FROM ROTTERDAM CENTER
TO GOOD CITY LIFE
An Urban Regeneration Strategy
Master Thesis | Urbanism | July 2009
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Problem Statement: Low Urban Vitality

Representing the city and its inhabitants as a whole, the centre plays a particular role in the urban life. Who knows the central area of Rotterdam has reason to question the presence of good city life. The city’s image suffers from problems such as a low urban vitality; users also might find it difficult to orientation and navigate in the centre of the city.

Research Question

1. What is the centre of R’dam? • Where is the centre of R’dam? • How do people use the centre? • The centre is changing. Into what? • Who will benefit? • What do the people want?

2. What are the criteria for a well functioning city centre? • How to plan & design good life?

3. How to generate synergy? • What needs to be improved? • How can it be improved?

Method

1. Urban Morphology focuses on the study of cities physical form. It is responding to this complex subject in terms of theory, method and practice. Kevin Lynch, Nikos Salingaros and Jan Gehl are three specialists approaching the matter of form, usage and development of the city in different ways. The theory section aims to describe their diverse methodologies to read, analyse and transform the urban surroundings. Reviewing different schools of urban morphology will provide general knowledge about the characteristics of the field and filter criteria for “good city life”.

2. The first scale uses the boundaries of the administrative city centre borders. For abstraction facts and data’s will be isolated. This will help to compare the results and draw conclusions on the level of the overall framework of the total central area. The investigation aims to answer the question where and what is the centre of Rotterdam. Outcome of this part of the study will be the choice of location for later intervention, relevant criteria are areas with a strong potential to be used in the planning or design (beneficial for central area) or points which limit the potential of the place that need to be changed.

3. The second, smaller resolution, will examine centre components, such as districts, squares or streets, in detail within the particular location. What needs to be improved? How can it be improved? At this stage the research is design driven to explore actual possibilities to improve the quality of Rotterdam’s centre.

Final Product

- Thesis Report
- Design
- Feasability
- Mock-Up 1:1000
- Evaluation

Design Objectives

To design a city form that stimulates activity, a positive image and therefore a sense of place.

Design Question

How to generate Synergy between the Urban Elements?

How to stimulate a vital street life?

Design Strategy

- Urban Composition
- Urban Function
- Key Projects

Evaluation

Introduction

- Rotterdam
- Rotterdam City Center
- Current Planning
- SWOT
Introduction

The City of Rotterdam

StadRegio: 1,300,000 inhabitants

City Centre: 29,788 inhabitants

Rotterdam: 600,000 inhabitants
Introduction
The City Center of Rotterdam

1932

1946

1987

2007
Research on center scale: Where & What is the centre of Rotterdam?

Historical & future development

- Historical Core
- Basisplan 1946
- Masterplans & Studies
- New Projects
- New Program

Urban morphology

- Aerial View
- 7 Districts
- Distribution Population
- Built Area
- Unbuilt Area
- Monuments

Public domain

- Infrastructure
- Pedestrian Area
- Squares
- Green Area
- Water bodies
- Image
Introduction
Shift of the Center

till 1940
Historical Center, east

1946
Basisplan, shift to west

1990
Kop van Zuid, shift to south
Introduction
Decentral distribution of Function
Introduction
Centre in transformation

• The centre is changing but into what?

Masterplans & Studies
source: ds&V

New Projects
source: Bureau Lofvers

New Program
source: Bureau Lofvers
Introduction
Tendency towards semi-public space

Project 2e Beurstraverse by OMA
source: OMA
Introduction
Dehydration of Center Function

Academie van Bouwkunde Rotterdam to Stadshaven

source: avbr
Introduction
Effects on local Population
Introduction

What people in Rotterdam want!
Introduction

SWOT & Area of Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful + to achieve the objectives</th>
<th>Harmful - to achieve the objectives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Geographic Position</td>
<td>- Hierarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Regional, National &amp; International Accessibility</td>
<td>- Urban Coherence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Multi - Ethnic Population</td>
<td>- Rules of Post-War Transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Young &amp; Creative</td>
<td>- reduced complexity &amp; connectivity</td>
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<td>- Path Meent</td>
<td>- Urban Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Relation Architecture &amp; Urbanism</td>
<td>- Morphologic Mismatches</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mixed functions \ Pattern opening hours</td>
<td>- Linkage</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strong Identity: young &amp; dynamic</td>
<td>- Weak East- West Lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Path West-Kruiskade</td>
<td>- Unconnected Urban Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Relation Architecture &amp; Urbanism</td>
<td>- Pattern of opening hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>- mixed functions \ Pattern opening hours</td>
<td>- Low Residential Density</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strong Identity: multi-ethnic</td>
<td>- Segregation of Function</td>
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<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>- Relation Architecture &amp; Urbanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Highest Residential Density</td>
<td>- Quality of Public Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oude Westen &amp; Laurentskwartier</td>
<td>- Lack of Human Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>- COUPLE: connect &amp; extend element</td>
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<td>- Well functioning Streets</td>
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<tr>
<td>- COUPLE: connect &amp; extend element</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Position of existing Pedestrian Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>- COUPLE: connect &amp; extend element</td>
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<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Public Space Tendency</td>
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<td>- Closed System vs Open System</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dehydration of Center Function</td>
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<td>- Sprawl vs Compact</td>
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Good City Life

- Literature
- Criteria
- Vision
Good City Life
Selected Literature

K. Lynch
• What does the city’s form mean to the people who live there?

N. Salingaros
• How and why are cities successful or not?

J. Gehl
• How to improve the pedestrian quality of urban life?
Good City Life
Criteria

GOOD CITY
• clear structure of urban composition
• unifying relation between architecture & urbanism
• the human scale as a main reference
• small scale connection for slow means of traffic
• high residential density

GOOD LIFE
• pedestrian quality
• mix functions
• pattern of opening hours
• support of distinctive local identities
• invite various user groups
• encourage contact & exchange
• stimulate participation
• gradual transformation
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Area of Intervention

• Urban Context
• Morphological Evolution
• Problem Definition
The chosen location covers roughly the region between the two urban paths Meent and West-Kruiskade. The area, which stretches over three districts from the eastern to the western boundary of the center over, has the potential to become a clear defined core, distinctive from other places outside the area.

Relevant factors for an active center life are already present in the current situation: The West-Kruiskade as main public space of multi-ethnic district, the historical Westersingel, Pocket parks and the Rotte as landscape elements, main cultural functions are situated at the Schouwburgplein including the Schouwburg theatre, the Doelen music hall and a multiplex cinema, the Lijnbaan pedestrian zone forms the main commercial center, administrative functions like the town hall are located at the Coolsingel, in the east the function mixed path Meent stretches to the open air market.
Area of Intervention
Morphologic Evolution


- Improvement of hygienic, moral & social condition of old centre
- Expansion towards the West with 20m wide streets
- Singel as attractive feature
- Zoo in central position

Rose’s Singel Plan

- Town Hall
- Post Office
- Beurs

Transformation Coolsingel

- Rebuilding the Centre with strong modernistic approach
  - separation of function
  - priority to motor-traffic
  - low density living area
  - Lijnbaan as pedestrian area

Rebuilding the Centre

Modern Architecture

- Schouwburgplein
- High Rise

Ambition towards a strong economy & attractive residential city

- High-speed Train Station
- higher density in centre
Area of Intervention
The Separation of East and West

1880

2009
Area of Intervention
Original Path Kruiskade
Area of Intervention
Thesis
Area of Intervention
Urban Mismatch West Gate

1930 Entrance West-Kruiskade

2009 Entrance West-Kruiskade
Area of Intervention
Separation & Limitation

1930 Hofplein

2009 Hofplein
Area of Intervention
Low Quality of Public Space

1930 Aert van Nesstraat

2009 Aert van Nesstraat
Area of Intervention
The Lijnbaan, a monofunctional Barrier
Area of Intervention
Problem Definition

1. Urban Composition = NOT CLEAR

2. Public Space = NOT ATTRACTIVE

3. Program = NOT MIXED
Design & Planning

- Urban Composition
- Public Space
- Mix-Use Program
Design & Planning
Strategy

Missing or Weak Linkage
- dominant North-South
- weak East-West

Reconnect East & West
- restore pre-war Kruiskade
- revitalize Aert van Nesstraat

Vital Urban Place
- complex, vital

Future Opportunity
- redefine Hofplein
- Delftse Port
- reincorporate Pompenburg
Design & Planning
Strategy

1. Legible Urban Compostion
2. Attractive Public Space
3. Complex Mix-Use Program
Design & Planning
1. Legible Urban Composition

Problem = Mismatch

Solution = Subtraction
Design & Planning
1. Legible Urban Composition

Composition before 1940
Superblock
Central Solid
4 Blocks in Corners
Two blocks with accessible roof
L-shaped blocks with square
Design & Planning
1. Legible Urban Composition

- Legible integration in Urban Fabric
- Good accessibility from all sides
- Opportunity to integrate edge
- Transit stops in close proximity
- Only slow means of traffic
Design & Planning
2. Attractive Public Space
3. Complex Mix-Use Program

- Cinema
- Grand Hotel
- Shops & Housing
- Coolsingel Theater
- Shops & Housing
- Forum
- Mix-Use
- Housing
Design & Planning

3. Program Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Parking</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
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<th>Cultural</th>
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<td>760 PP</td>
<td>80 000 m²</td>
<td>9000 m²</td>
<td>5000 m²</td>
<td>50 000 m²</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 000 m²</td>
<td>1000 PP</td>
<td>16 000 m²</td>
<td>7600 m²</td>
<td>2190 m²</td>
<td>xxx</td>
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</table>
Design & Planning
Strategic Projects

Urban Composition
East-West Connection
1. Kruiskade
2. Aert van Nesstraat

Public Space
Streets
3. Kruiskade
4. Aert van Nesstraat
Squares
5. Central Square
Location: Kruiskade
6. Urban Living Room
Location: Aert van Nesstraat

Redevelopment
7. Cinema
Location: Coolsingel
8. New world of Lijnbaan
Location: Lijnbaan
9. Atlanta Hotel
Location: Aert van Nesstraat
10. School
Location: Sint-Luciastraat
11. Coolsingel Block
Location: Coolsingel

New Developments
12. Public Forum
Location: Kruiskade & Aert van Nesstraat
13. Coolsingel Theater
Location: Kruiskade & Coolsingel
14. Residential Tower
Location: Aert van Nesstraat
15. Residential Block
Location: Aert van Nesstraat
16. Townhouses with Garden
Location: Aert van Nesstraat
Design Walk

- Restored Backbone The Kruiskade
- Revitalized Lijnbaan
- Revitalized Backbone The Aert van Nesstraat
The Kruiskade
Public Forum
The Kruiskade
Public Forum

Seattle Public Library

Amsterdam Public Library

Den Haag Public Library

Seattle Public Library
The Kruiskade
The Central Square
The Kruiskade
The Central Square

Play

Events

Pass by, Sit, Watch & Exchange

Square related program

Night Activity
The Kruiskade
Impression of the Central Square
The Kruiskade
Coolsingel Theater

Evening and Night Program  source: drostvanveen
The Lijnbaan
Urban Oasis Reference Hackische Höfe Berlin
The Lijnbaan
Urban Oasis Reference Falkenried-Terrassen Hamburg

• 5 carfree streets as main public space for 324 apartments
The Lijnbaan
The Lijnbaan goes Multi

**MONO**
- 50 Units
- 100% shopping

**MULTI**
- 40% atelier
- 30% horeca
- 30% shopping

**DISTRIBUTE IN AREA**
- Aert van Nesstraat
- Coolsingel
- 70% shopping
The Lijnbaan
The new World of Lijnbaan
The Lijnbaan
The new World of Lijnbaan
• Impression Lijnbaan Gardens

before

after
The Lijnbaan
The new World of Lijnbaan

• Impression Street Life
The Lijnbaan
The Lijnbaan goes Multi

before

after
The Aert van Nesstraat
A Continuum of the Meent

Plan Map Aert van Nesstraat
The Aert van Nesstraat
Urban Living Room
The Aert van Nesstraat
References Urban Living Room

Urban garden Paley Park in New York

Place for exchange

Public green, Bryant Park Allee in New York

Relation between architecture and public space
The Aert van Nesstraat
Residential Program

Residential Tower (120m)

Townhouses with Garden

Apartment Block
The Aert van Nesstraat
Situation Public Space
The Aert van Nesstraat
Impression desired Street Life
The Aert van Nesstraat
Atlanta Hotel

Hotel Atlanta, 2009
Hidden Potential
Hidden Potential
The Aert van Nesstraat
Atlanta Hotel
The Aert van Nesstraat Cinema
The Aert van Nesstraat
Cinema
Something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something 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something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happens because something happen
“But a state exist for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only.”

(350 BC, Aristotle, The Politics)