connecting Zuidas
research & design

P2 booklet
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table of contents

introduction

urban analysis 6
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individual research 16
research paper 19
problem statement 25
goals and ambitions 26
concept 28
program 30
proposal 31
references 33
introduction

In the Msc3 studio ‘Hybrid buildings’ research and design revolves around the question how a spatial intervention for Central Business District (CBD) Zuidas in the city of Amsterdam can evoke or result in urban transformation.

CBD Zuidas was developed in the 1980’s as a place of social meaning, a lively place or even a second city centre. Unfortunately this has not happened until now, so how can such a place be created without extensively changing the existing CBD or making a masterplan for the complete CBD but rather using a relatively small spatial intervention that can evoke the start of such a place. The municipality of Amsterdam plans to put the motorway that runs through CBD Zuidas underground, providing new plots to build on or perhaps providing space to use in order to make CBD Zuidas more lively.

To get familiar with the site and the notion of ‘CBD’ a batch wise analysis was done on a large urban scale, relating the site to global phenomena, gradually zooming in to the scale of the site. After this individual research was conducted and a research paper was written.

After researching the site, challenges and opportunities were deduced and problems were stated, these lead to a position towards these problems and the design assignment. According to the research combined with the position taken a proposal for an intervention was formulated and worked out; reacting to the problem on an architectural, urban and programmatic level. Due to the fact that this is not a final design, references are given explaining what things are interesting to research for developing the design.
“A ‘central business district’ (CBD) is an area in a city in which a high concentration of corporations and commerce is located. Often it also is the geographical centre of the city.” wikipedia

The traditional ‘central business district’, usually the best connected and well served by technical networks, used to be the place where most firms had their main operations. But the new urban scenario constituted by new and multiple nodes of production and consumption, new possibilities of transferability and intermodality and the revolution in ICT have resulted in new urban structures, where the centre might be everywhere. Roberto Rocco - An Urban Geography of Globalisation
Hybrid Buildings
P2 booklet; ‘connecting Zuidas’

02
map of world cities based on economic importance placed in a hierarchy of alpha, beta and gamma

alpha world cities
beta world cities
gamma world cities
urban analysis
When countering the design for the first time there was need for, an abstract, analysis as a basis to get to know CBD Zuidas from different perspectives. Within the framework of the course ‘Urban analysis’ CBD Zuidas was to be researched on different topics and scales. Point of departure was visiting the site and a deriving number of questions from this visit; why is Zuidas so empty or abandoned? What is a CBD and how does it operate? How does CBD Zuidas fit in the city of Amsterdam? These questions formed the first framework of our research, which later evolved in a research focussing on the operations, value and potentials of CBD Zuidas on three different scales.

research and methods
The research was conducted batch wise and was aimed to answer: What is CBD Zuidas and what does it offer or lack, and which potentials can be discovered? Using literature and mapping/positioning CBD Zuidas the analysis was carried out. Stepping aside from typical quantitative analysis CBD Zuidas has been researched to reveal latent qualities and characteristics of the site that might become the basis for the following design assignment. An attempt has been made to define rules as well as states of contradiction inherent to CBD Zuidas on different scales and levels of analysis. In addition to this, visions or preliminary conclusions deriving from analysing the physical conditions on site are examined and systematised within the framework of contemporary theory of global nodes, centralities and networks. Immediate judgements and defining certain conditions as problems were avoided, instead these conditions could be seen as unique phenomena that are opportunities or potential benefits for the future development of the site.

scales and topics
The main body of the analysis is based on the topics of economic relations, connectivity, program, identity, centrality and infrastructure. In order to structure the analysis it was carried out on roughly three scales: global/continental, national and urban. These scales are based on the different economic networks CBD Zuidas operates in: the alpha/beta/gamma- and panregional network (global/continental), de Randstad (national) and Amsterdam (urban). Where in the larger scale network abstract relations like economical linkage were research, working towards the smallest scale research was conducted on more conventional or comprehensible topics like activities or physical boundaries. The following pages show a condensed version of the research on the three different scales.
Amsterdam in the Global network

London is (one of) the most important economical centre(s) in the world, apart from London being an leading centre on a global scale it also has a wide regional scope. It has a strong panregional function, a large number of businesses have their headquarters in London. From here the most important economical activity in Europe and Africa can be operated.

Europe is the most powerful global economic region. Its core, the NW region, is densely populated and hosts the five most important CBD’s and the four most frequented airports. But the European economy is reaching its limits in terms of growth, depending increasingly on emerging economical region China as its production powerhouse. Exchange of information and goods rather than producing them is becoming crucial for the European economy. Therefore proximity to major hubs of trade and information is important to businesses on all scales.

Zuidas is the textbook example of a perfectly located CBD. Very near to Schiphol a major airport (4th of Europe) connecting it to any economical centre in the world, on any other scale it is perfectly connected as well by any transportation mode possible. Zuidas is embedded in a historic city with a culturally rich city centre, especially for temporary events like international congresses or seminars the appeal of a historic city is a major advantage. Compared to other CBD’s in the top five or other CBD’s in general, Zuidas is best connected to its airport or trading hub, beating for instance Paris by 56 minutes on a travel from CBD to airport by train. This proximity to Schiphol provides Zuidas with a strong centrality on a global scale.
06 city linkage to London
07 Traveltime by train from CBD to local airport
08 Geographical centrality of Amsterdam in NW European region
09 Distance from Amsterdam by car, train and plane
**unique Randstad**

Zuidas could be compared to the other CBDs in the region by various quantitative and qualitative parameters (area, year of establishment, number of workers, total office area etc.) However, it won’t be quite relevant to do so because Zuidas is an integral part of the polycentric metropolitan region Randstad which in itself is a unique geographical, economic and political entity.

Randstad is a network of economically and politically important cities complemented with a number of transportation- and information hubs. Major cities that can be recognised in Randstad are Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht. The most important hubs are globally orientated harbour of Rotterdam and the airport Schiphol.

Each of these centres has its own identity and economical profile. Amsterdam is clearly the ‘flagship’ of this region; it has the most international business activity of the Netherlands, there is in both Amsterdam and the adjacent Amstelveen a large and quickly growing creative sector, it accommodates the largest airport and information hub of the Netherlands and has a very rich cultural and touristic city centre.

Rotterdam has the largest harbour in Europe which is also one of the largest in the world which are connected to its extensively developed logistics and distribution facilities. Furthermore it is very active in the field of technological innovation.

Utrecht has a large number of insurance companies that represent the most activity in this branch of the Netherlands.

The Hague houses the political and administrative apparatus as well as an International Court.

These cities benefit from their mutual proximity because they complement each other rather than compete with each other. Extensive technical, digital and in particular infrastructural networks facilitate a spillover of activities and corporation between cities. Compared to a typical mono centred CBD, Randstad has the advantage of not geographically converging all its activity and therefore its infrastructure to one point, sparing it from congesting and keeping it well connected. For instance, in less than an hour Zuidas is accessible by train or car. This spreading of centres also provides space for agricultural- and recreational green landscape.

The combination of both factors mentioned above allow people or possible employees to live relatively close to both pleasant green or rural space and their work.
Connectivity or accessibility are imperative to polycentric regions. The networks that facilitate this connectivity allow the region to be actually poly centred instead of a collection of mono centred parts. Therefore it is important to improve not only the separate cities or economic centres in Randstad but improve the networks that connect them as well.

A very important network for the success of polycentric Randstad is its railway network, daily facilitating the transport of thousands of commuters. The stations of the railway network are therefore materialised transportation nodes that are gates to or faces of the city, it is the first and last place people enter when people travel between cities or economical centres. Often activities and program are located around these main infrastructural nodes.

Currently several transportational nodes in Randstad are undergoing large scale reconstruction, expressing by the design the importance of the node itself and therefore the city it represents.

Considering the reconstruction of the stations of major economical centres in this respect, it is curious to see that these important and intensively used stations are all designed to stand out and provide a unique image.

Randstad is still mostly a political and geographical concept which is not directly perceivable. In every list inventory of CBD's or important cities Amsterdam is mentioned as an entity but the cumulative value of Randstad always goes overlooked. Therefore, it would be more relevant to create a network of recognisable typologies and a system of signs that could emphasise the unity of the centres of the Randstad.

Perhaps following the example of the metro stations of Paris, it would be beneficial to create a identifiable typology or system instead of iconic buildings. Where are system or typology is based on the universal nature of the collection, a icon is based on the different nature of the part in the collection.

Creating a typology or system for train stations in Randstad will give the cities an recognisable face or gate, materialising the political and economical union of Randstad in order to make this physically present and therefore perceivable to the world.
two conceptual models for reading Amsterdam

Considering Amsterdam as a part of the Randstad, Amsterdam itself could also be considered as a network of various activities. Following the same logic, we tried to understand what place Zuidas takes within Amsterdam as a city. Therefore, we came up with two conceptual models.

The first model is based on the assumption that Amsterdam is a coherent whole with a homogeneous identity or maybe it consists of the network of various programs and activities such as housing, cultural network, parks and other public spaces. However, in this model Zuidas can hardly be read as an integral part of this coherent entity.

The second model is based on the idea of fragmentation. Therefore, Amsterdam could be seen as an archipelago of different islands. These islands with a more less homogeneous identity were identified on the basis of predominant program, morphology and activities. Contrary to the first concept, here Zuidas could play an equal role to the other islands and interact with them.

This model triggered the question about forces that hold these islands together. By exploring the relations between these fragments we discovered that the centrality of the historical core of the city is strong enough to keep everything together as well as well developed connections between them. Most of the patches are able to support themselves, however they also need some extra programs that could be found in the other patches or only in the centre.

Amsterdam as a coherent whole

The branded identity of Amsterdam, created mostly for tourists, contributes to the simplistic reading of the city, based on popular stereotypes.

The recognizable identity of Amsterdam is based on diverse housing typologies (the Berlage style, the detached houses with private courtyards, the new modern houses in Java and Borneo Islands, houseboats, etc.), a variety of world-famous museums (the Van Gogh museum, Rijksmuseum, Stedelijk, etc.) and other landmarks. In addition to this, Amsterdam's identity could be supplemented by a network of public spaces, green parks and unique system of canals.

Amsterdam as a patchwork

The city could be understood as fragmented entity that is hold together by a very strong central element or (and) developed connective infrastructure.

Predominant program, morphology and activities identify each of the fragments. Some of these parts are characterised as monofunctional and some others have diversity in program. However, the homogeneous morphology can be the recognizable element for them. For instance, Amsterdam historical core has a great diversity in program, while it keeps its morphology clearly recognizable.

Most of the fragments are interdependent, as they are related to others in terms of programmatic needs.
dual nature of centrality of Zuidas

The paradox of Zuidas lies in the fact that while being a relatively influential centrality in the larger region, it fails as a second centre of the city as it lacks programmatic value to the rest of the city. This could be exemplified by a simple comparison of the relations between a typical residential area and Zuidas with the historical centre. Residential areas were planned to support daily needs of its residents during the week besides workers commuting to the centre or neighbouring areas, therefore residents don’t need to leave the area for every day activities.

Zuidas attracts mostly office commuters from Randstad and visitors from the global economical network and remains active only during office hours. Residents on site need to go off site for amenities that support everyday life.

So apparently Zuidas is programmatically mostly focused on the user profile of business people, lacking programmatic value for everyday life.

The reason people live in Amsterdam is mainly because of its identity established by the historical city centre and the activities and environments it offers, that can not be found in their neighbourhood. It’s not that most inhabitants of Amsterdam use the historic city centre every day but that they have it at there disposal permanently, this also counts for the dwellers in Zuidas. Therefore it is perhaps not relevant for Zuidas to become a second city centre, perhaps it is better to implement programmatic value according to every day life. The city centre is at the disposal of dwellers of Zuidas as well, there is no need to compete with such a powerful centrality when the purpose and potential of the area is economic activity.

‘A global local paradox seems to exist in which global competitiveness is driven by local initiative and local characteristics.’

O. Raspe, D. Hamers and W. Hornis, ‘It’s the agglomeration stupid!’ in The Tale of two regions, 2011

As stated before CBD Zuidas is apparently lacking programmatic value for local people, for everyday life. This could be one of the reasons people do not go to CBD Zuidas spontaneously, or going to CBD Zuidas is not a regular part of their life. In addition to this the large scale of its buildings and the transition from inside to outside are not the most suitable for evoking a lively place. The current state of CBD Zuidas is that it is still unfinished due to the economic downturn. Therefore the possibility exists to improve CBD Zuidas by filling the empty plots strategically, perhaps serving both the CBD and the local people.
personal conclusions and statements on the urban analysis

In economic terms CBD Zuidas has an enormous potential for the Netherlands. It is extremely well connected to the global network and is in proximity of several major CBD’s in the NW European region, of which one (London) is perhaps the most important of the world. In economic terms it has all qualities a CBD could ask for; high connectivity on different scales and in different transportation modes, office towers providing a successful appeal, secondary functions supporting the CBD and its employees, situated in a culturally rich city and near a knowledge generating institution (VU). The only thing in economic terms that is not optimal is the fact that it has not been finished yet, empty plots are obscuring the spatial clarity of the territory and affecting its successful appeal. Perhaps an intervention for the CBD itself is not the most relevant solution, when the world and national economy recovers CBD Zuidas will be able again to expand its activity and create new office buildings.

The strength and polycentric nature of the economic network ‘de Randstad’ is internationally not acknowledged, making this network perceivable could simultaneously benefit all its cities in international perspective. De Randstad could be emphasised by creating a system or integral typology for train stations, since a lot of people enter cities through these stations. However this is not very likely to happen or perhaps even feasible to propose since all major cities in de Randstad are currently refurbishing or expanding their central stations.

Amsterdam is a collection of interdependent parts, identifiable by dominant programmatic activity and morphology. What makes these part to be perceived as a city is due to the centrality of the historic centre or collective dependence of the parts on the historical centre, connectivity and high accessibility makes the transition or borders between parts hardly perceivable. Zuidas is a part in the mentioned collection, according to Burdett et al there is nothing wrong with being a part in a collection. But in this collection every part should have some relevance for the other parts, the collection, hence the interdependent nature. Lacking programmatic value on a local scale CBD Zuidas is not a relevant addition to the collection in terms of social meaning. Economical prosperity has enabled CBD Zuidas to grow successful in a short amount of time, perhaps CBD Zuidas needed to be socially isolated having only one primary use in order to develop so quickly. In that respect it is not fair to compare it to the lively historic centre of Amsterdam or a CBD like ‘The City’ in London, these have had ages of time to develop a pleasant urban fabric with socially relevant program. Perhaps the temporarily economical obstruction we experience currently is the proper moment for contemplating on how CBD Zuidas should develop further. A lot has been built for corporations in a very short amount of time, now is the moment to take time to think and integrate buildings for ‘people’ in CBD Zuidas. These buildings for ‘people’ are intended to have programmatic value for the everyday life of local people. Instead of having one primary use, business, CBD Zuidas needs to gain several primary uses putting people in the streets of CBD Zuidas during the whole day. These primary uses can attract secondary uses that complement everyday life activity, the growing number of people in the streets support the secondary uses. These secondary uses can contribute to making a place lively. (see, included, research paper)

Designing for the local people and providing them relevant activities means designing on a human scale. There is no need for high towers or splendidly looking buildings to show prosperity in this case. There is need for buildings that are porous and relate to the surrounding, public, space. Buildings that express a certain hospitality and invite people to use them.

However, when building for local people, simultaneously the impact on the CBD must be considered; it should not be affected. Dealing with this duality of a virtual potential and a perceptible intervention is perhaps the most important issue in the design assignment.
CBD Zuidas at the Southern edge of Amsterdam, the motorway and train tracks running through it.
After conducting batch wise research on a large, abstract scale on a theoretical basis, I conducted individual research focussing on the smaller scale using a spatial or more practical scope. The site itself was explored; conditions were determined, surrounding roads were analysed in terms of transportation modes and frequency of use.

In the area there are several connections in North-South direction connecting Amsterdam (North) and Amstelveen (South). The most important one, in terms of frequency of use and support of different transportation modes amongst which a metro line, is the Parnassusweg which also connects Zuidas to Amsterdam and Amstelveen.

In the East-West direction there is one road that is by far the most important and frequently used by visitors of CBD Zuidas. This is ‘de Boelelaan’ which runs between both exits of the motorway and connects to two clusters of office buildings, amongst which the one on the Western end contains the headquarters of ING.

As stated earlier there is a lack of programmatic value on the local scale, therefore the current local amenities were analysed. This analysis was meant to be a basis for the adding or diversification of the program on site. The aim is not to compete with existing amenities but rather complement the current supply.

Public places were appointed, trying to find the public focal point of CBD Zuidas and determining its nature and functioning. The Gustav Mahler square in CBD Zuidas is in terms of position and dimensions the public focal point of CBD Zuidas, unfortunately there is no program to support this place. Buildings positioned at the square or not permeable or porous, therefore not relating their indoor program to the square preventing people to engage and making the edges of the square lively.

On the West side an axis that intersects the Gustav Mahler square contains public facilities, unfortunately this axis is not optimally positioned or directed and contains mainly program focussed on business people.

Realising that future development of nearby location can occur or is being planned currently, planned development of CBD Zuidas and peripheral locations were investigated. The VU is planning to develop its campus, trying to make it a mixed used site containing not only program for university related purposes. An important aspect of this plan is reviving de Boelelaan, making it a lively street that will mediate between the existing campus and the future extension.
Figures
23 empty spaces in CBD Zuidas
24 public focal point Gustav Mahler square and Western axis
25 future developments VU campus
26 programmatic research: recreative sports; bowling
27 programmatic research: shopping facilities, both high end and everyday life; N P.C. Hooftstraat S Gelderlandplein
research paper
By writing a research paper I explored the possibilities CBD Zuidas has to offer in terms of liveliness from three perspectives; spatial, anthropological and programmatic. The main body of this research paper was based on studying literature, this was complemented by several visits to the site to experience it personally and by analysis in plans and diagrams.

place, people, purpose
exploring the possibilities of making CBD Zuidas a lively place

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Central Business District (CBD) Zuidas (image 1,2) is a densely occupied area in Amsterdam, developed in the 1980’s. At that time the municipality together with corporate investors agreed on developing CBD Zuidas as a vibrant place with intensive city life, it was meant to become a second city centre for Amsterdam. Eventually CBD Zuidas did not become this lively place, it has become a place monotonously focussed on corporate business unable to facilitate city life.

How or why this happened is mainly due to economical and political reasons, however these won’t be discussed in this essay. What might be more interesting, since it has not been completed yet, is to see what CBD Zuidas lacks or needs to improve in order to become the second city centre as primarily intended. So how can CBD Zuidas become a place of social meaning that can facilitate city life?

Analysing the current condition of CBD Zuidas and studying relevant literature have resulted in an essay that was written taking multiple perspectives. These perspectives, spatial, anthropological and programmatic, complement each other to answer the question: How can CBD Zuidas become a place of social meaning that can facilitate city life?

place

CBD Zuidas was developed according to the modernistic planning ideals of the city as a machine, every part does a different job that complements the functioning of the machine. A rational and purposeful condition for necessary activities was to be created, mostly not considering enough what this purposeful, or monotonous, condition would mean for the city as a meeting place and its city life.

City life, or urban liveliness, is facilitated by pedestrian life which is based on walking, a mode of transportation that allows for interactions with other individuals, spontaneous behaviour and an opportunity to think or be inspired: ‘walking through common city space can be a goal in itself, but also a beginning’. Increasing car traffic gradually squeezed city life out because pedestrian life became increasingly difficult, this is especially a problem in large cities. Cities like Melbourne, New York and Copenhagen have been actively trying to revive their city centres by decreasing car traffic to and from the city centre. By inviting people rather than cars into their centres these cities have successfully reimplemented city life.

Although CBD Zuidas is a product of the mentioned planning, car traffic is not necessarily a problem. Only one street supports car traffic to and from CBD Zuidas, the rest of the streets and squares is car free or at the very most one way or dead ended. What could be an obstacle for CBD Zuidas in becoming vibrant and full of city life is the fact that not inside but around CBD Zuidas there are wide and extensively used roads that support car traffic, forming large boundaries. The connection of CBD Zuidas with the city of Amsterdam is due to being poorly supported in terms of pedestrian travelling very faint and not inviting for people to go there. People hardly go spontaneously to or through CBD Zuidas.

1 Geyl J., 2010, p29
2 Geyl J., 2010, p26
3 Geyl J., 2010, p13
4 Geyl J., 2010 p20
The quality of city space is leading for the character and the extent of city life. Necessary and purposeful activities like going to work or to school, waiting for public transport or shopping for groceries will take place under any circumstance. On the other hand recreational and optional activities like strolling down the promenade, sitting at a square or stopping to enjoy a view will require places with good quality.  

While our senses, by means of evolution, focus mainly on everything that happens in a horizontal plain before us, city life can be created or evoked by designing for the human scale and senses that take into account the human body and all its limitations. Further, sight is the most important of the human senses. Therefore the ‘social field of vision’, a perimeter in which social interaction can take place, is important in urban design. The outer limit of this field is 100 meters, within which we can see people moving. Between 50 and 70 meters we can recognise persons and their body language. An important frontier is at 25 meters, from which we start recognising emotions and facial expression. Approaching even closer, from seven meters details can be experienced, conversations take place and feelings can be exchanged. Humans naturally are less used to experience from above, therefore city life will appear for a great deal on eye level and everything closely related to this dimension.  

CBD Zuidas consist of a number of large office buildings that exceed the contact thresholds as shown in image 5, interacting with the majority of the buildings and the people in it is therefore not possible. The main square in CBD Zuidas is the Gustav Mahler square, 150 by 90 meters wide, which is the focal point in terms of public social interaction. This would be slightly too large, as stated above, but due to the articulation and partitioning of the square the dimensions are suitable for interaction and city life. The facades of the buildings surrounding the square are mostly closed, separating inside from outside strictly. To allow a lively square it would be better to evoke inside-outside relations by making permeable facades. Furthermore when encountering an entrance, the transition from inside to outside is very abrupt, there is mostly no intermediate space or something that could make the transition more gradual.  

Apart from spatial conditions, perhaps there is a less visible or less directly spatial condition that prevents CBD Zuidas from having city life. French anthropologist Marc Augé published a study that addresses what he calls ‘non-places’: places characterised by their uniformity and lack of social coherence, functioning similarly regardless of their geographical location, where people will only be temporarily. ‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.’  

Alone, amongst many others, the user of a non-place is enabled to use it by the estab-
lishment of a contractual relation. He is actively aware of this nature due to the, ongoing, reminding of it by the non-place. When gaining access to an airport departure lounge a ticket stating name and other information has to be shown, reminding the individual to the contractual relation. When boarding, a boarding pass, a passport, and in some occasions a visa have to be presented; all proof that the contract has been respected. The contract always relates to the identity of the contracting party, so the individual accedes to his anonymity when respecting the contract.

The same goes for the supermarket customer that pays by bankcard or the motorway driver that is obliged to publicly expose his identity to a certain extent by his licence plates and obligatory carrying a drivers licence. The individual is reduced to nothing else than how he acts or what he experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver. He becomes more or less gently possessed by the non-place, temporarily distanced from personal worries or joys. While in this subjected state, enabled to experience the passive joys of identity loss and the perhaps more active amuse of role playing.

In ‘corporate life’, when acting in a world where mainly corporate business is present, individuals experience a similar condition. After being interviewed and screened, having proved to possess certain qualities by showing necessary documents, they are registered and literally contracted. They enter an ungraspably large organisation, vast like a neighbourhood or district, impossible to get acquainted with completely. A neighbourhood that obeys the standards of corporate business. These include amongst other things a certain mind set, a code of ethics or behaviour, educational level and even a dress code. By wearing the proper clothing inhabitants of this corporate world can recognise and address each other the right way, enabling both parties to instantly play the right role. Where ten years ago the CBD would probably have been filled with chalk lined suits, today it is filled with a plain dark alternative complemented by a light shirt and a plain tie. Thus the non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations, it only creates solitude and similitude.

The question is how an outsider, perhaps just passing through, can enjoy a place that demands such a subjection. Although this subjection is contained in built form, a spillover is present at the public space surrounding it. Not being able to take the threshold of the built containments because one cannot meet the contractual requirements, not even trying because there is a certain presence of the need to have clearance to access them. One is allowed only in the leftover space between these containments. A space where the requirements can still be sensed and where the rules still implicitly apply, a space that mainly facilitates the accessibility of the containments; peripheral space of contractual centres. The coincidental passenger is actually rejected due to the fact it does not meet the requirements, further it does not have the proper clothing excluding it from participation in the leftover space outside the containments.

Without condemning a non-place to a negative phenomenon, an attempt has been made to build an argument merely to support the suggestion that a CBD as a non-place does not entirely qualify as a basis of a lively urban centre.

8 Augé M., 2008, p82 
9 Augé M., 2008, p83 
10 Jacobs J., 1992, p146 
11 Jacobs J., 1992, p148 
12 Jacobs J., 1992, p162
Cities naturally are generators of diversity, because a large number of people can support a large diversity of activities therefore making a city or a place lively. A lively place is also determined by the virtue of its collection of small elements, ergo activities. Apparently there is a balance between the number of people and activities that can make a place lively.

A primary use or main programmatic activity, for instance employment or dwelling, attracts people to a place at a specific time (span) of the day, during the rest of the day the primary use won’t attract people. Combining primary uses is only effective when they attract people at different times of the day and therefore putting people on the street during different times of the day. Secondary use or convenience use, for instance retail in a residential area, exists in presence of a primary use to serve the people that are drawn by this primary use. If based on a single primary use secondary use will not flourish. Serving mixed primary uses, secondary use can be efficient and contribute to making a lively place. The other way around there is no place, how densely populated or well established, without the need for spreading or attracting people through the day.

In CBD Zuidas there is one primary use which is employment, this brings employees or business people for leisure related reasons on the street mainly during lunch time. There are also high end dwellings in CBD Zuidas, but due to the fact that all secondary uses are serving business people there is no reason to be on the streets of CBD Zuidas for these dwellers for leisure reasons. Furthermore most dwellers are provided with luxurious indoor or private outdoor space, reducing the need to go on the streets. On the topic of schools Hertzberger notices that when a school facilitates too many indoor activities as an alternative to schoolyard activities the schoolyard will become deserted.

In his essay ‘Spatial quality: compensation for density’ Rudy Uytenhaak pleads for a spatial compensation of densely built areas; density based on FSI. This is because a certain density could have a menacing or claustrophobic effect. According to Uytenhaak this compensation should be spatial quality. Spatial quality is not only determined by the nature of the space itself, but also by the activities it provides; either inside or outside buildings; things that contribute to the experience of a space.

Balancing primary and secondary uses, the overall programmatic value, of CBD Zuidas can evoke more liveliness due to a large number of people on the streets during the whole day and simultaneously can offer compensation for the existing density to dwellers.

In this respect it might be interesting to notice that crime prevention strategies advocate the meeting of people from different groups of society as a routine part of every day life. So attracting different people not only can make a place more lively, but it also allows the strengthening of society.

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FSI = floorspace (m$^2$) / envelope (m$^2$)

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13 Jacobs J., 1992, p160
14 Hertzberger H., 2008, p136
15 Uytenhaak R., 2008, p74
16 Uytenhaak R., 2008, p75
17 Geyl J., 2010, p28
In spatial terms CBD Zuidas functions reasonably well. Pedestrian life is very well possible and there is already a focal point for city life. However facades are not permeable and don’t allow inside-outside contact. Boundaries around CBD Zuidas hinder people to go there spontaneously.

Due to the large number of large corporations and business people CBD Zuidas could feel strange to people that do not work there. The subjection, people in suits or uniforms, the single identity they have and the anonymity they carry; it is all perceptible, not intimidating but also not inviting. If business people were not such a majority in CBD Zuidas, perhaps it would already be more inviting and could become more lively. Unfortunately this requires a different group of people to be there in order to solve this.

Further, developing new buildings containing different uses or program, or replacing program in existing buildings could solve the problem of the singular primary use of CBD Zuidas.

The easiest or most obvious intervention is to spatially improve CBD Zuidas. Opening facades, improving relations between public space and buildings. Also changing the boundaries around CBD Zuidas in order to make the place less isolated could help. Since it has not been finished yet this improvement could also be done by adding new buildings that meet these requirements, to function as an example.

To find the right balance between primary and secondary uses is more challenging. In order to establish this research has to be done in order to find out the demands of all sorts of target groups and implementing these is the right way.

Perhaps the most challenging thing is to balance the mixture of people. By inviting other kind of people than business people to CBD Zuidas business people will not be a majority anymore. But this should be done in such a way that these business people do not feel like ‘their’ space is, gradually, being invaded. As mentioned before there is no gradual transition from inside to outside, no intermediate space, public space is right at the doorstep of each building. In the current situation CBD Zuidas is crowded with business people so this transition is perhaps less perceptible, but once different people are drawn to CBD Zuidas in the future, this might become a less pleasant side effect.

Since pedestrian life is crucial for a lively place, the current flows of people should be investigated and the influence of future development on these flows in order to secure existing pedestrian life in the future.

references
books
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Uytenhaak R., Cities full of space: qualities of density (Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Uitgeverij 010, 2008)
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Hook W. ea, Our cities ourselves: the future of transportation in urban life (2011)
problem statement
Considering the conducted research, the most prominent unfavourable conditions were deduced that should be addressed in the intervention.

1. Currently CBD Zuidas is unfinished, suggesting it is unable to generate sufficient economic activity or gravity in order to attract new corporations and finish or expand its site.

2. Lack of programmatic value for local people, causing them not to use CBD Zuidas. Due to this the CBD is mainly used during office hours by employees and the public spaces are only used for leisure purposes around lunchtime. This results in a seemingly abandoned place during most of the day.

The unfinished state of CBD Zuidas occurs at the edges of the site, putting this unfavourable condition at public display limitlessly. It also makes its connection with the city rather faint; instead of people passing CBD Zuidas they are passing emptiness or undefined space. This problem is most present at the Western edge, where the Parnassusweg and the Boelelaan pass CBD Zuidas. There the empty space is due to density and rise rather a part of the VU campus than of CBD Zuidas.

CBD Zuidas and its peripheral area contain people from four types of different user profiles; businesspeople that are employed at CBD Zuidas, travellers that use the train station to enter Amsterdam, students studying at the adjacent VU campus and local dwellers. These people have different needs and could be potential users of CBD Zuidas during different times of the day, unfortunately there is only programmatic relevance for businesspeople.

The dual nature of CBD Zuidas is a potential problem and should be recognised; the global economic potential and the local perceptible and spatial challenges. The intervention must be able to address both scales without affecting either one in order to utilize the full potential and make it as lively as possible.
goals and ambitions

Corresponding with the problem statement the goal is to spatially complete CBD Zuidas at the West edge and give it programmatic relevance in order to develop social meaning. Both goals can work in the global as well as in the local scale if executed well enough.

Completing CBD Zuidas will give it more appeal in economic terms and a way to address the city; a face towards the city. Also the remaining space will be defined as a part of CBD Zuidas, not as drifting space between VU campus and CBD Zuidas. The city will gain clarity, an identifiable territory, and will receive a pleasant piece of urban fabric.

Creating programmatic value for the local people will not only serve these people and complement the range of existing activities in their neighbourhood, it will attract people to CBD Zuidas making it more lively and helping it grow to a place of social meaning. The additional program will not be the inverse of the existing; monotonously focussed on the local, therefore businesspeople can enjoy these new activities as well. Further, a lively place will help build the image of an economically successful place.

Reaching these goals requires a basic or generic set of rules, guidelines that will form the framework of the intervention.

- As mentioned before the West edge should be built on, defining the remaining space.
- The intervention should be shaped or positioned in such a way that future development will be evoked to react to it, perhaps confirming scale or orientation.
- Due to the fact that around the intervention there will still be much emptiness it has to able to create its own context, creating a pleasant environment for its users.
- Generate programmatic value in order to serve local people

These guidelines imply that the space the intervention creates should be inviting and that is should stimulate interaction, this means that it should be designed according to the human scale.

The VU has the ambition to transform its campus to a lively mixed use area, therefore a possible connection should be present in the scheme of the design to connect to the VU campus. Since the VU campus has not been transformed yet the intervention does not have to connect to it immediately or actively, but merely the presence of the possibility is sufficient.

As stated before de Boelelaan is to become the focal point of public liveliness of the VU campus, refurbishment of existing buildings and specific plans of adding new will take place shortly. Therefor the intervention should react to de Boelelaan as well in order to complement and profit from this lively street.

Adding new activities and evoking future developers to react makes the intervention potentially a perfect mixed use example for the area.
Figures
36 research; translating guidelines to an intervention
**Concept**

The intervention is based on a plot that derived from dividing the empty space according to the context of the CBD, creating an efficient street pattern and keeping a generic profile in order to follow the logic of CBD Zuidas; no masterplan is made, the intervention should be able by itself to evoke quality in further development.

The intervention consists of three volumes. The West volumes respond to the Northern UN Studio office tower and together form a front that will face the Parnassusweg.

The three volumes, each with specific program. The volumes are occupying the plot in such a way that the space left is asking for future development on a smaller (human) scale than the existing CBD. The two West volumes contain public space that are linked and form a route, a route that leads from de Boelelaan to the Gustav Mahlerlaan. At de Boelelaan side this route is most public, reacting to the future refurbishment of de Boelelaan. The openings between these blocks allow for future connection to the new VU campus.

The way the volumes work together creates a focal point for public activities, this focal point is meant to stimulate architects of future developments to recognise this quality and to respond to this with their building. The most prominent (possible) connection to the VU campus subtly leads to this focal point as well. Concluding, this place has the possibility to connect the VU campus, the plot and CBD Zuidas.

As mentioned before, the existing buildings of CBD Zuidas are not porous or do not relate to the adjacent public space. The volumes of the intervention are porous at specific points, connecting to the public space at strategic points. At different points the volumes do not offer porosity but allow visual connect; giving indoor activities exposure and offering people passing by a peak inside, perhaps triggering them to participate.

Facing the Parnassusweg and defining the remaining space, the intervention will connect CBD Zuidas on the scale of the city. In addition to that, making CBD Zuidas seem finished will build the idea of economic success on a global scale. Porosity, visual contact, a public route and a public focal point will connect CBD Zuidas on the local scale. Instead of making one mega building, dividing the program in separate parts relates to the human scale in terms of volume. Working out the blocks itself should be done according to the human scale as well in order to create a pleasant building for ‘people’.
Figures
39 transparent facade, visual contact
40 porous facade, interaction
41 routing and potential routing to future VU campus
42 focal point public life
program

Programmatic relevance for the local scale was translated partly in necessities in every day life and partly in leisure activities, trying to be relevant for four different user profiles; business people, local dwellers, students and starters.

Business people will mainly use leisure related program after office hours or will perhaps have a cup of coffee during lunch time. Local people will use leisure and retail program mainly during the evening and in the weekends.

The program responds to the general shortage of student housing and dwellings for starters as well. These target groups commonly can do with relatively small space and use the city and its public space at their convenience. Students will use every aspect of the programmatic supply not restricted to a specific time of the day. Starters will show a similar use of functions to the local people.

food & beverage  2075

- cinema  2825

- sports:  875
  - bowling  875
  - squash  475

- retail  1200

- dwelling  9725

- collective  1350

- public  1475

- parking  7500

- total  27,500m²
proposal
Hybrid Buildings
P2 booklet
‘connecting Zuidas’

Figures
46
section through
Pernassusweg
Figures
47
self creating context by courtyard

Lundgaard & Tranberg Arkitekter,
Tietgen Dormitory,
Copenhagen
Hybrid Buildings
P2 booklet
‘connecting Zuidas’

Figures

48
program divided
over a collective of
superblocks

Dick van Gameren
en Bjarne Mastenbroek
IJ Dock
Amsterdam

49
exposure of
program to public,
not porous but
transparent

Herzog & de
Meuron
1111 Lincoln road
Miami