Reflection paper - Ato Cardna - 4346211

This year’s name of the Dwelling Dutch housing studio is the Apple Market – living and working in Amsterdam. This project is our graduation project, which means that a certain degree of independence is necessary. Obviously, some limits are set by the studio:

- Work-Live combination. The Apple Market has to be developed into an area that combines dwelling with work. The assignment calls for investigating the possibilities of the site acting as a production space of some sort, and developing typologies of work/home combinations.
- The existing parking garage. Students will design new buildings for the as of yet unbuilt areas and will come up with plans to reconfigure the parking garage. The proposals must explicitly be seen as being part of a larger transformation effort of the city of Amsterdam.
- Cars and bicycles. Parking for the new dwellings, to be designed within the project. The exact amount has to be convincingly motivated in relation with the housing/work program.
- Target group. For whom do we build, how can we design solutions which help people to live and work together and how can we keep inner city affordable?
- Future proof. Architects need to think ahead to design buildings that can adapt to future challenges. Needless to say, sustainability is an integral part of the design.

I started with the bigger picture of cities in general to clarify why working and living should be combined at this intervention area.

research

There is a transition in the development of cities. The car-based urbanization is shifting into a pedestrian and bike based urbanization. This is the effect of the transition in society because the fossil-fuel based society is changing into a renewable energy-based society. Cities want to densify instead of expand to deal with energy and transport more efficiently and to not affect the landscape. A new city model arises which I call for the convenience the compact city. It puts an end to the CIAM concept in which live, work, recreation and mobility are strictly separated and introduces a mix of functional urban areas. The interrelation between functions and buildings is subject to change and therefore the following research question:

What should the architectural design of buildings comply with in order to fit in the urban fabric of the compact city?

Before I can answer this question, it needs to be clear what exactly is meant by the architectural design of buildings which leads to the following sub question: Out of what consists an architectural design?

I used the research of ass. Prof. at the faculty of Architecture and the built environment Elise van Dooren as a method to structurise my research. She defines a general definition for architectural design:

‘Architectural design is about creating space and using material. The space is meant for use by a defined target group and is situated within a defined site and a socio-cultural context.’

Out of this general definition 5 domains can be distinguished which comprehend all the components of an architectural design. The Socio-cultural context represents the compact city. Space, Material and Use hold all the designable components and the site is the starting point of the design assignment.

For each designable components (space, form, composition, material, structure, climate, use, function, route and movement) I specified what it should be to fit in the ideology of the compact city.
The main conclusions are:
- Buildings of the compact city should combine several functions to create vibrant areas.
- Due to the fact that the city is constantly changing the buildings should be flexible in every aspect to be able to adapt to possible future functional changes.
- Because of the limited space, public spaces are an important part of the compact city.
- The term energy should be a part of the architecture.

**Design assignment**
Amsterdam is one of these cities which wants to densify the city. The municipality is looking on a large scale to combine living and working. But there is this huge group of young professionals who wants to live in the city centre but because of the limited place, they are forced to find a place outside of the city centre. The age and dwelling requirements of these young professionals vary considerably which makes it a divers target group.

Focussing on the city centre, there are a few open spots among which the Appeltjesmarkt. The Appeltjesmarkt in Amsterdam, situated at the corner of Marnixstraat and Elandsgracht, has seen thirty proposals for its transformation in twenty years. None have been executed. The indecision on the side of the city of Amsterdam reveals some of the complexity at play here. The prominent location calls for ‘something special’. Exactly what would qualify as ‘special’ is not clear. The large modernist parking garage that covers a big part of the site has to be taken in account.

After analysing the intervention area, I set up a design assignment:

*Design for young professionals (a) flexible building(s) with the accompanying public space in which working and living are combined*

**design**
I used the conclusions of my research and the analysis of the intervention area as the base for my design. The outcome is an ensemble of three buildings surrounding a public square opening up to the water. One of the buildings makes a gesture to the existing parking garage by cantilevering over the garage and therefore it becomes part of the composition. Each building combines working and living in different ways. The floorplans are designed in a way to give the user as much freedom as possible to arrange it to their own wishes. This flexibility is also to be found in the structure of the buildings. The concrete casco, which is designed with as few as possible ongoing walls, offers freedom in the choice of layout variants. The facades are designed in a neutral way with respect to the underlying functions and thereby avoiding an explicit residential atmosphere. This will allow possible future functional adjustments without losing the identity.

**Reflection**
*the relationship between research and design*
As mentioned before, the research forms the base of my design.

*the relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)*
I think the theme of the studio is well processed in my design. Work / live combination and future-proof are two of the main topics of this project.

*the relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework*
I tried to meet all the requirements concerning all the drawings etc. given by the studio.

*the relationship between the project and the wider social context*
As already explained, my design is based on the transition in the development in cities in general.
References


