

SWITCH STATION

SWITCH BETWEEN A TRAIN STATION AND A NIGHT LIVE VENUE

REFLECTION

2023/2024

COMPLEX PROJECTS
Bodies & Building Berlin
AR3CP100



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Reflection

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REFLECTION

Introduction

For my graduation project, the whole research started from some accidental discoveries. In the process of searching for city information, I learned that Berlin's night culture was declining. Then I started to imagine whether the train station I needed to design could be used during non-operating hours by transforming it into a building that can accommodate nightclubs which have lost their original venues, in order to protect this important but declining cultural aspect of Berlin. In this process, the train station and the night live venue interact with each other to form a more distinctive architecture and optimize their respective original experiences. During the design phase, how to achieve the switch between two programs is my biggest focus, and it is also the aim that leads my design.

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The relationship between research and design

First of all, research and design are joint explorations of the same academic direction. I formulated my research question corresponding to the aspects I focused on, and this question ran through both research and design phases. During the research phase, I tried to further clarify and answer this question from multiple angles, including client, program, site, etc., and at a theoretical level proposed a building that could answer this research question. At this time, a rough building has emerged in my mind. While in the design phase, a complete architecture project is used to respond to the research question through its volume, circulation, space and materials. Combining the conclusions drawn from the research and design phases respectively, the research question is answered from theory to practice.

Research also directly guides the design. Design cannot appear out of thin air, and it must be attached to certain requirements and guidelines. These requirements and guidelines are further clarified during the research phase. With these guiding directions and rules, the design process can finally generate a proper outcome.

At the same time, the design is also reflecting on the results of the research. Some strategies developed by the research may be found to be inapplicable during the design process. It also forces oneself to further optimize the research outcome at a more detailed level, so that the final research and design results can reach a better state.

The relationship between your graduation topic and studio topic

The theme of the studio is Bodies & Building Berlin, and I am in one of the groups whose theme is energy. Under this theme, topics surrounding people, architecture, cities and energy are discussed. Berlin is a city that is undergoing an energy transition, what role its buildings can play during and after this transition is what I think about the most.

First of all, I believe that buildings, when supported by particular conditions, should not just be consumers of energy, but should also be able to reduce energy consumption through various active and passive methods, and create energy feedback on surrounding area. At the same time, as a product that consumes a lot of energy to build, a building should not only serve a certain period of time and be completely idle for the rest. Whether in terms of construction consumption or usage and maintenance consumption, this is contrary to the upgrading of energy structure. If in the future, buildings still only carry a single function, cities with limited resources may be swallowed up by various buildings built with wastefulness. This is also the main reason why I proposed in my graduation topic how to switch a building between different functions and roles. If buildings that are operating and idle according to schedule (such as the train station) can still be used during their vacancy period, the energy consumed during the construction process can be reduced and also more spatial resources of the city can be reserved. In this way, the sustainable urban development will be facilitated.

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Research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio

In the complex projects studio, research methods and approaches are carried out at three levels, which are group, seminar and individual.

At the group level, my group took energy as the theme. We evaluated Berlin's energy status by reviewing documents and news. Based on this, each student's project is placed in the group narrative as a participant in the energy transition, which is ultimately elaborated in the form of energy strategy cards. In this process, everyone chose the most appropriate and suitable strategy card based on the characteristics of our respective building types. At the same time, we also selected a strategy card shared by everyone to strengthen the connection between our projects.

At the seminar level, students with the same building type were divided into the same group. First, we strengthened our understanding of this train station building type through case studies using models as the medium. During the process of comparing different cases, we found and analyze their similarities and differences and understand the reasons behind them.

At the personal level, based on the client, program and site framework defined by the studio, a design brief was formulated through online information inquiry, field research, mapping, etc. The goal is to design a metro station that can be switched during vacancy period at night to become a night live venue. In the design phase, I gradually implemented the design brief into an actual architectural project through case studies, massing and detailing to respond to the research question I raised.

Relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific relevance

Most cities are still gradually becoming overcrowded, and excessive construction has caused many subsequent problems, including urban space compression, surface runoff, etc. Each of these issues affects from different aspects whether a city can develop healthily and sustainably. At the same time, new constructions often lead to the demolish of some old venues. Many of these old venues carry the memories of residents and are concrete manifestation of residents' daily lives. I think this is a topic that is more closely related to people in the process of urban development and renewal.

In response to this topic, I hope to advocate a model of coexistence instead of replacement through my graduation project. In this model, programs with staggered usage times can be carried out on the same site through venue sharing. This model can be applied not only on an hourly, daily, and monthly basis, but also on a longer time span. After the current operating program is leaving from the building decades later, its space can still be possible to be converted and then to be used by another program for a long time. By using this model, more places which are important to citizens can be retained in the city. my graduation project is to design a metro station based on this model. The station is used as a normal metro station during the day and as a night live venue during non-metro operating hours at night. It also provides a new place for nearby nightclubs that have lost their venues due to urban renewal.

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Ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered during graduation

For my graduation project, the most obvious problem is based on the related clients of metro station and night live venue. Stations, as urban public infrastructure, are supervised by the government and transportation departments, the features of such places do not match the requirements of club-goers who pursue the spirit of freedom and may cause a contradiction between them, because most of Berlin's night live venues are opened in abandoned spaces. From the atmosphere of the venue to the overall management, they show an attitude and desire of not being regulated. However, as an industry in decline, nightclub operators are now actively communicating with the government, hoping to gain support through new policies to reverse the declining situation. I hope that my graduation project can serve as a pilot project to demonstrate possibilities for collaboration between government and nightclubs.

Another difficulty is about the part which will renovate and expand the original station. Because for a station with a certain historical atmosphere, to what extent should it be renovated in order to retain its historical sense while optimizing the original station experience and achieving the ultimate goal of switching the programs. The biggest problem lies in the contradiction between opening up the underground space and preserving the historical atmosphere. The more the underground space is opened to the surface, the better the passenger experience, the greater the energy savings, but at the same time the less the historical atmosphere. The method I applied minimized the changes done to the original station. While retaining a large portion of the original structure, space and decoration, I demolished the walls on both sides and used new materials to translate the original walls, which not only achieved

the introduction of natural lighting to the underground space, but also reduced the loss of historical atmosphere to a certain extent.

