

Reflection

17-05-2023

Relation between research and design

In this graduate studio, the relationship between research and design is quite specific. Especially in the first semester, while jointly researching interventions at several shopping malls in the Netherlands, I quickly noticed that these interventions had been done to solve certain problems. In the end, the joint session of the class in which a mood board with all types of interventions was named decided which direction I wanted to take with my research. In principle, this moodboard was already a very simply implemented toolbox and thus formed my starting point.

In the next step of drawing up the research plan, I did fail a few times in narrowing down my topic. I quickly wanted to explore too broad an aspect to develop as large a toolbox as possible. During my P1 presentation at the time, I did narrow down my research but it was still too broad in retrospect at the time. Even when combined with an online survey I was going to provide, it would have to confirm the conclusion of a sub-question. However, this was not necessary. To conclude, my research plan during the time of the P1 presentation was far from perfect.

Nevertheless, the basics of my approach worked in part. A reasonably comprehensive and substantiated toolbox is the result. This toolbox provides a good basis for designing a shopping mall in the Netherlands, exactly what I wanted to achieve with this research beforehand. But also demands further deepening in the design phase.

Relation between the theme of the graduation studio and the theme of the design project

From the beginning of the project, it was clear that redesigning a post-war shopping mall was going to be the design brief. By choosing the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen, I look at redesigning a post-war shopping mall at different architectural scales. From urban incorporation (including the vision of The Hague municipality), the value of the current building, routing in the shopping mall, to newly designed facades. This involves looking at multiple aspects of existing heritage and architecture.

Personal approach

For me, the teachers' feedback had a high value in the design. The feedback method where no solutions were suggested but you were encouraged to think in a different, more radical way and to find the solution yourself also had a positive influence on my design. This involved thinking with you but you had to take the steps yourself. These teachers also took the time to delve into my shopping mall (which only I had as a design assignment) so that they could think along at all scales. This included questions that I had not yet thought of myself (what to do with the roof to strengthen your concept even more? Is there the possibility of removing parking and letting residents share a car? Is Scheveningen's master plan actually that good? etc.) This type of interactive feedback, in my opinion, took my design to the next level. So I incorporated this feedback into the design many times. During my P2 presentation, I tried to apply as many toolbox elements as possible in my concept, but this was not the best way of forming a concept. By focusing on the toolbox elements, I missed opportunities. In particular, the feedback I received during my P2 presentation also made my concept stronger, allowing me to design more radically and make interventions at different scale levels with the building. The combination of my own vision and way of thinking and designing, combined with the feedback from fellow students and expert teachers clearly helped me in the design phase.

The feedback from the P3 also helped in further developing my concept and making it more widely understood. Zooming out to the immediate surroundings and including them in my story will strengthen my concept and thus do it justice.

When I look back at the past few periods, I have learned in every way whatever has to do with a mall. The vision behind shopping centers, in what ways shopping centers can be designed, the different types of shopping centers with different levels (district, village, city or rural) and the behavior of people while shopping and what demands people have in today's time. In addition, it was the first time for me to go to the archi-

ves to request and see existing drawings. In which it was difficult to find all the desired drawings immediately and therefore had to go back again.

I also learned more about planning the phases in a design. Whereas in previous studios you were often asked to deliver different products on a weekly basis, here it was left more free and you had to start thinking for yourself what would be a logical next design step.

When I look back at my proposed methodology (**Scheme 1**), I worked according to this method. However, in an earlier phase of the developed method, I had added another validation (red in scheme). This validation was to be done by people in Scheveningen (with the preference of people living in the flats above the shopping mall) to see if the proposed design meets what is missed in the current situation. However, due to the lack of time, this has not been possible.

The project in its wider social context

The relationship between the project and its wider social context is the study of how to ensure that you can also give the existing heritage of shopping malls a future. The problem statement of this study highlighted the problem both on the level of observation and in more theoretical way. Creativity in the form of interventions seems to be the solution to this proposed problem. These architectural interventions (which are in the toolbox) that also take into account the building's current (architectural) values could be meaningful for architect(ural student)s when redesigning a shoppingmall in the Netherlands. The toolbox developed during the research not only serves as a handbook for the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen. It could be deployed at several shopping malls in the Netherlands, so that they again meet current consumer demands and thus become more attractive to visit again.

Process

From the P2 presentation, there has been a change in my understanding of fun shopping combined with the specific location of the shopping mall. By combining the vision of this location with fun shopping, other interventions were made to the building to combine both and enhance each other. For instance, the public spaces in the building are designed in such a way that they contribute to the social aspect of fun shopping but also to the mental and physical health of the people in this space.

To complete my design project and research for the P5 presentation, several aspects will have to be further elaborated. To begin with the design of the Palace Promenade, the plans, cross-sections and facades up to a scale of 1:200 will be finalized. In consultation, part of the building will also be developed to a scale of 1:20 with multiple details scale 1:5. In addition, multiple 3D impressions should provide a better vision and feeling of the positive effects of the interventions. And the final steps need to be taken in the field of heating, cooling and energy consumption. It is also necessary to look at the building on a larger scale (1:5000) for a last time, how it relates to the environment and where improvements can be made.

Own reflection questions

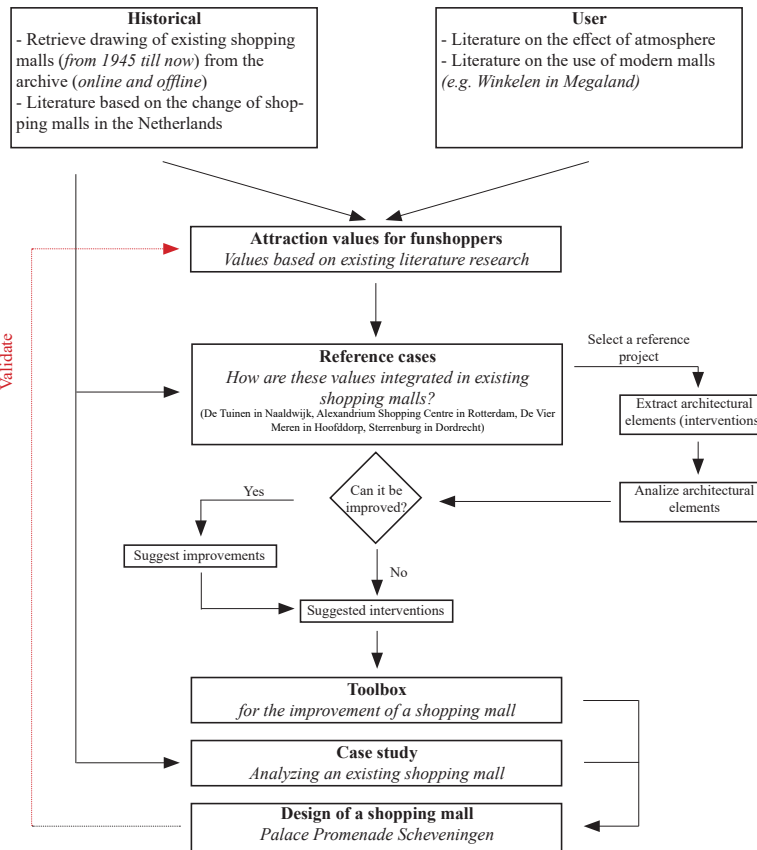
What were some of my most powerful learning moments and what made them so?

The feedback I received during my P2 presentation to dare to think more radically and to look more critically at plans made by municipalities, has changed and improved my whole idea of this shopping mall. Because of this feedback, my principles and concept have become much stronger and I have started designing in a different way. The lesson I learned from this is that I, sometimes, need to take a step back from what I'm doing and not focus too much on one thing (in this case how I could apply the toolbox to my design assignment). And just radical and inofative thinking.

In addation, I took steps in integrating research to substantiate my topic during presentations. This makes the choices of interventions clear. This is something I will definitely take to future projects as well.

How will you use what you learned in the future?

Everything I've learned about human behavior during shopping, social gatherings, and their perception of what is important about a building's atmosphere will be valuable in future projects that are open to the public. As a designer you often think about many other aspects when designing the building, such as regulations, energy saving, etc. I quickly forget what is perceived as the most important for the user of this space. I have never dealt with this kind of project before, so many of these aspects were new to me.



Scheme 1. Research-design structure