

Reflection report P4  
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### **Delta Interventions**

Delta Interventions is all about, as implicated, interventions within delta related areas. The Delta area our studio focused on this year is the San Francisco Bay. The structure of the studio is based on research by design. In this reflection, I focus on the intervention that is a result of the research.

### **Process and reflection**

#### *Field trip*

During our trip to San Francisco I started to think. The scale of the bay and the scale of the flood-risk problem impressed me the most. I was also surprised to notice only a minor connection with the water and its urban environment. What sort of intervention can I, as an architecture student, make to contribute to the solution of this problem?

#### *Location*

After our fieldtrip, there was one location that stood out. The Hunters Point location contained multiple interesting factors to work with. A vacant, central location with a lot of connection to the water and potential renewable structures. Hunters Point contains more than 100 vacant buildings, but it also houses the largest community of artists in the United States.

#### **Larger scale intervention**

The challenge was, to find a use that fits these characteristics as much as possible. A highly dense urban area was an obvious choice because of the central location and the high demand for residential space in San Francisco. But this location has more potential than only a residential neighborhood. Due to the history of Hunters Point as a Navy shipyard, the connection with the water is evident. Old drydocks and piers provide this connection. Also, large buildings and structures are left on site and have a lot of transformation potential. All these findings combined result in the fact that a research hub focused on water seems to be a very suitable use for this location.

The water research hub brings all kind of parties together that are involved in water related issues. Think of universities, research centers, government and companies. And to provide this area with life, the hub contains also a lot of residential, cultural and commercial buildings. The current artists community can be used to bridge the gap between research and the public.

#### **Smaller scale intervention**

On a larger scale the research we did resulted in the intervention of a neighborhood combined with a water research hub. The next step is defining the intervention on a smaller scale. The research I did to achieve this step was mainly focusing on the site itself.

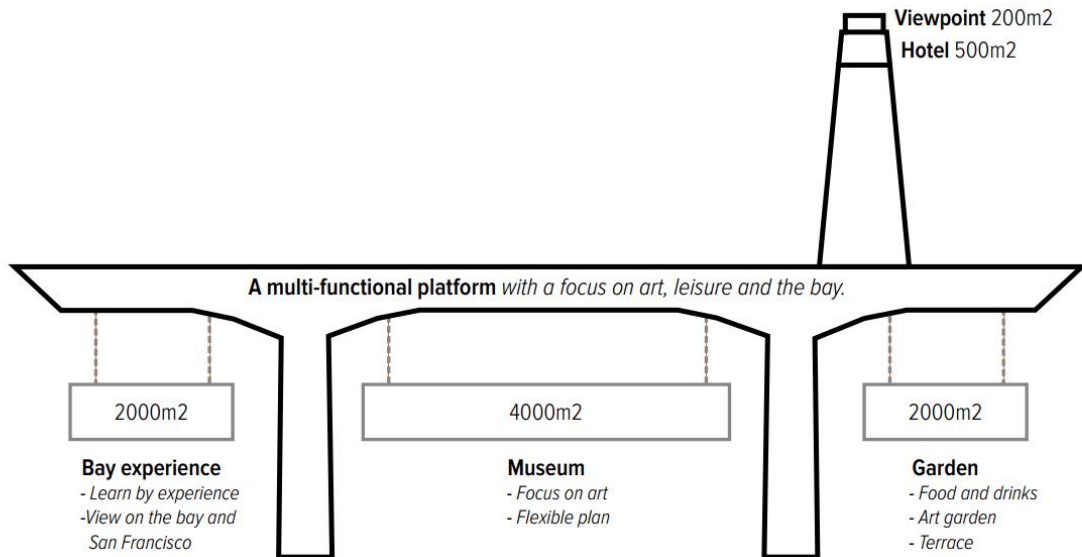
Therefore, I started to research all the vacant buildings on the site. This resulted in a catalogue that compares all the buildings on quality and appearance. Approximately 15 buildings can be conserved and play an important role in the new urban design.

One of these buildings is actually not a building, but a massive crane. The Crane was used to load and unload ships, it is 220 meters wide and 110 meters high and therefore the landmark of Hunters Point. The crane is could represent all the important characteristics of the site. A big connection with the bay, because of the two 50-meter spans over the water. It is an old structure with a lot of historic sense and can be reused. The fact that it is a landmark means that it can act as a point of recognition for the research hub, but also for the current artist community. All these factors combined result in

the intervention of transforming the crane as an ideal representation of the larger scale characteristics of the site.

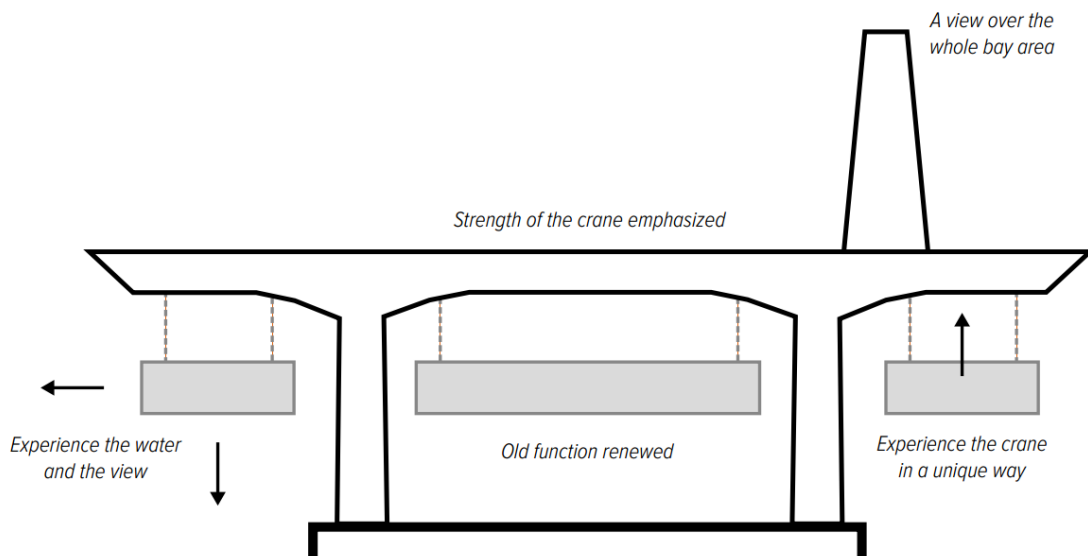
*Program*

The next step was defining the program that fits the intervention the best. By giving the crane a public use the landmark experience is strengthened. The crane then belongs to everybody and they can all build up their own connection with it. Therefore, the viewpoint on top is for everybody accessible. To represent the bay and the artist community an experience center and a museum is part of the main program. In the drawing below the program is made visible.



*Space*

How to create space in such a way the crane itself is strengthened as much as possible. After studying options through models, three hanging volumes seemed to be the best option. It emphasizes the power of the structure and it represents the old function.



### *Accessibility*

There were multiple options to enter the building. Through the columns, next to the columns or in the center without touching the crane. In this stage of the process, every design choice is made with the crane as a main priority. The new design should emphasize the crane. That is why entering the building happens through the columns.

### *Materialization*

The intervention that is done here, is a bit extraordinary. You don't see a 220-meter-wide crane very often, and especially one with a building hanging below. This specialness should be emphasized by the chosen material. When users see the crane for the first time, the question in their minds should be: Is this really happening? The vague transparency of polycarbonate stimulates this question and provides the intervention with a slightly magical feeling.

### **Reflection conclusions**

There were multiple reasons why I chose for this studio. The most important thing was the freedom (research by design) within the assignment. The second one was the process of starting research at a large scale and gradually work to a smaller scale. The final one was working with water, since I am young I am fascinated by water and its surroundings.

Reflecting on this process of research and design, working with this freedom, scale difference and water, was not only a lot of fun but also very useful.

In the beginning, the research by design method was sometimes difficult. Especially the separation of design and research. I noticed I have the urge to design without doing research first. Without this research, there is no clear reason to design for and then a design will not contain useful quality.

The step from large to a smaller scale was also difficult. After designing the whole masterplan, I had difficulties in choosing one option to go on with. I doubted between transforming the crane or a big shipyard building and I chose to go for a whole cultural network. This choice was still a large scale intervention. I think I didn't realize that a smaller intervention can still represent all the qualities that the masterplan contains. The next time I will try to summarize the outcome of the research and decide which intervention can represent this outcome the best.

During the design of the crane, I also experienced difficulties in separating functionality and architectural experience. After all, the architectural experience is the most important. Finding a balance between function and architecture is also very important, but there is a danger in defending design decisions with functional arguments. I noticed this the most while choosing a material for my façade. Functionality is easy to explain while architectural experience can be more complicated and less rational. Eventually, the architectural experience is the highest goal and the functionality can be used to reach this goal.