

Choosing the subject of the research at the start was based upon several societal factors, such as rising vacancy (due to an increase in online shopping) and a call for the addition of mixed functions to combat the monofunctional properties of a shopping mall. For this research, three cases were selected to be studied. Research on these cases and conducting interviews with residents has been valuable for my design process. The talks with residents gave insight into how they experience a mall and what their needs are. Also, how they value a location that is heritage but might not be seen by many as is since it was built relatively recently and is a type of building complex that is abundant in the Netherlands. In architecture, connecting with future users is to me one of the most important things. If you do not include their needs in a design, they will not make use of a building.

The interviews and valuation of them showed me how difficult it can be to pose questions in a certain way that results in usable data. We as architecture students are trained in analysing the built environment and can relatively easily comment on what we perceive around us. When conducting the interviews it was valuable, but also would have been more valuable if the interviews had been longer. The downside of this is then people are more likely to take part in a short street interview, than in a longer half an hour/ hour talk.

Due to privacy reasons, the interviews were kept anonymous and people were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research. Valuing the words of others, the interviews, poses an interesting ethical question. By me being the person to put a value on these words, I will be interpreting what they have said and I will subconsciously do this through my lens as an architecture student.

The research subject was admittedly too extensive, combining focusing on a site analysis of the three cases, but also the interviews and valuing them. In the end, the results were useful, but because it was so broad, there was little space to go into depth. It did help me to narrow the research down and therefore be able to head a bit more into some topics.

To be able to make the research concise and clear, the focus was put on two case studies. One of them was a shopping centre, the other a public building (focus on library). To extend this research and better apply it to design cases, it would be useful to extend the number of research cases. In the beginning, I thought it would be most useful to learn from shopping centres that have already have mixed functions incorporated into them and to see what worked and what did not. It was however useful to learn from the public buildings. And since the shopping centre in the future will not consist solely of shops, learning from public buildings in general and how they function most successfully is better to teach ourselves about these elements in general. Since, when mixed functions are applied to a shopping centre, is it then still a shopping centre or does it then turn into a more general public building with mixed functions.

This also brings me to the question that I could pose myself, what would I then have done differently and how would that have benefited my design project?

In the Heritage studio, we all start from the same general topic, in our case the modern mall. Since we are a heritage studio, all of our projects will in part focus on the heritage itself. Designing with respect to what is already present on location is something that is part of every design assignment. Where other studios perhaps focus on a full newly constructed building, they will all still have to design with the existing context in mind. The difference with the heritage studio will be that we do not fully construct a new building, we take the existing into account and apply interventions to this.

In my case, besides heritage, I bring mixed functions and the role of the neighbourhood into the equation. Social and functional aspects will be a part of all the different architecture studios, since they are universal elements in our design for buildings or on bigger scales, such as on the urbanism scale. As the track architecture, we tend to be design-focused and often work on a smaller scale than, for instance, urbanism. But all tracks are intertwined in the sense that they support each other and later, in practice, all different roles are necessary to create a well-put-together project. As

a master's programme at the technical university, the programme combines technical elements with designing and therefore combines technology with creativity.

Since there are many malls present in the Netherlands, research and design results could be applicable on more cases, or serve as an inspiration. Also, many malls will face vacancy or will be in need of transformation in the coming years. Because malls are relatively new additions to the heritage portfolio, it is useful, with research on this subject, that more information on how to value this new heritage will be provided.

This graduation project started as a quite concise assignment, focused on a well-known building typology. At the beginning of the design period, I was aiming to design a building with mixed functions in it. At the end, the project became one that is not so much focused on the functional infill of the building, but on the space in between, the connections. It is focused on how people experience the space, how they can be attracted to pass from one to another and how they can be kept curious. This is expressed in an abstract manner in the essence model below.



