

Reflection paper

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Relationship between research and design

In my research, I delved into the intersection of architecture and the needs of home-seeking youth, aiming to understand how design can facilitate a sense of belonging and security. To make my research applicable to the design, I tried to find specific (architectural) ingredients through literature studies, case studies, and field research. I have done an architectural case study analysis of three projects in Rotterdam that are currently housing home-seeking youth with different kinds of care concepts. Garage 2020 has done field research in Rotterdam and they created five focus points on how to create a pleasant home for home-seeking youth. These focus points have been used to analyze the three projects in Rotterdam. I have added one focus point which is 'blending in'. Whenever a building is created for this group, it is important that it blends into the neighborhood and gives something back to the neighborhood. This is important for two main reasons: it is important that there will not be any stigma created about the new inhabitants within the neighborhood and it is needed that the home-seeking youth have a place where they can meet people from the neighborhood creating more familiarity and cohesion between home-seeking youth and the neighbors. The five focus points combined with blending in create six stepping stones to make a home for home-seeking youth. These six steps are right away taken into the design and have led to most of the decisions, creating a strong link between the research and the design.

1. Blending in
2. A warm welcome
3. Intermediate outdoors
4. Together at heart
5. Seclude for a moment
6. Personal space

Relationship between graduation topic, the studio topic, master track, and master program

This research aims to explore the integration of housing solutions and architectural guidelines tailored to the needs of home-seeking youth. The objective is to effectively address their needs, thereby preventing the accumulation of health problems and contributing to the overall resilience of Rotterdam, in line with the studio's goal. The research seeks to establish a practical connection between innovative housing solutions and architectural frameworks to create a more supportive environment for youth

seeking stable homes. By designing housing with guidance embedded, youth can reclaim stability before descending into homelessness and the accompanying challenges. The research revealed that addressing social needs is paramount in preventing homelessness. Hence, fostering a sense of community within the housing environment is essential for youth to integrate into society and fully engage. Through an architectural lens, I envisioned pathways toward enhancing the resilience of home-seeking youth in Rotterdam. By combining the six steppingstones with embedding guidance and fostering community within housing, it offers avenues to intercept the trajectory towards homelessness for Rotterdam's youth.

Elaboration research method and the approach chosen. In relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.

The research methodology and approach chosen for this project align closely with the methodical line of inquiry of the graduation studio, thereby underlining the scientific relevance of the work. The studio's methodical approach revolves around conducting field research to ascertain the specific needs and desires of the Rotterdam community from the ground up. In line with this approach, comprehensive and systematic case studies were conducted, allowing for thorough comparison and analysis to discern what elements are effective and what are not. By combining architectural analyses with interviews with the workers involved in these case studies, a deeper understanding of their dynamics was achieved. While the research methodology proved robust, it is acknowledged that additional interviews or workshops specifically with home-seeking youth would have enriched the data further. This gap has been filled partially by field research that has already been conducted with the target group by Garage2020 in Rotterdam. The challenge of locating this demographic due to their invisibility in the community was recognized. However, efforts were made to engage with at least one home-seeking youth accommodated within a facility of the 'Leger des Heils' organization.

To gain a more intimate understanding of the target group, diverse methods were employed, including workshops held at a festival with vulnerable youth in Rotterdam and painting sessions conducted with individuals experiencing homelessness at 'Leger des Heils'. These engagements facilitated the formation of personal bonds and provided valuable insights into their perspectives and experiences. In terms of scientific relevance, the research contributes by synthesizing these diverse experiences and perspectives into a comprehensive overview of potential solutions for home-seeking youth. By grounding the guidelines in field experiences and user feedback, the project offers practical insights that are rooted in real-world contexts, thereby enhancing their applicability and effectiveness.

Elaboration on the relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional, and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project result.

The graduation project occupies a role within the wider social, professional, and scientific context, striving to develop tangible solutions to improve the well-being of home-seeking youth in Rotterdam. By intertwining housing solutions with tailored architectural guidelines, this research endeavors to address the nuanced needs of this demographic, thus catalyzing preventing potential health issues and fostering community resilience. This research not only illuminates the intricate relationship between housing and architecture but also underscores the imperative of holistic urban development. It presents tangible pathways toward creating sustainable and supportive communities, wherein individuals can thrive. The transferability of the project results extends beyond the confines of Rotterdam, offering practical steppingstones applicable in architectural design for various vulnerable groups. Central to the project's ethos is the recognition of social cohesion as a cornerstone of effective design for home-seeking youth. The need for a figure of support – both emotionally and financially – resonates deeply within this demographic. Hence, it becomes imperative to integrate such social needs into the fabric of architectural endeavors. Concepts like 'Samen en Anders', where youth are connected with elders to foster non-informal relationships, emerge as innovative solutions to address this crucial aspect of social support within housing design. In essence, the graduation project not only serves as practical guidelines to design housing for home-seeking youth, but it also advocates for the holistic well-being of marginalized youth. By championing the integration of housing and social support frameworks, it sets a precedent for inclusive urban development practices, ultimately shaping a more resilient and compassionate society.

Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered

1. doing the research

Securing permission for data usage is a critical ethical concern, particularly when dealing with sensitive information about vulnerable populations. Balancing the imperative of data collection with a deep respect for privacy and autonomy is paramount. Engaging with home-seeking youth presents its own set of ethical considerations. The challenge of locating and involving these individuals raises questions about potential intrusion into their lives. It's essential to prioritize their well-being and comfort throughout the research process. Conducting interviews with home-seeking youth demands a delicate approach. Ensuring informed consent and providing ample space for participants to decline to answer sensitive questions are foundational principles. Establishing boundaries is another ethical dilemma in research. It involves determining the appropriate level of participant involvement and respecting their autonomy in deciding what they're comfortable contributing. Striking the right balance is crucial to upholding ethical standards.

2. elaborating the design

Balancing the needs of home-seeking youth with practical constraints presents a significant ethical challenge. It requires striking a balance between providing adequate support and maintaining cost-effectiveness. Ensuring that the solutions offered are both beneficial and sustainable is crucial for ethical decision-making. Inclusivity in design is another ethical consideration that cannot be overlooked. Integrating different demographic groups, such as the youth and the elderly, demands thoughtful consideration to ensure inclusivity and respect for their unique preferences. Establishing boundaries while fostering a sense of shared community is essential for promoting a sense of belonging and cohesion. To ensure this, I have tested my design with different people and experts around me. One of which is someone working for 'Kamers met Aandacht' and is currently hosting a home-seeking youth. 'Kamers met Aandacht' is a foundation that helps youth to find a room in a household. Adults are renting out a room for minimal price and next to that, they provide attention to the home-seeking youth. Additionally, I have tested the design with colleagues who have a lot of experience with designing community-based architecture which also led to new insights and considerations. Incorporating feedback from diverse stakeholders and testing the design around me was integral to ethical decision-making in the design process. Soliciting this input helped ensure that the design accommodates a wide range of perspectives and needs.

3. potential applications of the results in practice

When applying the concepts, it is very important to include people with a care background to make the concept work. For a building to become a thriving self-sufficient community, it is important that within the building there is a good balance between people that can carry the community and people that ask more in the community (the more vulnerable group). Therefore considerate placing of habitants is of utter importance.