

Designing In de Bogaard, a 20th century shopping mall, through insider perspectives.

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The graduation project is part of the Heritage studio of the Architecture Master at the University of Technology in Delft. In this part of the studio the modern shopping mall is the typology of interest, as its nature is one of transformation and redevelopment to cater to changing commercial attitudes. Nowadays, malls have a growing amount of vacant retail space, and are often demolished to make space for more profitable functions. Therefore, the overarching question of the studio is: What is the future of the shopping mall?

To answer this question the research and design case is In de Bogaard. Reason, because of its cultural significance and as a monument of evolving heritage in addition to being classified as an architectural typological underdog that is driven by demand and commodity. It was built in Rijswijk as the one of the first malls in the Netherlands, showing its importance in the development of the liberal and globalized world. Nowadays, the role of the Bogaard in its urbanity needs to be re-evaluated as in recent years it has been struggling with structural vacancy with two of its five buildings being closed because of this. There are plans underway opting for demolition to make way for the building of more high-density dwellings.

Research

From the research a link was created between what insider stakeholders valued. However, not all questions haven't been or could not be answered. The study examined the insider stakeholders, spatial changes and value and attributes. Defining the who in the study was inconclusive due to ambiguity. Queries on who constitutes an insider and the significance of their input, and the weight of different attribute values, remain unanswered. Comparing values is difficult because people experience and communicate them differently. Similar, the analyzing the what, in the change in attributes was done by looking at tangible without including the intangible. Lastly it would be interesting to see the research done with more quantitative methods, to see what themes and spatial attributes people value positively and negatively

The process of interviewing people on the street showed most importantly that there is a difference between how experts look at the build environment and the non-expert. The first interviews were done in a more structured way, which was intended to give more useful data. However, this created a boundary between the interviewee and the interviewer that gave only positive and negative sentiments about the architectural qualities without naming underlying values.

Design

From the research Through different scales the design tested how mixed functions could work together, how new development can connect to the existing and how to introduce porosity in the boundaries of the design. Environmental change is an important element that was taken into account, as this will affect all of the afore mentioned topics in the future. Methods of model making, sketching and concept drawings helped to investigate this. However in the design further research needs to be done on the material use, about how much will be demolished, how to re-use the materials in the future and where materials are sourced from. The drawn existing state of the case study is an approximation of reality, as it was unclear how the detailing and installations was managed. These element were taken into account, but not as comprehensively researched than other aspect.

Research to design?

the research showed the themes that design needed to focus on: green, porosity, multiplicity of functions and uses. In this sense it had a lot of effect on the trajectory of the design on different scales. An example is the green strip that connects the two parks to each other, the new path between two neighborhoods and the role the project plays in addition to these interventions. A multipurpose building in which activities and connecting are made possible.

Recommendations

The group analysis of multiple shopping malls and the research paper showed that it's future lies not in the holding onto its past physical structure. This would create a frozen artifact, while its context might have differing needs. Recognizes that heritage buildings or sites are not isolated artefacts of the past, but rather part of a larger urban or cultural context that is constantly changing, is the definition of evolving heritage as stated by Cameron (2023)

The notion of evolving heritage is important in talking about heritage, and stakeholder needs have to be researched continuously, as contemporary needs are ever changing. Becoming part of a community and listening is something the graduation project could've applied more, and is highly recommended for future research, as often the expert takes on a project, and leaves after its completion. A more continuous involvement offers a more inclusive and holistic approach. This not only applies for research, but also when looking at the owning or developing a project. The concluding themes that were found, wouldn't appear in the research that is normally done when redeveloping a shopping mall. As the current focus is on its market development and behavioral patterns of shoppers. Therefore the advice would be to listen to what people say, in addition to look at what they do.

Personal development

The shopping mall was an interesting subject to study. The first impression and association was that its uncomfortable, too busy, deteriorated and in general a negatively perceived sequence of spaces. However, having looked at it more closely one can't help to see beauty in the layering of the historical development of it as a typology and of it when it's the case of In de Bogaard. Practical skills such as visiting the archive, contacting architects that worked prior on the project and contacting employees and visitors of the subject showed me how to communicate and formulate needs and wants more concise. But also skills that helped during the process were used, such as mind mapping the research attributes and values, and the different aspects of the design. In 10 years I would hope to develop communicative skills further to find out what drives other people in their wants and develop the tools to show priority of different aspects of the design process. Developing the tools further to translate ideas and needs into clear design.