RESEARCH PLAN

Loes Bruins Slot
Interiors Buildings Cities
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INTRODUCTION / PROBLEM STATEMENT

The metropolitan city is the place where people are drawn to. Lots of people live together in one city. On top of that, there is an extensive number of tourists visiting every year. There is always movement, people and activities happening in the city. That was, until the beginning of this year.
With the COVID-19 virus people were forced to stay at home. Creating a decrease in tourism over the whole world. Which lead to an insight in how a city might work without all these masses of tourism. On top of that, people need to keep distance from each other. Which changed not only the public spaces in the city. But the public life of people in the city. Home became much more important.

Within the city the relation between people becomes more anonymous. You only know a group of people, which is a small percentage of everyone who lives in the city. In contrast to a small town, where everyone knows each other. In the city loneliness is a result of this. People do not feel connected to each other's neighbours anymore. While home is more important, the neighbours are too.

Kate Raworth's book Doughnut Economics | Seven ways to think like a 21st – century economist describes a model which can ensure social and environmental sustainability. On the inner ring the life's essentials are listed, on the outer ring the earth's life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend. Social relation to ecological relation is seen something which are equally important.

Nature hardly ever gets priority within the city. Biodiversity is something which is still hard to find. There are plans of a blue green network, where the nature in the city gets connected. However, this often results in a small strip of grass to an already busy road. Whereas it has the potential to be integrated into the city life as well.
Can the street be connected with nature in a way that both could thrive together? Where there is a rewilding of the street, a forest garden self-sustaining forest which grows food, such as nuts and fruits.

The reinterpretation of the street does involve a whole range of aspects connected to the city. The infrastructure under the ground, the infrastructure above ground (cycling, walking), the connection of the houses to the street, the maintenance of the green, water drainage houses and street, planting the trees and plants according to right orientation and soil conditions until the accommodation of animals. This design was worked out in a small design experiment. Can this idea of the street integrate with the hotel? Where the principles of nature come together into a place which can draw the community together and educate them about the principles of nature in the city and what can be edible.

A hotel is a public space in the city. Something which can be valued by both the tourists as the residents. A place where people can gather together. However, the quantity of hotels in Amsterdam has made the quality for the residents not so visible anymore. Is there a way that the hotel can become something which serves the residents of the city?

The site on the Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat in Amsterdam is located on the island Uilenburg. Until the beginning of the 20th century, it was a place where mostly poor Jewish people lived very close together. The city demolished half of the buildings on the island in the beginning of the 20th century to make a better and healthier place to live.

The site lies between a street on one side and a canal on the other. It forms a connection between the public life of the street and the nature life of the canal.

On the site is a former municipality building as well as an old teacher's house of a Jewish school for poor children. This place has always had a social function as well as and educational one. Can the site ones again be a place for young people to learn and get together in a safe space? A place where people live collectively. The ones who take care of the place live there permanently.
While there is also an option for young people from the rest of the city to live here temporary, as a place where they can get away from home and learn about the way nature co-exist in the city.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can one continue in the line started at the beginning of the 20th century, of making Uilenburg a better and healthier place to live for the residents?

Can the hotel become something which serves both the residents of Uilenburg while also allow nature to flourish in the city? Creating an equal relation between social and ecological issues?

What kind of conditions are needed for nature to flourish in an urban setting? What offers the site and what is still lacking in this area?

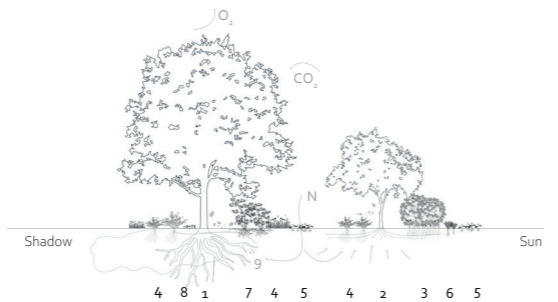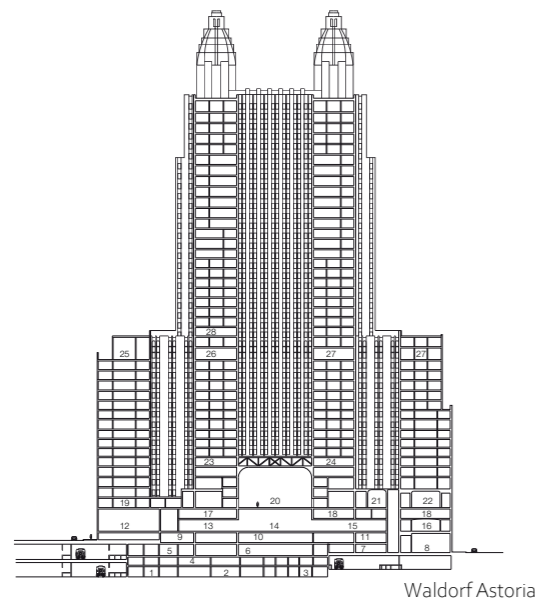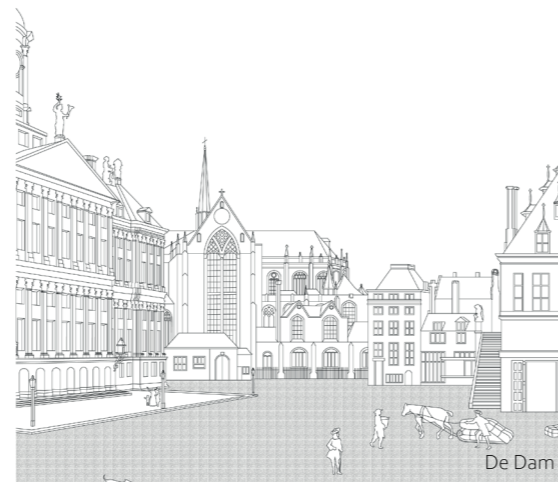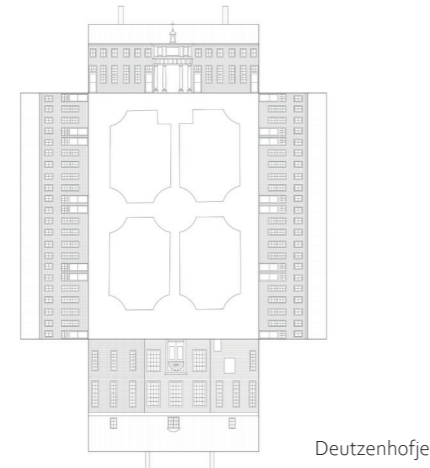What kind of relation can there be created between the public and the canal?

How can the site be transformed into a place which allows for a community to flourish?

How can a place of collective living create both collective places as well as places where one can retreat to some privacy? What do these places offer?

Left
Uilenburgerstraat 1900

Right
Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat in 2020

1600   1650   1700

Deutzenhofje

De Dam

Waldorf Astoria

Shadow   Sun

4 8 1   7 4 5   4 2   3 6 5

1. Canopy
2. Low tree layer
3. Shrub layer
4. Herbaceous layer
5. Floor layer

6. Rhizosphere
7. Vertical layer
8. Fungi
9. Bacteria

Forest Garden

METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONING

In order to find answers to this question there have been done and will be done different kind of research. In the form of primary and secondary research, within groups as well as individual.

Primary	Secondary
Models	Books
Drawings	Historical
Photographs	Drawings
Interviews	Reports
Visits	History
Diagrams	Photographs
	Paintings

Morphological research of Amsterdam has been done with the studio. From the first big expansion in the 17th century until the city today. This period was divided into seven parts. Where a group of three students would research one period in time. The group I was attending research the first big expansion in the 17th century. The research focus was on the urban structure of the city. Where the expansion was compared to the old centre. With its architecture, construction of both the canals and the houses as well as the social aspects of living. As a hotel is a place where people live collectively, there is a close analysis of Het Hofje (a courtyard with alms houses around it) and the way it functions within the city.

The way the inhabitants reacted to this controlled planning will be discussed in the second part of this research. The planned disruptions of the 17th and 18th century in Amsterdam. There were several riots against people who had too much power and took advantage of their position. Places where these people can gather and discuss have proven to be quite important. This can range from society houses to public squares. A space where people feel that their fight for change is heard.

Typological research in hotels was done in the studio as well. Looking at the different kind of types throughout the history, from the start of a place where people can stay on the move, to hospitals, to grand hotels and finally the arrival of Airbnb's. These different types in time were again divided in seven groups in the studio. The group I was attending researched the start of the modern hotel type. Looking at the Ritz both in London and Paris, the Waldorf Astoria in New York and finally the SAS hotel in Copenhagen. These hotels are examples and maybe even seen as icons of a luxury world.

Take the Waldorf Astoria, it is this machine in the city. These hotels are the public interior of the city for a secluded group of people, where the spaces were merely functioning as a theatrical living room for the guests and their visitors. Not being aware of the system (back of house) needed to provide this extensive luxury front.

Experimental research was done individual although it consisted of group work as well. The city of Amsterdam has adopted the doughnut economy model as a step forward for the city. The city has different kind of groups and organisations which try to improve the city within this doughnut economy model. The studio contacted these organisations for interviews in order to get a better understanding what these organisations where doing and how they were doing this. Parallel to these designs were made which would form out of the doughnut economy model, both the ecological and social side. A way that the principles of the model can be expressed in architecture.

The garden street which I designed was focussed on the aspects of nature and community within the city. Research was done in the local conditions which allow certain plants and trees to grow. Where a list was created of native species of trees and plants which could grow in the local circumstances of Amsterdam. As well as the forest garden principle, a forest which grows edible plants and trees in a self-sustaining ecosystem.

Top
Expansion Amsterdam from 1600 till 1700

First from top
Left
Collective living in Amsterdam in the way of hofjes.
Deutzenhofje at the Prinsengracht.
Right
Public interiors
Dam square as the centre of the city

Second from top
Left
Section Waldorf Astoria hotel New York
Right
Forest garden working of the layers

Bottom
Left
Model of street design in summer season
Right
Model of street design in autumn season

THEORIETICAL FRAMEWORK / REFERENCES

The theoretical base which needs to be developed is the role of nature in the city. The way nature flourishes and grows best in certain conditions. At the same time research will need to be done in the way communities work. How architecture will allow for communities to be developed in an existing neighbourhood. The transformation and reinterpretation of existing urban structures, such as street, building block and houses. The connection between these two is the most important thing. The relation between human and nature, and how architecture might be a way to reconnect the two.
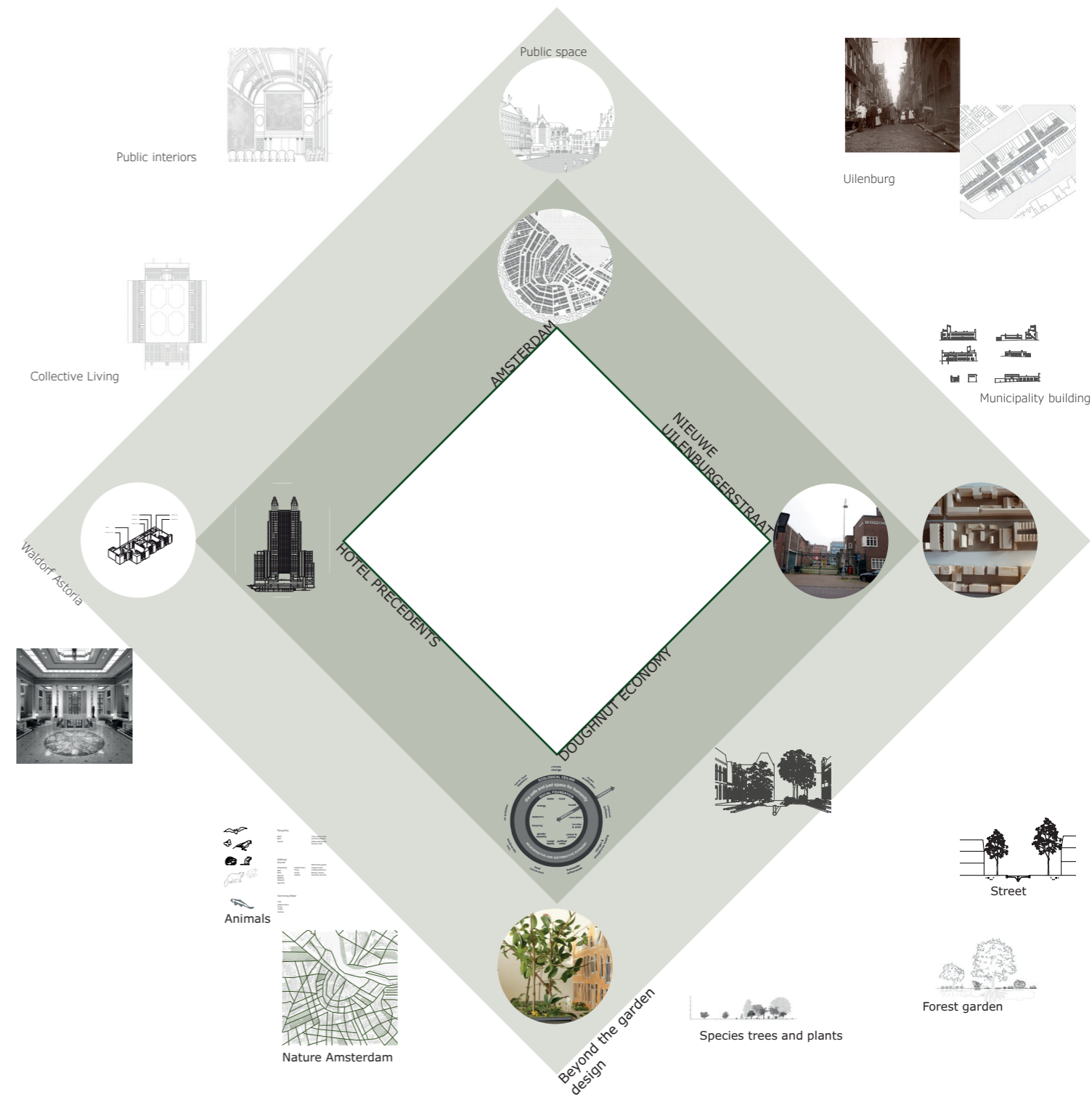
Literature which might help to establish this is:

Simmel: The metropolis and Mental Life
Life between buildings Jan Gehl
Cutting Matta-Clark (anarchitecture)

REFLECTION ON RELEVANCE

The question is what the role of the architect is going to be in the social and ecological aspects of the city. When looking at the doughnut economy the whole system needs to be changed. An architect cannot change the whole system, but can definitely decide what agency they want to have. This project will be a case study in a larger debate of the implementation of the doughnut economy in the city, and especially with relation between the residents and nature. The architect can take over the role of mediator. Standing in between all the different specialisations, bringing them together by means of a profound design.

DIAGRAM OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Public space

Public interiors

Uilenburg

Collective Living

Municipality building

AMSTERDAM

NIEUWE UILENBURGERSTRAAT

HOTEL PRECEDENTS

DOUGHNUT ECONOMY

Waldorf Astoria

Street

Animals

Forest garden

Nature Amsterdam

Beyond the garden design

Species trees and plants

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