

Final Reflection

AR3AP100 Public Building Graduation Studio: Vertical Campus

Name

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The project, why?

This Graduation Studio of Public Building asked us students to design a vertical campus in the vicinity of The Hague Central Station. While this area was supposed to be vibrant, the Bezuidenhoutseweg appeared to be very unengaging towards its surroundings, mainly due to very large buildings with their closed off facades, and lack of ground floor activities. Initially, while forming a capacity plan for P1, our team asked ourselves if adding another high rise building would not only add to this anonymity. Therefore, we proposed campus as a constellation of buildings spread through an area, varying in scale. This meant that the main part of campus could still be a vertical building, but in addition, campus as a whole would comprise medium and smaller scale buildings to encourage movement and interactions between various users, and activate the public realm. In addition, for P2, I researched several models on the spatial interplay of campus and city. I found out that in the Netherlands, campus is often only *partly* integrated in the city. This means there is a one-sided interplay: campus users are able to make use of the city program, but the broader city population is not able to make use of the campus program. My goal for this project was to design a campus that follows the model of campus *fully* integrated in the city, meaning there is a two-sided interplay.

Research question

Moving forward, following our approach on the idea of campus and my ambition of a two-sides interplay between campus and city, I came up with the following research question for my project:

How could a public vertical campus contribute to and enrich the city of The Hague?

Design goal

To answer my research question, I formulated a design goal:

The design goal is to create a public vertical campus that integrates seamlessly into The Hague's urban fabric and connects it, fostering social, cultural and economic vitality.

Methodology, research and design process

From the beginning I knew I was interested in how to actively connect campus and its surrounding city. I tried out several approaches, but could not quite put a finger on how to translate this ambition into architectural design. Somewhere in the process, I tried narrowing my scope for the design to gain a clear direction. I created a framework for myself to follow consisting of three key pillars: connectivity, collaboration, and performance. Connectivity referred to the physical and social links between campus and the surrounding urban fabric. It was achieved by creating attractive public spaces that invited participation from the public, and encouraged interaction between different user groups. Collaboration referred to the cooperation and engagement between various user groups, bridging the gap between academic community and broader city population. It was achieved by providing shared spaces, where people could engage in joint activities and exchange knowledge. Performance referred to result-driven achievements, presenting campus as a contributor to innovation and economic growth. It was achieved by creating dedicated working spaces, where people could focus on specific and professional initiatives. To these pillars I could link functions of the

program brief as the pillars respectively related from public to semi-private, creating a logical vertical hierarchy of spaces. In addition, I researched all kinds of personas and their needs, and translated this into types of spaces (partly from the given program brief, partly added). By considering different users and their needs, the campus could become a vibrant and inclusive environment that not only serves the academic community but also actively engages with its surrounding public realm. I received feedback to think in activities and interactions that a place can provide, rather than plain program. From this point on, I had a much clearer view and my design process progressed in a much more linear way.

Importance of design thinking

In my opinion, involving personas in your design, should be one of everyone's main priorities. Buildings, especially (vertical) public buildings, should be designed for the public that makes use of it for it to actively integrate in the cityscape and not be an enclave on its own.

Reflection

Looking back on my proposed design, I believe I managed to design my vertical campus as an actual extension of the urban fabric, that therefore invites a large variety of people and connects academic life and city life. In addition, I made slight expansions to the program brief. For example, I wanted this campus's educational offer to go beyond student degrees, and, amongst other things, I introduced not only workshops for students, but also public (group) workshops. These functions were stacked upon each other in a way that it created a logical hierarchy of spaces and extension of the urban fabric. From lower levels to mid levels to upper levels, the aim per floor gradually shifted from connectivity, to collaboration, to performance. This was connected to the shift from public to semi-private. For example, functions assigned to the pillar connectivity (e.g. caf@lounge, public student and temporary exhibitions, public group workshops) were located on the lower levels, and acted as an introduction to the vertical campus. Functions connected to the pillar collaboration (e.g. theaters, advanced virtuality center, workshops, break-out spaces) were located on the mid levels. The pillars connectivity and collaboration contributed to social and cultural vitality. Functions connected to the pillar performance (e.g. research spaces, offices) were located on the upper levels, occasionally interrupted by collaborative break-out spaces. The pillar performance contributed to economic vitality.

Relation to master track

The topic of my graduation, campus contributing to the city by fostering social, cultural and economic vitality, makes for the campus to not anymore be an isolated enclave but be a real public building. This topic covers, next to architectural design, urban design as it aims to connect campus with cityscape.

Relevance in larger social, professional, scientific framework

This research contributes to the profession in a way that it can lead as an innovative spatial model for other universities facing challenges in bridging the gap between academic life and city life. By identifying contemporary shortcomings, and reimagining the common spatial layout of a university campus, it provides valuable insights and has the potential to spark positive transformation within the profession.