

Thesis Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track (Ar, Ur, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

Mental illnesses have been on a rise. Theories and literature presented such as the one by the infamous Dutch scholar, Desiderius Erasmus suggests that prevention is better than cure. Besides this, I also believe that the de-stigmatisation and de-institutionalisation of mental health facilities for the youth can be done by normalising seeking for help. Design strategies can help in making facilities more approachable and attractive and that is the relation between the graduation topic and the master track. Understanding the needs and requirements of the target group followed by architectural design alongside structural analysis has helped in creating solutions. Human behaviour is influenced by the built environment and architects are the curators of this. Hence creating viable solutions and a harmonic synergy is attempted by the knowledge gained by the master program.

2. How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

Research was conducted through different forms such as literature research, case study analysis and fieldwork. While the literature research hinted towards design choices such as bio-receptive elements, a communal feeling and building orientation. The fieldwork and already existing design recommendations helped in further investigating certain topics through literature research. The design had further influenced the research based by focusing on architectural elements such as choice of materials, program and location. Hence several ways played an important role that lead to the final findings and design choices of the thesis.

3. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

I believe that the work was conducted in such a way that the topic of mental health in regards to the built environment was studied through multiple directions. In depth literature research through multiple sources prompted certain solutions. These solutions were then checked if they existed in the chosen case studies. And at last, all the findings were cross-referenced with the knowledge gained through doing fieldwork in the form of interviews, discussions, observations and surveys with the target group. The approach is therefore not linear and multiple sources of information have influenced the design choices making it a more convincing analysis.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

Mental Health is a very relevant topic in today's day. A higher percentage of youth are increasingly getting effected by the disease and our built environment plays a crucial role in the prevention and stability of mental health. While the goal of the thesis is not to scientifically or medically prove something, however, I do believe that the built environment can be used as a tool to curate change. This change could be the environment of a care centre, the experience of the patients or it could also be a change in the medical system through a physical restructure of care centres around a city. I believe that this is the relevance of the graduation work. It could help and inspire professionals to make design implementations that benefit the target group in new ways and also creates societal awareness of the ongoing problems with mental health.

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

We also expect you to develop 2 reflection question yourself which relate to the content of your work.

I believe that the methods used to learn about the topic and the design solutions presented based on the research would be similar if the research was presented to another academic in the same study. I do feel that the project results can be further expanded as the topic of mental health is ever growing due to societal and digital changes. While my thesis had more programatic solutions alongside hints of design elements, I do believe that an architect with the same research might have a slightly different approach and focus more on the specific design elements. The method of suggesting a mix of programmatic and design solutions is more beneficial in my opinion. The thesis presents design solutions to architects but also gives the opportunity to readers from outside the field to consider programatic solutions, hence reaching out to a larger audience.

Additional Question 1: Is the thesis relevant to the context of The Netherlands?

While The Netherlands is a very progressive and innovative country, the individualistic nature of society alongside social media and medical problems after the pandemic has raised concerns of mental illnesses. Keeping Dutch culture in mind, the thesis introduces communal solutions, biophilic design and new forms of construction while keeping the context in mind to make it more fitting in its location as well as in a social and cultural manner.

Additional Question 2: What would you have done differently if given an opportunity?

Even though I am quite satisfied with the overall process that lead to the results in the thesis, if there was one aspect I would have wanted to do differently it would be the care facility visits. It would have been nice to have also visited a mental healthcare facility specifically for young adults. The facilities that I visited included young adults but mostly hosted slightly older people with more extreme conditions. However, this was also a great learning experience as I was able to talk to them about prevention methods and early solutions to avoid extreme conditions