

Reflection Research & Design

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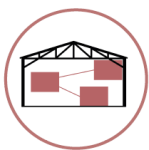
Abandoned shipyard, Mercon-Kloosterrein in Alblasterdam (Bestemmingsplan Mercon Kloos, 2018)

Research influencing design

During the site visit of the design location, I found it perplexing that such a historically significant hall remained in a state of utter dilapidation and isolation. However, the research elucidated the underlying factors that precipitated the decline of these industries, thereby providing a more comprehensive contextual understanding. Interestingly, these former shipyards are regaining appeal among municipalities, provincial authorities, national governing bodies and the general public.

The research provided insights into the revitalization of maritime heritage by examining how a case study shipyard has been repurposed and adapted. The process of mapping out diverse values inherent to these sites and halls helped me both in writing a value assessment and in determining various guiding principles that incorporated into my own design approach. It also offered design tools that contributed to the redevelopment of the former industrial shipyard. Emphasizing a design approach focused on comprehensive restoration of the original character can effectively highlight its historical significance. For instance, preserving elements like the large shed doors, basement track and crane track serves this purpose.

Architecture PRINCIPLES



OPEN/FLEXIBLE LAYOUT & HORIZONTALITY



VISIBILITY PORT ARCHITECTURE



FACADE RHYTHM & SKYLIGHTS



CONTRASTING MATERIALS

Architecture design principles, inspired by the research

The research concluded that the utilitarian and functional character of the shipyard reflects the company's growth and commitment to efficiency, functionality and adaptability. This flexibility serves as a central theme in my design, particularly evident in the flexible living modules within the hall. The research underscored that incorporating new design interventions and modern materials can facilitate the integration of new functions while maintaining a balance between preserving historical values and accommodating contemporary needs. Consequently, the design proposes adding a new volume to the original hall and replacing the front facade with a modern one.

Design influencing research

Selecting a study closely aligned with the design brief allows for mutual reinforcement between the two. Given my lack of experience in redeveloping industrial halls, I deemed it valuable to explore several converted halls to understand the design decisions driving their transformation. This exploration in combination with engaging in an interview with an experienced architect, provided a wealth of insights into the comprehensive process of such redevelopment.

Value of methodology

The design approach commenced with developing a modular co-living system for the hall, empowering users with creative autonomy over layout, material selection and finishing touches. By establishing distinct guidelines, the hall still comes into its own while preserving user freedom. I believed that once this modular system seamlessly integrated into the building like a puzzle, all essential elements would be in place. However, addressing accessibility emerged as a challenge that I underestimated, complicating the puzzle. Nonetheless, I'm content with the process as it underscores the critical role circulation plays in design, a lesson I'll carry forward into future endeavours.

Design Constraints and Challenges

Despite the hypothetical nature of this design process, which afforded a relatively substantial degree of creative freedom, it was imperative from the outset to maintain a sense of realism. Preserving the inherent spaciousness of the hall posed a significant challenge in realizing a substantial number of residential units without compromising this defining characteristic. Ultimately, the design proposal encompassed 25 dwellings, a café with an exhibition space, and a greenhouse. Following a visit by the developer of the Mercon Kloos site, it became evident that none of our designs were financially viable, a revelation that was unanticipated. This experience underscored the necessity for heightened attention to feasibility considerations in future endeavours. The insights gained from this project have highlighted the critical importance of striking a balance between creative expression and practical constraints, ensuring that proposed designs are not only aesthetically appealing but also economically sustainable.

Value of graduation project

The project offers a suggestion for the revitalization of maritime heritage by redesigning an abandoned shipyard. Regarding the broader practice of Architecture, the study of revitalising maritime heritage is something which can aid future conversations in the profession as the abandonment that followed deindustrialization poses great challenges to the redevelopment of industrial shipyards.

Value of transferability

There are scant instances of industrial halls being repurposed into co-living spaces. I envision the eventual design serving as an inspiration, highlighting the distinctive experience of living in such a hall. Moreover, I earnestly hope the current developer refrains from demolishing the hall.