

Diploma thesis evaluation / Maria Chloe Tonia Rodriguez

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Academic year: 2020/2021 – Summer semester

Název projektu: Blurred borders & Binding paths

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The presented diploma thesis has been developed by the author during two consecutive semesters under my supervision. The project was conceived within the framework and inline with the overarching topic of the studio for academic year 2020-2021 which topic-wise focused on Urban Mobility Systems and context-wise aimed for case study application within the planned new South-center district of Brno surrounding the planned new Main Train Station.

Purely in terms of content and format the presented work showcases a balanced structure which includes Historical research, state-of-the-art identification, context analysis, implementation of urban design strategies and designing case-study urban-architectural configurations.

The project seems to be driven by two key ideas:

- 1) Human-centric urban design which forms the conceptual backbone of the thesis.
Aiming to blurr district boundaries, connect the old city with the new urban fabric, activate public space and encourage higher pedestrianisation of the urban landscape.
- 2) Modular, flexible and adaptive strategies informing the proposed urban and architectural configurations.
Focusing on potentials such systems can bring forward such as phased construction, gradual fromation, adaptability to changing urban conditions and possibilities of future reconfiguration.

On the conceptual level, the key aspirations of the project are valid, relavant and up-to-date. The submitted work includes an extensive analysis of the context focusing not only on historical precedents but also on contemporary conditions of the site. Analysis of the site conditions have been performed with adequate due diligence. Key city-forming principles have been identified, analysed and quantified. The project however comes short in terms of making clear, convincing and legitimate conclusions based on the gathered data.

The idea of the modular multilevel bridge has not been clearly assessed in terms of potential benefits and shortcomings. Wouldn't the bridge drain all pedestrian flow from the surrounding context and channel it into the proposed line ? Wouldn't that create a problematic condition ? What guaranties the success of the concept ? How can the potential underutilization of the bridge structure by pedestrian traffic in favour of pedestrian movement on the ground be addressed ?

In terms of design strategies the project has been conceived as a modular structure on a hexagonal grid. The proposed architectural and urban configurations aspire to enable gradual construction and provide adaptive reconfigurability. These aspirations are valid and in-line with contemporary design tendencies that favor economically feasible, ecologically conscious and programmatically flexible solutions. The project showcases a number of hexagonal modular configurations that create very spectacular and interesting urban spaces along the proposed bridge, but many key aspects of modularity, programmatic flexibility and structural effectivity have been neglected and not properly analysed.

The project also lacks the adequate geometrical and formal consistency that is typical for modular and grid-bases formations.

Considering the intellectual capacity with which the author has addressed the topic and architectural skills with which the project have been developed, I have no doubt that Chloe is ready and we'll equipped to successfully graduate with a master's degree and joinn the community of architects. In light of the above mentioned comments and reservations I'm inclined to propose ECTS grade B.

Liberec
15.09.2021

Saman Saffarian