

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Filipa van der Laan
Student number	4721551

Studio		
Name / Theme	Methods of Analysis and Imagination - A Matter of Scale	
Main mentor	Jorge Mejia Hernandez	Architecture
Second mentor	Freek Speksnijder	Building Technology
Third mentor	Willie Vogel	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>My selection of the studio was motivated by several factors. Primarily, the thematic focus on "A Matter of Scale" piqued my interest due to my inclination to engage in design across various scales from the beginning stages of a project. Furthermore, the studio provides a strong theoretical foundation, facilitating the cultivation of critical thinking skills — an aspect that I wanted to develop further. A secondary factor that influenced my choice was the autonomy to explore diverse design methodologies. I envisioned utilizing this academic year as an opportunity to delve into the exploration of my personal architectural language. Lastly, the flexibility inherent in selecting one's project within the city boundaries of Tallinn appealed to me. Moreover, the unfamiliarity with Tallinn provided a unique opportunity to navigate and handle design challenges in an unfamiliar city and culture, which hopefully fosters my development of designing with a respectful approach.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	A Forum for the Built Environment
Goal	
Location:	Pärnu mnt. 37-41, Tallinn, Estonia
The posed problem,	The problem statement is derived from an extensive pool of information, centered around two principal themes. Firstly, the intersection of democracy,

digitalization, and the diminishing significance of physical spaces in municipal structures. Secondly, the absence of a designated city architect and citizen engagement in urban development.

Regarding the first theme, the merging of democracy and digitalization in Estonia has transformed societal interactions, eliminating citizens' need to visit governmental buildings physically. While digitalization enhances the efficiency of accessing governmental services, such as online voting from any location, it introduces challenges. Communication barriers arise, impeding citizens' ability to engage with municipal employees, and participating in digital debates proves problematic, lacking true representation of societal diversity.

Furthermore, the expansion of digital space corresponds to a reduction in physical space, exemplified by the Combined Ministry Building's relocation from multiple government buildings towards one 'mega-structure.'. Estonia's digital ecosystem results in significant time savings and a more business-friendly environment, necessitating a reevaluation of building design to occupy less physical space.

The second theme regards the ongoing developments in Tallinn's built environment, as there is a notable absence of a designated city architect. Endrik Mänd, who dedicated 21 years to Tallinn's city planning office, held the position but resigned in 2019. Following Mänd's departure, Ignar Fjuk, the head of the city planning department, assumed an informal role as the city architect until his resignation in 2021. Presently, the position is managed internally within the municipality, raising concerns about the objectivity of such

	<p>governance and generating citizen dissatisfaction, evident in panel discussions and newspaper articles.</p> <p>Considering alternative structures, the Forum emerges as a pertinent model connecting citizens with governing bodies. The definition of a Forum according to Collins Dictionary is a place, situation, or group in which people exchange ideas and discuss issues, especially important public issues. Simultaneously, a forum is also an area of a website where users can post comments and have discussions. In addition, in ancient Roman towns, the forum was a square where people met to discuss business and political matters. The duality of the historic and current use of the word 'forum' is in the design proposal intertwined.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>Main research question: How could a forum function as a collaborative and participatory space for citizens and city officials?</p> <p>Sub-questions: How will the forum relate and integrate in its context?</p> <p>How will the forum relate to memory? – concerning the site but also the memory of past and future architectural projects</p> <p>What kind of people would visit the proposal?</p> <p>How should a forum materialize?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>Derived from contextual, historical, and disciplinary analysis, the proposal consists of a forum. The forum consists out of multiple buildings that are situated at Pärnu mt. 37-41. This is a busy traffic axis of the city of Tallinn.</p>

	<p>The current site, currently abandoned, exhibits remnants of demolished structures. Beyond addressing the design challenge of creating a forum, the proposal aims to harmonize with its distinct surroundings.</p> <p>Functioning as a passage within the city block, the forum invites observation and literal and metaphorical engagement. Its design aspires to symbolize the transparency inherent in civic discussions, inviting both citizens and officials to partake in the city's dialogue.</p> <p>The forum encompasses four standalone yet architecturally cohesive structures: the primary forum building, municipal space, archive, and study café. The primary forum building houses an exhibition space showcasing planned city projects, alongside areas for discussions and flexible seating arrangements. The municipal space encourages public input, while the digital and physical archive facilitates information retrieval and dissemination. A garden pavilion complements the neighborhood scale, featuring a café and study spaces.</p>
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Process

Method description

The methodological approach underpinning my research is multifaceted, drawing upon various methodologies and techniques throughout this study period. Initially, collaborative group research, particularly up to phase one (P1), provided valuable insights into the utilization of space in Tallinn, which resulted in the research of 'undefined spaces.' This initial investigation helped me focus on underutilized plots within the city centre, leading to the selection of Pärnu mnt. 37-41 as a primary case study area.

Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of case studies within Tallinn, as well as relevant projects outside the city, is integral to understanding the spatial configurations connected to my design proposal. This entails the relationship between form, materiality, and its context.

Moreover, the research-through-design approach is central to my methodology, involving a meticulous and critical examination of each step in the design process. Each design iteration is informed by the research of references and to be able to consider these carefully.

Another key methodological aspect involves the exploration of scales, whereby I continuously go through different scales. This process allows me to assess early my design ideas. Utilising drawing techniques and creating digital and physical models are instrumental in this process.

In summary, my methodological approach encompasses collaborative research, case study analysis, research-through-design, and iterative exploration of scales through drawing and modelling techniques.

Literature and general practical references

Key sources:

Breakell, Sue, and Wendy Russell. *The Materiality of the Archive: Creative Practice in Context*. London: Routledge, 2024.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Kaja Randam, and Luisa Translation Agency. *City Unfinished: Urban Visions of Tallinn*. Tallinn: Eestikunstiakadeemia, 2021.

Lester, Peter. *Exhibiting the Archive: Space, Encounter, and Experience*. London: Routledge, 2022.

Linsi, Laura, Roland Reemaa, Tadeáš Ríha. *Weak Monument: Architectures Beyond the Plinth*. Zürich: Park Books, 2018.

Reichert, Ramón. "Digital Governmentality: Citizen Power, Digital Culture, and City Development." In *New Stakeholders of Urban Change: A Question of Culture*

and Attitude?, ed. Hilke Marit Berger and Gesa Ziemer. Berlin: JOVIS Verlag, 2017.

O'Mahony, Mike. Sport in the USSR: Physical Culture – Visual Culture. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006.

Key reference projects:

Bruther. (2015). New Generation Research Center. Caen, France.

David Chipperfield Architects. (2022). Morland Mixité Capitale. Paris, France.

Jabornegg & Pálffy. (2000). Museum Judenplatz. Vienna, Austria.

James Gorst Architects. (2022). New Temple Complex. Village of Rake, Hampshire, United Kingdom.

Lacaton & Vassal Architectes. (2013). FRAC – Nord Pas-de-Calais. Dunkerque, France.

Murmuur, Carton123, and AE-architecten. (2018). Standaertsite. Ledeborg, Belgium.

Rossi, Aldo and César Portela. (2002). Museo do Mar de Galicia. Vigo, Spain.

Terragni, Giuseppe. (1936). Casa del Fascio. Como, Italy.

Winhov, and Gottlieb Paludan Architects. (2017). Stadsarchief Delft. Delft, The Netherlands.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The studio, "A Matter of Scale," redefines scale as a dynamic proportion rather than a fixed size. Within this framework, the graduation project navigates design heuristics such as form, performance, technology, and communication to envision future built environments fostering quality. Furthermore, the aspect of delving deeply into contextual and disciplinary analysis helps situate and scale the design.

The graduation project applies this approach to explore participation in the context of digitization's rapid growth, bridging disciplines such as urbanism, building technology, landscape architecture, and management in the built environment. By examining urban planning, construction, public space design, and stakeholder dynamics, the project ensures holistic understanding and implementation. This interdisciplinary process enriches the MSc program by integrating diverse perspectives into the discourse of the graduation project.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

My graduation project addresses the need for collective participatory discourse in urban development, particularly within the context of Tallinn. Dissatisfaction among citizens regarding their limited engagement in current and prospective urban initiatives is evident in Tallinn and extends to various countries.

Citizens play a pivotal role in electing their representatives, who subsequently influence the allocation of public funds toward urban projects. Municipalities attempt to democratize this decision-making process by offering participation processes. However, conventional attempts to involve citizens in these deliberations often do not succeed due to either belated engagement or inadequate public awareness regarding ongoing initiatives.

In response to these challenges, my graduation project transcends conventional approaches by exploring the transformative potential of digitization and presenting an innovative framework for participatory urban development. By engaging not only with the architectural realm but also with governmental and social spheres, this project seeks to foster transparent dialogue among stakeholders. It aims to question the current workings of urban planning by facilitating physical spaces for citizens to participate.