

# 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](mailto: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	Jelte Aisa van den Berg
Student number	5682096

  

Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban architecture, last green in town	
Main mentor	Rosie van der Schans	Architecture
Second mentor	Eireen scheurs	Architectural research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I believe it is interesting that the studio focusses on a somewhat larger scale than only building-level. Because the graduation takes a whole year I believe it is interesting to go through all the scales: from masterplan to detailing. Moreover, I found it pleasant that there is great flexibility and freedom in choosing a research topic and building-typology. Furthermore, the hands-on approach is one that I was until yet not familiar with. I wanted to explore if it suits me and how I could learn from it.	

  

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Arriere garde (working title)

  

Goal	
Location:	(North of) Friche, Brussels
The posed problem,	During the site visits, the notable contrast in the area of the North station, where the Brabantwijk is juxtaposed against the modern North quarter of Brussel, caught my attention. The Northern quarter has been built relatively recently, and therefore reflects a time defined by globalization. This can be easily spotted; the buildings often consist of simple geometric volumes, and the facades are made of reflecting glass. Because of these specifics, the buildings have no relation to their surroundings, forming almost an island within the city.

	<p>The same island can be placed in any other random business district: it is anonymous, unpersonal, and it is hard to relate to or form a connection with. In this research, this kind of architecture is called 'homogenized architecture', defined as:</p> <p><i>An architecture that has no connection to the local culture, context, history, and building methods.</i></p> <p>Because of this, the architecture becomes ignorant to the place identity.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>The main-question that this research tries to answer is:</p> <p><i>How can a building connect to and stimulate local identity?</i></p> <p>SQ 1: From what aspects can architectural identity be derived?  SQ 2: From what scale level should the architectural identity of the aspects mentioned above be derived from?  SQ 3: What are the architectural specifics of the elements that inform the aesthetics of the design?  SQ 4: How to construct a building in a sustainable way while contributing to the local identity?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>While the choice of designing a train station may seem unrelated to the research's specific typology, it is a deliberate decision. First of all, the typology of a train station is interesting one, particularly in the current time period, where we often don't have to buy tickets anymore, and our travel schedule can be found on our phone, rendering traditional train stations outdated. Yet, in a time where travelling with the train becomes so important again due to our climatic crisis, the train station has undergone a transformation. Bigger stations often come with numerous shops and cafes prevalent.</p> <p>For my research, a train station also forms a logical step to the design phase. Firstly, the historical significance of the train, starting the industrial revolution and shaping today's homogenized architecture, makes it a compelling starting point. Furthermore, train stations lack vernacular history. Therefore, I</p>

can disregard that and focus completely on the identity aspect of the architecture. In addition, train station were often very un-local buildings, that were built with similar styles all over the world. By re-inventing this process, a new standard can be established. Moreover, a train station serves as an entrance point for a neighbourhood, making it an excellent building to set a standard for the design style of the rest of the neighbourhood. By combining a train station with public a program like a library, and adding commercial functions like previously mentioned, the train station is not only a functional building, but serves a public function as well.

## Process

### Method description

SQ 1 seeks to explore the various factors that influence a place's identity. A scan of the literature about vernacular architecture has resulted in a definition that is utilized in the research. The definition allows the following aspects to be researched:

Geography, architecture, culture, materials and climate.

SQ2: All of these aspects are looked at, at three scale levels. One is the current state of the Friche, the second one is the vernacular architecture of Brussels and the last one are train stations of Brussels **(last one after p2)**.

SQ3: For the Friche and the train stations in Belgium a photo report will be made during site visits. The bundle of photos will be analyzed and structured in a report. Furthermore, a personal observation in the form of texts will be given to look for the more subjective side of the place's architectural identity.

For the vernacular architecture, literature research will be needed to identify the vernacular specifics of Belgium's historical architecture.

SQ 4: This question requires literature research about local materials and built upon the research about building methods of vernacular architecture. **(This will be done after P2)**

## Literature and general practical references

For the site visits, Gordon Cullen's book 'the concise townscapes' is read as an inspiration.

For the research about Belgium's vernacular architecture a number of resources are available. A short overview:

- Historic timber roofs in Belgium: overview of materials and structures (1150-1960), Louis Van den Abeele
- Literature review on rural architecture in Belgium: ideas to modernize farmsteads in architectural publications from 1847-1884, Christine Roles
- Wood Used in Brussels' Old Buildings: Origin, Characterisation, and Use (12th-19th Centuries), Paulo Charruadas et al. (2023)
- <https://bokrijk.be/nl/gebouwen-openluchtmuseum>, website from a historical museum about Belgium's history
- Hoeven op land gebouwd : een verhaal van boerderijen, landschappen en mensen, Vic Goedseels, Luc Vanhaute, Anton Hardy
- Ontwikkelingsgeschiedenis van onze landelijke architectuur, Clemens van Trefois (Clemens V.)
- Van vakwerk tot baksteenbouw, Clemens van Trefois (Clemens V.)

## 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)?**

By looking at the identity on a larger scale than just a building the more urban side of the city of Brussels will be discovered. My project also stems from an inspiration that is broader than just an architectural scale. However, the end project that tackles the urban problem can be projected in one building. I think that is eminently a research that suits the studio of Urban Architecture. Furthermore, the typology of a train station also facilitates a city on a large scale. In a way, it is thus a blend between the urban and architectural scale. Furthermore, the chosen research method is a hands-on one which suits the overall theme of the studio.

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

The question I am asking is one that could be asked all over the world. The topic of an homogenized architectural landscape is not solely bound to Belgium or Brussels. The research could thus also be applied on loads of other cities resulting in different outcomes and buildings. However, it would all lead to a building design that is more grounded to the local context. Furthermore, the question is one that is relevant in today's discussion in the field of architecture and urbanism. It is one that will perhaps be even more relevant in the future if a universal sustainable building method will be invented. It can even be said that this question has influence on broad societal topics such as the individualization of society, which stems from a lack of collective identity, which then again relates back to architecture.