

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan

Personal information	
Name	Muge Elmas
Student number	5807700

Studio	
Name / Theme	Public Building Graduation Studio 2023-24 The Vertical Campus / A Public Hub of the Future in The Hague
Main mentor	Paul Kuitenbrouwer
Second mentor	Piero Medici
Third mentor	Gosia Gołabek
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The divergent life paths between my brother and me, shaped by distinct environments, have sparked my academic interest. While he thrived in a small town, becoming a beloved community figure, my upbringing in a gated city community led to different sociological and psychological developments. My enlightenment on the interaction between individuals and their spatial environments, however, manifested during my academic pursuits at TU Delft, particularly within the framework of my MSc1 public building design studio. It was in this scholarly context that I probed more deeply into the symbiotic relationship between people and the spaces they inhabit. By designing a hybrid building for my graduation project, I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between space and human behavior. Such multifarious spatial configurations possess the transformative capacity to significantly influence public domain, thereby unlocking novel possibilities for personal development and communal engagement. My academic pursuits are directed towards further exploration of this realm, where I aim to elucidate the connections between space and social, economic, and psychological factors. I aspire to unravel how individuals perceive, navigate, and engage with their surroundings, providing valuable insights into the ways architecture can enrich our overall well-being.

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Public Takeover: Building a Common Ground through Public Infrastructure
Goal	
Location:	The Hague, The Netherlands

	Central Station District
The posed problem,	<p>Among the rich diversity we have, a paradox emerges – while our streets echo with diverse stories, we, at times, cocoon ourselves in individual bubbles, marking everyone as ‘other.’ The Hague possesses a quality of life that is alluring, attracting residents due to its plentiful businesses and university campuses. Additionally, it serves as the seat of governance, making it particularly appealing to a diverse range of individuals. However, whether the Hague can accommodate the rich diversity effectively still needs to be answered.</p> <p>The Central Station District exhibits a heterogeneous demographic profile, drawing in a varied cohort of inhabitants. The locale is characterized by the coexistence of both governmental and private sector employees, alongside the academic vigor emanating from the Leiden University campus and the Hogeschool Inholland, rendering it an optimal hub for scholarly activities. The presence of high schools, primary schools, and vocational institutions contributes to the generational diversity within the student populace. This demographic diversity manifests itself in the composition of the resident community within the neighborhoods. Despite the inclusivity of this environment, the escalating rental costs have sparked grievances among employees, constraining their residential options within the district. Notwithstanding these challenges, certain accessibility endures, particularly for those seeking affordable housing, with limited availability earmarked for students. This juxtaposition of senior citizens and students imparts a distinctive character to the Central Station District, reflecting an interaction of socioeconomic factors and</p>

contributing to its multifaceted and inclusive fabric. The research initiative commenced with interviews involving diverse user groups, revealing a prevailing sense of residing within isolated domains, leading to a detachment from the broader community. Despite spending considerable time in the district, a lack of social interaction was evident. An IT professional working in an office in Bezuidenhoutseweg Street expressed a preference for a swift return home after work, indicating a diminished inclination to actively engage with the surrounding environment. Spaces derive their meaning through usage, but this aversion to exploration results in a narrow interpretation, leading to a 'thinning' of the semantic volume along the Green Border. People simply want to leave rather than explore new possibilities. This sentiment poses a challenge to the business centers, municipal, and ministerial buildings in The Hague's urban landscape, hindering the development of an organic society. The issue of social separation also emerges as a noteworthy concern, impacting the overall well-being of residents. Interviews formed the basis for an exploration into why individuals struggle to go beyond their social domains and occupy their environment.

The research focused on the green border, spanning from the Bellevue complex to the UNICEF building on Bezuidenhoutseweg Street. Quantitative data from the municipality revealed that 21% of the land was municipally owned, 5% state-owned, and the remainder privately owned. Ministries along Bezuidenhoutseweg, such as Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Economics, Education, Culture, and Science, exhibited limited public access, contributing to a perceived lack of

	<p>openness. Instances of police intervention that were observed, such as repelling a woman protesting in front of an entrance, highlighted the challenges of public engagement. Despite their public service roles, these power structures failed to establish themselves as communal spaces. One private sector employee admitted avoiding university-associated spaces, perceiving them as exclusively for students. These findings showed that every building has a boundary effect on users on different levels, and the prevalence of these power structures in the neighborhood created an environment where individuals simply executed their tasks without an active push to engage with the community or environment.</p>
research questions and	<p>The urban fabric of The Hague grapples with a significant densification challenge, earning it the distinction of being the most densely populated city in the Netherlands. As the city contends with growing housing demand, accommodating the requisite infrastructure and social amenities and preserving adequate green spaces for residents, pose considerable challenges. In light of these considerations and the studio brief for public building graduation studio, the integration of hybrid structures and high-rise buildings emerges as a viable solution for The Hague's urban landscape.</p> <p>Addressing the lack of physical and mental accessibility to power clusters and the gaps between them, which limit citizen engagement with the environment, is paramount. This, coupled with the need for densification and hybridization, leads to the following research question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How can a design provoke its user to explore?

	<p>Sub Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How can spatial design facilitate diverse user experiences and interpretations without predefined functions? - How does discovery contribute to building stronger connections within one's community and neighborhood?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The green border stands in need of a 'public takeover,' a transformation from its rigid and submissive urban setting into a more accessible and less formal version of itself. As articulated by Richard Sennett in his essay on the public realm, the infusion of anonymity and impersonality is crucial for individual development, offering an opportunity to alleviate pressures related to conformity and fixed social roles. In the dynamic realm of discussions and debates with strangers, the exchange of ideas becomes paramount, particularly in a democratic government where shared assumptions and interests may not always align. This transformation calls for territories with diminished power influences to go beyond traditional social hierarchies. Stavros Stavrides refers to such spaces as 'thresholds' in his work 'Towards the City of Thresholds,' conceptualizing them as arenas for encounter, exchange, and recognition. These threshold spaces, introduced into urban scenes by people, become dynamic places in constant evolution, demanding negotiation. In essence, they transform into potential theaters for displays of human interaction. Active engagement in social actions empowers individuals to initiate encounters with otherness, fostering the potential transformation of space through these interactions. The amalgamation of 'individual and other' within these thresholds holds the power</p>

to exceed stereotypes and fixed hierarchies among diverse entities, contributing to the cultivation of a diverse and multifaceted urban culture.

To execute this vision, Green Border requires informal spaces, or in Sennett's terms, 'a space that is not over-determined,' possessing adaptive capacity and environmental vitality. The proposed design should be an open narrative that is shaped by usage rather than predetermined classifications. As said by Herman Hertzberger in 1999, the identity of what is created should evolve through usage, not be fixed from the outset. Creations need to be offerings, capable of eliciting specific reactions tailored to diverse situations over time. Polyvalence, or that broader efficacy, should be a defining characteristic—not just neutrality and flexibility, which make them non-specific. Corroborating this notion, during qualitative research on the Green Border, numerous alternative uses of space were observed in the pedestrian streets of Bezuidenhoutseweg and in the Haagse Boss forest—considered 'less determined' spaces in the formal urban tissue. Hence, to cater to the demands of The Hague's intensifying urban landscape, a vertical design proposal accommodating diverse people and activities with enhancement combines the frequent utilization of undetermined spaces. The outcome is a legitimate public space that is frank, democratic, and has the potential to inspire innovative approaches to occupying and utilizing its open areas.

Process

Method description

In the process of creating a new urban narrative for Green Border, the methodology incorporates both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Qualitative research, manifested through observations and interviews, builds a solid base of identified

issues. Concurrently, quantitative analysis delves into the numerical landscape of the neighborhood and its residents. Aiming to address the formulated research questions, the proposal adopts a research-by-design approach. Sketching, collaging, and assembling serve as the tools guiding an exploration through existing urban concepts and speculative design states. This visual and concrete discovery acts as the origin for a design manifesto, embodying the project's aspirations. Through the examination of literature and case studies, a systematic exploration unfolds to understand how these design speculations may materialize into a concrete proposal. The synthesis of this examination with design-based research forms structures a process of design drafts, and revisions. This methodical process provides a spectrum of ideas and concepts, encapsulating the essence of a more accessible and democratic urban vision for The Hague.

Literature and general practical references

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Case studies:

3XN – Church + Wellesley – Toronto, Canada

Alison Brooks Architects – Exeter College Cohen Quad – Oxford, UK – 2020

Aristide Antonas – Transformable Vertical Village – Athens, Greece – 2011 'Paper Architecture'

Chamberlin, Powell and Bon – Barbican Centre – London, UK – 1964 – 1982

Grafton Architects – Marshall Building – London, UK – 2022

Hawkins / Brown – Beecroft Building – Oxford, UK – 2018

Hawkins\ Brown – Bartlett School of Architecture – London, UK – 2016

John McAslan + Partners – King's Cross Station extension – London, UK – 2012

Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners – LSE Centre Building – London, UK – 2019

Sweeny &Co Architects Inc. – Queen Richmond Centre West – Toronto, Ontario

William Wilkins – UCL Historic Campus – London, UK – 1827

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)?

My graduation project, which centers on the transformation of the Green Border, harmoniously aligns with the objectives of both my master track in Architecture and the overarching theme of the Public Building Graduation Studio. The studio's current exploration into the Vertical Campus for higher education institutions resonates with my project's emphasis on reshaping urban spaces, albeit in a distinct context. While the studio concentrates on innovative building types that are hybrid, resilient, and futureproof emerging from the needs of urban densification, my project tackles the reinvention of an existing urban area—the Green Border.

My project advocates for a 'public takeover' of the Green Border, emphasizing the infusion of impersonality and autonomy, and the creation of undefined spaces as dynamic spaces for encounter and exchange. This vision aligns perfectly with the studio's pursuit of multiplicity, addressing the pressing need for adaptable and future-proof spaces within the evolving urban tapestry.

From the project's standpoint, truly future-proof designs grant individuals the spatial autonomy they require, allowing them to choose their own territories and set their boundaries. Theoretically, this freedom exists everywhere, but due to the abundance of power clusters, the Green Border presents unique challenges with accessibility, making this autonomy less apparent in the urban landscape. My design intentionally facilitates this freedom and presents a framework to encourage active participation in shaping one's own space.

Moreover, allowing every stakeholder to choose their preferred spaces in the design necessitates a learning process on how to coexist and share these environments effectively. This aspect fits together with another critical studio objective: fostering lifelong learning by bringing diverse groups together in shared spaces. This not only enhances communal living but also enriches the individual's experience within the public domain, making every interaction an opportunity for personal and collective growth.

Additionally, the interdisciplinary nature of the MSc AUBS program is well-reflected in my project's approach. By integrating insights from social dynamics, environmental concerns, and architectural design, my project contributes to the broader academic discourse on the multifaceted relationships between urban spaces, societal needs, and architectural innovation.

In summary, my graduation project serves as a practical application of the theories and principles learned in my master track, aligning with the studio's exploration of multiplicity in design, and contributing to the interdisciplinary character of the MSc AUBS program. It represents a thoughtful response to the challenges presented by urban densification, reflecting the broader goals of my academic journey within the architecture discipline.

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

My graduation project adopts a comprehensive approach by initially addressing the issue of inaccessibility and emphasizing the relationship between a declining inclination to engage with one's surroundings. This investigation integrates social, psychological, and political perspectives, extending their impact into the spatial dimension. This holistic problem-solving approach underscores the importance of designing not only for physical needs but also for the complex social dynamics that shape human behavior and well-being.

The project analyses the intersection between social dynamics and spatial design, positioning itself as a prospective model for both social and psychological studies. It

vividly demonstrates the transformative role a building can play as a catalyst, fostering meaningful conversations within a neighbourhood. Emphasizing the pivotal role of the 'user autonomy' in design, it prompts a discussion on the ontology of public spaces, highlighting the significance of people's engagement with the spaces they inhabit. The project seeks to decode the dynamics of how a space becomes truly public, emphasizing the collaborative and participatory aspects that enhance its democratic character.

Moreover, the project addresses the challenge of densification in a heavily populated neighborhood, aiming to set an example of how existing buildings, in harmony with their context, can contribute to enhancing the overall quality of the neighborhood. The design endeavors to exemplify how buildings can play a role in enriching the narrative of a community.

Finally, the project explores the creation of a public space open to interpretation, acknowledging that enhanced human autonomy allows for the recognition of patterns and newly established relationships. The design strives to exhaust the possibilities, representing, in a modest and sincere manner, the vibrancy of this distinctive locale. In essence, it contributes to the ongoing exploration of designing public spaces with enduring significance.

Time Planning

P2: Schematic Design

Phase 1: Post P2- Week 3.1

In Phase 1, the feedback from P2 will be thoroughly examined to clarify the design strategies intended for assessment and to progress the schematic design to a formalized design proposal. The completion of this phase is scheduled within one week, concluding on 3.1.

Phase 2: Transitioning from Conceptual Design to a Concrete Design Proposal- Week 3.2- P3

In this phase, dedicated efforts will be directed towards transforming the schematic design proposal into a comprehensive design proposal. Technical drawings will be meticulously crafted, and various design elements will be carefully considered. The deliverables of this phase include detailed floor plans, sections, and elevations. Concurrently, the narrative of the building will be revisited to ensure coherence. This phase extends until the P3 Presentation.

P3: Design Proposal

Phase 3: Refining and Concluding the Design Proposal

During this phase, a comprehensive exploration of technical aspects will take place. Rigorous consideration will be given to the selection of materials and technical components, aligning closely with sustainable design principles. The project will be developed with a strong emphasis on technical precision. This phase is anticipated to conclude prior to P4.

P4: Final Design Proposal

Phase 4: Preparation for Presentation

The current materials will be prepared and reorganized in preparation for the P5 presentation. Additionally, a presentation model will be constructed.