

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	Quinten Smits	
Student number	5165849	

Studio		
Name / Theme	AR3DC100 Architectural Design Crossovers 2022-2023 Heterogeneous City: London	
Main mentor	Roberto Cavallo	Architecture
Second mentor	Jelke Fokkinga	Building Technology
Third mentor	Johan van Lierop	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I have always been very fascinated by the city and am always trying to understand the relationship between urbanism and architecture. Throughout the years, I have engaged in several architectural design studios and I regularly missed the connection towards the urban environment. We as architects do site studies, but it sometimes feels more compulsory than it should be. What if we start to use architecture for changes on a bigger scale more often? During my MSc2 Architectural Design Crossovers studio I had the opportunity to use my architectural tools within a team of urbanism and landscape architecture students and felt completely in place. Addressing metropolitan issues and trying to improve those while jumping in between scales is what I thoroughly enjoy. This positive experience of MSc2 made me decide to choose the Architectural Design Crossovers Graduation studio. It allows me to focus on a particular urban problem and pose possible answers through design on multiple scales.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Absorbing Splinters Revalorising identities within the ever-growing fragmented urban landscape of London.
Goal	
Location:	Romford, London
The posed problem,	<p>The post-industrial city has become an area of fragmented suburbanisation. The modernist ideology has invaded towns along infrastructural nodes and took away most of their identities resulting in generic areas which have become illegible and where the sense of place is lost.</p> <p>Although the fragmented landscape comes with issues as described above it also offers an exciting potential. The differences which are created by fragmentation can in fact be the base for new synergies which can again characterize space. The interaction between people is the base for this thus architecture and urbanism must provide a leading role in this.</p> <p>Since the announcement of the Elizabeth Line, station areas in between Reading and Shenfield – especially in Outer London - have seen a massive increase in housing prices. The pitfall of this new connection is that existing towns which already have been victim will continue to lose character and gentrify further while new towns are likely to follow this trend.</p>
research questions and	<p>How can architecture contribute to overcome the fragmented urban landscape along the Elizabeth Line in Outer London, countering the loss of legibility by drawing on the revalorisation of its identity?</p> <p><i>1. How can the fragmented landscape along the Elizabeth Line be interpreted?</i></p>

	<p>2. <i>What makes places legible and how can they be read and understood?</i></p> <p>3. <i>What is the identity of a place and how can it be revalorised?</i></p>
design assignment in which these result.	[Design Assignment]
<p>The urban redevelopment of a shopping centre + station area and an architectural design of one or multiple multifunctional buildings within this redevelopment area in Romford. Goal is to transform the consumer into a citizen again. The design will be a result of improving the legibility and revalorising the identity of the place.</p>	
<p>Process</p>	
<p>Method description</p>	
<p>In order to execute this research it is important to explain the different methods which I will be implementing. Different methods consist of demographical, sociological, historical and morphological research.</p>	
<p>Firstly, it is essential to understand the fragmented landscape which will be investigated. I have chosen to narrow my research down to the recently opened Elizabeth Line since it is highly relevant to my research and makes the complexity of London more tangible. To get an understanding of the fragmented landscape along the Elizabeth Line, a series of sections across the Elizabeth Line stations will be made to demonstrate the ground use and building density near stations.</p>	
<p>From this point on, the focus will be on Outer London boroughs as specified by the Office of National Statistics since the research is on (commuter) towns around London. Interesting regions to intervene will be found along the Elizabeth Line through demographical research. The movement of people is most important and quantitative maps will be produced which provide an insight into where people move to along the Elizabeth Line. For this particular part, population change will be the main factor of interest to narrow down the research to specific regions.</p>	
<p>After determining possible regions to intervene, multiple layers of deprivation will be reviewed to address the different problems these regions cope with. These layers of deprivation will be created through quantitative research and by layering of these maps, specific smaller areas around stations within the found regions in the previous step become visible where deprivation is the most present.</p>	
<p>Fourthly, out of the three chosen station areas one will be picked based on the experience while visiting and how much planning already has been executed. Through a contemporary interpretation of Lynch's legibility mapping, the chosen station area will be analysed. The identity of the place will be derived from Edward Relph's definition and investigated through the use of historical maps and interviews on site. Together with the conclusions of the research paper, an alternative urban approach to the chosen station area will be suggested which will lead to the formulated design assessment.</p>	

Literature and general practical preference

Literature

- Stephen Graham, Simon Marvin. Splintering Urbanism - Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2001.
- Neil Brenner. Implosions / Explosions. Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization. Berlin, Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2014.
- Brian McGrath. Urban Design Ecologies. Wiley, Chichester, West Sussex, 2013.
- Rem Koolhaas. What Ever Happened to Urbanism? New York, Monacelli Press, 1997.
- Paola Vigano. The Contemporary European Urban Project Archipelago City, Diffuse City and Reverse City. In: The SAGE handbook of Architectural Theory, 2012
- Kevin Lynch. The Image of The City. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.
- Edward Relph. Place and Placelessness. London, Sage, 2008.
- David Sim, Jan Gehl. Soft City. Building Density for Everyday Life. 2019.

Reference projects

- Inverdan Zaandam – Sjoerd Soeters
- Almere Centrum – Office for Metropolitan Architecture

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 Architectural Design Crossovers graduation studio explores heterogeneous systems within the complex urban environment of London. Although I am studying to become an architect, I have always been particularly interested in urban systems. Through my studies, I have had the chance to engage within urban projects to discover and apply multi-layered approaches. My graduation topic starts from my fascination for the fragmented cityscape. Through both research and design I aim to develop an alternative approach to this heterogeneous phenomenon touching both an urban and architectural scale.

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

Numerous cities such as London have been victim of uncontrolled growth which has led to fragmented cityscapes. Modernization and compulsive growth has led to illegible places where the sense of place is being lost. More cities are starting to have similar skylines where generic high-rise buildings are being built next to shopping malls replacing the former landmarks what once made them distinguishable. The image of cityscapes is blurring. I believe this is impacting cities in a negative way. Although we cannot reverse the fragmentation of cities, we can avoid making the same mistakes as the last hundred years and in fact see the situation as an opportunity. Architects and urban planners are – ironically – more relevant than ever. It is not too late to prevent the further loss of places.

This process of urbanisation has been a topic of discussion for several decades now, but for now there are relatively few hands-on approaches – such as Ungers' Archipelago City or Neutelings' Patchwork Metropolis – to deal with this growing problem. This research seeks a strategy on how to deal with the loss of legibility of towns around infrastructural nodes within the fragmented urban landscape of London. The outcomes of this investigation provide a

different approach on how to read these towns and act within them to make them flourish again by revalorising their own individualities.