

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	Weronika Dardzińska
Student number	5634776

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers / Heterogeneous City: London	
Main mentor (Design)	A. Alkan	Architecture
Second mentor (BT)	F. Eckardt	Architectural Engineering + Technology
Third mentor (Research)	A. van der Meij	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The heterogeneous nature of London fascinated me on my first trip to the city. All the different elements - modern architecture blending with historic one, the many languages and accents mixing in the city's bustle, or restaurants serving food from all over the world are like a patchwork created from seemingly incompatible pieces that, sewn together, become a well-functioning urban organism. This diverse urban structure encouraged me to take a closer look at its presence on the high streets of London.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The diverse nature of High Streets. From fragmented spaces to regeneration.
Goal	
Location:	London: A site on one of the high streets - Brixton Road (Brixton), North End (Croydon) or Rye Lane (Peckham)
The posed problem,	Dynamic changes in the economy, technology or the lifestyle and consumption habits of Londoners have disrupted the traditional look of the high streets and pose a real threat to their future vitality. The establishment of more and more shopping centres and supermarkets or the rise of e-commerce are reducing the need and desire to buy

	<p>from small, independent shops. Due to a lack of customers, a growing number of shops are being closed by the traders. Empty premises deter the remaining clientele and attract crime. It causes a vicious circle - more places are abandoned, scaring away more customers, so more shops are forced to close.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>How can architecture be an active agent in the regeneration of the high streets (by embracing the destination-making and social potential of spots along the high streets) to enhance the quality of the streets as integral urban systems?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The research aims to uncover the hidden/overlooked potential of high streets, which will contribute to enhancing their quality and highlighting the significant role these streets play in the formation and creation of community spaces in the city. The design aims to use the opportunities of different spots along the shopping streets that are important places for communities as a catalyst for change in the streets themselves. Proposed solutions should consider the unique ability of high streets to adapt and change dynamically based on program, spatio-temporal interventions reaching beyond the limitations of window fronts as the manifestation of commercial functions.</p>

Process

Method description

The research begins with an analysis of the evolution of high streets in the UK, taking into account key economic events, technological developments, architectural transformations and changes in people's lifestyles and consumption over the last few centuries. Internet articles and accumulated literature were used for this purpose.

The next step was to select a case study of high streets on which to base further research. These streets were selected using the document 'Population by Country from Birth' produced by the Office of National Statistics, as well as academic articles, collected literature and Google maps. They were treated as systems composed of a

main street, parallel and perpendicular ones and studied like the Las Vegas strip described in the book by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. Therefore, their analysis does not focus only on the study of urban forms, but above all on uncovering their hidden meanings in both architectural and sociological terms.

The selected streets were investigated using the following methods:

- interviews with people met on the streets, and employees of nearby shops and cafes,
- leaflets collected on-site informing about events taking place in the area,
- photography,
- social media analysis, such as Instagram and TikTok,
- public transport and traffic mapping using Google Maps.

The materials collected allowed to create so-called street biographies.

Literature and general practical preference

Literature:

Al, Stefan. *The Strip: Las Vegas and the architecture of the American dream*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2017.

Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London ; New York: Verso, 1995.

Bagiński, Jan and Dominika Kubieniec. "High Street". *Rzut 17 Ulica*: 32-43

Carmona, Matthew. „London’s Local High Streets: The Problems, Potential and Complexities of Mixed Street Corridors”. *Progress in Planning* 100 (sierpień 2015): 1–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2014.03.001>.

Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*. 3rd ed. Applied Social Research Methods Series 17. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2010.

Greater London Authority, *High streets & town centres. Adaptive strategies*. (January 2019) https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ggbd_high_streets_adaptive_strategies_web_compressed_0.pdf.

Hall, Edward T. *The hidden dimension*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.

Hall, Suzanne M. „Super-Diverse Street: A ‘Trans-Ethnography’ across Migrant Localities”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, nr 1 (January 2015): 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.858175>.

Hubbard, Phil. *The battle for the High Street: retail gentrification, class and disgust*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Intelligence Squared. „The High Street is Dead, Long Live the High Street.” October 31, 2014. Debate, 1:30:11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlbLB6IRCDU>.

Lucas, Ray. *Anthropology for architects: social relations and the built environment*. 1st wyd. London ; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020.

Manning, Jane. *Complex City: London's Changing Character*. London: RIBA Enterprises, 2020.

Panayi, Panikos. *Migrant City: A New History of London*. First published in paperback. New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2022.

Richards, James. *High Street*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2022.

Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. [Rev. ed.], 7th printing. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Pr, 1985.

Precedents:

The Blue, Assemble Studio, London
East Street Exchange, We Made That, London
Burnt Oak Town Centre, We Made That, London
Livesey Exchange, What if, London
Mediatheek Delft, Dok Architecten, Delft
LocHal Public Library, Mecanoo, Tilburg

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

Unlike many papers, I treat London's high streets not as dying spaces in the city but as living organisms capable of adapting easily to new conditions. I believe these streets do not always have a liminal character but are still regarded by many as destinations. Although they have a different nature than they once did, there are still places along them with a strong social and community character. It is my belief that my research will allow me to discover the true potential of these spaces and use it in my master thesis's design as an impetus to improve the quality of further parts of the city.

As the issues of empty and neglected places in London's high streets are an increasingly pressing problem, city authorities and architectural studios are looking for new tools to improve these spaces and inject new life into them. I hope that my research work, and the proposed design solutions, will provide a different perspective on the hidden potential of shopping streets and the future of their regeneration. I am convinced that with the continuous changes occurring in the appearance and character of high streets, it is crucial to search for and test new, flexible architectural and sociological solutions that respond to the current and future needs of the city's residents.

