

# 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	Tudor Cosma
Student number	5608724

Studio		
Name / Theme	Complex Projects / Bodies & Building	
Main mentor	Dr. Olindo Caso	Architecture and the Built Environment
Second mentor	TBC	Building Technology
Third mentor	Jelmer van Zalingen	Architecture and the Built Environment
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>Choosing Complex Projects as a graduation studio was motivated by its pragmatic approach. Aside from offering nine clear building typologies to choose from as a project basis, the studio also encourages an analytical data-driven approach to research and design, a method of working that resonates with me. What I found to be the most engaging type of building, not only to study but also to generate a design proposal for, is that of the parliament. The choice has been motivated by two factors. First of all, it is a very difficult building to design in terms of aesthetics as its choice of materials, massing, layout and, most importantly, façade have the responsibility of communicating the essence of the institution that they represent to the public. Parliaments and government buildings as a whole are an expression of a country's way of governing and, by extension, national identity. Hence, the socio-political and cultural stakes are quite high, something which demands a thorough understanding of concepts such as power and politics in the context of architecture. Second of all, by virtue of housing a governmental institution, the complexity of the building as a sort of machine is noticeably high in comparison to other types of buildings, making it necessary to juggle with the many elements that make up the functional spatial layout of the parliament.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The Physical in the Age of the Digital: Positioning the Parliament in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century

<b>Goal</b>	
Location:	Volkspark Schönholzer Heide, Berlin, Germany
The posed problem,	<p>As our society has entered the age of the digital, several problems have risen from the unprecedented amount of information circulation. While indeed the benefits of this instant access to information and data cannot be overstated, one cannot ignore problems such as misinformation. Spreading through the social media and news that we consume on our smart phones, misinformation has proven to be quite dangerous for our democracies, as proven by the 2021 US Capitol attack.</p> <p>With that in mind, comes the problem of how would architecture deal with a society that is ever more dependent on the immaterial world provided by the digital in the context of politics.</p> <p>This is where the parliament as a building typology factors in. It represents the intersection between political institutions (and by extension the societies they serve) and architecture. As such, the proposed research aims to explore how a parliament would look like in the context of an information society.</p>
research questions and	<p>A. main question: How could a parliament building actively engage with the public in an information society?</p> <p>B. sub questions: 1. What if Berlin hosted a new seat for the European Parliament? 2. What is the architectural DNA of a parliament? 3. How can a parliament be adapted to the information society we live in? What can be changed in a parliament building? 4. How can a parliament's security and approachability both be ensured?</p>

design assignment in which these result.	Design a new European Parliament building (in Berlin, Germany), a building that shall establish an active urban presence by engaging the public and educating it about the parliamentary process.
<p>Considering the matter at hand, that of how to position the parliament as a building in the context of an information society, the design assignment attempts to tackle two problems.</p> <p>Firstly, the design brief needs to bring forth the impact of the digital on architecture. A method of accomplishing this would be to turn the building into a live “mirror” of parliamentary proceedings, effectively having screens that broadcast in real time political debates happening elsewhere as well as other matters such as news etc. This shall be considered the more speculative part of the project as it aims to explore how parliament architecture shall respond to the parameters imposed by the information society.</p> <p>Secondly, considering the immaterial nature of the digital world, the design brief must emphasize the physical dimension of a parliament. The building should communicate in a transparent and honest manner the proceedings undertaken by the parliament to the public, a gesture intended to reinforce the connection between the people and the institutions meant to serve their best interests.</p>	
<p><b>Process</b></p>	
<p><b>Method description</b></p>	
<p>Before delving into the process behind the formulation of the design brief, one needs to explain the reasoning behind choosing to design a new European Parliament in Berlin, Germany. An admittedly controversial stance, the choice of positioning such an institution in Berlin is very much hypothetical as it is intended to be an academic experiment. In addition, the complex organizational framework supporting the European Parliament provides an interesting research and design challenge for this graduation project.</p> <p>In order to formulate the design brief for P2, one needs to have a solid understanding of what a parliament is as a building typology and institution, as well as how it is impacted by the information society. With that in mind, the process behind establishing a design brief shall debut with the theoretical research about parliament architecture, as well as what an information society entails.</p> <p>Once the theoretical framework is established, the process shall advance to more practical matters, precisely exploration of the client, program, and site intended for the building. The first step consists of understanding the client’s identity and needs. With regards to the program, an analysis of the established parliament typology shall offer a view into what are its specific architectural traits that allow it to function as its</p>	

respective building type. Once the typology is understood, comes the opportunity to speculate its future by mutating the program according to the project ambition in the hopes of providing an answer to the research question. Finally, the third step takes all that has been studied in the context of the building as an object and applies it in the context of the city, thus trying to accommodate the parliament in a properly chosen area of Berlin. As such, this marks a step from the abstract study of typology to the more tangible aspect of urban analysis.

## Literature and general practical preference

### Literature:

- Adam, R. (2012) *The Globalisation of Modern Architecture: The Impact of Politics, Economics and Social Change on Architecture and Urban Design since 1990*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing
- Blundell Jones, P. (2016) *Architecture and Ritual: How Buildings Shape Society*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Cairns, G. (2016) *Reflections on Architecture, Society and Politics: Social and Cultural Tectonics in the 21st Century*. Milton: Taylor and Francis.
- Carlo Argan, J. (1963) *On the typology of architecture*. Translated by J. Rykwert. AD.
- Choi, E. and Trotter, M. (eds) (2017) *Architecture is All Over*. New York, NY: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City;
- Dovey, K. (2018) *Architecture, Power and Parliament: How do Buildings Shape Politics?*, *Papers on Parliament* (69)[Online] [Accessed 2nd October 2022][https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Senate/Papers\\_on\\_Parliamen Papers\\_on\\_Parliament\\_69/Architecture\\_Power\\_and\\_Parliament](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Papers_on_Parliamen/Papers_on_Parliament_69/Architecture_Power_and_Parliament)
- Findley, L. (2005) *Building Change: Architecture, Politics and Cultural Agency*. London: Routledge.
- Gavas, M. and Koch, S. (2021) *Germany's Role in EU Development Policy: From Broker to Agenda-Setter*, Center for Global Development [Online] [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022] <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/germanys-role-eu-development-policybroker-agenda-setter>
- Giamarelos, S. (no date) "Calling Rowe: After-lives of Formalism in the Digital Age", *Footprint*, 12(1);
- Goodsell, C. T. (1988) "The Architecture of Parliaments: Legislative Houses and Political Culture," *British Journal of Political Science*, 18(3), pp. 287–302.
- Hirst, P. Q. (2005) *Space and Power: Politics, War, and Architecture*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Polity.
- Mourier, P.-F. (1999) *Le Parlement européen à Strasbourg = The European Parliament in Strasbourg = Das Europäische Parlament in Strassburg*. Besançon: Imprimeur.
- Per Fernández, A., Mozas, J. and Arpa, J. (2014) *This is Hybrid: An Analysis of Mixed-Use Buildings*. Vitoria-Gasteiz: a t architecture.
- Schulz, B. and Foster, N. (2000) *The Reichstag: the Parliament Building by Norman Foster*. Munich: Prestel.

- The Economist (2019), Parliaments get facelifts; but it is politics that really needs one [Online] [Accessed 29th October 2022]  
<https://www.economist.com/international/2019/07/27/parliaments-getfacelifts-but-it-is-politics-that-really-needsone>
- Witt, A. (2021) Formulations: Architecture, Mathematics, Culture. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press (Writing architecture series).
- XML (Firm) (2016) Parliament. Amsterdam: XML.

Parliament building case studies:

- Valletta City Gate (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 2015)
- Senedd Cymru (Richard Rogers Partnership, 2006)
- National Assembly of Kuwait (Jørn Utzon, 1982)
- New Second Chamber of Dutch Parliament (de Architecten Cie., 1992)
- New German Parliament (Foster + Partners, 1999)
- New Ba Dinh Hall (gmp Architects, 2014)
- Louise Weiss Building (Architecture-Studio, 1999)
- Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (Louis Kahn, 1982)

## 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 aiming to explore how a parliament building would manifest architecturally in the immediate future of an information society, the graduation topic responds to the theme of the studio, that of "Bodies & Building". Thus, the graduation topic focuses on how a parliament building can be moulded according to the needs and aspirations of our current society. With that mind, the task of designing such a building shall contribute to the overall academic work which focuses on the study of architecture and its evolution, as part of the MSc AUBS programme.

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

The graduation work's relevance lies not only in the methods encouraged by the Complex Projects studio but also in its topic.

First of all, the research aims to tackle the problem of how architectural design can be undertaken with the tools provided by the digital age. The topic of how data can generate designs is highly relevant in the contemporary academic and professional landscape as our own dependency on digital means is arguably inescapable. This method challenges the more traditionally subjective approach to architectural design where one relies more on overarching ambitious concepts, rather than starting from a fact-based foundation and building up on it with the help of rationally curated sets of data. By aiming to inform the research process and subsequent design decision through datasets (ranging from program specifications to site conditions) and an overall objective line of reasoning, the research method proposed by the studio

strives to improve the precision and quality of choices that are part of the architectural process.

Second of all, the subject of politics and how its institutions are materialized in the architectural form is a matter of utmost importance today. The architecture of parliaments is in need of a re-evaluation, from how it operates internally to how it relates to its exterior environment. By exploring how a parliament building can improve upon its established typology (including a re-evaluation of the debate chamber design and layout), the graduation project aims to offer a contribution to the academic work on which the professional dimension of architecture rests upon.