Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Personal information	
Name	Marit van 't Walderveen
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Dwelling Graduation Studio: Designing for Care in an Inclusive Environment	
Main mentor	Kobe Macco	Architecture
Second mentor	Maria Meizoso Aguilar	Building Technology
Third mentor	Leo Oorschot	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I want to research and design for a vulnerable target group creating meaningful architecture that improves the built environment to be more inclusive. I like the human-centred approach of the studio and value the interaction between different domains since we are supported by teachers with experience in architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Growing into Independence: a research on enhancing social engagement in the living environment of adults with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) within urban green-blue grids.

Goal	
Location:	Delft – Tanthof
The posed problem,	6,4% of the Dutch population has a Mild Intellectual Disability. Adults with an MID are less satisfied with life, more often lonely and participate less in society compared to people without a disability. The (potential) need for support of adults with an MID often concerns several areas of life at the same time and can differ per individual making it a vulnerable target group. Moreover, society is getting more complex and increasing higher demands are placed on people's functioning, which is especially difficult for people with an MID.

research questions and	Main research question:
	What living environment for adults with a Mild Intellectual Disability supports social engagement and meaningful experiences within urban green-blue grids?
	Sub-questions:
	1. What different living environments are currently available for adults with an MID?
	2. What are the needs of adults with an MID in relation to the living environment?
	3. How can social engagement and meaningful experiences be fostered by the living environment of adults with an MID?
	4. How can urban green-blue grids support adults with an MID?
design assignment in which these result.	The aim of the research is to create architectural design guidelines for a housing facility including its immediate surroundings for adults with a Mild Intellectual Disability in an urban area. The potential to combine housing with additional neighbourhood facilities stimulating social interaction will be taken into account to reduce loneliness and segregation from society and support them in their everyday life to make them more satisfied in the growing urban landscape.

Adults with an MID often come across as if they can handle more than they are actually capable of. It is important to respect their wish to be as independent as possible but their disability should not be overlooked. Taking manageable, clear steps towards an independent living situation should be facilitated but it is equally important to reassure this is not necessary. Their environment should not *force* them to develop, it must *allow* them to grow into their desired independence and match with their capabilities.

Process

Method description

Literature research: to identify different living environments, a theoretical understanding of the needs of adults with an MID, how to foster social engagement and the benefits of urban green-blue grids in general.

Observations: spending time in the 'shared living space' and in the direct outdoor surroundings of three different housing facilities during a fieldwork week to write, photograph and map the observations as case studies.

Interviews: conducting semi-structured interviews with adults with an MID, caregivers, an initiator of a living concept and a relative about *typology & form, spatial organisation, outdoor surroundings, embedding, facilities, privacy, control/influence on the environment* and *social interaction*.

Urban analysis: to be able to choose a fitting design location, different neighbourhoods of the city of Delft are analysed by doing observations, making pictures and creating maps that support (or contradict) the design guidelines deriving from the research.

Literature and general practical references

For the theoretical framework of the research the following literature is used:
- Overview [influence of the] physical living environment (Roos et al., 2022)
- Dignity paradigm (Reerink et al., 2017)
- Measures and effects of urban green-blue grids (Potz et al., 2012)

For the main body of text the following literature is very influential:
- The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses (Pallasmaa, 2012)
- Living in an 'ordinary' neighbourhood? A care-ethical exploration of the experiences of young adults with mild intellectual disabilities. (Nistelrooij & Niemeijer, 2023)

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 master programme MSc AUBS is focused on working in a multi-disciplinary way to create integrated solutions for the built environment. The architecture track takes a closer look at the building level. The Dwelling studio Designing for Care aims to research and design for societal-, health-, and care- related issues. My graduation topic is about finding a living environment for adults with an MID that supports social interaction within an urban context. By taking a holistic approach, looking at different architectural scales, and empirically studying the needs of a vulnerable target group it fits in the larger master programme of MSc AUBS but also the more specific studio topic.

2. *What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.*
   In view of the socially and politically broadly supported goal of making society more inclusive, as an architecture graduate student I want to make a contribution to reach this goal by researching the specific needs for the (built) environment of adults with an MID. This is important because adults with an MID tend to fall between the cracks of our care system and are often overlooked. The limitations that an intellectual disability entails are not always directly visible which can lead to them not getting the help they need.