

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	Vittorio Domanda
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Complex Projects Graduation Studio Bodies & Building Berlin	
Main mentor	Benjamin Groothuijse	Architecture and the Built Environment
Second mentor	Georgios Karvelas	Architecture and the Built Environment, Building Technology
Third mentor	Maruli Heijman	Architecture and the Built Environment
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Since I finished the first year of the Master's, I've had big interest for the topic "Bodies & Building", central theme of the studio. The possibility of designing a complex structure (one of the 9 typologies presented) by my own was very fascinating for me. In particular, given my passion for social and political topics, the idea of designing a Parliament is what convinced me to select this studio. Moreover, I consider the context of the city of Berlin really stimulating in terms of research and possible design outcomes.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Echoes of Tomorrow A Parliament of Natural Things in Berlin
Goal	
Location:	Berlin, Marx-Engels-Forum
The posed problem,	Our world is living in an environmental crisis without precedents. The risk of ecocide is the order of the day. Around the world, different countries are struggling to preserve their natural entities from exploitation and extinction. In 1972 Christopher D. Stone published an article titled "Should Trees Have Standing?". In the article, the lawyer questions the idea of nature as an entity at the service of human beings, proposing the groundbreaking concept

	<p>that nature should be granted legal rights. Now, 50 years after the publication of the article, it is clear how nature should be considered a legal person and represented in legislative systems. This is happening all around the world, as shown by the cases of the Whanganui River in New Zealand, the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador and all the rivers in Bangladesh. In this worldwide process of change, Europe is lagging.</p> <p>On the other hand, parliamentary institutions are facing a strong crisis with the community they govern. They are losing trust in the eyes of the people and are considered outdated forms of legislation. Surveys show how parliaments are considered the cause of high rates of dissatisfaction towards public institutions, especially in Germany and Berlin.</p> <p>For all these reasons, what is the role of the parliamentary institution in our society? Is the classic form of legislative body losing trust and dying? What is the future of Parliaments in the coming years?</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>How can a contemporary Parliament be designed to include, besides humans, natural entities in the legislative process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways can legal representation of natural things promote democratic participation? • What kind of parliamentary space can accommodate human and non-human representatives? • How can the design of a new type of legislative building serve as a model for sustainable future?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>As explained in the research questions, the main assignment of the project is to design a new parliamentary space in which non-human entities are represented and included in the legislative process of a State. In particular, the project aims to reimagine the city-state Parliament of Berlin (Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin) to give legal representation to the natural things of the city. For this reason, a new design of the Parliament is required, since the current structure would be inadequate for this new purpose because of its spaces, dimensions, architectural style and location.</p>
<p>Process</p>	
<p>Method description</p> <p>The methods of research for my project were developed, according to the studio guidelines, with a specific focus on program, client, and site. For this reason, these three sections are divided to explain in detail how the process was conducted and what results were expected from the research.</p>	

Program

The definition of the building's program encompassed several key aspects. Initially, I conducted a thorough analysis of program elements in diverse case studies worldwide. Six exemplary projects were selected about three analytical features (government type, democracy index values, number of seats in the plenary hall) and personal preferences.

The chosen case studies for the comparison were:

- Reichstag Building in Berlin, Germany;
- North Rhine-Westphalia State Parliament, Germany;
- Old Royal Palace in Athens, Greece;
- Louise Weiss Building in Strasbourg, France;
- National Congress Palace in Brasilia, Brazil;
- Jatyia Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

For each case study, external and internal appearance, project details, floor plans, and sections were collected. In addition to this, the program proportions were calculated in about six primary analytical categories: Committee, Assembly, Administration, Recreation, Visitors, and Functional, based on the square meter size of various rooms within each project.

Subsequently, the results of this analysis informed the calculation of an average program bar for parliamentary buildings. Also, my exploration extended to include the evaluation of two parliament student projects from last year. By measuring the differences between the average program bar and the student projects, I defined six \pm personalization margins, offering valuable guidelines for the future personalization of my project's program bar.

However, the program bar is not the only aspect I focused on. Together with a qualitative comparison of views, photos, floor plans, and sections, a comprehensive analysis of the plenary hall shapes protocol was conducted. This examination sought to understand how the size (from small to large) and the shape (opposing benches, semicircle, horseshoe, circle, and classroom) of the plenary hall influence the democracy index, providing critical insights into the spatial considerations that impact democratic processes within parliaments. This investigation provided me with the fundamental notions for imagining the plenary hall of the new Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin.

Client

The identification and analysis of the client involved three interconnected aspects: users, clients, and stakeholders. These facets collectively shape the goals and objectives of the design project.

To initiate the client analysis, an examination of the current clients of the Abgeordnetenhaus was conducted to grasp the existing client dynamics within this specific Parliament. Subsequently, a detailed analysis of Bruno Latour's theory of the Parliament of Things was undertaken to identify possible diverse figures involved in the project.

The process of client definition commenced with outlining the potential users of the project, categorized into two groups: private users and public users.

For private users, the classification was further segmented into three distinct fields:

- Politics - Encompassing the Abgeordnete (Parliamentarians), government officials, technicians, and the Mayor;

- Berlin - Inclusive of citizens and residents, students and teachers, and community activists;
- Tourism - Encompassing visitors and tourists.

On the other hand, public users were organized into the following three main areas:

- Media - Involving journalists and photographers;
- Things - Inclusive of citizens and residents, students and teachers, and community activists.
- Science - Involving environmentalists, students and professors, and scientists and researchers.

This user classification and description laid the foundation for targeting the primary clients and stakeholders aligned with the project's concept. The interplay between these diverse entities will guide the design process toward the project's overarching vision and objectives.

Site

The process of site selection was underpinned by a mix of group and personal criteria, creating a comprehensive set of requirements to guide the identification of the most fitting location for the project.

Group criteria centre around the overarching themes of health and mitigating overstimulation. These criteria were adapted based on the group strategy, which currently necessitates:

1. Highly Stimulated Area - Within 100 meters of the most stimulated areas concerning air pollution, noise pollution, thermal burden, and traffic congestion.
2. Absence of Category-Specific "Cabins in the City" - Ensuring a distance of 100 meters from existing cabins, which means existing places where people can recover from the overstimulation of the city about mental, social or physical health.

Conversely, personal criteria were grounded in the chosen architectural typology (the Parliament), aligning with the project concept and the context of Berlin. These criteria include:

- Relevance - Clear visibility from public places and natural areas.
- Organisation - Closeness to institutional areas and things associations
- Mix - Positioning integrated into a various context
- Logistics - Proximity to main public transportation hubs.
- Gathering - High footfall and visibility to a diverse audience.
- Openness - Absence of physical and visual boundaries on the sides.

To do this, several tools and methods were employed to formulate a viable set of locations, including:

- Satellite Image Study, for a comprehensive view of potential sites;
- Line Vector Drawing, for precise representations through DWG files;
- 2D Diagrams, providing insights into the contextual layout of the sites.
- 3D Diagrams, for evaluating massing options and their potential impact;
- Table of Comparison, to evaluate different locations against the requirements for a systematic comparison.

Literature and general practical references

About Rights of Nature

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Burgers, L., & den Outer, J. (2021). Rights of Nature. Case-Studies from Six Continents. Embassy of the North Sea.

About Bruno Latour

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Lash, S. (1999). *Another modernity: A Different Rationality*. Wiley-Blackwell.

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Weibel, B. L. P. (2005). Making things public : Atmospheres of democracy (p. 1072).

Yaneva, A. (2022). Latour for architects. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429328510>

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Holzapfel, A. (2023). *Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin*. Taschenbuch 19. Wahlperiode 2021 – 2026.

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About Parliaments

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Strom, E. A. (2001). *Building the new Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital City*.

Wise, M. Z. (1998). Capital Dilemma: Germany's search for a new architecture of democracy. *Foreign Policy*, 111, 145. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1149387>

General practical references

1. Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin in Berlin, Germany;
2. Reichstag Building in Berlin, Germany;
3. North Rhine-Westphalia State Parliament, Germany;
4. Old Royal Palace in Athens, Greece;
5. Louise Weiss Building in Strasbourg, France;
6. National Congress Palace in Brasilia, Brazil;
7. Jatyia Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Reflection

Relation between graduation topic, the studio topic, and Architecture track

The central emphasis of the Complex Projects Graduation Studio revolves around the concept of Buildings and Bodies. The Building is seen as a creator of space, light, and shelter, defining the environments where people work and reside. Architecture, influenced by its time and context, embodies the culmination of various physical and functional necessities of the Bodies, dealing with dimensions, mobility, and comfort. In my project, Bodies and Buildings are reflected by the interest towards a design solution for the Parliament of Things by Bruno Latour, in particular for the natural things of the city-state of Berlin. The Parliament, conceived as a space where people gather to debate, is put into discussion as an old and outdated institution. On the other hand, the Bodies are not only the citizens of the community of Berlin but also the non-human (natural) entities that constitute the ecosystem of the city. Moreover, the graduation project reflects several of the topics I studied during the entire master's programme, especially the political values of architecture I deeply analysed during my history thesis. In fact, in the thesis, I analysed the symbolic messages conveyed by Casa del Fascio in Como designed by Giuseppe Terragni, and this study was fundamental to introducing to the concept of political symbolism in architecture.

Reflection on the relevance of my graduation work in the larger social, professional, and scientific framework

The exploration of a Parliament of Natural Things in Berlin emerges as an innovative attempt in architectural research, dealing with creative ideas that redefine traditional paradigms. The significance of this topic lies not only in its unprecedented nature but in the potential implications that extend far beyond the immediate context. Embarking on a project without a previous reference poses a distinctive challenge, provoking questions that defy conventional norms. Is it a bicameral system, a tricameral system, or an entirely new configuration? How is the plenary hall designed, and does it conform to existing models, or does it transcend canonical shapes? And also, is it a plenary hall, a market hall, or an entirely new type of space? These questions not only stimulate architectural imagination but also challenge the very essence of parliamentary spaces, pushing for a revaluation of their form and function. The need to design a plenary hall that has never existed before calls for a questioning of preconceived notions and a reimagining of the spatial and functional attributes of parliamentary chambers. It becomes an invitation to architects to envision spaces that go beyond historical constraints, fostering an environment conducive to the active participation of both human and non-human entities. Beyond its immediate impact, the project catalyses a potential global shift. The start of a process that could witness the proliferation of Parliaments of Things worldwide carries immense implications for the future of governance. It introduces an innovative form of democratic expression that accommodates a more comprehensive representation, fostering conversations about inclusivity, rights, and legalisation. Moreover, the concept's versatility is a key driver of its relevance. The application of the Parliament of Things can be scaled from the local to the international level, presenting opportunities for adaptation to diverse contexts. Whether implemented within the confines of a city-state or expanded to address global issues, the concept introduces an innovative framework for modern governance.