

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 | Rumyana Toncheva |
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| Studio | | |
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| Name / Theme | Interiors Buildings Cities /Future Bank | |
| Main mentor | Sam De Vocht | Architecture |
| Second mentor | Matthijs Klooster | Architectural Engineering + Technology |
| Argumentation of choice of the studio | My interest in the studio's methodologies was the first reason why I chose it for my graduation work. The studio works in many scales starting from the city, building to the interior and keeping all these scales interrelated to one another. Moreover, I was interested in the studio's new brief and notion of a future bank as a catalyst of change which emphasizes on the social and sustainable responsibilities. I wanted to broaden my knowledge and skills by working on an actual renovation project of a megastructure like the National Bank of Belgium. | |

| Graduation project | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Title of the graduation project | The Future National Bank of Belgium |
| Goal | |
| Location: | Brussels, Belgium |
| The posed problem, | The brief of this year's studio addresses the National Bank of Belgium located on the border of upper and lower parts of Brussels. The current fortress like megastructure that the bank occupies is imposing power and solidity, but is closing itself completely from the public. With the traditional role of the bank such as printing and storage of currency being relocated outside of the city and finance transitioning to virtual mediums, the National Bank of Belgium seeks to both redefine itself physically and at the same time rethink its role in the society. |

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| | <p>As the city of Brussels has declared itself a doughnut economy, the future national bank should be taking into consideration the environmental impact that this project will have but also its future consumption. The future bank is a catalyst of change which would affect the city in various scales - through the future economy, society's attitude and awareness and hopefully set an example to be followed by other institutions.</p> |
| <p>research questions and</p> | <p>How can the future national bank play a role in in the upcoming transition towards the Brussels' Doughnut Economy?</p> <p>How to address the question of circularity in the future bank?</p> <p>How can the bank create a direct link with the citizens?</p> <p>How can the bank become a place of exchange of ideas, knowledge and tangible things?</p> <p>How to reuse the materials from the partial demolition of the bank?</p> <p>How to create a democratic bank that is open to everyone but still keep the security lines which a national bank enforces?</p> |
| <p>design assignment in which these result.</p> | <p>The future bank that I will be designing aims to be open to everyone in order to remove this huge gap between the institution, its workers and the citizens. At the moment the link between the public and the national bank is covered by the commercial banks, however this has to change. My goal for the central bank is to establish a democratic base for communication, social exchange, create prerequisites for social action and connection between the individuals and the institution.</p> <p>The bank courtyard was an essential part of the bank history, however at the moment it is used for delivery and services for the National Bank of Belgium. My project would reactivate the courtyards and reestablish them once again as places for exchange both of knowledge and ideas but also of tangible things. Moreover, the role of the bank as a communicator and mediator as part of the permeable city is essential, but it is important to think about how this could be</p> |

translated within the workspace as well. The central bank has to be designed as a social platform for its employees through removing hierarchies and tendencies like comfort according to rank and invisible control. The office environment would be rethought especially with the effect that the current pandemic situation had on the workspace.

In order to achieve these project goals but at the same time think about sustainability and circularity, there would be a detailed analysis of the existing structure to adequately decide where it is possible to add instead of destroy and where the materials from the demolitions could be reused.

Process

Method description

To be able to answer those questions and problems arising from the research done until now, there are several research methods that would be explored in order to obtain various perspectives and therefore better solutions.

Precedent studies: In the beginning of the studio, the research mentors guided us through the history the workspace and the bank. From these first eight weeks of the research seminar I have been able to learn a lot about the office and the bank as typologies, as architectural spaces and as interiors and institutions. I will continue with the research through precedents, studying the buildings thought plans, sections and elevations as well as through their forms and interior spaces. The courtyard is my starting focal point for the project, thus it will be essential to study plans of early banks, how they evolved with time and how did the typology changed. At the same time it is important to see how the office typology changed over time and how this affected the employees.

Literature research: I will be using literature in order to get information on various topics as well as inform myself with background information concerning topics which I am not well aware of such as banking, economics, role of central banks. Moreover, academic articles as will be part of the research of the alternative functions of the future banks in order to be able to establish this link between the bank and the citizen.

In our studio we already did an extensive research studying the heterogenous city of Brussels and its complex political and cultural background. The same was done for the history and development of the National Bank of Belgium, as archives provided by the bank itself as well as kept in the State archives in Belgium were studied in detail. This information was all organized in a studio booklet which will be a guiding point for the Future Bank I will be designing.

Thinking through modeling, drawing and making: The method of thinking through making is very well used in the studio Buildings Interiors Cities since week one. While making models both for the office interiors and learning about the social plinth and the public interaction with it, I have learnt a lot about these spaces. This is why, I am planning to use this method of research and thinking for answering some of my questions concerning the future bank.

Site Analysis: When visiting the site of the bank in Brussels, methods like mapping, photographing, sketching, drawing would be useful for documenting the condition of the site and the existing issues which would need to be solved.

Literature and general practical preference

- Abramson, Daniel M. *Building the Bank of England: Money, Architecture, Society, 1694-1942*. New Haven. (London: Yale University Press, 2005).
- Antoine, S., & Antoine, S. *Marcel Van Goethem, architect of the National Bank's Headquarters*. NBB Museum. 2021 Retrieved from: <https://www.nbbmuseum.be/en/resources/marcel-van-goethem-architect-national-banks-headquarters>.
- Becker, Franklin. *Workspace: Creating Environments in Organizations* (New York: Praeger, 1981).
- Booker, John. *Temples of Mammon: The Architecture of Banking*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).
- Dovey, Kim. *Tall Storeys: The Corporate Tower*. (London: Routledge, 2008).5
- Duffy, Francis. *Buildings and Society: Office buildings and organizational change*. (London: Routledge, 1980).
- Duffy, Francis. Cave, Colin. Worthington, John. *Planning Office Space*. (London: Architectural Press, 1976).
- Ford, Edward. *The Architectural Detail*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011).
- Hertzberger, Herman. *Architecture and Structuralism: The Ordering of Space*. (Rotterdam: Nai010 publishers2016).
- Parnassus Foundation, and Houston Museum of Fine Arts. *Money Matters: A Critical Look at Bank Architecture*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990).
- Pevsner, Nikolaus. *A history of building types: Exchanges and Banks*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

- Raworth, Kate. *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*. (New York: Random House, 2017)
- Spencer, Douglas. *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

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)?

My project for the master thesis deals with an existing structure of around 90000m² gross area. As a result, there is a careful study done of what to demolish, what to preserve and what to add, considering the historical heritage of the building, the wider urban network as well as the technicalities of the existing form and the sustainable innovations that could be incorporated. The project looks at various scales in order to respond to the current and future needs. Therefore, my project fits within the multidisciplinary context of my master programme - Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences and creatively addresses the whole spectrum of its academic approach.

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

My project of the National Bank of Belgium aims to become an agent of change and set an example to be followed. The project addresses the future economy and the role of the central banks, their influence on the politics of Belgium but also wider framework. Moreover, there are set sustainable goals with which the bank would also address the climate change and the influence buildings have on it. My project addresses the importance of the workplace, the office typology that is highly problematic and affected nowadays. My graduation work analyses and establishes the preconditions for a democratic institution which takes into consideration both the social and sustainable aspect.