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 topic of my graduation studio focuses on health and care. My research ties in with the studio's focus and addresses the prevention of cognitive impairments. It also meets the requirements of the architecture master as it addresses a pressing problem of our time - the increasing number of people living with dementia and fills in a research gap in the prevention of cognitive impairments through a housing block design.

1. How did your research influence your design/recommendations, and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

My research has substantially influenced my design. The results of my research have been collected in a set of design guidelines essential for my design development and incorporated into my design proposal. My research has also inspired me to choose the scale of my design.
I have had multiple in-person conversations with my target group during my fieldwork. These conversations made me realise that the elderly tend to spend most of their time at home or in their neighbourhood. It led me to choose the housing block scale for my design and focus on preventative strategies on this scale.

2. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

The methods I used for my research have enabled me to get to know the perspective of the target group and to check how the design strategies could work in practice. The mixture of first-hand research methods like questionnaires and semi-structured interviews helped me to understand the target group's needs and address them in my design. The second-hand methods, such as the analysis of 2 case studies of community-based housing projects and existing interviews with the residents, made me understand what architectural strategies promote social interaction and strengthen the feeling of community. Additionally, the perspective of the residents and architects involved in the building process provided valuable information about how community-based designs are developed and how the finished project works after being built. Combining first-hand methods with second-hand methods resulted in design guidelines for a preventative housing block design. To conclude, the methods used for my research added substantial value to my research.

3. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

Since the healthcare system can no longer provide care for the elderly in nursing homes, we have to look for solutions beyond the design of healthcare facilities.
Most studies concerning architecture design for dementia have only focused on minimising the symptoms of dementia. However, such approaches did not investigate the possibility of preventing cognitive impairments altogether. Many architects concentrate on developing the right living conditions for people with Alzheimer's. Projects like Alzheimer's villages or specialised elderly housing have emerged worldwide. Yet what is still not developed is how to prevent these cognitive impairments through the architectural design of housing and neighbourhoods. Therefore, in my research, I want to address this research gap. Inspired by the phrase, "prevention is better than cure," I wish to focus on

minimising the risk of developing cognitive impairments, encouraging daily inter-generational contact and strengthening communities.

The results of my research can shine more light on preventing cognitive impairments through architectural design and healthy ageing in place and inspire other architects to be more conscious of these problems in their designs.

4. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

While every project has its site-specific design solutions, some of the design ideas in my project can be reapplied in future developments. For example, the design ideas focused on architecture for encounter and active design and future-proof housing design incorporated in my building can be reapplied in other housing projects.

Thus, the research aimed to create a project that would inspire other architects to incorporate preventive measures into future designs. Therefore, a set of guidelines has been included in my research report.

5. What has influenced you to develop a project on a housing scale?

During my paper, I researched how cognitive impairments could be prevented by incorporating design strategies on the neighbourhood and housing scale. I discovered that the elderly spend most of their time in their closest surroundings. This led me to choose the housing block and the neighbourhood as the scale of my intervention. I have then analysed what kind of design strategies could prove the most effective in prevention. I have established that encouraging social contact and physical activity through design for encounter and active design are the key approaches to consider. Moreover, future-proof design can play a crucial role in making it possible for the elderly to keep living in their familiar environment for longer, thus keeping their social network and being more self-dependent. Since the most significant cognitive decline is experienced after moving an elderly person out of their familiar space, future-proof and flexible design is an essential factor I have incorporated in my housing block design.

6. Why did you choose to create a co-housing project?

During my research, I discovered that there had been a sudden increase in interest in co-housing and cooperative housing projects. It is influenced by the rising prices of apartments and the interest in breaking with anonymity between neighbours. People actively search for housing options focused on creating inclusive communities where people of different ages, incomes, and family structures can live together and battle loneliness. The elderly residents of the analysed co-housing and cooperative housing projects have pointed out that they were actively looking for a community-based project. They have said that they feel a sense of purpose since moving to their new flats. They always have something to do, a neighbour to help or a companion to walk to the park with, and thus feel a part of a community. Additionally, they have mentioned that the design of circulation spaces and communal areas of their housing blocks has improved social interactions. After considering all of these factors, I have concluded that community-focused projects can help to keep the elderly in the circle, improve their social interactions and help them feel a sense of purpose, and therefore decided to create a co-housing project.