

Looking back at the journey through the master's thesis in architecture, it becomes evident that the initial stages of research and design were fundamental in shaping the direction of my project. The first assignment addressing the question "What is nature to you?" gave me the chance to reflect on the concept of nature and its relationship with the theme of "Last Green in Town" that I had previously explored. Choosing the master's thesis track with the studio Urban Architecture challenged me to work on a project that combines the societal and political issues existing in Brussels, particularly in Schaerbeek's neighbourhood, understanding the direct and important connection with the ecological questions and challenges of leftover spaces in an urban environment.

Alignment of Topic, Master Track, and Programme:

The connection between my graduation project topic, my master track in Architecture, Urbanism, and Building Sciences (AUBS), and the broader MSc program is pivotal. My chosen topic, "Turning the back to the city. Re-thinking the connection between inhabitants and nature in urban wastelands," seamlessly integrates with the themes of urban sustainability and architectural innovation inherent in the AUBS track. The interdisciplinary nature of the graduation theme "Last Green in Town" allowed me to delve into topics such as urban planning, environmental sciences, political challenges, and architectural design, enriching the depth of my research.

Mutual Influence of Research and Design:

The symbiotic relationship between research and design has been fundamental in shaping my project. Initial research findings on ways of living the relationship between urban contexts and inhabitants to urban green spaces' ecological benefits and social significance informed the starting phase of my design criteria. The walking act is the element that allowed me to experience and understand the complexity of the topic both from a scientific and more research-related point of view, bridging with the perceptive aspects of how architecture and the walking act could answer my research questions. Conversely, the design process prompted deeper dives into specific research areas, refining hypotheses, methodologies, and ways of explaining my research. This iterative process enriched my research, stressing the inseparability of research and design and bringing to a passionate and more complex work.

Assessment of Methodological Value:

Evaluating my approach necessitates a critical examination of the methods employed. From the beginning, the site-oriented approach of the studio gave the first directions to my research

methodology, trying to always start from a human point of view and already experiencing the site walking. Although the broad and multifaceted research sometimes brought me to uncertainty about how to reframe and re-organize the result of my work, the collaboration with my tutors helped me to strengthen the connection between research and design choices.

Academic and Societal Implications:

The project always aimed to solve the multifaceted challenges that the site was already addressing. Starting from the political problems related to the administration of urban leftovers, to society and inhabitants' involvement in the decision-making process, the project, as the title suggests, aims to give a new point of view to the administration of our cities on how to combine ecology, society, politics through the combination of architecture, sciences, and landscape design. By delineating strategies for enhancing urban green connection to the city and its inhabitants, my project addresses pressing environmental concerns while fostering community resilience and well-being. Ethical considerations, such as equitable access to green spaces and the mitigation of gentrification pressures, have been central to the project's ethics.

Transferability of Project Results:

The project results underscore potential scalability and applicability across diverse contexts, raising the question of wasteland and urban leftovers that our cities, changing and developing over time, are generating. While rooted in the urban fabric of my case study area, the principles and methodologies explained in my project are transferable to similar urban contexts dealing with sustainability and housing challenges. By articulating best practices and adaptable design frameworks, my project seeks to catalyze broader conversations on ecology and architecture in urban leftovers and urban transformation and developments.

In addition to the prescribed reflection aspects, two reflection questions emerge:

How has your personal relationship with nature evolved throughout the course of your thesis project, and how has this influenced your understanding of the concept of "Last Green in Town"? How could it be improved or analyzed in a different way?

Where do you position yourself in the discussion on sustainability and architecture? Do you see yourself more as an activist-architect looking for a solution and refusing compromises, or do you see the potentiality of a gradual change through a more sustainable architecture, accepting the impossibility of changing everything in a short period of time?

Reflecting on the relationship between research and design in your project, what specific moments or insights during the iterative process stand out as key elements in shaping both your research findings and design criteria?

Looking ahead, the final part of my graduation period will be filled with consolidating insights gleaned from the reflection process, refining design recommendations, and preparing for the presentation of my work. Additionally, I would like to explore future possibilities for further studies and application of my project findings, opening up the dialogue and implementing a new way of looking at urban ecological leftovers and maybe to sensitize about the needs and developments of our cities, enabling them to be ready for the societal and political challenges and changes that they are going to face in the future.