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	Rebecca Smink
Student number	4836642
Telephone number	
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Design of the Urban Fabrics – Theme: densification/intensification	
Main mentor	Dipl. Ing Birgit Hausleitner	Urban Design
Second mentor	Dr. ir. Lei Qu	Spatial Planning & Strategy
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Due to globalization challenges concerning inequalities, exclusion and social tensions are expanding, increasing the ongoing social and political struggles over space in contemporary London (and many other cities). As a result there is a growing need for research regarding urban development that can foster a sustainable and livable environments. The studio is especially concerned with typological and structural transformations that possibly can achieve such environments. The general topic of the thesis is concerned with the impacts of restructuring the socio-spatial environment through densification/intensification of the selected urban area, and aims to create possible future evolutions (design scenarios) that can support adapting societal practices. For that reason the choice has fallen for the graduation studio Urban Fabrics, because the expertise of the mentors are essential for strengthening the outcome of the thesis. For example, advanced spatial analyses, scenario driven design, always keeping in mind the impact on street-level.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Main Title: Global inclusion and local exclusion Subtitle: the conflicts between social and economic space within contemporary London
Goal	

Location:	Stratford, Newham - London
The posed problem,	Newham is facing many challenges related to social issues, such as anti-socal behavior and unemployment. At the same time Newham will be target for densification and intensification, resulting in the change of their physical and socioeconomic environment. This transformation of the urban form, however, can be seen as an opportunity that create conditions for the emergence of certain urban effects, such as facilitating the potential for more social interaction between different community groups. However, there is little comprehensive national guidance; as a consequence the local government struggles to develop a design framework that can solve challenges related to these issues.

Simultaneously, the local plan is too much focused on the economic regeneration of the area, undermining the social value of public space, including their role in creating people's sense of attachment to a place and their contribution to community cohesion. Furthermore, the economic restructuring has accelerated the process deindustrialization, as well as processes of gentrification, driving out the traditional working class and marginalised groups within the boroughs Newham and Tower Hamlets. Moreover, it has resulted in the removal of existing locally available jobs, affordable housing and community faclities which had benefited Newham's lower-income class. To sum up, the reconfiguration of the socio-spatial landscape for the accumulation of capital actually downplays the ongoing social and polical struggles over space in contemporary London. |
| research questions and sub research questions | Main question
How can the morphological reconfiguration create better opportunities for social interaction between different community groups in the contested space of Stratford?

Sub question

- How are the different elements (density, mix and accessibility) of urban morphology interrelated? To what extend do they impact social interaction?

- What are the probabilities of interaction between different socio-economic groups in public space? Which current places in Newham already facilitate integration and exchange?

-What are the design solutions that promote social interaction?

- How can the results be integrated into decision making and planning? |

design assignment in which these result.	The design assignment is designing different design scenarios, showing different alternatives for enhancing social interaction within Stratford. This includes configurational changes, as well as typological changes (including different densities provided by different typologies). The typological changes include typologies provided by different estate developers (for example local authorities, private developers, NGO's).

[This should be formulated in such a way that the graduation project can answer these questions.
The definition of the problem has to be significant to a clearly defined area of research and design.]

Process

Method description

Question 1 method:

Sub-question 2 can be answered based on studying the theories concerning morphology in relation to social interaction and urban life. These concepts can be found in the researches of Jane Jacobs (1961), Jan Gehl (1971) (2010) and Dovey&Pafka (2019). At the same time there are many researches available regarding the relation between the configurational morphology and certain social activities (Hillier and Hanson, 1986), such as interplay segregation (Legeby, 2010), and crime and antisocial behavior (Friedrich & Hillier, 2008). The key concepts and methods of these theories are useful creating methods for analyses, as well as evaluating design proposals. At the same time the literature review is used for developing the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the research. To sum up, it is important to use the approaches described by Hillier in order to empirically support the normative approaches as described by Jacobs and Dovey&Pafka.

Question 2 method:

Sub-question 3 will be answered through a context-specific analysis. The tools and methods are defined in the theoretical and conceptual chapter of this research. First a quantitative method is set out using GIS data to perform a configurational analysis as well as a geographical accessibility analysis. Secondly, a qualitative method is carried out through field research in order to verify the conclusions formulated using the quantitative method.

Question 3 method:

This question will be answered through research through design. The generation of the design solutions are meant to achieve the design objectives that are formulated in earlier stages of the research. First, the different design solutions (design scenarios) will be created based on reference studies that tried to achieve similar objectives as well as own intuition. Creating different scenarios encourages design thinking and helps to overcome thinking limitations. Then, the design proposals will be evaluated using the methods and techniques developed in the earlier stage of the research (place syntax). In this way parts of the design cycle can be empirically justified. The cycle of generating and evaluating ideas can be repeated at different moments until the most optimum solution is reached that is in allignment with the vision as well as the ideas and wishes of the stakeholders. Here, stakeholder is of utmost important for the validation of the design.

Question 4 method:

To answer this question a qualitative method will be carried out. Planning and policy documents have to be analysed in order to develop a planning and design strategy that is economically and politically visible; or if necessary, to propose planning and policy reforms in order to create conditions for the implementation of the design strategy.

Literature and general practical preference

Theories:

Lefebvre – The social production of space (Social Space)
Hillier - The social logic of space (Space Syntax Theory)
DeLanda – A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity (Assemblage theory)
Stahle – Place Syntax Tool (PST) – Accessibility instruments (Place syntax theory)
Jacobs – The Death and Life of Great American Cities (Urban Life)
Gehl – Life between building (Urban Life)
Dovey – The Urban DMA (Assemblage theory and urban life)
Kropf – The Handbook of Urban Morphology (Urban Morphology)

Reflection

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 general topic of the thesis is concerned with the impacts of restructuring the socio-spatial environment through densification/intensification of the selected urban area, this has a direct relation with the graduation studio topic of Design of The Urban Fabrics, which is also densification/intensification.

The master track urbanism combines urban design, spatial planning and engineering. The graduation topic is concerned with practices of urban design and spatial planning.

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

Within the globalizing world challenges concerning inequalities, exclusion and social tensions are expanding, for that reason there is a need for research concerning design and planning approaches for making neighbourhoods more social inclusive and sustainable both at local and city scale. This thesis will address these challenges, on a local level, within a Newham and will equip the local government, state government and developers with possible design approaches creating possibilities of interaction between different community groups on a neighbourhood scale, Furthermore, the approach of the thesis uses an analytical tool for partly justifying certain design decisions during the design process. Therefore this research can also be considered as an example that explores the potentials and perils of integrating the space syntax aproach into city-design-and-transformation processes. The outcome can be useful for designer and planners in the future.

The aim of the research is to increase the social of Newham's residents. This will be done by proposing transformations of the urban environment that create possibilities for certain conditions, in this case encounters. As mentioned before facilitating places for daily encounters can enhance the sense of community, give relieve from daily routines or create opportunities for making new friendships. Furthermore businesses seems to thrive in such areas, therefore these places are needed for economic regeneration. Lastly, activity in the streets seems to 'push out' incidents related to crime. Thus, the proposed transformations are needed for enhancing the well-being of the residents.