

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



<b>Personal information</b>	
Name	Jochem van Westing
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<b>Studio</b>		
Name / Theme	AR3AP100 Public Building Graduation Studio – Public Condenser – New Urban Lounge & Commons	
Main mentor	Stefan Witteman	Project Design
Second mentor	Florian Eckardt	Technical Building Design
Third mentor	Stefano Corbo	Theory & Delineation
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>Society is getting more inclusive by the day. Both in terms of race as well as gender, sexuality, religion and so on. This trend of inclusion should find physical correspondence in the design of public spaces that are more accessible to a wider audience with different lifestyles and cultures. The studio of Public Building offers a platform to dive deeper into this subject and to create a prototype to facilitate this important trend. By designing a public condenser people will be brought together that may normally not have crossed paths with each other. The design process will be guided through four thematic pillars: multiplicity, hybridity, resilience, and sustainability. These pillars will pave a way to a new form of public building. A public building that will stand the test of time and serve as an example for future projects.</p> <p>These public buildings are important to the neighborhood and even the whole city as they can be the heart of communities. A safe space where people of all ages can go to and meet each other, learn from each other, and play with each other. A building that will regenerate its neighborhood and the social life of its inhabitants. Without such buildings these interactions between citizens would be greatly inhibited. The building will, next to the four pillars, be a form of Commons as a way of creating a building that is more inclusive for people, moments and cultures. This way of stimulating social interaction made me finally choose this studio.</p>	

<b>Graduation project</b>	
Title of the graduation project	<b>Sofas in the City</b> Closing the Gap between the Urban and the Domestic in Friedrichshain, Berlin
<b>Goal</b>	
Location	Friedrichshain, Berlin
The posed problem	<p>In contemporary cities the contrast between the peaceful ambiance in one's home and the overwhelming urban setting enclosing these personal spaces are hard to miss. High buildings in city centers generally create more impersonal relationships. When looking at such buildings you need to stand back at such a distance that small details disappear and you lose part of the connection with the building and the functions inside (Gehl et al., 2006).</p> <p><i>"The development of society and the attendant development of architectural ideals have created an urban architecture where meaningful close encounters between city and buildings and between people inside and out have disappeared almost automatically."</i> <sup>[1]</sup></p> <p>If there is little to no connection between the inside and outside of buildings, people are less likely to visit that building. And because the urban setting is so impersonal, people are less likely to interact with each other in public spaces as well. This is corroborated by a study done by Glaeser and Sacerdote (2000) where it was found that large apartment buildings might bring neighbors closer to each other but it furthers the distance between people's homes and the urban surroundings.</p> <p>This means there is a lack of social interaction in cities with high buildings, which is important since social interaction is vital for creating positive effects on both your mental health as well as your physical health (Antonovsky, 1987).</p> <p>The step in scale between private and public spaces is currently too big to facilitate these social interactions. To fill this gap between scales and boost social encounters an in-between space is necessary. A place where there it is easy to connect to from both the small private scale and the big urban scale.</p> <p><i>"The intermediate-size building is marked by a gradual transition from the private to the public domain, while maintaining its autonomy through a balanced relationship between the whole and its parts."</i> <sup>[2]</sup></p> <p>In this project that gradual transition between the private and public domain will be explored via a new form of public building in Friedrichshain, Berlin. This location is chosen because of the way the neighborhood is constructed. The buildings in the area are mainly tall and monofunctional with a closed façade. The infrastructure has a high presence and breaks the neighborhood into smaller islands. And the green public spaces have little to no quality other than to look at, resulting in a lack of public gathering spaces where people can socialize.</p> <p><b>Notes</b></p> <p><sup>[1]</sup> Bijlsma, L., &amp; Schreurs, E. (2019). Over de stad en de kleine korrel: Collectieve architectuur tussen ideaal en praktisch. <i>OverHolland</i>, 12(20), 177–186. <a href="https://doi.org/10.7480/overholland.2019.20.4148">https://doi.org/10.7480/overholland.2019.20.4148</a></p> <p><sup>[2]</sup> Gehl, J., Kaefer, L. J. &amp; Reigstad, S. (2006). Close encounters with buildings. <i>URBAN DESIGN International</i>, 11(1), 29–47. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.udi.9000162">https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.udi.9000162</a></p> <p>For other references see "Literature and general practical preference"</p>

Research questions	<p>In what way can a public building facilitate the gradual transition between the private and public domain in Friedrichshain, Berlin?</p> <p>How can architecture rethink the boundaries between public and private?</p> <p>How can a public condenser act as a multi-scale entity within the urban fabric of Berlin?</p> <p>How can notions of density and multiplicity inform the design of a public condenser?</p> <p>Using the notion of Commons, how can a public building be more inclusive?</p>
Design assignment	<p>The design will be a prototype for a public condenser in the neighborhood of Friedrichshain. This public condenser will explore the aforementioned transition by implementing the programmatic elements in a gradience of scale based on different themes. The building will start with a base program existing out of for example a daycare and a restaurant, a program that will bring people to the building regardless of its location. The complementing program is based on the site of the building. Out of a long list of possible program, rated on how public or private they are, some are picked based on what was missing in the location and what focus group will be targeted.</p> <p>Because a lot of buildings in the surrounding areas are monofunctional, they are abandoned for large chunks of the day. To make the location livelier and safer the program is more spread out over the day. With most parts of the building being open between 9:00 and 18:00, there will be parts that focus more on the evening and the night. That way there will always be people there creating more eyes on the street.</p> <p>The design will go on by exploring the placement of the programmatic elements in relation to each other and the urban surroundings to create a public interior. This public interior will, as Pimlott (2018) describes, be a space that reflects values of society and relations between citizens themselves and the city. In this way, the prototype will be a way to lower social thresholds and bring the private and the urban closer to each other.</p>

### **Process – Method Description**

Just like any studio this studio started in the first quarter of the year with some general research about the location. This was followed by an excursion to Berlin, where research on location was done through photography and interviews. After the excursion further research and positioning was done which eventually led to a P1 presentation with conclusions in the form of definitions, maps, location comparisons, program, sections, and a general concept.

But what set this quarter apart from other studios was the parallel course of Theory & Delineation. Through a series of lectures and design exercises this course explored different design techniques and tools to help filter information, position yourself and/or create a design concept. The techniques used were a collage and montage, diagrams, psychogeography, assemblage and digital modelling. At the end of the five exercises of Theory & Delineation you now had a step by step visual research by design process of your design concept. This course let you go deeper into relationships between elements and made you think in different ways about a problem statement and eventual design concept.

The second quarter of the year started again like any other studio with more research about the design location, a further analysis of the program and a search for references. It quickly went deeper through a final design exercise from Theory & Delineation, the Re-mix. This final exercise opened the door to more realistic design research by making you think more about programmatic relationships, spatial relationships, sequences, hierarchies, scales, and routing. These elements would be tested through the use of a site plan, floorplans, and sections and will be complemented by elevations, axonometric drawings, and relational schemes in P2 to represent a schematic design.

The third quarter will be used to translate the schematic design into a preliminary design. During this period the floorplans and routing will be finalized, taking the P2 feedback into account. The scale of products will change as well. In the second quarter the main focus was on products of scale 1:1000 or 1:500, in the third quarter the focus will change more to products of scale 1:200 to 1:50. This will mean decisions on the following subjects: position and materiality of main structure and design elements, circulation, and a façade design. The preliminary design will be presented in P3.

The fourth quarter will be used to translate this preliminary design into a final design. This means a final step in scale. Decisions will have to be made on all materialization, all buildings systems, sustainability, and connection between elements. This will be presented in P4 after which adjustments will be made to finalize products and models for the final presentation of P5.

### Literature and general practical preference

Since the main focus of the studio is on research by design, the references that will be used in the project will not only be literary references but examples of buildings as well.

- *Kunstmin Theatre (2014)*, Dordrecht, Netherlands
- *De Kom Theatre and Arts Center (2012)*, Nieuwegein, Netherlands
- *Ku.Be House of Culture and Movement (2016)*, Frederiksberg, Denmark
- *Casa da Música (2005)*, Porto, Portugal
- *Taipei Performing Arts Center (2022)*, Taipei, Taiwan
- *The Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center (2016)*, New York, United States
- *Prior Performing Arts Center (2022)*, Worcester, United States

Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well*. Wiley.

Bijlsma, L., & Schreurs, E. (2019). Over de stad en de kleine korrel: Collectieve architectuur tussen ideaal en praktijk. *OverHolland*, 12(20), 177–186.  
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Neufert, E., & Neufert, P. (2012). *Architects Data* (4de editie) [Pdf]. Wiley.  
<https://byarchlens.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Neufert-4th-edition.pdf>

Pimlott, M. (2018). Interiority and The Conditions of Interior. *Interiority*, 1(1), 5–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.7454/in.v1i1.5>

## 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 relationship between the MSc1 studio of Architectural Engineering and the current studio of Public Building is in this phase of the project not very strong yet. The themes of the MSc1 studio were more focussed on technical elements and was exploring a way to slow down or solve the Urban Heat Island Effect. In the coming semester the connection between the two is expected to grow as the semester will dive deeper into sustainability and technical aspects.

The relationship between the MSc2 studio of High-Rise Culture, a multidisciplinary studio from the chairs of Public Building, Dwelling and Form Studies, and the current studio of Public Building however is way stronger. The themes of the MSc2 studio were more in line with the current studio as it explored how dwellings could be combined with public space and a (semi-)public program. Where it differs between the two is the scale of the project and the depth of the research into social thresholds. The MSc2 studio was combining three high-rise towers of housing with a public plinth, whilst the current studio only focusses on the public part of the program with only a fraction of the floor space. This leads to the fact that the graduation studio is diving deeper into the subject of public program, thresholds, and social interactions than the MSc2 studio was doing.

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

The problem of the scale gap between private space and the urban surroundings are not one specifically bound to Friedrichshain or even Berlin. In almost every big city you can find the same problem. With this graduation project a solution will emerge that can either solve or soften this problem with the use of a public building. In this way the project can be used as either a baseline or a reference to projects in other cities dealing with the same problem.