

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examenscommissie-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	Kushav Dharvish Aubeeluck
Student number	5957001

Studio		
Name / Theme	Methods of Analysis and Imagination: A Matter of Scale	
Main mentor	Jorge Mejía Hernández	Architecture
Second mentor	Freek Speksnijder	Building Technology
Third mentor	Klaske Havik	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Growing up in Mauritius' multicultural environment and later studying in China and the Netherlands have enriched my perspective and strengthened my desire to become a culturally adaptable individual who embraces the many ways of living and architectural solutions for different societies, communities, and contexts. Choosing the studio, A Matter of Scale in Tallinn has therefore provided me with a unique opportunity to engage with an unfamiliar culture while being granted the freedom to independently develop my research and design brief. This experience not only allows me to explore my personal interests in Tallinn's local context, but it also enriches my architectural sensitivity.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The Dwellers of Väikese Rannavärava
Goal	
Location:	Aia tn 20, 10111 Tallinn, Estonia
The posed problem,	In Tallinn, tourism has grown rapidly, with foreign visitor numbers increasing from 160,000 in 1985 to 4.6 million in 2018. Simultaneously, the population of the Old Town has decreased from 6,000 to 2,300, raising concerns about the impact of tourism on urban diversity and local communities. This extreme disbalance can be better understood when we consider that Tallinn Old Town had

	<p>more tourists per inhabitant than Venice before the pandemic (Talk et al., 2023).</p> <p>The mass departure of the Old Town's permanent residents is largely due to the growing number of buildings used for short-term rentals or other tourism-oriented purposes, like hotels and Airbnb accommodations. According to the Tallinn City Council (2014, p. 44), these buildings contribute to seasonal fluctuations, leaving the area underutilized during off-peak times and failing to meet the needs of permanent residents.</p>
research questions and	How can Tallinn Old Town's tourism economy be integrated with local uses to create a cohesive social and economic ecosystem that benefits both the temporary and permanent residents?
design assignment in which these result.	<p>To contribute to the preservation and regeneration of Tallinn Old Town, the Väikese Rannavärava Bastion—destroyed in the late 1800s and later rebuilt to accommodate modern architecture will be transformed into a socially cohesive and resilient neighbourhood.</p> <p>This neighbourhood will function as a system of sympathetic relationships, promoting coexistence among diverse and sometimes conflicting individuals. By enabling shared access to resources and encouraging unique contributions, this system has the potential to evolve into a self-sustaining urban community. To achieve this, the project will integrate everyday life with privatized activities through mixed-use programs, including housing, a hotel, community spaces, offices, and small-scale commercial businesses.</p>

Process

Method description

To create a socially cohesive and resilient neighbourhood in Tallinn Old Town, I must go beyond its physicality and search into how it is perceived, conceived and lived in.

To achieve this, my research partner Clarisse and I identified symbolic conceived spaces (landmarks) in Tallinn's City Centre that reflect distinct stages in its historical, social and architectural evolution. These spaces served as markers for studying its thresholds, its various perceived spaces- its tangible architectural forms and urban layouts. To analyse these complex social and spatial processes, we created a hybrid

method, which we termed as Juxtaposition of Scales. It is a method of 3 steps and 3 scales to represent how the different scales of Tallinn influence or are a subtle indication of the purpose of each space.

The 3 Phases are:

1. Planning and Walking a Thematic Route
2. Horizontal-Viewing
3. Drawing Collectively

The 3 Scales are:

1. Urban
2. Architectural
3. Detail

This method, allowed us to see and understand the everyday spatial realities (Lived Spaces). This became a Juxtaposed Drawing, which served as a tool to reveal the city's hard data (dimensions, orientation, qualities, and geometries) and soft data (activities, use, experience). Therefore, it became our container for the new knowledge gained, which I later used as part of my design strategies.

After analysing the different thresholds of Tallinn's City Centre, I narrowed my focus to its symbolical and historical thresholds, namely its fortifications. According to Zobel (2014, pp. 9-11), Tallinn was what could be termed as a real fortified city throughout the medieval era (1030) until its loss in military importance in the modern era (1864). Historically, its defence belt evolved from medieval fortifications from the era of vertical defence (1200s-1400s) to a new layer of fortifications during the era of horizontal defence (1500s-1800s).

We can still see some of the remnants today, which were not destroyed after 1857 when Tallinn was removed from the registry of land fortifications (Zobel, 2008, p. 13). The once permanent defence belt together with many buildings in the Old Town were part of a chaotic destruction that erased most of Tallinn's stone bastions.

Moreover, during my archival research, I discovered that the Väikese Rannavärava Bastion, which was part of the fortifications destroyed in the late 1800s was later rebuilt to accommodate modern architecture in 1986. To better understand the Väikese Rannavärava Bastion, I therefore deconstructed it and followed with extensive research on how to turn similar non-human scale architectures into artifacts of human scale.

Literature and general practical references

Literature

Alatalu, R. (2017). *Estonian Cultural Heritage: Preservation and Conservation* (Vol.2). Muinsuskaitseamet

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Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (1st ed.). Basil Blackwell Ltd.

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Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, J., Milano, C., Novelli, M., Dijkmans, C., Eijgelaar, E., Hartman, S., Heslinga, J., Isaac, R., Mitas, O., Moretti, S., Nawijn, J., Papp, B. and Postma, A. (2018). *Research for TRAN Committee - Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses*. Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/629184/IPOL_STU\(2018\)629184_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/629184/IPOL_STU(2018)629184_EN.pdf)

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UNTWO. (2018). *'Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions*, Executive Summary

Zobel, R. (2008). *Tallinn (Reval) in the Middle Ages: Town building in the 13th-14th centuries* (2nd ed.). Estonian Academy of Arts.

Zobel, R. (2014). *Tallinn (Reval): Fortifications in the Middle Ages*. Estonian Academy of Arts.

Precedents

Diocletian's Palace, Split, Croatia.
Arles Amphitheatre, France.
Roman Amphitheater of Lucca, Italy.
Kingly Street, United Kingdom.

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)?

The goal of creating a self-sustaining urban community requires a multi-scale approach, ranging from the careful detailing of individual buildings to their integration at the urban level. The design must therefore provide diverse opportunities for different people while ensuring that each building functions effectively within the larger urban context. This approach combines aesthetic considerations with technical performance, addressing both architectural and urban challenges. It is a process that requires attention in multiple scales, from the micro (detail) to the macro (urban planning), which aligns with the focus of the, A Matter of Scale, studio.

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

In historical cities, the consequences of overtourism are particularly complex. While tourism can provide the necessary funding for maintaining heritage sites, it can also compromise the social and functional diversity of these spaces, turning community neighbourhoods into tourism monocultures. This issue is quite known in many European cities, such as Venice and Barcelona, where rising tourist numbers have increased the cost of living and real estate prices, leading to depopulation and a decline in the quality of life for residents (Talk et al., 2023). Residential areas often become “touristified,” with short-term rentals displacing locals and altering the character of neighbourhoods. This process can marginalize the resident population and lead to hostility between locals and visitors, eroding cultural identity and social cohesion (Peeters et al., 2018, pp. 39, 40).

There is therefore a need for a more sustainable urban tourism model that benefits both the temporary and permanent residents to avoid tourism monocultures and ensure the long-term sustainability of historic city centres.