



POST-MILITARY LANDSCAPES

REFLECTION

Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment TU Delft

Petra Malinská

Figure 1.
Petra Malinská, Building
without Context, scheme,
2025.

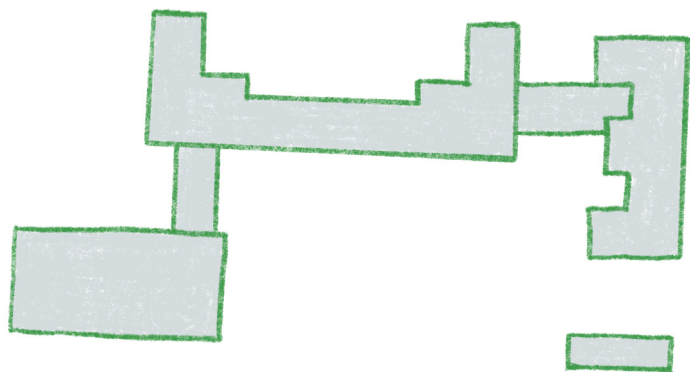


Figure 2.
Petra Malinská, Building
with Context, scheme,
2025.

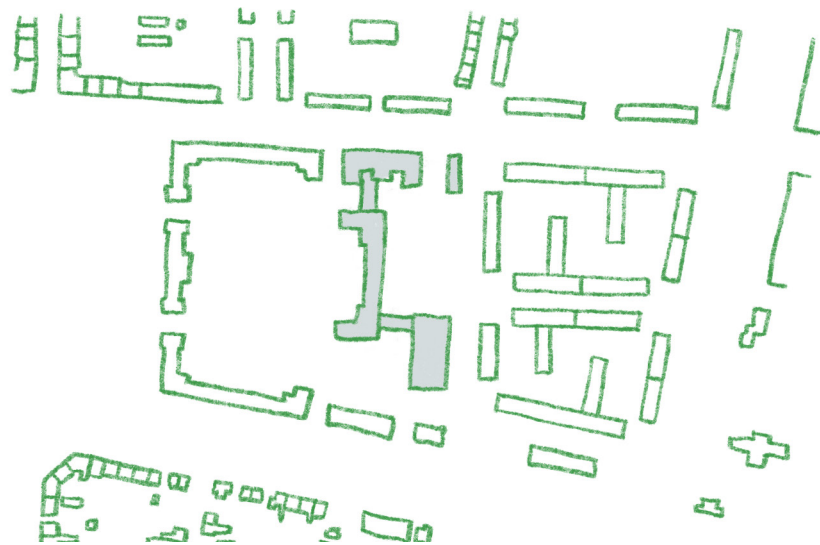
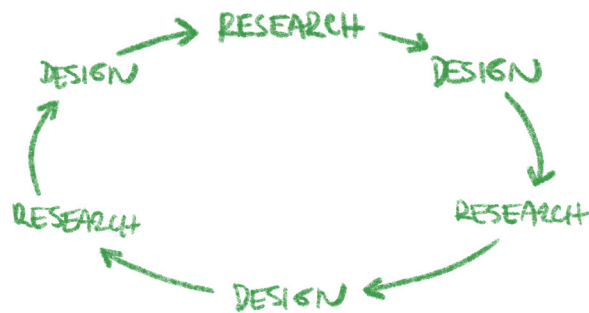


Figure 3.
Petra Malinská, Research
and Design, scheme, 2025.



REFLECTION

1. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN YOUR GRADUATION PROJECT TOPIC, YOUR MASTER TRACK (A, U, BT, LA, MBE), AND YOUR MASTER PROGRAMME (MSC AUBS)?

Architecture, urban planning, urban design and building sciences are closely intertwined, making it difficult to draw clear boundaries between them. The scale of my project lies between architecture and urban design. From an architectural as well as form urban perspective, my project emphasises the importance of reusing existing buildings and the necessity of using existing structures instead of constantly building new structures. Moreover, architecture cannot exist without context. In fact, the context can be even more important than the building itself (see figures 1 and 2).

As a student of both architecture and urbanism, I believe it is essential for architects to understand the connections between all areas of the AUBS Master's program. To be able to think about them in a broader context and to integrate the unified aspects of other disciplines into ours. This standpoint is important for the contextuality of the design. At the same time, this understanding is the first step in learning to collaborate with other professionals involved in the design process.

2. HOW DID YOUR RESEARCH INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN/ RECOMMENDATIONS AND HOW DID THE DESIGN/ RECOMMENDATIONS INFLUENCE YOUR RESEARCH?

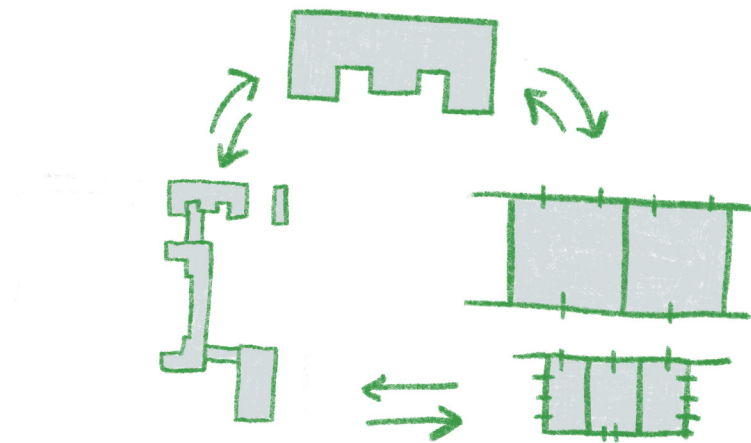
The main result of the research phase is a set of recommendations on how to manage the area in the future. However, during the research phase I had already started to analyse the buildings and think about ways of reusing them, which certainly influenced the way I assessed them in the research phase. Conversely, during the research I discovered many new facts about the history of the site and explored completely new perspectives from the respondents. So, both the design part and the research part complemented each other and shaped my attitude towards the site (see figure 3).

3. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE VALUE OF YOUR WAY OF WORKING (YOUR APPROACH, YOUR USED METHODS, USED METHODOLOGY)?

At the beginning of my research, I started with a rather broad topic, which I would narrow down even more from today's perspective. This would have meant the possibility of going even more in depth, but on the other hand it would not have provided such a broad context.

I started with archival, historical and literature research because I needed to better explore the place and the context. I then decided to work with a quantitative methodology, which would probably have been more appropriate for a different topic but still provided me with basic data that helped me to orient myself to the topic and better prepare for the qualitative part. In the qualitative part, I used a questionnaire to find respondents for semi-structured interviews that were more focused and in-depth than the questionnaire outputs.

Figure 4.
Petra Malinská, Scales,
scheme, 2025.



In the design phase, I tried to work simultaneously at different scales and levels of detail to create a coherent design proposal (see figure 4). Now the design is not yet fully detailed, but I believe I will be able to improve it towards P5. I work mostly with digital 3D models and digital drawing and sketching methods, as I am more comfortable with that than creating physical models and hand drawn plans. However, I still occasionally use hand sketching to quickly jot down ideas that I can later develop into proper detail on a 3D model. It may not be the standard way of working, but it is the approach that works best for me.

4. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL VALUE, SCOPE AND IMPLICATION OF YOUR GRADUATION PROJECT, INCLUDING ETHICAL ASPECTS?

My project emerged from several years of civic engagement, when I was interested in what was happening in Pardubice and tried to comment on it. Although I probably cannot influence the future of the Masaryk Barracks, I consider it important to point out that similar sites, of which there are many in the Pardubice Region and beyond, can be approached in other ways than demolition.

The view of abandoned barracks buildings as a burden or an obstacle to be got rid of sets a precedent that may affect the future of many other buildings. It is important to acknowledge their existence, to explore their possible uses and to express their cultural significance, even though this significance may sometimes be obscured by layers of dirt and overgrown vegetation or hidden in old memories. From an ethical point of view, engagement and the presentation of examples of good practice are essential. I have provided such examples in the chapter on case studies to show that there are other ways of thinking and other options with good results.

5. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE VALUE OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF YOUR PROJECT RESULTS?

I believe that the principles of my project, such as presenting the possibilities of reusing the military site in the research part, identifying the values of the site, preserving the traces of history and exploring the hidden and forgotten memories of the site, can be easily applied to any other abandoned military site. An important aspect, in my opinion, is the level of public education on this issue, namely that the barracks do not necessarily have to be demolished. Barracks can be handled sensitively and with good results. Finally, I would like to mention that it makes sense to deal with barracks, even if they are not necessarily buildings of high aesthetic value.

6. TO WHAT EXTENT DID YOU MANAGE TO KEEP THE TRACES OF THE FORMER USE IN THE DESIGN?

From the urban point of view, I decided to keep the most culturally significant buildings, and demolish small shed like structures of garages that were not of a high architectural value, similarly as done in one of the case studies (Caserne Reuilly, Paris). I also decided to work with the site as with a patchwork, to keep the surfaces which are there, sometimes change them or add others, where necessary, that is something that creates a clear distinction between old and new.

In the interiors, I believe I managed to keep the majority of the traces of demolished construction and use them as design elements, on the other hand, so far I thought about the exteriors in a completely different way and I do not use that principle of keeping the traces on the façades, because of the need to insulate them, that means that the possible traces are hidden and recreation of the former traces on the facades with a new elements would not be authentic.

7. WHY IS IT RELEVANT TO REUSE EXISTING BUILDINGS?

Except from the cultural significance, which is the main topic of my project, sustainability can be another reason why to preserve such a site as Masaryk Barracks which might not be a significant piece of architecture or not even an aesthetically appealing building. Another reason might be that it is not wise to erase a part of a history, even though it might be a history we do not like and do not agree with. The last point is the social value that site might possess for the people in the neighbourhood.

TO CONCLUDE

The project I have worked on naturally has its limitations, arising from my decision to adapt existing buildings and give them a new function. Throughout the entire year, I had to deal with sometimes conflicting demands I placed on the building, such as: should I preserve as many architectural elements as possible, or should I focus on the best possible technical solution and significantly alter the building? In facing such questions, I tried to find, from my perspective, the best possible solutions. However, these are not always ideal solutions that could be applied to new constructions and come with their own limitations. Nevertheless, I believe that the reuse of buildings is sensible and that it is important to look for the best possible, even if not perfect, approaches.

I also think I chose quite ambitious assignment, and at the beginning, I underestimated its complexity. Even though I had a connection to the site and thought I had known it well, during my research I discovered an overwhelming amount of new information. Therefore, my perspective on the area changed significantly, and the buildings I initially saw as not particularly valuable, or even unnecessary, gained more and more value as I uncovered additional pieces of information. From today's point of view, I would say that it is important not to judge sites and buildings solely based on their aesthetics or their architectural or urban quality. It is essential to understand their context, whether social, spiritual, or historical, because this context, though often invisible, can define their cultural significance.

If I could go back to the beginning of the project, I probably would not think it was a good idea to study at two universities simultaneously during the first semester. It cost me a lot of time and energy, which I, in retrospect, would have rather devoted to research as well as to project. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my supervisors for their patience, especially at the beginning of my project, and for being able to guide me when I was unsure of where to go next.

