

intro.

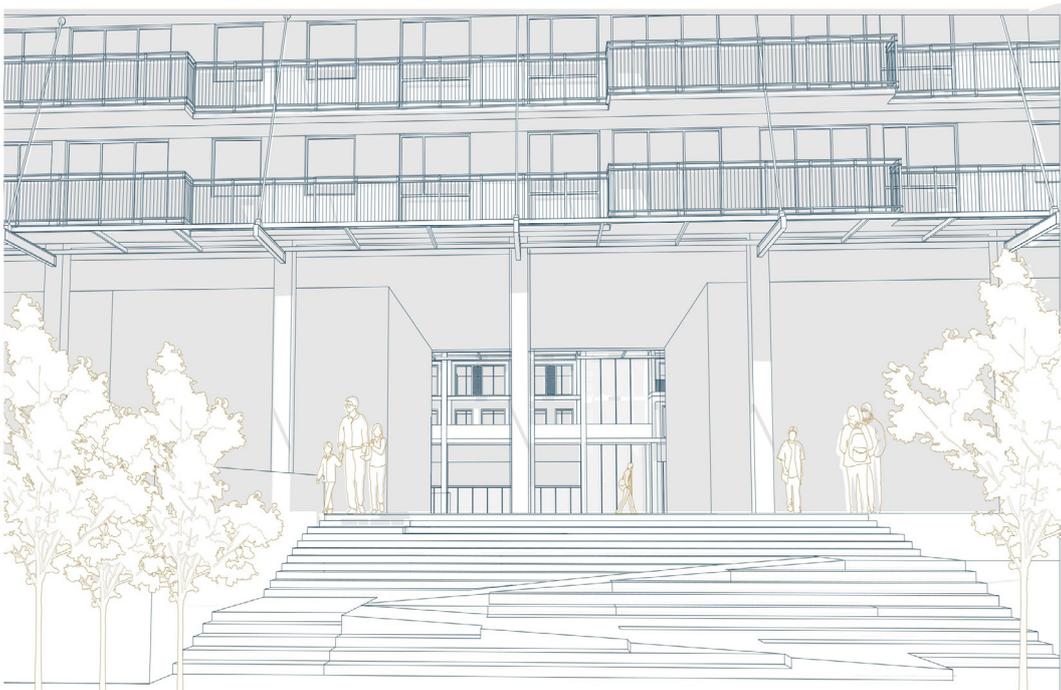
The graduation project wants to define some activity points and events capable of creating social integration. The key to their meaning and success will be the use and the appropriation that the community itself will make of them. According to Jane Jacobs the 'everyday life' space is banal and repetitive; however, its dynamism is determined by its mixture of uses and public contacts. The creation of a square, a space of public domain, will have a direct impact on the Anderlecht's societal sphere. The strategy is to build a 'city inside the city' to improve the neighborhood by its differences, its functional and social mix, its places to form relationships and communitarian feelings.

As the title of the project suggests, 'Inhabiting the uninhabitable', it seeks to improve the integration and interaction opportunities through public and private spaces made up of community activities. In doing so, we are touching upon different topics and scales: from the material reuse to the anthropological study, from the technical understanding to the human perspective. The design, like a bricolage, wants to reconnect the fragments of the society and of the built environment through a circular and efficient approach, made of simple and durable materials.

research.

The anthropological perspective through which both of our researches were conducted has indeed influenced design decisions at different stages of the project. Through the typological analysis of a central square in Anderlecht and the variety of activities taking place on a weekly basis, certain conclusions were drawn that were debated and integrated or avoided accordingly to the design of our square. The clear indication of entrances and exits to the square, the activation of the perimeter in terms of public programs such as shops, cafes, cultural activities, working spaces and living entrances, as well as the demarcation of sitting areas, where some of the most striking parameters taken under consideration in the design.

Furthermore, the research on the hierarchy of public and private spaces and the types of transition between the public and private domains aided the design of the working and living development. That is exemplified in the different relationships between the private interior of the flats, with loggias and balconies, the semi-private sitting areas and terraces overlooking the public square, and the public square itself. Safety in public spaces was an issue addressed in both researches and was set as priority in the urban design stage by providing natural surveillance to the square from the surrounding buildings but also from the street through openings. The combination of these two researches enabled us to have a human-centric approach in our designs as we have come to understand that architectural elements, may influence the behavior and well-being of people.



P3 presentation images

methodological framework.

The dedication of this academic year on our thesis project has given us the time and the opportunity to make an in-depth research before moving to the design stage. Starting from the scale of the city of Brussels, moving to the area of Anderlecht and to the site itself we got acquainted to the character, the qualities and the challenges we would have to respond to with our designs at a later stage. The extended focus of the studio on the urban decisions prior to the design made us understand the value of the context within which we are called to design. This open exercise of deciding what to keep and what to demolish led us to first understand all elements of the site, question their qualities and make strong urban gestures for the benefit of the area.

Our eagerness to develop further a bigger part of the urban plan led us to continue the project in a team of two. We are convinced that through our efficient collaboration we can achieve a more complete graduation project that involves a variety of programs. In our work we always start with an idea, an image, an atmosphere that evokes a feeling and through a series of sketching, modelling, debating and looking through relevant projects we reach a desired solution. We focus on the scale of each building separately but also on the relationship and proportions between the different buildings that synthesize the square. We embrace the varied characters but at the same time strive for a symbiosis of the distinct elements. For each design move regarding the buildings we keep re-

ferring back to the masterplan and question whether such decision may still be appropriate or not. Through the database of OPALIS, recommended to us by a member of the ROTOR team we integrated a circular approach in our designs. Becoming familiar with the processes and market of reused materials has been a very fruitful experience that we hope to adapt in our work as future architects. Therefore, moving through different scales from the urban plan, to the building, to the material decisions is a method that we feel has helped us in the process of the design so far. Our work has been very much enriched by the feedback we received from our mentors, who are challenging us, giving us suggestions and pointing out elements that may have been overlooked with the aim of ultimately improving our designs. We always like to consider their recommendations, test the possibilities and decide whether we feel its fitting to take them on. Their guidance well calibrated, giving us the freedom to design what we are envisioning has been invaluable during this year.

At this stage of the project we feel confident about the potential of our designs in giving something back to the community of Anderlecht. In the coming weeks we are looking forward to finalizing the design, detailing, and focusing on a fitting visualization method that will enable us to tell the story of the different users and express the atmosphere we have been striving to achieve with our masterplan.