

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	Ying Hou
Student number	5101417

Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Fabrics	
Main mentor	Gerdy Verschuure-Stuip	Landscape Architecture
Second mentor	Teake Bouma	Urban Design
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The area I want to focus on is a historic residential area built in the 1920s. Inside this neighborhood, 37 buildings are listed as monuments by the government. But these historic resources are protected by a material-based approach, so the old buildings are protected at the expense of fulfill present need of residents. I want to find out if there is a way to make the historic resources also functional for current use. This project will focus on urban history, space-morphology, and community needs, which are also the main topic of urban fabric studio, to make the historic environment an integral part of our city and daily life.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Improving Livability in Historic Neighborhood
Goal	
Location:	Meiyuan Xincun, Nanjing, China
The posed problem	Meiyuan Xincun is a residential area built in the 1920s with various building types and historical events, but it is now degraded and not livable due to multiple reasons. With population growth and urban development, the spatial condition can no longer meet the livability standard, especially the amount of living space, street space, and public space. Besides, the residents are also living in the historical context under the inequality of power relationships. The central government and local government took responsibility for protecting historical relics and economic growth, respectively, leaving the residents' voices invisible in the planning process. As a result of construction projects led by the government, the residents are suffering from various environmental problems

	and relocation. Further more, the lack of public space and the relocation destroyed the social structure and the sense of community. In conclusion, with issues from spatial, political, and socio-cultural aspects, the historic neighborhood can not offer a healthy living environment with the right to envision and a sense of community to its residents.
research questions and	How can community-based approach be used as a tool to improve livability in the historic residential area, Meiyuan Xincun District?
design assignment in which these result.	As the term livability is not only about the physical environment, but more relating to the social and community environment a person is interacting. Also, as a historic neighborhood, the intangible heritage is mainly about the communities' daily life. So, the design assignment is to use Meiyuan Xincun as a case study to develop a community-based preservation and renewal strategy that fits the Chinese context and show urban designers' role in this framework by offering a set of spatial design principles and design experiments.
<p>[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.]</p>	
Process	
Method description	
<p>The literature review will be conducted to get an academic definition of livability and learn from other heritage management methods. The historical study will form a part of the definition of tangible heritage value and intangible heritage value. The morphology study will also be used to learn the old fabrics and building types. Interviews will be used to ask local people about their collective memories and future needs and ask other scholars about similar projects' experience. Case studies and design experiments will be used to develop a set of design principles and pilot projects. Lastly, interviews with government officers and institutional analysis will be used to design a strategic shift from the current heritage management system.</p>	

Literature and general practical preference

The theoretical framework follows the problem fields' structure. The three study fields of historic neighborhoods are tangible heritage, intangible heritage, and heritage management. The livability is the center topic, and it is combined with the three aspects of the historic neighborhood. In spatial livability aspects (combining livability with tangible heritage), urban renewal theories will be reviewed to find solutions for the lack of space and improve environmental quality. In the political livability aspects (combining livability with heritage management), the value-based approach and the living heritage approach will be research to see previous practices in preserving community with heritage. In the cultural livability aspects (combining livability with intangible heritage), place attachment and sense of community will help to revive the community life and identity, which is central the intangible heritage.

1 Livability

Neighbourhood Livability: Livable places and neighborhoods are deeply contextualized environments – embedded within each place are unique historic, political, socio-economic and cultural factors. (Szibbo, 2015)

2 Tangible Heritage

Sustainable Urban renewal: urban renewal aims at improving the physical, socio-economic and ecological aspects of urban areas through various actions, including redevelopment, rehabilitation, and heritage preservation. In the current urban renewal context, social inclusion has become a crucial objective. When discussing achieving sustainable urban renewal, it is seemingly impossible to avoid the issue of 'community involvement' or 'public participation'. (Zheng, Shen, & Wang, 2014)

3 Heritage management

Living heritage: Living heritage emphasizes the continuity of the original function, the community's connection to heritage, the traditional knowledge to manage and maintain, evolving tangible and intangible heritage expressions in response to changing circumstances. (Ioannis Poullos, 2014)

4 Intangible heritage

Place attachment: Place attachment is defined as bonds between people and their residential environments that positively affect individuals (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Both the connection with the physical settings and interpersonal relationships comprise a person's attachment to a place (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014), while the social aspects are emphasized more by scholars. Place attachment is an important construct in its relationship to sense of community and social capital but often overlooked by scholars. (Perkins & Long, 2002)

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 cultural identity studio is dedicated to using a biographic approach to discuss the narrative, physical elements, the identity of urban environments and find suitable transformation ways to make heritage functional for future development. In my project, I want to apply this approach to a historic residential neighborhood in Nanjing in the Chinese planning and protection system. With its unique narrative, social and spatial context, this project will enrich the studio's variety of values from different areas around the world.

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

Social relevance: The area I choose was a residential area built for government officers and social elites in the 1920's. Just after this area was built, the war started. After the anti-Japanese war (1937-1945) and the civil war (1945-1949), lots of the original residents are lost and many houses were nationalized. The government made these house public rental housing until now. Residents living there now are usually too poor to have the financial ability and power to improve their living environment or cherish the historic environment. In my project, I want to pay attention on this group of people, find both spatial and institutional solutions to make a sustainable community. In the meantime, by doing so, the identity and value of this area will be enhanced, and more people will see the worth remembering past in the city.

Scientific relevance: Although most Chinese cities has an abundant historic resource, the current urban development in China is mainly led by the government and developers to seek local revenue at the expense of historic districts. Heritage preservation only started in the 1980s and solely focused on the physical elements, such as historic fabric and buildings. The government expropriates many historic districts for other utility, such as tourist shops or museums (Chen, Wang, & Waley, 2019). Consequently, original residents are requested to leave their site by the government, and the connection between community and heritage is broken, causing psychological stress to local communities. The site is also losing the inspirational sense of connection to its residents. (Poulios, 2014). In academic fields, scholars have already recognized the critical value of local communities with heritage sites. ICCROM has also implemented value-based approaches and living Heritage approaches to explore how to preserve local communities and their traditional management system. In this project, I will try to use Meiyuan Xincun as a case study to explore how to apply these new methods in China.