

# 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](mailto: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	Peyvand Taremi
Student number	5188199

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers – Heterogeneous City	
Main mentor	J. Van Lierop	Design
Second mentor	F. Eckardt	Building Technology
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The unconventional interdisciplinary framework which is introduced within the architectural design crossovers was one of my main reasons to choose this studio.</p> <p>The topic of heterogeneous city, in constantly changing cities, such as London, seemed like a prevailing yet crucial topic to be explored.</p> <p>Moreover, I appreciated the fact that as students we were given the opportunity to define the scope, concept and location of our projects individually based on our distinctive curiosities.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<p><b>Title:</b> Urban cracks of London</p> <p><b>Subtitle:</b> A strategy of regeneration for the high streets by reactivating its interstices through space appropriation and placemaking</p>
Goal	
Location	Shoreditch district, Borough of Tower Hamlets, London
The posed problem	<p>High streets have always represented some of the most important public spaces in UK by capturing the excitement, dynamism, endless variety and striking contrasts that characterize each neighborhood. However, these complex and dynamic mixed-use urban corridors, are facing a wide range of challenges and life-style changes since 1970's.<sup>1</sup> The expansion of out-of-town shopping centers, the growth of e-commerce or even most recently, the vast impact of covid-19 outbreak are some of the most threatening issues amongst all, which have</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Carmona, London's Local High Streets, 42.

	<p>remarkably contributed to an increase of vacancy rates and resulted in an overall neglect of these public spaces.</p> <p>Yet, high street is much more than parades of shops and retail. By looking more closely to the courtyards, behind the façades, down the alleys and side streets, one might instantly discover urban cracks and interstitial spaces in different scales. Thus, apart from empty shops, some of these interstitial spaces which have poor quality or feel disconnected from the high street, leave a negative effect on the perception and the performance of the high street.</p>
research questions and	<p><i>In what ways could architecture facilitate placemaking in order to reactivate the interstices for the benefit of the High Streets, in London?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is meant by urban crack and urban interstices?</li> <li>- How do they translate in the context of London?</li> <li>- Where do they typically occur?</li> <li>- What are the spatial characteristics of such spaces?</li> <li>- Who are the main actors and what type of activities take place?</li> <li>- In what ways could (interstitial) space appropriation maintain the high street and improve its performance?</li> </ul>
design assignment in which these result.	<p>As a result of literature review and theoretical research that was conducted regarding the high streets of London followed by the site analysis including local interviews, the design assignment will be a <b>creative community center/entrepreneur hub</b>. The architectural design proposal includes a package of interventions which provide tools to all the high street users, especially the local community, in order to increase engagement and create a sense of belonging, but more importantly with a mission to train the local community as the future entrepreneurs who could run the vacant shops, revitalize the interstices and maintain the high street.</p>
<b>Process</b>	
<b>Method description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Literature study:</b> to build up foundation knowledge on the concept of urban interstices, urban cracks, space appropriation and placemaking.</li> <li>- <b>Document review:</b> reports and data analysis on high street by GLA and other agencies.</li> </ul>	

- **GIS-based mapping:** by superimposing relevant layers of maps such as high streets, railways, water, designated open spaces and brownfields in order to track down intersecting nodes representing the interstices and identify sites of investigation.

- **Field research in London using:**

- Photography/Videography
- Drawings
- Notes/observations
- Multiple personal interviews

- **Visual Catalogue:** analysis through a collection of photographs and diagrams in order to organize the field trip findings.

- **Precedent analysis:** in order to gain inspiration from other architectural standpoints towards the interstices in London or other metropolitan cities.

- **Research by design:** define urban strategy and architectural design.

## Literature and general practical preference

Carmona, Matthew, Miles Davis, Fiona Scott, Jay Gort, and Mellis Haward. *High Street London*. Reprint, London, 2010.

This research was used in order to build the core knowledge on the network of high streets. it reveals the great variety and complexity of London's high streets and the multiple endemic problems that many face, as well as their continued value as physical, real estate, and movement spaces, and as places for economic and social exchange. It also demonstrates how could high streets become the focus for London's future growth, supported by multiple data analysis and infographics.

Franck, Karen A, and Quentin Stevens. *Loose Space*. London: Routledge, 2007.

This book refers to interstice as Loose Space, which offers a different perspective for the research. It further explores the many ways that urban residents, with creativity and determination, appropriate public space to meet their own needs and desires. The author argues that these activities whether familiar or unexpected, spontaneous or planned, momentary or long-lasting, make urban space loose continue to give cities life and vitality. The book is divided into four sections out of which the chapter of 'appropriation' has been studied for this research.

Glick, David. *Bottom-Up Urbanism: A Survey of Temporary Use in Europe*. E-book, 2014. [https://issuu.com/david.t.glick/docs/bottom-up\\_urbanism\\_dglick](https://issuu.com/david.t.glick/docs/bottom-up_urbanism_dglick).

This catalog of outlier case studies was used in order to gain inspiration from other architectural standpoints towards the interstices, as it represents a wide range of contemporary Do It Yourself approaches in which designers, architects, and everyday citizens have become emboldened to take on more proactive roles in shaping the public realm. These examples of grassroots "placemaking" tactics are a provocation to normative top-down, real estate and urban planning models; and serve as a jumping off point for envisioning more holistic models of urban design practice.

Greater London Authority. *High Streets & Town Centres Adaptive Strategies*. London: Greater London Authority, 2019.

This report is a guidance with a 'mission-orientated' approach to develop 'adaptive' strategies for high street renewal. It refers to adaptive as an iterative, interactive process, characterized by adaptable planning, early adoption, evolutionary development, continuous improvement and flexible responses. Strategies of this kind are further argued to focus on what is needed for a given high street and its community – rather than a pre-chosen answer.

This report was reviewed in order to discover the exiting proposals and suggestions from the experts before designing adaptive strategies for the high streets, in order to achieve up-to-date and long-lasting positive change.

LeGates, Richard T, and Frederic Stout. "Urban Design and Placemaking." In *The City Reader*, 551-639. 7th ed. London: Routledge, 2015.

This anthology features a Prologue on "How to Study Cities", it provides the comprehensive mapping of the terrain of Urban Studies, old and new. It illustrates how different academic disciplines and professional fields can contribute to good urban design that is sensitive to human needs. However, for the sake of this research part seven has been studied which focuses on urban design and more specifically the way in which humans actually shape the built environment and the related concept of placemaking.

Matos, Rute Sousa. "Urban Landscape: Interstitial Spaces". *Landscape Review*, 2009, 61-71. <http://hdl.handle.net/10174/12536>.

This paper helped to sharpen the urban condition of the interstitial spaces and their uses. The author suggests a systemic perspective of a productive and recreational landscape, provide new experiences in understanding the urban condition, the interstitial voids and the quality of the landscape itself.

Mitchell, Lee. Interview by Peyvand Taremi. In person. London, 2021.

This interview offered a broad perspective on the chosen site and its community as well as the history of Redchurch high street. Lee also talked about their vision as a community organization who looks after The Redchurch high street. She talks about the specific challenges in their high street but also the initiatives that they are taking to create a positive change for the community.

Mubi Brighenti, Andrea. *Urban Interstices*. London: Routledge, 2016.

In order to comprehend the wide-ranging meanings of interstitial space in urbanism and to be able to differentiate it with other similar notions, this book was very helpful. It shows how in-between spaces are intimately related to larger flows, networks, territories and boundaries. The author further argues that interstices appear as veritable sites of transformation, where social forces clash and mesh prefiguring our urban future and proposes new ways to explore the dynamics, events and visibilities that define them. Although, the book includes numerous articles and case studies offering a wide scope, chapter seven by Mattias Karrholm is mostly studied and applied as he describes the relationship between interstitial practices and the territorial transformation of retail spaces.

Scott, Fiona. "High Street Productivity". In *Suburban Urbanities: Suburbs And The Life Of The High Street*, 204-222. Laura Vaughan. London: UCL Press, 2015.

The book offers a comprehensive understanding of urban change, touching on the history of the suburb as well as its current development challenges, with a particular focus on suburban centers and the importance of local high streets. Chapter seven, has been specifically reviewed for this research, which takes a look at the rich and varied life of these important areas of commercial activity in outer London, with an emphasis on their importance to local economies. In this chapter a number of projects by Gort Scott Architects (of which the author is the director) including urban design research and strategy, and site-specific designed interventions,

demonstrate how a detailed understanding of high streets and their interstitial spaces is critical in order to nurture, strengthen and incorporate them meaningfully in regeneration plans.

**Scott, Fiona. Interview by Peyvand Taremi. In person. London, 2021.**

The typical mixed-use aspect of high streets is profoundly discussed as well as the importance of the back sides of the high streets. The future goal regarding the functioning of these backsides (by enhancing their appearance but also by turning them into more useful spaces) was discussed as well as the complexity to arrange such development. The role of architecture and the physical design in the high streets are further emphasized by reviewing several projects accomplished by Gort Scott and other urbanism/architectural companies.

**Steel, Riet, Elly Van Eeghem, Griet Verschelden, and Carlos Dekeyrel. *Reading Urban Cracks*. Ghent: MER. Paper Kunsthal, 2012.**

This is a research based book which questions the why and how of setting up social practices in the urban cracks in the city. The notion of the urban crack is elaborated in the first part of the book, and their diverse manifestation in the urban fabric is illustrated and the public character of these spaces is further revealed. The first chapter is the part that is mainly reviewed for this research in order to sharpen the concept of urban crack.

## **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 topic of this graduation studio, heterogeneous city, is well reflected in the choice of individual sites of investigation. Hence, this research treats the interstices of London's high street as heterogeneous pieces with hidden potentials. The purpose of the project is therefore, to establish a prosthetic urban and architectural strategy which could hold these interstices together and enhance the overall performance of the high street. For that reason, the multidisciplinary framework and the multi-modal design research proposed by the studio is well established in the approach of this project.

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

Urban cracks and urban interstices exist in every city especially in cities with rapid changes. Therefore, they are not only experienced in high streets of London. This study aims to provide an insight on recognizing these interstices, enhancing their spatial qualities and even possibly reconnecting their lost socio-spatial relationship to the surrounding context by providing an adaptable and interactive urban and architectural solution which could be applied and adapted in similar situations elsewhere.

Moreover, most of the previously mentioned challenges that high streets are facing, are wide-reaching. In fact, many formal vibrant mixed-use commercial streets might feel a gradual decline, due to similar economic, cultural and global changes within the society. Therefore, the points of discussion in this research could still be applicable for similar cases elsewhere around the world.

