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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal information</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>André van Deursen</td>
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<td>Private e-mail address</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Studio</strong></th>
<th>Explore Lab Studio 24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name / Theme</td>
<td>Explore Lab Studio 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers / tutors</td>
<td>Ir. Robert Nottrot (Architecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dott. Silvia Naldini (Heritage&amp;Architecture)</td>
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**Argumentation of choice of the studio**

Years ago, during a visit to friends in the Italian region of Umbria, I became fascinated by the agricultural landscape of Central Italy. The characteristic view of hills with scattered farmhouses is unfortunately in decay caused by disuse of buildings and land. I started to look into these agricultural estates by investigating the villas of De‘ Medici around Florence and the way this family ruled the estates. This research was done as graduation project for my MA in Arts&Culture: Architecture at Leiden University. I wanted to continue this project by looking into new ways of redeveloping vacant farmhouses of agricultural estates in central Italy, specifically Umbria; the region I am familiar with and where the problem is topical. Explore Lab gives students the opportunity to explore their own fascination. It created the perfect academic environment to continue my research and helped me develop a plan and design for this topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Graduation project</strong></th>
<th>“The vacant farmhouses of Central Italy”</th>
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<th><strong>Goal</strong></th>
<th>In the north of the province of Terni lies a small municipality called Parrano. The province of Terni together with the province of Perugia is part of the central</th>
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Italian region of Umbria. Parrano as community contains the three *frazioni* (subdivisions): Frataguida, Cantone and Pievelunga. The municipality hosts the Principality of Parrano, an agricultural estate with several buildings inside the *Borgo* (borough), including a castle, and multiple houses and farms in the countryside. The farmhouses are not listed monuments. However, they belong to the traditional rural architecture of the area and are thus buildings of cultural interest. Besides, they are part of a protective landscape meaning that visual appearance of the current buildings is protected under certain circumstances.

One farm was chosen specifically for the elaboration of a transformation plan. This farm, positioned on the highest level of the estate: circa 530 meters above sea level, is called *Podere Bovorosso* and covers 39,8 ha. of land. The compound of buildings covers about 3,7 ha. alongside the road, *Strada Provinciale* 104 (SP104). The main building of the complex is shaped around a courtyard and contains the living quarters of the farmer and different sorts of stables. Several smaller buildings are situated around the main building.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The posed problem,</th>
<th>Vast vacancy amongst farmhouses in central Italy, caused by the release of the agricultural sharecropping tradition called <em>mezzadria</em> and strengthened by the late Industrialization of Italy.</th>
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<td>research questions and</td>
<td>“In what ways can the study of cultural heritage be of advantage for redeveloping vacant farmhouses in central Italy?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>design assignment in which these result.</td>
<td>The design assignment is divided in two parts: in the first part, the aim is to develop a plan of redevelopment for the</td>
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The first aim is to develop a redesign for complete agricultural estate including a list of new potential functions, an overview of its heritage values and rules for possible architectural interventions; the second aim is to develop a redesign for *Podere Bovorosso* and its adjacent buildings within the plan for the complete estate.

Even though the farmhouses are not listed monuments, they are part of a protected landscape and are related with the traditional *mezzadria*, thus possessing an immaterial value. Heritage values can be used as inspiration source and starting point for new developments. The research from the first semester will be used to develop a new design approach in two steps for the agricultural estate of Parrano.

First step will be determined with the following studies, based on the theoretical research from the first semester:

- Heritage values of the agricultural estate and specifically the buildings and land
- Potential functions
- Potential users
- Communal factors in the new conceptual plan

The second phase will cover the following disciplines:

- Urban plan
- Landscape architecture
- Architectural plan

The focus for this design project is on *Podere Bovorosso* in relation to the agricultural estate of Parrano referring to heritage values of today, of the past and to the former organization.
Process

Method description

The method which will be used to answer the research question can be defined by the structure of the research. Five sub-questions will lead the research towards an answer concerning the main question of this thesis:

✓ "What is Cultural Heritage?"
✓ "How did the debate on Cultural Heritage develop the last twenty years?"
✓ "Which institutions and political organizations are involved in the debate?"
✓ "What values from Cultural Heritage can be defined for architects?"
✓ "What is the advantage for architects to use cultural heritage for redeveloping vacant farmhouses in central Italy?"

The essay will be structured in three consecutive steps:

1. First, the definition of Cultural Heritage and the current debate about its role. A debate that has been growing for several years and had resulted in all kinds of new institutions and communities dealing with cultural heritage.

2. Secondly, understanding tangible and intangible values of heritage for architects. Heritage goes beyond the physical building and that is why the advantage of knowledge about Cultural Heritage, both tangible and intangible, will be discussed within relevance for architects.

3. At last, a casus on how the cultural values of farmhouses in central Italy can be a source for plans of redevelopment. Part of this is limited research into the traditional agricultural system of mezzadria.

The method used for this research is mainly based on literary review to write a new, critical theory. On a smaller scale are interviews of use to gain understanding in, for example, the ceased mezzadria system.

Part of a strong framework on the topic of Cultural Heritage is investigation of the policies and visions of organizations and programs like ICOMOS, UNESCO, Europa Nostra, CHCfE, Distretti Culturali, and many others. Also governments like the European Council with their future plans and policies concerning Cultural Heritage will be looked into. The study of this kind of literature together with the review of publications from historians and designers concerned with Cultural Heritage, help creating a thorough literary background on the topic.

Literature and general practical preference

a.u. (1968). Legislazione agraria vigente : contratti affitto, mezzadria, colonia ed individuali piccola proprietà contadina contributi per la riprese delle aziende
agricole contributi unificati assicurazioni sociali dei coltivatori diretti istituzione agronomo di zona. Milano: Pirola.


Camparini, A. (1930). La contabilità nelle aziende agrarie a mezzadria con speciale riguardo alla Toscana. Milano: FMR.


Reflection

Relevance

Heritage is an important topic nowadays with relevance on many levels of policies and practices. Not only protective institutions like ICOMOS and UNESCO champion our cultural heritage. In the last years the topic has become more and more relevant for political institutions on higher level, like the European Commission and the Council of Europe, making new policies and future plans. They ask institutions and organizations to study the relevance of cultural heritage for the identity and future of Europe from different points of view; economy, history, anthropology and so on. Next year, 2018, will be the European year of Cultural Heritage.

The role of architecture for cultural heritage is important. Like Matthews states: its ‘[...] architecture reflecting different social structures and cultural forms, as well as different natural environments.’ (Matthews, 2007, p.49) These structures and forms are like gold in the hands of the right architects. ‘Historic buildings, industrial buildings, and obsolete public buildings provide exceptional opportunities to those architects who can "understand" them.’ (Robert, 1998, p.11) Benefits of using cultural heritage of the past for plans of redevelopment are economic, environmental, social and cultural. Studies of the Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe (CHCFE) consortium showed the major positive results of using heritage for redevelopment. The vast architectural heritage we have, which is part of our culture, makes it even more relevant to use it properly. Architects should be aware of the opportunities and responsibility of heritage they work with. ‘Architects cannot be indifferent to the
existing, which should become their primary source of inspiration.’ (van Hees, Naldini & Roos, 2014, p.13) ‘Heritage buildings are testimonies of our past and bear the traces of time: they need to be respectfully maintained and adjusted to serve new goals and continue their life in modern times, in a sustainable way.’ (van Hees et al., 2014, p.113)

By connecting this project within the scientific framework of cultural heritage I want to visualize the possibilities of studies into cultural heritage and the advantages that may derive from that study for planning current and future developments. Using one estate in central Italy I’ll try to set an example on how we could deal with vast amount of vacant agricultural settlements. The problem of vacant agricultural heritage is not only present in central Italy, but is to be found throughout Europe and the rest of the world. The agricultural sharecropping tradition of mezzadria dominated the Italian countryside – and also other countries – for centuries, but could not evolve and modernise in the second half of the twentieth century. The theoretical research embed the goal to redevelop one vacant farm estate from the mezzadria in the current debate on how to deal with cultural heritage. For this specific form of heritage proper studies of its history and former use can be used to redevelop it maintaining its values and creating new potentials. Since the former users abandoned their farms in the previous centuries, and now their grandchildren look for opportunities to return to their grandparents poderie, reuse them and start a new living outside the cities in the countryside. This graduation work can be more than just a fictive study: its object, the valuation and transformation of traditional rural buildings, will be tackled from social, economic and cultural perspectives, and the result is expected to go beyond the solution of a local problem.

This project, including study and design, can thus set an example for a broader area than Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio and Marche together, suggesting how to deal with the vacant architecture of agricultural heritage in the countryside in other Italian regions and even outside the country.

**Time planning**

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