1.0 Introduction
For the last year I have been working in general on the topic of housing in historic inner cities and in particular on a qualitative housing project within the borders of the vibrant UvA Binnenstadscampus. The design location is situated in the Binnengasthuis area in the bufferzone of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Amsterdam and looks for answers to architectural challenges of heritage cities. The focus of the project is to distance from the extensive, large-scale masterplans with long standing developments. With this project is shown how on the one hand neglected - and residual spots can be revitalized with small, specific defined project proposals and at the same time the high demand for housing in historic inner cities can be met. The anchorage in - and the relation with the present social and spatial characters of the historic environments therefore plays an essential role. Three designs in Amsterdam serve as a test case to take a fresh look on housing in historic inner cities.

In this reflection report a closer look will be taken on the results of the research and design in the graduation project in terms of product, process and planning. The aim of this reflection is to get a more thorough understanding on the design approach: its effectiveness and also what can be learned from it. Four aspects will be more elaborated:
1. the relation between the project and the wider social context
2. the relation between the theme of the graduation lab and the chosen subject
3. the relation between the methodological line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student
4. the relation between research and design

2.0 Relation between the project and the wider social context
The city of Amsterdam is ambitious regarding the improvement of its existing neighbourhoods. The demand for housing in historic inner cities is high, is still increasing and will increase even more according to predictions. People want to live in a pleasant city and many people are in search of affordable housing. The municipality of Amsterdam would like to densify the city, but there is little money due to economic decline. At the same time developers don't take any risks. The houses that are being developed now are mainly built by private developers.
During my graduation I tried to find a new way of townplanning. With my urban acupuncture strategy I distance from the extensive, large-scale masterplans with long standing developments and I encourage small, specific defined project proposals. I have been striving for "special" housing by trying to grasp the site specific characteristics and to translate this into the design. In my project housing is a tool to give neglected spots a new impuls. Three designs in Amsterdam serve as a test case to take a fresh look on housing in historic inner cities. These designs resulted in small scaled housing blocks that has been weaved into the existing urban fabric very carefully. Some buildings fully blend in with their environment and some deserve to stand out a bit. All of them relate strongly to their existing context. Besides the design part there is a theoretical part. The theoretical part of my assignment, including aspects regarding the opportunities and restrictions of new design in historic settings, can be useful for future small scaled project proposals in historic inner cities.

3.0 Relation between the theme of the graduation lab and the chosen subject
The main theme of the graduation lab was housing in historic inner cities and in particular the design of a qualitative housing project within the borders of the vibrant UvA Binnenstadscampus. Important themes of housing were summarized in the common, basic “elements of housing”; the street, the facade, the entrance, the rooms, the flexibility, the structure, the energy, the function house and work and the function house and shop. The fact that these “elements of housing” were by each student independently explored in the beginning of the project, resulted in design proposals for the Binnengasthuis that varied a lot per person. My personal element of housing was the street (materialisation), that I transformed into the theme of the “Floorscape”. The Floorscape is an important element of the urban scene. The Floorscape can shortly be defined as the public realm on eye level, defined by the surfacing, the plinth, the furniture and the collective memory. By making an elaborated research and analysis on the Floorscape of the outdoor space of the Binnengasthuis area, I tried to find the values and more important the imperfections of the area. In my design is shown how on the one hand present neglected - and residual spots can be revitalized with small, specific defined project proposals and at the same time the high demand for housing in historic inner cities can be met. In my project the housing program is a tool to give neglected spots a new impuls and is therefore subordinate to the project.

4.0 Relation between the methodological line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student
The Heritage & Architecture (former RMIT) section focuses on the design projects of the built heritage. Heritage is interpreted in a broad sense and is separate from a particular object's or ensemble's monument status. In all design projects in an existing context, the past will play a more or less important role. The Heritage & Architecture section focuses first of all on those design projects in which the past will strongly determine the further development. In other words: the section focuses on the highest divisions of the built heritage. The chairs of the section Heritage & Architecture are structured and visualised in a triangle with three knowledge domains: design – cultural value – technology. The combined input of the three domains in the field of built heritage is the main asset of the section. The graduation studio Heritage and Housing, within the Heritage and Architecture section, aims to realise two ambitious goals with its graduation lab. It will develop
deep insight into the origins, history, contemporary situation and actual problems of housing in the centre of Amsterdam and attempt to design innovative interventions that can offer the existing stock opportunities for a sustainable future. This will be done for a specific project location and in more generic ways through strategies for housing in historic inner cities.
The method of this project is divided into two phases, which are treated differently but are actually very intertwined. Starting with the research question, which is the core of the research as well as the design. The first phase consists of the research in a broader scale and the site-specific analysis. The design is developed out of this research in the second phase, the phase of production. During the production phase new more specific research is needed to keep in progress. To find the answer for the assignment, the iterative process of moving, representing and reflecting form the main process in the second quarter.

Once developing the design out of the research and analysis, my personal assignment turned out to not be traditionally applicable on just one building or ensemble but on a whole area, the Binnengasthuis area. Therefore I worked on the urban scale and the architectural scale simultaneously. The urban theory I used is the theory of Urban Acupuncture. Urban acupuncture is a strategy for urban regeneration. The city is a living organism and pinpoints areas are in need of repair. Sustainable projects serve as needles that revitalize the whole by healing the parts. Architecture is an urban catalyst. This theory was very fruitful to apply on this area and was developed while keeping the three knowledge domains of the Heritage and Architecture section, design, cultural value and technology, in mind. Despite my design is not traditional concerning the focus on one building or one ensemble, the method of the Heritage and Architecture studio could still be applied. Careful integration within the urban fabric was the focus and in fact an obligation on this site, considering the qualities and values of existing buildings.

The research question and preliminary design that initially was a more urban assignment, shifted during the last months to a more architectural assignment where the focus is in first place on the architectural anchorage of the buildings in their environment, the squares and (little) the housing function.

5.0 Relation between research and design
During the project, research and design progressed simultaneously. In this way a much more fluid process could take place in which research influenced the design and vice versa. Findings from the research could be directly applied into the design, making it also possible to focus the research very precisely. Within the studio a wide range of themes concerning housing have been researched, which fed the design process.

My fascination for this graduation project in combination with the given topic concerning housing (street materialisation) was combined within the theme 'Floorscape'. The Floorscape is an important element of the urban scene. The Floorscape can shortly be defined as the public realm on eye level, defined by the surfacing, the plinth, the furniture and the collective memory. The following research question was intended as the core of the research as well as the design.

“What is the role of the Floorscape in the support of visual integration and appreciation of the public realm?”

In my research report I elaborated on the theme of the Floorscape itself and the history of the Floorscape in Amsterdam from the 16th century onwards. In the analysis I explored the Floorscape
elements available or lacking in the Binnengasthuis area nowadays in order to improve integration, thus appreciation. This combined, resulted in a report wherein among other things the values and the imperfections of the Floorscape of the Binnengasthuis area were made clear. This resulted in a design strategy that shows how the present neglected - and residual spots can be revitalized with small, specific defined project proposals.

For these small specific project proposals I was inspired by the past, where the relation between the street and the building was much more present, represented in an intermediar: the stoep. People sold their wares on the stoep, a private domain in front of their houses, a transition zone between the public and the private. In my design I tried to transform the idea of the stoep as intermediar between the public street and the building, into a new urban typology: the square/forecourt. All the small specific project proposals consist of a housing program (with additional functions) and a square/forecourt. My aim was to carefully integrate these buildings with square within the urban fabric and to grasp the qualities and values of the surroundings. The buildings with their squares are therefore site specific and differ due to their variety in architectural and urban environment.