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:

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<th>Personal information</th>
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<td>Name</td>
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**Argumentation of choice of the studio**

On the website of the urban fabrics, this sentence is written: “There is a need to change the way we design the urban fabric: more robust, more responsive, being able to anticipate on various developments.”

Due to demographic shifts, I think there is indeed a need for more responsive and flexible designs of the urban fabric and living environments. I see this as a challenge what I would like to research further.

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The posed problem, Nowadays and the upcoming years, more elderly people remain in their home independently for as long as possible, due to their wish and government policies which stimulate it. As people age, their mobility declines and they experience a loss of social contacts. This makes elderly more dependent on their neighborhood and the amenities, activities and social contacts it has to offer. However, a lot of elderly experience problems in their living environment. The urban environment is not always designed or functions in such a way that it stimulates meetings between people and the development of strong social connections.
Besides, a lot of older people experience physical barriers in their living environment. These difficulties experienced in the living environment could cause loneliness and a decrease in physical activity which is both bad for the well-being and health of older people. These factors can hinder elderly to age in place in a active and healthy way.

Research questions and design assignment in which these result.

Which spatial interventions and interventions in the public space are needed to create a more suitable and pleasant urban living environment for elderly aging in place in The Hague?

How can the researched characteristics and elements of public spaces and the living environment, that stimulate aging in place, be applied in the existing neighborhood of the Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier in The Hague?

Sub questions

> Who are the elderly?

> What is aging in place?

> Which general characteristics of the urban living environment and public space facilitate elderly to age in place in a pleasant way?

> What are the current public space networks in the neighborhoods Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier and how are elderly positioned in it?

> Which (semi-) public spaces and elements of it are important for elderly living in the Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier that stimulate them to go out and to participate in public life?

> Which spatial barriers do elderly, who live in the neighborhoods Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier experience that makes it more difficult to age in place?

**Process**

**Method description**

In order to answer the research questions, which are formulated in the previous chapter, different methods will be used. The research questions “who are the elderly?”, “what is aging in place?” and “which general characteristics of the urban living environment and public space facilitate elderly to age in place in a pleasant way?” will be answered by a review of the existing literature. These questions are part of the theoretical framework. In this review, both literature on aging and literature on urban design are used. This theoretical framework will result in general criteria of the urban environment that facilitate elderly to age in place.

The second sub question, “what are the current public space networks in the neighborhoods Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier and how
are elderly positioned in it?”, will be answered by a location and spatial analysis of the neighborhoods. Besides, observations will be used to get an understanding of the behavior of elderly in the public space. In order to formulate opportunities and weaknesses of the areas in the neighborhoods, the general criteria from the literature review will be uses as a guideline.

If you design for a certain group, you need to know what their needs and demands are; assumptions are not enough. Therefore the following two questions are formulated: “which (semi-) public spaces and elements of it are important for elderly living in the Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier that stimulate them to go out and to participate in public life?” and “which spatial barriers do elderly, who live in the neighborhoods Regentessekwartier and Zeeheldenkwartier experience that makes it more difficult to age in place?”. These questions will be answered by interviews and surveys. It would be also nice to know what the future elderly demand. The interviews and surveys will lead to a new set of requirements.

The products gained by the above mentioned questions will help to apply these knowledge in a urban design. In order to do this, some design principles should be formulated first. Besides, an additional analysis of the location is needed to integrate it well with the conditions on the location.
Literature and general practical preference


Reflection

Relevance

Social relevance

The upcoming years, the amount of elderly people is growing rapidly. Besides, elderly people are expected to continue living independently at their home. These new trends give rise to a lot of questions among people. Almost every week, a topic related to aging is discussed in the news and in newspapers. This discussion is often about health care: the rising cost of health care due to aging, the dissatisfaction with the quality in nursing homes and the affordability of both.

However the effects of these trends on the built environment are rarely discussed. Besides a lot of people wonder where they could live in a pleasant way for as long as possible, if they are expected to remain living in their home when they are old (Pol, 2014). Nowadays it is not only the wish of people to age in place but also policies are forcing it. Moving to a nursing home is made more difficult by stricter criteria. Besides, the number of places in nursing homes are limited because a lot of nursing homes closed their doors. Now, people are dependent on themselves and their neighborhood, surroundings and connections. It becomes a challenge to keep older people active, to keep them involved in society, to maintain their health and well-being and to stimulate social activities to prevent them from social isolation, in order to maintain their independence and to let them age in place in a healthy way. This confirms that there is definitely a need to modify, improve or reconsider the built environment in the context of an aging population.

The newspaper article “Do we want more or less elderly people?” (Van Veelen, 2014) caught my attention. We often generalize elderly people and sometimes forget that this group is so diverse. “The elderly” does not exist actually. When designing for this group we often tend to put them together and to segregate them from other places and people. However, no matter how old people are, every person has different needs and wishes, is part of society and benefits from being with other people and in different places.

Academic relevance

Since the WHO launched the “Global Age-friendly Cities” project in 2006, a lot of research has been done on elderly from the perspective of gerontology, sociology and health. However these studies are often not translated into the current research and applications related to community design (Michael et al., 2006 p.734). They mainly discuss which features influence the health and well-being of elderly. But they do not often explicit address how these outcomes are related to elements of neighborhood design and urban form that could provide pleasant living environments for elderly people and allow successful “aging in place” (Michael et al., 2006).

Besides, when studies look to elements in the built environment that promote the needs of elderly people, they often focus on presence or absence measures and are limited to identify specific needs or how to apply it in neighborhood design (Alley et al., 2008). A lot of age-friendly guidance and checklists exist already. However, these checklists can be limiting and leave out what is less obvious or more complex by focusing only on the basics (Handler, 2014).

This graduation research will look both to different studies on elderly and literature on public space and neighborhood design in general. As a result, knowledge from both fields will be combined in order to improve the built environment and create living environments that stimulate elderly to age in place.
**Time planning**

- **week 3**
  - P2 presentation
  - Evaluating P2 presentation
  - Theoretical framework
  - Defining general criteria
    - **week 7**
  - Theoretical framework
  - Defining general criteria
    - **week 8**

- **week 9**
  - Fieldwork
  - Arrange interviews
    - **week 10 - 11**

- **week 12 - 18**
  - Start making one design / one story
  - Designing
    - **week 19 - 21**

- **week 22 - 25**
  - P4 presentations

- **week 26 - 27**
  - Final products; drawings, visualizations, models etc.
  - P5 presentations