Graduation Plan
GitavanVeen
**Personal Information**
Name: Gita van Veen  
Snumber: 4262255  
Address: Balthasar van der Polweg 148  
Postal code: 2628 AX  
Residence: Delft  
Telephone: 06 30 72 65 06  
Email: Gitavanveen@gmail.com

**Studio: Heritage and Housing**
Tutors: Lidwien Spoormans  
Wido Quist

**Motivation for the studio**
During my entire study and also in the MsC1 and MsC2 fase, I have tried to explore the topics of architecture that fascinated me the most. For me this was the topic of housing and the topic heritage. Arrived at the final project of my study before working in the architectural field, I would like to combine these two interesting topics to get the best out of both worlds.
Introduction

The site we are concerned with within the studio of Heritage and Housing is located in the historic inner city of Amsterdam. This area knows a long history of change dating back to the fourteenth century. At first, the area was located at the border of Amsterdam. In this period a Monastery occupied the area. Compared to the small scale buildings of Amsterdam, the Monastery had relatively larger buildings, situated around several courtyards. The complex had an introvert character and the water around the area emphasized the borders. After the Alteration of 1578 the buildings of the Monastery became vacant. The function of a hospital appeared on the site. For the extensions of the hospital, the water around the location was filled, but the clear borders always remained. The area distinguished itself due to these borders as an enclave within the dense city centre of Amsterdam. During the period of the hospital there was a lot of change on the area. Extensions, new buildings, remodelling and so on. In 1981 it was decided that the Binnengasthuis should relocate to the outskirts of Amsterdam, and again, the buildings on the Binnengasthuis became vacant. The University of Amsterdam took over several building on the site till the present day.

The city centre of Amsterdam has undergone a lot of change over the last centuries. To protect our heritage, the canal district was declared a national monument in 2010. The Binnengasthuis is located in the Buffer zone. Most of the buildings on the Binnengasthuis are also a monument. But the site is currently under a lot of change due to the new university plans. The question is how to deal with this heritage while transforming the buildings into housing.

Problem Statement

The research topics on the Binnengasthuis in this studio were divided into four themes. Because the urban layout of the Binnengasthuis terrain is very much in contrast and very unique comparing it to the urban fabric of the inner city of Amsterdam, the topic I wanted to elaborate on was the urban situation of the Binnengasthuis. With this topic in mind I formulated my problem statement and research question.

The Binnengasthuis terrain, as mentioned above, has undergone a lot of changes over the past centuries, not only in function but also in structure. For centuries the area had an introvert character, but the character changed in the eighties of the twentieth century. In this period it was decided to give the area back to the city (although the inner area never belonged to the city, in my opinion). To achieve this goal, the borders of the Binnengasthuis were interrupted to create entrances for newly built roads. The inner area was now connected with the fabric of the city. Also new users and buildings were introduced such as the social housing block of Paul de Ley. This change caused friction on the site and separated the inner area into several parts.

As said before, we can find different users on the terrain. There are students, residents but also lots of tourists. Although the area is located in the heart of the inner city with the Red Light District only a few hundred meters away, the inner area of the Binnengasthuis seems empty of people, especially when the University is closed. Beside this, the theme of the encountering of people in the public space of the Binnengasthuis is something that has my interest. The Binnengasthuis is opposing a public space that is not stimulating the encounter of the different users.

Research

The research is subdivided into a theoretical part and a site specific part. The site specific part is also subdivided into present and historical research. The theme of encountering in the public space came to mind when I visited the Binnengasthuis a few times. It occurred to me that the University and the students play an important role in the liveliness of the inner area. During University hours there are a lot of students, but outside these hours the inner area is still a quiet place although it is now connected to the always busy inner city. These observations led me to the following research question:

“What are the conditions within the public space in the encounters between the different users of the Binnengasthuis terrain?”

In order to give an answer to this research question I formulated several sub questions. The sub questions are already subdivided into three parts: Theory, site specific research and historical research.

Theory:
- What is public space in a historical perspective and what is public space nowadays?
- What is meant by encountering?

Site specific:
- Where does encountering take place?
- What are the conditions on and around the Binnengasthuis terrain?

History:
- Did the public space and therefore the encountering of citizens change overtime?

In the second quarter of the first semester also a specific target group is going to be research. This research will focus more on the spatial needs of the specific target group. In this part, I would also like to research the theme of encountering within the spatial needs. In this way, the complete research will cover the urban and architectural scale.

Goal

The goal of this research is to understand the public space of the Binnengasthuis and to create a strategy in which this public space can be improved and changed in advantage of the residents. The research will form a basis for the final design, which is the goal for this graduation studio. The whole graduation project should be an elaborated, innovative and beautiful design.

Method

The duration of the graduation project is one academic year. This paragraph will cover the method description for the whole year.

The first step of the graduation is working on a research report. The research report is guided by one leading research question. In order to give an answer to this research question several sub questions are formulated. The report is divided in three parts: theory, site specific and historical research. The first part, the theory, is elaborated in order to understand the topic and to be able to analyse and research it on the site. The first part will be a literature study and research. The second part of the research is the site specific research where I try to understand the public space of the Binnengasthuis and how it is been used. I will make observations on the site and study the public life. The observations will be documented in a journal and photos. From this research and from literature study I will distill the conditions that are given by the site. To make the research even more complete and elaborated, the last part will focus on the historical changes. Also
this last part will be a literature study, but I also have to do my research in the archive, in order to find historical maps of the Binnengasthuis terrain.

The second part of this graduation studio is the design. The research outcomes will give input for the design. The final design should be an answer to the former formulated problem statement. In this stage of the process, there will be more site specific analysis needed in order to understand the cultural value of the place and the buildings. This is after all a studio concerned with the heritage of Amsterdam. With all this knowledge and own interpretation an elaborated design can be made.

**Literature**
The literature that I expect to use during this research to answer the research question:


**Relevance**
The demand for affordable housing in the inner city of Amsterdam is very high and still increasing. There are many young people who would like to live in this unique and vibrant area of the Netherlands, but the inner city is under pressure with the increasing amount of tourists. The question on who should be living in the city centre and how is a topic that is discussed in the present time. Therefore, developing a strategy for affordable and comfortable housing in the dense inner city is therefore a contemporary topic to elaborate on.

This research is not looking at the physical aspect of housing, but is looking at the public space of the surrounding urban situation and the opportunities that are given to encounter the different users of the Binnengasthuis terrain. With the large amount of tourists, the public familiarity of the resident in the neighbourhood is decreasing. By creating a pleasant environment around a residential area, the resident would feel more at home. This can be achieved by creating an environment where the repeated encounters can take place. It will give a sense of home and eventually it will contribute to the social cohesion of the neighbourhood.

The research is not only applicable for the Binnengasthuis terrain, but can be useful for all the neighbourhoods in the inner city of Amsterdam.

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**Planning**

[Planning will follow]

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**Diagram 1: Structure of Graduation Project**