

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan:

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Studio	
Name / Theme	Heritage & Architecture Housing Heritage Amsterdam
Teachers / tutors	Lidwine Spoormans, Wido Quist

### Argumentation of choice of the studio

My motivation to enroll in this graduation studio is because of my interest in the transformation of existing buildings. I have a passion for old buildings. Old buildings are attractive to me not only because of the texture of the bricks and stones, but also the historical layers they reveal and the stories they tell. Last year, I worked on a transformation project for a soda factory in Schiedam, also in the H&A studio. It was an interesting experience as I started to learn more about the difficulties in the design of restoration projects in particular the cultural-historical and technical aspects. This year, I want to work on a different building type. I am attracted by the topic Housing Heritage Amsterdam. I want to explore different methods to intervene a housing monument in a modern and sustainable perspective.

The site of my project is a municipal monument located in Landlust in Bos en Lommer District, Amsterdam-West. It has been a social housing for minimum income households since 1936. Since shortage of housing is a global problem in many cities, it is a very meaningful task to transform old buildings into sustainable ones instead of starting everything from scratch. I believe this project will allow me to find out appropriate solutions to restore housing heritage. Many existing housing in the Netherlands possess similar building form as Landlust. Thus, I think finding a way to improve this housing monument in Landlust is not only beneficial to this particular project, it is also useful in coming up with a more generic solution for Dutch housing. The design motto for this housing monument was Light, Air and Space. The building blocks are surrounded by greenery. I think it has a great potential to be transformed into a very nice neighbourhood after restoration. The technical issues and climate control in the housing built in the pre-war period are not up to nowadays standard. This type of mass-produced housing has to be renovated into sustainable housing that fits the current and future needs. Therefore, I hope that the outcome of my final graduation project will help to accomplish my strong attempt of providing substantial solution to improve the housing monument through preservation and transformation.

Graduation project	
Title	Living in Gardens - revitalizing the positive vibes in the public and semi-public spaces in Landlust
Location	Landlust, Amsterdam-West
Problem statement	
<p>The housing monument in Landlust was built in 1936, designed by Merkelbach based on the Western garden cities idea. With the design motto 'Light, Air and Space', his goal was to incorporate strips of green in between building blocks for recreational and leisure purposes. These public and semi-public spaces were once the merits of the complex in the 1930s. Later, the positive qualities of these green spaces started to deteriorate over time. Is this caused by the shortcomings in the original design? Or is it affected by the changes in social concepts and modern technology? What other reasons could have led to the gradual degradation of the semi-public and public spaces in Landlust?</p> <p>Now, this housing monument has the opportunity for restoration. As suggested by the Bureau Monumenten &amp; Archeologie (BMA), the public space is one of the most important factors to take into account at renovation. Special strategies are needed in the handling of the green as an integral part of the street profiles and public space. (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014) Thus, I would like to focus on the semi-public and public spaces of Landlust in my project, especially on the connections between the private dwellings and public streets. First of all, it is crucial to study the advantages and disadvantages in the public space of the existing site and then to find out the appropriate solutions to meet the current and future demands. The public space should not be considered as separate outdoor space but rather a continuation of the private dwelling to the collective space, as well as an integrated landscape of communal garden and street profiles.</p>	
Research Question	
What are the strengths and weaknesses in the design and use of existing public spaces in Landlust in relation to its historical and cultural significance?	
Design Question	
How can the characteristics of the semi-public and public space be preserved and enhanced in the future design for different target groups?	
Sub-research Questions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What are the important characters of existing site to be preserved/removed?</li> <li>2) What are the pros and cons in the public and semi-public space in the site?</li> <li>3) Who are the target users? Who will live in the site after renovation?</li> </ol>	

## Goal

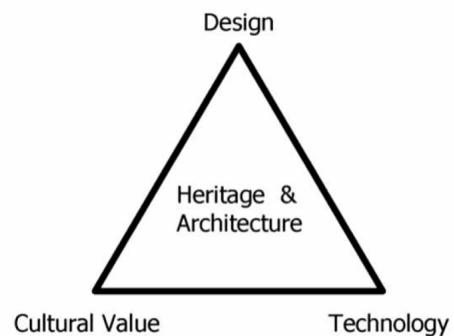
In my research, I aimed to find out the positive and negative qualities of the existing semi-public and public spaces in Landlust and then to research on the most appropriate improvement and solutions for this housing monument based on architectural theories and case studies. By gathering the results of the research, the advantages and disadvantages of the public space in the site are discovered. The results will reflect the aspects and locations that should be preserved or improved. The analysis of specific needs of potential users is also important in determining the future program and new design. The evaluation of public space in Landlust is the combined conclusion of the research on architectural design, cultural-historical values, societal needs and building technology.

My design vision is to preserve and transform Landlust into a vibrant community for young people and the future generation with a diversity of green and recreational spaces. During my research, I discovered the positive and negative qualities of the existing semi-public and public spaces. I think the site has a great potential to be transformed into a lively and comfortable environment surrounded by greeneries. The abundance of trees and plants has been the most important idea of this housing monument. Thus, this concept should be enhanced in different ways. In order to make the green spaces to be used more frequently and effectively by residents, they should be better connected to the circulation routes. The semi-public spaces in Landlust should be maintained and regulated by residents using the opportunities provided by new architectural designs. The courtyard should be connected as part of the public streets to be used by the public in a safe manner. I also want to add more variety and diversity in the types and functions of greeneries in the courtyard and communal spaces to meet the needs of young people and ethnic groups. More recreational spaces with furniture and shelters will be added to make the site more interesting. On a smaller scale, I want to make the dwellings more sustainable and comfortable to live in by giving each household more spacious interior and bigger private outdoor spaces. Residents shall be given authority and freedom with their own spaces. This will add more unique characters to this housing monument. My ambition is to create an urban oasis for residents in Landlust and the surroundings.

## Process

### Research Method Description

To solve the research questions in an integrated approach, my analyses are based on the three research categories stated by the department of Heritage and Architecture.

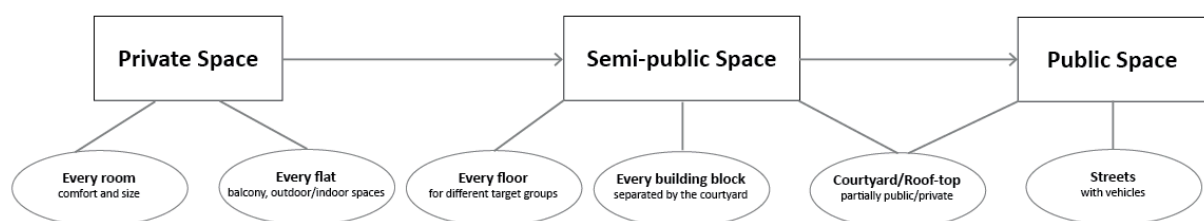


My research starts with the analysis of the site and the surroundings through the study of old maps and historical records and photographs from City Archives, photographs of present situations, resources from Van Eesterenmuseum Amsterdam, reports and future policies from Gemeente Amsterdam and original drawings of Merkelbach. The core of my research is to find out the merits and problems of the existing public space in the site based on my observations and assumptions. I explain the possible causes of these problems using theories of architectural historians, architects and urbanists who have commented on the planning policies of modern architecture and the decline of public space caused by modern architectural ideologies. These theories, which described the common problems, are useful in the reflection of the problems in Landlust. The theories used in my research include Jane Jacobs' 'the Death and Life of Great American Cities', Richard Sennett's 'the Fall of Public Man', Michael Sorkin's 'Variations on a Theme Park', etc.

In order to determine if the affairs happening now in the public space of Landlust are indeed good or bad, I use the information in the report of the future plans for Bos and Lommer Area provided by Gemeente Amsterdam and the report of the culture history of Landlust provided by Bureau Monumenten & Archeologie (BMA) to have insights about the things that needed to be improved in the future. The reports also include the current technical and social problems in Landlust and suggest possible solutions for the communal spaces in Landlust. With the references of these reports and the study of the theories, I could evaluate the public space of the site in architectural perspectives. The results are categorized into pros and cons in the conclusion of the P1 research report.

### Design Method Description

Based on the conclusions, I have a few design variants to be the starting point of my project. I have specific design ideas in different categories, i.e. private, semi-public and public space with the common goal to elaborate the existing greeneries. The area of concern in each category is shown in the figure below.



The next step is to reflect on the possibilities and limits in each design variant. Instead of selecting one particular idea to develop into detail, I work on the three categories in parallel that lead to a preliminary design. After P2, the design will be built up gradually into details that construction and technical problems will be solved. Meanwhile, the design is continuously checked and compared with the value assessment and conclusions in my P1 research report. Eventually, I aim to work out a final design with one design strategy that link all the categories into an integrated project.

## Reflection

### Relevance

In my project, I start with designing in a very specific way for Landlust. Due to the fact that many post-war housing in the Netherlands have similar building forms as Landlust, I believe that this specific design could also be applied to other old buildings in the Netherlands. Through this project, I also want to experiment how the problems found in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as explained by the theories of 'modern urban planning' such as Jane Jacob's, be solved and redeveloped for use nowadays and the coming century.

## Literature and general practical preference

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### **Time planning**

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Graduation Time Planning		2015-2016																							
	Week	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	21-Dec	28-Dec	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10		
	Date	1-Sep	7-Sep	14-Sep	21-Sep	28-Sep	5-Oct	12-Oct	19-Oct	26-Oct	2-Nov	9-Nov	16-Nov	23-Nov	30-Nov	7-Dec	14-Dec			4-Jan	11-Jan	18-Jan	25-Jan		
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