

Urban Architecture

MSc3 Urban Architecture Graduation Studio

Last Green in Town



Fall semester 2023

Tutors

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Code	AR3UA100
Credits	55 ECTS
Location	Brussel
Excursion	Yes
Costs	t.b.d.

At the chair of Urban Architecture, we study medium-size urban sites that are inaccessible for the regular tools of urbanism, and where expectations of urban design can only be fulfilled by an architectural project. Adding a building thus means (re)designing an environment.

The graduation studio is site-specific and research-driven. Sites may not yet have acquired a decisive urban form capable of sustaining further development – but they are not blank either, and too strongly invested by the hopes and interests of various actors to be wiped out. An extensive reading of the physical, social, cultural, historical and political forces at work underscores thorough design labour, aiming for urban continuation, social relevance, technical soundness and lasting beauty alike. We invite inquisitive, creative and sensitive students, resourceful in their research approaches as well as in their design ventures.

Topical questions for our group are “what to keep” and “where to build”? We value the energy embodied in building materials in service, and consider outdoor space as the inevitable counterpart of the built. These

concerns become particularly acute in our cities’ last urban voids, typically abandoned brownfields with belated development proposals that in the meantime turned into greenfields and, in a striking demonstration of ecological resilience, grew delicate ecosystems home to rare fauna and flora. In Brussels, Belgium, where this year’s studio will be quartered, some of these sites have become the object of fierce political debate.

Should such budding ecological “happy accidents” be treasured and kept, thereby determining where we should build? How to act when in the scope of interested parties non-human actors join in? When approached from the centre, the opposition between building opportunity and ecological value becomes irreconcilable. When, on the other hand, approached from the edges, that is, from the adjoining neighbourhoods and their needs, a balance may be struck. Urban Architecture welcomes mediators.