

# DESIGN THESIS : DESIGN THESIS PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

## Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba



"Habitat '67" under construction in Montréal", from the website of [Safdie Architects](#)

Design Thesis is an important career threshold. It culminates a professional education and inaugurates new directions. It opens new ways to think, make and engage architecture and brings together strands of thought from all corners of the professional education. Carrying out self-directed design research in professional practice is an imperative intellectual skill for any architect. This is an opportunity for students to challenge themselves by pursuing architectural interests in elaborate and critical ways while working in the mutually supportive context of peers attempting the same. Design Thesis entails considerable intellectual effort that is repaid in critical design practice from invention in research to reflection in making to critical presentation.

### Fall Term M2

The project commences with a Design Research Studio. This first term is about finding topics of fascination and concern, articulating questions, and attempting responses. The first term is an opportunity to develop critical design techniques and methods that align with a research inquiry and culminates with significant attempts at architectural design and design strategies, together with presentations of ongoing creative research in the form of diverse models and drawings, and potentially full-scale installations, supplementary videos and digital projections. The outcome of the fall term includes a well-developed thesis proposal supported by a body of research, investigatory techniques and design methods to be used in the Winter term.

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#### 2022-23 Design Thesis Committee

Mimi Locher (Coordinator), Ralph Stern, & Brian Rex, w/ Tobi Hawkins, Graduate Student Advisor  
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### Winter Term M2

During the Winter Design Thesis term, students fully manifest a substantive architectural design project and produce a Design Thesis book. The book compiles a full year's worth of search and research, including documentation of processes, iterations, and a final design, plus sufficient text to describe the thesis inquiry, providing contextual framing, annotations and critical reflections.

An important preliminary step of Design Thesis is preparing a proposal that establishes the general topic and particular strategies to guide the work. Articulating a multi-faceted topic of interest is not enough.

The purpose of this written proposal is to clearly articulate interests, points of departure and parameters for the thesis inquiry. It must indicate the "what," "how" and "why" (the intentions, processes and context) of the Design Thesis. The proposal should be 5-8 pages in length, 11 pt Arial, or similar font. The written proposal should include the following:

ABSTRACT	300 word summary of your proposal.
INTENTIONS	400-600 words addressing specific motives, questions and premises.
PROCESSES	400-600 words on intended strategies, or manners of working.
CONTEXT	400-600 words on the theoretical context, particular sites, precedents, historical and/or contemporary concerns to which your work relates.
TECH FOCUS	400-600 words describing the intended technical focus of the project, to be developed as part of the winter term Technology Thesis Report (ARCH 7080).
RESOURCES	up to 2 pages of bibliographic material.
APPENDIX	up to 2 pages of images, or other pertinent supporting material.

A proposal must be clear, specific, succinct, relevant, exciting, and achievable within the given time frame. A good proposal is detailed, yet open-ended. It does not predetermine results but rather inaugurates inquiry in particular ways, establishing the parameters that allow for creative work to unfold.

All Design Thesis information documents can be found on the Department's website:

<https://www.umanitoba.ca/architecture/student-reference-material#march-design-thesis-information>