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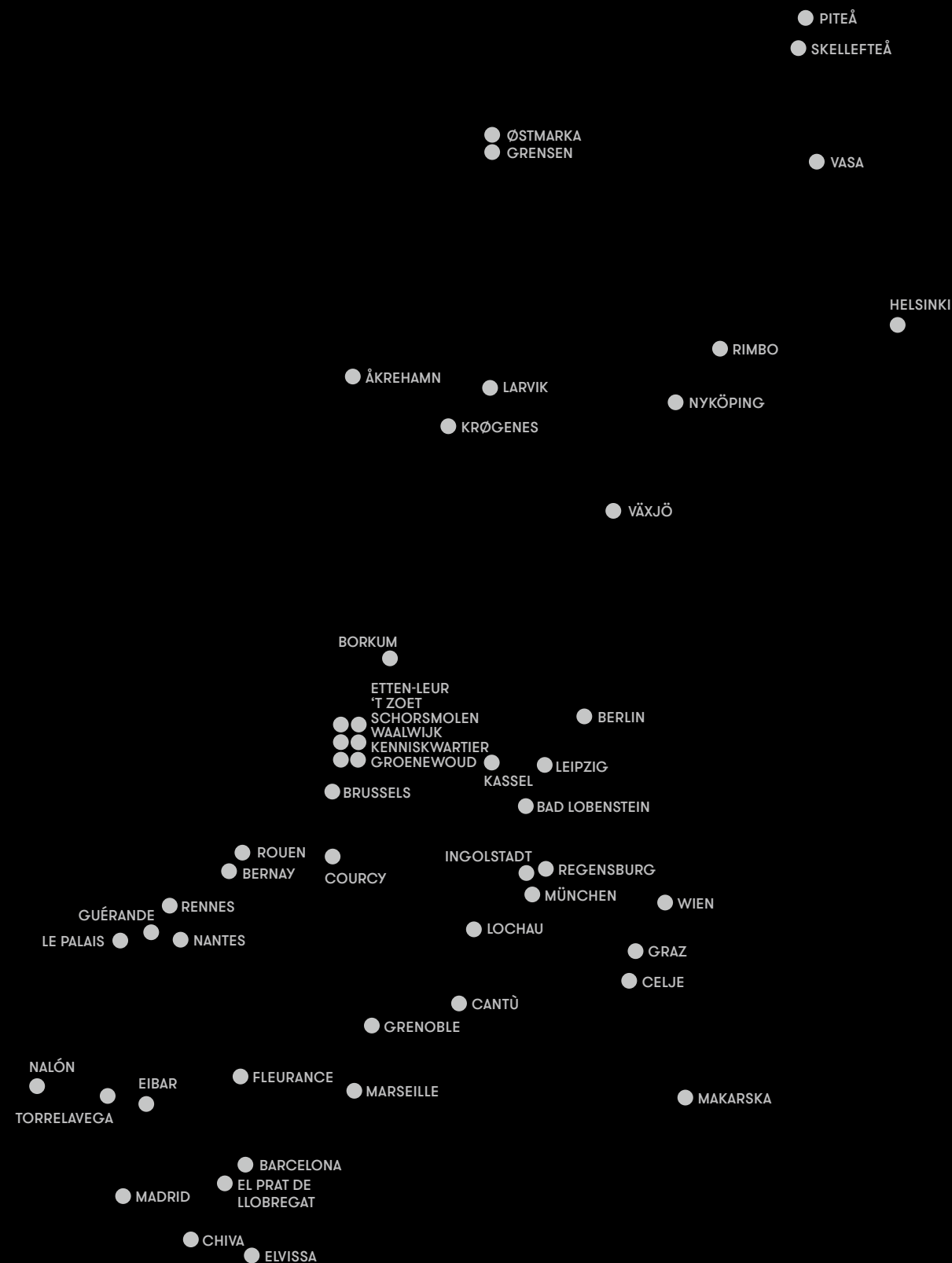
LIVING
CITIES 2

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With additional photography
by Amadeja Smrekar

EDITO- RIAL



Iris Kaltenegger
Bart Lootsma

EDITORIAL

EUROPAN, now in its 17th edition, is a series of competitions for architects under forty for urban and architectural projects in smaller and bigger cities and villages all over Europe, with the goal of realising them. But apart from the realisation of projects, which may take several years after the jury decisions, EUROPAN has always been inspirational for the field of architecture, urbanism, and planning by showcasing exemplary solutions that, in all their diversity and specificity, address a common theme. EUROPAN is unique in bringing together younger architects, municipalities, housing corporations, and developers, encouraging discussions among them that contribute to the profession in the broadest possible way. In the background, the scientific committee prepares the content. The EUROPAN Forums, which are large conferences, also feature lectures on the themes by different experts. Thus, EUROPAN produces knowledge that goes beyond the specific projects and their realisation. The catalogues play a key role in this process. You will find them on the tables of students, architectural offices, local planners, and, of course, in the libraries of architectural schools, as an inspiration for future projects. Therefore, EUROPAN Austria took the initiative to turn this book into more than just a catalogue of winning projects. The ‘Living Cities’ section features essays by the members of the international jury in Austria on the theme of this edition of EUROPAN. The ‘Burning Questions’ section includes contributions by three international experts on the issues of the Rights of Nature, the importance of housing as infrastructure, and architecture and race. This makes the publication rich with credible narratives, spotlighting inspiring projects and powerful ideas.

The theme of the EUROPAN *Living Cities 2* competition is *Care: Reimagining architectures by caring for inhabited milieus*. The aim is to explore the regenerative capacities of living milieus amidst new ecologies that attempt to overcome the opposition between nature and culture and anthropocentrism during times marked by natural disasters and a climate emergency.¹

‘Cognitive biases that ensured our initial survival make it difficult to deal with complex, long-term challenges that now threaten our existence, such as climate change’,² notes political psychologist Conor Seyle, research director of the One Earth Future Foundation. Our species has evolved to pay attention to immediate threats but has a poor ability to make decisions about more complex, less tangible facts. Despite extensive discussions on the climate crisis, insufficient actions are being taken, leaving us questioning how to effectively address this critical issue. Those in the building industry know that the sector is a major contributor to global emissions.

Planners therefore have a huge responsibility to address climate change, but also a huge opportunity to influence and accelerate the tide of change. Credible narratives and optimistic examples with the capacity to inspire and activate are crucial to this effort. In this context, EUROPAN positions itself as an initiating and supporting platform for these endeavours, bringing together open-minded site partners and the young generation of planners. For this edition, EUROPAN Austria partnered with Slovenia and managed four sites: three in Austria – Graz, Vienna, and Lochau, and Celje in Slovenia. A total of 210 planners and 58 teams submitted projects, eleven of which were awarded prizes. The catalogue section showcases the awarded projects with their various approaches and solutions to tackling diverse problems.

¹ ‘Theme’, EUROPAN, accessed 8 February 2024, <https://www.europan-europe.eu/en/session/europan-17/topic>.

² Matthew Wilburn King, ‘How brain biases prevent climate action’, BBC Future, 8 March 2019, accessed 8 February 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190304-human-evolution-means-we-can-tackle-climate-change>.

In Lochau, a complex intertwining of emotional attachments to a boat, a beautiful but sensitive natural environment, and the imperative to act is met with a skilful proposal from the winning team. **‘Lochau rural (h)arbours’** emphasises the transformative journey and suggests an inclusive process for the residents that celebrates farewells and welcomes. This approach facilitates a period for transitioning into a new identity.

A new identity is also proposed by the awarded project of Graz for the district of Gösting. **‘Care and repair’** highlights blue and green infrastruc-tures, hidden in the everyday hustle and bustle of a busy street crossing. Making nature the central actor in a place of mobility allows the qualities of pause and stay to be experienced.

Not hidden, but severely contaminated is the nature at the site in Celje. A former zinc smelting plant has left its traces in the middle of the city. The nature’s wilderness and scenic atmosphere, with memories of the industrial past – the book cover offers a glimpse of it – display an innocence that is not there. **‘The Parliament of Cinkarna’** wants to rethink our approach to land and highlights the powerful symbiosis between all actors, taking mea-sures to clean and ‘heal’ the place.

Our dealing with soil is also the focus of discussion on the Viennese site. Three different approaches show ways how to keep fertile ground healthy while providing housing for a growing city. **‘Feldstadt am Heidjöchl’** pro-poses to intertwine agricultural land and the local food supply for its resi-dents, while **‘Into the wilderness’** suggests an organic street pattern for unlearning car mobility. **‘The park that reaches every home’** weaves different green areas with built volumes.

In all these projects, the issue of ‘care’ is central: care for inclusiveness and justice, care for giving space and voice to all living beings. This session is dedicated to the theme of *Living Cities* for the second time, with the aspect of ‘care’ being a crucial focus in this extended round. The aim is to create a good foundation for all life on our planet. Joan C. Tronto, the political theo-rist and care ethicist, defines ‘care’ as the characteristic activity of the human species, ‘encompassing everything that we do to maintain, preserve, and repair our “world” so that we can live in it as well as possible’.³ The habitability of Planet Earth is at stake, and we need to reconcile humans, animals, nature, and resources.

The ‘Living Cities’ section features essays by the members of the interna-tional jury in Austria and Slovenia, giving importance to and deepening the central theme of this edition of EUROPAN: ‘care’. In his ‘Manifesto of Care’, Chairman Alessandro delli Ponti sketches an operative overview of the tran-sitional approach to the project of the city and the environment that emerges from the critical analysis of the sites and projects participating in this edition of EUROPAN. Radostina Radulova-Stahmer writes about the necessity for ‘Deep Adaptation’, a term she borrows from the British sustain-ability expert Jem Bendell. Now that we know about climate change, biodi-versity loss, and resource scarcity, we need to worry, transition, regenerate, cherish, change, care, and act accordingly. Johanna Gibbons shows by the example of her project *Making Space in Dalston* how ‘care’ is a duty that can be realised in an existing city through a process-driven design practice that establishes subtle connections from brownfields to urban forests. She demonstrates how ‘care’ requires insurgent forms of cultural and scientific practice that embrace the complexities and diversity of life, rather than seek to sanitise.

To introduce a third level of reflection, the ‘Burning Questions’ section reports on the eponymous symposium as an openly accessible part of the EUROPAN Forum that took place in Seestadt Aspern on 11–12 November 2023. It was initiated and organised by EUROPAN Austria to open EUROPAN up to

3 Joan C. Tronto and Bernice Fischer, ‘Toward a Feminist Theory of Care’, in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women’s Lives*, eds. Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

larger audiences. ‘Burning Questions’ are issues that may have been addressed in EUROPAN before but have still not been sufficiently discussed and taken up in the current discourse on architecture and urbanism. They have nevertheless become increasingly ‘burning’ in the world outside and for a younger generation. Three speakers – Jessica den Outer, a lawyer who has been involved in the international movement for the Rights of Nature since 2017, Andrej Holm, a social scientist and senior researcher in the field of urban research at Humboldt University in Berlin and former under-secre-tary for housing in the Berlin city government for the party Die Linke, and Tazalika M te Reh, an architect and cultural scientist – gave provoking lec-tures and discussed intensively with the audience in thematic groups. In this book, Bart Lootsma reports on Jessica den Outer’s contribution. She introduced and emphasised the importance of nature as an autonomous stakeholder with legal personhood and the history of the Rights of Nature movement as it developed over time, with a series of examples from all over the world. Andrej Holm stressed the importance of housing as infrastructure, as opposed to the current situation in which it has increasingly become a real estate asset. Tazalika M te Reh carefully demonstrated the still-hidden presence of racial issues in architecture and urbanism and presented a renovation for the Black House in Cologne, bringing the issue of slavery, which made this part of the city of Cologne possible and prosperous, to the fore.

This book thus presents all the layers of EUROPAN’s commitment to produc-ing better cities and architecture, from organising competitions and realis-ing the winning projects to producing content and making it available for a large, interested audience of professionals – architects, planners, politicians, developers, theorists, and students. EUROPAN is the only organisation deal-ing with the whole complexity of the process that leads to successful proj-ects and their realisation and publicly sharing its results. Taking a holistic approach, EUROPAN initiates change by bringing all relevant stakeholders to the table. The organisation is guided by five key goals:

1. Facilitating the cross-country mobility of knowledge and people in Europe
2. Formulating innovative strategies for a European future
3. Initiating processes for spatial development
4. Collaborating to create a lasting impact
5. Serving as an enabler for young professionals to build a career.

These goals underscore EUROPAN’s commitment to addressing pressing challenges and fostering positive developments on various fronts. However, true accomplishments can only be achieved through collective efforts. The outstanding EUROPAN 17 session has been made possible by the collabora-tion of site partners, the emerging generation of planners, juries, and experts from diverse fields of knowledge. In the Austrian/Slovenian session alone, with the participation of four sites, a total of 319 people contributed to this edition. We sincerely thank everyone for their contributions, their enthusiasm, and their optimistic spirit, which are instrumental in promoting transition. Take this significant number of people and extend it to 51 sites, which is the total amount of cities and municipalities across Europe involved in this session, and one can begin to have an idea of EUROPAN’s impact. This book is a good introduction to this process, and we hope you will enjoy reading it and be inspired.

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Bart Lootsma is a board member of EUROPAN Austria. He is a histo-rian, theoretician, critic, curator and professor for architectural theory.



INTRODUCTION

Bernd Vlay

Playing a bit provocatively with the *Living Cities* theme, one might ask, after 35 years and 17 rounds, if EUROPAN still ‘lives’ its mission. If its biennial competition format, which has been preserved since its very beginning, still meets EUROPAN’s ambitious agenda: empowering architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture as core agents for a better European future.

There has never been any doubt that the source of ideas which should nourish this brave mission must be the talents, concerns, and ambitions of the young generation.

To host the young generation appropriately, EUROPAN has been promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and the cross-country mobility of knowledge and people beyond national borders and disciplines. These ‘spurring’ ingredients can trigger projects whose narratives are powerful enough to convince EUROPAN’s partners – cities and developers – to rethink familiar site development strategies, abandoning outworn pathways in favour of a realisation process that might be adventurous but at the same time rewarding as it provides surprising future potentials and perspectives.

If we look at the 51 sites of EUROPAN 17, each of them seems to long for a future that asks for different pathways, processes, and challenges. The three subthemes of *Living Cities* are symptomatic of the special lens through which EUROPAN 17 asked the young teams to approach the sites’ potentials: Let the birds sing! Imagine a second life! Tabula non rasa! Clearly, these themes suggest that a credible future for these sites is only possible if the very specific ‘talents’ of each site are explored and carried further. More than imposing something new, the sites seem to ask for a careful repair concept, for strategies clearly linked to the process of healing: ‘Let the birds sing’ in Lochau means embedding the architectural operation into an environmental strategy. ‘Imagine a second life’ in Graz means rethinking the potential of infrastructure within a new paradigm of mobility. ‘Tabula non rasa’ for Vienna and Celje means giving up the idea of colonial growth in favour of a respectful re-evaluation of the sites’ potentials.

Imagining ‘development’ as something that does not colonise by expansion but provides conditions for just, inclusive, and respectful relationships, negotiating a symbiotic ‘rendezvous’ with what is already there, suggests a radically different paradigm of planning, designing, and thinking, one that the disastrous planetary crises are acutely yearning for. If you read this catalogue, you will encounter a variety of inspiring examples and formats showing how this new paradigm can be acted out, be it the promising winning projects, the brilliant texts, or the bright excerpts of the international jury’s thoughts.

This catalogue is proof that EUROPAN’s mission lives. At the same time, it is a serious invitation to all those reading these words to continue carrying out this mission.

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LIVING CITIES

Alessandro delli Ponti

NOTES FOR A MANIFESTO ON CARE

LIVING CITIES

EUROPAN – Mission Impossible?

European territories are populated by a rich palette of ghost spaces, left-over areas, zombie programmes, and landscape monsters of different natures that can run under the more mundane term of ‘hard to deal with’ urban conditions.

Industrial left-over terrains, infrastructural mobility lines running through urban agglomerations, back-rear peri-urban landscapes, invisible plots inserted in busy city centres, abandoned mono-functional islands, vast urban areas deserted by economic activities, obsolescent commercial venues, polarised social districts, natural unexpected resurgences and savage landscape explosions, city spots, natural geographies, community places... How can we frame these challenges? Who are we going to call? Who cares for them?

One of the key objectives of EUROPAN is precisely to help municipalities envision the long-term future of those territories that are hard to frame and to bring into the protocols of day-to-day city management.

EUROPAN – Making it possible

EUROPAN offers a unique knowledge capital of visions, methods, and conceptual categories to help think out of the box. EUROPAN is also an open arena helping municipalities learn from one another.

In EUROPAN, the boundaries that distinguish and separate the different pathways which design professionals can take to engage in the project of the city are opened and porous, helping fasten innovative approaches. The designer of the city (be it an architect, a planner, or a landscape designer) can play very different roles: the public administrator – sticking to electoral mandates, objectives, and administrative procedures; the service provider – working for firms that design projects for local authorities or economic actors; or the activist – using professional skills to engage critically in the political venue. Each of these roles represents a different perspective on the disciplines that shape our cities and environments, answering respectively to different goals, and backing ideologies. EUROPAN can be seen as a shared venue enabling these different knowledge perspectives to inter-cross and nurture a holistic understanding of our challenges and define together new design methods.

Yesterday & today

Seen from a historical perspective, EUROPAN offers an overview of the evolution of the European urban condition in the last thirty years, presenting an evolving portrait of both urban conditions and the mindsets and ideologies that shaped our idea of the future in the last decades.

Today, the topic of ‘Living Cities and Care’ brings us to a turning point as to whether we might interpret the change that expects us as a transition, as a bifurcation, or as a U-turn. The topic mirrors the times of economic uncertainty and socio-cultural turmoil inaugurated by the pandemic and is currently boosted by the complex association of environmental crisis and geo-political worldwide struggle.

The following notes sketch a non-exhaustive ‘Manifesto of Care’ – an operative overview of the transitional approach to the project of the city and the environment that emerges from the critical analysis of the sites and projects participating in the seventeenth edition of the EUROPAN Europe process.

CARE AND ITS TRANSITIONS

Caring for an open perspective – Towards an Ecology of Mind

The lesson of the pandemic years has taken the form of a ‘revealing accident’ [cit. Virilio]; it allowed the observation, from a static point of view, of the broken mechanics that have oriented the project of our territories since from the glorious years of modernity.

In the rare framework of an operative and existential pause, the usual processes of ‘transformation through growth’, which envisions the city as a financial machine, and city design, as an incremental linear flow of programmatic additions, were put in stand-by.

This meditative pause allowed us to observe the project process of the city in slow motion, suspending usual workflows and conditioned automatic mental habits. The attribution of value and the very definition of resources and capitals were open for a critical understanding and discussion.

In a world with less action, the centrality of ideas, intellectual courage, and creativity was suddenly valorised, bringing many to start a search for deeper meaning and existential motivation.

In city management and design professions, the sudden scarcity of resources highlighted the importance and the impact of secondary, or ancillary project phases, suggesting a new, care-full attention to the minor steps of the process of transformation. The time and the flows of ‘service’ actions (site preparation, logistics, raw material availability, etc) acquired more importance, and became the object of a project per se. This condition determined a major ‘transition’ in the quality and the objects of our attention. Today, taking advantage of the historical perspective of proximity, but relative detachment to the pandemic years, we could say that a new ‘Ecology of Mind’ (G. Bateson) emerges as the necessary premise to develop new perspectives on what the project of space and the environment can become in the future and what it should care for in the first place.

Developing a new Ecology of Mind can help us understand ‘care’ as a vision-making paradigm, expanding and shifting the meaning and perspective we assign to the three moments of our imaginative endeavours as designers: ‘Attention – Intention – Action’.

The opportunity is to reshape the nature of the project of space, its authorship, its methods, and its understanding of time. Landscape is at the core of this operative reflection; it valorises the latency and the power of the context – to be understood as the result of a long sedimentation of shared ideas, human actions, and natural flows; a capital of time, matter, and knowledge. The project can wait... other words emerge on the first plane: observe, point, select, valorise, engage.

Caring for the ‘already there’ – Local values & built stocks

Today, cities are responsible for approx. 40% of global CO₂ emissions. Tomorrow, the stock of built cities we inherited from the past will present a considerable environmental impact, which can only partially be compensated by sustainable procedures implemented in new constructions. As the economy and consumption habits change, old housing complexes, office districts, or commercial sectors grow rapidly obsolescent, leaving us with a built capital in need of a radical reinvention.

The attentive description, understanding, and valorisation of the ‘already there’ city is the premise to maximise our thoughts and actions to build the city of tomorrow. This approach allows for a definition of progressive strategies of transformation based on the careful management of local material and knowledge flows.

Rather than thinking in terms of demolition, dismissal, and re-construction, in linear, commercial, and product-oriented logic, the ‘care paradigm’ brings us to transform, re-programme, and metamorphose spaces, shortening



logistic chains and reducing the environmental footprint of the future city. This approach relies on the social and relational intelligence involved within the act of spatial transformation and adaptation, rather than on the automated application of self-proclaimed ‘smart’ private investment protocols.

Caring for the ‘right of nature’ – Invisible landscapes & invisible communities

Today, the idea of landscape embodied by our cities is largely a legacy of illuminist and romantic culture: Landscape is a crucial part of the image of the city, but its notion remains confined within a defined ‘perimeter’ of normal, protected, and exclusive ‘naturalness’ – one piece of the puzzle among others. This zoning approach associates distinct sectors to specific regulations and responsibilities. In this framework, design risks become another layer of the regulatory framework the urban order overlays upon the otherwise unpredictable energy of living systems.

Nevertheless, outside the ordered cartography of public park fences and of Google Maps-beaten tracks, spontaneous green lines, forgotten enclaves, and islands of native naturalness – which the city does not even have a name for – happen to evolve and thrive unnoticed, getting ready to reconquer the battlefield of the city in a form of a green guerrilla.

Will they be defeated by a new commercial or institutional programme? Will they be romantically integrated into a new, urban, mixed-use neighbourhood concept? Or will they be successfully defended in court by some activist collective? These spaces and the living communities that inhabit them remind us that landscape is everywhere, life and intelligence are everywhere, and can take very different forms.

These spaces offer us an escape exit from urban life, allowing us to encounter the unknown, and to breathe the vibrant air of indeterminacy.

They invite us, by their simple existence, to reverse our point of view on how the project of the city is conceived, prioritising the condition for life to spread and flourish over the obsession of performance and financial capitalisation. By recognizing the ‘right of nature’ to make the city, we valorise it as a social binder, promoting new alliances among humans and other living communities, producing meaning and engagement as a pathway to produce a new kind of urbanity.

Caring for the soil – Below altitude 0.0

In all European countries, we observe the increasing scarcity (and rising prices) of sand and topsoil for building and landscape construction processes. This trend forces the construction industry and local municipalities to find new ways to manage building processes and move past inherited ideologies of construction. Particularly today, the project of the ground level, of public spaces and city routes, is intended as an effort towards artificialisation and engineering, in which existing soils are evacuated and replaced by layers of technical implants and exogenous materials. This approach doubles the logistic chain of inbound and outbound raw materials and is highly market-dependent. The visible output of this paradigm is also problematic: The hard and mineral-oriented approach to city-shaping results in climate-fragile urban conditions, with the diffusion of heat island phenomena in summer, and the growing risk of floods in winter days.

New strategies emerge to envision the soil as a powerful resource, to be attentively analysed and reworked on-site. If terrain management was once an ancillary technical phase of the building process, it now becomes, potentially, a project of its own. Soil can be stored as re-usable land for topographic works; it can be regenerated on-site, through biological interventions, to produce, after a few months, living topsoil to be re-used in local landscape sites; soil can also be decontaminated locally, through phytoremediation, producing a landscape of its own. These and other possible approaches

to the local, in-situ transformation of the underground layers of our cities show an alternative pathway to deal with local resources, one capable of shortening logistic chains and reducing the impact of building sites.

The other impact of this different relation to the ‘underground’ reality of our city is that of understanding the environmental services that a natural, breathing soil can give, an alternative to the current, dominating mineral cityscapes. The act of de-paving and rethinking street sections to integrate plantings and natural water management systems is an essential climatic and environmental measure that maximises the ecological services delivered by passive measures. This paradigm shift holds the potential to change the meaning and image of public spaces, expanding the socio-political notions of shared ownership and responsibility we usually assign to public space to the realm of the environment, showcasing the advantages of an alliance between humans and other living communities.

Caring for tomorrow’s landscapes – Coming ecosystems

Today, climate change is impacting the survival of endemic vegetal species and increasing the death rate of endogenous trees and ecosystems. Rising temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and the increased frequency of extreme weather events stress trees in urban areas and alter forest ecosystems. In Europe, we can observe a northward and altitudinal shift of tree species distribution and an increased fragility towards pests and diseases. This current trend imposes an adequate preparation of adaptive strategies to orient the long-term evolutions of our ecosystems.

The opportunity is given to try and learn from the intelligence of other ‘living communities’ how to deal with the radical changes that await us and open an operative debate on how to experiment with alternative approaches: anticipating the flow of climatic change or changing to resist.

On one hand, the perspective is that of re-composing our future urban ecosystem with the insertion of exogenous ‘ingredients’, i.e., non-native trees, grass, and shrubs – that present a ‘climate-adapted’ behaviour or drought-resistance capacities, thus helping define more resilient urban landscapes in the context of the ongoing climatic shift.

On the other hand, the perspective is that of protecting local vegetal species by redefining their conditions of access to light and water. This approach implies working with topography and soil to create water reservoirs, water cycles, and humidity conditions that allow the survival of existing species. This approach also relies on the importance of keeping existing ecosystemic niches compact, dense, and interconnected to avoid fragmentation and contamination.

While we may be inclined to alter ecosystems in a design-based approach, recognising that we are part of an interconnected living ensemble and depend on it can help us understand the need to adapt our thinking to a different kind of systemic intelligence. The debate is open on how to think of future adaptations, and it is, today, a terrain of scientific, political, and strategic struggle.

Caring for a city for/by all – Relational knowledge and new processes

The processes through which urban and territorial visions are produced are not neutral – they can be part of the problem or the solution to contemporary challenges. Today, we continue to follow planning and development processes that originated from the bureaucratic practices of post-World War II, twentieth-century democracies. In these processes, each stakeholder – politicians, economic powers, civil society, and project professionals – had a clearly defined and limited role. This theoretical balance ensured that the flow of information and the control over technical knowledge followed a known and predictable hierarchy. Today, this [relative and imperfect] bal-

ance has broken, and, with it, the resilience of systems that guaranteed planning framed within the stakes of democracy and the general interest.

In times of exponential complexity, we observe a growing investment of the private sector in tools for the digital predictability of dynamic flows (climate, finance, opinions). In what has been defined by Colin Crouch as the ‘post-democracy’ society, predictive digital tools are not only aimed at analysing future perspectives but also mainly at influencing and designing them. More than ever, knowledge and information are power.

For the general public, ‘life-long-learning’ becomes not only a necessity to protect working capabilities in times of growing demands for adapted and evolutive competencies, but a necessity to engage in an active civic life.

Accessing, producing, and understanding the cloud of information and knowledge on the distribution of interests in urban processes is a key source of empowerment for social bodies and a tool to make territorial transformations more sustainable.

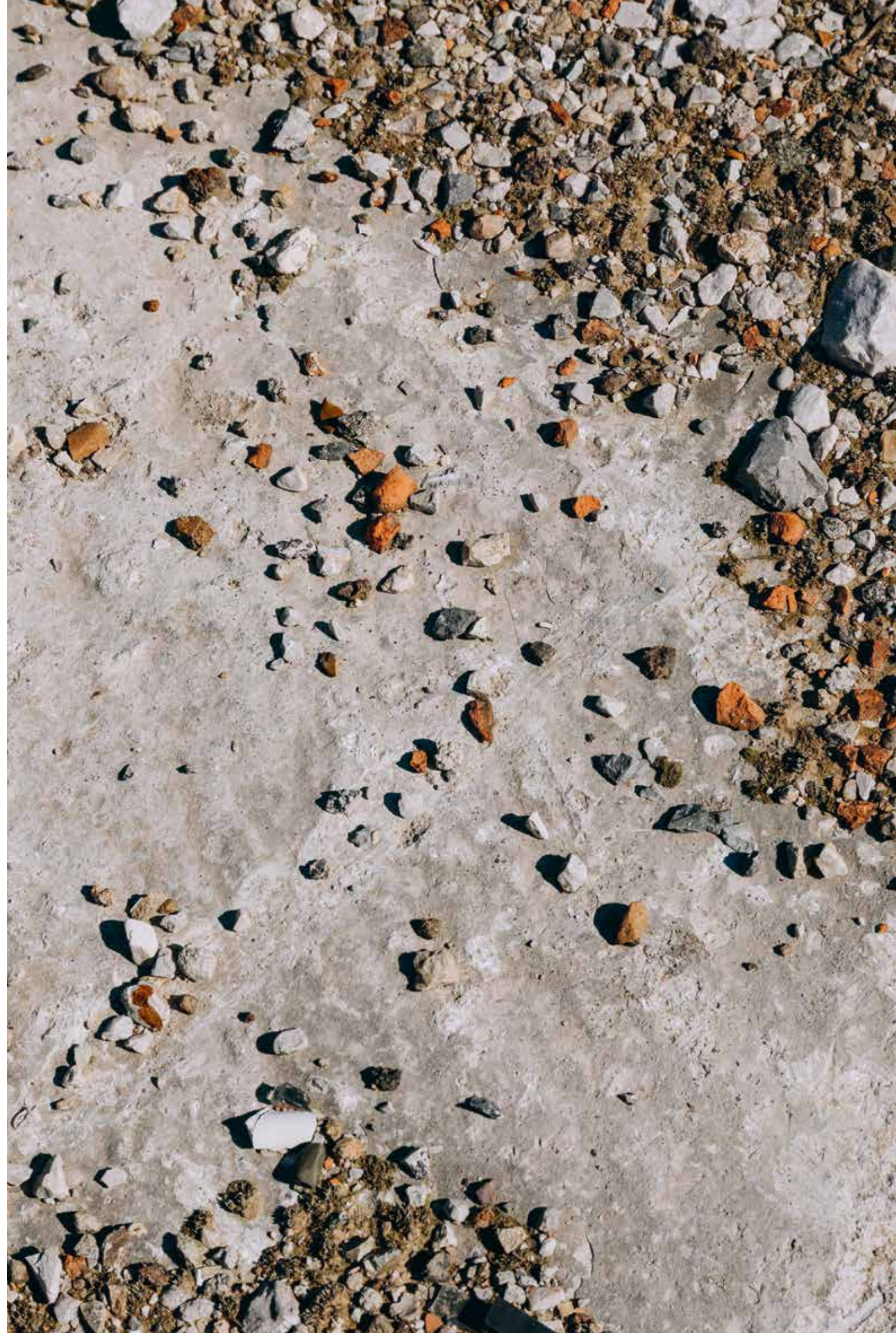
From this perspective, predictability capacity is only a relative advantage in vision-making processes. Envisioning the long term is rather a matter of building and sharing cultural beliefs, goal-oriented motivation, and collective intentionality. The challenge is to rebuild common memories and meaning and the political dimension of collective care for the future.

Future processes should allow the constant weaving of relational knowledge, allowing the guidance of concrete transformation while upgrading planning documents in an open, dialogical, and socially integrative parliament of interests and hopes. Vision-making processes should become iterative and trans-scalar, constantly associating the project of the local scale to the cross-check of coherence with the development of an overall territorial goal. Collective intelligence can be mobilised via the tools of open, transparent communication, auto-evaluation, and co-design methods. The process of planning the future becomes a practice of day-by-day care-taking.

Conclusions

We have seen that thinking in terms of care impacts the social, material, and environmental dimensions of the project of space. In terms of operational practices, we see the emergence of ‘new circularities’, aimed at producing locally shortening logistic and distribution chains, and activating the potential cooperation of often dismissed material, natural, and social capitals. In terms of design processes, we observe that ‘the project of time’ acquires new importance, taking into consideration the time horizons of the regeneration of natural resources, as well as the phases and flows of the adaptative and temporary programming of spaces. The profile of who is in charge of the project of spaces also evolves: the palette of involved actors is broadened, highlighting the importance of constant dialogue and exchange; competencies evolve towards a higher grade of inter-disciplinary and mutual contamination. The architect, the landscape designer, becomes a ‘territorial curator’ that animates, dialogues, and orients, for a given time, the metamorphosis of space, learning from and cooperating with the entire community of the living.

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CARING FOR OUR PLANET: THE IMPERATIVE OF TERRITORIAL REGENERATION

Radostina Radulova-Stahmer

¹ The article 'Deep Adaptation: Navigating the Realities of Climate Chaos' was published in July 2018 by Professor Jem Bendell. The article emerged against the backdrop of growing concerns about the speed and severity of climate change and the limited progress in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

From knowledge to action

Twenty minutes of climate protest have achieved more than twenty years of scientific research. With this sentence, the Viennese climate researcher Reinhard Steurer opened his lecture 'Overcoming fake climate protection' at the TU Graz (Steurer, 2023). He thus addresses accurately the painful discrepancy between existing knowledge about the environmental state of the planet and the political and societal readiness to act. The complacency of our previous ways of thinking and acting in the face of climate chaos can no longer hold. We stand at a precipice where a radical rethinking of our relationship with the natural world is our only viable path forward. Now we need to decide.

Because of the challenges and uncertainties of our time such as climate change, biodiversity loss, or resource scarcity, Deep Adaptation¹ emerges as a compelling necessity. 'Deep Adaptation'¹ is a framework from Jem Bendell – a British sustainability researcher and professor of sustainability leadership at the University of Cumbria – who deals with the challenges of climate change and the need for adaptation. Deep Adaptation emphasises the necessity to prepare for the worst and to prepare for a potentially radical change in social, economic, and ecological systems. Climate change is a reality that already has tangible effects on our world (Bendell, 2018). Given the urgency highlighted by Bendell since 2018 in his call for preparing for the worst and taking swift action, it becomes evident that in an era of unprecedented environmental risks, the conventional paradigms of adaptation no longer suffice. We need to rethink.

The big challenge humanity is facing today is the transition from a fossil-fuel economy to a post-carbon society. The transition process relates the actions to be undertaken to the time required and aims not only for a quantitative but also for a qualitative transformation.

But we are still on the wrong track. We further remain in a serious biosphere crisis that is strongly linked to climate change, and this is becoming even worse. The Living Planet Index report from 2022 shows a massive biodiversity loss in the last fifty years. It says that '[...] studied animal populations have seen an average relative decline of 69% since 1970' (WWF, 2022). Further data also show that we are responsible for a continued exponential increase in the use of fossil fuels worldwide over the last twenty years. The latest IPCC report is emphasising the urgency of taking action to mitigate climate change, to achieve the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target. It necessitates comprehensive and immediate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But if we look at the last five years since the concept of Deep Adaptation emerged the '[...] probable, inevitable or unfolding collapse of industrial consumer societies, due to the direct and indirect impacts of human-caused climate change and environmental degradation' doesn't seem so far (Bendell and Carr, 2021). We have known about the dramatic climate and environmental situation since at least fifty years, now we need to act.

From adaptation to territorial transition

Adaptation, in its traditional sense, often implies incremental adjustments within the existing frameworks. We believed that technological innovations and minor policy changes would suffice to mitigate the impending climate catastrophe. However, these solutions have proven woefully inadequate. The scale and urgency of the climate crisis demand an entirely new perspective. Territorial transition signifies a comprehensive and systemic shift in the way

we interact with our environment. It involves the relinquishment of unsustainable practices and the embracing of regenerative and sustainable alternatives. It calls for a profound revaluation of our consumerist culture and an earnest commitment to fostering resilience in the face of unpredictable climate disruptions. We must redefine our priorities, with the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants taking precedence over short-term profits and convenience. We need to worry.

Moreover, this transition also entails a reconciliation with the irrevocable losses we face. Some damage is already done, and as we adapt to our rapidly changing world, we must find ways to see and remember the species we’ve lost, and the ecosystems forever altered. This collective memory can be a catalyst for change, fostering a deeper connection with nature and reinforcing our commitment to preserving it. Now we need to remember.

Territorial transition is a process that starts from the necessity and urgency of climate-oriented territorial and systemic change. To reach the common goal of becoming climate-positive, it offers quantitative metrics but more importantly strategical spatial approaches which are both climate-oriented and large-scale. Transition combines the climate potentials with spatial qualities and creates multi-scalar, measurable added value to make possible a long-term existence of all species (Armengaud et al., 2023). Now we need to transition.

From resilience to regeneration

Another key aspect of Deep Adaptation is the emphasis on resilience. The concept underscores the need to strengthen the resilience of societies and communities to better confront the growing challenges of climate change. This resilience extends across social, economic, and ecological domains, with the aim of enhancing adaptability to these changes. But resilience alone is not enough. To reverse the damage we’ve inflicted upon our planet, we must also embrace regeneration. Regeneration embodies the essence of rebirth, restoration, and renewal. It is a call to action, urging us to not only mitigate the harm we’ve caused but to actively participate in the healing of ecosystems. It requires regenerative agriculture, reforestation, rewilding, and the preservation of biodiversity. It’s a commitment to not just ‘do less harm’ but to ‘do more good’ to our planet. In the face of climate chaos, regeneration is not a mere concept; it is our guiding principle, our beacon of hope. It reminds us that even amid chaos, we possess the power to adapt and to heal. Now we need to regenerate.

From inevitability to uncertainty

The third critical point in this concept is the recognition of inevitability. Deep Adaptation acknowledges the fact that some impacts of climate change may no longer be reversible. This awareness necessitates our adjustment to a world where certain changes are unstoppable, and it calls for taking appropriate measures to cope with these unavoidable changes. Tipping points in climate change (such as the melting of the Arctic ice sheet, changes in ocean currents, or loss of permafrost) are critical thresholds at which the Earth system can abruptly and often irreversibly transition to a new state. These points mark critical changes in environmental conditions that affect the stability and functioning of our planet. Crossing these thresholds could lead to drastic impacts on climate, ecosystems, and human society. This volatile eco-systemic dynamic asks for agile forms of planning and design, questioning traditional routines and practices. Now we need to prepare. Climate catastrophes, hazards, health crises, or humanitarian disasters can change spatial demands and necessities within days. Transitions are situations of high uncertainty, doubt, and contradictions. They question the

velocity of dynamic urban or economic developments, advocating for an immediate territorial transition but at the same time for slowness as an asset for ecological regeneration. Now we need to cherish.

Disciplinary shift

In the Berlin Declaration of the German Academy for Urban and Regional Planning titled ‘Our Cities and Regions: What Must Change – How We Must Change’ (DASL, 2022), the Academy redefined its societal responsibility for the future of cities and regions. The Berlin Declaration is intended as a political stimulus and as a self-commitment. The Declaration first states that a new balance in the relationship between humans and nature is needed. Traditional concepts of domination over nature, perpetual growth, and the primacy of technical solutions that do not rely on sustainability (no more resources taken than added) and sufficiency (produce differently, use resources more efficiently, and consume less) are to be left behind. This demands not only a cultural shift but a shift in systemic thinking and action, recognising that urban and rural areas are interconnected through various metabolisms and must always be understood as a spatial network to establish a circular economy. Now we need to change.

However, while some progress is being made compared to a scenario with no climate policies, we are still far from achieving the international targets set for mitigating climate change. The existing climate policies will result in a reduction of emissions, although the pace of reduction is insufficient to meet global targets. Now we need to hurry. Architects, urbanists, landscape architects and planners need to leave anthropocentrism and re-image urban spaces as dynamic ecosystems that not only actively contribute to, but also really care for the well-being of both human and the more-than-human world. This horizontal approach acknowledges the interdependence between cities and their surrounding environments, advocating for a shift towards an eco-centric framework that gives equal importance to the welfare of the entire planet and its diverse inhabitants. Now we need to connect. So how do we need to change our discipline? What can post-sustainable architecture and urbanism look like? Benedikt Boucsein puts it like this: ‘The egalitarian city is the city that doesn’t get built’ (Boucsein, 2021). We need to stop building and start regenerating. Territorial regeneration, in this intricate relation of transitions and territorial systems, is the key to revitalising and restoring urban and rural landscapes. It is the promise of healing ecosystems, of reconnecting fragmented habitats, and of reclaiming spaces for both natural and human communities. Spatial regeneration involves rewilding urban areas, restoring degraded ecosystems, and breathing life back into once-barren lands. It is a journey of profound transformation, one that encompasses our relationships with the natural world, our fellow human beings, and future generations. Caring for our planet means putting the living systems in the urban-rural continuum in first place. Deep territorial regeneration is crucial to at least have a chance to invert climate change and ecospheric crisis. Now, we need to truly care.

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TAKING CARE

Johanna Gibbons

Symbiotic relationships describe a close and long-term interaction, whether organisms, people, or things, and often adapted to the specifics of the environment. Lichens are one such life form. So varied are the adaptations to substrate and microclimate that as a genus they can be hard to categorise in terms of where the fungal and algal partnership co-exist in time and territories, over millennia, through periods of mass extinction and climate change.

The roofs and walls of our ancient cities are mottled with mosaics of lichen growth. Our urban forests are encrusted with various foliose, crustose, and fruticose forms. They define the environment within which they exist. They are a biodiversity indicator, yet in the confusion of what it means to care for the urban habitat humanity has engineered for itself, care-taking is often a reductive activity, stripping away the very organic growth that brings not only moments of joy and awe, but also critical messages of the atmospheric conditions – of the air that we breathe.

In exploring gaps in perception and practicality and in defining a more nature-permeable city, the ‘duty’ of care becomes a discussion of process-driven design practice and opportunity, from brownfield to urban forest. This is an optimistic view of co-existence within a vernacular urban landscape culture that is meaningful, resilient, and biodiverse. To nurture in the urban environment requires insurgent forms of cultural and scientific practice that embrace the complexities and diversity of life, rather than seek to sanitise. In promoting the de-paving of urban living to reinstate porosity and create potential, the essay illustrates the open invitation beyond the professional elites to each of us as visionary gardeners; a call to activate a compelling, eccentric, and thoughtful collective approach.

Our Human Nature walks as part of London’s Architecture Week drew a good crowd of urbanites. Our agenda was to highlight the diversity and prevalence of the city’s incidental green infrastructure – natural regeneration that is often overlooked. The ferns that self-seed into the limey joints of the underside of a viaduct; dripping gutters creating a vertical habitat; moss copings on a shady wall; places free from ‘cleansing’ operations that sanitise the surfaces of the city, allowing lichen to spontaneously establish. Structures in the city transformed from inert to living as fascinating examples of ‘ordinary, local nature’¹.

During the pandemic, so-called ‘rebel botanists’² chalked out scientific and common names of weeds onto the pavements of London and Paris. This act of guerrilla education raised awareness not only of botanical diversity, but also of councils that have adopted environmentally sensitive practices of reducing or banning the toxic chemical application of ‘weed’ killers. Moments of insurgent beauty, resilience, and optimism captured the imagination, inspiring a sense of discovery and intrigue. The chalk marks in this case are as much performance art as education, a different form of caretaking as a reaction to homogeneity. They point to a more symbiotic and eco-centric appreciation of life in the city.

The emergence of ecological thinking in the urban context and the notion of attentiveness and ‘gradients of urbanity’³ advocate for a more careful and agile approach to regeneration and place-making in the city. This philosophy and practice have been adopted by the more radical agents in the built

1 Charles-François Mathis, ‘The Emergence of Ecological Thinking in the City’, trans, Oliver Waine, *metropolitics*, 27 September 2022, accessed 11 January, 2024, <https://metropolitics.org/The-Emergence-of-Ecological-Thinking-in-the-City.html>.

2 Sophie Leguil, founder of More Than Weeds, in Alex Morss, “‘Not just weeds’: how rebel botanists are using graffiti to name forgotten flora”, *The Guardian*, 1 May 2020, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/01/not-just-weeds-how-rebel-botanists-are-using-graffiti-to-name-forgotten-flora-aoe>.

3 Charles-François Mathis, ‘The Emergence of Ecological Thinking in the City’.

environment and development sector, such as Richard Upton.⁴ Drawn to what he terms the ‘grimy corners’ where nobody else goes, he finds ‘the magic’ places that hold personal significance. Rather than overlooking space that forms the background to everyday life, this perspective seeks out the genuine and authentic qualities of the urban landscape, promoting a set of values that were overlooked. Professor Matthew Gandy says what might have been previously termed marginal space is now recognised as ‘part of the ecological infrastructure of the city’.⁵ Gandy says it forms a soft infrastructure that is part of the mosaic of greenspace, something altogether less manicured, where contact with urban nature not only fosters social cohesion and well-being but also benefits flood control, water purification, and the mitigation of soaring urban heat and the consequent health and environmental impact. Whether de-paving a pavement, bringing a dead-end highway to life, or framing a brownfield site as ‘green’, nurturing and protecting the special qualities of less-favoured places in the city requires imagination and collaboration. This action research informs our practise, while supporting and inspiring communities. It embraces a broader aesthetic alongside a choreography of negotiation that allows for the idiosyncrasies of the personality and peculiarities of a neighbourhood to express themselves in shared space. This is a generous public realm, to allow for different paces of life, community needs and expectations in which a footpath for perambulation, a bark-chipped track for running, and a meandering pathway for contemplation, can exist alongside each other.

‘Capacity building’ was a regeneration term of the 1990s. It meant that a project was charged with the delivery of more than a built space. Its responsibility was equally to generate common ground and a common spirit, socially and ethically. It was a measurable demonstration of investment in the process of design development, delivery, and ongoing stewardship. This was a duty of care born out of valuing and accounting for the real time it takes to foster relationships in a symbiotic manner. Benefits are shared in mutual interaction as the art of living together.

Our ***Making Space in Dalston*** project exemplifies this approach. The study, which led to the build-out of ten projects, looked at how public space could be enhanced without losing existing assets. With a history of community descent and scepticism in the planning process, a key concern was how to foster confidence in embracing change while nurturing the self-organising distinctiveness of Dalston, inherent in both its social capital and physical character, to avoid what might be perceived as gradual neighbourhood sanitisation. To do this, firstly the initial mapping explored the wider cultural context of both external and internal public realm for space and programme opportunities, giving value to the existing creative activity and suggesting the role that the public realm could play to support it. Secondly, rather than a traditional top-down masterplan, the project set out to identify projects through dialogue with a large stakeholder group, from the grass roots up using local knowledge to appreciate existing assets of cultural and environmental value. The scope of opportunity could then be defined and discussed with the stakeholders who themselves became the driving force and promoters of change, rather than resisting it. Subsequent high-level endorsement was sought to ensure deliverability and sustainability.

The brief called for ten costed projects and an action plan for cultural programming and management. In fact, the project became a test case for the process of deliberative planning, a constant convivial and non-linear feedback loop with almost two hundred individuals or groups. We identified almost eighty projects, which were identified and categorised in ten themes

⁴ ‘Are You? Ruffling feathers and lighting fires’, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://areyou.place/about/>.

⁵ Matthew Gandy, ‘City of Weeds: Tracing the Origins of the Urban Ecological Imaginary’, The MIT Press Reader, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/city-of-weeds-on-wastelands-and-the-emergence-of-urban-ecology/>.

⁶ Matthew Gandy, ‘City of Weeds: Tracing the Origins of Urban Ecological Imaginary’.

⁷ Kieran Long, ‘Is this what you mean by Localism?’, see <https://www.objectif.co.uk/projects/localism/>.

⁸ ‘Rosa Barba Prize 2014, Selection, discussion and choice of the jury’, accessed 11 January 2024, https://landscape.coac.net/sites/default/files/2021-10/Acta%20del%20jurat_8aBiennal.pdf.

⁹ Horniman Museum and Gardens, ‘Nature + Love’, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/project/nature-love/>.

under the umbrella concept of a ‘discontinuous park’. Rather than speaking solely with council offices, we convened stakeholder meetings in local venues, sharing food, where the community felt comfortable and at ease. The project list distilled from the engagement varied from small-scale interventions to larger projects. Some were permanent, some ‘meantime’ for space awaiting development, priming the local authority and the community for the positive possibilities of incremental change, of sensitive, fine-grained, deliverable innovations with an entrepreneurial approach to retrofit. This was a strategic ambition with modest means, crafting a ‘vernacular landscape culture’.⁶ Good plans evolve and the ability of this complex process to result in swift action comes down to trust, building confidence and consensus, and recognising and calling out the significant sweat equity. By taking the responsibility to relieve bureaucratic barriers to empower the community, this becomes an investment in process – the successes and frustrations of ‘working in productive unpredictable collaborations with local people’.⁷ It can be felt in what has become the flagship project for this strategy, ***Dalston Eastern Curve Garden***, described by writer and social historian Ken Walpole as ‘radical, eccentric and people-based’. The garden is constantly evolving under the dedication and love of a social enterprise with hundreds of volunteers. It is barely 0.2 ha but hosts over 150,000 visitors per annum. The garden is inspired by the ruderal and ephemeral vegetation self-seeded as a spontaneous ecology and subsequent illegal landfill over an abandoned railway. Hidden behind a hoarding, its planted structure of pioneer species has already evolved as an urban forest of birch and alder. It is a place of immersion in the eclectic curation of people and plants which has made it a unique experience on the doorstep. More than an exemplar of the rehabilitation of derelict urban lands, it has become an expression of optimism – with a subversive and ambitious garden agenda of nuanced dimensions that has become a safe haven for human and non-human life. It’s an antidote to social isolation, a hive of tranquillity and activity – pollinators, artists, birds, children, and an eclectic band of volunteer urban forest gardeners alike. It has become a cool refuge in unprecedented heatwaves beneath the urban forest canopy to enjoy nutritious food and build friendships. A place to breathe.

By engaging with local stakeholders and incorporating their insights, a diverse range of projects were identified, each tailored to the specific needs and desires of the community. This collaborative process resulted in a series of small-scale interventions that collectively transformed the neighbourhood, creating a more vibrant and liveable environment. ***Making Space in Dalton*** was shortlisted for the prestigious Rosa Barba International Prize. The jury liked this low-key, low-cost project, because landscape architects shaped their own assignment by convincing the authorities of the values and qualities of the existing neighbourhood, of the effectiveness of nurturing these qualities and possibilities, and of defining what was missing. By combining politics with people and the profession, the jury praised the enormous effect on a socially and economically deprived area. Michael van Gessel, chair of the judging panel, saw it as a project that was ‘humble and fitting’, and as such could give a new direction to the profession.⁸ There is a garden movement afoot in the cultural sector too. The Horniman Museum and Gardens, London, says that ‘appealing to the love of future generations is the most powerful incentive for action in the face of climate anxiety’.⁹ This is the interconnectedness between people and nature that underpins the museum’s ‘Nature + Love’ initiative. It expresses the desire to use their visitors’ love for their friends, family, and future generations, and of the Horniman to ‘generate a greater love and understanding for our planet’.

The project realises the symbiotic relationships of institutions and community to create agency in nature exploration and sustainable gardening. It de-paves forgotten features to create resilience and the possibility for biodiversity restoration in the city. Take the rare and fragile small blue butterfly¹⁰ that has found niches in Central London resembling its natural habitat of the Chalk Downs. The thin, infertile soils free of agricultural spray drift or nutrient enrichment have become its new urban habitat. While across London at the Natural History Museum, the Urban Nature Project will be a focus for the exploration of deep time, the abundance of nature in the city, and how communities and wildlife can flourish, if allowed, in the rapid environmental changes induced by climate change. These projects we are engaged in, along with our ongoing research with King’s College London, Urban Mind¹¹ provides the evidence. Even down to the time-lasting, positive impact of birdsong on mental well-being.¹² I describe a philosophy for practice favouring special care for cultivating agility and resilience through interwoven design and dialogue with the science of nature-based solutions, rather than asserting purely concept-driven transformations. A wider sense of curiosity of revealing natural systems, finding the enchantment of everyday artefacts and urban landscapes where nature is recognised as having active democratic agency¹³ and long-term stewardship is eco-centric in practise, a partnership which Ian McHarg described emphatically in his seminal work, *Design with Nature*.¹⁴ It’s an embrace of the pluriverse, the interconnected human, natural, and spiritual world, coexisting in time and space, especially in the urban habitat, growing faster than any other and home to most of humanity.¹⁵ Rapid urbanisation means current nitrogen and particulate pollution remain as much a severe threat to epiphytic flora, such as lichen, as it does to human health. Furthermore, the lag effect of high pollution climates of the twentieth century may still be carrying a legacy in the chemistry of tree bark and building stone, substrates on which lichen exist. Such high potential microhabitats act as an indicator for the basic requirements of life, and the reciprocity that characterises an intricate web of life on which humanity depends.

Why would we not want to make cities a place for all life to thrive?

10 *Cupido minimus*, the small blue butterfly of principle importance for biological conservation.

11 Ioannis Bakolis et al. ‘Urban Mind: Using Smartphone Technologies to Investigate the Impact of Nature on Mental Well-Being in Real Time’, *BioScience* 68, no. 2 (February 2018): 134–45, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/68/2/134/4791430>.

12 Kings College London, J&L Gibbons, Nomad Projects; see also ‘Smartphone-based ecological momentary assessment reveals mental health benefits of birdlife’, *Scientific Reports*, 27 October 2022, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-20207-6>.

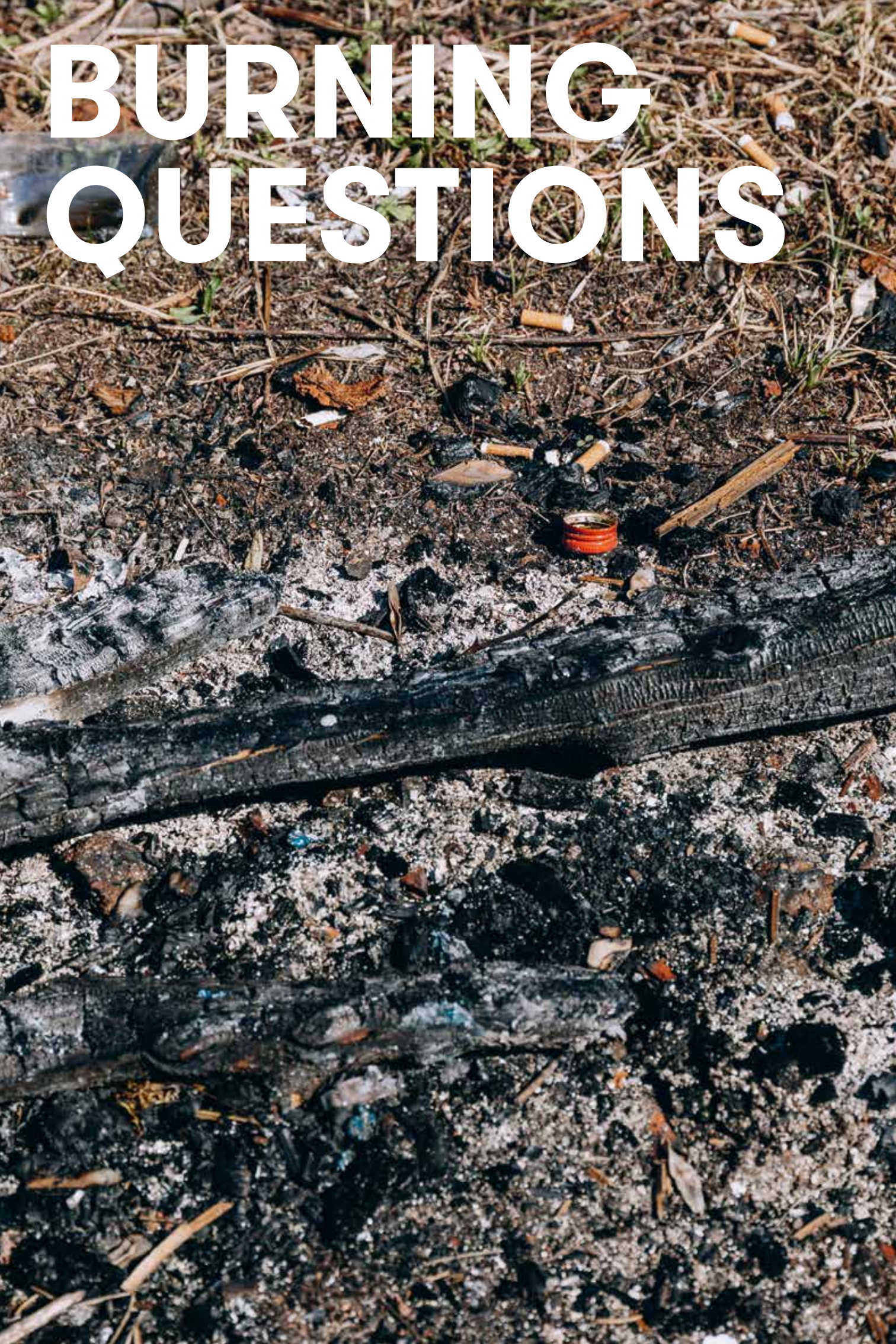
13 Richard Mabey, *The Cabaret of Plants: Botany and the Imagination* (London: Profile Books, 2015).

14 Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1969).

15 The World Bank, ‘Urban Development: Overview’, 6 October 2022, accessed 11 January 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview#2>.

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BURNING QUESTIONS

BURNING QUESTIONS

RIGHTS OF NATURE

Bart Lootsma

Report of Jessica den Outer's lecture on the Rights of Nature

Finding new approaches to the relationship between the city and nature is one of the most important agendas of contemporary urbanism. The theme of *EUROPAN 17 Living Cities 2* is 'reimagining architectures by caring for inhabited milieus' and 'aims to explore the regenerative capacities of living milieus'. It is a direct reaction to the climate crisis. 'The very possibility of living is now in doubt for all, given the excessive consumption of natural resources by certain human groups to the detriment of the needs of the global population, exceeding what Planet Earth can replace'. As such, EUROPAN 17 is an example of the more pragmatic approach to the ideals of a wide global movement that goes under the name 'Rights of Nature'. Many locations in EUROPAN 17 are post-industrial sites, while others demand a revitalisation or reintroduction of nature into existing urban tissues. However, this is still an approach in which humans and their rights to dwell take central stage.

Rights of Nature is a broader movement though, one that addresses more fundamental questions: If we have human rights that are even declared by the United Nations, what about those of nature?

Therefore, EUROPAN Austria invited a prominent representative of the Rights of Nature movement to speak at the Burning Questions symposium it organised during the European Forum in Vienna on 10 November 2023. Jessica den Outer has a background in environmental law and has been involved in the international movement for the Rights of Nature since 2017. She has contributed to United Nations reports on this subject and, together with other young people, set up an advisory group on the Rights of Nature (Earth Advocacy Youth). She also advocates for the recognition of the Rights of Nature in the Netherlands and is one of the initiators behind a campaign for the Meuse River. She has received several awards for her work. In 2019, den Outer was appointed by the United Nations Harmony with Nature programme as one of the youngest experts on Earth-centred law. Her book on the Rights of Nature was published in Dutch in 2023 and the English version will come out as *The Rights of Nature Movement* in the spring of 2024. Consequently, we cannot publish her lecture in an integral version. As it is an important theme in the spectrum of Burning Questions, we therefore provide a summary inspired by it here.

In her lecture, Jessica den Outer introduced and emphasised the importance of nature as an autonomous stakeholder and the history of the Rights of Nature movement as it developed over time. It started with a competition organised by the United States Forest Service for the development of a recreational area in Mineral King, a subalpine glacial valley located in the southern part of Sequoia National Park in California, that was won in 1966 by Walt Disney Productions, which had become interesting in skiing as a relatively new form of mass tourism. The project involved the development of a ski resort in this unique area, famous not just for its colder climate, but particularly for its giant redwood Sequoia trees, which can be millennia old, and its abundant wildlife. Many of the trees would have had to be removed. The Sierra Club, an American environmental organisation already founded in 1892, started a lawsuit to stand up for the trees. They did not win, because the judges ruled that the legal system was solely about human interest and not about the interest of nature. In a period in which the aware-

ness about the importance of nature and the *Limits to Growth*, as the first report of the Club of Rome from 1972 was called, grew, this was considered highly problematic and attracted the attention of the legal world. Also in 1972, then-34-year-old law professor Christopher Stone published his essay *Towards Legal Rights for Natural Objects*, which was expanded in 1974 to his famous book *Should Trees Have Standing?: Law, Morality, and the Environment*. Stone was ‘quite seriously proposing that we give legal rights to forests, oceans, rivers and other so-called “natural objects” in the environment – indeed, to the natural environment as a whole’. Just like when a person becomes unable to manage his or her affairs, for example, because of dementia or because he or she is a child, a guardian should be appointed to represent him or her. Similarly, groups like the Sierra Club could also apply to serve as court-appointed guardians for mountains, streams, or other natural phenomena. Companies and municipalities, for instance, also have rights, so why not nature? The result was that Disney had to make an extensive environmental impact assessment, which took six years to write, with the conclusion that they could not build the resort without harming the redwoods, and Mineral King was saved. With his publications, Stone became one of the most important persons to help launch the modern environmental movement, which he himself saw as a part of the many emancipatory movements that developed over the last centuries.

Today, according to the United Nations, the Rights of Nature movement is the fastest-growing legal movement of this century. This has many implications. In city planning or building design, for example, nature must now be regarded as a stakeholder when new things are planned. Jessica den Outer continued her talk with several recent examples from all over the world illustrating how this works. In most cases, these show that respecting the rights of nature enables a more complex, integral approach to nature areas that fits systemic, ecological, and maybe even holistic thinking better than fragmented interests.

Ecuador recognised the rights of Pachamama in Article 71 of its Constitution in 2008. Pachamama is named after the ‘Earth Mother’ goddess revered by the indigenous people of the Andes. She embodies nature and has her own creative power to sustain life on earth. The recognition of Pachamama happened largely through the pressure of the indigenous people of Ecuador because they wanted to live in harmony with nature, whereas Ecuador depends largely on the extraction of resources from the ground, like oil. In the past few years, many lawsuits were lodged against the government, which had granted permits to start mining activities. In the case of a permit granted to a mining company in Los Cedros, this involved 68% of a rare, important, and protected, high-altitude cloud forest removed for the mining of copper and gold. As the rights of nature are enshrined in Ecuador’s Constitution, this also meant that the forest has the right to exist. As removing 68% of the forest contradicted this, the lawsuit on behalf of the forest was won.

In New Zealand, where the Maori have been fighting for over 150 years to have their traditional rights and way of life recognised, the Whanganui River was the first river in the world to be granted legal personhood. The law now states that the river is one indivisible whole from its beginning in the mountains to its end in the sea. Different parts cannot be managed in different ways. Representatives of the Maori and the New Zealand government together form the legal guardianship of the river. However, there are no lawsuits, because in this constellation the river is a stakeholder in all decisions taken, causing a different dialogue. This also works on a smaller level, for instance, if a bridge is built over the river. Ecological aspects have to be

taken into account, which means that, e.g., changes in the riverbank have to be compensated elsewhere to restore nature.

The Mar Menor is a lagoon in northeastern Spain. Since 2016 it has been a heavily polluted green soup. In 2019, because of a heatwave, the oxygen levels in the lagoon dropped further, which meant more algae were being developed and fish, shrimps, and seahorses were no longer able to breathe. Three tons of sea animals washed up on shore every day. After law students and professors initiated a legal fight, and the rights of the lagoon were ultimately recognised by law, a guardian structure was conceived. Most importantly, however, this meant the government had to take measures to ensure that, among other things, no organisms may be introduced in the area that are harmful to it, houses cannot be built using harmful materials, and the Spanish government must clean and change the sewage system so that sewage can no longer end up in the lagoon.

In Curridabat, a suburb of San José in Costa Rica, pollinators have been given rights. Bees, bats, and butterflies have citizenship just like humans. With this starting point, they could design the city differently, with parks for pollinators and the introduction of facilities in which insects can dwell in houses and homes. For Jessica den Outer, this approach is the most promising for architecture and urbanism.

Jessica den Outer agrees that the United Nations and the European Union have introduced many laws and regulations to protect nature since 1972. However, according to the UN, these are not enough for the multiple crises we are facing today. In most cases, rights are fragmented because of human behaviour, economic interests, and the fragmentation of ecological systems through the borders of different countries. Jessica den Outer mentions the example of the Meuse River, which flows from France, bordering Germany, through Belgium to the Netherlands. In some of these countries, companies are still permitted to empty their discharges into the river, after which they enter another country. Technical regulations like environmental impact assessments do now work in this context because they do not take the whole ecosystem into account. The recognition of complete ecosystems and the disregarding of national borders provide the only possibility to solve this problem and have a guardian at the table. Only the lawyers of the companies are sitting there now.

There is also a development in criminal law that relates to ecosites. It allows holding people who commit environmental crimes accountable under criminal law. Crimes against humanity are regulated at the International Court of Justice in The Hague and there is a movement demanding ecocide and crimes against nature to be recognised there as well. This is also a fast-spreading movement. France and Belgium are already incorporating ecocide in their penal codes. The Rights of Nature movement is about another kind of law, not criminal but public law, in which nature can obtain legal personhood, have guardians, and so on. By setting up negotiation tables, it might have a positive effect long before conflicts or one-sided interests result in crime. It might even be beneficial for the different stakeholders beyond their immediate individual interests.

Bart Lootsma is a board member of EUROPAN Austria. He is a historian, theoretician, critic, curator, and professor for architectural theory.



Andrej Holm

¹ Christian Donner, *Wohnungspolitik in der Europäischen Union: Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna: Self-Published, 2000).

HOUSING AS SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

BURNING QUESTIONS

I have been involved in neighbourhood and tenant initiatives for over thirty years and try to play an active role in shaping Berlin's housing policy and enforcing public responsibility for social housing provision. Now I'm a senior researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin and working on issues of housing provision and housing policy.

When I talk about Berlin, I am talking about a city in which almost eighty-five per cent of all households live in rented accommodation and in which almost every housing issue is a rental housing issue.

For a long time, Berlin was regarded as a metropolis with very low rents and a relaxed housing market. This has changed significantly in recent years due to massive rent increases. Compared to other major cities in Germany, Berlin is not yet the most expensive city, but it is the city with the highest rent increases in recent decades. Almost half of all tenant households now exceed the affordability threshold and must spend more than thirty per cent of their income on rent. With these developments, the Berlin example is prototypical of the social housing crises that we know from many other cities.

Contrary to what politicians from the major parties and experts from the property lobby have been repeating for years, it is not just the reluctance to build new buildings that has caused rents to skyrocket. Rather, Berlin stands for a comprehensive privatisation of public housing stock, a drastic reduction in social housing, and a growing proportion of institutional investors in the city.

Since reunification, over 300,000 municipal flats have been privatised. Unlike in many other countries, privatisation did not take the form of individual transfers of ownership to individual households, but rather of bloc sales, in which tens of thousands of flats or even entire housing associations were sold in some cases. The beneficiaries of this privatisation policy were almost exclusively institutional investors and international investment funds, which took hundreds of thousands of flats into their portfolios and now manage them according to financial criteria. The total stock of financialised housing is currently estimated at over 250,000 flats and accounts for around twenty per cent of the rental housing stock.

In the same period, the social housing segment with its rent and occupancy restrictions has been reduced by over 270,000 flats. This means that the volume of social housing has fallen by three quarters. This shrinking of the social housing stock can be traced back to the German subsidy system, which, despite extensive grants and loans from the subsidy programmes, sets a time limit on social commitments to create incentives for private companies to participate in social housing construction. This absurd system has been aptly described by the Austrian housing researcher Christian Donner as a 'subsidy program for private rental housing investments with temporary social use'.¹ However, the provision of social housing is a permanent task and does not require interim social utilisation, but rather permanent solutions. In a largely privatised housing market with only a few social housing units, the provision of social housing at affordable rents regularly fails. This is because, under market conditions, investments require at least an average return on equity. Applied to the rental housing market, all economically rational landlords therefore strive for at least an average rental income. However, this understandable principle of capitalism is always offset by fifty per cent of households that earn below-average incomes – and are therefore usually dependent on below-average rents.

Market-based calculations will always strive for the highest possible returns and can only contribute to social housing provision under the conditions of strict regulation by the state. However, legal instruments must be enforced against private profit interests and regularly encounter resistance from the property industry. In Berlin, for example, a strict rent cap was overturned by the Federal Constitutional Court a few years ago following a successful lawsuit by property owners and property-friendly parties. The right of ownership regularly takes precedence over the requirements of social housing provision.

Even state intervention through the funding of support programmes, tax incentives, and individual housing benefit payments is only ever of a temporary nature and does not create a permanent basis for social housing provision.

Against the background of these experiences, housing researchers David Madden and Peter Marcuse describe a permanent tension between 'housing as a home and housing as real estate'.² A tension that cannot be permanently resolved even by legislation and subsidy programmes. Even if owners forego maximum profits and calculate with so-called cost rents, they generally expect that the construction costs of the residential buildings can be refinanced from the rents. Against the backdrop of rising construction costs and interest rates, it is not only tenants on low incomes who are often overwhelmed by cost rents. So what can be done to overcome the contradiction between social needs and economic calculations? In addition to regulation and financing, there is a third modality of state action: the mode of provision. In other areas of life, the state and local authorities provide important facilities as social infrastructures as a matter of course. Social infrastructures are characterised by public funding and unrestricted and usually free access for all. An important feature of the provision of social infrastructures is that there is no expectation of refinancing by users. Public libraries, for example, are provided by local authorities and nobody expects the low user fees to refinance the construction of the library building or the purchase of books. At best, the user fees refinance the ongoing operation of the facilities. In the provision mode, the state would therefore have to take over the construction of flats and manage them like other social infrastructures, without expecting the construction costs to be fully refinanced by the rents. Historical examples such as Red Vienna in the 1920s, the early council housing system in the UK, and the multi-million public housing programme in Sweden show that the provision of housing as social infrastructure can be implemented in practise. Even if these experiences from the past and in other countries are not transferable 1:1, as practical examples of the forgotten utopias of housing policy they can provide a lot of impetus for our current challenges. Thinking of housing as social infrastructure is the most consistent way to demand public responsibility for social housing provision.

² David Madden and Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (London: Verso, 2016), accessed 12 January 2024, https://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/2016_Madden_Marcuse_Defense_Housing_book.pdf.

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Tazalika M te Reh

POWER AND RACE IN ARCHITECTURE

BURNING QUESTIONS

5 aphorisms on power and race in architecture – or: Where did the rubber come from?

As architects we are trained to imagine, to design, and to realise spaces and constructions. However, over the years, I sensed a complexity in architecture intertwined with cultural production beyond my education. It was only later, armed with the tools of Cultural Studies, that I could articulate my questions about power dynamics and the master narrative in architecture, encompassing aesthetics, beauty, style, knowledge production, and re-production. In cultural studies, the understanding that concepts are constructed is fundamental. As an architect, I found it profound to recognise that not only my field but also other aspects of human life, such as the city, architecture, and race, are fundamentally constructed concepts. These realms share a common basis in construction, and their dynamic nature means they are continually undergoing transformation rather than remaining static. We are taught that essentialising is an unfavourable thing to do. Yet, literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak introduces the concept of strategic essentialism for clarification. I invite you to follow my strategically essentialising thought process, and I will share five aphorisms, starting with reflections on the intersection of Architecture and the Racial.

1ST APHORISM — THOUGHTS ON ARCHITECTURE AND THE RACIAL

Sociologist Denise Ferreira da Silva links the industrialisation process to the ideological construction of humanity, asserting that the concept of the Racial originated in modernity. According to her, the shift to modernity, marked by the ascendancy of reason over royal or divine authority, allowed for the introduction of racial determinism. The framing of human differences through the Racial, as a means to organise global spaces, persists in modern thought – still influencing the creation of knowledge and power. And because of that, modern representation cannot be discussed without analysing the Racial. The origins of the Racial concept trace back at least four centuries, evolving from early European philosophers during the Enlightenment. This mindset, prevalent wherever European influence extended, defined the European self in contrast to the non-European Other. The concept of the European heteronormative White male gave rise to its counterpart, the Black Other, and the intertwined notions of Blackness and Whiteness collectively form the construct of the Racial.

An architectural project evolves from a thought to physical expression, engaging with existing discourses and contexts. It transitions from a mental conception to a physical structure, facilitating tangible experiences in built space. The very same can be said of the Racial. Much like an architectural project materialising in the physical world, the concept of the Racial is constructed and has tangible effects on human bodies. Just as architecture shapes physical spaces, the Racial defines boundaries of social mobility, influencing access to class, history, and geographic space. Interactions with both architecturally and racially determined spaces can have constructive or destructive outcomes. This highlights the parallel impact of these concepts on lived experience.

2ND APHORISM — THE MASTER NARRATIVE I

When it comes to telling stories about the people involved in the creation of society, there are different ways of creating racialised master narratives.

These narratives, used for purposes such as nation-building, historiography, and architectural history, can manipulate perception and imagination within knowledge systems such as architecture, literature, and history. These systems have the power to either construct or erase Black presence. However, resistance against this kind of erasure is possible. My research explores the use of the Racial to control knowledge spaces, analysing works by writer Toni Morrison, (art) historians, and U.S. founding father Thomas Jefferson. The first strategic step is to identify and racialise key elements of the storytelling. Then, the concept of the Racial is used as a tool to construct a new master narrative that influences our collective imagination. Let me give you an example.

In U.S. architectural discourse, Monticello, located in Charlottesville, Virginia, and once owned by Thomas Jefferson, has emerged as a symbol of paradoxical duality. This discourse includes highlighting Monticello’s dual nature as both a monument to noble ideals and a site of contradiction due to Jefferson’s enslavement of some 400 people. In *Race and Modern Architecture*, architect-writer Mabel O. Wilson links race, reason, and architecture, and more than twenty years ago, architect-writer Craig E. Barton was among the first to call attention to the spatial disparities in Monticello’s construction. As the primary plantation of the third U.S. president, Monticello operated on a foundation of slavery. Precisely because of its picturesque appearance, critical thinking inspired by cultural studies can challenge the conventional narrative and encourage a deeper reading of the site. So, let’s look beyond the conventional narrative! What we don’t see in this image is the double standard in the architectural layout of the building: two intertwined floor plans that permitted the Black enslaved to perform domestic chores while moving about the building, invisible to the White residents. Or the slave quarters for those who effectively ran the plantation, including Sally Hemings, who bore Jefferson six children – quarters invisible to those standing on the veranda under the portico overlooking the spacious garden. What we see, however, is an architectural master narrative that quotes Andrea Palladio’s design principles, creates fantastic vistas, and manipulates the landscape – all by using race to construct it. Thus, is the problem with this image of Monticello – and here I quote literary scholar Anne Anlin Cheng – rather this: ‘Sometimes, it is not a question of what the visible hides but how it is that we have failed to see certain things on the surface’?¹

3RD APHORISM — THE RACIAL, MODERNITY, AND MODERNISM

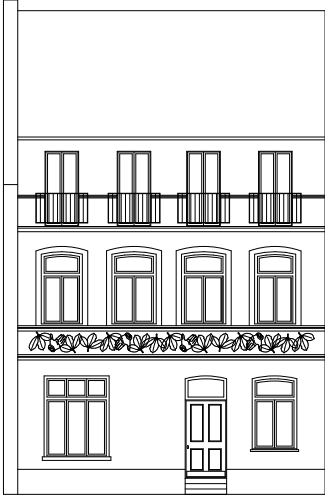
This construction of space, the construction of a master narrative works through creating both social and spatial hierarchies. By differentiating visibility and invisibility based on predefined human difference. This active denial of the presence of the Black body points to the strong discrepancy of proximity and invisibility. You might ask yourselves: ‘What do I have to do with this? This is not my history!’, ‘I live today and not in the past!!’ or ‘What is modern about this?’ This Jefferson nickel, a piece of money, is a cultural artifact still in use today. And on that cultural artifact is Jefferson’s construction! Why don’t we take a moment and ask: What don’t we have to do with this? Symbolising the origins of capitalist dynamics through the Atlantic slave trade, where African bodies are rendered invisible, the Jefferson nickel raises questions about issues like silencing, forgetting, erasure, construction, and resistance, while also considering their relevance in the context of globalisation and capitalism. Money makes our world go round and money enables architectural projects. What I find fascinating about this image is that it intriguingly reveals the hidden presence of the Racial amidst the forces of capitalism and enslavement.

1 Anne Anlin Cheng, quoted in Irene Cheng, Charles Davis III, and Mabel O. Wilson eds., ‘Introduction’, *Race and Modern Architecture. A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2020), 11.

2 Cheng, Davis III, and Wilson, ‘Introduction’, *Race and Modern Architecture*, 4.



Black House in Cologne



Drawing showing the frieze

4TH APHORISM — THE MASTER NARRATIVE II

The narrative of the Industrial Revolution contains prominent concepts such as progress, expansion, industrialisation, modernisation, urbanity, and economic wealth. What this narrative leaves out is that these concepts rely on the racialisation of people and spaces. These racialised spaces are constructed, they circulate as powerful stories across time and space, and shape our mindsets, and their material outcome is the foundation of Western industrialised urbanity. They encompass both geographic and non-geographic realms, and they shape our understanding of knowledge systems such as nationhood, history, literature, music, and architecture. The *Gründerzeit* narrative, for example, interprets Germany’s economic history, defining its transition from agrarian to industrial development. As architects, we learn from a Eurocentric curriculum. Taught by professors sowing the seeds of Eurocentric knowledge in us. How can we ‘look to the heart of the canon, deconstructing that which appears universal, modern, and transparent [once we understand the imbrication of race in modern architecture]’?² As centres of knowledge, we have the ability and responsibility to question the re-production of this architectural master narrative: What role does the Racial play in the narrative of urban memory?

5TH APHORISM — GERMAN-EUROPEAN PARADOXICAL DUALITY

The Black House in Cologne is an apartment building from the late nineteenth century. When I got to know it, the Black House didn’t look black. The building is in the northeastern district of Cologne-Mülheim. Like other major cities in the northern hemisphere of the world, Cologne had its industries in the east-northeast of the city to carry away smoke from the industrial chimneys. During industrialisation, Mülheim became famous for its diverse industries, such as mechanical engineering, railroad construction, and the rubber industry. Following the structural transformation caused by dismantling industries, urban areas, including Cologne-Mülheim, former factory structures are being replaced with new residential, recreational, and commercial spaces, fuelling significant gentrification. The building in question, situated across from a vital former industrial zone on Deutz-Mülheimer Straße, dates to 1892 and once housed factory apartments for senior employees of adjacent industrial companies. Being an architect, my goal was to contemporise the building with sustainable spatial and material qualities. This involved practical solutions for building physics and statics, including high ceilings, climate-friendly energy supply, and greening the courtyard. Despite the project’s pragmatic aspects tied to time and money in the Cologne housing market, there’s an additional layer of interest beyond capitalist conditions. Here is some context: At the time of industrialisation there was the *Kölnische Gummiwarenfabrik vorm. Kohlstadt & Comp.*, a rubber thread factory, across the street. Rubber’s significance extends beyond its production to impact industries like mechanical engineering and railroads. It played a vital role in driving engines and manufacturing essential products such as drive belts, tires, and cables. Even today, rubber products are indispensable, facilitating various aspects of our lives, from household machines to health care. In essence, rubber not only contributed significantly to the Industrial Revolution, but the industrialisation of the so-called Western world is based on the production of rubber.

Thus, my burning question is: Where did the rubber come from?

In the late nineteenth century, natural rubber primarily originated from tropical regions, such as Brazil and Peru. The rubber boom later expanded to African countries, including the Congo and Gabon, as well as Asian nations. The *Kölnische Gummifädenfabrik* sourced natural rubber from Kilwa in German East Africa, a former German colony now encompassing Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda.

Especially in the Congo, notorious for the ‘Congo Atrocities’, rubber production was linked to severe brutality, including enslavement, mutilations, and killings. Cultivating rubber demanded intensive care and knowledge, making it challenging. The seeds and harvest were highly prized, offering wealth during the European Industrial Revolution.

As a cultural scientist with a critical perspective on (urban) history and housing’s core purpose, I recognised this building’s potential to reflect our ongoing historical entanglements. You could say: ‘Colonial exploitation is the basis of today’s so-called Western modernity’.³ And this resonated with my prior observations and reflections, and it is something I mentioned before: That the construction of space works through creating both social and spatial hierarchies. By differentiating visibility and invisibility based on predefined human difference. This active denial of the presence of the Black body on another continent, and yet, so strongly tied to Europe, points to both ‘a concrete form of power’ and the strong discrepancy of proximity and invisibility.⁴ And again, this can refer to society, architecture, or history as racialised spaces.

In the case of the Black House in Cologne, I will use my power to tell history, and to make it visible. The most striking feature of the new architectural setting is the transformed façade, characterised by a black paint coat, roofing, and distinctive details such as black-framed windows, a front door, and railings. The monolithic appearance is largely due to this overall colour scheme. The most notable architectural elements are the paint and a frieze depicting a recurring motif of severed children’s hands touching rubber tree leaves. Placed on the flat surface between the cornices above the ground floor, this frieze serves as a deliberate commentary on the atrocities in rubber mining areas and symbolises the exploitation of Black labour on the *Gründerzeit* building.

My preliminary conclusion: The costly renovation will significantly affect future rent, reinforcing affordability disparities in the developing area, highlighting the project’s link to contemporary capitalist dynamics. Simultaneously, it resurfaces a racially contested space in German and European history, offering potential for historical awareness and revealing Germany’s colonial past. This *Gründerzeit* project raises complex issues of capitalist dynamics, globalisation, historical erasure, and commemoration, encouraging discourse on whether such buildings symbolise a German-European paradox in architectural discourse. Monticello, industrialisation, the Black House, and narratives – We don’t live in some random, unwritten blank space. And architecture, too, is always embedded in a context, be it geographical, historical, urban, cultural, or architectural.

Why do architects need to discuss the Racial? Because it is a versatile phenomenon always connected to space. On the one hand, architecture is part of our social formation. On the other hand, architecture itself can represent, or be an instrument of racialisation. Thus, the simplest and at the same time complex response to why architects should discuss the Racial is because it unfolds in three-dimensional space.

3 Quote from historian and Africanist Prof. Dr. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst, University of Cologne.

4 See Craig E. Barton, ‘Duality and Invisibility: Race and Memory in the Urbanism of the American South’ in *sites of memory*, ed. idem. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 5.

This text is an abbreviated version of the presentation I gave at the EURO-PAN Forum in Vienna on 10 October 2023 as part of the Burning Questions symposium. Permission to copy and use under ‘fair use’ in education is granted, provided proper credit is given. Feel free to let Snoop Dogg read this text to you: <https://speechify.com/text-to-speech-online/>

Further reading
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Tazalika M te Reh is an architect and cultural scientist and explores architecture’s intersections with race, space, decolonisation, and decarbonisation. She delivered a keynote speech at the Burning Questions symposium as part of the Europan Forum in Vienna.





SITES & PROJECTS

GÖSTING TRANS- FORMATIVE MILIEUS

SCALE

L – urban and architectural

LOCATION

Graz, Austria

POPULATION

291,072 inhabitants

STUDY SITE

112 ha

PROJECT SITE

32 ha

ACTORS

City of Graz, Federal Province
of Styria Department for Mobility

Wiener Straße serves as the main artery upon entering Graz from the north. Coming from the motorway or regional streets, cars speed along a four-lane road towards the city centre. Gösting is the first district they encounter. Junctions and traffic lights slow the speed, and the two- to three-storey houses along the road become gradually higher and increasingly denser. However, the continuity is interrupted by sizable supermarkets or car dealerships interspersed in between.

Gösting features the ruins of a scenic fort on the hill, often overlooked by those rushing along Wiener Straße. Taking a turn left or right at intersections reveals a diverse and patchy urban fabric with lots of greenery and hidden small streams.

Residents of Gösting take pride in their peri-urban lifestyles but face significant challenges related to public and active mobility, as well as accessing high-quality public spaces. The EUROPAN 17 competition aimed to question the existing status quo. Graz-Gösting requires a comprehensive public space strategy that accommodates the dynamic flows of commuters, residents, and goods passing through the city's entrance. Simultaneously, the strategy should prioritise preserving and connecting the remaining ecosystems in the area.

At first glance, one might dismiss the Wiener Straße as unviable. However, those familiar with the city's routine know that what's unviable means continuing the way that things are. Slow and unpredictable travel through rush hour traffic jams, a faceless streetscape, a succession of retail parks, interspersed with single-family homes, relying on automotive mobility, and offering little spatial, social, and ecological quality characterise the current situation. The fleet of vehicles has increased, as the number of commuters is escalating.

To address this, the construction of a suburban train station in the district of Gösting on the outskirts of Graz is proposed. Collaborating with the Austrian Federal Railways and the Federal Province of Styria, the City of Graz aims to develop the second-largest train hub in terms of frequency in Styria. This initiative seeks to enhance the quality of connections to the city of Graz, especially to the northern districts, both regionally and supra-regionally, while improving the prerequisites for sustainable mobility within the region. Moreover, the train station is envisaged to function as a local mobility hub, linking the city centre of Graz with Gösting through a new tram line, and serving as a new social centre for Gösting. This presents significant potential for engaging urban interventions, fostering new synergies, and conducting temporary experiments to facilitate a sustainable shift in mobility.

In the upcoming years, Gösting will be integrated into the regional and supra-regional rail network, coupled with a tram connection to the city centre. This anticipated link, long-awaited, will finally bridge a crucial gap, reducing the pressure of automotive commuter mobility in Gösting and Graz. On a local scale, it holds the potential to interconnect and foster the spatial possibilities within the district. Infrastructure hubs are inherently dynamic places in a city, and the planned location for the new public transportation hub, encompassing a train, tram, and bus station, will offer a new public anchor within the district. The neighbourhood is home to numerous retail and commerce centres, industries, and residential areas, all of which

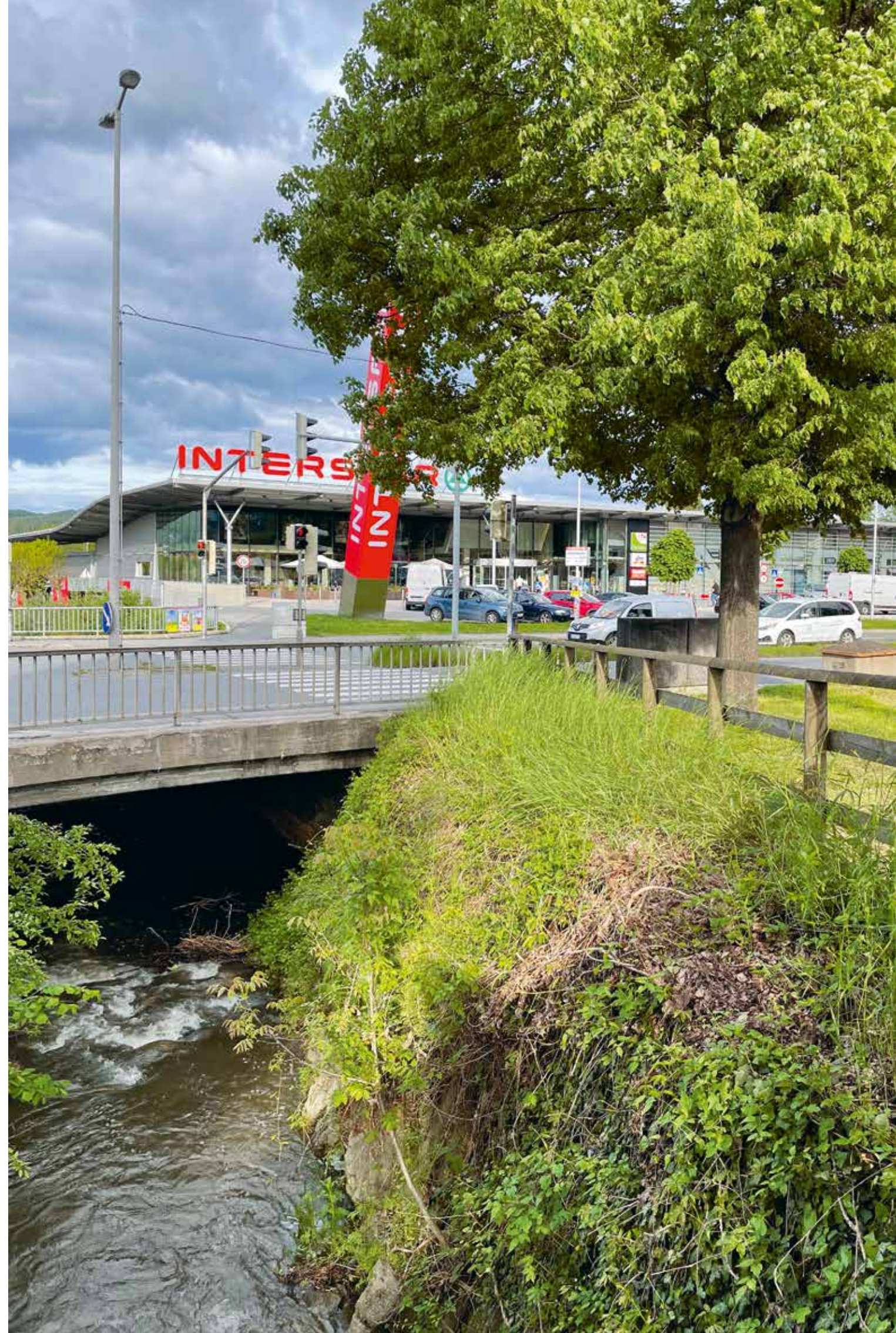
● ● ● reflection site
— project site

are in need of a catalyst for increased vibrancy. Given the large-scale volumes and outdated structures from retail buildings, semi-public institutions, and a higher technical school, there exists an opportunity to stimulate activities that create a nurturing ground for a mixed liveliness.

Situated at the threshold of Graz's geological, aquatic, and ecological intersections, the neighbourhood of Graz-Gösting seeks an effort to encapsulate the broader landscape memory of hydrological flooding events and ecological entities. This involves creating a hybrid landscape that fosters favourable conditions for the re-emergence of public open spaces. These spaces would act as a transition and connection between the Natura 2000 and bird protection area along the banks of the Mur River (documenting over 134 bird species) and the socio-culturally valuable sites like the ruins of the Gösting fort and the castle in the old town centre.

Spanning across the former flood plain of the Mur River, the E17 site is located between vacant lots, industrial and commercial spaces, heavy transport routes, and a patchwork of single-family homes. Viewed as a part of the metropolitan landscape, this new condition – the mobility hub – has the potential to offer something different to the urban environment. It could become a place for the emergence of a new fluvial, socio-ecological city reality, operating as a positive coexistence where the delicate ecosystem around the Mur River seamlessly integrates into the newly envisioned vibrant public spaces of Gösting.

By proposing this site to EUROPAN, the city sought socially, climatologically, and ecologically sustainable ideas and strategies for revitalising the district. It aimed for a sensitive approach to the local ecology and urban fabric, urging all participants to actively connect with the underlying territory, especially its water courses and fragile ecosystems, while responding to the existing conditions. The challenge was to overcome the urban-rural dichotomy, transitioning from single-family homes and nondescript city entrance roads to a place that embraces its genius loci, transforms heterogeneity into liveliness, and encourages both human and non-human entities to flourish.



The proposed renewal strategy results in a network of self-regulating natural areas and public open spaces, predominantly along existing waterways, to provide lush, inviting green corridors throughout Gösting from the Mur River through to the hiking trails of Plabutsch. This will benefit locals, visitors, the overall biodiversity, and, most importantly, enable the district to better negate the effects of a changing climate. Furthermore, significant changes are proposed to Wiener Straße, the central transport corridor, to better prioritise active and public transport while increasing density and activation in the district's centre.

This will ensure that the proposed development of the new transport hub complements a vibrant, activated, and sustainably focused neighbourhood.



Strategic response to the renewal of Gösting, showing sequential themes that have informed the process

MOBILITY & MOVEMENT

Proposed green corridors, mostly centred around Gösting's improved waterways, are to form the primary movement paths for pedestrian and cycling activity, as well as providing crucial biodiversity connections throughout the district.

The green corridors provide activated linkages between important locations like schools and the transport hub, as well as connecting the districts open public spaces from the hiking trails of Plabutsch through to the Mur. This proposal includes new public open spaces at the gardens of Schloss Gösting, a space behind the Volksschule along Thalerbach and the vacant field along the Mühlgang.

WATERWAYS



GREEN CORRIDORS



OPEN SPACES & PARKS



ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Intentionally, this proposal includes no new roads or impervious surfaces in an effort to prioritise the environment, and active and public transport over cars. This results in a dramatic change to Wienerstrasse to service both cars and trams to better promote the transport hub as sustainably focused node. A further tramline is also suggested to continue to Shopping Centre Nord where existing carparks can offer a 'Park and Ride' for people travelling to Gösting from the north.

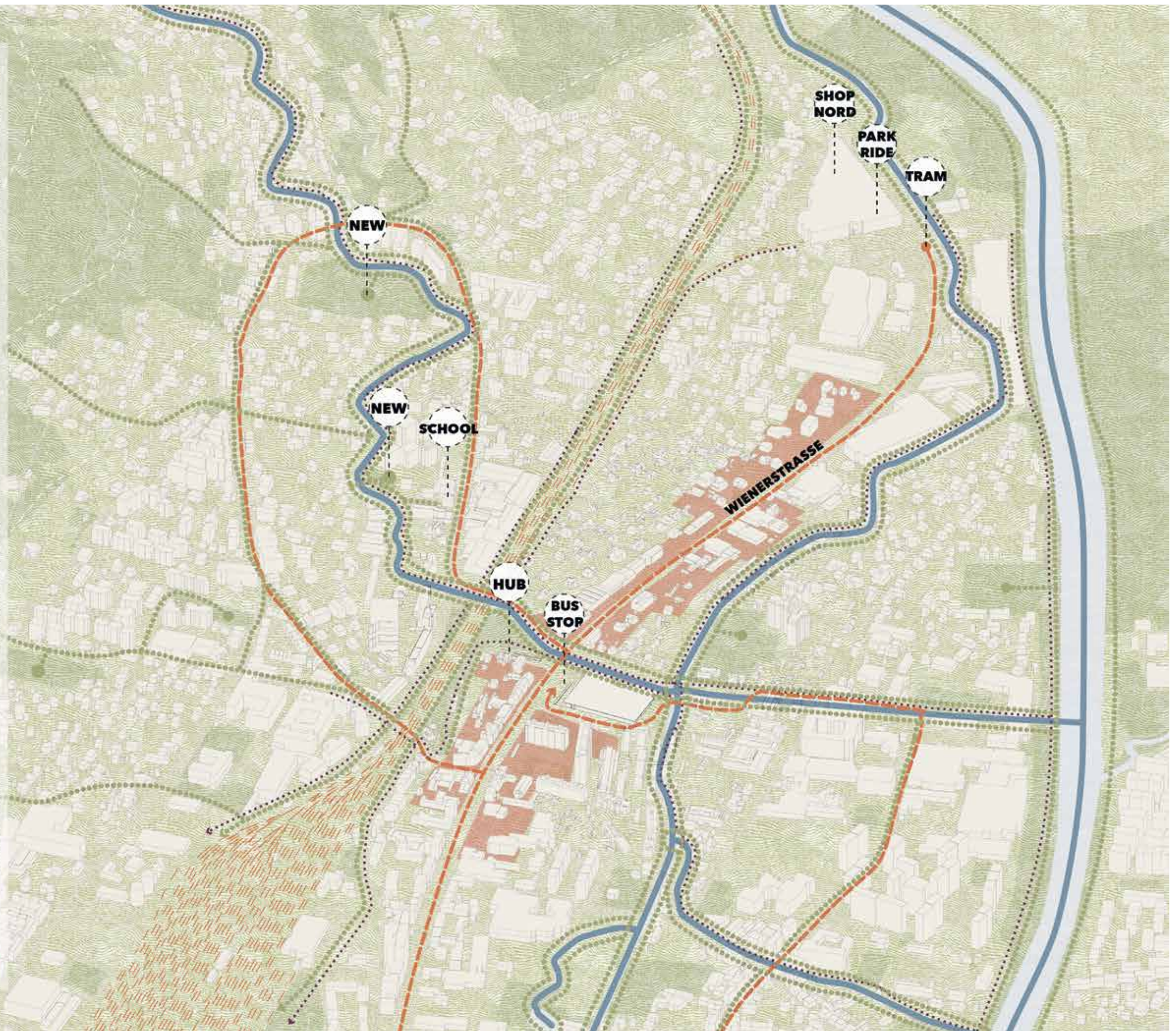
TRAMS & BUSES

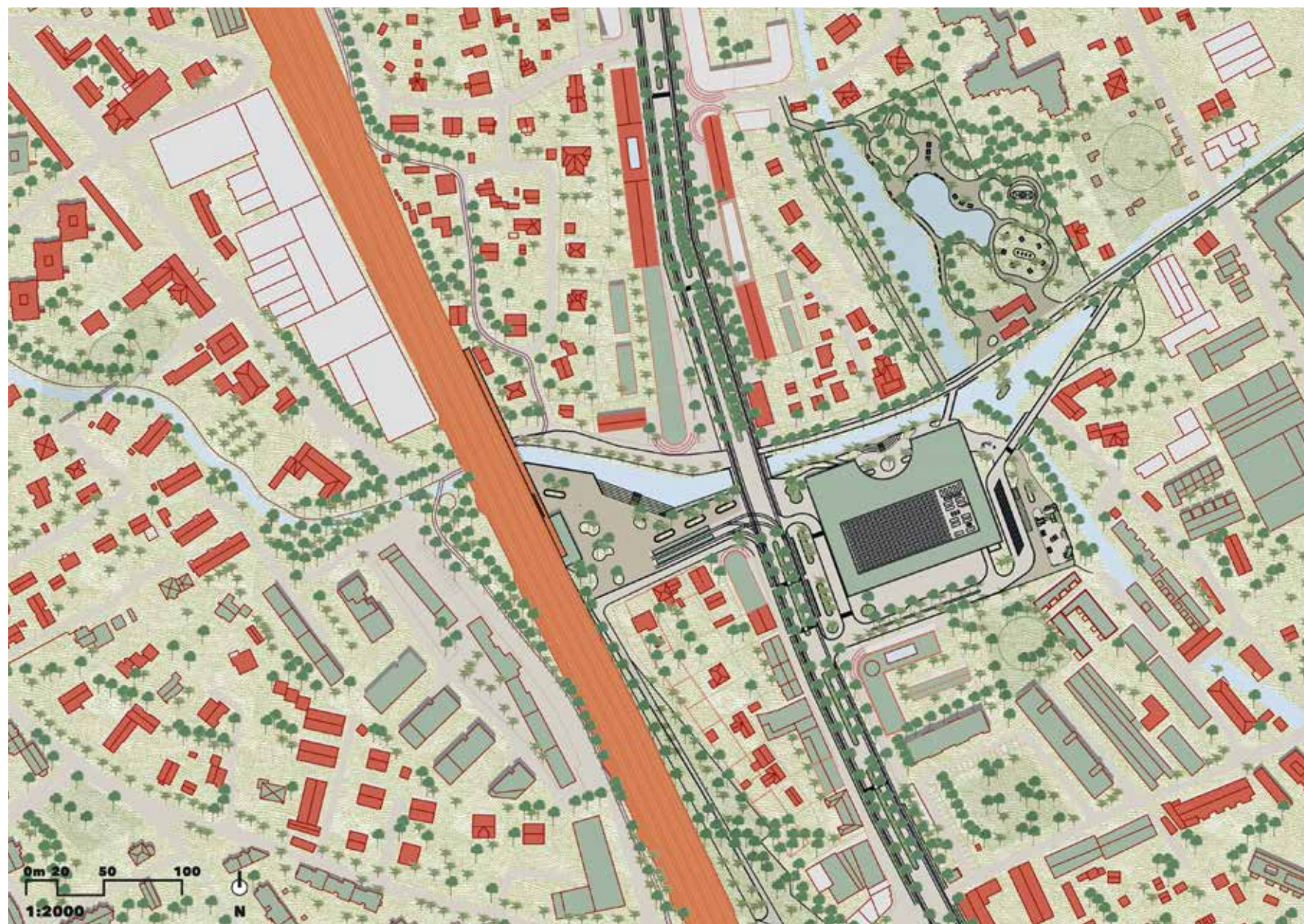


TRAINS

In addition to the renewed streetscape, Wienerstrasse is set to become a vibrant 'downtown' area full of activity through rezoning the properties directly adjacent the street to incentivise development, increase density of people living in central Gösting and provide a greater number of fine grain retail, hospitality, office and co-working spaces at ground level to better activate the public realm.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES





Ground floor plan, showing the systematic emphasis on water as a central element in the transition process envisaged

JURY STATEMENT

The proposed project presents a robust and well-developed strategy that emanates from public spaces and regards Wiener Straße as a focal axis for densification. Particularly noteworthy is the consideration of hydrological aspects and the interconnection of socio-ecological notions.

The remarkable approach takes public space as the foundation for the strategy, concentrating on redistributing private and semi-public spaces to public areas like the school open space and castle park as catalysts. The new waterfront area forms the heart of the entire site. Here, it becomes evident how the developed concept is consistently expanded and can span along this versatile open space.

The systematic emphasis on water as a central element is commendable and serves as both an urban and open space design tool. Likewise, envisioning the various green spaces along the waterfront as potential future scenarios is well imaginable. However, a more thorough exploration of addressing the terrain and the underpass would have been preferable.

The transformation of Wiener Straße is well-thought-out, as it not only envisages the reduction of street lanes and the establishment of green corridors, but also integrates building mass into the street space, thereby creating sustainable densification. The conversion of mobility areas into building areas is viewed by the jury as a robust and promising strategy.

The work is considered convincing not only in terms of design but also strategically. It's evident that the team has put considerable thought into mobility transition and participation processes. Furthermore, the future visions regarding social connectivity and the integration of public spaces appear capable of addressing the complex requirements and challenges in Gösting. 'Repair and Care' is seen as a project that has a lot of potential even if not implemented in its entirety.

SWITCH ON THE SWALES

Water underlies the relations between all kingdoms of nature, and all parts of every individual. Water is consubstantial with us and yet it is the element most difficult for humankind to tame. What if, instead of mastering it, we decided to follow it? To circulate, to infiltrate, to reflect, to water, to purify: Such is the utopia of this project. The fragmentation of Gösting's territory induces a series of ruptures at all scales of life. Our project aims to break down the dams, follow the breaches, consolidate the networks, and irrigate the territory. This new landscape, structured by the network of swales, will improve the living environment of users in ethical, aesthetic, and health terms, enriching the heritage value of Graz and demonstrating the area's ability to meet the challenges of the future.

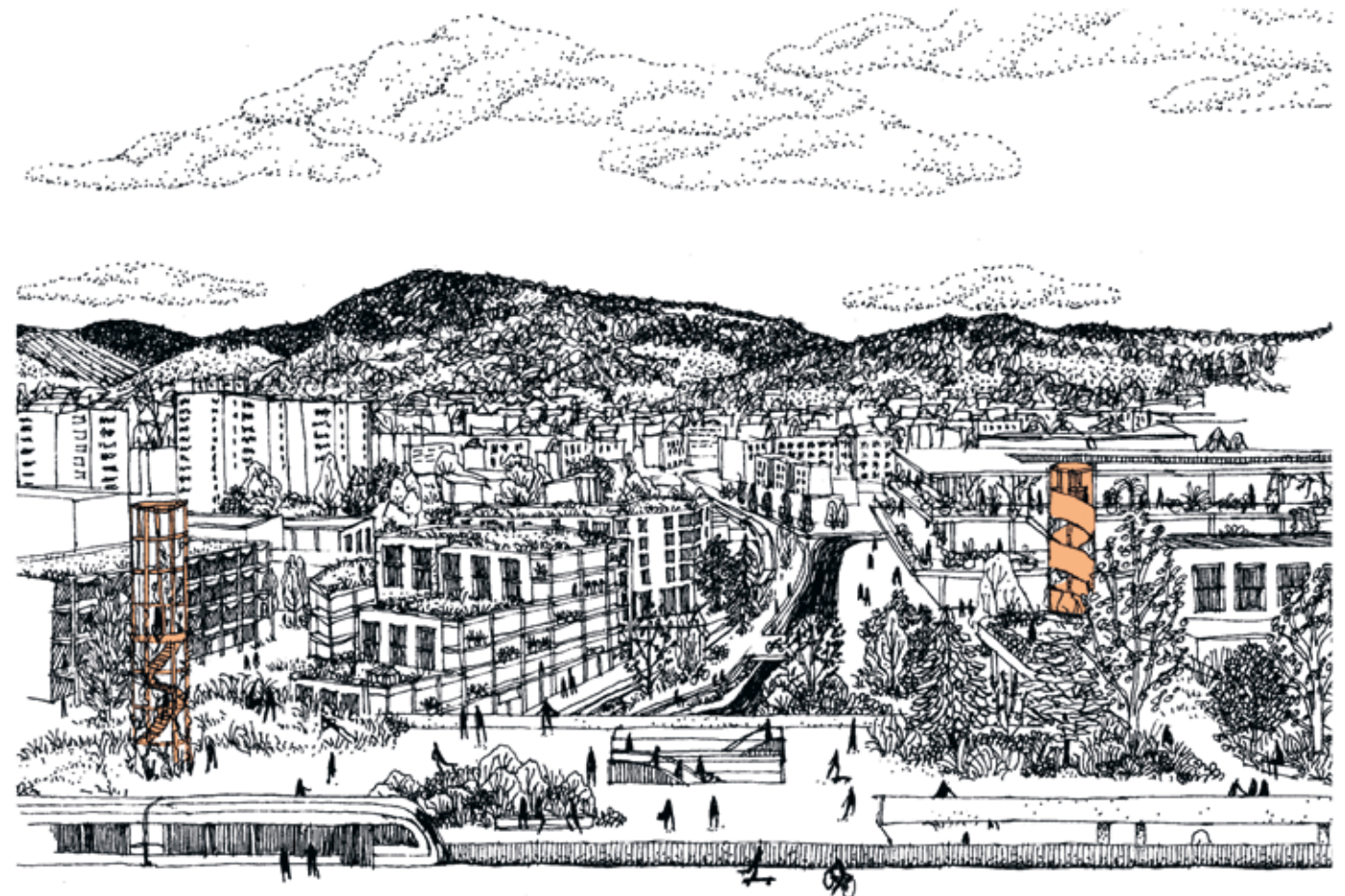
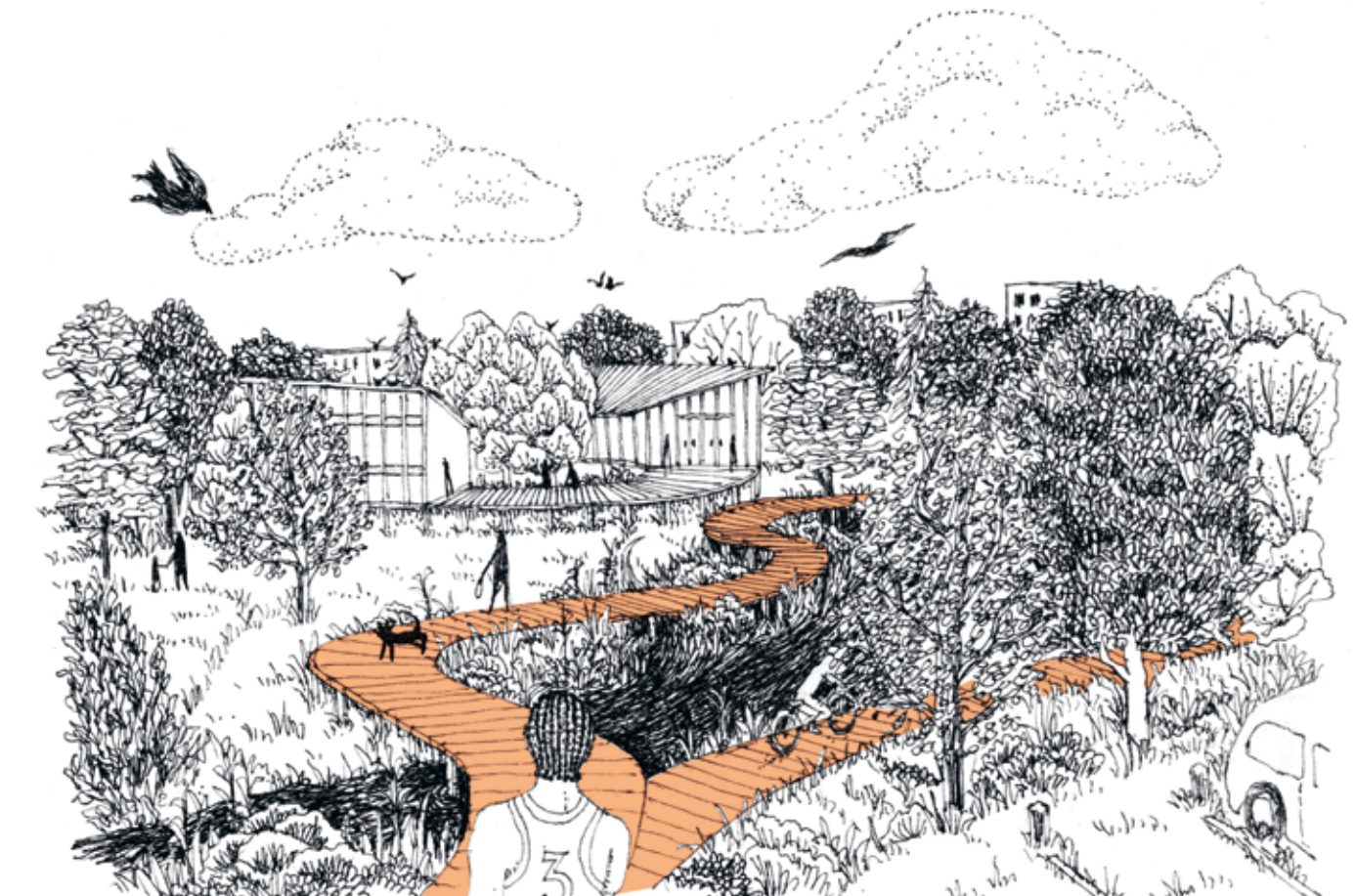
PRIZE
Runner-Up

PROJECT
Switch on the Swales

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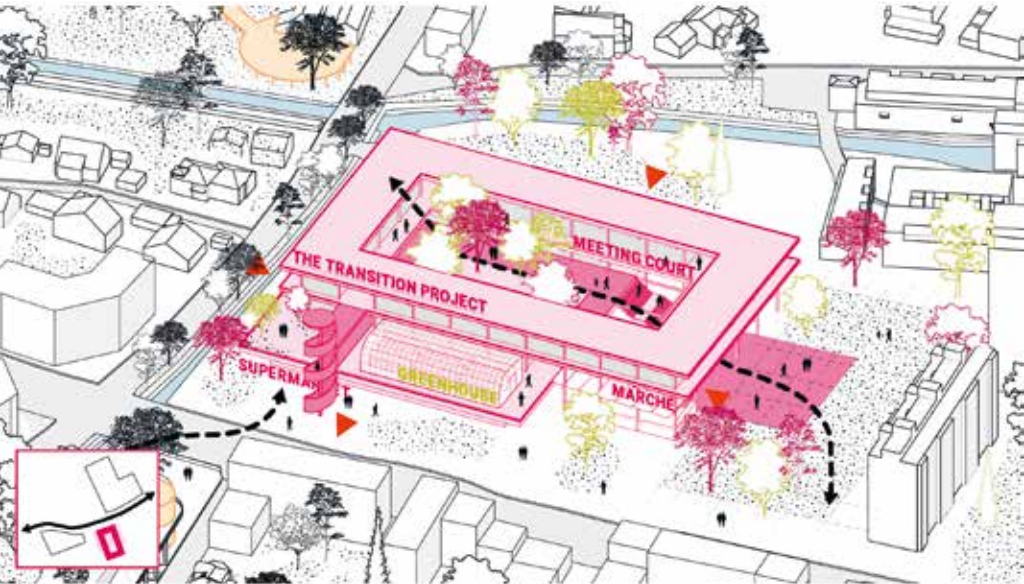
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Paris



Right top:
The floodpark from the
footbridge

Right bottom:
View of the new Hub from the
platforms



Left top:
Milieu 1, The Hub: Gateway to
Gösting and the city

Left bottom:
Milieu 2, The Transition Project

JURY STATEMENT

The project seeks to mend the infrastructural fractures by uncovering and showcasing the latent potential within the territory’s underlying elements. It strives to redefine the district’s image by focusing on its landscape and dynamics, strengthening its inherent qualities, primarily through blue infrastructure.

The project is valued for its robust and well-developed proposals across scales. It takes the existing ecological network seriously and strongly illustrates a framework that incorporates the wider aspects of the site. The approach is convincing through its consistent, logical, and poetic engagement with the theme of water. Dualities such as nature and urban space are dissolved, giving rise to a multifunctional, identity-establishing space. What’s particularly noteworthy is that public spaces are not created through buildings, but rather water is utilised as a socio-ecological typology to establish them. The clear structure of the strategy, which extends down to smaller scales, is also worth highlighting.

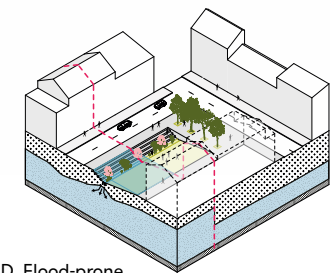
On a design scale, the project offers a certain lightness and fragility that captured the jury’s interest, not only in the way it’s presented, but also in its content. The focus on important ephemeral qualities of the landscape related to seasonal changes adds

depth. The densification of the existing market and the fragile handling of the transportation hub infrastructure bring a new level of quality, and an interesting approach to what already exists. Addressing a variation of platforms on different levels provides indications that the terrain and vistas were thoughtfully integrated into the design. Nevertheless, certain aspects of station accessibility and the market transformation lack clarity, particularly the connection to the opposite side of the railway, which would have been an intriguing aspect to address.

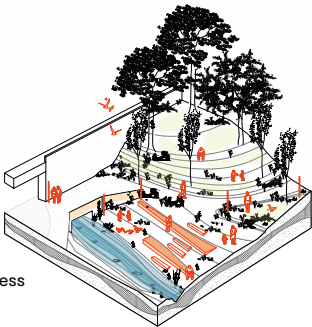
The project’s strength lies in its intricate proposal and the step-by-step development that embraces its overall complexity.



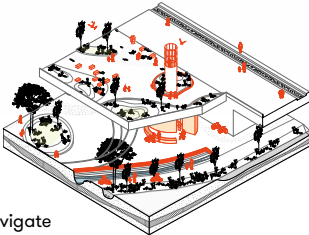
Narrative section of the new
perspective of Gösting



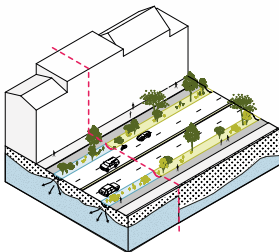
D Flood-prone
public square



1 Witness



2 Navigate

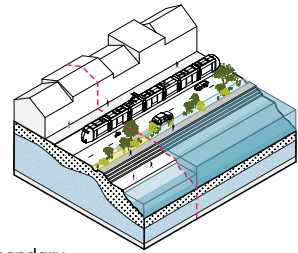


A Urban canals

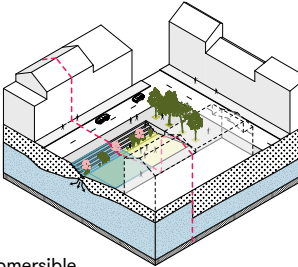


Above:
Milieu 3, The Flood Park

B Secondary
banks



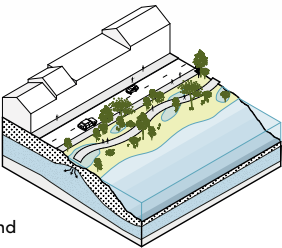
E Submersible
bank



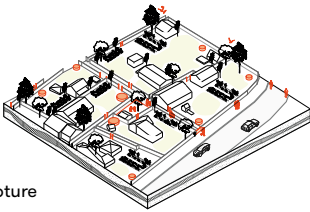
Right:
Göting guide plan -
A landscape with a rich and
active natural heritage



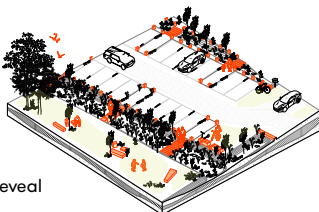
F Wetland



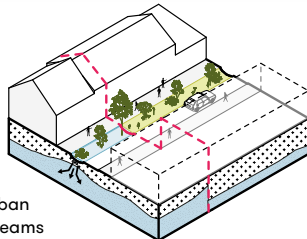
6 Capture



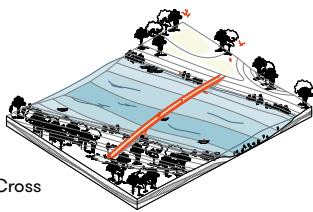
7 Reveal



C Urban
streams



8 Cross



LOCHAU



LOCHAU

WHERE THE WILDER- NESS STILL THRIVES

SCALE

L – urban and architectural

LOCATION

Lochau, Austria

POPULATION

7,000 inhabitants

REFLECTION SITE

127 ha

PROJECT SITE

8.1 ha

ACTORS

Municipality of Lochau,
City of Bregenz,
Federal Province of Vorarlberg,
Federal Agency for Water Management

In tune with the lake and the mountains, the small village of Lochau is nestled between the basic elements of nature: water and rock. Nature is deeply rooted in the lives of its inhabitants, providing opportunities and recreation from which everyone can benefit.

Nature, such as the topography of mountainous areas, can also be a limiting factor. In the case of Lochau, it dictates the mobility corridor (rail and street) along the coast, serving as a significant barrier that separates the villagers from their cherished shoreline. The village itself is an urban sprawl that covers the area beyond the rail tracks up to the historic centre, which lies approximately four hundred metres above the surface of the lake. On a ten-minute ascent through these urban patches, visual corridors open here and there, allowing rare glimpses of the water. The historical development of the centre at the foot of the mountain reflects a time when the lake was primarily seen as an unsafe place. However, the present population, which identifies strongly with the lake, finds their living environment lacking a meaningful connection to it. Consequently, a crucial challenge for the teams working on this E17 site was to discover a means for the village to embody the spirit of the lake more directly and soften the dividing impact of the mobility corridor.

The residents of Lochau take great pride in living in such a picturesque setting, appreciating the beauty that surrounds them. However, they are keenly aware of the economic pressures that impact the area. Lake Constance borders three countries: Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Boat connections foster closer ties among cities surrounding the lake, and the Lake Constance Cycle Path along its entire shore adds to the region's appeal. Excellent infrastructure is provided in this tourist-orientated area. Lochau benefits from it as well, connecting the village to the historic towns of Lindau and Bregenz, both reachable within a five-minute train ride. This aspect further contributes to making Lochau a highly desirable place. The resulting popularity generates a lot of traffic and attracts many people looking to reside, to vacation, or visit. Enhancing its uniqueness is the fact that the entire twenty-eight-kilometre-long Austrian shore of Lake Constance is open to the public and free of charge – a rarity in Central Europe, where private land ownership is often a symbol of success and wealth. Being raised with the belief that access to nature is a communal asset shared with others is undoubtedly influential. This upbringing is rooted in respect, sensitivity, and an inherent instinct to care for both the existing environment and the vulnerable. It is this mindset that teams were encouraged to consider, particularly addressing the challenge of preserving an ingrained sense of solidarity in a location facing growing pressures as a sought-after destination for visitors and residents alike.

Lochau's waterfront features a marina, a Natura 2000 nature reserve, and beautiful recreational areas, making it not only a great location but also a place where diverse interests meet and potentially collide. The focal point of the E17 project site is situated amidst this intricate environment, where the needs of various natural components intersect with the diverse interests of many people.

● ● ● reflection site
— project site

Practically, it centres around a small piece of land between the two marina basins that accommodates a playground, an open outdoor space, a harbour building, and an old ferry. The ferry holds sentimental value for many villagers, who reminisce about celebrations and parties on its decks since the late 1970s when it was installed on Lochau land. Although no longer seaworthy, it transformed into a charming local eatery and kiosk, offering snacks and ice cream to beachgoers. Its appeal lies in its imperfection and lack of glossiness, a rarity in this touristic area, signalling an inclusive attitude towards all users. However, corrosion and general deterioration have advanced significantly, rendering renovation financially impractical. The aim of this EUROPAN competition was to evaluate the situation and propose a new approach for addressing the ferry, the harbour building, and their surrounding area, with a critical emphasis on creating an inclusive space that extends to embrace the surrounding landscape.

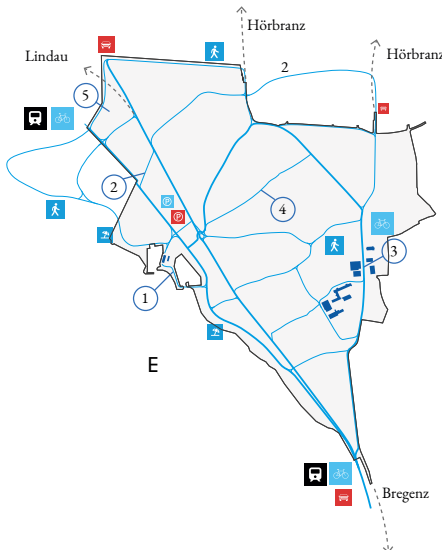
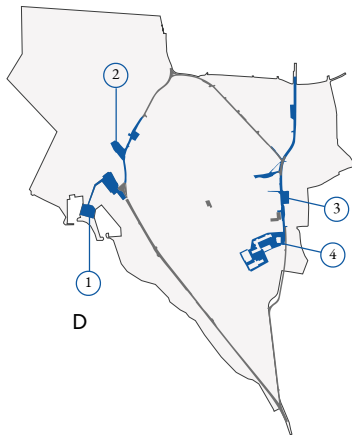
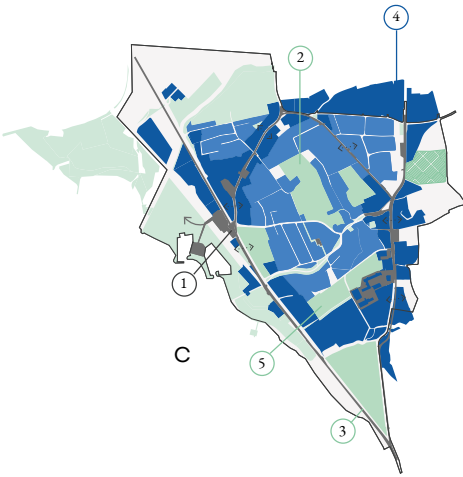
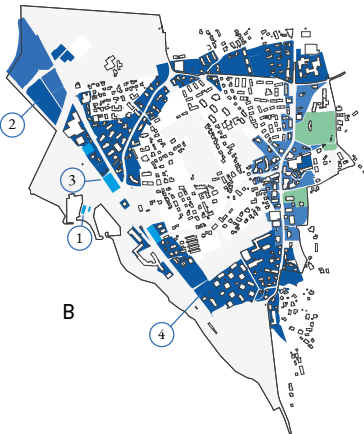
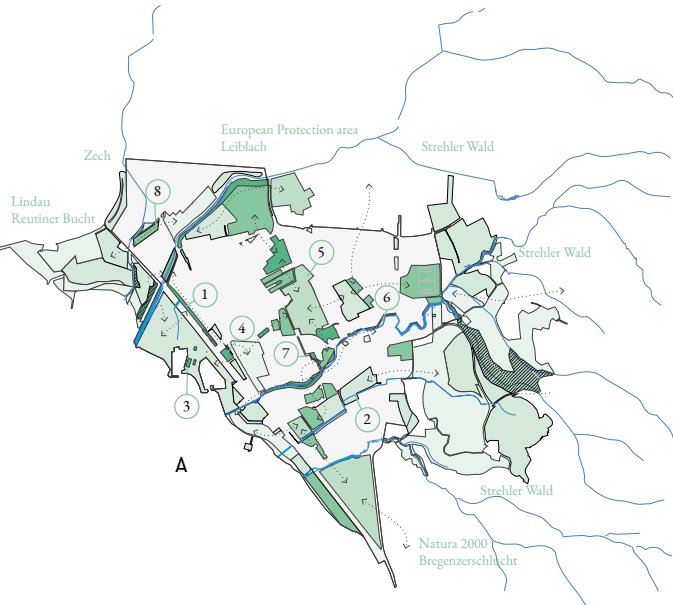
Throughout the year, the place at the water presents a variety of scenes to observe. At times it is serene, while at others it is lively, celebratory, athletic, casual, formal, enthusiastic, tranquil, and active. It serves almost as a ‘stage’, where the village’s life unfolds. Importantly, it is a place one doesn’t permanently inhabit, but rather visit. Everyone is a guest here. This temporary nature of the visit generates a power of inspiration. It encourages a mindset of stewardship, where visitors are not merely passive spectators but active participants. Consequently, a key question was posed about strengthening the performative power of the place, enabling creativity to unfold and become a catalyst for new communal activities.

Addressing the complex mix outlined by this multi-layered task for a site spanning various scales provided an opportunity to showcase the elements needed for a transformative shift. The emphasis on understanding symbiosis, which unites all aspects in the pursuit of a good life in the future, is crucial and should become a central theme for every place across the entire planet, including seemingly unharmed locations like Lochau.



LOCHAU RURAL (H)ARBOURS

The current models and development strategies must be revised to address current challenges – Lochau (H)arbours emphasise strong cores, water arteries, and civic ribbons. The vision involves active negotiation, renewed green spaces, civic node centres, and reduced car traffic. The project focuses on caring for the Lochau meadows as green corridors, adding strategic infrastructural interventions. The (H)arbour building, as a prototype of this concept, is a catalyst for interaction and inclusivity, embracing the idea of care, culture, and community. Spatially, the building consists of light shafts and various planting typologies to attract birds and insects while providing shade, collecting water, and cooling. In that sense, the Lochau (H)arbours become the meeting point in the shore garden.



PRIZE
Winner

PROJECT
Lochau Rural (H)arbours

AUTHORS
Christopher Gruber (AT)
Architect
Christina Ehrmann (DE)
Architect

COLLABORATORS
Manuel Gruber (AT)
Student of Architecture
Frieda Zapf (DE)
Sociologist
Jakob Czinger (HU)
3D Designer

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A. Caring for the Lochau meadows as green corridors:

- 1 New contact line infrastructure connecting the industrial area with the harbour
- 2 Sports quarter park connection to river biotope
- 3 Harbour building roof and screen
- 4 Pergola roofs as green connection
- 5 Lochau meadows to be maintained
- 6 River parks as biodiverse biotopes
- 7 Kindergarden centre
- 8 Connecting forests to be sustained

B. Active Densified Band - A civic ribbon for Lochau:

- 1 Lochau harbour centre as a community centre at the beach
- 2 Industrial areas incorporated into a productive ring
- 3 Train station area as future development
- 4 New developments closing the development ring of Lochau

C. Sustaining Lochau's rural generosity - Green is cool:

- 1 South Quarter Mobility Hub with harbour site
- 2 Lochau meadow in the Opening Triangle - division of traffic
- 3 Connection area to Hörbranz
- 4 School lawns as another typology of the meadows

D. Civic Node Centres - Creating moments of desire:

- 1 Harbour Node - civic desires
- 2 West Node (area around Loft)
- 3 Municipality office towards bank
- 4 School quarters with celebration hall

Left:

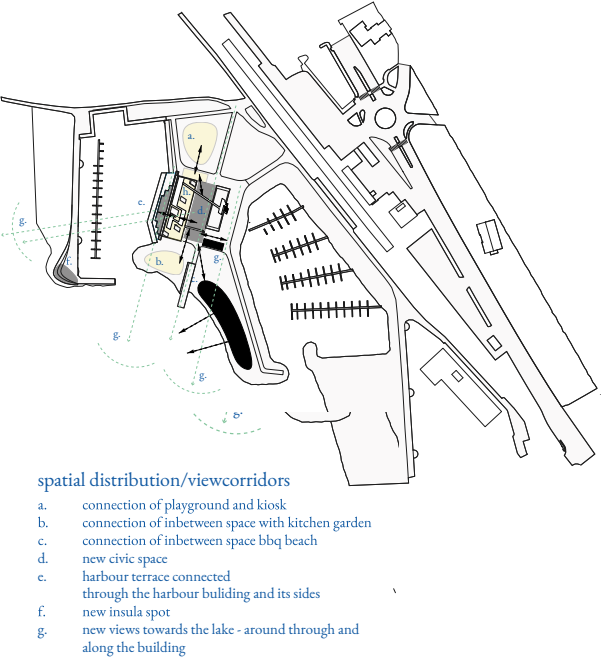
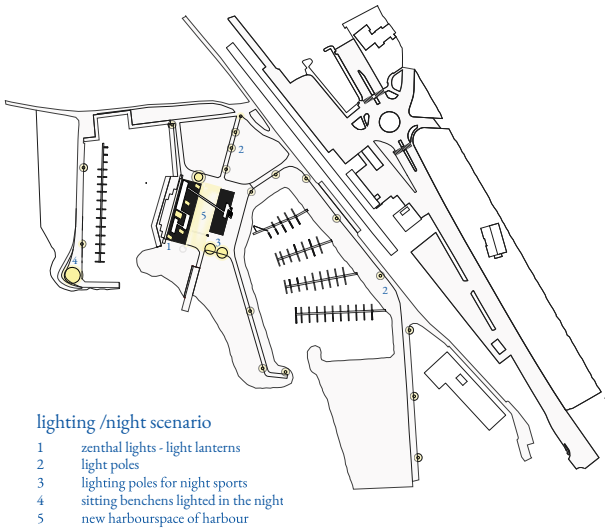
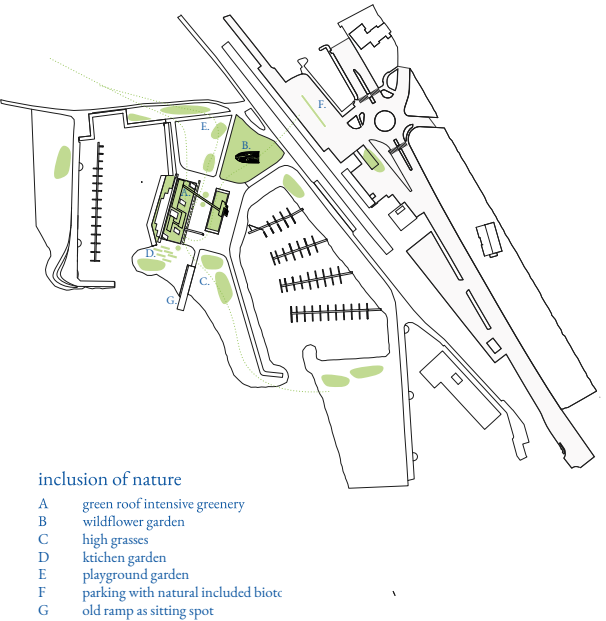
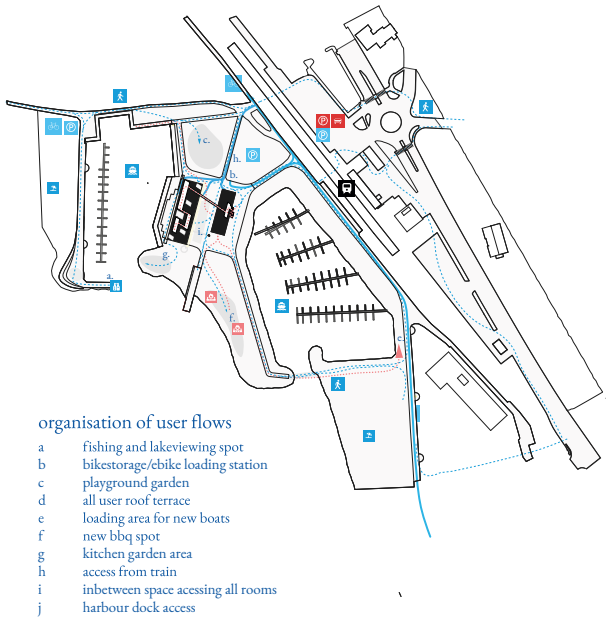
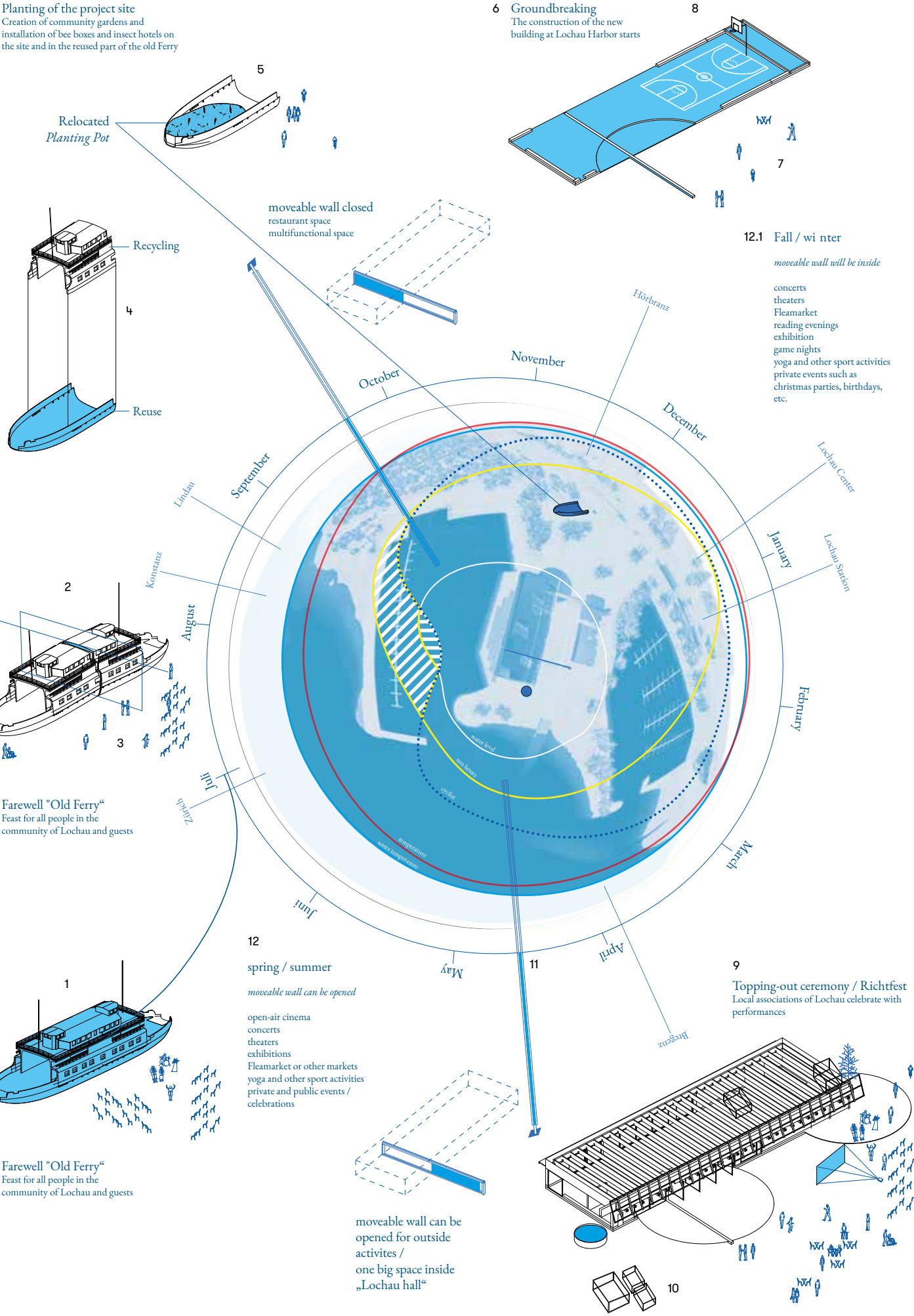
- 1 Process - Lochau (h)arbour - New civic space for all species
- 2 Strategy - Lochau Plains
- 3 Process - Active Ribbon
- 4 Strategy - biophilic noise landscape
- 5 Process - Following the raindrop

E. The end of traffic - car-reduced scenario:

- 1 Lochau harbour building as civic platform
- 2 Paths through industrial areas connecting both sides
- 3 Connecting important buildings in Lochau
- 4 Lawn paths as a new urban experience



Planting of the project site
Creation of community gardens and installation of bee boxes and insect hotels on the site and in the reused part of the old Ferry

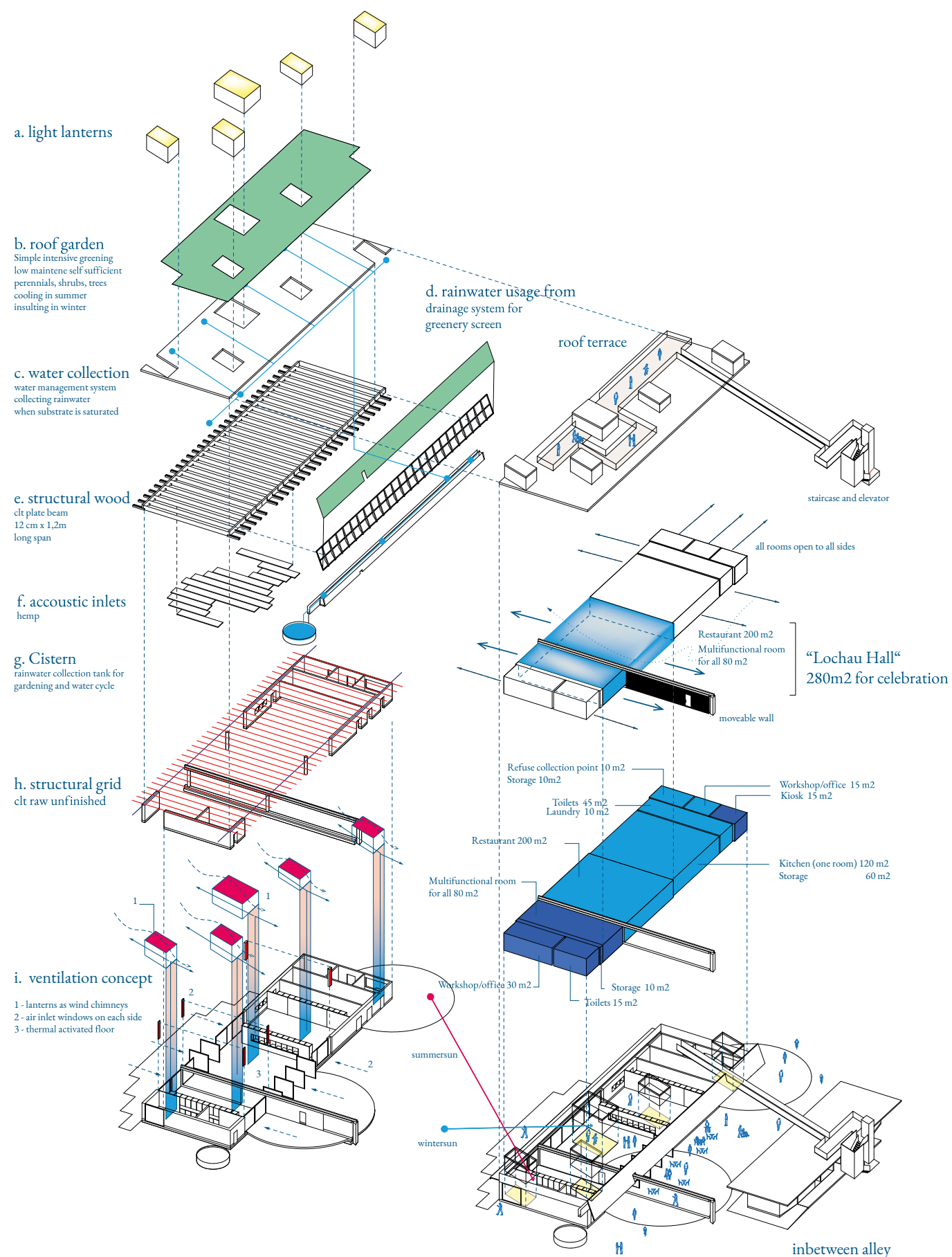


Left:
Civic engagement project
in the creation of a new
harbour building

Applied strategies
and events:

- 1 Removal of all parts which need to go through the recycling process
- 2 Cutting of the ship to create a split
- 3 Farewell celebration
- 4 Removal of top parts of
- 5 Keeping a part of a ship as a planting pot
- 6 Ground breaking celebration
- 7 Excavation and base creation of new building
- 8 Temporary usage of the platform
- 9 Wood construction topping out celebration with concert at construction site
- 10 Finishing of the building,
- 11 Maintenance of the garden through different actors
- 12 Civic event in the new building
- 12.1 Diverse programme of civic and private events in the new spaces within the seasons

Above:
Diagrammatic exploration of
the project site - user flows,
night scenario, inclusion of
nature, spatial distribution



Above:
Diagrammatic exploration
of the climatic/structural and
material aspect of the new
harbour building

JURY STATEMENT

The project's strategic proposal is seen as looking carefully at the strategic grain of the place and embracing the notion of caring. The proposed solution works intensively with the wider structure, particularly in terms of connecting streams and watercourses. The idea to lay a ribbon around Lochau that holds 'a garden inside' is highly convincing. Preserving the meadows is recognised as a robust strategic idea that the municipality can utilise positively and implement quickly. While the ribbon outlines a long-term strategy, it provides clear instructions for addressing urban sprawl in an easily understandable and logically comprehensible manner.

On the site itself, the position of the ferry is taken over by a new building that is biophilic. It is one of the few where vegetation is a serious part of the façade treatment, which is considered interesting and conveys a seasonal expression. Some concerns were expressed about a lack of innovation. Nevertheless, it is emphasised that the project is well-thought-out on many levels, especially with regard to nature-based solutions. It is the only project that seriously considers

natural ventilation and the choice of materials. The green façade and biodiverse roof are considered feasible to contribute to the biodiversity of the site.

The meticulous disassembly of the ferry, coupled with the incorporation of community ideas and engagement, is truly noteworthy. The thoughtful celebration of both the farewell and the new beginning is regarded as a fantastic approach, capable of establishing a meaningful identity that resonates throughout the entire community.

The façade, which reflects the seasons, and the abandonment of an interior corridor in favour of access from all sides are positively emphasised. The transparency from west to east is given and the structure of the building is considered perfect for this location.

Although this EUROPAN competition is explicitly not focused on the building, it is noted that the building is a prestigious representation of all the ideas considered throughout the site. The project in its entirety is seen as demonstrating the desired approach in E17 in a highly engaging and inclusive way.



FORGET-ME-NOT. A THIRD LIFE TO THE ALTE FÄHRE

After eighty years in service, the Alte Fähre (Old Ferry) is showing some signs of exhaustion but is it yet the time to forget about it? Or does it just need some care and a new purpose for the years to come?

The project aims for a set of exterior, interior, and intermediate spaces that work symbiotically to create a physical and emotional framework for social activities.

An adaptable bioclimatic infrastructure will shelter the Alte Fähre from further deterioration, setting it up to be used by the citizens, acting as an interior garden in winter, and as a shaded exterior in the increasingly hot summers, becoming a climate refuge. A compact wooden building will host the rest of the interior programmes.

Built from green and constructed archipelagos, Lochau must rely on the multiple creeks that cross the landscape to promote the slow circulation and boost the thriving fauna and flora. Follow the sound of water.



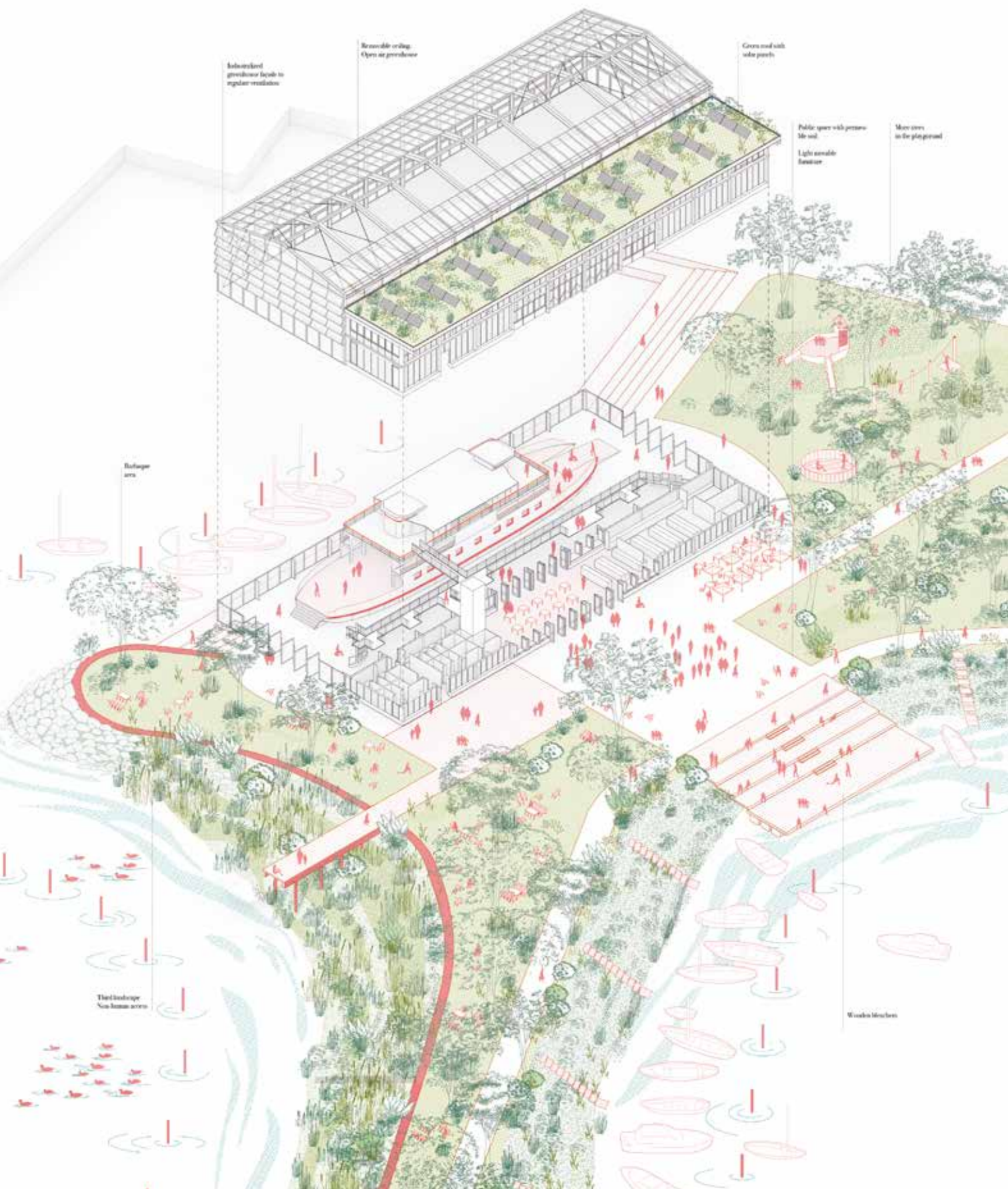
PRIZE
Runner-Up

PROJECT
Forget-Me-Not.
A third life to the Alte Fähre

AUTHORS
Pau Sarquella Fàbregas (ES)
Architect
Carmen Torres González (ES)
Architect

COLLABORATORS
Alicia Marco Zuriaga (ES)
Architect
Jerome Lorente Martí (ES)
Architect
Joana Plana Ortiz (ES)
Architect

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JURY STATEMENT

The project is valued for its robust and well-developed proposals across scales, easily projected into future scenarios. It takes green infrastructure seriously and strongly illustrates a framework that incorporates the wider aspects of the site and links it to the reflection site. 'Forget-Me-Not' is recognised as having a lot of potential, even when not implemented in its entirety. Notably, the project demonstrates a commendable handling of the ecosystem aspects of the area, addressing them from the largest to the smallest scale. Atmospheric graphics vividly convey the holistic idea behind the project.

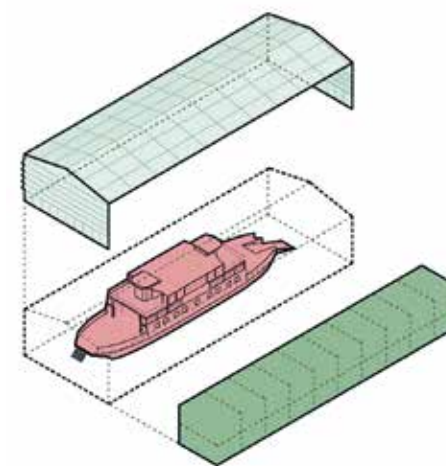
Despite the considerable dimensions of the boathouse and a proposed footprint exceeding regulations, the boat ruin emerges as an outstanding feature, providing a compelling argument for the warmth and character of the location. The team's creative use of the boat as scenography adds a unique and captivating element to the project. The jury praises the project for offering a strong interpretation of the EUROPAN theme 'Care', emphasising the significance of ships to Lochau's identity.

The eastward orientation of the public square is viewed unfavourably, given the west-facing sunset as the precious side. The proposed steps elongate the public space, lending a sense of generosity. However, their implementation, also towards the east, is not possible due to the high traffic volume in the harbour basin.

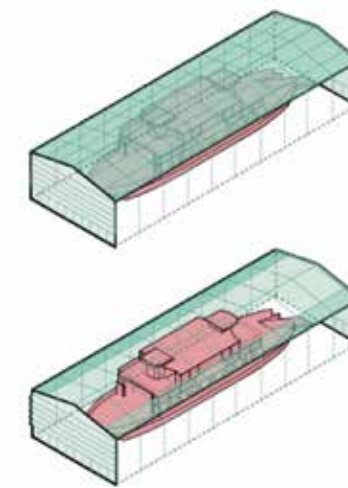
The possibility of modifying the shoreline, especially to the south, as suggested in their project, is questioned by the jury. Strict requirements of the Water Authority make this modification probably impossible, although the planting proposal is considered environmentally desirable.

Compared to other submitted projects that house the ferry, 'Forget-Me-Not' offers a more cost-effective approach. Despite potential cost savings, there is some uncertainty about why precisely this boat needs to be enclosed.

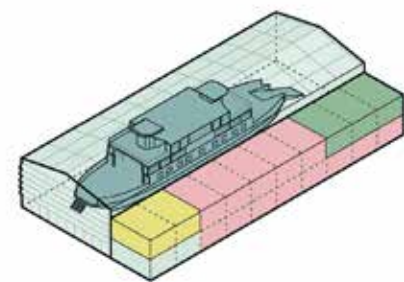
While the project may provide ambiguous answers, its intriguing graphics contribute a captivating dimension. In summary, the project stands out through its imaginative use of space, consideration of ecosystem aspects, and the potential to give the site its own identity.



Phases: construction of shelter and wooden building, restoration of Alte Fähre, demolition of former harbour building



Greenhouse strategies: light structure - removable ceiling, skin wrapping, vegetal species



Activities: sociocultural programs, intermediate garden, restaurant, sailing club, harbour master office, kiosk, shared and public services



Green Archipelagos



Urban Wetlands



Creeks & Paths



Permeated Border



Bicycle Hub



Weather Icon Artifact



Lakeshore Wilderness



Toast & Roast



Naturban Port



Restaurant



Common Shelter



Alte Fähre Back in Town

BOAT HOUSE

PRIZE

Special Mention

PROJECT

Boat House – Enhancing the Existing

AUTHORS

Sophia Richwien (DE)
Architect

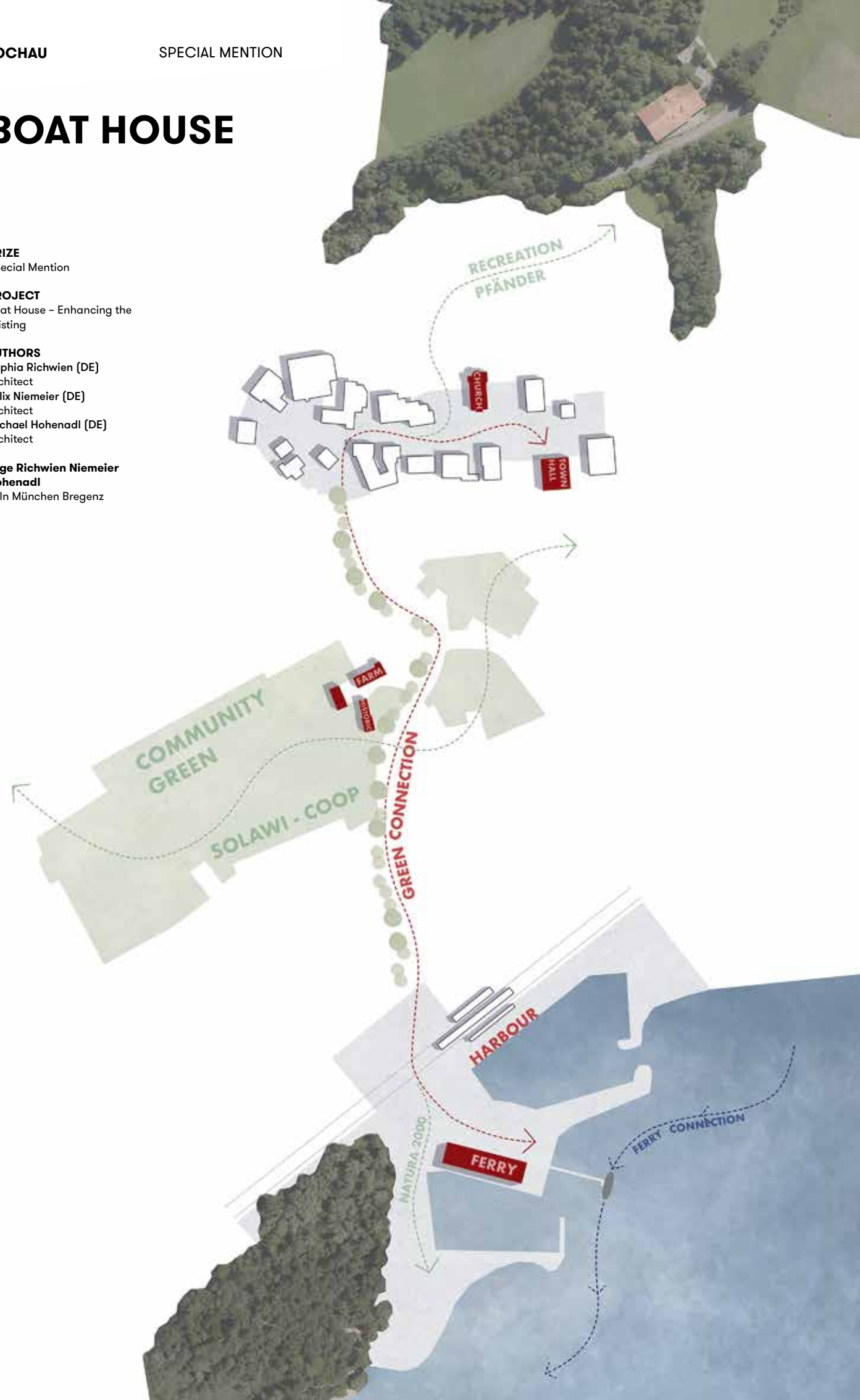
Felix Niemeier (DE)
Architect

Michael Hohenadl (DE)
Architect

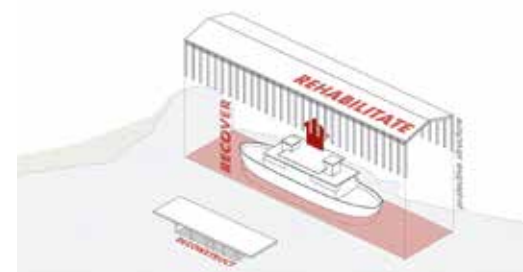
Architect

**Arge Richwien Niemeier
Hohenadl**

Köln München Bregenz



The proposal reinforces an existing pedestrian axis between the town centre and harbour. A road shaded by trees connects the recreation areas of Pfänder Mountain and Lake Constance. From a redesigned intersection at Landstraße, the revitalised Bahnhofstraße passes green spaces and a proposed municipal agricultural co-op in the heart of the town, fostering access to commons. At the train station a shared space allows for safe traffic interaction. The adjoining plaza turns the station into a multi-modal hub, creating an ample crossing above ground for direct access to the waterfront. The spirit of the marina is reinvigorated by restoring the Old Ferry through community participation and building a boathouse that doubles as a cultural space by the lakefront. Under a lightweight canopy, citizens are invited to participate in the restoration of the boat in an inclusive process.



Top:
Visualisation showing the new boathouse with the Old Ferry

Left page:
Urban development concept – enhancing and connecting the existing

Left:
Rehabilitation and development of the Old Ferry

JURY STATEMENT

The project presents a robust proposal for addressing through traffic on the L190 and suggests measures to decelerate and establish a shared space zone. The positive reception of the market area and the recognition of the place's viability for the next decade are noteworthy. This project takes into careful consideration the currently unattractive and complex traffic node, which serves as a crucial entrance to the village. It additionally suggests relocating the railway crossing to ground level, which is highly unlikely, despite the existence of similar examples nearby. On a spatial planning level, the jury agrees that the proposal for the village square in front of the railway station could also succeed with a broad underground path, making it a robust framework.

In a broader context, the project suggests establishing an 'imaginary' connection between the lake and the mountain, spanning the entire valley. It emphasises incorporating significant portions of the landscape into the overall experience, providing opportunities to linger and gain a deeper understanding of the local culture. The jury highly appreciates this consideration of larger dimensions in the project's approach.

On the project site, the team envisions a boathouse for the boat emphasising community and incorporating various functions. While being seen as keeping within the narrative of the site, the substantial gesture of introducing this boathouse is met with questioning. This choice results in a sizable structure and footprint, affecting the westward view. Although the proposal includes a deck for accessibility from all sides, the functions on the ground floor within the boat's belly are not considered very inviting. The project is predominantly appreciated for its robust concepts on the strategic scale.

FERRY TALES

In the captivating and uniquely developed village of Lochau, a paradox unfolds. Situated between ‘water and rock’, Lochau’s vital economic survival hinges on connecting to other cities via train and car. However, this connection comes at the expense of dividing its landscape and separating it from its shore. Upon reflection on the local context and ecosystem, we chose to intervene minimally by trying to soften the barrier and embrace the village’s polycentricity. Five pavilions, built out of the dismantled ferry boat, are scattered throughout the project area with their nautical character gracefully bringing a slice of the shore into the heart of the village. By adding to existing narratives, we tried to preserve what we considered important to the collective while envisioning a refreshed public life that nurtures community spirit and coexistence with its surroundings.



Visualisation of pavilions and screen installation at the shore



PRIZE
Special Mention

PROJECT
Ferry Tales

AUTHORS
Angela Lulati (AL)
Architect
Karina Baraniak (PL)
Architect

Vienna



JURY STATEMENT

The conceptual idea of ‘Ferry Tales’ sees the entire site connected with a loop that pins a series of five pavilions. They all share a nautical design reminiscent of the old ferry and reuse its materials. The loop is perceived as a sensible guide through the village, and its lightweight structures are interesting in themselves. Every single one of them is influenced by its position and immediate surroundings, incorporating biodiversity habitat features into their design. The romantic fairy-tale imagery is both inspiring and artistically appealing, with a realistic potential for implementation.

The pathway design is valued for providing an exceptional nature experience woven with the memory of the landscape. While a thoroughly considered spatial strategy may not be immediately evident, the sensitivity of the proposed pathway is striking.

In summary, the project displays a blend of artistic creativity and practical realism, with notable strengths in material selection, supplementary texts, and alignment with the community. Despite the evident intrigue, the jury doubts that the proposal radiates the strong and impactful presence that the site demands.

Visualisation looking east, showing seating steps along the western harbour basin, the new building proposal and two incentives – the kiosk pavillion & screen installation

WIEN

THE URBAN WEAVE

WIEN

SCALE

L – urban and architectural

LOCATION

Am Heidjöchl, Vienna,
Austria

POPULATION

1.9 m inhabitants

STUDY SITE

70 ha

PROJECT SITE

35 ha

ACTORS

City of Vienna,
wohnfonds_wien

How should we think about new, large-scale developments in the present era?

In the east of Vienna, embedded between agricultural fields, greenhouses, detached houses, large housing estates, and transportation infrastructure, is the thirty-five-hectare-large urban development zone known as ‘Am Heidjöchl’. Upon entering from the new Aspern Nord underground station, visitors find themselves surrounded by fields and crops, bordered by single-storey structures to the north and expansive railway tracks to the south. Trains of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) and the elevated subway line U2 pass by, showcasing current and future developments. Vienna is experiencing rapid growth!

The city is currently one of the fastest-growing metropolises in the German-speaking region and is expected to surpass the two million mark in the next few years, driving an increasing demand for housing. Over the past decade, Vienna has made considerable efforts to expand its public infrastructure. Extensions of existing or new metro lines now quickly reach the fringes of the city. Densification along these corridors is a strategy that the city is pursuing.

While a few years ago, the underground line U2 still ran into a ‘void’, today, numerous new urban neighbourhoods are emerging along its route, filling alleged gaps between existing areas. Vienna takes pride in prioritising public transport in urban development, with the underground line already operational before construction begins. Similarly, tramway line no. 27 is scheduled for completion by 2025, preceding the construction of the first buildings in the Heidjöchl area.

It is in this context that we find the site ‘Am Heidjöchl’, a former field directly located along the U2 underground line in Vienna’s 22nd district, Donaustadt. Bordering the surrounding countryside, Donaustadt is still partially characterised by agriculture. It has a heterogeneous appearance, with carpets of single-family homes alternating with multi-storey, terraced houses and interspersed with individual large blocks of flats.

Several parts of Donaustadt are earmarked for new urban development. Famous for its size and in the immediate vicinity of Heidjöchl is ‘Seestadt Aspern’, an ongoing mixed development project for around 40,000 people. Other smaller developments are also in the neighbourhood. Heidjöchl, a long-term strategic area, is the final piece in this comprehensive urban strategy.

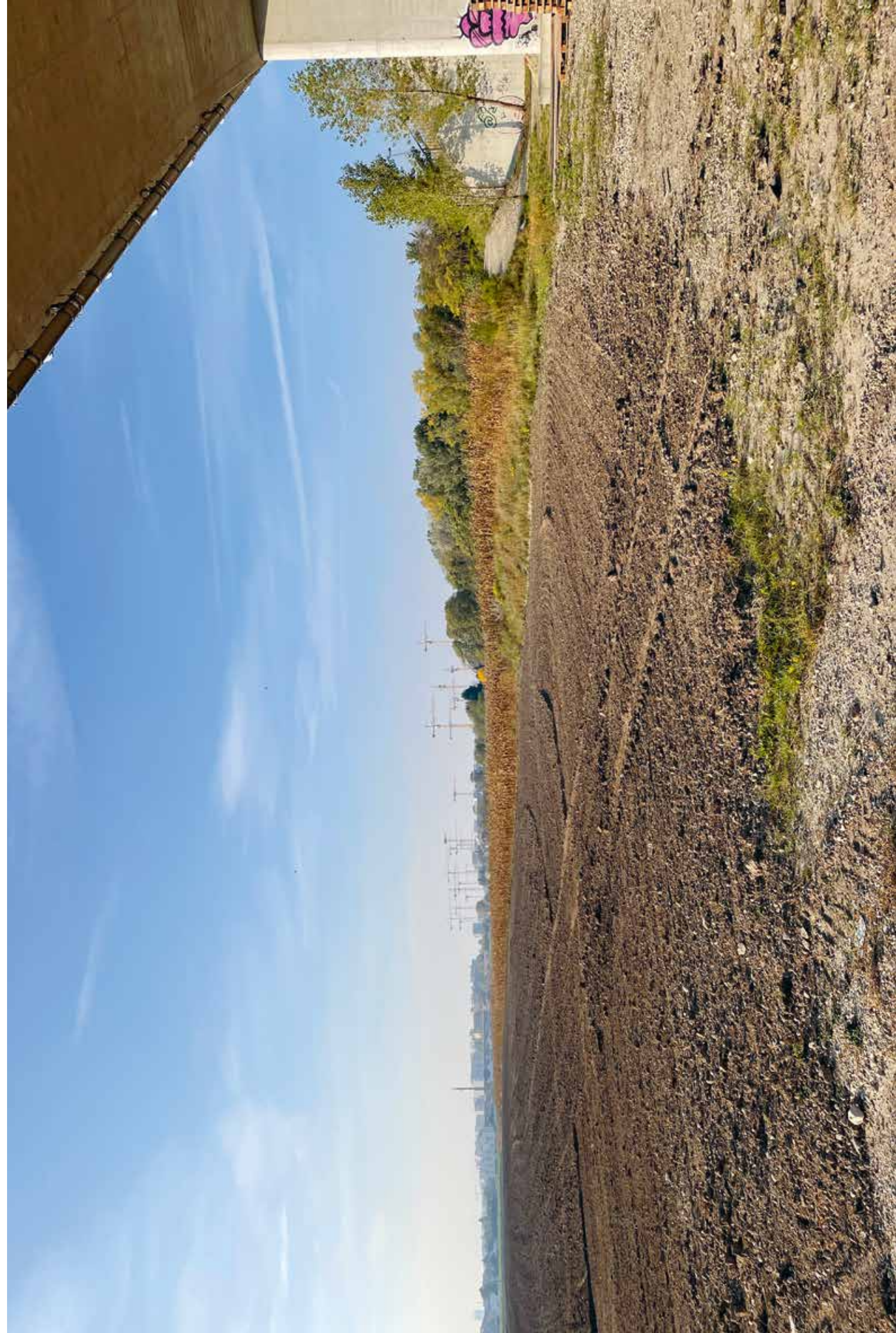
The development area is inserted into existing neighbourhoods with particular qualities that are loved by their inhabitants. Residents value the relaxed atmosphere on the outskirts with ample green and open spaces. These qualities need to be respected and enhanced with additional elements that only areas of higher density can provide, such as social infrastructure, care, and supply. The current rural ambience is reflected in car usage statistics specific to regional areas, indicating that inhabitants of the 22nd district use cars more frequently than the average Viennese. Therefore, the project must address existing requirements while crucially proposing an alternative model that is inclusive and in tune with our planet, encouraging the abandonment of harmful habits, such as extensive car use.

● ● ● reflection site
— project site

Intensively used landscapes such as the Heidjöchl area have led to a significant reduction in local biodiversity. Transforming this space from agriculture to a new urban quarter presents the opportunity to develop new habitats for animals, plants, and insects. Achieving this requires an intelligent design approach for both open spaces and buildings. The challenge posed here was to overhaul and adapt the area to meet the needs of a growing city without completely erasing its existing features. How can an urban planning strategy emerge that recognises nature as a point of departure and a constituent moment?

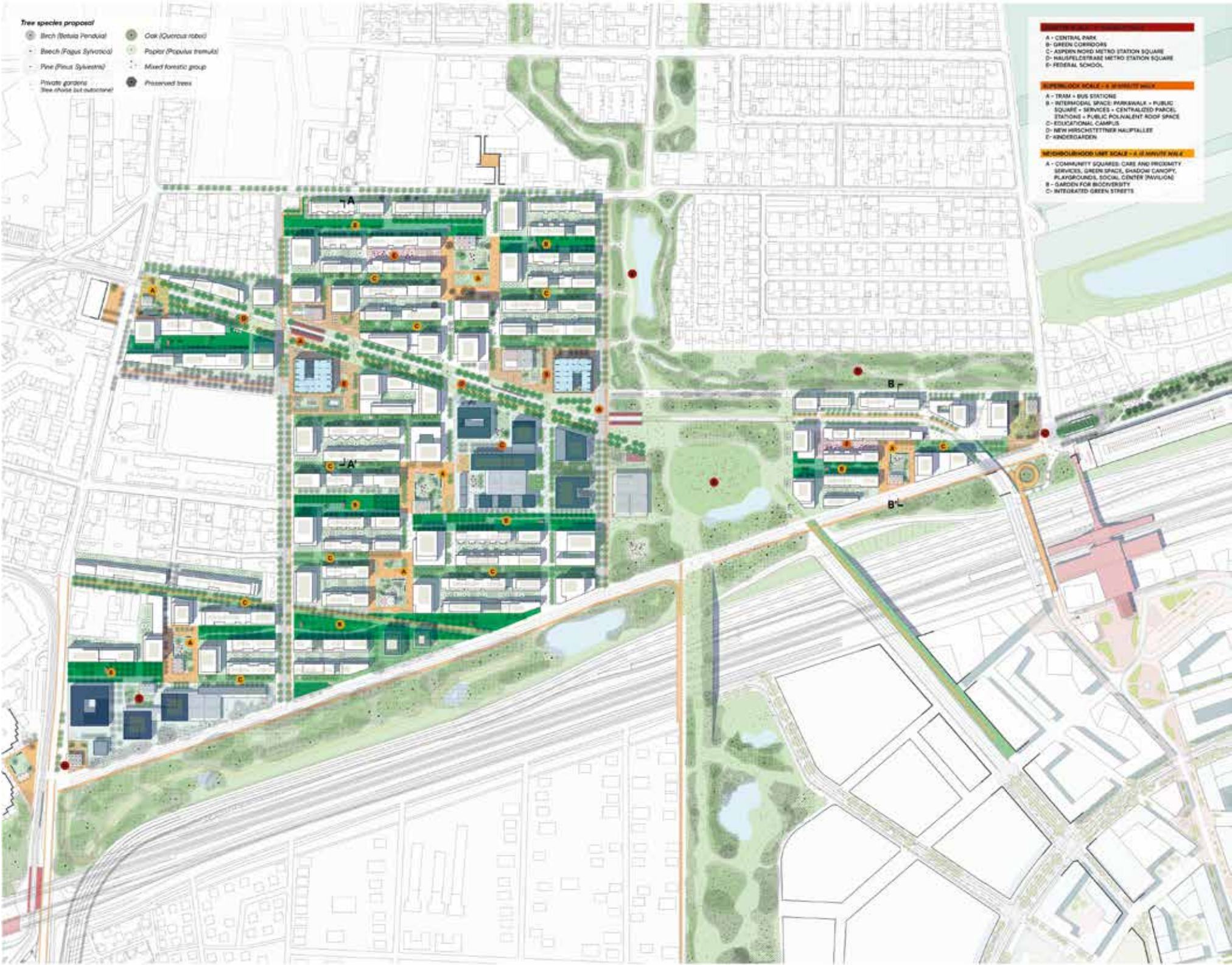
The era of Red Vienna is internationally known for its concept of social welfare and the subsequent achievements which continue to shape the city to the present day. Between 1923 and 1933, a total of 61,617 municipally-owned apartments were built, providing affordable housing for eleven per cent of Vienna's population. Today, about sixty per cent of Vienna's population lives in subsidised housing. In the Target Area U2 – Donaustadt, encompassing the urban development site 'Am Heidjöchl', housing for about 65,000 people is planned over an area of 1,130 hectares. For Heidjöchl, the City of Vienna is looking for resistant, inclusive, and sufficient concepts that balance the existing configuration with the demand for housing in an expanding city, considering climate protection, climate adaptation, and circular economy factors.

Vienna's climate guide and the insight from developments around the site provided the framework for Heidjöchl. The objective is a fundamental shift in urban paradigms, placing sustainability at its core. Around 11,000 people are expected to live here in about 4,900 residential units. Key parameters are already defined, including two underground line stops, a two-stop tram line, schools, kindergartens, affordable housing and workspace. Density near public transport stops can be increased, while at the edges a reasonable fit with the existing neighbourhood is required. A holistic approach to social inclusion, the presence of green space, and an urban foundation for resilient development were important factors.



THE PARK THAT REACHES EVERY HOME

Our proposal starts with the identification of a structured and functional network of open spaces, the preservation of their values, and the definition of a central park that completes the existing green corridors and stretches through different categories of elements: integrated green streets, gardens for biodiversity, and inner spaces between buildings. These connect the new quarter with the surrounding neighbourhoods and articulate the new urban tissue while nourishing it with excellent environmental qualities. The introduction of urban life has been thought out, considering three scales linked to three types of spaces necessary for every-day life: a 5-minute walk (neighbourhood unit), a 10-minute walk (superblock), and a 15-minute walk (new quarter); these provide essential services for social and community life.



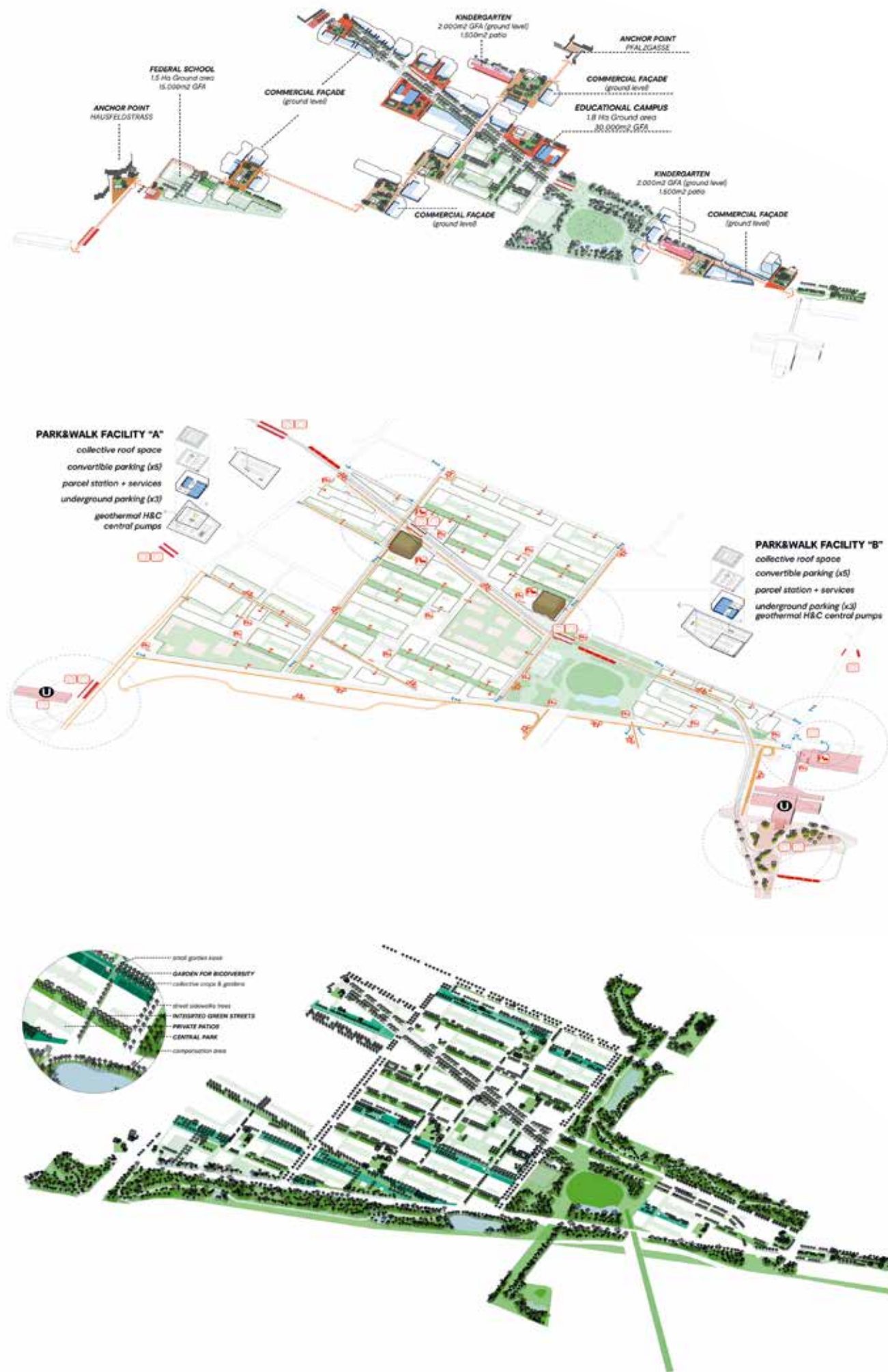
PRIZE
Runner-Up

PROJECT
The Park That Reaches Every Home

AUTHORS
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Paloma Mosto Zavala (ES)
Architect, Urbanist

Barcelona

Masterplan illustrating the green weave and the three levels of urban development, ranging from residential life to citywide connections



JURY STATEMENT

The project demonstrates an appealing approach that skilfully combines public green space and the built environment. The green areas serve as initial points for the urban design strategy and are considered important elements to accommodate daily needs. The concept is illustrated across various spatial levels, ranging from smaller neighbourhood parks to vivid public squares along Hirschstettner Hauptallee.

The introduction of three scales – the 5-minute neighbourhood scale, the 10-minute superstructure scale, and the 15-minute quarter scale – which contribute to identity and significance, was positively emphasised by the jury. The project also demonstrates an attitude towards the Hirschstettner Hauptallee by integrating it into the neighbourhood. Depending on the concept, it either connects it with the neighbourhood squares, emphasising it more, or tones it down as a regular connection. This embeds Hirschstettner Hauptallee in a multifaceted scenario, representing a well-thought-out concept for promoting social dynamics.

The differentiation and diversity of the green spaces, in general, are noteworthy. This also includes the main central green space. The skilful integration of adjacent open areas into the overarching landscape concept consolidates them into a cohesive figure – the green corridor.

Sustainable elements are also demonstrated on a building scale, showcasing the Venturi effect for natural ventilation, photovoltaic elements, and the integration of proper tree rooting zones and retention basins. The strategic placement of buildings in a zig-zag pattern enables wind conditions to be controlled, thus contributing to a harmonious urban design.

Despite all these advantages, the jury pointed out the generic system applied throughout the entire area. Breaking the strict grid with informal openings that allow for exceptions, such as 'public surprises', would mutually nurture the open space and the built environment.

Top left:
A healthy and lively community
– Educational and care facilities as central elements
– Constellation of community squares with services and amenities
– Hirschstettner Hauptallee as the backbone of the new quarter

Middle left:
A connected and accessible quarter
– Intermodal park & walk facilities
– Extensive cycle network
– Centralised parcel stations
– Car-free superblocks development, ranging from residential life to citywide connections

Bottom left:
A quarter with different shades of green
– Integrated green streets
– Gardens for biodiversity
– Central park and green corridors
– Private patios within housing block
– 30 % of permeable ground

Left:
Axonometric view of the new city quarter





INTO THE WILDERNESS

Soil is a living species by itself. Streets are no longer asphalt and concrete surfaces but open strata for green life and all species to thrive. Traditional, car-planned infrastructure is replaced by an ecological lung that spreads towards the entire site, covering it completely with different intensities of wilderness. This new, green infrastructure spills into the existing peripheric urbanism and towards the new to be built. Additionally, special care is bestowed on the ground floor areas, becoming transitional spaces that balance living units and facilities. Sustainability, conciliation, caring, and respect for the environment are the urban tools that define 'Into the Wilderness'.

C1 green corridor
ecological bridge to
Aspern landscaped buffer

C2 green corridor
ecological paths to new
district park

C3 green corridor
ecological path to swimming
pond
landscaped buffer

GB green belt
ecological infrastructure
landscaped buffer

C1 green school corridor
direct access to the park
landscaped path

C XL scale building
Baugruppen cooperative
medium rise landmark

E1 educational campus
green corridor to the park
collective green areas

E2 federal school
green corridor to the park
collective green areas

G1 west gateway
mixed-use transport hub
enhance local business

G2 east gateway
mixed-use transport hub
enhance local business

P park & ride
office and public spaces
+1000 vehicles

S special urban pieces
public uses
urban references

U generative urbanism
cooperative development
social housing



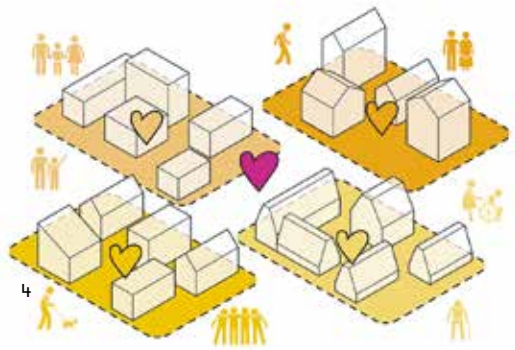
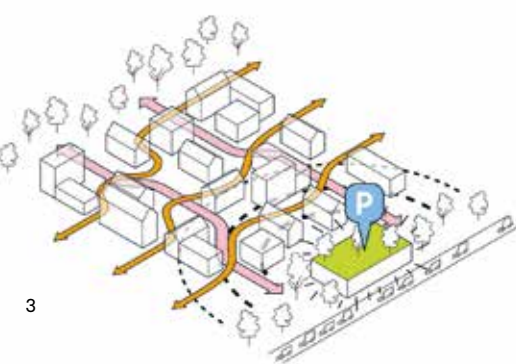
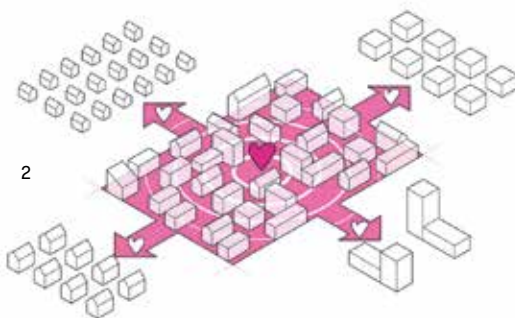
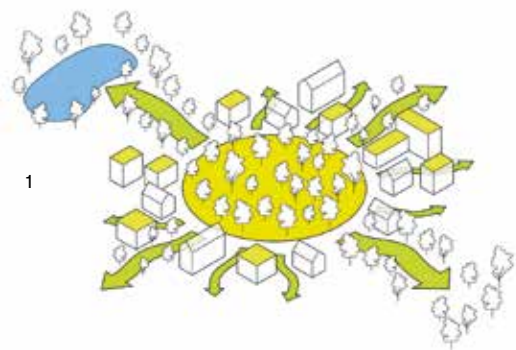
PRIZE
Runner-Up

PROJECT
Into the Wilderness

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Masterplan illustrating a
design for transitioning from
a car-centric city to the 'wil-
derness urban life'



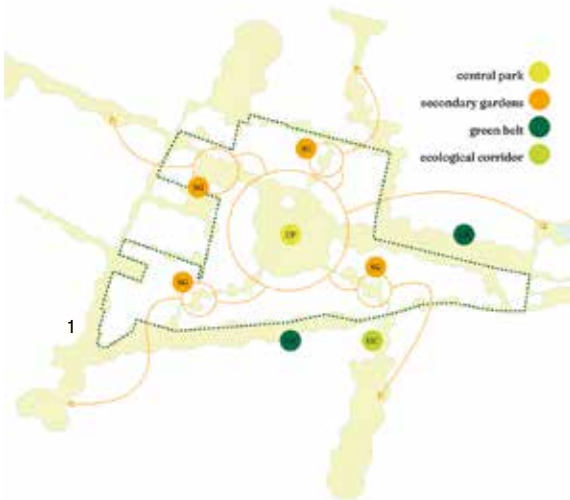
Re-thinking how we shape urban planning: from the car city to the wilderness urban life in four conceptual strategies

1
Ecological sprawl
- Changing the infrastructural basis
- Becoming terrestrial, soil as a living species

2
Responsive cohabitation
- Promote cohabitation between 'Am Heidjöchl' and its surrounding communities
- Performative urbanism

3
Liquid infrastructures
- Change the way we move daily
- Create a peripheric buffer to sieve the context

4
Generative politics
- Create a strategic grid for urban planning, housing and architectural development
- Stimulate conscious housing developments



Proposed measures

1
Green lung and alveolar extensions
The inner lung is connected via green corridors to the perimeter.

2
Gradual mobility plan
The internal mobility structure is designed following street width and density allowance.

3
Density variation and architectural grid
Density is related to the ground floor footprint and the idea of a completely green space.
- Stimulate conscious housing developments

4
Molecular equipment and divisions
Iconic volumes are located in order to structure the zones as semi-autonomous fields.

JURY STATEMENT

The project presents an optimistic approach to a new vision for a city. The jury appreciates the proposal of a new 'typology of greenery', seamlessly integrating green spaces and built structures into one entity. 'Into the Wilderness' introduces a unique hybrid landscape that permits alternative uses and fosters a new understanding for cities.

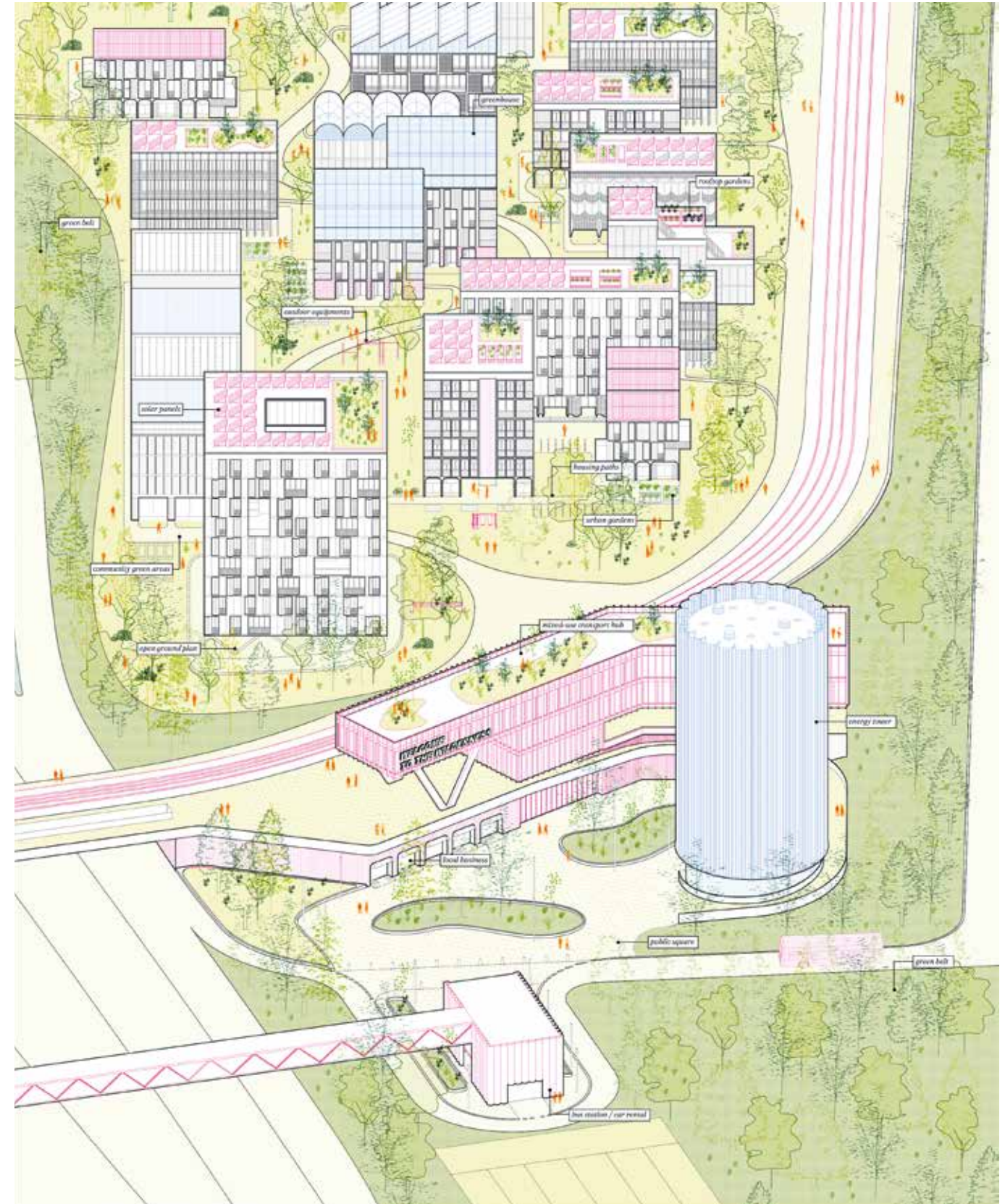
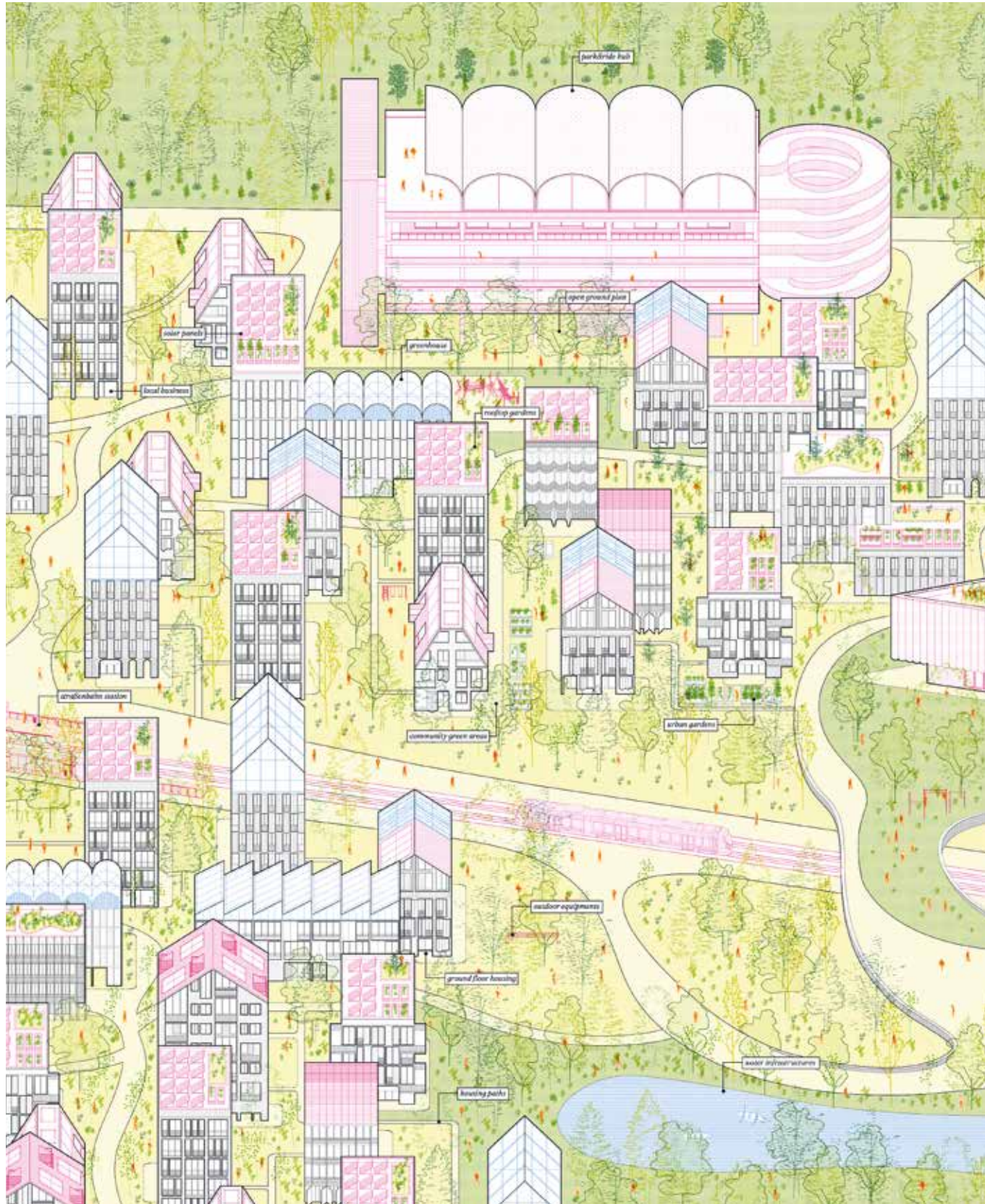
Nature acts as a central structure, with the concept of a central green lung branching throughout the neighbourhoods and gradually evolving into varying degrees of wilderness. The entire open and green areas are connected by a meandering network of paths. An organic form is applied to all the streets, lanes, and pathways of the site, chosen to facilitate the transition of mobility.

The jury views this as an intriguing and radical statement for urban renewal, while also recognising concerns regarding access for emergency services, public transport, and similar considerations. There is recognition that starting to allow cars to pass through the site may undermine the initial concept.

The diverse scales of the buildings establish an internal logic that structures the neighbourhood and influences the adjacent public spaces through their ground floor functions. Focal points like iconic anchor buildings are crucial for internally identifying different neighbourhoods within the entire site. The jury acknowledges that the presented buildings are placeholders for concrete projects.

The concept conveys a more progressive vision that some jury members felt could result in an exciting, pioneering city. While the vision of merging nature and urbanity in such a way as proposed here is deemed interesting, questions about the sustainability of the dispersed housing typologies and their resulting amount of surface area are raised.

Despite acknowledging unresolved issues and differing opinions on feasibility and urban design concepts, the jury unanimously agrees that the project is exceptionally innovative and visionary.



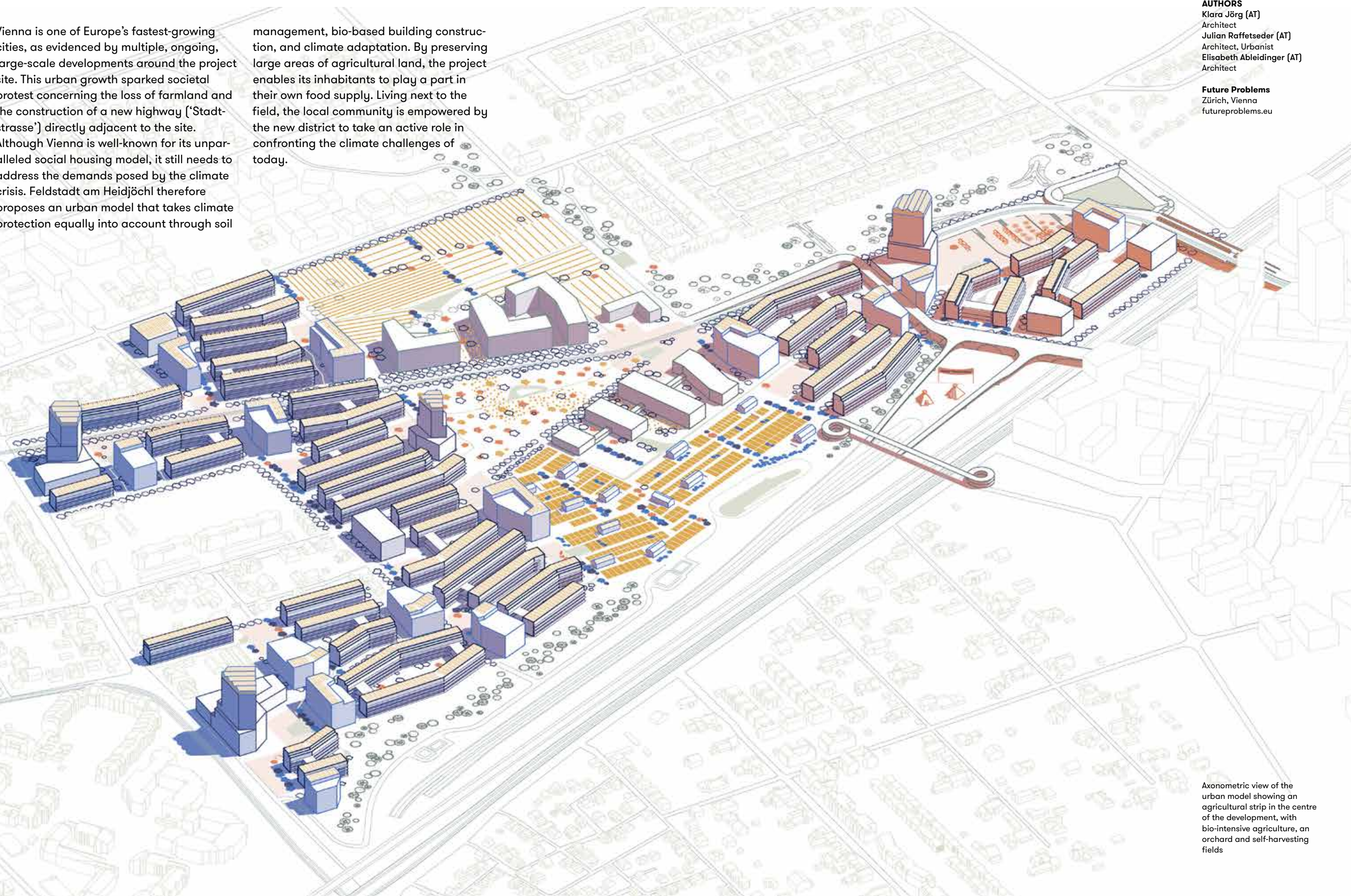
Left:
Visualisations of
neighbourhood scenarios

Above:
Looking north, across the
central park towards one of
the mobility hubs
Right: Looking west, with the
east gateway visible in the
foreground

FELDSTADT AM HEIDJÖCHL

Vienna is one of Europe's fastest-growing cities, as evidenced by multiple, ongoing, large-scale developments around the project site. This urban growth sparked societal protest concerning the loss of farmland and the construction of a new highway ('Stadtstrasse') directly adjacent to the site. Although Vienna is well-known for its unparalleled social housing model, it still needs to address the demands posed by the climate crisis. Feldstadt am Heidjöchl therefore proposes an urban model that takes climate protection equally into account through soil

management, bio-based building construction, and climate adaptation. By preserving large areas of agricultural land, the project enables its inhabitants to play a part in their own food supply. Living next to the field, the local community is empowered by the new district to take an active role in confronting the climate challenges of today.



PRIZE
Special Mention

PROJECT
Feldstadt am Heidjöchl

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Future Problems
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futureproblems.eu

Axonometric view of the urban model showing an agricultural strip in the centre of the development, with bio-intensive agriculture, an orchard and self-harvesting fields

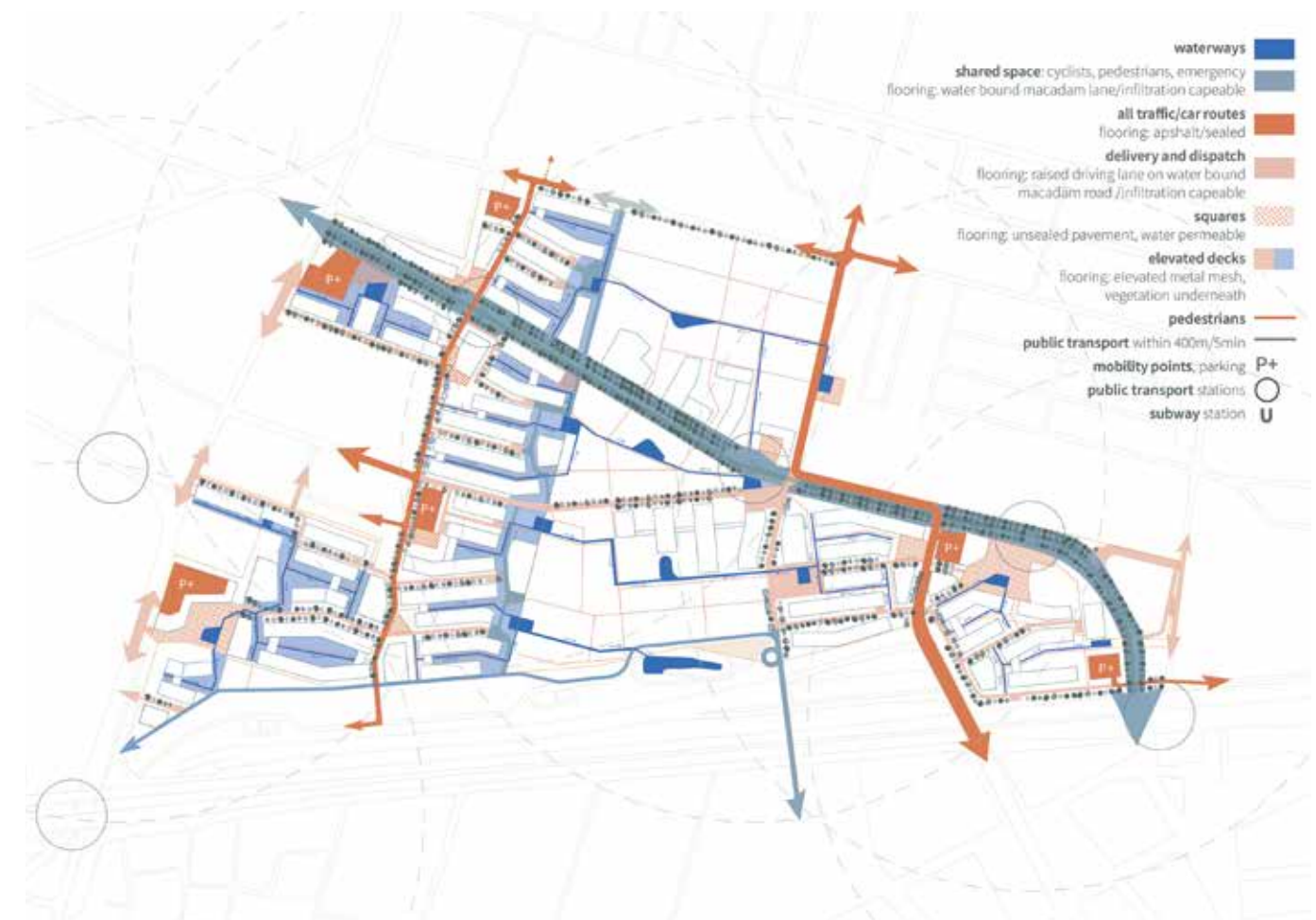
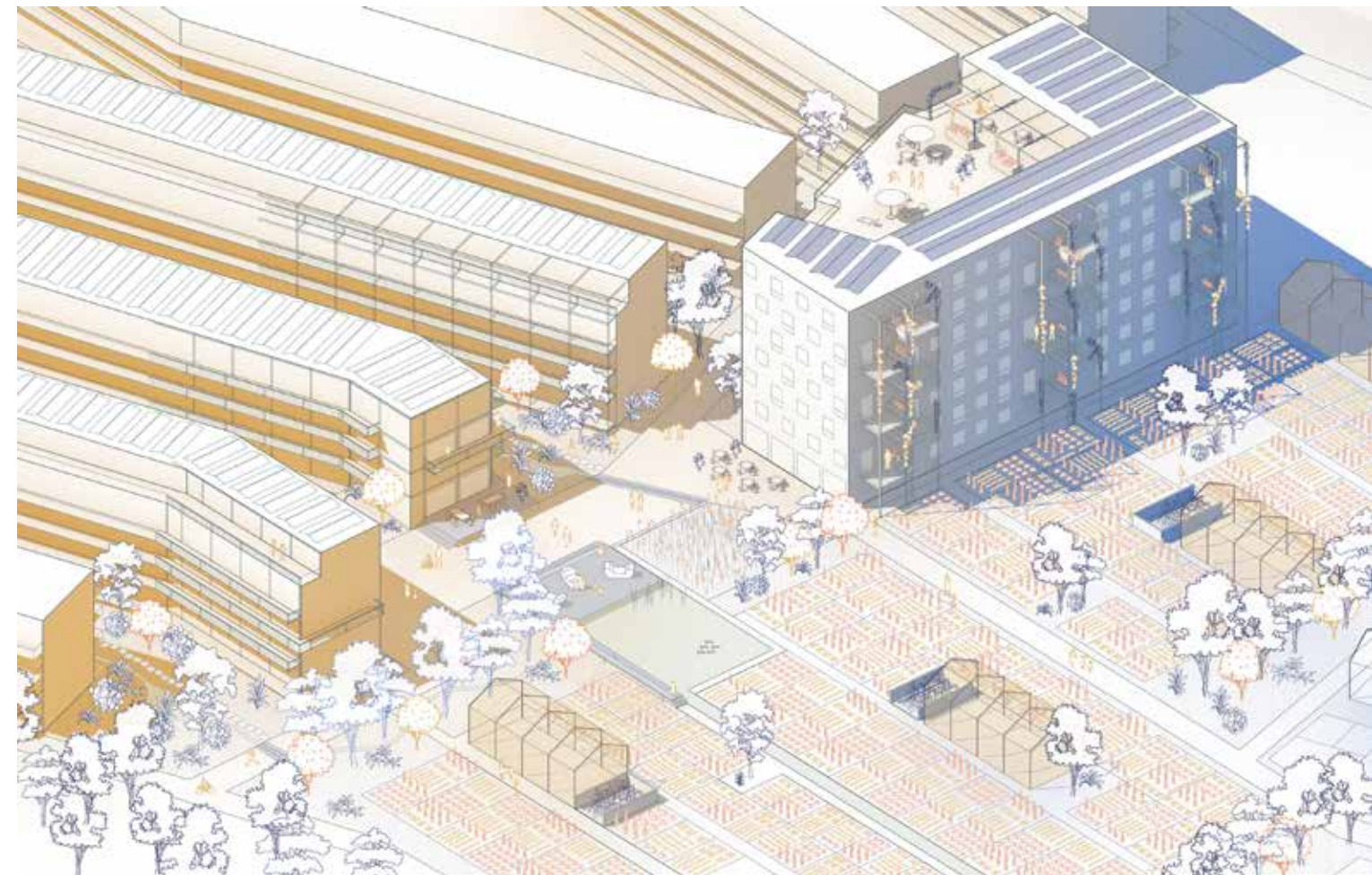
JURY STATEMENT

The three presented typologies are well-received, with their positioning soundly embedded into the contextual dialogue of the overall urban development idea. Nevertheless, the jury raises questions about the public space between the longitudinal volumes. While the suitability of these parallel units for housing is critically examined, their curves and bends are valued for introducing beautiful ambiguities at the edges, which take away from the purely linear proposition.

The expansive, open, north-south strip in the middle of the development, incorporating various green spaces, is recognised as a robust feature. However, controversial discussions surround this landscape design. The compromise of open green space due to inaccessible agricultural land raises concerns, although there is unanimous agreement on the ecological significance of biodiverse agriculture as a response to past industrial practises. An intriguing interface is established between the development and a form of market gardening, bringing a sense of production directly to the doorstep of this location. The idea of having a farm and addressing this aspect imparts a forward-thinking 'think tank' atmosphere to the project.

The project proposes extending beyond the designated area by moving the city road underground, a radical proposal considered unfeasible.

In general, the project demonstrates innovative approaches, regenerative methods, and comprehensive solutions. Despite neglecting crucial parameters outlined in the brief, its forward-thinking and visionary proposal make it a noteworthy candidate for special mention. The jury acknowledges its visual presentation and distinctive style.



Right top:
Shadow study conducted at 13:30 on June 21, depicting the 'Community House' typology, its relationship with adjacent rows of the 'Living Line' typology, and the self-harvesting fields in the foreground

Right below:
Diagramme showing the circulation and soil management

CELJE

CELJE

SCALE

XL, L

LOCATION

Celje, Slovenia

POPULATION

49,007 inhabitants

REFLECTION SITE

350 ha

PROJECT SITE

31 ha

ACTORS

City Municipality of Celje

THE PROMISE OF INHOSPITABLE LAND

The Stara Cinkarna (Old Zinc Smelting Plant) site in Celje is marked by a history of industrial production that has influenced the economic, cultural, natural and health conditions of the city and its surroundings. The metallurgical and chemical industry activities that took place on the site for 120 years still have a significant impact on the condition and use of the site today, as the soil is significantly contaminated with heavy metals and, in places, mineral oils. The main characteristic of the contamination of the site, which has a significant impact on the remediation options, is the heterogeneity in the intensity and nature of the contaminants and the low bioavailability of the contaminants. For the past thirty years, the city has been trying to find a solution to prevent the spread of pollution, to reduce its extent or impact, and to keep it under control. The pollution, the past activities, and the associated negative impacts have excluded the site from the mental and physical space of the city, even though it is in the very centre with excellent connections to the transport network. The site is a place of collective memory and a monument to the development of the city, but the burden of pollution has turned it into an alienated and undesirable place.

Celje is a city with some of the worst air quality in the country and is losing citizens to relocation. Therefore, it wants to reverse the fortunes of the targeted development of strategic locations. One example is the E17 site, which appears to have several advantages: It is close to the city centre, has good connectivity, is easily accessible regionally, receives good sunlight, and has a large surface area. Most of the former industrial area has been demolished, leaving only the most prominent remnants of the Old Zinc Smelting Plant: three chimneys. These chimneys are protected as a cultural monument and, despite the site's degradation and inaccessibility, act as a daily reminder of the past. They are visible from various parts of the city. The development of the site presents a challenge not only in terms of allowing development on contaminated land that can only be conditionally encroached upon or removed but also in terms of addressing the burden of history. The task is to encourage sustainable development of the site that will at the same time prevent further negative impacts of contamination on the immediate and wider surroundings, and to design development that sees the openness and connectedness of the site, rooted in its history, as an essential asset. The burden of space must therefore become its strength. How can we reconcile with the industrial past, which has provided livelihoods for many, while also considering its negative impact on the ecosystem?

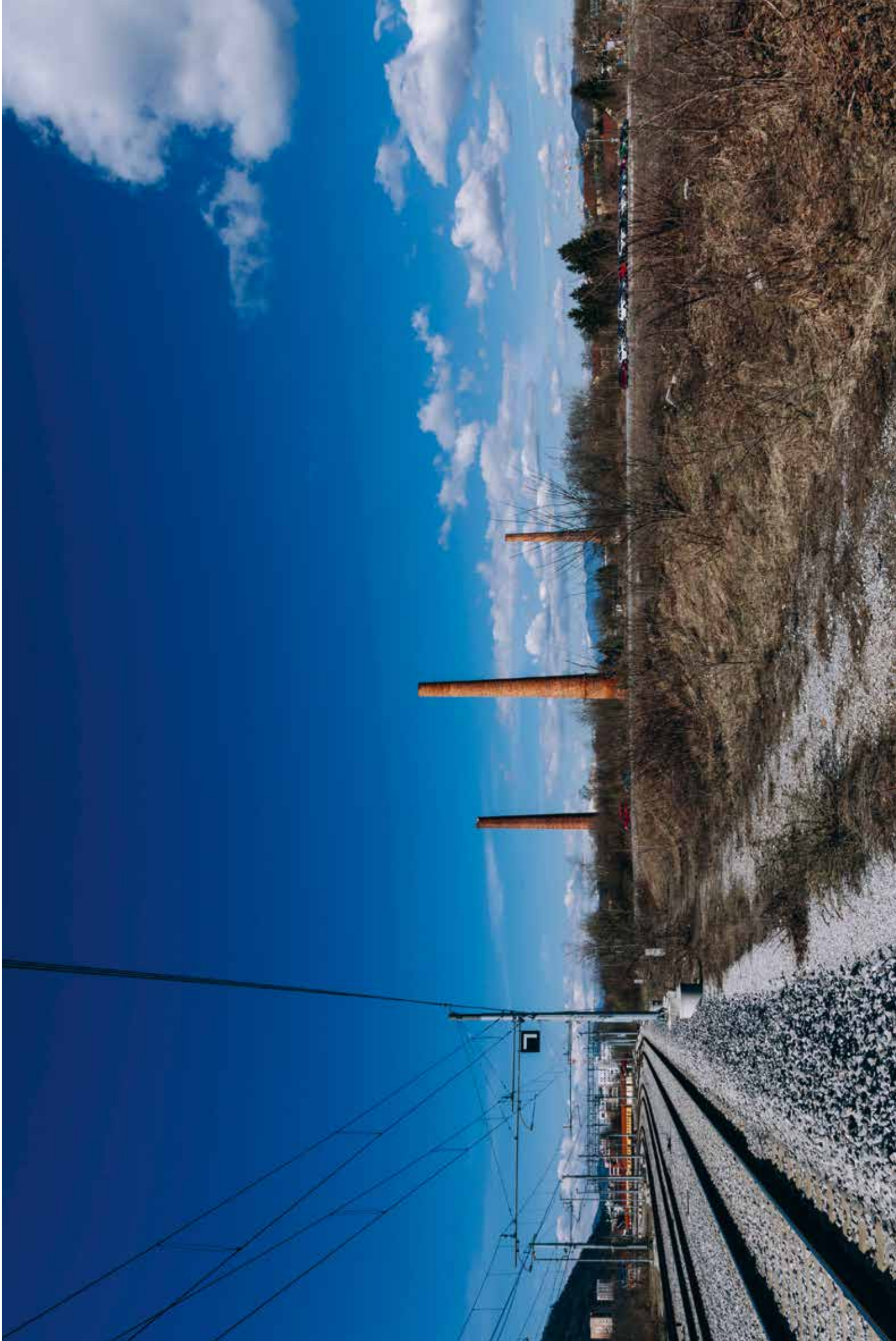
The Stara Cinkarna site has a distinct, twofold character. On one hand, it is open, well-connected, and green. On the other hand, it is almost untouchable, closed to development, and polluted. The soil is just a thin layer over industrial waste, the greenery is potentially hazardous, and the water is polluted. The site represents both the desirable and undesirable aspects of the city's past and future. It all depends on the next steps, which will see the development of the site as part of the development of the city as a whole. These steps will confront the burden of pollution as the factor that has given the city the opportunity to set a different development path today, and are able to tackle and overcome the limits of pollution.

● ● ● reflection site
— project site



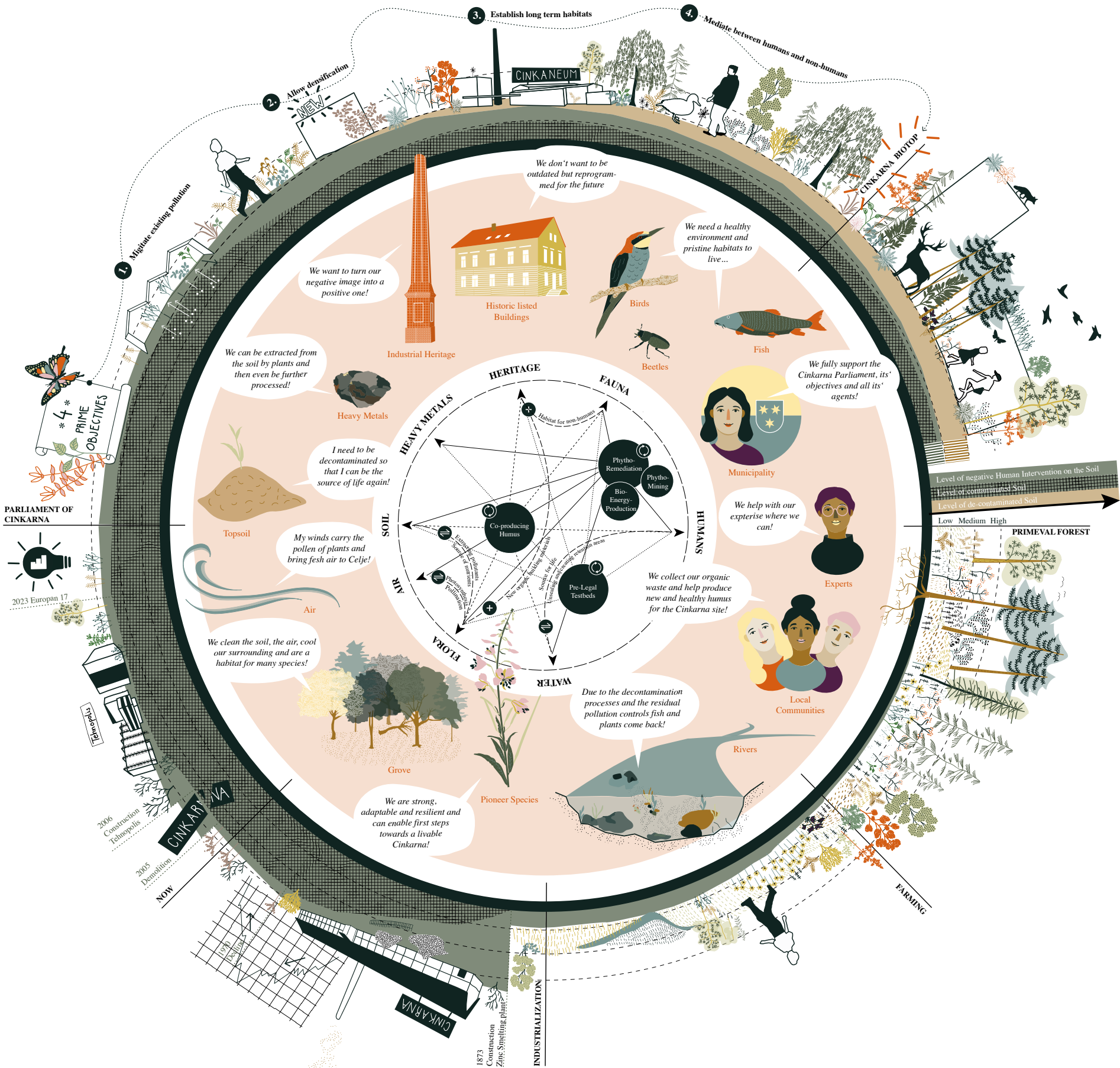
Detailed site investigations show the complexity and intensity of the pollution, the heterogeneity of which makes it impossible to choose only one approach for the development of the area. Due to the volatility of the pollutants, interventions in the area must be as unobtrusive as possible; otherwise, they would spread the pollution further into the wider area. The primary objective, therefore, is to prevent or limit the spread of pollutants, their transfer to the biocenosis, the bioavailability of the pollutants, and their transformation into environmentally friendly elements or compounds. Already widespread pollution means that the assets of the site – greenery and watercourses – can be detrimental.

The main issues for the development of the site are how to take advantage of the openness, connectivity, and centrality of the site as a strategic location for the development of the whole city and to re-evaluate its role in the region, the country, and internationally. The answer to this question cannot be provided unless there are clear responses on how to contain, stabilise, and nullify the impact of pollution on plants, animals, and people in the immediate and wider surroundings. How can we cope with more than ten times the tolerated levels of heavy metals in the soil? What attitude should be established towards the vegetation that has grown on these inhospitable soils? How can the existing built elements be preserved, complemented, and/or programmatically modified to use them as starting points for further development? How intensively should the site be developed and how do urbanisation and nature protection go hand in hand? Answers to these questions will offer a chance to reflect on the creation of a new identity for the site and the city itself, based on the heritage of the past in all its multiple facets and stimulating the orientation of society towards a future of solidarity and sustainability.



THE PARLIAMENT OF CINKARNA

Over the last decades, the impact of humans has led to such high contamination on the site of Cinkarna's former zinc smelting plant, making it a toxic landscape for humans and non-humans. The 'Parliament of Cinkarna' has been formed out of the necessity to turn this process around by putting the soil and natural habitats in the centre of the project. It encourages us to rethink human interaction with land, flora, and fauna, and aims to re-enchant the site by establishing a new model of collective and symbiotic urbanism. All agents affected by the pollution, the cleaning measures, as well as the future development, are an equal part of the parliament. Based on the needs and desires of all involved parties, strategies for the decontamination of the soil, urban and territorial planning, and the establishment of flourishing communities and habitats are proposed to form the future of the Cinkarna site.



PRIZE
Winner

PROJECT
The Parliament of Cinkarna

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Architect
Paula Fernández San Marcos (ES)
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Adrian Judt (DE)
Urbanist

COLLABORATOR
Helene Schauer (AT)
Architect

Vienna, Sevilla

Diagrammatic toolkit of decontamination strategies engaging all stakeholders and envisioning a vibrant future scenario

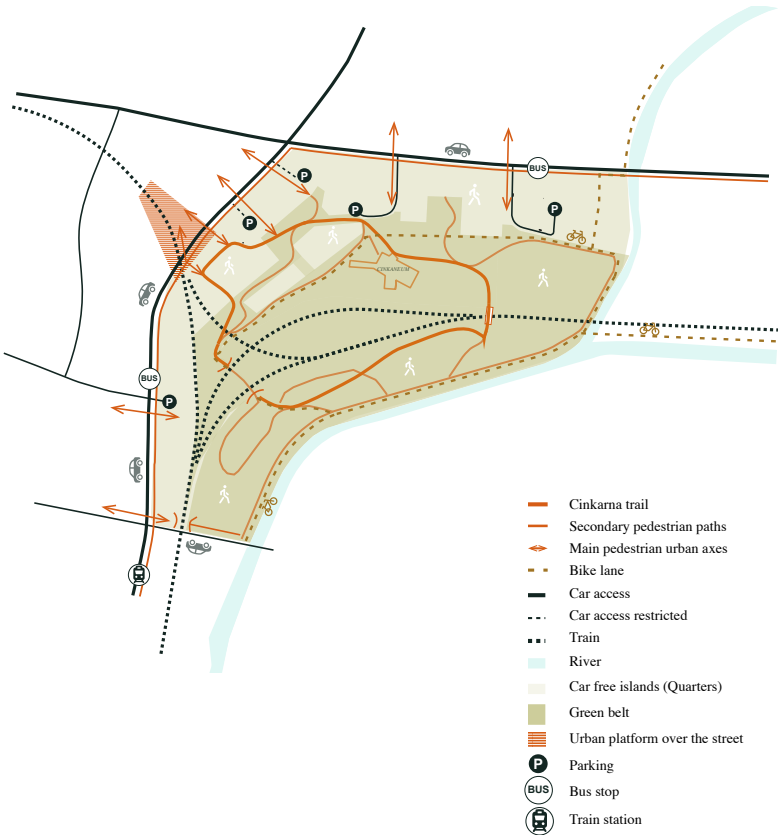
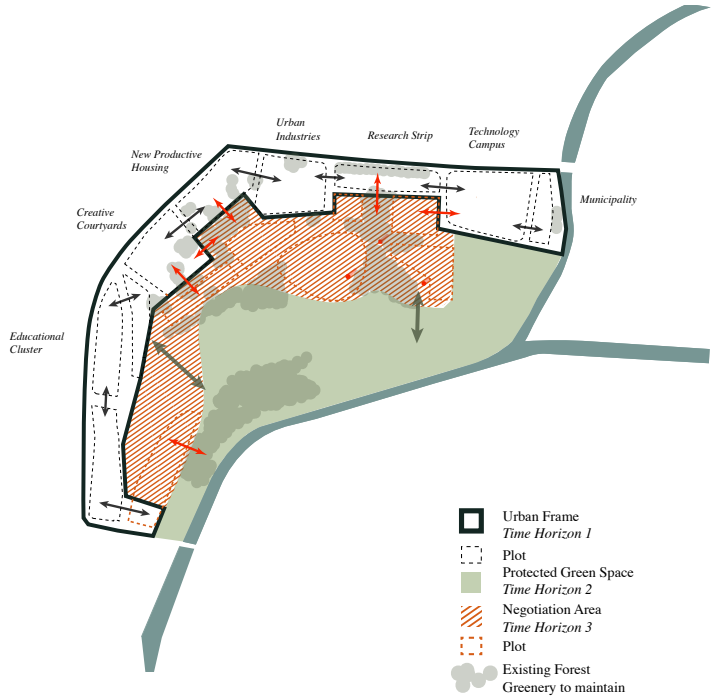
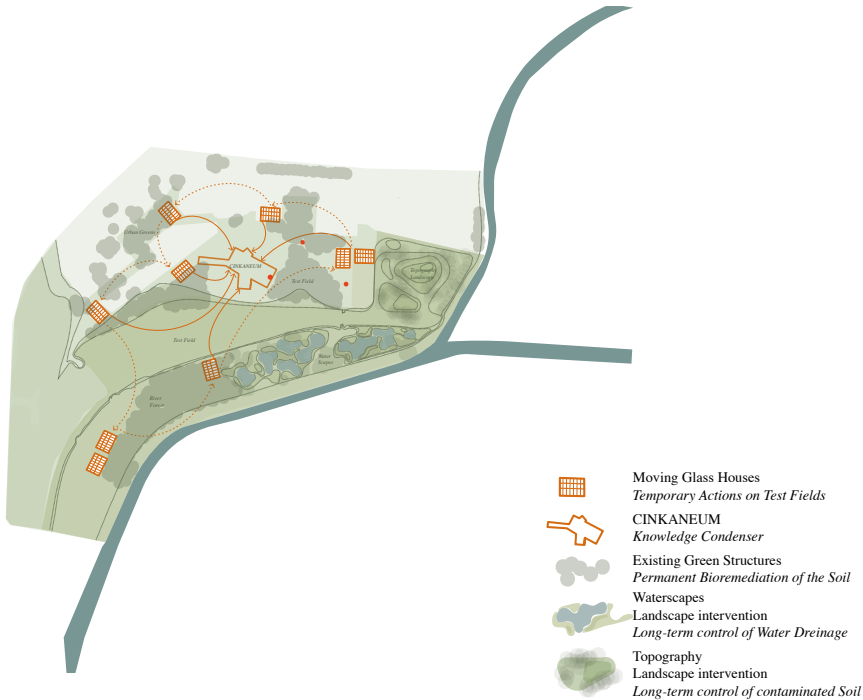


Left top:
Uncertain landscapes
Phasing,
incremental steps towards a
new Cinkarna

Left bottom:
Moving glass houses
Landscape strategies,
transfer of knowledge from
test fields

Right top:
A fertile habitat for green
technologies
Urban strategies,
programming and synergies

Right bottom:
From local to territorial
mobility,
Cinkarneum, a new research
institution,
Cinkarna Trail, a trail of
knowledge

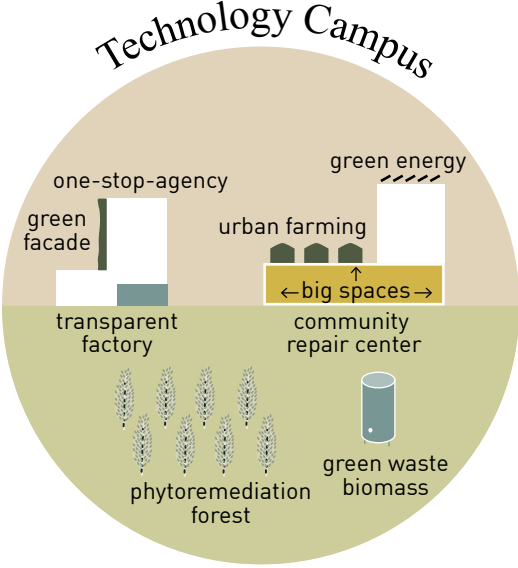
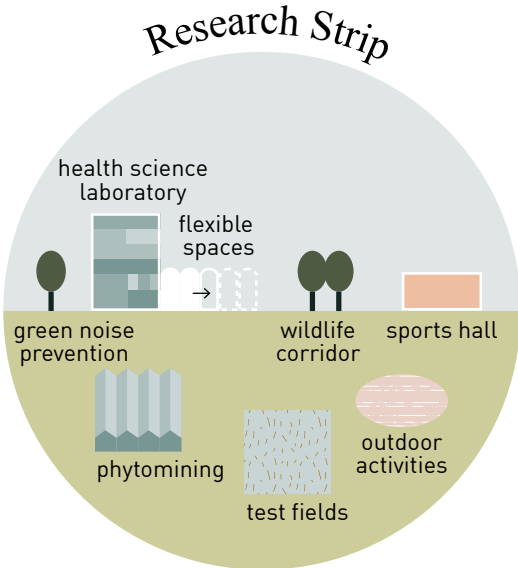
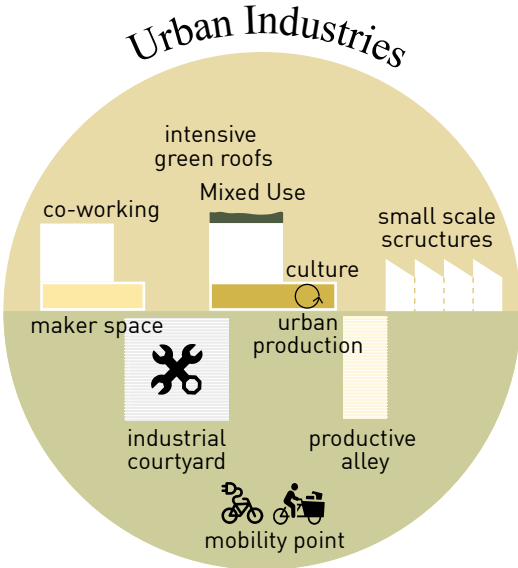


JURY STATEMENT

The jury values a very strong message and storytelling of the project. Although some other projects raise similar themes and ideas, this project stands out because it successfully combines different topics and ideas and takes them a step further. The project shows a tremendous amount of optimism and hope for an incremental change.

Some members of the jury were sceptical about the scattered urban structures proposed by the project. More questions arise regarding how to read this masterplan, whether it shows the maximum possible development or it is a starting point? Still, the jury agrees that the statement of the project is so strong that even if you take away or change a part of it, the idea is still recognisable and robust. The multi-actor dimension of this project is highly valued, as it shows how different communities can learn to interact and focuses on engaging people, rather than thinking about how to exclude them. An important quality of this project is also the reflection on the development of Mariborska street and surrounding empty plots.

The project proposes to structure the area into three zones: a densification zone, a negotiation space, and a protected area. One of the outstanding values of this project is the recognition of a legal and procedural framework needed to develop such a complex site. This aspect is further reinforced by the proposal to base further development on active participation of the inhabitants without excluding the ‘voiceless’ actors such as animals and nature itself.

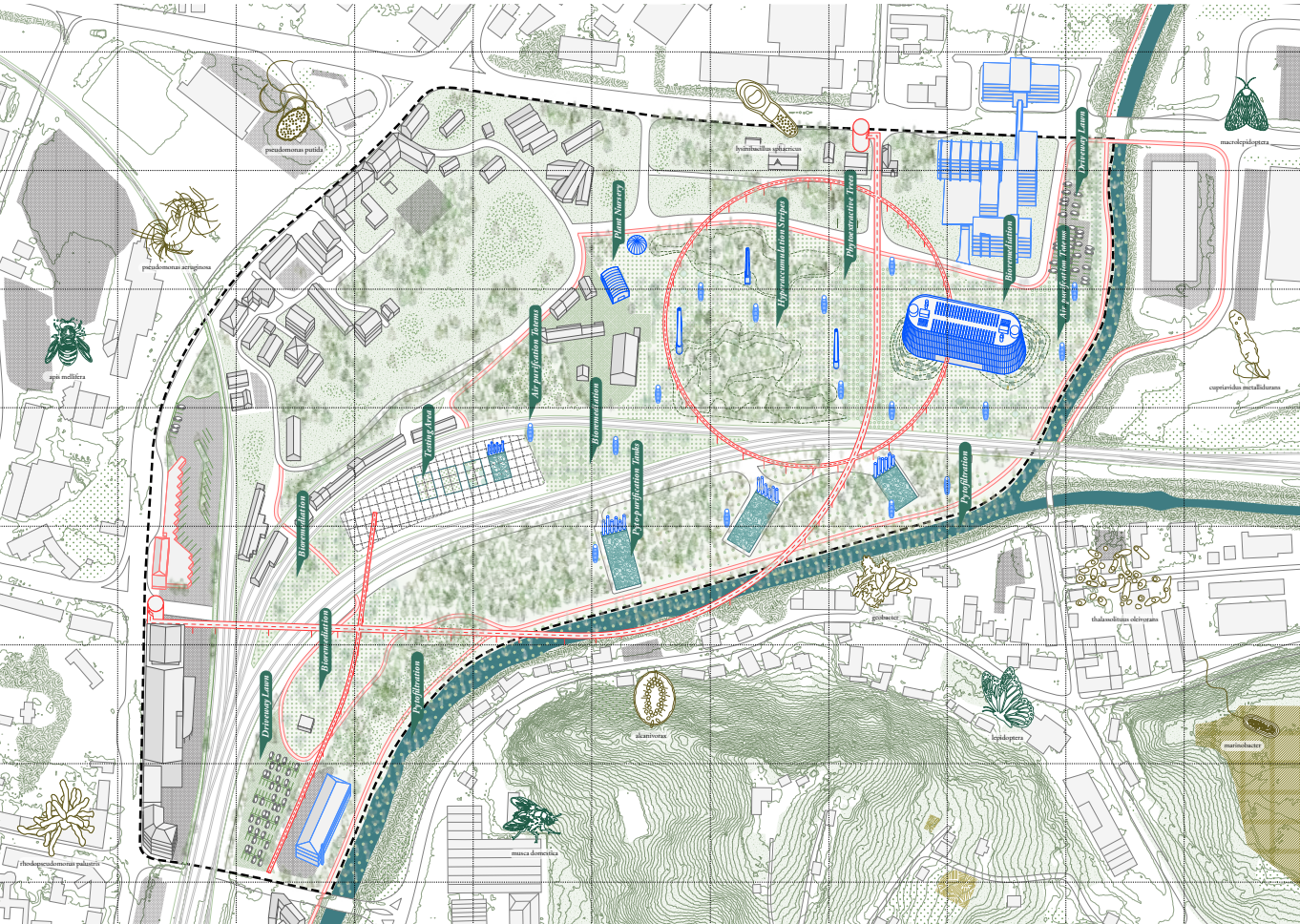


Left:
Measurements for transition

Above:
Axonometric view of future
scenario showing proposed
strategies applied and densi-
fication in the north-east

BACK OFF!

The current biodiversity, climate, and environmental crises may be interpreted as resulting from a human/non-human relationship in which the human perspective has dominated and sought to control the non-human. Therefore, working with distance and separation necessarily becomes the most sustainable and respectful technique to (re) connect and include non-humans in human society. For this reason, ‘Back Off’ translates distance not only as a spatial dimension but also as a temporal one so that a new balance can be found. The project intends to activate a gradual process of non-human remediation and caring, triggering a regenerative process capable of actuating a landscape metamorphosis that returns to coexist with the human sphere after being sedimented and spread.

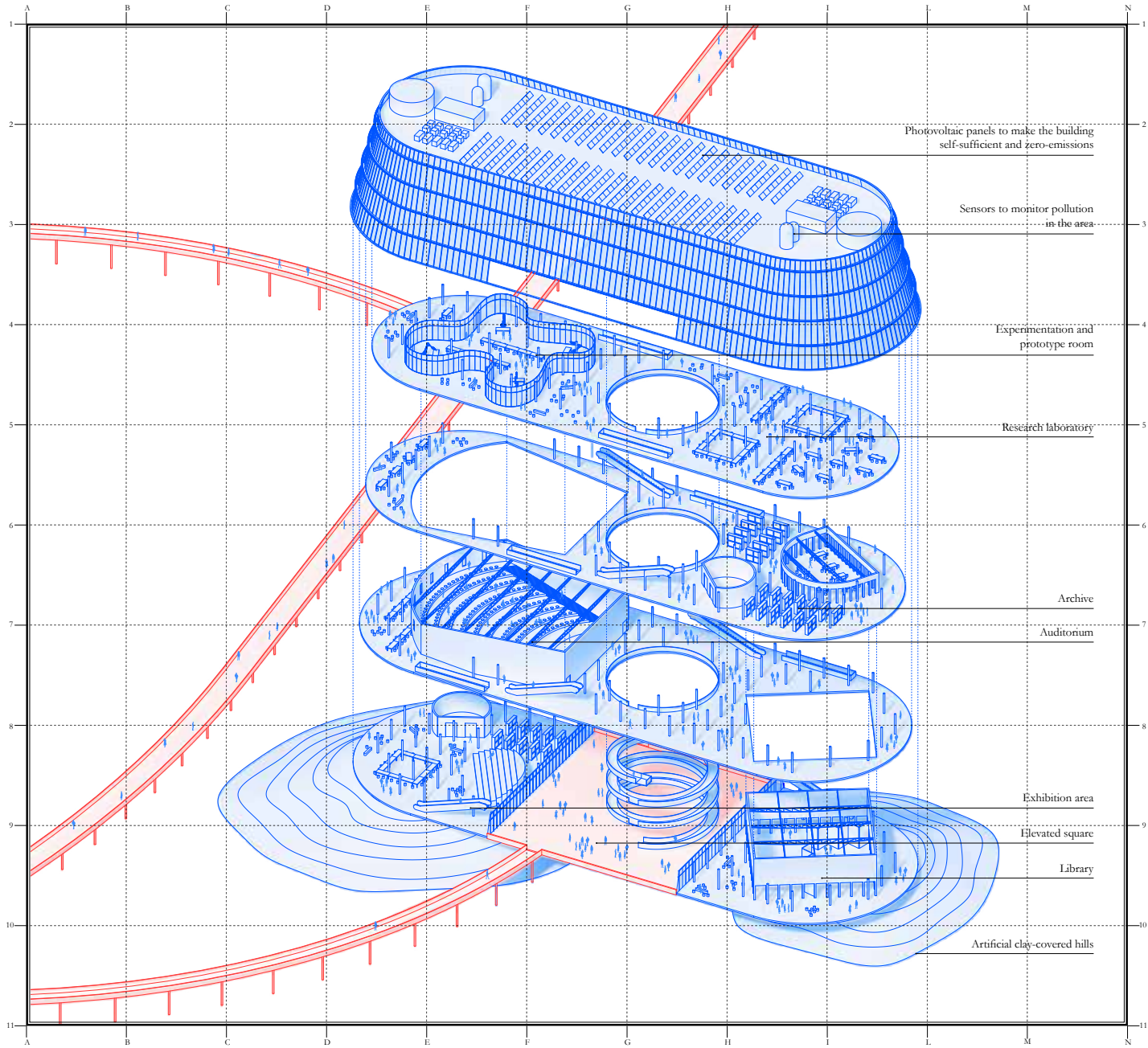


PRIZE
Runner-Up

PROJECT
Back Off!

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Left:
‘Time as a cure for an injured territory’
Masterplan showing the year 2040

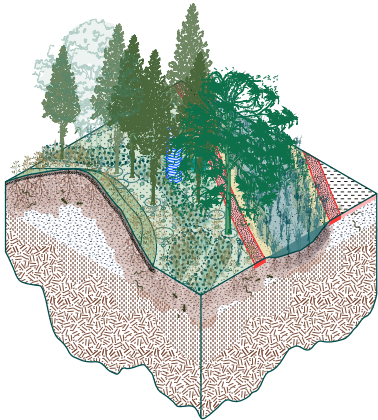
Above:
Phase 3, from 11 – 16.5 years
New environmental awareness: a greenhouse for humans



four planting strategies to deal with pollution

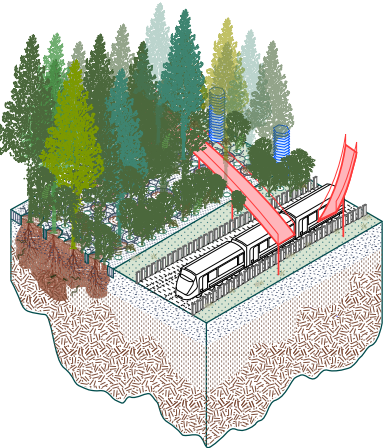
1. The embryonic ecosystem of permanent care

Planted on a widespread and pervasive grid, new metal-tolerant herbaceous and arboreal essences have been selected to support, permanently, the existing plant population characterized by the presence of maples, hornbeams, and sambuca, enriching the ecosystem of the site and contributing to the redevelopment of its soil.



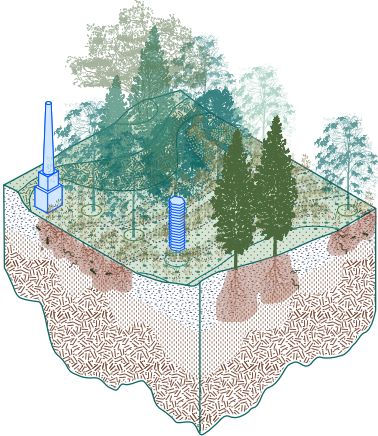
2. Vegetal invasive regeneration

The areas historically occupied by paved surfaces have been demolished through the grafting of a dense grid on which lattices combine tree and shrub essences, forming dense vegetal volumes or rows along the pedestrian path, contributing to the bioremediation of the area. These plant masses activate a phytoextraction process through their woody apparatus, absorbing and assimilating the pollutants present inside the soil.



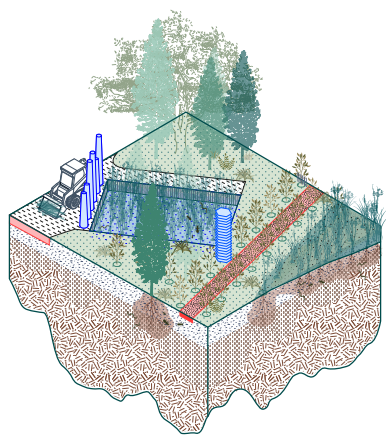
3. Post-toxic transitional landscape on the move

Heavy metals-accumulator plants are displaced within the polluted epicenter of the area and planted to form horizontal strips capable of reducing organic and inorganic pollutants from the soil, water, and air. Planted with a density of 4-5 plants/m², these hyperaccumulator plants have to be collected once they reach their maximum pollutants absorption capacity, and the saturated vegetable biomass is then removed and sent for controlled disposal.



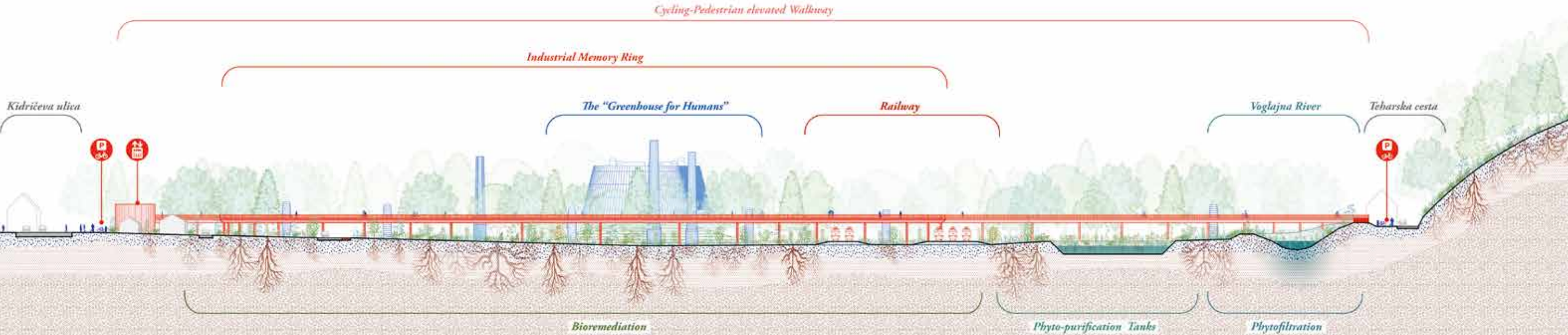
4. Phytofiltration, or dealing with troubled waters

The phytofiltration process has been carried out through the construction of phytofiltration tanks, within which the water coming from the site's wetlands has been filtrated through the intense planting of high-metal-reactive species. Moreover, a much more diffused strategy has been applied to reduce the pollution diffusion through the Voglajna river. It consists of planting the river bed with the same species present in the tanks. The result was the formation of a riparian aquatic landscape, contributing to re-evaluating this vital landscape element.



Above:
Phase 1, from now to 5.5 years
Bioremediation: taking care of the damaged soil

Bottom:
Phase 2, from 5.5 to 11 years
Urban and territorial connections: separating human and non-human flows

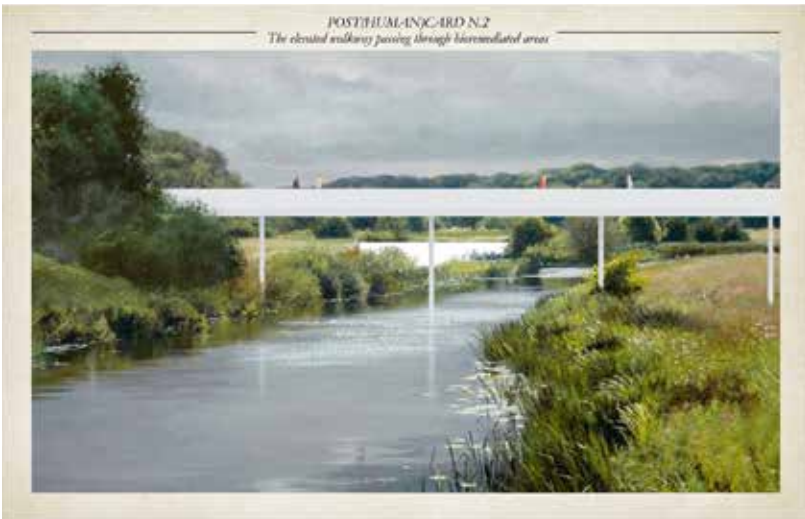
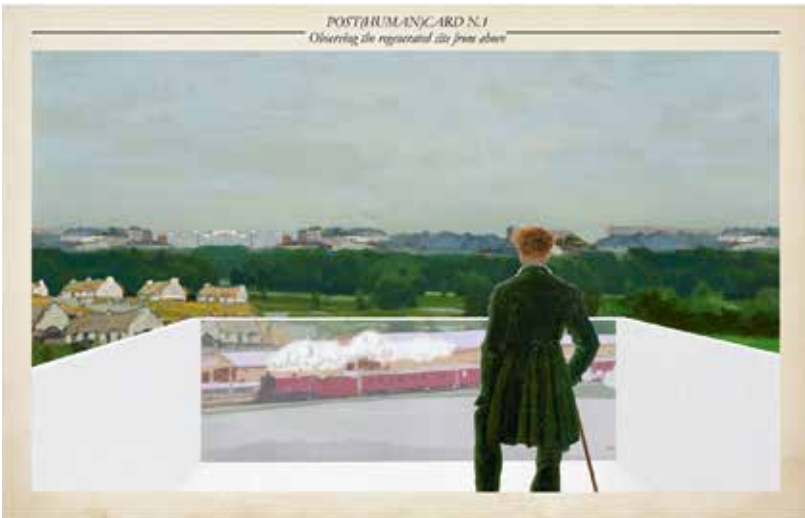


JURY STATEMENT

The project is valued because of the different approach they have taken and the recognition of existing conditions. The jury appreciates a very clear and determined time frame, but some of the jury members have doubts as to whether this is really feasible. What proves most valuable is the suggestion of a process, of stepping back and then reapproaching, rather than the actual timeframe.

General discussion arises regarding the elevated walkway, since it can amplify the sense of danger, on one hand, and it could have didactical consequences, on the other. The idea that is presented would be equally powerful whatever the height of the walkway. The jury agrees that elevated walkways can encourage people to reflect on the landscape and promote a sense of care for the land. That also allows some areas to be left undisturbed, while in others rewilding is key. It is very much appreciated for this statement to be taken to the city and be used as design research, showing the value of doing less. In that sense the project can be understood as an educational resource.

The scale of the bridging structures and the lack of urban complexity are discussed as the weaker part of the project, but the connections the project establishes are very meaningful and well-thought-out. Given the strength of the project's idea, a more daring approach towards existing buildings would also be appreciated. However, the project's general vision and statement are dominant and powerful.





**BLACK
MATTER**

TEAMS

GRAZ



REPAIR AND CARE

Therese Eberl (AT), Architect
Mitch Gow (AU), Architect, Urbanist

Therese and Mitch first met while studying at TU Delft in 2015. Since then, they've collaborated on various projects that include publications, built works, and competition entries. Therese brings an immense passion for design's potential to positively impact social equity and community well-being. This is reflected in her community engagement work and research into social and affordable housing. Mitch has delivered architecture projects for community groups and local councils and urban design projects focused on public space and sustainability. Together, they are a team committed to positively shaping the built environment towards a better future for both people and the natural world.



SWITCH ON THE SWALES

Charlotte Sampson (FR), Architect
Léa Malga (FR), Architect
Arthur Rundstadler (FR), Architect
Marion Conte (FR), Architect
Jean Pierre Serna Zerpa (VE), Sociologist

Our team is like a tongue twister. We, Arthur, Charlotte, Léa, Marion, and Jean Pierre, are colleagues or mates.

Amélie, Esteban, Magda, Bérénice, and Bertille, too. They joined us to reinforce the production process. There are also Emmanuelle, Clément, and Marie-Claude, whose support was crucial. We're a multidisciplinary team from architecture to graphics, from urban planning to sociology, anthropology, and literature. EURO-PAN was our meeting place. We worked by night and on weekends, and as we live in several cities of France, we worked face-to-face or remotely. It wasn't easy but we were united by a desire: to make of EURO-PAN an adventure, to mix our backgrounds and experiment ideas, and see what comes out. And it worked!

LOCHAU



LOCHAU RURAL (H)ARBOURS

atelier ehrmann:gruber
Christopher Gruber (AT), Architect
Christina Ehrmann (DE), Architect

Atelier ehrmann:gruber is a collaborative and experimental dispositive for thinking and making space – founded by the architects Christina Ehrmann and Christopher Gruber in Vienna (AT). The complex relationships between living beings, objects, and processes around us in space and the resulting practices, habits, and rituals are the starting point for their explorations of space. Diverse experiences in the fields of architecture, craft, film, publication, building projects, installation, scenography, and exhibition design inform the work of atelier ehrmann:gruber.



FORGET-ME-NOT.

A THIRD LIFE TO THE ALTE FÄHRE

Sarquella Torres
Pau Sarquella Fàbregas (ES), Architect
Carmen Torres González (ES), Architect

Pau Sarquella and Carmen Torres co-founded Sarquella Torres. For four years they resided in Bangkok, where they contributed as educators at INDA (Chulalongkorn University) and designed an award-winning kindergarten in Bang Nong Saeng. Currently based in Banyoles, Spain, they continue their professional practice, engaging in projects spanning from ephemeral installations to public facilities, all while fulfilling teaching roles at the University of Girona (UDG), the Vallès School of Architecture (ETSAV), and the La Salle Higher Technical School of Architecture and Building (ETSALS). Their proposal 'Becoming. Architectures for a planet in transition' conceived together with P. Bajet, M. Benedito, M. Giramé, T. Ramis, and J. Zabala, recently won the competition to curate the UIA World Congress of Architects Barcelona 2026.



BOAT HOUSE – ENHANCING THE EXISTING

Arge Richwien Niemeier Hohenadl
Sophia Richwien (DE), Architect
Felix Niemeier (DE), Architect
Michael Hohenadl (DE), Architect
We met during our studies at the Technical

University of Munich in the timber construction programme. The work with renewable materials remains the foundation for our projects. We have continued our exchange as we worked in different countries and in different practices, sharing our professional expertise. Simplicity and pragmatism guide us in creating works in harmony with the local context, joining the fabric of everyday life while adding beauty, utility, and meaning. We aim to be mindful of the existing, using its material and footprint to renew while minimising the need for resources. We want to address the needs of the users and societal stakeholders and contribute to the broader benefit for a community.



FERRY TALES

Angela Lulati (AL), Architect
Karina Baraniak (PL), Architect

We are two practicing architects and colleagues who collaborated on EURO-PAN 17. Angela is currently working at a Viennese office on competitions and implementation projects. She is also interested in theoretical work, presently researching material cultivation for the building industry, while also attempting to establish a platform for liquid collaborative work between young professionals as a new form of praxis. For Karina, architecture is not just a profession, it is a lifelong passion. Driven by a desire to explore, she is currently immersed in the world of graphic design. Her future aspirations include combining these two fields to create unique designs.

WIEN



INTO THE WILDERNESS

CRAC, pepelacruzarch

Alejandro Caraballo Llorente (ES), Architect
Carlos Reboló Maderuelo (ES), Architect
José Lacruz Vela (ES), Architect

Carlos Reboló, Alejandro Caraballo, and José Lacruz at the Higher Technical School of Architecture of Madrid (ETSAM), and have collaborated in several competitions since then. Carlos and Alejandro have been running CRAC since 2020. Their Madrid-based architectural studio explores transfers between architecture, image theory, and cultural performances in unbuilt environments. José [Pepe] runs his own practice as pepelacruzarch, investigating the intersections of architecture, urbanism, and territory. Their architectural collaboration offers a contemporary perspective into ecological thought.



THE PARK THAT REACHES EVERY HOME

Samuel Llovet Montardit (ES), Architect, Urbanist
Paloma Mosto Zavala (ES), Architect, Urbanist

We come from two complementary approaches: Samuel Llovet has developed

his career as a partner of the Barcelona-based studio JPAM City Makers. He is also a professor at Barcelona's School of Architecture (ETSAB), where he has been teaching as a member of the Department of Urbanism, Territory, and Landscape. Paloma Mosto has developed her professional activity within the public sector (Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona – Department of Public Policies and Natural Spaces) as part of a multidisciplinary team dealing with local and metropolitan-scale challenges.



FELDSTADT AM HEIDJÖCHL

Future Problems Architecture Studio

Klara Jörg (AT), Architect
Julian Raffetseder (AT), Architect, Urbanist
Elisabeth Ableidinger (AT), Architect

Brought together during their studies and professional lives in Vienna, their individual expertise in urban living models, bio-based building construction, and urban climate adaptation was a perfect fit for this year's EUROPAN 17 *Living Cities*: Elisabeth was able to build up a broad knowledge of Vienna's housing typologies during her career and is currently founding an office with her partner. Julian's PhD explores architectural strategies of urban climate adaptation in a 'subtropical Vienna', while Klara is working at an office in Zurich focusing on building component reuse and bio-based construction. For their common work, they founded the Future Problems Architecture Studio.

CELJE



CELJE. THE PARLIAMENT OF CINKARNA

Dorothee Huber (AT), Architect
Paula Fernández San Marcos (ES), Architect, Urbanist
Adrian Judt (DE), Urbanist

Coming from different international backgrounds, we collaborated for several years as co-workers at the same urban design office in Vienna. Through this, we know the strengths, expertise, and skills of one another well and could apply this very efficiently during the design process of the E17 competition: Paula is our EUROPAN-expert, having received prizes at two other EUROPAN competition as a co-author in the past years. Adrian is the all-rounder in the team, starting from competitions to urban interventions or curating pavilions at international biennales. Dorothee has a profound knowledge and expertise of various stages of urban design processes, gained through her involvement in relevant institutions and urban research projects.



BACK OFF!

m²ft architects

Flavio Martella (IT), PhD Architect, Engineer
Maria Vittoria Tesei (IT), Architect, Urbanist
Mariacristina D'Oria (IT), PhD Architect

The team is m²ft architects (established in 2018 by Maria Vittoria Tesei and Flavio Martella) and Mariacristina D'Oria. Maria Vittoria, Flavio, and Mariacristina are Madrid-based Italians who, since 2021, besides being good friends, have collaborated on several architectural and research projects, and participated together in international competitions. Although the three have different backgrounds, they share the same interests in specific topics of architecture, urbanism, and research, such as post-human, human-non-human relations, and the concept of design as a temporal process.

JURY

JURY PROCEDURE

To assess the work, each nation sets up an international panel of experts, which selects the prize winners in a two-stage, Europe-wide synchronised, anonymous jury procedure.

1ST STAGE: LOCAL COMMISSION

In the first stage, a local expert commission selects 30%–40% of the best works. The local commission consists of three local representatives of the city and landowners, two architects or urban planners from the local context (e.g., design advisory board), two representatives (expert jurors) of the international EUROPAN jury, and an inter-

national expert panel nominated by EURO-PAN Austria.

2ND STAGE: INTERNATIONAL JURY

The international jury of EUROPAN Austria meets to nominate the winners of the Austrian locations from the anonymous pre-selection of the 30%–40% of the best projects.

The international jury has received and is aware of all projects submitted on the Austrian and Slovenian sites and has the right to bring a project that was not pre-selected in the first stage of evaluation back into the discussion.

LOCAL COMMISSIONS

GRAZ

Alexandra Würz-Stalder, architect, City Councillor, Graz
Bernhard Inninger, Head of City Planning Department, City of Graz
Consultants: **Wilfried Krammer**, Executive Office for Urban Planning, **Wolfgang Walder-Weisberg** and **Eva-Maria Benedikt**, Planning Department, City of Graz
Markus Bogensberger, architect, Building Culture Coordinator, Federal State of Styria

Anna Detzlhofer, landscape architect, principal of D\D Landschaftsplanung
Rudolf Scheuvens, urban planner, Professor of Local Planning, TU Wien, principal of raumposition
Anna Popelka, international jury member
Radostina Radulova-Stahmer, international jury member

LOCHAU

Frank Matt, Mayor of Lochau
Consultant: **Stephan Schnetzer**, Economic and Tourism Committee, Lochau
Anke Blumenstein, Mobility and Planning Department, City of Bregenz

Thomas Blank, Head of Department for Water Management, Federal State of Vorarlberg
Markus Thurnher, architect, Fink-Thurnherr Architekten
Anna Fink, landscape architect, Atelier Fischbach
Johanna Gibbons, international jury member
Theresa Krenn, international jury member

WIEN

Bernhard Silvestri, Office of the City Councillor for Innovation, Urban Planning, and Mobility, City of Vienna
Philipp Fleischmann, Target Area Coordinator, District Planning and Land Use, Northeast, City of Vienna
Gregor Puscher, Managing Director of wohnfonds_wien
Consultants: **Alfred Petritz**, Managing Director of MIGRA and **Alexander Skarbal**, Managing Director of Haring Development GmbH
Carla Lo, landscape architect, principal of Carla Lo Landschaftsarchitektur

Claudia König, architect, principal of königlarch architekten
Anna Popelka, international jury member
Angelika Fitz, international jury member

CELJE

Matija Kovač, architect, Mayor, City of Celje
Monika Tominšek, architect, advisor to the Mayor, City of Celje
Tadej Kozar, landscape architect, Urban Planning Specialist of the Municipality of Celje

Denis Rován, architect, partner at the studio Navor
Miran Gajšek, architect and urbanist, Head of the Department for Environment, Space and Communal Services at the Municipality of Celje
Alessandro delli Ponti, international jury member
Gašper Medvešek, international jury member

INTERNATIONAL JURY

Anna Popelka (AT)

CHAIR OF JURY

Anna Popelka runs PPAG architects in Vienna and Berlin with Georg Poduschka and their team. Since its foundation in 1995, the office has worked continuously in the field of research and development of architecture in the broadest sense, with the aim of realising innovation. The objective is the permanent formulation of a necessary newness in architecture that accompanies society. At a time when building is in a state of upheaval, planning will make an essential contribution to a future worth living for all of us.

Johanna Gibbons (UK)

2ND CHAIR OF JURY

Johanna Gibbons is a Landscape Architect, Royal Designer of Industry, and Fellow of the Landscape Institute. Jo is Founding Partner of J & L Gibbons, established in 1986, and co-founder of the social enterprise Landscape Learn. She is a member of various advisory panels, including the World Forum on Urban Forests, and a core Research Partner of Urban Mind. Jo lectures widely and writes. Her most recent publication is *Conversations on Urban Forestry*.

Alessandro delli Ponti (IT)

2ND CHAIR OF JURY

Alessandro delli Ponti is a registered architect, planner, and landscape designer, as well as a devoted researcher and teacher (IDAUP PhD Programme). Together with architect Ilaria Novielli, he is the co-founder and director of KH STUDIO – Building Strong Stories, a Paris-based practice currently engaged in various initiatives for urban strategic planning across Europe. KH is currently implementing the 35-hectare-large urban and landscape project ‘Mannheim’s Connection’, the EUROPAN 12 Laureate.

Gerd Pichler (AT)

Gerd Pichler is head of development at ARE Austrian Real Estate. He is responsible for large urban development projects such as Wildgarten, an 11-hectare urban housing project in Vienna, and VILLAGE IM DRITTEN, a large inner-city partner project with a highly innovative renewable energy concept. Gerd Pichler studied spatial planning and development at the Vienna University of Technology and holds a Master’s degree in Geoinformatics from Paris Lodron University in Salzburg.

Cristina Gamboa (ES)

Cristina Gamboa is a chartered architect and teacher. She studied at the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) and the University of Stuttgart. Cristina is co-founder of Lacol, where she has focused on researching and developing cooperative housing projects. Their work has been recognised locally and internationally, including the Mies van der Rohe Award (Emergent Category, 2022). Cristina is currently teaching at the Architectural Association in London and at ETSAB.

Gašper Medvešek (SI)

Gašper Medvešek u.d.i.a. graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, where he is an assistant professor. He was the creative director of Plan B Architects. His notable projects include the RCERO recycling factory and the Stražišče gym hall, which were awarded the Golden Pencil by the National Chamber of Architects of Slovenia. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ljubljana for his artistic achievements.

Angelika Fitz (AT)

Angelika Fitz has been Director of the Architekturzentrum Wien since 2017. Before that, she worked internationally as a curator and author in the architecture and urbanism field. In 2022 she was awarded the Julius Posener Prize for Architectural Theory. Her most recent exhibitions and publications include *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* with Elke Krasny (The MIT Press, 2019), and *Yasmeen Lari. Architecture for the Future*, co-edited with Elke Krasny and Marvi Mazhar (The MIT Press, 2023).

SUBSTITUTE

Radostina Radulova-Stahmer (DE)

Radostina Radulova-Stahmer is an architect who focuses on urbanism. She studied architecture at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the Higher Technical School of Architecture of Madrid (ETSAM), and later finished her PhD with honours at

KIT/TU Graz. She is currently a postdoc at the Institute of Urbanism, TU Graz. Radostina co-founded the office STUDI-OD3R, which received several international awards. Her research and work focus on climate-oriented urbanism and digital change. She is part of the scientific advisory board of the Wüstenrot Stiftung.

Theresa Krenn (AT)

Theresa Krenn studied architecture in Vienna and co-founded studio uek prior to establishing her current practice studio ederkrenn together with Benni Eder in 2017. She co-realised the cooperative housing project Kohlenrutsche in Vienna (2019). The award-winning, first-prize EUROPAN project Oase 22 (2013) was nominated as the ‘best urban quarter development’ by the City of Vienna. She has been teaching at the TU in Vienna since 2010.

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EUROPAN has acted as an international platform in Europe since 1989. It is one of the world’s largest competitions for architects and urban designers under the age of forty and provides a forum for young professionals to develop and present their ideas for current urban challenges. For the cities and developers, EUROPAN is a tool to find innovative architectural and urban solutions for implementation. Every two years the competition is organised simultaneously and accompanied by international forums, exhibitions, and events. Around fifty European cities and around one thousand international teams participate in each session.

EUROPAN is a European federation of national structures, with Austria being one of the founding members. At the national level, EUROPAN Austria manages the jointly composed European programme and acts as a local guarantor for developing new solutions and connecting pilot projects with decision-makers.

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Alexandra Würz-Stalder, vice president,
Aglaée Degros, Iris Kaltenegger,
Bart Lootsma, Claudia Nutz, Andreas Tropper, Bertram Werle

TEAM EUROPAN AUSTRIA

Iris Kaltenegger, secretary general,
Hannah Nusser

In this European session, we are delighted to be partnering with Slovenia!

TEAM EUROPAN SLOVENIA

Blaž Babnik Romaniuk, secretary general,
Urška Cvikl

EUROPAN Europe is based in Paris.
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EUROPAN Austria is a non-profit association, registered in Graz, registration number ZVR-690746338.

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We would like to thank all teams, partners, actors, and organisations for their openness in joining EUROPAN’s journey and entering a realm of dynamic exploration – the only starting point for honest and responsible innovation.

Editors: Iris Kaltenegger and Bart Lootsma,
EUROPAN Austria
Copy editing, proofreading: Brian Dorsey
Design and lithography: sensomatic
Printing and binding: Medienfabrik Graz


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ISBN 978-3-200-09637-0

EUROPAN Austria is being supported by
the Federal Ministry of the Republic of
Austria for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and
Sport.

 Bundesministerium
Kunst, Kultur,
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport



This catalogue is a rich source of pioneering essays and award-winning proposals, all centred on the pursuit of 'Living Cities'. EUROPAN, now in its 17th edition, is a series of competitions for architects under forty for urban and architectural projects in smaller and larger cities and villages all over Europe, with the goal of carrying them out. Apart from the realisation of projects, EUROPAN has always been inspirational for the field of architecture, urbanism, and planning by showcasing exemplary solutions that, in all their diversity and specificity, address a common theme. As such, they are also prototypes that undergo discussion and thus produce a discourse beyond the specificity of the projects themselves.



EUROPAN
AUSTRIA
X SLOVENIA

In this edition, the theme of *Living Cities* is revisited for the second time. It focuses on the notion of 'care', exploring the regenerative capacity of living environments to overcome the opposition between nature and culture – a critical step towards achieving a shared future on a healthy planet.

Designed for sites in three Austrian cities – Graz, Lochau, and Vienna – as well as Celje in Slovenia, these projects invite us to imagine urban living with fresh eyes and discover new insights. Essays by the members of the international jury in Austria/Slovenia on the issue of 'care', along with contributions by three international experts on the rights of nature, the importance of housing as infrastructure, and architecture and race, provide for further reading.

ISBN 978-3-200-09637-0



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