

NARRATIVES OF IRRESISTIBLE CIRCULAR FUTURES



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desire an irresistible
circular society

Desire – Narratives of Irresistible Circular Futures

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About the project:

‘Desire – Designing the Irresistible Circular Society’ experiments with creating sustainable, attractive, and inclusive urban spaces which respect the limited resources of the planet, with the recycling of materials, and in interaction with citizens, artists, architects, designers, urban planners, contractors, builders, knowledge institutions, and other organisations.

If nothing else is declared, images are of own work or from within the Consortium of Desire.

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Executive summary

Our living spaces are vital to thriving cities and communities (counting humans and nonhumans alike). Thus, the built environment is a fundamental leverage point for exploring how we collectively can engage in imagining its sustainable future. In a time of poly-crisis, more than existing norms and methods will be required to imagine a sustainable transition. Creative, interdisciplinary approaches are called for, and we need everyone on board. Social, economic and ecological dimensions are crucial for our built environment's circular, regenerative and sustainable transition. In Desire, we have embarked on a journey of innovation, experimenting with creating sustainable, attractive, and inclusive urban spaces and territorial places. Our goal was to present an ambitious and innovative way forward where art, design, and architecture play critical roles in the future of urban trajectories. The narratives presented are not just an outcome of a research study but a beacon of inspiration for the future of urban design and architecture.

The narratives represent a practice-based perspective of the project's two-year outcomes, focusing on actions carried out by eight urban sites of transformation. Driven by forming, shaping, and organising activities in the urban transformation projects, eight sites have experimented with interpreting and translating the values of New European Bauhaus and five Desire principles (Biodiversity, Belonging, Movement, Circularity, Aesthetics). The narratives unfold the intricacies and nuances of running place-based activities and experiences, putting words and images into understanding their place, processes, dynamics, and potential futures.

To summarise, to promote place-based change when experimenting with creating sustainable, attractive and inclusive urban spaces through interactions with and across designers, artists, project managers, architects and others, we notice that:

- Creative, artistic, and design methods can support deep and participatory engagement with places
- Building and nurturing trust and relationships with people is vital to developing a sense of belonging and ensuring the sustainability of urban transformation efforts
- Organisations actively creating spaces for dialogue and presenting alternatives for the future development of living spaces is important
- Multistakeholder participatory processes can take various formats. When tailored to the unique local context, it can lead to more effective and relevant outcomes and strengthen local actors' support and trust in organised initiatives (Designing the Irresistible Circular Society, 2024).

These points are further expanded upon in the narratives as well as report D3.2 Site experiences and future plans, available on Desire's website:

www.irresistiblecircularsociety.eu/about

The work in the Desire project paves the way for a new vision for the built environment—one that is open-ended and builds on stories of being awakened to new perspectives, perceptions and experiences in individuals, neighbourhoods, organisations, and local authorities.

Foto credits: Hanne Kokkegaard





- 1 Wildemanbuurt, Amsterdam
- 2 Ziepju, Riga
- 3 Gadehavegaard, Høje-Taastrup
- 4 MIND, Milan

- 5 Kalundborg Campus, Kalundborg
- 6 BTC City, Ljubljana
- 7 Cascina Falcera, Turin
- 8 The Garden Caretaker, Herlev

Introduction to Desire and the Whitepaper

Where do you belong? It is a simple question, but not necessarily one with a straightforward answer. A story of separation in modern society can be traced, for example, as a sense of disconnect from others (Wamsler, 2022). Across Europe, changes are unfolding, impacting communities of both humans and nonhumans and the notion that places are constantly in a state of becoming (Dovey, 2010) is undoubtedly the reality. In some areas, changes unfold rapidly, where buildings, infrastructures and public spaces are being built, rebuilt, refurbished, or transformed. This comes with changes for the communities living there and those who will inhabit the place. How might we foster a sense of belonging, involve and nurture ownership, and care for places with their multiple, diverse inhabitants? In Desire, there has been an ambition to address this question by, for example, engaging communities and stakeholders through participatory processes.

Shifting towards a circular, regenerative, more systemic understanding of the built environment requires an integrated approach to decision-making that considers all three dimensions of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social (Grupe Larsen, 2024). In such transformations towards a more sustainable future, there is a need to engage with deep leverage points (Vervoort et al., 2024). Collective imaginative approaches are needed to enable and pursue a green transition in our living spaces, societies, and economies (European Union, 2022). To act on this, we need to develop new languages, methods and tools to avoid replicating unsustainable patterns and find ways to foster imagination, hope and creativity within transfor-

mations towards sustainable futures (Moore & Milkoreit, 2020; Vervoort et al., 2024; Westerlaken, 2021). Indeed, some believe tackling this task requires creating approaches to help us imagine urban futures (Pelzer & Versteeg, 2019).

Creative practices have been found suitable to facilitate change in transformation towards sustainability and stimulate societal transformations (Vervoort et al., 2024). Moreover, participating in community-building and active collaboration can enhance social cohesion, which must be understood as situated and complex (Eriksson, 2023). Thus, Desire's development of new tools and methods to engage participants in urban transformations has involved design, creativity, and artistic methods. In this respect, Desire utilises designerly methods to foster and support participation. Design has shown potential in supporting transformations in organisations, fostering resilience, and engaging tensions (Harre, 2022; Neuhoff et al., 2022; Rodrigues, 2020), and bring diverse stakeholders together to imagine alternative urban futures (Pelzer & Versteeg, 2019).

Through the Desire project, eight urban transformation sites have experimented with creating attractive and inclusive spaces by activating stakeholders and communities to build a shared new vision for the sites based on inclusion, cohesion and equitable ways. Outputs are captured in a shared toolbox and innovation biographies, further expanding and adding nuance and facets to the project's learning and knowledge space. Moreover, learnings from the site activities are disseminated in key deliverables, and we specifically want to

refer the reader to D4.1 Learning and Evaluation Framework, D2.1 Manifesto, D2.2 on Principles, and D2.3. on the Desire toolbox. The site experiences and actions are described in greater detail in D3.1 and D3.2. All deliverables (reports) are accessible through

<https://www.irresistiblecircularsociety.eu>

The eight site narratives presented in this whitepaper are a way to capture the transformative process happening in each site and synthesise this into a single story from each site. In the narratives, we refer to 'site representatives'. This refers to the organisations facilitating the demonstration activities at the sites. Through dialogues, local participation, workshops, and interviews with the site representatives, the narratives have been formed to authentically tell stories of experiences and reflections from the place-based activities that have taken place at the sites throughout the project period.

To summarise the potential of narratives, it matters what stories we tell about the future of our living spaces. We need stories that create openings and redirect urban trajectories towards more desirable alternatives (Edwards & Pettersen, 2023; West-erlaken, 2021). The narratives foreground angles of optimism without comprising the hurdles of inducing place-based change and sustaining participation. Each narrative visualises a preferred future, building on insights from the processes initiated at each site and their visions for the future. Inspired by each other and diverse ways of involving and bridging gaps between experts, designers, change agents, and residents, the narratives tell stories of building and strengthening relationships

in places driven by a process adapting principles of biodiversity, circularity, aesthetics, belonging, and movement to local contexts.

Reading Guide

The first four chapters are authored by Aalborg University, and chapter five is authored by Vibeke Grupe from the Danish Association of Danish Architects, who has been involved in the Desire project.

Chapter 1 introduces the setting for the whitepaper.

Chapter 2 unfolds the methodological foundation for the whitepaper and describes our approach to designing and telling place-specific narratives. This section includes the motivation for using narratives as an overall lens and method and describes the approach. Moreover, it presents the format and three aspects of the narratives: framing, excursions into the site, unfolding the process and activities, and lastly, looking beyond Desire through a future-oriented perspective.

Chapter 3 is the body of the whitepaper, presented as eight individual narratives following the same structure.

Chapter 4 concludes the whitepaper with a section focusing on the aggregated outcomes from the demonstrations at the eight sites in relation to the Desire principles, articulating general output for an irresistible circular society.

Chapter 5 is authored by Vibeke Grupe from the Danish Association of Architectural Firms. This chapter offers a perspective on the future role of architects in urban transformation projects, considering the experimentation that has unfolded on the eight sites.

2

METHODOLOGY

A Relational Design Approach to Capture Site-Specific Narratives

Urban sites are complex, multi-layered entities that are constantly in the state of becoming (Dovey, 2010). They are constructed out of relations to other places, things, events, and processes, and the urban site can be described as an assemblage of material things, flows, and spatial connections that co-exist with representational narratives, urban design codes, and intensities created through time (Dovey, 2010). The relational understanding of sites also expands to the fact that every site consists of a past, present, and future (Hvattum, 2010) meaning they are dense, layered accumulations constituted through time. Thereby arguing for a relational approach that sees sites as a process rather than a fixed and bound entity (Laursen & Lassen, 2021). In this respect, every site is a composition of multiple stories. These stories are subjective and can take different directions depending on who tells the story and what the focus of the site story that is being told is. Moreover, a relational approach also considers the importance of being in process and dialogue with the material (such as text and visualisations) and between the roles that bring them alive. There is no fixed, finished story; instead, a story tries “to represent and create relationships between humans, space, and actions.” (Schmidt, 2019, p. 144). Hence, we tell one story from each of the eight demonstration sites in Desire—meaning that the stories tell one interpretation of the given events, actors, context, etc., enacted on the site. This approach “highlights the open-ended nature” of urban sites and “acknowledges the potential of urban spaces as dynamic sites of everyday narratives and operations.” (Atmodiwirjo et al., 2019, p. 225); recognising the logic of sites as these deep, condensed entities with

enormous spatial, cultural, and societal complexity.

A narrative can be defined as “an account of the events of the plot.” (Raven & Elahi, 2015, p. 52). In our case, the narrative approach to accounting for the events unfolding at the Desire sites enables the authors to link and make relations between the built environment, human actions, and time (Havik, 2014). In our case, the authors from Aalborg University have been responsible for designing and producing the narratives based on multiple engagements with the sites. In this respect, a narrative approach “can be used to obtain local knowledge” (Schmidt, 2019, p. 158) and thereby develop deep descriptions of the relationship between spatiality, actors, and events, as well as develop “images of the future” that can foster discussions with the local actors on prospects (Schmidt, 2019, p. 158). Thus, stories can be “descriptive of the past or fictional for the future, anecdotal or practical,” and they “collapse the barriers between expert architect and nonexpert client and user” (Till, 2009, p. 114).

Storytelling is integrated into design practices (Raven & Elahi, 2015). The choice of narratives related to the transformative power is inherent in narratives as “stories include both elements of reality and elements of imagination” (Atmodiwirjo et al., 2019, p. 227). A narrative approach enables us to investigate the present and imagine the future. In this respect, a story is between ‘what is’ and ‘what could be’ (Ehn, 1992), where the narrative can be an instrument for speculating about the future (Schmidt, 2019). Hence, narratives can be a

tool for exploring experiential futures (Engeler & Schultz, 2019), and thus, formulating and imagining new futures, where “the transformative power of narrative lies in the ability to move forward and backwards, to and from different times, within the story (Atmodiwirjo et al 2019, p.227).

To honour and build on these streams of literature, you will, for each site narrative, discover a shared structure that ensures methodological consistency across eight diverse sites. However, this structure is also a response and choice of how to tell stories between 1) what is, foregrounding physical and material aspects of each site as vital aspects to understand their transformation and 2) what was, which unfolds the activities through prose text that highlights processes and interwoven aspects of place, stakeholders, and artefacts, and 3) what could be, which emphasises insights from the process of experimentation as pathways to a preferred future of the sites transformation.

Indeed, as Flyvbjerg states, narratives “not only give meaning to our past experiences, they also help us envision alternative futures.” (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 8). The narrative method incorporates duality, describing a phenomenon and a possible result—telling a new narrative about the eight demonstration sites.

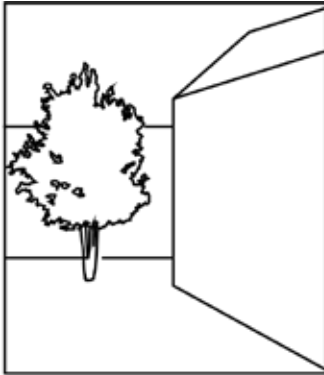
As mentioned, the authors from Aalborg University have been responsible for producing the site narratives. These are based on multiple engagements with the sites, such as field excursions and participation in locally run workshops, interviews, workshops, and partner meetings. The first author

of the whitepaper was responsible for gathering data such as photos, videos, mappings, documents, and notes. This input was used in an iterative, collaborative analysis process with all authors to construct the individual site narratives’ components, which were then further refined and validated through dialogues with the sites.

The creation of narratives builds on an analysis divided into three aspects. The first focuses on our excursion into the sites, the second on unfolding the place-based activities in the experimentation phase, and the third takes a future-oriented perspective looking beyond Desire. The sections are profoundly connected and focus on establishing a sense of the sites that are in transformation. The following three sections will elaborate on this.

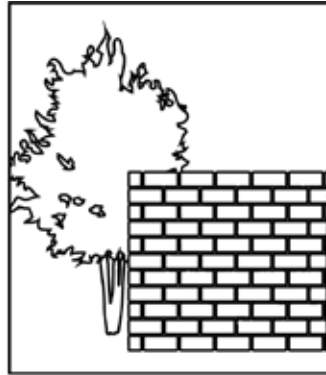
Excursions into Sites of Transformation

Urban transformations take place in a place. To tell the story of each site and its urban transformations, a hybrid methodology was adopted to convey the places both as a material reality and an experienced phenomenon. Establishing a sense of a site necessitates engaging with the environment as both a material reality and an experienced phenomenon inscribed in various social, cultural, and historical relations. Given the short-term engagement of the project, the authors' engagements with the sites were important as they enabled us to gain a more in-depth and detailed insight into the sites' realities and complexities. The analysis incorporates elements from phenomenology with a situational, context-sensitive approach to highlight qualitative aspects of the sites. The analysis was formed through field engagements and participation in locally run workshops. Here, an immediate impression was formed, grounded in a first-person perspective of the site, captured in maps, pictures and notes from participatory observation. To guide our analysis, we designed a set of lenses. The lenses form a systematic approach to analysing these impressions. Drawing upon the works of architect and professor Leatherbarrow (2011), the set of distinct lenses was formulated to guide an explorer's journey by elucidating unseen elements in the place. The lenses are interrelated, enhancing the holistic aspect of the survey. Accompanying the lenses, expressed as images and text, the authors have created a map for each site, which conveys its scale and anchors focal points of the site to a specific location.



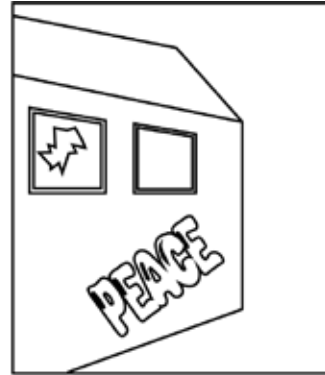
Spatiality

Concerning spatial relations between natural and build structures. The purpose is to show how configurations of voids and masses create different spatial experiences and opportunities for actions.



Materiality

Concerning the physical substance of the place. The purpose is to give an impression of inherent qualities of materials on site by showing contrasts in textures, perceived hardness, or temperature.



Temporality

Concerning the subjects of time and transformation. The purpose is to describe how a place is evolving by focusing on physical signifiers of age and elements pointing to renewal or altered functions.



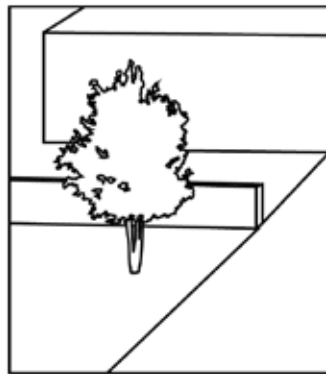
Soundscape

Concerning the experience of sounds from human and non-human activity. The purpose is to provide an impression of the sounds and noises that are most impactful to the sense of place.



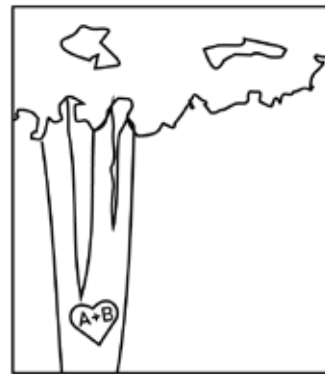
Activities

Concerning formal and informal activities occurring at the site. The purpose is to investigate how the place is and might be used in the future, by showing areas and artefacts designed around activity.



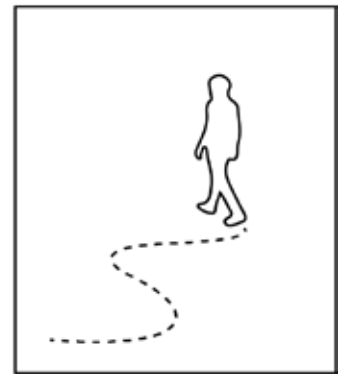
Demarcations

Concerning the virtual boundaries between the site and its surroundings, and the spheres of individual, communal and public spaces. The purpose is to show where and how these do or do not interact.



Memories

Concerning memories, lived and collective, embedded at the site. The purpose is to show the impact of memories as expressed through everyday practices, artefacts and narratives surrounding the place.



Movements

Concerning the flow and modalities of human and more-than-human movements. The purpose is to identify the opportunities and barriers of movement by focusing on patterns, pathways, and transitions.

Unfolding Place-Based Activities in Desire

In Desire, the emphasis has been on facilitating place-based activities, using various methods and tools in the sites' sustainable transformation processes. In the narratives, what follows the physical/spatial introduction to the sites, as outlined above, is a rich text that unfolds the process and place-based activities run in the Desire project. The activities have been selected in dialogue with the sites. The authors have led the process of tying the relations between activity, locations, stakeholders and artefacts into a unified story. This section starts with anecdotes presented in cursive text. These anecdotes are written from a first-person, outsider perspective and exemplify our excursions into the sites with project partners and participants. They give the narratives an experiential dimension, conveying the short but "intense excursions" into the sites (Pink & Morgan, 2013). The texts have a bridging quality and have served two purposes: 1) to add an experiential dimension that can bridge between readers and the narratives, and 2) to foster transparency between authors and site representatives and prompt responses in dialogues aiming at validating the stories. There will always be an issue of perception and interpretation when describing any situation (Emerson et al., 2011). Thus, it is important to acknowledge the complexities of describing a particular event (or site). Following the authors' excursions and multiple engagements with the sites, we have presented our insights, format, pictures, mappings, questions, and understandings to the sites to generate feedback and validate the trajectory of each narrative.

The anecdotes tell but of one experience through one activity. It has not been possible to be present

at all eight sites at all their activities. To address this, we developed a shared format to map stakeholders, activities, artefacts and locations during individual workshops with the site representatives. The refined result of these mappings is presented as process visualisations in the sites' narratives. The visualisations unfold relational dynamics, building on the assumption that places can be understood as heterogeneous networks that are constantly evolving and in a state of becoming. They should be seen as open-ended and can be interpreted in different ways. Producing these maps was particularly effective in conveying the complexities of facilitating place-based activities, as they emphasise a relational view of the sites and their activities, holding their complexity in mind while also simplifying by being bound to a project period.

Beyond Desire: Making Irresistible Future Visible

The third and final aspect of the narratives includes a future-oriented perspective, reflecting on the activities in the Desire project at the sites and connecting these to the longer-term vision of the sites' transformations. This aspect takes an imaginary view of the sites by asking what could become and reflecting on what insights from the processes would be needed on the journey towards that vision. Imagining positive urban futures is crucial as cities will become living places for future generations, and imagination is "fundamental to processes of conceptualisation, envisioning and performing urban futures" (Dunn, 2018, p. 375). We have transformed and interpreted written visionary statements shared by the sites into visualisations to make these futures visible. The visualisations are not literal representations of the sites or how they could be but rather a speculative glimpse of a preferred future. The authors have created them through an iterative process. These visualisations could inform discussions of how a sustainable future could manifest within the sites, building on spatial, temporal and processual aspects and experiences. According to Havik (2014), narratives can be spatial in showing the spatial implications of the transformation processes. In our case, this aspect enables us to show the spatial implications of the transformation processes.

Taken together, the three aspects of the narratives emphasise the temporal quality of narratives – temporal in the sense that we can capture the sites' dimensions of past, future, and present within the scope of the project, which "come together in the present of the narration" (Havik 2014, p. 115).

3

NARRATIVES OF IRRESISTIBLE FUTURES

WILDEMANBUURT

WILDEMANBUURT, AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Crafting Situations to Design and Do!

*Fostering ownership and resilience through community
engagement*



Figure 1: Wildemanbuurt, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

*"WE TRY TO WORK WITH WHAT IS THERE AND
NURTURE GOOD IDEAS, FOSTER NEW RELATIONS-
HIPS. IN THE END, IT'S REALLY ABOUT AGENCY
AND WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A NEW NE-
IGHBOURHOOD FROM A PLACE OF TRUST,"*
- ROSALIE BAK, COMMUNITY BUILDER AND SO-
CIAL DESIGNER FOR THE DESIRE PARTNER
STICHTING SAMENWONEN-SAMENLEVEN.

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

In the Nieuw-West area of Amsterdam, in the Osdorp district, lies the Wildemanbuurt neighbourhood. Currently, it accommodates approximately 5,000 residents, primarily big families with a notable proportion of elderly (around 12%) and young inhabitants (around 40% under 30 years old). The Wildemanbuurt is diverse. Its inhabitants come from different cultural backgrounds and represent 75 nationalities. Activities are facilitated by the community-based design organisations The Beach and Samenwonen-Samenleven. The two organisations have their home in buildings in the neighbourhood, Station Wildeman, Perron 32, and Garage Notweg. Together, these three hubs provide an important foundation and basis for community-driven initiatives to flourish in Wildemanbuurt with its local community.

The area of Wildemanbuurt represents typical social housing neighbourhoods as seen in other European cities, with its parallel blocks and concrete material. In Wildemanbuurt tension lies in approaches where plans are made by experts from local authorities without the integrated participation of residents. Trust between residents and municipal and social housing authorities is thus a delicate matter, as residents have experienced the negative effect of unfulfilled promises and plans. The voices in the neighbourhood's conversations

and discussions represent strong opposite opinions, and a significant challenge is rooted in mistrust between citizens and formal institutions, as well as between citizens themselves.

Moreover, external factors, such as new development plans and negative forces, underline this tension. Integrated approaches are needed to address these challenges. Through Desire, the site has been focusing on enabling the residents to take ownership and influence how the neighbourhood is shaped in the coming decades. In a collaborative effort between The Beach, Samenwonen-Samenleven and the residents, a new approach was initiated for designing locally and identifying structures for unifying residents' needs and dreams into concrete actions. Through these efforts, a structure was identified for bringing the residents' ideas and ambitions to life. Referred to as 'design & do' groups (in short ODGs, which in Dutch means 'Ontwerp en Doe Groep'), this concept represents such an approach. The ODGs are run as small businesses, and the citizens execute their plans to benefit their neighbourhood, collaborating with the site representatives to bring their input to the attention of formal authorities such as the municipality and social housing companies.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Wildemanbuurt through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

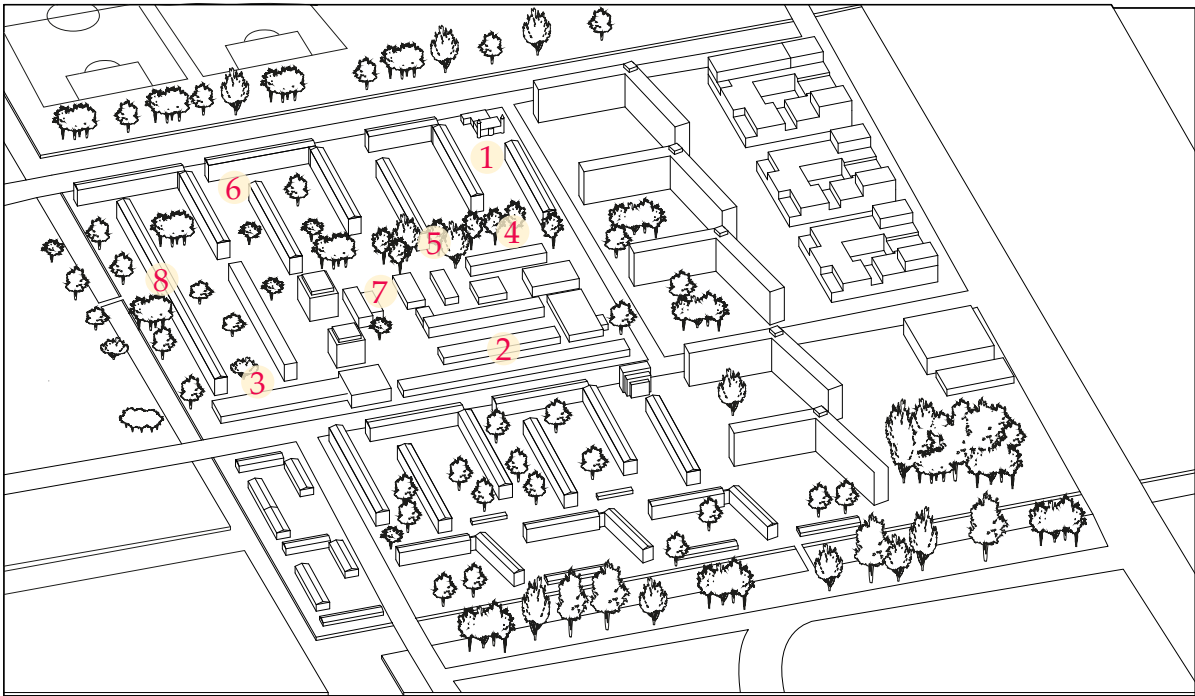


Figure 2: Wildemanbuurt, Amsterdam, The Netherlands





1: Spatiality



2: materiality



3: Temporality



4: Soundscape



5: Activities



6: Demarcations



7: Memories



8: Movements

The Wildemanbuurt neighbourhood is nestled between the channels in the middle of the district of Osdorp in Western Amsterdam. It is a post-war social housing neighbourhood built in the 1950s. The buildings mark spaces, and the tree canopies covering the street create interesting, green spaces to walk along. These green spaces are also important for understanding the soundscape: the leaves rattle in the wind, and birds sing between the branches. Occasionally, a duck will quack along the channels. Walking between the buildings, one will notice that many local green spaces are fenced off, creating demarcations and no-go zones. The building appears old and, in some places, tired. However, the warm colour of red bricks is the dominating colour. When moving along these buildings, they contain much history. The buildings contain signs of change and use of different needs over time, with old door entrances and

windows sealed with new brickwork. The area is also under reconstruction, creating some temporal changes that will eventually change, but it appears as a construction ground between the buildings. However, some of the original features will stay the same, as both the building of The Beach (called Garage Notweg) and Perron 32 have been marked as cultural heritage and are thus protected.

Many activities are happening around the site, particularly at The Beach and the local school, IKC Het Talent. Playgrounds and a sports field are also available on the site, creating play and sports activities possibilities. Station Wildeman is a gathering place for local activities. This space also contains many memories, as it used to be the old school in the neighbourhood. Much movement occurs on the site, with sporadic car engines running by or the locals strolling and chatting.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Will your initiative still be here in 20 years? The question is the last one during our three-day visit to the Wildemanbuurt neighbourhood. Without hesitation, Mo (Mohamed) from the YOU (Young Osdorp United) collective that runs the Design and Do group 'Peaceful Neighbourhood' looks me in the eyes and says: "We won't just be here. We'll be in all of Europe." The confidence and pride is deeply felt stemming from their efforts to establish a locally anchored media lab, where they produce digital content echoed on global digital social media platforms. Wanting originally to focus on safety and achieving a peaceful neighbourhood, the group of youngsters found a way of achieving this vision by creating a creative platform for building new skills and capacities to share and amplify positive narratives of their neighbourhood. With 1200 followers on Instagram, this testifies to an initiative that has impact and potential, geared with the group's potential and talents, to go beyond the green streets in Wildemanbuurt. Their vision requires courage and ambition, as negative forces might catch the attention of the neighbourhood youth before they do.

The digital content and storytelling are outcomes of a commitment to shifting perspectives and establishing connections within and beyond the Wildemanbuurt neighbourhood. For YOU, this has manifested in creating a space where youngsters can connect and grow through shared projects. The emphasis on building connections and nurturing empowerment, along with the ambitions that come with it, runs as a strong current for the citizen-driven Design and Do groups.

While the groups are run as small businesses who execute on their plans, they emerged with support of two local design organisations The Beach and Samenwonen-Samenleven. The two organisations represent a locally anchored approach to design-based bottom-up initiatives and foster ways for the inhabitants of the social housing area to have a voice and representation in political and institutional matters concerning the area. This approach mutually benefits inhabitants, stakeholders, and the design practice. Together, they form a neighbourhood ecology that blurs the boundary of where and when design, situations, expertise, reflection, and doing ends and begins, always being in the process together.



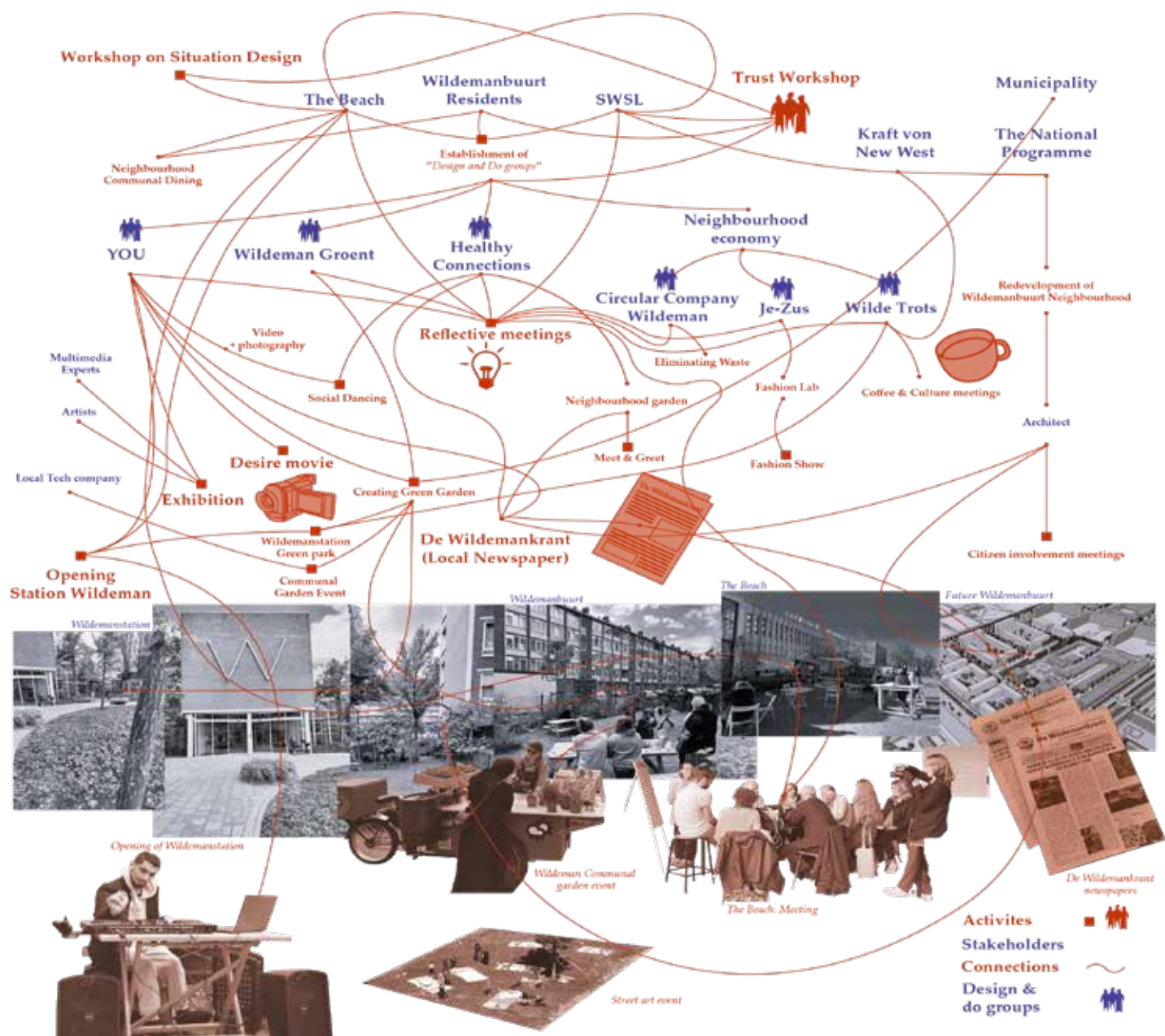


Figure 3: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

The ODGs mentioned in the anecdote represent only one of the resident-driven initiatives (ODGs). Throughout Desire, the formation of groups and topics has evolved, supported by civic design approaches and active facilitation of multiple stakeholders by The Beach and Samenwonen-Samenleven (the site representatives). An integrated approach and location shared by the organisations and neighbourhood form an important anchor for developing a meaningful practice harnessing and nurturing local expertise and engagement. Moreover, this entails identifying ways for input to inform policies and connect with local authorities.

Design and do groups in action

The Desire project was launched by gathering residents to explore issues and form important themes: safety, cleanliness, infrastructure, neighbourhood economy, and green spaces. The ODGs have significantly impacted the neighbourhood through various initiatives such as renovation, waste management, gardening events, promoting a safe environment, and organising community gatherings with food, coffee, dancing and more. Some initiatives are built on preexisting projects, and some have been formed through the Desire project. One thing remains certain – the Desire project created a platform for unifying, connecting, and strengthening initiatives. The ODGs continue evolving as they learn more about each other and their environment, resulting in new collaborations and spin-off initiatives. For instance, the Neighbourhood Economy theme has led to the formation of three groups with

diverse goals, including Circular Company Wildeman, crafting fashion (Je-Zus), and the launching of a coffee truck by the Wild Proud ODG (in Dutch ‘Wilde Trots’). Another group, Peaceful Neighbourhood, aims to engage young people in digital storytelling and production to promote a positive narrative and alternative in the neighbourhood and foster a sense of belonging. And Wildeman Green (in Dutch ‘Wildeman Groen’) works on various urban garden initiatives. A shared dimension of the initiatives is the ambition to strengthen connections between residents and residents-nature. One group promotes well-being (Healthy Connections) through initiatives such as shared breakfasts with mindfulness activities and launching a local newspaper to amplify and share activities and matters of concern related to the neighbourhood.

Designing trusting, meaningful interactions and situations

Designing trusting and meaningful interactions in a complex landscape is crucial for fostering a supportive and flexible work environment. This involves creating an atmosphere of togetherness and care through various activities and situations, both small and large, where awareness and relationships can be strengthened. Site representatives have collaborated and evolved their design practice to balance facilitation and intervention and offer practical co-designing tools and workshops to support the residents’ needs. These design acts are also felt in small but significant details. It is important to create an environment where people feel welcome, for

example, by leaving the door open to The Beach's location in Garage Notweg, so groups of women can come in ad hoc and make candles or share food when guests arrive.

Sensing and responding to designing meaningful workshops and offering tools was visible in a workshop focusing on building trust. Recognising a need to reestablish trust and collaboration amongst the groups midway through the project, the workshop aimed at fostering collaboration across multiple viewpoints to create awareness of the multiple co-existing dreams and agendas for the future and decide on follow-up actions. This resulted in a greater appreciation of the many initiatives and diverse ideas and perspectives, creating space for the groups to work on smaller interventions simultaneously. Efforts in Wildemanbuurt demonstrate how lived experience and local engagement can be surfaced, connected, and formed as impactful initiatives.

Practising within this local context forms a design approach that always starts with the needs and energy of the people in the neighbourhood. Practical tools, structures and acts are suggested through a sensitivity towards people and their needs, such as structured brainstorming sessions to develop ideas, roadmaps and scenarios to support the ODG's long-term visions or workshops on the design process. The latter proved to be a valuable reference point for seeing the bigger picture when feeling stuck.

Intertwining stories, dreams and place

The ODGs' visions and dreams are grounded in deep and gripping investment, connections to their neighbourhood, and a desire to enable a preferred future. Throughout the project, they have expressed needs for reflection and wish to be heard, for example, regarding the distribution of funds. In a joint workshop, the groups outlined detailed roadmaps for their visions and collective goals to ensure a thriving neighbourhood, discover each other's uniqueness, and foster connections among themselves. Building on a unified voice, the individual ODGs moved on with their projects. One outcome was supporting a new initiative called Wild Proud, a mobile coffee shop, which demonstrates how a vision can begin with a small intervention and be carried out through entrepreneurial spirit and social meaning. The founder's motivation stems from wishing to "flip the pattern" and address a sense of disconnect with themselves, their community, and society. By democratically redistributing funds, Wild Proud, became a physical manifestation in the neighbourhood, creating opportunities for new connections and breaking down barriers across perspectives. Starting with brewing coffee and facilitating conversations, the initiative aims to show that that energy can be generated through action. By engaging in creative practices and getting involved, the founder believes that new capabilities can be developed to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. The intended outcome and vision are clear: in the future, people will greet each other, know their neighbours, and not feel lonely, and spaces exist for

unplanned connections to emerge.

The physical traces and manifestations in the neighbourhood connected to the ODGs go beyond temporary constellations but also entail a community garden named after a resident's son or other green spaces that are cared for, reflecting the intertwined nature of actions, experiences and stories and place.

Collaborating and bridging local engagement expertise with policies and local authorities

The ODG's activities have directly impacted the local community. It features more green spaces and gardens and hosts and supports public events for curious attendees. There is a growing sense of trust and awareness of each other's skills and activities, and people flourish alongside each other. Strengthening the neighbourhood is increasingly important, especially considering upcoming changes in the area. As the neighbourhood undergoes transformative changes, ensuring community unity is an area of concern and finding ways to ensure coherence. There is hope that the resident-led initiatives, such as preserving green spaces, can successfully influence and support decision-makers in the neighbourhood's future. Experiences have already testified to synergistic collaborations; for example, activities led by Wildeman Green ODG who work on green spaces and gardens ensured that a spot in front of the Station Wildeman building became a green space instead of hard stones through collaborating with the municipality. This ODG is also designing the garden near Perron 32 and the local school, IKC

Het Talent, together with multiple stakeholders such as elementary school children, residents from Perron 32, the social housing company and Samenwonen-Samenleven.

Residents have been approached by local authorities who showed interest in integrating bottom-up methods to harness local know-how and expertise when including and involving neighbourhoods that might be challenging to reach due to a lack of trust. A continuous effort for the site representatives lies in navigating political layers and connecting residents' input with informal platforms of civic initiatives like 'Kracht van Nieuw-West', which aims at bridging the gap between top-down policies and long-term transformation plans (the National Programme) with civic engagement and input from multiple neighbourhoods. Through Desire, a gap between policy and practice was bridged as the ODGs in the Wildeman neighbourhood were connected with a Community Wealth policy and National Programme Nieuw West (see <https://www.samennieuw-west.nl/over-ons/>). One example of this, is Circular Wildeman who introduced their idea and interest in waste management to the municipality, and as a result, the ODG can now count on their support to develop their business plan and realising a 9-month pilot project.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire have amounted to four key foci to enable the dreams and shared vision of a thriving neighbourhood in Wildemanbuurt. They concern the ways of working of the ODGs, defining a new model for designing with and in a local context, and how such efforts might be leveraged and connected to policies, plans and authorities.

A new model for designing with people in a local context. The various initiatives build on recognising the value of local knowledge and expertise. Reflecting on the efforts, the methodology entails a focus on working with people as experts in their own living spaces. To guide this process, a series of interconnected steps outlines how resident-led initiatives can emerge. It includes both 1) Discovering knowledge and building connections through in-depth discussions, 2) Identifying how to utilise existing expertise together, 3) Connecting expertise across different areas, 4) Developing and nurturing expertise by making situations for experiences to unfold through activities and gatherings, and 5) Connecting initiatives, possibly with external entities beyond the neighbourhood. This way of designing with the neighbourhood entails paying attention to details and stimulating people creatively by inspiring them to think of new options and perspectives, and how they might inspire more people. Through Desire, a movement towards seeing citizens as co-designers and co-owners of community wealth has been initiated, stimulating dialogues around values underlying a just and inclusive society.

Ecological thinking and enabling creative force through trust-building. The abovementioned process is built on a shared set of values to stimulate people creatively, inspire, uplift, amplify, and support their hopes and dreams, as well as offer meaningful exchange with external agendas. The facilitation and deep discussions that the site representatives do daily entail balancing and providing

structure with openness and flexibility. The efforts spent nurturing moments for discovering and connecting involve dedicated efforts in building trust and enabling a space where interactions can unfold – these visible and invisible aspects of designing can, in this case, become the mycelium of a thriving community. An ecological way of thinking of the neighbourhood honours the entanglements and complexities of neighbourhood dynamics.

Building communities of practice to ignite stakeholders and enable meaningful ways of working.

The partnership between the site representatives has shown the strength of collaboration through connecting practice, bottom-up initiatives, authorities, and decision-makers. Combining expertise and approaches to bridge resident-led initiatives with the system. The ODGs' work within a design process characterised by flexibility, setting realistic goals and focusing on incremental steps toward long-term visions, starting small and working organically, and not overcommitting by making promises that cannot be kept. In the future, the site representatives want to offer a firm basis for the residents to keep their work going, connecting, and growing. The remarkable green spaces might be pressured in the future, but there is hope to find ways for the ODGs to leverage their initiatives and shape the neighbourhood's future. Moreover, the hope is that more youngsters can be involved early on and find ways for the youth to play a role, which is crucial for envisioning a thriving future neighbourhood.



Figure 4: Imaginary vision of the future Wildermanbuurt

ZIEPJU

ZIEPJU, RIGA, LATVIA

From 'Sleeping Buildings' to Empowered Communities of Tomorrow

*Designing at the intersection of legacy, procurement,
and citizen ownership*



Figure 5: Ziepju, Riga, Latvia

"WHEN THIS BUILDING WAS BUILT, THERE WAS NO USER INVOLVEMENT. NOBODY WAS ASKED WHAT OR HOW THEY WOULD LIKE IT TO BE. THIS TIME WHEN WE DO IT IN LATVIA, WITH NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS PROJECT AND VALUES, WE WANT TO PUT USER ENGAGEMENT IN THE HEART OF THE PROJECT"

- RUDIS RUBENIS, RIGA CITY COUNCIL

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

Ziepju Street 11 and 13 are two social housing buildings in Ziepniekkalns, a suburban district of Riga City. Ziepju 11 and 13 and their shared courtyard are being reinvented as a social housing area with a social service centre and various related functions. 'Sleeping buildings' refers to a saying about the role of people's houses in Riga. It links to legacies of soviet housing planning, characterised as zones where buildings were labelled according to their function, such as work or simply sleeping. The specific buildings at Ziepju Street represent a social housing complex. Two buildings standing opposite each other appear similar, representing a typology of a locally dominant soviet style residential modernist architecture.

One building was renovated 20 years ago and houses elderly people. The other is abandoned and in dire need of restoration. The building will serve as a pilot case for the municipality to illustrate circularity, biodiversity, aesthetics, and belonging principles. A newly established design team in the

municipality is working to experiment with how the building's courtyard might be transformed for existing and future inhabitants as a thriving space for a diverse community. Such ambitions target both a concrete lived experience of existing inhabitants and ways for involving these, along with future inhabitants, in participatory processes to have a say in the design and implementation of principles of the outdoor space.

The pathway to opening the social housing transformation processes to citizens' engagement in design processes has a dual focus, where the new design team is at one hand, reaching out and establishing relations with existing and future residents from social housing areas, while

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Ziepju through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

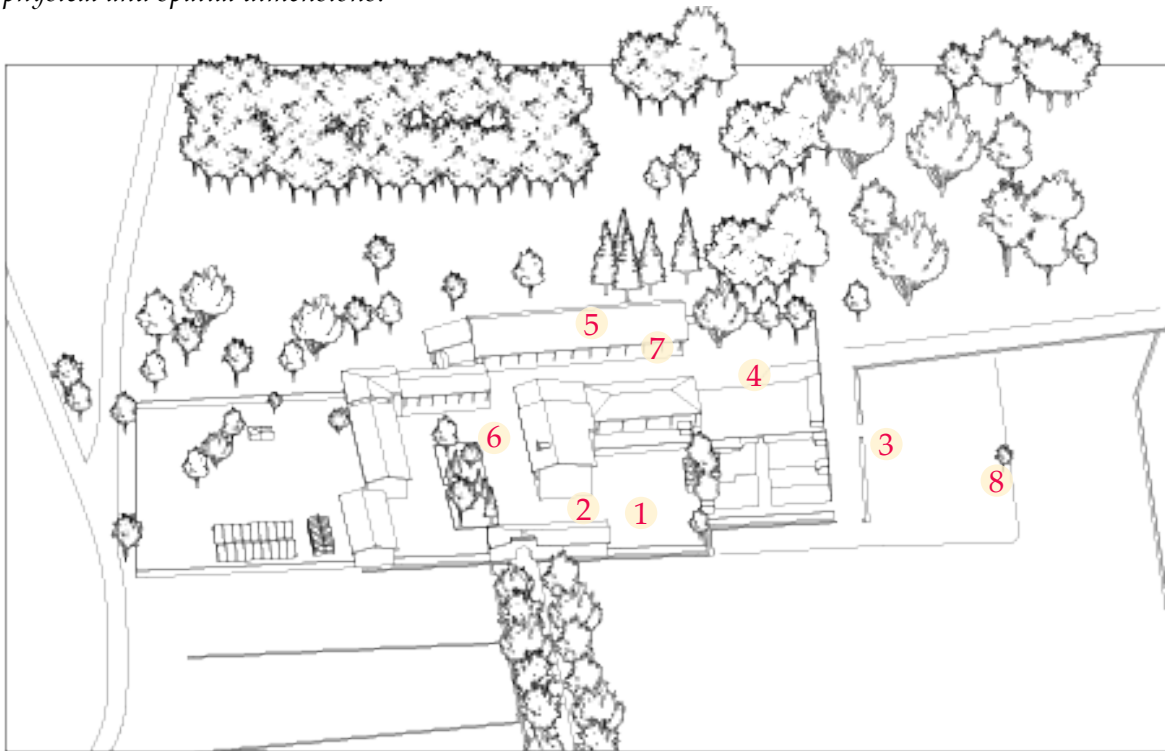


Figure 6: Ziepju, Riga, Latvia





1: Activity



2: Memories



3: Materiality



4: Spatiality



5: Temporality



6: Demarcations



7: Materials



8: Soundscape

Different physical movements are witnessed in the area: cars passing by the larger roads surrounding the site, and pedestrians are walking around the buildings. The green space between the buildings can be seen as a **hub for human and non-human movements**.

The derelict building is adorned with signage from different times: a "sauna/bars" sign (possible) pointing to one of the building's previous functions. **The space is taken possession** of by reclaiming the building as a canvas for graffiti.

The contrast in **materials gives variance and character** - corrugated metal sheets of varying colors against the brickwork.

The **demarcations between the built and natural environments are well-defined**. This distinction is

supported by the architecture, where the original apartments are raised well above the green space, and the ground-level walls offer little interaction between the interior and exterior spaces.

Time has taken its toll on the uninhabited building, as witnessed in its material makeup. **The passage of time is apparent**, for instance, as broken windows or external plaster eroding.

Nature has slowly but surely begun to **spread across the previously exclusively human territories** in and around the buildings

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



A sense of excited anticipation and hesitation is present at the site of Ziepju in August 2023. Here, a new design team from the municipality of Riga is preparing for a citizen workshop, inviting existing and future residents of the social housing area into the design process regarding the future of its courtyard. Priorities must be made, and the framing and focus of the involvement are of significance; amongst two residential buildings where the workshop are taking place dwells lush moss and trees, trees taller than the buildings, safekeeping the courtyard's green grass with shadow and muffling the noisy street with cars. An older lady with a characteristic look peeks out of her window from the first floor, carefully following the designers as they set up tents, projectors, and tables with materials. She joins us and takes a walk around the area with her rabbit. At the time of the workshop, the peaceful and quiet courtyard (which children from the nearby daycare center use for playing) is a temporary community space for gathering a mix of people. The workshop starts with a tour around the empty building, discussing the courtyard, its potential, and areas of improvement. Someone is sad that her flower bulbs were stolen, bringing issues of safety forward. "I've never been here before," another resident says as we walked on the back side of Ziepju 11. Carefully listening and taking notes, people express their concerns. As we return to the tent, people use maps and props to build a future courtyard focusing on their needs and wishes. Children run around the tables, parents engage in conversations, and the elders have dressed up for the occasion. There is a mixed atmosphere of seriousness and playfulness, and many have been anticipating this event. Taking turns, each group presents to each other, bringing forth a democratic sense of listening and sharing as groups express wishes to move garbage cans closer to the houses to avoid slipping on the asphalt during winter, benches for sitting and conversing, and more. The activity forms the foundation of a new process for the designers in the municipality, one that invites co-creation with citizens to empower them as the municipality renovates the buildings. The vitality, connection, and conversation in the eyesight of the citizens will be an example of how citizens, local stakeholders, and procurement processes can thrive, building on cross-disciplinary synergy within the municipality and a desire to foster senses of belonging, biodiversity, aesthetics, and movement. The impressions from the workshop at the Ziepju site, animated with knowledge from informal conversations with the site representatives in Riga municipality, represent one point in time, one activity with one group of residents.

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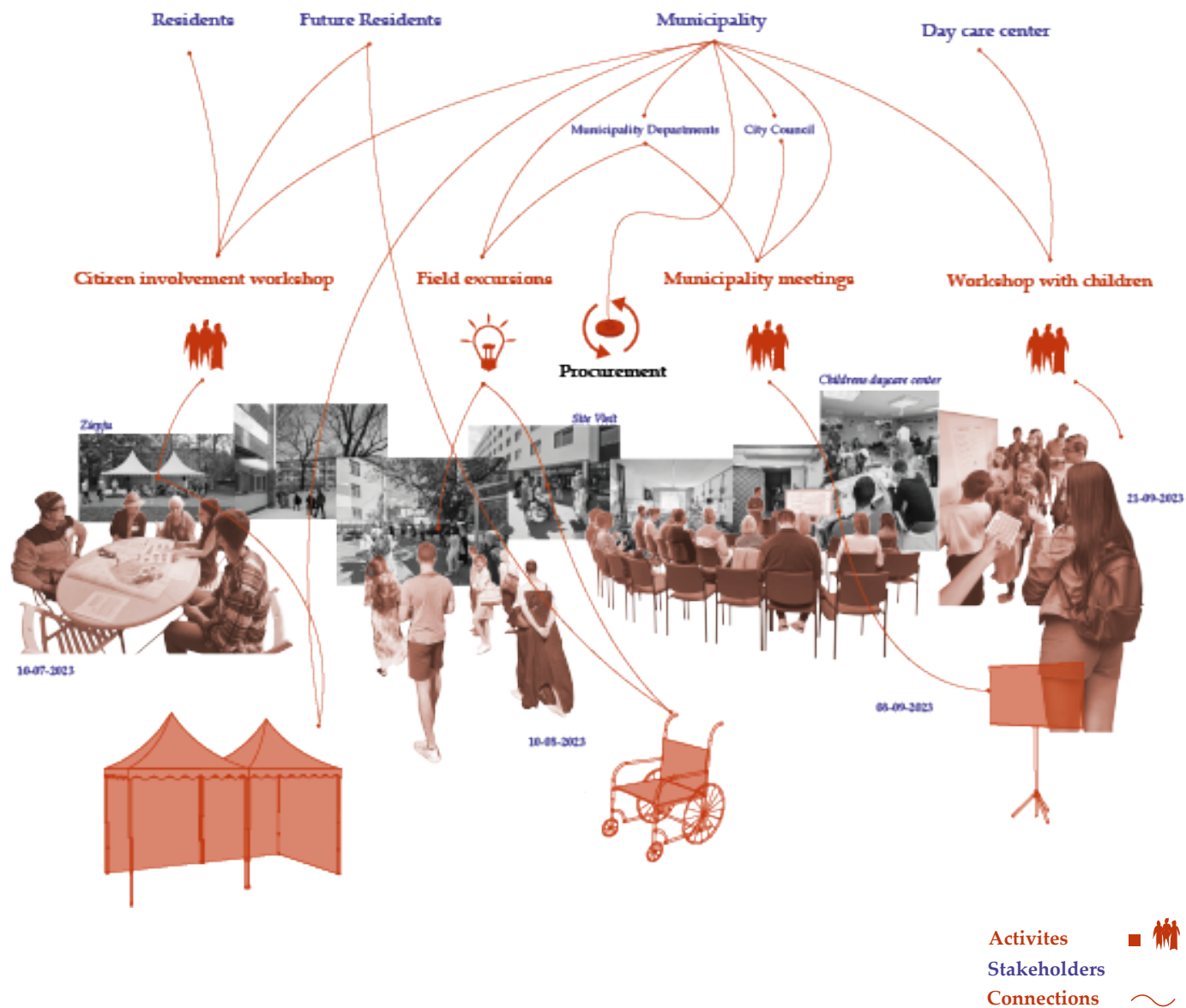


Figure 7: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

The impressions from the workshop at the Ziepju site, animated with knowledge from informal conversations with the site representatives in Riga municipality, represent one point in time, one activity with one group of residents.

Bringing in a participatory approach

The activities and processes initiated do, however, go beyond involving and engaging with residents. In the building of Ziepju, there is a children's day-care centre, which was invited to share its vision for Ziepju's future courtyard. The concepts and ideas captured in the co-creation workshops will be mapped into opportunities that can and should feed into subsequent design phases. This is easier said than done, as participatory design processes within social housing are new to the municipality and the citizens. Building trust and relationships is a key concern for the municipality. Having a dedicated person working within the neighbourhood to listen, explain, translate, set expectations, and invite residents into the workshops was crucial pre-workshop activities to ensure interest and participation.

Reimagining processes for social housing with citizens' involvement

The efforts to work with participatory processes have also sparked an opportunity to reimage and assess the municipality's internal processes, norms, and approaches for social housing. While multiple

participatory urban design projects sprout in Riga, focusing on repurposing buildings and spaces to nurture communal wellbeing (for example, urban gardens at Sporta Pils or Free Riga), there was a need to look within internal social housing processes in the municipality. This includes facilitating discussions across municipality departments to discuss the social housing services and bring together layers and stakeholders to broaden the debate on the current situation (with long waiting lines and low user participation) and identify areas of improvement and how user involvement could be nurtured. To kickstart this process, multiple field excursions provided moments for the municipal department, which owns and maintains the buildings, and the city's council to move out of the office and experience the actual social housing situation.

Efforts to reimagine and empower social housing processes and question existing structures also involve looking into processes that plan and envision the future of social housing buildings. An ongoing procurement process has as such been a key focus area, where ongoing research projects focusing on the circular economy, renovations, and materials must be balanced with the design of the buildings' outdoor spaces, going beyond technical expertise and architectural aspects also to include perspectives and ideas designed by the inhabitants themselves.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire in Ziepju street has amounted into three key foci important for the realization of an irresistible social housing transformation including questioning internal processes, experimenting with citizens participation and trust-building, and bridging citizen's voice with the procurement and design of Ziepju's outdoor spaces.

Ensuring impact of co-creation activities in procurement and design of outdoor spaces

Ongoing procurement processes focusing on the renovation of Ziepju and the design of the outdoor spaces and courtyard are continuously encouraged to consider perspectives and voices less visible within social housing renovations. This could be facilitated through discussions on aesthetics, potentially across stakeholders (such as designers and the municipality), and eventually, inviting residents to share desired physical structures of buildings. The capacity of the citizens to bring in new ideas, practical focus, and good arguments must be harnessed in future projects.

Bringing co-design to public social housing transformation processes

Communal work and establishing systems to ensure citizens' voices are crucial to nurturing the caretaking of future neighbourhoods and buildings. The municipality aims to establish and experiment with systems that keep good practices running, such as recurring meetings across groups of stakeholders and sharing experiences. Expecta-

tions must be balanced as the municipality navigates the procurement process with ideas designed by residents.

Establishing trust, building new relations, and sharing capacities across and within social housing

Links across communities and institutions have been forged, and residents at the pilot of Ziepju Street now wave to designers from the municipality when they stop by. Trust building is an ongoing process, and the hope is that initiatives will affect people living there in a positive way, to trust each other more, and to spend more time together. Communal work should encourage a culture of using and sharing space and knowledge and establishing relations, and breaking down silos between institution and citizen, as well as within the institution itself.

"The new social building is fully populated with social families, children, and people with disabilities. And all three groups are living simultaneously and independently, but at the same time creating a more united and holistic neighborhood [...] with a few important upgrades such as driving a community together, creating a more livable courtyard with gardens and playgrounds [...]." Emīls Zinkēvičs, Riga City Council, 2024



"Ziepju Street – lively place that has a specific name in the neighborhood, locals know it as a nice little oasis which you can visit time to time or pass through. [...] It has a nice playground and benches to relax. Interesting to see to the seasonal vegetables and flowers changing in the courtyard. People find it interesting to look at this place [...]." Rudis Rubenis, Riga City Council, 2024

Figure 8: Imaginary vision of the urban spaces between social housing in Ziepju.

GADENHAVEGAARD

GADEHAVEGAARD, HØJE-TAASTRUP, DENMARK

**Shaping Social Housing Transformation by Opening
the Door for New Perspectives through Co-Design**

*Visualising and imaging invisible dimensions of the
transformation of a local area to bridge multiple stakeholders.*



Figure 9: Gadehavegaard, Høje-Taastrup, Denmark

"AT GADEHAVEGAARD, OUR GOAL WAS TO MEANINGFULLY INVOLVE 8TH GRADERS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD BY EQUIPPING THEM WITH THE DESIGN TOOLS THAT ARCHITECTS USE EVERY DAY. THIS APPROACH ALLOWED THE STUDENTS TO EXPRESS THEIR NEEDS AND DESIRES THROUGH PROJECTS THAT BECAME PLATFORMS FOR DISCUSSING IDEAS WITH THE WIDER GADEHAVEGAARD COMMUNITY"

- ALBERTO RONCELLI, GXN

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

A large housing area, Gadehavegaard, is undergoing a major transformation. The transformation of the area is decided by Danish law, which aims to create a more diverse range of residents in certain geographic areas, known as the ghetto law. By 2030, the social housing will be reduced from 100% to 40%, a transformation that includes the demolition of 260 apartments, the sale of 75 apartments to private developers, the merging of 100 houses with another 100 houses, the transformation of 105 small apartments into student housing, the development of 100 private houses, 54 social housing homes for elderly people and the renovation of 551 existing apartments.

Amidst the significant changes, two large parking lots and a two-lane road will be changed into a new park area covering 30.000 m². The transformation was thus not chosen by its residents, who also

count vulnerable groups and the site representatives can feel this in their efforts to include citizens' perspectives. One concern of residents is related to the impact that the transformation will have on their future living conditions and situation.

In Desire, the focus is to experiment with the involvement of residents and citizens in developing a future green space where there today is a huge parking lot—focusing on ensuring a flourishing local biodiversity and generating ideas for recycling material from demolished buildings. Principles of biodiversity and circularity were put at the forefront of designing, facilitating, organising, and planning activities to achieve their ambitions driven by an assumption that, if they achieved to frame activities within such a frame, other principles would “follow along” as an indirect outcome of the participatory process.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Gadehavegaard through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

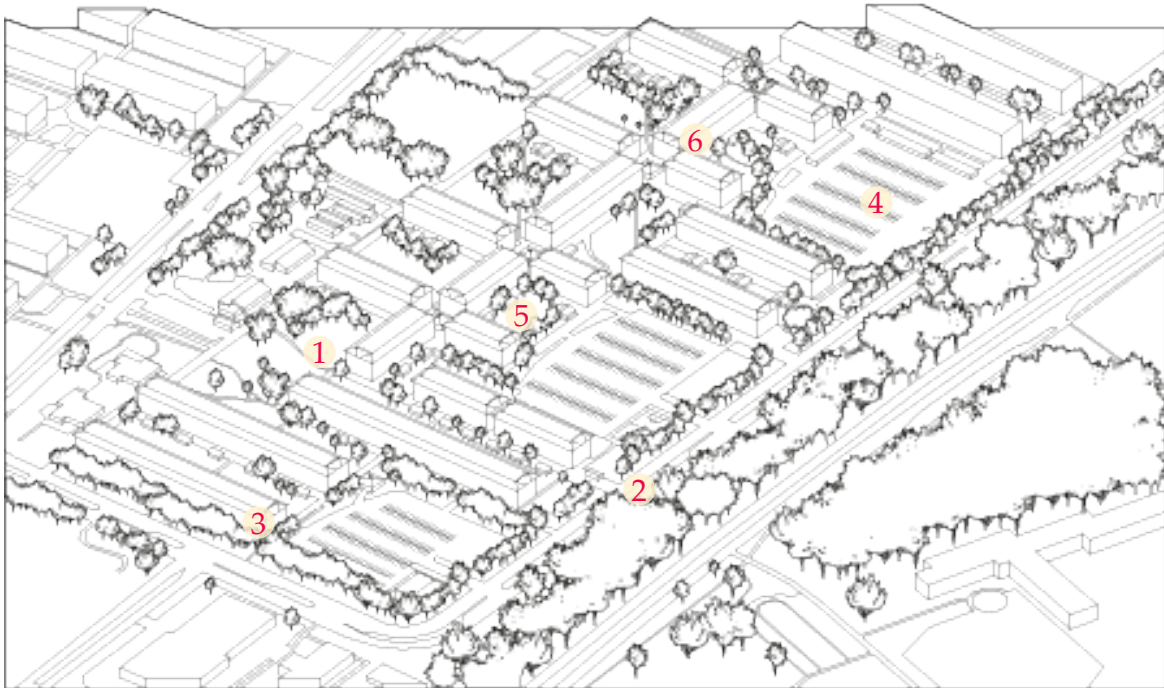


Figure 10: Gadehavegaard, Høje-Taastrup, Denmark



1: Materiality



2: Movement



3: Soundscape



4: Spatiality



5: Demarcations



6: Activities



7: Temporality



8: Memories

The site of Gadehavegaard is characterised by a juxtaposition of materialities; the hard and cold surfaces of concrete walls against the softness of the foliage and grass covered terrain. This creates **a rich tapestry of organic and inorganic matter**, as can be seen in the corridors along buildings, or in the communal green spaces surrounded by buildings.

The **topography gives shape to the surrounding areas** by establishing hills, corridors and winding pathways that slow movement and emphasise leisure. This is a contrast to the rectilinear and hierarchical paved walkways between the apartment blocks that provide access to residents. Conversely, the stretches of road surrounding the entire site **establishes a border** prompting little to no interaction with the areas outside. The border region is **characterised by a segmentation** of cars and

pedestrians, the latter of which shares their limited walkways with bicyclists. The open car parks located between apartment blocks are **experienced as a separate environment**, owing to its particular material composition of hard, inorganic surfaces and visible demarcations created by guard rails and garages.

The center of **the site gives way to activities and opportunities to play**, to sit etc. These activities are scaffolded by numerous affordances, but also **appear as islands between buildings**, with little degree of connectivity to each other. Dotted around Gadehavegaard are signs and physical manifestations pointing to potential futures. These **visions of what can be** are thus already embedded in the physical environment, although the exact form of the futures pointed to is in flux.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Creativity, imagination, and awe fills the space of the library of Ole Rømer School on an early Friday morning in September 2022. More than 30 8th-grade youngsters are buzzing and giggling, waiting to present their models envisioning a future green park of their residential area: Gadehavegaard. Powered by stellar facilitation from teachers and expert organizations the audience (counting representatives from municipalities, parents, the mayor, social housing companies and more) are invited into a dialogue with the pupils at the center who unlocks their ideas and materializations framed through principles of circularity and biodiversity. The youngsters were guided through an intensive two-week design sprint entrusted with giving their perspective on the area's transformation. Their designs spark and mediate conversations amongst multiple perspectives, making abstract notions of transformation concrete, tangible, playful, and immersive. The models enable speculation and tinkering, grounded in hands-on material of the area. The outcome is manifold: to engage future generation youngsters in the transformation that will impact current and future residents, to experiment with new processes in future tendering processes through participation and use of locally developed design principles

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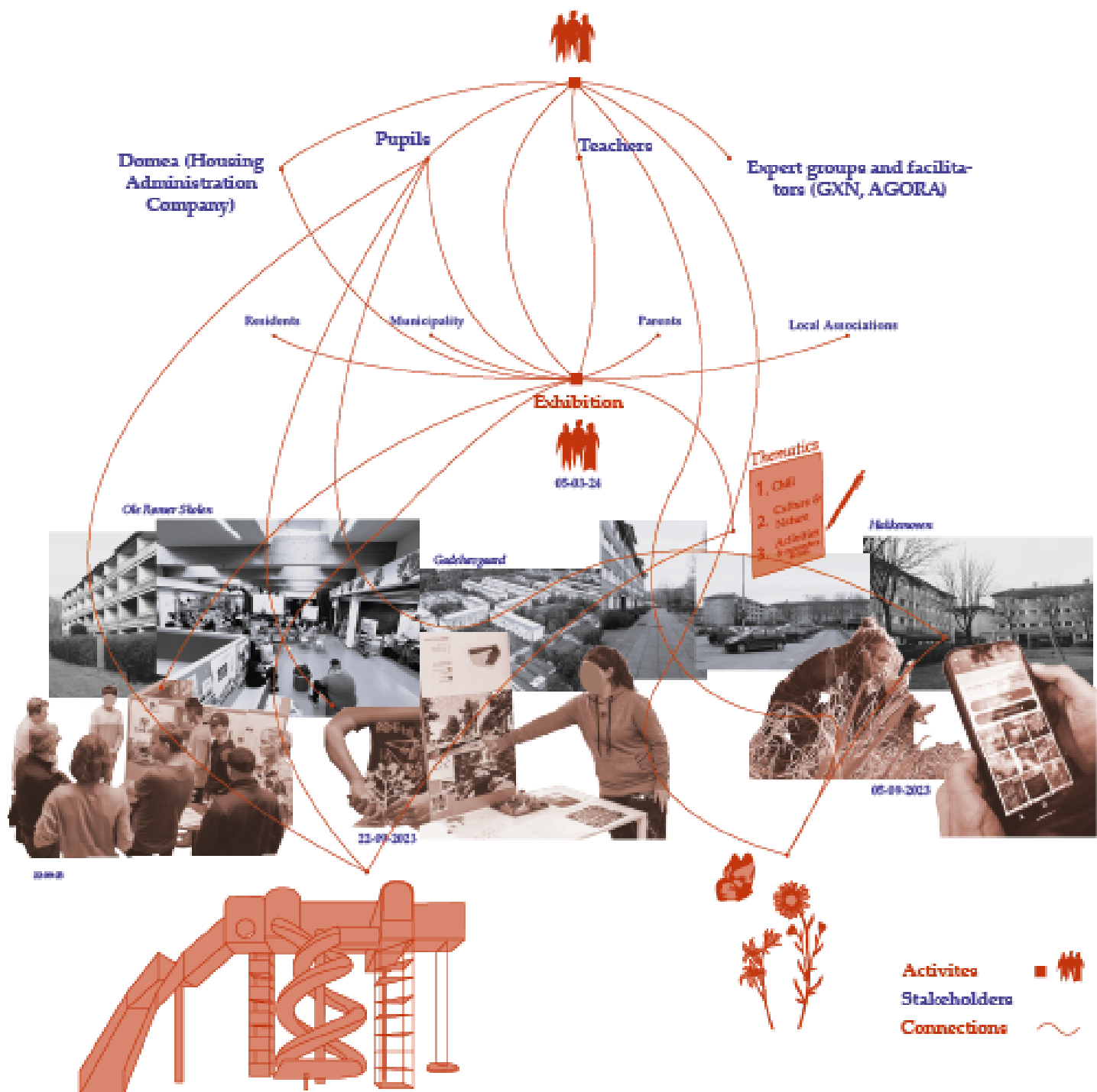


Figure 11: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

Building relationships with youngsters

Inviting pupils from Ole Rømer school into the design process informs values that the site in Gadehavegaard wants to ripple through the subsequent co-design process of transforming the social housing area and future park. The ideas proposed by the pupils provided material and input to support ideation, development of locally anchored principles, and an invitation to challenge participation in the transformation and tendering process. Forming locally grounded design principles will hopefully influence and guide the tendering process, resulting in a future park area where the input of the local citizens is evident. Such ambitions might potentially impact power structures, as they are being invited into a room where their perspectives and voices might not typically be represented through “full involvement,” i.e., ensure that the perspectives of the pupils are taken seriously in the transformation process and that they have a say throughout. This also means reaching residents whose voices are not typically represented in the touchpoints that the site representatives have with the residents, e.g., the parents of the pupils. Efforts have, as such, also focused on experimenting with how the parent’s perspectives could be unfolded in the process and facilitating dialogues in ways where new perspectives could be safely shared. This resulted in inviting them to an exhibition of the pupils’ ideas, which we unfold in the next section.

Exhibiting ideas and forming design principles to guide future processes

The pupils’ ideas formed the anchor point to facilitate and inspire such discussions. An exhibition with their ideas and materialisations has framed a

testing ground for developing local design principles that can be utilised in subsequent participatory design steps in the tender process.

Nearly five months after the two-week engagement with the pupils, a mixed group of participants were gathered again in the library at Ole Rømer school. During a late afternoon in the early days of Spring 2024, the pupils hosted an exhibition to present, show, and gather feedback on their ideas for a biodiverse, circular future park area. Around half of the students were present. Orchestrated in collaboration with external facilitators, architects, and teachers, the students welcomed the participants and motivated them to voice their opinions and give feedback on their ideas. The special moment was emphasised by students’ well-prepared presentations and demonstrations, showing both confidence and ownership of the process and ideas.

Since the vibrant and creative engagement, the design ideas have since been synthesised into six design principles which could inform the design of the future park area, e.g. a space to be me and relax or a place for sports, creativity and play. Moreover, in the exhibition, the design principles were further thematised into three zones: chill, activities, and encounters across, as well as nature and culture. Participants were guided through the three zones as students led the conversations, presenting their design solutions and inviting participants to comment, critique and ask questions. During their presentations, they shined with confidence and a sense of empowerment as they discussed their designs and embraced complex topics of biodiversity, fellow species, and upcycled material alongside the actual use of their designs. Site representatives

and participants were impressed by their pride, confidence, and capacities in using and exemplifying the vocabulary introduced through the workshops.

Finding formats for inviting and reaching out

Participants included representatives from the Desire project, Domea, expert facilitators and architects (AGORA and GXN), a landscape architect, teachers, residents from Gadehavegaard, and a representative from Dansk Naturfredningsforening. However, there was one group who was missing: the parents. One indirect goal of the exhibition was the hope and assumption from the site representatives that the exhibition could be a pathway to invite parents into the discussions of the future park area, building on the foundation of the pupils' ideas as mediators of such interactions. Reflecting upon the session, the representatives shared their awareness of the challenge of balancing involvement and representation of different groups and communicating the importance of the future park area. Whether it was due to lack of time, cultural aspects, other priorities, lack of resources, or not having the mental and energy capacity to participate, the parents did not join. Furthermore, it became clear that bringing principles of biodiversity and circularity to a community and communicating its relevance is not straightforward.

Rethinking roles and processes in the next steps

Still, in the subsequent phases there is an ambition to continue testing and sketching how the design principles and design ideas will inform a new co-design tendering process, and to rethink the roles and processes towards how the park will be

sketched, realized, and manifested in the future. A landscape architect thus participated in the exhibition who will be involved in sketching a model for how to include the pupils and design principles into a tendering program, that can unfold details, nuance, and animate how the park is to be envisioned. At the closing part of the exhibition, the landscape architect was asked how it might change his role and approach, having access to the design ideas, principles, many new perspectives, and work that the pupils had carried out. He reflected, that the work carried out in these early stages might help to overcome potential biases and challenge assumptions of how to envision a future biodiverse space.

"AT GADEHAVEGAARD OUR GOAL WAS TO MAKE YOUNG RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE AREA - ITS QUALITY, EXISTING RESSOURCES, AND POTENTIALS - EMERGE IN THE DESIGN PROCESS. WE CALLED THIS PARTICIPATORY ON-SITE RESEARCH BECAUSE WE ALLOW USERS TO COLLECT DATA ON THE AREA THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO THEM. THIS DATA MATERIAL IS NOW LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MATERIAL, THAT ARCHITECTS WILL NEED TO RESPOND TO WHEN PARTICIPATING IN THE COMPETITION FOR THE FUTURE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AREA.
- SARA NARDI, AGORA

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings, reflections, and concrete outputs from the processes initiated in Desire in Gadehavegaard has amounted into four key foci important for the realization of an irresistible social housing transformation. This includes the ambition of testing a new model for co-design in tendering processes, giving youngsters an explicit role and influence, continuously emphasizing the need for a biodiverse park, and making circularity visible in the future landscape.

A new co-design model for future tendering processes: Running participatory processes with citizens has a proven track record. However, the results of these processes are often collected in a flat, text-based list of requirements handed over to architects to be looked into in the tendering process. Building on learnings from Desire, there is an ambition to sketch a new model for how tendering processes are formed, to challenge existing roles and processes, and to destabilise dominant voices. A crucial step in sketching a new way forward has been formulating guiding local design principles based on the youngster's needs and ideas. The design principles will be used as a tool rooted in empirical work to mediate the subsequent design and tendering processes. Another essential new take is to let architects use their architectural skills to test these design guides before the task is sent out for tender. The idea is to supplement the Quantity Surveyor's cost-focused quality assurance with spatial outlining quality assurance. Based on the guidelines and the spatial verification, teams of architects/engineers, etc., will be invited to abide by the principles and identify ways forward for also involving residents in their design process to overcome potential bias and ensure ownership.

Co-design with youngsters to question patterns of power: Inviting young pupils into the process throughout opens a door into rethinking the de-

sign and tendering process. Shaping the park with new perspectives in the co-design process empowers youngsters to make their voices and needs heard and questions existing patterns of power in social housing transformation processes. There is a desire to give youngsters a specific role in the tendering process and invite them to be ambassadors of biodiversity.

Green spaces for wellbeing of humans and non-human life: Nature cannot be separated from the participatory process. There is a desire to reach a point where the relationship between residents and green areas is built on respect, acceptance, and the well-being of multiple life forms. However, this aspect does not come without challenges, which can be tied to context-specific factors and socio-economic dimensions characterising the existing community. Building a community around biodiversity is a continuous effort requiring further dedicated involvement and resources from the site representatives in terms of working hours

Making circularity visible: In the future circularity should be physically manifested in the outdoor space where recycled material will be visible in the park area to make the history, identity, and memory of Gadehavegaard visible.

"What you meet is a kind of special nature, that you don't meet other places [...] the area must signal respect and care for nature." Lisbeth Engelbrecht Jensen, DOMEA, 2024



"The first thing I picture is laughter. You can see the rolling hills with grass and wild flowers, and you can't necessarily see everything, but it is a place where you want to explore." Elsba Hardlei, DOMEA, 2024

Figure 12: Imaginary vision of the green park area in Gadehavegaard in 2050

MIND

MIND, MILAN INNOVATION DISTRICT, ITALY

Opening a Closed Site by Connecting to,
and through Relationships

*Changing perceptions and including new perspectives in a
contrasting landscape to nurture a sense of belonging*



Figure 13: Mind, Milan, Italy

*"MY DESIRE FOR THE FOUR BENCHES,
WE INSTALLED HERE IN MIND, IS THAT
MIND'ERS WILL USE THEM TO SIT IN THE
SUN, START A CONVERSATION AND BE
SOMETHING LIKE A SIGNPOST IN ORDER
TO FEEL SOME KIND OF BELONGING TO
THIS PLACE,"*
FRANCESCO LA LOGGIA, PLUSVALUE

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

As the former site of Expo 2015 hosted in Milan, the innovation district of MIND has already seen transformations in the past decade and continues to evolve. MIND is located on a 100ha plot of land surrounded by major infrastructural lines, including highways and railways. MIND is a public-private partnership between Arexpo and Lendlease, which will develop the district over the next 99 years. Several open plots have been left bare within the site following the dismantling of expo pavilions. At the same time, the remaining structures have been converted to support research, business, and innovation, which are folded into many of the buildings that house, for example, biotech companies. Construction projects in different stages of completion are found throughout the area.

MIND's future-facing perspective is encapsulated by a mission to engage with "the most significant challenges of our time: the environment, health

and well-being, social inclusion" (Mindmilano.it). The mission is linked to Desire and the chosen principles of belonging, movement, and aesthetics. In the section on process and experimentation, we unfold the design concepts and development of an assessment and impact framework and how this ties to their mission.

In Desire, attention has been given to the involvement of internal and external stakeholders to identify and address key concerns, including the lack of community, the use of public spaces, infrastructure, and accessibility. Developing an approach based on the notion of universal design leading to multiple experiences, MIND seeks to activate the concept of beauty to enhance the quality of experiences in public spaces and the well-being of all. Nurturing a sense of belonging is at the heart of these efforts.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of MIND through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

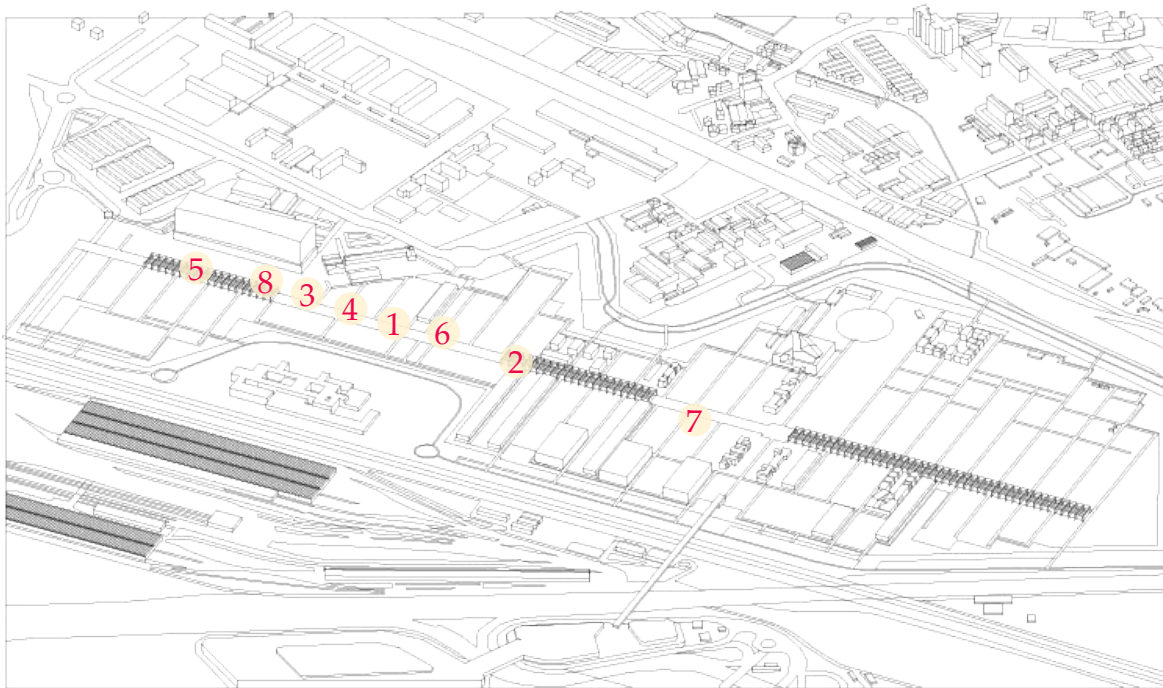
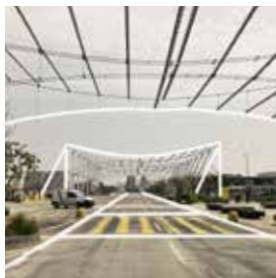


Figure 14: Mind, Milan, Italy



1: Demarcations



2: Spatiality



3: Memories



4: Movement



5: Soundscape



6: Materiality



7: Temporality



8: Activities

MIND appears as a place between “**what it was**” and “**what it is becoming**”. Temporary objects like construction cranes jutting over the horizon, or benches mounted with wheels for ease of transportation stand out against the skeletal structure lining the Decumano as a marker of the site's heritage. The tree nurseries consecrated for preservation are no less significant and serve as tangible memories of the EXPO2015's influence.

Spatial contrasts are found in the **horizontal**ity of the long, broad Decumano on one hand and the verticality of the hospital Galeazzi-Sant' Ambrogio and scores of construction cranes dotting the site on the other hand. The vastness of the site has necessitated transit busses and a host of electric scooters to cover longer distances. Consequently, **the pavement is adorned with markings and signage to guide movements and wayfinding** for

drivers and pedestrians alike. **The linear organization of buildings and open spaces by the Decumano visually segments** the environment, with other demarcations being more physical, including numerous barriers surrounding construction sites. Contrasts are also evident in the material environment, with manmade **structures of concrete and wood** appearing against natural features like waterways and open fields of vegetation.

Despite MIND's location near **hubs of activity and ongoing construction projects**, **noise is less present than anticipated**. Sounds abound in public places like the C1 building, where people can sit and rest by the water's edge. Elsewhere, suggestions of play are found. Yet, outside select pockets, few shaded areas exist, which discourages long-term stay, particularly in the warmest hours of the day.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Dunk, dunk, dunk. On the hard concrete road, a circle of youngsters from Valore Italia is playing football beneath the early, bright sunlight. The sight of people at this time of day contrasts the vast, long road of the Decumano in MIND. Each side of the road is surrounded by a contrasting atmosphere of spaces and shapes: empty spaces, green spaces, dirt spaces, workspaces, construction spaces, and finished buildings, creating a landscape that appears complete yet also one that is emerging in flux, and temporary. A place that is closed, a place that is already open and in use.

Only a few years ago, the former EXPO site was vacant, but now, people, structures, and services are sprouting, starting to give shape and life to Milan's innovation district. How can a community be cultivated while the physical structures emerge to sustain it? How might they foster inclusivity and beauty and nurture a sense of belonging? How will the area connect and synergise between business, education, and innovation while also giving back to its surrounding, existing community?

”

The vibrant scene of being greeted by a group of students enjoying their free time on the Decumano is but a glimpse of the more than 2,000 people who traverse this space daily. Beyond the surface, a rich tapestry of everyday life unfolds, with stakeholders from all walks of life: employees, patients, researchers, students, and medical professionals, all converging in MIND to carry out their daily activities.

Ensuring representation of multiple perspectives

At the heart of MIND's community-building efforts is Plusvalue. Through their initiatives, such as the experimentation in Desire, they connect the relations that could bind the emerging community together. These activities have brought together a diverse mix of existing and future stakeholders to challenge perceptions and ensure a broad range of perspectives on building a thriving community in this area, which is set to welcome many more people and institutions.

MIND focused on the Desire principles of aesthetics, belonging, and movement, promoting reflections on beauty, enhancing the space through aesthetics, and exploring how to nurture a sense of belonging amongst the emerging community. As of now, the site is indeed perceived as a distant destination. Moreover, the ability to move freely has been important to work on in terms of navigation and inclusivity.

Early activities focused on understanding internal stakeholders' perspectives on MIND and invited external stakeholders such as the Association for Blind People to give input on inclusivity and the potential of the place. Inviting such groups

to explore topics of inclusivity and accessibility of MIND led to the concept of MIND4all and the adoption of a universal design approach. Insights have been generated through three main activities: 1) interviews with key stakeholders to ensure their buy-in on the chosen principles and map future activities. 2) a survey was used to identify opportunities with internal stakeholders, and 3) focus group workshops with experts helped explore the themes of focus at various levels. Insights highlighted from these efforts included concerns about the lack of community, physical infrastructure to provide shade and gathering areas, and, lastly, wayfinding. The last part proved challenging in accessing the mobility providers' plans.

Students were activated through a workshop to explore how they perceived the space and their desires for the future. The enriching workshop crafted postcards to show how MIND is expected to be in 2050. The intriguing ideas from the students will potentially influence the direction of the development of the space for its future and harness their perspectives. Envisioning a desired state, inspiring keywords such as dynamic, safe, welcoming, empathy, creativity, and uniqueness of the place, as well as valorising historical elements, were brought up, to name a few.

Beauty as a catalyst for temporary interventions

In Desire, the broad concept of beauty has been a catalyst for the efforts in MIND, bringing together people and places, and a wish to make the large area accessible and feel like a destination – a place where one can nurture and initiate connections with others. MIND has been dedicating efforts to exploring how physical interventions in the area might be a way of responding to some of the insights gained and tie together the foci of aesthetics, belonging, and movement. Motivated by ensuring an interdisciplinary approach, an artist was invited to design a series of benches on the Decumano. This is both to ensure a physical structure could support people in staying longer, socialising, sharing knowledge, and conversing.

The temporary benches on the Decumano are physical structures that invite a human scale to the area. The potential impact of these temporary structures in the public space is part of a wider ambition to test and develop approaches for impact assessment. The benches are being monitored to see if they achieve the intended outcome. The data and knowledge obtained will help MIND strategise and inform future plans. Constructing an assessment measuring framework parallel to the experimentation can support MIND's strategic decisions, e.g., about governance and funding, and benefit other urban transformations working with temporary structures. The tool, 'Beauty4ALL', developed in collaboration with Politecnico of Milan's Department of Design, is applicable in urban contexts characterised by temporary nature and can help assess and monitor changes in public over time. In MIND, examples of outcome indicators to measure changes in relation to the benches could

be monitored by, for example, the percentage of new visitors compared to the total number of visitors, who, on their first visit, say that they felt welcome and understood the directions needed to find their way around.

The processes initiated have been achieved by balancing and influencing the multiple agendas at stake when inviting key stakeholders onto the journey toward a socially meaningful environment. This entailed skilfully aligning aspirations with corporate objectives.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire in MIND have amounted to three foci important for the realisation of irresistible community-building and urban regeneration of the area: the development of the place's identity, working with aesthetics and the arts, and exploring ways of enabling movement for the diverse groups of stakeholders and potentially also for the community outside of MIND.

Making beautiful interventions and monitoring their impact through the Beauty4all-model

The broader concept of beauty will be used at various levels, both as a prompt for reflection for its community members, but also as an opportunity to explore how physical interventions might enhance the space, for example, through temporary installations of benches. This signpost is dedicated to experimenting with ways of making the space livable for its human inhabitants as the large-scale site develops. Ensuring a robust foundation for measuring if they are on track is important to strategise for future initiatives. The tool, 'Beauty4all', informs the ambitions of continuing to experiment and set up the right outcome indicators to assess how decisions and efforts have an impact on achieving goals of beauty and inclusivity. The model was developed as a tool to assess and monitor changes in public spaces over time.

Gradually cultivating a sense of belonging and identity

Strategies to foster a sense of belonging include deStrategies to foster a sense of belonging include designing spaces that are easy to navigate, fostering familiarity and comfort, and cultivating a culture where every individual feels genuinely heard and valued. The community of MIND is emerging, and it is important to ensure that voices from those who are already there are captured and used to

inform strategies concerned with the future of the place. The ambition is to continue exploring how the community identifies with the place but also to cultivate the identity of the place itself creating a sense of belonging. Moreover, their experimental approach will continue to generate and build on the valuable insights from, e.g., collaborating with existing students and harnessing their intriguing ideas in the development of the space.

Pushing boundaries of what it means to 'move freely' through universal design approaches

MIND has, through Desire, explored various approaches to design in ways that would foster the ability to move freely, ensuring accessibility and inclusion. A universal design approach will be leveraged to create experiences of accessibility through visitors' journeys. The 'Decumano' is a key anchor point for leveraging such ambitions. The benches installed on the Decumano ensure a data-driven approach that will shape future efforts where their impact is monitored in the short term. Future physical installations will touch upon key areas such as aesthetics and purposeful spaces with shade, and opportunities for resting and social gatherings. Identifying and building temporary interventions in urban space could potentially have an impactful effect on the individual human experience in contrast to being in the space.

"In 15 years, MIND will be one of the greenest areas in Milan. 20,000 students will come to study here by public transport; there will be no cars. I also imagine the site as a giant test bed for new technologies. Considering that it will be a very green place, there will be a lot of experiments on plants and agriculture next to the buildings that will house the companies. I imagine there will be spaces to have meetings outdoors, using as little indoor space as possible." Francesco La Loggia, PlusValue, 2024



Figure 16: Imaginary vision of a future urban space in MIND

KALUNDBORG CIRCULAR CAMPUS

KALUNDBORG CIRCULAR CAMPUS, KALUNDBORG, DENMARK

Designing with Friction to Situate Interventions in Place

*Initiating dynamics to unlock synergies across industry,
education, and socio-cultural life*



Figure 17: Kalundborg Cambus, Kalundborg, Denmark

"IN OUR LEARNING JOURNEY POWER OF PLACE, THE TEAM MAPPED THE STORY OF KALUNDBORG. WHAT EMERGED WAS A STORY OF ONGOING VALUE EXTRACTION IN WHICH ONLY SOME STAKEHOLDERS OF KALUNDBORG PARTICIPATED AND IN WHICH NATURE DID NOT FEATURE AT ALL. [...] A FOUNDATIONAL QUESTION BECAME: HOW COULD THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROYAL DANISH ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL BE A CATALYST FOR WHOLENESS? OUR ROLE WAS TO HELP REVEAL THIS STORY TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND SHAPE A PATHWAY OF INTERVENTIONS AND EXPERIMENTS THAT WOULD CATALYSE WHOLENESS, ONE OF WHICH WAS TO SUPPORT THE FORMATION OF A FIELD OF ENERGY WHICH BECAME AN ACTIVE CITIZEN TEAM, THE PHOENIX GROUP. BELONGING WAS KEY."

- JENNY ANDERSSON, THE REALLY REGENERATIVE CENTRE

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

The prospect of a future Circular Campus has set things in motion in the city of Kalundborg. Not only has the campus become home to a newly established bachelor's education provided by the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, but there is also hope that it will spark further interactions between the public, education, and industry. The arrival of the new campus started in 2021 with the establishment of the University College Absalon and the Helix Lab in 2022 in collaboration with the Technical University of Denmark. With the arrival of the new architectural education in 2023 came a wish to explore the perception of what a campus could be and how the initiative might be an opportunity to involve citizens' perspectives. The topic of location is central to the future development of the campus, as is the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, the local municipal government, industry, the University of Copenhagen, the Technical University of Denmark, other educational institutions, and citizens.

Kalundborg is home to Kalundborg Symbiosis, an industrial symbiosis with a circular approach to production, composed of public organisations and local companies. Discussions of the city and its development are coupled with the context of the surrounding biotech industry. Tapping into an industrialised vocabulary of "injection"/"extraction," one finds a host of different

streams going through, in and out of Kalundborg - of matter and energy, as well as people and ideas. Potentials for exchange and mutual gain present themselves, but also the risk of drain or exploitation of these streams. In calling attention to Kalundborg's socio-cultural development, there is a wish to impact the role of citizens' perspective in the future. Herein lies a potential to harness the future Kalundborg Campus as a catalyst for positive change and possibly transform discursive matter so that the campus can find its own anchor from where it can direct and move discourse and people back to Kalundborg.

Through Desire, the site representatives have showcased and experimented with paving the way for doing things differently. At the same time, the project seeks to tap into and draw inspiration from established symbiotic relations to collaborate and share knowledge with multiple stakeholders, including the municipality and biotech industry. From a broader perspective, the project concerns the urban development of Kalundborg, touching upon topics such as housing, cultural life, and placemaking, which was supported through the Power of Place initiative conducted by the Really Regenerative Center. In the process, Kalundborg has seen the formation of the citizen-driven Phoenix Group, from which principles of future development have emerged.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Kalundborg Circular Campus through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

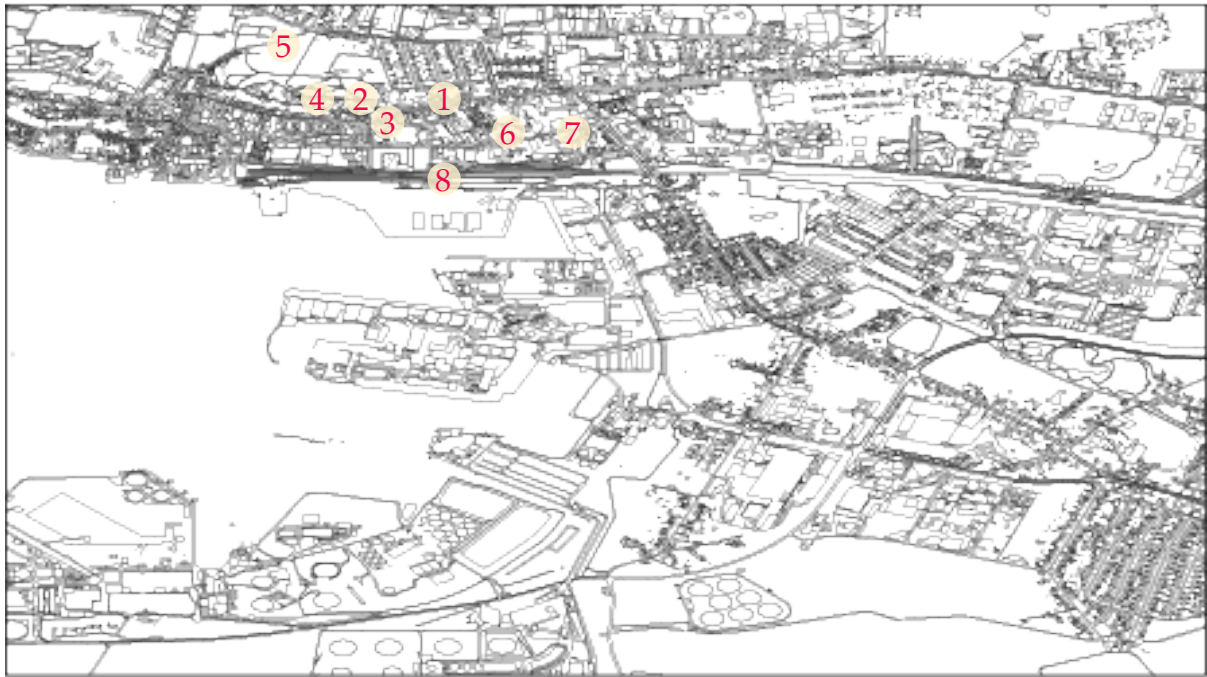


Figure 18: Kalundborg Cambus, Kalundborg, Denmark





1: Demarcations



2: Materiality



3: Spatiality



4: Soundscape



5: Memories



6: Activities



7: Temporality



Ill. 8: Activities

Overlooking the fjord and Røsnæs peninsula, the city of Kalundborg is nestled in the landscape. **Memories abound; perhaps at first glance, mostly evident of the biotech industry's mark on the city**, but no less importantly also of the history that characterizes the city center and older parts of Kalundborg dating back centuries with signs pointing to settlement as early as the Viking ages. **In appearance, the site presents a multitude of scales, forms, and materialities**, from quaint medieval houses along cobble streets in the historic district to the vast expanse of industry surrounding it.

Kalundborg and the greater area surrounding it consists of districts, physically demarcated by networks of roads and railways, visually demarcated by changes in scale, materiality, and density, and functionally divided between work, dwelling, and the natural landscape. The site is an anchor of various exchanges, with goods being shipped in and out through the port, different streams of water and

waste products being directed to and from industrial hubs in a closed production loop, and **people moving between these districts**. Influence is concentrated in the city's outskirts rather than the centre. In the eastern district, the municipality resides along with biotech companies like Novo Nordisk, which have a strong presence. The southern part of Kalundborg is home to the port, which, together with Kalundborg Refinery, Asnæsværket power station, and companies like Saint-Gobain, form an industrial district. **Regular movements of people and materials between these districts create a sense of distance and segmentation**. As an enhancement of this notion, time and place seem to be at odds; some inhabitants commute to work at the surrounding companies, limiting opportunities for interaction across industry and the city. **Life in the city centre changes with the seasons**; it is empty through winter but heavily used during summer.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Entering the platform of Kalundborg station in the early days of Autumn, cool-toned colours meet the eyes: an oceanic blue in the far, just behind a surface of the asphalt, concrete, and grey metal containers placed neatly in a straight row on the harbour. In the far back, fumes from factories produce a consistent cloud formation. A strong wind gushes in from the west, sending a harsh welcome shiver as a greeting. The microclimate here is, in fact, something to be mindful of. A persisting wind comes in from the west during fall and winter, and the sun is sharp during summer.

On September 2023, citizens, industry, municipality, and new architectural students are gathered on the first floor of the train station, which frames a temporary space for a new architectural education. Drawings, sketches, and an atmosphere of excitement are evident on the first floor as the new architectural school is opened and the students' first projects are displayed. The city's old church has been sketched, and history has been studied. Below the room, another exhibition is on display. Here, ideas for places of potential in the city have been rendered with ideas for interventions drawn by experts who have been involved in supporting a self-organised citizen group, 'the Phoenix Group,' in concretising and visualising urban acupuncture points that hold potential for the nurturing community and life in the city. There is a suspenseful atmosphere between the two groups and their materialisation of ideas. This palpable friction in approaches speaks to something at stake and could potentially forge positive synergies and foster pathways for new dialogues to emerge.

”

The activities in Kalundborg were initiated with the arrival of the new architectural education and the anticipated presence of future students. Within Desire, the arrival and establishment of the new architecture school paved the way for testing ways of enabling circular principles by forging relations beyond industry, municipality and other stakeholders. This became evident in urban development discussions around the location of the future campus. Inspired by a wish to establish connections genuinely across stakeholders and interests to ensure synergies across industry, municipality, inhabitants, and socio-cultural life, the project became a “vessel” to demonstrate and test how synergies might be achieved, tapping into ongoing dynamics of business, municipality, students, and citizens’ wishes.

This approach did not come without friction. Through their experimentation, the site representatives have geared their efforts to apply an experimental approach to disrupt business-as-usual and norms to bridge and design situations where perceptions, alternatives, and new perspectives could be discussed and acted upon. The architectural school’s temporary location, the formation of a citizen-driven group, the Phoenix Group, and the dissemination of approaches all testify to the community’s active participation and form a potentially new way forward.

Visualizing alternatives and the “no decision” principle in location discussions

Activities in Kalundborg have sparked a shift in perspectives concerning approaches towards deciding where to locate the school. The site representatives have navigated layers of governance in relation to progressing on the future Kalundborg campus. At the project’s inception, the site representatives faced a unique challenge: finding a temporary location for the future campus. With no students enrolled yet, they began their search, considering existing buildings in the city center. One core principle that emerged from early discussion was to not make any permanent decision on the location of the architecture school during Desire. Driven by a vision of finding ways for the school to centre, anchor, and retain energy in the city centre, various existing buildings were thus researched, which culminated in the selection of the building in front of the station.

A workshop with the municipality stands out from these efforts: a scenario-based workshop, where the site representatives presented various scenarios and strategies to inform and support the decision-making process around the location of the architecture school. The workshop brought forth contrasts, counter arguments, and opposing views in the debate, and by using visual tools to render alternative directions, the municipality reconsidered its stance on the best way forward. The building in front of the station now serves as the temporary home for the

Architecture school, where approximately 70 students are currently situated. Since then, the school's temporary placement and identity have been focal points in workshops and stakeholder discussions. One perspective has been crucial to maintain in the process: to foster a circular approach that would situate the institution in a collaborative network with connections to Kalundborg's socio-cultural life and inhabitants in addition to other collaborators.

The evolution of the Phoenix Group and engaging citizens' perspectives in the debate

The evolution and establishment of the Phoenix Group testify to a new approach in Kalundborg of involving and gathering citizens' energies in a self-established group. The self-formed group wishes to see positive changes in their city and has been brought to life through a regenerative and place-based approach to community building. The Phoenix Group consists of people who live in the Kalundborg area. Through Desire, the site representatives have facilitated spaces for them to express their wishes, ideas, and hopes for the city's development. The local network and community were set up through dedicated time and effort spent with the group. This included several workshops and discussions about developing a sense of belonging and four workshops with landscape architects (Tredje Natur). Scenario and dilemma-based approaches and workshops have supported forming the group's shared set of values, translating the movement and principles underpinning Desire and

the campus project. For example, should the new architecture students have a local body to show them hidden locations in the city – or should they develop such places on their own?

The group meets every 14th day at various informal places to discuss ideas and progress visions. Bonded with a shared manifest, the group is a testimonial to how relations among people must be established before working on tasks for the community to thrive.

The role of professional perspectives in ensuring synergies across socio-cultural efforts has been explored by inviting professional landscape architects (Tredje Natur) as a support and resource who could give their outside-in perspective on matters concerning citizens and help translate and render their visions into tangible suggestions. This resulted in an urban analysis of Kalundborg that revealed hidden gems and history, told from the citizens' perspective and foregrounding their view on places of potential. Building on citizens' understanding of the dynamics of the city, Tredje Natur were invited to design opportunities for bringing places of potential into life through temporary urban experiments that could be initiated to potentially have a long-term impact on the future. Five ideas frame spaces where connections can be made and dreams can be expressed, brought forth by the idea generation and passion built up in the Phoenix Group. In the visualisations, temporary effects bring these places to life through more greenery, places for sitting, lines on

the road, and more. The initiative also included a street event where the group invited participants to participate in various social activities in front of the school's temporary placement. It used simple tools to create a greener space during the event. Through a collaborative effort, one participant co-created trees on wheels with a group of vulnerable youngsters that could be moved around to some of the places that had been selected. The trees have since been planted, and the structures have been repurposed as Christmas decorations in winter. Moreover, open meetings and idea generation sessions were facilitated, where potential participants who could offer resources to the group were hosted to echo and diffuse the efforts towards richer socio-cultural initiatives in the city to others.

The Phoenix Group collaborated with the Architecture school to merge their visions. The academy hired two members of the Phoenix Group, one was hired due to his useful knowledge about the city and another to help set up the school's workshop space. With support, the group is becoming self-governing. The Phoenix Group have independently applied for funds to support their future ideas in Kalundborg. Visualisations and renderings produced by the site representatives have helped their ideas evolve. This shows how leadership and facilitation roles are shifting. Moreover, the Phoenix Group is growing, and politicians have become part of the community.

Diffusing approaches and connecting to long-term strategies

The combined approaches of working with potential, being place-based, and facilitation have found their way to other realms and communities connected to the long-term strategy for the wider campus project. A workshop with students was conducted to explore how students want to feel when they are present on the future campus. This workshop informed another internal workshop with key project players. The aim was to ensure a user-driven approach and a thriving future environment for the students.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire have amounted to three key foci to enable the dreams and visions of a preferred future for a thriving Kalundborg in relation to the process. This concerns the emphasis on establishing meaningful relations in a local context, forming new roles and values in setting up a foundation for circularity and insisting on keeping an analytical focus on potentials instead of problems in development/urban transformation projects.

The impact and value of working relationally

The emphasis on building relationships before tackling tasks has been fundamental in fostering meaningful experimentation with stakeholders in Kalundborg, and has led to the formation of the Phoenix Group. This space allows citizens to share, discuss, and shape initiatives based on their perspectives and local knowledge. Looking ahead, the site hopes to see the Phoenix Group community grow and find ways to ensure that it is sustained so that more from the local community want to be involved in their visions of shaping the city's new identity.

Paving the way for circular urban planning approaches

Through the site representatives' involvement in Desire, they found it important to design situations where relations can be fostered to establish circular principles and approaches in urban development and planning discussions. However, engaging with the local community while developing an institution's identity can lead to tensions when embarking on new collaborations and inviting perspectives. One important lesson from the process is the presence of a role that insists on encouraging ongoing discussions in the transformation pro-

cess to bring forth the plurality and multiplicity of viewpoints. The Royal Danish Academy has recognised the importance of having a role that can keep the discussion about the city's future active, considering its urban transformation and ensuring a productive environment for exploring ideas.

Potentials as a lens for enabling place-based change

One insight gained throughout the Desire project is the impact of recognising and harnessing the potential in a place, rather than dwelling solely on its problems. This approach was a key contribution from the Really Regenerative Center early in the project. This shift in focus is essential for revitalising the narrative of Kalundborg as a thriving, inclusive community. It involves embracing the diverse voices within the community - past, present, and future - as well as acknowledging the historical and environmental elements. Concentrating on the potential, one can adopt a perspective that seeks to forge new connections and cultivate growth across various facets of the community.

"In 2050 I dream that there will be a forum for debate concerning the city's future and physical development - a space where the Academy continuously proposes directions for the city's future through discussions with local politicians and citizens, e.g., the Phoenix Group. I also dream that Kalundborg will have a strong circular economy based on local production, food, and outspoken ambitions about quality and diverse life forms." Flemming Overgaard, Royal Danish Academy, 2024



"In 2050, I dream that the educations will be spread across the city with a connection to the whole city, along with a world-famous educational environment on biomaterials. I dream that tourists will come to Kalundborg, which has shorter train commutes and more green areas. I dream that the citizens of Kalundborg will benefit from higher educational opportunities and income and that they will be part of the Kalundborg model. I dream that the Phoenix Group will become a stable platform for collaboration." Pernille Bech, Knowledge Hub Zealand, 2024

Figure 20: Imaginary vision of the future Kalundborg Campus

BTC CITY

BTC CITY, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Enabling Sustainable Synergies through Collaborative Visioning

*Engaging stakeholders in a collaborative effort to co-create
a sustainable vision for a thriving built environment*



Figure 21: BTC City, Ljubljana, Slovenia

"AT BTC, OUR AIM WAS TO CHALLENGE CONVENTIONAL APPROACHES TO URBAN GREENING - WHICH OFTEN REDUCE THE CONCEPT TO MERE QUANTITATIVE METRICS SUCH AS THE NUMBER OF TREES - BY FACILITATING THE CO-CREATION OF AN HOLISTIC GREEN VISION THAT INVOLVED YOUNG PEOPLE, LOCAL BUSINESSES, CER AND BTC AND USED A VARIETY OF PROCESSES SUCH AS WORKSHOPS, HACKATHON AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS."

- ALEKSANDER GULDAGER KONGSHAUG, GXN

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

BTC City is located in the city of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. It is one of the largest shopping, business, entertainment, recreational, and cultural centres in Europe, with around 21 million visits annually. BTC City contains everything from shopping arenas and office spaces to a water park and entertainment facilities. However, the area is at risk with the changing climate, and the area is affected by increasing heat islands during summertime due to the many hard surfaces at the area. This requires new greening initiatives and changes to the built environment, and the green infrastructure is a prioritisation. Further, the area is a historically rich centre, with many historic buildings repurposed over time. This adaptation of usages can transform the buildings again, protecting the historical significance of the area and repurposing it.

The area is dominated by car traffic from the many visitors, and a huge potential lies in connecting the shopping district to the city centre, for example, by facilitating bicycle infrastructure or better connectivity with public transportation, as well as with future green corridors by sustainable means of transportation.

The community amongst the many business partners in BTC City offers a solid foundation for experimenting with building a movement fostering green initiatives and providing a breeding ground for sustainable solutions within BTC City. The project within Desire aims to unify sustainable change by including diverse stakeholders to co-create a future sustainable vision and urban greening strategy to adapt to climate change, boost biodiversity and well-being for their visitors and strengthen the green identity of BTC City.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of BTC City through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

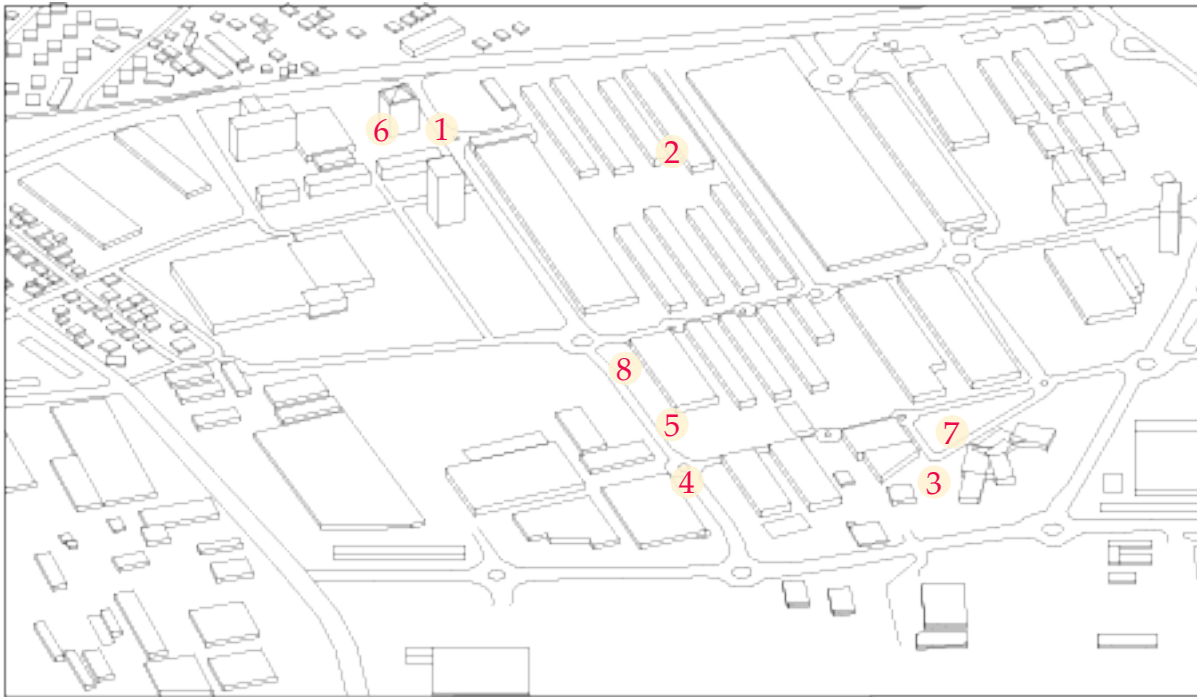


Figure 22: BTC City, Ljubljana, Slovenia





1: Spatiality



2: materiality



3: Temporality



4: Soundscape



5: Activities



6: Demarcations



7: Memories



8: Movements

BTC City is today a large magnet for many activities such as shopping and recreation, and it draws in visitors from all over the country as well as tourists abroad. People come from wide and far-away places predominantly by car. This is evident in the many asphalted roads, parking lots, and concrete-paved surfaces. This is also present in the soundscape: **the running engines of the cars driving by and the hum of tyres on the dry asphalt.** Crystal Palace in BTC City towers above the area in the area as a focal point. **The many buildings together with the enormous network of roads create the boundaries and demarcations** that prevent the flow of pedestrians and prioritise the motorized vehicles.

The **materiality** in the area is dominated by the **hard surfaces, concrete and asphalt.** However, many different materials can be found around

the different buildings, providing many different colours in the area from the many signs inviting people in.

Sporadically around the area green pockets can be **found with lush green trees and fields of grass**, providing shade in the otherwise hot heat islands. The recently planted trees stand as a marker for the green transition that the place is undergoing. **The primary activity taking place in the area is shopping and leisure.** However, places to take a rest can also be found with among others benches placed along the parking areas. The area however also showcases the **immense history that it contains within with the remanence of rail tracks** running through the area. The buildings stand as markers of the future changes that are to come, as they potentially will be transformed in the future.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



When arriving with the bus in BTC City, one will find not one but many possible stops at which to get off. As a human pedestrian, this place feels big. Alongside busy streets of cars, buses, commuters, and bikers, a landscape of old and new buildings forms an evolved landscape with homes for various activities: work offices, cafes, shops, entertainment, a water park, and more. Gigantic shops with sports gear and groceries. A place to shop, play, eat, work, and connect. Along one wall I walked by from getting off the bus, a green plant in freshly turned soil is snarling its way up. This organic green species contrasts pleasantly with the otherwise concrete, hard material.

The question of green in the space of grey hues is, in fact, part of a larger movement – to envision how the area might change in 2050 to mitigate challenges from heat and gather its inhabitants and community on a new path led by the area’s owners. In February, during two warm days, around 30 young people calibrated their ideas for how such a vision could be materialised and conceptualised towards 2050.

Observing the eager participants, I noticed that they utilised all their skills, energy, and focus as they designed, prototyped, and pitched ideas and concepts for the future built environment of BTC City in 2050, hoping to win the prize. Digital tools made BTC reappear in new shapes, colours, and purposes, crafting potential for new narratives about the area. The two winning proposals embodied ambitious long-term vision to design sustainable solutions and harness existing buildings to honour the history of the place while seeing new ways of using existing structures to repurpose their function in ways that would enable new meanings for its inhabitants and visitors and honour the quality of life beyond the human scale and perception. Other workshops before this event have shown commitments from its community to imagine a future vision for the area, speaking to a strong sense of belonging.

BTC City is set on a green transition. Some parts might be retained; others will be transformed, adding new value to their function to strengthen and harmonise relations between new and future communities and their physical-material dimensions. Changing course takes time and courage. How will the vision be combined, disrupt business as usual, and build patterns toward a sustainable future?

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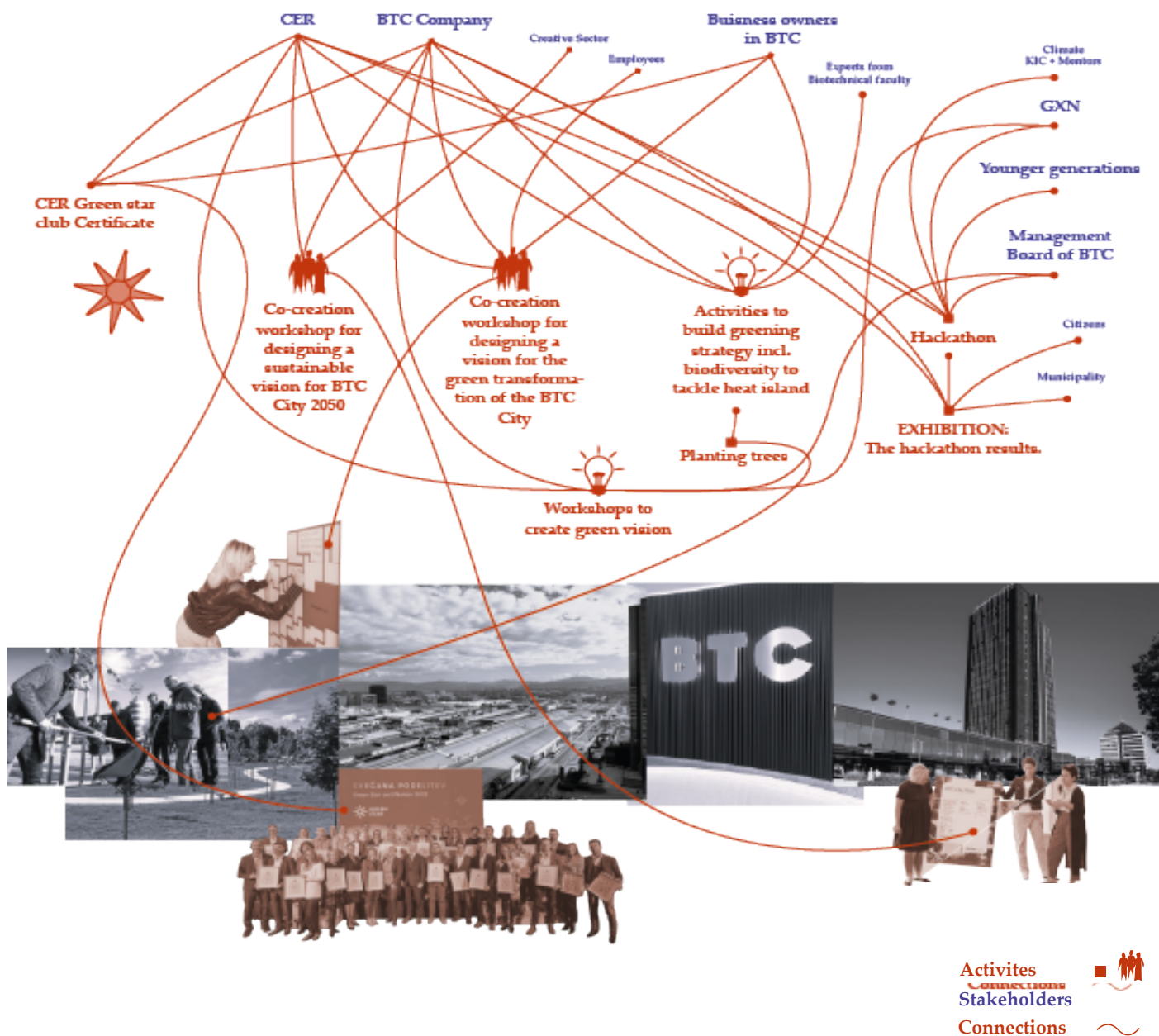


Figure 23: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

BTC City in Ljubljana has engaged in various activities to co-create a sustainable future for the area. The process was kicked off with a mapping activity to identify the key stakeholders who should be involved in co-creating the vision for BTC in 2050. The aim is to balance long-term ambitions with concrete actions to mitigate the impact of climate change and involve everyone in the process.

Co-creating 2050 visions with new perspectives

CER (CER Sustainable Business Network, from here on referred to as 'CER') and representatives from BTC City started a co-creation process by hosting a series of vision workshops. The goal was to gather various perspectives and imagine the area's potential, including viewpoints on the area's identity and potential from a diverse group of participants. The first workshop had participation from twenty experts representing academia, the creative industry, and NGOs. The involvement of participants from the creative sector was particularly interesting, as they shared insights driven by purpose and suggested imaginative ideas free from short-term constraints. For example, they proposed transforming BTC into the region's first commercial-free shopping centre and shifting from a consumption-focus to a production-oriented city. Building on this positive event, BTC invited internal perspectives to share their views and discuss their roles in shaping BTC's future. Twenty-five business partners joined together with BTC City employees and CER. The site representatives noticed that the topics and ideas differed from the first workshop. The second workshop focused more on combating existing challenges, and the attention was on solving challenges related to operational topics.

Greening activities, incentives, and community

After the workshops, BTC and CER focused on building a green movement with BTC's business partners. They aimed to identify synergies and opportunities to work together towards a sustainable future. One pivotal leverage point was the Green Star certificate created by CER Sustainable Business Network. This initiative encourages and incentivises businesses to adopt ESG principles and take climate action in their business operations. CER facilitated the certification process to assess the sustainability of the business partners, creating excitement and competitive spirit within the new community. Recipients of the certificate initiated the establishment of Green Star Club to share common challenges and opportunities, exchange knowledge and seek potential ideas, innovations and partnerships.

Concrete solutions benefitting both business partners and the community were identified. Additionally, early steps to adapt to climate change and ensure visitors' well-being were taken into consideration through various walks and discussions resulting in the planting of 400 trees in BTC City in the last two years. The increased greenery is expected to mitigate heat from rising temperatures and storm-water runoff and increase the well-being of visitors and other nonhuman species. Involving experts such as botanists and arborists in this process was crucial to ensure that plants would thrive in the local environment.

Co-designing, making, and exhibiting tangible visions

The anecdote from the beginning of this section describes a hackathon involving thirty young participants under thirty. The objective was to develop a common sustainable vision for BTC City 2050. Working in six groups, the participants came up with innovative ideas and services based on the Desires principles and guided by themes such as 'urban green' and 'social spaces'. The process was facilitated by local experts from 'Transformation Lighthouse' and Desire's partner the architectural company GXN. The participants received feedback and support from mentors representing local organisations, businesses, and visitors. The CEO of BTC Company also showed interest and support by visiting during the introductory section. The participants' diverse educational backgrounds and interests contributed to the wide range of ideas. As a result, the winning prize was split between two equally innovative ideas with contrasting outcomes. One idea focused on retaining local talent and creating an innovation community hub, while the other envisioned transforming BTC City into a comprehensive garden, connecting the area's history and buildings to fit new functionalities.

The outcomes were showcased in a public exhibition in collaboration with the municipality, where citizens and stakeholders were invited to the event and took part in the conversation. This provided an opportunity for citizens to share their perspectives on interactive posters and engage with the young participants' solutions in envisioning a sustainable BTC City.

A cohesive green identity and balancing purpose with progress

One might wonder how all the creative input gathered through Desire will be synthesized into a meaningful path forward. The puzzle pieces all fit into a long-term vision of building a collaborative cohesive sustainable vision, which encompasses concrete solutions, as part of a larger green strategy: spaces, buildings, and identity. A combined strategy, bridging far-reaching ambitions with concrete actions, has proven effective. This includes experimenting with creating incentives for tuning business operations into achieving short-term goals, balanced with workshops and events that keep the long-term strategy as a key focus, with the hope of becoming the "green norm" of the region. The activities have generated interest and curiosity from key stakeholders, and the site representatives are assured of the support and commitment of BTC's board. The three areas of space, building, and identity represent three themes BTC and CER are working on together with architectural company GXN to strengthen the green identity amongst stakeholders.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire have amounted to three key foci to enable the visions of a preferred future for a thriving BTC City.

Becoming greener and collaborating across disciplines

Through Desire, there is a wish to leverage the greening initiatives and boost biodiversity efforts in BTC City, for example, by creating green corridors. Throughout this process, the site representatives have realised the importance of building strong partnerships with experts in the field, like the Biotechnical faculty, and the Faculty of Art (Department of Geography) and the significance of incorporating new perspectives and diverse knowledge. There is a hope to further facilitate these mutual learning processes in the future and engage more stakeholders to collaborate across disciplines.

Connecting BTC City to socio-cultural dimensions

The greening initiatives in BTC City encompass more than just the actions of the business partners and the creation of green spaces. They also hold the potential to be extended to educational and socio-cultural aspects. For example, corridors could be used as opportunities to create educational paths that teach about the positive effects of biodiversity and the flourishing of other species. There is potential to connect the site to cultural dimen-

sions, integrating national treasures and elements such as sports or artistic interventions. Additionally, there is a potential to connect BTC City with the city centre of Ljubljana, which was proposed in early workshops and the hackathon. Concretely, the site representatives imagine this could unfold by expanding the new park area towards the centre.

Sustaining collaborative environment

Building a collaborative greening strategy is an ongoing journey fuelled by the involvement of external consultants, such as GXN. Navigating multiple perspectives in a large organisation and aligning with a new vision is a significant task. Still, the support and involvement of business partners and the management board are essential to sustain. The workshops and activities organised through Desire have captured stakeholders' attention, demonstrating the potential for change. Collaborators and potential investors must be attracted and invited into the movement, which takes effort. For example, showcasing concrete outputs from a greening strategy has been helpful by connecting visionary material to KPIs or statistics.

"I envision that BTC City is one of the greenest centers in Europe, with green business partners and green innovations, a green educational path and green corridors and areas full of life" Andrej Janko, BTC City, 2024



"You can stay here from morning till evening. [...] There is a green corridor of Slovenian athletes and sports stars that ties BTC City to the city centre of Ljubljana, through a bicycle path" Ema Henic, CER Sustainable Business Network, 2024

Figure 24: Imaginary vision of the future BTC City

CASCINA FALCHERA

CASCINA FALCHERA, TURIN, ITALY

Restoring and Repurposing a Cultural Landscape

Strengthening city-nature relations through communal and educational activities as part of an innovative farm renewal initiative



Figure 25: Cascina Falchera, Turin, Italy

"AT CASCINA FALCHERA WE INVITED 15 CREATIVE YOUNG PEOPLE TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN THE TERRITORY AND RE-DISCOVER THE LOCAL IDENTITY OF THE PLACE THROUGH SITE-VISITS, ARCHIVE RESEARCH, DIALOGUE WITH RESIDENTS OF THE AREA. TOGETHER WE DEVELOPED A MANIFESTO AND A SERIES OF ARTEFACTS ENCAPSULATING A SET OF VALUES (BIODIVERSITY, CARE, HOSPITALITY) THAT ARE MEANT TO INSPIRE THE WORK OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVES, WHO WILL WORK AT CASCINA FALCHERA IN THE FUTURE."

- SARA NARDI, AGORA

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

Nested between a protective landscape of fields and roads lies Cascina Falchera. This old farmhouse from 1701 is a 30-minute commute from the city of Turin. The farm is a common good of the city of Turin.

Once a destination for educational activities focusing on farm life, food, and biology, Cascina Falchera has a vision of becoming a vibrant hub where people, projects, and species can thrive and where new projects can grow. The urban farm is a space for reconciling our connection to place and experimenting with cultivating biodiversity to ensure its sociocultural and ecological meaning. With the farm's opening, Consortio Kairós has been trusted to revitalise and transform the space. Through Desire, efforts have been geared towards ensuring stakeholders' ongoing participation and involvement in reimagining Cascina Falchera's identity. The vision is to expand its social endeav-

ours with citizens from Turin, the local community and ecology while exploring forward-thinking and innovative solutions. The site has focused on establishing relations with educational institutions and the local neighbourhood and experimented with participatory processes to encourage its collective potential.

Waterways and water have been the focus of re-constituting the 'Bealere' system, as it is called in Piemontese dialect, and which refers to the small streams of water that border local farmsteads. The possibilities and functionalities of the farmhouse are multiple, which is clear in the many projects and initiatives that unfold simultaneously: classrooms for educational activities, gardens for exploring innovative ways of growing food, experiments with planting trees to improve the soil and providing shelter for animals and endangered species.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Cascina Falcera through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

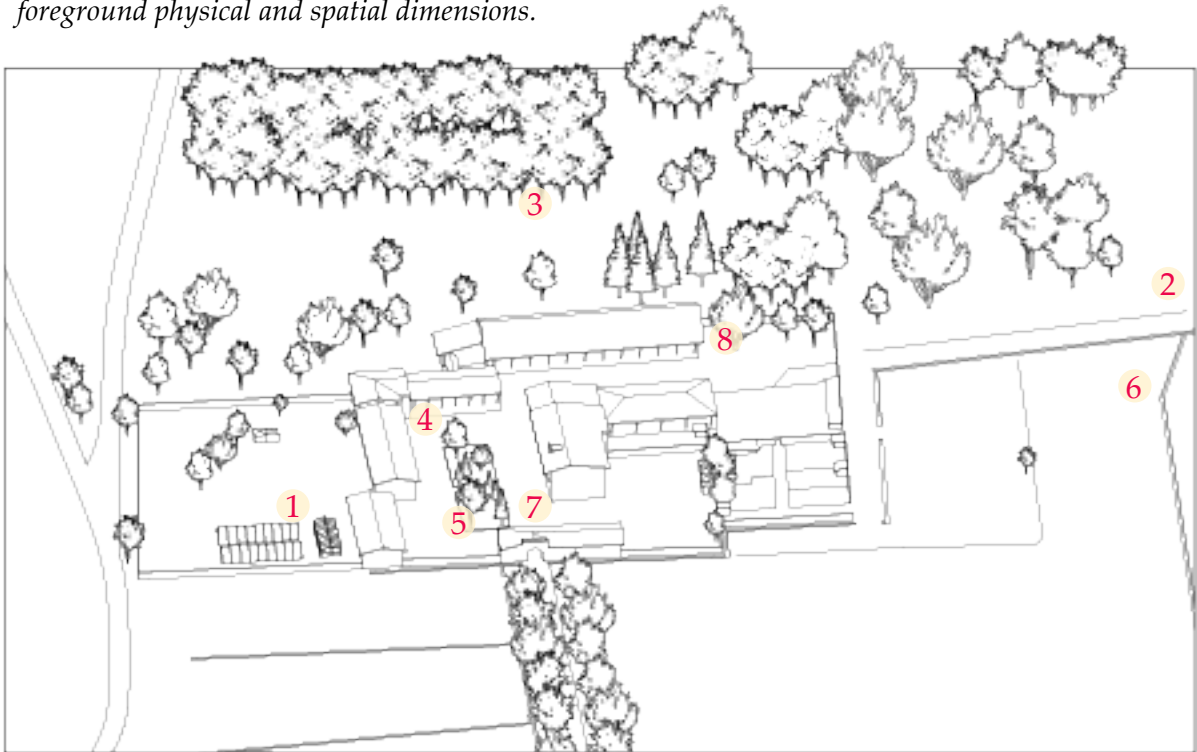


Figure 26: Cascina Falcera, Turin, Italy





11: Activities



2: Demarcations



3: Soundscape



4: Materiality



5: Memories



6: Movement



7: Spatiality



8: Temporality

Emerging from the picturesque farmland lies the idyllic Farm of Cascina Falchera. A place with a long history of farming. Evident in the buildings, in the ground and in the atmosphere, sprouting around every corner. Surrounding the site lies the farmland. Land which has been farmed for centuries, with its channels that bring water from faraway lands. This creates an **interesting set of movement and sound** when moving around the farm. Furthermore, the place is lively and full of sounds, from the animals, the rustling of the trees and distant chattering.

It is evident that the space has been in use a long time. It can be seen everywhere on the buildings, where **shifting needs has transformed the buildings** over time. The temporality of the many different phases and evolutions the buildings have undergone, lies **evident in the patchwork of bricks**

and materials, some older than others, and they hold **immersive stories and memories**. The buildings form a closed courtyard with many **voids and interesting enclosed spaces**, making one wants to explore thus creating interesting spatial arrangements. When strolling the site these spatial arrangements also create a large set of boundary demarcations enclosing the space. A wall surrounds the entire site closing the space and hides the many **activities occurring on the grounds**.

There can be no doubt that this place is an **active place, with many ongoing activities** and experiments. From the many greenhouses with new ways of growing crops, to the incubators of chicken eggs, to the lively art community roaming the grounds.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Muffled between busy roads, highways, city life, and sleepy suburbs, the urban farm Cascina Falchera is located. A distinct wall in creme colors protects its inhabitants and visitors from the outside and welcomes visitors to explore and experience a safe space where one encounters new perspectives in peaceful surroundings. Just a 30-minute ride from Turin's center, a whimsical road welcomes visitors to this place of serenity.

On a warm day in September, a group of visitors and residents in Falchera explored the farm, its water system, and nearby lakes to invite water, a crucial material for ours and fellow species' wellbeing into our imagination, allowing it to play a pivotal role in the story of the place and as a prompt to think with through the exploration. Once, the water formed a system that sustained the area's farming and uplifted a sense of community coupled deeply with the sharing of resources. Building on the image of water as a binder for the community's well-being, this non-human fabric is being repurposed through various activities, marking the reopening of the farm. The focus on water forms an arc of activities.

In Cascina Falchera, what we see is not necessarily what we think. Animated by the project leaders' stories, one might discover that a beautiful flower bed in the old courtyard has been replaced to reduce heat. Trees are planted to nurture and spark a thriving soil environment. Cows are offered a place for retirement. Food is prepared daily for refugees, tying this farm into a web of relations that stretch within and beyond Cascina Falchera's walls to achieve socio-cultural and ecological impact.

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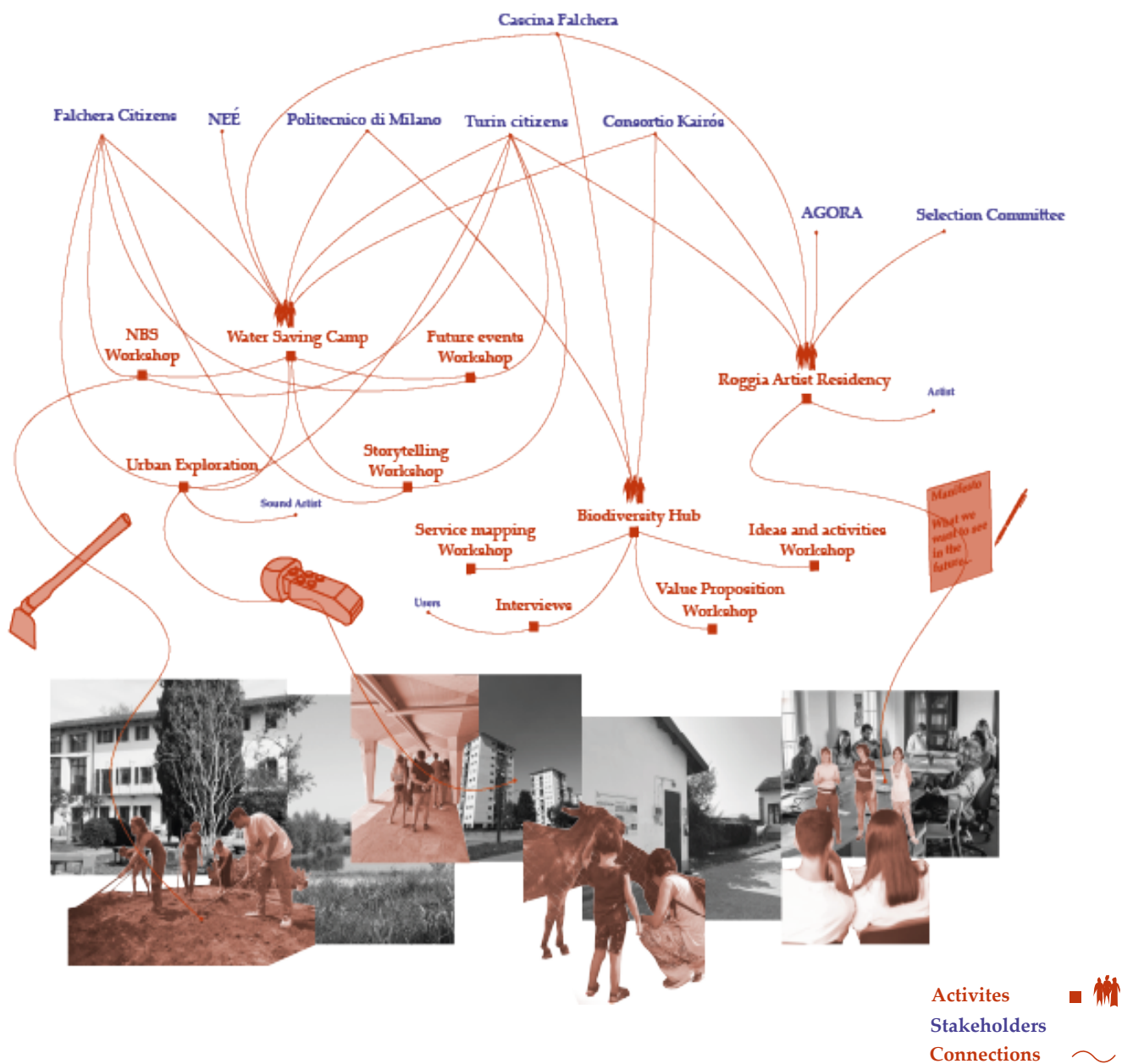


Figure 27: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

As the anecdote suggests, nothing is ever what it appears to be – beneath the surface, something stirs, and above ground, new initiatives and ideas are already sprouting forth. The topic of water has been harnessed as a generator of initiatives and discussions of how to re-actualise the resource to support the local ecology, as well as how Cascina Falchera itself can become a destination for people – both for the local neighborhood, as well as visitors from the city center. The transformation process has subsequently focused on evolving the narrative of Cascina Falchera while ensuring it is anchored in the local natural environment, its inhabitants and surrounding context.

Sowing the seeds of new things through action research

At Cascina Falchera, a beginning initiative and concept under the umbrella of the irresistible cycle called Water Saving Camp has been conducted, centred on the question of how citizens, and, in particular, young people, may rediscover environmental and historical values inherent to the place. With a timeline going from July to September of 2023, a series of workshops have been conducted, spearheaded by a collaboration between the groups NÉE (comprising Nicoletta Daldanise, Elena Miglietti and Elisa Campa) and the Tecnologia Filosofica and a host of local organizations.

As part of the Water Saving Camp, a workshop was held involving practical application of Nature Based Solutions to manage rainwater and mitigate adverse effects of water accumulation due to the presence of non-permeable surfaces by, for example, altering surfaces to direct water more beneficially. Theory on climate change and Nature Based Solutions was provided, with the expressed purpose of applying it as action research. This contributed to making the workshop successful in multiple ways – as a bridge

between theory and practice with an immediate physical manifestation of the participants' work. A second workshop involved an urban exploration, inviting participants to gather information about natural spaces and the presence of water across the threshold of Cascina Falchera and its surrounding neighbourhood. With the help of a sound artist, tools like headphones and recorders were utilised to capture water soundscapes, where the tangible outcome was recordings of everything from underground water to cars. The workshop considered how this knowledge of the site and its context may be expressed in new and profound ways. Harnessing storytelling methods, a third workshop asked participants to help strengthen the narrative surrounding Cascina Falchera. Impressions of the place were shared, laying the foundation for generating new stories that could subsequently strengthen external communication and branding strategies. Finally, a workshop was held to gather perspectives and ideas for where Cascina Falchera could head with future activities and events. Building upon the former workshops, participants were asked what they would love to see. With input from young people, the outcome of the workshop was a wish to host an artist residency.

Involving local participants was fruitful to the workshops, requiring little to no additional effort to engage on behalf of the organizer. A reason for this is a profound familiarity with the place and its history. This was worked into the process as personas, with which the relational aspect could be further emphasized.

Forging a new vision of Cascina Falchera

Following the previous activities, work began to formulate a new vision of what the place could offer in the future. These efforts were both locally anchored in place but were also partially virtual in the

form of online meetings between Consorzio Kairós, Politecnico of Milan's Department of Design, staff and users of Cascina Falchera. It mounted to a vision of Cascina Falchera as a biodiversity hub, that was further developed and detailed as a framework through a series of activities that included the monitoring and mapping of services and user-interviews. A following workshop focused on value proposition, and another sought to generate ideas between stakeholders for activities and events as part of the biodiversity hub. Collectively, these efforts came to resemble a patchwork of many parts within one whole where Politecnico of Milan's Department of Design has supported gathering and structuring perspectives which helped the site to concretize its own vision.

Building upon a strong foundation of Cascina Falchera as a place where education, care for non-humans and living off the land go hand in hand, the vision became one of a hub that reaches beyond the walls of the Cascina to connect with a wider community in the city of Turin and its surroundings. The biodiversity hub will embody the history and practices of what is already present at the site, experimenting with agriculture and sustainable regenerative solutions and innovating its social collaborative efforts. The prospect of a new Biodiversity Hub calls for renovations of the existing physical spaces, emphasising integrating new technologies to improve energy efficiency and enhancing natural spaces to support biodiversity.

Breaking ground in an uncharted territory

Building upon the outcome of the previous Water Saving Camp and work on the biodiversity hub framework, the artist residency thread was picked up and developed into the concept of Roggia. In a collaboration between AGORA (subcontracted partner) and a group of 15 students from Turin, a

manifesto was made to describe the future role of the artist and provide conceptual guidelines for the residency.

The process raised critical considerations, among others on the process of selecting the artist. A selection committee was called upon for their expertise in curation, as knowledge of and experience with public arts was not widely represented between the staff of Cascina Falchera and the students from Turin participating in the development of the artist residency. Recognizing their artistic quality, the committee helped select the artist Rooy Charlie Lana. At the time of writing, the artist is still developing the concept. Mirroring the close bond shared between inhabitants and the environment around Cascina Falchera through water, the artist will explore the aspect of liquid as a connector between human bodies, raising important and sometimes provocative issues through their practice.

A topic of discussion has been how to communicate Cascina Falchera's identity first and foremost as a social endeavour rather than an art foundation. Another critical consideration was the process of implementing the art residency itself, which raised questions about how to navigate regulations on the accountability of purchasing material for artistic practices.

Balancing tradition and innovation is in many respects a key topic for the site, and embodies a form of tension. This tension is evident in other aspects of the project; between the Cascina and its surrounding urban context, between internal and external communication of the place, and between the uncertainty of working with many disparate activities and creating a common narrative.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire have amounted to three key foci to enable the future biodiversity hub in Cascina Falchera in Turin. They are concerned with the ambitions to explore ways to sustain a thriving local ecosystem, bring locals and youngsters to the hub through educational activities, and reimagine the purpose of the space by paving the way for contemporary artistic experimentation.

Nurturing a holistic way of working with local ecologies

The fields and gardens of Cascina Falchera serve as a testing ground for exploring innovative and sustainable ways of processing and growing food and embracing nature-based solutions. Future goals aim to continue working with nature, creating a self-sustaining ecosystem, for example, through permaculture, and integrating diverse approaches. This effort also focuses on social endeavours and purposes and could be further amplified through farming opportunities. Site representatives, for example, envision a shared farming approach where participants can engage in gardening as a family activity.

Pushing boundaries for bringing in new perspectives

The prospect of inviting artists to envision and explore the farm through innovating and conceptual methods represents a fresh challenge for the site representatives. Finding ways for overcoming bureaucratic obstacles and embracing fresh perspectives has been a valuable learning experience. Involving young minds in designing the guidelines for the artist residency proved to be an impactful

involvement strategy as they were empowered to shape and share knowledge. However, aligning and bridging the guidelines with a curated selection process presented its own set of challenges. There is hope that the artist residency will be a stepping stone for informing future ways of harnessing artistic practices at the site.

Building a hub for exploring complexity

In Cascina Falchera, the numerous parallel projects speak to the farm's potential and space for exploring and learning about the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman life. From the processes in Desire, there is a solid wish to integrate biodiversity with services and educational activities. Additionally, there is a wish to renovate buildings and merge existing environments with contemporary solutions, such as providing more sustainable solutions for heating and electricity. However, embarking on this transition will require perseverance, as obtaining permission for these ideas can be challenging.

"What I would like to see in Cascina Falchera in the future is a group of young people who are aware that public green spaces are to be safeguarded; they host our heritage and should be consciously designed to reproduce the natural patterns. They also contribute to the care of the people who use these places. Nature and people are at the center." Domenica Moscato, Consorzio Kairos, 2024



Figure 28: Imaginary vision of the future Cascina Falchera

HERLEV ASPHALT FACTORY

HERLEV ASPHALT FACTORY, HERLEV, DENMARK

Unlocking a Space for Artistic Experimentation

Balancing spontaneity and control to ignite artistic practices that drive transformative and impactful experiences with non-humans



Figure 29: Herlev Asphalt factory, Herlev, Denmark

"THE HERLEV EXPERIMENT WAS A UNIQUE WAY TO HELP CITIZENS, BUSINESSES, AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ON SITE - EXPLORE THEIR CONNECTION TO THE ALIVENESS OF PLACE THROUGH NATURE AND ACTIVATE THE DEEPER SENSE OF WONDER AND CARE FOR HER PRESENCE IN THE MECHANISTIC PROCESS OF BUILDING HOUSING. THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS EVOKE AN EMBODIED SENSE OF CONNECTION TO NATURE THROUGH SOMATIC PRACTICES THAT AWAKEN OUR INNER CAPABILITY TO SENSE OUR CONNECTION AND PARTICIPATION AS PART OF LIFE'S LIVING SYSTEMS. WE SUPPORTED THE TEAM TO DEEPEN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF LIVING SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES AND SOME OF THE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIMENTS WITH CREATIVE FEEDBACK."

- JENNY ANDERSSON, THE REALLY REGENERATIVE CENTRE

Framing the Site's Transformation within Desire

At the site of a former asphalt factory in the city of Herlev, things are in motion as the area is transforming. The former industrial area is a place of transition, where more than 400 new residential homes are speedily being built. In parallel, a method known as “Being of Place,” developed by NXT, has been applied to raise important questions about what characterises the place of the Herlev asphalt factory. Being of Place represents a novel approach to combining arts and storytelling to foster a greater sensitivity towards a place and its multi-species inhabitants and is in Herlev implemented through the Garden Caretaker project.

Through five artistic residencies, six artists have embodied the role of Garden Caretaker. A human role, who, through artistic practices, have worked through participatory formats to create a sense of community, inviting inhabitants of the existing area to various activities aimed at stimulating their

sense of belonging to the place, to work pluralistically and relationally through multispecies perspectives, and to unfold the network of stories, nonhumans, things, and matter that is inherent to the site. All Garden Caretakers have brought a different craft and method of investigation, including writing, performances, visual arts, recording and producing audio walks, geology, listening, crafting, and filmmaking. The Garden Caretaker works to help explore the essence of a place and break down barriers between groups of people, between humans and nonhumans, and between what was and may become.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions of the Site

Places may be seen as entanglements of physical spaces, human and nonhuman unfoldings. Place-based potentials can be unfolded through analysis of different aspects of the site, like its character and the experience. In the following we unfold the site of Herlev Asphalt Factory through the lenses that foreground physical and spatial dimensions.

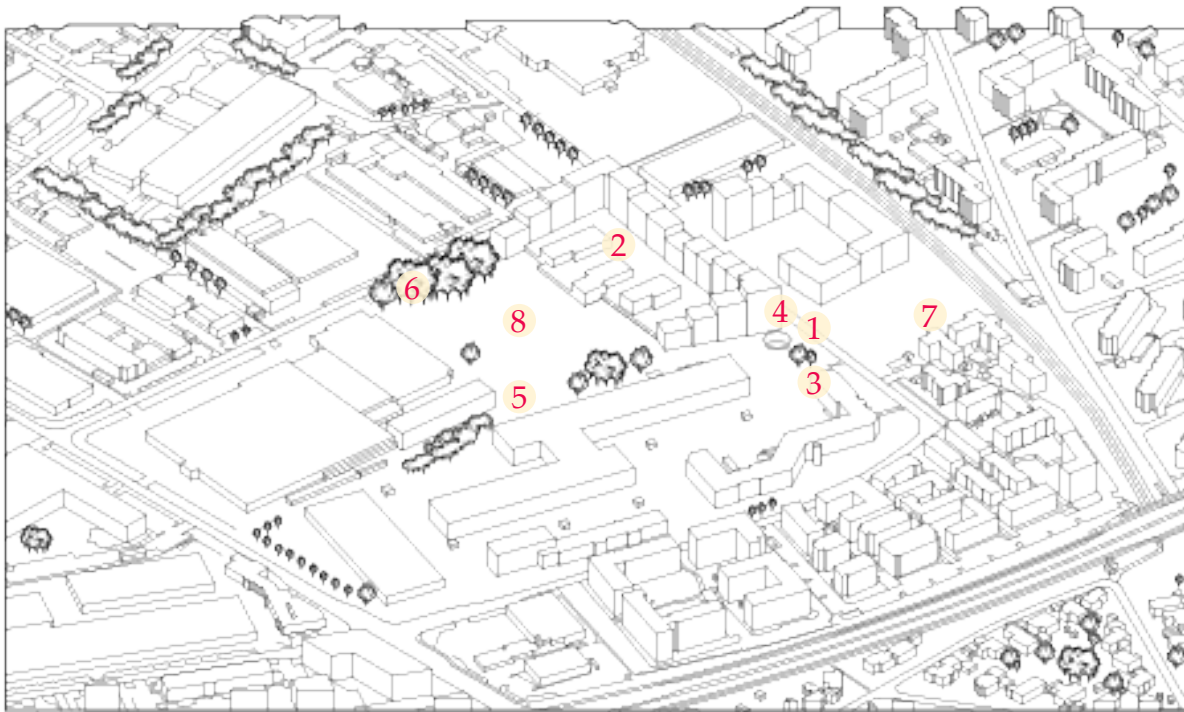


Figure 30: Herlev Asphalt factory, Herlev, Denmark





1: Activity



2: Movement



3: Temporality



4: Materiality



5: Soundscape



6: Demarcations



7: Spatiality



8: Memories

The former Herlev Asphalt Factory reveals itself as an environment rich with history and atmospheres. Here, visions of “what can be” are juxtaposed with traces of “what was”. Construction cranes pierce the sky as markers of ongoing transformation, while the presence of the asphalt factory is still felt in the physical fabric of the site. No less important to this story are the **memories of the many species who came before**, some still inhabiting the place. A meadow at the southern edge of the site is framed by trees, potentially as old as the factory itself. Road names draw upon historical references, pointing further back in time.

Through the work of the Garden Caretaker, **the place is unfolded across these timescales**, with the potential to leave lasting impression in the minds of people who come into contact with the place. Amidst the whirl of construction machinery and

cars passing by, one encounters a living breathing environment where **different sounds emanate from particularly in and around the meadow** like the chirping of birds or leaves rustling. The gentle sway of trees and plants in the wind is **punctuated by periodic movements** of lifts and construction cranes. The **physical fabric of the site is composite**, an organic environment against a backdrop of concrete and brick structures. The site is also characterized by a great contrast in shape and scale, with **rectilinear building volumes towering several stories above the organic figure of the small Droplet**, by Kristoffer Teglgaard Atelier, resting on the ground. The Droplet establishes **a new physical and figurative domain** and provides a point of contact between different realms. It is an **anchor of activity**, where the transparent surface embodies a welcoming gesture. Its unusual shape lends to it feeling out of time as a counterpoint to the events unfolding around.

Process and Experimentation: What Happened?



Strollers carry my favorite kind of pressure, a combination of evenly leveled light pressure and soothing wheels, which make the surface shiver and almost tickle. I provide a stable, soft experience in return. The strollers are unaware that a network hides a mass of layers, many layers, and invisible links beneath me. Do the layers welcome the deprivation of sunlight? They are wrapped beneath me as if I have been asked to look after them, hide them away, envelop and embrace them. But was this how it was intended? I often get carried away by thoughts that make me ponder whenever I think of that question. [...] My form is most certainly convenient for this purpose. I am a compressed mass, uniform but composed. [..]

This prose is but an excerpt from a series of workshops where participants were invited to select and identify with a nonhuman actor in a parking lot next to the former asphalt factory in Herlev. In this case, through the perspective of asphalt. The first Garden Caretaker facilitated the writing workshops to fine-tune and cultivate participants' attention to place, things, and other species. The careful speculation expressed in the text is one of warmth, connection, care, and consideration, and forms images of a nonhuman animated with emotions similar to a human. These words we might not usually use to describe nonhumans, especially not on a building ground full of routine ways of working, of structure, mechanistic loud sounds, and development, made me wonder how one could ever fall in love and care for a place with no prior explicit relations?

This is only the beginning of the Garden Caretaker's initiative told from one person's perspective. If one workshop can inspire care for nonhumans and provoke richer, nuanced mental images of the plurality of voices inherent to places, imagine what these efforts' collective outcome and wondrous potential could be.

”

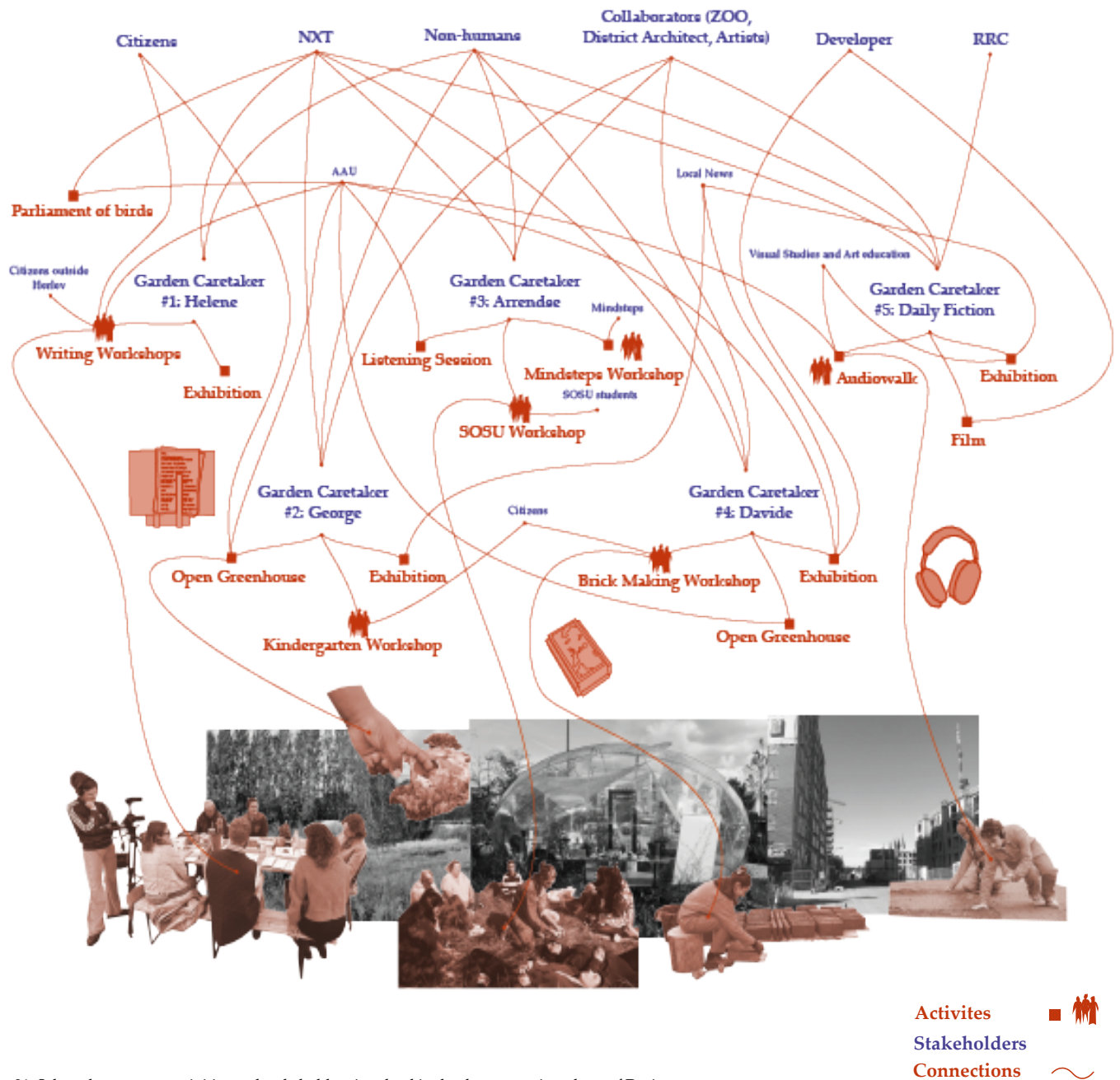


Figure 31: Selected processes, activities and stakeholders involved in the demonstration phase of Desire

Since the writing workshops in the early days of Spring 2023, more participants have been touched through various artistic tools. Additionally, relations with institutions have been established by activating the Garden Caretaker role and inviting six artists to embody it through their residencies in Herlev. The first Garden Caretaker, Helene Johanne Christensen, introduced writing as one way to draw our attention to the diversity in places and develop new abilities for observing, engaging with, and learning from the world around us. It teaches us that observations are inseparable from our awareness and can actively influence how we experience a place. Sound, stones, clay, and dancing are examples of other artistic approaches and tools utilised in and around the Droplet at Hørkær 8 in Herlev. At the beginning of Desire, a round, see-through greenhouse was built next to an empty building ground. An open call for artist residencies initiated the realisation of the Garden Caretaker. Introducing the human role in the place of Hørkær 8 aimed to explore how artistic, creative practices might foster a sense of belonging among inhabitants and care for the multifaceted entanglement of human and nonhuman perspectives to a place.

The narrative of Herlev portrays both 1) how participants (from both within and outside of Herlev) have experienced the transformative potential of artistic tools and approaches and 2) how the site representatives have immersed themselves in the local context and experimented with ways to ensure and

invite participation in a place that previously had no direct connection to community or institutions, aside from their collaboration with the construction company responsible for developing the site into new residential homes. Furthermore, it illustrates the exchange the artists have experienced through their residency, as they adapted their practice and approach to embody the role of Garden Caretaker while exploring the place of Hørkær 8 themselves and with others.

Finding formats for bringing artistic tools to a local context in an area of transformation

Exploring different formats for opening the space to artistic endeavours, the second Garden Caretaker, Georg Jagunov, followed the first Garden Caretaker and moved into the Droplet's space. While the writing workshops implemented a more formal/closed approach by having a fixed time and requiring participants to sign up, Georg and the site representatives took a more inclusive and casual approach. They organised an 'Open Greenhouse' format. During this period, participants could drop by, allowing the Garden Caretakers and site representatives to interact spontaneously with people passing by. Furthermore, Georg experimented with storytelling and language to attract people. One prompt that Georg used to invite people in was to shift the orientation to his artistic practice to his focus on exploring the ice age. Using flint stones, moss, and wax, he created collections of materials to speculate,

study, and sculpt, all while sharing stories of these ancient materials and their potential connection to Herlev and beyond, transforming the Droplet into a place where speculation and imagination could roam freely. Visitors could engage with the artist's stories and immerse themselves in the allure and mystery of seemingly passive material, brought to life through, for example, 'geofacts,' i.e., a formation challenging to distinguish from human-made artefacts. Naming a geofact sculpture was important to the artist, as it made the sculptor an active participant. While the artists use diverse tools, a shared methodology and purpose are visible across their practices. They work with our senses and stimulate them in ways that bring our attention to place.

Building relations with local institutions and an inclusive project design

Throughout the project, the site representatives worked on building relationships with local institutions and maintained an inclusive, open project design. They also explored ways of incorporating artists into the local context and bridging their tools with local institutions' needs. For example, a local kindergarten visited Georg in the Droplet in September 2023 to explore his collection of stones. The collaboration continued during the Desire experimentation, during which it became evident that the children enjoyed having a nearby outdoor space to play and engage with their environment in new and different ways. The fourth Garden Caretaker, Davide Ronco, invited the children to make bricks,

which had a transformative effect on one child who typically didn't like playing outside but suddenly found grounding in a brick-making process. When the third Garden Caretaker, Arendse Krabbe, arrived, a connection was established with students from the local Social,- Health- and Child Care college (SOSU).

They experienced a facilitated listening session with orchestration of sounds produced with artefacts and instruments sourced from the environment. The workshop proved to be challenging for some of the participants. Introducing meditation and exercises, participants were for example invited to sit on the ground. The Garden Caretaker met resistance and adapted the format to ease the participants, inviting those who did not want to sit on the ground, to stand up instead. Participants who eased into the session, expressed strong experiences that brought deep impact. A participant shared that slow movements, which were used in the exercise, had helped him better tune into his body and shift his perspective to better empathize with his patients. This exemplifies how artistic tools can be both impactful and demanding in surprising ways, and easing into them can bring discomfort, but those that do could leave with a lasting impact. The moment moreover offered a welcomed contrast to their everyday lives and demonstrated the nuance and vastness of artistic approaches and how they can be adapted to various groups.

While some impacts have unfolded through planned workshops, unexpected moments have also occurred, extending the artistic project's effect in unforeseen ways. Such precious moments are inevitable to control and plan for. The workshop with Mindsteps (a training centre for families with children with disabilities) is an example of how spontaneity and planning were balanced. Spontaneous, meaningful interactions highlight the importance of an open approach when bringing artistic practices to an urban transformation project.

Cross-disciplinary perspectives and encounters

With the fourth Garden Caretaker's arrival, the Droplet's wooden floor became covered in clay and soil. Davide Ronco introduced a new material and approach that differed from the previous Garden Caretakers' soft and sensitive methods of fostering sensory encounters with nonhumans. Participants were encouraged to look, touch and sense the soil, and this invitation involved engaging in a brick-making activity. They became part of an artwork - a blanket made of bricks formed from the local soil. The temporary nature of the piece was essential, marking a significant departure from the timeless nature of traditional buildings.

The piece's temporary nature was vital and provided a critical contrast to buildings' otherwise timeless nature and claim over land. Construction workers were also present throughout the Desire project, creating an atmosphere of diverse knowl-

edge and expertise working in parallel. A wheelbarrow became a concrete artefact that invited the Droplet's neighbours into the process, as the fourth Garden Caretaker needed to find a way to bring the soil to the greenhouse. During the exhibition, participants watched as construction workers joined and posed with the artwork in the meadow, which also serves as a commuting route to and from the construction site. The building ground has been an adjacent space for the Garden Caretakers' practice. The artist duo Daily Fiction (Tora Balslev and Felia Gram-Hanssen) used it as a setting for their film in the fifth Garden Caretaker residency. The Garden Caretakers further explored and incorporated the non-human elements and spaces as part of their practice. Participants were encouraged to observe and experience these spaces in their final workshop and exhibition, allowing room for speculation and imagination of how Linden trees could play a part for future inhabitants.

The Garden Caretakers proposed and encouraged to view the linden trees as elders, as sources of wisdom that must be protected and symbolically woven into the place in transition. A small yet significant gesture involved participants collecting seeds from the trees and offering them to the site's developers, ensuring the ongoing role of these non-human elements in the future of space.

Envisioning a Future Beyond Desire

Learnings and reflections from the processes initiated in Desire have amounted to three key foci coupled with the potential of activating artistic processes in a local context. These concerns reflect on how to expand and extend the Garden Caretaker concept, identify ways of translating the value and impact of art in urban development projects, and how such efforts might be leveraged and recognised as an integral part.

Recognizing the value and impact of artistic practices in local urban development contexts

The Desire project has provided the opportunity to realise the ambitions of the Garden Caretaker. The transformative experiences that participants have felt on their bodies and minds will live on, but the more who go through similar facilitated experiences, the greater the impact and potential for sensitising people to their surroundings and fellow species. Building on the project's learnings, there is ambition to continue leveraging and diffusing artists' impact in urban development projects. An enabling factor of this ambition includes compensating and recognising artists as a direct value-adding dimension. Expanding the effects requires resources and recognition.

Envisioning future caretaker residencies

The site representatives have already built on lessons learned to evolve and revitalize the Garden Caretaker concept in accessible ways, formats, and places. This includes, for example, pushing the boundaries of art through their work and finding ways to break down barriers and hierarchies of knowledge, ensuring that art is accessible to many while maintaining its authenticity. The experiences gained from the Garden Caretaker initiative have provided valuable insights into how these can be used to generate ideas and plan for future projects involving artists in urban development. One concrete output to consider is to allow for a deeper engagement with a specific location. Additionally,

there is potential in exploring hybrid practices, such as combining disciplines like biology and art. Moreover, it is crucial to remain immersed in the specific characteristics of a particular location when conceptualising artist experimentation, considering time and place as fundamental elements, as this will also influence opportunities for participation. Furthermore, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among Garden Caretakers could ensure that valuable insights from bringing creative experimentation to a place are disseminated and amplified.

Promoting, assessing, and translating impact of artistic experimentation

A primary focus on sharing the value of artists in urban transformation projects involves using tools and approaches to assess their contribution in ways that can be translated into quantifiable measures. The site representatives have been exploring methods to measure the impact using different statistics. However, caution must be exercised not to compromise the complex inner experiences that participants have testified to. Such qualitative and subjective dimensions relating to sensory, artistic, and emotional dimensions are difficult to simplify and quantify. Thus, ongoing work aims to experiment with new ways of expressing and translating outcomes using qualitative data and testimonials and to find compelling arguments to promote artistic practices. The goal is to effectively communicate the added value that has been created in a local context.

"The trees in one end of the courtyard are called the elders [...] Two children from the place are standing beneath the trees and reading a vow of support aloud to each other, with the promise of eternal friendship. This is the way of things here beneath the linden trees" (Madeleine Kate McGowan, NXT, 2024)



"Nature is present in the image of the city, and the Droplet has moved into the courtyard as a permanent fixture. Here, residents have taken ownership of the Droplet after a 5-year period of Garden Caretakers. The resident share their knowledge, experiences and learnings about the gardens, its inhabitants – human and non-human alike – and about life in Herlev with each other and newcomers." Siv Werner, NXT, 2024

Figure 32: Imaginary vision of Herlev Asphalt Factory

4

CONCLUSION

4. Conclusions

Eight ongoing urban transformation projects aim to promote and accelerate progress towards inclusive, regenerative, and transformative urban futures. The narratives in this whitepaper tell diverse stories about these projects and the role of the Desire project. As we conclude and reflect on the many lessons and outcomes, we summarise notable efforts to support place-based change in relation to the ambition of Desire and foster pathways towards sustainable futures.

To summarise, the outcomes of the place-based activities at the eight sites tap into existing urban transformations that vary in size, temporality, and maturity of existing communities to develop new tools and methods towards the sites' sustainable futures. The narratives emphasise the importance of organisations actively creating spaces for dialogue and presenting alternatives for the future development of living spaces. They highlight the need for new models for designing with people in a local context and the positive impact of combining expertise from external and internal organisations. Additionally, the narratives discuss forming new relations between participants and site representatives, fostering connections with local institutions, utilising green spaces for thriving social dynamics and nonhuman wellbeing, and paving the way for circular urban planning approaches. Lastly, they reflect on the need for new frameworks to monitor temporary space enhancements and explore new ways of expressing outcomes through qualitative data to promote artistic practices. The experiences from the sites show that using creative, artistic, and design methods can support deep and participatory engagement with places (Designing the Irresistible Circular Society, 2024). The importance of build-

ing relationships and trust to ensure the long-term sustainability of urban transformation efforts and finding the right formats for facilitating multistakeholder participation processes is important and should consider local context as this can lead to more effective and relevant outcomes and strengthen local actors' support and trust in organised initiatives (Ibid.).

In engaging with transformation processes that pursue sustainable futures, there is a need to engage with deep leverage points, such as mindsets, beliefs and ways of making sense of the world (Vervoort et al., 2024). As we have seen in the narratives, much of the work has focused on intervening in places of transformation and creating/facilitating the conditions for people to participate in the transformation processes. The narratives unfold ambitions concerning how to spark engagement, collaboratively imagine what the sites could become, and use creative, designerly, and artistic formats to unearth the plural ways and perspectives impacting the site's futures. The articulation of the Desire principles in the place-based activities on the eight demonstration sites must be understood through such ambitions. The principle of biodiversity has been expressed throughout the experimentation process as a wish to develop 'green spaces together' and awaken perspectives to more-than-human perspectives in the built environment. Many sites have worked with greening spaces, but the potential impact on biodiversity remains unknown after the experimentation phases. It has not been the primal focus – biodiversity has served as a frame for participatory processes and a long-term goal. The principle of fostering a circular mindset might manifest later in processes and potentially in the built environment. The

principle of fostering belonging and understanding belonging to place has been a shared focus for all sites, working on the cohesion of communities and identifying areas of opportunity. The organisation's active and sustained engagement with the sites was required to identify and craft moments supporting the movement to enact a more sustainable future. One underexplored dilemma when working with belonging is that some site organisations did not necessarily sense belonging to the places up front. A phase of familiarisation with the places for individuals/organisations to drive place-based change might be needed to see and act on their potential. Adjacent to this point is that when framing participatory efforts, it is important to listen deeply, find formats for participants to express their needs, and use such insight to design meaningful interactions and initiatives. Doing this builds relationships and trust and nurtures ownership, as participants are invited to cultivate and co-design a specific outcome. This also shows how the organisations who have organised the place-based activities have worked with a sense of emergence, allowing their approach and plans to be impacted by their engagement with the places and their transformations. The principle of aesthetics can be linked to design as various approaches that gather, create, frame and facilitate spaces to support those involved in changing and exploring situations. Aesthetics have not found their way to the physical designs of the sites. However, aesthetics can be interpreted as a layer to participatory processes and an outcome that brings awareness to our senses. Sensory impressions have been linked to a more receptive awareness (Liljefors, 2019). This aspect is important in transformation processes that invite us to rethink our relations and pursue alternatives. In Herlev, aesthetic expressions

could be found in the Garden Caretaker role, who used specific clothes to make it visible and mark that a new role was being activated to bring forth a multispecies perspective through artistic processes. For practitioners working with or within urban transformations who are curious to learn about, apply and work with Desire's ambitions, the Desire toolbox can be accessed here:

www.irresistiblecircularsociety.eu

Lastly, we offer some thoughts on the limitations and the authors' role in the project. The voices represented in the narratives are mainly based on the viewpoints and experiences of the site organisations facilitating the demonstrations and have been qualified through discussions with us. In this respect, our role has focused on strengthening the analytical outcomes and synthesis of site experiences through our engagements across sites. Our role as researchers at Aalborg University has been to facilitate, organise and deploy the experimentation phase of the project, where it has been important to recognise that plural perspectives are always inherent in sites of transformation.

The following and final chapter offers another perspective on Desire's outcomes in relation to the future role of architects. Here, author Vibeke Grupe from the Danish Association of Architectural Firms shares insights that build on learnings from three architectural company members involved in the experimentation and activities at three Danish sites. The Danish Association of Architectural Firms was involved in the project to provide specialised knowledge in support of the activities at the demonstration sites.

THE FUTURE ROLE OF ARCHITECTS

5

5. The Future Role of Architects in Urban Transformations: Building and Refurbishing from a Life-Cycle Perspective

Author: Vibeke Grupe (Danish Association of Architectural Firms)

The long-term vision for a Circular Economy in the building and refurbishment industry focuses on utilising regenerative energy sources, maximising the use of existing building resources, and avoiding primary production of building materials. This approach addresses climate challenges, resource scarcity, and biodiversity crises, ensuring a better environment for future generations.

Achieving this vision requires a systemic shift where circular principles are integrated across the building and refurbishment value chain and social strata and sectors. Concrete goals for reduction, preservation, recycling, and regeneration are needed to create common objectives. Decoupling growth from the consumption of natural resources and reducing energy use is essential to minimise environmental impact, resource loss, and structural changes.

Engaging civil society is crucial for creating the movement needed for this transformation, making the human-centred social dimension of sustainability as important as environmental and economic aspects. Without this focus, the transition will not happen. Social value in construction and renovation projects encompasses the utility, significance, and benefit they bring to society, the economy, and human life. Without assessing social value creation and impacts, long-term social solutions might not be prioritised, leading to negative consequences for building operations and usability over time.

However, integrating sustainability in building and refurbishment is challenging due to current silo thinking, linear processes, and a reluctance to invest in sustainable solutions due to unclear terminology and

Danish Association of Architectural Firms (Danske Ark) is a trade association with approx. 700 member firms, equivalent to 95% of all Danish architectural Firms. The organization represents the interests of architectural practices in Denmark and work towards promoting the architectural profession, providing support and resources to member firms, advocating for relevant policies, and fostering collaboration within the industry. Danske Ark has been involved in the Desire project as expert organisation.

changing fashions. Related to this is the conventional understanding of social aspects, which suggests that such aspects must be quantifiable to be addressed. In the worst-case scenario, this could mean that the quality of construction and renovation is not improved.

The Desire initiative has explored user involvement in integrating cultural aspects of art, design, and architecture early in the design phases, which is uncharted territory for all involved parties. This exploration aims to verbalise requirements that enable the evaluation of social value creation from a broader perspective. Tools and methods to support evidence-based decision-making and assess value creation along the value chain, especially in design processes, need to be developed and tested.

The future role of architects in urban transformation projects, especially given the experiments and activities in the Desire initiative, including the involvement of three architectural firms at three Danish Desire sites, should evolve around this. Architectural companies have a significant role in the regenerative transi-

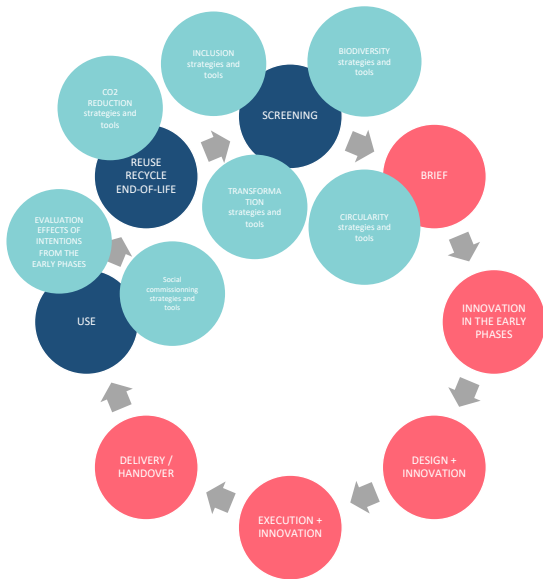


Figure 33: This illustration derives from the PhD. Thesis “Circular Transition and Affordable Housing. Generating Social, Environmental and Economic Value by Design” (by Vibeke Grupe Larsen).

tion of the building industry through their ability to rethink systems by design and facilitate participatory/co-design processes that can accelerate and improve the transition’s efficiency. They must meet this challenge to strengthen their influence and market share while enhancing overall cultural heritage.

Approach

A circular process model was used to define optimal user involvement times and methods in Desire, visualising how early user involvement in the ‘Screening’ and ‘Brief’ phases can form a basis for ongoing user engagement (Social Commissioning) throughout the design and building process. This model also supports post-occupancy evaluation during the use phase. The model helped recruit three Danish architectural expert companies to identify and verbalise end-user needs,

determine who could fulfil them evaluatively, and specify the necessary expertise. The companies possess expertise in CO2 reduction, circularity, biodiversity, inclusion, user-driven processes, transformation, and Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE). Notably, all three firms are multidisciplinary, employing professionals like anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, landscape architects, and biologists alongside architects and planners. They were engaged in three Danish pilot projects to test end-user involvement in sustainable area development decision-making.

The goal was to articulate services for transforming an existing linear phase model into a future circular phase model, viewing building and refurbishment from a life-cycle perspective. It also aimed to evaluate value creation to clarify its significance, enhance design processes, and provide opportunities for assessing social value creation in pursuit of the Irresistible Circular Society, Desire’s guiding work ambitions.

This process aimed to allow companies to define strategic measures in the early project phases and evaluate efforts to develop attractive cities and buildings. These efforts engaged citizens in a holistic, circular understanding and behaviour in built and natural environments.

The architectural companies were tasked with delivering generic recommendations and principles for creating better social and biological conditions, using aesthetics as a design driver at the Desire sites, and describing possible evaluation efforts with indicators and points. They also provided goal-oriented input demonstrating how recommendations and principles translate into specific projects. For example, in one of the projects, the architects went on a walk in Kalundborg with residents to look at urban furniture and spatial sequences. During the walk, they discussed

immediate thoughts and ideas, which the architects later tested 1:1 in mock-ups together with the participants to assess what could form the basis for the specifications in the upcoming construction program. In another project, the architects engaged local school-children in workshops to brainstorm ideas for park areas and play spaces, aiming to address requirements related to the experience of biodiversity and the use of recycled building materials in the outdoor areas between the buildings.

Evaluation interviews with Desire project management, pilot project leaders, and the involved architectural firms revealed that:

- End-users value architects for their holistic thinking and ability to communicate complex issues.
- End-users feel better prepared to specify and answer requirements and plan future processes.
- User involvement procedures have improved.
- Knowledge about fields crucial for circular societies, such as biodiversity and regenerative design, has advanced, facilitating dialogues between clients and architects about value creation.
- Architectural firms are better at listening to clients and users, translating complex issues into visuals, and supporting decision-making in planning processes.
- Firms are continually learning to meet the complexity of client and user requirements.
- Architectural firms reflect on adapting to clients and acting as facilitators, mediators, and change agents.

These insights support the potential for social value creation and the importance of addressing such issues in strategic planning and follow-up through systematic evaluation - the Desire intervention aimed to assess the feasibility of transforming existing linear phase models into circular ones. The focus should be on considering building and refurbishment from a life-cycle perspective to develop the architectural profession's skills and competencies to evaluate value creation.

The architectural profession can advance by emphasising research and evidence, particularly in creating social value. By gathering data on user experiences, energy consumption, and productivity, architects can enhance their credibility and distinguish themselves within the value chain. For instance, architects measured how many local residents moved through an area, where they walked, how fast they moved, where they paused, and how long they stayed. This analysis was conducted to evaluate the area's attractiveness and to define it as a functional requirement in the forthcoming construction program.

Additionally, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between architects and experts such as anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and biologists is essential. This collaboration helps document the significance of social and human science initiatives, which is critical for social commissioning and post-occupancy evaluation. Strengthening these connections further enhances the profession's capacity to assess and understand the social impact of architectural designs.

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[ere-6616054/](https://pixabay.com/da/photos/robot-maskine-robotteknologi-7925618/)

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Picture by Skalgunbar available at: <https://skalgunbar.se/2012/09/05/176-here-is-h-f-and-e-during-a-short-walk-in-the-forest/>

All Tree pictures available at: <https://meyer.dk/>

Figure 8 - The collage contains the following images under creative common licenses:

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Picture by af lhs_333333 available on Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/da/photos/hill-grusvej-meadow-eg-blue-sky-3988897/>

Picture by Freddie Ramm available on Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/selective-focus-photo-of-blue-and-white-flowers-field-51548/>

Picture by Mrcutout available on: <https://www.mrcutout.com/80-cutouts/objects-cutouts/6637-bench-0043>

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Picture by JJ Harrison from wiki commons. Available at:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oryctolagus_cuniculus_Tasmania_2_\(cropped\).jpg#filelinks](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oryctolagus_cuniculus_Tasmania_2_(cropped).jpg#filelinks)

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Picture by Skalgubbar. Available at: <https://skalgunbar.se/2017/10/18/339-p-and-kids-on-the-way-from-the-train-station-in-frauental/>

Picture by Skalgubbar. Available at: <https://skalgunbar.se/2014/11/05/281-i-had-a-walk-with-a-t-and-the-dogs-to-the-sea/>

Picture by Skalgubbar. Available at: <https://skalgunbar.se/2015/04/09/291-e-and-j-having-an-illegal-picnic-on-the-18th-floor-on-a-manchattan-roof-top/>

Picture by MrCutOut Available at: <https://www.mrcutout.com/78-cutouts/people-cutouts/9712-woman-walking-0434>

Figure 12 - The collage contains the following images under creative common licenses:

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Picture by MrCutOut Available at: <https://www.mrcutout.com/82-cutouts/animals-cutouts/9280-bird-0099>

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Picture by Rawpixel available on: https://www.rawpixel.com/search/brown%20fabric%20texture?page=1&path=_topics&sort=curated

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Picture by Cbaile19 (CC1)
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All Tree pictures available at: <https://meye.dk/>

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Picture by Karsten Madsen available on:
<https://comevisit.dk/id/kerteminde#gallery-2>

Picture by czu_czu_PL available on Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/da/photos/eng-blomster-mark-valmuer-valmue-1344617/>

Picture by MrCutOut available on: <https://www.mrcutout.com/78-cutouts/people-cutouts/11165-group-of-friends-with-a-computer-learning-0005>

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Picture by Karsten Madsen available on: <https://comevisit.dk/id/kerteminde#gallery-2>

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Picture by Luke Lawreszuk available on: <https://www.sprayed-out.com/countryside-nature-summer-landscape/>

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