

# In Completed

on-going open - ended designed places  
in Den Helder



IN COMPLETED  
THE ON - GOING OPEN - ENDED DESIGNED PLACES IN DEN HELDER

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*exhibition brochure*

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# INTRODUCTION

'...To give a perspective  
and an opportunity to  
look at such spaces: an  
idea, an interpretation, an  
unstructured text'

The urban spaces that arise as a result of urban shrinkage and decay are loosely defined (*Franck & Stevens, 2007*). The ambiguity of these spaces provides a potential outlet for accidental or spontaneous encounters, informal activities and alternatives to our increasingly commodified, controlled and privatised 'open' urban spaces. Many topographic unions, particularly those that are easily accessible and large enough to contain interesting physical features, have the potential to become 'dynamic 'indeterminate spaces'' or 'slot areas' (free zones).



figure 1 - 1 historical leftover  
in Fort Dirksz Admiraal  
photographed by author

As undefined ambiguous places, these sites are highly inclusive of environmental renewal within and outside themselves. This means that interstitial sites temporarily or non-temporarily allow for any movement to take place in the city. The design task begins with an urban memory path based on void and leftover places.

The understanding of the sites as carrying memories depends on the audience. They can be anyone, human or non-human. So, let's make the audience the players. And we, the designers, are the directors.

## 1.1 DEN HELDER

### LOCATION

Den Helder is the northernmost mainland town and municipality in the Dutch province of North Holland. During World War II, it was considered one of the most heavily bombed areas. Due to its advantageous location on the border, a strong fortress was built here during the many wars. As a result, many war relics have been left behind. The years of war have left Den Helder with a chaotic urban fabric.

Today, due to the transformation of its economic and trade structure, Den Helder can no longer rely on a single heavy industry (e.g. shipbuilding). The city has fallen into decline and neglect, becoming a stopover for visitors to Texel Island.



figure 1 - 2 landuse and structure of current Den Helder

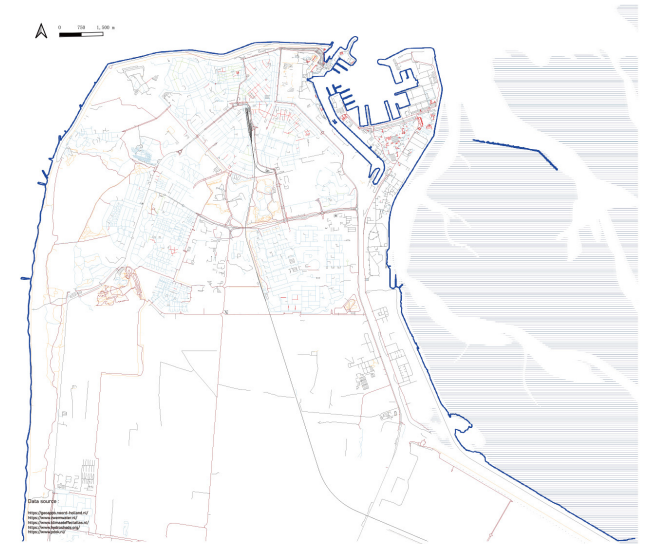
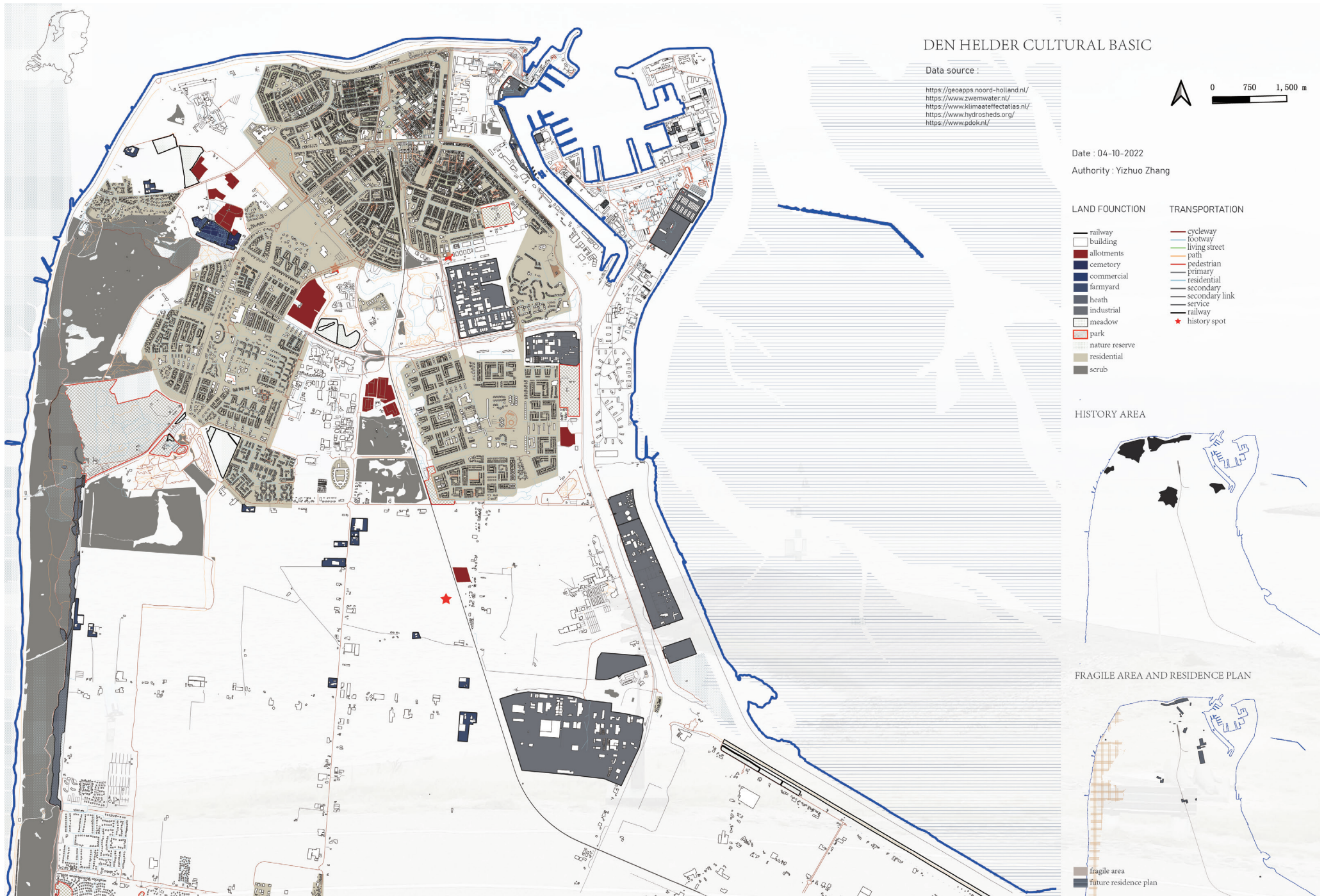


figure 1 - 3 location of Den Helder, Netherlands



made by author, based on source :<https://www.canonvannederland.nl/noord-holland/noordkop/den-helder-zee-en-marinehaven>





## 1.2 A CRITIQUE OF BROAD HISTORY NARRATIVE

WHAT WE ARE FACING ?

### 1.2.1 URBAN DECAY & URBAN SHRINKING

Its strategic location as a naval base and maritime logistics brought prosperity to the city, especially in the post-war reconstruction phase. Den Helder is facing urban decline as a result of de-industrialisation. In the 20 years since the 1980s, the city's population has declined by around 4,000 people. The forecast is that this contraction will continue in the coming decades.

This is partly due to a lack of positive and enthusiastic urban perceptions among the indigenous population, with the labour force aged 20-65 moving out of the city. On the other hand, Den Helder is not seen as an attractive area for new residents to settle in due to the negative perception of the city by the foreign population. It is often perceived as a grey city, with its post-World War II buildings in shambles and the constant strong winds blowing in the streets.

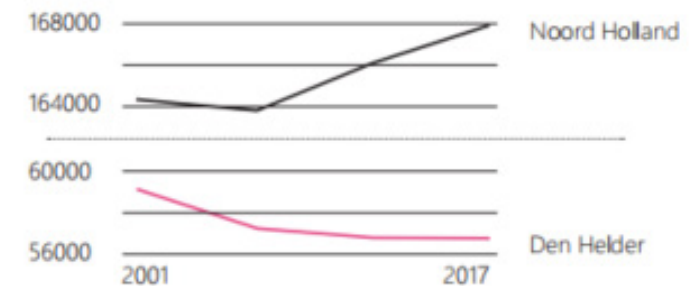
There used to be around 30.000 marine jobs, however now that number has diminished to around 10.000

This has brought about an unstoppable urban shrinking and decay.



figure 1 - 5 urban decay of Den Helder  
photographed by author

### Declining population growth



### Declining employment rate

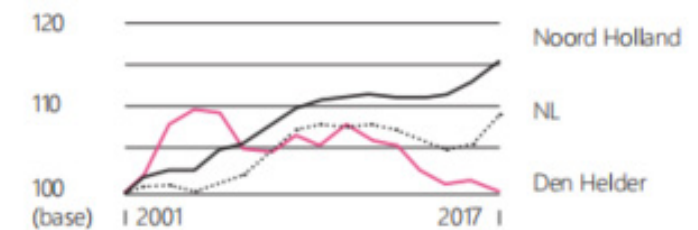


figure 1 - 6 urban shrinking of Den Helder  
source: Long-Term Development Perspectives in the Slow Crisis of Shrinkage: Strategies of Coping and Exiting, Ruiying Liu ( Aug 2022)



## 1.2.2 CURRENT STRATEGY

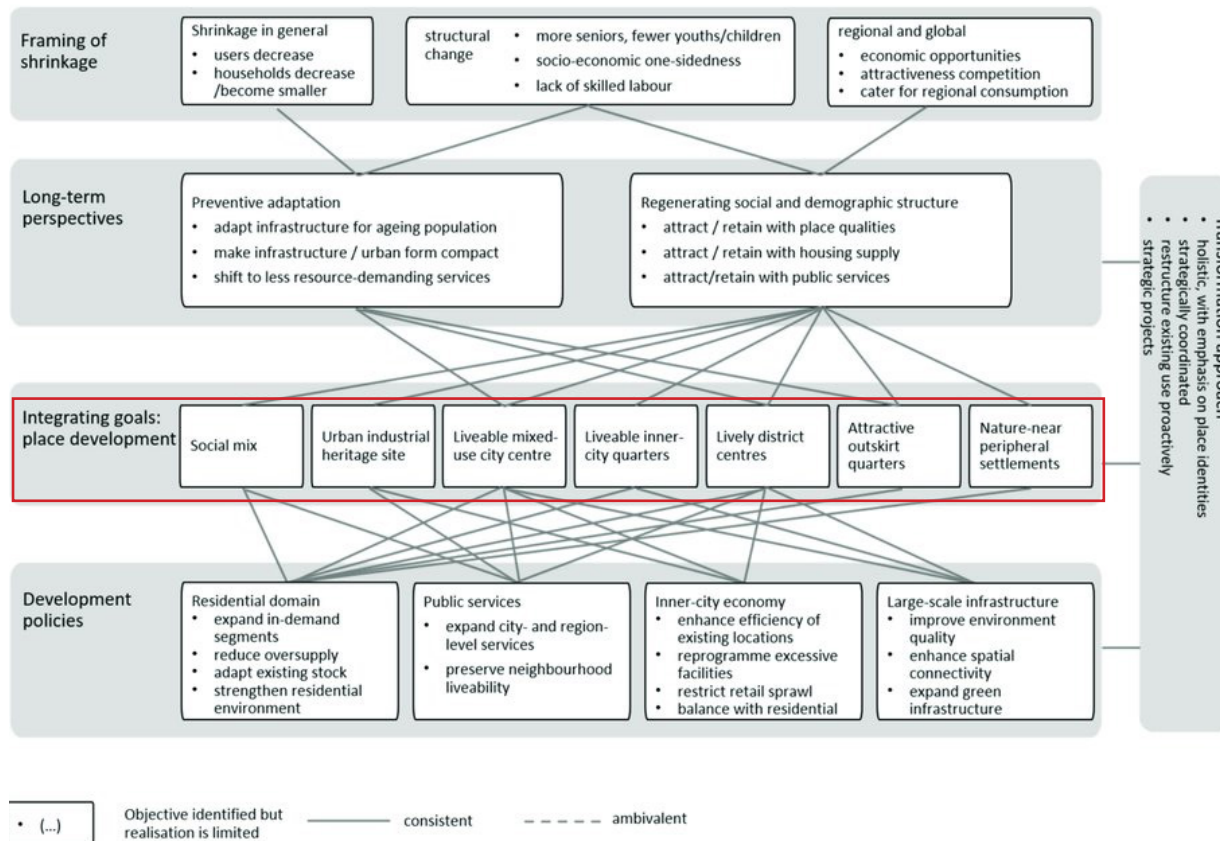


figure 1 - 7 Structure of development strategy in Den Helder and relative population change

source :Long-Term Development Perspectives in the Slow Crisis of Shrinkage: Strategies of Coping and Exiting,Ruiying Liu( Aug 2022),[figure 7]

## SPATIAL STRATEGY 1 --- ENHANCE PLACE IDENTITY



source :<https://www.denhelder.online/en/marinemuseum>

'On the face of it, the municipality seems to be moving in the right direction with a policy called 'quality over quantity': Den Helder city centre is being renewed and policy makers are focusing on Den Helder's 'DNA': branding the city as "Den Helder at Sea", profiting from its unique location and its long history. Renovating the historic harbour and investing in its visitor-oriented presentation will help to make the city a more active and pleasant place to live.' (Ruiying Liu, Aug 2022)

## SPATIAL STRATEGY 2 --- BUILD LIVEABLE & ATTRACTIVE INHABITAT

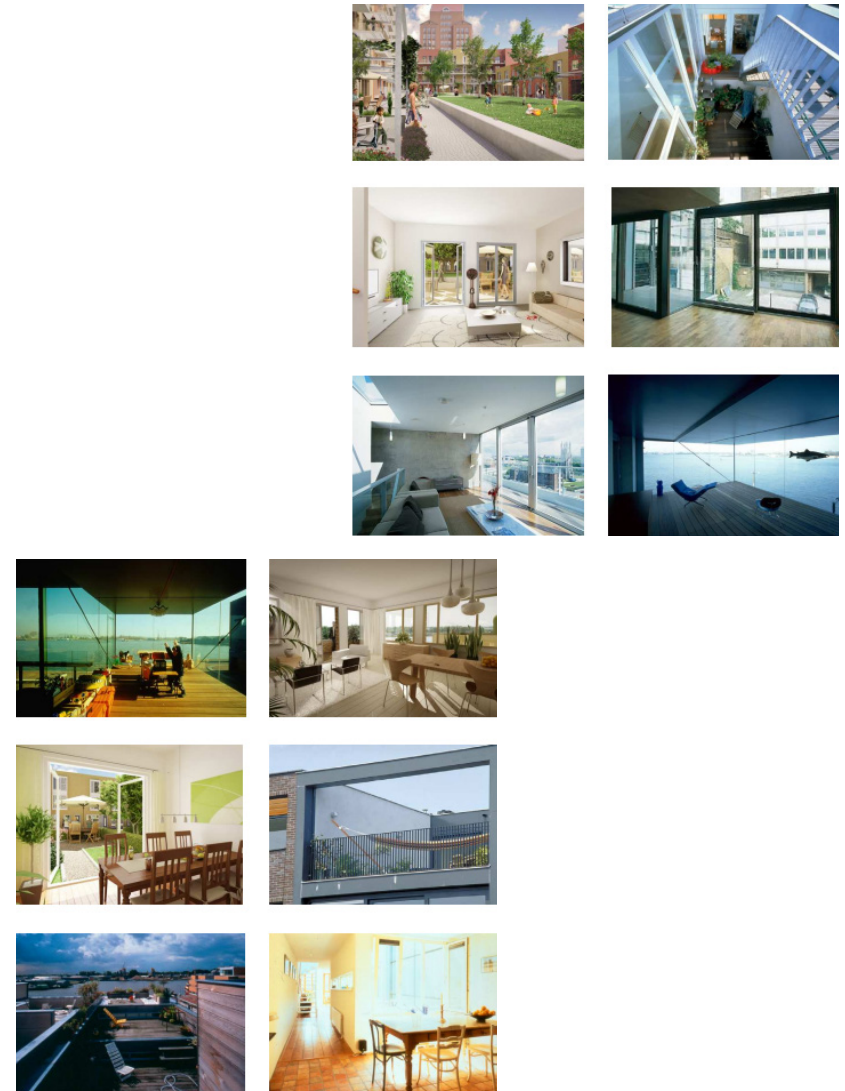
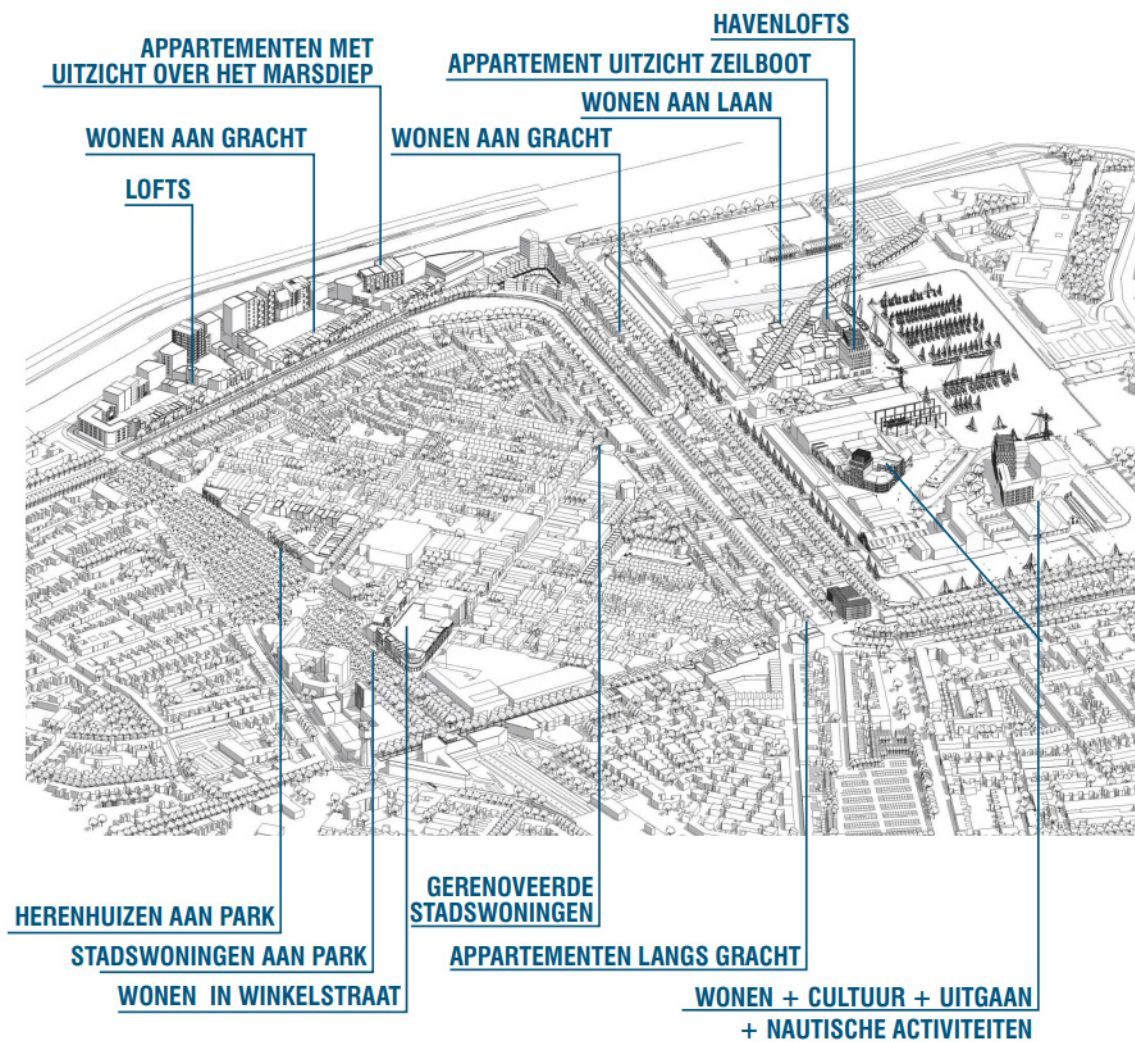


figure 1 - 8 spatial development strategy in Den Helder city center  
source : <https://zeestad.nl/wp-content/uploads/2.-Gebiedsvisie.pdf>



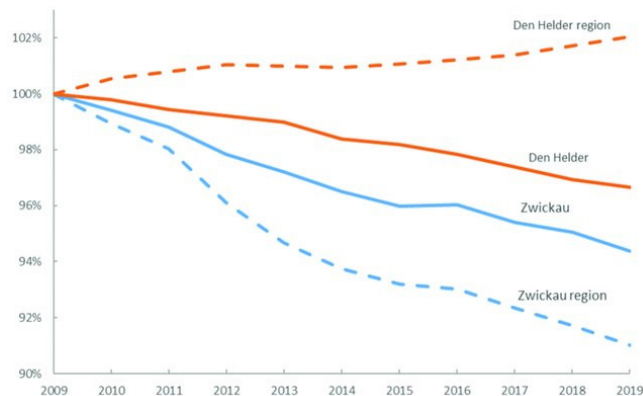
### 1.2.3 CURRENT SITUATION

However, existing top-down policies have not fully curbed urban decay and shrinkage. Spatial transformation alone has limitations in enhancing the spiritual connection between the city and its inhabitants. The city's long history and cultural heritage still serves a specific population.

Den Helder is losing the vital value and vitality it once had and is being forgotten

figure 1 - 9 relative population change in Den Helder and its region

source :*Long-Term Development Perspectives in the Slow Crisis of Shrinkage: Strategies of Coping and Exiting*, Ruiying Liu (Aug 2022), [figure 6]



## Shrinking Den Helder: The Dutch Detroit at Sea?

December 2, 2013 By Jolien Groot

3

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59



Many urban and regional development theories focus on the growth of urban regions. But what about regions that shrink? In recent years, an increasing number of urban planners have concerned themselves with how cities shrink and what should be done about that. Shrinking cities are a relevant research topic: a German project called *Shrinking Cities* found that over 450 cities (with of over 100,000 inhabitants) worldwide lost at least a tenth of their population over the past six decades.

This blog entry focuses on a case of urban shrinkage in the Netherlands: Den Helder. Never heard of it? That is possible, since it is only a small city in a small country. As a native *Den Helderian*, let me shortly introduce the city to you. Den Helder is a small city (population of 56.739) in the uttermost northern part of the province North Holland in the Netherlands, surrounded by the sea.



figure 1 - 10 urban shrinking news in Den Helder  
source :<http://theprotocity.com/shrinking-cities-the-curious-case-of-den-helder/>

#### 1.2.4 DISCONNECTION BETWEEN GRAND MEMORY & DAILY BEHAVIOUR

However, the decay and shrinking caused by urban transformation is also one stage in the city development. What really matters is the ability of residents to reconnect with the identity of the city. Unfortunately, in Den Helder, the vast amount of empty space and derelict structures brought about by urban decay and shrinkage has left a disconnect between urban history and personal memory. Residents are unable to make a meaningful connection to their city's past, leading to a sense of alienation.

Den Helder's existing historical narrative is divorced from local forms of memory practices and denies the commemorative value of everyday life. The historical places themselves are ignored by everyday life and the results of the renovation make it difficult to establish a connection between the user and the site. In these historical narratives, the users are not only passively accepting history, but also passively accepting transformation.

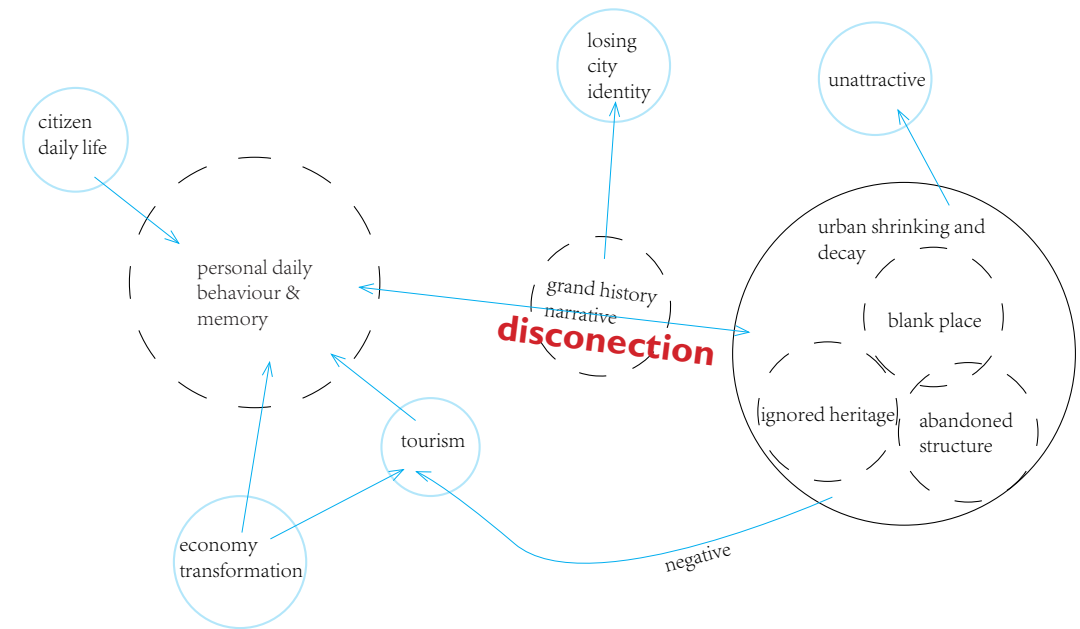


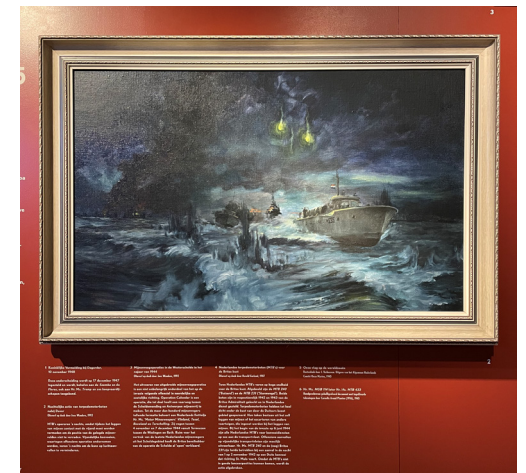
figure 1 - 11 problem statement  
made by author

## FROZEN MEMORIAL OUT OF DAILY MEMORY & BEHAVIOUR

The city of Den Helder is full of a variety of historical narratives. Since the Second World War, museums and monuments have been built in an effort to preserve the city's memory. Remnants of the city's history from the last century and even earlier can be found everywhere in Den Helder. Most of the ruins of the stelling line have been preserved. However, what will happen in a few decades? The new urban structure overwrites the existing water lines, traffic routes and roads, and the buildings will be knocked down and rebuilt. When we look at the map again in a new urban landscape, will we still be able to fully understand these historical sites?

As the surrounding area continues to change and develop, these preserved historic places are becoming increasingly difficult to be accepted by the city's growth and new generations. The emphasis on the preservation of historic sites and the best efforts to keep them 'clean' are at the same time depriving them of their growth, and time seems to be frozen here. What we are preserving is a formal memory vessel of history, but it is increasingly lifeless and out of place.

figure 1 - 12 historical narrative in Den Helder  
photographed by author





## IGNORATION OF HERITAGE AS REMINDERS OF HISTORY

Historic places are themselves part of the urban process and the history they carry makes them special and important. Historic places should therefore be transformed in a way that is respectful. In fact, however, all too often functional conversions inevitably erase history altogether. Like Willemsoord, this old shipyard will become an entertainment centre, and we see cinemas and fine restaurants being built. It is a transformation of a historical place. Yet a few generations later, young people are beginning to see it as a mere place of entertainment. In the future, the scattered ruins of Willemsoord remind us that history once existed. But it is difficult for new users to understand the history of the site anymore. History and memory become two completely separate existences.

In this respect, I find that this phenomenon is not only present in the area of the site, but is widespread across urban processes. Just like the redevelopment of residential areas from the city centre to the northern waterfront, more and more voids are emerging. They appear and disappear in a short space of time, being replaced by entirely new buildings or other functional spaces. Each void

heralds the death of a part of the old city. The history of this shell-damaged neighbourhood can only be glimpsed in the grove of monuments on the street corners. Then one day, when the place is refreshed, it will be transformed into a delightful waterfront neighbourhood, a huge container for everyday life. The histories are gradually blurred and covered over until they disappear completely. The new urban look, both in terms of structures and new building facades, completely erases the history that was once there.

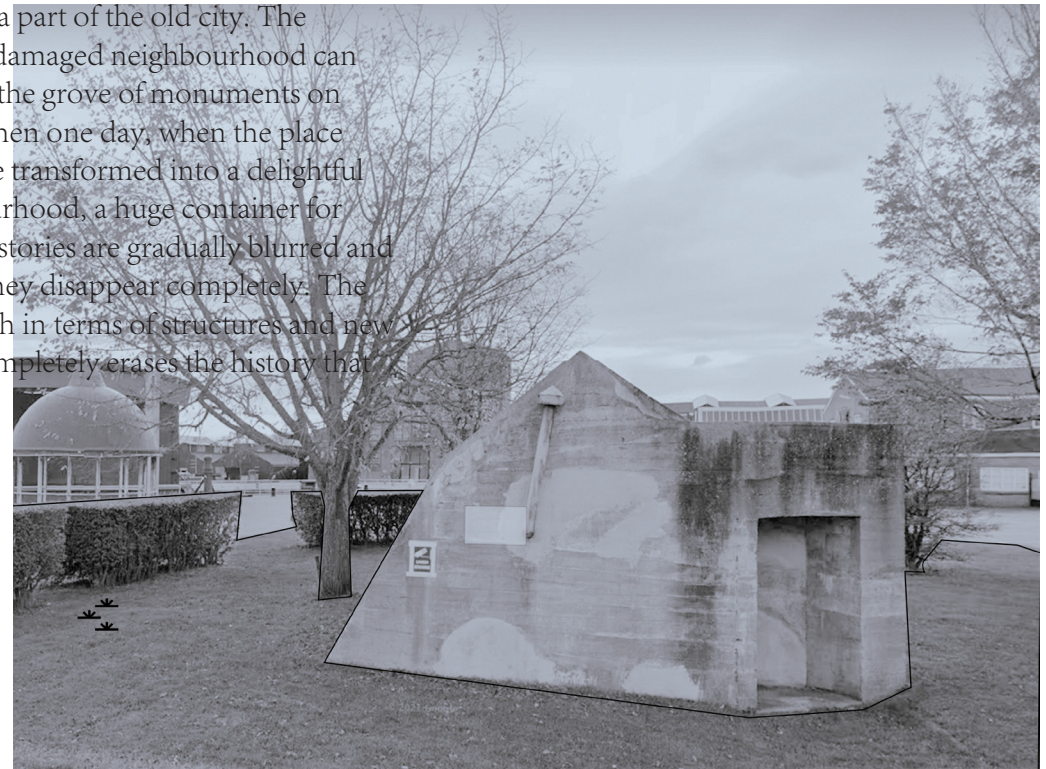


figure 1 - 13 bunker in Willemsoord  
photographed by author, 2022 October

## 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

### 1.3.1 OBSERVATION

From empty buildings and ruins to a variety of vegetation and other natural features, these spaces, which have not been assigned a clear function, have attracted creative, unintentional and unplanned use by many people and non-human creatures. The traces, species and markings within the site are a metaphor for the site's rich history. Neglected, these spaces are often left undisturbed. They undergo ecological processes that are rare in modern cities and are often appropriated by non-human life forms. And unlike urban green spaces and parks, these spaces have a less defined nature. Whether such spaces exist in the long or short

term, their contents and the generation of activities are indeterminate. Some are havens for wildlife, becoming ecological territories that suddenly appear in an environment surrounded by buildings; others are littered with rubbish and construction waste, or artificial structures that have been left unused for a long time. What is certain is that they are visually out of place in their surroundings.





### 1.3.2 OPPOTUNITY

I was attracted by these little pieces of leftover and void places. The places are ignored and forgotten by the city. They permeate in everyone's daily life. On the way to work, in our regular routine, we often pass by these small, inconspicuous spaces.

These small spaces are filled with chaos and desolation. A lot of materials are piled up here. In other abandoned places, I could also see some elements related to the history of war, such as some bunker, or a gun emplacement.

I began to wonder about the experiences of these urban abandoned places. Why are they here? Why are they forgotten? And what does their presence represent?

Furthermore, can we transform the undefined places in Den Helder by inviting the public participation, to reconnect their memory with the grand history?

figure 1 - 14 & 15 void in city center  
photographed by author, 2022 September





## UNDEFINED PLACES AS CONNECTION



figure 1 - 16 undefined place in Den Helder  
photographed by Pjotr Boomgaard, 2022 September

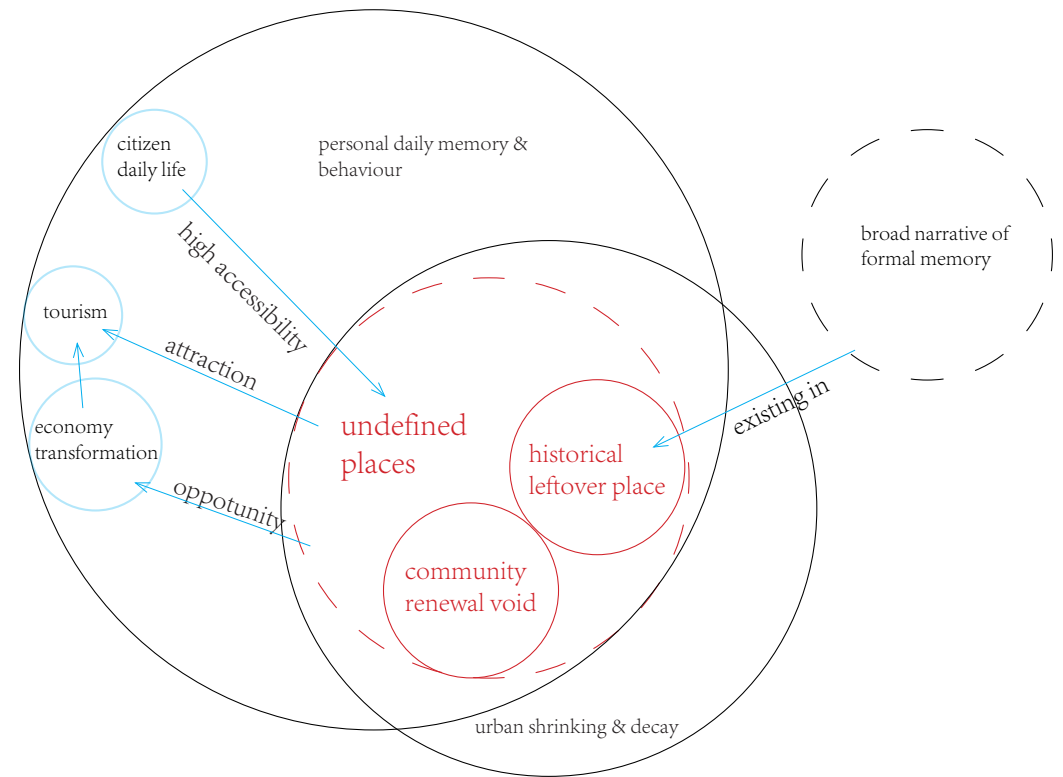


figure 1 - 17 fascination statement  
made by author

## UNDEFINED PLACES IN DEN HELDER

✚ community renewal void (ephemeral)

✚ historical leftover (permanent)



figure 1 - 18 undefined places in Den Helder  
made by author

### 1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can we transform the **undefined places** with public participation by practical design, and create a stronger link between the public, the place and the grand formal history of Den Helder by inducing daily memory in this process?

#### SUB RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How to understand the grand formal memory of Den Helder?
2. What qualities and components can be used to pick up potential undefined places in Den Helder?
3. How to understand and record the people's daily behavior towards the undefined places?
4. What is the relation between undefined places and the production of memory?
5. What can be the role of design to strengthen the qualities of undefined places for enabling and evoking the production and crystallisation of memory?

#### 1.3.4 DESIGN VISION

Therefore, I opened an experiment. While still respecting the existing renovation programme, I add a layer to the historical place and the renovation process to complement the spiritual connection between the place and the people. In this layer, I encourage the participation of the users and emphasise the history. Both the outcome of the practice and the process are an important part of the research.

- community renewal void



public participation

community garden



small scale memorial

- historical leftover



public participation

heritage park



regional scale memorial

OPEN - ENDED  
DESIGN WITH  
MEMORIAL LENS

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### literature

<site specificity in contemporary large-scale harbour transformation projects>  
<Terrain vague: Interstices at the edge of the pale>  
<Disclosing interstices: Open-ended design transformation of urban leftover spaces>

<Spatial recall: Memory in architecture and Landscape>  
<Place and Pacelessness>  
<Non-Places>

<Constructing Urban Cultural Landscapes & Living in the palimpsests: A case of Moscow City (Russia) distant residential areas>  
<Deconstructing heritage: Enabling a Dynamic Materials Practice>

<What is Bottom - Up Design?>  
<Urban resilience: A study of leftover spaces and play in dense city fabric>

### aspect

character of undefined places

how to evoke the personal memory  
memorial lens

how to keep personal memory physically  
guided open - ended design

### what I learn

The **vagueness** of undefined places allow more incredible movements happen. We can disclose the places by layers of :physical, flux and immaterial. The understanding of the places differed from **the time, spatial change and individual variety**.

When we evoke a memory, we are in fact evoking personal emotions arising from **actions** related to events in the place. At the same time, the **objects** play important role in the memory evoking. Our **recollections** are situational and spatialized memories.

**Palimpsest** as analysis approach  
**Deconstruction** as design transformation.

1. incredible 2. review + implementation  
3. direct user involvement 4. Guerilla maintainance  
social framework

## 2.1 VAGUENESS OF UNDEFINED PLACES

In <*Terrain Vague*>, Ignasi de Solà -Morales describes the remaining spaces that are difficult to categorize. He uses the term ‘terrain vague’ to refer to ‘empty, abandoned spaces where a series of events have taken place,’ claiming that they can provide ‘planned, efficient and legitimate cities’.

Since its launch in 1995, several books and collections have been published, continuing to examine gap spaces from different angles and with different emphases. These publications have advanced the study of urban interstices through different strategies: they have developed a series of specific terms and research approaches through their multiple characteristics and applications (i.e., urban voids, loose spaces, ambiguous spaces) to cater to the different physical manifestations of the topography that these spaces reveal.

The two types of undefined spaces that I am interested in Den Helder are also categorized under this category of interstitial spaces. Community void and historical leftovers both exhibit today’s free state due to a series of development processes in the city and are ignored by people’s daily life. On the one

hand, due to their rich processes, both sites present a multi-layered spatial structure and material legacies from different periods, making them important for triggering memories. On the other hand, their spatial systems possess complex, fragmented, and sometimes contradictory meanings due to their topographically ambiguous properties. This makes it tolerant of spontaneous, informal activities and thus has a special spatial potential. The community void and the historical leftover are interspersed with important parts of our everyday environment and contain complex resources related to the city’s historical context.

At the same time, these two types of spaces are in a constant state of change or even on the verge of disappearing due to the future development plans of the city. The ambiguity of these two types of spaces is not without purpose under conditions related to macro-memory; their important cultural role is to give space for the display of new social purposes. This requires not tying too tightly the form, use, and meaning of the public spaces transformed by void and leftover. Recognizing people’s active, even transgressive, participation in space is beneficial

for the preservation and transmission of memory. By facilitating users’ appropriation of undefined spaces, the memory connotations embedded in the space are continuously received and created by individuals. (*Patrick Barron & Manuela Mariani, 2014*)

With this in mind, I set out to explore a design approach that would keep the memory content of these spaces from being abandoned in the process of urban development, and maintain a balance between total neglect and free use.

## 2.2 TWO WAYS FOR THE THINKING

### 2.2.1 PALIMPSEST AS APPROACH

*history of place, change over time & spatial*

The historical context of a site is considered to be the 'bass line' of the city. Modernity does not obliterate them, but pushes them into the background. They have survived like the words that express them and will tell them in the future. They are like palimpsest, on which the confusing game of identity and relationships is constantly rewritten. (Marc Augé, 2009)

Since the 1970s, we have used the metaphor of the 'rewritten book' to describe a polyphonic cultural landscape. Interventions in new cultural/human geography, semiotics and regional geography theory have helped to see each layer of the 'rewritten book' as a constructed context, centred on the dominant representation of a place. Real and imagined landscapes are considered as rewritten texts lived through everyday practices and are seen as processes of (re)construction of new layers.

1. on the temporal scale, palimpsest contains the deconstruction of the different time uses. reading through the layers facilitates an understanding of the historical and cultural values of the site.
2. on the social scale, differences in the 'interpretation' of the landscape by social groups

and individuals trigger the coexistence of multiple visions and the influence of different cultures on the landscape

3. at the spatial scale, different levels or fragments of spatial composition come into conflict, questioning and arguing with each other. palimpsest helps to understand the separate meanings and mutual influences of the multiple voices of landscape composition.

In all the changing socio-economic patterns, some elements of the landscape remain constant. Others are forgotten or disrupted by newly emerging forms. Some have been replaced by other objects. Still others retain their physical structure, but their meaning has changed. What has value is retained and what has no value disappears. But the value system is also changing. Some elements are considered valuable in times of war, then neglected in times of urban renewal, and become valuable again after the city's transition to cultural industries.

Here, an effective step towards understanding a cultural landscape site using a hierarchical reading palimpsest is proposed:

1. find the distinctive attributes at the centre of the narrative of each layer of the palimpsest, giving primacy to the most important or meaningful characteristics of each area
2. understand the secondary characteristics of the site based on the connections within the site and between the site and its exterior, and understand the palimpsest of the site from a multidimensional perspective with the help of a unified symbolic representation (e.g. nautical elements, war elements, etc.). Complex spatial compositions can all be reduced to a specific meaning of a certain symbol to be understood and generalised.
3. Acknowledge the contradictory and heterogeneous nature of urban social space today. That is, each place and each moment exists only within a whole, linking and differentiating it from other places and moments through contrast and opposition.
4. Ultimately, the focus shifts from the hierarchy of spatial constructions to the hierarchy of life and experience. That is, how these complex palimpsest are perceived by the present user. (Mitin, I., 2018)



## 2.2.2 HERITAGE DECONSTRUCTION

*historical composition and objects evoke memory*

Deconstruction, also known as manual demolition. That is, the dismantling of a building in the reverse order of construction, preserving its materials for reuse. This emphasizes heritage as a dynamic cultural process rather than a product.

The traditional heritage reuse process based on structural authenticity is central to traditional definitions of historical integrity, which use these definitions to utilize the chronological value of extant buildings or landscape materials as a link to historical events or patterns. Once the resource has been surveyed and documented, management follows an ethic of minimal intervention. This process is achieved through the application of four treatments: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

However, this framework treats heritage and community identity as fixed and defined by the past. By being deprived of the ability to make changes in the present, heritage is disconnected from identity and the material loses its meaning. In this context, heritage reuse encourages adaptive reuse. This includes allowing for the deconstruction of heritage and salvaging its materials.

The deconstruction approach provides a more

meaningful link between historic preservation and sustainable design principles. By reusing fewer and fewer historic building materials and reducing construction waste, the principles of historic preservation and sustainable design are made more meaningful. More importantly, material reuse provides an important link to the past. (McCarthy, T.M. & Glekas, E.E., 2019)



figure 2 - 1 Savannah Grey bricks  
source :Eleni Glekas.& Tina Mccarthy (Dec, 2019).  
*Deconstructing heritage: enabling a dynamic materials practice*

2.3 MEMORIAL LENS SERIES

METHODOLOGY

LENS USED IN DISCLOSING UNDEFINED PLACES

(Sitong Luo, 2021)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <div><p>morphomeral<br/>lens</p><p>(1) undefined places and<br/>surrounding landscape<br/>arrangement<br/>(2) spatial context<br/>(atmosphere, characteristics<br/>etc.)</p></div> | <div><p>social lens</p><p>(1) routine and activities i/<br/>outside of interstitial places<br/>(2) community composition</p></div>  |
| <div><p>ecological<br/>lens</p><p>(1) species composition<br/>(alive or dead)<br/>(2) decay and lifespan<br/>(3) habitat condition</p></div>                                       | <div><p>material lens</p><p>(1) composition material<br/>(Horizontal &amp; Vertical)<br/>(2) stuff in the undefined<br/>places<br/>(3) sequence in - out<br/>undefined places</p></div> |

based on source :Sitong Luo.(2021). *Disclosing Interstices,Open-ended Design Transformation of Urban Leftover Spaces*

## 1. morphomeral lens

Designing through a morphological lens allows the designer to perceive the geometric and spatial qualities of the remaining space, shaped by its past transformations. This understanding forms the basis for the new physical layout, integrating the site with its surroundings while differentiating it from other spaces. The creation of interstices is not accidental, but a result of the combined influence of time and space. By considering the spatial characteristics and previous transformations, the designer can unlock the potential of these spaces within their urban context. Design principles such as axes, grids, dimensions, and proportions reveal the form of the remaining space, facilitating connections between existing and new layouts. This approach strengthens the site and fosters its reconnection with the surrounding urban realm. (Sitong Luo, 2021)



figure 2 - 2 permanente Open-Air-Ausstellung among Berlin Wall memorial  
source : <https://www.landschaftsarchitektur-heute.de/en/topics/projekt?contentID=26>



## 2. social lens

In this scenario, the primary objective of design is to reintegrate the site into the social sphere, accommodating diverse types of social activities. However, the designer must also preserve the allure of concealment and ambiguity that characterized the space, embracing another paradox. To incorporate new social uses into an abandoned space, this social lens enables the designer to explore potential social activities and desired outcomes. Based on this exploration, the design should not only cater to the specific needs of the local community but also align with the overall urban development.

The revitalization of undefined places prioritizes addressing public needs and fostering social and cultural activities. By decentralizing management responsibilities between the designer and the users, the site can be maintained in accordance with the design vision while evolving in tandem with local initiatives. This approach will draw attention to the site within its local context and encourage increased participation. (Sitong Luo, 2021)



figure 2 - 3 permanente Open-Air-Ausstellung among Berlin Wall memorial  
source :<https://www.landschaftsarchitektur-heute.de/en/topics/projekt?contentID=26>

### 3. ecological lens

Due to a temporary absence of human activities, undefined places acquire a distinct wild state. In these spaces, nature reclaims its ground, flourishing alongside the decaying artificial materials. This growth process transforms the sites into small-scale intermittent natural sanctuaries within the city, offering a restorative green space that is intimately connected to the daily lives of urban residents.

As a result, undefined places are recognized as crucial repositories for nature in urban settings. When designing with an ecological lens, the primary consideration is the preservation of the original ecology within the existing legacy spaces. Subsequently, the design can explore ways to enhance the habitat conditions and diversify the species groups, enriching the ecosystem. Additionally, incorporating formal and artistic design elements can emphasize the aesthetics and temporality of the natural world, evoking empathy and affection for the non-human realm among visitors. The overarching principle is to strike a balance between the untamed character of the site

and the intentional plantings introduced by design.  
(Sitong Luo, 2021)



figure 2 - 4 sinter park

photographed by Michael Latz;source: <https://landezine.com/post-industrial-landscape-architecture/>



#### 4. *material lens*

Undefined places exist as unmanaged and disorganized spaces, often appearing unkempt, wild, and even dilapidated. The chaotic nature of these spaces can make it difficult for the average visitor to appreciate them. Therefore, it becomes necessary to introduce a design that adds or adapts spatial elements, layering, framing, offsetting, or shaping what already exists. The design provides a language that invites and welcomes people, enabling them to perceive and engage with the space.

However, it is also crucial to imbue the new environment with a sense of uniqueness and ‘externality.’ This involves intertwining existing and newly added materials, creating a dialogue between complexity and order, and evoking surprise.

Furthermore, the design through a material lens highlights the temporal nature of matter. In undefined places, the material world undergoes changes primarily driven by wild species and sporadic human visitors. Natural processes like

decay, erosion, and overgrowth play a significant role in these transformations. Design, in this context, has the potential to amplify or exaggerate these material changes, emphasizing the dynamic and evolving transformation of the space.

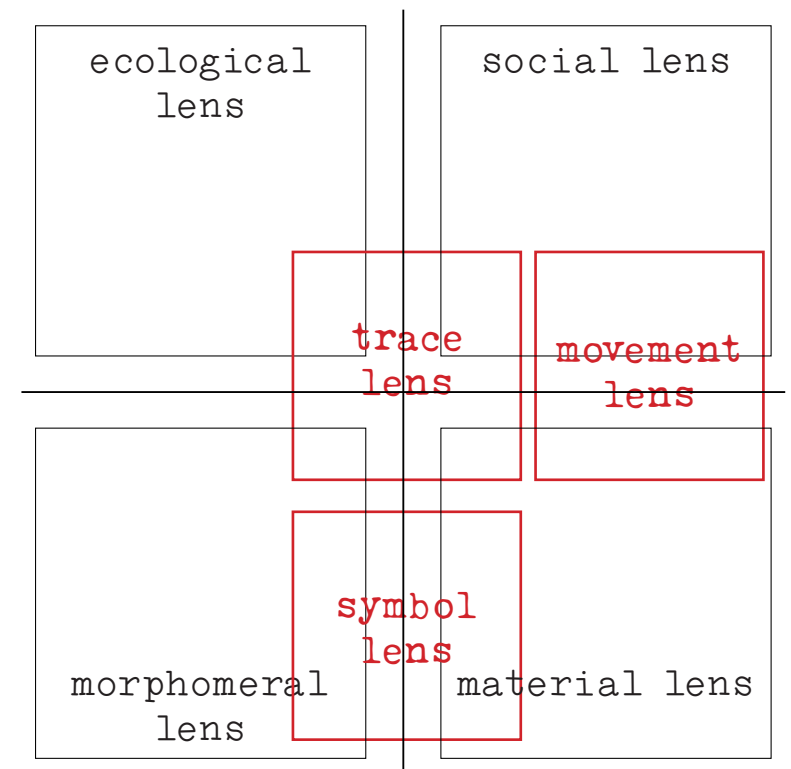


figure 2 - 5 Blast Furnace Park  
photographed by Christ Panick;source:<https://landezine.com/post-industrial-landscape-architecture/>

## MEMORIAL LENS SERIES

In the Den Helder case, there is a specific design direction for transforming undefined places, aiming to strengthen the connection between the city's macro-history and individual daily memories. Drawing inspiration from Sitong Luo's proposed four lenses, I have selectively abstracted, reorganized, and introduced three new lenses that emphasize the attributes of memory.

Through these three new lenses, the design actively addresses the spatial features associated with memory. By extracting and repurposing the site's historical spatial structures, spatial compositions are created to accommodate and inspire new social activities. This process enhances the users' emotional connection to the site and reawakens personal memories. Consequently, the site's usage and the influence of bottom-up activities continue to shape the space, prompting the designer to continuously respond to these changes while maintaining alignment with the broader urban context.



## 1. movement lens

*'...although sharing a common diagnosis with the development oriented ones(space waiting to be transformed),gesture towards a quite different form of actual or imagined intervention:Empty spaces become for them a space of emerging and dissensual possibilities...'*

This lens encompasses the use of spatial design to encourage spontaneous user participation in the transformation of undefined places. In this case, the user's participation becomes an integral part of the site's transformation. This perspective addresses the paradox of transforming undefined places: the subjective emphasis on the attributes of memory risks compromising the aesthetic ambiguity of the site and imposing a unilateral memory on the user. The design therefore attempts to create opportunities for participant activity by providing materials, open spaces, and establishing small-scale enclosures in the form of frames. This approach allows users to actively shape and create personal memories through their activities, while the indeterminate nature of their actions reinforces the site's inherent ambiguity.

Through this lens, the designer adopts the identity of a director. By creating small 'landscape stages' that collaborate with people in the construction of the landscape design, the movement lens offers users an extraordinary spatial experience that extends beyond mere aesthetics. It provides a unique perspective on space, opportunities for personal intervention, and a cohesive framework that evolves over time, allowing the environment to be meaningfully shaped by its components.

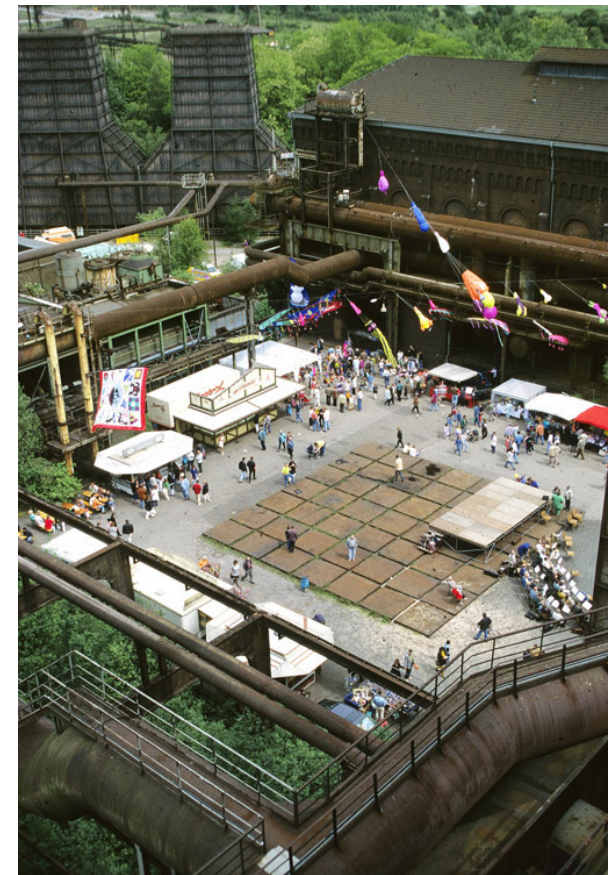


figure 2 - 5 Blast Furnace Park

photographed by Michael Latz;source:<https://landezine.com/post-industrial-landscape-architecture/>



## 2. trace lens

*'...The unique quality of place is its power to spatially order and focus **human intention, experience, and action**...Our understanding of space is related to the places we inhabit, which in turn derive meaning from their spatial context...'*

Historic spatial compositions alone lack intrinsic meaning; what distinguishes an environment emotionally from other spaces is how people engage with it. The trace lenses aim to reveal the developmental history and enduring patterns of activity embedded within these spaces. These traces represent physical entities within the landscape that establish a connection to the past narrative.

The design process primarily focuses on preserving the loose and unstructured traces of use and remnants of the site, maintaining its spatial character. The trace lens utilizes spatial design to highlight these traces out of their original context and transform them into new spatial components. Simultaneously, the design should consider the potential to accommodate additional traces. By providing increased opportunities for users to

shape the site, the trace lens documents the evolving transformations through visual representation, encouraging greater participation and engagement. In doing so, the trace lens broadens the user's perspective, allowing people from all backgrounds to fully observe and appreciate the entire landscape, enabling them to weave their own memories and narratives of what transpired in this place.

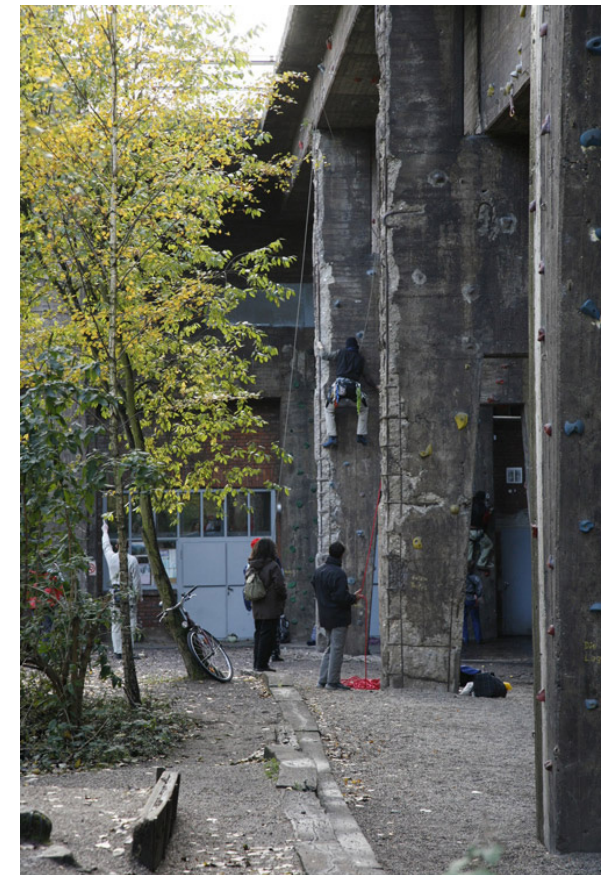


figure 2 - 6 play points in Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord  
photographed by Jane Sebire;source:<https://landezine.com/post-industrial-landscape-architecture/>

### 3. symbol lens

*'...Our **recollections** are situational and spatialized memories. We constantly project meanings and symbols onto everything we encounter...'*

*'...The importance of objects in our memory process is also the main reason why we like to collect **familiar or peculiar objects** around us. They expand and strengthen the field of memory and ultimately our sense of self...*

*Incompleteness and fragmentation possess a special evocative power. They force us to remember and imagine...'*



figure 2 - 7 water park in Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord  
photographed by Jane Sebire;source:<https://landezine.com/post-industrial-landscape-architecture/>

movement lens  
activity, attitude



trace lens  
random material, arrangement



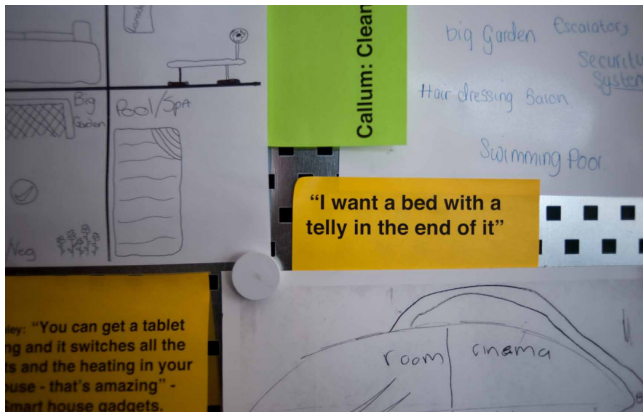
symbol lens  
meaningful material, atmosphere



figure 2-8 the concept model of the memorial lens  
photographed by author

## 2.4 GUIDED OPEN - ENDED DESIGN

Over the last thirty years there has been a paradigm shift in the understanding of landscape architecture. The complexity of systems was first observed. This involved in a range of interrelated fields such as systems theory, complexity science, ecological science and the humanities. Emergence is a characteristic of complex systems and can be described as the result of the self-organisation of a system and its many interacting parts. Guided collaborative design is one of the means by which this feature generates new and unpredictable behaviours that change the nature of the system or produce new outcomes.



### 2.4.1 DESIGNER

#### REVIEW + GUIDE

Landscape design often falls into this trap of treating the landscape as a complicated the phenomenon that can be understood and controlled, rather than a complex system that can only ever be influenced and directed. The approach to a design should translate the concern with predicting contingencies into acknowledging, and accepting the inevitability of contingencies occurring. An open-ended design recognizes the complexity of the system. Rather than focusing on adding policies and actions to address contingencies, such a design treats these contingencies as the project itself. It will create a more robust and healthier system that allows incredible cases. The design will overcome the vulnerability of the enclosed design. (Nassim Nicholas Taleb 2007, Hassan, Z. 2014)

The collaborative design happens over time. The design initially starts with a macro view of the system as a whole. The system then reacts, adapts and strengthens over time. The system is designed to be resilient. The system can sense-accept-summarize-exploit unexpected situations. Unlike planned design, collaborative design views unexpected events as opportunities for system evolution. This iterative design respects change over time. The design itself is an exploitation of each change. (Camponeschi, C. 2013)

figure 2-9 a bottom - up design case  
source :Karin Christof,Bottom-up & top-down:the neighbourhood as a tool for urban design

## 2.4.2 USER

### HANDS - ON BUILDING

The remaking of the landscape is entwined with the perception of the places we live in. Each landscape has existing relationships embedded within it. The direct involvement of the user in the design is an emphasis on place, implying that the designer abandons the idea of the outcome. It is an approach to design that goes "beyond consultation" and recognizes and values the user as an active participant in the urban and public realm. This approach links place development to the needs of people, and people acting directly on the site. The connection between people and place is fostered in the design process itself. (Brown, T. 2009)



figure 2-10 a bottom - up design case  
source :Karin Christof,Bottom-up & top-  
down:the neighbourhood as a tool for urban  
design

### GUERRILLA MAINTENANCE

Adjacent to the participatory design movement, the theory and understanding of social capital is on the rise. There is a growing emphasis on the role that social capital plays in all communities. While landscape design has a long history of exploring the connections between people and place, social capital provides one of the most coherent frameworks for understanding the importance of community. Based on the need for a sustainable social landscape, site and design maintenance calls for the establishment of social capital for long-term site maintenance. By establishing a framework for a guerrilla maintenance system, users are guided to spontaneously maintain and continuously design the site.(Dillard, J., Dujon, V. & King, M. ,2009)



## 2.5 DESIGN APPROACH

Inspired by Disclosing Interstices, I believe that the quality of void and leftover spaces has a guiding role in their design. In order to better interpret the memory properties of these spaces, I have developed a set of **memorial lens**. This series of lenses focuses on uncovering the memory-related elements of spaces and serves as a set of criteria to guide and evaluate design.

In order to maintain the ambiguity and uncertainty of undefined places, I adopted **guided open - ended design**, a design approach in which the user and the designer jointly lead the process of site transformation. In the experiments, I provide some pre-defined stages and boundaries of places that are directional and serve as a starting point for triggering user activity in the experiments. Based on the design site's own history and spatial composition, I designed inspiring scenarios and provided materials to encourage users to generate activity. At the same time, users have the power to stop and change their activities. Ultimately, the results of these activities will also be examined through a memory lens to assess how public, community, and grand formal memories are **RIVIEWED**, **COMPOSED**, and **CHANGED** by everyday life.

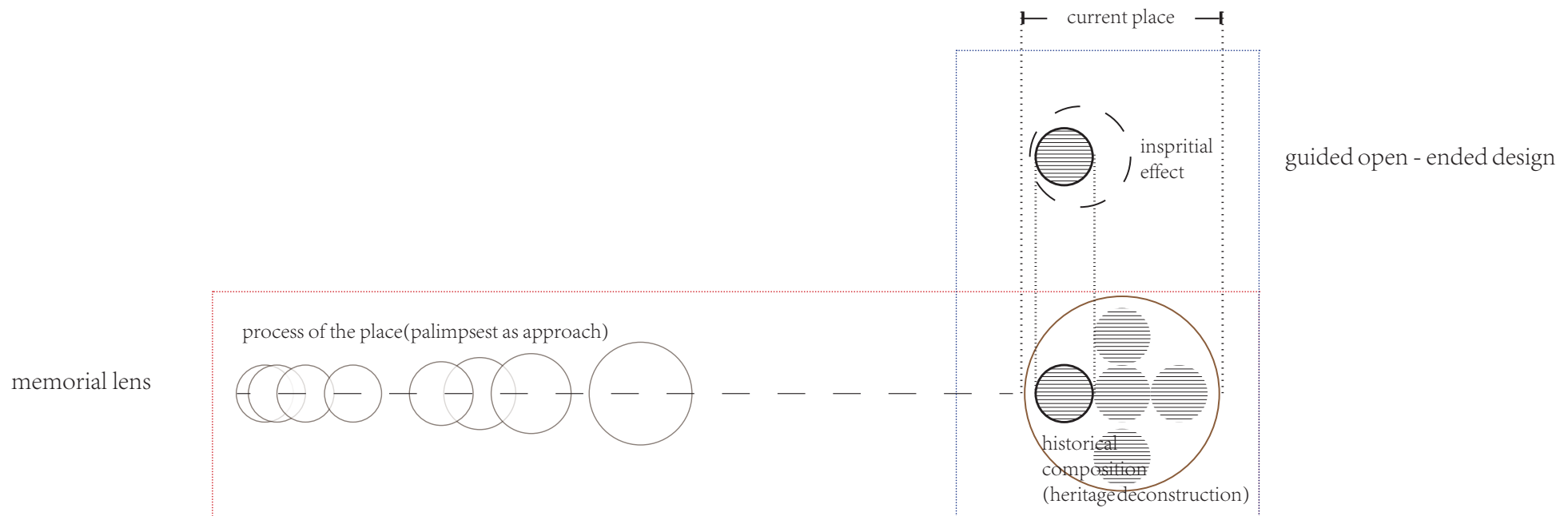


figure 2-11 the qualities and components of specific cultural landscape site  
made by author, based on source :Lisa Diedrich.(Feb, 2015). *Site-specific landscape architectural approaches in contemporary European harbour transformation*

### 2.5.1 case study of open - ended design in undefined places

Each intervention triggers behaviors related to playfulness. Multiple forms of play are identified and classified following Sutton-Smith : from subjective and mostly private (daydreams), to solitary (hobbies, reading, gardening...) and playful behaviors (playing around), to informal social play (pleasure, party...), celebrations, and festivals.

It is observed that play and playful behaviors constantly strengthen the relationship between leftovers and users. (Alice Covatta & Vedrana Ikalovi, 2022)

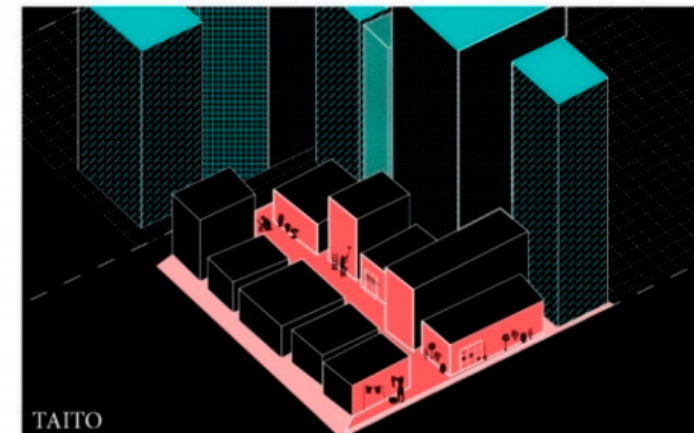
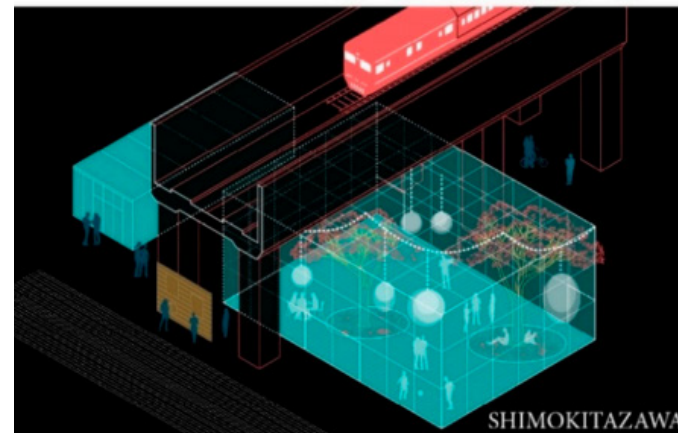
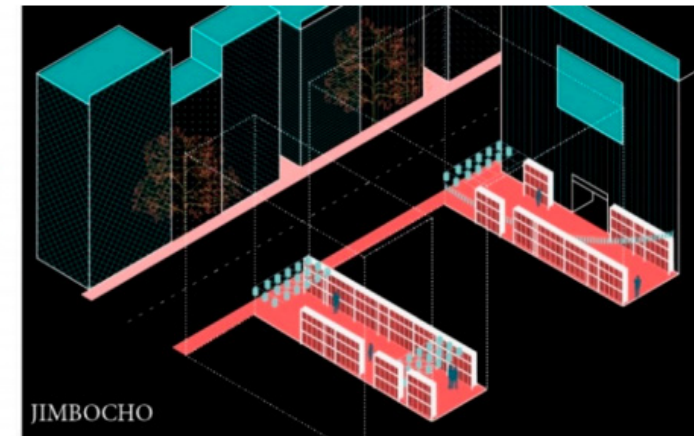
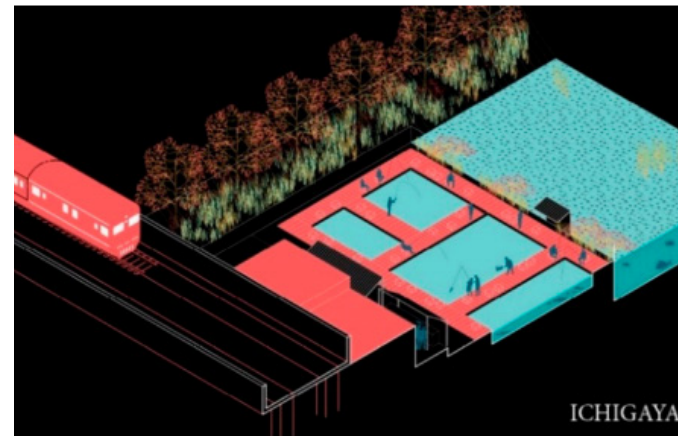


figure 2-12 4 cases of transformation of undefined places in Tokyo  
source :Urban Resilience: A Study of Leftover Spaces and Play in Dense City Fabric

# DESIGN EXPERIMENT

’ Indeed, a recent study indicates that the affordances provided by messy structures appear to have a greater appeal to users.’



### 3.1 VOIDS & LEFTOVERS IN DEN HELDER

#### 3.1.1 RENEWAL VOIDS FROM COMMUNITY CHANGE

##### OLD CITY CENTER IN THE PAST

Den Helder, like Texel and Kornwerderzand, was directly involved in the German attack on the Netherlands. After the surrender of the Dutch army, Den Helder was the target of Allied air raids. The harbour and airfield used by the German Navy were attacked by heavy bombers and fighter-bombers more than 150 times; Rijkswerf was the main target, but many bombs hit the city, killing and injuring dozens of people.

During the war, thousands of residents fled Den Helder communities. Those who worked in Den Helder stayed nearby, sleeping in the countryside and returning to work in the city during the day. Others went to parts of the Netherlands further away from the coast. As the war wore on, more and more residents took refuge outside the city. Especially the unemployed. The bombing in Den Helder killed 177 people. Many residents were injured or permanently disabled.

From the very beginning of the Second World War, the location of the North Sea coast, naval ports, shipyards and military airfields were of strategic importance to the German occupiers as well as to the Allies. Nowhere else in the Netherlands was

bombed as often as Den Helder's center during the Second World War.



figure 3-1 destroyed community in Den Helder during the war

source : <https://www.atlantikwall-wadden.nl/en/bezoek/den-helder/den-helder-in-de-oorlogsjaren>

## COMMUNITY RENEWAL VOID +

as a result of the rebuild policy in the community against urban shrinking. The voids appear after the post-war building was removed.

The communities in Den Helder have endured the destruction of the war, and today there are still many weathered pre-war buildings. While these buildings are dilapidated, they also hold a wealth of formal memories. Since 2000, the government has decided to renew the pre-war buildings in the communities (especially in city center), in order to weaken the loss of population due to urban shrinking.

By rebuilding a more modern waterfront community, the government believes it can attract more people back to the community of Den Helder.

figure 3-2 renewal in city center  
photographed by author, 2022 September





In order to rebuild and develop, Den Helder is constantly changing the urban pattern, and in the latest urban plan, a large number of pre-war buildings will face demolition and reconstruction.

In this process, while the buildings are being knocked down and rebuilt, temporary abandoned sites will be created --- the voids. They are often tightly fenced off. They are filled with construction materials or overgrown with weeds and left untended.

People's daily lives also ignore these small spaces. These pre-war buildings are themselves part of the city's history, and they are a metaphor for formal memory. However, when new buildings are erected, the memories and traces of these old living quarters will be overwritten and erased. The emergence of each renewal void place represents the disappearance of a part of the formal memory. Eventually, the informal memory of people's daily life discards these history.

figure 3 - 3 void in city center  
photographed by author, 2022 September





figure 3-4 city center community voids character  
made by author

voids surrounded by commercial places, made by author



voids nature taken away, made by author



voids leftover stuff, made by author



voids borders, made by author

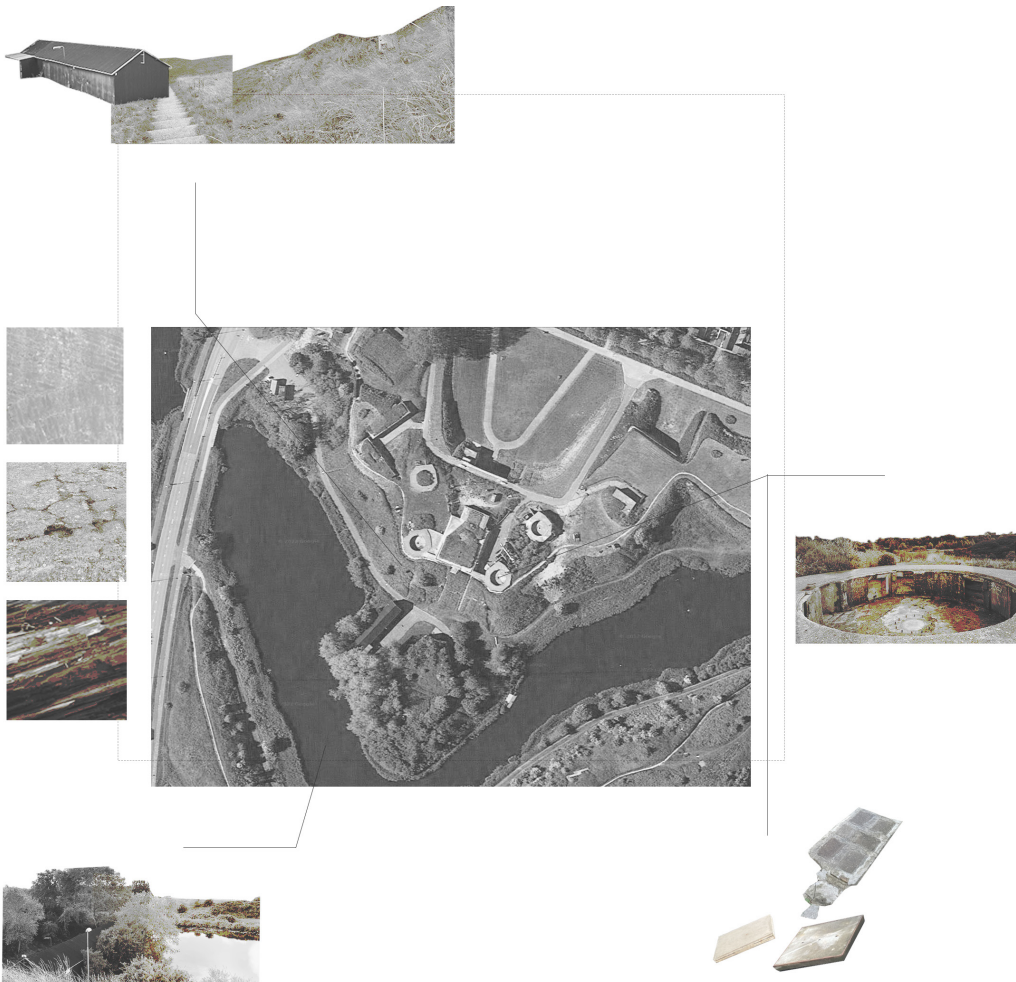




### 3.1.2 HISTORICAL LEFTOVER FORM STELLING LINE

#### STELLING DEN HELDER

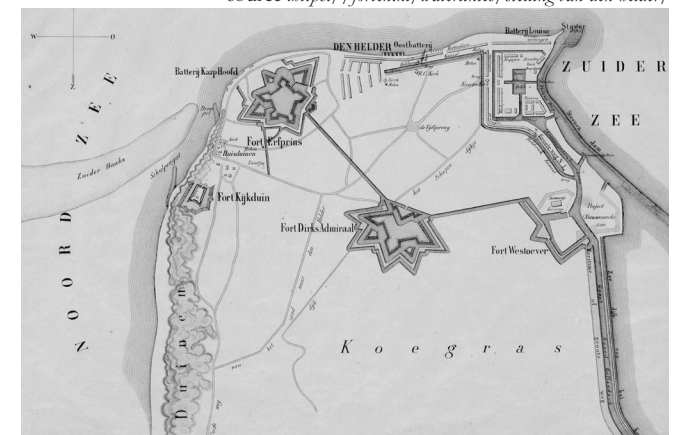
figure 3 - 5 spatial of stelling area in Den Helder  
made by author, based on source :<https://forten.nl/waterlinies/stelling-van-den-helder/>



Stelling Den Helder is one of the oldest surviving military defences in the Netherlands. The fortifications - conceived by Napoleon in 1811 - consist of six forts, fields of fire, various structures and a line of dykes at least 5 kilometres long, which connects some of the forts and structures. The six forts were Oost-oever, Fort Erfprins, Kijkduin, Dirks-Admiraal, Fort Westoever and the last armoured fortress built on Harssens in 1884. This line of defence was used to protect the Willemsoord Naval Factory.

The city of Den Helder owes its present shape to this line, which still exists to a large extent in the landscape.

figure 3 - 6 stelling Den Helder  
source :<https://forten.nl/waterlinies/stelling-van-den-helder/>



## HISTORICAL LEFTOVER



as a result of the urban decay. The leftovers appear because the ignorance of the heritage and the abandonment of old industrial structure.

Stelling Den Helder is now seen as a green belt structure that runs through the city. Along this path, we can still see fortress structures from all eras. In the course of my urban research, I observed some sites that have been converted into small urban agriculture and factories. Others are considered landscape heritage and are protected by volunteers. Overall, these fortresses are considered an important part of the city's history and are considered museums.

However, due to the weak spiritual connection of the inhabitants to these sites, these fortresses are rarely considered as spaces for everyday life. These structures, along with a small area around them, are becoming legacy spaces of a neglected history.

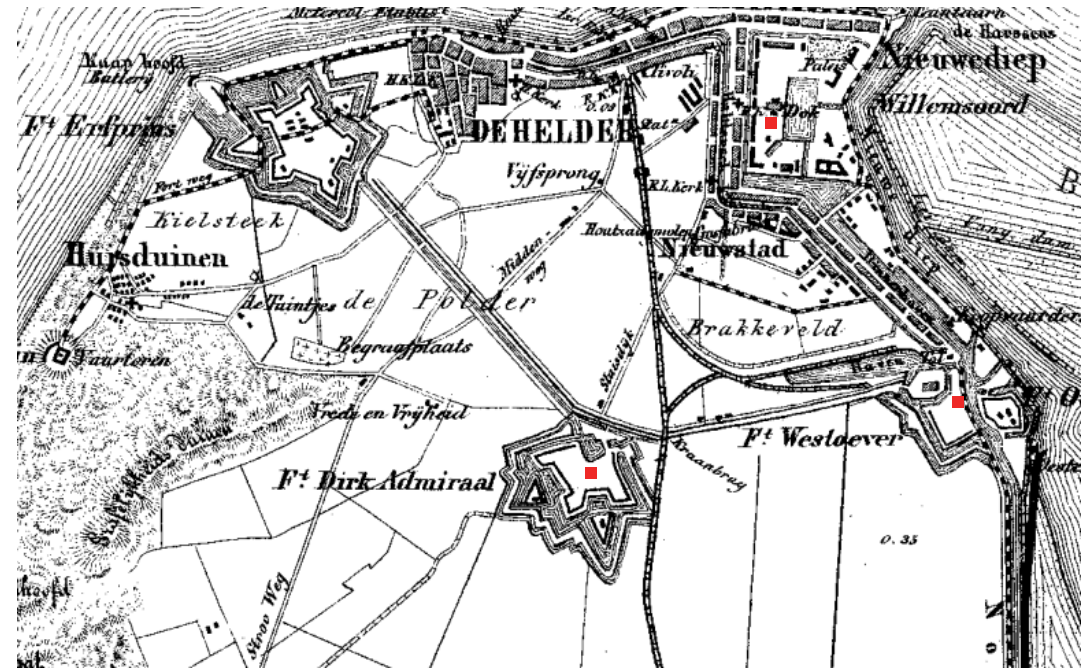
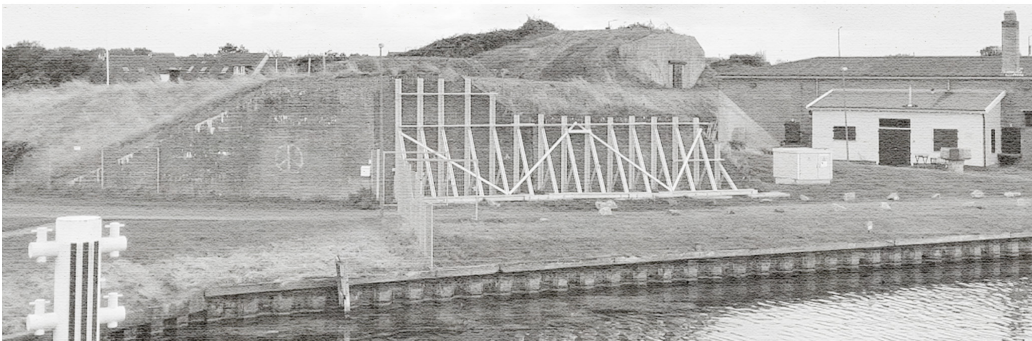


figure 3 - 7 historical leftover locatins in stelling

source: <https://www.denhelder.online/location/stelling-den-helder/2b6bbe2e-e491-4353-b510-2e1b75ea7a9f?pid=0646ae19-c7a2-403d-9ce9-aed4bd01e6d0>





The city has experienced war , and left many traces behind. These war relics no longer perform their initial function in today's society and have become a cultural site. These small spaces have traces of artificial repair and maintenance. It can be seen that they are protected.

However, due to the long history and the transformation of needs, these small spaces no longer contain traces of people's daily life. It is like a direct transition from the war era to a modern state of desolation. During this long process of transformation, these sites were isolated from the outside world. It is like jumping directly from one point in time to another, lacking an intermediate transition.

People nowadays feel unfamiliar with them, and even have some fear and rejection. People skip these spaces in their daily lives. Informal memories of these sites have barely connected with the sites since they lost their functions. Eventually, these sites are excluded from people's daily life , and gradually fall into disuse, becoming empty symbols of formal memory.

figure 3 - 8 historical leftover in stelling  
photographed by author, 2022 September

figure 3 - 9 symbol in historical leftover in stelling  
made by author

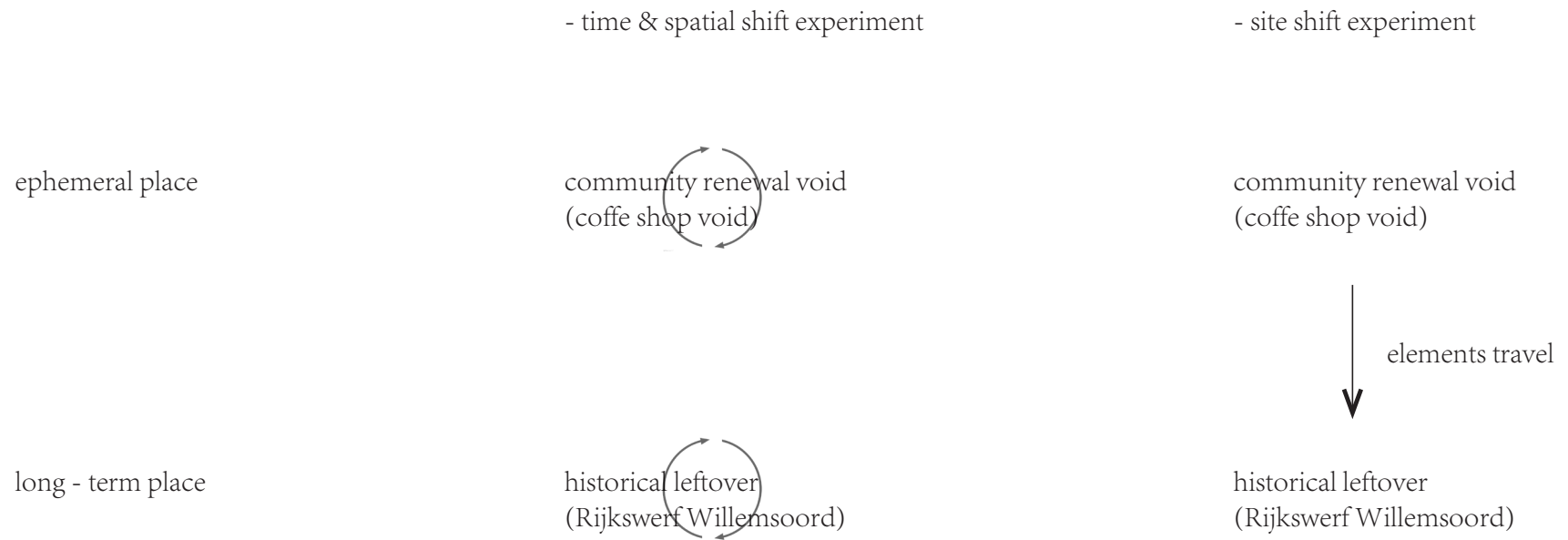
surrounded by flat place



heritage symbol



### 3.1.3 design frame





### 3.2 URBAN VISION BETWEEN VOIDS & LEFTOVERS

+ community renewal void (ephemeral)

+ historical leftover (permanent)

→ spatial element traveling

Moving spatial elements from ephemeral voids to permanent leftovers is meaningful. Once this transition takes place, the residual structure along the stelling line becomes a repository for memories. These sites, which held significant historical value in Den Helder, are once again brought into focus. They have evolved alongside the city, with active participation from the public. As an increasing influx of memories permeates the stelling line, the old structure begins to embody not only the historical physical defense of Den Helder but also establishes a deeper emotional bond with its residents.

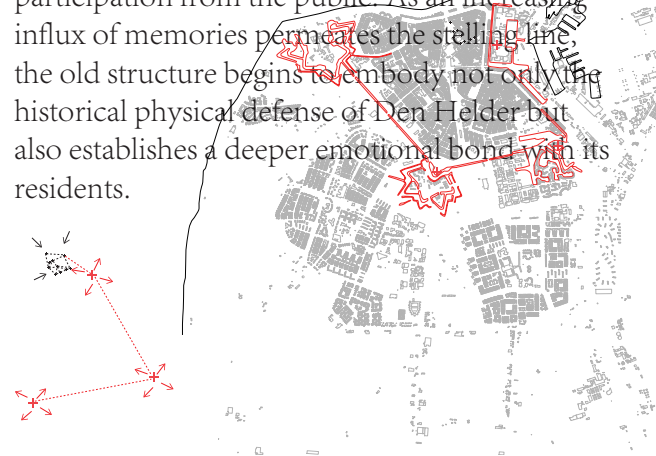
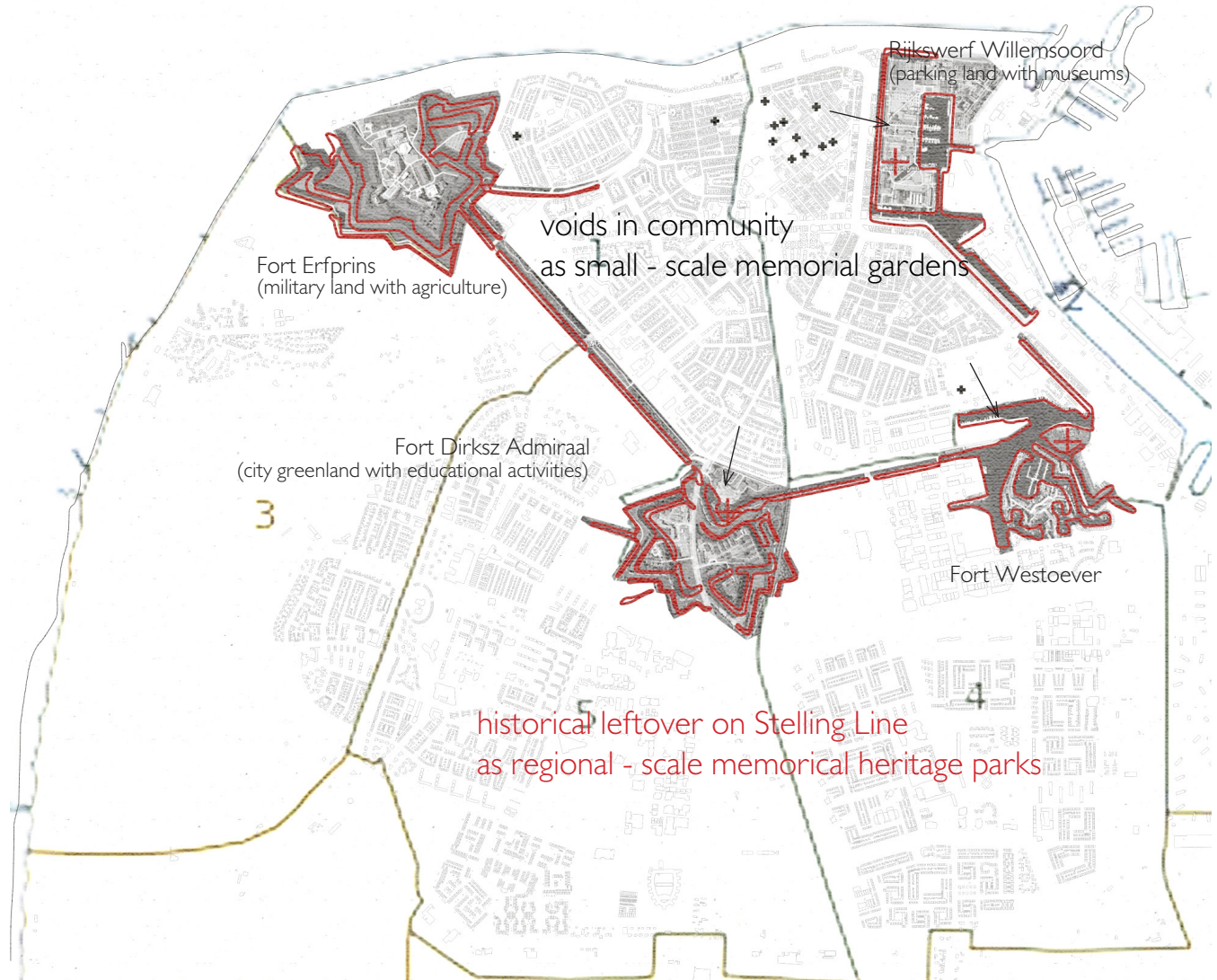


figure 3 - 10 transportation between voids & leftovers  
made by author



### 3.2.1 EXPERIMENT LOCATION : CITY CENTER COMMUNITY - RIJKSWERF WILLEMSOORD ZUID

Based on the government's proposed plans, significant changes are expected to occur in the Den Helder city centre area over the next decade. The government aims to relocate shops within this area, potentially shifting some to new locations while expanding existing ones elsewhere in the centre. Additionally, the government intends to systematically demolish and renew the pre-war buildings in the downtown community, transforming it into a modern waterfront community. Consequently, void spaces will continue to emerge in the downtown community.

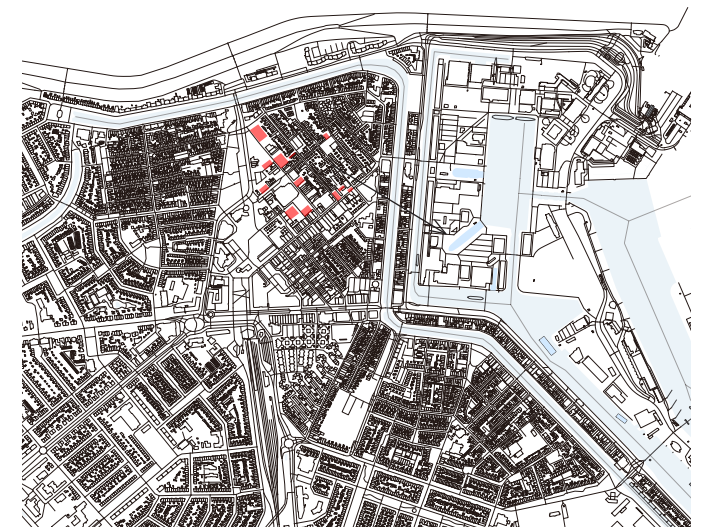
Furthermore, the government's plan includes connecting the city centre with the Willemsoord area. The city centre area is set to form a cultural cluster alongside the cultural functions of Willemsoord, encompassing a library, cultural heritage centre, cinema, art lending, gallery, theatre, cultural incubator, museum, and event

space. This integration aims to create a stronger synergy between the two venues. Given the interconnectedness of structures and functions across the two areas, the transportation of frames and containers becomes more meaningful. It serves as a conduit for transmitting memories that will resonate more profoundly.

Therefore, for this research, I have selected the city centre and the Rijkswerf Willemsoord as the experimental sites.



figure 3 - 11 voids & leftovers in city center & Willemsoord  
made by author





### 3.2.2 A TRAVELING FESTIVAL

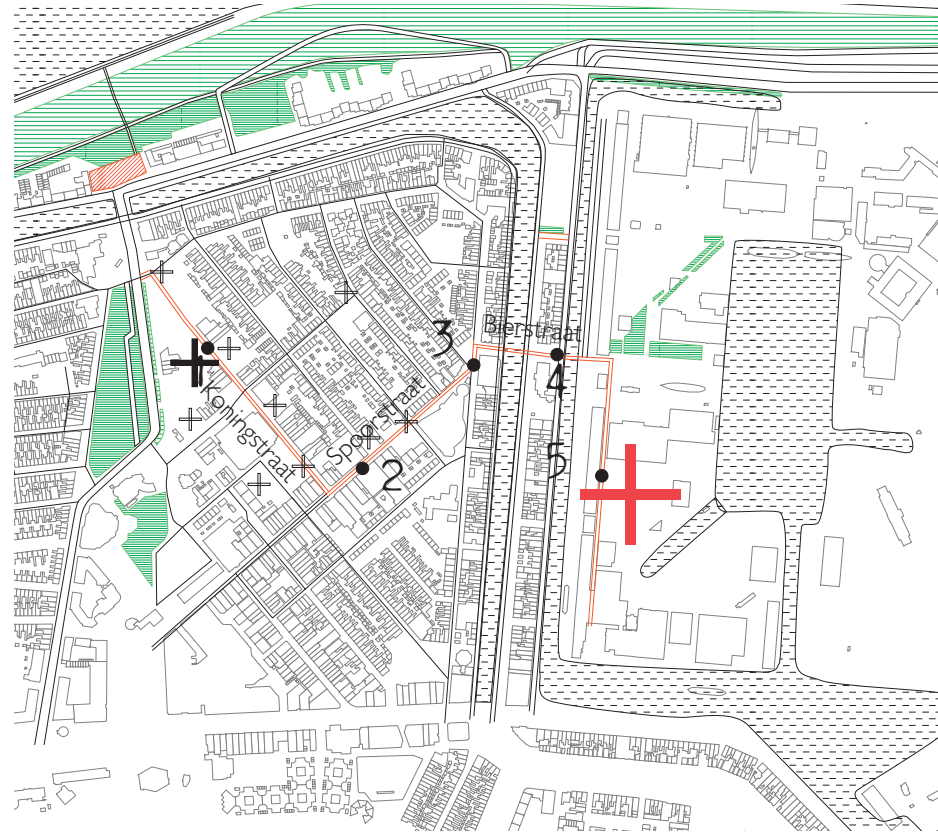


figure 3 - 12 traveling route of spatial elements  
made by author, source: google earth pro street view

The frequency of transporting frames and containers from the community to Willemsoord is determined by the prompt replacement of void spaces with new buildings. In this experiment, I have opted to utilize the access route through the interior of the community. This approach serves two purposes: firstly, it avoids disrupting traffic on the main city road, and secondly, it brings greater attention to the act of travel within the community.

The journey itself can be regarded as a festive occasion, commemorating the inception of a new building within the community. The travel symbolizes the daily memories that will resonate with the residents of community. And, the memory will pass on permanently in Willemsoord.

The transportation process for containers and framers is open. Anyone is welcome.



RESIDENTS



MUSEUM STAFF





### 3.3 DESIGN THROUGH MEMORIAL LENS

The application of memory lenses, both individually and collectively, plays a vital role in the creation of open and inclusive designs for undefined places. By employing memory lenses, designers are prompted to recognize the intricate interdependencies among conditions and elements within these urban areas, facilitating the evocation of memories and the preservation of history. In addition, the memorial lenses are used to explore the impact of user intervention on the narrative of undefined places.

In order to facilitate the visualization of the design and interventions, I have introduced two spatial elements for the experiment (**framer & container**). These components have been specifically designed to be easily transportable and assembled, with the added ability to enclose the space. They serve as practical applications of the memory lens within the design and intervention process.

#### 1. FRAMER

a new observation, a new perspective to encourage awareness ; a structure framed for specific function

#### 2. CONTAINER

a recording of the physical memory, as the collection holder of the daily life leftover, which can be used as the original toolbox to build the structure we need

spatial element

spatial arrangement

#### 3. ORDER

landscape arrangement, and all the activities in the landscape add a new layer of memory

### 3.3.1 FRAMER

#### HOW DAILY LIFE REVIEW SYMBOL LENS & TRACE LENS?

Historic buildings and everything associated with the grand past can be viewed as symbolic representations, serving as reminders of the broader historical narrative. Framers are designed to accentuate these symbols and enable them to stand out amidst the urban landscape. The forms and materials of framers are diverse, chosen based on the unique characteristics of each site. These structures can serve as enclosed spaces, seating areas, or even flower pools, among other possibilities. They offer a distinct perspective, guiding the observer's attention towards the presence and evolution of these symbols, fostering an awareness of the ongoing development within the city. During this process, the activities of individuals around the framer and the legacy it represents are documented as an experimental endeavor. These traces aid in understanding users' attitudes towards places and symbols.

The materials used in constructing framers are lightweight and easily transportable, ensuring they do not disrupt the existing atmosphere of the site. Initially identified within a void, they are eventually transported and integrated seamlessly, becoming an integral part of the surroundings. Once the framers

find their place in Willemsoord, they continue to fulfill their intended purpose and inspire further activity.

#### 1. part of the awareness of the formal memory.

When the framers settle in the Willemsoord, they are together with the historical leftover structures. From the spatial degree, they should not be together. But if we think about the memory itself, yes, they are. They are all part of the formal memory of the Den Helder city.

2. an element to show how dialy life / new users' attitude to the historical symbol things. The users can leave traces on them as they want. They can even take off or add some pieces to the travelers during the using time if they want.

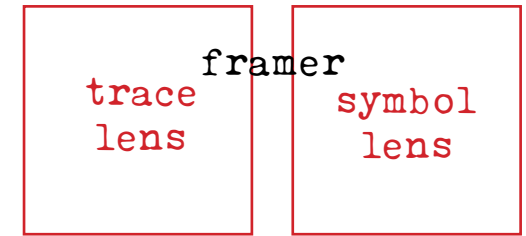
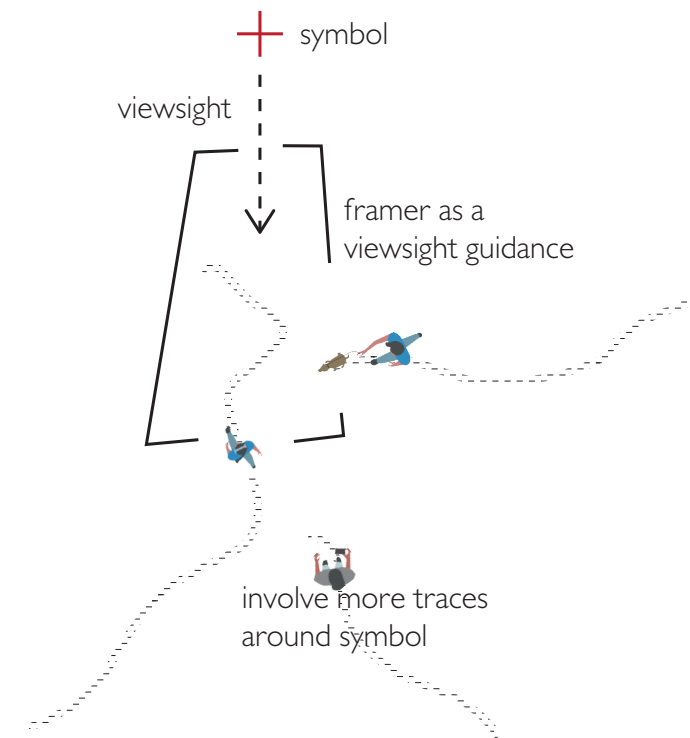


figure 3 - 13 framer concept drawing  
made by author

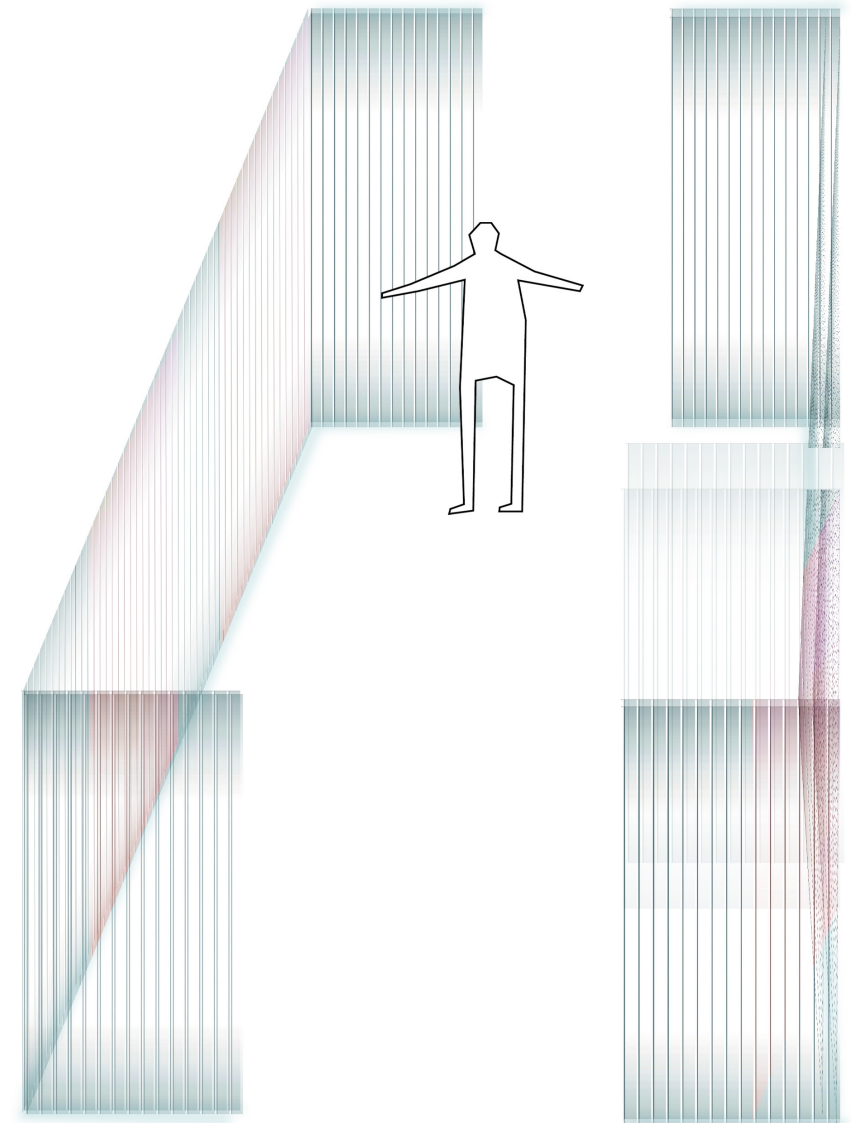
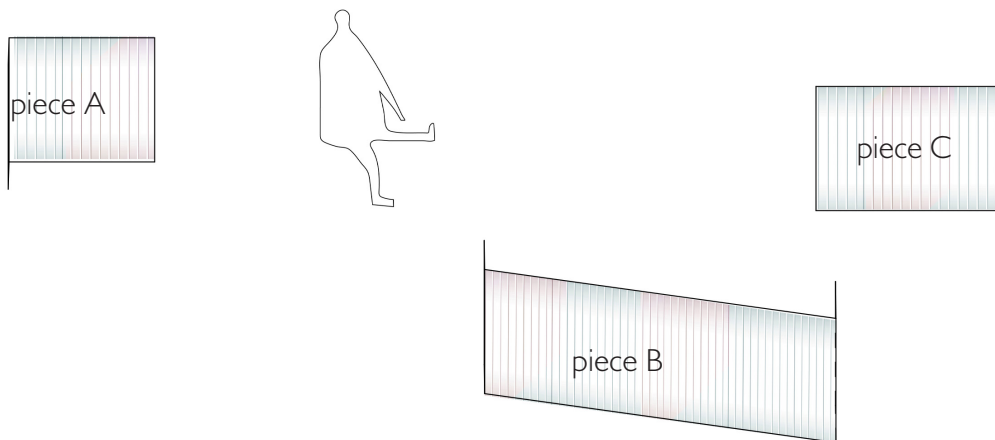


In this study, I have chosen framer to enclose a specific place, and create an angel towards the symbol as an example.

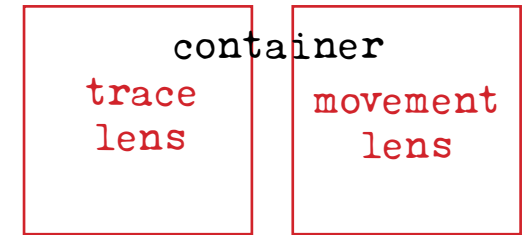
figure 3 - 14 framer as telescope in coffeeshop void  
made by author

### LEXAN BOARD

Through the combination of the three pieces of constituent structures, the framers will play different roles in the places. Framers are combined to form a new place and observation perspective. In coffeeshop void, residents can use the angle of the traveler to focus their eyes on the historical building across the street. The material of the traveler is translucent and reflective. This structure is easy to move and does not disturb the original atmosphere of a place.







### 3.3.2 CONTAINER

HOW DAILY LIFE COMPOSE MOVEMENT LENS & TRACE LENS ?

In any urban neighborhood, day by day and month by month, residents and all the human activities associated with it are generated. This process is more evident in these neglected corners. People are accustomed to throwing away the objects of their lives here. I salvage these objects and make them into a single installation structure to emphasize that the process of daily life and time is forming the memory of the city.

It is a cumulative process. As the site is transformed, more activities will be created here. This process leaves more traces of life behind. container is a meta-component. It collects the objects generated by people's activities and reorganizes them into various structures for new activities. They can be used to form fences, seats or whatever structures people need. In this process, the container becomes part of the urban process. Everyday personal memories are collected and built as part of the city's history.

part of the awareness of the informal memory.

In the heritage park of Willemsoord, the activities of the users are still encouraged. In the new time, Willemsoord is a playground, an urban forest, or even a marketplace. The various spatial structures needed for new functional transformations can still use these containers, and new activities leave more objects to form new containers. The daily use of people is writing a new urban formal history.

undefined place without many movements

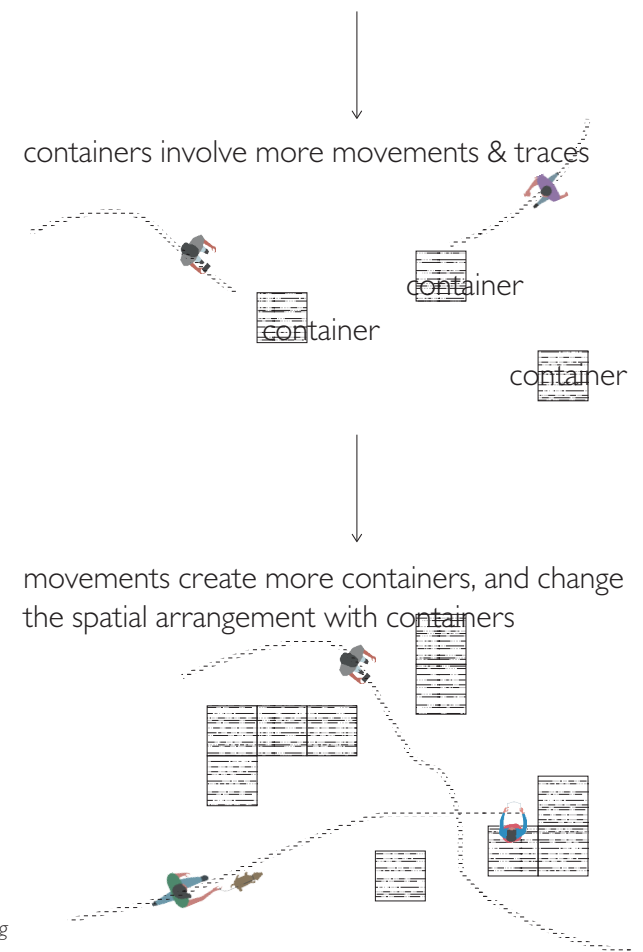
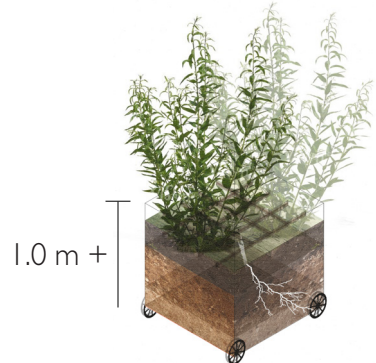
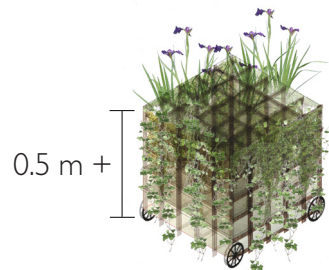
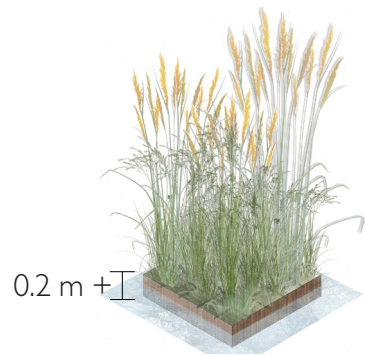


figure 3 - 15 container concept drawing  
made by author

type A for the plantings & public art works



type B for the leftover, tools & garbage



type C for the historical bricks storage



figure 3 - 1 6 container typology  
made by author

# COMMUNITY VOID

take Koningstraat as example



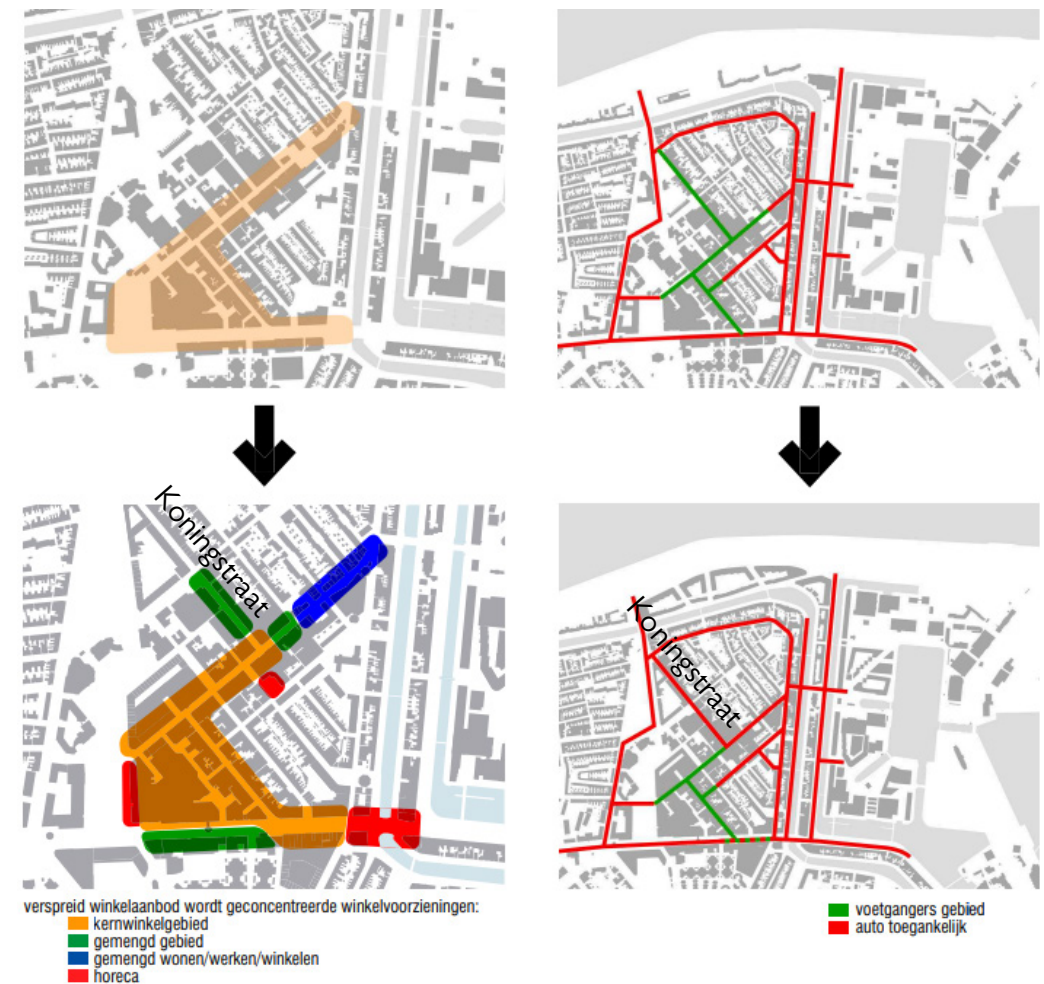
## 4.1 KONINGSTRAAT IN CITY CENTER

### 4.1.1 MULTI - FUNCTIONAL STREET TOWARDS THE SEA

According to the municipality's plan, the Koningstraat in the city centre will undergo a comprehensive transformation to become a vibrant mixed-use street, catering to pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation. The government aims to enhance the appeal of the planned Koningstraat, making it attractive to a wider range of people. To achieve this, the street will feature a variety of daytime and evening food and beverage establishments along its entire length, complementing other central functions in close proximity. Furthermore, the Koningstraat will serve as a crucial link connecting the core shopping area with the northern coast.

The government recognizes that this transformation may entail converting some existing shops into residential spaces or renovating buildings to adapt to a more contemporary neighborhood environment. Specifically, the northern section of Koningstraat will be transformed into a residential area, accommodating a variety of small family-oriented businesses. While efforts will be made to restore the building walls to their original state whenever possible, the southern part of the street will be designated as a mixed-use area. This area will

figure 4 - 1 Koningstraat development plan  
source: <https://zeestad.nl/wp-content/uploads/Winkelhart-1.pdf>



introduce a range of services, specialty shops that are distinct from the core shopping area, and residences that may house family-run businesses.

In the process of downtown renewal, many temporary vacant lots are created. Today, these vacant lots appear to be in a self-contained and cluttered state. During the site study, I found that most of them are overgrown with vegetation and scattered with waste from old buildings and household waste. Within 1-2 years, these vacant lots will be occupied by new buildings.

figure 4-2 city center community renewal map  
made by author, source: <https://zeestad.nl/wp-content/uploads/Facetkaart-te-slopen-gebouwen.pdf>





figure 4-3 city center community in the WWII  
 source : <https://www.atlantikwall-wadden.nl/en/bezoek/den-belder/den-belder-in-de-oorlogsjaren>



figure 4-4 city center community in 2023  
 source : <https://www.atlantikwall-wadden.nl/en/bezoek/den-belder/den-belder-in-de-oorlogsjaren>



#### 4.1.2 STADSPARK & RENEWAL VOIDS

**A** Stadspark routing

**B** Koningstraat

Monument in Den Helder onthuld voor  
118 vermoorde Joodse Heldernaren



canopy density



Former Synagogue on Kanaalweg. This synagogue was  
in turn destroyed by acts of war in 1944.



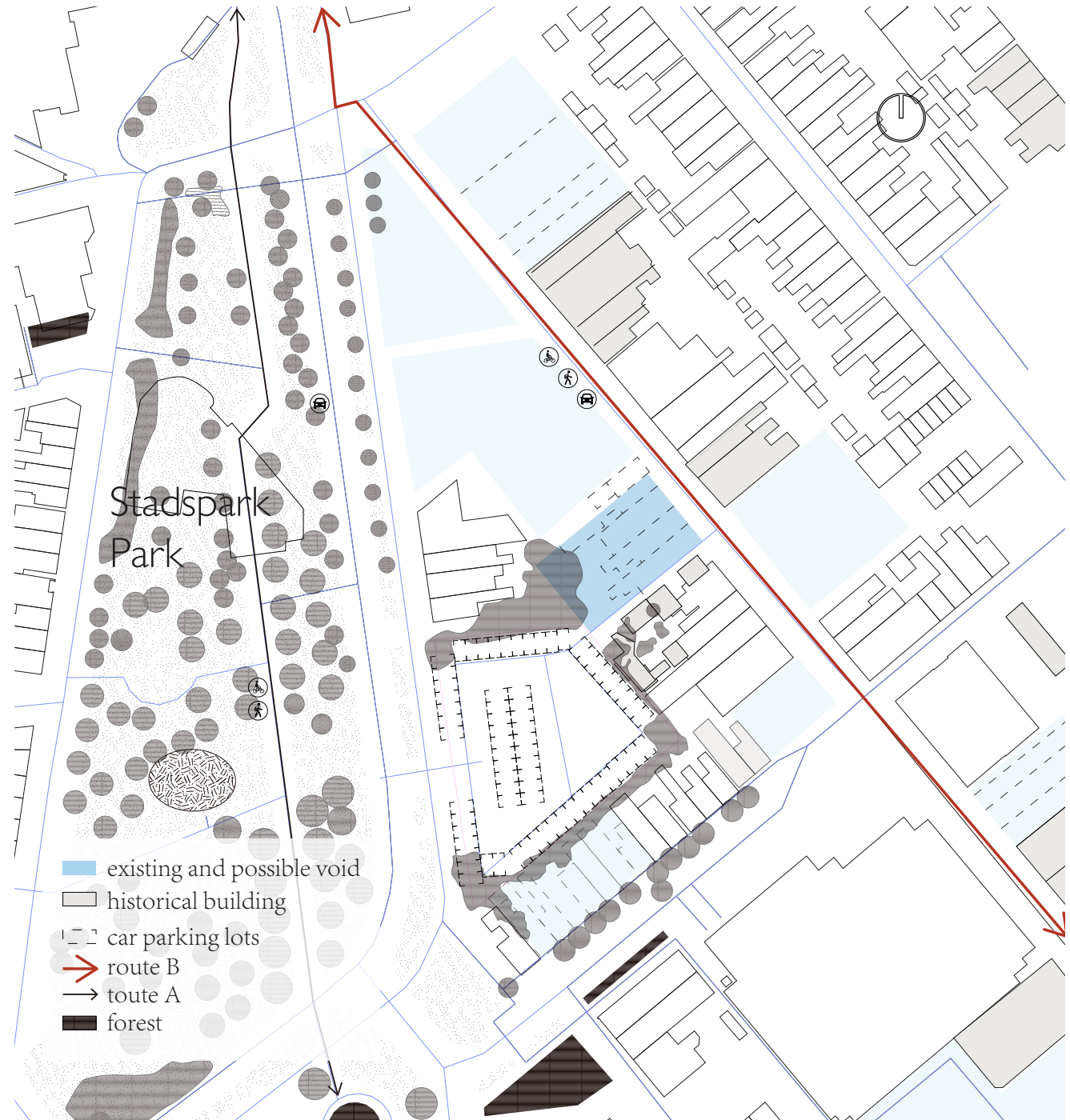
figure 4-5 the content of city center community  
made by author

figure 4-6 2 routes through city center community  
made by author, based on source :[https://www.west8.com/projects/den\\_helder\\_city\\_center/](https://www.west8.com/projects/den_helder_city_center/)

With the government's city centre regeneration programme, these two routes are planned from Den Helder city centre to the seafront in the north. (See figure 3 - 2) These two routes are now revealing very different spatial experiences.

Route A runs through Stadspark Park in the city centre. Along this route can be found facilities for community activities, linearly planted trees and a cluster of memorial stepping stones in memory of the Jewish citizens who were killed in World War II. At the end of route A is the old Jewish church.

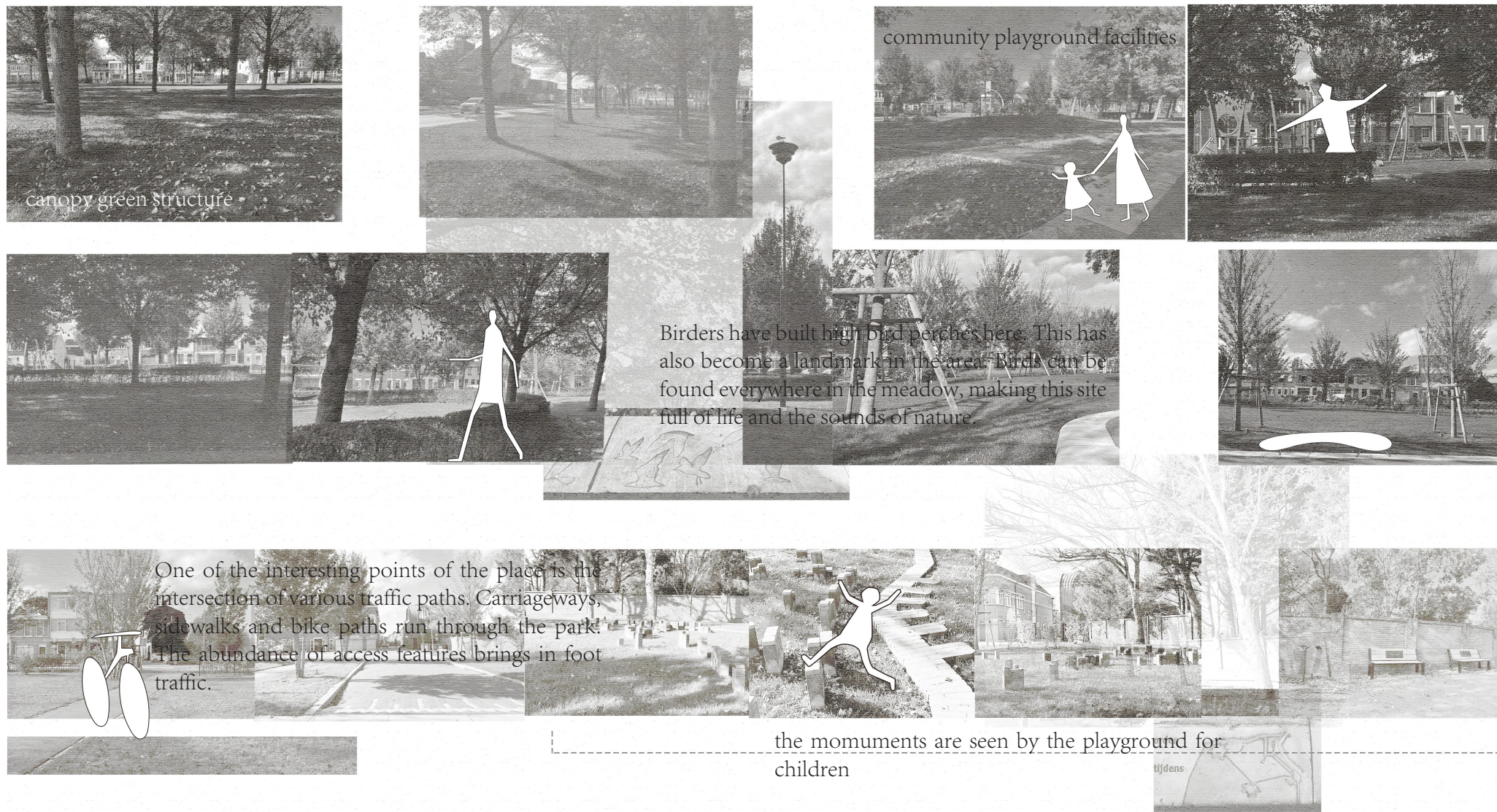
Route B runs through the streets of the neighbourhood which are being renovated. Today's observable landscape is a mix of old, pre-war buildings that are about to be demolished and new, modern homes being built. It is conceivable that after the renovations are completed, the area will become an ordinary neighbourhood street filled with buildings.





## STADSPARK

figure 4-7 city center community walking score  
made by author





Sunday 15:14 - 15:30 sunny Stadspark

Stadspark Park uses the changing density of the tree line to connect the city centre to the dike. The park itself has become an important public green space for the community. It gives the community a more modern and attractive feel.

However, the new park and the whole community redevelopment plan are erasing traces of history and memories from the old town centre of Den Helder. We can get the story of the history of the whole site from historical documents and the scattered monumental stones in the community. Yet these small interventions cannot stop the loss of memory on a large scale. When the pre-war buildings in the area are completely replaced, a part of what led Den Helder to where it is today will be forgotten forever... It is these memories that make Den Helder's downtown community unique.

So I set out to use the voids along the pathway that runs through the community (route B) to preserve more of its history and everyday memories.

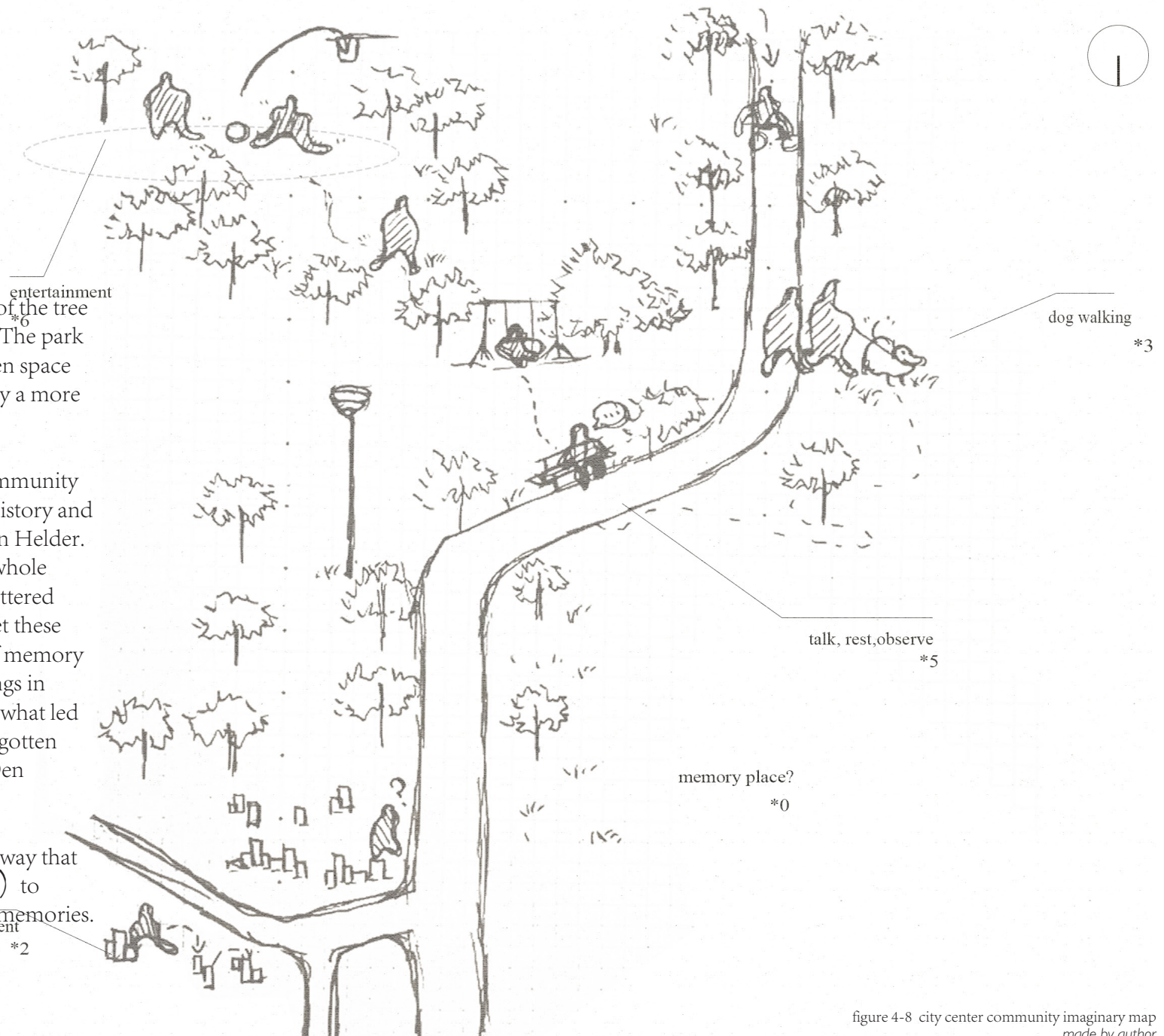


figure 4-8 city center community imaginary map  
made by author



## CONNECTION BETWEEN STADSPARK & KONINGSTRAAT



figure 4-9 spatial design for the connection  
made by author

## 4.2 COFFEESHOP VOID

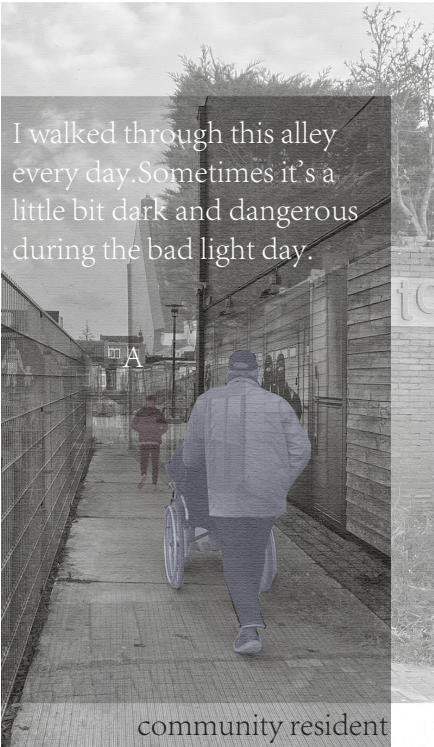
### 4.2.1 CURRENT SITUATION THROUGH MEMORIAL LENS ANALYSIS



figure 4-10 coffeesgop void in 2021  
made by author



MOVEMENT LENS



|                  | community resident   |          | visitor  |          | staff           |  |
|------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|--|
| A walker         | stroll               |          | stroll   | shopping | working routine |  |
| B bicyclist      | communication<br>55% |          | 25%      |          | 20%             |  |
| C parking people | stroll               | shopping | shopping | shopping | working routine |  |
|                  | 80%                  |          | 5%       |          | 15%             |  |

figure 4-1 | movement around coffeshop void  
made by author



## SYMBOL LENS

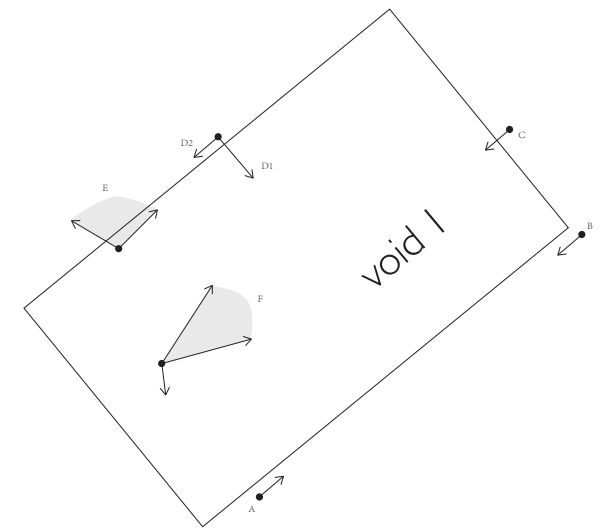


building before WWII  
*built in 1931, dead in 2023*



vegetation habitat

figure 4-12 atmosphere in coffeeshop void  
made by author



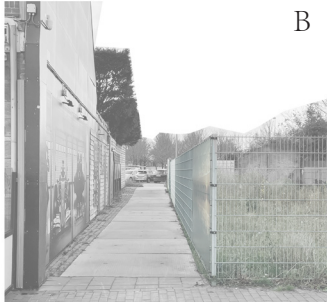
A



C



B



D



F



E



figure 4-13 viewsight in coffeeshop void  
made by author



TRACE LENS

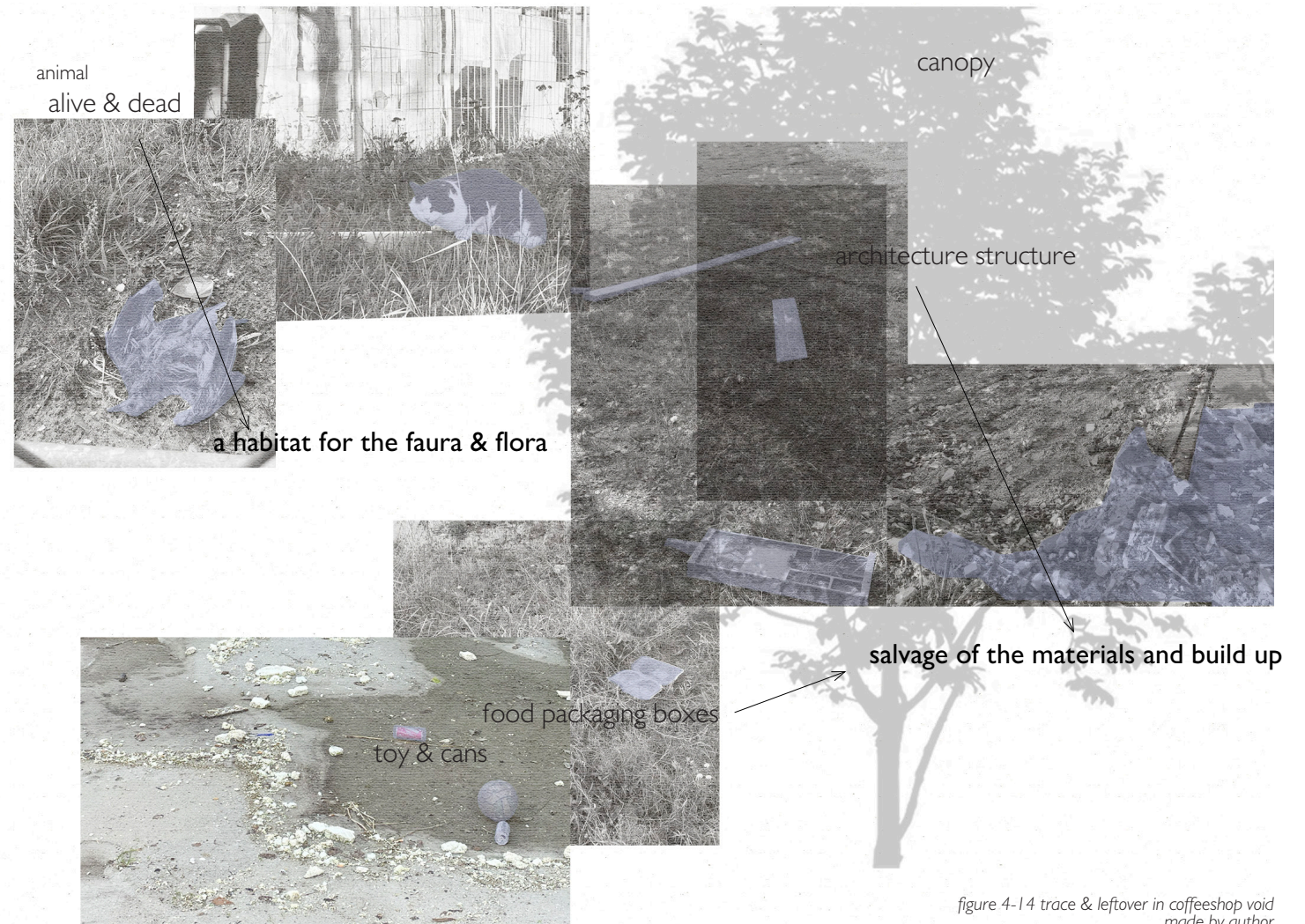


figure 4-14 trace & leftover in coffeeshop void  
made by author



#### 4.2.2 CREATE A MEMORIAL COMMUNITY GARDEN

Core to the design of void is the addition of a new layer. This layer emphasizes the wildness and cluttered properties of the void itself. On top of this, the design emphasizes specific angles and reading styles within this disorder. Instead of overwriting existing traces, **this layer brings a new perspective of observation.** This includes the use of viewpoint design to guide the user to observe how the surrounding architecture disappears. The user is guided to transform the unordered historical waste into a part of life, and play with them.

The process of urban renewal is irreversible. But the activities in and around these voids will make the residents aware of this renewal, and remember some of the stories from the past. These activities will also create new traces that become part of history.



*figure 4-15 activities in a garden of Den Helder  
made by author*

## THE FRAMER

The coffee shop void serves as a showcase for the untouched beauty of the natural surroundings. In this site, I have selected lexan as the material for the framer. The incorporation of colorful lexan panels adds a touch of artificiality to the wilderness-like ambiance, enhancing the visual appeal of the environment. Additionally, the framer itself acts as a decorative element, subtly reminding visitors that human activity is encouraged within this site. Moreover, the lightweight and portable nature of lexan make it perfectly suited for facilitating trips to Willemsoord, ensuring convenience for users.



joint as a 'telescope'

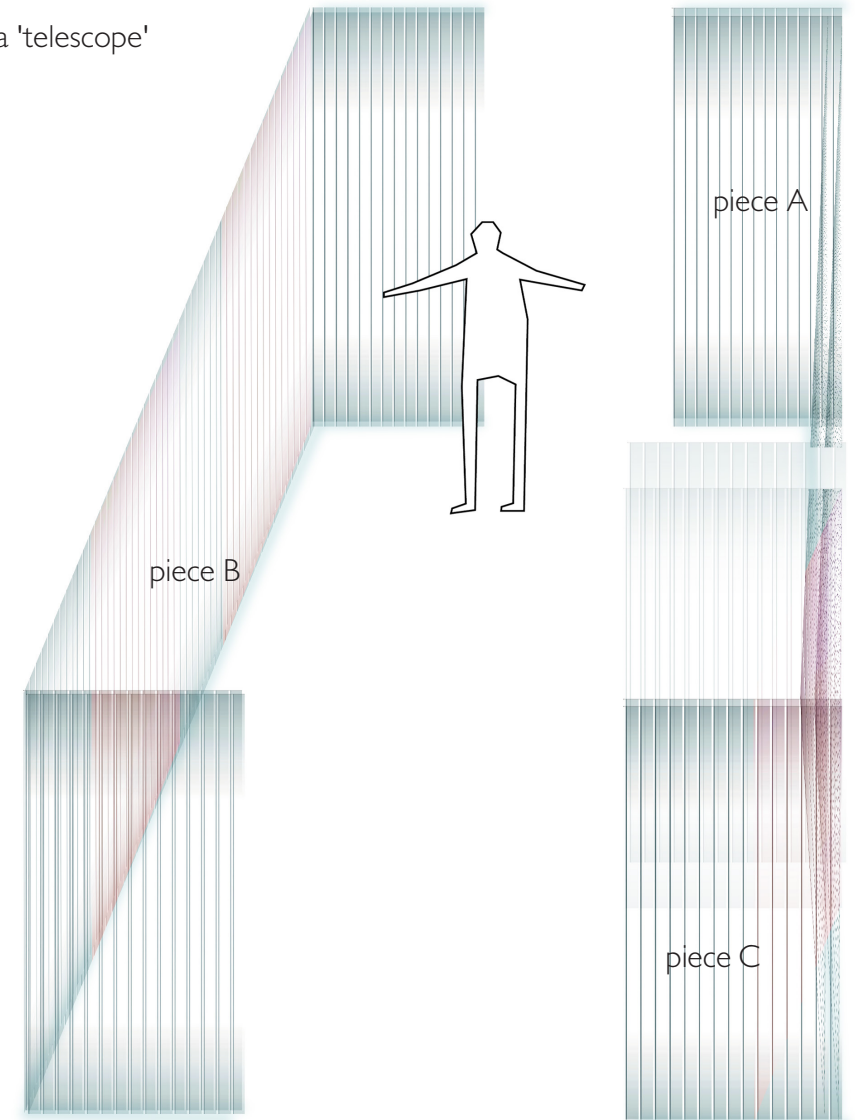
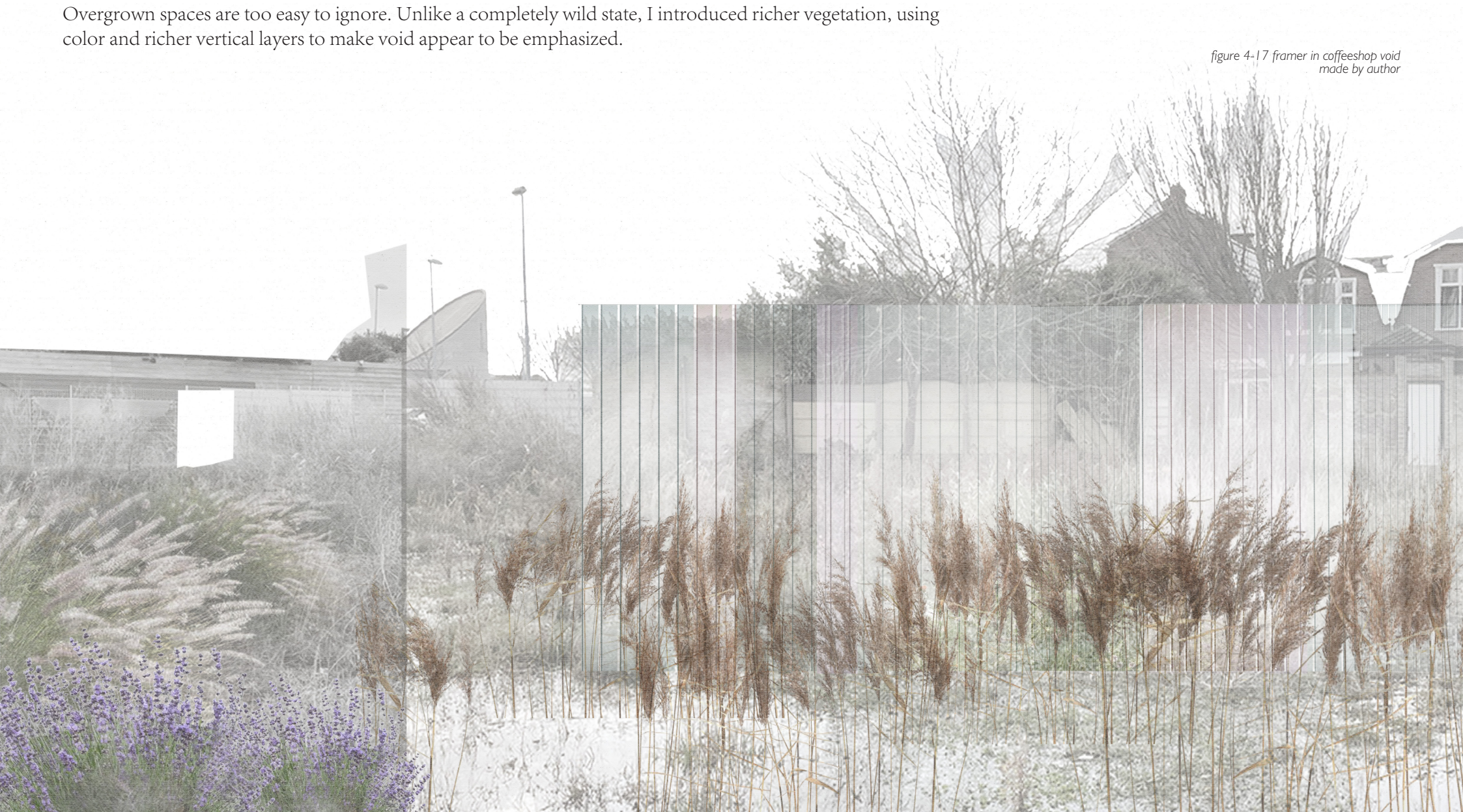


figure 4-16 lexan framer as a telescope in coffeeshop void  
made by author



Overgrown spaces are too easy to ignore. Unlike a completely wild state, I introduced richer vegetation, using color and richer vertical layers to make void appear to be emphasized.

*figure 4-17 framer in coffeeshop void  
made by author*





As residents use the traveler, they inevitably leave traces of their activities. These traces follow the traveler's travels and continue to accumulate. This is a new memory. It is a new history.

*figure 4-18 look at the old building through framer  
made by author*



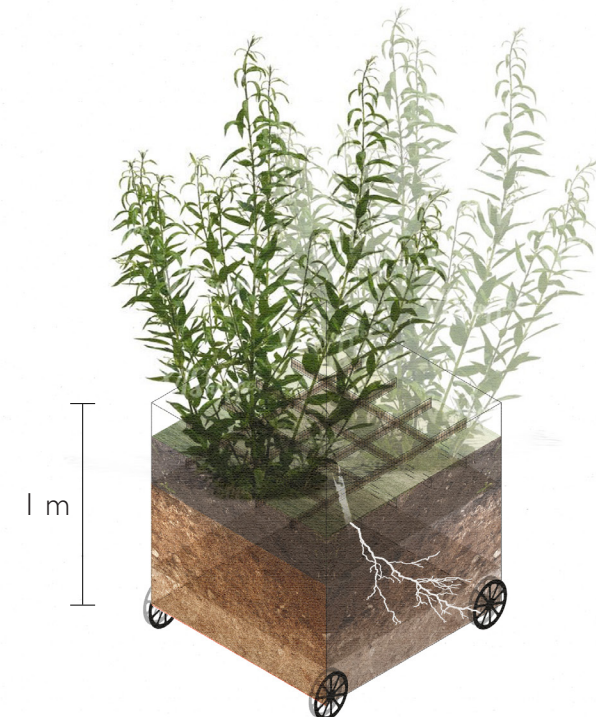
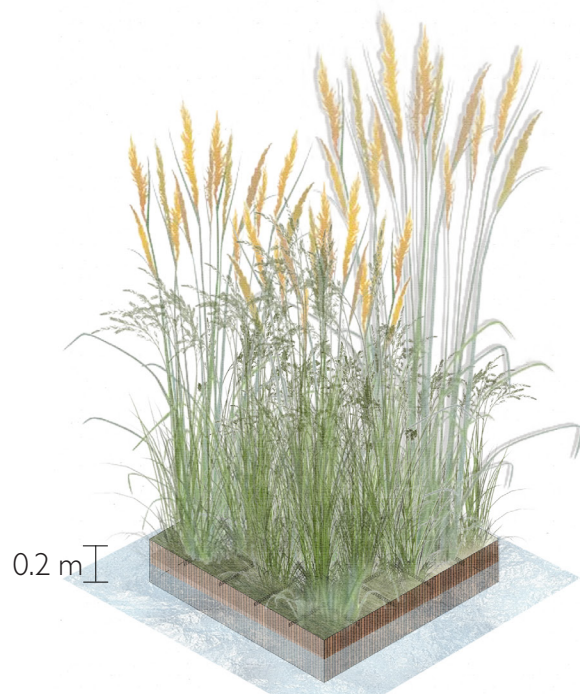


## THE CONTAINER

figure 4-19 container type A  
made by author

TYPE A - container for the added plantings

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| reeds:               | awareness of the water body / boundary for the spatial enclosure |
| ecological box:      | part of the exhibition / decoration                              |
| shrub / willow tree: | as the boundary for the spatial enclosure                        |



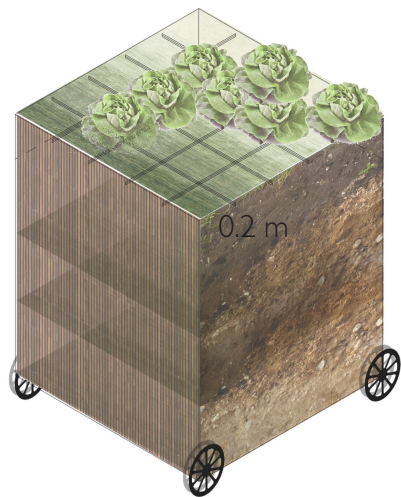
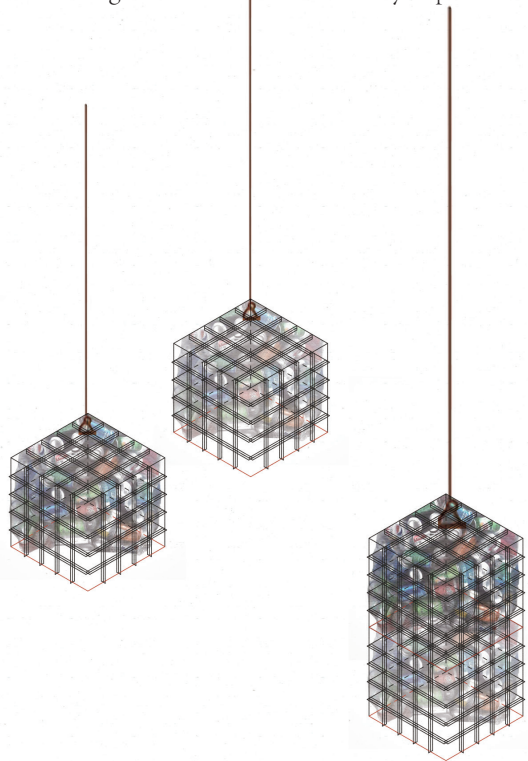


figure 4-20 guide book for container type A  
made by author



## TYPE - B container for the daily leftover item and tools

TYPE-B is used to collect people's daily leftovers. The transparent device allows people to see the contents inside. The contents record a part of the site's memory. After void is replaced by a new building, the contents will be hung in the Willemsoord factory as part of the exhibition.



PUT IN EVRYTHING  
U FIND THE PLACE &  
ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE  
TO SHARE IN PUBLIC  
(WITHOUT LIQUID)

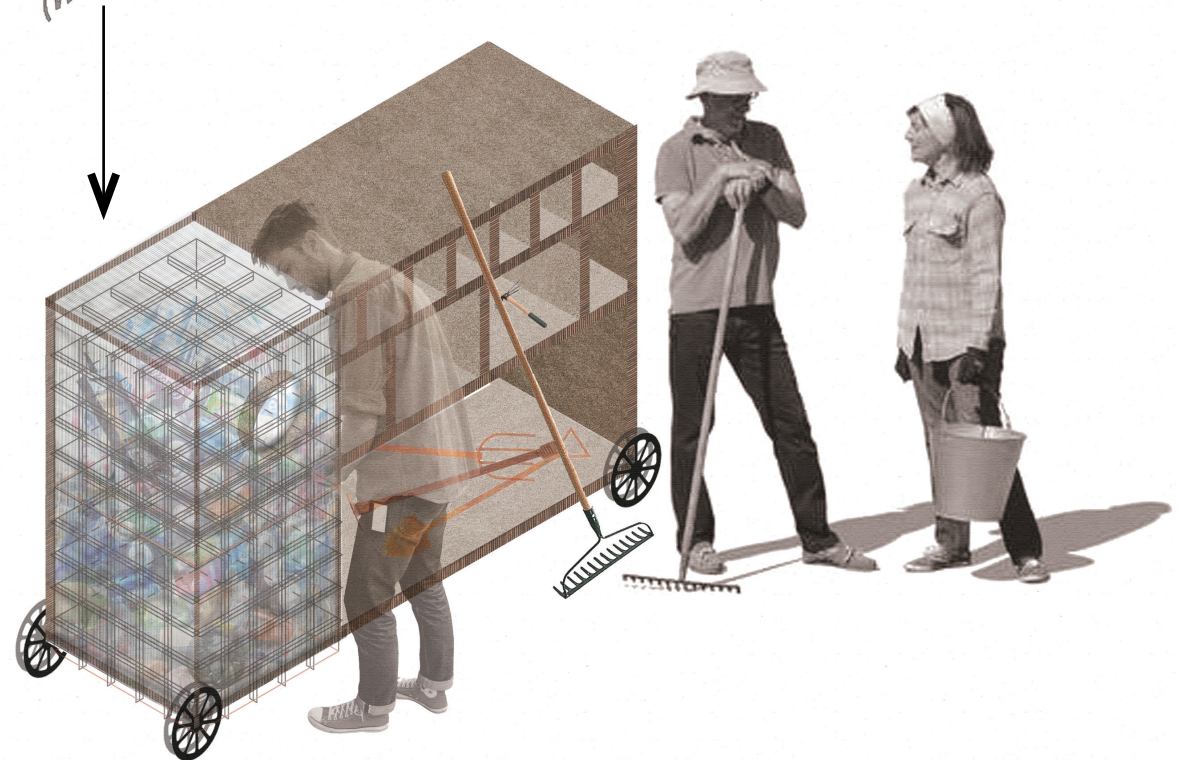
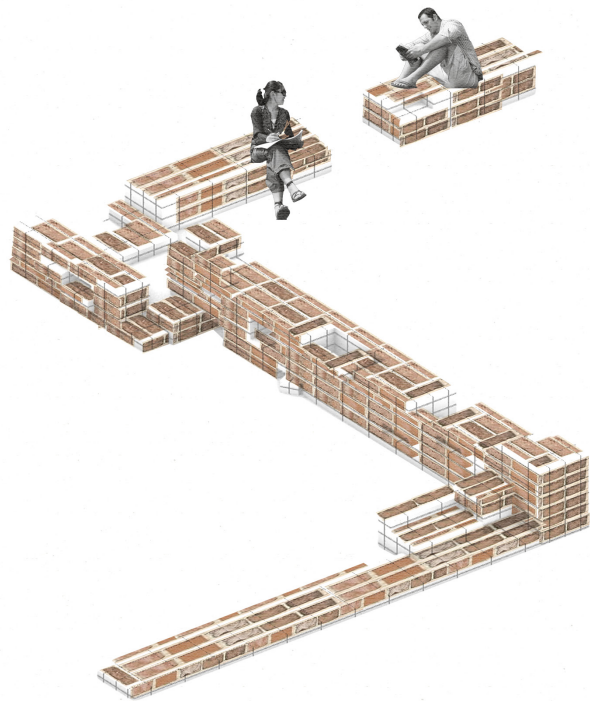


figure 4-21 container type B  
made by author

TYPE - C container for historical bricks

figure 4-22 container type C  
made by author



brick structure



brick pavement



brick container

During the demolition of pre-war and post-war (1945 - 1970) buildings, the masonry walls were scraped off the buildings by excavators and collected from the ground. They were then transported to processing plants where they were separated and cleaned from the mortar using a vibratory tamping method. There, they are separated and cleaned from the mortar. Using this technique, on average, 50% of the bricks in the building can be retrieved.



People are encouraged to create as much as they want in an enclosed space. At this point, the boundary is no longer a barrier that prevents users from coming in. It is a clear directive - make what you want to create here. In void 1, I encourage users to create the garden they desire here. Most of the wild plants in Void 1 itself are preserved. On top of that, all the containers are introduced as a new layer. They are seen as tools for the user to transform and create a garden. Plant some trees in removable containers, build some low walls with bricks, or, any other way you can think of .....By the way, all the containers are able to move after the disappearance of voids.





People are encouraged to create at will in an enclosed space. The boundary at this point is no longer a barrier that prevents users from coming in. It is a clear instruction - **do what you want to create inside here**. In void1, the boundary is incomplete. So refining this boundary becomes part of creation itself. There are many ways to do this that are encouraged. Plant some trees in removable containers, stack some low walls with bricks, or, any other way you can think of .....

*figure 4-24 movement with container  
made by author*

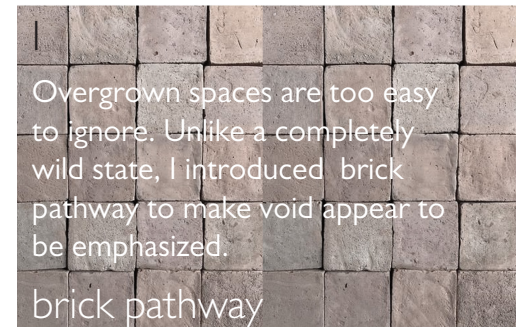




## THE ORDER



figure 4-25 spatial arrangement in coffeshop void  
made by author





### 4.2.3 MANIFEST

'The garden is a delightful observation of nature, perhaps the most delightful of all. It is a place where its users are free to indulge in their own enjoyment.'

The garden symbolises the individual's possession of what exists, and an environment that would otherwise be unimaginable. It means using the head and hands to make sense of the history around us. In the community garden of void transformation, the characteristics of the garden are increased.

1. easy to reach
2. spontaneously induces activity in the space
3. transient temporal constantly being moved and replaced

The garden is a place of rest and a place that encourages the user to constantly explore the relationship between everyday life and the remnants of history. Here, I followed the following intervention steps:

1. external linkage
2. internal configurations
3. classify and explain the guiding nature of the fragmented assembly of the site for the use of the space (depending on the nature of the site, public or private properties)
4. summarize the common behaviors and activities of different individuals in the use of the space

During the experiment of transforming from renewal voids into community gardens, I propose a paradigm for investigating the relationship between spatial guidance and people's behavior. The users create their own gardens using the objects **(container & traveler)** I provide. This is an ongoing process. I, the user and the site itself influence and shape each other in this experiment.

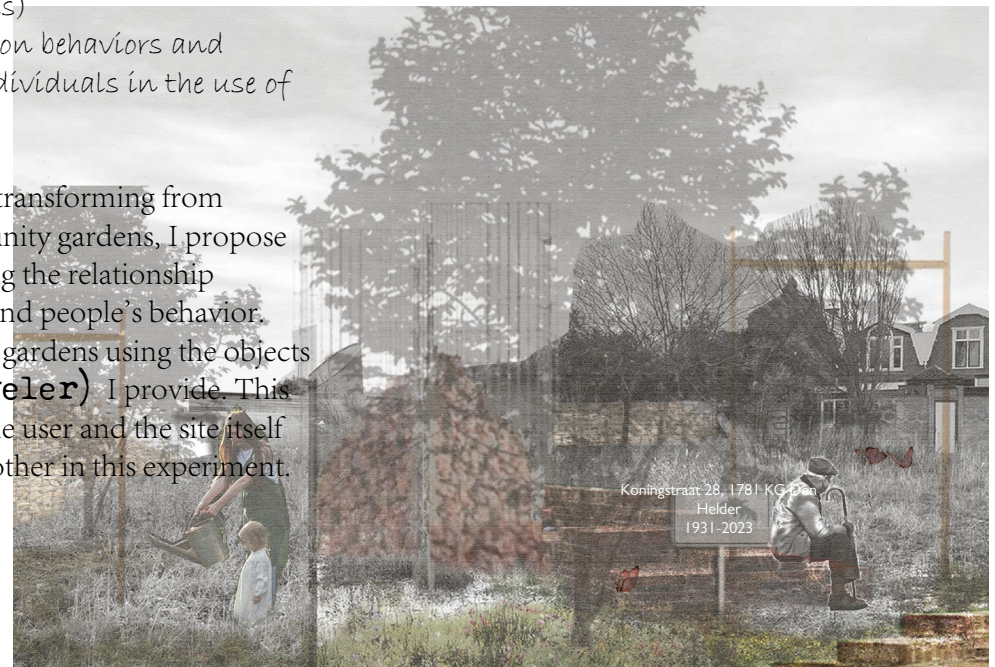


figure 4-26 design vision in community voids  
made by author



# HISTORICAL LEFTOVER

take Rijkswerf Willemsoord as example

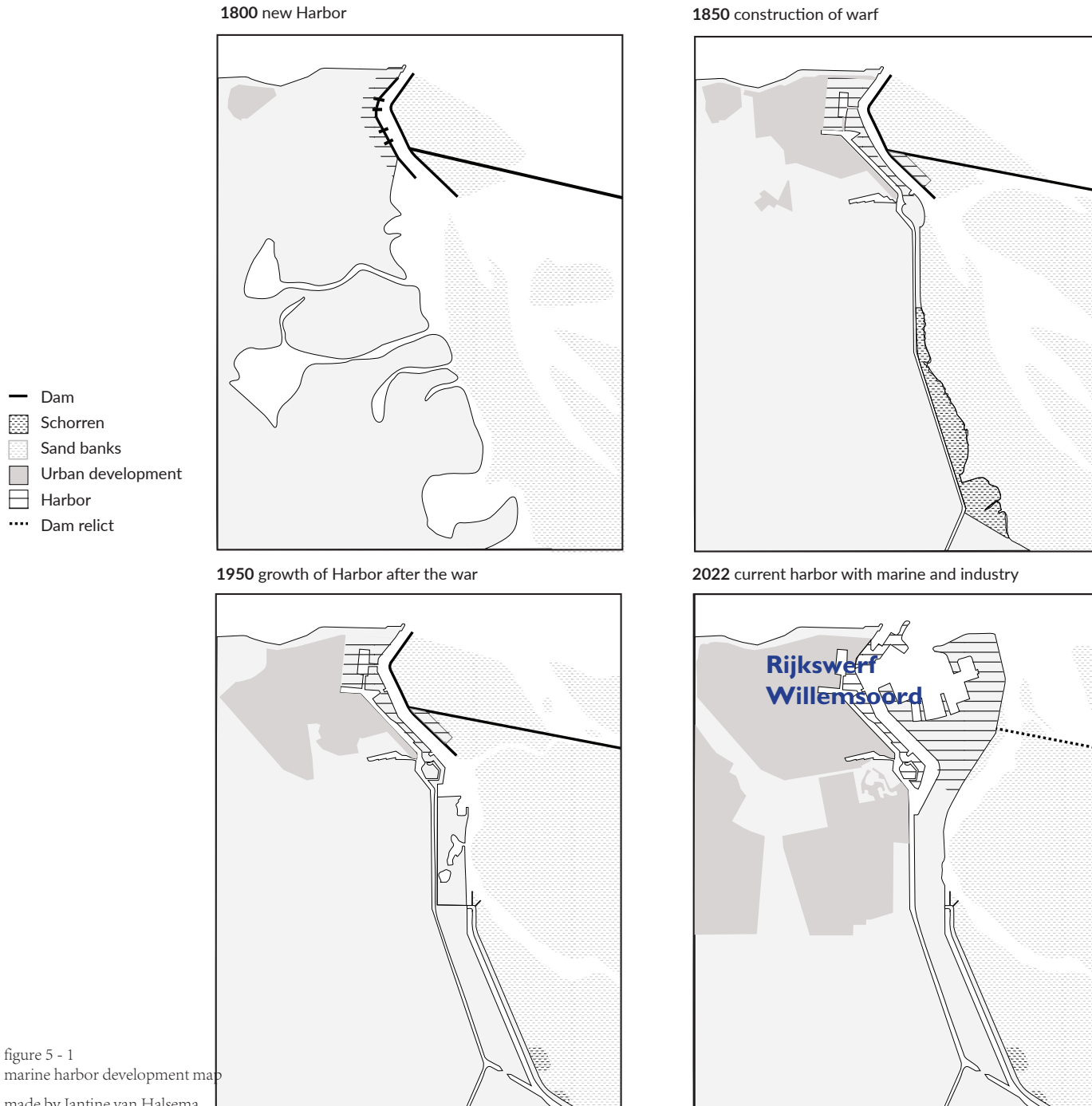


figure 5 - 1  
 marine harbor development map  
 made by Jantine van Halsema

## MARINE CULTURE

In the half century between 1780 and 1830, Den Helder was transformed from a small fishing village into the second largest port city in the province of North Holland. A decisive factor in this development was the arrival of the navy and the construction of the Wilhelm Soder Naval Shipyard. Most of the yard was built between 1822 and 1827. But the foundations had been laid long before this.

Den Helder played an important role in Dutch shipping. In the Dutch Golden Age, ships would gather near Den Helder and sail from there to the world's oceans, and in the 1820s the North Holland Canal was cut from Amsterdam to Den Helder.

figure 5 - 2 Den Helder en het Nieuwediep anno 1793.  
 source: Noord-Hollands Archief, collectie Provinciale Atlas Noord-Holland



## 5.1 RIJKSWERF WILLEMSOORD

### 5.1.1 RIJKSWERF WILLEMSOORD IN THE PAST

1812 born of  
Rijkswerf Willemsoord

1822 dock and  
axis composition

1876 a period of  
abundance

since 1900 important port



In 1812 the French Emperor in Paris approved the design of the Den Helder line. This was a period of political turmoil. Napoleon's regime collapsed and in 1813 the Netherlands was liberated from French occupation. The first Prince of Orange after the French era, William I, ordered the implementation of Napoleon's plan, giving rise to the name Wilhelm Sod



The dry dock was completed in 1822 and Jan Blanken handed the facility over to the marine building inspector L. Valk, who was responsible for the further design of the complex. A symmetrical structure was chosen, with the main axis facing the sea.



In 1876, with the opening of the North Sea Canal, the merchant fleet disappeared from Willemsoord. The inhabitants of this part of the town consisted mainly of soldiers and workers in the service of the Empire.



The city soon succeeded in redeveloping itself into the most important naval port in the Netherlands and the most modern naval shipyard in Europe. Den Helder developed into the second largest port city in the province of North Holland.





figure 5 - 3 history of Rijkswerf Willemsoord

1939-1945 bombs  
during the world war II

1954 new port  
Nieuwe Haven

since 1989 the decay  
& shrinking

nowadays a historical  
place with leftovers



The target of almost all the attacks was the Rijkswerf in Willemsoord, an important construction and maintenance workshop for the Royal Navy before the Second World War, the German Navy taking over the site and the workshop after the German invasion in May 1940. The repair of German warships, the construction of war material and the maintenance of weapons and ammunition were the main activities. This made Rijkswerf a legitimate target for Allied bombers.

source: <https://www.bombardementenopdenhelder.nl/>



After the Second World War, the Royal Netherlands Navy built a new harbour complex east of 'Nieuwediep'. The new military port was opened in 1954 and completed four years later. In the following decades, until today, changes and additions were made. Gradually, the State Shipyards at Vlissingen, Rotterdam, Hellevoetsluis, Amsterdam and Medemblik were abolished and the State Shipyard at Den Helder alone remained.

source: <https://swzmaritime.nl/news/2023/04/14/expansion-for-den-helder-naval-port/>



Defence budgets were cut after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War in 1991. Population reduced to less than 60,000 due to dramatic loss of employment opportunities



Since the withdrawal of the Royal Navy to a new yard location in Den Helder, the former Rijkswerf has been transformed into a nautical theme park. The unique Willemsoord complex, once a shipyard and repair yard for the Royal Dutch Navy, is now a beautiful monumental building in Den Helder and is gradually developing into an open urban area. The restoration of Willemsoord took many years and has resulted in a magnificent cultural heritage. willemsoord is home to a variety of entrepreneurs as well as nautical and cultural institutions.

source: <https://www.bouwenmetstaal.nl/publicaties/nieuwsbrief-architect-staal/architect-staal-november-2015/schoumburg-de-kompanje-rijkswerf-willemsoord-den-helder>

## 5.1.2 RIJKSWERF WILLEMSOORD IN THE FUTURE

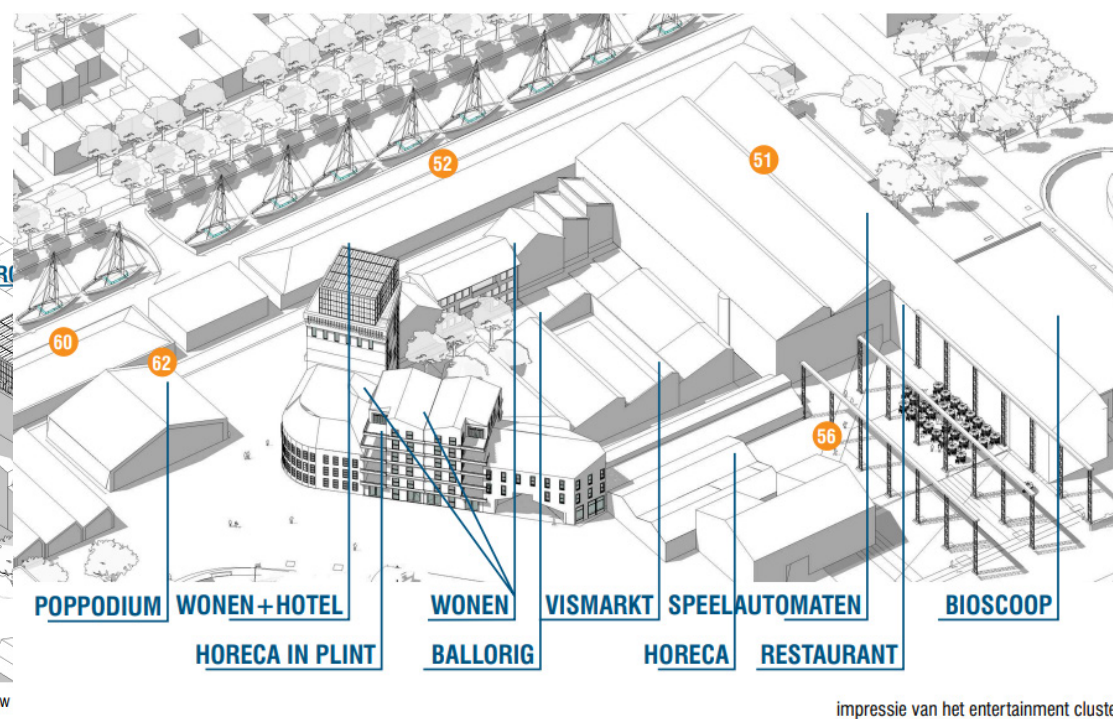
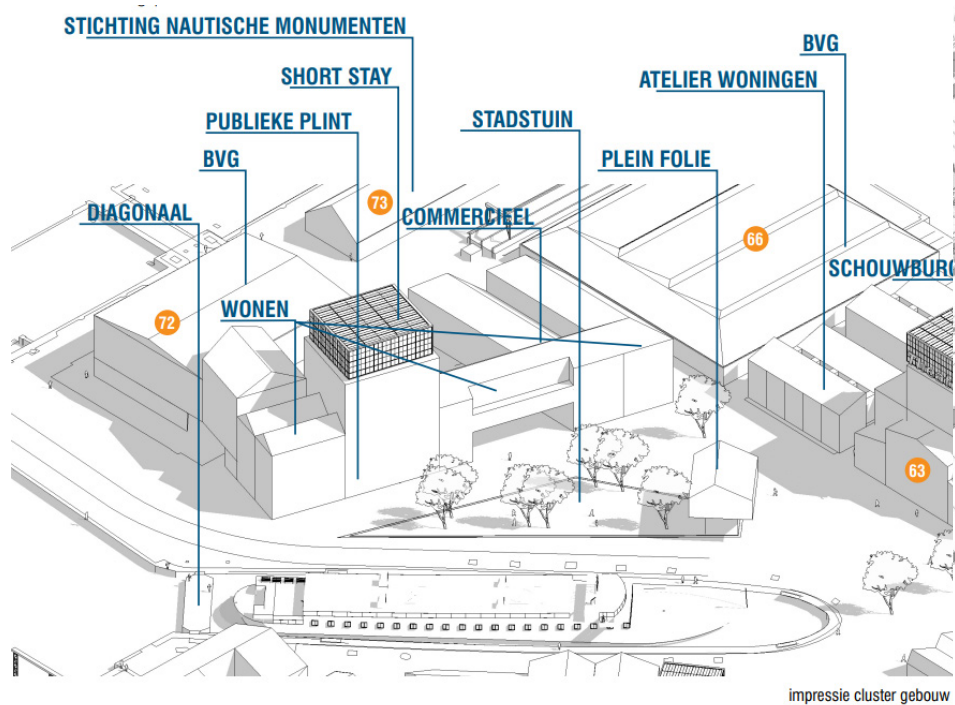


figure 5 - 4 development vision of Rijkswerf Willemsoord  
 source: <https://zeestad.nl/wp-content/uploads/Willemsoord-Zuid.pdf>

## 5.2 RIJKSWERF WILLEMSOORD ZUID

In its current state, the Willemsoord zuid is encompassed by distinctive 19th-century industrial buildings, creating a historical blank area. This space is still occupied by the Prince of Willem at the sloping quay, preserving remnants of the harbor such as cranes and the crane runway. These elements contribute to the historical and cultural significance of the Willemsoord zuid. Moreover, it has emerged as a crucial thoroughfare connecting Den Helder and Texel Island, welcoming a significant number of visitors who form their initial impression of the city.

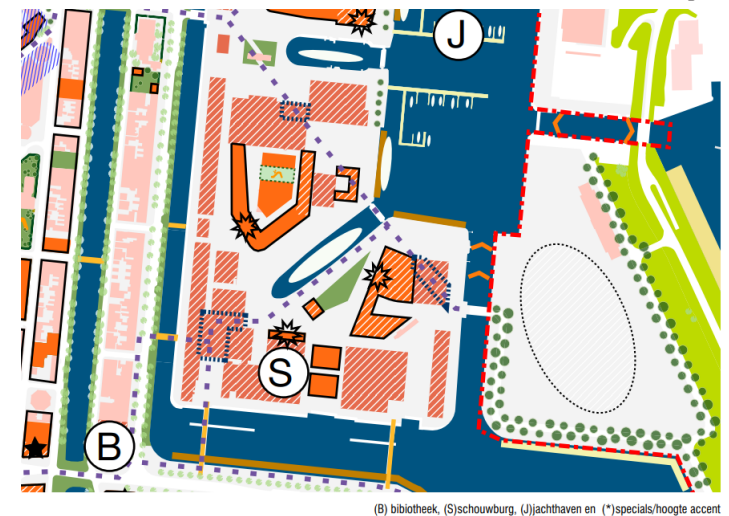
However, as the government plans, this area is slated for transformation into a vibrant cultural and recreational hub, serving as the artistic and cultural center of Den Helder. To integrate the city with the marina, there will be a reduction in the extensive open spaces present. Additionally, some buildings in the Willemsoord zuid will be demolished, and the open areas will be repurposed for various functions, such as parking facilities. Benefitting from its proximity to the city center shopping district, the public space on the south side of Willemsoord will be utilized as a leisure and recreational area, seamlessly connecting with the urban fabric and

serving as a complement to the city center.

An important cultural cluster is formed by the regional library on Beatrixstraat, the main street that connects Willemsoord to the city center, along with the galleries and cinemas located in the southern part of Willemsoord. This cultural cluster serves as a link between Willemsoord and the city center, connecting with the theaters in Willemsoord and enhancing the overall cultural experience.

figure 5 - 5 spatial development of Rijkswerf Willemsoord zuid

source: <https://zeestad.nl/wp-content/uploads/Willemsoord-Zuid.pdf>





## 5.2.1 CURRENT SITUATION THROUGH MEMORIAL LENS ANALYSIS

### SYMBOL LENS + TRACE LENS

We commemorate "all those - civilian and military - who have been killed or murdered in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or anywhere else in the world since the outbreak of the Second World War, and since then in war situations and peacekeeping operations. Today, the war and its commemoration are so vivid that we are still erecting new memorials to it.



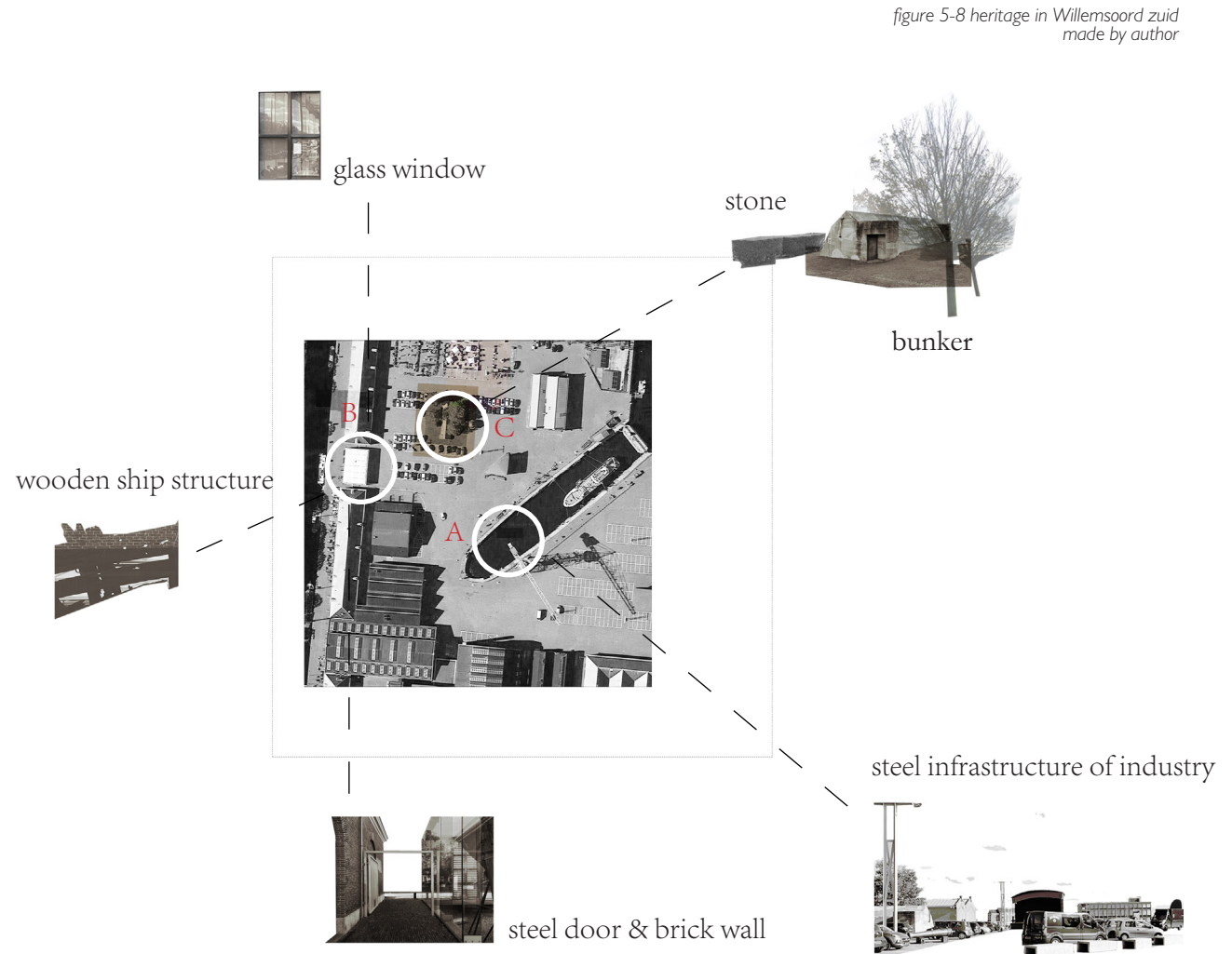
figure 5 - 6 Memorial Civilian Victims Navy Yard Willemsoord Den Helder  
photographed by Tineke Tesselaar, source :TracesOfWar

figure 5-7 The dockyard, 1940  
source : <https://www.winbo.nl/en/projects/city-hall-den-helder/>

## HERITAGE COMPOSITION

The williemsoord has an important role in understanding the history and cultural history of the city as a specific geographic area of heritage importance that has been altered by human activity. These cultural heritages that surround the leftover site (including the bunker of the leftover place itself) all physically inspire the historical function of the site. They provide evidence of history at specific sites. On this basis, they can be further translated into an emotional atmosphere. The starting point of the design is the narrative of heritage.

The heritages are seen as an important record of the cultural context of the site, so the design is used to emphasise these elements.

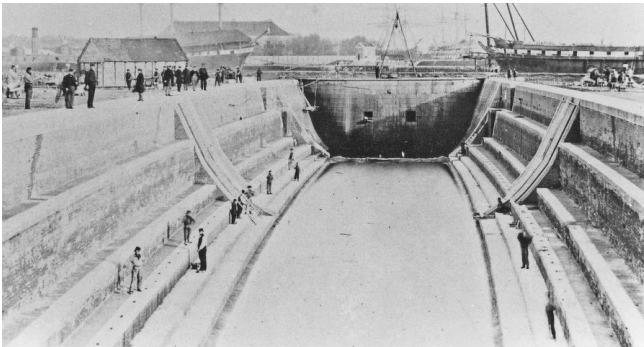


## HERITAGE EXTRACTION

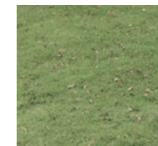
Some site activities that are seen as neglected.  
Existing forms of function and use. The  
introduction of traces with mnemonic significance  
and the emphasis on traces can better signal  
mnemonic properties.

figure 5-9 dok II in the past

source: <http://hisdocmb.nl/gedenkstenendok2.htm>



wood



grass



brick ground



steel structure



brick wall



mosses



stone

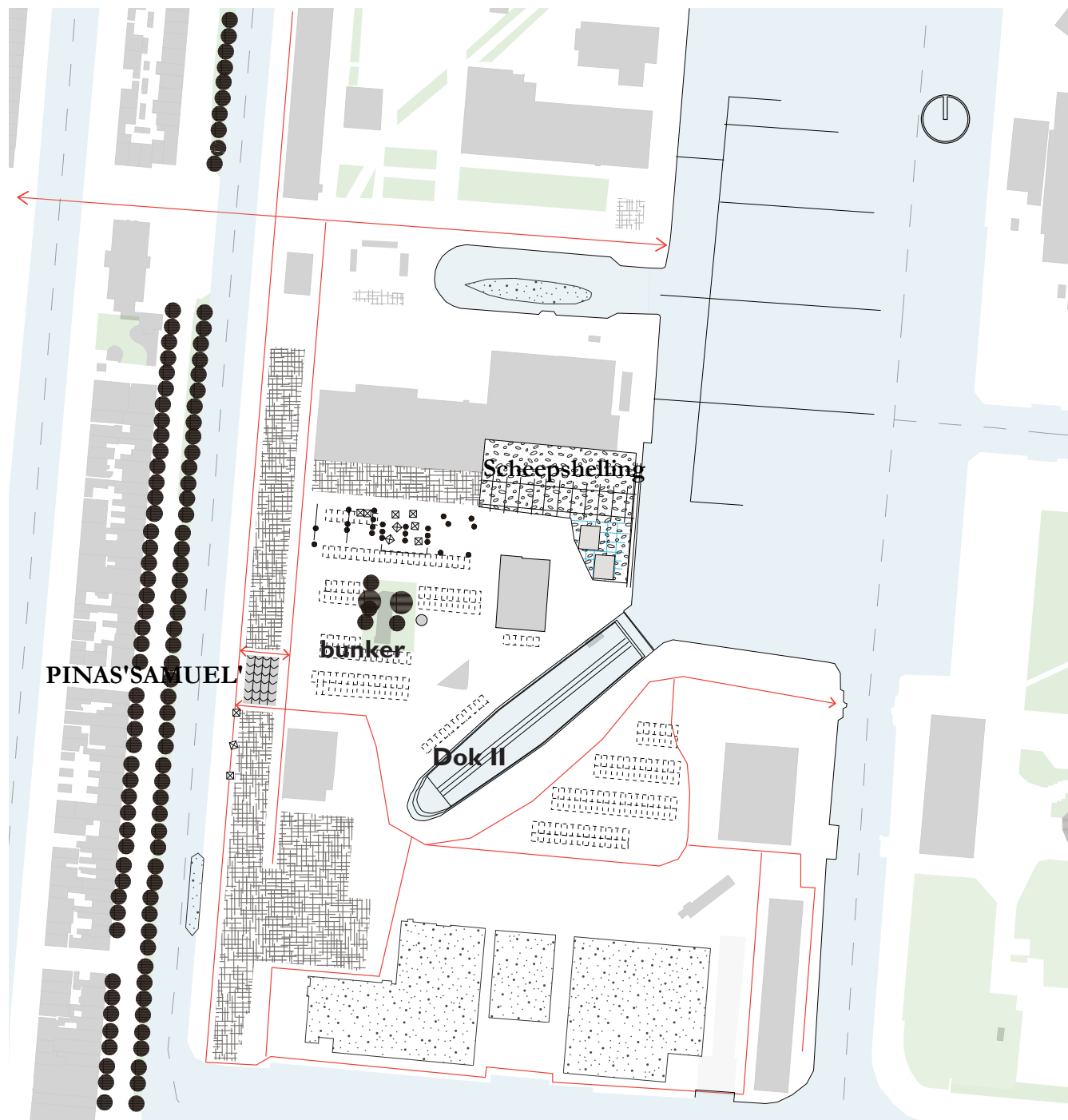
figure 5-10 material extraction  
made by author



## MOVEMENT LENS + SYMBOL LENS

figure 5-11 movement in Willemsoord zuid  
made by author

- car parking
- planned routing
- greenland
- water
- building
- stone ground
- gallery & museum
- restaurant & club
- canopy



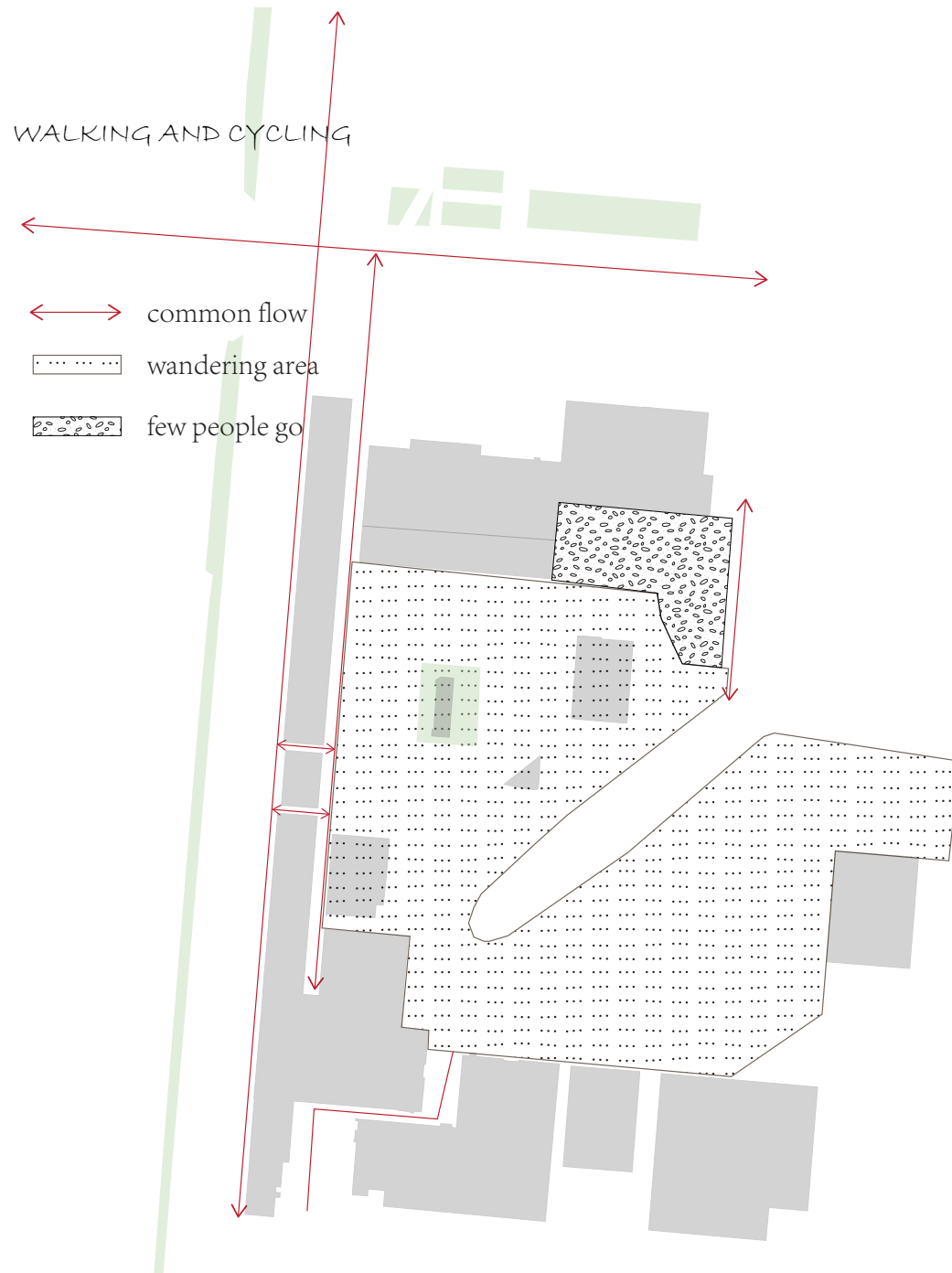


figure 5-1.2 walking & cycling flow in Willemsoord zuid  
made by author

Capturing pedestrian activity in the expansive open area of Willemsoord Zuid poses a challenge. To overcome this, I conducted three separate footpath surveys at different times and weather conditions. By averaging the results, I obtained two distribution maps that provide insights into pedestrian movement within the area.

However, it is worth noting that the installation of certain bridges on the outskirts of the open space introduces linear constraints on pedestrian trajectories. These bridges serve as physical boundaries that influence the paths pedestrians can take within the area.

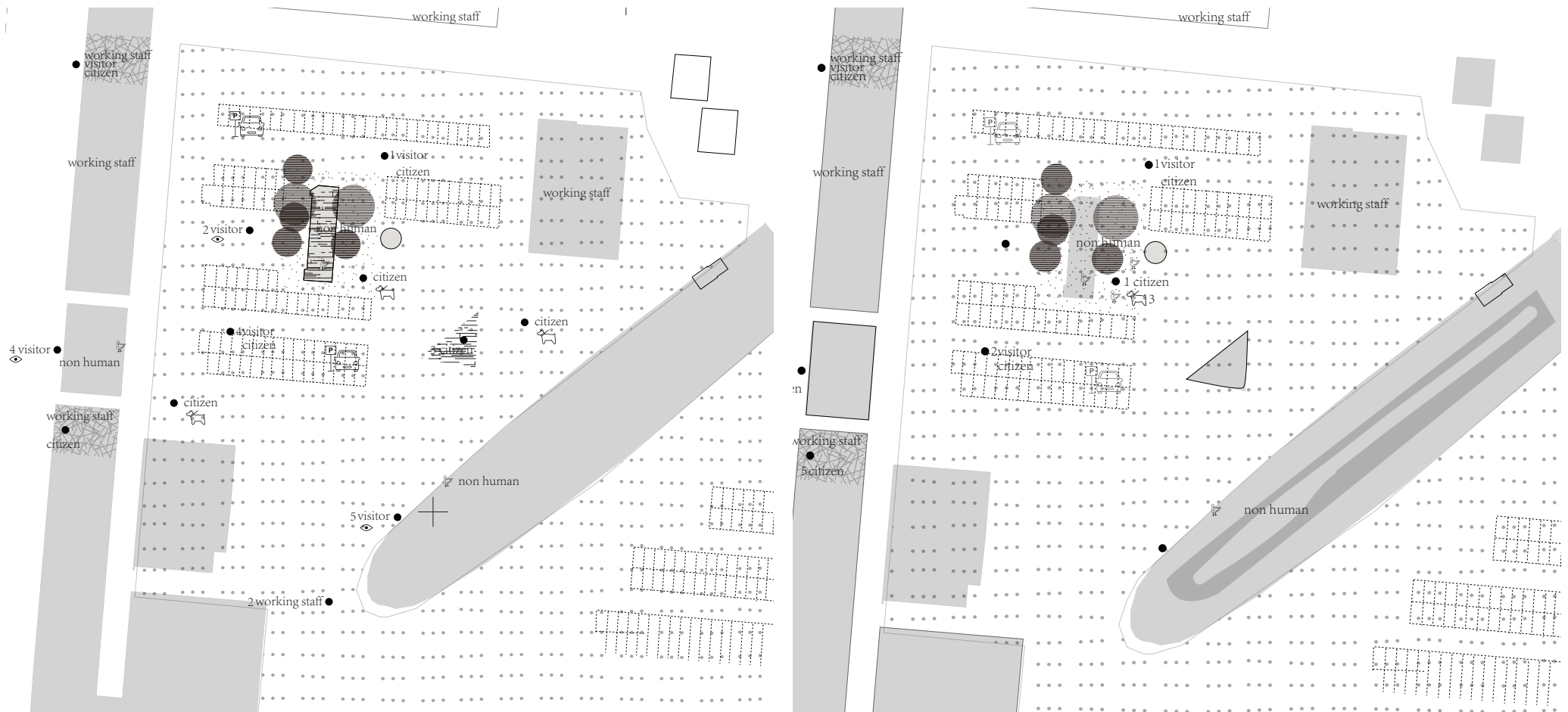


figure 5-13 flow scoring in Willemsoord zuid  
made by author



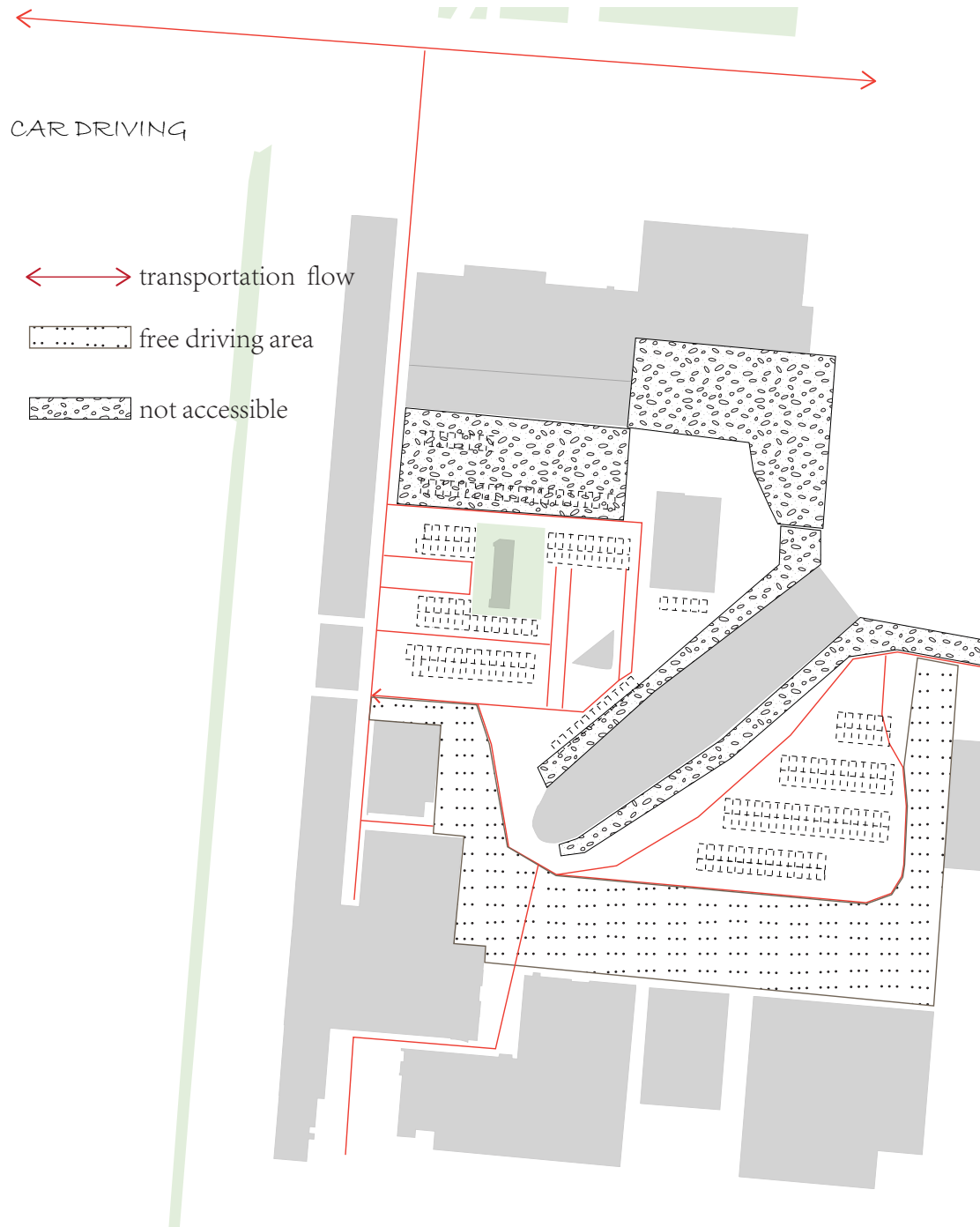


figure 5-14 car driving flow in Willemsoord zuid  
made by author

The vehicle flow in Willemsoord Zuid is primarily focused on the car park, with the red lines representing the designated access routes for motor vehicles during the planning phase. These routes were designed to be wide enough to accommodate larger industrial transport vehicles.

However, certain areas within Willemsoord Zuid are inaccessible to vehicles. This is due to the presence of industrial remnants and outdoor seating areas occupied by restaurants or cafes, which restrict vehicular access.

## PORTRAIT OF USERS



figure 5-15 user activities in Willemsoord zuid  
made by author



## ACTIVITIES AROUND HERITAGE

### A DOK II (1857 - 1866)

The dock is located in the southwest compartment of the Rijkswerf Willemsoord complex, on a diagonal axis (from northeast to southwest). The quay can be closed by a floating door (bateau-porte) that has been replaced. The length of the pier is about 114 meters, the width of the floor is about 23 meters and the depth above the block is initially about 5.5 meters (8 meters below the normal high water level).

As a major part of the historical function of the Rijkswerf Willemsoord complex, the docks are of general importance. Furthermore, from the point of view of cultural history, architectural history and structure, the object of general interest has survived intact as a rare example of a dry dock built in the second half of the 19th century.



photographed by Arjo Eijgelsheim, source:historie rijkswerf willemsoord

visit in distance



messy & not attractive

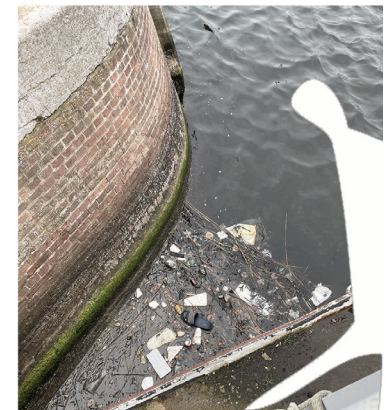


figure 5-16 user activities around dok II  
made by author



Monday, March 1, 2021

Clipper Stad Amsterdam was in dock 2 at Willemsoord for six months for major maintenance.



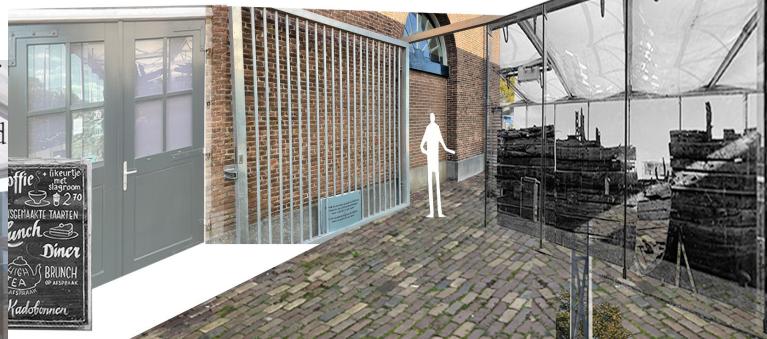
*figure 5 - 17 ship repairing in Dok II in 2021*

*photographed by George Stoekenbroek, source: [https://www.noordhollandsdagblad.nl/cnt/dmf20210301\\_39118666?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic](https://www.noordhollandsdagblad.nl/cnt/dmf20210301_39118666?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic)*

## B PINAS'SAMUEL'(NE81)

The wooden remains cannot be stored as such after excavation; the wood will dry out and fall apart completely. It must therefore be preserved. For two years Pinas stood under a water spray system. As cellulose is still present in the wood fibres, there is no need to add polyethylene glycol (PEG) to the water. The merchant vessel was then dried in a controlled manner for four years. This was the first time in the Netherlands that a shipwreck had been preserved in this way. The restoration of the ship was completed 12 years later in 1982.

In 1997 the museum in Port Ketel closed its doors. Due to lack of space, the wreck of the Pinas was loaned to Willemsoord in Den Helder in 1998 and since 2003 the cargo ship has been displayed in a glass case in the yard of Willemsoord, a former naval ship and repair yard.



no guidance after entering



as the entrance of the park



figure 5-18 user activities around PINAS'SAMUEL'(NE81)  
made by author



## C BUNKER

The williemsoord has an important role in understanding the history and cultural history of the city as a specific geographic area of heritage importance that has been altered by human activity. These cultural heritages that surround the leftover site (including the bunker of the leftover place itself) all physically inspire the historical function of the site. They provide evidence of history at specific sites. On this basis, they can be further translated into an emotional atmosphere. The starting point of the design is the narrative of heritage.



most of the time is closed, and be seen as a structure



figure 5 - 19 raid shelter, with central heating and a pit-coal storage  
source: Forten, bunkers in Den Helder.



figure 5-20 user activities around bunker  
made by author

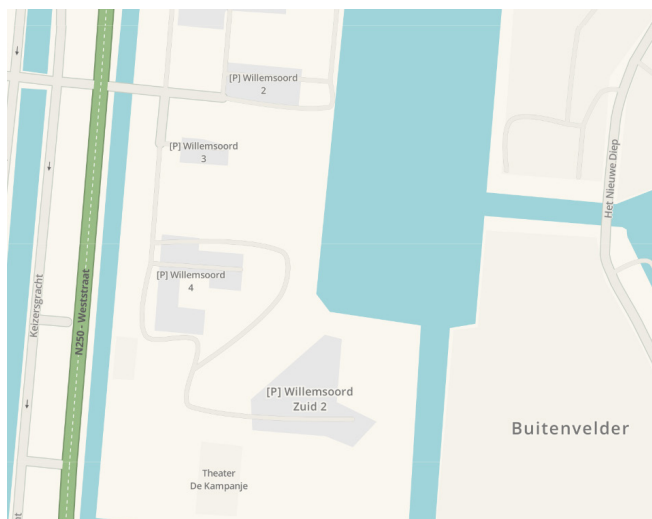


Cars make the way to  
the ship wreckage hard...

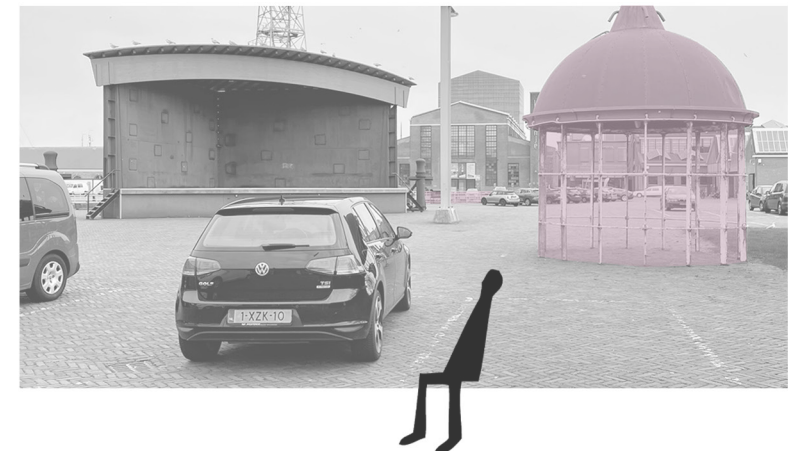
## D 171 CAR PARKING LOTS

Parking is free and unrestricted in the middle of a new museum and restaurant complex in a historic building. The area is safe, with direct access to the ferry to Texel (by bicycle). The ferry to Texel is a 15-minute walk from this parking lot. There is plenty of space for all kinds of vehicles with good facilities. This facilitates visitors' trips to the Texel islands. It is important to note that this is a no-entry zone at night.

figure 5 - 21 car parking map  
source: openstreet map



It's hard to see the show on  
the stage because of cars...



The old dok hide behind  
the cars...I prefer a clear  
atmosphere to admire it



## 5.2.2 CREATE A HERITAGE PARK

How to evoke and create daily memory by the design ?



How to demonstrate the grand memory of the heritage and express spatially ?



How to transform the Willemsoord heritage into a heritage park?

### **feeling & activity(movement lens + trace lens)**

pass by, sit, climb up and down,  
planting,

### **overall atmosphere(symbol lens + trace lens)**

material: brick wall, wooden step, gravel  
pathway...  
planting: single oak, white brick tree  
line,shrub...

### **historical leftover + heritage narrative**

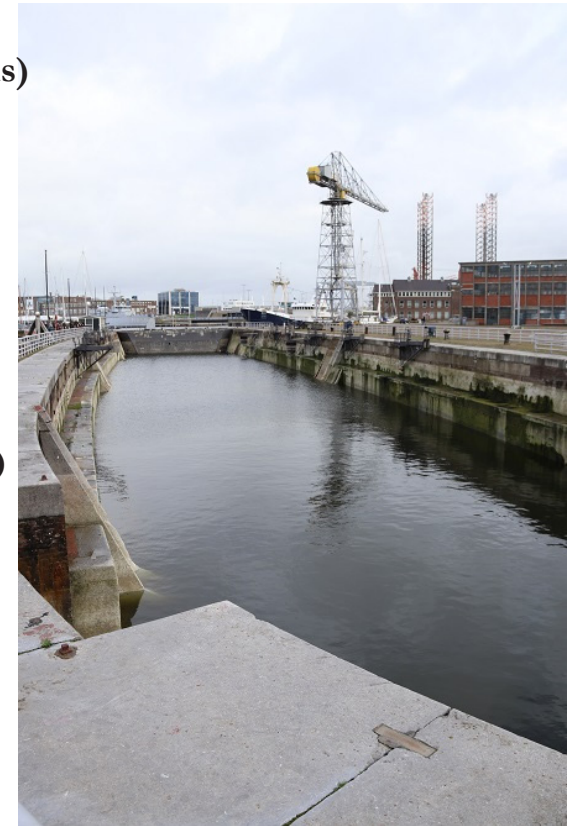


figure 5 - 22 Dok II filled with water  
photographed by Arjo Eijgelsheim, source:historie rijkswerf willemsoord

## 5.3 HERITAGE PARK

### SPATIAL & TIME SHIFT EXPERIMENT

When we evoke a memory, we are in fact evoking personal emotions arising from actions related to events in the place. At an urban scale, the emotions associated with grand memory triggered by the actions of everyday life are a complex process. Both temporal processes and changes in spatial order can affect the perception of emotions. The present experimental investigation divides this interaction process into two main dimensions, time and space. I investigate the effects of shifts in both on review, compose and broke grand memory in everyday life.

#### SPATIAL SHIFT

The unique quality of place is its power to order human intention, experience and action spatially. Our understanding of space is based on the meaning that places derive from their spatial context.

Objects expand and strengthen the field of memory and ultimately our sense of self as we remember, and they function socially and spiritually. In advancing the structural and functional transformation of the Willemsoord, the contents of the voids experiment are transported as spatially constituted and raw material for eliciting activity. Spatially, I lead the users and use these raw materials to form a spatial pattern similar to that of the inner city, thereby advancing the connection between the naval port and the inner city.

On the one hand, in this more public area, the users develop different attitudes and uses of the materials. The transfer of materials from the voids to the Willemsoord will itself make people more aware of the historical and urban changes taking place; on the other hand, the spatial displays and order that emerge temporarily in the voids are an important part of the urban process in Den Helder. The Willemsoord can be used as an exhibition

repository to preserve the memories of these communities. On this basis, the memory of the use of the Willemsoord, which belongs to another space, is introduced.

At the same time and with the same triggering mechanism, this experiment explores whether users give different feedback to the same historical objects depending on the changing spatial context. These feedbacks differed from person to person. The attitudes and uses of people directly associated with the historical element, people about to be associated, and people who know nothing about it, all intertwined in the same place, constitute an unpredictable and dynamic scene.



### 5.3.1 FRAMER & CONTAINERS TRAVELING FROM VOIDS



figure 5 - 23 moving forest  
photographed by Anne Pinto-Rodrigues, based on source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/04/walking-forest-of-1000-trees-transforms-dutch-city-aot>

Inspired by the Bosk project's walking forest, I used a similar device to move the containers, an activity that occurs with uncertain frequency. It depends on how soon the void will be occupied by a new building. In this process everyone is welcome, whether you have been involved in the construction of the void or not. We need the help of the community and all interested parties to move the containers to the transporters. Eventually, the transporters will be pulled by small cars as power. Every single container is also encouraged to be

moved as individuals during the transfer time.

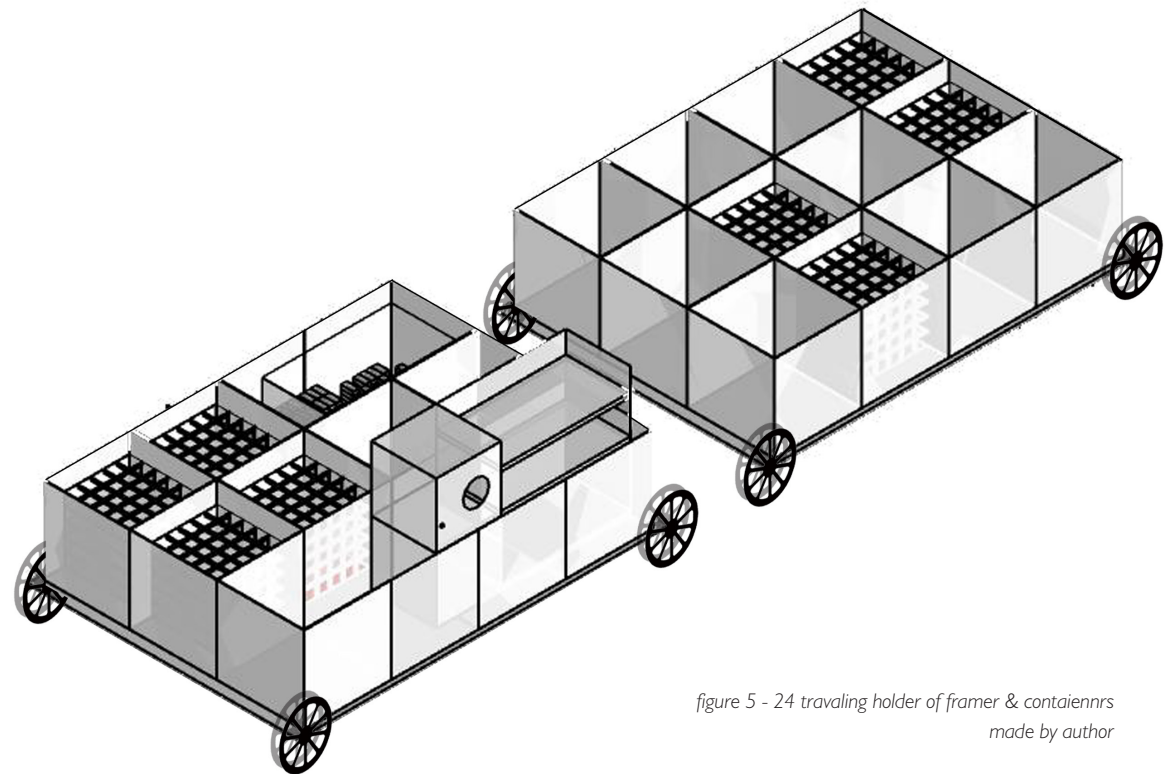


figure 5 - 24 traveling holder of framer & containnrs  
made by author




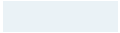
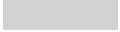


FOLLOW US!



figure 5 - 25 traveling festival from coffeeshop void  
made by author

### 5.3.2 SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

figure 5 - 26 current spatial arrangement  
made by author

-  greenland
-  water
-  building
-  car parking
-  water ditch





## PATTERN EXTRACTION



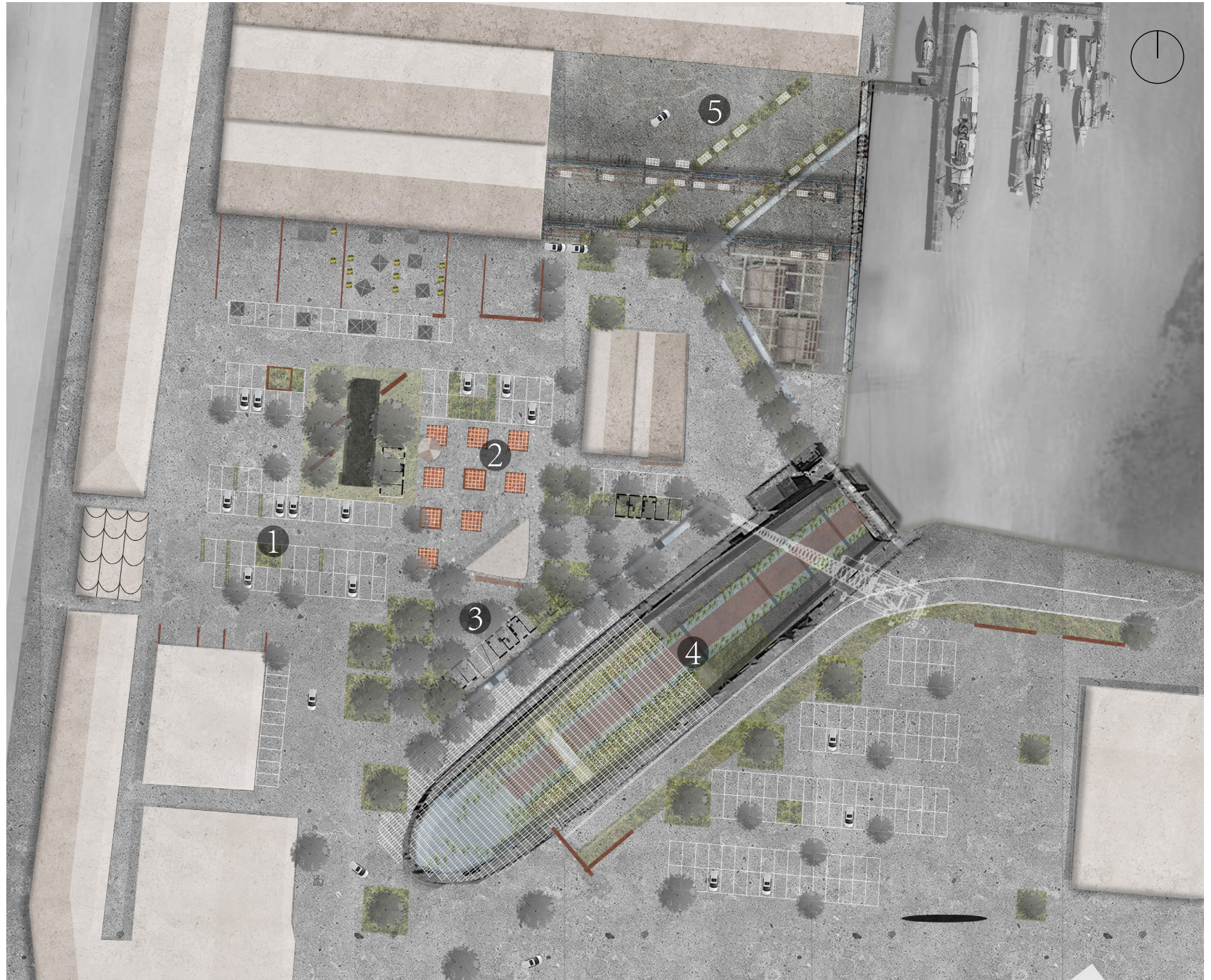
figure 5 - 27 pattern arrangement  
made by author

## PATTERN COMPOSITION

The site composition of Willemsoord Zuid predominantly comprises axes and grids aligned in two directions. To ensure coherence with this underlying texture, the spatial design endeavors to establish connections between the spaces of Willemsoord Zuid and the northern and downtown areas. By adhering to these existing textures, a sense of continuity and harmony is fostered throughout the entire area.



figure 5 - 28 spatial design plan  
made by author

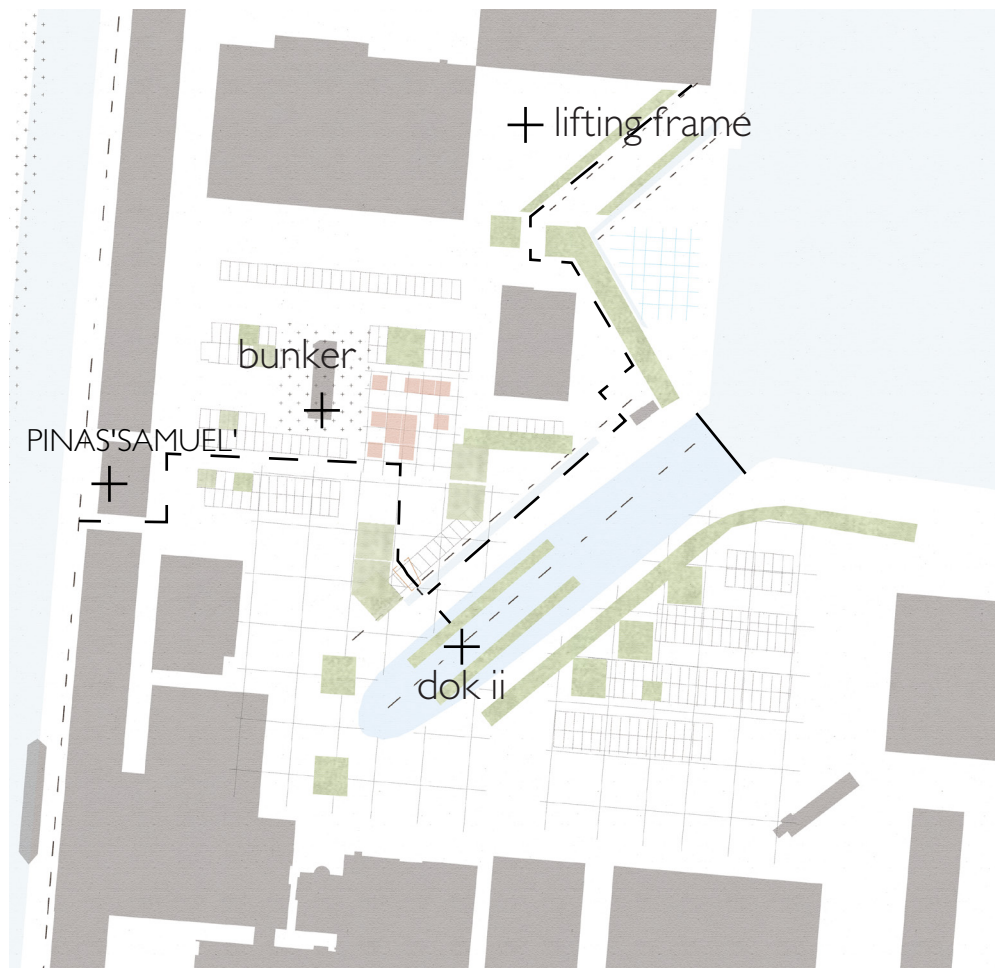


- 1 car parking lots
- 2 open stage
- 3 brick garden
- 4 dok garden
- 5 public exhibition





## SYMBOL LENS



— — visiting routing

In the open space of Willemsoord zuid, I have implemented a division using a combination of a green area and a small water channel. This spatial arrangement is a result of careful consideration of the site analysis and extraction of patterns.

By incorporating the green space and the small canal, I aim to establish a spatial connection with the heritage elements present in the area. This connection not only honors the site's historical significance but also serves to create a cohesive and integrated experience within the open space.

The interweaving of these three patterns—heritage, green space, and the water channel—contributes to a rich and dynamic spatial experience. This arrangement invites visitors to engage with the environment, allowing them to explore the heritage, immerse themselves in the tranquil green surroundings, and interact with the water feature.

I strive to enhance the overall ambience and provide a captivating experience for residents and visitors alike, while maintaining a harmonious relationship with the site's historical context.

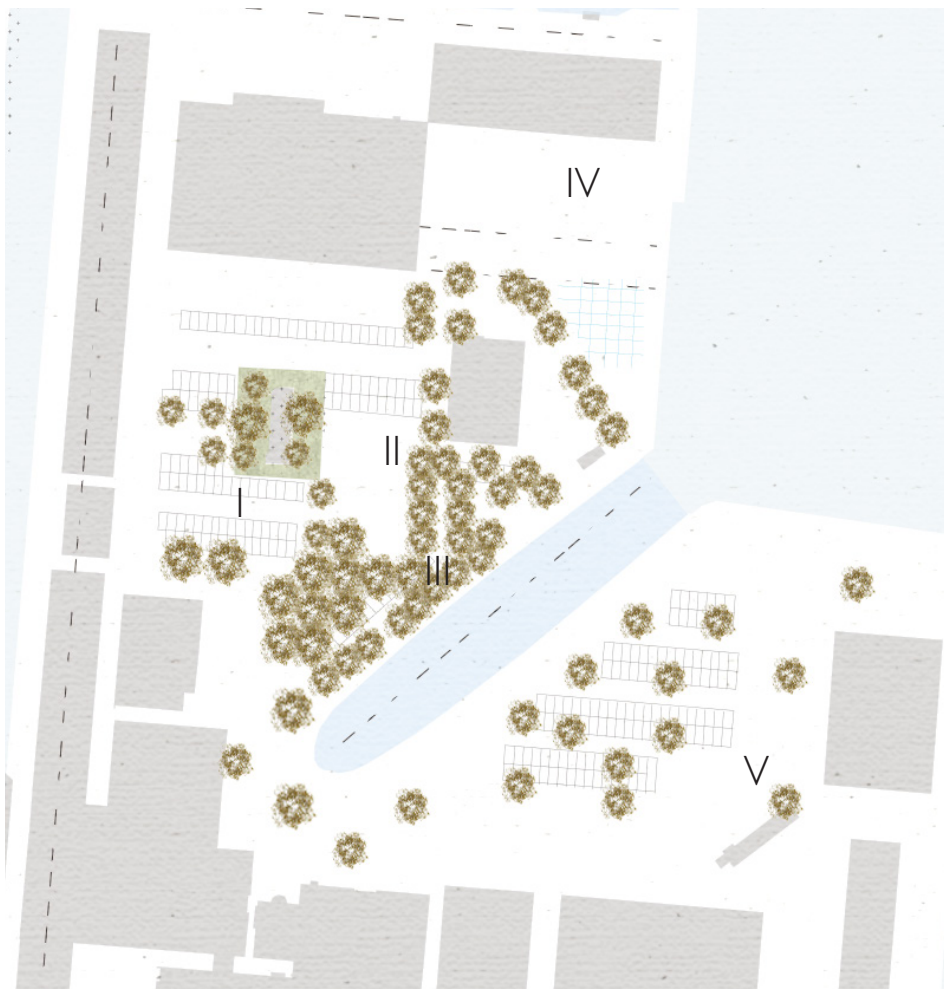
figure 5 - 29 symbol connection  
made by author





## MOVEMENT LENS

figure 5 - 30 canopy layer  
made by author



- I     + 
- II     / 
- III     wandering park
- IV     exhibition
- V     parking

- I    plant, parking, rest
- II    perform, rest
- III    plant, communication, rest
- IV    exhibition, wandering
- V    parking

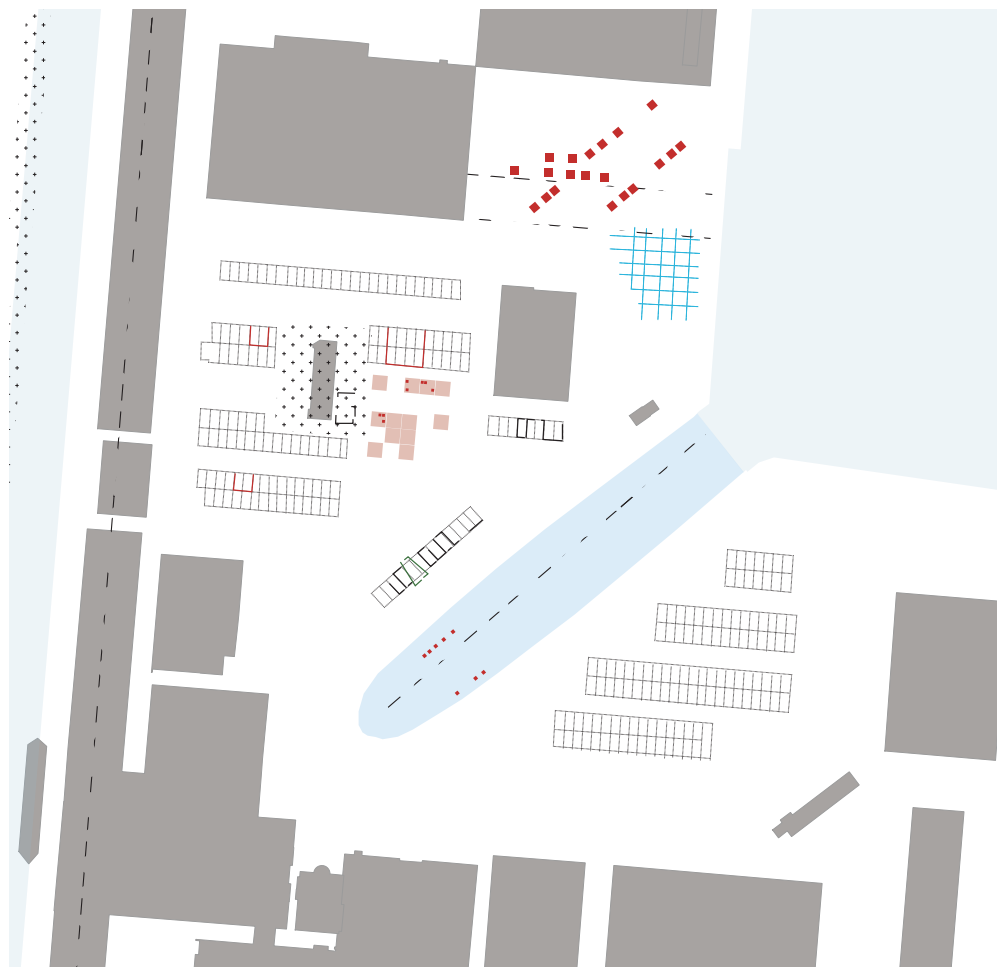
To create distinct spaces that prioritize pedestrian access, I employ the enclosure of trees. This design choice intentionally restricts vehicular entry, encouraging users to engage closely with the space and its heritage. By limiting access to pedestrians only, a sense of intimacy and connection with the surroundings is fostered.

In certain areas where the functionality of the space is more intricate, the strategic placement of trees serves as a guide for traffic flow. The arrangement of the trees helps define and navigate the routes within the space, ensuring a smooth and organized movement of pedestrians. Additionally, the paving materials used emphasize the boundaries of pedestrian activity, delineating areas designated for walking and reinforcing the intended spatial experience.

Throughout this design approach, I remain mindful of the site's texture and existing elements. The spatial setting of the tree layer harmonizes with the overall context, respecting and complementing the unique features of the site. The white birch invites users to engage with the space and appreciate heritage.



## TRACE LENS



- container
- brick structure

The container serves as a crucial spatial element that documents and captures the transformations initiated by the users within the space. Simultaneously, in the original parking lot of the pedestrian zone, I have utilized bricks collected from the community void to shape the environment.

By incorporating the container, users' interventions and contributions to the space are visually and physically recorded, allowing for a tangible representation of the evolving nature of the area. This element becomes a testament to the collective efforts and creative input of the community. Furthermore, the use of bricks sourced from the community void in the transformation of the original parking lot adds a layer of historical significance to the space. By repurposing these materials, the space becomes a physical embodiment of the city's past, interweaving heritage with the present.

This integration of the container as a record-keeping element and the utilization of bricks collected from the community void in the parking lot design not only enhances the visual appeal of the space but also serves as a meaningful connection to the city's history, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging for the users.

figure 5 - 3 | container & brick  
structure arrangement  
made by author

### 5.3.3 TRANSFORM WITH TIME

#### TIME SHIFT

Permanent, unchanging surroundings, with specific taken-for-granted environments and spaces based on cultural and social structures, can overwhelm people's perception of their environment. My aim was therefore to create a dynamic, changing space to enhance people's attention to the site. In this historical leftover in Willemsoord, I have attempted to create a new, growing spatial mix. In the process, the spatial order and function of the site is constantly changing.

In order to strengthen the connection between the user and the site, I also direct the user to participate directly in the transformation of the site. Here, the designer merely gives an opening, and the rest of the activities and the direction of development are determined by the users. These user changes to the site and the design are inevitable, meaning that uncertainty will gradually emerge over time.

As a designer, I reorganise the site and give the users an inspiring starting point, and Willemsoord is seen as a beautiful stage. In this landscape arena, the users are free to generate activities. Different

activities, over time, transform the site into different forms and functional properties. The traces and memories generated by the activities accumulate on this stage and inspire the creation of new activities. In this process, design is an interactive collaboration between the designer, the user and the site.



# CAR PARKING LOTS & BUNKER



figure 5-32 starting arrangement for car parking lots  
made by author

PHASE 1  
PREPARE CAR PARKING LOTS FOR TRANSFORMATION

what if the designers do everything to transform the car parking lots...

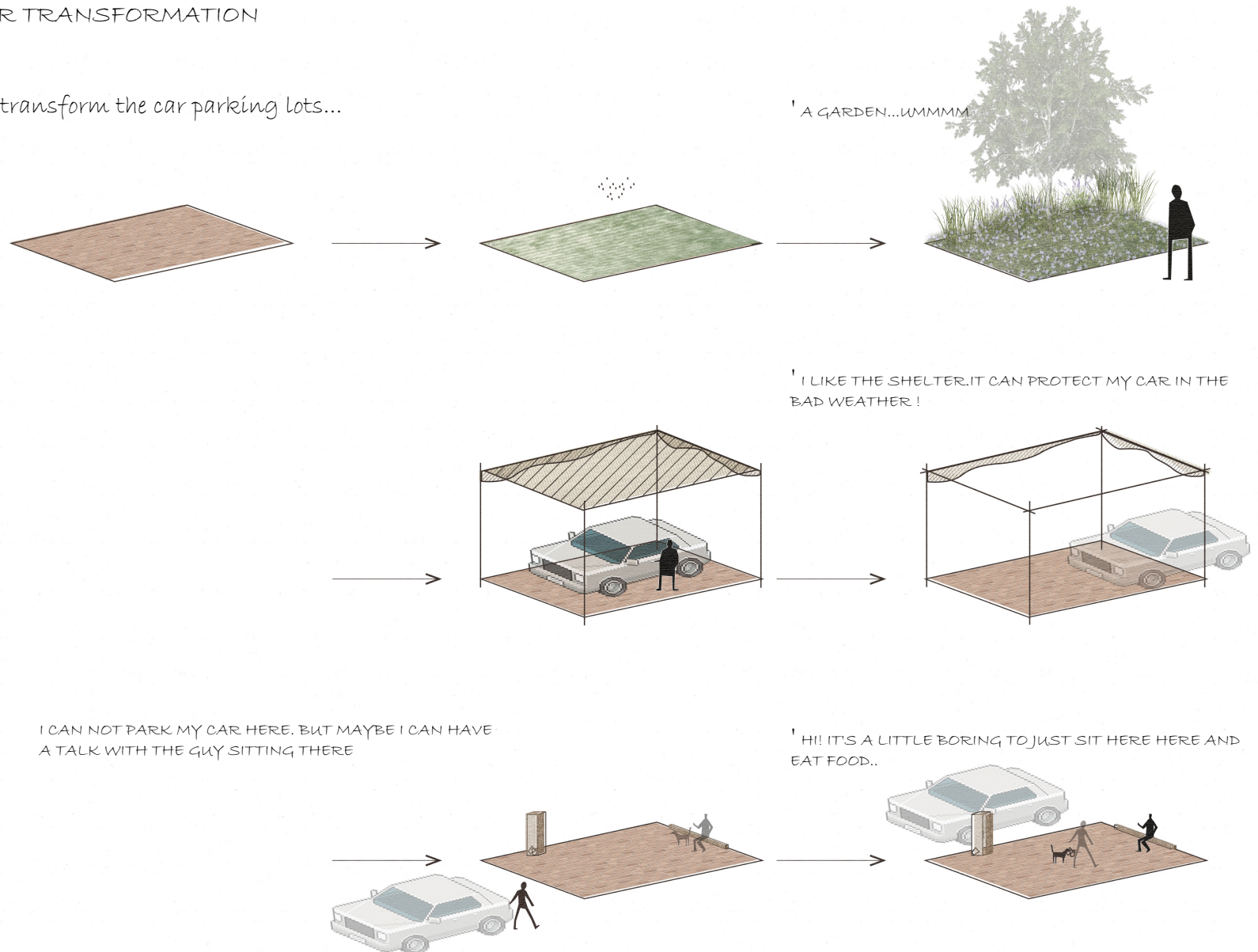


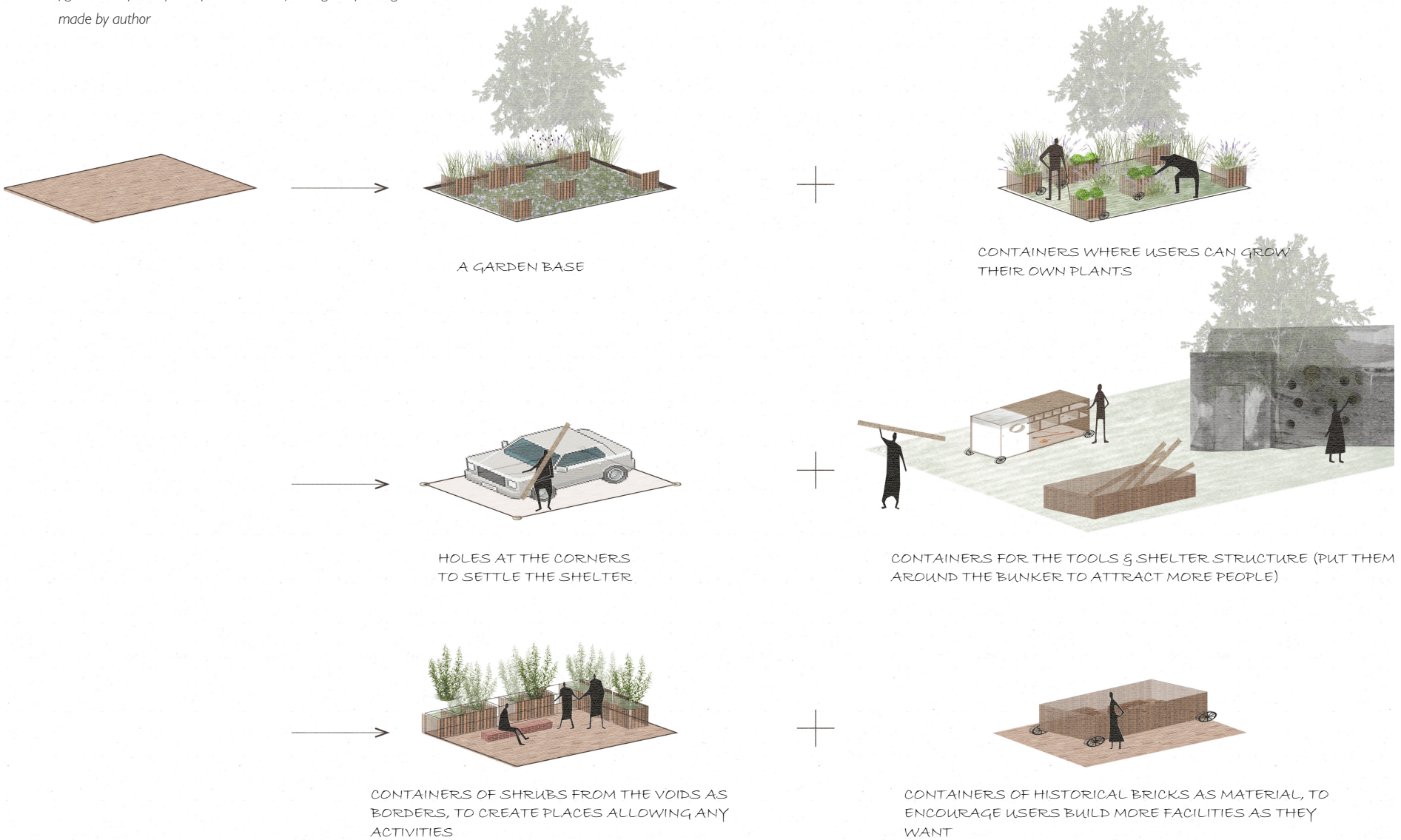
figure 5-33 public participation in transforming car parking lots  
made by author



what if we invite the users to take part in ...

figure 5-34 public participation in transforming car parking lots

made by author





PHASE 2  
MULTI - FUNCTIONAL CAR PARKING LOTS

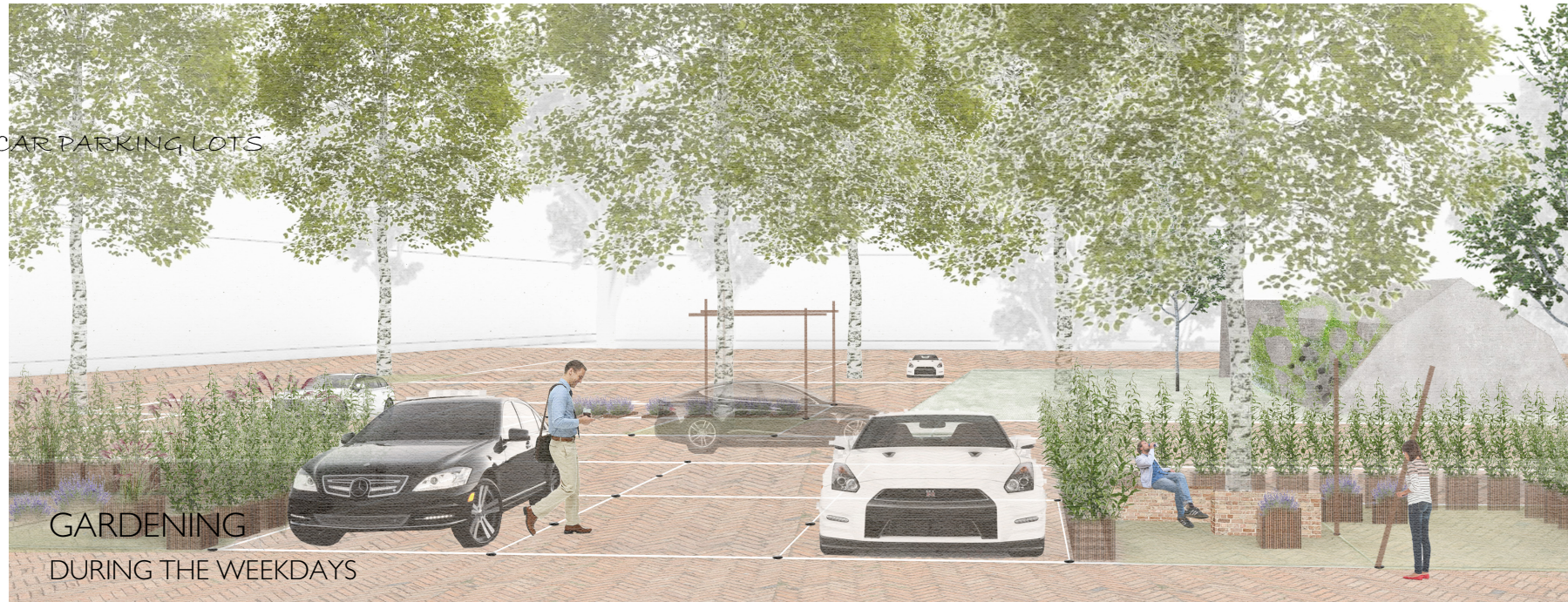


figure 5-35 multi - functional car parking lots  
made by author





AFTER THE YEARS, THERE WILL  
BE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE  
CAR PARKING LOTS

2025  
a start for the transformation by the public



2030  
a growing place with fairs, gardens and  
parking lots



20NN ?  
a multi - functional gathering place for  
users' needs, in a dynamic balance



figure 5-36 car parking lots transformation process  
made by author

### PHASE 3

these trees and plantings are growing,  
the viewsight architecture is changing the angel,  
the production of the leftover stuff is simulating



*figure 5-37 car parking lots transformation vision  
made by author*





figure 5-38 starting arrangement of open stage  
made by author

## OPEN STAGE





figure 5-39 when there is no performance in open stage  
made by author





figure 5-40 when there is performance in open stage  
made by author





## CONSTRUCTION DRAWING

The wheel trail makes it easy to move the containers forward and backward.



*figure 5-4 | wheel trail for open stage containers  
made by author*



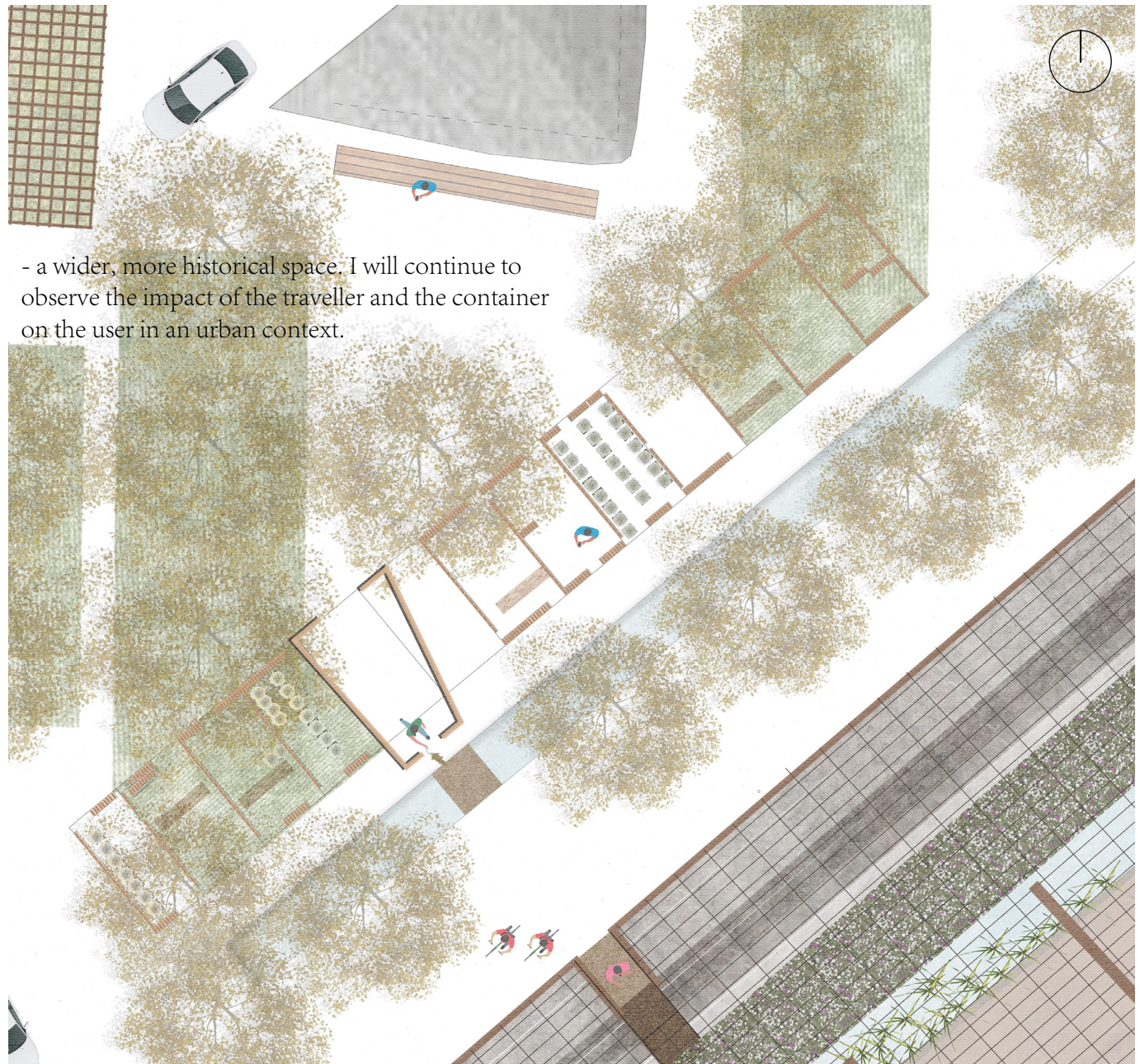
figure 5-42 starting arrangement for brick garden  
made by author

## BRICK GARDEN

It is considered as an exhibition space for community memories. Based on the pattern of the parking lot, the historical bricks in community voids are reassembled according to the parking lines.

Unlike community voids, Willemsoord's composition is more complex and extensive. This is where the experiment advances. Here, I use these structures to amplify the attitudes of different people towards history. In the beginning, the structures drew people to the site. Users are still encouraged to plant and change the form of the brick structures. As time changes and new traces are created, what attracts the users will become the activities in the site. Further back, perhaps the users themselves will become the attraction of the site. The verbal exchanges, the traces left by the users, are encouraging a longer-term connection to the site. This process will also facilitate an influx of more participation.

At the same time, the traveller is transferred to the venue in its entirety. Here it is seen as an amplifier of the entrance. It guides the user to explore the dok garden, and this structure will also bring a different spatial experience in Willemsoord than in voids



- a wider, more historical space. I will continue to observe the impact of the traveller and the container on the user in an urban context.



figure 5-43 brick garden in spring sunny day  
made by author

SEASON CHANGES...  
WILL YOU COME ALSO IN  
WINTER ...?





Willemsoord, along with Den Helder itself, is by default a grey and depressed space. However, during the field research, I decided that this desolation is exactly the tone that echoes the history of the war. I chose white birch as the main tree species for the site. The seasonal change of this deciduous plant in the fall and winter brings a different experience to the space. If users come here in the winter, it will be a quiet, solemn place for meditation. In the bricks of the garden, I will insert shelters to help users escape from the harsh weather.



figure 5-44 brick garden in winter cloudy day  
made by author

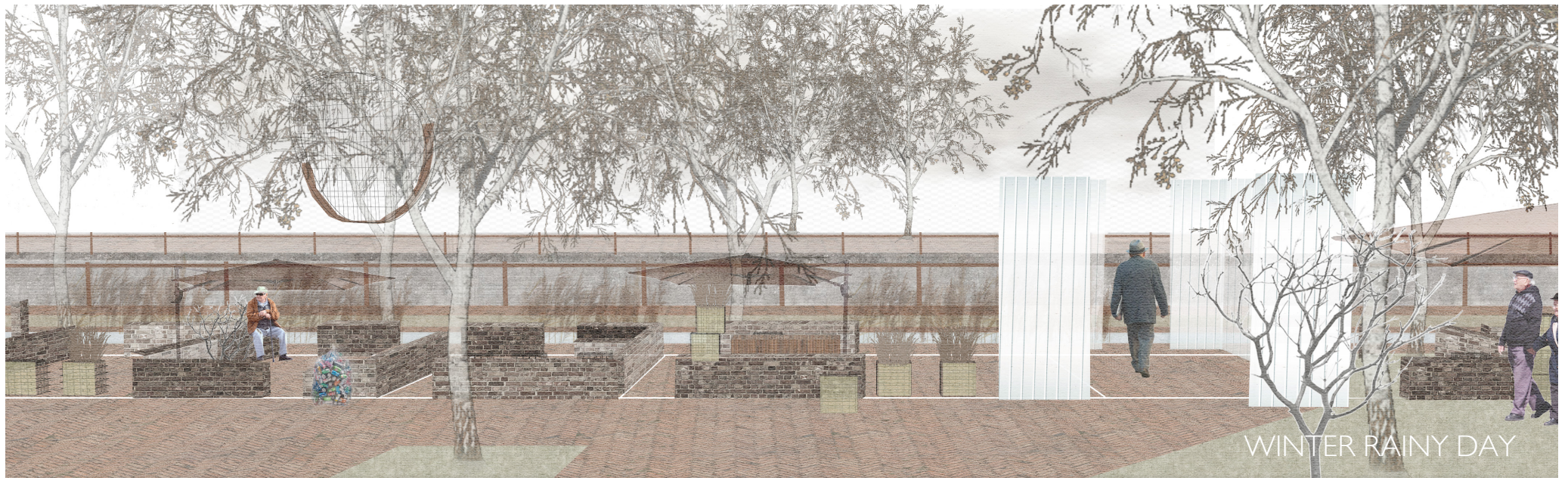




figure 5-45 brick garden transformation process  
made by author

## YEARS PASS BY ... A GROWING PLACE WITH PALIMPSEST

2023  
a personal garden with your own plantings



2024  
we communicate with the others, maybe  
from the other city



2025  
A new void take part in us. This is a  
palimpsest garden now...more and more  
personal memory come to this place





figure 5-46 starting arrangement for cok garden  
made by author

## GARDEN IN DOK

In the last two centuries, it was customary to mend vessels in the dok. Nowadays this dok is not used so often. I transformed the dok space into a large container for plant containers. This functional transformation calls users to come to the bottom of the dok and plant there - just as their ancestors once did, working at the bottom of the dok for mending. Only this time, they tinker with the place itself and their relationship to it.

This work is metaphorical. Users can realize in the process that they are still driving the process of development of the dok space , and even the city.

Meanwhile, when the site is occasionally used for vessel maintenance, users are informed in advance. When they move the plant containers away from the site, they become more acutely aware of the significance of the site's existence. I planted reeds that can withstand flooding to mark the location of the dok garden. When the boats leave, the users can still put the plant containers back to their original places. In this process of tidal change, the dynamic experience of time and space is amplified at the same time.

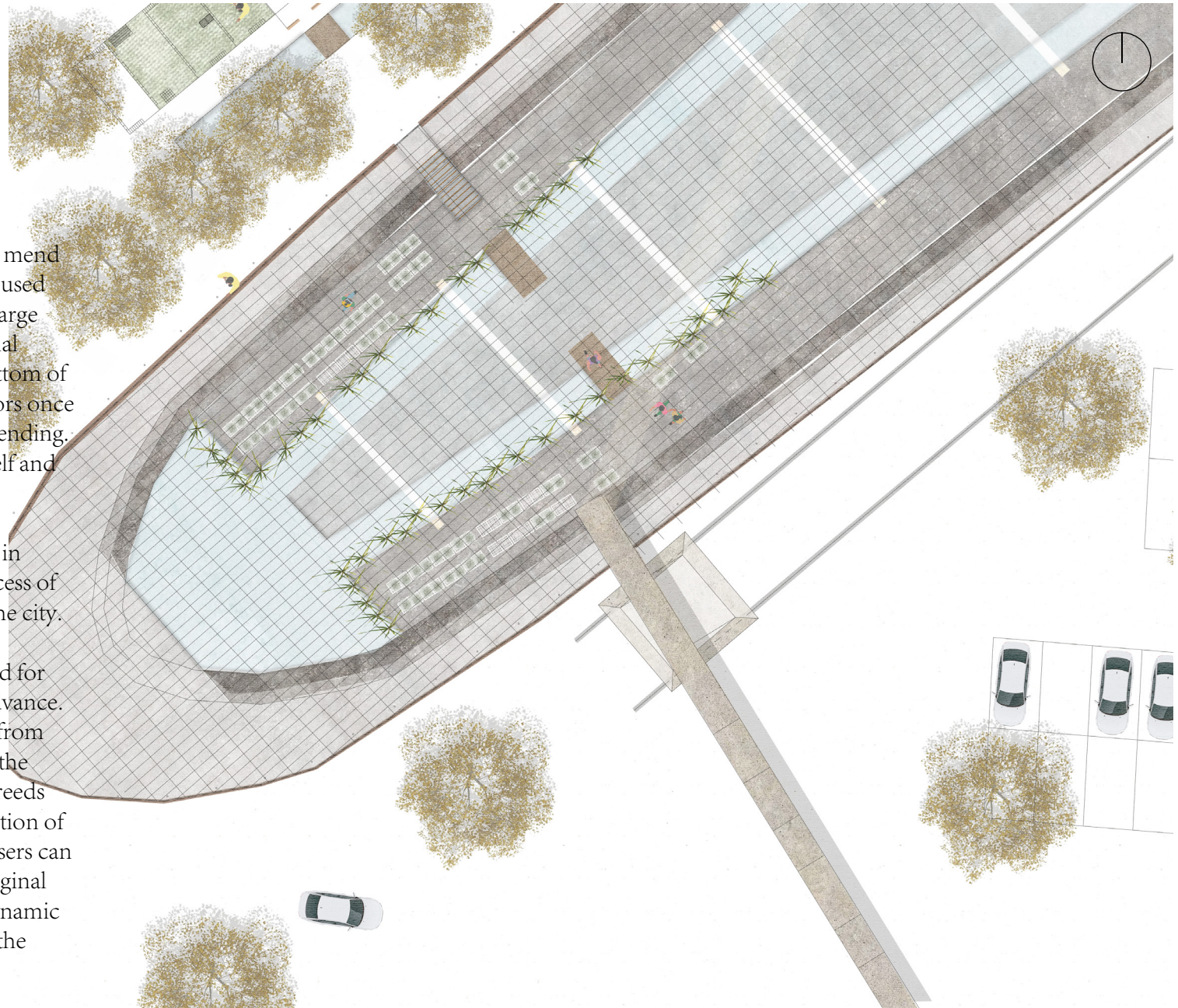




figure 5-47 dok garden section  
made by author

“

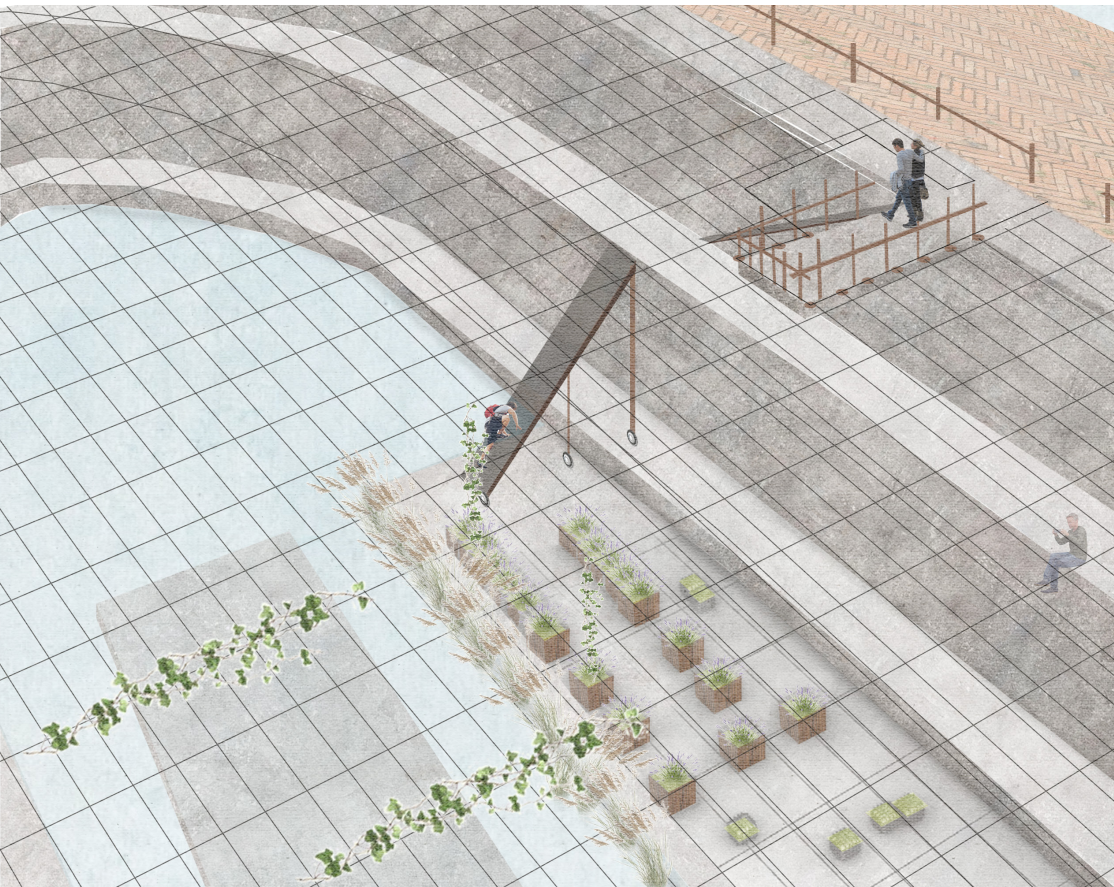
Ship builders are known as roughnecks, but they will wait until the chicks are strong enough to fly out of the nest on the track before turning on the crane. When you hear these stories, you will know that their hearts are in the right place.”





figure 5-48 moveable dok garden  
made by author

WE CREATE A GARDEN  
2023 - 2025



A SHIP BEING REPAURED HERE... PLANTINGS AND WE ESCAPE !!  
2025

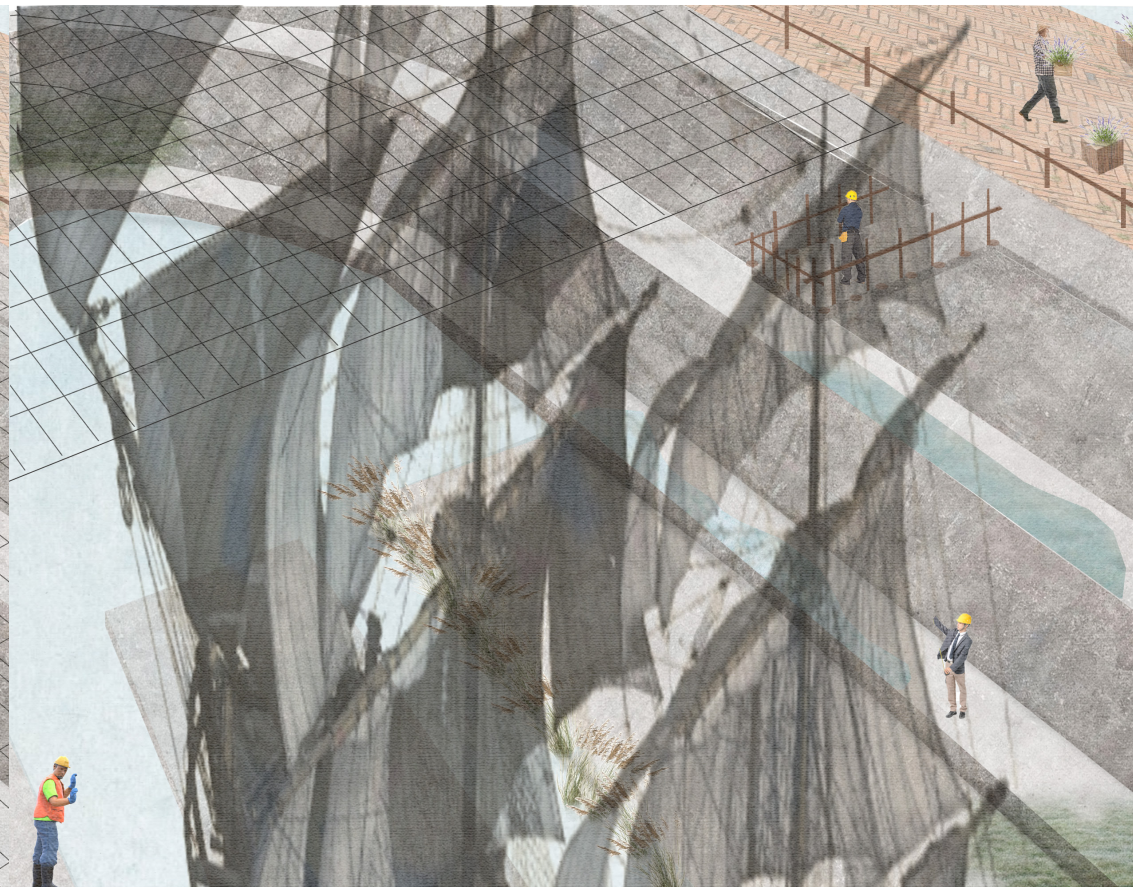




figure 5-49 starting arrangement for exhibition  
made by author

## EXHIBITION FOR & FROM PUBLIC





In the community garden experiment, I provided residents with a free container to collect small objects from their daily lives to make "artworks". I used the steel frame structure of the shipyard to hang the artwork containers. These small everyday objects preserve the personal memories of the people and inspire more people to join in.

On the other hand, the rubbish and void leftovers that I have intentionally collected are also hung and displayed together here. More and more leftover containers will be created. Over time, we can see the changing attitudes towards void, and even the development of the Den Helder city.



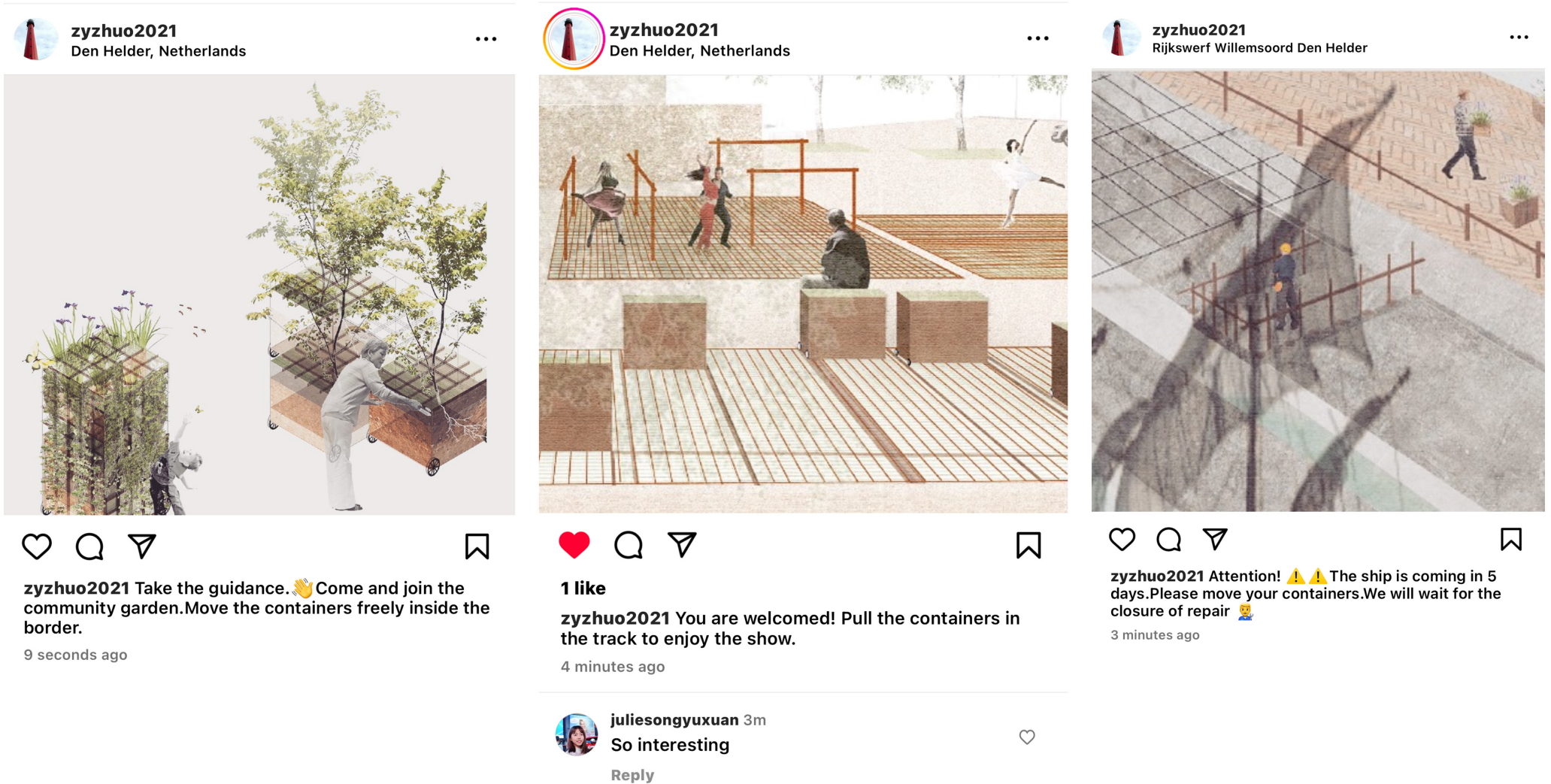
figure 5-50 exhibition activities  
made by author





figure 5-52 guidebook for containers on instagram  
made by author

### 5.3.3 A SYSTEM



# CONCLUSION



## 6.1 CONCLUSION FROM THE EXPERIMENT

### 1. How to understand the grand formal memory of Den Helder?

From a historical standpoint, Den Helder has been profoundly influenced by its past wars and the maritime economy, which have left an indelible mark on the city. The enduring Stelling Line, the remnants of the Atlantic Wall, and other historical artifacts serve as tangible reminders of this grand memory.

Simultaneously, Den Helder finds itself undergoing an urban economic transition, leading to urban decay and population shrinkage—a phenomenon that adds to a new layer to the grand formal memory of the city. It is crucial for us to recognize this ongoing process and prevent the detachment of residents from the city's rich history caused by the introduction of new urban functions and structures.

Our objective should be to foster a sense of continuity and connection between the past and present, ensuring that the inhabitants remain engaged with Den Helder's history, even as the city evolves. By embracing this dual perspective, we can navigate the urban changes while preserving the historical fabric and promoting a vibrant and inclusive urban environment.

### 2. What qualities and components can be used to pick up potential undefined places in Den Helder?

1. Spatial composition aspects, we can consider the following spatial character:

1) Undefined places **lack a clear function and designated use within a specific timeframe**. This characteristic presents an opportunity to create spaces that foster spontaneous activities among users.

2) **Accessibility** plays a crucial role in the appeal of undefined places. Being widely distributed in daily life areas, these spaces can establish a stronger emotional connection with residents. Additionally, changes occurring in undefined places are more noticeable and can be better perceived by the community.

3) **Distinguishing itself from the surrounding environment** is another potential feature of an undefined place. Whether it has a physical boundary or not, the interior of such spaces exhibits a distinct spatial atmosphere compared to its surroundings. It may either succumb to natural encroachment, transforming into a wilderness, or retain a spatial structure and layout that no longer

aligns with the current urban function. identity.

2. Evocation of memory aspects, we can explore the following lenses:

1) Through **movement lens**, an open and vacant space can facilitate the generation of spontaneous activities, further supported by adaptable spatial transformations.

2) The **trace lens** aims to preserve the remnants of use within undefined places as richly as possible, allowing for the continuation of historical narratives.

3) The **symbol lens** emphasizes the significance of structures and spaces associated with grand memories and the city's development. These elements serve to evoke residents' awareness of the city's history, and the ongoing processes shaping its identity.

### 3. How to understand and record the people's daily behavior towards the undefined places?

The vagueness of undefined places introduces uncertainty regarding their renovation direction and the activities they may catalyze. To address this characteristic and encourage resident participation, an **open-ended design** approach becomes pivotal.

Spatial transformation serves as a starting point for these undefined places. Within these areas, empty spaces provide conditions conducive to resident engagement in shaping the transformation process. Introducing two spatial elements—**the framer and container**—can serve as unit components in this experimental endeavor, allowing residents to actively contribute to the space's metamorphosis. In a specific area, residents utilize these elements to determine the function and layout of their placement.

By regularly observing the quantity, positioning, and traces of use related to these two elements, the residents' attitudes towards the site can be visualized. This visual representation of residents' engagement aids in understanding their preferences and interactions with the space, helping guide future decision-making processes.

### 4. What is the relation between undefined places and the connection of grand and daily memory?

The focus of this study revolves around undefined places that are closely tied to urban decay and urban shrinking, shedding light on two specific categories: the **community void** and the **historical leftover**.

The community void represents temporary vacant spaces created as buildings undergo renewal during urban development. These spaces emerge as a solution of urban shrinking, preserving a fragment of the city's history. On the other hand, historical leftovers result from the abandonment of old industrial structures and the neglect of heritage. These remnants retain a significant part of the city's past and offer abundant traces of the bygone era due to their undisturbed nature.

In terms of their connection with daily memory, the indistinct nature of undefined places creates a distinct space within the urban environment. Here, disorder and freedom of movement are encouraged, and these places can be perceived as tangible inheritances that can be touched and altered according to one's will. As residents engage in transforming these undefined places, they become more attuned to the changes unfolding in

the city and recognize the importance of individual contributions to the urban process.

During the process of traversing these sites, residents' observations, actions, emotions, and memories become intertwined with grand memory. This interplay between personal experiences and collective recollection helps forge a deeper connection between residents and the city's historical narratives, fostering a heightened awareness of the significance of their role in advancing the urban landscape.



5. What can be the role of design to strengthen the qualities of undefined places for enabling and evoking the production and crystalisation of memory?

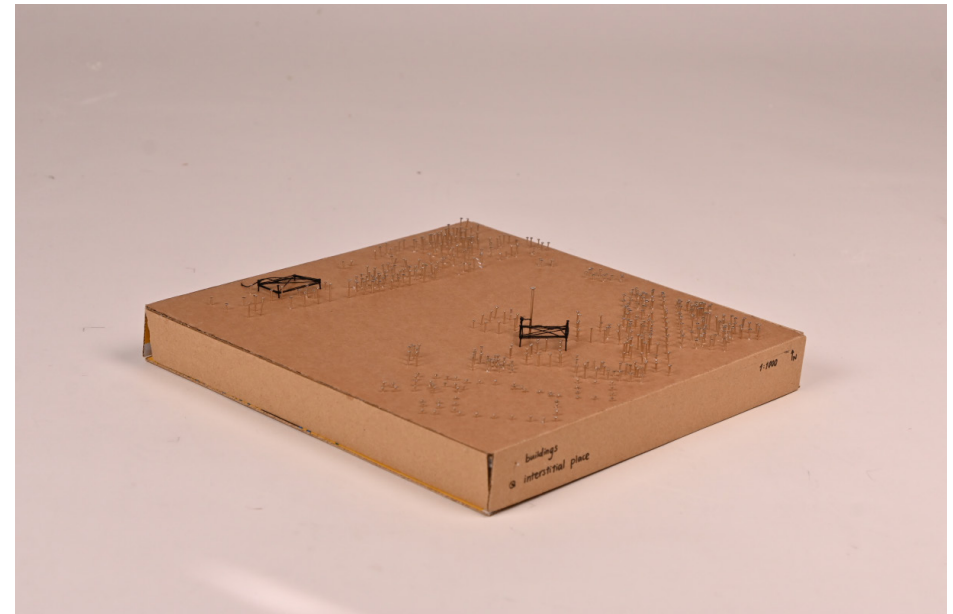
In this experiment, I assume **the role of a director**, orchestrating a collaborative effort with people to participate in the construction of landscape design using the memorial lens.

Through this lens, I conceptualize the **landscape as a stage**, creating a platform for collective engagement. The spatial design serves as a guiding force, inspiring and facilitating spontaneous activities among the residents. It goes beyond mere aesthetics, aiming to provide users with an extraordinary spatial experience.

My goal is to offer a distinct perspective on space, presenting opportunities for personal intervention and fostering cohesion among various components. Over time, these interventions contribute to the evolution of the environment, shaping it in a meaningful and significant way.

By assuming the role of a director and employing the memorial lens, I endeavor to create a landscape that invites active participation, nurtures personal connections, and fosters an ever-evolving environment that resonates with its inhabitants.

figure 6-1 concept model of undefined places in Den Helder  
photographed by author



## 6.2 WHAT I LEARN

- Open- ended design gives opportunity for the public participation.

'The aim of spatial design is to give a perspective and an opportunity to look at such spaces: an idea, an interpretation, an unstructured text'



*figure 6-2 cat in community void  
photographed by author*

- The vagueness of undefined places attract more movements happen.

'Indeed, a recent study indicates that the affordances provided by messy structures appear to have a greater appeal to users.'



*figure 6-3 abandoned lifting structure in Willemsoord  
photographed by author*

- Seek for the story from the grand historical narrative, and create the memory by your own movement.

'These are strange times, with strange rules. But we wanted to unveil the memorial anyway'

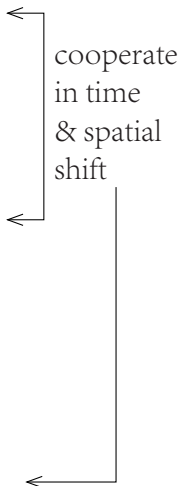




## 6.2 REFLECTION

### 6.2.1 OVERVIEW FRAME

| SUB QUESTION  | METHODS   | PROCESS   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. How to understand the grand formal memory of Den Helder?   | literatural research & historical research(chapter 1)   | design backgrounds  |
| 2. What qualities and components can be used to pick up potential undefined places in Den Helder?   | literature review(chapter 2)<br>personal place specific in site investigation:walking score, observation, recording by photos, writing, sketch(chapter 3) | design potentials   |
| 3. How to understand the people's daily behavior towards the undefined places?  | engagement with citizens:interview<br>design experiment 1:guided collaborative design in community void (chapter 3 coffee shop void as an example)        | strategies design<br>---how existing memory influence design                      |
| 4.What is the relation between undefined places and their effect on grand memory?   | design experiment 2:guided collaborative design in historical leftover (chapter 3 Willemsoord as an example)  | pattern arrangement design + traveling design<br>--- how design evoke more memory |
| 5. What can be the role of design to strengthen the qualities of undefined places for enabling and evoking the production and crystalisation of memory? | ongoing follow-up research & recording( chapter 4)  | design versions possibility and summary of design experiment                      |



## 6.2.2 RELEVANCE

### SOCIAL RELEVANCE

Many cities around the world are undergoing a similar process of urban decay and depopulation as Den Helder. My graduation project changes the inherent roles of designer and user, offering a design possibility to counteract urban decay. In the experiment, both act directly on the site.

Even in other thematic contexts, on the one hand, collaborative design can invite people to contribute to the transformation of space. And, the masses are made aware that it is the activities of individuals that shape the urban environment. On the other hand, collaborative design puts a large part of the decision about the function of the space back in the hands of the users themselves, and sees the function of the space as staged. This helps to create a greater value for the use of space. This has important implications in an increasingly sprawling and populated urban future.

### SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The gap we leave in the design has been shown to trigger activity. And, in doing so, it changes the human psyche. The project explores the attitudes of users towards the same elements both within and between cities. This broadens the span of open-ended design to a certain extent.



figure 6-4 ignored traces in Den Helder  
photographed by author





figure 6-5 ignored movements in undefined places  
photographed by author





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I am also thankful for the enriching two years I spent at Delft. The warm and welcoming community I found there transcended geographical boundaries. It was not only a place where my professional abilities were honed, but also where I developed a new perspective by immersing myself in a different cultural context. The classes and interactions with everyone involved broadened my horizons in

numerous ways.

Lastly, I express my gratitude to my family and friends. Whether they were physically present or not, their unwavering support served as a constant source of encouragement throughout this journey. Their presence made me feel connected and reminded me that I was not alone in facing the challenges along the way. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Xu for his unwavering support, encouragement, and companionship throughout these two years. Thank you for always being there by my side, providing guidance, and being a source of strength.

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### Aspect 1: the relationship between the research and the design

The ambiguity surrounding undefined places is filled with possibilities. As I progressed with this project, I discovered that the accumulation of traces and the temporary unuse of these undefined places opened up avenues for development. Exploring the memory lens of such places proved to be an effective method for research and design, serving as a bridge between the two. During interviews conducted at the site, I became aware of the users' longing for a space they could shape on their own. The ambiguity inherent in undefined places provides an opportunity for just that. Allowing individuals to actively participate in the construction and transformation of the site deepens their spiritual connection to it. To truly influence users on a spiritual level in the design process, we must create room for their own interpretations. Within undefined spaces, where a function doesn't have to be immediately defined, users can decide how to use and structure the space according to their own preferences.

While attempting to develop a bottom-up design after clarifying the ambiguity of the place, I found it to be inappropriate. Bottom-up design implies involving the user from the very beginning, which would result in the decision-making process for the function and nature of the space being largely handed over. This approach didn't allow me to effectively execute the desired memory-related transformation. Consequently, I discovered that a guided open-ended design proved to be more effective. This design approach provides a starting point for development, allowing the site to evolve into a dynamic field. Simultaneously, the inclusion of reserved blank spaces and flexible materials grants users the freedom to create their own preferred spaces and functions within the defined scope.

### Aspect 2: the statement of the research method and approach chosen

In the previous section, I emphasized the distinctive nature of undefined places due to their inherent ambiguity. In the work "Disclosing Interstices" by Sitong Luo, four lenses are proposed to reveal the spatial characteristics of such places and effectively transform them. However, these lenses offer a broad exploration of the site and primarily address its overall ambiguity. In my graduation project, I aimed to shift users' attention toward the memory properties of these sites while preserving their inherent ambiguity.

Adopting a dual approach of palimpsest and deconstruction, I deconstructed undefined places across two dimensions: time and space. This process allowed me to comprehend them layer by layer. Subsequently, I extracted and reorganized a specific set of memory lenses from Sitong Luo's foundational lenses. I focused on the spatial elements that bore traces of the past, substances that evoked memory, and components capable of capturing people's activities within the site. This lens, while remaining within the scope of the base lenses, prioritized the exploration and revelation of the site's memetic qualities.



Throughout the experimentation process, the memorial lens proved to be remarkably effective. It facilitated the rapid identification of memory elements within the venue, enabling their integration with spatial elements. Consequently, these memory elements were organized into patterns that fostered greater user participation.

### Aspect 3: the relationship between the graduation project, the studio, and the landscape architecture track

During the course of my graduation project, I came to realize the profound connection between the spiritual essence of a place and its historical background. The activities, traces, and functional transformations of the past have shaped the site into what it is today. With my experiment, I sought to merge the site's history with personal memory.

My graduation project aligns with the studio's emphasis on place and memory. It aims to uncover the mnemonic qualities of undefined urban spaces and serves as a case study through experimental approaches. In the field of landscape architecture,

this project introduces the potential of utilizing undefined spaces in participatory design. Given the prevalence of such spaces in numerous cities, this project holds instructive value for urban environments worldwide.

Furthermore, this graduation project introduces a departure from conventional thinking by embracing the decline and depopulation of cities, and by unearthing aesthetics and opportunities within this process. By employing the negative spaces within urban development as a medium, I transform them into experiential realms intimately linked to everyday life. In doing so, we should not only acknowledge the city's decay but also harness it to create unique and memorable experiences.

## LIMITATION

Regrettably, due to constraints in time and language, I was unable to conduct the experiment in the actual field. The uncertainty surrounding the experiment's outcome was further compounded by the unique characteristics of the site and its design. My experiment merely encompassed the interaction of several potential scenarios that could have unfolded at the site, and conducting the experiment in the field could have led to unexpected directions. This missing link leaves me with a sense of incompleteness.

Furthermore, as a consequence of this limitation, I lacked the depth of thought required to sustain this design experiment over time. Presently, I propose the utilization of social media and swipe cards to rent out space elements as a means to maintain engagement with the site and prevent the loss of a significant number of spatial elements. However, I acknowledge that these measures alone may not be sufficient for long-term maintenance.

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I hope you all enjoy the journey of the framer & containers.  
and look forward to a visit to Den Helder by yourself.

