

deviation.

ARCHITECTURE, CONTROL, AND THE BEURSTRAVERSE

I would like to dedicate this work to my late-grandfather, who's wit, words, and wisdom will always be an inspiration; and who's memory will forever live on through the actions of his children and grandchildren.

Thank you, grandpa.

ABSTRACT

Contemporary semi-public spaces – spaces that present themselves as public whilst operating under private logics of investment, regulation, and access – increasingly engineer the body as a consumer. This project examines how the apparatus of control operates spatially in one such space: the Beurstraverse, or Koopgoot, in Rotterdam. Drawing on Michel Foucault's disciplinary society, Gilles Deleuze's control society, Byung-Chul Han's transparency society, and Roberto Esposito's concept of immunisation, the research develops a theoretical framework through which the spatial techniques of control – surveillance, access regulation, monofunctionality, and the production of a hierarchy of legitimate presence – are identified and analysed. A comparative case study of the Beurstraverse, the Lijnbaan, and the Hoogstraat reveals the Koopgoot as an exaggerated instance of neoliberal urban planning: a space that is itself a deviation from the norms of its context. In response, the project proposes an architectural intervention structured around three spatial strategies: to wander (a park and communal garden replacing the retail surface), to bypass (an elevated walkway offering alternative routes beyond the surveillance apparatus and commercial schedule), and to collide (vertical transitions and furnitures that stage encounters between different bodies, speeds, and intentions). The design does not oppose the existing apparatus; it introduces new instruments alongside it, operating under a different logic of non-profitable productivity. The project argues for designing for deviation – not the production of an alternative, but the production of conditions in which alternatives can emerge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

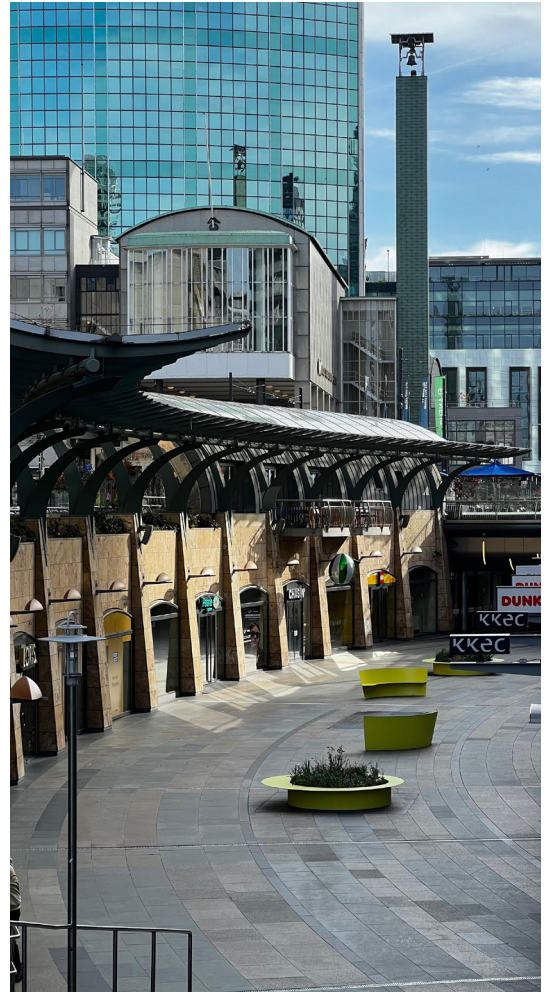
| | | |
|----|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 8 | INTRODUCTION | THE SMOOTHING |
| 13 | THEORY | THE APPARATUS AND ITS CRACKS |
| 18 | METHOD | A GROUND |
| 26 | RESULTS | THE CONDITIONS |
| 36 | DESIGNING | FOR DEVIATION |
| 62 | CONCLUSION, REFLECTION | AND THEN |
| 68 | APPENDICES AND | REFERENCES |

1 1 THE SMOOTHING

Sketching in the Koopgoot, a man approached me, and asked if he might know what I was doing. His tone was pleasant, and careful; I was not doing anything wrong, after all. I think. It is this – the fact I am still not sure – that is, in many ways, the subject of this project.

Contemporary society operates within a network of mechanisms that count, track, and regulate. These mechanisms are not overt in the way that a prison wall is overt – a blunt, declared, legible enclosure – but are dispersed across the surfaces of everyday life, woven into the infrastructure of convenience and connectivity: the OV-chipkaart registers a body's entry and exit; the algorithm confirms what is already believed; the camera records without being watched. What is produced is not a single act of surveillance but a continuous condition of monitoring; an environment in which the subject is, at all times, locatable, sortable, and reducible to data. The complexity of life, intrinsically irreducible, is compressed and simplified into a ceaseless flow of information, the medium of current-day organisation.

This compression is not imposed through force; it is facilitated by ease. The smoothing of friction, the acceleration of access, the removal of obstacles: these are the spatial and cultural logics through which the network sustains itself. Space is engineered not for the unpredictable body but for the productive¹ one – the body that moves, consumes, and circulates without interruption. Where this body encounters no resistance, it also encounters no pause,



Photograph of the western wing of Koopgoot, 09:53, April 6 2026.

1 "Productive" is, these days, directly associated with economic profit; monetary gain. Somehow it reminds me of Foucault's concept of the Docile Body; power being dissociated from the body by control, in order to increase its capacity or aptitude - its productivity.

2 "Traditional" is itself relative, or contextual; culturally and historically specific. The point is not that these forms have disappeared, but that they are joined, and in some contexts superseded, by subtler mechanisms.

no distance, no opacity. What Byung-Chul Han describes as the culture of positivity – the compulsive elimination of negativity, mystery, and the capacity to not – finds its spatial expression in environments designed to reassure rather than to confront. The subject is not oppressed in the traditional sense². The subject, rather, is accommodated; smoothed into a predictable flow. This, to me, is where the problem lies; not with coercion, but with the comfort that conceals – and, in a way, makes redundant any direct means of – coercion.

This accommodation extends to the configuration of what one might call “public” space, though the quotation marks are, perhaps, already alluding to the point. The promise of the public – the sharing and contesting of space, open to difference – is increasingly managed through the logics of the private. Spaces that present themselves as accessible, as belonging to every-body, operate under conditions that quietly sort who is welcome, who is tolerated, and who is excluded. The sorting does not happen at a gate. It happens in the width of a bench, the placement of a camera, the absence of a place to rest without purchasing something; the mechanisms are spatial, but they are rarely visible as such.



Photograph of the Koopgoot eastern staircase, 13:21, April 12 2026.

The Netherlands offers a particularly dense instance of this condition. The territory is, in almost every aspect, a technological artefact: designed, engineered, and maintained. The “total design” of the country – from polder to motorway, from cadastral grid to digital infrastructure – has transposed an ordering onto the land that makes legibility its primary principle. This is not incidental. The Dutch landscape is a landscape of control, not because it is authoritarian, but because it is constructed; every square metre is the result of a decision, a negotiation, a regulation. To live in the Netherlands is to live inside an apparatus – one that, for the most part, functions so smoothly that is experienced not as control, but as normality.

This apparatus extends into the digital. The OV-chipkaart, the Dutch public transport card, tracks movement through public transport, and DigiD, though not formally mandatory, is made indispensable by the obstacles one encounters when attempting to navigate the system through any means other than the digital. Dutch society functions as a continuous network: efficiency-driven, liberal, and seemingly frictionless. The seeming, of course, is the point. The mechanisms of control are most effective when they are least visible – camouflaged as convenience, as progress, as the absence of friction.

Rotterdam sharpens this further. The old centre, largely destroyed during the Second World War, gave the municipality the opportunity – and the political mandate – to follow successive waves of urban design ideology with

unusual directness. The post-war reconstruction was not a restoration but a reinvention: a city built according to the logic of the time, and rebuilt again, and again, as that logic shifted. The municipality has maintained control over the allocation of space, but has increasingly leaned into collaborations with private parties, seeking corporate investment to finance large-scale urban plans.

The result is a city in which the line between public infrastructure and private interest is not always where one would expect it to be – or, perhaps more accurately, where it is not always where it is presented to be.

What stands out to me in the city is the characteristic patchwork of “iconic” – yet often solitary – architectures and urban enclaves; a density and complexity of responsibilities, boundaries, and regulations that works to conceal the mechanisms and relations between the public and the private.

It is within this context that the Beurstraverse – known colloquially as the Koopgoot – becomes intelligible as a concentrated instance of the semi-public condition: a space that presents itself as public while operating under the logics of private investment, regulated access, and consumer legitimacy. The traverse will be examined in detail later. What matters here, in framing the problem, is the convergence: a constructed territory, a culture of transparency, and a digital infrastructure that together produce an environment in which the body is counted before it is welcomed.

How can architectural intervention design for deviation within the apparatus of control of a consumerist semi-public space?

The question that guides this project emerges from the conditions described above. If space is configured to accommodate – to smooth, to monitor, to sort – then the architectural question is not one of opposition but, as I will argue, of deviation: not an exit from the system, but a contortion from within.

This question contains three parts. First, the apparatus of control: the spatial, regulatory, and economic mechanisms through which the Beurstraverse produces a hierarchy of legitimate presence – distinguishing, before any direct interaction occurs, between desired, tolerated, and undesired bodies. Second, the consumerist semi-public space: a specific typology in which the logics of private investment and consumer behaviour organise a space that is nominally public. Third, designing for deviation: the architectural proposition that the project can create conditions, not prescriptions, in which normalised habits are reconfigured, and other forms of occupation become possible.

Three sub-questions guide the investigation along corresponding thematic threads:

The objective of the project is to propose, through architectural design, an intervention that deviates from the disciplinary and commercial apparatus of the Koopgoot. This is not an attempt to dismantle or escape; it is an attempt to inflect – to bend the existing condition toward encounters, durations³, and forms of presence that the current configuration does not accommodate. The project is an opportunity, and a first one at that, for me to question and challenge a given order; to play and knead the established clay a little.

The scope of the project is delimited to one site (the Beurstraverse, Rotterdam), one intervention (a speculative architectural design), and one method (a comparative case study grounded in personal observation and theoretical analysis). The design is not a blueprint. Rather, it is a proposition – most certainly open-ended, and deliberately so. An attempt to demonstrate what designing for deviation might look like, materially and spatially, within a specific and highly engineered environment.

How does the apparatus of control spatialise a hierarchy of legitimate presence in the Beurstraverse?

In what ways does the engineering of consumerist semi-public space direct, regulate, and reduce the body to its capacity to consume?

How can non-profitable spatial programs and productive friction reconfigure the normalised habits of a controlled environment?

3 The act of 'spending' - the irony, or perhaps accuracy, is not lost on me - time in the space; lingering, waiting, watching, gardening, napping.

2 1 MOULDS AND MODULATIONS

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Michel Foucault described a form of power that does not repress but organises. Disciplinary power, as he theorised it, operates through the arrangement of bodies in space: making them visible, comparable, and correctable. The school, the factory, the barracks, the prison – each encloses the body and, through physical enclosure, moulds it. The subject is not punished into compliance; it is produced through compliance. Discipline distributes individuals across a grid of observation and classification, and in doing so creates the conditions under which behaviour becomes legible, measurable, and – as Foucault would put it – normalisable. The mould is the operative technology: a fixed form into which the body is pressed, shaped, and released as a functional unit within a larger series (Foucault, 1979, 1982).

Gilles Deleuze, writing shortly after Foucault, argued that the disciplinary model was giving way to something else. The enclosures were opening. The factory was becoming the corporation; the school was becoming continuous education; the prison was becoming electronic tagging. What was emerging was not the absence of control but its modulation: a form of power that no longer relied on fixed moulds but on continuous, self-reforming mechanisms of tracking and regulating. In the “Control Society,” the individual is no longer enclosed and shaped but is instead rendered as a “dividual” – a data sample, a profile, a point in a flow. The password replaces the watchword. Access replaces enclosure. The subject is not confined to a space; the subject is

granted space, conditionally and continuously, on the basis of data (Deleuze, 1992).

What matters for this project is not the transition from one society to the other as a clean historical break, but the coexistence of both logics. The contemporary condition is not purely modulated; it retains disciplinary structures – walls, gates, cameras, guards – while embedding them within a fluid network of access, data, and flow. The *Beurstraverse*, as will become clear in the site analysis, is precisely such a space: physically enclosed, linearly directed, and surveilled, yet functioning as a node within a larger network of urban circulation. The mould and the modulation operate simultaneously. Understanding how they do so, spatially, is the first task of this project.

The Dutch context, as I touched upon in the problem statement, intensifies this coexistence. The Netherlands is a territory of legibility: designed, gridded, and maintained as a technological artefact. The OV-chipkaart – the national public transport card – exemplifies the modulated milieu. To enter a train station is to scan, to be counted, to be tracked; the gates permitting entry instantaneously producing data. The gesture is frictionless, habitual, and almost invisible as an act of regulation; yet it constitutes a continuous sorting of bodies according to their access. Dutch society functions as a continuous network – efficiency driven, liberal, and seemingly “frictionless”⁴ – within which the mechanisms of control are most effective precisely when they are least visible (Buchanan & Savat, 2020; Deleuze, 1992, 2006; Foucault, 1979, 1982; Voss, 2020).

4 Between quotation marks, because although presented as a streamlining of processes, it is certainly not indiscriminate and can absolutely be perceived or experienced as a context of friction.

If Foucault and Deleuze describe the structure of control, Byung-Chul Han describes its contemporary atmosphere. Han argues that the subject of control society is no longer primarily watched against their will, but voluntarily exposes themselves. The regime of transparency functions through a compulsive conformity enabled by the active collaboration – or, perhaps, the need – of putting oneself on display. Every aspect of life is offered up for visibility, feeding the ceaseless flow of data that sustains the network. In turn, this data feeds what Han calls the engine of positivity: a self-accelerating cycle that abolishes negativity – the hidden, the opaque, the resistant, the slow – and replaces it with perpetual affirmation (Han, 2015).

The consequences are spatial as much as they are cultural. The elimination of negativity produces environments from which friction, pause, and distance have been systematically removed. Han’s critique of the “Transparency Society” describes a condition in which “cult value” – value grounded in existence, in the mere fact of being – is replaced by “exhibition value” – value contingent on visibility, on being seen and displayed. The subject who is not visible is not valuable, the space that does not exhibit is not productive. This logic extends to the built environment: glass facades, open-plan offices, shopping streets without dead ends or comfortable places to sit. The architecture of positivity is an architecture of perpetual exposure, in which opacity is read as suspicious and stillness as unproductive.

What Han introduces, crucially for this project, is the concept of negativity as that which the culture of positivity has sought to eliminate – and which, precisely because of this elimination, becomes necessary to recover. Negativity is not destruction, nor nihilism; it is the capacity for mystery, distance, and resistance. The hidden, the opaque, the uncomfortable; these are not failures of design but conditions through which the subject might encounter something other than the frictionless reproduction of the same. The design ambition of this project takes its cue from this: not to produce comfort, but to reintroduce the negative – the pause, the obstruction, the encounter that was not anticipated – into a space from which it has been designed out.

3 THE NEUTRAL TOOL

The theories above might suggest a clear opposition: control on one side, critique on the other. But, then, a complication arises: the spatial gestures that facilitate surveillance, regulation, and the enforcement of consumer behaviour – concealment, distance, restricted access, material hardness – are not inherently oppressive. A camera is a neutral instrument. A gate is a neutral threshold. A wall is a neutral surface. It is the intent with which these tools are wielded, the ownership under which they operate, and the logic they serve that attributes to them a directionality – a politics (Teyssot, 1994). The same tools that monitor and regulate could, under different conditions of ownership and intent, conceal, shelter, or redirect. This is, to me, a critical insight for the design: the project cannot simply reverse the spatial gestures of the Koopgoot. It must reconfigure⁵ them – with a different intent, under a different logic – that operate alongside, and in tension with, the existing apparatus.

This reconfiguring finds a theoretical frame in Roberto Esposito's concept of immunisation. Esposito argues that modern political and institutional bodies – along with the biological body of the individual subject – protect themselves not by sealing off from the outside, but by interiorising exteriority in controlled doses. The immune system does not reject the foreign entirely; it admits the foreign in a regulated form, neutralising what it perceives as a threat while preserving the integrity of the body. Applied to urban space, this logic describes – and, perhaps, to an uncomfortable degree – precisely the condi-

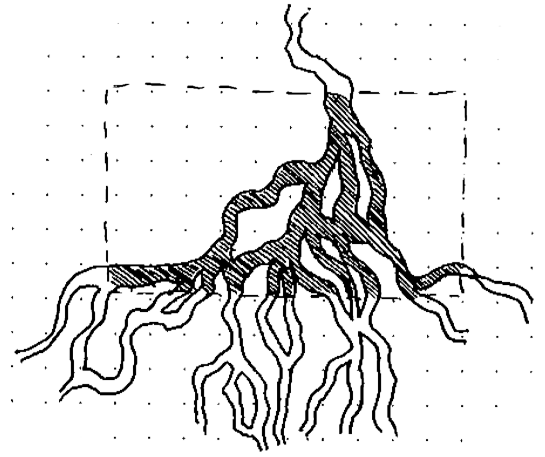
tion of the semi-public commercial environment. The Koopgoot does not exclude every-body. It admits the stranger, the passer-by, the consumer, the worker, the dependent body, and even the disruptive body – but only insofar as they can be absorbed into the space's own logic of order. What is treated is not illness in a literal sense, but the possibility of uncontrolled common life (Esposito, 2011).

The “patient,” in this reading, is ambiguous; productively so. It is both the body moving through the space and the space itself, imagined as vulnerable to contamination, disorder, and liability. Immunisation is performed not by a single authority but by a dispersed apparatus: rules, ownership structures, security protocols, hygiene standards, insurance logics, and architectural thresholds. The effect depends on the internal constitution of the body being protected; its administrative routines, legal responsibilities, economic interests, and tolerance for risk. Certain bodies are not rejected after entering; they are already anticipated as possible infections. The immunised space protects its interior by producing thresholds between what it considers acceptable and excessive exteriority.

The question the project must confront, then, is not simply how to oppose control, but how to redirect the neutral tools of spatial organisation toward a different logic – one that admits disorder not as a regulated dose to be neutralised, but as a productive condition to be sustained.

5 To reconfigure the meaning of a spatial tool is to alter the relations in which it participates. The camera does not change; the assemblage in which it operates does.

4 DEVIATION



The theoretical framework so far describes a condition – discipline, modulation, positivity, immunisation – and identifies the spatial tools through which it operates. What remains is to define the conceptual term through which the project proposes to respond: deviation.

“Escape” one might understand as the act of a total exit from the grid, or the established apparatus of ordering. It implies a somewhat binary movement: a body is escaping or has escaped, or a body is not escaping and has not escaped – disregarding, for the sake of the argument, the question of whether any-body can even be considered to have escaped the ever-growing intrusion of the asserted order. What I suggest is most productive in contorting the grid is not the escape itself, but the attempt to escape. The movement – most certainly open-ended as of yet – of attempting to escape is the moment in which the body interiorises an understanding of the established order and the body’s potential on a path of renegotiation: of the environment, the meaning, and the body itself. “An” understanding, because “the” understanding would assume complete, objective knowledge⁶ – a reductive take on both knowledge and on the complexity of the control apparatus. Each body is a constant reconfiguring with and through its environment and the meanings it interacts with, or “intra-action”⁷ (Barad, 2007).

6 The nature of which is constantly, and desperately, sought, yet is always unachievable. This is particularly the case when the constant reconfigurings of meaning (and body, and environment) are taken into consideration.

7 The body is an active part of the environment, just as the environment is an active part of the body

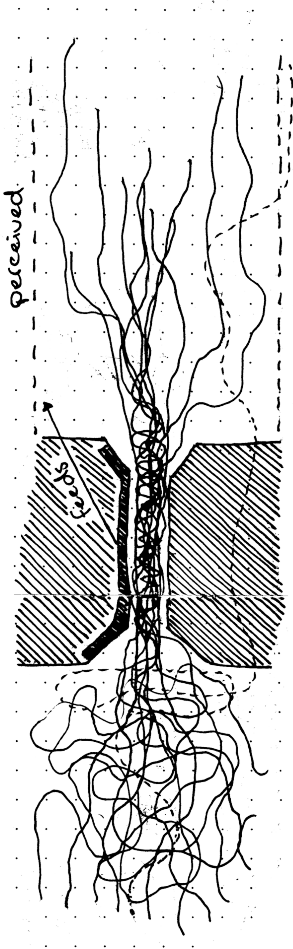
Deviation is a means of escaping. It is the contorting, or reconfiguring, of the grid – generating vacuoles in which the body can escape, albeit temporarily⁸. Perhaps the most effective deviation takes place in a goldilocks zone of understanding: sufficient knowledge that the shift in movement is intentional, but without a complete picture, as completeness constrains the imagination and the creativity of the subject's act. There is, admittedly, a tension in this formulation – the suggestion of an optimal

understanding risks reproducing the very hierarchy the project seeks to contort. The goldilocks zone is not a prescription but an observation: the deviations I found most generative, in my own encounters with the site, were those that were neither fully blind nor fully informed. In responding to a condition with a juxtaposition, one generates a fiercer response, initially blinding the subject from identifying the other. This blinding, however, exclusively considers the body's perception, excluding the site as an active element in the assemblage of the space. The introduction of the juxtaposition produces a "new", or reconfigured condition⁹. In considering the blinding as final, one neglects the reconfiguring of the body necessary to navigate what has changed.

The concept should therefore embrace both manners of questioning the condition: soft at times, abrasive at others. Concealed positivity and outright negativity. The physical environment of the site should be reconfigured, further intruding upon it with impactful, intentional, and specific moments. The matters – the tools or mediums – of negativity are neutral in themselves, yet reform normalised habits into deviations: designing for deviation. "For", rather than "a", because whether it is the space or the body, it only becomes a deviation when interacting with the other. The tools, and the intent, are designed. The deviation is implied.

It must be noted, that the interpretation of the theory, the site, and the machine at the intersection, is grounded in observations and interactions performed by my person. In accordance with this, the responses – whatever their nature – will be formed as such. Mind you, this is an exercise in avoiding assumptions. To empathise wholly – or as wholly as possible – requires a deeper knowing of every-body over an extended period of time. What is important is knowing, or rather acknowledging, one's place in, between, or as a result of the condition.

Deviation – when considered a pre-existing, natural antithesis to the order – requires a ground against which to test itself: a specific apparatus, a specific set of habits, a specific space in which to deviate. The following chapter turns to the Beurstraverse as that ground.



8 This, therefore, might require an embracing of the random, the unpredictable, the chaos.

9 "New", instead of 'new', as I am of the opinion nothing is new, rather the same elements being shifted around into different – and perhaps without precedent – forms."

3 1 THREE CRITERIA

The choice of site is not incidental to the theory; it is produced by it. Three criteria guided the selection, each derived from the theoretical framework.

Three criteria guided the selection of a site, each derived from the preceding theoretical landscape. First, the site should constitute a disciplinary apparatus: a space that orders bodies through spatial techniques of visibility, regulation, and correction – cameras, security, behavioural codes. Second, it should be configured as a consumerist semi-public condition: a space designed for economic exchange, under private logics of ownership and investment, in which the legitimate body is the consuming body and non-commercial presence is spatially discouraged. Third, it should operate under an engineered positivity: a space designed to produce assurance, comfort, and the elimination of friction, in which negativity is systematically removed.

Several sites in Rotterdam were considered. The central station, in many respects a symbol of both directed flow and regulated access, relies on the OV-chipkaart to gate entry and exit – every body counted, every movement conditional. Westblaak, with its broad median and skating rink, isolates a nominally public space between parallel streams of traffic; a publicly not-so-accessible space. The Beurstraverse, however, satisfies all three criteria with an intensity that the other sites do not match. Its linearity, its orientation toward retail efficiency, its high degree of preventive regulation, and – critically – its financing structure, in which seven-eighths of the project was funded by private parties, make it an exemplary, perhaps even exaggerated, instance of the semi-public consumerist apparatus the theory describes.

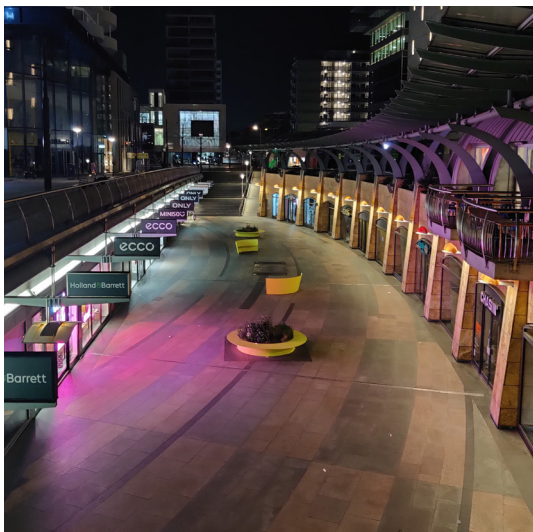


2 THE OBSERVING BODY

The analysis of the Beurstraverse is grounded in a case study comprising three components: repeated personal observation, a comparative spatial analysis, and the theoretical transposition described in the previous chapter.

The project proceeded in three overlapping phases: a theoretical reading conducted between November and March, site observations carried out over 12 visits between February and May, and a design process that developed iteratively from January onward, informed by the analysis as it progressed. These phases were not sequential; reading Esposito's immunisation, for instance, reframed observations I had already made – the grey zone of the house rules, the selective enforcement – which in turn redirected the design toward the handout station's open threshold. The process was, in short, intra-active: each phase reconfiguring the others.

The observations were conducted over multiple visits across different times of day and week. They were recorded through written notes, sketches, and photographs. The method is deliberately subjective. The body that observes is the same body that is subject to the space's mechanisms: counted by the cameras, addressed by the security, moved by the slope and the sound and the crowd. This is not a limitation to be apologised for but a position to be stated. To empathise wholly – or as wholly as possible – would require a deeper knowing of every-body over an extended period of time. What is possible, and what this project attempts, is to acknowledge one's place in, between, and as a result of the condition, and to work from that acknowledgement rather than from a pretence of objectivity.¹⁰



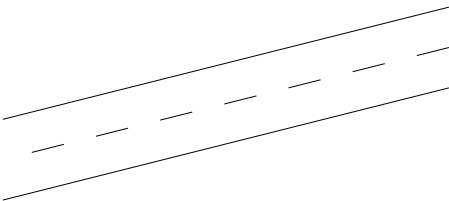
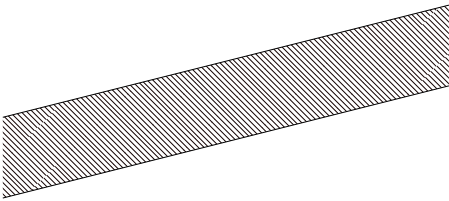
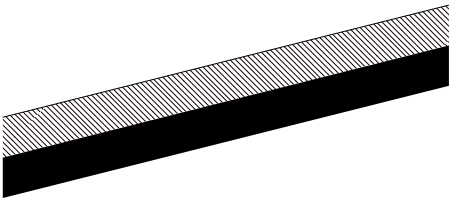
10 Our actions are generated by our feelings, as our feelings are generated by our actions. Hence, I should not only look at the spatial or physical affect, but also at what it does to me.

One encounter in particular shaped my understanding. I was sketching the spatial composition of the central axis when a security guard – who turned out to be the general manager of security – approached me. He asked, pleasantly, if he might know what I was doing. Even though I knew, or thought I knew, that I was not doing anything wrong – with the unusual rule against photos and recordings in the back of my mind – I felt a sense of shame. As if I had been, or was, dishonest in some way. Months later, I am still not entirely sure how far I had gone, or could have gone. It is this ambiguity – in the invisibility of the boundary – that I felt compelled to conform, just in case.

The comparative analysis places the Beurstraverse alongside its two adjacent shopping areas: the Lijnbaan and the Hoogstraat. The comparison is not intended to evaluate which is “better” – or, for that matter, “worse” – but to reveal how the Koopgoot exaggerates the logics of control and consumption that are present, in milder form, in its neighbours. The three spaces share a common urban context but differ in their intensity of regulation, their programmatic composition, and their spatial treatment of the non-commercial body.

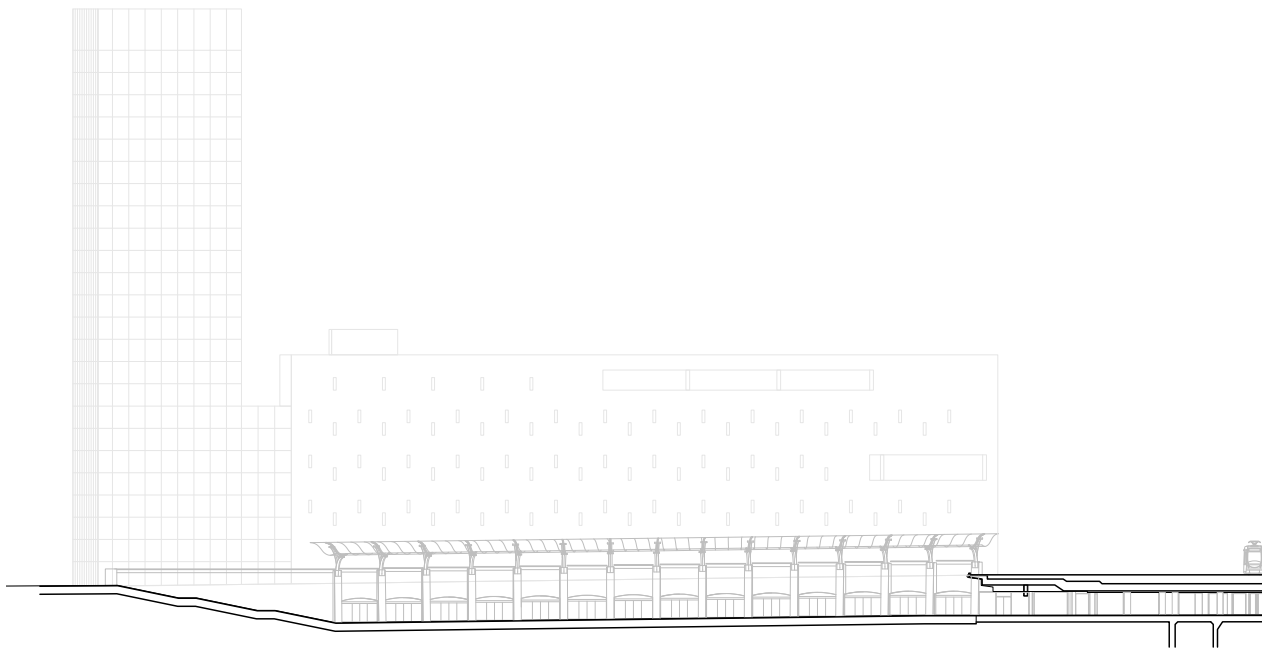
The theoretical framework – Foucault’s discipline, Deleuze’s modulations, Han’s positivity, Esposito’s immunisation – is not applied to the site as an external grid. Rather, the theory and the observations inform each other intra-actively: what is seen in the space sharpens the reading of the theory, and the theory makes visible what might otherwise remain unremarked. The conditions identified in the results are the product of this reciprocal process.

3 THE TRENCH



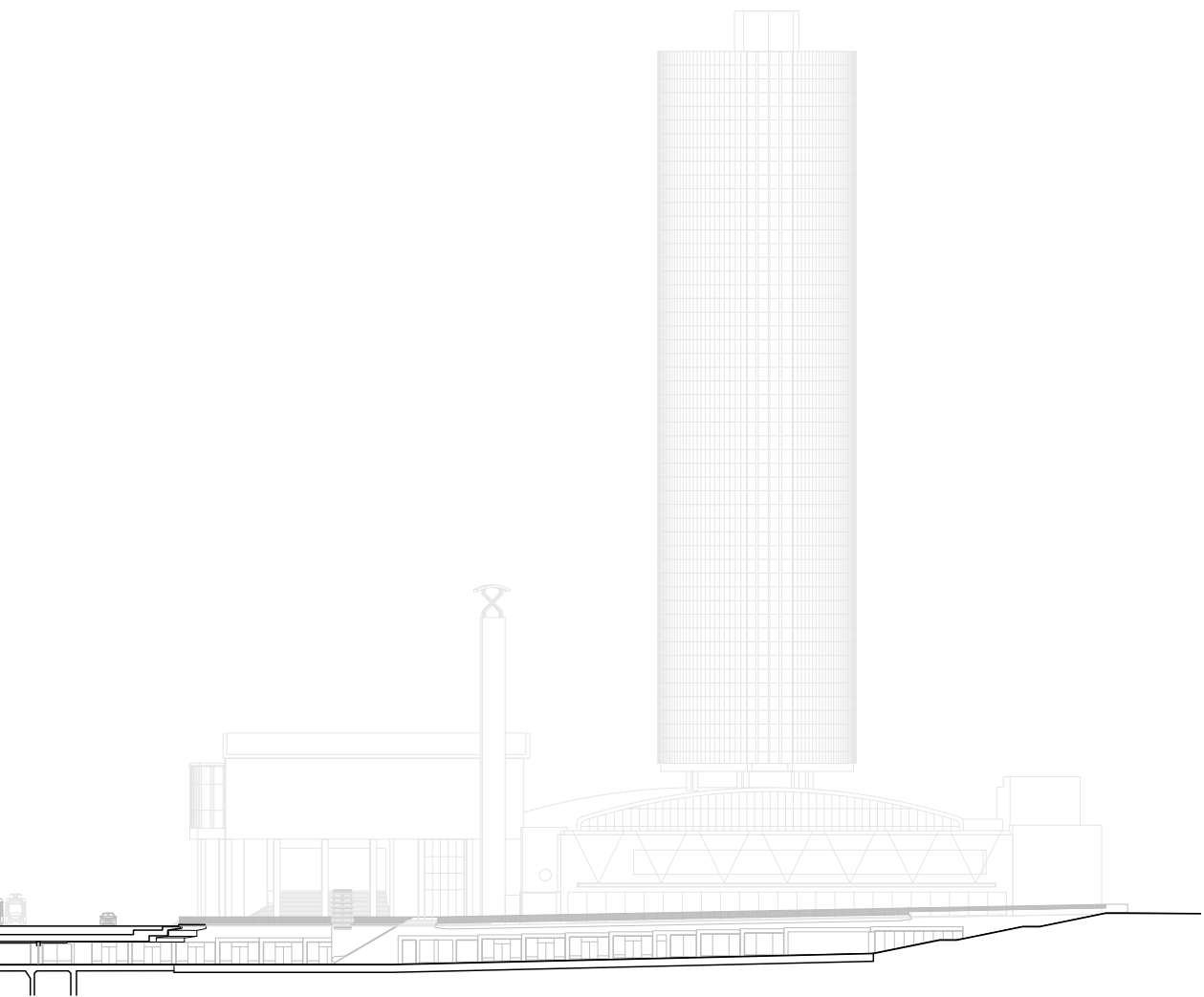
The Beurstraverse runs beneath the Coolsingel, one of the main traffic arteries of Rotterdam. The Coolsingel has functioned as a line of separation for centuries. It traces the path of the city's former fortifications: first the medieval city walls and moat, then the canal that replaced them, and now the broad thoroughfare that carries the traffic of a modern city across the same line. The barrier has changed form, from defensive to infrastructural, but it has not ceased to be a barrier. The Koopgoot was designed to traverse it: to connect the Lijnbaan, to the west, with the Hoogstraat, to the east, by passing underneath.

The initiative to develop the Beurstraverse did not come from the municipality but from the private sector. C&A, the retail conglomerate, sought to upgrade its department store on the Beursplein; the developer MultiVastgoed saw the opportunity to expand the project into a large-scale urban intervention. The municipality, already struggling to entice the property owners of the Lijnbaan into renovation, recognised that a new competing shopping street might trigger that process indirectly (Van Melik, 2008). Designed by Pi de Bruijn of the Architecten Cie, with an interior by the American architect Jon Jerde – who gave the trench its Mediterranean flavour of warm materials, marble, and fountain – and built between 1992 and 1996, the traverse is approximately 300 metres long. Both ends begin with a broad set of stairs, bridging a depth of roughly four metres over a length of around 22 metres and connecting the ground level of the surrounding streets with the lower elevation of the trench.



The rest of the Beurstraverse runs at this lower level, an open-air corridor lined on both sides with shopfronts. The central area – beneath the Coolsingel itself – branches into several entrances and exits, among them a basement entrance to a department store and an entrance to Metro

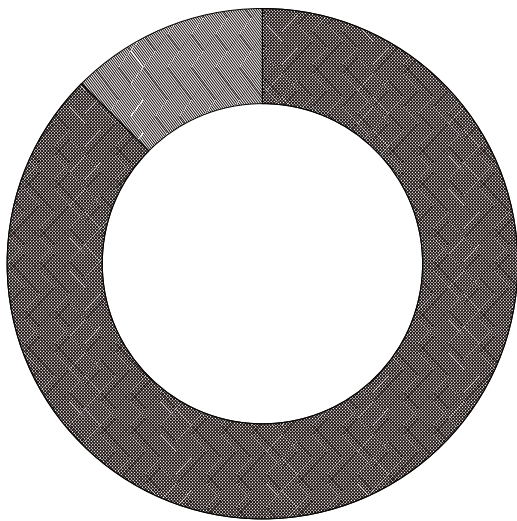
station Beurs. The floor slopes lightly from east to west, with circular benches placed sparsely along the slightly slanted surface, and music playing on speakers along the edges of the trench – the stairs loud when walked down, the centre louder still.



Coming from the east, the traverse opens with broad, lazy stairs; the gap in the ground level oddly inviting. The stairs – designed so that neither one step nor two feels natural – land on a subtle slant. Immediately, the sounds of music and voices, and the compressed, directional flow of bodies pulls you in. The high facades of the traverse loom behind the slow-moving crowd. Benches dot the surface, uninviting when passed, uncomfortable when used – to sit is to risk being identified as loitering. As the central area approaches, the ceiling stoops from open-air to under three metres; the space narrows into a funnel. Here, the sounds of OV-gates, shop music, and the bodies flowing in five directions accumulate into a cacophony that urges you onward. Whatever exit one takes is a relief.

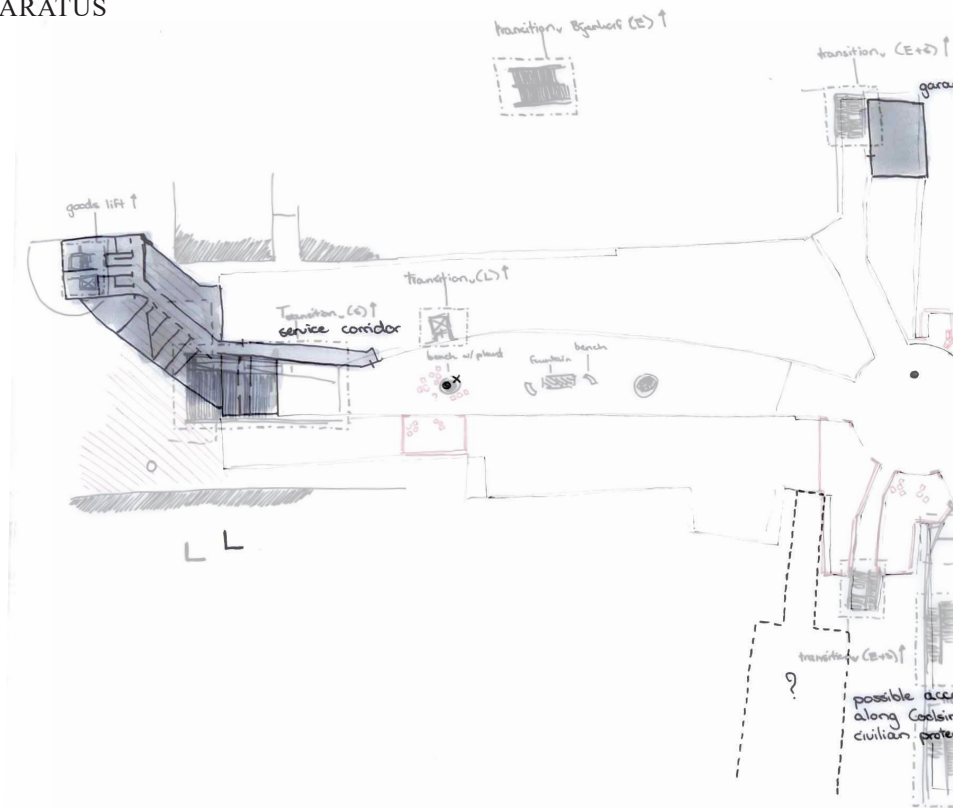
The Koopgoot was financed by a consortium of the municipality and various private parties, including ING Bank and the C&A pension fund Focas. The local government participated to the tune of 9.5 million euros – the appraised value of the land – while the private parties contributed the remaining seven-eighths, covering the construction of the shops and the design of the sunken mall. Since completion, management costs, including maintenance and surveillance, have been shared among the consortium members in proportion to their financial participation, with daily operations contracted out to a private management company (Van Melik, 2008; Van Melik et al., 2009). This arrangement is unusual in the Netherlands, where public space is typically zoned, planned, and financed by the municipality. The municipality, notably, participates in the consortium not as a public actor but as a private party; it owns commercial retail property, a situation unique among Dutch municipalities (Van Melik, 2008). The function of private investment in such a space, as Van Melik has argued, is to generate income by controlling access: desirable users – those with the capacity and willingness to consume – are encouraged, while undesirable users – those lacking the intention to use the space as commercially configured – are hindered (Van Melik et al., 2009). Bergenhenegouwen and Van Weesep have characterised the resulting condition as a “counterlocale” – drawing on Lofland’s term for a space that appears to be public but is in fact monitored and manipulated to minimise the chance of uncomfortable social confrontations, removing what Lofland calls the “hard edges” of the public realm (Bergenhenegouwen & Van Weesep, 2003; Lofland, 1998). The traverse is, in short, both presenting itself as public and carefully managing the terms under which that publicness is available.

Municipality of Rotterdam, as private party:
9.5 million euros (appraised value of the land)



ING Bank, Pension fund C&A (Focas):
66.5 million euros

4 1 THE APPARATUS

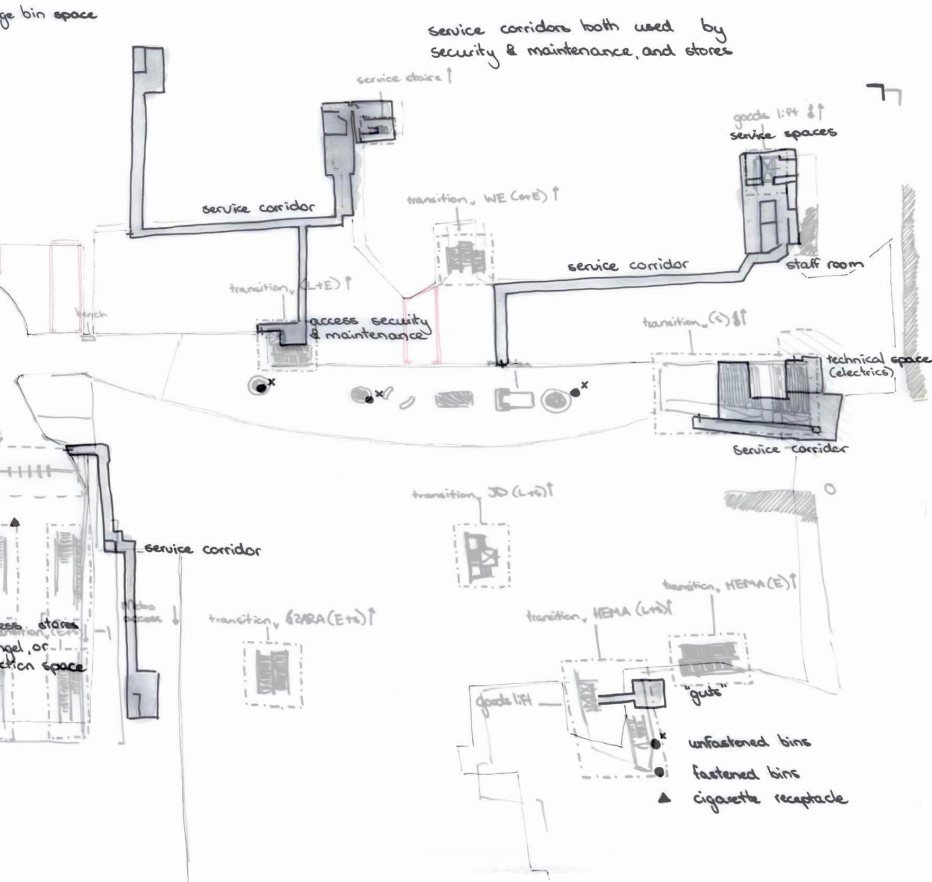


Rather than simply excluding certain users, the Koopgoot produces a hierarchy of legitimate presence. Following Foucault, discipline can be understood as a spatial technique that orders bodies by making them visible, comparable, and correctable. In this commercial semi-public space, however, the norm against which bodies are measured is not only behavioural but economic: the legitimate body is the body that moves as a consumer, or at least remains com-

patible with consumption. Those who do not fit this expectation are not necessarily excluded by a single explicit rule, but by a more diffuse spatial implication of undesirability. The space does not neutrally receive different publics; it prefigures them, distinguishing between desired, tolerated¹¹, and undesired users before any direct interaction occurs.

The mechanisms through which this hierarchy is maintained are both visible and

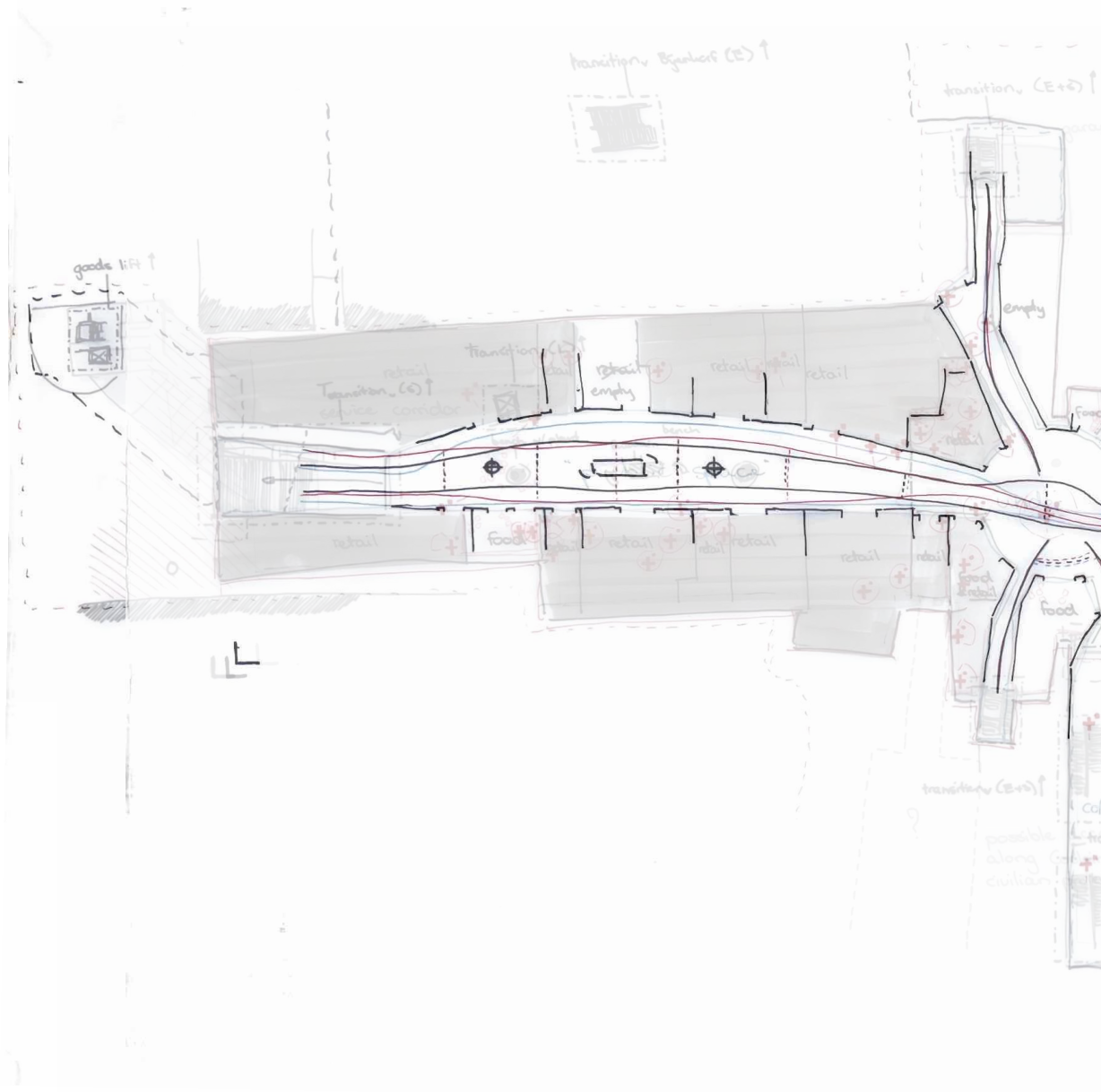
¹¹ The category of 'tolerated' is itself unstable. In conversations with security guards and shop owners, a grey zone emerged: guards confirmed they only approach smaller infractions when the space is busy, as busyness seemingly does not allow for even the smallest inconvenience; shop owners noted that rules against dogs and photography are more like guidelines, often unenforced. The security manager, however, was adamant. This inconsistency — the rules being enforced selectively, unpredictably — creates its own form of friction: the body never quite knows where the boundary lies, and conforms just in case.



concealed. No fewer than 68 surveillance cameras – confirmed by my own count – line the 300-metre traverse, their presence a deterrent as much as a recording device¹² (Van Melik, 2008). Private security guards patrol in rhythm with municipal law enforcement; together they constitute a layered monitoring apparatus – what Flusty describes as “jittery space” (Flusty, 1997). The house rules prohibit not only the predictable – smoking, skateboarding, the consumption of

alcohol – but also less obvious acts of soiling the commercial sanctity of the space: walking a dog, loitering, advertising, soliciting for charity. When vendors of homeless newspapers first appeared, they were swiftly removed. When a radio station attempted to broadcast live from the traverse, its reporters were summoned to leave while still on air. These incidents prompted enough public scrutiny that the consortium now posts the main house rules at the entrances (Bergenhengou-

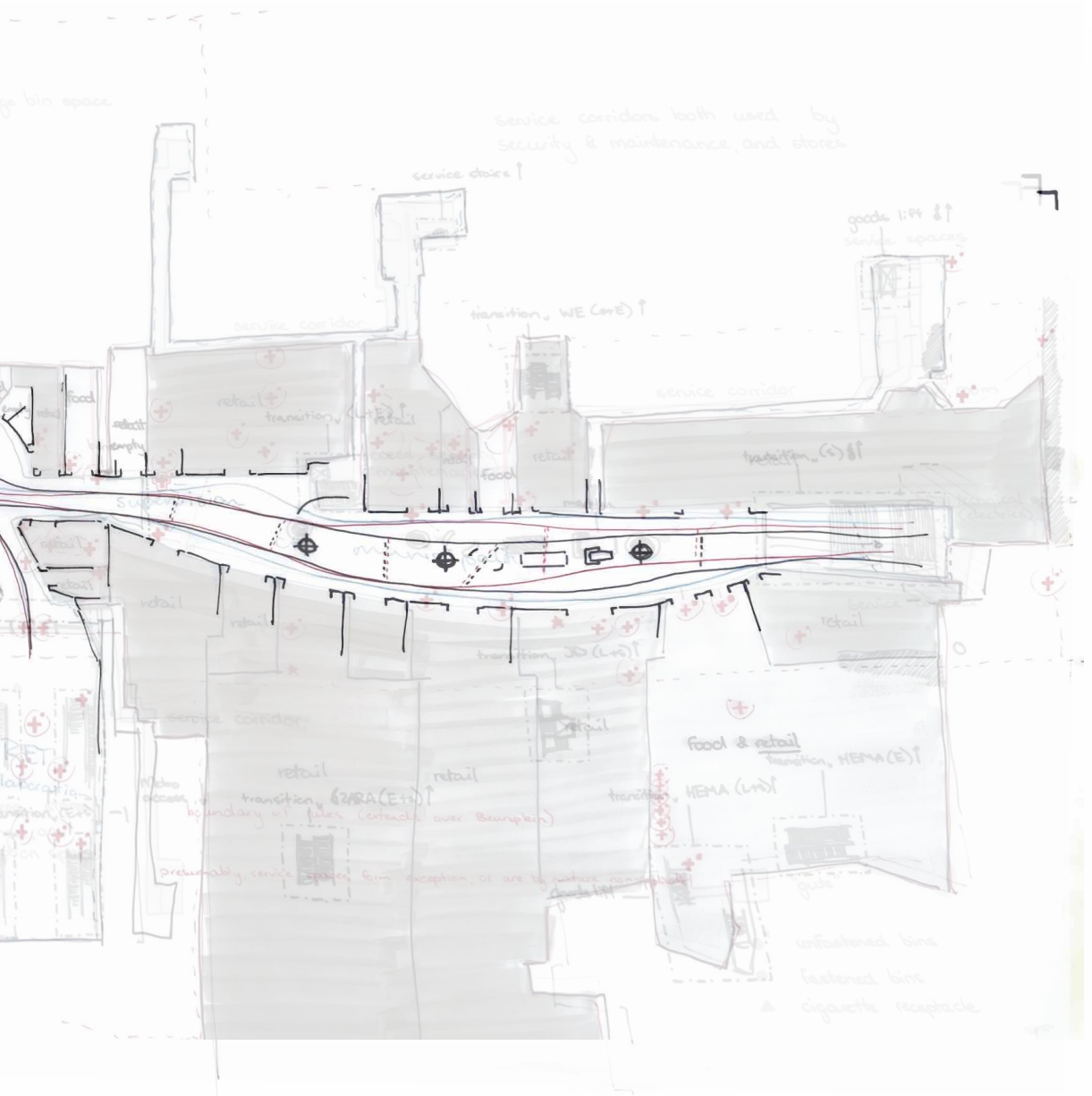
12 These cameras are all placed at high point along the edges of the trench, and on the ceiling of the central axis; providing a better vantage point. They are watching the crowds on the base plane – facing downwards. This orientation inadvertently creates a blind zone at the height of the ground level – the very plane on which the bypass operates.



wen & Van Weesep, 2003; Van Melik, 2008). Even the act of sketching – a body standing still, looking, producing something that is not a transaction – triggers the apparatus. The response is not violent but managerial: a friendly, inquisitive inquiry. “May I ask what you are doing?” The friendliness is, one could argue, itself a technique of control.

Steven Flusty’s typology of interdictory spaces provides a useful vocabulary for categorising what is observed (Flusty, 1997; Van

Melik, 2008). The traverse contains “stealthy” space – hidden entrances and routes, access points on a need-to-know basis, particularly the north and south entrances near the Bijenkorf; space that, as Koskela describes, is “known only to – and hence is only supposed to be found by – exceptional privileged people” (Koskela, 2000). It contains “slippery” space – contorted or confused interior paths configured with an inward retail orientation (Flusty, 1997). It contains “prickly” space – the sparse seating



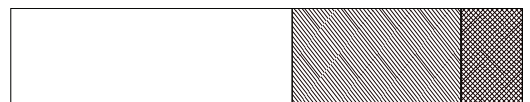
options that are either the property of a specific shop or positioned so awkwardly that sitting feels like being on a pedestal; the consortium has deliberately minimised benches, reasoning that seating would distract customers from shopping and encourage loitering (Van Melik, 2008). It contains “crusty” space – the OV gates regulating access to the metro, the stairs that close after commercial hours, the after hours barriers that complete the traverse’s daily metamorphosis into an inaccessible void. And it contains

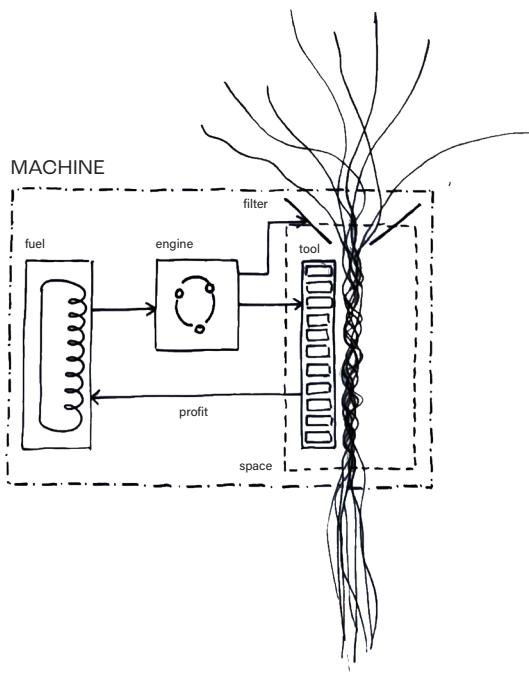
“jittery” space – a heightened monitoring apparatus in which indirect surveillance by means of personal phones is paradoxically discouraged while institutional surveillance is constant (Bergenhengouwen & Van Weesep, 2003; Flusty, 1997). What is notably absent is any vertical transition within the space itself — one either joins the flow or exits completely, speaking to the mono- functionality of a site that provides no provision for remaining without moving.

2 THE MACHINE

The Beurstraverse is overwhelmingly configured for retail. An analysis of the tenant composition reveals that approximately 85 percent of units are dedicated to consumption – clothing, footwear, accessories, beauty, branded lifestyle – with roughly 10 percent allocated to food and the remaining 5 percent to services. The Lijnbaan, its western neighbour, presents a similar composition: approximately 82 percent retail, 13 percent food and hospitality. The Hoogstraat, by contrast, is considerably more mixed: roughly 55 percent retail, 33 percent food and hospitality, and 12 percent services and leisure. The Hoogstraat accommodates lingering, eating, refreshing, meeting, and passing through without necessarily shopping. The Koopgoot, by design, does not.

The comparative analysis reveals further patterns. Service areas in the traverse are hidden – achieved through the subterranean condition, which allows deliveries and maintenance to be conducted out of sight. The cover against sun and rain is situated along the shopfronts, directing the body toward the commercial edge. There is almost no flora in any of the three areas; what little exists in the Lijnbaan and Hoogstraat is placed in moveable planters or under metal covers. In the traverse, even this is largely absent, omitting any softer surface such as soil or sand. The infrastructure for fauna appears limited to birdboxes along the upper edges of the trench – yet in all my visits, I never encountered or saw any birds in the space. All three areas lack structural seating or leisure zones, but the Koopgoot is the most extreme: the few benches serve primarily as waiting spots outside shops, positioned not for rest but for the management of shoppers' companions.





The space can be read as a machine. The fuel is financial incentive – the private investment that demands a return. The engine is the regulatory framework – the house rules, the security, the spatial configuration that directs movement toward retail frontage. The interference is the space itself – the architecture that channels, sorts, and presents. The feedback is profit. The consortium has deliberately kept restaurants, cafés, and events out of the traverse, reasoning that such activities would attract loitering and undesired activities after dark; the mixing of business and leisure was considered inappropriate for a space designed to serve consumption alone (Bergenhengouwen & Van Weesep, 2003; Van Melik, 2008). In its current state, the machine generates feedback in the form of margins, and everything in the space – every surface, every rule, every absence – is oriented toward sustaining that cycle.

A DHL deliveryman stood in the middle of the trench with his trolley, looking around himself, lost. A common sight, possibly anywhere else in today's society, but an odd sight here. To me, an evidence of the illegibility of an exaggeratedly positive space, and of the system's cracks when the provided infrastructure is not utilised as intended.

The Beurstraverse is designed to produce an atmosphere of assurance – of safety, comfort, and ease. This assurance is directed at making the consumer feel more willing to spend. The apparatus appears to succeed: a survey found that 84 percent of visitors evaluated the level of safety during the daytime as positive or very positive (Van Melik, 2008). The surfaces are clean. The lighting is even. The music is constant. The maintenance cycles are hidden: tiles are replaced, seams are kitted, bins are emptied

by staff who appear and disappear with choreographed efficiency. The space presents itself as “frictionless”.

And yet, through its intrinsic intentions and assurances, the “frictionlessness” generates its own form of intensity. The constant movement of a crowd through a narrow, enclosed, acoustically hard space produces an environment that is experienced – at least by this body – as overwhelming and abrasive. The music, the voices, the reverberations of the tram overhead, the

A cleaning staff who had started his routine of replacing the bin bags that dot the surface of the trench. A task following its own rhythm, perhaps pulsing slightly faster on busy days, but all in all consistent. Yet, when he got to the first bin and stopped to pull out the old bag, the trolley started rolling away on the slanted plane – a small performance which repeated itself, each time revealing, unintentionally, the labour the space works so carefully to conceal.

loud clatter of footsteps on the stairs, the clanging of the marble play-set: these accumulate into a condition of sensory saturation. The traverse is avoided by some precisely because the intensities of its flows are exhausting. The space of positivity becomes, paradoxically, a space of friction – but a friction that is unproductive, undirected, and unacknowledged.

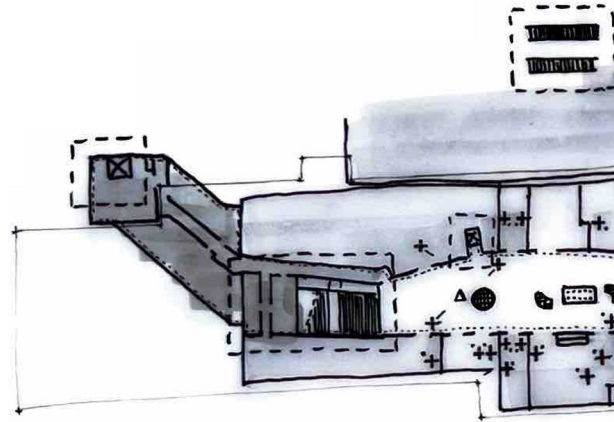
Read through the lens of Esposito's immunisation, this condition becomes legible as a space that admits exteriority only insofar















as it can be absorbed. The stranger and the passer-by are allowed in, but the disruptive body – the body that lingers, that rests, that does not consume – is anticipated as a possible infection. The space protects itself by producing thresholds between acceptable and excessive exteriority. The Koopgoot is, I would suggest, an operation theatre of urban life: a controlled interior in which what is treated is not illness but the possibility of uncontrolled common life.

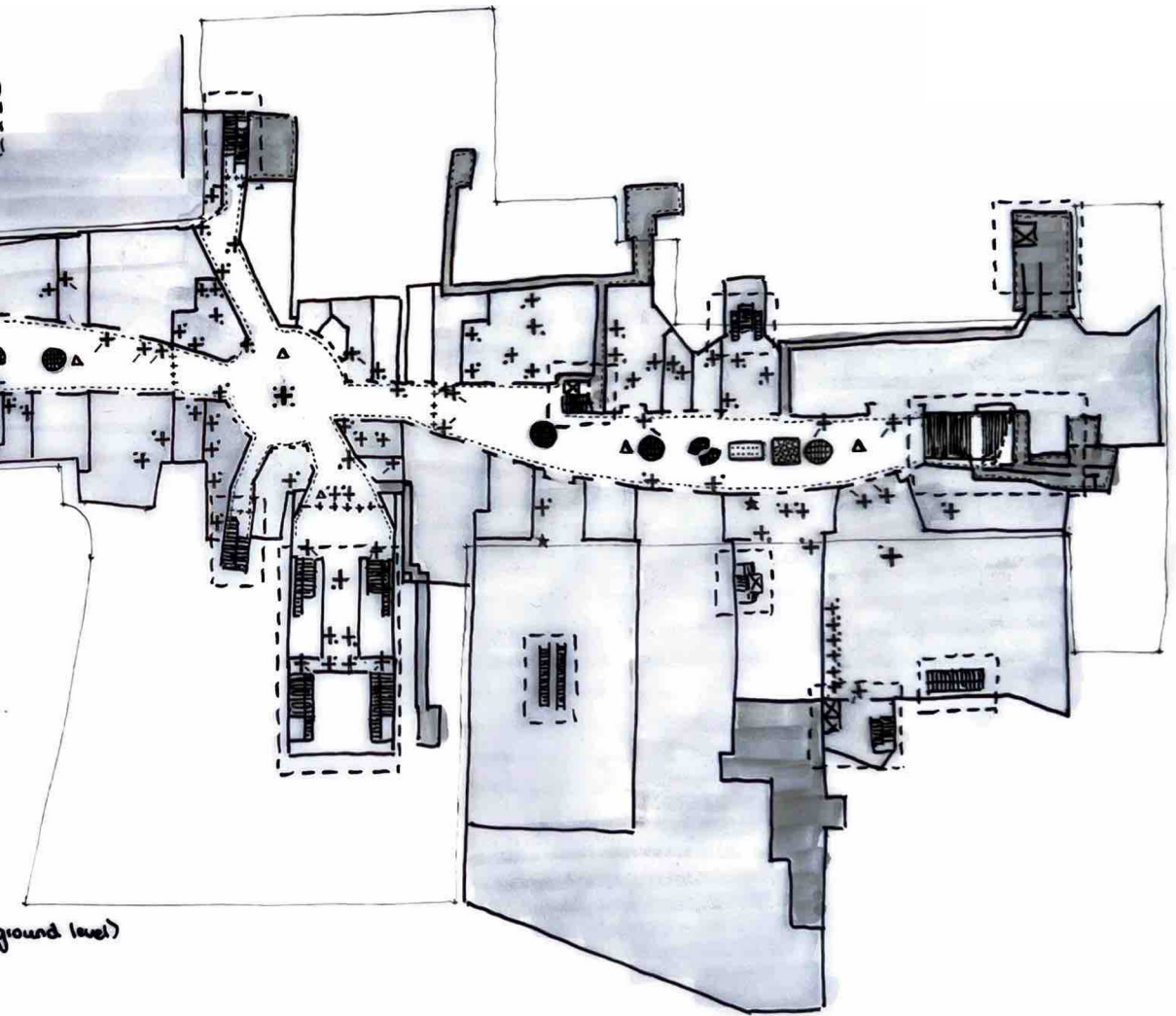
The analysis began with the assumption that deviation would be a quality of the intervention – something introduced into the space by design. But the comparative analysis reframes the site itself. The Koopgoot is not a typical shopping street. It exaggerates the logics of control, consumption, and positivity beyond what is found in the Lijnbaan and the Hoogstraat. Its subterranean enclosure, its monofunctionality, its financing structure, its degree of surveillance, and its after-hours closure are all more intense than the norms of the adjacent urban fabric. The Beurstraverse is itself a deviation – a structure that pushes the logics of neoliberal urban planning further than its context.

This reframing matters for the design proposition. The project does not introduce deviation into a neutral space. It designs for deviation from an already-deviant condition; a double inflection. The intervention works with an already-extreme condition, bending it further, not back toward a norm but toward something the apparatus has not anticipated. Where the Koopgoot currently bridges the Lijnbaan and the Hoogstraat through consumption, the intervention proposes another form of connection: one based on collision, friction, non-profitable occupation, and ecological intrusion. It introduces a new typology – one that interrupts the retail trench and allows other forms of urban life to take place.

The following chapter describes this typology: the design as a proposition for what designing for deviation might look like, materially and spatially, in the specific and highly engineered environment of the Beurstraverse.



-  marble run, street furniture
-  fountains
-  benches
-  zone of housesules (incl. ground level)
-  zone of vertical transition
-  conditional border
-  zone under municipality's supervision (excl. p)
-  retail; food & drink
-  retail
-  service & goods
-  camera; on rotation
-  camera; fixed
-  private security guard
-  bins

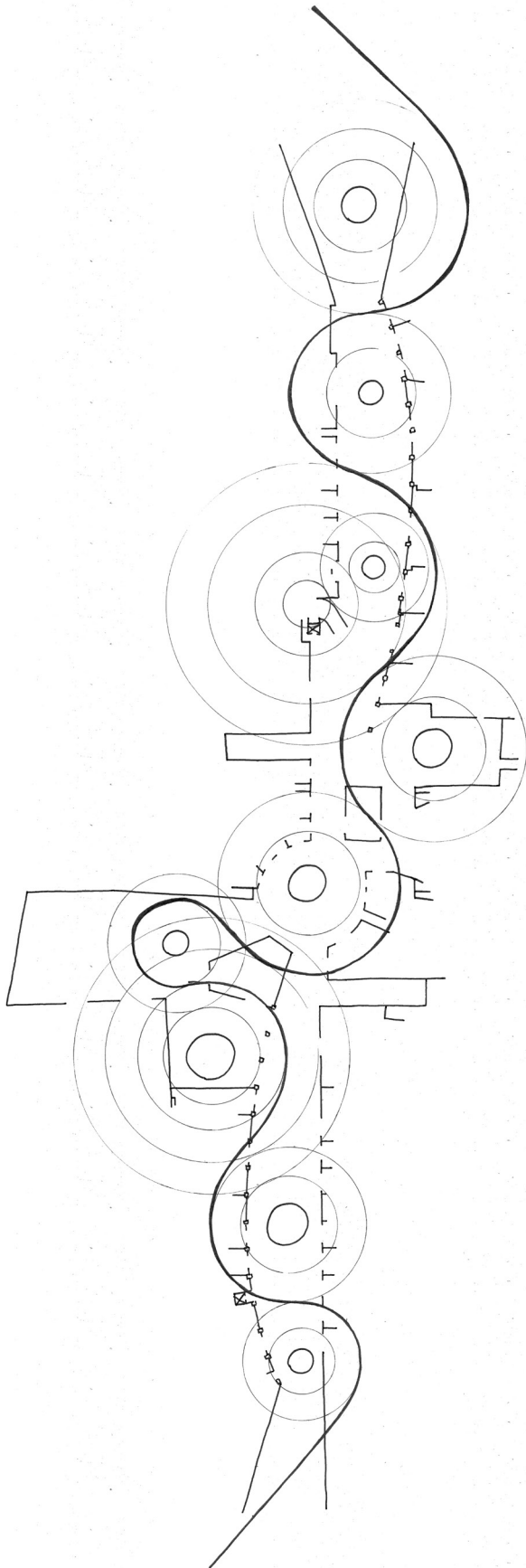


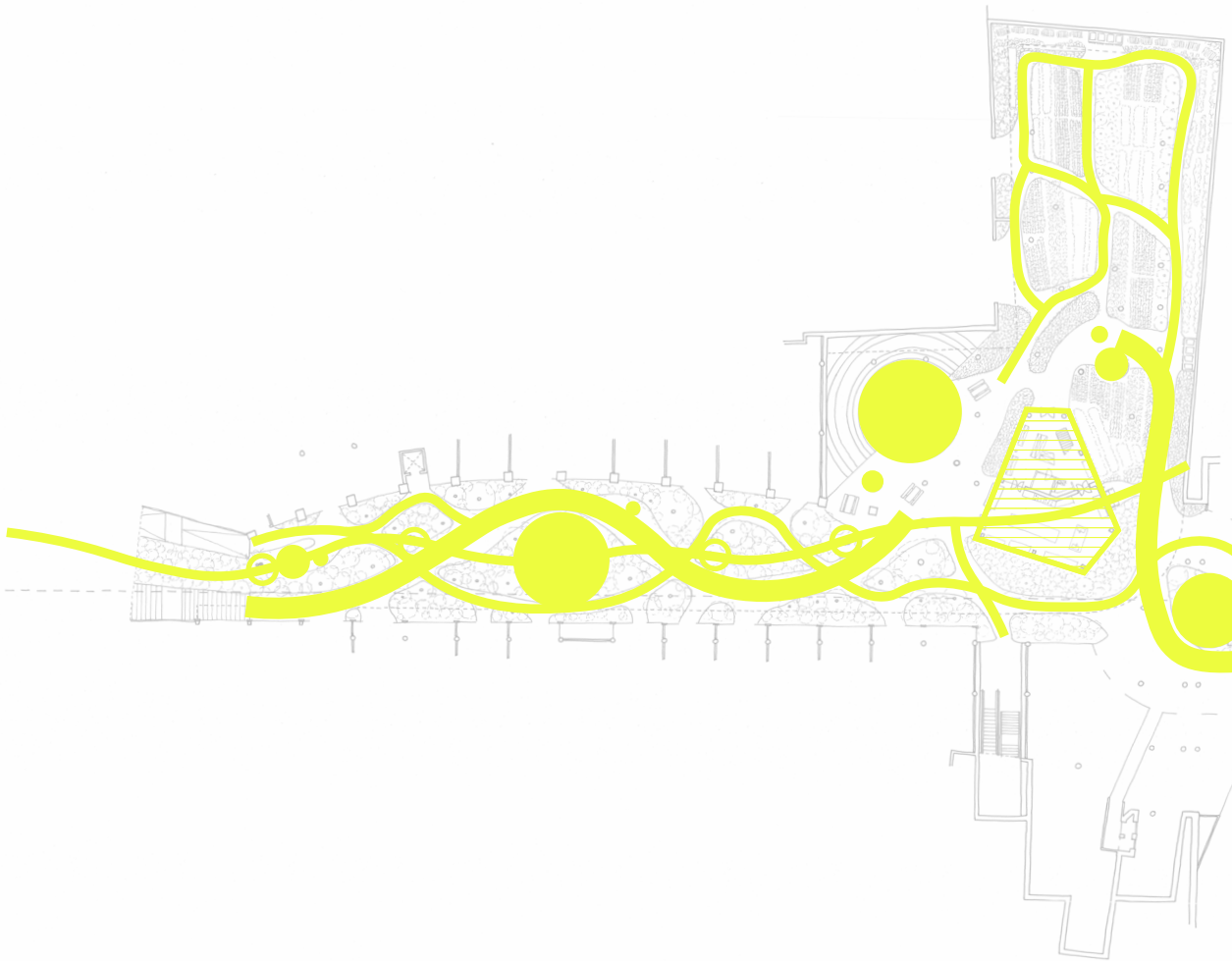
ground level)

5 1 NON-PROFITABLE PRODUCTIVITY

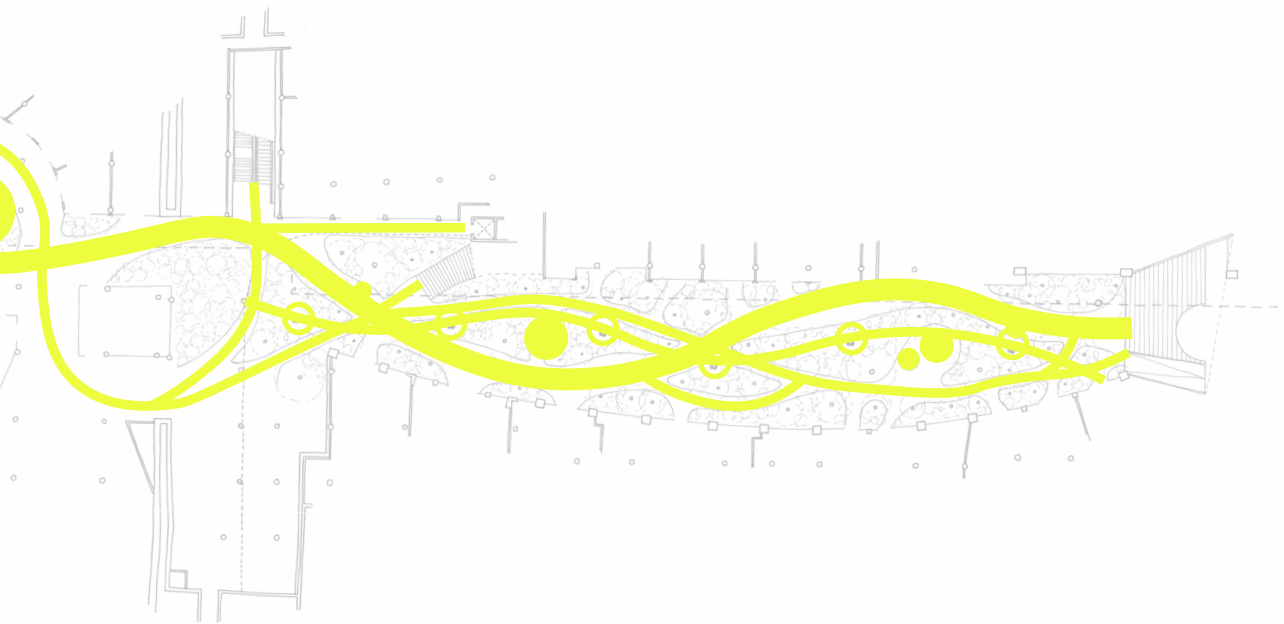
The aim of the project is not to heal the Beurstraverse, nor to dismantle its apparatus. It is to reconfigure – to introduce new instruments, with a different intent and under a different logic, that operate alongside and in tension with the existing condition. The preceding chapters have established the machine: fuelled by financial incentive, driven by rules, interfering through architecture, and generating profit as its feedback. The design proposes a different feedback loop: one in which the space is productive, but non-profitably so. Productive in the sense that it generates encounters, durations, and forms of occupation that the current configuration does not accommodate. Non-profitable in the sense that these encounters yield no economic output – they are loitering, sitting, gardening, napping, feeding birds, consuming for free, sunbathing, watching. Acts that the existing apparatus categorises as undesirable become the programme.

The design can be likened to a river. The current condition of the Beurstraverse is a fast, channelled stream: bodies moving through a linear trench with little opportunity for pause. The intervention introduces bypasses – alternative routes that sidestep the main current. It places rocks at various points in the stream and along the banks – obstructions that force the flow to split, slow, and eddy. It opens up the banks at certain points, allowing the water to pool and settle. The disruptions in the flow result in moments of calm and pause, much like eddies in a fast-flowing river. These moments are not incidental; they are designed to produce collision, and to be productive. The interruptions generate opportunities.





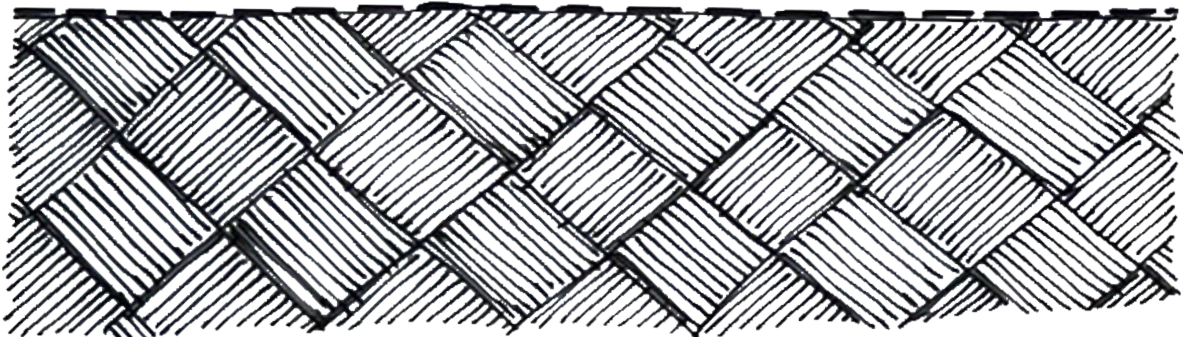
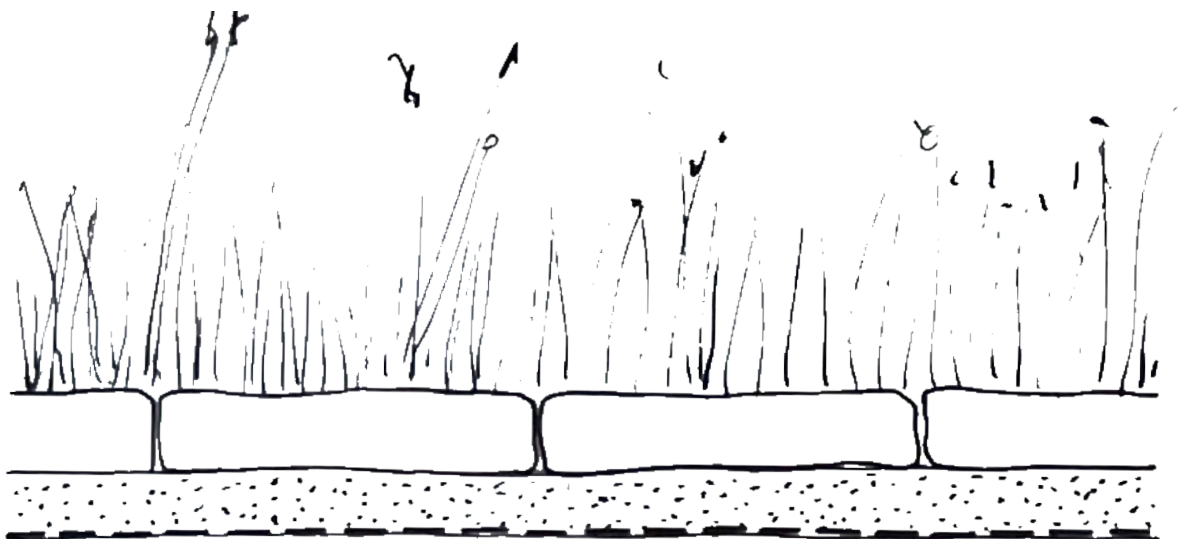
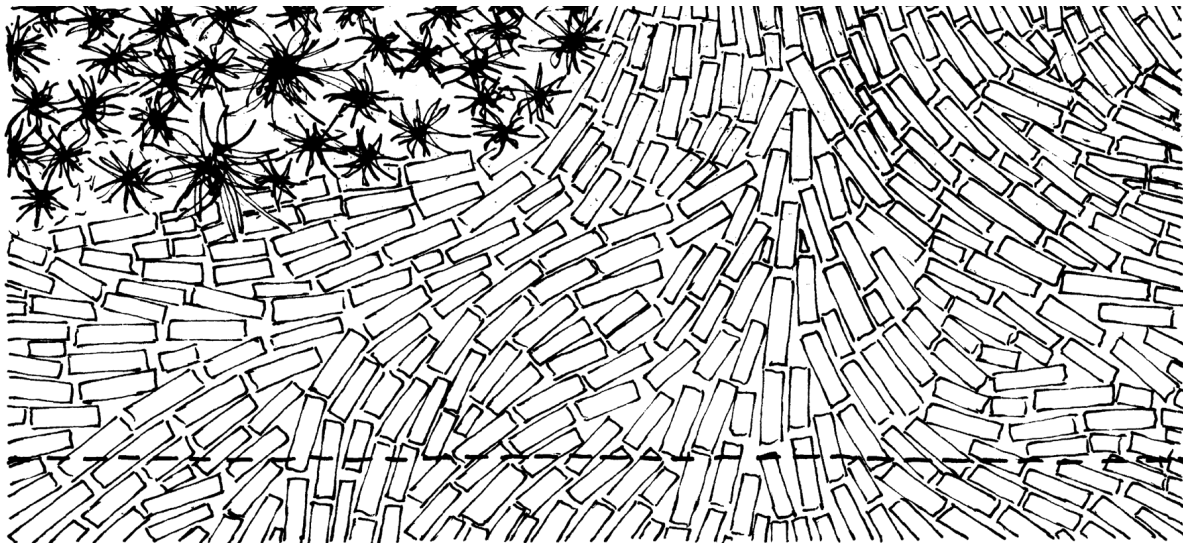
The concept consists of three layers, each corresponding to one of the three threads traced through the report. Together, they operate simultaneously within the same space, at times overlapping, at times pulling apart.

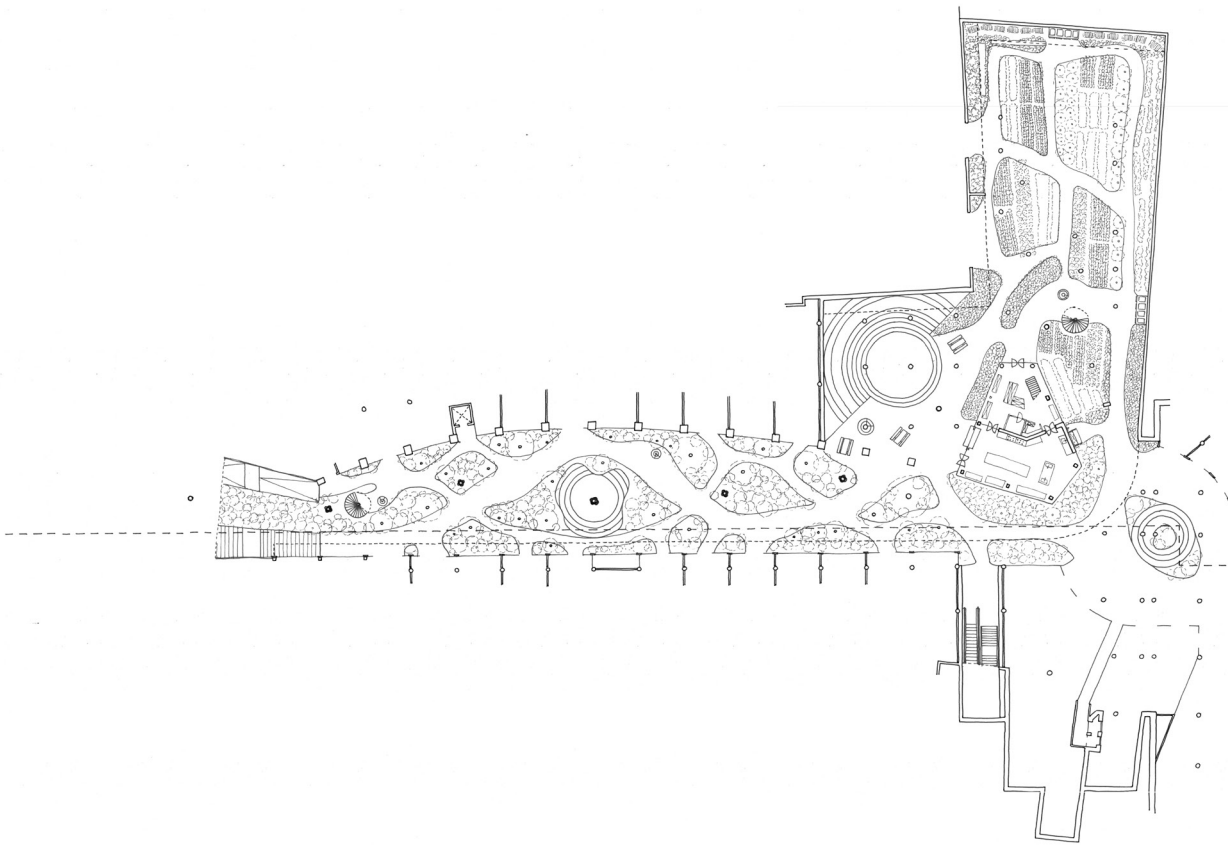


The first layer responds to the conditions of consumption – the flow. Where the existing traverse is a “frictionless” surface engineered to facilitate retail, the design transforms the lower level into a softer, slower ground: a park.

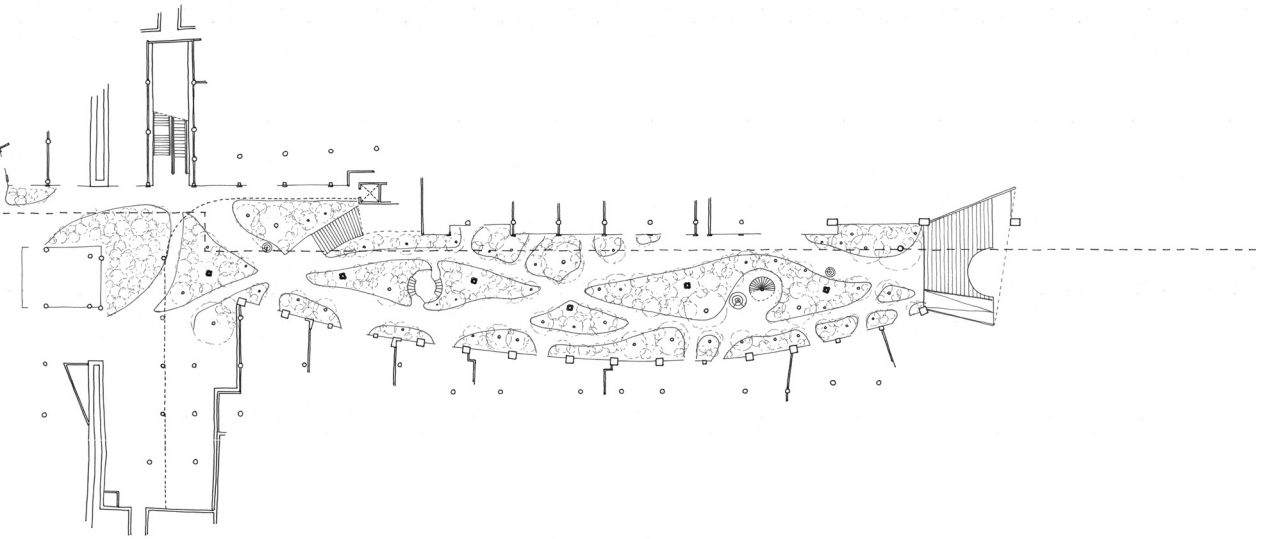
The park is not ornamental. It is a communal landscape that grows over time, climbing around, through, and over the structures that support the other layers. The ground plane of the trench is broken open at specific moments and given back to soil, sand, and water. Certain sections of the facades are similarly interrupted, allowing the park to bleed into and through the existing structure. The ground plane is no longer uniform: it is planted, permeable, and alive. Flora and fauna are not decorative additions but participants in the space. The existing infrastructure for nature in the traverse is, to put it mildly, negligible – moveable planters, metal-capped beds, birdboxes that house no birds. The design replaces this with actual ground: soil deep enough for roots, substrates varied enough for insects, water accessible enough for birds and hedgehogs.

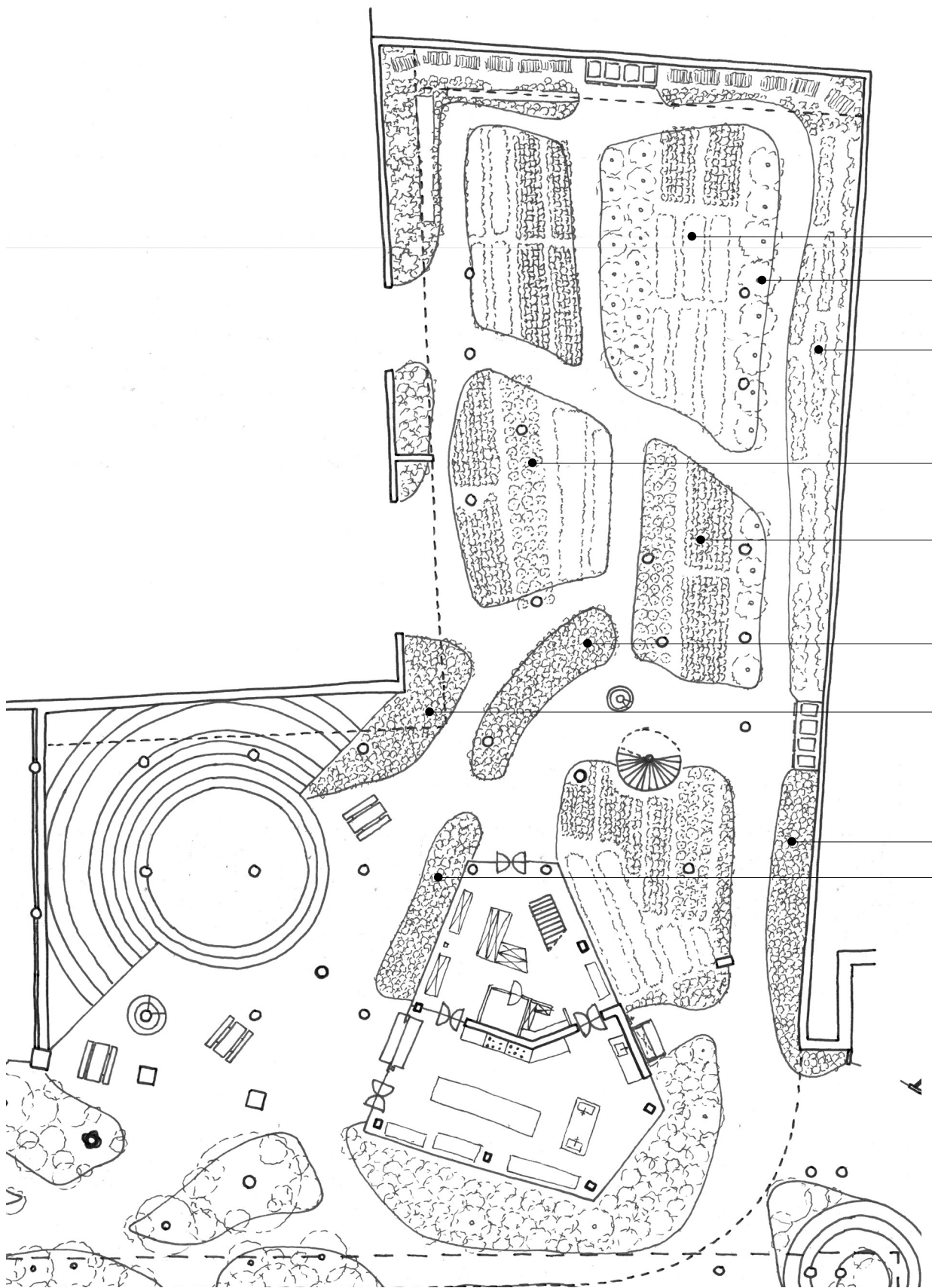
The paths through the park are made from thin, long bricks laid in a pattern that suggests the flowing of a stream. Along the main path, the edges dent inward and outward – creating subtle bottlenecks that slow movement and small expansions that accommodate benches, access to low trees, or a place to stop and look. At certain points, a garden bed bulges into the path, narrowing it and forcing a yielding between bodies – a moment of micro-negotiation that is, perhaps, the heart of what the project calls productive friction.





To descend the stairs is to enter an entirely different space. The music has faded – or, rather, has been replaced: by the wind rustling the leaves, by the water, by the scrape of a trowel in the garden bed. The air is cooler, damper, and smells of soil. The body, accustomed to the strict choreography of the retail trench, does not yet know what to do.

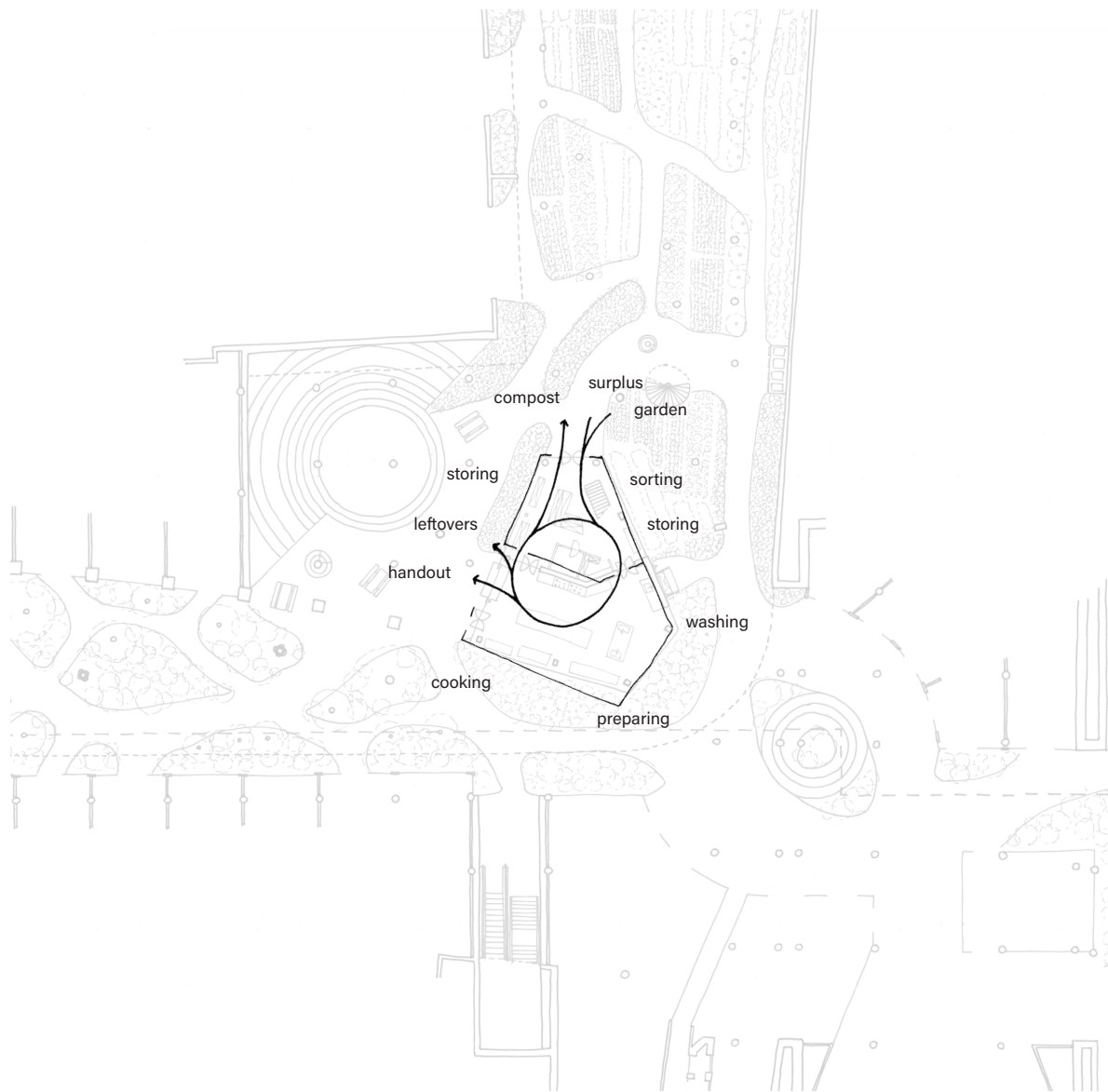




| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| | strawberries |
| | apple and pear trees |
| | apple and pear trees, espalier |
| | tomatoes |
| | chard |
| | herbs; hardy edibles, such as |
| | rosemary |
| | bay |
| | lavender |
| | sage |

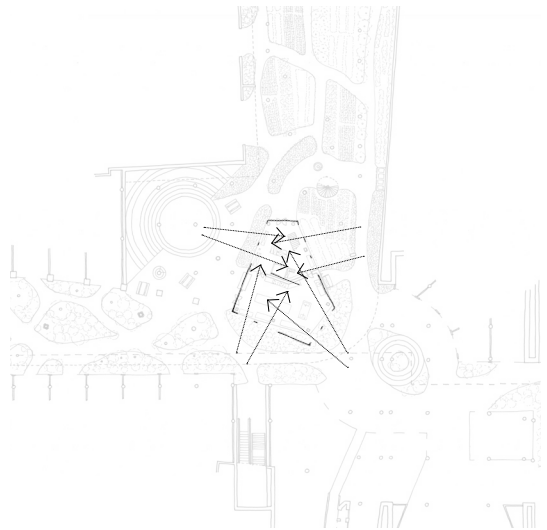
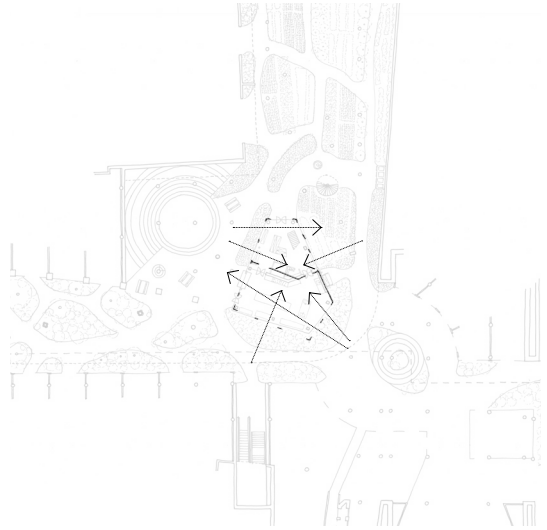
The communal garden is structured as a layered foraging model: hardy, edible plants at the outer edges – bay laurel, lavender, rosemary – that can absorb being trampled or over-harvested, and more sensitive crops in the “islands”

created by the braiding of the paths. The garden produces food. This food enters the handout station, which gathers surplus and rescued produce from the surrounding area, processes it collectively, and distributes it freely.



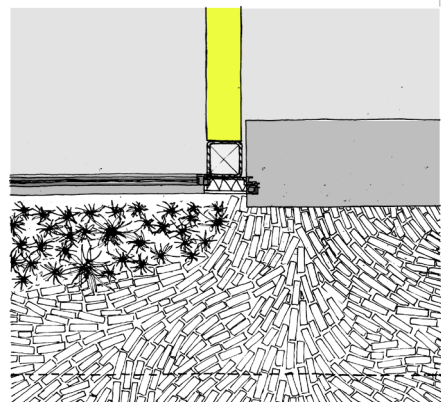
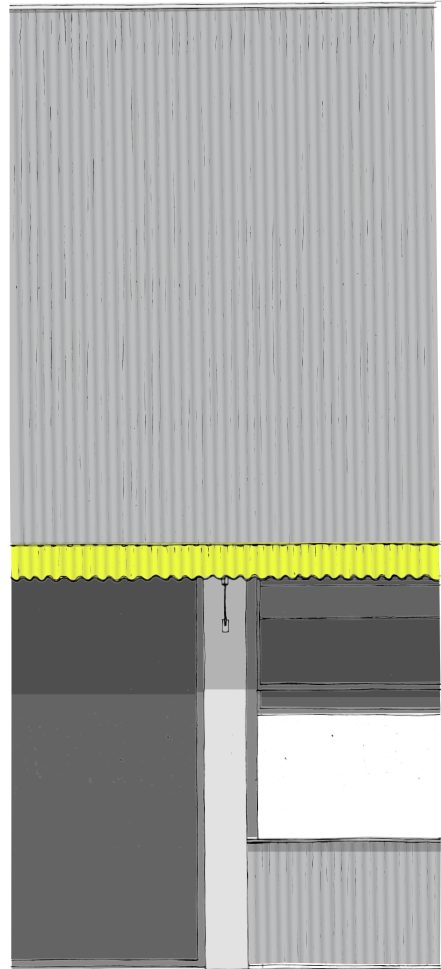
The handout station is not a charity window but a civic hearth – a low counter at eye level, a visible kitchen, an open threshold. Its programme is non-profitable by design: food is de-commodified, and the labour of preparation is shared, horizontal, and visible.

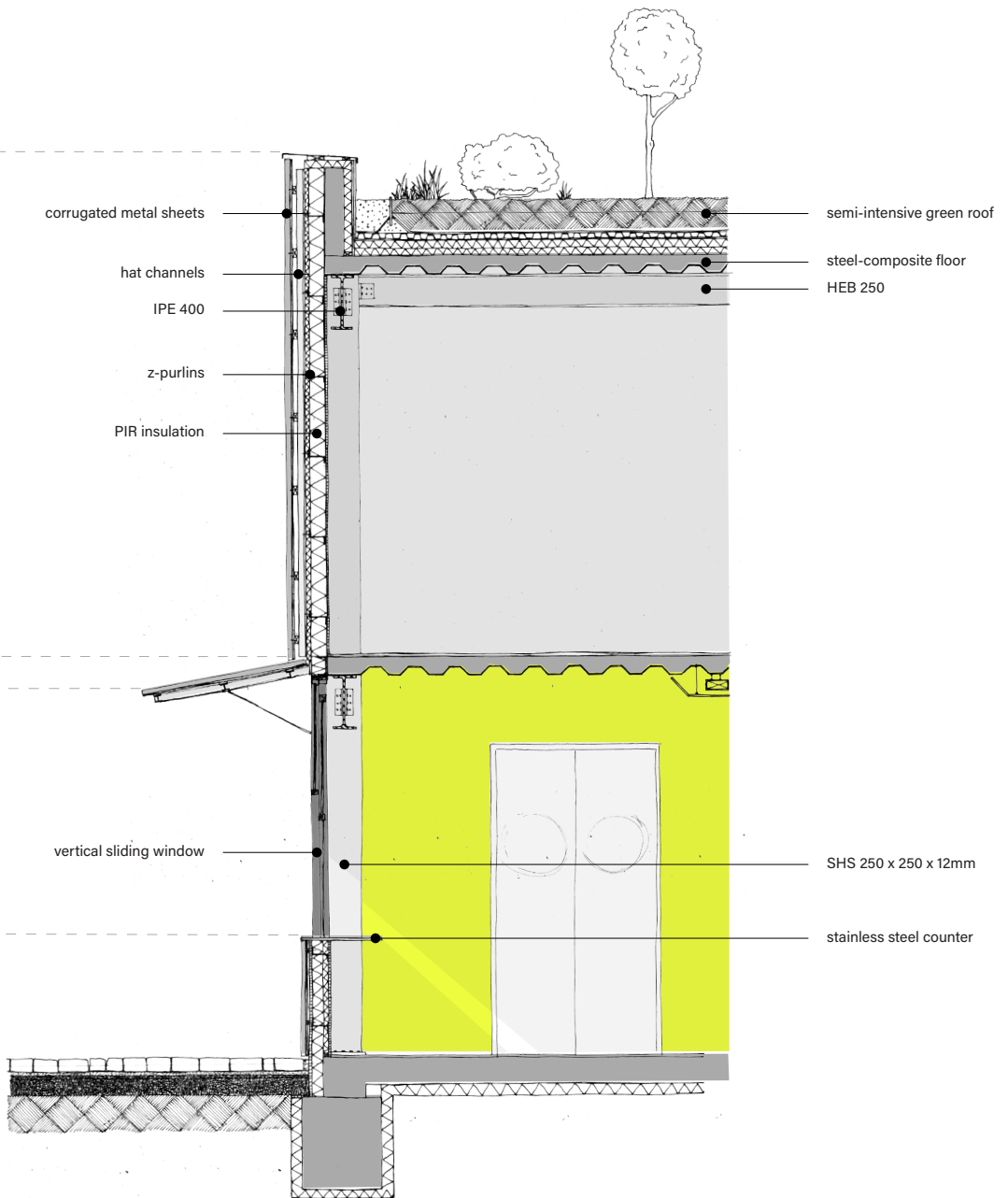
The station is organised around two conditions: the transparent and the solid. The ground floor is predominantly glazed — open to the park on one side and the traverse on the other — so that the activity of preparation is visible from both directions.



The kitchen, the storage, and the service areas are consolidated in a solid core of reinforced concrete, around which the public interface wraps. The counter — stainless steel, at 900mm, continuous from inside to outside — is the threshold between the two. Above it, a 1200mm opening is closed by a top-hinged steel panel that, when open, folds upward to form a canopy sheltering the counter from rain. When closed, it secures the kitchen. A corrugated steel rain cover at roughly 3000mm wraps the building's perimeter, projecting over the public edges and providing shelter for those approaching or waiting.

The roof is planted — a semi-intensive green surface that extends the park upward, with deeper planting zones above the columns and core walls where the structure can carry the additional weight. Over time, the roof becomes a continuation of the landscape below: a surface that blurs the boundary between building and ground.

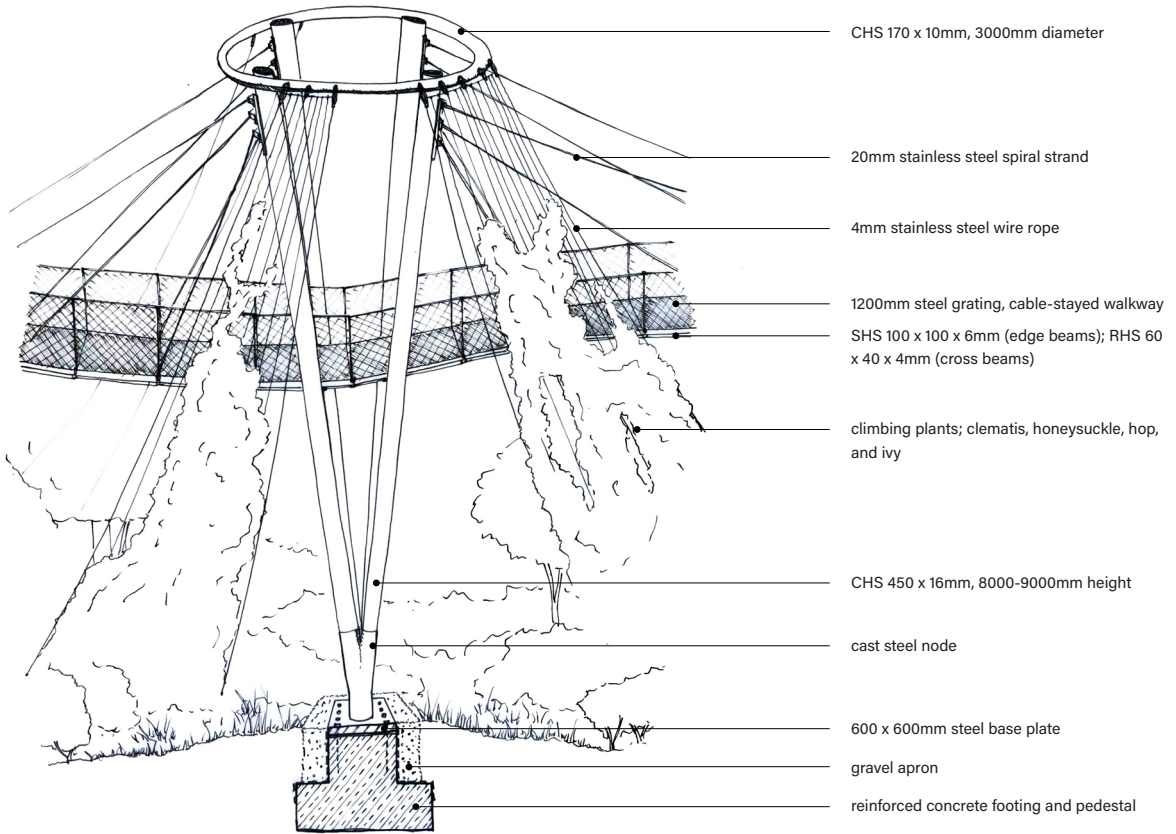


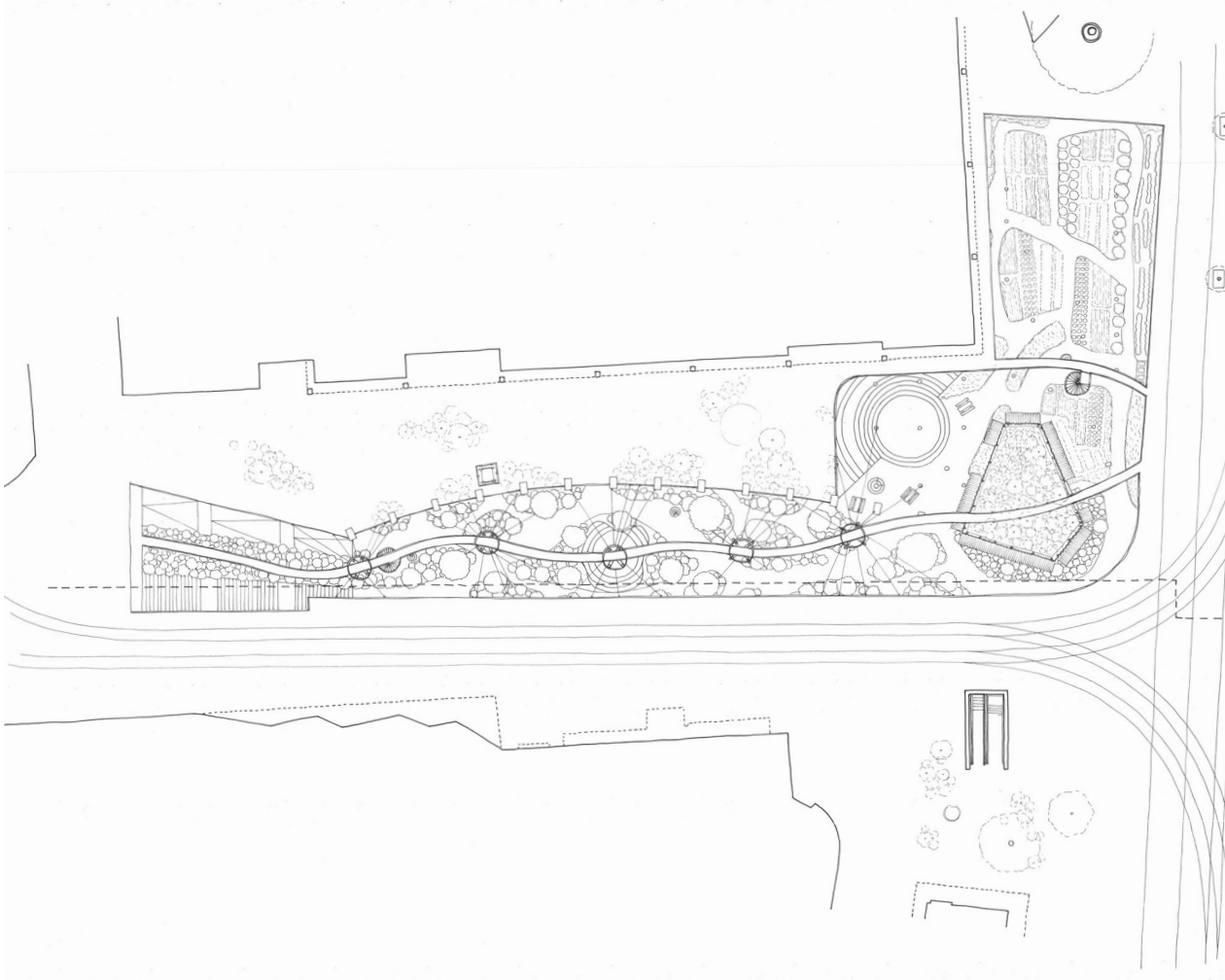


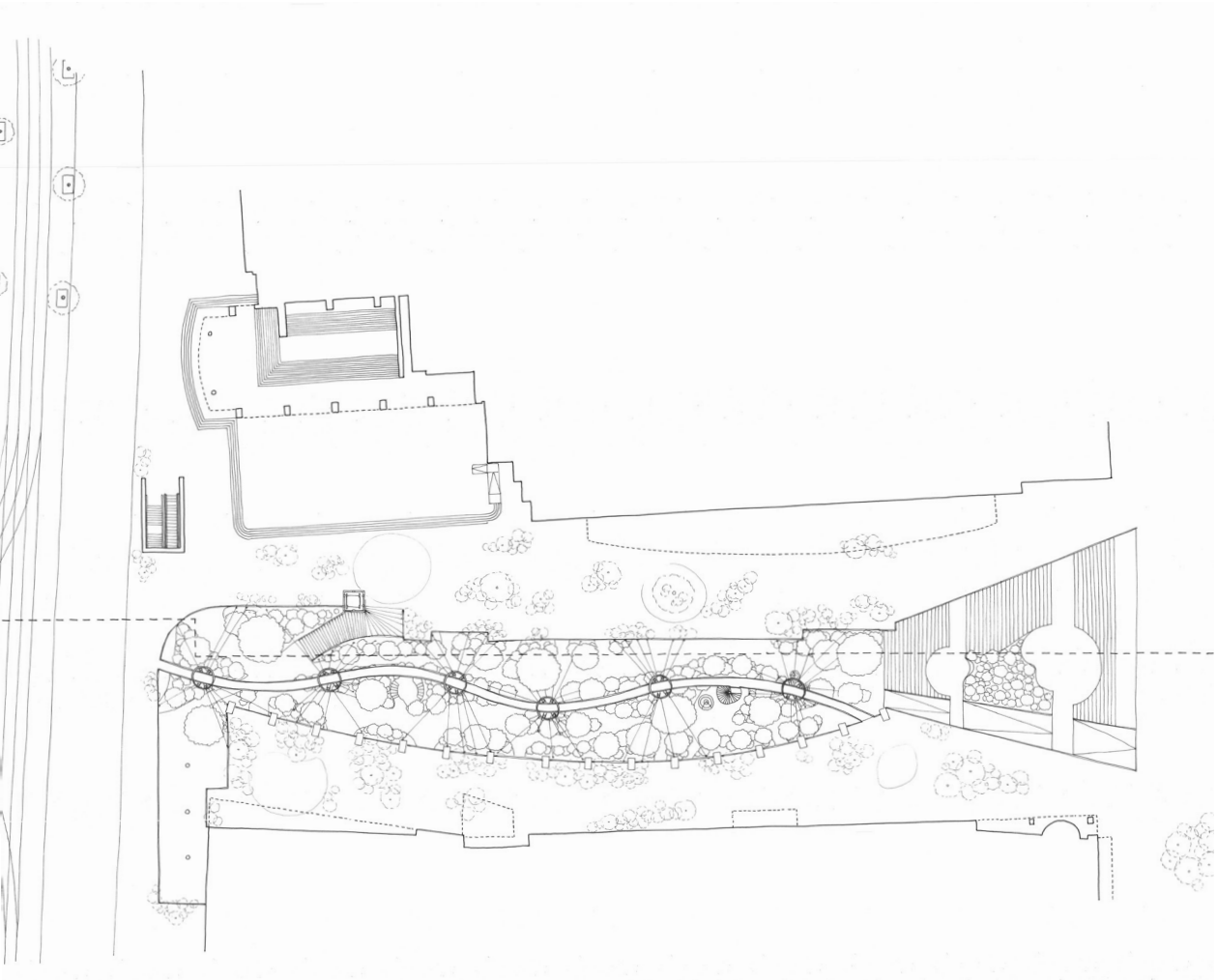
3 TO BYPASS

The second layer responds to the conditions of control; the grid. Where the existing traverse offers a single linear route – monitored, gated, and closed after hours – the design introduces an elevated steel walkway at the height of the surrounding ground level. This walkway, along with the smaller paths through the park, facilitates alternative paths – one that bypasses the gates, the stairs, the surveillance apparatus, and the commercial logic of the lower level. It connects directly to the ground floor of the surrounding context, offering entry and exit points that are not controlled by the OV-gates or the after-hours closures.

The walkway is carried by a steel structure – a V-frame system from which, additionally, a net is suspended. Over time, this net fosters climbing plants, and the vegetation creeps upward from the park below. The walkway becomes more concealed as the park encroaches beyond its original plane, gradually acquiring a quality of solitude – a route concerned less with efficiency than with the possibility of moving through the space without being fully visible, fully counted, or fully available to the apparatus.



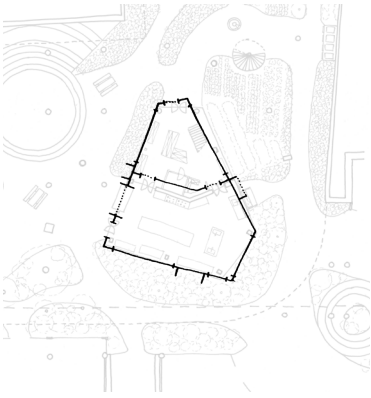




Critically, the bypass remains active when the commercial logic of the Koopgoot withdraws. Parts of the site are currently closed at night: the north and south stairs around 18:00, the central axis when the metro ceases operation. This closure completes the traverse's daily metamorphosis into a space emptied of all function – or, perhaps more precisely, a space whose final function (traversing) is eliminated, revealing how little of its design was ever intended for anything else. The space, stripped of its commercial programme, reveals the fragility of its claim to publicness. The design resists this. Alternative routes remain open, activating the space beyond the commercial schedule. The handout station shifts into a night mode. The folding panel lowers, the kitchen secures, the interior lights dim. But the public threshold — the counter, the canopy above it, the covered route along the building's edge — stays accessible. A community fridge built into the facade remains stocked. A water point continues to run. The lighting shifts from functional to warm. The station does not close; it changes register. During the day, it distributes food and stages collective labour. At night, it offers what the commercial schedule withdraws: shelter, sustenance, and the right to remain. The question the bypass poses is not only spatial but temporal: who is allowed to remain in the city when consumption has stopped?

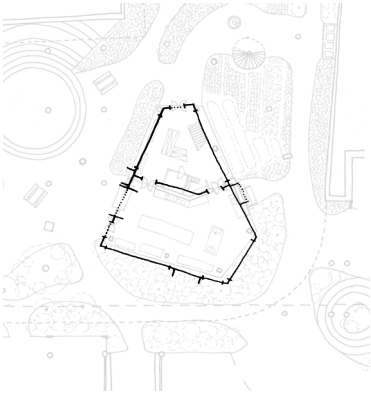
The bypass, even when all else is closed, remains open-ended — the dead-end, that spatial full stop of the commercial logic, is abolished. The space no longer terminates; it continues, even if into uncertainty.

DAY



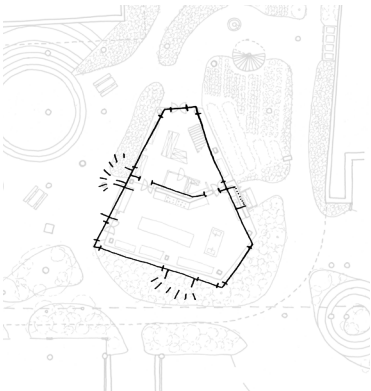
Full commons :
kitchen, and handout table accessible
garden in use

EVENING



Reduced :
kitchen semi-closed
counter remains staffed for prepped meals, leftovers, tea, water, and information

NIGHT



24/7 :
cover from rain
tap
information board
public fridges

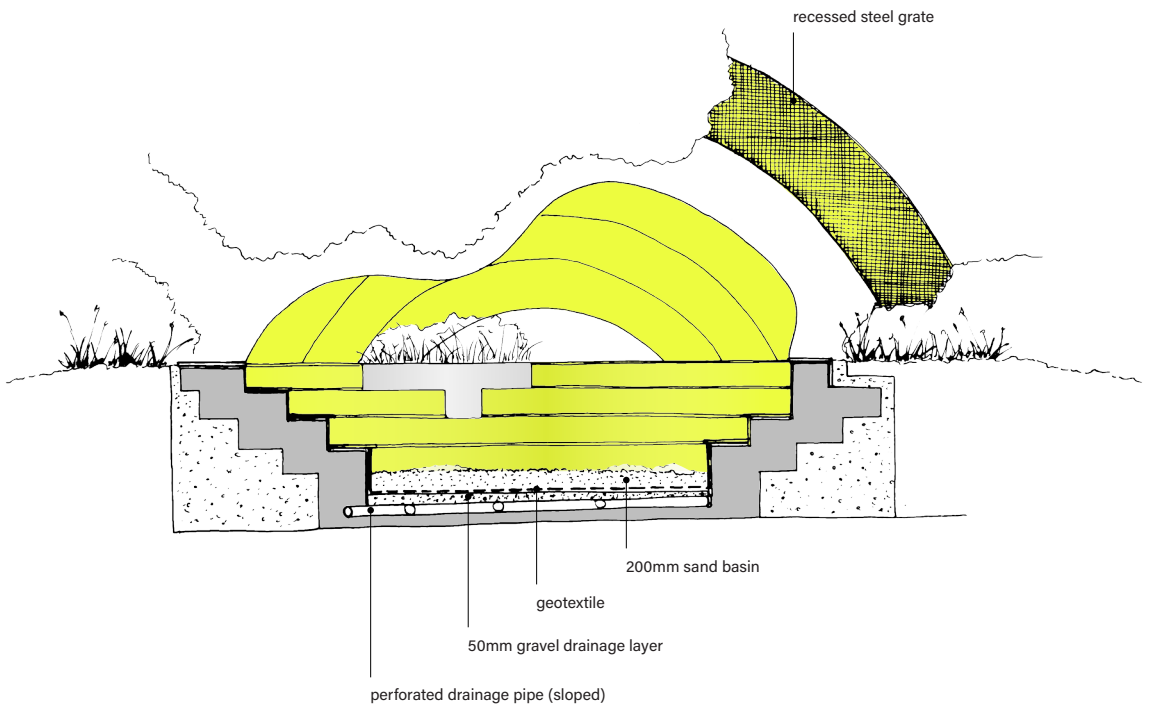
The third layer responds to the conditions of positivity – the surface. Where the existing traverse produces a paradoxical friction through its insistence on “frictionlessness,” the design introduces intentional friction: collisions between the two other layers, between different bodies, between human and non-human participants.

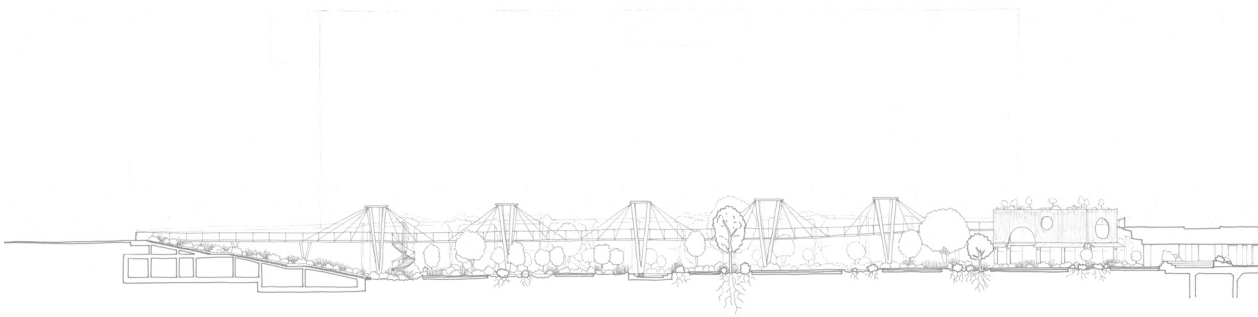
The collisions are facilitated by vertical transitions – points at which the wandering of the park and the bypassing of the walkway are given the opportunity to cross paths. These transitions take the form of additional stairs, ramps, and – perhaps most importantly – furnitures: sunken amphitheatres, benches, and thresholds that stage the encounter between different modes of occupying the space. The amphitheatres are small, circular, stepped seating areas sunk into the landscape of the park. In selected basins, the ground is filled with sand – a playful and unstable material that records use through footprints, displacement, and accumulation. Its constant spreading makes the hidden labour of public-space maintenance visible. The surrounding hard seating rings and drainage layers, and sand-trap thresholds reveal the attempt to contain it, whilst also showing that traces of use can never be fully erased.

The collisions are also ecological. The park grows. The climbing plants on the tensile net create a canopy – a living ceiling that filters light, attracts birds, and transforms the acoustics of the space. The watering points serve triple duty: a drinking fountain for humans, a basin for filling watering cans and washing hands, and a

shallow splash-off for dogs and urban wildlife. The composting station, placed near the handout station, closes the loop: food waste from the kitchen feeds the garden that people are walking through. The composting station, placed adjacent to the handout station, receives food waste from the kitchen and returns it, over time, to the garden beds as growing medium. The food cycle – harvested, prepared, distributed, consumed, composted, regrown – is not hidden but performed in full view, each stage visible from the paths that wind through it. The non-human is not a backdrop to the human programme; it is an active participant, constantly negotiating the space in ways the design cannot – and, I would argue, should not attempt to – fully predict.

What I, in that sense, cannot design is the child clambering up the trees and nets, stuffing their pockets with rosemary and sand. The couple staying laying on the sand at midnight. The bird that nests in the V-structure, and refuses to leave. The gardener planting something I did not account for. The group of elderly playing a novel, circular, form of pétanque. These are the acts that emerge not from the design’s intent but from the body’s encounter with conditions the design has made available.







5 NEGOTIATIONS

All three layers, to varying degrees, ask for constant negotiations between the non-human and the human. The park demands tending – weeding, watering, harvesting, composting – and this tending is not hidden but staged. The walkway demands navigation – choosing a route, yielding to another body, deciding whether to descend or to continue. The transitions demand encounter – the moment in which the wanderer and the bypasser share the same stair, the same bench, the same view.

The design does not prescribe the outcome of these negotiations. It provides the conditions and the tools: the paths, the garden beds, the counter, the amphitheatre, the sand, the water, the net, the stairs. What each body does with these tools – whether it sits or walks, plants or picks, watches or climbs, stays or leaves – is not determined. The deviation is not in the architecture. It is in the encounter between the architecture and the body, and between the body and another body.

Where the Koopgoot currently bridges the Lijnbaan and the Hoogstraat through consumption, this intervention proposes another form of connection: one based on collision, friction, non-profitable occupation, and ecological intrusion. The connection is no longer only spatial or commercial. It becomes social, ecological, and temporal.



How can architectural intervention design for deviation within the apparatus of control of a consumerist semi-public space?

The project answers this through the specific case of the Beurstraverse. To start, the apparatus was identified: a coexistence of disciplinary and modulatory mechanisms – cameras, security, OV-gates, house rules, private financing, hidden maintenance – that together produce a hierarchy of legitimate presence in which the consuming body is desired, the non-consuming body is tolerated at best, and the disruptive body is anticipated as an infection to be immunised against. Next, the consumerist semi-public condition was demonstrated: a space nominally public, overwhelmingly mono-functional, financed seven-eighths by private investment, and designed to generate profit by engineering the body as a consumer. Finally, the paradox of positivity was observed: a space that eliminates friction in pursuit of comfort, yet produces, through its own intensity, an environment of sensory overload and exhaustion.

The design proposes three spatial strategies, each corresponding to one thread of the analysis.

To the question of how the apparatus spatialises a hierarchy of legitimate presence, the design responds with the bypass – an elevated route that sidesteps the gates, the surveillance, and the commercial choreography, and that remains active when the retail logic withdraws. The bypass does not destroy the apparatus; it offers a path around it, and in doing so reveals the apparatus as contingent rather than total.

To the question of how consumerist space reduces the body to its capacity to consume, the design responds with the wander – a park, a communal garden, a handout station, and a programme of non-profitable productivity. The body is no longer legitimate only as a consumer; it is legitimate as a gardener, a cook, a restler, a watcher, a player.

To the question of how non-profitable programmes and productive friction can reconfigure normalised habits, the design responds with the collision – vertical transitions, furnitures, and ecological encounters that stage the meeting of different bodies, different speeds, and different intentions. The collision does not prescribe an outcome; it provides the conditions under which normalised habits are interrupted, and other habits become possible.

How does the apparatus of control spatialise a hierarchy of legitimate presence in the Beurstraverse?

In what ways does the engineering of consumerist semi-public space direct, regulate, and reduce the body to its capacity to consume?

How can non-profitable spatial programs and productive friction reconfigure the normalised habits of a controlled environment?

2 WHAT TRANSFERS

The design is site-specific. The three strategies – to wander, to bypass, to collide – are responses to the particular apparatus of the Beurstraverse: its linearity, its depth, its enclosure, its financing structure, its regulatory regime. They would not transfer directly to another site without modification.

What is transferable, however, is the method. The process of reading a space through the lens of discipline, modulation, positivity, and immunisation – identifying its spatial techniques of control, its programmatic mono-functionality, its paradoxes of comfort – and then proposing deviations from within, using the same spatial vocabulary (concealment, access, friction, material) but reconfigured toward a different logic: this process is, I believe, replicable. It suggests that any semi-public consumerist space could be subjected to a similar analysis and that the architectural discipline has a role not only in designing such spaces but in deviating from them.

The project also implies a temporal argument. The 24-hour solidarity interface – the night mode – challenges the assumption that a space's usefulness is bounded by its commercial hours. If the city permits presence only when consumption is possible, then the activation of space after retail hours is itself a deviation – and an architectural one: it requires routes, thresholds, lighting, and programme that outlast the commercial schedule.

Architecture, it seems to me, sits at an intersection of forces – social, cultural, economic, political – constantly forming and being

formed by them. I am not yet sure I fully understand where, when, how, or for whom the discipline operates; what I have come to understand, through this project, is that it is largely commissioned to work within the established order, and that the spaces it produces are not neutral. Designing for deviation suggests a different posture – one that reads the apparatus before contributing to it, and that considers the architect's responsibility not only to the client or the brief, but to the bodies the space will sort. Whether this posture is viable as professional practice, I do not know. But I believe it is necessary as a point of departure.

This project has, in ways I did not anticipate, elucidated mechanisms and understandings I could not have entertained or identified at the outset. It generated revelations – about politics, society, theory, architecture, space, and about myself. I looked into consumerism, capitalism, liberalism, violence, collectivity, posthumanism, and more. If anything, the implications have been personal as much as professional: through this project, I have gained an idea of where I stand – and, I hope, where, when, and how I might want to contribute.

This project began elsewhere. The original question concerned the ‘Regime of Visibility’ – a phenomenological inquiry into haptic dysfunction, sensory numbness, and the body’s escape from its reduction to data. The theoretical landscape was different: Foucault’s delinquent, Pallasmaa’s eyes, Teyssot’s prosthetic body. Over the course of the research, that framing gave way to something I found more grounded, more spatial, and more honest: an inquiry into how control is enacted in a specific place, and how architecture might design for deviation from within. The shift was not a loss. What was left behind – the prison as model, the haptic, the phenomenological, the prosthetic – was replaced by the intra-active, the situated, the political. The question became less abstract and more, well, mine.

The method – personal observation grounded in theoretical reading – carries inherent limitations. The body that observed the Beurstraverse is one body, with one set of sensitivities, habits, and blind spots. The observations were conducted over a limited period. A more rigorous study would involve multiple observers, longer durations, and engagement with the bodies that the space most aggressively sorts – the homeless, the solicitors, the loiterers, the teenagers – whose experience of the apparatus is more intense and more consequential than the experience of a graduate student with a sketchbook. The project acknowledges this – and in extension, so do I. I do not claim to speak for every-body; I only claim to speak from a situated position, and to design from the understanding that position

affords.

Furthermore, the structural implications of breaking open the reinforced concrete base plane – including the management of existing services and infrastructure underneath – would require engineering assessment beyond the scope of this project.

Another consequence of the design that I find worth noting is the removal of the ceiling above the central axis – cut away to allow the park and the bypass to breach the enclosure. In doing so, the gate that currently closes the traverse at night loses its mechanism; there is, quite simply, nothing left from which to lower it. I am aware of this, it is not an oversight. The design’s spatial logic produces an irreversible consequence for the apparatus of control: the gate cannot return because the architecture it depended on no longer exists. Should the consortium wish to reinstate control – to gate the bypasses, to close the space again – it would need to build new infrastructure, and that act of building would itself become visible, legible, and contestable. The current mechanisms are effective precisely because they are camouflaged; new ones would not enjoy that privilege. The reconfigured space, in other words, forces the apparatus to reveal itself – which is, perhaps, itself an act of designing for deviation.

The design, too, is a speculation. It has not been built, tested, or inhabited. Whether the park would grow; whether the handout station would sustain a collective; whether the amphitheatres would fill with sand and children and

birds, or with neglect; whether the bypass would be used at night, and by whom – these are questions that I pose but cannot answer. What I can claim is that the conditions for these possibilities have been spatially articulated: that there is soil deep enough, a counter low enough, a path wide enough, a net high enough, and a programme generous enough to make them plausible.

So much is decided for us; affirmed, assured. The paths are laid, the surfaces cleaned, the sounds curated. I found myself lost in all this positivity – not in chaos, but in the absence of it. Pause. Take a breath. Explore the boredom. Find your stare. And then? Well, that is up to you.

APPENDICES

7 1 LITERATURE

- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822388128>
- Bergenhengouwen, G., & Van Weesep, J. (2003). Manipulated space: The Beurstraverse retail complex in Rotterdam. *Belgeo, 1*, 79–86. <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.15307>
- Buchanan, I., & Savat, D. (2020). Affect and Noise in the Society of Control. *Coils of the Serpent, (5)*, 49–65.
- Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on the Societies of Control. *October, 59*, 3–7.
- Deleuze, G. (2006). *Foucault* (S. Hand, Ed. & Tran.; 7th ed.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Esposito, R. (2011). *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life* (Z. Hanafi, Tran.). https://doi.org/10.1111/1478-9302.12053_12
- Flusty, S. (1997). Building Paranoia. In *Architecture of Fear* (pp. 47–59). Princeton Architectural Press.
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Tran.; 2nd ed.). Random House, Inc.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry, 8*(4), 777–795. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Han, B.-C. (2015). *The Transparency Society* (E. Butler, Tran.). Stanford University Press.
- Koskela, H. (2000). ‘The Gaze Without Eyes’: Video-Surveillance and the Changing Nature of Urban Space. *Progress in Human Geography, 24*(2), 243–265. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200668791012>
- Lofland, L. (1998). *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory*. Aldine de Gruyter.
- Teyssot, G. (1994). The Mutant Body of Architecture (J. Svoboda, Tran.). In *Flesh : architectural probes* (pp. 8–35). Princeton Architectural Press, Inc.
- Van Melik, R. (2008). *Changing Public Space: The Recent Redevelopment of Dutch City Squares*.
- Van Melik, R., Van Aalst, I., & Van Weesep, J. (2009). The private sector and public space in Dutch city centres. *Cities, 26*, 202–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2009.04.002>
- Voss, D. (2020). Communication Breakdown: Cutting off the Flow. *Coils of the Serpent, (5)*, 30–48. <https://archive.org/details/leonssur>

2 IMAGES

All photographs and drawings by the author unless otherwise noted

Contemporary semi-public spaces – spaces that present themselves as public whilst operating under private logics of investment, regulation, and access – increasingly engineer the body as a consumer. This project examines how the apparatus of control operates spatially in one such space: the Beurstraverse, or Koopgoot, in Rotterdam. Drawing on Michel Foucault's disciplinary society, Gilles Deleuze's control society, Byung-Chul Han's transparency society, and Roberto Esposito's concept of immunisation, the research develops a theoretical framework through which the spatial techniques of control – surveillance, access regulation, monofunctionality, and the production of a hierarchy of legitimate presence – are identified and analysed. A comparative case study of the Beurstraverse, the Lijnbaan, and the Hoogstraat reveals the Koopgoot as an exaggerated instance of neoliberal urban planning: a space that is itself a deviation from the norms of its context. In response, the project proposes an architectural intervention structured around three spatial strategies: to wander (a park and communal garden replacing the retail surface), to bypass (an elevated walkway offering alternative routes beyond the surveillance apparatus and commercial schedule), and to collide (vertical transitions and furnitures that stage encounters between different bodies, speeds, and intentions). The design does not oppose the existing apparatus; it introduces new instruments alongside it, operating under a different logic of non-profitable productivity. The project argues for designing for deviation – not the production of an alternative, but the production of conditions in which alternatives can emerge.