

Research * Design

Laura Vos - Technical University Delft

(Dis)enchantment of the Interstitial Space



(DIS) ENCHANTMENT OF THE INTERSTITIAL SPACE
Exploration on wonder and accessibility in the urban in-between of Rotterdam

Technical University Delft
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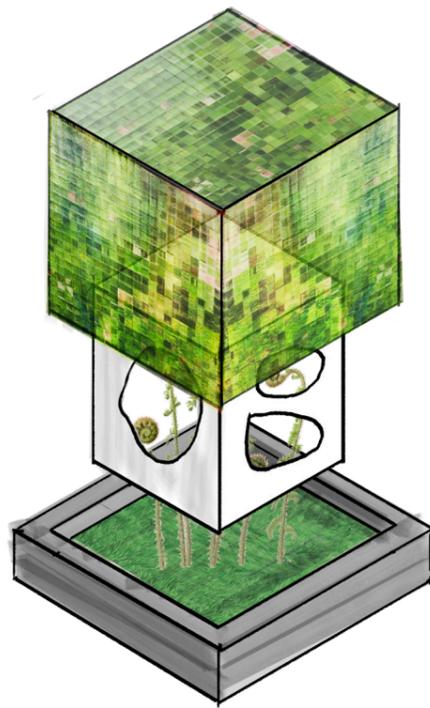
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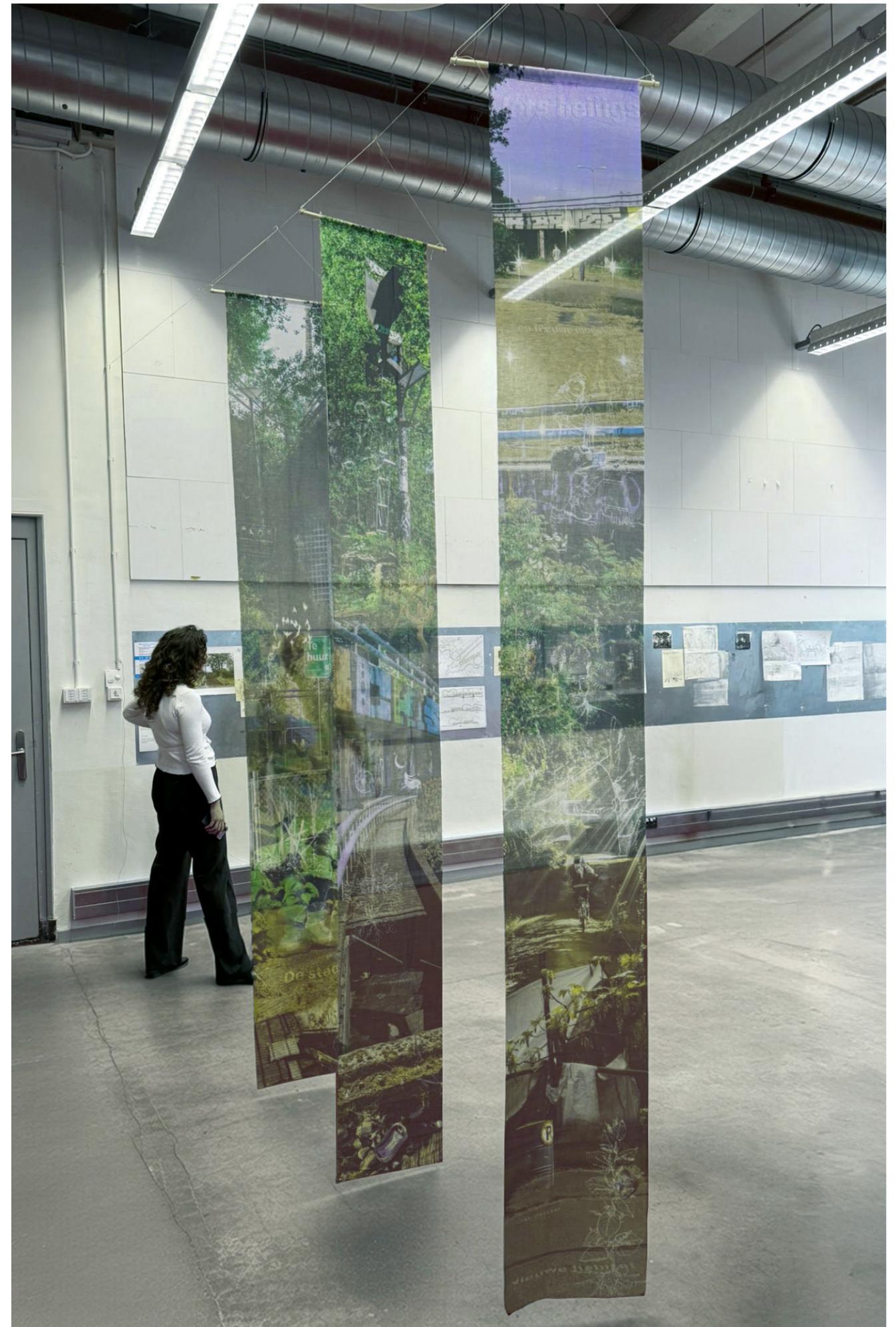
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(Dis)Enchantment of the Interstitial Space

Exploration on wonder and accessibility in the in-between
of Rotterdam



LOOSE SPACE / LOST SPACE / LIMINAL SPACE / SLACK SPACES
/ TRANSITIONAL SPACE / NEGLECTED SPACE / TERRAIN
VAGUE / NO MAN'S LAND / IN BETWEEN SPACE / VACANT
LAND / SUPERFLOUS LANDSCAPE / INDETERMINATE SPACE /
FREE ZONES / TEMPORARY URBAN SPACE / CRACKS IN THE
CITY / JUNKSPACE





Rotterdam's official greenstructures (parks, forests, singels)



Rotterdam's official greenspaces + unofficial greenspaces. (grown on own accord, not planned)

Rotterdam as location

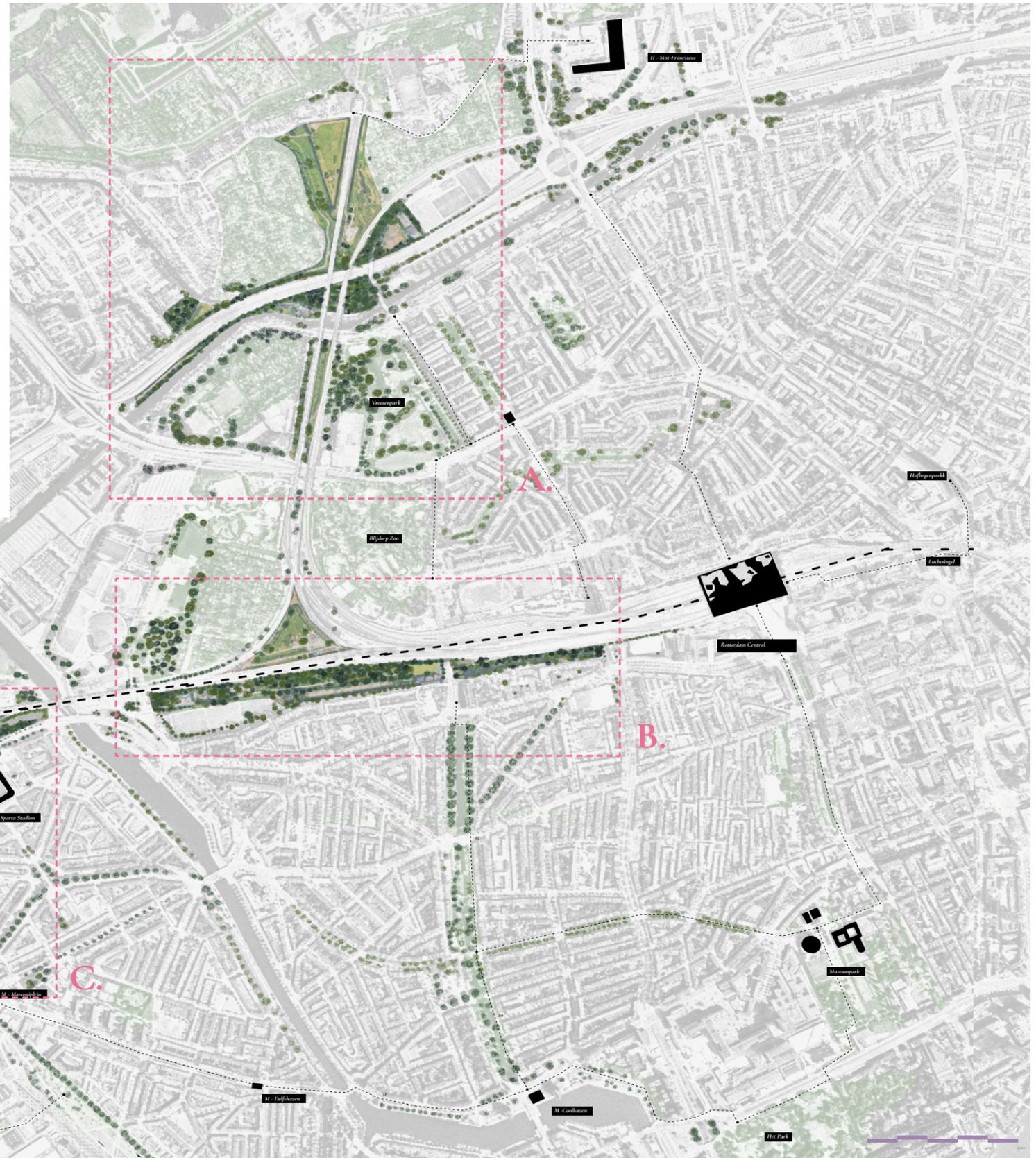
This project takes place in Rotterdam. The city I have lived in for the past years. Rotterdam is rich in its history of ever evolving change, growth and destruction. It made for a city that is set up spacious, with high-rise for modern architecture and the idealisation of the car. Places of emptiness and in-betweenness are something Rotterdam has known for a long time. It is always in change, always looking for something new and ready to abandon the old.

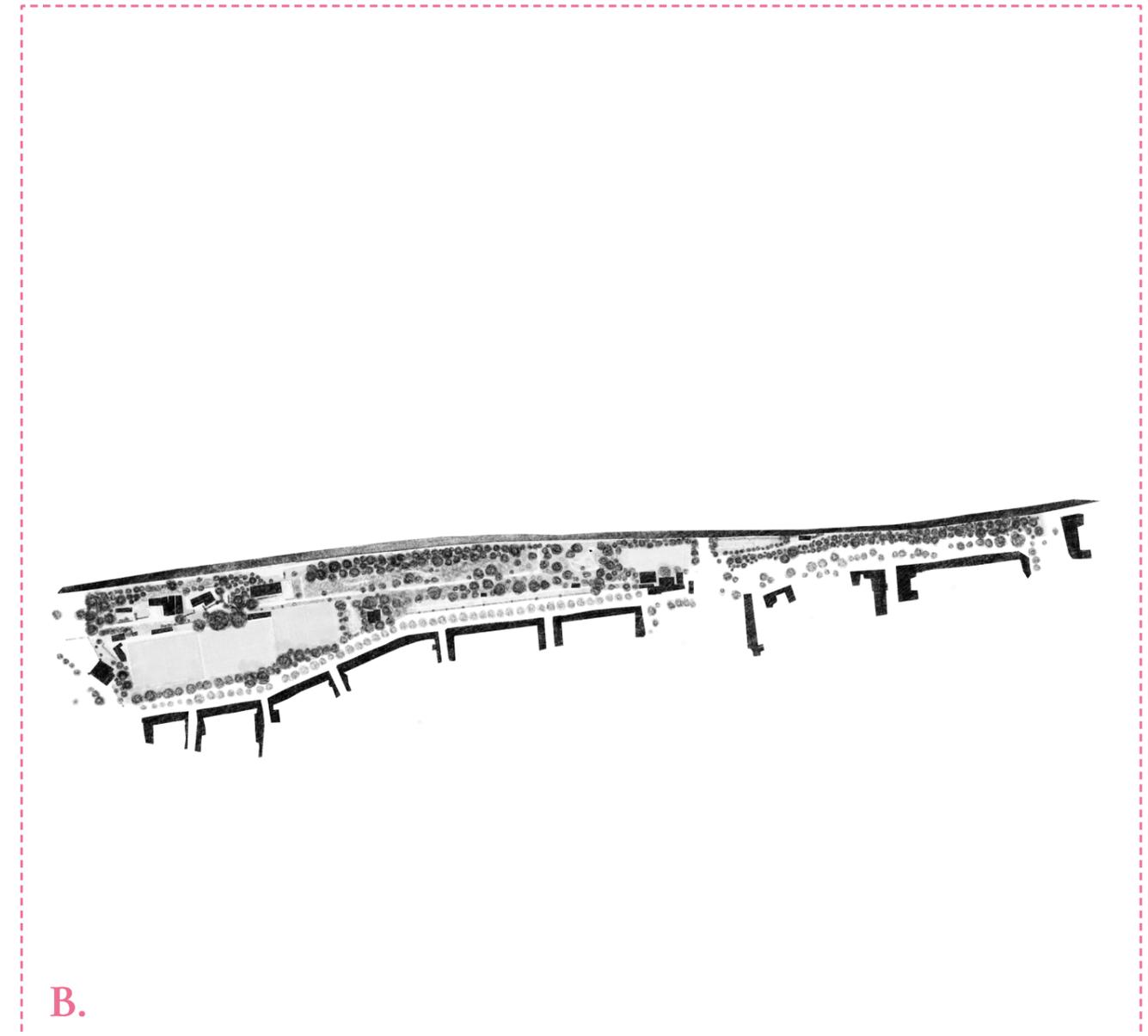
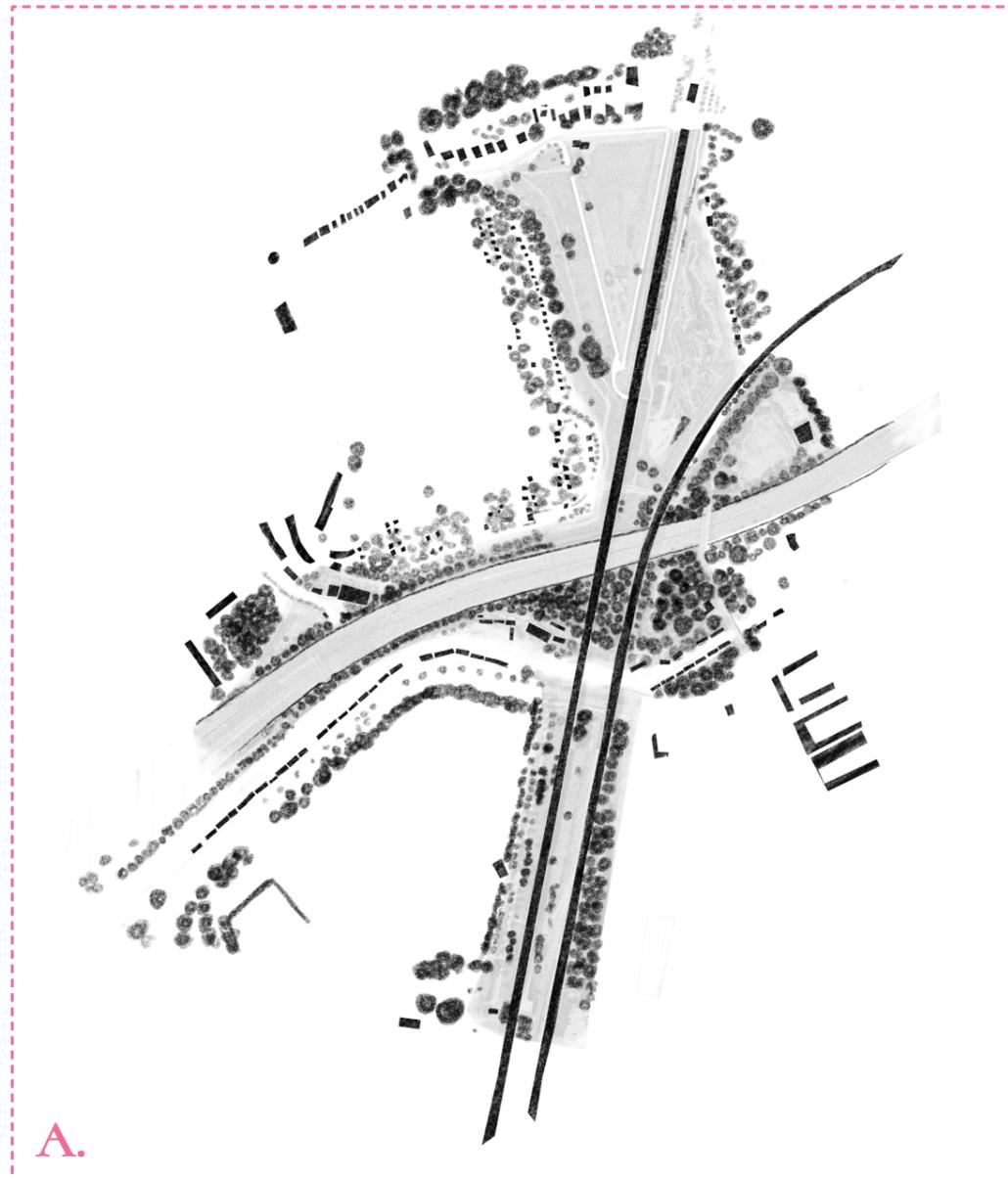
Yet, one thing Rotterdam seems to find hard to get to, is finding new public greenspaces. Anyone known to Rotterdam will know that our city seems a concrete jungle, with (too) little green spaces for its inhabitant to retreat to which are often commercialised and highly managed to be able to keep it usable. But actually, the city seems greener than you might think.

In the first image on the left are all the official green spaces Rotterdam knows; Het Park, the Vroesepark, The Kralingse Plas, etc. Yet, if we actually look at our city, not from a map but from our bodily experience, we find a lot more green space than represented. The second map shows unofficial green spaces. Areas that have just grown spontaneously. Patches of left-over space, forgotten plots, trailineverges, all bustling with nature and even more; life.

Chain of Interstitial Spaces

To research the topic of interstitial spaces and the often overlooked qualities they possess, four sites have been selected across Rotterdam's North-East fringe. This area is characterised by many left-over areas that have been created over time by the realisation of large scale infrastructure, canals, trainlines, and industry, and at the same time, by the abandonment and decay of them. Location A is a classic example of a array of interstitial spaces created as residue of highways, canals and trainlines, manifesting a classic fringe landscape full of allotment gardens, sport fields, horse paddocks, storage units and overgrown corners. Location B is a location more central, created by the ever changing landscape of traintracks, these areas have been retaken and reshaped by local community to a (sort of) public park. Location C is also a product of its trainline past, yet it has been abandoned for almost 20 years, resulting an almost unfindable and overgrown line through the neighborhood Spangnen. Location C is an area more exposed than the rest, close to the waterside and more apart of the city, it has been shaped by its harbor dock past, now laying barren.



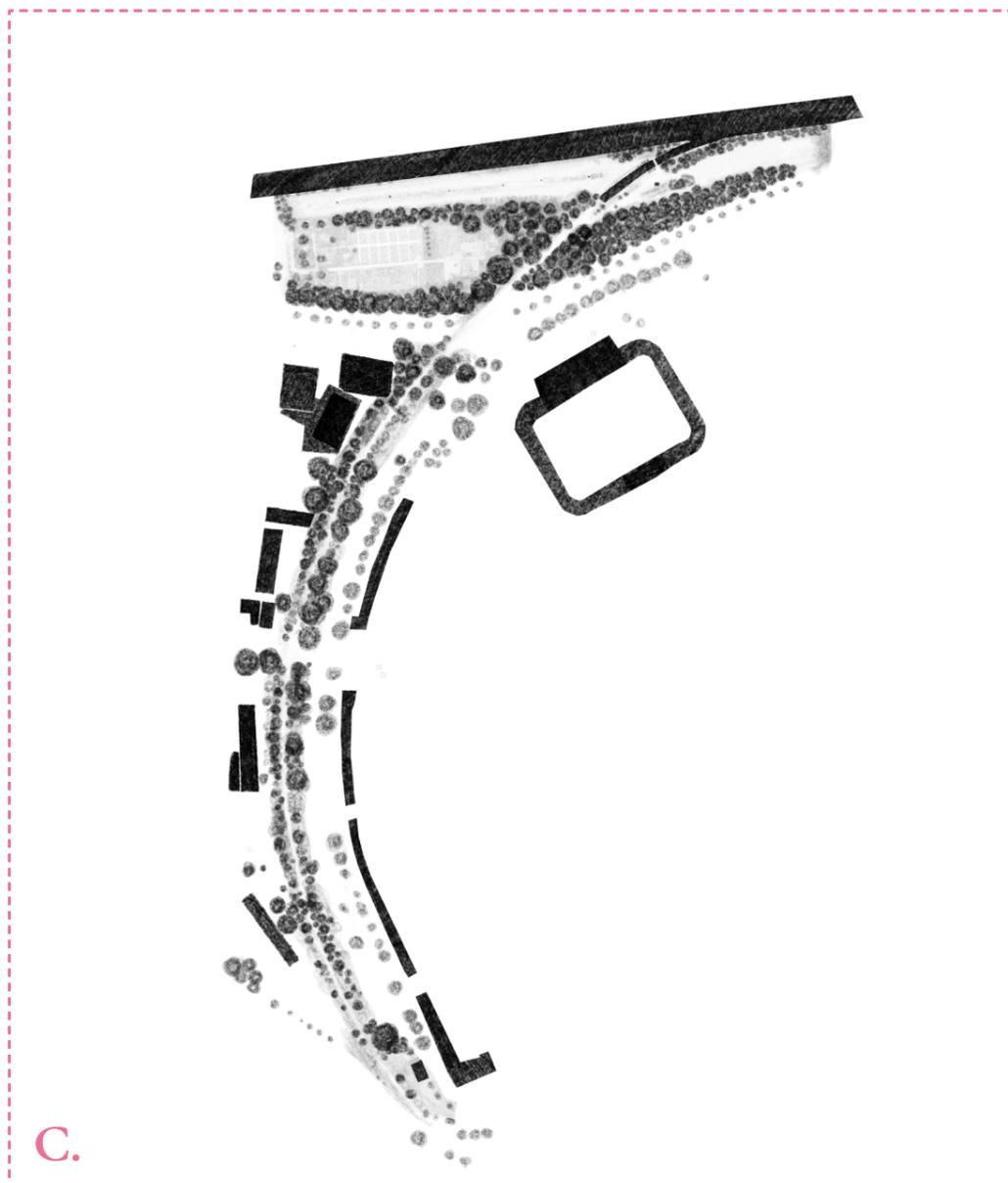


Het Verknijpte Land

This left-over region spans from Vroesenpark, over the canal and highway, towards the Kleiweg. It is an area totally chopped up by train lines, highways and canals, leaving pieces of land you will have never heard about, or noticed. Yet, this area is very big. Mostly it is now known as a region of Stadspark West, a real yet also imaginary park. The area is used as a safe haven for a large marginal community of homeless, finding a place that where they are not disturbed. Also many graffiti artist, gardeners, BMX'ers, joggers, and horse enthusiast.

De Trein Tuinen

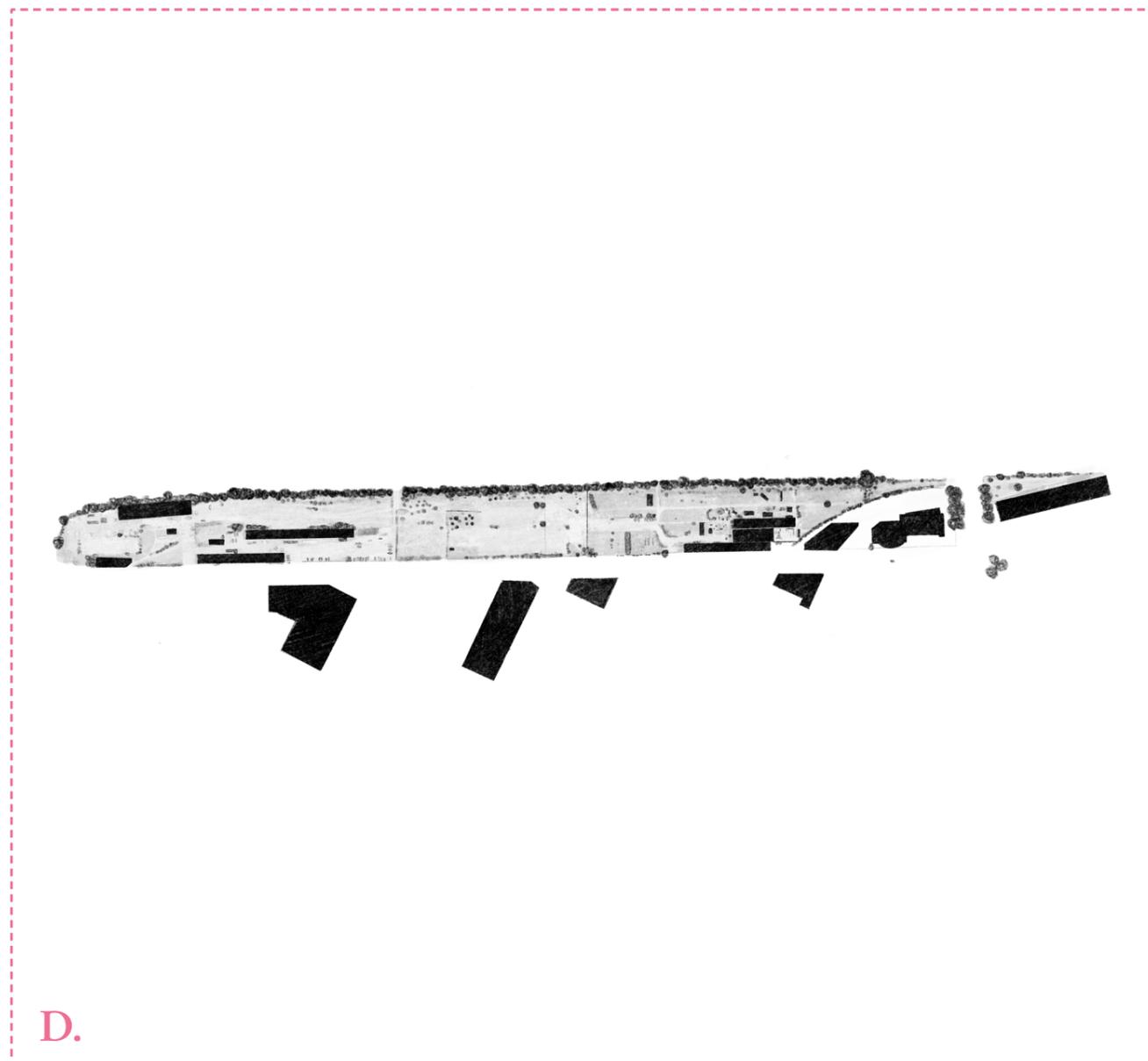
This area has a rich history along the old trainline of Rotterdam-Schiedam. It has been abandoned, and later reclaimed by the local community who take care of this terrain vague. The Essenburgpark and The Spoortuin are both located here, and are accessed only lengthways, making it a long walk. The Spoortuin is open day and night, Essenburgpark is closed at night, making it a not totally free space. This space is used by a variety of Rotterdammers, from dog-walkers to trainspotters, kids, elderly and gardeners. This area is also a super densely vegetated location, hosting many ecosystems and communities.



C.

Spoordijk Spangen

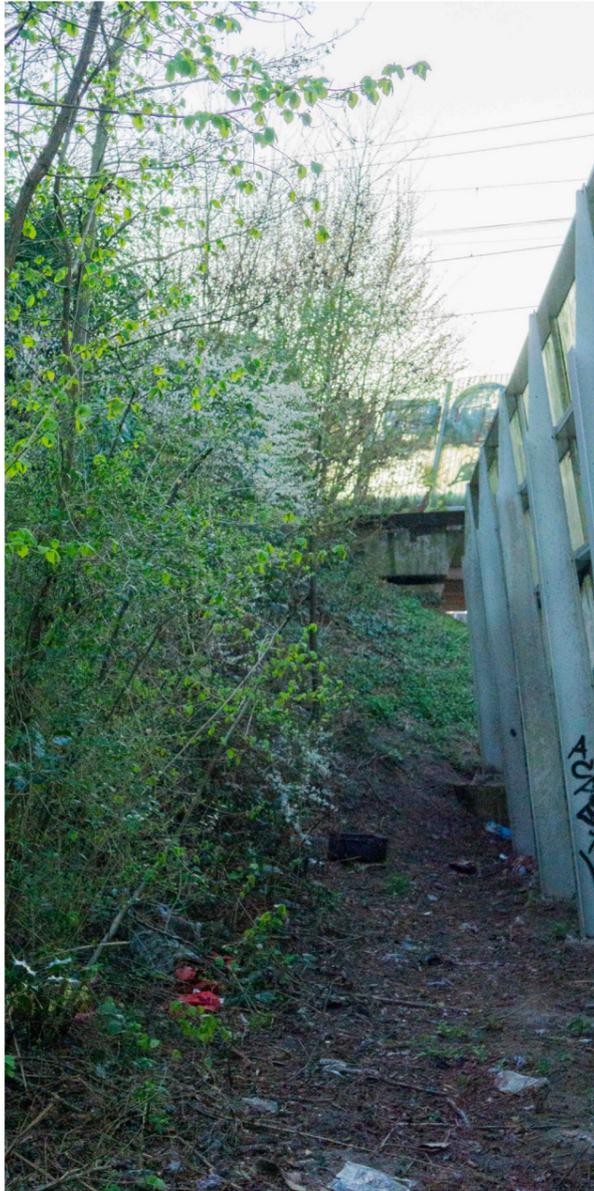
A left-over in Rotterdam that you will know and care about, or have walked past and have never heard of. It exists out of two areas; the abandoned dyke that runs from the main trainline south to the old harbors and the area up north consisting of Sparta's flow-over parking mainly used as freehaven for many people and animals. It is overgrown and wild, but used daily. A lot of different people meet here, dogwalkers during the day, ravers at night, this place is really full of life. This place also provides a very important habitat for bunnies, foxes and many birds.



D.

De Fruit Frontier

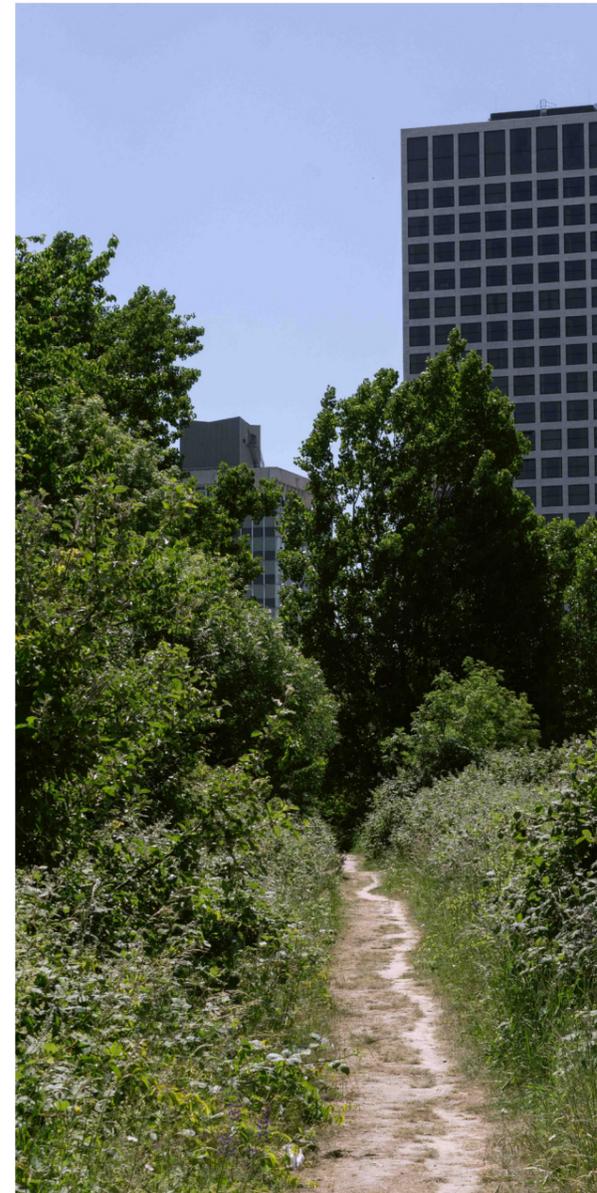
This space used to be a shunting yard for the harbor, where mainly fruit was imported into Rotterdam. It is mostly empty and dry, therefore hosting a different ecosystem than the other locations, it resembles somewhat of a prairie landscape in summer. Yet there are also some important cultural functions in this zone such as Weelde,



A.



B.



C.



D.

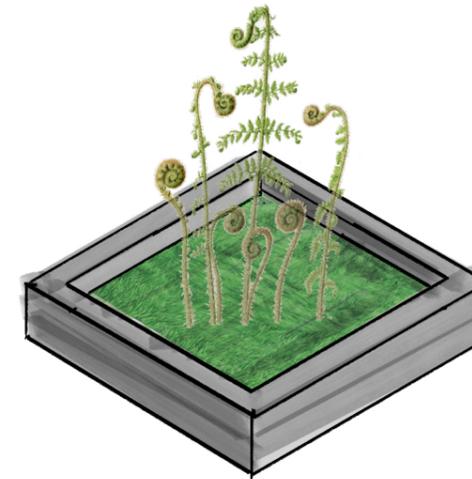


Interstitial Spaces evoked a kind of wonder and playfulness

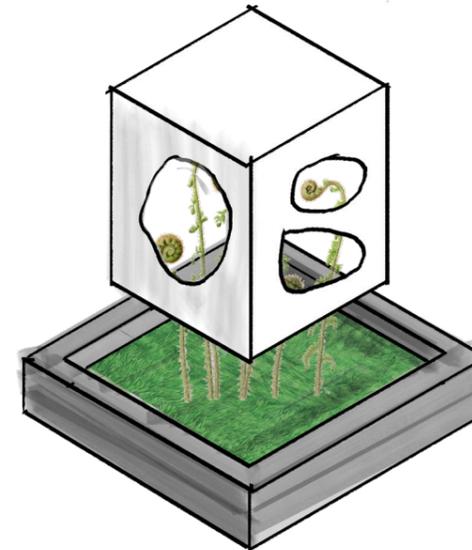
Accessibility as Guide

Accessibility in this research is the guiding tool to understand and to work with these spaces. Access is not only a question of physical access, but even more so one of perception.

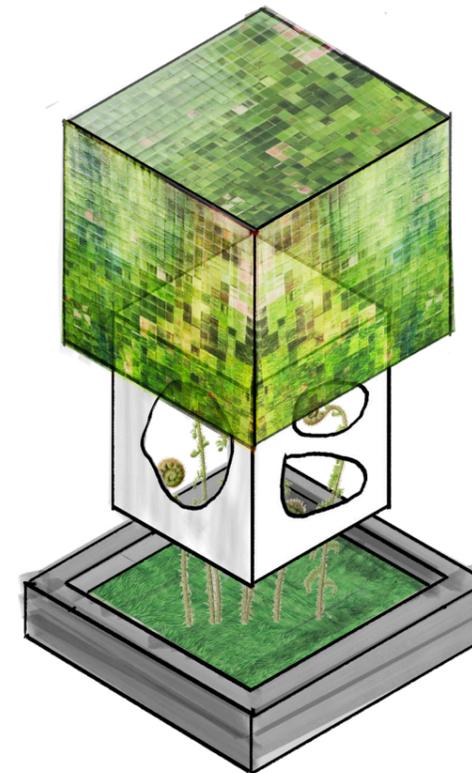
Many of these spaces remain unused not because they are unreachable, but because they are overlooked, misjudged, or burdened with a negative reputation. Using accessibility as a research as well as design tool allows us to identify where barriers exist. Fences that block off, edges that discourage entry, and narratives that frame these places as undesirable. By making them visible, legible, and approachable, we begin to re-imagine them as potential alternative green spaces. To reach these environments is essential, but to see them differently is what enables their transformation.



How a space actually is
(to step inside, to experience, to sense)



How a space is seen
(to see, to peek in, to be seen, to be hidden, to hide)



How a space is perceived
(thinking, talking, writing, dreaming)

Ruderal Species - Drifters, Voyagers, Fugitives, Custodians

The plants that colonise these area's are one of the reason they are seen as undesirable, yet they are massively important for the ecological wellbeing of our city. Ruderal species are always closely tied to human movement. They follow our trade, our waste, our construction and disturbances. They mirror our own patterns of human occupation and abandonment of space. Drawing on inspiration from Roberta di Cosmo's (2024) insect roleplay program at TENT in 2025 and her typology of 'mediators, guardians, travelers and transporters' in urban insect assemblages¹, four categories of ruderal plants are identified. Each group represents a distinct mode of arrival, adaptation and interaction with the anthropogenic environments. See the corresponding chapter in 'Theory' for further explanation.

Melilotus albus -
Honey Clover

Drifter



Comes from eastern Europe and Siberia. It has tiny white flowers which bees love. This plant is a 'culture follower' and can be traced back by the movement of people over the continent. It was taken along route as animal feed and as a soil improver. It is often seen in left-overs and along train roads. Very common, loves rocky soils with disturbances.

Berteroa incana -
Hoary Alyssum

Voyager



Has been in the Netherlands since the 1600's. This plant is family from the mustard and originally comes from eastern Europe and Asia. It has been accidently carried to the west along with grains and seeds on cargo. They were therefore often found along grainmills. They now grow in ruderal terrains and sandy soils.

Lepidium virginicum -
Virginia Pepperweed

Voyager



This plant is originally from the America's but has been accidently imported along with grains and seeds and grows therefore often near grainmills. The leaves of this plant can be cooked or eaten fresh, the young seeds taste like pepper, hence the name. Likes to grow in stoney places, with low nutrient. Very cosmopolitan plant, very common.

Centhrantus ruber -
Red Valerium

Drifter



This plant is also known as 'railway flower' as it really almost only grows in the bedrocks of rail lines. It has grey-greenish leaves and bright pink flowers. Comes originally from South Europe. Used as rock garden plant now but also behaves feral on ruderal terrains and stone walls. Loves dry grounds and benefits from climate change. Pollinator for butterflies.

Geranium purpureum -
Little Robin

Drifter



This plant comes from the Mediterranean & north-Africa. Only grows on dry train tracks with low nutrients, and has with via seeds spread across the continent. It forms dense mats and it has little pink flowers. It is very uncommon and is listed on the Red List. Arrived in the Netherlands in the 90's and is very resistant to pesticides. It has medicinal benefits like being antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial effects and is traditionally used in teas and poultices for wound healing. It also attract pollinators and controls erosion.

Senecio inaeccuidens -
Narrow-leaved Ragwort

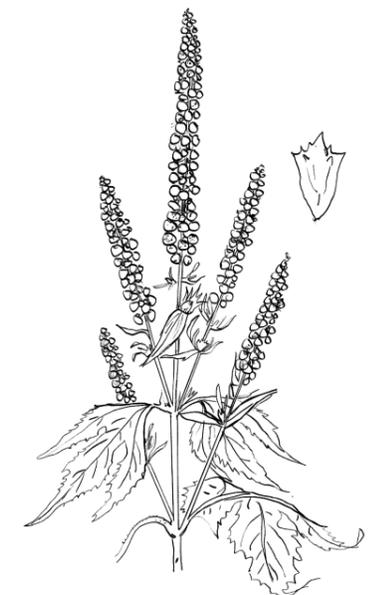
Drifter -
Voyager



Originally from south-Africa but arrived as seeds via train on a cargo of wool in Tilburg. It has since spouted in their shunting yard and then moved along railwaylines and highways. Very commonly seen in this region, as it has bright yellow flowers with white fluff that is still in bloom in late autumn. It also now grows in dunes.

Ambrosia Trifida -
Giant Ragweed

Voyager



This species comes from north-America and grows best in wet soils. It has been accidently imported via a load of soybeans and was therefore often found in transfer places. It now grows along rivers and in industrial areas. It can get up to 3 meters high. They are not yet settled in the Netherlands and not commonly seen, but have the potential to start growing here more permanently.

Papaver rhoeas -
Common Poppy

custodian



This is a seasonal custodian and has always been very closely tied to human behaviour and agriculture. It likes open soil that is often ploughed or grazed, as it needs disturbance to activate its seeds to sprout. It needs bare and mineral soils with full sun. The seeds can stay dormant in the soil for decades, waiting for the right disturbance to suddenly sprout and bloom. In the city it lives on construction sites, wastegrounds, areas that have been bombed or temporary clearings. It feeds many pollinators and has large symbolic meaning.

Buddleja davidii -
Butterfly bush

fugitive



Butterfly bush comes from central China and has been introduced by a missionary to Europe as ornamental plant and pollinator. It grows rapidly via abundant seeds and quick sprouting and often escapes gardens into railway verges, demolition plots and water edges. Especially after WWII it has spread via bombed sites and disturbed areas. It has a lot of light seed, spread out by the wind. It likes dry, mineral rich substrate with little soil. It has large benefits for insects, especially late in summer when food is scarce. It is labeled as invasive.

Ailanthus altissima -
Tree of heaven

fugitive



This tree comes originally from China and Taiwan. It was introduced in the 18th century as a street tree, but also as a potential silkworm mediator. It can withstand very tough conditions like heat, water scarcity, salt and disturbances, therefore making the ideal city tree. Started behaving more spontaneous since the '70's on disturbed soils, road verges and left-over plots. It has a very particular look that stands out in the city, often growing in between the pavement and a house. It spreads via seed and rhizome but mainly via suckers underground. It has an open foliage and is able to cool down cities while being a hard tree.

Plantago major -
Broadleaf Plantain

custodian



Has followed human traces for centuries, long before asphalt even existed. It always thrived in compacted soils made by wagons, hooves or feet. It needs to have regular disturbances to live next to full sun. In the city it grows in desire paths, playgrounds, sidewalks, vacant plots, and basically around every corner. It's roots and rosette shape protects the ground by absorbing impact. It reduces soil erosion and holds moisture in the soil. It is edible and has medicinal uses known for over centuries.

Urtica dioica -
Common Nettle

custodian



This is a very nutrient loving plant. It has been in this landscape for centuries, traditionally often in fields with a lot of animal presence. Riverbeds, flood planes or farmyards are its traditional soils. It likes moist and nitrogen rich soils, with a medium disturbance. It needs to be 'fed' organic material to thrive. In the city it grows where humans leave trash, soil or compost material. It lives in riverbanks or at the edges of housing blocks. Although not humans favourite, it supports a lot of insects and butterflies, so much that whole communities depend on this plant. It is edible and historically medicinal. It is also used as a fiber material.

Fallopia japonica -
Japanese Knotweed

fugitive



This plant has been introduced to Europe from Japan mid 19th century as ornamental plant by botanist Philipp Franz von Siebold to the Netherlands but also for erosion control due to its vast root system which spreads far and is very strong. So strong it is said to be able to move foundations and grow through concrete. It has escaped the botanical garden and now abundantly grows in in-between places, mainly next to train lines as their seeds stick to the wagons. It can also spread from cuttings or accidental fragments as large as a centimeter. When cut down it very quickly regenerates, and is therefore hard to get rid of. It is also a large carbon capturer and a foodsource for birds and insects. Labeled as invasive since 90's

Heracleum mantegazzianum -
Giant Hogweed

fugitive



Also goes under the name Giant cow parsley or Hogshane. Introduced in Europe from the Caucasus region as an ornamental species in the 19th century for its impressive size and exotic appearance. It has since then quickly escaped the gardens and estates and now grows along rivers, roadsides, railways and other disturbed grounds. The sap of the giant hogweed is phototoxic and causes burns and blisters upon touch. It can get up to 5 meters high with leaves that can reach 3 meters long. It spreads via seeds and can produce up to 20,000 seeds which are dispersed with wind and animals. Slow grower and once flowering, the plant dies. Pollinator. Labeled as invasive since 2002.

Ilias & Malik



The Voiddwellers

Drawn here are speculative characters based on fieldwork, interviews and observations. Each of them have their own reason to use the space, their own seasonal or even daily rhythm, and their own way of entering the space. The characters are a crucial element to understand interstitial spaces.

Philip

15 Lives nearby uses: Late afternoon / Evening

After school we come here. Not every day, only when the weather is dry. We bring some wood, broken pallets, stuff we find around. There's a spot near the tracks where the ground is already black. That's where we go. We know we're not really supposed to, but no one tells us to leave. The trains are loud, and the smoke disappears fast. We sit around the fire, talk, throw things in. Sometimes other kids show up, sometimes it's just us. It feels far away from school, even though it's close. Like the rules don't reach here.



34 Lives in Rotterdam-West uses: Early morning / Daytime

I come here early, before the city wakes up. Just me, the trains, and the birds. I have a small garden near the tracks. It's not official. I just started working the soil one day and never stopped. The ground is rough, full of rubble. Not everything grows. You learn what works by trying. Herbs, a few vegetables, flowers for insects. If something dies, that's fine. Next season I try again. People pass by sometimes and look at what I'm doing. Some ask questions, some don't. I don't explain much. I'm not here to make it neat. I'm here to take care of it.

Amy & Puck



Noah

45 Lives nearby uses: Daytime

I come here with my dog during the day. Just a short walk. I like it because no one minds if it's a bit messy. I don't have to clean up everything. We don't stay long. It's not really a park. But it's close, and that matters. If this place wasn't here, I'd have to walk much further. It's nice to have this space in between.



24 Lives in Zuid uses: Afternoon, weekends, golden hours

I usually come in from the bridge, near the busstop. No one knows about it, but you just hop right on to the concrete. That is what I like about this space. It is totally open but still it feels like it's just yours. We skate on the abandoned parking mainly. It is a bit rough but nice enough. No people in your way. Bring some wax, maybe a box or rail if someone brings it. The stairs on the dike are sick too. But honestly it is the whole vibe here. Wild trees, old rails, graffiti everywhere, no cops. No rules, just space. Sometimes it's actually not about the skating. Play music, talk, watch the sun go down. That is what makes it so good.

Michel



Lucy



26 Lives in Schiedam uses: Night/Past midnight

I only come here at night. Usually after all the other bars have closed, when the city is done pretending to be neat and clean. I've grown up in Rotterdam so I know this part a bit. You can get in from Marconiplein or from the busstation. I use the last one, the walk from the first is dark and creepy. No one really knows about this place, that is why I love it. Just a hand full of people that love to dance. We set up the speaker in between the trainlines, there a perfect dip in the terrain that holds the sound. Concrete on both sides, the perfect reverb. People don't know you're here, even the police is never able to find us. I mean you cannot dance like this in a club. Mud on your shoes, leaves in your hair. The train roaring over like some sick baselines. We don't stay long, like a couple of hours, then we are gone again, it is like a glitch in the city.

Fatima



Truus & Bep



66 Lives in Bospolder uses: Summer / Daytime

Every summer I come here for the brambles. I bring bags, sometimes three or four. Sometimes my husband to help me carry. They grow well along the old tracks, strong and sweet. Better than in the shop. I pick slowly, watching my hands. They get dark purple from the juices. This place gives every year, even when no one takes care of it. People look at me like it's strange, picking fruit here. But I think it is totally normal, and my husband and grandkids love it so much. When the bags are full, I go home.

74 & 76 Live in the neighbourhood uses: Daytime

We didn't know this place existed, and we live around the corner. To be honest, I don't know if we would've come when it was not made a bit more accessible. We don't come often don't get me wrong, but during the day, when it is sunny, people walking their dog, kids, it is nice. At night it is a bit more shady, i would not recommend. We use the new pedestrian bridge to cross into Essenburgpark, what a lovely place.



Aesthetic Qualities of the Interstitial Space

1. Threshold

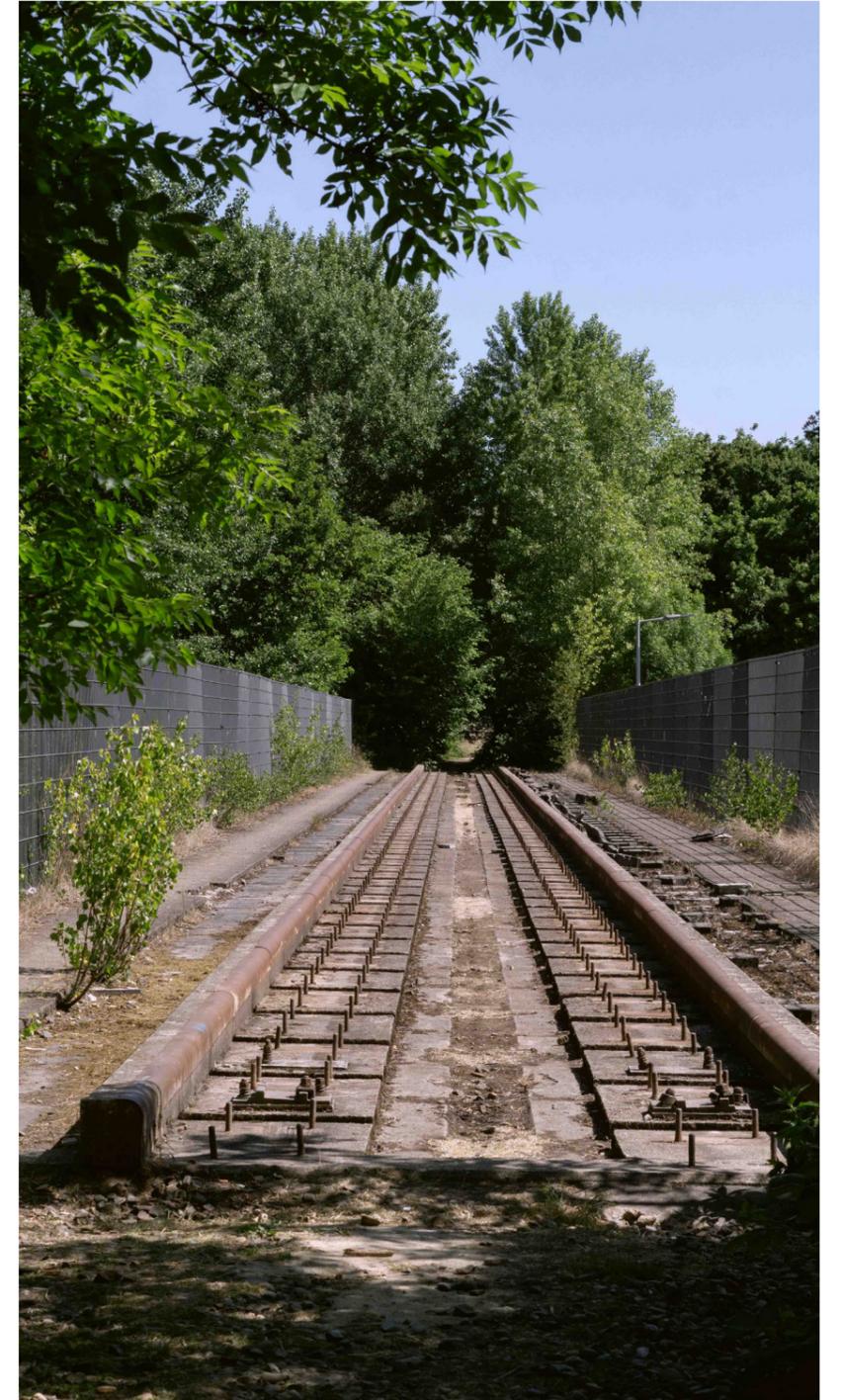
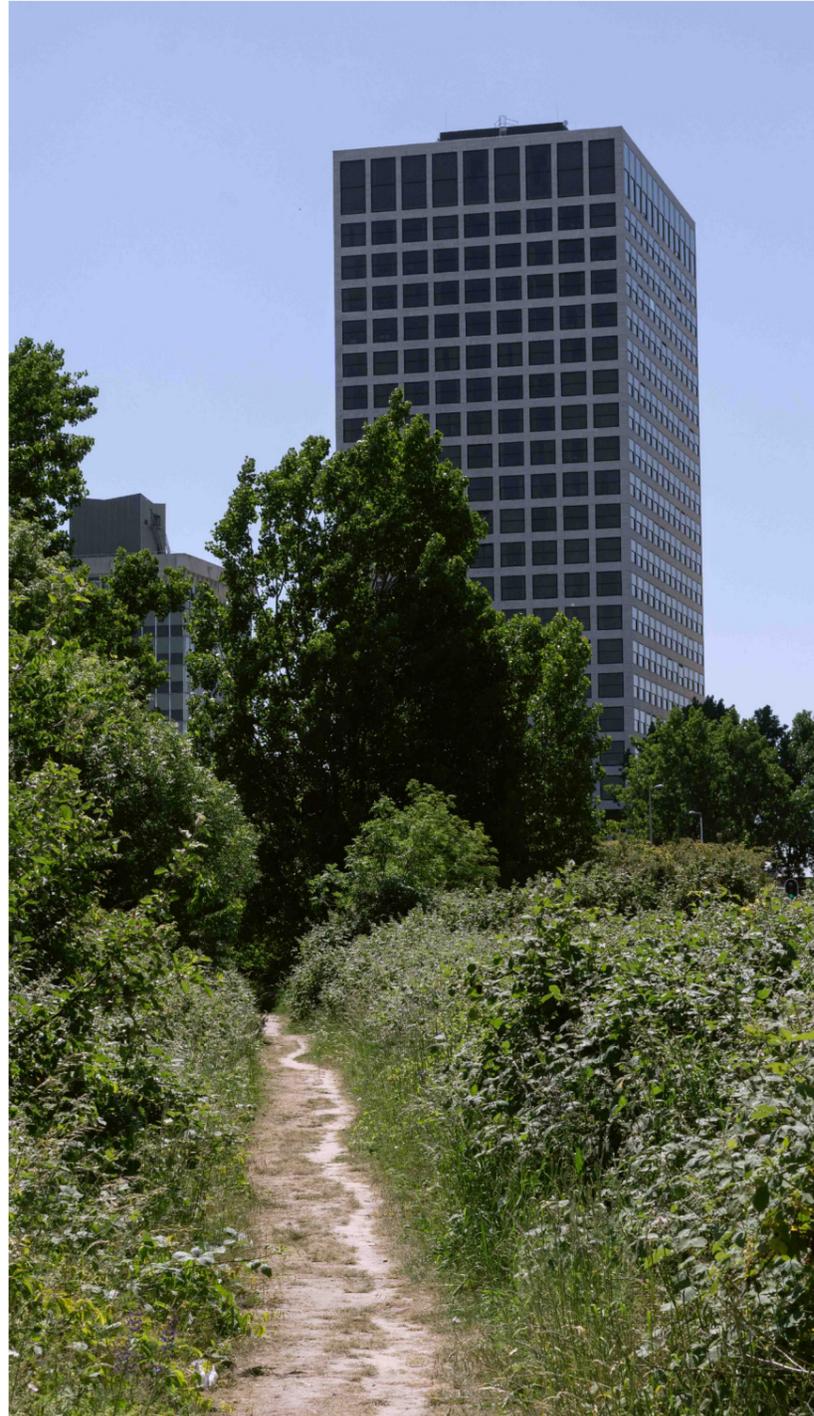
This fabric represents the threshold between the city and the interstitial space. It is defined by edges, ambiguous boundaries, and uncertain function. Informal occupation exists here, but it is accompanied by tension and unease. The space holds friction with the outside world and remains indeterminate.

2. In-between

This fabric represents the in-between condition of the interstitial space. It speaks of layered histories, memory, and the passing of time. Traces of use, decay, absence, and abandonment overlap, forming a space that is unproductive, forgotten, and slowly transforming.

3. Terrain vague

This fabric represents terrain vague as a condition of openness and possibility. It is free of fixed program and clear instruction. The space allows spontaneity, freedom, and projection, remaining open to future uses without being defined.





The Design: Spoordijk Spangen

To bring the goal of accessibility to a physical translation, the location of Spoordijk Spangen in Rotterdam West is chosen to develop a design intervention. This map above shows the current situation as well as the proposed design. This chapter will walk through the design choices made in drawing and text.

Fig
Current situation of the location Spoordijk Spangen. The dyke functions as a unofficial walking route. In pink the current locations of entering the site are represented as well as the movement on site. The movement on site is very linear, going from north to south, with people taking the shortcuts east to west to quickly cross the location. (Own Work, 2025)

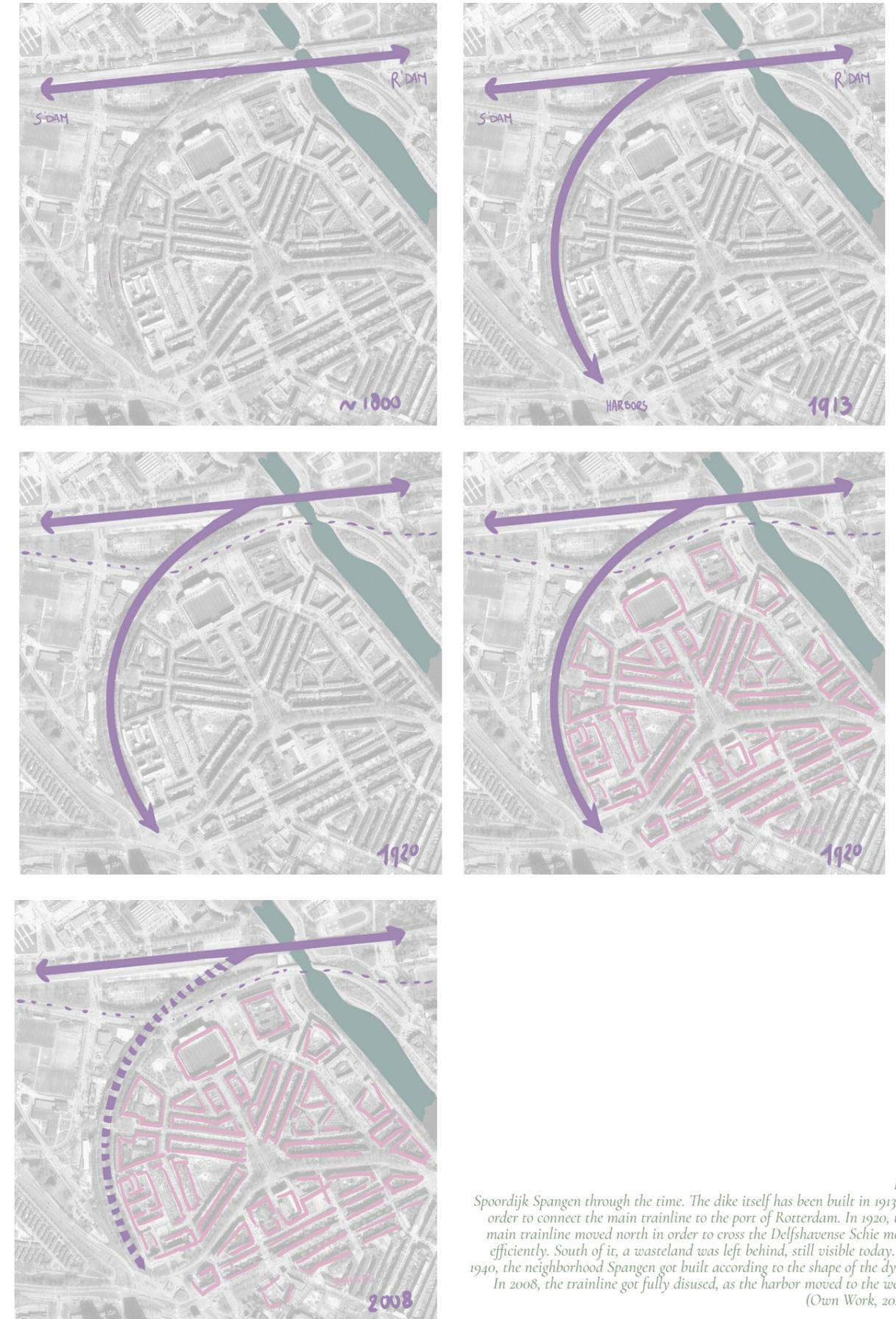
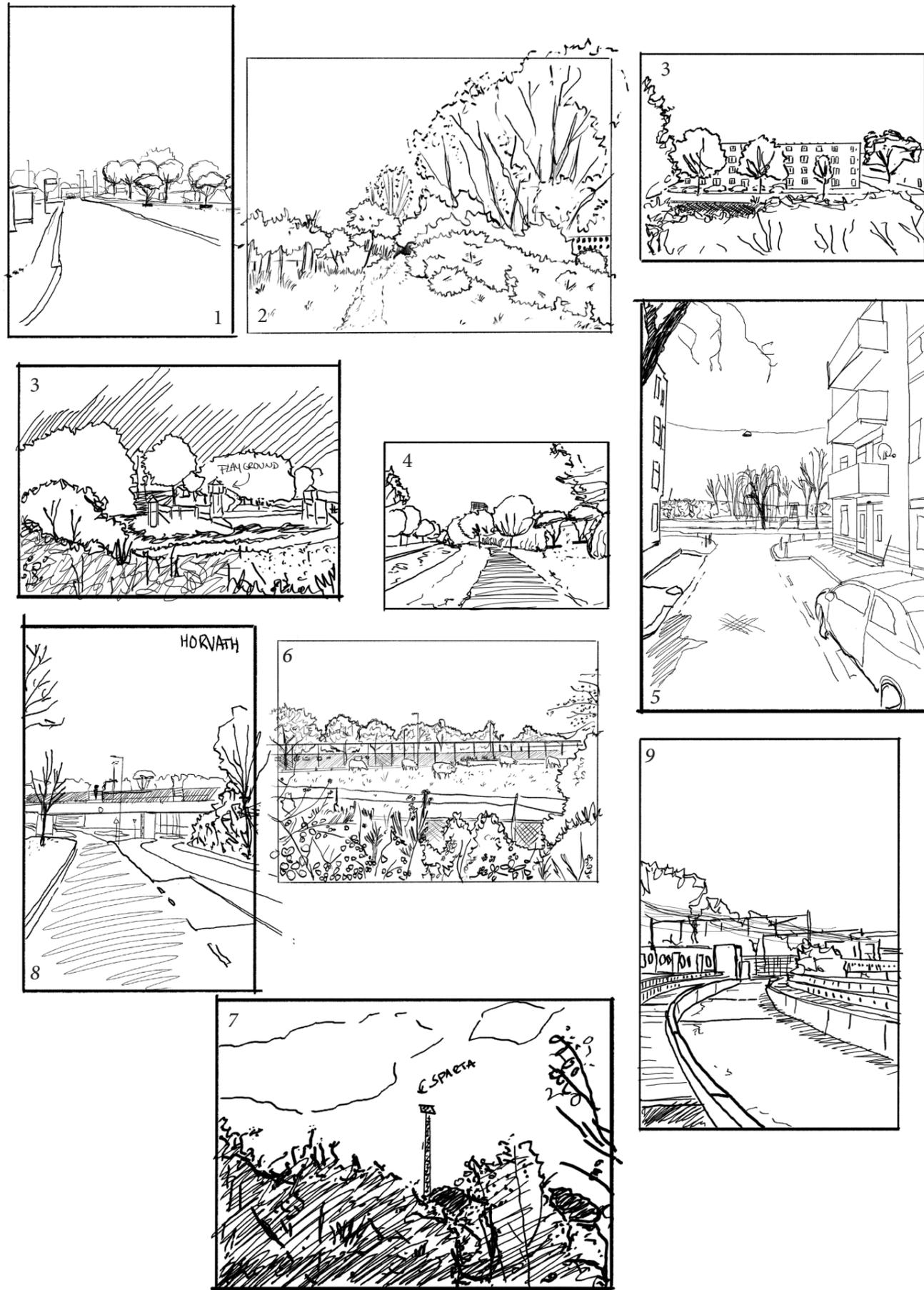


Fig
Spoordijk Spangens through the time. The dike itself has been built in 1913 in order to connect the main trainline to the port of Rotterdam. In 1920, the main trainline moved north in order to cross the Delfshavense Schie more efficiently. South of it, a wasteland was left behind, still visible today. In 1940, the neighborhood Spangens got built according to the shape of the dyke. In 2008, the trainline got fully disused, as the harbor moved to the west. (Own Work, 2025)

Once a Wasteland, always a wasteland

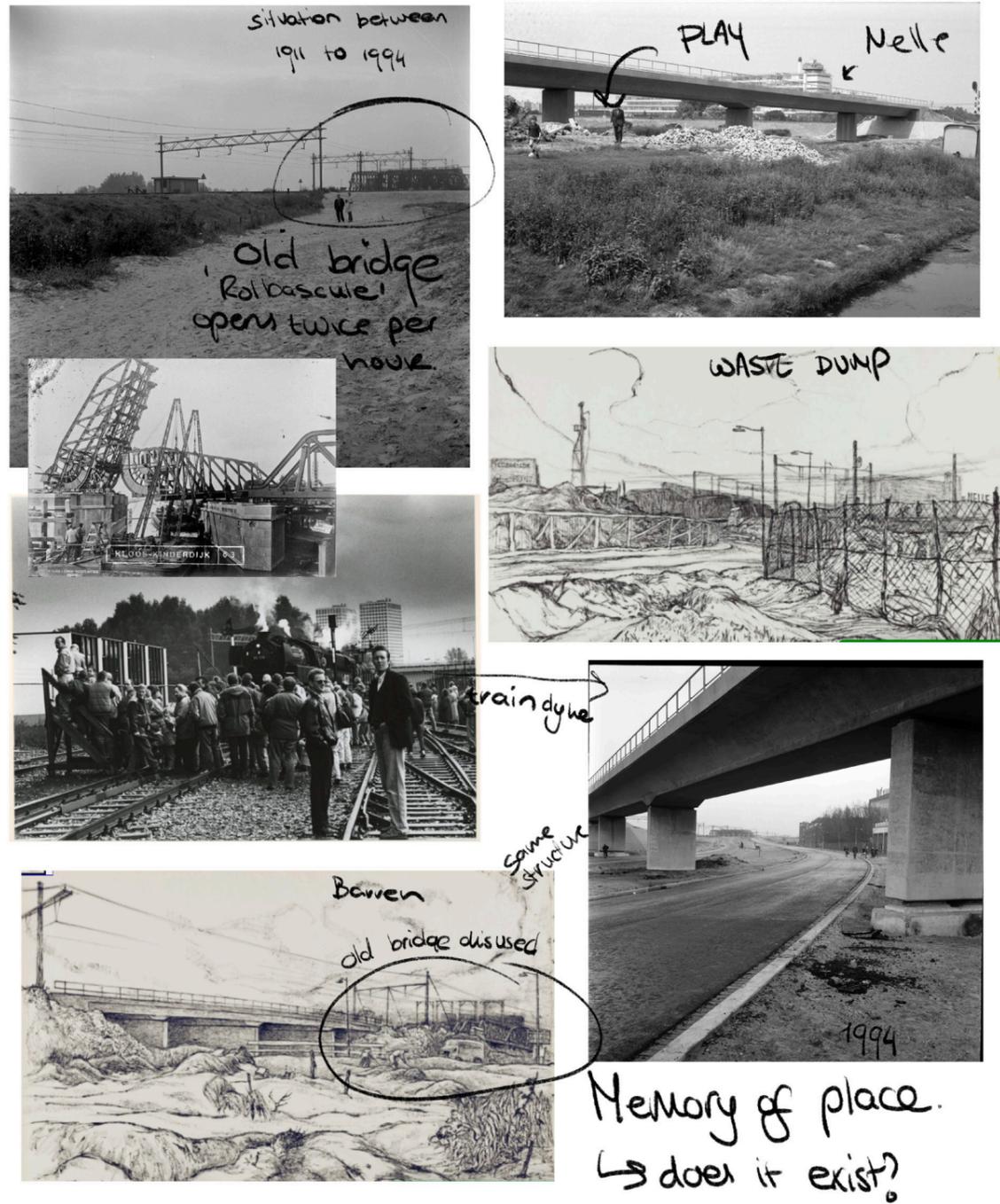
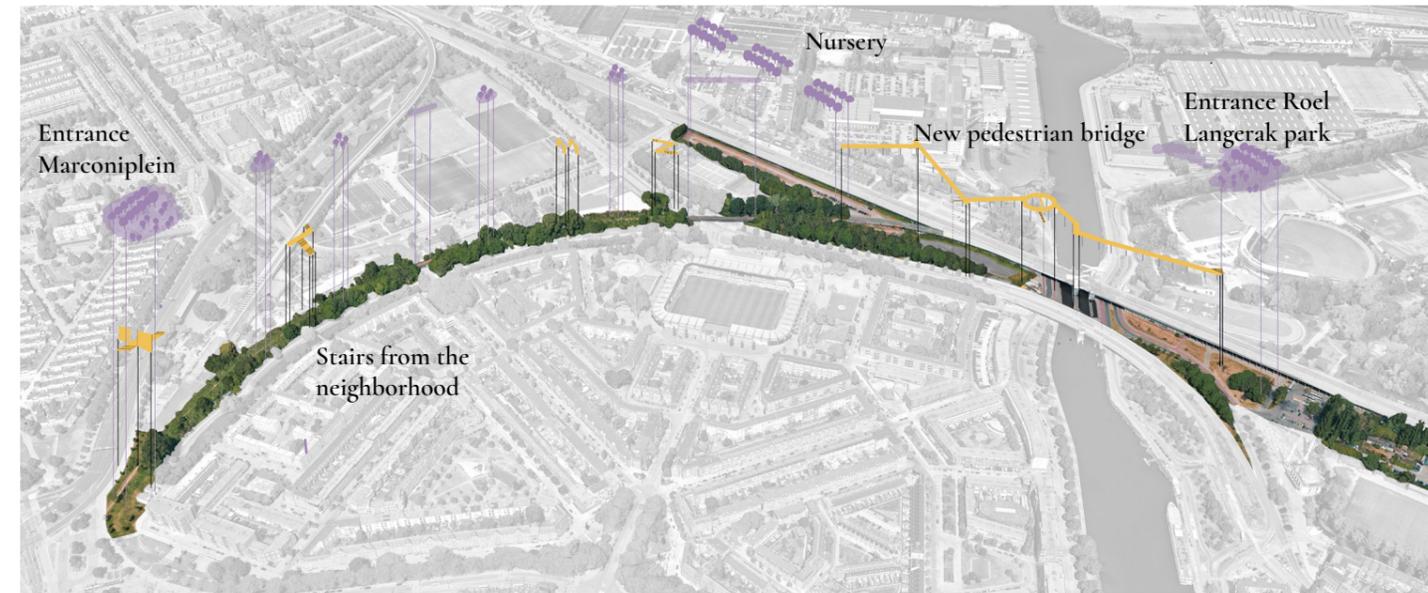
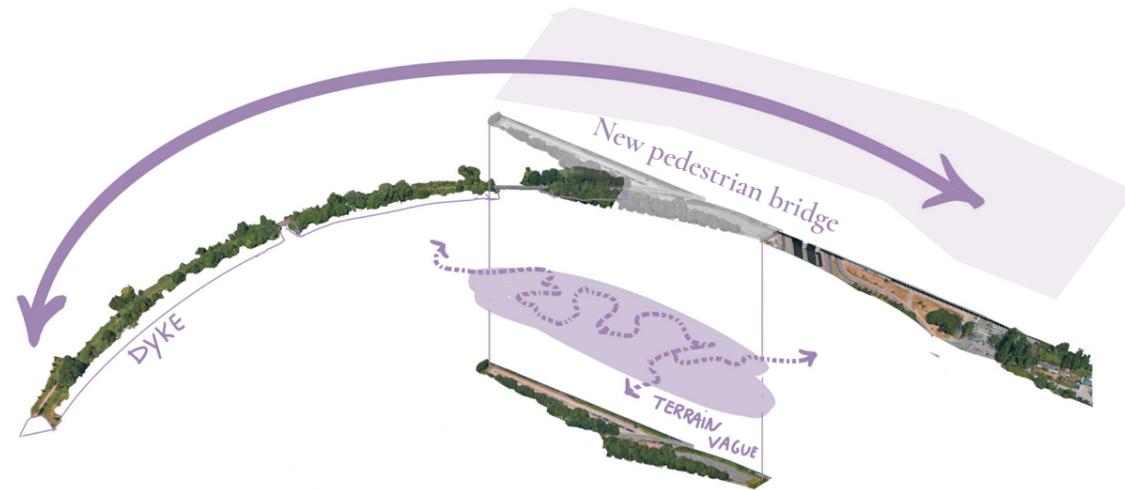


Fig Collage research on the history of the Spoordijk Spangen. Visible is the wasteland once created along the main trainline, the old 'Rolbascule' bridge crossing the Delfshavense Schie and images of the traindyke running through Spangen. (Own Work, 2025)



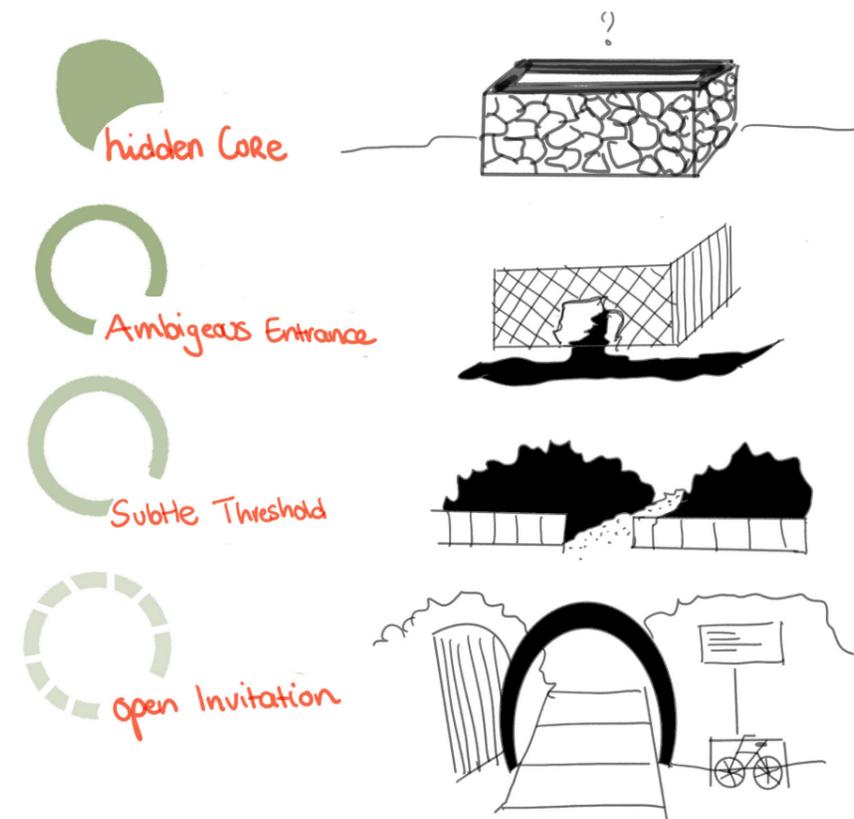
Fig An idea of a pedestrian bridge was developed. Crossing the Delfshavense Schie by foot over the old piers of the 'Rolbascule' bridge, connecting the interstitial site to the Roel Langerak Park. (Own Work, 2025)



Concept: Layers of Access

The design for Spoordijk is structured around layers of access, recognising that accessibility operates at multiple levels simultaneously. Rather than a single moment of entry, the project proposes a gradient of accessibility across the site. The dyke is reworked as an inviting threshold, legible, continuous, and approachable. This encourages movement and orientation along its length. Below, the parking area is transformed into a more ambiguous, loosely defined zone: a space for informal use, transition, and appropriation rather than prescription.

Each intervention is designed to activate three interconnected layers of accessibility. Physical access enables movement through and across the site. Visual access opens up sightlines, revealing the presence and potential of the space. Mental access challenges existing perceptions, reframing Spoordijk from an infrastructural leftover into a place that can be entered, used, and imagined differently. Together, these layers operate as a cohesive strategy, ensuring that accessibility is not partial, but embedded throughout the site.

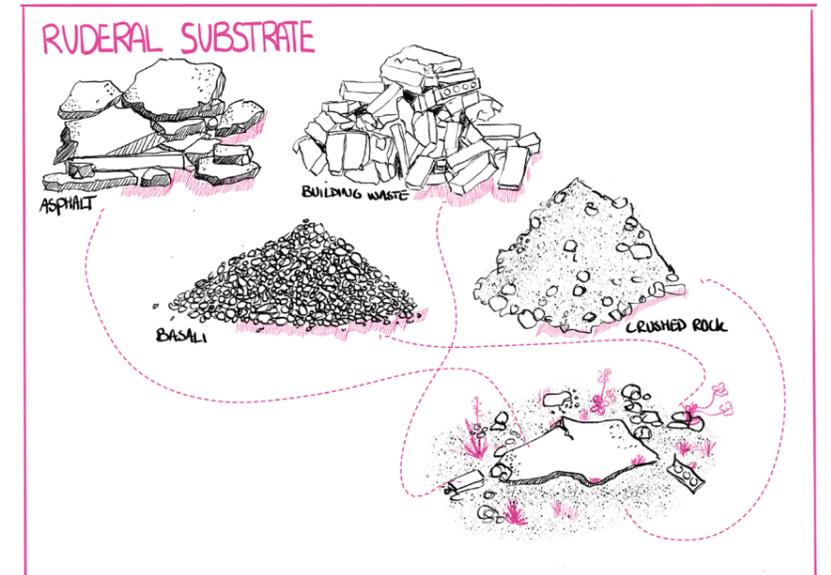




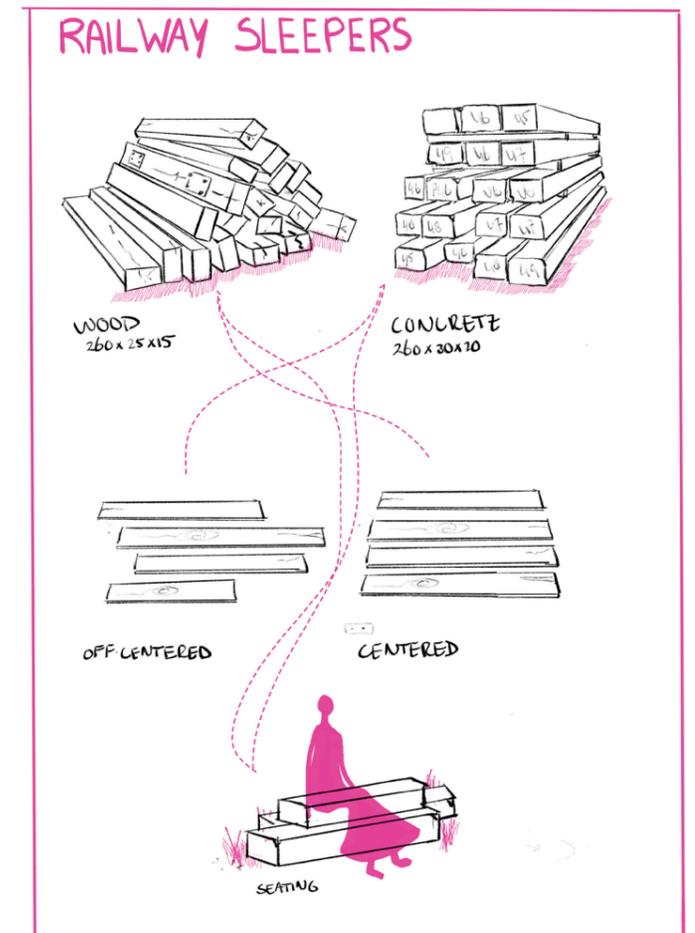
Marconi Entrance

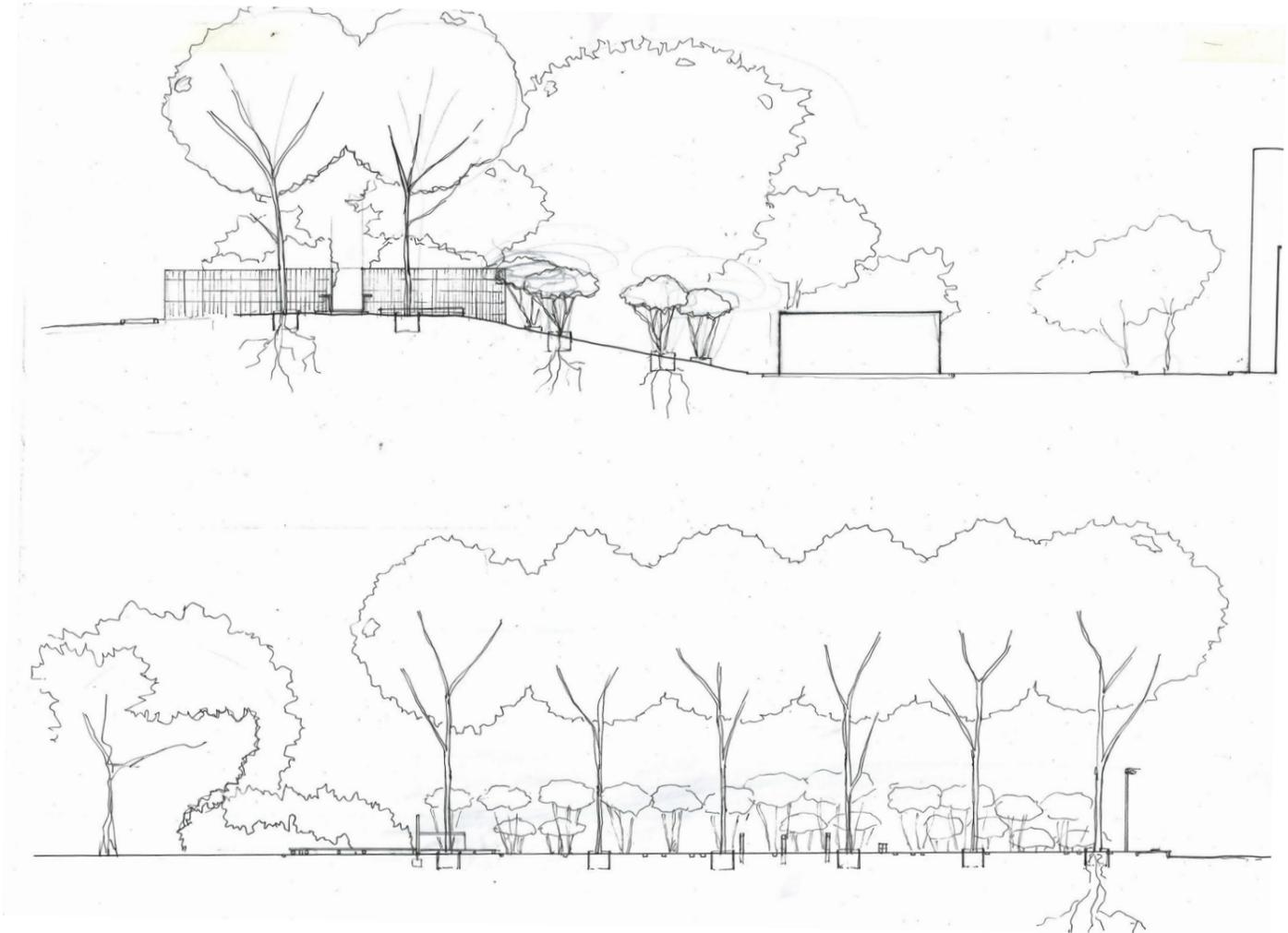
Visualization looking towards the new entrance of the dyke. Old railway sleepers guide you in the direction of the old track. Having to look down where you put your feet as you walk forces the visitor to become aware of its surrounding. Ailanthus (tree of heavens) are planted in rows creating an avenue guiding towards the entry. By placing them in pots they will not be invasive. The former plain grass is replaced by a substrate from gravel, building debris and asphalt, creating the perfect conditions for flowering ruderals to settle. Upon entering, a corten gate with a raised boardwalk literally lifts you over the threshold of the interstitial space. An information plaque is shown in the handrails, explaining the visitor where they are going. (Own Work, 2025)

Ruderal substrate: by mixing left over materials from urban development and industrial use, a substrate is made that resembles many terrains that are left-over: dry, coarse, warm, possibly polluted. - A perfect growing soil for many important and endangered ruderal pioneer species, mainly grasses. (Own Work, 2025)



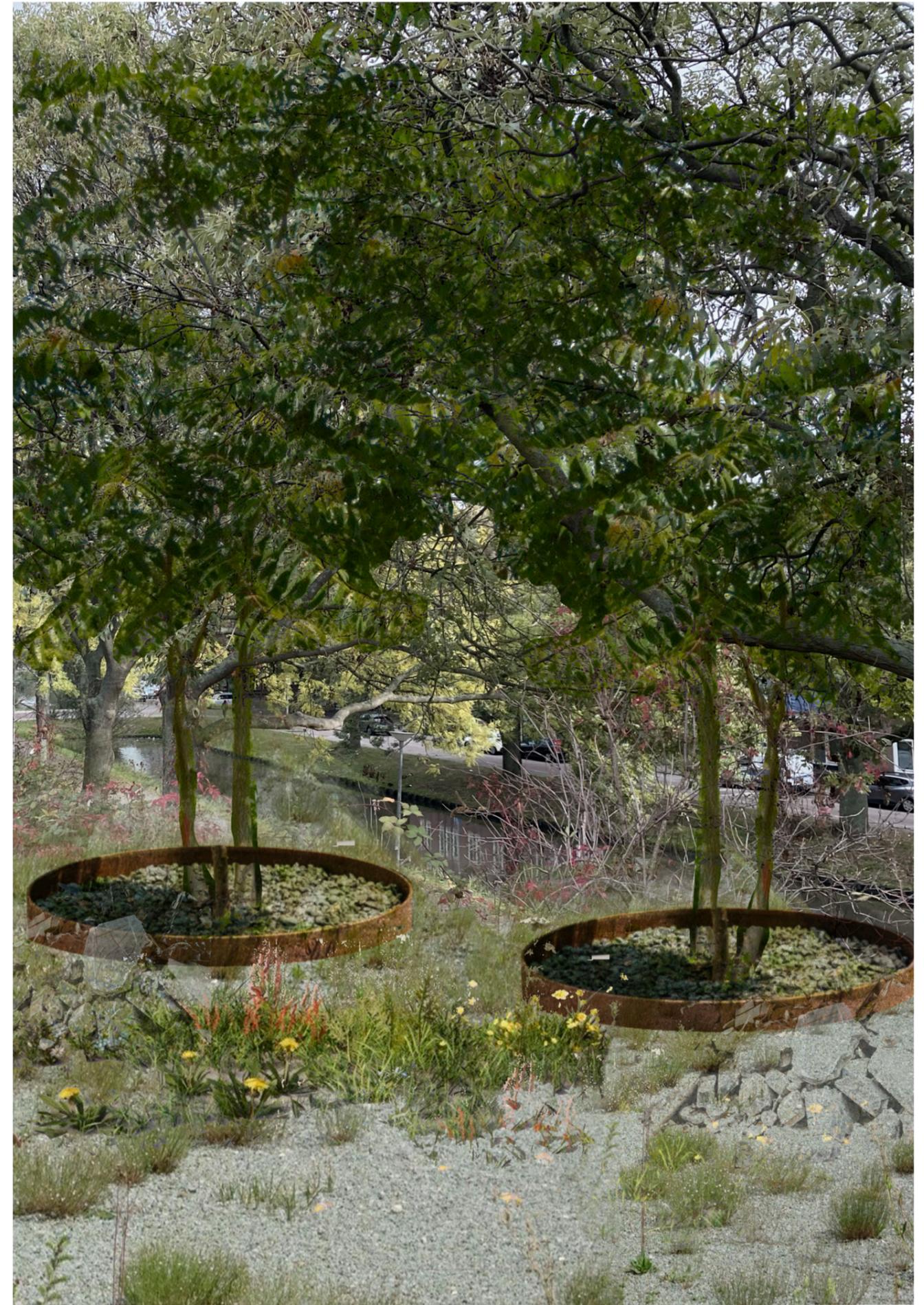
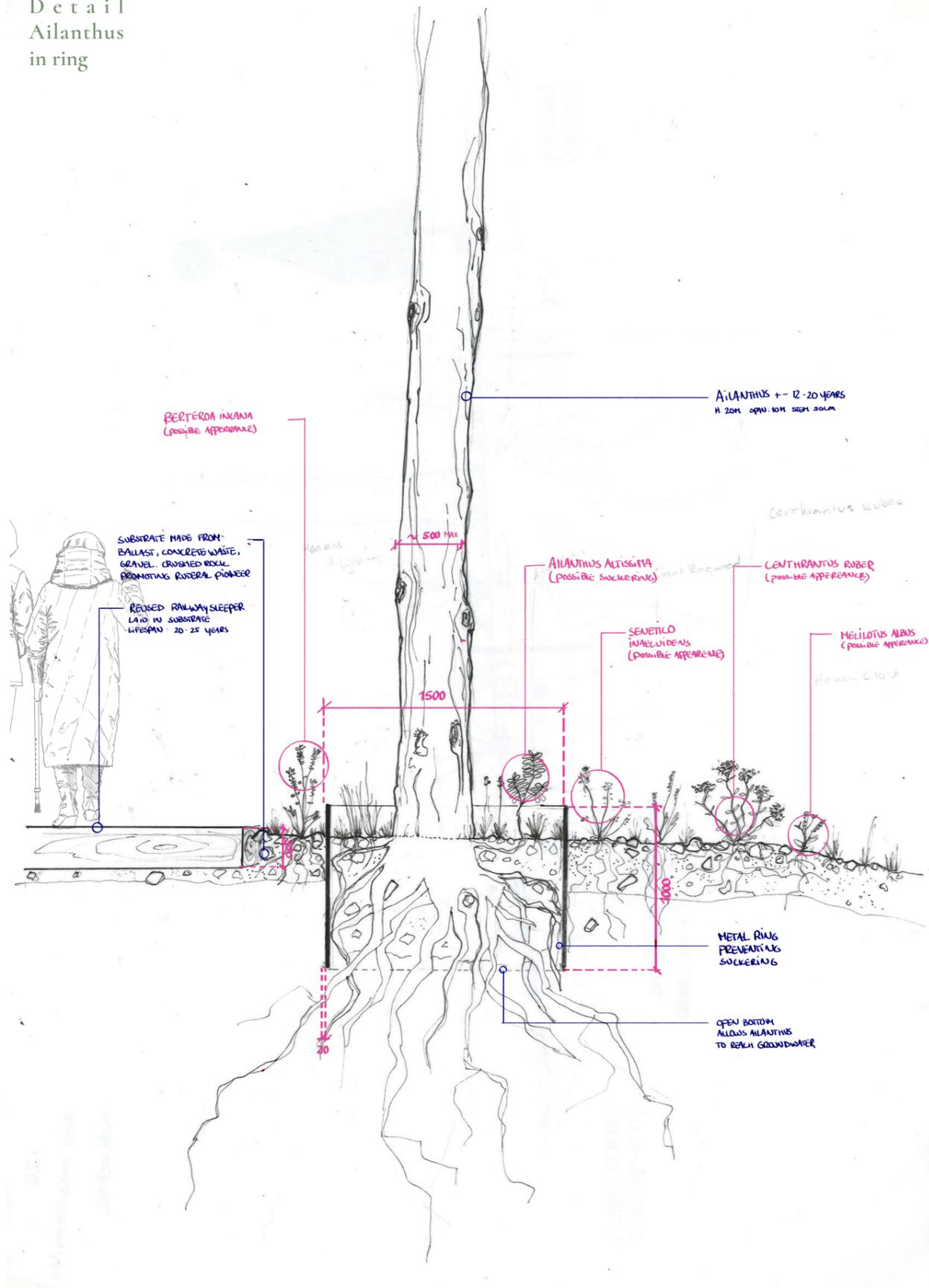
Railway sleepers: Railway sleepers are a product that the train industry uses a lot. Many old wooden railway sleepers are taken off the tracks and are replaced by concrete ones. Yet, because they are treated with a toxin to prevent rot, they cannot be used for furniture or building. There are many depots with tons of old sleepers, just sitting there slowly decaying. In the design, they are brought into the old train landscape again, not having to worry about toxins seeping out as the ground is full of them already. They guide the visitor inwards, as well as providing seating. (Own Work, 2025)



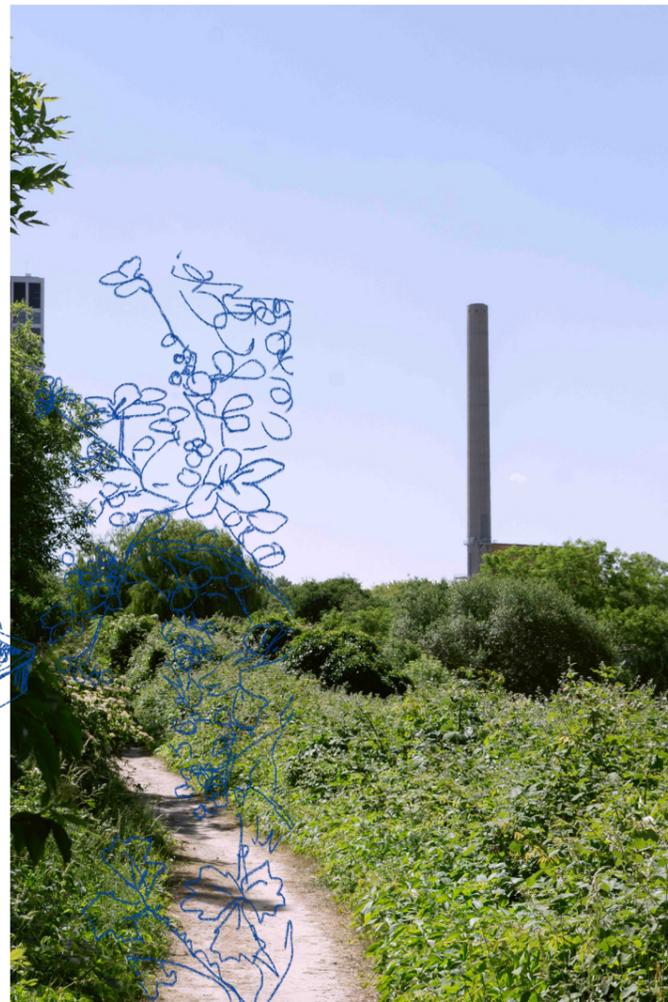


Section AA

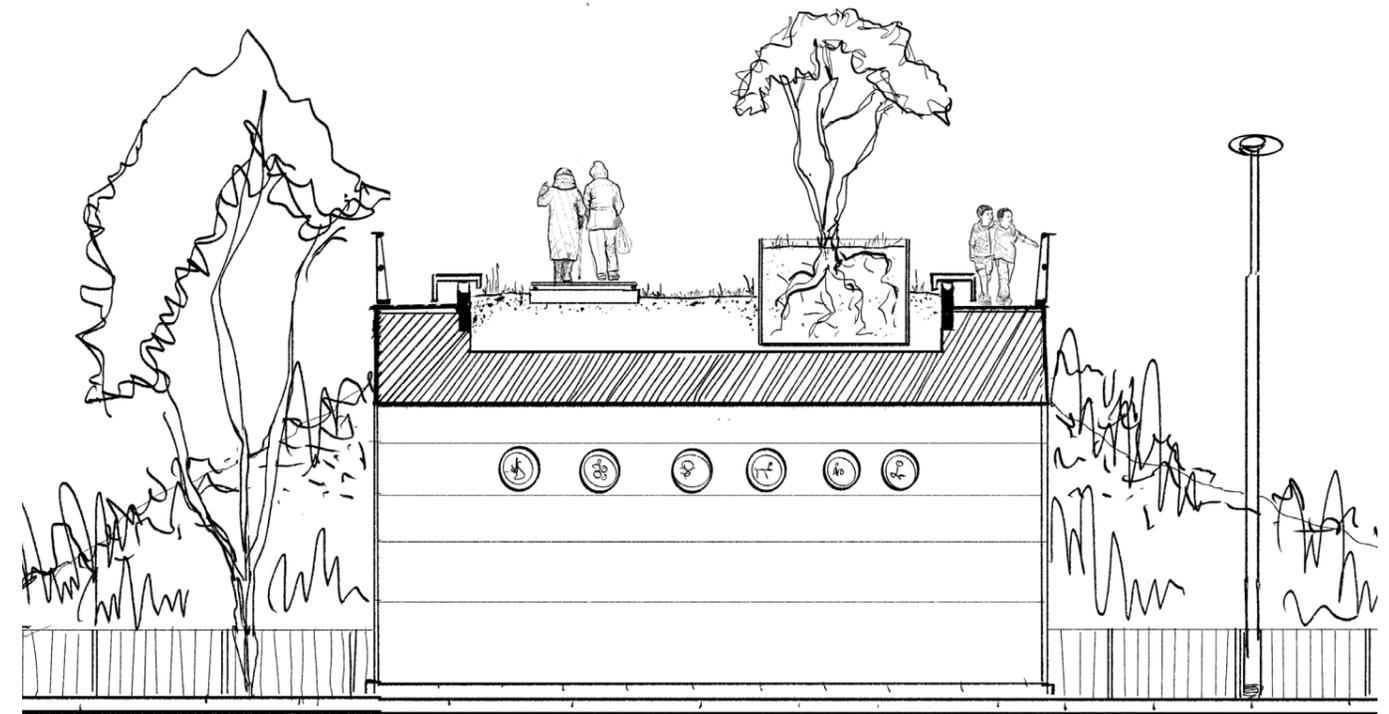
Detail
Ailanthus
in ring



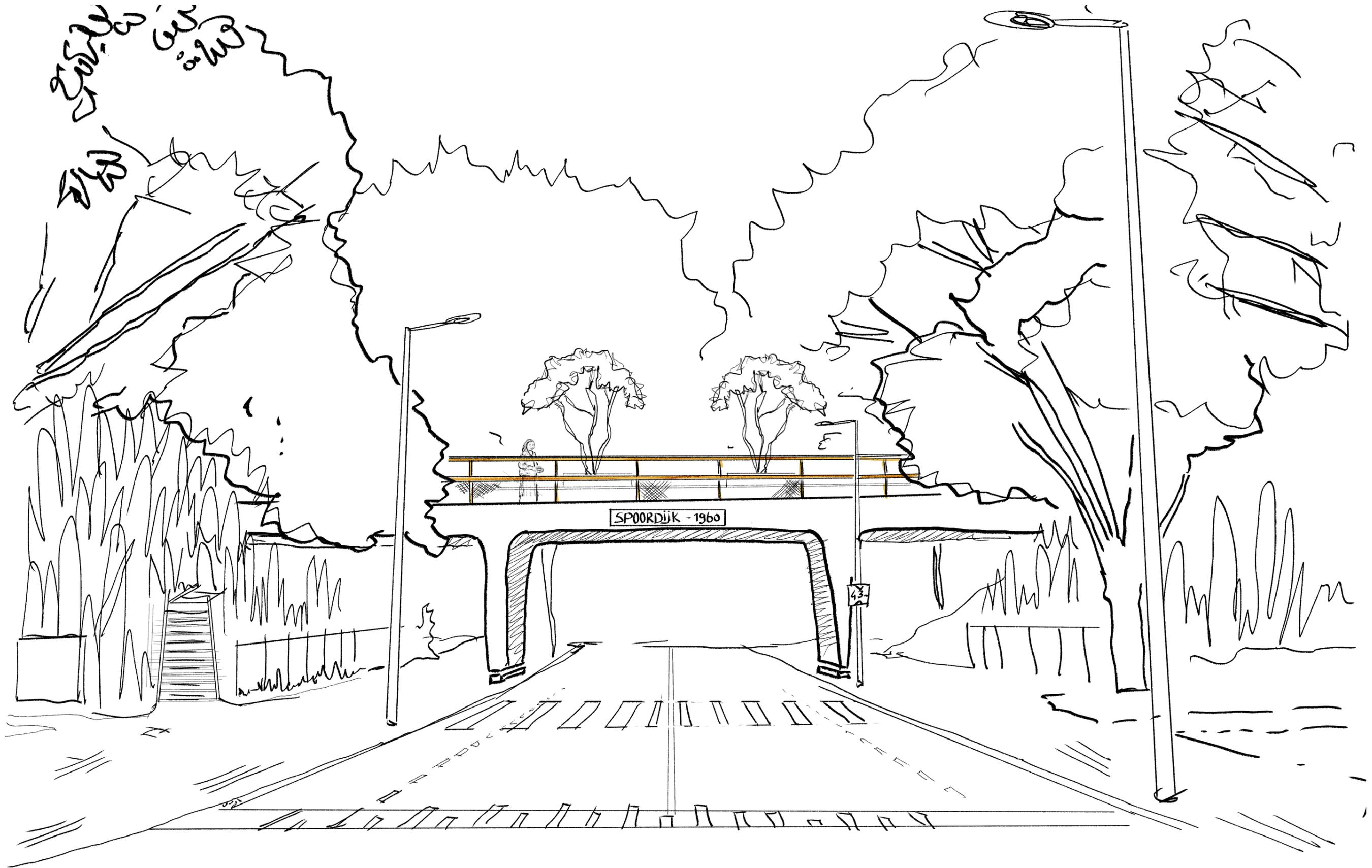




Crossing the Abandoned Bridge



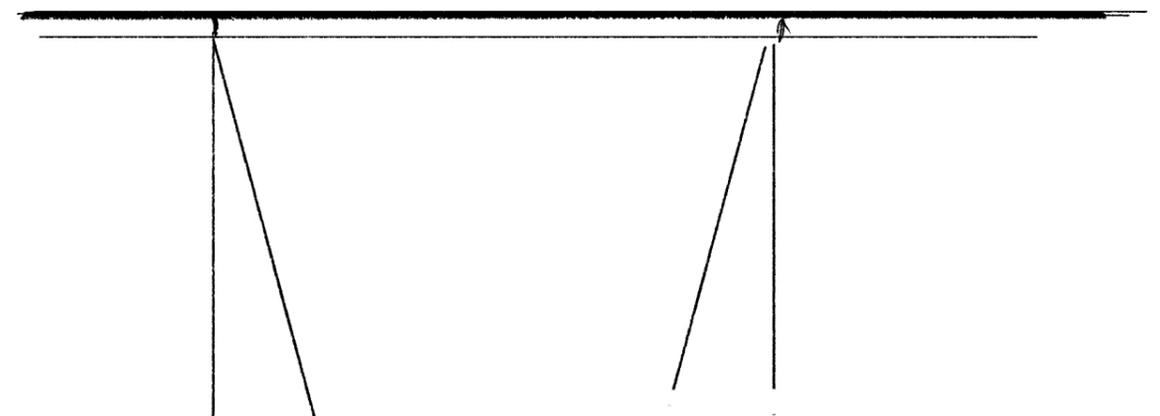
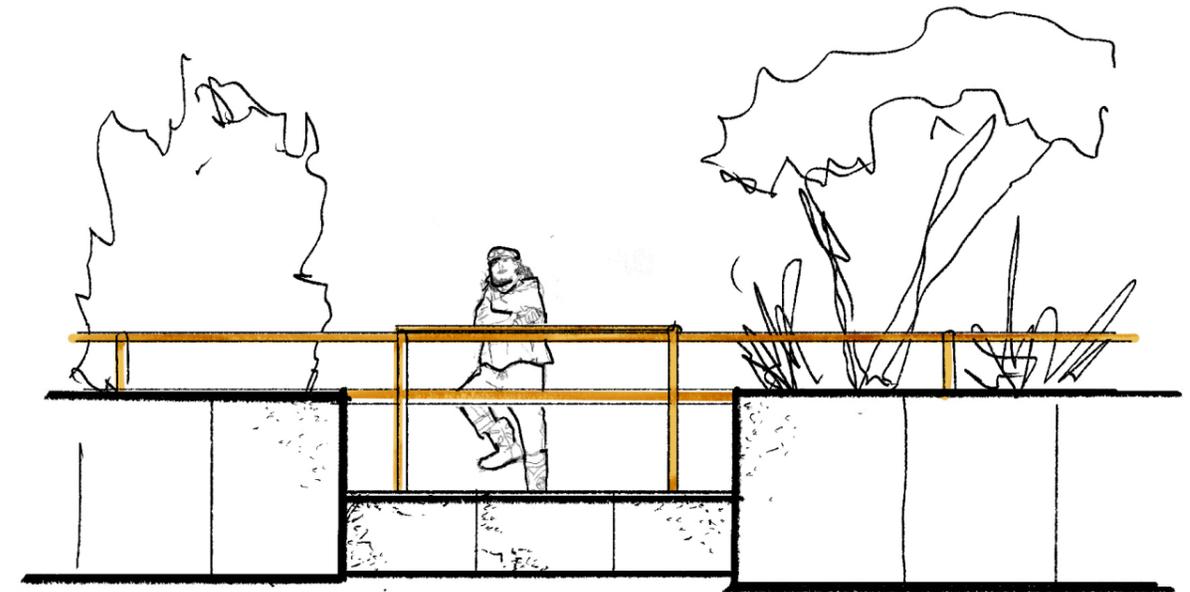
There are two bridges lifting the dyke over two roads. The first bridge is small, almost unnoticed when seen from the street. It is overgrown now, but not very ecologically beneficial. The design poses this bridge to be filled with the ruderal substrate, resembling the old trainbed. On the sides of the bed, the edges are raised so people can sit. The Ailanthus tree is placed in a raised pot, making the bridge visible from the street. (Own Work, 2025)





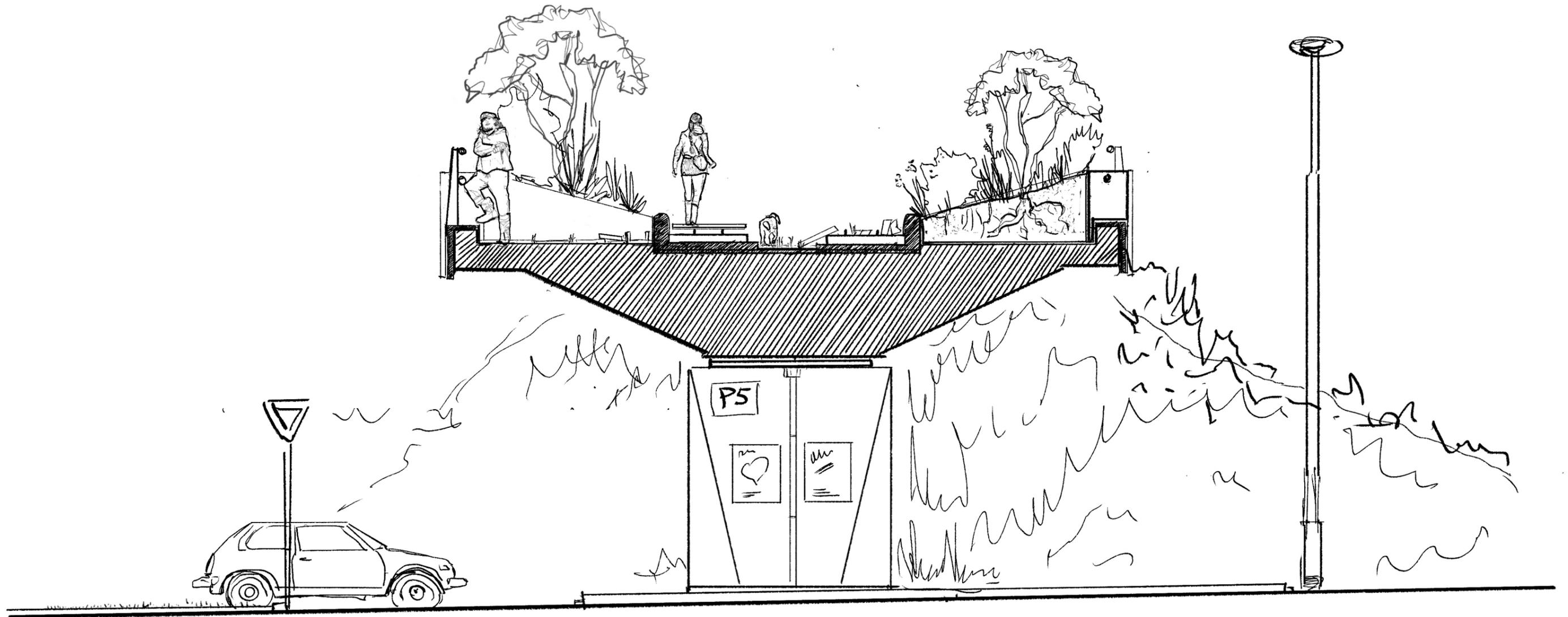
Old train remnants are kept visible on the site.

Crossing the Horvathweg

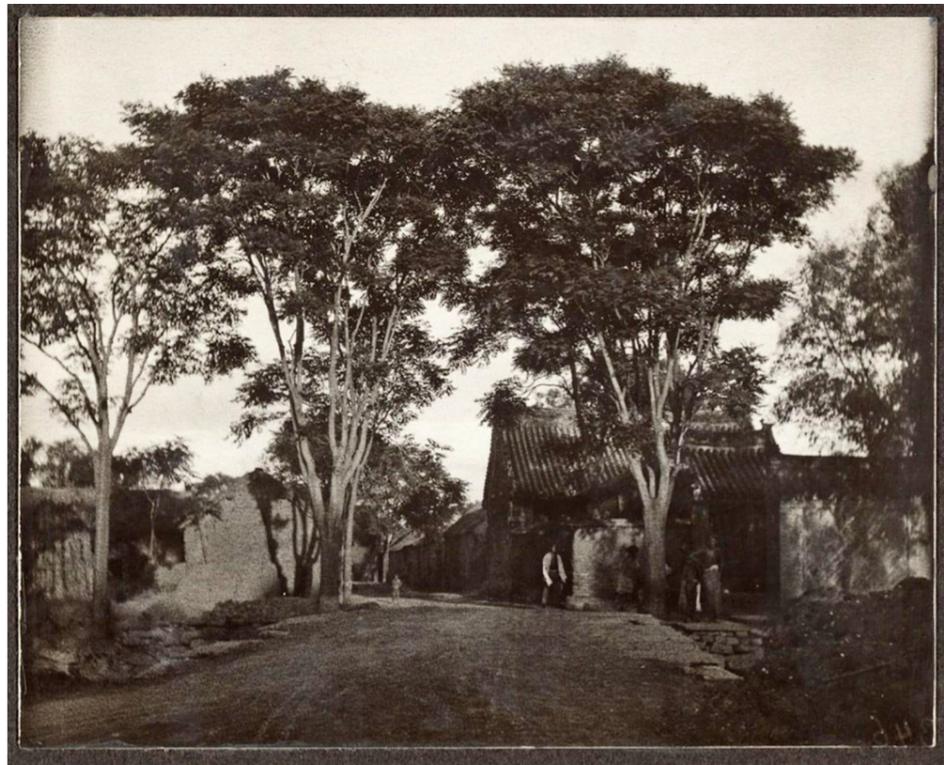


The other bridge over the Horvathweg is longer. Here, the loudness of the road breaks the experience of the enclosed dyke. The design poses the following: the sides of the train bed are heightened, creating a sloped bed filled with substrate that recreates the conditions of the dyke. On occasion, you can peek out into the street. (Own Work, 2025)

Stadsschappen in Spangen – foto 010web Rotterdam vroeger en nu



A boardwalk lifts you over the old fittings of the rail, which is half broken and somehow always wet and overgrown with plants and mud. The sides of the track are filled with substrate as said and allow spontaneous vegetation to grow. Here the Ailanthus is planted as well. (Own Work, 2025)



Ailanthus altissima by Frank Henry Meyer (1907) Yanzhou Shandong-Sheng China

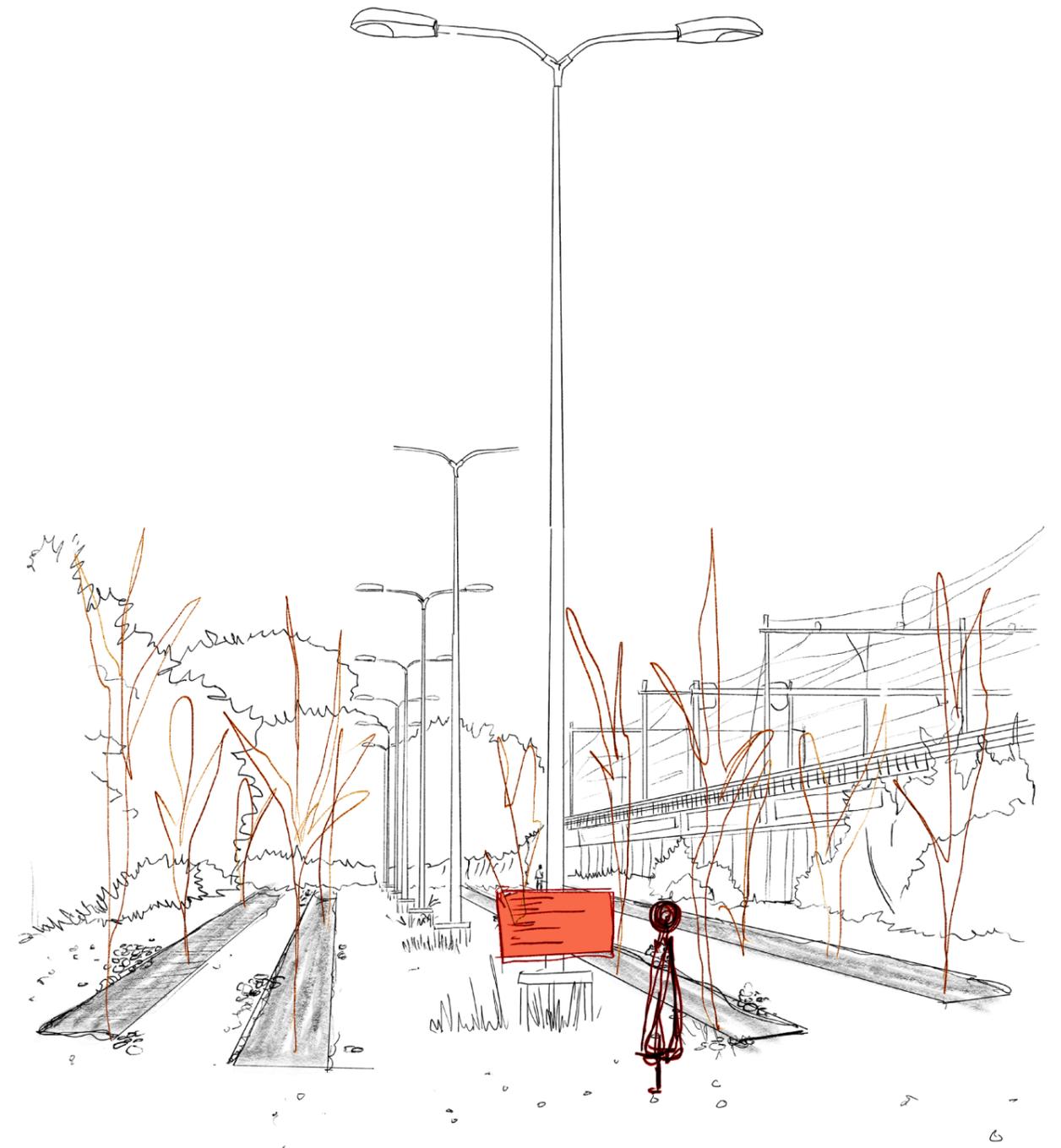
The Ailanthery

The arrival of the *Ailanthus* (or the Tree of Heaven) is not accidental. It was grown from cuttings from scientist Peter Del Tredici, growing in one of the species' favorite habitats amid the gravel and drifting trash that lies between highways and rivers. The *Ailanthus* has many characters that make them ideal for growing inside of the city: it grows quick, can withstand pollution and drought and happily spreads via root suckers. It has therefore also been used in Rotterdam as a city tree for many years, before being labeled as "invasive. It has escaped its bounds of domestication, now living in the marginal corners of our cities.

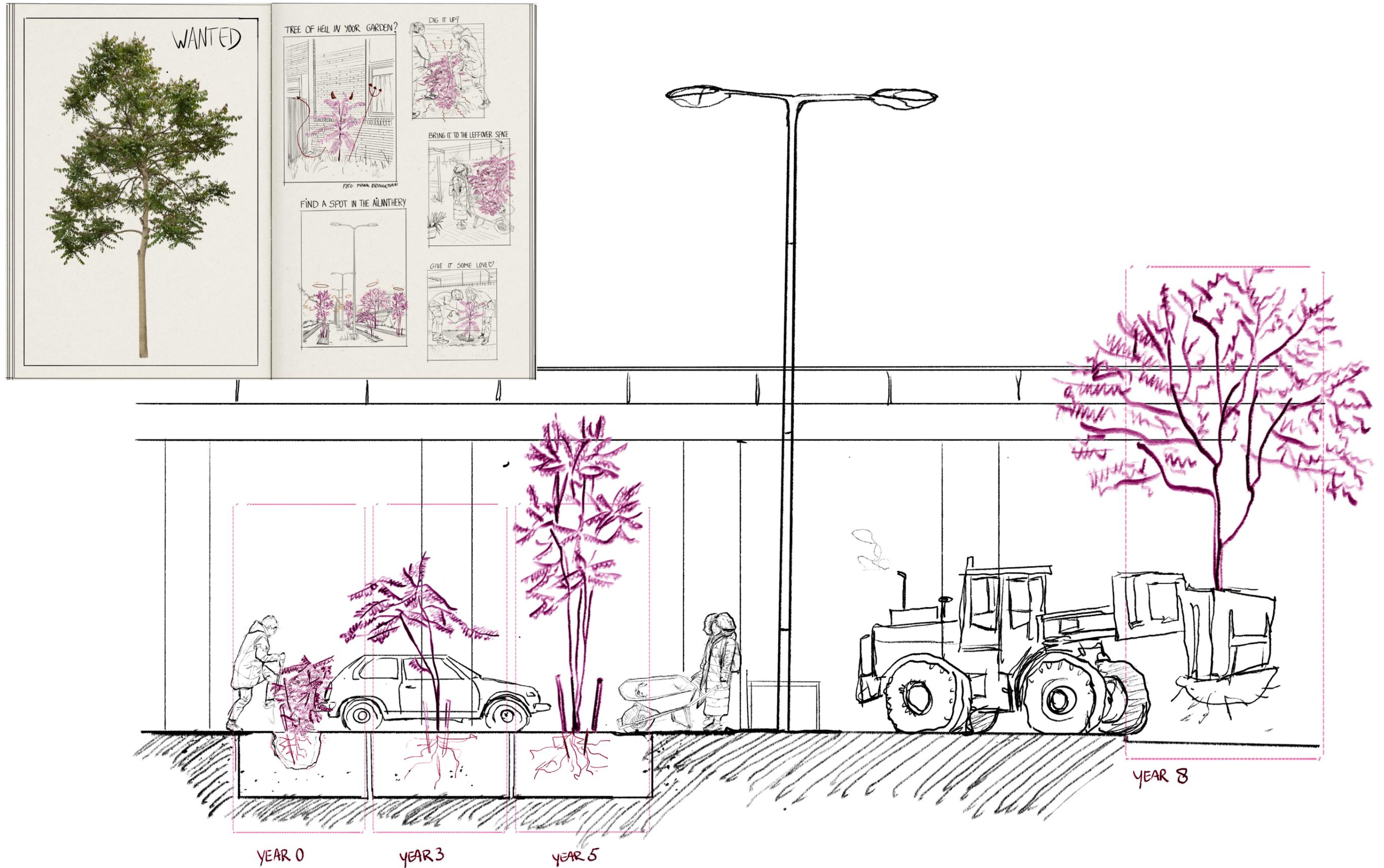
Collecting these unwanted trees from the city and returning them to one central point that acts as a nursery seems a crazy idea. But nothing is less true, growing them in a nursery on gravelly soils next to trainlines has been done before. Not for aesthetic reasons but for the production of 'Eri Silk' by the silk-making moth *Samia cynthia*, the *ailanthus* silk moth. In the Victorian times, well off people envisioned a silk industry in the cold north, here and in England.

"Much study has been bestowed on (*Ailanthus* and its silk moth) in Europe," wrote a correspondent in London's *Journal of the Society of Arts* in 1879; "so much so, that this study rejoices in the name *Ailanthiculture*, and the breeding houses of the insects are called *Ailantheries*."

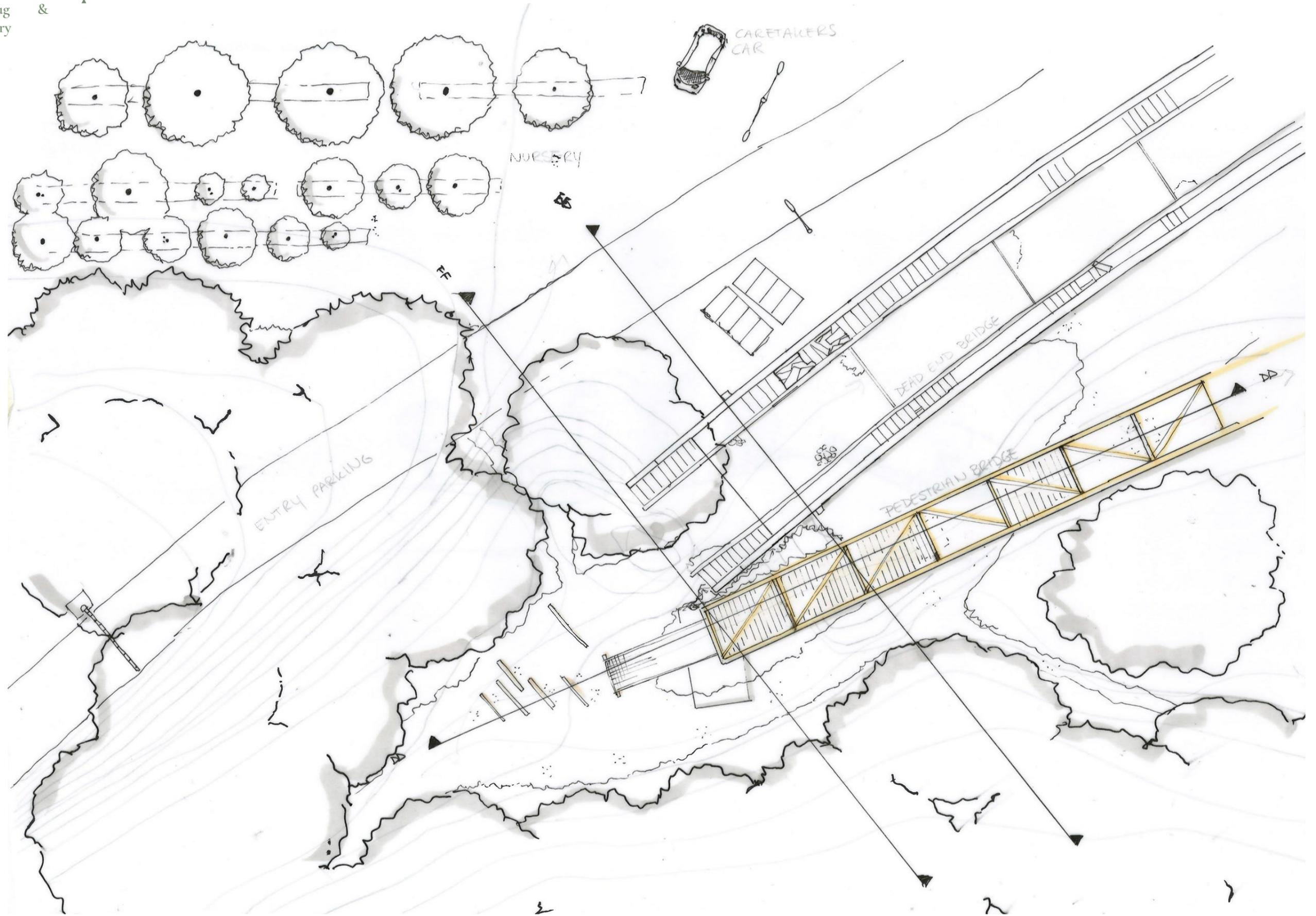
Ailanthery - the fugitive tree

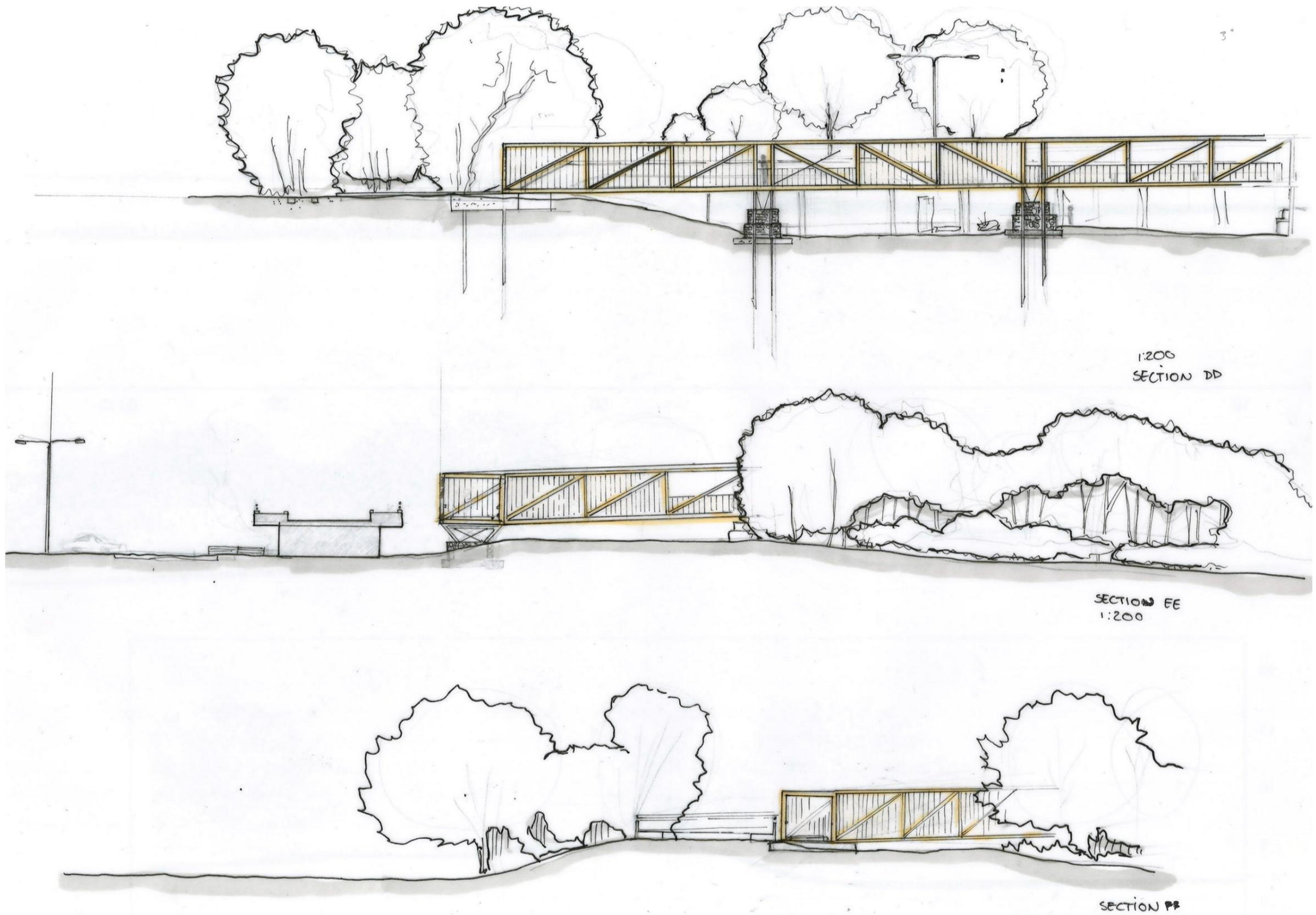


The *Ailanthery* is placed in the wasteland area, now functioning as a flow over parking. The concrete is dug up in places and people from Rotterdam can bring their unwanted *Ailanthus* to the nursery for them to get a better life. Here they grow into large trees with single stem, or smaller ones pruned in umbrella shapes. (Own Work, 2025)



Entrance
luchtbrug &
ailantery





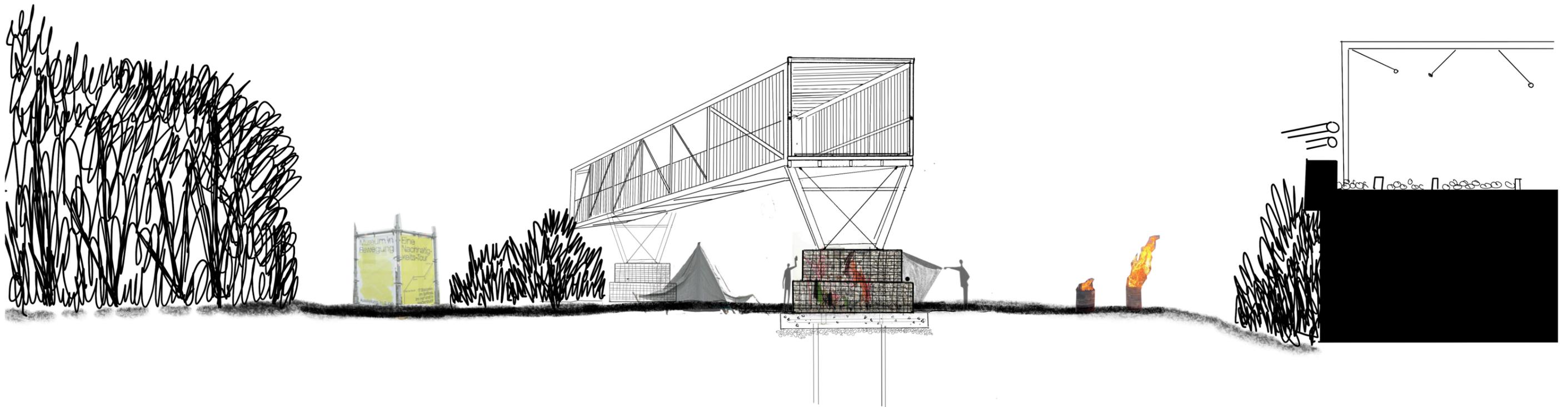
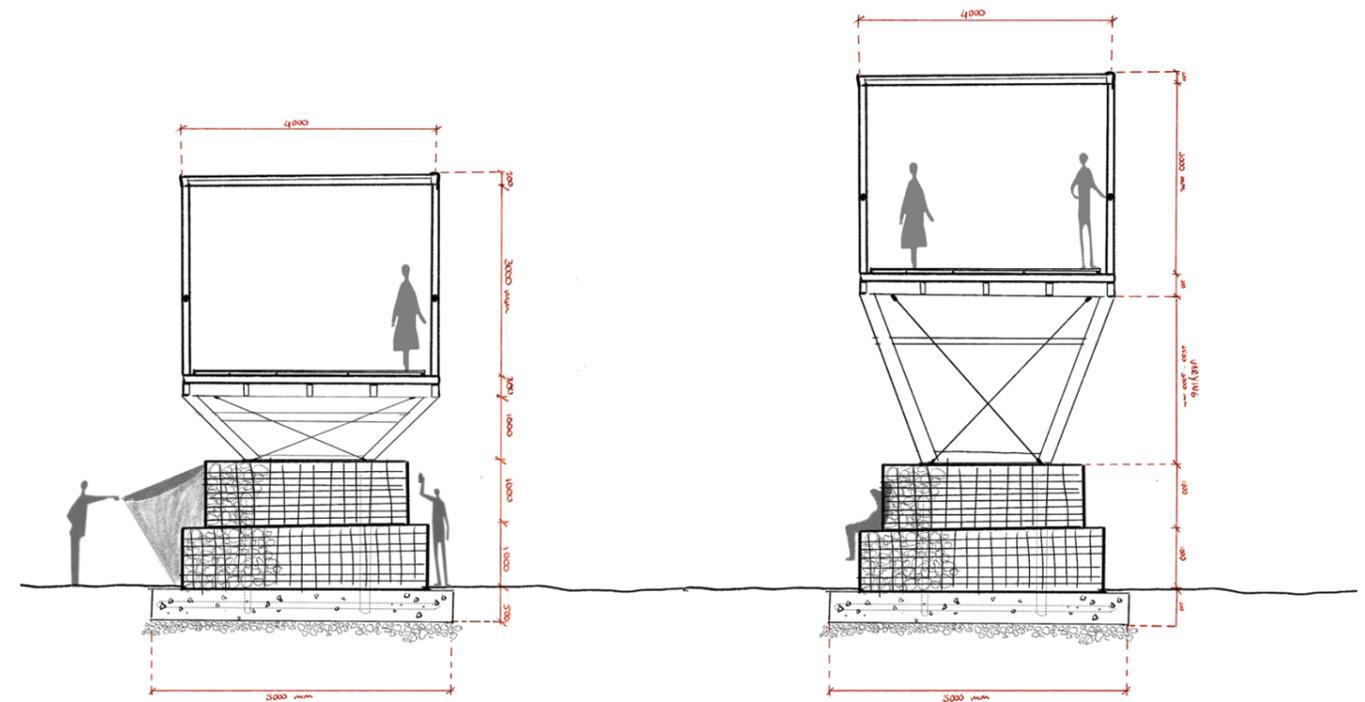


The New Pedestrian Bridge

The new pedestrian bridge is the biggest intervention in the design. It seems a huge design implication, but it is actually necessary for guaranteeing the interstitial character of the lower parking lots that hold a lot of social value to marginal groups and youths. The idea to make the area more accessible is good, but that roughness and freedom of use it he first thing to disappear when used by a more diverse group. The bridge gives the user an option; head into the designed bridge and get safely to the other side of the river and site, or, head down into the terrain vague and meet the unknown.

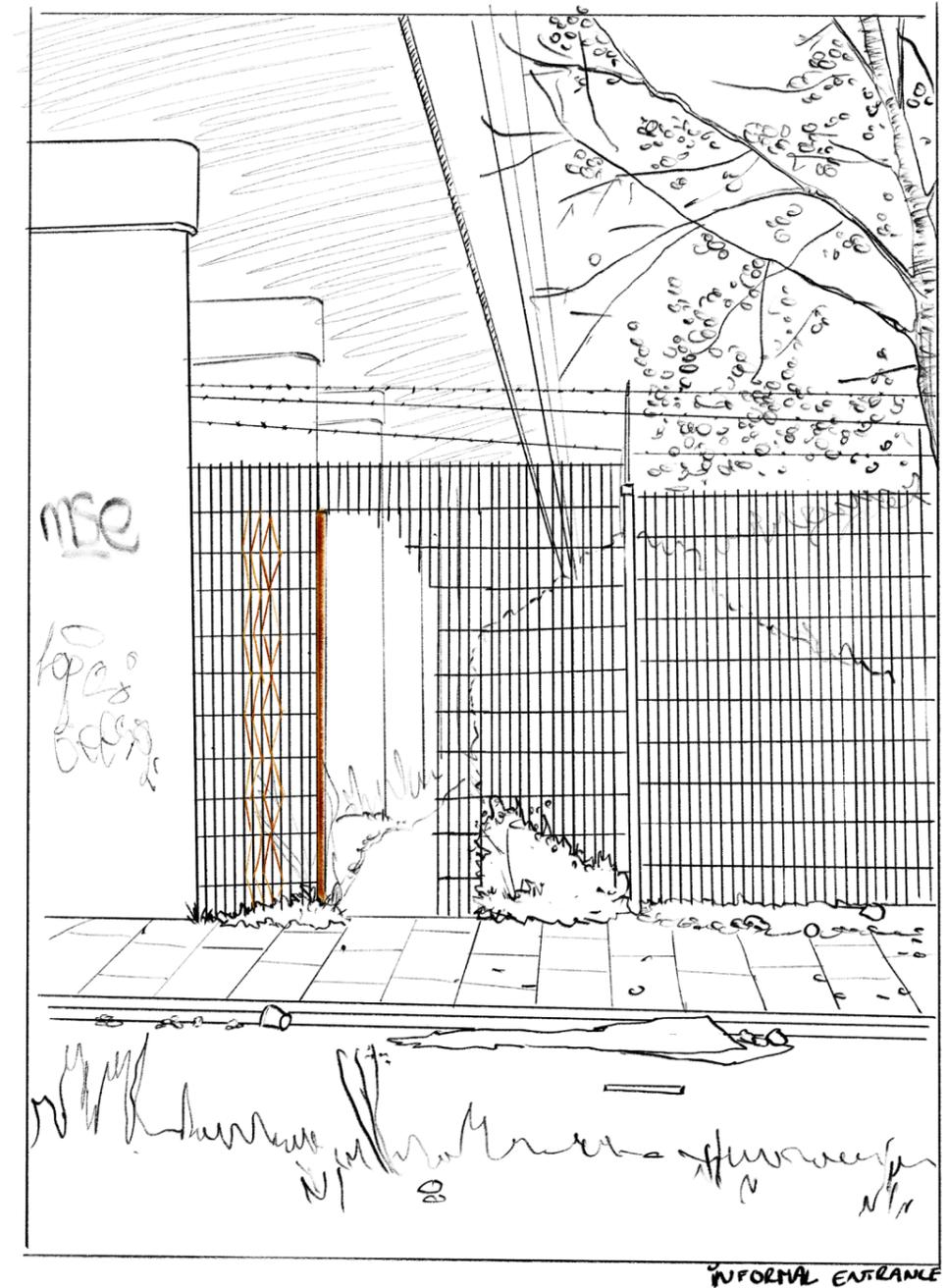
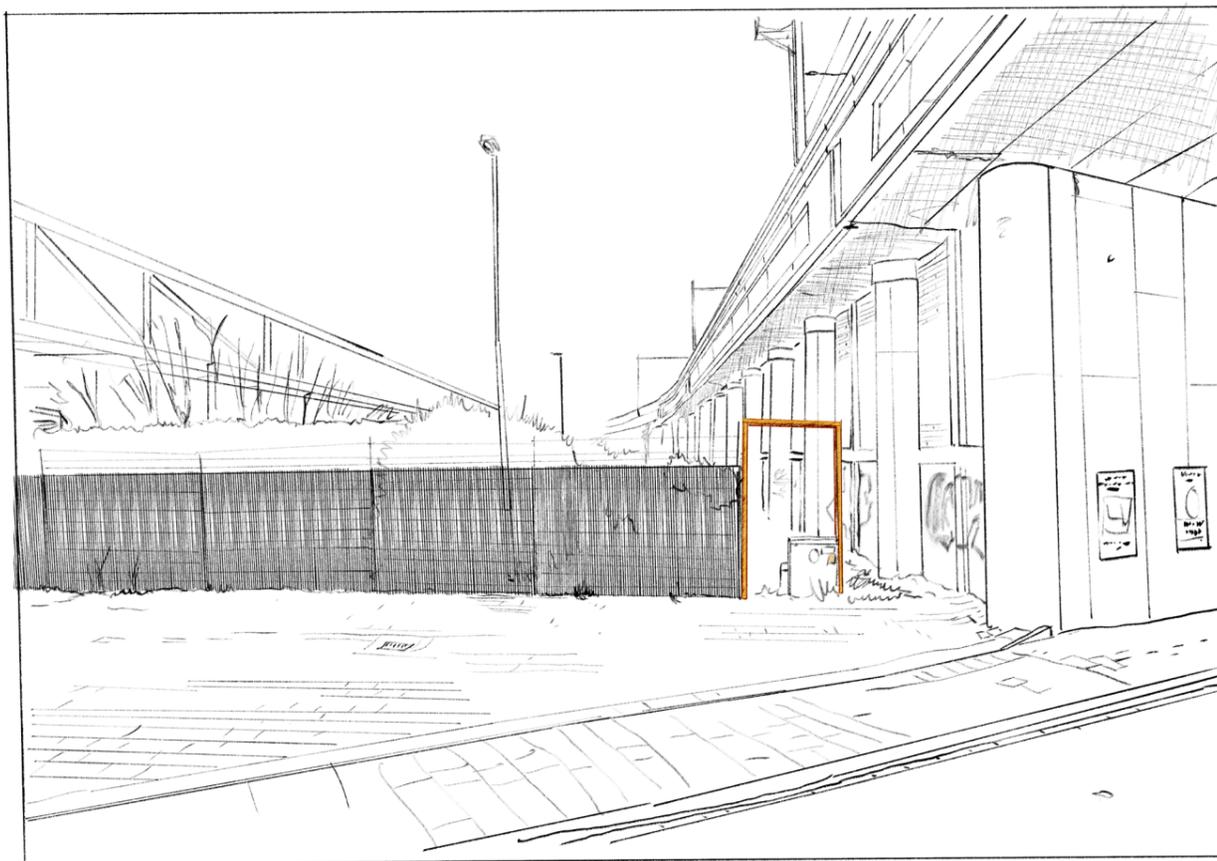
The bridge location is based on the train line from before the 1910's, with the steel frame representing the cargo trains running over the line. The bridge is paneled partly, giving you the illusion of flinching in and out of a bridge when passing it.

The underside of the bridge is maybe even more important, as this is the space where the two layers of access meet. On the feet of the bridge are gabions filled with building debris, they create space for mosses and lichen to grow as well as it gives a literal possibility to tie meaning to it; a tent for shelter, a banner for an exhibition or a wall to graffiti on.



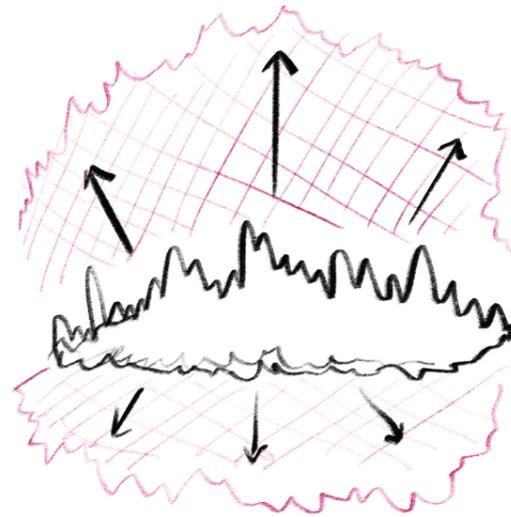
Entrance Roel
Langerakpark





URBAN BLEED - OUT

Look for opportunities where the interstitial space spills into urban empty space making a transitioning zone.



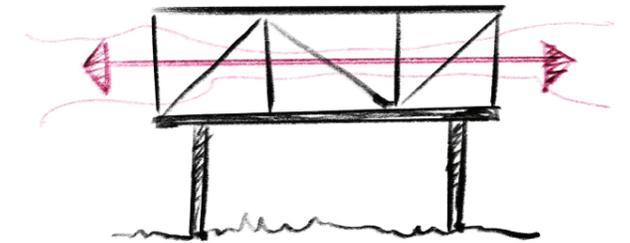
INTERNAL PATH

On-site routes allowing movement within the interstitial area to make wandering into possible.



MAJOR CONNECTOR

Bridges or overpass that stitch together fragmented parts of the interstitial network might be needed, allowing direct movement across barriers such as rail lines, water, or roads.



Rules of Enchantment

Interventions & Restraints that are able to work with interstitial spaces, without them losing their undefined qualities

The Rules of Enchantment outline a limited set of intervention logics through which interstitial spaces can be approached without being formalised. Rather than proposing finished designs, these rules describe ways in which accessibility can be subtly adjusted: physically, visually, and mentally.

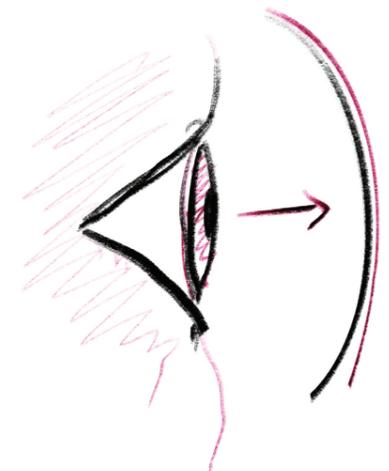
MINOR CONNECTOR

Small-scale routes, stairs or desire paths enabling local passage to surrounding context.



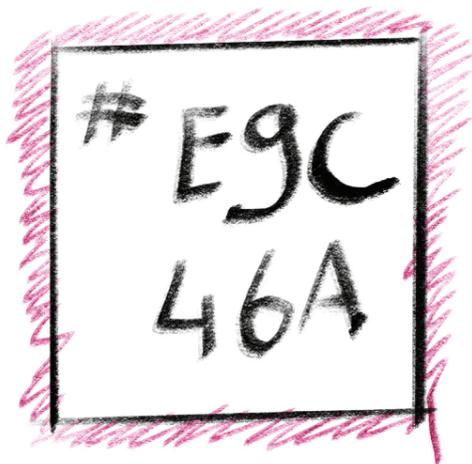
VISUAL PEEP HOLE

A framed sightline that reveals the interior of interstitial spaces will allow visual access into secluded or hidden areas without requiring physical entry.



COLOR MARKER

A colour-coded identifier can be used to connect separate spaces as part of a coherent network, helping users recognise they are moving through related sites.



TREE MOTIF

Stylised representation of iconic ruderal species (e.g. Ailanthus) that shape the visual identity of interstitial spaces can be used in urban context to make connections.



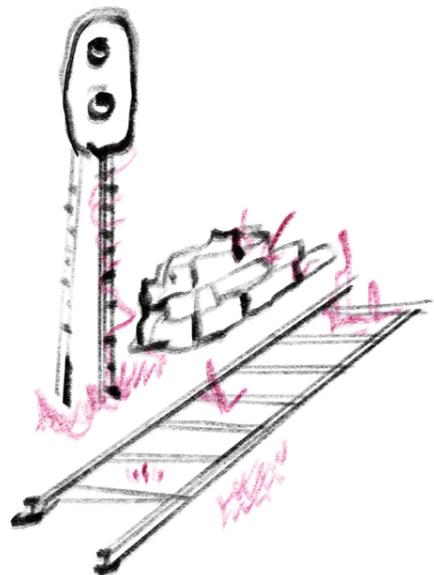
ENTRANCE GESTURE

A threshold condition that announces entry into the interstitial area, helping users notice and access spaces that are otherwise overlooked.



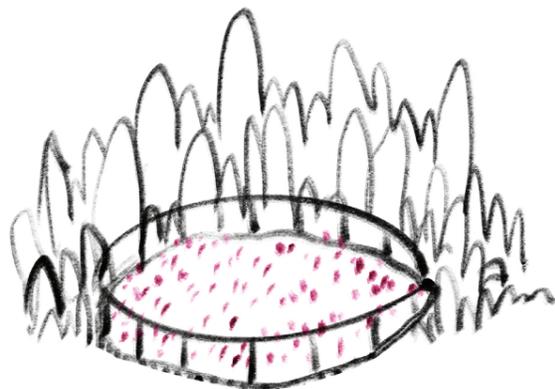
MATERIAL RELIC

Existing artefacts that signal the site industrial history provide identity and can therefore not be removed.



CUES TO CARE

A minimal sign of care - trimmed edges, clean borders, or defined boundaries - that frames surrounding wildness might be needed in some places.



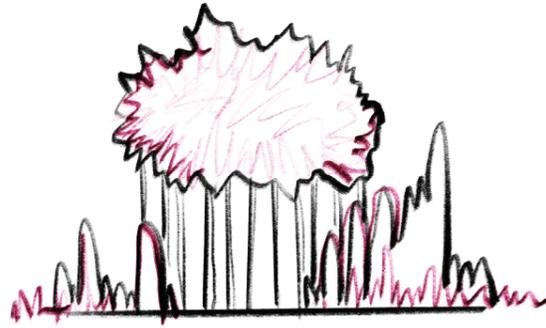
RUDERAL SUBSTRATE

Patches of gravelly, low-nutrient ground that create ecological conditions favouring resilient ruderal pioneer grasses and herbs can be used for bleed-out areas and to promote biodiversity.



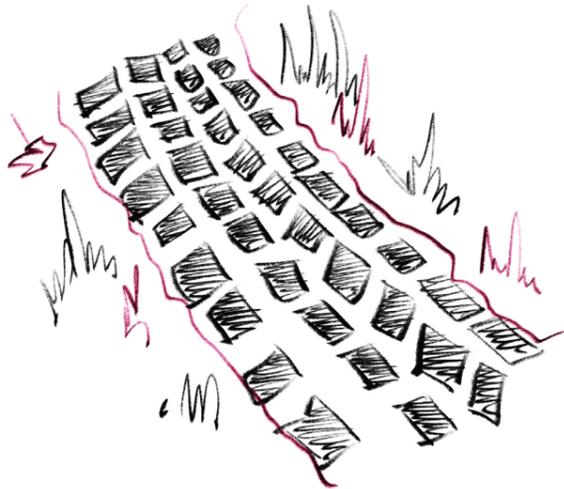
SPONTANEOUS GROWTH

Allow zones that can support unmanaged, self-seeded ruderal vegetation. Also means leaving dead wood in place to support microclimates.



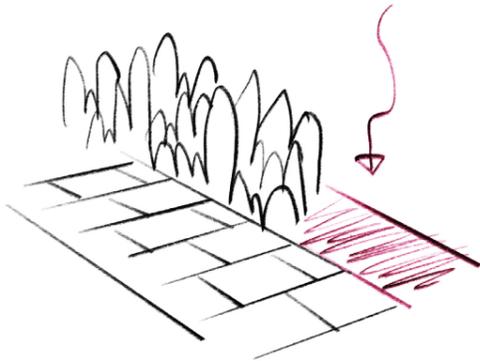
DISTURBANCE

Some zones need intentional or accidental disturbance to keep early-successional states (trampling, grazing, clearing, scraping), supporting dynamic ruderal ecologies.



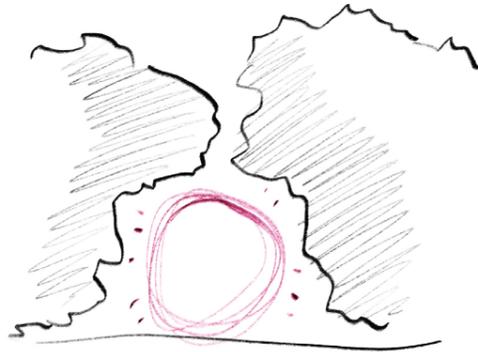
KEEP TO EDGES

Interventions need to be kept as much to the edges of the location as possible as these are the key thresholds to allow people inwards.



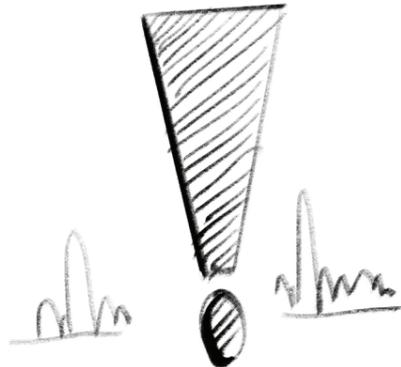
KEEP ENCLOSED FEEL

Interstitial spaces need to maintain a sense of privacy and enclosure to ensure looseness.



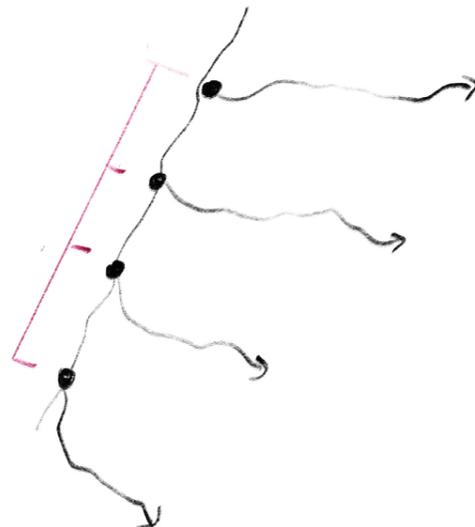
CONTEXT AWARENESS

Localised design modification should always respond to site-specific conditions.



ACCESS LOGIC

New access needs to make sense on a wandering pace or to connect to already existing desire paths.



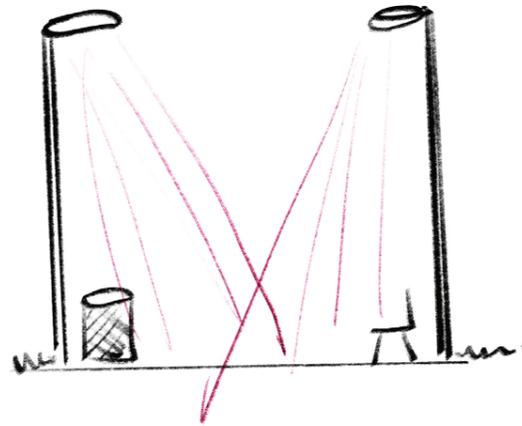
MINDFUL OF THE MARGINAL

Do extensive research to the communities that need this place. New accessibility cannot mean that marginal groups will have to leave.



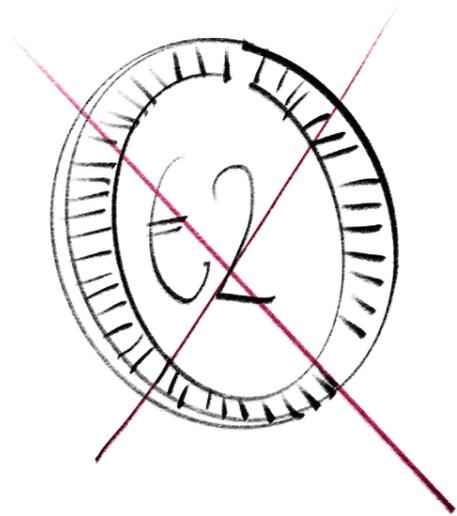
HARM IN HARMONISING

Do not make areas appear smoother, safer, cleaner. Do not make interstitial spaces harmonise with ordinary green spaces.



NO COMMERCE

There will never be commercial infills in interstitial spaces as these spaces are meant to be free for everyone to use.



DOING NOTHING IS ALSO OPTION

Sometimes intervening does more harm than good.
If interstitial qualities will disappear, it is best to do
nothing.

Interstitial Network Rotterdam North-West

How the interstitials can operate collectively as a network across the city



interstices
left-overs in project scope



public green
parks, allotment gardens, zoo's, countryside



connective possibility
option to be made visual or physical



major connection
overpass or breakthrough needed



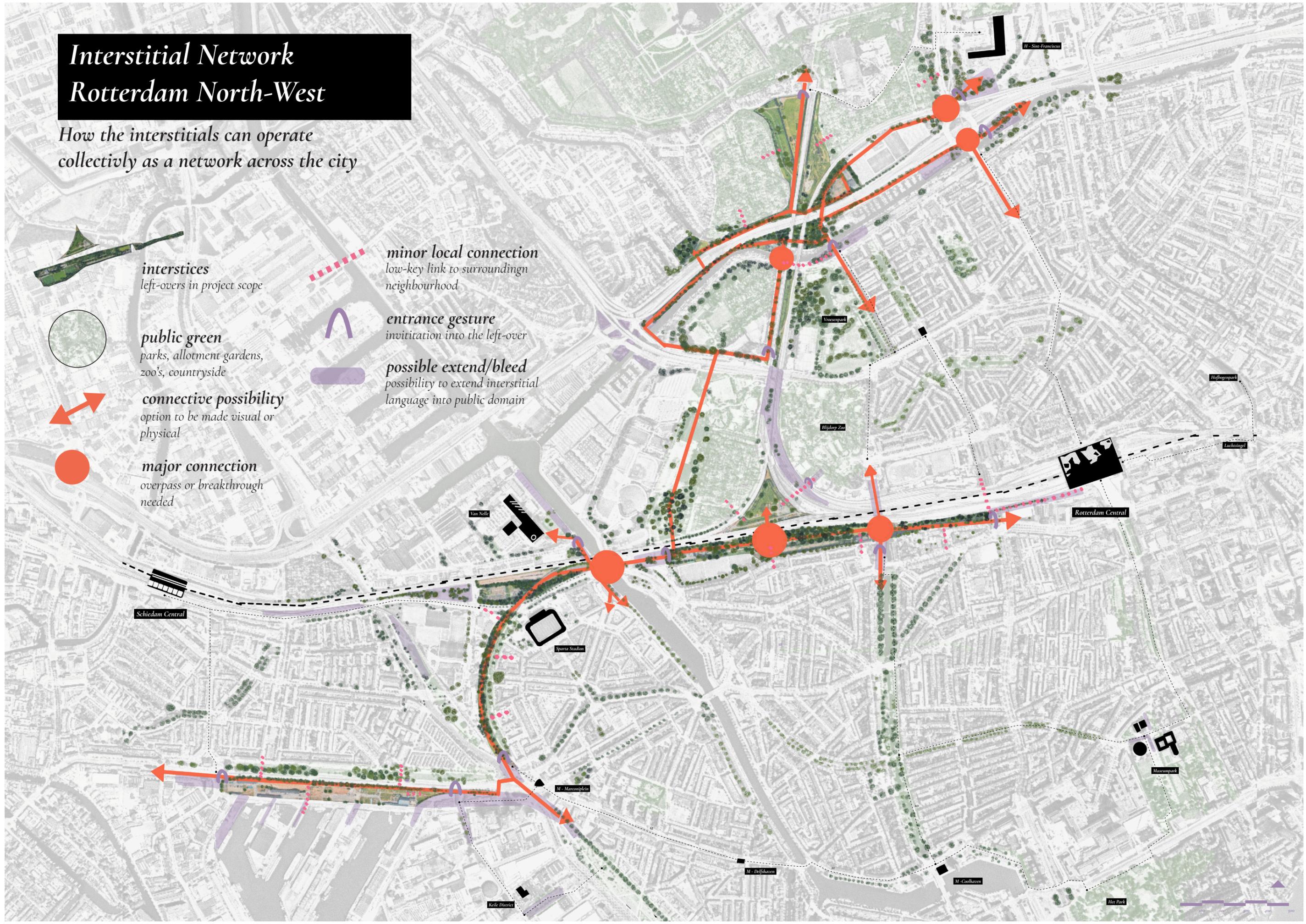
minor local connection
low-key link to surrounding neighbourhood

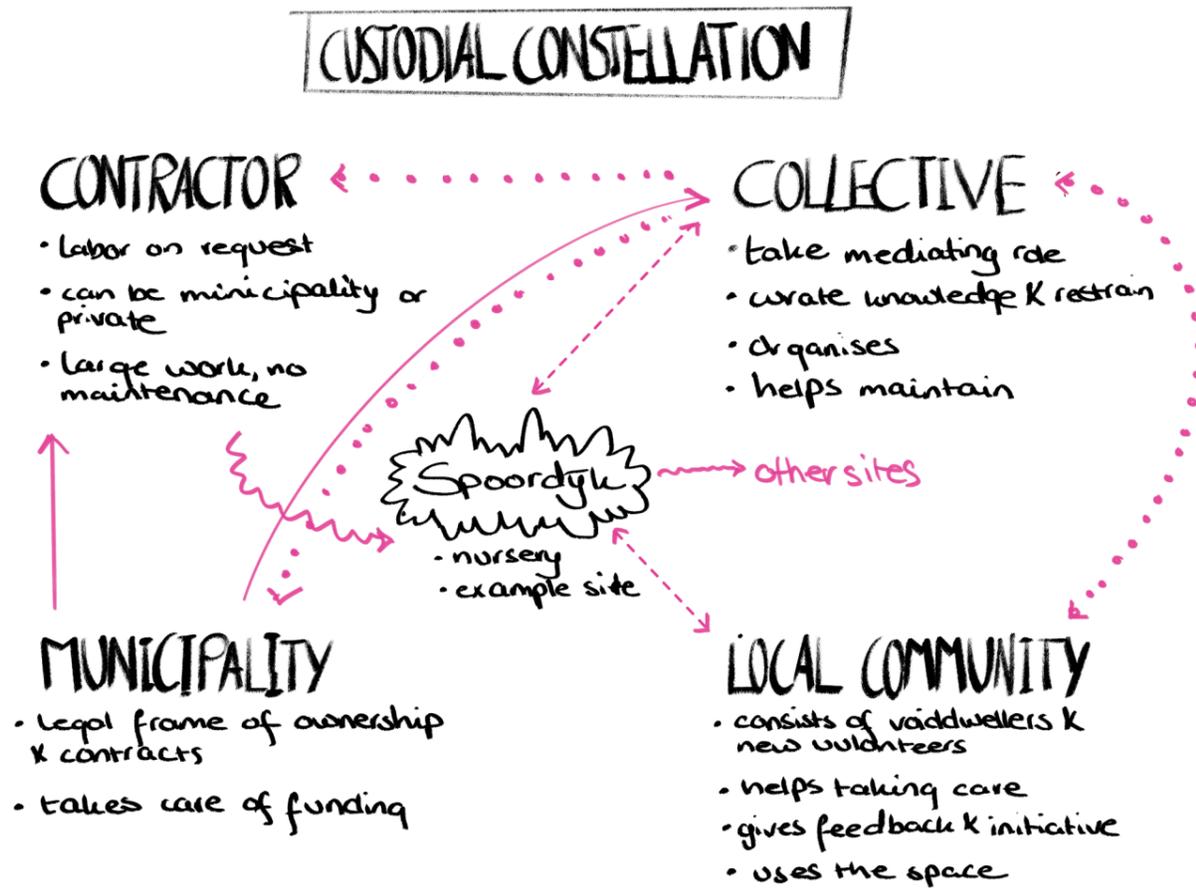


entrance gesture
invitation into the left-over



possible extend/bleed
possibility to extend interstitial language into public domain





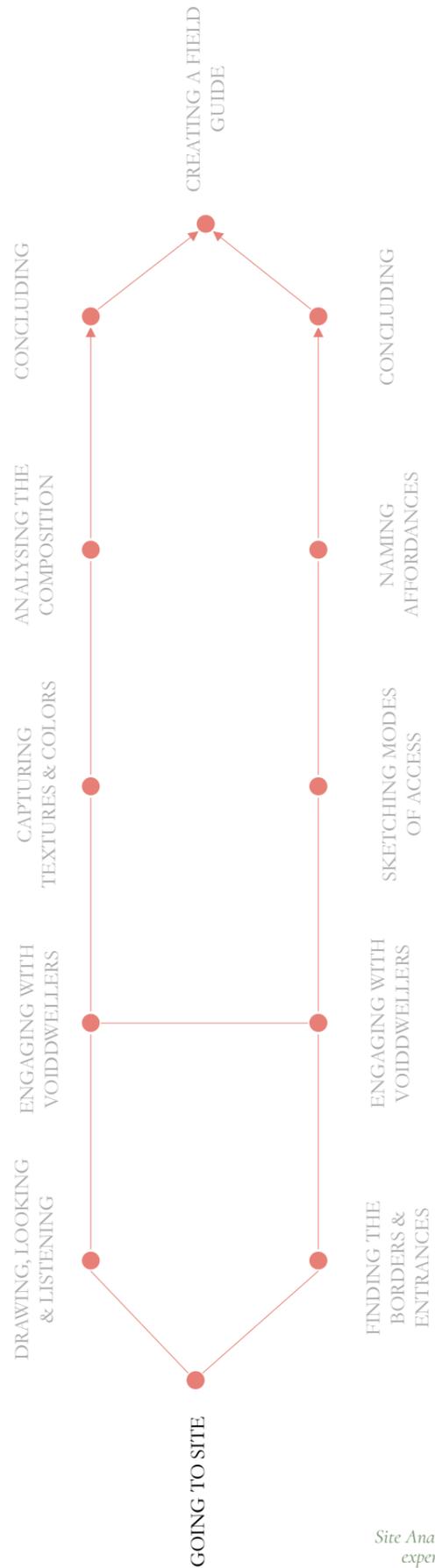
Custodial Constellation

The custodial constellation is a model of shared stewardship where roles radiate outward from a central collective. At the heart of this system is a group that assumes responsibility for both the knowledge and the restraint needed to manage and organize the space. This collective holds deep understanding of the local context, from ecological conditions to community needs, and applies it with care.

Around this core, local community gardens act as vital feedback loops, where residents become active participants in the ongoing evolution of the space. Their input helps refine and adapt the design, ensuring it remains responsive to both environmental changes and social dynamics. Meanwhile, the municipality provides a crucial support role, taking care of the necessary funding, navigating legal frameworks, and ensuring professional landscapers to do hardscaping. This partnership fosters a balance of local knowledge, community-driven engagement, and professional guidance, ensuring the space remains vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive over time.

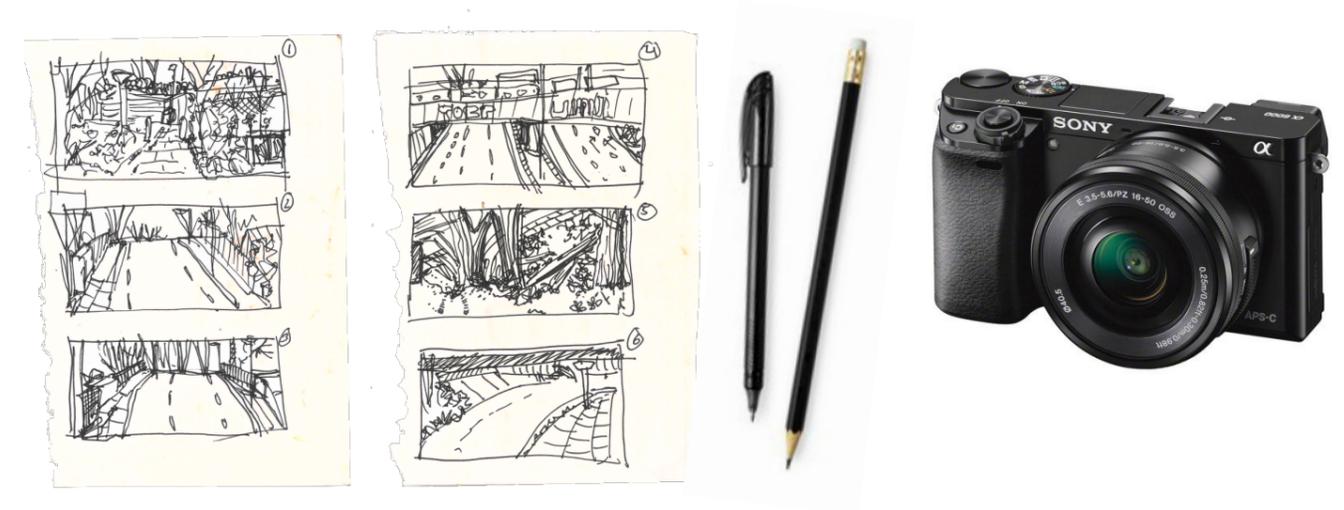
IMMERSIVE SITE ANALYSIS

Aesthetic & experiential qualities



Modes of access

Site Analysis methodology consisting of researching the aesthetic and experiential qualities as well as the modes of access on site. (Own Work, 2025)



Vroom
People laughing

zzzt
crows laughing

Poplar leaves
rustle in the wind

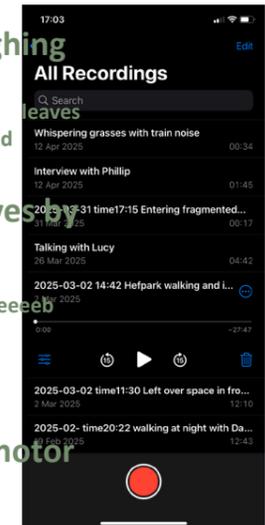
Metro drives by

Vroom Beeeb
BIRDS far away

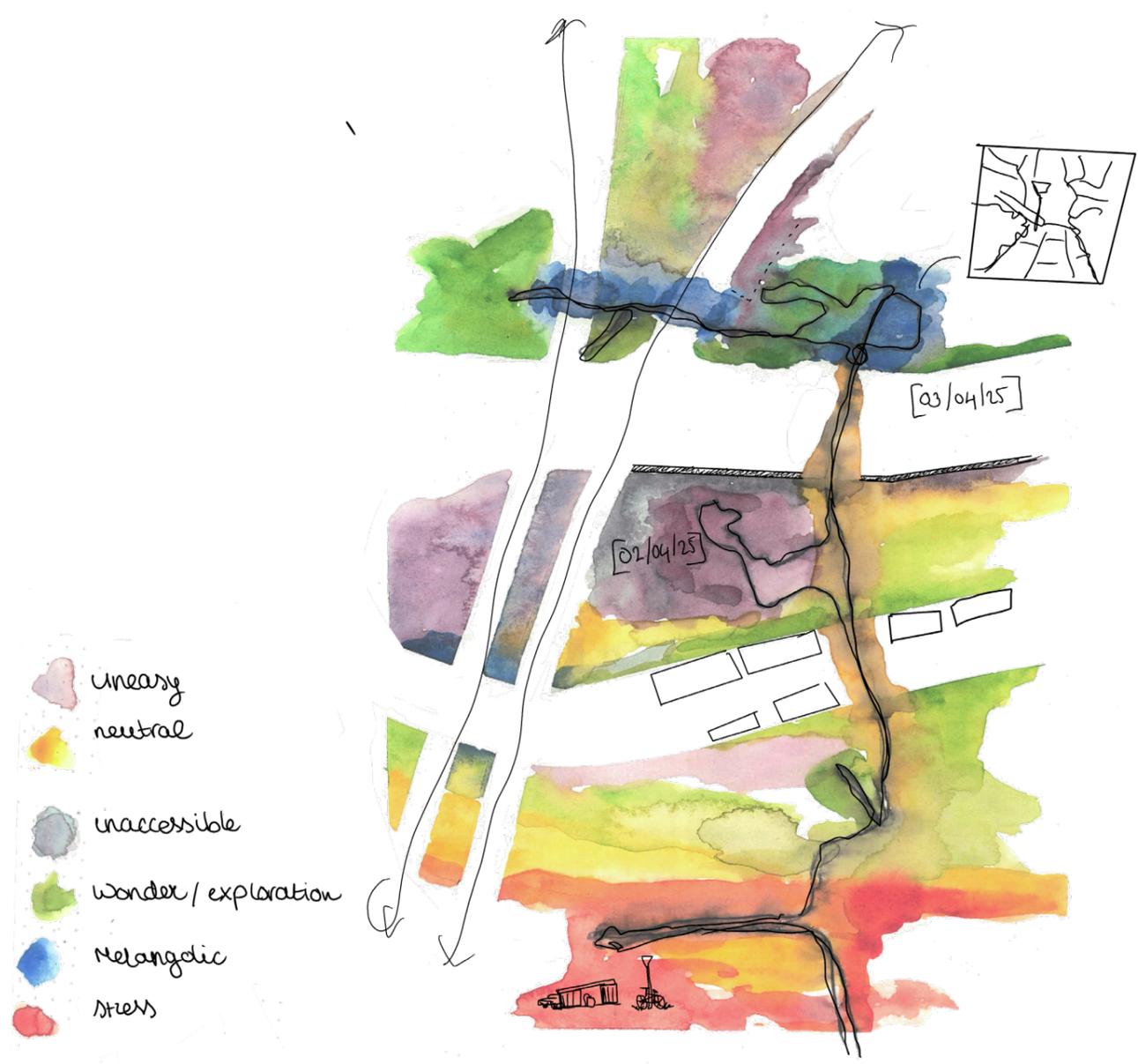
Crow motor

tram bunny?
definitely a bunny

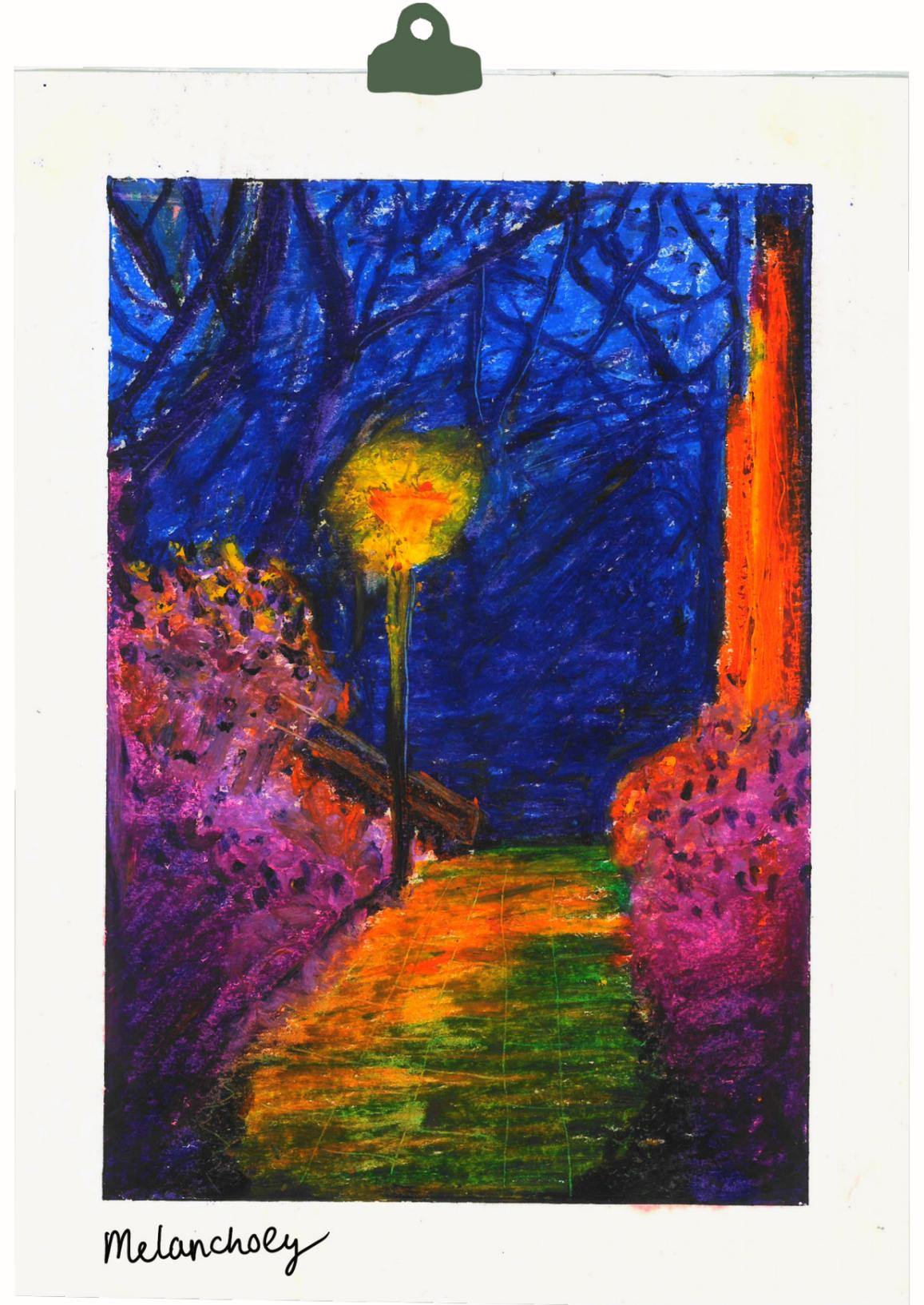
buzzing of insects



Aesthetic & Experiential qualities: Methods for 'drawing, looking, listening' during the site Analysis. (Own Work, 2025)

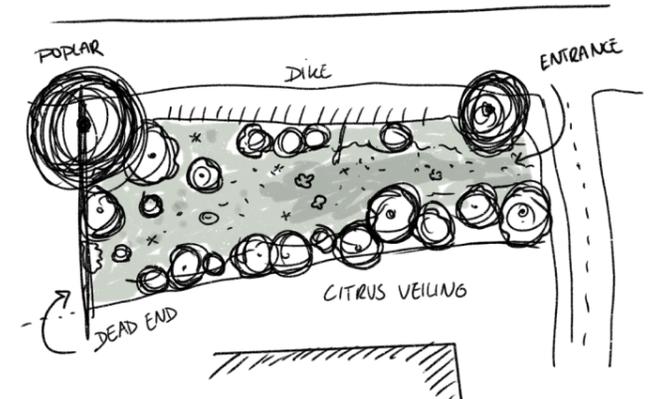
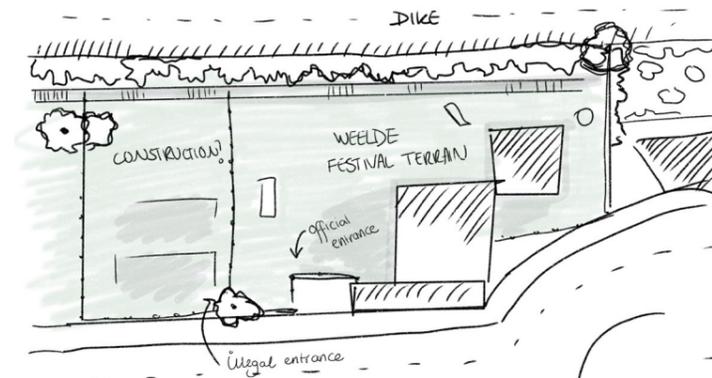
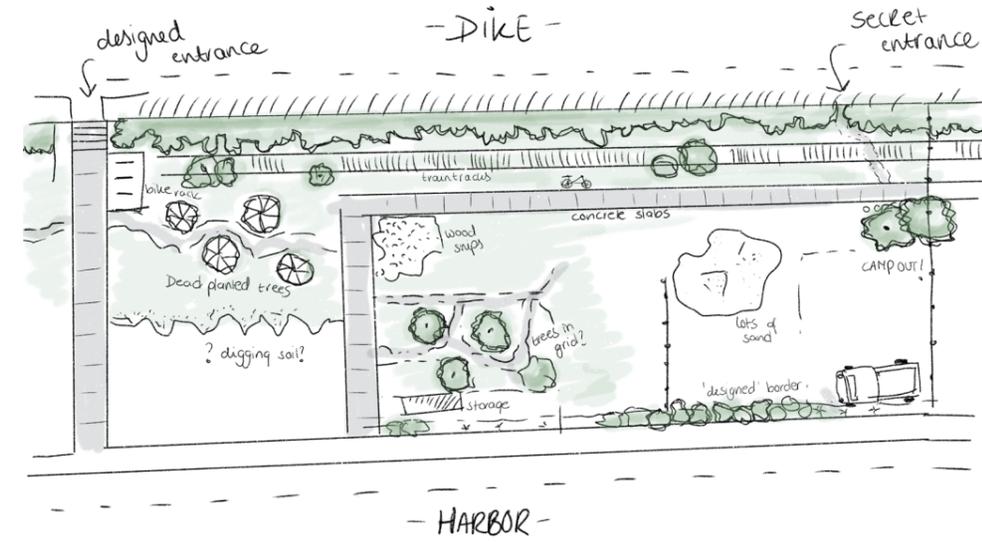


Aesthetic & Experiential qualities: Mapping my own emotions on site visits in location A. (Own Work, 2025)



Melancholy

Aesthetic & Experiential qualities: Visualisation of emotion 'Melancholy' at location A. (Own Work, 2025)



GOING TO SITE DRAWING, LOOKING & LISTENING ENGAGING WITH VOIDDWELLERS CAPTURING TEXTURES & COLORS ANNOTATING THE COMPOSITION CONCLUDING



Aesthetic & Experiential qualities: meeting with the voiddwellers on all locations. . (Own Work, 2025)

GOING TO SITE DRAWING, LOOKING & LISTENING ENGAGING WITH VOIDDWELLERS CAPTURING TEXTURES & COLORS ANNOTATING THE COMPOSITION CONCLUDING

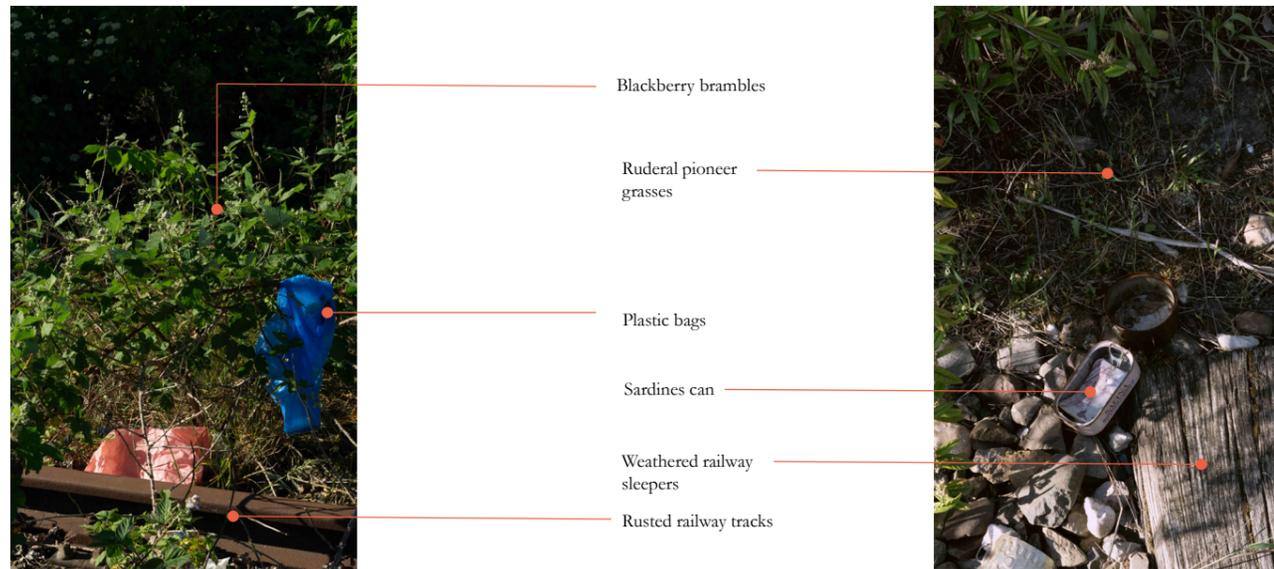


Aesthetic & Experiential qualities: Field visit drawings at location D. (Own Work, 2025)

APPENDIX | Site Analysis

(DIS)ENCHANTMENT OF THE INTERSTITIAL SPACE

ROUGH	LAYERED IN TIME	OBSCURE	HUMAN-SCALED	CONTRASTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild (invasive) plants • Exposed materials • Raw and unpolished materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traces of past uses • Multiple time periods coexisting • Ephemeral constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially hidden • Hard to read or define • Spatial secrecy • Tucked away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate proportions • Close-range materiality • Bodily resonance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong visual or material oppositions • Wild vs. constructed • Light vs. dark
freedom	discovery	intimacy	care & stewardship	tension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of being able to act without surveillance, rules or obligations • Freedom to use space creatively or unexpected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovering something hidden • Finding wild places • Being away from the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling out of sight • Slow paced • Quiet and undisturbed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactile engagement with space • Maintenance • Making • Gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unease • Unpredictability • Illicitly • Unsafety



Blackberry brambles

Ruderal pioneer grasses

Plastic bags

Sardines can

Weathered railway sleepers

Rusted railway tracks



Blackberry brambles

Ruderal pioneer grasses

Plastic bags

Sardines can

Weathered railway sleepers

Rusted railway tracks

ROUGH

LAYERED IN TIME

OBSCURE

HUMAN SCALED

CONTRASTING

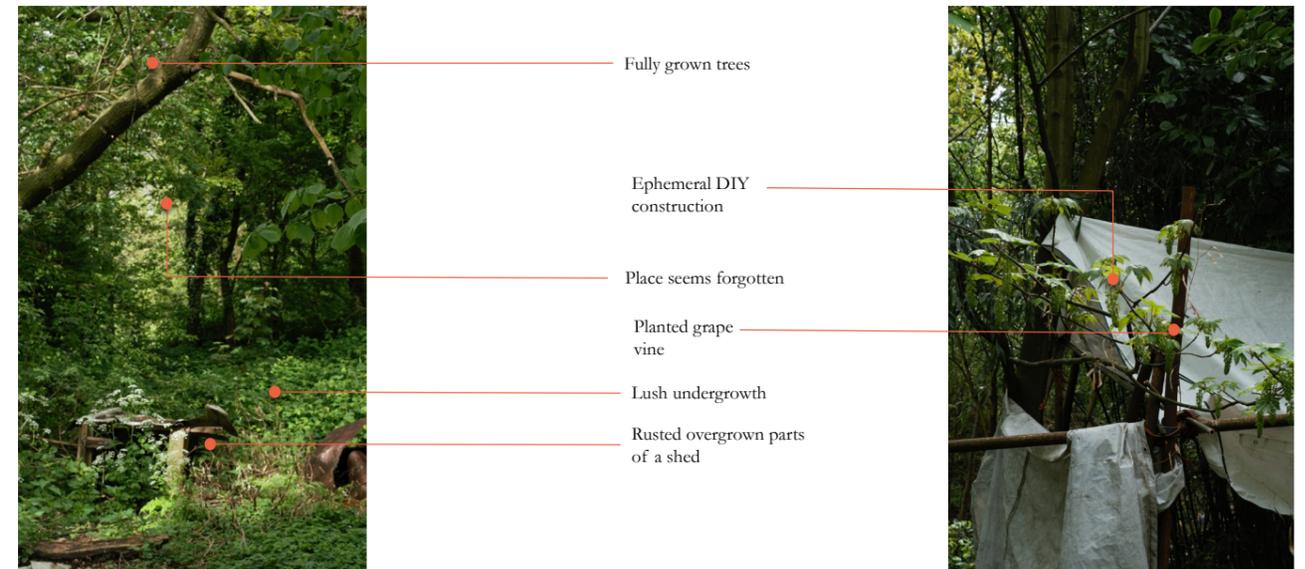
freedom

discovery

intimacy

care & stewardship

tension



Fully grown trees

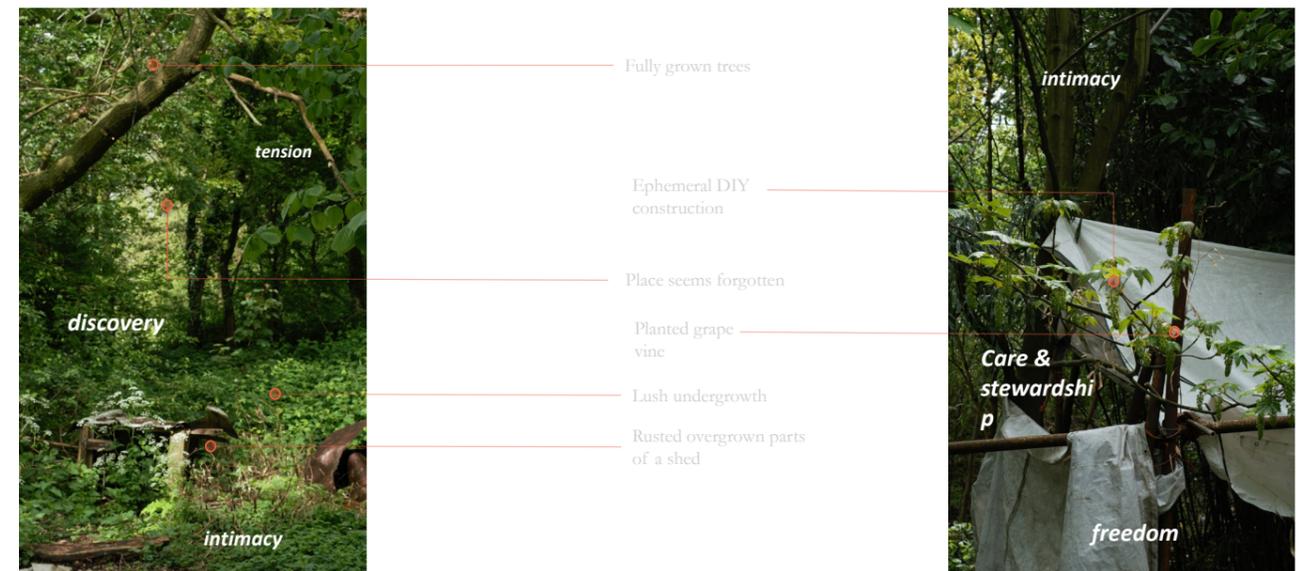
Ephemeral DIY construction

Place seems forgotten

Planted grape vine

Lush undergrowth

Rusted overgrown parts of a shed



Fully grown trees

Ephemeral DIY construction

Place seems forgotten

Planted grape vine

Lush undergrowth

Rusted overgrown parts of a shed

ROUGHNESS

TEMPORAL LAYERING

OBSCURETY

HUMAN SCALE

CONTRAST

freedom

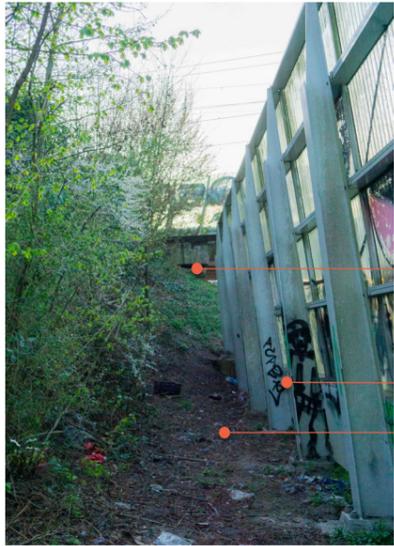
discovery

intimacy

care & stewardship

tension

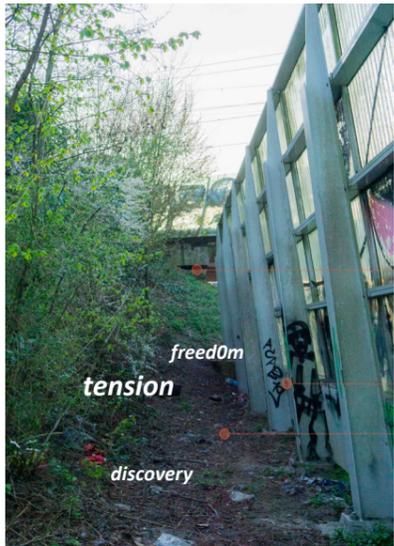
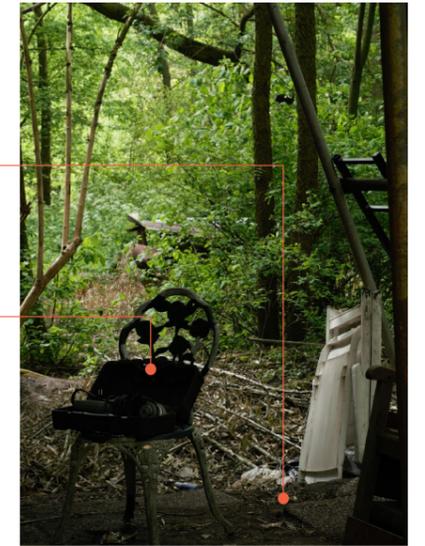
Concluding on the aesthetic & experiential qualities of the researched chain of interstitial spaces. (Own Work, 2025)



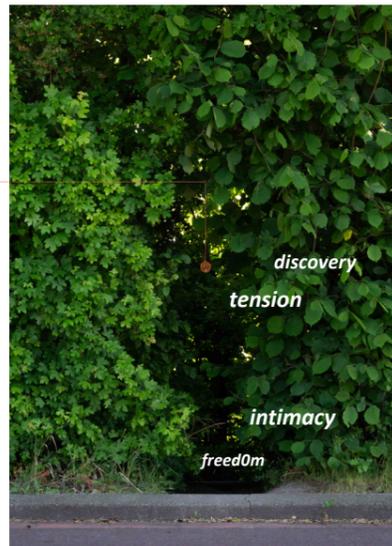
- Secret entrance
- Unknown destination
- Parted off by sound wall
- Debris littered path



- Garden tiles
- Gathered branches
- Decorative chair
- Makeshift campfire
- Reused bricks and sand



- Secret entrance
- Unknown destination
- Parted off by sound wall
- Debris littered path



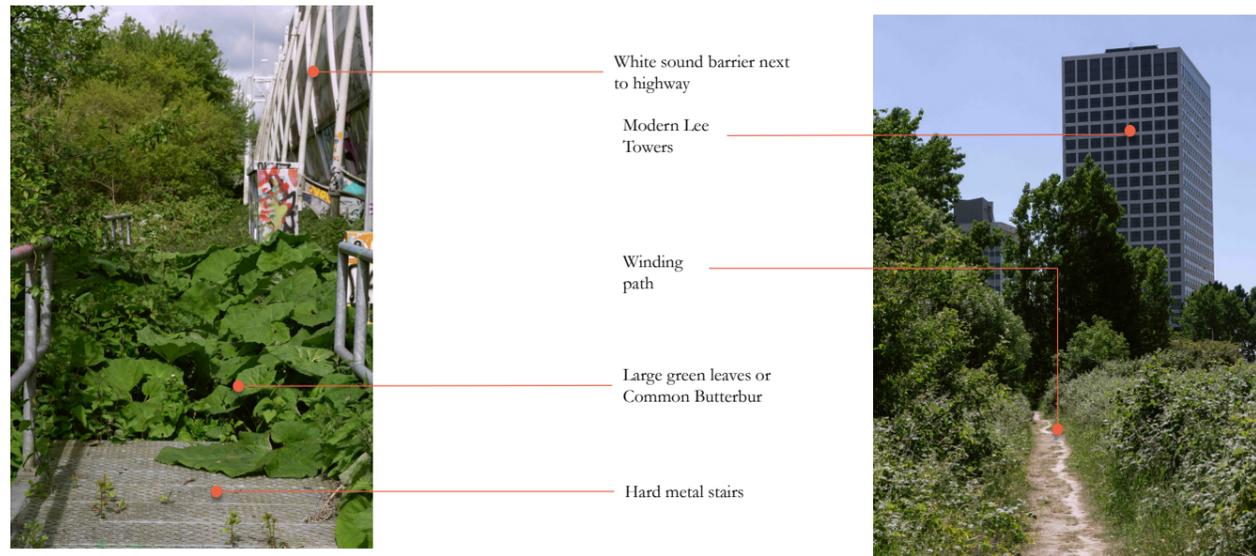
- Garden tiles
- Gathered branches
- Decorative chair
- Makeshift campfire
- Reused bricks and sand



ROUGH freedom LAYERED IN TIME discovery OBSCURE intimacy HUMAN SCALED care & stewardship CONTRASTING tension

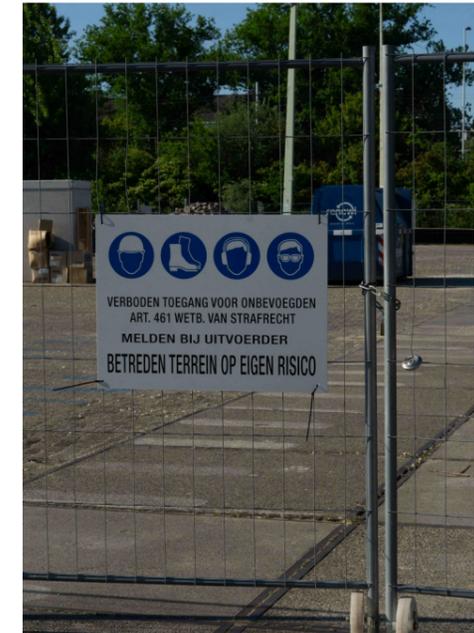
ROUGH freedom LAYERED IN TIME discovery OBSCURE intimacy HUMAN SCALED care & stewardship CONTRASTING tension

Concluding on the aesthetic & experiential qualities of the researched chain of interstitial spaces. (Own Work, 2025)



ROUGH freedom LAYERED IN TIME discovery OBSCURE intimacy HUMAN SCALED care & stewardship CONTRASTING tension

Concluding on the aesthetic & experiential qualities of the researched chain of interstitial spaces. (Own Work, 2025)



GOING TO SITE FINDING THE BORDERS & ENTRANCES ENGAGING WITH VOIDDWELLERS SKETCHING MODES OF ACCESS NAMING THE AFFORDANCES CONCLUDING

Modes of Access: Finding the borders and entrances across all the research locations. (Own Work, 2025)

IF ...



THEN..



IF ...



THEN..



CONCLUDING

GOING TO SITE

FINDING THE BORDERS & ENTRANCES

ENGAGING WITH VOIDDWELLERS

SKETCHING MODES OF ACCESS

NAMING THE AFFORDANCES

CONCLUDING

GOING TO SITE

FINDING THE BORDERS & ENTRANCES

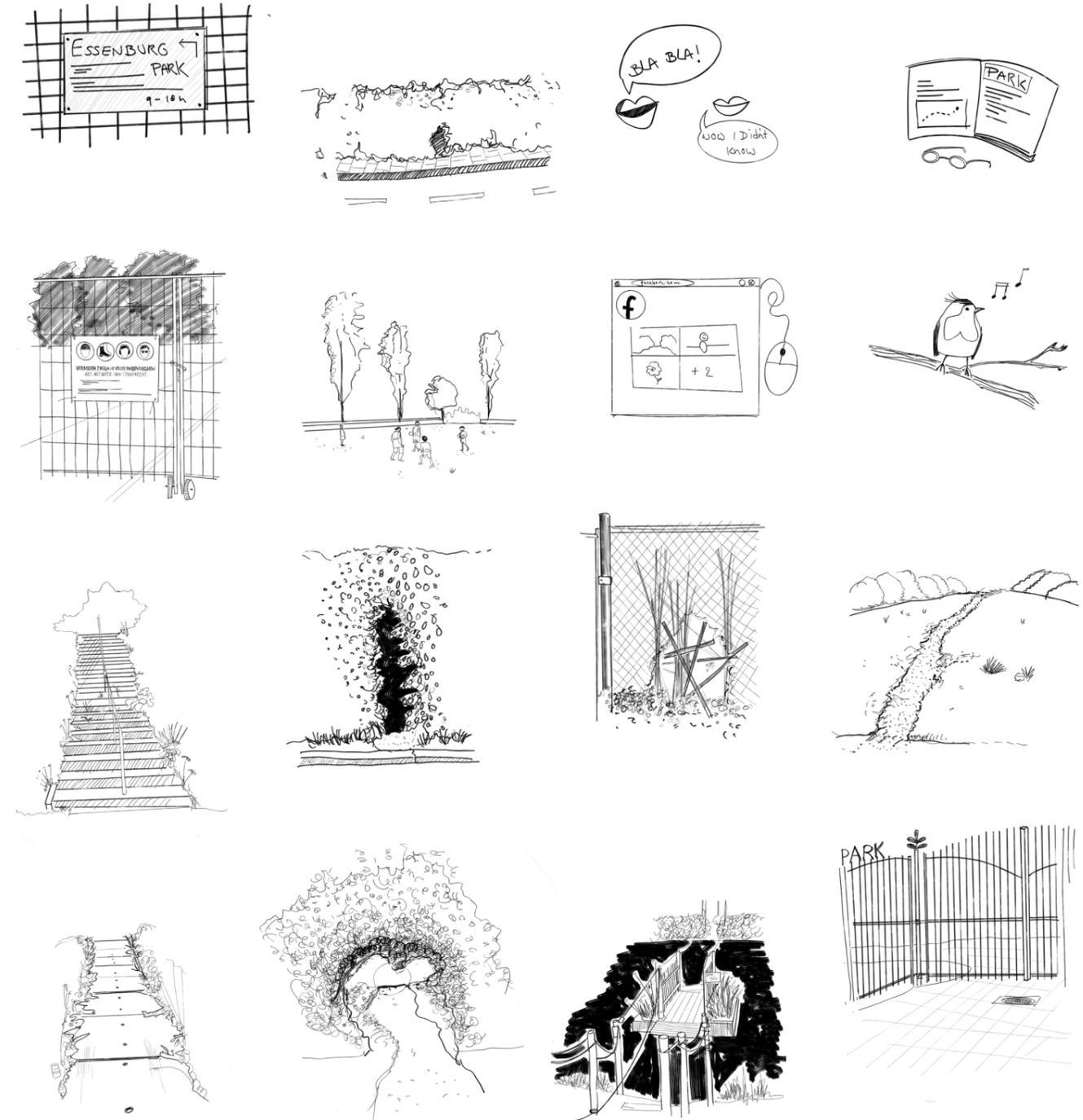
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SKETCHING MODES OF ACCESS

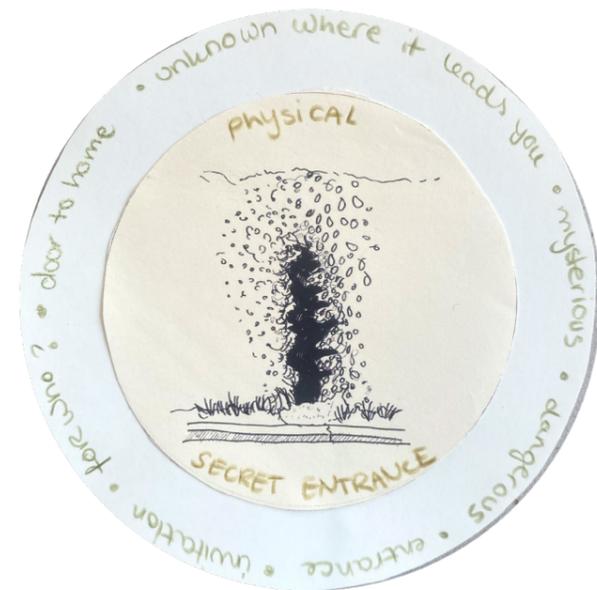
NAMING THE AFFORDANCES

CONCLUDING

Modes of Access: Engaging with the voiddwellers in relation to their way of accessing the site. It can be concluded that multiple ways of entering the site can be interpreted in different manners relating to whom is using it. Two examples above show that voiddwellers often have their own system of access that does not fully relate to programmed/designed urban spaces. A closed fence can to a graffiti artist mean they can work undisturbed, a hole in a hedge can be the front door to someones temporary home. (Own Work, 2025)

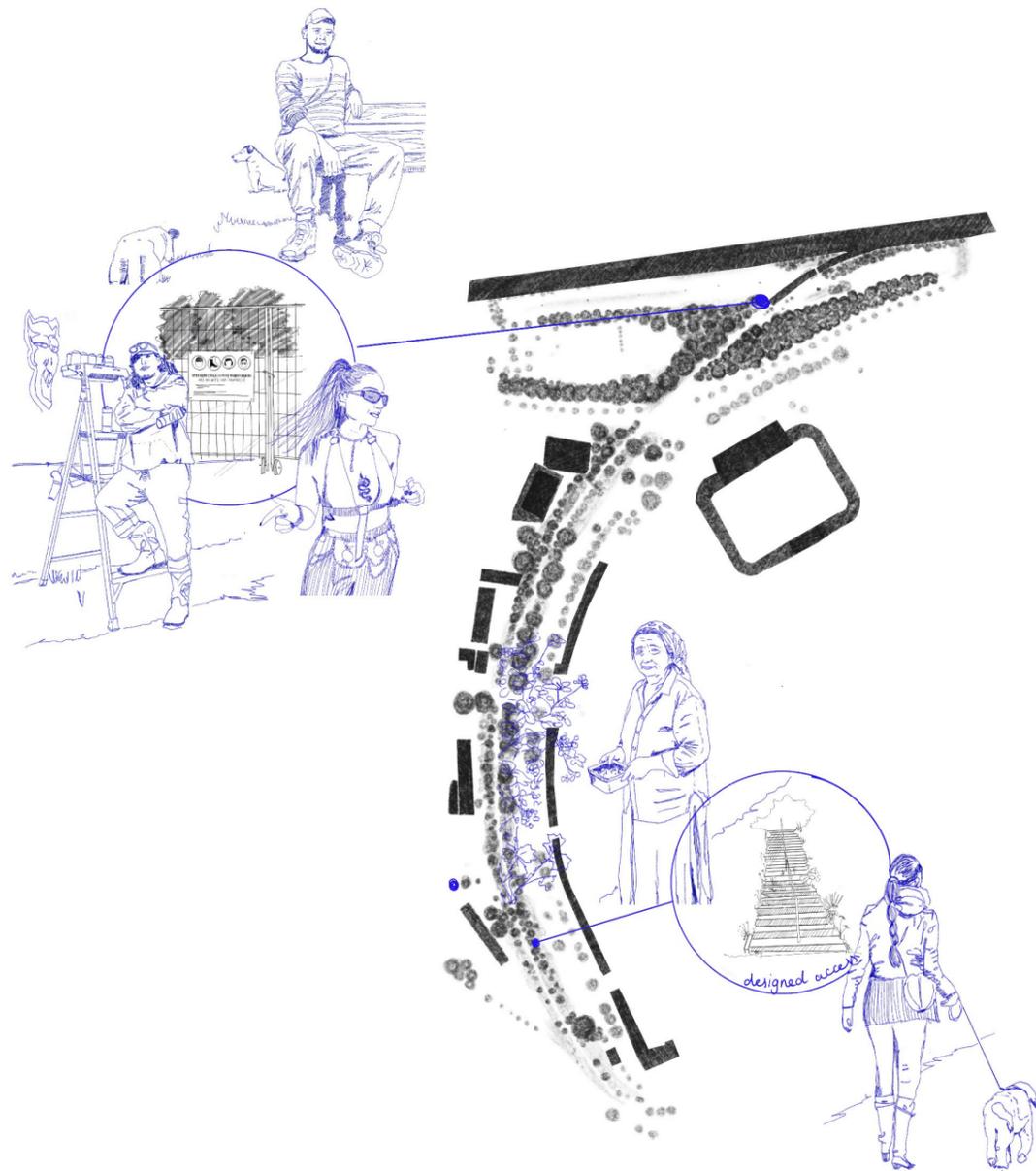


Modes of Access: Sketching Modes of Access that are found across all 4 research locations. (Own Work, 2025)



Modes of Access: naming the affordances. When grouping the ways of access, it appears to consist of three different categories; mental access, visual access and physical access. Each mode also has its own divergence of meanings to offer to different public. Therefore being sometimes contradictory, being safe and enclosed as well as scary and private. This shows the complexity of understanding the systems of the interstitial space, and how they are used as public arena. (Own Work, 2025)

Modes of Access: naming the affordances. Two examples of visual and physical access. (Own Work, 2025)



GOING TO SITE FINDING THE BORDERS & ENTRANCES ENGAGING WITH VOIDDWELLERS SKETCHING MODES OF ACCESS NAMING THE AFFORDANCES CONCLUDING



Modes of Access: Concluding. It can be concluded that different users of the space all have their own way of accessing the space. Some of the types of access is more relevant for more 'regular' urban activities; eg. walking your dog, going for a jog, while other type of entrances seem to accommodate more unregular or somewhat illicit activities, eg. graffitiing, bmx'ing, organizing raves or building shelter. (Own Work, 2025)





14-05-2025

Converstation with Phillip

I am biking towards the spoortuin east entrance when I lock my bike and see two half drunk guys with beers also coming up to the entrance. I have a good think and realize that I actually do not feel safe entering the linear park that makes up the spoortuin wearing the shortest skirt I own in my whole wardrobe. I should plan my site visit outfits better. I guess this is what you get for doing your thesis research in your own city, every moment becomes a moment of observation.

As I am feeling silly for my cowardice I bike towards the east side of the Spoortuin, I know that there are vegetable gardens over there and I think I will feel more socially blend in over there.

Harnessed with my camera in my hand (my camera has become my invitation to linger and talk to people) I enter the garden and walk towards the stone stacked beds. I say hi to some people there, and before you know it a man that is gardening approaches me and asks what I am doing. He asks me if I am with the On-Site course of this year. I explained to him that I did that last year and that now I am doing my graduation about fringe zones in Rotterdam, just like this one. We both suddenly realize we already know each other, and that we have met at multiple instances, like when I did the elective last year and with a volunteering project I did with Stads-Park West. He already gave me a tour through Essenburg Park exactly a year ago. We talk a while before he makes sure that actually he is working and that it is better if I follow him to the pump, to and fro all the plant beds. The garden is made up of geometric shapes made out of stacked pavement tiles, very Louis le Roy, where the paths come together, there is a star shaped bed. These are not from any of the gardeners, they are more for the show, and as it is such a dry year Philip waters them thoroughly.

We speak about the project and about these two locations. He tells me that these areas were all NS territory and fell perfectly outside of the municipality maintenance plans and were therefore overgrown with all kinds of trees like willows and poplars and birches. The neighborhood got eyes on the location when NS wanted to cut the trees down for the very arbitrary reason of having a better view from the street of possible graffiti artists painting on their trains. Naturally the neighbourhood was not a fan of this idea as all the wild trees were blocking the views on the trains, and probably even muting the sound.

When the neighborhood finally got through to the municipality to use this area as a green space the municipality asked them what they wanted so that they could make a design. But that, as Philip said, was of course besides the whole point. We liked the wild character, there was already so much there and we rather wanted to do it ourselves. So we did!

He stops mid story, there is a fly that he wants to photograph. He sits down next to me and explains that it is a fly that acts like a bumblebee as he uploads it into ObsIdentify.

Then he hushes me, he is wondering what that high pitched bird sound is coming from the bushes. I am afraid I cannot answer his questions. He then tells me that next week is Bioblitz, a day where they observe all the animals they can see that day in a specific location. Philip seems very, very up to date with all the local community activities that are going on.

There are future plans as well. I asked him about the proposed connection over the train viaduct connecting essenburg park with de Spoortuin, he agreed that that still stands. 'We would even love to extend this towards where the Central station buses stop, if you would open up that train viaduct crossing the main street, you could link these areas all together.

'You know, all the initiatives, the green initiatives, the neighborhood initiatives, the social cohesive initiatives, they all want the same thing, its space. Space to be, to create, to connect, space to play'. He mentioned multiple times the importance of the latter, space to play. I ask him what that means, and I think he is aiming at literal space to be, without program, without obligations, and to meet. So these spaces are important and we want them to stay in our hands, not those of the municipality. Visibility is a large issue in that matter, not only physical but also mentally. "That is why, when we were arguing with the municipality about Essenburgpark to be under our control, we started the Groene Connectie. By making it visible that this fringe of urban wilderness connects places and fits into a bigger whole, we were standing stronger in our 'Essenburg Park' case."

He tells me that many people use this area, and the already built before NS house/shack which functions as neighborhood living room (also from his initiative Huize Middelland) where at this very moment they are hosting a refugee gathering where they are making a cooking book. "For some reason this little house seems a good place to have hard conversations, maybe because it is detached from the city, a little bit outside."

He also talks about Farouk, a man that he claims is only able to live on the fringes. I ask him what he means with that, does he not go into the city?

He means that Farouk is not able to make plans, be somewhere on an agreed time or work in that matter of sense. He needs spaces like this, where he can just be himself.

The longer I hobble behind Philips' quick pace, the more I see the amount of work that has been put into this space. How much work a garden takes, or to be a gardener for that matter. A few stacked up tiles become a really beautiful compost place, or a meticulously laid out vegetable bed, a campfire or bench.

3 young teens around their 15's are hanging on one of these benches. It reminds me of how I used to sneak into the woods around the campground on holiday with my friends, just out of sight of my parents, building god knows with the materials we found. There is a certain relaxation here.

Philip and I speak a little more about how hard it is to find this balance (where this whole project is about) between accessing and over formalizing. About how he hates signs, telling you what you can and cannot do. How a gate could be an invitation, but could also look like it is wearing people off. About how the municipality wanted to make bridges on every street crossing towards Essenburg Park. The Fringe qualities are quickly lost when you start to make it super accessible.

We finished the hour-long conversation by him promising to give me Catherine number. She is a landscape architect who is dealing with exactly this balance, here in Essenburg Park, the Groene Connectie and the Spoortuin.

He also tells me numerous times and dates that they are working in the gardens, and he invites me to join their Monday 9am maintenance team. "For the able bodied, you can cancel your gym membership when you join us", he laughs. Funnily enough that is just where I was heading afterwards.







The Playzone (end of traintrack)

19-05-2025

Informal
Dead end of the Spoordijk
Good views over whole area

Why do we come here? To spot trains as well? Haha no.. My friend made that tag on the train that just went past. I think it is the one from Hoek van Holland, it drives up to central station and then comes back. So let see, 15 minutes from now it drives back around? I better get a picture of that tag tho, it looks cool as.

But no no, we are graffiti artists. And well, this is one of the only left places in Rotterdam where we can spray without anybody telling us off. If not here you could go to Schuttersveld or that little tunnel in Overschie (see chapter 1), those are all 'legalized', this one is more underground tho.

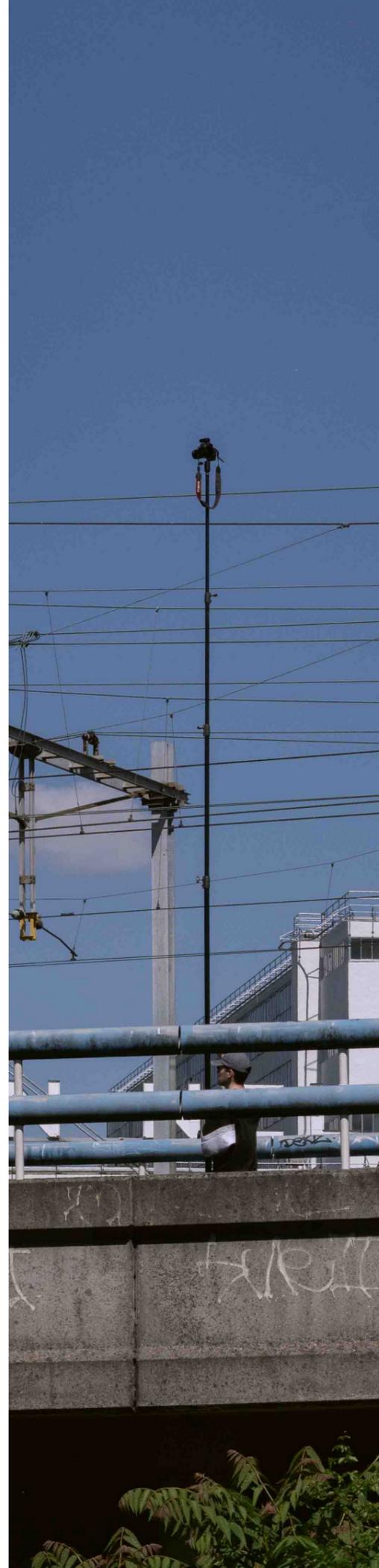
Because it is so hard to access (by car) ofcourse. If the gate down there is closed, we know the police is not patrouilling here. But the other day, we were under the trainbridge with a whole diy scaffolding to make this big piece, they just drove by and said nothing, haha. They don't care about this place, it's of the football club Sparta for extra parking. It's just an overflow terrain for cars, but humans use this all the time ofcourse.

Yeah this place is important for us, I mean just look back for a second, doesn't that view - with all those wild trees, the signal poles and old rails - look super sick. It reminds me of Berlin, the roughness and the 'just do whatever you want'.

Shit!!! Was that that train?? Fuck man, literally had my phone out, but it was in selfie mode, shit. Oh man, that sucks.

But yeah, do you have contacts with the municipality? Can you tell them to not built here? This is like literally one of the last wild places of the city.

Hey, but don't rat us out heh.





The Rock Garden



11-05-2025

Informal
 Dead end, but people have been here
 No appropriation, space feels oddly 'untouched'

I walked in here from the pedestrian path, sneaking in between the 'Citrusveiling' fence and the Schiedamseweg dike leading to Schiedam. I am unsure when I approach if i might be mistaken, I'm unsure if this is really the place I thought it was. Perhaps my desk work had lead me to the wrong place.

But then it appears, the old rock bed laid for the traintracks leading to the big old shunting yard. This used to be the traintrack connecting the whole of the Merwehaven to the rest of Rotterdam. Yet, there are no rails or wooden slots to be found anymore, just this almost uncanningly clean rockbed. It kind of looks like a 'Rockery' with alpine plants growing here and there.

I see the most beautiful pink flowers, I have never seen it before.

I walk further down and the space feels narrow and like everyone can see me as there is no screening from the dike or the fence on both sides. People must wonder what the hell I am doing here. People laugh at me from their car, music is playing around me. After all, it is a sunday and 30 degrees celcius.

I Walk further down and the vegetation becomes denser, the dike higher and the space wider. Poplars have settled here and there, rusting in the warm wind.

I see a bunny! It shoots away.

When I walk further down, trying to follow it, I realise there is a fence at the back, overgrown with plants.

It is a dead end.

I feel safe back here, hidden, out of sight. Out of the wind the sun is burning on my back and the rustling of the poplars makes me feel at ease. This is a very nice place.

....

Vroom
 P e o p l e
 laughing

zzzt

Door shut bangs

Poplar leaves rustle in the wind

Metro drives by

Vroom Beeeeb
 brids far away

Crow motor

tram bunny?
 defenitly a bunny

buzzing of insects





Interview met Joost – Hefpark

Ik: Ik ben aan het afstuderen op stedelijke tussenruimtes.

Joost: Ja, dat is dit precies, hè?

Ik: Ik begin gradaties te zien in hoe zulke ruimtes worden beheerd. Dit wordt beheerd door bewoners, neem ik aan?

Joost: Ja, dit is een initiatief van de bewoners, het hele park. Officieel is het geen park, maar een onbebouwd bouwterrein. Zo staat het in de papieren. Dit was jarenlang een zandvlakte, en twaalf jaar geleden zijn de bewoners hier zelf aan de slag gegaan. Ik zit nu in het bestuur van het park en heb zelf ook landschapsarchitectuur gestudeerd, in Larenstein.

(Joost geeft een andere man instructies om de kruiwagen buiten te laten staan.)

Ik: Er zijn veel tussenruimtes die niet zo intensief beheerd worden. Het lijkt me dat participatie zoals hier bijdraagt aan de waarde van de plek, ook in de ogen van de gemeente.

Joost: Ja, dat klopt. Daar zijn wij als bestuur hard mee bezig.

Ik: Ik kan me voorstellen dat dit park onder druk staat vanuit de gemeente. Willen ze hier niet bouwen?

Joost: Het staat altijd onder druk, maar we zijn ook met leuke dingen bezig. Binnen twee maanden gaan we het westelijke deel van het park vernieuwen. Er komt een grote kinderspeeltuin, en de entree wordt parkachtiger met bankjes. Een echte upgrade. Ook het volleybalveld wordt opgeknapt.

(Een andere man mengt zich in het gesprek en vertelt dat hij vorig jaar veel heeft geschoffeld.)

Onbekende man: Maar wat gaan jullie nog meer doen? Gaan die tuintjes allemaal weg?

Joost: Nee, in maart komt er een mooi houten hek omheen, zodat het er vanaf de buitenkant eenduidig uitziet. Nu oogt het rommelig. En als we nog budget overhouden want we hebben aardig wat subsidies binnengehaald dan gaan we ook de betegeling aanpakken.

Ik: Maar ik neem aan dat jullie het belangrijk vinden dat het park een beetje dat rommelige karakter behoudt?

Joost: Dat is een goede vraag. Ik hou daarvan, maar je ziet dat sommige mensen daardoor het park niet in durven.

Ik: Denk je dat dat een probleem is? Dat sommige mensen zich hier niet welkom voelen? Er zijn natuurlijk genoeg aangehakte parken in Rotterdam vergeleken met dit soort plekken.

Joost: Dat is waar. Veel mensen lopen er langs maar hebben geen idee dat ze gewoon naar binnen kunnen. Daarom willen we de entrees versterken en een uitnodigend pad aanleggen dat een centraal punt creëert en verbindt met de Koninginnebrug richting de Jumbo. Daar werken we aan, maar omdat we alles vrijwillig doen, gaat het langzaam.

Ik: Maar dat geeft ook ruimte voor een open einde. Dingen gebeuren op hun eigen tijd, en niet alles ligt van tevoren vast.

Joost: Precies. We hebben een zelfbeheercontract met de gemeente. Onze tegenprestatie is dat we het park schoonhouden en het groenbeheer doen. We hebben hier een jaar over onderhandeld, en op basis daarvan kunnen we veel subsidies aanvragen.

Ik: Had de gemeente plannen voor dit gebied?

Joost: Er loopt een treintunnel onderdoor, dus je kunt hier niks bouwen. Dat is een geluk voor deze plek. Anders waren hier allang torens verzezen.

Ik: En die mannen met dat rommelige kippen- en duivenhok? Hoe zijn die hier terechtgekomen?

Joost: Ja, leuk hè? Daar houdt natuurlijk niet iedereen van. Het linker gedeelte gaan we wel opruimen, en ze krijgen een geüpgradede kinderboerderij. Ze vragen altijd om geld eigenlijk vraagt iedereen hier constant om geld.

Ik: Hoe is het hier 's nachts?

Joost: Dan ben ik er zelf niet, natuurlijk. Bedoel je qua veiligheid? Dit park is een afspiegeling van de maatschappij, en daar hoort ook baldadigheid bij. Als iets niet stevig genoeg is, wordt het soms gesloopt. Er komen ook dakloze mensen, vaak met verslavingsproblematiek. Ik heb daar niets tegen, maar ze laten rommel achter en beschadigen soms dingen. Ze slapen ook in de tuintjes, omdat ze daar uit het zicht liggen. Daarom plaatsen we een hek met een poort, zodat het 's nachts afgesloten kan worden.

Onbekende man: Als je er een hek omheen zet, wordt het misschien juist aantrekkelijker.

Ik: Kun je hier nog een tuintje krijgen?

Joost: Je kunt je inschrijven op de wachtlijst. Op de website staat een e-mailadres

Interview met Jaco – Zomerhofstraat (02/03/2025)

*Jaco (50)
Dakloos, slaapt in opvang.*

Ik: Hi! Lekker plekje, zit je hier vaker?

Jaco: Ja, hier op het bankje wel. Dit is echt lekker in de zon.

Ik: Ik doe onderzoek naar wilde plekken in de stad.

Jaco: Nou, dan ben je hier op de juiste plek. Maar ik zou niet om het hoekje gaan, daar zit de drugsopvang.

Ik: Doet de gemeente hier iets aan?

Jaco: Een man genaamd Jan beheert dit terrein. Hij gaat ook de tramwagon opknappen en daar komen waarschijnlijk opvangplekken. Hij is in contact met de burgemeester en wethouders.

Ik: En wat gaat hiervan gemaakt worden?

Jaco: Alles wordt een beetje opgeknapt, maar het blijft wel natuurlijk. Gewoon iets mooier allemaal.

Ik: Wat betekent mooier voor jou?

Jaco: Nou, een beetje de rommel opruimen en het groen bijhouden.

Ik: Het zou mooi zijn als je een balans vindt, toch? Waar de natuur haar gang kan gaan, maar waar mensen geen oude bankstellen dumpen.

Jaco: Ja, precies.

Ik: Heeft deze plek eigenlijk een naam?

Jaco: Nee, er staat ook geen bordje of zo. Jan woont hier in de buurt, ergens hierboven. Maar kijk uit om het hoekje, daar zitten jongens buiten en die zorgen altijd voor gedoe. Geen leuke gasten.

Ik: Ik onderzoek tussenruimtes plekken die vaak onopgemerkt blijven. Hier kan de natuur verwilderen en ontstaat er een bio-hotspot. Daarnaast lijkt het alsof mensen hier meer vrijheid voelen dan in een aangehakt parkje.

Jaco: Ja. Weet je wat Jan echt erg vindt? Dat die jongens van om de hoek hier rond twee uur 's nachts knetterwaus van de cocaine in de tuin drugs gebruiken. Dan wordt hij boos en stuurt hij ze weg. Ik zit hier gewoon met m'n biertje en ruim alles netjes op.

Ik: Zit je liever hier dan in een net park?

Jaco: Ja, de sfeer is hier fijner. Een park dat helemaal spik en span is, dat vind ik niks.

Ik: Interessant dat we zulke plekken minder waarderen alleen omdat ze niet netjes zijn.

Jaco: Ik vind het hier netjes genoeg. Alleen moet die drugstroep opgeruimd worden. Die gasten moeten wat respect hebben voor de plek.

Ik: Mag ik een foto van je nemen?

Jaco: Ja hoor, zolang ik maar niet op Opsporing Verzocht kom. En niet links om de hoek, hè!

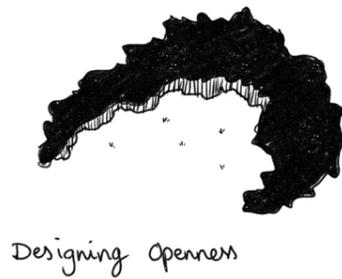
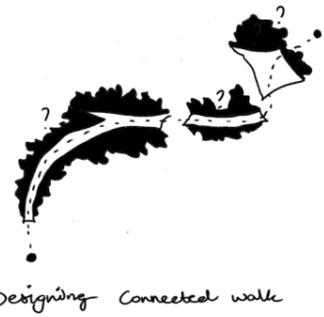
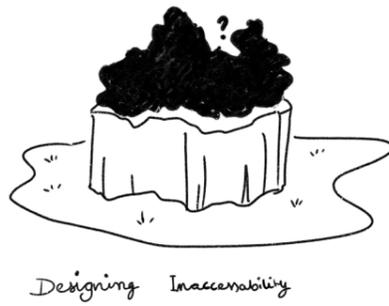
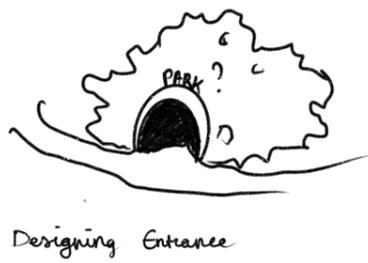
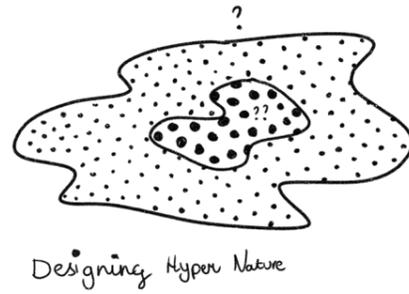
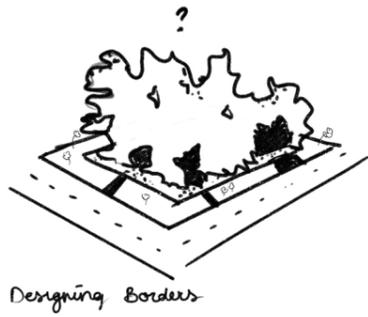
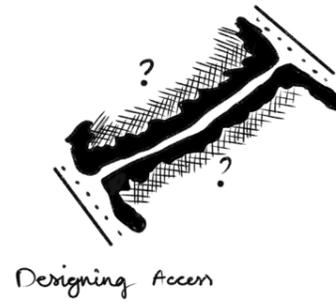
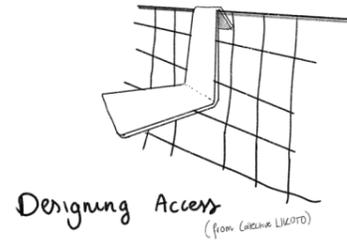
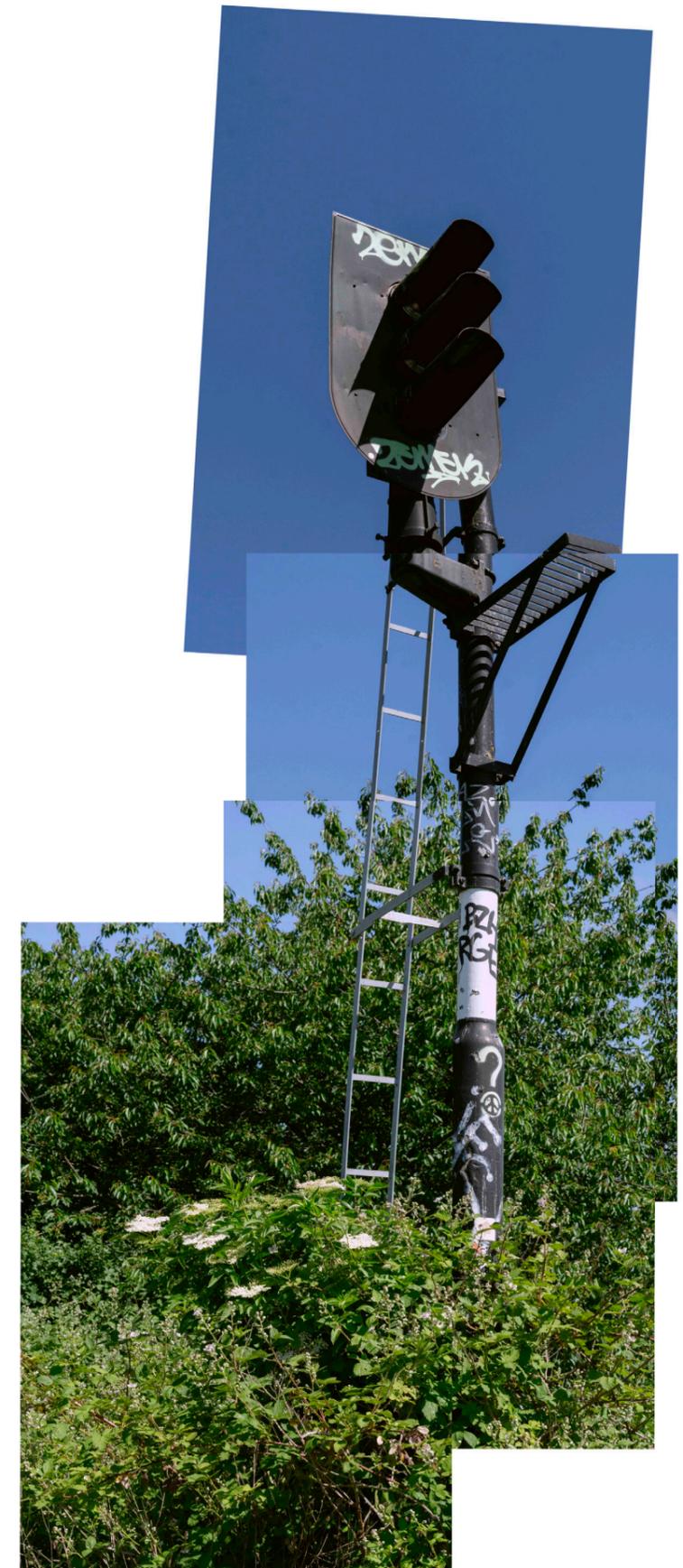
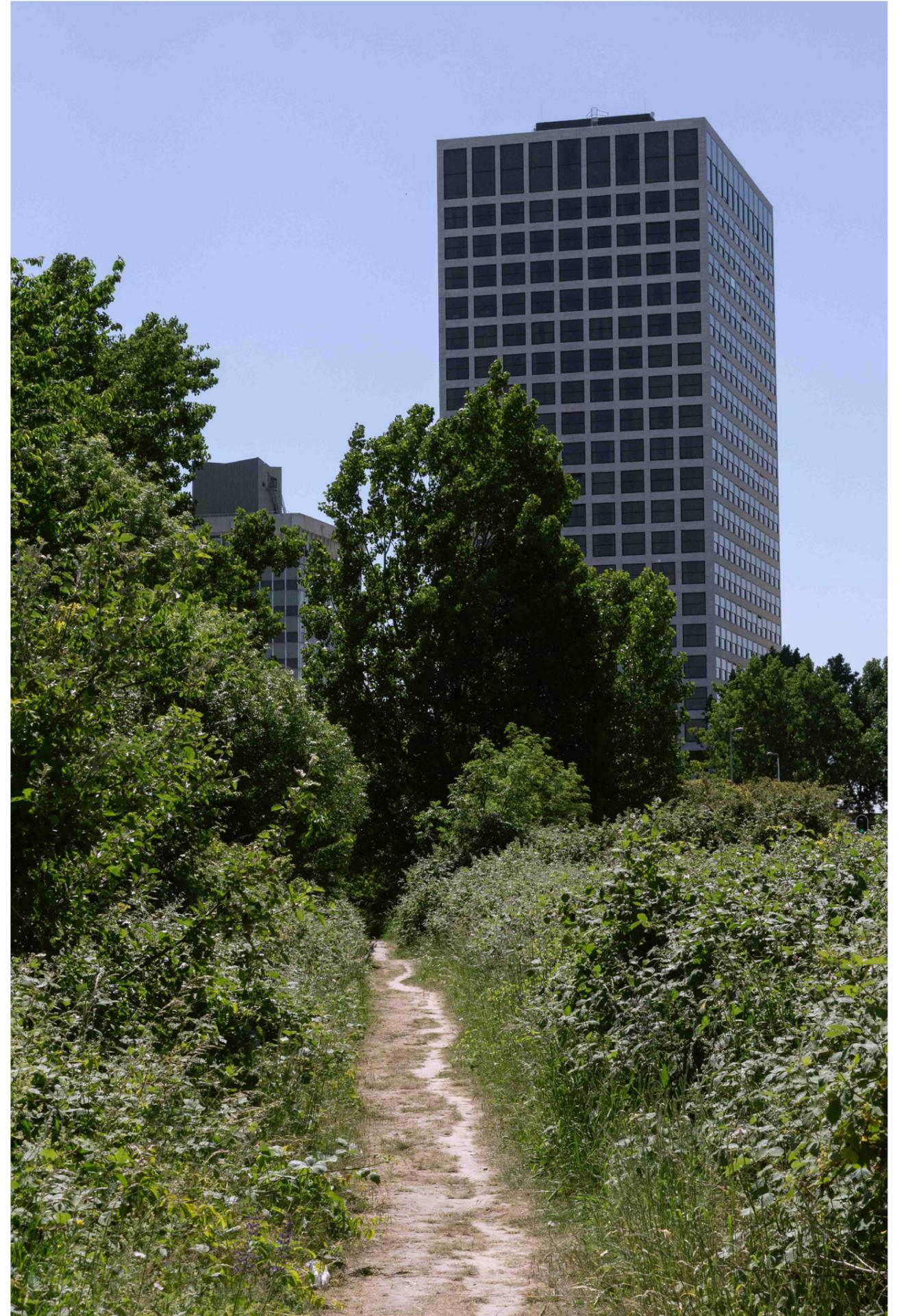


Fig
Designing a way in: ways that have been found during precedent studies and literature studies that relate to making the interstitial space accessible, mentally, visually and physically. They all symbolise as a tool that could be used to open the space up, or makes them more valuable. (Own Work, 2025)









WASSERKRATER GARTEN

In 1997, the spa towns of Bad Oeynhausen and Löhne in Germany held a design competition for the upcoming 2000 Regional Garden Show (Landesgartenschau). The competition was won by Agence Ter, a French landscape architecture firm, whose proposal centered on the “revelation of underground water” - a concept inspired by the site’s unique geological characteristics (Agence Ter).

The design introduced ephemeral gardens, spaces intentionally crafted to evolve and partially disappear over time. This approach reflects a distinct style in landscape architecture that emphasizes sensory perception and the transient beauty of nature. Although temporary, these gardens successfully simulate realistic natural environments, engaging light, shadow, sound, scent, and fauna to forge a profound connection between humans and the natural world. One of the key interventions in the park is the Wasserkrater (Water Crater), an accessible fountain sculpture that penetrates deep into the geological layers to tap into underground saltwater reserves. Located precisely on a fault line, the Water Crater dramatically channels a powerful burst of water, creating a sensory and almost otherworldly experience. As noted by Land8, “visitors have the opportunity to be part of a magical underworld and experience something different” (Land8).

Adjacent to the Water Crater, a sequence of thematic gardens extends the sensory journey. These include a berry garden abundant with edible plants, a rose garden, a sculpture garden, and a reflecting water garden. Each space is meticulously designed to stimulate the senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing - inviting visitors to engage fully with the landscape. Through this immersive design, Agence Ter poses a larger question: can awakening all our senses in such a setting deepen our relationship with nature and celebrate this profound connection?

THE EXPERIENCE

The Avenue (1) is located on one of the viewing axes, which stands perpendicular to the path you follow to the crater. It has blocks of plane trees with experimental gardens in between. Following the path you will suddenly out of the dense forest see water being spouted into the sky (2).

When you reach the edge of the plateau, the corten tube becomes visible out of the forest as you descend down (3). From the previous openness you now are surrounded by a dense forest (4), It is warmer and windstill, its little leaves dappling light over you.

As you follow the strips of concrete in the grass you find yourself across the entrance of the tube (5) and you are able to look in. You enter and your gaze is pointed down this cold, blue cave (6) where suddenly a burst of water explodes in the air. Your gaze, totally taken by surprise follows it up into the sky (7). When you exit the crater, the path leads you to a tranquil water garden (8).

TAKE AWAY

Wasserkrater Garten (1997) by Landscape Ter, region Bad Oeynhausen/Löhne. Analysed in meanings of positioning, landscape context, routing and viewing directions, experiences and by sensorial narrative analysis from secondary source. This was done to distill the elements designed in the landscape that evoke a sense of wonder and awe that visitors experience. We can synthesise that by enabling senses, creating anticipation following climax and connecting to context of place Wasserkrater Garten does succeed in evoking wonder, care and engagement.

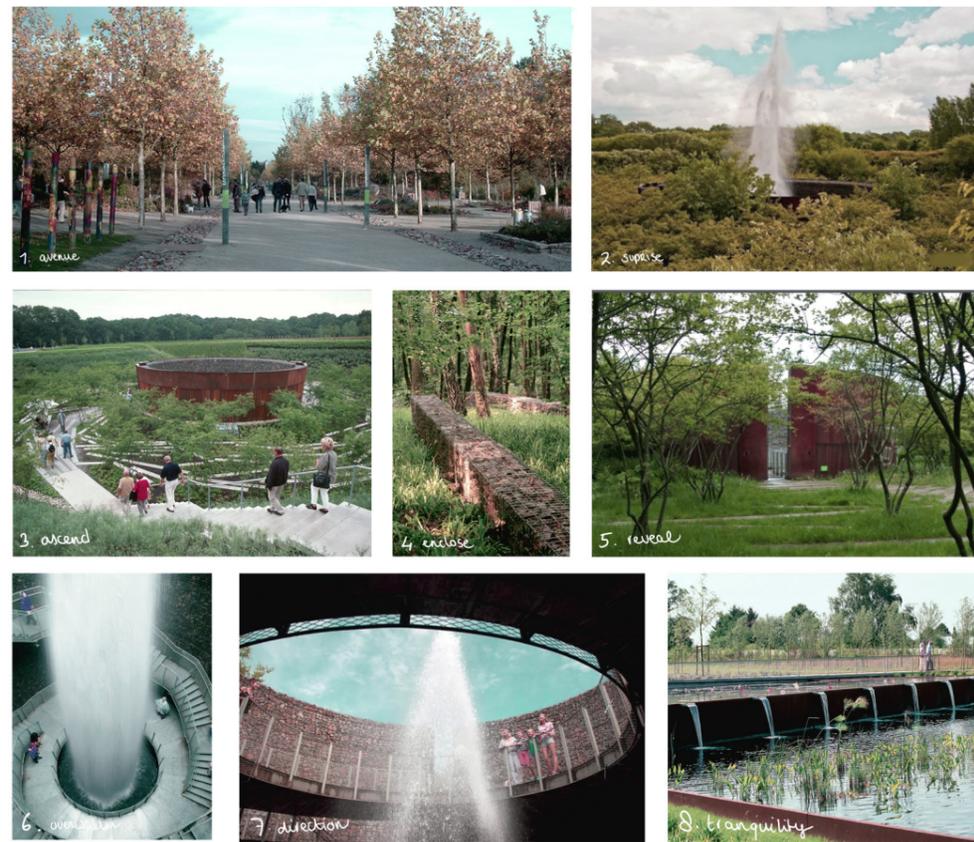
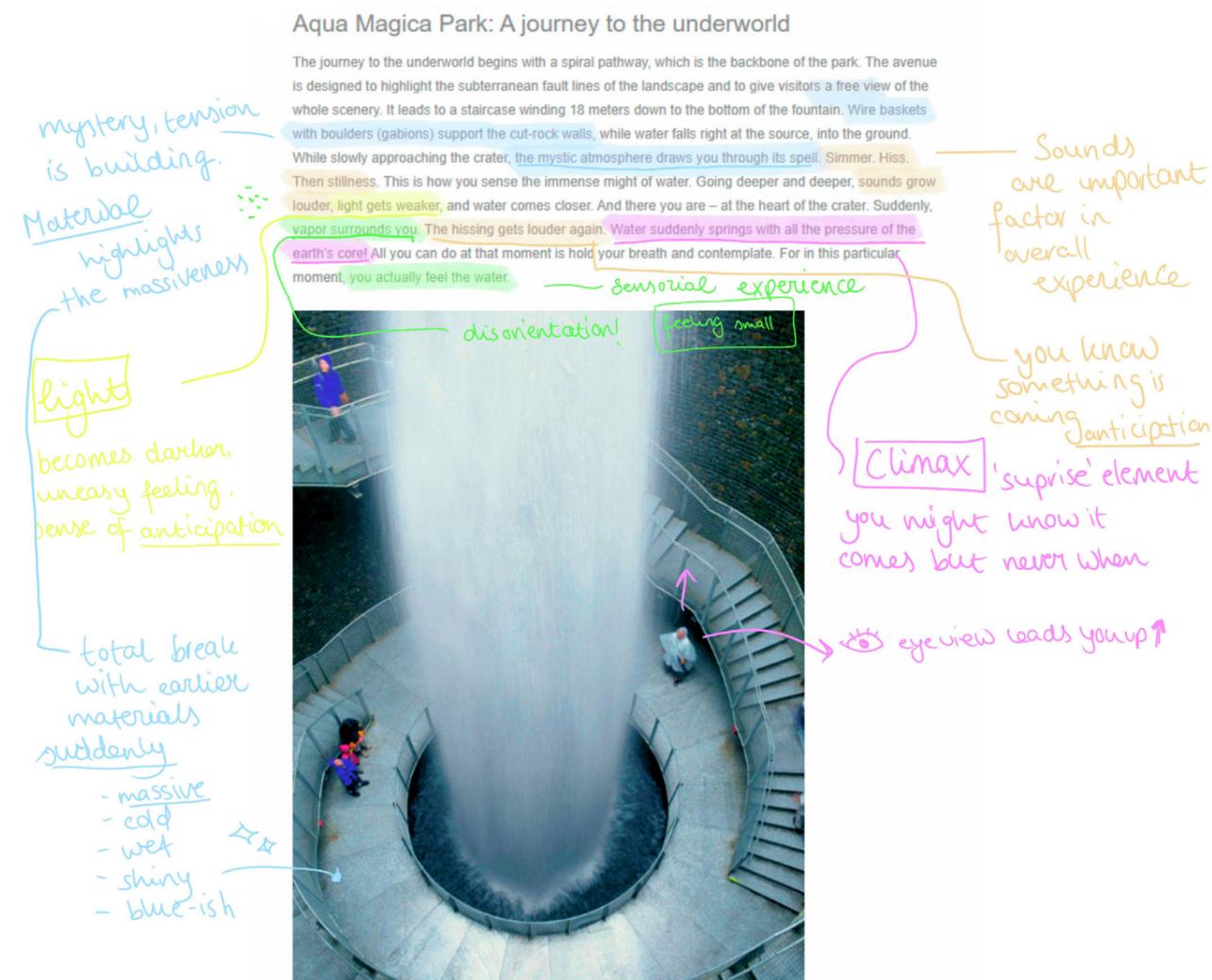


Fig
Precedent study on Wasserkrater Garten on elements of surprise and on hide-reveal methods in order to engage the visitors senses in order to provoke deeper connection to the site. (Own Work, 2025)



Fig
Precedent study on Wasserkrater Garten on elements of surprise and on hide-reveal methods in order to engage the visitors senses in order to provoke deeper connection to the site. (Own Work, 2025)



Laura Vos
Technical University Delft

Exploration on wonder and
accessibility in the in-between
of Rotterdam

(Dis)enchantment of the Interstitial Space

Research * Design

