

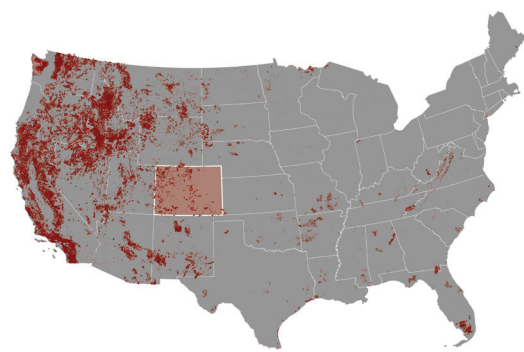
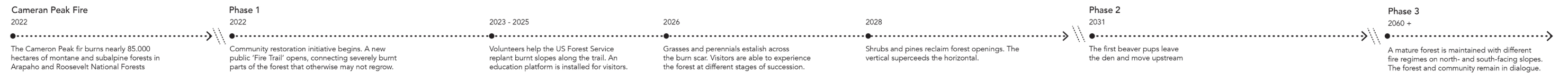


The curriculum at the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam bridges the practical and the poetic to create meaningful designs that improve living conditions for all forms of life.

Students follow an interdisciplinary path across Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urbanism departments. Alongside their studies, they are required to work in professional practice. In Landscape Architecture, students explore alternative relationships between humans and nature. Rather than maintaining an anthropocentric mindset—where everything serves human needs—we seek an ecocentric approach that supports all life forms. This transition aligns with our Climate Curriculum, which promotes nature-positive, regenerative, and just design throughout education and research.

As part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, the Academy is uniquely positioned to integrate practical skills and imaginative thinking. We provide students with hands-on knowledge of i.a. soil, water, and planting, while fostering an understanding of the intricate interconnections between people and nature—and how to shape these relationships over time through design. Looking beyond solely technocratic solutions, students engage with the natural and cultural, the tangible and imaginary, the practical and the poetic.

The work submitted for the Manuel Ribas Piera Prize exemplifies this vision. These projects, created by an international group of students (German-American, Slovakian, Dutch, Brazilian, and Polish), are rooted in the Dutch landscape tradition while addressing contemporary challenges in innovative ways. Each explores new approaches to process, change, ownership, memory, culture, soil, water, and fire—proposing alternative ways of thinking and designing that resonate with the Academy's mission and ethos.



The project is located in Colorado's fiery Front Range mountains. Wildfire is treated as a process, not a moment. In the first focus area, illustrated above, the local community collaborates to restore a severely burnt montane forest ecosystem close to town.



In the 2nd focus area, fire breaks are introduced to help naturally guide wildfire in a high-risk subalpine forest ecosystem.



Fire breaks are tied to recreational networks. "Built to burn" lookout towers commemorate the forest that once was.

Country/City Netherlands, Amsterdam
University / School Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts
Academic year 2023
Title of the project Burnt: a tale of 3 fires
Authors Jacob Heydorn Gorski

Title of the project	Burnt: a tale of 3 fires
Authors	Jacob Heydorn Gorski
Title of the course	Master's graduation thesis project
Academic year	2023
Teaching Staff	Jana Crepon, Hank van Tilborg, Sarah McCaffrey
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture / Master's thesis project
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts



Burnt: A Tale of Three Fires explores how embracing wildfire can restore ecological resilience and foster new relationships between people and place. Rooted in the designer's childhood fascination with fire and landscape, the project is inspired by a Dutch approach to living with natural forces—specifically, water. It centers on Red Feather Lakes, a town in Colorado's fiery Front Range mountains, to challenge dominant wildfire narratives and propose a new path forward.

Drawing from local ecology, the project proposes three fire-adapted strategies: defensive, resilient, and resistant. Each strategy is applied to a specific local ecology and community to let fire tell a different story about the landscape. On the first site, fire breaks shape how a forest burns, allowing visitors to witness the 'terrible sublime' of the postfire landscape. At the second, a stream becomes a naturally managed buffer to mitigate postfire flooding. In the third, a community works together to restore a heavily burned forest.

Together, these interventions regenerate ecosystems, create new landscape experiences, and foster community exchange. While designed for Red Feather Lakes, the strategies offer a framework for reimagining fire-adapted landscapes across the American West. To borrow Dante's words, we find ourselves "within a forest dark, for the straightforward pathway had been lost." This project offers a new direction—one lit by the light of fire.

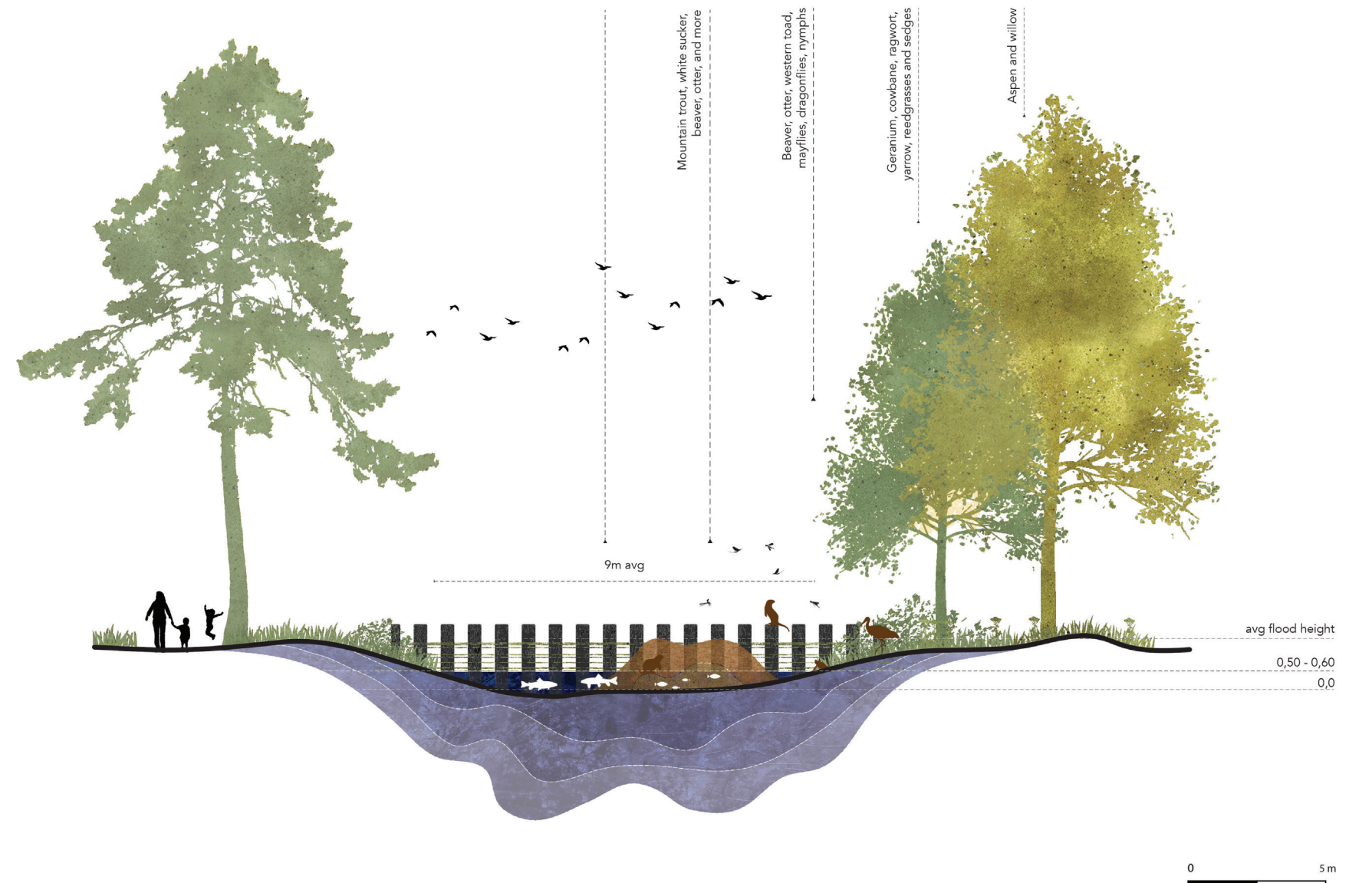
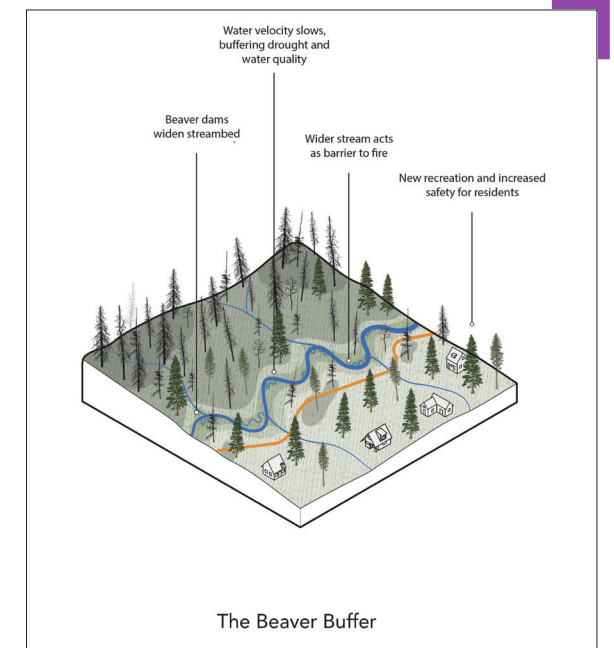
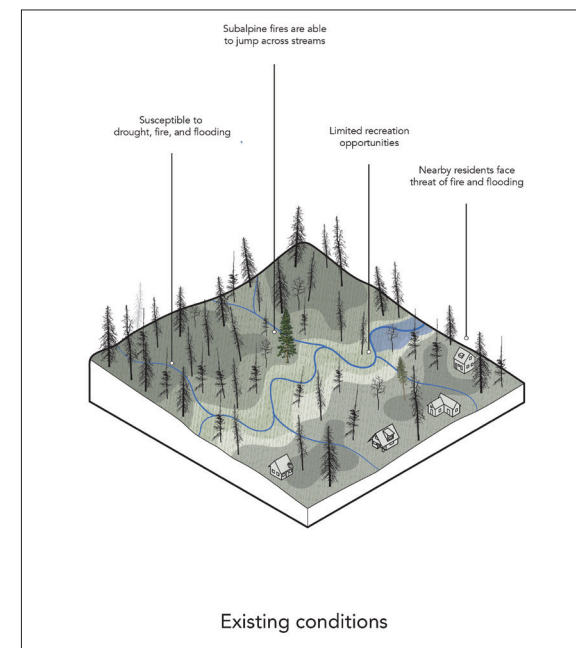
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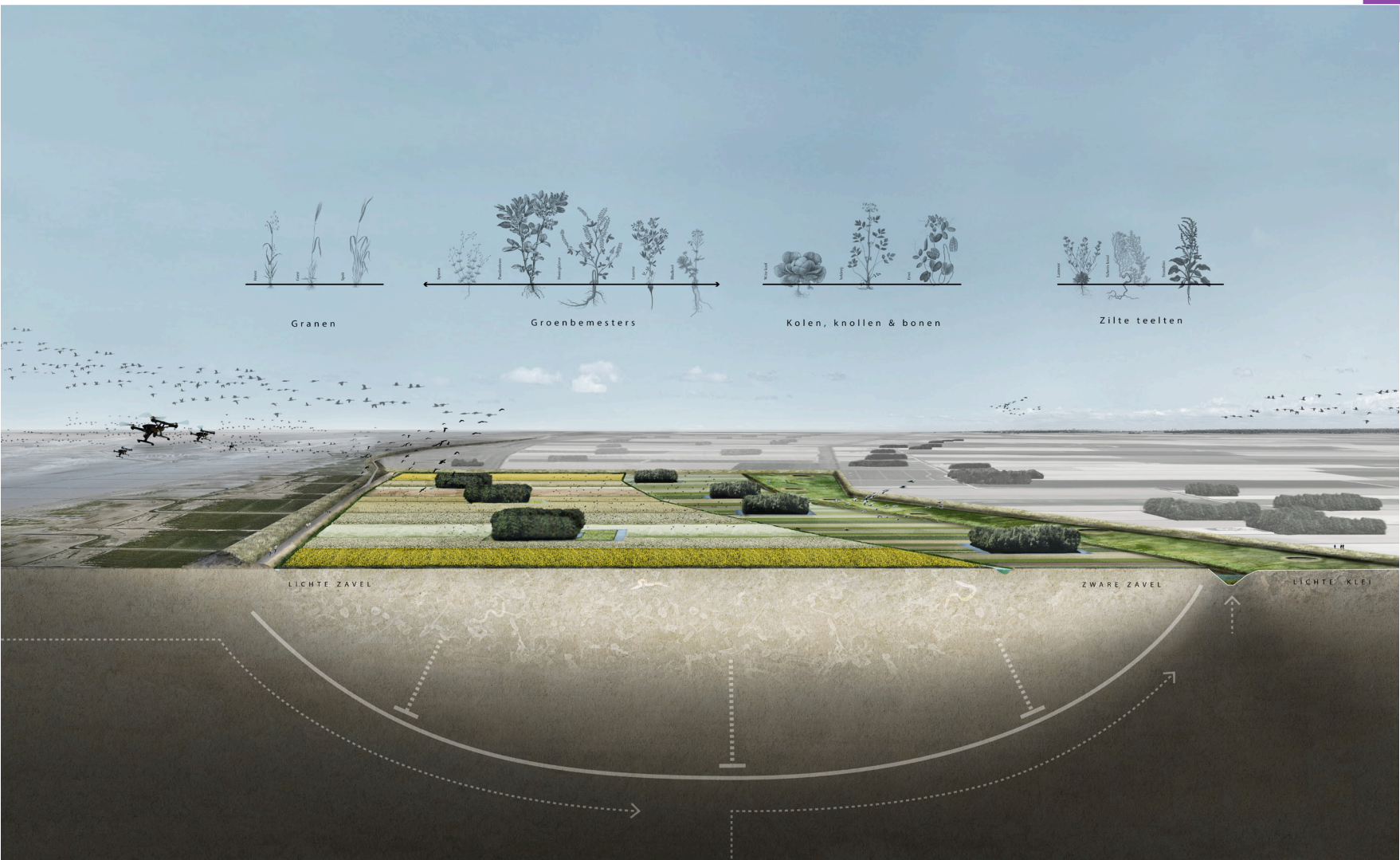
A maquette with a built-in smoke machine in the base allowed people to interactively 'burn' the landscape with the press of a button. This underscored the project ethos that us humans are a fiery species at heart.



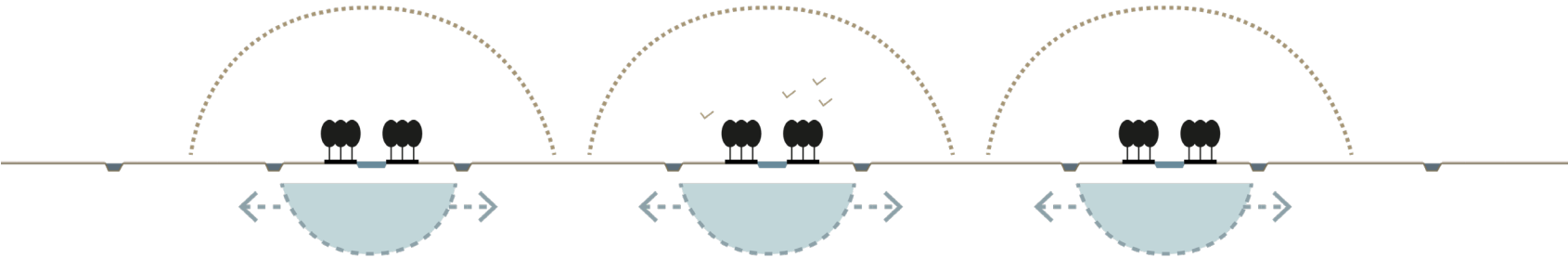
In the third focus area, a fragile stream ecosystem is restored through the help of residents and a new firefighter: the beaver. Artificial dams are created using wood harvested from the fire breaks. Over time, strengthened stream transforms into a 'beaver buffer' that helps protect the town from wildfire.



The floorplan of a freshwater farm looks like karakteristic farmyard of the region. Though this not inhabitat by an farmer and it's family. The farm is designed for nature; insects mamals and birds, who function as natural crop pretectors for the areable lands. Nature as new farmers of the landscape.



New farmyards are being introduced into the open, unbuilt landscape. These lushly vegetated farmyards follow the tradi-tion of older polders, where farms were historically established. They enhance biodiversity within the industrial landscape and contribute to the formation of freshwater lenses underground, using infiltration wells at the center of the freshwater farms. Together with a diverse selection of crops, this approach helps the area resist salinization.



Ecosystems: Above ground, a network for biodiversity is created through trees around the farmyards and field margins. Below ground, a freshwater lens forms through the infiltration wells of the freshwater farms.

Country/City	Netherlands, Amsterdam
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts
Academic year	2020 2021
Title of the project	Freshwater farmyard on saline soils
Authors	Lieke Jildou de Jong



Title of the project	Freshwater farmyards on saline soils
Authors	Lieke Jildou de Jong
Title of the course	Master's graduation thesis project
Academic year	2020-2021
Teaching Staff	Marieke Timmermans (mentor), Floris Alkemade, Mirte van Laarhoven
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture / Master's thesis project
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts



Northern Groningen. What was once sea is now a vast, open landscape, shaped by the rhythms of endless fields of crops. Large-scale arable farming dominates the region. Due to the absence of urban development, the landscape’s layered history of struggle against the sea remains clearly visible. The systematic land reclamation has shaped both the terrain and the soil structure in a way that feels almost architectural.

The fields are occasionally interrupted by farmyards with rich vegetation. Scattered like islands across the land, they emphasize the vastness of space without making you feel lost. Farmhands and small-scale farmers have been replaced by large, heavy machinery, causing many farmyards to lose their function. The coastal polders are left uninhabited. These expansive, fertile marine clay soils, shielded from the sea’s dynamics, appear to be a farming paradise—but the sea is finding its way back through the soil. Salinization is only worsened by the unnaturally low groundwater levels required for intensive crop farming. The current agricultural system is no longer sustainable.

“Freshwater farmyards on saline soils” demonstrates how the agricultural heritage of past centuries can be used to adapt the landscape to today’s challenges of biodiversity restoration and climate change. Soil composition and micro-life play a key role in this process. As traditional farmyards and their associated planting have disappeared from the coastal polders, so too has the biodiversity they supported—biodiversity that is essential for a resilient landscape. Variations on the original farmyards now serve as tools to future-proof the landscape for arable farming, ecology, and recreational use.

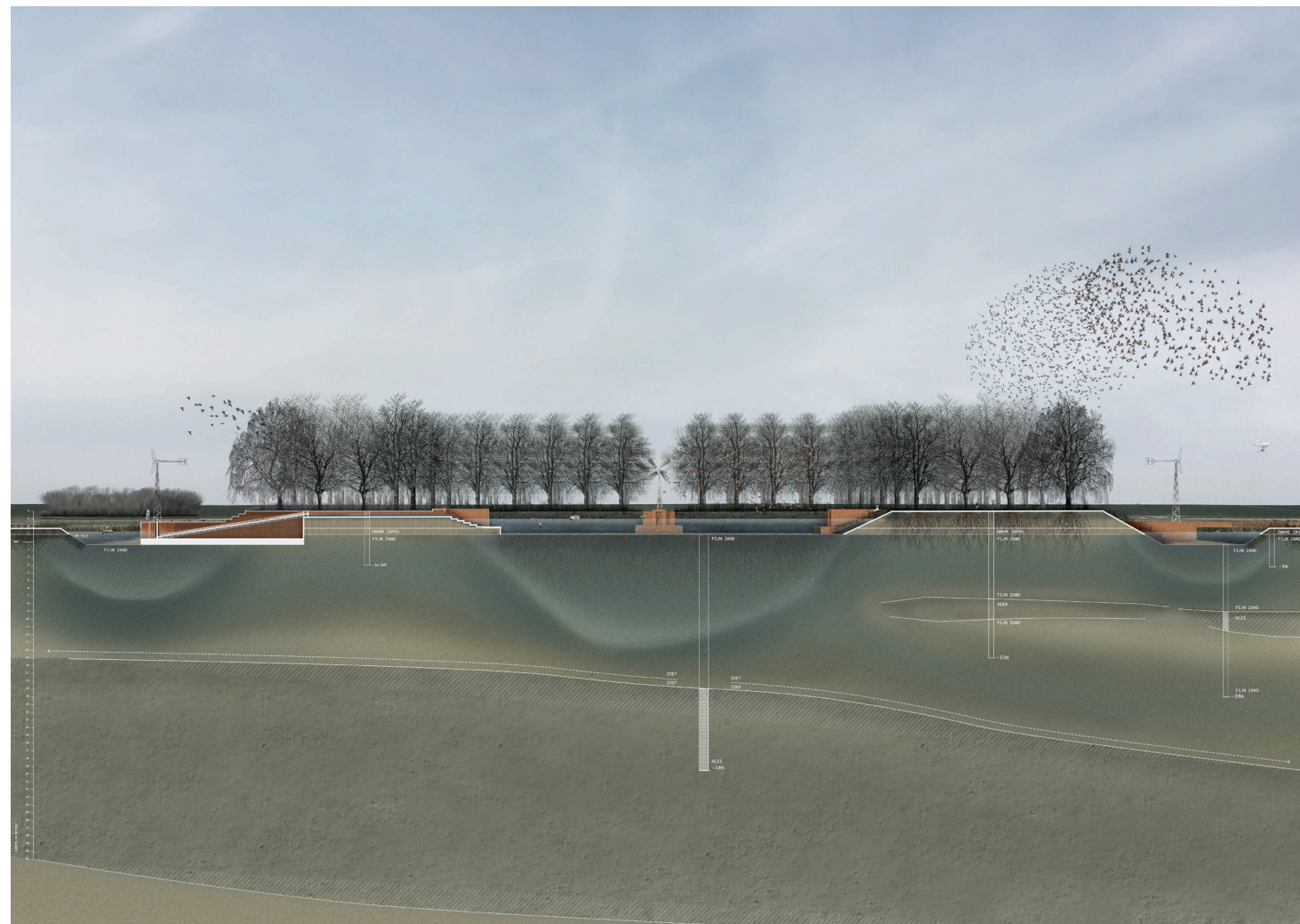
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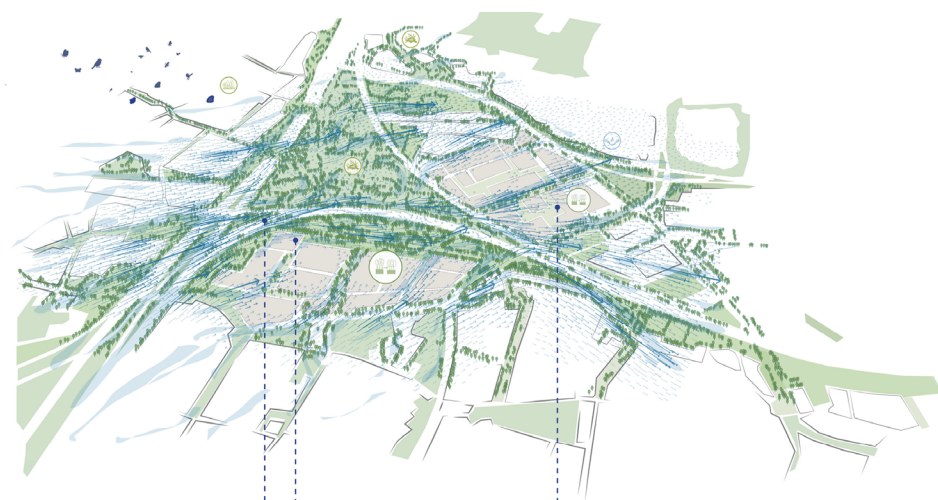
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For each soil type, a different kind of farmyard has been designed, tailored to the infiltration rate and the ecological value required for the surrounding type of arable farming. The various types of farmyards function together as a single landscape system.



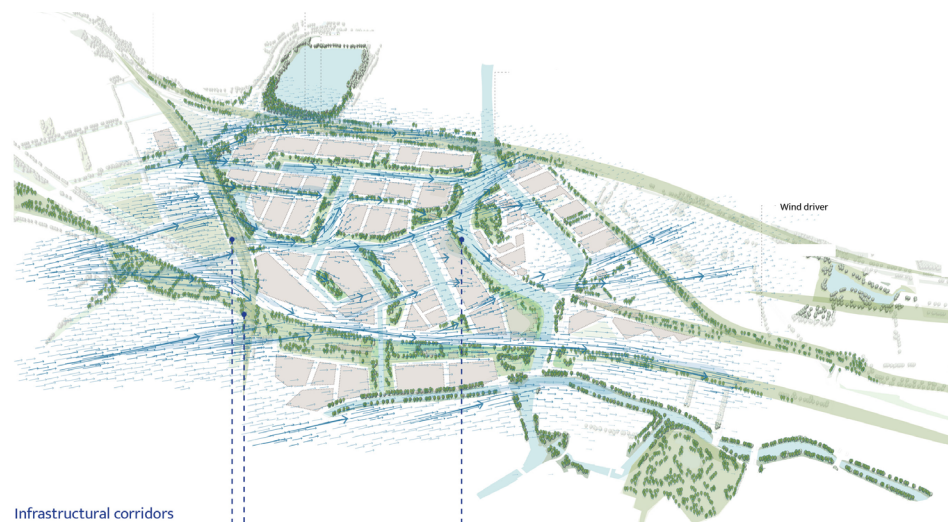
The water structures are made of bricks sourced from the excavation of the wells. These locations also serve as access points for people, as well as places to enjoy the view or linger. The objects show visitors the soil type of the location and the current water flows. The crevices in the structures provide shelter for insects and birds.



Wind is filtered and slowed down by vegetated wind shields, creating a calmer and more comfortable microclimate. Train track remains the main ventilation corridor.

Formation of sheltered areas for birds and insects creates safe havens that enhance urban biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Landscape framework shapes the future developments

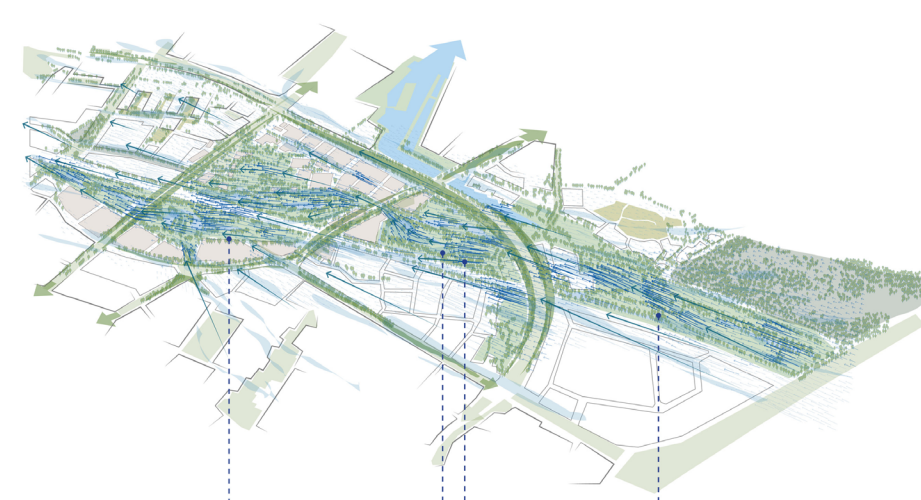


Infrastructural corridors serve as additional ventilation channels throughout the urban fabric, promoting continuous airflow and mitigating heat buildup

Railway infrastructure transports cool air throughout the city

River Mark, the widest waterway, has a cooling capacity that benefits vulnerable areas by mitigating the urban heat island effect.

The water structure extends in both parallel and perpendicular directions to the prevailing southwest winds.

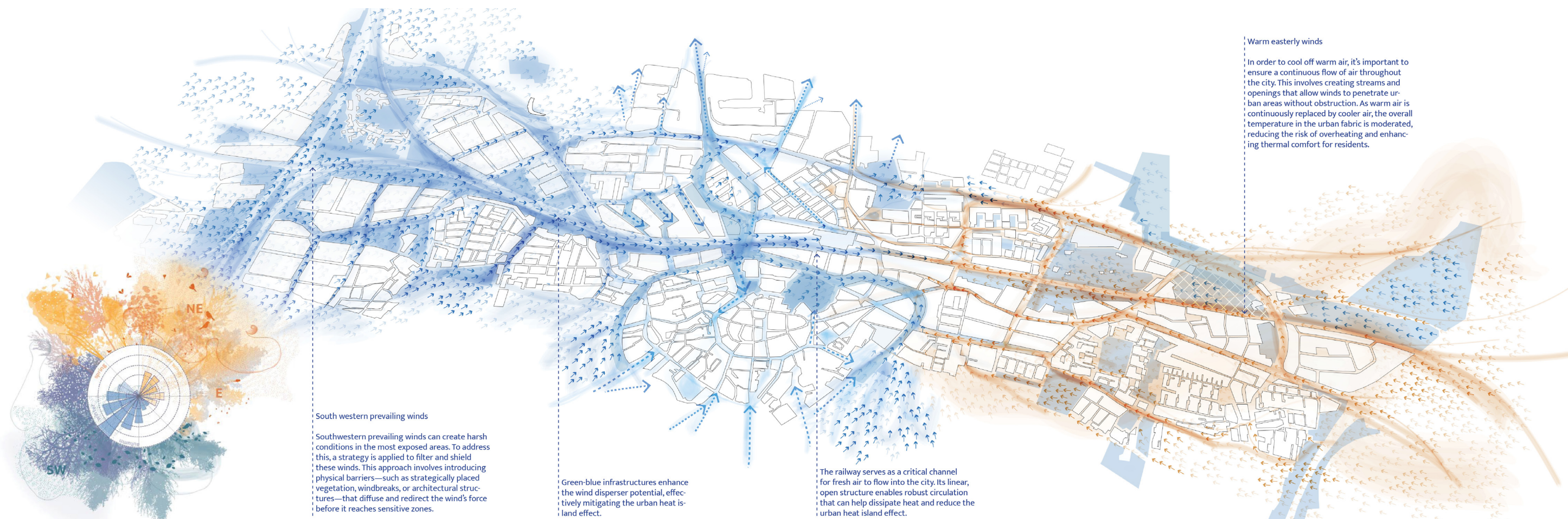


Smooth water surfaces act as wind accelerators by reducing friction and allowing air to gain momentum.

Wind is funneled between urban structures and vegetation, channeling breezes through narrow passages and enhancing natural ventilation.

The principles of vegetation planting assist in managing wind flow.

Forests at the city periphery act as cool air producers



South western prevailing winds

Southwestern prevailing winds can create harsh conditions in the most exposed areas. To address this, a strategy is applied to filter and shield these winds. This approach involves introducing physical barriers—such as strategically placed vegetation, windbreaks, or architectural structures—that diffuse and redirect the wind's force before it reaches sensitive zones.

Green-blue infrastructures enhance the wind disperser potential, effectively mitigating the urban heat island effect.

The railway serves as a critical channel for fresh air to flow into the city. Its linear, open structure enables robust circulation that can help dissipate heat and reduce the urban heat island effect.

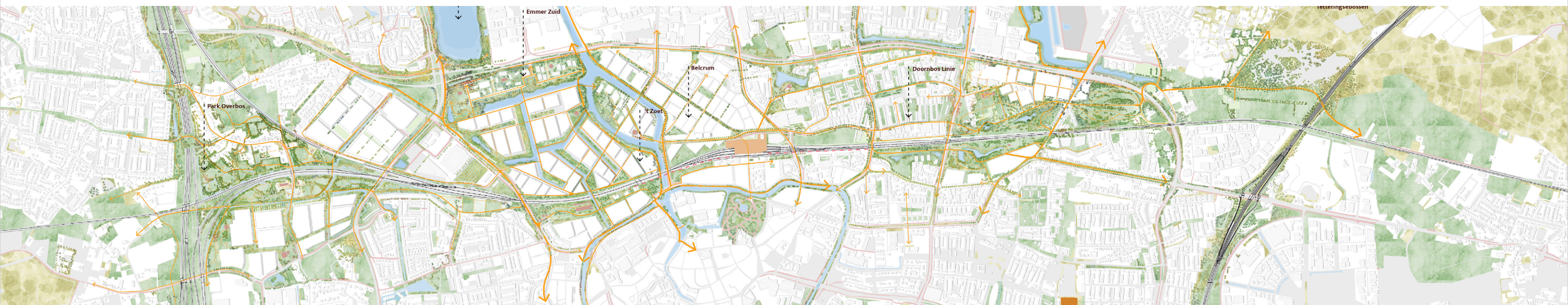
Warm easterly winds

In order to cool off warm air, it's important to ensure a continuous flow of air throughout the city. This involves creating streams and openings that allow winds to penetrate urban areas without obstruction. As warm air is continuously replaced by cooler air, the overall temperature in the urban fabric is moderated, reducing the risk of overheating and enhancing thermal comfort for residents.

The 8 km railway stretch in Breda is being used as a test case for three specific methods. First, it aims to block winds coming from the southwest. Second, it works to improve air circulation around the station area. Third, it plans to direct breezes over water and under the shaded tree canopies to cool the warm easterly winds.

Country/City Netherlands, Amsterdam
University / School Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts
Academic year 2024
Title of the project Wind Woven
Authors Rachel Borovska

Title of the project	Wind Woven
Authors	Rachel Borovska
Title of the course	Master's graduation thesis project
Academic year	2024
Teaching Staff	Gert-Jan Wisse, Nikol Dietz, René van der Velde
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture / Master's thesis project
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts



Wind Woven explores the often-overlooked influence of atmospheric elements such as wind, humidity, and temperature on shaping urban environments. Focused on an eight-kilometer railway corridor in Breda (Netherlands), an area undergoing rapid development, the project investigates the critical role of urban ventilation in mitigating urban heat islands and supporting cooling strategies within densification plans.

The design responds to the distinct wind patterns of the Netherlands, from strong southwesterly winds in winter to warm easterly breezes in summer. It reveals how wind not only cools but also carries an entire microworld of seeds, spores, and insects, connecting ecosystems across the urban fabric. By working with these natural forces, the railway corridor is reimagined as a park-like necklace, a green-blue network weaving through the heart of Breda, enhancing, filtering, and redirecting wind flows while offering space for biodiversity, recreation and providing a spatial framework for emerging neighbourhoods. The vision emphasizes the importance of integrating natural processes such as wind as active agents in urban planning and landscape architecture. These forces deserve “a seat at the table” when shaping urban densification strategies and zoning plans, highlighting weather as a vital yet often silent element in the creation of resilient cities. Ultimately, Wind Woven collects insights and methodologies that can be applied across Western Europe and similar climate zones, inviting designers, to engage more deeply with the invisible and dynamic forces that shape our environments.

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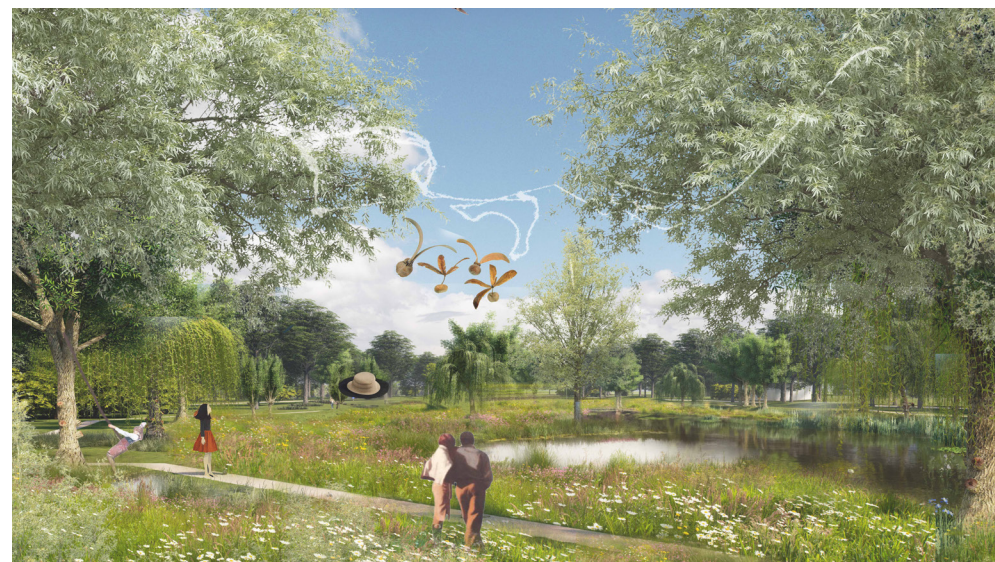
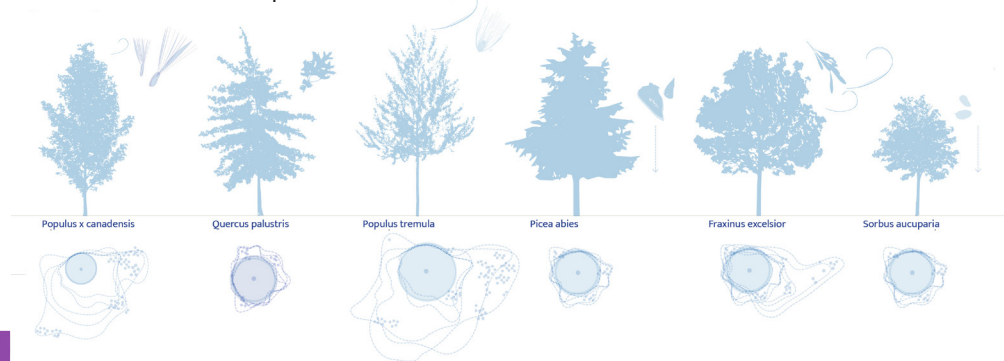
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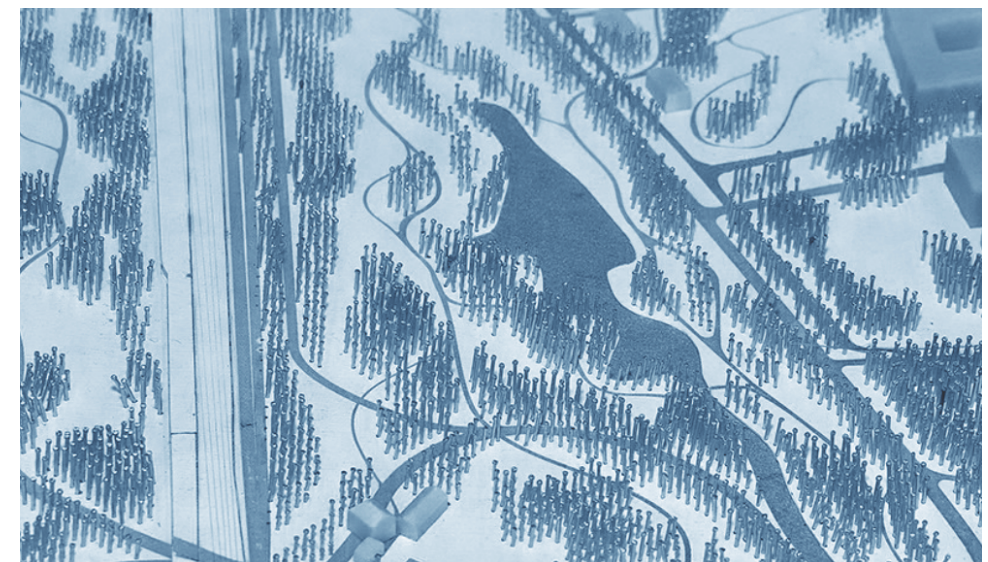
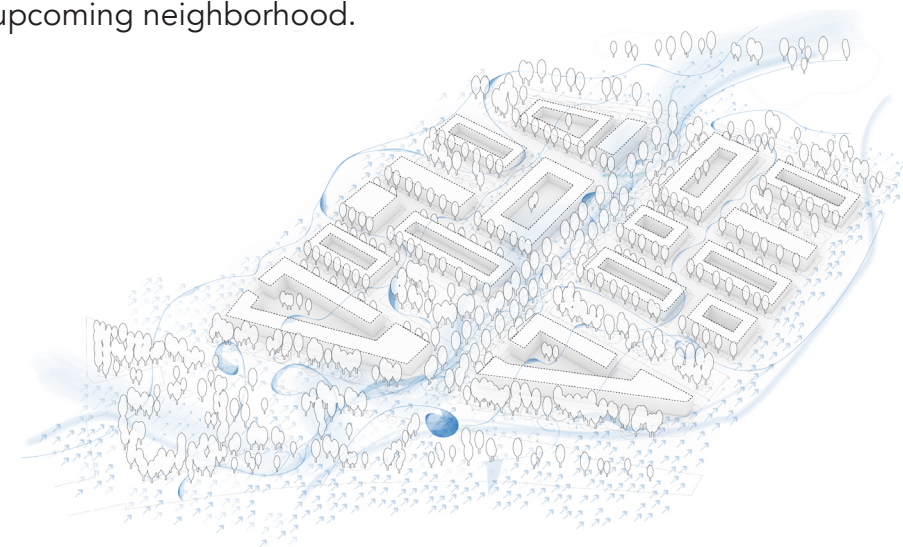
A fragment of the eastern railway area focused on funneling and accelerating to cool off warm air.



Carrying an entire microworld, breezes are essential to the ecological balance. Spiderwebs and seeds float on the wind, while butterflies, dragonflies, and specific species of ants depend on air currents for migration, particularly during their reproductive phases. Pollen drifts through the air to fertilize distant plants, and seeds are dispersed across the landscape.



An example of an urban layout considering ventilation for a potential upcoming neighborhood.



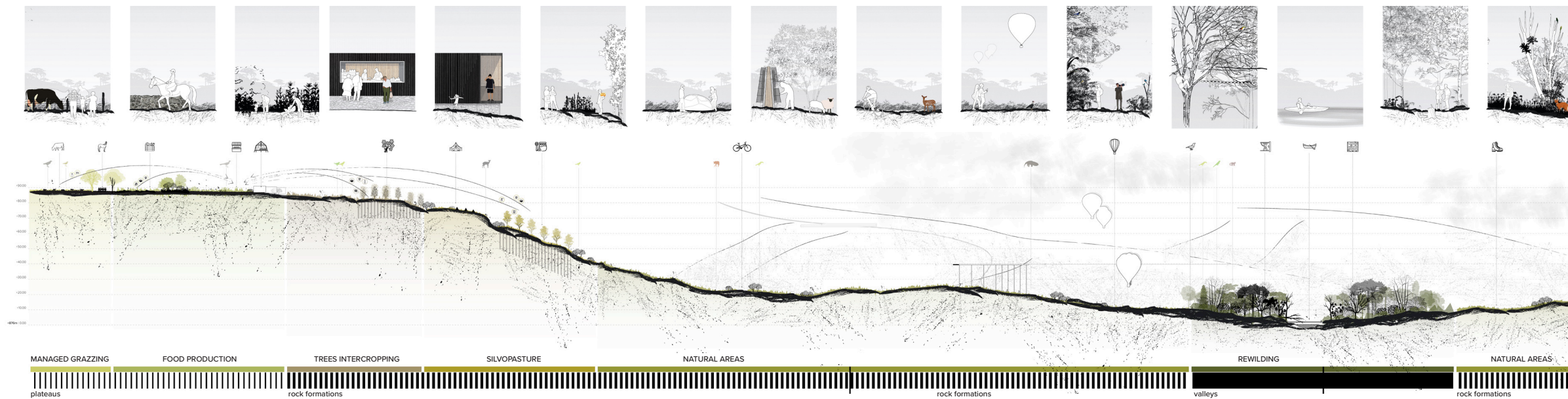
A model showing the essential wind funneling planting principle. Vegetation guides wind streams under shadowy canopies and over surfaces of waterbodies.





(Be)Coming Home centers on three core dynamics—ecology, culture, and geology—that define the unique identity of Campos Gerais in southern Brazil. In a landscape dominated by extensive monoculture and privatized land, the project envisions a future where these forces are reconnected, restoring the land’s ability to sustain life and renewing a collective sense of belonging. It proposes a network that integrates ecological restoration, cultural heritage, and sustainable land use to heal the landscape and reestablish meaningful relationships between people and place.

Country/City	Netherlands, Amsterdam
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts
Academic year	2024
Title of the project	(Be)Coming Home
Authors	Renan Dijkinga



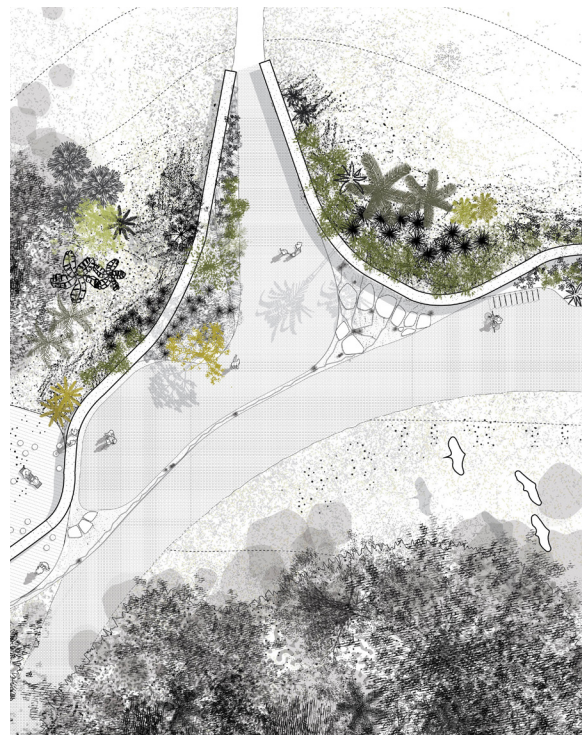
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Carambeí, my hometown, was selected to exemplify the strategy along the Devonian Scarp due to its ecological richness, historical depth, and geographic relevance. Situated between Campos Gerais National Park and the São João River Reserve, the area combines diverse topographies with landscapes degraded by monoculture and invasive forestry. The masterplan introduces new land uses informed by topographic zoning. Below, a strategic node connects the wider network, acting as an acupuncture intervention in vulnerable zones.

Presentation with different display reveals the design process—rooted in research, drawing, mapping, and storytelling—as a way to unravel the complexities of the place. Each element invites immersion into the ecological, cultural, and emotional dimension of the site.





Re-naturalizing rivers should serve future generations who are going to deal with even more severe floodings. Restoring the presence of the Strzyza represents the interest of other tributaries of the Vistula River, which have dissappeared from too many Polish cities.



During floods, people are forced to deal with the problem themselves, since many of the sites around the creek are privatized. Citizens create protective dikes at the front of their houses.



Inspired by the existing actions of placing sandbags, this projects offers a choreography of resilient actions, which insted of just protecting, prepare people for upcoming floods. Learning new skills can help prepare for future floods, creating resilient and collaborative community. All of the actions aim to strengten the presence and ecological value of the Strzyza.



Garden nr. 5



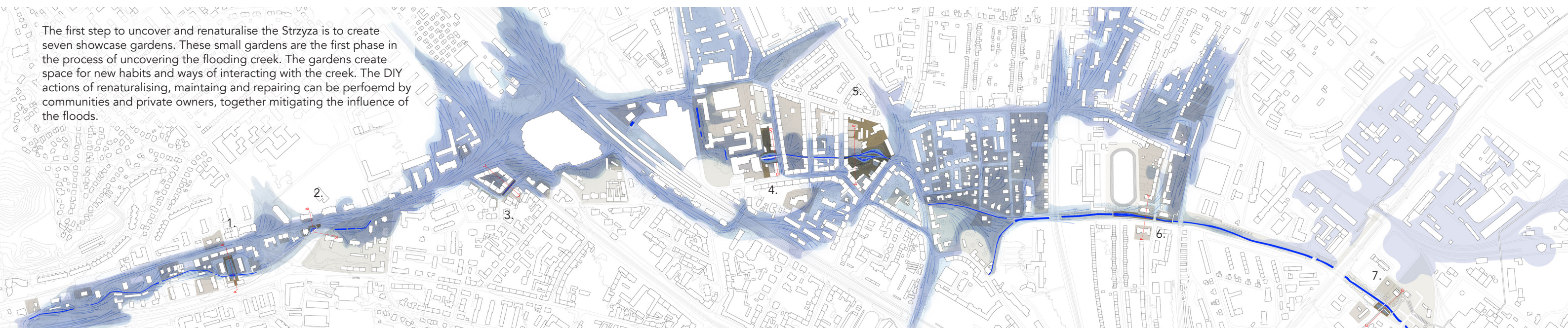
Garden nr. 4: symbolic DIY action of uncovering hidden in the underground pipes Strzyza.

Country/City	Netherlands, Amsterdam
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts
Academic year	2021
Title of the project	Choreographing resilience along the Strzyza stream
Authors	Justyna Chmielewska

Title of the project	Choreographing resilience along the Strzyza stream
Authors	Justyna Chmielewska
Title of the course	Master's graduation thesis project
Academic year	2021
Teaching Staff	Nikol Dietz, Jarrik Ouburg, Anna Maria Fink
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture / Master's thesis project
University / School	Academy of Architecture - Amsterdam University of the Arts



The first step to uncover and renaturalise the Strzyza is to create seven showcase gardens. These small gardens are the first phase in the process of uncovering the flooding creek. The gardens create space for new habits and ways of interacting with the creek. The DIY actions of renaturalising, maintaing and repairing can be perfoemd by communities and private owners, together mitigating the influence of the floods.



The government buried two kilometres of the Strzyza underground and sold the land above to various investors. Today, some plots that cover the Strzyza belong to commercial companies, some to privatized neighbourhoods, and the rest is still owned by the municipality.

The consequences of channelling the Strzyza through underground pipes are catastrophic. Rainwater collected in the concrete canal of the creek has nowhere to go, and so it floods the city. Because the stream is invisible, citizens are not warned about rising water levels.

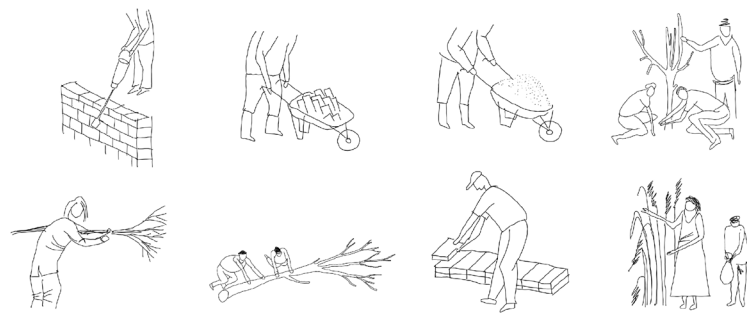
The goal of my project is to restore the physical presence of the Strzyza and explore ways in which residents can coexist with the flooding creek. In an age of climate change, bringing our lost rivers back into our lives is a necessity. Their natural riparian landscape buffers and stores rainwater. Their meandering watercourses flow more slowly than canalized ones. A planned reappearance will bring the Strzyza back into the consciousness of people living alongside it and new resilient actions will help us to live 'with' the stream rather than experience its absence.

The way to restore the Strzyza is through various interventions: from engineered investments on municipal land to simple DIY actions on privatized sites. The multitude of owners along the river make a single top-down plan impossible. Existing conditions call for choreographed and precise actions facilitated by collaborations between various owners. Only together can we deal with the consequences of the lost ecosystem of the Strzyza.

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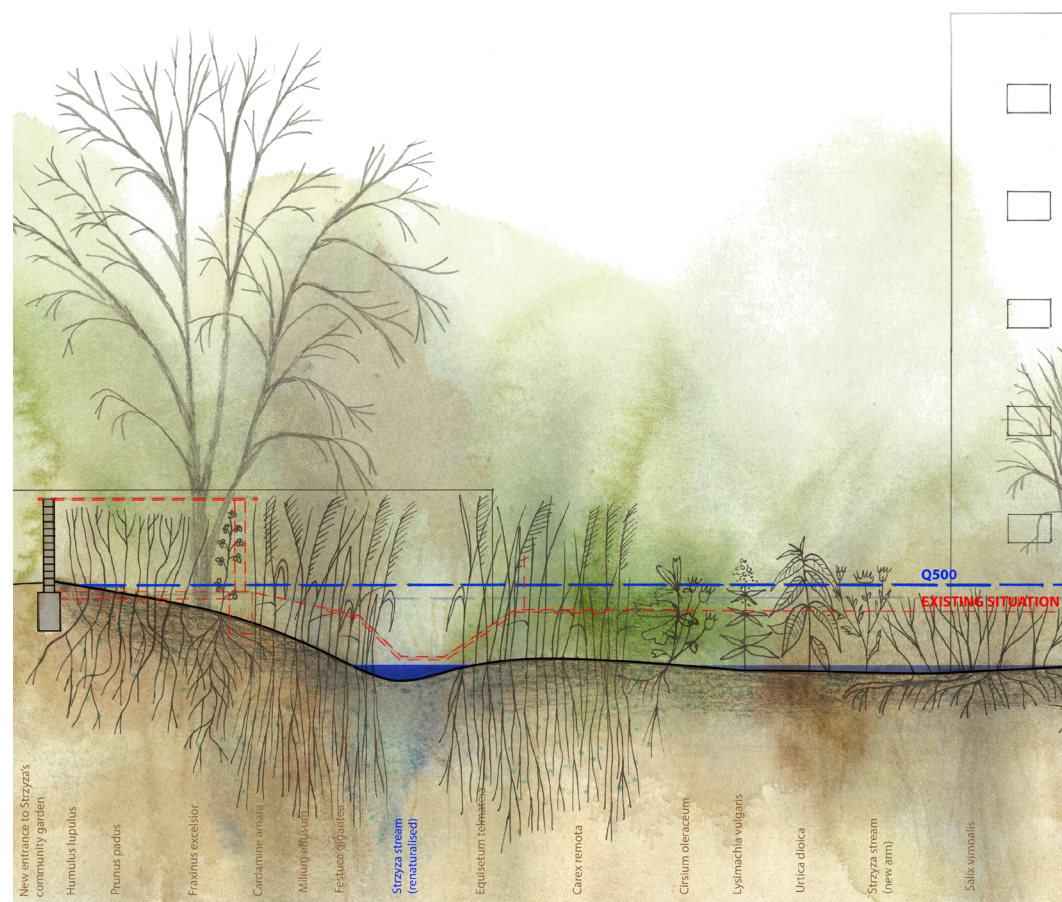
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Garden nr. 1: 'The Old Garages'

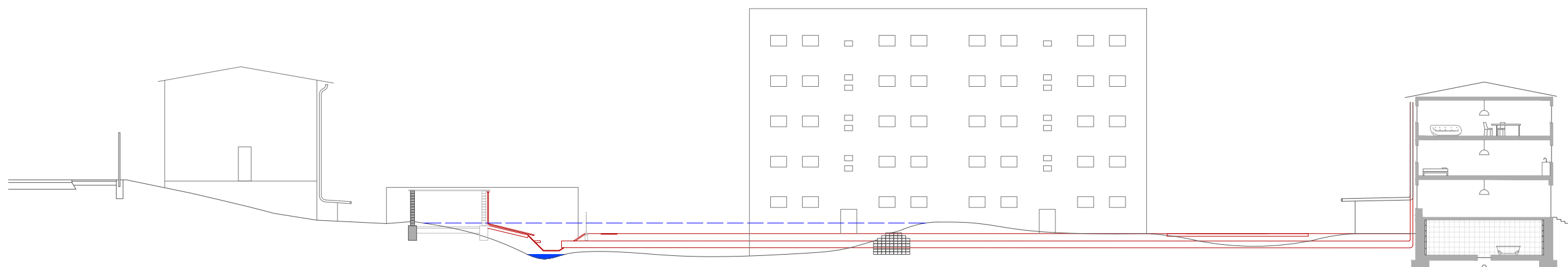
The process of uncovering Strzyża has to be realized in collaboration between municipality and the inhabitants. Collective actions of garden creation are: removing old materials of Strzyża canalised waterbody, removing paved surfaces, re-using paving for new garden edges and objects, re-shaping topography, planting new trees. Collective actions of maintenance, reparation and harvesting: collecting and re-using dead branches, re-arranging and re-using dead trees, repairing garden walls and objects, harvesting flowers, leaves and fruits.



Garden nr. 1



Collective garden around the Strzyża with re-arranged found on site concrete tiles and blocks. We need to invest our public money in urgent matters, such as those connected to our disappearing rivers, which increasingly flood our homes. The municipality of Gdansk could finance the gardens as part of a participatory budgeting project, realizing them together with inhabitants. All of the proposed interventions can be performed with the materials found on site. Instead of adding more, this project is about removing and re-arranging.



Red line illustrates the current situation.