

Felberstrasse Workshop diary

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The site



Felberstraße is an inner-city void and city fringe, located in the 15th district of Vienna. This 1,5km long artery is one of the main roads connecting the western districts with the city center. The street is home to various residential houses and a few hotels located on the eastern end of the street, along the northern side.

The site is adjacent to railway tracks, a flophouse, a multi-story car park, and 'Westbahnhof', a train station with an integrated shopping mall, restaurants, offices and a budget hotel. In walking distance to the Felberstraße stripe, more shopping possibilities, entertainment opportunities and cultural institutions are situated. Felberstraße has its east end on the Gürtel, Vienna's substantial city ring road and one of Austria's busiest roads.

Westbahnhof is also an important transportation hub with the following public transportation lines: subways U3 and U6, tramways 5, 6, 9, 18, 52, 58, the Airport shuttle and taxi stations. The street and its close surrounding is a constant topic of controversial discussions about urbanity. In the context of the current developments of the railways and its central location within the district, this stripe could serve as a key area for urban change.

The workshop's aims

The background image shows a street scene. On the right, there is a multi-story building with a stone base and a yellow upper section, featuring several windows. In the foreground, a silver car is parked on the right side of the road. To the left, there are other parked cars. In the distance, a railway station with tracks and overhead lines is visible under a cloudy sky.

Masterplan: The aim of the workshop is to develop a strategy for the development of the area, consisting of housing with a reasonable percentage of affordable ones, commercial and public space. It will be important to take into account the improvement of the accessibility of the area with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Logo: It will be important to develop a clear identify for the development of the area, which should be synthesised into a logo or slogan, clearly understandable to broader audiences.

Detailed plans: It is expected that a series of cross sections of the Felberstraße will be developed into more detailed, taking into account the difference in heights.

International call

RETHINKING
URBANITY

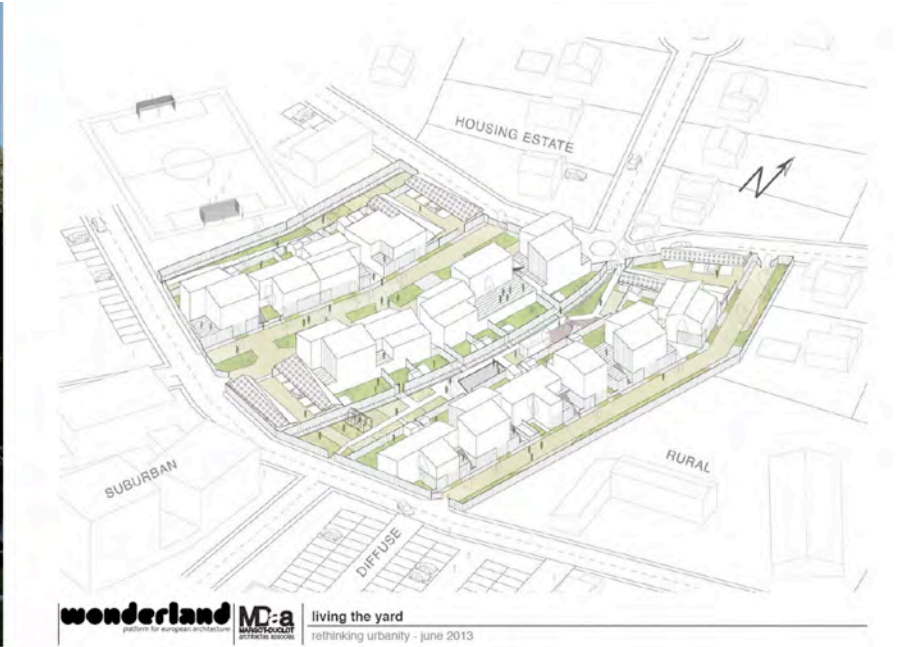
In May 2013, wonderland launched an international Call for Best Projects to select projects and teams for the wonderlab events in Vienna in August 2013. The criteria for selection were considerations of social inclusion, participation, as well as social and ecological sustainability.

The entries, including interventions, realised or research projects, had to answer the following questions:

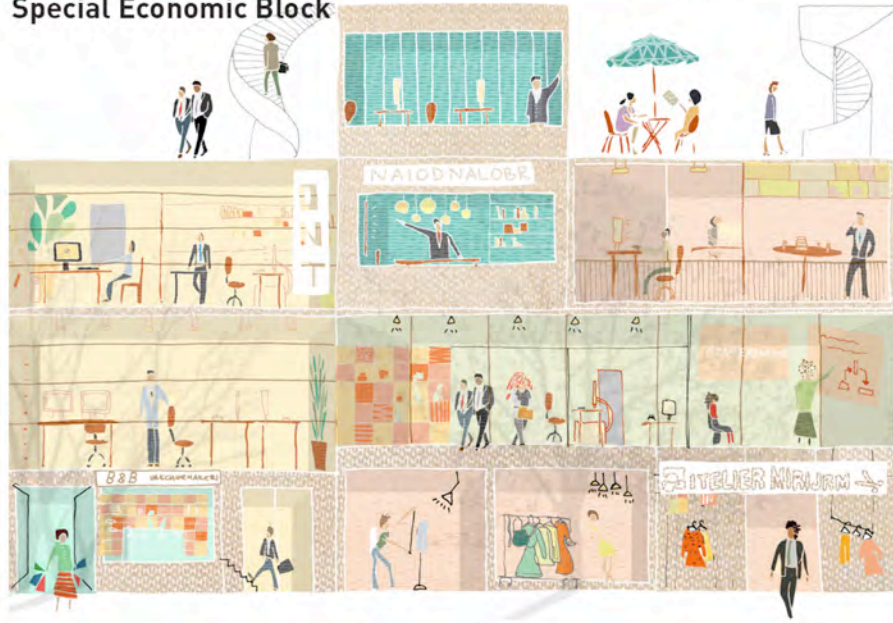
- How did your project influence the intellectual, political and/or social environment of your neighbourhood or city?
- What was your socially sustainable approach?
- How does your project represent your attitude towards and involvement with the public?
- Was there a methodological approach behind it?
- Where and how did you have to intervene?
- Where did you have to activate the public?
- How did your project include all social groups and stakeholders?

SEND US YOUR
BEST PROJECT!

Out of 90 entries the jury selected 4 teams to participate at the workshop “Rethinking Felberstraße” and 30 projects to be exhibited in the Architekturzentrum’s Alte Halle. The participating teams were heri&salli (AT), Margot-Duclot architectes associes (FR), LCC (NL) and Grupo Aranea (ES).



Special Economic Block





First impressions

On August 7, at 15:00 the participants met at the Westbahnhof, to visit the Felberstrasse area, accompanied by representatives of ÖBB (Stephanie Silber), MA21 (Christiane Demcisin and Eckart Herrmann) and the Gebietsbetreuung (Daniel Dutkowski and Chrstiane Klerings). The visit raised a variety of questions:

1. Housing standards: Flexible typologies btw housing and offices? Possibility of high-rise buildings?
2. Offices: need for offices or other kinds of workspaces?
3. Across the tracks: what role for the other side? What scale to think in?
4. Logistical functions: what contracts, what plans?
5. Special uses: need for new nightlife areas?
6. Clients: what values, what investment plans, what goals for ÖBB?
7. Traffic changes: moving the street down? Creating or avoiding cul-de-sac?
8. Local needs: what other types of uses?
9. Structural change: effects of Hauptbahnhof? Or of a pedestrian Mariahilferstrasse?
10. Street front apartments: Gaining green and losing views? Healthy compromises?
11. A linear park: a forest? Plugging things in the strip? Fitting into the image of ÖBB?
12. Connections: More/better bridges? Security and activities on pedestrian bridges? Railway going under a green platform?
13. Aesthetics of tracks and trains: appreciating the infrastructure?

Board meeting



The first board meeting had the aim to share the impressions on the site with the stakeholders and discuss the aims of the coming days as for program, surfaces and spatial qualities. The meeting was joined by representatives of ÖBB (Stephanie Silber and Alexander Gluttig), MA21 (Christiane Demcisin and Eckart Herrmann) and the Gebietsbetreuung (Daniel Dutkowski and Christiane Klerings).


Connecting ideas



Participants had then the time to work individually and develop their first impressions into ideas which were focused into the main issues of:

- connections – green cover: to connect to the other side of the tracks
- programmatic platform: a space to overcome the difference in height that will be full of functions
- park: a linear green space which runs through the Felberstrasse
- housing: new forms for living

Elaborating program



After having developed the first sketches the participants developed some draft plans and sections in smaller groups, so to see in detail the functioning of their ideas.

2nd Site visit



The participants had a second site visit to see also the other side of the Westbahnhof tracks in order to verify the real need of connecting the Felberstrasse. The tour was also joined by Patrice Hershain-Blondin from Radlobby who helped the participants to better grasp the mobility needs of the area. The participants were surprised by the poor quality of the connections between the two sides of the rails.



2nd Board meeting



Additionally to the participants of the previous board meeting, the presentation was also joined by Tamara Schwartzmayr from the association 'Samstag in der Stadt'. The discussion started after a presentation on the concept and continued in front of the working model, where many issues were raised, such as the visual relationship with the historical centre, a more detailed program and the quality of the park next to the rails. To give functions to the programmatic platform, mosques and temples, affordable community facilities, indoor sports facilities and proximity commerce were suggested.

Elaborating plans



After the presentation the project was further developed and issues such as the quality of the public space, the type of housing and the social program in the platform have been deepened.

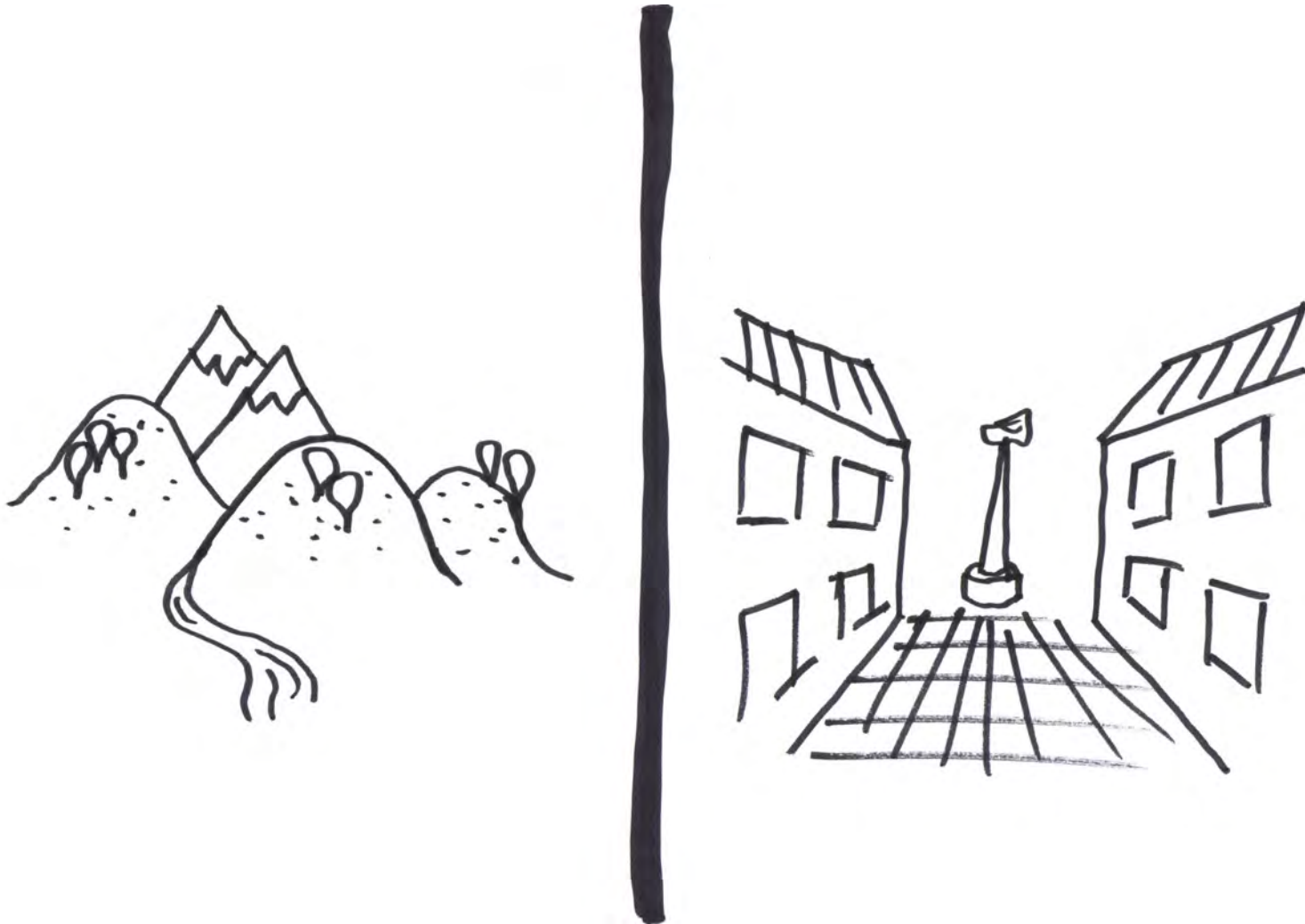
the FelberForest

the FelberForest

the interest in obb in developing the northern edge of their westbahnhof site gives an opportunity to completely rethink the felberstrasse and the role of that space in relation to the 15th district. Further, given the special characteristics of the site, there is great potential to explore the development of a other forms of public space and living besides the common viennese typologies.

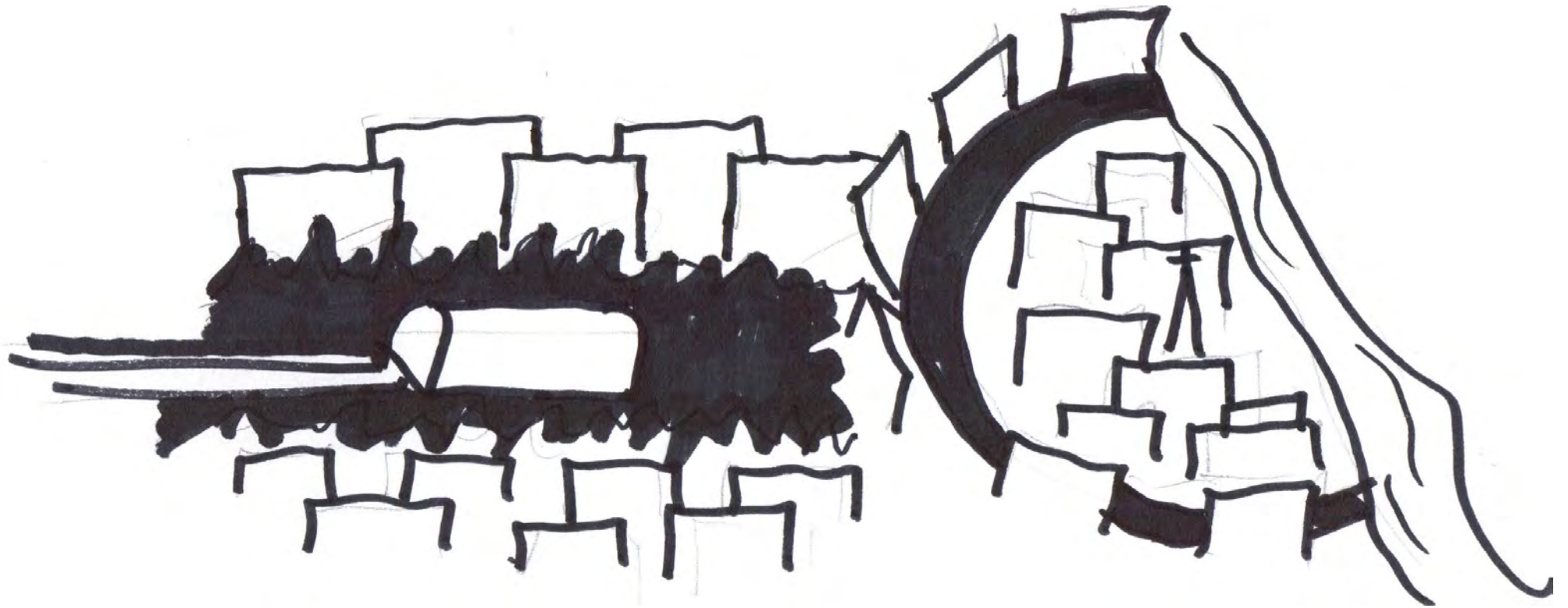
austria | vienna

the visual identity of austria is associated with rolling hills, lakes, streams and of course the mountains. meanwhile, the vienna is associated with stones, streets, and a very controlled architectural heritage.



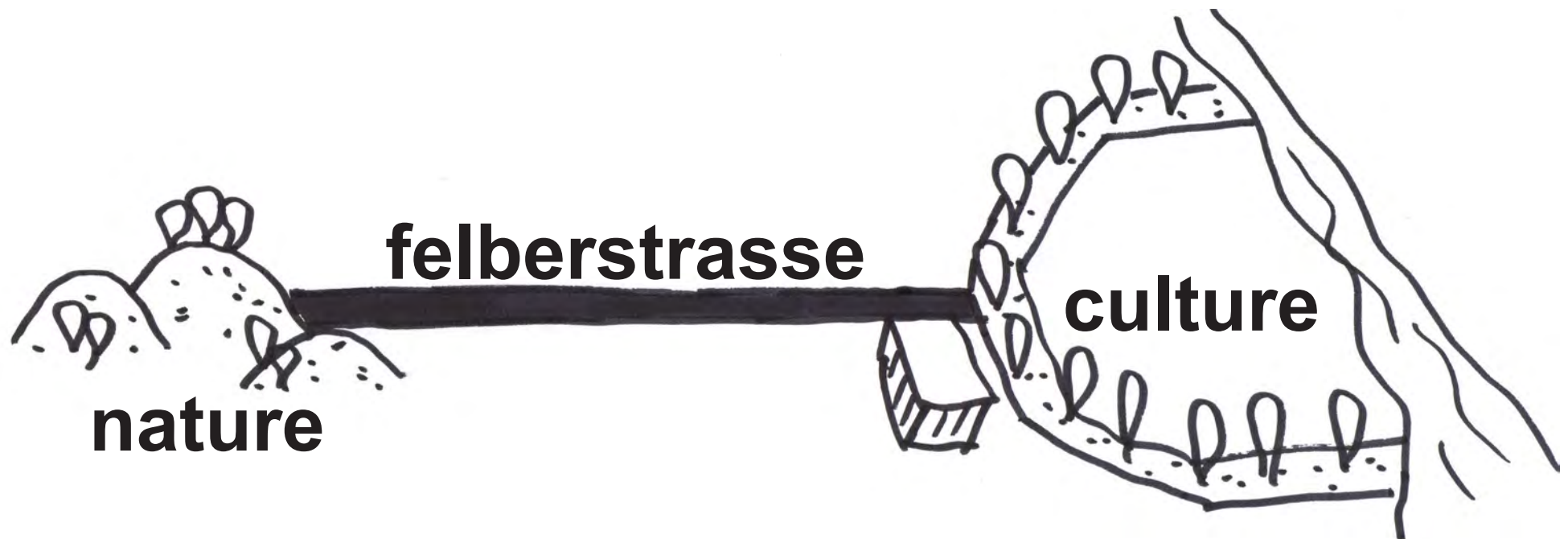
history of a scar

when the westbahnhof was established in 1858, it formed a permanent scar in the landscape, severing the 15th district into two distinct places.



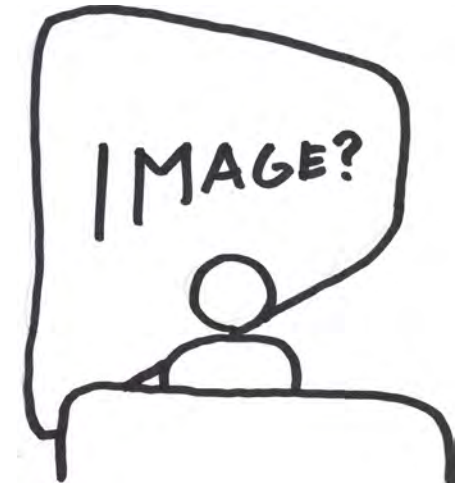
nature | culture

within vienna, the felberstrasse is a link between the historic cultural center and the hillsides to the west.



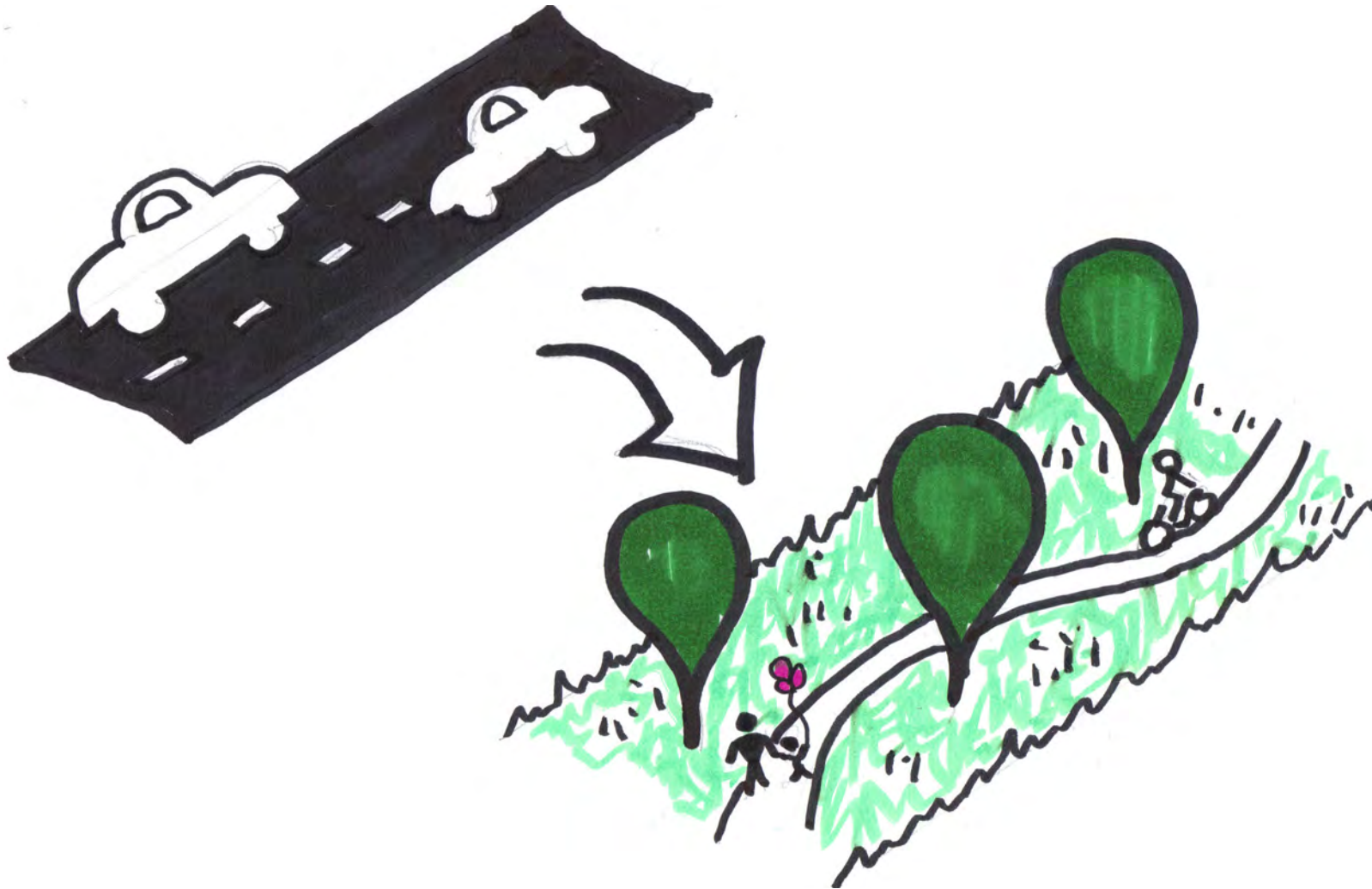
gateway image

the potential exists in the redevelopment of the felberstrasse to act almost as a billboard for one arriving into vienna at the westbahnhof. perhaps this image could be reminiscent of the landscapes one had just been passing through in western austria.



from felber, to forest

the idea is to transform what was once a street known for prostitution and currently is a place for cars to merely pass through into to a lush natural landscape for the people.



site data

1,41 km in length

101,653 sqm of surface area

9.95 m (max height difference from top of ridge to bottom)

so how do we do it?

move fast cars

add parking

create quality housing

preserve existing views

maximize public space

form new ways of living

create rhythmic ridge

give gifts to the community

form a community green

add a tramway

make a community base

link to the community

add a tramway

make streams

form felberforest moments

create a green gateway

link the 15th

form a green bridge

use green to make green

form a green highway

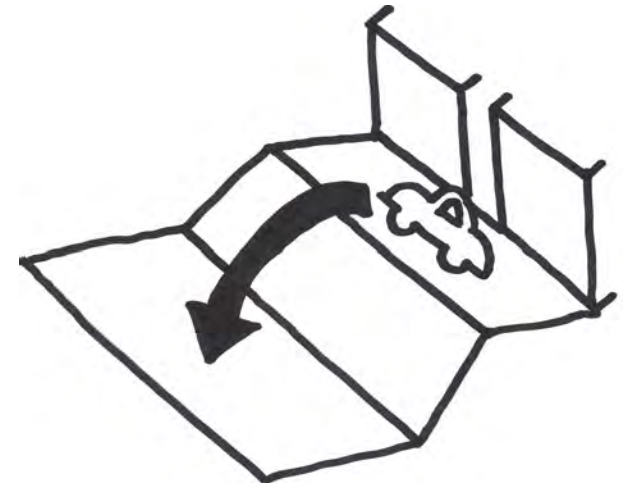
make intersections for people too

form infrastructure art

allow the community to grow

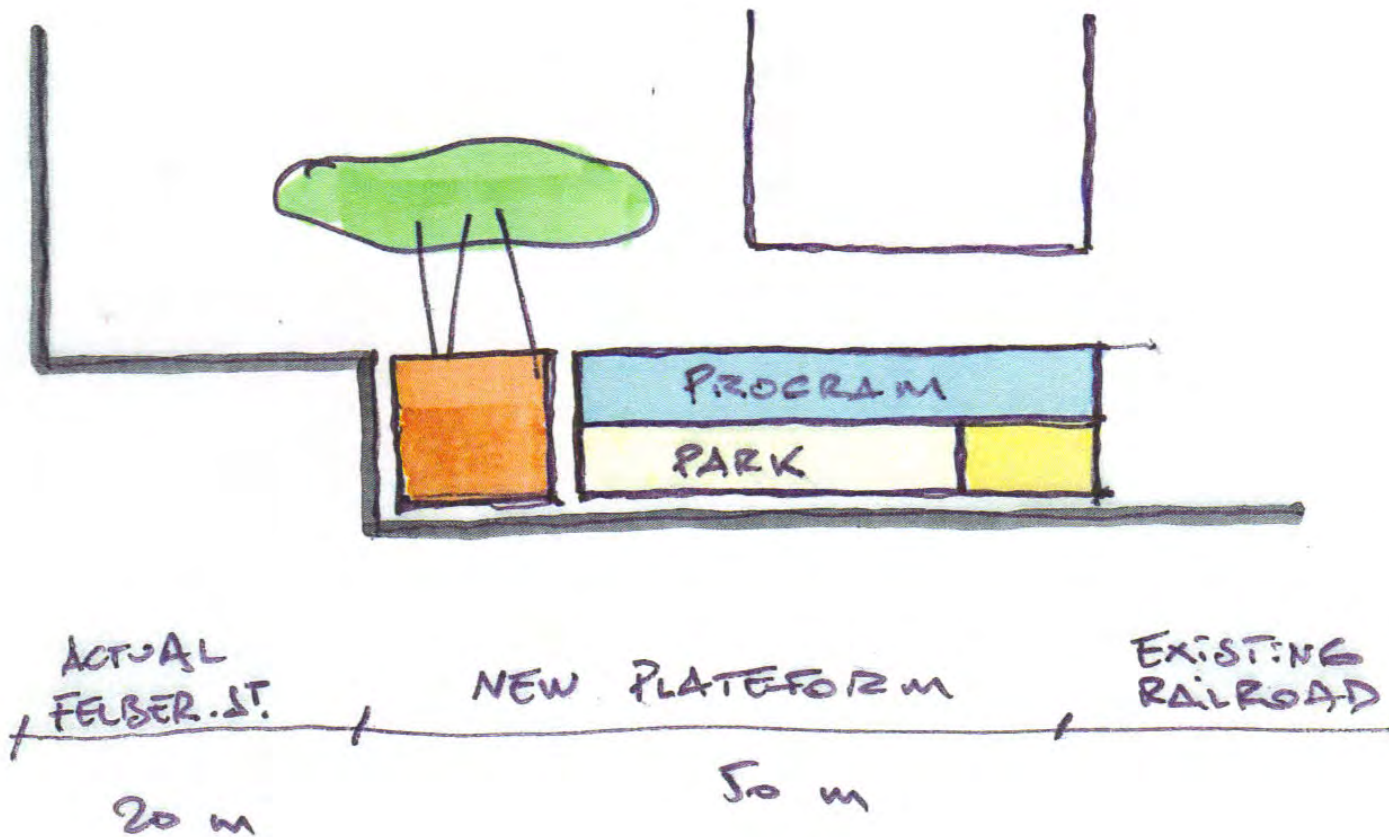
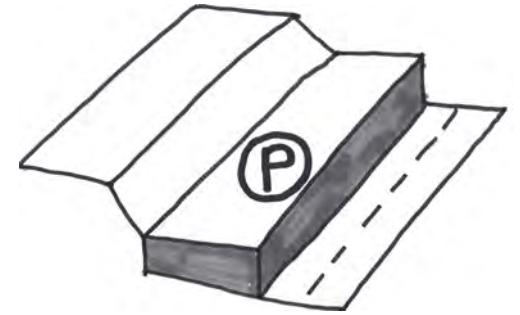
move fast traffic

we use the existing incline adjacent to the felberstrasse to move the cars 'down the cliff' and away from the existing buildings, forming a bypass roadway that no longer disturbs the community.



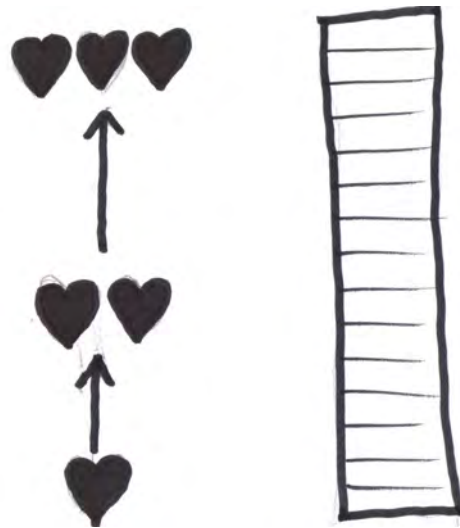
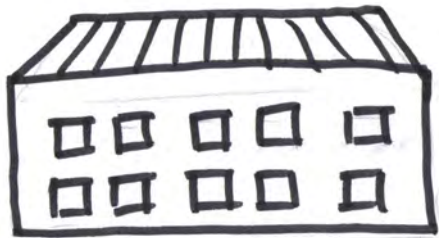
add needed parking

given the program for housing and the demand for more parking in vienna in general, a large parking area is formed at the bottom of the 'cliff', adjacent to the bypass roadway.



housing, value = view

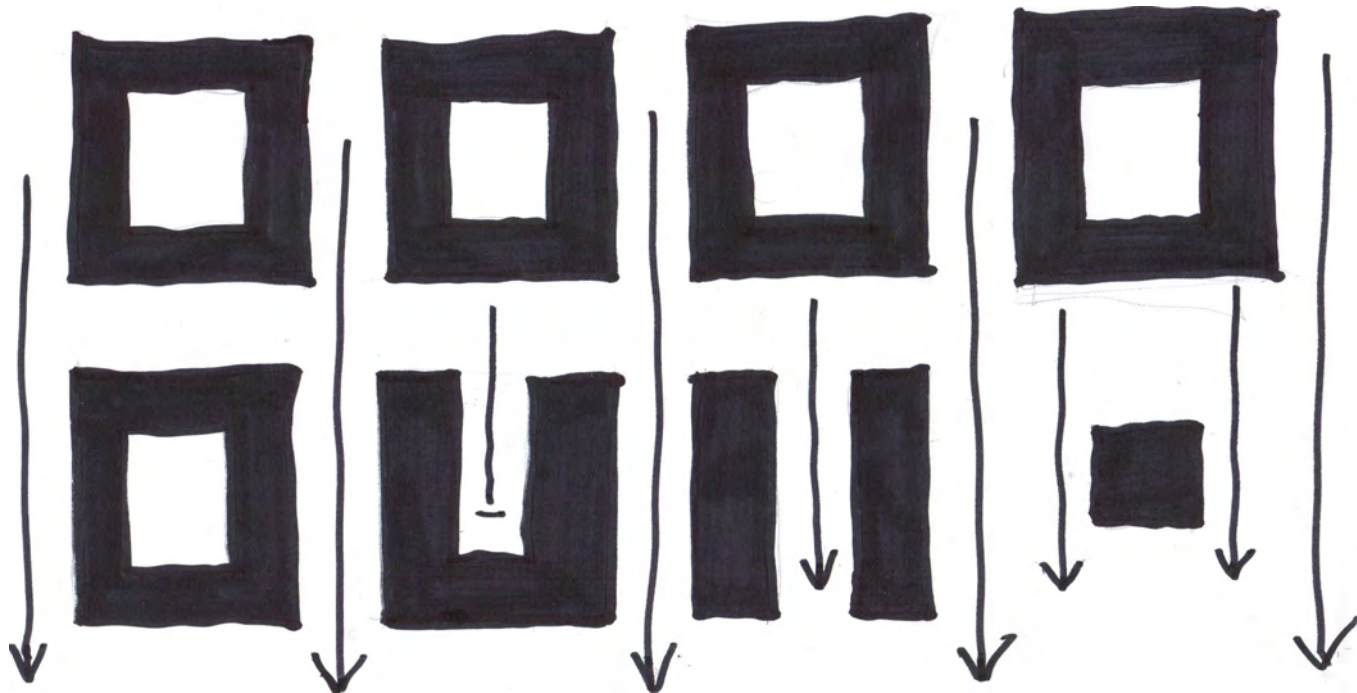
one of the greatest amenities in the community, thanks to the scar, are the commanding views across the city and the landscape.



existing building in area modified on top levels

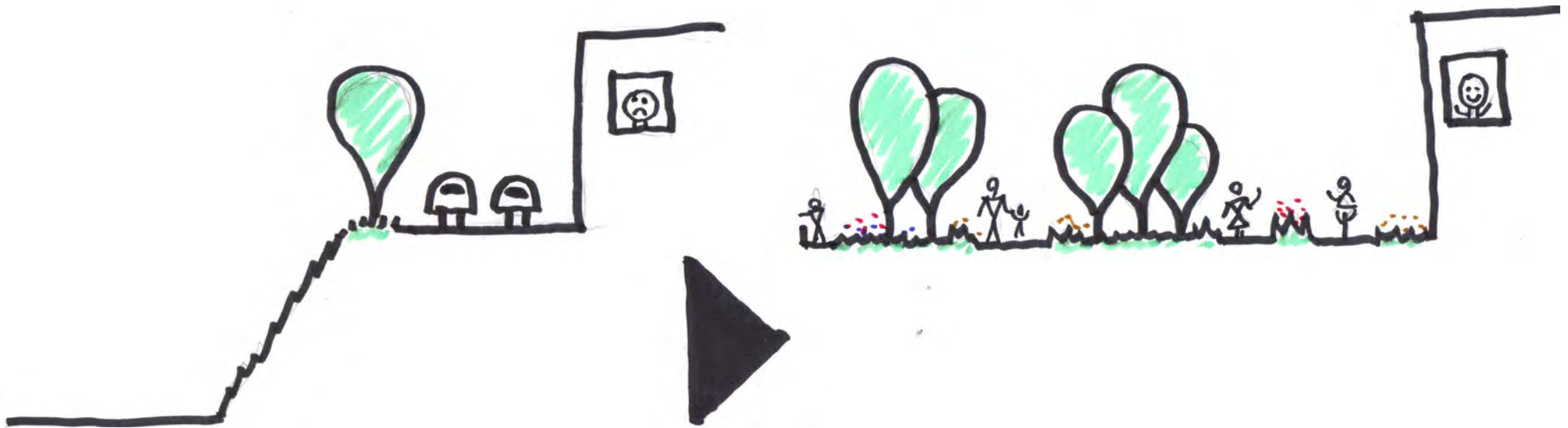
housing, keep existing views

looking down the north|south streets there are framed views to the distance. Also, the housing along felberstrasse has wide vistas to the south. as much as possible, these characteristics should be retained.



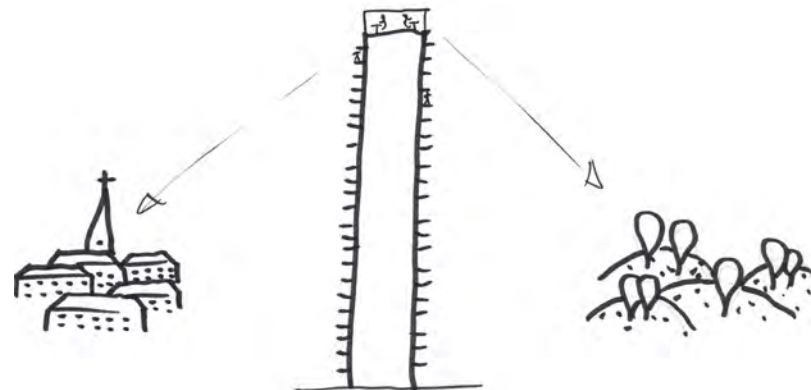
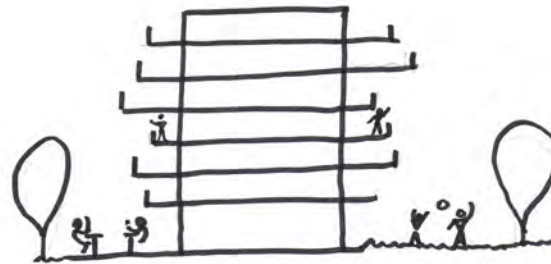
housing, max public space

by providing minimal building footprints, the amount of public space that can be given to the public can be maximized.



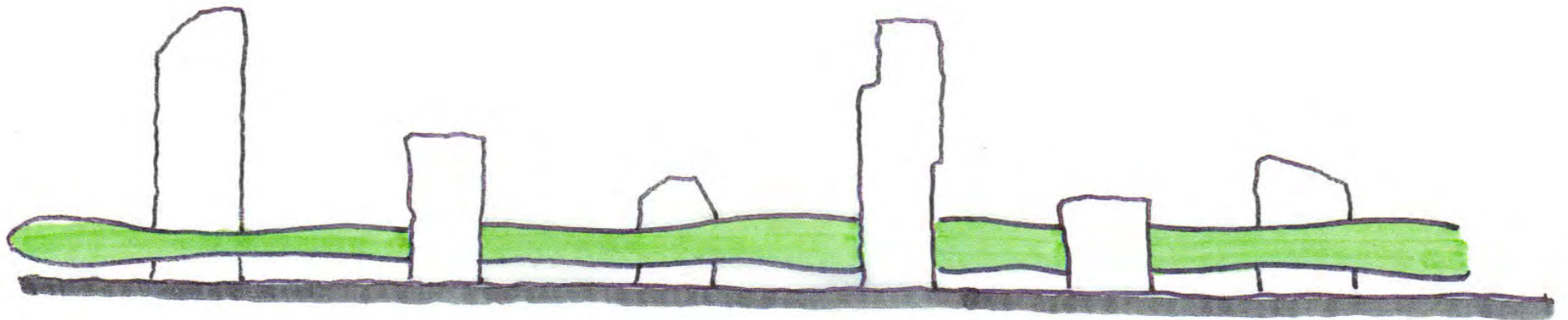
housing, new ways of living

the area should provide new housing typologies for vienna. Ones that are more low and directly oriented to the green space; those at a midrise level [10 to 12 stories] with generous balconies to relate to the public space; and towers [20-25 stories] that relate to distant landscapes.



housing, rhythmic ridge

all of these elements together compose a rhythm to the buildings on the ridge.



housing data

120,000 sqm housing program

1600 units (@70 sqm per unit)

40,000 sqm of parking

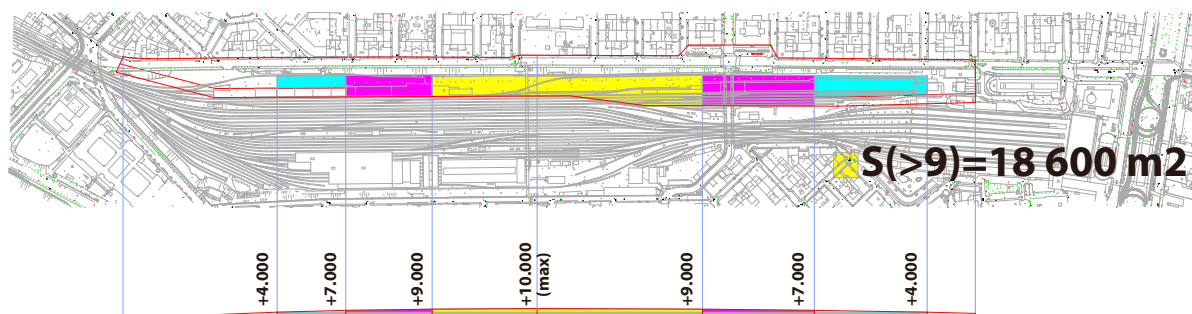
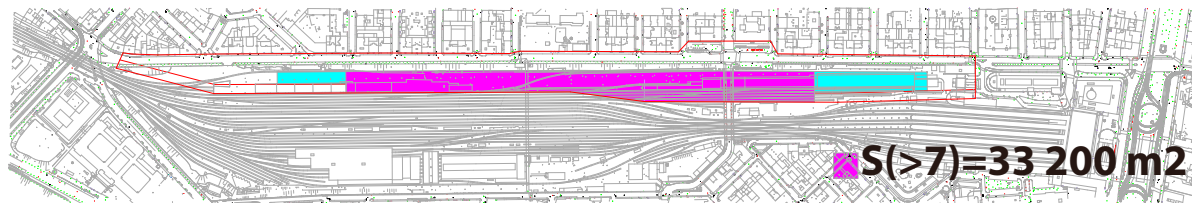
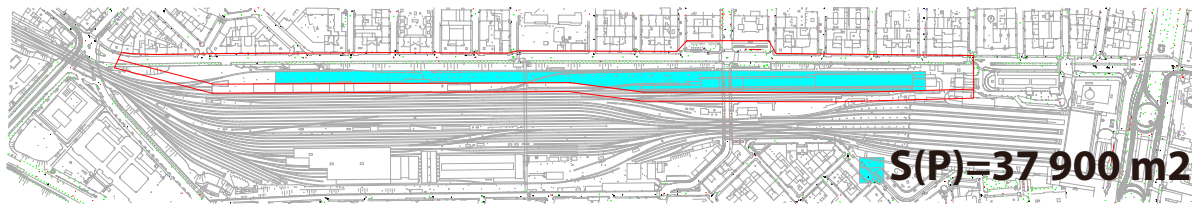
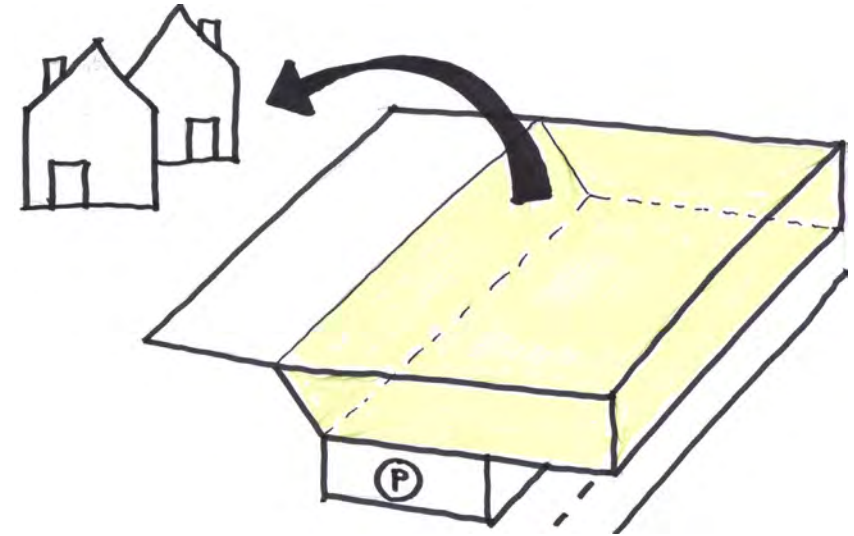
70% affordable housing

gifts to community

given the amount of development coming to the community, it is necessary that the development include a generous series of elements that if for the existing community.

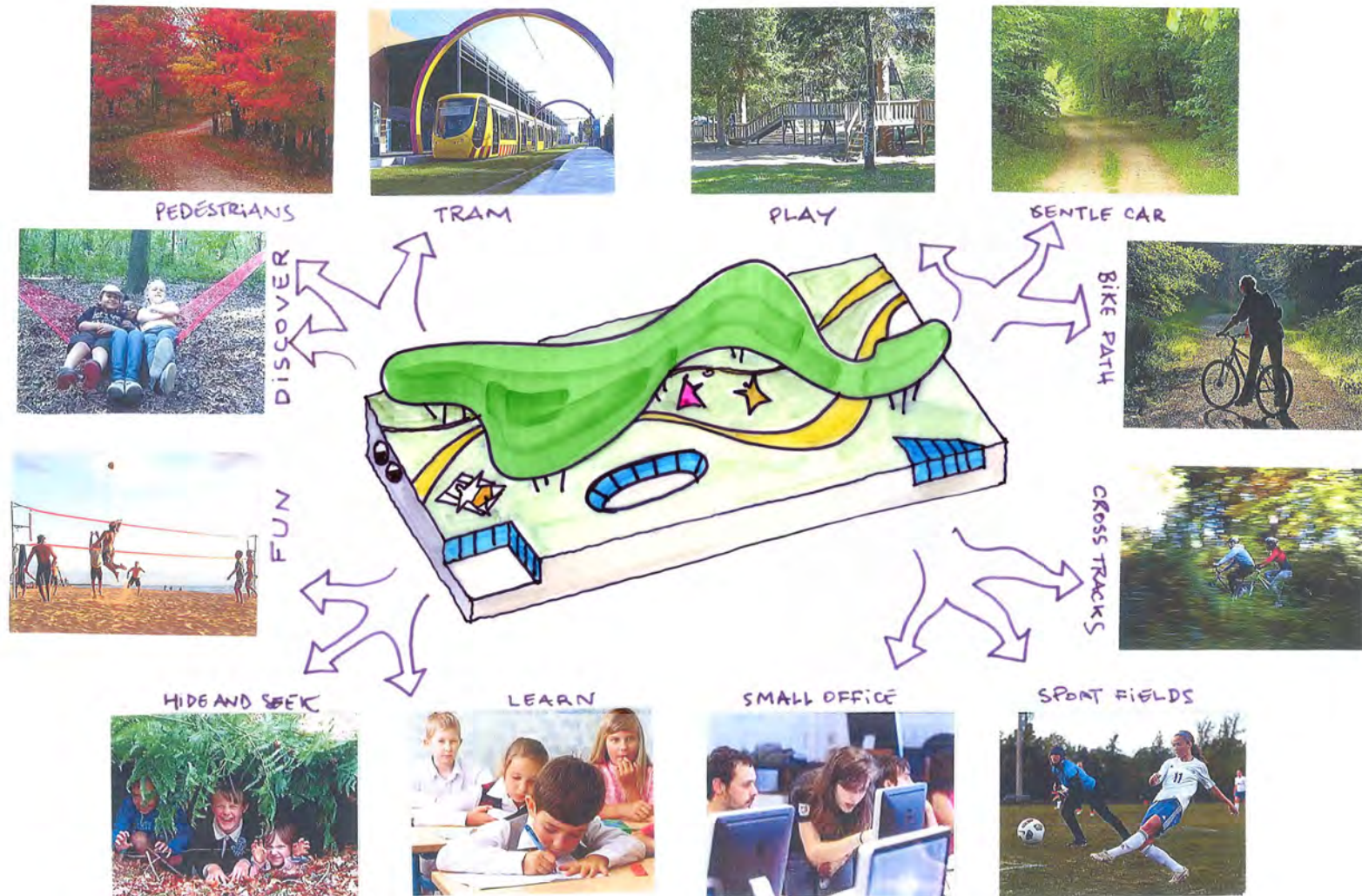
a community base

with the height difference between the bottom and the top of most of the ridge and the shear length of the site, there is an opportunity to create a 'base' of community programs both on the surface and in the levels just below.



a community green

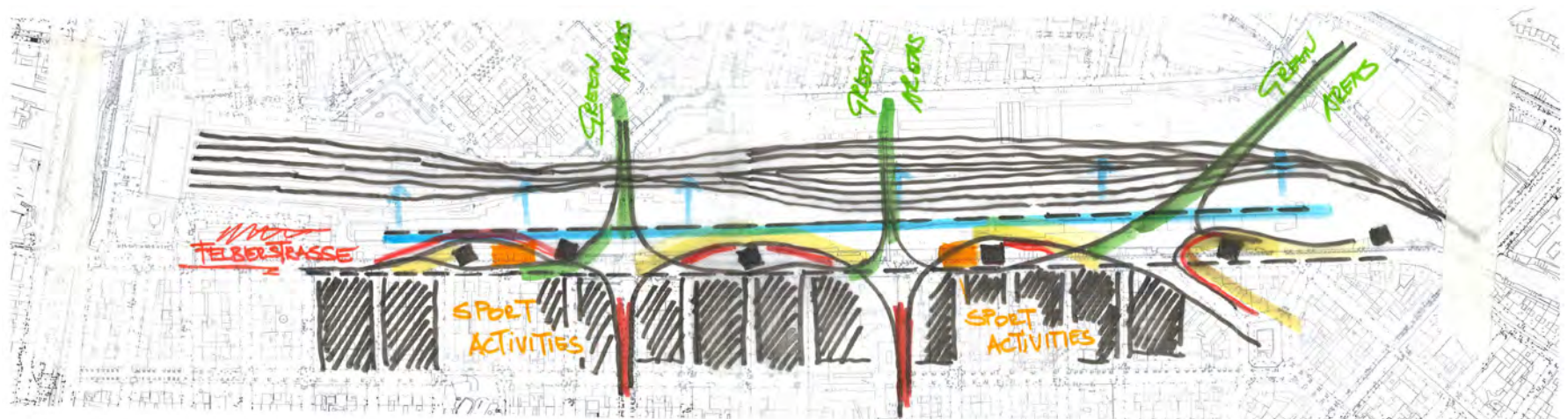
the surface of the development must be programmed well to activate the space and to link it to the existing community.



green programs

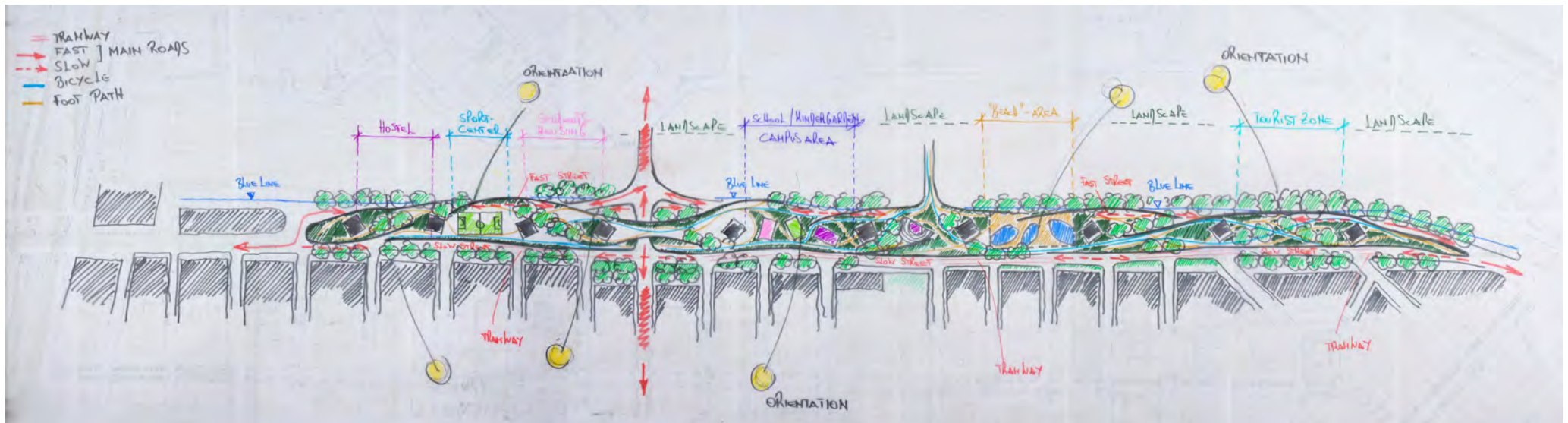
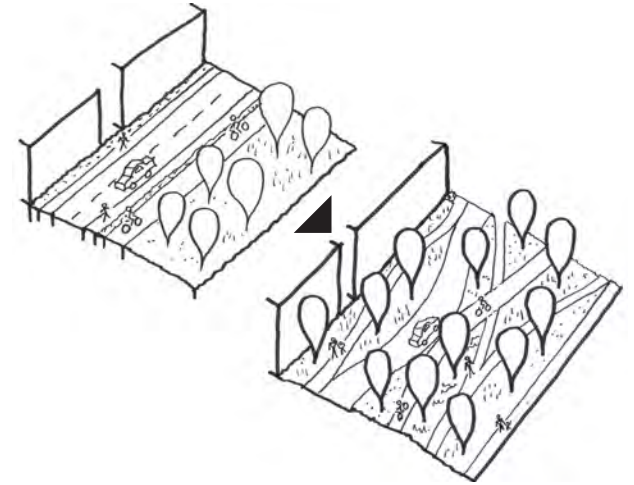
analyzing the existing communities amenities and needs; as well as taking into account movement pattern a series of programs are placed along the green space.

- community gardens
- amphitheater
- playgrounds
- public art
- barbeque areas
- beaches
- beach volleyball
- basketball
- outdoor pool
- fountains
- ponds
- large lawn
- event space
- sledding hills
- glass houses



stripes to streams

in a standard street, the walking, biking, car, and other movements are all straight parallel lines. In order to create a fresh and more pastoral feeling space, the paths are a series of undulating and intertwined pathways.



local road + tramway

a local roadway is provided, for short car movements can linking to the existing grid. It is one element in the undulating streams. additionally, this roadway carries a tram, providing greater access to transit for the community.



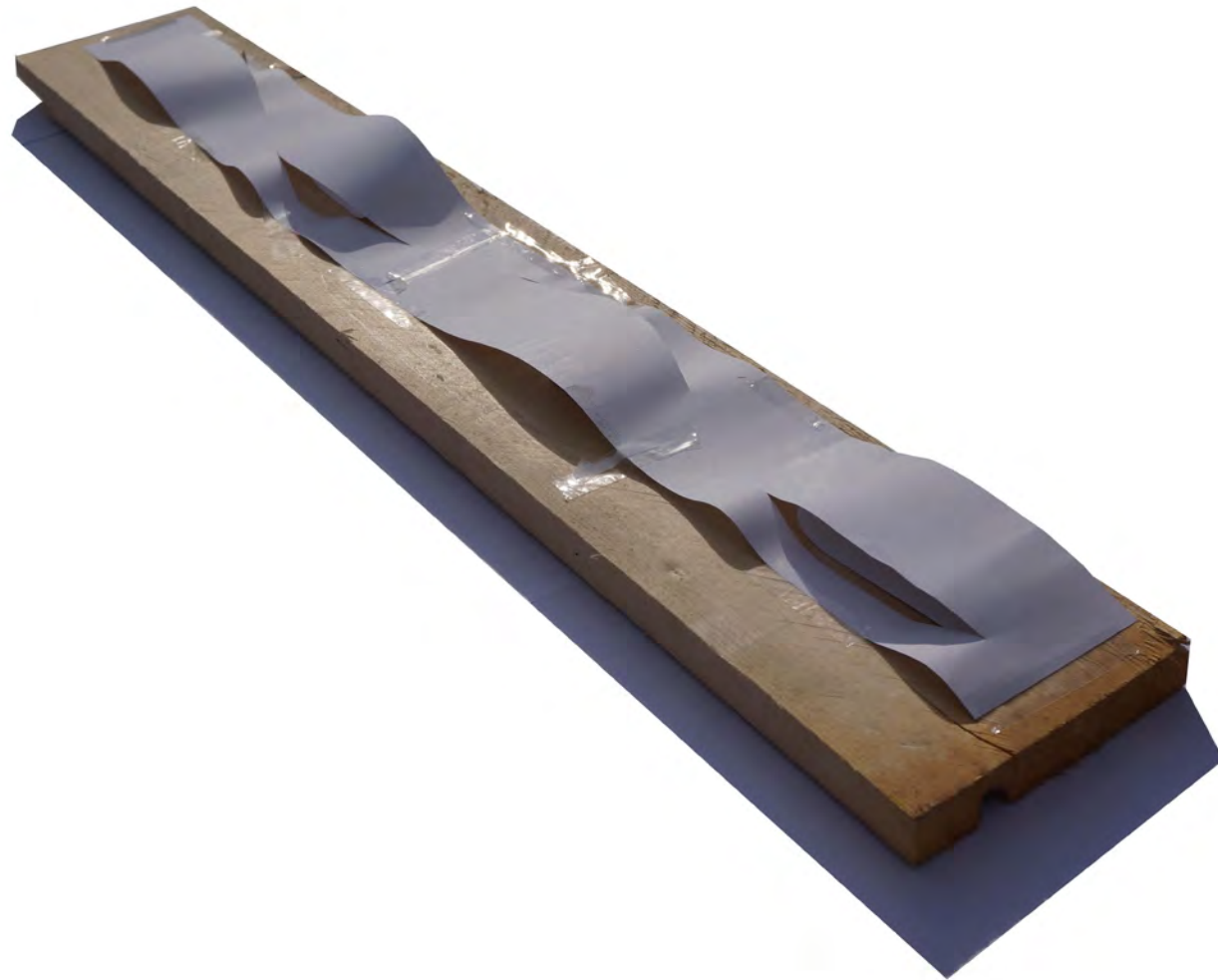
+



base programs

the spaces just under the surface of the green and above the parking will be community spaces. further, the surface of the green can move up and down, allowing these spaces facades onto the green, provide access to light and will help to activate the space – increasing the community's ownership of the open space.

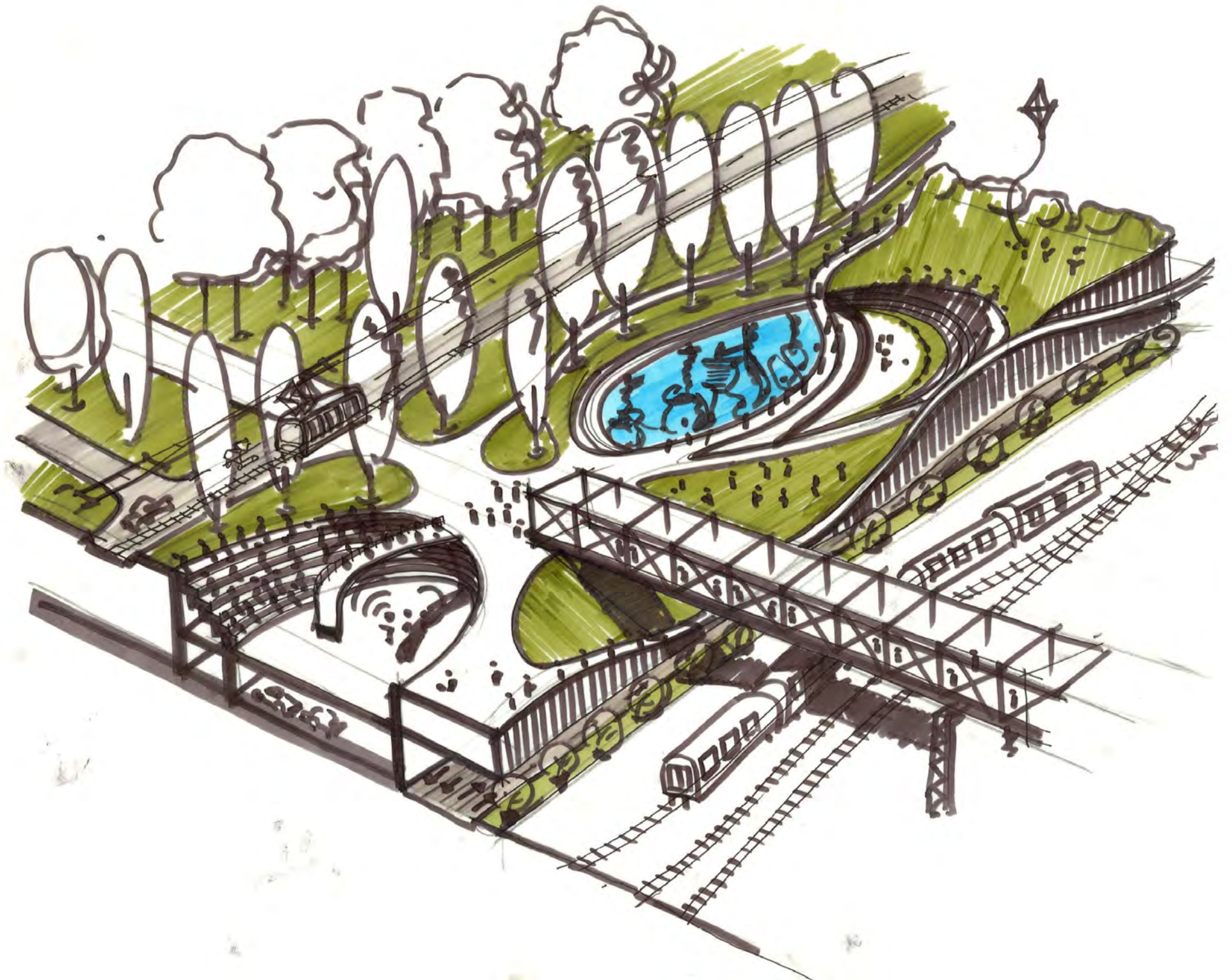
sports facilities
community centers
religious facilities
education centers
performance spaces
rehearsal spaces
tourism centers
music clubs
hostels
generational living
swimming hall
library
daycare centers
galleries
cafes/restaurants
ateliers

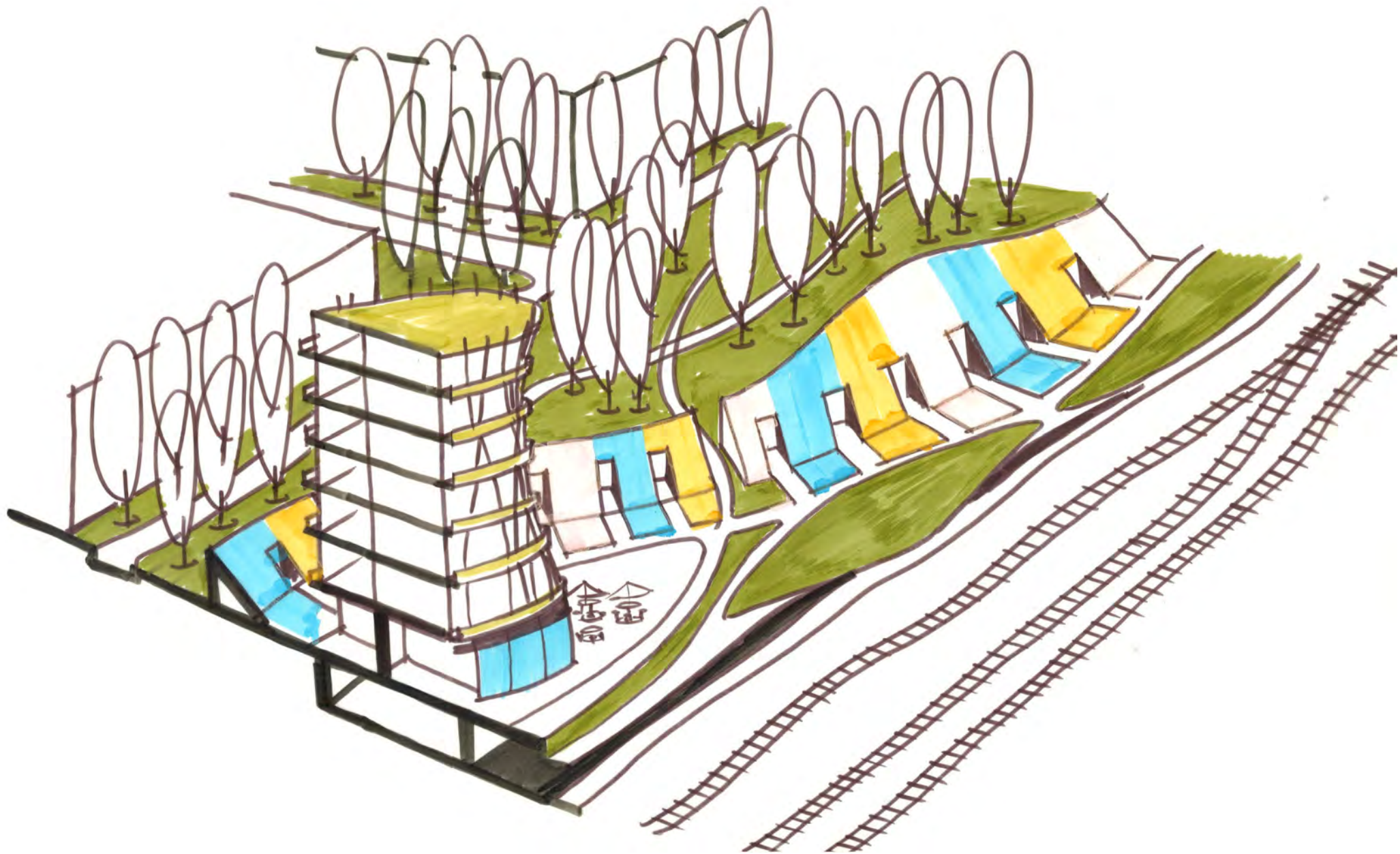


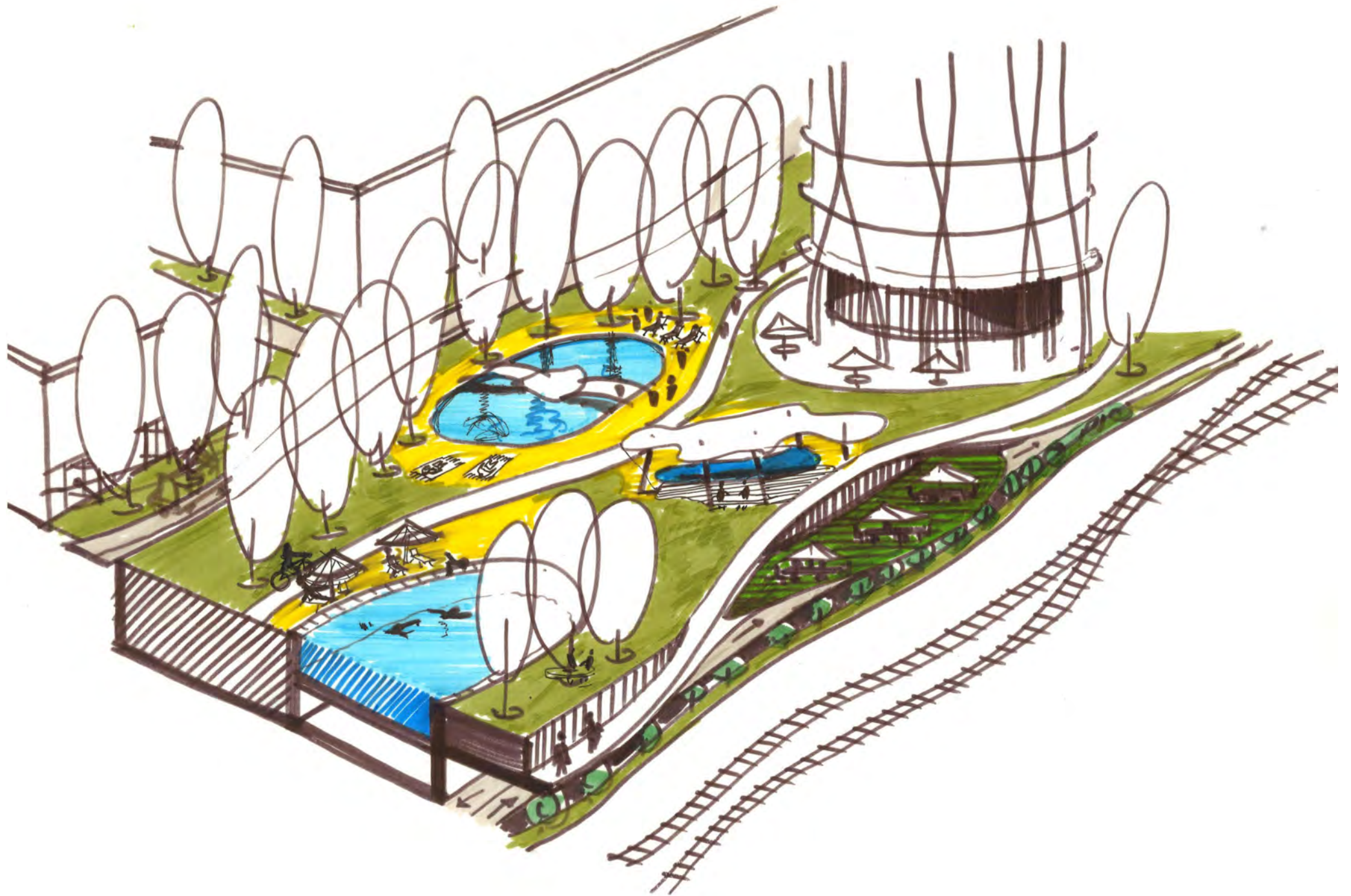
felberforest moments

thanks to the overlapping of community programs, there are opportunities to link differing spatial moments and differing people to form community cohesion.

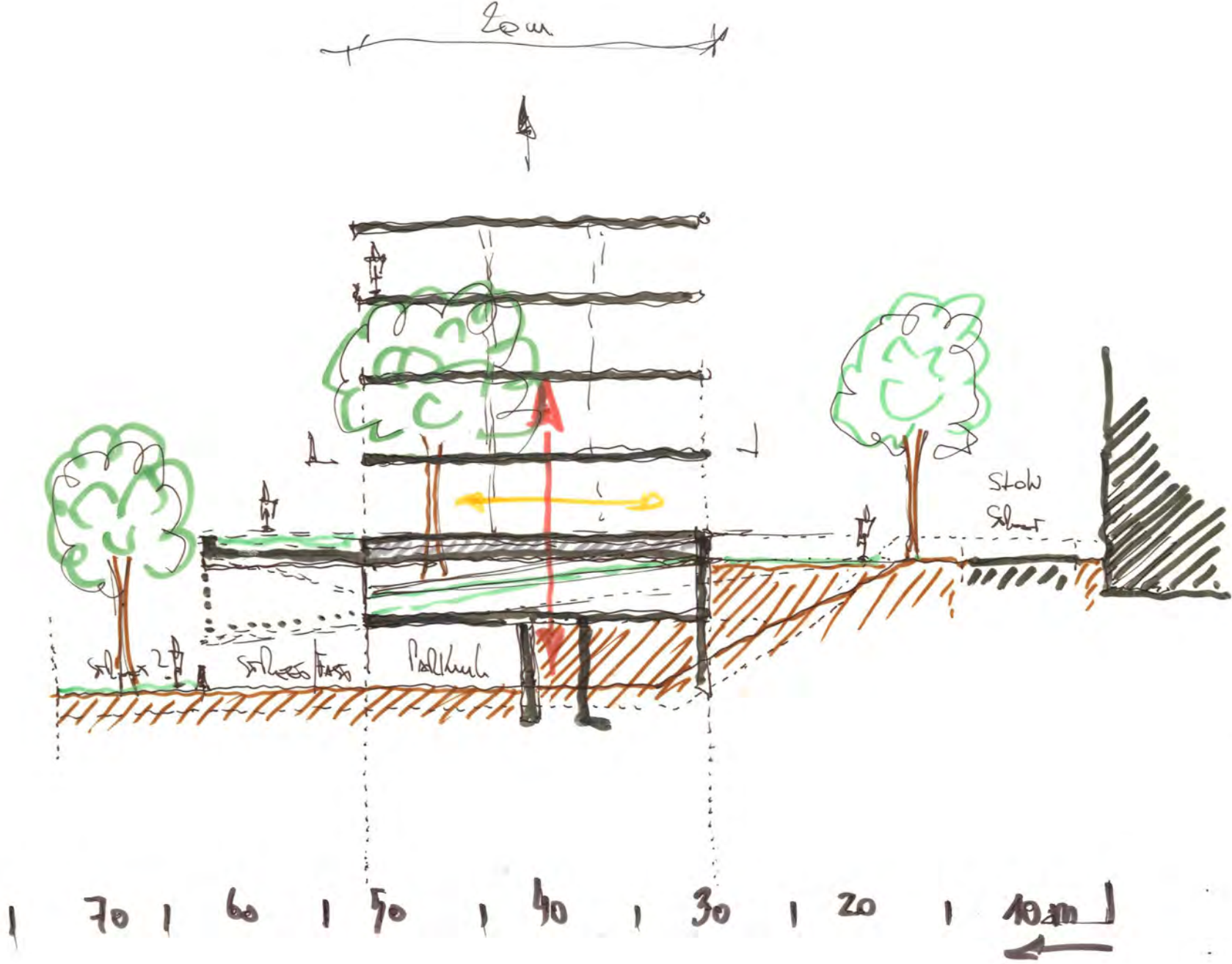




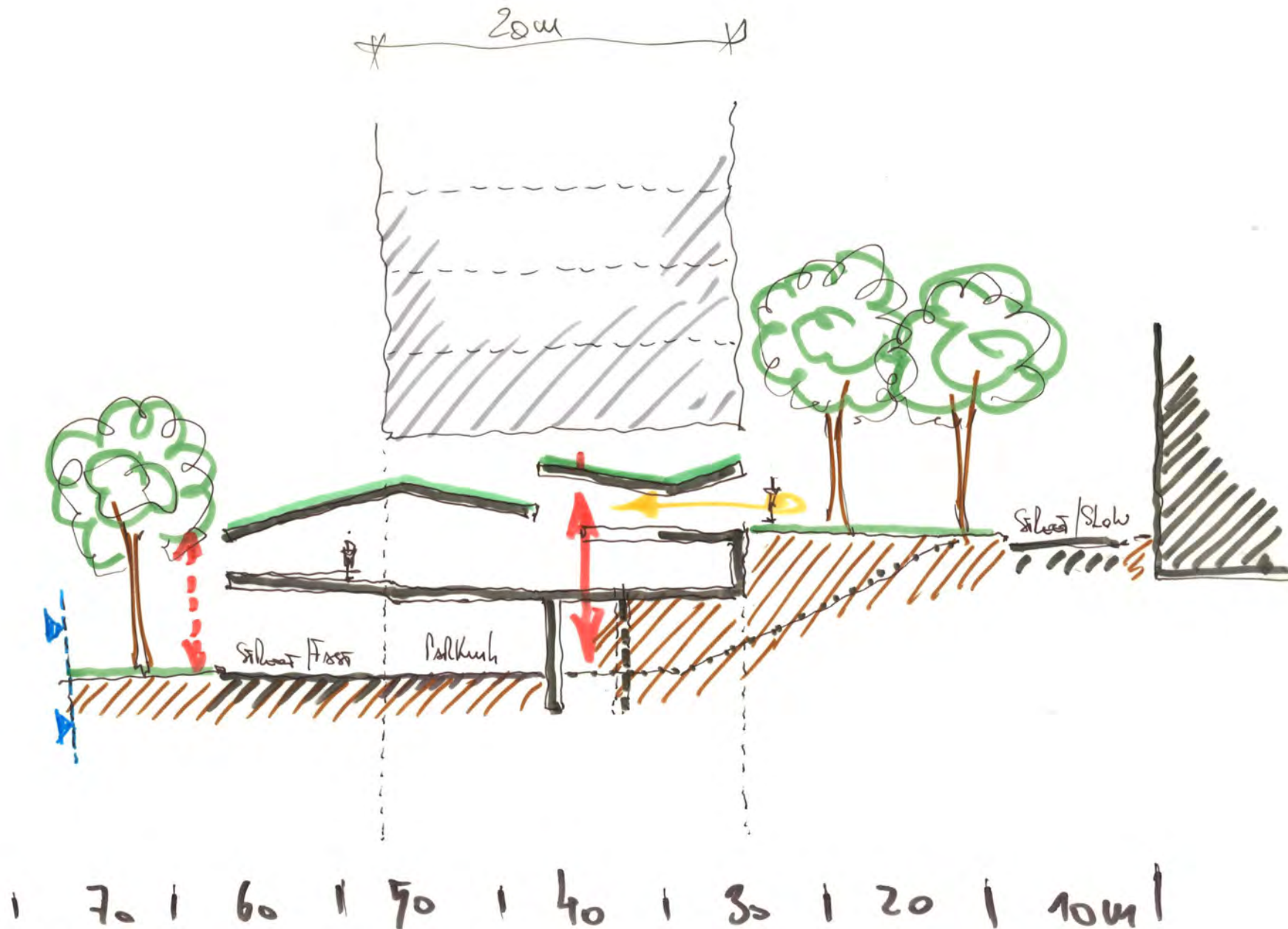




in certain moments, the buildings can allow under passages for more direct links to the ridge.

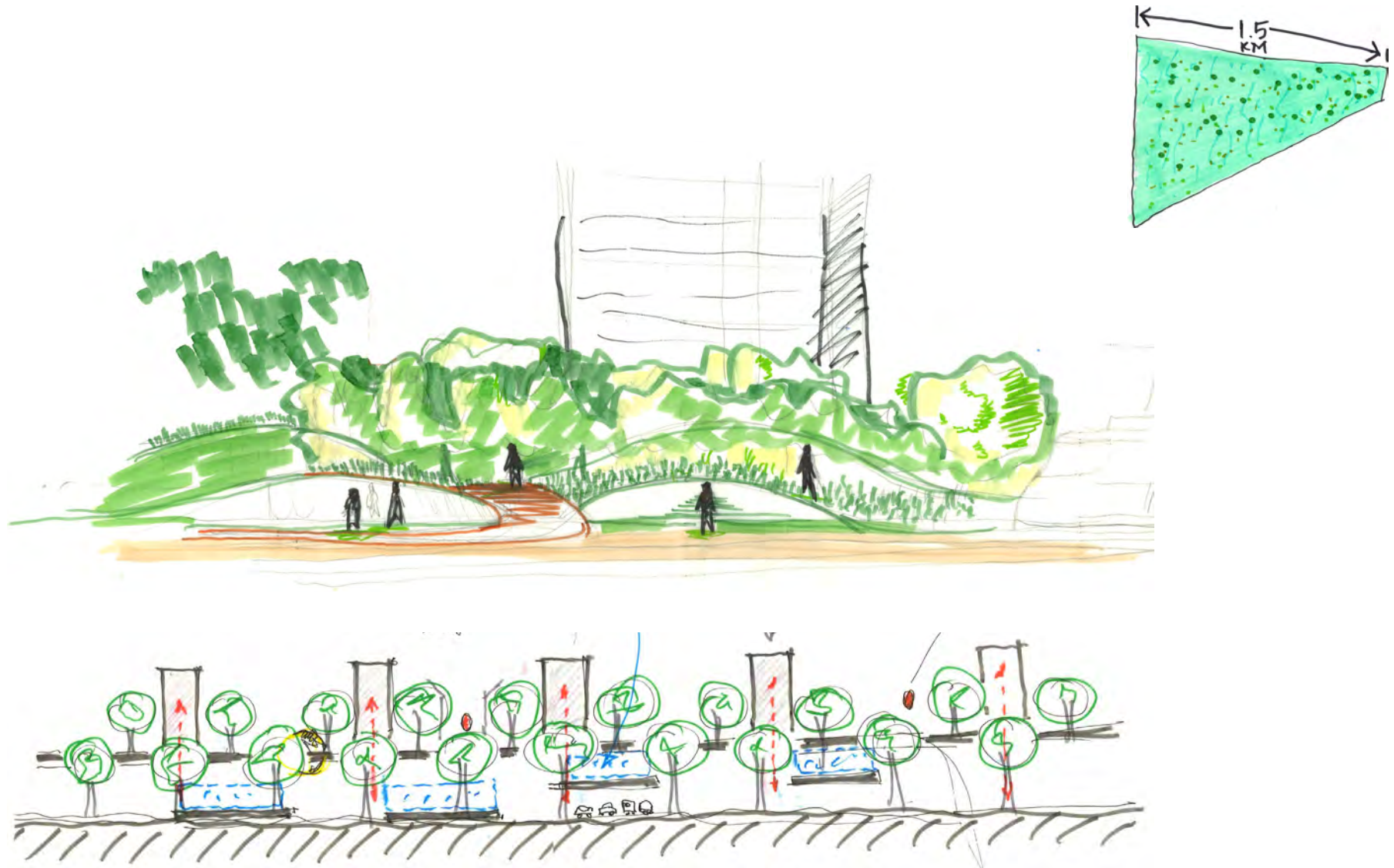


the base can be designed to allow more 'real dirt' of depth, to allow for larger trees to grow. further, these spaces can allow for complex spatial moments to provide visual interest in the layering uses, users, and spaces.



green gateway

the layered, undulating landscape of the felberforest forms a green elevation. This could perhaps be the longest green façade in the world.



gift data

road and paths:

8 500 sqm of road (6 m wide)

13,000 sqm of pedestrian paths (3*3 m wide)

5,000 sqm of bike path (4 m wide)

outdoors spaces:

68,000 sqm of grass

33,000 sqm of forest

1,000 sqm of ponds

2,000 sqm of playgrounds for children

4,000 sqm of sport facilities

4,000 sqm of lounge zones

700 sqm of BBQ zones

indoors spaces (33,000 sqm):

5 100 sqm of community center

8 600 sqm of offices and ateliers for rent

4 100 sqm of gastronomic

3 500 sqm of gym

3 900 sqm of galleries

3 100 sqm of educational facilities

1 900 sqm of rehearsal areas

2 500 sqm of performance areas

*all numbers are approximate

linking the 15th

the scar that is the train tracks can be mended. a few interventions could go a long way to link the two sides in a healthier and interesting way.

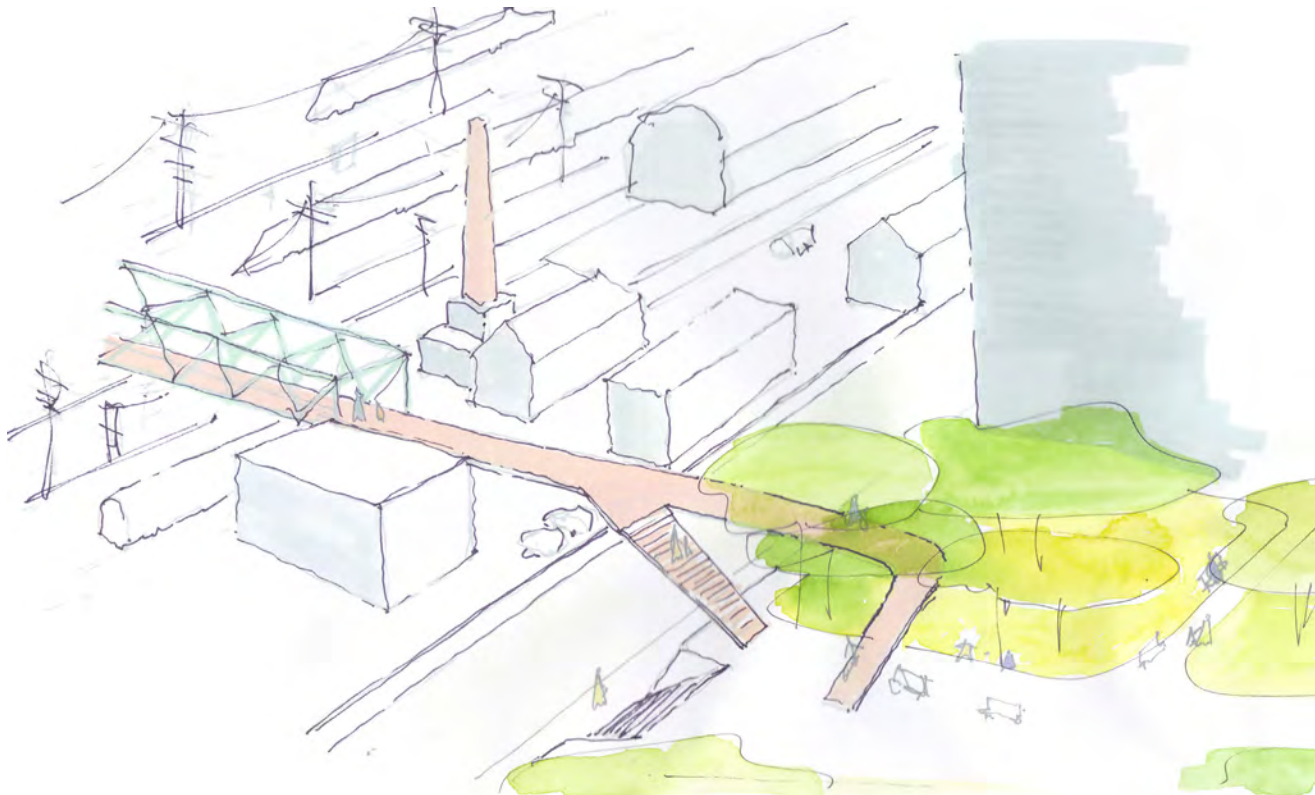
bad connections

The current south side of the pedestrian bridge is dangerous, difficult, and hostile to bikes and the handicapped.



a green connection

with the bridge ending at obb land, and with a community park just to the south, generous south facing steps could link across obb land and the street into the park.



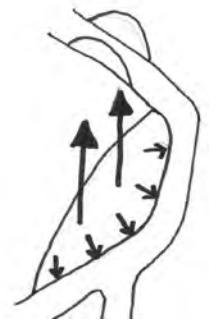
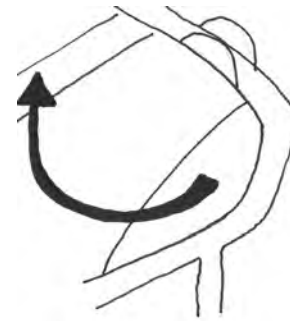
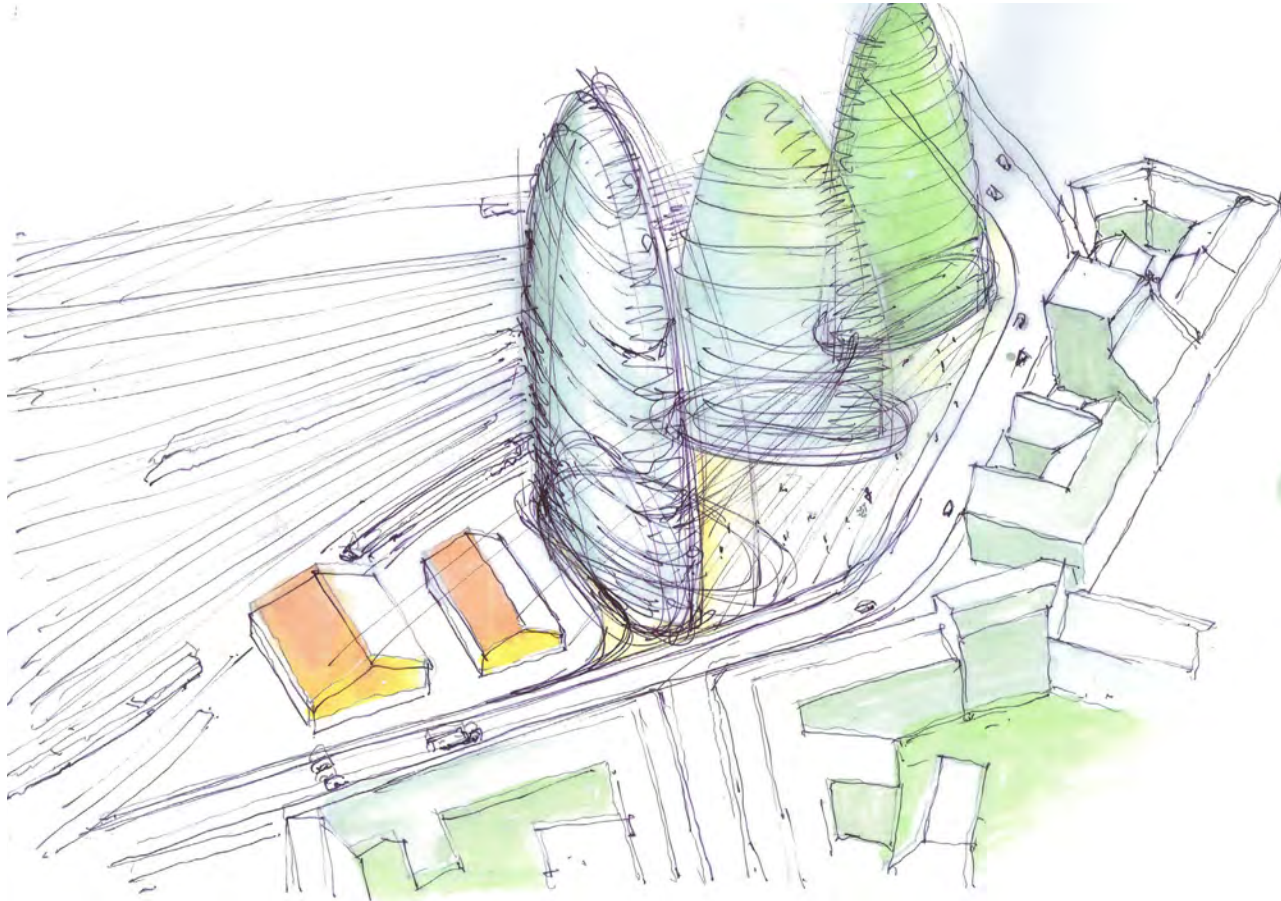
bad connections

the current road bridge is not a pleasant place to be for people.



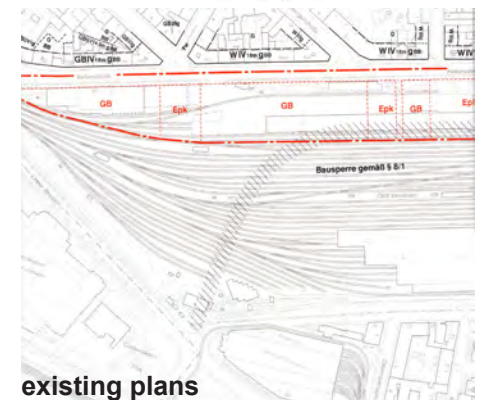
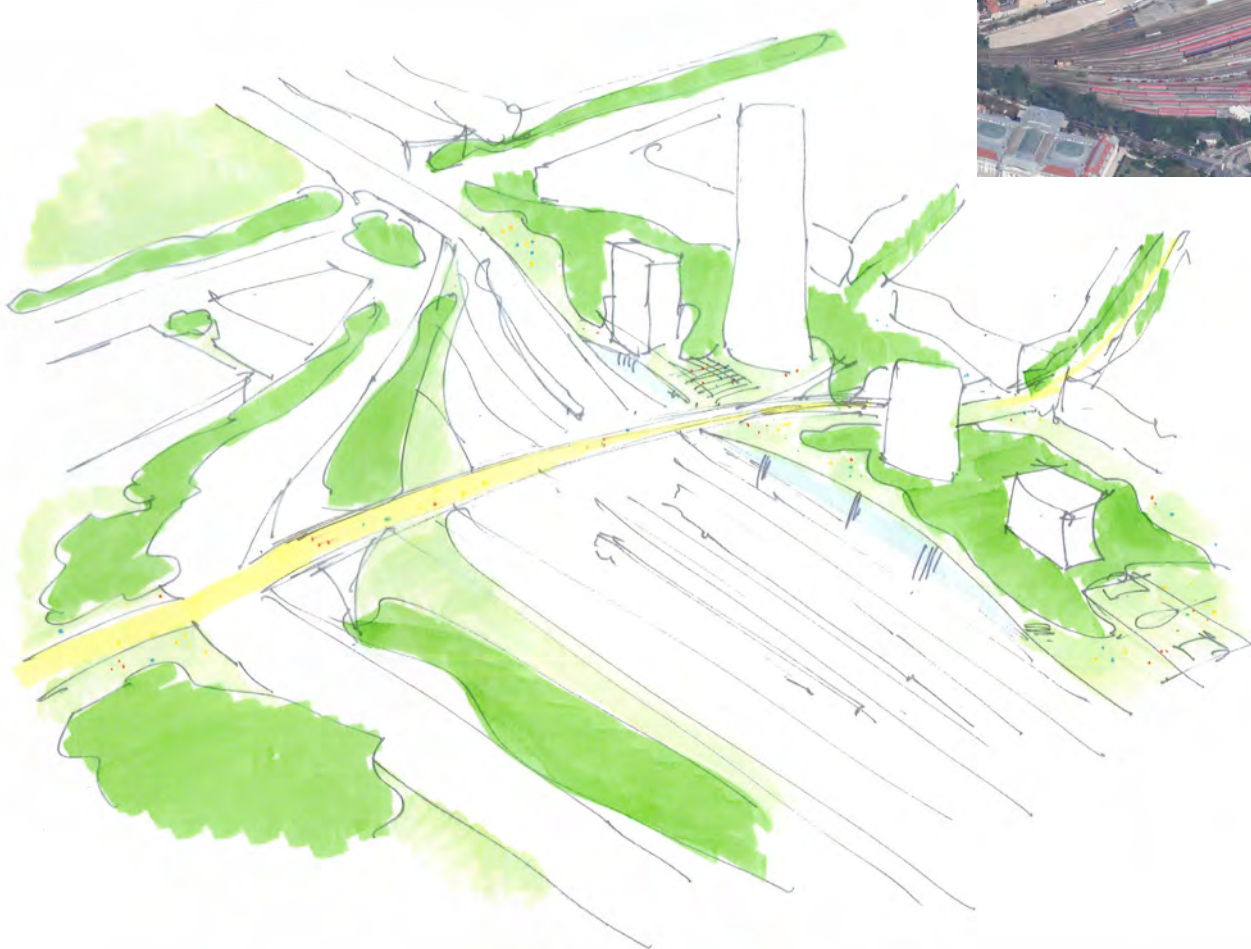
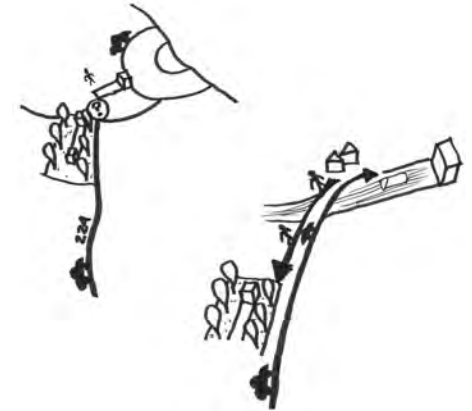
an urban connection

the land adjacent to the rise to the bridge is obb land. perhaps the uses on site could be transferred elsewhere [other side of the tracks maybe] and allow land to be redeveloped. This redevelopment could form an urban edge along the rise and provide a nice series of urban spaces to the community.

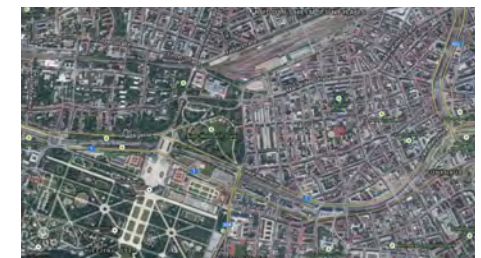


road link | green link

there are existing ideas to link the felberstrasse to the 224 as it comes from the outside of the city. if this project were to proceed in the future, it is an opportunity to put a green 'lid' on it that could give the northern 15th district a more direct pedestrian path to the parks to the south.



existing plans



regional connection

green for green

considering all of the money that obb could make from such redevelopments it is worth noting that the 'green' made from these projects could be reinvested in making higher quality connections, with green qualities.



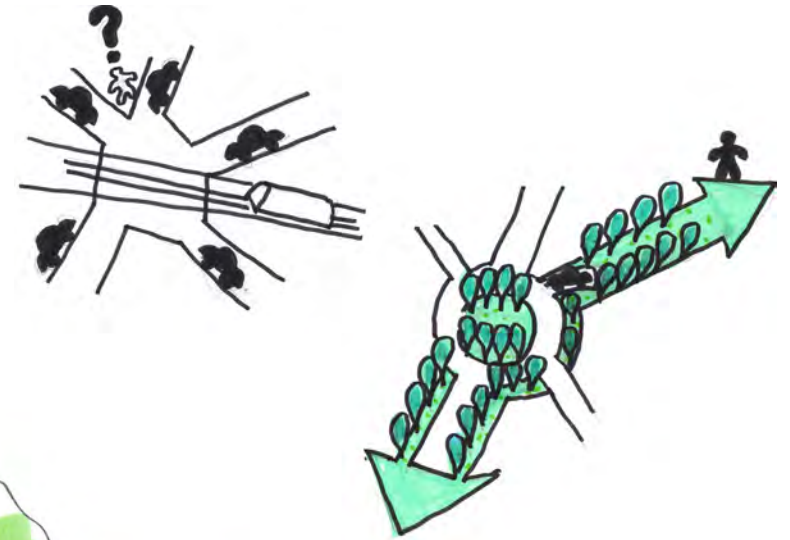
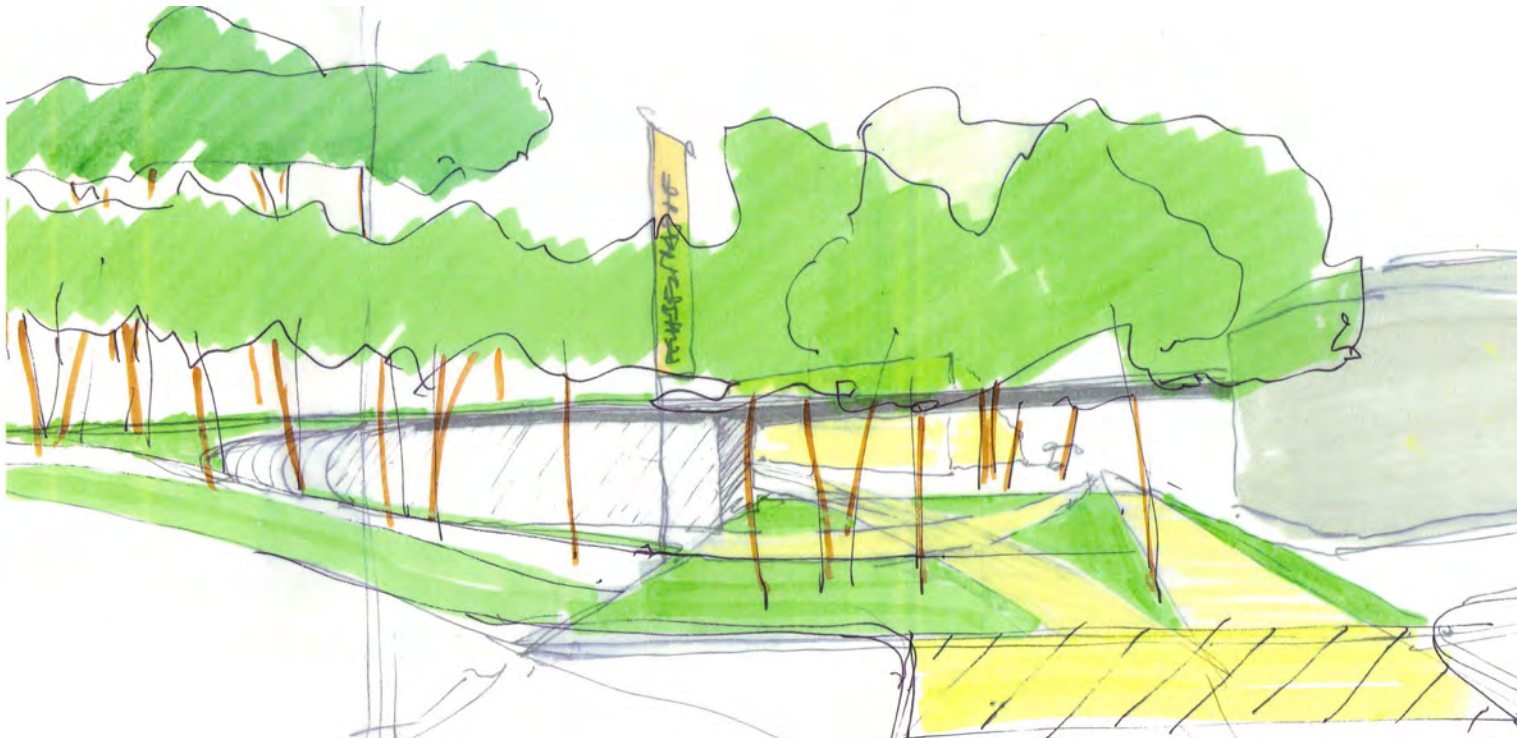
bad intersection

the traffic knot that occurs where the felberstrasse, schlossalle, linzer strass, and other roads meet is hostile to people and dangerous for cars as well.



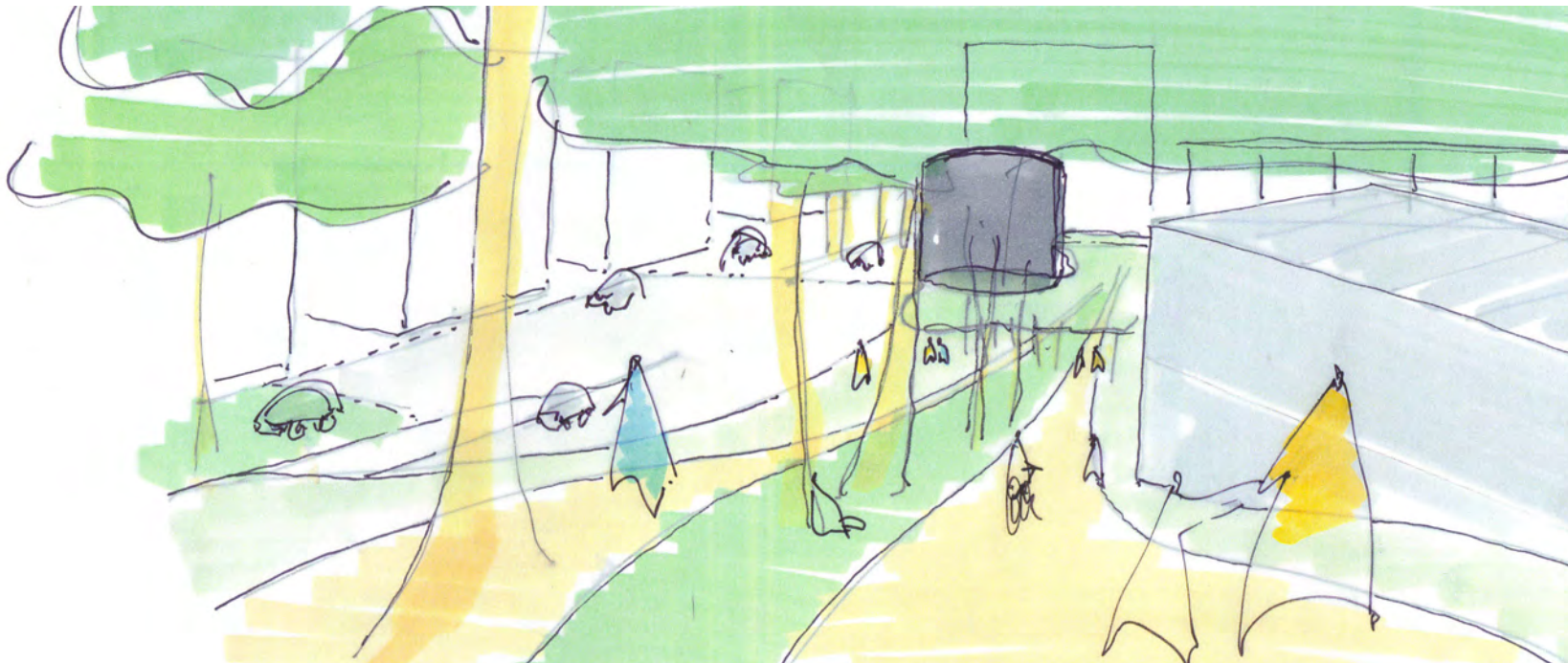
better intersection

given the moving of felberstrasse and the formation of the felberforest, it is time to improve this intersection. Particular attention should be made to linking the felberforest to the schlossale for pedestrians.



eastern entrance

as the felberforest nears the westbahnhof and the traffic emerges, particular care needs to be given to the mix of pedestrian, bike and car flows.



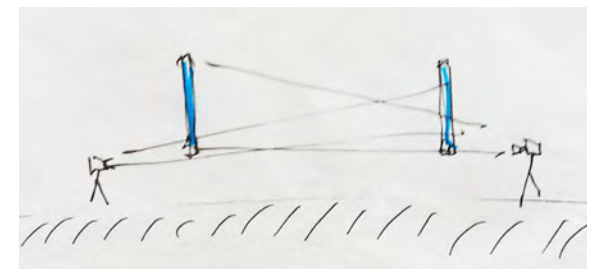
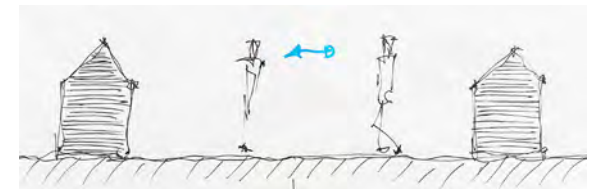
on unesco

despite the height of hte buildings, they are carefully placed in order to respect the historic axis views.



infrastructure art

while some might see the tracks emerging from westbahnhof as a scar, there is an opportunity to use this large canvas toward the sky for art installations. these can include projections, linear lighting, sound art, or even just planting the surface in low plants. further, small interventions can be explored to connect the 15th in more intimate and abstract ways, for example with video installations.



on sustainability

obviously with such a large and ambitious project sustainability is a key issue. underlying much of the themes of this project are issues of sustainability. With high density development, large green spaces, and efficient uses there are many opportunities to pursue many layers of sustainability. this must remain a high priority as the project moves forward.

the community grows

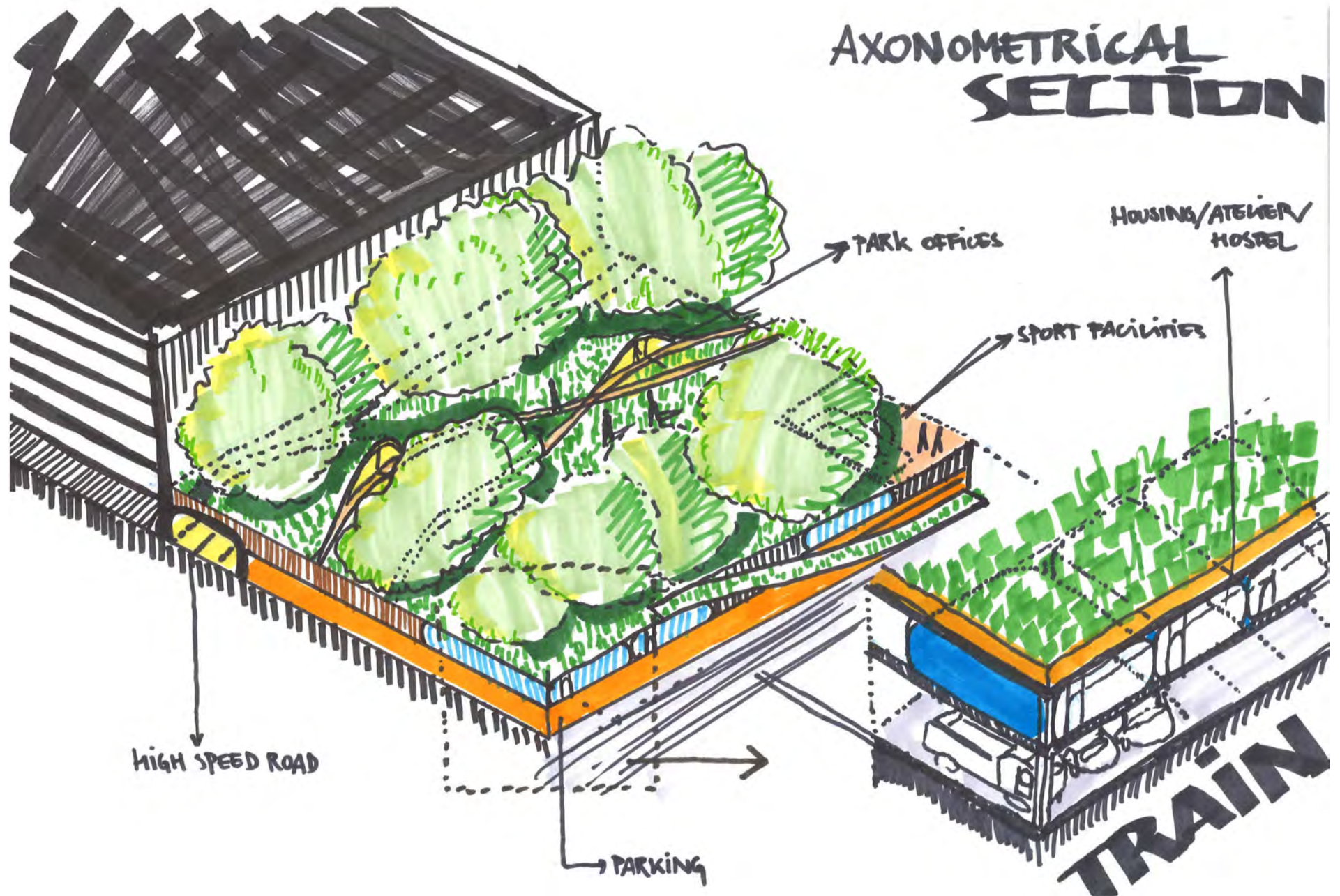
with all of our suggestions, mixed with the reality of the time for development, and time for the felberforest to grow and mature, the development will grow and become a integral part of the 15th district community and of vienna.

a potential future

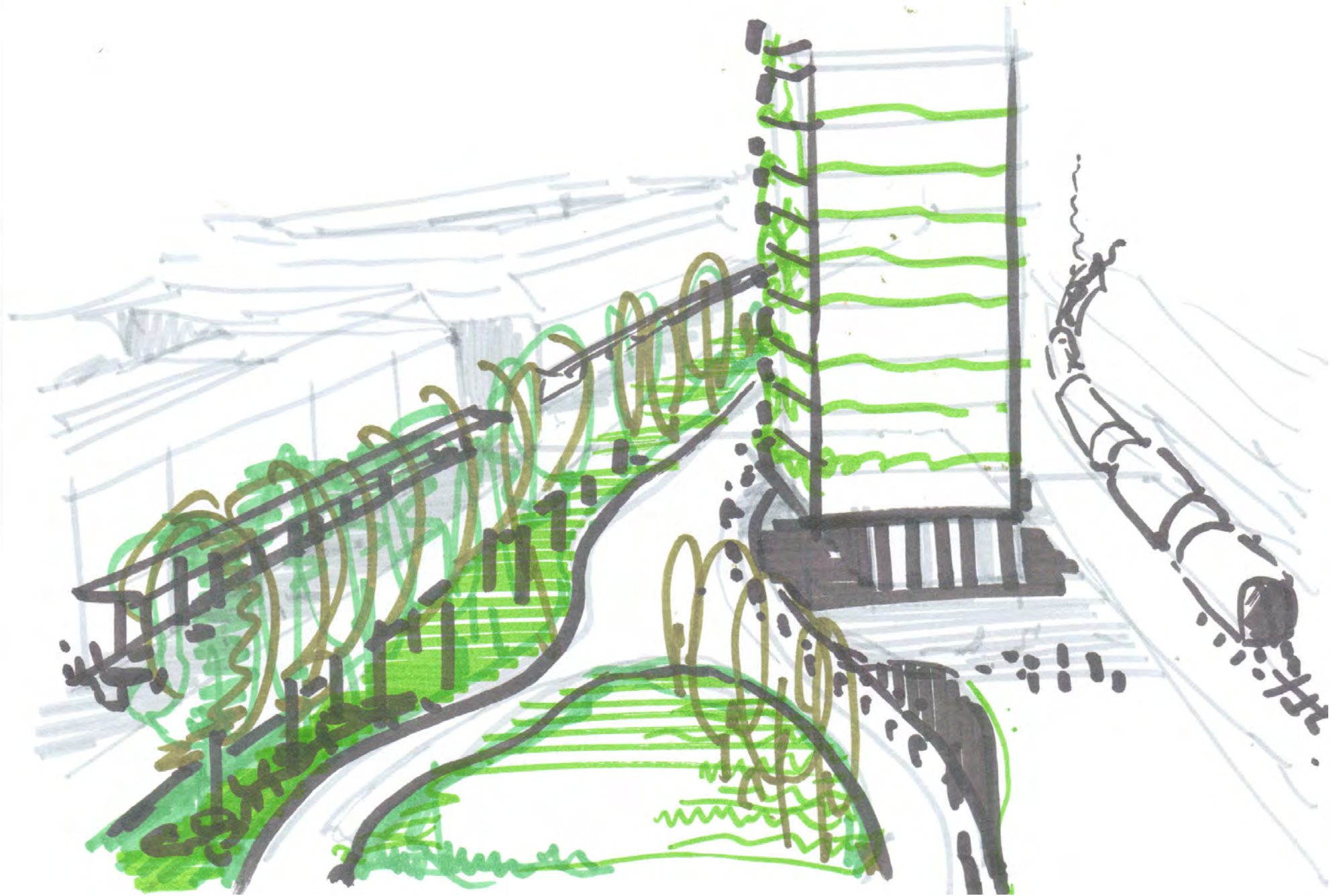
in time, perhaps forming more generous public space links between the two sides of the 15th should be considered.



the base can be designed to allow more 'real dirt' of depth, to allow for larger trees to grow. further, these spaces can allow for complex spatial moments to provide visual interest in the layering uses, users, and spaces.



some visions of the future...



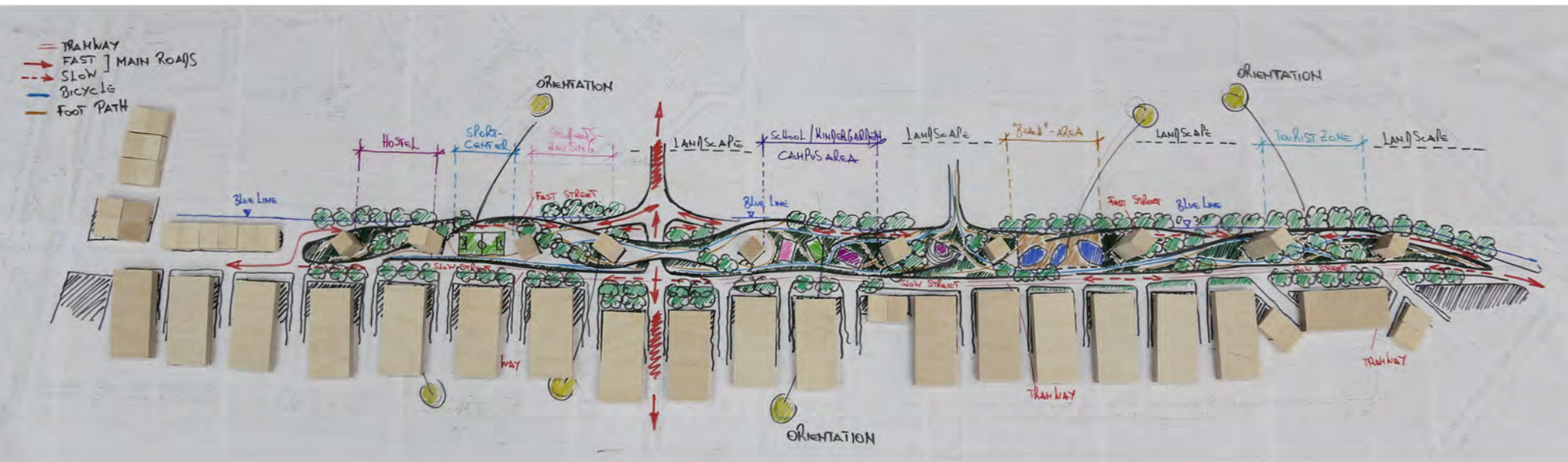






danke osterreich!

thank you!



works by:

heribert wolfmayr and josef saller, heri & salli (AT)

guillaume margot-duclot, Margot-Duclot architectes associes (FR)

andres llopis perez mestre arrosser del pinos, fleiva, Grupo Aranea (ES)

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Wonderland – platform for European architecture is a network fostering the exchange of experiences, information and knowledge between young European architecture practices, based in Vienna, Austria.

Throughout its 11 years of existence, wonderland established new formats, which bring emerging practices together in various locations to address dilemmas of the discipline, both at the local as well as the international level.

***Project Spaces*, site-specific workshops selecting teams through competitions and encouraging them to work together on a local problem, brought new perspectives in local planning and sometimes inspired decision-makers to rethink their strategies.**

The “Rethinking Felberstrasse” workshop was organized by Daniela Patti & Levente Polyak, with the support of Orsolya Veres (wonderland), in cooperation with ÖBB Immobilien and the City of Vienna (MA21)



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