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MAKING SYDHAVNEN MEET

ENHANCING SOCIAL INTERACTION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

The interest I developed during the years towards architecture and urban design comes from a deeper fascination for humanity and human behaviour.
In our daily lives, we find ourselves constantly interacting with the environment that surrounds us, influencing and being influenced by it. The materialities we come across guide us in our actions and perceptions, sometimes even more than we are aware of.
Therefore, designing can be described as creating a frame for human life to develop. This doesn't mean being able to control behaviour, but rather have the tools to understand how the interaction between the environment and humanity takes place. This allows us, as designers, to impact life quality by providing options to the users.

From this perspective, individuals and, more importantly, society are fundamental elements in shaping space. Social interaction is at the base of the creation of society and community. These forms of exchange among people find a perfect setting in public space. It is in these spaces that individuals are presented with opportunities to confront and interact with others and consequently develop a broader sense of community and belonging. In public places we can witness dynamics and rituals that bring strangers in contact with each other, enriching their own life and the community itself.

With this in mind, we can think of the physical environment (and the materialities that inhabit it) as mediators of those human interactions. In my thesis project, I adopt this framework to investigate the relationship between physical attributes and human behaviour and perception, with a focus on the positive impact that design could have in relation to social exchange. Interpersonal contact is a basic human need and enriches society through a sense of community and belonging. Being with others allows us to compare and exchange opinions and perspectives, bridging the gap between different social groups and therefore strengthening cohesion.

Understanding which elements can enhance interaction in cities is the first step towards a more careful and effective urban design that encompasses varied themes, such as social and psychological matters. Designing, from this point of view, is not just the mere act of laying out a setting, but a contribution to the production of dynamics and relationships. This shift in perspective can result in a bigger awareness of the architect's role in shaping the world and the responsibilities it entails.

"The individual is linked to society through two principal social bonds: to collectivities through membership and to other individuals through social relationships. He in turn helps make a network of society by linking through himself the social units linked to him."
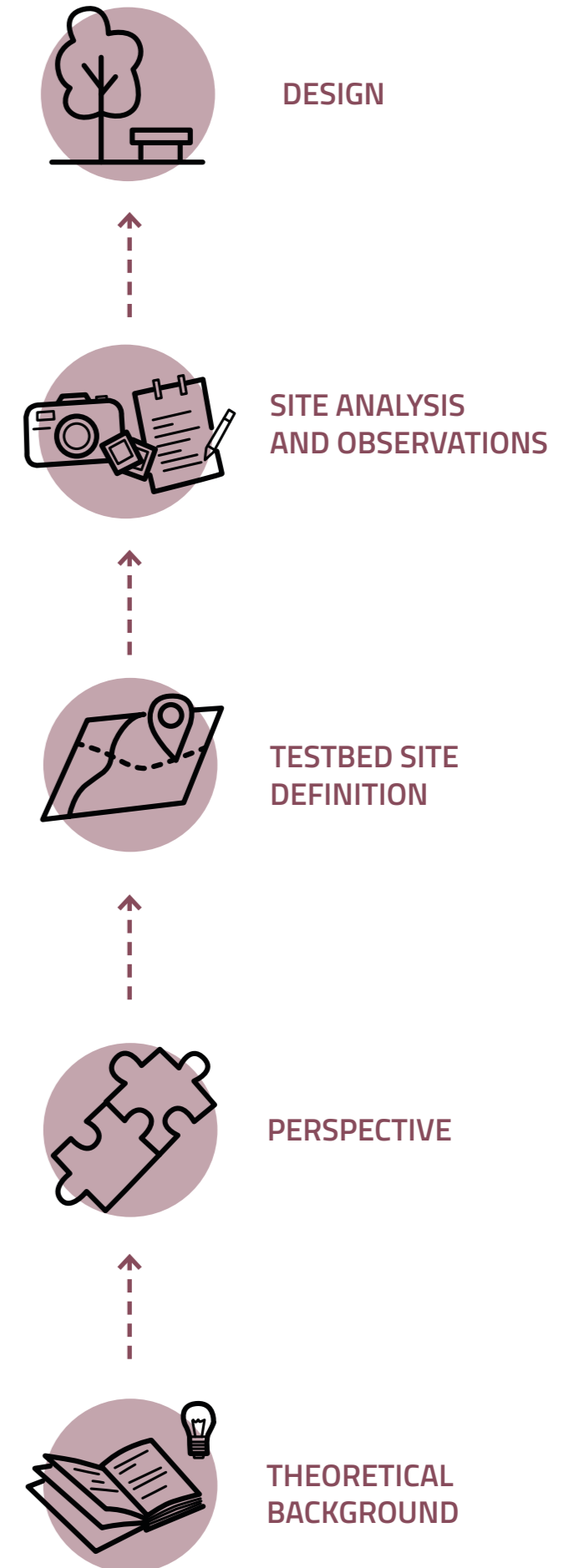
ERVING GOFFMAN, 1971

AIM AND METHOD

This thesis project goal is to investigate the elements of public space design that can enhance social interaction. Exchanges among individuals are encouraged and promoted through accurate design of the physical environment, taking into account human needs and perceptions of spaces.

The research questions guiding this work are:
-Is it possible to enhance social interaction in cities through public space design?
-How can possibilities of social exchange be provided by urban designers?

With roots in the theories of territoriality and affordances, the project will analyse the relationship between human perception and spatial qualities, to better understand which characteristics might have a greater influence on public life. The tool of participant observation will be used for studying behaviour in public space with regard to the materialities that compose it. Finally, a test design will be presented, after a careful evaluation of a suitable site. The concept of public space in this work is to be intended as a highly accessible space that invites users to linger and potentially be in contact with a variety of groups. The project has to be considered as one of the possible approaches to the purpose. The options are, of course, varied, so the thesis aims to be an example of one possible outcome of the application of these principles.

DESIGN

SITE ANALYSIS
AND OBSERVATIONS

TESTBED SITE
DEFINITION

PERSPECTIVE

THEORETICAL
BACKGROUND

THE NEED FOR INTERACTION

The recognition of a multiplicity of human groups and conditions and the inclusion and acceptance of these differences are certainly essential topics of human evolution. In recent years especially, these themes have become even more central and seem to be universally understood and discussed. But very often, when we look at the way our cities are designed, it's difficult to see this correspondence. Urban spaces are very often planned for a stereotypical group of users and their supposed needs and activities while neglecting large categories of users with different necessities and preferences (Magnusson, 2016, p.20). But what can be done to make urban spaces more inclusive and democratic?

One element that can certainly soften these social barriers is interaction between different groups. Social contact has been defined by E. Goffman as the act of simultaneously addressing one another, usually in a context of physical co-presence (1971, p.70). Contact can be seen as the simplest form of interaction, which is often followed by more complex ones, such as greetings, conversation or other rituals that characterize social encounters (Goffman, 1971). When talking about interaction as a means to bridge social gaps and create a community, though, we tend to refer to something which goes beyond the definition of social contact provided by Goffman. Those deeper connections, however, usually emerge from a more immediate kind of contact between strangers.

The simple act of witnessing social contact can be considered a part of a range of social interactions, even if of a more modest kind (Gehl, 2006, p.15). This form of exchange represents a prerequisite for more committed interactions and can be influenced by physical space the most. The physical environment can therefore be designed to foster or inhibit this kind of social behaviour (Gehl, 2006, p.54).

PUBLIC SPACES

Social activities have been defined by Gehl (2006, p.12) as "all activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces". The co-presence of individuals in the physical space is, according to the author, an essential prerequisite for exchange and a form of interaction itself (2006, p.13). Therefore, we could consider public space in cities as a stage that enables human actors to perform their social lives. But what is public space and in which ways can it contribute to producing optimal conditions for exchange to arise?

Many different definitions of public space exist in the literature, but most of them delineate it as an additional realm to work and home, characterized by free access and in which social life takes place (Carr et al., 1992; Francis, Giles-Corti and Wood, 2012). A large number of places in our cities could fit the description, but we know from direct experience that not all of them successfully manage to support social interaction. Places such as trafficked roads and windy unprogrammed lawns are not usually considered pleasant to spend time in and consequently don't stimulate encounters with strangers.

The factor that mostly influences social activities in public space is, in fact, the quality of it (Gehl, 2011). Quality, in this sense, doesn't only mean pleasant aesthetics or favourable size and shape. It means most and foremost providing opportunities to the users, as highlighted by Whyte in his book *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980, p.24-28). People will tend to engage in an activity if the potential for that activity is provided from the environment, and consequently, from the designer. Or, as Whyte would put it, *"People tend to sit most where there are places to sit"* (1980, p.28).

Moving from these considerations, I am, for this project, referring to public spaces as those outdoor, openly accessible places that provide an opportunity to linger and potentially expose the users to chance encounters.

01. BACKGROUND

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

To study interaction in public spaces we should, first of all, understand how the physical world relates to the social sphere. To address this issue, I chose to adopt ANT as a background for my thesis. Actor-network theory is a very complex framework, which would require an extensive analysis to be exhausted. In this project, though, I am only going to discuss the basics of it as a reference to better understand other theories, such as the concept of territories and affordances.

ANT, proposed by Latour among others, is primarily concerned with explaining social phenomena through a situational approach, in opposition to the traditional sociologists, that used to consider social as a result of existing hierarchies (Latour, 2005; Magnusson, 2016). Through this set of tools, indeed, the assumption that humans are at the centre of any social event through their conscious actions is refused, including many other variables to the process.

The main concept behind ANT is the assumption that the social world is made up of actors that associate together in networks. According to this framework, indeed, social can be described as a *"momentary association which is characterized by the way it gathers together into new shapes"*. (Latour, 2005). An *actor* is, in this sense, any element that takes part in an action or, as Latour would describe it, "*any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor—or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant*" (2005, p.71).

This concept opens up to include in the course of events not only humans, but also physical objects, or *non-humans*. For ANT, it is in the interaction between humans and non-humans that the social is constantly produced through associations. As explained by Magnusson, an actor is any element that influences a specific interaction, while an actant can be anything usually associated with a category of actors.

"Urban artefacts, such as benches, bollards or walls, repeatedly used for sitting, leaning or lying on, are actants that can appear in different architectural contexts and guises, taking on various actor-roles in each situation"
(Magnusson, 2016, p.35)

Considering objects as part of the social realm is one of the main backgrounds of this thesis project. Moving from these assumptions, the designed elements of space are seen as mediators of human actions, which contribute to the creation of social ties. It is, however, necessary to mention that non-humans don't substitute humans' will to act, but rather influence it by allowing or preventing certain actions (Latour, 2005, p.72).
From this point of view, physical artefacts mediate human actions by taking an active part in the production of social relations through the formation of a network.

A network is defined by Latour as "*a string of actions where each participant is treated as a full-blown mediato*r" (2005, p.128). This means that actors in a network are everything that acts and actively influence the interaction. In a situation of a group of people sitting and chatting, for example, the chairs can be defined as actors, since they allow the action of sitting and therefore take part in defining the social interaction.

Taking ANT as a background framework for this thesis project allows me to analyse the effects of the physical environment on human interaction and find concrete solutions to encourage it.

TERRITORIES AND COMPLEXITY

To further explore the relationship between human actions and the environment, the concept of territories could be useful. Brighenti (2010, p.57) describes a territory as *"the effect of the material inscription of social relationships"*, bringing once again the focus on the interdependency of behaviour and physical space. In this perspective, a territory is not a space per se, but it defines one through *patterns of relations* (Brighenti, 2010, p.57). These relations, though, shouldn't only be seen as social exchanges among humans. According to Kärrholm, in fact, *territorial production* is *"a collective effort of human and nonhuman actants"* (2007, p.449), highlighting once again the role of materialities in the production of spatial and social relationships.

Territories are, in fact, produced every time these relationships occur and a network of actors and actants is in place. Therefore, social interaction implies territorialisation and contributes to the definition of space or, in Magnusson words, *"what takes place makes space"* (2016, p. 48).
Fro these considerations, we can state that every time someone engages in social activities in public space different territories emerge.

The concept of territory involves that of boundaries. The latter is a natural part of the territorialisation process and can be more or less physically visible (Magnusson, 2016, p.50). According to Brighenti *"territory and boundaries should be framed as two aspects of the same phenomenon"* (2010, p.60). These boundaries can be made to correspond to the actors involved in the action and therefore are constantly negotiated and mutated in time (Magnusson, 2016, p.50).

Territories can be produced in many different ways and Kärrholm proposes four different tools used for this goal. Some of them are intentional, such as *territorial strategies and tactics,* others emerge from recurrent uses, namely *territorial associations and appropriations* (Kärrholm, 2007, p.441). This specific matter would require a deeper analysis, but for the purpose of this thesis, I believe that these concepts are enough to grasp the high variety of territories that can be produced.

Another essential aspect for this project is what Kärrholm defines as *territorial complexity*. As stated before, one of the main characteristics of urban spaces relates to their publicness or accessibility. Kärrholm argues that *"For a place to become accessible to many different people it must, however, also be a place of varied activities"* (2007, p.446). Territorial complexity is not only about a multiplicity of territorial productions, but also refers to the rhythmical alternation of those in time and the interrelation among different territorialisations. Large, unprogrammed spaces can be, in this sense, less accessible than small programmed ones, simply because more difficult to appropriate. The fact that fewer actors and actants are involved makes it complex to claim a territory. This concept is particularly relevant when discussing the effect that urban design can have on social interaction.

What are then the physical elements that can contribute to territorial complexity and how do they encourage social interaction?
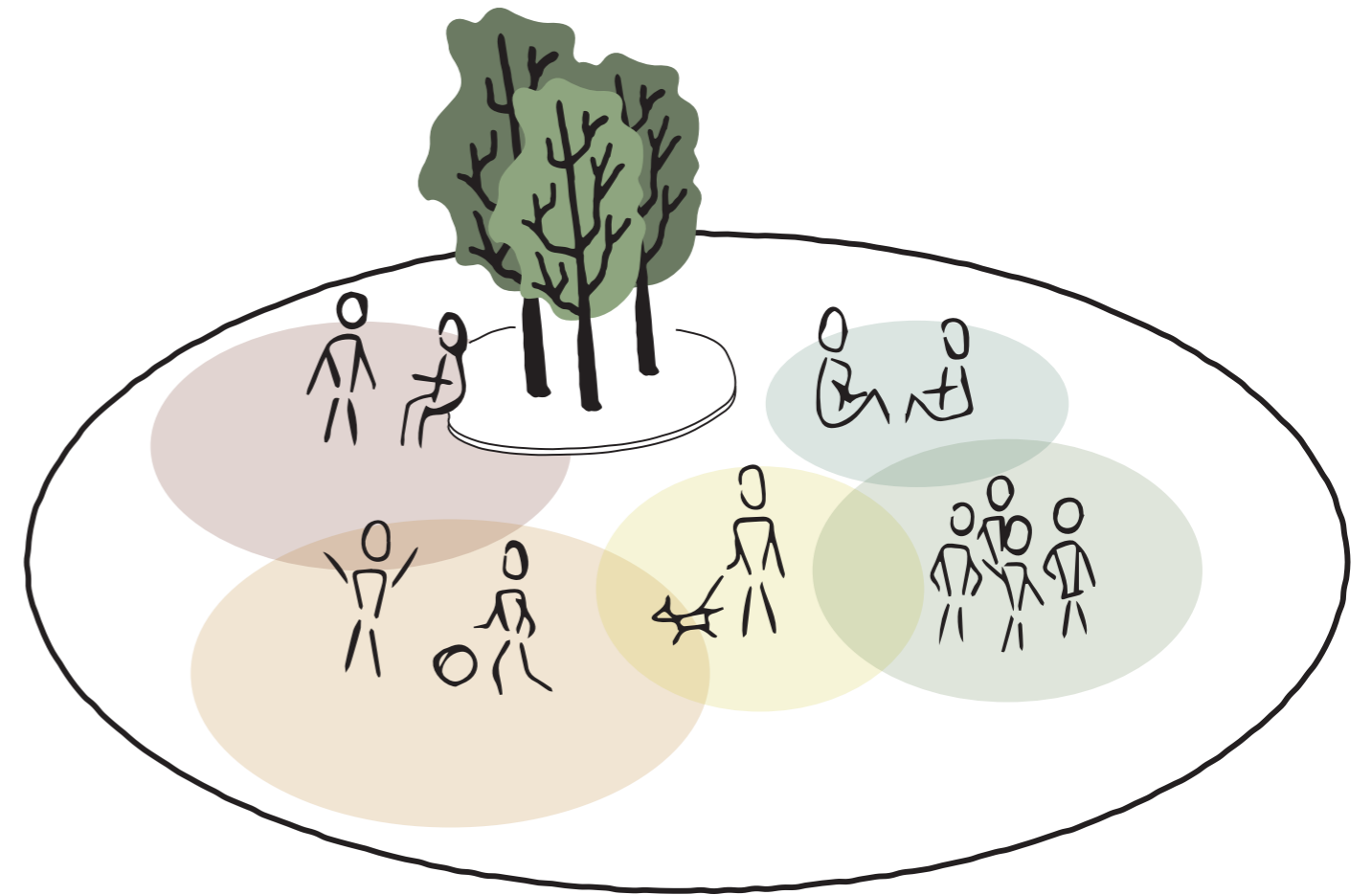
AFFORDANCES

Whenever we are faced with a physical object we tend to categorize it based on our assumption of the purpose it was designed for. However, if we analyze the material world through the perspective of *affordances*, we will shift our focus to the potentials of the object itself, rather than its explicit primary function.

The concept of *affordances*, developed in the 1970s by J. Gibson clarifies a connection between the physical environment and human actions, describing them as complementary terms.

"The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or for ill."
(Gibson, 1979, p.127)

Affordances, in virtue of their nature, are strictly correlated to the users' dimension. This means that objects' affordances can't be defined merely by their physical characteristics, but always have to be determined in relation to the user (Gibson, 1979; Withagen and Caljouw, 2017). According to Gibson, what we perceive when we see an object of the environment are its affordances and not the qualities we often use to classify it. (1979, p.134). The author even states that no classification is needed to be able to perceive the multiplicity of affordances of materialities and this is even more true for children. (1979, p.134).

As clarified by Magnusson, in an ANT framework, affordances can be seen *"as a result of complex relations between artefacts and humans, culture, conventions, perceptive abilities, etc."* (2016, p.60). This perspective points out how materialities' functions emerge from interaction among different actors in a network.
For example, a bench, designed for sitting, can be perceived as an object for play by a user interacting with the environment in a specific time and with specific needs. The factors that can influence this perception are varied, but always relate to the exchange between the individual and the materialities in the space.

An important asset of this theory is recognizing that objects might have different and multiple meanings for users (Withagen and Caljouw, 2017, p.6). We can take some steps as an example: the primary function we usually associate with them is reaching a higher or lower surface. However, according to the physical dimensions of the steps in relation to our own, we can intuitively recognize other possibilities, such as sitting, climbing or playing. These perceptions are always situated in a socio-cultural context that influences them (Withagen and Caljouw, 2017, p.7). According to Gibson affordances are what children start perceiving of objects (Gibson, 1979, p.134) and they later learn the possibilities of use by being taught or observing other kids playing (Withagen and Caljouw, 2017, p.7).

In an example described by Withagen and Caljouw (2017), children are instructed by parents in using an object, such as a slide in a playground, for the purpose that the said object was designed for. This ties back to the idea that materialities have a primary function that characterizes them and therefore might limit the child's creativity and perception of alternative affordances. To avoid this (not only in the playing realm), objects can be designed in a way that doesn't immediately imply a specific function. By doing so, more affordances can become apparent to the users and therefore opportunities for a higher territorial complexity can emerge.

This theory is conceived as an ecological framework but its relationship with the urban design questions is apparent. We could say, indeed, that the role of designers is adding and distributing objects in the environment. From this perspective, then, we can think of physical elements as facilitators and mediators of certain human activities. This, for example, can help us designing urban furniture according to different users' needs and consequently fostering social interaction.
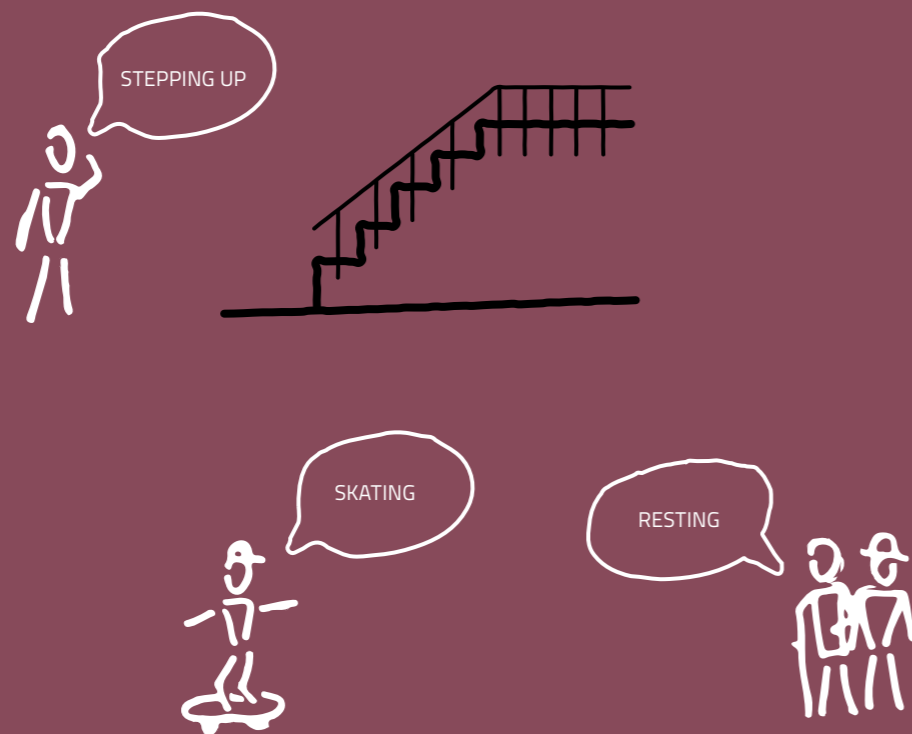
PERSPECTIVE

The goal of the theoretical background in this thesis is to present a framework through which the project has been conceived. The theories can be helpful to explain the complexities involved with public space design and its role in enhancing human interaction.

When we assume that design has an influence on human behaviour we have to understand which elements affect it and to what extent. Referring to the previous analysis, we can define material objects as an active part in the production of social relations, assuming they play a role in everyday actions, either inhibiting or encouraging them. Under these circumstances, designers should be aware that the physical elements they plan for have an impact on public life.

Theories concerning territorial complexity can strongly influence the design of public spaces. Being conscious of the relation between territorial appropriation options and the accessibility of a space is essential when designing for social exchange. In my project, indeed, a higher level of interaction is associated with a higher amount of possibilities offered to the users. The goal will then be conceiving a design that allows for a multiplicity of actions to develop, more or less spontaneously.

Moreover, to be able to translate these goals into artefacts and spaces, the concept of affordances can be adopted. The large number of activities (and territorialisation) possible can be properties of the object itself in relation to the users. Designing objects (such as public furniture) for a high number of potential activities, becomes the goal of a designer who wants to enhance publicness and social interaction.

It is in these varied uses and appropriations that social exchange can initially be identified in the form of modest contact. The variety of uses in public spaces makes them more attractive for different social groups that wouldn't be co-present in the space otherwise. As mentioned before, co-presence is an essential pre-condition for interaction to develop and should therefore be encouraged in public space. Public life can take many forms and involve different levels of interaction but, even at its modest expression, it contributes to society's wellbeing.
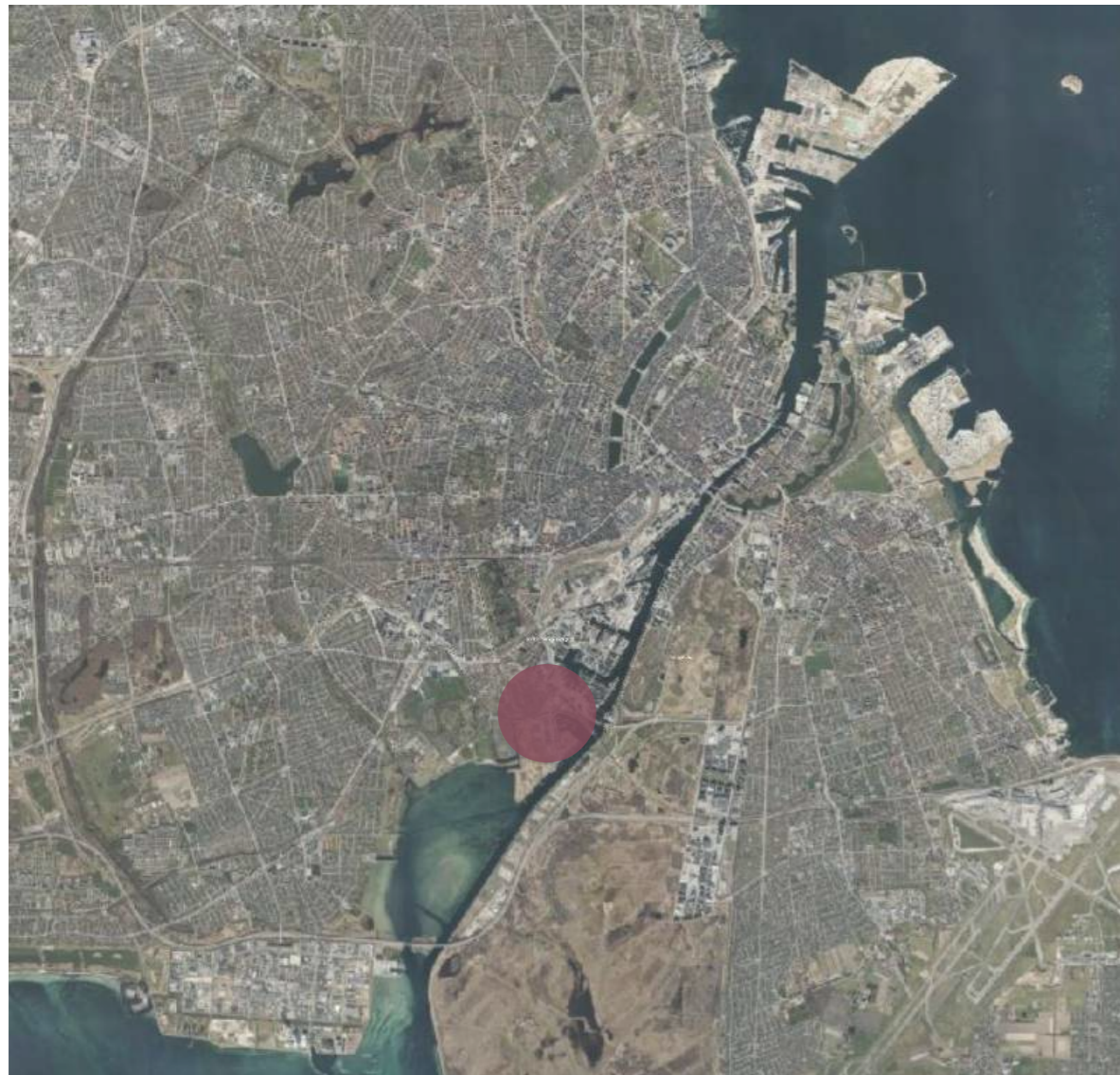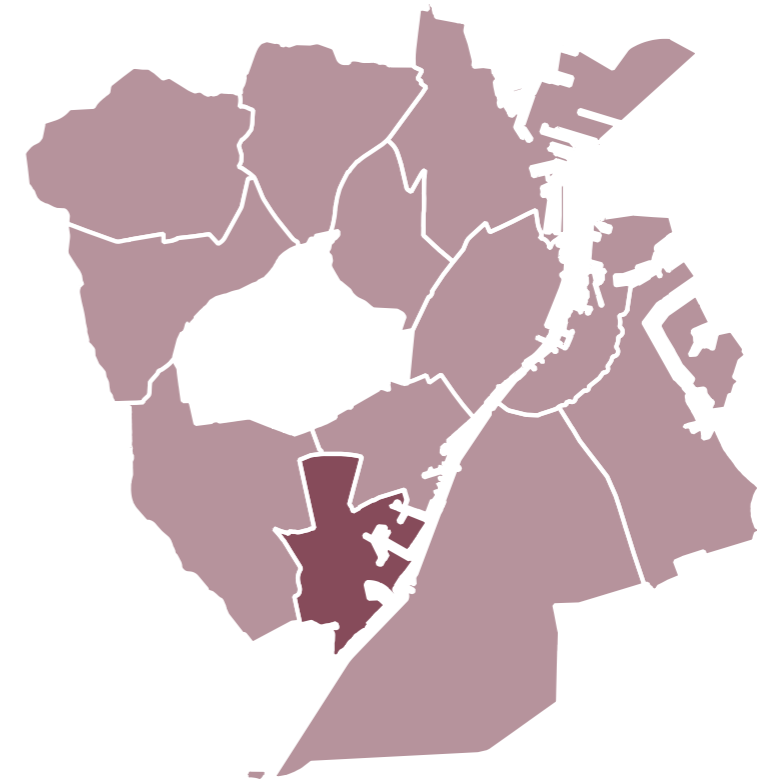
02. SITE ANALYSIS
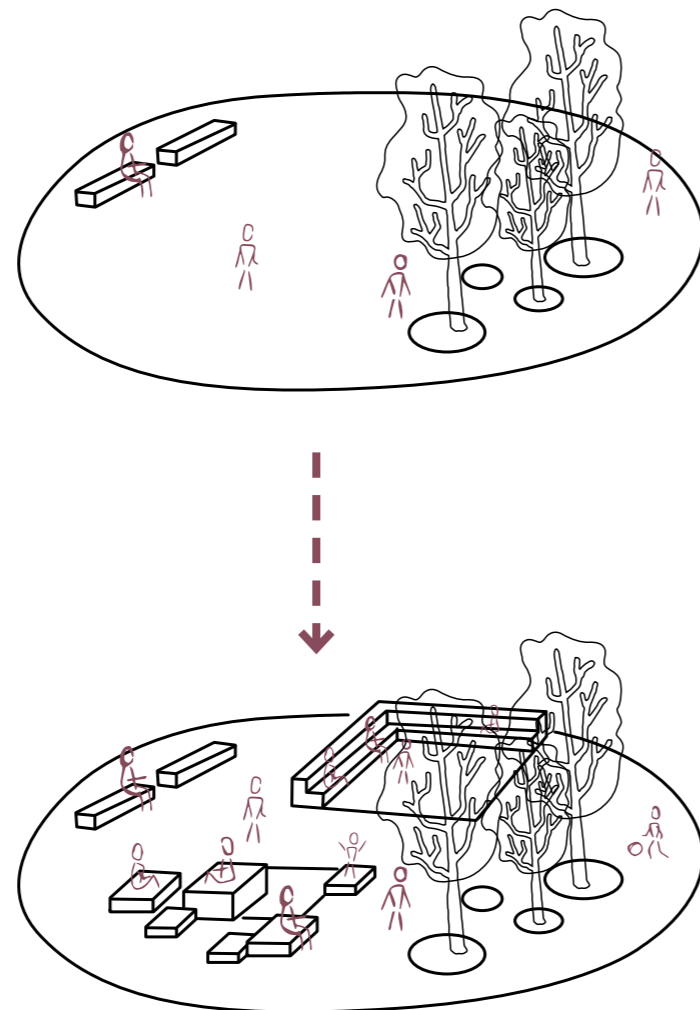
CONTEXT

View of Sydhavn from the train station

THE SITE

The site I chose for investigations is the district of Kongens Enghave, located in the south of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The city of Copenhagen has often been referenced in the discussion of urban development and social sustainability as a positive model. The attention placed on urban life from Gehl studies on public space has informed many interventions in recent years and continues to do so. Despite being an international reference for public space design, certain areas of the city could still benefit from a further transformation that enables high-quality public life to develop. This, I believe, is the case of Kongens Enghave, more commonly known as *Sydhavnen*.

SYDHAVN'S CONTRADICTIONS

This area of the city is formally considered as part of the Vesterbro-Kongens Enghave disrict, combining it with a more centrally located area of Copenhagen. A series of challenges and problems emerge from this matter, as pointed out by the Local Committee in the latest local plan (2017). Associating the two areas is a way of neglecting the strong identity of Sydhavn and simultaneously ma-

kes analysis and considerations inaccurate, as in the case of statistical inquiries. The two neighbourhoods differ in many aspects and present their own peculiar identities.

The distinctive character of the district emerges in particular in the social aspects. Sydhavn is, in fact, a very diverse area in which inclusiveness plays a crucial role, together with traditions and culture associated with its historical roots. Its particular location, close to the city centre, makes it an attractive area for development. A large number of valuable recreational areas and the connection to the harbour add to these factors and enhance the potential of the neighbourhood. Various social and educational associations operate in Sydhavn, supporting the different groups and activating the district through a network of cooperation and inclusiveness that is distinctive of the area.

The area, however, faces multiple challenges, linked to its recent development and its social and physical composition.
A large part of Kongens Enghave is, indeed, classified as a "vulnerable area" by the City of Copenhagen, mainly due to the high rate of

Older part of Sydhavn

Older part of Sydhavn

Newer part of Sydhavn

Newer part of Sydhavn

socially disadvantaged inhabitants, usually associated with a lower income and educational level. One of the possible causes for this issue can be identified in the high number of social housing located in the older area of Sydhavn and the often small and cheap apartments that are generally more attractive to these groups. In addition to its social composition, the traffic layout in the district poses challenges to the everyday life of its inhabitants. Kongens Enghave is, in fact, crossed by major traffic arteries which threaten its positive recreational and social aspects, making soft mobility difficult in the area and bringing higher levels of noise and pollution to the neighbourhood.

Adding up to these elements is the apparent socio-economical gap between the historical part of Sydhavn and the newly developed area of Holmene, which makes Kongens Enghave a perfect testbed for urban design that fosters social interaction in public space.

SYDHAVN AS A TESTBED

The main aim of this thesis project is to bridge the social gaps that characterize the neighbourhood through encouraging social contact between its residents. The assumption is that careful public space design can help to soften the mental and material barriers of high-traffic roads and bring people together across social and physical borders. Exchange can, in fact, foster a sense of community that strengthens the identity of Sydhavn and eases the differences between groups. The complexity peculiar to Kongens Enghave is hereby regarded as a fundamental asset for its development. Moreover, internal cohesion is seen as a primary goal of the design proposal, together with a more marked perception of Sydhavn as a neighbourhood of central Copenhagen.

SYDHAVN'S HISTORY

Frederiksholm Teglværk

To better understand the current complexity of Sydhavn it might be useful to look at the process that led to its development and affirmation as a central location in the city of Copenhagen.

Despite it being a well anchored area in the minds of copenhageners, Kongens Enghave is a relatively recent district in the history of the danish capital. The first traces of settlments can be dated back to around 5000 B.C., when a small nucleus of people established in the southern part of what is now known as the city of Copenhagen. The area has remained unhinabited for a very long time and its lands became part of the royal stables of Copenhagen Castle's Ladegård around 1530.

THE OLD SYDHAVN

A turning point can be seen in 1795, when the terrains have been divided in 22 plots and the contruction of Enghavevej, now a large artery that runs in the middle of the neighbourhood and connects it to the city centre, started. This event triggered a slow process of occupation: during the 1800s small farms have been established along the street and in 1870 Vester Cemetery opened to the public.

To this date, this large cemetery remains a focal point in Copenhagen and represents one of the main recreational areas for the residents of the surroundings.

The following year the Køhler brothers founded "Frederiksholm Teglværk", a company devoted to the production of bricks, which remained open until 1918, profoundly influencing the development of Sydhavn. The head office of the company, Frederiksholm, is now the oldest builing on site.

A few years later, in 1879, the "Asylum for the mentally ill" was built in what is now the location of Karens Minde Culture House, an important social institution in the neighbourhood.

After AKB, a non-profit housing association, was founded in 1913, the first residential blocks started to be built along what is now known as P. Knudsens Gade. These few blocks represent the starting point for the development of Sydhavn as a proper city district and the increase in residents set the basis for other activities to emerge. Emblematic is the case of the garden association Frem that was established to sustain the residents' nutrition with crops, chicken and pigs. More garden associations emerged in the following years.

Around 1930 Bavnehøj school was founded and consequently the area urbanized with residential buildings, shaping the spaces that are now located in proximity of Sydhavn's Station. In the same years the area around Mozart Plads and Mozartsvej were developed, until Sydhavn started looking similar to the fully urbanized nieghbourhood we know now.

Shortly after, in the 1940s, an area of the harbour in the western part of the district was filled and industries started setteling.

After WWII, the second school of the district, Ellebjerg School, is founded and in 1959 Sjællandsbroen, a brige that connects Sydhavn to Amager across the harbour was opened. It's now considered one of the main arrival points by car to Copenhagen and continues in Sydhavnsgade and Enghavevej until reaching the heart of the city. Finally, the S-train line, together with three stations, starts its operations in 1972 and marks the beginning of one of the essential means of transport in the area until these days.

THE NEW SYDHAVN

The areas developed in the 1800s and 1900s correspond to what we now call "the old Sydhavn". This is due to the most recent development, identified as Holmene, which can be described as a clusters of artificial islands located in the west end of the neighbourhood, in close relationsip with the harbour. The first residents moved in the Amsterdam-inspired residential blocks in 2006. This area is what we now identify as "New Sydhavn", which is in constant development.

The development, which emerges from an industrial part of Sydhavn, adds a whole new level of complexity to the neighbourhood, with its new school, businesses and urban life. The high level architecture and proximity to the canals attracts a new group of residents to the area, generating the social gap that can be today perceived in Sydhavn.
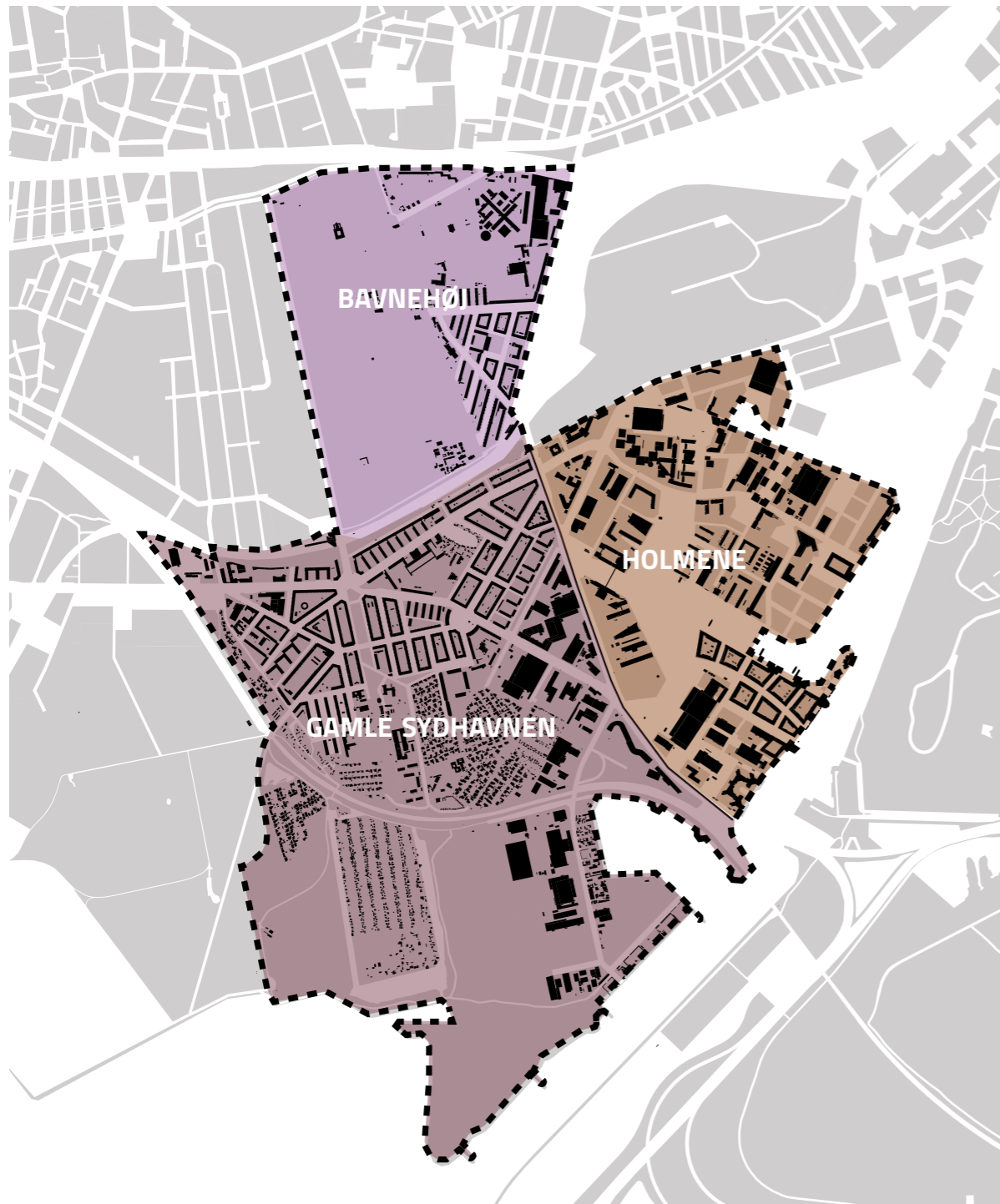

Karens Minde Kulturhus

Sydhavn Train Station

Buildings in Gamle Sydhavn

New areas of Sydhavnen

Sydhavn's areas

As mentioned earlier, Sydhavn encompasses three distinct areas, namely Bavnehøj, Gamle Sydhavnen and Holmene. The socio-economical differences between these areas are the primary reason why this site has been chosen for investigation. As we can read in the Local Plan for Kongens Enghave (2017), one of the main ambitions in the neighbourhood is achieving cohesion, combining the multiple qualities of the different areas that compose it. The goal of this project is indeed bringing together, both physically and mentally, the inhabitants of the different parts of Sydhavn.

Bavnehøj and Gamle Sydhavnen are physically separated by the railway and present slightly different backgrounds, but can, for this analysis, be considered as a joint area, due to their common socio-economical peculiarities. The older part of Kongens Enghave is characterized by a relatively large number of green recreational areas, connected through bike lanes and paths that support soft mobility. The built environment appears as a series of city residential blocks that sometimes feature an accessible commercial ground floor in connection to the classic Copenhagen sidewalks. This area is permeated with culture and traditions and is characterized by a heterogeneous social environment. Many social institutions are located in this area and support the different groups, such as children, elderly and socially disadvantaged citizens. We can therefore observe the inclusive and caring culture that characterizes Sydhavn, with a tradition of tolerance and diversity. During the years, many associations emerged, often based on inclusiveness, creativity and community-building activities. These qualities make up a complex and unique part of Copenhagen, which identity can be strongly perceived by its inhabitants.

But the older part of Sydhavn is also the area where social issues are more apparent. A large part of it is considered a "vulnerable area" of the city, due to the high rate of disadvantaged citizens. People struggling with substance abuse concentrate in this area and the levels of education and income are generally lower compared to the newer parts of the neighbourhood.

The large amount of social housing in the area, together with the smaller apartments and cheaper prices, attract these social groups and make it difficult for families to stay in the neighbourhood, due to a lack of space in their homes. As mentioned before, this diverse community is a unique trait of the neighbourhood and should be preserved and taken care of, to ensure that the community and the district can thrive. The main focus in this area becomes then the strengthening of the support network and the prevention of loneliness, which, I argue, can partly be tackled through a careful public space design.

The newer area of Sydhavn, with its close relationship to water and the contemporary architecture, can be seen as a complementary part to "Gamle Sydhavnen". Its canals and quays provide a valuable recreational environment and the larger apartments are a counterpart to the smaller ones that can be found in the older area. Due to these factors, however, the groups attracted by Holmene are also very different to the social composition of the rest of Kongens Enghave. With the trafficked Sydhavnsgade as the only physical border, the qualities and issues of the two sides of the neighbourhood rarely meet, and neither do their residents. This situation of mental and physical distance between old and new Sydhavn hinders the social cohesion of the district and constitutes the main focus of this thesis topic.

Can we make Sydhavnen meet?
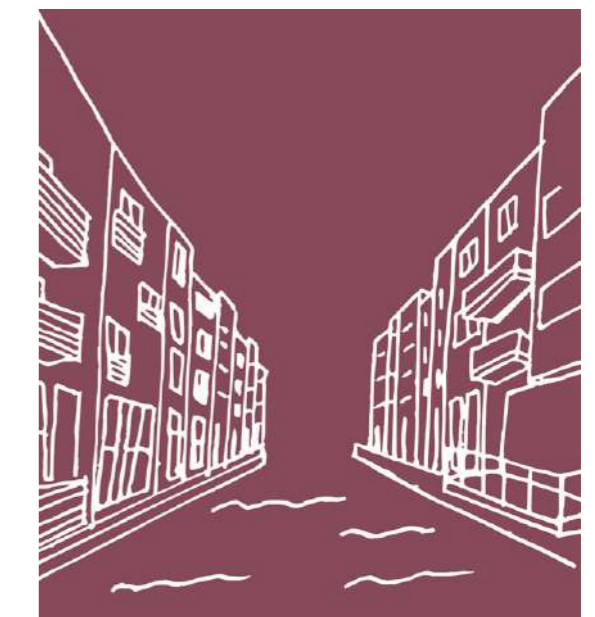
LANDSCAPE

LEGEND

- ● Nature areas
- ● Recreational areas
- ● Parks
- ⧄ Cemetery
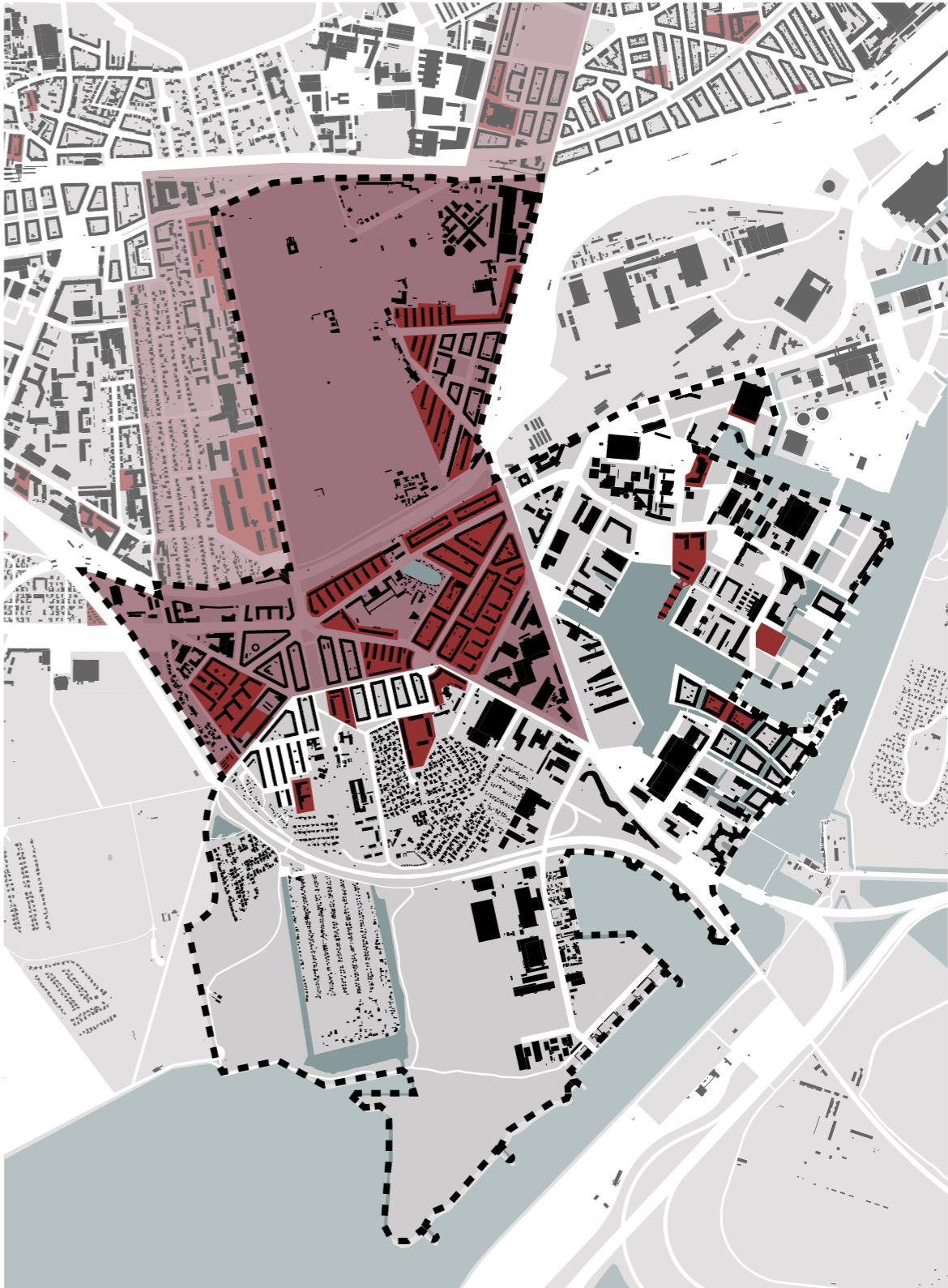- ● Allotment gardens

NODES

LEGEND

- ● School
- ● Playground
- ● Cultural and social institution
- ● Kindergarden
- ● Sport center
- ▬ "Sikker skolevej"
- ● University
- ● Church
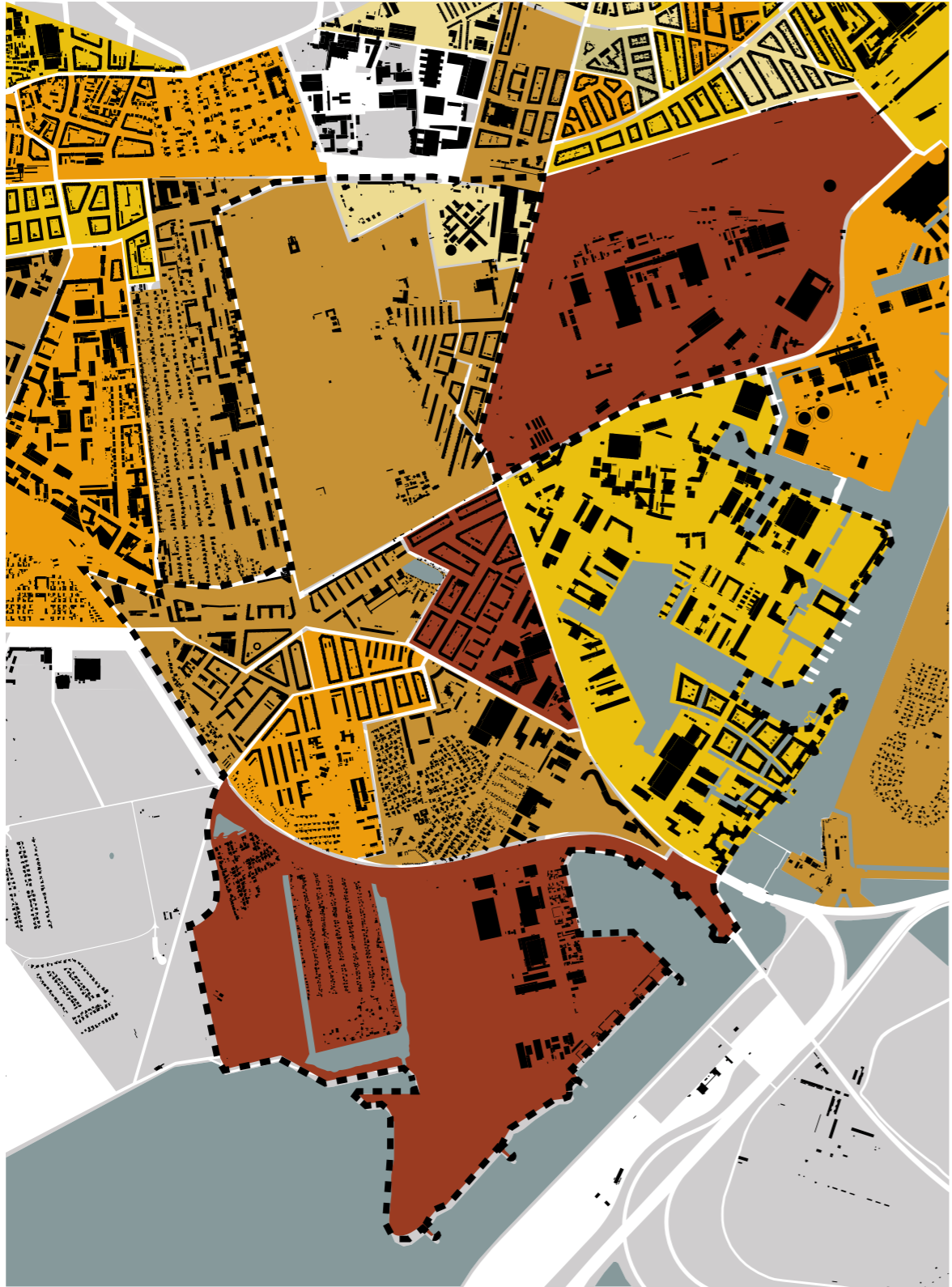
Socio-economical aspects

VULNERABLE AREAS AND SOCIAL HOUSING

LEGEND

Areas classified as vulnerable

Social housing

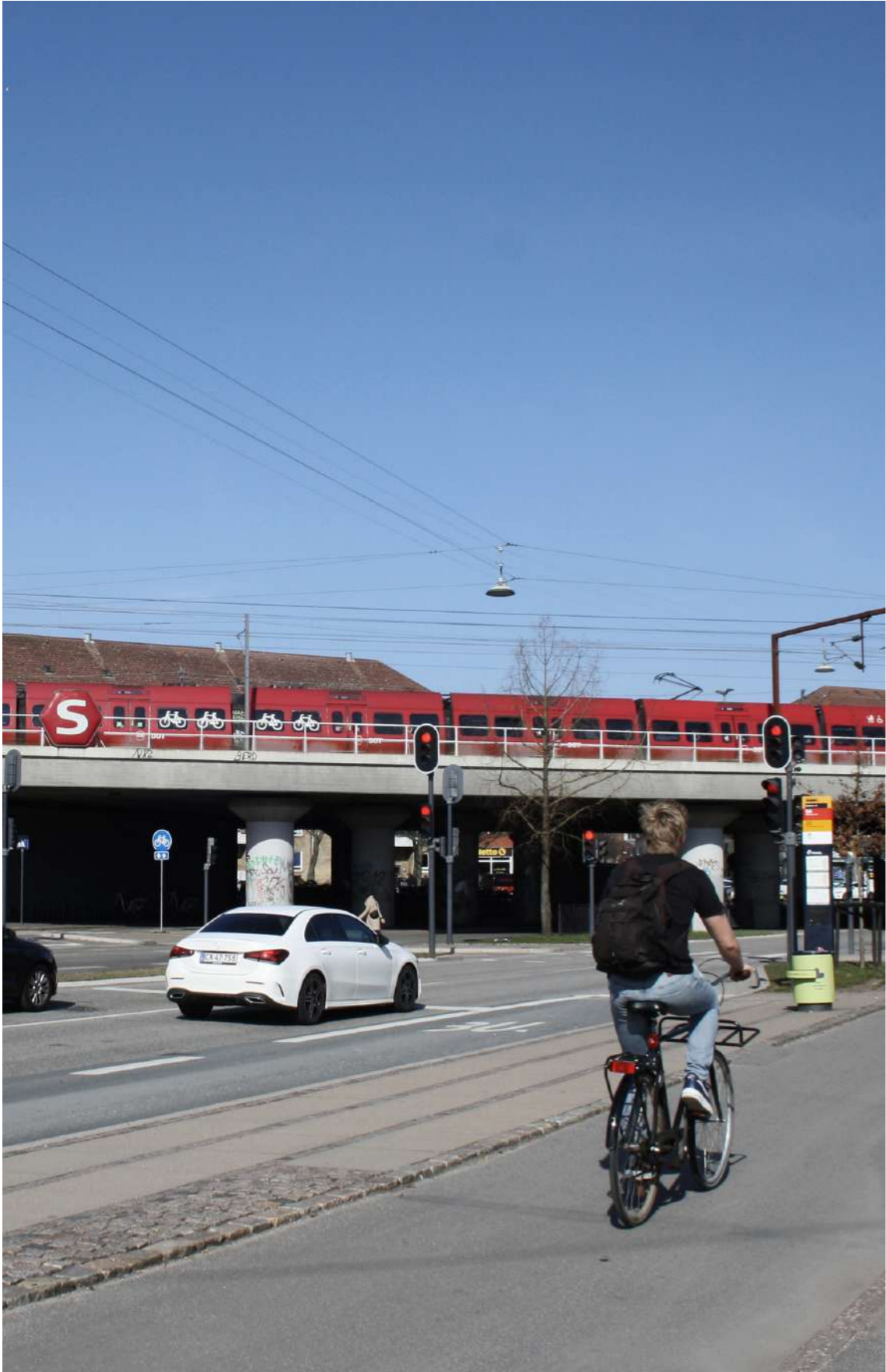# LOW EDUCATION LEVEL

LEGEND

- ■ >35%
- ■ 25-35%
- ■ 18-25%
- ■ 14-18%
- ■ <18%

PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF LABOUR MARKET

LEGEND

- ■ >48%
- ■ 41-48%
- ■ 33-41%
- ■ 26-33%
- ■ <23%

MOBILITY

VULNERABLE AREAS AND SOCIAL HOUSING

LEGEND

▬ TRAIN LINE		‖‖‖ METRO LINE – UNDER CONSTRUCTION	
‖‖‖ TRAIN TUNNEL		▬ BUS LINE	
▬ METRO LINE		▬ HARBOUR BUS	

STREET TYPOLOGIES

LEGEND

▬ Regional street   ▬ "Strøggade"

▬ Distribution street

▬ District street

32

TRAFFIC SPEED

LEGEND

▬ 90 Км/н   ▬ 50 Км/н

▬ 70 Км/н   ▬ 40 Км/н

▬ 60 Км/н   ▬ 15 Км/н

33

NOISE FROM THE STREET (1,5m)

LEGEND

- ■ >78 dB
- ■ 73-78 dB
- ■ 68-73 dB
- ■ 63-68 dB
- ■ 58-63 dB

03. OBSERVATIONS

PUBLIC SPACES IN SYDHAVN
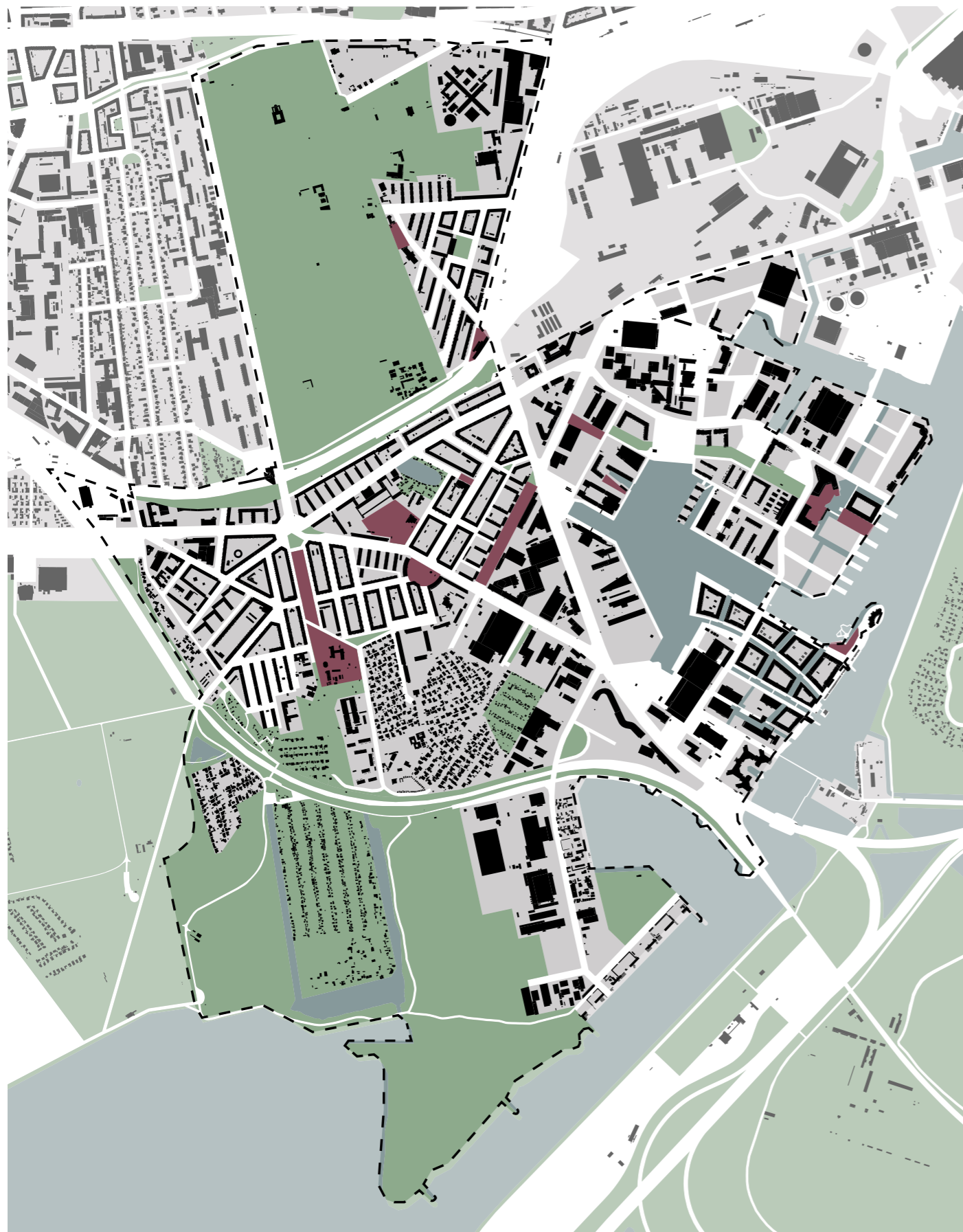
Public space is the main setting of urban life, where dynamics of contact and conflict take place and develop. Low opportunities for social contact might increase feelings of loneliness by reducing the possibilities of chance encounters. For the purpose of mapping, public space was defined as an outdoor place where lingering is made possible and encouraged with furniture and favourable conditions. In this sense, a few spaces in Sydhavn seem to be organized for this purpose. However, plazas and parks are not the only typologies of public space. Sidewalks and entrances are part of the public realm too and can encourage a vast number of contacts and exchanges. But a poor design of those, with low opportunities for other activities than walking past, negatively affects this potential.

If we exclude from the analysis the larger recreational areas (such as the green area of Sydhavnstippen, located in the south of the district) that attract people from all over the city, we can observe that the existing public spaces are concentrated in the heart of the two parts of Sydhavn. Those spaces have different qualities and most of them seem to be very popular, at least with some groups. We can see busy waterfronts in Holmene during the warm season, playgrounds filled with children and small plazas where the elderly seem to gather. However, these public spots are generally attracting the residents in the areas immediately surrounding them, so the social groups of old and new Sydhavn have fewer opportunities for meeting and communicating. The physical border between the two areas, Sydhavnsgade, doesn't accommodate public spaces and has very few active facades. This, together with the high traffic, defines the street as a mere connection, but not a place for social exchange.

The social life of the neighbourhood seems to be thriving and inspiring but once again shows the social gap between the older and newer part.
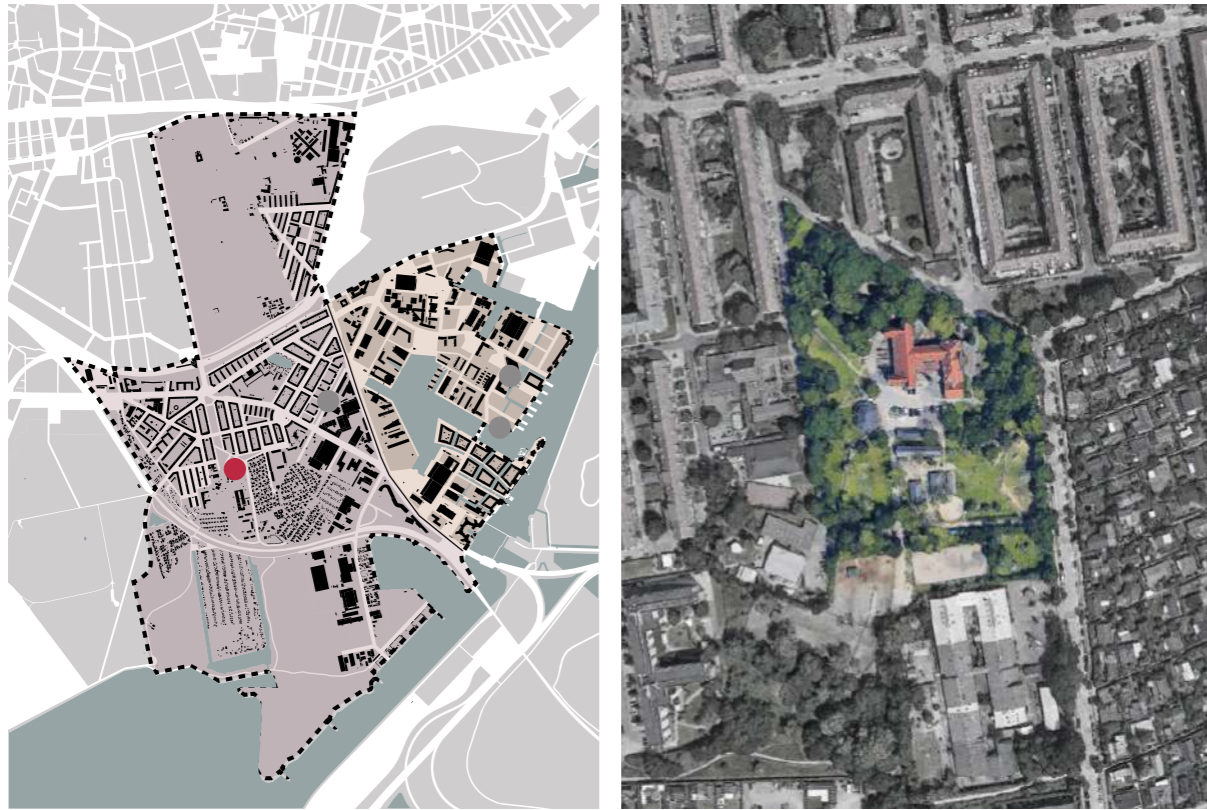
PUBLIC SPACES OBSERVATIONS

In order to be able to design new public spaces in the neighbourhood, it's necessary to observe the way people use the existing ones. I carried out some observations of gathering spots in Sydhavn to better understand the ways people interact with each other and the physical environment. Four spaces were selected, two of them located in Holmene and two in the older part of the district. The method applied was an observation of public life through taking active part to it, experiencing the selected spaces along with the other users to get a clearer picture of the elements influencing the use.

The studies were carried out during a sunny Saturday morning in May, a time that might attract many Copenhagen residents to spend time outdoor, catching the first warm rays of sun. The observations consisted of pictures and notes, supplemented with mappings and counting of people and activities during 10 minutes for each space.

PICTURES

ACTIVITIES MAPPING

FIELD NOTES

COUNTS
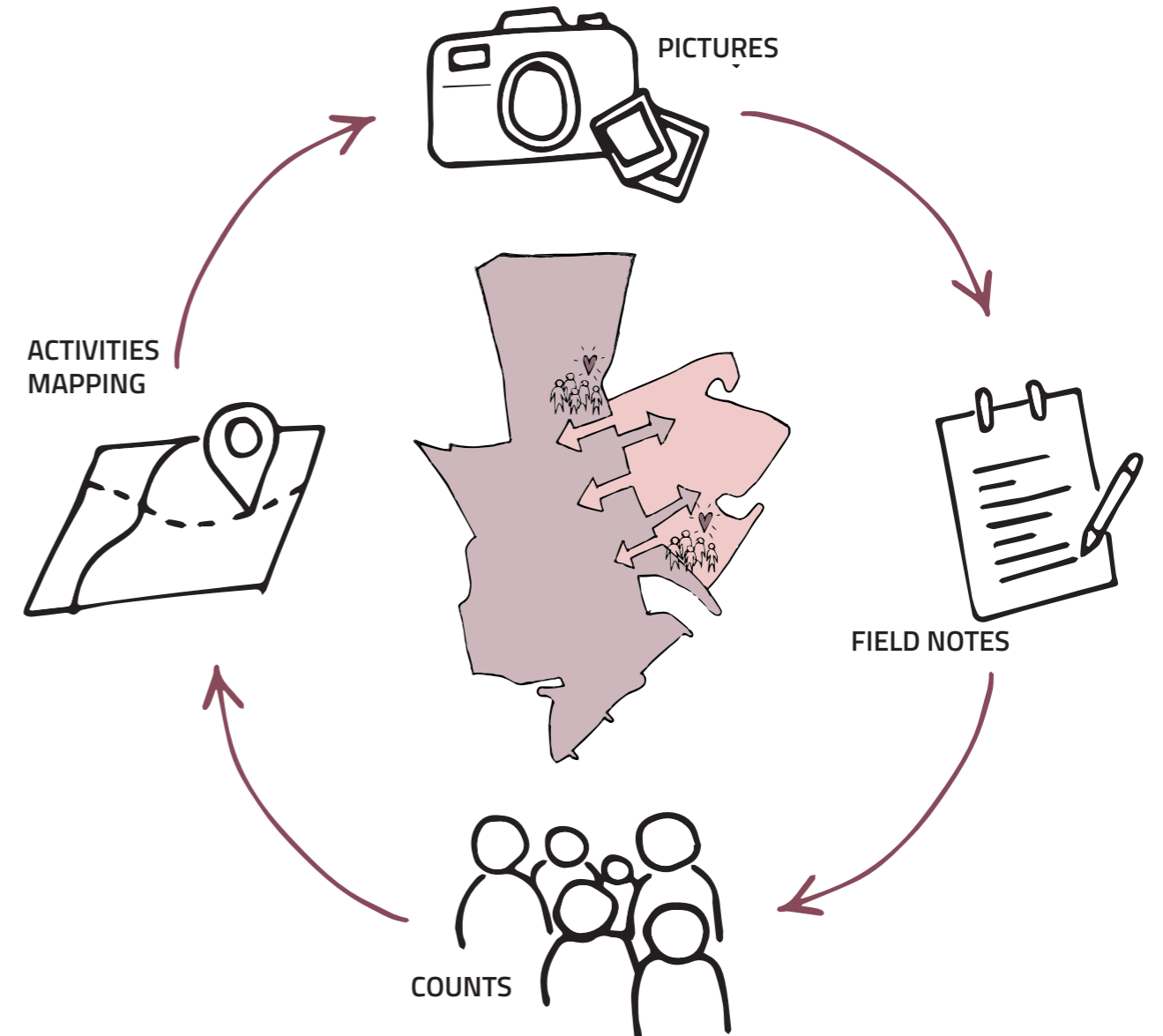
1- KARENS MINDE KULTURHUS

26000 m2

**14 adults
10 children
0 teenagers**

Culture house, Library, Park, Event spaces, Animal farm for kids

Picnic, Sitting, Animals watching, Playing, Meeting

Karens Minde Kulturhus area is one of the most vibrant places I encountered during my observations. The complex encompasses many activities and associations of Sydhavn and therefore attracts a large number of residents. Some of the functions in place are a Library, a cafè, event spaces and the children animal farm. The setting is a park environment around one of the oldest buildings in the neighbourhood.
The furniture in place is quite simple, mainly constituted of benches and picnic tables, which are widely used. The multiple activities they afford are apparent when observing people's behaviour. Moreover, the topography changes in the park are an attractive element that stimulates kids' play. Adults were also climbing the small hills to have another perspective on the space and observe the animals.
Despite the morning being windy, the microclimate at the park was overall pleasant and people could be observed soaking up the sun, taking advantage of the differently oriented tables and benches.

Culture house and Library

Seating and picnic area

Event space

Animal farm

2- SCANDIAGADE

4500 m2

**5 adults
1 child
0 teenagers**
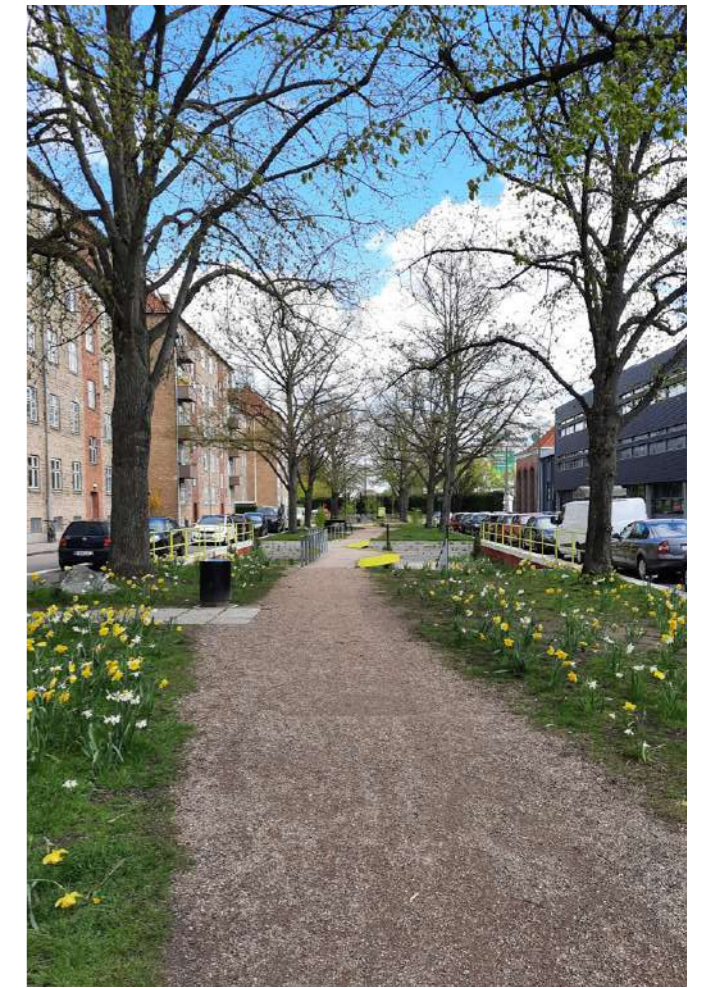
Neighbourhood street, Park

Sitting, Playing, Meeting

Scandiagade is a recently renewed street in the heart of old Sydhavnen, designed for stormwater management. The result is a beautiful recreational space, strongly characterized by the yellow boardwalk that functions as its backbone. The space is visually pleasant and encompasses a series of spaces at different levels, with sinking basins to accommodate the water in case of heavy rain. On one side of it, social housing buildings line up to create a facade to the street, while on the other, industrial buildings are placed. Despite its aesthetics, this space emerged from my analysis as a quiet and not heavily used space. The boardwalk affords to stroll and the many and differently shaped benches provide a comfortable spot to sit. However, few people seemed to be engaging in activities in the park and most importantly they seemed to be using the space alone. I concluded that its quiet character and lack of planned activities were not attractive to all groups and at all times. Even though it was not populated at the time of my observations, I am convinced that the space is positively perceived by the residents and used for different activities under other circumstances.

ACTIVITIES PLAN- SCALE 1:1000

Painted crossings

Basketball

3- Skolen i Sydhavnen
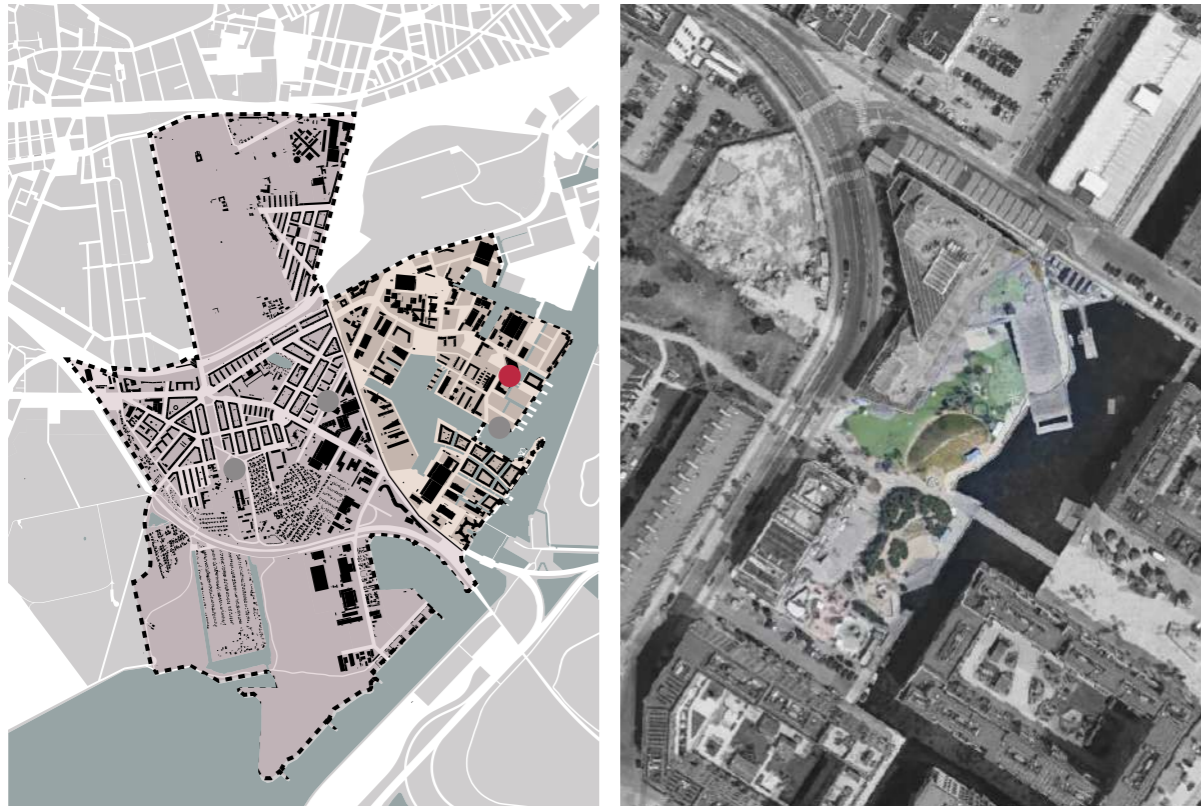

6000 m2

School playground and waterfront

19 adults
21 children
3 teenagers

Playing, Kayaking, Meeting

The playground located behind the School of Sydhavn is certainly a very successful public space in the heart of the new areas. At the time of my observations, a large number of users was present and engaged in varied social activities. A child birthday party was being celebrated, taking advantage of the many available picnic tables, sheltered from the wind. The space is designed for a large number of activities, and it's easy to see why more spontaneous ones emerge. The varied textures of the ground stimulate different uses and so do the urban furniture and play equipment. Changes in topography attract children and adults and provide a new perspective on the playground. Its proximity to the canal adds a layer of complexity to the multiplicity of the space, allowing for different groups to enjoy the space. The territorial complexity of this place is very high, and this reflects in the vibrant life that could be observed.

ACTIVITIES PLAN- SCALE 1:750

Steps

Play area

Hill

Bike parking

Canal

Sports area
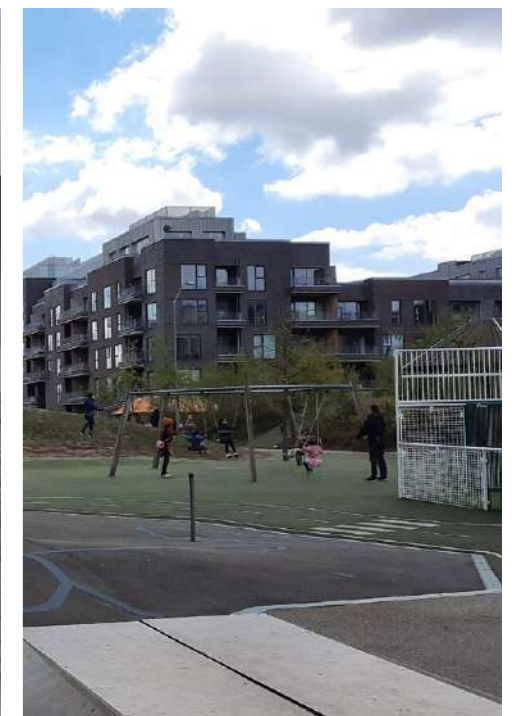
4- Teglholmens Sydkaj
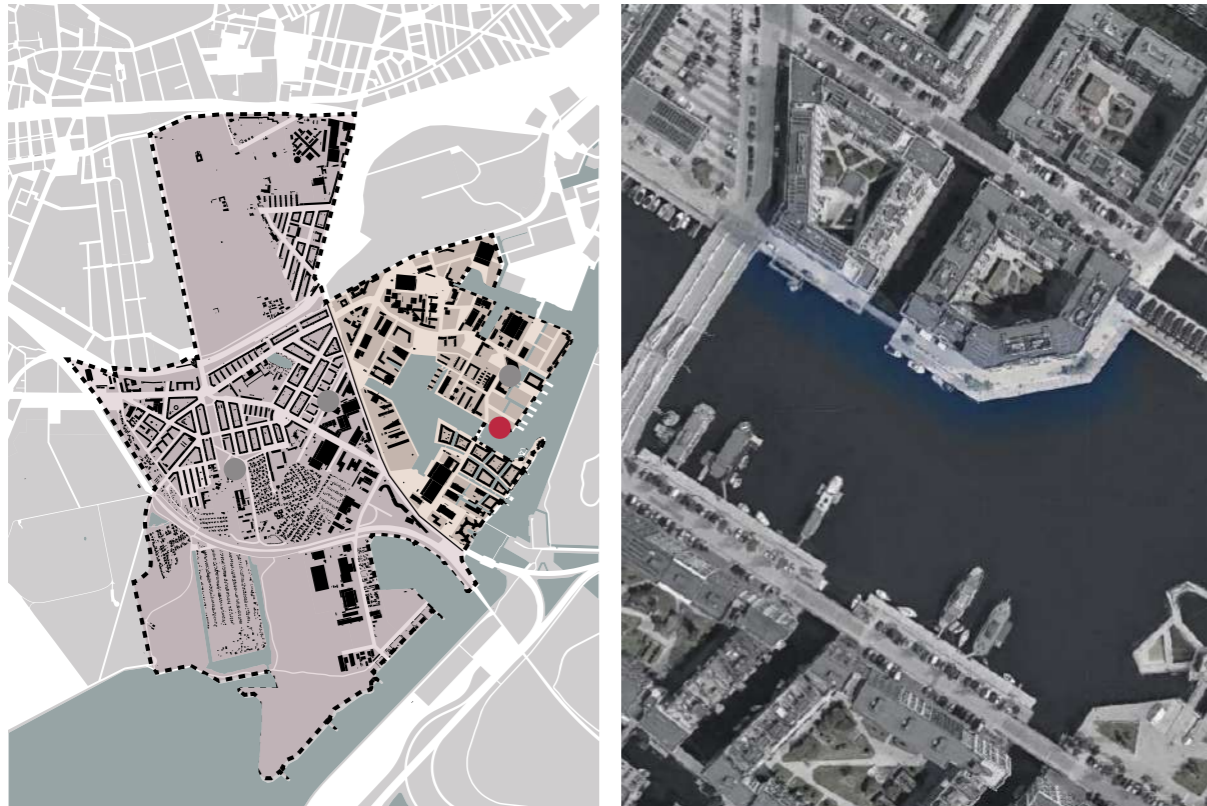

1500 m2

Waterfront

10 adults
1 child
0 teenagers

Sitting, Waiting, Meeting

The last investigation took place in Teglholmens Sydkaj, one of the many waterfronts in the new area of Sydhavn. Despite the quay usually being highly populated during the summer season, my observations revealed a quite public space, mainly used for strolling, due to the mild temperature and the lack of shelter from the wind. At my arrival, a small heterogeneous crowd could be spotted waiting for the harbour bus along the quay. By the time my observations began, however, few people could be detected. The main purpose of the space seemed to be strolling, with one exception of a couple using the benches placed along the street. Some more people could be seen sitting in the lower boardwalk, more sheltered from passers-by and wind. Additionally, the cafè outdoor seats seemed to be attractive for paying customers. The general lack of activities can be associated with the microclimatic conditions and the low level of affordances provided by the urban furniture. The benches are standard size and can't be moved around to face the sun or each other. The low possibility of observing public life could be another factor, which made it also difficult for me to carry out the study. Moreover, the commercial activity caters to a very specific social group and excludes others.

Harbour bus stop

Cafè with
outdoor seating

Canal
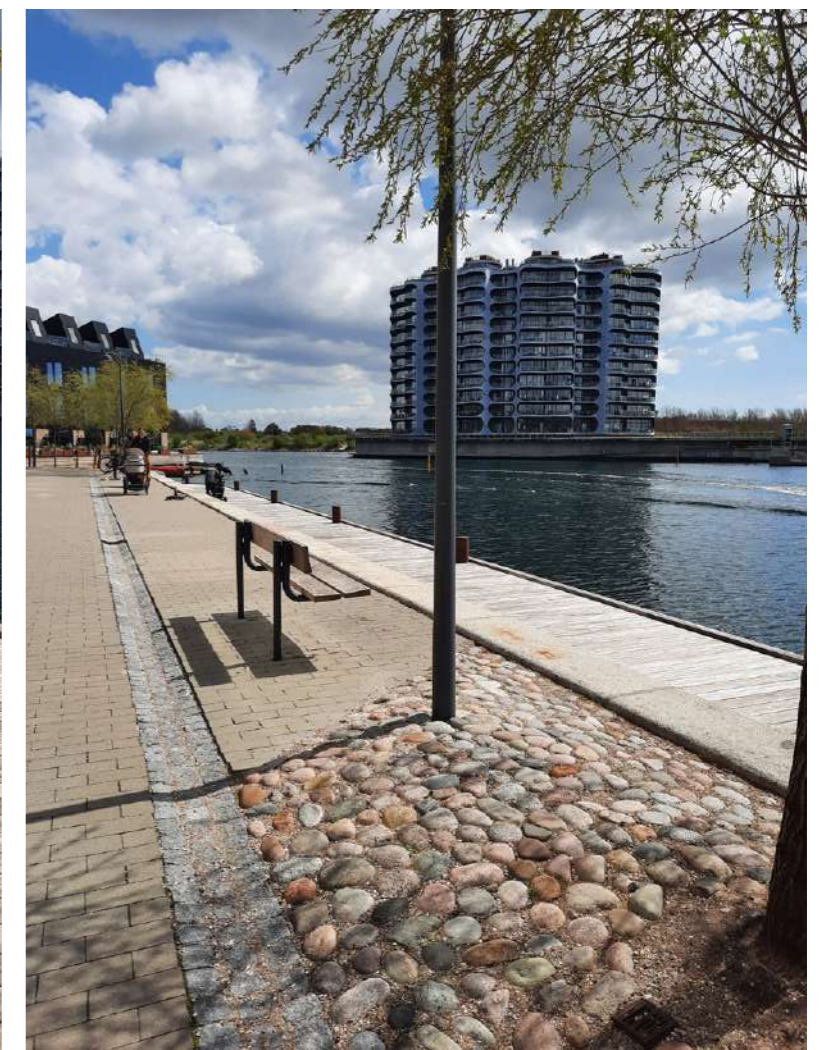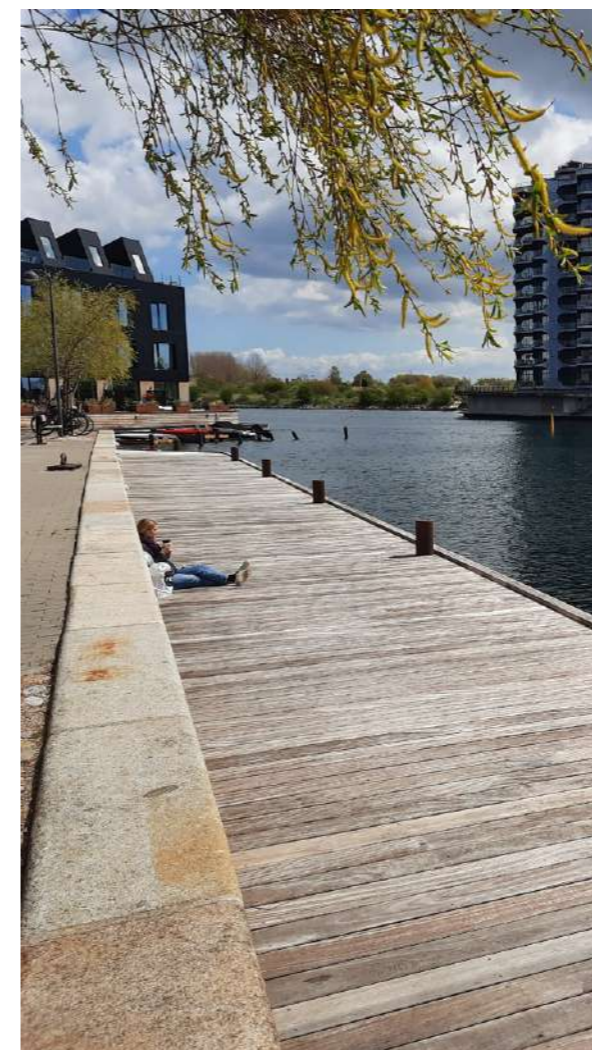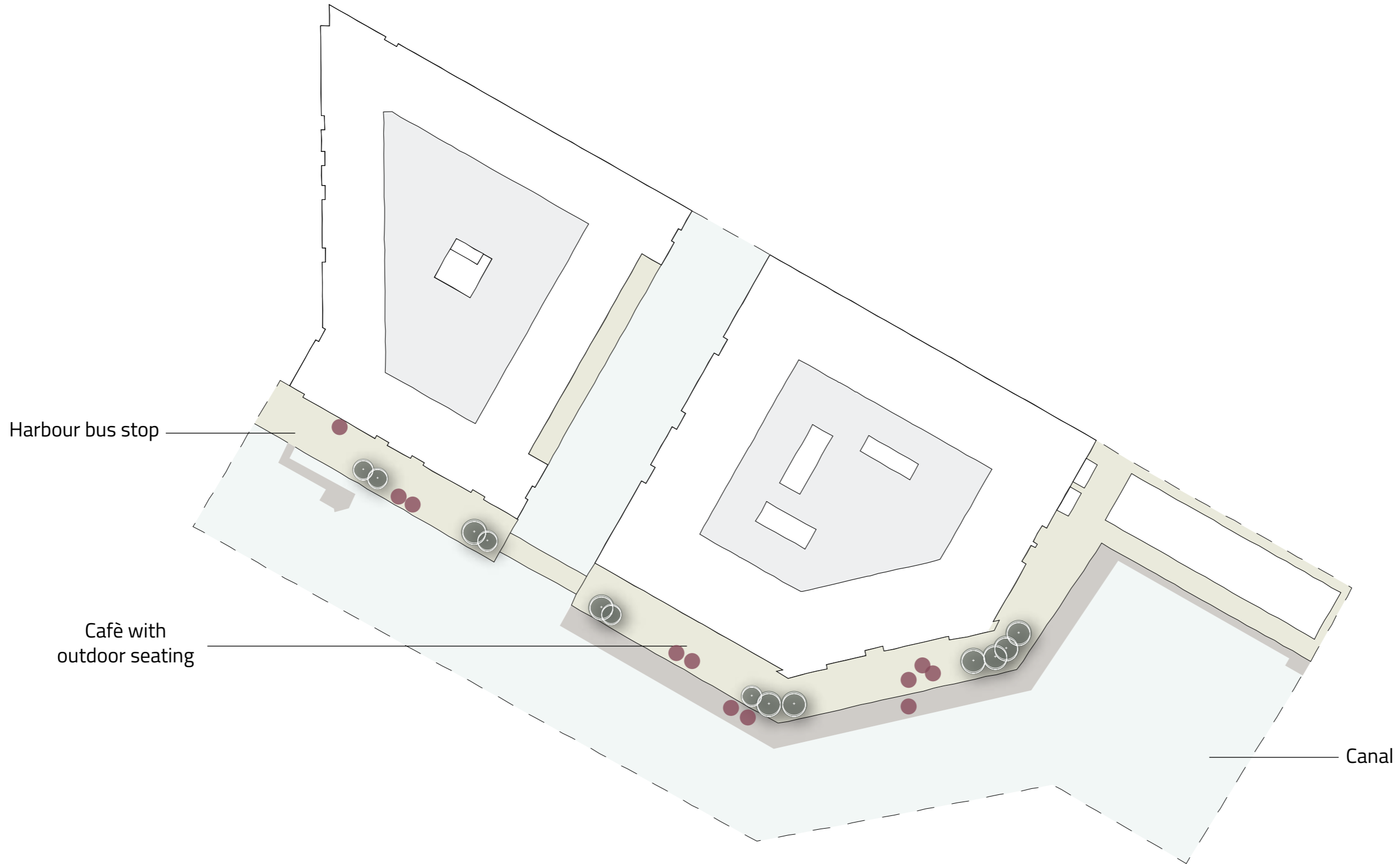
REFLECTIONS

The site observation was a really enriching experience in the process of conceiving this thesis project. This is partly due to my overwhelming interest in public life: immersing in it and trying to understand the complex dynamics that compose it was a pleasant experience for me. Moreover, looking at public spaces through the lenses of the theoretical framework I chose gave me a new perspective on the ways that people interact with the physical environment.

The first (and never too obvious) conclusion relates to territoriality. As mentioned before, a higher territorial complexity leads to a more successful appropriation of public space. We could clearly see this in the most successful places of the study: people are attracted by a large number of activities and materialities. The programmed activities were performed and could be considered a starting point for the social life that emerged after. Observing others use the space, indeed, stimulates individuals to find new ways to interact with the environment. It is through this process that the several affordances of the carefully designed artefacts are explored and made apparent.

Another reflection on my studies concerns the social groups that we should strive to plan for. It appeared that the most successful public spaces were the ones that involved some areas planned for children and play. This probably ties back to the acute perception kids have for material affordances, which leads them to be more creative in their way to explore the environment. When play was encouraged, other groups populated the public space too and engaged with it, probably inspired by the spontaneity of the primary users. Moreover, few teenagers were spotted using these public spaces. The reasons could be multiple, but it's important not to neglect these groups when designing urban spaces. Teenagers have specific needs and are particularly affected by the public social sphere. They should be taken into account in the process of planning public life since they constitute an essential part of it.

04. DESIGN SITE ANALYSIS

DESIGN SITE

Future deveoplment areas

Train tunnel- no construction

Tunnel

The area selected for the design proposal is Sydhavnsga-de, which marks the physical division between the older and newer areas of the neighbourhood. This long street is the continuation of Enghavevej and terminates as Sjæll-andsbroen, connecting inner Copenhagen with its outskirts. It is a high traffic road that cuts through the neighbourho-od and serves as an entrance corridor for cars into the city. Some developments are planned for the area and are partly approved already. However, for this thesis project, I decided to alter most of these plans to better fit the aims of the proposal.

The north area is mainly characterized by Sydhavn train sta-tion, which entrance is located under the dark railway tunnel. The train tracks crossing on top of the road represent one of the physical limitations of the design site. Moving slightly towards the south, we can observe a few residential blocks facing the street on the west side, which serve as one of the few defined edges towards the street. For the most part, in-deed, the edges are quite undefined, with large parking spaces to mediate between the sidewalks and the building facades, especially on the east side. It should be noted that, due to the presence of a train tunnel, this side of the road has limitations regarding construction.

DESIGN SITE
MOBILITY

⟨--⟩	Larger Roads on site
──	Bike lanes on site
●	Bus stops on site
●	Stations on site
●	Coming Metro stations on site

Mobility is one of the focal points of the site. The entire proposal focuses, indeed, on transforming the trafficked Sydhavnsgade into a more livable environment and discouraging the speeding of cars through prioritizing soft mobility.

Pedestrians and cyclists are not the primary users of the space today, which seems to be dominated by cars and their pace. This is apparent when looking at sidewalks, often too small for engaging in any activity aside from walking. However, the area is well served by public transport, as we can notice from the elevated number of bus stops located along Sydhavnsgade and in the surroundings.

The S-train crosses the north of the neighbourhood, facilitating movement around the entire city and allowing for mixed transportation solutions. A high number of people, indeed, uses the trains to complement their bicycle trips, contributing to different mobility networks.

In addition to these traditional means of transport, a harbour bus connects the new part of Sydhavn to the rest of Copenhagen waterfronts. This interesting mobility solution has the potential to attract many users, especially tourists, thanks to the beautiful views of the city that can be obtained from the ferry.

Perhaps the most relevant mobility solution is, however, the metro, which will start serving the neighbourhood in 2024. Two new stations will emerge in the area, with a potential for new public spaces surrounding them and attracting urban life.

As far as bike lanes are concerned, the network is well established just as everywhere else in the city. The quality of the cycling experience, though, can be threatened by the proximity of cars speeding and the inadequate separation to the sidewalk and the street.
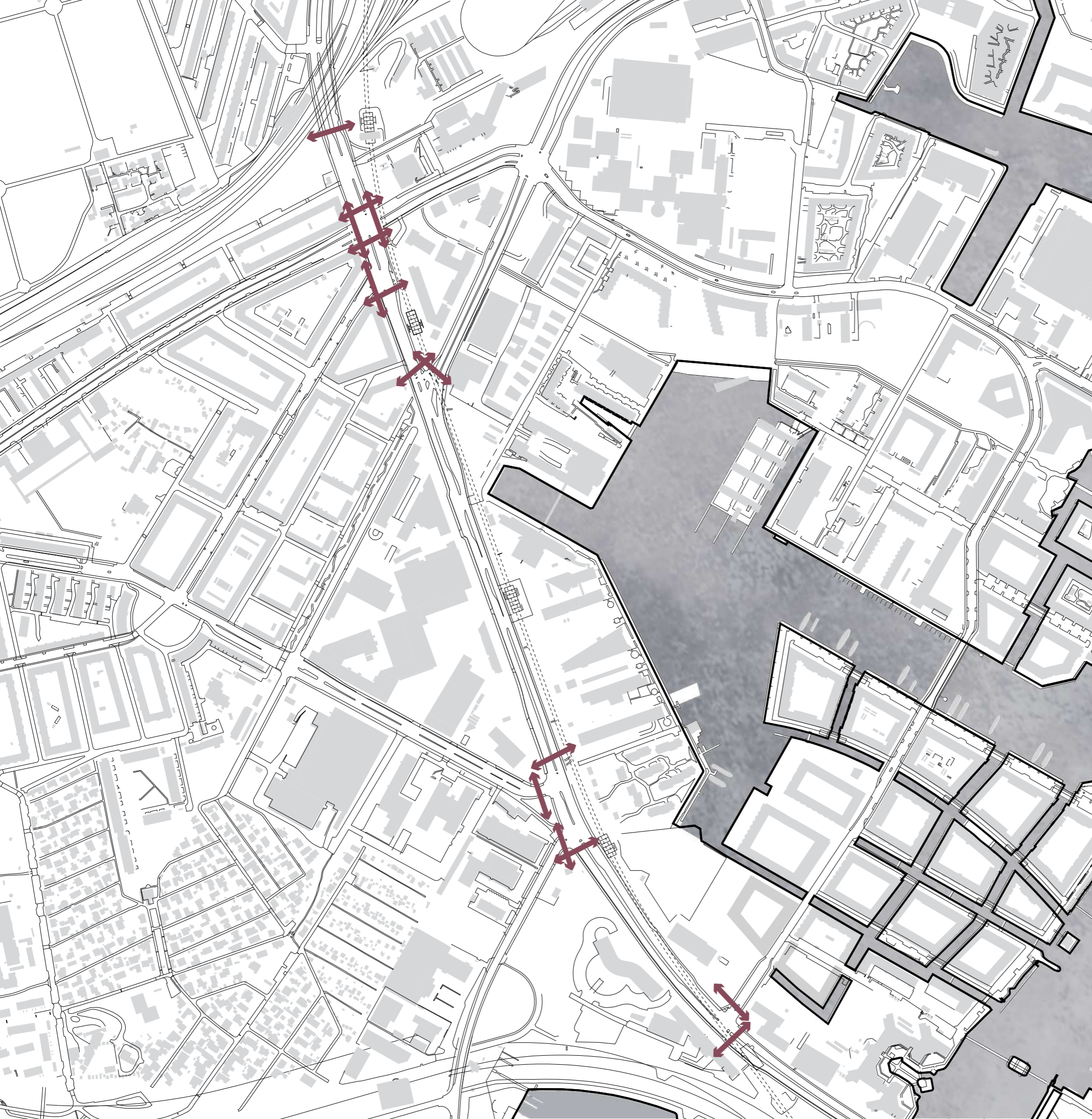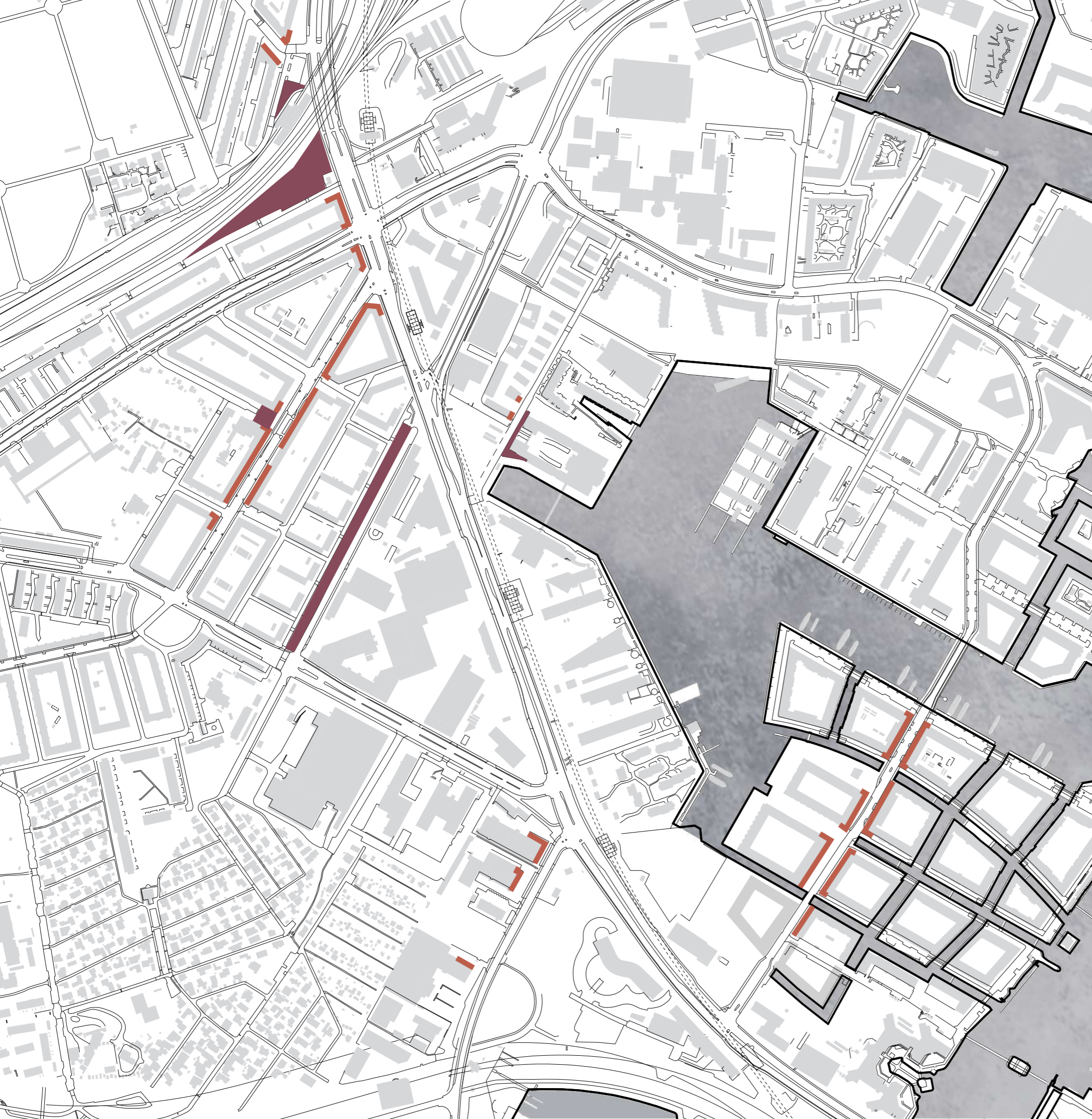
DESIGN SITE
CROSSINGS

DESIGN SITE

PUBLIC LIFE IN PROXIMITY OF SITE

�▬ **Larger Roads on site**

▬ **Bike lanes on site**

Despite being located in one of the central neighbourhoods of Copenhagen, Sydhavansgade has a suburban feeling and a probable cause can be found in its social role. We are used to identifying urban streets as those spots of the city where urban life is thriving and connecting different places is not the sole purpose. This is not the case for Sydhavansgade.

The street, in fact, doesn't have an equally vibrant character and one of the causes could be the lack of active facades. Very few ground floors along the street are accessible and inviting and, even when they are, the activities rarely spill out on the public space due to the limited space on sidewalks and plazas. Lively active facades can be found, instead, in some of the secondary streets close to Sydhavnsgade, such as Borgbjergsvej or Sluseholmen. These streets serve as commercial backbones for old and new Sydhavn respectively and accentuate the gap between the two areas since mostly catering to the nearby residents.

When it comes to public spaces, we can once again observe how no such places are located along the street, but rather in the inner areas of Holmene and "old Sydhavn". The lack of spaces for lingering profoundly impacts social life on Sydhavnsgade and represents the main concern of this thesis project. When walking along the entire stretch of the site, very few benches can be found for resting or socializing. The spaces are often undefined and therefore uninviting, also due to the adverse microclimate. A process of transformation of these characters could positively enhance the quality of the entire site and encourage social interaction.
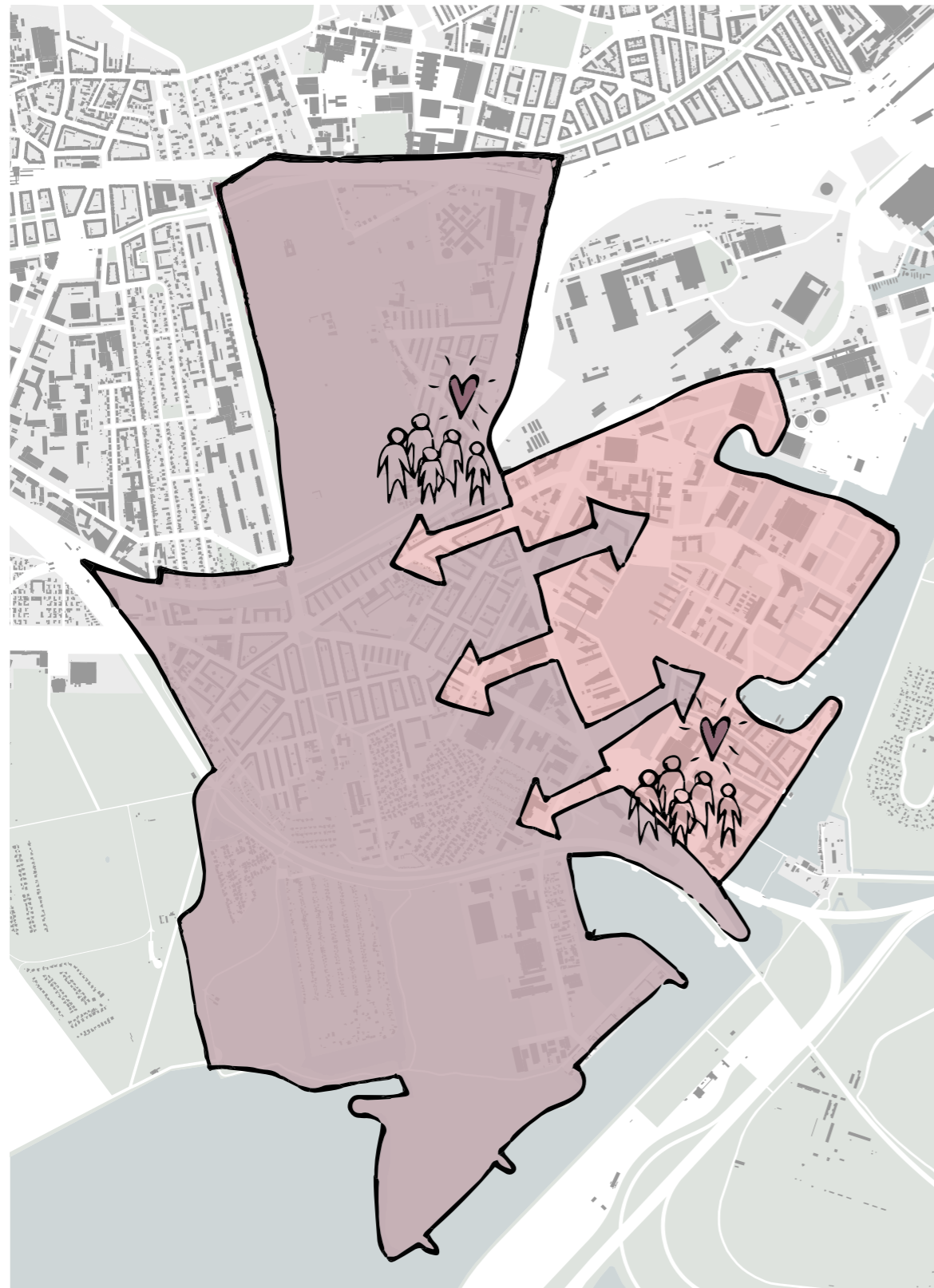
STRATEGY: Making Sydhavnen Meet

–ENHANCE SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE AREA

–SOFTEN THE BARRIER BETWEEN OLDER AND NEWER PARTS OF SYDHAVN

–CREATE A VIBRANT STREETSCAPE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC LIFE

The question I asked myself at the beginning of this process was simple: Can we make Sydhavnen meet? I believe the answer has to take into account the mental and physical barriers of the area. It is for this reason, that I decided to focus on Sydhavnsgade as a design site for this project.

The street, which lays at the border between the older and newer area of Sydhavnen, stands out as one of the largest roads in the neighbourhood. Its car-focused character makes it difficult for pedestrians and bicycles to use, or even cross. Of course, some crossings are located along the street, but what I argue is lacking is a reason to cross. I, therefore, believe that, what is now the barrier between the two sides of the district, could become a meeting point itself through a process of transformation and revitalisation. The output of this project will be a masterplan of the area surrounding Sydhavnsgade. A transformation of the road is proposed, to convert it into a proper urban street and a vibrant public space on its own. Many factors are taken into account, from the issue of car traffic to the general quality of the spaces for human life. Moreover, some larger public spaces are designed along the street, to create attractive points for the residents of the entire district, encouraging them to meet halfway.

The proposal aims at transforming Sydhavnsgade into a lively urban space, which marks the entrance to the city of Copenhagen and enhances the district connection to the centre. Exchange and cooperation are encouraged by inviting people to share spaces and activities, creating a stronger and cohesive community.
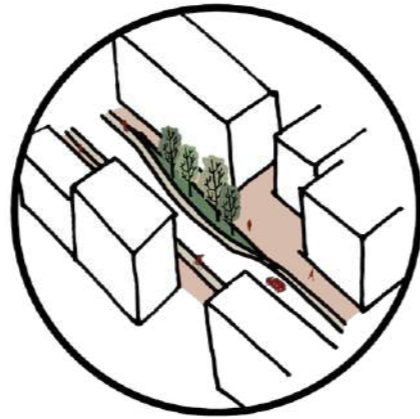
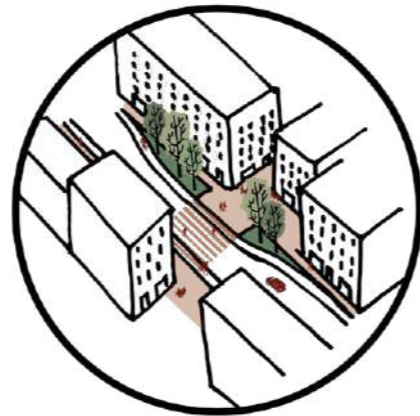And Sydhavnen will finally meet.

TOOLS
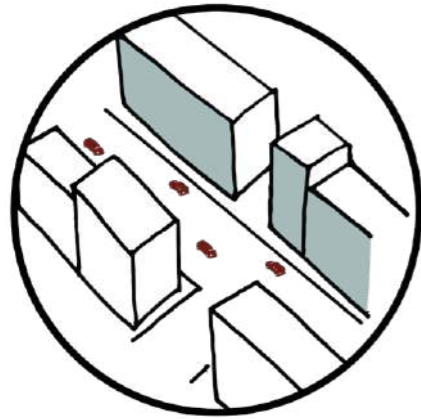
DENSIFY ALONG EDGES

PRIORITIZE
SOFT MOBILITY

ACTIVATE
GROUND FLOORS

CONNECT WITH SAFE
CROSSINGS

CREATE FLEXIBLE AND
INVITING PUBLIC SPACES

The design process to transform Sydhavnsgade into a vibrant public space that brings people together starts from a series of design tools I chose to adopt. This toolbox has to be seen as a guide for me to follow during the elaboration of my proposal and is strictly related to the chosen site. However, these concepts can be extended and adapted to a variety of projects concerning similar questions.

DENSIFY ALONG EDGES

One of the critical issues behind the unpleasant experience of Sydhavnsgade as a pedestrian relates to the absence of perceived borders. With the northern section as an exception, no buildings align with the street, creating an undefined space for the users. The large spaces that result from this physical disposition of the built environment make the street feel like a suburban artery that doesn't welcome soft mobility users. Densifying along the edges can help to create a more urban feeling and improve the perceived quality of the spaces. Densification doesn't necessarily have to concern residential buildings, but all those structures designed to frame the public space, including temporary elements and greenery.

PRIORITIZE SOFT MOBILITY

Soft mobility is regarded in this thesis project as a central element of public life. It is in this situation of reduced speed that humans manage to catch the stimuli from the environment and other individuals. Walking and cycling make it possible to stop and engage with others and therefore these means of movement should be encouraged. The prioritization of soft mobility is, first of all, a perceived quality of the physical environment, which relates to safety and options. The often very narrow sidewalks of Sydhavnsgade are enlarged and furnished and the bike lanes are connected to green spaces and other pleasant elements. Moreover, car speed is limited through a series of physical arrangements. These elements positively contribute to the feeling of ownership of the space.

ACTIVATE GROUND FLOOR

To contribute to encouraging soft mobility, ground floors are activated and made accessible. Lively facades improve the general quality of the street by providing visual interest and adding several attractors to the area. The possibility of accessing the buildings not only gives the street a more urban feeling but enhances the possibilities of chance encounters. Moreover, residents might also feel safer in the space, especially during night hours, extending the duration of activities in the public space.

CONNECT WITH SAFE CROSSINGS

Connection across the street being a crucial point of the project, crossings are highly valued. They can be considered as part of the prioritization of soft mobility, but deserve their own reflections. Crossings are indeed already present along the street, but their quality and number should be enhanced. The quality of a crossing is hereby discussed in terms of its safety. The proposal encompasses different solutions for connecting the two sides of the street, adopted at different places to match the surroundings and the flows. Bicycle crossings are also improved, with a clear definition of the paths to ensure a more efficient network.

CREATE INVITING PUBLIC SPACES

Finally, public spaces are designed along Sydhavnsgade. Their main goal is to offer new possibilities to the residents of the district, enhancing the opportunities for chance encounters. These public spaces have different configurations, but can mainly be described as "the reasons to cross the borders". With multiple activities and physical assets, they are aimed at attracting different social groups and encourage them to engage in shared activities. Therefore, flexibility is an essential quality of these spaces, which need to cater to various and ever-changing needs. The spaces are connected to each other and the rest of the neighbourhood and represent the final pieces of the puzzle to bring together the two sides of Sydhavn.

DESIGN STEPS

01. DEFINING MAIN URBAN SPACES

The first step of the proposal focuses on the identification of three main public spaces along the street, which will become catalysts for the public life of the area. The first one is the plaza connected to the Sydhavn train station, due to the high number of people passing by for a transport connection. It's also considered an entrance to the neighbourhood coming from the centre of Copenhagen. The second space is located in the middle of Sydhavnsgade, close to the University buildings and with access to the water, bringing together different peculiar qualities of Sydhavn. Finally, the new Sluseholmen Metro Station location has been chosen as a site. Its potential of becoming a square for the entire community is enhanced by its design.

02. CONNECTING THROUGH THE STREET

After defyining the focal spots of the proposal, Sydhavnsgade is improved in its physical and social character through small inteventions to the elements that compose it. The traffic is slowed down and soft mobility prioritized, allowing people to easily access the new public spaces. Moreover, crossing along the entire street are improved at this stage, to begin the process of inter-relation between older and new Sydhavn and to make mobility through the area safer and more appealing.

03. DENSIFYING AND DEFINING THE BORDERS

Finally, the edges of the street and public spaces are designed. This step is the crucial one to shape Sydhavnsgade as a successful and inviting stage for public life. More activities are brought to the area and its appearance assimilates it to an urban street. The suburban feeling can be overcome and the many peculiarities of the neighbourhood combine into a high-quality public space where social life can thrive.

06. DESIGN

Masterplan

The final proposal for the site takes into account the many complexities of the area and strives to reach a cohesive design that strengthens the identity of the district.

Sydhavnsgade is redesigned to let soft mobility take up more space and dictate the qualities of the space. The cars are relegated to a secondary role, to let urban life take over instead. The main public spaces align along the street and create a varied sequence of plazas and niches characterized by different opportunities. Safe crossings are implemented in the entire stretch of Sydhavnsgade to allow and facilitate the movement between different sides of the neighbourhood and among public spaces. To further improve the experience of the street users, Sydhavnsgade's edge is defined by an alternation of mixed-use buildings, temporary structures and greenery.

The built environment is imagined to support the social role of public space. Most of the buildings present openings and active facades along the street and plazas and the functions have the opportunity to spill out and merge with the outdoor public life. The uses are mixed, and so are the building typologies, in an attempt to bring together different social groups and overcome the current segregation.

The qualities and issues of both sides of Sydhavn meet halfway and generate a well-equipped stage for public life to develop.
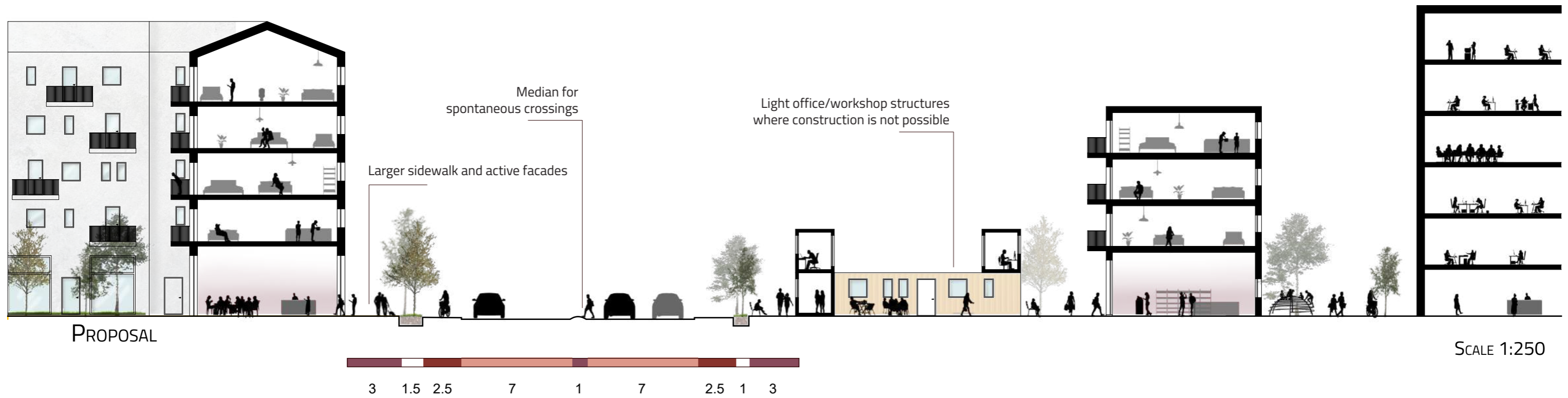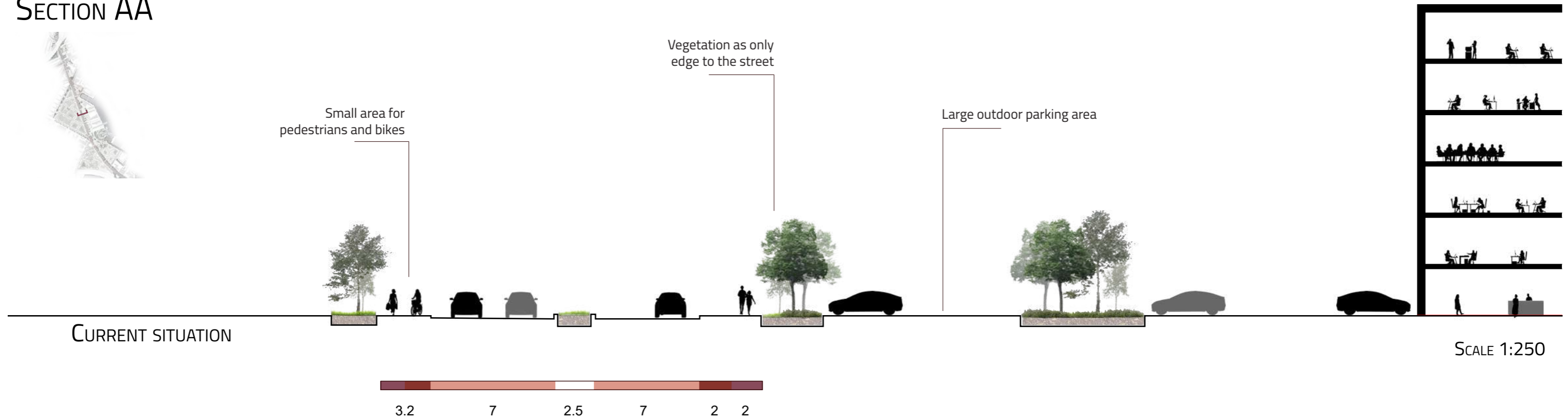
Masterplan

1. Station square
2. 24/7 Gym
3. Park
4. Student Housing
5. University
6. Community and Arts Center
7. Sit and play area
8. Outdoor study area
9. Kindergarden
10. Light office/workshop structures
11. Light commercial structures
12. Parking Houses
13. Metro Plaza
14. Harbour Bath
15. Playground and Park

Scale 1:5000

Section AA

Vegetation as only
edge to the street

Small area for
pedestrians and bikes

Large outdoor parking area

CURRENT SITUATION

SCALE 1:250

| 3.2 | 7 | 2.5 | 7 | 2 | 2 |

Median for
spontaneous crossings

Light office/workshop structures
where construction is not possible

Larger sidewalk and active facades

PROPOSAL

SCALE 1:250

| 3 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 2.5 | 1 | 3 |

The proposal focuses on improving the space of Syhavnsgade to accommodate and encourage public life. One of the factors that certainly negatively influences the user's perception of the street is the absence of a defined edge to it. Due to this, the space is not comparable to the human scale of soft mobility and therefore seems to prioritize car traffic. Moreover, the presence of large parking lots and the closed facades of buildings don't contribute to stimulating social life, making the space difficult to appropriate.

In the design proposal, edges are provided to the street in the form of buildings, temporary structures or vegetation as a response to different needs and limitations. Sidewalks are made larger, to allow life to spill out of the buildings and open accessible facades guarantee an interplay between inside and outside. The number of car lanes is generally not reduced, but the speed of cars is limited by the design of Sydhavnsgade: the limited edges provide an urban appearance to the street and the better relation between soft users and cars shifts the paradigm to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists. Large parking areas are replaced with parking houses that save precious urban public space and have the flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses. Moreover, the general feeling of safety is improved as a result of traffic speed decreasing and thanks to some partial filter between the public spaces and the traffic lanes.

Scale 1:150

SECTION BB

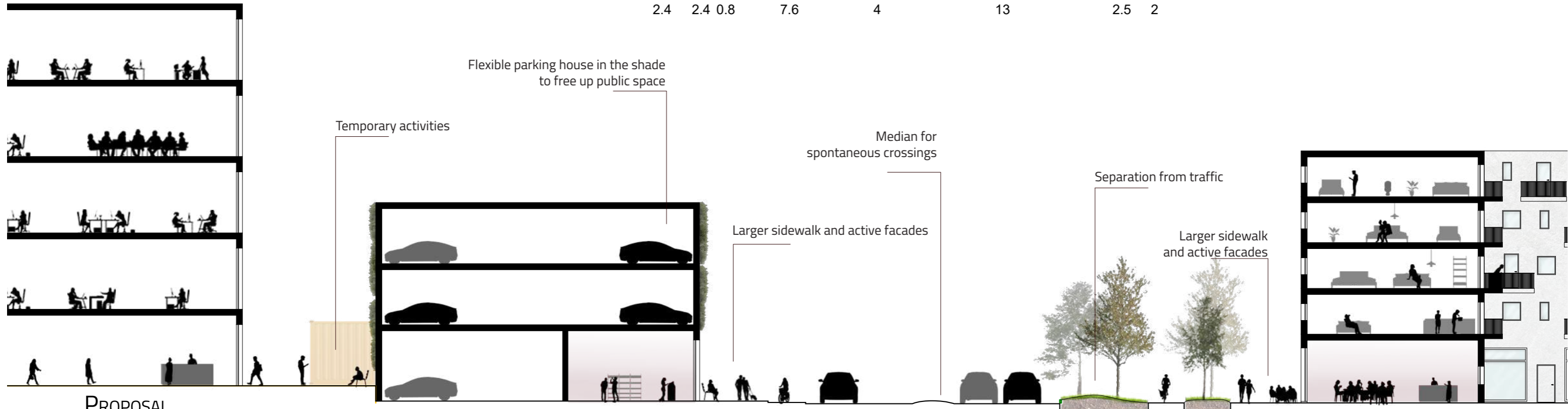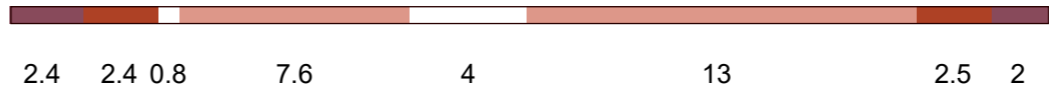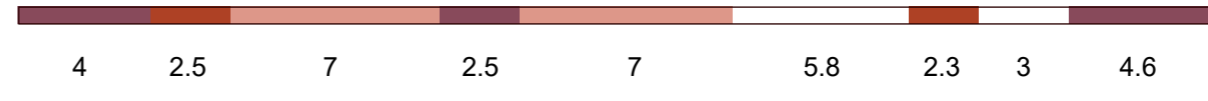## CURRENT SITUATION

Undefined space

Inactive green edge

Small area for soft mobility

Vegetation as only edge to the street

Large outdoor parking area

SCALE 1:250

| 2.4 | 2.4 | 0.8 | 7.6 | 4 | 13 | 2.5 | 2 |

PROPOSAL

Temporary activities

Flexible parking house in the shade to free up public space

Larger sidewalk and active facades

Median for spontaneous crossings

Separation from traffic

Larger sidewalk and active facades

SCALE 1:250

| 4 | 2.5 | 7 | 2.5 | 7 | 5.8 | 2.3 | 3 | 4.6 |

Section BB- detail

Scale 1:150

CROSSINGS

⟷ **Formal crossings**

– – – **Informal crossings**

To improve the social exchange among all areas of Sydhavn overcoming physical barriers is an essential prerequisite. A first step in the proposal relates to the crossings along Sydhavnsgade to promote East-West movement.

As of now, the crossings located along the road have a simple and effective design to allow pedestrians and bikes to reach the other side of the district. However, their number is limited, considering the lenght of the street, and the locations are not well distributed. The result is that crossing is not made possible for large stretches of Sydhavnsgade, forcing pedestrians and bikes to take longer routes. Moreover, as a result of the prioritization of cars, crossing can be perceived as large and unsafe and therefore be avoided by some users.

In the design project, the crossings of the current street are improved and supplemented with many new formal and informal opportunities to easily reach the opposite sidewalk. Multiple solutions are adopted in the proposal, adapting to the conditions and needs of the specific cases and contributing to make up a successful interconnected public street.
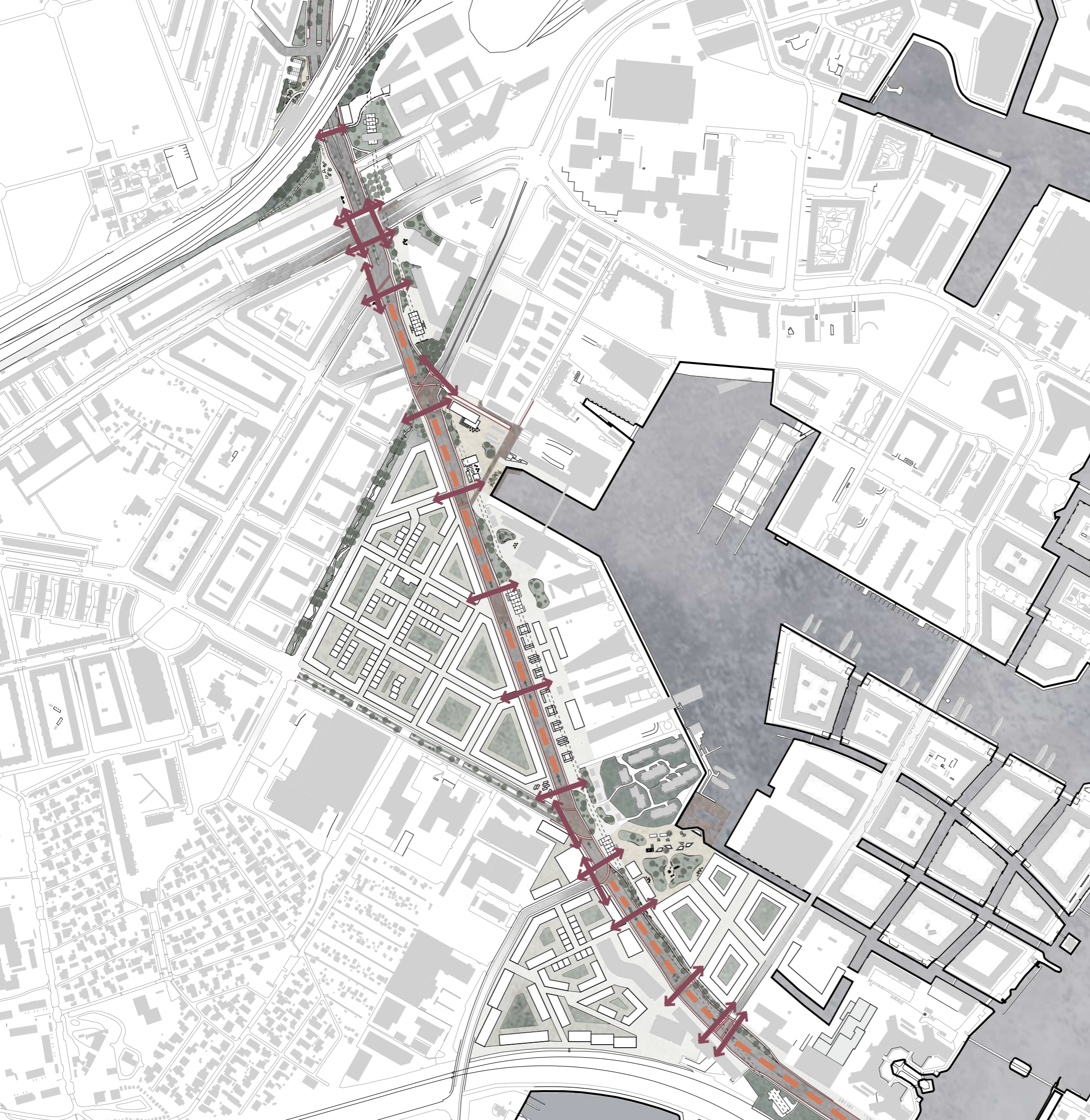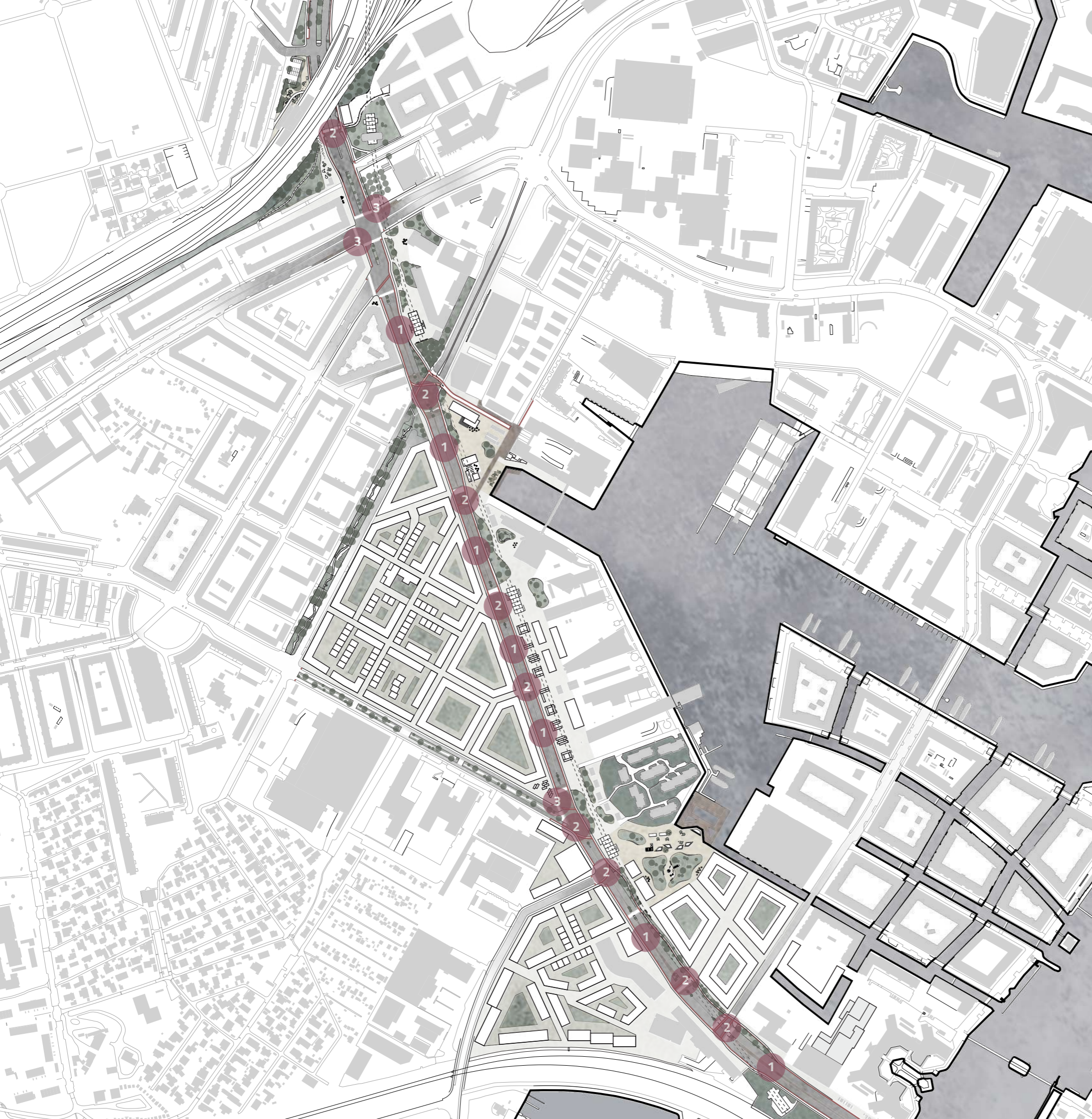
Safe crossings
Tools

1 Median

2 Paving change

3 Curb extension

Safe crossings— median

Safe crossings— paving change

The first measure adopted to facilitate movement across Sydhavnsgade is the introduction of informal crossings. Aside from the programmed crossings, a small median can allow pedestrians to safely reach the other side of Sydhavnsgade at any point. The median, indeed, provides a space to stop when crossing without the support of traffic lights. These areas are signalled by paving and a slight level change, but they can be crossed by cars for turning or any necessity. This method differs from the formally regulated crossings, located in relevant focal points, but supports the spontaneous decisions of pedestrians providing a safe and appealing option.

In formalized crossings, some techniques are adopted. One of them concerns a change in the street texture. The paved surface signals the presence of a space dedicated to pedestrians and bicycles, forcing the cars to slow down and therefore improving the quality of the physical environment. This solution can sometimes be complemented by a slight change in level, bringing the crossing at the sidewalk level to slow down the car traffic even more and create continuity between public spaces.

SAFE CROSSINGS- CURB EXTENSION

Finally, curb extension can be used to improve the safety and appeal of crossings. It relates to corners and is primarily aimed at reducing the distance that pedestrians have to walk to reach the other side. This kind of solution involves the appropriation of the turning area in a crossing. This is signalled through paving and other pieces of urban furniture and forces cars to slow down and pay more attention when turning, since both the visibility and the space are limited. Consequently, the crossing becomes safer for pedestrians and can appear more viable, encouraging individuals to move across Sydhavnsgade.
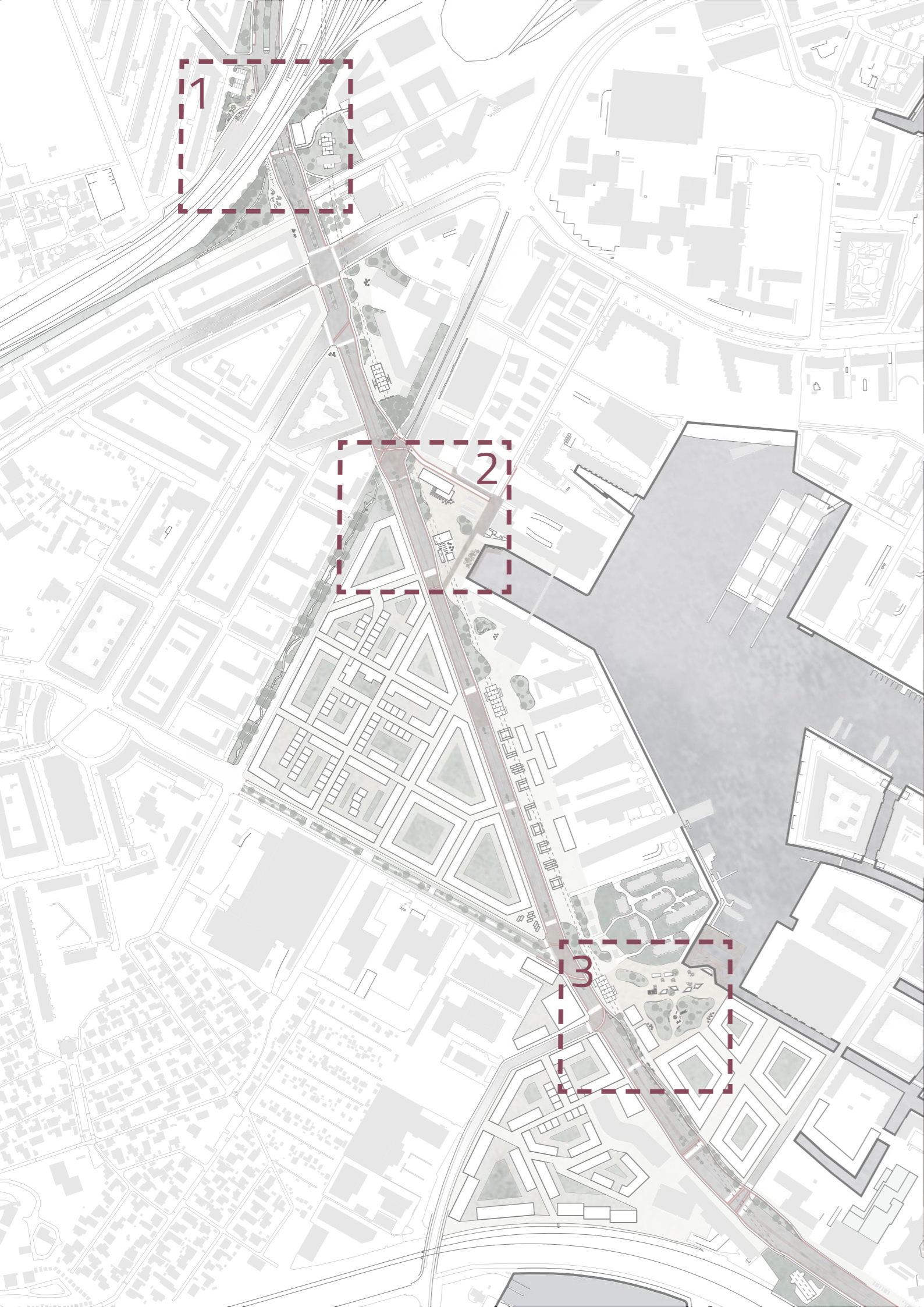
07. PUBLIC SPACES

ZOOM IN 1
CURRENT SITUATION

To Copenhagen
City Center

To "New part
of Sydhavn"

To Mozart Plads

To Highway
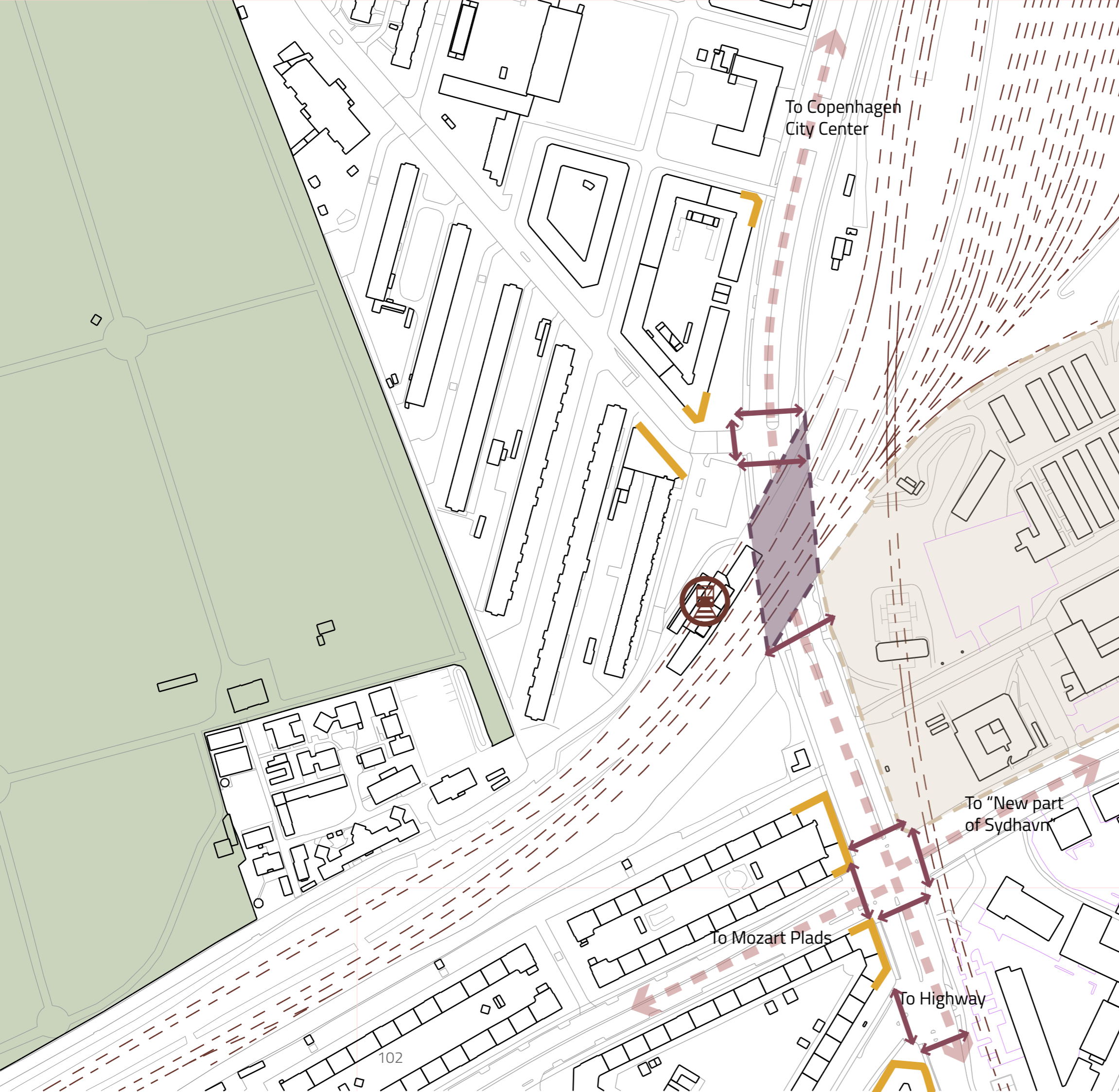
Active Ground Floors

Cemetery

Development Area

Tunnel

Train Tracks

Train Station

Crossings

The first area identified as a focal public space on site is the one surrounding Syshavn's train station. The potential of this mobility node is elevated, given the heterogeneity and multiplicity of users of the S-train line. Being the tracks elevated, the entrance of the station is located underneath a dark and noisy tunnel, which contributes to a general feeling of unsafeness in the area. The plaza located next to the station is bordered by residential buildings on one side and presents three large benches to accommodate public life. On the other side of the tracks, a public park extends along the bridge. On the opposite side of Sydhavnsgade, a new mixed-use development is under construction, which will transform the area along the train tracks with new residential buildings and sports infrastructures. The main challenges of this site involve a low level of perceived safety and soft mobility issues in connection to the tunnel.

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STATION PLAZA- PLAN
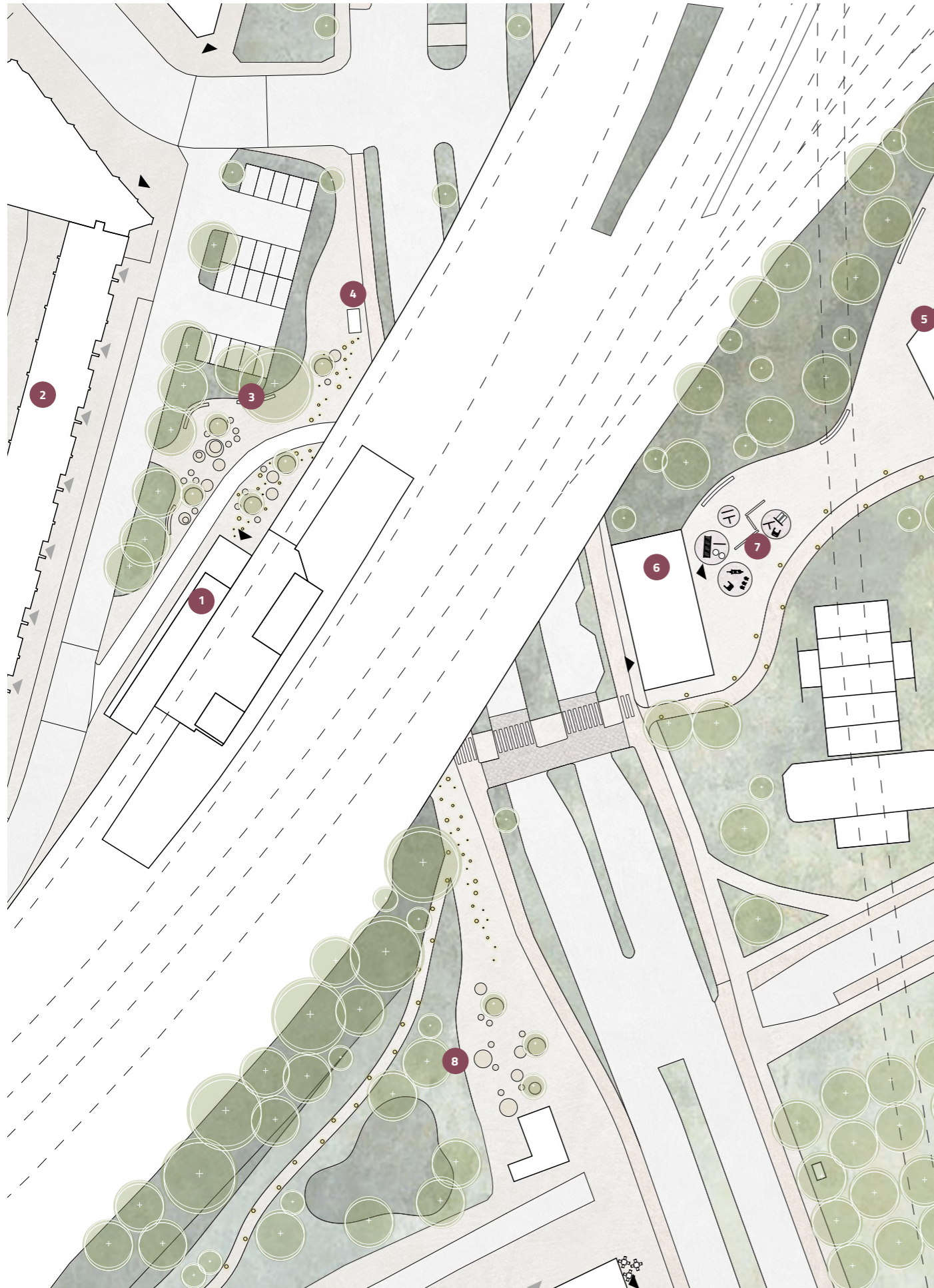
1 Sydhavn Train Station
2 Residential Area
3 Renewed Plaza
4 Bus stop
5 New Development Area
6 24/7 Gym
7 Outdoor Gym
8 Public Park

The proposal for the north area of the site is a minimal intervention, mainly aimed at improving the quality of the existing spaces to enhance their social attractiveness. To guide the movement of pedestrians on site, small floor lights are placed along the sidewalk that leads to the station entrance and the plaza in front of it. The lights are meant to provide a reference for the users and improve the perceived safety of the space and the pleasantness of the tunnel. In addition to this, a building is placed on the east side of Sydhavnsgade, hosting a 24/7 gym.

This function might help to increase the use of the spaces all day around, providing an additional layer of safety to the passers-by and activating the proximity of the tunnel, marking the point at which Enghavevej turns into Sydhavnsgade. Moreover, the building signals the entrance to the future development to the east of the site.

To enhance social interaction in the area, the plaza and its adjacent spaces are equipped with movable furniture. The modules proposed for the intervention have different sizes and can be arranged and combined to afford multiple actions. The increased opportunities to appropriate the space can indeed stimulate a variety of uses and therefore attract more groups to the space, increasing the probabilities of chance encounters. Station users can cross a lively space and be invited to linger and interact with other social groups that chose to use the public space for the many different activities that it offers.
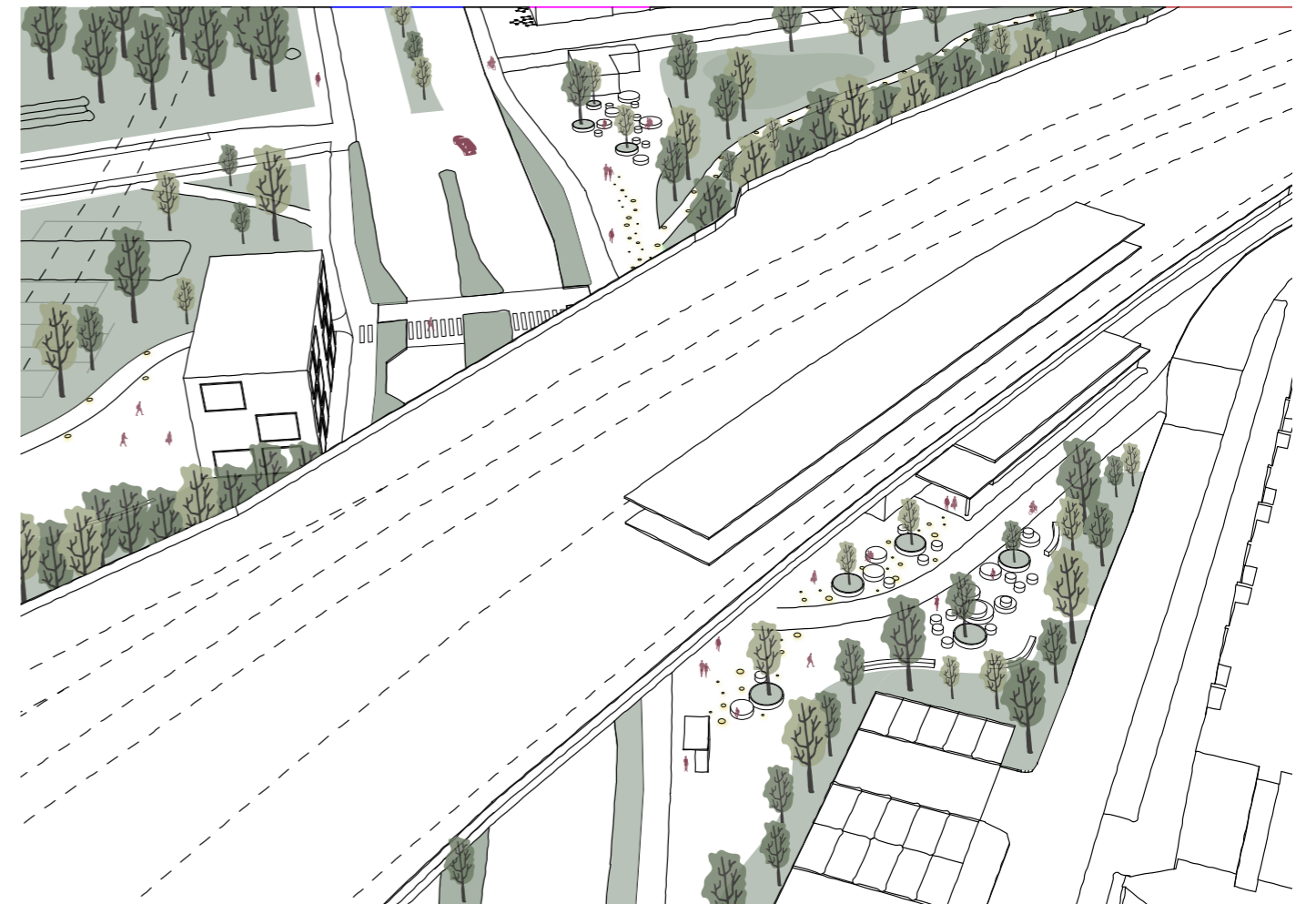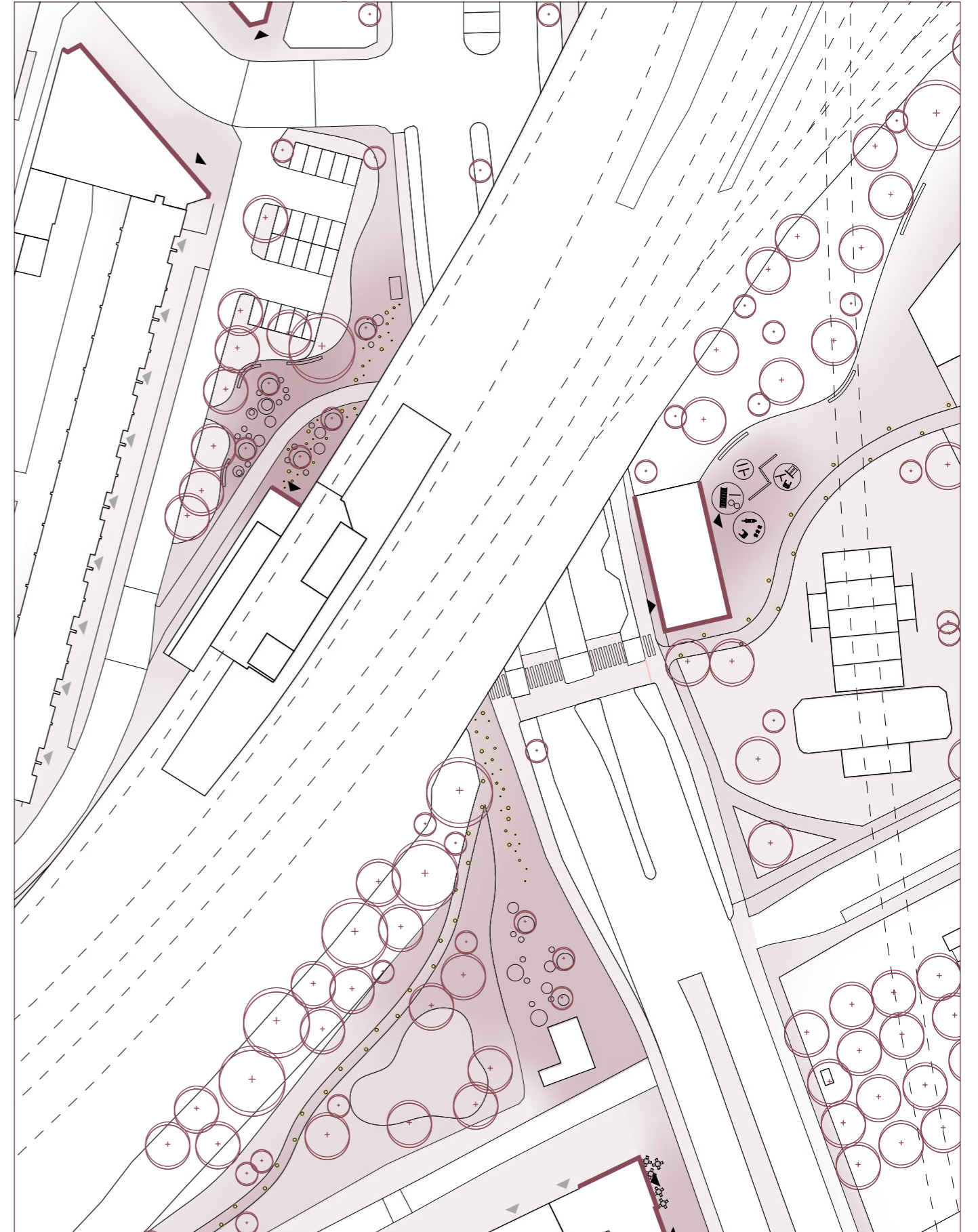
Low
CHANCE

High
CHANCE

EXISTING

PROPOSAL

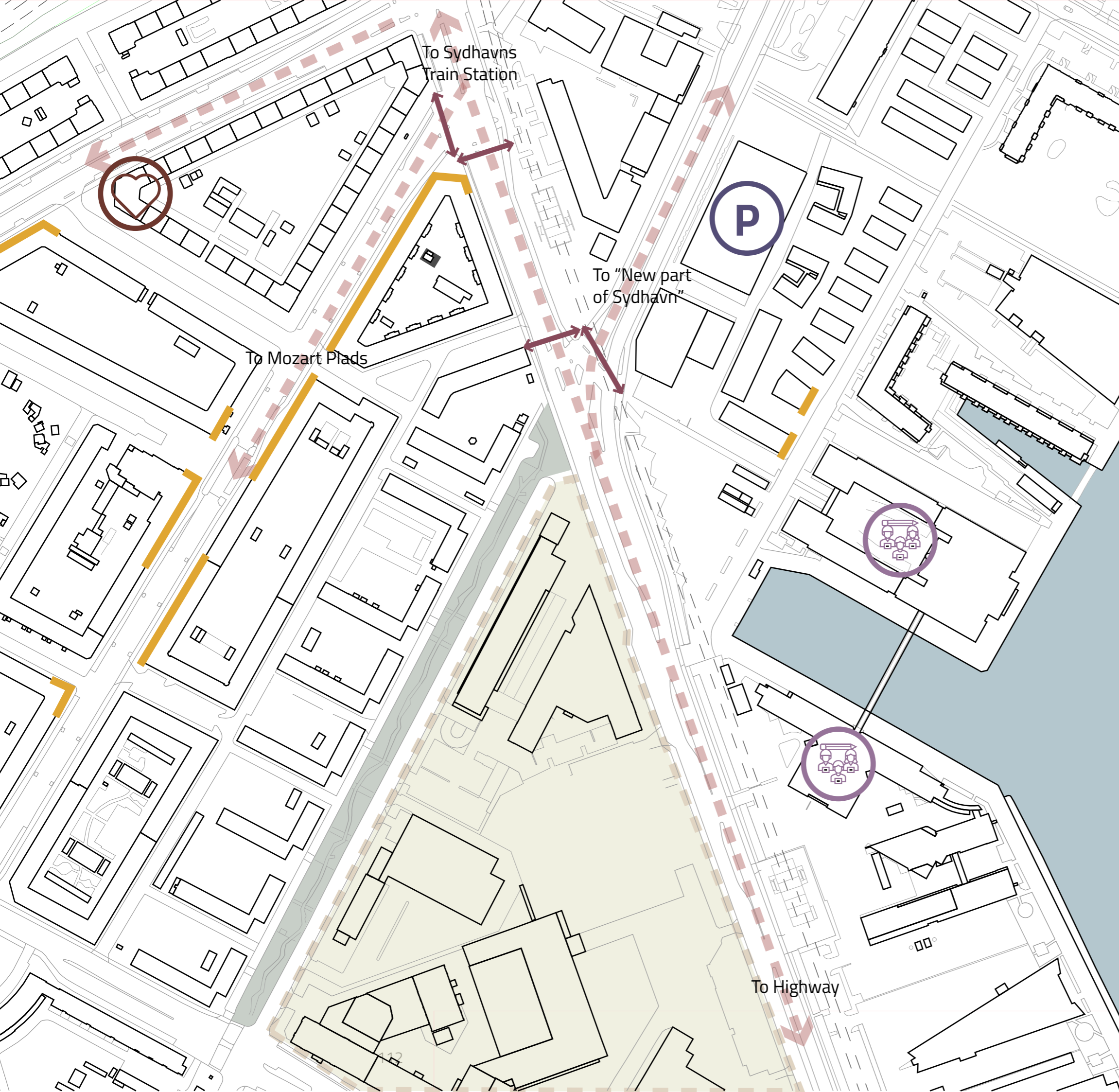To Sydhavns Train Station

To "New part of Sydhavn"

To Mozart Plads

P

To Highway

Legend
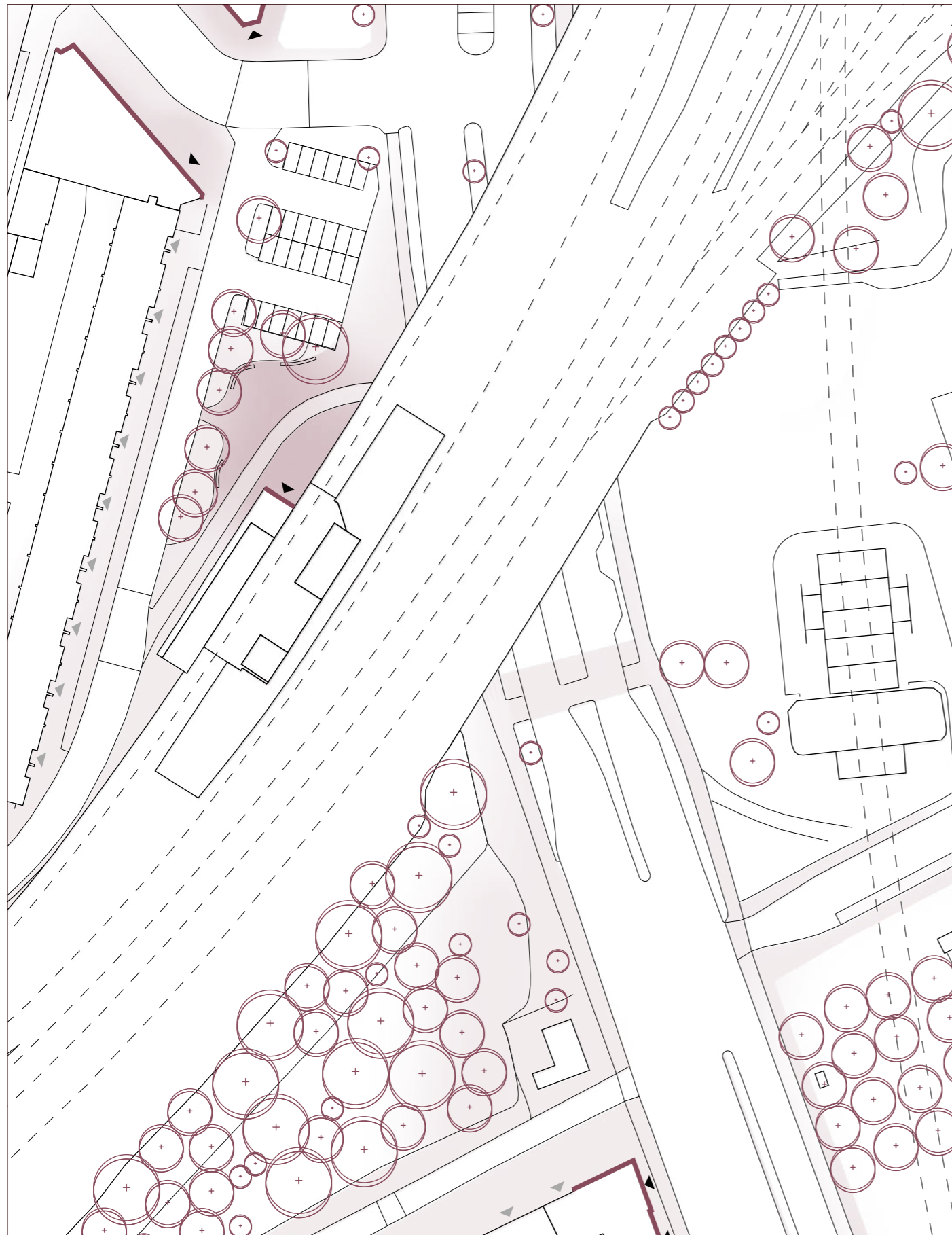
— Active Ground Floors

■ Park

▢ Development Area

◉ University
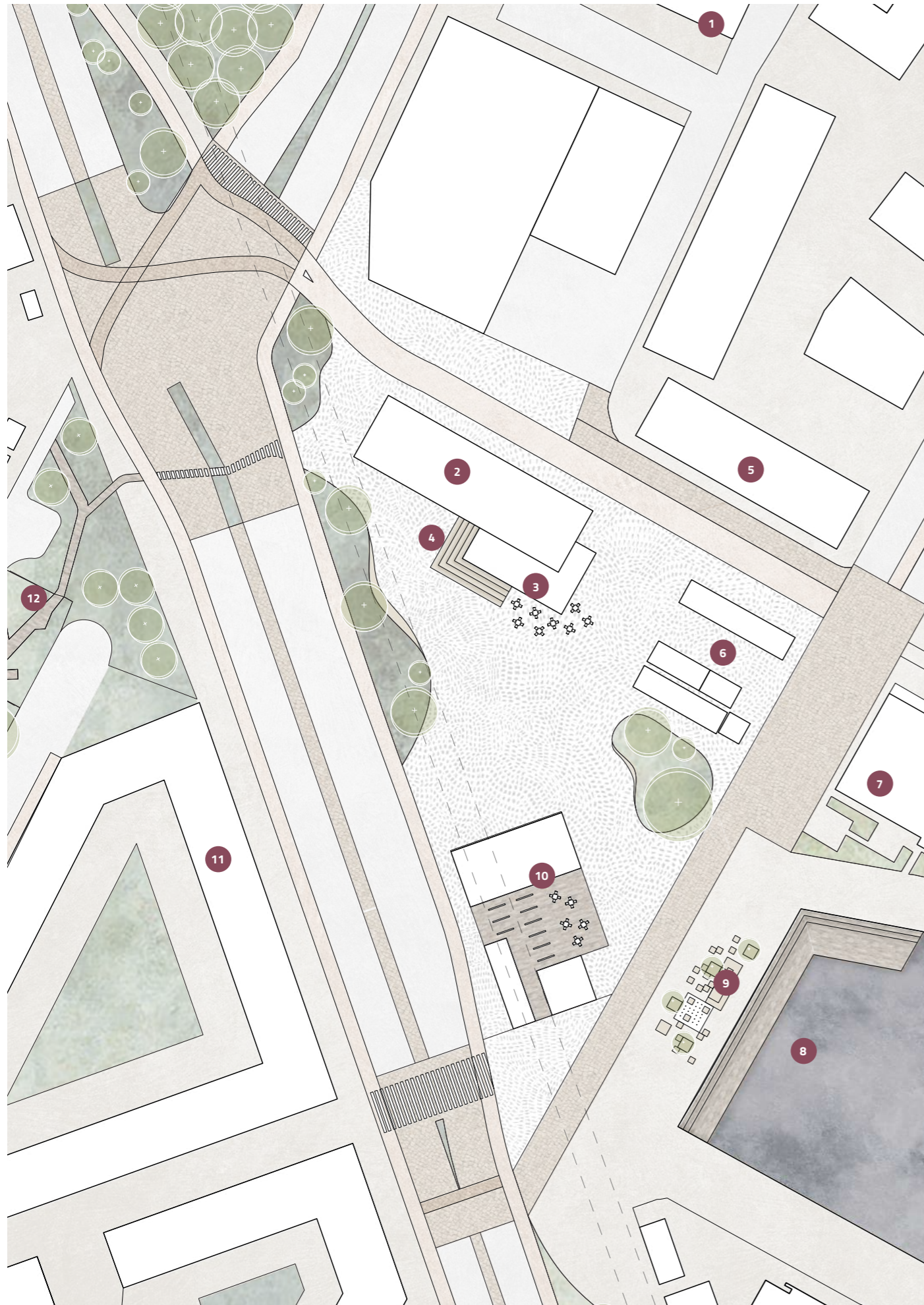
Ⓟ Parking House

♡ Community Center

↔ Crossings

The second space selected to host public life is the area in front of Aalborg University. The area, which is currently a parking lot, can be reimagined to allow for an exchange of ideas and opinions, taking advantage of the stimulating academic environment. The proximity to the green boulevard of Scandiagade can add qualities to the area, turning it into a part of a public spaces network. The site is currently bordered by Sydhavnsgade on one side, recently developed residential buildings to the north-east and the canal and university buildings to the south-east. The views of the canal can be enhanced by providing direct access to water, including a distinctive element of Sydhavn in the design.
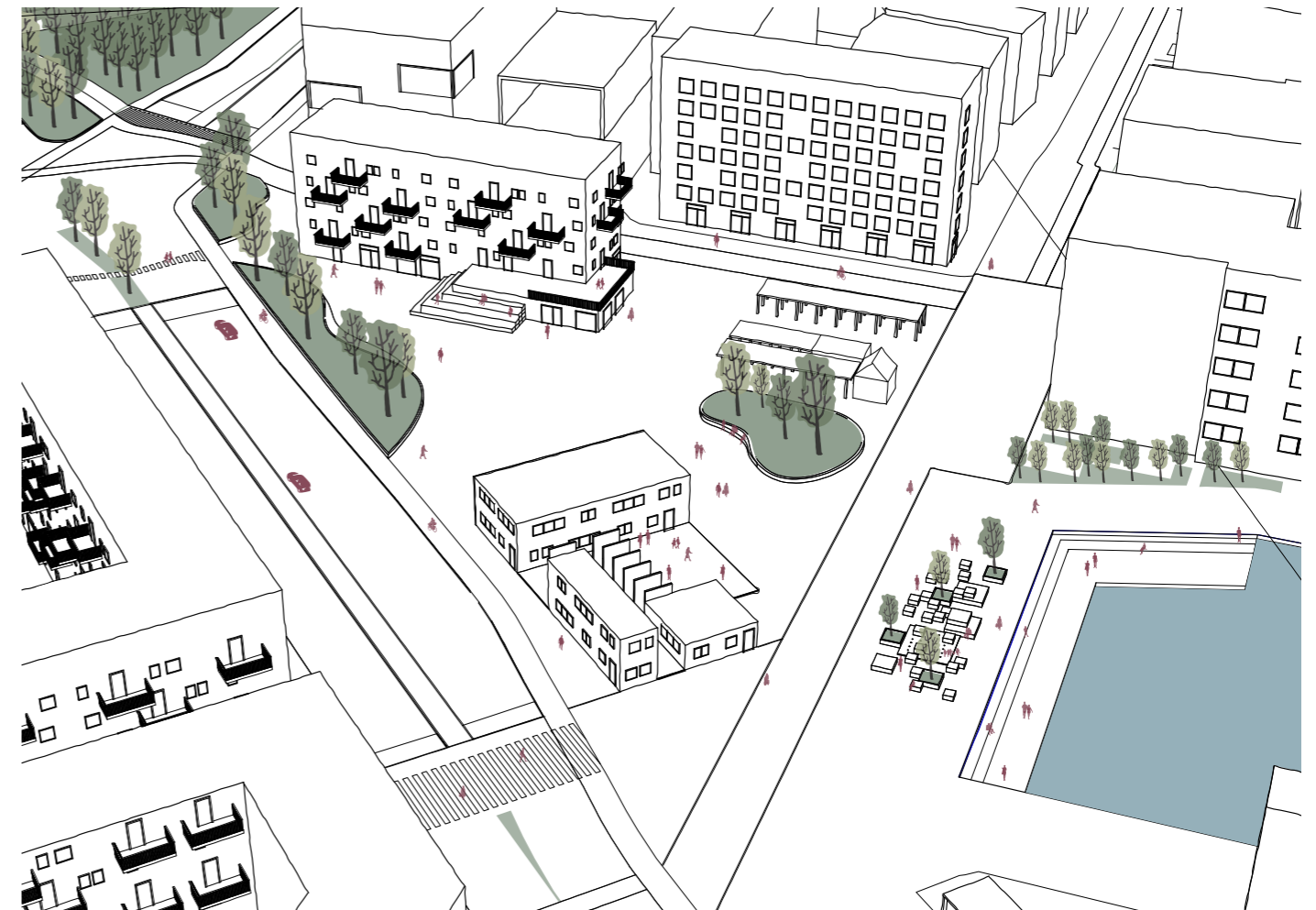
UNIVERSITY PLAZA - PLAN

1	Parking House	**7**	Aalborg University
2	Student Housing	**8**	Harbour Bath
3	Cafè	**9**	Sit and Play Area
4	Seating Steps	**10**	Art Community Center
5	Residential area	**11**	Mixed-use Area
6	Bike Parking	**12**	Scandiagade- Green Boulevard

The proposal for the area in front of Aalborg University encompasses a variety of elements to improve the social qualities of the space. The plaza connects to Scandiagade, becoming part of a public space network in the district. A student housing building is located on the square. It interacts with the outdoor space through a cafè and spacious seating steps facing West, which can accommodate different public activities. The creative and stimulating identity of the plaza is enhanced through the presence of a

Community Art Center, which can host a multiplicity of activities open to the public, mainly relating to creativity and artistic expression. This structure replaces the previous temporary organization located in the plot on the opposite side of the street. Water, a distinctive element of the neighbourhood, is made accessible through steps and platforms, to invite the users to interact with it. Finally, an area for seating and play is located in front of the quay. It is characterized by movable standard modules that are meant to have a high affordance. Their dimensions and possible arrangements allow for many disparate activities and can attract different groups simultaneously, making social interaction easier between users. The plaza is accessible from multiple sides, thanks to large and safe crossings, and relates to the mixed-use development on the opposite side of Sydhavnsgade, which connects to the older part of the district.
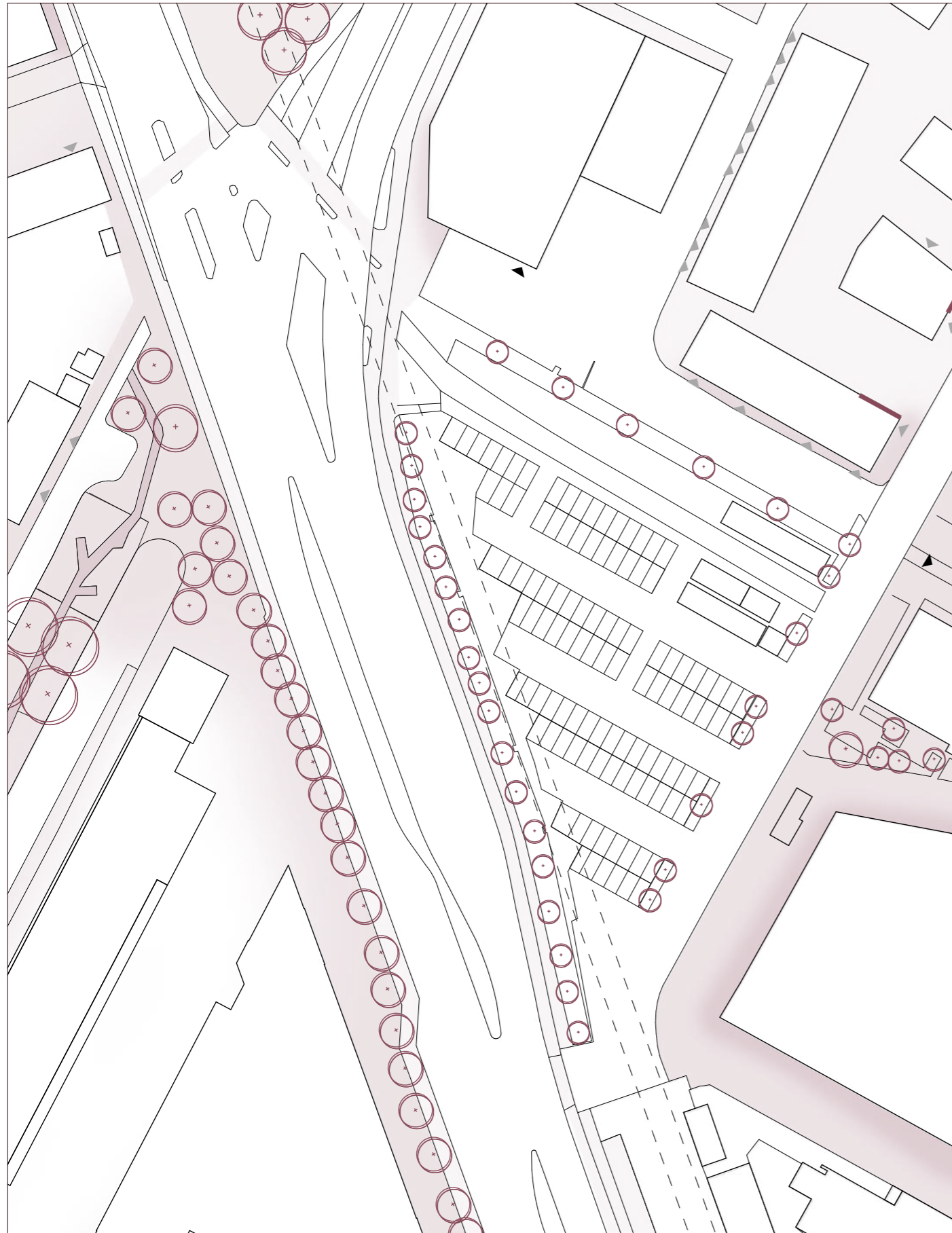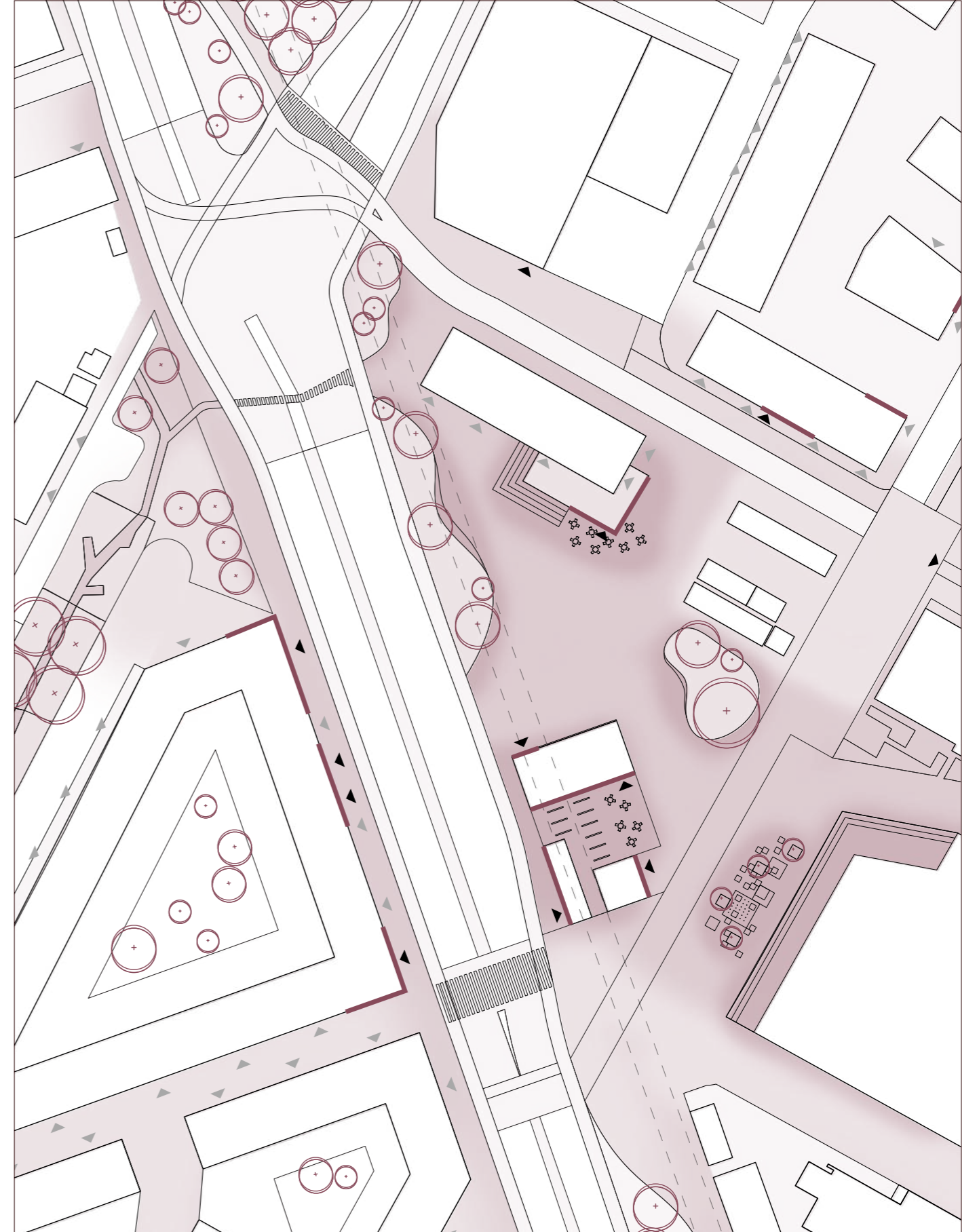
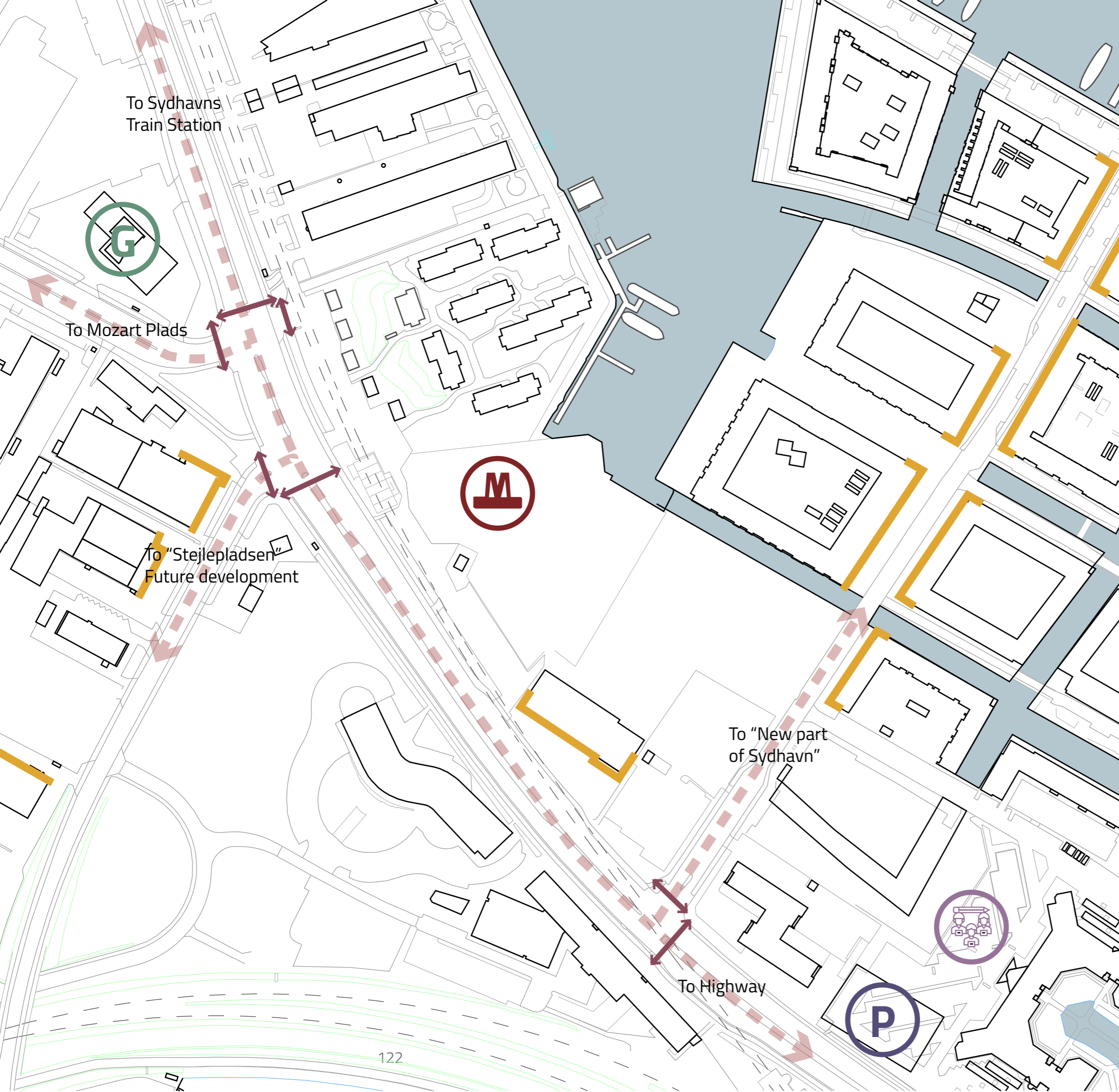# Chances for public space appropriation

Existing

Proposal

ZOOM IN 3
CURRENT SITUATION

To Sydhavns
Train Station

To Mozart Plads

To "Stejlepladsen"
Future development

To "New part
of Sydhavn"

To Highway

Legend:

— Active Ground Floors

Coming School

**P** Coming Parking House

M Coming Metro Stop

G Gas Station

↔ Crossings

The last place selected to become a main public space is the plaza of the new metro station "Sluseholmen", in the south of the site. This area currently has a suburban appearance, dominated by large office buildings with inaccessible facades. Due to its location, this spot could become one of the first sights when driving into the city of Copenhagen. Moreover, the Metro will bring a multiplicity of users to cross the space daily, resulting in a great potential for social interaction. The proximity to the water adds qualities to the space, strengthening the identity of the place and providing opportunities for different uses of the plaza.

Metro plaza- plan
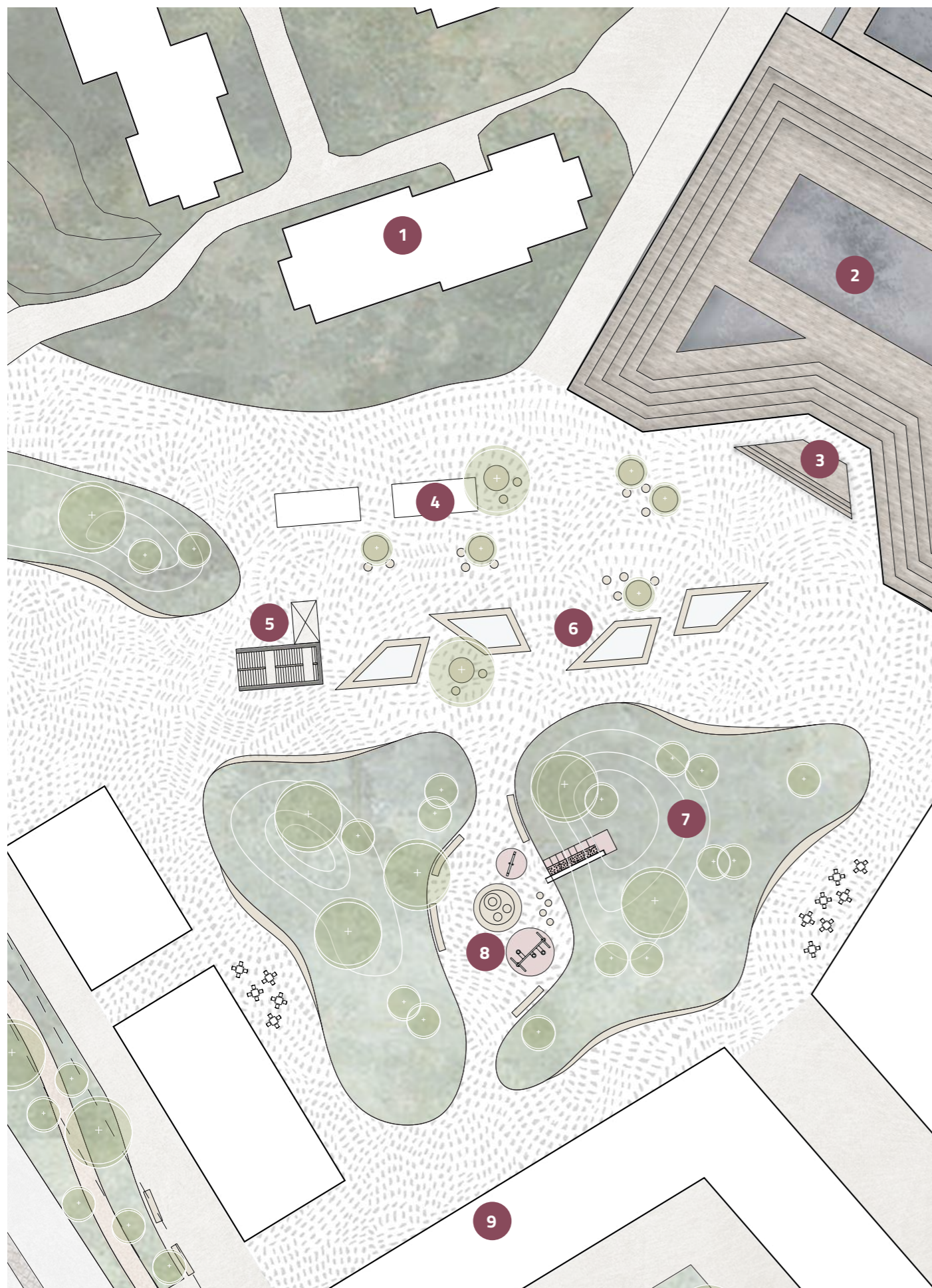
1 Residential Area
2 Harbour Bath
3 Public Stage
4 Bike Parking
5 Metro Entrance
6 Metro Shafts
7 Hills
8 Playground
9 Mixed-use Development

The proposal for this site focuses on creating a space for the community to share experiences and express themselves in different ways. The entrance to the metro station characterizes the space and the metro shafts are involved in the design of the plaza, providing seating space for the users. Re-arrangeable blocks for seating are placed in this area, to encourage lingering and interaction. The relation to the water is highlighted through a large harbour bath designed to be able to accommodate larger events as well as spontaneous gatherings of people.

Topography is brought to the site to subdivide the space and create intimate pockets for the users to appropriate. The inclinations can be used for a multitude of activities including play. For this reason, a formal playground is established between to hills and along one of the main paths through the square. Play is seen as a catalyst for public life and interaction among groups. The plaza is defined by new mixed-use buildings with active ground floors. Activities can extend in the outdoor spaces creating a lively environment for pedestrians. Finally, a small stage is placed in the square, allowing for spontaneous performances, political debates and music events to bring life to the space.
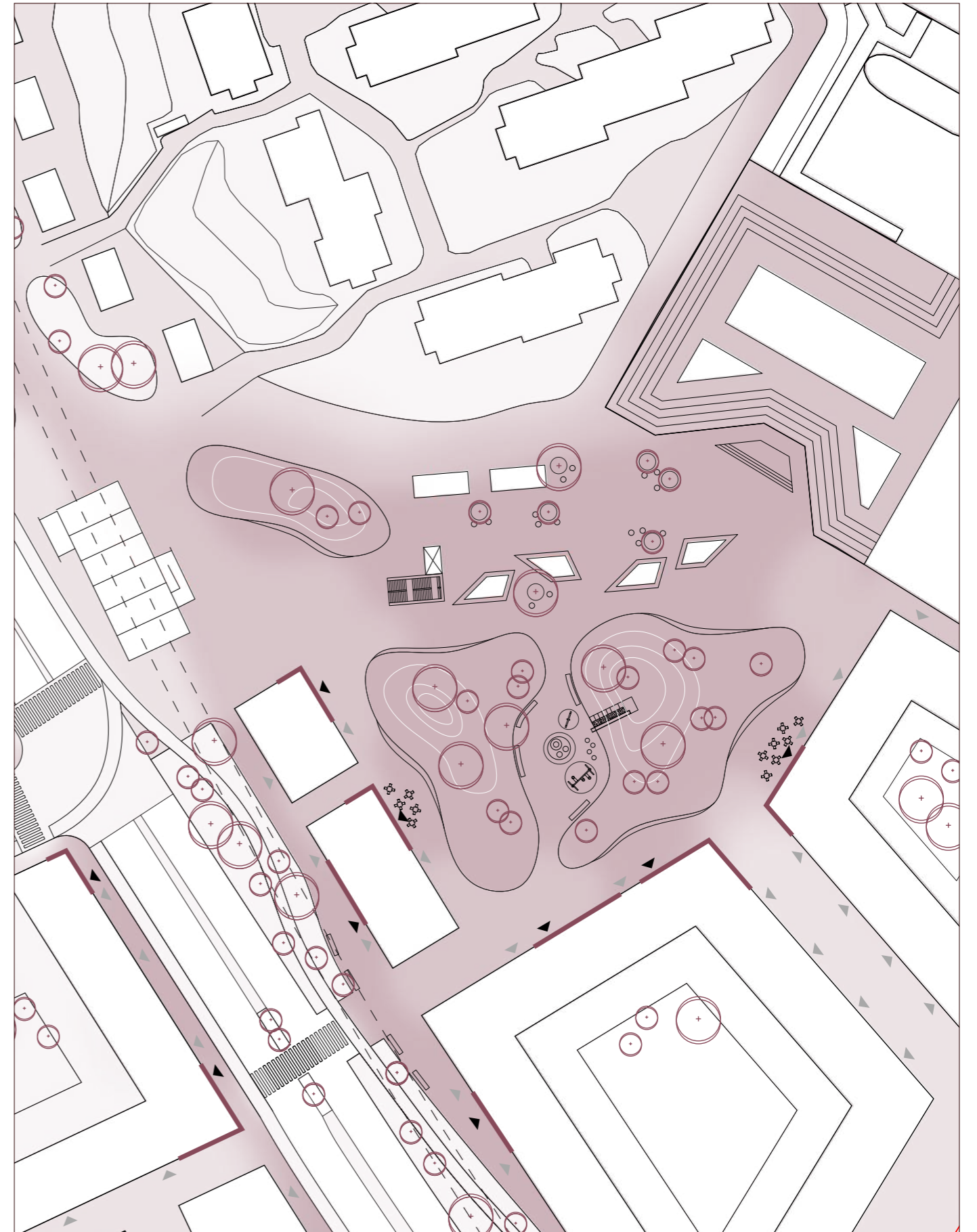
CHANCES FOR PUBLIC SPACE APPROPRIATION

EXISTING
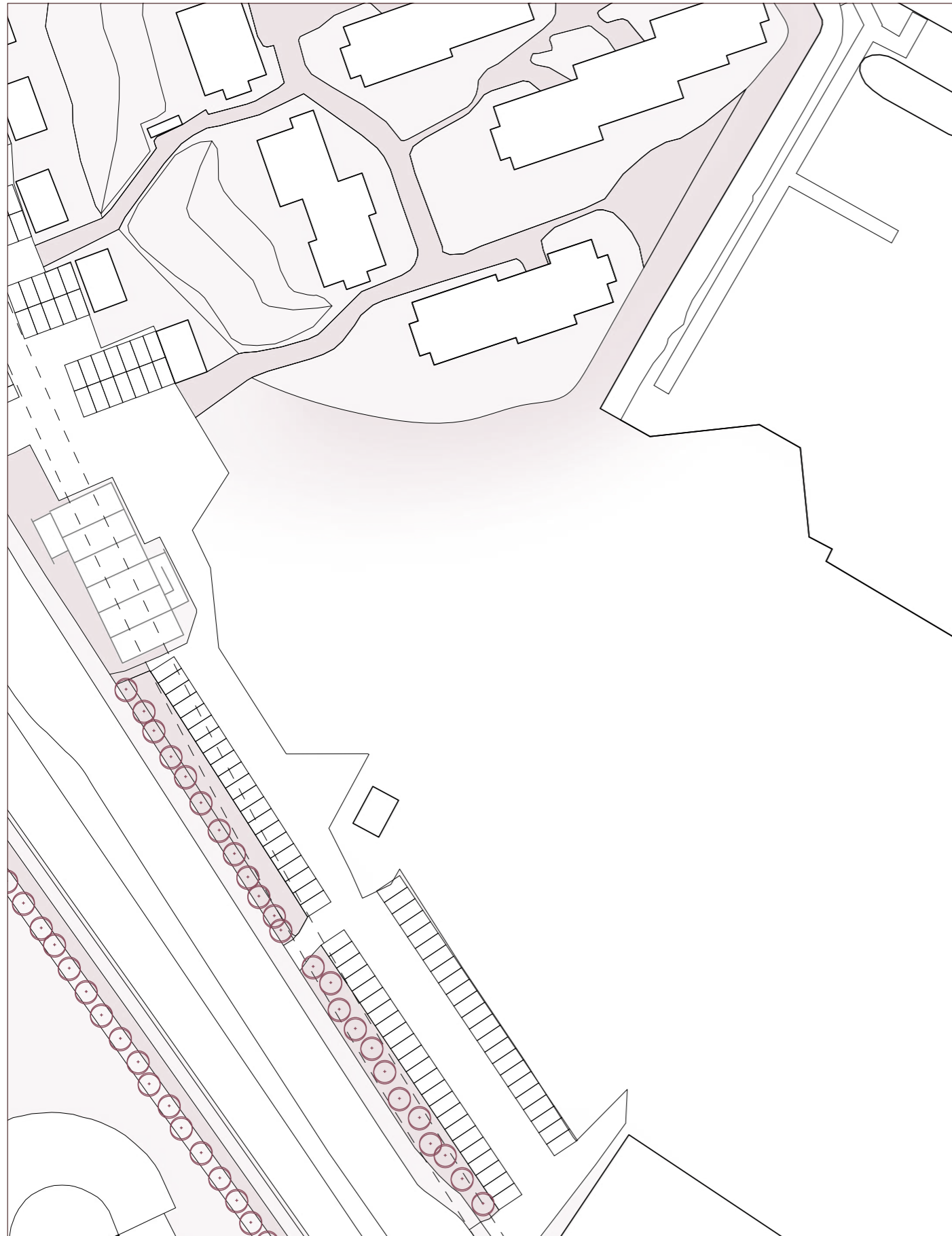
PROPOSAL

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