



SOCIAL MAGNETS

Urban Assemblages 2020 • Antonella Bunimov and Chiara Schmidt

Introduction

About Marchienne au pont

Marchienne was once one of the most important spotlights for the progress in ironworks during the industrial revolution in Belgium. It is a city characterized by its industrial past, and the surroundings are still defined by the enormous industrial buildings.

Buildings that are now abandoned or in decline and that make a huge contrast with the residential tissue of Marchienne au pont. The analysis of the place, indicates a strong split in the city. Indeed, it is divided in two by La Sambre, a river to which the city has turned its back.

Due to its past, Marchienne au Pont is rich in gateways (train, metro, car, boat) but the mobility network is poorly connected; going from one type of mobility to another is not easy and the incorporation of new types of mobility is still to be developed.

Marchienne is also rich in its cultural diversity, it is inhabited by about thirty different ethnic communities. But still, the social interaction is very little and the places to do so are not inviting. Even if the good intentions of associations are there, the place to develop social activities is missing. There are no public places in Marchienne where the inhabitants are invited to stay. There is no public place to gather, where to organise a market or to create a sense of community among its citizens.

About “Social Magnets”

The social magnet defined in this analysis is the point of interest giving rise to social encounters.

We focus on the study of the magnets, the places that attract people to gather. We study not only the present magnets but also past and future magnets.

We take a step back and analyse through postcards what the magnets used to be in Marchienne. We use postcards for their way of highlighting places that were considered of interest.

Present magnets are established by the current flows of the people in Marchienne. Places that are already gathering citizens and that have potential for the future.

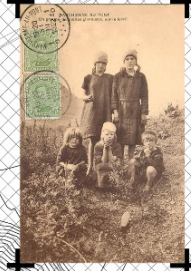
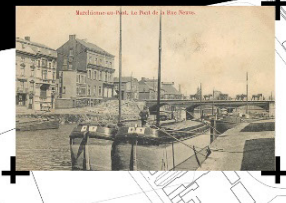
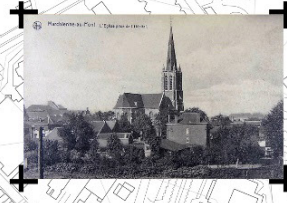
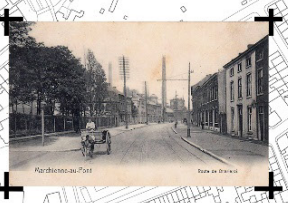
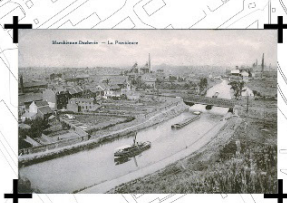
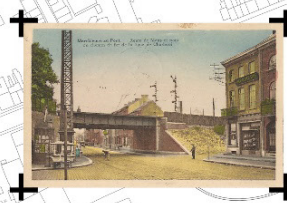
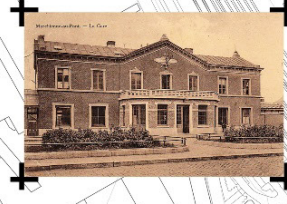
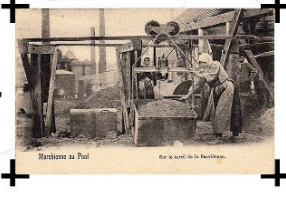
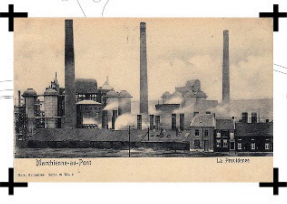
Future magnets are defined by the Bouwmeester plan.

Not all magnets have the same background, but their purpose is to bring together and generate interaction and activities for the city's inhabitants.

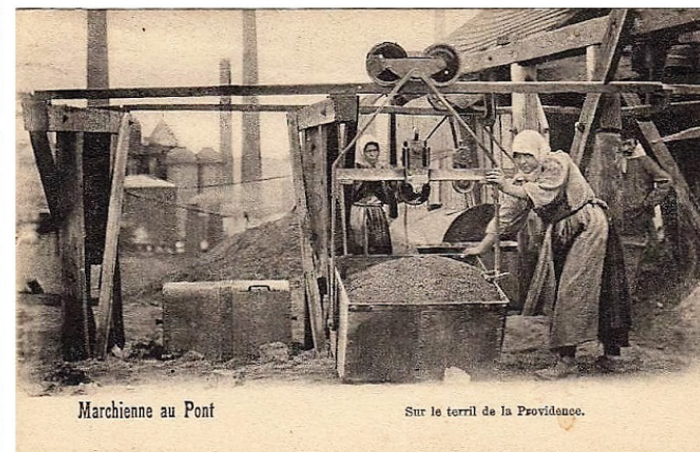
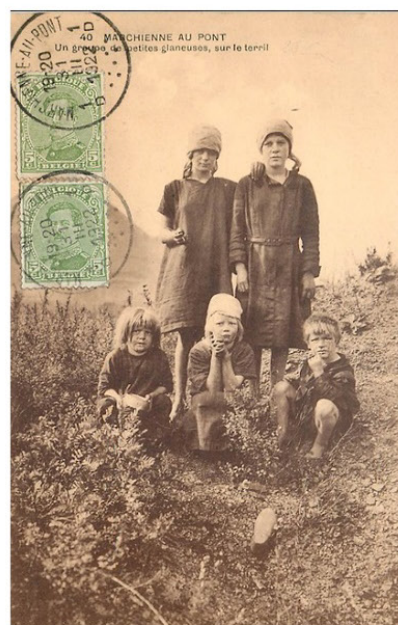
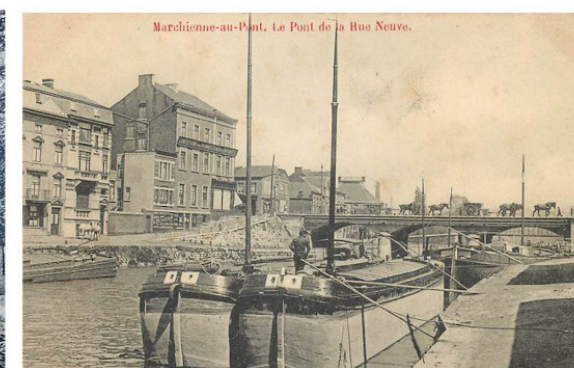
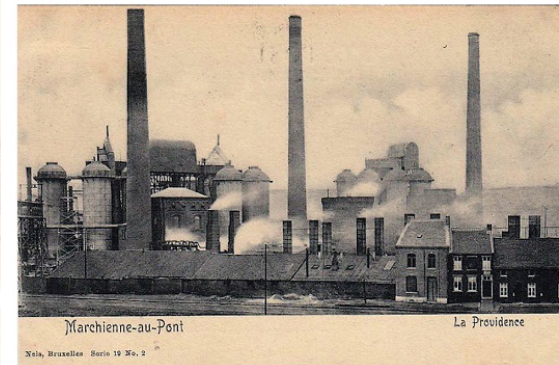
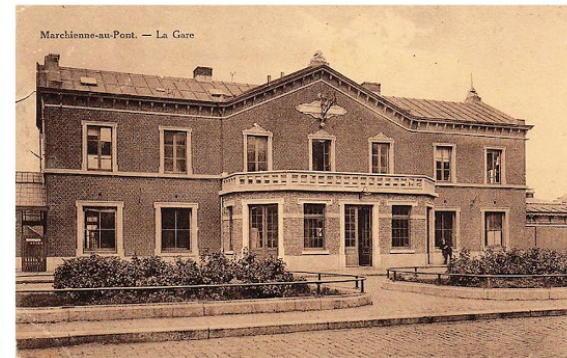
About the “Cluster analysis”

The magnets have been classified by clusters, responding to the geographical boundaries and programmatic analysis of the magnets.

The analysis focuses on 4 clusters: sport, park, city center, and events.



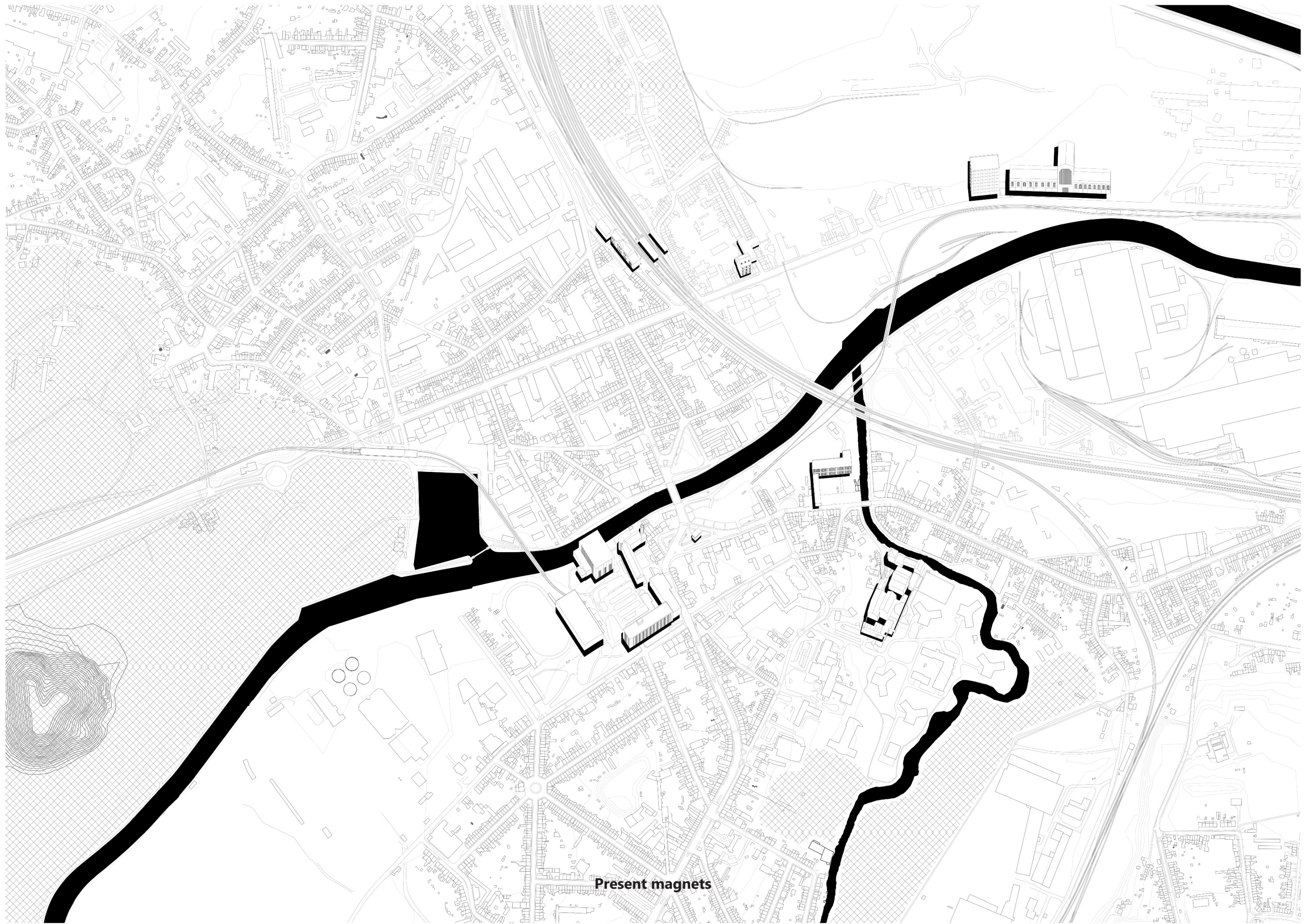
Past magnets



Postcards

They were initially used to deliver a message. But it also was a way to collect and share images. Those images were captures of places that we considered of interest, we don't want to show misery but happiness.

In the analysis we find out that most postcards are showing the advances related to the industries or the big infrastructures such as La Providence.

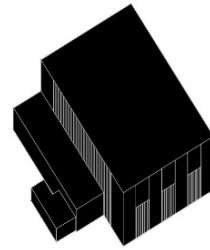


Present magnets

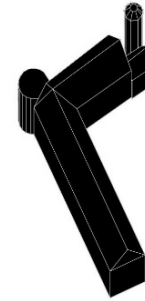


Hall communal

It generates ephemeral and fun activity. It takes the form of a multipurpose room to host festivities and events for the community. (festive & leisure)



Swimming pool

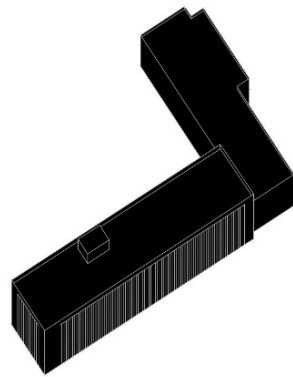


Library

The library is a place for social interaction because it allows knowledge and history to be shared in one place. It is a place linked to education and leisure.

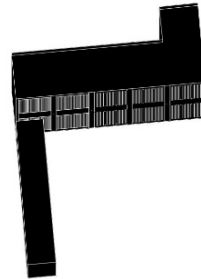


Metro Cartier



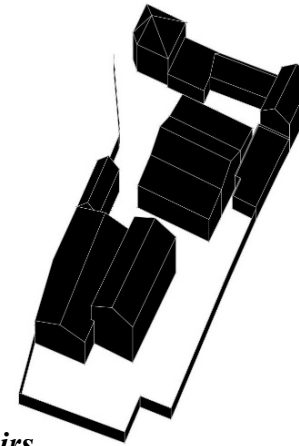
Maison communale

It is a place for social interaction because it hosts activities (such as weddings) and gatherings. It is also a benchmark for administrative and municipal affairs.



Music academy

The music academy generates social interactions related to education and learning. It welcomes a large number of students.



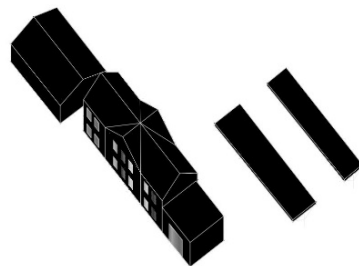
Zabbatoirs

It is a non-profit organization that sees itself as a place of laboratory for social and cultural citizenship. A place for projects, meetings, art, exchange...



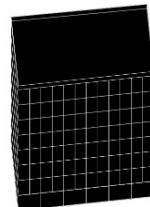
Espace citoyen

Association that is in charge of most of Marchienne's social activities, they organize the well-known festival mai'talurgie.



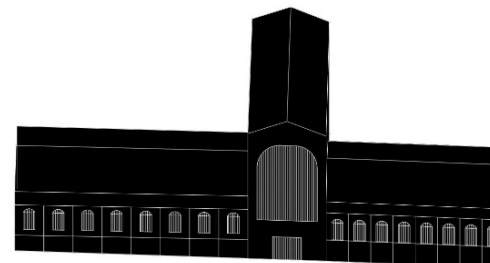
Gare

Place for departure and arrival for some. It is also the place for meeting and interaction for some. A place where we meet and wait.



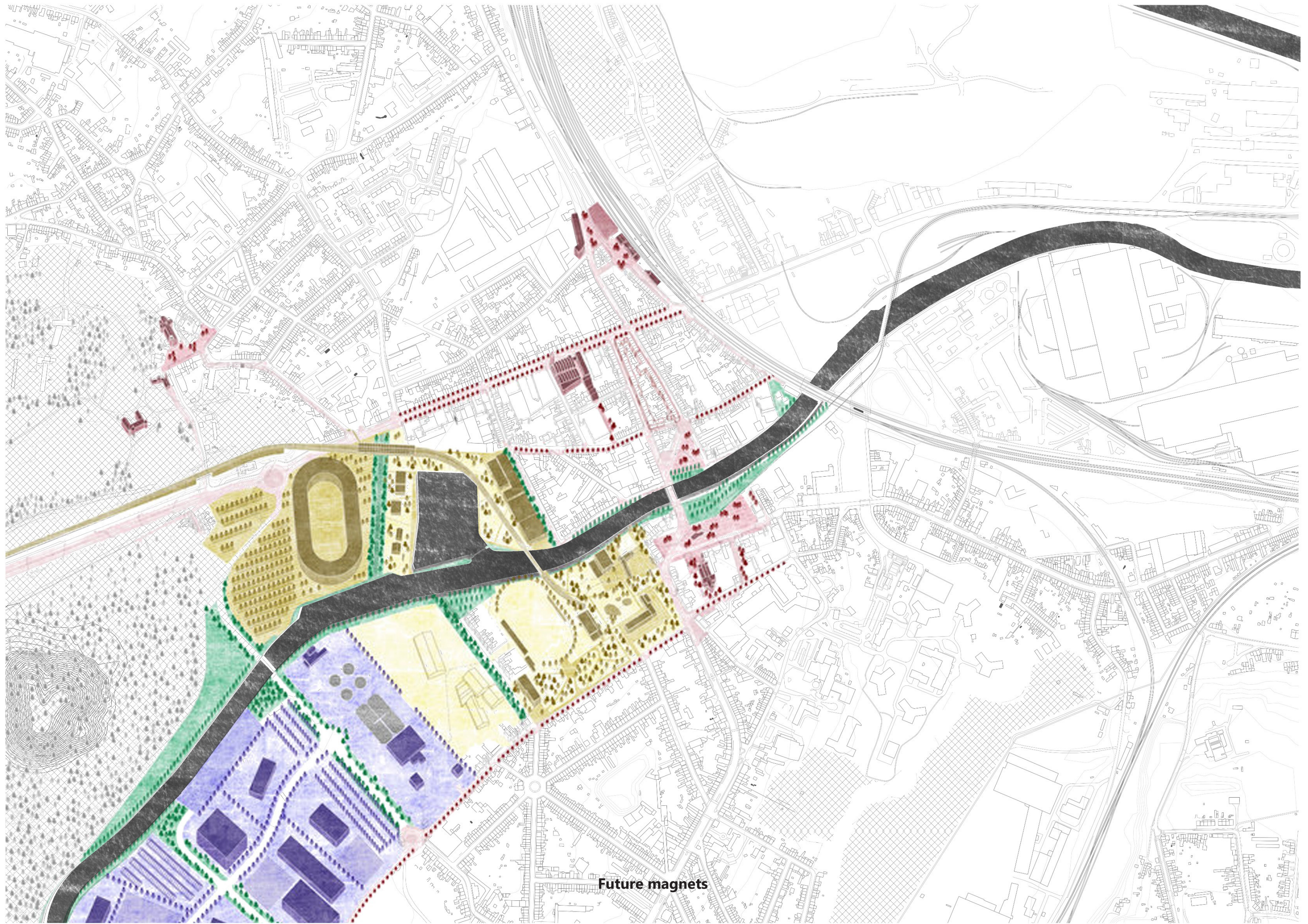
Providence

Place that welcomes artists and artistic projects. It works as a residence for anyone interested.

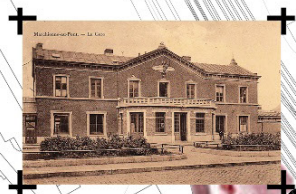
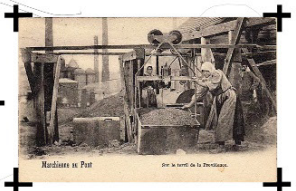
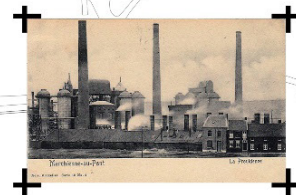
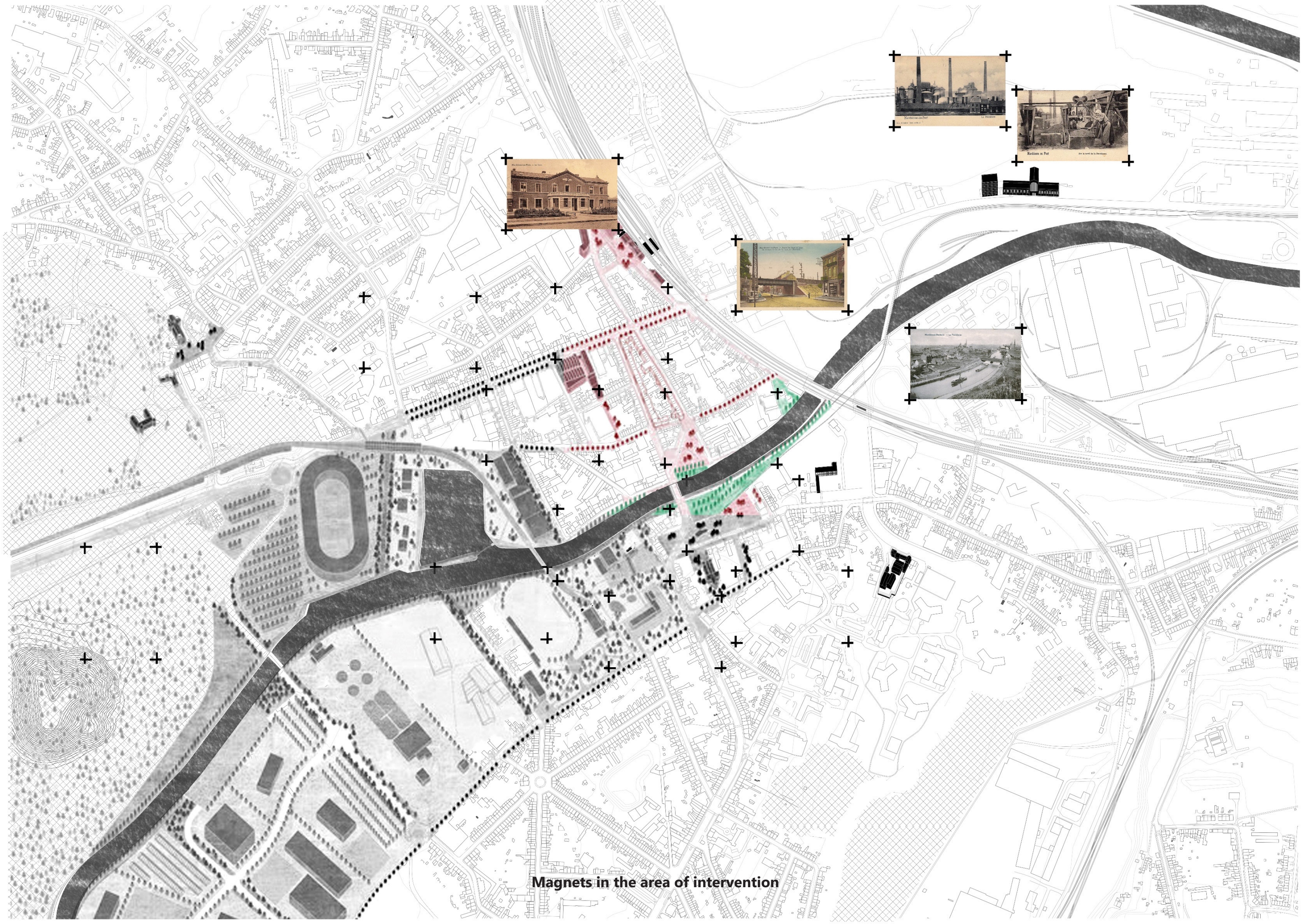


Rockerill

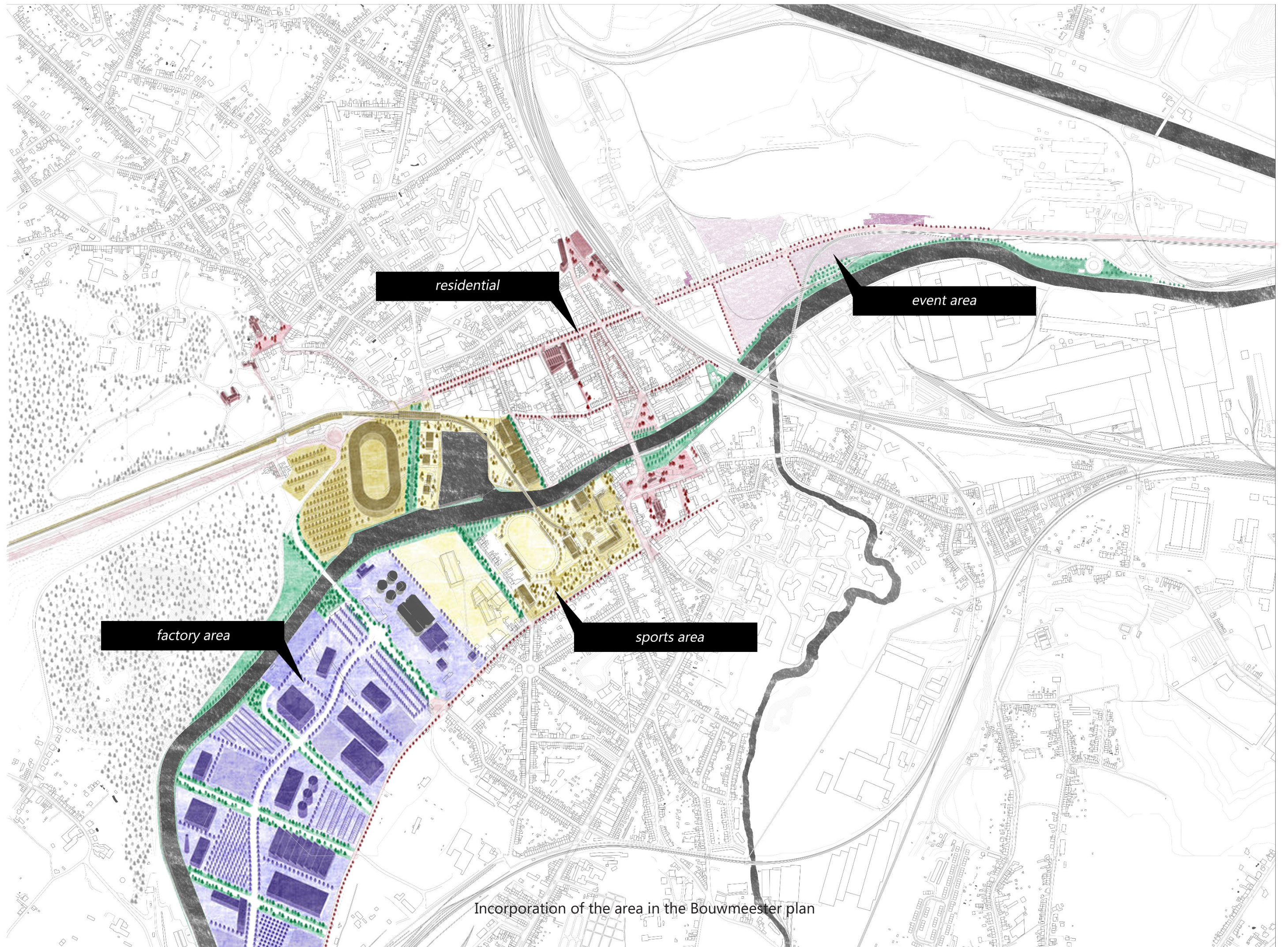
Former factory revisited as an event venue. Events and cultural.



Future magnets



Magnets in the area of intervention



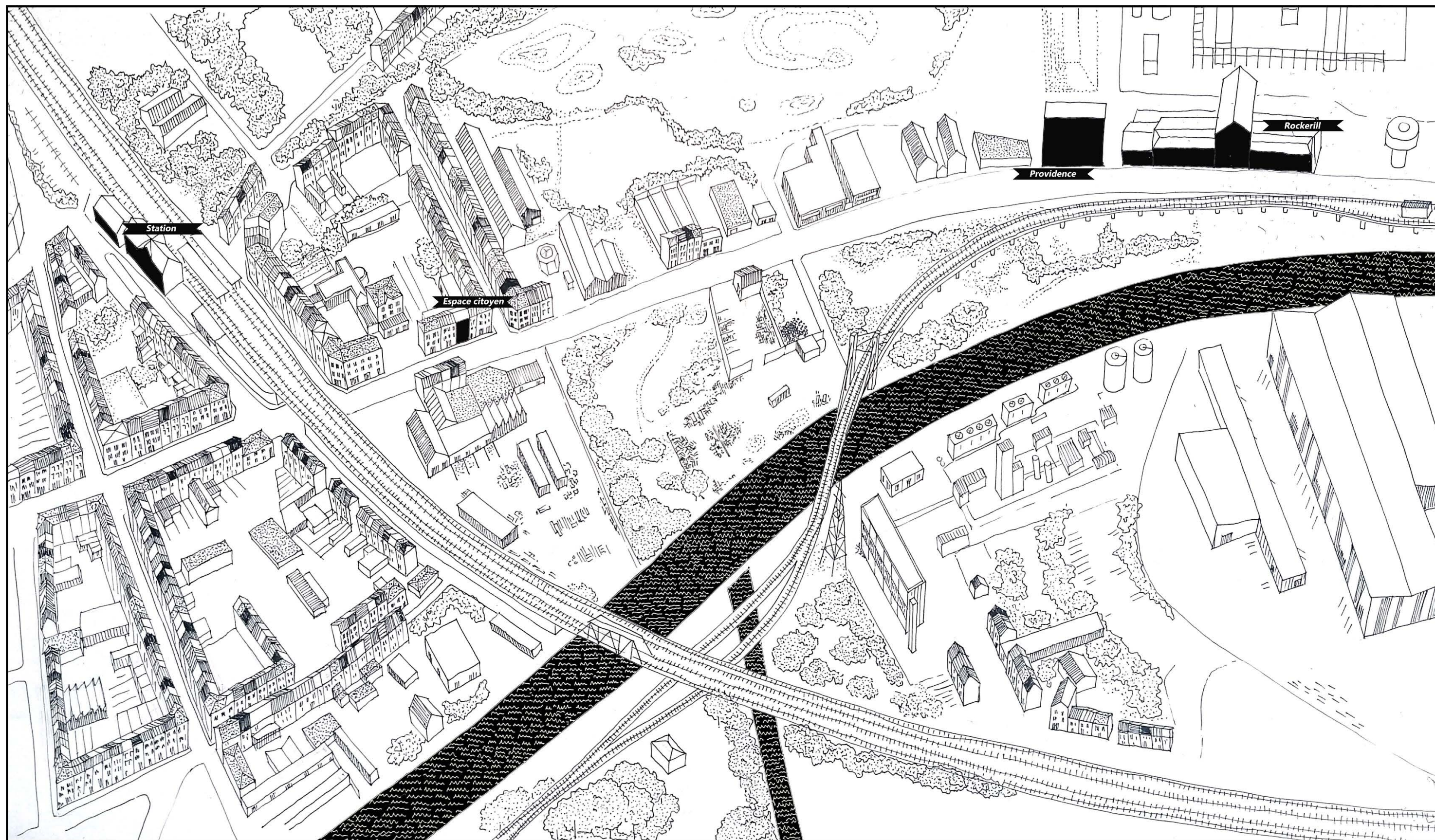
residential

event area

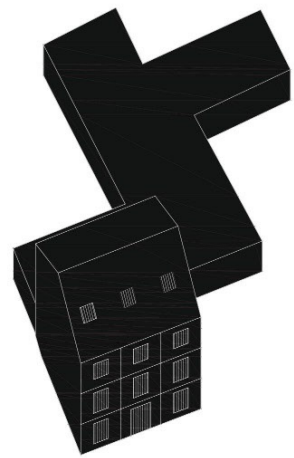
factory area

sports area

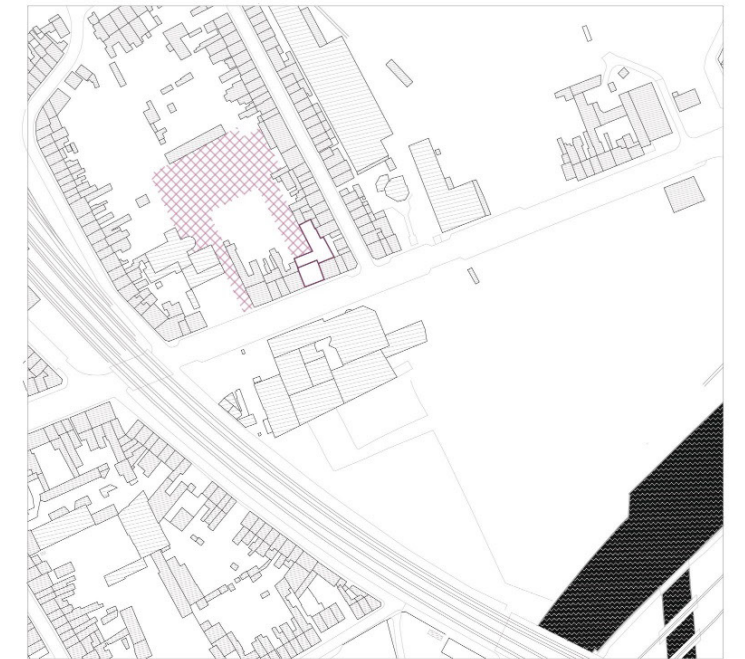
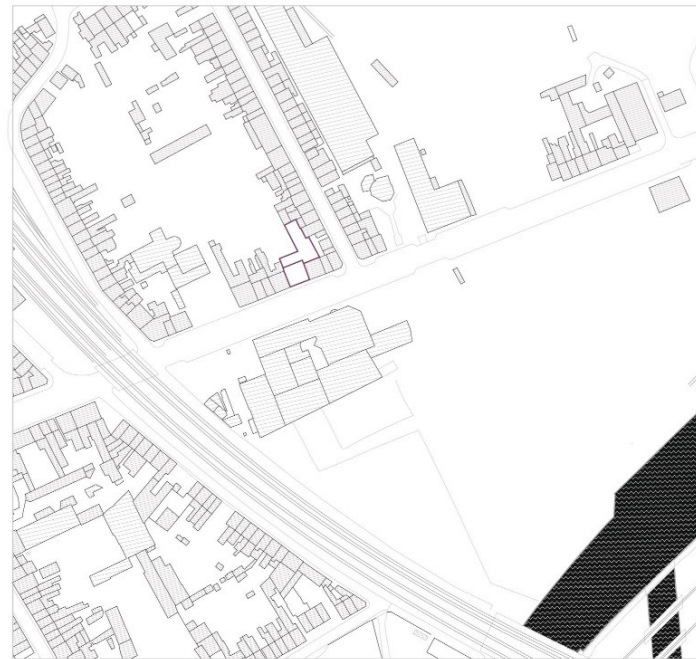
Incorporation of the area in the Bouwmeester plan



Study of the area of intervention



Espace citoyen



1 · Espace citoyen

It's open to all and located in the heart of the neighborhood. Whatever their age, status, nationality, any inhabitant can find local services and projects (employment relay, homework school, social and legal services, literacy...

The citizens also have the possibility of participating with us in the animation of their district and even in the very organization of these activities like **Mai'tallurgie**, the intercultural cavalcade in Marchienne and so many other actions of various sizes which come to bring a dynamic in these localities.

2 · Public space.

Espace Citoyen is a building which used to be a residence, it is located inbetween two other houses and conforms part of a bigger housing block.

The public space consist in the one of the narrow garden located in the back.

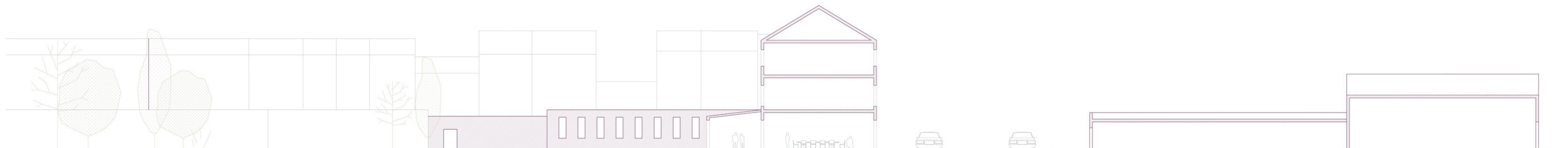
3 · Connections.

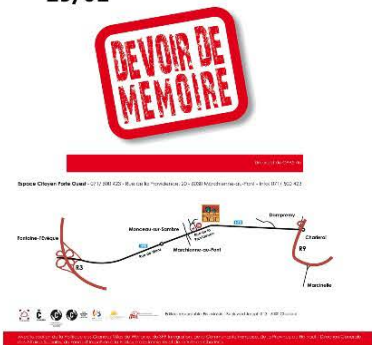
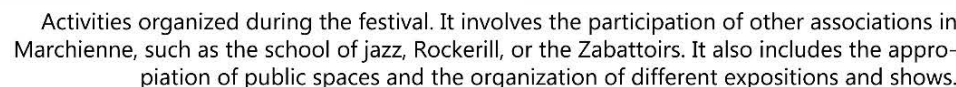
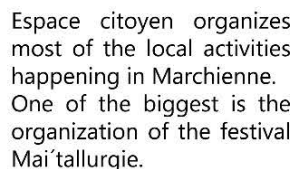
Located in the west side of the town, on the other side of the bridge, it is fairly near from the station and the center of the city. Although it is not a pleasant path for the pedestrian.

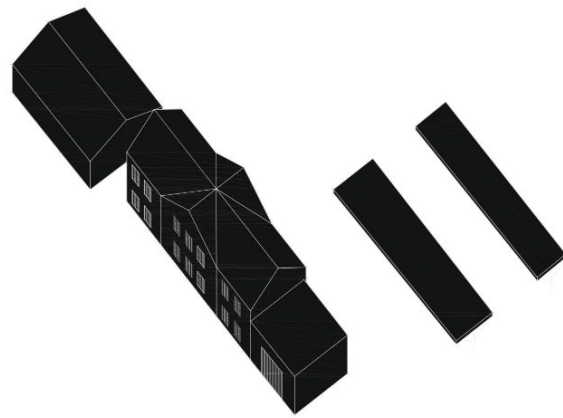
The closest bus stop is located 200 m away.

4 · Limits.

The limits are drawn by the parcel of the building. On the other side, we have the rue de Mons, a high speed road that has 15 m of width.







Station



1 · Station Marchienne au Pont

It was opened in 1843 and it was crucial to the development of the industrial area at the time.

The station is located in the North side of Marchienne, at the very end of the urban tissue. The infrastructure of the railways creates a massive separation between the city, dividing the most residential area to the historical industrial part of Marchienne au Pont.

2 · Public space.

Most of the surroundings of the train station is dominated by parking space. There is one located in the northeast part, with a capacity of approximately 300 parking spots.

The close context consists in a residential block and a factory close by. The sidewalk to arrive to the station is narrow and there is no trees or vegetation.

3 · Connections.

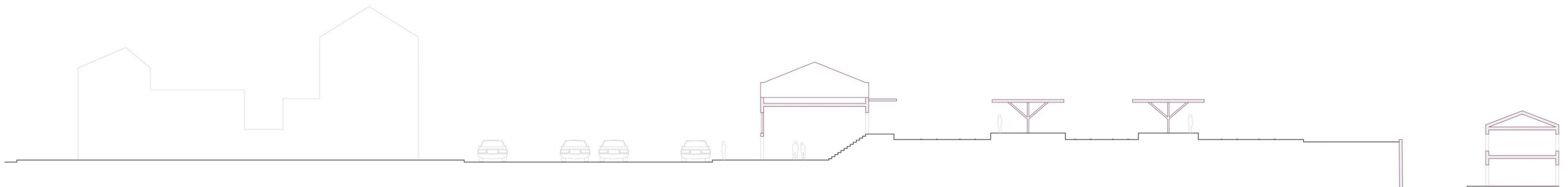
It connects the city to Charleroi, Bruxelles, Antwerp, Mons, Liege, Mouscron, Luttre and centre la Louvière.

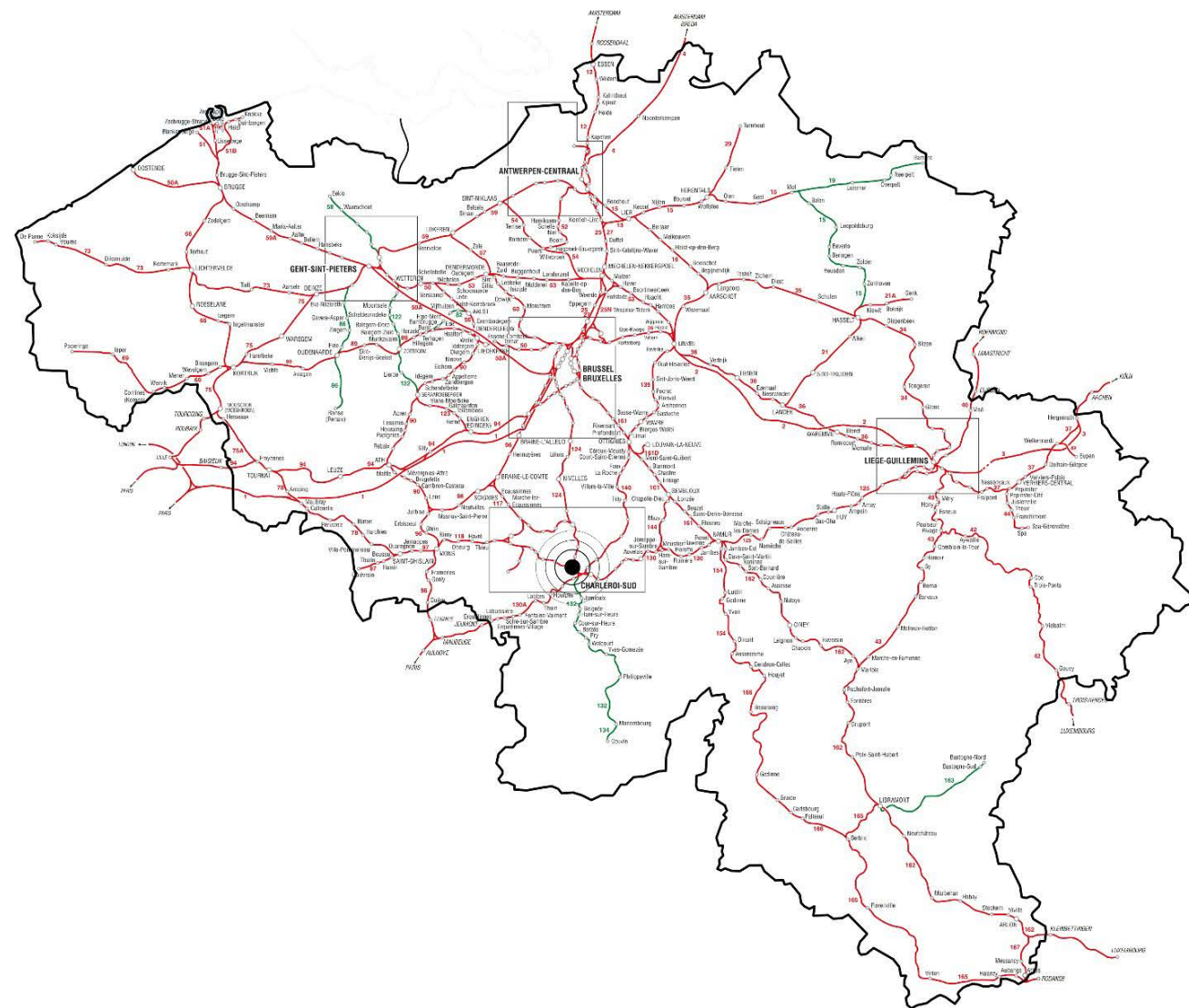
IC 05 Charleroi-Sur - Bruselas - Amberes - Essen
IC 07 Charleroi-Sur - Bruselas - Muelles Amberes-Norte
IC 25 Lieja-Saint-Lambert - Mons
IC 27 Charleroi-Sur - Aeropuerto de Bruselas-Zaventem
S62 Charleroi Sur - Luttre

IC 25 Liers - Lieja - Mouscron
IC 31 Charleroi-Sur - Bruselas - Amberes-Central
L Charleroi Sur - Centro La Louvière
S62 Charleroi Sur - Centro La Louvière

4 · Limits.

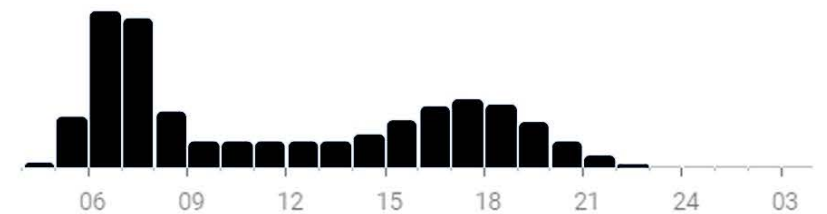
The limits are established by the railways, the space is bordered by fences. The limits of it are also delimited by the area occupied by the parking.





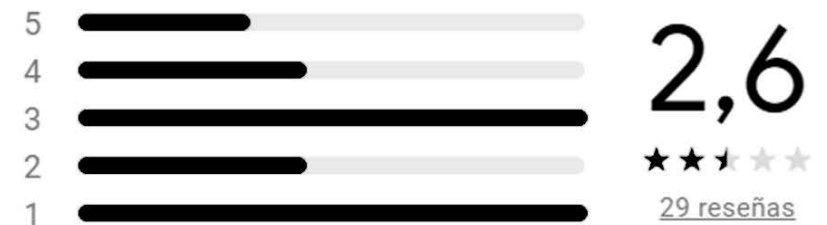
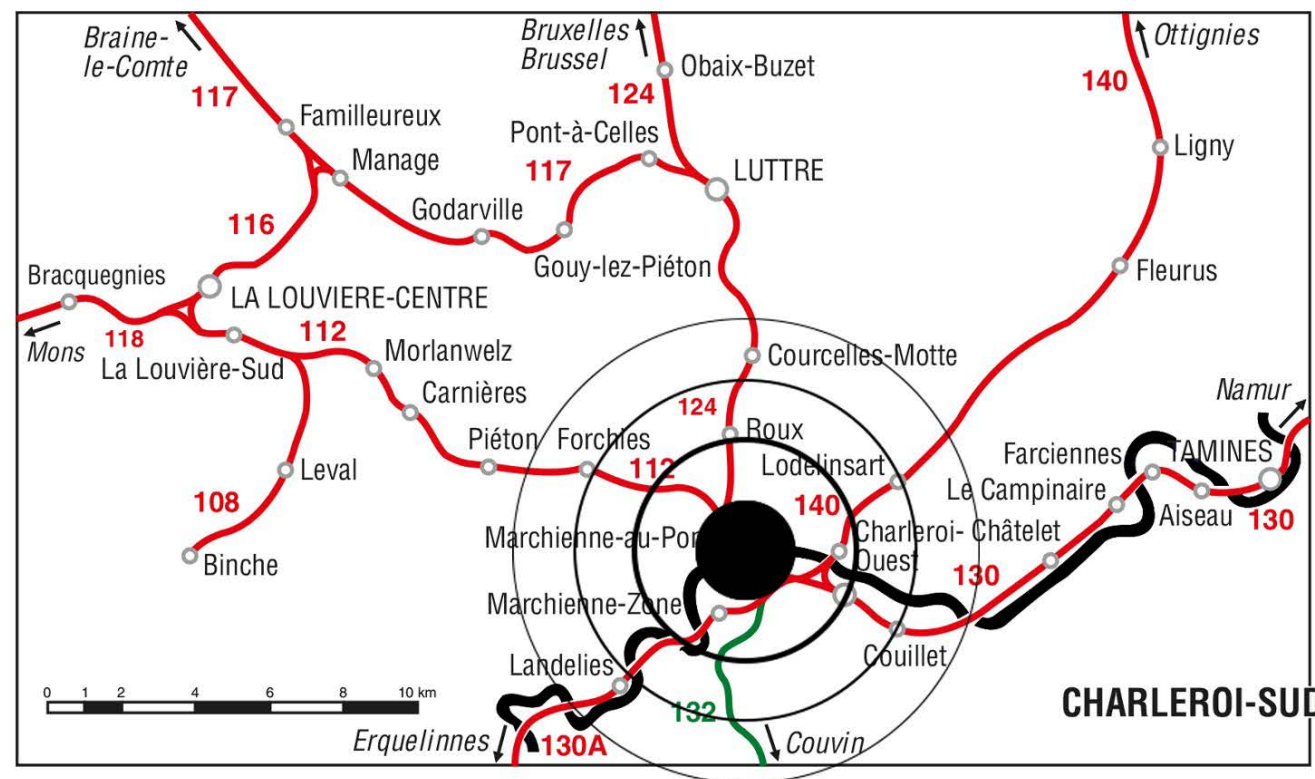
During the week:

- **IC** (2xh) Charleroi-Sud and Anvers-Noorderdokken or Essen
- **IC** Mons and Liège-Saint-Lambert via La Louvière-Sud
- **IC** Bruxelles-National-Aéroport
- **S62** Charleroi-Sud et Luttre via La Louvière
- **S1** Charleroi-Sud et Anvers-Central
- **P** Châtelet et Schaerbeek le matin
- **P** Jemeppe-sur-Sambre et Schaerbeek
- **P** Luttre à Charleroi-Sud
- **P** Charleroi-Sud à Luttre
- **S1** Charleroi-Sud à Anvers-Central (tôt le matin)



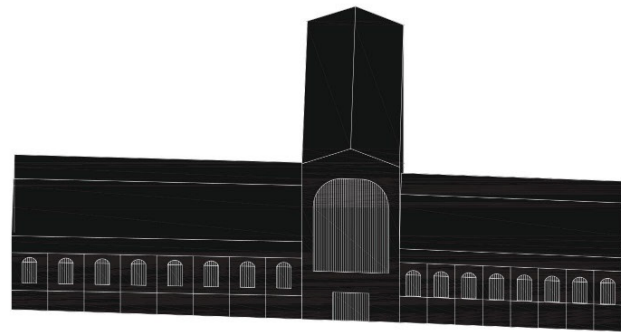
During the weekend:

- **IC** (1xh) Charleroi-Sud et Anvers-Central
- **IC** Mouscron et Liers via La Louvière
- **S62** (every 2h) Charleroi-Sud et La Louvière-Centre
- **S62** (every 2h) Charleroi-Sud et La Louvière-Centre (via Luttre)

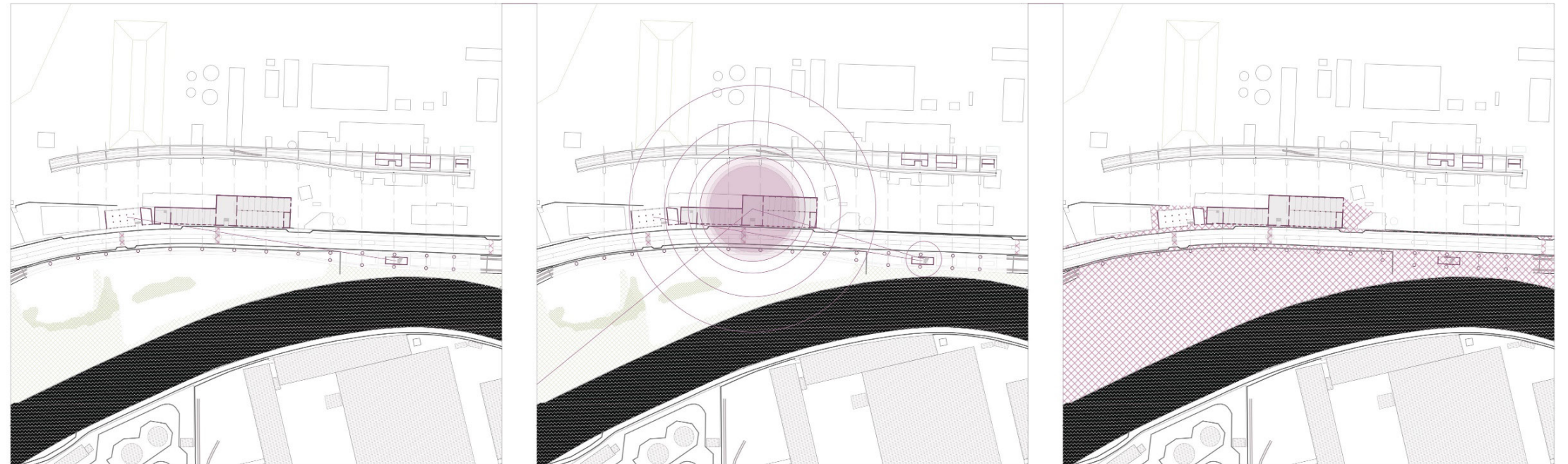


TOP comments of visitors of the station

- "Completely abandoned by the SNCB. A shame" Florent Malak
- "The station is a bit creepy but is well mantained" Fer Saye
- "Correct" Jb Tranquille
- "Convenient but needs restorage" Sebastien Rochez
- "Forgotten station but still very relevant" Jean Vandeveld



Rockerill



1 · Rockerill.

In 2005, a collective of artists and friends recovered and saved the brownfield site and renamed it Rockerill. A new life begins for the forges of La Providence: concert halls, ironwork cooperative, artists' workshops and creation of the Rockerill Records label.

Cultural activities are developing (industrial aperitifs, international concerts, electronic evenings ...). The place welcomes, in different forms, more than 300 artists per season. Since then, its influence has continued to grow with more than 25,000 people a year.

2 · Public space.

It is one of Marchienne au Pont most attractive spots and as we can see in the map, there's no public space related to it. The only thing that we could consider is the sidewalk, out of proportion in relation to the buildings in the surroundings.

But there is one possibility of expansion and that is towards the Sambre, a vacant space could be a place of interest for future investors.

3 · Connections.

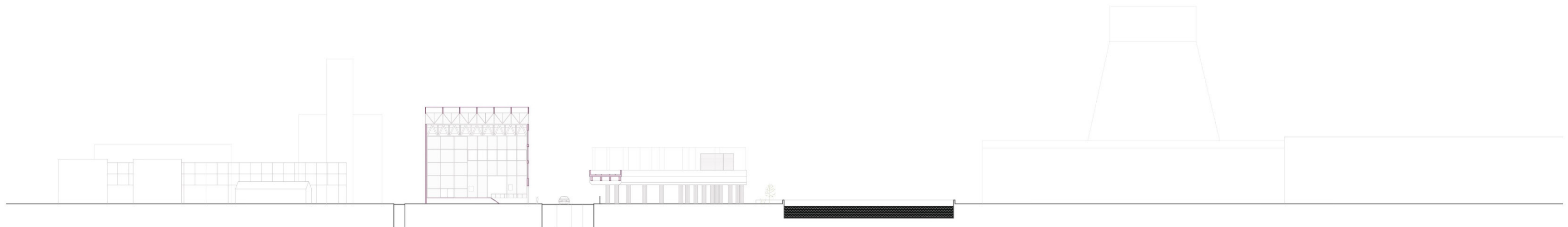
Located in the North-Ouest, it doesn't participate in the life of the city center. Even though it's possible, it is not kind for the pedestrian and the connection is lost.

500M of Marchienne-au-Pont's station(BXL/Charleroi)
12 minutes by taxi from Charleroi Airport
50M metro station: Providence (Charleroi)
45 minutes by train from Bruxelles
50M of Providence
100M from Centre CEPS

4 · Limits.

The limits of Rockerill are determined by the own limits of the building. In establishing a series of connections with the surroundings we can distinguish some external limits.

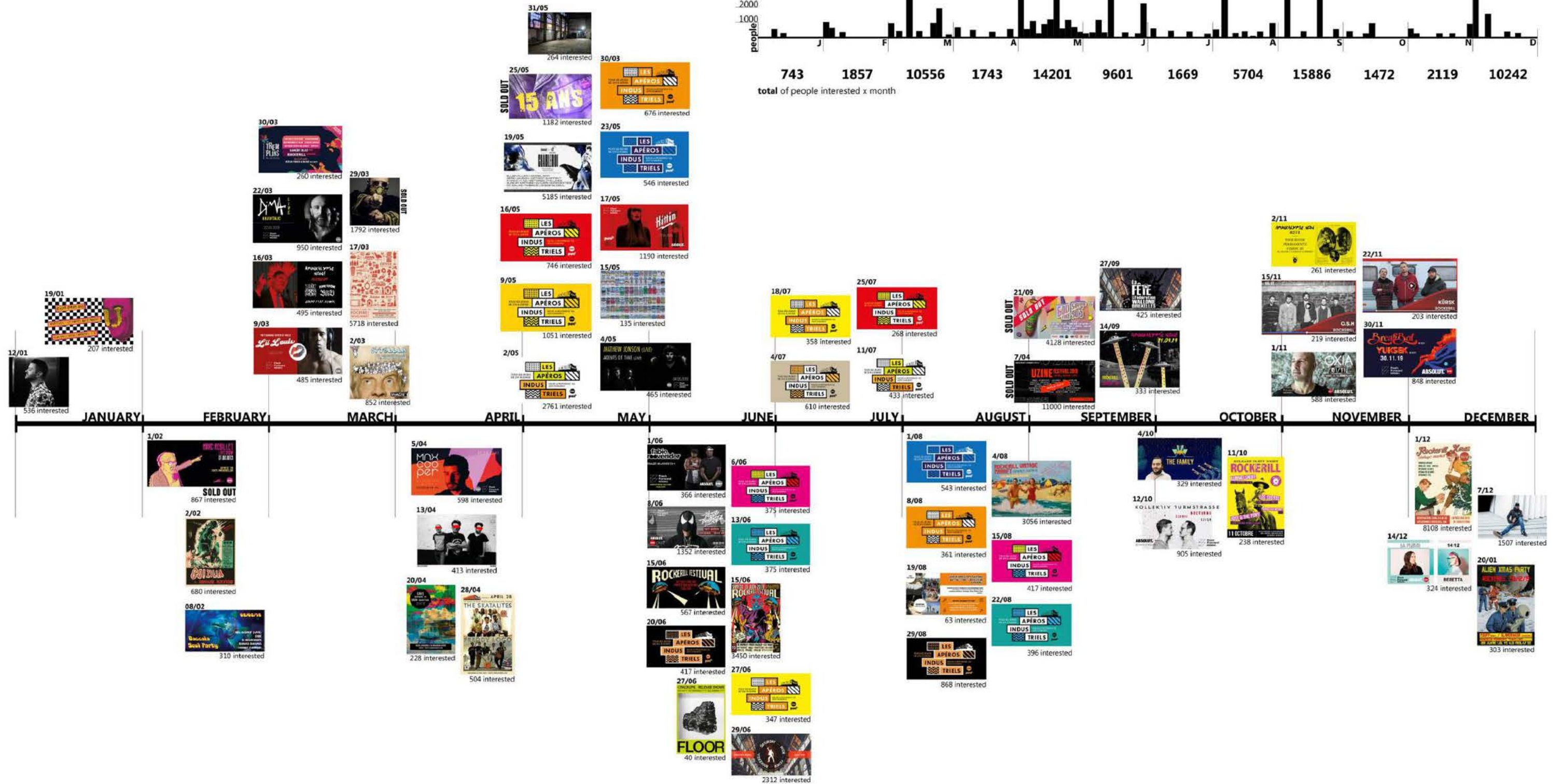
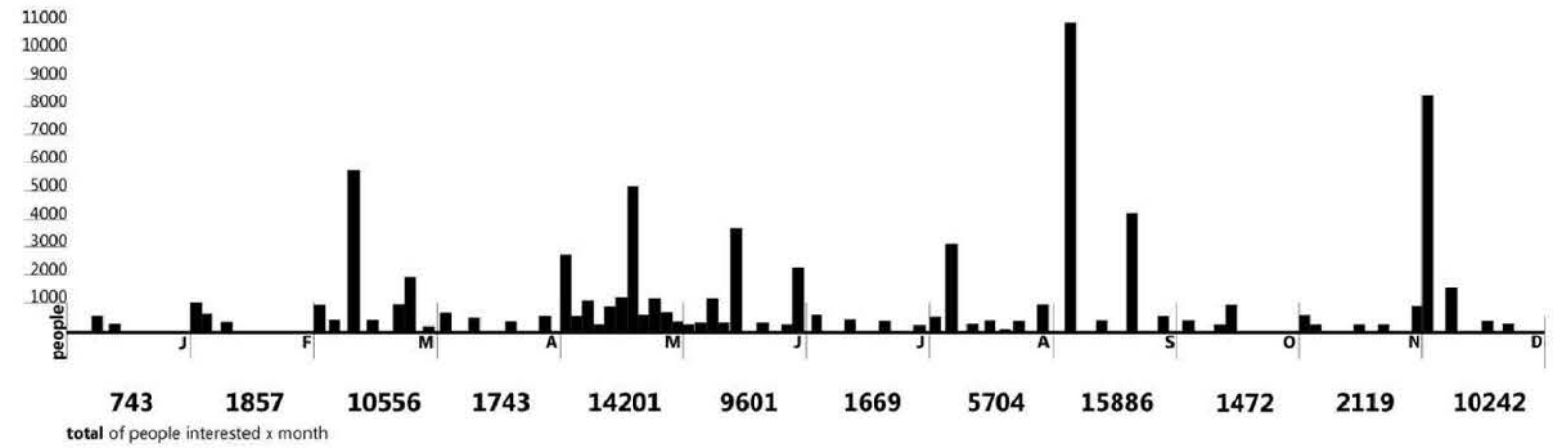
The most highlighted would be the N90, which allows only car mobility and is not accesible for the citizens of Marchienne. In a smaller scale, we have a series of fences that also block the areas.

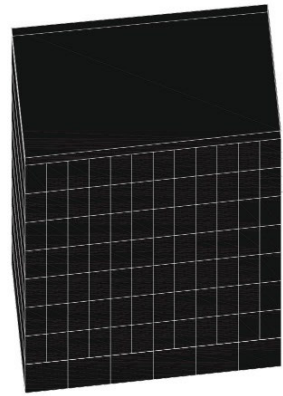




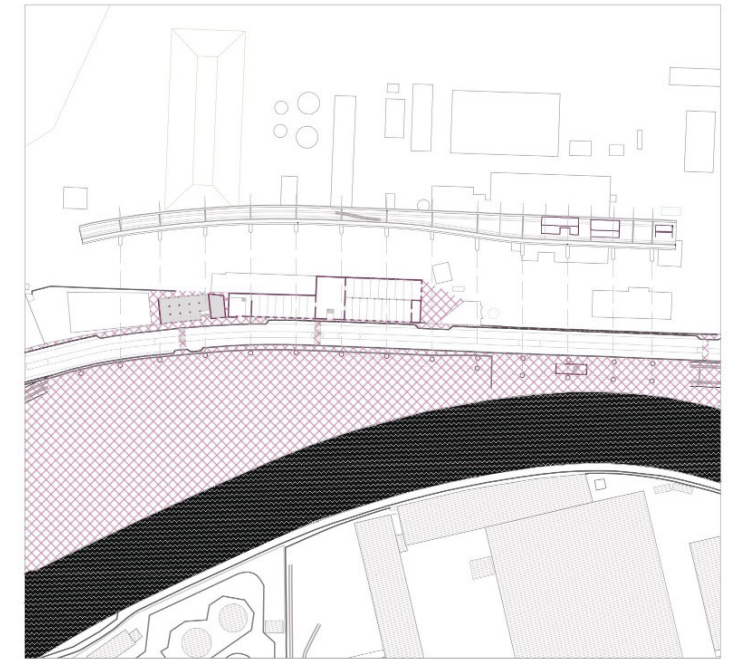
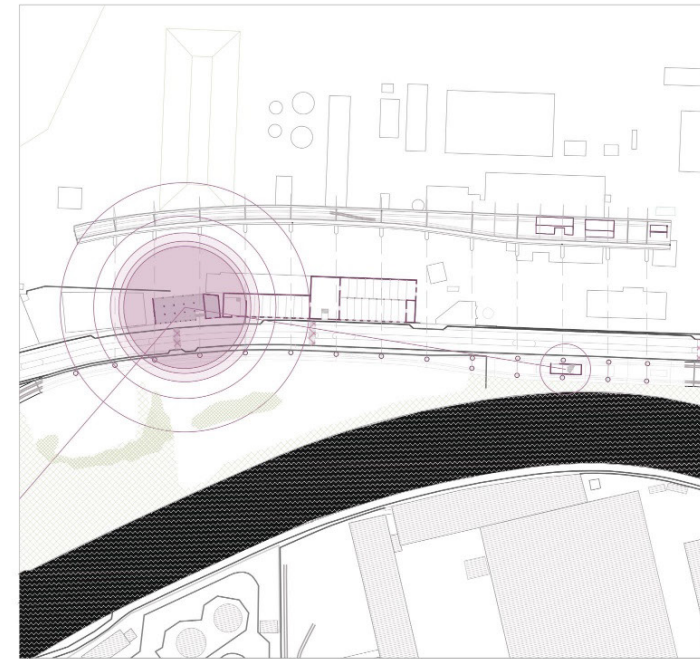
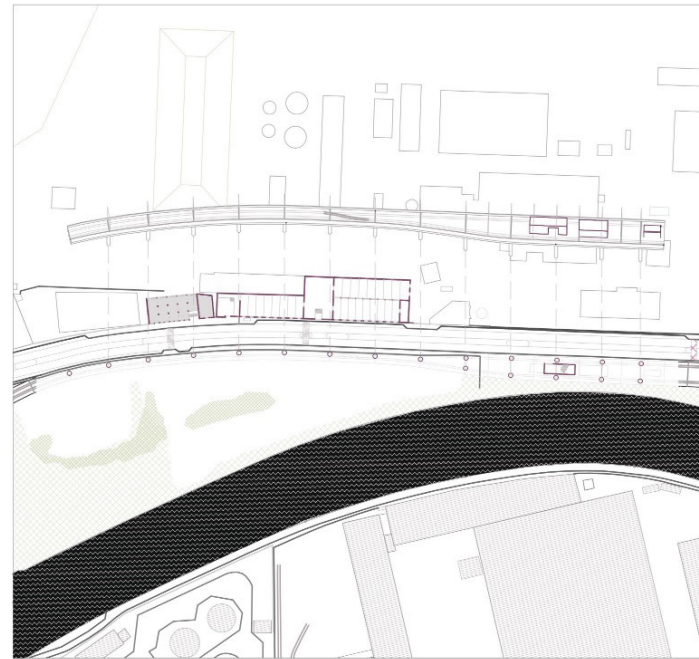
The Rockerill functions as one of Marchienne's most attractive magnets. Defined as the event magnet, it brings the attention of people from all over the region

We try to analyse, based on the study of the previous year of events of Rockerill, when there will be more people concentrated in the area.





La Providence



1 · Providence

Located in the historical industrial architecture site of Marchienne au Pont. It is a place of research and creation dedicated to the plastic, political and industrial arts.

It's vocation is to offer attractive workspaces and services to "autonomous" creators and promoters of the plastic, graphic and digital arts.

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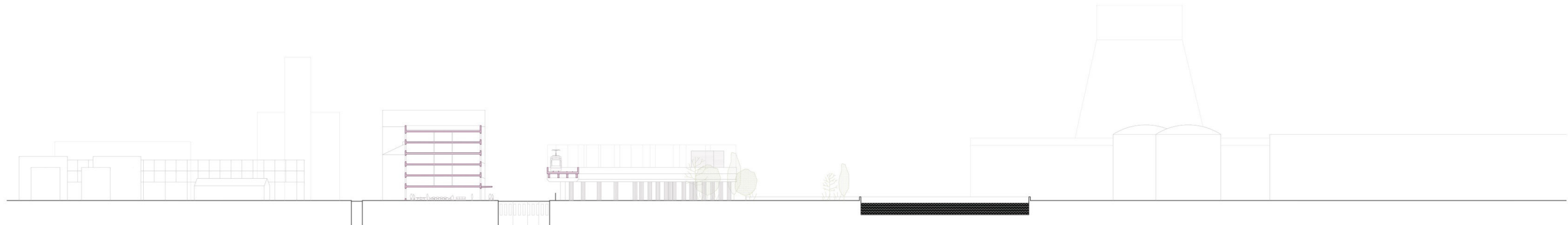
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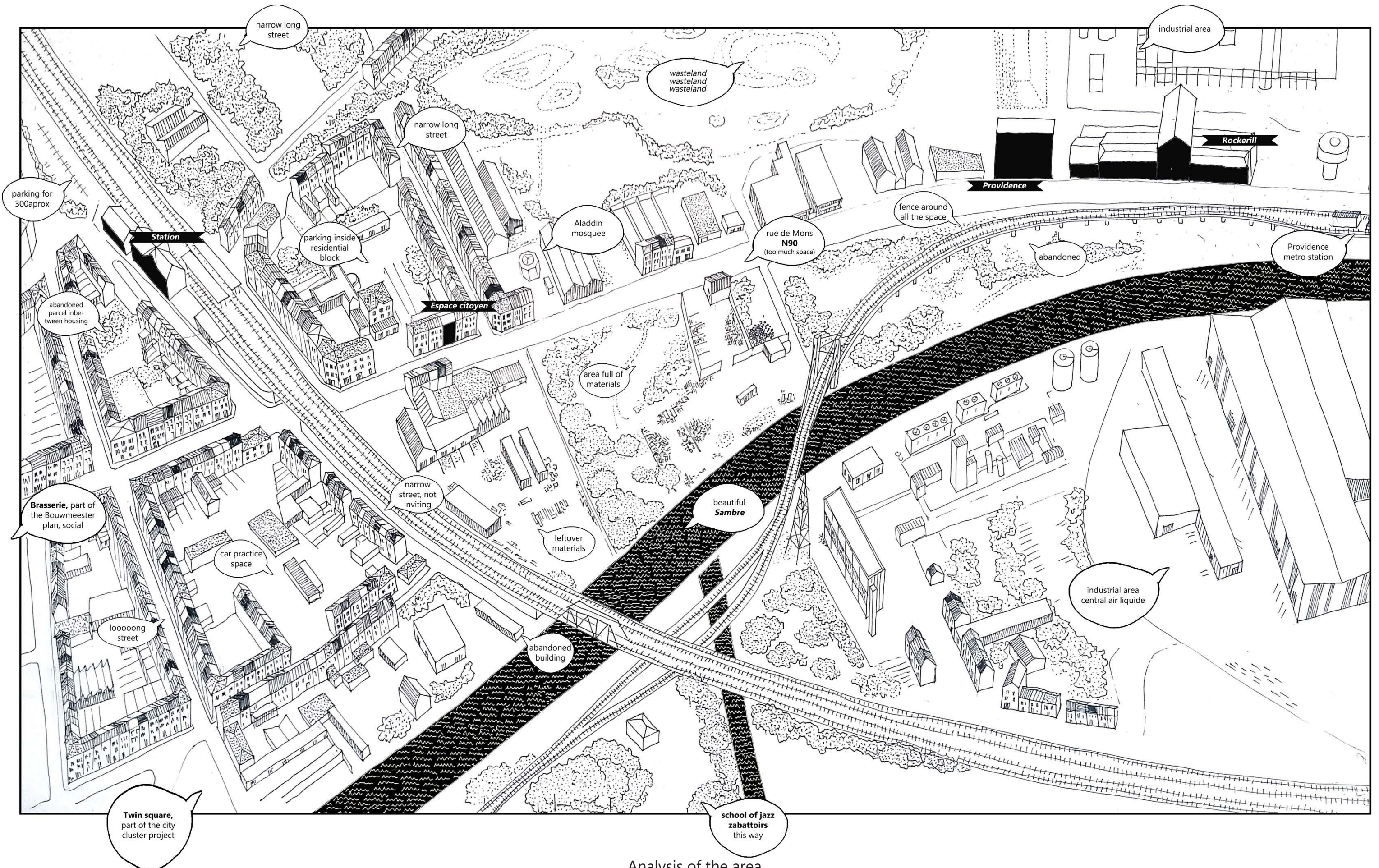
500M of Marchienne-au-Pont's station(BXL/Charleroi)
12 minutes by taxi from Charleroi Airport
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45 minutes by train from Bruxelles
50M of Rockerill(Concert hall)
100M from Centre CEPS

4 · Limits.

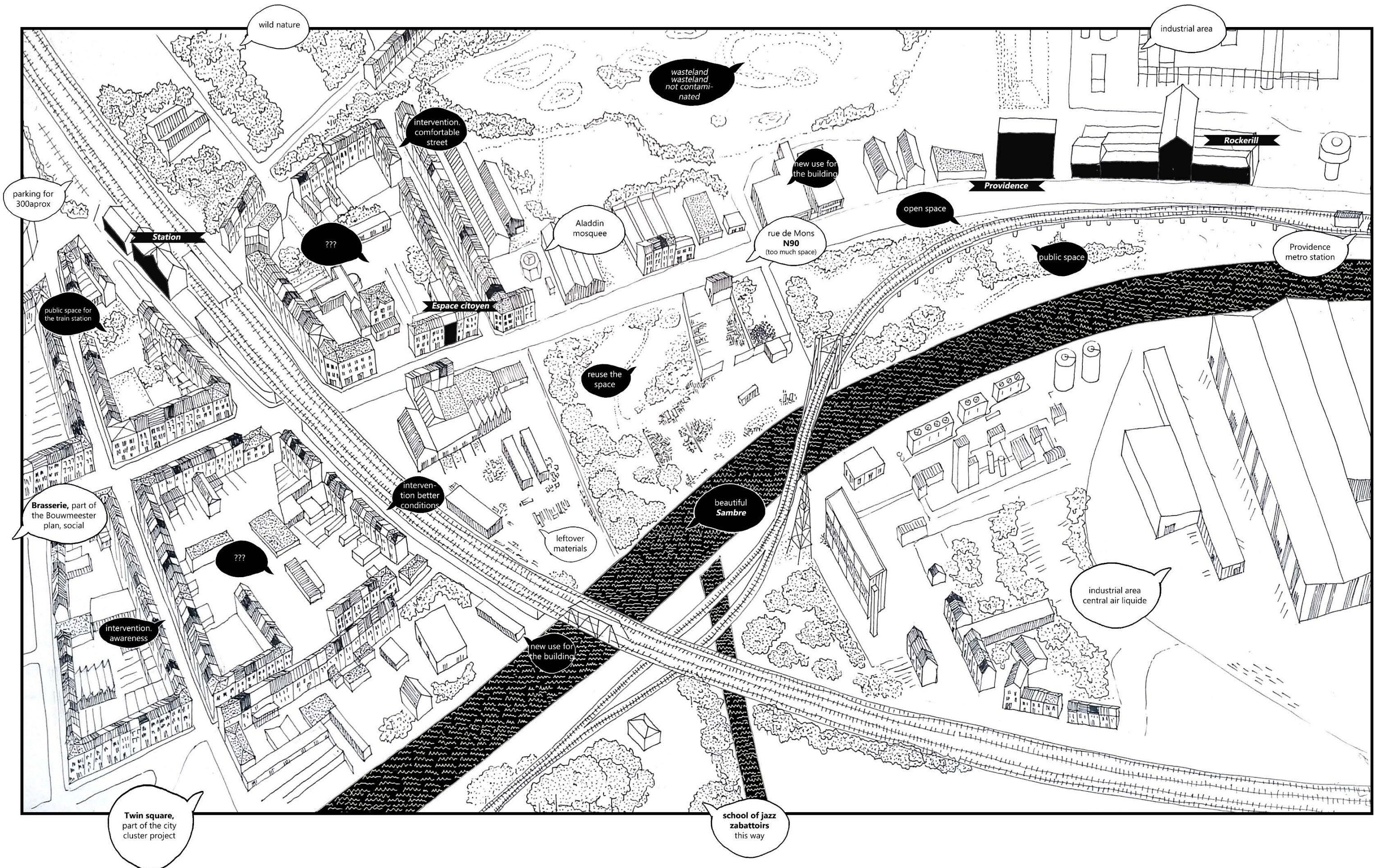
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Analysis of the area



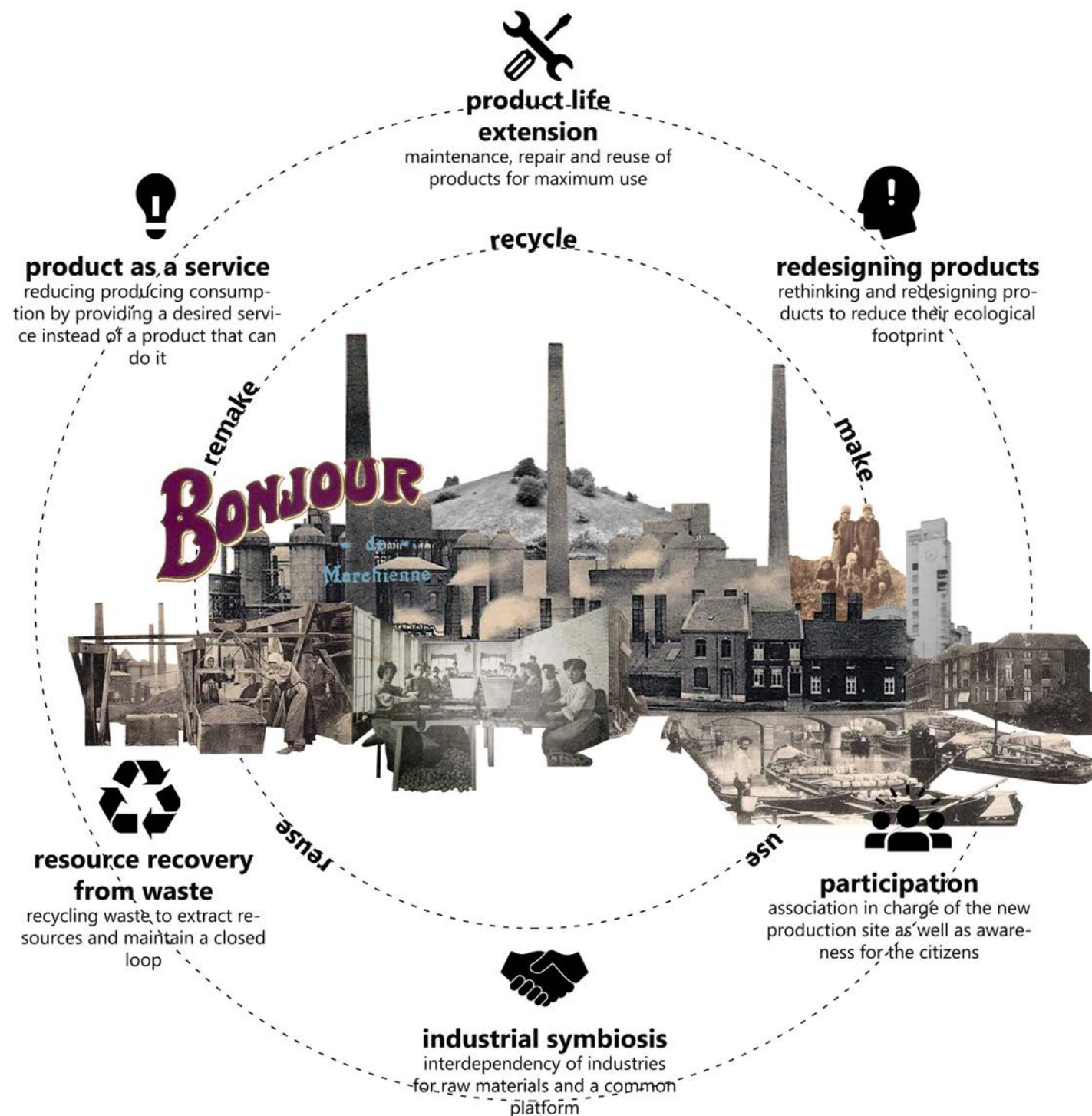
Possibilities of intervention

Proposal

For the project it is important for us to go back to the origin of our concept of leisure and social interaction. In doing so, we emphasize in the importance of the question: Who is actually caring?

After having reviewed the conversation with the director of espace citoyen, we have once again become aware that there are currently not many residents who care about the district and the social interactions. The reasons for this are mainly the lack of offers. The design of the Bouwmeester already extends the city with several sports facilities and a separate area for the industrial site. With the Rokerill and Providence magnets to the north-east, it seems sensible and important to better connect these important areas for marchiennes cultural scene with the residents.

For this purpose, we want to create a further point of contact for social interaction in cooperation with Espace Citoyen. The main aim is to strengthen an inclusive and open society, which will include different nationalities, different abilities and different ages. In the future, there will be several small interventions and various offers to network in marchienne and to organize one's leisure time. These activities will also help the inhabitants to become more aware of the environment, mobility, water, culture and regional materials. For example, there will be a bicycle self repair station, a small boat rental, urban gardening and a contactcafé. In order to prepare people for these new interventions, there will be several temporary interventions in the course of a festival, which will draw attention to the innovations.



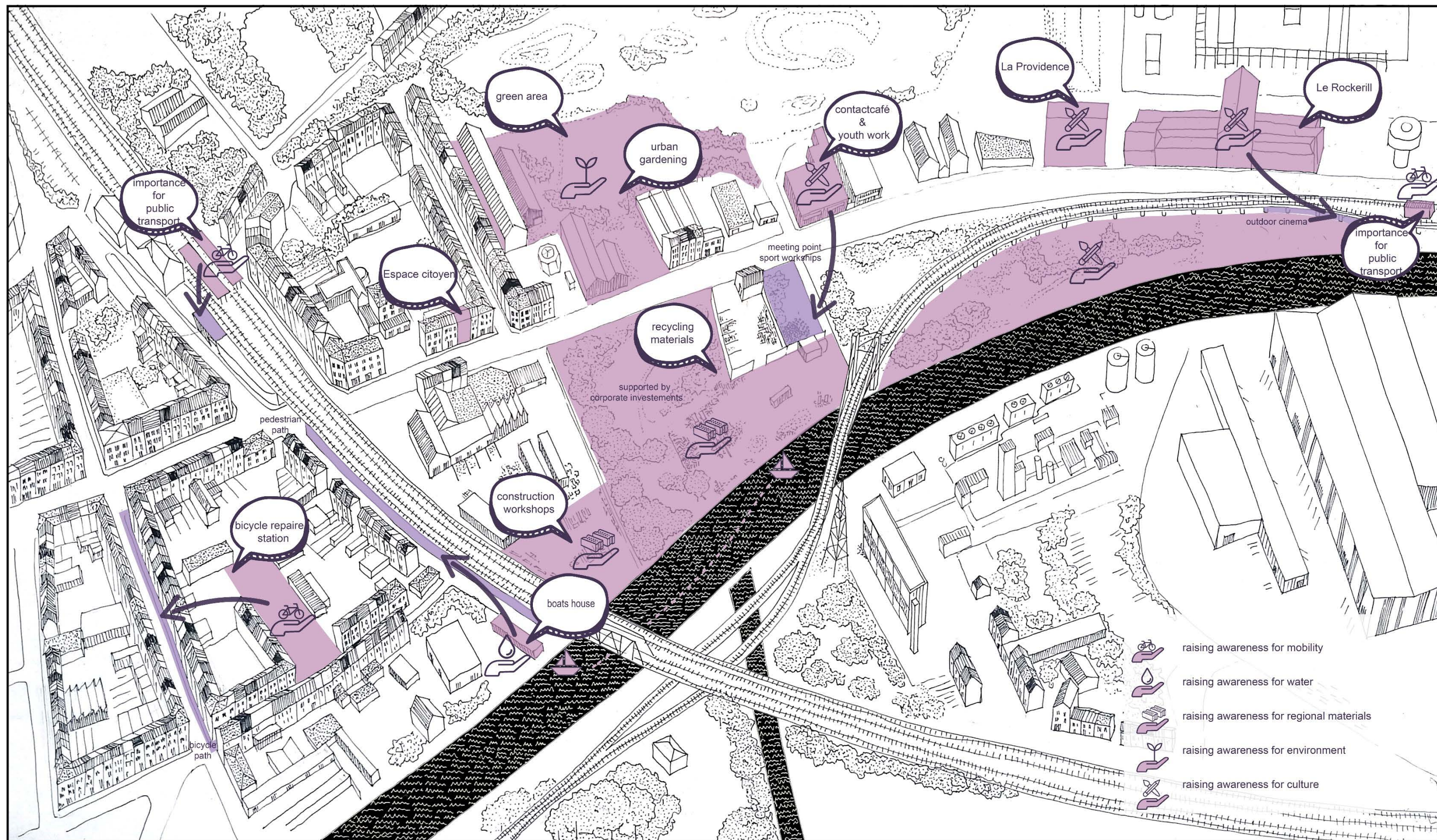
Analyzing the postcards we found out that the industrial side of Marchienne used to be of great pride. Most of the pictures are showing either scenes of the industries, the landscape generated by this particular type of buildings or the activity in the Sambre due to the factories. So, instead of having the focus in pictures of the Church or a beautiful park, the predominance is found in this industrial history.

This leads us to think about the current situation of Marchienne, regarding this past that is still very present in the imagery of the city.

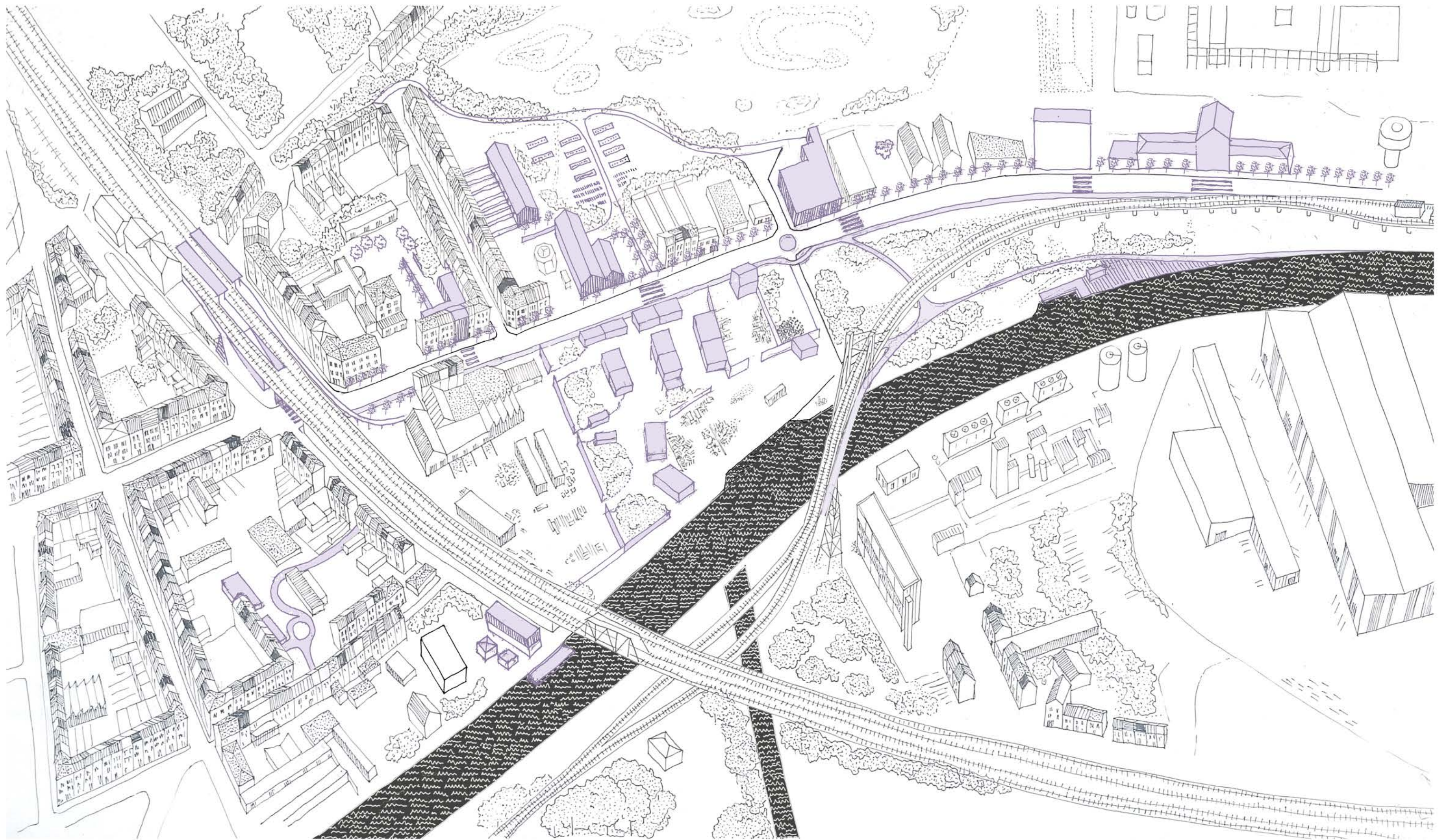
In the search of an identity for the people of Marchienne we bring back labor. Marchienne was originated by the industries, people were moving here because of the work, so in the idea of exalting the qualities of this place, we decide to bring back this magnet.

Making this idea the joint for the development of the event cluster and turning **labour into a motive of pride**.

So the event cluster, which was already functioning through the social interaction generated by its magnets is now given a new dimension. Each of the magnets in its rethinking has the incorporation of new activities that will generate work offers. All by involving the citizens into it, making it possible to foment the sense of community and guarantee the inclusion into the laboral work.



Plan of intervention



Axonometry of intervention

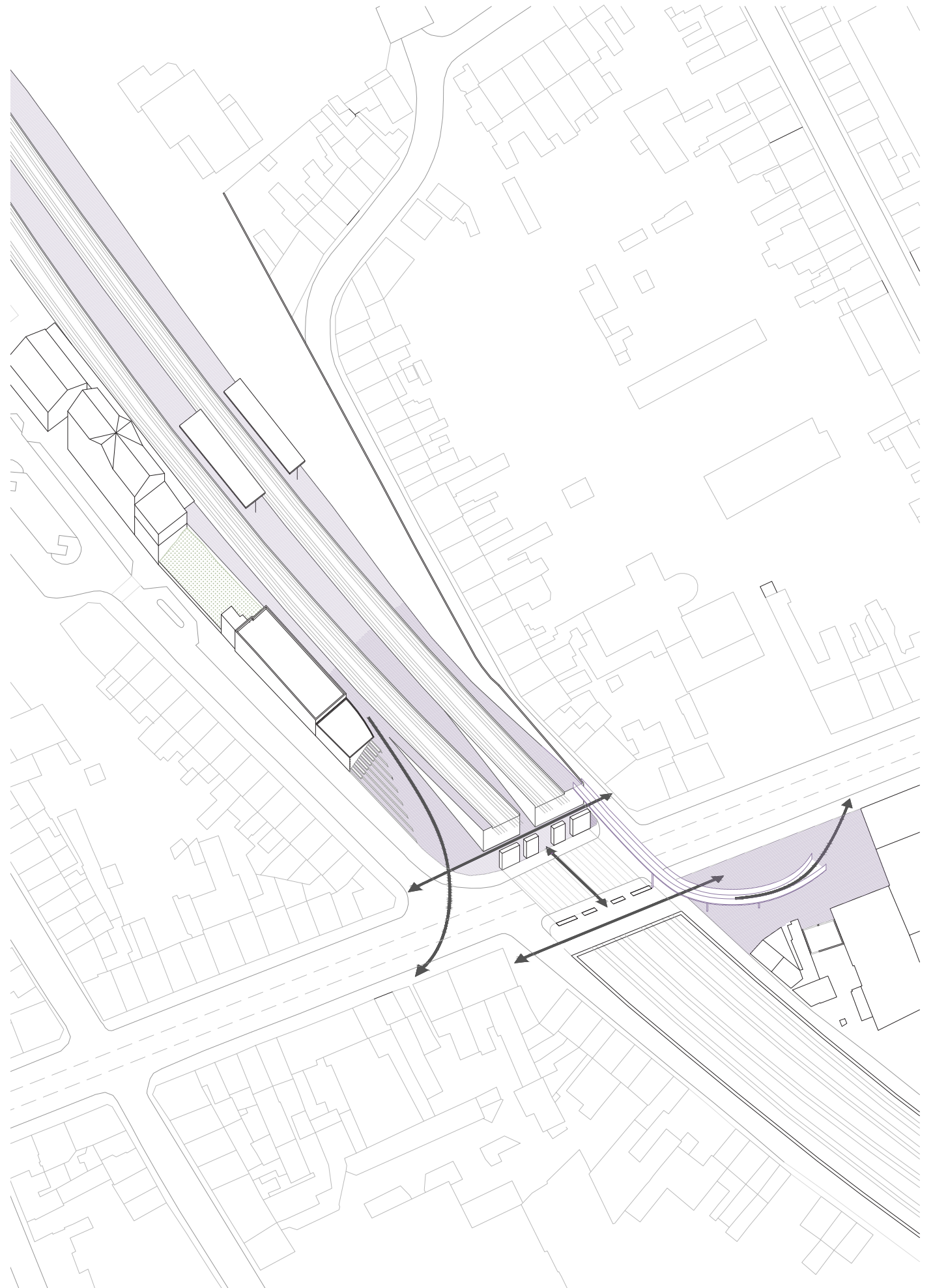
Station

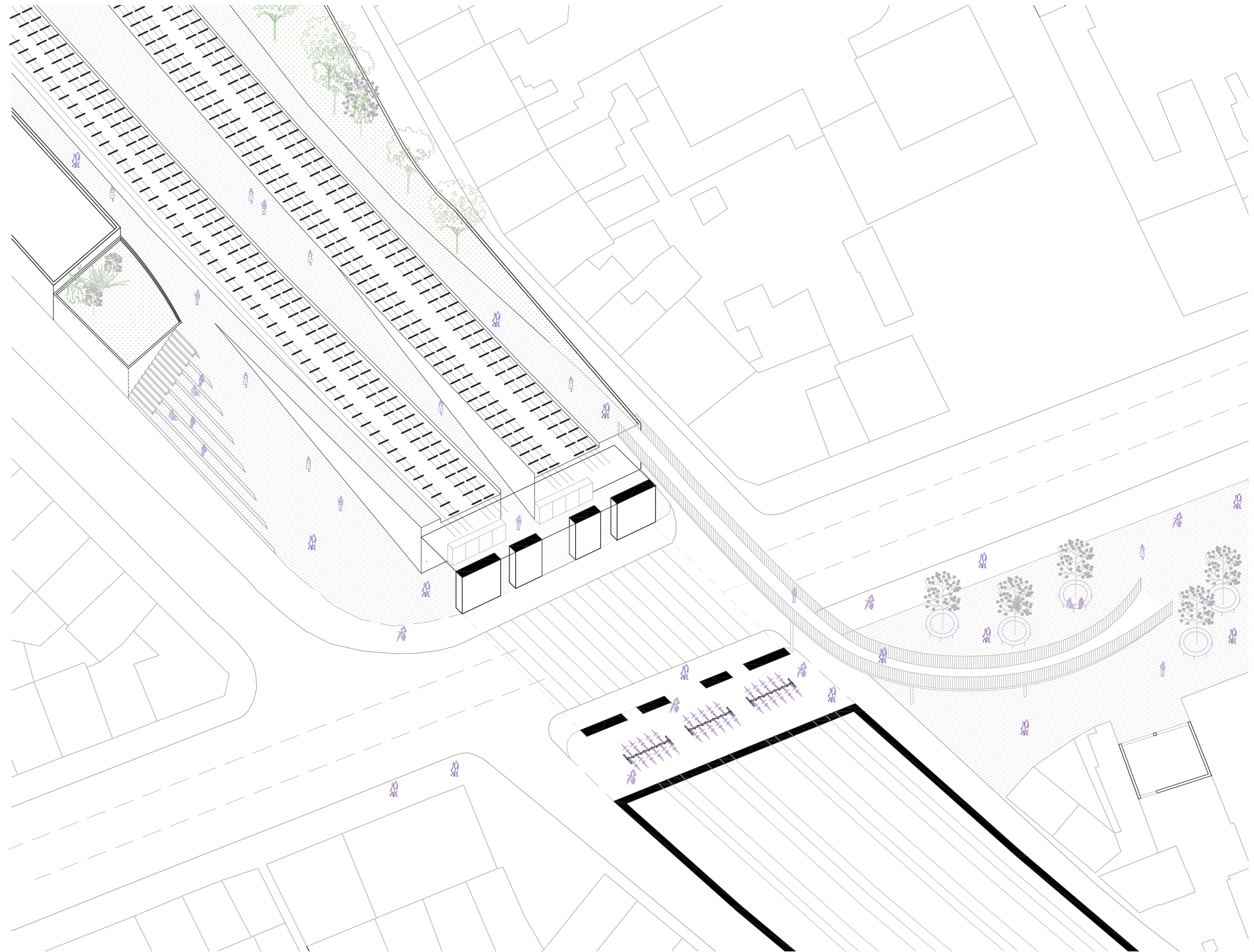
Since the beginning of our analysis we've understand the value of the train station. Regarding this matter, we want to work on the inclusion of the station into the urban tissue of the city. Establishing a better connection for the pedestrians.

In doing so, we propose a new entrance for the station, located in the N-90. With this we can foment the relation with the surrounding magnets as well as establishing a direct entrance for the event cluster.

The strategy consists in:

- 1• New entrance/exit.** Elongating the existing platforms to reach the N-90
- 2• Accesibility.** Ramps of 6%
- 3• Working on the existing structure.** Horizontal connection through an opening in the wall supporting the railways. Horizontal reinforcement of the structure. Vertical connection through the opening of the parallel wall to the N-90
- 4• Direct connection to the event cluster**
- 5• Inclusion of new mobility.** Bike station in front of the entrance
- 6• Complementary public space**





Axonometry **Station**

Bike project · Bikeative

The current driving school on Rue Martinsen includes a very large driving practice area inside the block. With regard to the coming change in mobility, which will lead away from the car, we want to use this space in this sense as well.

During our visit to Marchienne we noticed that there are currently no good possibilities for cycling and that the car is given the most value on the street. For this we want to build a station for a bike project there. The houses of the then former driving school will be converted into a bicycle self-repair workshop. Here the people can find all kinds of tools for the bicycle and also mutual help. The empty house in the east of the area will be converted into a sheltered workshop where people with a disability can help with the construction of bicycle parts. The bicycles will be sold in the north of the area in the building, which is also empty, and the workers will be paid from the income.

Through our research on possible bike projects, we have noticed again and again that it is often pointed out that many people are not able to ride a bike even in adulthood. This is more and more the case for people from socially weaker countries, where bicycles cannot be purchased either because of bad road conditions or because they are too expensive. For this purpose, we want to turn the former asphalted practice area for cars into a green and permeable soil practice area for cyclists. For this purpose, this facility can be used as a normal small mini park, or the access roads to the individual buildings there can be used as a practice area without cars for children and adults by means of erectable signs.



Boat House

In our analysis, we noticed the Rue Latérale in particular. It's an asphalt road next to the tram tracks. The people who live there do not have a nice view besides the noise of the trains. From an urban planning point of view, the street is an important road for the north of Marchiennes, because it leads directly to the Sambre.

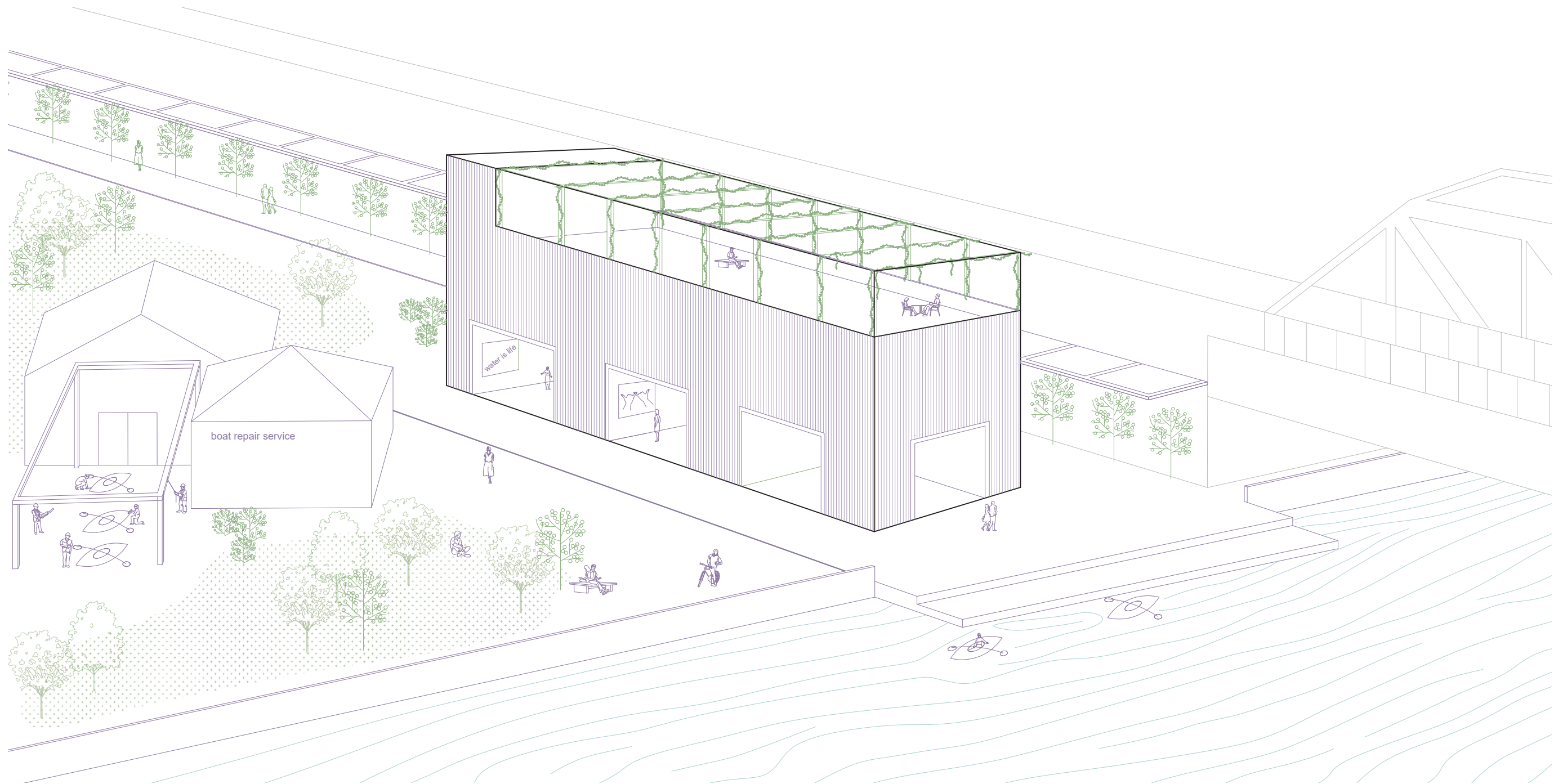
On the bank of the Sambre is a building that has been abandoned until now. Due to its very good location we want to convert this building into a boatshouse. Here it will be possible to rent kayaks and ride on the Sambre. Besides being an activity for the inhabitants, this point can also be a good place for the awareness of mobility. With the beginning of the boatshouse we want to show new possibilities of mobility far away from the car.

The ground floor of the building also contains an exhibition room used by the Water Association to show visitors the importance of the water, the purification and maintenance of water and the water cycle. On the newly built roof terrace, it is possible to have a coffee and enjoy the view over the river.

To the west of the building there are two smaller houses which are being converted into a boat repair shop. There, small repair works on the kayaks and boats are carried out.

Due to the Rue Latérale, which is not very inviting so far, it is not possible to show the people the change of the boathouse, so we temporarily rebuild the street as part of a small town festival. The street should get a small path where pedestrians can walk safely and find their way to the Sambre.

Along the wall we want to plant trees and plants to make the view more pleasant for the people living there and to shield the noise of the trains. Above the wall a new light system will be installed to make the street brighter and safer. The newly built path will lead to the Sambre and will allow visitors to get into the kayaks rented there and ride along the river



Axonometry **Boat House**

Green House

Between the tram station and the rockerill is a previously unused green area. Following our idea to give the inhabitants of Marchienne not only places to relax but also to make them aware of important issues of the city, this area is dedicated to the environment. Due to the predominant industry in the area, the soil is still contaminated today, so that there are no good possibilities to grow anything. Because of this fact, we decided to choose this place. It shows us that all our influences on the environment have consequences for the future.

At the same time, the area is located next to the Espace citoyen, with which we want to work together on this place. The espace citoyen is so far the only possibility for people to get social offers for their leisure time. Therefore we connect the back exit of building with the new green area by a path. We want to remove one of the two unused, empty factory buildings to make the connection possible.

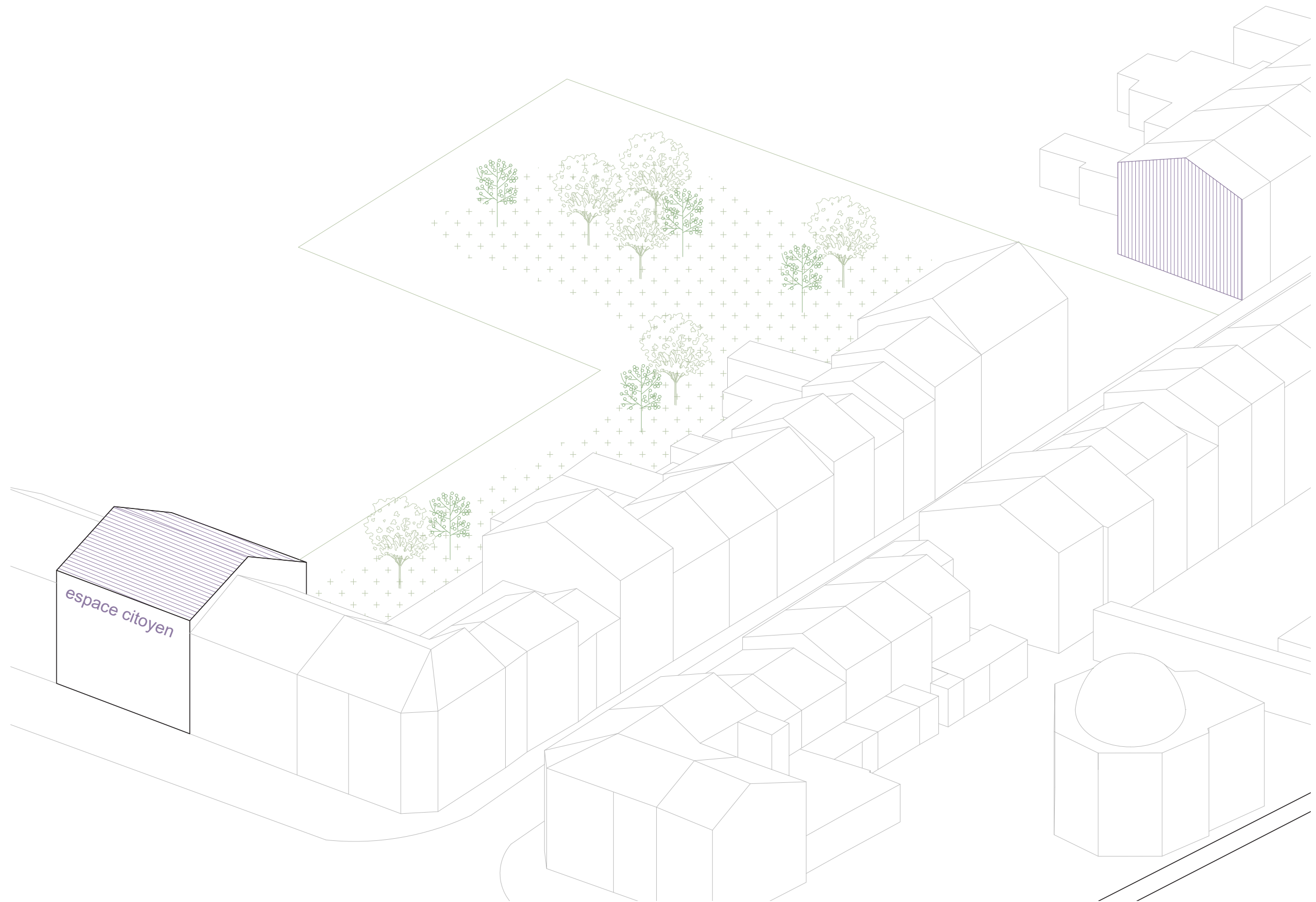
The smaller hall will be converted into a public greenhouse. In front of the new greenhouse is the green area, which has already been divided into individual areas by the old stock of trees. A small patch of trees will serve as protection for a compost, where biodegradable residues can be disposed of and new soil can be gained for the area. In the two large parts of the area there will be several raised beds where the inhabitants can grow their own vegetables and herbs.

The raised beds have several advantages: on the one hand, it is possible to plant something there even if the actual ground is contaminated, the beds can be quickly and easily made by the residents themselves, for example in the construction workshop located to the south, from recycled materials, and the height of the beds makes it possible for people in wheelchairs and elderly people who can no longer bend down well to participate in gardening, so everyone can be included.

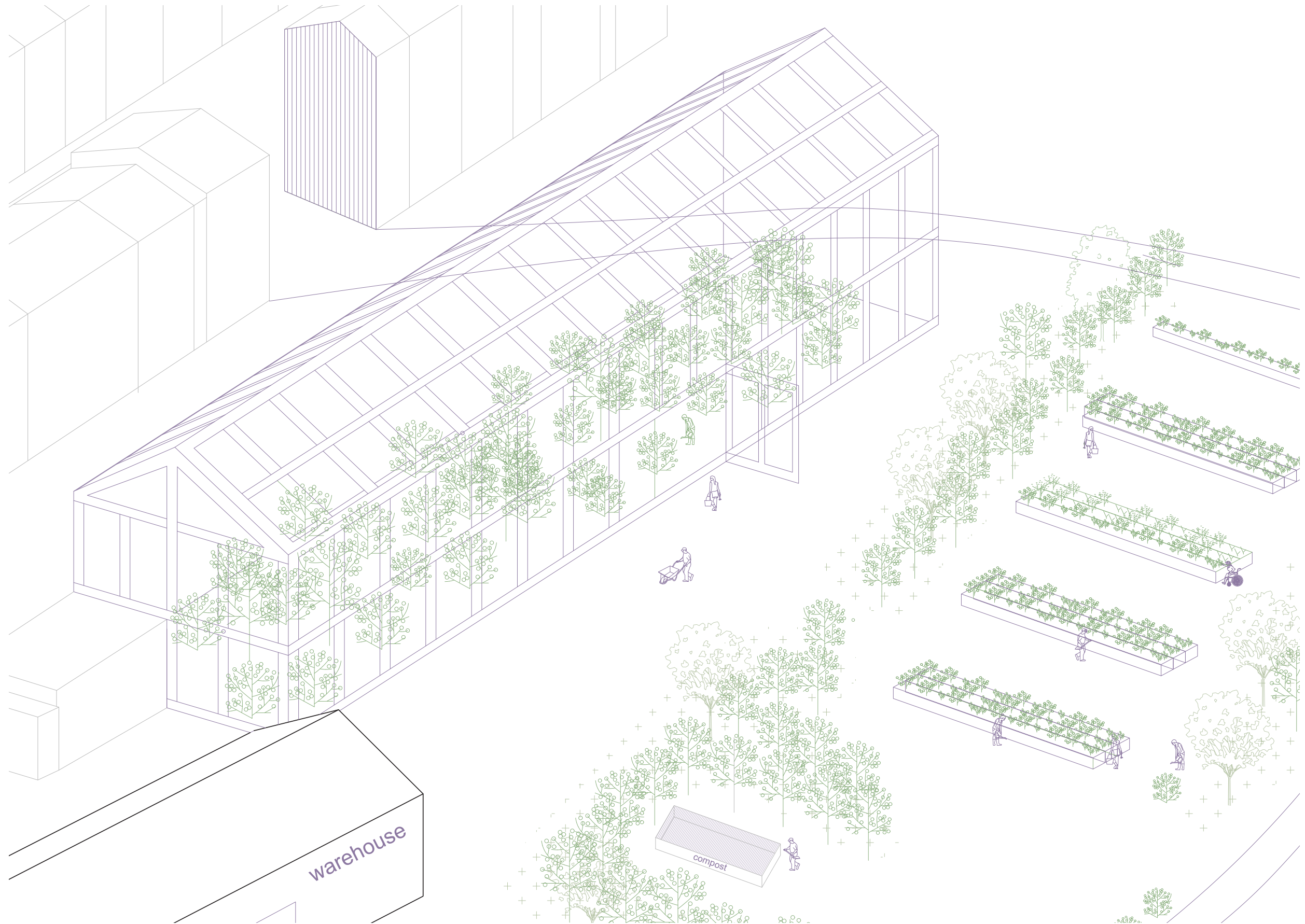
In the east of the area there is another building that has been vacant up to now. This is to serve as a meeting café. Everyone, regardless of their migration background, gender or age, can come here and exchange ideas with others. Vegetables, which are grown in the adjoining raised beds, can be prepared here together. Furthermore, there will be a contact point especially for children who have no access to leisure activities in their free time.



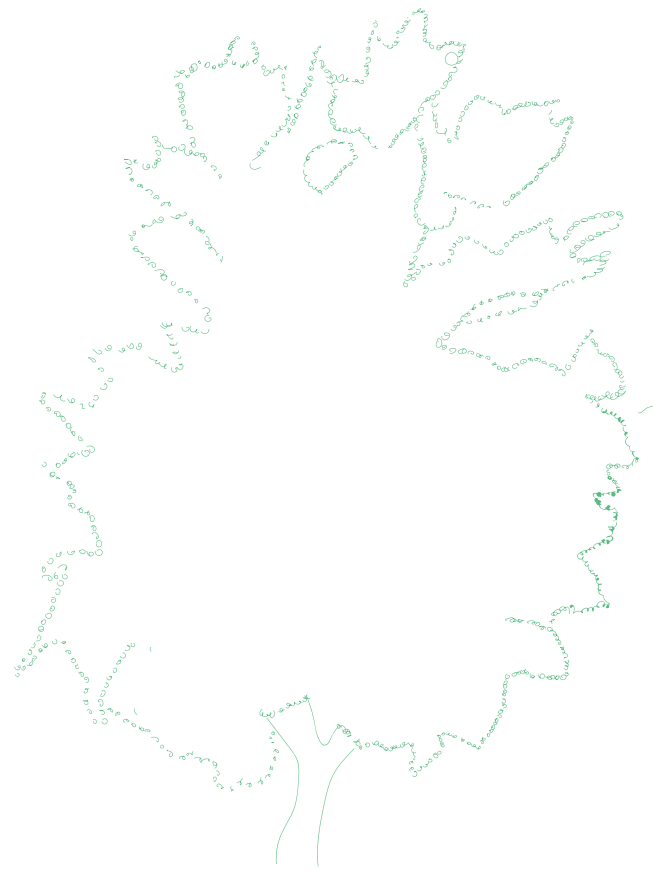
Axonometry **Green House**



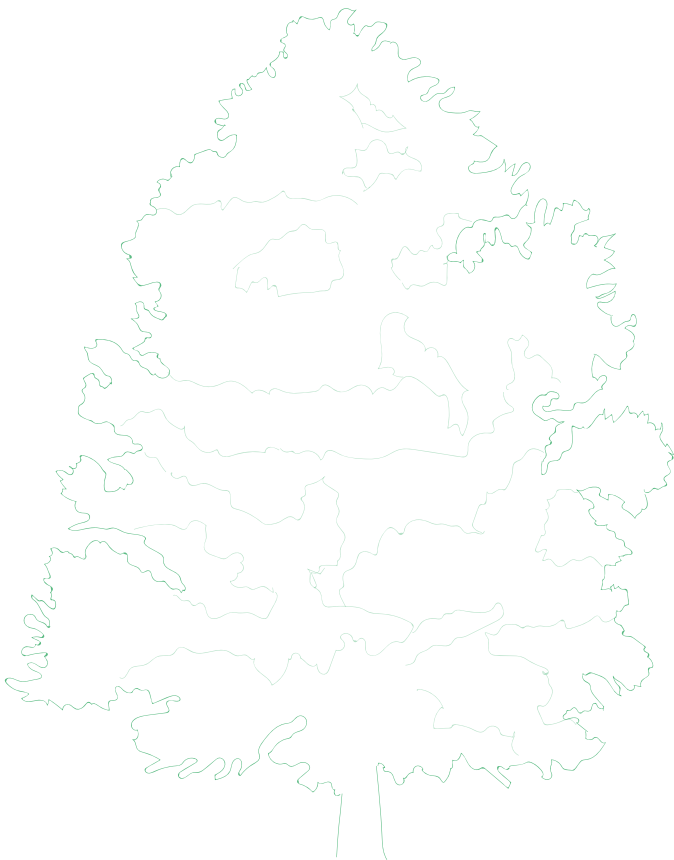
Connection Espace Citoyen



Green House and surroundings



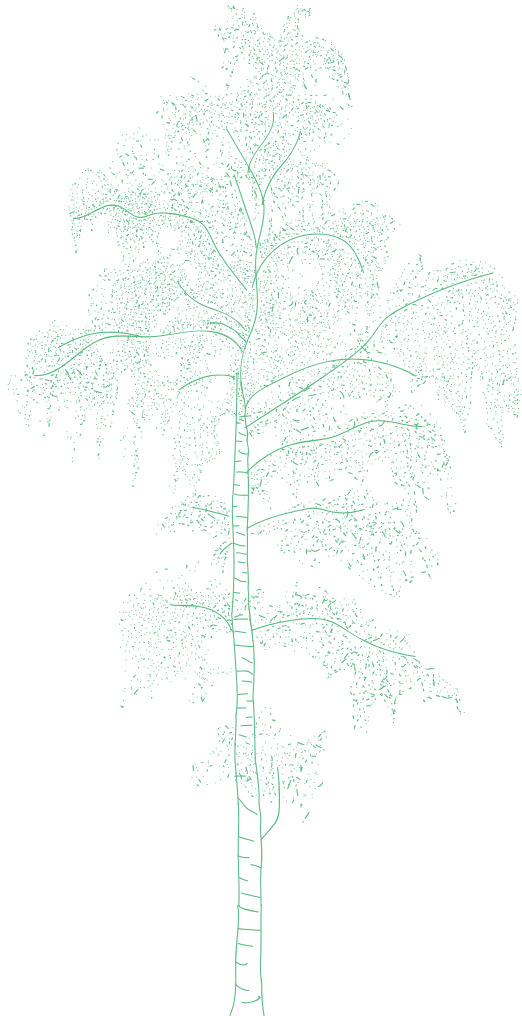
Populus Alba



Tilia platyphyllos



Salix babylonica



Betula pendula

Existing trees

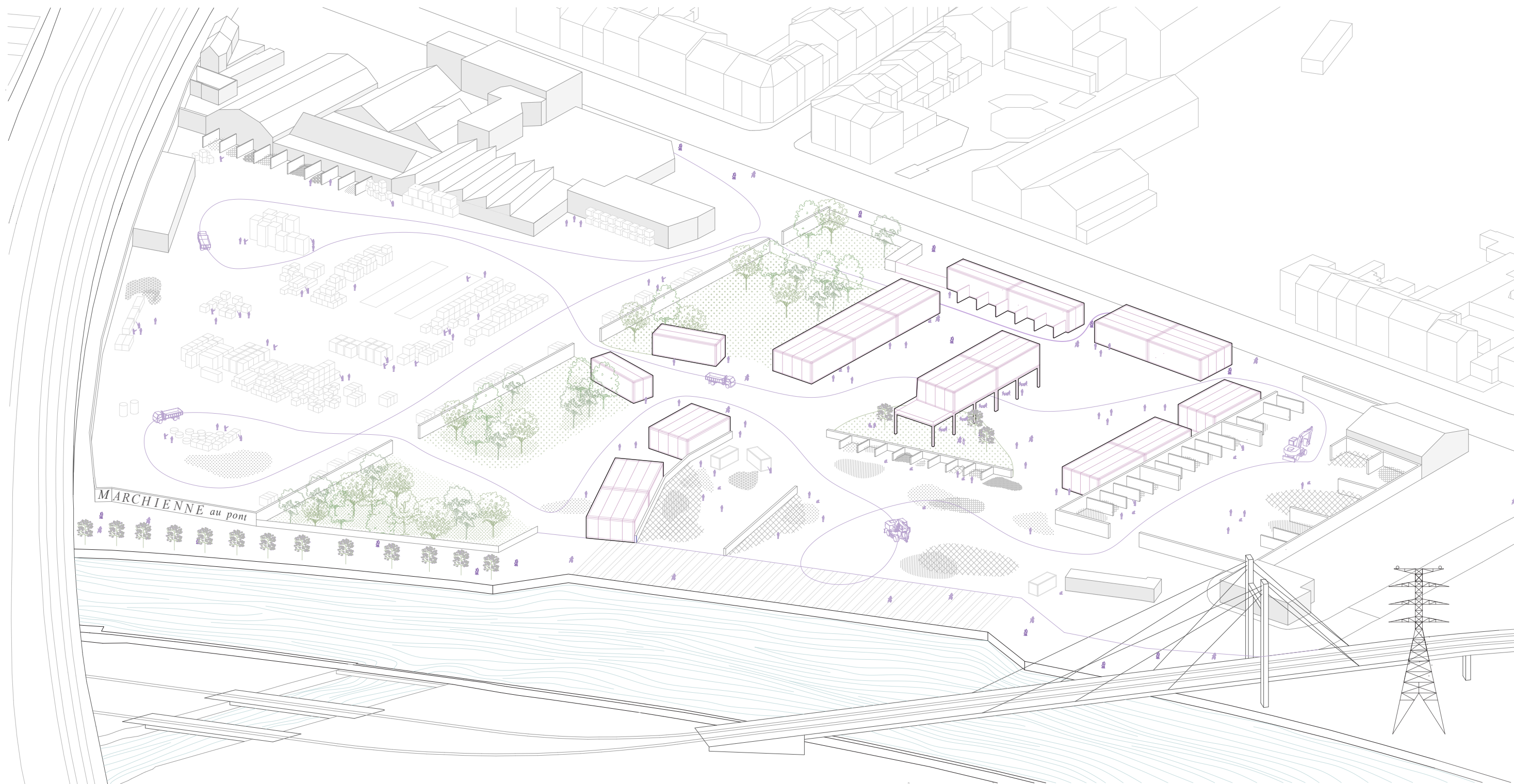
Production Area

As we mentioned before, the labour dimension will be a crucial point in the project. We develop a new area for these new activities regarding the recycling of materials and creation of jobs. This area is located in between two points that are already serving this purpose.

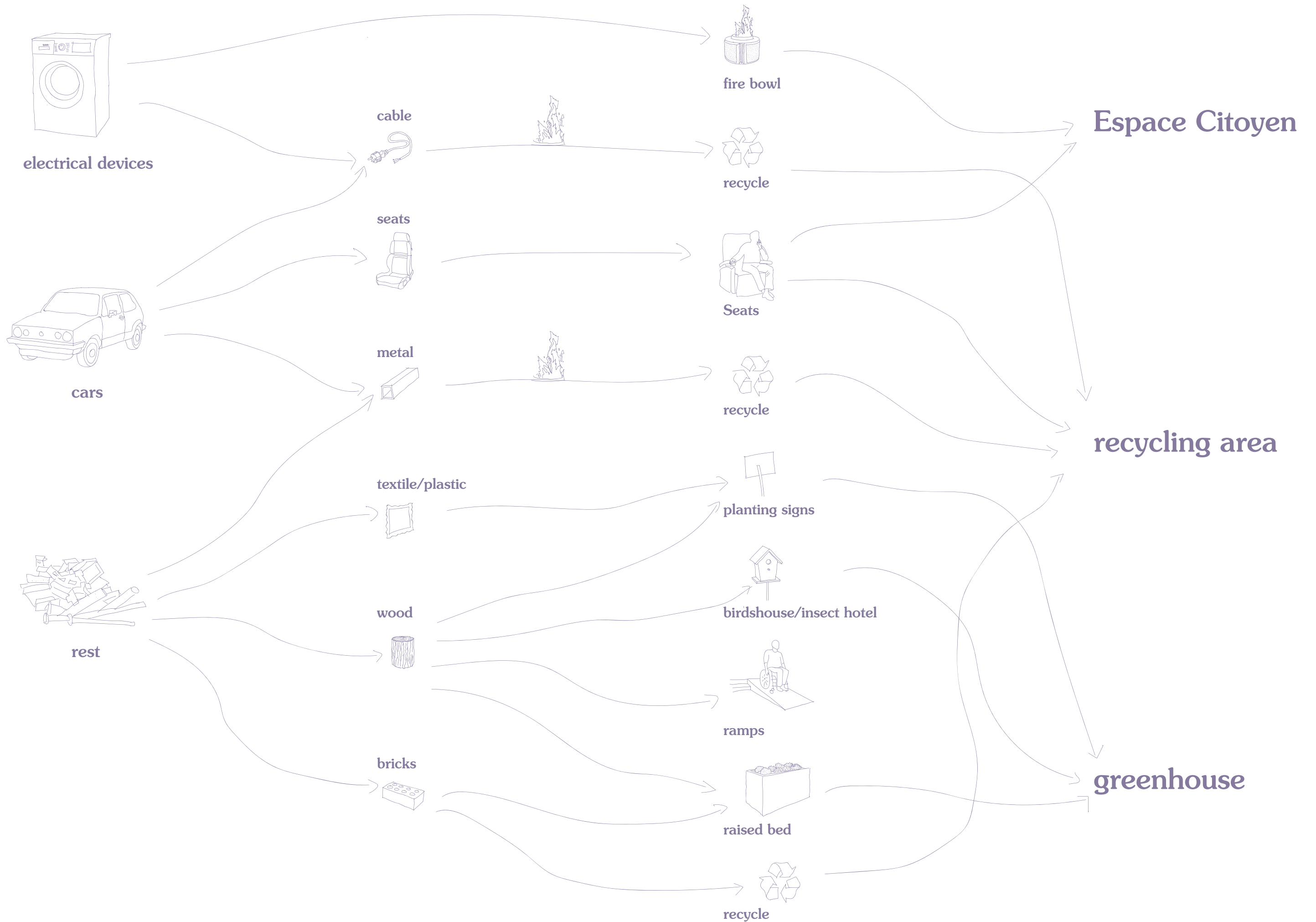
On one hand we have a construction enterprise in charge of the sorting and selling of materials; on the other side there is a recycling spot, a place where materials are brought to, sorted out and then brought back to the place they came from.

The strategy consists in creating an intermediate space that will benefit from these two sides and that will aim the creation of new projects around Marchienne. We establish a cooperation between the sides and a more direct connection through the area, creating a more inviting space for the workers.

The project is organized by a series of pavilions made out of containers, that provide a flexible and economic structure. All of these pavilions go from logistic to workshops, as well as a pavilion designed for recycling other types of materials, related to the human scale, such as textile, furniture...and that will allow a more direct connection to the citizen of Marchienne.



Axonometry **Production Area**



Event area

We know by our previous analysis that Le Rockerill and La Providence are two of the most important magnets in Marchienne when it comes to social gathering. For this reason it seems reasonable to provide this functioning magnets with a significant public space that will be able to support the flows of the people.

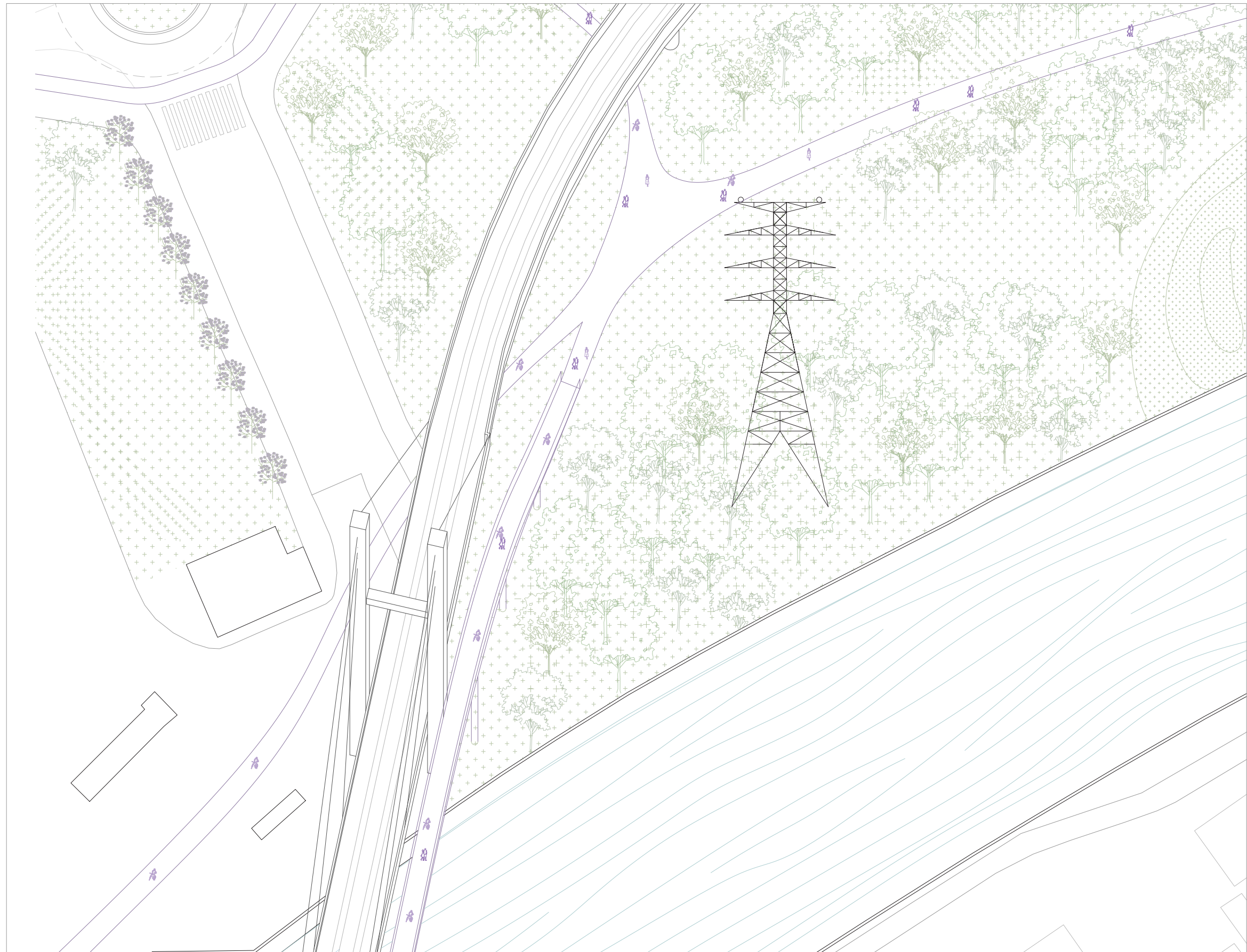
The area located inbetween the Sambre and The N-90 is now turned into a public space for the people. Without a specific design, the area is meant to hold any type of activity in relation with Le Rockerill or with any association of Marchienne.

The strategy consists in maintaining the existing vegetation and working on the surroundings, we continue the bike path coming from the city center and we incorporate another boat station in conversation with our kayak space. This pasticular spot tries to bring the people in realtion with the river, making it possible to reach water.

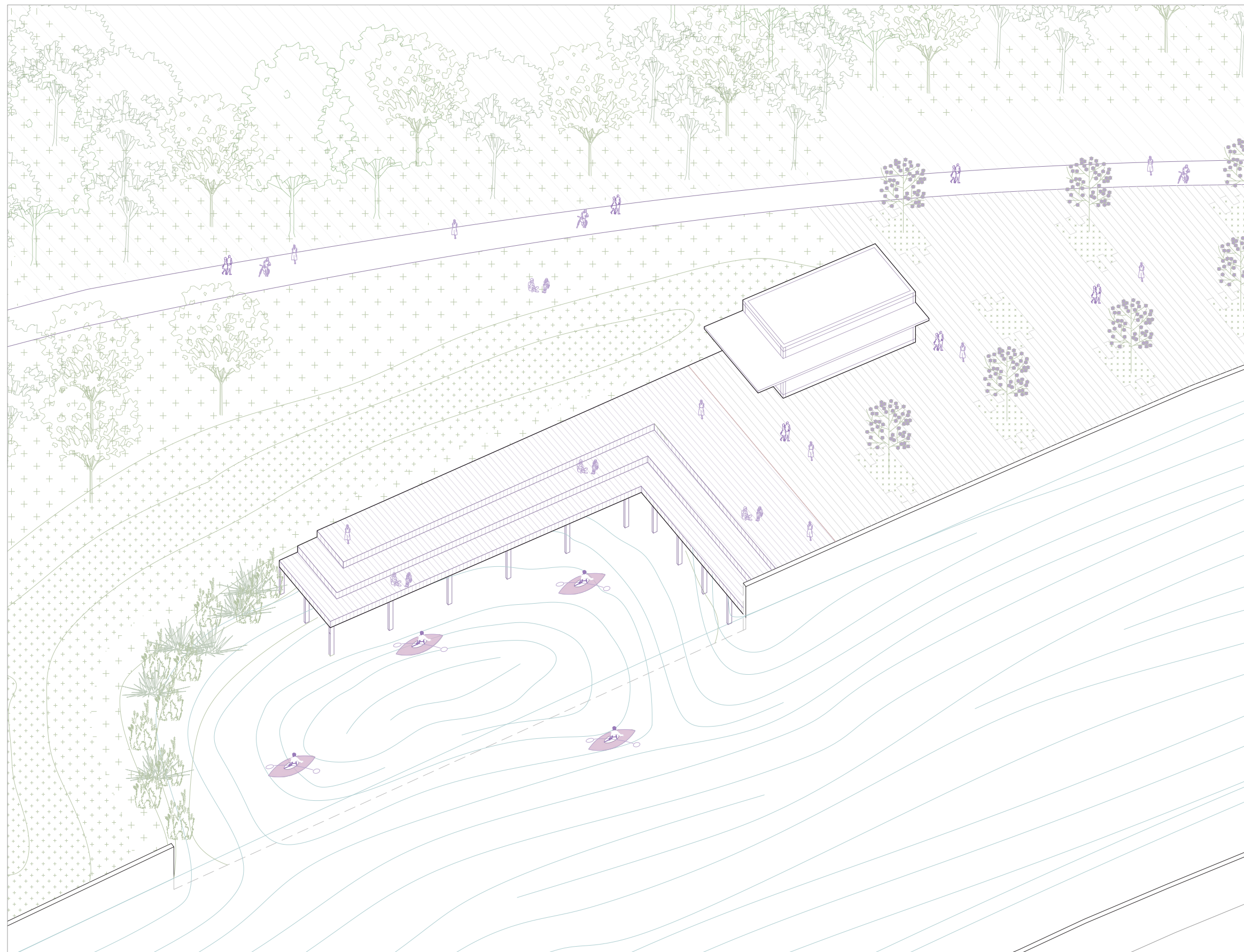
For the direct connection from Le Rockerill we work on the section of the N-90. Now a regional road, we intend to maintain this charecteristic, but adding the new normal of a bike and bus path as well as regaining space for the pedestrians on the sidewalk. This new road will bre supported by the addision of a roundabout that will manage the traffic.



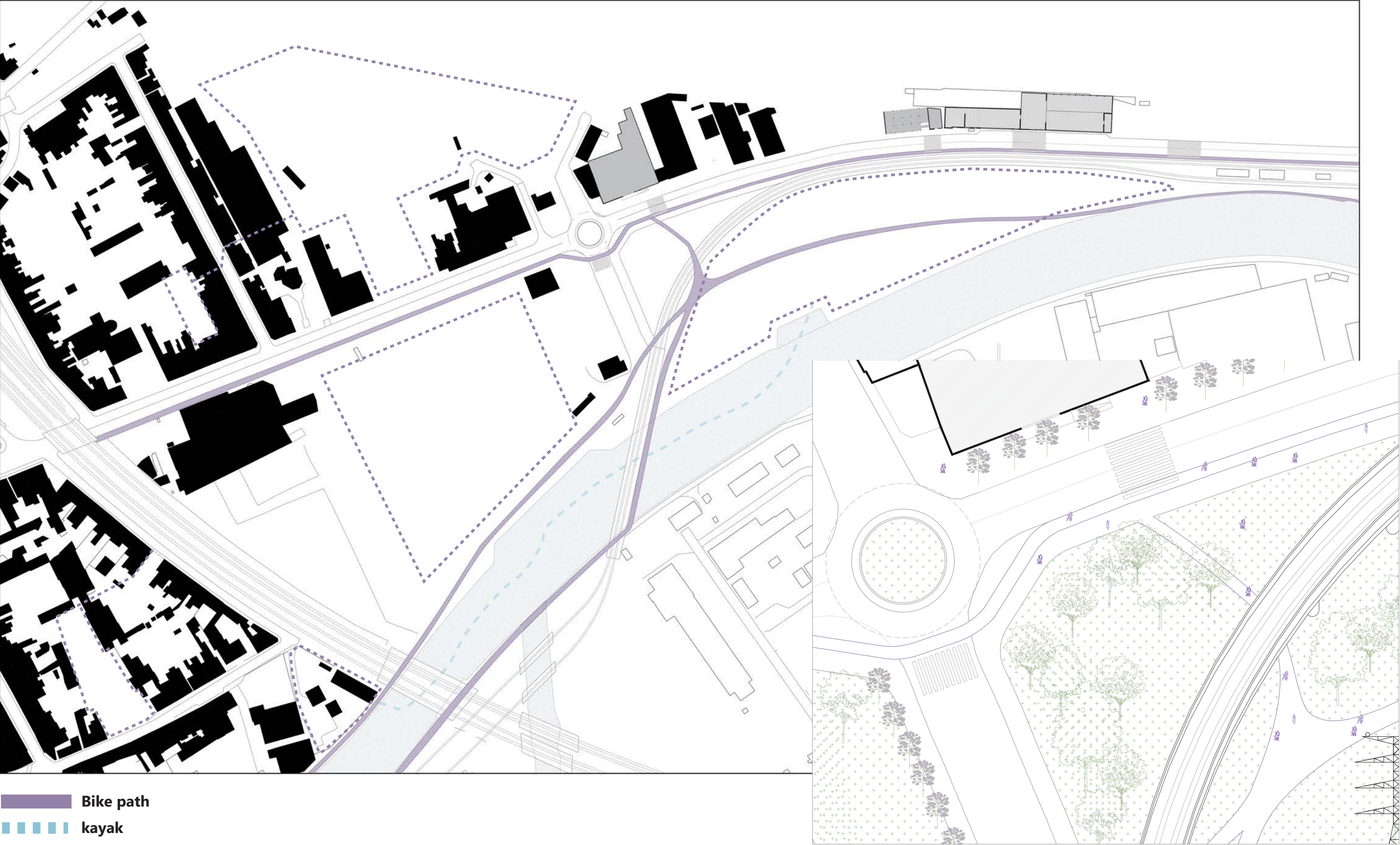
Axonometry **Event Area**



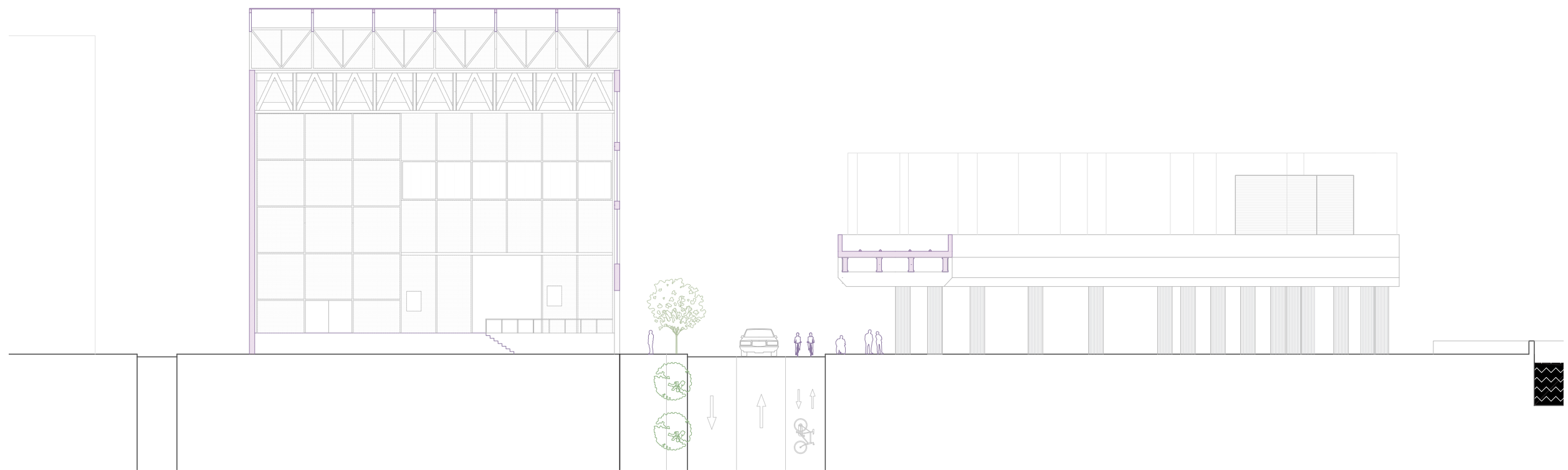
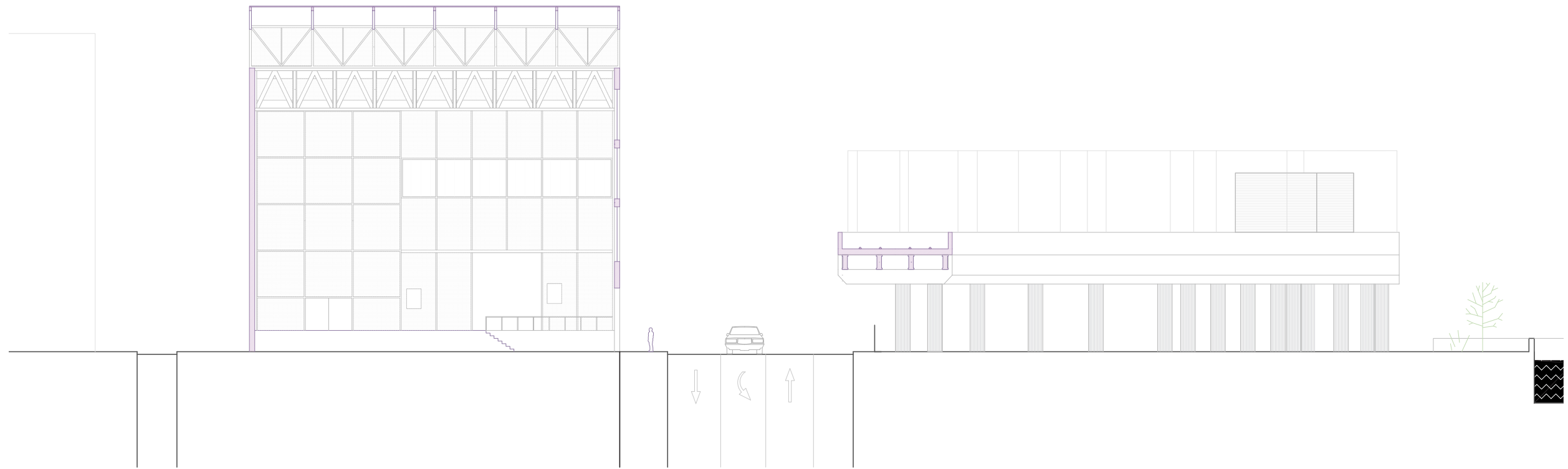
Connection with the city center · **Bike path**



Connection with the Sambre



Mobility in the area · **Detail Roundabout**



Section of the street · **Before and after**

THANK YOU!