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Place In Transit: Intuitive Methodologies Abroad

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Place In Transit: Intuitive Methodologies Abroad

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Gaines Center for the Humanities



Doug Niemann
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A Word from the Author

This thesis, while rigorously researched and documented, is not meant to be a work to be published and peer reviewed by professors and critics worldwide. It is meant to be a work of subjective investigation into a series of phenomena that I the author have found of considerable interest. The thesis itself is based upon a project developed from personal interests and observations of Berlin's architecture and society. These interests and observations are themselves derived from growing up and studying in Kentucky, among innumerable other factors that make up my subjective perspective. Additionally, the consciously conducted research is also extremely subjective, as the topics of investigation were based upon elements of my summer project that I felt needed further inquiry.

The result of these investigations showed that my findings in each topic in fact held a good deal of precedent in the fields of geography and architecture, effectively removing academic consequence from my investigations. However, this is not to say the work in this thesis is without value. A major motivation behind my investigations was my lack of defined design process. In the seven studios excluding that which is included in this thesis, I used seven very different methodologies for generating architecture. I felt this thesis project would be a good way to find what I'm really interested in and through that develop my own methodology.

The use of past place experience in design is almost pure reaction, pure “coping” in action. It is probably only when they must explain themselves to others --builders, clients, users--that designers become more aware of how they reach certain conclusions in design.

-Frances Downing

This thesis is the product of intuitive design and the resultant reflection upon the successes, failures, and potentials of those reactionary decisions. It began in the Summer of 2012, when I participated in the University of Kentucky College of Design's Berlin Summer Studio led by Jason Scroggin and Akari Takebayashi.

Like many other architectural studies based in Berlin, our studio sought out the unique urban conditions resulting from the city's numerous re-creations over the past 700 years. However, where a majority of studies over the past 20 years have worked with urban socio-political issues stemming from the reunification of the city, our studio sought out *new opportunities for the synthesis of the peculiarities of small scale internal spaces and the larger network of Berlin's public spacial occupancies to reconsider inhabitation on the street*. We were instructed to find and thoroughly document urban *pockets* in Berlin, where we saw any space that was misappropriated, under-utilized, leftover, and/or held a condition of *in-betweenness*.

Following this documentative research, we then categorized our findings into typologies of these urban conditions. With one type-group per student we designed programmed interventions within these spaces, using our personal observations and experiences of the space as well as of Berlin itself as guides.

In my personal design experience up until that studio, I had never worked in a methodology so personal, so intuitive. There had always been some objective formal and/or material study to guide my architectural vision, but in Berlin I was forced to make design decisions based purely on site documentation, memory, and experiential research. The intuitive nature of the studio was only catalyzed further by its time restriction and location in a foreign country, which forced design decisions to be much more reactive by way of tight deadlines and novel socio-spacial phenomena, respectfully.

In four of the six other design studios I had experienced prior to this summer project, research and objective formal investigations were common methods of design development. In the Berlin Summer Studio, a majority of my design decisions were made as intuitive reactions to what I perceived subjectively, without any thorough research into the contextual conditions surrounding each of my sites.

This purely intuitive reactive design method made me nervous from its sincere lack of empirical support, and because of this I was especially surprised when I received positive critiques on my designs. In reaction to those critiques, I fell back on research-based design methods to re-evaluate this intuitive project, to see how my reflexive project holds up

against informed critiques of its main concepts.

The first main concept and section of this thesis is concerned with the idea of placemaking. The sites that I had chosen were located on subway platforms throughout the city, and faced with the challenge of designing a cinema on a subway platform, I became enamored with the idea of creating a place (the cinema) within a non-place (the subway platform). The resulting research into this concept became increasingly involved in the role of personal and social memory in the creation of place. As discussed in the section, places recall memories, which in turn recall emotions, senses, and ideas. When this process is flipped, that is, when recalled memories are used to generate spaces (and places), their use is intuitive.

The second section concerns a concept that was not extensively utilized in the summer project, but was researched for its traditional place in the architectural process. Contextual awareness has been a staple in architecture since cities existed, as forms, programs, and compositions have traditionally been guided by local building methods, customs, and social structure. As I was designing in a European capitol far from my home in Kentucky, I was acutely aware of my cultural ignorance. Although I tried to incorporate what I learned about Berlin's culture and history into my project that summer, my attempts were shallow, at best. In the second section I go much more in depth with cultural and historical research, continuing the theme of place in a case study of Fernsehturmplatz, or T.V. Tower Plaza, where multiple histories and cultures of Berlin visibly clash in and between the architecture.

The third section continues the contextual research, but hones in on the sites themselves in a discussion of the transit system of Berlin and its qualities of place. I argue that the transit system is simultaneously a place and is placeless. The shops and people in Berlin's train stations make each stop potentially memorable, but at the same time the coldly functional platforms focus on moving passengers through the station so quickly that the platform and station circulation becomes placeless.

In the last and final section we reach the project itself, where each station is profiled by the work done in the summer (left side or with faded spine) as well as the graphic research done upon returning from Berlin (right side or block-fade spine). In the beginning of the section the project and my interpretations are outlined in further detail, with explanations of my original theses for the project. Following each station profile and post-analysis, the original theses are brought up again and edited based upon the above research. A discussion of the alterations of the original designs completes this section.

Through this retrospective I seek to determine intuition's role in my personal design philosophy and methodology. This thesis is an investigation of intuitive methodologies and conscious research, with the intention of establishing a personal design philosophy and methodology from which this and other design projects could be developed.

SUMMER WORK

POST-SUMMER WORK

Memory and Place

When we remember, we not only take into account the events that occurred, but the sensations that we felt during those events—the smell of the air, the texture of a chair, the color of a sweater. As we connect those sensations to our memories, so too are those memories connected to its sensations. For Marcel Proust, his first taste of madeliene in years opened the door to an entire cache of memories from his youth. However, as the memories were far removed from his present consciousness, his mind's first reaction to the taste was hazy:

*And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory – this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me it was me.*ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ Proust, Marcel. "The Cookie." Introduction. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983. N. pag. Print.

This precipitated essence Proust describes can be most concisely defined as familiarity. He was fully aware that there was a memory associated with the taste, but as he first happened upon that memory, it was a murky fragment just below the surface of consciousness. As his present consciousness recalled why the sensation was familiar, the memory of the taste acted as a bridge to the consciousness of his youth:

...so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.^{iv}

^{iv} *ibid.*

This example has often been used by geographers and architects alike in the discussion of memory and place, particularly for its vivid description of the experience of remembrance, where the trigger for Proust's so-called involuntary memory would be the place itself. Instead of the taste of cake and tea, the trigger would be manifested in the many qualities of a space, combining a complex matrix of sensational memories with a physical location to give meaning to that space, thereby creating a place.

Eloquently put by Lucy Lippard in her book *Lure of the Local*, *Space defines landscape, where space combined with memory defines place.*^v Place is most commonly regarded as a location, or a point in space. However, for those who specialize in the study of the existential qualities of space, place takes on a much deeper meaning. Place goes beyond its lay synonyms of *location* and *position* by taking on phenomenological and existential meaning, encompassing not only one's physical location, but also one's experience and resulting recollection of that location.

When an event is recorded in our memory, we take into account the objects and location(s) that played significant roles. As we connect locations and objects to memories, so too are our

memories connected to those places and objects, allowing our memories, and our selves, to exist not only within our consciousness, but also in the physical world.

The role of memory and consciousness in the development of the self and identity has a long history and has been discussed by every philosopher, psychologist, and neurologist since John Locke, who, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* wrote:

And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that Person; it is the same self now it was then; and 'tis by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done.^{vi}

Published in 1690, these writings argue that it is in fact the memory of a being that creates one's self. Through memory, Locke argues, the material that makes up our present existence can connect to past experiences of the same body, thereby creating the conscious existence of one's self. Despite being published over three hundred years ago Locke's argument still holds water, not only with contemporary philosophers, but also in the scientific and architectural communities. Synthesizing all three vocations in the book *Remembrance and the Design of Place*, Frances Downing writes:

Each set, each bank of images, was the embodiment of a person's experiences. From such experiences—both direct experiences and influences from surroundings—are built a set of values. ...Behaviors and memories follow physical paths in each brain, reinforcing some and weakening others, making each individual unique yet connected to others.^{vii}

It has been widely accepted that memory and past experiences are seen as important resources when addressing new problems, but the development of the self occurs not only in what memories are used, but how they are used. It is this translation and application of memory that influences how we interpret the world, but also how we return that influence back onto the world. This reciprocation between our selves and the world is in many ways a reckoning tool of identity: as bats find themselves through the world's reflection of their voices, so too do we locate ourselves within history, culture, and society by the world's reflection of our self expression, creating an infinite loop of feedback between our selves and the world we live in.

So we stand, reach, touch, see, hear, smell, shout, and whisper our own existence, gathering our particular experiences within our growing sense of self. The non-self world is not just a necessary "other"; it is our experience, our existence, our life. The world is embodied by us.^{viii}

^{vi}Locke, John. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 1690. Menston: Scolar, 1970. Print.

^{vii}Downing, Frances. "Identity and Others." *Remembrance and the Design of Place*. College Station, Tex: Texas A&M UP, 2000. 13. Print.

^vLippard, Lucy R. "All over the Place." Preface. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*. New York: New, 1997. N. pag. Print.

Place and Significance

In the United States, towns struggle to find their identity; a lack of history requires them to cling to places of local significance or fabricate them.^{ix} Berlin, on the other hand, finds itself with the same problem but for the opposite reasons. (The involuntary memories triggered by places occur with such frequency and polarity in Berlin that to experience a Proustian recollection with more than a fraction of the places would be mentally and emotionally exhausting.) It is for this reason that the definition of a place, especially public and community places, varies from Berliner to Berliner. As French philosopher Gabriel Marcel summarizes: *An individual is not distinct from his place; he is that place*. And as Berliners sift through the fractured places of their city's past, Berliner becomes less of an identity and more of a geographic label.

As a place is created through a space's association with memory, place is wherever memories can be created, that is, wherever people dwell. These places can manifest on a number of scales, depending on the subject's concept of 'location.' These can range from one's place at the dinner table, to the two blocks around their apartment, to their city, geographic region, nation, and more recently, their global community.

The types of meanings and functions defining places need not be the same for all cultural groups, nor do the centres have to be clearly demarcated by physical features, but they must have an inside that can be experienced as something differing from the outside.^x

^xRelf, E. C. "2.3.3 Structure of Geographical Space." *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion, 1976. 22. Print.

Using subjective and shared meanings to define and perpetuate the significance of places within these zones, a community develops the identity of their space. In this case, community refers to the group of people that associate themselves with a single geographic zone. While personal memories are the most numerous and powerful to their authors, it is not until the memory is shared that it is sympathized with and thereby begin to be associated with similar memories. Unfortunately, the specificity of personal memories often prevents clarity in their association, which creates an amorphous collective meaning of place. As the memory continues to be shared the specificity of the experience is lost through translation, and as a result the meaning of the place becomes more refined.

Alongside memory, architecture plays an important role in the propagation of the place's meaning, through both its active and inactive programs and their resultant forms. As a place's meaning is paraphrased further and further, it approaches the point where it loses its place-ness, where it cannot be discerned from places across the world. This simplification makes a place's meaning most easily shared; however its simplified meaning is also a shallow one. In order for a more accurate meaning of place to be known, the observer must actively learn about and experience the place, making use of personal, shared,



architectural, and applied meaning to give the place common in its community, helping to form the character of the community as a whole.

Aggregated personal memories are the most accurate phenomena in place definition, as they are formed from memories of specific experiences within a space. The phenomena depends on personal experiences and narratives, and through the subject's interpretation of those memories of that place, the place is defined. This phenomenon most clearly occurs in societies where similar events are read as such by a majority of the populous. As each story is shared, the audience empirically associates it with like memories of their own, and with each common element of meaning, the power of the story is strengthened. If one tells a story of their positive experience in a place, its meaning is bolstered by a memory of another's shared positive experience. The strength of personal meaning lies in its vivid specificity and its ability to connect on multiple cognitive levels if shared frequently and with skill.

In the fictional narrative series of *Harry Potter*, the protagonist first enters the world of magic through Platform 9^{3/4} at King's Cross station in London. No such platform exists in the real world, but due to the skill and resultant popularity of J.K. Rowling's narrative, thousands of tourists every year visit

fig.1.02 At the Memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe a girl dodges imaginary bullets from a playmate while an older woman solemnly looks on from the shade.

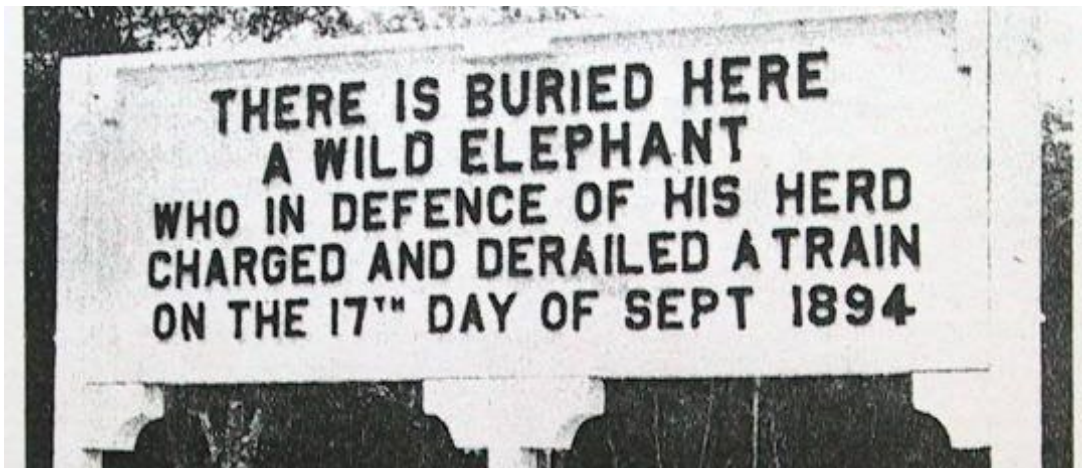


fig. 1.03



fig. 1.04

The event of an elephant charging a derailed train effected all of its passengers, and through photographs was circulated through printed media. (*fig. 1.03*)

The subsequent memories to be associated with the site of the accident, making the site a place. Clarifying and perpetuating its placeness is the memorial sign (*fig. 1.04*).

a wall 3/4 of the way between Platforms 9 and 10. Although the personal memories shared were of a fictional character, the connections made by the author to her audience were so strong that a real location to a fictional entrance became a globally significant place.

Unfortunately, not all memories are shared with the skill of a novelist, and as a result, the aggregation of shared memories may not communicate the sense of place accurately, if at all. As the sample of personal memories about a place is reduced, the accuracy or truthfulness about the definition of place is exchanged for a more precise definition, thereby homogenizing its experience and interpretation among a society.

When a large group witnesses a single event, the memory of the event is reinforced by other witnesses, and although the specific experience and interpretation of said experience varies from witness to witness, the shared memory of that specific area of space/time gives an applicable definition of the significance of a place, if only in naming the date and time of the occurrence. The memory of the event is projected across history through communication and memorialization, allowing those absent to interpolate a memory of the event.

Although a secondary witness will never experience an event in its original form, he/she may employ relevant imagery from existing memories to fabricate a memory of the event itself. Through the use of similar memories, others can create approximations of the original event. Due to the development of mass media over the past century, the difficulty of extrapolating memories has become all but eliminated. First-hand accounts are readily available to millions across the globe allowing not only cities and nations to bear witness, but the entire world.

Propaganda is perhaps the most widely used and least accurate of the aforementioned place definitions. However, while both function-definitions and propaganda create an expectation of experience, propaganda often oversimplifies and augments the experience of a place in order to promote it (fig. 1.06-1.07). It is on this perilous cliff that one finds many places battling homogeneity in a world that demands quick, simple information at an unprecedented rate of consumption. In defining a place through propaganda communication is made easier, but by doing so creates a common acceptance of the same half-truths and fragments of the place. These common half-truths not only oversimplify the place's identity on a global scale, but it also alters the experience of the place by creating false expectations of its character and narrowed interpretations of its history.

The place defining actions mentioned above are themselves without place, in that each form of propagation is independent of site and medium. This is especially true with the speed and breadth of contemporary media which allows access to seemingly unlimited information almost anywhere on the globe. Despite the essential connection between a site and its placeness, knowledge of that place can be shared, and its significance can be spread with relative ease.

However, there are some aspects of a place's character that are so reliant on the place that they must be experienced firsthand. These aspects are inseparable from and often generated by the architecture of the place. The characteristics of a space have passive and active influence on the memories that are created within them: actively through prescribed or circumstantial events made possible by the space, and passively through its



fig. 1.06 Berlin.de logo, featuring Brandenburg Gate Icon



fig. 1.07 Brandenburg Gate, c.a. 2012

environmental characteristics such as materiality, climate, and lighting.

A building does not need to be programmed or have an explicit function of any kind in order for it to become a place; it simply needs people to occupy it. However, having a function associated with a location not only helps to define that location, but also helps to define the memories that are made within it. By calling a building a bakery, it not only differentiates it from its surroundings, the not bakeries, it also suggests that memories have—and will—be made within it regarding the creation and exchange of baked goods.

In some cases, the former function of a space continues to define the place in spite of new or altered programs that may currently inhabit the space. Names and memories of the original space are carried over by local residents and passed on despite its new function and even form. Aiding the persistence of the place's identity is the re-purposed architecture of the original place, often carrying with it forms commonly associated with its original function. The Hamburger Bahnhof (Hamburg Station) in Berlin hasn't been in service since the 1880's, yet the art museum that currently occupies the site shares both its name and architecture with the original place. Although its current function is dramatically different, the original program and its architecture still influence the experience of the space, and therefore the place itself.



fig. 1.03 Hamburger Bahnhof, c.a. 1859



fig. 1.05 Hamburger Bahnhof, c.a. 2009

The role of material in architecture is formative in the sensorial experience of a place, influencing not only aesthetics, but how a space is felt, heard, and smelled. A material's influence can be subtle, like the creak of a metal hinge, or it can be augmented to a grand design gesture, like the use of thousands of glass panels cladding Berlin's Hauptbahnhof. Materiality permeates architecture, as one would expect, and provides myriad opportunities for spacial affect.

Although it is possible for a place to be defined by only one of these forms of meaning, it is often the case that more than one definition works in tandem to create a significant place, reinforcing the character of the place. However, this is not the case in Berlin. Because of the past century's national and international sociopolitical shifts within Berlin, there exist conflicts of meaning within the places of the city, embodying social and political conflicts on an architectural scale.

Just as memory plays an essential role in the transformation of space into place, so too do memories play an equally vital role in the imagination and creation of new spaces and places. As Frances Downing is recalled: *Each set, each bank of images, was the embodiment of a person's experiences. From such experiences—both direct experiences and influences from surroundings—are built a set of values.* These values that are built from our experiences effect our interactions and decisions on both a conscious and subconscious level. In cases where these experiences are significant and/or are repeated in frequent, the reaction to that memory and encounters like it become what is colloquially referred to *second nature* or intuition.

Downing, Frances

Mark Lochrin, writing in Frances Downing's Rememberance and the Design of Place, recalls the experience of intuitive design: *Individual memories, even those not invoked by a deliberate or dream-like act of mental revisualizing, appear to well up as an influential, but subliminal tone.* This is to say that in addition to the intentionally recalled images and place memories architects are simultaneously experiencing subliminal influence from subconscious memories of place and form. As the architect becomes more practiced, these subconscious tones become more and more relevant and applicable to immediate design problems:

Lochrin, Mark

The expert designer simply "works" the act of design because he or she has "practiced" the rule-bound behavior over a span of time—it is this doing/acting individual who perhaps is less conscious of her or his own processes. At this point, intuitive design overtakes the architect's intentionality as years of practice has allowed the architect to develop a formula with his or her own memories. Design problems are plugged in to their *rule-bound* matrix and moments later memory-images are returned, adapted to the immediate issue.

Downing, Frances

With an understanding of intuitive design as memory-sourced materials and decisions lacking conscious intentionality, it is possible to extend that logic beyond the design scenario and argue that intuition occurs in every subjectively created idea or decision that we make. It is clear that some decisions are obviously intuitive, but when one considers the calculated argument, its logic must be traced back to its fundamental claims and facts. Like the matrices of the practiced architect, these fundamental claims and facts have their own rule sets and assumptions that are adapted to immediate issues. At their core, most subjective arguments are based on intuitive rule sets of societal or academic convention. The subconscious plays its minor role in these arguments as well, subtly leading the debater towards one argument over another.



Making Place in Berlin

Every city has a history, and although that history touches all reaches of the city, there are some locations, some places that the area's history is especially evident, and as a result changes the interpretation and experience of its environment. The space suddenly becomes ripened by the depth of memory associated with that space as significant happenings of the past are juxtaposed to the place of the present.

In this regard, Berlin is no exception, containing more than its fair share of history in its urban landscape. However, given the sheer number, proximity, and overlap of these places in Berlin, the interaction of place generates an unprecedented fracturing of urban experience. As Brian Ladd concludes his book *The Ghosts of Berlin*,

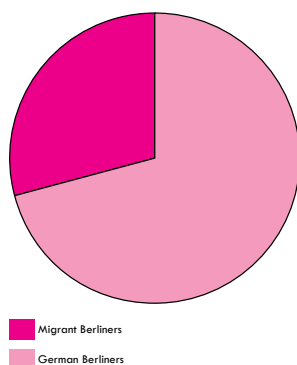
*German architecture and urban design cannot escape the crisis of German national identity. All cities' buildings display their cultural traditions, but the sandy soil of the German capital conceals the traces of a history so fiercely contested that no site, however vacant, is safe from controversy.*ⁱ

The complex layering and proximity of the places significant to the communal history of Berlin is such that places are not only generated from Berlin's identity crisis, but they also perpetuate that crisis, generating a cycle that is to repeat itself with every reclamation of the city.

This identity crisis might come as a surprise, considering the economic, social, and cultural sophistication of Berlin. However, when one reflects upon the extreme changes the city has gone through in the past century, its fractured identity makes sense. Multiple versions of Berlin exist concurrently within the same city; Berliners are struggling to find

ⁱ Ladd, Brian. *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1997. 234. Print.

ⁱⁱ fig 1.01 Immigrant population of Berlin relative to German-Born Berliners





which Berlin to identify with. They could reach back to the enlightened Berlin of Frederick the Great; or the Industrial powerhouse of Prussian Berlin; or the communist *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR) ; or they could connect to the many foreign cultures that make up modern Berlin, comprising of over a quarter of Berlin's current population. For many, the solution lay not in a choice between the city's conflicting pasts, but ignoring the city's history altogether in favor of generating their own identity, their own Berlin free from the haunts of its pasts. This sentiment is especially apparent in the most recent incarnation of the city, where *place* has become *real estate*. The newest Berlin is overwrites its past: shiny jewels of glass and steel arise, bedazzling the otherwise beige urban landscape.

Politically speaking, there have been six different *Berlins* in the past century. Each Berlin was governed with its own unique political philosophy, and cultivated various ideologies, cultures, and architecture. Objectively, this creates a dramatic urban collage of Berlin's eventful history; however, the proximity of these places and the meanings associated with them generates confusion among those attempting to identify with the city. As with any other major city of the world, Berlin is complex: containing different facets, cultures, and histories; but unlike any other city, the conflict of its histories fractures the city's identity: some try to remember, others try to forget; some actively, others indifferently. Because of the lack of a common contemporary history in Berlin, the identity of the city is constantly being written and rewritten by conflicting memories of Berliners, a conflict embodied by the architecture of the city itself.

(above) map of Mitte district in modern Berlin, landmark buildings filled in black

- 1237 - 1415 : Medieval Berlin
- 1415 - 1701 : Electorate of Holy Roman Empire
- 1701 - 1871 : Kingdom of Brandenburg-Prussia
- 1871 - 1918 : Prussian Empire, a.k.a. (First) German Reich
- 1918 - 1932 : Weimar Republic, (Second German Reich)
- 1932 - 1945 : National Socialist Party, "Third German Reich"
- 1945 - 1949 : Allied-occupation under U.S.A., U.K. , France, and U.S.S.R.
- 1949 - 1990 : *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (West Germany), *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (East Germany)
- 1990 - : *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Reunified Germany)

Place in Transit

Since their beginnings in the seventeenth century, rail stations have acted as the gates to cities, from which passengers first experience the character of the city. However, in a city so densely packed with historical, cultural, political, and personally significant places, these modern gates are often overlooked for the destinations that surround them. So appears to be the case in the rail system of Berlin, where stations are more often thought of as means to a place rather than places in and of themselves. This problem is compounded by the hyper-efficient design of the station platforms that facilitates movement through, rather than to, each platform. The effective signage and standardized platform elements enable novice passengers to navigate the rail system with relative ease, however once the brief learning curve is overcome the novelty of each station becomes almost trivial.

The Stadtbahn, or S-Bahn is the oldest rail transit system of Berlin, beginning in the late seventeenth century to facilitate commuting from the then suburbs of the city. Thanks to the oversights of the Hobrecht Plan of 1862 Berlin had one of the densest populations in the western world, which made life within the city cramped, at best. Those who could afford it lived in the suburbs of the city, but the commute alone made it an equally unattractive choice for many.^{xxi}

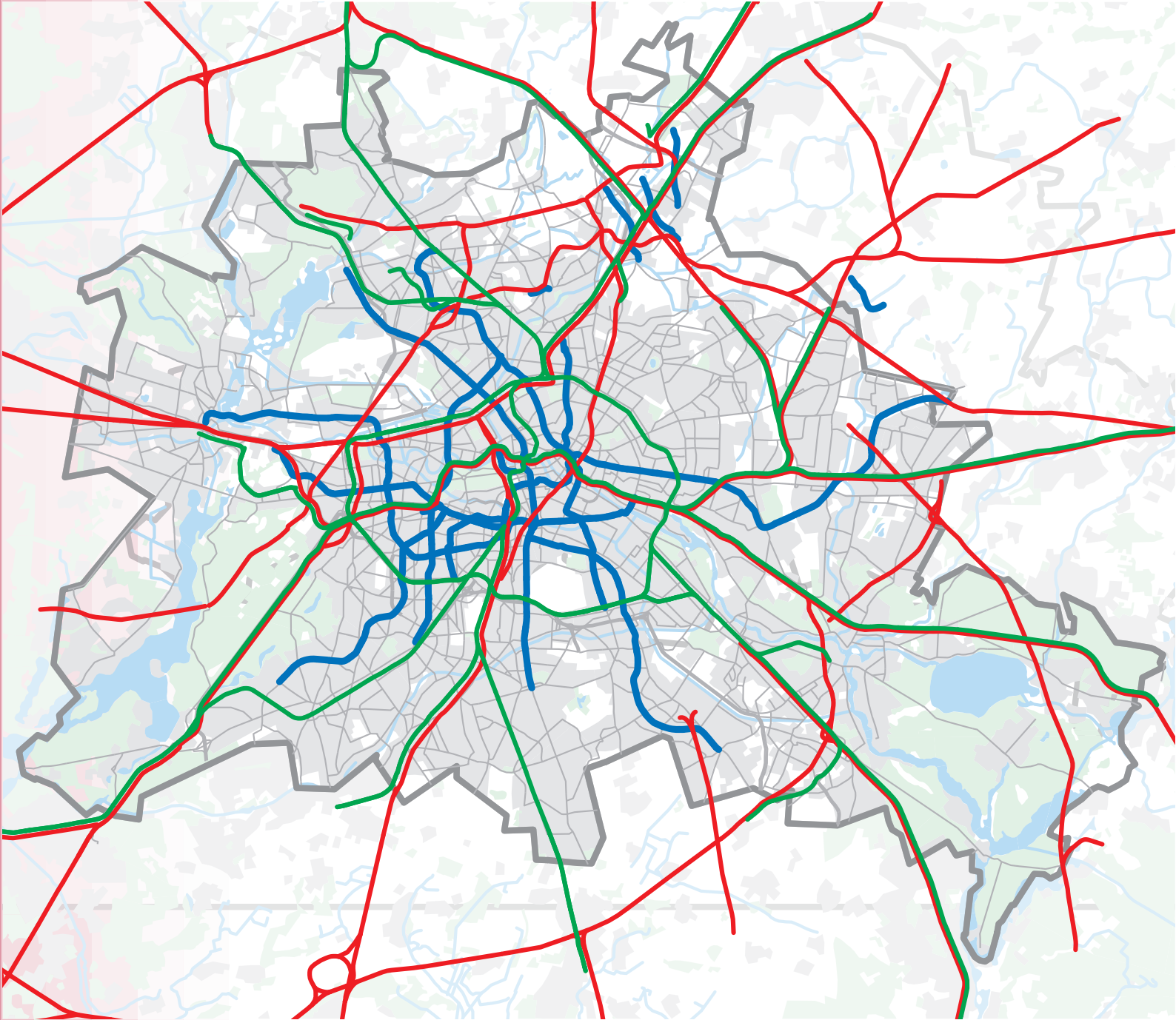
^{xxi}Niemann, Doug. Modernism by Mistake: The Hobrecht Plan's accidental contribution to modern transit. University of Kentucky. ARC315 course final paper. 2012.

As a result, a number of the international and German railways that passed through and around the city were modified, connected, and rerouted to create the first S-Bahn system, effectively wrinkling the urban fabric of Berlin. Like other major European cities of the 1800's, Berlin was designed to be experienced as a procession: with gates, boulevards, and public spaces composed as a sequence. With the S-Bahn, the urban procession was made all but irrelevant.^{xxii} Through a visitor's ability to enter anywhere along the former procession that they saw fit, every station in the rail system becomes a potential *gate* to Berlin. Given the speed and uniformity of the experience of a train car in transit, the effect of the surrounding city is minimized. The procession out of one place, between places, and entering another becomes glossed over by the constant of the train car experience, reducing miles of myriad places to five: the home, the departing station, the train car, the arriving station, and the destination. Thus the multitude of choreographed places that acted to build the character of a city through procession are bypassed, wrinkling the urban fabric to create a more efficient, more placeless way into Berlin.

^{xxii}Smyth-Penny, Julia. Lecture. University of Kentucky. 2011

The efficiency of the rail system is carried even further onto the platforms of each station, where efficiently spaced and effectively labeled platform elements expedite the flow of passengers in and out of each station. However, with this efficacy of flow the space of each platform is rendered especially temporal, due to the lack of time spent on each platform or to its resulting uniformity of

Berlin Rail System



- U-Bahn —
- S-Bahn —
- Regional Rail —



fig. 2.15 Crowd filling the grocer at Friedrichstraße on a Sunday

xxiii Relph. pg 35. 1975



fig. 2.16 Identical platform components at U8 Rosenthaler Platz and U55 Brandenburger Tor



fig. 2.16

experience. Through a rigorous execution of functionality in the design of rail stations within Berlin, the experiences in each station are numbed by the *inauthentic sense of place*, creating stations that vary so little in their experiences that they become placeless. So many elements of U-Bahn and S-Bahn platforms are similar that one can expect the same spacial interactions at every station in Berlin.

Despite the spacial variation in station architecture, the platforms themselves adhere to a strict typology, which itself is the result of spacing requirements objectively implemented across the city by Berlin's transit authority, BVG. On opposite sides of Berlin, U-Bahn platforms have the same ticket machines, garbage cans, bulletin boards, vending machines and food stands, generating a sameness of experience that minimizes one's ability to differentiate the memories of each station, thereby reducing their authenticity of place to such a degree that the stations become place-less. Placelessness, as defined by E. Relph in *Place and Placelessness*, is a *weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience.*^{xxiii} The network has homogenized the transit experience to such a degree that the placeness of each location is deteriorated by an association with the ambiguous *macro-place* of the entire rail network, rather than the existential space where the memories were created. Memories created in transit, in lacking site-specific sensorial association become blurred together, preventing any one station from standing out and becoming its own place.

Acting against the homogenizing force of the BVG are a number of diversifying forces within and without the train stations. In the examples observed here, a sense of place can be generated through the station's architecture, through supplemental programs



fig. 2.17 Hauptbahnhof's dramatic architecture generates imageability of place

within the station, through alternative uses of the station's space, and through the influence of the passengers themselves. As these forces manifest they impede and augment each other to create unique conditions of place in each station.

The role of a station's architecture in its sense of place is a fairly simple concept, in that the more striking or exceptional a station's space, the more memorable and significant the place becomes to its visitors. Because of their central clarity of form, remarkable size, exceptional architecture or unusual natural features, such places possess *high imageability*.^{xxiv} It should be noted, however, that a space's imageability is not related to a space's subjective quality. In other words, a poorly-designed space can be just as memorable as a well-designed space. This makes distinguishing stations with high imageability a much easier task, as imageability allows objective evaluation. As such, Berlin's Hauptbahnhof can be evaluated as one of the most imageable stations in the city due to its large size, uncommon materiality, and modern design.

xxiv *ibid*

Supplemental programs also serve as a diversifying force within stations. Because of the intersection, elevation, and/or depth of the rail lines that cross the city, a large area is needed to comfortably allow passenger circulation to and from the station's platforms. Where possible, retail is placed along these paths, often in the form of flower shops or fast-food chains. In larger stations, larger residual space allows shops to cater specifically to their constituencies. For example, the Friedrichstraße S-Bahn station, located in a more residential area, contains a grocery and cobbler, while the Alexanderplatz S-Bahn Station, sited in the center of a commercial and tourist district, is home to a cigar shop and two cell phone stores. In any case, the diversification of programs within these stations in turn diversify and augment the numbers



fig. 2.18 Senefelderplatz's lone ATM

of memories generated within them.

Where the supplemental programs of a station can be seen as additional opportunities for memory creation and association, in some cases space within the station experiences an undesigned repurposing, thereby compounding the significance of that station. Through the addition of a program to a space with an existing, designed program, the space's meaning is augmented. If a U-Bahn platform has the only ATM in three blocks, like at Senefelderplatz, the station becomes both a place for transit and a place for monetary transactions, making it a transportation and financial hub for local pedestrians. In another example, the grocery at Friedrichstraße is one of the only groceries open on Sundays in the entire city. Because of this, the absent-minded of Berlin flock to the station to pick up last-minute shopping, crowding the ground floor of the S-Bahn station. While the grocery is open the other days of the week, on Sundays the Friedrichstraße bahnhof grocery begins to supercede the placeness of its station. For some, Friedrichstraße on Sundays is a place of culinary salvation, while for others it becomes a place of deep frustration.

With the uniformities of Berlin's rail system, there is often little room for catering to site-specific constituencies within each station. With the exception of large S-bahn stations that have enough residual square footage to accommodate specialized retail, most stations' programmatic content varies only slightly across the city. In many cases this homogeneity actually exacerbates the effect of the passengers themselves on the experience of the station. The cultural and personal background, job, schedule, and even mood of each passenger effects how she interacts with the station and its occupants. That interaction is likewise witnessed by her fellow passengers and is subsequently reacted to, per each

passenger's own background and condition. As a result, stations in residential neighborhoods service somber, purposeful individuals in morning and evening rush hours, giving the stations a tense urgency of Berliners trying to meet a schedule. Alternatively, stations in commercial districts carry more relaxed, casually dressed passengers, often traveling in groups of two to ten. These stations maintain a more relaxed atmosphere, where conversation peppers the air and urgency is replaced by impatience.

The signs in the station use icons, arrows, names, and times to direct passengers to their destinations as quickly and efficiently as possible. The name of the station itself is emblazoned across the walls of the platform and across signs in the platform's center to help orient passengers on their journey. When the train cars finally arrive, the impatient pedestrians crowd around the closest door, taking care to make room for exiting passengers. The pedestrians file in to the car, and the train lurches away from the station, continuing until the next stop, where the process repeats.

The rail system of Berlin is simultaneously a series of hubs of concentrated placeness and a placeless transit system of fleeting temporality. As Jimenez Lai puts it: *Here does not matter, because here never lasts long enough to be meaningful.* The hubs of placeness, or the stations, hang on the rail network like a string of pearls, allowing the thread of the placeless rail system pass through them while the stations reap the benefits of a larger constituency and maintain their own placeness through program, imageability, and exclusivity.



fig. 2.19 Clock and marquee at Senefelderplatz



St. Oberholz Lifeguard Chairs, Rosenthalerplatz, Berlin

Berlin Summer Studio 2012

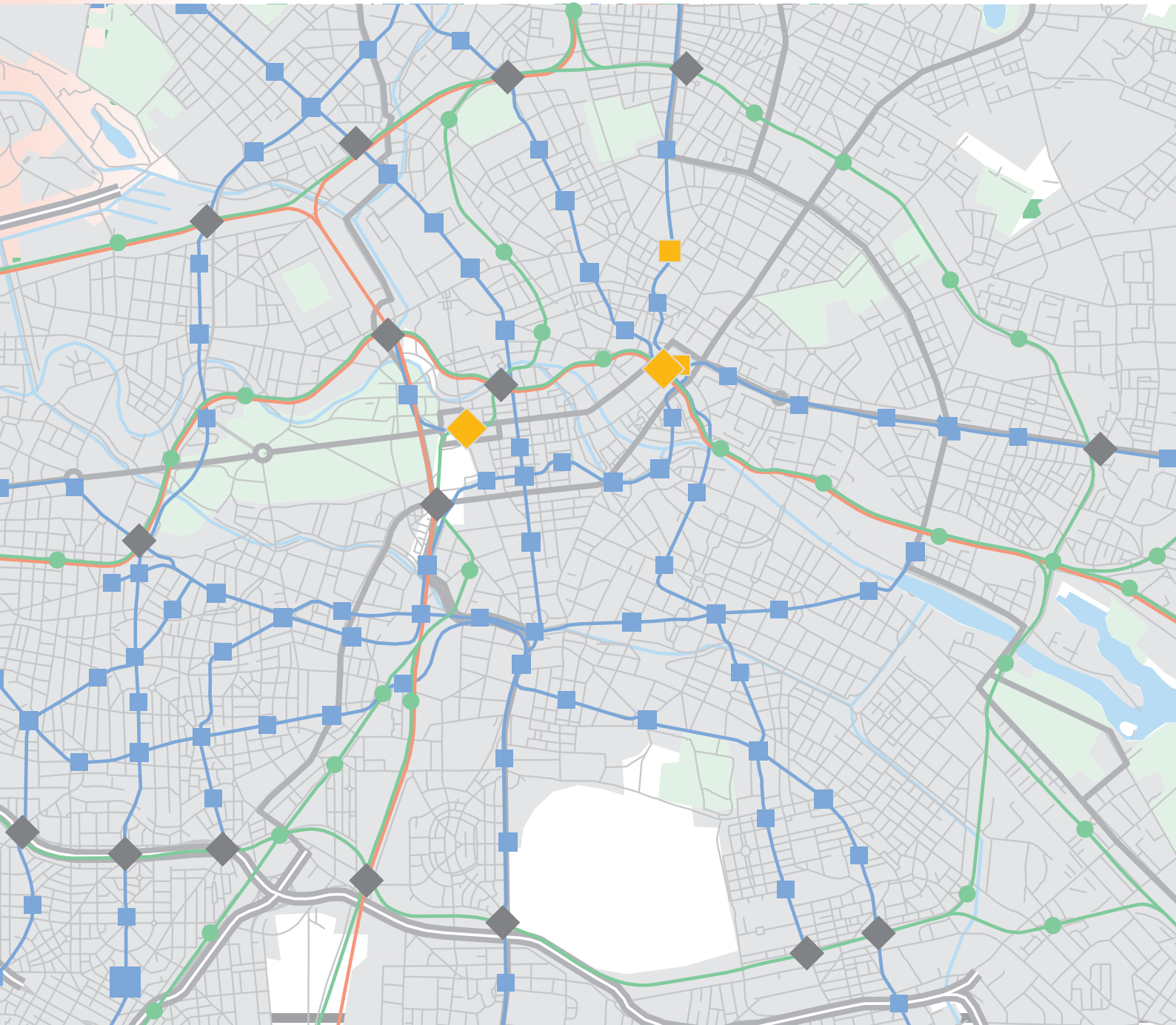
From the prompt for our first assignment in Berlin:

Find 15 examples of in-between spaces in the public realm that speak to the peculiarities of Berlin. For Monday, present documentation to explain the reason why you think this public space represents this notion of an in-between space: a leftover space that either has been taken advantage of or has potential for future programs, and relates back to the unique characteristics of the city.

Each student was subsequently assigned a U-Bahn line to take to discover our own in-between spaces, as a *jumping off point* for our exploration into the city. I, however, never made it that far. I was particularly drawn to the areas in and around the stations themselves. Despite being renowned as one of the most efficient rail systems in the world, it was still very possible to find misappropriates or otherwise usable space throughout the train stations of Berlin. In the vestibules, along the circulation, and even on the platforms I saw architectural opportunity. At the time I had no idea what would fill those spaces, but I knew it had to be better than what it was.

The space that initially caught my eye was on the U2 platform at Alexanderplatz, where an odd assortment of subway platform elements were in just the right proximity to suggest a sub-volume within the larger volume of the platform. After realizing how unique this occurrence was, I broadened my scope and recognized that the same objects that created the sub-volume at Alexanderplatz could be found on every train platform in Berlin, and not only that but they can be found in some sort of alignment with the central axis of the platform. I considered the space between each of these elements to be the misused space. In the following graphics, the space itself is highlighted in gold, with the platform elements in purple.

Case Study Stations



- Junction Station ◆
- U-Bahn Line & Station ■
- S-Bahn Line & Station ●
- Regional Rail Line —
- Station Case Studies ■

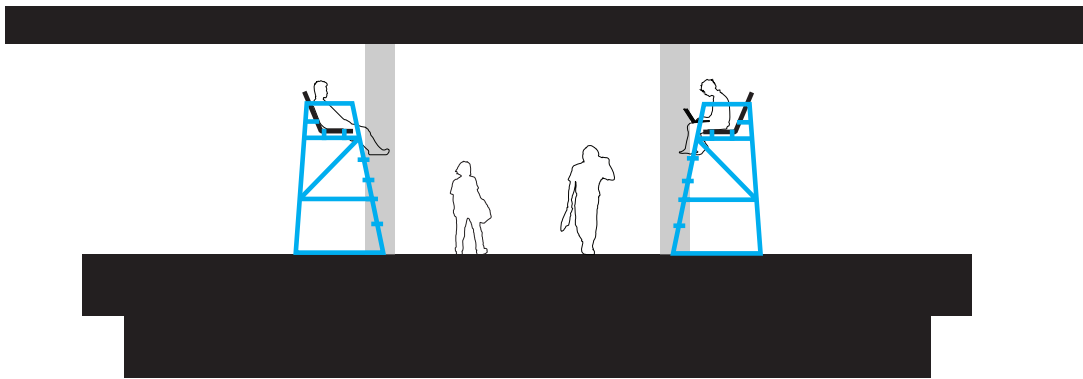


fig. 3.03 Early concept sketch of elevated 'lifeguard' chairs for elevated public observation

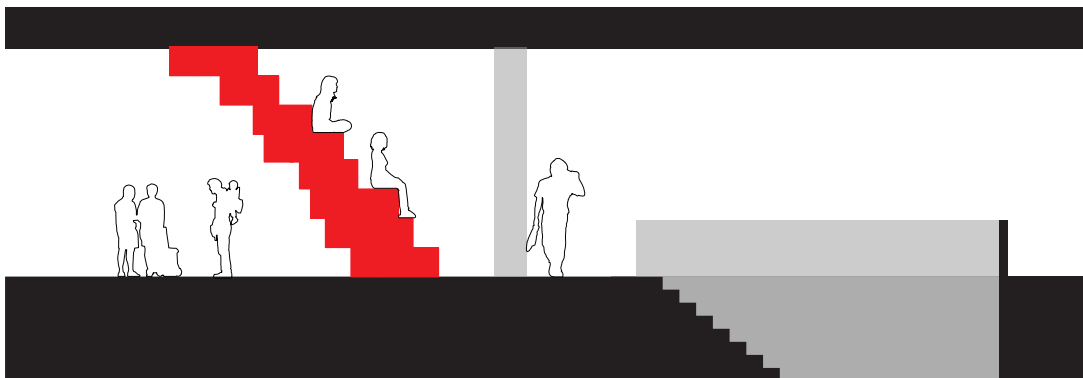


fig. 3.04 Early concept sketch of seating as amphitheater for public viewing

Railway Zimmers

In the next step of the process we were instructed to insert a Kino, or cinema, into each space we had catalogued. To catalyze the design process, we were required to use 45cm cubic units to generate our kinos. Many of us initially thought the cubes would cause more problems than they solved, but we soon realized that because the form was already a set unit, problems regarding space, function, and site could be addressed more thoroughly. Each proposed kino was to be designed as a temporary installation piece to be placed within/on its space so as to allow commentary on the utilization of space in Berlin without destroying the space itself.

I did not see the space as 'wasted,' as the platforms were already highly efficient in circulation and function. I considered the general area around the center of each platform to be under utilized and in some cases misused; the spaces created by the platform elements could become something much more than just a functional space for circulation and brief interactions. What if these spaces, rigorously organized for circulative efficiency, became passive places, where passengers would want to not only slow down, but linger?

As I began to insert the Kino program into my spaces, I became interested in the function of the Kino cubes while the platform was in use. Early sketches (figs. 3.04, 3.05) showed an

amphitheater form replacing the existing seating on the platform, and upon addressing the daily use of the elevated seats, immediate parallels were drawn to the social phenomena lifeguard chairs.

The form of each platform intervention was determined by a hierarchy of site-specific parameters, primarily the existing platform elements and circulation. The mandated 45cm cubes were clustered around these elements and shifted within the space based on circulative and programmatic needs. Accommodations were made for the existing micro-programs of the platform, with necessary space reserved for signs, vending machines, and food stands.

By physical elevation, the seated person is removed from the action on the surface of the platform, allowing the seated to passively observe the goings-on below. By elevating themselves on 45cm cubes, visitors to each station could remove themselves from the movement on the platform and see the station from a different perspective, prompting a reinterpretation of the space as a whole, a keener observation of social and personal tendencies, and a connection with the few sharing that elevation. Through this change in perspective, I sought to change the transient space of the rail station platform to a more passive place where people would want to stay longer than necessary.

This also inspired a re-interpretation of the kino program: at night, the cubes would allow for viewing projector screens, while during the day, those seated would see the platform a stage, and its occupants conscious and unconscious players in the drama of daily transit. Because of this, each station was designed for both forms of theater, providing special seating for kino audiences as well as ample generic seating for railway passengers.

The resulting designs were evaluated to be much more successful in their daily functions, and as a result the kino program was eliminated. The projection screens were removed from each design, but each composition remained unchanged. Although it would have been preferable to re-design each station, the elimination of the kino program came so late in the studio process that only minor changes could be made to the designs. The scars of the jettisoned program can be seen in the specialized seating areas of the design, where kino patrons would sit on softer seats to watch their two-hour movies.

Instead of acting as a seating installation & social theater by day and cinema by night, the designs now acted simply as social theaters. Clarified in their program,

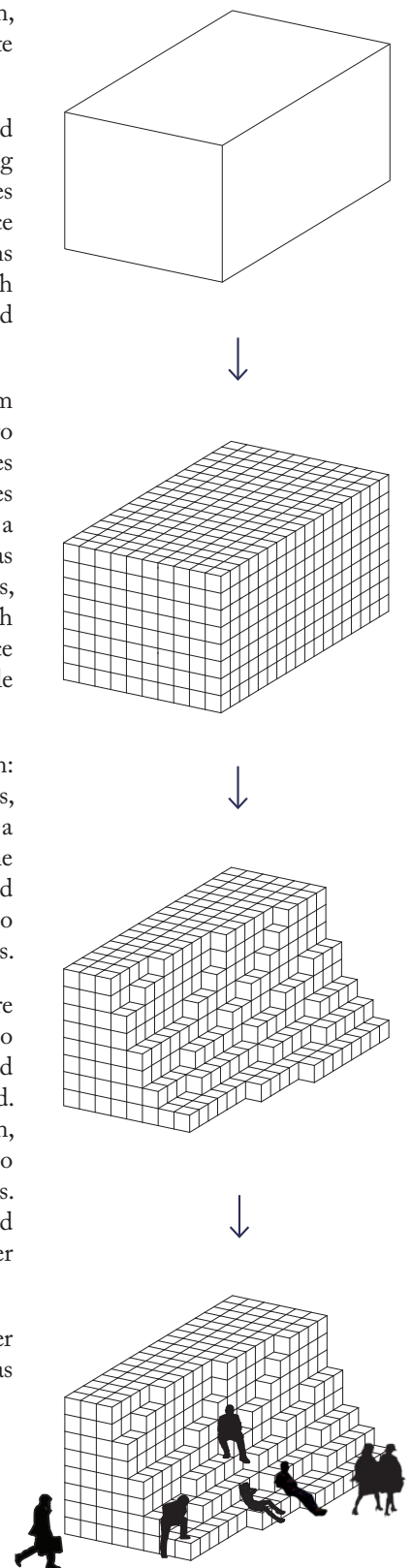


fig. 3.05 Formal concept of platform re-design

Senefelderplatz



fig 4.01_Switchroom at Senefelderplatz



fig 4.02_Seating at Senefelderplatz

Senefelderplatz has the distinction among the group of not only being the most northern station, but also the smallest, as it only services the U2 line. In this case, the station is its platform and vice-versa. In many ways, the Senefelderplatz U2 station represents the archetypal Berlin U-Bahn station: a single-line station with efficient station and platform architecture, with a mostly residential constituency. Given the commonality of this type of station, the sense of place for each station is for the most part generated by the exceptional architecture of the station – if it is read as such – and the personal memories of the passengers who use it most. As mentioned earlier, the greater number of memories associated with a space increases its significance as a place among those who experience it, and it is because of this that stations like Senefelderplatz have the strongest sense of place to their constituencies, making the station a locally significant place.

This local significance is especially apparent to those outside of the constituency, as visitors to Senefelderplatz are likely to be underwhelmed by its unremarkable form. The most notable aspect of the station, especially to those unaccustomed to subways, is the shallow depth of the station. After only two flights of stairs, one arrives directly on the platform of Senefelderplatz, with less than two meters of earth separating the ceiling of the station from the surface. After this brief journey, one becomes immediately aware of the rigorous symmetry of the entire station. Save for the elevator on the north side of the platform, every element of the platform—the riveted columns, the maintenance and former control rooms, the vending machine and even the trash bins—is loyally in line with the center axis of the platform. Architecturally speaking, while the symmetry created by the platform elements is aesthetically pleasant, it only serves to add to the tepid regularity of the rest



fig 4.03 View from south entrance at Senefelderplatz



fig 4.04 Maintenance closet and northbound platform at Senefelderplatz

of the station.

However, within the tepid regularity of an axis in a box, one of the aligned elements, the *geldautomat* (ATM), actually serves to compound the sense of place of the station by making the station a different kind of place altogether. The ATM at Senefelderplatz happens to be the only location available within 500m, so for the local residents, restaurant patrons, and business owners, Senefelderplatz is not only a place of transit, but also a place of monetary transaction. This augments the station's sense of place through the addition of meaning to the space, as well as through the subsequent memories associated with either or both meanings of place. For example, if a resident runs out of cash while enjoying the local pub, he can return to the station that brought him there and withdraw more money. In this case, the station carries the personal significance of both the point of arrival to an area of leisure, as well as the point where he realizes how much he has spent. Because both memories occurred within the same space, both contribute to the personal significance of that space for the unfortunate resident.

Although the area immediately surrounding the Senefelderplatz station is regarded as "mixed-use" by the city planning department [citation], the majority of the land around the stop is purely residential. The neighborhood makes up the southern edge of the borough of Prenzlauer Berg, the most affluent of the eastern Boroughs. Prenzlauer



fig 4.05_Senefelderplatz column detail



Senefelderplatz



fig 4.06 Marquee, billboard, and map board at Senefelderplatz

Berg and the neighborhood around Senefelderplatz has one of the highest populations of university-educated citizens while simultaneously leading the city in terms of total number of young residents under three years old. These statistics may be true especially in the residential areas of the borough, but in the area around Senefelderplatz the population's demographics are a bit skewed. In addition to the shops and restaurants lining the street around the station, the block to the southeast of the stop provides a particularly interesting community. A restaurant, hostel, rock bar, architecture school, and a hand full of art studios and galleries now occupy what was once known as the Pfefferberg Brewery, a beer factory built in the industrial boom of Berlin. The mix of affluent young parents in the neighborhood with the assorted constituency of the Pfefferberg complex ensures an interesting mix of characters at Senefelderplatz. It would not be uncommon to see a group of bleary-eyed twenty-year-olds step on the platform at 6 a.m., shuffling past a sharply dressed thirty-year-old on his morning commute and a mother with twins on their way to the park.



U-Bahn Station 
U-Bahnlinie U2 

Senefelderplatz

Site Zoning

Land for building purposes

Residential building land, W1 (FSI above 1.5)	Mixed building land, M1
Residential building land, W2 (FSI up to 1.5)	Mixed building land, M2
Residential building land, W3 (FSI up to 0.8)	Commercial / industrial
Residential building land, W4 (FSI up to 0.4)	Retail concentration
Special building land Capital city functions (H)	Special building land
Special building land with commercial character	Special building land with large proportion of green

Land for community facilities

Higher education and research	Culture
School	Administration
Hospital	Post office
Sport	Security
Community requirements land	Community requirements land with large proportion of green

Land for supply and disposal plants

Area with commercial character / Area with mixed use character	Area with high proportion of green / Area in agricultural use
Water supply	Energy, power supply
Refuse or sewage disposal	Bus or railway yard

Transport

Motorway with entrance / exit	Railway land
Major road	Urban and regional rapid transport station above / below ground level
Option for major road	Main-line station above / below ground level
Tunnel	Light railway
Airport	

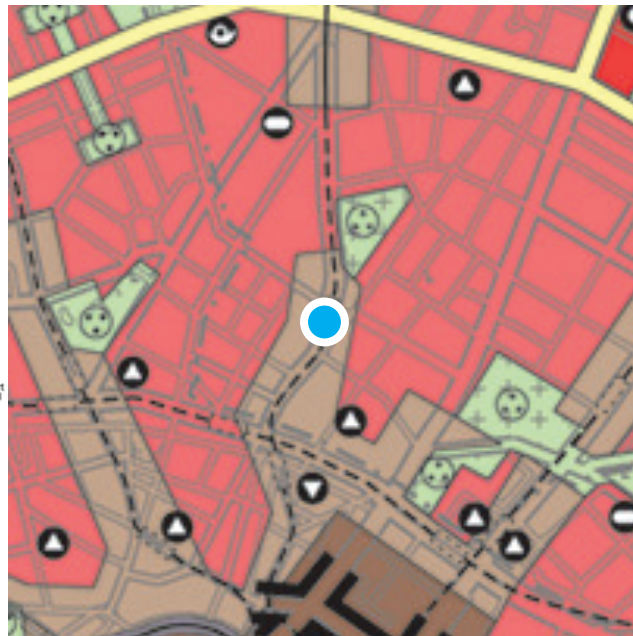
Open spaces, water

Green area	Field or meadow
Parkland	Sport
Cemetery	Water-sports
Allotments	Camping
Woodland	Agricultural land
Water	

Use restrictions for environmental protection (Land Use Plan and other sources)

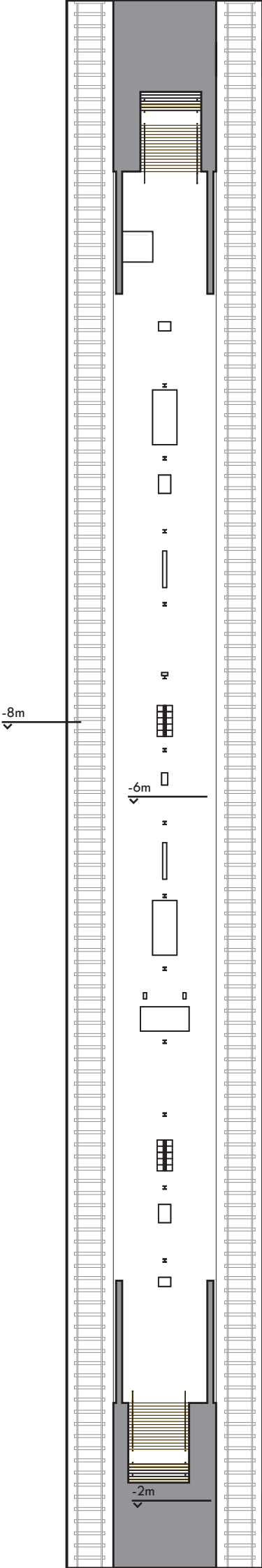
Residential areas of high landscape value	Flora-fauna-habitat-area* / Nature reserve
Clean air priority area	Landscape conservation area
Aircraft noise protection area	Water conservation area
Planning zone	UNESCO world heritage area
Polluted ground	

* including bird protection area



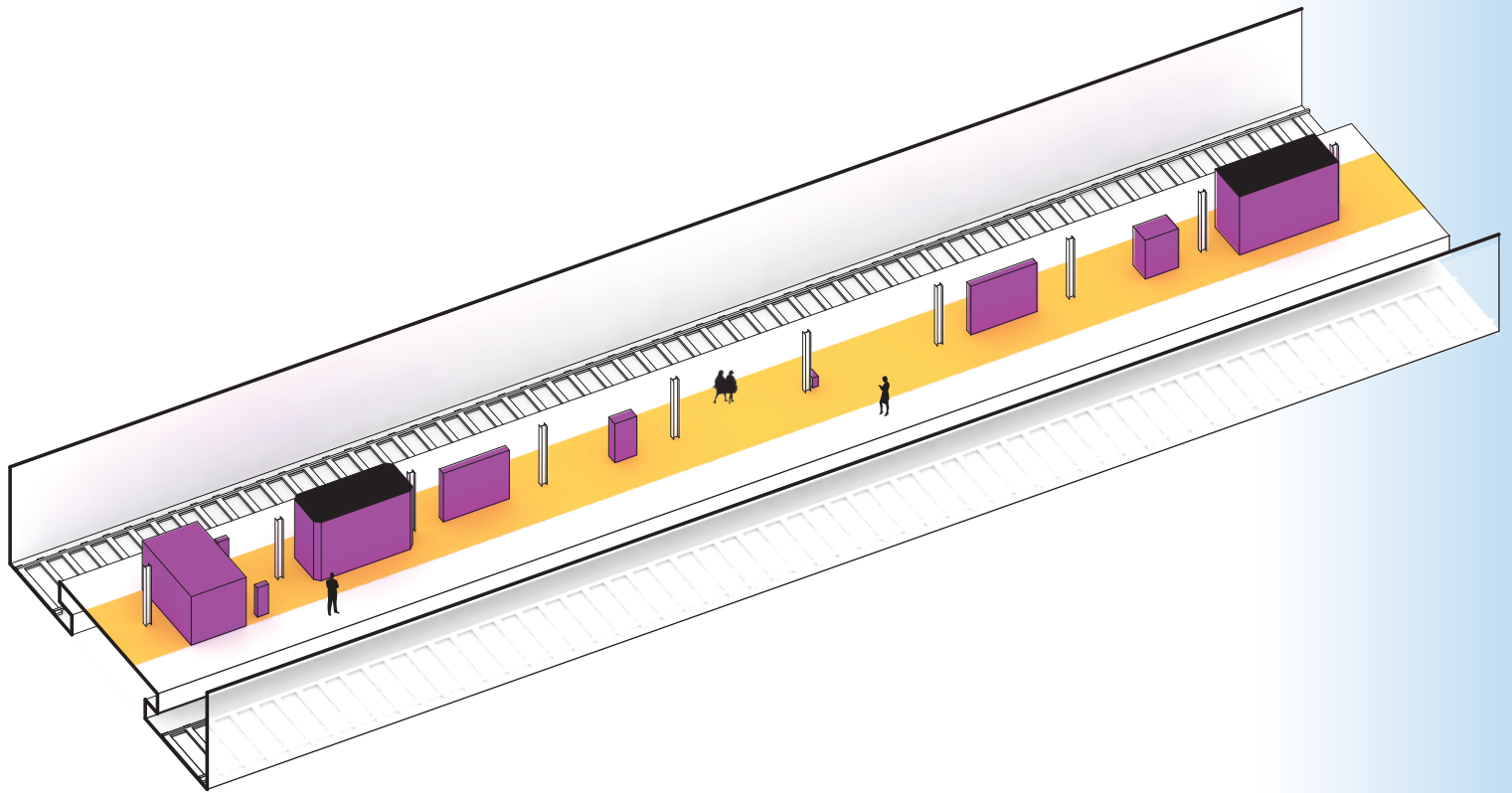
Rail Station

Plan



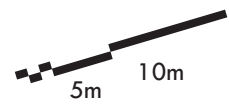
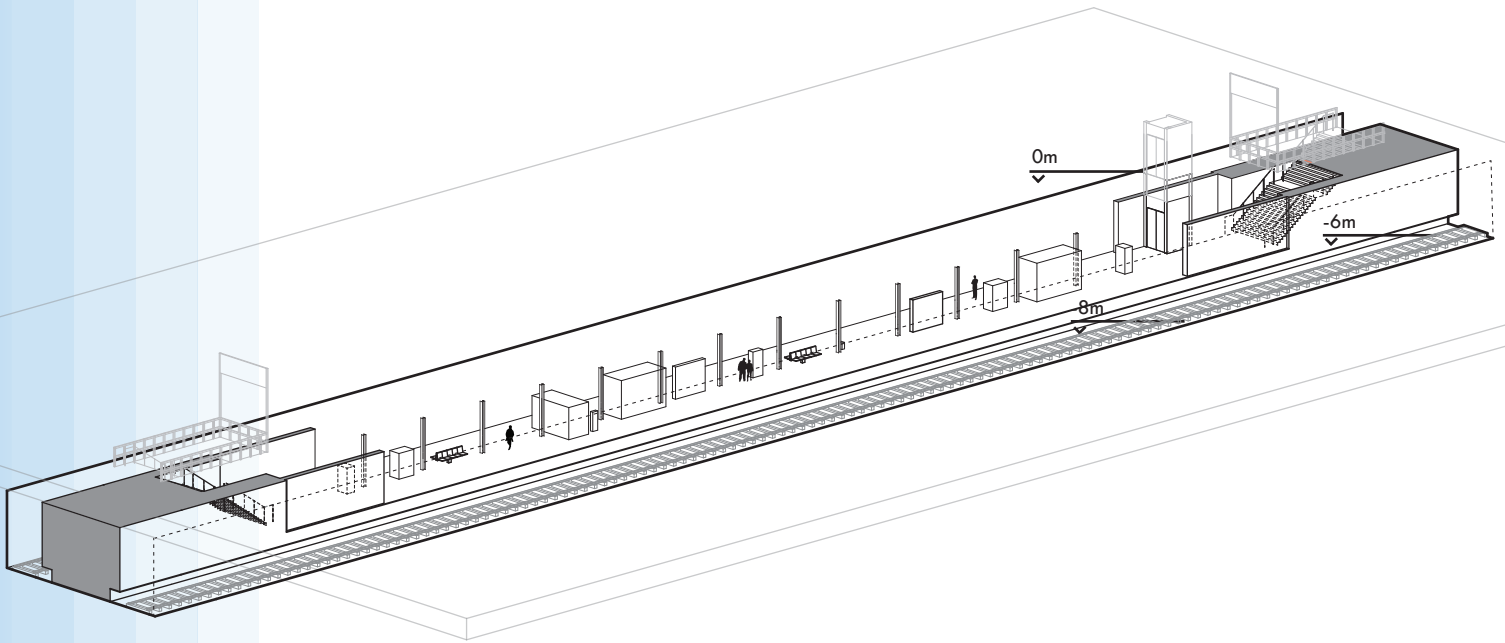
Senefelderplatz U2

In-between Space
Axon



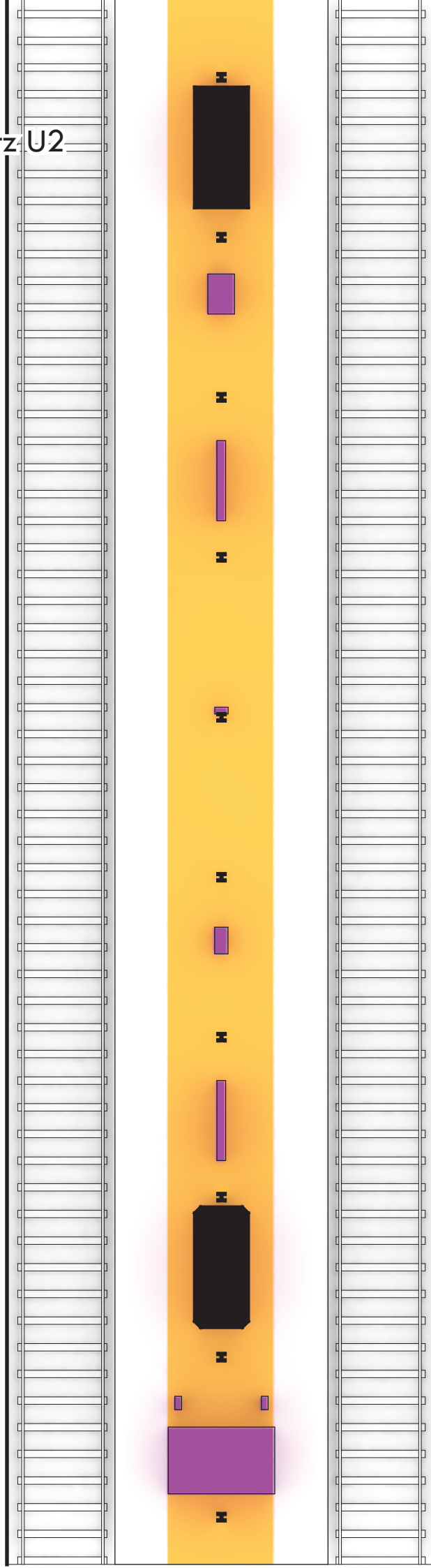
- In-between space
- platform elements

Axon

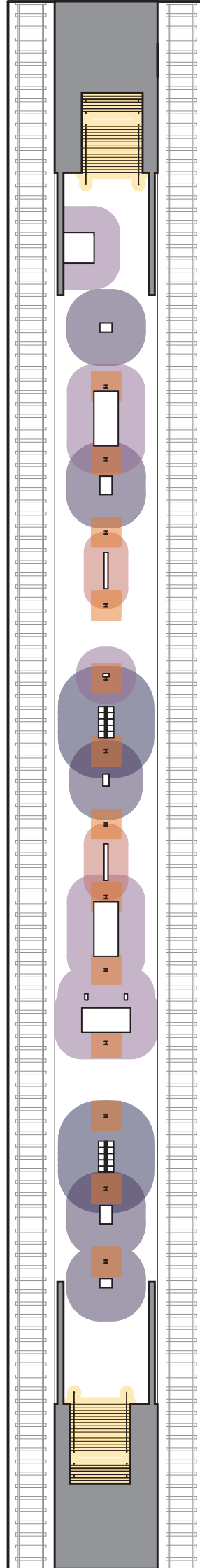








Senefelderplatz U2

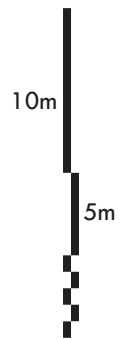
In-Between Space
Plan



Component Density Relative to Duration of Use

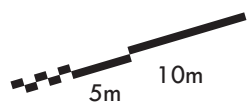
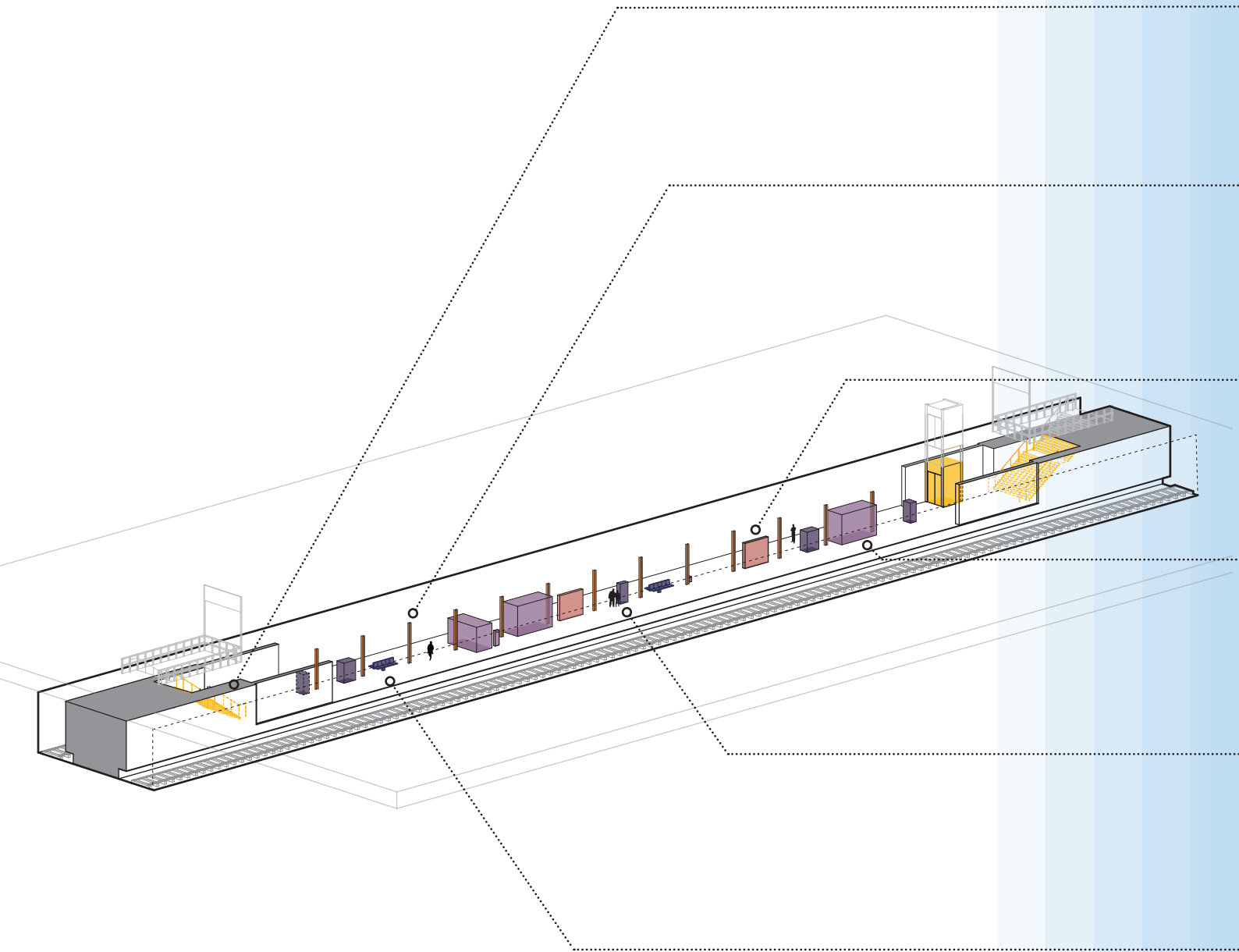


- Circulation 
- Structure 
- Infographics 
- Maintenance+Storage 
- Monetary Exchange 
- Seating 



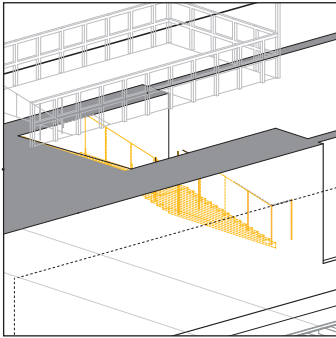
Senefelderplatz

Platform Components



Platform Component and Duration of Interaction

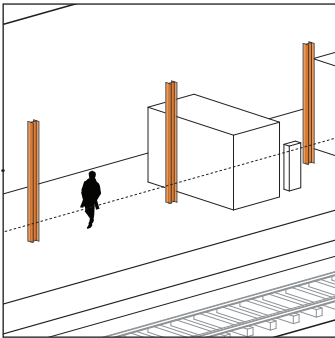
Circulation



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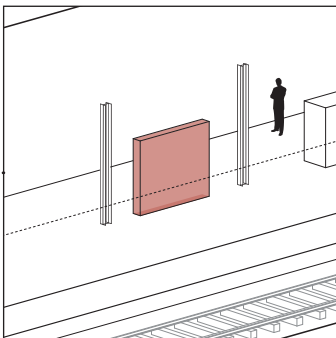
Structure



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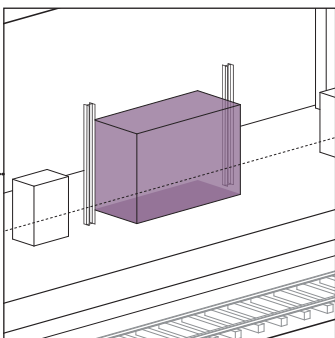
Infographics



5s-5min



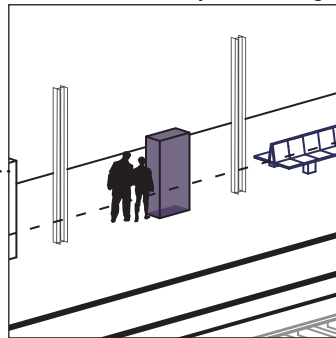
Maintenance+Storage



5s-10min



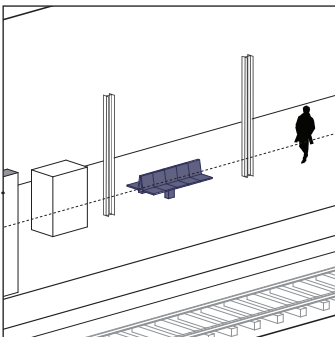
Monetary Exchange



2min-15min



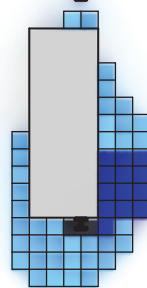
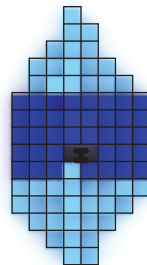
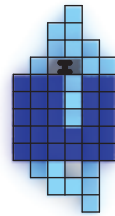
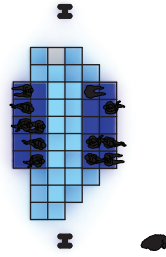
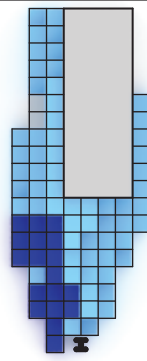
Seating



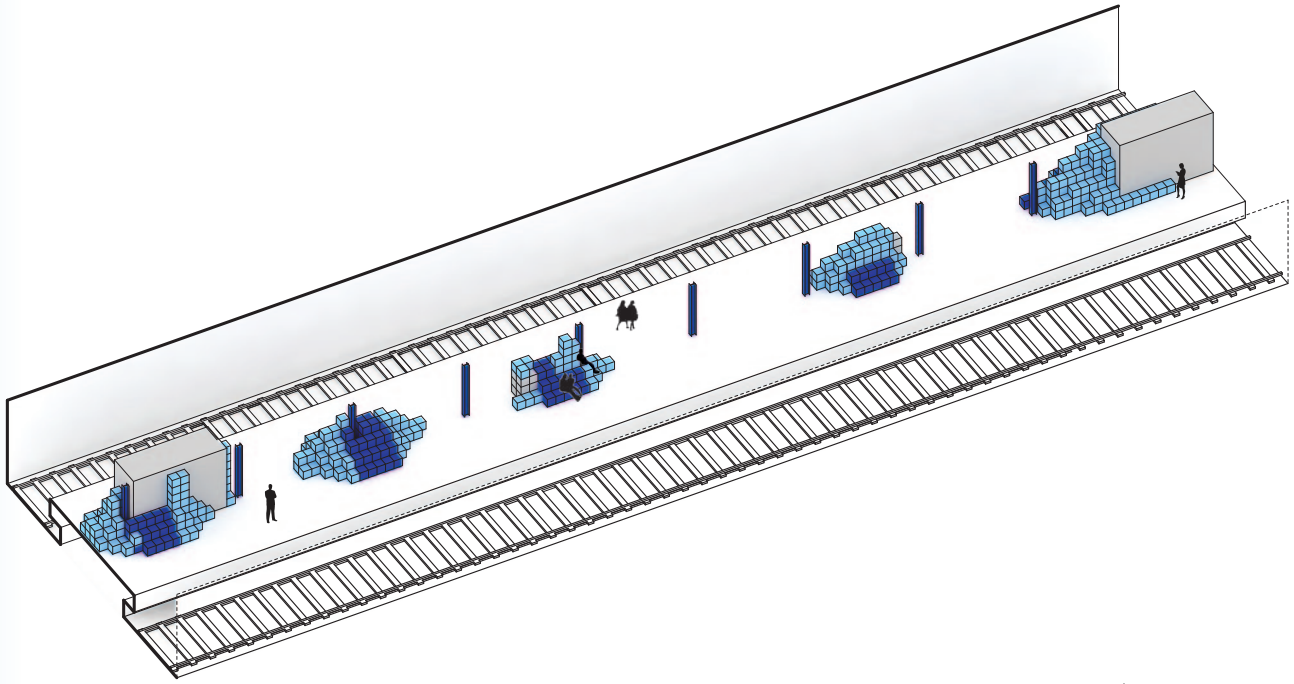
30s-15min+





Platform Re-Design
Plan



Platform Re-Design Axon



- integrated platform components 
- cubic landscape units 
- specialized seating 

Platform Re-Design Elevation



Alexanderplatz U2



fig 4.07_Clustered platform elements at Alexanderplatz U2

Like the Senefelderplatz station up the line, the U2 platform of the Alexanderplatz station is only a few flights of steps away from the surface. However, where at Senefelderplatz the station was surrounded by a neighborhood, U2 Alexanderplatz crosses directly under the famous Alexanderplatz itself. Originally a public space outside the Königstor (the King's Gate), the eastern counterpart of the Brandenburg Gate, Alexanderplatz acted as public space for a suburb of Berlin until 1805, when it was renamed for Czar Alexander I. As the industrial revolution took hold of Berlin, the city increased in density, and the open space available at Alexanderplatz provided ample commercial opportunity.



fig 4.08_Platform elements suggest volumes through their extruded masses

Since the mid 1800's, Alexanderplatz has maintained a strong commercial presence in Berlin, and even now the station draws thousands each day to the shopping centers and entertainment on its periphery. This draw has created a multiplication of the transit lines associated with the plaza, which is presently served by three U-Bahn lines, three S-Bahn lines, three bus lines and five tram lines. The three U-Bahn lines, despite the apparent age of the station, are actually the latest addition to the transit matrix of Alexanderplatz. Built from 1918 to 1931, the three-level subway station services the U2 on its highest platform, pedestrian circulation on the middle level, and the U5 and U8 lines crossing underneath on the lowest level.

Of these three platforms, the Alexanderplatz U2 is the most compelling. Because of its architectural breaks from precedent, the multiple types of place that it becomes for its constituency, and the social theatre created by the passengers on the platform, the Alexanderplatz U2 platform has the strongest sense of place. This strength of place helps the platform transcend its locality to



fig 4.09_More dispersed platform elements at Alexanderplatz U2



fig 4.10_South entrance to Alexanderplatz U2, Billboard, seating, and food vendor

the point where the station becomes incorporated into the place of the space above and becomes significant to the entire city of Berlin.

Like many other U-Bahn platforms built in the 1920's, the descent to the U2 platform is very short. However, upon reaching the platform, the regularity so common to other stations appears to be absent here, as the twin rows of columns follow the curve of the platform and the stairs, vendors, elevators, and signs struggle to align their orthogonal shapes. The especially wide platform provides ample room outside the columns, allowing for the elements along the center axis to organize themselves in a variety of arrangements, creating among themselves implied volumes within the larger space of the platform.

Food kiosks operate on opposite ends of the platform within this center space, and despite the rules against food on the trains, the vendors still receive a good deal of business. With purchases from these vendors, the center space of the platform becomes a place to eat, where one can use the standing-height tables around the food kiosks, sit down on a bench, or simply enjoy food whilst standing. By doing this, the platform in essence functions as the patron's breakfast room.



fig 4.11_From within the clustered platform elements at Alexanderplatz U2

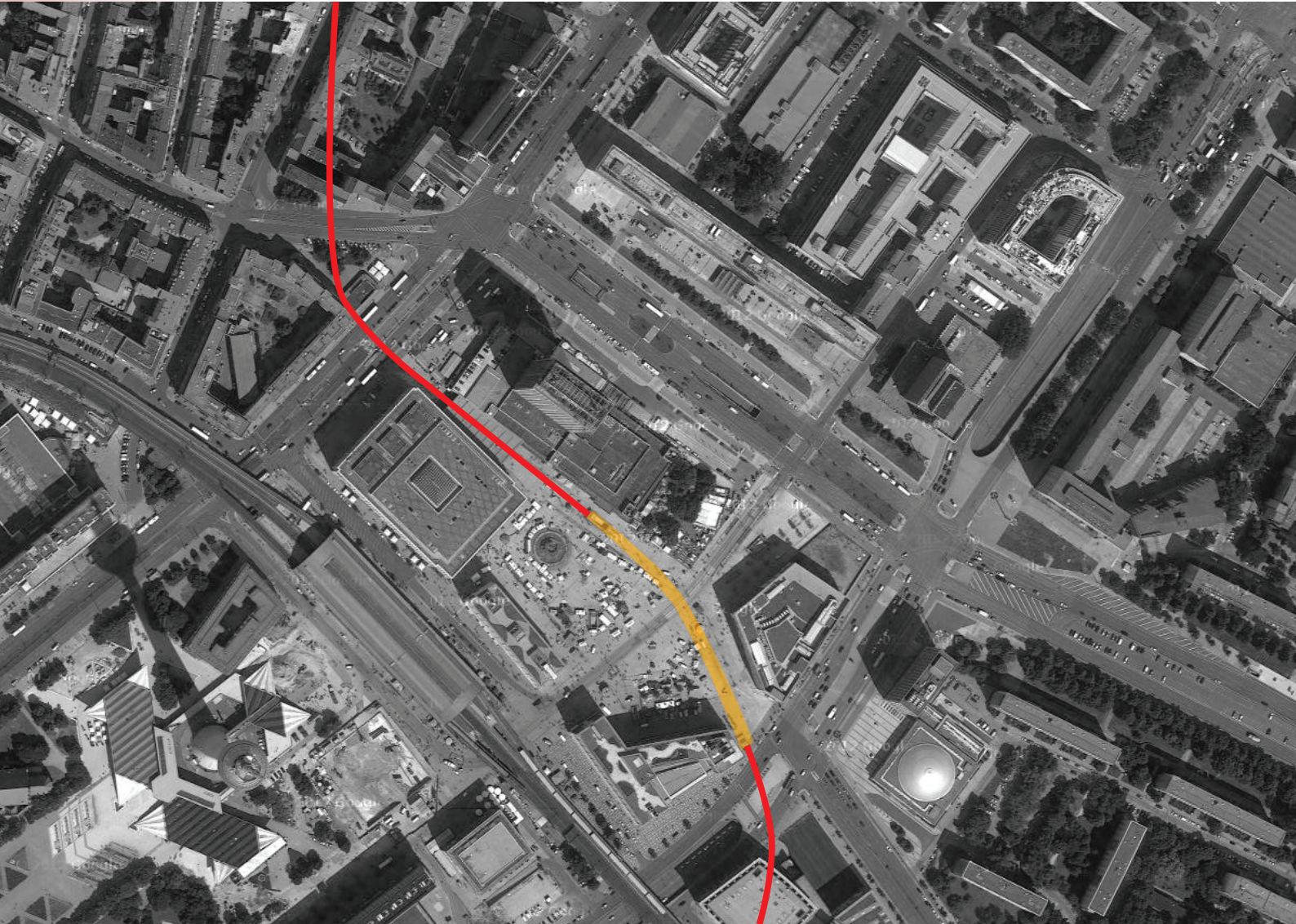
Alexanderplatz U2



fig 4.12_Summer festival at Alexanderplatz

It takes a certain kind of person to eat pastries in a public place, because no matter how neat the pastry is eaten, everyone else on the platform, either intentionally or incidentally, is watching it being eaten. This is especially true for the U2 platform, which is almost always busy with people walking through or waiting on their own train. As a result, one's actions are almost always witnessed by another, creating a subconscious social theatre on the stage of the platform. The drama is especially ripe on the U2 platform, where the tourist, commercial, and business interests of its internationally-diverse constituency mix and match among and within the people on the platform. With widely varied intentions and equally varied backgrounds, it is nearly impossible to predict who will comprise one's fellow passengers at Alexanderplatz, but it is certain that they will be interesting.

Perhaps what makes the character of passengers at the Alexanderplatz U2 stand out is the station's proximity to the event space of Alexanderplatz. As its entrance is so near the shopping centers and festival space of the plaza, the energy of those exciting events gets carried onto the platform. To clarify, the kind of excitement that is brought onto the platform in both situations is not necessarily the thrilling kind, but it refers to the subconscious excitement experienced by proxy. Much like how witnessing a yawn triggers one's own yawning, proxy to excitement convinces the subconscious that there is cause for excitement. When teenagers, with purchases in hand, chatter in excitement of their new things, when toddlers dance in place, still dripping from their adventure in the fountain, and when tourists with oversized cameras stink up the station with 'authentic' currywurst, they influence the sympathies of the witness's subconscious. The tone of the experience of the space is changed by these sympathies, and in that change the sense of place is augmented.



U-Bahn Station 

U-Bahnlinie U2 

Alexanderplatz U2

Site Zoning

Land for building purposes

Residential building land, W1 (FSI above 1.5)	Mixed building land, M1
Residential building land, W2 (FSI up to 1.5)	Mixed building land, M2
Residential building land, W3 (FSI up to 0.8)	Commercial / industrial
Residential building land, W4 (FSI up to 0.4)	Retail concentration
Special building land Capital city functions (H)	Special building land
Special building land with commercial character	Special building land with large proportion of green

Land for community facilities

Community requirements land	Community requirements land with large proportion of green
Higher education and research	Culture
School	Administration
Hospital	Post office
Sport	Security

Land for supply and disposal plants

Area with commercial character / Area with mixed use character	Energy, power supply
Area with high proportion of green / Area in agricultural use	Bus or railway yard
Water supply	
Refuse or sewage disposal	

Transport

Motorway with entrance / exit	Railway land
Major road	Urban and regional rapid transport station above / below ground level
Option for major road	Main-line station above / below ground level
Tunnel	Light railway
Airport	

Open spaces, water

Green area	Field or meadow
Parkland	Sport
Cemetery	Water-sports
Allotments	Camping
Woodland	Agricultural land
Water	

Use restrictions for environmental protection (Land Use Plan and other sources)

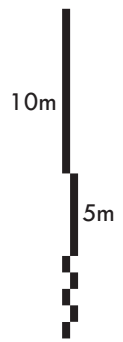
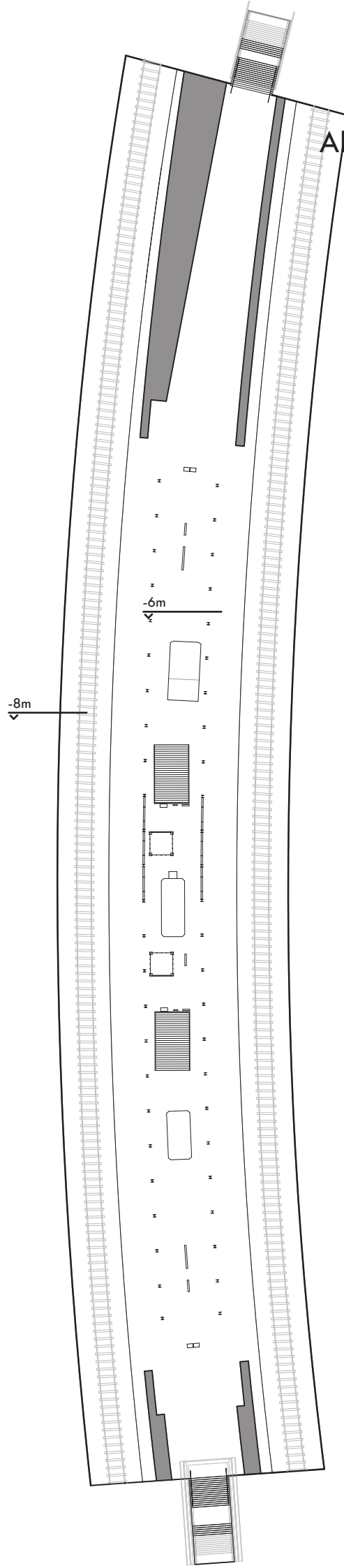
Residential areas of high landscape value	Flora-fauna-habitat-area* / Nature reserve
Clean air priority area	Landscape conservation area
Aircraft noise protection area	Water conservation area
Planning zone	UNESCO world heritage area
Polluted ground	

* including bird protection area



Rail Station

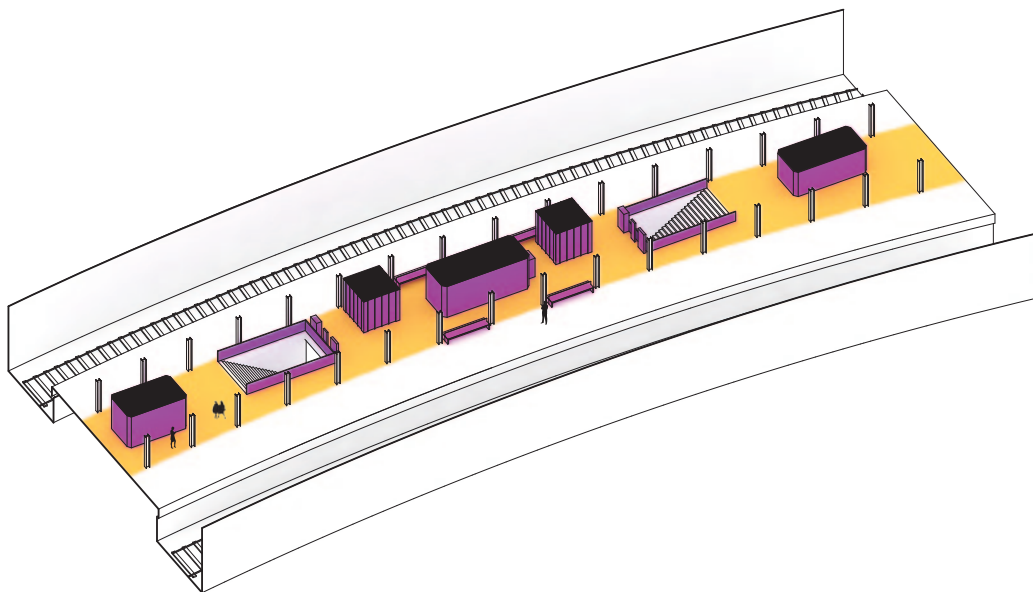
Alexanderplatz U2 Plan



Alexanderplatz U2

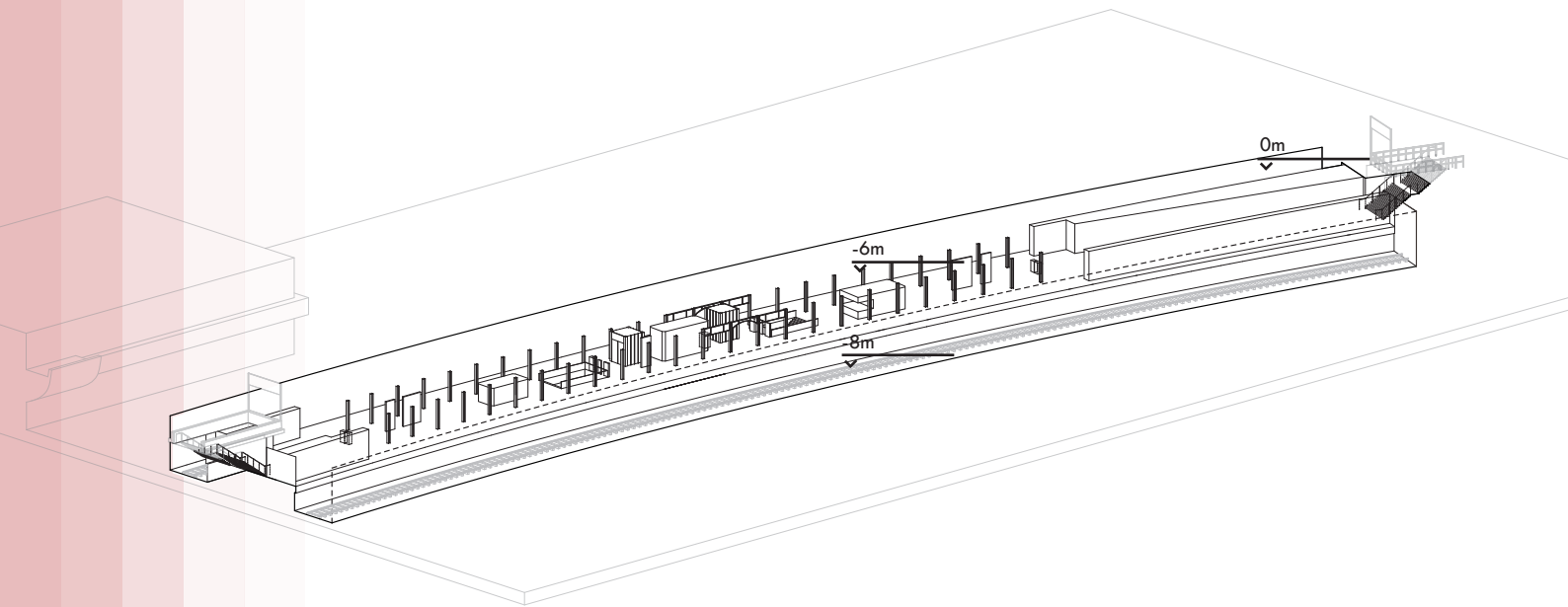
In-Between Space

Axon

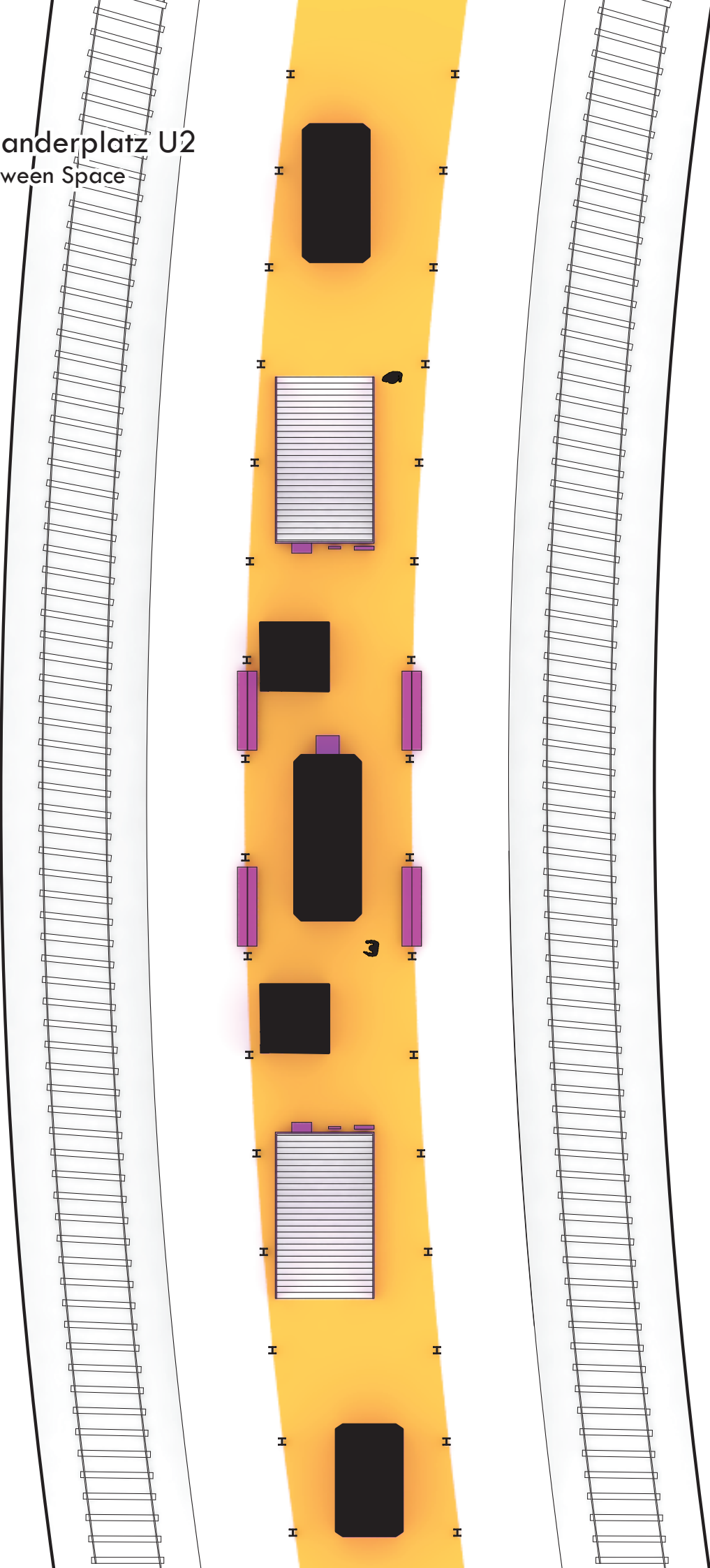


- In-between space
- platform elements

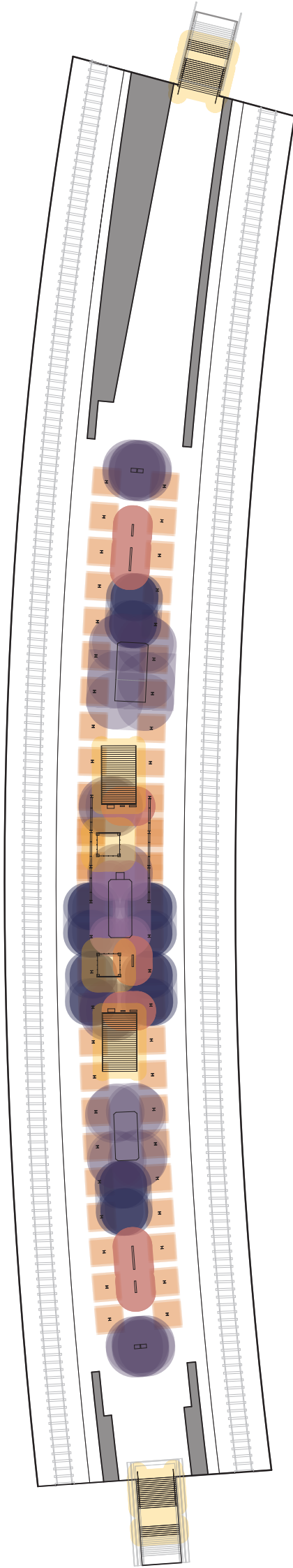
Axon



Alexanderplatz U2
In-Between Space
Plan



Component Density
Relative to
Duration of Use



Circulation



Structure



Infographics



Maintenance+Storage



Monetary Exchange



Seating



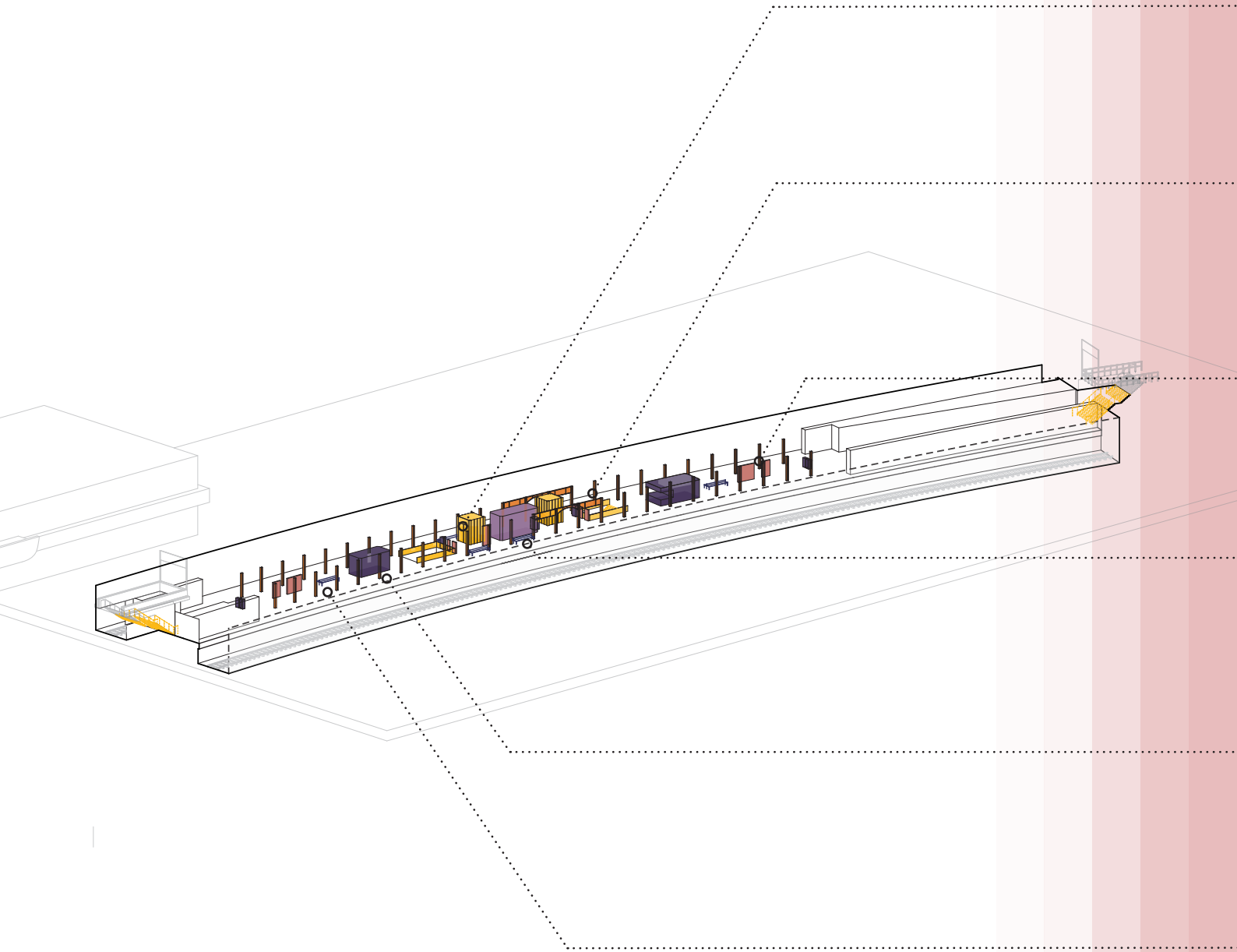
10m

5m

49

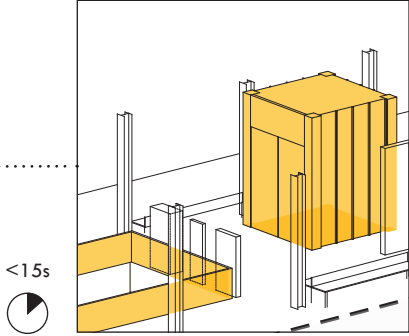
Alexanderplatz U2

Platform Components

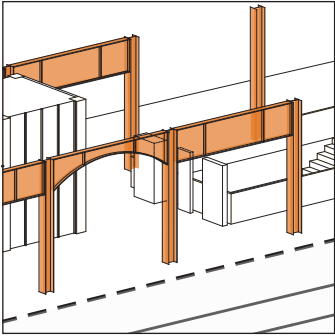


Platform Component and Duration of Interaction

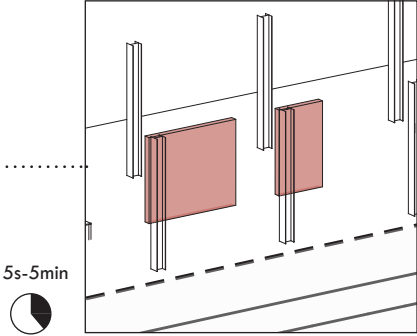
Circulation



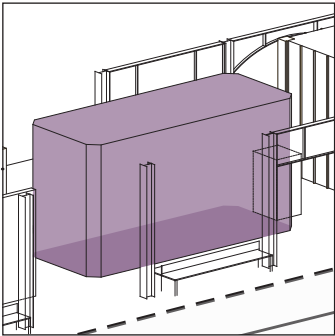
Structure



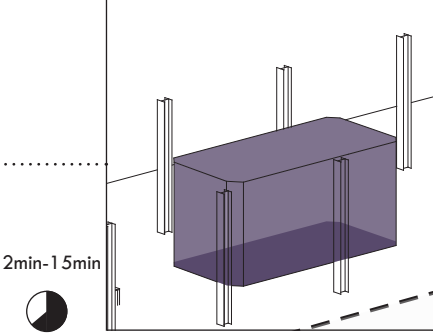
Infographics



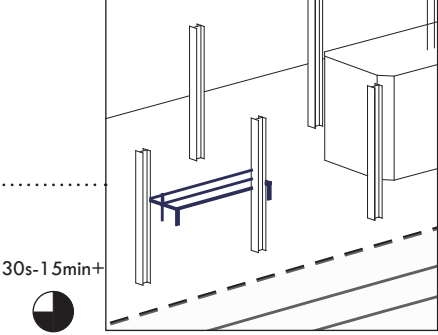
Maintenance+Storage



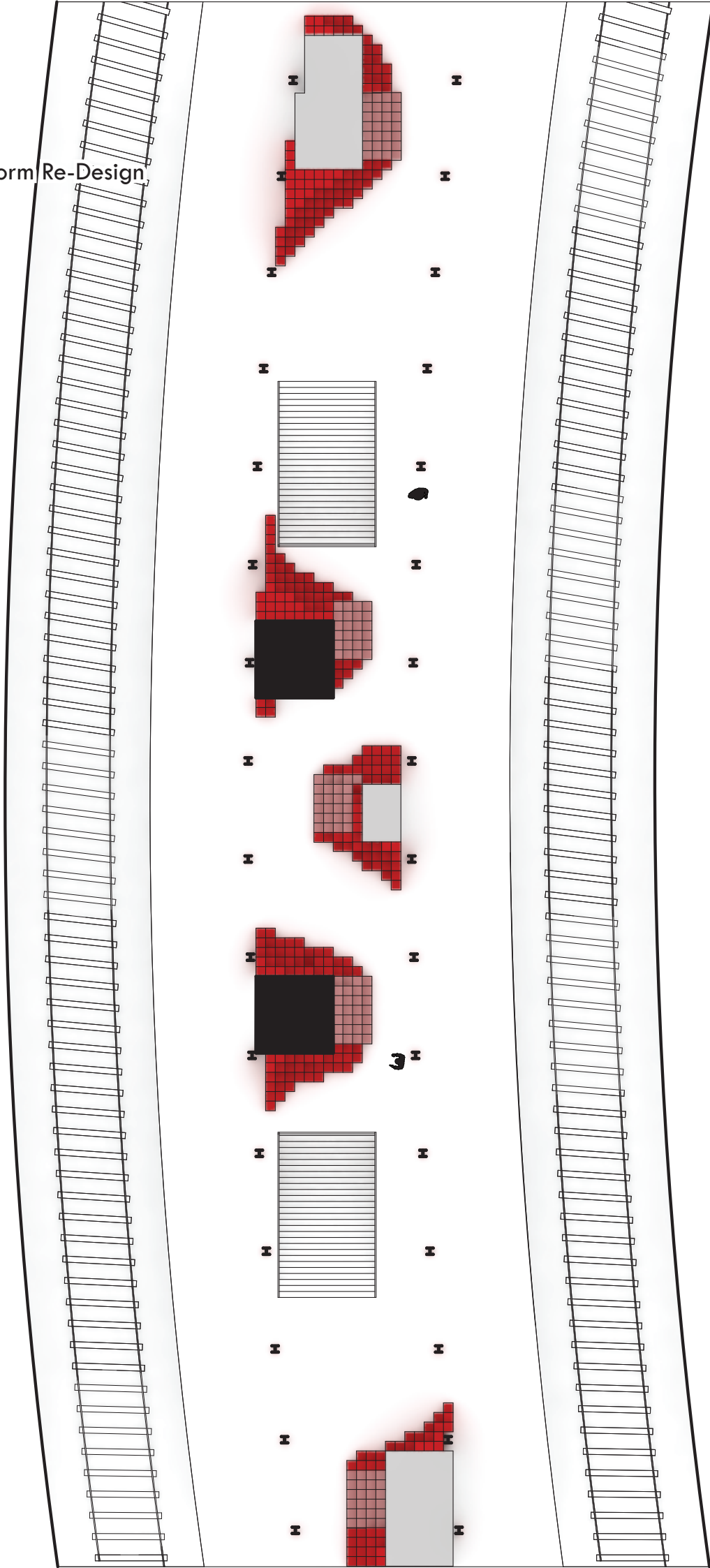
Monetary Exchange



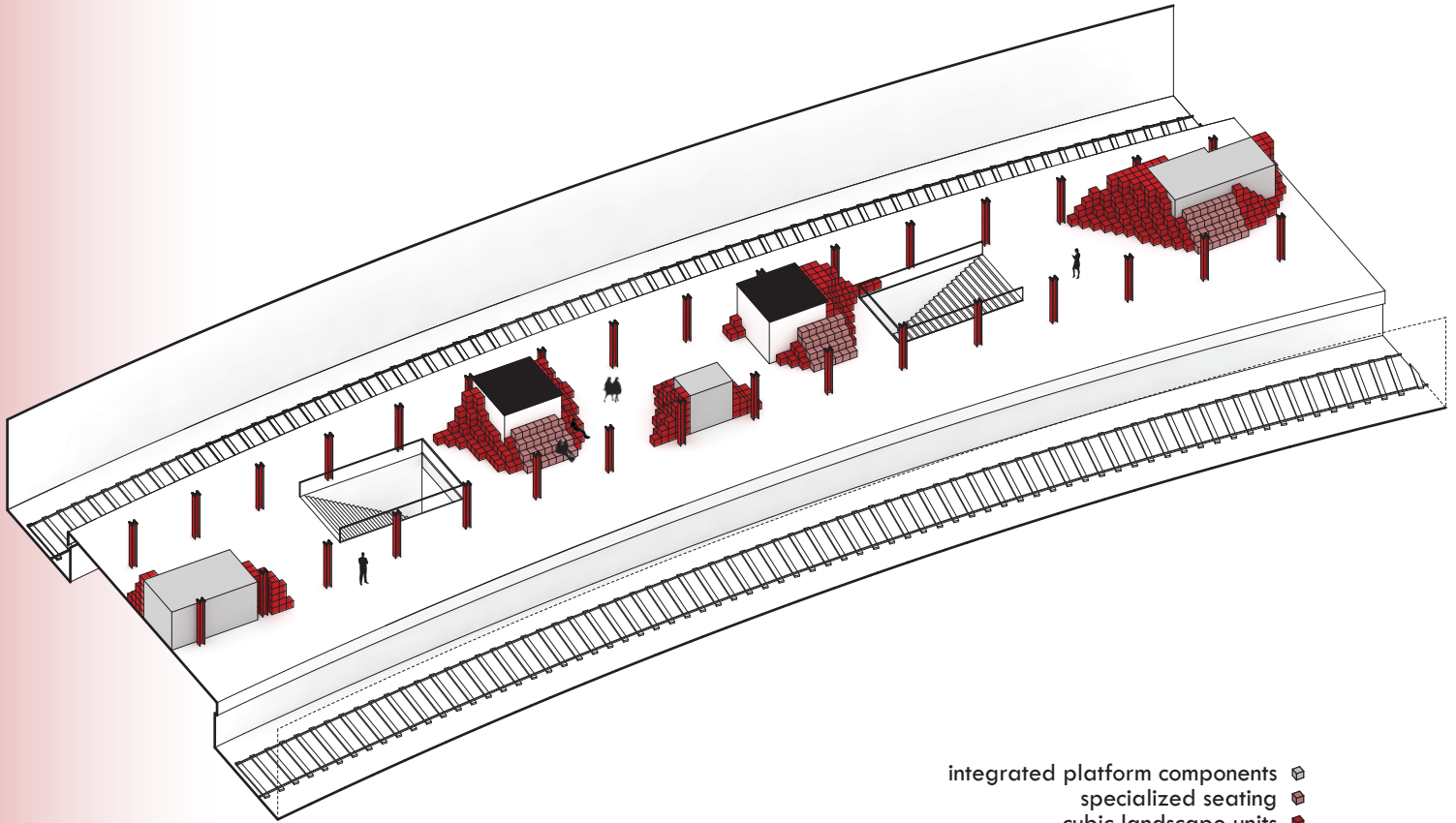
Seating




Platform Re-Design
Plan

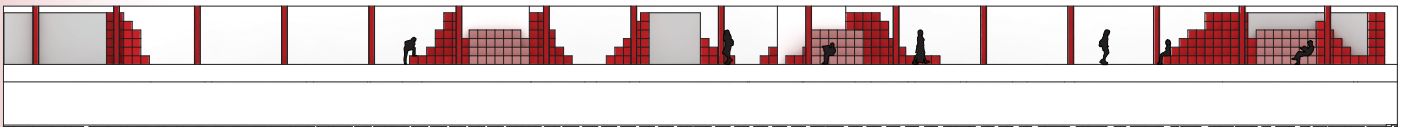


Platform Re-Design Axon

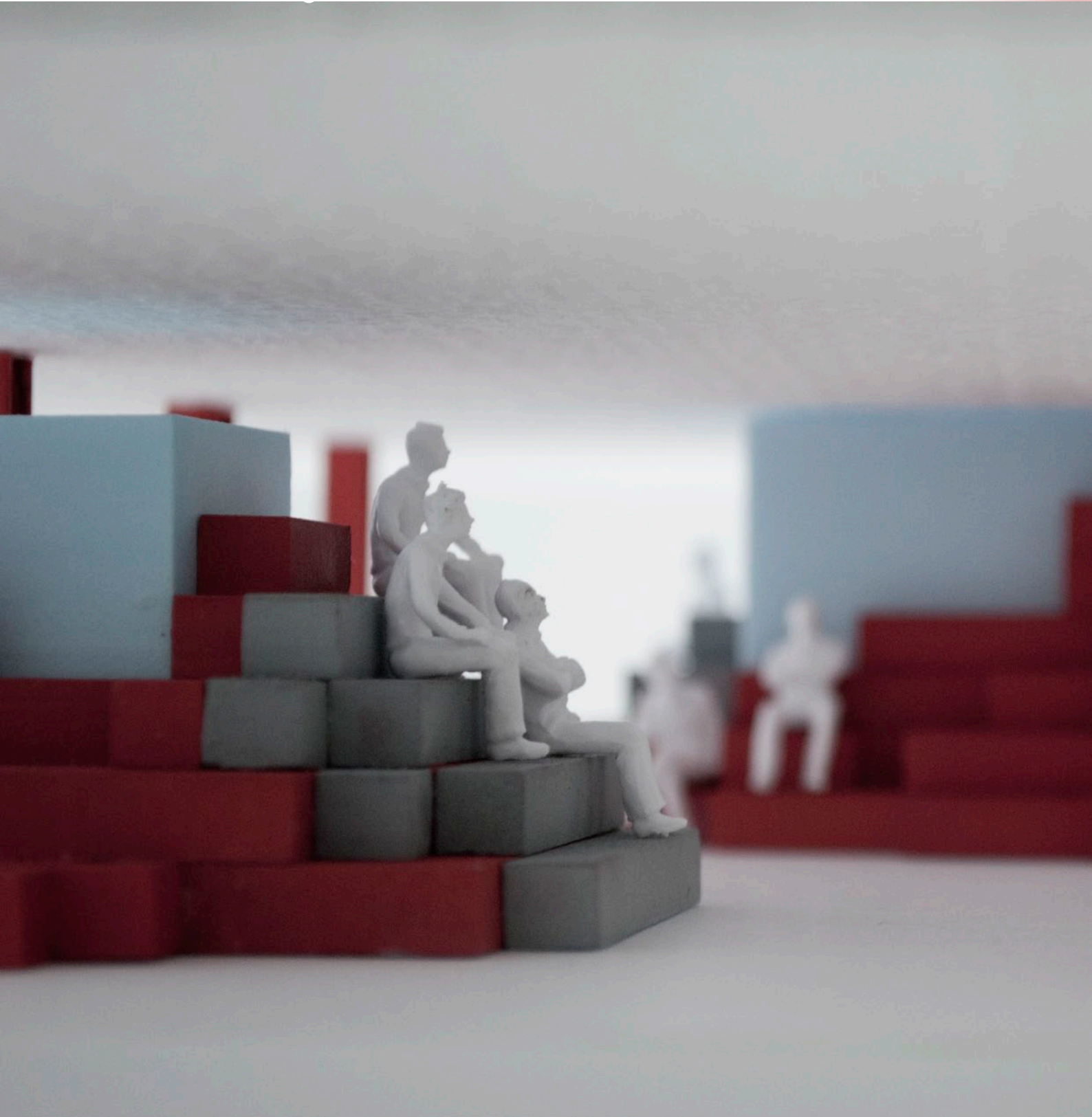


- integrated platform components 
- specialized seating 
- cubic landscape units 

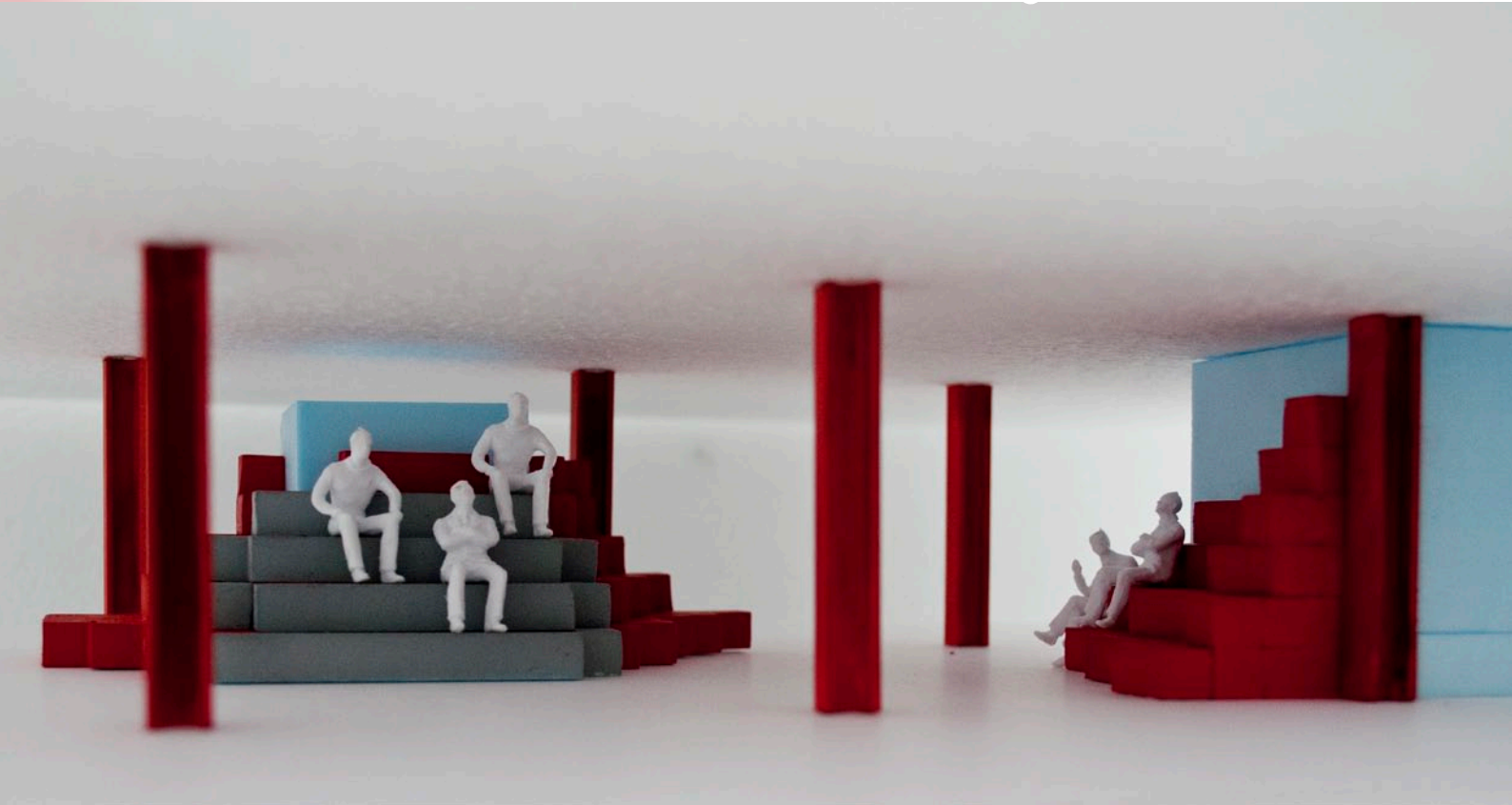
Platform Re-Design Elevation



Platform Re-Design 1:100 scale model



Platform Re-Design 1:100 scale model



Alexanderplatz Bahnhof



fig 4.13_Deutsche Bahn platform at Alexanderplatz Bahnhof

The platform at Alexanderplatz Bahnhof is only 150m away from the U2 U-Bahn platform, but despite their proximity the difference in experience is surprisingly dramatic. Contrasting the shallow U-Bahn platforms observed in this paper, Alexanderplatz Bahnhof is part of the StadtBahn or S-Bahn, a mostly aboveground light rail system that encircles and crosses the city.



fig 4.14_Despite the presence of structural columns on the platform, the elements still maintain symmetry

Alexanderplatz Bahnhof was one of the first of these stations, built on the former site of the city wall as part of the east-west S-Bahn viaduct. The architecture of the station is very typical of the time: a mortar base full of retail and circulation crowned by a substantial glass and steel pointed vault encasing the platforms. At the time that it was built, the volume of the train shed was necessary to allow the fumes from the steam engines to dissipate, however since the introduction of electric train cars in 1903, the massive glass and steel structure has become largely superficial. The glass shed allows a great deal of natural light onto the platform, which when combined with its size creates an almost exterior quality. Other senses help to verify the interior condition of the station from the screeching echoes off the glass panes and the sheltered climate on the platforms.

The platforms themselves vary little in their design, keeping many of their elements in parallel. However, because the southern platform services regional and high-speed trains, support arms for electrical feeds are present and the control office has been removed for increased capacity. Underneath the train shed in its brick-clad base, a number of retailers and restaurants take advantage of the station's traveling and commuting constituency with fast food restaurants and souvenir stores. Because the platforms are elevated, the shops beneath have much more space



fig 4.15 _On platform: food vendor and billboard _In background: Rotes Rathaus and base of T.V. Tower

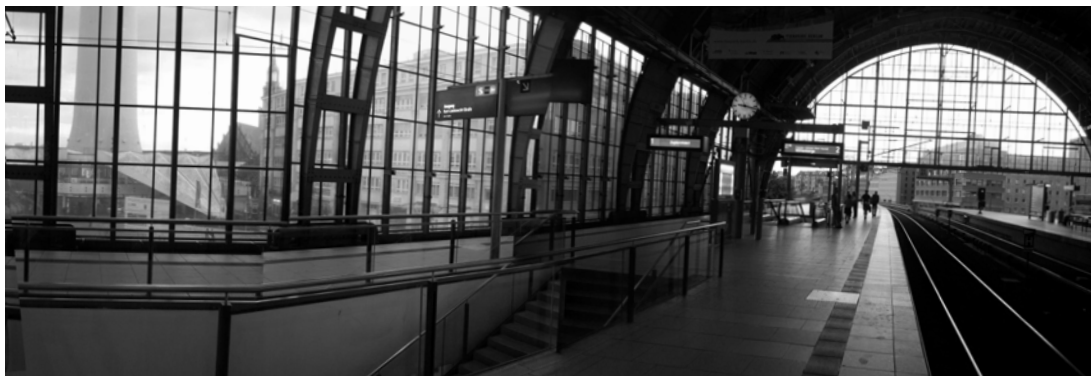


fig 4.16 _View to North end of platform

available to specialize to take full advantage of the diverse crowd at Alexanderplatz.

For the most part, the shops at Alexanderplatz Bahnhof are specialized for brief exchanges, as can be seen in the number of fast food restaurants, bank, and apothecary featured there. Compounding their brevity of place is the fact that all of the shops at the station are all franchises, reducing their place-ness by association with a larger group of stores. However, a few stores are able to counter the surrounding placelessness with strangely specified programs that create a sense of place through length of interaction, such as in the hair salon, and speciality of wares, such as in the cigar shop. For Berliners, these kinds of shops are not part of a daily routine, so when they are visited distinct memories are created. For non-Berliners, the novelty of visiting these shops as a tourist would be novel enough to generate distinct memories of the place.

The demographic of passengers at Alexanderplatz Bahnhof can be summarized as commuters and travelers. Commuters are classified as those who live in or around Berlin that are using the S-Bahn to commute or travel across the city. Travelers are those who arrive to or depart from Alexanderplatz from the Deutsche Bahn directly or via the S5, S9, or S75 to the Hauptbahnhof. Like elsewhere in the world, travelers are most easily distinguished

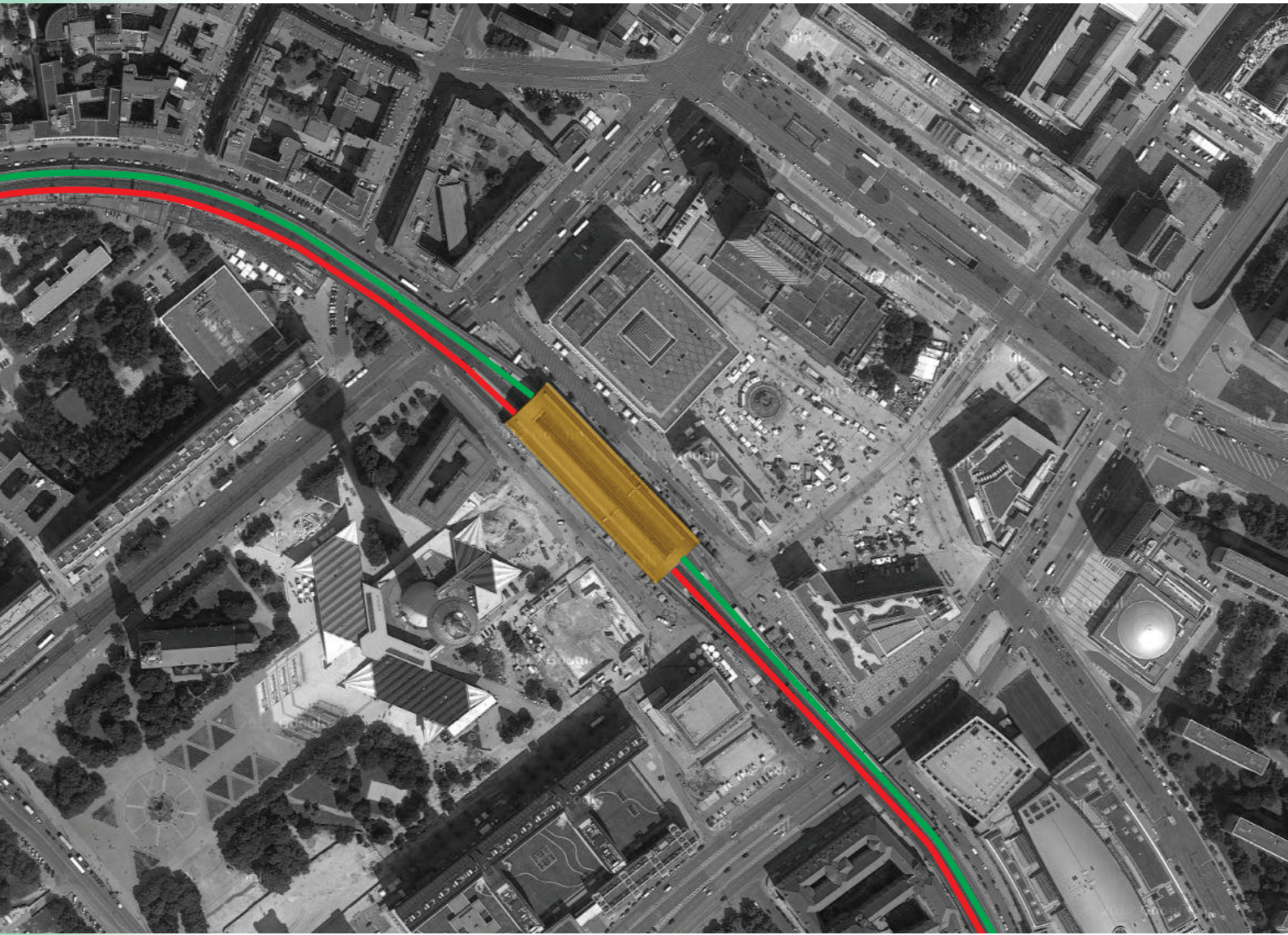
Alexanderplatz Bahnhof



fig 4.17_For lack of seating, many lean on the railing of the vertical circulation

by their sizable baggage and their tendency to study maps and timepieces. The juxtaposition of travelers and commuters creates an interesting effect on the platforms, as the experience of the Berliner contrasts the novelty of the foreign traveler. The commuters follow all the flows of the platform like a fish in a school, while travelers, in their cluelessness, are often caught swimming upstream. For commuters, Alexanderplatz Bahnhof could be a place of routine as part of their daily commute, with occasional annoyance from travelers. For the travelers however, the station could be the first and/or last thing they experience in Berlin, making it a much more distinct memory in their journey. This memory could also be toned by Berliners' reactions to the inexperience of the traveller, creating either a welcoming or hostile first impression. Although both travelers and commuters await relatively long distance journeys at Alexanderplatz Bahnhof, it is their reactions to each other that form the experience of the station.

The role of Alexanderplatz Bahnhof as an inter- and intra-city hub for Berlin has and will continue to shape the sense of place about the station. Its industrial architecture, its franchised shops, and its long distance constituency help to generate a sense of place that reaches beyond its surroundings and even Berlin itself as Alexanderplatz Bahnhof is placed among stations on a national level, among the new gateways to the most important cities in Germany.



- U-Bahn Station ■
- S-Bahn ■
- Deutsche Bahn ■

Alexanderplatz Bahnhof Site Zoning

Land for building purposes

Residential building land, W1 (FSI above 1.5)	Mixed building land, M1
Residential building land, W2 (FSI up to 1.5)	Mixed building land, M2
Residential building land, W3 (FSI up to 0.8)	Commercial / industrial
Residential building land, W4 (FSI up to 0.4)	Retail concentration
Special building land Capital city functions (H)	Special building land
Special building land with commercial character	Special building land with large proportion of green

Land for community facilities

Community requirements land	Community requirements land with large proportion of green
Higher education and research	Culture
School	Administration
Hospital	Post office
Sport	Security

Land for supply and disposal plants

Area with commercial character / Area with mixed use character	Area with high proportion of green / Area in agricultural use
Water supply	Energy, power supply
Refuse or sewage disposal	Bus or railway yard

Transport

Motorway with entrance / exit	Railway land
Major road	Urban and regional rapid transport station above / below ground level
Option for major road	Main-line station above / below ground level
Tunnel	Light railway
Airport	

Open spaces, water

Green area	Field or meadow
Parkland	Sport
Cemetery	Water-sports
Allotments	Camping
Woodland	Agricultural land
Water	

Use restrictions for environmental protection (Land Use Plan and other sources)

Residential areas of high landscape value	Flora-fauna-habitat-area* / Nature reserve
Clean air priority area	Landscape conservation area
Aircraft noise protection area	Water conservation area
Planning zone	UNESCO world heritage area
Polluted ground	

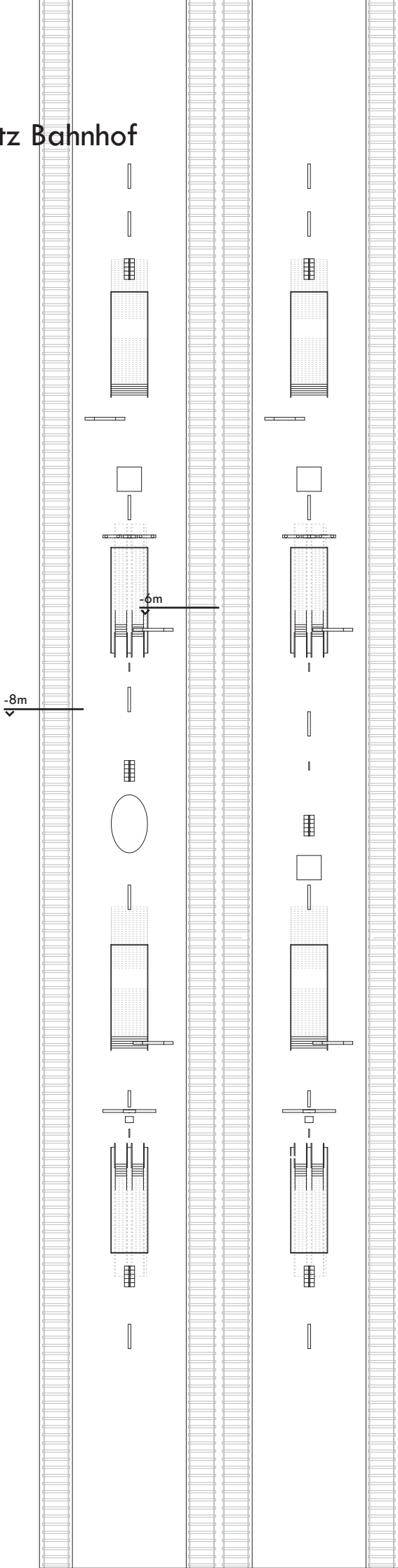
* including bird protection area



Rail Station

Alexanderplatz Bahnhof

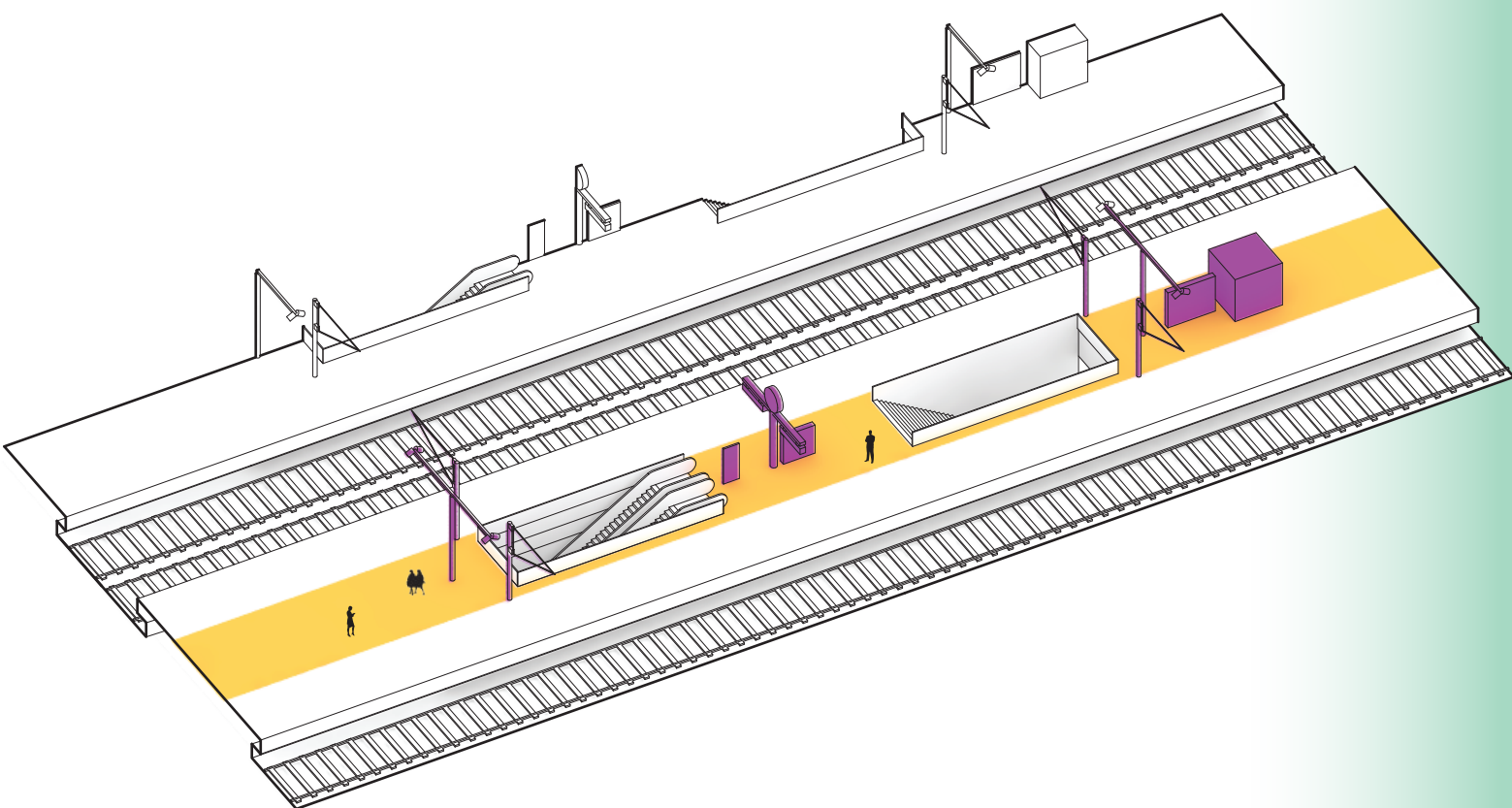
Plan



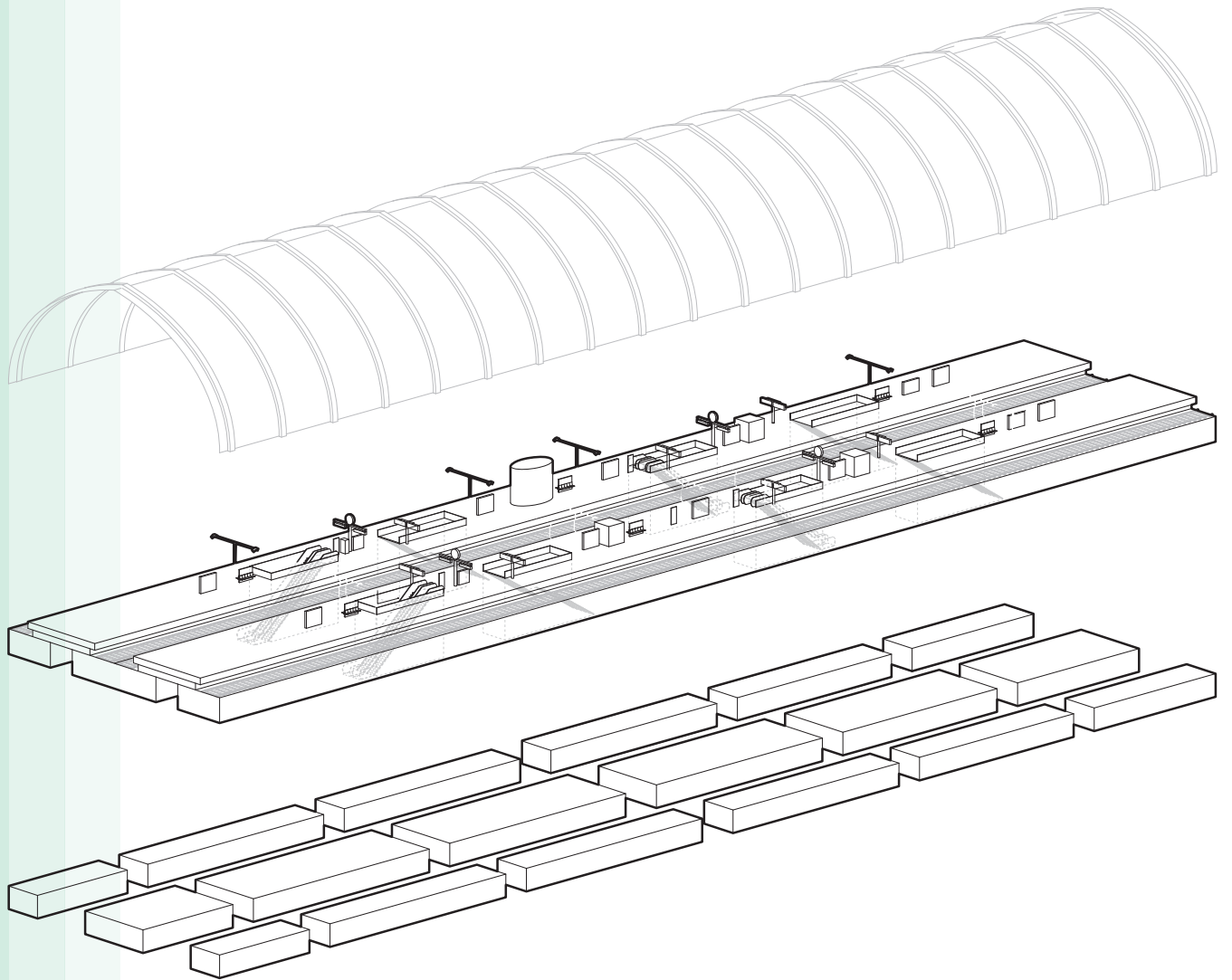
Alexanderplatz Bahnhof

In-Between Space

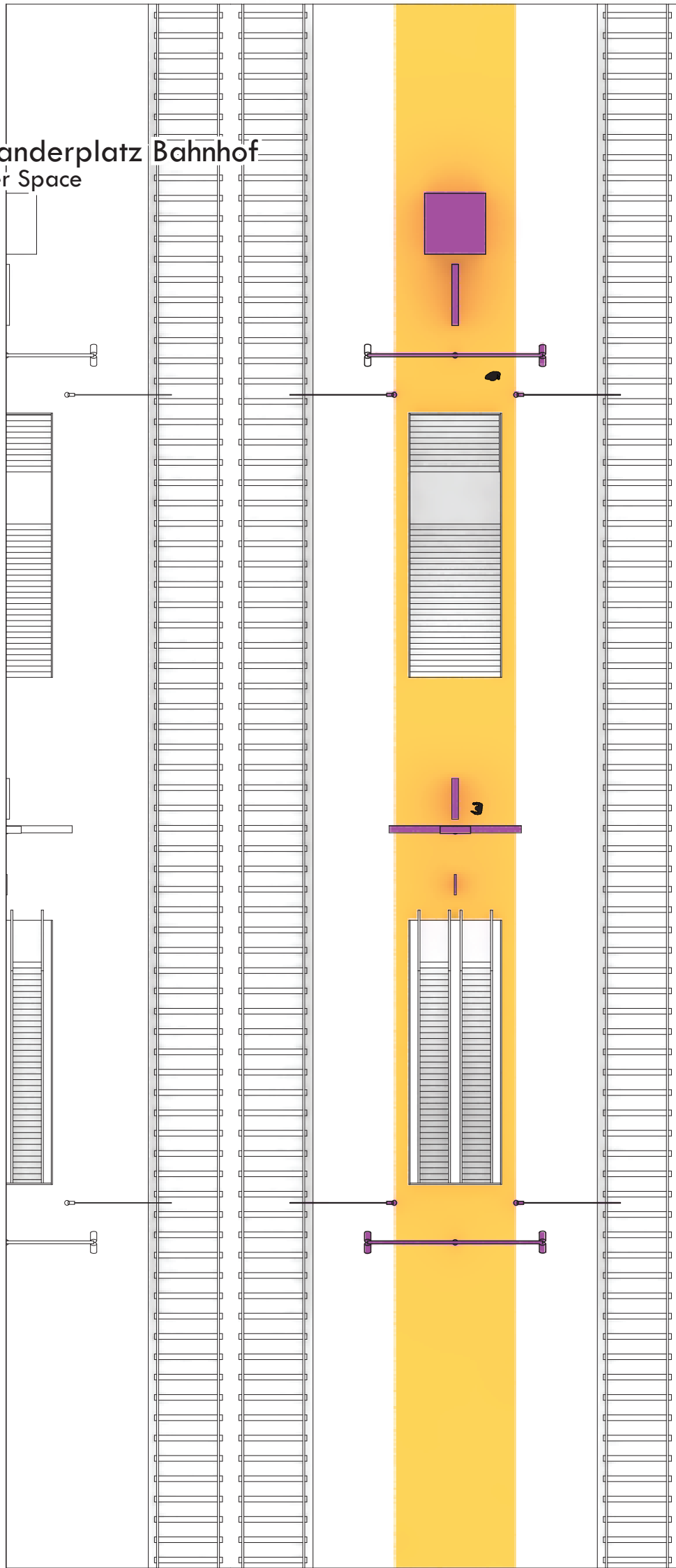
Axon



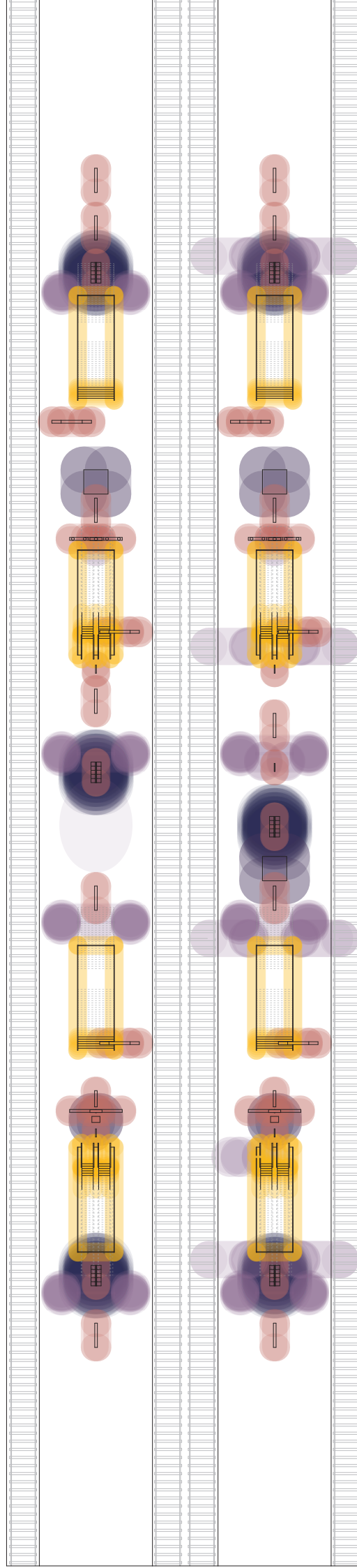
- In-between space
- platform elements



Alexanderplatz Bahnhof
Zimmer Space
Plan



Component Density Relative to Duration of Use



Circulation ■

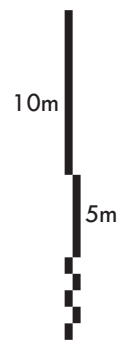
Structure ■

Infographics ■

Maintenance+Storage ■

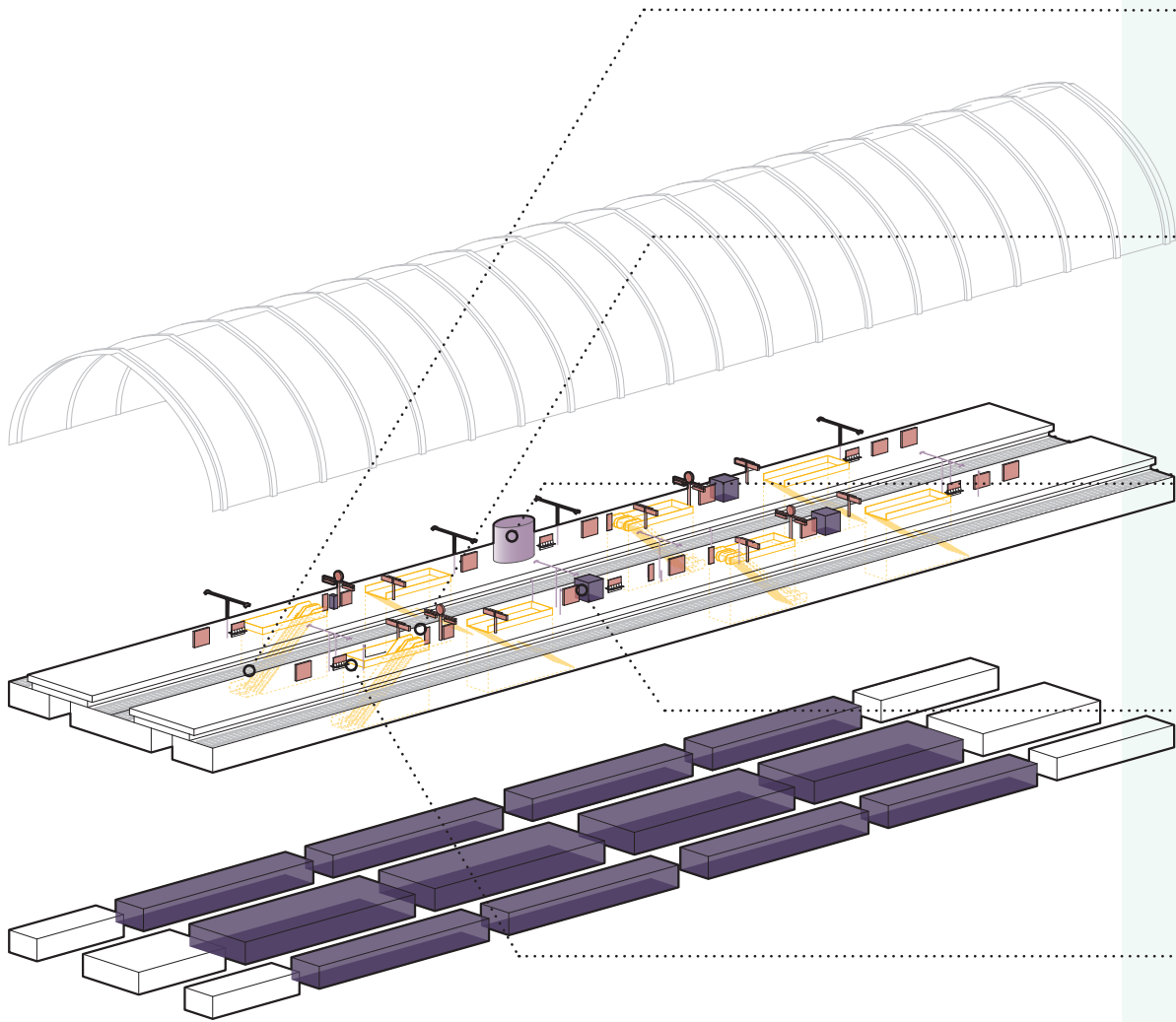
Monetary Exchange ■

Seating ■



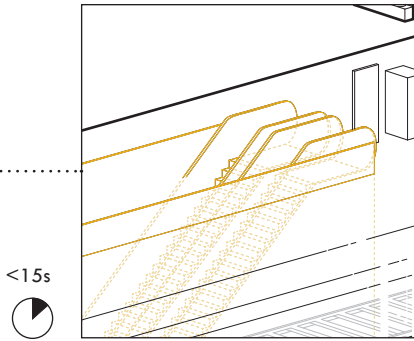
Alexanderplatz Bahnhof

Platform Components

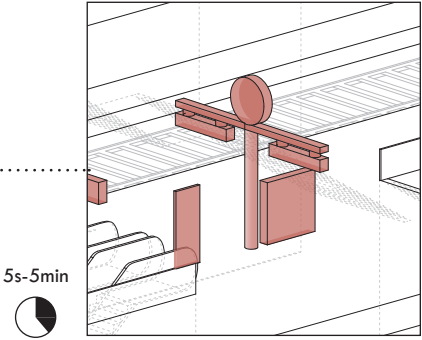


Platform Component and Duration of Interaction

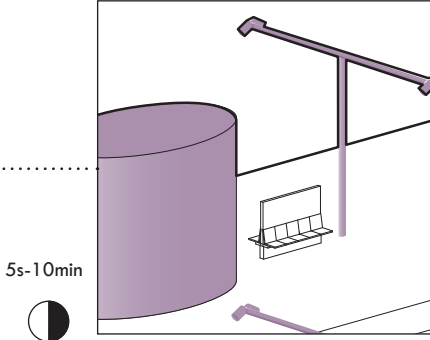
Circulation



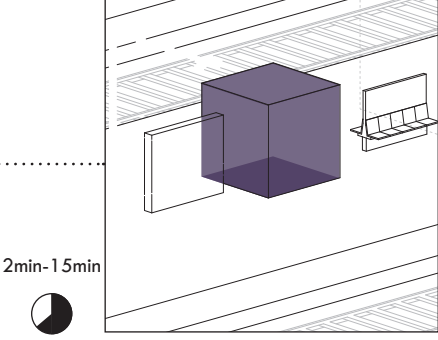
Infographics



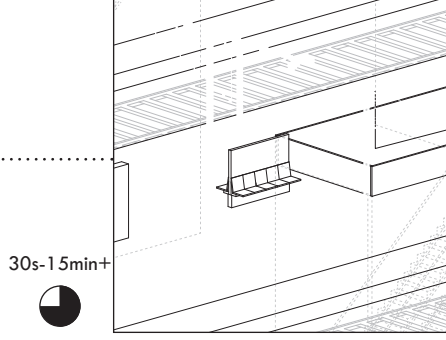
Maintenance+Storage



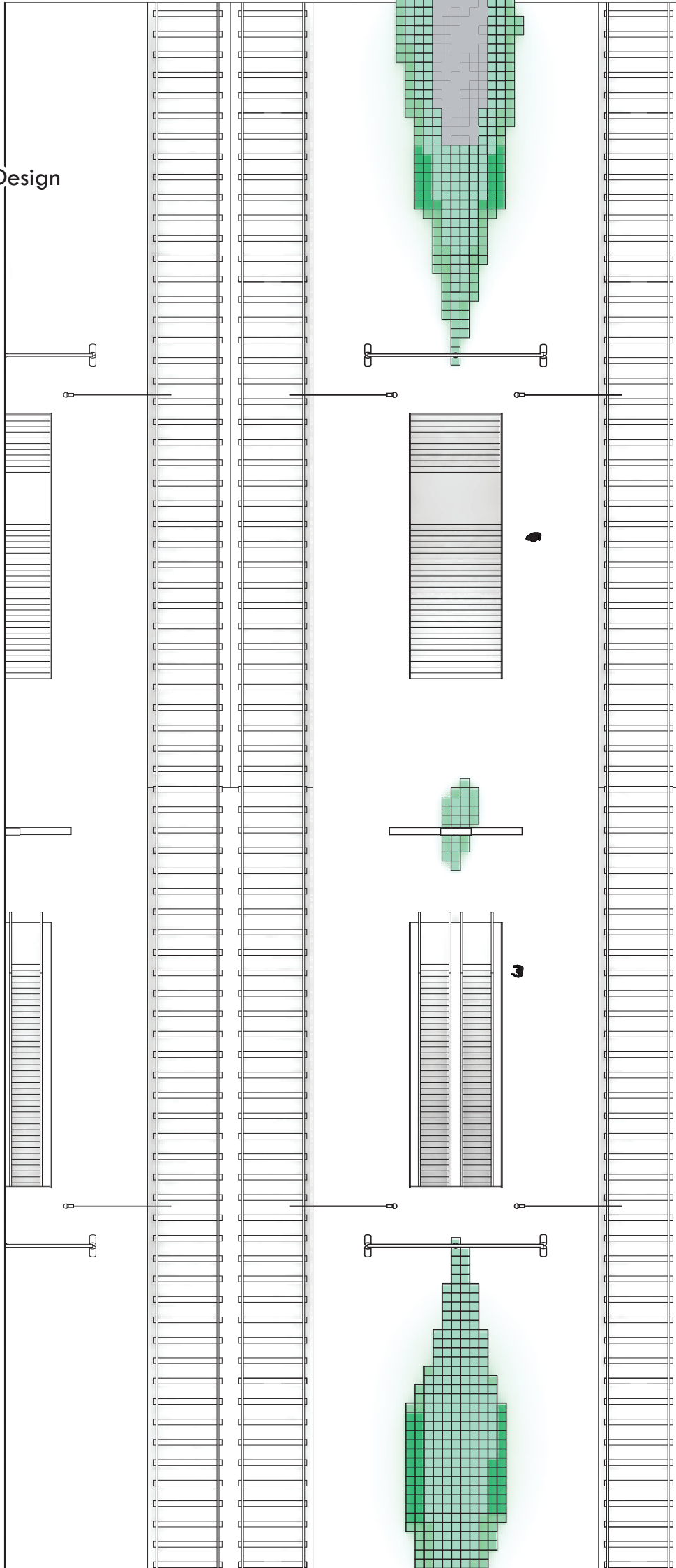
Monetary Exchange



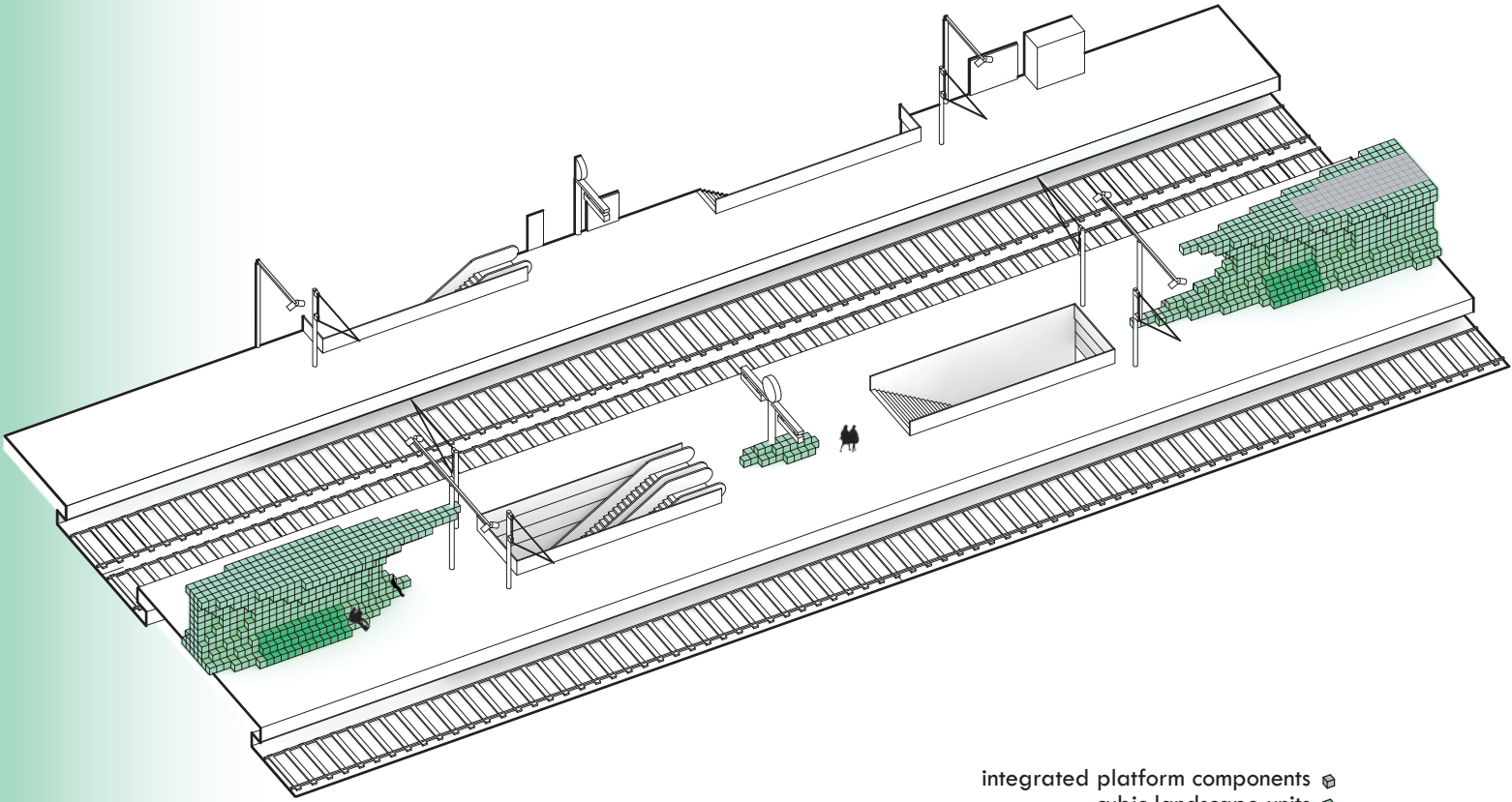
Seating





Platform Re-Design Plan

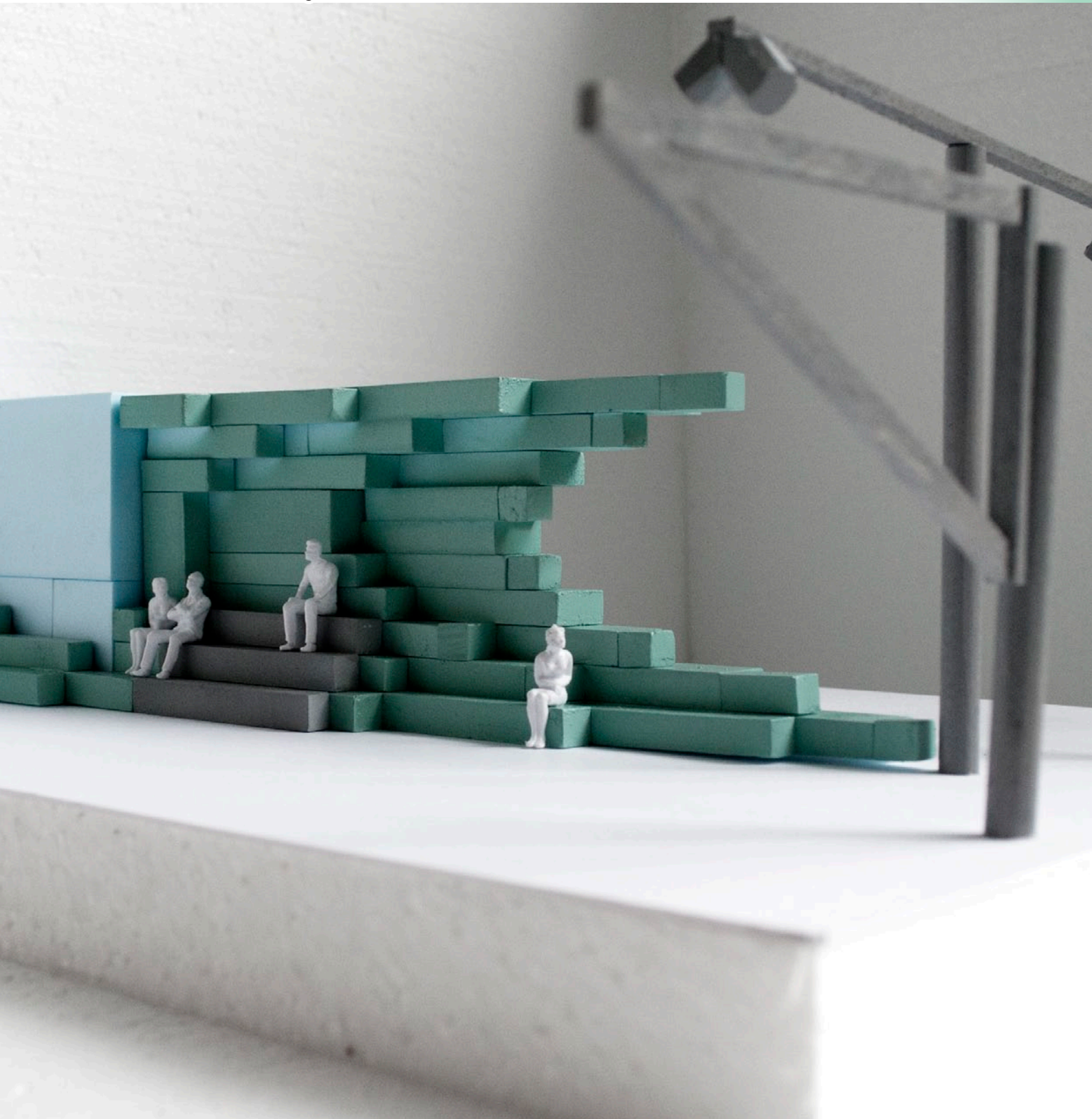


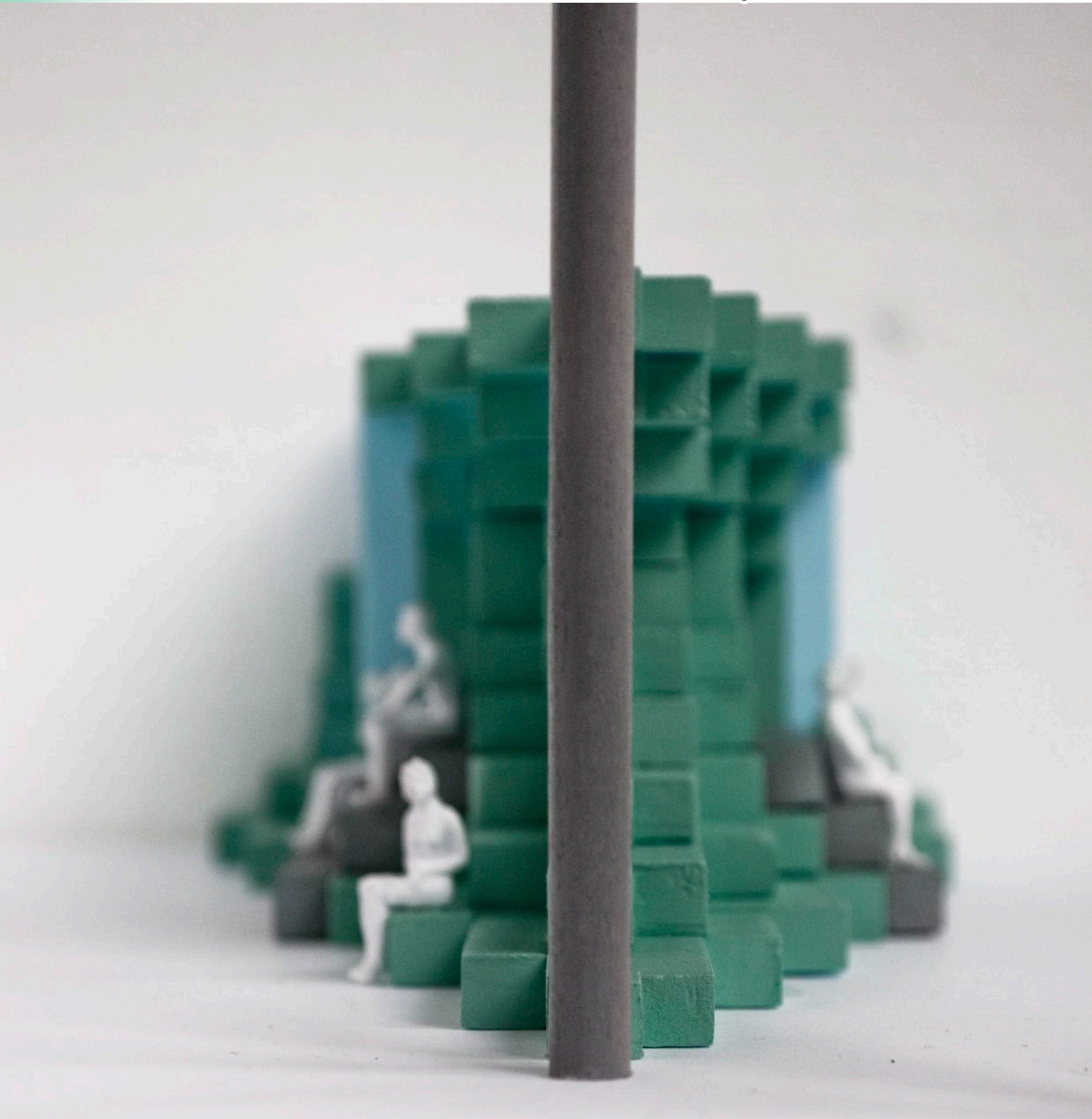
Platform Re-Design Axon



- integrated platform components 
- cubic landscape units 
- specialized seating 

Platform Re-Design 1:100 scale model





Brandenburger Tor U55



fig 4.18_Information center in intermezzo of south entrance to Brandenburger Tor U55



fig 4.19_View down temporarily closed track, planned to open in 2013

Completed in 2009, the U55 extension line is Berlin's newest stretch of subway, and until it is connected to the U5 at Alexanderplatz in 2013, it is also the shortest. Since it opened, the U55 has serviced three stations: Hauptbahnhof, Reichstag/Bundestag, and Brandenburger Tor. However, because of its short length and low passenger rates, only one car is used to service the stations, and the platforms built for droves of people have yet to meet their potential. Commercial tourism is the main reason why this short spur was opened years before the connection to the U5 was completed. Two of the most popular monuments in all of Germany are the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate, both of which are located south southeast of Berlin's central station, the Hauptbahnhof. By opening this stint of the line early, more visitors to Berlin from across the world can more conveniently visit the most popular landmarks of the city.

Although the design of the U55 Reichstag is exceptional architecture, there is a much more direct consciousness of place at the U55 Brandenburger Tor station. Its design seems very aware that for those who arrived to Berlin by train, the platform at Brandenburger Tor will be the last the traveler sees before entering Berlin for the first time. The monolithic columns of the Gate are echoed in the shape and dimension of the platform's columns. After a ride up the south escalator along a wall of quotes regarding the Berlin Wall, one is greeted by an information kiosk where maps, travel books, and snacks are available for purchase. As one ascends the final staircase the Brandenburg Gate comes in to view—perfectly framed by the glass and steel handrails of the station entrance.



fig 4.20 _Station elements go unused as tourists mill read information on the walls of the station



fig 4.21 _The inoperable side of the platform becomes museum-like as visitors lean against the railed off edge of the platform to read about the landmark above

Further augmenting the consciousness of place in the station are the historical infographics along the walls of the platform, allowing visitors to not only place themselves geographically, but also historically. Through the historical narrative of the Gate, the infographics allow the visitors to reckon their subjective point in history relative to the formative events of the Brandenburg Gate. With that historical knowledge, visitors are able to reinforce and/or modulate their own experience of the place, creating enriched memories that serve to improve the Gate's sense of place.

While the infographics in the station do amplify the placeness of the Brandenburg Gate, they also serve to improve the sense of place of their own station. Through the use of small font and numerous historical panels, the infographics effectively slow down the hyper-efficient pedestrian circulation to a museum-like pace. Some passengers completely ignore the panels and go straight to the surface, but those who linger tend to stay for a while, getting as much information as possible before witnessing the historical place itself. Because of this, the station becomes much more meaningful for the dawdler as she has spent more time and therefore created more memories within that space.



fig 4.22 _Typical pedestrian density during work week

Brandenburger Tor U55



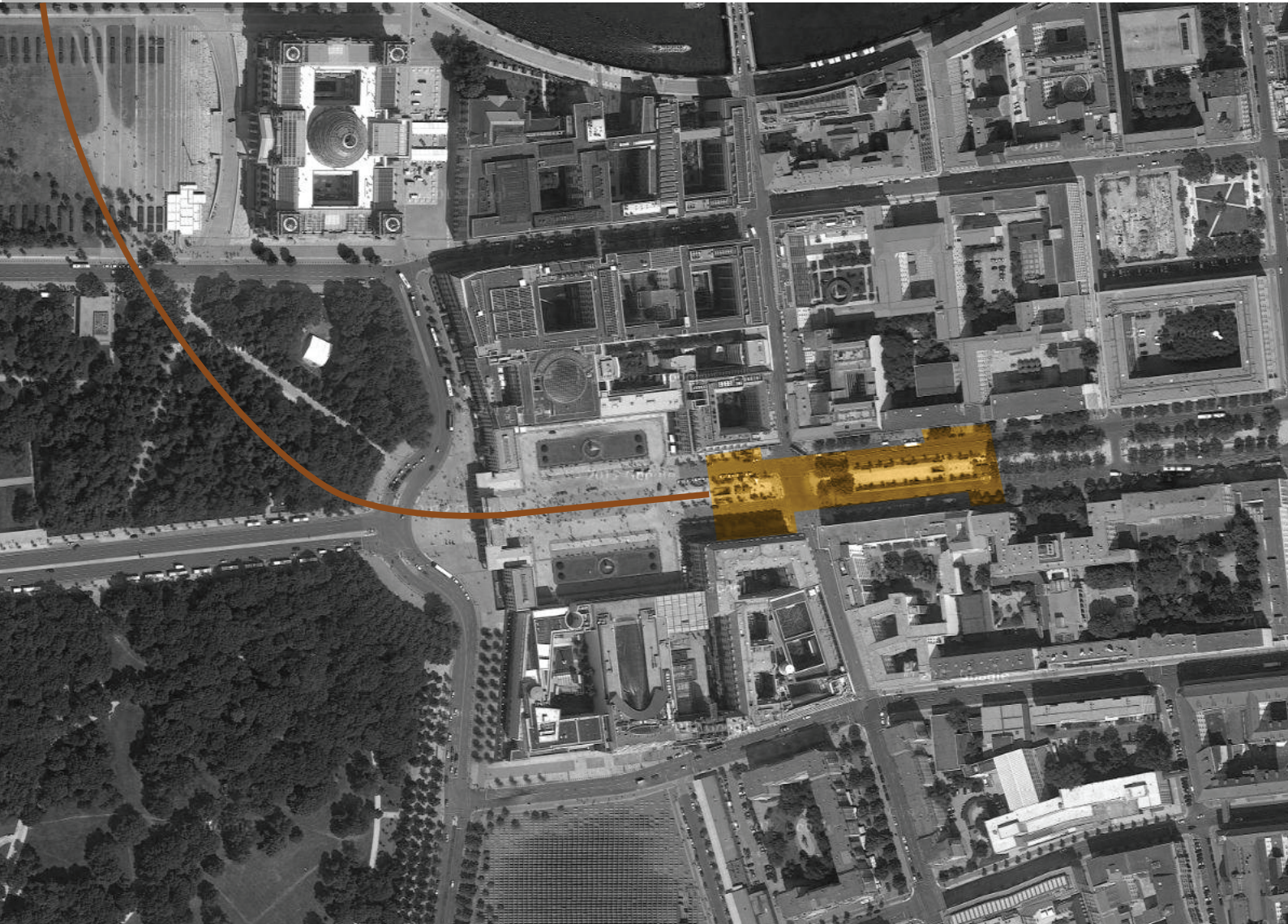
fig 4.22_Vertical circulation to platform at southern entrance

Additionally, the station becomes a place of both transit and knowledge, which as mentioned earlier helps to compound the significance of the platform for not only the one dawdler, but also for any other passenger that reads from those graphics. It will be interesting to see, when the connection to the U5 is completed and both sides of the station are fully operational, just how many tourists will clog the thoroughfares because they wanted to read more about the Gate under Nazi rule.

Those who end up reading every last word of historical narrative are more often than not on holiday and want to learn about the Brandenburg Gate for fun. As they are on holiday and can afford to take their time reading each panel, the infographics can be seen as museum plaques for the exhibit of the authentic Brandenburg Gate in full scale featured in the aboveground gallery. The formal nods of the architecture towards the monument it services are extremely useful in visually preparing the visitors for the Gate, but the infographics that provide historical narrative for the Brandenburg Gate museum-ize the station to such a degree that the Brandenburg Gate becomes more of an object than a place.



fig 4.22_Famous quotes regarding Berlin and the Brandenburg Gate presented graphically in their original languages



U-Bahn Station 

U-Bahnlinie U55 

Brandenburger Tor U55 Site Zoning

Land for building purposes

Residential building land, W1 (FSI above 1.5)	Mixed building land, M1
Residential building land, W2 (FSI up to 1.5)	Mixed building land, M2
Residential building land, W3 (FSI up to 0.8)	Commercial / industrial
Residential building land, W4 (FSI up to 0.4)	Retail concentration
Special building land Capital city functions (H)	Special building land
Special building land with commercial character	Special building land with large proportion of green

Land for community facilities

Community requirements land	Community requirements land with large proportion of green
Higher education and research	Culture
School	Administration
Hospital	Post office
Sport	Security

Land for supply and disposal plants

Area with commercial character / Area with mixed use character	Area with high proportion of green / Area in agricultural use
Water supply	Energy, power supply
Refuse or sewage disposal	Bus or railway yard

Transport

Motorway with entrance / exit	Railway land
Major road	Urban and regional rapid transport station above / below ground level
Option for major road	Main-line station above / below ground level
Tunnel	Light railway
Airport	

Open spaces, water

Green area	Field or meadow
Parkland	Sport
Cemetery	Water-sports
Allotments	Camping
Woodland	Agricultural land
Water	

Use restrictions for environmental protection (Land Use Plan and other sources)

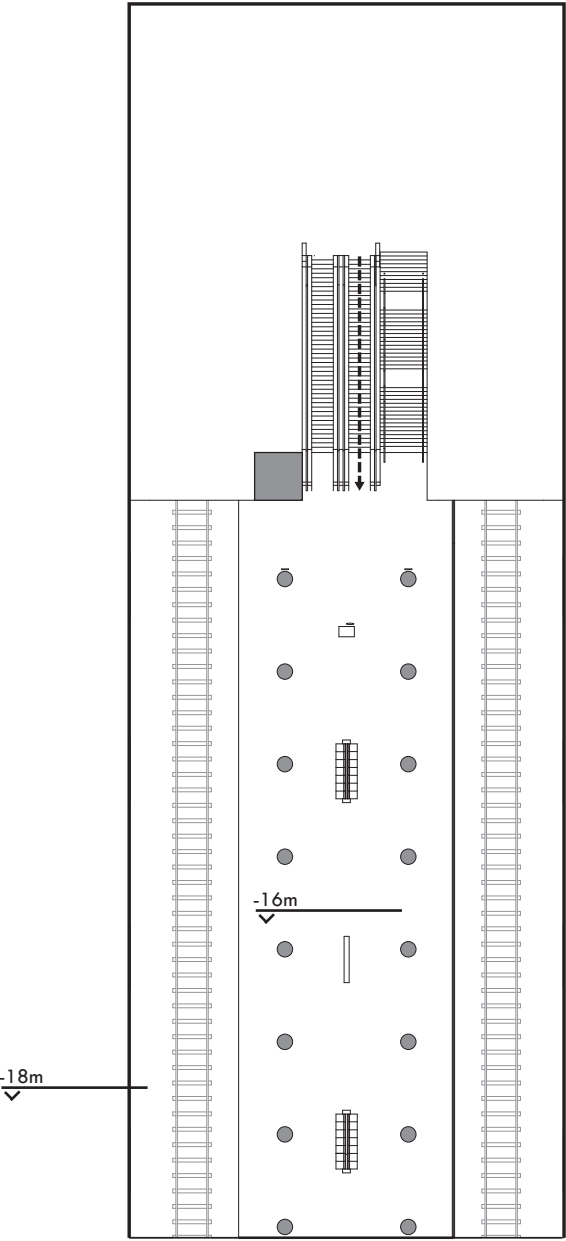
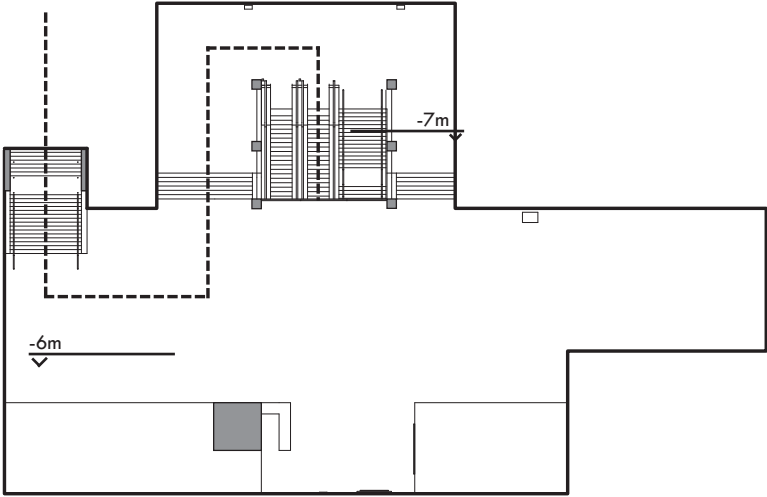
Residential areas of high landscape value	Flora-fauna-habitat-area* / Nature reserve
Clean air priority area	Water conservation area
Aircraft noise protection area	UNESCO world heritage area
Planning zone	
Polluted ground	* including bird protection area



Rail Station

Brandenburger Tor U55

Platform Plan



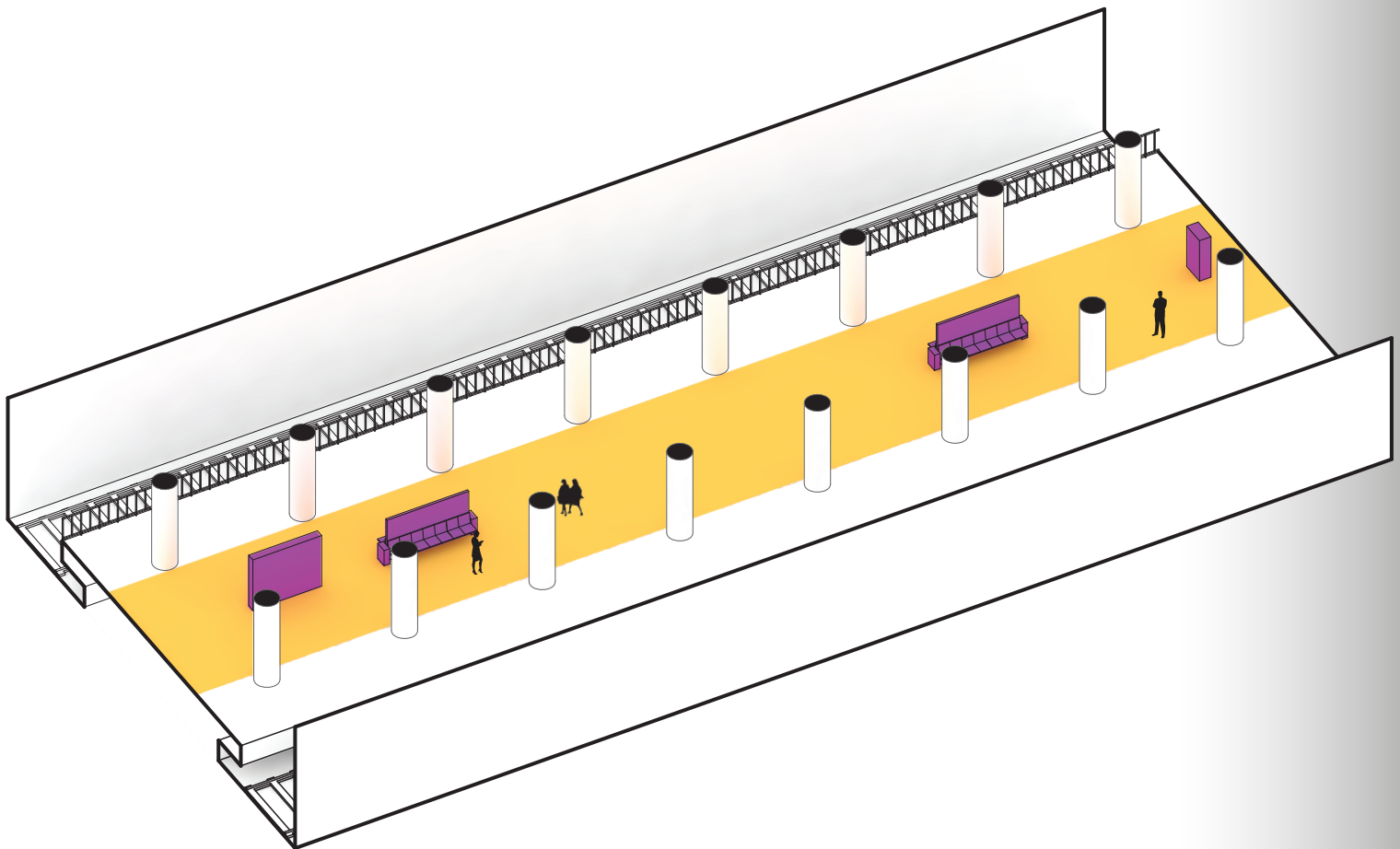
10m

5m

77

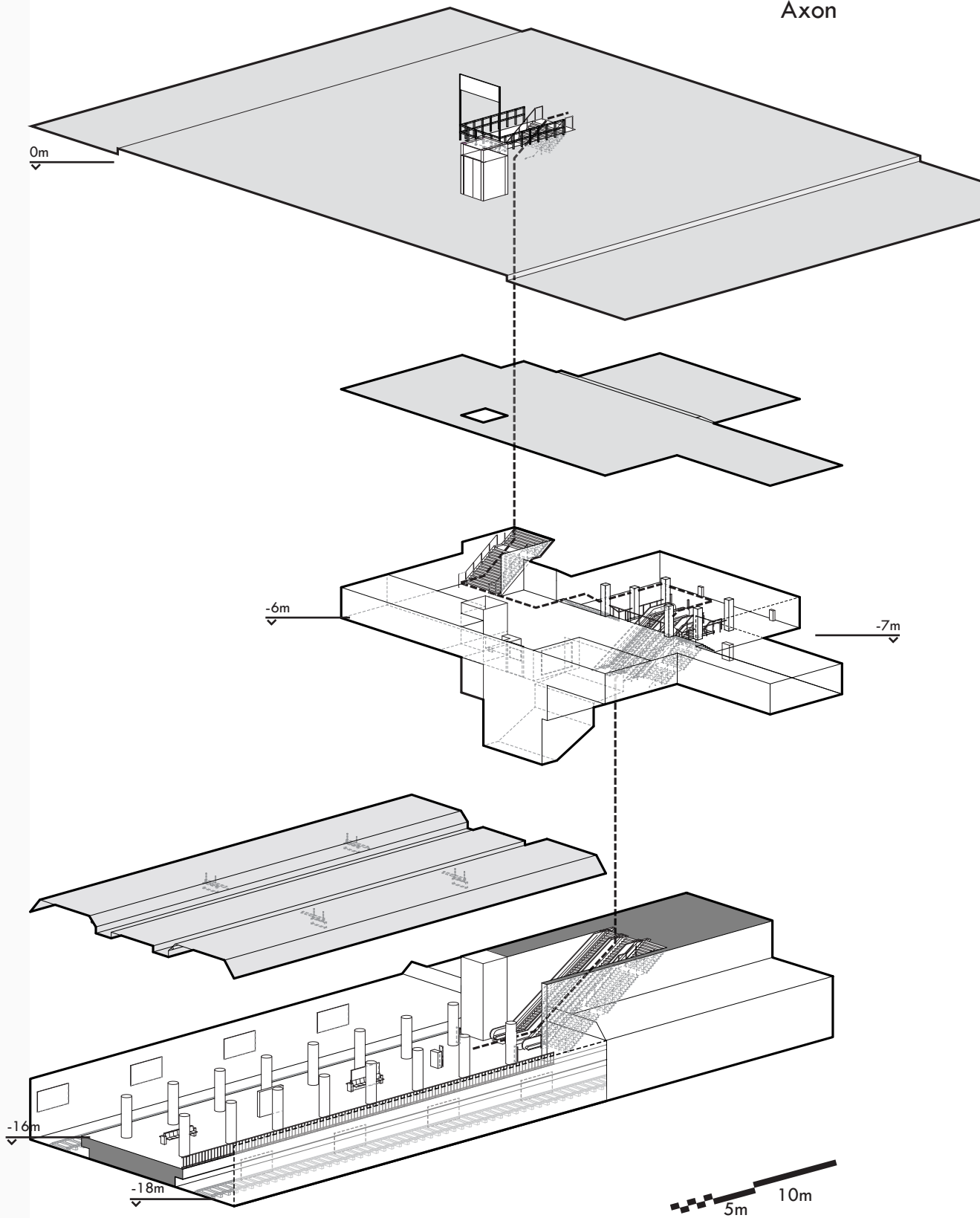
Brandenburger Tor U55

In-Between Space
Axon



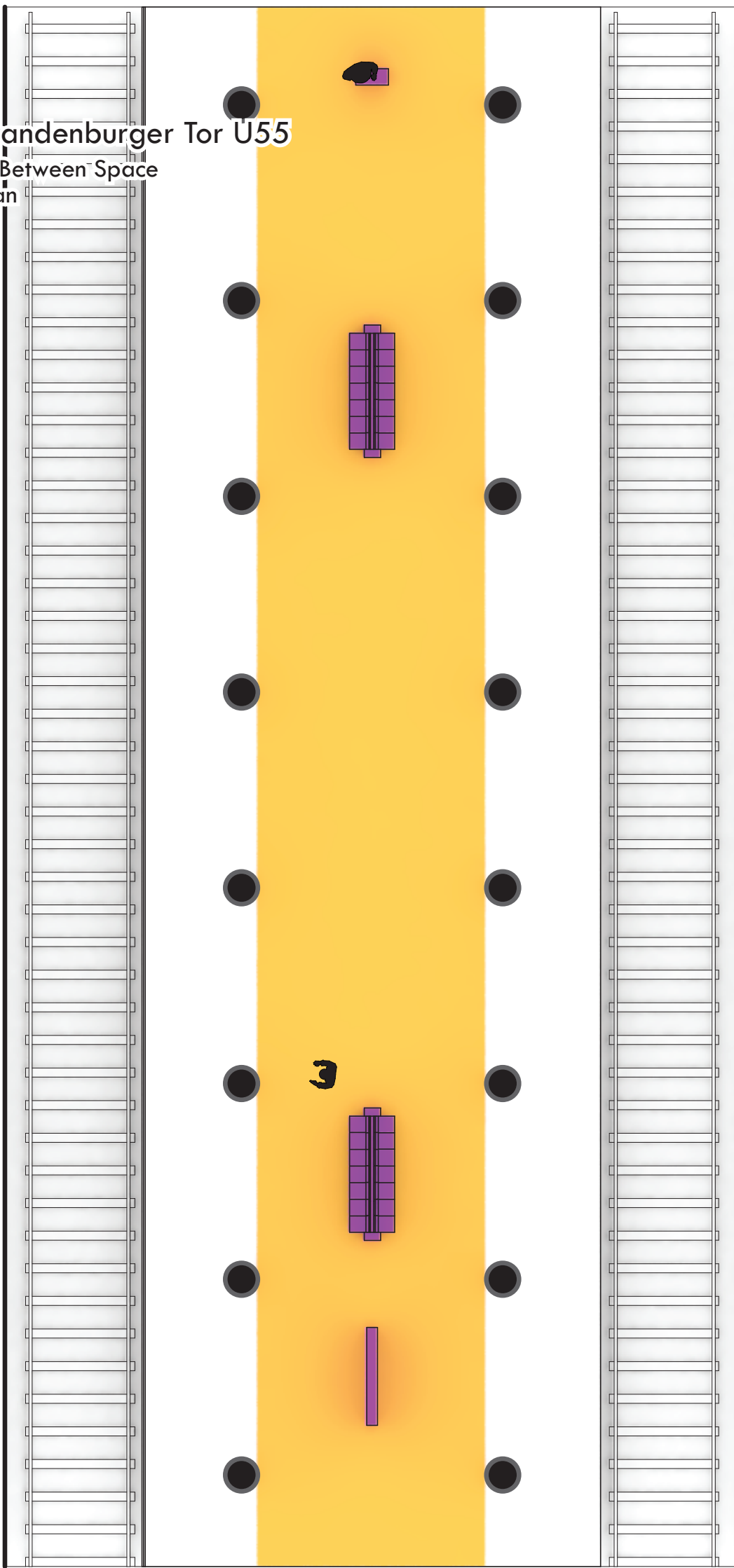
- In-between space
- platform elements

Axon

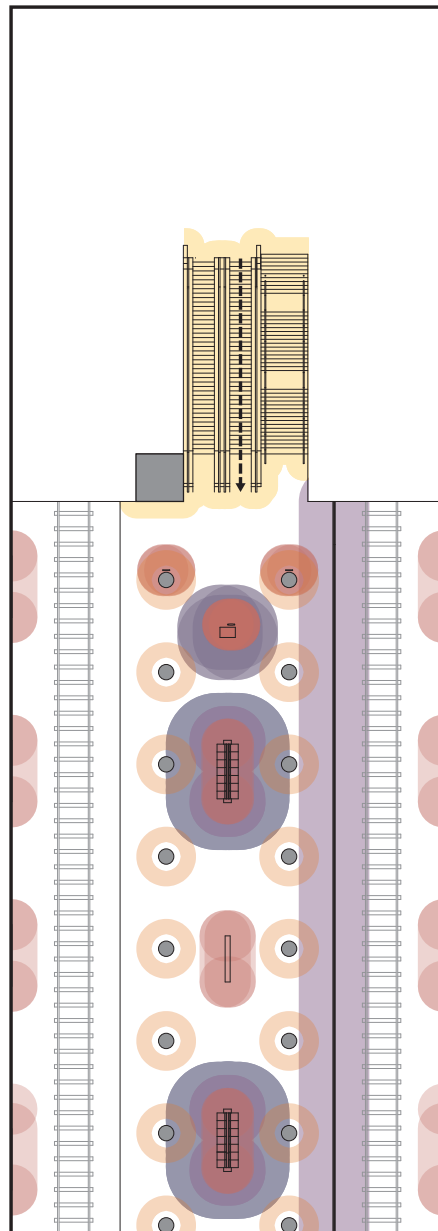
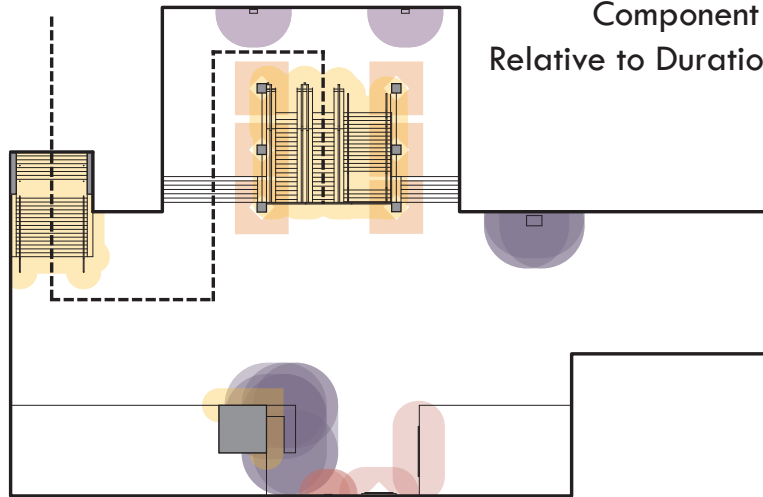


Brandenburger Tor U55
In-Between Space
Plan

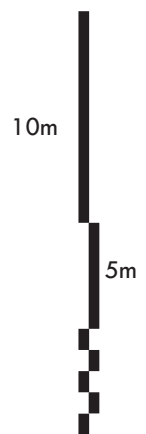
80



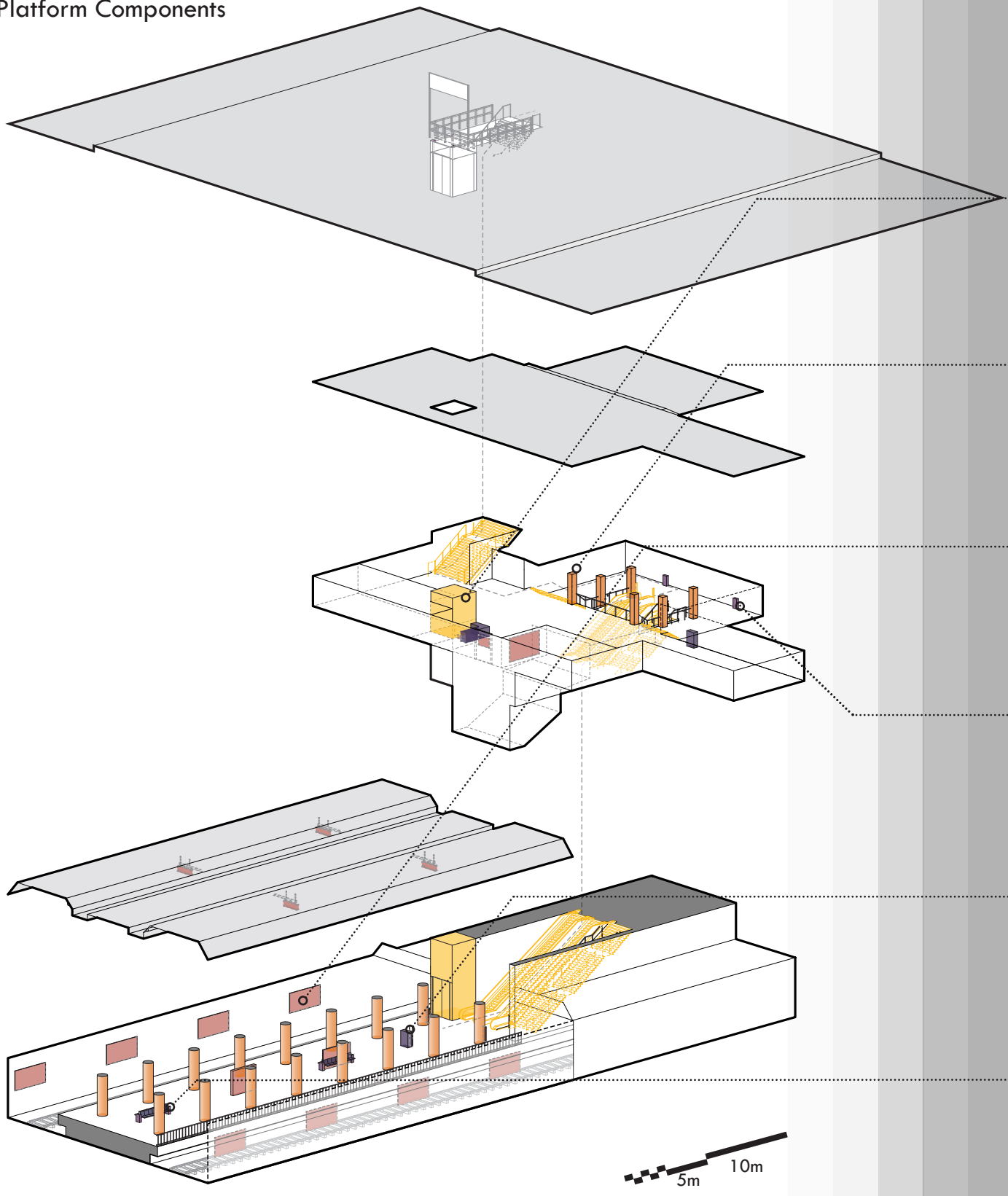
Component Density
Relative to Duration of Use



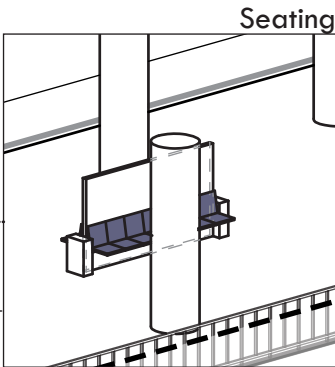
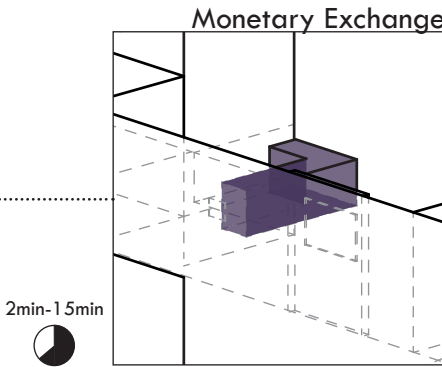
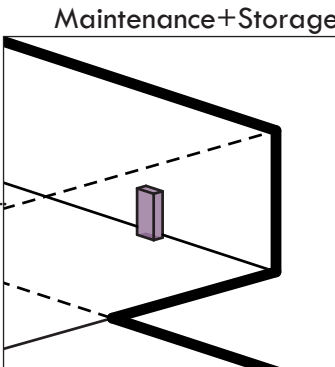
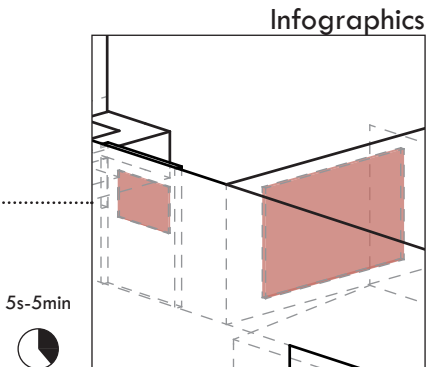
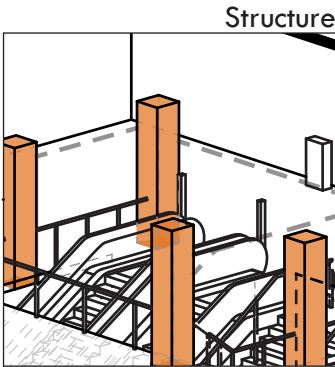
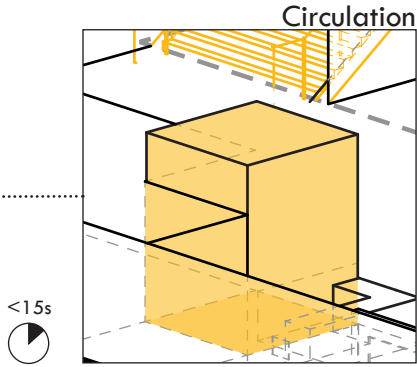
- Circulation
- Structure
- Infographics
- Maintenance+Storage
- Monetary Exchange
- Seating



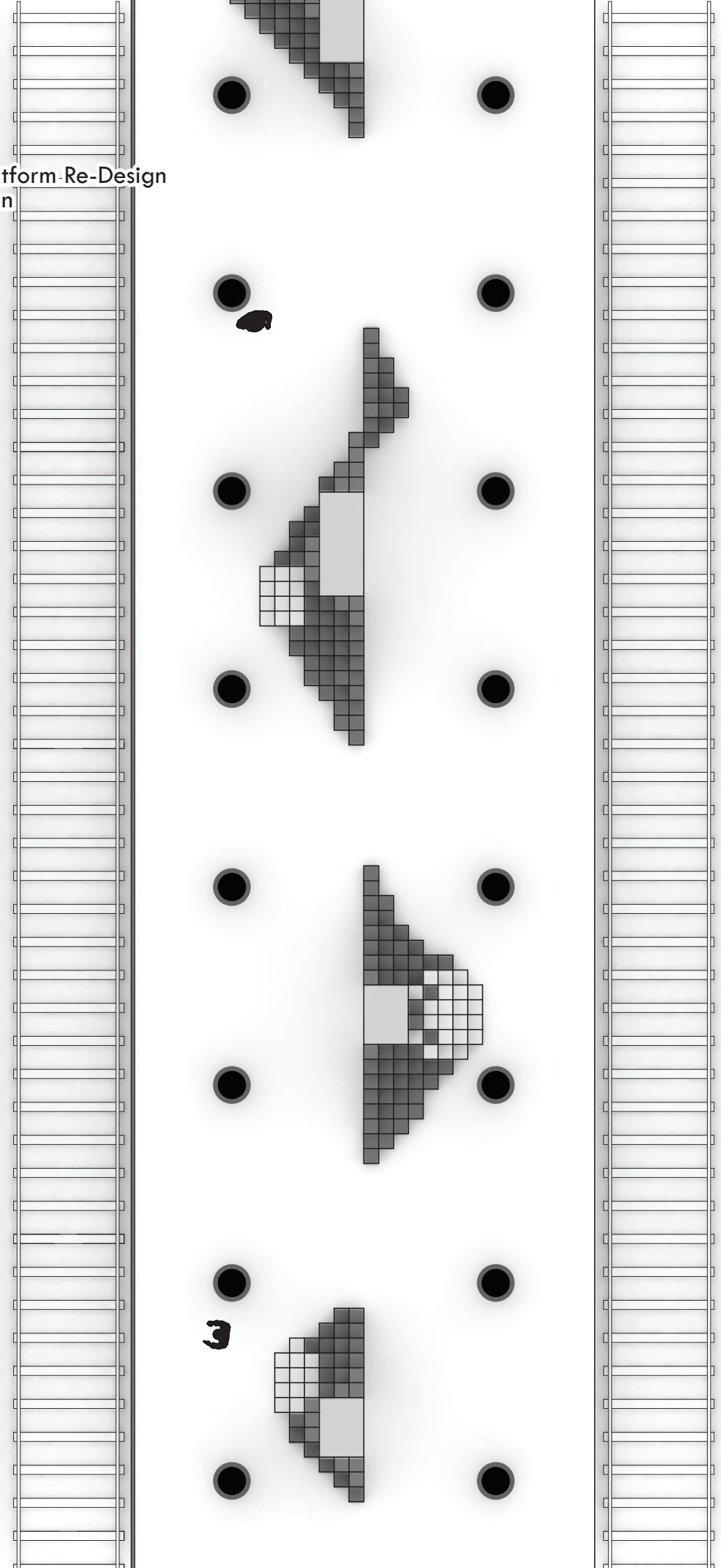
Brandenburger Tor U55 Platform Components



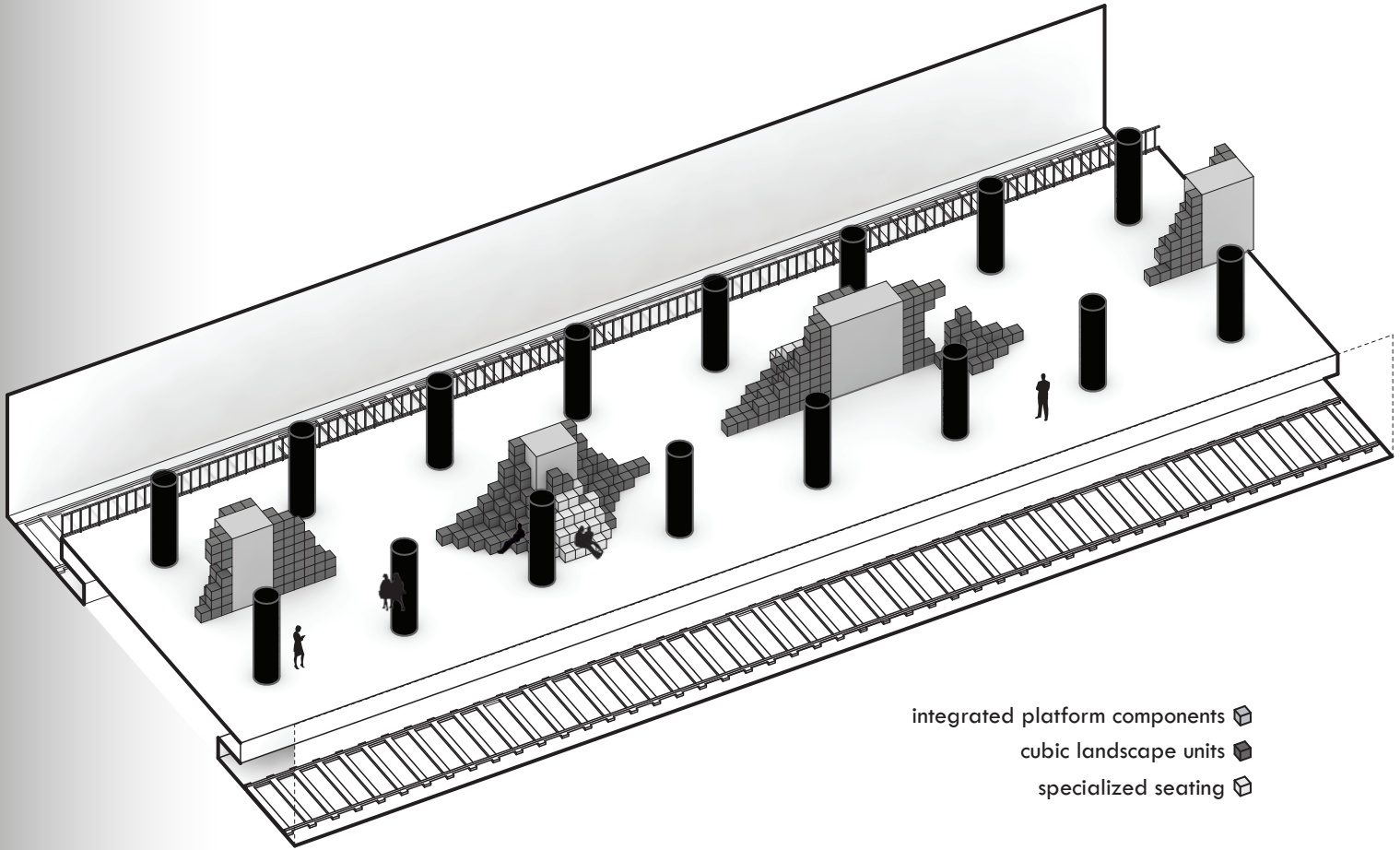
Platform Component and Duration of Interaction






Platform Re-Design
Plan



Platform Re-Design Axon



- integrated platform components 
- cubic landscape units 
- specialized seating 

Platform Re-Design Elevation



Initial Critiques

The critiques received in the final review of the studio were made sharply by our panel of Berliner Architects, were largely responsible for the continued research into the concepts addressed in this project. These critiques were largely based on issues associated with the place and culture of the city itself, regarding the design's circulation issues and its unwanted side-effects. Additional critiques were made addressing the design more objectively, regarding the lack of formal response to my altered program and its relatively unaddressed materiality.

As mentioned before, the kino program was jettisoned late in the design process, and although the projection screens were removed from the designs, the formal composition of each platform remained based on projection viewing angles. Consequently, this prevents the adopted primary program of the public transit theater from becoming fully addressed in the form. A design that addresses a non-existent program becomes irrelevant. In this case each design is rescued by its success in its adopted program, however, that success can be augmented if the platforms are re-designed with a single program in mind.

Another aspect of the project that was addressed much too late in the design process was the materiality of the cubes. General ideas were proposed regarding the kinds of material, e.g. softer material on seats more likely to be sat upon, a more durable material for the standard cubes, and coloring to match the scheme of the station. Beyond that, very little investigation was made into the material and construction of each design. Depending on the material employed, the realized platform could either be a bouncy jungle of foam cubes, or a series of harsh crystalline forms that feel as hard as they look.

As the critiques moved beyond universal principals of design, comments became much more site-specific. The European critics honed in specifically to the Alexanderplatz stations, where issues of circulation and cultural tendencies were brought up.

Especially on the redesigned Alexanderplatz U2 platform, circulation was seen as a major issue. On the original platform, space was accommodated for circulation between the numerous platform elements. In the redesign, those elements were clustered and incorporated into the cubic masses, which despite the spacial efficiency of consolidation actually hindered circulation across and through the platform. The proximity of the cubic masses would not be able to properly circulate the massive flow of people that come to and through the station on a daily basis.

The culture of the stations also creates another issue with the proposed platform redesigns. The existing railway platforms of Berlin are notoriously clean and well-kept, with a notable lack of homeless occupants thanks in no small part to their Spartan design logic. By redesigning each station to have more than ten times its previous seating capacity, the redesign could actually work too well and gain permanent residents.

The critics mentioned that the stations at Alexanderplatz would be especially problematic due to their high rates of pedestrian and tourist traffic, compounding circulatory problems as well as promoting loitering of potentially unsavory characters.

These critiques were extremely influential in the development of the summer studio project as well as this booklet, as much of the research conducted for this thesis project was meant to correct a majority of these problems and augment the existing experiential qualities of each design.

Original Project Goals

Goal:

to create conditions of stasis on the platform in order to multiply the significance of the place through event generation over time

Conceptual Strategies

1. Social Theater by day, ~~Kino~~ by night
2. Renewal of spacial interest through elevated perspective
3. Increased seating to create meeting places on cubes and platform
4. Consolidation of massing into multi-use aggregations

Modified Project Goals

Goal:

To augment the experience of place of the platform through spacial differentiation, exponentially increased seating, and social stages on the platform.

Conceptual Strategies

1. Social Theater
2. Renewal of spacial interest through **re-composition of platform space by cubes**
3. Increased seating to create meeting places on cubes and platform
4. Consolidation of massing into multi-use aggregations

Re-Evaluation

Armed with critiques from the final review in Berlin, professors back at the University of Kentucky, and my own research specifically generated to critique my work, I set about re-evaluating, reviewing and scrutinizing my work with the intention of creating constructive criticism to augment the effectiveness of my project. As such, project goals, formal implementations, and other design decisions were modified and replaces instead of simply receiving flat criticism.

As seen on the previous pages, the original project goal was *to create conditions of stasis on the platform in order to multiply the significance of the place through event generation over time*. At the time that this goal was made, I had a basic idea of what was necessary to make a place. I had not done any research into the study or definition of place, let alone how to design it, yet I was not very far from the mark, as evidenced by the Gunter Nitschke quote *Place is the product of lived space and lived time*. I was aware that time, and the generation of events (*memories*) over that time was crucial in imbuing meaning into a space, and to facilitate the generation of memories, I thought it best to slow down the overall speed of the platform, to try and figure out a way to keep people on the platform as long as possible without creating a major inconvenience.

From my research on place and place generation, I learned that although time is important in the significance of memories, it is not essential to the creation of place memories. For example, a space with a high imageability, such as the foot of a skyscraper, can be viewed for a brief moment and have similar significance of place to a coffee shop in your neighborhood. Because of this other time-independent place making techniques, the factor of time was removed from my project goal and replaced with the more general phrase *augment the experience of place of the platform*. This new phrasing now covers all place making techniques and also allows for a more practical approach to the redesign of each platform, as there is no longer an explicit goal to render parts of the platform in stasis.

The isolation of the *social theater* program further in the second iteration of the program requirements was meant to encourage a recomposition of each of the platform designs. While the general forms will remain the same, the arrangement based on the kino program will be scrapped altogether, along with the specialized seating to encourage use of the entire cubic structure. Additionally, with this recomposition, the seats positioned to accommodate sight lines to the kino screens will be repositioned to put emphasis on the social *stages* of the platform stairs, the vending kiosks, even the platform edges, where passengers occasionally wrestle for a spot on a crowded train car.

Although the elevation of passenger seating was the original inspiration for the concept of the social theater, it is not the only spacial dynamic that occurs upon the redesigned platforms. Elevation of the seating still occurs on a large scale, but the aggregation also materializes horizontally as the cubic landscape re-shapes the platform. Because of the spacial differentiation on and between platforms caused by the horizontal and vertical aggregation of cubes, the imageability and therefore memorability and placeness is amplified. The rephrasing of the Conceptual Strategy above has no direct formal consequence in the revision of my designs, but serves to describe what is intended through those designs in a more eloquent manner.

The exact formal impact of the graphic research on the corresponding platform re-design will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, the component density diagrams are extremely insightful when juxtaposed against the densities of the redesigned platforms. In my original concept, I sought to condense platform component densities so as to 'open up' more space on the platform. What resulted in the redesigns was less of a condensation and more of a redistribution and aggregation of component massing. In almost every one of my redesigns, circulation through and around the platform was considerably impeded by the cubic landscapes I was trying to generate. Although the exact formal consequences of the graphic research will be specific to each platform, I am certain that the research will be essential in designing the speeds and paths of circulation through the next iteration of the platform designs.

Conclusion

For the most part, the critique of the summer project through the research proved to be a more constructive action than any, as many of the original design theses became modified and augmented by the additional information. As seen in the first section of this thesis, in the end every action is ruled by the subconscious, by the intuitive, and as a result every decision we make is in some way intuitive.

It can be argued that all design is intuitive design, and although some intuitions are more strongly supported by evidence and reason, reactive design methods reach the phenomenological aspects of design more quickly and effectively than empirical, research-based design methods.

As seen in the reflexive designs of my project in Berlin, it is more efficient and effective to intuitively react to the context first when designing, rather than exhaustively researching the context first, because while reflexive designs are tested and developed strategically by specific conditions, calculated designs consider as many options as possible to empirically determine a design, thereby exponentially complicating and retarding design decisions.

However, this it not to say that intuitive design methods should be used exclusively in design development, only that they should be used first. Research and empirical evaluation is essential for effective and functional designs, but should be used as tools for prototype analysis. Ideally, these methods would be used in a cycle: reflexive prototypes are created, then critiqued by research, which is then reacted to in the next iteration of the prototype, which is critiqued by more research, etc. These methods working in cycle create a self-critical system not unlike what occurs in this paper, allowing continual refinement and distillation of concepts and their realizations.



Line 211 Arrivi
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INFORMAZIONE
Tutti i giorni
10:00 - 18:00
19:00 - 21:00

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Tutti i giorni

10:00 - 18:00

19:00 - 21:00

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Place In Transit: Intuitive Methodologies Abroad

Thesis Defense
Gaines Center for the Humanities



Doug Niemann
2013