

PART I

GROUP

2

INDUSTRIAL
HERITAGE:
HUTMEN

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CONTEXT

- > *Hutmen* is a large industrial site of 39,2 hectares located 1,5 km south-west of Wrocław city centre. Established in the early 20th century, the site has been constructed to create better working conditions, health care and amenities for workers. The steel foundry forms the traditional core of industrial activity, accompanied by additional small businesses (manufacturers, radio stations, car services and light industrial). *Hutmen's* distinctive industrialism with its central location, distinctive architecture, excellent transport connections to the city centre, city bypass, and airport, public transport infrastructure has become a heritage interest. Preserving industrial and light industrial functions, the relocation of the steel foundry has become a priority for both the company and the city ranging from high rise to detached housing and services of Wrocław. The site is surrounded by vast garden landscapes (allotments) and Grabiszyn neighbourhood with 14.000 residents.



Existing urban fabric

ANALYSIS

Multiple, varied boundaries are distinctive characteristics of the site, together with its morphological structure of large building footprints, concrete walls and barbed wire fences. Two railway lines restrict the site on its northern and eastern boundaries. There are few opportunities for internal circulation within the site. The eastern part of the industrial site, owned and operated by Hutmen, is bound by fencing, concrete and barbed wire walls. The hotchpots of buildings are of diverse heights and styles long-lasting as well as cheap 'quick fix solutions' and visual barriers are making this townscape disorienting and difficult to use.

WHO USES THE SITE?

Based on our site visit, it is clear that the Hutmen is not a 'pure' brown field site. It displays a surprising variety of social demographics and uses: older persons travelling to and from allotments, young families cycling on the path in front of the iconic foundry building or sitting on park benches, shoppers visiting the local supermarket, and teenagers waiting for the tram, thus the site accommodates a number of diverse users, existing assets and hubs of activity.

VISION

Our vision is to strengthen the site from within, enabling people of the city to take 'ownership' of an under-utilised industrial structure with potential for innovative new uses. Without competing with the historic city centre, the site will emphasise Wrocław's industrial past while providing a sub-centre which enriches the local community. New uses may include workshops for arts and crafts, spaces for young start-ups and other diverse businesses and outdoor events.

URBAN DESIGN TASKS

Reduce fragmentation: facilitate new networks across existing boundaries, create greater legibility between large building footprints by reducing the number fences and physical barriers between buildings and eliminating fine-grained structures of lower quality.

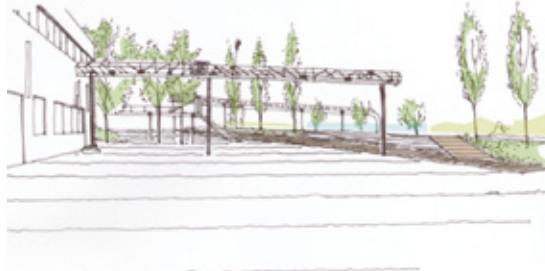
Improve urban quality: provide conditions to create new public spaces and new patterns to engage people with this industrial structure in new ways.

Make industrial space 'liveable': create lively niches and initiate hotspots that attract activity, i.e. specific sites developed incrementally to stimulate ideas, further interest in the area and generate diverse uses; foster legible spaces which retain a sense of intimacy.

- > **Utilise industrial character:** retain larger buildings as enabling structures, using their block structure for co-habiting businesses, diverse start-ups, etc.; invite new users to take advantage of exciting industrial heritage structures while retaining some light industry uses; and keeping the gas piping structure in place.
- > Given the current morphology and barrier conditions, local engagement with the site is limited. Yet there are existing nodes that can help facilitate access to the site. They include a hotel, fitness centre and supermarket on the western fringe of our industrial area, a café servicing workers on the site, bike routes along the main road, as well as the road leading to allotments. This collection of spaces has a variety of different qualities and scales made up of 'generic' single box store typologies (e.g. Lidl), untidy yet intimate spaces (e.g. on-site café for workers) and gritty and overgrown peripheral places (e.g. access path to the allotments).

HOTSPOTS

- > Our vision rests on existing patterns of movement, interest, and unique qualities. Hotspots are a key tools for delivering our vision. Buildings, distinctive industrial infrastructure features and vacant spaces within the industrial site serve as roots from where to branch out further developments in adjoining areas. These hives of activity will be developed incrementally, over time, in key locations or pockets on the site and serve as incubators for new investment or innovative use of space. They will consist of both outdoor spaces and functions within buildings generating new activities and a dynamic with their surroundings. A variety of urban squares and corridors will provide stopping and starting points to rest in, move through, hide away or socialise.
- > The creation of a boulevard running parallel to the railway on the north of the site will serve a greater function by softening the hard border of the railway which separates allotments from Hutmen and providing visual and physical access to this enormous space. This new interface will help re-conceptualise the 'front' and 'back' of the site. The distinctive gas pipes will act as a playful reminder of the industrial infrastructure and visual marker to lead users through the network of hotspots. A fine grained pavilion structures and strategic landscaping links the existing main entrance with side entrances providing visual guidance. Small scale activities or services in the pavilions and newly defined routes will encourage users to explore the site further.



Design proposals

