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Towards a membrane of meaning

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| Authors | Egan, Eimear |
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T o w a r d s a
M e m b r a n e o f M e a n i n g

E i m e a r E g a n



A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Thank you to everyone who lent a helping hand throughout the year,
With a special thanks to Jane and Adrian for your generous commitment
in the final few days in getting me over the line.

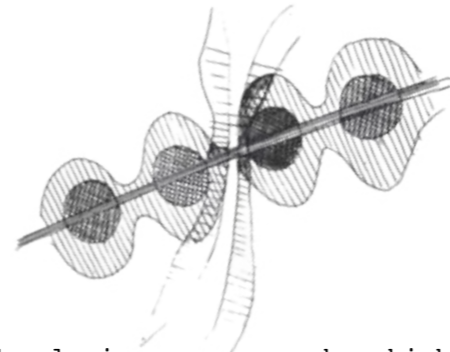
Thank you to my family for your boundless support and constant enthusiasm,
With a special thanks to my little brother Jack, your eagerness to get
involved and passion to learn gives me great hope for the future.

Finally, a tremendous thank you to the SAUL community both students and
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a discourse that won't end here.

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A B S T R A C T



My Thesis investigation involves developing a process by which one could derive meaning in the threshold space of an edge condition to which the border is not explicit. In investigating the social and ideological aspects of movement in line with infrastructure, the project aims at reworking our perception of spaces created by transport infrastructure, dealing predominantly with speed, scale, roads and landscape in the play between linear and polar movement. My focus deals with the relationship between the City of Galway and the Town of Oranmore, investigating the changing dynamic of the Irish Town developing a place for lived experience and heritage in future development. The program incorporates a more multi-functional framework, looking at roundabouts, motorway exits and flyovers as nodal points for social interaction between different territories.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

"The bridge gathers earth as landscape around the stream...it does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream"

-Martin Heidegger ²

"It seems to me that past, present and future must be active in the minds interior as a continuum...The time has come to reconcile them [past,present,future];to gather the essential human meaning divided among them."¹

I am interested in an architecture less concerned with the spectacle of the monumental whole, and more with an ongoing network of parts where the end condition is still evolving. I have always tried to look at things from first principles, intrigued with the method and tactics of process. The journey conditions your perception of the destination, therefore the implications of nodal relationships are of the utmost importance. I have a fondness for the strong sense of identity a particular place can evoke within a person, a sense of involvement and memory.

In this essay I intend to develop a process by which one could derive meaning in the threshold space of an edge condition to which the border is not explicit. How can a sense of place be realised in the spatial mediations between different states? What happens when a threshold becomes inhabited, a charged place within itself? In a challenge to sustain both country and city life it is important that they converse rather than compete with one another. This temporal zone between destruction and building is a tricky one. I wish to rework our perceptions of ordinary space within the daily routine of everyday experiences on a human scale and study how this informs our connectivity as a collective whole. In contemplating this paradoxical space between transience and permanence, I will investigate the social and ideological aspects of movement in line with infrastructure, dealing predominantly with speed, scale, roads and landscape. I will explore both defined and undefined edges and both introverted and extraverted growth. While examining the play between linear and polar movement, I intend on identifying with the question of context.

1. Van Eyk, Aldo, *The Interior of Time in Meaning in Architecture*, edited by Charles Jericks and George Baird, New York, George Braziller inc, 1970,171.

2.Nesbitt, Kate, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965 - 1995*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1 Mar 1996, 433.

F R O M H E R E T O W H E R E ?

The infrastructure of the city implies a function with its focus on utilitarian physical structures, however I am particularly intrigued by the activities and associations that relate to use, the point where design meets reality in everyday experiences. The culture of a society dictates its urban dynamic which in turn dictates its built fabric. I am concerned with the thresholds and boundaries of a space in the way that they challenge use and provoke form. How can we minimize functional separation thus spur imagination.

I see the infrastructure of the city as a complete interlinked system. Currently each function seems to be conceived irrespective of its neighboring parts, a process of departmentalization that results in competing entities. Where do one structure's perimeters stop and another begin? Should there be a seamless harmony or a tensional drama? What is the ideal ratio between a city's permanence and transience in layering a narration, or is there one?

A road is a road, built for the purpose of cars. Its sole motive is to provide a route from A to B by the most efficient means. Parallel lines don't intersect. This tunnel vision mentality needs to be broken down. The connections between objects should be determined by, as Van Eyck puts it "their mutual relationships rather than by a hierarchical ordering principle."³ A discourse of interpretation and synergy needs to become more apparent, while still honouring the methodology and vocabulary of each element. Architecture is just one component in a greater holistic management network. Roads are a product of the collective, yet our engagement with them is quite individual, it does not provoke a shared relationship. The movement of the body is vital in creating social space. Where does the movement of a car feature in this?

In contemplating infrastructure's deep entanglement with the speed and scale of a place, it seems only right to outline and investigate the interfaces by which this has come about. To what do we owe our relationship with cars and their entourage of infrastructure? This leads me to the social life of roads.

ROADS, PERSONAL TRANSPORT & THE PUBLIC REALM

Roads have a rich history in the social scene of rural Ireland. Where roads crossed was a common point of interaction in rural areas. It was a rich point of culture where music, céilí dances and set dance flourished. Could there be a modern equivalent to be found in the spatial arrangements of today's roundabout? How can a piece of banal civic infrastructure be adapted into an integral portion of adaptive public space? The creation of a 'céilí' type space on places like roundabouts could serve the community and introduce new skill sets that relate back to the tradition of the local area, cementing them in modern place and adapting the road from a consuming to a productive space. These formal objects within a linear system create a polar shift. Such nodal relationships are key in establishing a pointed located focus.

If roads are an evolution of linearity within landscape, we must first explore the archetype of 'Landschaft' the description of a compact territory with permanent human intervention. In *Landscape and Images* Stilgoe describes Landschaft as "a self-sufficient, fully realized construct of fields, paths and clustered structures encircled by unimproved forest or marsh"⁴ Here people had a much stronger spatial awareness. As Landschaft developed an insular unity can be observed where situation in space reflected a position in society and was at the core of individual identity. People used only what was immediately accessible to them. A rural depiction similar to how Kevin Lynch describes the ideal city in the 60's, as a place of order where each element has an intensified character of its own.⁵ Landschaft developed into towns and villages, nuclei of urbanized growth.

As the desire for exploration and trade developed, paths evolved into roads extending beyond, changing people's perception of the countryside and initiating a shift in interpersonal relationships. "The City begins only when paths are transformed into roads"⁶.

Roads were seen as open territory, the playing field of professional travelers. The road edge was transformed from scenery to scene. The activity of the road began to permeate into its surroundings, the intent of which usually contested with local values. In Ireland this zone became the home of itinerants, the birth place of the Travelling community; originally nomadic cattle herders who became known for their skill in metal work. This displaced border of transitory space lacked formal control and governance. Christy Moore's depiction of the struggles of the life of a traveler in his song *Go, Move, Shift* successfully encapsulates this condition.

*"Mary Joyce was living at the side of the road.
No halting place and no fixed abode,
The vigilantes came to the Darndale site
And they shot her son in the middle of the night"*⁷

The road is the spine to many rural towns in Ireland. They have been moulded over time around the road. Here the road holds place together rather than tearing it apart. Before the twentieth century, Towns and Villages were crucial markers in a much larger network region. How can we engage with the fragmented edges of cities through roads incorporating a balance of governance and creating a framework of many binding strands of production? The anthropology of a place is of the utmost importance in the development of a collective public realm. Use is something that is quite fragile and time related, however, how people have inhabited a space will dictate the speed and scale of future movement and activity.

"A road is a physical entity" an "object in landscape"⁸. I am skeptical of Marc Augé's description of roads as non-places⁹. I feel he only gives a partial depiction of the experience of the road, place is a more dynamic condition than he articulates. Roads have a particular sensed experience, they are not all abstract, many take us on a particular journey. I do believe that their landscapes need to be perceived in a much more coherent manner. I feel the next layer of the foreseeable future is crucial in inscribing new relationships and unearthing forgotten ones. In understanding the idea of place and how we perceive space in different territories, it is interesting to compare and contrast the approaches of Christian Norberg-Schulz and Kevin Lynch in an attempt to find some form of clarity somewhere between the two.

4. Stilgoe, John, 'Linearity and Landschaft', *Landscape and images*, University of Virginia Press, London, Eurospan, 2005, 29.

5. Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, Cambridge and London, 1960

6. Rykwert, Joseph, *The idea of a town: the anthropology of urban form in Rome, Italy and the ancient world*, Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press 1988.

7. Moore, Christy, the eight verse of *Go, Move, Shift*.

8. Hvattum, Mari, *Routes, roads and landscapes*, Ashgate, Farnham, 2011, 34.

9. Augé, Marc, *Non-places : Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, Verso, London, 2008.

Christian Norberg-Schulz was interested in Architecture in terms of the topography of the earth's surface, the light conditions as naturally created by the sky, buildings and the symbolic meanings in the cultural landscape. He breaks down the landscape into three basic characters; sky, land and earth, taken from Hiedeggers theories on architecture. He also believes that it is in relation to nature that places and objects take meaning. An object cannot be conceived irrespective of its context. "A city has the same right as human patient to be regarded as an individual requiring personal attention rather than abstract advice"¹⁰ I think this is particularly relevant in the area of road design and how it has developed today. Universal and generic engineered models have been implemented to insure safety and efficiency. However the spatial layout of these transportation networks should be integrated with greater care. The uniqueness of a thing is confined to its context. Elements should not be simply considered in abstract space. Contributions of topography, natural conditions and symbolic meaning should have as much relevance as built form.

Like Norberg, Lynch is interested in the City as a place with distinctive valued character. Lynch's main focus however was on the structural identity. He put emphasis on the how the image of the city is perceived. "Elements of Legibility"¹¹ He categorizes these elements into a pattern of paths, edges, districts, landmarks and nodes. These elements describe the here, there and in-between. In his characterization of elements, he creates a framework from which to determine the way in which we navigate and negotiate the city. In breaking down these elements of association further he affiliates them with our trajectories. Along which paths do we customarily, occasionally and potentially move? This catalogue of parts doesn't allow for adapting networks. As this stems outwards, control of legibility disintegrates, perception is altered as speed intervenes.

In Aldo Rossi's "Architecture of the City" he discusses the city in terms of pieces. The monuments of the city's form that make up the objects of its hard infrastructure. "One is struck by the multiplicity of functions that a building of this type can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of form."¹² It is the composition of these pieces of the city that is most rich in sustaining the character of the city. Rossi associates the architecture styles with particular functions. He emphasis's building type rather than building function. Monuments should serve the city's collective memory. I agree with the idea of the city as a relationship between things and am intrigued by its morphological development on its edge. I believe it would be useful to look at roads with the same principles. Can a roads characterization be thought of in terms of their speed rather that function. Can there be a more multiplicity of speeds?

The edge condition was built for speed. At the awkward moment where street suddenly expands into distributor roads, the visual messaging of the road commands a new language of its own. Here the car is the most valuable customer "cars are a defining characteristic of the edge-lands"¹³ .When you are in a car at high speed you are only experiencing a sense of the landscape, rather than the actual landscape, usually this is a false perception, a buffer zone of hedge-groves giving the illusion that you are amongst nature making you feel comfortable. As soon as something comes into view you get an idea of how fast you are going. The wider the road is perceived to be the faster the speed tends to increase,¹⁴ location becomes a blur. Here time can both accelerate and allude our view. I aim to create a new awareness of the overlooked, the subtle moments that alter and inform everyday routine life practices, defining some place in the widely sprawled space absorbed by speed. By altering perception and perspective slightly I aim to lessen the gap between conceptualized space and reality, heightening a more conscious attention of the viewer and provoking interaction.

10. G.Jivén,P.J Larkin, Sense of Place,Authenticity and Character,Journal of Urban Design, Vol.8, No.1,2003.

11. Lynch, Kevin, The Image of the City, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, Cambridge and London, 1960

12. Rossi, Aldo, Ghirardo Diane Yvonne, Ockman Joan, and Eisenman Peter. The Architecture of the City. Cam- bridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982.

13. Farley,Symmonds,Paul, Roberts,Michael, Edgelands : journeys into England's true wilderness, Jonathan Cape, London, 2011

14. Mars, Roman, 99% invisible Episode 68 "Built for Speed", 99%invisible.org, December 12, 2012



Fig 1 & Fig 2 (following page) Speculative proposals for the use of leftover roundabout space in Oranmore.



J U X T A P O S I T I O N O F P A R T S

In investigating how cities engage with their adjoining hinterlands and the role infrastructure has to play in this relationship, I have taken two examples, the City of Stockholm and the City of Galway.

Galway is described as the 'Gateway to the West'. This hints at a particular condition. Galway is known as a cultural heart. It is a vibrant, attractive city with numerous festivals. There is no doubt that it is an active city. However Galway city feels more like a town. It has quite an informal, low density structure, which adds to its charm. The infrastructure of the city core is frozen in time. It is this connecting infrastructure or lack there of which lets it down.

With Galway's current dispersed, organic nature it is interesting to see it was once a walled city, the introverted nature of which has still left its trace. Although the city continues to grow outwards, it has a habit of looking in on itself. Much of the city turns its back to one of its biggest assets, Galway Bay.

The coastline defines one edge of the city, while the landward side appears undefined. Roads seem to scatter houses into the landscape with no clear cohesive agenda. It is difficult to determine where city ends and county begins. In the 90s settlement pattern moved from the peripheral rural areas of the 70s to peri-urban belts.¹⁵ Ribbon development came in swarms in an effort to supply a fast growing city while retaining its character. This ribbon development I feel has had a negative impact on local landscape. Maybe the rugged nature of the terrain lends itself to low density dwelling? Even so, this doesn't excuse the fact that Galway has become a sea of traffic. Galway city is on par with Dublin in terms of its growth rate. Infrastructure has not kept up to date with growth.

I feel in maintaining the character of the city, it is the sub-centric towns that are beginning to suffer. For example, consider Oranmore, situated 8km east of Galway City, on the edge of Oranmore Bay, an inlet of Galway Bay. The heart of the town is located at the junction of two roads, Main Street and the Old Dublin Road, which meet at a T-Junction. Oranmore is seen to have the best of both worlds, rural and suburban, with a rich heritage including a fifteenth century castle in the heart of the town which is still inhabited today, and the beautiful demesnes of Renville and Ardfry not too far from reach. Oranmore also holds strong geographical features with the river flowing through the town and entering Oranmore bay. However, this village has seen major developments in the boom years. A surge of housing came first, to which the schools and other amenities have struggled to adapt proportionately. Oranmore is rapidly becoming a part of the city's commuter or suburban belt.

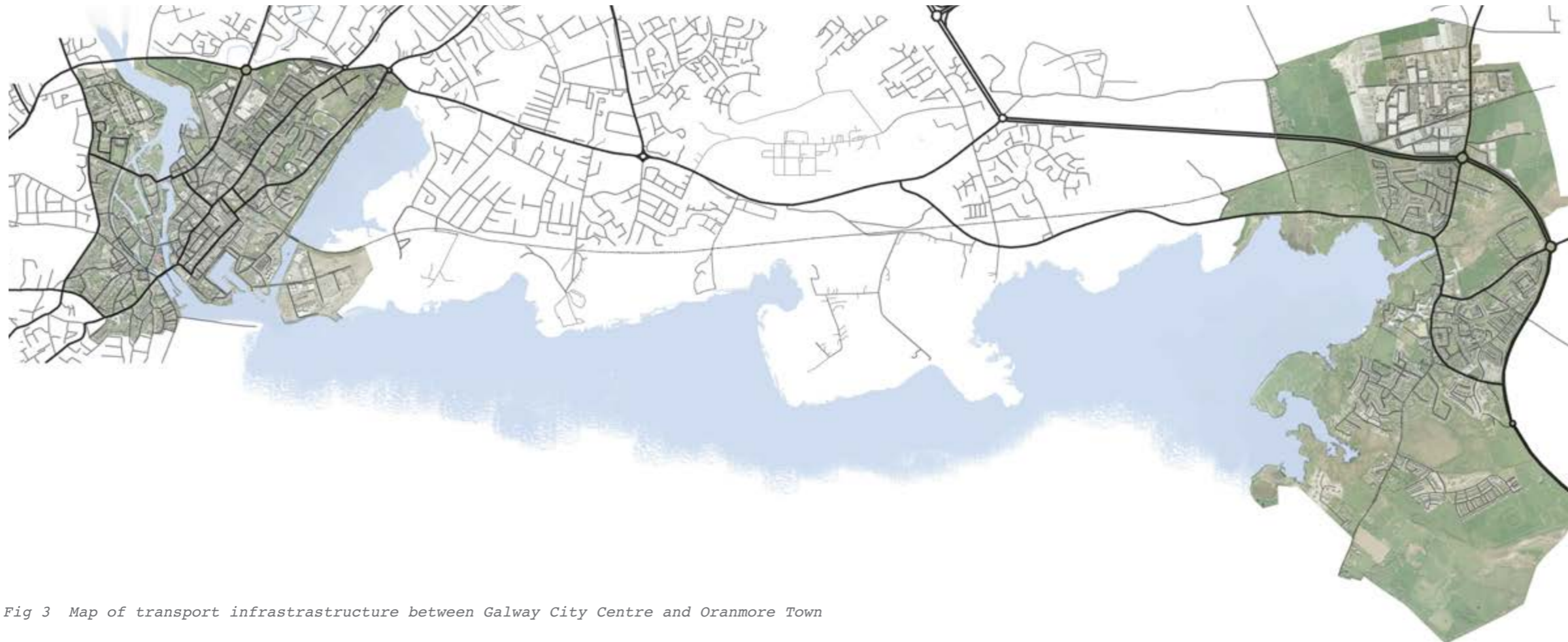


Fig 3 Map of transport infrastructure between Galway City Centre and Oranmore Town



Fig 4 The view of Tesco's as approaching along the Coast Road.



Fig 5 halted development at roundabout existing Oranmore along the N17 in the Clarinbridge direction.

If we compare and contrast Stockholm to Galway we can see how the infrastructure of the city has influenced its growth/settlement pattern. Like Galway, Stockholm has a low density core, with a strong relationship to nature and water. Stockholm sees itself as a region, including the 14 islands of its archipelago. The City itself is broken up into core islands. The Islands provide clarity, each with a particular identity.

In the 1930s Stockholm believed that growth should follow a public transport system. As a solution, long 'fingers' of development were introduced with undeveloped 'green wedges' between. This creates a radial development throughout. The region became easily accessible and green corridors began to filter into the city.¹⁶ A series of prescribed nodes were set up based on transport infrastructure, allowing for poly-centric growth. Dense housing blocks were created around transport hubs in an effort to achieve efficiency and accessibility. After spending some months living in Farsta, one of the city's southern sub centers, the attempt to create a sustainable living space has compromised the feeling of a sense of place.

There is very little that distinguishes one sub center from another. Each sub center has its housing towers and shopping malls as prominent features. As there is little variation in the housing, there appears to be social and ethnic division. In creating so called self-contained developments such as these, which have an insular secluded nature, it seems almost as if we are advocating an indifference to one's environment. More variety, integration and diversity are needed. "Beauty resides in what is undetermined and vague"¹⁷. People would do anything to protect their woods in Sweden and the locals take great pride in it. As you travel from city to sub-center along the train, there are many stark contrasts of untouched woodland and dense nodes. To me it feels like an all or nothing type approach. A landscape, however is an area perceived by people, "whose character is the result of the interaction of nature and or human factors?"¹⁸ I don't feel these sub-centers speak very much to the surrounding characters. They make sense on a map. But in reality, spatially a sense of context does not feel present.

In examining two territories familiar to me in terms of how the city's connecting infrastructure has influenced its growth, settlement patterns and identity of place, it is clear the transport networks have a key role in our involvement and perception of the land. Has traffic engineering supplemented town planning? This traversing of transport infrastructure is understood to have the greatest rational and conceptual validity. I believe we need to be more critical of how it is superimposed on a place. In comparing the conditions of the outskirts of both Galway and Stockholm city, where very different approaches are taken. What is the solution? How is a happy medium between urban and rural to be formed? The relationship between infrastructure and housing density is of extreme importance. Too low a density over sprawling estates, which can be seen in the Galway model, results in there being no economic argument to develop the infrastructure to support such development. Consequently poor public services can be observed. However, in the opposite extremes, too high a density can reduce the quality of life of residents, and be detrimental to the character of a place, also putting a lot of pressure on schools and other social services. Demographic and rate of growth are also key factors to this equation.

16. Nelson, Alyse, 'City of Water', *The Local*, September 2013, 14:33 CET

17. Zumthor, Peter, *Thinking Architecture*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 2010

18. Stilgoe, John, 'Linearity and Landschaft', *Landscape and images*, University of Virginia Press, London, Eurospan, 2005

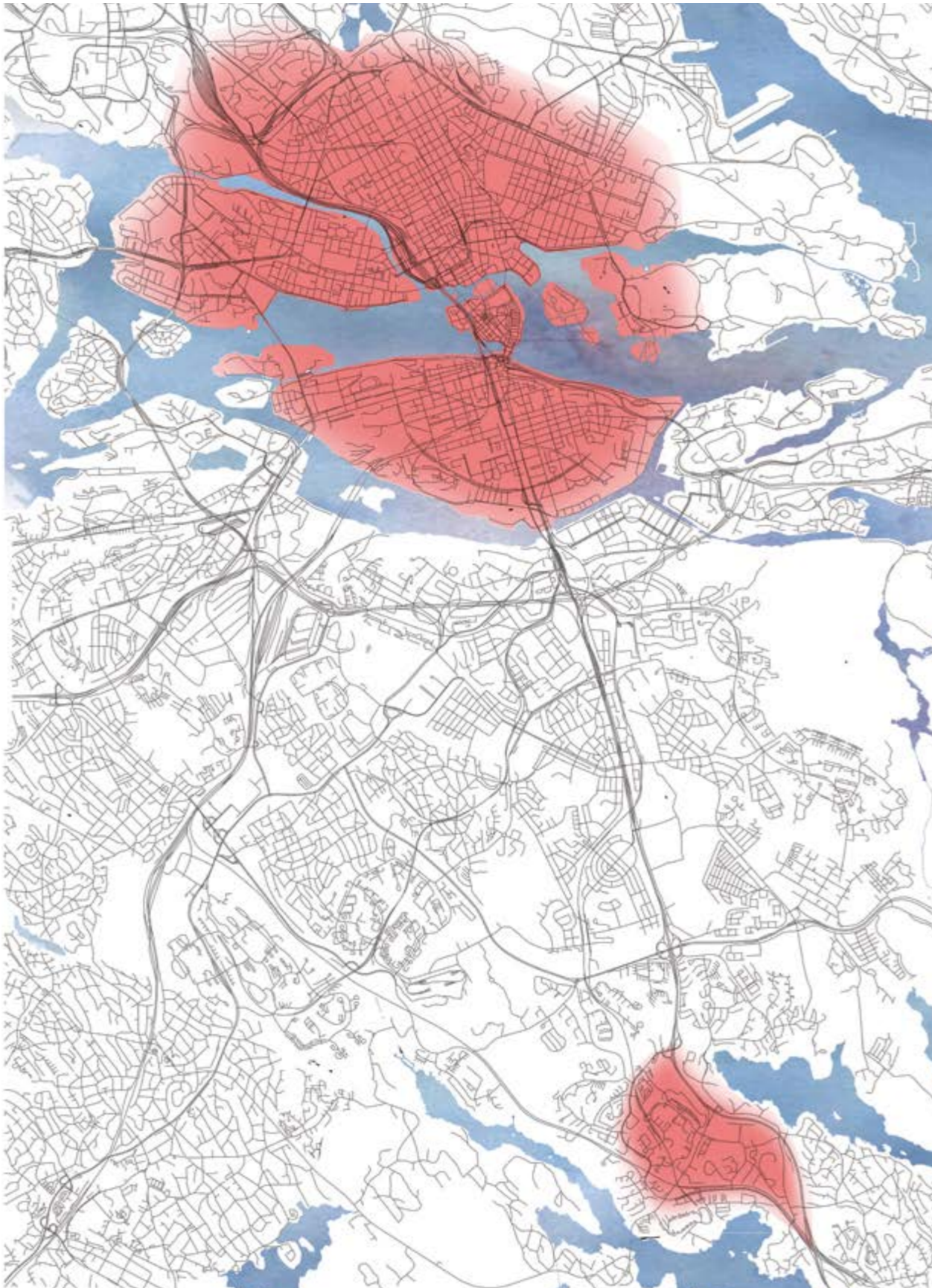


Fig 6 Map of transportation infrastructure networks between Stockholm City Centre and Farsta.

Cities should be in continual flux. In returning to a familiar place, a more than frequent condition comes to mind, that of flooding. Galway city has great problems with flooding down by the Spanish Arch and right down along Quay st. causing great damage to many buildings, with grave consequences for many businesses. With names like 'Flood St.' one need not ask the regularity of such events. This is not an isolated circumstance. As I watch the rain belting against the window, I can't help but wonder how weather has become an ever increasing factor in the cities of the future. How can we in-vision a future Galway that is more respondent to its inclement weather and how can we incorporate new more productive infrastructure to resolve issues of weather in our future plans.

The weather conditions of a place do a lot to shape its culture. A sense of shelter and enclosure encourages people to linger, occupy space. The built form adapts to facilitate this in containing our outdoor civic spaces. The conditions in Ireland are a prime example of how weather can play a key role in the culture of a place. It is a prominent topic of conversation in our daily lives. Our inward looking settlement has a lot to do with seeking shelter from south westerly winds across the Atlantic. The name Hibernia given to us by the Romans is derived from the latin word "hibernus" and means 'land of Winter'.²¹ The edge conditions in Ireland are exactly that, the edge of comfort and shelter, from the exposure of the coast, to the open landscape connecting places.

How will rising sea levels affect the many major cities bordered by water worldwide? We need to rethink how cities are conceived to deal with the rapid environmental changes. The coast, the river bank, lake shore, we must be more open along these edges. It is interesting to look at these edges not as boundaries but as transformable and adaptable possibilities. Water is a valuable infrastructure. It needs to be looked at with more open eyes. It is important to work with it not against it. As Séamus Heaney so eloquently puts it in his poem *Lovers on Aran*.

*"Did sea define the land or land the sea?
Each drew new meaning from the wave's collision
Sea broke on land to full identity"²²*

I am interested in this point where two territories meet. In tinkering with the idea of water defining an edge, it is interesting to look at how it negotiates with land. The borders where two territories meet create new spaces that generate new contexts. Reclaimed land is the most obvious example of such an event. With this in mind Woodquay in Galway City is a fitting precedent. Historically if we look back to Galway as a walled City of fifteenth century, Woodquay then, was not only on the waters edge, but also lay in the bounds outside the city walls. Originally the water flowed all along Eglinton St. This area was incrementally broken up into 3 islands, the first of which the Horse Island/Sicín (in Irish meaning low wet area), then after the knocking of the City wall the long Island was born, of which the title has been lost today. The rubble from the wall created the infill for the roads. In the eighteenth century St. Stephens Island came into being. This is the area we call Woodquay today. At this time the water now came to where Mc Swiggan's Pub is situated today. In 1830 this inlet shortened. The addition of the weir marked the main change in the topography.

Infrastructure such as the Dyke road which was finished in 1854 and the Eglinton canal, which arrived in 1851 had a major influence in the molding of the place. With the new pier in 1852, stone silting occurred causing Horse Island to become joined to Eyre st. Woodquay became a valuable access point into the city. A railway line coming in from Clifden arrived in 1892/4. Woodquay was a bustling place, an active border for incoming boats and trains. Woodquay was a thriving hub of activity on the last bend of the Corrib before it enters Galway bay. With four rowing clubs, this section of the river bank is still the height of activity today.²³ The land reclaimed as the central Woodquay St. is quite a sheltered, enclosed area. Its location near to boat access and its conditions made Woodquay a very successful market space where mainly potatoes were sold. Eggs and butter resided up at the corner of Eyre st., sometimes turf and scallops for thatching could also be found.

To my eyes it is the advent of the car that seems to have depleted this area quite considerably. With road networks landing here, its once vibrant social space has been engrossed by a car park. In taking a walk through Woodquay's formation it is interesting to observe how its connecting infrastructures were the main deciding factors in the key moments of development as the place evolved. Today it has become a mediator between the incoming drivers to the pedestrian core of the city centre, its activity bound by the car. The city should be an interplay of the conscious and the unconscious. Borders are like seams which sew different spatial situations both physically and mentally.

21. Corless, Damian, *Looks Like Rain ; 9000 years of Irish Weather*. The Collins Press, 2013.

22. Heaney, Séamus, *Lovers on Aran*

23. O'Dowd, Peadar, *Galway Local Historian, Walking Tour*, 17thsept, 2013.

*"a living border is not simply a place where there is no obstacles to people. Like a cell membrane, it is a filter- it takes effort but you can pass through it. In the past that is how urban walls function"*²⁴

24. Sennett, Richard, untitles essay, Venice Biennale Catalogue, 2006.

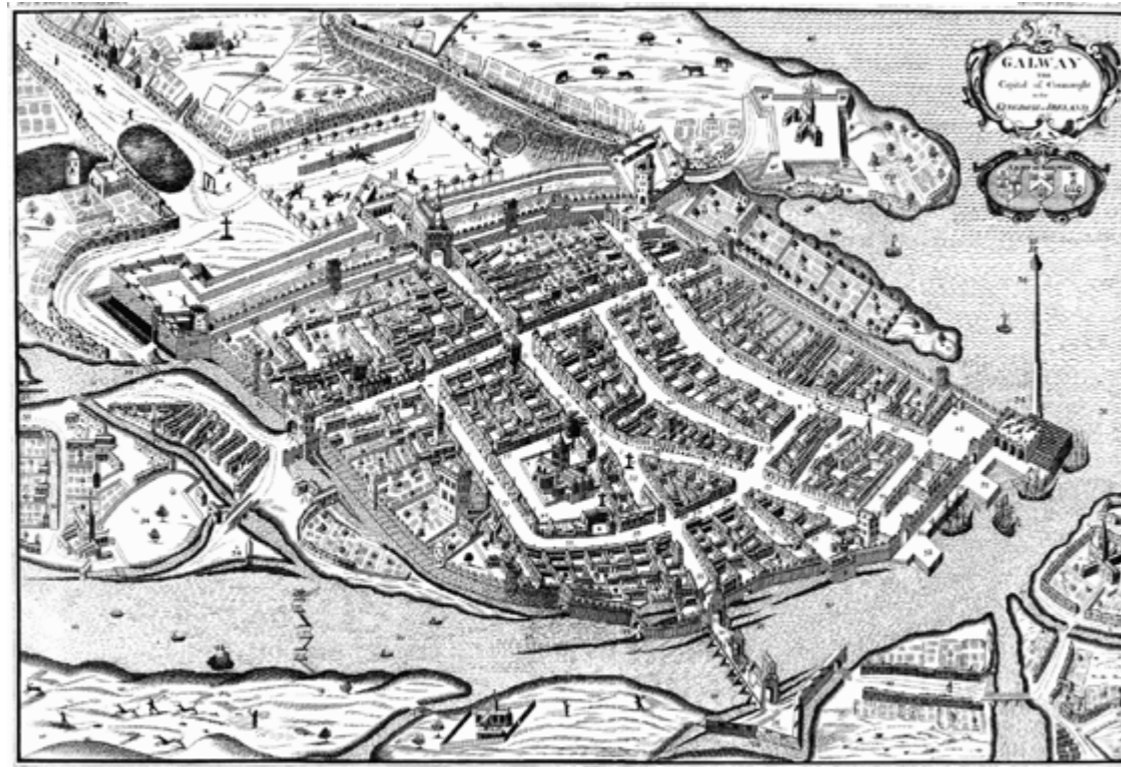


Fig 8 Map of the City of Galway 1651



Fig 9 Map of the reclamation of the City from the 1850's to the present day.



Fig 10 Drawing of Woodquay as it rests today.



Fig 11 Sketch of Re-imagined open space at Woodquay. Re-inhabiting car space, creating social space and reconnecting the inclosed park from being insular to an open and engaging public amenity.

T I M E P E R M E A T I N G T H E E D G E

In fast growing cities it is interesting to look at edges as places which foretell and deal with their own eventual destruction. If we are aware from the onset that what we are designing will be dismantled, how can we prepare for this? Even if the project disappears, the attitude towards the place is transformed. Temporary structures can be erected quickly and can become catalysts in rerouting activity through, and re-imagining forgotten spaces. I feel they are a suitable way of managing urban change. However, this should be done in coordination with an over all planned goal if the over turning liability of the edge condition is to be converted into a strength. In the territory of the edge-land, in the ambiguity of the blurred buffer zone between city and suburb, temporary structures become place holders planting a seed of what this place could grow into. It becomes the ideal territory for pilot social experiments in asserting incremental change. There is a need for continuous coordination between bordering territories in order for a balanced interaction. The Architect's role should entail implementing the guidelines and framework for the cultivation of social space. It is important for the local people to be part of this process for successful results.

I believe a more open infrastructure system is the way forward. If we take this to the context of roads "infrastructure should not exist just for the sake of expediency, it becomes the pretext for art and social welfare"²⁵ In the area of the city's breathing space, there is a lot of potential in the spaces created by crossing infrastructure which is generally over looked. In the principle of cut and fill road construction, how can we fill the spacial framework defined by heavy road infrastructure. Under-passes, fly-overs and lay-byes all have great potential in anchoring roads to collective social interaction and engagement with the geography of the places they occupy. By studying two similar interventions within road structures, I will explore and identify their social and cultural impacts. These projects will include firstly, one temporary intervention; Assemble's Folly for a Flyover in the disused undercroft in Hackney Wick, London. Secondly, a more permanent establishment; Debaser, a music venue and bar built in an underpass in Slussen, Stockholm.

Folly for a Flyover was a successful temporary project in Hackney Wick in London put forward by a young group of Architect's known as Assemble as part of Create festival. With over 40,000 visitors over the course of its 9 week existence²⁶, this project transformed a disused motorway undercroft into a place, a new public space engaging with the residents and the area. The clever play on the Folly and the reference to the red brick of the area, creating a mock historical worth to the site. The structure itself was built by a group of over 200 volunteers from reclaimed and donated materials, consisting of clay and wooden brick held up by a scaffolding frame. The events plan of activities was as important as the structure itself, the folly acting merely as a backdrop for activity. There was a busy schedule for the duration of the festival. Designed events being as important as designed space. There was a diverse programming with events and boat trips exploring the surrounding waterways. The folly was home to a cafe during the day and a theatre house at night. When the summer came to an end, the folly was dismantled. The materials were reused around the local area for facilities for a primary school. This project succeeded in planting a seed in peoples mind about the potential of this area. The London Legacy Development began to invest in the site, the folly became a doorway to more permanent infrastructure. The site has now become an area of cultural public space.



Fig 12 Assemble's Folly for a Flyover, Hackney Wick, London, 2012.

25. Ingersoll, Richard. *Sprawltown: Looking for the City on its Edges*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006, 20.

26. Assemble Studio, *Folly for a Flyover*, Projects, <http://assemblestudio.co.uk/> accessed Dec 2013.

Debaser is a chain of music venues on the southern side of Stockholm, one of which plugs in under the bridge over the Kark Johanslussen canal and faces onto the Karl John Torg, a popular public square which lies between the old Town Galma Stan and Slussen. During the day the club is an open-air restaurant which seeps into the activity of the square, it creates a knuckle point between the various flows of fast movement around it, becoming a very casual, lively place to hang out for the locals and tourists alike. At night the activity carves inward under the bridge where an intimate cave like music venue comes into light. I feel this place is a great example of an interior with exterior ambition, although it is a retail business establishment, it has a strong engagement with the social life of the square without imposing ownership. There are some similar interventions within this side of the city . Trädgården ("The Garden"), a sessional venue, located under the Västerbron bridge which connects the southern and northern parts of the city. Trädgården is an open-minded and innovative place, with an outdoor stage made up of rough materials. There is also a more inclosed building beneath the bridge which houses a gallery and a bar. By day, the outside public space is brought to life with a range of activities from boules tournaments and markets to mid-day DJ sets. By night it becomes a popular music venue. These types of interventions create informal exchange, with an active permeable membrane between inside and out, bringing life to otherwise forgotten spaces commanded by infrastructure.



Fig 13 Debaser opening out onto Karl John Torg, between Galma Stan and Slussen ,South Stockholm.



Fig 14 Market at Trädgården, under the Västerbron bridge which connects the Southern and Northern parts of the city.

MAPPING & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

In planning today there appears to be fixed entities of visual legibility, a stagnancy in figure ground. I feel cartography of this form has become an object in need of critical attention. Master planning maps can fall into a territorial political trap. In investigating the defining border on a map it is interesting to see how it encircles a local cropped area. When we perceive this space in reality is there a physical/spatial change? More often than not it is an invisible line. There is a greater need to link the technical to cultural and social elements if a site.

More distinction needs to be made between the the idea of a diagram verses a Plan. Here, I feel is where patch-work zoning becomes a big issue. How can we judge the discrepancies between planning boundaries vs. Place boundaries. I believe in understanding the complexity of place, the focus needs to be on process rather than product. If we look at the growth of a city as an open framework, guided by structure "the fact that the end result may be disastrous should not preclude experimentation, as the process more than the product is instrumental in learning about structure."²⁷ I feel there needs to be some deviation from prescribed generic representation methods. If we look at problems in the same way, we will only come up with the same solution. If we look at le Certeau's views, although everyday life may have changed somewhat since the book was written it still holds valid today "The network of these moving intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of space: in relation to representation it remains daily and indefinitely other"²⁸ or as Kevin Lynch puts it "At every instant there is more than the eye can see and more than the ear can hear"²⁹. The flow, rate of growth and network linkages are what determine a city's outcome, the pace of change being most prominent and crucial on its edges.

27. Plēsums, Guntis, On Teaching Structure Systems, Journal of Architectural Education (1947-1974) Vol. 27, No. 4 (1974), pp. 68-77, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc. DOI: 10.2307/1423936.

28. de Certeau, Michel, The Practice of Everyday Life, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1988, 93.

29. Lynch, Kevin, The Image of the City, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, Cambridge and London, 1960

This is an area where space is constantly shifting state. In ambiguous space, a combined journalistic approach to mapping makes more sense. In Justin McGuirk's accounts in *Edge City: Driving the Periphery of Sao Paolo*,³⁰ one is captivated by the story. A cinematic approach, documenting an anomaly of what a place has become through photographs, and what people believe it ought to be, incorporating the reality of society and local nuance. Mapping should be interwoven with this depth of engagement with place, and not an abstract overlay of governance. Current master-planning strategies have quite indirect contact with their subjects. They attempt to design for permanency. A lot of these places are transforming so fast that once a map is drawn, the reality may already have changed.

In looking at the work of Diller and Scofidio, these are architects who's focus explores how space functions in our culture. They understand that architecture is "the physical manifestation of social relationships, in everything, not just buildings".³¹ They border into the realm of conceptual art, with keen interest in the exteriority of meaning. "We live in a world of parallel objects, we no longer believe in an original totality, nor in the totality of a final destination"³²

Our minds function like a comic; they snap pictures, and our consciousness is simply the story the mind constructs around the pictures "The negative in-between space", "The blank space between the panels"³³ I feel this is where legibility should strive to another level of richness in creating knowledge. Not only shape, colour and arrangement but also the tactile expression of a place in striving to stimulate learning.

30. McGuirk, Justin, Vilas Baos, Thelma. *Edge City: Driving the Periphery of Sao Paolo*, Kindle Edition. Strelka Press, Strelka Institute, 2012.

31. Teyssot, George, essay : The Mutant Body of Architecture, Diller and Scofidio, *Flesh : 1: the outermost surface of the "body" bordering all relations in "space"*, Triangle Architectural Publishing, London, 1994

32. Teyssot, George, essay : The Mutant Body of Architecture, Diller and Scofidio, *Flesh : 1: the outermost surface of the "body" bordering all relations in "space"*, Triangle Architectural Publishing, London, 1994, 33.

33. mcCloud, Scott, *Understanding comics*, SSE talks the Phenomenology of intent, www.scientificexploration.org, april 2009.

In conclusion, I believe there are many correlations between the way maps are represented and the dominance of cars in today's society. "Maps are always abstractions. The road map in particular disregards most terrain(...) They get us from a to b and in so doing distort all scales in favor of public highways, turning us into vectors"³² There is a need to invigorate the texture of the landscape we pass through, counter-acting the estrangement felt as we oscillate from one territory to another.

It is important to integrate these territories through infrastructure. Civic value must be instilled within the imprint of mobility infrastructure on the landscape. We cannot deny that transport and development work in conjunction with one another. However, how would roads fair if the car were to become obsolete? Can roads be integrated with the social collective realm? I believe that in establishing an alternative process of planning, knowledge and meaning can be cultivated. A new intimacy and identification of place should be a driving factor in establishing a direction for the threshold space of an edge condition.

34. Farley, Symmonds, Paul, Roberts, Michael, *Edgelands : journeys into England's true wilderness*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2011, 16.

DESIGN PROCESS

Territory & Meta - Context.

Cities are structured by transportation nodes, ideally positioned for knowledge and social exchange. Ireland becomes a perfect testing ground for such experimentation as it has, according to a study by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), to no surprise, the most roundabouts per capita in Europe.

In further analyzing Galway and its edge conditions, it is interesting to zoom out to the global condition. Galway is the most West-ward City in Europe. A moment of charge with tensions between the edge of the Irish language, the periphery of Europe and the force of the Atlantic Ocean. There is a great magnetism to the City, with 8 of the world's top ten pharmaceutical companies based in Galway.

-10,500 people employed in 49 IDA client companies

-over 330,000 of the population living within 60km of the City Centre.

-there has been a 2 fold increase in car ownership since the 80's

-Galway is a festival City with the youngest population per capita in Ireland.³⁵



Fig 15 Diagram of Galway County within Ireland, and Galway City within the major transport links spreading outwards marking Oranmore and Claregalway as key Satellite towns as the City moves outwards.

B U F F E R P R O J E C T

In adapting my thesis to a design, my site extends from my investigation. In exploring the transport infrastructure between Galway City and the satellite town of Oranmore, how roads have impacted on development and visa versa, my buffer project began with Oranmore. I was keen on a scheme that involved re-purposing the infrastructure of the area, re-imagining an identity of place through a journey, with the hope of developing a new awareness of the overlooked. I am interested in a series of adaptive routes, developing the roads from a space experiencing a sense of the landscape to a more accurate depiction of the actual landscape. This Creates a new perception of the ordinary and banal and allows for an anchoring of place.

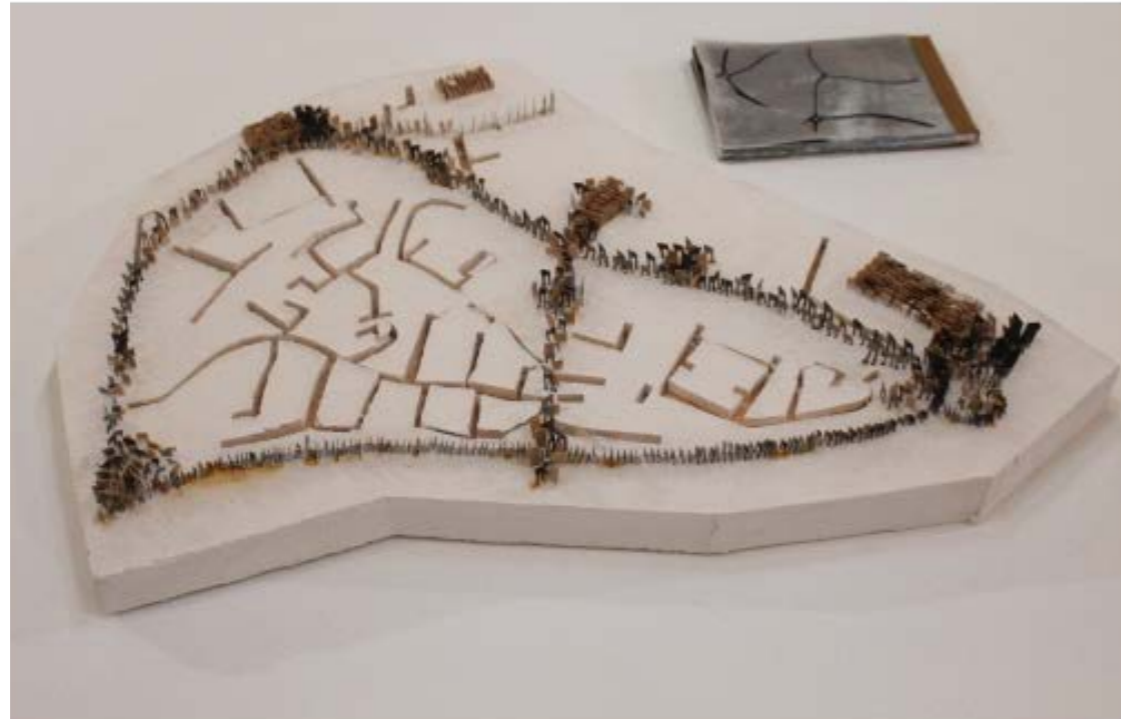


Fig 16 Conceptual model of oranmore contrasting open public space and car space suggesting integration at nodel points of bounding road and connecting networks.



Fig 17 (above) Fig 18 (right)
Basic strategy model of proposal for an integration of an active border between road and open public space and amenity, establishing a gateway of activity along the threshold from the roadabout of the periphery into the heart of Oranmore town.

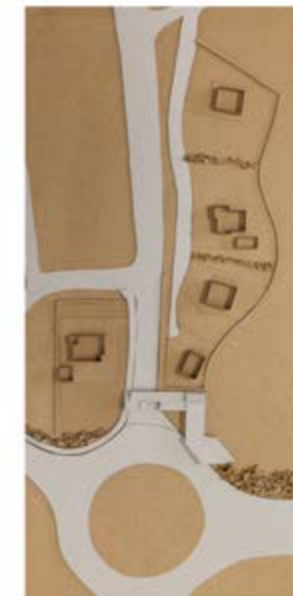




Fig 20 A breakdown of Oranmore into import defining elements to be considered in the establishment of further development.

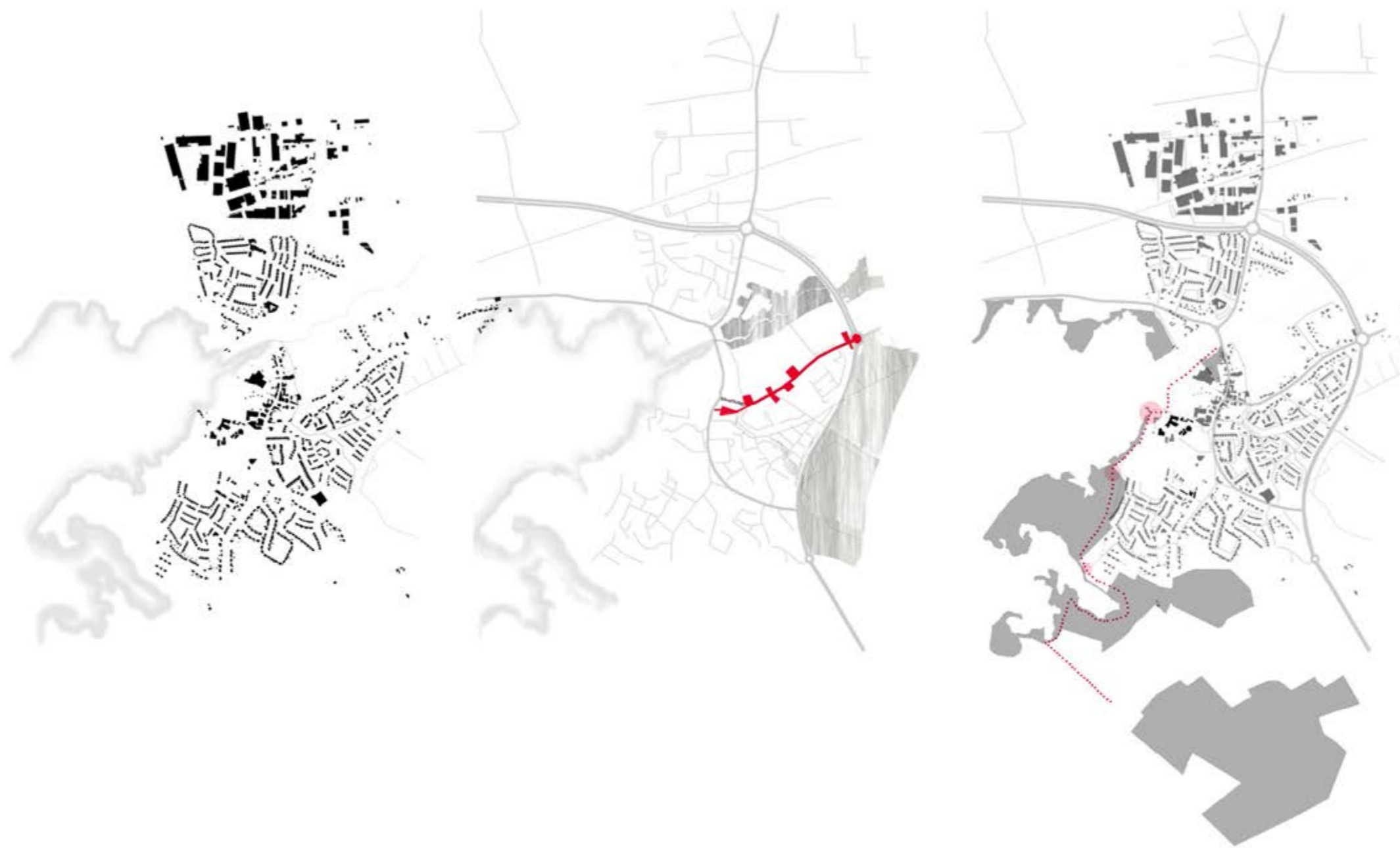


Fig 20 Proposal for two new routes varying pace to add dynamic of movement and a new perspective of forgotten hidden gems. The first of which, a recreational road plugging into its surroundings with important accessible public amenity space. The second of which a green way route, interacting with important features such as the coast and the castle, and plugging into the schools along the way for pedestrian ease of access.



Fig 21 Perception of surroundings travelling along a rural regional road. The N17 between Clarinbridge and Oranmore.



Fig 22 Perseption of space stuck in traffic driving through the Towns main street in the rain.



Fig 23 perception of surroundings travelling along a dual carriageway.

REPRESENTATION

The methodology of representation chosen was a series of painted postcards, with reference to the perception of a John Hinde type image, depicting a romantic realism of the culture of today.

I am interested in narrative paintings as a phenomenological medium. They depict a digestible solidity and a universally tangible physical presence, that can be devoid of the limits of time.

I enjoy the moment where Hyperrealism, with its sharply mechanical imagery, meets moments of surrealism. In keeping the emphasis on mundane everyday scenes, a new sense of reality can be much easier understood.

I am greatly influenced by the work of the Australian artist Jeffery Smart. I am drawn to his precisionist depictions of urban-landscapes. His work has a vivid Hooperesque vibrancy that is simultaneously realistic and ridiculous.



Fig 24 *The Construction Fence*, Jeffrey Smart, 1978



Fig 25 *Bus Terminus*, Jeffrey Smart, 1973



Fig 26 Local pride and aspirational identity, pace and interconnection



Fig 27 Oranmore outsiders perspective, and direction of development



Fig 28 Current river bank condition in Oranmore



Fig 29 exploiting the river as a feature integrated with the infrastructure rather than a boundary. using the outpipes as framework for a boardwalk



Fig 30 & Figure 31 (above) Current view approaching Oranmore Castle & wall detail



Fig 32 Oranmore Castle revisited.

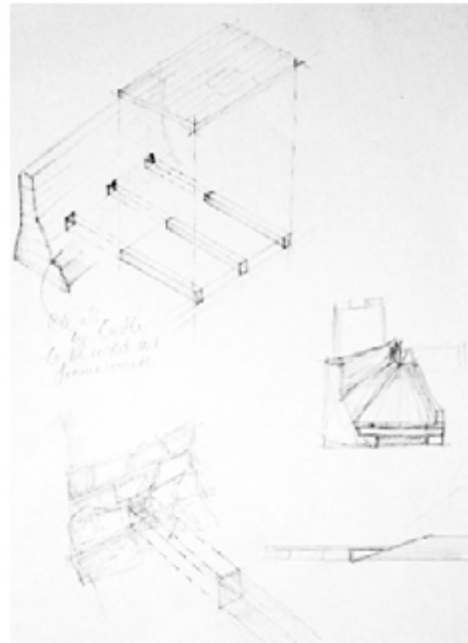


Fig 33 Adding secondary purpose to monofunctional Infrastructure.

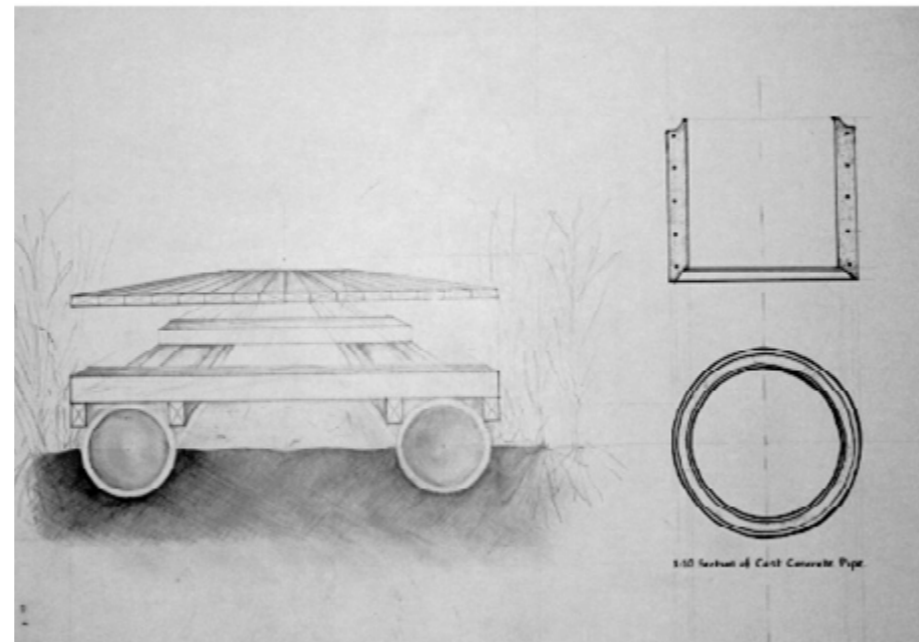


Fig 34 Using sewage outpipes as framework for light boardwalk structure.

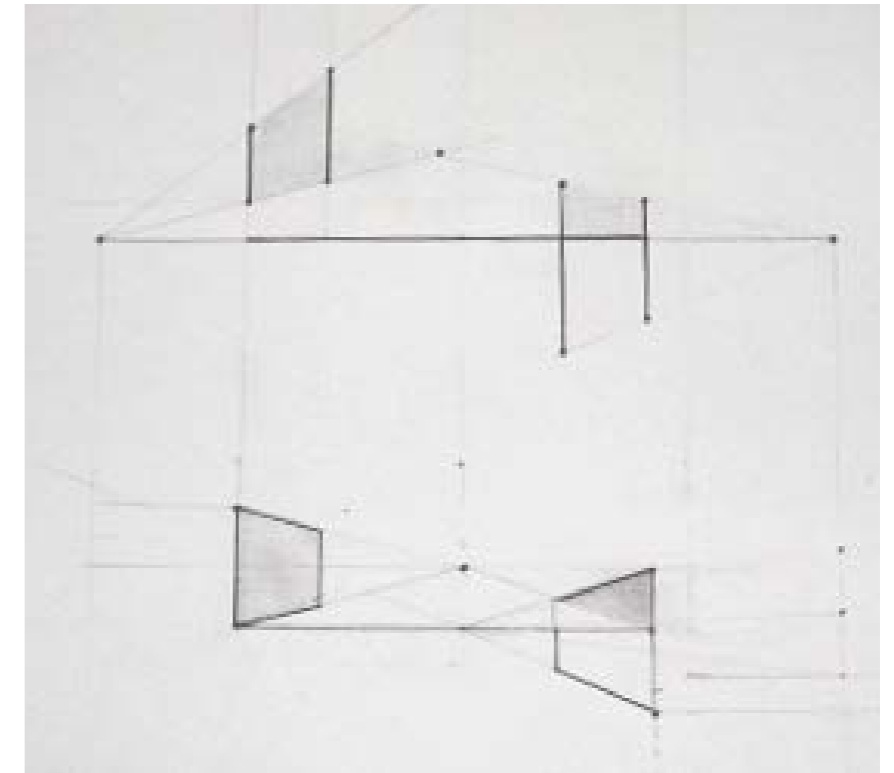


Fig 35 (above) Idea about shifting perspective lines.



Fig 36 Shifting topography and landscape engagement, with an idea movemant and weather.



Fig 37(above) & Fig 38(right) Proposal for adaptive social space in Oranmore as you approach the bridge by the river, at the level of the road a pull in point has been created with a low wall to sit on and shelter overhead, framing the view of the castle as the river meets the sea. the lower space that steps down below the road is a 'searoom' which is more sheltered, a place to pause and listen to the water flowing around you amongst the reeds.



DEVELOPMENT OF CLARITY OF SITE AND BRIEF .

(Car)nmore?

Carnmore is a semi-rural community situated at the Southern end of Claregalway Parish. With the land consisting mostly dry sand loam soil, tillage farming would be the main land use. Carnmore makes its mark on the map known by its vacant Airport, who's runway stretches 1289m in the North-West of the area. The runway is too short to handle most jet airlines, so is restricted to turboprop aircraft or small executive jets.

In my research of the area I had a meeting with the local Public Health Nurse Dimpena Collins in order to get a greater insight and a deeper understanding of Carnmore as a Place. From this conversation it was clear that Carnmore area had become a spill off of Claregalway. Mass and the GAA are the main modes of communication, as with many areas of this typology. In terms of the demographic, anyone new to the area tend to be young couples who are mainly commuting to the city. The main focal point and landmark to the community is Grealish's Pub, situated along Carnmore cross, the centre of activity.

In investigating the area further as an extension of the Oranmore territory, it is interesting that the people of the area affiliate themselves more with the town of Claregalway, however are physically closer to Oranmore, which they are disconnected from by the slicing through of the motorway. My initial proposal developed in the form of a recreational route along the N17, that would reconnect East and West Galway.

Element make up of Site and Context

The boundaries of the site consist mostly grass verges and CPO'd land which is under disuse and disrepair. I believe these elements associated with the road infrastructure hold the greatest potential. I am interested in the points of exchange between road and land and how one deals with a variety of scales and points of movement at a human scale. In focusing on the flyover, crossing the N17 over the M6 motorway, I intend to recalibrate the existing, making left over space productive, thus adding new value to the secondary infrastructure of the motorway.

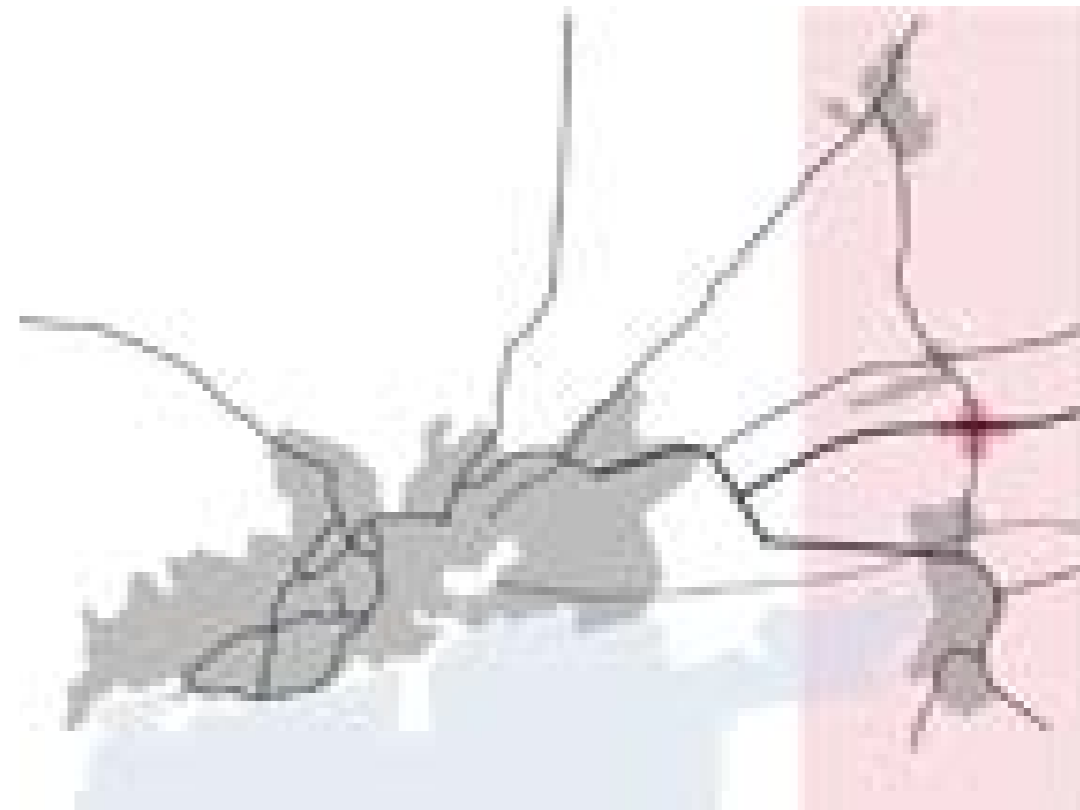


Fig 39 Diagram of proposal for network linkages, highlighting nodal relationships between Claregalway and Oranmore to each other and to Galway City.



Fig 40 The cross over of the N17 and the M6 including the old Carnmore airport with the immediate area exected by the motorway highlighted.

BARRIERS





SCENES OF SIGNAGE





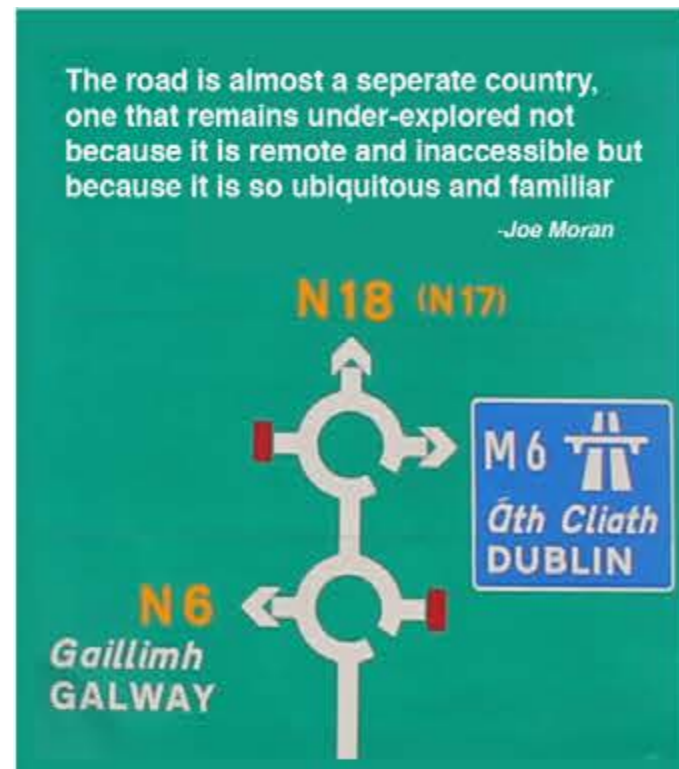
LANGUAGE AND MATERIAL

I am interested in redefine the language of precast road elements and re-imagining spaces like underpasses as creative and imaginative urban spaces I believe the scheme sould come about through low tech materials, adding a new wonder to the banal. I propose the main structural elements to be of concrete and the secondary structure and plug ins that hang between to be mostly of cedarwood.

The roof is covered with moses for absorption of pollution from the traffic. The walls consist of layers of polycarbonate, with different degrees of build up depending on need for sound insulation and privacy. This create less of a solid wall barrier, maintaining a connection from space to space with its translucency. Roof lights and window, door frames to be made of repurposed generic precast road elements.



concept painting of an overlap and integration of speeds of activity.



Found Elements on site.

Reimagined road elements, adding a human scale and purpose to their language

BRIEF DEVELOPMENT

The brief began with an aim to reconnecting and reanimating the surroundings incorporate mobility and community activity through establishing a social and cultural idea that can be realised through architectural space.

In creating parameters for myself it was important that the program made sense on every scale, not just the immediate area. This is where event route associated with the atlantic corridor became quite significant, trying to implant something that could run alongside the established festivals of the oyster festival, the galway races and the Claregalway Garden festival, which run along this route, generating a new event/spectacle in Carnmore in connection with the area.

In devising a strategy, I felt the existing structure was a good place to start. In using the foundations of the road as a starting point to build off, holding most of the program at existing road level. A new loop road would be built, sloping up at a higher level with visual access to the enclosed activity within. A cycle and foot paths are to take more of a central focus with less car dominance. I believe in a living border, a membrane incorporating sheltered space for social interaction. It is to be a part of everyday experience dealing with the speed scale and landscape associated with roads.

The structure works as the flyover itself as the main strip of social activity. Both roundabouts are to be extruded. One built up on, with access over the road, and one dug into, with access in the form of an underpass, developing from my early investigations with the play of perspective and topography while moving. Services and a lighter secondary structure will then plug in and hang between the two. A roof will pull across the entire structure to pull all activities together.

Schematic Development of Program

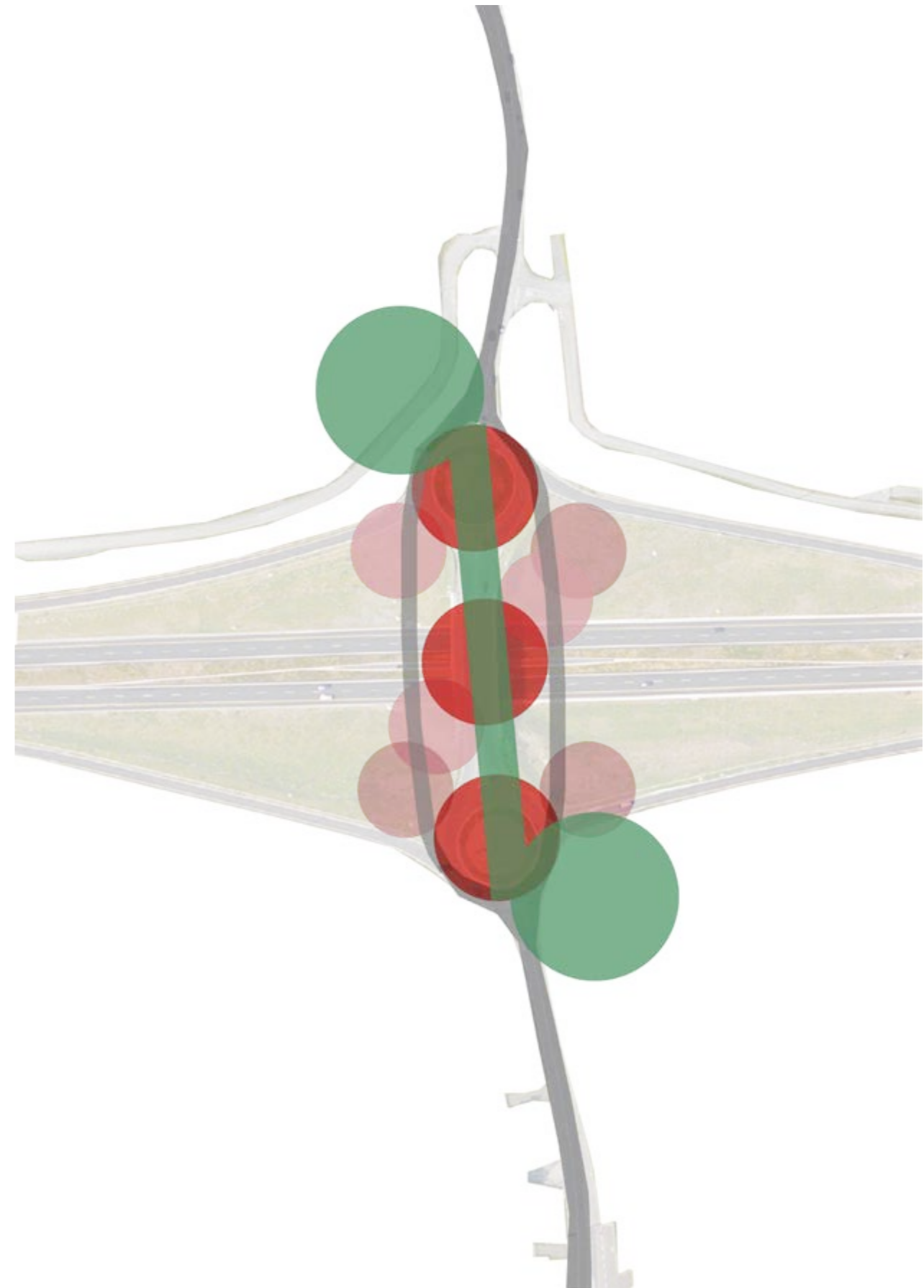
'Dancing at the Crossroads'

In developing a structural prototype for the generic flyover condition, it was important that the programmatic elements which plug in at a human scale would have an anchoring and engaging connection to the area.

The feis as an important part of the culture of rural life. In relation to relevance in this area, Oranmore has a history of traditional music, most well known for its Reel; *The backs of Oranmore*. There is also quite a strong history of Irish dancing in the area, with world champions from the Hession School of Dance residing in the Oranmore/Maree and Claregalway areas. Claire Greaney, from Claregalway holds 6 world titles and current no.1 female dancer in the world, and the Keaney Brothers; renowned Irish dancers from Oranmore/Maree.

The program evolves from an idea of curiosity, Pace, Rhythm, Performance, Collaboration and Spectacle, all of which can be found in the world of Irish dance. The program is broken up into 3 primary elements which interlink and overlap with a spill off of secondary activities.

The program includes a bus stop and bus shelter, a cycling and pedestrian street, dance studio teaching spaces, a feis space, changing rooms, toilets temporary accommodation, a dress making workshop and shop, a central theatre space, a bar and restaurant/cafe, a creche with adjoining playground and an array of connecting courtyards and green spaces.

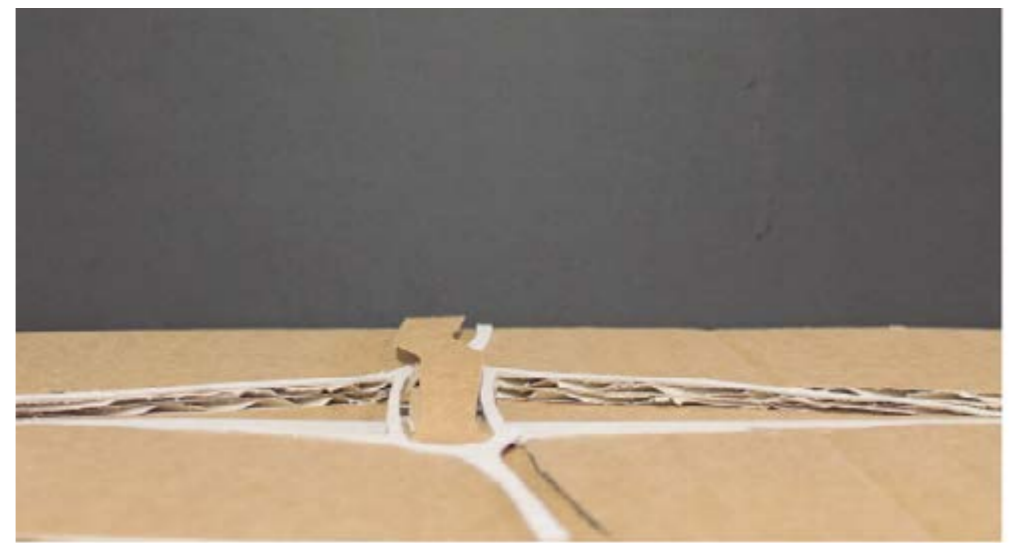
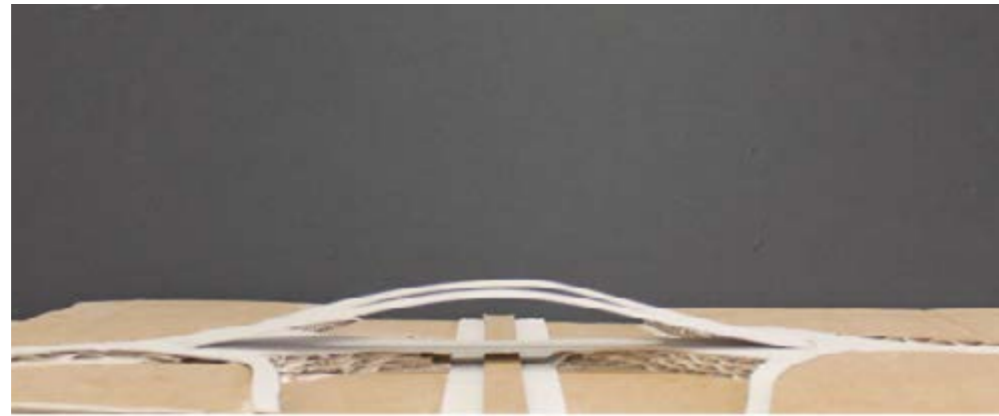


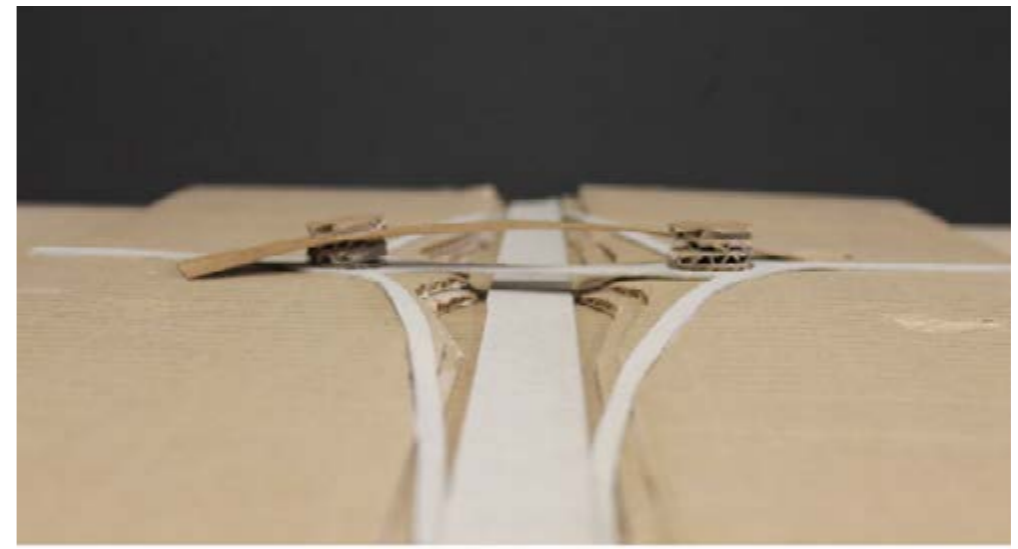
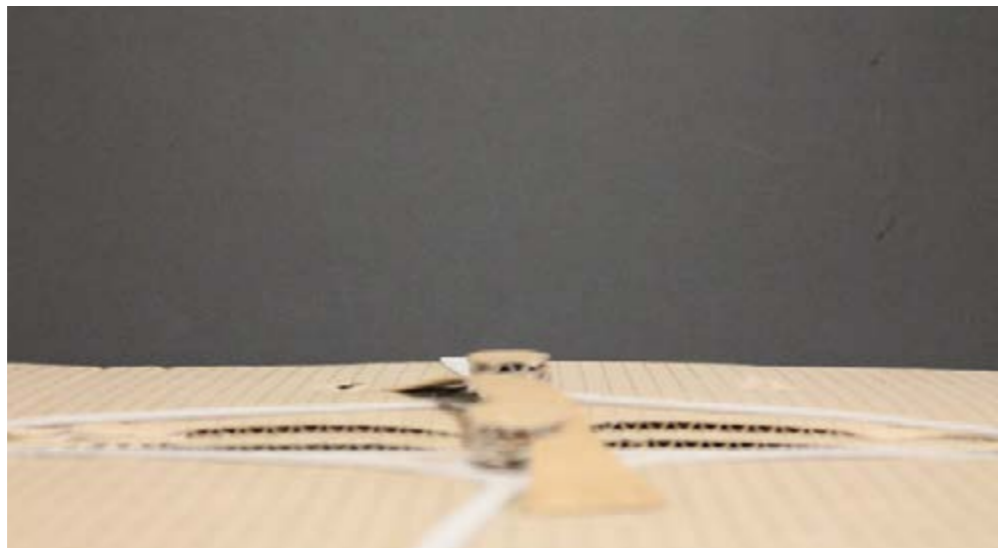
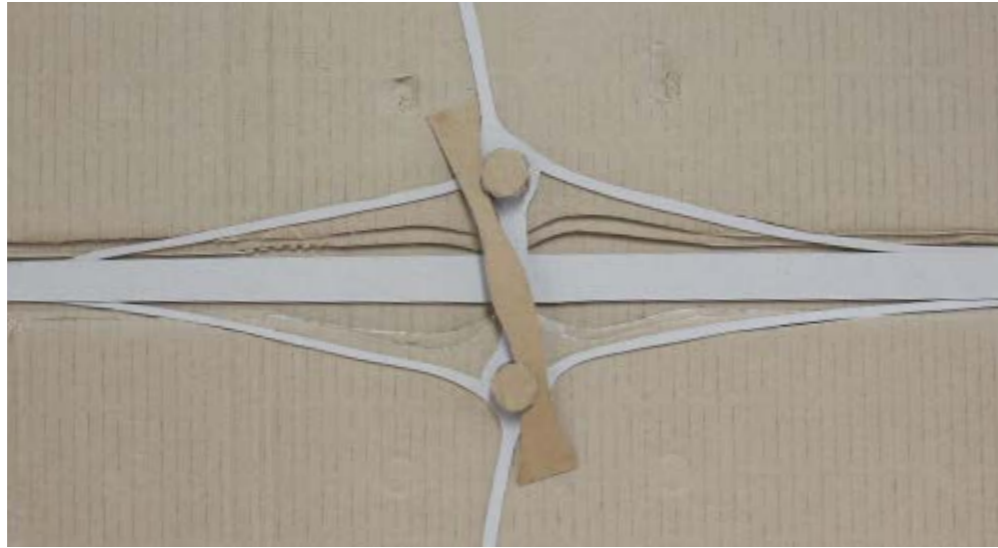
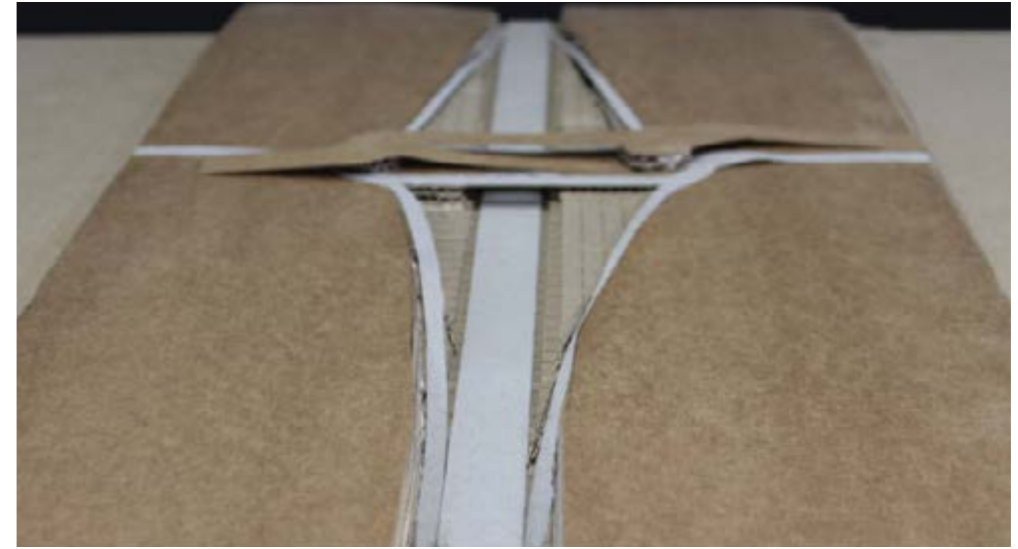
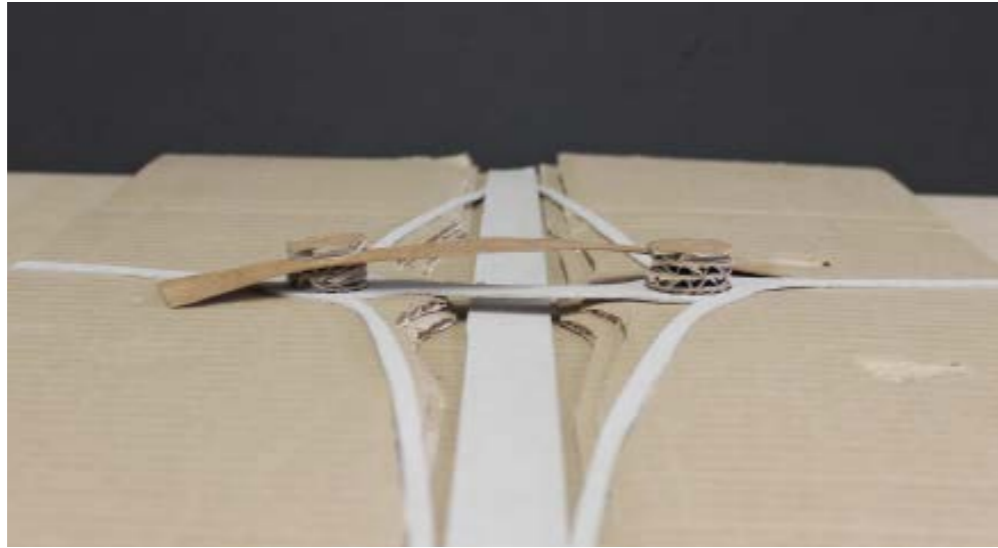
Initial plan diagram

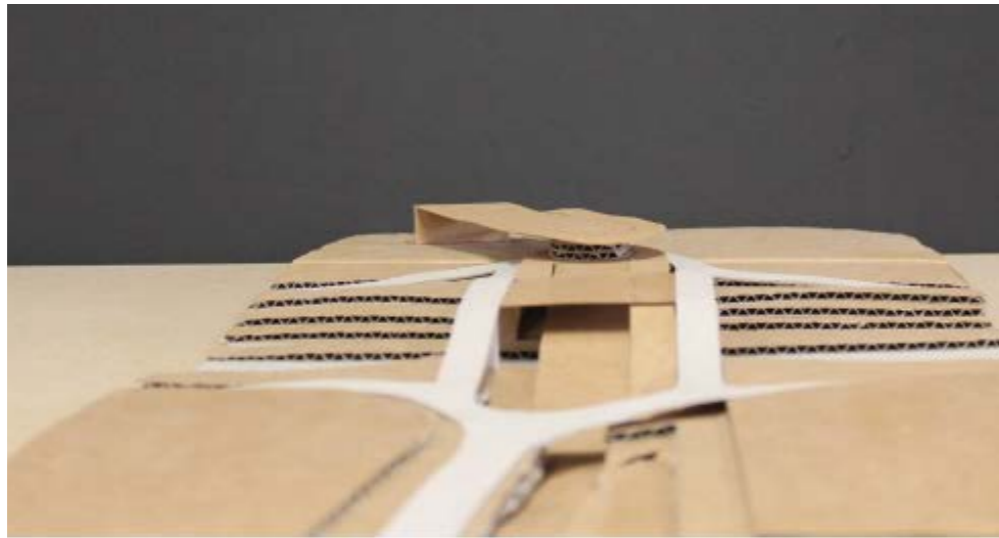
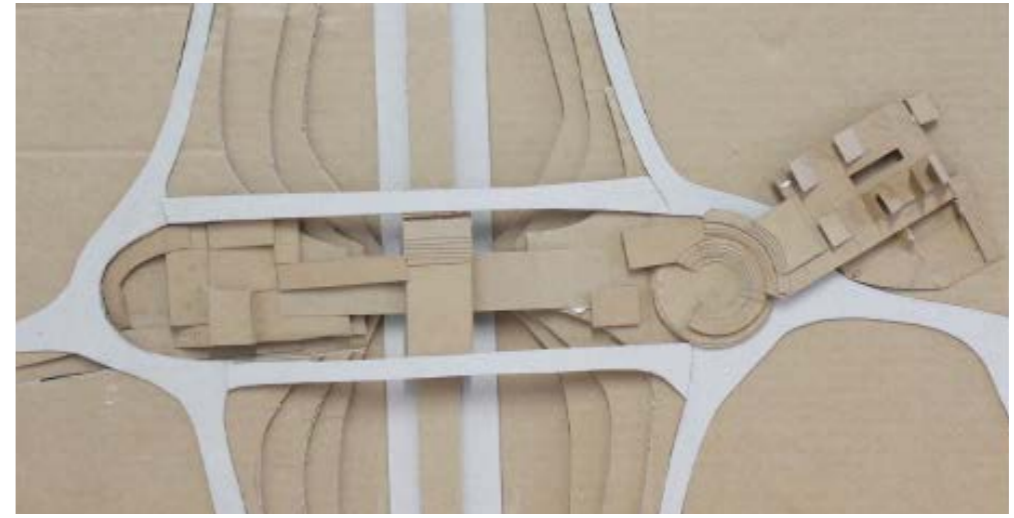
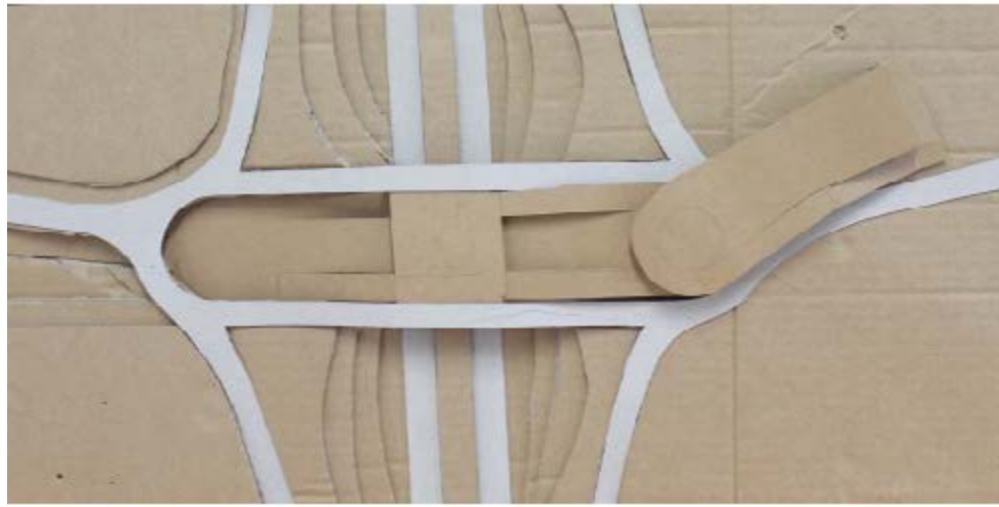
Early Threshold Studies

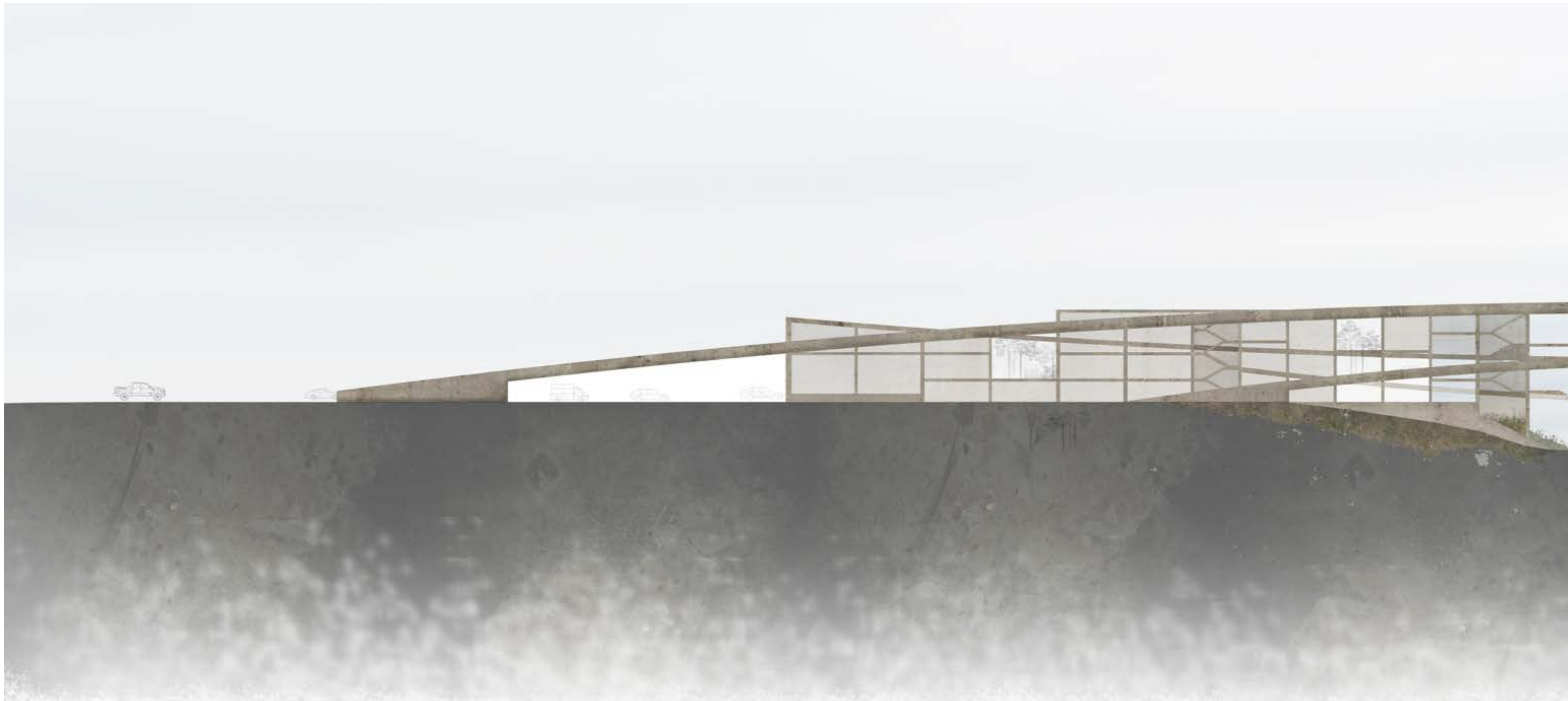


Development of strategy
through sketch models
at 1/1000 & 1/500





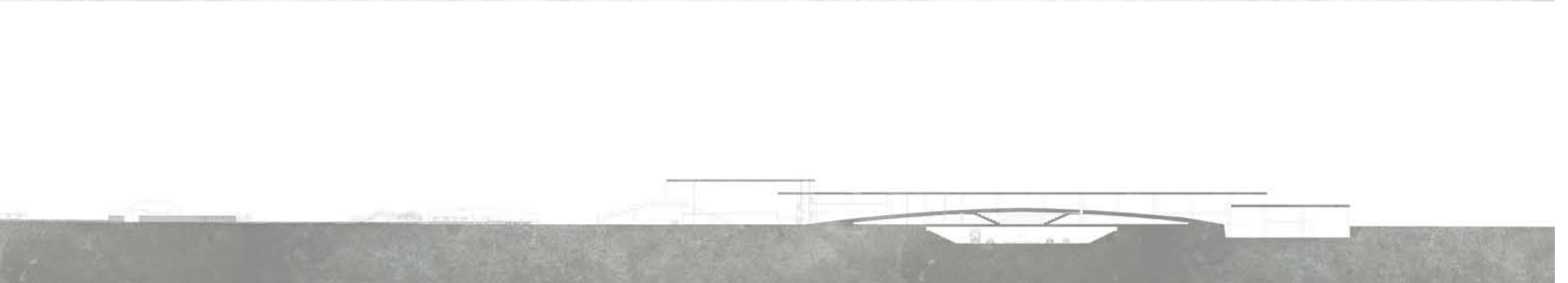


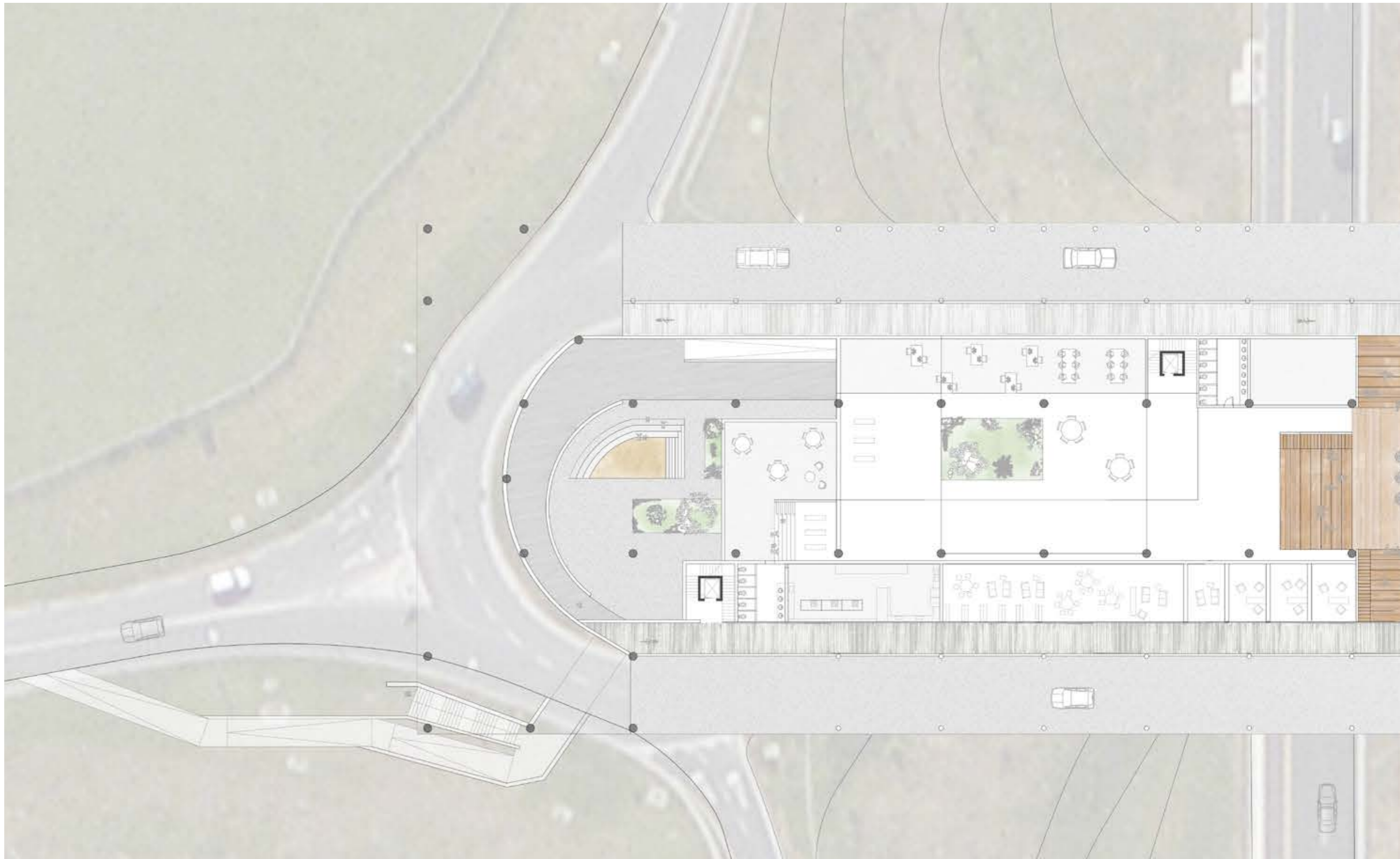


Long sectional elevation through primary spaces of pre-final proposal facing westwards.

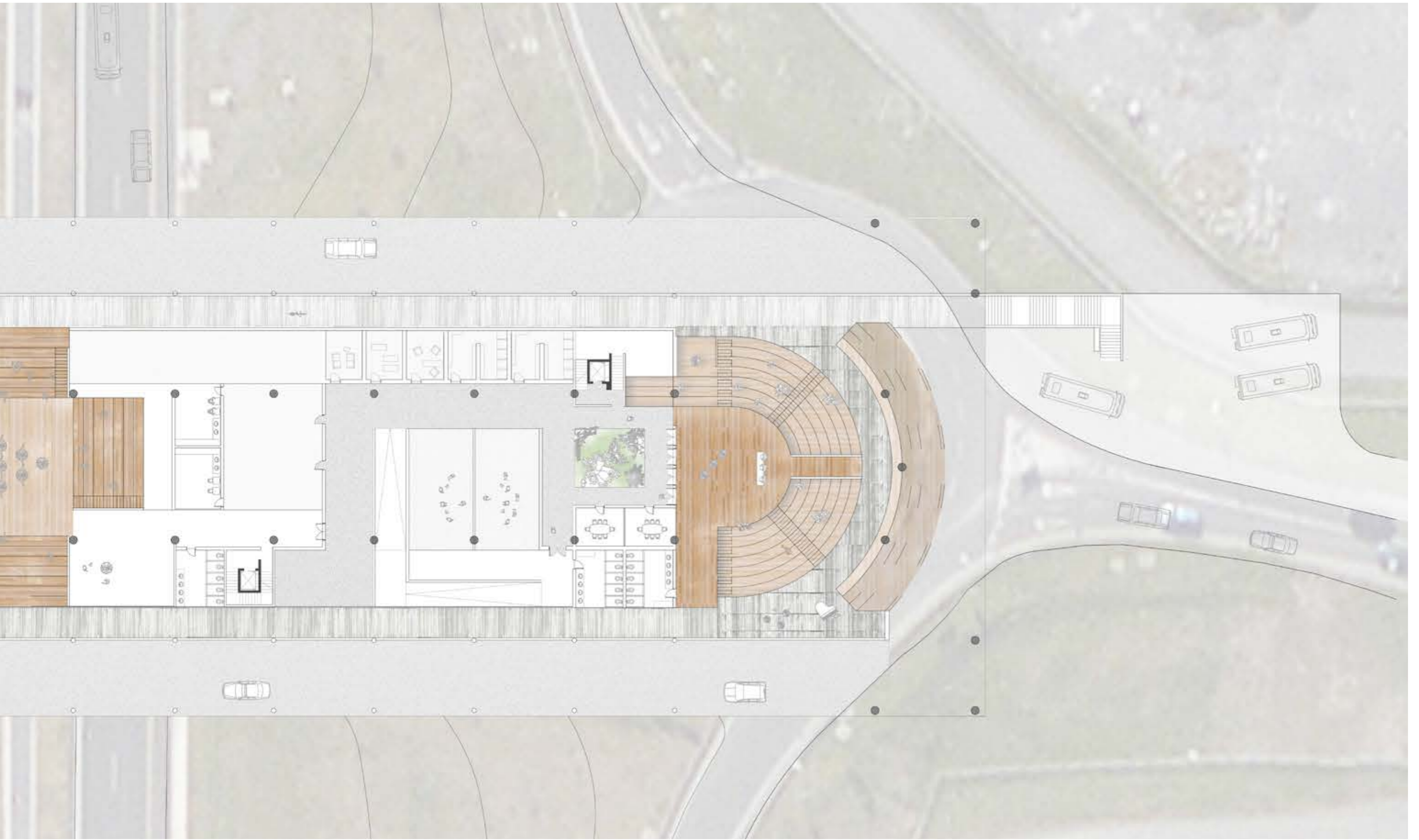


Long section through final proposal including an elevation of the Carnmore area along the N17 moving from North to South facing East.



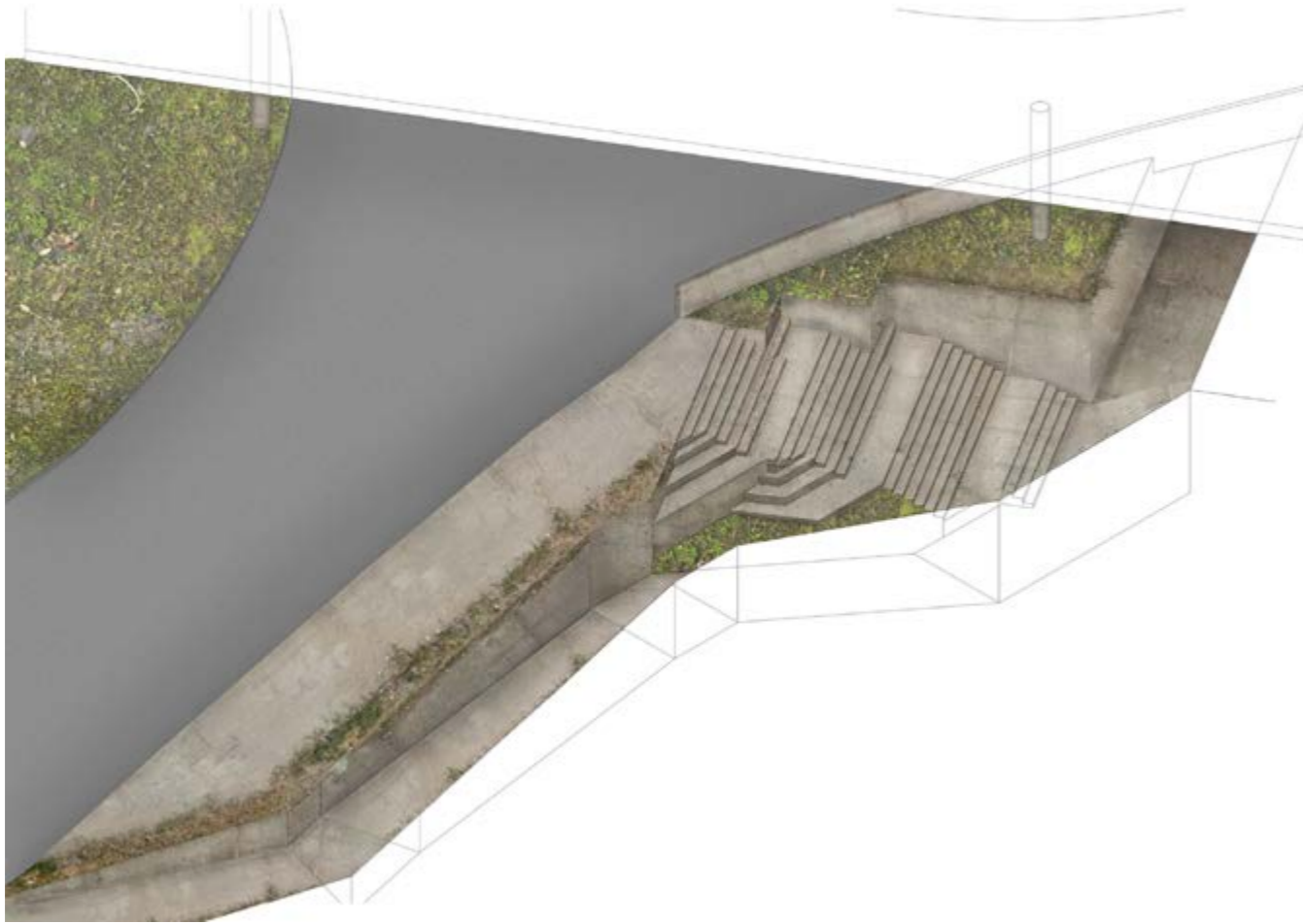


Ground floor plan of primary spaces and access routes across the flyover





Short section with construction detail, including secondary and primary structure through dance studio, public inner street and learning spaces and new car space.



Isometric of pedestrian entrance and gathering space, with creche pick up point on the southern end of the site.



Short section across the road through the main theatre space facing southerly.

KEY PERSPECTIVES



Perspective as you're driving along the M6 to the rehearsal space adjoining the main central theatre space.



Perspective of the inner feis space within the roadabout at the Northern end of the site.



Perspective of the sunken courtyard/playground space adjoining the creche within the roadabout, entering from below on the southern end of the site.





Model of Final Proposal







Final Review presentation board.

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