



Mannheim's Connection

MANNHEIM'S CONNECTION

A STORY OF STRATEGIC RELATIONS

Strong Stories are based on complex relations, shared paths and common transitions. The story of *Mannheim Connection* is driven by one fundamental premise: **to evolve from a Hard Modernity city to a Soft-Knowledge Metropolis.**

The narrative of Mannheim's selected site is common to European cities. A site marked by the ideal of modernism and military planning which has the opportunity, now that the military base is departing, to become a civic place and multifunctional knowledge-based city.

Such a knowledge-city is defined by its relational potential between social relations, mobility, scale, urban spaces and nature. And as we look at Mannheim's B38 we can tell that one of its weaknesses is its lack of relational potential between mobility, infrastructure, nature and architecture. It is partly a consequence of Modernist planning which has developed an ordered vision of urban space where flux and functions have been separated. Our goal is therefore opposite to the one defended by Modernists: **from separation we evolve towards relation.**

Mannheim's connection is about inventing encounters between antinomic components: military and housing, nature and highway, office and industrial, university and business etc.

To provoke these encounters we first need to define:

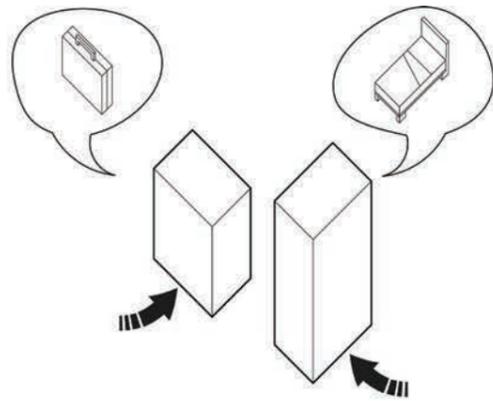
the **relational potential** in opposition to the pillars of Modernist planning

the **relational strategic postures** leading to a Soft-Knowledge City

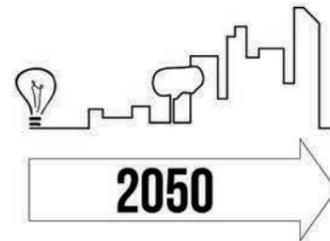
the **settings and actions** of the *Mannheim connection*

the **road-map and phasing** of this long-term transformation of the *Mannheim engineering mile*

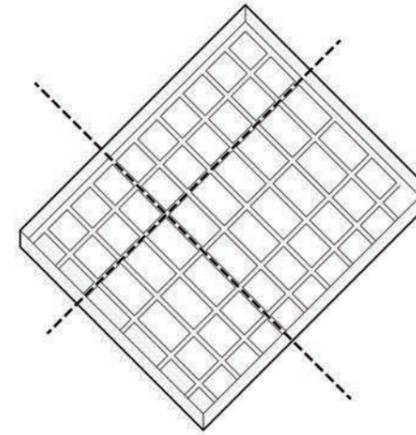
UNVEILING THE RELATIONAL POTENTIAL VERSUS MODERNIST PLANNING PILLARS



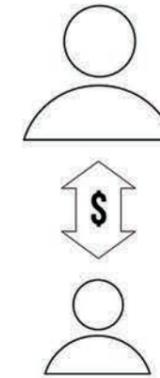
Defining monofunctional roles /
imagine complex urban characters



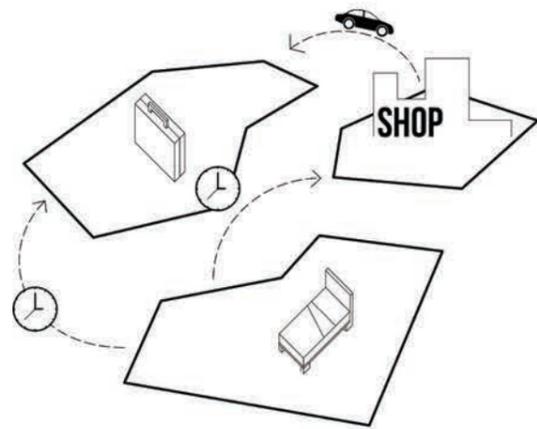
Imagine a 1 option future /
Imagine a multifocused and retroactive developmen



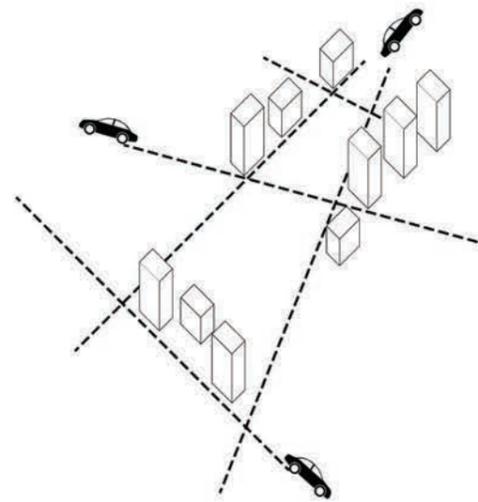
Military organization /
Civic Space, multiactorial decision making



Labour vs capital / Creative Class and flexibility



Imagine mono-solutions /
Imagine helpful relations and stimulations



Car driven planning / Multimodality

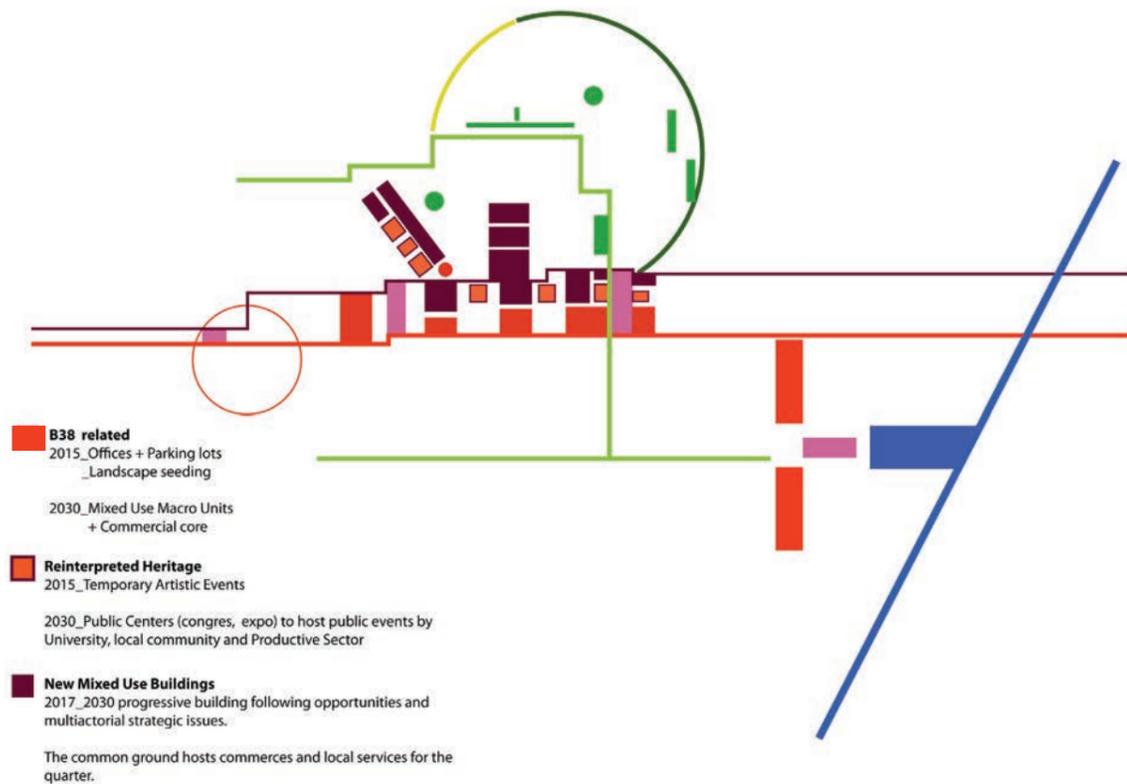


Proceeding towards a rigid masterplan /
Imagining an evolving plot

RELATIONAL STRATEGIC POSTURES

Multiscalar programming - Merging local and global

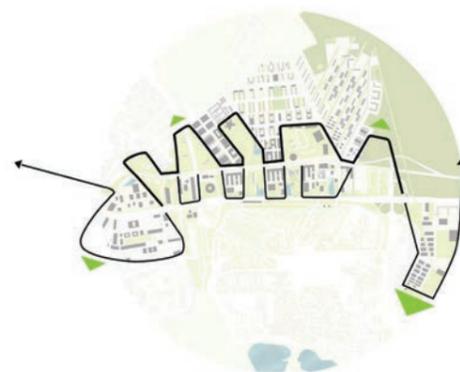
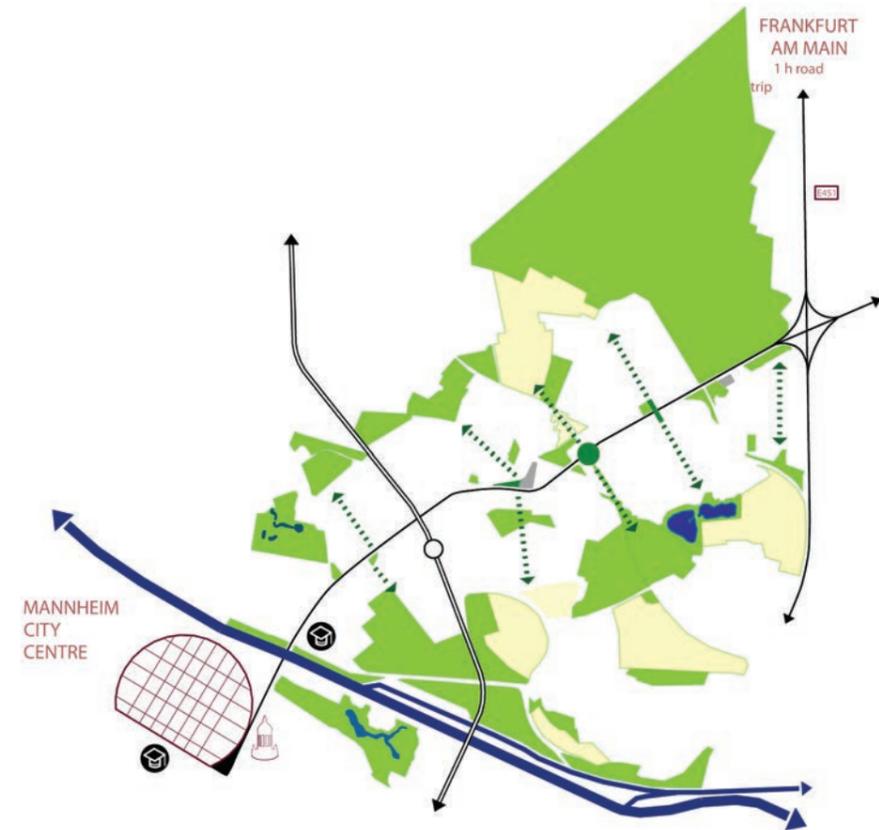
Mannheim is already an economic and cultural centre. It is also a university town. How can we develop relations between these different fields in order to adapt it to a 21st Soft-knowledge metropolis? Mixing local and global activities is one way to do it. Today, separated zones dedicated to industrial activity, military and university are established along the B38 with no relation with one another. The first step is to redefine the status of the existing programs along the highway, focusing on key areas, and to propose mixed-use spaces as well as mixed used architecture.



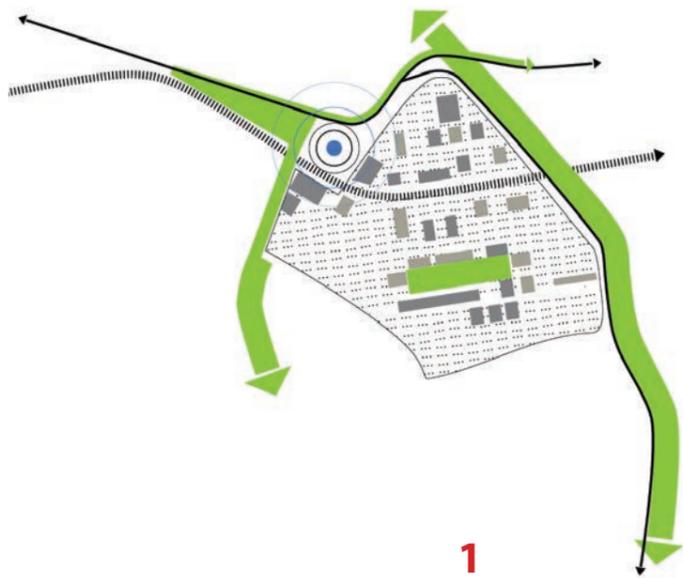
Relational Landscape Structuration

The relational potential of a city can be measured by its proximity to nature. Programmed green spaces allow random encounters of young and elderly people as well as families during their various outside activities. The site contains unbuilt green pockets which need to be defined. The existing forest and agricultural landscapes surrounding the Mannheim engineering mile need to penetrate in the green pockets and meet in the new pole.

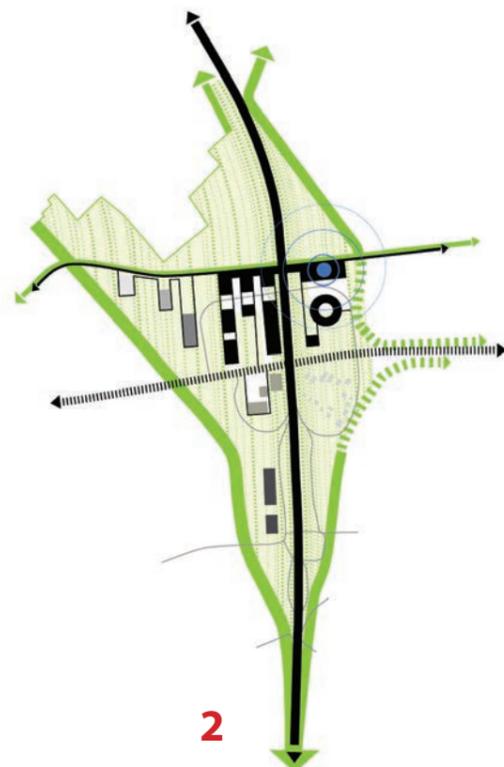
Hard infrastructure, such as the B83, needs to be "softened" by smart landscape design. The 6 lane highway could be partly occupied by plantations and linear paths for cycles, roller-skates, joggers and pedestrians, transforming a highway in a parkway shared between high-speed and low-speed vehicles. A waterscape system, with metropolitan fibers and linear paths, perpendicular to the highway, would also build the depth of field of the B83.



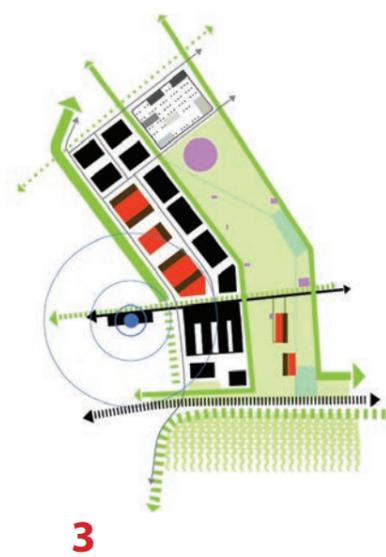
SETTINGS, ACTIONS AND NEW RELATIONS



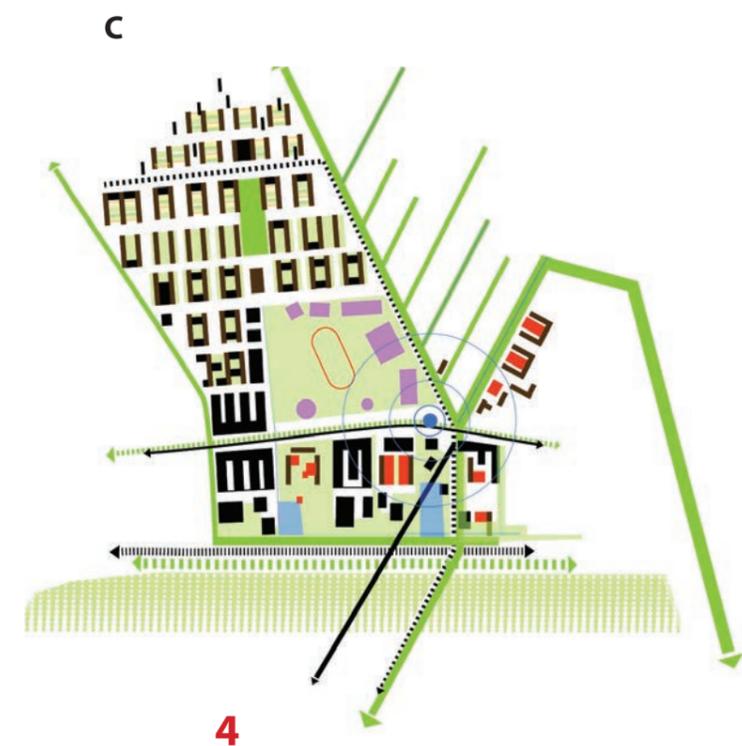
1
FROM HARD INDUSTRIAL TO SOFT INDUSTRIAL
 (MIX OF LIGHT INDUSTRIES AND OFFICES)



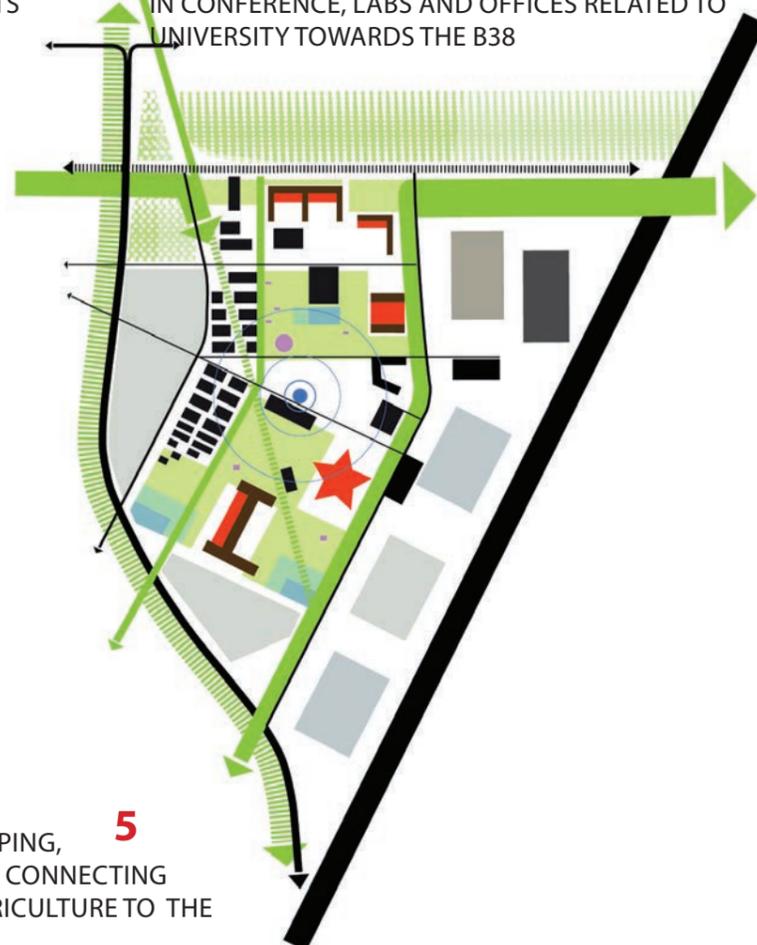
2
URBANIZING HARD INFRASTRUCTURE
 BUILDING RELATIONS BETWEEN ADVANCED
 LOGISTICS OFFICES AND MOTORWAY INTERCHANGE



3
THE CAMPUS CONNECTION
 UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AND ITS OPENED
 GREEN PARK CREATING NEW PHYSICAL
 AND SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS
 AND CITIZENS



4
FROM MILITARY BASE TO MIXED-USE DISTRICT
 EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE TRANSFORMED IN
 HOUSING UNITS ABOVE BIRKENAUER STASSE AND
 IN CONFERENCE, LABS AND OFFICES RELATED TO
 UNIVERSITY TOWARDS THE B38



5
LEISURE PARK
 DEVELOPMENT OF AMENITIES (SHOPPING,
 RESTAURANT) ALONG A GREEN STRIP CONNECTING
 THE FOREST TO THE NORTH AND AGRICULTURE TO THE
 SOUTH

ROAD-MAP AND PHASING

New functionalities are progressively introduced on site, associating functionalities in space and time.

PHASE 0 / FIRST ACTION

Developing soft multimodality and creating collective events on different sites along the B83 in connection with tramway stations are two major actions which will kick start the project development. This will enhance the long-term transformation of the engineering mile.

The Mannheim engineering mile becomes the scene of new temporary and collective uses. Attention is raised in the academic, entrepreneurial and social realm for the spatial potential of the sector.



PHASE 1

As a founding act of the new urban sustainable pole a smooth pedestrian and bike bridge is built over the B83. A tram/bike multimodal node is created. Sport program and service for large public events are developed in the green spaces, also stimulating the progressive definition of a local *ambiance*.

An intense B83 related office and parking program starts to be built with monolithic autonomous plots which will introduce new urban life for the sector. Its main relation is with the conurbation scale global scale, since it is an attractive, low cost, highly accessible sector.



PHASE 2

The other axis of development, parallel to B83, is ideal to sustain a knowledge development oriented quarter.

Heritage buildings, once scene of ephemeral events, are now taken over by cooperatives linking universities, businesses and civic associations in order to arrange low cost congress centers, start-up incubators.

Mixed-use parcels, with commercial groundfloors, offices and hotels are built around qualitative voids and next to actor related incubators.

In the north-west part of the site, the existing is transformed into housing and green quarters with local facilities and a strong continuity with the forest (west) and agriculture (north), bringing new young active populations of students and first-time buyers (social housing), next to elder specific units.

On B83 a new system of restructuring with bus transit is organized. Speed is regulated and brought to a minima of 60 km/h.

A new multimodal pole is added in the car exchanger, redevelopment opens beyond the limits of Birkenauer Strasse.



PHASE 3

B83 progressively grown to become an urban boulevard, integrating a car free bus sector, shared with sustainable mobilities

Car crossings are minimized in order to keep vehicles to a slower speed.

The intense program offices at variable size, addressed and designed with enterprises interested in working with german universities and Mannheim's community is developed, also integrating the commercial area for the nearby quarter.

The inhabited areas offer a new life style condition merging social classes, ages, professional profiles and the scales of proximity to green, forest and agriculture, modes (fast and slow) and typology, reinterpreted heritage.

