

Urban Fringe Mechanics

The Transport Hub, conceived as an abstract machine, radiates notions of efficient flow and productivity, and yet within it the visitor finds moments for contemplation and sociability.

The project is conceived as an 'accidental' social condenser, a by-product of fleetingly inhabited infrastructure.

The relationships its components form with one another, as well as with their context, evolve out of an abstract reading of flows and necessities.

The hub 'machine' becomes alive with bustling activity created by its users, and in moments of low usage remains suspended, silent.

The machine gives off the impressions of beginnings, and ends, and an abundance of activity and production along its paths. Programs that are seemingly unrelated, co-exist and benefit from proximity and flow dynamics.

This transport hub negotiates one of the most important access nodes to the city of Graz.

Its social component elements, the Bridge, the 'Bier Zelt', the Auditorium/cinema, the Public Ramp, the Sun Deck, all contribute in opening the territory of transport to new and fleeting forms of inhabitation.

The Lines of pedestrian passage are demarcated for the one in a rush, allowing for moments of accidental discovery, as well as stop-and-shop retail and commerce along its routes. The benefits are mutual:

Retail benefits from passers-by trade ("airport shopping").

Events may unfold and attract an audience spontaneously.

Offices benefit from infrastructural connectivity and local lunchtime activities and food courts.

Residents benefit from an active base, maximised views and contemporary high-rise living.

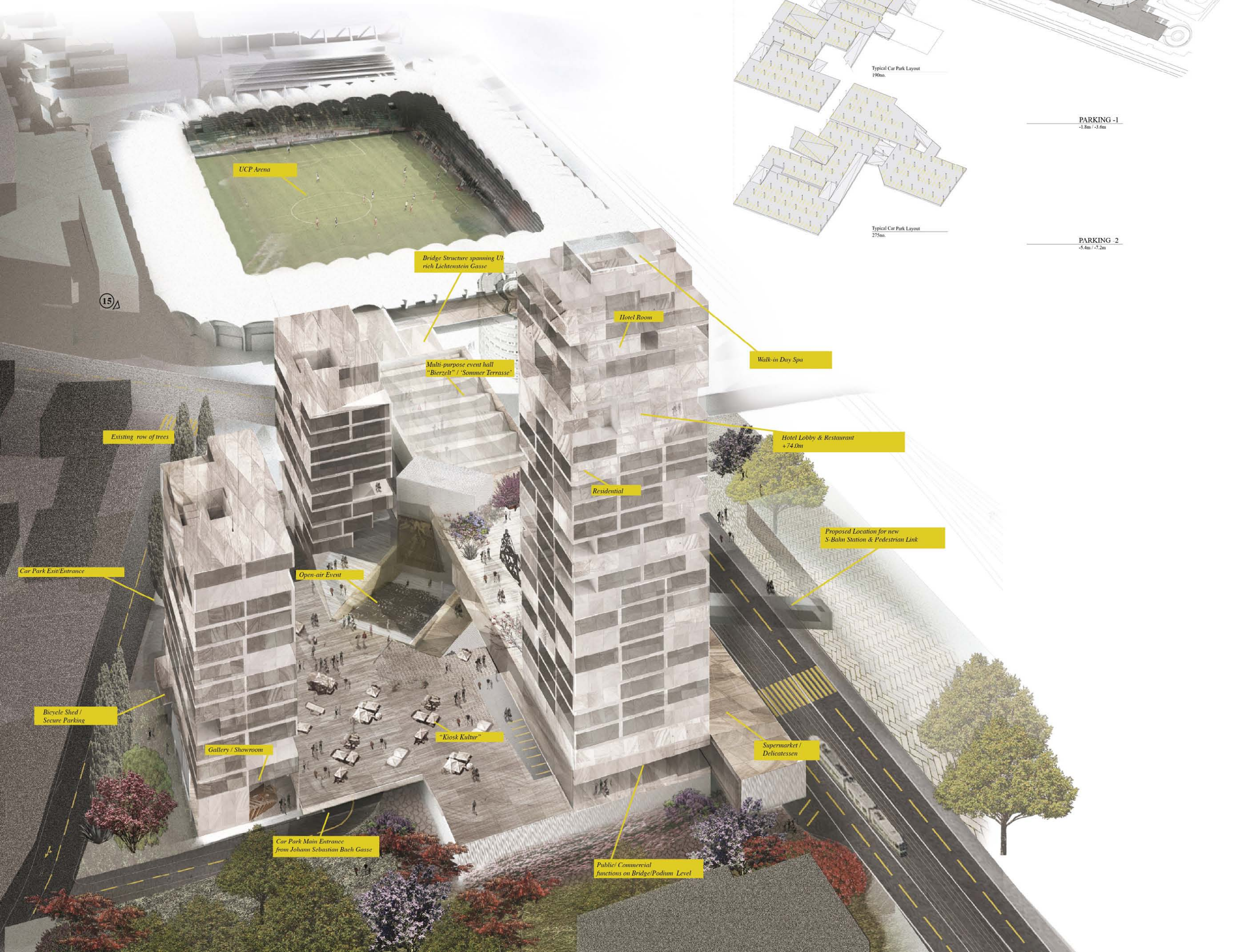
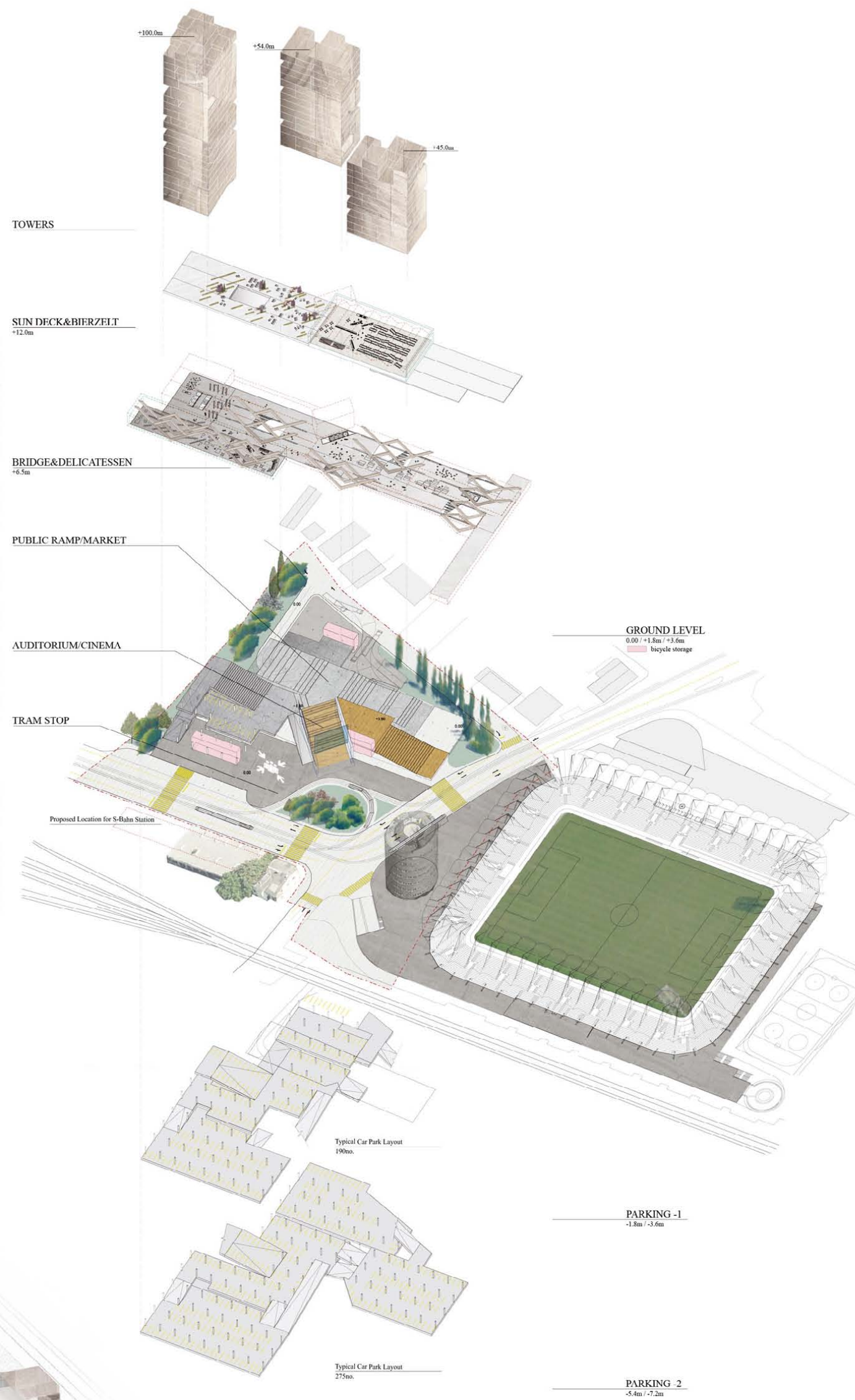
Travellers arriving in Graz may stop and take some time off.

Access
The public podium level negotiates parking deck roofs and follows gradual pedestrian ramps of maximum 5% incline. The landscape is born out of infrastructural necessity and connectivity between parts.
Vehicular Access from Johann Sebastian Bachgasse.
A new tram stop in sheltered location underneath the Bridge.

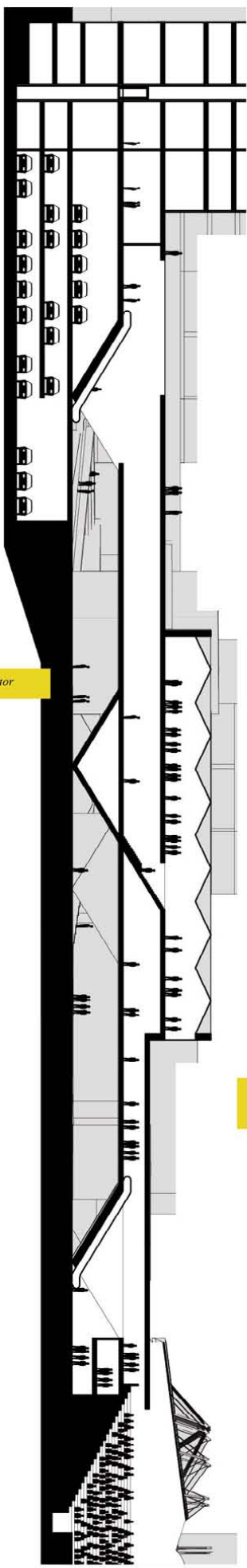
Structure/Manufacture
The 'Bridge' poses as an alternative to an in-situ landscaped platform or podium, and could be manufactured off-site.
It builds a strong connective element within this cluster.

Structure/Grid
The parking grid sets up the rhythm for below-ground, from which a public topography of ramps and negotiable levels is deducted above-ground. The parking plateaus alternate by 1.8m and hence allow for natural ventilation between decks. This sets out visual links between parking and pedestrian activities – for example the hotel bar & valet parking, ramped car access & related pedestrian deck access.

'Inter-zones' between infrastructure and public realm are seized for secure bicycle parking within bicycle sheds.



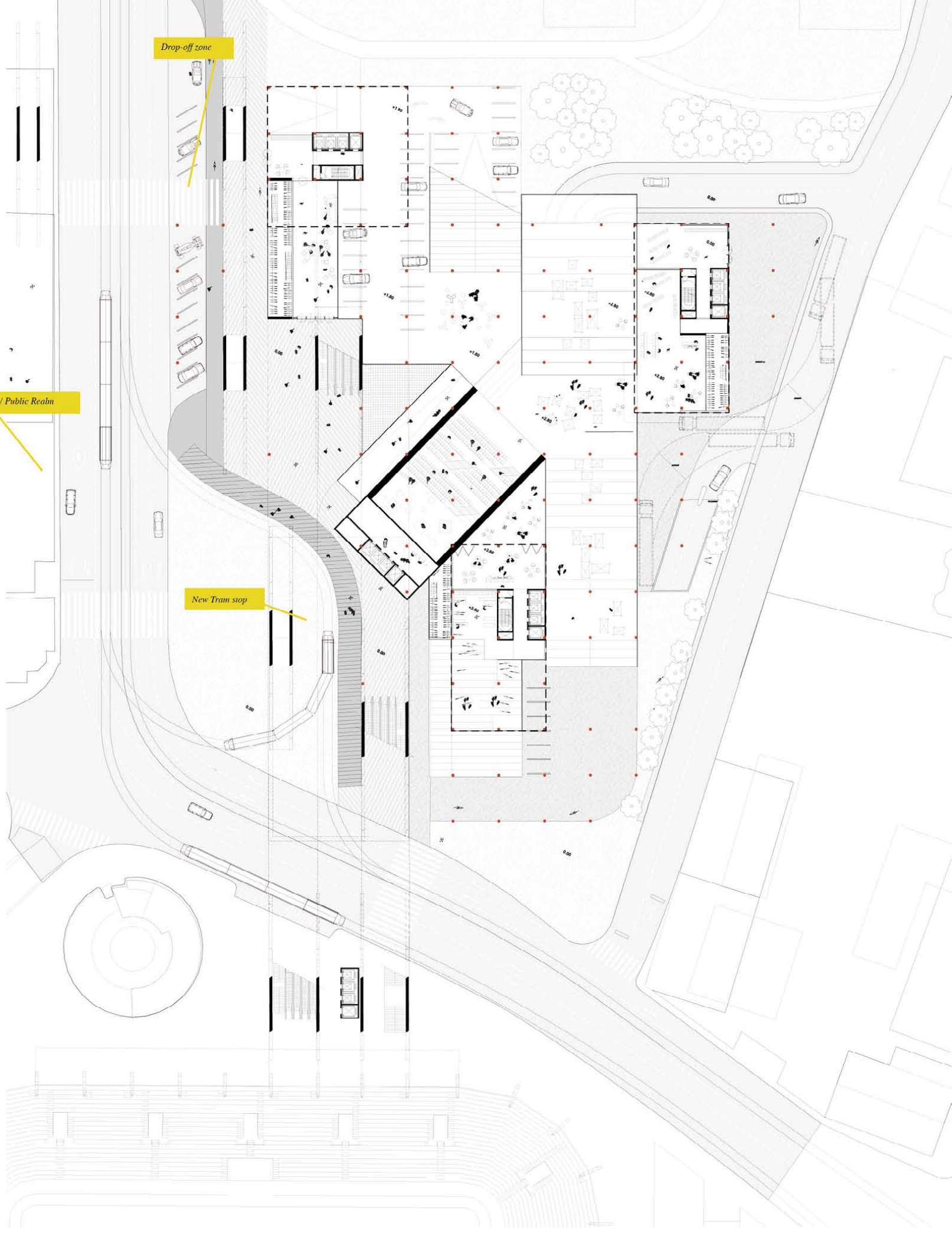
Section through Bridge/Connector



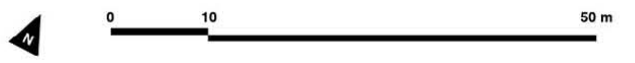
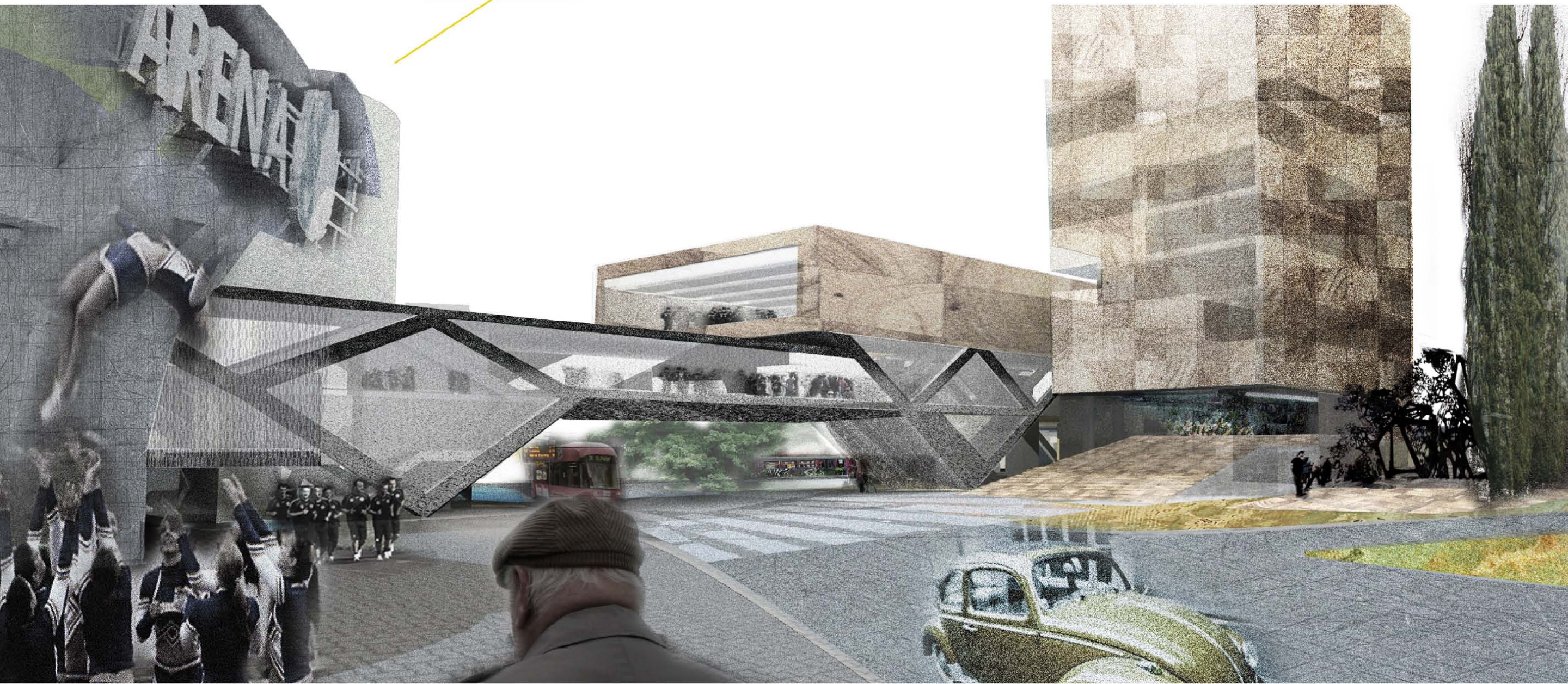
Plan of Pedestrian Bridge / Debatessen 46.5m



Plan Ground Floor / Public Realm



Towards bridge / Public ramp



Inside "Beerzell" (summer)



Under Podium/ Bicycle shed / Bar/Venue

A new district for Graz "Verdichtung und Wahrheit"

Graz's relatively intimate scale strengthens a sense of real belonging, which is manifested in a sense of familiarity with its unique charm and characteristics.

From a 'native' point of view, Graz represents a formidable 'retreat' into a lifestyle filled with daily human pleasures of food, drink, social gatherings and general "Lebenslust". It promotes a strong emphasis on quality, good food and housing, and a high standard of living.

There is, however, a notable trend towards mass consumerism (small-style shopping centres, vehicle-heavy consumer behaviour) which has been counteracted by numerous efforts to preserve, and revive the "Altstadt" and pedestrian qualities of this medieval jewel.

Two worlds in popular demand within this context are "Lifestyle"/"Lebensstil" and "Sustainability"/"Umweltfreundlichkeit".

With this in mind, we propose to introduce the notion of "Density"/"Verdichtung".

Reinforcement of public transport, trains, trams, buses, can be considered as a serious and user friendly alternative to the car - promoting the concept of the "Slow Life: for an ever-expanding population.

The current unsustainable sprawl and pseudo-suburbia of the neighbourhood - each to their own house and garden phenomenon - is complemented by the development of a Central Business and Residential District, providing a high-density alternative to the preserved, historic core.

The challenge set out in the brief arrives with the fact that no existing precedent for a 100m tall residential tower exists to date. Furthermore, the site projects a certain freedom from the constraints of preservation as mandated by the historic city centre - we propose to neither adopt, nor compete with the inimitable beauty and aesthetics of historic Graz.

In the context of this site, a 100m tower will set an exciting precedent, for an area that is overall composed of urban sprawl, low-rise dwellings, social housing clusters, industrial/commercial shed units and parking lots.

We propose to look at a larger study site, which encompasses the entire stretch between the UCP Stadium and the Grazer Messe.

From the onset, the site has enormous potential to gain Landmark status and increase its land-value, purely through an advantageous North/South position and optimal infrastructure and access to public transport. Landmark definition is produced by viewing the district as an unified volume, which could turn this 'tabula rasa' strip of land into a prolific new Central Business and Residential District, providing a compact and clearly defined visual urban structure.

It is bounded to the West by the Infrastructural Arterial road (Conrad v Hoetendorf), and develops towards the East at a more gradient, lose residential scale (Muenzgraben)

The main intentions of the Masterplan are as follows:

- 1) Rejuvenate the area's industrial 'tarmac landscape' and brownfield sites, by intensifying the built footprint against a new public landscape and pedestrian realm
- 2) Increase the built Floor Area Ratio for this region from 'suburban' to a new Urban District.
- 3) Find the appropriate typology for future growth and sustainable development.

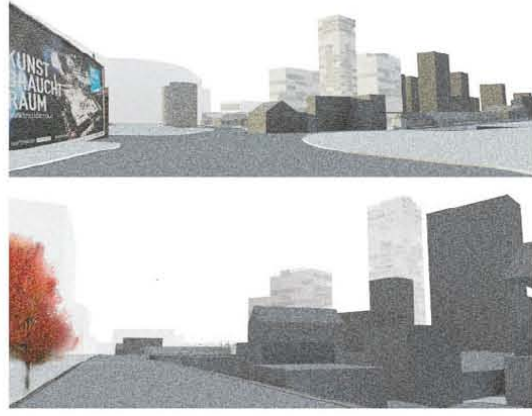
We propose a multiplicity of tall building components, forming a readable cluster, which will accommodate future needs of an expanding city, and create an alternative to the medieval dense structure of the historic core.

Generic "Box" and "Shed" typologies are rejected if they are borne out of commercial enterprise (DIY superstores, McDonalds etc). They create a disorienting, pedestrian non-friendly, car-oriented 'wasteland' and should become subordinated within a larger urban strategy.

With regards to Traffic, we accept that vehicular traffic is bound to increase in the future, and therefore aim to reduce the effects of bottleneck congestion by maintaining a continuous 2 lane car traffic in both directions, from Ulrich-Ichtensteingasse on to Conrad von Hoetendorf Strasse (see plan).

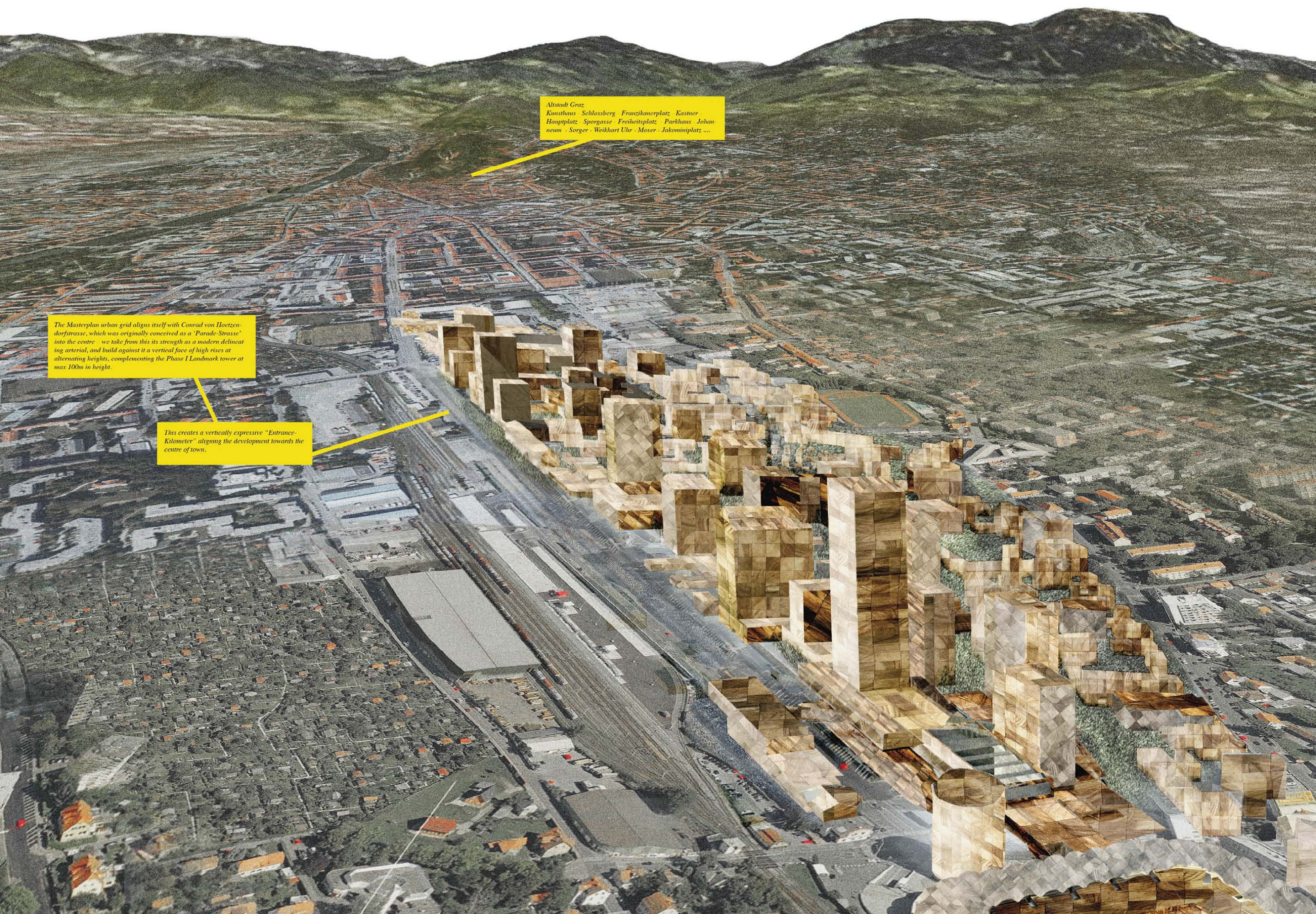
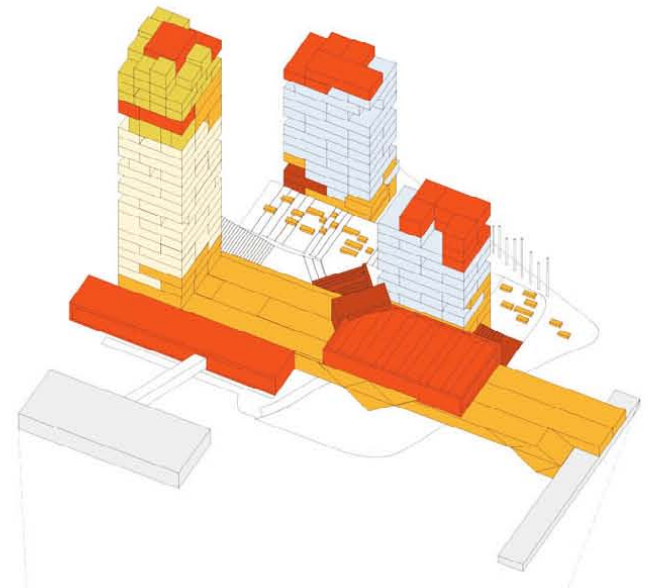
The aim is to reinforce Conrad von Hoetendorf Strasse as the main access Arterial from Sued-Autobahn, while at the same time relieving traffic and promoting residential development on and along Muenzgrabenstrasse.

Pedestrian movement is for the most part pushed away from the street, into the safe zone within a car-free realm that incorporates a tram stop, undulating paths, bicycle routes, as well as landscape - plazas and squares relating in scale to comparable squares in the medieval core of Graz, and softscape - parks and greens, all of which create a pedestrian-oriented public realm.



Top / from Sued-Autobahn
Bottom / from Muenzgrabenstrasse

High Density/Low-footprint Tower/Podium structures accommodate these intentions with logistics and public functions at their base (commercial, parking), allowing for ample park- and green areas freed up for as new public realm, eventually turning this brownfield site into an attractive public hub. Towers taller than 75m (height limit for residential living) may also incorporate vertically layered program, such as a high-rise boutique hotel/spa, or restaurants and entertainment venues at the upper levels.



Altstadt Graz
Kunsthans - Schlossberg - Franziskanerplatz - Kastner - Hauptplatz - Sporgasse - Freiheitplatz - Parkhaus - Johann - Sorm - Sorger - Weikhart Uhr - Moser - Jakominiplatz ...

The Masterplan urban grid aligns itself with Conrad von Hoetendorfstrasse, which was originally conceived as a "Piarale Strasse" into the centre - we take from this its strength as a modern delineating arterial, and build against it a vertical face of high rises at alternating heights, complementing the Phase I Landmark tower at max 100m in height.

This creates a vertically expressive "Entrance-Kilometer" aligning the development towards the centre of town.