



Black Country *See it in colour*

question
aspire
confidence
educate
collective
spirit

broadening horizons

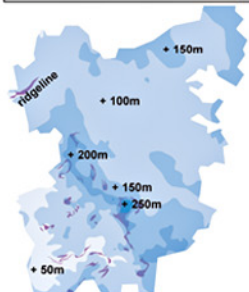
a vision of the black country urban park

black country 30 : 60 : 90

the national urban research park

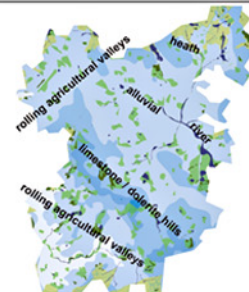
LOVEJOY

urban topography



component

including **beacons**, uplands, **hills**, plains, **wetlands**, marshes, **horizons**, visual connections and biomass including agriculture, **forestry**, ecology, horticulture and parkland.



analysis

Hidden, disguised by **relentless residential sprawl**, roads and industry. Landscape of **marshes**, **osier beds**, **woodlands**, **heaths** and **agriculture** largely forgotten, legacy of cherry orchards, fruit trees and horticulture obliterated. The urban fringe is in danger being eroded.



proposals



Global connections would present design opportunities for artists, architects and landscape architects from the city of destination across the world to create local links to the images of the Black Country and its multi-cultural community and opportunities for development, sponsorship and reciprocal projects. These could include evening platforms, bridges, places to sit, terraces, cafes, bars, theatres and studios, school projects, shared research and exchange programmes.

The first major international festival to mark the Black Country's global network should be planned for 2015.

urban floor



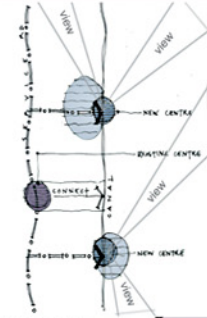
component

corridors, incorporating movement, **exchange**, places for meeting, watching, talking, trading, walking, playing and looking.

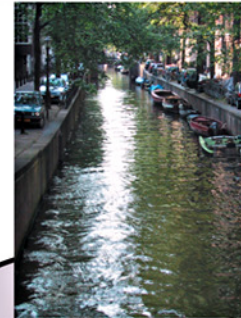


analysis

mediocre, often squalid, **disaggregated**, disconnected jumble, **dictated by roads**, **left over space**, reclamation of individual plots, trying to make good but no overall strategy. **Canal network** now functions **purely as a recreational resource**, not a driving force for the location of industry or housing.



proposals



urban architecture



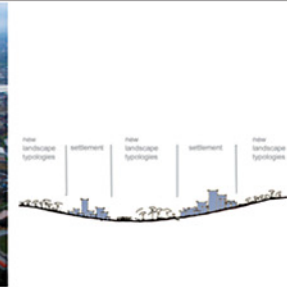
component

communities. the density and massing of development, location and **spatial structure** of settlements, industrial, educational, agricultural and horticultural buildings and infrastructure and research facilities etc.



analysis

No urbanity Messy, low cost clutter, disintegrating urban fabric based on **opportunistic and fractured re-use of industrial land**. Residential development based on land availability due to **decline of industry**, not suitable location.



proposals



proposals :

PROPOSAL ASSUMPTIONS :

- : The spatial planning decision-making framework is simplified and co-ordinated to ensure the implementation of a long-term strategy.
- : Derelict and contaminated land reclaimed, having a neutral value and therefore no longer determining location of urban architecture or topography.
- : Reversal of population decline.
- : Car use and dependency reduces dramatically.
- : Residential, industrial, educational and market development is based around the canals, trains and trams rather than the roads.
- : Land values are increased through high end uses.
- : Distance is expensive.
- : Industrial and bio agriculture and engineering develop significantly.
- : Density of development is accepted as a key for sustainable urban living.
- : Self-sufficiency, low energy consumption (water and power) become vital components of urban life (allotments, walking to work, using local resources).
- : Location therefore becomes vitally important, but in a globally connected network.
- : Research centres related to land reclamation (fungi) and high tech manufacturing (bio-composites) attracted to the area, in association with local universities and schools.

urban topography

PROPOSALS : Responsive to **geology, topography**, ecology, soils, cultural history, future agriculture, industrial agriculture and research and recreational/educational needs. It is manipulated to create **views, expose horizons** and demonstrate local, regional and international connections. A highly articulated and distinctive **urban topography defines the structure**, quality and character of the region and its individual villages. Intensive urban landscape infrastructure between the villages gives a **sense of identity** to each centre.

A number of **typologies** infiltrate the urban structure:

- Heath and pine, woodlands, lakes and wetlands, marsh, osier beds and willow woods.
- Orchards, allotments, garden centres, fruit growing.
- Intensive, high-end value industrial bio agriculture such as jute, hemp, flax or other high value agricultural products.
- Parkland, gardens.
- Wilderness.

This is not the countryside in the city, but a collection of new urban landscape typologies. Urban qualities come from its character, including the sturdiness, scale and quality of the boundaries, paths, seats, lighting, entrances and other facilities.

Works with the horizons, hills and plains. Emphasises horizon, through woodland, beacons, exposing topography etc. Establishes view corridors and sky contours from all centres towards local and regional beacons. Emphasises contours by views, changes in texture and typology.

Establishes a network of international reference points contributes to cultural exchange and development.

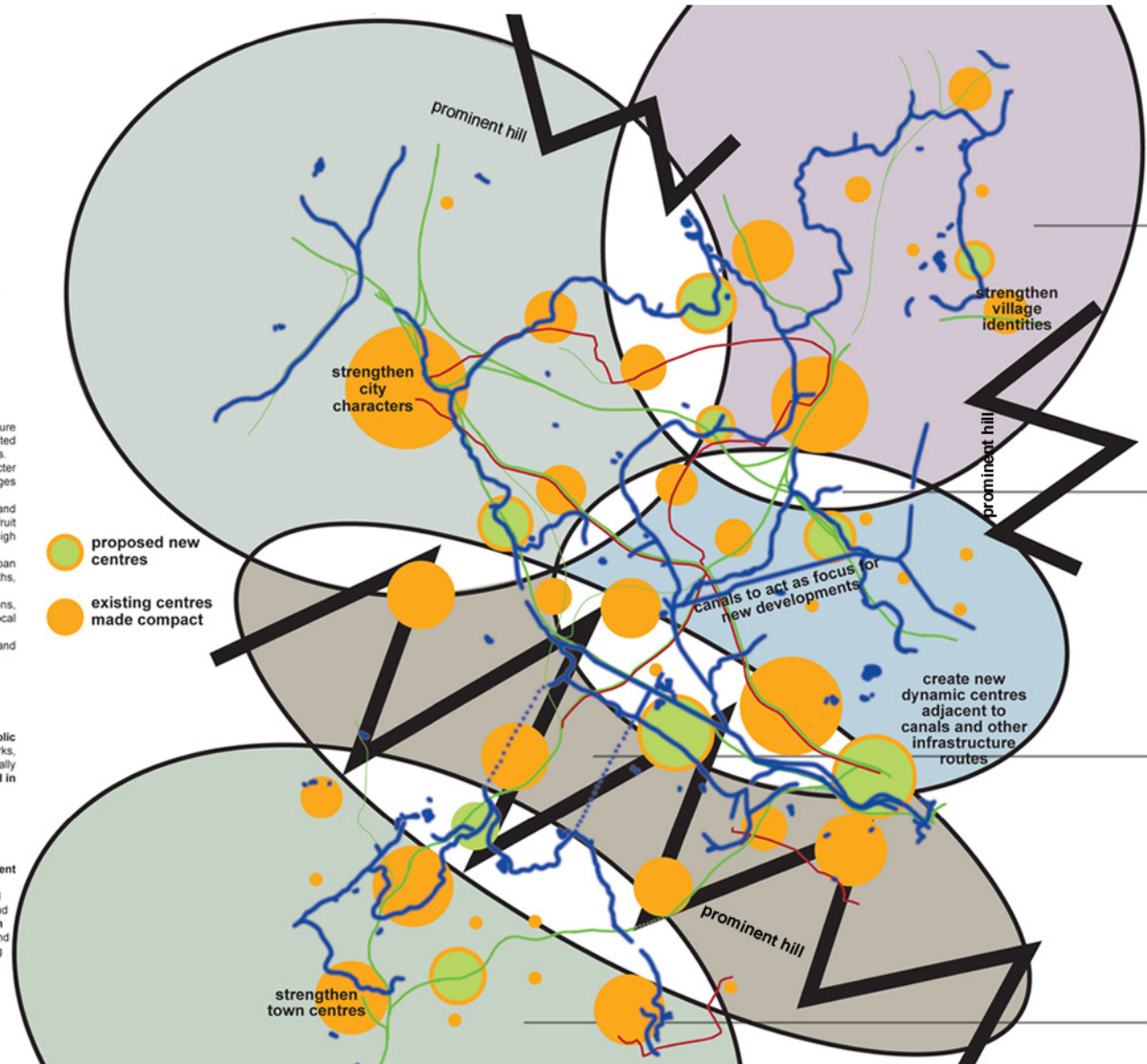
urban floor

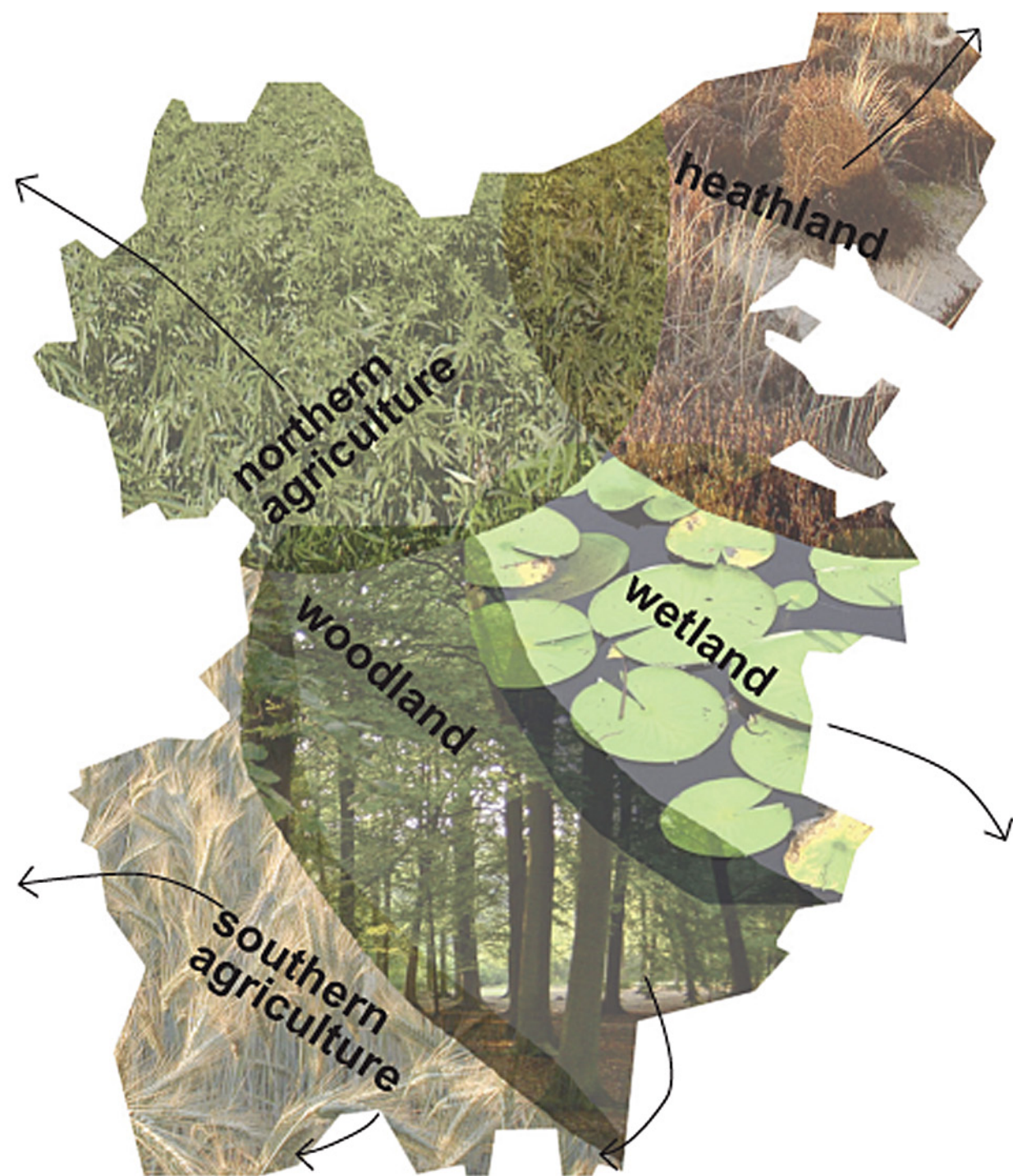
PROPOSALS : Created by transport corridors, **tramways, streets, canals, railways**, the public realm such as town squares, plazas, village greens, markets, cafes, promenades, walkways, parks, cycle ways etc. Exploits and works with layer 1 above. Orientated to **exploit views**. Connects locally and regionally to the urban topography. Provides a framework for development. Is **differentiated in visual quality and character** from village to village.

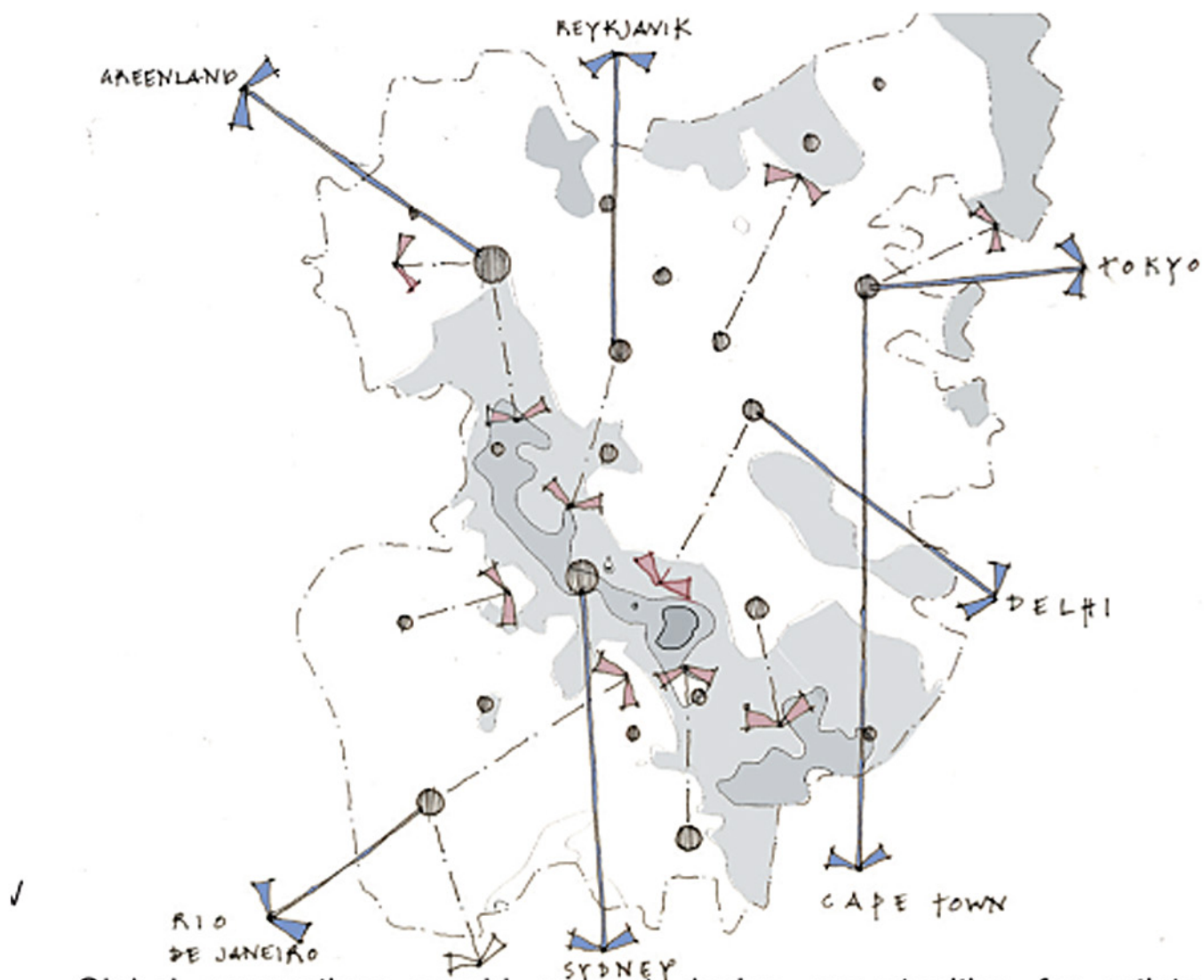
urban architecture

PROPOSALS : Exploits and works with layers 1 and 2, developing a **new, interdependent relationship between architecture, urban form and landscape architecture**.

Thin out built development from land over 175 metres, **intensify** development between 150 and 175m. Aggregate built form into discrete, fragmented structure based on villages. Creates wetland villages in the floodplain. Uses urban centres located at 150 metres as starting points for **beacon views** of surrounding landscape. Massing and density contributes to accentuating topography and character. Uses new industrial agricultural composites (based on hemp, jute and flax) as housing elements – prefabricated to assemble and disassemble easily. Orientated to **exploit sun** and protect from wind.







Global connections would present design opportunities for artists, architects and landscape architects from the city of destination (across the world) to create local links to the villages of the Black Country and its multi cultural community and opportunities for development, sponsorship and reciprocal projects. These could include viewing platforms, bridges, places to sit, terraces, cafés, bars, theatres and studios, school projects, shared research and exchange programmes.

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