

LAN 3741

Design Theory & Practice

Joseph Young S18132649 MA Landscape Architecture



Advertisement

- o Eye-catching
- o Clear & Understandable
- o Makes the viewer ask "how?" so visit the website

Abundance Investment.com

- "At the forefront of financial innovation since 2012 creating ways for everyone to invest in green & social infrastructure"
- "Turn a profit without turning a blind eye"

money / morality *

plus / minus positives / negatives

'Balance' - Decisions (Compromise?)

Font: rounded tails to g's & y's - "friendly / personal"
Contrasting with bold geometric symbols & layout

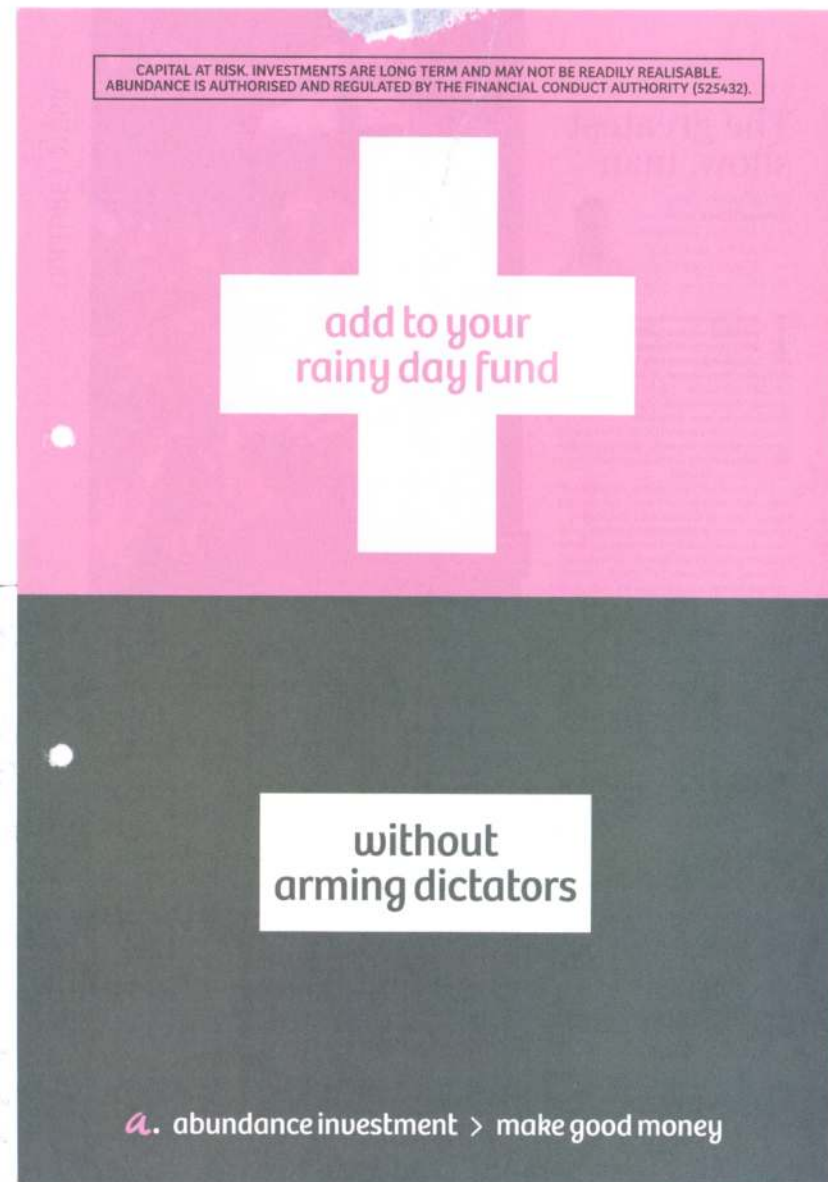
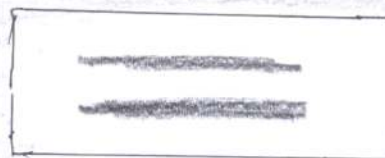
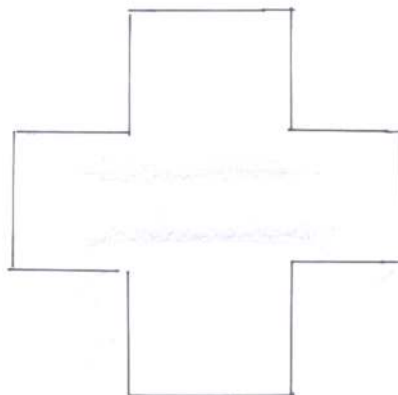
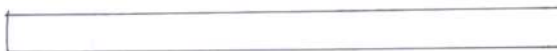
"small print" is not at the bottom but at the top in bold
(Inversion of 'convention' perhaps?)

* Graphically evocative of ^(International aid) an organisation
Such as Medecins Sans Frontieres
- uses similar text & visual language

only pink not red

"soft, feminine, caring
... human humane?"

Considering spatial principles in communication



Promenading... Historic & Contemporary



People promenading in Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, London during the 18th Century (Coke, 2015)

In the 1700s people would promenade as a social activity in pleasure gardens, enjoying meetings & entertainment. The conventions & etiquette involved meant that to promenade here was also to 'pose'.

Promenading today is rarely as formalized as it ~~may~~ have been at certain times in the past. However, there could be said to be a kind of ritualistic element at play when we walk in some places. La Rambla in Barcelona is a very busy street in the Gothic Quarter, a "must-see" location for visitors to the city & provides an opportunity for an impressive, collective experience.



La Rambla, Barcelona (Greim, 2013)



Christmas Market, New Street, Birmingham

Birmingham's New Street is one of the main shopping areas & during the Christmas Season, when the German market arrives, the volume of people & atmosphere is somewhat similar to the more famous Spanish tourist hubs!

Posing...



'Instagramable' tourist sites (Girl vs Globe, 2019)



'Selfie' with Brandenburg Gate, Berlin (Lifewire.com, 2019)

Social Media

The ubiquity of the smartphone means that people taking 'Selfies' in public is commonplace. People take pleasure in documenting their travels, at home or abroad, on social media platforms such as Facebook & Instagram.

The above photo is from a travel blog advising readers of some of the most 'Instagramable' locations in Venice. Professional or amateur models and the general public will seek out the best spots for posing for photographs & the appearance of these images - increasingly on social media - helps rise or maintain the profile of a place. Such sites are therefore a great asset to a city or town.

The criteria for these places is obviously varied, but no doubt includes qualities like picturesque beauty, famous landmarks, quirky interest, etc...

Media

Gehl (2010: 28) states that "Public Space has significant social importance as a forum for the exchange of ideas & opinions". As seen below, when people choose to pose in order to make a statement it makes sense to use a raised area where one can be seen, or alternatively, low ground surrounded by higher vantage points.



Women protesting on steps of City Hall, Portsmouth (ITV plc, 2016)



Walking for Health volunteer group, Kingston Borough, London (London.gov.uk, 2019)

To Walk For Well-being



Sensory qualities of walking: the sound of dry leaves under foot (Parliament House Hotel, 2019)

'Mindful' walking might involve paying attention to natural rhythms & sounds around us.

The health benefits of walking are well understood, so it's important for people to have good access to quality places in order to do it. Some people form organized groups to walk regularly, whilst dog-walkers (surely the most typical park user) get out on a daily basis. How can we encourage those who have yet to make such commitments to walk more often?!



1. Behave Media Group, 2019
2. Turnedogspot.com, 2019
3. yessofcousa.com, 2019

Contemplating...

This famous sculpture is the archetypal contemplative figure ('poet or philosopher'?) & a solitary one. Is contemplation something we must necessarily do alone...?



Le Penseur (The Thinker) statue by Auguste Rodin, Musée Rodin, Paris (Ellison, 2019)



Greenwich Park, London, offering great views of Canary Wharf (Getty Images, 2019)

Finding a Place

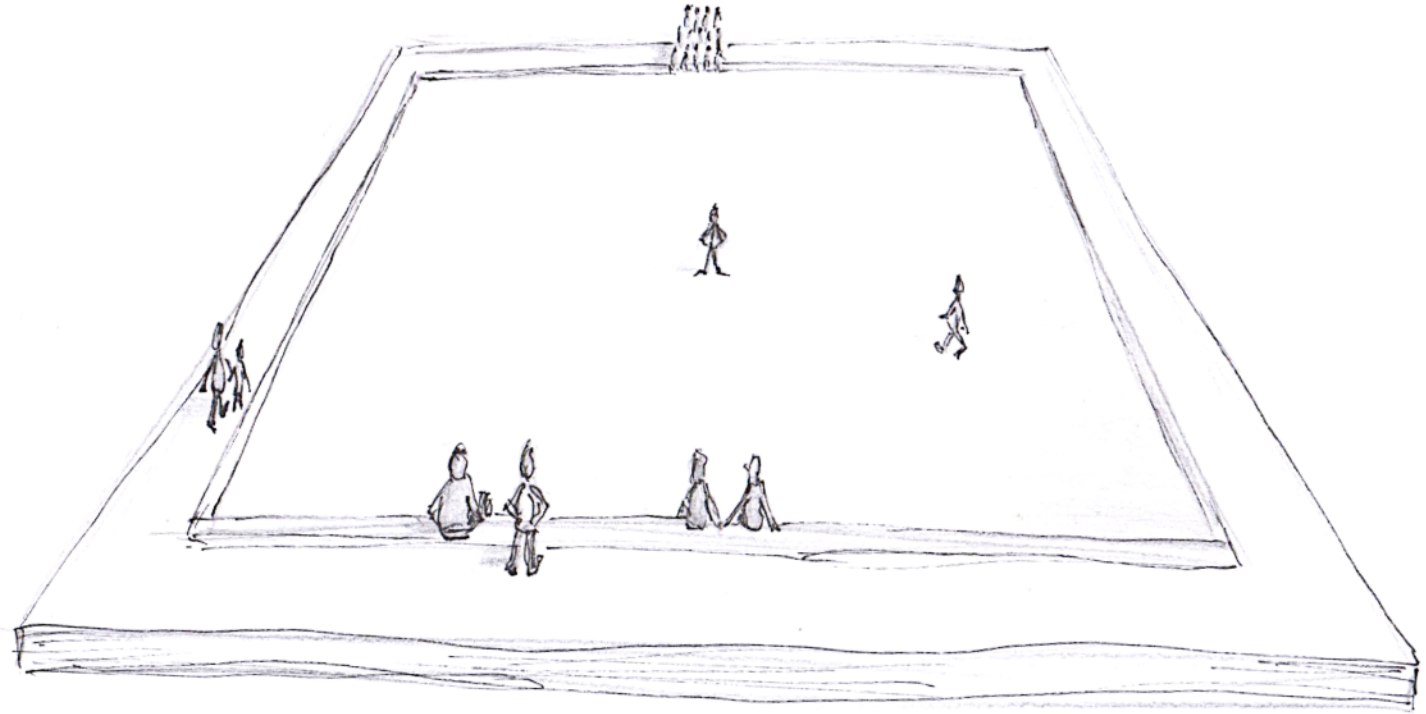
Space can be thought of as both physical & mental, but often there is some connection between feeling at peace & having somewhere peaceful to be; an 'escape'. Views are crucial as they provide us literal & metaphorical perspective. Appleton (1975) recognizes the importance of a vantage point from which to 'prospect', as well as a safe niche or 'refuge' - where we have both we feel most content.



Ryōan-ji Temple garden, Kyoto (Lam, 2013)

In my sketch, where space is defined by a walkway around an imagined plaza, there are 7 activities taking place:

1. Posing alone in the centre space (making a statement, the individual being most on show and exposed)
2. Promenading out into the centre (exposed so also posing, though still moving through the space and able to make choices about where next to go)
3. Posing in a group on the edge of the space (making a bold, performative statement, choreographed and with intention, but feeling less exposed than if posing alone and in the centre space)
4. Promenading around the edge of the space (the route taken is demarked by the pathway, so the promenaders are guided by the design)
5. Contemplating alone on the edge of the space (the individual has a view of others and the whole space, observing the action, and is comfortable)
6. Sitting together as a pair, either contemplating or possibly posing (on show to others, in central position, but also in a strong position to view the whole space and others)
7. Standing alone on the edge (contemplating, assessing the space, possibly deciding where to go, behind others in an offset position. There would be a feeling of relative security here)



Jan Gehl (2010) categorizes activities in 3 ways:
Necessary, Optional and Social

Posing, promenading and contemplating could each fall into any of the above categories, to a lesser or greater extent.

Mark Rothko

No.8, 1964, National Gallery of Washington DC

I chose this artwork by Rothko as the basis for my work, from the series of 'black-Form' paintings. These are quite distinct from his previous colour field paintings of the previous decade, The works require prolonged **contemplation** and "[introduce] an element of duration and physical **self awareness** into the process of perception". (Tate, 2019)

On first looking, it is striking how minimal the work is. I found this powerful. What is most apparent on first viewing is the painted border around the edge of the work, lighter than the centre space and of varying thickness.

Closer study within this border or 'frame' reveals that the painting is divided into four main portions; two darker sections at the top and bottom, and two lighter sections to the left and right. There is also an overall balance and reflective symmetry along one vertical centre line.

Given how black the piece is, the few paler specks and streaks, found mostly around the edge, become quite significant, like faint sparks of energy or static in the darkness.

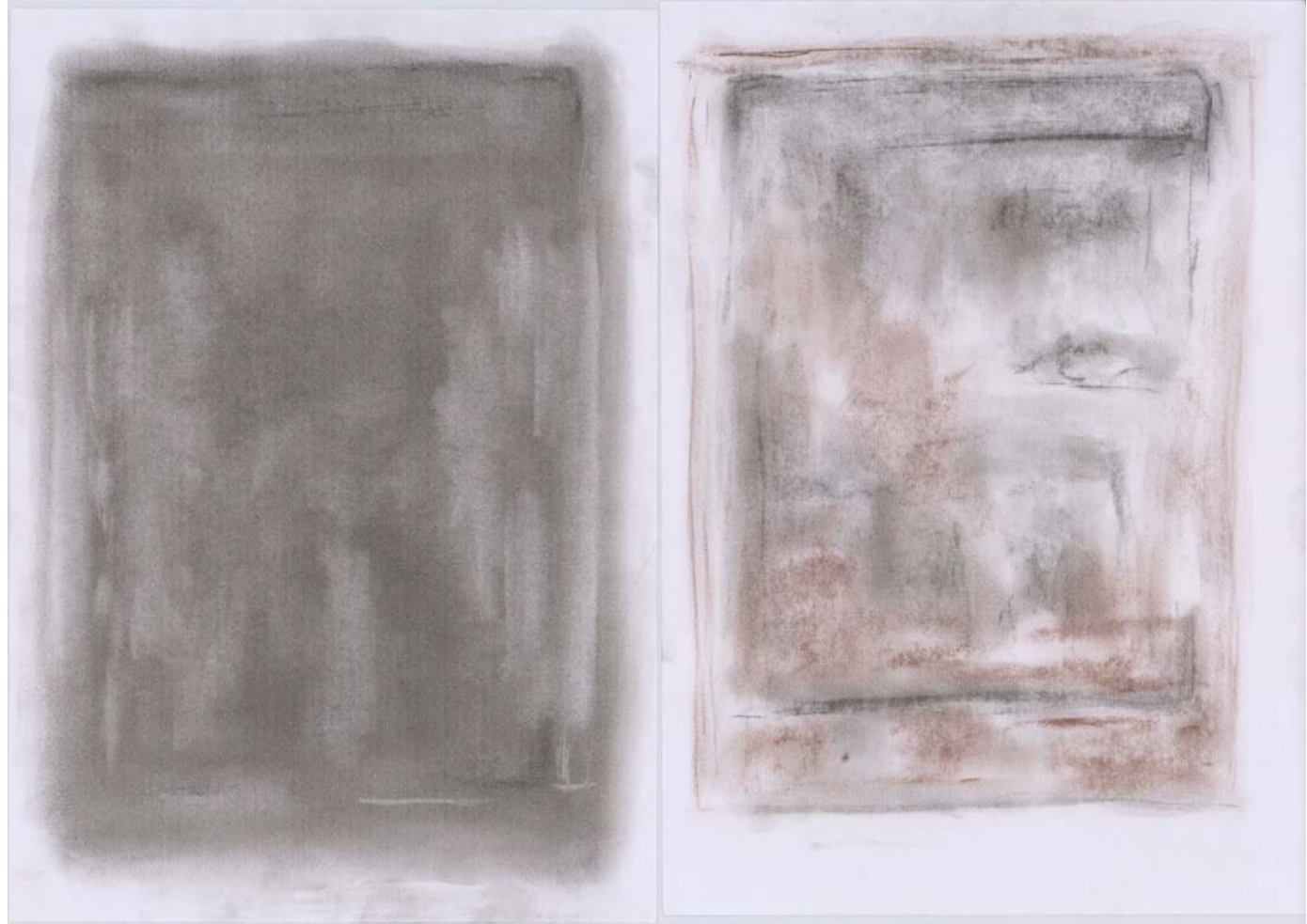
I was intrigued by the nebulous form which seems to emanate from the periphery and how one feels almost drawn into the implied space in the centre.



Initial Studies

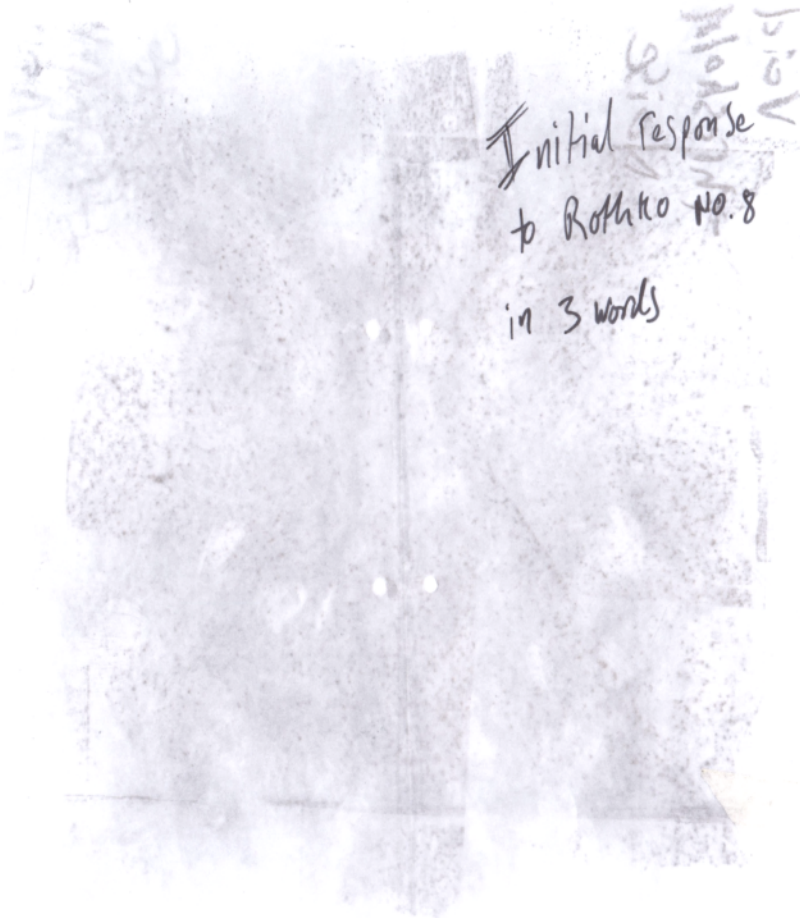
On the left is a digitally enhanced version of the painting, which I did in order to reveal more of the artist's brush strokes and to give more contrast between different areas of the image.

Centre and right are my first observational studies, familiarizing myself with the painting and its structure.



Spatial Principles

Response to painting in 3 words



Void

- Empty / Emptiness
- Absence
- Space
- Chasm
- Vacuum
- Barren / Bare
- Darkness
- Stark
- Desert
- Unoccupied
- Hollow
- Calm
- Silent
- Drained / Repleted

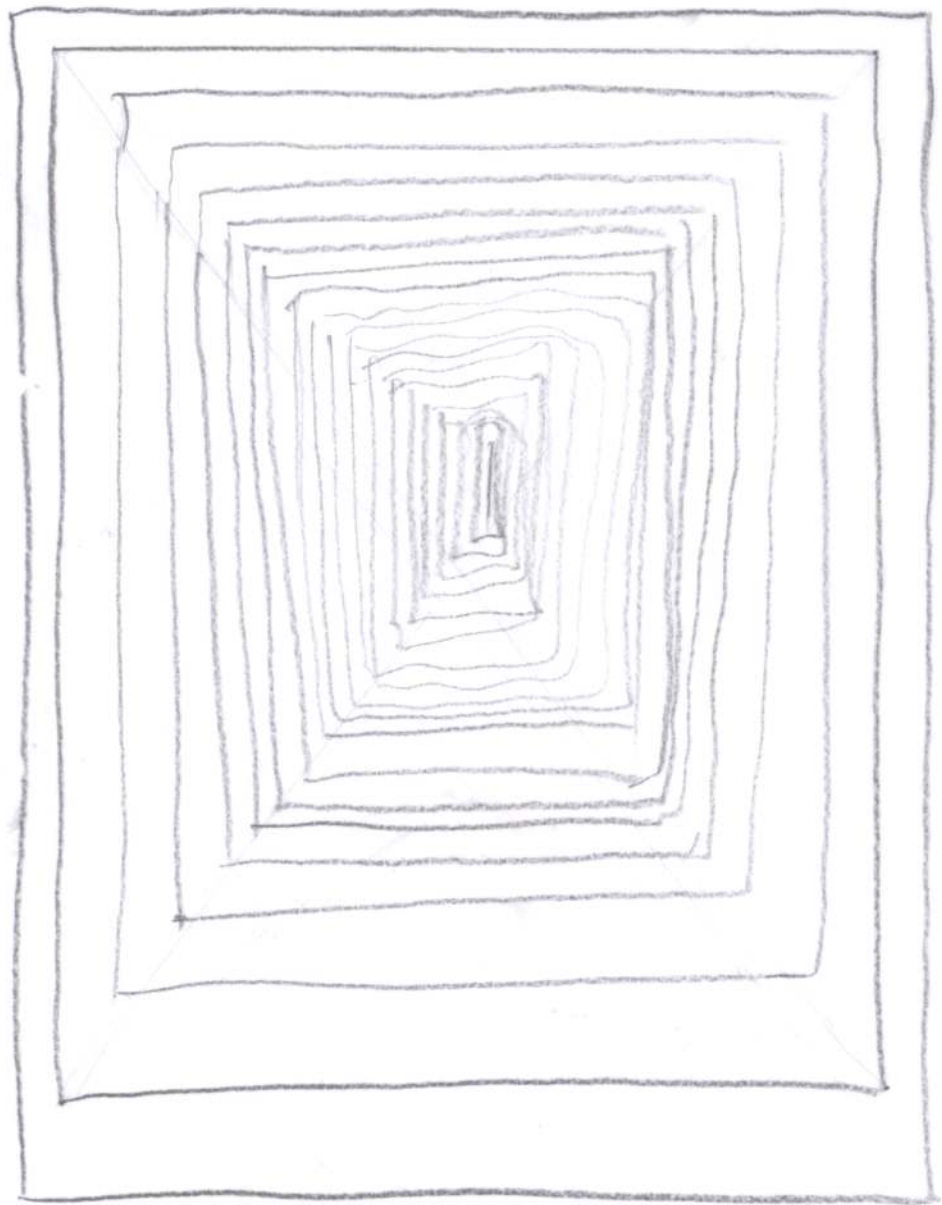
Static

- Noise
- Interference
- Presence
- Energy
- Electric
- Still
- Forces in equilibrium
- (charged)
- In Stasis

Threshold

- Boundary
- Border
- Entrance-way
- Brink
- Tipping-point
- Beginning
- View point

My spontaneous response to this piece was to try to draw the movement I imagine from the edges in towards the centre. I came up with the terms Void, Static and Threshold as spatial principles which I thought were at play in the image and considered synonyms and associated words (for me the very abstract and ambiguous nature of the painting meant that as I contemplated it, most of the above words seems like they could apply).



I depicted the piece in a diagrammatic way to represent a kind of gravitational pull inwards, which I feel overwhelmingly is happening. This potentially goes on infinitely into the central void.

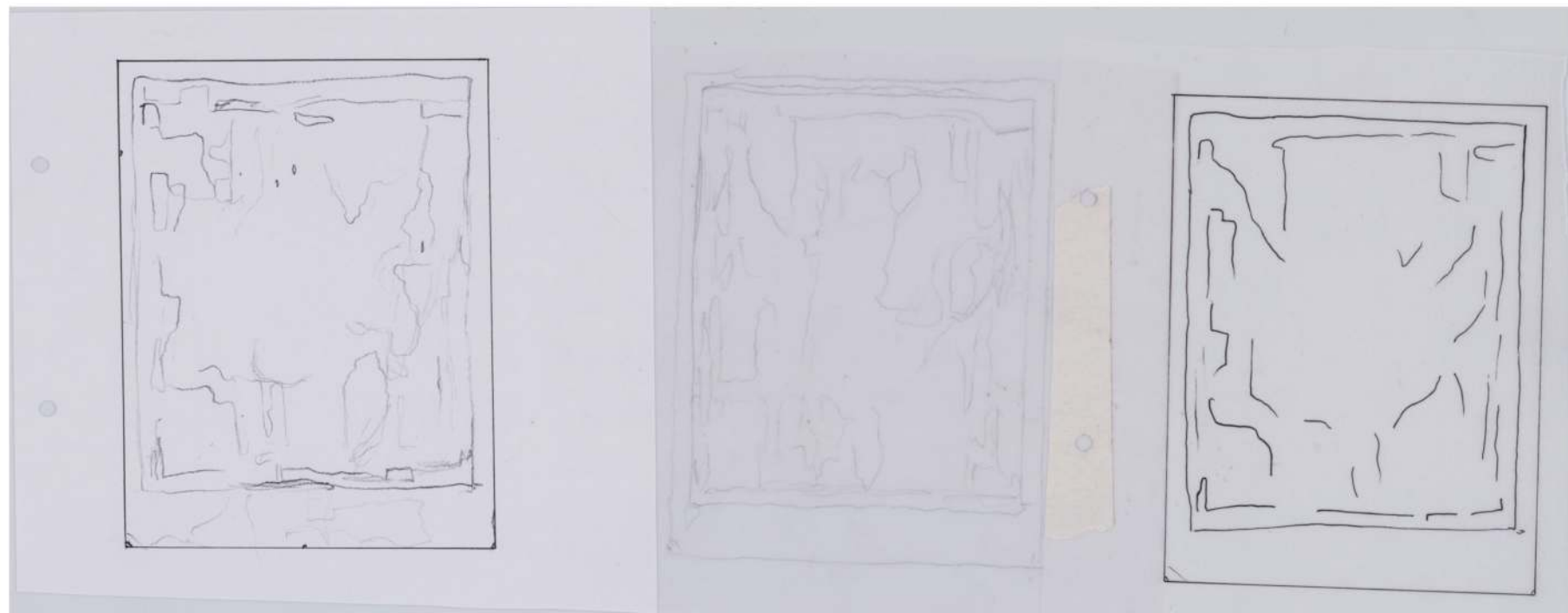


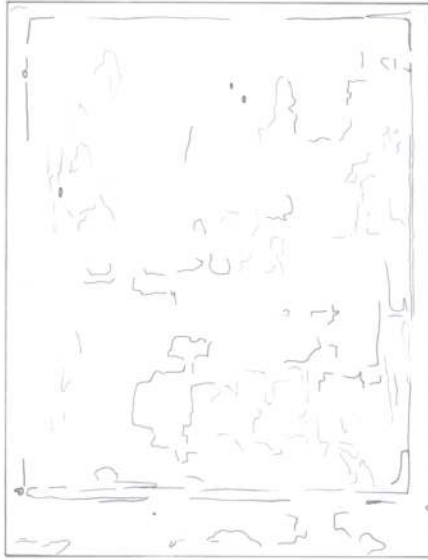
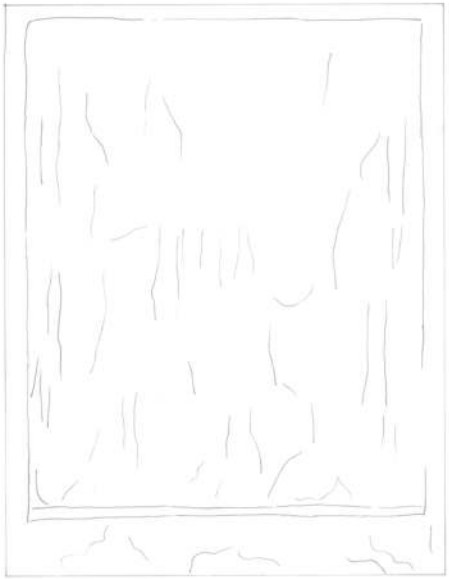
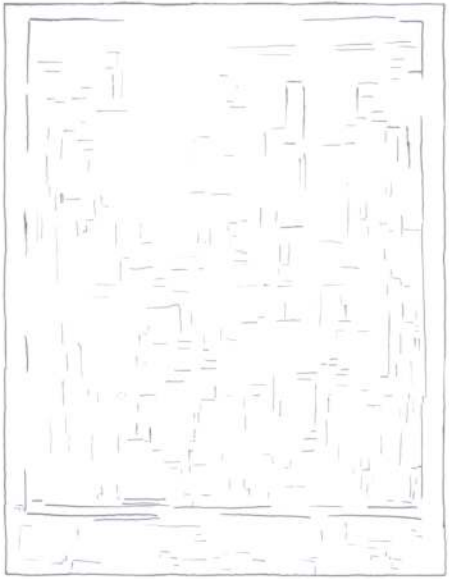
For me, one very interesting thing about the piece is to feel and imagine the artist's hand creating the work. In such an apparently sparse painting, without obvious form, the brush strokes themselves become structural elements, which would be more apparent when viewing the piece for real, due to the light on the textured canvas. To the left is a quick study I made in graphite, filling the space using vertical strokes which are dictated by the range of movement of my own hand. Similarly, the technique here dictates the composition (as well as pressure/tonal range).

I was also reminded of the White Paintings by Robert Rauschenberg, which are so plain and uniform that what the viewer mainly notices is the subtle changes in how light falls on the canvases in the particular room in which they are displayed.

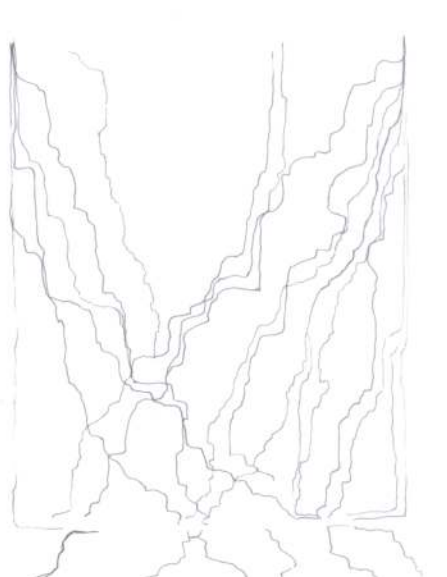
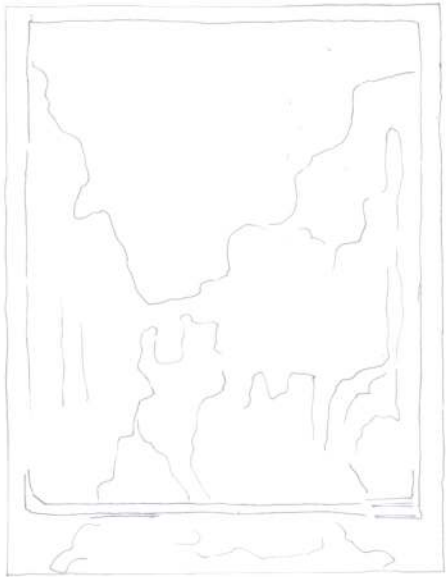
Importantly, in both paintings, the experience one has depends on the site-specific environmental conditions.

The three studies to the right are meant to highlight and emphasize areas of space created by the subtle tonal changes and brush strokes on the Rothko canvas.

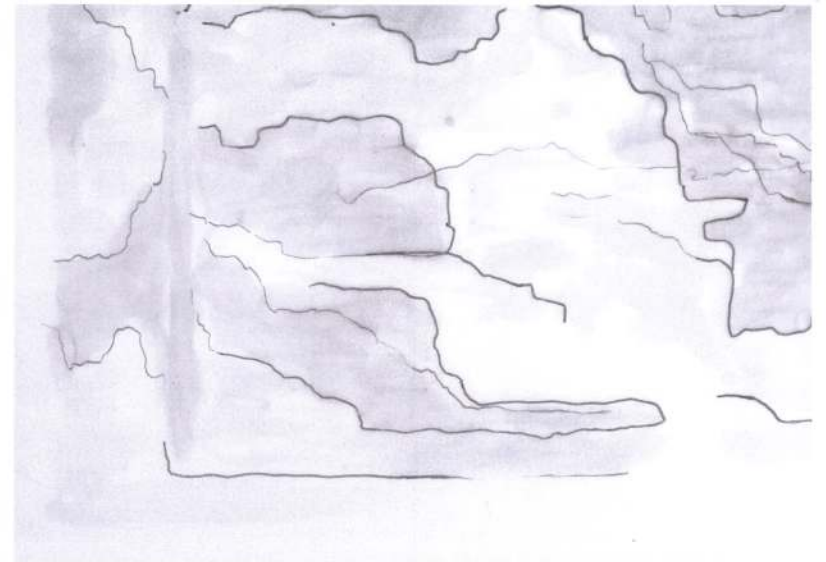


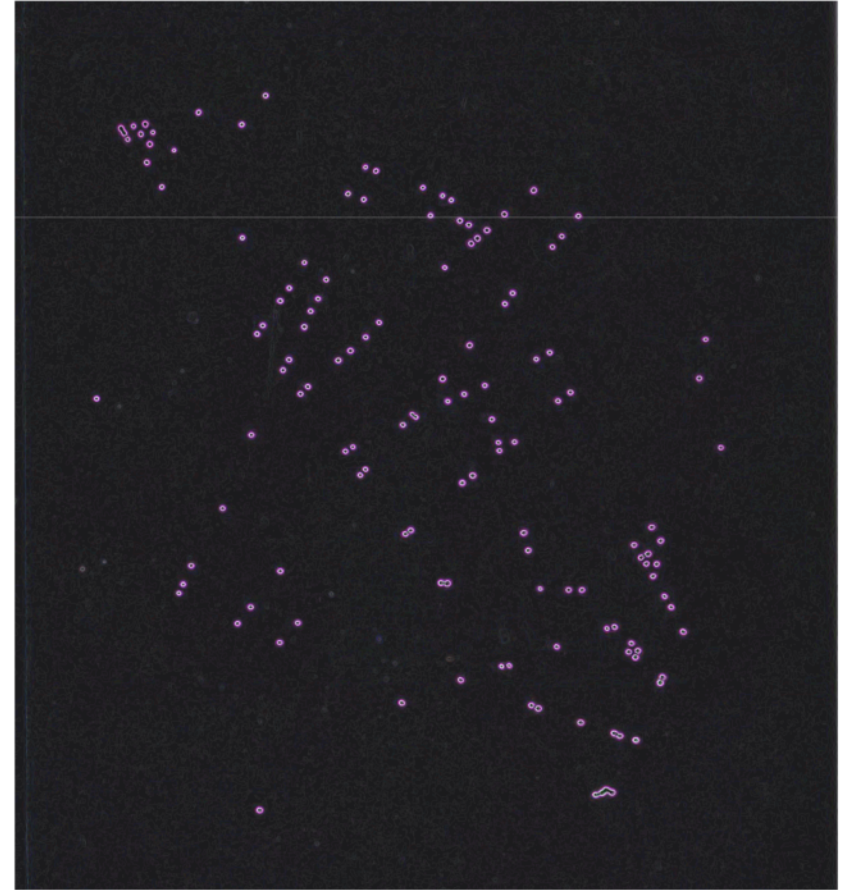
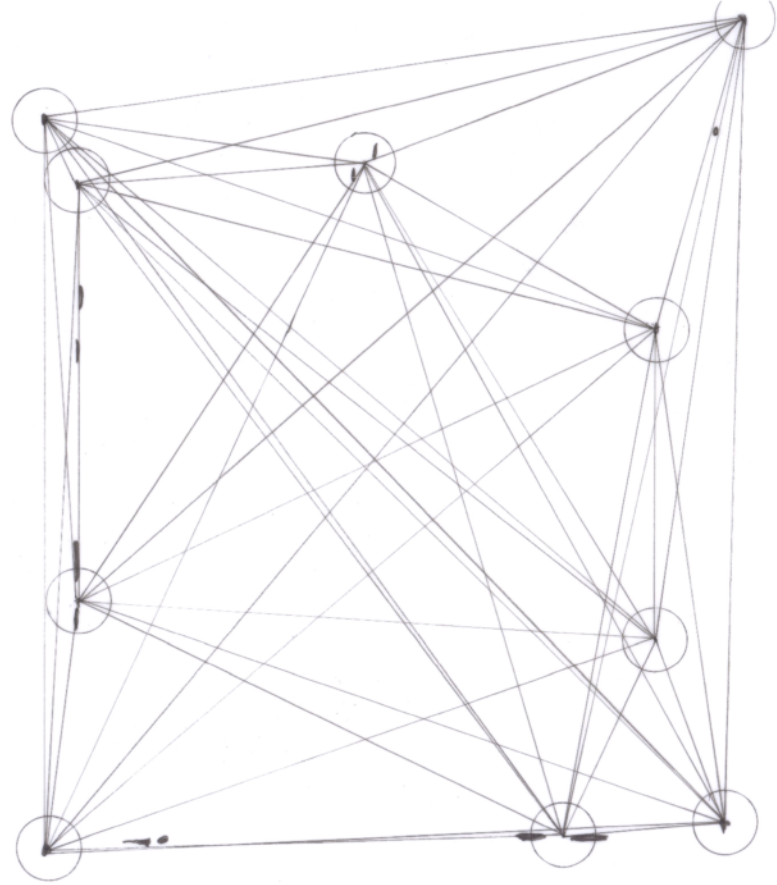
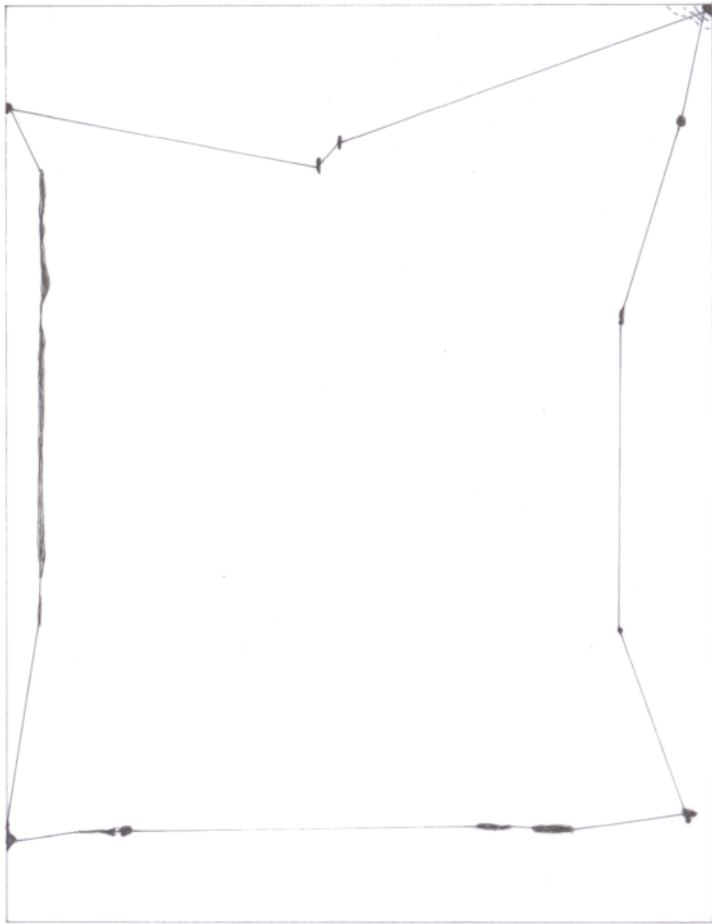


Further studies on a similar theme...



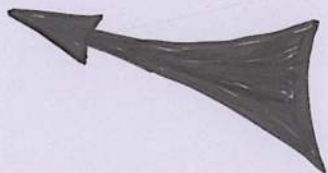
The last image on the left is meant to represent the possibility of entering the space and moving through in a gradual but irregular way, perhaps following lines as if they were pathways, or moving between the spaces





Here I focused only on the paler highlights in the painting to see if this would reveal anything structural between these 'bodies in space'. They are certainly absent from the centre. I connected them together, first by proximity along one line, then tried joining each point to every other. The structure is quite random but has an overall balance to it, and the crossing lines do seem to emphasize the central space.

Finally, I placed a point at every location where lines intersect. This had the effect of creating a kind of connecting path of energy between points. Where there was an interaction, there was a 'spark' or 'event'.



In the drawing
- graphite on trace,
darkly shaded
areas represent
resistance, gravity, heaviness
or a slowing of movement.

Lightly shaded areas represent lightness,
possibility, ease of movement. Nearly
all implied movement or exchange is either
from or towards the central space, giving
this part of the image primacy.

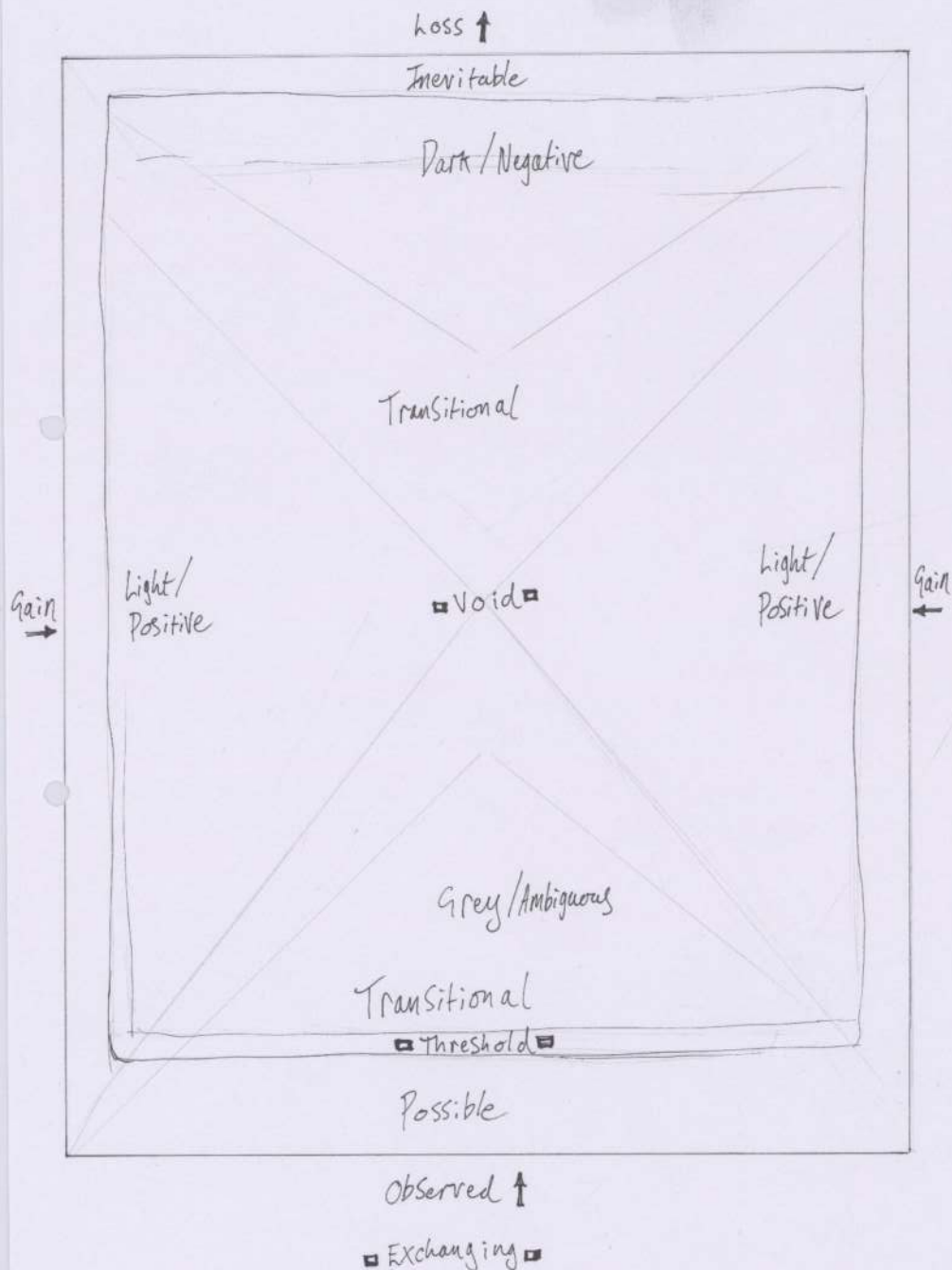


Enlarged detail from the previous image



As already mentioned, the way the painting contains a kind of inner frame or boundary is striking. This acts as a threshold, but it is one which is I see as being crossed by 'material' or some kind of 'energy'.

Of course, the edge of the canvas itself is the threshold between the 'environment' of the painting and that of the viewer in the gallery...



-Void -Threshold
-Balance → EXchange
of Energy



Energy (dark)
(cold) escapes at
the top centre
of the image:
light fills
the void it
creates



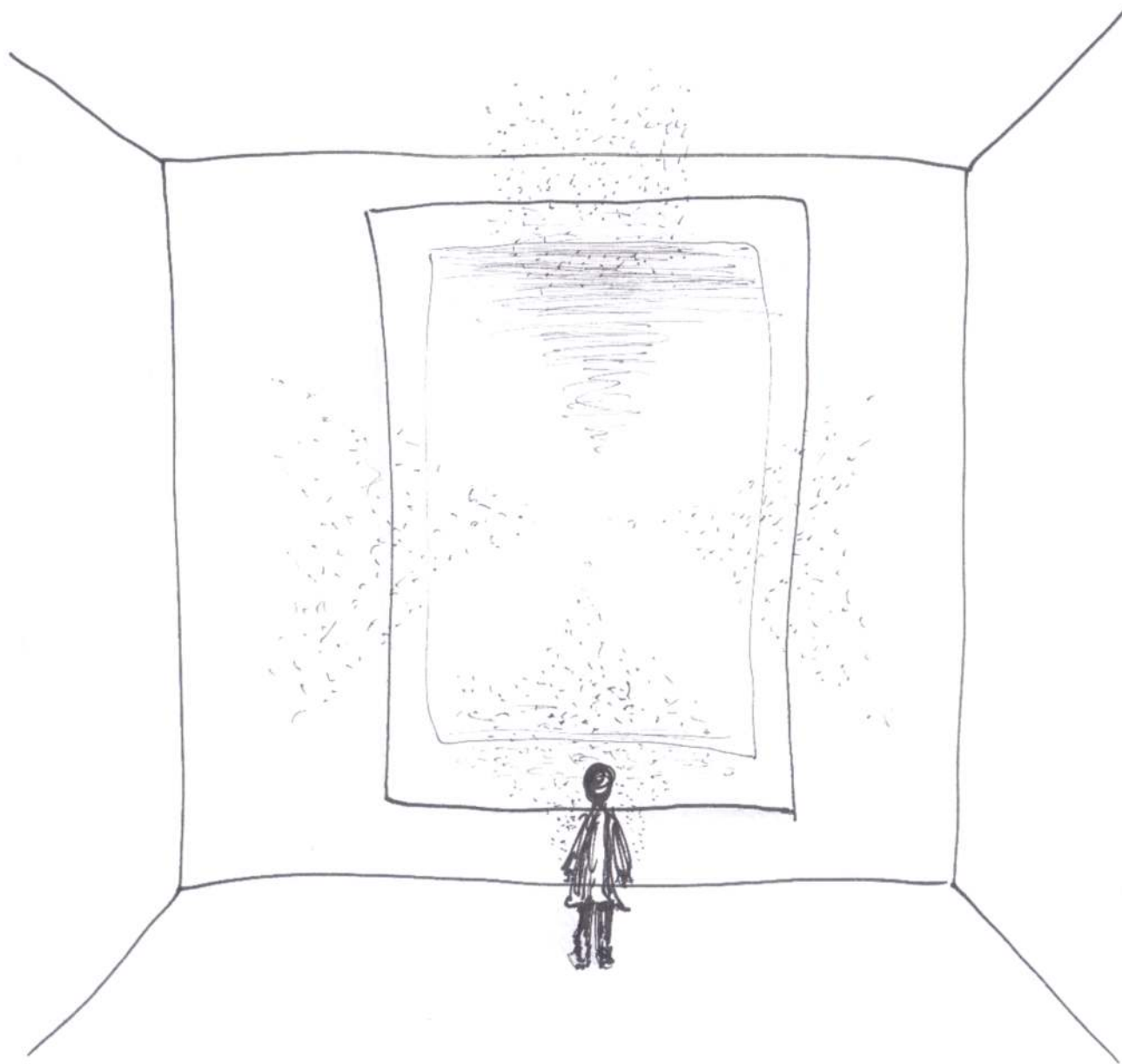
Energy (light) (warmth)
or material is
drawn in towards
the centre of the
image from beyond
the canvas & the
implied threshold
Painted near its edge



The Viewer
is poised on
the implied
threshold at
the bottom of the
image ...



... they
contemplate
crossing the
threshold
& being drawn
into the central
space



In the series *The Shock of the New*, Robert Hughes talks about a “**state of receptivity**” and of “Slow looking” when experiencing Rothko’s series commissioned for the Houston Chapel in the mid 60s.

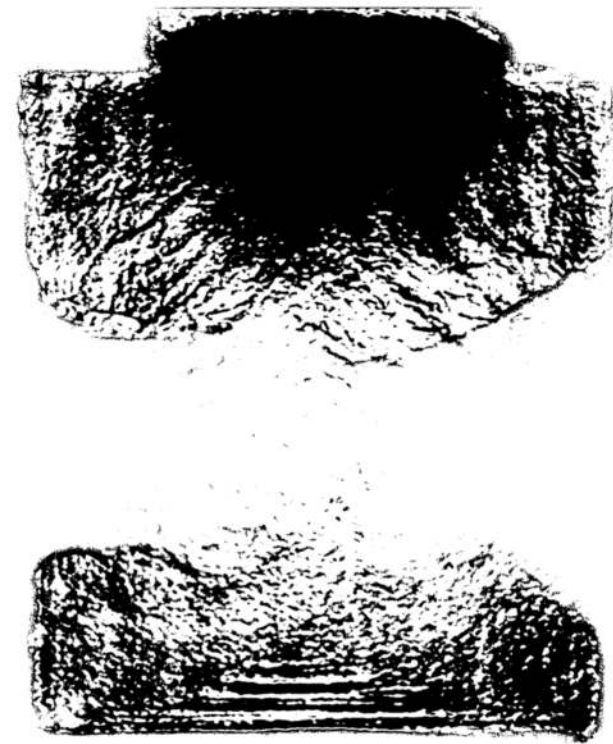
He goes on, these are “not ‘active’ images, they’re more like zones of silence, blank slates which **you complete by looking at them**”.

“The horizons and storms of earlier Romantic sublimities are gone and what is left as the sole subject of contemplation is **a void**”.



Here I used pastels to represent the movement of matter I see happening in and out of the painting across thresholds.

The bottom of the picture is the most important as far as the viewer is concerned, as this represents the possibility that they may cross the boundary



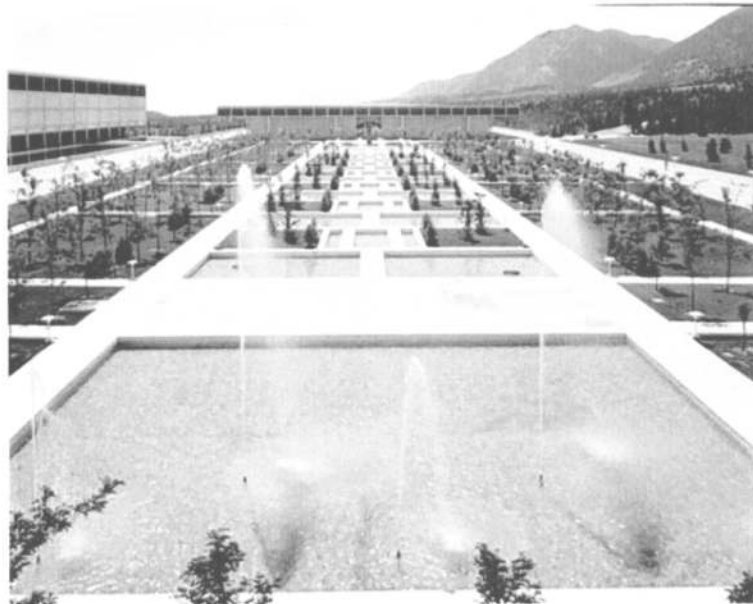
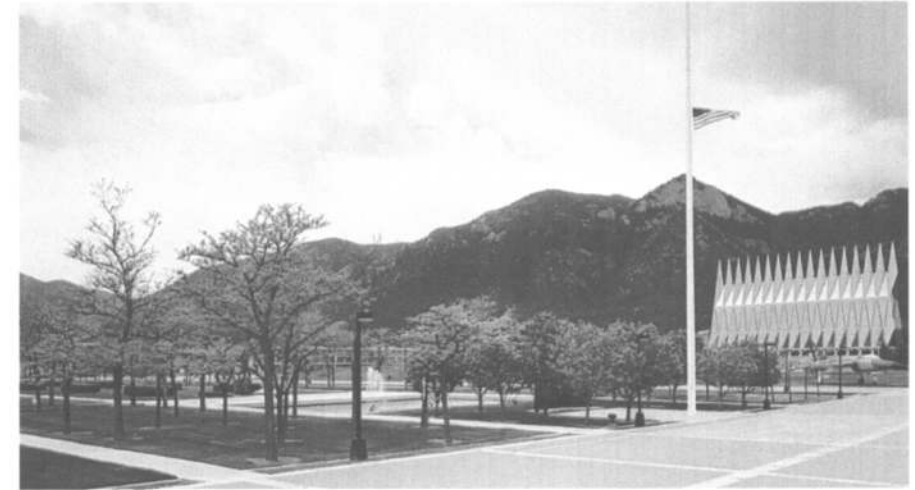
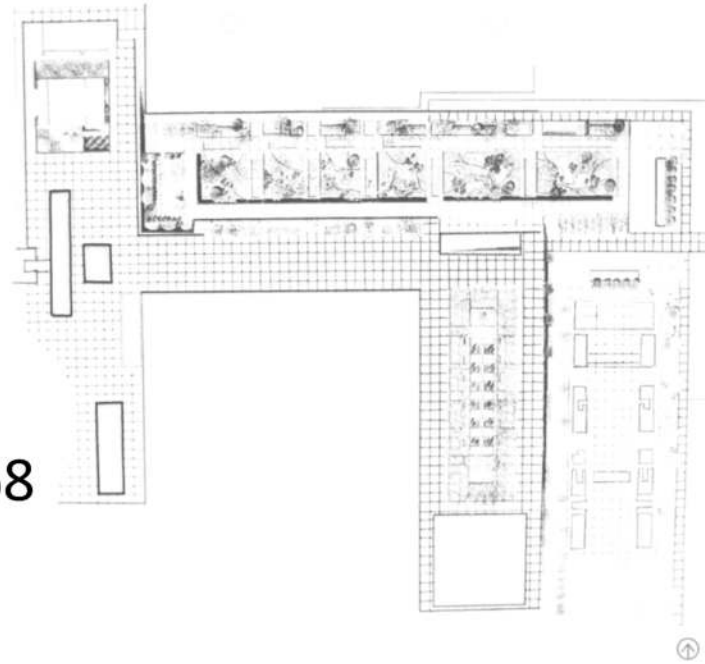
I was reminded of the figure in my sketch of the 7 activities around the plaza and the individual standing on the edge of the space, contemplating whether they will be drawn into the centre, thus crossing a physical threshold, and mental one too (a choice with how to engage)

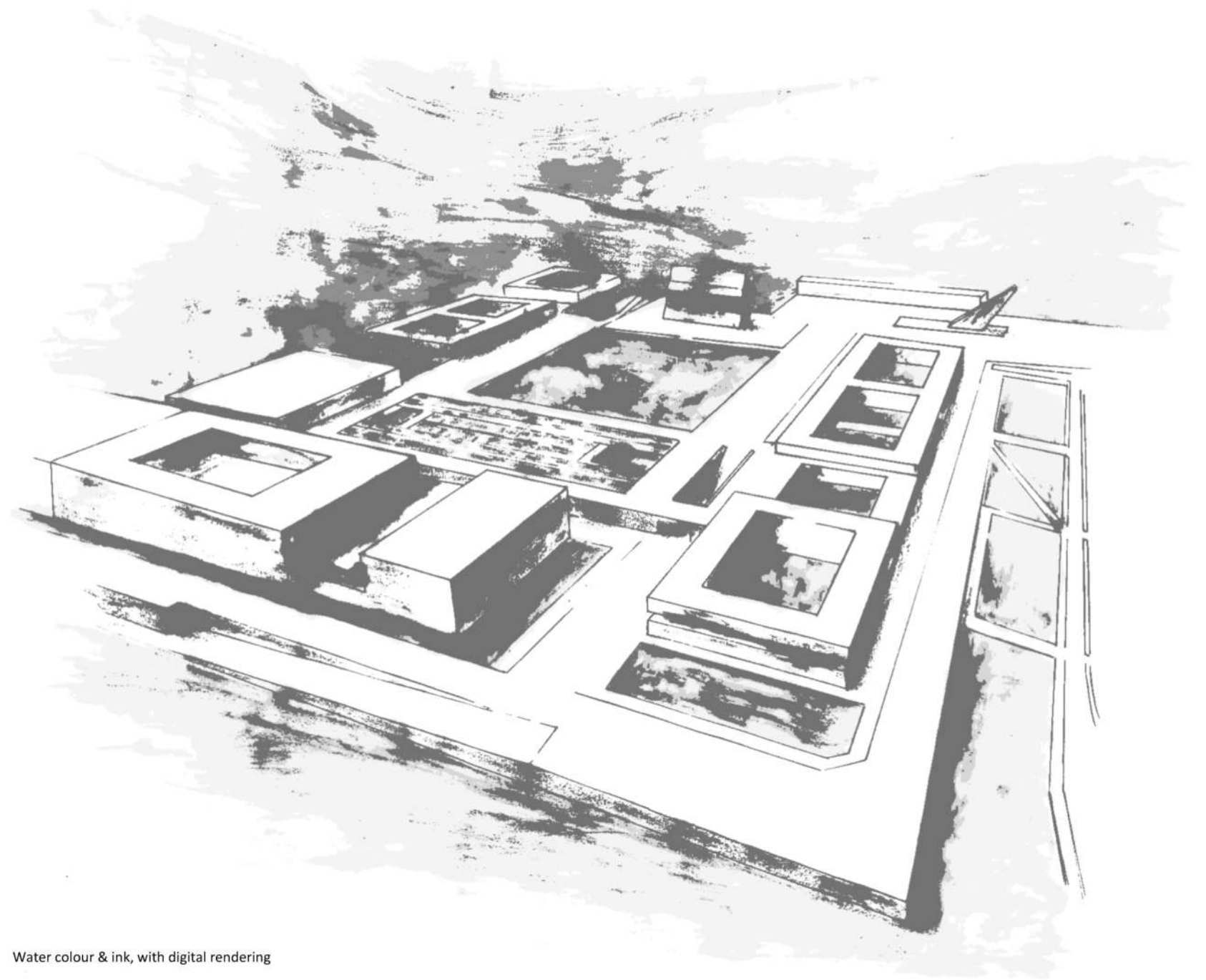
Experience	Artwork	Park	Shared	Promenading	Energy (exchange) Static
Environment	Gallery	City	Public	Posing	Void
Individual	Viewer	Citizen	Private	Contemplating	Threshold

Case Study US Airbase

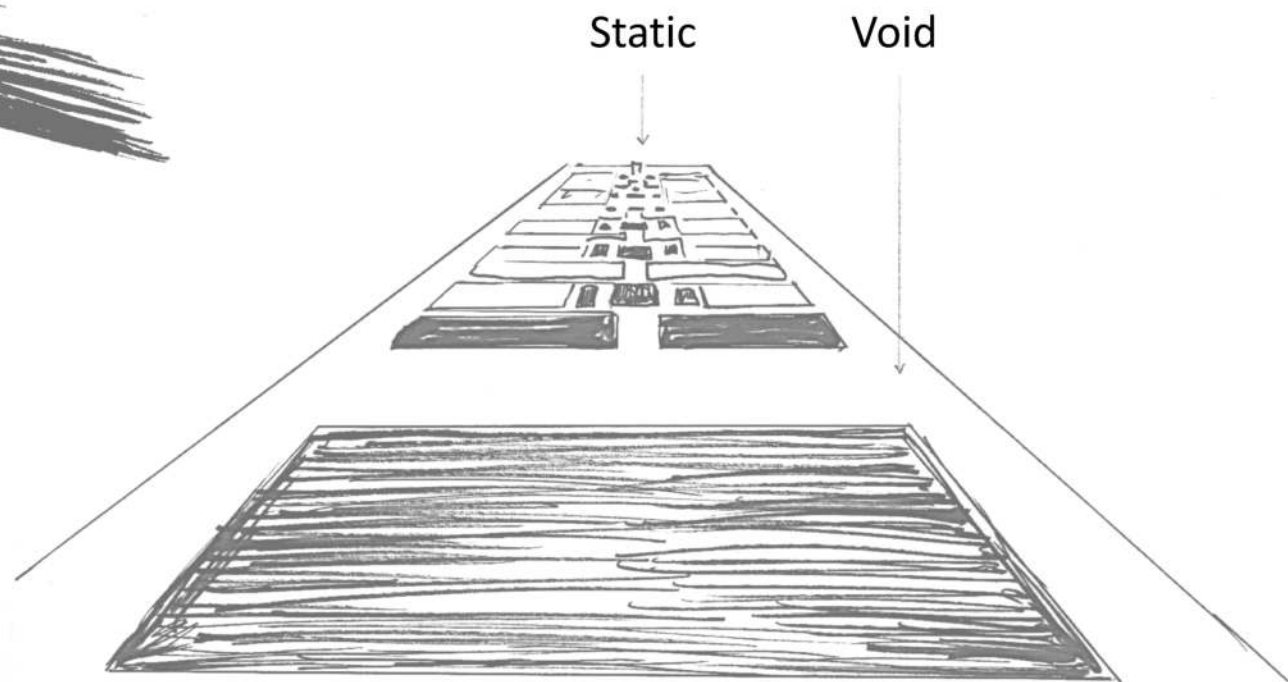
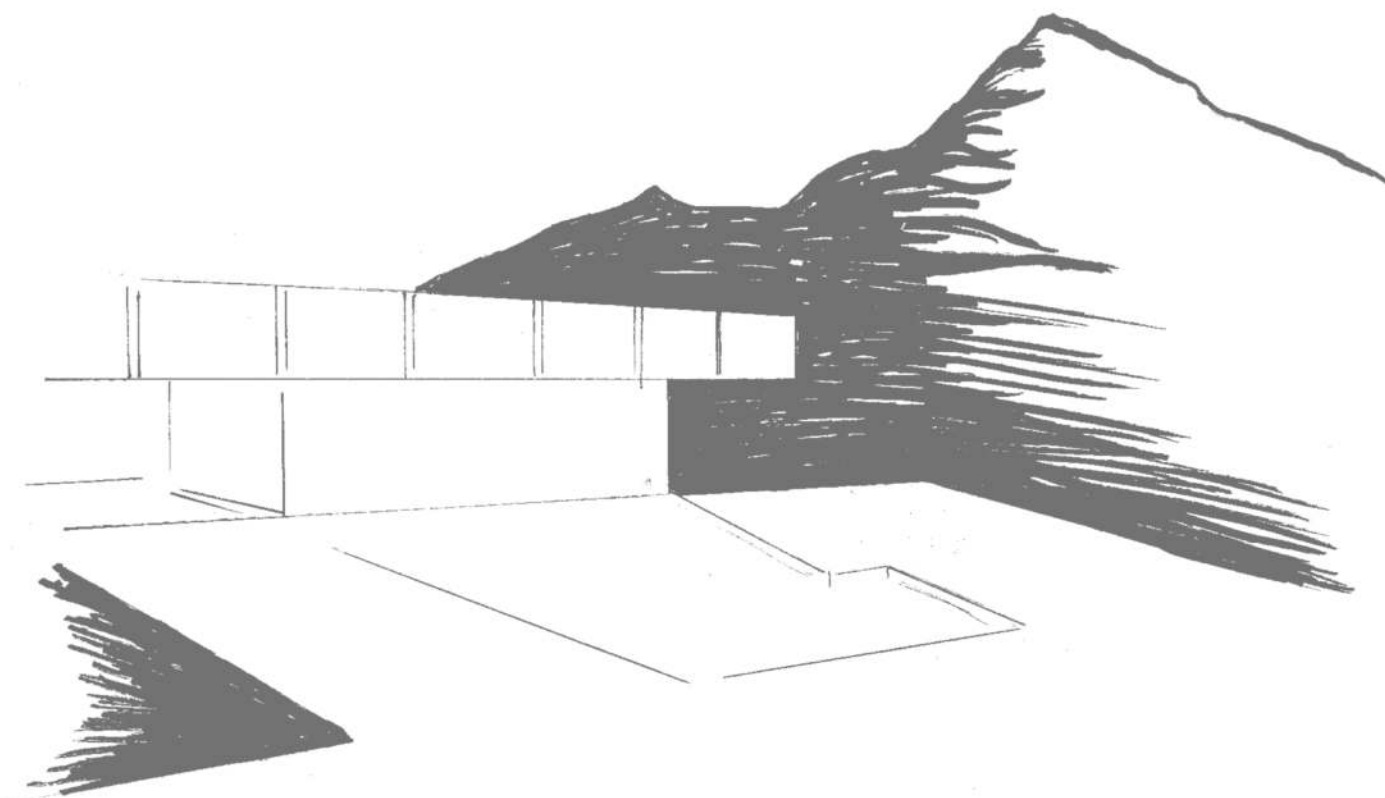
by Dan Kiley

Colorado Springs CO, 1968



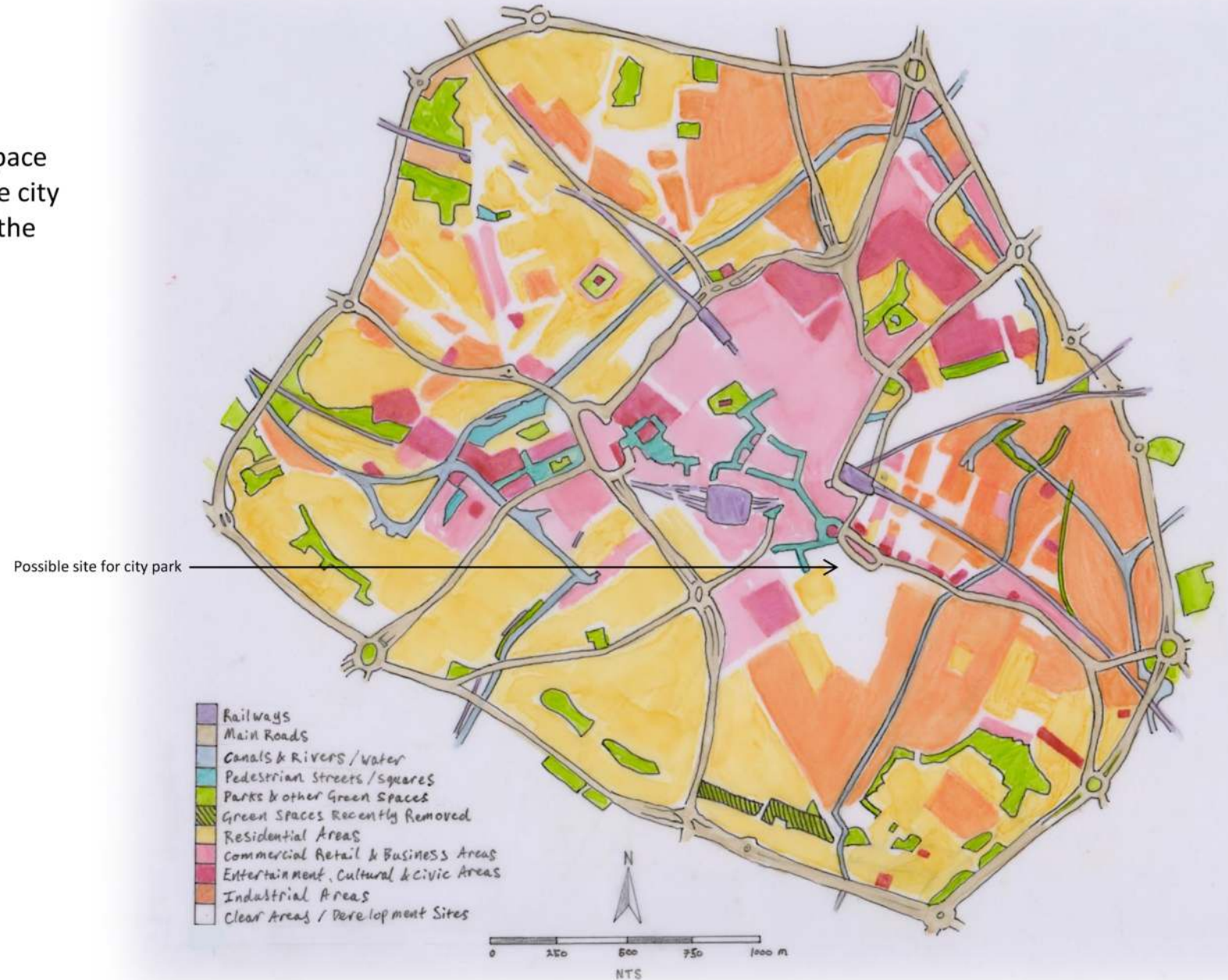


Water colour & ink, with digital rendering



CITY DIAGRAM

This analytical map highlights the lack of green space within the ring road. The Southeast portion of the city which extends out from the immediate centre is the most lacking.

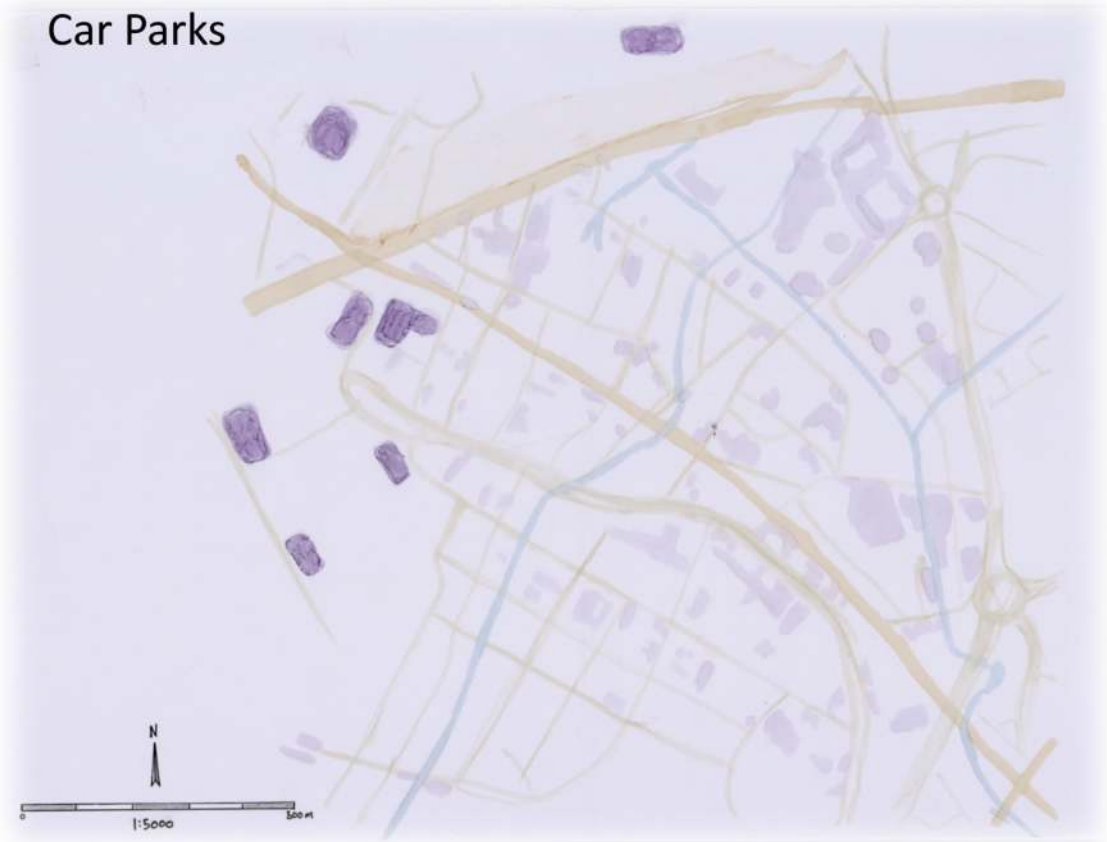


City Analysis

Flood Risk from Rivers & Reservoirs



Car Parks



Former Smithfield Market Site
now largely cleared for redevelopment



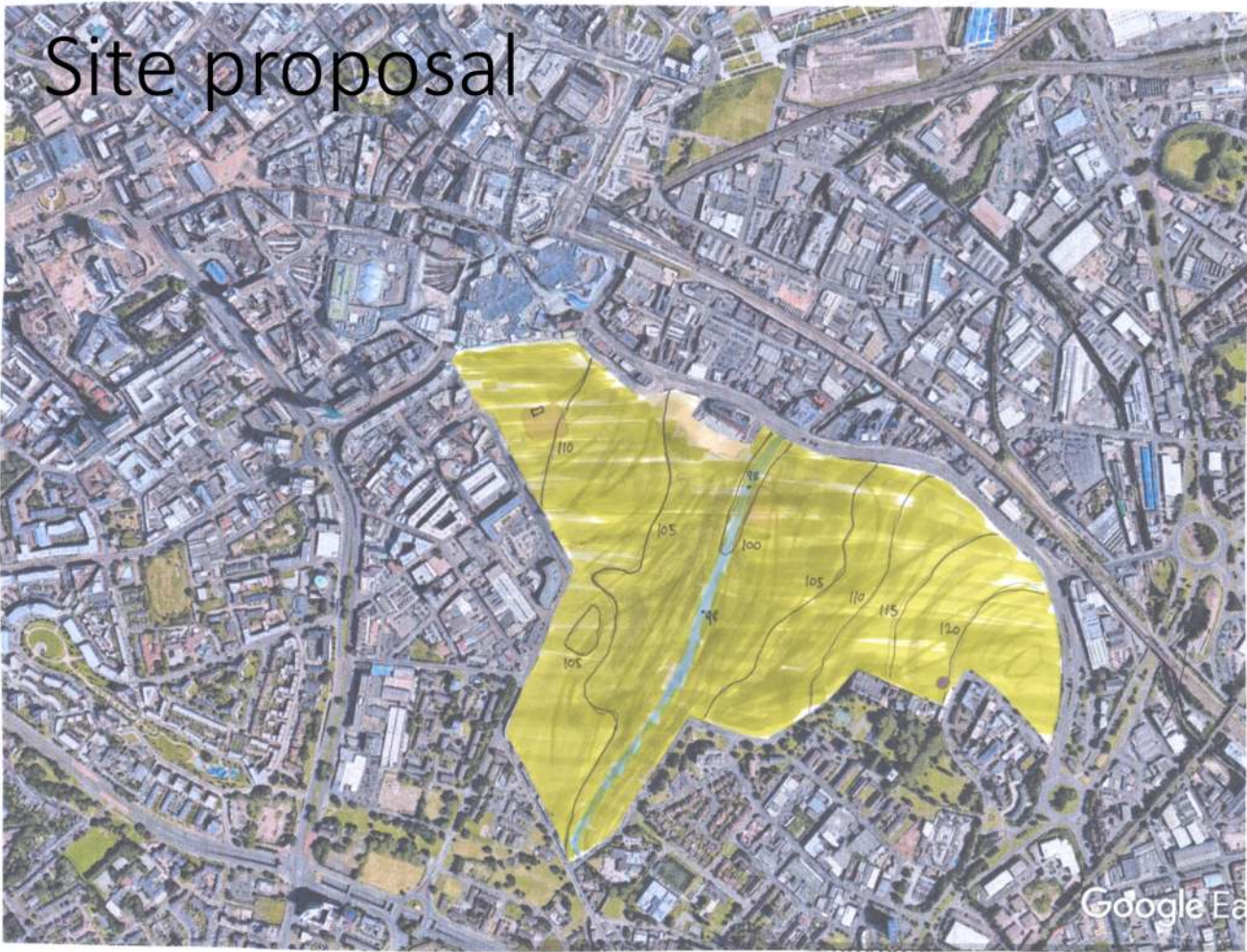
Advocating a City Park for Birmingham



Park should include a section of the river Rea
And water features – ponds and streams
A linear connection to Highgate Park, with views to the city
Make connections to HS2 arrival terminal
A feature to acknowledge the history of the market
Cultural buildings & attractions

Petition is approaching 11,000 signatures
Many councillors are backing the proposal

Site proposal



Map 1:10,000 Scale @A4

Proposal for Birmingham City Park

- 150 acres (.6 km²)
- 940m of River Rea made accessible

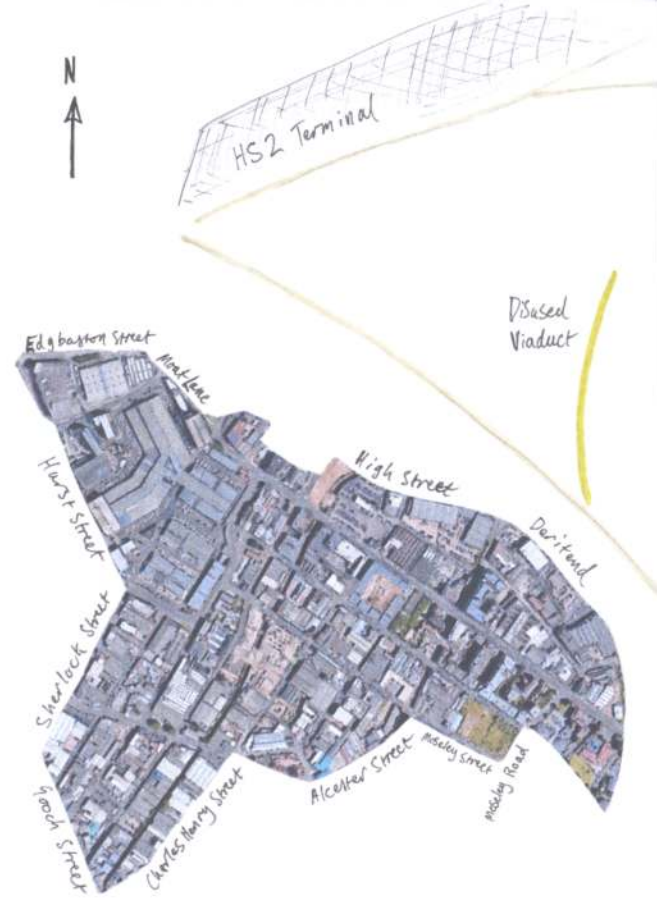
Population (2018) 1,141,400
BCC website 14/11/19

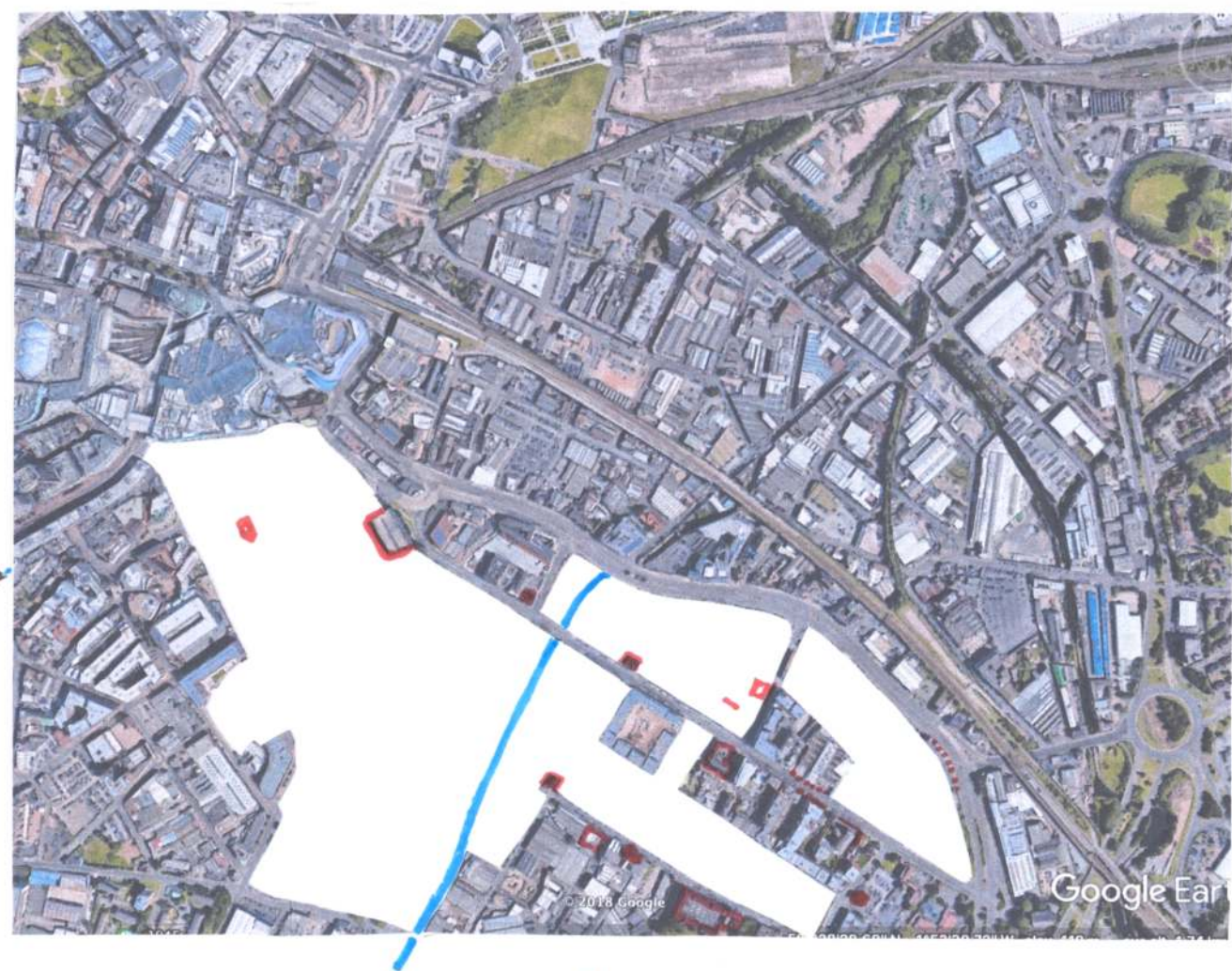
- View point to City Centre
1km distance to St Martin's Church

Central Park New York (Manhattan)

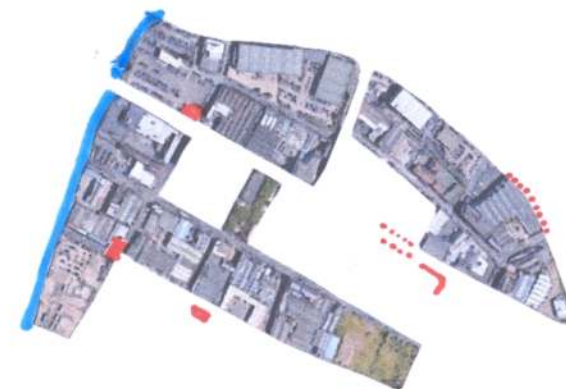
- 840 acres (3.4 km²)

Population (2018) 1,628,701 Wikipedia 14/11/19





- Listed building (local & Statutory)
- ... Facade to potentially retain







Draft Masterplan 1:1250 scale @A1





Pubs



The Old Crown, Digbeth

Lunar Society Research

Erasmus Darwin

- Physician
- Physiologist
- Natural philosopher
- Botanist 
- Slave trade Abolitionist 
- Advocate of women's education

Matthew Boulton

- Manufacturer
- Metals & minting
- Steam power

James Watt

- Inventor • Steam Engines
- Engineer
- Chemist

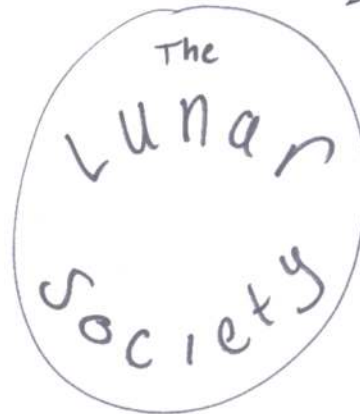
Sosiah Wedgwood

- Pottery • Abolitionist
- Grandfather to Charles Darwin




'Dining club'

pe

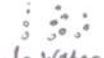


West Midlands
Enlightenment

Sohnathan Stokes

- physician • Botanist
- Digitalin from Foxgloves 

Joseph Priestley

- Natural philosopher 
- Chemist — 'Discovered oxygen'
- Separatist theologian
- French Revolution Sympathiser
- Riots 1791

Samuel Galton

- Gun manufacturer
- Family criticized for slave trade involvement
- Quaker • Colour experiments

Samuel Kier

- Chemist • Geologist
- Inventor • Industrialist

William Small

- Physician • Natural philosopher
- Mentor to Thomas Jefferson
- Buried in St Philips Cathedral

William Withering

- Chemist • physician
- Geologist • Digitalis research

Highgate Park history



Highgate

- The Site of the original Anglo-Saxon Settlement of Birmingham
- Birmingham Central Mosque nearby (Balsall Heath)
- & St Alban's Church
- Central & West Wards (Chadwood & Hall Green)
Life expectancy is lower than National average & Coronary heart disease is the main cause of early death in the area

Rowton House

Lord Rowton 1903

- Affordable lodgings for poor people
- Later a homeless hostel (Parque, 2010)

Highgate Park

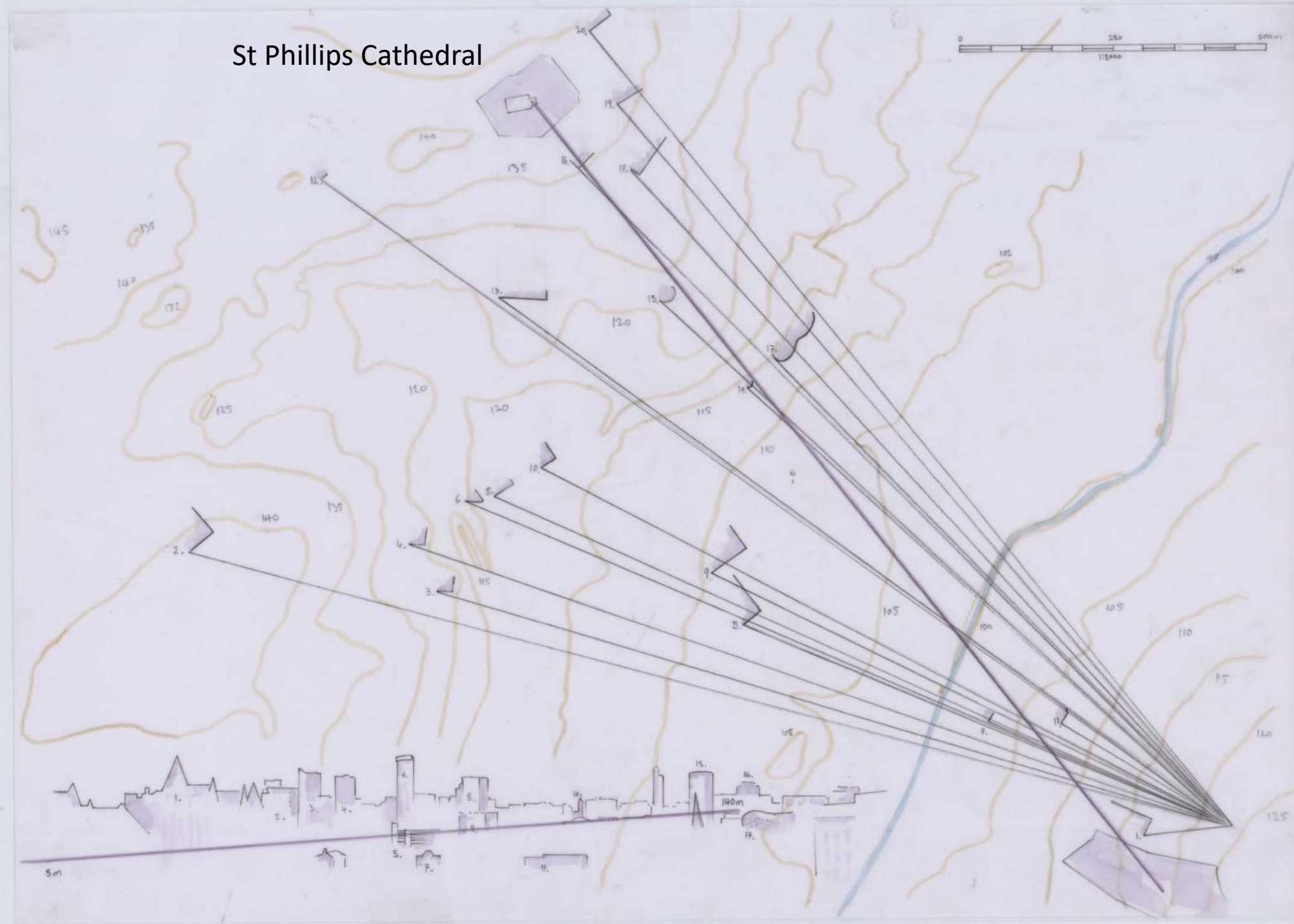
- Sheep & cattle fold for the Livestock market

- The first park created by the Town Council (1875) opposing industrial development proposed on the site
- Originally owned by Elizabeth Hollier who specified that the land be rented for grazing to clothe twelve poor people of Aston Parish
- History of philanthropy in the city
- 'Breathing Space' for 19th residents enclosed by buildings
- Somewhere to walk & exercise
- Situated on high ground & on a connecting line running through St Martin's Church, St Philip's Cathedral & The Scho House (Lunar Society)

St Phillips Cathedral

Study Diagram of City Skyline

1:5000 @A3



Viewpoint from
nr. Highgate Park

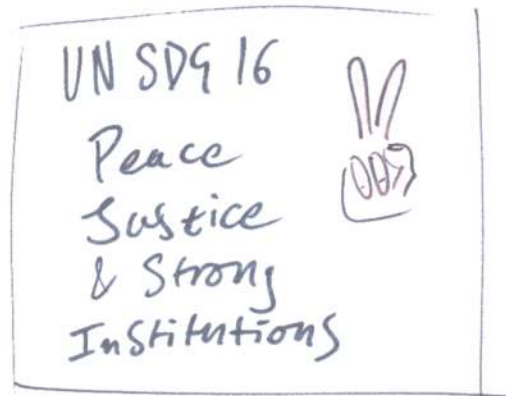


SDG16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development
provide access to justice for all & build effective, accountable
& inclusive institutions at all levels.



- Violence
- Abuse
- Exploitation
- Discrimination
- Corruption



- Safety
- Security
- Fairness
- Inclusion
- Transparency

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory & representative
decision-making at all levels



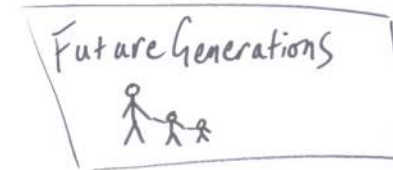
Smithsfield City Park petition

nearly 11,000 signatures
& 2/3 people questioned support city park idea

Future generations

Wellbeing of Future
Generations Act 2015
Welsh Government

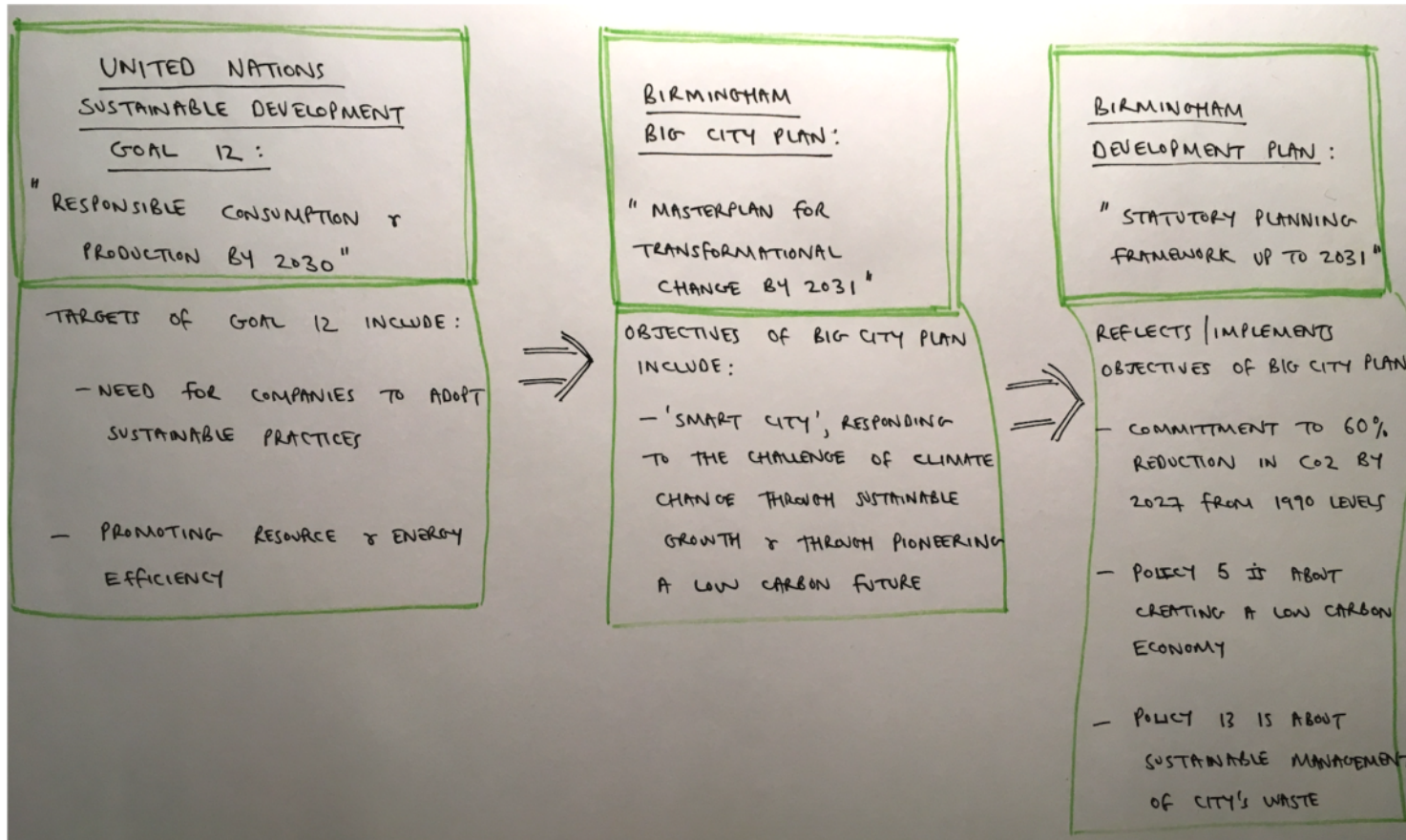
Oct 2019
UK Government Bill
Lord John Bird
(Big Issue Founder)



School Strike
Greta Thunberg
2018

Climate Action
Clean Air
car-free city 5 years time (9)

SDG 12



Interpreting SDG16 for the brief

- Peace – “Contemplating”: Creating a space and refuge...
- Justice – “Promenading”: Making progress on social issues...
- Strong Institutions – “Posing”: Taking a stance, representing people...

City Park Concept – Photo Collage



Before...

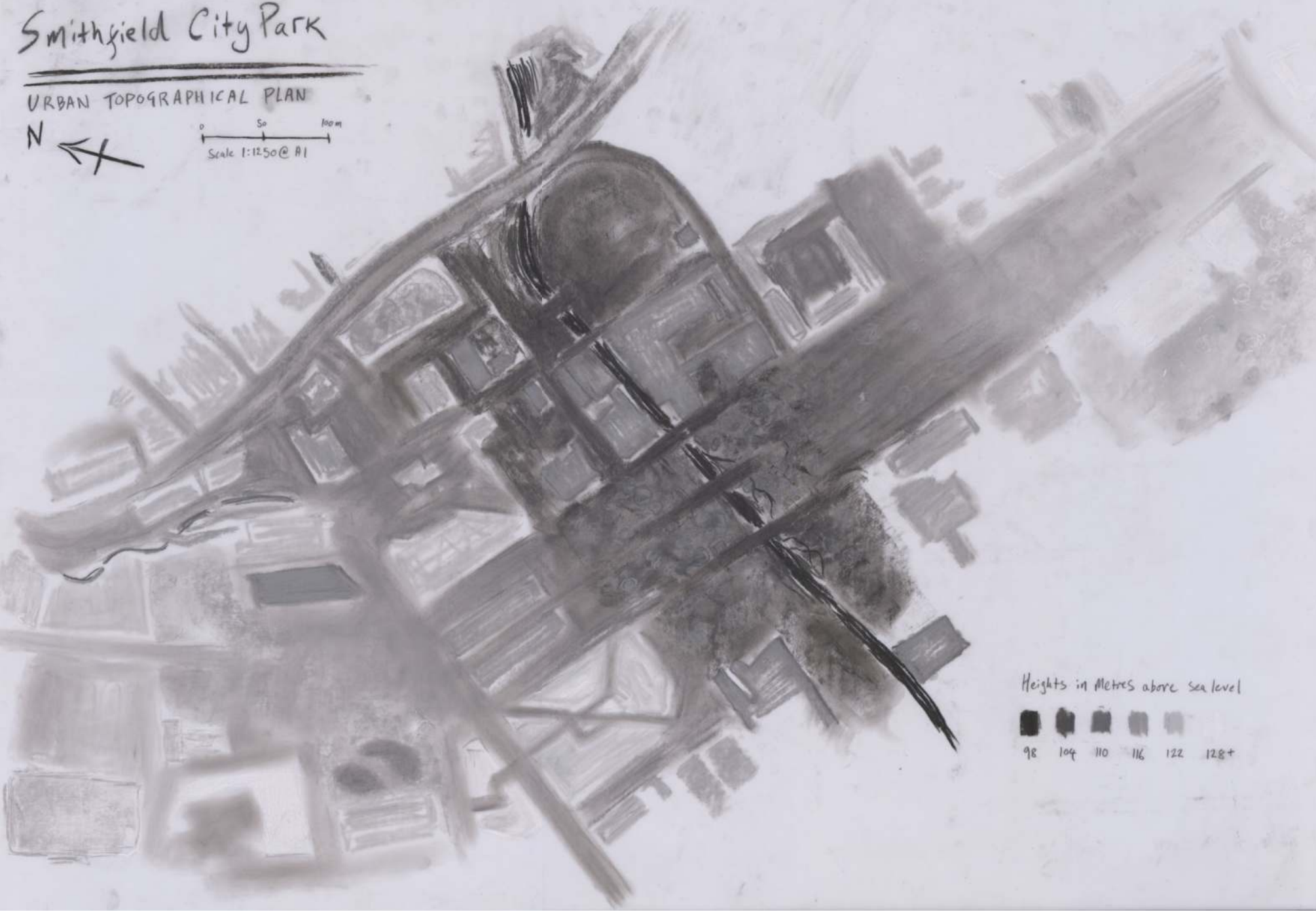
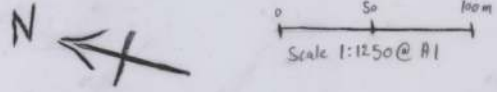
City Park Concept – Photo Collage



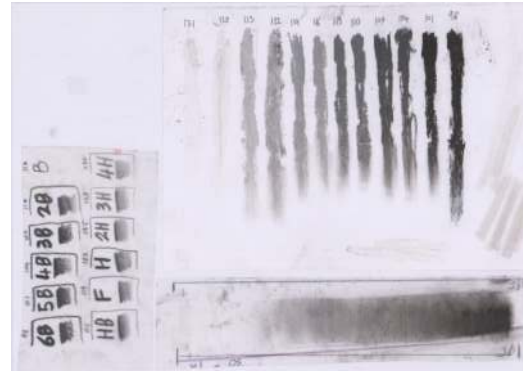
After!

Smithfield City Park

URBAN TOPOGRAPHICAL PLAN



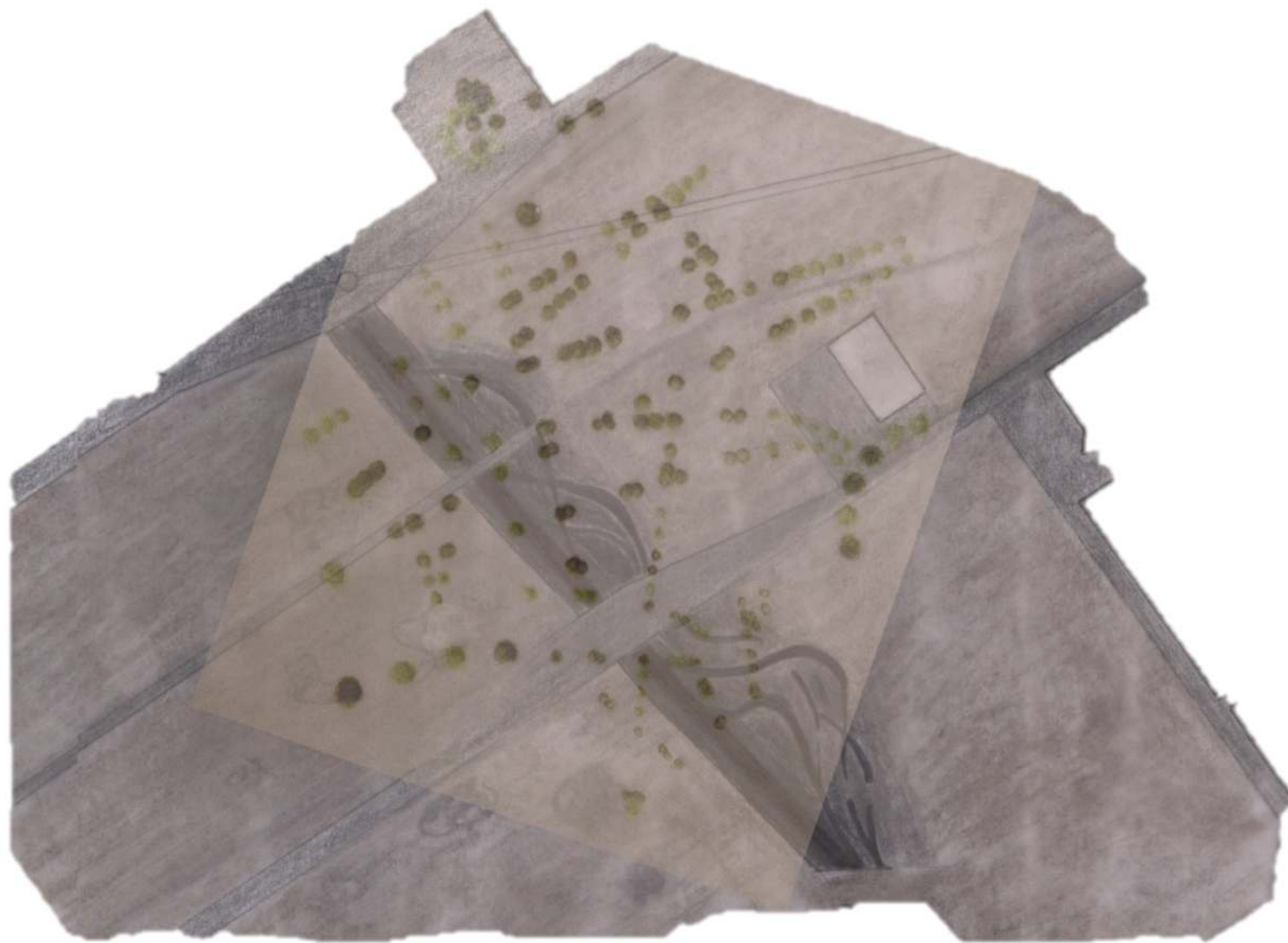
Heights in Metres above sea level

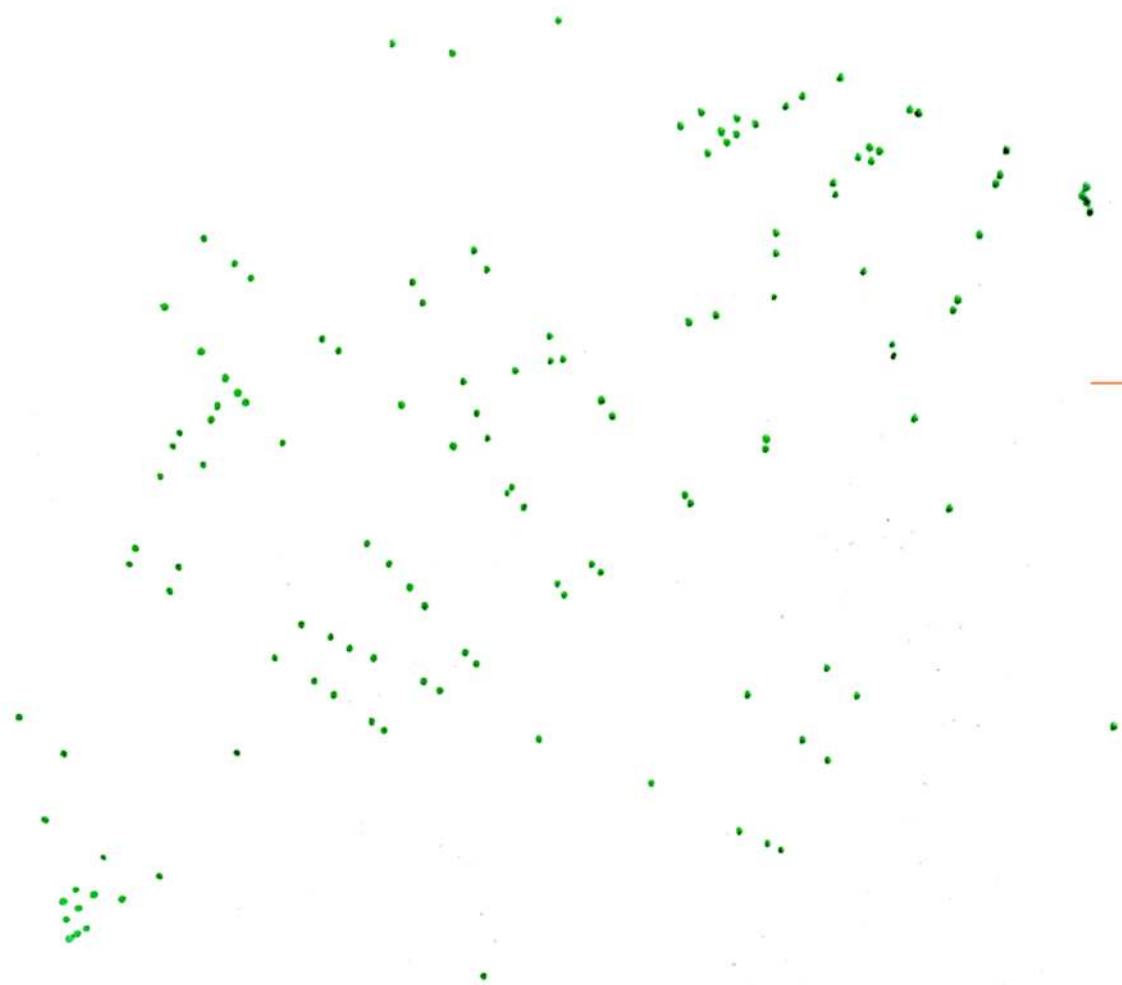


2nd Draft
Masterplan
1:1250 @A1



Overlaying planting plan for parkland trees derived from Rothko painting





This is a scale model I made using mount board and card. The location is the river crossing point in the centre of the park, at 1:1250.

It is an experiment for a tree planting plan using the layout derived from the Rothko painting.

I depicted trees as 2D shapes and kept them all to the same orientation so that the planting points and axes still remain visible.

However, the irregularity of the trees (and shadows, etc) means that the naturalistic effect becomes immediately prevalent.

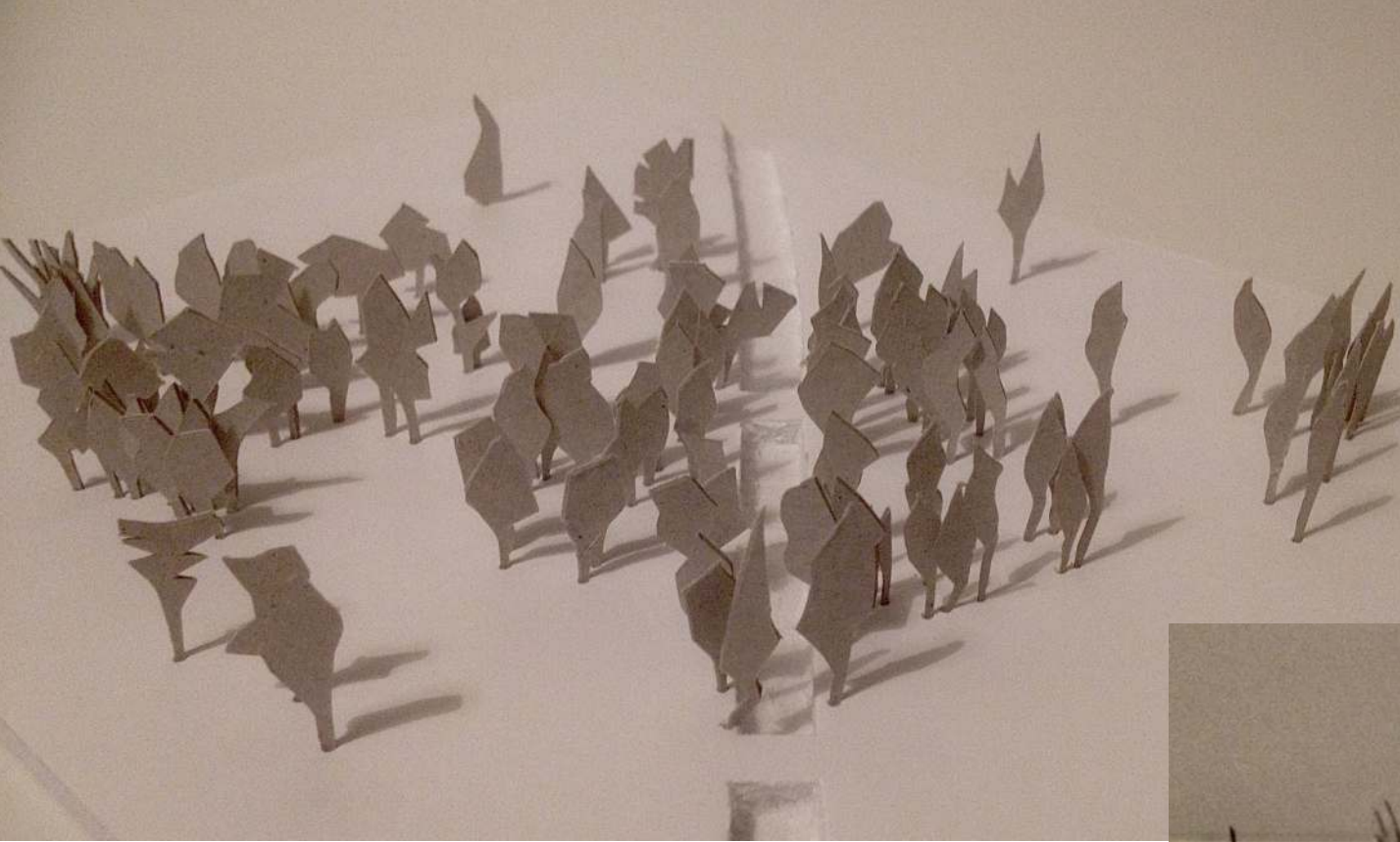
I think this would be the overall character of such a planting layout, and much more so with full, 3D canopies.

It also became apparent on doing this experiment that one tends to consider the trees as small clusters, grouping them together more by proximity than by any sense of belonging to a 'row'.

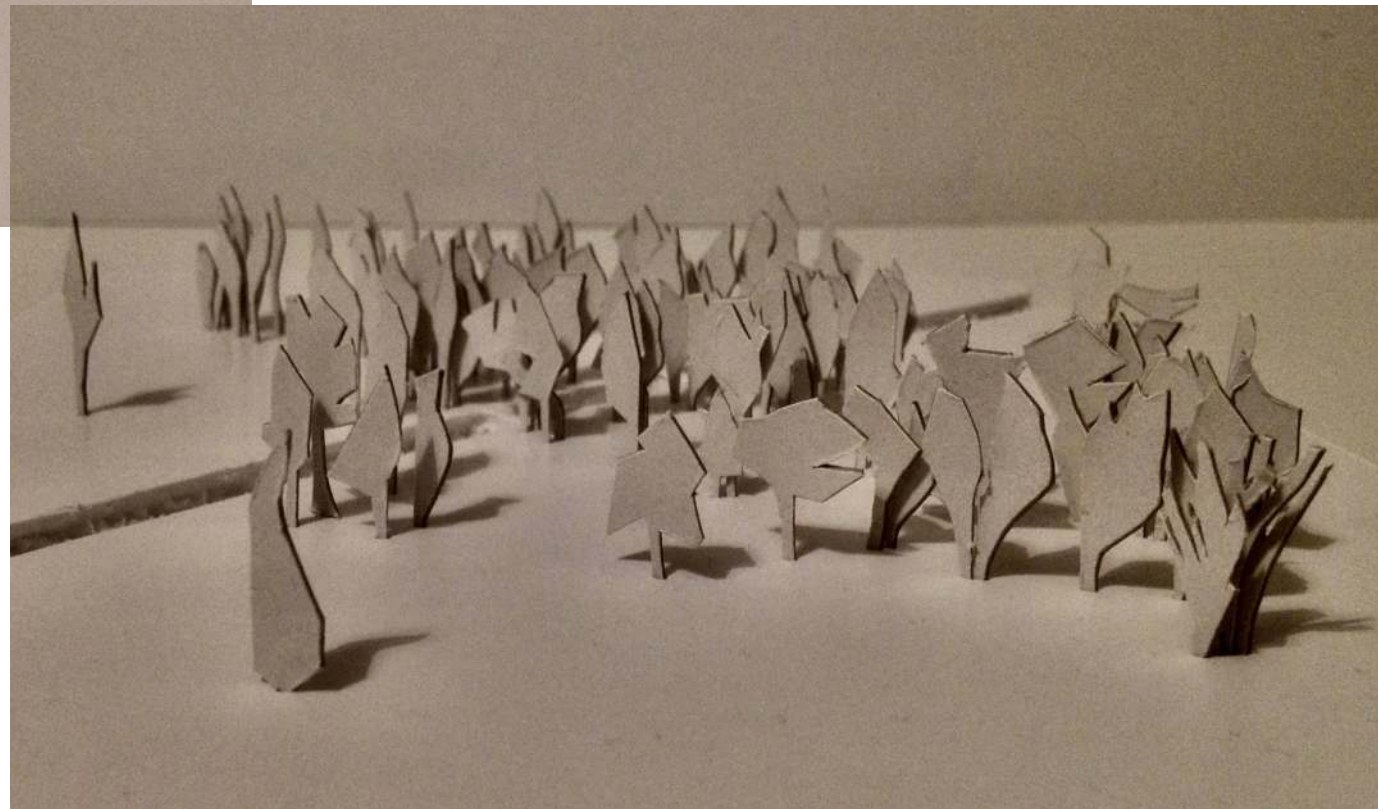
It would be possible to either emphasize or avoid this, to a lesser or greater extent, by grouping species depending on how much one wanted to honour the origins of the plan.

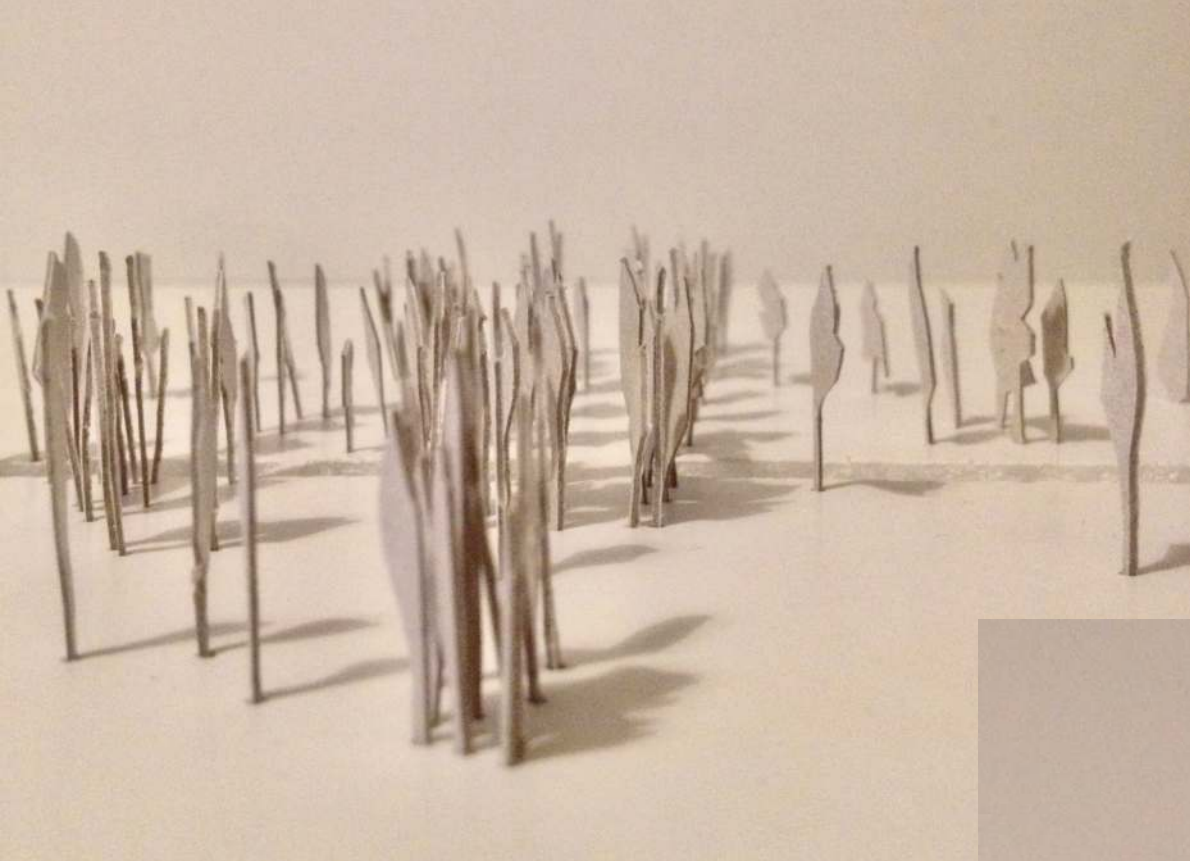
Scale is also a significant factor, as the further the trees are from each other, the clearer the lines and axes will be.





In these images, when viewed at this orientation and elevated, the geometric layout is not at all obvious and instead the planting appears completely naturalistic.

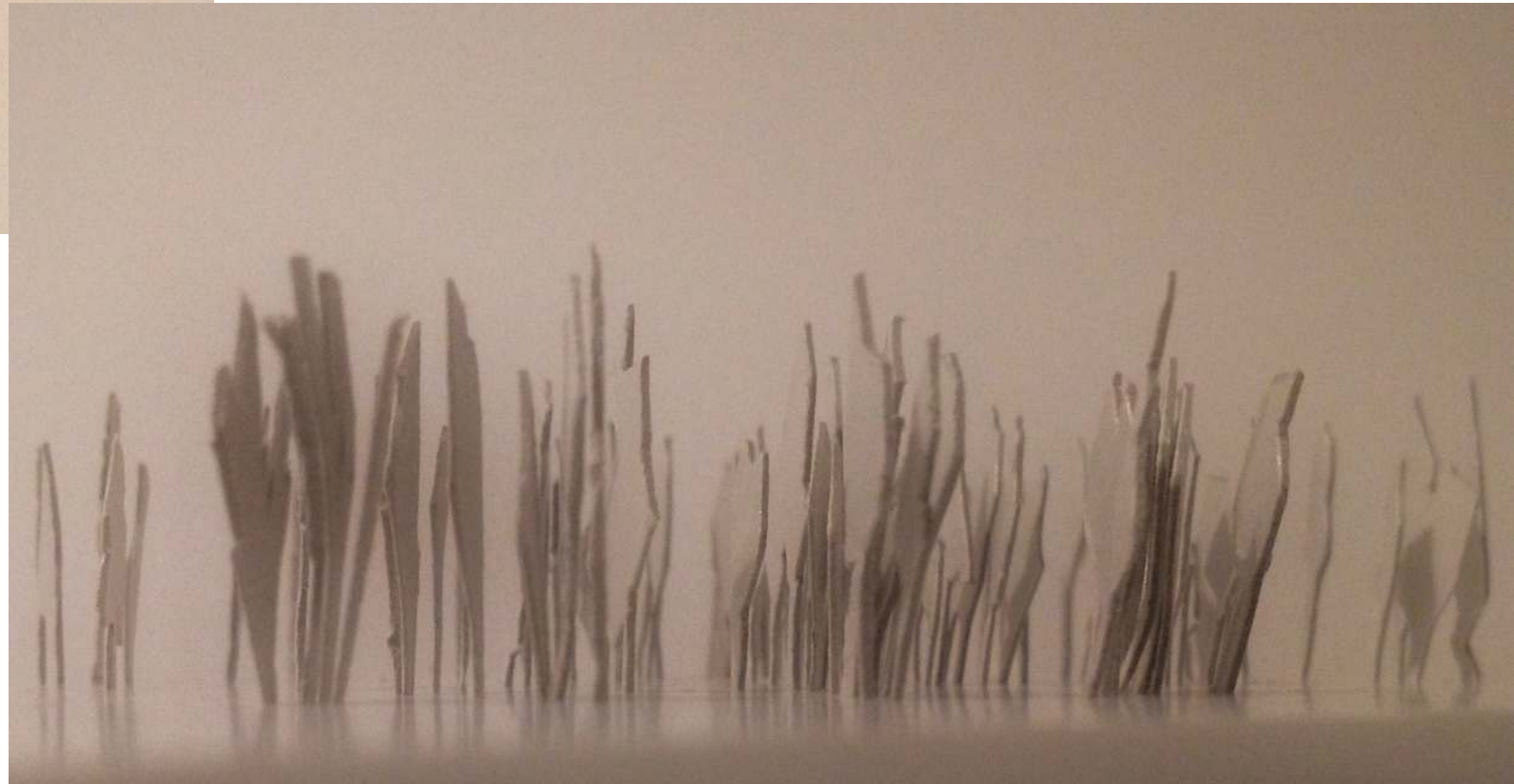




Closer to 'ground level', as would be experienced when walking through the woodland, one main axis through the trees and across bridge over the river is clear. Several other routes running on a similar orientation are also visible (such as over the narrower bridge). I overlaid the planting plan onto the site in order that the bridges were clear of trees, and also the river.

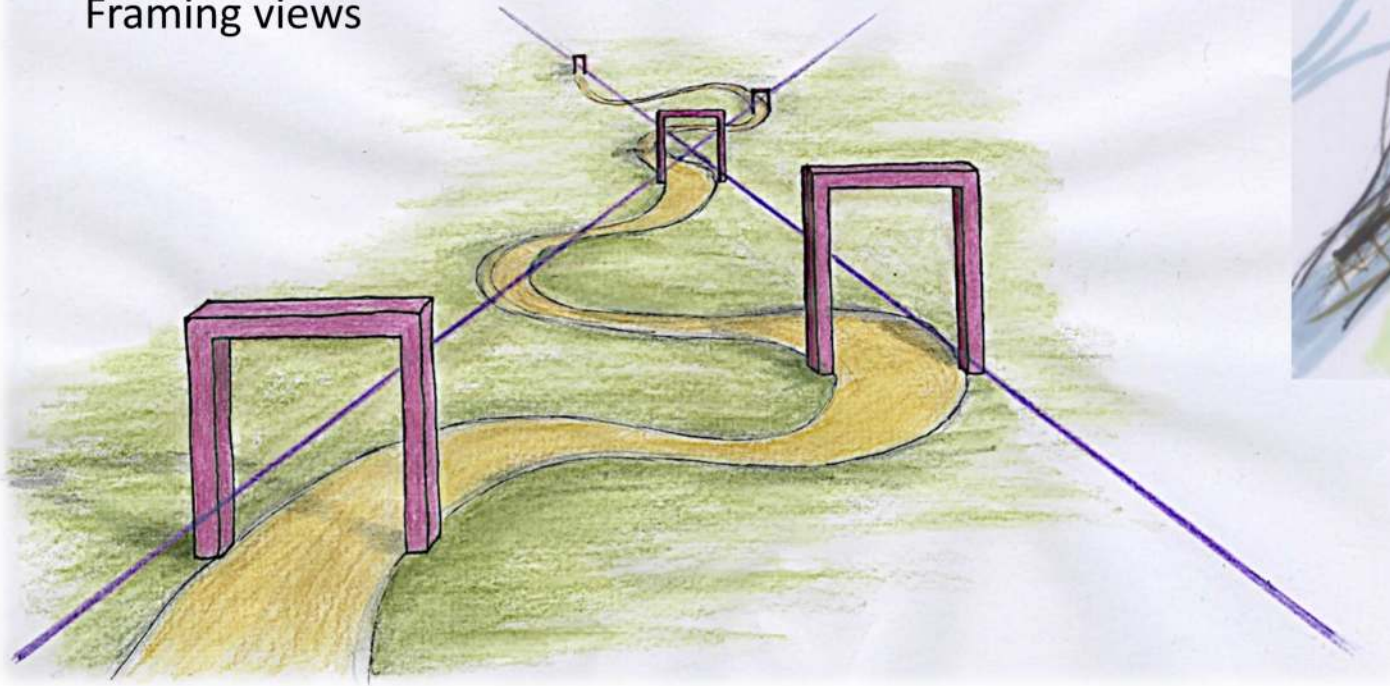
This principle would work when the tree canopies close together over the years, creating tunnel effects.

So there is a pleasing balance of permeability and obscuring in this design; routes through would be legible but one would also feel sheltered.

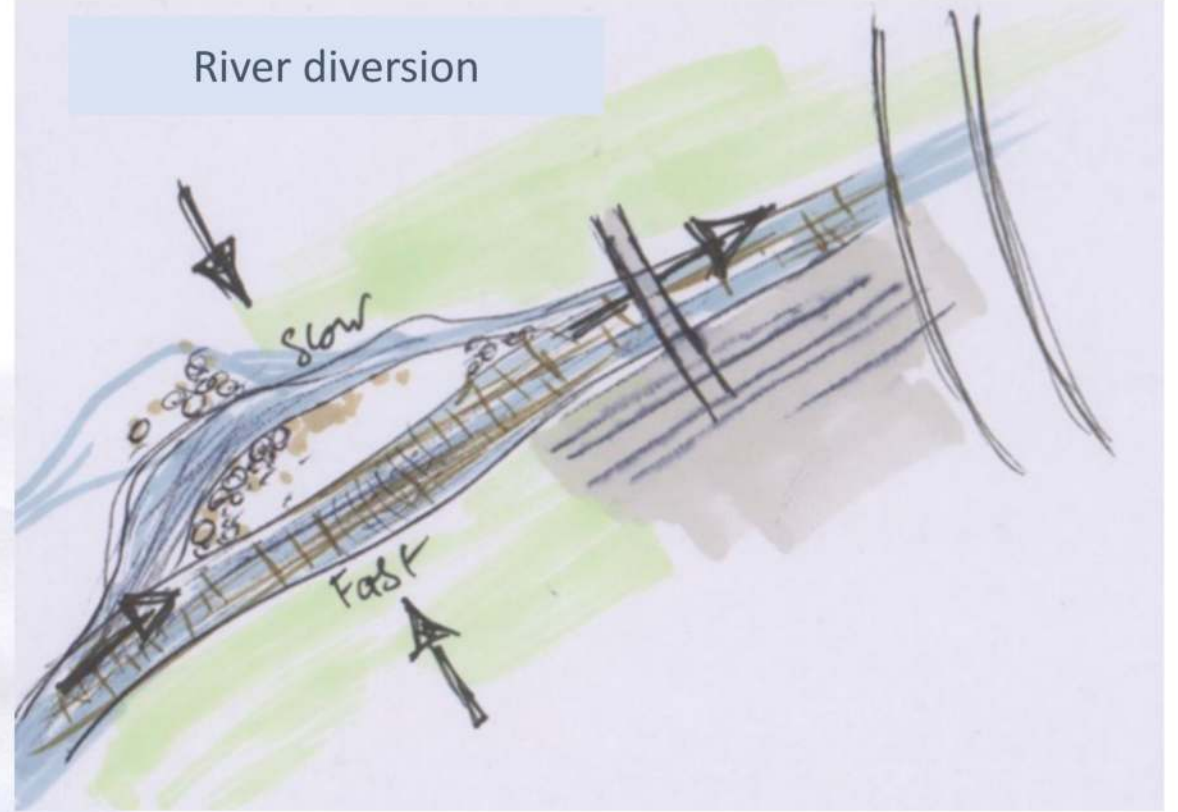


Design Ideas

Framing views



River diversion







BIRMINGHAM SMITHFIELD CITY PARK
MASTERPLAN 1:1250 SCALE @A1





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