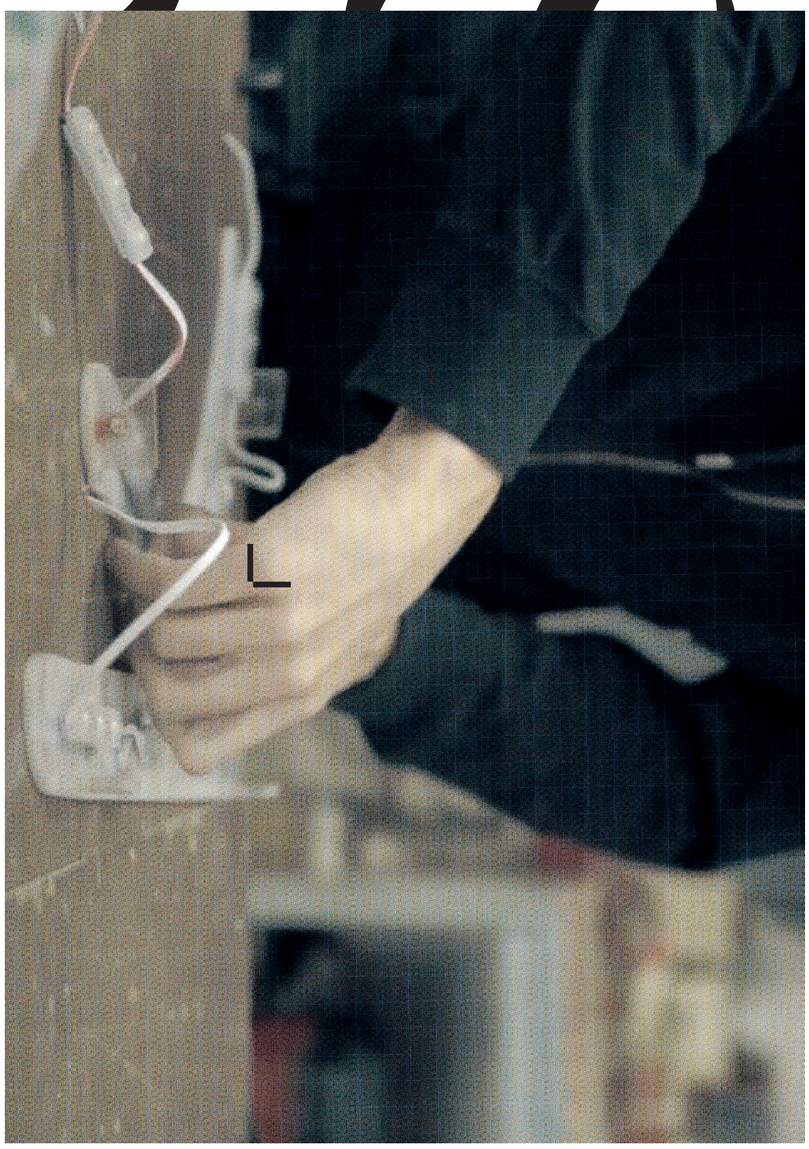
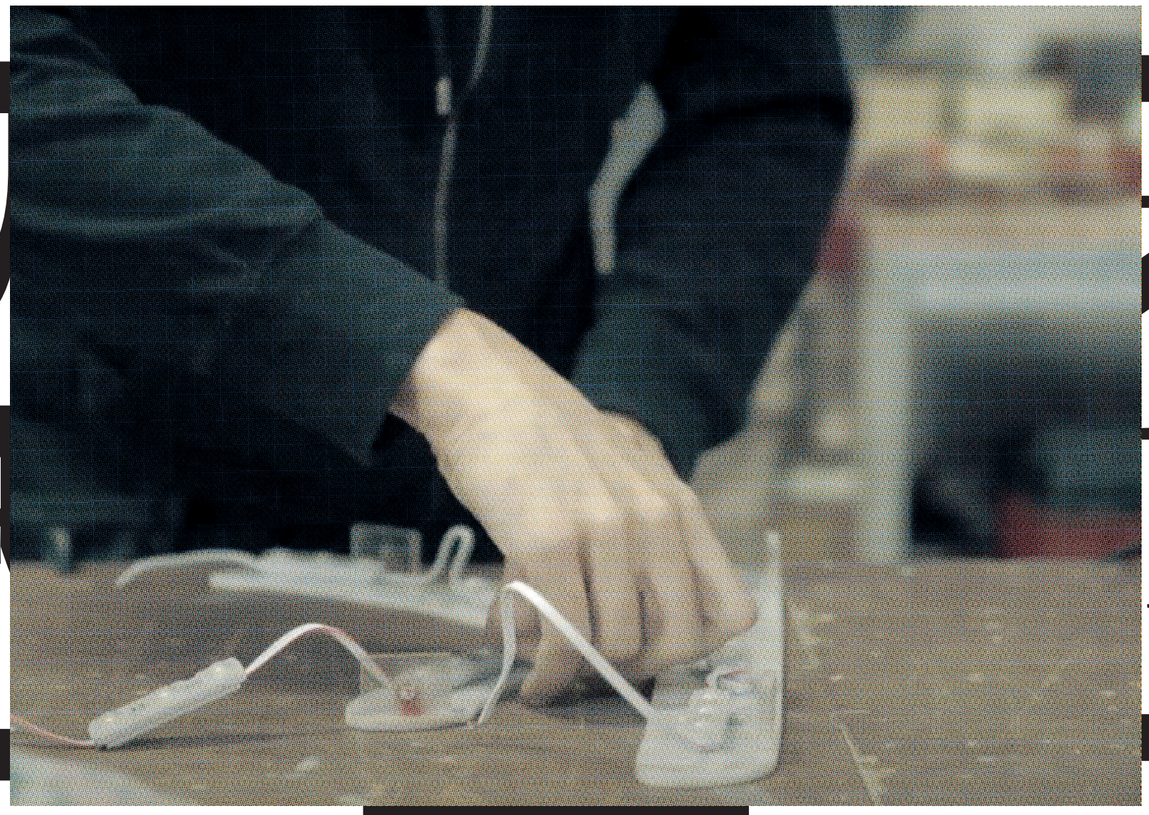
MAKING THE IN BRUSSELS ATLAS





IN THE MAKING

BRUSSELS ATLAS

EXCERPT

PREFACE

The relation between the production of goods and the city has radically changed over the last century, leading to a strong disconnection that exiled manufacturing activities to marginal places, out of sight. In recent years, such confinement and its negative consequences – congestion, energy waste, pollution, employment unbalance – has gained attention worldwide. Critical discussions and a reconceptualisation of manufacturing processes in the urban realm are emerging from this awareness. Acknowledging the many socio-economical, spatial, environmental problems that such divorce brought to our cities was crucial and it is thanks to the growing ecological sensitivity, circular economy claims, and the fashion for crafts that manufacturing issues are discussed at different (political) levels. Todayís momentum is visible in policies, plans, visions, funding schemes, and citizen movements, with a renewed aim of bringing back industry close to our daily lives. Various cities and regions start to recognise the links between manufacturing and other parts of their economies, the vast range of benefits it brings in terms of diversity of jobs, the technical capacity to solve a wide range of urban problems, including the support of a vibrant and diverse urban life.

However, the research on how contemporary manufacturers work, on their historical heritage and evolution, on the relation between different forms of production, on their role in cities is far from being complete. In many cases, the necessary support and resources for existing manufacturers are still scarce, while businesses often struggle to find the necessary space in urbanised areas to develop into long-term activities. Furthermore, many local and regional level governments push manufacturing out of cities because the tax base and public image of housing and offices are generally far more attractive.

In European cities there is a clear difficulty in securing productive spaces from being demolished and reconverted into housing. Large, dirty and noisy manufacturers – as, for example, the ones belonging to the construction sector, demolition, and recycling – are replaced by preferred fab-labs, craftsmen, bike repair. That is leading to the diffuse challenge of keeping or reintroducing many necessary activities. Moreover, recent trends in architectural hybrid building typologies that combine makers (most of the time in plinths) with housing or office spaces (most of the time on the upper

floors) are often of limited benefit to manufacturers due to building regulations and conflicts with other users.

In that respect, Brussels proves to be an interesting case study. It was once one of the leading industrial centres in Europe, including numerous car factories, metal workers, cloth and clothing factories, breweries, food processing, and producers of almost every ingredient required to build a house. In the 1960s, some 60% of the population were connected to some kind of manufacturing work – which has now fallen dramatically. However, the city is still dotted with remnants of a manufacturing past – industrie manufacturiere (FR), stedelijk maakindustrie (NL). The many former workshops and warehouses witness how manufacturing was once deeply integrated into the urban life and co-existed within the same neighbourhood, on the same site, and even within the same building. But those are not solely remnants of the past: many manufacturing activities are still present and rooted in a century-old tradition of living and working in the city, showing that they still have their place in Brussels.

MANU FACTUM, MANU FACĔRE

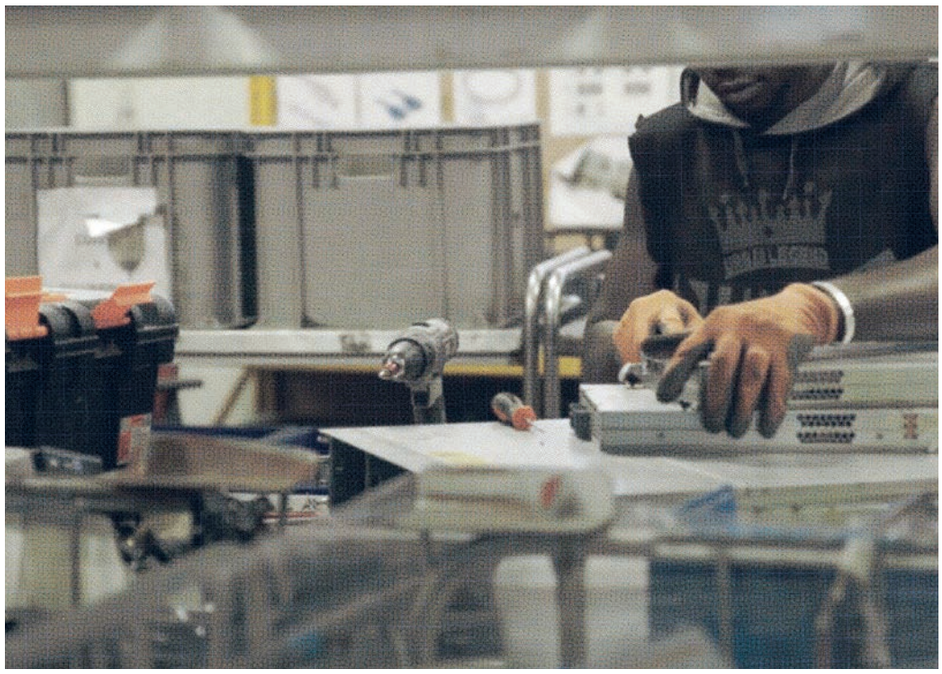
Even though the meaning of manufacture, manufacturing – also the Italian *manifattura* or the French *manufacture* – is today primarily associated with making (something) on a large scale using machinery and to industrial branches, rather than denoting something made by hand, today's understanding of the term seems different. The contemporary debate on makers and making questions the standard definition, opening to a variety of nuances. The recent emphasis on upcycling, craftsmanship and short loop production leads to a different interpretation of manufacture, especially in the urban realm. The industry is no longer seen as the sole mass standardised

creation of goods but it is progressively including a growing number of activities that incorporate hand making, repairing, the small scale and local production. As a consequence, the list of NACE codes – the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community – on which policymakers, funding schemes, planning tools have been long based upon seems to not reflect completely the changing reality of many cities, including Brussels. Besides devoting space to logistics, services, commerce, and recycling, companies often integrate hi-tech machinery and artisans, blurring the boundaries between classic types of making and calling for a more fine-grain understanding of contemporary urban manufacturing.

We should ask ourselves to which extent the urban production is leading to a new paradigm, shifting back to the Latin manu factum (‘made by hand’) and manu facĕre (‘make by yourself’), that is to say reconsidering the human-centered physical act of creating.

DIRTY AND UGLY

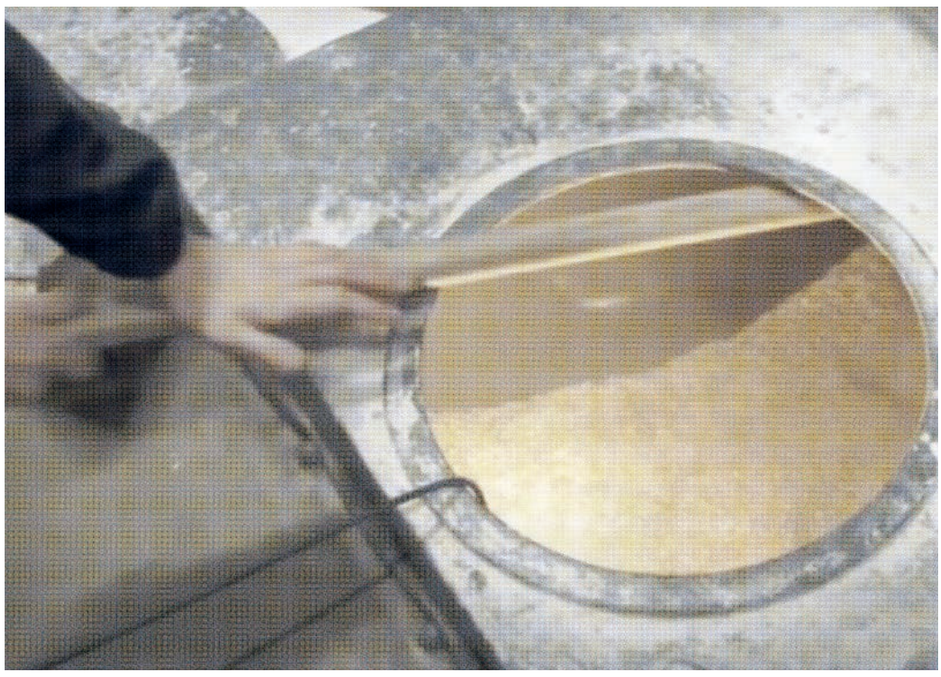
Manufacture can evoke the poetic and artistic act of making by hand, immediately leading to the very glossy images of handsome bakers, fascinating wine farmers, hipster bike repairers who populate much everyday advertising. However, that probably only represents the tip of a very different iceberg. Manufacturing means also noise, smell, dust, dirt, pollution, unfriendly contexts, and ugly material, but our (urban) societies seem to have a hard time accepting that. To reintroduce productive activities in our cities, cleansed stories about idealised industrial processes have been globally circulating to sensitise voters and make manufacturing more friendly and acceptable. However, we can still observe clashes between inhabitants and unwanted productive activities, highlighting the fact that many companies seem not to be socially accepted.



In Brussels, that is the case of the construction and demolition sector, car repair, metal recycling companies: they are fundamental for the urban ecosystem and need to be embedded in the city fabric but suffer from housing pressure and gentrification process. As a consequence, new residents in old mixed use neighbourhoods tend to oppose the presence of ‘disturbing’ next-door activities while new mix-use developments prefer to accommodate easily acceptable businesses such as fab-labs, small scale breweries, and other low impact maker spaces. Non-fashionable companies (many critical for the city such as food manufacturers) are either forced to leave, not welcome, or not included in the political debate.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

For manufacturing to be back in the urban agenda, be integrated, appreciated by the public, and stay relevant, it needs to be given a stronger place in the twenty-first-century urban economy. However, the debate on how to proceed and what is to be prioritised has been poorly developed. Although the discussion on the foundational economy leads to important conclusions concerning global trends and sustainable development, much remains to be understood of the complexity of local contexts and the delicate equilibrium of related economies of place. In Brussels, as in other European cities, some of the most threatened by urban development processes and the least represented are the small locally anchored businesses, suppliers, and workshops that are strongly embedded in the city. For such businesses not only proximity is key but they are also anchored in the mixed urban morphology and the human activities in the area (Vandyck, 2020). For those activities, the future is uncertain.



Even if manufacturing heritage and contemporary workplaces demonstrate how manufacturing can

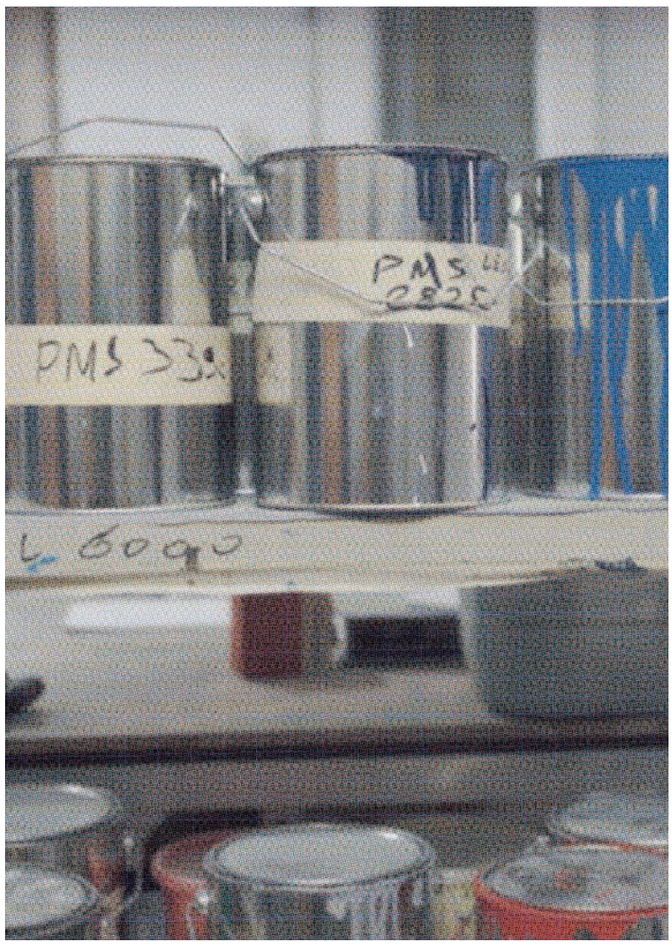
still be organised within a dense urban fabric, further research is needed to understand their degree of adaptability. Such activities unfold a certain long-term inertia and strong resilience against external pressures and sudden economica, social, spatial changes. Studying todayís constellations of manufacturing, morphological criteria, internal functioning, and flows can unfold their relative importance over time, leading to a long-term investment and protection. To imagine the future of urban productive activities we need to adopt an ecosystemic approach, looking at the relatedness and the layered relationship between uses and space, despite the complexity of such research. That can provide a range of spatial, social, and technical possibilities that can lead to powerful scenarios, refined solutions, and novel forms of hybrid developments.

Jan Zaman

PHAZE III

On Frank Zappaís Civilization Phaze IIIí album someone says Well, . get through Phaze I & II firstí, before an interesting and complex opera starts. I have the feeling that, by making the argument that A Good City Has Everythingí, including industry, we finally got to Phaze III. In the wider Brussels region we got here by providing new and exciting examples and architectural models, by organizing debates, walks and comparative studies. The research Cities of Making and its comparative study made a big contribution to policies and projects to get us this far.

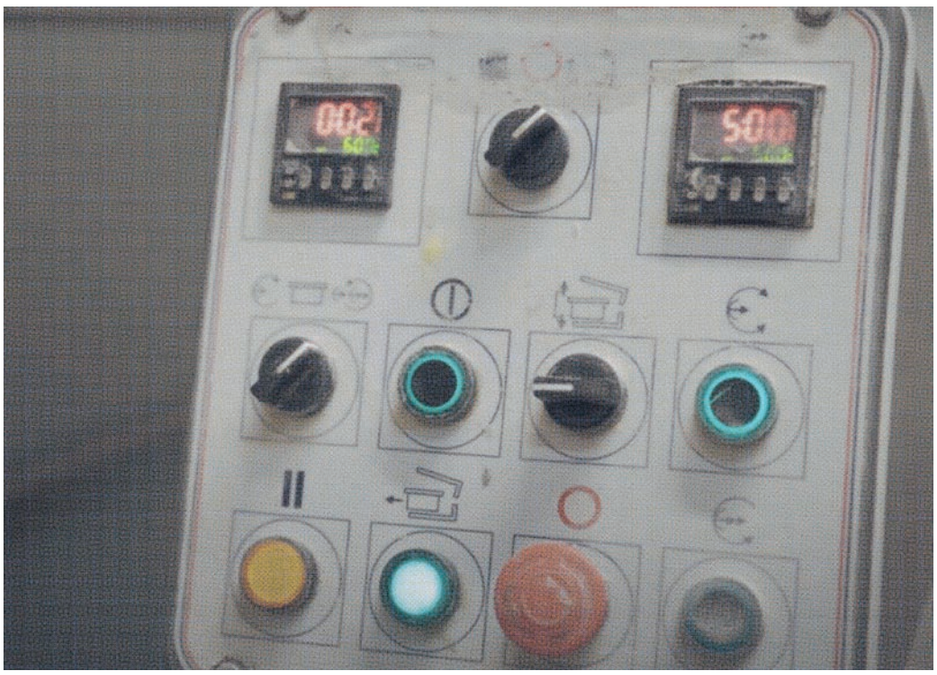
Against the common belief from the early 2000ís that all manufacturing industries would eventually move out to low wage countries, urbanists, economists, activists and (some) politicians in Brussels and across Europe started to point out the importance of keeping productive economic activities in the city. In Brussels, this debate started around 2012 with the invention of ZEMU (Zone díEntreprises en Milieu Urbain) and the RE:WORK workshop organized by ULB and VUB (EHB). In many European cities, the debate was pushed forward by the need to provide space for additional housing. From a real estate perspective, lots of money can be made by transforming inner city industrial zones into housing development opportunities. The Brusselsí PRAS Demographique



(Plan Régional díAffectation du Sol – Regional Land Use Plan), looked at these zones to deal with the rising demand for housing in the region. Unlike London, where the process of pushing out economic activities still continues on a unprecedented scale – well described in Rowan Mooreís article ‘The city that ate itself’ (for The Observer) – Brussels decided to go for a compromise by allowing housing in these industrial zones, with some basic requirements to provide a significant part of floor space for economic activities. In theory, economic activities were saved, and housing opportunities were created in a joint urban densification effort. As the planning prescription change also induced a shift in environmental regulations, the businesses present in these ZEMU found themselves confronted with the rules for ‘Mixed Use Zone’. Many companies moved out of these ZEMU either because their sites were sold to a developer or they had no long term future in the area due to the change in environmental regulations.

Nevertheless the ZEMU only marked the start of raising political awareness and the social construction of a long lost narrative that a real metropolis has to include all social and economic activities that are part of urban life. So, the metropolis also has to give room to the rough and dirty side of industrial production and wholesale. The effort of universities (VUB, ULB, London Metropolitan University), activists (BRAL, AWB and IEB) and some economic actors (BECI, VOKA, Citydev) resulted in politicians embracing the importance of productive activities during the opening speeches for the 2016 Bozar exhibition ‘A Good City Has Industry’.

Meanwhile, other efforts were on their way to show how a new form of mixed city could be build. As this needs to function in real life, and not just to entice policy makers into embracing industrial activities, a deeper knowledge base had to be developed and new architectural concepts needed to be imagined. Understanding how



manufacturing works in a dense city is an important part of this effort. The Cities of Making project contributed to this by making a status report for each city (London, Rotterdam, Brussels), by testing discussion and implementation tools ('Foundries of the Future') and by giving a detailed insight in how urban manufacturing works or could work in the future in this book. The choice for three sample areas (Drogenbos Stalle, Cureghem and Buda) where urban manufacture is still present, and the threat of a ZEMU land use designation is absent, enables us to learn what the territorial characteristics are of urban mixed use areas and how existing businesses cope with the challenges and uncertainties of operating in real urban area.

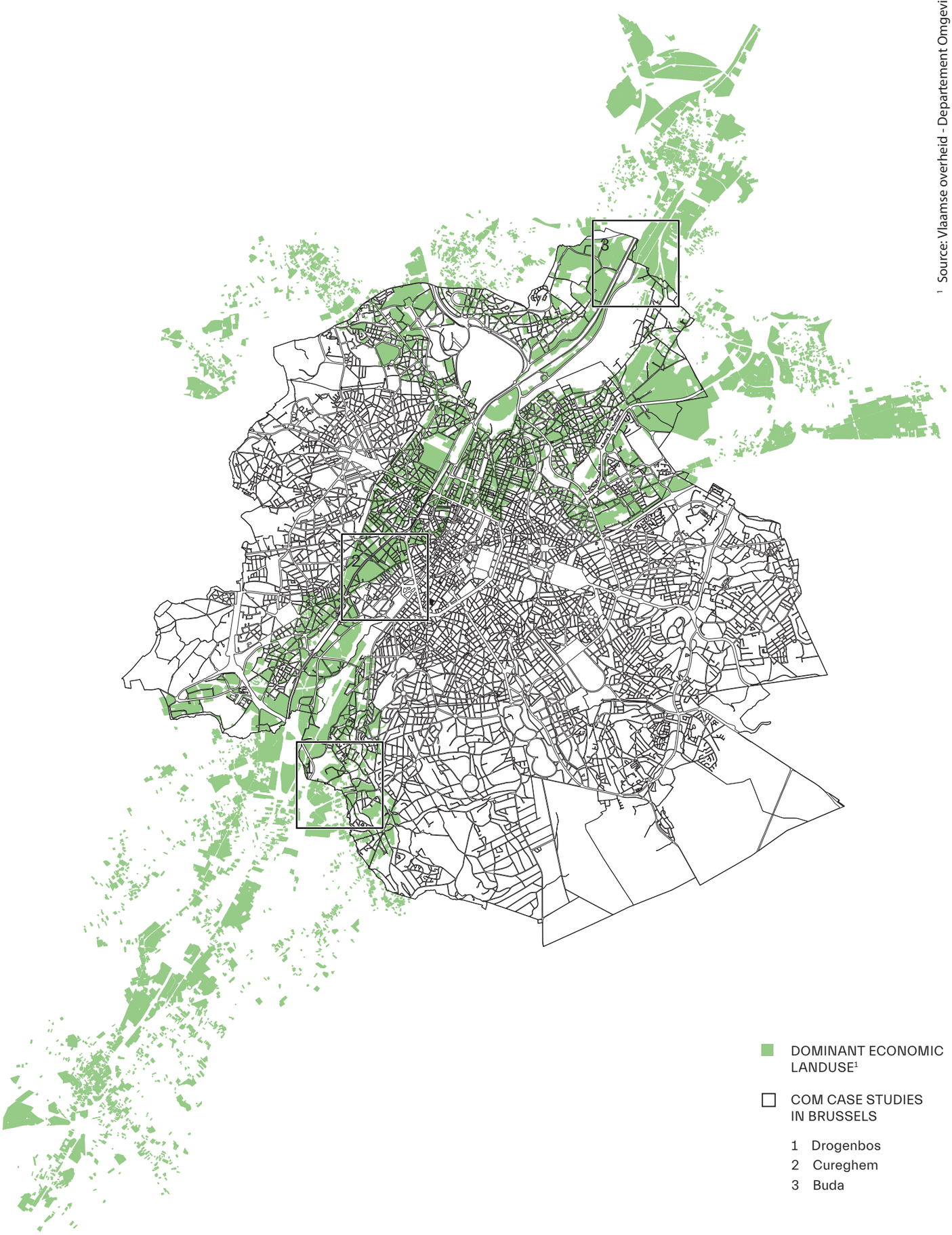
The maps for the areas of Drogenbos Stalle, Cureghem and Buda all point towards essential amenities for industrial companies: public transport, traffic congestion, accessibility, heavy goods vehicles manoeuvring space, yard space. What urban planners regard as a mobility problemí is an existential part of production and distribution businesses: when goods can no longer be transported to and from the companyís site in a predictable and efficient way, there is no point in doing business there. When the (public) street has to function as a yard, as shown in Cureghem, there is competition between different economic activities and parking on the street. Why would we accept to rent public space for private use, to park cars, in an area where the primary functions of public space, e.g. to facilitate the exchange of goods and people, cannot even be organized? Cureghem also illustrates how older high density mixed areas are the home to complex socio cultural and economic ecologies. The Car Business Ecology and the Meat Business Ecology meet in this neighborhood, and connect to a myriad of other multi cultural retail businesses. Both Drogenbos and Buda never got to this level of organizational complexity. Of course, every business has its

own network of relationships, and most are links to other places in Belgium or Europe. The Buda mapping illustrate that these networks are specific to each company, even within the same sector. If one would make the same maps for Cureghem and Drogenbos, you would see similar, but different patterns. Companies in one sector (e.g. second hand car sale) are competitors, and usually do not share the same economic network. However, they do share a similar interest in the proximity to the city, the economic specialization of the neighborhood and the presence of potential clients. The inner city location of Cureghem, and the strong mix with housing seem to promote a more entangled social and economic network, where both Drogenbos and Buda as old industrial, functionally segregated areas seem to have looser relationships.

The company fact sheets, interviews and internal organization drawings provide an excellent overview of the difficulties and advantages of contemporary urban manufacturing. The challenges are huge, uncertainty arises from the hesitation of (local) governments to be clear on the future development of these neighbourhoods, the demand for solutions and answers to mobility and environmental issues requires an urgent response. Scholars, practitioners, experts and students worked on these cases, and helped to get this together. But they also started to develop specific proposals to give 21st century answers to these wicked problems.

More is yet to be explored, but with this essential contribution to include manufacturing in urban planning practice, 'Foundries of the Future' and 'In the Making' mark the start of a new era, where the implementation of new complex concepts can start and we can all add another piece to the puzzle of a vibrant 21st century metropolis. New and exciting things are about to happen, probably fuelled by the 2020 Corona crisis. We need manufacturing in our City. We will build new exciting places for industry and housing. We are ready for Phaze III.

BEHIND THE ATLAS



[1] Source: Vlaamse overheid - Departement Omgeving

This publication gives an account of the work conducted in Brussels lead by Latitude Platform in the frame of the JPI ENSUF Urban Europe funded project ‘Cities of Making’. While the comparative study between London, Rotterdam, and Brussels carried out by the international consortium formed by UCL, RSA, TUD, VUB, ULB, BECI, and Latitude between 2017–2019 led to the publication of an overarching narrative on European urban productive areas and a pattern-based handbook, the research by design presented here focuses on Brussels only and aims at visualizing and critically understanding the multi-scalar complexity of manufacturing in the capital region.

Looking at the morphological conditions in which contemporary manufacturing is embedded in Brussels, we can distinguish three main categories: 1) the inner/compact city, characterized by a dense built historical fabric where small-medium productive spaces are intertwined with housing and commercial spaces, occupying mainly ground floors or filling the interior of the blocks; 2) the mixed zones, characterized by patches of medium productive spaces coexisting with residential and tertiary areas; 3) the mono-functional zones, characterized by the predominancy of medium-large manufacturers and other related activities and by dedicated infrastructures.

We selected three territorial 2x2 km samples that are in our view prototypical of the above-mentioned conditions: they are located in Cureghem (compact city), Drogenbos-Stalle (mixed zone), and Buda (mono-functional zone). It is important to note that while the first is situated in the central area of Brussels, the other two are representative of fringe conditions, highlighting the (strong) differences and frictions between the very peculiar case of the Belgian capital region and Flanders.

The following chapters are the result of the effort to rework, synthesize, homogenize, and make comparable a large amount of information collected in various settings throughout the research period. While Drogenbos-Stalle and Cureghem have been mainly investigated by Latitude and VUB, in dialogue with ULB researchers, Budaís chapter is based on the results of two VUB MA-STeR* design studios (2017-18, 2018-19) carried out in close collaboration with Jan Zaman (Department Omgeving).

The extensive fieldwork conducted in the three areas was based on a spatial survey,

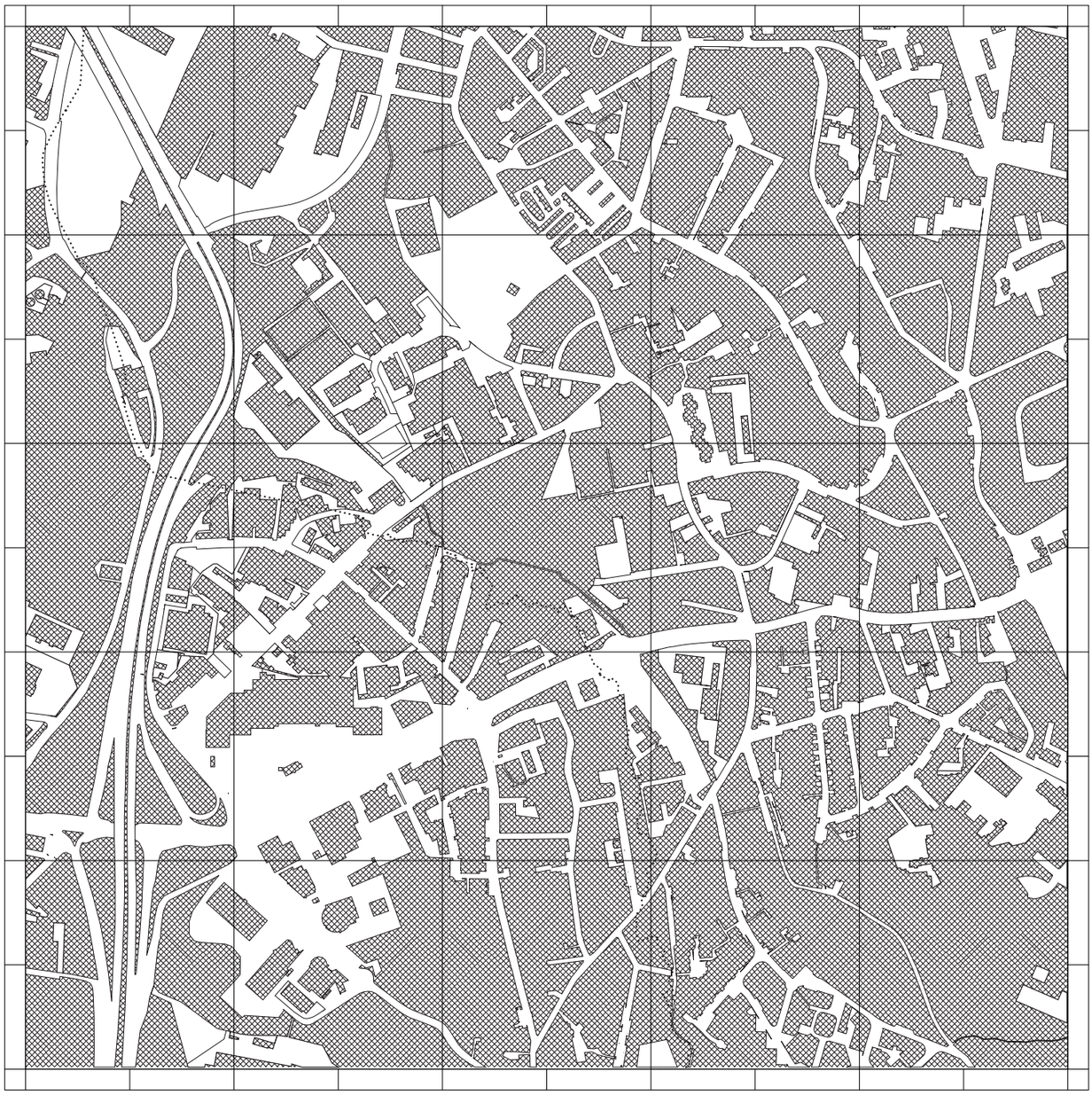
I DROGENBOS – STALLE

Drogenbos Stalle is a cross border area located in the southwest fringe of Brussels. It is representative of one of the many mixed zones within the region s boundaries and its surroundings, embodying a cock tail of small manufacturing areas, services, large and small retail, housing and recreation spaces.

The delayering of the analysed 2x2 km area shows the historical evolution of manufacturing (located to the east). and housing (west). Services and retail create a transition zone along Verlengde Stallestraat/rue de Stalle, an important artery linking the E19 to Uccle and the Brusselsís centre. Based on the traffic analysis, one of the most critical issues for manufacturers in the area is congestion.

0 0.4 km

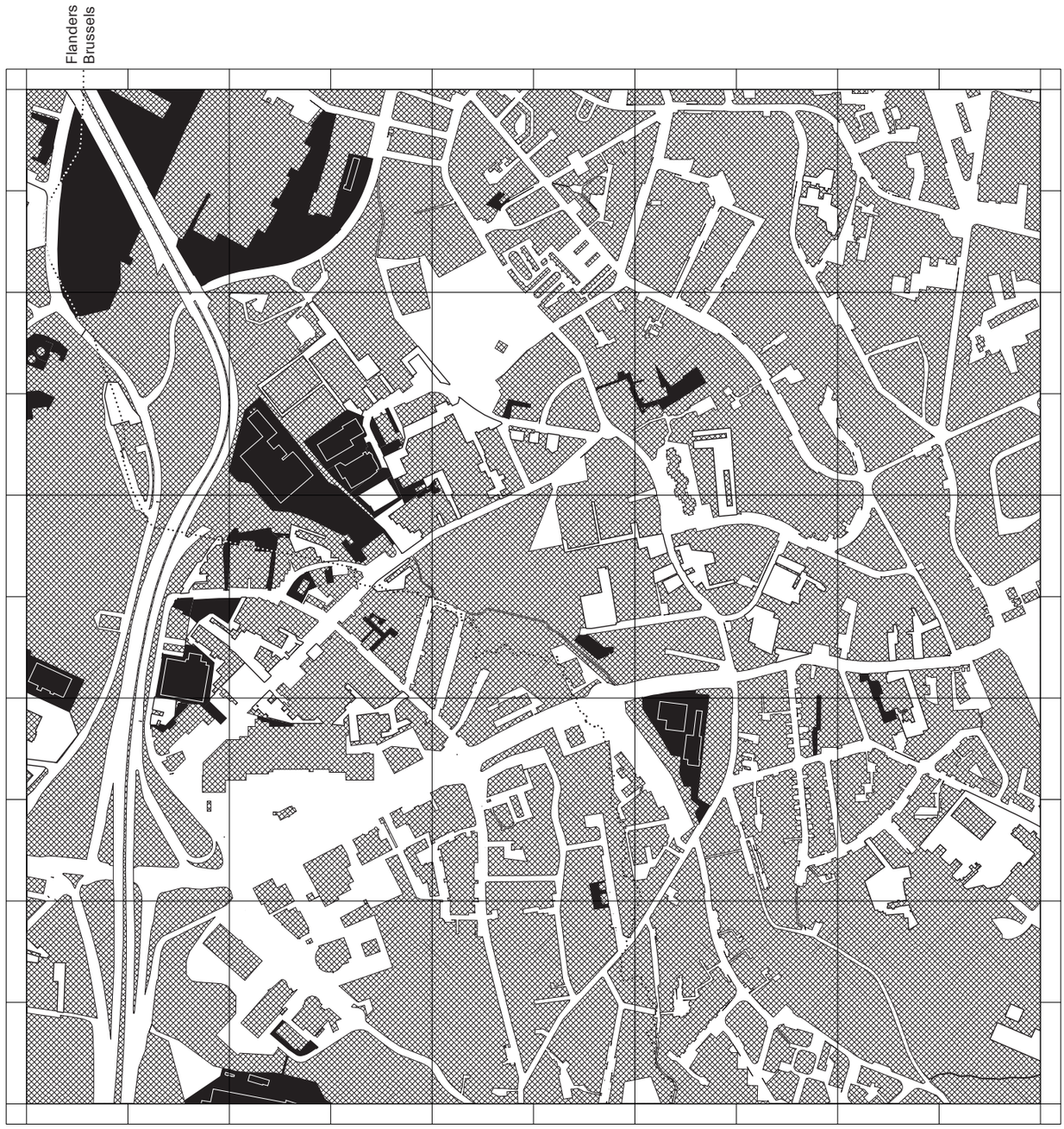
CATEGORY	SURFACE [m²]	PERCENTAGE [%]
Built space	2,837,600	71%
Unbuilt space	1,162,400	29%
Total	4,000,000	100%



0 0.4 km

The border zone between Drogenbos and Stalle is characterised by spatial fragmentation, complex accessibility and informal use of residual, in between spaces. It is formed by a patchwork of disconnected productive yards that question the overall socio spatial vision of the area. Can we identify and spatialize the most pressing issues and the opportunities of the zone? What can we learn from its companies?

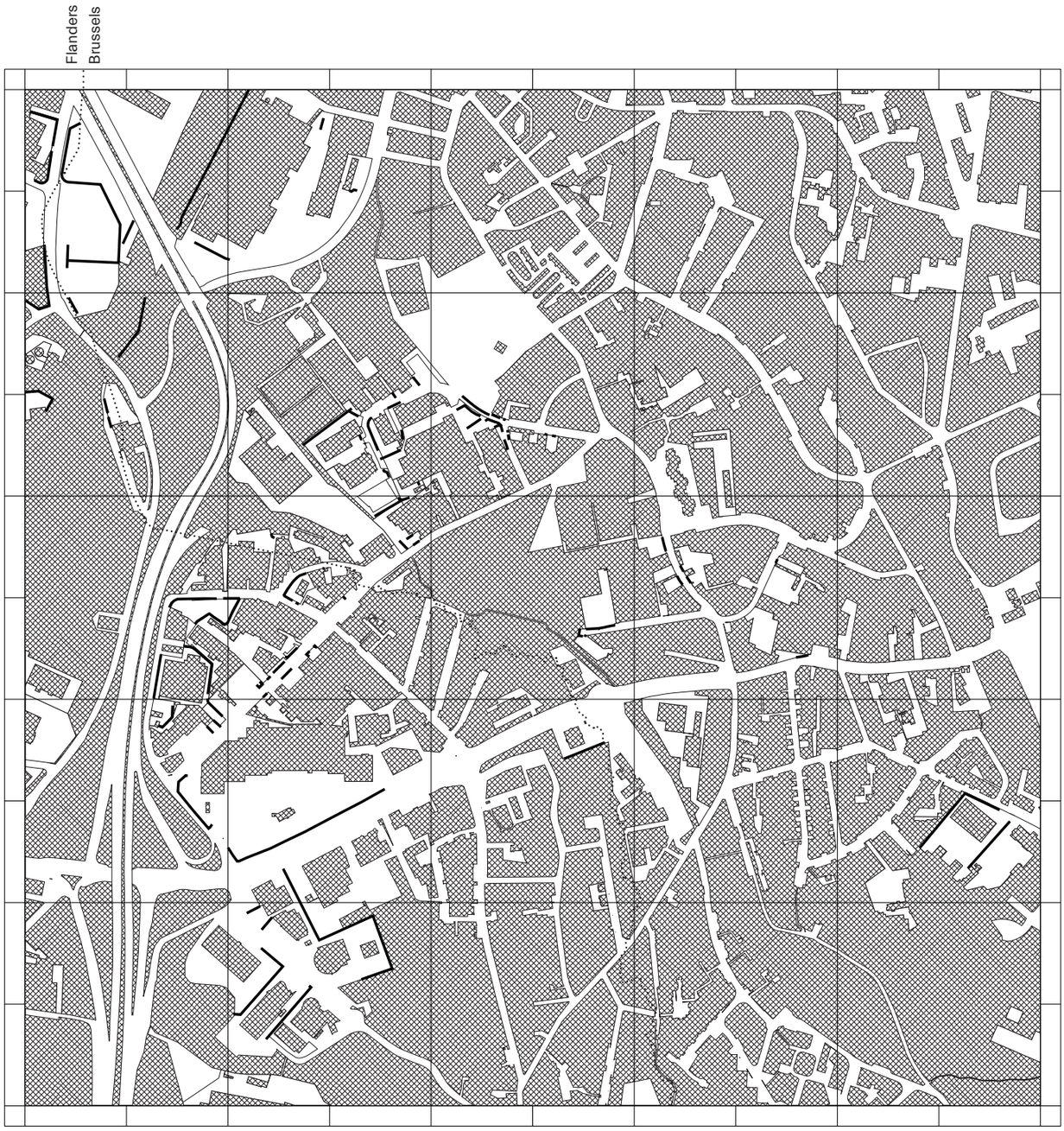
Amongst the overall potentially accessible spaces in the area, some are either restricted or forbidden. That amount of surface area, in certain cases under or unused, reveals a stock of space that could be reorganised, opened and shared with other manufacturers and/or be beneficial for the local community.



0 0.4 km

CATEGORY	SURFACE [m²]	PERCENTAGE [%]
■ Not accessible	205,200	18%
□ Restrained	126,400	11%
□ Accessible	830,800	71%
Total	1,162,400	100%

Gates and fences are in many cases misplaced or unnecessary. The mapping of the vertical and horizontal barriers highlights the spatial fragmentation of the area and points out the need for a fluid continuity for users and producers.



0 0.4 km

CATEGORY	SURFACE [m²]	PERCENTAGE [%]
— Fences	5,060	90%
- - Gates	530	10%
Total	5,590	100%

Drogenbos Companies

Urban manufacturing in Drogenbos is influenced by its location on the periphery of the region of Brussels. There are advantages in terms of larger available spaces and lower prices. At the same time, the proximity to the Brussels-Capital Region makes a sought after site for manufacturing businesses.

While the mobility situation is not as bad as in the city center, it is still a concerning issue for businesses. Close to the ring road, the zone is affected on a daily basis. Urbanisation (particularly housing) is also putting pressure on Drogenbos, with real estate projects or the installation of public infrastructure (Brusselsí regional waste agency) that increases car traffic. The new tram depot (Marconi), despite improving public transport accessibility for workers, seems to only lightly counterbalance congestion and puts additional pressure on parking. Trucks and their requirement for large parking and turning space are not well regarded in this context. Complaints from car drivers or inhabitants have been observed and can be particularly challenging for companies offering onsite installation, such as the construction sector.

Besides mobility, the Drogenbos area is located at the regional border. Depending on what side they are, businesses can experience very different conditions in terms of taxes and subsidies. Labour market services of organisations such as the regional employment agency, Actiris, or work placement agencies will still be served if the company has moved across the border. The institutional boundary has however had a harmful effect on urban development. Regional policies only take into account the social and economic impact of a project on their immediate territory and neglect the inhabitants and companies on others, even if it is located a few meters away. That is why businesses in Drogenbos feel abandoned by regional institutions.

The Drogenbos case study exposes interesting insights into the dynamics of the integration of manufac-

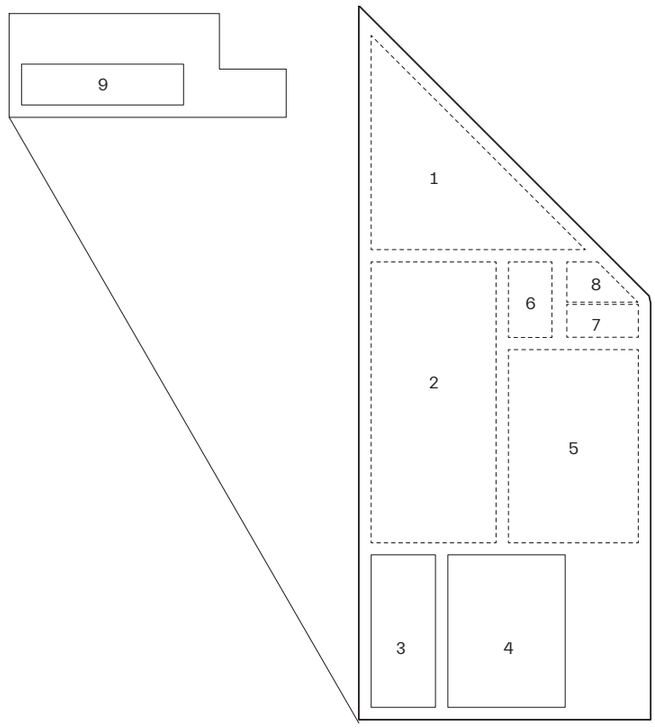
es, which gives a guarantee of quality of public spaces and access to logistics, providing also other devel opment services. We have met companies on this site that are very satisfied with the management and the available spaces at accept able prices. But we have also met companies, previ ously located on a Citydev site, which were very dis appointed by their experi ence.

turing activities in a functionally mixed area. On the one hand, residential spac es are losing ground in certain zones that are encircled by big retail sites and manufacturing companies. Some hous es have been bought by companies and transformed for commercial or industri al purposes with. It has been observed that this characteristic of semi zoning is showing less problems in terms of nui sance than in more central urban loca tions. On the other hand, residential real estate projects are developing in other zones closer to the center of Drogen bos, adding pressure on congestion, which concerns inhabitants, public au thorities and companies.

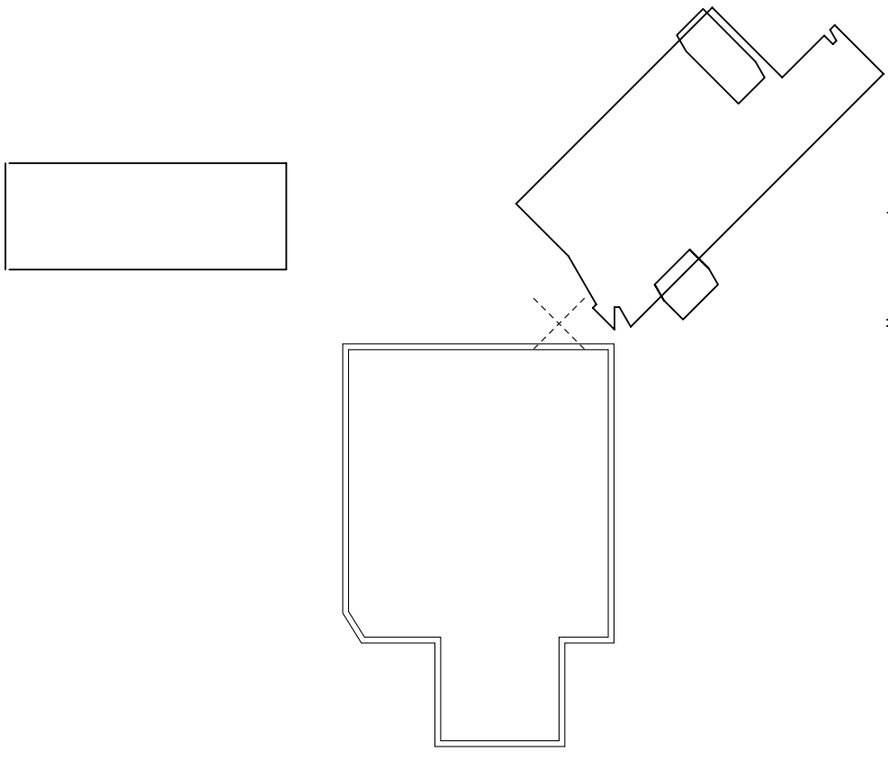
The role of public authorities in industrial sites is inconsistent. There is a will from municipal actors to take care of congestion issues, limiting expan sion of housing and to develop the local economy. But there is little evidence of the existing companies and on their activities or possible impacts a situa tion also observed in more central areas such as Cureghem. Meanwhile regional institutions are not paying so much at tention to this, making it both out of site and out of mind. The only exception is the Bempt site, managed by Citydev, the regional public developer, and locat ed in Forest (Brussels). The regional in stitution is taking care of renting spac

XIII builds the interiors of lifts and Pragma Plexi is focused on plexiglas (plastic) objects. Both businesses have the same management, they share the same building and equipment. A level of complementarity can be observed between the two activities, with machines being used both for lift preparation and production of plexiglas objects.

A major outcome from observations of PragmaPlexi/XIII is the strong, but not necessarily symbiotic connection between the businesses and the city. First there is the direct client base. Fabrice Corneux, the director, explained the inevitable link between lifts and cities, tall buildings are more frequently used in dense areas. There is then relative interest to be close to their clients, notably for logistics issues. Secondly, there is the concentration of suppliers. Once built in the workshop, XIIIís workers need to install the lift onsite. This last step is an important part of their job, as is the transport in the urban environment. But their clients are also in other cities across Belgium. Finding suppliers nearby is important for Pragma Plexi/XIII, making it possible to easily find missing materials, increasing flexibility and speed. Thirdly, there is the concentration of labor. Workers mostly come from Brussels and have often been trained in the city center, however the company struggles to find suitable employees. The role of local work placement agencies is expensive but unavoidable.



1 Storage
2 Cutting area
3 Changing room
4 Gluing room
5 Assembling area
6 Finished elevator waiting area
7 Compressing area
8 Pickup area
9 Welcom roomoffice



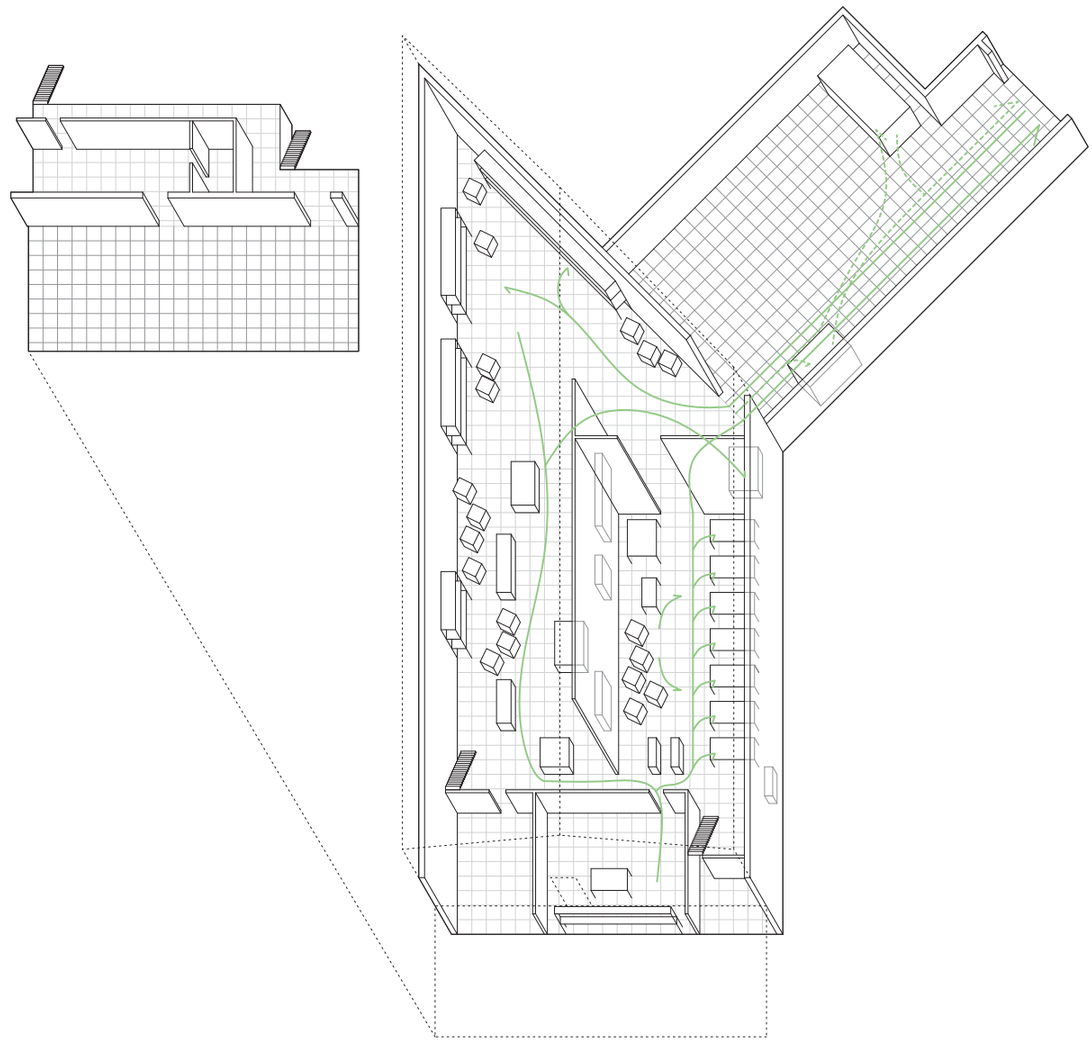
Improvable key outer space (clients / loadingunloading)

Flows conflict point

Intensely used manufacturing area

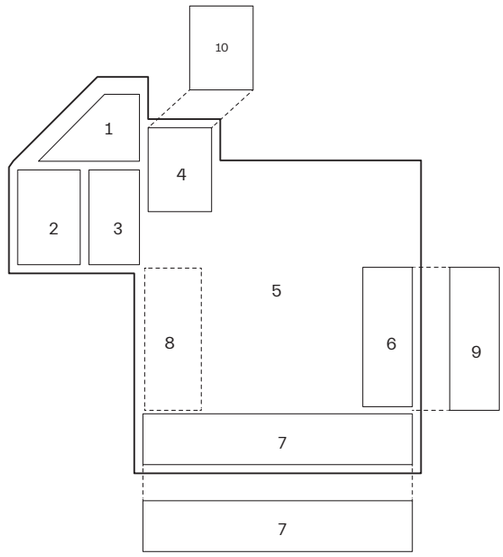
Main labour flow

Waste

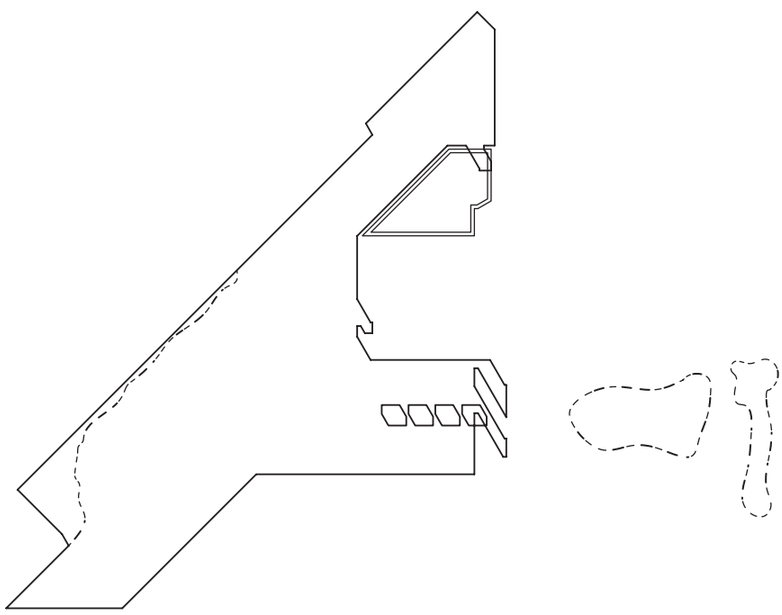


Screen Group is a printing company specialized in serigraphy. They are located in Drogenbos in a building adapted to their needs, with large and high spaces and good logistics access.

Daniel Daneels, director of Screen Group, has been a printer since the 80ís and witnessed the impacts of Internet and digitalisation. Firstly there were impacts in terms of changes to the market. Internet and digitalisation means less demand for paper. Numerous companies had to close and the remaining ones are in serious competition, with a decrease of market prices and a general concentration of capital in larger businesses (operating online). Companies such as Screen Group need to systematically accept clients requests to retain clients, while spe cialising in order to minimise costs. Second, there are impacts in terms of production processes. New communication technology implies a distance in the communication between sellers and buyers; face to face contact has become very rare. At the same time, the internet became the main window to new clients. Clientsí culture is also evolving, expecting always shorter lead times to answer their needs. Furthermore, manual labour is required to keep existing machines that can not be automated or that are not profitable. Finally, there are impacts in terms of development perspectives. Daniel Daneels doesnít anticipate particular developments for the serigraphy sector in the following years. To adapt, the business has merged with another company in order to enlarge its market, resources and production opportunities.



1 Digital printing
2 Welcome / exhibition
3 Office
4 Wet room
5 Production
6 Ink storage
7 Storage
8 Pick up area
9 Refectory
10 Office



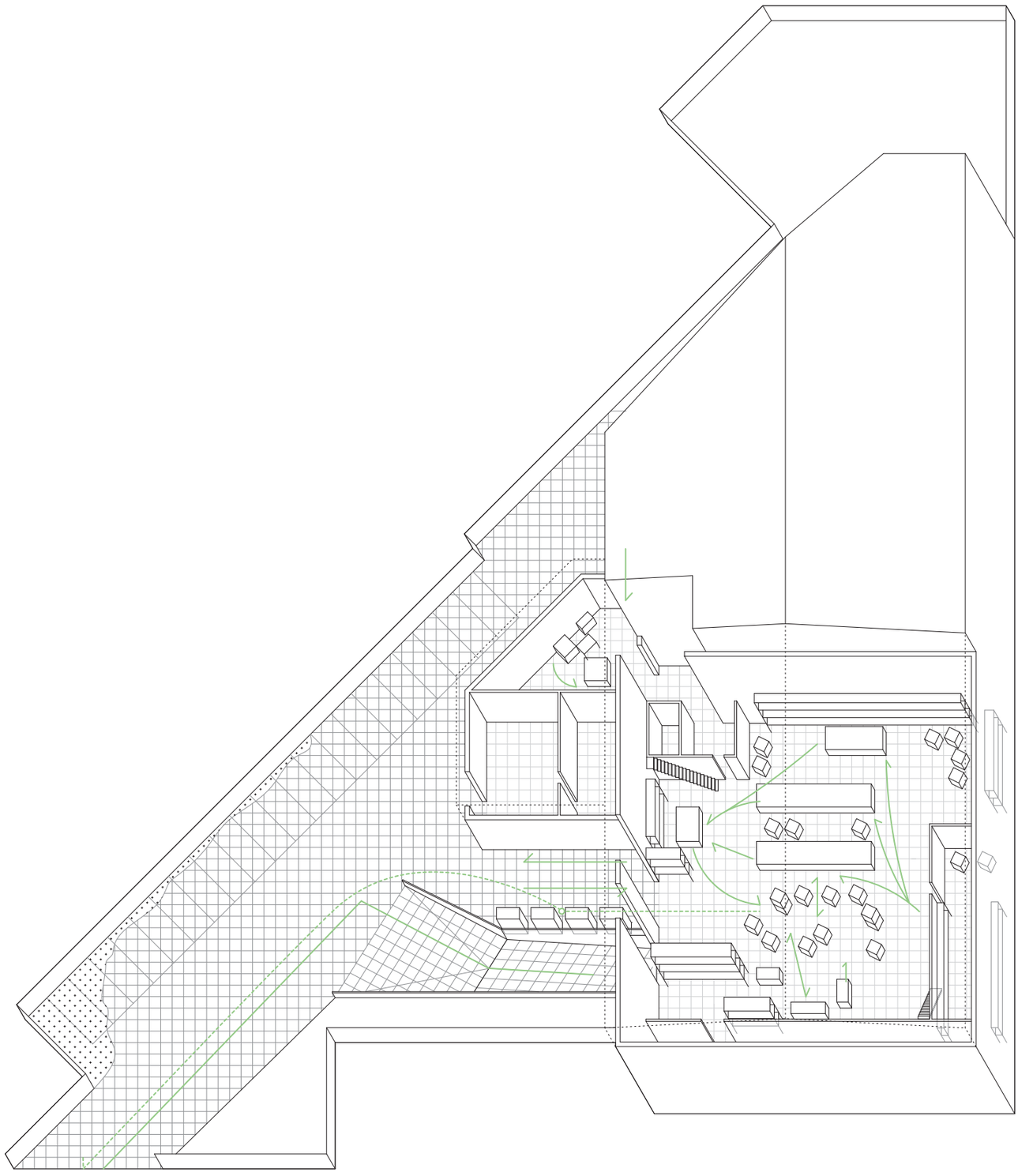
Improvable key outer space (clients / loading unloading)

Unused/misused central or residual area

Intensely used manufacturing area

Main labour flow

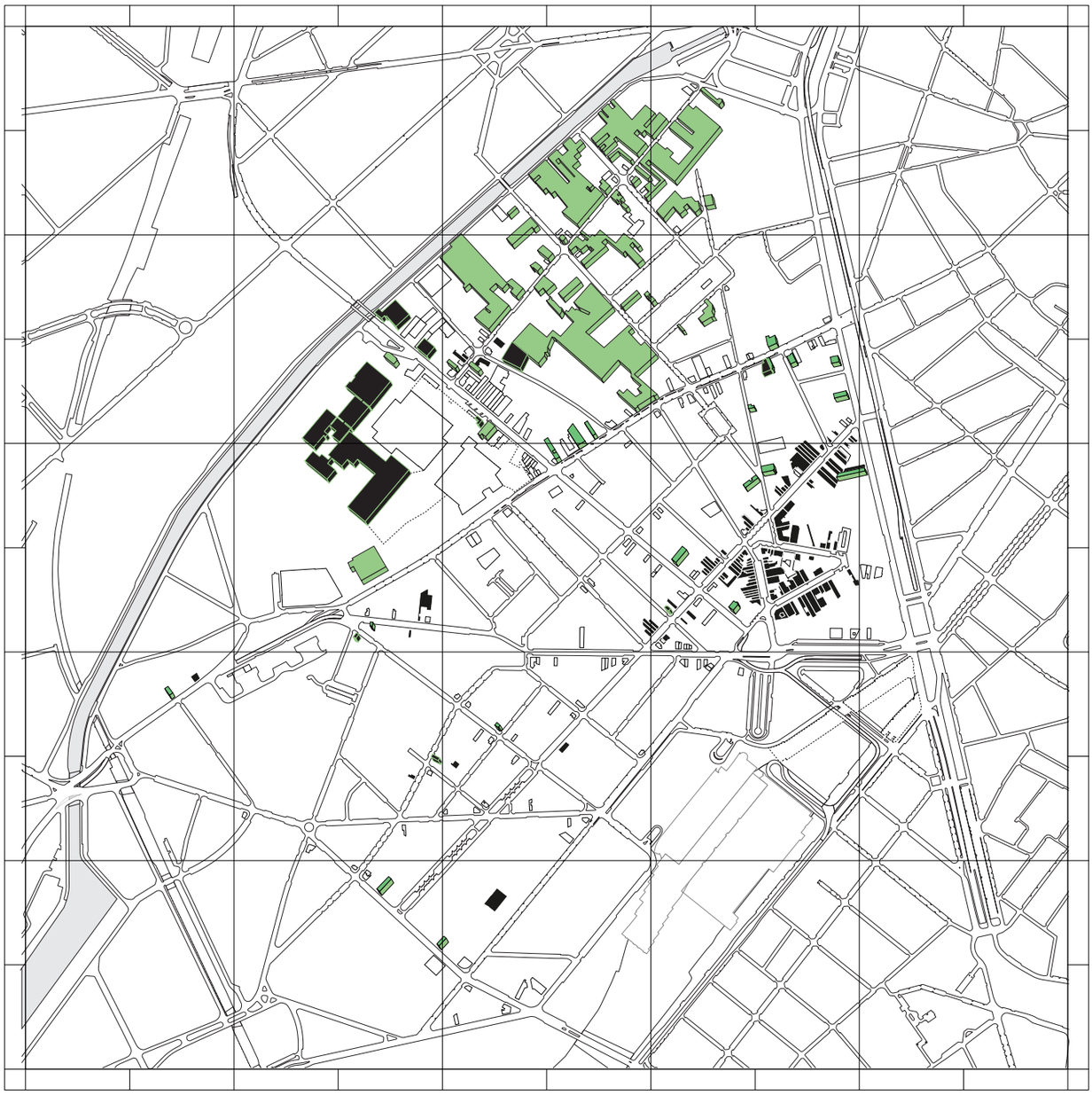
Waste



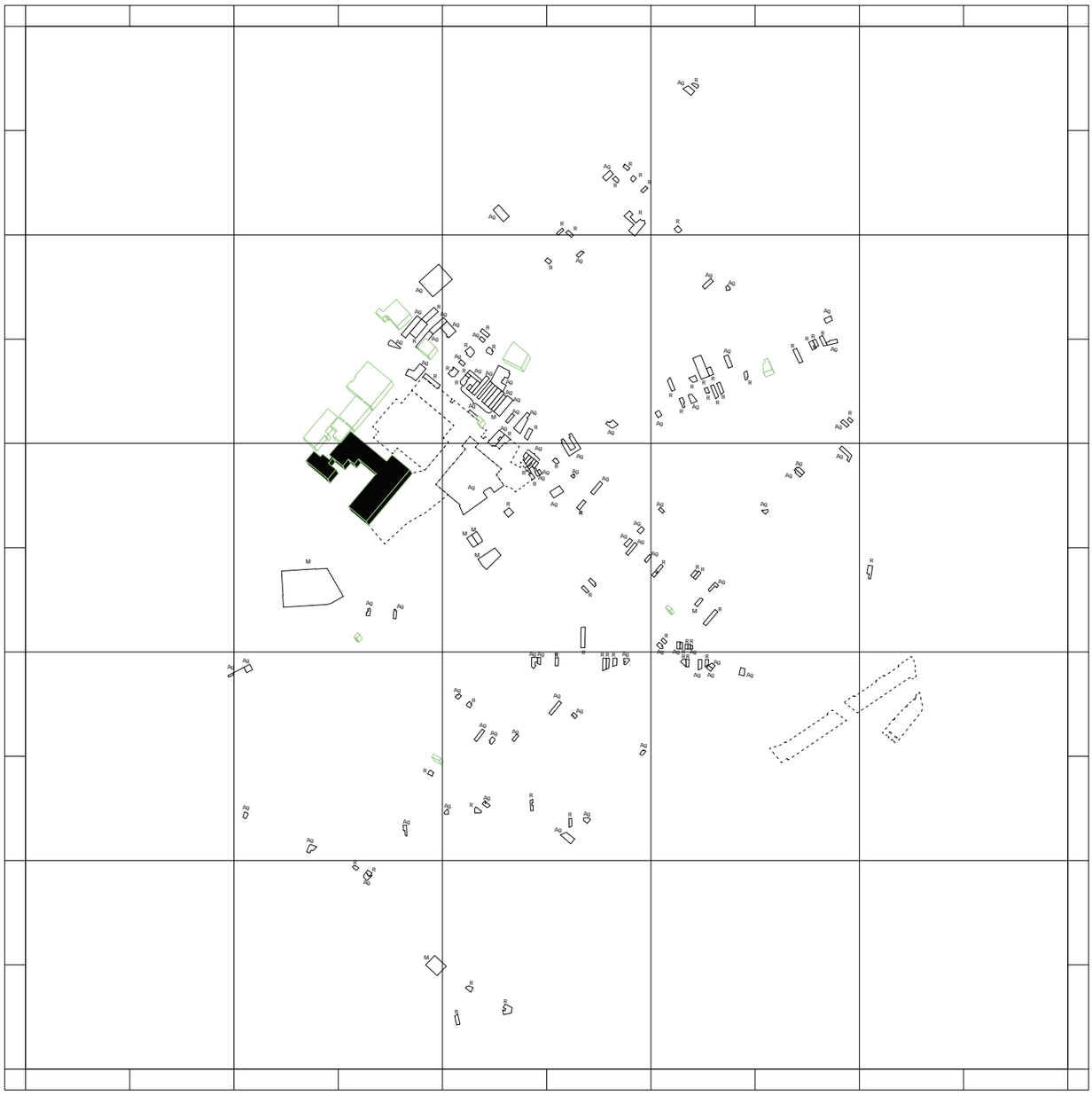
II CUREGHEM

Cureghem is a dense productive area adjacient to the Brussels city centre with a large mix of housing and small to middle scale manufacturing companies. Its industrial activity dates back to the beginning of the 19th century and it is representative of a dense urban highly mixed tissue that has also been an arrival place for migrants for over a century.

Cureghem is dominated by two main businesses: second hand vehicles and meat related activities. They are clustered in specific areas, such as the one around the slaughter house (food) and along Rue de Heyvaret (vehicles). Both clusters reveal ecologies formed not only by the core businesses, by also by services, wholesale and other dependent and related functions.



The meat business ecology revolves around the core site of the Abattoir (slaughterhouse) that includes a series of related businesses such as butchers and services (including restaurants and food shops). Recently, a number of new businesses appeared although not related to the Abattoir but using new technology to produce or process food.



0 0.4 km

ABATTOIR

BUTCHERY

SERVICES

R Restaurant

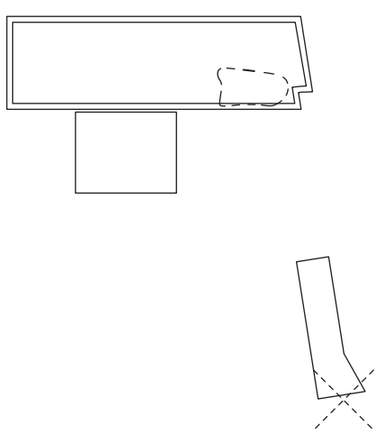
Ag Alimentation General

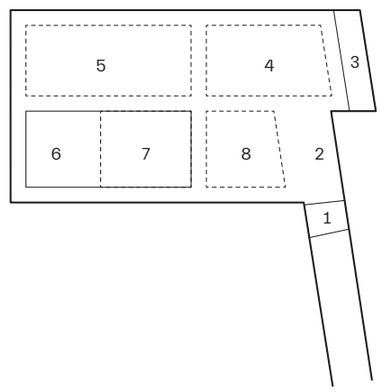
M Supermarket

Wood In Molenbeek (WIM) is a publicly financed action-research project focused on the use/re-use of wood. It was launched by two non-profit organizations and academics and located in a building owned by the municipality. This project is exclusively accessible to Cureghemís inhabitants and their entire communication policy has been developed in this way. The scope of WIM can be considered a means for resisting gentrification through community building in a poor and disadvantaged neighborhood. The workshop has become a significant place of social interaction, inciting people to share knowledge and meals. It has integrated circular practices, such as the collection of local wood waste, mainly from local building sites. There is also an informal network of inhabitants reusing WIMís own waste materials.

The relationship with neighbouring workers in the second hand car trade is not always easy. On the one hand, they are regularly communicating with workers from WIM and inhabitants, which is positive. Moreover, WIMís wood waste is also used by the garages, who use it to treat oil spills or for heating. On other hand, drivers often drive quickly in the narrow and poorly policed streets, making it uncomfortable for some inhabitants and WIMís workers.

WIMís project is slowly arriving to an end of its funding and the municipality has other plans for the building. They are therefore looking for new sources of financing and a new place to develop their initiative.





Improvable key inner or outer space (storage / loading-unloading)

Misused central area

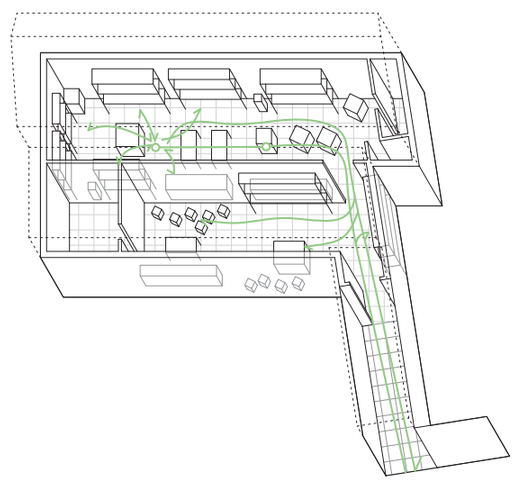
Key manufacturing area intensely used

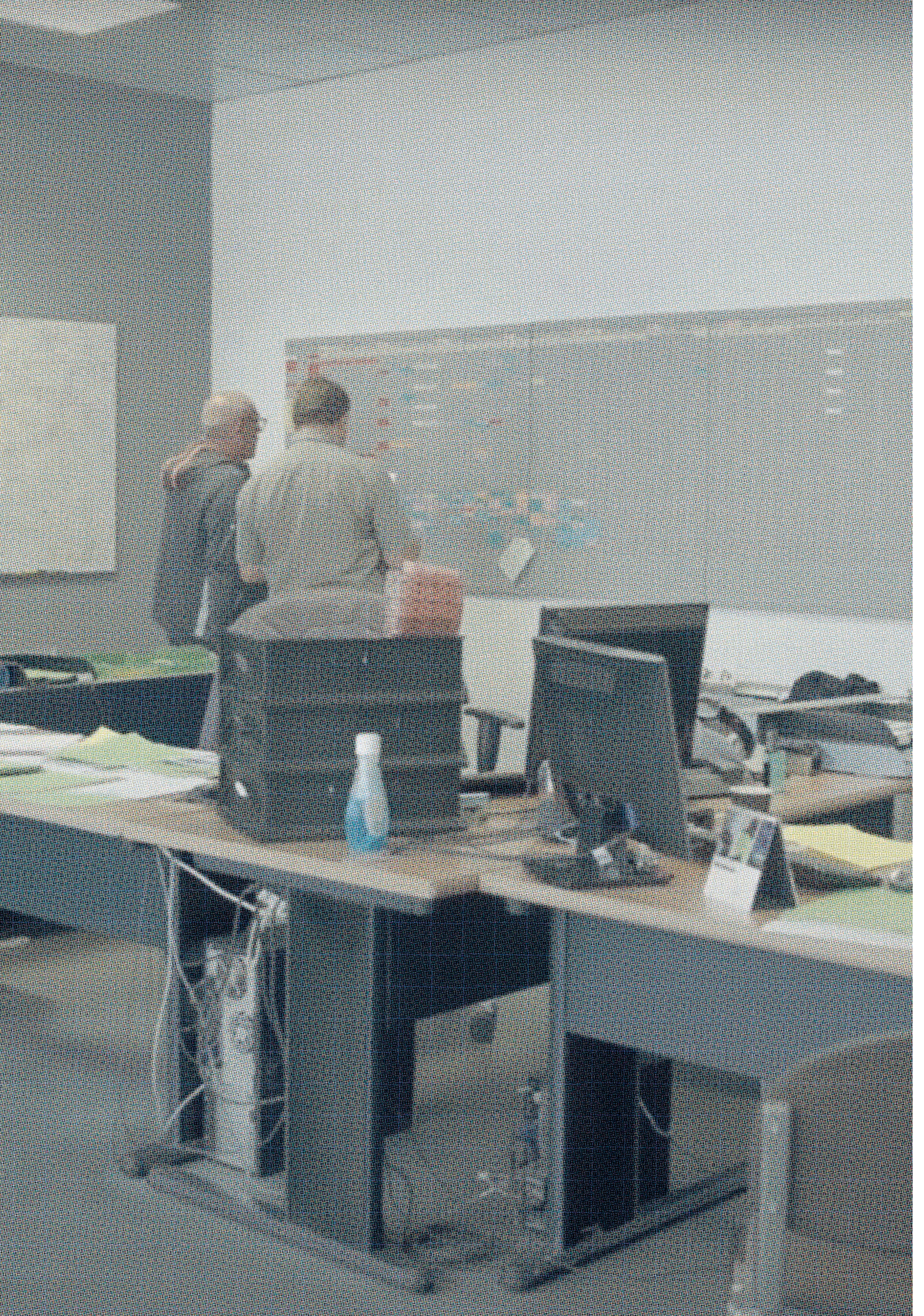
Flows conflict point

1 Reception
2 Wood delivery
3 Wc
4 Awaiting material + dismanteling
5 Workshop + storage
6 Office area
7 Meeting area + show room
8 Out going project

Main labour flow

Key storage

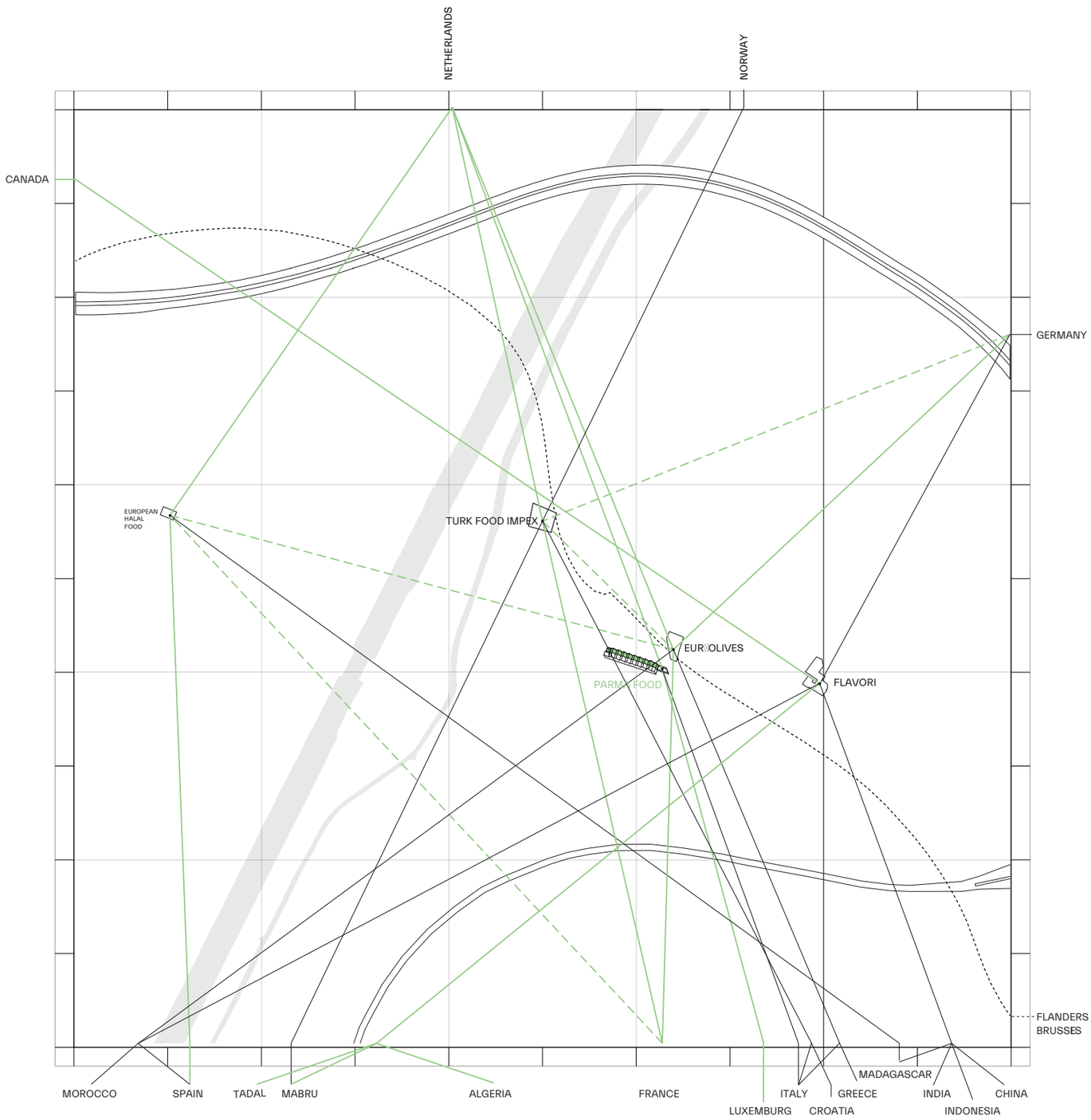




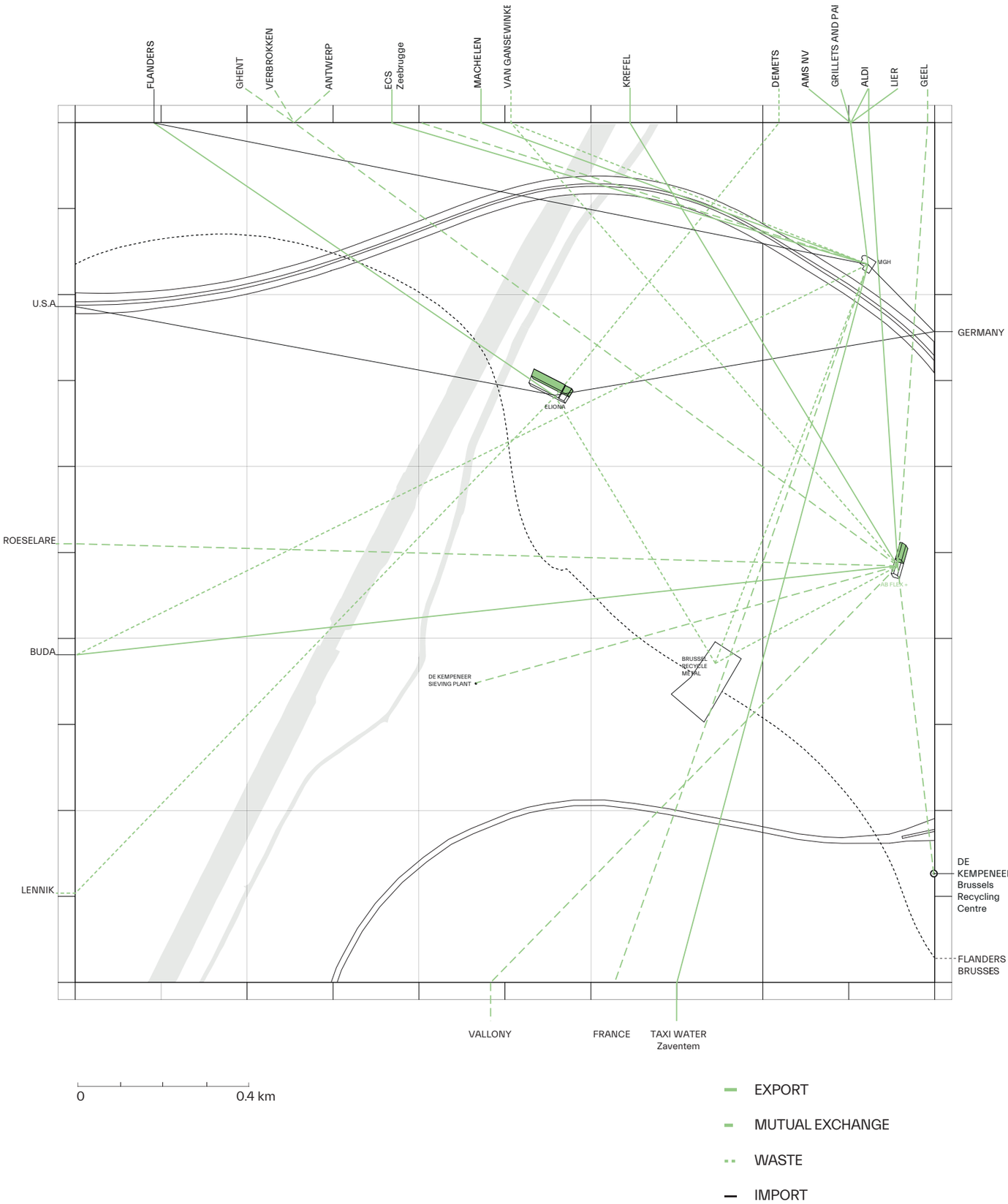
III BUDA

Buda represents a typical, almost monofunc tional industrial zone within the Brussels metropolitan area. Its spatial and socio eco nomic composition is typical of industrial areas that cluster manufacturing activities. For over a century, this site has been the preferred location for polluting or less urban activities. Connected to the airport, the canal and the highway, the area plays a key role also on the national and interna tional scale, with companies often working with import export within local and global networks.

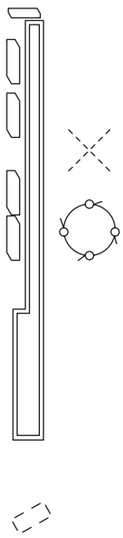
The majority of wholesale products arriving in Budaís companies are imported through harbours from other European countries and are brought in container by truck, while Mabru Brussels morning market plays also a relevant role as secondary supplier.
After processing their products, each company transports them individually to the customers, small wholesalers mostly located in Brussels, Gent, and Antwerp, as well as to other parts of Belgium and abroad. Local business relations do exist: Flavori provides companies in Buda with herbs and spices and collaborates with Demo for waste collection, Eur olives delivers olives to European Halal Food and Turk Food, EHF supplies halal sausages to Turk Food. Moreover, the companies do make use of the services on the site for the maintenance of their delivery trucks, machines and even buildings. The sector could be clearly reinforced in the area, forming a general federation, exploiting the potential offered by the canal for goods transport and rethinking the companies production chain which can be vertically organized.



Service firms are strategic because of their contribution to the production chain of other companies located in Buda and beyond. The services provided are so specific that it would be too expensive for a company to implement them by themselves. In Buda, MGH provides a total complete, highly technical and specialized service: design, sale and repair of gearboxes. Eliona is specialised in dishwashers repair. AB Flex+ replaces and maintains a wide range of pipes and is specialised in the repair of tailboards. It is key for those firms to collaborate with transport companies and to work with a network of technicians spread across the territory. AB Flex+, for example, defines itself as a ☒company in movementî offering on location, fast repair.
Partnerships and outsourcing a part of the production process is also a common strategy to guarantee full services. Product imports mostly come from Europe and Flanders and they are managed by local transporters who can deliver either to the company or at the technicianís home address. The centrality of Buda is the main reason behind the companyís location choice.



Parmafood is specialised in storage and distribution of Italian products such as wine, pasta and flour to horeca businesses. It belongs to food wholesale activities that consist in buying, (sometimes repackaging) and selling goods in large quantities and therefore at cheaper prices, usually to shopkeepers who resell them to their customers. Their importance is twofold: it is strategic in the food chain and it implies a degree of manu facturing that does not require highly skilled labour. Other companies of a similar kind, such as Turk Food Impex, Flavori, Eur Olives or European Halal Food, share a similar background, having moved from city centre locations to Buda due to spatial limitations and the chance of finding cheaper yet strategic sites for their business. They often keep a facadeí in the city while having a backí in Buda. Parmafood imports products from Italy and distributes them to shops mainly located in Brussels and in Belgium. The company moved to Buda in 1978 and started buying over the site part by part, recently renting out extra spaces to other companies due to the contraction of its activities. In fact, the spatial organisation of their business highlights the key issue of companiesí spatial expansion shrinking and, in the case of wholesale, the possibility of being organised vertically



Misused central area

Key manufacturing area intensely used

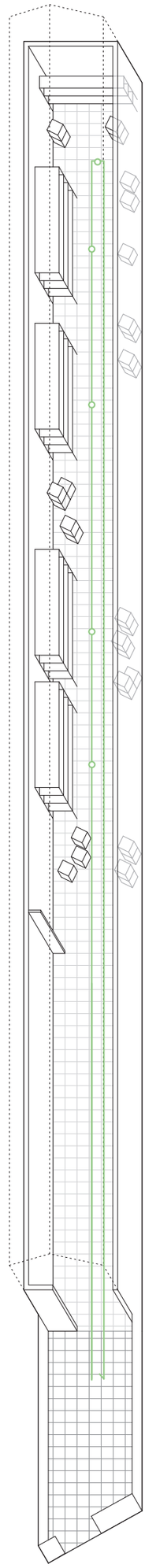
Manufacturing collaboration / synergy (branches, other companies)

Flows conflict point

1 Office
2 Stock

Main labour flow

Key storage



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