Streets and Parking

- Main streets
- Collector streets
- Local streets
- Pedestrian and bike paths
- Parking lots
- Wild illegal parking

Yards and Entrance Areas

- Yards associated with a building
- Yards between buildings and streets
- Dwelling entrance areas
- Store entrance areas
- Private and allotment gardens

Public Spaces, Sports and Play Facilities

- Neighborhood parks
- Landscape parks
- Communal gardens
- Urban agriculture / brownfields
- Sports fields
- Playgrounds

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3. TYPOLOGIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Figure 1: Site plan with types of open spaces in Vazha-Pshavela Block VI

0 50 100m

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INTRODUCTION

Open spaces provide additional living space. In general, although there are many open spaces in the neighborhood, they do not always meet the different demands of various target groups. While it is important to ensure sufficient green spaces for adequate water retention and reduce sealed surfaces, not all areas need to remain unbuilt or publicly accessible. Due to the lack of complementary functions for housing, the need for new housing typologies that promote social diversity, and the general housing shortage, questions arise about where and to what extent densification can occur.

Large housing estates from the 1960s to the 1980s offer ample open spaces with great potential for sustainable and resilient transformation. Planned and realized according to a systematic concept that clearly defined hierarchies and functions, today they lack qualities important for contemporary living spaces. At the same time, they offer possibilities for adaptation to current and future needs, as well as to the requirements of sustainability and resilience, such as climate adaption and mitigation, social interaction, and much more. This chapter presents scenarios that demonstrate the potential for transforming these open spaces, with a view to enhancing the overall benefits to the quarter.

The buildings within the block are positioned at a 45-degree angle relative to its perimeter. Only at the northern edge, facing Vazha-Pshavela Avenue, are the buildings oriented parallel or perpendicular to the street. The average distance between the buildings is about 25 meters, with an overlap of about 40 percent over their length.

Three predominant types characterize the neighborhood. The first group encompasses all sites pertaining to transportation, thoroughfares, and designated parking areas. The second group—yards, entrance areas, and private gardens—comprises the more intimate green open spaces, while the third group—parks, sports and play facilities, and communal spaces—embraces all open spaces used publicly and by the residents. The identified types are not merely characteristic of this particular neighborhood, but also exist in a similar manner throughout the majority of large housing estates. Each type is presented in its current form and described in terms of its specific characteristics, revealing its qualities as well as its deficits and problems.

Furthermore, this chapter presents several proposals for future transformation of selected areas—for sites in Vazha-Pshavela in particular and for large housing estates in general. All transformations aim to enhance the open spaces and focus on sustainable and resilient development of the neighborhood. In order to enhance the quality of the living environment, car traffic should be re-

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duced, functions should be added and diversified, and spatial qualities should be strengthened.

One of the most significant challenges encountered in the context of open spaces in large housing estates pertains to the uncontrolled influx of parked vehicles. The further development of the open spaces aims to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for all user groups, with a particular focus on marginalized and vulnerable individuals. The unorganized, spontaneous, and illicit appropriation and privatization of open spaces shows potential for additional use and different designs, but this can also lead to friction among residents. A holistic approach that respects privacy and offers spaces for the community could benefit all residents. Besides improving the living quality of the residents, the possible transformations would improve water mitigation and adaptation by unsealing surfaces where possible and using the potential inherent in the existing green spaces.

The following proposals address this issue by securing valuable open spaces and testing densification with new uses to achieve diversity and variance. For each scenario, one representative site was selected for each of the different subtypes and presented in plan and axonometric views. While the level of detail exhibited in the drawings of all sites is comparable, the scale at which they are presented varies depending on the size of the site. It is important to note that some of the open spaces are unique in their expression and dimensions, making them too specific to be included in this typology. Consequently, they are not included in this publication. Nevertheless, it is evident that some of the selected types are unique to the site and may not be found in many other large housing estates. The transformations presented should not be understood as specific design proposals, but rather as generalized scenarios for further development that offer rich possibilities for the neighborhood's sustainable future.

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3.1 STREETS AND PARKING

This typology contains all open spaces dedicated to mobility. It includes spaces for all modes of transportation, yet the focus lays on motorized traffic. There are five distinct subtypes in the neighborhood: main streets, collector streets, local streets, organized parking, and pedestrian and bike paths.

The first subtype, the surrounding main streets, connect the whole district to other districts and include spaces for public transportation along with broad sidewalks and parallel parking. Since the microdistricts of large housing estates were typically designed to be free of through traffic, only smaller streets of the second and third subtypes can be found within the Block VI. These were designed either as cul-de-sacs or ring streets. This strict hierarchical organization of streets ensured the separation of through traffic and destination traffic. The second subtype, the collector streets, connect to the surrounding main streets. These streets, which organize the traffic between main streets and local streets, have no designated parking or sidewalks. The third subtype, the local streets, provide access only to the different building blocks, shops, and garages within the neighborhood and are entirely free of through traffic. The fourth subtype consists of organized parking. Although the original layout included only very few such areas, they can now be found throughout Block VI. These areas are often located close to the building blocks and are usually accessed through the collector streets or are a direct part of the local streets.

The last subtype, the pedestrian and bike paths, received little initial consideration. While the original plans had a limited number of paths, today there is a tight network of more or less formalized paths that create shortcuts throughout the neighborhood and connect streets with shops and open spaces.

The increase in individual mobility has led to a surge in unauthorized parking within the district today. The extent of illegal garages, in particular, puts a great strain on the open spaces and now dominates the neighborhood. This affects all open spaces but is especially dominant in those spaces that are neither privately owned nor publicly maintained. Besides occupying a lot of space, illegally parked cars and illicitly built garages have also given the neighborhood a very chaotic appearance. Pedestrians share the internal local streets with all other modes of transportation. This was not a problem at the time of construction because there were very few private cars when the district was built. Today, however, the streets within the quarter are overwhelmed by the increased traffic.

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Figure 1: Streets and parking areas in Block VI

At the same time, due to the neighborhood's size and functions, only a few streets are actually needed within the block. Nevertheless, the current street network within the block is inefficient and redundant. Therefore, the chaotic street layout and unregulated parking throughout the district, as well as the privately erected barriers, are in urgent need of reform.

The enormous amount of paved space, among other factors, hinders any approach to sustainable district development and puts a strain on the effective water management of a self-regulating city. This increases the risk of flooding

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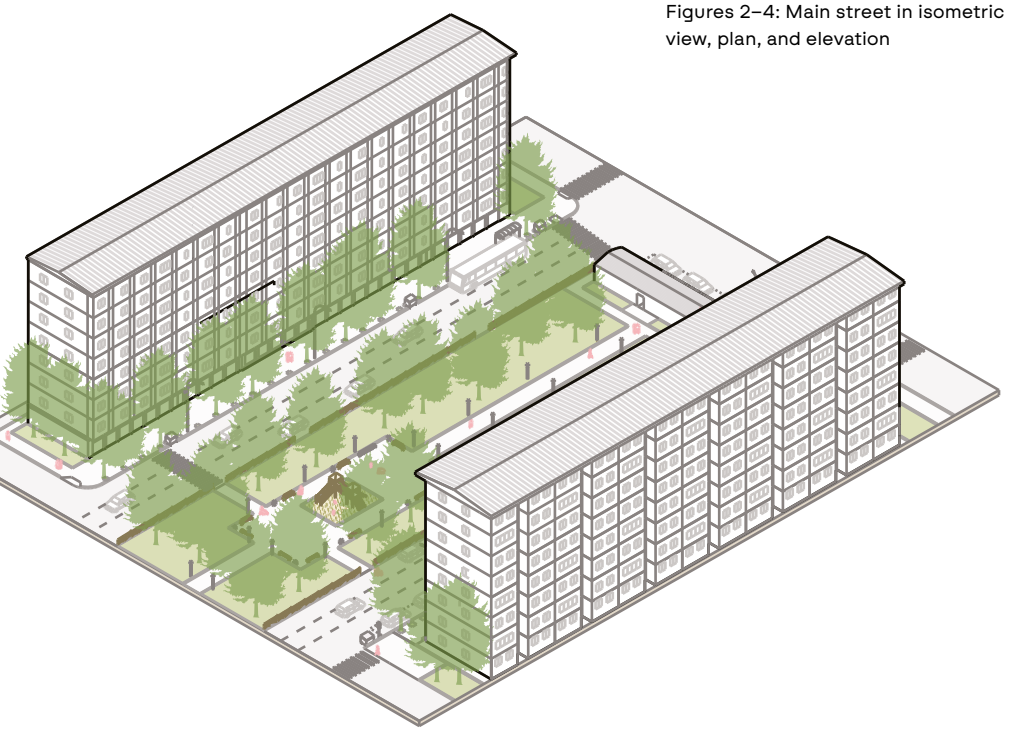
during the wet season and droughts during the dry season. It also increases the likelihood of heat islands and worsens air quality due to higher levels of dust compared to green areas.

From purely mobility point of view, the network also needs attention. The collector streets are too narrow for today's demands and must be freed of some traffic, as they can be dangerous for pedestrians, in particular for children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

3.1.1 Main Streets

In the context of Block VI, the main streets—namely Vazha-Pshavela Avenue, Mikheli Shavishvili Street, Petre Kavdaradze Street, and Vagan Mamasakhlisovi Street—connect the neighborhood to the rest of the Sarbutalo district and other parts of the city. These streets have multiple lanes for cars traveling in each direction and are sometimes designed as boulevards. Where the buildings are parallel to the main streets, public and commercial functions can



Figures 2–4: Main street in isometric view, plan, and elevation

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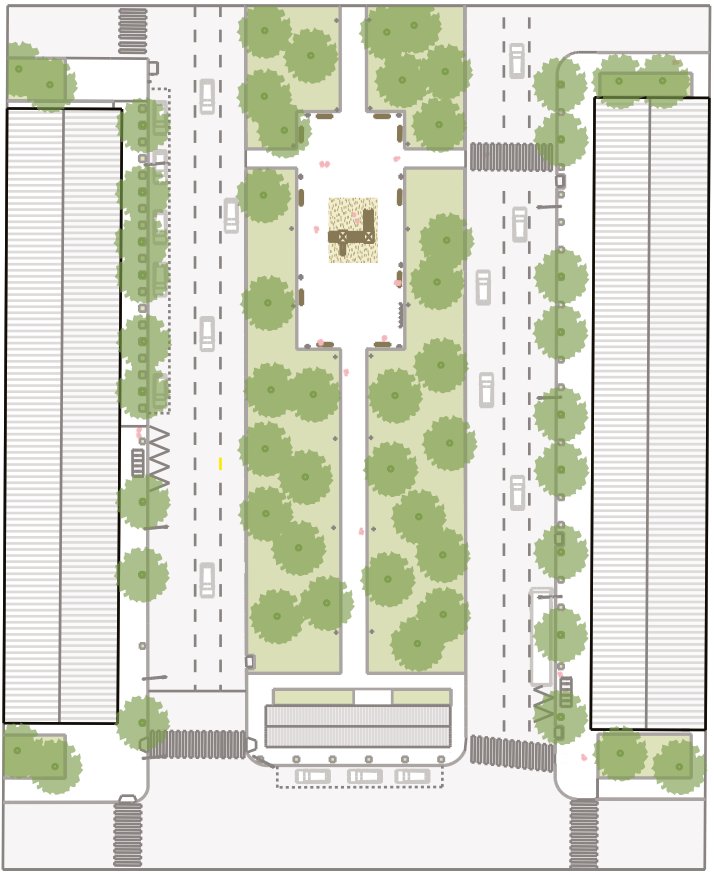

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Figure 5: Vazha-Pshavela Avenue, looking west, with central sidewalk
Figure 6: Vazha-Pshavela Avenue with pedestrian crossing

Figure 7: Vazha-Pshavela Avenue, looking west, with one-way traffic
Figure 8: Vazha-Pshavela Avenue, looking west, with fenced-in central green area
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

be found on the ground floor. The sidewalks along the avenue are wide and spacious, with enough room for retail, social interactions, and mobility, whereas the sidewalks alongside all other main streets are barely wide enough for pedestrians. Currently, buses use the same lanes as the cars. Therefore, buses travel in the same direction as the car traffic, and the bus stops are on the right-hand side.

There are distinct areas for parking between the road and the sidewalk on one or both side of the street. On-street parking is almost exclusively parallel and usually occurs on only one side of the street in the direction of travel. The regulated on-street parking areas are usually officially marked at the edge of the main roads and have a width of approximately 2.50 meters. These areas are publicly accessible and are either equipped with parking meters or assigned to certain user groups, such as residents with valid long-term parking permits. In

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either case, the duration and frequency of use are often controlled. Most main streets in the neighborhood do not have dedicated bike lanes. Crosswalks allow pedestrians to cross the street independently of traffic-light controlled intersections. However, crosswalks are infrequent, and consequently pedestrians do not casually cross the boulevard or wander along the park-like center, even though its spatial quality would invite leisurely strolls.

Possible Transformations

Many of the spaces on the main street could be reclaimed for other uses and activities, thus supporting sustainable transformation of the neighborhood. Some lanes must remain open for cars and additional paths for pedestrians and cyclists should be added. Additionally, streets and parking areas should be simplified and rearranged.

An intelligent parking system coupled with on-street parking alongside the main and collector streets could reduce the parking pressure on the yards. Beyond changing the use and users of many streets, planting additional trees, bushes, and hedges would further enhance the streetscape. In all transformation proposals, spaces for temporary parking will remain available for customers of businesses alongside the buildings.

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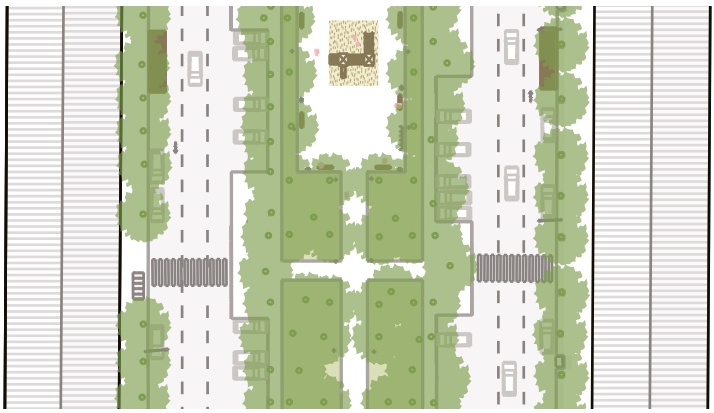
Main Street with Additional Parking

Using additional parking spaces in the surrounding boulevards could free up the yards from uncontrolled "wild" parking. To maximize the space provided, parking could be located on both sides of the traffic lane and center parking could be arranged as parking pockets.

While this transformation aims to provide as much parking as possible at the perimeter of the neighborhood, the main street should simultaneously be improved by planting trees alongside the street and between the parking spaces. Additional crosswalks should be created to provide easy and safe access to the central parking spaces. This solution would enlarge the transportation space while maintaining a green setting and ensuring that the central area remains comfortable for pedestrians.



Figures 9–11: Transformation of main street with additional parking

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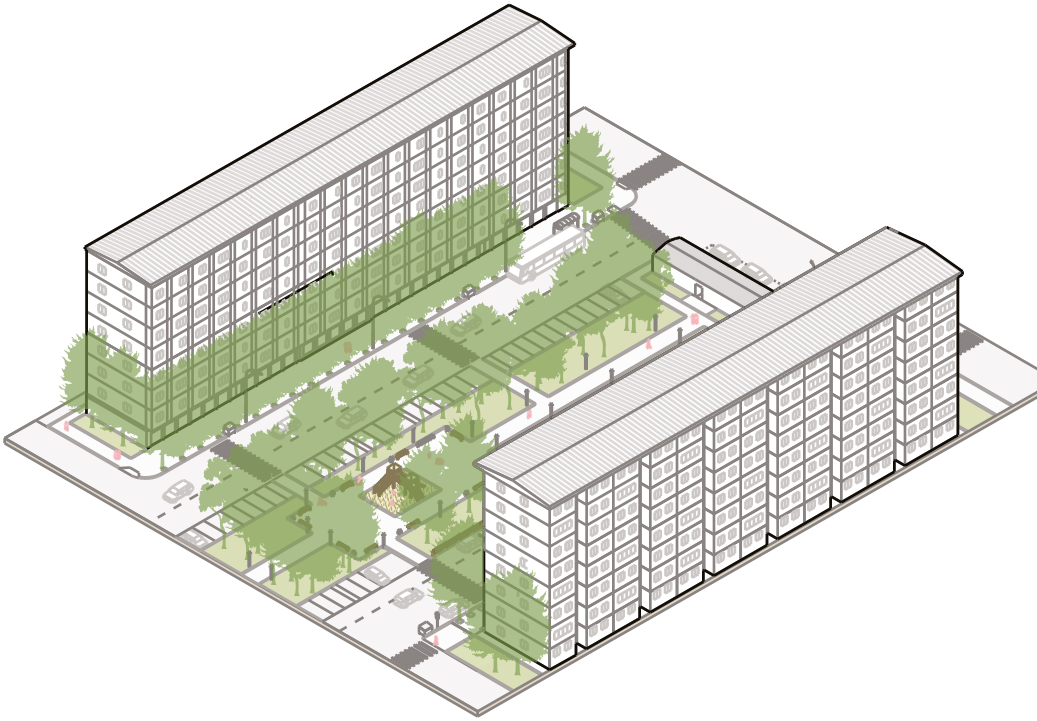

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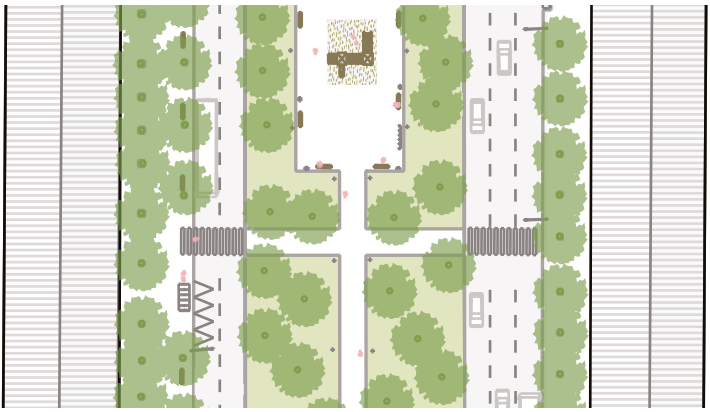
Main Street with Enlarged Pedestrian Areas

This transformation focuses on the adjacent businesses, optimizing the streetscape and providing more space in front of the businesses to make both shopping and strolling more enjoyable. Additional seating for cafés and restaurants on the widened sidewalk and even in the center of the boulevard can provide additional space for businesses and encourage people to linger. Parking for motorized vehicles will also be available here. On the far side of the park, two lanes for private vehicles and a bus lane will provide the minimal but sufficient space for neighborhood accessibility. On the other side of the boulevard, only public transportation and bicycles are allowed, thus ensuring a tight connection between the central green space and the shopping area. This transformation is quite extreme and could only work alongside neighborhood-level measures and an improved public transportation network.



Figures 12, 13: Transformation of main streets with enlarged pedestrian areas

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Main Street as Green Corridor

Through traffic with private cars will be banned entirely from the boulevard. The sidewalk will be widened, followed by public transportation, a car lane for residents, and bike lanes. Multiple crosswalks will connect the central park tightly with the sidewalk, which should be equipped with bushes and flowerpots along the buildings.

Figures 14, 15: Transformation of main street as green corridor

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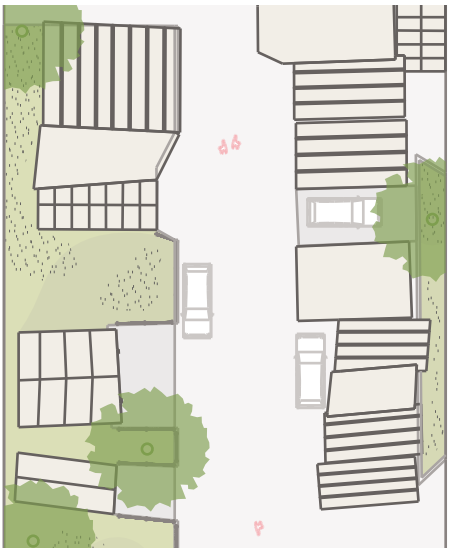
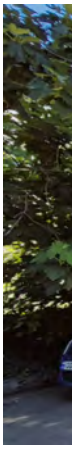
3.1.2 Collector Streets

Collector streets lead through the micro district; they do not necessarily connect the surrounding main streets directly but often form a loop within the block. These streets are not linear but have multiple curves to minimize traffic through the interior of the block. At the moment these streets are open and accessible for all users and modes of transportation, currently there is no public transportation within the block. Residential collector streets usually have two lanes, one in each direction of travel, they connect the block to the peripheral main streets and distribute the traffic within the block. As with all streets within the block, the residential collector streets lack parallel sidewalks or bike lanes and offer on-street parking.



Figures 16–18: Collector street in plan, elevation, and isometric view



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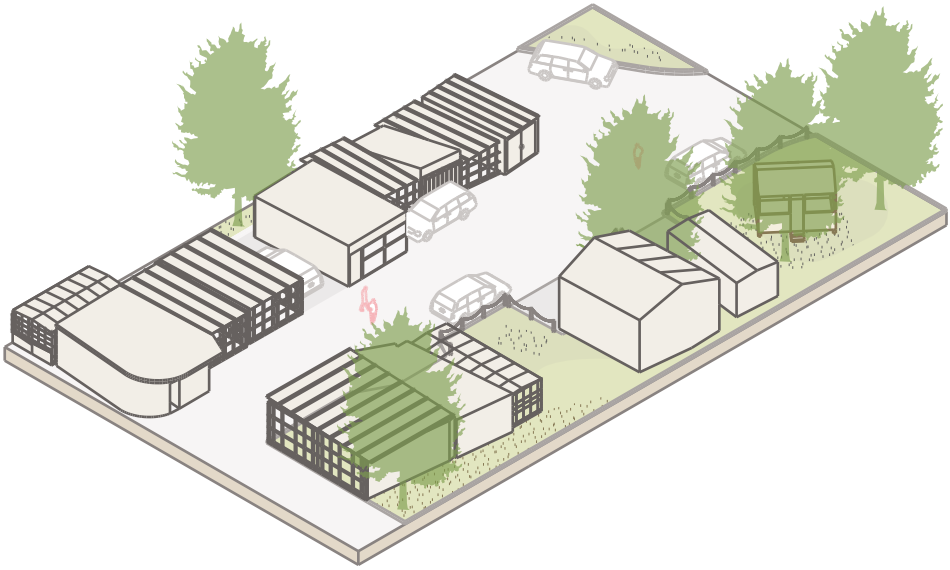

Figure 19: Collector street between building 2 (98) on Vazha-Pshavela Ave. and building 6 (15) on P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 20: Collector street between building 2 (98) and 1b on Vazha-Pshavela Avenue
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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Figure 21: Collector street, P. Kavtaradze 4th turn, near buildings 4 (20) and 6
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 22: Collector street, P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn, near building 5
Source: Nano Zazanashvil, 2024

Along the collector streets, there are parking areas that are usually unregulated. Although the streets are owned and maintained by the municipality, on-street parking within Block VI is free of charge. Therefore, neither the duration nor the positioning of parking is controlled. Cars usually park in the direction of travel on the right-hand side of the road.

The current street layout poses challenges for non-motorized traffic. While the streets are wide enough for cars to pass by easily, the lack of sidewalks often pushes pedestrians to the center of the street. This situation is inadequate for a residential area because it makes the pedestrians more vulnerable due to the lack of sufficient space reserved for them, such as a sidewalk adjacent to the road.

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Possible Transformations

Transforming the collector streets could significantly calm the neighborhood and potentially free it from cars altogether. Pedestrians would benefit significantly. The other open spaces would also improve with less traffic and better-organized street sections. Even the car traffic could improve from less bidirectional traffic and fewer turns. On-street parking within the neighborhood should be reserved for local residents, and introducing payment schemes could make it less attractive for non-local users and free up space for the residents. Since corners and crossings can be hazardous for non-motorized traffic, clear markings could help to avoid unsafe zones for pedestrians. Playing children who are obscured by parked vehicles are at high risk of getting into an accident in such situations. At the same time, the possibility of eliminating all on-street parking could be discussed. Such a measure could benefit pedestrians, cyclists, and even other users and functions. These areas are well connected to both the street network and public services such as water and electricity, making them especially interesting for micro businesses. Allocating this space for other modes of transportation would also support the idea of the superblock. Strengthening the pedestrian network could help to reduce short car trips and make walking in the neighborhood safer and more convenient.

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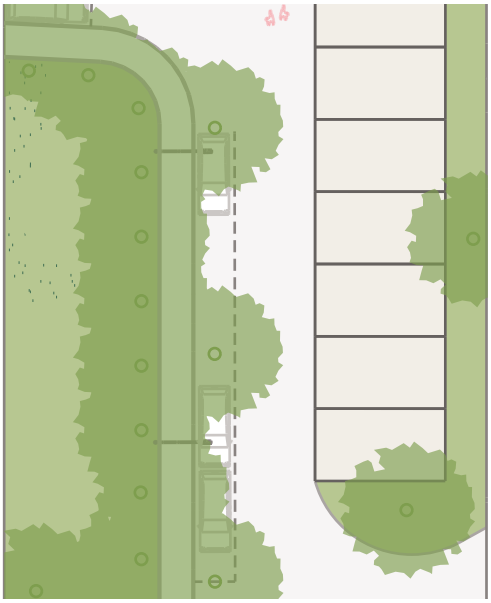
Multimodal Street

In this transformation, the streets remain open for all modes of transportation, but the different transportation spaces, such as parking areas, motorized traffic lanes, and pedestrian walkways, will be separated in assigned areas. Restructuring the street's cross section by adding sidewalks and trees will guarantee a safe environment for pedestrians. Marking areas for parking on alternating sides slows down the traffic and allows pedestrians to walk more safely through the neighborhood, minimizing the need for crosswalks. Some garages will be restructured and assigned to nearby residents, while other



Figures 23–25: Transformation of a collector street into a multimodal space, as seen in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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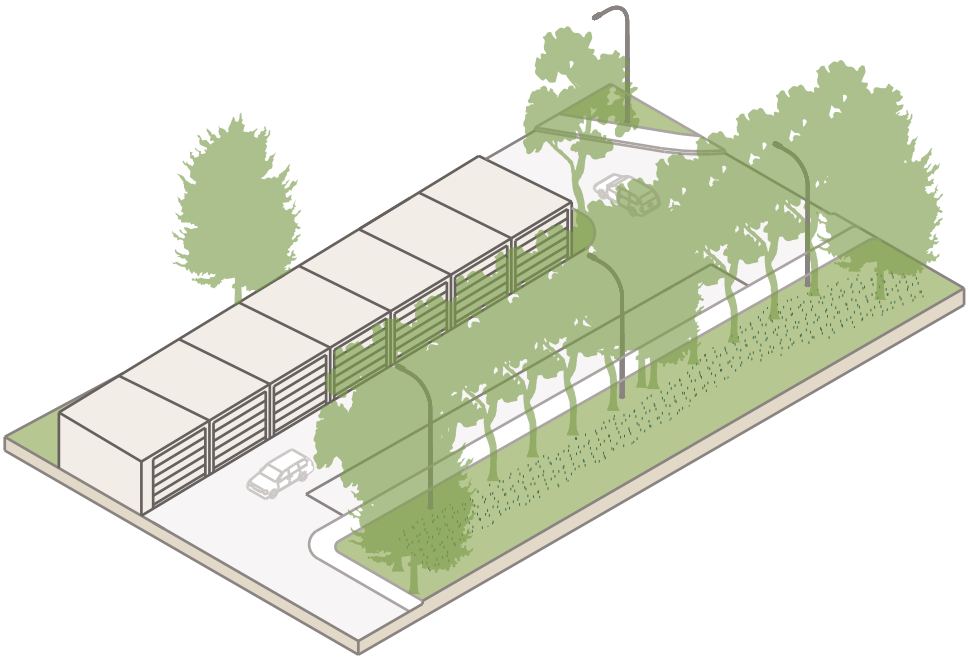
garages should be removed to ensure sufficient open spaces for play and wildlife. This will further clarify the street spaces and allow for sufficient parking throughout the neighborhood. Additional trees along the street provide shade for pedestrians.



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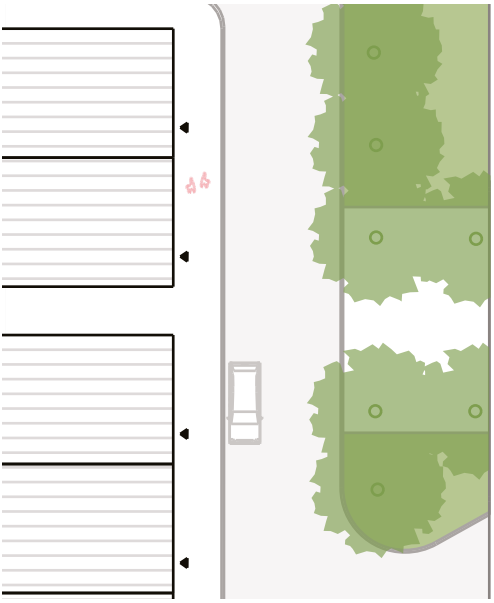
Neighborhood Street

The street will be reorganized with a new profile featuring a shared section for cars and cyclists, as well as sidewalks on both sides. The introduction of mainly one-way traffic and modal filters will redirect the motorized traffic and reduce through traffic even further, which will generally lead to a calming of the neighborhood. Adding tree islands will slow the traffic. Narrowing the lane width will reduce the speed of cars further. The garages will be removed, and the space gained will be used to build row houses, which will attract new residents to the neighborhood. This different typology is ideal for families and will foster social cohesion within the block.



Figures 26, 27: Transformation of a collector street into a neighborhood street, in plan and elevation

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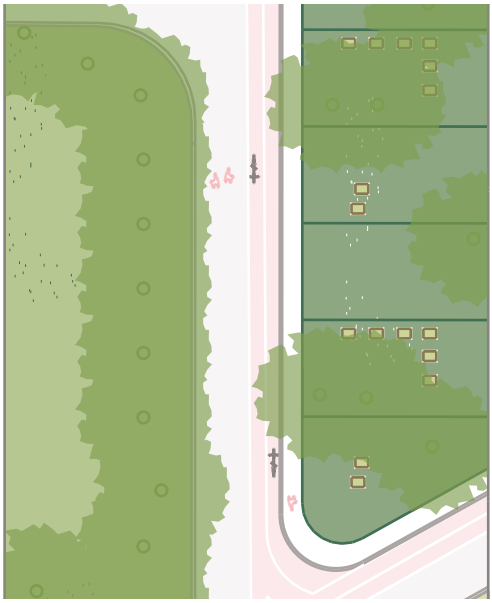
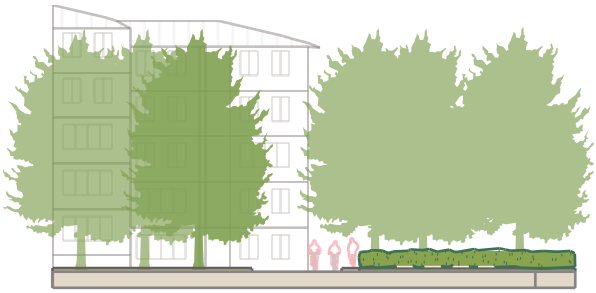
Car-Free Street

In this transformation, personal cars will be banned entirely from the street and inside the block. This requires the addition of parking spaces at the periphery, located at the entry points to the neighborhood. Existing streets can be narrowed but must remain wide enough to allow service and emergency vehicles to safely pass through. The removed garages make way for wide open spaces that can be used by all. Private gardens will add to the diversity of users of these open spaces and give residents the desired space for their own creativity.

Figures 28, 29: Transformation of a collector street into a car-free street, as seen in plan and elevation





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3.1.3 Local Streets

Local streets constitute the lowest level in the street hierarchy. They branch off from the collector or main streets and guarantee access to the neighborhood buildings. Sometimes these streets are blocked with barriers, such as gates, and are consequently only accessible for residents of the adjacent buildings. At night these streets are often used for parking, leaving barely enough space for mobility. These streets account for up to 50 percent of the yard space. While these streets were not always part of the original layout as planned or built, they have been increasingly formalized over time. They are often paved with non-permeable materials. From a mobility viewpoint, these streets are not necessary since they only service the last stretch toward the houses.

Figures 30–32: Local street in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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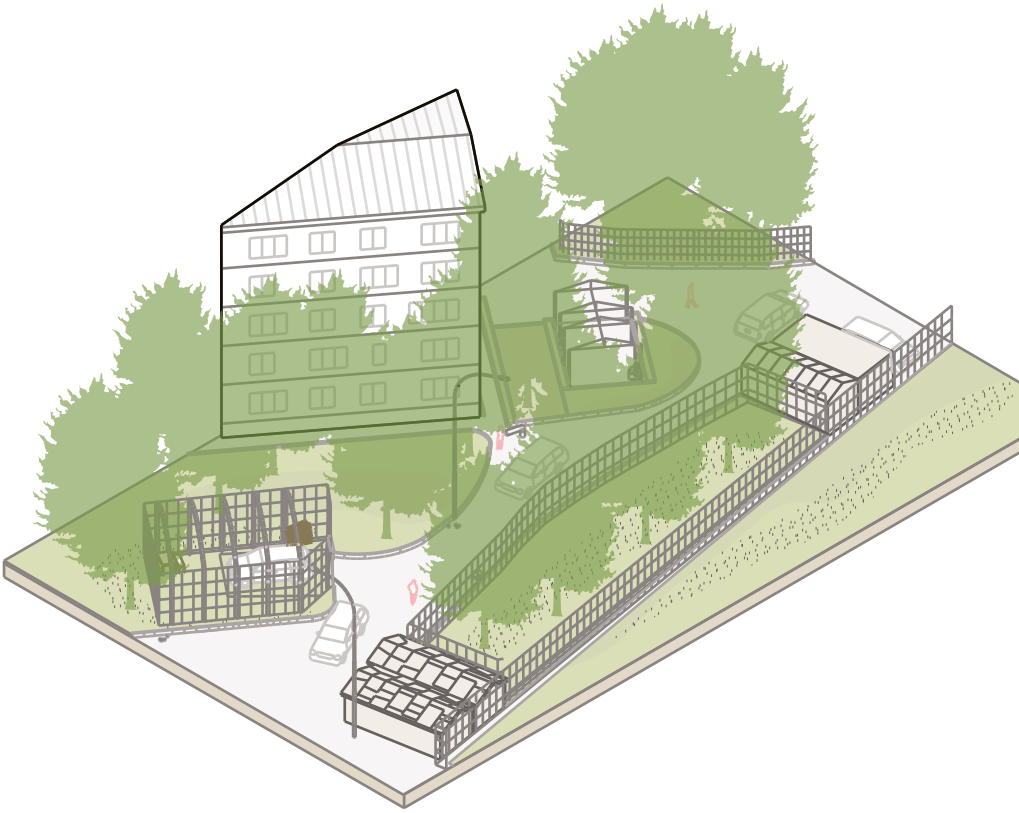

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Figure 33: Local street between the football field and building 1 (18) on P. Kavtaradze 4th turn
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 34: Local street, south of the football field, between buildings 6 (15) and 4 (10) of P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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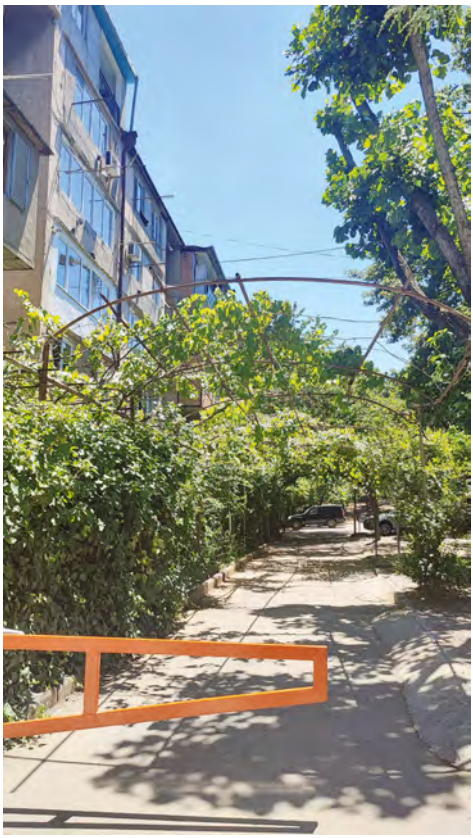
Figure 35: Local street, entrance to the courtyard of the P. Kavtaradze 70
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 36: Local street between the soccer field and building 1 (18) on P. Kavtaradze 4th turn
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2024



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Organized Parking

In this proposal the street section within the yards would be minimized. The streets would offer parking along their entire length, interspersed with trees. Other functions, such as bike stands and trash collection, could be integrated into this space, depending on the specific location. At the chosen site, parking is accommodated in garages that would also provide elevated seating for the stadium on one side and an additional barrier toward the residential yards on the other side. While the transformation seems quite rigorous at first, it actually serves as a valuable buffer between the busy stadium and the calm neighborhood. This type of transformation works best where sufficient space is available and where multiple competing functions are located close to one another. Although the sealed surface area increases in this scenario, the quality of the adjacent spaces improves due to clear zoning and better separation.

Figures 37–39: Transformation of a local street with barrier forming garages, in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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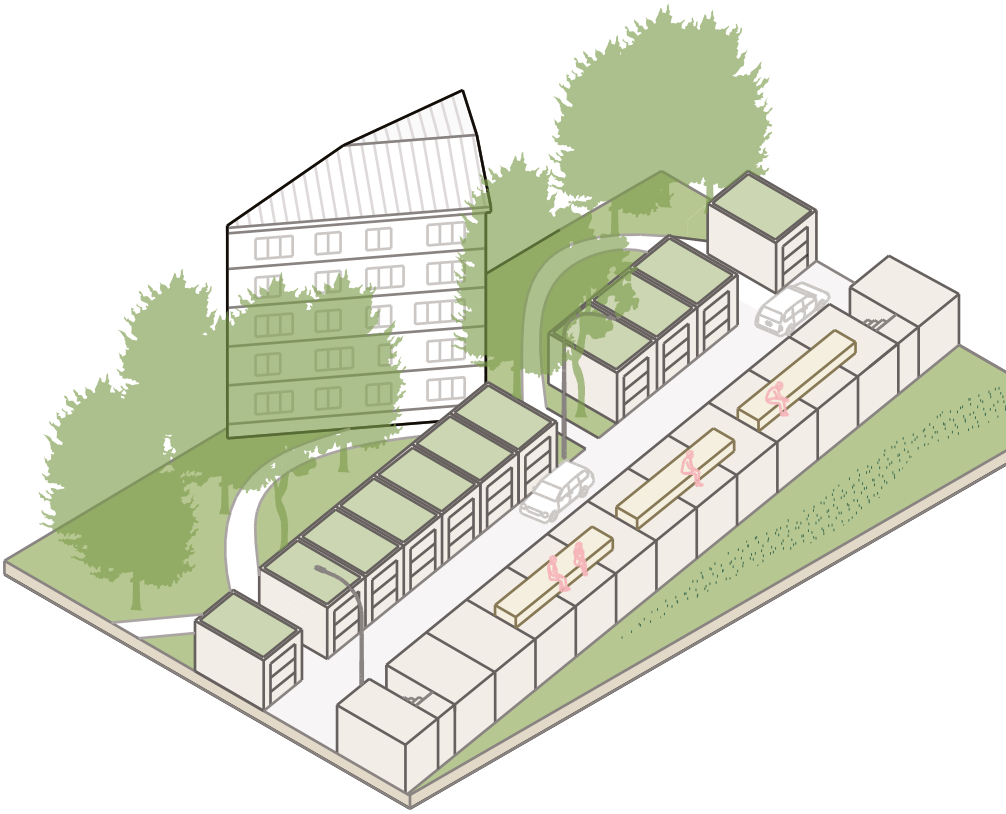

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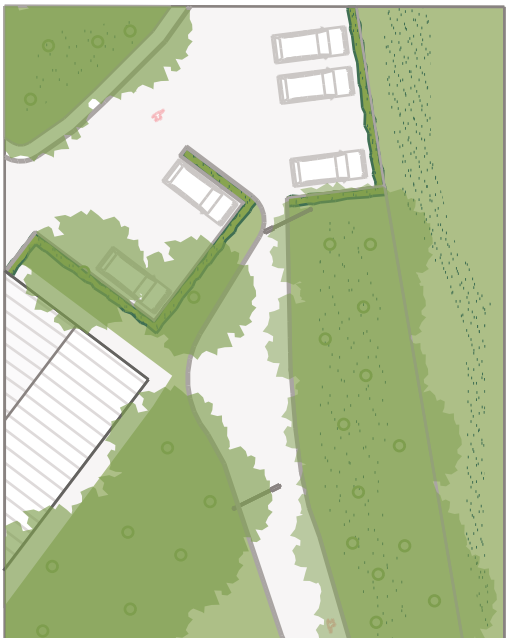
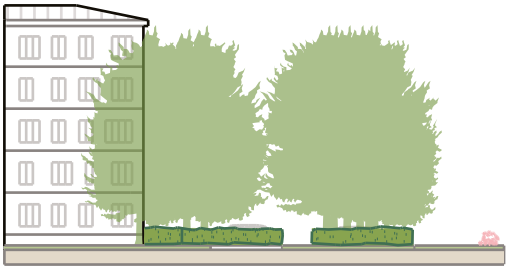
Car-Free Street with Parking at the Entrance

Parking will be organized at the entrance to the yard. Both garages and uncovered parking are viable options. In the yards, the goal is to minimize paved surfaces and transform the street into a pedestrian path, leaving the remaining open spaces for recreational and personal use.

Figures 40, 41: Transformation of a local street with parking at the entrance, as seen in plan and elevation





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Car-Free Street without Parking

This transformation bans the cars altogether. The newly gained spaces are used for leisure activities and additional sports amenities. The existing garages are transformed into little shops that provide a rudimentary infrastructure for the stadium and the nearby houses.

Figures 42, 43: Transformation of a local street into a car-free zone, with a new playground and a comfortable path for pedestrians and cyclists as seen in plan and elevation

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3.1.4 Pedestrian and Bike Paths

This subtype includes pathways intended mainly for pedestrians but also used by cyclists. These pathways were planned to provide comfortable connections for pedestrians and shortcuts between streets and yards, thereby connecting buildings and entrances to public open spaces. The sidewalks parallel to the main streets are also part of the footpath network. They have a relatively small width of about 1.5 meters, allowing two pedestrians to pass each other comfortably. The surface of the paths can consist of various materials, such as asphalt, paving stones, sand, or dirt. Some footpaths are equipped with lighting and other urban furniture, such as benches or trash cans.

Figures 44–46: Footpath in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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The footpaths in Block VI are in overall simple conditions. The pavement is often cracked, and there are severe thresholds and bumps. The paths offer few or no supporting functions and would therefore benefit from investments. Consequently, they do not always provide barrier free access, often have insufficient lighting, and lack signage altogether. There is no clear hierarchy, and many paths seem to exist more or less accidentally, connecting specific functions without ensuring accessibility throughout the block.

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Figure 47: M. Shavishvili Street, pathway to building 5 on P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2024

Figure 48: Pathway near P. Kavtaradze 43
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2024

Figure 49: Pathway near P. Kavtaradze 51
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2024

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Formalizing the Existing Situation

Further formalizing existing paths would allow all users to comfortably use them. The first priority would be to provide barrier-free access, especially for public transportation. However, additional lighting and seating areas would also be significant improvements, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Figures 50, 51: Transformation of footpath with formalized borders, as seen in plan and elevation

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Integrated Bike Path

Widening the footpath and adding a separate bike path would allow cyclists to profit from the same shortcuts that pedestrians enjoy. This transformation would only be implemented on a few paths because cyclists can easily use the street network.

Figures 52–54: Transformation of footpath with additional bike path, as seen in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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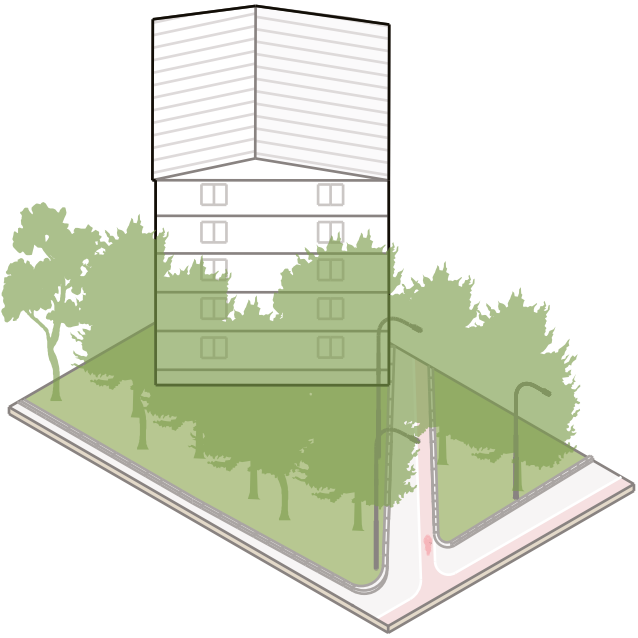

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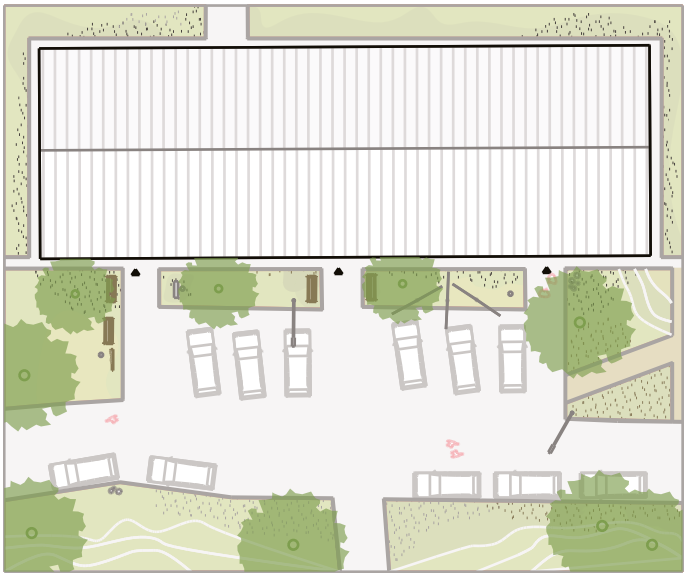
3.1.5 Parking Lots

Parking lots are the only form of organized, legal parking within Block VI. This subtype comprises all open spaces off the street that are exclusively reserved for parking. The lots usually consist of 8–16 perpendicular parking spaces situated near the entrance to buildings. The parking spaces are on public land but are often maintained and organized privately by the HOA of the building. Some of these parking options are personalized and are only accessible to the owners of the building. These parking spaces are relatively efficient and well-maintained. They pose few conflicts with other uses and are conveniently located for the users because they are close to the buildings.



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Figures 55–57: Parking lot in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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Figures 58, 59: Parking near P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn building 6
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

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Multifunctional Parking Lots

Formalizing the existing parking spaces could make them more attractive, which would benefit carport users and their neighbors alike. Carports should have green roofs or solar roofs with rainwater collection. Electric charging options with integrated bike and stroller parking could be additional ways to transform these spaces with quality gains for the community. Due to the ample street space, additional parking could be provided across the street and a sidewalk could be added for the pedestrians.

Figures 60, 61: Transformation of a parking area with garages, as seen in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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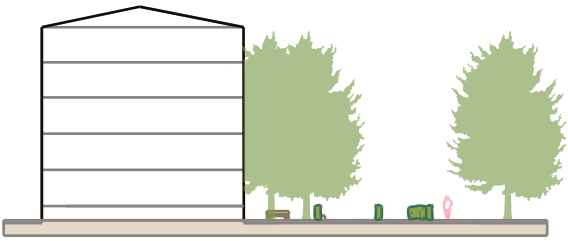
Repurposing and Repositioning

In both car-free and car-reduced neighborhoods, the parking lots at the heart of the neighborhood could be repurposed. Due to their proximity to houses, these areas could be transformed into private or shared gardens. Small plazas for gathering could also be offered. These should be placed at a distance from buildings and could be open to the existing street.



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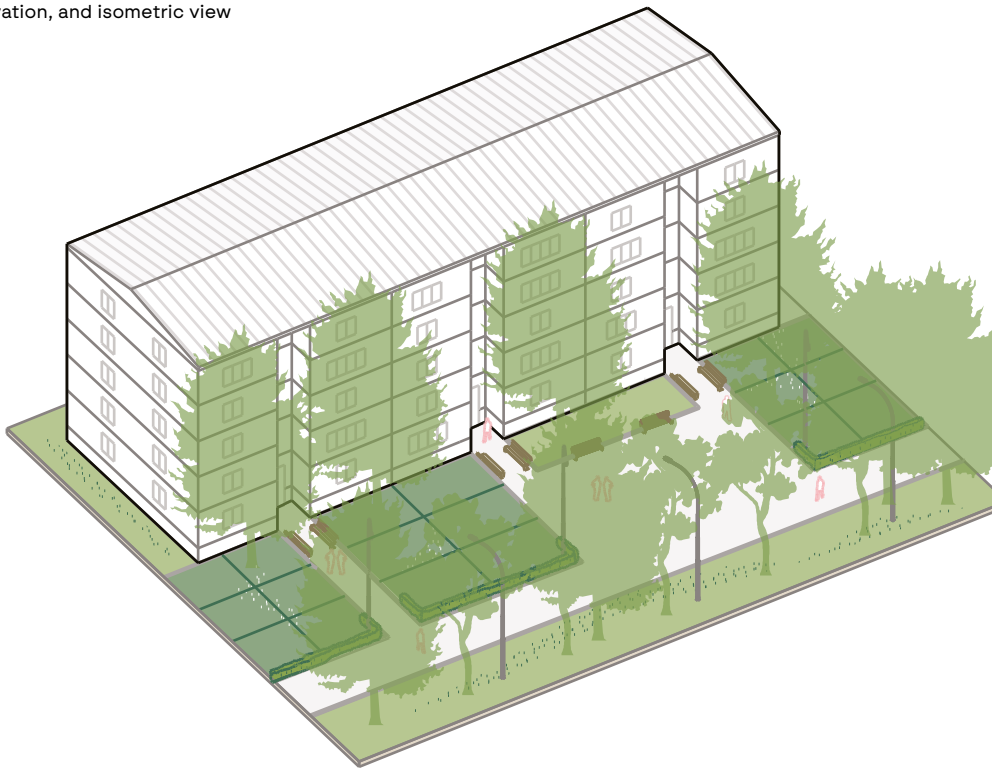
Figures 62–64: Transformation of a parking area with private gardens and a square with benches, as seen in plan, elevation, and isometric view



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3.2 YARDS, ENTRANCE AREAS, AND PRIVATE GARDENS

The subtypes of this chapter are among the most prominent open spaces in large housing estates. The basis of the open space network within large housing estates consists of enclosed directly associated with buildings, yards between buildings and the street, entrance areas from the yards, store entrances, and private and allotment gardens.

All yards belong to one of the first two subtypes. The first subtype comprises yards that are exclusively associated with a building. The second subtype comprises all yards that are located between buildings and streets. The separation into these two subtypes helps us to understand the different qualities and potentials of these open spaces. The first subtype is enclosed by the built fabric it has great potential for activities related to housing. It can be of high quality and highly valuable for its direct residents. Spaces of the second subtype are spatially less well-defined and need more qualification to be of benefit for the local residents. Therefore, they lend themselves to more public activities.

Similar to the distinction between yards, there are two subtypes of entrance areas. Entrance areas from the yards are usually private and important for the residents' quality of life because they provide space for social micro-interactions. They are rather intimate yet help with establishing a sense of place. In contrast, the fourth subtype, store entrances, serves an entirely different purpose. They profit from being highly visible and very public. Their spatial qualities focus on ease of entry and consumer experience.

The last subtype of this chapter describes all privately used garden spaces. Although they were uncommon in the original plans, they have become abundant after the privatization of the microdistricts and are used in various ways today.

Yards are a particularly defining element of open space for large estates. While most yards are open spaces adjacent to and associated with a specific building, some are located next to streets and serve as buffer zones. Yards can be enclosed or open on one or more sides, creating the fluid space characteristic of large housing estates. Typical of the open structure of large housing estates from the 1960s and 1970s, the buildings are situated in a continuum of flowing green spaces rather than defining spaces themselves. Yards were usually interconnected by other larger open spaces, such as parks, schoolyards, or internal streets. Today, however, some of these connections have often

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been lost due to unregulated structures, such as fences and garages. Within the continuum of open spaces are the access points, the entrance areas of the buildings.

The topography and diagonal placement of buildings with relatively short overlaps of adjacent houses create many spatially undefined spaces at the

Figure 1: Privately used open spaces in Block VI

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ends of the yards. Often it is not apparent whether a specific area should be considered a front or back yard, or even part of the street. Due to this specific layout, only two types of yards can be distinguished within Block VI.

The spatial organization, accessibility, and usage of the yards have changed over the years. Due to a lack of oversight, the quality of the yards has deteriorated significantly. In the original layout, the yards were interconnected; today, they are often interrupted by fences or other obstacles. Unregulated new construction, privately enclosed areas, chains, and other barriers interrupt the flow of the yards. These alterations have lowered the overall quality of the yards, restricting access for the general public and granting rights only to individuals or specific groups. The fragmentation of the yards has also led to a decline in day-to-day leisure usage in favor of specialized and individualized functions, such as private gardens and enclosed areas filled with trash.

Besides this fragmentation, the biggest threat to the quality of the yards is illegal ("wild") parking. Cars driving over unpaved ground destroy any existing flora, leaving behind a barren, gray wasteland. Even a single car in a yard can lower the quality of the space, leading to less frequent usage and inviting even more cars. Since the cars park chaotically in ever-changing positions, other uses of the yard can be lost entirely the, making this the biggest challenge for the yards and the neighborhood. However, the urban layout of Block VI actually facilitates and exacerbates the appropriation of the yard.

Converting the neighborhood back to its original layout by removing unauthorized construction would already be a great improvement to the current situation, yet it would fall short of the potential of these open spaces and would not meet modern needs. Any conversion should also entail a change in ownership or, at least, management. Having all open spaces managed by the district, for example—or, in a less drastic change, by multiple HOAs—would allow for more coherent action regarding transportation and other uses within the settlements. However, it would not result in privatized and personalized open spaces as we know them from other urban morphologies, such as the inner space in block developments. The management of private spaces—where to place them, how to assign them, etc.—would also have to be organized. To unlock the full potential, the usage and ownership of the yards should be managed at the district level, allowing parts of the spaces to be used individually while ensuring the majority are kept publicly accessible and communally maintained.

The entrance areas of the houses are separate and have the potential to serve as individual addresses and offer space for all daily residential activities. Originally, the adjacent areas served as places where the residents could meet, spend their leisure time, and do household chores. Today, these areas are either privately or publicly and may be reserved for the inhabitants of the buildings or accessible to everyone.

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Figure 2: Individually configured entrance area
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 3: Fenced-in private garden
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Private gardens are small, individually used green spaces. Ownership can vary. These spaces are typically used for gardening, such as planting flowers or vegetables. They are spaces where people spend their leisure time and can function as an extension of the apartment if the climate and weather conditions allow it. Although private gardens and entrance areas are both part of the yards, they are considered separate subtypes due to their specific ownership and usage.

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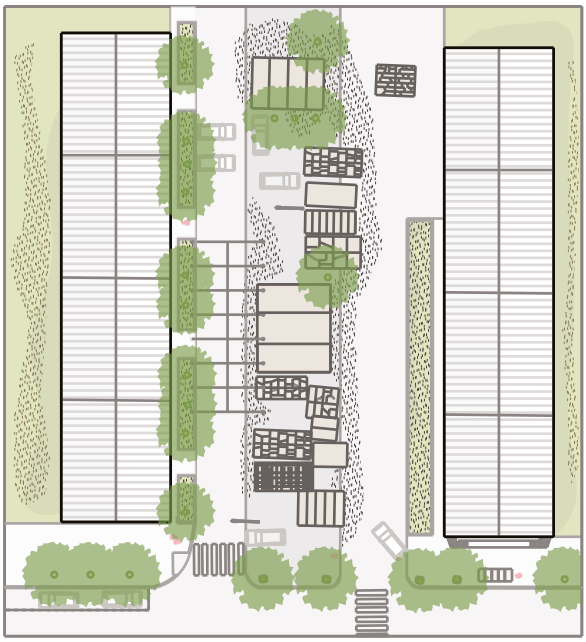
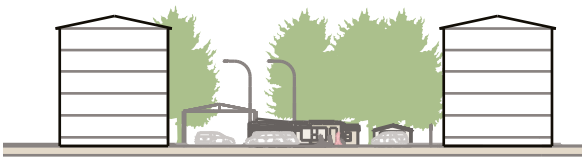
3.2.1 Yards Associated with a Building

The yard located between two buildings is the most prevalent type in the neighborhood. Due to the diagonal positioning and the resulting half overlap of most buildings within the block, the yards are spatially very undefined. They are typically open to both sides, although some of the yards are closed on one side at the northern and eastern edges of the block. This openness makes the yards very public and reduces their spatial qualities. In many yards, new dividing elements have been built, such as fences or garages. Most of the yards also provide entry to the buildings. Due to unclear ownership and a lack of regulation and supervision, a lot of chaotic structures have been built. Illegally parked cars and occasionally random pathways or enclosed private gardens make the yards unattractive for other users. The yards often lack good lighting, making them unsafe or at least uncomfortable to walk through at night.





Figures 4–6: Courtyard in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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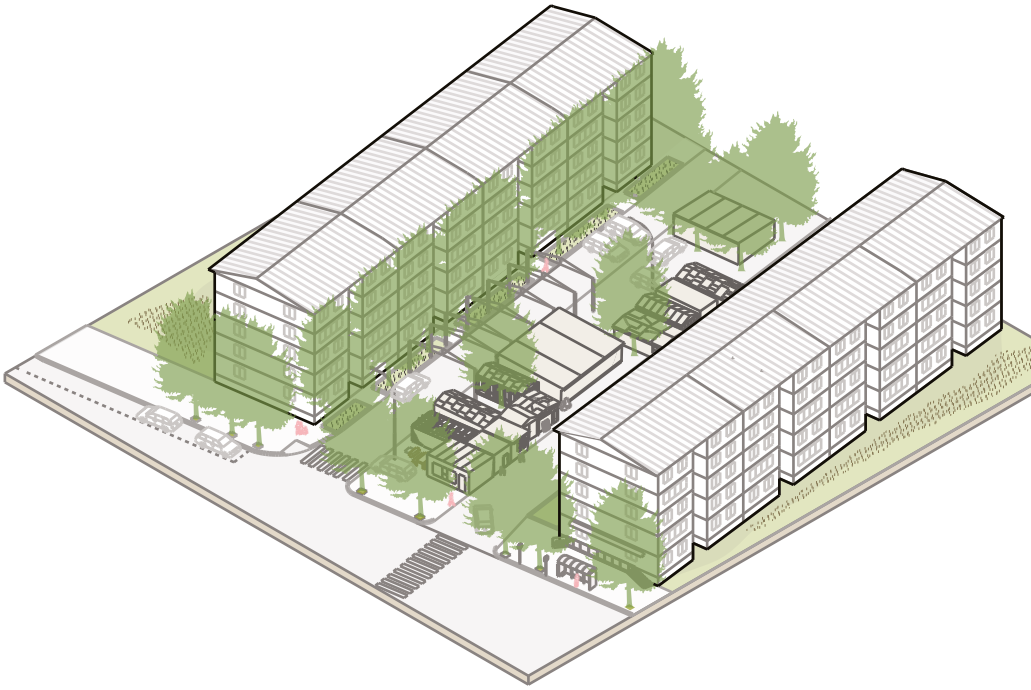

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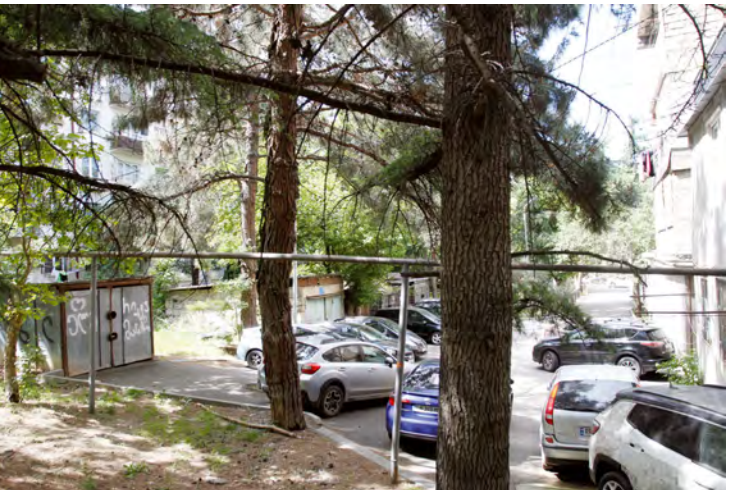

Figure 7: Courtyard with elevation and wild parking between buildings 72 and 74 on P. Kavtaradze Street
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Figure 8: View into courtyard between buildings 70 and 72, as seen from P. Kavtaradze Street
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

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Figure 9: Courtyard with stairs between buildings 72 and 74 on P. Kavtaradze Street
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Possible Transformations

A portion of each yard should be reserved for communal ownership to ensure it remains accessible to neighborhood residents. The maintenance of these areas should be the responsibility of the relevant HOAs. In order to facilitate unobstructed "fluid" movement throughout the settlement, these open spaces must not be divided by physical structures following the property lines. Instead, they should be transformed to serve all adjacent buildings. However, this does not imply that the entire open space must be designated for communal or single use. A variety of scenarios could allow for greater or lesser private use, and the placement of small business within the open spaces or the construction of small service buildings could enhance the yards' structure further.

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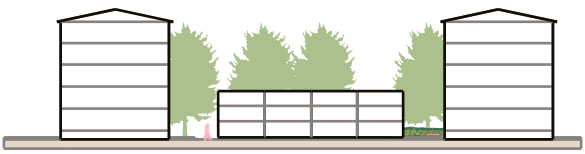
Densification with Row Houses and a Communal Yard

In larger yards, housing densification can greatly enhance otherwise underused and misused space. Row houses could help to diversify the socioeconomic fabric of the neighborhood by attracting middle-class residents. Although the houses in this transformation would occupy a significant part of the yard, the remaining area could be developed to provide amenities for other residents. The architectural scheme under consideration presents an alternative design that incorporates additional private gardens to optimize the space available for individual use. The central green space could accommodate a variety of amenities such as a playground, bicycle parking facilities, or simply a lawn.



Figures 10–12: Transformation through densification with row houses and a communal yard

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Private Gardens

This transformation aims to return parts of the yard to their original communal use. The offerings in the open space should be adapted to current needs and made available to all users. In addition to reestablishing a communal center, this transformation also addresses the need for more private outdoor spaces. The ground floor gains access to a row of gardens directly adjoining the building. The remaining part could be developed into an allotment garden for other residents of the house or a communal space for the remaining residents to share.

Figures 13, 14: Transformation with privatized gardens alongside buildings

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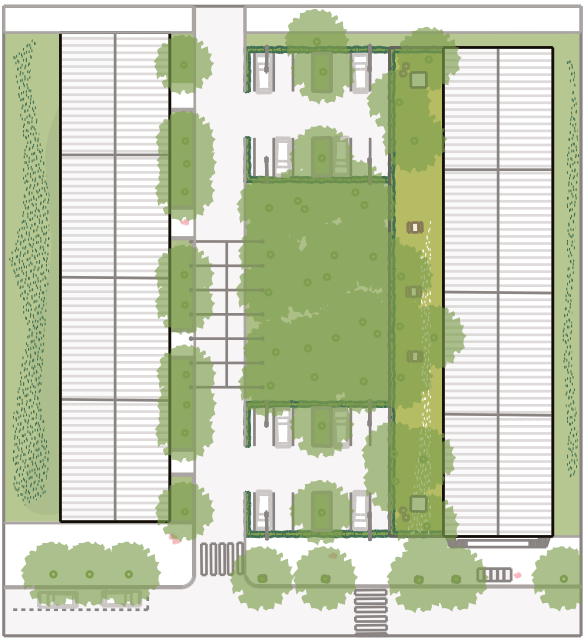
Organized Parking and Communal Garden

In locations where the yards are of low quality—due to large streets or a lack of interest in communal spaces, for example—the yards could be partly converted into organized parking space. The sides of the yards can be closed by a row of garages, providing a calmer space at the center and additional parking for residents at the sides. While aspects of solar exposure and noise pollution should still be respected, this would allow the rest of the neighborhood to be car-free.

Figures 15, 16: Transformation with organized parking and communal garden



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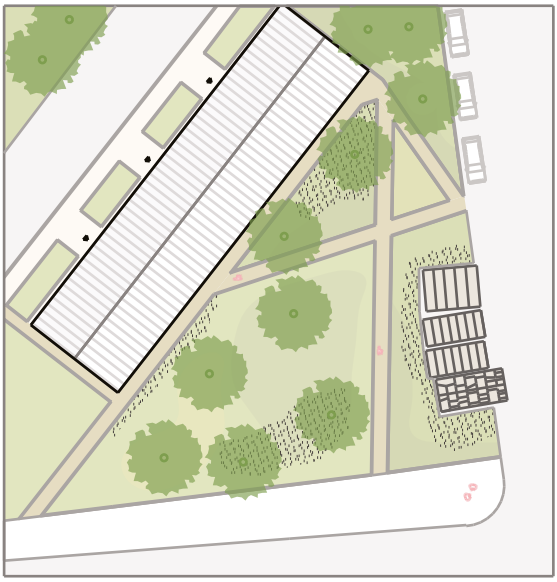
3.2.2 Yards between Buildings and Streets

The second type of yard is located between the buildings and the streets. Currently, this type often lacks a clear functional association with any of the buildings. These yards make slightly less than 50 percent of the total yard space in the neighborhood. Those on the entrance side of a building are almost exclusively paved, while those on the opposite side are usually green. Despite their odd location and the lack of spatial framing, these spaces hold great potential for the neighborhood. Since the rear sides of the buildings face the outer perimeter of Block VI, these yards contribute to the character of the rest of the city, giving the block an especially green appearance. Since they are located along the rear of the buildings and are cut off from the main street by a sidewalk, surprisingly few cars park in these areas. However, when such yards are located next to one of the access streets within the neighborhood, they are almost exclusively used for parking.

Figures 17–19: Yard in plan, elevation, and isometric view



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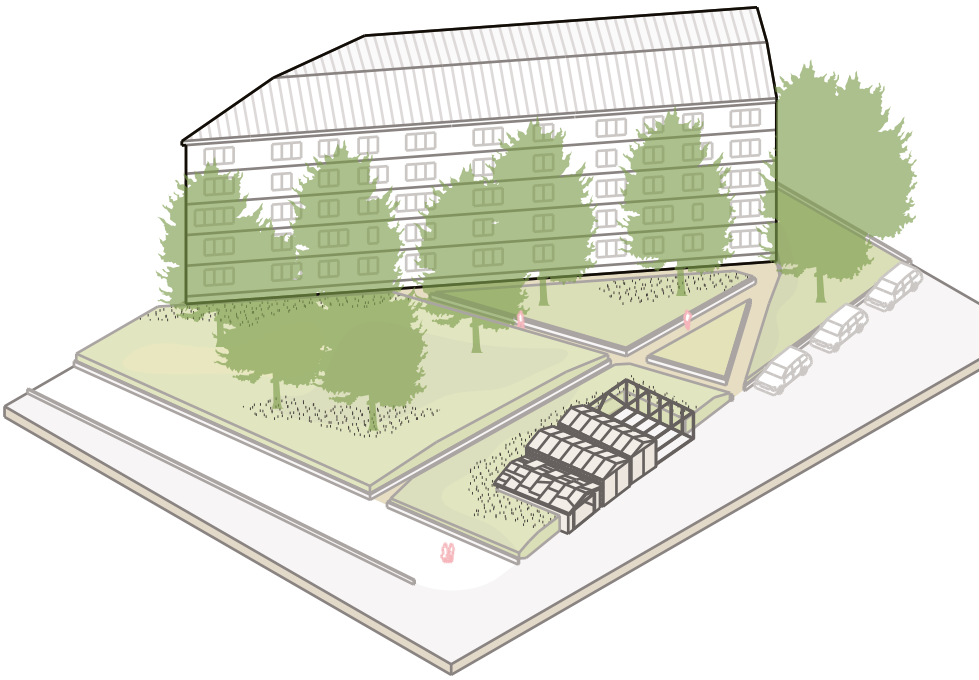

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Figures 20, 21: Yard next to building 51 on P. Kavtaradze Street
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2023

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Figure 22: Yard near building 6 (20) on P. Kavtaradze Street 4th turn
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Figure 23: View into yard from P. Kavtaradze Street
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Possible Transformations

Due to their public position, these areas should generally be maintained by the municipality or another blockwide-operating legal entity, such as a housing cooperation. Depending on the specific situation, these areas can serve many different purposes, including organized parking, neighborhood parks, plazas, playgrounds, and even gardens. In any case, due to their intermediate position, they have to link the more private yards to the public street spaces and other open areas.

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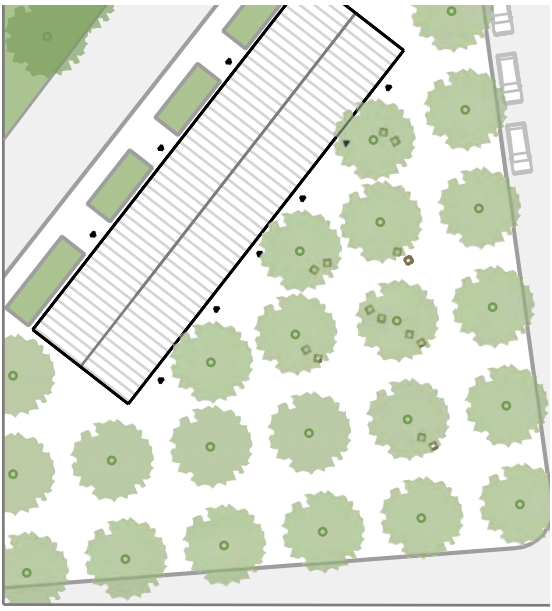
Green Plaza

In a highly public location, the yard can be transformed into a plaza or square. The presence of public squares has the potential to enhance the quality of life in the surrounding community, particularly when located in close proximity to public transportation or other public places frequented by many people in their daily routines In this scenario, the ground floor of the building should be allocated for the establishment of retail spaces, cafés, and restaurants.

Figures 24–26: Transformation into a green plaza



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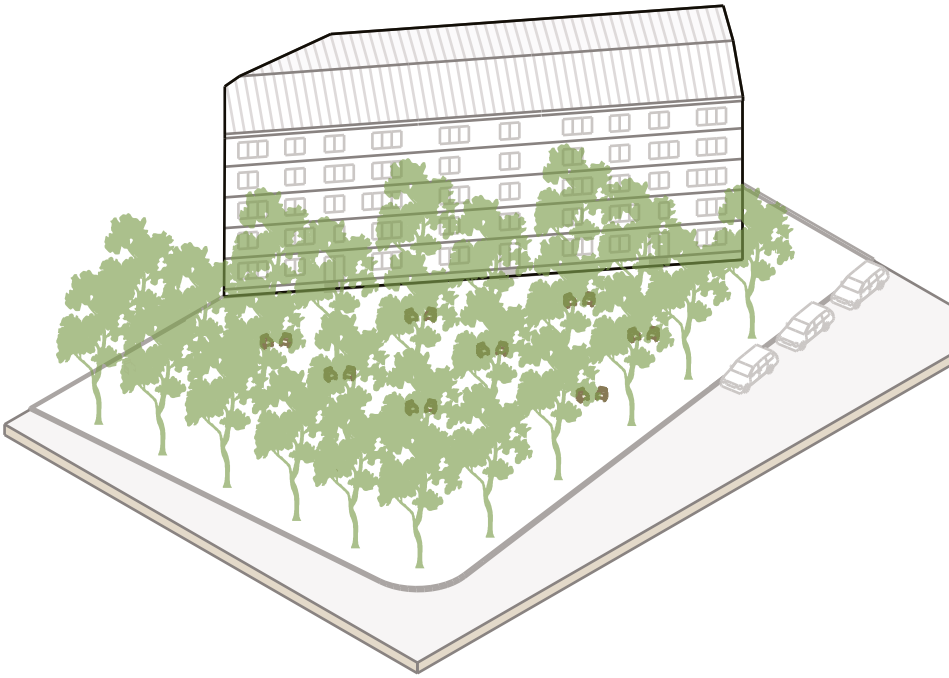

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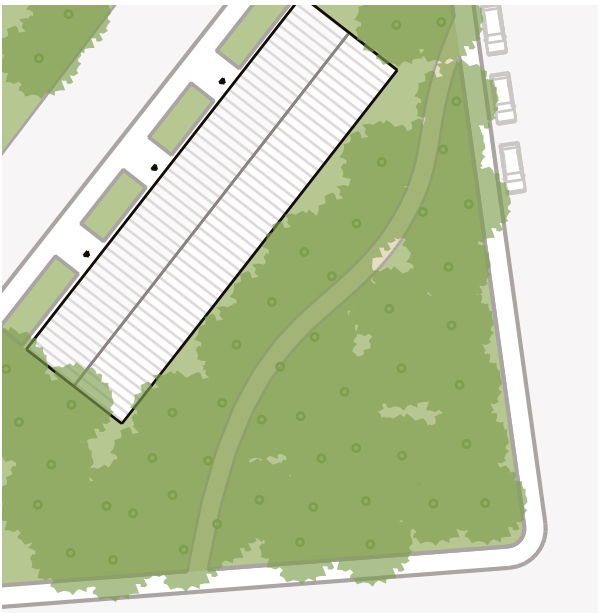
Buffer Green Spaces

In yards of smaller dimensions or those situated further inside the neighborhood rather than at the boundary, the implementation of buffer spaces is often the preferred alternative. These green spaces offer numerous ecological benefits, especially by providing a habitat for local flora and fauna. Furthermore, these areas have been shown to mitigate the urban heat island effect. Additionally, green spaces can serve as a physical barrier between a building or yard and surrounding noise pollution, thereby enhancing the quality of the neighborhood. If pathways provide access to the space, it is crucial that they be kept a certain distance from the building.

Figures 27, 28: Transformation into a buffer green



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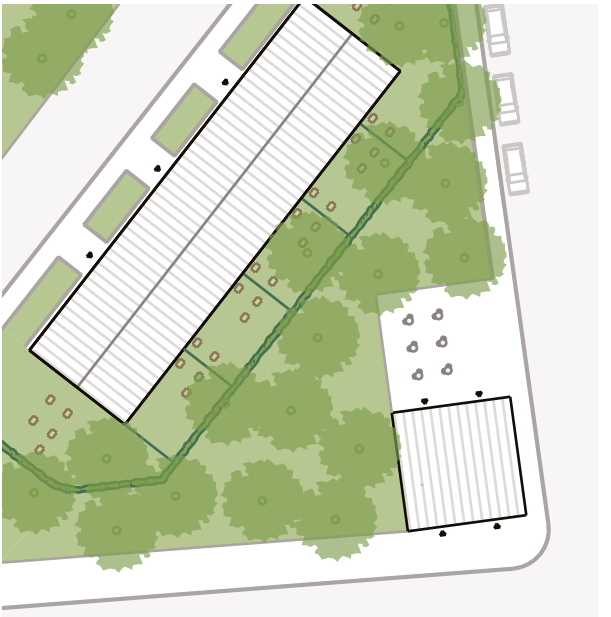
Integration and Activation

In many cases, integrating these open spaces with adjacent areas is an effective way to utilize these challenging spaces. This can involve other yards or even street spaces, as seen below. This increases the dimensions of the adjacent open spaces, enabling an expanded array of functions or more optimal integration of existing ones. When the yard is situated close to a major thoroughfare, adding amenities such as cafés can further enhance the space's functionality and appeal. The implementation of organised parking is also a valid transformation for these spaces, offering a number of advantages to the neighborhood by reducing the need for parking in other, higher-quality locations. However, in all these transformations, the yard should be structured with effective spatial elements, such as hedges, to create a private area associated with the building, as well as an open area relating to other functions and spaces.



Figures 29, 30: Transformation through integration and activation

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3.2.3 Dwelling Entrance Areas

This subtype encompasses all dwelling entrance areas. These open spaces play a crucial role in the inhabitants' quality of life, since they must pass through them to access their homes. However, many of the entrance areas are of poor quality. The planting areas are either bare or have few flowers, and the rest of the open space is unplanned, with some outdoor furniture dating back to Soviet times dispersed throughout.

Figures 31–33: Dwelling entrance areas from the yard, shown in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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In the case of apartment buildings in socialist neighborhoods from the 1960s and 1970s, the entrances are situated toward the inside of the microdistrict and are frequently accompanied by seating areas in close proximity to the door. However, given that the entrance is not from the public street but rather from the semi-public yard, these areas are relatively private.

The buildings within the block were designated for residential use only. Their entrance areas typically have a narrow strip of asphalt or similar material along the perimeter, followed by a strip approximately two meters wide, intended for the development of gardens or other outdoor spaces. The greenery in these areas is also in a state of relative neglect, despite many inhabitants taking responsibility and pride in them. In instances where individuals have initiated improvements, such as planting flowers or installing additional benches, these efforts often lack the oversight of a planner, resulting in limited enhancement of the existing conditions.

Additionally, these spaces are under considerable pressure due to the encroachment of building extensions. The entrances themselves are often obscured, thereby creating an unwelcoming and dimly lit ambiance. In the absence of extensions, the entrance areas are adequately sized for outdoor seating, trash containers, and bicycle parking. However, there is a lack of systematic efforts to address the existing shortcomings of these open spaces and transform them into welcoming spaces.

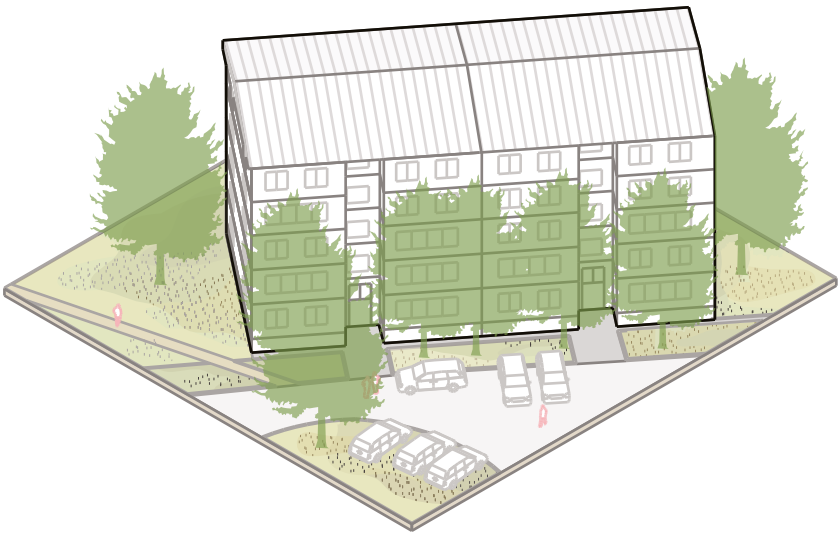

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Figure 34: Entrance to building 6 (20) on P. Kavtaradze 4th turn
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Figure 35: Entrance with parking and seating
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2023

Figure 36: Entrance with laundry and seating, near P. Kavtaradze 74
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2023

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Figure 37: Entrance with trash collection area near Vazha-Pshavela Avenue
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2023

Possible Transformations

The entrance area is of particular significance in this regard, as it functions as a crucial buffer between the private home and the public street. It is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal function of the entrance area in all transformations. The area should fulfil the dual role of serving as both an open and pleasant face to the public, inviting to visitors and providing room for daily communication for the inhabitants. Furthermore, the proposed changes should assist in bolstering the privacy requirements for the inhabitants, thereby ensuring their protection from the public.

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Private Gardens

In this transformation, the ground-floor units get exclusive access to the strip of land between the street and the building. Where possible, each ground-floor unit gets direct access from the apartment. Enclosing the gardens with a hedge protects the area from the street and adds some privacy. The privatization of the open spaces helps to reduce the municipality's maintenance obligations, qualifies the ground-floor apartments for families, and helps to create a calmer streetscape. The risk is that the hedges will form a somewhat anonymous presence on the street. Design guidelines can help to regulate how the private gardens are designed. This can help to keep the appearance of the neighborhood somewhat coherent while allowing the individual owners freedom to express their own preferences.

Figures 38–40: Transformation into private gardens

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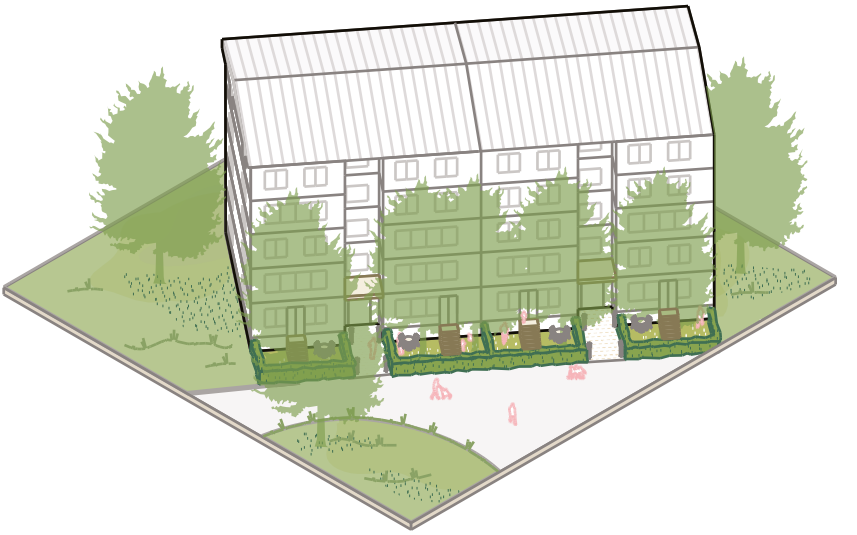

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Communal Gardens

Enclosing the front yard with a hedge while leaving the sides open toward the entrance will make the area more inviting for the residents. The area near the entrances can also be partially blocked off with a small structure for trash, bikes, and/or strollers. In this case, access can be restricted to one or more residents or given to all residents of the building. Providing communal furniture, such as barbecue equipment, will make the space more attractive to users. This will activate the space, ensuring higher levels of maintenance while keeping it communal. A downside of this transformation is the area's proximity to ground-floor apartments, so clear usage rules must be established.

Figures 41, 42: Transformation into communal gardens

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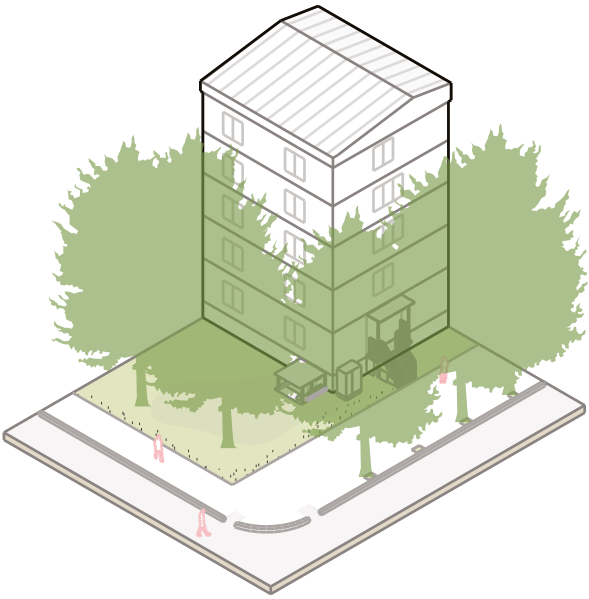
3.2.4 Store Entrance Areas

This subtype is predominantly located on the main streets along the perimeter of the district and encompasses all open spaces in front of storefronts. Strictly speaking, this subtype constitutes part of the sidewalk and street space. However, due to its unique usage, it is classified as its own subtype. The area's topography invariably results in a few steps leading into the stores. In contrast to the residential entrances, where the steps are are located inside as part of the building, these steps are situated outside and thus become part of the open space. Beyond this common characteristic, the store entrances share very few features. Nevertheless, this area is crucial for the stores. It allows businesses to display their goods, advertise, and even provide seating for customers. A review of Block VI's perimeter reveals only a few examples of positive alterations to these open spaces. Also, the few store entrances in the neighborhood have undergone significant modifications. Since these areas were not originally designed for stores, extensive construction was needed to enable customers to access the businesses. However, most of these open spaces lack the quality necessary to encourage prolonged stay. This represents a missed opportunity, both for the local community and for the businesses themselves. Cafés, bakeries, and similar establishments that are tucked away here, off the main streets, could also thrive inside the settlement if they were to offer seating areas for customers and would have greater visibility, for example by clustering together.



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Figures 43–45: Store entrance, shown in plan, elevation, and isometric view

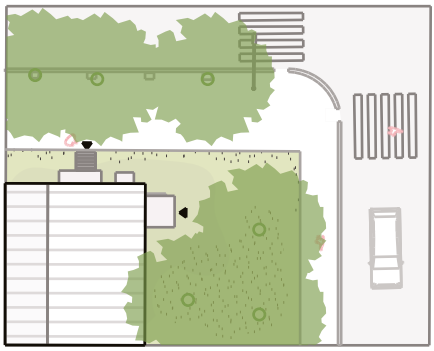

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Figure 46: Store entrance P. Kavtaradze str. No. 41
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Figure 47: Store entrance P. Kavtaradze str. No. 66
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Figure 48: Store entrance at P. Kavtaradze No. 51
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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Figure 49: Store entrance at P. Kavtaradze str. No. 62
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Possible Transformations

The elevated first storey of the building constitutes a significant impediment to the effective integration of stores within this housing typology. The presence of this object has been shown to impede a seamless transition from the pavement into the retail establishment. It is recommended that all transformations address this issue. The transformation solutions could either help to ease said transition, or alternatively, the level difference could be used to integrate store specific functions. As an alternative strategy relocation of the business could be considered, this makes sense where the threshold is particularly challenging to address, or where the public function is not beneficial for the neighborhood.

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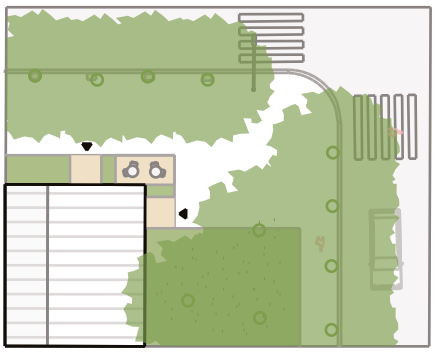
Clarified Entrance Design

This transformation is intended to maintain the status quo while clarifying the current situation by reducing visual elements and introducing design guidelines. The implementation of explicit design guidelines has the potential to enhance the neighborhood's aesthetic appeal, thereby mitigating the likelihood of conflicting interests among various stakeholders. The designation of a specific area for each business entity could enable these spaces to be used to their full potential in a beautiful and efficient manner. These guidelines could define uses such as seating, advertising, or showcasing. They could also provide a style guide relating to materials, furniture dimensions, or even a color schemes. The implementation of regulatory measures should be deliberated at the local level and subsequently enforced by the district administration.

Figures 50, 51: Transformation by clarifying entrance design



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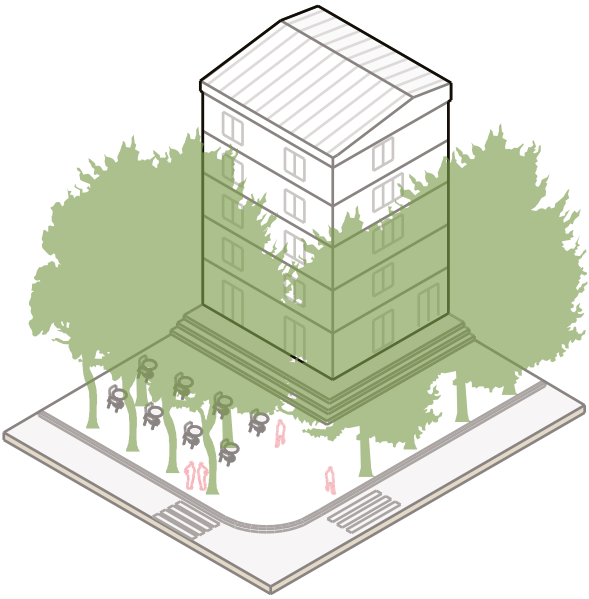
Combined Store Entrances

This transformation aims to reduce the chaotic appearance of the storefronts, especially at the corners along the main street. Providing a shared raised gallery for multiple commercial entities mitigates the need for disorderly individual stairways. This will also free up additional space on the sidewalks, thereby creating an opportunity for shops to install outdoor seating areas. Giving the shops a combined entrance area can also accentuate the building corners and clarify where businesses are located. Strategic placement of additional trees along the thoroughfare serves a dual purpose. They provide a respite from the summer heat and enhance the overall aesthetic of the streetscape.

Figures 52: Transformation by combining store entrances



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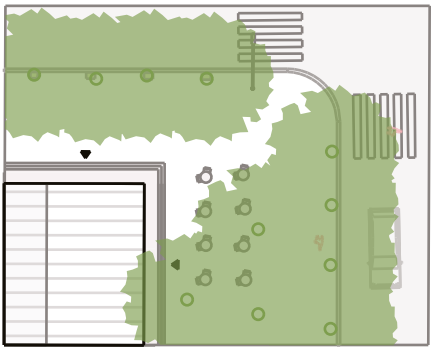
Figures 53, 54: Transformation by combining store entrances



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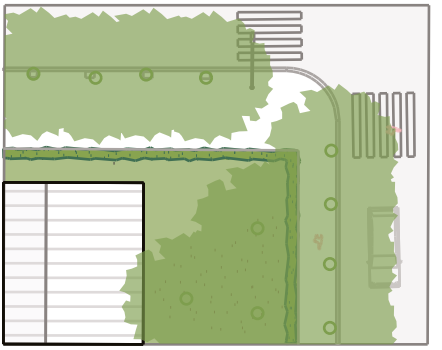
Bundling Commercial Activities

In some cases, entrances should disappear altogether from the main streets. Where the economic pressure is low clearly marked and maintained green areas would improve the appearance of the buildings and heighten the comfort for the pedestrians on the sidewalk. This transformation could be combined with the former ones leading to a greener appearance while providing sufficient space for retail, restaurants and cafés.



Figures 55, 56: Transformation by bundling commercial activities

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3.2.5 Private and Allotment Gardens

Private gardens are found throughout the neighborhood, but they are often adjacent to the buildings or a garage. Due to their privatized nature and individual use they are often fenced in and can only be accessed by the user. The location of such private gardens is pretty random. It seems that people have taken over areas of low use and privatized these without considering the neighborhood's overall appearance or functionality.

These gardens also pose a risk to the neighborhood. The litter and waste that accumulates in the them is unsightly and attracts pests such as mice and rats. Even if the gardens are free of rubbish, a lack of maintenance makes them unattractive and lowers the value of the adjacent areas. The fences surrounding the gardens prevent people from using the areas in other ways. The main challenges of the private gardens throughout the neighborhood are mismanagement and their random locations.

Figures 57–59: Private garden in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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Despite these risks, the gardens have great potential for each owner because they can use the parcel in any way they like. Under these privileged conditions, people are willing to invest in this kind of garden as they also benefit from their investment and work. However, many of the private gardens in Block VI seem to have been abandoned, as they exhibit significant dilapidation. There are manifold reasons for mismanagement. One is that people today actually have less time to maintain a private garden. The standard of living has grown over past decades, making private vegetable gardens less of a necessity for many people. Another explanation for the many underused fenced-in gardens is that their owners have simply moved away or are too old to take care of them. Unfortunately, the fences and barriers remain.

Nevertheless, the areas currently occupied by gardens have great potential for the neighborhood. If maintained, they increase biodiversity. Maintained gardens also improve the quality of life. The beauty of the flowers and other plants improves the quality of the neighborhood. Although the gardens are currently privately used, they often lay on public land.

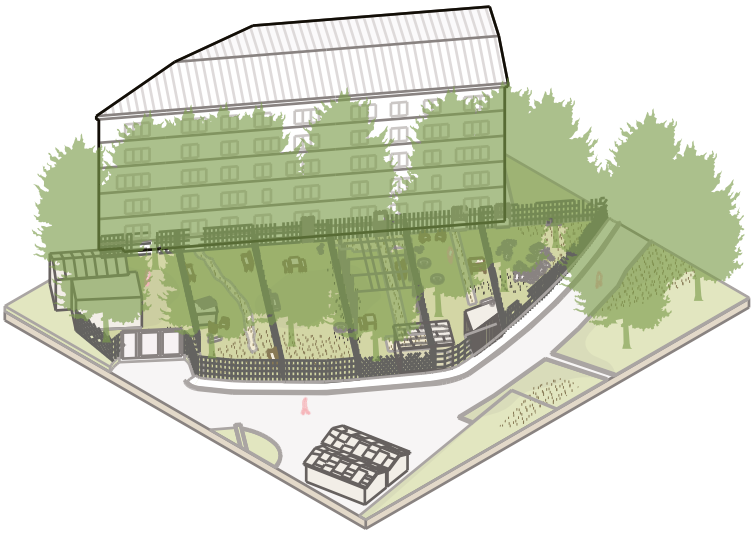

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Figure 60: Wild private garden near P. Kavtaradze 4th turn building 3
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Figure 61: Private garden on a curve, with fig tree
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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Possible Transformations

There are evident advantages to the privatization of open spaces. The economic burden and maintenance responsibilities lie with a specific owner, who, in turn, can profit from the privately owned space. However, it is important that significant areas in large housing estates remain publicly accessible. The outcome of this process is an improvement in the settlement's overall aesthetic quality. The reduction of boundaries will result in a decrease in the fragmentation of the land, thereby preserving the integrity of the original character of the settlement. In general, many structures, such as garages, should be considered for removal since they primarily benefit only a single individual. If the street is sufficiently wide, it is feasible to position on-street parking on the periphery of the shared garden instead of occupying the garden space.

Figure 62: Shared garden in yard, with pergola
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2023

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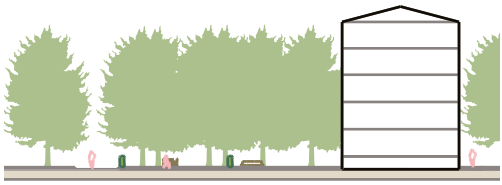
Clustered Gardens

More efficient management and utilization of allotment gardens can be achieved by reorganizing their parcels and dimensions. Implementing an equitable plot size allocation and establishing a remuneration framework and allotment system, can ensure that the gardens are used optimally. It is important to ensure that no land is left unoccupied so that most residents are able to reap the benefits of a private garden. In the context of residential development, it is helpful to cluster the private gardens, with the objective of facilitating the shared utilization of infrastructural resources. The allocation of built-up space must be subject to stringent regulation, and its use must be in accordance with the established character of the neighborhood. The implementation of a design charter has been demonstrated to further enhance the quality of these open spaces.

Figures 63–65:
Transformation into clustered gardens



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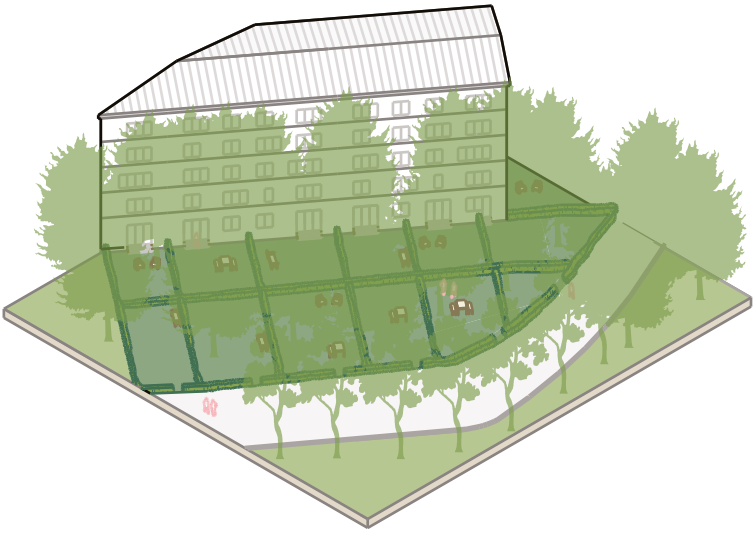

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Shared Gardens

This transformation aims to give the privatized space back to the community. While these areas should be accessible to the neighborhood residents, it is possible to partially enclose them with hedges or fences in order to enhance the safety of young children and reduce the risk of walk-through traffic, which should be confined to designated pathways.

The maintenance of these areas should remain the responsibility of the respective homeowners' association, and the primary use of these areas should be reserved for local residents. Notwithstanding the communal character of the space, direct access could be granted to the residents of ground-floor apartments. The design of these spaces could be approached in a variety of ways, incorporating amenities such as playgrounds, seating areas, and sports facilities. However, it is imperative that the surfaces remain predominantly permeable and green.

Figures 66, 67: Shared gardens

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3.3 PARKS, SPORTS AND PLAY FACILITIES, AND COMMUNAL SPACES

This type of open space includes all kinds of formal and informal organized meeting places for the community on public or publicly maintained land. In large housing estates, most bigger spaces for gathering, leisure, and culture are positioned between the microdistricts and are therefore used by all surrounding neighborhoods. In some cases, these open spaces are also located within the blocks, bringing guests from the district into the more private space of the microdistrict.

The first subtype of this chapter comprises landscape parks: large natural areas that are an important asset for both the city's biodiversity and the district's sense community. Despite variations in size, these green spaces invariably feature elements such as trees, shrubs, and lawns, thereby playing an important role in enhancing the biodiversity of the district.

The second and third subtypes are large, open spaces that play an important role in the social framework of the block. With their reasonable size and offerings for sports and recreation, they are small "centers," or focal points, within the neighborhood. Sports fields and neighborhood parks occupy a prominent position within the open spaces of large housing estates. These spaces serve broad part of the community and are often placed at the center of the block for easy accessibility. Squares also belong to this subset of open public spaces, and they are equally significant for the social structure of a community. They can provide substantial support for surrounding businesses by offering high-quality outdoor areas for cafés and similar establishments. Squares typically have hard paving and no green areas. There are no squares in Block VI.

The third subtype comprises communal meeting spaces. They offer amenities such as benches, picnic tables, table tennis tables, and chessboards. These spaces are used mostly by immediate neighbors for social gatherings and meetings, and they are decentralized throughout the neighborhood.

The fourth subtype consists of urban agricultural spaces and brownfields. These publicly owned open spaces encompass all areas that lack organized public oversight. They are typically managed by groups of people who organize specifically to take care of them. They may be used solely for leisure or left fallow if no one takes ownership. In large housing estates, however, they are often used for planting vegetables, fruits, and berries. The harvest is sometimes

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shared within the community, significantly reducing the need to go to the supermarket. Or the produce is sold at small neighborhood markets to boost the family income.

The last subtype in this chapter are places with smaller sports and play facilities. These spaces are defined by their specific programming and user groups. They are very common, and playgrounds in particular have always been a typical element in large housing estates.

Figure 1: Publicly used open spaces in Block VI

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The integration of nature into the housing districts was an essential component of the planning concepts for large housing estates of the 1960s and 19070s, Like the rest of the spatial organization, the green spaces were also organized into a clear hierarchy. The green spaces included central parks and open spaces within the residential groups with different functional areas for sports, play, and recreation. The green spaces on the edge of the residential areas, which were often built on the outskirts of the city, were to be preserved as much as possible. As with many communal facilities in large housing estates, there was a discrepancy between the initial plans and the realized project regarding parks and sports facilities. While a large communal park and sports center with various options for recreation and sports was planned, only a fraction of this was realized. No other facilities were planned, and the few that were built were only added gradually over the past decades. Today, the block is well-equipped with various offerings.

In modern society, individualized settings are very common in both virtual and physical spaces, where many activities are offered to individual users. Similarly, many people spend little time in communal settings in their immediate neighborhoods, finding community instead at larger events, in commercial settings, or even online. This calls into question a key feature of former socialist neighborhoods: communal open spaces. As people increasingly deal with daily challenges in a private or family environment, communal activities that occurred during the Soviet era, such as the regularly organized weekly cleanings of public spaces during subbotniks, become less relevant. At the same time, groups periodically form to organize voluntary work, staying relevant by strengthening opportunities and creating spaces for meetings that attract various groups at the neighborhood level.

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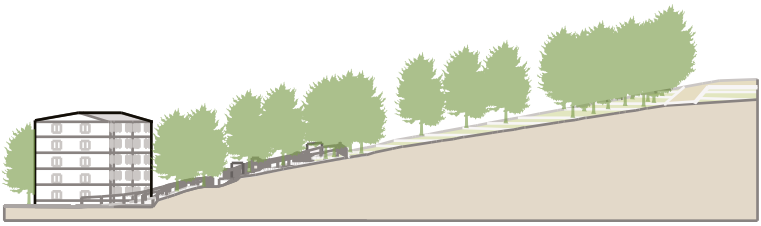
3.3.1 Landscape Parks

This subtype comprises public open spaces of district-wide importance. They are characterized by their public accessibility and are typically maintained by the municipality. They lack borders, such as fences, since they usually end at the sidewalk along a major street. Despite their upkeep, these spaces often retain a natural aesthetic, unadorned and devoid of elaborate designs or features. Instead, they are characterized by the presence of native flora, which lends a natural and unspoiled quality to the environment. These spaces are crisscrossed by footpaths, ensuring their accessibility and giving them a "natural" feel. Their substantial size gives them the role of a natural refuge within the urban landscape, providing a sanctuary for diverse fauna. These spaces offer residents a valuable opportunity to engage in leisure activities such as walking and picnicking, thereby promoting mental well-being in the midst of urban congestion.



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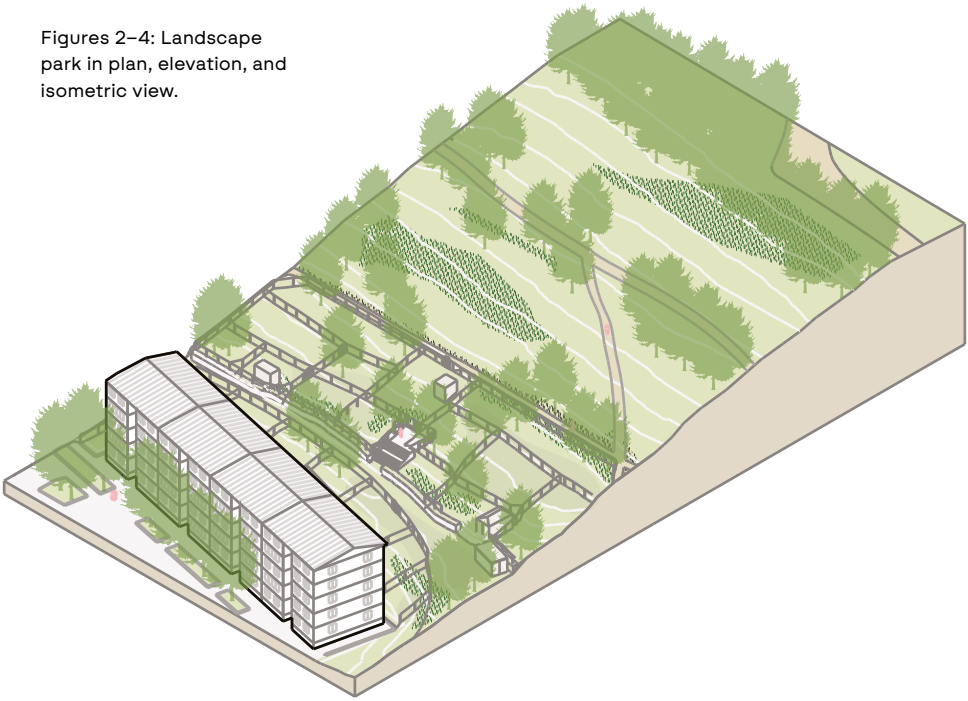
Figures 2–4: Landscape park in plan, elevation, and isometric view.



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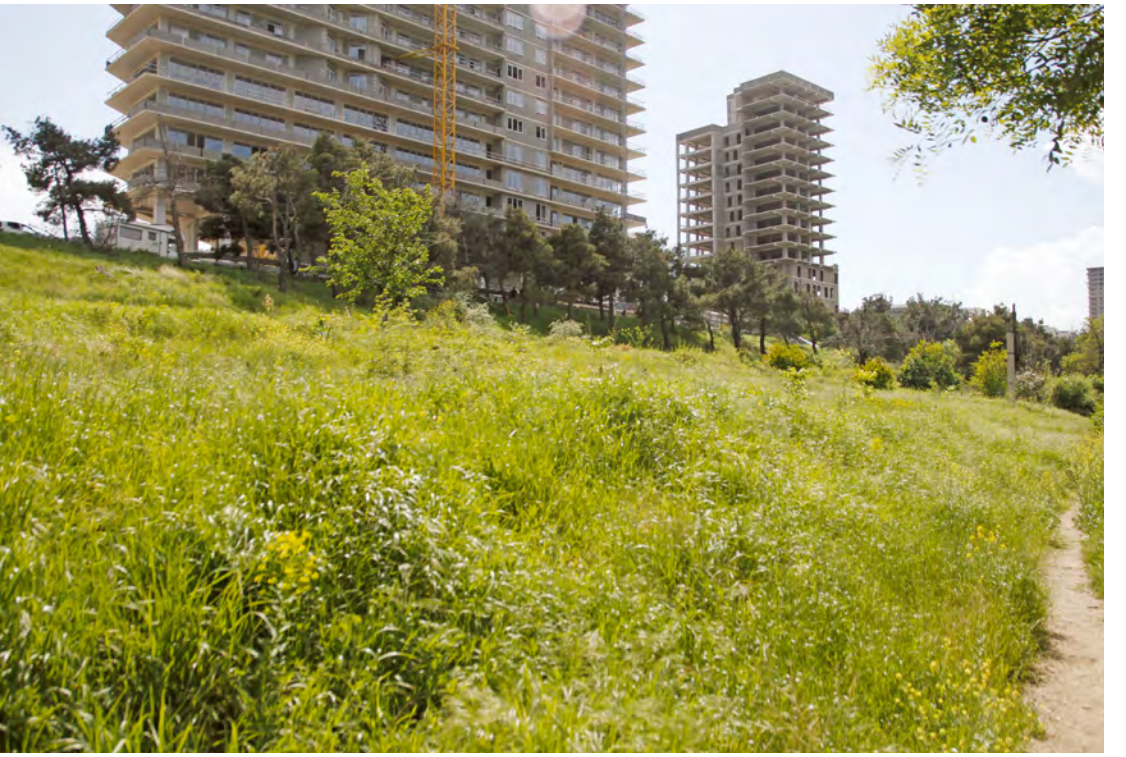

Figure 5: Landscape park with new development in the background
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2024

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Possible Transformations

These open spaces are usually very accessible, requiring only modest initial investments for transformation. This makes them a compelling proposition for developers seeking to convert them into profitable real estate. However, it is imperative to acknowledge their ecological and social significance, since these spaces serve as vital habitats for local fauna and are an essential resource for the mental well-being of the community, underscoring the need for their preservation. Therefore, all scenarios for future transformation should prioritize the protection of these crucial spaces. Any proposed transformation involving construction should be regarded as a threat and be evaluated carefully. These spaces could therefore benefit from some enclosure to protect them from illegal construction.

Figure 6: Landscape park
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2024

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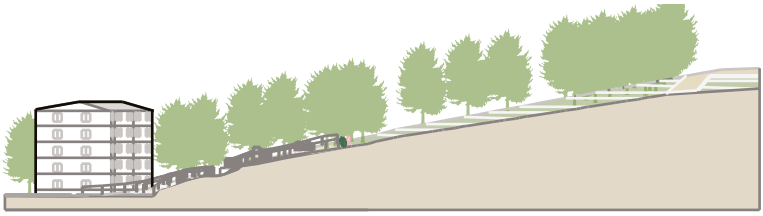
Entrances and Pathways

Providing clear entryways will help formalize these natural spaces. While there is an inherent quality to keeping the spaces unmarked and without formal pathways, adding some pathways could help raise awareness that these are relevant open spaces, not just leftover spaces. Additionally, providing information about the native fauna and flora can make users more aware of the space's relevance. Placing trash collection areas and seating close to entrances will increase comfort, especially for vulnerable user groups, and help keep the spaces attractive in the future.



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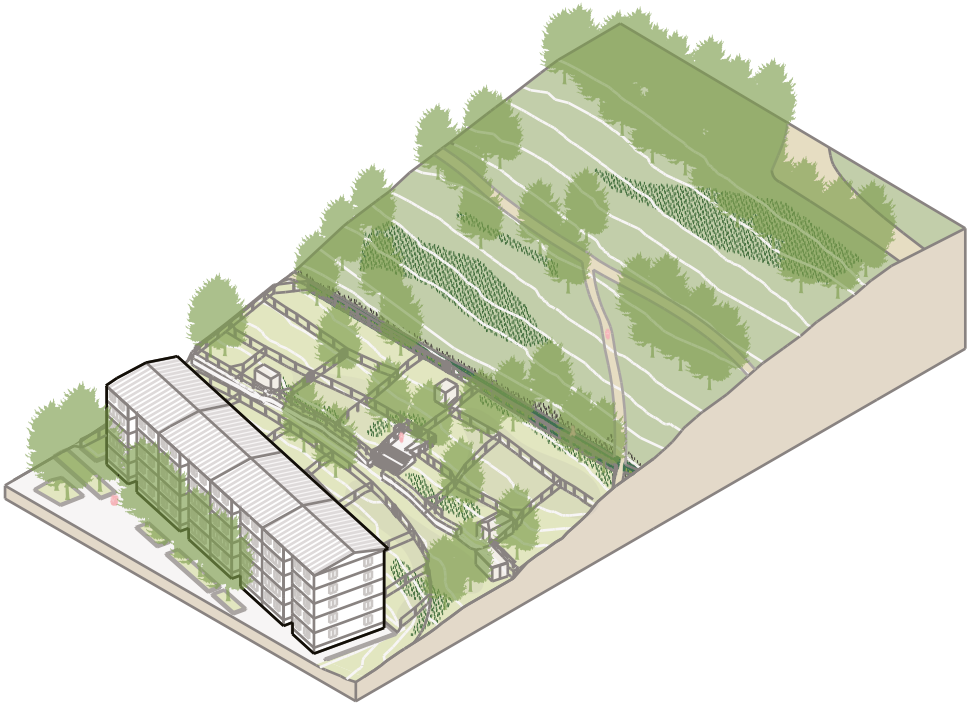
Figures 7–9:
Transformation entrances and pathways in plan, elevation, and isometric view



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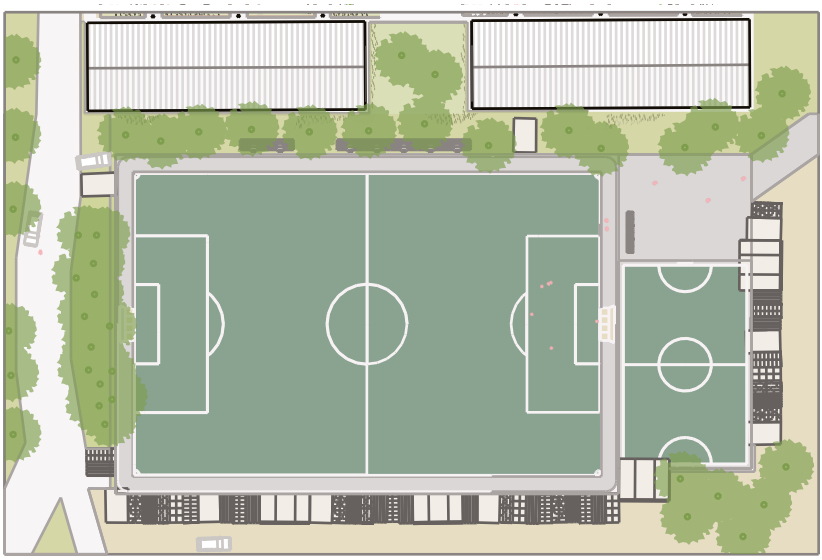
3.3.2 Sports Fields and Neighborhood Parks

This subtype comprises large open spaces with varied functions. With their considerable size and different functions, they serve as focal points within the neighborhood, be it a large sports field, a neighborhood park, or a square.

Sports Fields

At the center of Block VI is a soccer field, placing it in a very prominent location. The city owns the field but has leased it to a sports club for a period of many years. The field is currently enclosed by a tall fence, the purpose of which is to prevent balls from leaving the field, ensure the safety of spectators, and prevent others from entering the space. The field is equipped with several viewing benches for spectators and professional lighting, which allows its use during nighttime hours. There are also stands for coaches and substitute players.



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Figures 10–12: Sports field in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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Figure 13: Sports field with seating
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 14: Sports field with urban development in the background
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

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Possible Transformations

The field lacks additional infrastructure, such as dedicated parking or retail areas. Despite its semi-professional use and considerable size, these elements should be considered if the space continues to be used as it is. The field's location in the middle of a housing district presents both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it attracts many guests to the neighborhood, contributing to a more vibrant atmosphere and drawing customers to surrounding businesses. However, this influx can also generate undesirable consequences, such as noise and litter, which can adversely impact local residents. The sports field's boundaries are the primary challenge that should be addressed in any transformation, particularly due to its central location within the neighborhood.

As the sports field occupies the most significant open space in the area, it creates a substantial void that is inaccessible to the public and remains underutilized by local residents. This situation has a cascading effect on the adjacent open spaces, which become less appealing for communal activities and suffer from a general decline in aesthetic appeal. Consequently, a reduction in the size of the space should be considered and other functions should be added.

Figure 15: Small sports field between P. Kavtaradze 4th turn No. 5 and P. Kavtaradze 3rd Turn No. 6
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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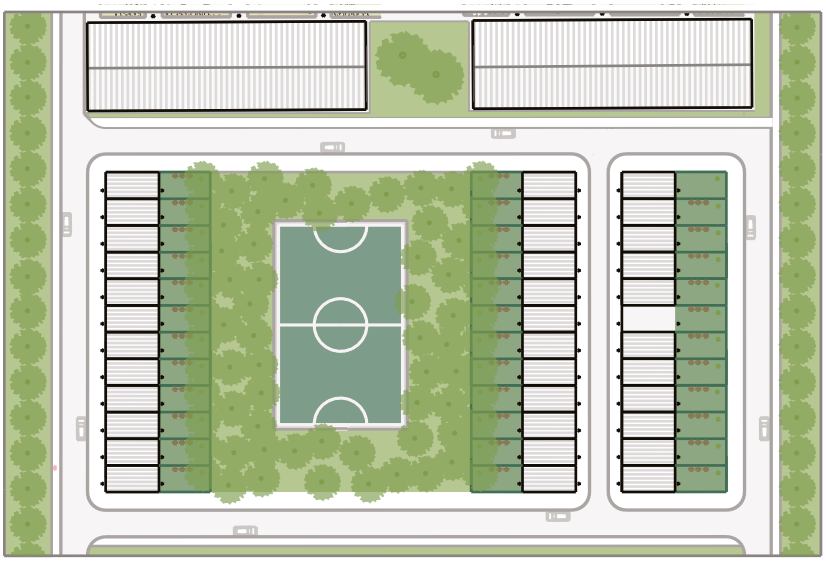
Densification

In light of the significant housing shortage, it is important to explore the potential of utilizing the existing urban fabric to facilitate densification. Although this space should retain some functionality for recreation and sports, there is considerable scope for reducing its dimensions. Due to the size of this area, a wide variety of housing typologies could be considered for densification. The proposed variation with row houses maintains relatively low density and therefore does not significantly impact the usage of existing amenities. The row house layout also opens up the space and makes it more permeable, thereby facilitating traversal of the neighborhood and reducing travel distances between points on either side. Therefore, such a scenario could benefit the neighborhood while maintaining its functionality for sporting events. An alternative space for professional sports should be found outside the neighborhood.



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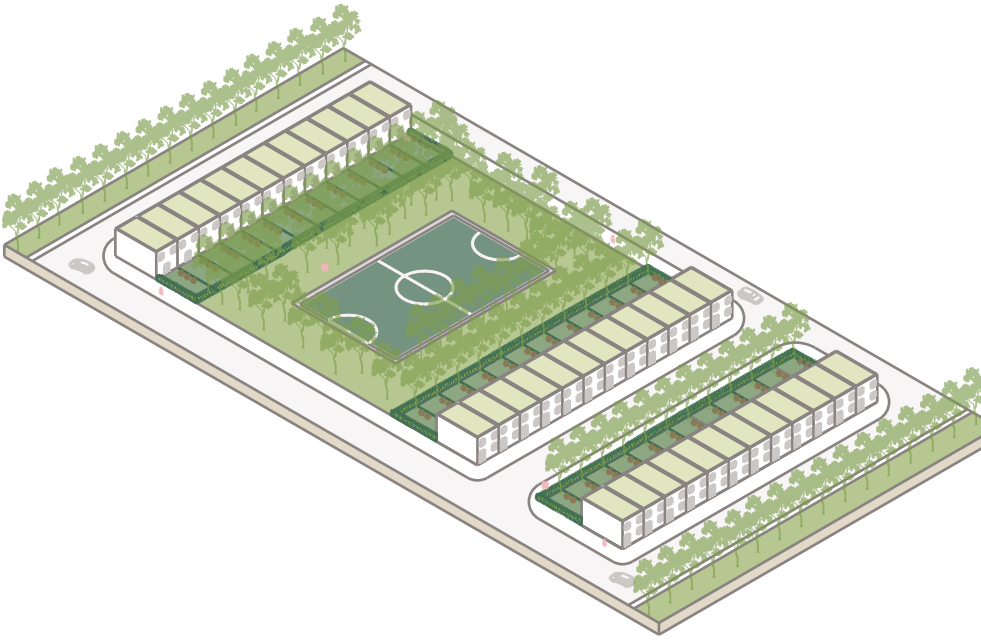
Figures 16–18: Transformation through densification



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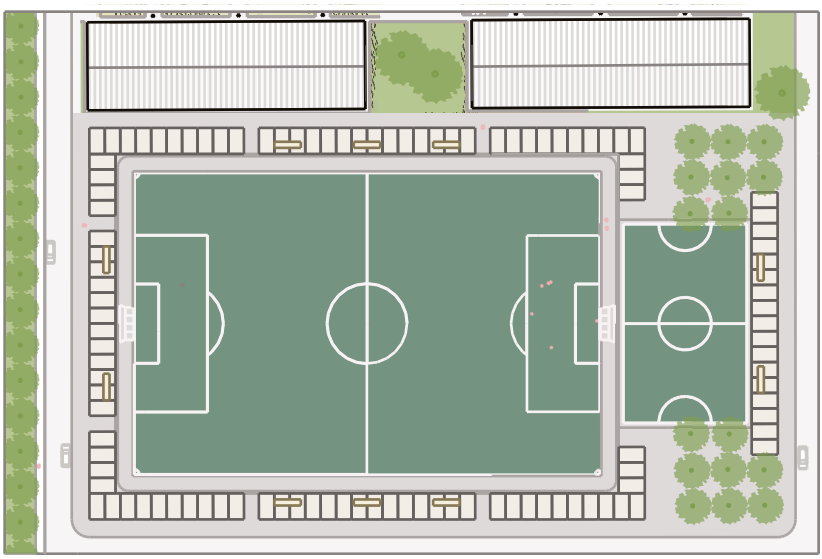
Garage Perimeter

If the size of the sports field remains the same, the surrounding area could be enhanced by building more garages around it. This would further isolate the field, making it seem like a foreign object in the neighborhood. The garages could then serve as raised seating for watching games. Some garages could house facilities that support sporting activities, such as small shops. While the field would still negatively impact the neighborhood, residents could benefit from the additional garage space and would be less burdened by the stadium's noise pollution. Fences and other dividing structures would become superfluous, and the neighborhood would effectively gain a new interior facade. This encapsulation could be an effective way to address issues that negatively impact the neighborhood's quality of life.

Figures 19, 20: Transformation through densification



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Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks feature varied greenery and also offer diverse functions for leisure and contemplation. Block VI is home to several neighborhood parks, which are built and maintained by the municipality. These parks offer a diverse array of activities, catering to people of all ages. While primarily designed for the benefit of local residents, these parks frequently attract visitors from neighboring districts. In recent decades, many of these smaller public spaces have been developed by the districts and the municipality. These public spaces are of great importance for the immediate community; they are within walking distance from the homes of local residents. They provide spaces for social interaction and leisure activities during the week. These open public spaces are usually designed to cater to the needs of the entire family.

The neighborhood parks are typically enclosed by fences and equipped with various playground equipment, such as swings and sandboxes. Due to their organized nature, furniture, and sports equipment such as basketball hoops, soccer goals, swings, seesaws, carousels, and sandboxes, the use is

Figures 21–23: Neighborhood park in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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mostly prescribed and the level of required maintenance is high. Additionally, they may provide designated barbecuing areas with tables and benches. Depending on the park's size, it may also incorporate sports amenities such as table tennis tables or basketball courts. In recent years, the district has developed many of these community facilities. They are well-accepted by the neighborhood but sometimes lack specificity. They are mostly equipped with standardized nonspecific furniture and lighting.

These parks play a pivotal role in community building. They offer spaces for gatherings and ample space for events such as children's birthday parties. They provide a diverse array of activities, fostering interaction among people with diverse interests or allowing users to enjoy the space on their own. Their public location ensures safety, and the presence of lighting enhances their usability. Overall, these parks provide valuable opportunities for neighborhoods by providing spaces for communal gatherings. This alleviates pressure on other, more private spaces like yards, which in return allows those spaces in the immediate housing environment to be further developed for private gardens or other individualized uses.

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Figure 24: Play structures in a neighborhood park
Figure 25: Swing set in a neighborhood park
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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Possible Transformations

Neighborhood parks should be open and inclusive. Zoning should be clear yet uncomplicated, and activities should cater to a diverse range of user groups. While furniture such as benches and lighting can be beneficial, it should be placed in specific locations rather than distributed randomly throughout. While neighborhood parks should ideally be well accessible and integrated into the neighborhood, they also benefit from clear delineations and even built-up boundaries.

Figure 26: Seating in neighborhood park
Figure 27: View on neighborhood park
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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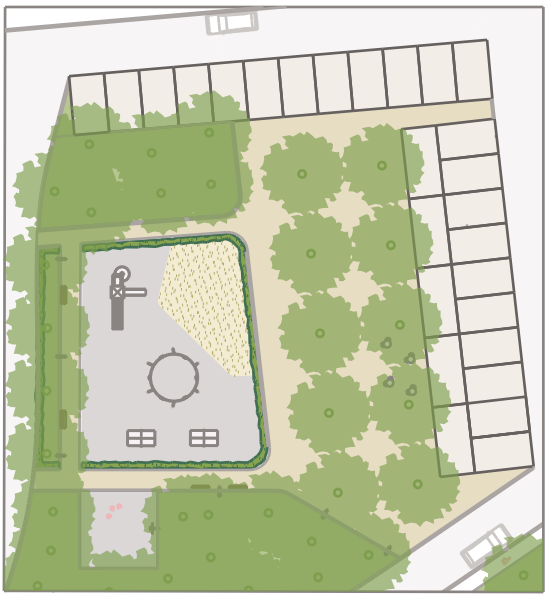
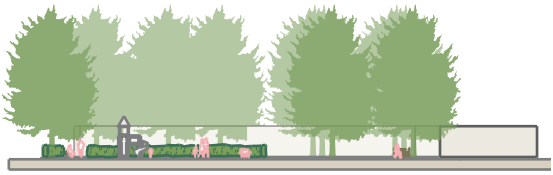
Structured Surrounding Garages

By adding onto the existing garages and closing off two of the sides with these structures, the enclosure of the park is strengthened. Entrance areas should be accentuated. The new structures could host a café with seating areas facing the park. Other shops selling basic necessitiies could also be located here, allowing the visitors to do some shopping during or after their visit. The actual play areas should be clearly zoned, and areas designed especially for younger children could benefit from being enclosed. By reducing the number of small zones, the remaining ones will be more attractive. Garages should be given green facades toward the park to integrate them into the area.

Figures 28–30: Transformation through structured surrounding garages





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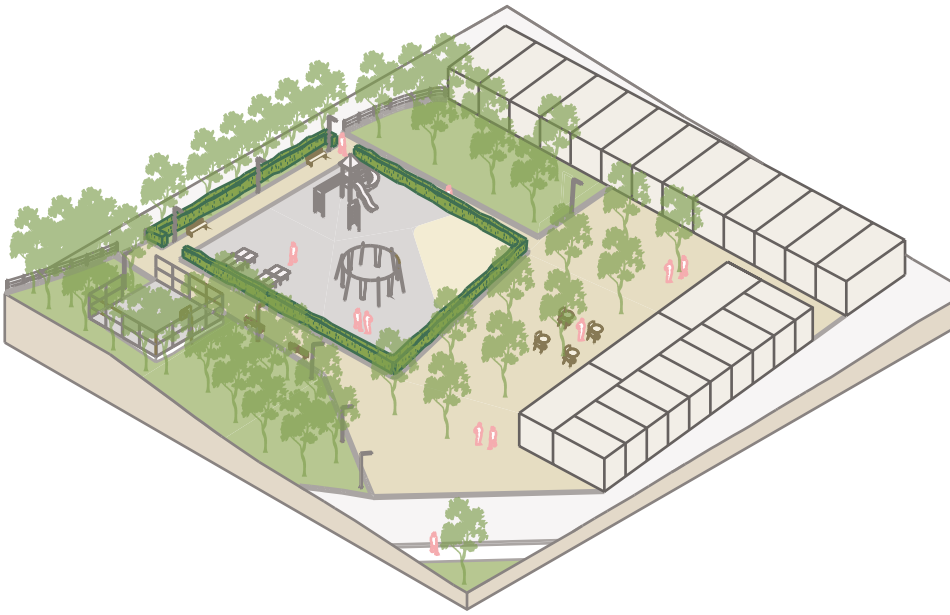

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Central Green with Perforated Boundaries

By opening the boundaries of the built-up area, the park becomes accessible from all sides while remaining clearly demarcated. The buildings could house various functions, such as neighborhood centers, cafés, youth centers, and child daycare facilities. All of these functions would benefit from the park, and vice versa, since the park would benefit from these functions during working hours. This scenario proposes a simple grass lawn in the center of the park. Trees would provide shade, making the area inviting for picnics. The area adjacent to the building could be used for ball play or other sports activities, but it primarily serves the specific function of the building's users. While these areas could be designed according to their needs, the rules regarding furniture, materials, etc., should be consistent throughout the entire park.

Figures 31, 32: Transformation into a central green with perforated boundaries

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Green Park with Large Lawn

This variation demonstrates the simplest approach to design a neighborhood park. At the same time, this can be very attractive for denser neighborhoods. By offering only green spaces and no built facilities, the area's use remains open to the creativity of its users. While ideal for social gatherings, a large unobstructed lawn also offers space for recreational games such as frisbee or soccer. The greenery positively impacts the neighborhod's climate. It is relatively inexpensive to build and maintain, yet attractive to all age groups. Creating differentiated open and closed areas with and without trees enables comfortable use during different seasons and weather conditions.

Figures 33, 34: Transformation into a green park with a large lawn

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3.3.3 Communal Meeting Spaces

Communal meeting spaces can serve different functions but are often used for gatherings and meetings. They are usually maintained by a group of people who share common interests. These spaces typically have some sort of urban furniture, such as benches and tables. They are usually accessible by everyone with no strict enclosure, and although they are maintained by a specific group of residents, the user group can be much broader. They are larger than the private gardens and are generally well visible and connected to the street network. These community meeting spaces are a crucial element for the large housing estates because they offer free gathering places for the entire community. As the open spaces experience increasing use pressure and more and more areas are privatized, commercialized, or restricted to specific uses or users, these open and somewhat undefined areas are increasingly important to neighborhood identity. They also offer a great space for markets or other recurring non-permanent commercial activity.

Figures 35–37: Communal garden in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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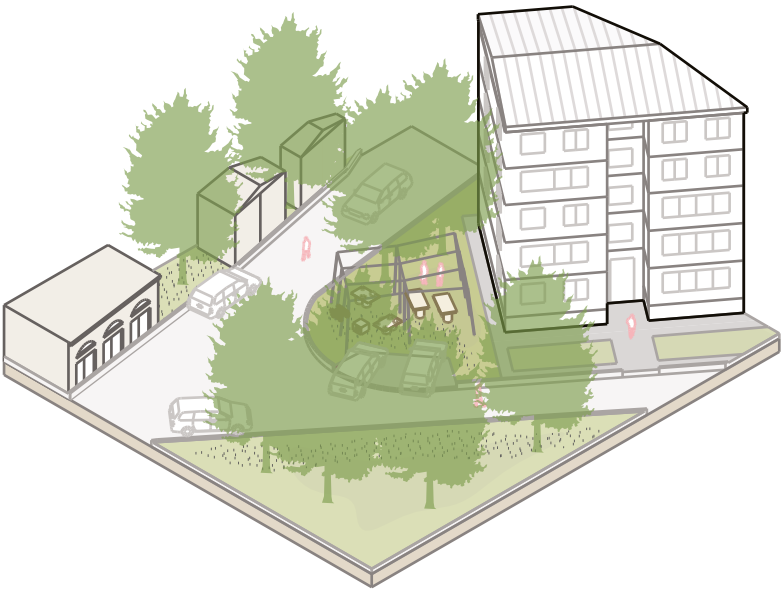

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Figure 38: Meeting space near P. Kavtaradze 4th turn building 4
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Figure 39: Meeting space, near P. Kavtaradze 4th turn building 4
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

Figure 40: Meeting space near P. Kavtaradze 3rd turn building 5
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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Possible Transformations

The lack of specificity is one of the biggest challenges posed by communal gardens. Their potential as meeting places for the community and the benefits of their spatial quality for the neighborhood are often hidden due to undefined responsibilities and a lack of maintenance, which makes them vulnerable to redevelopment. Due to their size, they have a great potential for other functions. Depending on their location, people already use them today for parking. While communal gardens are an important community asset, their current locations are not always ideal. This makes relocation advisable, enabling the currently occupied spaces to be redeveloped for other functions.

Figure 41: Meeting space near P. Kavtaradze 4th turn building 6
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

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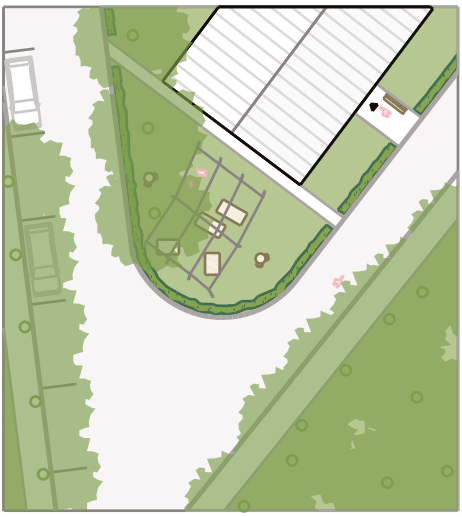
Formalizing and Qualifying

The easiest and best way to manage communal gardens is to formalize them when possible. By establishing clear agreements with the landowners and garden users, the latter are encouraged to invest more in improving the garden. As in other instances, design guides can help maintain a coherent neighborhood image while giving users sufficient freedom to design the space to their liking. In most cases, a soft border helps protect the space from competing uses, such as parking. Integrating the surrounding open spaces, such as front gardens or yards, benefits everyone. Due to the communal character of the space, clear entrances and accessibility to the community should be guaranteed.

Figures 42–44: Transformation by formalizing and qualifying



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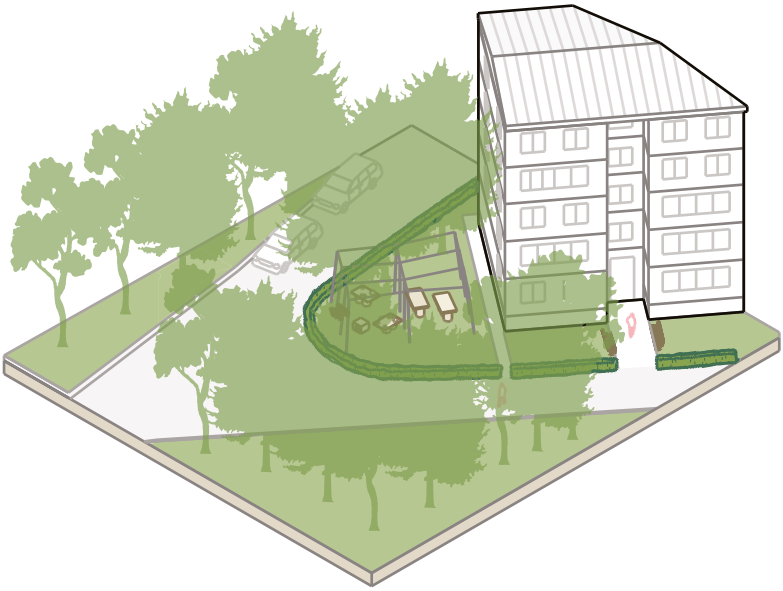

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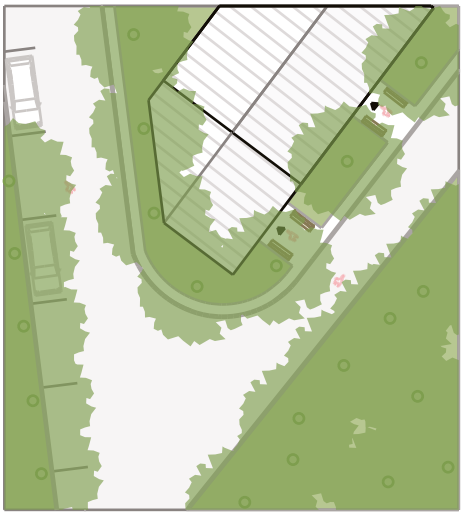
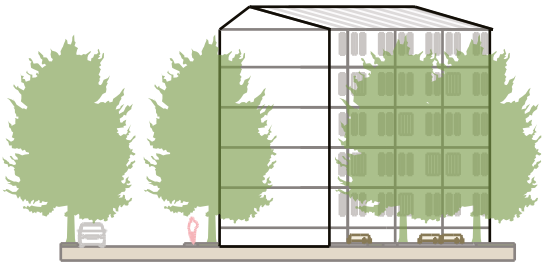
Additional Housing

If a garden is located next to a fully developed building, it may be possible to build additional housing by extending the building into the garden. This option should be considered when the quality of the space is not worth preserving and there is a high demand for additional housing. While some open space would be lost for the neighborhood, the additional housing would be more relevant and therefore justified. As shown in this scenario, the space is poorly utilized and has low spatial quality because it lies next to multiple streets.

Figures 45, 46: Transformation with additional housing





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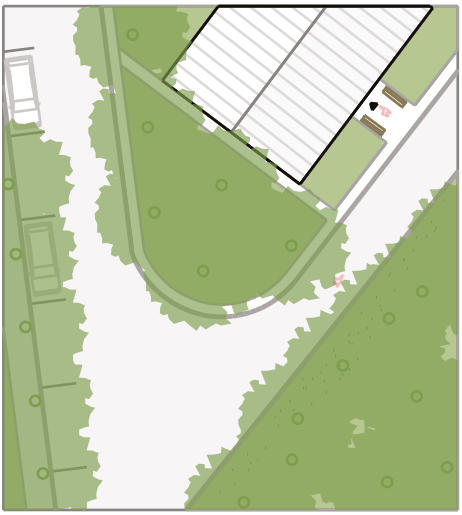
Removal and Redevelopment

If users are unwilling or unable to maintain the garden properly or reach a formal agreement to do so and there are no other feasible alternative uses, such as parking or redevelopment, it may be best to restore the space to its original design. Often, this was a green area without a specific function. In this case, the owner, or the representative of the owner—the HOA—should maintain this area and protect it from disruptive uses such as unauthorized parking. The area should also be integrated into the district-wide landscape concept. This may entail planting trees and providing water features.



Figures 47, 48: Transformation by removal and redevelopment

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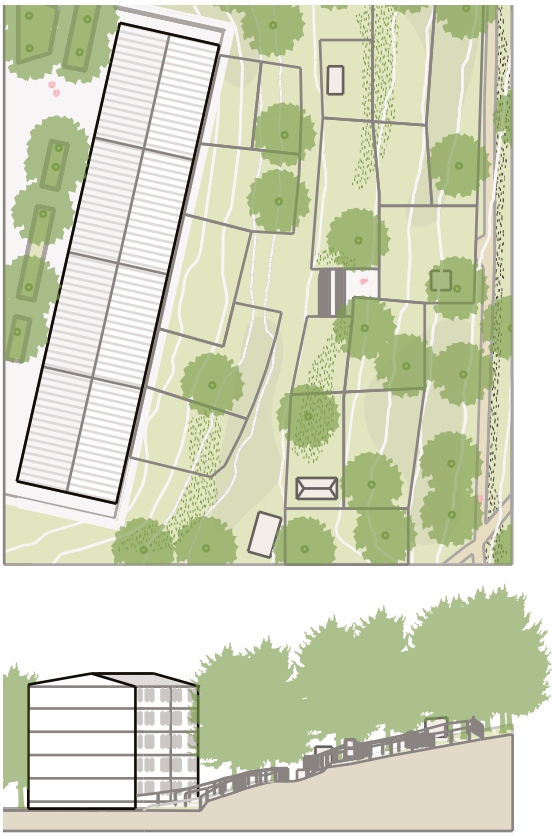
3.3.4 Urban Agriculture and Brownfields

All areas used for urban agriculture and all brownfield sites in Block VI are owned and maintained by the community. Most smaller sites of this type lie fallow, contain urban wilderness, and are unmaintained. The larger examples of this subtype are appropriated by the community, consist of multiple private individual parcels, and are used for urban gardening, a form of inner-city agriculture. Besides being used for vegetable cultivation, urban gardens are sometimes used to also raise small animals, such as rabbits or chickens. The purpose of these gardens is small-scale food production, usually for individual private use, but it can also be of small-scale commercial activity.

Currently, all urban agriculture is located at the southern edge of Block VI, between the last row of buildings and the natural park. The brownfield sites are scattered throughout the neighborhood. The most significant one is at the northern edge of the main sports field.

Figures 49–51: Urban garden in plan, elevation, and isometric view



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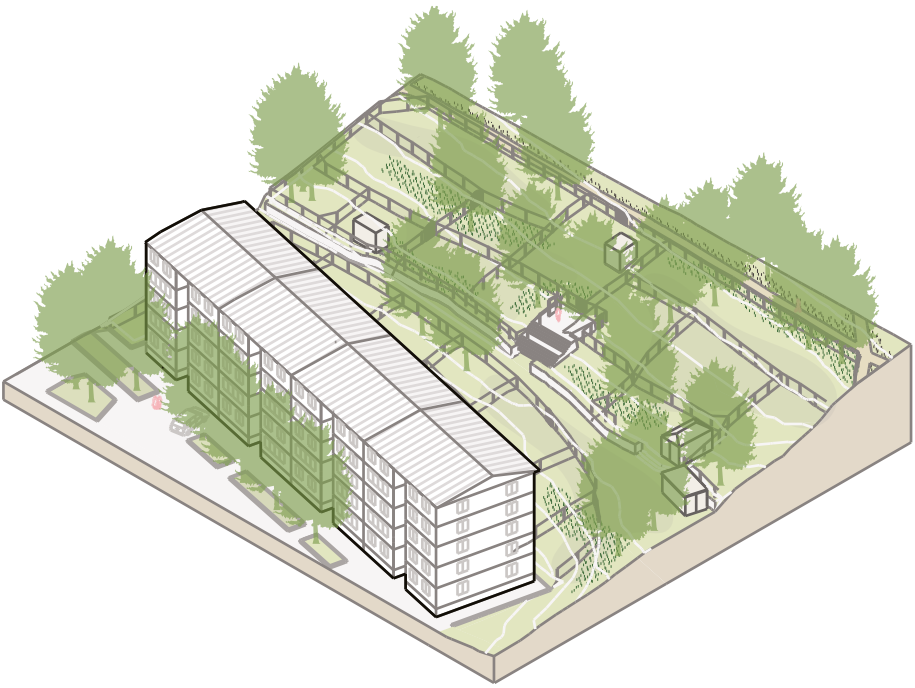

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Figure 52: Urban agriculture with apartment buildings in the background
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Figure 53: Urban agriculture with formal seating
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Figure 54: Urban agriculture with improvised seating
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

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Figure 55: Urban agriculture to the south of Block VI
Source: Ia Kupatadze, 2025

Possible Transformations

As with other communal areas, the urban gardens are a significant resource for the community. Although the necessity for urban agricultural areas is currently minimal, the demand for designated planting spaces is increasing. Determining the optimal locations for these open spaces is challenging because the immediate needs are not always evident. These areas are frequently situated at the periphery of the district. However, it is important to recognize that the district could benefit from a central location for these gardens. This consideration should be incorporated into all scenarios involving transformation or relocation.

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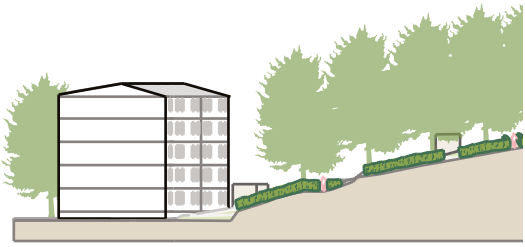
Parceled Plots

This scenario investigates the possibility of optimizing the utilization of the designated space. Introducing a central pathway and allocating a portion of the garden space to the apartment building has the potential to generate additional individual plots. Diversifying the size of the individual parcels caters to more needs. The central structures, which include water supply and tool storage facilities, serve all the gardens in the area. The wide pathway, which is designed for small gatherings, extends along the perimeter of the property. The strategic placement of hedges of varying lengths serves to define the spatial configuration, thereby offering refuge to diverse species while preserving an atmosphere that is both permeable and communal.

Figures 56–58:
Transformation into parceled plots



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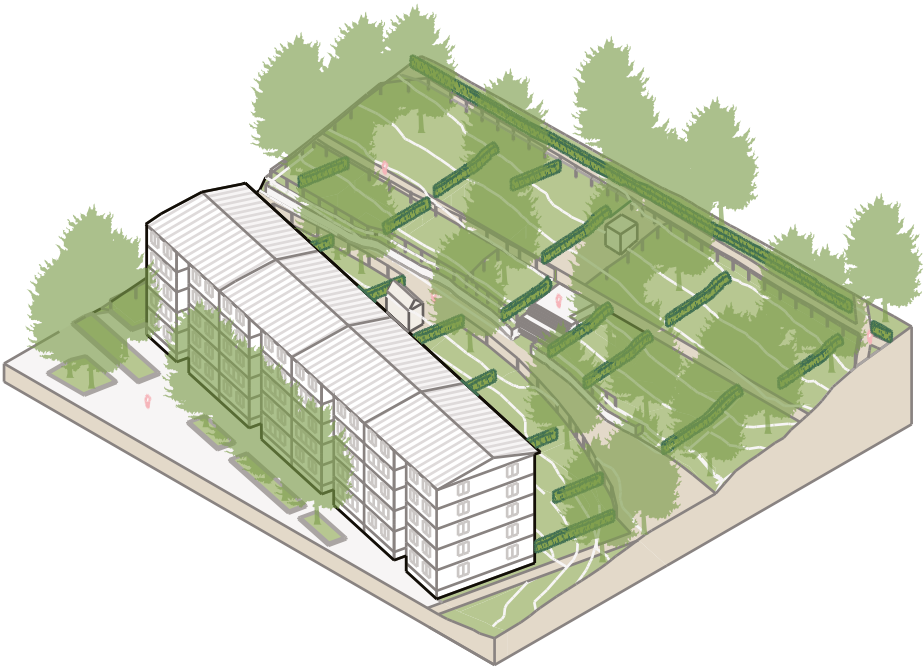

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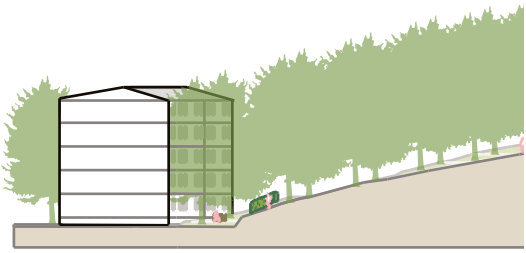
Common Garden

In the event of relocation or underutilization resulting in surplus, the spaces may be repurposed for the adjacent building. Establishing a shared garden at this decentralized location is a suitable use of the available space. Moreover, the gardens could be reintegrated into the nearby natural park, which would benefit from additional space. Similar integrations into adjacent spaces are also possible with other examples. If the space is of low value to the neighborhood and has little or no potential for natural development, even new building projects could be appropriate.

Figures 59, 60:
Transformation into a common garden



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3.3.5 Playgrounds and Spaces with Sport Facilities

This subtype comprises all open spaces designated for playful recreational and sport activities. Spaces with sports and play facilities are designed specifically for sporting and recreational activities. These spaces are often limited in terms of both usage and user demographic, frequently catering to a particular age group. Usage of these facilities may be regulated through direct payment systems or mandatory club membership.

The installation of specific instruments, goals, hoops, and workout or play equipment enables users to perform exercises or play games such as soccer or basketball, as well as activities like swinging, balancing, and so on. Due to their specialized nature, these open spaces often require a significant initial investment and relatively high maintenance costs. Consequently, many people who are not interested in or capable of performing the offered activity are excluded from using them.

Figures 61–63: Playground in plan, elevation, and isometric view

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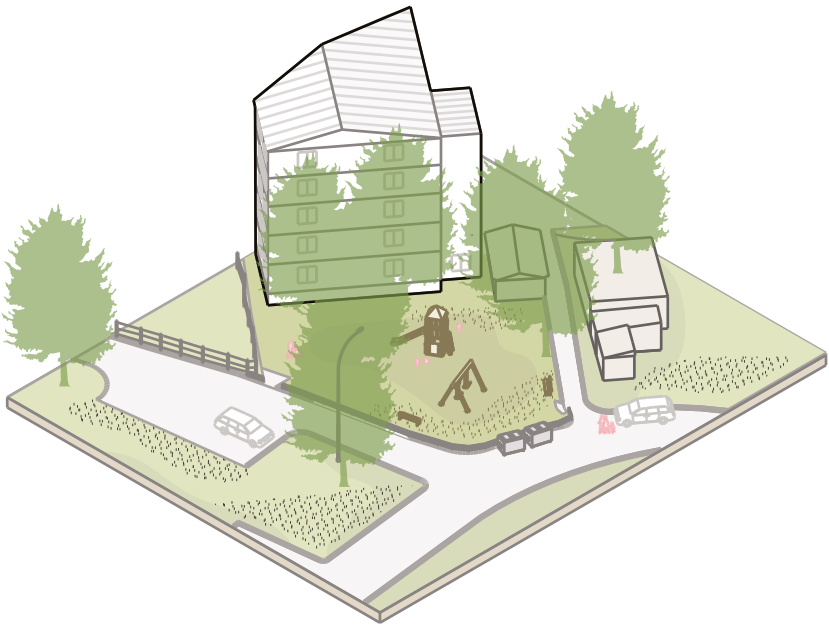

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While some sports can be practiced in a less regulated environment, sports fields are an integral component of our culture and society. They facilitate the practice of sports and serve as meeting places for recreational activities, with the potential to enhance physical and mental well-being. These open spaces are often enclosed by physical barriers, such as fences. In addition to their numerous advantages, sports fields can also negatively impact residential neighborhoods. Due to their restrictive nature, they can create inaccessible islands within the neighborhood.

There are also sport fields that are considerably smaller in size and are maintained by the district. These fields are open to the public and seamlessly integrate into the surrounding open spaces, such as neighborhood parks or residential yards. Despite their designated use, they are generally accessible to all members of the community. The basketball and soccer courts in Block VI are particularly popular among the youth population. These spaces are notable for their high levels of activity and their role as catalysts for the surrounding environment. Apart from the limitations imposed by urban furniture, these areas are also used as social spaces, particularly by children and adolescents.

There is one designated workout area with several exercise machines in the neighborhood. These open spaces are not delineated by a physical perimeter, but rather defined by the equipment itself. Although usage of these spaces is constrained to the specific exercise performed on each machine, they can serve as valuable assets for community building due to the presence of diverse user groups. It would be advantageous to consider integrating these workout spaces with other forms of sporting equipment, as this could further stimulate the use of these spaces and foster interaction among different groups within the neighborhood.

Playgrounds serve a similar function for children. These spaces offer specialized area for a specific user group. Some of these spaces have soccer goals and basketball hoops. Additionally, there are areas within Block VI with table tennis tables and workout equipment. The playgrounds are typically intended for children between the ages of 1 to 15 and are often enclosed to ensure safety and prevent children from leaving without supervision. They offer a valuable leisure opportunity for families, allowing caregivers to unwind while children engage in enjoyable activities. The playground equipment found in these spaces can vary, encompassing elements such as swings, seesaws, climbing structures, and sandboxes. Equipment intended for use by different age groups is typically characterized by variations in terms of both complexity and level of difficulty. Playgrounds are a vital part of the community infrastructure, serving as an essential open space for the development of social capital within the community. They foster the development of interpersonal skills, the resolution of conflict, and the cultivation of enjoyment by integrating diverse families and children.

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The presence of privately constructed and maintained playgrounds underscores the importance of accessibility for a broader demographic. While these playgrounds may not possess the same permanence as their public counterparts, they can serve as valuable resources for specific user groups. The utilization of playgrounds by families or young children necessitates their strategic placement in safe and secluded areas, distanced from the potential hazards of traffic and environmental contamination.

Figure 64: Playground with swing set near P. Kavtaradze 4th turn 3
Source: Ekaterina Gladkova, 2024

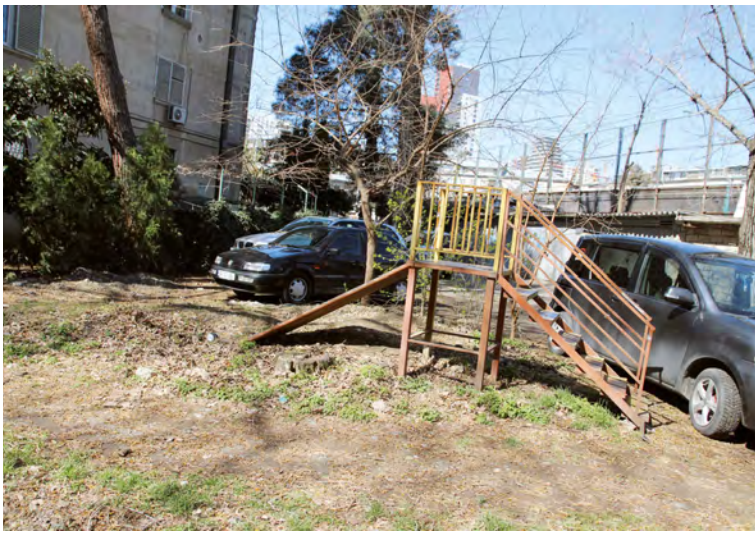

Figure 65: Playground with parked cars near P. Kavtaradze 47
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

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Figure 66: Playground with seesaw near P. Kavtaradze 47
Source: Nano Zazanashvili, 2025

Possible Transformations

Playgrounds are important, yet they are often found in suboptimal locations. Therefore, it makes sense to evaluate them and adapt the space accordingly. When replacing a playground with another type of space, alternative options have to be considered. It might also be advisable to divide the space, optimizing it for more than one function. When the function remains, it should be formalized to actually fit the needs of children and caregivers.

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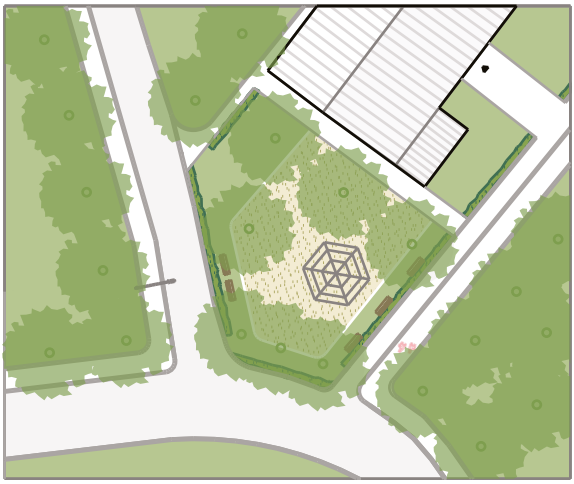
Formalized Playgrounds

By addressing all areas surrounding a playground, the quality of the play space itself can be improved. Adding sidewalks to the streets, removing unnecessary parking areas, and planting trees are some of the measures to further improve the space. Enclosing the playground, creating clear entry areas, and adding safe walkways for pedestrians transforms the area into an open space of high quality for the neighborhood, offering residents, especially those who live directly nearby, a place to meet and spend afternoons with their children.



Figures 67, 68: Transformation into a formal playground

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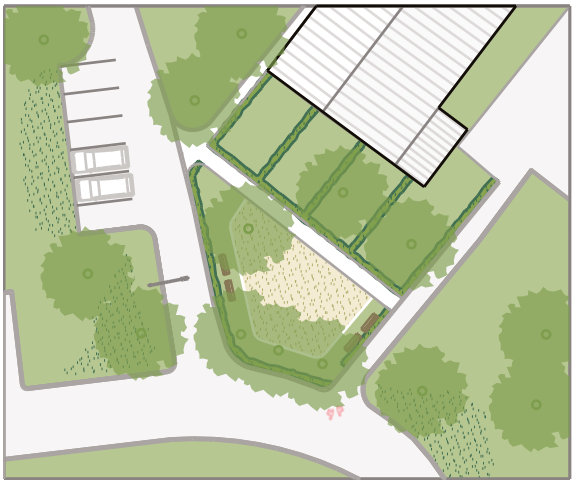
Private Gardens and Formalized Playgrounds

The dimension of the open space could be rearranged, creating private gardens and a small formalized playground. Adding a hedge and urban furniture can make the space safer and more comfortable. Building a formal footpath clarifies the entrance, which makes it easier to supervise children. At the same time, the space directly adjacent to a building might be better suited for its immediate inhabitants and could be transformed accordingly. In this case, private gardens would be provided for the residents of the building.



Figures 69–71: Transformation into private gardens and formalized playground

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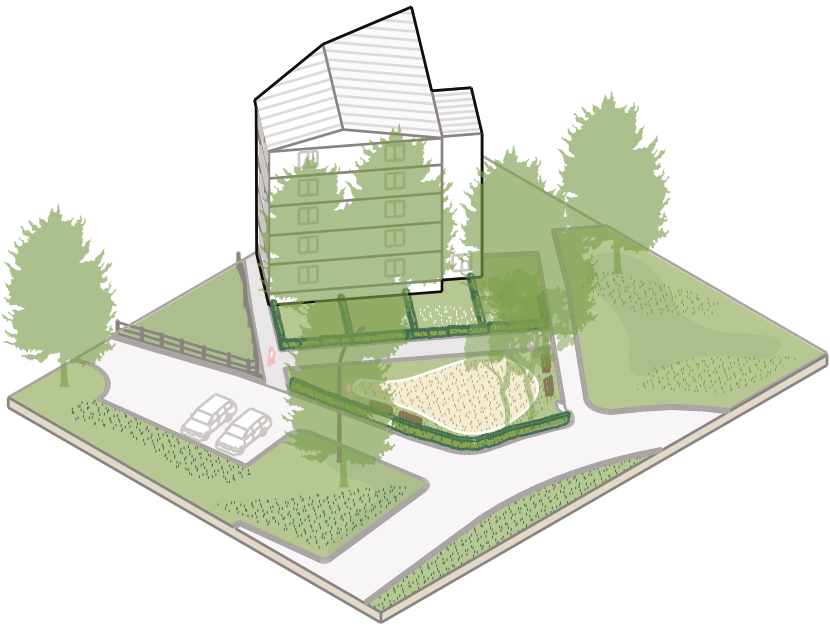

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