COMPLEX PROJECTS

THE ARRIVAL CITY:
BERLIN'S MIGRATION COURT

Integrating resettlement institutions with a migration court

Design Brief | P2 | courthouse | economy | area

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100+ MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE WORLDWIDE SINCE MID-2022

GERMANY

EUROPE'S BIGGEST MIGRATION COUNTRY

WORLD'S THIRD BIGGEST MIGRATION COUNTRY

WORLD'S SECOND HIGHEST REFUGEE WELCOME INDEX

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INTRODUCTION

01

Thesis topic

The Arrival City: Berlin's Migration Court explores Berlin's role as the arrival city for displaced people seeking asylum. Not only is Berlin the arrival city for Germany, but as Europe's largest migrant host country, it's also the arrival city for Europe (Eurostat, 2022). Germany is the world's third biggest migration host country, with over 2.2 million people arriving (UNHCR, 2023). Remarkably, Germany is the only top 10 host country without direct borders to a country where displaced people are fleeing from (UNHCR, 2023). These numbers demonstrate that Germany is at the forefront of global immigration and refugee statistics, attracting a large number of displaced people. As the second highest-ranked country on the Refugee Welcome Index, Germany has proven to be exceptionally open to displaced people (Amnesty International, 2022).

Migration is an integral part of the German national identity, which is rooted in the country's historical background. Since its nation-building phase, Germany has experienced fluctuating political borders, territorial expansions, and contractions. The dynamic relationship between these changes and the definition of nationhood is evident in both broad and inclusive phases of history, as well as narrow and exclusive ones. Throughout its history, German society has been shaped by migration, cultural exchange, and ethnic diversity, although these values have been subjugated in certain periods of nationalism for the supposed greater good of national advancement (Kurthen, 1995).

Today, the world is facing an escalating migration crisis, as the number of displaced individuals around the world exceeds 100 million and continues to rise (UNHCR, 2023). Climate migration is also becoming an increasingly pressing issue, with the barely unlivable zone of the world expected to rise from 1% to 19% by 2070 (Lustgarten, 2020). Although temporary factor of 'temporary' shelters may create the illusion that migration is a short-term

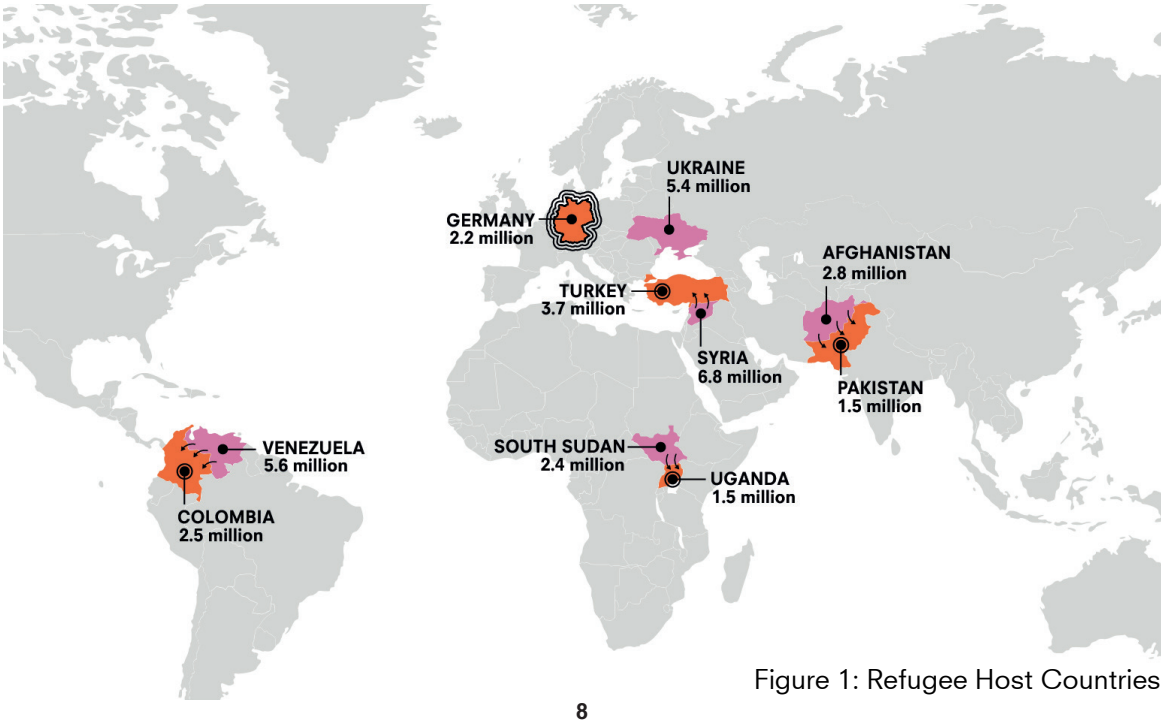


Figure 1: Refugee Host Countries

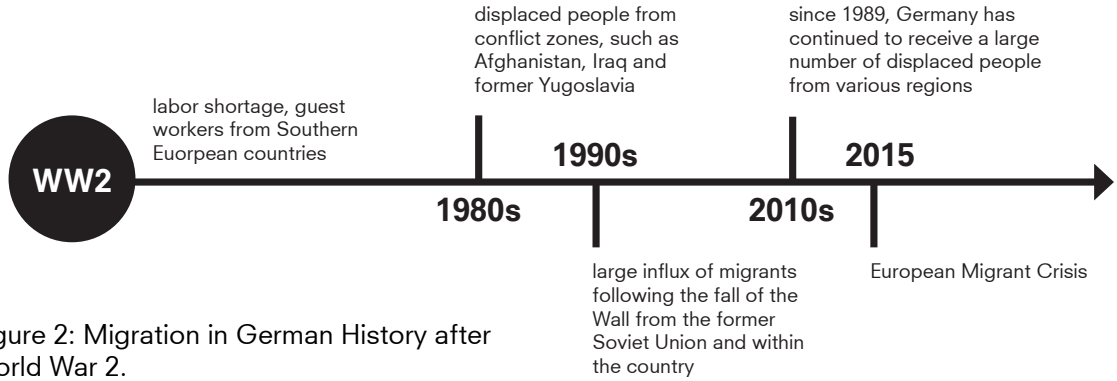


Figure 2: Migration in German History after World War 2.

issue, it is critical to acknowledge that migration is an ever-growing challenge. As such, a global approach is necessary to address this complex problem. To enhance the worldwide system, national institutions should be organized clearly and work together in a worldwide network to tackle this upcoming challenge.

To catalyze improvement in this system, a new type of building that brings together all resettlement institutions is proposed. The research investigates the concept of consolidating all asylum and migration procedures into a single building, prioritizing a user-oriented design approach. The proposed building would provide a clear and organized representation of the procedural and judicial steps that a newcomer must go through to be granted asylum or to migrate to Germany. This would include not only government institutions for registration and interviews but also institutions for support, integration, education, and employment.

In this new type of building, reorganizing the migration process should not only maintain efficiency within its own institutions but also encourage efficiency between them. For a displaced person, bringing these institutions together would bring more clarity and convenience. This research proposes the city of Berlin as an ideal location for a building dedicated to addressing the challenge of migration. Currently, migration buildings in Berlin are scattered around the outskirts of the city, similar to the situation in the Netherlands where institutions are located together in a small town on the edge of the country. Placing these buildings on the city's or country's periphery is a symbolic representation of the marginalization of migration in society. This geographical placement suggests a political preference for housing displaced individuals away from urban areas to avoid potential issues. This approach misses out on opportunities for integration and exacerbates social isolation, resulting in social exclusivity. By placing these institutions on the periphery of society, the visibility of migration is reduced, reinforcing the notion that it is a peripheral issue.

This study draws up a design brief for the proposed building based on program, client, and site. The proposed building consolidates the governmental migration institutions to maintain efficiency within and between institutions while prioritizing a user-centered design. The design approach aims to treat displaced persons in a socially inclusive manner while creating a functional space that meets the needs of all users, without taking any stance in the social debate surrounding migration.

Problem statement

The migration procedure in Germany is fragmented, with various institutions playing different roles in the process. These institutions are scattered throughout the city, forcing displaced individuals to navigate a disjointed system. By placing these institutions on the periphery, the current system reinforces the notion that migration is a peripheral issue, rather than a central aspect of society. This marginalization contributes to a lack of social inclusivity for displaced people in German society. The current migration system prioritizes efficiency within each institution, often at the expense of the needs and experiences of the individuals going through the process. This approach can lead to further marginalization and exclusion for displaced people. This study proposes a building that prioritizes the inclusive integration of displaced people into German society, while maintaining institutional efficiency.

Research questions

The main research question in this study is:
How can a building treat **displaced people** in a **societal inclusive** way while maintaining **institutional efficiency**?

To answer this question but meanwhile continue to develop the 3 factors (program, site and client) in this research, the subquestions in this research are divided into these 3 factors.

PROGRAM

> What are the specific needs and challenges faced by displaced people?
> How can architecture be used to promote social inclusivity and make minorities feel valued and integrated into society?

CLIENT

> How can the client ensure that the needs of its employees are met in a building that prioritizes efficiency?
> How can the client involve and communicate with local residents to ensure that the building is accepted and supported by the community, given the ongoing social debate surrounding migration?

SITE

> What are the political and social reasons for the current placement of migration buildings on the periphery of the city in Berlin?
> What is socially inclusive in the context of (the inhabitants) of Berlin?

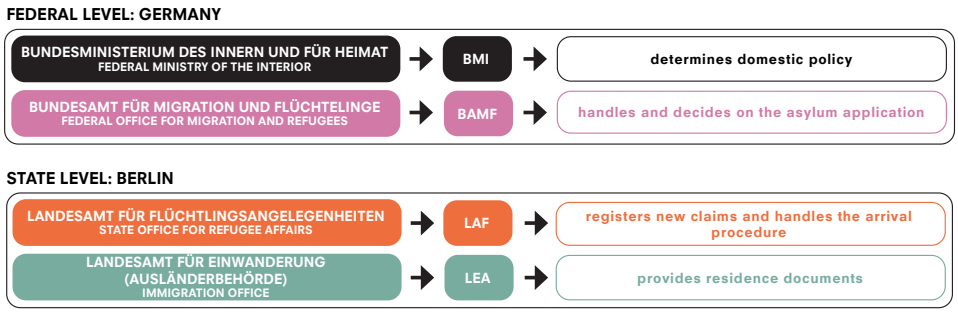


Figure 3: German migration institutions

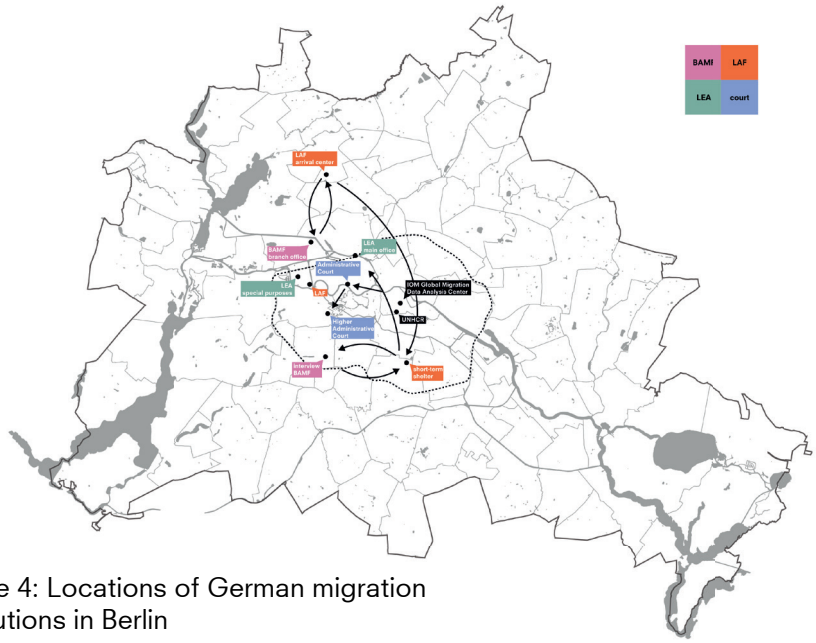


Figure 4: Locations of German migration institutions in Berlin

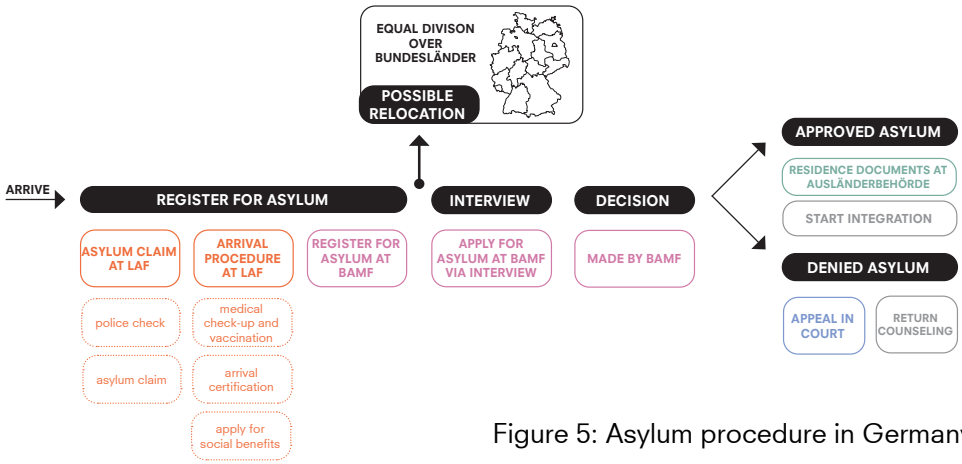


Figure 5: Asylum procedure in Germany

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

02

Theoretical framework

To answer the research question, it is important to identify the defined terms in the research question.

How can a building treat **displaced people** in a **societal inclusive** way while maintaining **institutional efficiency**?

displaced person: a person expelled, deported, or impelled to flee from his or her country of nationality or habitual residence by the forces or consequences of war or oppression

This research question intentionally focuses on the term "displaced persons" to avoid the stigmatization that is often associated with terms such as "migrants" or "asylum seekers." The way in which displacement is categorized into terms like "voluntary" or "forced," "immigrant" or "refugee," and "economic" or "political" has influenced how different actors respond to displaced individuals. For instance, refugees are typically viewed as people who have been involuntarily displaced due to political circumstances like war and violence, and are therefore seen as deserving of aid from the international community. Meanwhile, immigrants or migrants are often portrayed as economic opportunists who have chosen to leave their home communities in search of a better life, and as a result, are sometimes viewed as not entitled to social, economic, and political rights (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016).

efficiency: the quality of working well in an organized way, without wasting time or energy.

Institutional efficiency refers to the ability of migration institutions to operate effectively and efficiently, both independently and in collaboration with each other. While it is essential for these processes to work well, it is equally important to consider the needs of all users of the building, including the employees. Incorporating their needs in the design is crucial as well to ensure that the employees can perform their work well and efficiently.

inclusion: the act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability).

Social inclusiveness emphasises the social part that inclusion can play.

Social inclusivity in the city can be challenging from a spatial perspective, especially when migration buildings are situated on the outskirts of the city and are not well-integrated into the urban fabric. However, there is a growing trend of refugees moving to urban areas, as highlighted in *The Refugee Crisis Is a City Crisis* paper (Katz & Brandt, 2017). To address this trend, in September 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, announced that the agency would work more closely with cities to develop solutions that allow refugees to be more permanently integrated into the city (Kühl & Behrens, 2018). The paper *Possible impact of migrant crisis on the concept of urban planning* tackles this issue of integration and proposes an appropriate planning response to the effects of migration in West European cities (Danilovi□ Hristi□ et al., 2018). The aim for this paper is to prevent segregation and to enable a smooth and inclusive integration of refugees into the urban environment.

Although there is a focus on how spatial design can improve social inclusivity, the political framework that results in

migration buildings being located on the edges of the city is often overlooked, and there is less social discussion about how to design with this challenge. Berlin, being a polycentric city that was governed by two governments for a long time, has scattered migration institutions across the city, which is not surprising given its complex political history.

The history of migration in Germany reflects the political influence on the issue, as briefly discussed in the introduction. German society has been shaped by migration, cultural exchange, and ethnic diversity throughout its history. However, these values have been suppressed during periods of nationalism when they were deemed to be in conflict with the goal of national advancement (Kurthen, 1995). The growth of migration in Germany has been influenced by political decisions, and there have been three major turning points in this regard: the end of labor recruitment in 1973, the unification of Germany in 1989, and the 1998 federal election (Hess & Green, 2016).

The fluctuations in German politics, from broad inclusivity to narrow exclusivity, suggest that both xenophobia and the well-known "Wilkommenskultur" have support in German society. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend German norms and values to understand social inclusiveness. Fuchs and von Scheve's (2022) article on Refugee Belonging, which discusses the significant values for both refugees and German citizens, is a significant contribution to this study on social inclusiveness.

Relevance

The relevance of this research in relation to the theoretical framework is that it addresses the gaps in the theory of designing for social inclusivity in buildings for displaced people. The research takes a user-centric approach that emphasizes involving the occupants in the design process and setting design guidelines that promote social programming. This research focuses on social research design and aims to fill gaps in theory by investigating the role of social inclusivity in the design of a building for displaced people.

RESEARCH METHODS

03

Client

To examine the client, it is first of all important to identify and examine all German government institutions dealing with migration and refugees, to have a picture of who does what. In addition, it is also important to examine independent institutions, to see what the differences between them are. For instance, there are cross-world institutions from the UN, namely the UNHCR and the IOM. But there are also global umbrella aid organisations focused on migration, such as the Red Cross and Amnesty International. There are also Berlin-based institutions, such as KUB Berlin and Center for Student Refugees Berlin. By examining all these different institutions, an overview can be created not only of all the tasks involved in the migration process and aid, but also the differences between government and independent. With the government as the initiator and client of the building, research will be done on the German federal government system for migration, as well as the German judicial system.

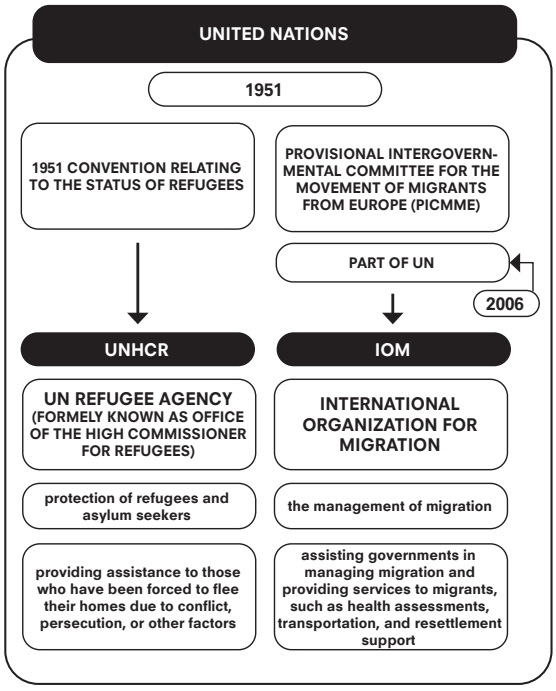
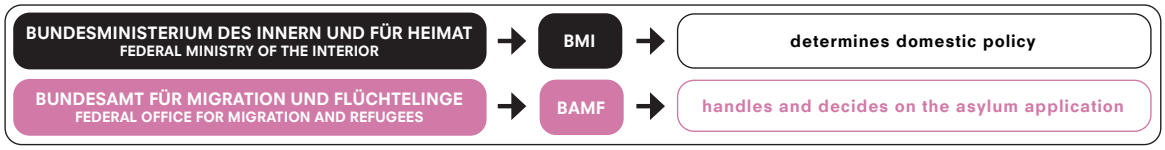


Figure 6: Research on United Nations for migration

Figure 7: German Federal Government

FEDERAL LEVEL: GERMANY



STATE LEVEL: BERLIN

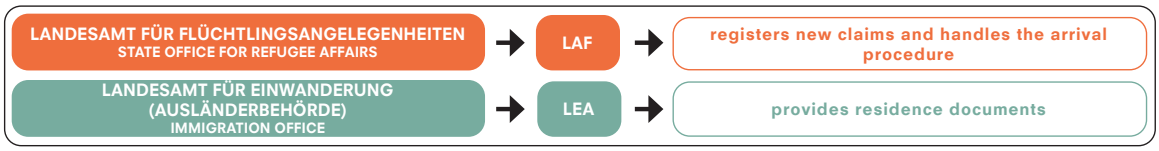


Figure 8: German migration institutions

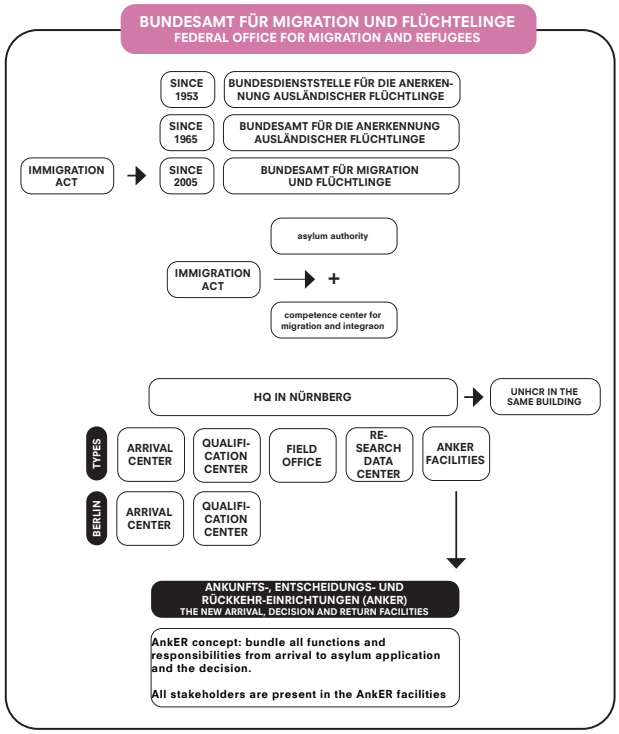


Figure 9: Research on BAMF

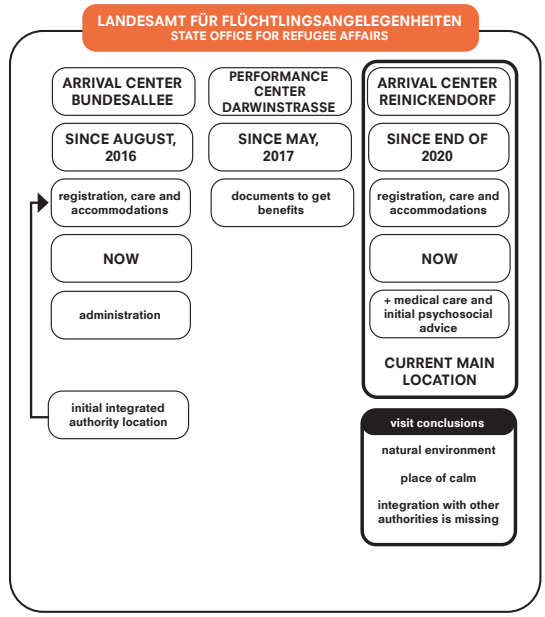


Figure 10: Research on LAF

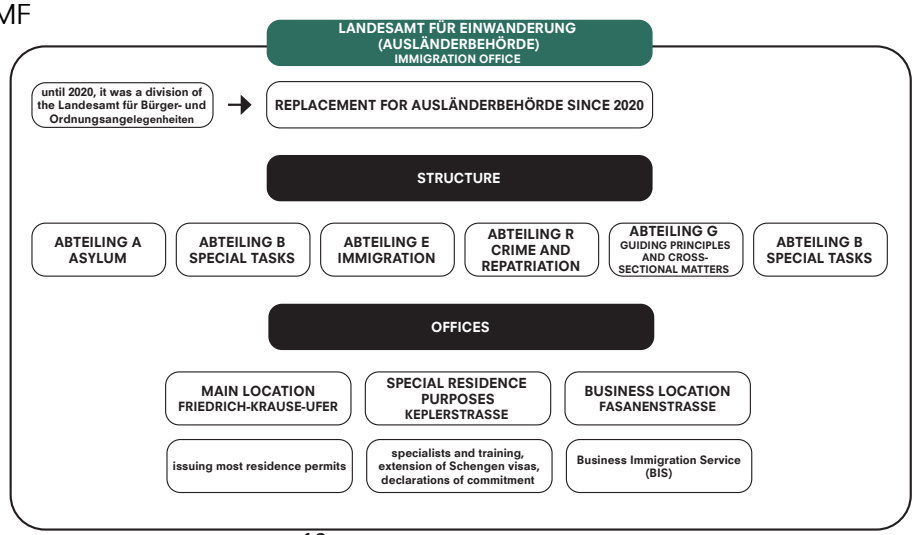


Figure 11: Research on LEA

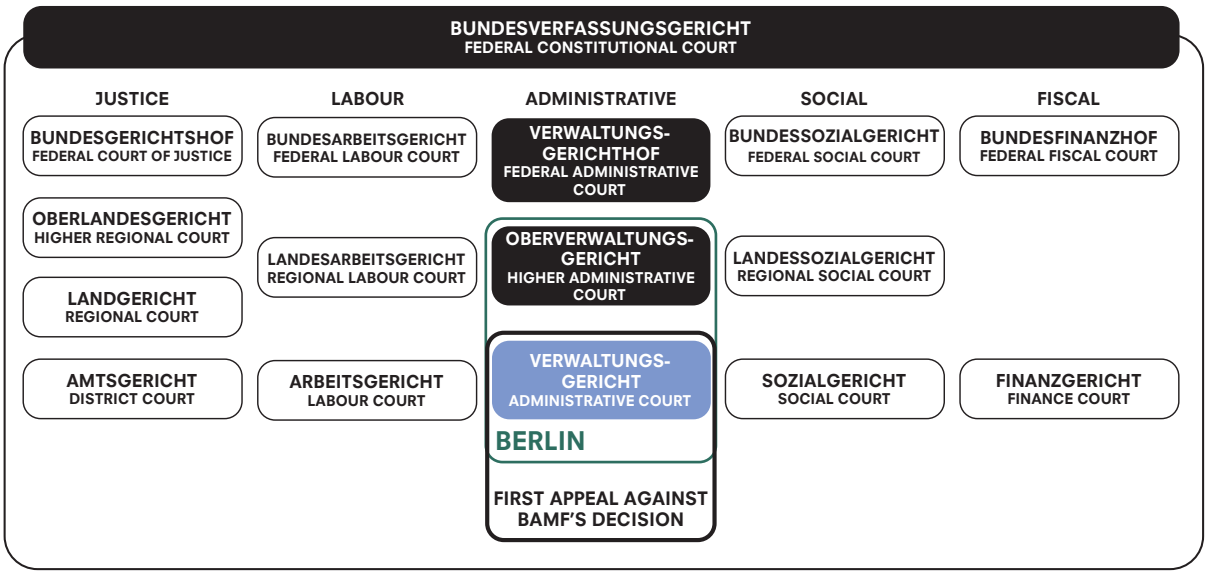


Figure 12: Judicial system in Germany

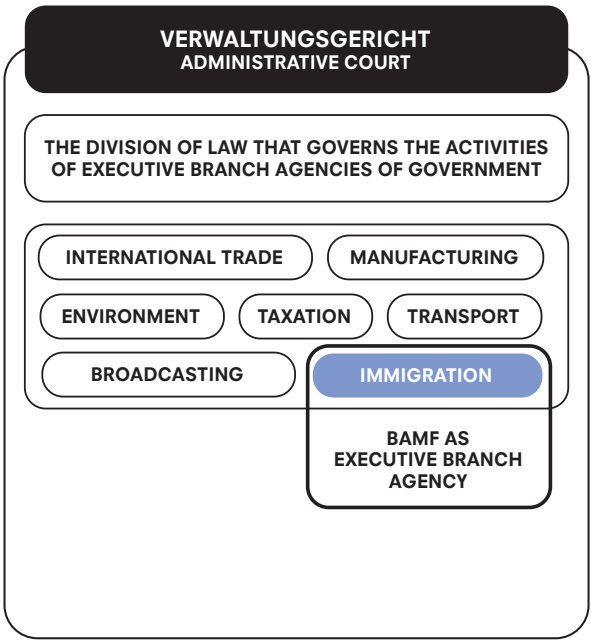


Figure 13: Administrative court in Germany

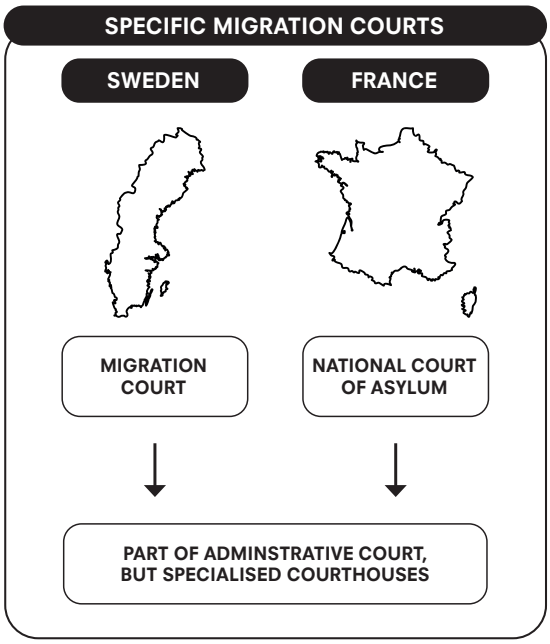


Figure 14: Precedent countries for Migration Court

Next to research on the judicial and governmental systems, fieldwork and interviews are important to research the client. Contact is made with the government in the field of migration to explore more from the client. The client is investigated through interviews with several people from COA (the Dutch LAF) and a visit to the arrival centre in Ter Apel. In Berlin, a visit is made to the Ankunftszentrum für Asylsuchende in Reinickendorf, guided by Monika Hebbinghaus from LAF. More research will be done on the residents of Berlin and their stakes. Another important factor will be the different users, which are grouped in three types of users: public, employees and displaced people. Research will be done on their diversity, stakes and ambitions for the building.

To answer the research questions for client, the COA document of the functional requirements and space needs required by the various government departments in the process can be used to answer "How can the client ensure that the needs of its employees are met in a building that prioritizes efficiency?", while the cases studies, such as in the paper Neighborhood environments and inclusive cities: An empirical study of local residents' attitudes toward migrant social integration in Beijing, China. (2022) can help to answer "How can the client involve and communicate with local residents to ensure that the building is accepted and supported by the community, given the ongoing social debate surrounding migration?"

Program

To move towards the program, the first thing to understand is the procedural steps in the asylum process.
These steps are described in BAMF's brochure. The stages of the German asylum procedure (2023) and on the Information for Refugees website of the Municipality of Berlin (2023). Following these documents, the different government institutions that play a role in the process are examined, namely the BAMF, LAF and LEA. There is also a focus on the role of the court in general and in the migration process. In doing so, the German legal system is examined, all courts in Berlin are mapped, including those dealing with immigration law specifically. It also looks at how immigration law relates in the legal system in other European countries, specifically looking at the migration court in Sweden and the (soon to be built) asylum court in France. However, courts are protective functions of which floor plans and the like cannot simply be found, so even with these two functions, in terms of benchmarking, this does not help. However, there is still enough understanding the sketches of courts from more general courts and design guidelines, which can help estimate spaces for the programme. By mapping all users of the building, programmatic spaces can be thought of from their needs and activities in the building. With numbers of daily users per flows in the building, it is then possible to think about how many spaces are needed. From an estimate in terms of time needed for an appointment, it can then be calculated how many appointments per day can take place in 1 space. From that number, it can be meant how many spaces are needed, which together with the m2s per space can be used to calculate the number of m2s per function. These process and calculation steps can then be checked with the established contacts and documents of the Dutch migration institutions, COA and Ministry of Justice and Security. Indeed, COA has identified the functional requirements and space needs for the Dutch government institutions, namely AVIM, IND, Dt&V and COA.

The division into programmatic groups then provides a logical subdivision into functions, which can be further developed into functions based on those groups. Not only from research, but also from the main goals, functions are filled in for the building. For instance, from the focus on the user, within 'procedure & support', there is a separation in the programmatic groups into 'procedural facilities', 'resettlement support' & 'supporting facilities for the procedure'. Whereas procedural facilities arise from the procedure, the other two programme groups arise from user support, with resettlement support focusing on displaced people and supporting facilities for the procedure focusing on building staff. COA research on the customer journey of displaced people is supportive in this to identify needs. The group theme of economy contributes to thinking about the possibilities of integration at the work level in the support functions, such as the Federal Employment Agency. Setting up requirements of key spaces or functions in the building are important to achieve the desired goals. The focus here will be on waiting areas and circulation, as both play a major role in users' perceptions.

To answer the research questions for program, the COA customer journey document can be used to answer "What are the specific needs and challenges faced by displaced people?", while the cases studies, such as in the paper

Neighborhood environments and inclusive cities: An empirical study of local residents' attitudes toward migrant social integration in Beijing, China. (2022) can help to answer "How can architecture be used to promote social inclusivity and make minorities feel valued and integrated into society?"

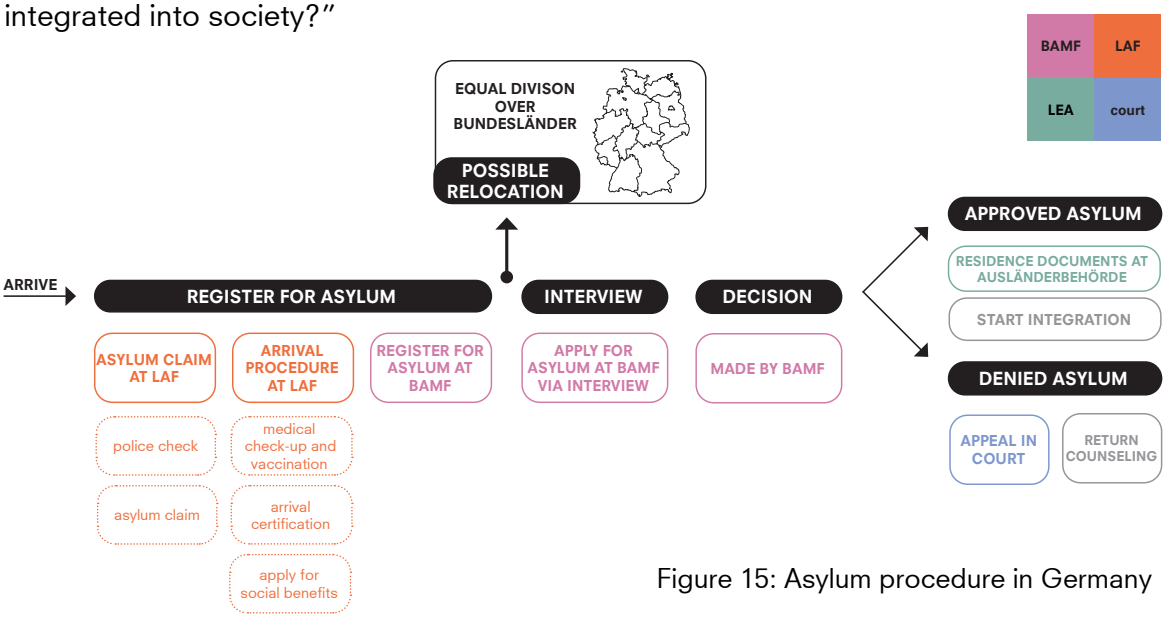
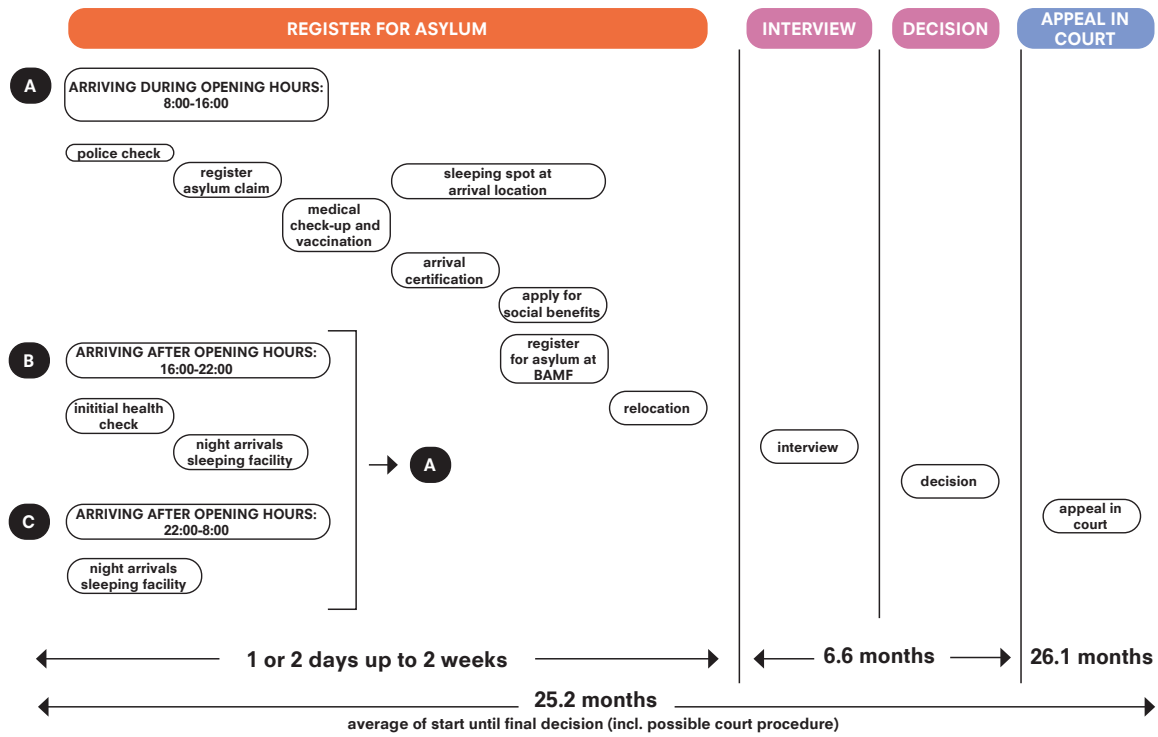


Figure 15: Asylum procedure in Germany

Figure 16: Timeline of asylum procedure in Germany



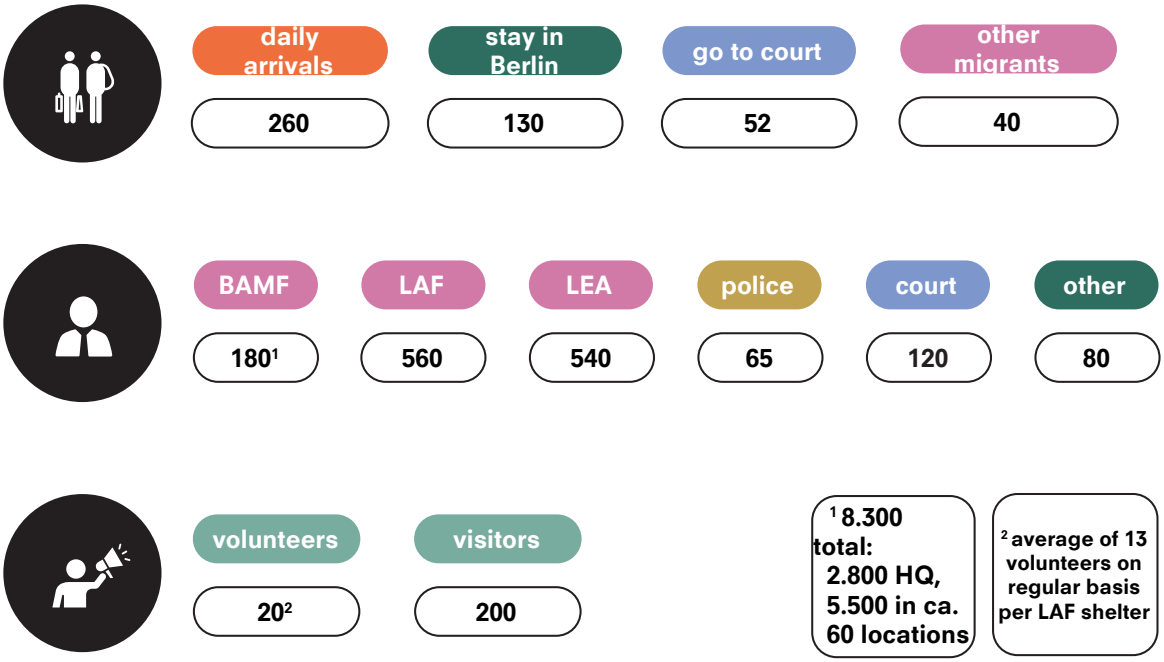


Figure 17: Amount of users

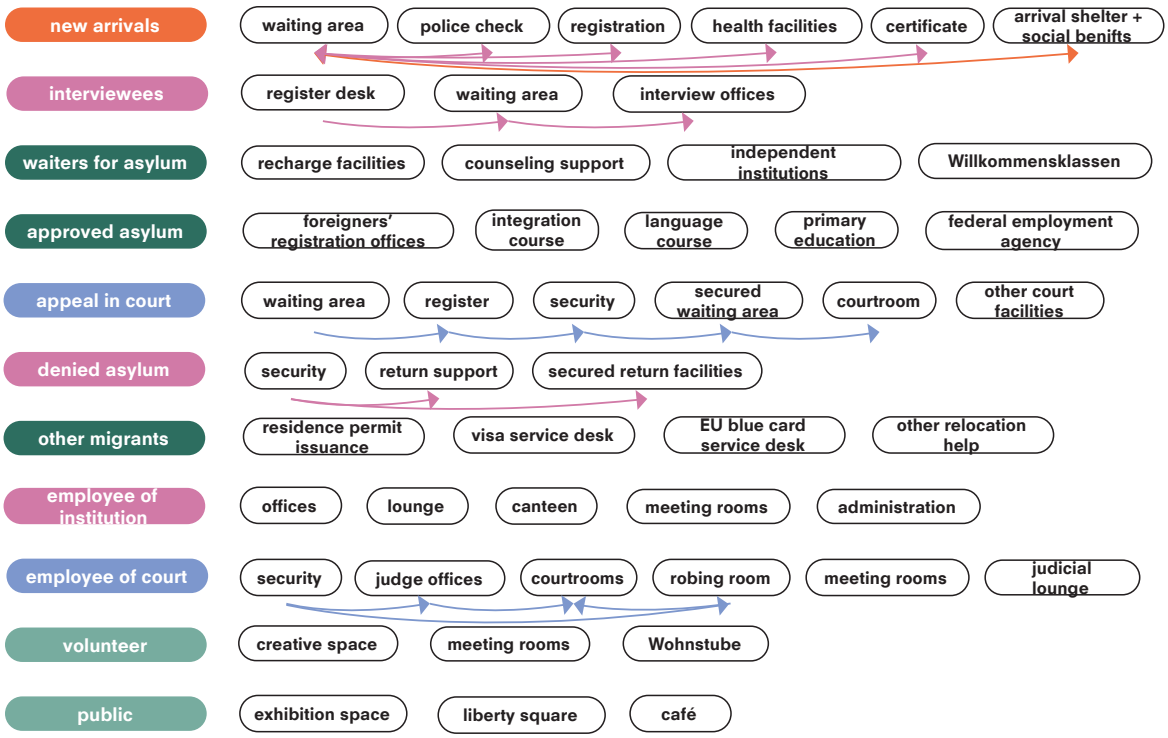
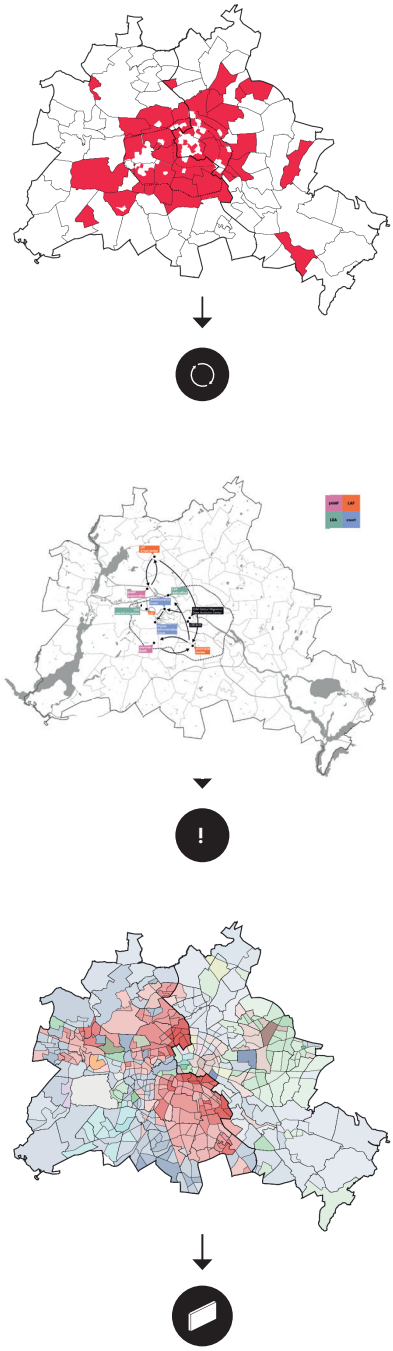


Figure 18: User streams

Site

To choose a location, it is first important to understand the city of Berlin in its context, historical development and future vision, for which the Berlin 2030 vision document is the starting point. Next, it is important to identify the current migration institutions and courts in Berlin. The reason for the placement of migration buildings on the edges of the city is then important to investigate. This requires research into Berlin's history and political backgrounds. It is also important to investigate Berlin's culture and society to capture Berlin norms and values in terms of social inclusiveness. The users are again an important factor in determining requirements for the location. The demographics and backgrounds of residents in Berlin are important to take into account. Parallel to this is the research on the city of Berlin from the economic group theme. From both studies, requirements can be established that the location should meet. These requirements are restricting enough to determine just a few possible locations, and these three locations are further investigated.



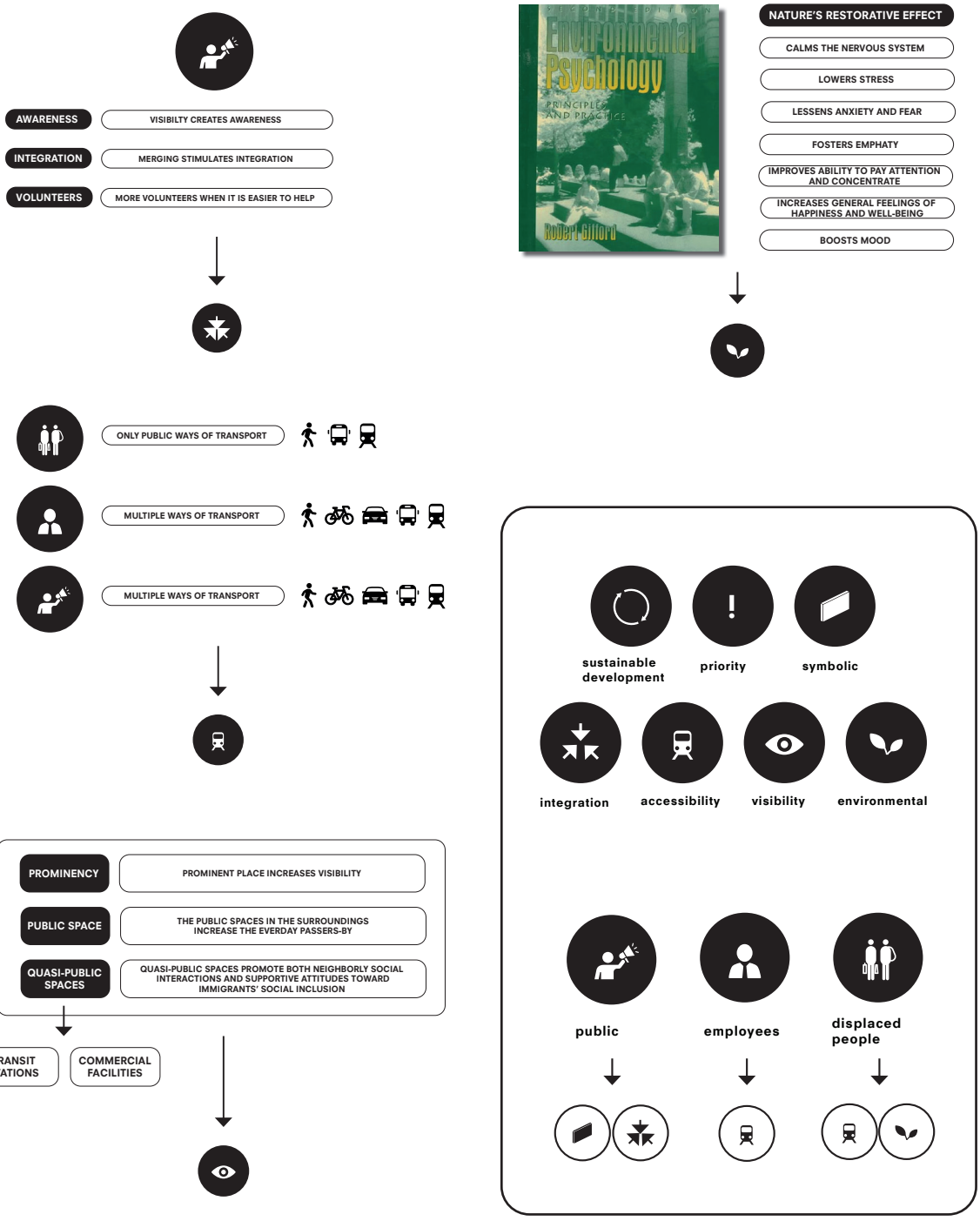


Figure 19: Research that lead to site ambitions

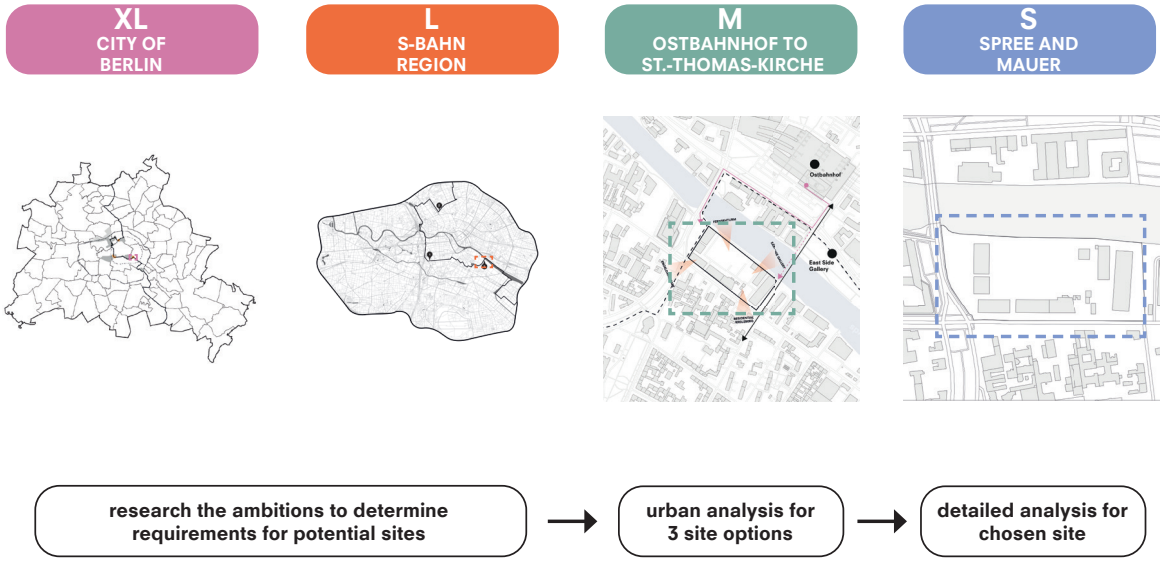


Figure 20: Site scales overview

The locations will be tested through different scales (XL – L – M – S) and will within these scales be tested for the ambitions for the site. The site visit to Berlin should support this research. As the research progresses, the requirements for the location are tightened up until the right location is found.

To answer the research questions for site "What are the political and social reasons for the current placement of migration buildings on the periphery of the city in Berlin?" and "What is socially inclusive in the context of (the inhabitants) of Berlin?", the papers mentioned in the Research Framework will be further investigated.

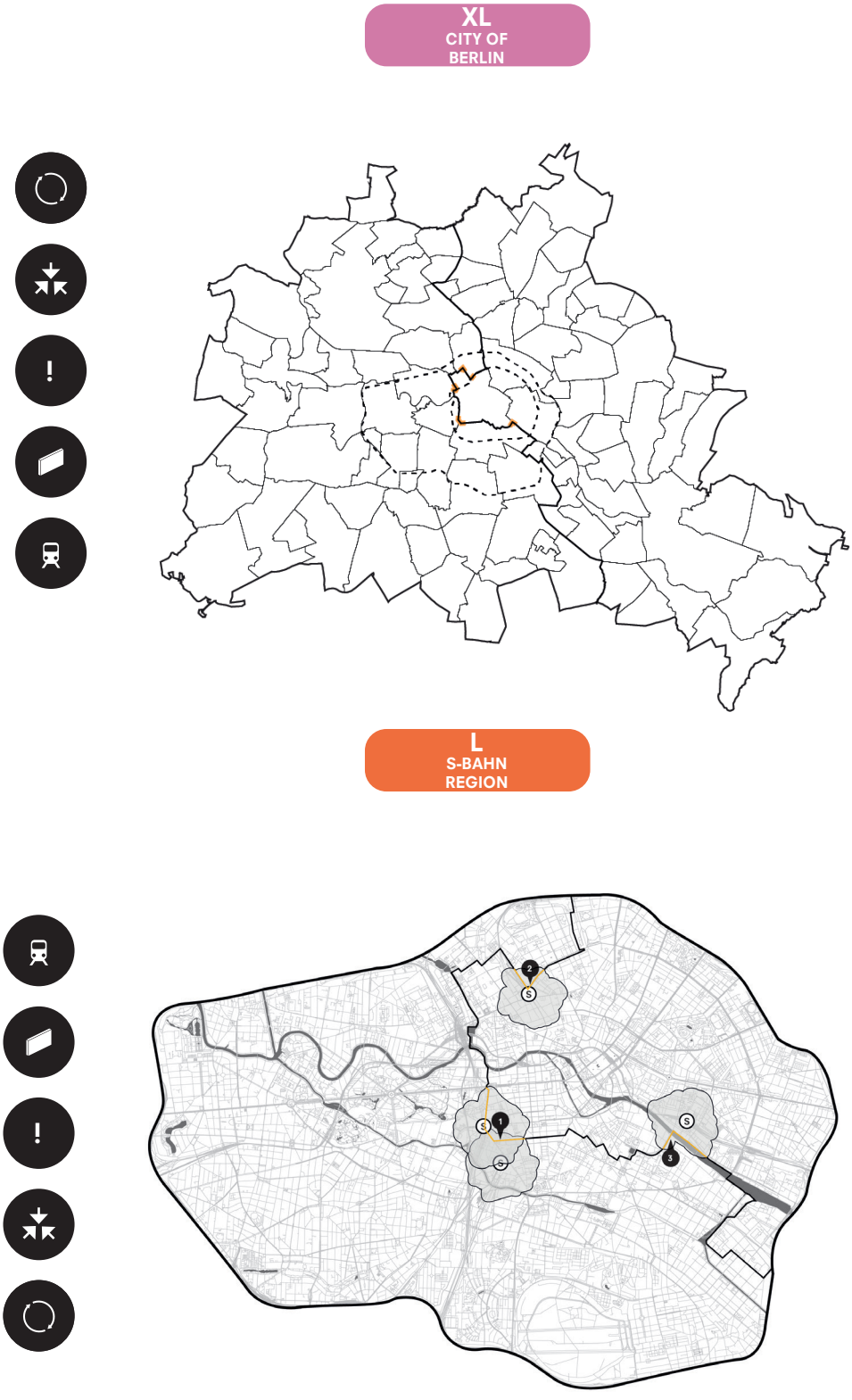


Figure 21: Site scales XL and L, tested on the site ambitions

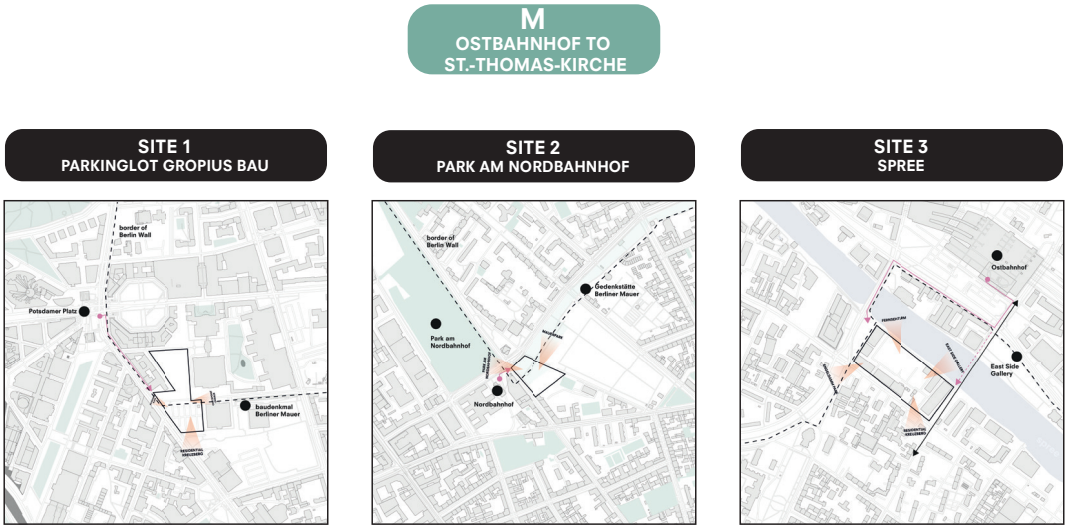


Figure 22: Site scales M, comparing three options

	SITE 1 BAUDENKMAL BERLINER MAUER	SITE 2 GEDENKSTÄTTE BERNAUER STRASSE	SITE 3 EAST SIDE GALLERY
	/	+	+
!	++	+	+
	+	+++	++
	+	+	+++
	+	+	+++
	/	+	++
	-	++	+
o	+	-	+

Figure 23: Comparing diagram for site options and ambitions

DESIGN BRIEF

04

Client

The initiator of the project is the German Government, working with the United Nations departments on migration and asylum, UNHCR and IOM. The implementing client is then the Berlin Government, which has several institutions to implement it. Among these institutions, the distinction should be made between the Resettlement Institutions, which have a political role, and the Court, which has the legal role. The main implementing institutions are the BAMF, LAF and LEA. Other stakeholders in the project are the users of the building and the residents of Berlin.

For the client, it is important to improve efficiency and cooperation between the institutions. In addition, an identified problem is often that the numbers in asylum flows vary quite often, so there is a focus on flexibility of functions to cope with these fluctuations. In addition, the focus for the client is on its employee, for whom it wants to ensure an optimal working environment. To get Berlin's residents and residents from the immediate surroundings on board in the project and to avoid much resistance, direct integration with these stakeholders is also important.

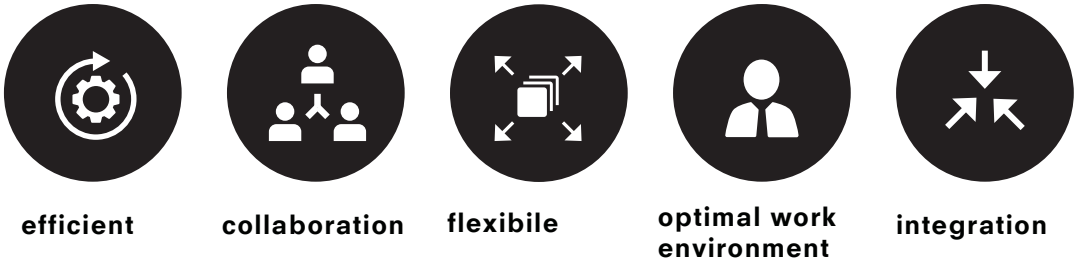


Figure 24: Client ambitions

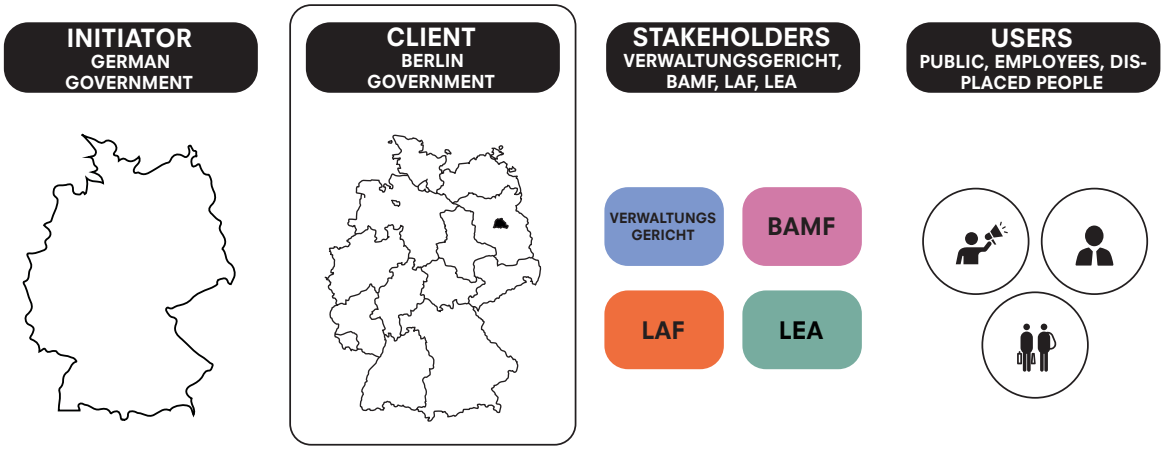
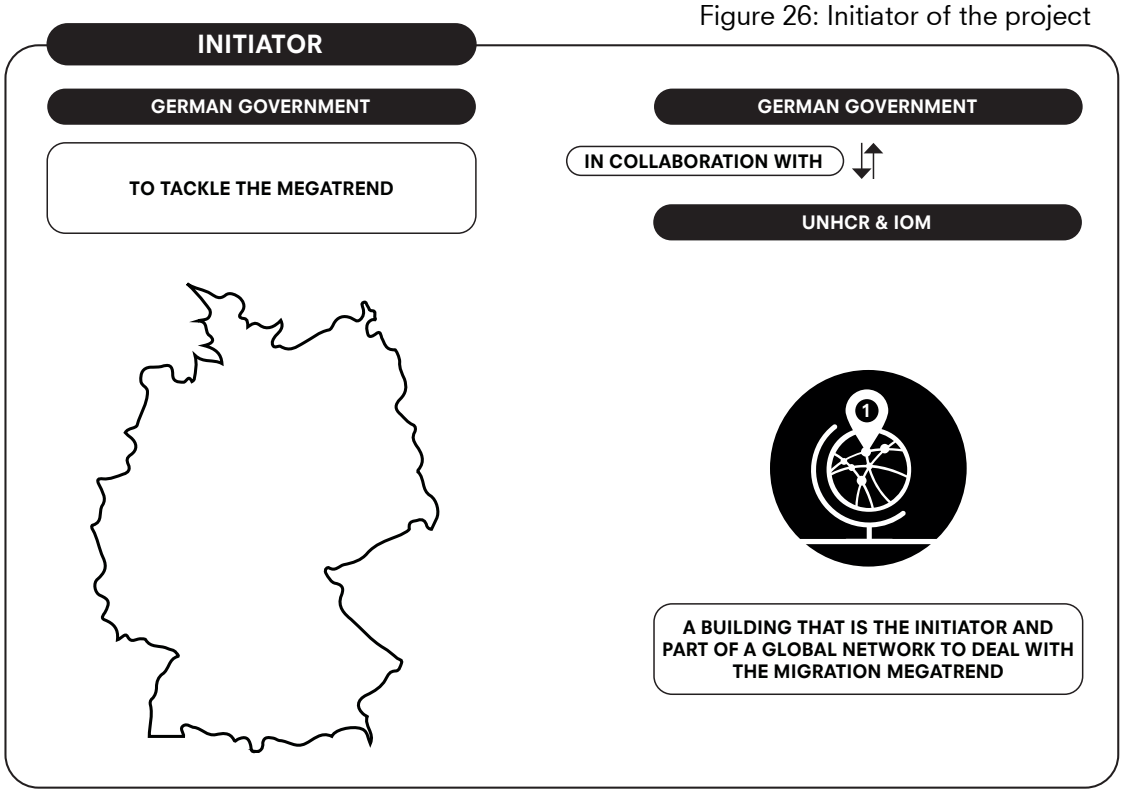


Figure 25: Client overview

Figure 26: Initiator of the project



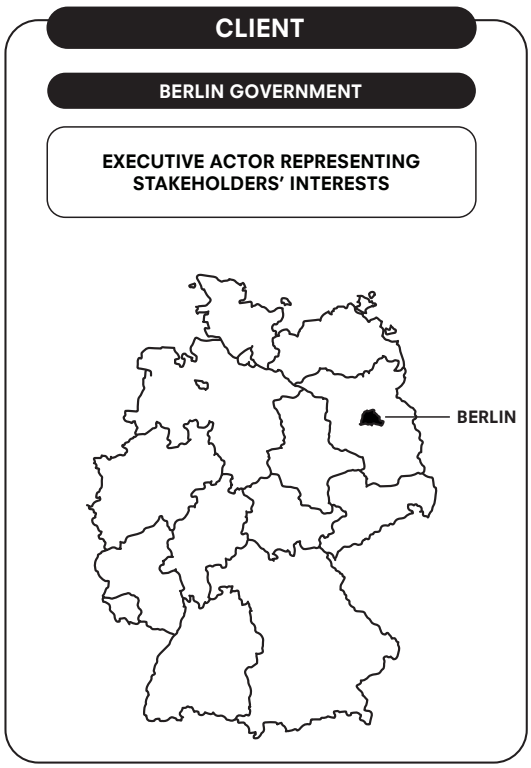


Figure 29: Client

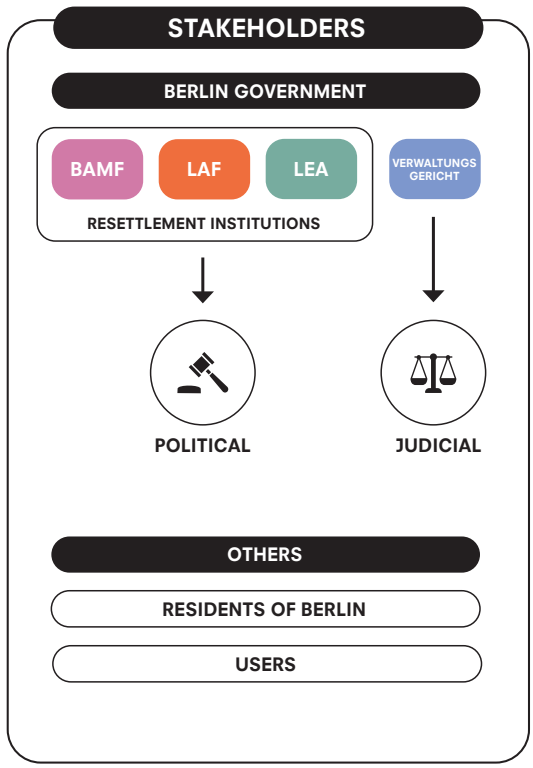


Figure 28: Stakeholders

Program

The program groups are divided into ‘resettlement institutions’, ‘court’, ‘public’ and ‘building functionalities’, with ‘resettlement institutions’ in turn further subdivided into ‘procedural facilities’, ‘arrival shelter’, ‘resettlement support’ & ‘supporting facilities for the procedure’. The procedural facilities is the largest part of the building and brings together government institutions for migration. The resettlement support are supporting functions for displaced people, which revolves around integration, education and wellbeing. The arrival shelter accommodates the arriving people for the first days, until their asylum claim is registered and they can be relocated. The supporting facilities for procedure are the functions that support procedural facilities and resettlement support. These functions will be supportive for the building’s employees.

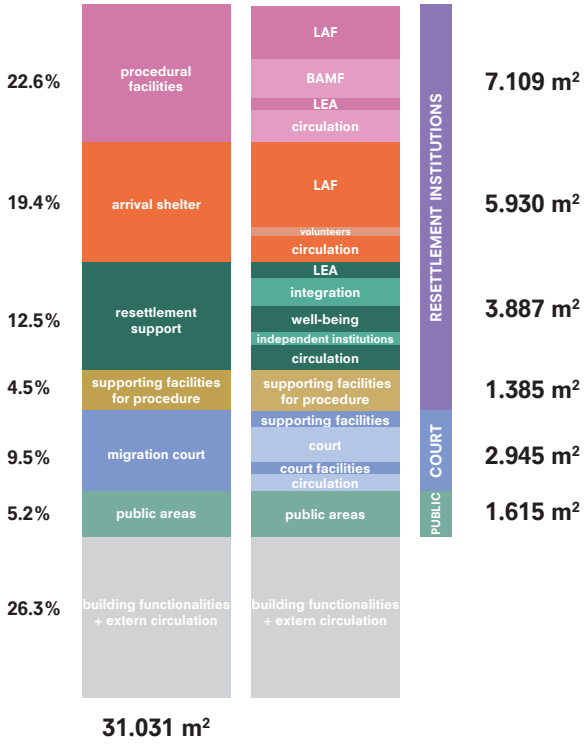


Figure 29: Program scheme

Figure 30: Program ambitions

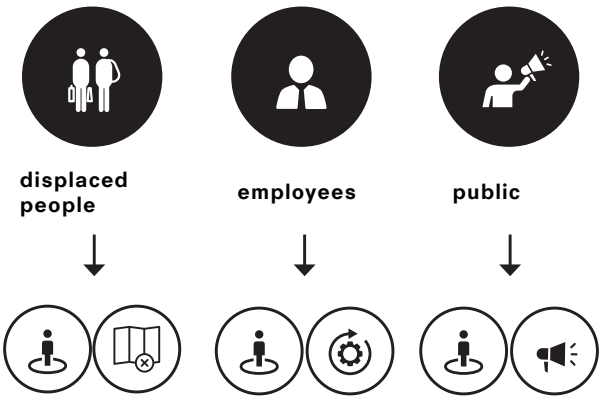


Figure 31: Program for the users

The resettlement support component sits most of the functions that contribute to the goals for the building. To facilitate the group goal of boosting the economic position of the building, there is a focus on integration, education and employment. To focus the building on the user, stimulating wellbeing, there are several cousellors for help and recharge facilities. There are also branch offices to bring independent insitutions together in the building and facilitate the user's possibilities

Another goal, is to make the building more public. Here, the focus lies on visibility of migration and integration with Berliners. For visibility, there is a liberty square in front of the building and an exhibition space; for integration, there are facilites such as a Wohnstube, where locals, old-refugees and displaced people can come together.

In the building, there will be an architectural emphasis on the design of the waiting areas, as they are a large percentage of the programme. In doing so, there are also important requirements for circulation, as these play a major environmental psycholosocial role in the building, focusing on having an overview and knowing where to go.

The collages, see figures 32, 33 and 34, explain this. Waiting areas are centrally located around functions, but also have visual connection to courtyards, which should give environmental psychologically-proven tranquillity. The building is constructed spatially, but efficiently, with the various functions visible.

Figure 32: Collage

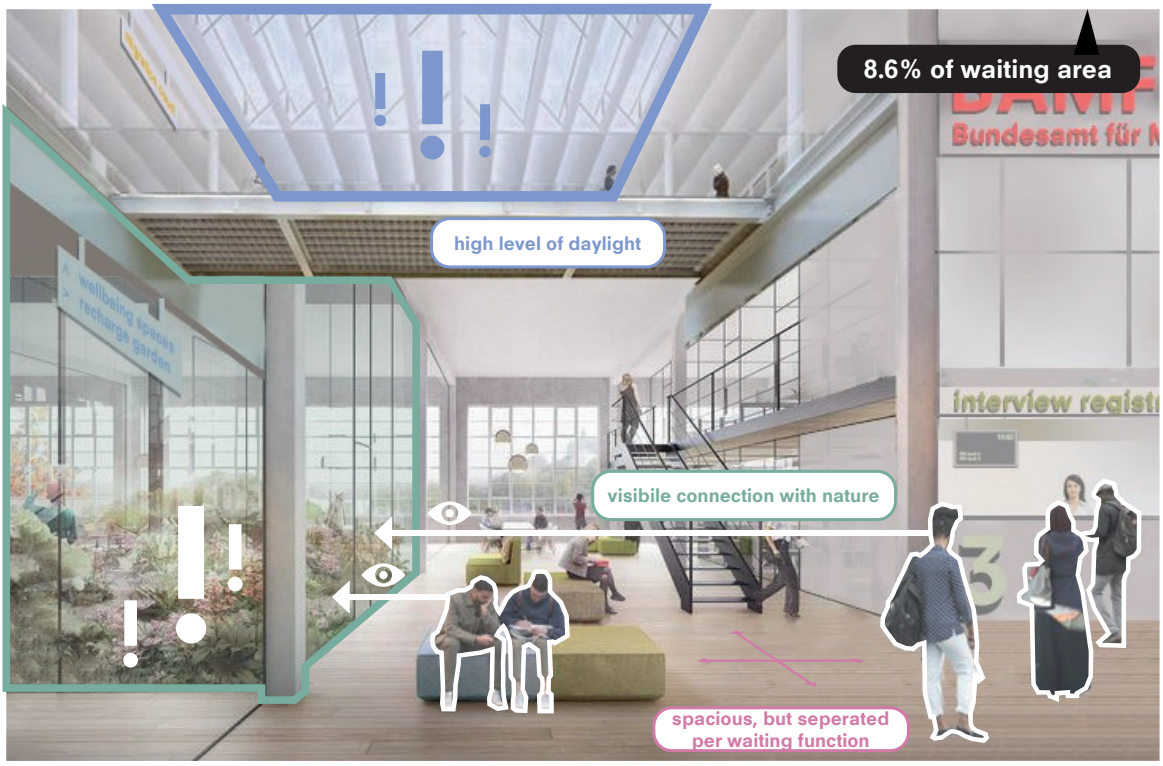
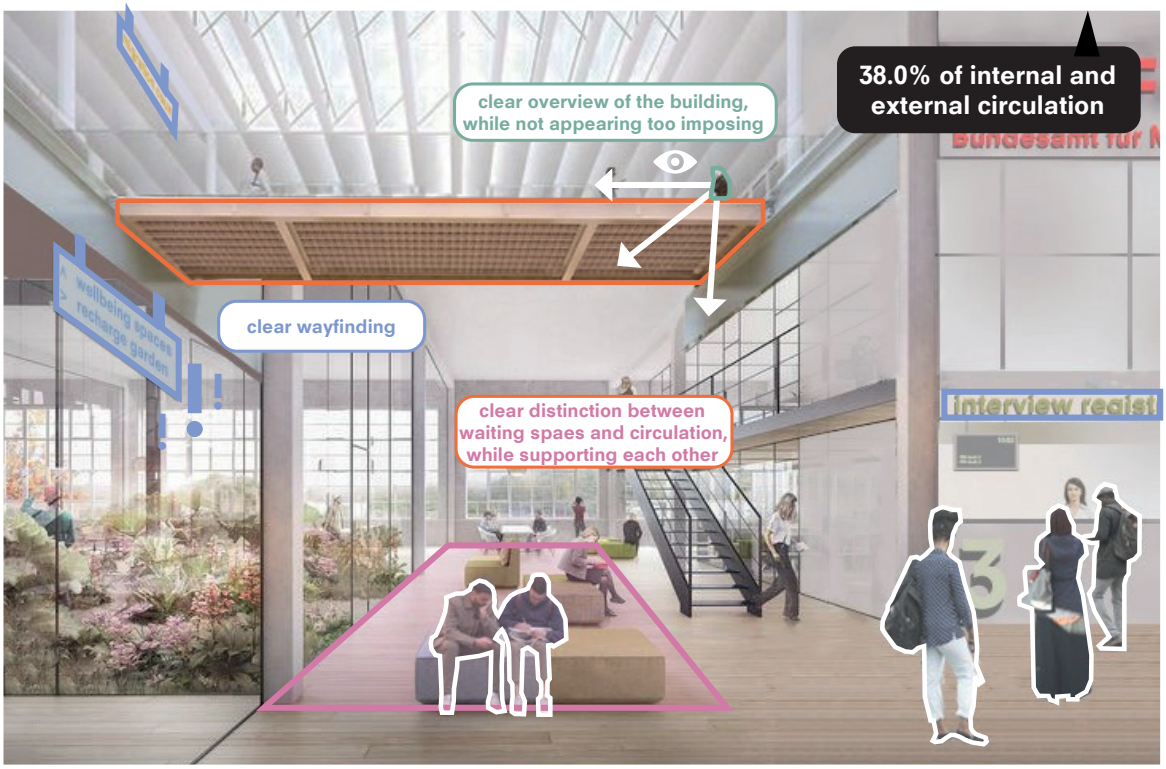


Figure 33: Waiting area as key space

Figure 34: Circulation as key space



The building separates the resettlement facilities from the court, as it is important that the court continues to exude authority and has an independent role from government institutions. Instead, the resettlement faciltites are linked to each other, with the support functions supporting the proceedings and the resettlement support. The public functions are situated around this, with the liberty square located at the entrance, as well as the exhibition area. These are the most public functions and thereby play the most important role for the visibility of the building. In contrast, the local support is closer to the resettlement support functions, as this is also a form of support for the displaced people.

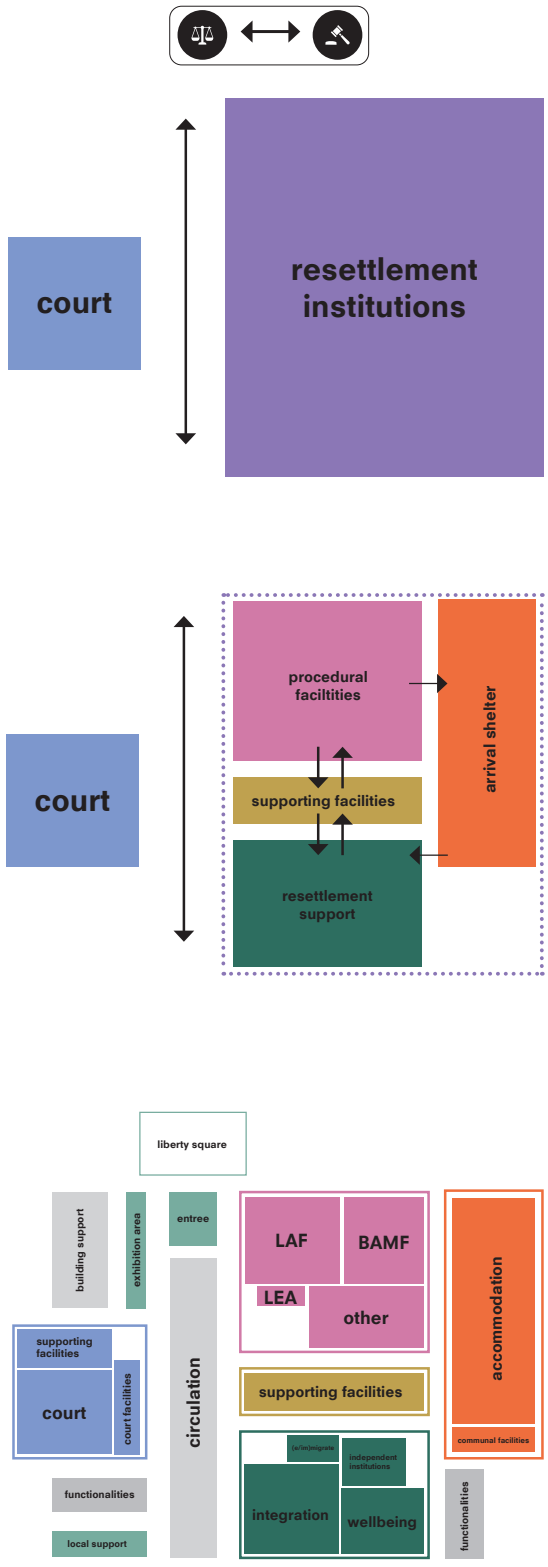


Figure 35: Relation schemes

Site

The chosen site emerged as the best locations of all ambitions for the site after extensive analysis. The main user of the site is currently a waste and cardboard recycler. These functions will be demolished, but however, there is also a monument present on the site. This Viktoriaspeicher is currently empty and will be preserved and given back to the neighbourhood in this project. There are also a number of municipal plans for the site, such as closing and improving opposite residential blocks, and constructing a bridge from the East Side Gallery to Manteuffelstrasse. Taking into account how long it takes to develop a complex project like this, these plans are taken into account in the design. The location has several qualities, with views of the Spree, the Fernsehturm can be seen to the west, while to the east the East Side Gallery is visible within foliage distance. Also, the Engeldamm ends at this location and there is a connection to the residential part of Kreuzberg, with its high percentage of immigrant background.

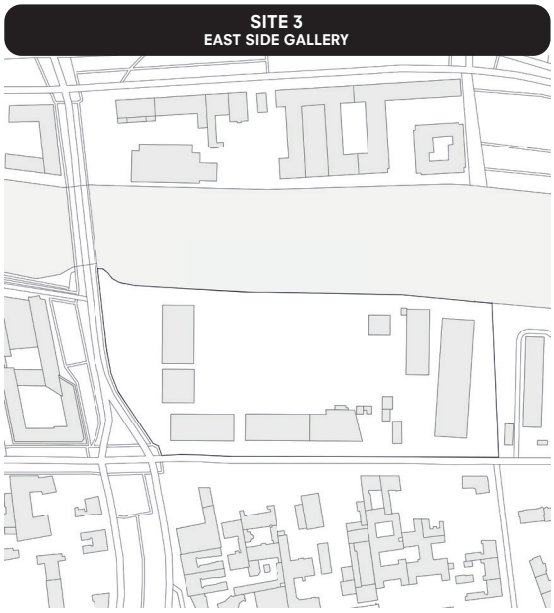


Figure 36: Current situation on chosen site

Figure 37: Pictures of chosen site

Figure 38: Location building in Berlin, in comparison with the other group projects

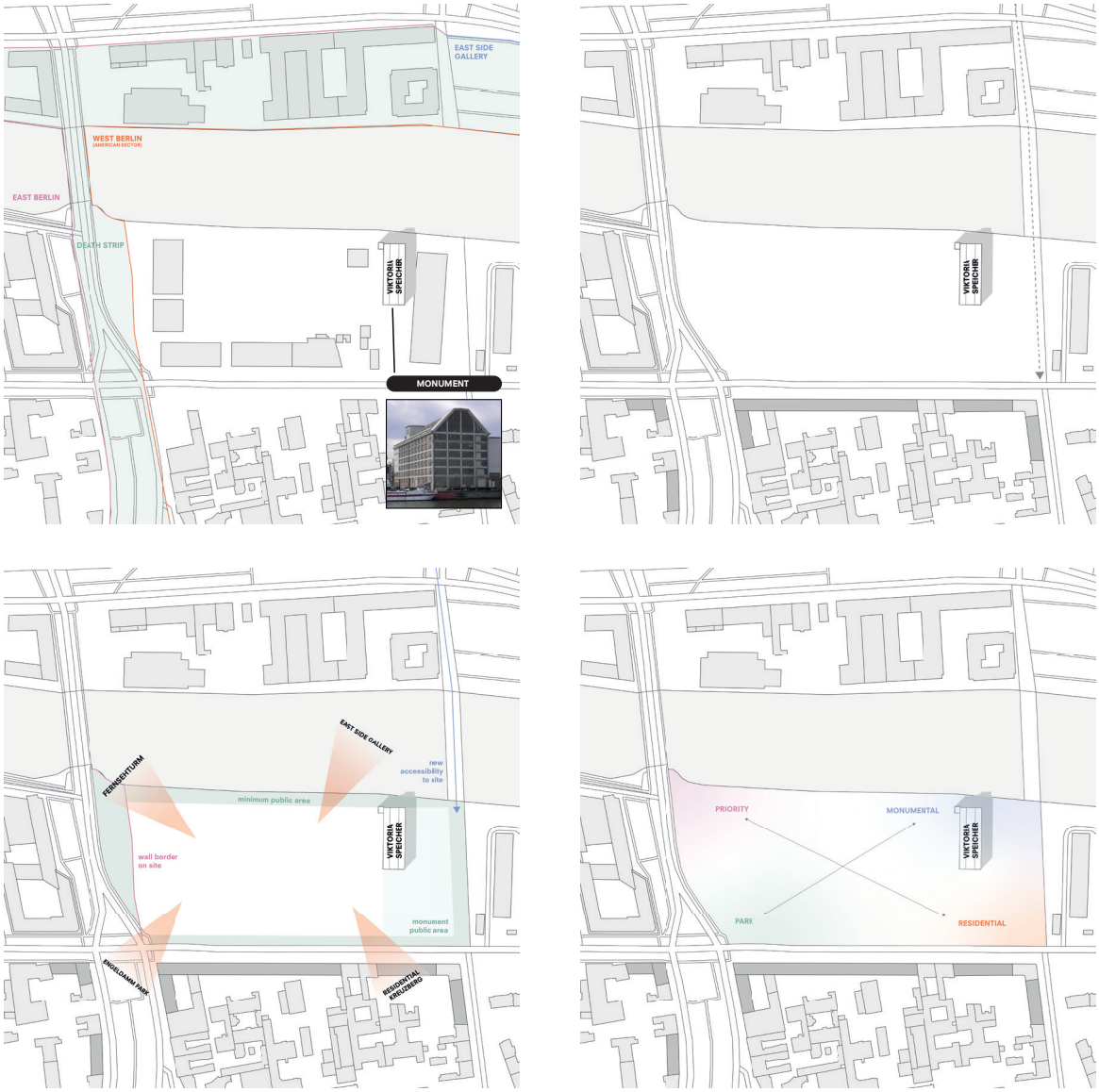


Figure 39: Site analysis

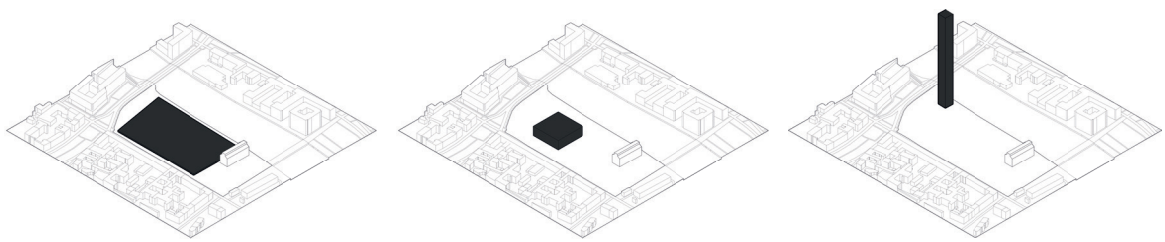


Figure 39: Mass studies

Integration

Concluding ambitions from the different components of the project.

For client, there can be a focus on the authoritarian appearance of a courthouse, the open appearance for the public, and a welcoming but institutional appearance.

For a clear programmatic layout, the focus can be on separate buildings for separate program. The building can also be divided into public (public functions such as exhibition), semi-private (interview rooms) and private (offices or institutions). Another option is to situate the program around environmental courtyards, with waiting rooms as key spaces in mind.

For site, there is the option to make the building blocks refer to the built environment, through height and shape. There is also the option to orient the program to the context of the site. For instance, the court could be oriented towards the Engeldamm, the public part towards Mitte and the Fernsehturm, the institutions towards the arrival side from the station, and the arrival shelter towards the residential area. Another option looking at the site is a dense building block towards the street, and opening the building block towards the Spree.

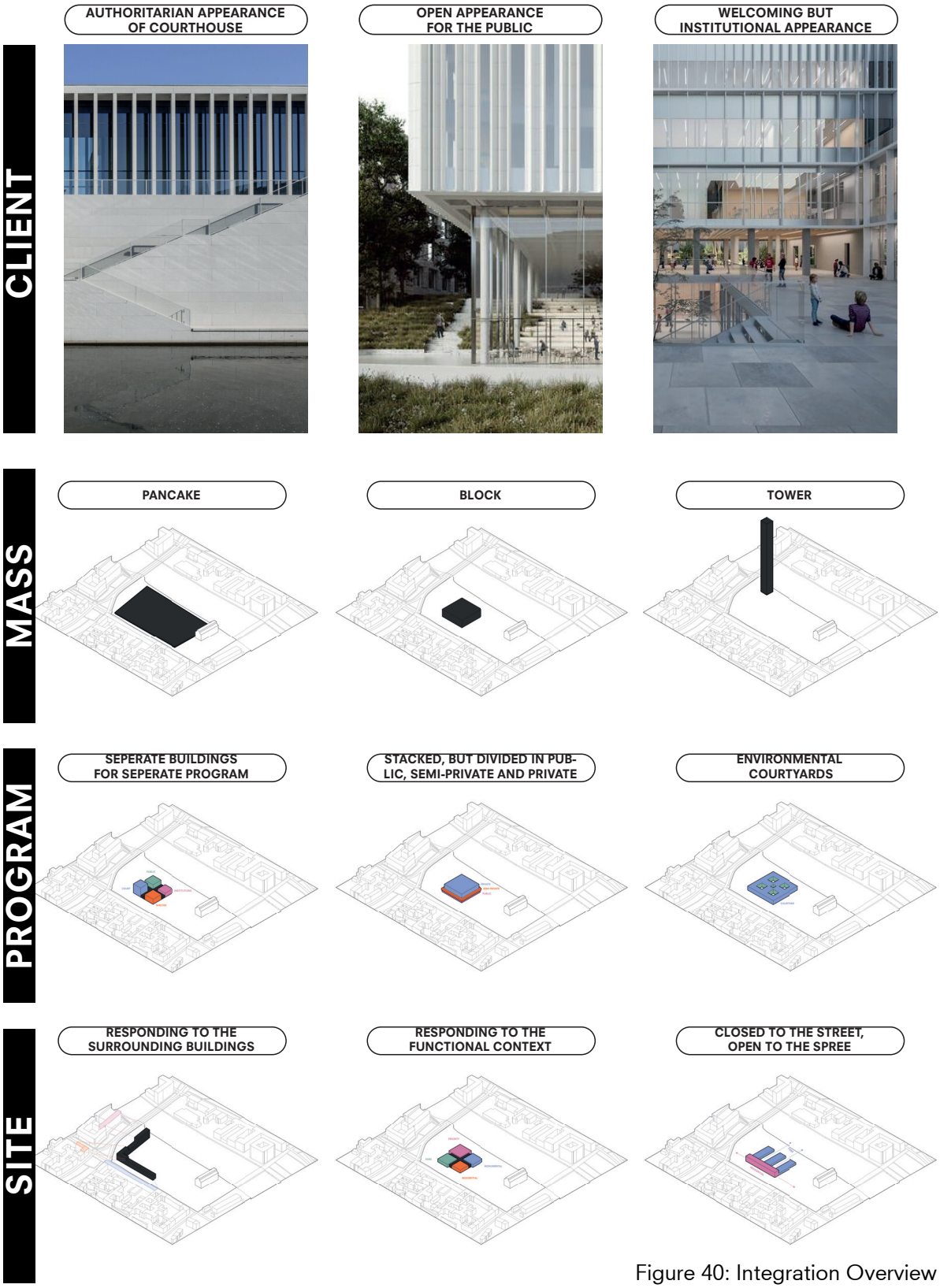


Figure 40: Integration Overview

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Figures

All figures by author.