

VIRIDITAS ANTE PORTAS

A NEW GATE FOR SCHWÄBISCH GMÜND

viriditas (lat.)
verdure, vitality, vigour

ante portas (lat.)
before the gates, on the way;
also an expression for a direct existential necessity

The German town of Schwäbisch Gmünd has a long and colourful history, dating back to the Roman Empire and its famous wall, the *Limes*. Its current appearance was mainly shaped in medieval times; main attractions are its gothic minster and the preserved towers of the town wall, creating a picturesque atmosphere.

Gmünd's western entrance lacks these qualities, it is an urban wasteland, characterised by car dealers, industrial sites and the crossing railway.

But the site is also promising: the forested slopes of *Nepperberg*, the lush banks of the river Rems, the proximity to the old town centre and the town's transport hub as well as some important institutions make it an ideal place for a new living quarter.

This design expands on these noteworthy potentials and aims to create a quarter that extends the town centre westwards adapting its distinctive features. It focuses on five points: 1. Historically and Contextually inspired **Structure**, 2. Blue-Green **Connections**, 3. Bike- and Pedestrian-Centred **Mobility**, 4. New Urban **Productivity** and 5. **Mixed Use** for mixed Lives.

By implementing the concepts developed regarding these points a district is created that is green, liveable, and productive, contributes to the development of a circular economy and circular construction, promotes sustainable forms of traffic and improves the local climate.

As the title indicates it will also acts as a new gate to the town of Schwäbisch Gmünd, welcoming visitors and residents alike by linking the town's illustrious past to the present and hinting towards the future.



water
water, inaccessible
water, underground
green space
forest
inaccessible green
intensive roof greening
green space, cool
sealed up to 50%
sealed up to 75%, warm
sealed up to 100%, hot
cold air stream towards valley

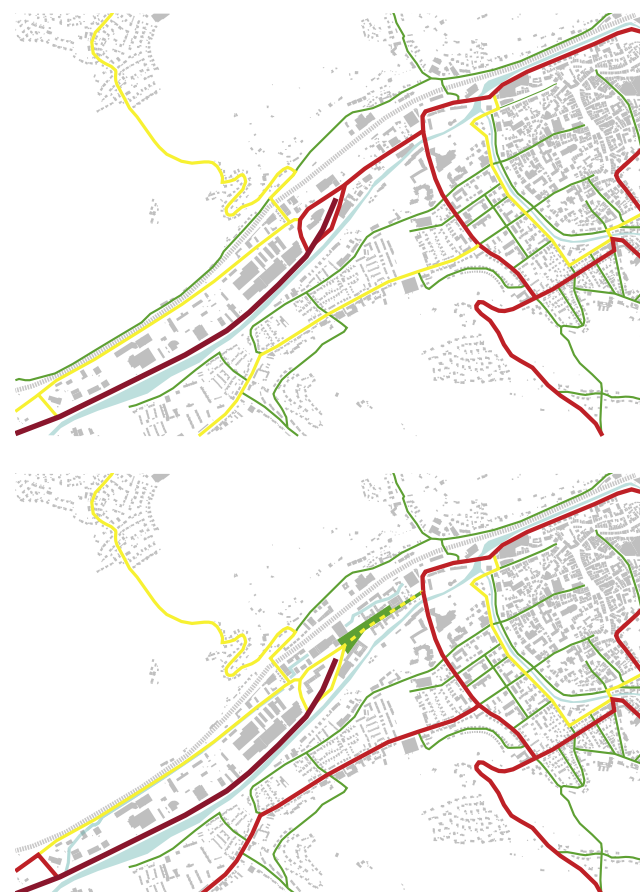
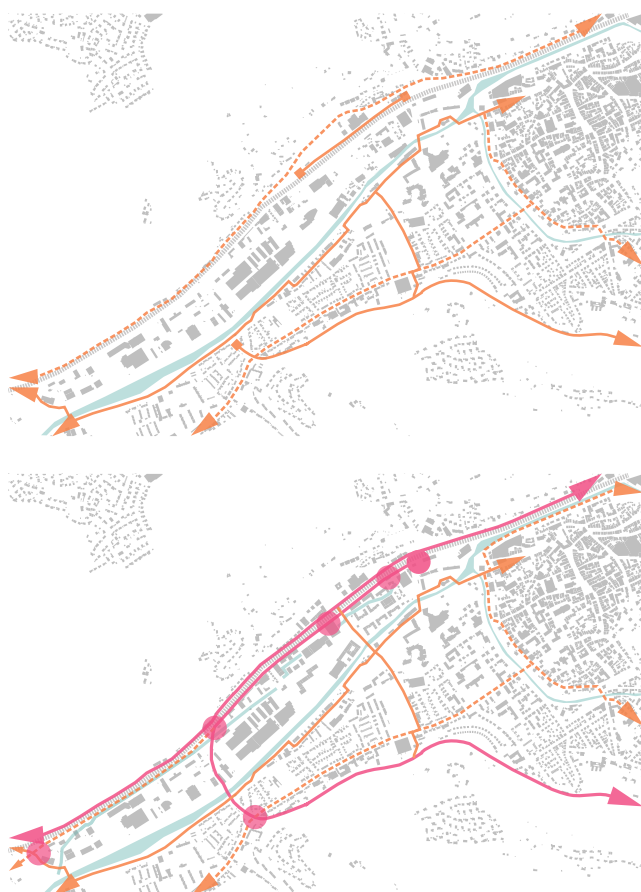
maps showing the site's current state (above) and the project's goals (below), from left to right: water courses, green spaces, climate analysis

Green and Free spaces

The site is confined by the river Rems in the south and the forested slopes of Nepperberg in the north. Most of the river is inaccessible, the only exception being the Remspark east of the site. There is an almost vanished millstream crossing the area and some green spaces on the southern riverbank.

The site is characterized by vast patches of wasteland, partially due to the construction of the federal street's tunnel and a high level of soil sealing. Hence, the area has a very negative microclimate.

Our project aims to open up the millstream and make the Rems accessible. The existing green spaces will be connected and form a ribbon going all the way from the southern to the northern slopes of Rems valley. The river and the millstream also bring green into the new quarter. By providing a large free space from the slopes to the river, the microclimate will be enhanced considerably.



bike freeway
mobility hub
bike path
bike path, shared
walkway, existing
walkway, planned
walkway, potential extension
federal street B29
high traffic
medium traffic
low traffic
living street

maps showing the site's current state (above) and the project's goals (below), from left to right: bike network, pedestrian network, street network

Infrastructure

The area lies next to the railway station and the central bus station (ZOB), right at Gmünd's main hub of public transport. There are several bike paths connected to regional routes, usually as part of the street or the pavement.

A few walkways connect the site to the other side of the river but there is no direct connection to the north or the Remspark area.

Lorcher Strasse is an important street, leading commuters, residents and visitors directly from the federal street to the town's centre.

This project establishes a variety of new street-independent bike paths of which two are designed as regional bike freeways. A new network of pathways connects the site to the adjacent areas. *Lorcher Strasse* will be rendered unattractive to commuters, thus relaxing the traffic situation. Alternative routes exist, but residents and visitors shall be motivated to use other forms of transport by upgrading interchangeability.

1 Historically and Contextually Inspired Structure



historical course of the Roman Limes
historical course of medieval town wall
new Green Wall

map showing Gmünd's walls, an inspiration for the design concept

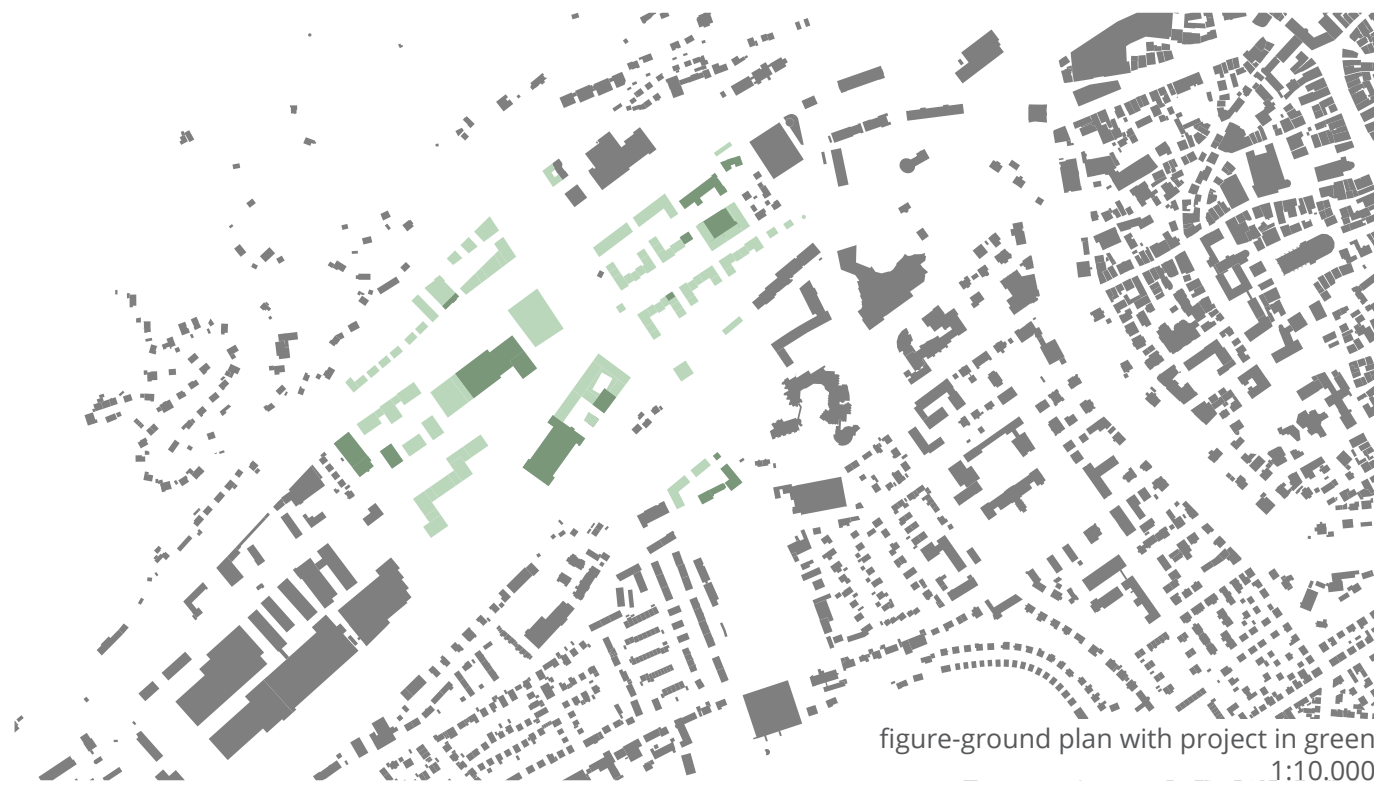


figure-ground plan with project in green
1:10.000

In search of Gmünd's very own character, we noticed its well-preserved structure: an old medieval town core, encircled by a green ring, followed by villas and residential quarters. This is only disrupted by a few bigger buildings, such as the Congress Centre. The project's structure is based on this observation.

Close to the ZOB is a cluster of block structures resembling the higher density of the town centre. To the west follows an open space called the *Green Wall* that divides the first cluster from the rest just like the town walls used to. A tower highlights the new gate and leads to the *Westtorplatz* square.

A layer of bigger structures defines the western edge of the *Green Wall*. Beyond this and north of the railway, the structures get smaller and less dense, mediating the smaller scale of the northern residential area and the industrial zone expanding westwards.