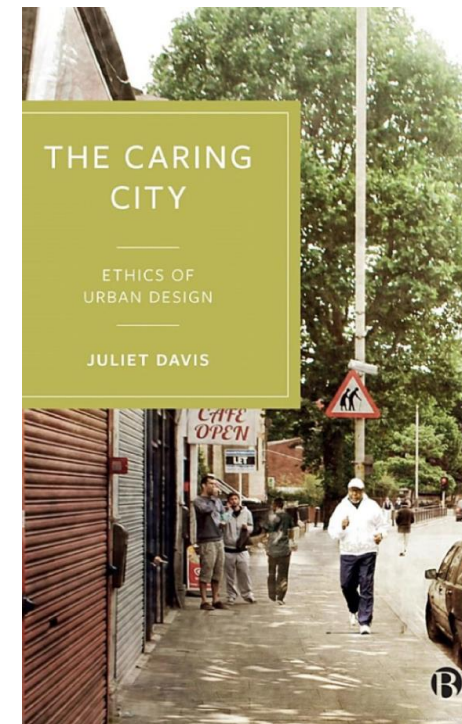
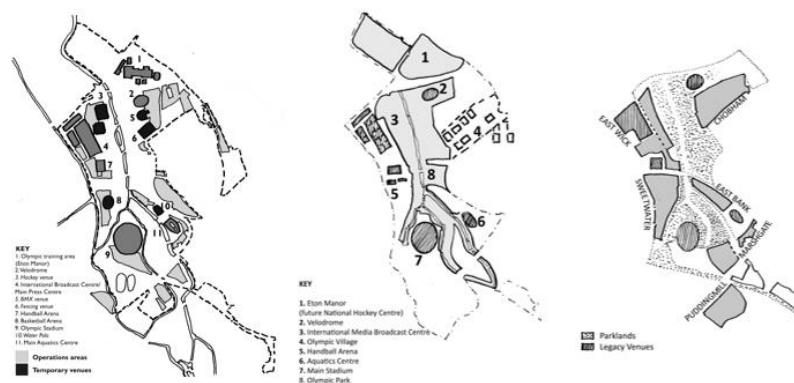
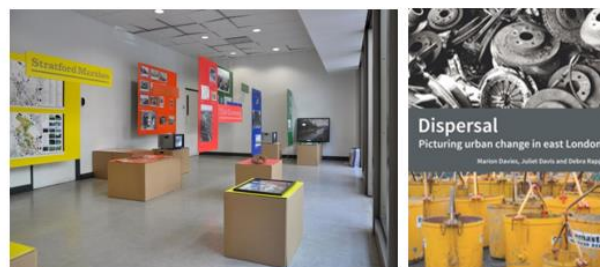




The Caring City

Guest Lecture, TU Wien
Professor Juliet Davis, 2023





Contents of the Lecture

- Making the book
- Aspects of the research process, including case studies and global fieldwork
- The structure and key arguments of the book
- Links with other scholarship, including '*Care and the City*'

Why Care? Research context, researcher context

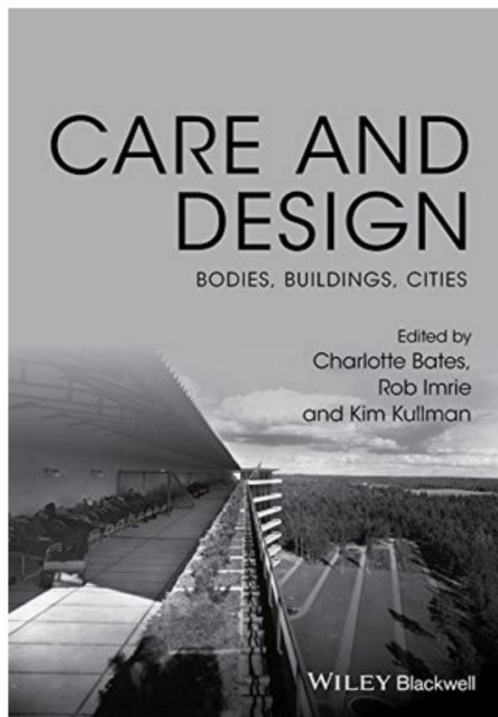
- A PhD in 2007-2012 and a focus on the making of an urban future/ Olympic legacy in East London
- A first encounter with 'care ethics' as an approach to the shaping of futures (Adam and Groves, 2007) – an approach that seemed very hard to square with how a regenerated future was actually being made in East London.
- So I began to think about care and uncare as ways to analyse and critique urban change and the impact of urban design.
- But I wasn't brave enough then, so I parked care... until around 2015...

Care and Design?

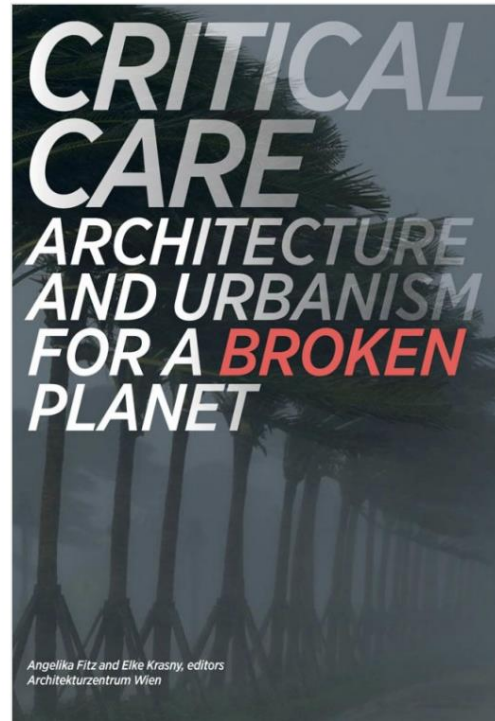
When I began to think about care again, it was in broader, terms in the context of design in general, and I began to realise:

- How care had been considered in quite limited / focussed terms in architectural/ urban design history and theory
- That care is absolutely everyday – we all have it, do it, and it involves relationships - and yet a complex concept at the same time with intellectual roots in 1970s feminism (Held, 2006; Tronto, 2010, 2013)
- That there are different ways of thinking about the caring possibilities of design
- That these possibilities include the provision of various sorts of ‘grounds’ and ‘shelters’ for care practices and relationships but also actually caring through/ with design and transformative practices more widely for people, environments and places.

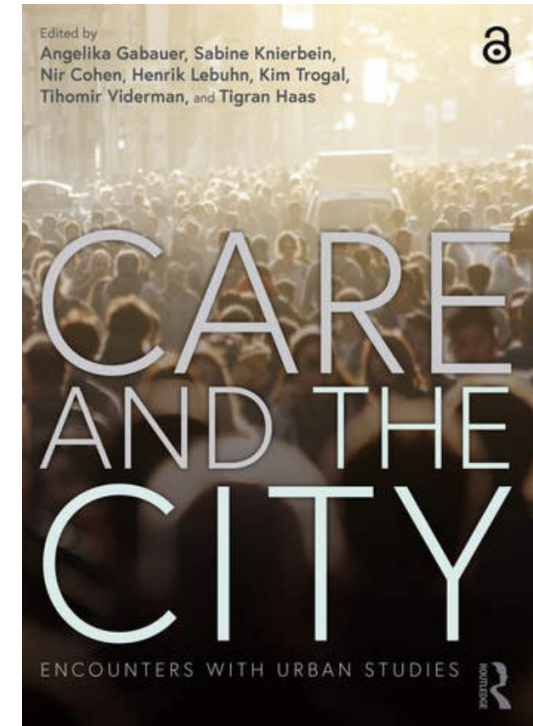
A growing, emboldening literature...



2017



2019



2022



... revealing a wide set of spaces of care and places that are relevant to care practices and relations beyond the domestic private/ institutional domains, including aspects of urban form and change (Till, 2012, for example).

Image source: [A homeless man begging in Paris/Alex Proimos](#)

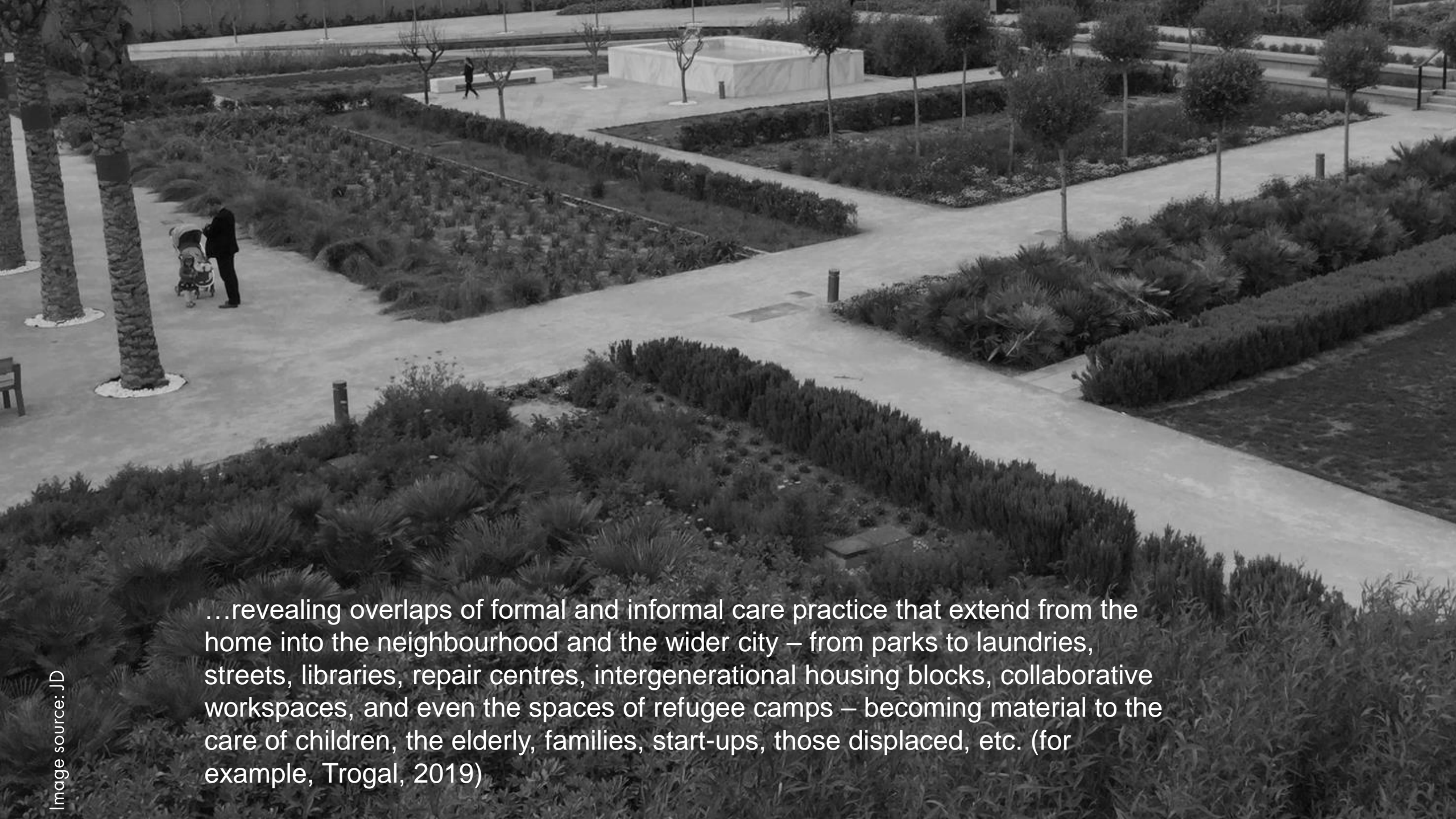


...revealing new spaces of care stemming from the failures of broader society under neoliberalism to provide formal care plus the consequent dispersal of ah-hoc care practices to streets and other urban infrastructures - foodbanks, soup kitchens, gardening groups...

Image source:


https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/03/Delhi_air_pollution_2019.jpg/2560px-Delhi_air_pollution_2019.jpg

...revealing the healthcare dimensions of urban systems, infrastructures and forms (that affect air pollution, urban heat and noise levels, for example)

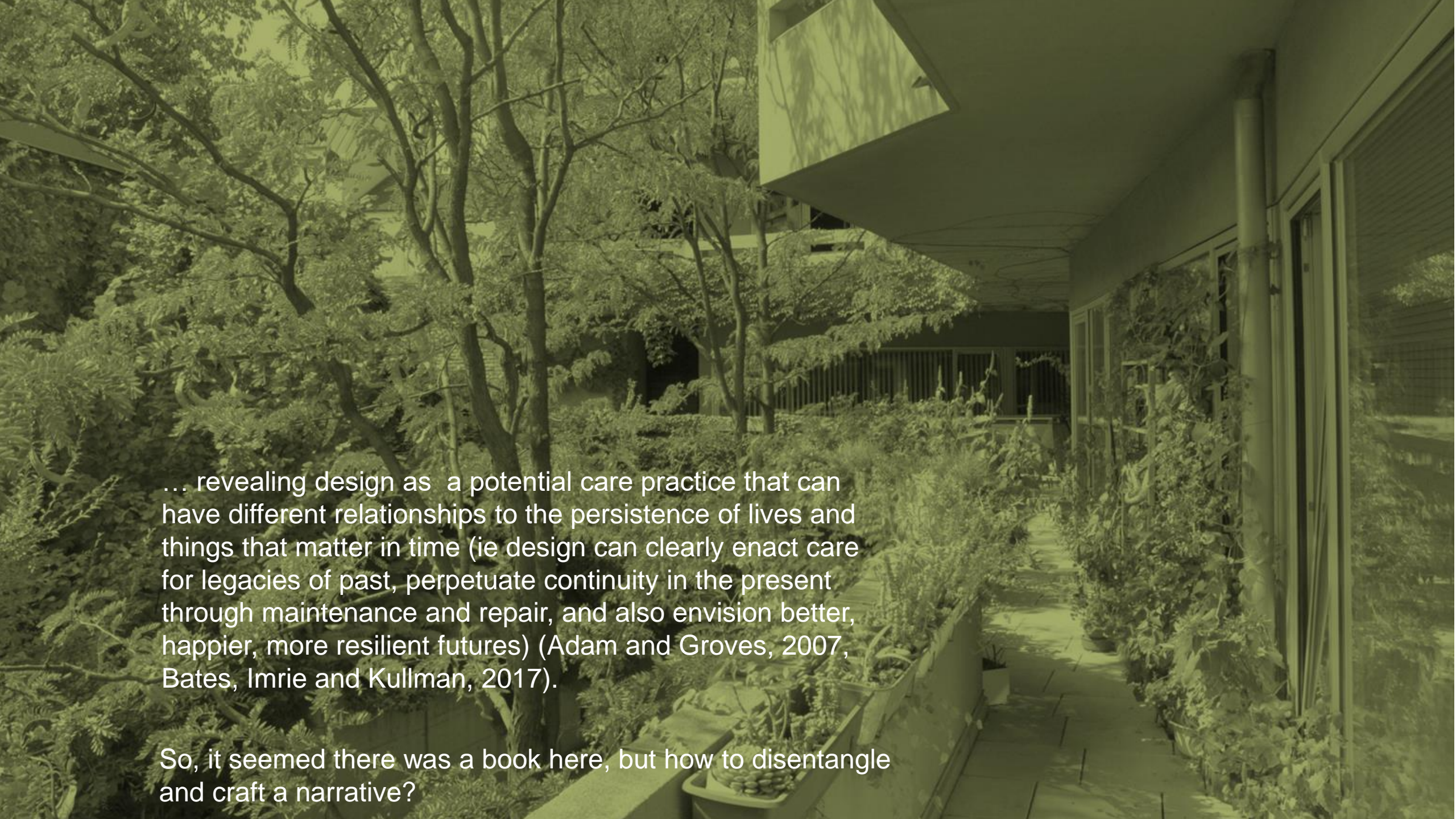


...revealing overlaps of formal and informal care practice that extend from the home into the neighbourhood and the wider city – from parks to laundries, streets, libraries, repair centres, intergenerational housing blocks, collaborative workspaces, and even the spaces of refugee camps – becoming material to the care of children, the elderly, families, start-ups, those displaced, etc. (for example, Trogal, 2019)

Image source: People wade through a flooded road outside Kuala Lumpur on 19 December. - Copyright AP Photo/Vincent Thian



... revealing spaces/sites of land-remediation, conservation, commoning, repair of damage (Fitz and Krasny, 2019) – with associated forms of care for the material world and our relationships with it representing critical stances toward liberalism, human-centrism, colonialism and capitalism (also Gibson, 2019; Frichot, 2019).



... revealing design as a potential care practice that can have different relationships to the persistence of lives and things that matter in time (ie design can clearly enact care for legacies of past, perpetuate continuity in the present through maintenance and repair, and also envision better, happier, more resilient futures) (Adam and Groves, 2007, Bates, Imrie and Kullman, 2017).

So, it seemed there was a book here, but how to disentangle and craft a narrative?

THE CARING CITY

ETHICS OF
URBAN DESIGN

JULIET DAVIS



What this book sets out to do

- recognising the breadth of care, to think big.... and differently... though not just to recognise more and more things as care.
- to consider some of the broad ways in which urban design positions and shapes care practices and relations in cities and how, in turn, it reflects the political dimensions of care in social life.
- to think and discover aspects/ facets of 'the caring city'
- to provide a new way of theorising urban design but one which, in the spirit of much feminist scholarship, builds theory from the bottom up through case studies and examples.



A tall order... a book takes a long time; it is in itself an act of care, a labour of love.

Starting with Caring

- Care as a **verb** (to care/ caring) versus care as a **noun** (the care) versus care as an **adjective** (the caring person/ the caring city)
- Care as a **disposition** (*caring about*) and a **practice** (*caring for – attending, practical caring*)
- Care as highly specific
- Care ethics, however, as a moral theory (as is justice, utilitarianism, contractualism, virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism) - describes the ethical values, general components and qualities of care practices and relations

Care as practice and ethic

- Care involves the identification and satisfaction of **needs** (Engster, 2015) and/or efforts to enhance ***capabilities*** (Nussbaum, 2000)
- Care is relational involving relations of **dependency / interdependency** (Held, 2006)
- Care involves different **stages and values** – caring about/ *attention, taking care /responsibility, caring/ competence, care-receiving/ responsiveness* and care-with (Tronto and Fisher, 1990)
- Care is **purposive** - the horizon of care is thriving and flourishing, whether through healing, resilience, wellbeing or the development of secure attachments (Groves, 2014)

How urban design can care

Design **process** can encompass dispositions as in 'caring about' (memory/ the historic built environment, climate change)

Design **process** can involve attunement – as in 'caring for' - to context, circumstance, needs, fragility, vulnerability, relationships and practices/ relations of care – and attention to the issues, fabrics and people to hand on the part of those realising design projects (through participatory practices for example that acknowledge power dynamics in design and different sorts of knowledge)

How urban design can care

Design **projects** or pieces of the city can form 'materialities of care' shaping care between people or between people/ environment through their characteristics and properties (Buse et al, 2018)

Design **projects** can come to embody an ethic of care – a solidification of the attention of the designers, of the care demonstrated through the sheer labour to understand, shape, represent, of their invitations of responsiveness from participants, users...

Structuring the book

- Six **thematic chapters** that set out an argument or vision of the caring city through different aspects/ 'dimensions' of urban design (Carmona, 2021)
- Each chapter includes two **examples of urban design projects** that show how design related to these dimensions shape care needs, relations, practices and purposes in distinct ways
- In each chapter, I explore design thinking and approaches to design practice, considering in each case how design itself can be thought of part of the caring

Note on methods

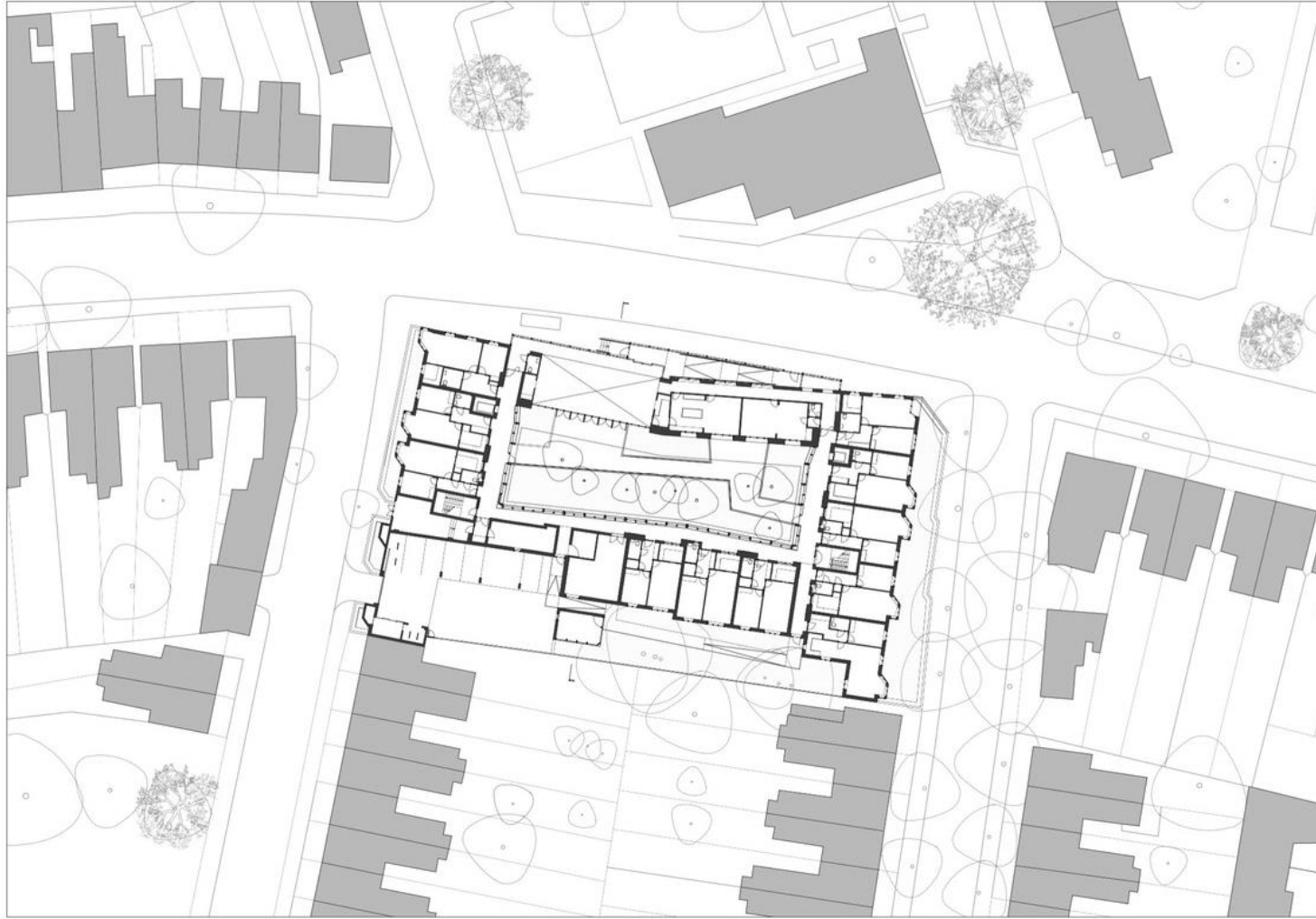
- Selecting cases – long-list, short-list, constraints
- Comparing and contrasting two case studies in each chapter
- Research design: exploring political context and design context (client, funding, land ownership), design thinking and approaches to design practice (often related to and expressive of context) as well as design itself (layout, elements, structure, materials, etc)
- Visits and time spent...
- I'm exploring care but none of the cases are 'perfect' – all provide ways to explore care issues, caring about and caring for
- Issues of comparability and transferability
- Each chapter unfolds an idea of how care is shaped by urban design and of the nature of 'the caring city.'

C3. CARE AS PATTERNED BY HOW IT IS PLACED

Here I show how the location of specific care needs, practices and relations in cities shapes their potentials, and how design acts to 'place care' (drawing on Hayden, 1980; Sevenhuijsen, 2007).

Wetherford Watson Mann – Southwark Almshouses, London – provides sheltered lifetime retirement homes, fosters informal care as well as access to formal care services, provides support while enabling independence.

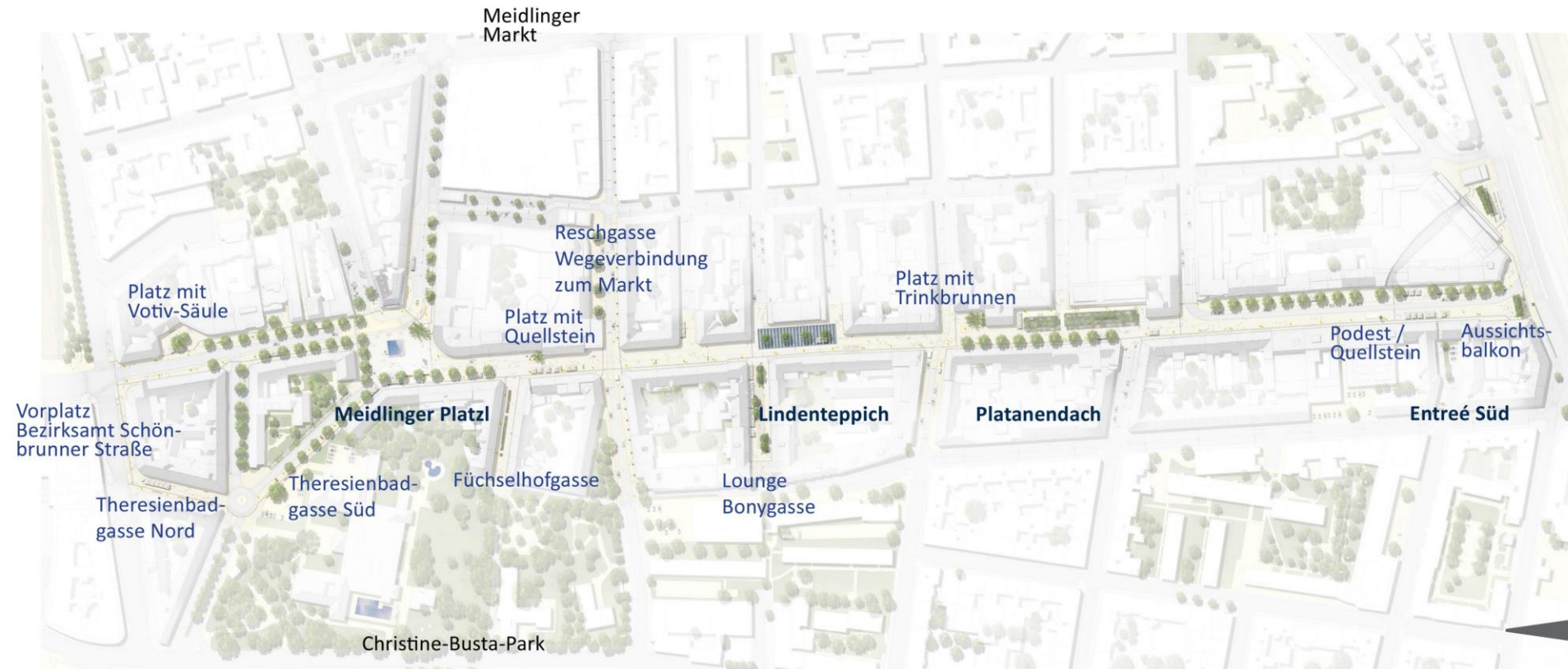




Caring involves placing care so as to maximise the opportunity for supporting all those in caring relations and supporting care practices.

C4. CARE RELATIONS AND PRACTICES AS SHAPED BY ACCESS

Here I show how, though access often thought of in terms of ‘universality’ and ‘autonomy’ (hallmarks of a justice framework), it can be thought of caringly - access shapes patterns of dependency/ interdependency/ independency in care relations, it can create space and time for care.



WES Lansdcape Architecture – Meidlingerstrasse, Vienna – creates an accessible public realm that supports care relations in different ways, stages activities that can generate informal care and seeks to sustain the identified character of the street as an urban living room, an ordinary high street and a ‘life-line’



The caring city is attuned to these relations, with design alert to connections between dependence/ independence / caring and mobility.

C5. CARE AS HAVING AN ATMOSPHERIC DIMENSION

Atmospheres of care are identified in the setting of hospitals, hospices and psychiatric wards.

Urban atmospheres exist on the interface of air quality/ meteorology and sensory experience of place.

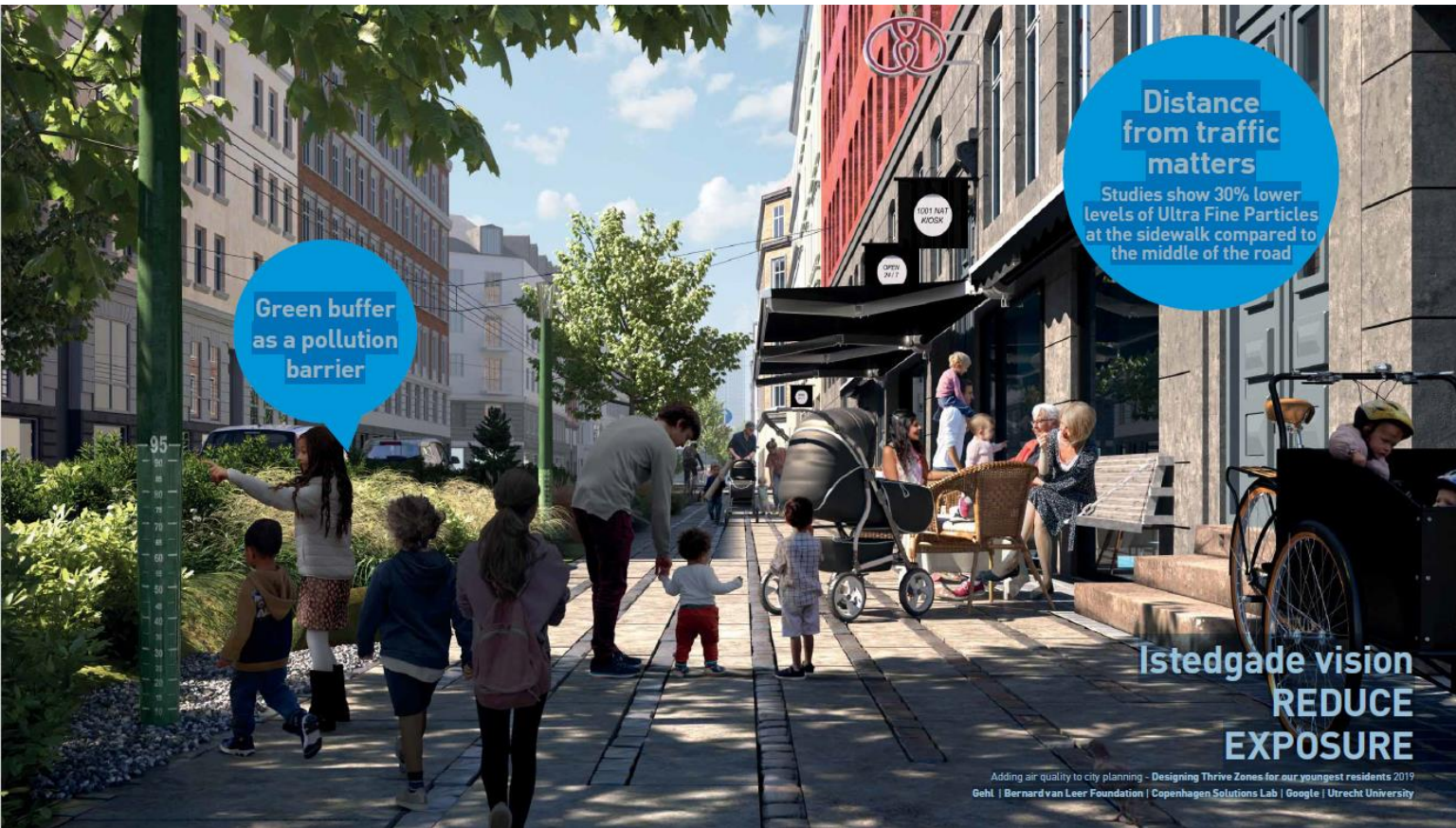
Here I explore the potential for urban atmospheres of care.

**Gehl Architects – Thrive Zones,
Copenhagen and London**

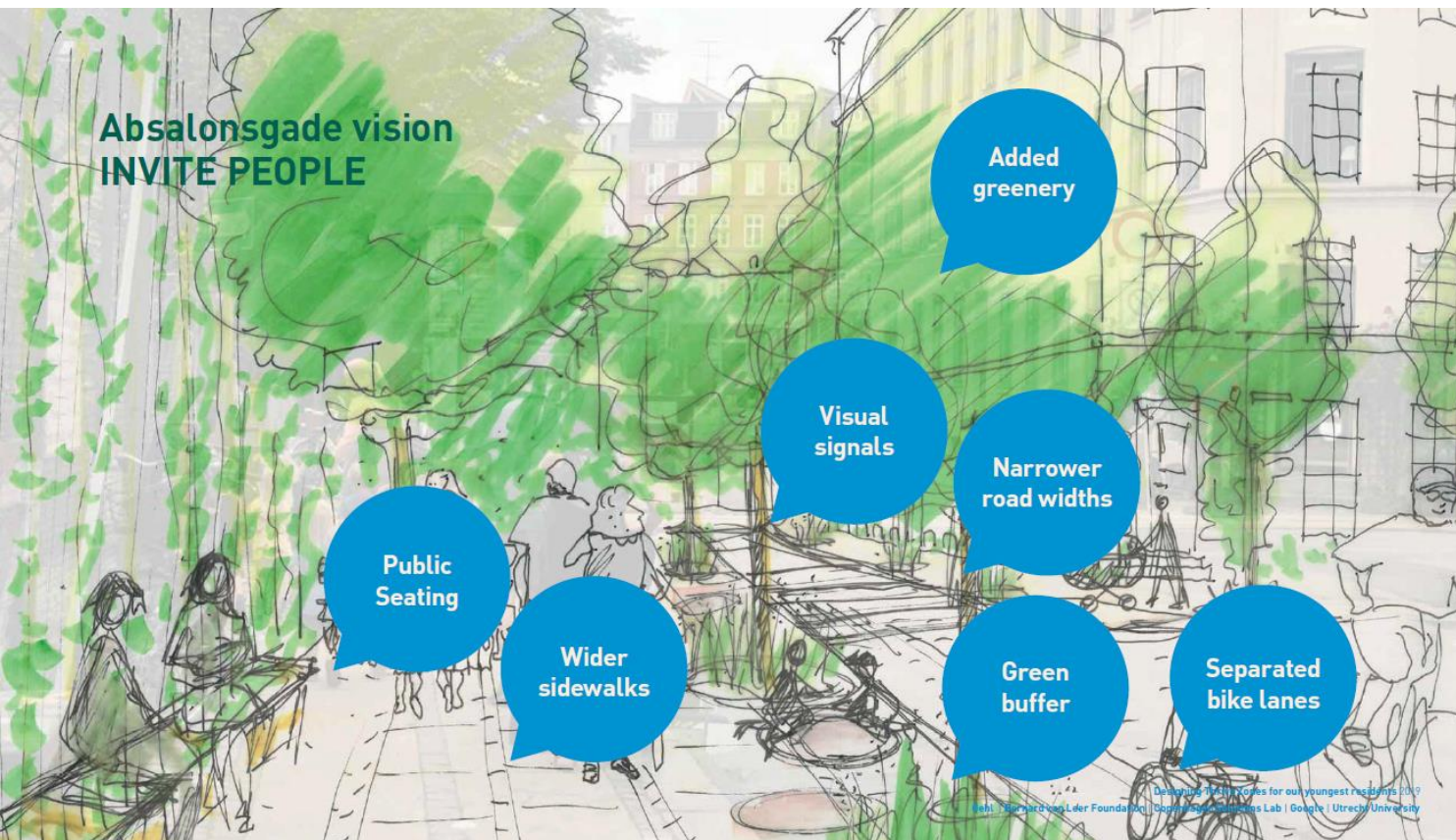
**Small children
are extremely
vulnerable to
poor air quality**

Small children breathe
up to 4 times as fast as adults
and as a result take in up to
**4 x more
polluted air**





Gehl Architects – Thrive Zones, Copenhagen and London –
Treats air quality and its long term impacts as issues for urban design, seeking to ensure that children can ‘thrive’ into the future. In doing so, it brings together different meanings of atmosphere



The caring city supports health and wellbeing, with design alert to the potential physical and emotional dimensions of atmosphere

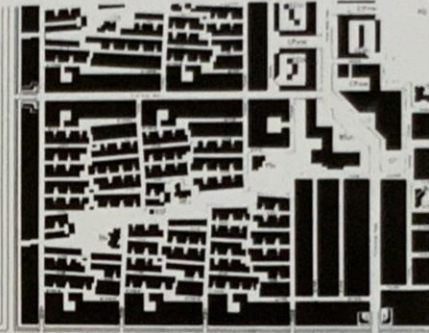
C6. CARE AS UNFOLDING AND AS OPENENDED

Here, I shift to explore the temporal dimension of urban design, aligning this with how care needs can be seen as changing constantly, unfolding through the lifecourse of each and every person (drawing on Bowlby, 2012).

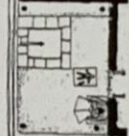
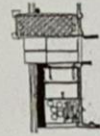
I explore how design, which is often inflexible, can embody the flexibility to attune through time to changing needs, or the openendedness to allow extension, accretion, adaptation.



1. Squatters
2. Figure/ground study of street pattern
3. Studies of extensions in an existing squatter settlement



2



A Small Extension



Washplace and Extension

3



BV Doshi – Aranya Housing, Indore – drew on the organic assemblage and inner complexity of informal settlement to create the infrastructure of a set of neighbourhoods that could develop over time.



Growth, adaptation, the uniqueness of individual circumstances, cultural practices of repair and maintenance.



The caring city encompasses forms of openness and flexibility that attune to the lifecycle.

C7. CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

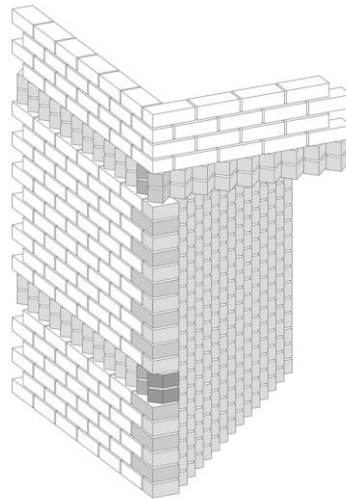
Moving away from interpersonal relationships, here I consider how care may be considered a process of building strong, loyal, felt connections to place.



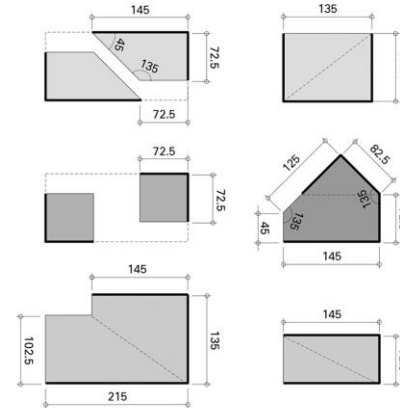
Bell Phillips – Marklake Court, Leathermarket, London

Bell Phillips – Marklake Court, Leathermarket, London – uses infill rather than demolition as an approach to creating housing for those in need, and involved a participatory approach driven by the resident-managed housing organisation client.

Caring is embodied by processes and transformations that foster and deepen these relationships rather than breaking them through redevelopment and displacement.



1 BRICKWORK TO SOUTHERN ENTRANCE



2 BRICK SPECIALS



C8. CARE OF IMPACT AND FOR THE FUTURE

Finally, I consider the environmental impact of urban design, and how to conceptualise care in the present for future generations through the resources of the common world – the air, water, soil and ecological systems upon which life itself depends (in the process challenging the notion of future generations as solely human, but also ‘more-than-human’)

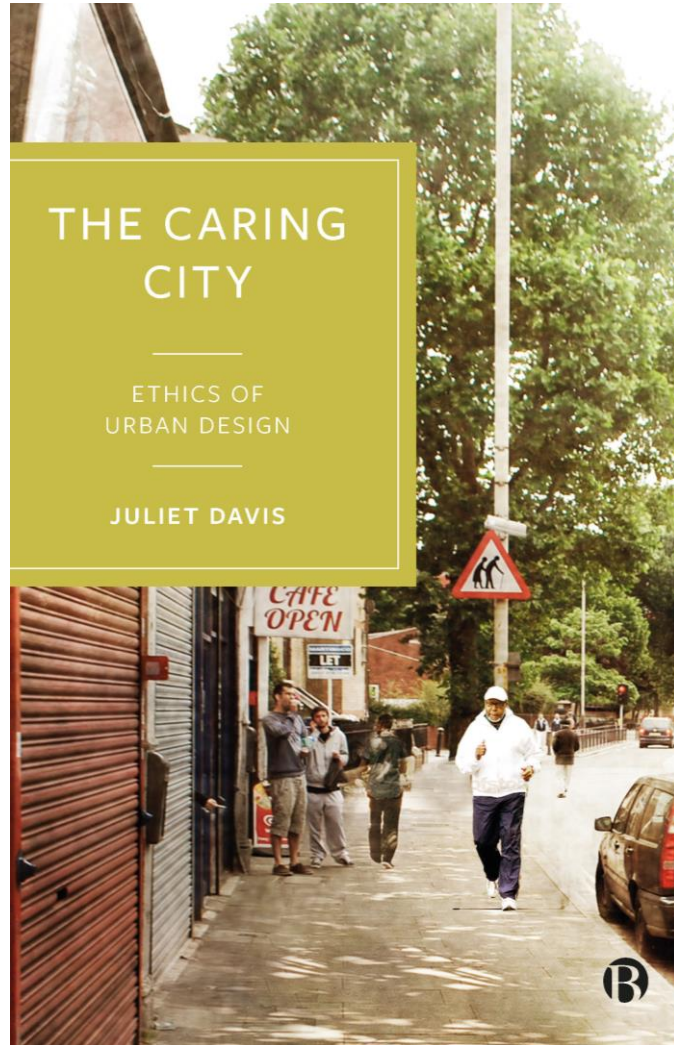


BIOME – A Million Wells and Lake Jakkur, Bengaluru – projects that endeavour to create sustainable water supply, creating security for people and replenishing aquifers at the same time

Caring is embodied in projects that not only conserve but also replenish and nurture these resources, articulating many different kinds of dependency/ interdependency.

The caring city as replenishing resources rather than exploiting for present gain.





The Caring City: Ethics of Urban Design

By Juliet Davis

Find out more at:
bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/the-caring-city

- Get 25% discount on ALL Bristol University Press and Policy Press books by signing up to our newsletter.

Pub date:
April 2022

HB: £80.00

EPUB: £27.99