architecture

MDPI

Article

A Good City Has Everything: Co-Design Workshops to Integrate a Functional Mix of Culture and Industry in Brussels

Jane Clossick [1,*] and Jan Zaman [2]

[1] School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University, London E1 7NT, UK
[2] Real Estate and Territorial Development Team, Idea Consult, 1000 Brussels, Belgium; jan.zaman@ideaconsult.be
* Correspondence: j.clossick@londonmet.ac.uk; Tel.: +44-7815-783-091

Abstract

Urban planning in post-industrial cities is often limited by stakeholders' understanding of the potential for intensifying mixed industrial and cultural uses, and the benefits to each of their co-location. In Brussels, differences in language and governance pose additional challenges to actors trying to bring together diverse stakeholders to cooperatively plan for urban regeneration. As part of a wider action research project on regeneration of the city, five co-design workshops were held across Brussels in 2017–2019 and interviews with participants were conducted. Later, in 2023, the researchers returned to the city to assess the practical outcomes of the project. This paper explores the role of the workshops in harnessing the untapped potential for integrating and expanding mixed industrial and cultural uses, and highlights the factors required to inspire and motivate diverse stakeholders to drive sustainable innovation and growth.

Keywords: sustainable urban redevelopment; cultural clusters; industrial heritage; gentrification; design-led research; mixed-use development; action research; Brussels; co-design

Academic Editor: Tigran Haas

Received: 15 April 2025
Revised: 14 August 2025
Accepted: 1 September 2025
Published: 1 October 2025

Citation: Clossick, J.; Zaman, J. A Good City Has Everything: Co-Design Workshops to Integrate a Functional Mix of Culture and Industry in Brussels. *Architecture* **2025**, *5*, 88. https://doi.org/10.3390/architecture5040088

1. Introduction

In July 2017, Wim Van Assche, owner of land and buildings in Buda, Brussels, joined one of a series of five co-design workshops with local and international architects and policymakers in Brussels, and it changed the direction of his decision-making. This paper explores the impact of these workshops, run by AAD Cities, Department Omgeving, and others, as a collaborative process, that engaged diverse stakeholders in placemaking for post-industrial localities in the city. They explored creative ideas for these places, the challenges, opportunities, and potential for economically and socially shifting landscape, perhaps away from industry, but perhaps not: "We owned the site Federa and our objective was to gain some ideas from the explorations, because for us, it was and it still is a site where there is no defined program. . .We hoped to get a good idea that we could somehow implement the next years."

Brussels, with limited land for development, is a compact 162 km^2 city housing over 1.2 million people. Distinct in language and governance from its neighboring Walloon and Flemish regions, it has rarely seen cooperative urban planning across regional borders. From 2013 to 2020, Architecture Workroom Brussels, Departement Omgeving, and AAD Cities, a research group at the School of Art, Architecture and Design at London Metropolitan University, led a multi-faceted action research project to investigate the conditions

necessary for intensifying industrial uses in Brussels, including innovative accommodation for the creative economy, and shifting political and cultural attitudes towards positive mixed-use development.

This paper is about five co-design workshops in cross-border localities, which explored the retention and boosting of cultural uses in the regeneration of "ex-industrial" areas, alongside productive and industrial uses, for the protection and benefit of both. The workshops took place in the "Canal District", which lies in or at the borders of neighboring municipalities (Figure 1). Some of the areas of focus in the co-design workshops are not entirely situated within the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region: Machelen and Vilvoorde are in Flanders, but to avoid discussing the complexity of administrative borders in the area, when we refer to 'Brussels' we mean the Brussels Functional Urban Area [1] Stakeholders including landowners, policymakers and professional designers were invited to explore possibilities of intensification and densification of both productive and cultural space.

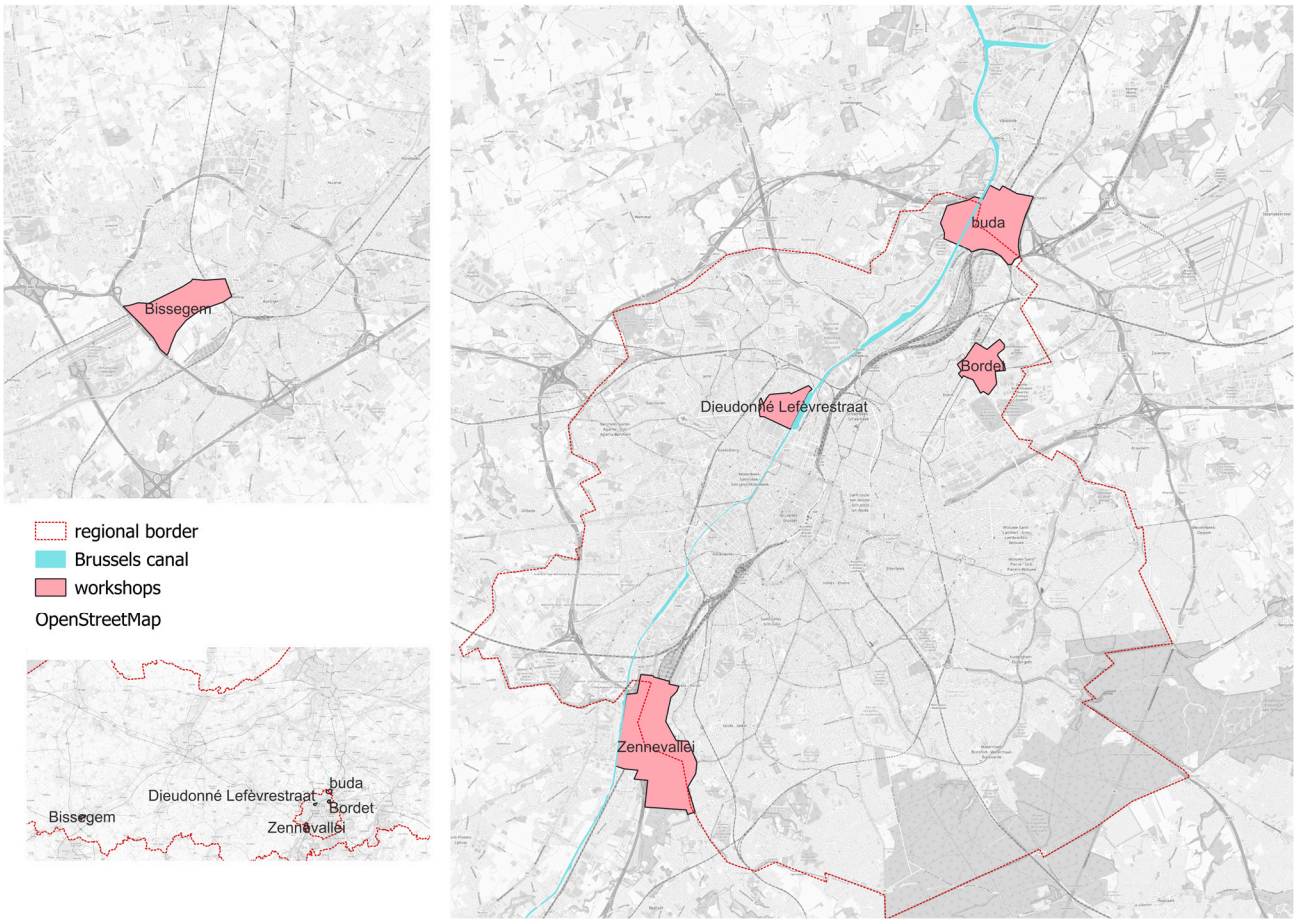

Figure 1. Locations of the five workshops in the Brussels area and Kortrijk.

To create livable, sustainable 21st century cities, integration of uses including industry through co-design (and the untapped potentials it exposes) is a growing movement, away from top-down planning-led urban change and towards a multi-stakeholder, more ethically minded approach. Retaining and nurturing industrial uses is vital, even in post-industrial cities as part of a thriving, mixed-use local economies. As Wim discovered, the potential for intensification and densification of productive uses is both vertical and horizontal, and about making use of buildings that are already there, as well as adding new: "I have the impression they are thinking too much 'Black and White': it is working OR it is living. But this is not how it's gonna work. We need absolutely to combine a lot of things."

There is a growing design literature that addresses how workshops could be used for stimulating urban transitions. Previous examples include urban laboratories which promote experimentation and learning through trial and error [2], and transition management governance frameworks [3,4]. Urban governance is shifting toward a "politics of experimentation" [5,6]. and workshops of the type tested in Brussels are an important aspect of this experimental process.

Long-term strategies and visions such as those which were born at the workshops are tools for institutionalizing transition efforts and facilitating collaborative action [7,8]. Networks and intermediary organizations, such as AAD Cities, play an important role in fostering communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among diverse stakeholders [9–11]. In addition, the ability of civil society actors to navigate tensions is heavily influenced by the organizational context in which they operate [12]: the networks, or broader organizational ecosystems within urban environments [11,13]. Characteristics that make organizational contexts supportive of experimentation include the presence of both short-term organizations, offering flexibility for innovation, and more stable organizations, providing continuity, accumulated expertise, and resources [13].

In the workshops discussed in this paper, a new form of urban governance though design took place, leading both to findings that were significant to policymakers but also to ideas for development which could be executed by land-owning stakeholders. Unlike traditional modernist approaches focused on planning policies to create "mixed use", they engaged innovative frontrunners from various societal domains [14], in this case stakeholders and designers, who tackled the problems identified from an integrated and systemic perspective [15] looking to create "functional mix". Experimental processes such as those undertaken in the workshops involve social learning and the formation of new coalitions and networks, which put pressure on established actors and structures [16].

The experience of the workshops as collaborative knowledge generation in place, between institutionalized agencies and knowledge transfer partners, has directly impacted the development of the localities in which they occurred. Fundamental changes to existing systems are necessary to address increasingly complex urban challenges, such as those in Brussels, and these workshops were an experiment in this domain. The aim of the project of which the workshops were part was to use co-design workshops to make ethical development opportunities visible to stakeholders, in a broader context of valuing and promoting a functional mix which includes industry.

1.1. Definition of Terms

A "functional mix" [17] refers to the integration of different land uses, such as residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial uses, within a single neighborhood. By "functional mix," we specifically refer to the deliberate co-location of productive and cultural activities such as artisanal manufacturing, logistics, design workshops, galleries, and event spaces. These uses support each other through proximity-based collaboration: manufacturers benefit from cultural producers who promote and add value to their goods, while cultural workers gain access to production capabilities and affordable space. The functional mix is not a loose juxtaposition but a dynamic interaction that enables cross-pollination of knowledge, skills, and networks in urban economies.

Here, we are particularly concerned with the "cultural", "productive" and "industrial" uses. "Productive" and "industrial" uses refer to areas designated for manufacturing, processing, and production activities and in this paper we use these terms interchangeably. To achieve functional mix, "intensification" refers to the amount of activity, measured as jobs per building or land area, or the volume of goods produced or processed; "densification"

refers to the dimensions of buildings, measured as floor area ratio, site coverage or building heights and volumes [18]; the workshops were concerned with both.

Although the terms "mixed use" and "functional mix" are often used interchangeably in the literature, they have significant distinctions. According to Dovey and Pafka [17], mixed land use is rooted in modernist thinking that emphasizes functional separation and often overlooks the integration of functions within a single plot or building while the narrowest scale of mixing, within a plot or building, tends to be disregarded. The "cultural economy", as defined by [19] includes arts and cultural heritage and is instrumental in bolstering the broader economy; cultural activities in European cities foster community cohesion, enhance quality of life [20].

A key part of the cultural economy are "cultural manufacturers": small enterprises that combine industrial and cultural/design knowledge to produce niche products. They often depend on urban agglomerations to access resources and skills, and the process of creating cultural products relies on a network of relationships between producers [21]. Cultural manufacturers and arts and cultural industries are sensitive to land use change and regulation and often value older industrial buildings for their distinctive aesthetic, affordability, and flexibility [22].

1.2. Productive Uses, Cultural Uses and Planning Policy in Brussels

Industry and productivity are core parts of the sustainable 21st century city and after several decades of deindustrialization in advanced economies, there is a growing interest in revitalizing urban manufacturing and incorporating production within city landscapes. The benefits include close access to networks of suppliers, services, and a skilled workforce [23,24] and productive and industrial operations cater to the demand for just-in-time services, minimizing necessary travel and the resultant carbon emissions [25]. The presence of industry which serves the creative economy, as well as industry which services the metropolitan districts from which the urban audience for the creative economy is drawn, is essential for the functionality of a city [26].

Until recently, the prevailing policy approach to ex-industrial land in some European cities, including Brussels and London has been one of "managed decline": a steady decrease in the availability of industrial land, based on the assumption that we are nearing the end of a prolonged period of deindustrialization and economic restructuring [27]. It is true that as a "post-industrial" city-region, Brussels was transitioning from a production economy to a service economy [28], with 85% of its manufacturing jobs lost between 1970 and 2014 [29]. But there are other forces at play. Small-scale industrial spaces have historically been vulnerable to being displaced by higher-value land uses, especially residential developments and prime office spaces [30]. Urban industrial land in post-industrial cities has faced significant development pressures, making it difficult to support the resurgence of urban manufacturing.

The scope of gentrification has broadened in the literature to include industrial displacement alongside residential displacement. Despite the implementation of legislation and policies, many cities including New York, Chicago, San Fransisco, London and others have experienced a loss of industrial land, redeveloped for higher-value uses at a much faster rate than anticipated and evidence suggests that this displacement of viable businesses has been driven more by real estate speculation than by deindustrialization [25,31,32].

For the reasons of real estate speculation and industrial gentrification, despite its significance for the economy, urban production and industrial space is rapidly vanishing in Brussels and policy attention here and elsewhere is increasingly focused on urban production due to its importance for social, ecological, economic, labor market, urban ecosystem, circular economy, and mobility [33–35].

The place of creative economic activities in Brussels, and industrial activities that support the cultural economy, is seen in policy documents as essential to a sustainable urban future [36,37]. In 2020, the Brussels regional government adopted the "Go4brussels2030" strategy, updated in 2021. The strategy focusses on aligning existing economic, environmental and social initiatives of the previous governments in a transition plan. Action 1.4.2 promotes cultural industries, with special attention for developing the existing mix of industrial, logistics and cultural activities in the Canal area (action 1.6.3). The ideas are elaborated in the "Shifting Economy Brussels" economic strategy [38] where promoting the cultural and creative industries is one of six pillars of policy. The focus on further development of mixed economic uses will be implemented in the ongoing change of the Brussels land use plan, "Share the city" [39].

Despite the policy attention on promotion of mixed economic uses, in the areas where the five workshops took place, there is a problem of gentrification: a trend towards displacing both cultural and industrial sectors (which sometimes occupy similar kinds of accommodation typologies), driven by the higher land values associated with residential, services and the strong demand for new housing supply. The loss of industrial space is well documented in the "*Observatoire des Activités Productives*" [40]. Between 2011 and 2017 over 620,000 m^2 of industrial space was lost to housing and urban services. Where land is at a premium, finding locations for expanding and densifying urban development poses a significant challenge [25,32,41]. In Brussels, as elsewhere, in all zoning typologies, high-value uses (e.g., offices, housing) displace low-value use (e.g., recreation, production) [42].

While planning policy may restrict the inclusion of residential developments in mixed areas, in Brussels this type of policy prevention only covers a small part of the areas where the industrial and cultural economies are located and even where policy is present, it is not always successful at maintaining a functional mix. As Adams and Tiesdell [43] (p. 194) argue, it is misleading to view planning and the market as opposing forces; instead, the focus should be on understanding how planners contribute to shaping markets. While it could be viewed that planning is unable to protect more vulnerable land uses, in many cases the planning system has actively encouraged or facilitated gentrification of productive uses towards "cultural manufacturing". This has been done through methods like re-zoning [31,42] or introducing new policies that designate areas for mixed-use developments, which include industrial spaces [25].

In 2013, the 2001 Brussels-Capital Region land use plan (*Plan Régional d'Affectation du Sol*, *PRAS*) was amended and almost 210 ha of industrial land were turned into the mixed-use category ZEMU (*Zones D'Entreprises en Milieu Urbain*, or Urban Enterprise Zone). Most such activities are in the mixed urban zones of ZEMU and "Strongly Mixed Zones" (*Zones de Forte Mixité*), where housing can also be built. The planning prescriptions have limited obligation to provide non-residential land [40]. It could be argued that the "Strongly Mixed Zones" the PRAS contributed to Brussels maintaining an above-average number of industrial and artisanal workshops and maintaining urban industrial space compared to other European cities. However, the "Strongly Mixed Zones" did not prevent the inner city's industrial activities being replaced by housing and service-based activities, or gentrified productive uses such as "cultural products" which fit the "maker-narrative" [30] and the districts covered by the workshops appear to be undergoing a similar process (e.g., Buda, see [33]).

1.3. The Context for the Workshops: Action Research Initiatives 2013 to 2020

The action research project which is the context for the workshops took place from 2013 to 2020, led by Architecture Workroom Brussels, Departement Omgeving (the Department for Environment for Flanders), AAD Cities, and other academic and stakeholder partners from what later became T.OP Noordrand. The partnership sought to test approaches and

build expertise in delivering intensification of industrial and cultural uses in peripheral districts Brussels through stakeholder participation and envisioning; including a total of 20 research-by-design workshops, exhibitions, meetings and other activities shown in Figure 2 [44].

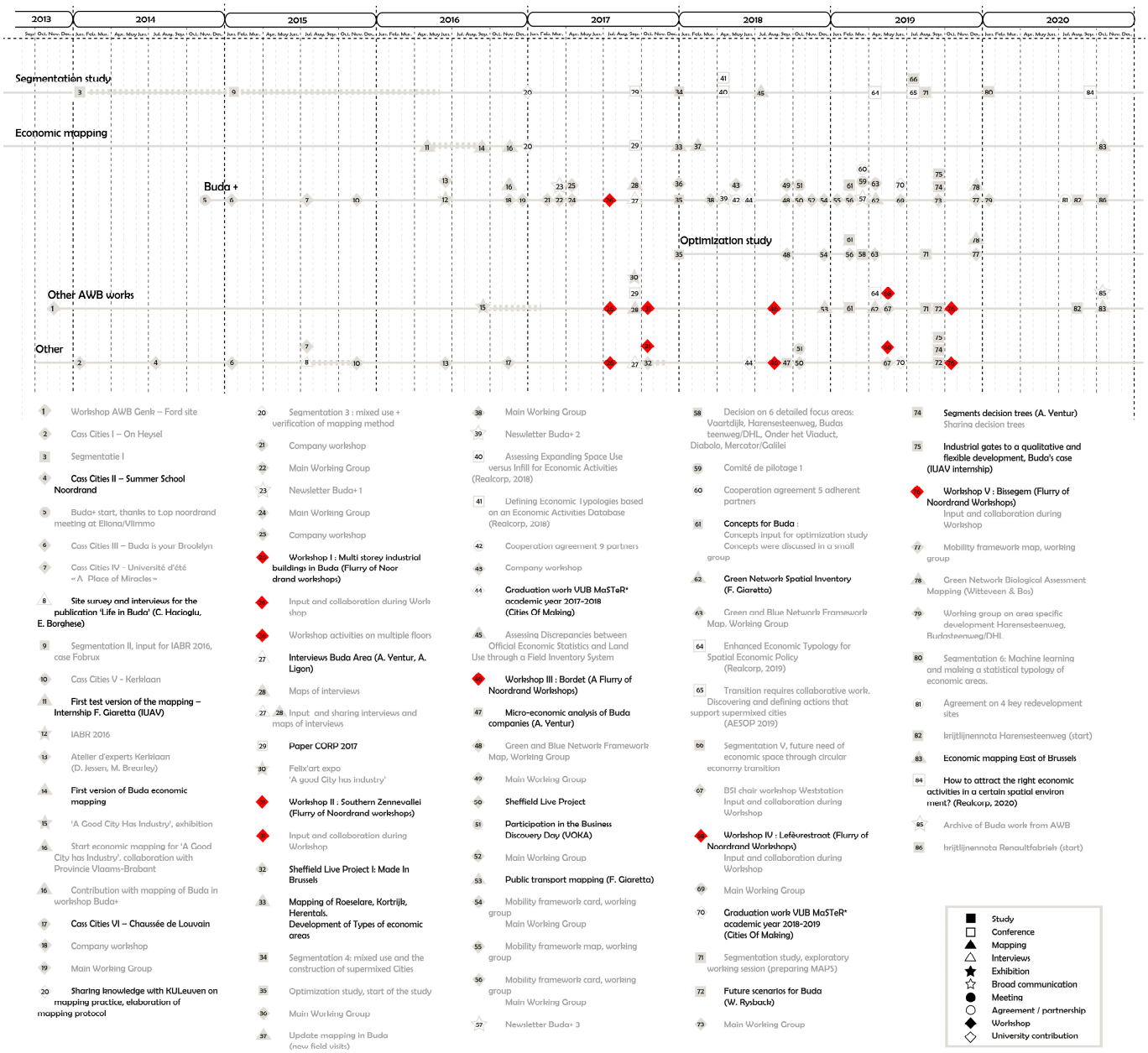

Figure 2. Diagram by Architecture Workroom Brussels of the 2013–2020 project, including mapping and audits, workshops for co-design and envisioning, collaborative stakeholder work and promotion and advocacy. The workshops discussed in this paper are shown in red.

The Canal District, where the workshops were situated, is historically a logistics and industrial corridor shaped by 19th-century infrastructure. Today, it is marked by fragmented land ownership, socio-economic disparities, and high development pressure. The area houses both entrenched industrial functions and emerging creative clusters, making it a contested terrain for planning policy. Its physical features: canals, wide roads, leftover industrial buildings, make it particularly suited to testing densified mixed-use strategies.

The 2013–2020 project aimed to uncover the city's industrial dynamics and influence stakeholders to value it; expedite retention and revalidation of cultural clusters and mixed-

use including industry; develop a methodological toolkit for academics eager to impact policymaking; and determine the most effective ways to enhance awareness of Brussels' industrial economy and its challenges among stakeholders. The five co-design workshops discussed here were at the end of research period, each involving four or five days of intense work, marked in Figure 2 in red.

The context of the 2013–2020 project is one of ongoing brokering of collaboration between regions. Since Belgium is a federal state, the regions possess autonomy for as territorial planning. Brussels needs to cooperate with Wallonia and the Flemish Region on inter-regional projects, with no formal metropolitan collaboration structure [39]. The Zone of Economic Expansion (ZEE), designed to attract enterprises to the Brussels Canal District (which includes the five sites for the co-design workshops), is an Urban Enterprise Zone: intended to stimulate growth in de-industrialized city districts [45,46] and aims for more functional mixing in the Canal District [42]. Similarly, since 2017, a territorial development program named TOP has been implemented in the Noordrand ('north edge'), alongside a partnership named Buda+. The Noordrand TOP is a collaboration between development agency perspective.brussels (Brussels-Capital Region), Omgeving Vlaanderen (Departement Omgeving, Flemish Region), the Province of Flemish Brabant, and OVAM (the Flemish public waste management agency). T.OP focuses on the joint development of the northern periphery of Brussels, involving areas north of the Brussels Region. Such alliances represent a novel metropolitan perspective for Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia [33] and the co-design workshops reported and discussed here were a key part of this ongoing process.

2. Methods: Five Workshops in Brussels

The workshops were held in key locations in the Noordrand: Buda (July 2017), Zennevallei (October 2017), Bordet (August 2018), Lefèvrestraat (May 2019) and Bissegem (October 2019). The underpinning knowledge base developed since 2013 allowed design research work to commence on specific sites in these localities with potential developers already identified and invited as stakeholders (see Figure 3). They were planned and conducted as a collaboration between Jan Zaman of Departement Omegeving and Prof Mark Brearley and Dr Jane Clossick et al. from AAD Cities at London Metropolitan University, who could be described as "civil society actors" [12].

Each workshop followed a co-design methodology combining participatory mapping, walking interviews, rapid prototyping of design ideas, collaborative drawing, and iterative group critique. Tools such as annotated maps, cross-sectional design sketches, and spatial narrative-building were used. Conflicting stakeholder interests, such as landowner concerns over economic return versus municipal priorities for cultural clustering, were mediated through structured dialogues facilitated by neutral experts. Ground rules of mutual respect and common goals (e.g., sustainable intensification) were reiterated throughout the process.

The planning of each workshop started with the selection of a potential site and topic, after which local stakeholders and administrations were contacted and invited. If open to collaboration, the site would be proposed to the steering committee of the research project (the actors involved in T.OP). Once approved, local and regional administrations and decision-makers for territorial and economic development were asked to participate. Participation consisted of sharing existing (local) research on the selected area and topic; providing a "base camp" for the onsite workshop; being available for an interview and/or walks; and active participation during the final presentation of the workshop co-designs and following open discussion and debate.

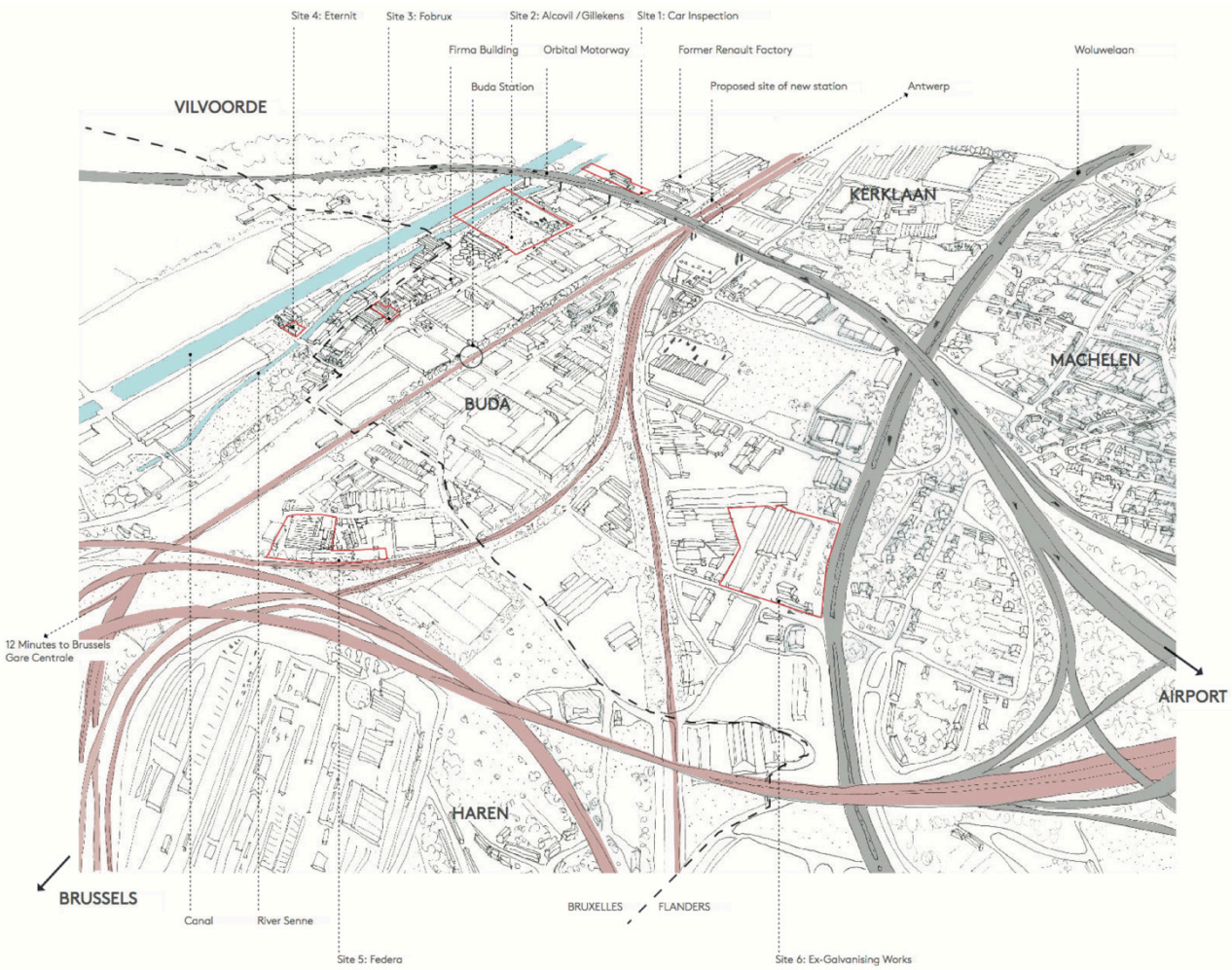

Figure 3. Karakusivic Carson Architects' preparatory work for the Buda workshop, identifying areas that may have potential for development (2017).

The workshops were structured around the particularities of each place, with students and professional designers co-creating site research and design proposals [40] were presented to and discussed with stakeholders, who fed back into the research and designs.

In Buda, sketch explorations of multi-storey industrial and cultural buildings were presented at a public talk and discussion evening, exploring the potential for public agencies to acquire premises and to give momentum to reaffirming Buda as a primarily industrial location. In Zennevallei, participants sought to rework the relationship between large densified industrial areas and the broader valley landscape of flood-meadows and woodlands, using landscape integration to add value to sites. The Bordet workshop explored how to add character by intensifying both industrial and workspace provision, coupled with more mixed (including residential) intensification around the transport interchange, reconfiguring public spaces to emphasize the validity of both urban culture and industry, and giving them a new public presence. In Lefèvrestraat, designs embedded large scale industry in dense urban fabric and explored conflicts of use, the relationship between culture, industry and public space, and the challenge of designing shared-use streets with goods access. Finally, in Bissegem the focus was on enhancing small industrial spaces, increasing their visibility and activity, and celebrating Kortrijk's industrial and productive economy.

2.1. Co-Creation of Knowledge for Placemaking

The co-design methodology employed aimed to bridge the communication gap between designers, developers and landowners by co-creating inclusive activities that boosted

participation and ensured that the voices of non-designers were prominent [47]. It facilitated the involvement of stakeholders, crucial for integrating local knowledge into design and building trust [48], which was particularly important in the context of interregional collaboration. The inclusion of stakeholders, ranging from individual citizens to organized groups such as local governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), was critical as their insights shaped the ideas and proposals [49,50] in a reflective dialog. Designers contributed technical knowledge and facilitated the co-design activities [51] and the goal of the co-design at the workshops was to enhance the legitimacy of expertise, increasing the relevance of design outcomes, and broaden the knowledge base supporting design solutions [52].

The knowledge created in these workshops differed depending on the role of participants: for the professional and student participants, engaged in spatial design, reflection-in-action was a reflective version of knowing-in-action. Schön [53] (p. 8) assumes that "competent practitioners often know more than they can articulate", that designers must frame and reframe a problem continuously, with each decision acting as a local experiment that reshapes the problem. For each workshop, designers, students and stakeholders envisioned future scenarios and used drawings to show possible development options, so their concrete implications could be discussed with stakeholders, creatively exploring possibilities of integrating industrial and cultural spaces, focusing on merging mixed-use functions with the existing urban structure, as well as densifying and diversifying uses and typologies. The core was to introduce stakeholders to the concept and value of industry densification and retention, in a neutral setting without political pressure. Some examples of the drawings are shown in Figure 4.

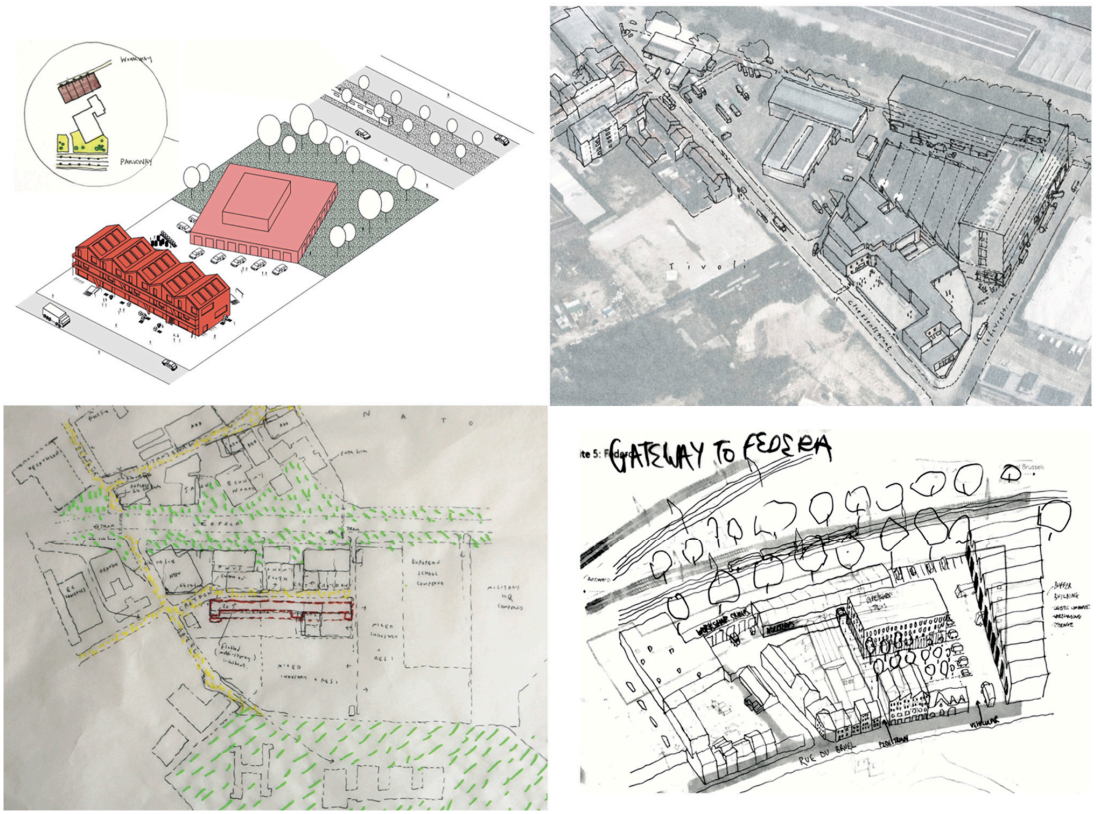

Figure 4. Upper left: Rue de Strasbourg proposal (Roularta), We Made That, Bordet (2018). Upper right: Proposal for Multilevel industrial building-Phase 1, Mark Brearley, Lefèvrestraat (2019). Lower left: Ex-NATO along East-Croydon street proposal, Mark Brearley, Bordet (2018). Lower right: Gateway to Federa, Federa site proposal, workshop assistant team, Buda (2017).

2.2. The Stakeholder Interviews

The workshops each welcomed multiple stakeholders, the majority of whom were professionals involved in planning and development. For complete details see https://cities.research.londonmet.ac.uk/brussels-research-by-design-workshops/ (accessed on 31 August 2025). The stakeholders were different for each workshop, and they participated in design, discussion, or both. Always present at the workshops were the facilitating team of Prof. Mark Brearley collaborating with Jan Zaman, supported at different times by Dr. Jane Clossick and students and academics from London Metropolitan University, Sheffield University, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Metrolab.Brussels and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Examples of the range of stakeholders are: non-local architects and urban designers; local professional designers; private, city and municipality stakeholders who attended included government departments and quangos, NGOs, urban and spatial planners, project managers, company directors and owners, land and building owners, city and private developers and development authorities, utilities representatives, and cultural organizations. Most of these were from the 19 municipalities located in the Brussels-Capital Region, but some were from further afield including Hamburg, Germany.

Nine stakeholders who were particularly involved in the workshops were subsequently interviewed by Roeland Dudal of Architecture Workroom Brussels [44] to draw out their experiences. These interviews, alongside reflections from the 2013–2020 project, led to a range of findings on integrating and expanding mixed cultural and industrial uses; the challenges of visibility and recognition in driving cultural and industrial clustering; the influence of stakeholder perceptions and envisioning processes on urban development; ensuring sustainability: excluding residential uses to prevent gentrification; and the resolution of inter-regional conflicts through neutrality of AAD Cities. These findings are discussed below in relation to the problems of industrial gentrification, cross-border collaboration and the integration of cultural and industrial activities.

3. Results: Outcomes and Insights from the Workshops

3.1. Unseen Districts

> "We knew that there were a lot of little factories and industry gathered around in Bissegem, but not that it was that dense. Most of the time they don't have showrooms or a front door... Everything is positioned behind walls; it is not visible. The workshop was therefore both an eye-opener and a reality check."
> —A Kortrijk planner

Districts covered in the five workshops are sometimes 'invisible' places: planners often remain unaware of what truly exists, and even businesses are sometimes invisible to one another. In a world where planners "create" markets, this is problematic, because no one know what is there. As Ferm et al. [54] argue about London, "inward-looking" industrial typologies are more vulnerable to regeneration because planners cannot see their value.

There were two ways that these findings were revealed: first, in the longer project there was extensive auditing documented elsewhere [21,44], and mappings made of the uses and the areas where space was available to integrate other uses, particularly cultural (see Figure 5). These maps then served as a basis for design research, which revealed the untapped potential at a building scale. In addition, there were photographic surveys undertaken at different times during the 2013–2020 project. The photographer who worked on the project noted, "People didn't always know that the businesses were there... this was about visibility, inclusion, integrating businesses more into the community." A visiting architect from London emphasized the importance of first-hand observation to counteract the invisibility to stakeholders: "One of the crucial things is to go and visit those businesses...

Go there together with the different stakeholders, planners, and other departments from the public sector to actually understand what is going on."

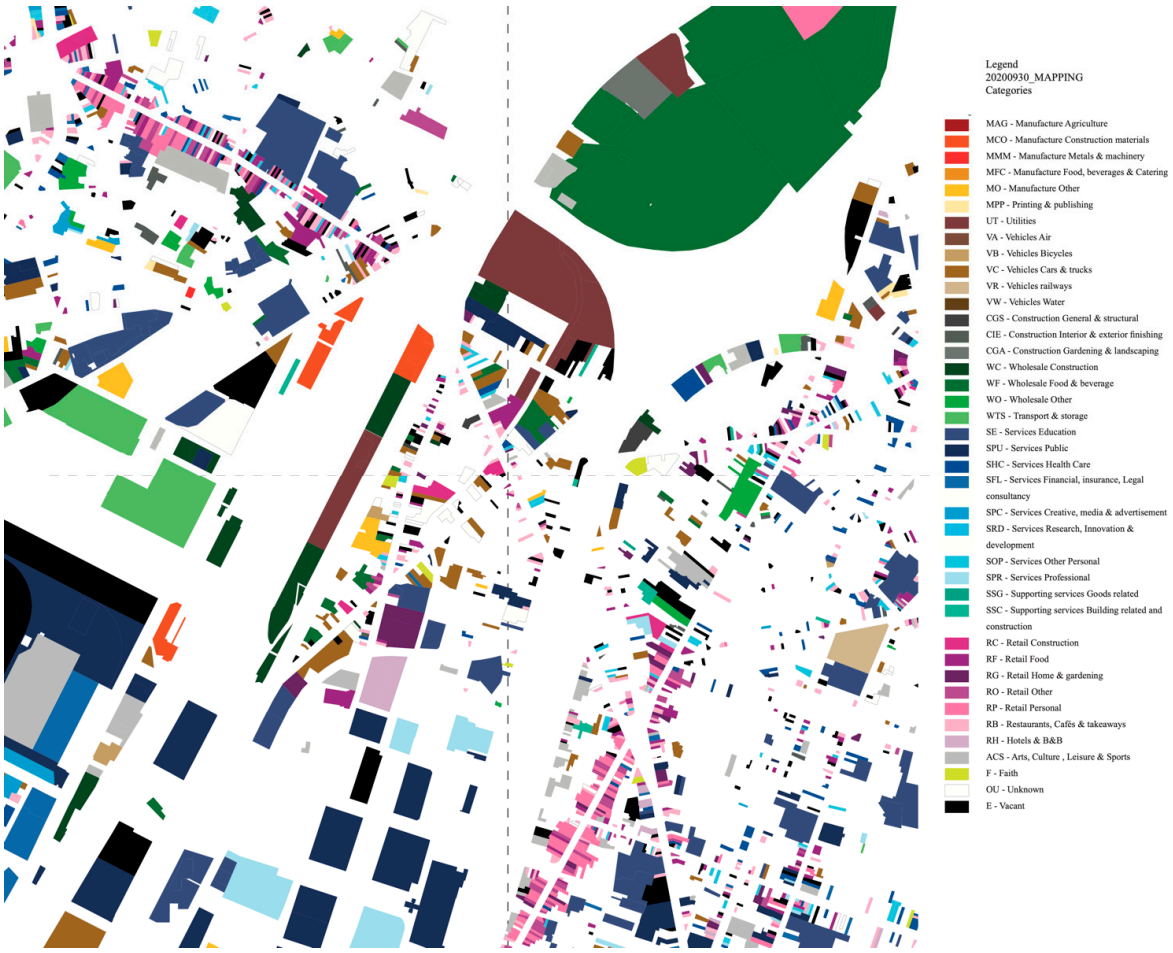

Figure 5. Detailed mapping of economic uses at ground floor level which was used as a basis for the co-design work at one of the workshops, and as part of the great 2013–2020 project.

A significant realization from both the auditing process and the workshops was the importance of distinguishing and visually representing various internalized activities, allowing stakeholders, policymakers, and designers to recognize and design for their civic and economic significance. The images produced during and before the workshops (shown in Figure 6) showed the detail of what was happening inside culturally productive spaces.

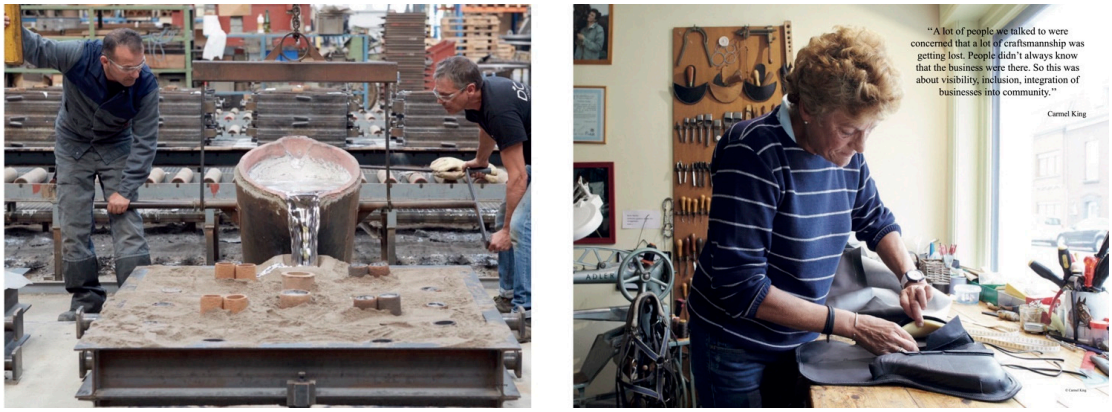

Figure 6. Photographs by Architecture Workroom Brussels, Carmel King and Mark Brearley, showing activities inside some of the businesses in the areas explored.

Areas examined in the five workshops possess untapped potential for the integration and expansion of mixed cultural and industrial uses and there are specific, effective design strategies for incorporating typologies which can house both cultural and industrial uses (on the building scale as well as on the block and district level). Although we cannot show every design generated in the workshops, Figure 7 shows a representative one produced at the Bissegem workshop, which reveals space for a potential additional 35 companies available in the locality; sites which could be put to cultural or industrial use. A planner from the City of Kortrijk said, "We were surprised to discover that 85 small companies were already there, and we were also surprised by the fact that . . . there would be even place for 35 more!"

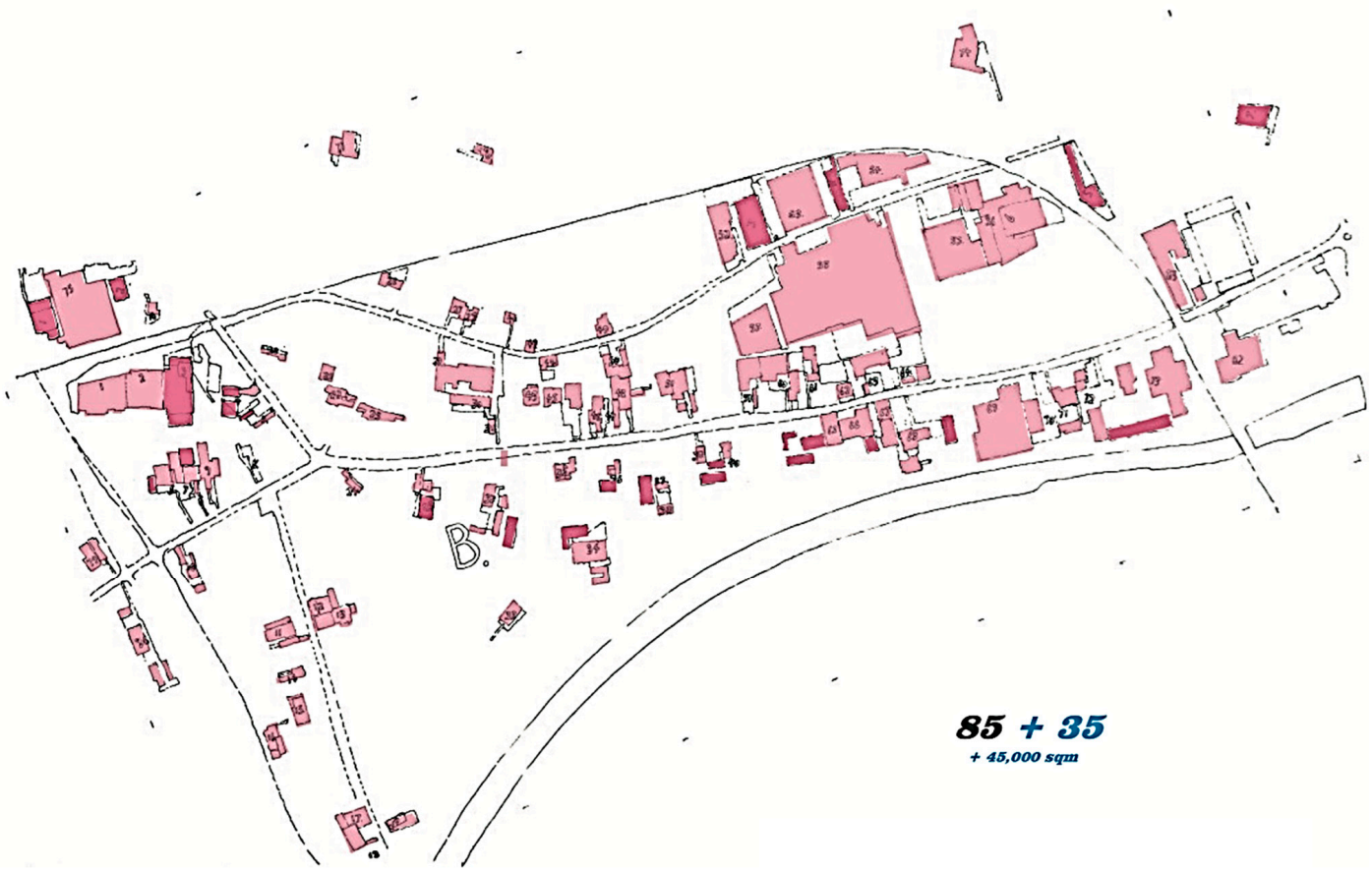

Figure 7. Bissegem Workshop (2019) Overview map, light pink: existing economic uses; dark pink: proposed economic uses.

At a closer scale, the drawing in Figure 8 from the Buda workshop in 2017 shows the Eternit site, which later became Buda BXL (see conclusion), as an excellent example of untapped potential for a cultural with mix both vertical and horizontal. A project manager for the Canal Team at *Société d'Aménagement Urbain* (SAU) pointed out "In Brussels there is this need to have production spaces [. . .] For example, this upper deck space could welcome activities that need less deliveries and focus more on the productivity."

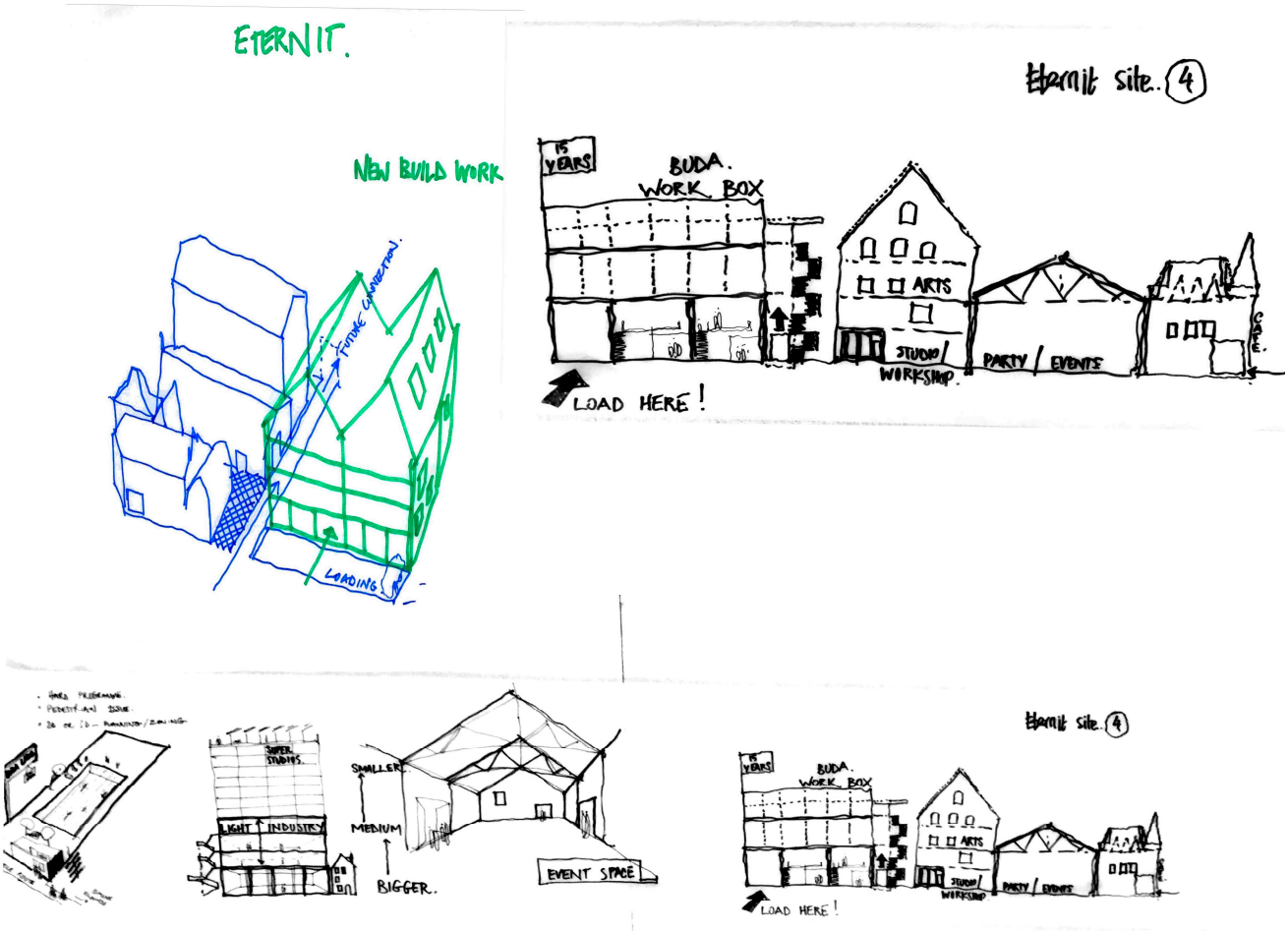

Figure 8. Sketch of proposal for the Eternit site, which later became Buda BXL, by the Buda workshop assistant team, showing loading spaces, event spaces, plant, and street access (2017).

3.2. When Creativity Meets Governance

> "We saw for the first time that three governance levels were looking in the same direction. There was something that could start moving there [. . .] being creative leads you to interesting paths of thinking, but not always you find the legal construction by which you can establish what you are looking for." —A Buda landowner

A recurrent finding from the workshops emphasized optimizing sites by understanding and redesigning physical and policy structure, rather than merely increasing density, design knowledge that grew directly from interaction with policymakers and developers. In the Bordet workshop, for example, an idea emerged to group individual green spaces into a larger, higher-quality open area, releasing more space per plot. However, current urban laws pose challenges, as they mandate a green surface percentage per project. As a stakeholder from CityDev noted, ". . .because it's always one permit per project, with the rule of the 10% of green surface area that you have to apply. And as a final result, you get what you have now" [fragmented green space]. A local architect suggested that such experiments are crucial for thinking anew about planning and designing, removing the inertia of policy and ensuring the voices of economic actors are heard: "It helps to . . . to see what the hell is possible. . . You can think anew about very interesting questions that have been raised by citizens, by economic actors, by planning services."

Producing drawings during workshops can cement thoughts and reveal contradictions, making it easier to grasp the kind of places being created. For the designers, the specifics of

the design challenge of integration of uses emerged through the co-design process with other stakeholders, as a local architect said: "In order to combine things that are all needed in the city, we cannot simply segregate things, but we have to integrate, and for that we need to invent typologies of space and tools." Putting people with disparate types of knowledge together, in a design-led space, resulted in creative solutions which crossed spatial and policy divides.

Design work from the workshops demonstrated that intensification with cultural clustering (mixed-use without residential) in Brussels is possible in economic, architectural, and urban terms. However, this potential is not always apparent to property owners, developers, and policymakers without demonstrating alternative design scenarios, and it is possible to influence powerful stakeholders through the envisioning process of a co-design workshop. A representative from CityDev emphasized this point, "We thought about how Citydev could have an influence and reverse the trend [of loss of productive uses], and we realized that it was not enough for Citydev to make land available. It was also necessary to be more active by buying old industrial buildings, reconverting them, while maintaining activities and workshops for companies, even if it is obviously not the easiest way."

3.3. Workshops Ease Inter-Regional Tensions

> "Places such as Vilvoorde and Zaventem have known centuries of competition with Brussels. It is hard to convince them that collaboration will be the solution. There has to be an understanding that the situation has changed–that we are now in a metropolitan space concerning the labour market, the housing market, mobility, education, etc. You cannot claim to all have your own territorial ambitions."
> —A local architect

The workshop process contributed to resolving inter-regional conflicts, but it is a slow process which relies on dialogue over time. Facilitated by "civil society actors" [12], with expertise but no political, geographical, or financial interests, the workshops created spaces for the co-design and development of ideas and relationships. A Kortrijk planner pointed out, "Outsiders put things into perspective. Whether they come from abroad or are people from Brussels visiting Kortrijk, they show you things that you do not see anymore." But it is not instant, as a visiting architect said, "It needs patience–even the most boring things take a lot of time at this scale. It is fragile–but there are quite sophisticated voices and we need to continue this conversation."

Workshops conducted proved to be an effective tactic for promoting change and fostering collaboration. A local architect notes that initiatives enabling movement beyond administrative borders are essential for the economic activities in Brussels, emphasized by another local architect, "Each of the parties have their own logics and requirements. Often the different parties don't listen enough to each other and an argument results. This kind of workshop is really important to learn to understand the other parties." Influencing urban change requires fostering a collaborative working culture.

3.4. Outcomes of the Action Research: Mixed-Use Developments

Not only did stakeholders claim to be inspired during interviews, but action happened. The retention and nurturing of industrial and cultural clusters in the localities discussed has been achieved by integrating both cultural uses and industry into regeneration.

Several mixed-use buildings including industrial and cultural uses have now been built in Brussels as result of the broader 2013–2020 project. Workatfirma and Eatatcantine started their activities in Buda towards the end of 2015. Anne Van Assche, daughter of firm owner Wim Van Assche, founded the shared workspace for creative young professionals and makers in November 2015 (www.workatfirma.be, accessed on 31 August 2025) and

soon after added the coffee and lunch bar (www.eatatcantine.be, accessed on 31 August 2025) They host cultural events such as weddings, exhibitions and fashion shows, alongside manufacturing spaces.

Firma and Cantine both attract people to Buda from the cultural and creative sector (e.g., fashion designers such as Caroline Bosmans, Snobe Get an Attitude, Yu.Me BXL, architects, tattoo artists and similar talent), as well as makers who are sited in amongst more traditional industrial businesses of the locality (logistics, construction, vehicle repair and sales, manufacturers) and at the same time provide a place for a coffee and lunch, enabling networking and meeting between both creative and industrial professionals.

Another example, Buda BXL originated from four large artists' studios in a former factory. The owner of Buda BXL saw the opportunity to include the shed, with industrial heritage value, as a venue: one of only 15 youth event spaces in the Brussels-Capital Region. In 2022 the municipalities of Brussels, Vilvoorde and Machelen applied for funding to organize a three-year cross-border cultural project, where artists are invited to work onsite in Buda. The project's aim was to bring new activities into the area and to promote the industrial zone as a vibrant cultural cluster, and a core part of the city.

In the images below (Figure 9), we show the way features of the (former) industrial buildings provide an environment for cultural uses, usefully served by nearby industrial uses. These examples are just the beginning of what is looking to be a cultural shift in the stakeholders' approach to the areas in which the workshops took place, which may spread to other post-industrial areas of Brussels and other European cities. It is, however, worth critically reflecting on the potential gentrification brought by co-working spaces such as Workatfirma which gather high end designers' and artists' communities.

Figure 9. (**Left**) Workatfirma I, Vilvoorde art event, source: www.workatfirma.be. (**Right**) Buda BXL, event, source www.budabxl.be (accessed on 31 August 2025). Reproduced with permission.

In informal follow-up interviews and field observations conducted in 2023, we documented that participants reported enhanced awareness of alternative development strategies, with several confirming shifts in project direction influenced by workshop insights. Notably, the transformation of the Eternit site into Buda BXL and the launch of Workatfirma were directly inspired by workshop discussions. Participants also noted increased collaboration across municipalities and greater sensitivity to cultural–industrial synergies

in future planning decisions. Informally, stakeholders described a shift in mindset, from compartmentalized to integrated urban thinking.

4. Discussion: Workshops as a Tool for Radical Planning and Design

The co-design process employed is grounded in transition management theory [4] and experimental urbanism [2], which frame cities as laboratories for collaborative learning. It also aligns with the reflective practitioner model [53] where knowledge emerges through situated, iterative design action. Co-design here is not merely participatory planning but a tool for institutional change, where spatial design becomes a medium for reshaping governance relationships and revealing systemic tensions.

There is a shift taking place in Brussels around T.OP Noordrand which is resulting in cross-regional collaboration, and a significant part of the shift was getting key actors into the same physical space to build relationships and consider specific localities. In the case of the workshops, the "civil society actors" who came together, some of whom from London Metropolitan University were politically and financially neutral, formed a (relatively) short term organization, which supported the development of longer term relational processes [55]. Learning the institutional rules of the Brussels region, such as policy networks and stakeholder-governance relationships, was vital for successful engagement, and this was in part achieved by the close relationship between AAD Cities and Departement Omgeving.

Although planning policies limit residential developments in mixed-use areas, in Brussels, such restrictions apply to only a small portion of locations where the industrial and cultural economies operate and cannot control the forces of gentrification. In this context, the workshop process, which both reveals opportunities for intensification and densification and advocates for the productive economy to the very people who own and develop the land, becomes an essential tool in the urban activist's kit.

The reflective method undertaken by designers in the workshops, collaborating with the stakeholders and leading to the range of findings above, demonstrates that design is not merely the application of technical rationality, but a reflective dialogue with the materials and place [53] and was dependent upon the constraints which were within the practical knowledge of the stakeholders. For the stakeholder participants (landowners and policymakers), there was development of contextual knowledge addressing localized challenges of creating a functional mix at the scale of the plot and building [17], as well as practical knowledge, with hands-on experimentation and prototyping generating actionable solutions that could be implemented.

The stakeholders involved were the very people who have the power to action these ideas. Without the workshops to bring the range of stakeholders together, and involve them into designerly ways of thinking and doing, embedded in a specific place, the cross-municipality collaboration of T.OP Noordrand would have been less likely. A sense of ownership was achieved for the stakeholders through meaningful participation, ensuring the sustainability and adoption of designed solutions [56] while the social learning that took place promotes knowledge exchange and collaborative problem solving [57,58].

Workshop co-design allowed the knowledge from disparate fields and actors to come together in one space, providing an opportunity for reflective clashing of different fields of knowledge. As one of the interviewees said, enhancing dialog among planners, municipalities, and the residents and workers is crucial. "The more dialogue that can be opened up between the planners, the municipality and the people that are living and working there, the better." There is a significant communication gap between these groups, and bridging this gap is essential for effective urban development–a process achieved through co-design. "An important element [. . .] is to get everybody around the table from the beginning."

However, co-design workshops have to be inclusive and carefully orchestrated: "To get everybody around the table you need to have a specific focus, so everyone is eager to join. Also, at the end of the sessions, we had this big presentation where all these people were present. That is important. If you don't take the time and the care to do this, all of this wouldn't serve anything."

While the workshops clearly inspired immediate interventions, such as the development of Buda BXL and the launch of mixed-use spaces like Workatfirma, the longer-term embedding of workshop-derived ideas into formal policy frameworks remains uneven. Although some municipalities have initiated cross-border collaborations and expressed sustained interest in cultural–industrial mixes, there is limited evidence that these outcomes have been structurally incorporated into zoning law or investment strategies. This reveals a gap between experimental design processes and institutional uptake, underscoring the need for mechanisms that better translate co-design insights into regulatory or strategic planning tools. This disjunction suggests that for design-led interventions to have lasting impact, they must be accompanied by policy advocacy and institutional learning processes.

5. Conclusions

In Brussels and elsewhere, high-value residential developments as well as higher-value "cultural manufacturing" uses displace cultural and lower-value industrial activities. Despite policy measures to preserve industrial spaces, areas such as those which were covered in the five workshops frequently lose out to residential and service-based developments, due to higher land values associated with housing. Top of FormBottom of FormThrough a series of co-design workshops, the project described in this paper facilitated the engagement of various stakeholders, including urban planners, developers, policymakers, and local businesses, in testing strategies for integrating cultural and industrial uses. Interviews served to uncover some of the impacts of the workshops on stakeholders, as well as key findings. Subsequent site visits then assessed some of the impacts of the broader 2013–2020 action research project.

5.1. Key Takeaways and Future Directions

Cities that were once the beating heart of manufacturing now find it difficult to foster the revival of their industrial roots. Development pressures, compounded by speculative real estate interests, have squeezed industrial spaces out, despite policy efforts to protect them. Cities like Brussels have witnessed industrial land being quickly swallowed by higher-value developments [59]. These spaces, while fostering vibrant creative communities, also raise local property values, potentially displacing long-standing residents and businesses. Consequently, their introduction must be carefully managed to balance the benefits of cultural and economic enrichment against the risks of displacement. Increasing awareness among city stakeholders about the industrial and creative economy's challenges and significance is pivotal; making development opportunities clearly visible to stakeholders and policymakers is crucial for development-design progress, equipping stakeholders with design strategies which work spatially, and are financially viable.

While this study is situated in Brussels, its methodology and insights are transferable to other urban contexts with similar post-industrial challenges. Key factors for successful replication include the presence of neutral facilitation actors, openness among public agencies to experimentation, and pre-existing networks linking cultural and industrial stakeholders. However, cities with more rigid zoning, weaker civic networks, or less flexible land ownership models may face additional barriers.

Key findings are that potential for regeneration includes the space available (what could fit in), the policy context (what is allowed) and the collaborative potential (how

willing and able the stakeholders are to work together); the importance of visibility and recognition of industrial activities not only helps in preserving these spaces but also in promoting their integration with cultural activities; the significant role of co-design processes in influencing powerful stakeholders in the envisioning process, with workshops as a platform for generating innovative solutions. Further key findings include the recognition of the challenges and benefits of excluding residential uses in mixed-use developments to prevent gentrification; that the process of mapping what is already there indicates areas of potential and highlighting this space inspires stakeholders to develop novel and sustainable development plans; and that the availability of neutral spaces, experts and facilitators allows collaboration among diverse stakeholders and across municipal borders.

The role of policy and governance is pivotal. Effective support for a functional mix requires zoning regulations that protect productive uses, incentives for maintaining industrial infrastructure, and governance mechanisms that encourage cross-municipal collaboration. In Brussels, programs like T.OP Noordrand and land use policies such as ZEMU zones are early efforts. However, implementation gaps persist. A more robust governance framework is needed, one that integrates economic development, cultural strategy, and land regulation under a unified vision.

The findings and outcomes suggest several avenues for future research, focussing on long-term socio-economic and impact assessments of mixed-use developments on local communities; comparative studies on different policy frameworks that support or hinder the integration of cultural and industrial uses in a functional mix; efforts to further investigate innovative architectural and urban design typologies that facilitate the co-location of cultural and industrial activities; economic viability and funding mechanisms for mixed-use developments; and strategies to mitigate the risk of gentrification and ensure that mixed-use developments remain inclusive and accessible to all socio-economic groups. Future research should also address the perspectives of grassroots actors, including residents, local artists, and small-scale cultural practitioners, to better understand the social consequences of redevelopment strategies. Their inclusion would enrich the discourse around cultural–industrial integration by grounding it in the everyday experiences of those most directly affected. The research (workshops plus interviews) was effective at determining an approach for future stakeholder co-design workshops. This methodology of co-design workshops could be transferrable to urban activists and action researchers in other jurisdictions.

5.2. Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, workshop participant selection was based largely on existing professional networks, which may have introduced biases toward certain interest groups, particularly institutional actors and professional designers. Second, the Brussels context, characterized by complex interregional governance and high land-value pressure, may limit the generalizability of findings. Third, long-term impact evaluation is constrained by the short post-workshop observation window. Finally, the stakeholder cohort primarily comprised landowners, policymakers, and design professionals, meaning the voices of local residents and grassroots cultural practitioners were underrepresented. As a result, the workshops' capacity to fully capture the lived social impact of redevelopment on these communities is limited. Future studies could benefit from broader stakeholder inclusion and longitudinal assessment.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, J.C. and J.Z.; methodology, J.Z. and J.C.; formal analysis, J.C.; investigation, J.Z.; resources, J.Z.; data curation, J.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, J.C. and J.Z.; writing—review and editing, J.C.; visualization, J.Z.; supervision, J.C. and J.Z.; project administration, J.C. and J.Z.; funding acquisition, J.Z. and J.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: The workshops and interviews were funded by Departement Omgeving as a service contract with nr RV-AGP/16/08.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee of London Metropolitan University 2014–2020 due to involvement of people in the study, although no ethical issues were identified.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data supporting reported results can be found at in [44] which is not publicly available, but may be available on request from Jan Zaman.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank Mark Brearley for his hard work and dedication at co-driving the overall project, and his dedication to the retention and densification of industry in London and Brussels. In addition, project partners Architecture Workroom Brussels were invaluable in the development and execution of the workshops and other related events such as exhibitions, not discussed in this paper. During the preparation of this manuscript/study, the authors used ChatGPT 4.0 for the purposes of text editing. The authors have reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the content of this publication.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest and the funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

References

1. De Valk, H.A.G. Socio-spatial Disparities in Brussels and its Hinterland. In *Urban Socio-Economic Segregation and Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*; van Ham, M., Tammaru, T., Ubarevičienė, R., Janssen, H., Eds.; Springer Imprint: Cham, Switzerland, 2021; pp. 271–291. [CrossRef]
2. Bulkeley, H.; Coenen, L.; Frantzeskaki, N.; Hartmann, C.; Kronsell, A.; Mai, L.; Marvin, S.; McCormick, K.; van Steenbergen, F.; Voytenko Palgan, Y. Urban living labs: Governing urban sustainability transitions. *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* **2016**, *22*, 13–17. [CrossRef]
3. Kern, F.; Smith, A. Restructuring energy systems for sustainability? Energy transition policy in the Netherlands. Energy Policy. *Energy Policy* **2008**, *36*, 4093–4103. [CrossRef]
4. Loorbach, D.; Rotmans, J. The practice of transition management: Examples and lessons from four distinct cases. *Futures* **2010**, *42*, 237–246. [CrossRef]
5. Bulkeley, H. The condition of urban climate experimentation. *Sustain. Sci. Pract. Policy* **2023**, *19*, 2188726. [CrossRef]
6. Ehnert, F. Review of research into urban experimentation in the fields of sustainability transitions and environmental governance. *Eur. Plan. Stud.* **2023**, *31*, 76–102. [CrossRef]
7. Ehnert, F.; Kern, F.; Borgström, S.; Gorissen, L.; Maschmeyer, S.; Egermann, M. Urban sustainability transitions in a context of multi-level governance: A comparison of four European states. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2018**, *26*, 101–116. [CrossRef]
8. Suitner, J.; Krisch, A. Navigating context in experiments: The "real," the roots, the rationale. *Eur. Urban Reg. Stud.* **2024**, *31*, 302–316. [CrossRef]
9. North, P.; Longhurst, N. Grassroots localization? The scalar potential of and limits of the 'transition' approach to climate change and resource constraint. *Urban Stud.* **2013**, *50*, 1423–1438. [CrossRef]
10. Kivimaa, P.; Boon, W.; Hyysalo, S.; Klerkx, L. Towards a Typology of Intermediaries in Sustainability Transitions: A Systematic Review and a Research Agenda. *Res. Policy* **2019**, *48*, 1062–1075. [CrossRef]
11. Torrens, J.; Von Wirth, T. Experimentation or projectification of urban change? A critical appraisal and three steps forward. *Urban Transform.* **2021**, *3*, 8. [CrossRef]
12. Pflitsch, G.; Hendriks, N.; Coenen, L.; Radinger-Peer, V. Get organized? Creating an organizational context for civil society activities in urban sustainability transitions. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2024**, *52*, 100889. [CrossRef]

13. Grandin, J.; Sareen, S. What sticks? Ephemerality, permanence and local transition pathways. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2020**, *36*, 72–82. [CrossRef]
14. Wolfram, M. Urban planning and transition management: Rationalities, instruments and dialectics. Co-creating sustainable urban futures: A primer on applying transition management in cities. In *Co-Creating Sustainable Urban Futures*; Frantzeskaki, N., Hölscher, K., Bach, M., Avelino, F., Eds.; Future City Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2018; pp. 103–125. [CrossRef]
15. Peris, J.; Bosch, M. The paradox of planning for transformation: The case of the integrated sustainable urban development strategy in València (Spain). *Urban Transform.* **2020**, *2*, 7. [CrossRef]
16. Wittmayer, J.M.; van Steenbergen, F.; Rok, A.; Roorda, C. Governing sustainability: A dialogue between Local Agenda 21 and transition management. *Local Environ.* **2015**, *21*, 939–955. [CrossRef]
17. Dovey, K.; Pafka, E. What is functional mix? An assemblage approach. *Plan. Theory Pract.* **2017**, *18*, 249–267. [CrossRef]
18. Alderneck, E. Industrial Lands Densification and Intensification: Profiling Planning Policies and Development Projects in Metro Vancouver. PND Magazine 01/2023. 2023. Available online: www.planung-neu-denken.de/1-2023-productive-processes/industrial-lands-densification-and-intensification (accessed on 31 August 2025).
19. UNESCO. The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics. UNESCO FCS. 2009. Available online: https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/unesco-framework-for-cultural-statistics-2009-en_0.pdf (accessed on 31 August 2025).
20. Amin, A.; Thrift, N. Cultural-economy and cities. *Prog. Hum. Geogr.* **2007**, *31*, 143–161. [CrossRef]
21. Clossick, J.; Brearley, M. Auditing, Revealing and Promoting Industry in the London Borough of Southwark. *Urban Plan.* **2023**, *8*, 211–224. [CrossRef]
22. Martin, D.; Grodach, C. Placing production in urban cultural policy: The locational patterns of cultural industries and related manufacturing. *J. Urban Aff.* **2020**, *44*, 567–587. [CrossRef]
23. Grodach, C.; O'Connor, J.; Gibson, C. Manufacturing and cultural production: Towards a progressive policy agenda for the cultural economy. *City Cult. Soc.* **2017**, *10*, 17–25. [CrossRef]
24. Grodach, C.; Taylor, L.; Martin, D.; Hurley, J. Regulating Sustainable Production. *Urban Plan.* **2023**, *8*, 186–197. [CrossRef]
25. Ferm, J.; Jones, E. Beyond the post-industrial city: Valuing and planning for industry in London. *Urban Stud.* **2017**, *54*, 3380–3398. [CrossRef]
26. Thiel, J. Creative Cities and the Reflexivity of the Urban Creative Economy. *Eur. Urban Reg. Stud.* **2017**, *24*, 21–34. [CrossRef]
27. Ferm, J.; Freire Trigo, S.; Moore-Cherry, N. Documenting the "Soft Spaces" of London Planning: Opportunity Areas as Institutional Fix in a Growth-Oriented City. *Reg. Stud.* **2021**, *56*, 394–405. [CrossRef]
28. Saeger, S.S. Globalization and deindustrialization: Myth and reality in the OECD. *Rev. World Econ.* **1997**, *133*, 579–608. [CrossRef]
29. Vandermotten, C. Bruxelles, une Lecture de la Ville: De l'Europe des Marchands à la Capitale de l'Europe. In *Brussels, Reading the City: From Europe of the Merchants to the Capital of Europe*; Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles: Brussels, Belgium, 2014.
30. Ferm, J. Hyper-Competitive Industrial Markets: Implications for Urban Planning and the Manufacturing Renaissance. *Urban Plan.* **2023**, *8*, 263–274. [CrossRef]
31. Curran, W. "From the frying pan to the oven": Gentrification and the experience of industrial displacement in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. *Urban Stud.* **2007**, *44*, 1427–1440. [CrossRef]
32. Curran, W. In defense of old industrial spaces: Manufacturing, creativity and innovation in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. *Int. J. Urban Reg. Res.* **2010**, *34*, 871–885. [CrossRef]
33. Hill, A. The Cities Report: Brussels, London, Rotterdam. Cities of Making. 2018. Available online: https://citiesofmaking.com/cities-report/ (accessed on 31 August 2025).
34. Kampelmann, S. Circular economy in a territorial context: The case of biowaste management in Brussels. In *Post-Growth Economics and Society: Exploring the Paths of a Social and Ecological Transition*; Cassiers, I., Maréchal, K., Méda, D., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2017; pp. 73–89.
35. Lester, T.W.; Kaza, N.; Kirk, S. Making room for manufacturing: Understanding industrial land conversion in cities. *J. Am. Plan. Assoc.* **2013**, *79*, 295–313. [CrossRef]
36. Architecture 00. Compendium for the Civic Economy. NESTA and CABE. 2012. Available online: https://www.architecture00.net/00projects/compendium-for-the-civic-economy (accessed on 31 August 2025).
37. Moritz, B.; De Clerck, P.; Vanhaelen, Y. Re:Work. Making place for industry, logistics and wholesale in Brussels. Université Libre de Bruxelles/Erasmus Hogeschool. 2013. Available online: https://dipot.ulb.ac.be/dspace/bitstream/2013/141055/1/Re-Work.pdf (accessed on 31 August 2025).
38. BEE-SPRB. Shifting Economy Brussels: Stratégie Régionale de Transition Économique 2022–2030. 2022. Available online: https://shiftingeconomy.brussels/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ShiftingEconomy-Brochure-FR_092022.pdf (accessed on 31 August 2025).
39. Perspective.Brussels. Urban Issues: Belgian and Metropolitan Action. 2024. Available online: https://perspective.brussels/en/studies-and-observations/actions/belgian-and-metropolitan-action (accessed on 31 August 2025).

40. Perspective.Brussels; de Voghel, C.; Strale, M.; Boswell, R.; Coekelberghs, S. Observatory of Productive Activities: Logistics Real Estate and Survey 2017. Perspective.Brussels, Brussels Mobilité and Citydev.Brussels. 2018. Available online: https://perspective.brussels/sites/default/files/documents/perspective-brochure_observatoire-04-2018_web.pdf (accessed on 31 August 2025).
41. Wolf-Powers, L. Up-zoning New York City's mixed- use neighborhoods: Property-led economic development and the anatomy of a planning dilemma. *J. Plan. Educ. Res.* **2005**, *24*, 379–393. [CrossRef]
42. De Boeck, S.; Bassens, D.; Ryckewaert, M. Easing spatial inequalities? An analysis of the anticipated effects of Urban Enterprise Zones in Brussels. *Eur. Plan. Stud.* **2017**, *25*, 1876–1895. [CrossRef]
43. Adams, D.; Tiesdell, S. Planners as Market Actors: Rethinking State-Market Relations in Land and Property. *Plan. Theory Pract.* **2010**, *11*, 187–207. [CrossRef]
44. Dudal, R.; Zaman, J.; Architecture Workroom Brussels; Departement Omgeving. Urban Economy Workshops: Looking Back at the Workshops Cycle, Lead by Mark Brearley in Flanders and in the Brussels Region. Unpublished Internal Document. 2020. Available online: https://cities.research.londonmet.ac.uk/brussels-research-by-design-workshops (accessed on 31 August 2025).
45. Ham, J.C.; Swenson, C.; İmrohoroğlu, A.; Song, H. Government programs can improve local labor markets: Evidence from State Enterprise Zones, Federal Empowerment Zones and Federal Enterprise Community. *J. Public Econ.* **2011**, *95*, 779–797. [CrossRef]
46. Mayer, T.; Mayneris, F.; Py, L. The impact of Urban Enterprise Zones on establishment location decisions and labor market outcomes: Evidence from France. *J. Econ. Geogr.* **2017**, *17*, 709–752. [CrossRef]
47. Cruickshank, L.; Coupe, G.; Hennessy, D. Co-design: Fundamental issues and guidelines for designers. Beyond the castle case study. *Swed. Des. Res. J.* **2013**, *10*, 48–57. [CrossRef]
48. Evans, M.; Terrey, N. Co-design with citizens and stakeholders. In *Evidence-Based Policy Making in the Social Sciences: Methods That Matter*; Stoker, G., Evans, M., Eds.; Policy Press: Bristol, UK, 2016; pp. 243–261. [CrossRef]
49. Stelzle, B.; Jannack, A.; Noennig, J.R. Co-design and co-decision: Decision making on collaborative design platforms. *Procedia Comput. Sci.* **2017**, *112*, 2435–2444. [CrossRef]
50. Webb, R.; Bai, X.; Smith, M.S.; Costanza, R.; Griggs, D.; Moglia, M.; Neuman, M.; Newman, P.; Newton, P.; Norman, B.; et al. Sustainable urban systems: Co-design and framing for transformation. *Ambio* **2018**, *47*, 57–77. [CrossRef]
51. Enserink, B.; Monnikhof, R.A.H. Information management for public participation in co-design processes: Evaluation of a Dutch example. *J. Environ. Plan. Manag.* **2003**, *46*, 315–344. [CrossRef]
52. Moser, S.C. Can science on transformation transform science? Lessons from co-design. *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* **2016**, *20*, 106–115. [CrossRef]
53. Schon, D. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think In Action*; Basic Book: New York, NY, USA, 1983.
54. Ferm, J.; Panayotopoulos-Tsiros, D.; Griffiths, S. Planning Urban Manufacturing, Industrial: Building Typologies, and Built Environments: Lessons from Inner London. *Urban Plan.* **2021**, *6*, 350–367. [CrossRef]
55. Clossick, J.; Brearley, M. Promoting Industry in Brussels: A Good City Has Industry. AAD Practice Research Portfolios London: London Metropolitan University. 2020. Available online: https://issuu.com/arts_londonmet/docs/brearley_clossick_promoting_industry_in_brussels__ (accessed on 31 August 2025).
56. Ramirez, R. A 'Meditation' on Meaningful Participation. *J. Community Inform.* **2008**, *4*, 3. Available online: https://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/JoCI/article/view/2948/3810 (accessed on 31 August 2025).
57. Sanders, E.B.N.; Stappers, P.J. Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign* **2008**, *4*, 5–18. [CrossRef]
58. Cumbula, S.D.; Sabiescu, A.; Cantoni, L. Co-Design with Communities. A Reflection on the Literature. In Proceedings of the IDIA 2013. Bangkok, Thailand, 15–18 August 2013. Unpublished. [CrossRef]
59. De Boeck, S.; Ryckewaert, M. The Preservation of Productive Activities in Brussels: The Interplay between Zoning and Industrial Gentrification. *Urban Plan.* **2020**, *5*, 351–363. [CrossRef]