

Peripheral Centrality

What happens if we position the site, located in the district of Carabanchel, as at the core of the city? When the periphery becomes the center, what city do we get?

With 35.000 people living in 80 ha, this is an extremely dense urban chunk –one of the densest in the entire Madrid region. And yet, there are just a handful of buildings that raise above 6 floors. These buildings are host to a vibrant cultural scene, with several galleries, creative ventures and the highest amount of rehearsal studios in Europe. This is a diverse city too, with a fourth of the population coming from abroad; if it weren't for their lower incomes, we could perfectly be speaking about the 'actual' city center of Madrid.



Unconscious Places

Unlike the center, this peripheral city has no gardens or historic parks. It is an impervious island, removed from the network of green areas of the region. At least, officially: the few public spaces that are defined as 'parks' in the municipal cartography present some trees, but are completely paved on the ground level. There are, however, many vacant lots –the scars of decades of second class planning and collective indifference, tenaciously established as a defining element of this and other cities that emerged in the periphery of the metropolis.

Can we think of them as a collective cultural marker of the peripheral city? Combined, all these lots weave an unconscious network spanning over 29,033 m2 of pervious, changing, and organic ground.

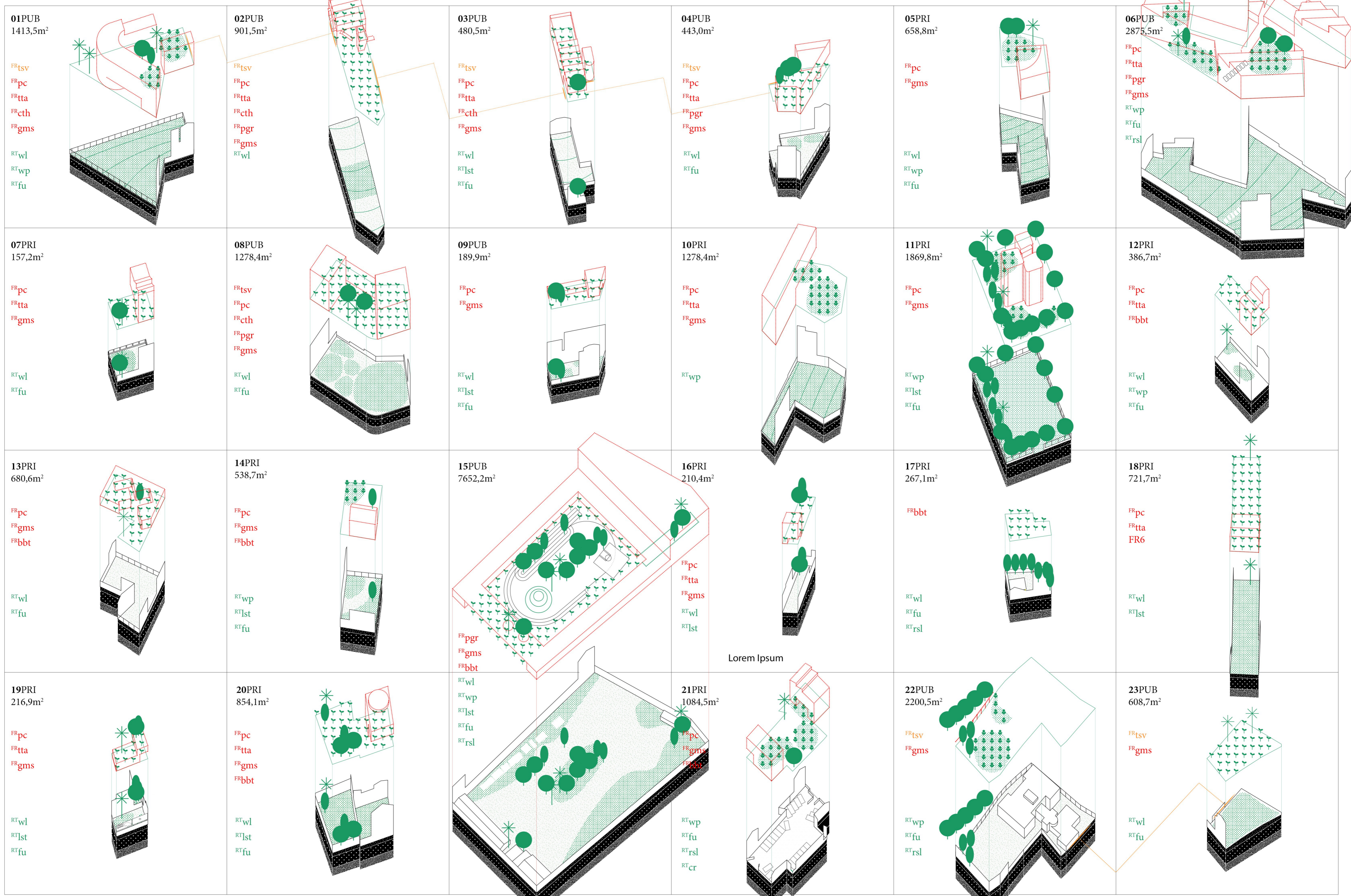


The Value of the Wasteland

In the peripheral city, the vacant lot is a precious asset. But not because of its potential for being developed, but because of its potential to remain empty, pervious, fertile, green, porous, accessible.

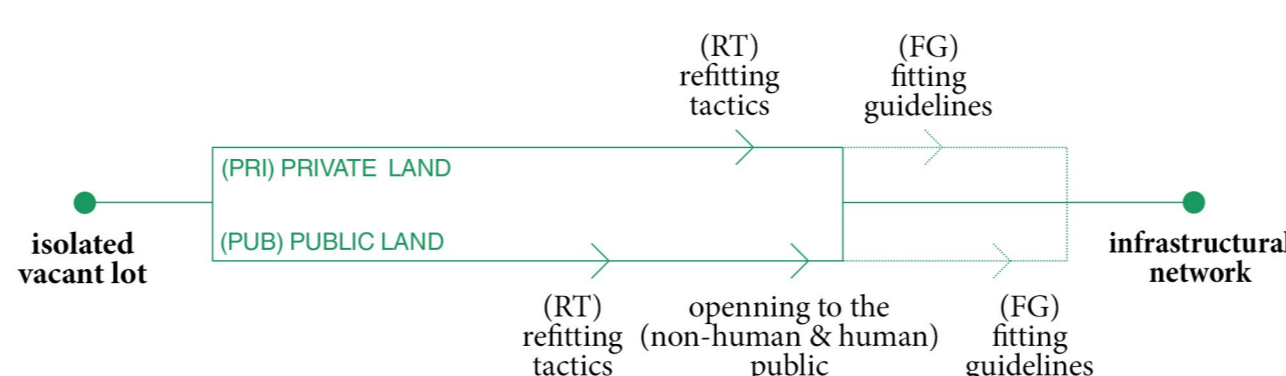
This project aims to harvest this potential, and poses itself to respond the following questions:

What happens if we turn wasteland into landscape? Can we think of the vacant lot not as the ground for a future building, but as a unique kind of public space?



Strategies of the void

The fundamental purpose of this proposal is to preserve and enhance the empty spaces in the area. To achieve this goal, the built and the void establish a new kind of agreement, whereby the essential traits of wasteland –informality, fertility, strangeness, ambiguity, emptiness, opportunity, fluctuation– become tactics to dignify the vacant lots, and guidelines to develop them. These tactics are necessarily site specific, but the inventory above, with its abstraction, offers the possibility of extrapolating them to other peripheral cities.



REFITTING TACTICS

- RTwl WEEDLAND** Preservation and enhancement of spontaneous vegetation.
- RTwp WILD PARTERRES** Launching of seed bombs in cooperation with neighbors.
- RTst LONG-STANDERS** Preservation and repair of existing trees and other features.
- RTfu FENCES UP!** Repairation and 40cm. lift of the existing fence.
- RTsl RE-SOIL** Cleaning of soils and regeneration of polluted areas.
- RTcr CRACKING** Ripping of asphalt and other impervious surfaces.

FITTING GUIDELINES

- FRtsv THE SUPERVOID** Expansion and connection of vacant lots. Pedestrianization.
- FRpc POROCITY** Visual and/or physical connection of internal areas and the street.
- FRtta TIPTOE ARCHITECTURE** 60% of buildable area – 60% pervious ground.
- FRcth COMMUNITY TREEHOUSE** Vertical development of public spaces.
- FRpgr PERVIOUS GROUNDS** Max. 20% of paved surface + use of SUDS
- FRgms GREEN MOVES** Landscaping based on weeds and spontaneous vegetation.
- FRbbt BACKBUILT** New constructions along the party walls.

