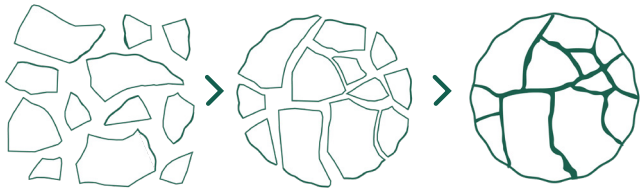


# wild vähäheikkilä

Cities are living organisms with a history – characterized by fractures, layers and transformations. Particularly in fragmented urban spaces like Vähäheikkilä, where different uses, layers of time and infrastructural caesuras come together, intermediate spaces often emerge that are perceived as empty spaces or functional residual areas. However, it is precisely these resources of the city that have the potential to act as connecting element – not by being reshaped, but by a deliberate landscape repair that recognizes and reinterprets the character of the location.



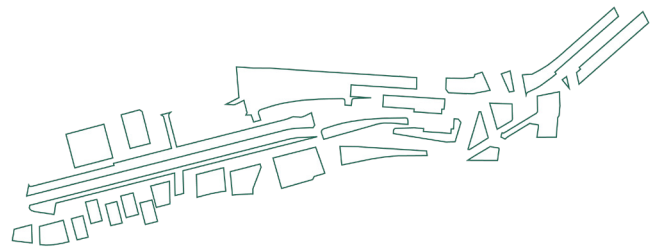
wild vähäheikkilä pursues the idea of ecologically oriented urban repair, inspired by the Japanese principle of Kintsugi: what was once broken or damaged is not hidden, but reconnected with care and appreciation – in a way that makes the break visible and at the same time creates a new beauty and identity.

The central intervention of the concept is the ecological uncovering of a previously canalized stream that had been routed underground. This watercourse now becomes the landscape link and acts as the heart of a wild and natural park structure that interweaves with the adjacent existing and new uses – like the golden lines in Kintsugi, it runs through the transformed area, making breaks visible without negating them, and at the same time creating a new and unique, coherent narrative.

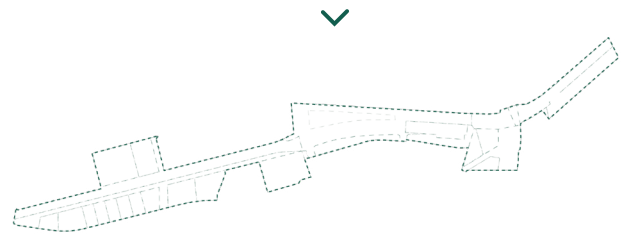
Reclaiming the stream as an open, ecologically diverse body of water not only creates a place of biodiversity and climate adaptation, but also an identity-forming element for the surrounding neighborhoods. New pathways, open spaces and meeting zones are developing along the watercourse, interweaving previously isolated uses. At the same time, this park acts as an important element of local rainwater management. Nature-based solutions attractively combine ecological and infrastructural functions, while celebrating water as an element that can be experienced.

This form of urban repair goes beyond a purely functional transformation: it sees itself as a healing intervention that works out of the existing fabric instead of imposing a new

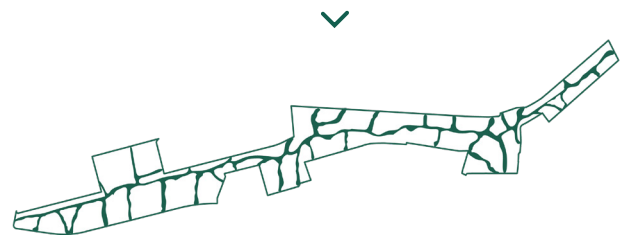
urban grid on it. The landscape becomes a medium of reconciliation, a golden seam between disparate elements. The result is a living space that is not convincing through perfection, but through its ability to integrate differences – and to shape a new, shared future from the rupture.



The current area of Vähäheikkilä is fragmented into isolated and forgotten areas and uses. Individual interests take precedence over ecological and common needs. This broken urban structure lacks a cohesive understanding and spatial structure.

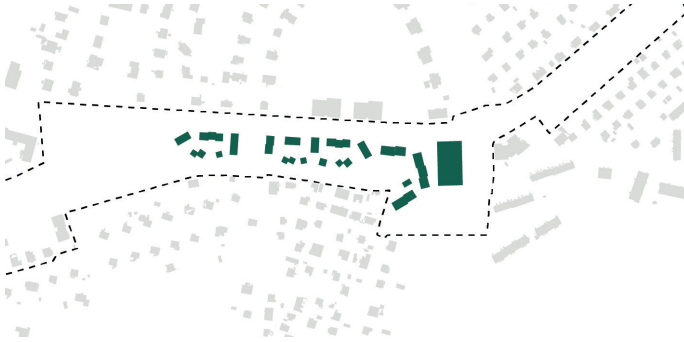


By understanding the area as a cohesive space, problems such as rainwater management can be tackled collectively. The result is a new neighborhood with a unique character that integrates into the context of the city of Turku as a naturally grown urban component



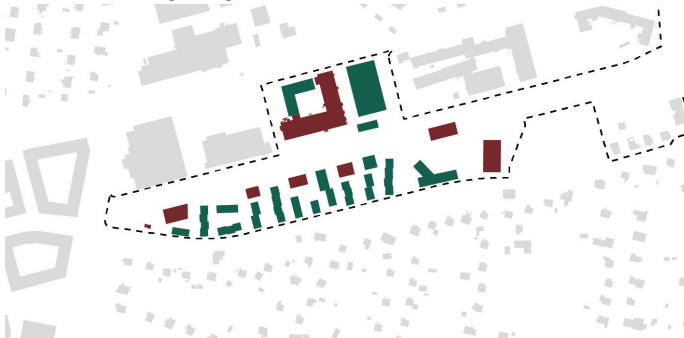
The core element of this careful urban redevelopment is the wild park structure that runs through the entire area and interweaves it with its surroundings. Existing and new uses benefit equally from this communal element and are oriented towards it.

Due to the special conditions and existing circumstances of the site and the new landscape-based restructuring, a very individual urban structure has been created.

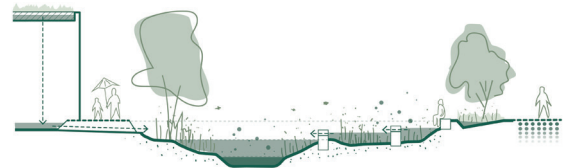


The eastern area, as the first construction phase of the development, balances a density adapted to the location with the new park structure. On the one side, the building structure creates a clear urban edge along the street; on the other side, the building development is subordinate to the landscape repair and blends gently into it. Diverse building typologies offer space for different needs to unfold and yet fit in harmoniously with the surrounding context. The new development mixes classic single-family homes, townhouses and apartment buildings. This variety of typologies creates a social diversity that revitalizes the area and creates a new community.

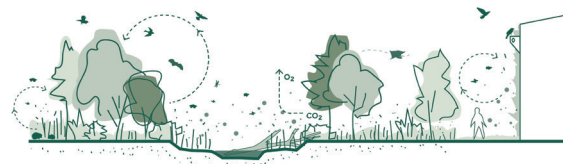
The area around Porkanpuisto will be purposefully kept free of buildings and instead the existing park structure will be further developed and included in the overall planning as part of the storm water management, especially for the existing neighborhoods.



The western area is strongly influenced by the existing buildings. Buildings and structures worthy of preservation are retained and function as identity-creating places. On the north side along the Vähäheikkiläntie, the historic existing buildings are extended and accentuated, while the new MobilityHub manages to handle the entire parking requirements and use the space efficiently. The south side combines the small-scale commercial character with new functions and attractive living space. The small-scale building plots can be developed in several phases and fit into the overarching structure. The area is now oriented inwards towards the previously forgotten rear side and towards the new landscape park, creating an attractive urban space with a variety of uses along the buildings.



**storm water management.** Water and the associated rainwater management is the core infrastructural and design element of the concept. Maximum reopening of the existing stream enables a natural approach to this. A well-coordinated system consisting of a variety of precautionary elements is created along the course of the stream. Every surface, whether on the buildings or in the open space, is part of this system and creates a resistant structure for any amount of rainfall. Nature based solutions have priority and combine the ecological importance of water with infrastructural management and qualitative experience of water. Water is not seen as a threat – but as a natural resource to be celebrated.



**green infrastructure & biodiversity.** With water comes life. The new ecological approach creates habitats for people, flora and fauna. With this unique opportunity of the project, the focus will be on natural and sustainable development. A living ecosystem is being created in which structural developments are subordinated to the landscape and gently integrated. The central and formative park structure should develop naturally and also offer retreats for animals and plants. This near-natural development creates a network with the local green infrastructure and acts as a link beyond the boundaries of the area, thus strengthening biodiversity and species richness. At the same time, the ambitious development has a positive effect on the local microclimate, creating a green lung in an urban context in times of climate change.



**mobility system.** The area is also an essential part of local mobility. Particularly in terms of soft mobility, the development fits attractively into the city's network and connects it strongly with each other. Two new, easily accessible mobility hubs create demand-oriented control of car traffic, which means that the space freed up can be used exclusively for walking and cycling. There are several options for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the area, creating different routes adapted to different speed and invites people to linger instead of just passing through. The required infrastructure in terms of parking spaces or safety and lighting has also already been considered in the concept. Through this attractive design of the traffic areas, also as part of the park structure, transit becomes an everyday experience.

**what is wild?** In the context of current ecological challenges, a new understanding of urbanity is taking center stage: the recognition of the city as a habitat for more than just people. Wild urban nature does not stand for anarchy, but for natural self-organization, co-evolution and resilience.

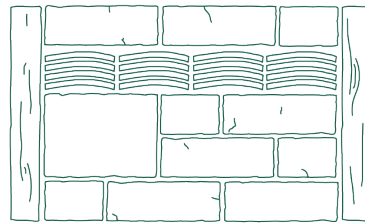
Urban space is no longer designed exclusively by humans, but is shaped in coexistence with other forms of life – with plants, animals, water and soil. Wild urban nature does not

mean a return to “pure” nature, but the integration of natural processes into the urban fabric – as a co-creator, as part of a shared future. The transformation of the canalized stream, not as a pure infrastructure project, but as a living dynamic organism gives rise to new urban qualities. Water is not controlled here, but accompanied. It becomes the engine of ecological, spatial and social renewal.

The following three principles frame this approach.



*nature as designer.*



*design by resource.*



*all life.*

**nature as designer.** Urban planning often begins with a plan – an idea of order, function and form. The wild approach challenges this. It begins with understanding: What does this place itself want to become? What processes are already in progress, what traces are legible? Growth, erosion, flooding, settlement by plants or animals – all of these are creative forces. The task of the design is to accompany them, not to determine them. The uncovering of the stream thus becomes a choreography of uncertainty: its edges are not drawn hard, but left soft; its course is not finally drawn, but developed in dialog with the terrain. Vegetation is allowed to settle, migrate and disappear. The space remains in flux – incomplete, open, alive.

**design by resource.** Wild also means avoiding over-forming. Instead of bringing in resources from outside, the design is based on what is available locally – both materially and immaterially. Existing vegetation, soils, water-courses, microclimates or old pathways are not erased, but integrated. Structural interventions are sparing, selective and resource-conserving. This approach promotes a new aesthetic: rough, fragmentary, organic. It is not about perfection, but about meaningfulness. In such a design, new forms of housing are created that adapt to the terrain – with a view of water, permeable transitions to the outside space, communal areas that blur with the natural space. The place sets the rhythm – not the norm.

**all life.** Wild recognizes that urban spaces are habitats for many – and that a future worth living can only be conceived in coexistence. Urban development here becomes the art of living together: people, animals, plants, microorganisms – they all shape and use the space. This means: islands of vegetation instead of ornamental lawns, deadwood as a habitat instead of garbage, light and shade zones in which a wide variety of life forms can thrive. The built environment also becomes part of this symbiosis – with nesting aids, façade greening, water catchment systems and open ground.

This creates new urban ecosystems – not as a substitute for nature, but as an extension of our understanding of the city.

The design of an urban ‘wild’ is also a design of a new attitude: less control, more relationship. The transformation of a canalized stream thus becomes a symbol – for a city that is learning to flow again, to grow, to change.



**water as an experience.** Water becomes a revitalizing and experienceable element of development. Infrastructural rainwater management is attractively integrated and thus creates an awareness of its importance.

The public space is formed around the water and offers a variety of attractive contact points.

**water as a retreat.** Natural refuge areas offer flora and fauna protection and habitat and strengthen connections and biodiversity. Careful access allows people to experience nature respectfully and invites them to recharge.

**water as neighbor.** Water is an all-embracing element in Vähäheikkilä and therefore also a constant neighbor. This relationship works in co-existence and gives both sides the space they need without restricting each other.

**water as the start.** The exposure of the waterbody also marks the start of architectural development and new life in the area. This starting point must be celebrated and shaped together. The stepped inflow is accompanied by natural water filtration measures.

**process.** Wild Vähäheikkilä is a unique project in an urban city like Turku. It focuses on a holistic approach that addresses the individual development goals and requirements, but deals with and solves them collectively and interdisciplinarily. The result is a dynamic ecosystem for all types of life, creating a multitude of synergies at different levels. The concept provides the framework and initial solutions for this ambitious transformation. A development of this scale and importance requires a process-based design that offers the flexibility and adaptability to cope with change and new developments, which will take place in several phases in such a project. The concept is resilient to adjustments and offers space for new things. It acts as a long-term point of orientation, both for municipal goals and developments as well as for the small-scale private areas in their individual character, which can be harmoniously integrated into the overarching concept. Wild also stands for something that has grown naturally, and so Vähäheikkilä should also grow naturally through the new developments. This also does not simply mean an implanted development, but a participatory development with all those involved. Wild Vähäheikkilä marks a shift in urban thinking: away from fixed outcomes and toward evolving relationships – between people, landscape, water, and time – where every phase adds a new layer to a wild city.

