



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA

Health Research Institute & Faculty of Arts and Design

Play across the lifespan and the temporary production of space in cities

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16th September 2017

Supervisors:

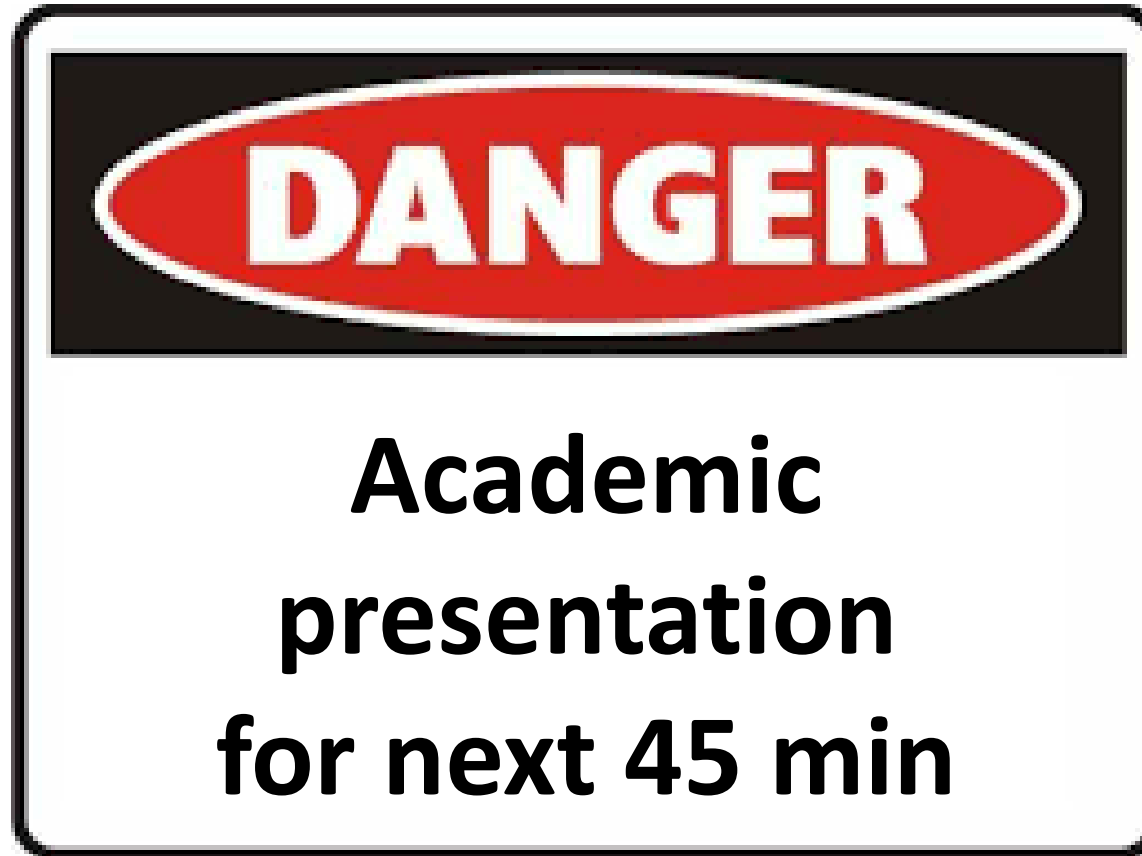
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Acknowledgement:

This HDR research project is supported through an “Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship” and by Urban Synergies Group

Key message

- Play is complex and needs to have a place in urban design with its temporary transformative and non-instrumentality nature in space
- Qualitative methods reveal more about social quality of space and play rather than quantitative methods only
- Social quality of space through play is high in the middle of an empty space (be seen, or on edges and corners of public space) → messiness vs. open space (Stevens, 2007)
- Birds and loose natural elements add to the quality for play in public spaces (tree droppings, sticks etc.)
- Playful space intervention that seek an audience only work when the time and the space is right (people are attracted by other people is a pre-requisite (Whyte 1980), which was confirmed in the research project)



Cities and everyday life

Cities are inherently complex, messy, constantly changing and evolving.

Jacobs (1961), Gehl (1987), Lynch (1960), Mumford (1937), Appleyard (1981) and Whyte (1980), Alexander (1977)

Variety of stimuli

Research questions

- How can the concept of play serve as a device to advance the understanding of the social quality of public space?
- What are the observable play activities in public space?
- How can we capture and describe the experience as play?
- What is the difference between traditional methods and the new proposed method in understanding the quality of public space?

City



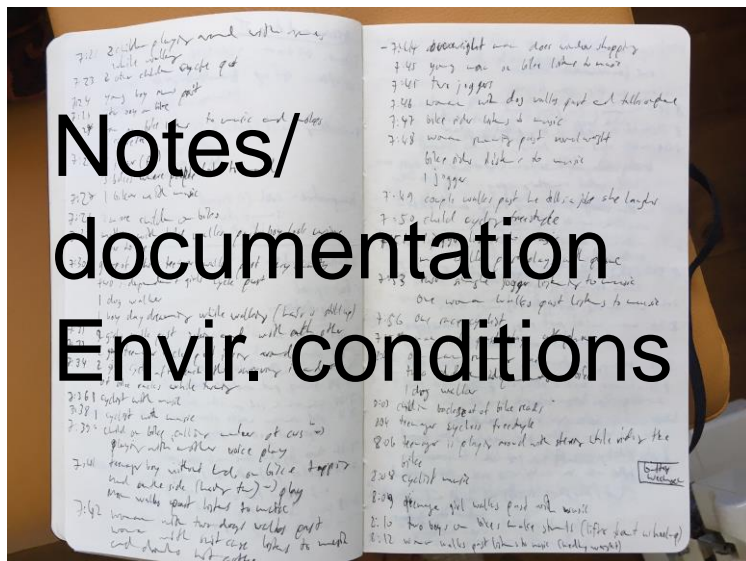
Play

Methods for data collection

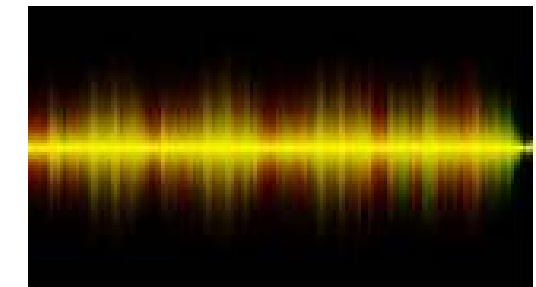


Direct
observations
- video

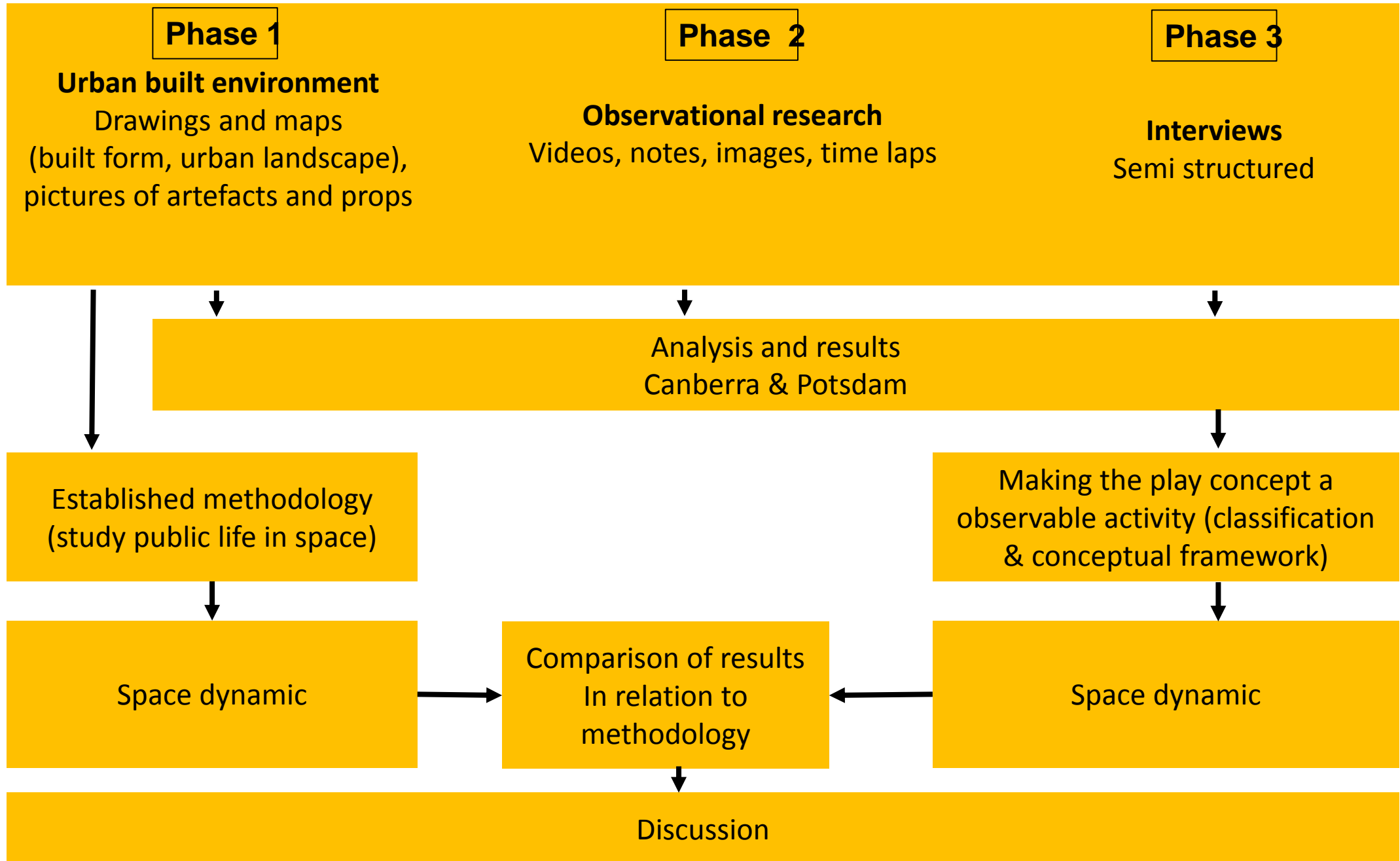
Photos of
artefacts



Interview



Noise recording



*‘Play is a thing by itself. The **play-concept** as such is of higher order than is seriousness. For seriousness seeks to exclude play, whereas play can very well include seriousness.’*

Huizinga (1950, p. 45)

‘The full variety of play forms only appears with the achievement of a certain maturity.’

Mouledoux (1977, pp. 52-53)

Concept of play - Definition

A **intrinsic induced activity**. It can include an **element of extrinsic motivation** that takes place on a **voluntary** basis and creates opportunities for **social inclusion** through **enjoyment** and **liberty** in its **temporary** transformational nature.

Furthermore, play constitutes the acceptance of **risk** and embraces attributes such as **spontaneity, curiosity, creative** processes and **purposelessness** in support of this activity as it happens **outside of the ordinary**. This activity is necessary to human identity as an exploratory pursuit of enjoyment outside of social purpose.

Play and its operationalisation in public spaces



Source: Bobb Edwards
<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=7367>

Roger Caillois (1961)
Classifications of play concept:
Competition,
Chance,
Simulation, and
Vertigo

Jan Gehl (2013)
Criteria to assess qualities of public space
Optional activities such as enjoyment:
possibility for play/ unwinding (play, dance,
music, theatre, soapbox speeches)

Brian Sutton-Smith (1997)
Ambiguity of play:
Seven rhetorics of play
(progress, fate, power,
identity, imaginary, self,
fivolous)
→ Play attributes



Source:
<http://www.cambridgewhoswho.com/Members/NY/Brian-Sutton-Smith-229572.html>



Source:
<https://magazin.aktualne.cz/kultura/film/receze-lidsky-rozmer-hleda-misto-cloveka-v-megapolich/r~i:article:772610/?redirected=1504670058>

Vertigo

Bicycling
Rollerskating
Loosing weight
Dancing

Bike racing if alone
Bicycling
Jumping / twisting
Skateboarding
Scooter
Jogging / running
Dancing
Walking with aid

Simulation

Intimacy
Daydreaming
Fantasy
Imagination
Listening to records/ music
Art project
Flower arranging
TV/film
Novels, reading & writing
Travel tourism
Photography
Shopping
Handicrafts
Night out fun
Amusement parks
Pets
Computer
Halloween
Construction
Woodwork
Gardening
Toys
Yoga
Collecting
Backpacking
Wedding

Affection / compassion
Daydreaming
Fantasy
Imagination
Listening to music
Art project
Flower arranging
Watching films
Novels / reading
Travel / tourism
Photography
Shopping / window shopping
Needlework/ quilting
Night out fun
Festivals, Carnival, Mardi Gras etc.
Dog walker
Play on digital device/ virtual reality
Costume
Construction
Woodwork
Gardening
Toys
Yoga
Collecting
Backpacking
Role play
Wedding

Chance

Bird watching
Crosswords
Joking
Parties
Gambling
Speech play
Bars/ Tavern
Magic
Playing the piano
Concerts / music
Playing voices
Lotteries

Bird watching
Crosswords
Joking
Parties
Gambling
Play with objects
Speech play
Bars / Tavern
Magic
Playing the piano
Playing music
Playing voices
Lotteries

Competition

Collections
Auto racing
Football/ cricket
Board games
Arm wrestling
Card games
Martial arts
Drinking
Street luge

Collections
Auto racing
Football/ cricket
Board games
Ground games
Arm wrestling
Card games
Martial arts
Drinking
Street luge

Multiple options possible for a play activity
Pending on perception and interpretation (natural
bias → validation possible due to video recordings)

Risk is minimised as focus is on space!

Qualitative space analysis / diary method

- **Subject to subject based play activities**
(triangulation concept, Whyte 1980)
- **Subject and object based play activities**
(affordance concept; Gibson 1979, Chemero 2003)
- **Time based play activities**

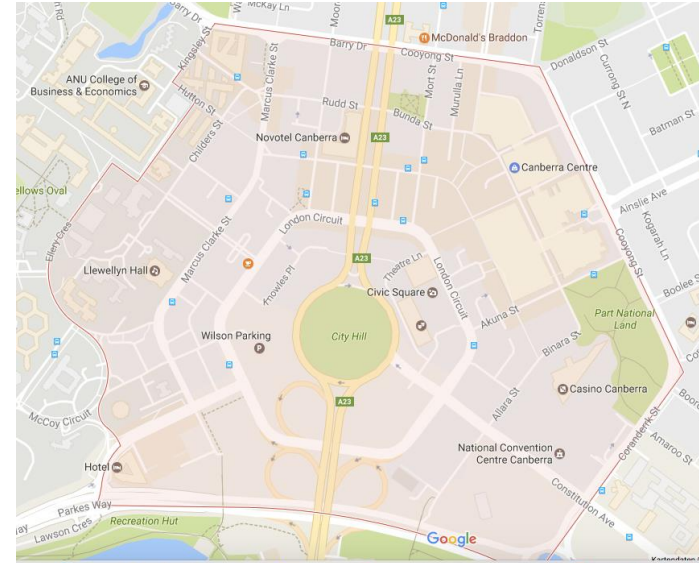
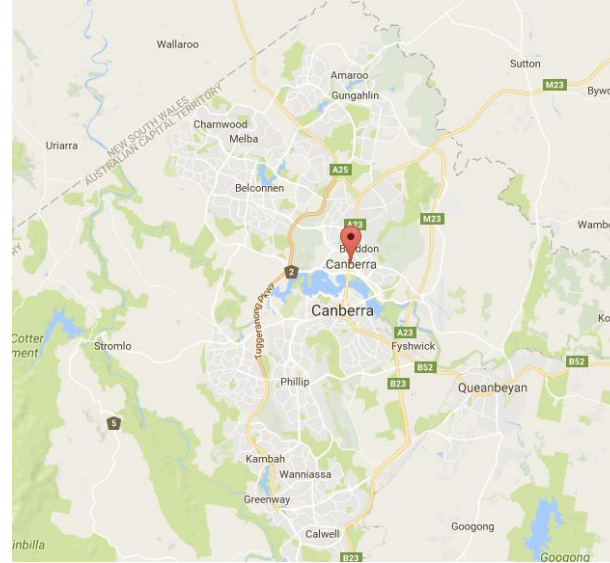
Why street space (shared space and pedestrian zone)?

“Nearly everyone in the world lives on a street. People have always lived on streets. They have been the places where children first learned about the world, where neighbors met, the social centers of towns and cities...”

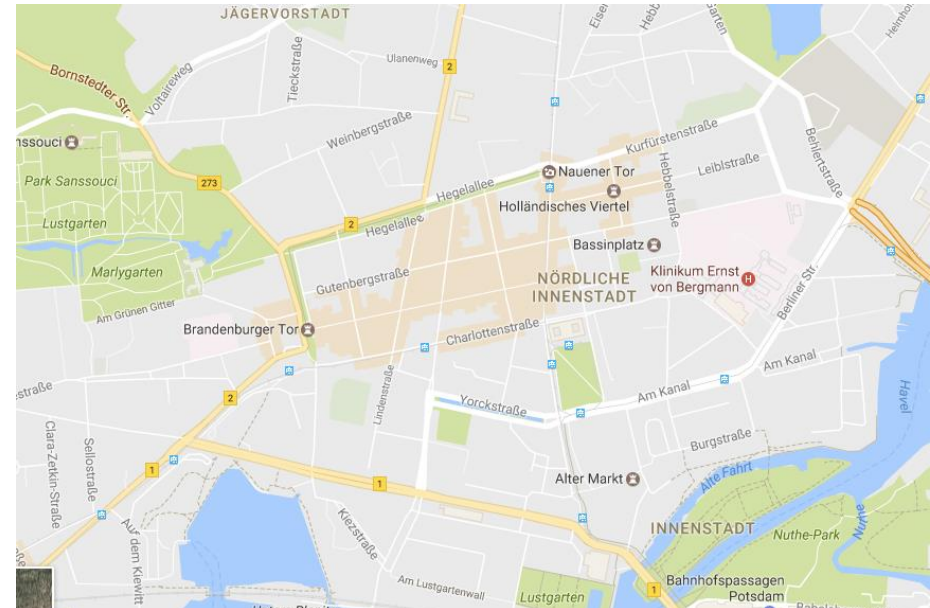
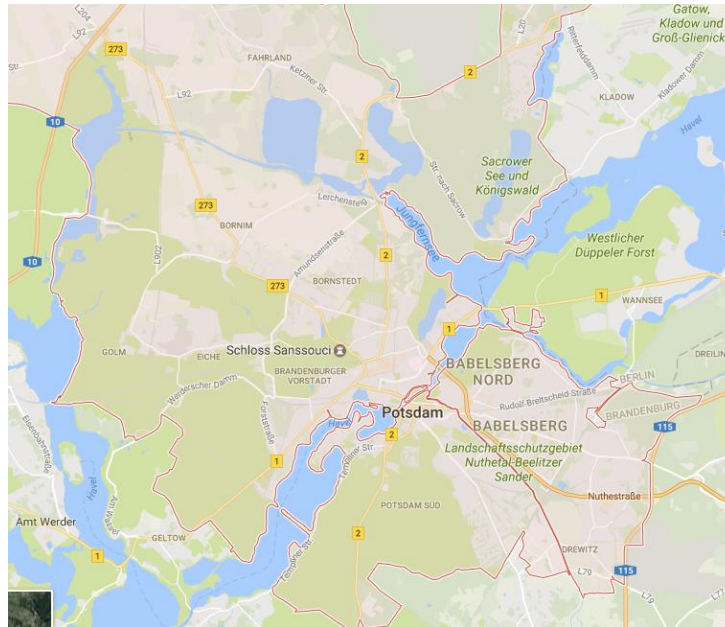
Source: Appleyard, D., Gerson, S., Lintell, M. (1981). Liveable Streets. University of California Press Berkley. Los Angeles, London.

Introduction of case studies (mid size cities)

Canberra, Australia



Potsdam, Germany



Source: Google Maps 2017

Environmental condition



27th March 2017
Monday



28th March 2017
Tuesday



5th April 2017
Wednesday



31st March 2017
Friday



8th April 2017
Saturday



12th May 2017
Friday



15th May 2017
Monday



16th May 2017
Tuesday



17th May 2017
Wednesday



19th May 2017
Friday



27th May 2017
Saturday



21st May 2017
Sunday


Little wind, noise level between 58- 78 db, shady and sunny spots


Getting a feeling for space




Title: Canberra City Centre

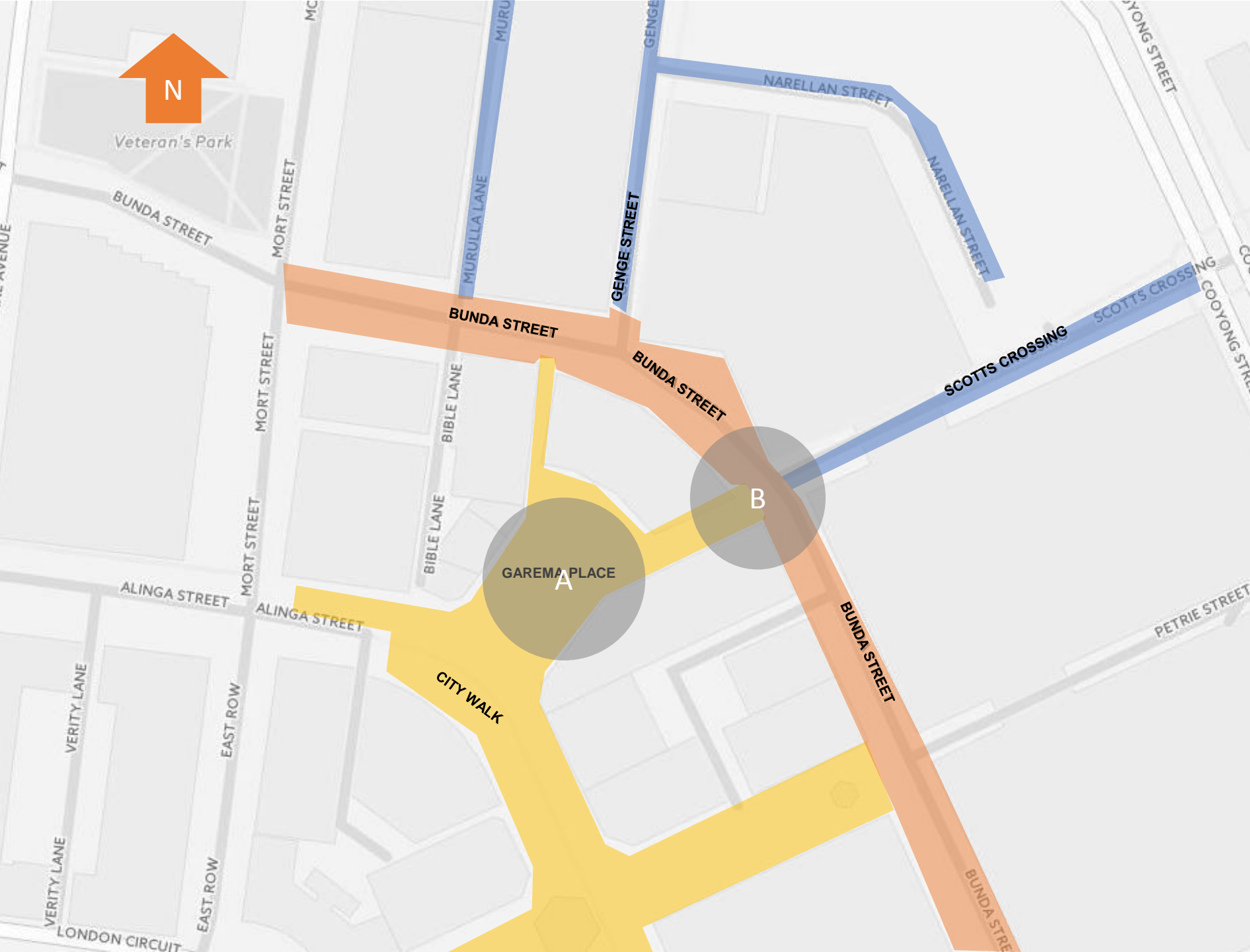
Legend

 Street with slow moving vehicles

 Shared space

 Pedestrian zone

 Pilot spots A & B



Scale: 1:2500

Source: own illustration, based on CartoDB

Date: 28th August 2017

Place: Canberra, Australia



Academy Club

Bible Ln

Murulla Ln

Bundra St

Garema Pl

Genge St

Bundra St

Google



Title: Pavement types in public space



Cobble stone footpath
mimic pavement painted



stone mimic pavement grey



Pattern mix of sealed surfaces



Stairs



Permeable tree surface



Cobble stone footpath
mimic pavement grey



Cobble stone mimic pavement



Chess board pavement

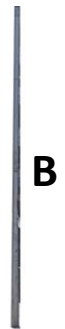
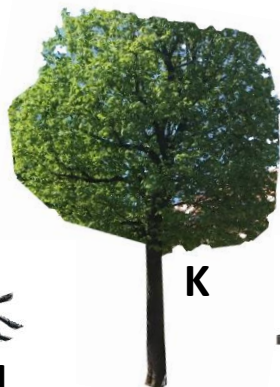
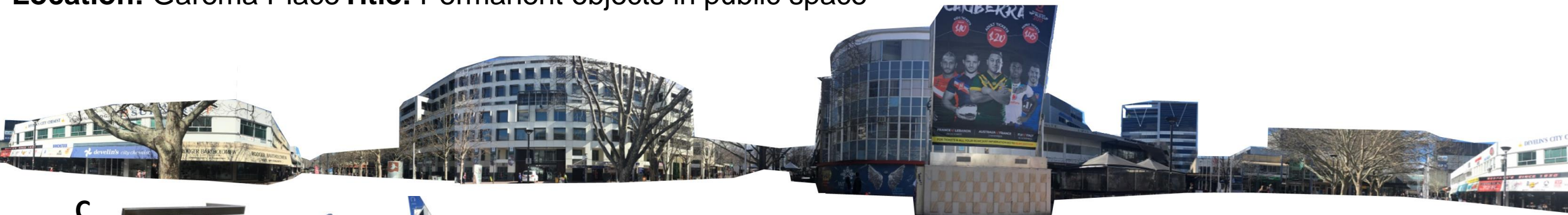


Mosaic





Location: Garema Place **Title:** Permanent objects in public space



Way finding sign



Tree



Lantern type 1

Lantern type 2 with Wifi

Lantern type 3

Flag pole

Surveillance Camera type 1



Bollard type 2



Drinking fountain



Fire hydrant



Sign sculpture



Bin



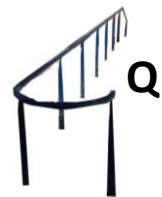
Surveillance Camera type 2



Poetry sculpture



Screen



Hand rail



Bollard type 1



Water fountain



II

Seating, fence & under cover



MM

Milk trays



EE



Seating, tables & boards



FF

Billboard



SS

Shopping trolley



CC

Planter boxes



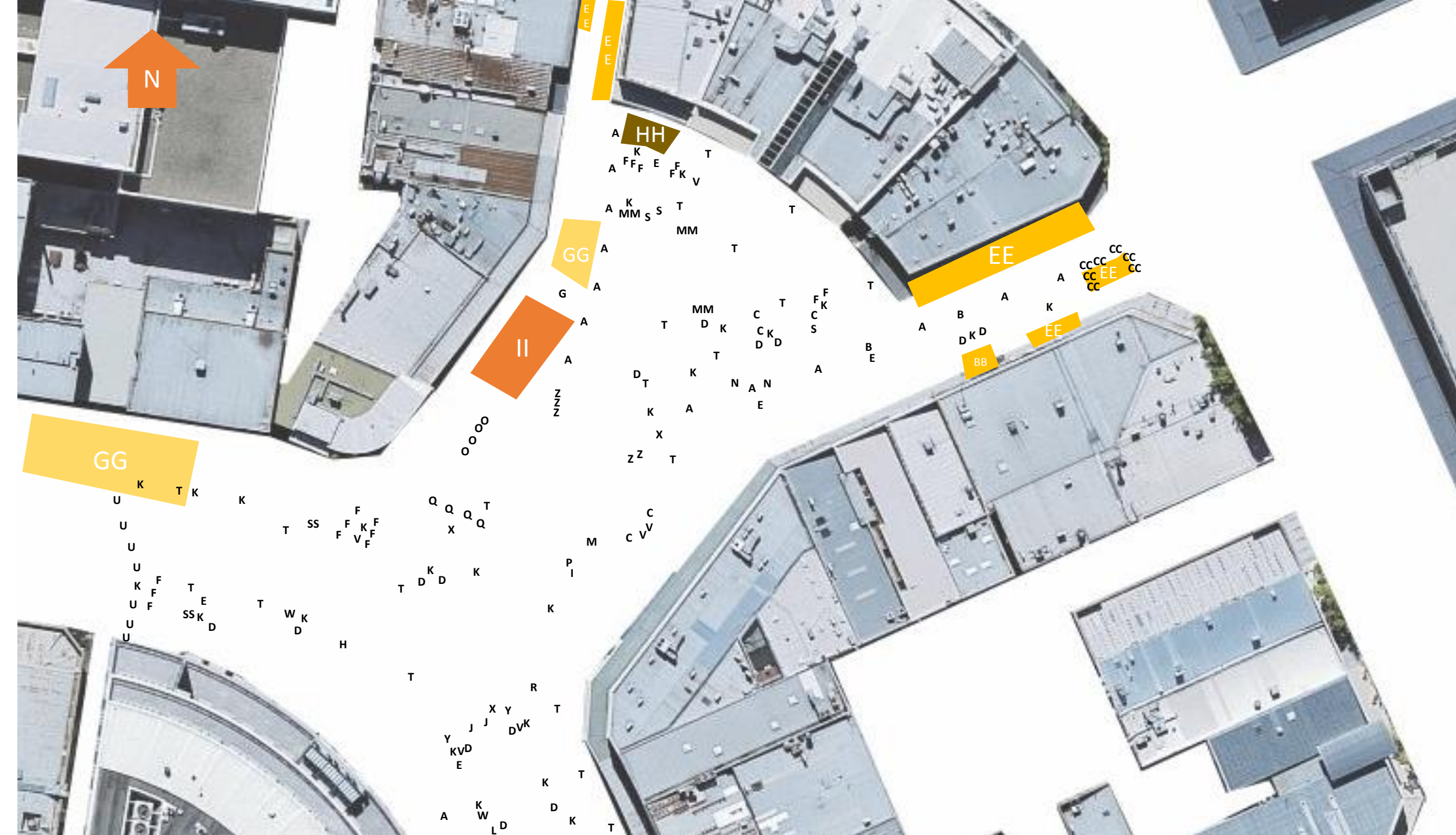
GG

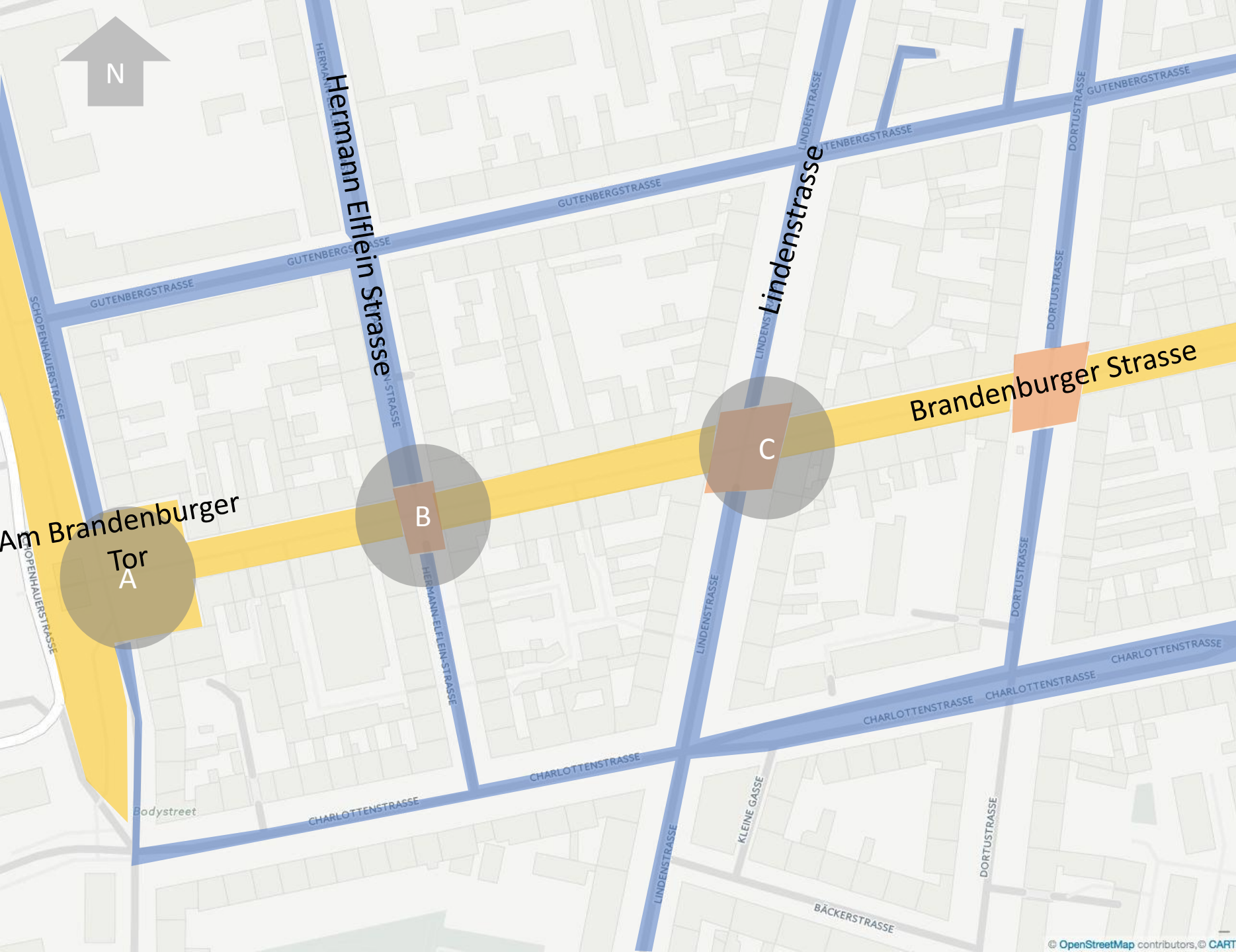
Seating, fence & umbrella



HH


Seating under cover





Title: Potsdam City Centre

Legend

 Street with slow moving vehicles

 Shared space

 Pedestrian zone

 Pilot spots Section A, B & C

Scale: 1:2500

Source: own illustration, map by Carto DB

Date: 15th February 2017

Place: Potsdam, Germany

DAS EIS · CAFÉ Am
Brandenburger Tor



Brandenburger Tor



Brandenburger Str.

Brandenburger Str.

Hotel Brandenburger
Tor Potsdam



N



Title: Pavement types in public space



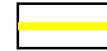
Mosaic



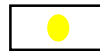
Cobble stone
pavement



Cobble stone footpath
pavement



Curbstone



Bicycle lane
demarcation



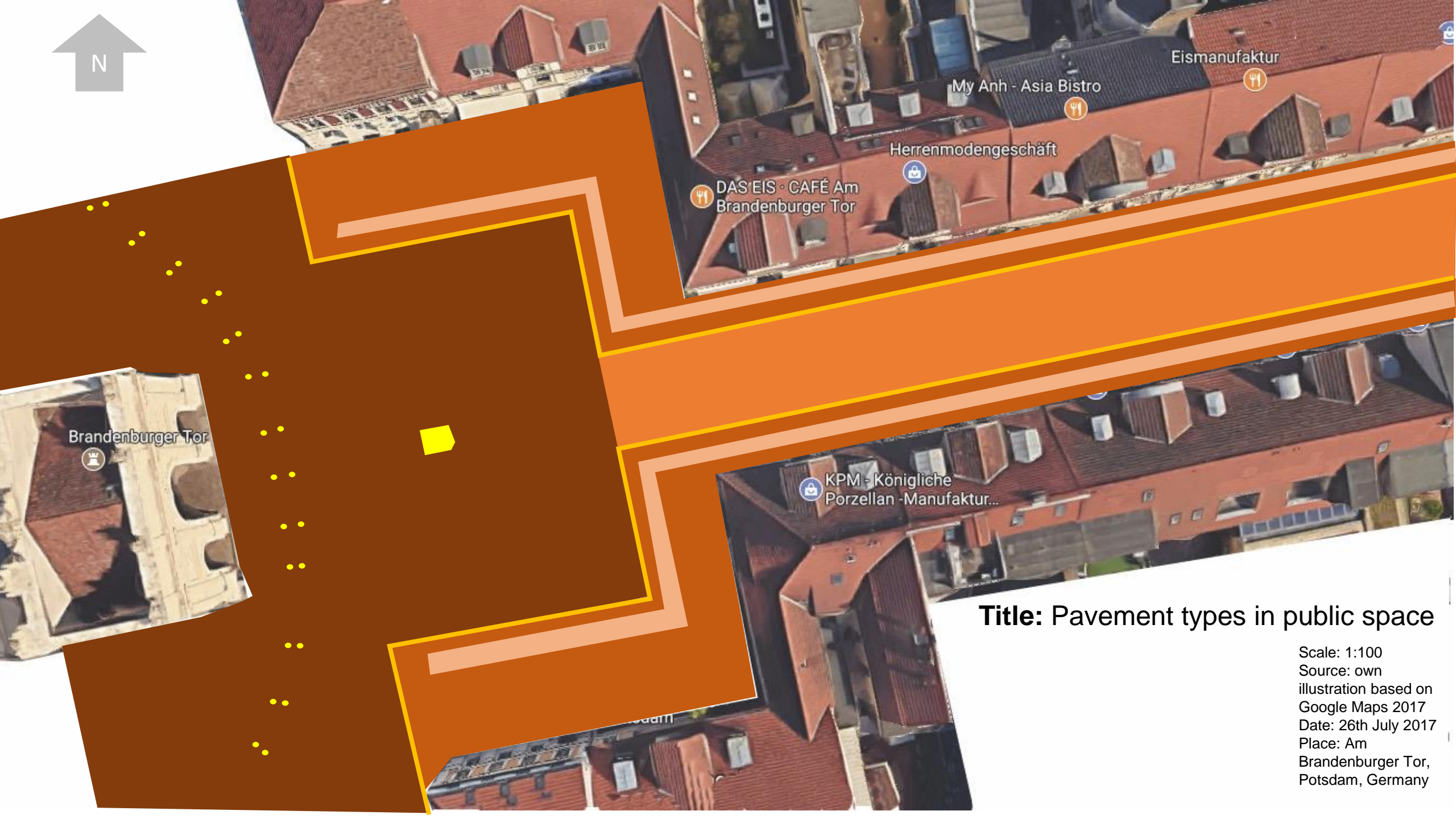
Asphalt & Cobble stone mix
pavement



Cobble stone footpath
pavement

Pattern mix of sealed surfaces





Title: Pavement types in public space

Scale: 1:100

Source: own

illustration based on
Google Maps 2017

Date: 26th July 2017

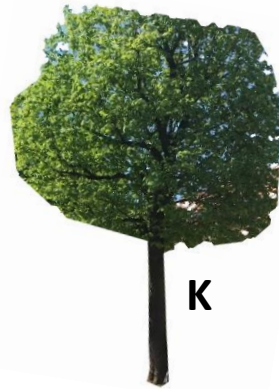
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

Location: Am Brandenburger Tor

Title: Permanent objects in public space



H Way Findings
Signage



K
Tree



S
Bench type 3



G
Signage



B
Flag pole



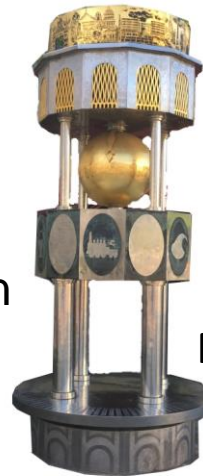
Q
History of
Water fountain
sign



P
Water fountain



O
History of Bell
play clock sign



N
Bell play clock



D
Bench type 2



E
Bin



M
Lantern
type 2



A
Lantern
type 1

Location: Am Brandenburger Tor

Title: Temporary objects in public space



FF
Billboard



AA
Umbrella

EE



Seating and tables



BB

Chairs, tables and umbrella



CC

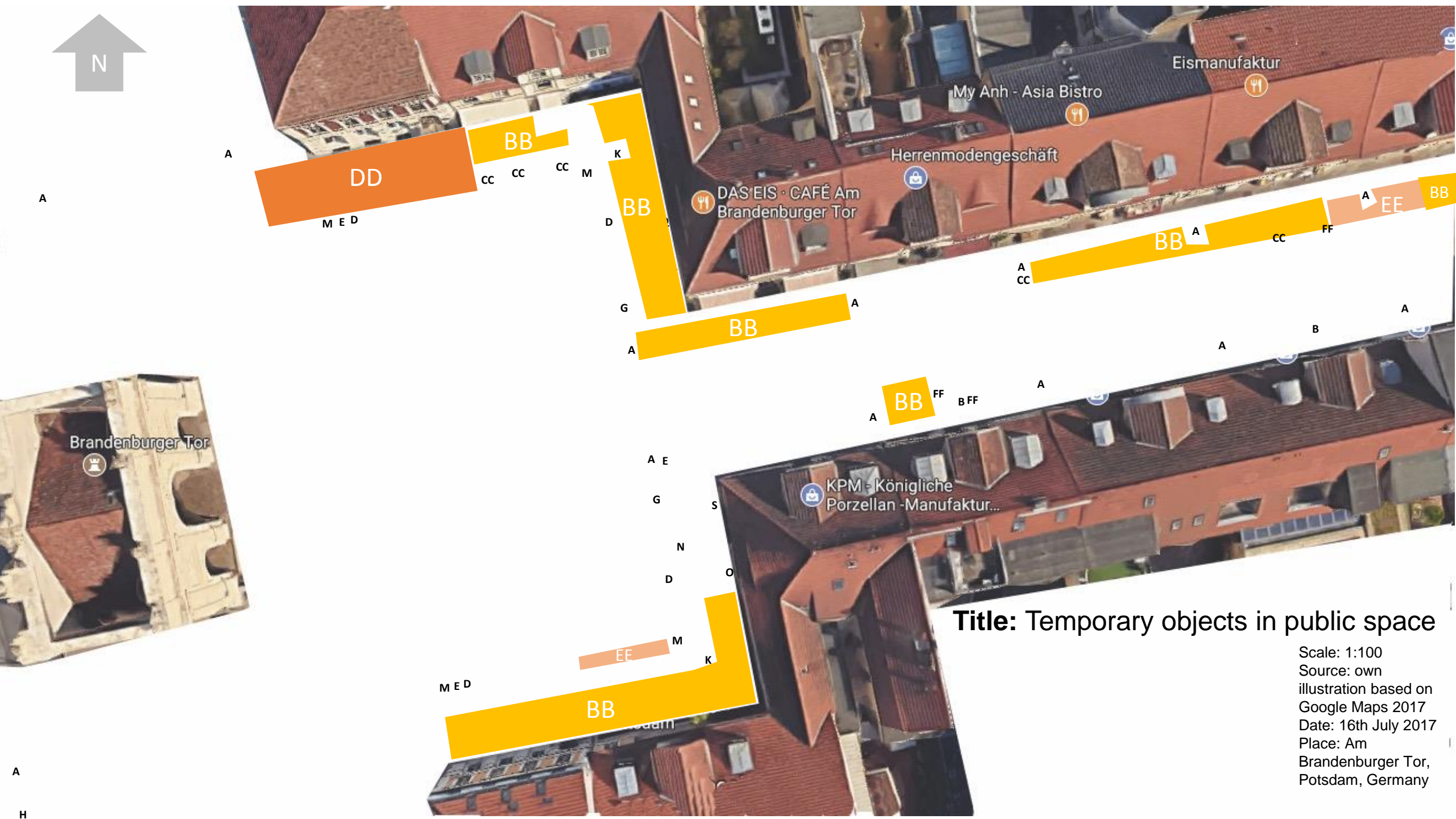
Planter boxes



DD

Construction fence



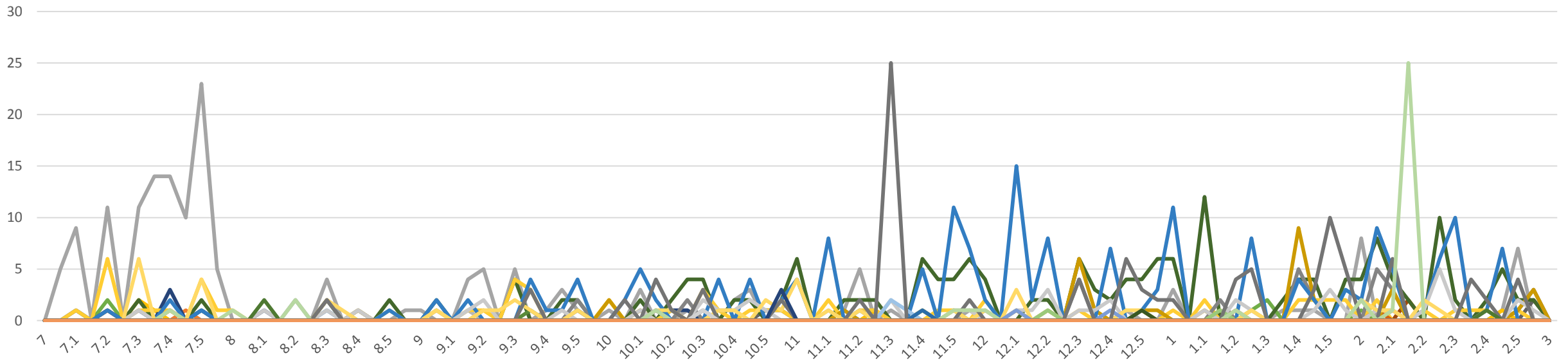


Title: Temporary objects in public space

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 16th July 2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

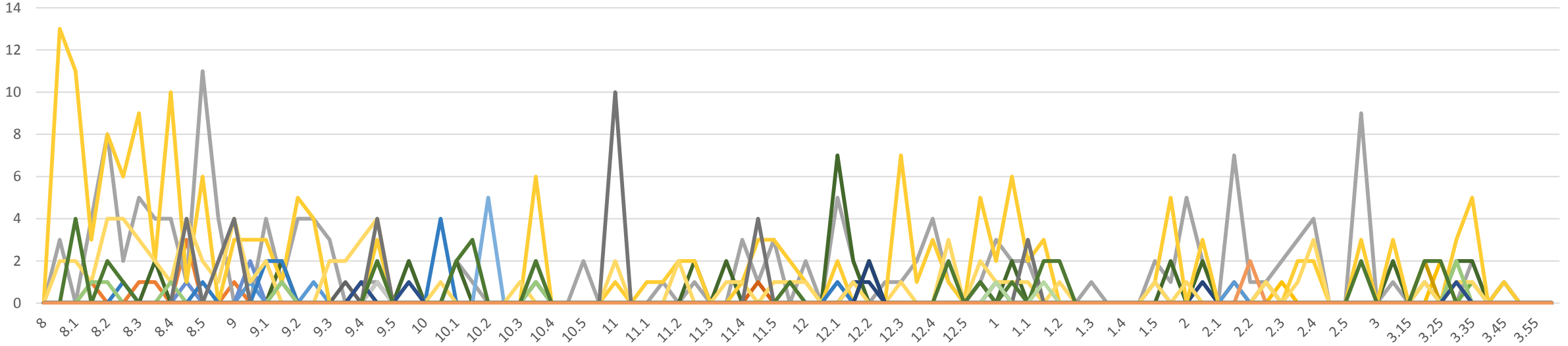
?

Potsdam Monday



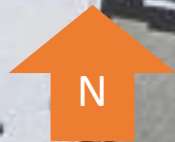
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|
| Vertigo | Car/ bike racing if alone | Bicycling | Jumping/ twisting | Skateboarding |
| Scooter | Jogging/ running | Dancing | Walking aid | Walking aid |
| Simulation | Affection/ compassion | Daydreams | Fantasy | Imagination |
| Listening to music | Art project | Flower arranging | Watching films | Novels/ reading |
| Travel/ tourism | Photography | Shopping/ windowshopping | Needlework/ quilting | Night out fun |
| Festival, Carnivals, Mardi Gras | dog walker | play on digital device/ virtual reality | Costume | Construction |
| Woodwork | Gardening | Toys | Other pets walking | Yoga/ Thai Chi |
| Collecting | Backpacking | Role play (cooking, hotessing, getting laid) | Wedding | Wedding |
| Chance | Playing with birds/ animals | Bird watching | Crosswords | Joking |
| Parties | Gambling (card games) | Play with objects | Speech play | Bars / taverns |
| Magic tricks | Playing the piano | Playing music | Playing voices | Lotteries |
| Other: | Other: | Competition | Collections | Car/ bike racing |
| Ball games (soccer, cricket etc.) | Board games | Ground games | Arm wrestling | Card games |
| Martial arts | Drinking | Street luge | | |

Canberra Monday



- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|
| Vertigo | Car/ bike racing if alone | Bicycling | Jumping/ twisting | Skateboarding |
| Scooter | Jogging/ running | Dancing | Walking aid | Walking aid |
| Simulation | Affection/ compassion | Daydreams | Fantasy | Imagination |
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| Magic tricks | Playing the piano | Playing music | Playing voices | Lotteries |
| Other: | Other: | Competition | Collections | Car/ bike racing |
| Ball games (soccer, cricket etc.) | Board games | Ground games | Arm wrestling | Card games |
| Martial arts | Drinking | Street luge | | |





Title: Movement in public space

Scale: 1:100

Source: own

illustration based on

Google Maps 2017

Date: 4th September

2017

Place: Garema Place

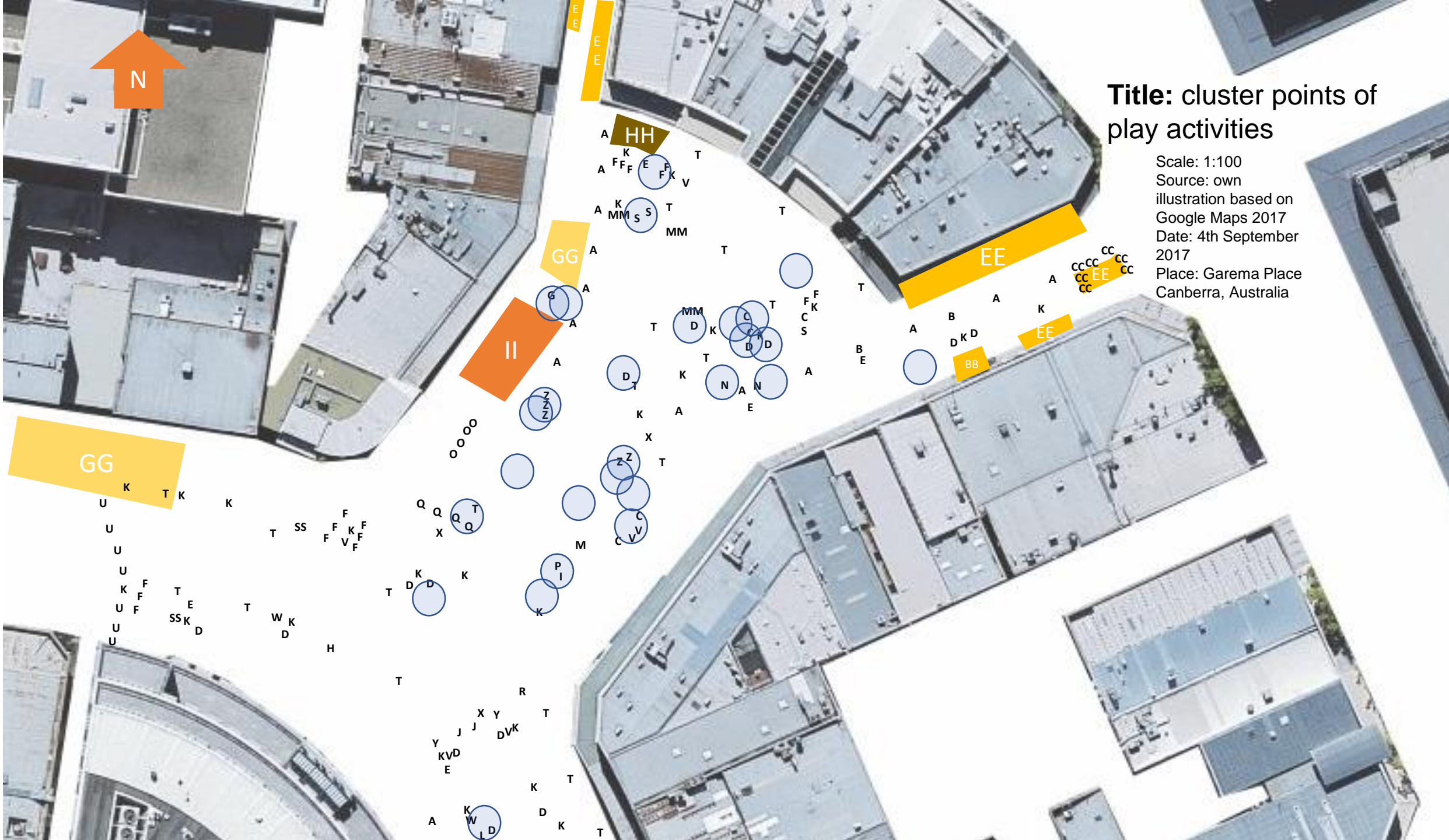
Canberra, Australia

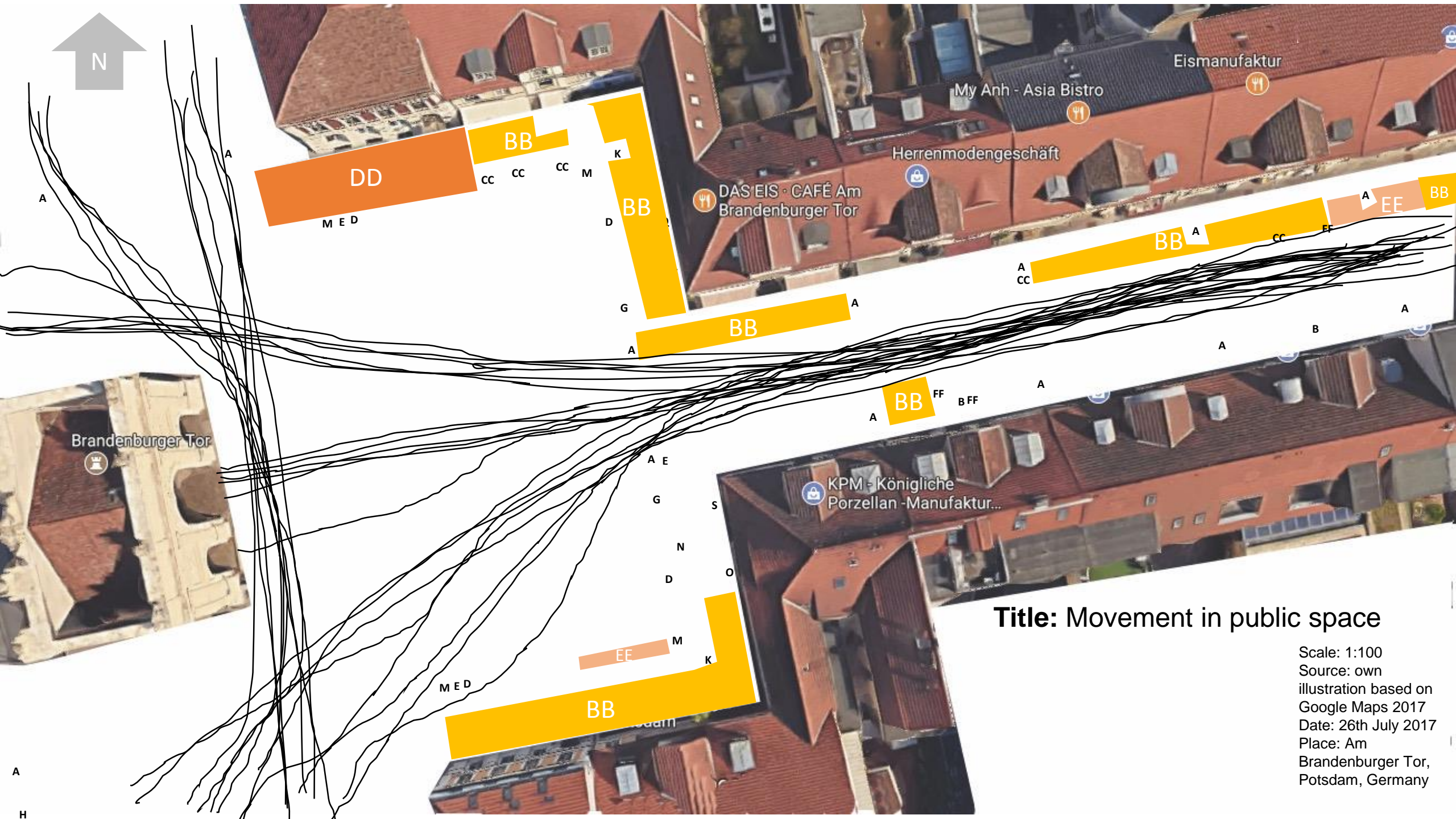




Title: cluster points of play activities

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 4th September
2017
Place: Garema Place
Canberra, Australia





Title: Movement in public space

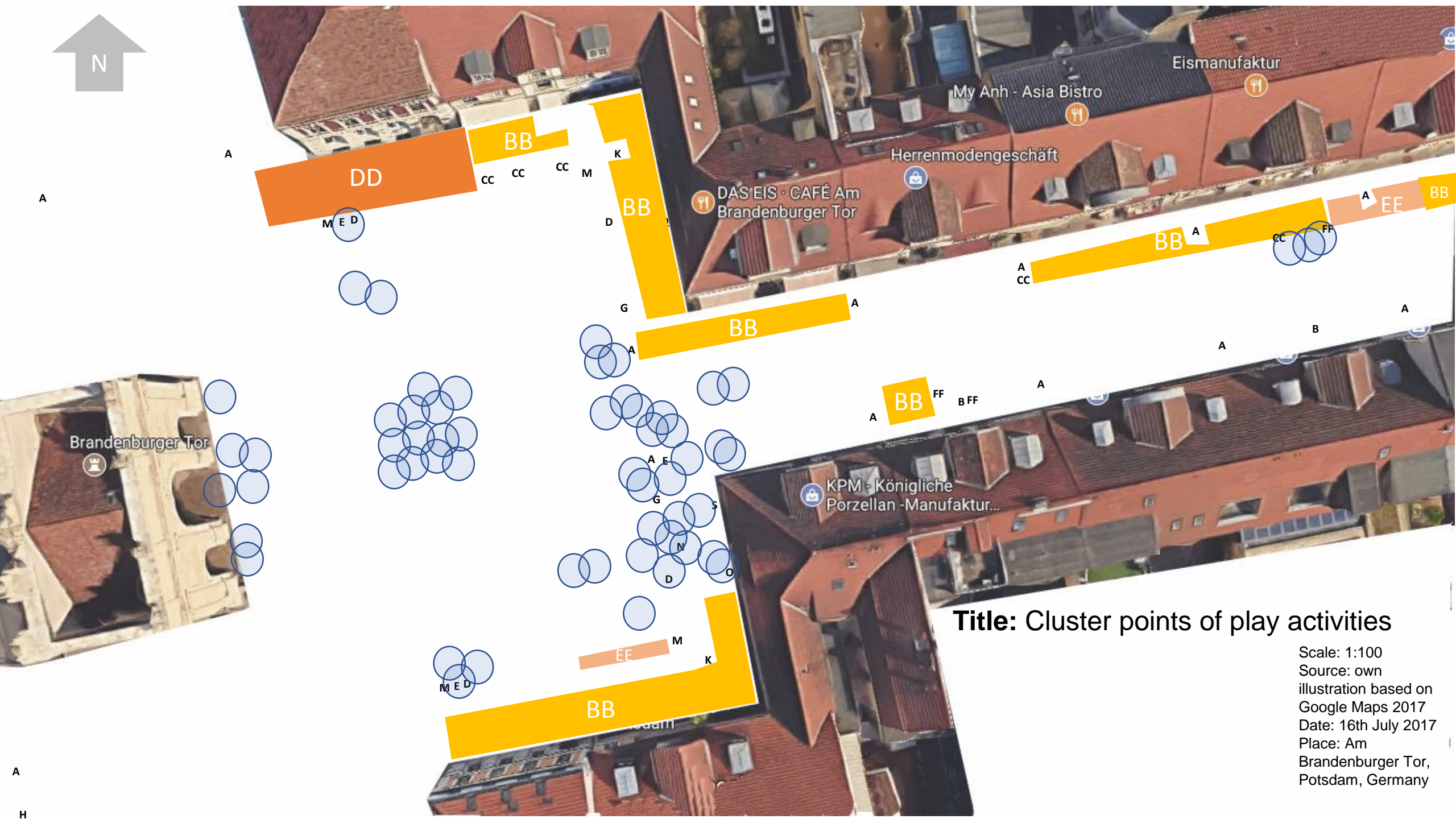
Scale: 1:100

Source: own

illustration based on
Google Maps 2017

Date: 26th July 2017

Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

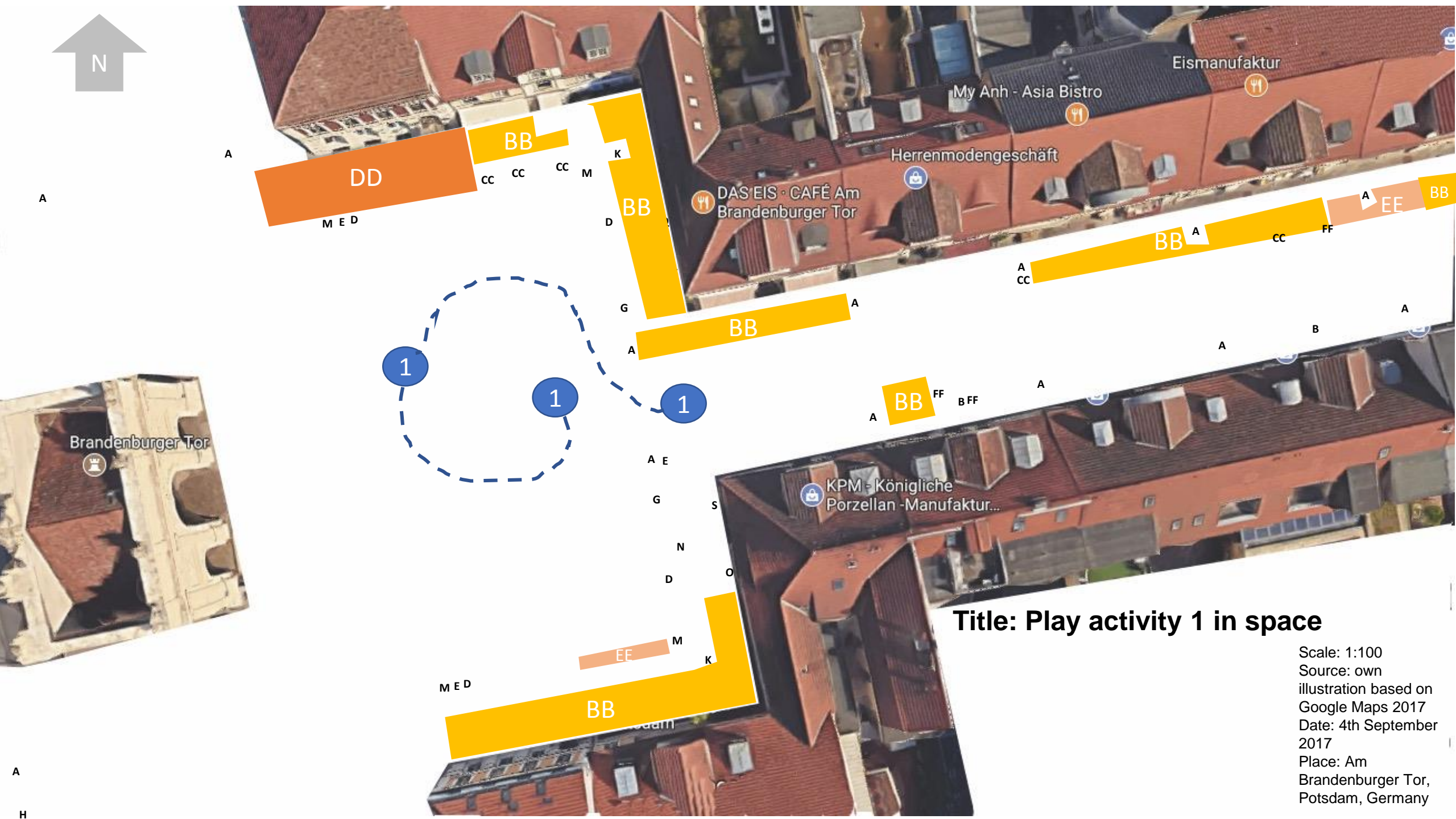


Title: Cluster points of play activities

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 16th July 2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

Play activity 1: 16th May 2017 3.04 pm





Title: Play activity 1 in space

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 4th September
2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

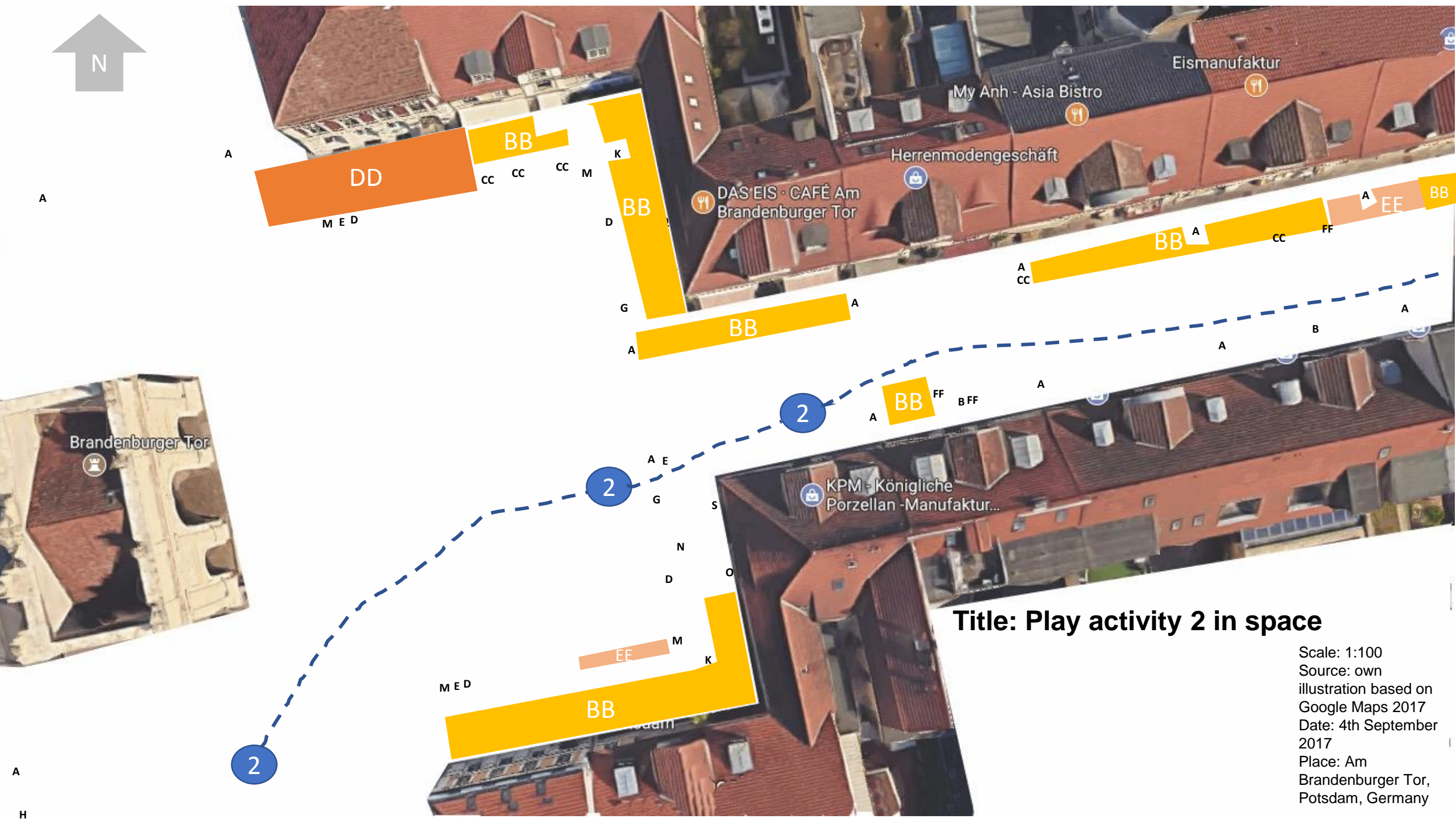
Play activity 1 in space

Criteria	Description
Play activity Potsdam	Vertigo Girl runs around and catches bubbles, starts from the Brandenburger Strasse towards the square and around the bubble creator.
Space / environmental implication	The activity took place in a vehicle free space, with many pedestrians around. In order to unfold, the activity required sufficient space for independent mobility and stable weather conditions. Spectators witnessed the activity from coffee shops, benches and were standing at the fringe of the square. The space was empty, but a change in pavement (the mosaic) became the set up point for the bubble creator. He chose to set up in the direction of the pedestrian zone. The Brandenburger gate provides an eye pleasing setback for the activity.
Time	16 th May 2017 3.04 pm – 3.06 pm / 2 minutes
Micro climate* (wind/ sun/ trees/ water)	Given that the weather condition was overcast- overshadowing was not relevant to the activity.
Objects/ props/ features*	Except the mosaic and the gate, material was required to create the bubbles. The bubble creator temporary consumed space in order to enable a temporary production of space for the target group as well as the spectators.
Self- congestion Social contagious/ triangulation*	The dynamic interaction of actors created a temporary space where social cohesiveness could occur. The activity enabled passive and active activities: passive spectators from the outside dining areas, sitting on benches and standing around the fringe area took part through smiling, joking, stopping watching while eating ice-cream. The most active actors were children, however occasionally adults participated too.
Food and other economic implication (retail)*	donation based activities by parents, to enable joyful activities for their children.

*criteria based on Whyte (1980). The Social life of Small Urban Spaces.

Play activity 2: 16th May 2017 3.06 pm



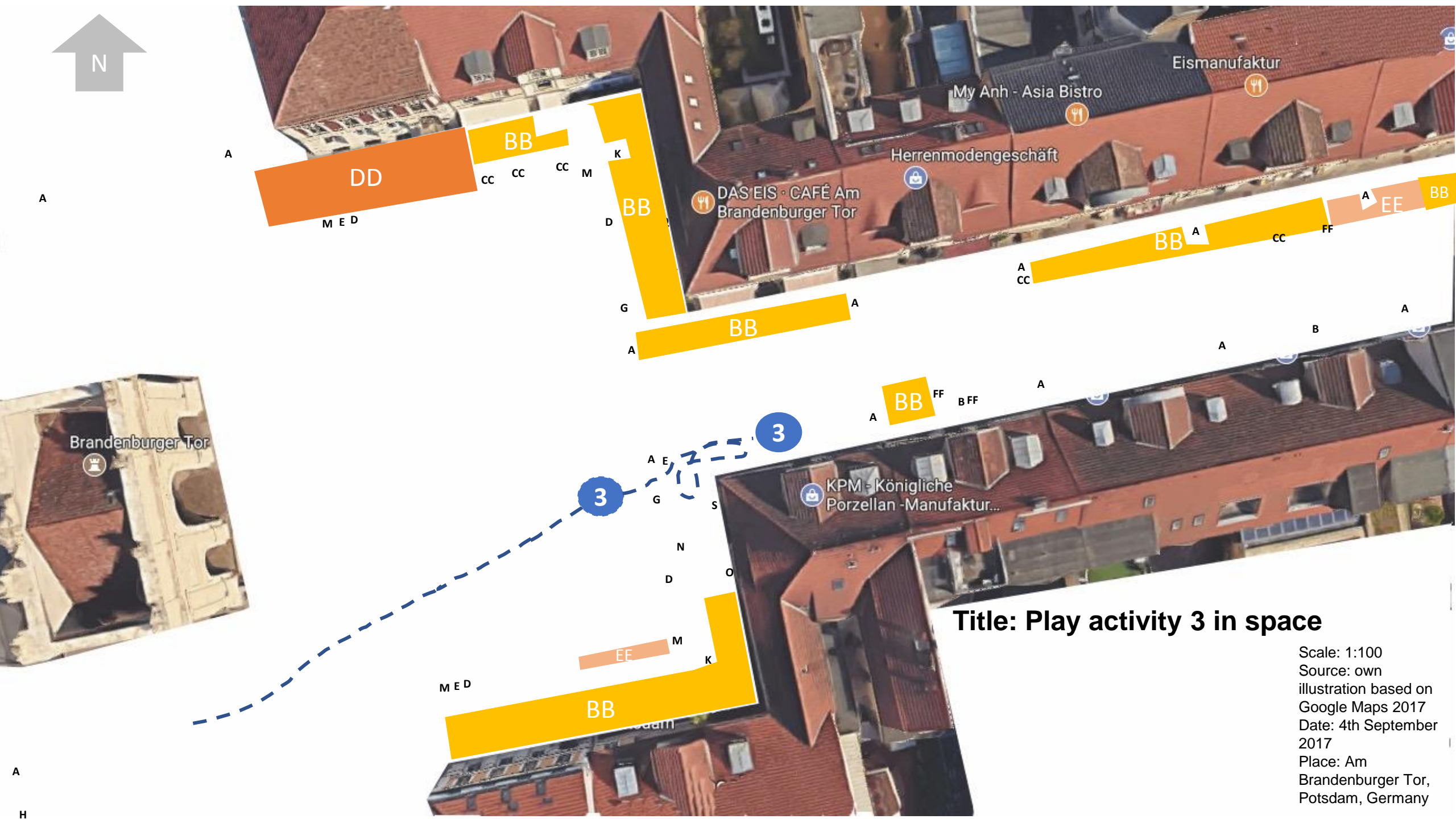


Title: Play activity 2 in space

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 4th September
2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

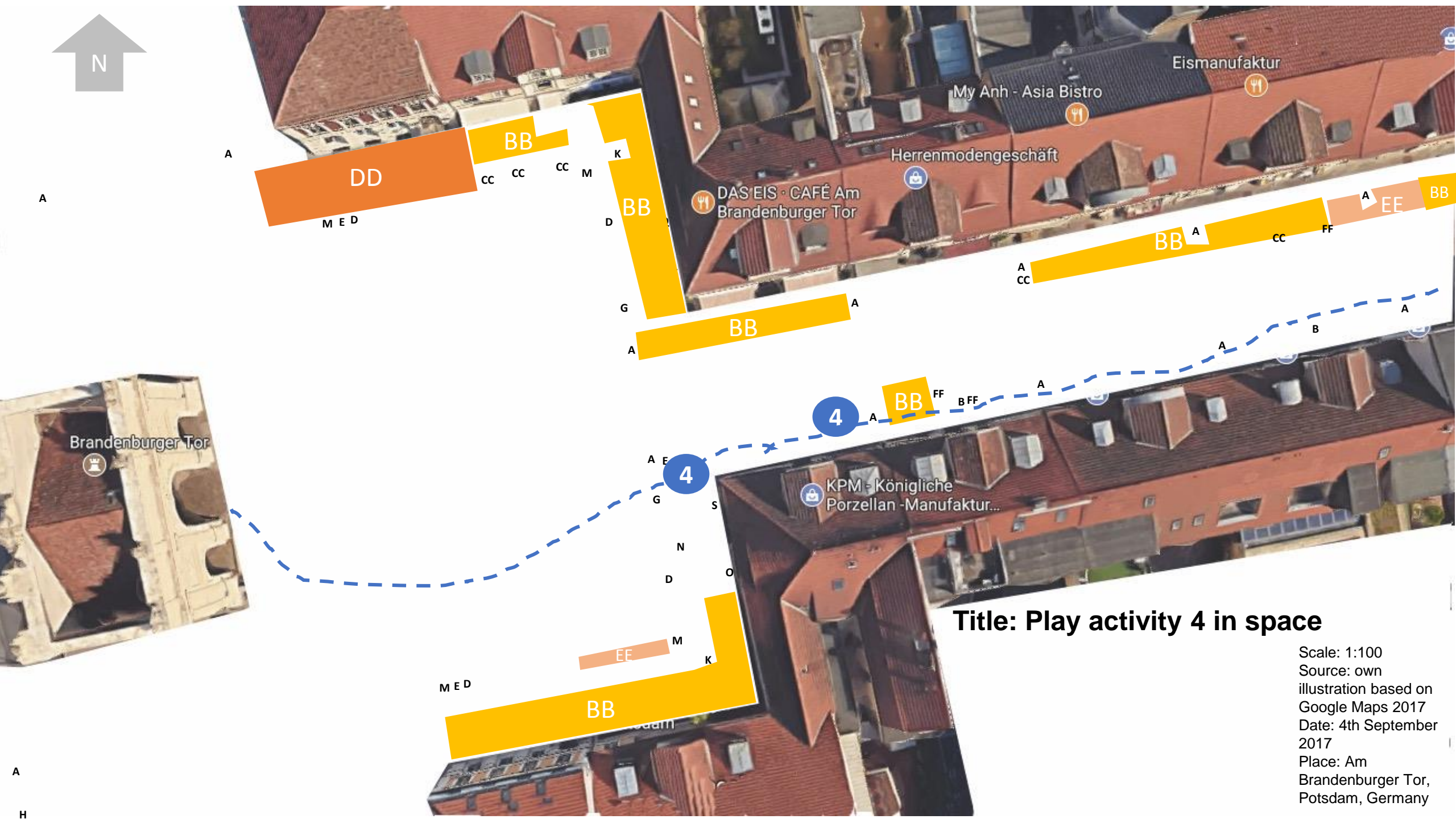
Play activity 3 and 4: 12th May 2017 4.29 pm





Title: Play activity 3 in space

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 4th September
2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany



Title: Play activity 4 in space

Scale: 1:100
Source: own
illustration based on
Google Maps 2017
Date: 4th September
2017
Place: Am
Brandenburger Tor,
Potsdam, Germany

Reflection on the pilot

Observation on play activities: vehicles interrupt play



Cycling, skateboarding can become a play activity



Cycling, skateboarding can become a play activity



The edge / corner and thresholds are more important than you might think!



Free open space and objects (space features) can support play













Playing with birds/ bird watching/ animals



Listening to music



Digital device/ virtual reality (smart phone)



Is production of a non-physical space a social quality in public space?



+



=



No production of space → no physical social contact

Discussion

- Play happens and finds a way
- Seek validation of definition of play activities as an urban experience and its operationalisation in public space

Thank you!

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