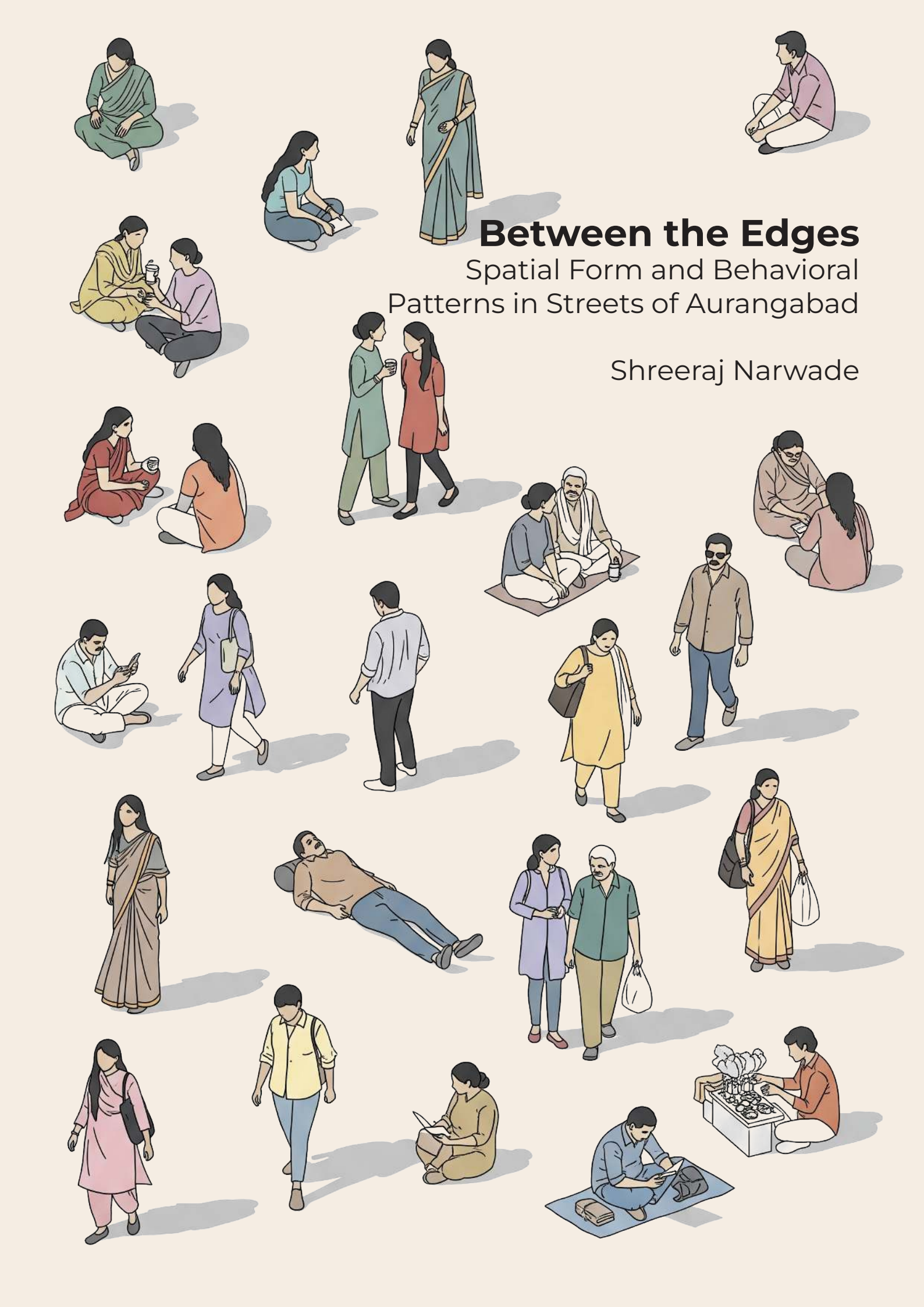

Between the Edges

Spatial Form and Behavioral Patterns in Streets of Aurangabad

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2025

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Between the Edges

Spatial Form and Behavioral Patterns
in Streets of Aurangabad



Shreeraj Narwade
Final Year Dissertation
School of Environment and Architecture
2025-26

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ABSTRACT \ WHY STREETS?

This thesis explores the intricate relationship between the architectural form of streets and human behavior, questioning how the built configuration of streets influences the rhythms of everyday life. Streets, often reduced to channels of vehicular movement in contemporary planning, are in fact complex urban spaces where social, economic, and cultural life unfolds. They are sites of encounter, negotiation, and adaptation, spaces where architecture and behavior continuously shape one another.

The research investigates how the form of the street, i.e. its width, edge conditions, thresholds, and materiality, lends itself to various human behaviors, and conversely, how everyday patterns of occupation and movement reconfigure the use and meaning of the street. Through observations across different street types in Aurangabad, ranging from dense market edges to quiet residential lanes, the study decodes how architectural affordances, such as plinths, awnings, compound walls, and medians, give rise to distinct behavioral patterns of pausing, walking, gathering, or vending.

The study situates streets not merely as transit corridors but as transactional/urban spaces that hold the capacity to enable diverse human interactions. It examines how the affordances of form support or limit actions, how a low plinth invites sitting, how a shaded awning encourages lingering, or how a blank wall accelerates walking. These subtle spatial cues shape patterns of visibility, comfort, and safety that vary with gender, age, and class.

CONTENTS

1. Understanding Form & Behavior 12
   - 1.1 Introduction
   - 1.2 Research Question
   - 1.3 Research Objectives
   - 1.4 Research Aim

2. Theoretical Framework 16
   - 2.1 Operational Concepts
   - 2.2 Comprehending Form
   - 2.3 Comprehending Behavior
   - 2.4 Comprehending Affordances
   - 2.5 Comprehending Transactions

3. Research Methodology 22
   - 3.1 Site Delineation
   - 3.2 Framework
   - 3.3 Methodology

4. Field Work 28
   - 4.1 Market Street – Hazrat Nizamuddin Road, Shahgunj
   - 4.2 Residential Street – Trimurti Chowk Road, Jawahar Colony
   - 4.3 Narrow Lane – Usmanpura
   - 4.4 Highway Edge Market – Dargah Road, Garkheda

5. Research Findings 84
   - 5.1 Conclusion
   - 5.2 Architectural Use

6. Bibliography 92

1.
Understanding Form & Behavior

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Walking through the streets of Indian cities has always been a deeply sensory experience for me, the sound of vendors calling out prices, the smell of food being fried on the roadside, the sight of people crossing through moving traffic, and the constant negotiation between vehicles and pedestrians. These everyday encounters made me realize that the street is far more than just a channel for movement; it is a living, adaptive space where the city breathes.

Over time, I began to notice how each street had its own rhythm and personality. A narrow lane between two compound walls felt silent and hurried, pushing people to walk faster and keep to themselves, while a street lined with shops felt open and engaging, inviting people to pause, browse, and interact. The physicality of the street, its width, edges, thresholds, and textures, seemed to shape the way people moved and behaved. Some spaces invited sitting, chatting, or waiting, while others subtly discouraged lingering.

During my visits to different parts of Aurangabad, I became increasingly curious about why certain streets feel alive and inclusive, while others feel intimidating or inert. Streets that appeared chaotic at first glance, full of vending carts, parked rickshaws, and scattered pedestrians, often held an unspoken order. Every element, from a low plinth to a shaded awning, carried meaning and purpose. Each surface afforded a particular use, to sit, to sell, to rest, to wait, to talk.

This realization deepened as I began to study how different users experienced the same street differently. A woman might feel unsafe in a dark, enclosed lane, while a child might see it as a shortcut to go home(I was that kid on my 3rd site). A worker might rest on a median wall, while a shopkeeper might extend his space onto the footpath to attract customers. The street was not a static form, it transformed constantly through these bodily and behavioral negotiations.

These everyday patterns revealed that the relationship between architectural form and human behavior is not incidental but fundamental to how cities function. Streets are dynamic systems of interaction, transaction, and adaptation, shaped equally by built form and human action. This thesis stems from that realization: to understand how the architectural form of a street lends itself to the user, and how human behavior, in turn, redefines and animates the street.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the architectural form of different streets lend itself to human behavior, and what is the relationship between spatial configuration and everyday patterns of use?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify types of street spatialities (based on edge form, width, and adjacency).
- To observe behavioral patterns across gender, age, and class within these spatialities.
- To quantify the affordances (seating, vending, shading, resting, waiting) offered by architectural elements.
- To analyze how edge conditions (built forms, plinths, walls, openings) affect movement, pause, and interaction.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM

To decipher the relationship between street form and human behavior by studying how different architectural configurations of edges, widths, and adjacencies afford different kinds of human activities, movement patterns, and social interactions.

2.
Theoretical Framework

2.1 OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

- Affordance – what the form enables: e.g., plinths afford sitting.
- Transactional capacity – how the street allows exchanges (economic, social, spatial).
- Porosity – degree of permeability or openness of the street edge.
- Density & Intensity – number of users and activities within a given stretch or time.
- Temporal variation – how behavior and use change from morning to night.

2.2 COMPREHENDING FORM

Architectural form is not merely a physical construct but a relational framework that mediates between space, time, and human presence. As Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980) suggests, form gives meaning to space by structuring experience, it anchors human activity and allows a sense of "dwelling" within the urban environment. In the context of the street, form becomes both a container and a catalyst: it directs movement, affords pauses, and defines how people inhabit everyday urban life.

Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson (1984), in The Social Logic of Space, explain that spatial configuration, the arrangement of built and open elements, inherently shapes the patterns of movement and encounter. A narrow street enclosed by continuous walls, for instance, encourages faster linear motion, while one lined with shops, shaded plinths, and porous thresholds induces slower rhythms, pauses, and social transactions. Thus, the physical form is not a passive backdrop but an active participant in human behavior.

Similarly, Amos Rapoport (1982) highlights that form encodes cultural and behavioral intentions, acting as a non-verbal language that guides action and expectation. The plinths, steps, and verandahs are not just architectural details, they are cues that signal where one can sit, linger, or interact. These micro-forms build what J.J. Gibson (1979) describes as affordances: the perceived possibilities for action embedded in spatial form.

Form also operates temporally. As Henri Lefebvre (2004) notes, space unfolds in rhythms, morning vehicular flows, afternoon vending, evening gatherings, transforming the same physical configuration into different experiential realities. The street, therefore, possesses a rhythmic elasticity: its form accommodates changing patterns of use across time.

Architectural form, then, extends beyond geometry or materiality. It is the scaffold for human behavior, regulating, affording, and transforming everyday urban life. As Hillier (1996) later argues, form generates the "social field" of the city, shaping how people see, move, and engage with one another.

2.3 COMPREHENDING BEHAVIOR

Human behavior within space is a product of continuous negotiation between physical form, perception, and social conditioning. As Amos Rapoport (1977) asserts, behavior in built environments is not arbitrary but patterned, emerging from cultural codes, environmental cues, and the meanings attached to spatial settings. Behavior, therefore, becomes both a response to form and a generator of spatial identity.

In the context of the street, behavior is an observable manifestation of how people perceive and appropriate architectural form. Edward T. Hall's (1966) concept of proxemics, the study of personal and social distances, illustrates how people instinctively regulate their movement and positioning in public space depending on enclosure, visibility, and social comfort. For instance, in a market street, the proximity between vendors, buyers, and passersby is fluid and negotiated: physical closeness is normalized through cultural familiarity and the transactional rhythm of the marketplace. In contrast, the same degree of proximity in a quiet residential lane would feel intrusive, even inappropriate.

Behavior is also shaped by what Gibson (1979) terms as 'perceived affordances': the recognition of what the environment allows one to do. A low plinth invites sitting, a shaded tree canopy suggests resting, while a blank compound wall affords walking past without pause. Behavior, therefore, is a reflection of the reading of spatial cues, how people interpret form as enabling or constraining action.

From an architectural psychology perspective, David Canter (1977) argues that behavior in space is relational, determined by the triad of place, activity, and meaning. A street is not only where movement occurs but also where meanings are exchanged and roles enacted: vendors perform commerce, pedestrians perform mobility, and bystanders perform observation. Each behavioral role is embedded in spatial and social hierarchies.

Moreover, Henri Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the production of space highlights that behavior is both shaped by and shaping of spatial form, it is through repeated bodily practices that space acquires meaning. The act of pausing at a shop threshold, leaning against a wall, or crossing through moving traffic repeatedly engraves these behaviors into the collective choreography of the street. Over time, these practices transform the street from a designed space into a lived space, one imbued with memory, familiarity, and routine.

Behavior, thus, acts as a mirror through which the success or failure of form can be understood. As Jan Gehl (2011) emphasizes, "life between buildings" depends on how urban form invites people to walk, stay, and interact. Observing behavior allows one to decode not just how people use space, but how they feel and belong within it.

2.4 COMPREHENDING AFFORDANCE

The concept of affordance provides a crucial bridge between architectural form and human behavior. Coined by James J. Gibson (1979) in The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception, the term refers to the actionable possibilities that an environment offers to an individual, not through explicit instruction, but through perception and bodily intuition. An affordance exists in the relationship between the user and the form: a low wall affords sitting, a shaded edge affords pausing, and a broad pavement affords vending or gathering.

In architectural discourse, affordances shift the focus from what space is to what space allows. As Keller and Keller (1996) describe, affordances are "the latent functions of form", the uses implied but not prescribed by design. This lens is particularly significant in the study of streets, where informal and spontaneous activities often arise not from planned intention but from spatial opportunity. A plinth, a curb, or even a broken pavement becomes a stage for human adaptation and negotiation.

Affordances also depend on cultural and social conditioning. As Rapoport (1982) observes, people in different societies interpret spatial cues differently depending on shared norms and behavioral scripts. For instance, a median wall is not merely a separator between traffic lanes; it is read as a resting place, a waiting area for daily-wage laborers, and a site of informal exchange. Its physical dimensions, knee-height, shaded, continuous, communicate its usability to the local body. In contrast, a high compound wall of the same material does not afford sitting or gathering; it affords parking, visual privacy, and faster movement alongside it.

Gibson's notion of affordance inherently blurs the distinction between designed and appropriated space. As Heft (1989) elaborates, affordances exist "prior to design intention", they are ecological properties perceived through bodily engagement. The act of sitting on a plinth, leaning against a shutter, or walking under a tree canopy demonstrates how users continuously reinterpret built form to meet their immediate needs. These everyday gestures reveal a mutual adaptability: the form affords action, and human behavior, in turn, reinforces or redefines that affordance.

In the Indian urban context, this reciprocal reading becomes even more layered due to the coexistence of formal and informal systems. The same street accommodates multiple readings of the same form: what affords vending to one user may afford resting or playing to another. Such multiplicity transforms the street into a performative landscape, a space that constantly negotiates between fixed form and fluid behavior.
Affordances thus operate as the fundamental link between architecture's physical reality and its social life. They help decode why some streets feel more "alive" than others, and why certain edges invite activity while others repel it.

2.5 COMPREHENDING TRANSACTIONS

Human behavior within urban environments is a dynamic response to the affordances, constraints, and social negotiations embedded within architectural form. Behavior, in this sense, is not simply an individual act but a spatially and socially situated performance, an unfolding of practices conditioned by the city's form, rhythms, and collective habits (Hillier, 1996). The street, as an architectural form, mediates bodily conduct through its configuration and affordances: a shaded plinth invites sitting; a narrow walled alley induces speed; an open bazaar encourages loitering and browsing. Thus, behavior is simultaneously produced by space and inscribed into it.

Rupali Gupte and Prasad Shetty (2018) extend this notion through their idea of "transactional capacity", where urban form's potential is defined by its ability to accommodate flows of bodies, commodities, and interactions. A street lined with compound walls restricts such flows, leading to transient, linear movement, while one lined with shopfronts produces lingering, negotiation, and exchange. Behavior, therefore, becomes a measure of the transactional performance of space, the extent to which people can dwell, pause, converse, or transact within it.

In this framework, the relationship between form and behavior is neither static nor deterministic but cyclical and adaptive. Behaviors modify spatial norms over time, as when a painter's bench-ladder transforms from work equipment to communal seating, redefining the function and meaning of the sidewalk (Gupte & Shetty, 2018, p. 27). These micro-adjustments, often born of necessity or habit, create a living feedback loop between architectural form and social practice.

Behavior on streets, then, becomes a negotiated choreography between design intention, material conditions, and human adaptation.

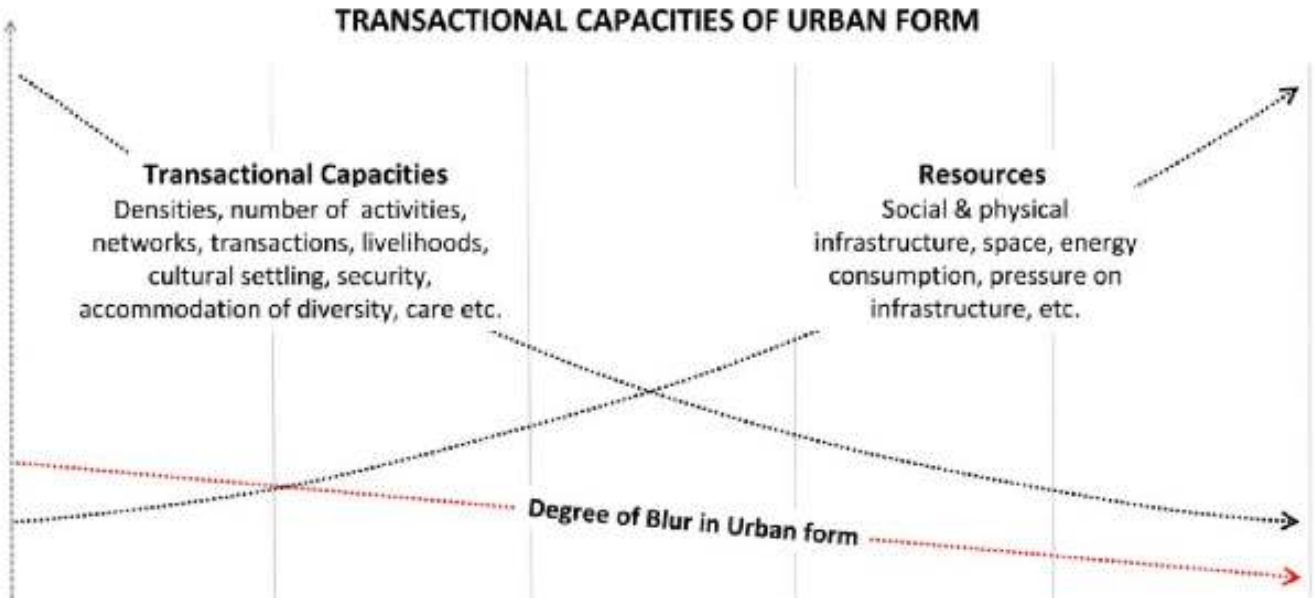


Fig. 1 - "Transactional Capacities of Urban Form" (Gupte & Shetty, 2018)

3.
Research Methodology

3.1. FIELD DELINEATION

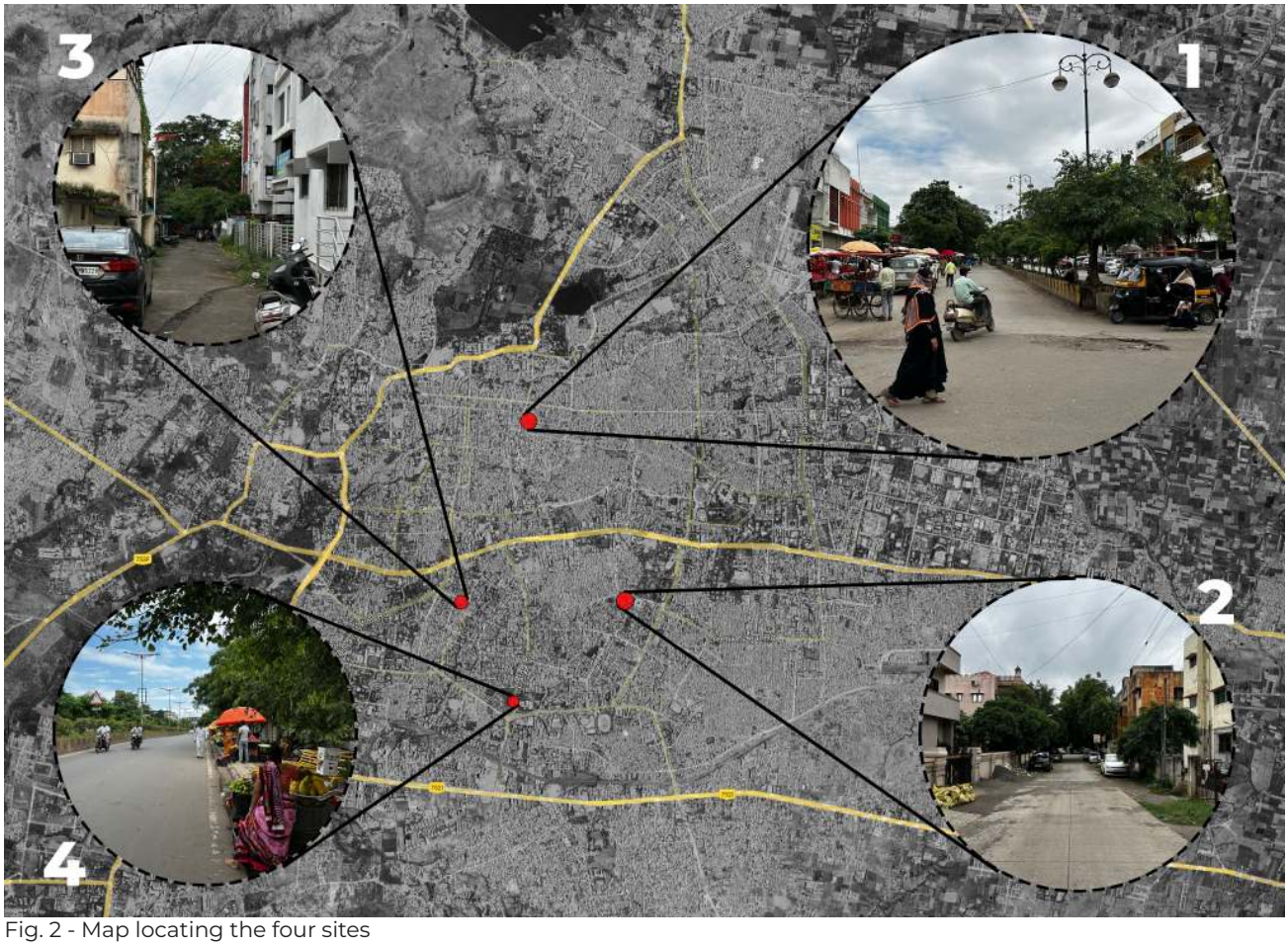


Fig. 2 - Map locating the four sites

RESEARCH SITES:

1. Hazrat Nizamuddin Rd, Shahgunj, Aurangabad
   - Edge Conditions - Market
   - Land Use - Public
2. Trimurti Chowk Rd (Internal), Jawahar Colony, Aurangabad
   - Edge Conditions - Walls with openings, front of building edge
   - Land Use - Private
3. Narrow Lane, Usmanpura, Aurangabad
   - Edge Conditions - Blank Walls, no openings, back of the building edge
   - Land Use - Private
4. Dargah Rd, Garkheda, Aurangabad
   - Edge Conditions - Market along a highway, heavy vehicular movement
   - Land Use - Public

The focus of this architecture thesis is to explore and understand how different street forms and edge conditions within Aurangabad shape and influence human behavior. The study aims to investigate how the architectural configuration of a street, its width, enclosure, materiality, and adjacency, lends itself to varied forms of occupation, movement, and interaction. By examining these streets, the thesis seeks to reveal how spatial form and human behavior are interdependent and how this relationship produces distinctive urban experiences.

The four selected streets, i.e. Hazrat Nizamuddin Road in Shahgunj, Trimurti Chowk Road in Jawahar Colony, a narrow lane in Usmanpura, and Dargah Road in Garkheda represent distinct spatial typologies within the same city, each embodying a specific social and spatial character.

Their selection is based on their differing edge conditions and land-use patterns, allowing for a comparative understanding of how physical form regulates public life.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Road, located in the dense commercial fabric of Shahgunj, is a public market street lined with shops, vendors, and continuous human activity throughout the day. Its edges are porous, allowing multiple transactions between the built and the street. In contrast, Trimurti Chowk Road, a residential internal street, is bounded by compound walls with intermittent openings, representing a private and controlled edge condition. The narrow lane in Usmanpura, enclosed by blank rear walls of buildings, creates an entirely different behavioral rhythm, fast movement, avoidance, and minimal lingering. Finally, Dargah Road in Garkheda, a market street along a highway, sits at the intersection of local pedestrian life and heavy vehicular flow, making it a space of constant negotiation and overlap.

By studying these contrasting streets, ranging from highly active public markets to quiet residential lanes, the thesis examines how architectural form (such as openness, enclosure, permeability, and vertical proportion) mediates human actions like walking, sitting, waiting, vending, and gathering. The analysis of these sites across different times of the day will reveal how varying degrees of publicness, safety, and spatial comfort manifest through behavior. Through this, the research aims to understand how the street's form not only accommodates but actively produces patterns of behavior, thereby contributing to the larger discourse on streets as lived urban spaces rather than mere conduits of vehicular movement.

3.2. FRAMEWORK

This research investigates the complex relationship between architectural form, spatial configuration, and human behavior across varied street types in Aurangabad. It focuses on understanding how physical form, defined by width, height, edge condition, and degree of enclosure, influences the behavioral patterns, rhythms, and routines of people occupying these urban spaces. The study explores the reciprocal nature of this relationship: how form affords and regulates behavior, and how repeated human practices, in turn, redefine the meaning and use of form.

The framework is structured around four key operational concepts, form, behavior, affordances, and transactions. Form defines the architectural language of the street, its geometry, enclosure, thresholds, and material articulation. Behavior captures the observable human actions that unfold within and in response to this form, walking, resting, vending, waiting, socializing, and loitering. Affordances bridge these two realms by identifying what spatial elements allow or enable, how a plinth affords sitting, how shade affords pause, or how enclosure induces movement. Transactions extend this to the socio-spatial domain, where people, objects, and built edges interact continuously, producing layered relationships between permanence and temporality, ownership and use.

Through these interrelated lenses, the framework examines how streets operate as active urban spaces rather than static conduits, and how spatial form modulates degrees of publicness, safety, and comfort across different socio-economic settings. It also considers the performative role of the body, how individuals of different genders, ages, and classes navigate, occupy, and claim space differently.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative and multi-scalar fieldwork methodology to examine how different street typologies in Aurangabad, ranging from market streets to residential lanes, shape and are shaped by patterns of human behavior. The research adopts a threefold approach: physical description, behavioral mapping, and affordance documentation, followed by a cross-comparison analysis across all sites.

1. Physical Description:

Each site is first documented through base plans and sectional drawings that capture its spatial configuration and materiality. Parameters such as street width, edge condition, threshold depth, adjacent land use, degree of enclosure, and surface material are recorded to understand the physical affordances embedded in the form.

2. Behavioral Mapping:

The study then focuses on the occupation and movement patterns of users. Behavioral mapping is conducted through repeated site observations across different times of day (morning, afternoon, evening). Each observation documents density, duration of stay, activity type (walking, resting, selling, waiting, conversing), and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and social class. This mapping helps visualize how the same space performs differently under changing temporal and social conditions.

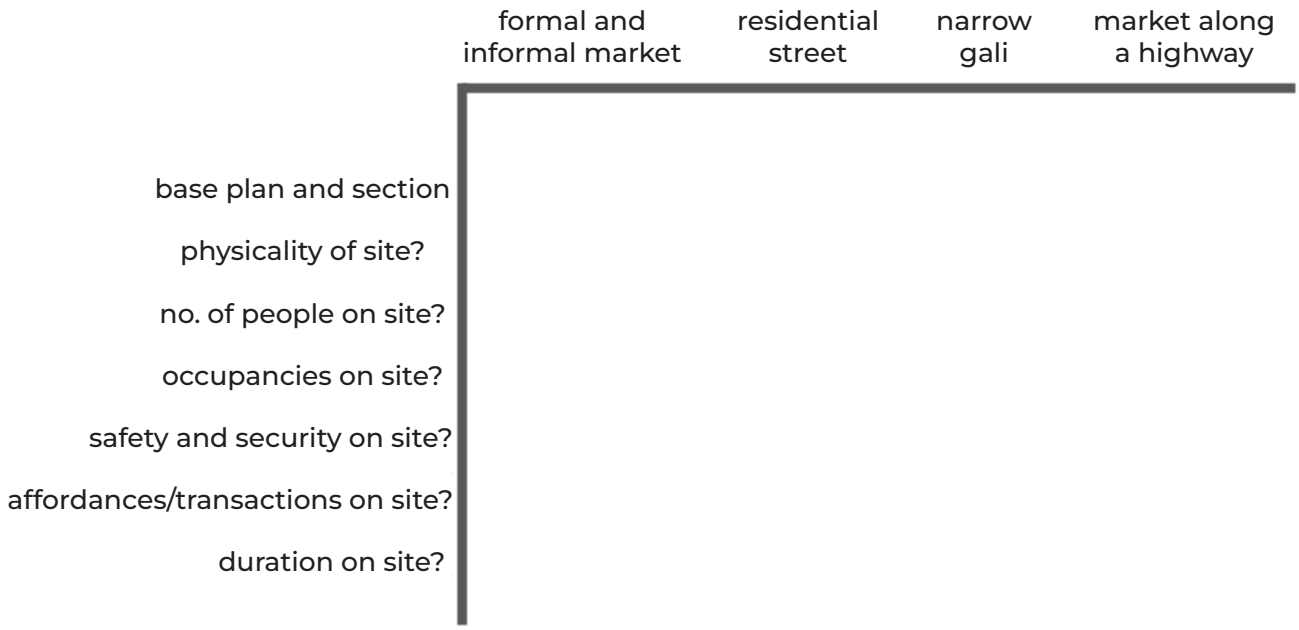
3. Affordance Documentation:

Building on J. J. Gibson's (1979) theory of affordances, the study identifies how physical features of the street, such as plinths, dividers, steps, trees, compound walls, or shaded awning, afford specific behaviors. For instance, a knee-height median wall may afford sitting or waiting, while a blank compound wall affords vehicular parking or quick movement. The mapping of these affordances reveals how subtle variations in form shape the possibilities of human action.

4. Cross-Comparison Analysis:

A comparative chart is developed to synthesize findings across sites. The vertical axis lists spatial and behavioral parameters, such as affordances, safety, density, diversity of activities, duration of stay, and transactions, while the horizontal axis represents the four selected sites.

This cross-sectional analysis allows for a visual understanding of how different spatial configurations afford or restrict behaviors, and how many types of transactions each street form can support. The outcome of this comparison builds a layered understanding of the relationship between architectural form and human behavior, positioning the street not merely as a conduit for movement but as an active urban space of negotiation and interaction.



4.
Field Work

4.1. HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN RD, SHAHGUNJ



Fig. 3.1 - Key Plan locating Hazrat Nizamuddin Rd in Shahgunj



Fig. 3.2 - Active Market Site



Fig. 3.3 - Form induced Labor Naka on site

Hazrat Nizamuddin Road Market, also known as Shahgunj Market, located in the Shahgunj area of Aurangabad, forms a significant part of the city's traditional trading network and serves as one of its most active mixed-use streets. Historically functioning as a key commercial connector between residential neighborhoods and the central bazaar, the market has evolved into a layered urban space accommodating both formal and informal economies. The street stretches for about 400 meters and is lined with permanent ground-floor shops, and upper floors house small residential units and storage spaces. Throughout the day, the wide footpaths and the metaled road itself transform into vending zones occupied by fruit and vegetable carts, tea stalls, and temporary vendors under umbrellas or tarpaulin covers. The central median, now used by daily-wage laborers waiting for work, as an induced labor naka, creating an additional layer of social use. This constant reconfiguration of space illustrates how the street's physical form, i.e. its width, edges, and thresholds, continuously lends itself to diverse behaviors and adaptive everyday practices.

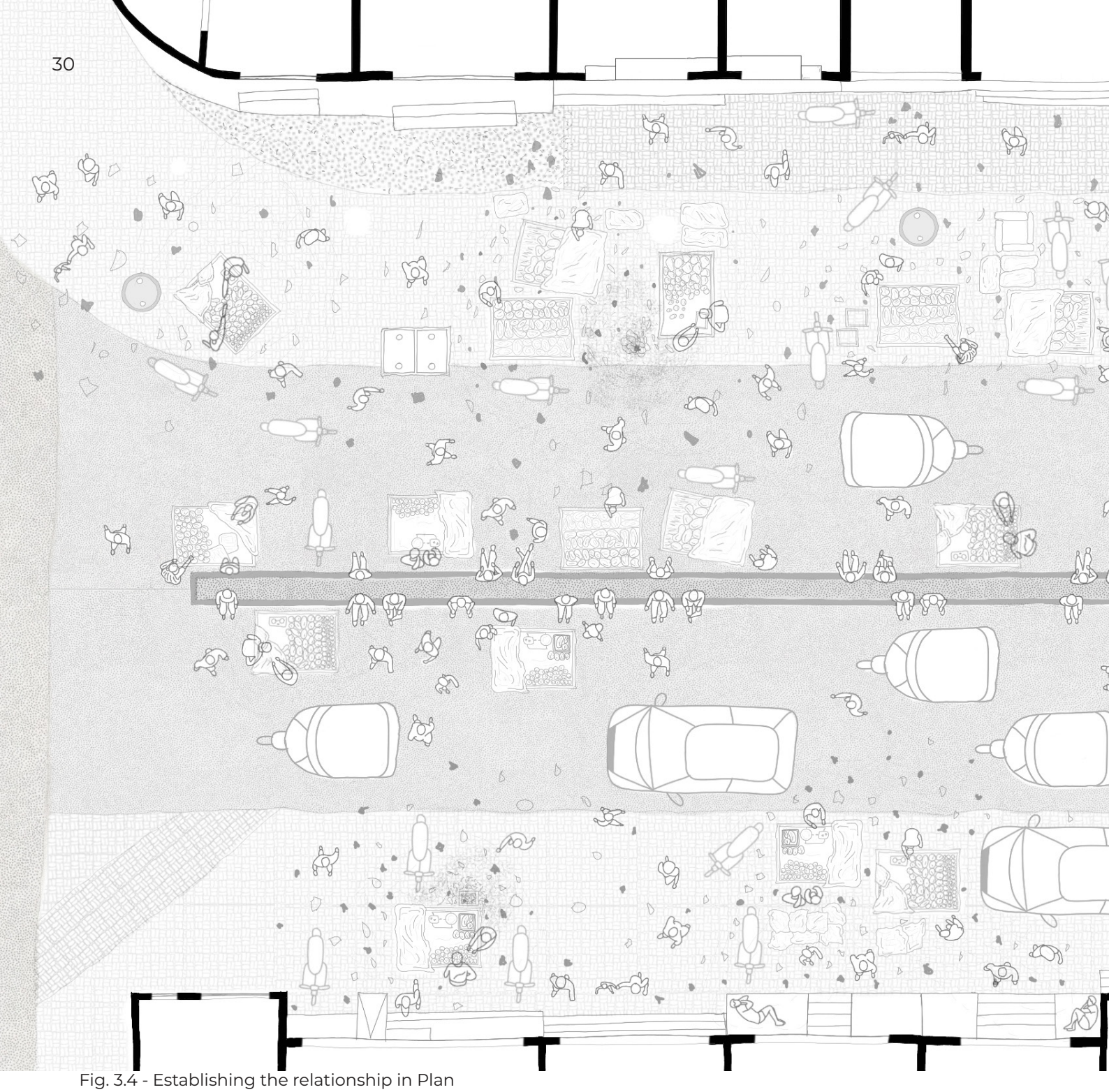
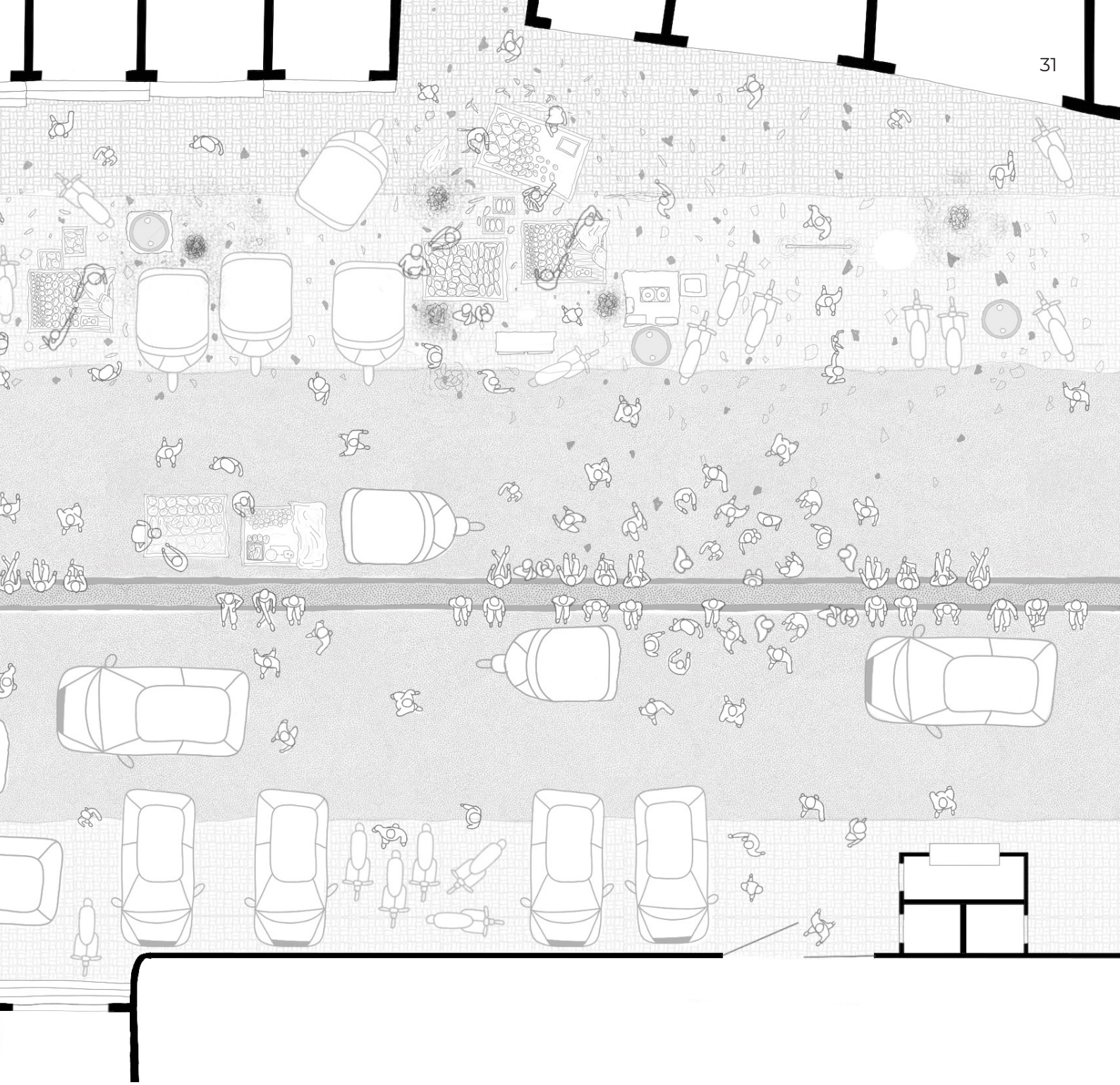


Fig. 3.4 - Establishing the relationship in Plan

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND BEHAVIOR

The spatial configuration of the market street operates through a system of overlapping layers, i.e. formal, semi-formal, and informal, that collectively define its lived morphology. A fixed edge of permanent retail structures establishes a linear architectural boundary, while the adjoining footpath acts as a transitional zone where vendors negotiate temporary claims. Between these two, an intermediate strip emerges, occupied by handcarts, stalls, and mobile sellers whose spatial practices redefine the intended movement corridor into a shared social ground.

The arrangement demonstrates a gradient of fixity and flexibility: permanent shops anchor the street, while informal occupations produce constant spatial variations through daily rhythms of setup, selling, and dispersal.



The central vehicular spine, though originally designed for transit, becomes a fluid domain of coexisting mobilities, i.e. pedestrians, vendors, and vehicles, each responding to the other through subtle spatial negotiations.

This condition of overlap generates a porous urban edge, where the distinction between public and private, formal and informal, is continuously reconfigured through acts of bodily presence, transaction, and adaptation. The resulting spatial form is not static but performative, its character defined by the density of interactions rather than by its physical boundaries.

Building upon this spatial reading, the sectional understanding of the market further amplifies the relationship between form and behavior by revealing the vertical and bodily dimensions of occupation that the plan alone cannot express. The section exposes how varying heights, plinths, canopies, and built edges produce differentiated affordances that influence posture, gesture, and proximity. Elevated shop fronts establish a hierarchy of gaze and transaction, while lower plinths or shaded extensions invite sitting, pausing, and casual exchange. The interaction between body and form thus unfolds not only horizontally across the street but vertically through gradations of elevation, enclosure, and reach.

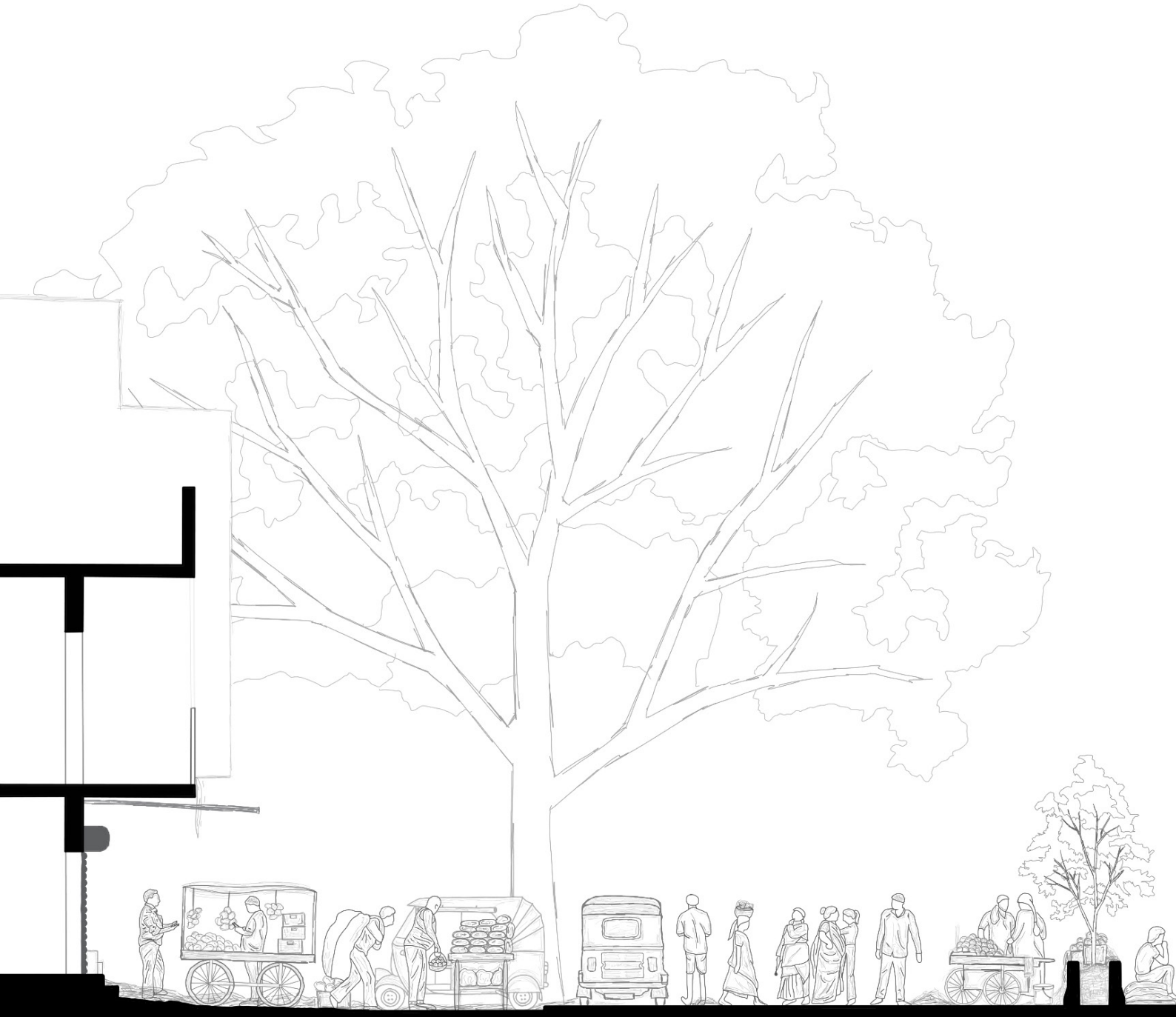
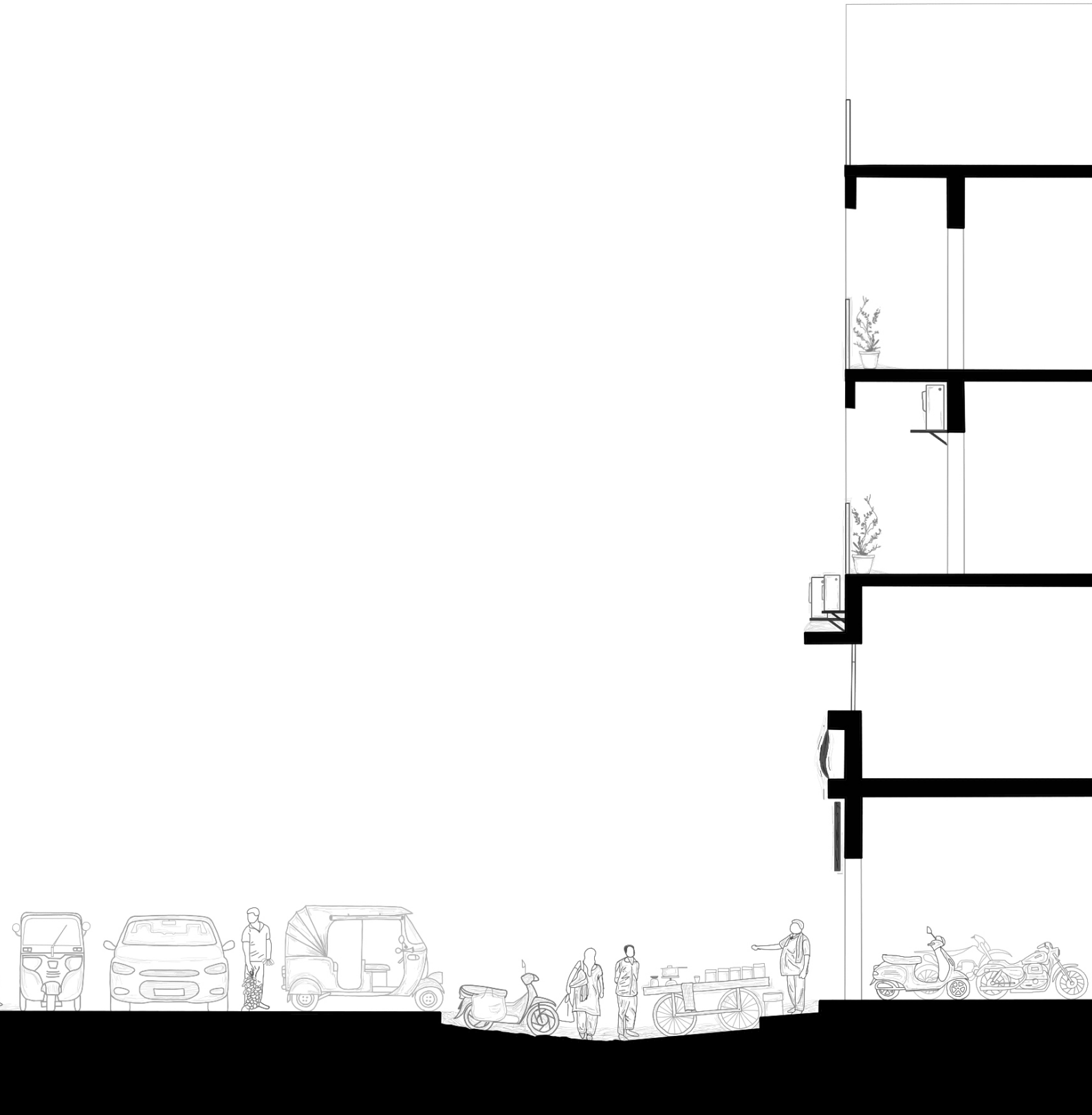


Fig. 3.5 - Establishing the relationship in Section

The height of a stall determines the bodily stance of both vendor and buyer, leaning, bending, or stretching, while canopies and overhangs create shaded pockets that momentarily slow down movement and foster social congregation. These micro-variations in section generate a choreography of bodily adaptations, turning the marketplace into a field of negotiated ergonomics.

What emerges, then, is an architecture of behavior rather than of fixed design, one where spatial form is continuously activated and redefined through bodily presence, material improvisation, and the temporal rhythms of everyday life. The section, in this sense, becomes a diagram of performance, illustrating how the built environment and human action co-produce the spatial identity of the street.



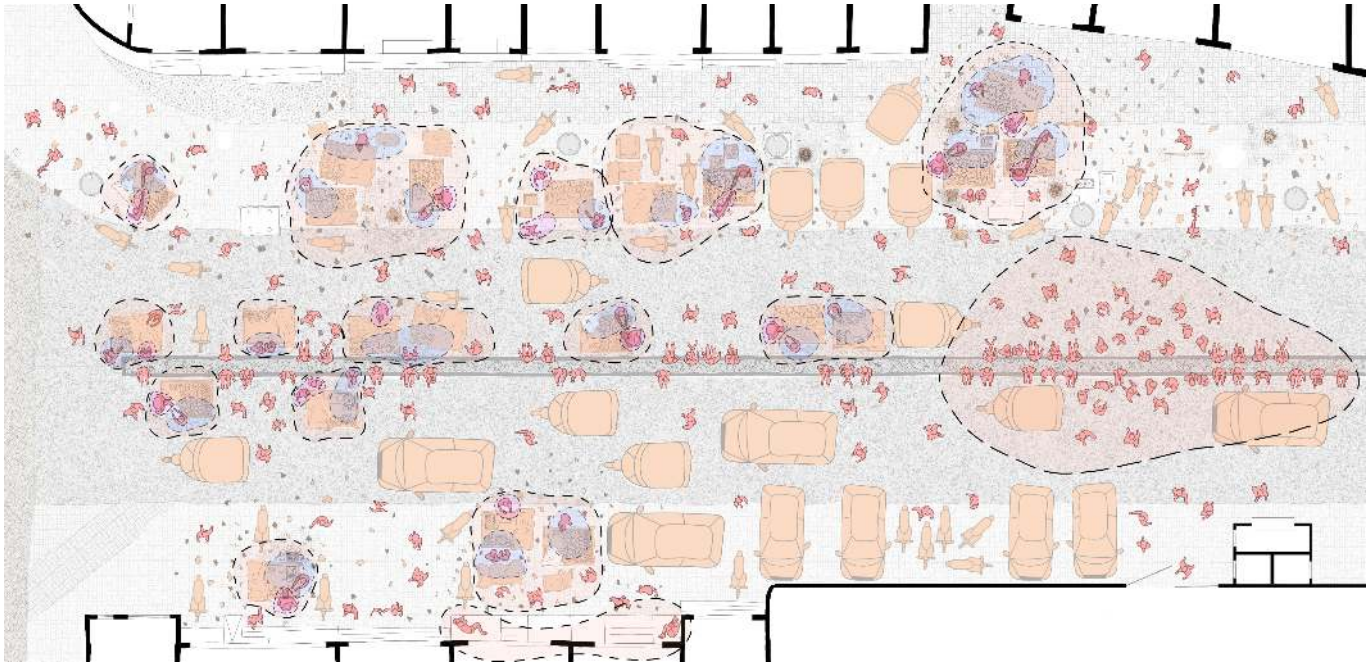


Fig. 3.6 - Diagramming patterns of relationship between form and behavior

The behavior along the market street emerges through patterns of proximity, density, and movement that respond directly to the configuration of built form. The arrangement of edges, thresholds, and intermediate zones produces distinct behavioral territories, some fixed and anchored, others fluid and adaptive. Activities such as selling, walking, waiting, and conversing occur in gradients that correspond to the affordances of physical elements: the shop plinths, shaded edges, narrow gaps between parked vehicles, and even the central median become active spatial participants in daily routines.

These overlapping zones of activity generate a rhythmic spatial texture across the street. Areas closer to the shopfronts exhibit slower rhythms of occupation, associated with extended bodily postures such as sitting, standing, and setting up stalls, while the central corridor maintains a faster, transient flow of movement. The footpath edges act as zones of exchange, where negotiation, transaction, and pause occur simultaneously, producing a fluctuating interface between movement and rest.

Among vendors, different patterns of occupation reveal the behavioral logic of commerce and spatial adaptation. Some vendors group their carts into clusters, forming dense micro-markets that draw higher footfall and create localized intensities of exchange. Others choose to position their carts individually along quieter stretches, prioritizing visibility and accessibility over the shared attraction of a cluster. This contrast demonstrates how vendors respond strategically to the spatial affordances of the street, transforming its linear form into a mosaic of economic and social territories.

The resultant pattern is not uniform but dynamic, shaped by the density of bodies, the time of day, and the adaptability of form. Here, behavior becomes both a response to and a generator of spatial conditions, continually redefining the role of the street from a linear conduit of movement into an inhabited urban space of layered social and physical interaction.

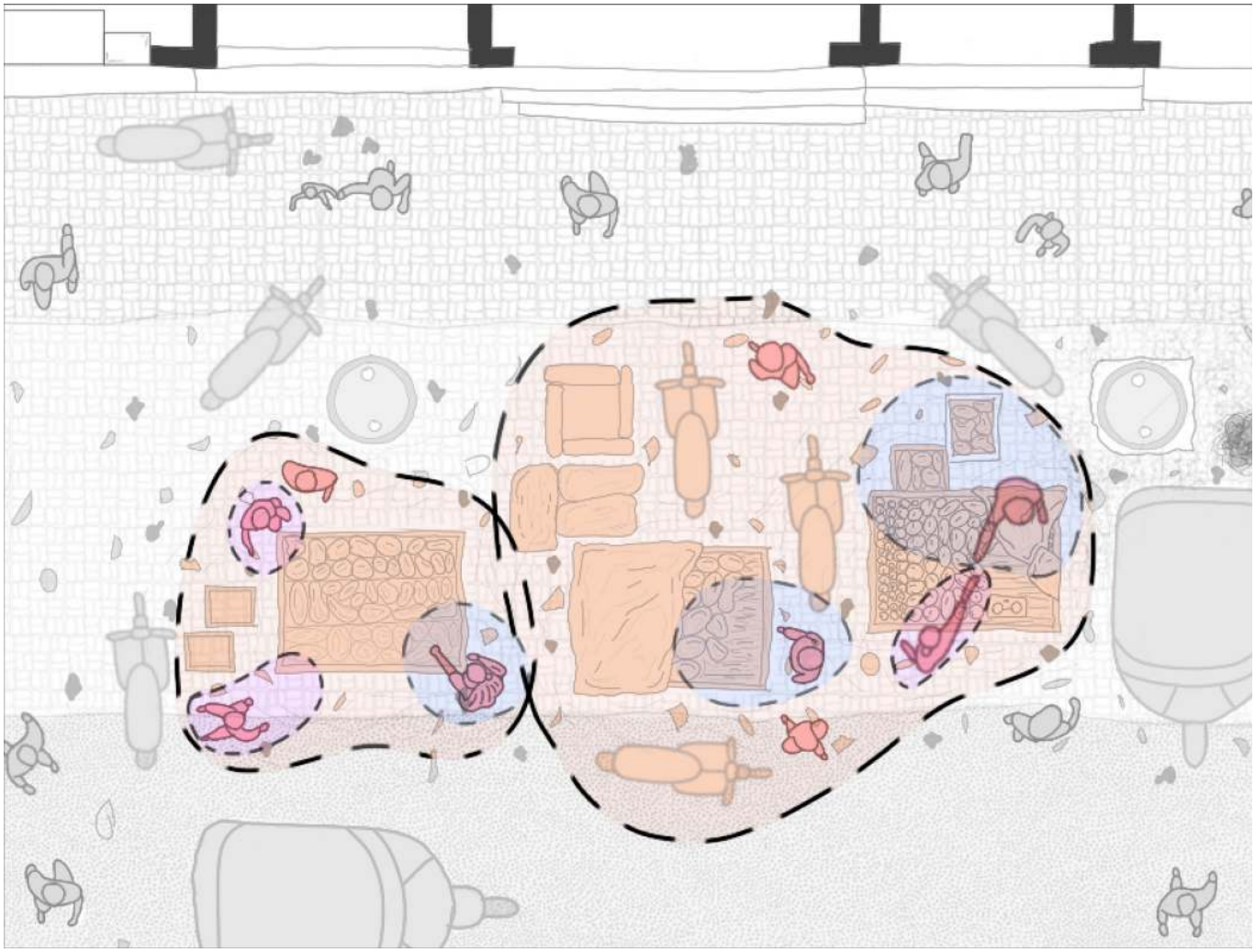


Fig. 3.7 - Cluster vending forming micro-markets

CLUSTERED CARTS AS MICRO-MARKETS

When multiple fruit and vegetable carts gather in proximity, typically with a gap of one to two meters between them, a micro-market emerges. The limited distance allows for verbal communication, shared shade, and a circulation pocket that accommodates 4–6 buyers at once. The physical closeness of carts defines a spatial envelope roughly equivalent to a 3–4 meter interaction radius, the distance within which human voices remain audible without shouting.

This bodily scale of proximity enables both cooperation and competition: sellers borrow each other's tools, share gossip, and attract collective crowds, while buyers move fluidly among them. The form of the cluster thus operates as an anthropometric and social construct. Customers benefit from variety and comparison, while vendors gain visibility, security, and a shared clientele. The micro-market thus becomes a negotiated collective edge, flexible, temporary, yet spatially legible. It blurs the distinction between individual and collective occupation, producing a rhythm of shared sitting, calling, and exchanging.

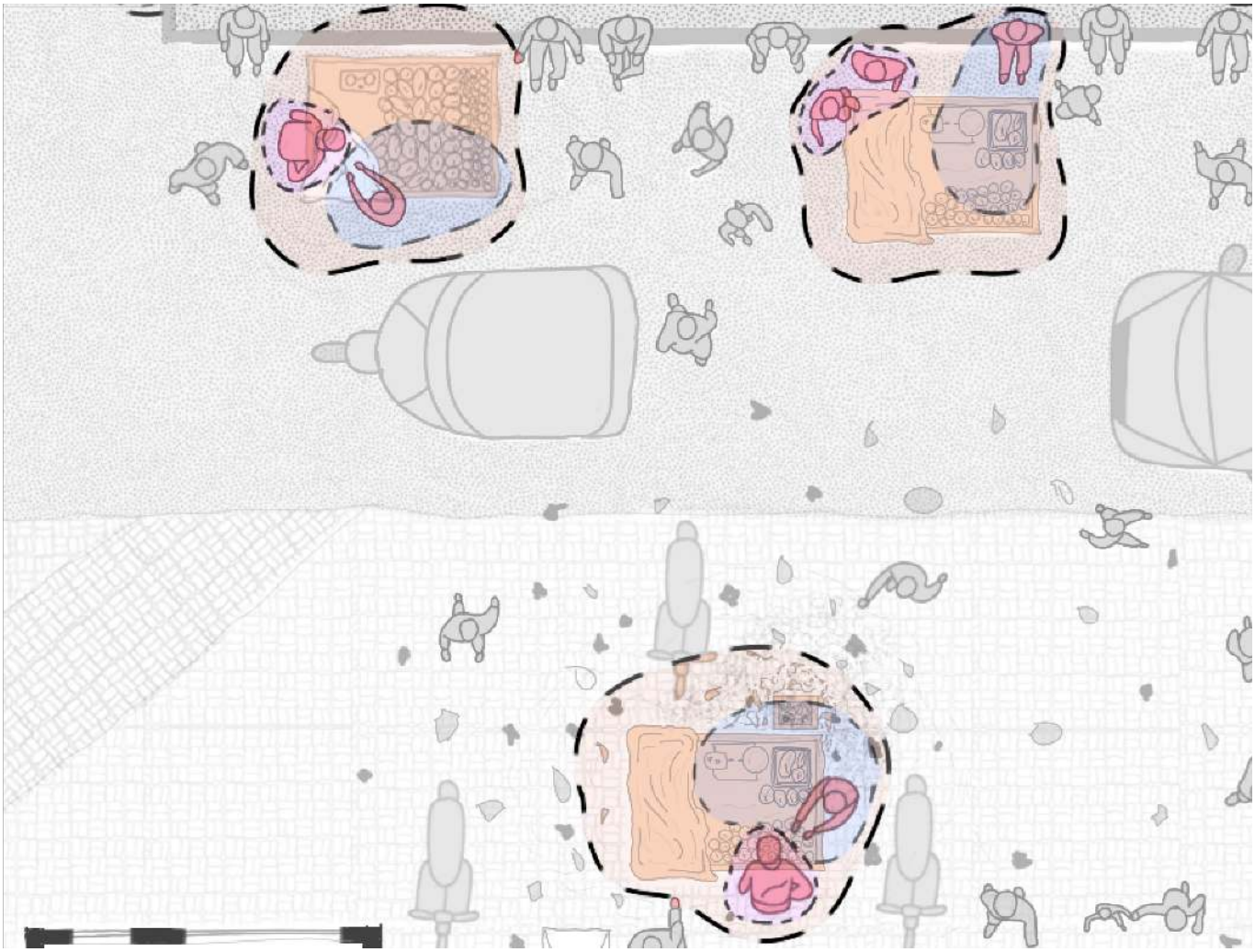


Fig. 3.8 - Individual vending spilled on the vehicular road

VENDOR'S CART AS A MOBILE BODY

Each cart in Shahgunj functions as an anthropometric extension of the vendor's body, its height of roughly 900–1000mm aligns with the vendor's elbow level, allowing sorting, weighing, and exchange without bending. The cart handle doubles as both a physical support and a spatial marker, defining a vendor's personal boundary even in motion. When stationary, the cart establishes an interaction distance of about one arm's length, enabling comfortable proximity between buyer and seller. In this sense, the cart becomes both architecture and instrument, an adaptive prosthesis mediating posture, transaction, and occupation of space.

Vendors operating individually rather than in clusters position themselves at key junctions, corners, or along active edges such as bus stops or on the metaled road itself, where visibility and footfall are highest. This independence offers control over display and interaction, allowing each vendor to negotiate their own spatial claim within the street's shifting rhythms. However, isolation also means limited shade, fewer social ties, and less support during periods of high traffic or municipal clearance. These vendors continually interpret and respond to spatial cues, adjusting distance from walls, thresholds, or medians, to optimize comfort, visibility, and engagement.

Through this individualized mode of vending, the body and the cart operate as a single system of adaptation. The vendor's actions of leaning, resting, repositioning mirror the micro-topography of the street, revealing how the affordances of width, edge, and surface invite dynamic patterns of occupation.

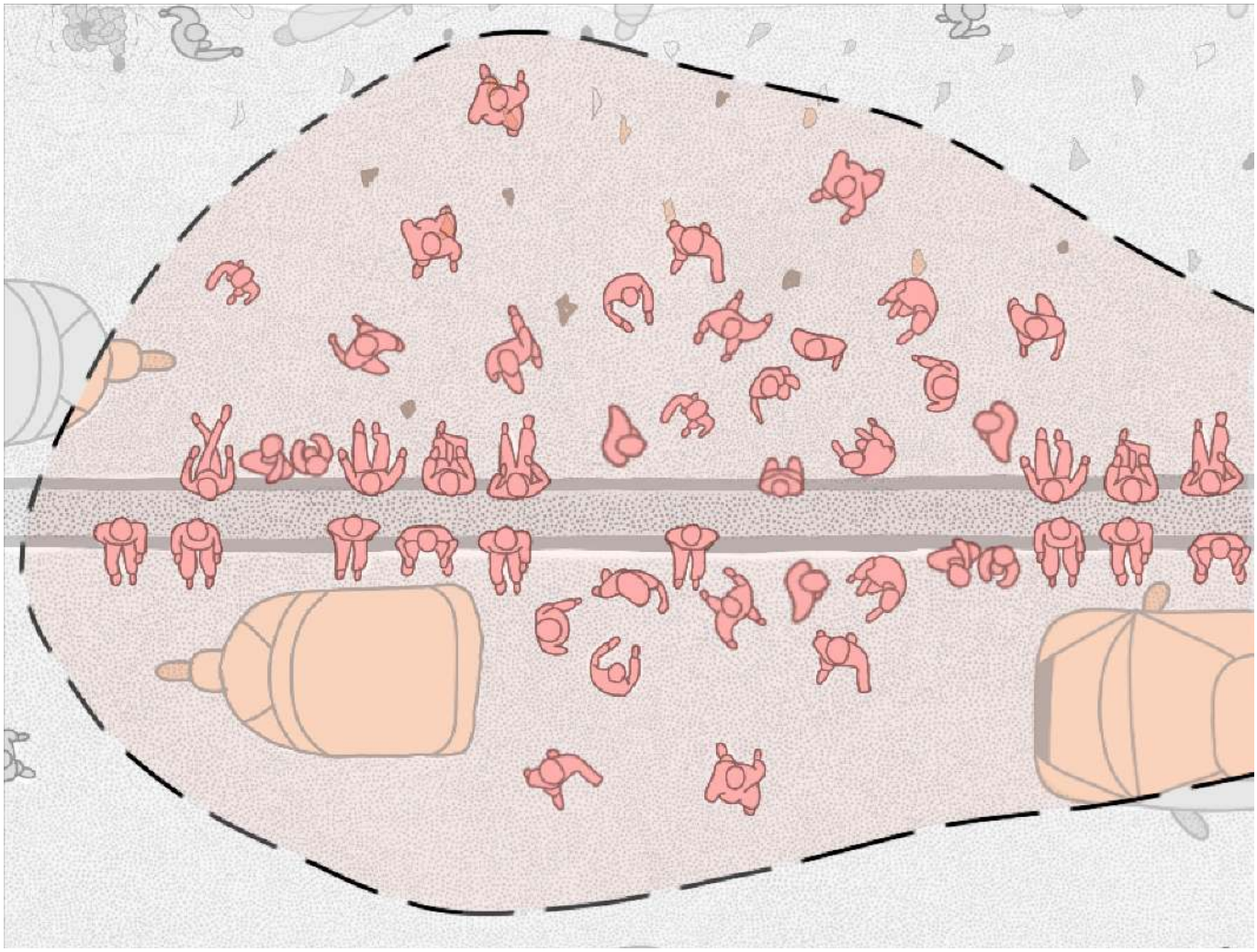


Fig. 3.9 - Labor Naka located at the central median of the street

MEDIAN AS A SOCIAL THRESHOLD

The labor naka at the center median of Hazrat Nizamuddin Road represents a compelling example of how small architectural interventions, here, a low concrete divider, can afford complex patterns of human occupation. The median, roughly 600mm high, acts as an unintentional urban furnishing. According to J.J. Gibson's theory of affordances (1989), environmental features inherently suggest possible actions to a perceiving body; in this case, the wall's height, material, and scale afford the bodily act of sitting. Its edge, neither too tall nor too wide, invites waiting and gathering, activities central to the labor naka's everyday functioning. Workers arrive early, claiming short stretches of the median as resting and waiting zones while anticipating potential employment. Over time, this repeated bodily engagement transforms an infrastructural divider into a social threshold.

Rupali Gupte and Prasad Shetty, in Transactional Objects (2017), describe such spaces as outcomes of "transactions between form, body, and use," where architecture becomes a facilitator rather than a container of life. The median wall here is not designed as a bench, yet it performs as one through continuous human negotiation. It becomes what Gupte and Shetty call a transactional object, a piece of the city that gains new function through collective improvisation.

This act of occupation also redefines the movement and perception of the street. Vehicles slow as they pass by the naka, pedestrians pause to converse, and informal tea stalls align along the curb to serve the waiting workers. The median, originally intended to separate flows of traffic, evolves into a spine of stillness, a counterpoint to the mobility around it. Its affordance lies not in formal design but in its ability to sustain a social routine of gathering, waiting, and exchange.

BEHAVIOR OF THE BODIES THROUGH FORM

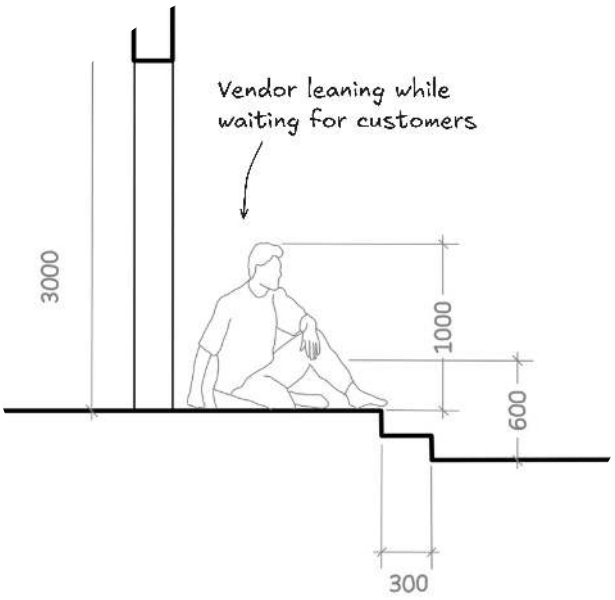


Fig. 3.10 - Plinths as Bodily Extensions

PLINTHS AS BODILY EXTENSIONS

The plinths in front of the permanent shops operate as a mediating surface between the body and architecture. Their height, ranging between 450mm and 600mm, affords sitting, leaning, and momentary resting. Vendors often lean against the wall while seated on the edge, half within and half outside the shop's domain, creating a semi-private zone that belongs to both. Shoppers, too, occasionally rest here with their bags or children, extending their stay. The plinth's height aligns with the knee level, a bodily register that instinctively invites sitting, confirming Gibson's (1989) ecological reading of affordances: the form itself signals the posture.

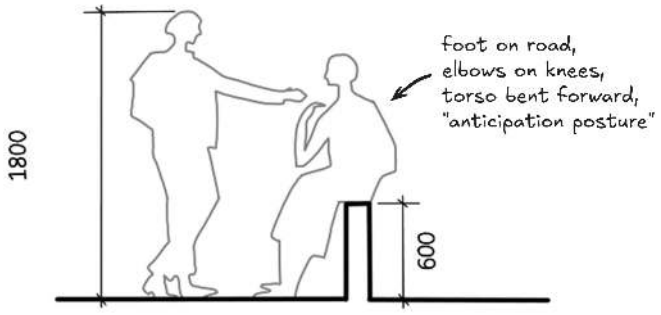


Fig. 3.11 - Posture of Waiting

POSTURE OF WAITING AT LOW WALLS

At the labor naka, the 600mm-high median affords sitting, perching, and casual conversation. Workers position themselves along its length, alternating between upright postures of alertness and slouched postures of fatigue. Their bodies adapt to the wall's dimension, the feet placed on the road's lower level, elbows resting on knees, torsos slightly bent forward, embodying a gesture of anticipation. This posture of readiness and waiting converts the linear divider into a social spine. The anthropometry of the human body and the street's low edge together construct a form of urban furniture that supports informal economies of labor and sociability, even though it was never intended for occupation.

POSTURE OF ABSENCE AT HIGH WALLS

Along stretches where compound walls replace active edges, bodily occupation diminishes almost entirely. The continuous, opaque surface, typically between 1800mm and 2100mm high, removes both visual and physical engagement with the adjoining property. Its height lies just above eye level, denying any horizontal visual connection or spatial porosity.

The wall's scale prevents sitting, leaning, or informal gathering; instead, it becomes a backdrop against which vehicles are parked, converting human occupation into mechanical use. This shift marks a change in bodily posture from active engagement to passive avoidance, the body walks faster, maintains distance, and refrains from lingering. The compound wall thus affords parking rather than pause, efficiency rather than exchange.

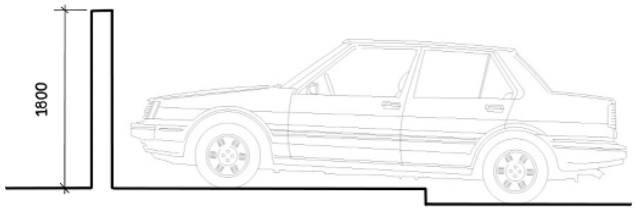


Fig. 3.12 - Posture of Absence

BODY IN MOTION

Where the formal footpath dissolves and the road surface continues seamlessly, people cross diagonally between shop edges and vendors. This flattened spatial gradient alters body movement, the stride elongates, the torso tilts forward slightly, indicating faster transit. Yet, at moments where carts narrow the passage, movement slows, and the head turns to scan, creating brief eye-level engagements between walker and vendor. These alternating gestures of acceleration and deceleration define the market's temporal rhythm. The very act of walking becomes a dialogue with spatial resistance, architecture and movement co-producing the lived experience of the street.

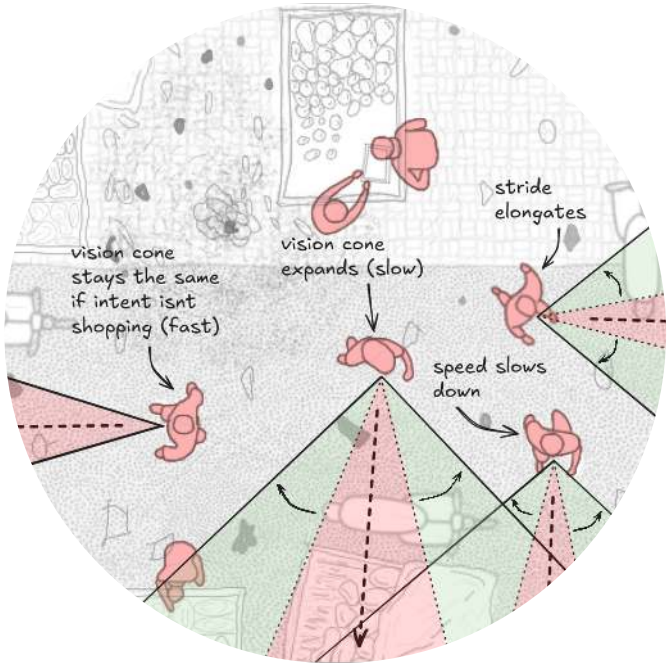


Fig. 3.13 - Body in Motion

PATTERNS OF OCCUPANCY AND SPATIAL INTENSITY

ACTIVITIES	OCCUPANCY		
Vendors	74	Storage	22
Walking	26	Rushing Through	15
Standing	80	Chatting	94
Buying	275	Sleeping	6
Visiting the Shops	67	Beggars	23
No. of Shops	17	Small Tempo	38
Dogs	13	Smoking	71
Cats	8	**Total**	**1047**
2 - Wheeler	83		
4 - Wheeler	24		
Rickshaw	56		
Cart	24		
Cycle	31		

Fig. 3.14 - Occupancy Table for a 50m stretch of Hazrat Nizamuddin Rd

The density and diversity of activities within this spatial system reveal the market's complex behavioral ecology. A micro-scale observation of a 50-meter stretch documents nearly a thousand discrete actions occurring simultaneously, from acts of selling, buying, and negotiating to movements such as walking, standing, resting, or simply passing through. Alongside these human interactions, the presence of vehicles, animals, and temporary infrastructures such as carts and storage units further contributes to the site's dynamic spatial layering.

This empirical mapping highlights the simultaneity of occupancies and the overlapping rhythms of use that define the marketplace. The coexistence of transient and stationary bodies, of commerce and pause, suggests that the street operates as a living organism, continuously negotiating between movement and stasis, order and improvisation. The intensity of occupancies within such a limited stretch underscores how spatial form enables multiplicity, where each affordance, be it a wall, plinth, or shaded edge, generates its own microcosm of activity.

4.2 TRIMURTI CHOWK RD (INTERNAL), JAWAHAR COLONY



Fig. 4.1 - Key Plan locating Trimurti Chowk Rd in Jawahar Colony



Fig. 4.2 - Residential Site

Trimurti Chowk Road, located within the residential fabric of Jawahar Colony, exhibits a distinctly domestic character. Primarily a neighborhood-scale street, it functions both as an access road and as a shared social space for residents. The street's width of five meters accommodates slow vehicular movement, parallel parking, and a continuous edge of compound walls punctuated by openings, due to it being a front-of-building edge. These edges, while defining private ownership, also act as thresholds for various informal and temporary activities, i.e. children playing, adults chatting, or fruit vending.



Fig. 4.3 - Few openings along walls

The rhythm of the street is calm and familiar, shaped by recurring routines rather than constant change. The presence of pets, joggers, and small gatherings at corners reflects a collective sense of belonging and shared use. Occasional vendors, such as the milkman or vegetable seller, briefly enter this rhythm, their presence blending seamlessly into the everyday flow of neighborhood life. The result is where the street operates as a subtle yet essential extension of the home.

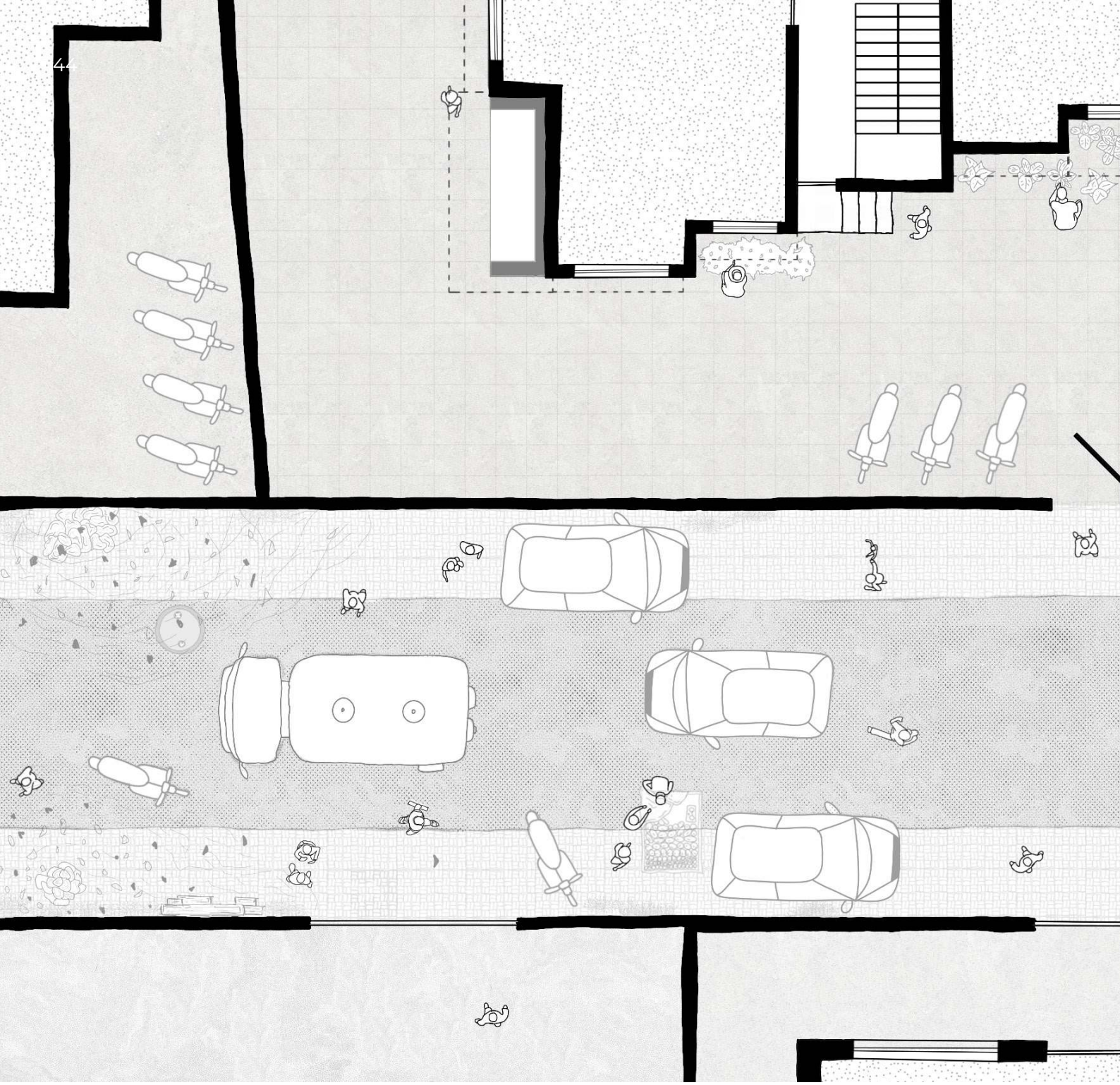


Fig. 4.4 - Establishing the relationship in Plan

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND BEHAVIOR

The spatial configuration of the residential street demonstrates how architectural form shapes patterns of everyday behavior through proximity, familiarity, and routine. The built edges, defined by compound walls and openings, establish clear boundaries of private ownership while still allowing subtle extensions of domestic life into the public realm. Parked vehicles, shaded thresholds, and entry steps become informal social interfaces where residents pause, converse, or simply observe the street. These physical features lend the street its lived character, transforming it from a passageway into a space of quiet, recurring interaction.

Throughout the day, the street's form supports shifting rhythms of use. Mornings are marked by movement, residents walking, vehicles leaving, vendors briefly stopping, while evenings invite slower, more social occupations.



Such as men gathering to chat, children play, or women talking across gates. These recurring routines are not organized events but natural responses to the affordances of form, the shape of the car, the width of the road, the recess of a gate.

Although not designed for gathering, the residential street allows it through its scale and rhythm. The medium-height compound walls do not afford pausing, but the cars parked along them act as low walls, offering spots to lean or sit and talk. Recessed entries provide small resting pockets, and the even street surface supports both movement and brief pauses with ease. Behavior here is sustained not by commercial exchange but by the familiarity of repeated gestures, walking, waiting, chatting, that weave social life into the built form.

The sectional understanding of Trimurti Chowk Road reveals how the vertical configuration of its built edges shapes patterns of everyday behavior within a residential setting. Variations in wall height, and surface texture subtly influence posture, visibility, and the degree of social engagement along the street. Taller compound walls of around 1800–2100mm limit visibility and contact, reinforcing privacy, while directing activities such as parking, brief pauses, or casual conversations toward the street edge. The shallow sectional depth between buildings and the street accommodates small extensions of domestic life.

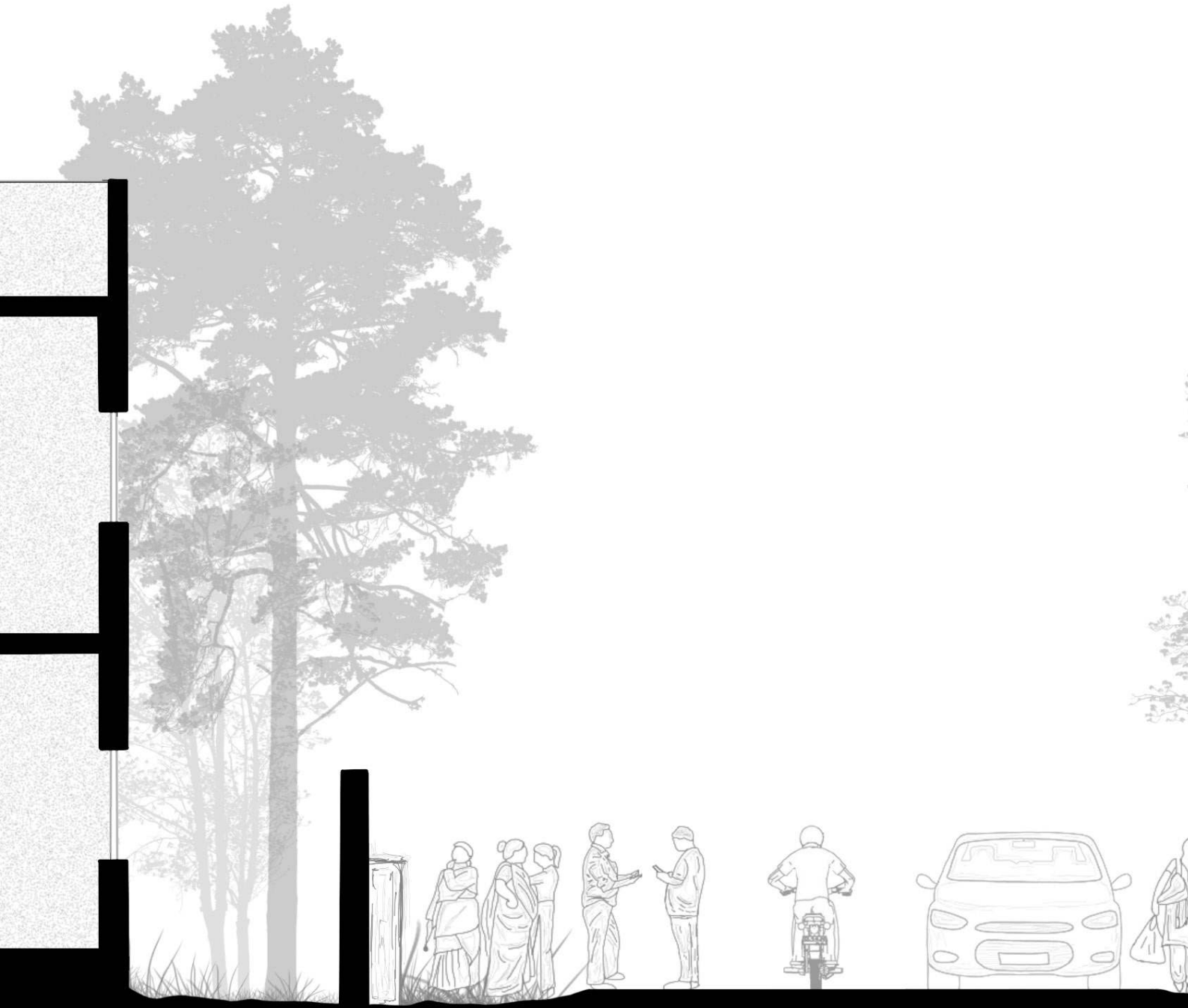
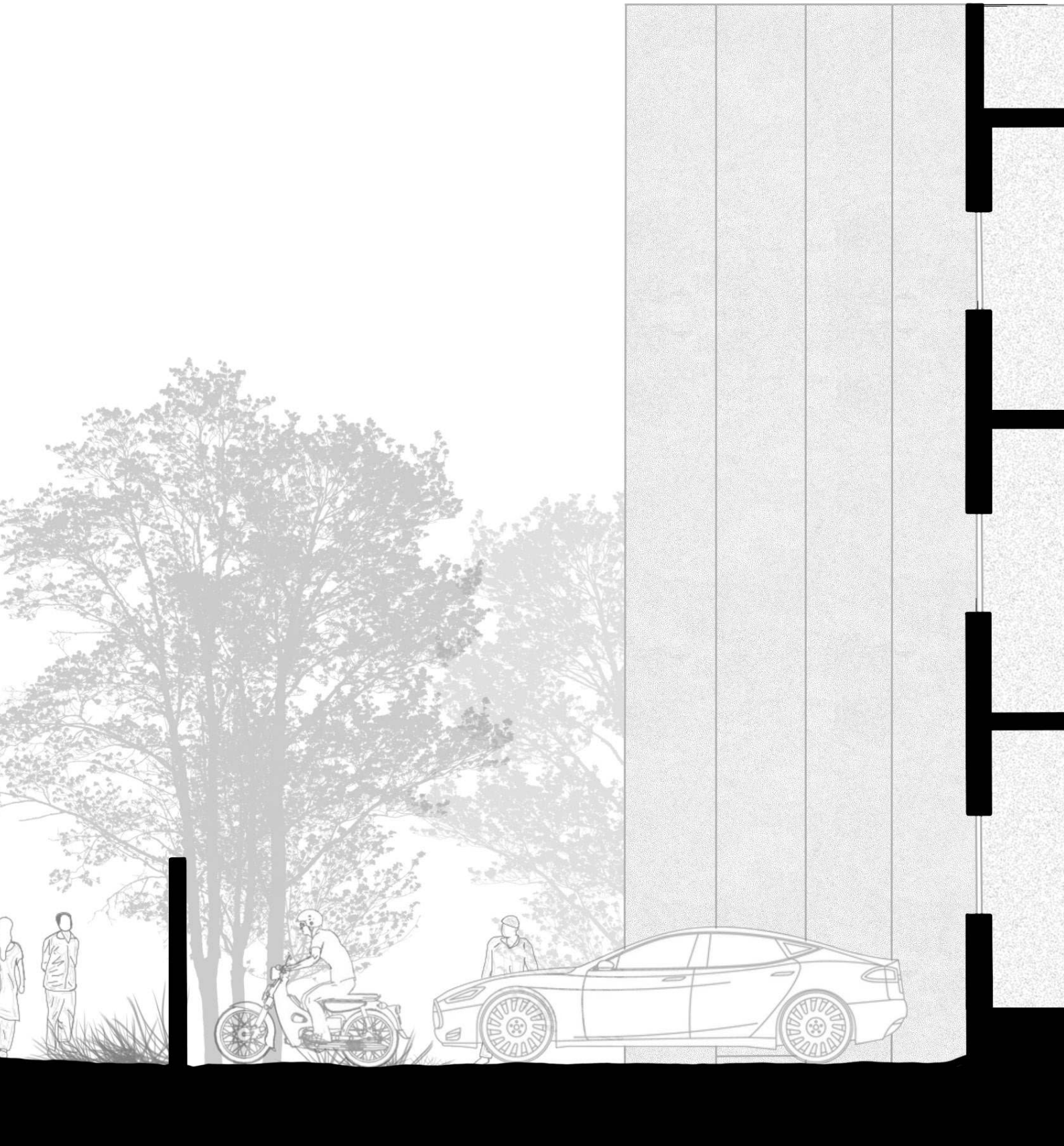


Fig. 4.5 - Establishing the relationship in Section

Steps, recessed doorways, and narrow setbacks become transitional zones where residents stand, talk, or watch the movement outside. These minor changes in elevation and shade determine the comfort and duration of occupation, whether one pauses momentarily or lingers longer. Through this vertical layering, the street operates as a lived threshold between home and public space. Its sectional rhythm, not overtly designed for social use, nonetheless allows a continuous negotiation between privacy and presence, shaping how bodies inhabit, move through, and momentarily claim the street in everyday life.



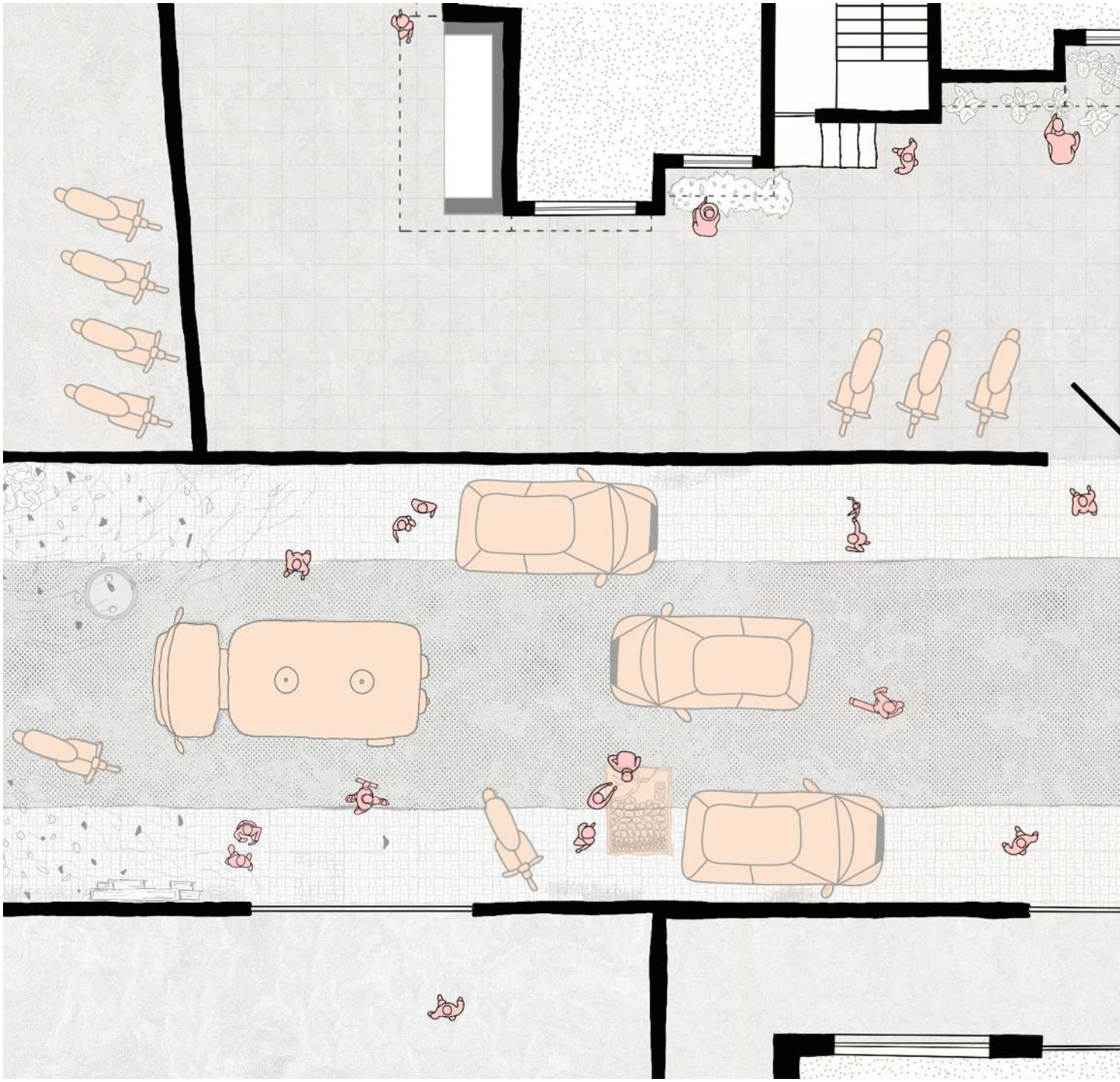
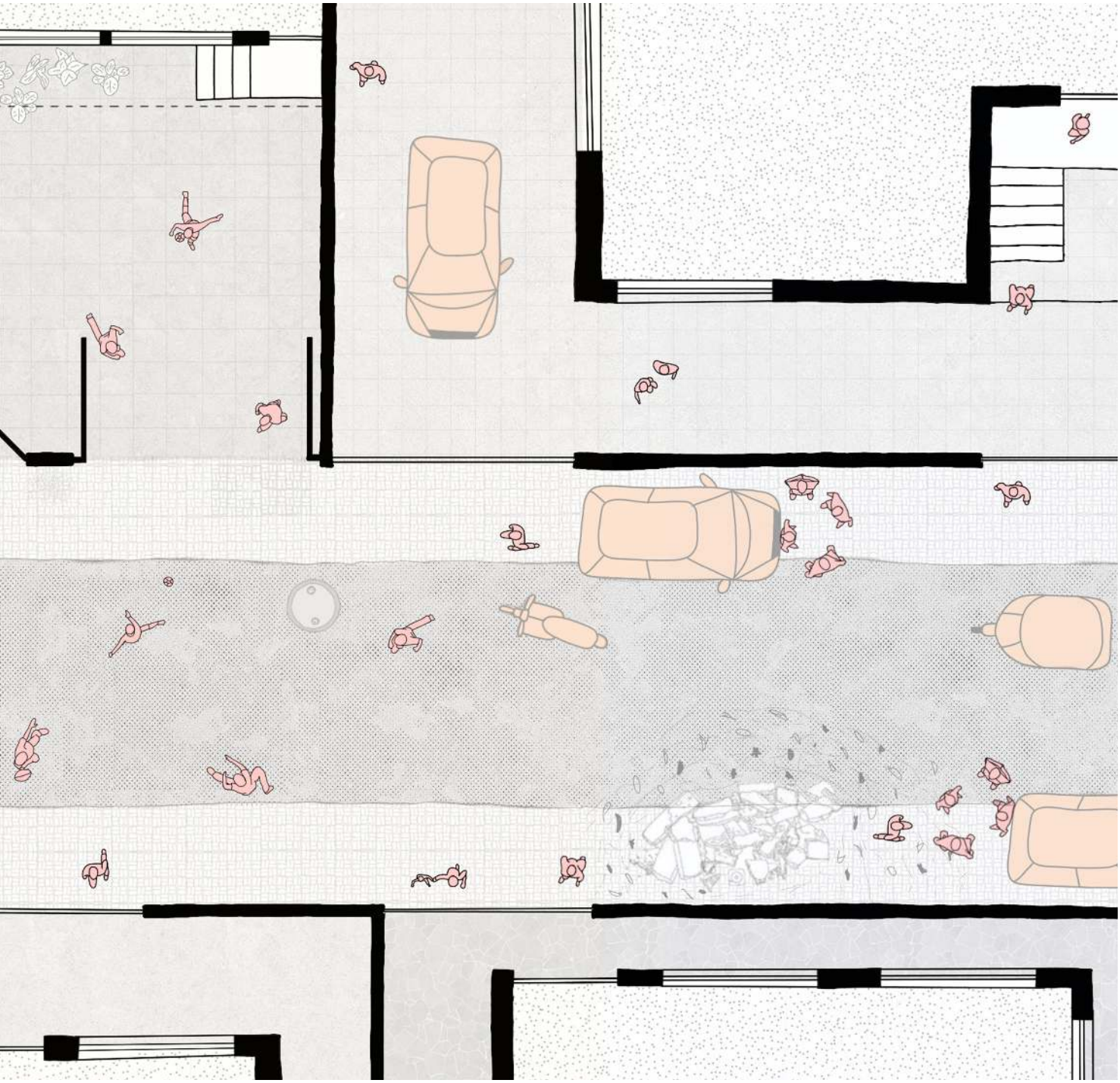


Fig. 4.6 - Diagramming patterns of relationship between form and behavior

Behavior along the residential street unfolds through quiet, rhythmic changes that respond to its spatial form and domestic edges. Unlike the market street's dense exchanges, this street transforms through the day, shaped by compound walls, gates, and parked vehicles that define where people move, pause, or gather. Its moderate width and smooth surface allow it to function alternately as a passage, a playground, and a social space, shifting seamlessly with time and routine.

In the morning, the street carries transitional movement, residents leaving for work or school, vendors stopping briefly at gates, and pedestrians moving quickly through.



By afternoon, the pace slows as children extend their play beyond the gates, temporarily reclaiming the street as shared ground. The boundary between home and street blurs, replaced by a playful, informal occupation.

As evening approaches, the character changes again, cars return, doubling as low walls for leaning and conversation. Men gather around parked vehicles, women chat across gates, and the street takes on a relaxed, communal rhythm. Through these daily transformations, the residential street subtly reveals how built form and routine behavior continually shape one another.

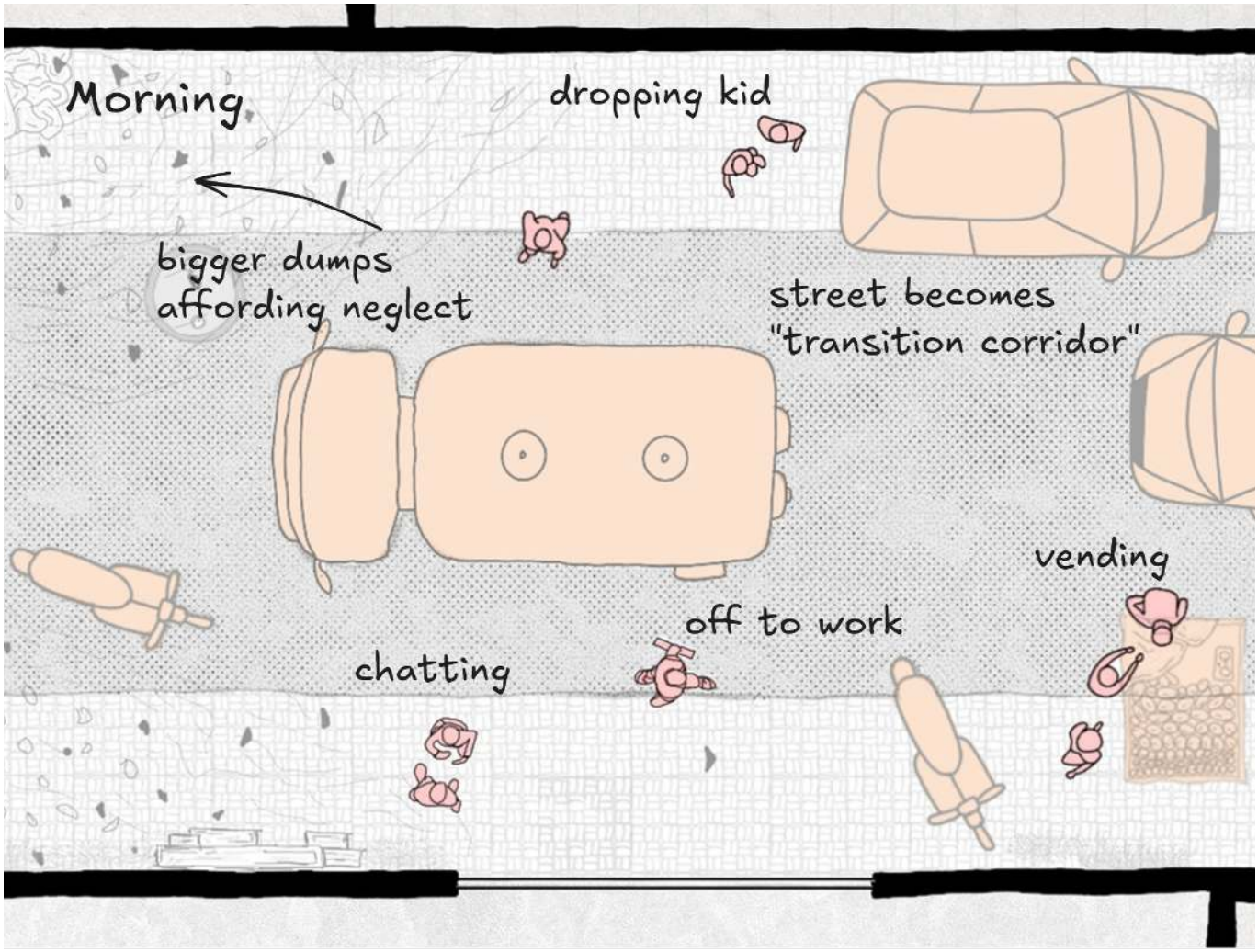


Fig. 4.7 - Transitional Movement in Morning

TRANSITIONAL MOVEMENT IN DOMESTIC EDGES

The morning hours along the street are defined by a steady flow of transitional movement as the street briefly transforms into a corridor of daily departure. Residents step out for work and school, vendors pass through offering milk, vegetables, or tea, and vehicles exit from driveways, reasserting the street's function as an access artery. The built form, compound walls and gates mediates these short-lived interactions. Gates open and close in quick intervals, marking the routine, while short halts at entrances for conversations or transactions occur without interrupting overall movement.

The edge's physical form allows for this fluidity: its defined boundaries guide circulation but do not entirely restrict engagement. The few shaded corners or recessed thresholds briefly host pauses, a parent waiting with a child, a neighbor exchanging morning greetings, illustrating how the residential street, even in moments of haste, supports the coexistence of movement and social exchange.

Through this rhythm, the architecture quietly choreographs temporal and bodily transitions, balancing privacy with public interaction at the scale of everyday life.

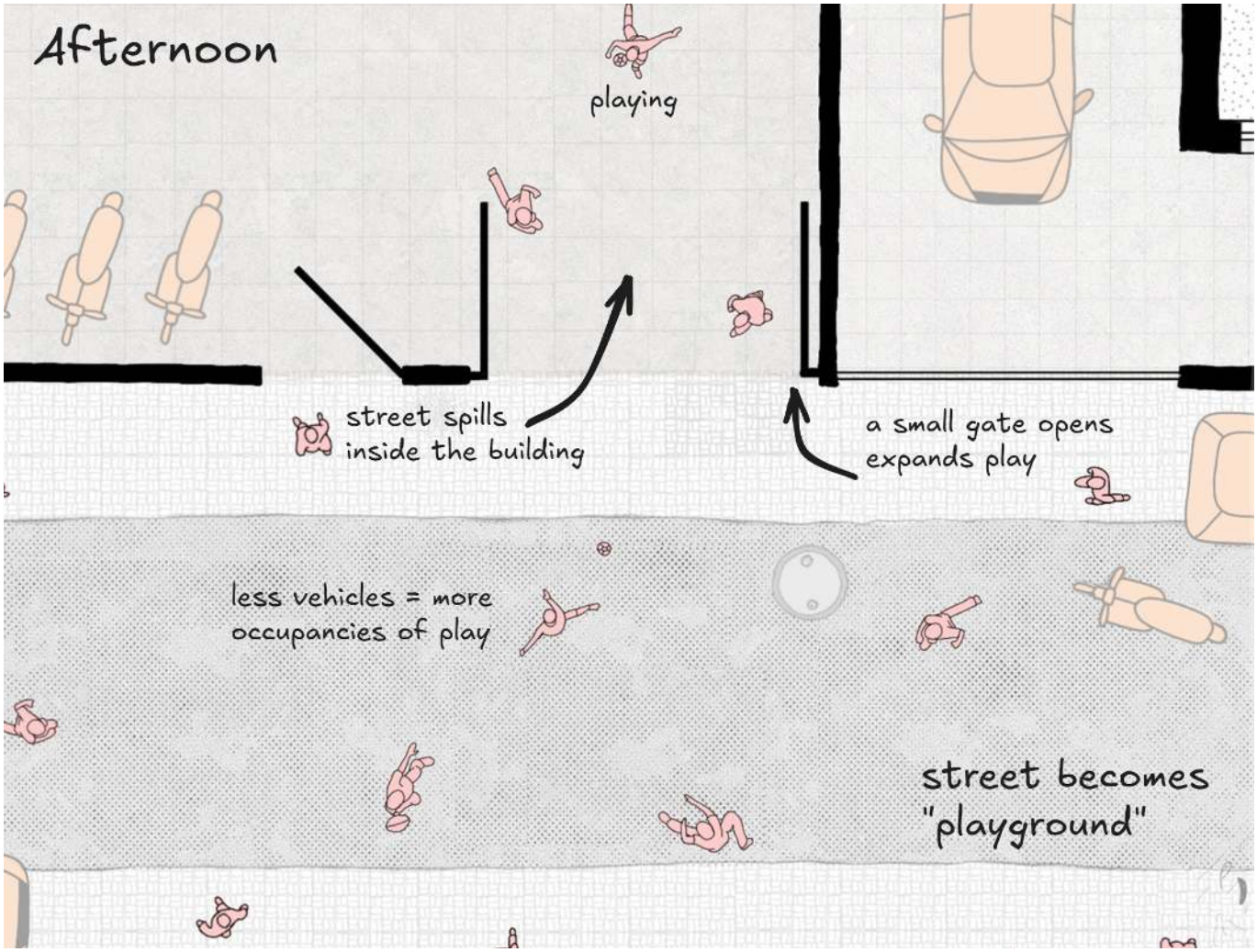


Fig. 4.8 - Act of Play in the Afternoon

EXTENSION OF DOMESTIC TERRITORY THROUGH THE ACT OF PLAY

By afternoon, the behavioral rhythm of the street shifts from transit to inhabitation. As traffic slows and the heat softens, the street transitions from a space of passage to one of active occupation, primarily through children's play. The opening of gates becomes a small but significant act, both physical and symbolic: it allows the building's front yard to spill outward, temporarily extending private territory into the shared street. The boundary of the building dissolves as toys, bicycles, and laughter flow beyond it, redrawing the spatial edge not as a fixed line but as an elastic threshold negotiated by routine.

In these moments, the street ceases to function merely as a corridor for movement and instead becomes an extension of the home. Parked vehicles, curbs, and shallow depressions become part of the play environment, improvised props that structure games and movement. The even surface of the road allows children to run freely, while parents watch from verandahs or doorsteps, visually connecting the building interior to the street exterior. The rhythm of play thus softens the street's architectural rigidity.

This daily reconfiguration alters not just activity but perception: what was a defined street edge becomes porous, adaptable, and socially charged. The residential architecture, through its setbacks and gates, affords this extension, inviting moments of encounter and coexistence between neighbors, children, and passersby. Through play, the street's form reveals its capacity to be more than just an infrastructural amenity; it becomes a lived and negotiated space of community, where behavior continuously redraws the boundary between private and public.

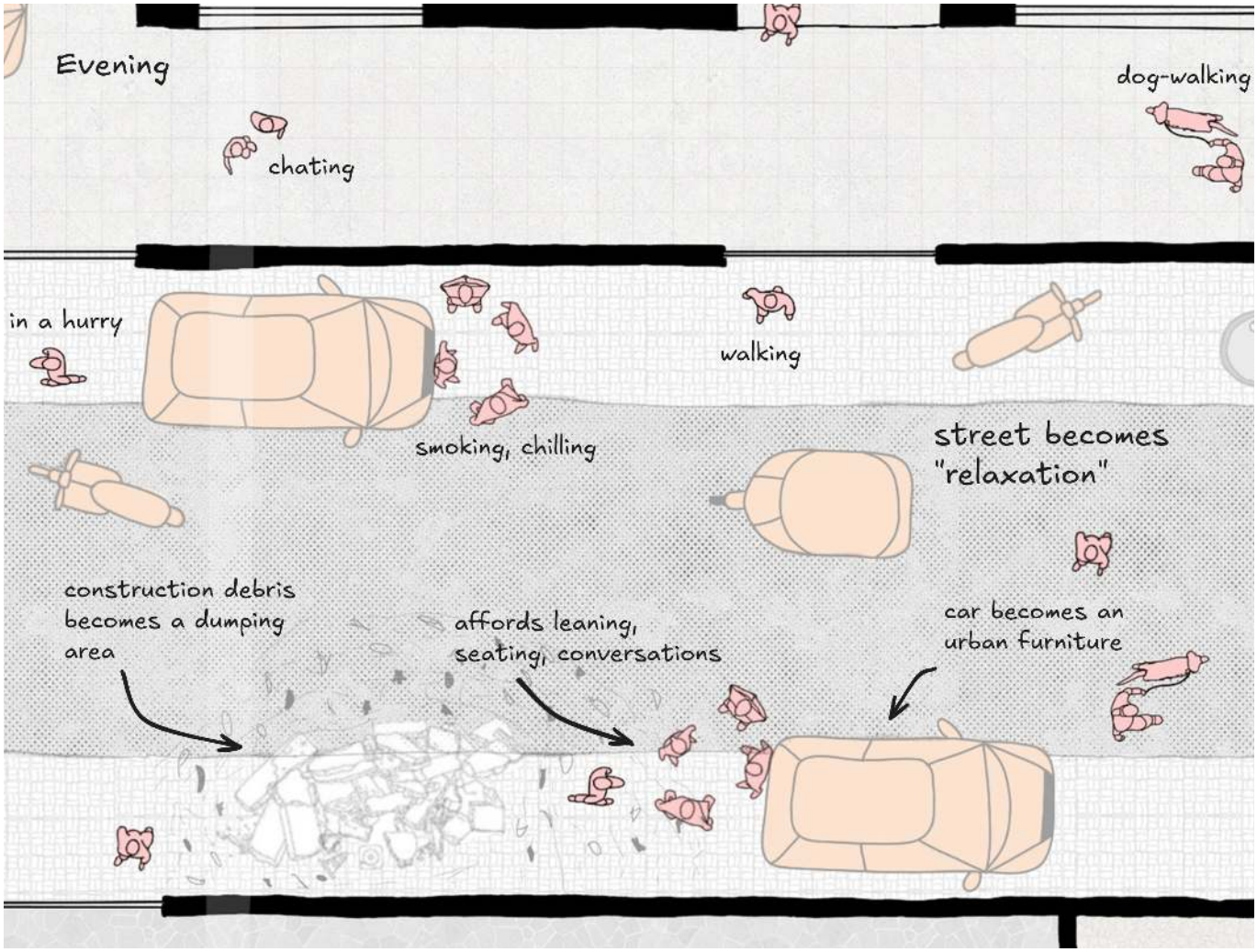


Fig. 4.9 - Social occupancies in the Evening

STATIONARY EDGES AND SOCIAL OCCUPANCIES

As evening settles, the street undergoes its final daily transformation, from a site of movement and play to one of pause and conversation. The return of residents from work reactivates the street, but not through motion; instead, it becomes a space of stillness and sociability. Parked cars line both edges, transforming from vehicles of mobility into stationary urban furniture. Their low height and firm surface afford leaning, sitting, and resting, unintentionally mirroring the function of a bench or plinth. According to Gibson's theory of affordances (1989), form invites bodily engagement through perception; here, the car becomes a perceived invitation, a surface at human scale that supports informal occupation.

The architecture of the residential edge reinforces this rhythm. Medium-height compound walls form a visual backdrop, while gates, thresholds, and recessed entries serve as conversational anchors. Men gather in small groups near parked cars, leaning or standing in relaxed postures; women pause at gates, conversing with neighbors or watching over children returning home. The lighting from nearby houses and street lamps creates zones of soft visibility, enhancing comfort and extending duration of stay. The atmosphere shifts from functional to communal, the street becomes a shared living room, animated by dialogue, gestures, and quiet familiarity.

This transformation illustrates how residential form accommodates social life not through design intent but through scale and adaptability. The edge conditions, i.e. walls, parked cars, gates, act as active agents in organizing evening routines, offering bodily support and visual connectivity. In this moment, the street ceases to be a purely infrastructural passage and emerges as a lived social environment, where rest replaces movement, and architecture, through its affordances, sustains the ordinary yet intimate theater of neighborhood life.

BEHAVIOR OF THE BODIES THROUGH FORM



Fig. 4.10 - Parked Cars as Urban Furniture

PARKED CARS AS URBAN FURNITURE

Parked cars, through their scale and shape, transform from vehicles of movement into stationary elements of social occupation. With bonnet heights between 600–700mm, they align closely with the anthropometric dimensions of a sitting or leaning body. This proportion allows residents, mostly men in the evenings, to rest, perch, or lean comfortably, converting the car into a low plinth or bench. The body recognizes the car's form through perception and memory, understanding it as sittable or lean-able, an instance of Gibson's affordance theory in action. This transformation demonstrates how even mobile infrastructure acquires architectural meaning through bodily engagement, enabling lingering and conversation where none was designed.

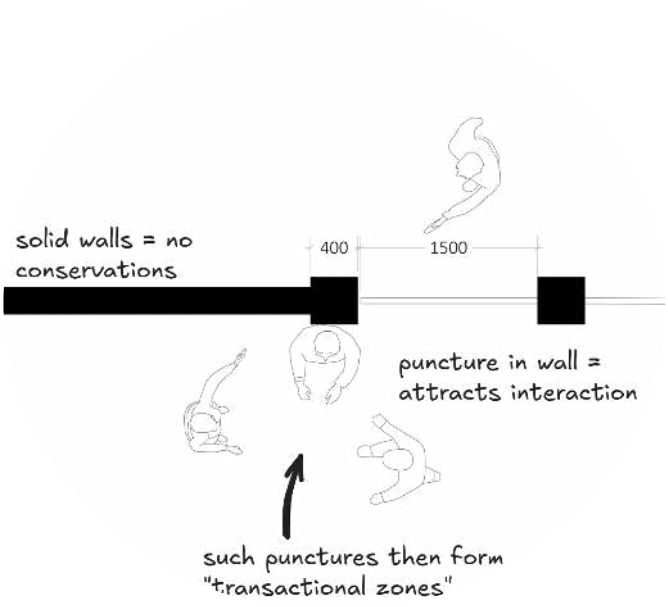


Fig. 4.11 - Gateposts as Anchors of Bodily Pause

GATEPOSTS AS BODILY PAUSE ANCHORS

The vertical gatepost, typically 400–450mm wide, provides an ideal scale for bodily pause. Its narrow surface offers tactile support for leaning or resting a hand, while its solidness gives psychological stability. As thresholds between private and public, gates become socially charged points of interaction, residents pausing to unlock, exchange words with neighbors, or simply observe street life. Their proportion and location at the junction of movement and pause naturally attract the body, creating what can be described as "transactional zones" (Gupte & Shetty, 2017), where form and social behavior intersect. The anthropometric comfort of the post enables brief, repeated engagements that animate the street's edge.

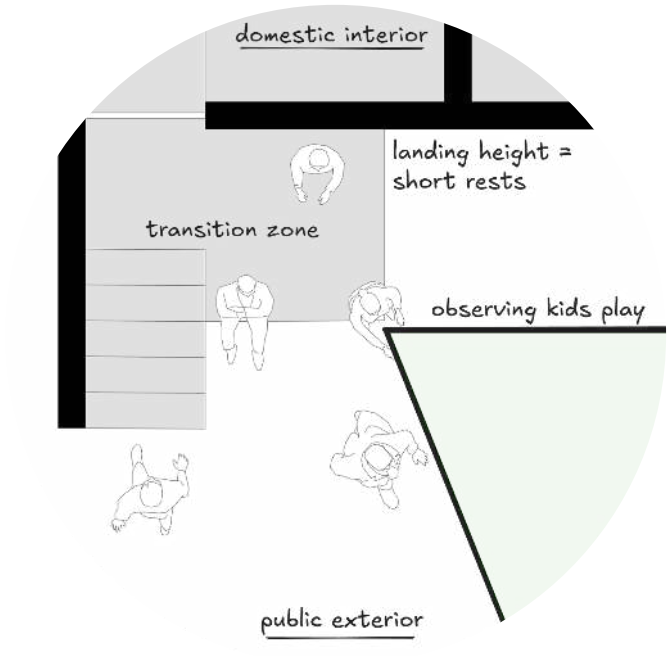


Fig. 4.12 - Steps as Transitional Seating

STEPS AS TRANSITIONAL SEATING

The steps leading up to house entrances and building lobby, usually with risers of 150mm and landings between 600–750mm high, perfectly accommodate the human body's posture for sitting or short rest. The comfortable seat height allows residents to sit with feet grounded and back slightly upright, sustaining longer pauses than a vertical wall would. These steps become spaces of observation and supervision, especially for women and elders, who sit watching over children playing in the semi-public front yards that often spill onto the street. As Gibson (1989) notes, affordances are perceived through body-scaled understanding; here, the step invites sitting not by function but by proportion. Thus, the threshold, originally meant for transition, becomes a zone of occupation and interaction between the domestic interior and the public exterior.

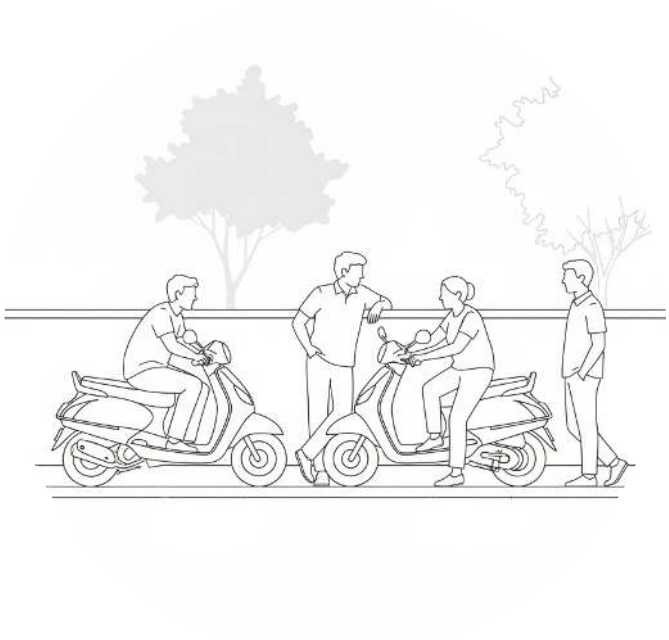


Fig. 4.13 - Informal Seating & Leaning Devices

INFORMAL LEANING & SEATING DEVICES

Two-wheelers parked along the residential edge introduce another anthropometric alignment into the street's social fabric. With seat heights around 800mm and handlebars near 1000–1100mm, they fall within the range of the body's waist and elbow. These proportions afford relaxed leaning or perched sitting, especially during informal evening gatherings. The repetitive rhythm of bikes along the street produces a continuous, low-height interface that both structures space and invites occupation. They perform as social furniture, movable yet predictable, architectural yet improvised. The anthropometric comfort of the two-wheeler transforms it from an object of transport into a facilitator of pause, conversation, and presence along the edge.

PATTERNS OF OCCUPANCY AND SPATIAL INTENSITY

ACTIVITIES	OCCUPANCY
Vendors	3
Walking(with pets)	18 (6)
Standing	8
Buying	2
Smoking	4
Chatting	5
Dogs	2
Cats	1
2 - Wheeler	7
4 - Wheeler	11
Jogging	9
Kids Playing	10
Total	**86**

Fig. 4.14 - Occupancy Table for a 50m stretch of Trimurti Chowk Rd

The residential street exhibits a quieter yet equally layered pattern of occupancy, where the rhythm of life is dictated less by commerce and more by routine, familiarity, and proximity. The total occupancy of around 90 activities within a 50-meter stretch reveals that, while the street lacks the density and diversity of a market, it sustains a steady continuity of use through small-scale, recurring gestures. These gestures such as walking, chatting, standing, smoking, or watching children play, reflect the street's transformation from a vehicular corridor into a lived domestic edge.

The form of the street directly informs this behavioral intensity. The continuous compound walls, punctuated by gates, create an edge that limits commercial exchange somewhat but encourages social familiarity. Activities cluster near thresholds, parked vehicles, and shaded areas, where the built form provides both enclosure and comfort. Unlike the market street, where edges blur between public and private, here the edge remains intact, producing a spatial order where occupation occurs intermittently but repeatedly throughout the day.

The patterns of use are also cyclical. Mornings are marked by movement, residents walking, jogging, or leaving for work, while afternoons and evenings invite slower engagements such as chatting, smoking, or children playing. The smaller spatial scale and quieter edge afford longer durations of pause and social recognition; neighbors greet, exchange short conversations, or supervise children spilling out from front yards onto the street. The intensity of life is not measured through numbers or transactions but through repetition and routine, where the architecture of the street supports a familiar rhythm of daily inhabitation.

4.3 NARROW LANE, USMANPURA



Fig. 5.1 - Key Plan locating Narrow Lane in Usmanpura



Fig. 5.2 - Narrow Lane, dilapidated

The narrow lane in Usmanpura, presents a compact residential condition defined by its enclosed spatial form and limited permeability. Measuring 5 meters in width, it is flanked on both sides by continuous compound walls, due to being a back-of-building edge. These uninterrupted edges create a tunnel-like spatial character where visibility, airflow, and social interaction are restricted, giving the street an introspective quality. The absence of commercial or active frontages directs its use primarily toward movement and brief pauses rather than prolonged occupation.



Fig. 5.3 - Tapri at the end of the street

Yet, despite its physical constraint, the street sustains a steady rhythm of everyday life, people walking to cross the street, standing, smoking, or engaging in short conversations near parked vehicles or narrow wall recesses, demonstrating how even in confined urban forms, bodies adapt and find ways to inhabit space.

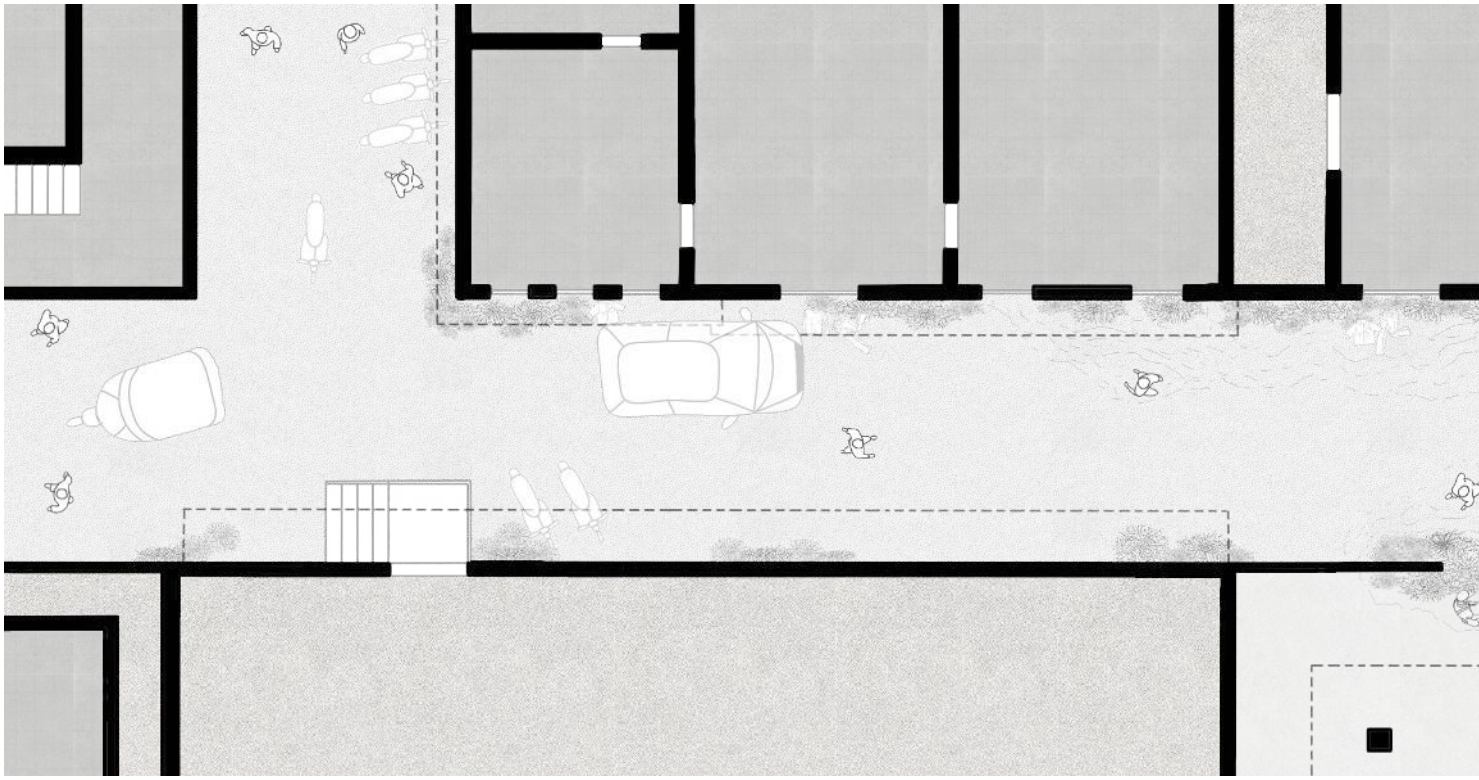


Fig. 5.4 - Establishing the relationship in Plan

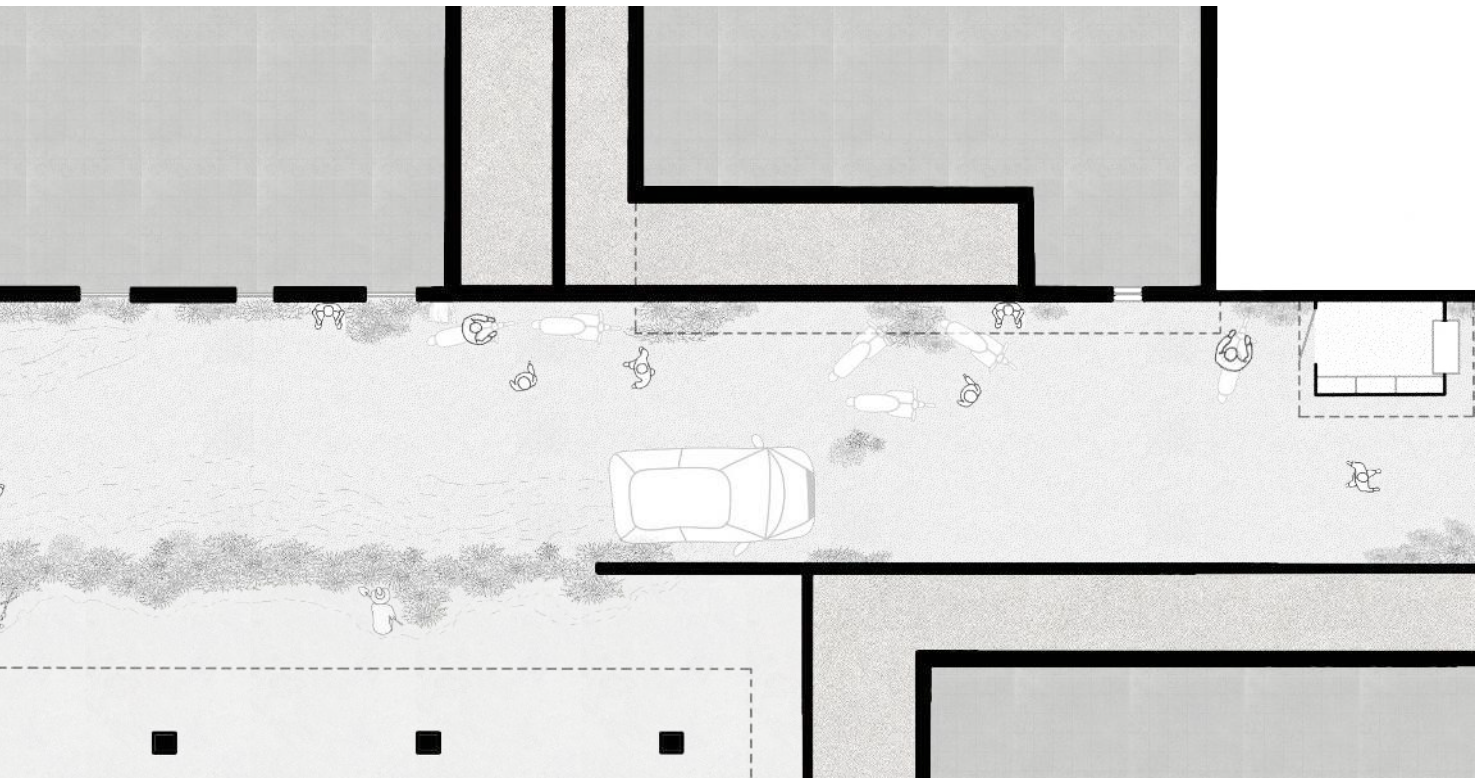
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND BEHAVIOR

The narrow lane reveals how a rigid and enclosed spatial form can enable an entirely different behavioral dynamic, one that is more personal, unrestrained, and appropriative. The street, flanked by blank compound walls with almost no openings or footpaths, creates a very clear distinction between what is private and what is public.

This lack of visual or physical transaction with the adjoining buildings turns the street into an autonomous realm detached from domestic oversight or commercial regulation, its hidden from the general public gaze. As a result, people begin to appropriate it for their own use, finding comfort and anonymity in its isolation.

Especially during the evenings and night, when visibility lowers and traffic reduces, the street transforms into a social yet informal ground for men to smoke, drink, and chat freely. The absence of surveillance and the clarity of boundary together produce a sense of liberation, a condition where behavior loosens precisely because the built form imposes no expectation of order or decorum.

The character of the street, therefore, generates a paradoxical relationship between rigidity and freedom. The high blank walls act as static, immovable limits, yet it is this very immobility that allows the body to behave with spontaneity. With no eyes from the adjoining buildings, no active edges, and no programmed function, the space becomes psychologically neutral, a threshold that belongs to everyone and no one at the same time.



The tapri or small tea stall located within this context becomes a subtle catalyst; its informal presence validates the act of gathering and transforms an otherwise transitional lane into a habitual meeting point. Here, Gibson's (1989) ecological theory of affordances finds resonance, the space does not dictate behavior through design but affords certain possibilities through its form and absence of function.

The wall's height and continuity afford leaning, the narrow width affords proximity, and the lack of transaction affords informality. In this condition, the intent of the user becomes crucial. Those who use the lane as a shortcut move swiftly through, unaffected by its affordances; the space remains invisible to them. But for those who seek to occupy, linger, or momentarily escape, the same street becomes an intimate territory of freedom.

This demonstrates the interdependence between threshold configuration and behavior, i.e. the more defined and impermeable the boundary, the greater the potential for self-appropriation.

Unlike the residential street where edges invite controlled interaction, or the market street where exchange dictates form, here the absence of exchange itself becomes productive. Thus, exemplifying how when a threshold ceases to connect, it begins to liberate, allowing the street to evolve from a passage into a privately claimed, collectively unregulated space.

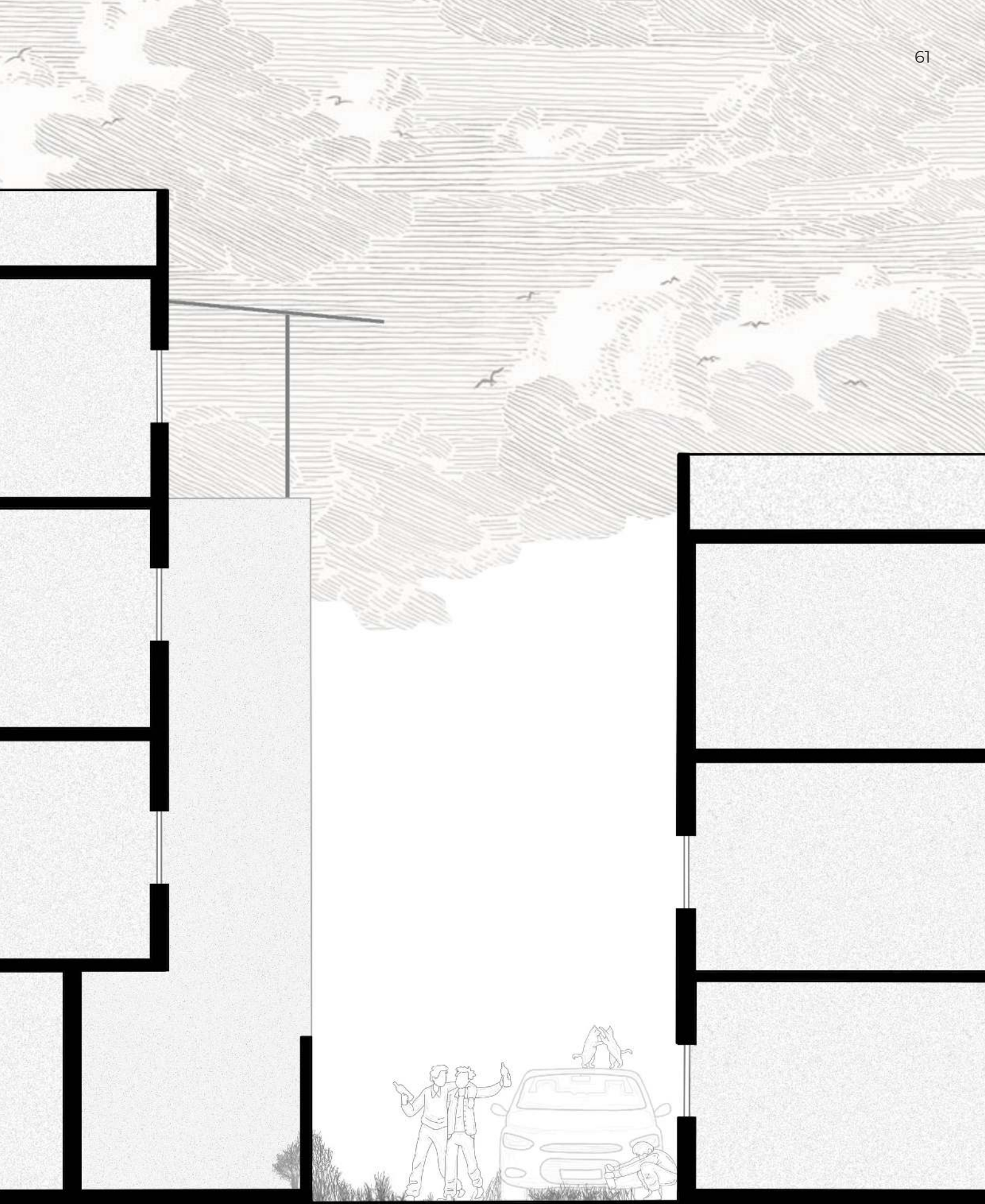


Fig. 5.5 - Establishing the relationship in Section

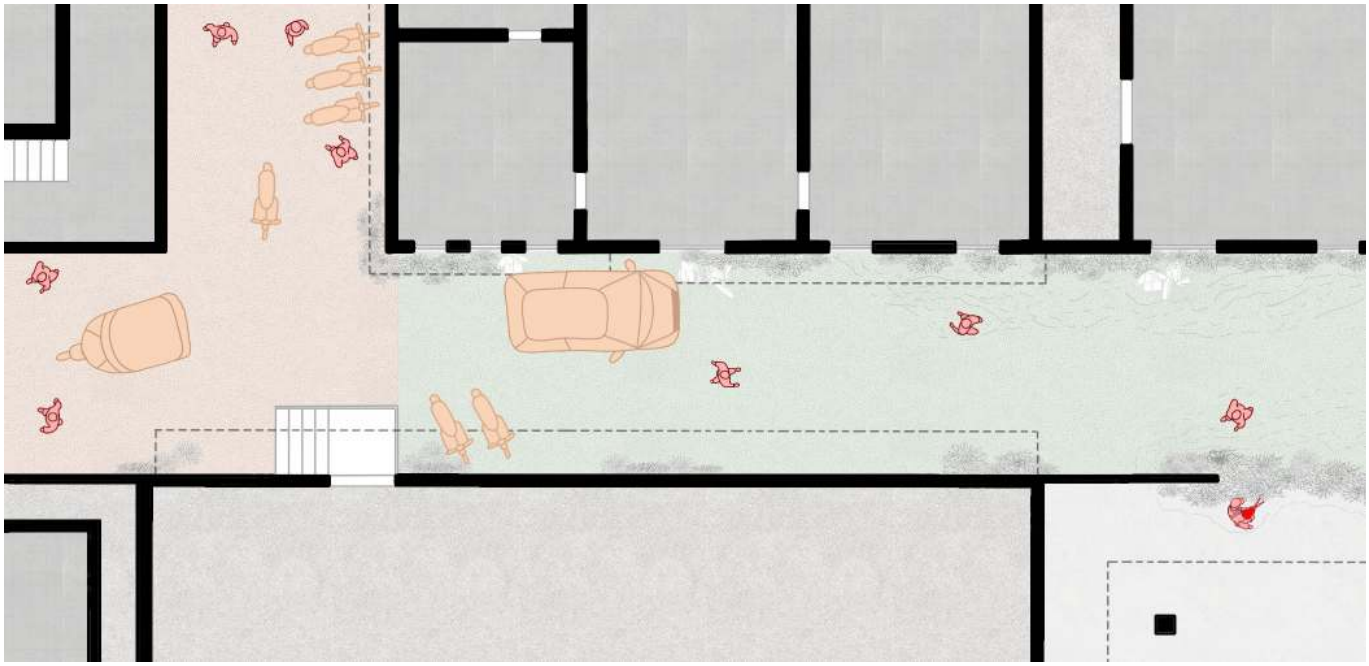


Fig. 5.6 - Diagramming patterns of relationship between form and behavior

Beyond its everyday rhythms of movement and pause, the street also accommodates layers of informal, often overlooked occupation that emerge precisely because of its anonymity. The absence of surveillance, combined with the physical containment of high walls, allows behaviors and practices that would be restricted or disapproved of in more visible and open streets. Parked two-wheelers line the edges throughout the day, used by nearby coaching students who leave their vehicles before attending class and four-wheeler used by the nearby clinic and office spaces in adjacent buildings.

For some, the lane becomes a space of transition; for others, it turns into a retreat, students lingering after class, chatting, or idling in small groups. Over time, these repeated pauses evolve into social rituals: smoking, listening to music, or simply being together in a space that feels detached from control. Friendships, habits, and routines are formed not in designed plazas or open courtyards, but within this overlooked corridor framed by concrete and shadow.

The physical form of the lane reinforces these behaviors. Its blank walls provide both visual cover and a sense of enclosure, while the parked vehicles act as informal enclosures within the enclosure, temporary walls that define micro-territories of occupation. Even neglect becomes spatially generative: discarded clothes, overgrown weeds, and scattered litter signal that the street is unmonitored, and this very condition becomes a cue for freedom. What might read as decay or disorder in formal urban terms here becomes a spatial affordance and an environment where people feel unobserved, unjudged, and therefore uninhibited.

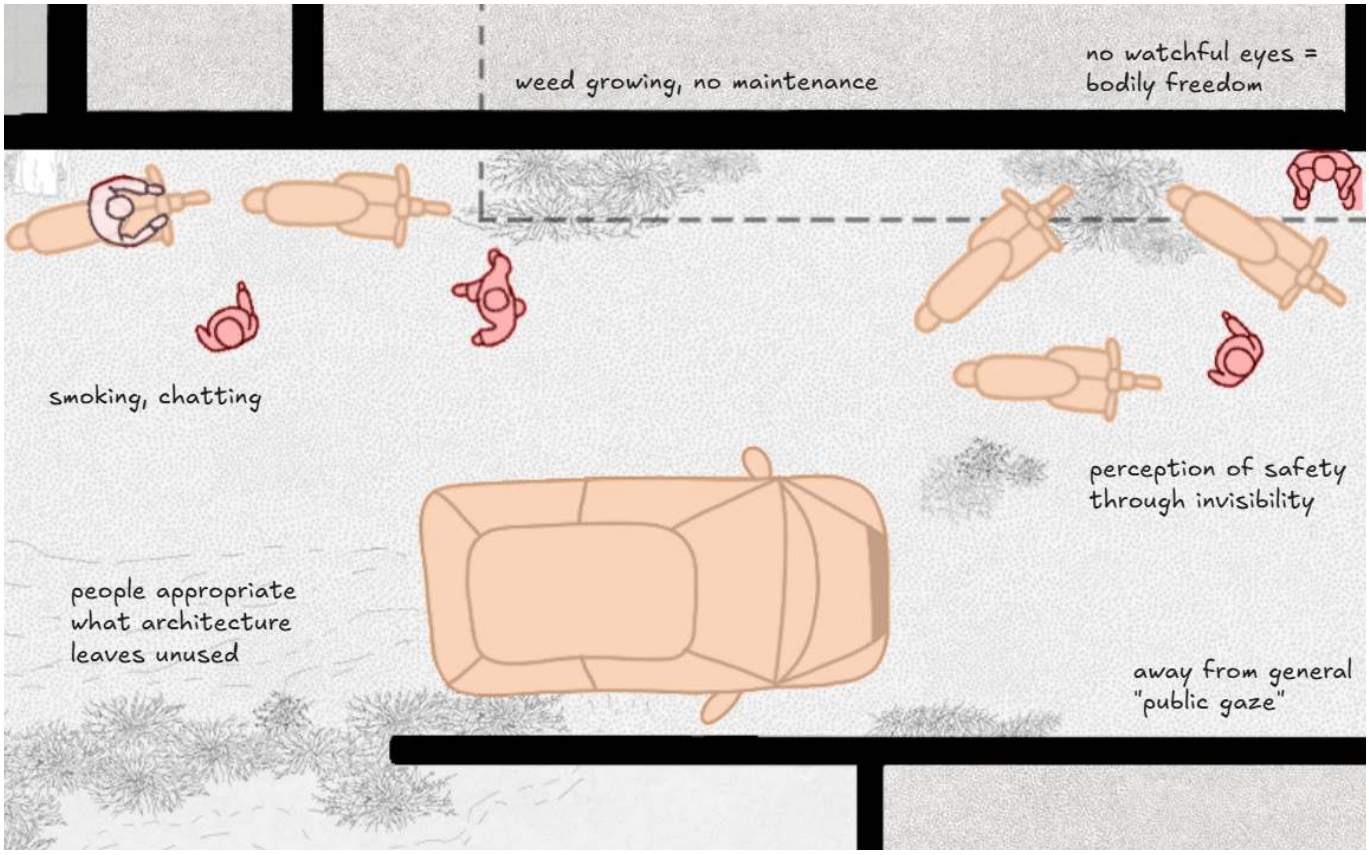


Fig. 5.7 - Lane as a refuge

THE LANE AS A REFUGE

The narrow lane functions as a spatial refuge, a place where anonymity becomes a defining behavioral condition. The continuous compound walls on either side eliminate visual permeability, creating a sense of enclosure that isolates the street from its surroundings. Without active thresholds, shopfronts, or domestic facades, the space feels detached from both public surveillance and private oversight. This absence of watchful eyes encourages a particular kind of bodily freedom, residents, students, and passersby linger, smoke, or chat in groups, unbothered by the expectations of formal conduct that define more visible streets. The enclosure transforms the street into what Michel de Certeau might call a “space of tactics,” where people appropriate what architecture leaves unused, adapting it for private or semi-social purposes.

In this sense, the lane’s blank walls do not only restrict vision but also construct a psychological affordance: they create a perception of safety through invisibility. Behaviors that rely on privacy, such as smoking, idling, even small social gatherings find comfort in this spatial opacity. The rigid architectural boundary, instead of suppressing activity, reconfigures it into informal, self-defined expressions of leisure and autonomy. Thus, the lane’s anonymity becomes its most powerful social feature, allowing it to operate as a refuge from the order and exposure of formal public space.

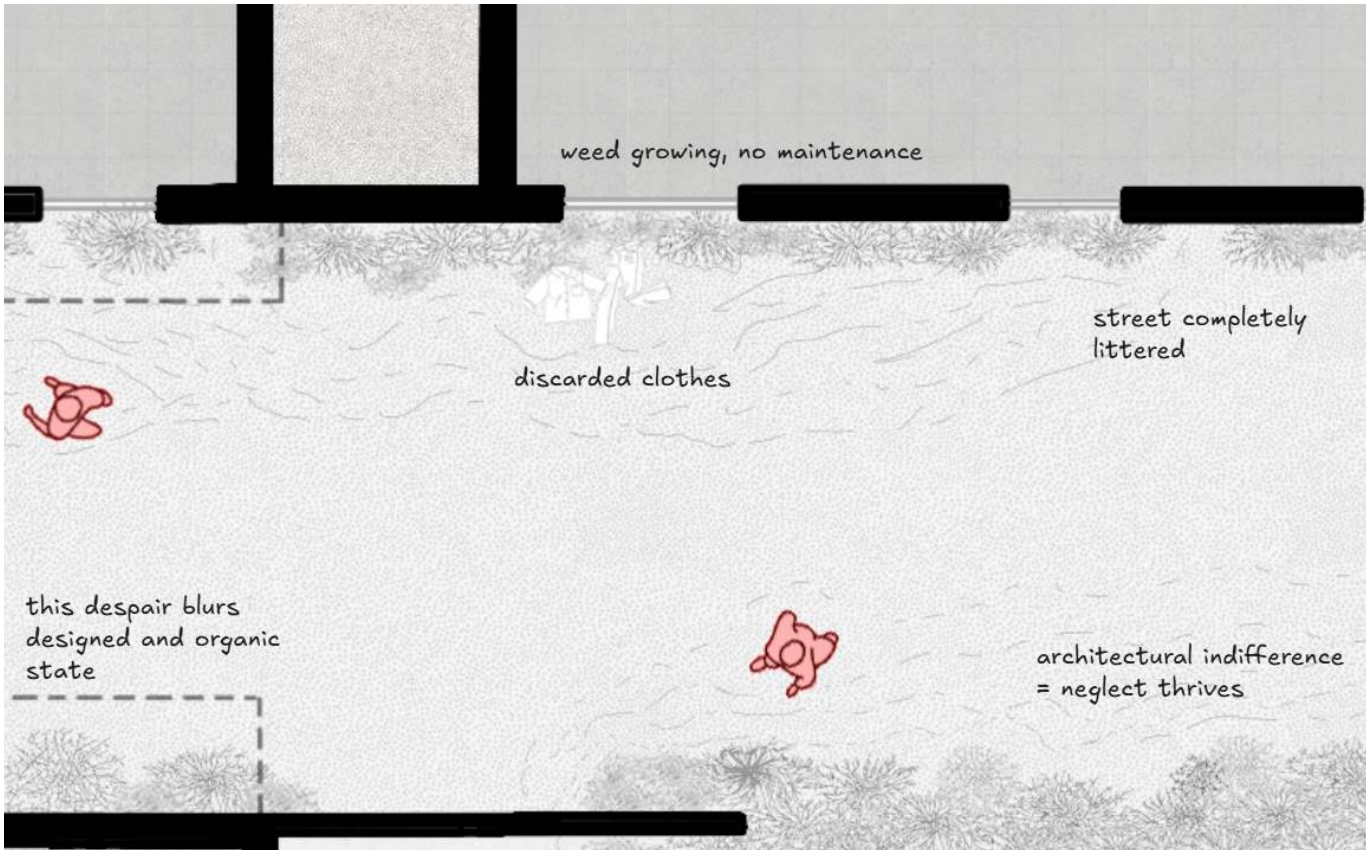


Fig. 5.8 - Neglect as an Affordance

NEGLECT AS AN AFFORDANCE

The physical neglect of the street that is visible through litter, overgrown weeds, and discarded objects, acts as a subtle yet potent affordance that shapes how people relate to the space. Drawing from J.J. Gibson's ecological theory of affordances (1989), the environment invites certain behaviors not only through its form but also through its condition. The unkempt surfaces, worn walls, and accumulation of debris signify a lack of ownership, producing a visual language of abandonment that users read as permission to occupy freely. The presence of waste or overgrowth signals to passersby that this is a space where formal control has receded, allowing for acts of loitering, resting, or gathering without fear of reprimand.

This state of disrepair blurs the line between the designed and the organic. Nature, through the slow growth of weeds, participates in redefining the edge, softening the built rigidity and marking time's passage on architecture. Similarly, the scattered litter becomes an indicator of recurring human presence, a trace of informal life rather than a sign of absence. In this way, neglect generates its own form of habitation: one that thrives precisely because of architectural indifference. The lane's physical decay becomes both symptom and facilitator of social use, revealing how the lack of maintenance, often seen as urban failure, can paradoxically sustain public vitality through informal, self-regulated behavior.

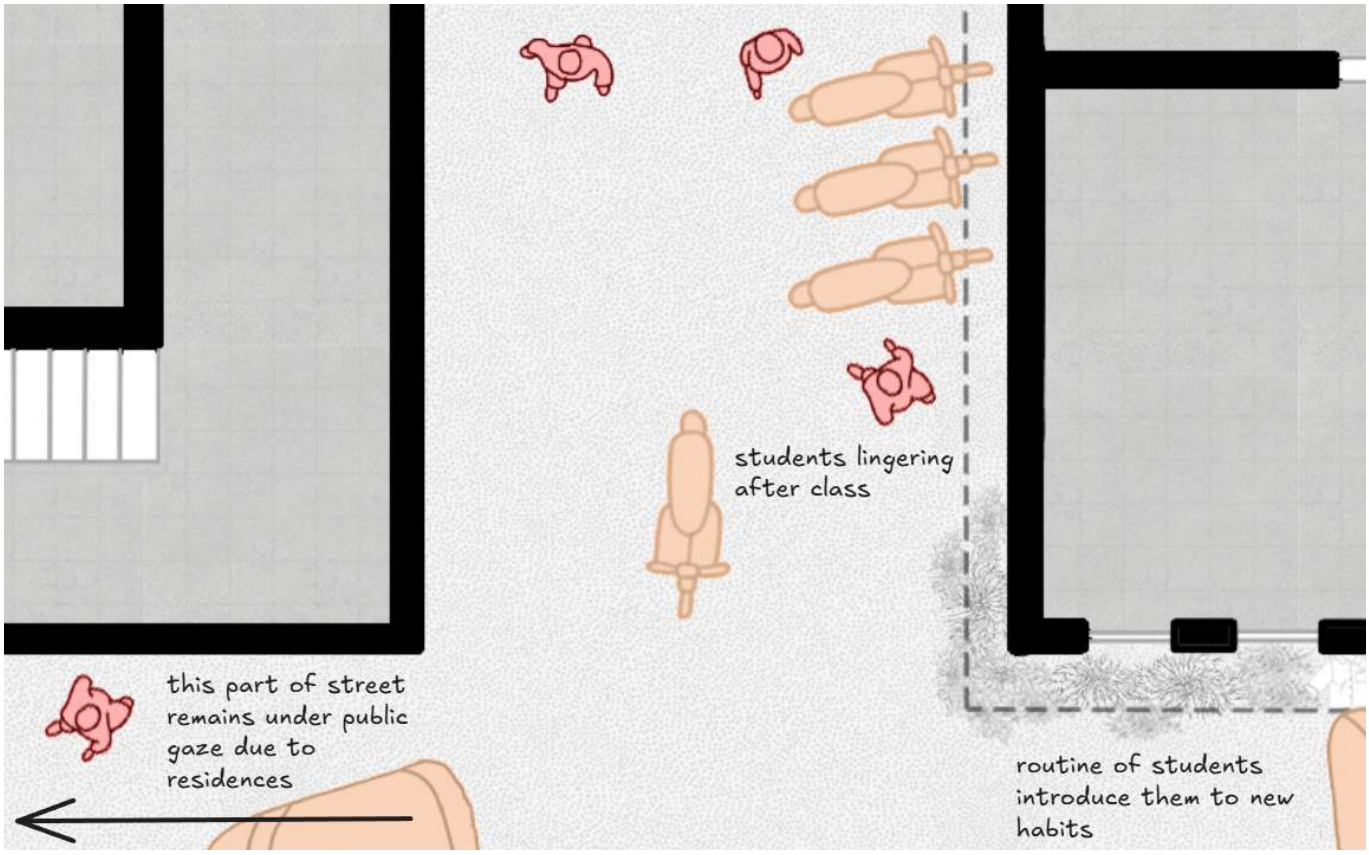


Fig. 5.9 - Behavioral Catalyst

COACHING CLASS AS A BEHAVIOR CATALYST

A nearby coaching class plays an unintentional yet crucial role in activating the lane, introducing a younger demographic that redefines its social character. Every morning and evening, the street witnesses cycles of arrival and dispersal as students park their two-wheelers, chat briefly, and move toward the class.

The lane thus becomes a transitional space, a buffer between institutional discipline and everyday freedom. For many students, it also becomes a site of lingering after class hours: small groups sit on parked scooters, lean against walls, or loiter near the tapri at the end of the lane. Over time, these recurring pauses have produced a micro-community of familiarity and routine. The coaching class's adjacency reveals how institutional proximity can indirectly shape public behavior.

The students' repeated engagement lends the lane a temporal rhythm, quiet in the afternoon, animated before and after classes. Social relations, too, are formed here: friendships, conversations, and habits that emerge not in formal recreational spaces but in the residual voids of the city. The lane, initially serving a purely functional role as an access path, transforms into a social threshold where youth, informality, and spatial anonymity intersect. Its architectural stillness provides the backdrop against which human routines unfold, turning this overlooked corridor into a quietly vibrant site of everyday urban life.

BEHAVIOR OF THE BODIES THROUGH FORM

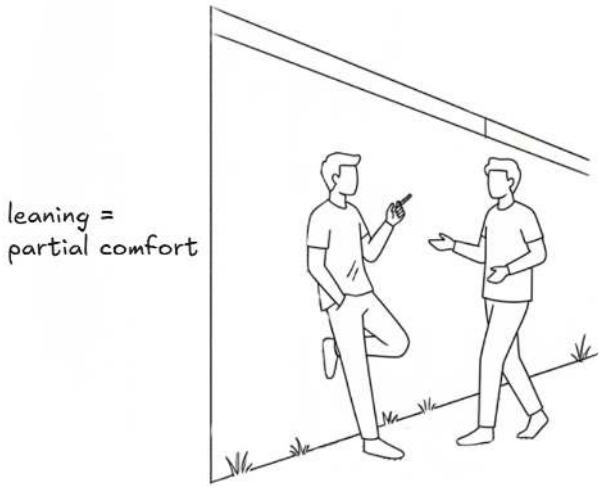


Fig. 5.10 - Wall as vertical resting area

WALL AS A VERTICAL RESTING AREA

The 2100mm-high compound wall along the Usmanpura lane defines the street's posture. Though it discourages sitting, it affords leaning, a partial comfort at shoulder or back level. People rest against it briefly while chatting or smoking, creating a rhythm of short pauses along the edge. As Gibson (1989) notes, the body perceives affordances instinctively; here, the smooth, upright surface invites standing rest rather than full occupation. The wall thus becomes a vertical resting plane, activating the blank edge through small, repeated bodily gestures.

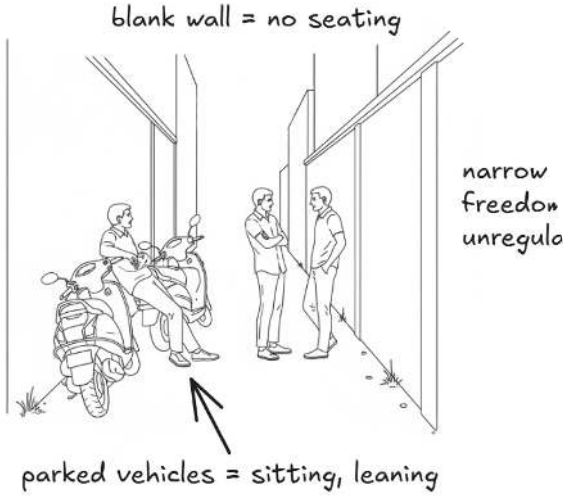


Fig. 5.11 - Extension of body - 2 Wheeler

2-WHEELER AS EXTENSION OF BODY

Parked scooters, with seat heights around 750mm, align closely with natural sitting dimensions. Their scale and tactility turn them into impromptu furniture, places to sit, lean, or converse. People adapt them socially, perching sideways or facing each other across vehicles. This informal adaptation transforms a mobility object into communal infrastructure, showing how compatibility of scale alone can convert private property into public affordance.



Fig. 5.12 - Social Ledge of the Tapri

TAPRI AS A SOCIAL LEDGE

The tapri counter, standing roughly at 1050–1100mm, corresponds to elbow height, enabling a natural leaning posture. Customers rest one arm, sip tea, and chat while standing, a micro-architecture of everyday sociability. The counter's scale and surface afford quick, repeated interactions, transforming a vending point into a temporal social hub. Its proportion sustains pause without permanence, merging bodily comfort with conversational ease.

PATTERNS OF OCCUPANCY AND SPATIAL INTENSITY

ACTIVITIES	OCCUPANCY
Walking	6
Sitting	3
Standing	5
Chatting	13
Smoking	14
Drinking	10
Dogs	1
Cats	1
2 - Wheeler	13
4 - Wheeler	8
Sleeping	1
Rushing Through	4
Total	**79**

Fig. 5.13 - Occupancy Table for a 50m stretch of Usmanpura Lane

The occupancy mapping of the street reveals a markedly different spatial condition from that of the market street. Within a 50-meter stretch, approximately eighty distinct actions were recorded. While the number of bodies present is comparable to that of the residential street, the nature of occupation here shifts entirely. Instead of transactional or familial exchanges, activities are limited to brief, individual engagements such as smoking, chatting, or drinking, with no long-duration pauses or collective routines.

This contrast underscores how the form of the edge directly informs behavior. Both the residential street and the Usmanpura lane share a similar spatial width of five meters, yet their behavioral ecologies diverge dramatically due to the differing nature of their boundaries. The residential edge, articulated through gates, recesses, and openings, affords permeability and social contact, encouraging everyday gestures of interaction. In contrast, the narrow lane is lined with continuous, blank compound walls that afford no visual or physical transaction between the private and public.

As a result, the street's activity becomes inward and self-contained, its social life organized around individual rather than collective use. The lack of architectural permeability limits diversity, but simultaneously enables informality and anonymity, producing a form of freedom that allows for unregulated behaviors. Here, the edge's opacity becomes a behavioral determinant, proving that even when scale remains constant, it is the configuration of thresholds, and not the dimensions of space, that defines intensity and type of human occupation.

4.4 DARGAH RD, GARKHEDA PARISAR



Fig. 6.1 - Key Plan locating Dargah Road in Garkheda Parisar



Fig. 6.2 - Vendors spread out all over the footpath



Fig. 6.3 - Buyers spilling on the vehicular highway

Dargah Road Market, located in the Garkheda Parisar area of Aurangabad, represents a distinct urban condition where commerce and mobility intersect along a high-speed vehicular highway. Functioning primarily as a connector between old neighborhoods and new extensions of the city, the road simultaneously supports through traffic and localized vending activity. Stretching over approximately 500 meters, the street is defined by a wide carriageway flanked by loosely formed edges, where the absence of a continuous footpath or setback has allowed for spontaneous and adaptive forms of occupation.

Throughout the day, the edges of Dargah Road transform into a linear marketplace, fruit and vegetable vendors on tarpaulins, small tea stalls, and seasonal vendors operate in close proximity to the moving traffic. Buyers on two-wheelers or in cars make quick halts, engaging in brief exchanges before merging back into the flow, generating a rhythm of short-duration transactions. Despite its infrastructural scale, the road accommodates a fine-grained social life where informal economies coexist with constant movement.

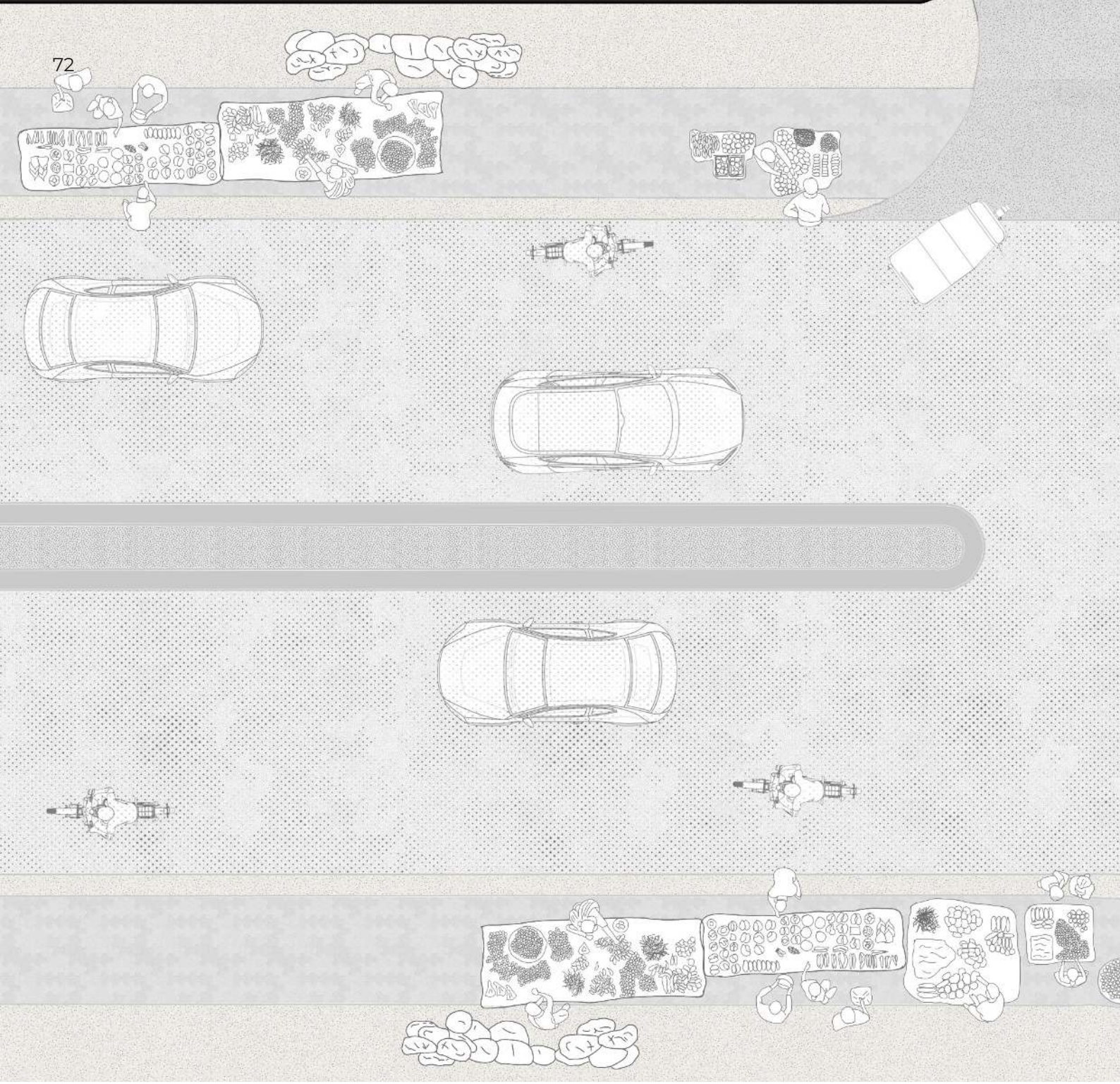
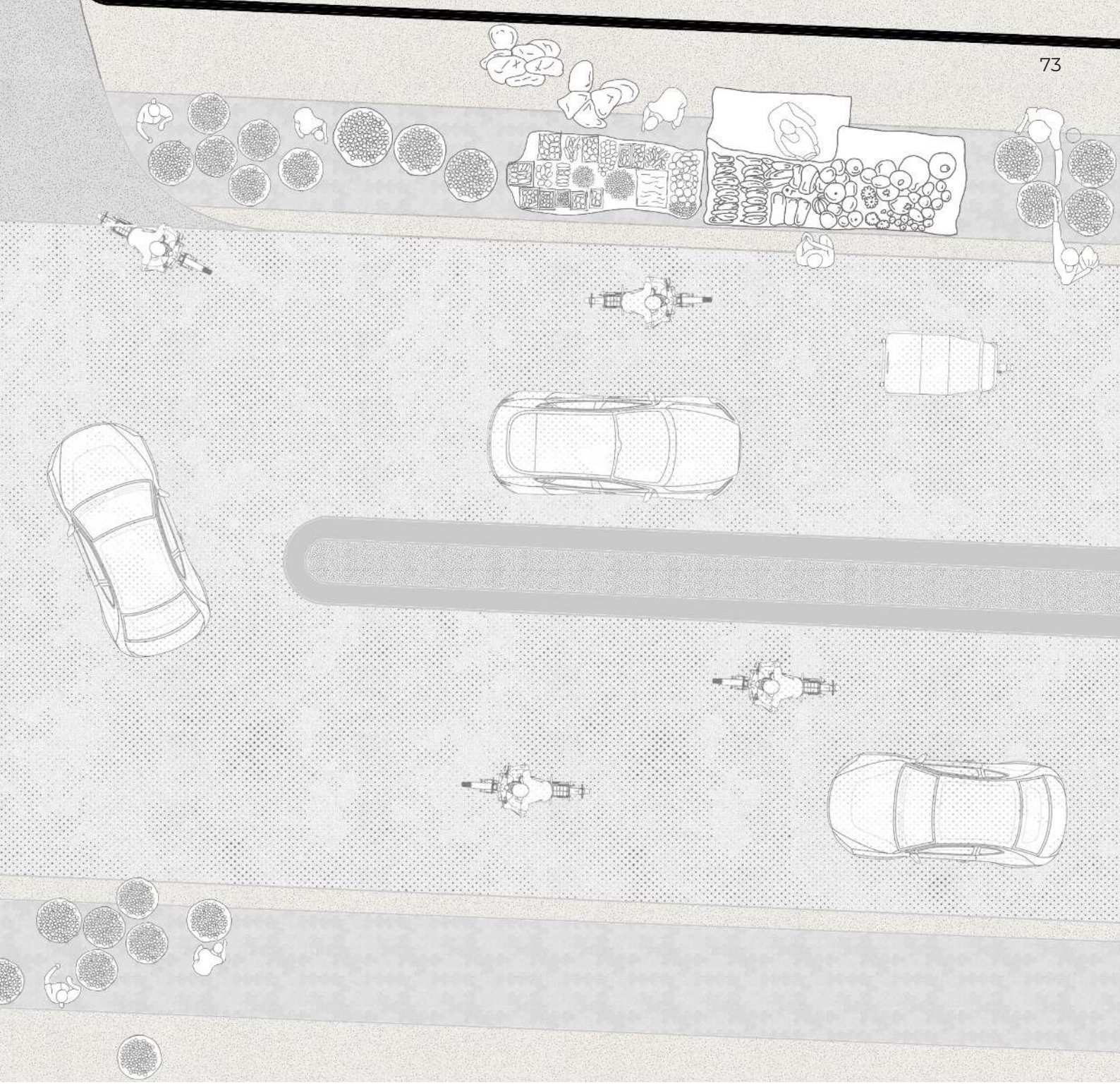


Fig. 6.4 - Establishing the relationship in Plan

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND BEHAVIOR

The street functions as a street of thresholds, between mobility and pause, infrastructure and inhabitation. Its form, characterized by a wide vehicular carriageway and undefined edges, produces a dynamic but fragile interface between fast movement and temporary occupation. The absence of a formal sidewalk allows for spontaneous appropriation on the footpath, where fruit vendors, tea sellers, and buyers on vehicles continually negotiate their use of space. Here, the threshold is horizontal like a blurred line between the cars and the edge that sustains short-duration behaviors such as buying, waiting, or standing.



Behavior on this street is shaped by intent and temporality. Vendors arrive early and occupy the edge for long durations, their setups compact and mobile, while buyers engage only momentarily, pulling over two-wheelers or cars, purchasing goods, and rejoining the flow of the highway. These transactions depend on visibility, accessibility, and the speed of interaction, all governed by the openness of the edge. The same form that affords vending also constrains it: proximity to traffic enforces constant alertness, and noise, dust, and movement dictate brevity.

The sectional configuration of the street reveals a asymmetrical distribution of occupation, where the central carriageway dominates in width but the narrow shoulders at either end sustain most of the human activity. The vending edges, slightly raised from the asphalt, yet level enough to permit vehicular spillover, operate as thin transitional bands between infrastructure and habitation. Here, posture and gesture are constantly shaped by the precarious proximity to traffic: vendors sit or squat low to the ground, minimizing their presence, while buyers lean forward or extend arms from two-wheelers and cars to transact without dismounting.



Fig. 6.5 - Establishing the relationship in Section

Unlike the vertical layering of the enclosed intimacy of the residential edge, this section performs through horizontality and exposure. The absence of enclosure removes the sense of safety, producing bodily behaviors defined by alertness, motion, and brevity. Temporary setups such as crates, baskets, carts mark the only vertical punctuation in an otherwise flat field. Each transaction becomes a fleeting occupation of risk and opportunity, where form dictates duration, and the body negotiates balance between mobility and pause.



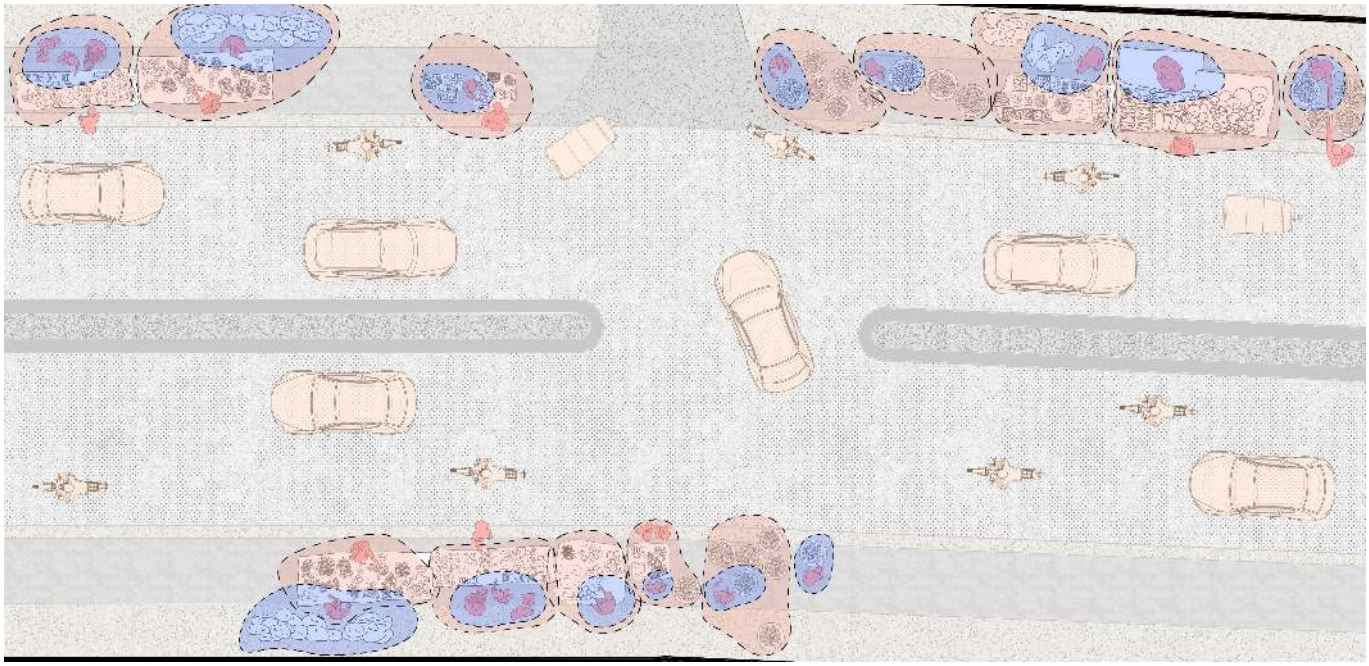


Fig. 6.6 - Diagramming patterns of relationship between form and behavior

The behavioral configuration along the street unfolds as a continuous negotiation between speed and pause, between the infrastructural scale of the highway and the human scale of vending and buying. The spatial form, wide carriageways flanked by soft, uncurbed footpath, creates a condition where the edges are undefined yet actively appropriated. Vendors arrange their tarps and displays directly along this loose boundary, orienting themselves toward both the road and the passing vehicles. The resulting pattern of occupation forms a rhythmic sequence of micro-markets interspersed with voids of vehicular movement.

Each vending cluster establishes its own small pocket of spatial intensity. Vendors positioned in groups benefit from mutual visibility and collective attraction, drawing more buyers who can navigate between multiple stalls within a short stretch. In contrast, individual vendors occupying isolated points along the edge rely on direct roadside exposure, catering primarily to motorists who slow down briefly or stop at the periphery. These differentiated spatial strategies produce alternating densities of behavior, zones of high exchange and interaction punctuated by stretches of movement and transit.

The lack of physical separation between the vending zone and the traffic lane leads to fluid patterns of behavior: buyers often remain half on the road, leaning from two-wheelers or cars to complete quick purchases; vendors continuously adjust their carts or displays to maintain distance and visibility. This perpetual reconfiguration blurs the conventional boundary between pedestrian and vehicular realms.

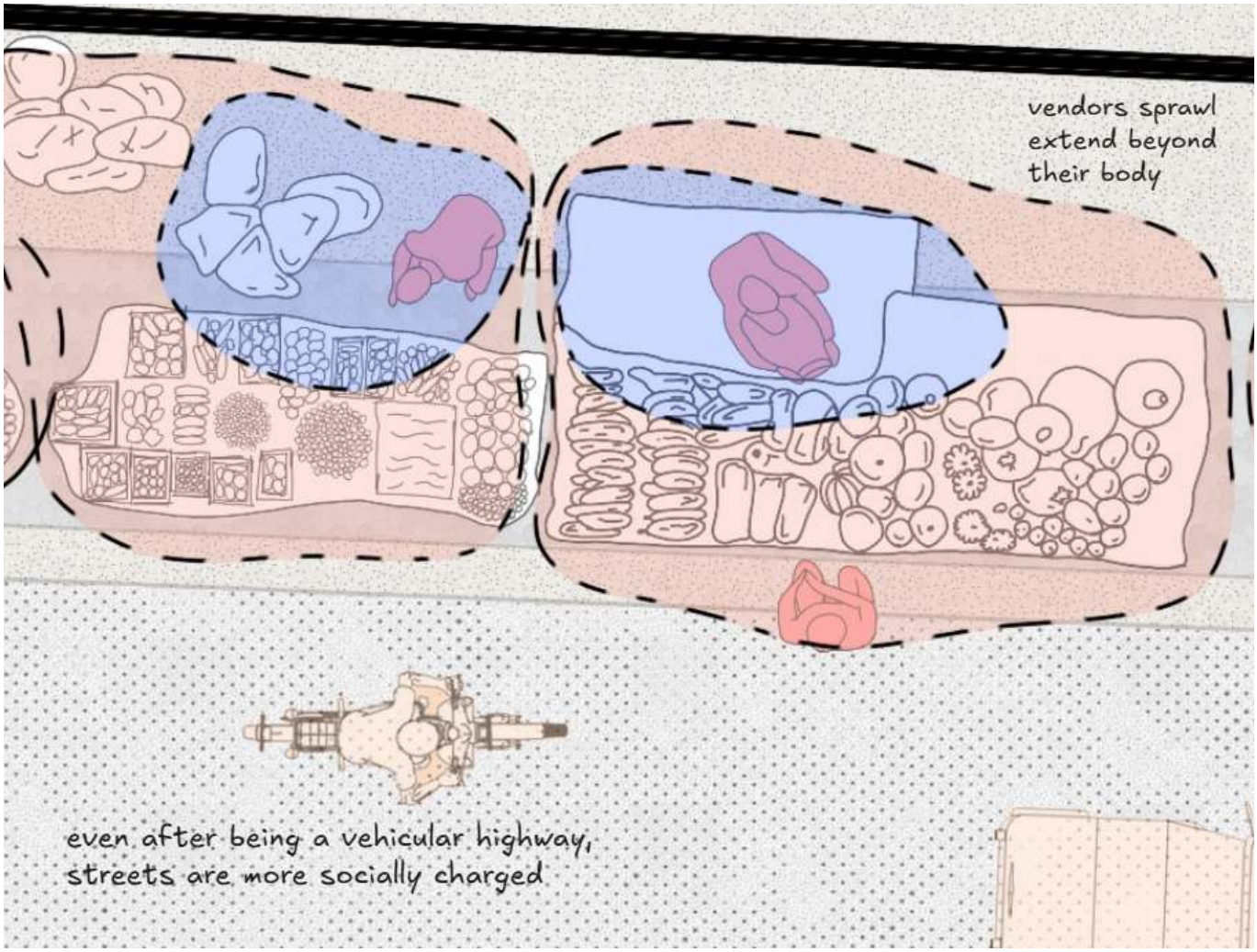


Fig. 6.7 - Footpath as the primary space of claim

FOOTPATH AS PRIMARY CLAIM

The diagram reveals the footpath as the principal zone of informal occupation, where all vending activity consolidates in a linear sequence along the street edge. The slight elevation and flat, continuous surface afford stability and visibility, allowing vendors to lay out goods, position their sprawls, and engage directly with buyers. This infrastructural strip becomes an active threshold, not a leftover of the highway, but its most socially charged surface. Its form simultaneously provides safety from moving traffic and a sense of legitimacy through proximity to the street edge.

By occupying the footpath, vendors transform a formal infrastructural element into a spatial resource for livelihood, creating a fine balance between order and improvisation. The footpath, therefore, functions not merely as circulation infrastructure but as a negotiated territory of claim, mediating between architectural edge and vehicular corridor.

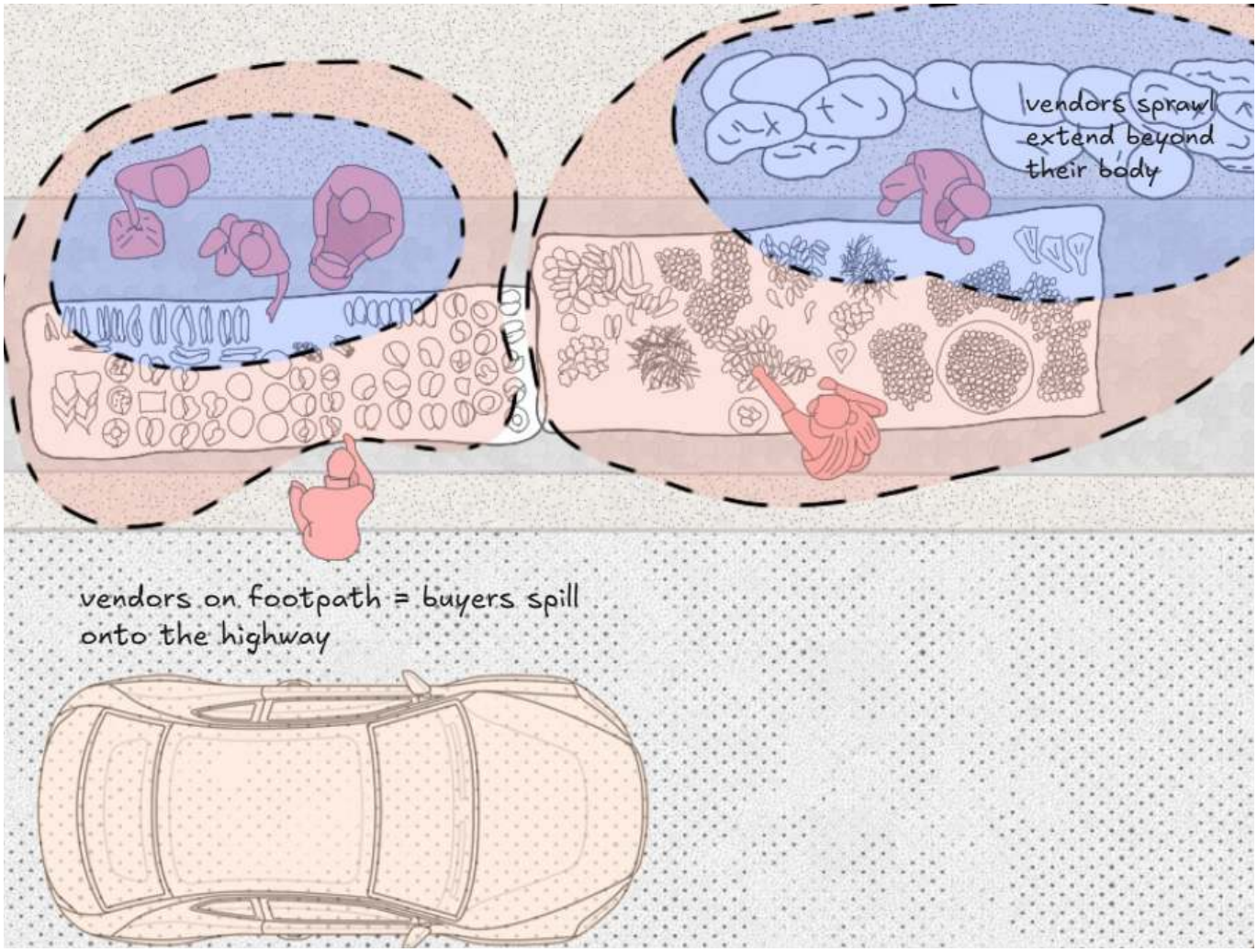


Fig. 6.8 - Pedestrians spilling onto the highway

SPILLOVER OF PEDESTRIANS ONTO THE HIGHWAY

The diagram illustrates how the boundary between the footpath and the road dissolves through patterns of pedestrian movement. Buyers, while interacting with vendors, frequently step off the footpath onto the metaled street, occupying the in-between space where commerce and movement overlap. This behavioral spillover converts the vehicular surface into a temporary pedestrian ground, challenging the conventional separation between zones of flow and zones of stay. The market's spatial form, particularly the proximity of vending to the road, forces this negotiation, compelling pedestrians to remain alert to both vehicles and vendors.

The act of crossing, pausing, and retreating onto the footpath becomes rhythmic and continuous. This interaction turns the highway into a shared behavioral field, where visibility and awareness govern safety more than formal physical demarcation.

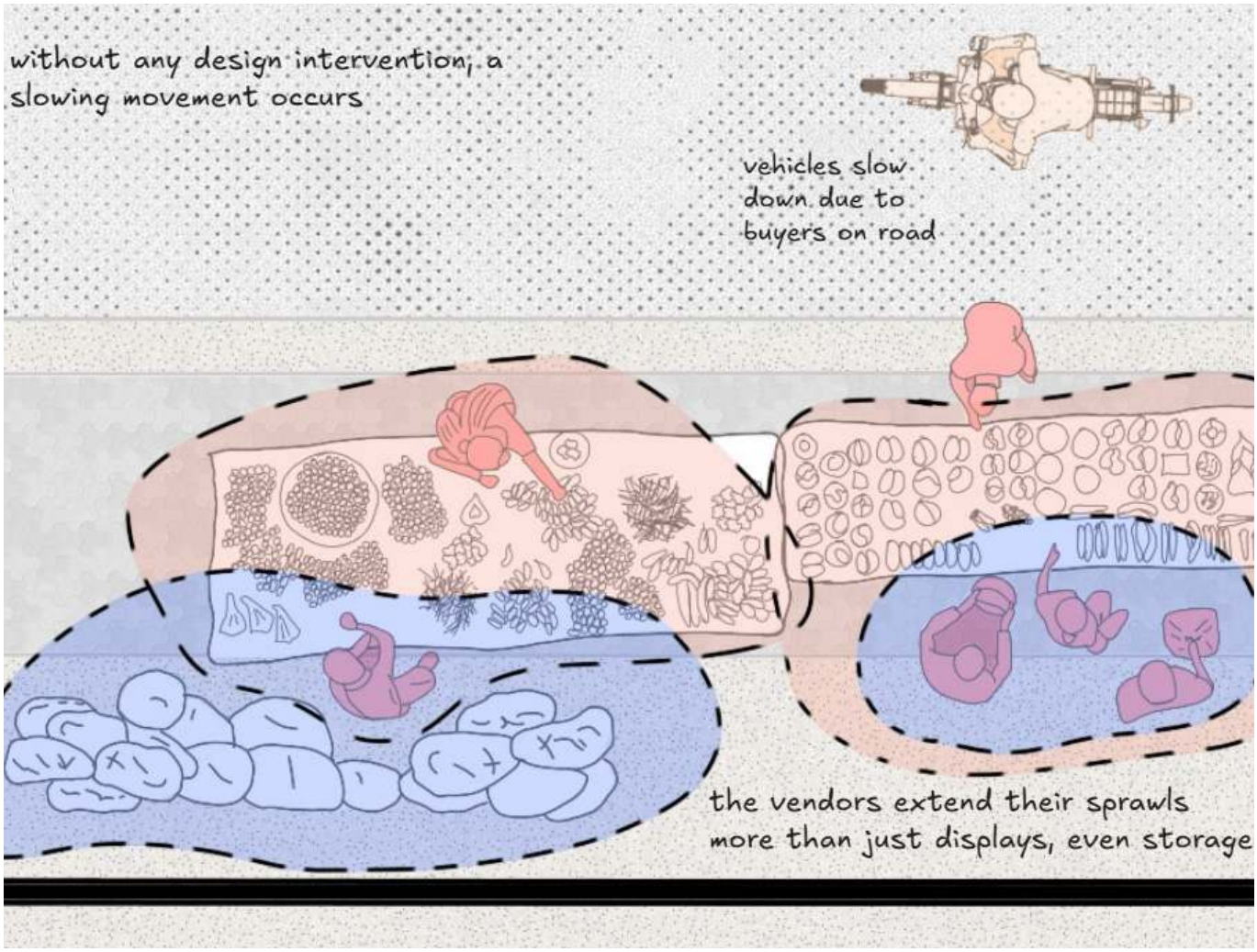


Fig. 6.9 - Vehicles adjusting to Human density

VEHICULAR RHYTHM ADJUSTING TO HUMAN DENSITY

The diagram captures a subtle but crucial transformation in the behavior of vehicles as they encounter dense human occupation. Cars and two-wheelers instinctively slow down, weaving carefully through clusters of vendors and buyers. This emergent condition shows how spatial density itself becomes a regulatory mechanism, slowing movement without any designed intervention. The visual and spatial presence of people, goods, and carts compels vehicles to negotiate their speed and direction with heightened attentiveness. Thus, the market's edge modifies not only human behavior but vehicular conduct as well, blurring distinctions between designed control and lived adaptation.

The form of the street, though intended for uninterrupted movement, evolves into a cooperative spatial system, where speed, density, and visibility constantly recalibrate each other to maintain the coexistence of commerce and mobility.

BEHAVIOR OF THE BODIES THROUGH FORM

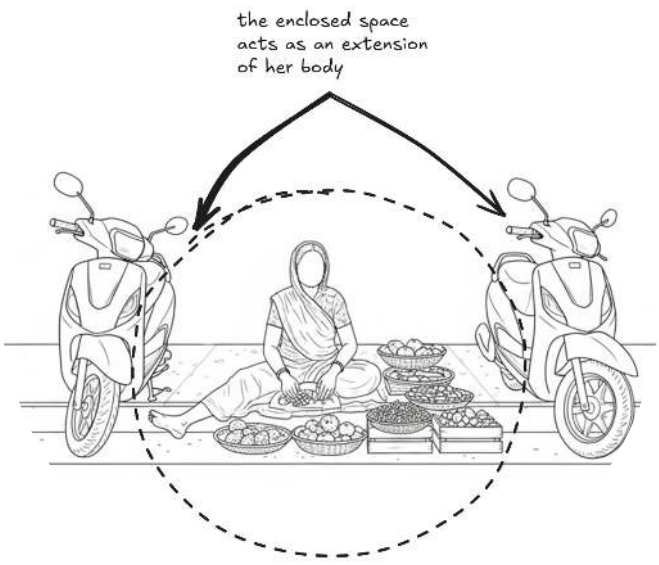


Fig. 6.10 - Flower Vendor

FLOWER VENDOR

She carves out a private pocket of space between parked bikes on the footpath, sitting comfortably on the slightly raised edge while stretching one leg toward the road. The height of the scooter seat (around 700–750mm) and the base of the footpath (roughly 150mm above the carriageway) together afford an informal workspace scaled to her seated posture. The parked vehicles become both a boundary and an extension of her presence, i.e. objects to lean against, rest upon, or use as partial shade. This arrangement allows her to sell, chat, and monitor her produce while remaining physically anchored within a narrow edge between stillness and motion.

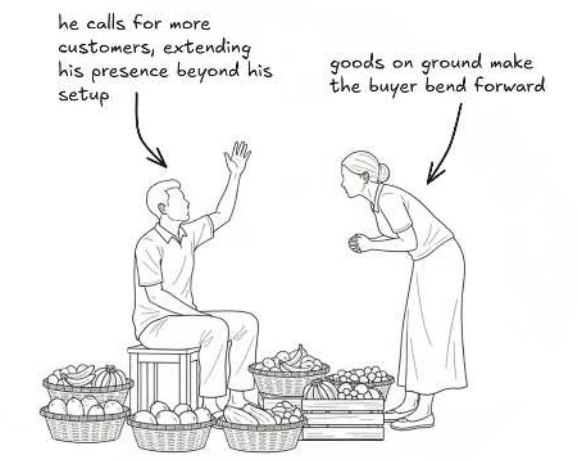


Fig. 6.11 - Seated vendor, Standing buyer

SEATED VENDOR, STANDING BUYER

The transaction between the seated vendor and the standing buyer forms a micro-hierarchy of gaze and movement. The vendor sits on a stool roughly 450mm high, his produce displayed at ground level in baskets or crates about 300–400mm tall, aligning with the buyer's knee level. This spatial configuration encourages a physical bend from the buyer, an embodied gesture of attention and engagement. The vendor's raised arm and vocal call animate the space, extending his presence beyond his immediate setup. Such bodily negotiations between vertical and horizontal postures turn the footpath into a performative field of communication, where visibility, reach, and elevation dictate social exchange.

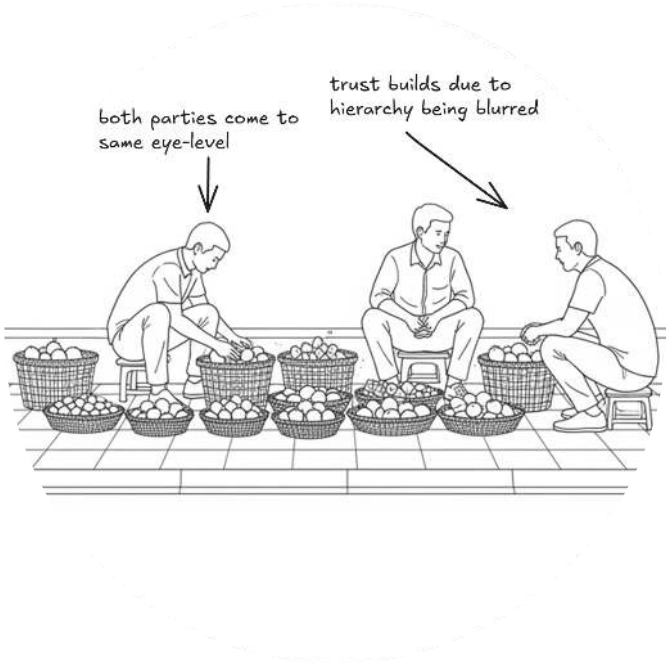


Fig. 6.12 - Vegetable Seller

VEGETABLE SELLER ON GROUND

Male vendors who spread their produce directly on the footpath occupy a low, open configuration that dissolves visual barriers between buyer and seller. The height of baskets (250–350mm) and the low stool (400–450mm) bring both parties to a near-equal eye level when the buyer squats or bends forward. This shared bodily stance fosters an atmosphere of casual familiarity rather than hierarchy. The simple geometry of the setup, flat surfaces, low heights, narrow gaps, affords intimacy, conversation, and mutual trust. The form itself choreographs proximity, turning the act of buying into a social encounter rather than a transactional event.



Fig. 6.13 - Fruit Seller

FRUIT SELLER

Fruit vendors, especially those with baskets or crates held at waist height (around 900mm), occupy the edge between the footpath and the road. Their posture, upright and mobile mirrors the transient character of their selling activity. Buyers pause briefly, leaning forward to inspect items while maintaining awareness of traffic behind. This half-turned body language reflects a dual awareness of both the product and the environment. The spatial affordance of the slightly raised curb and the open edge invites this quick, alert mode of engagement, transforming an infrastructural surface into a constantly shifting social interface.

PATTERNS OF OCCUPANCY AND SPATIAL INTENSITY

ACTIVITIES	OCCUPANCY
Vendors	67
Walking	54
Standing	24
Buying	134
2 - Wheeler	51
4 - Wheeler (passing)	92
4 - Wheeler (parked)	14
Beggars	19
Tempo	13
Total	**468**

Fig. 6.14 - Occupancy Table for a 50m stretch of Dargah Rd of the Garkheda Parisar

The pattern of occupancy along Dargah Road reflects a distinctive negotiation between infrastructure and informality. Despite being located along a high-speed vehicular highway, the street continues to sustain a dense layer of activities concentrated along its footpath edge. Vendors occupy the entire length of the sidewalk, compelling buyers to step off the curb and onto the carriageway. This simple spatial shift transforms the highway into a shared, hybrid zone of commerce and cautious movement, where vehicles instinctively slow down and pedestrians continuously navigate between stillness and flow.

The field observations reveal that while the total number of activities remains high, the intensity of life manifests differently from inner-city markets. The dominance of mobility, cars, two-wheelers, and tempos, restricts the street's capacity for pause, yet it simultaneously ensures constant visibility and flux. The edge here produces a temporary coexistence of systems: one driven by speed and transit, the other by commerce and human exchange. This creates a fragile but functioning equilibrium, where spatial form dictates both the pace and pattern of occupation.

5.
Research Findings

5.1. CONCLUSION

This thesis reveals that the relationship between architectural form and human behavior is not static or one-directional, but a continuous, reciprocal negotiation shaped by intent, threshold, and bodily adaptation. Across the different typologies studied, from the open market streets and residential edges to the narrow lanes and the highway markets, it becomes evident that form does not prescribe behavior; rather, it provides a set of affordances that are activated, resisted, or redefined by the body.

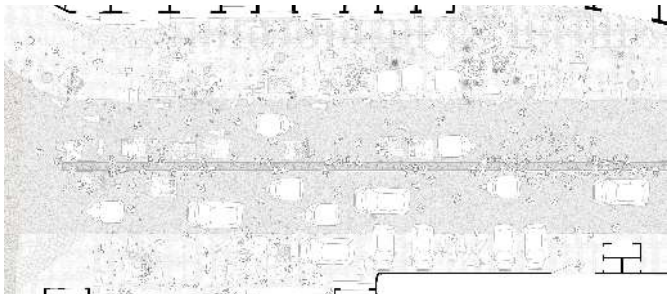
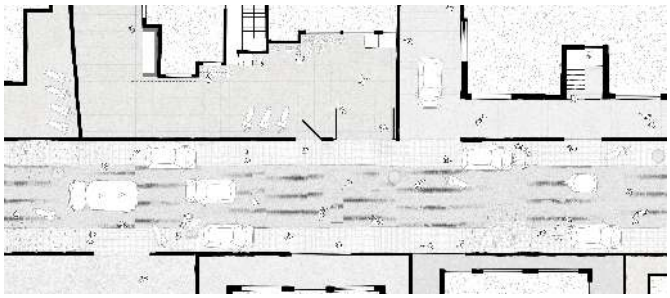
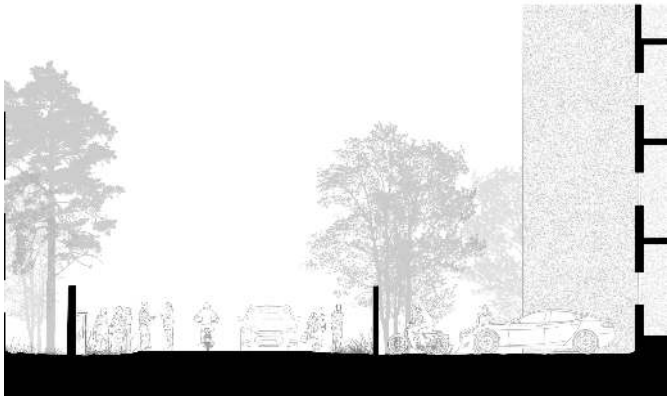
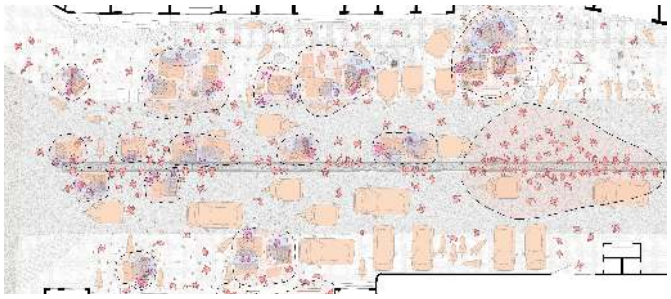
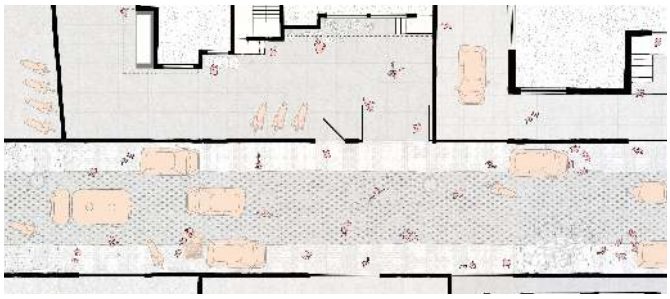
The study shows how thresholds, as physical and perceptual conditions, hold the key to this relationship. Where the edge between public and private becomes porous, behavior diversifies, vending, pausing, chatting, and watching unfold in a choreography of mutual adjustment. Conversely, when form enforces rigidity or visual enclosure, as in the narrow lane, bodies respond by creating their own rhythms of occupation, leaning, gathering, or resting in defiance of the formal boundary. Thus, form becomes a silent participant, its geometry continually reinterpreted through lived use.

At the scale of the body, the research demonstrates how everyday gestures, sitting, squatting, leaning, resting, transform static architectural elements into social instruments. Walls, plinths, steps, scooters, and parked cars evolve from background objects into active extensions of the human form. This continual adaptation of the body to its environment not only generates behavior but produces new spatial meanings, of comfort, freedom, and social connection.

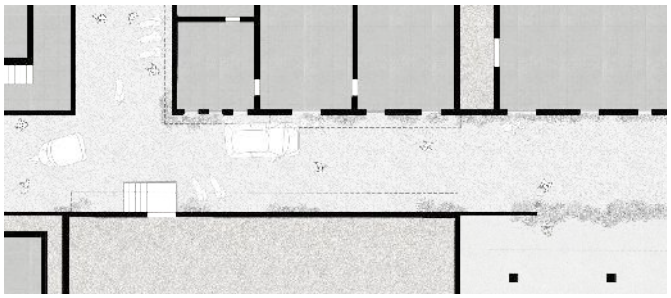
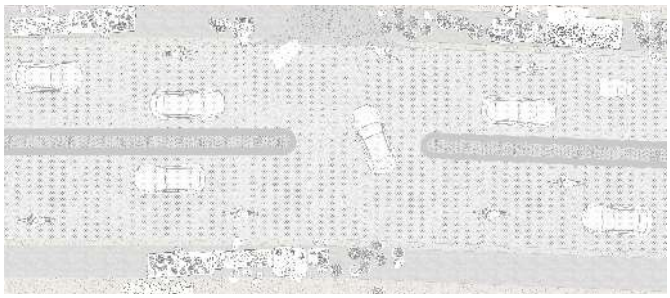
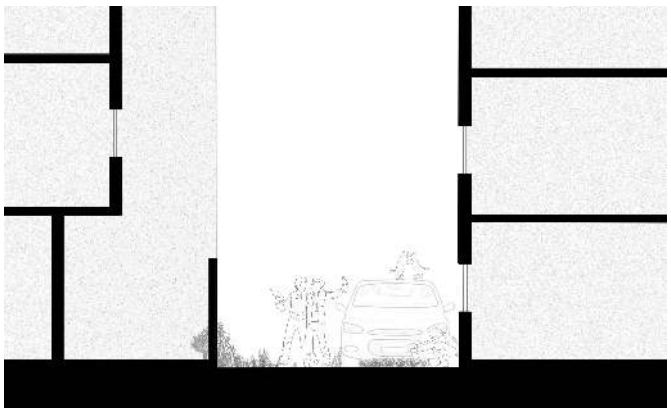
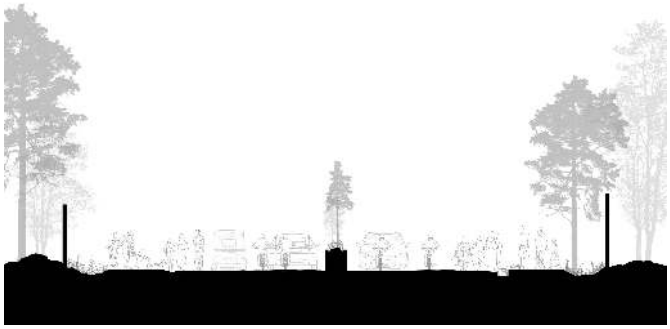
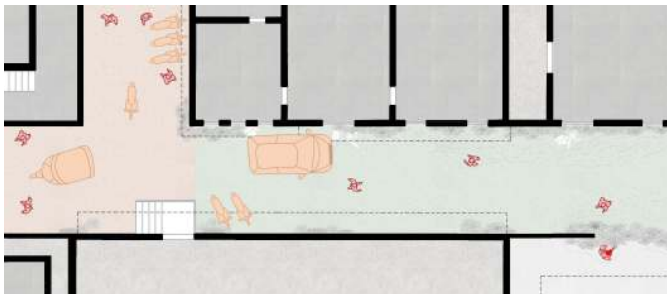
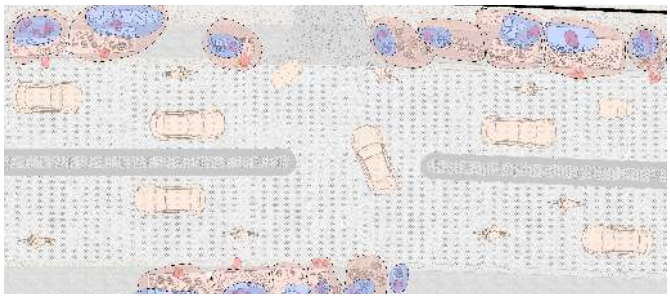
At the scale of the street, patterns of occupation, claim, and movement emerge as collective expressions of these individual negotiations. Each site displays a different intensity of sociality shaped by visibility, porosity, and edge condition, from the dense choreography of the market to the withdrawn intimacy of the lane. These variations establish that the social life of a street is not a product of design but of interaction, of how bodies interpret and inhabit the given form.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that architecture's agency lies not in prescribing behavior, but in enabling possibility. The body's adaptability, its ability to read, occupy, and redefine space, is what transforms form into experience. Architecture, therefore, is not a fixed container of life but a field of affordances, continuously re-authored by human action. In recognizing this, the architect's role expands from shaping static built forms to designing conditions of negotiation, where form and behavior coexist as equal and evolving parts of urban life.

5.2 ANALYTICAL COMPARISON & INFERENCES

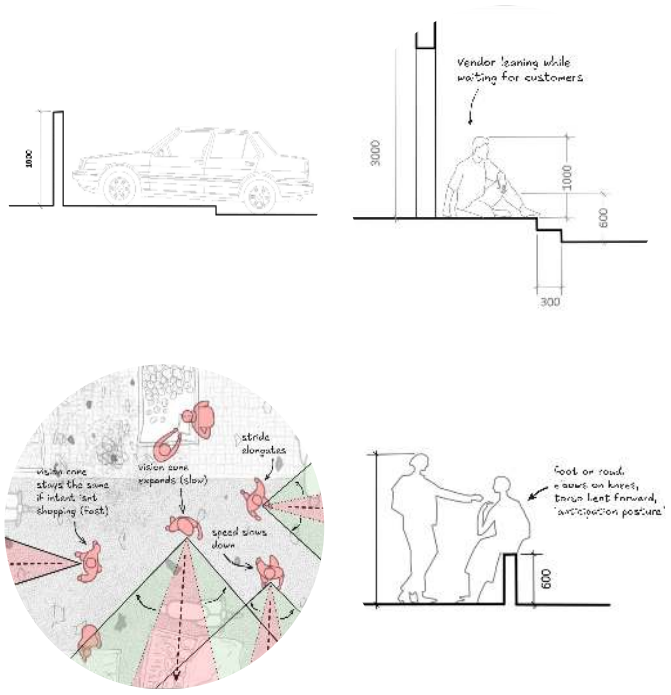
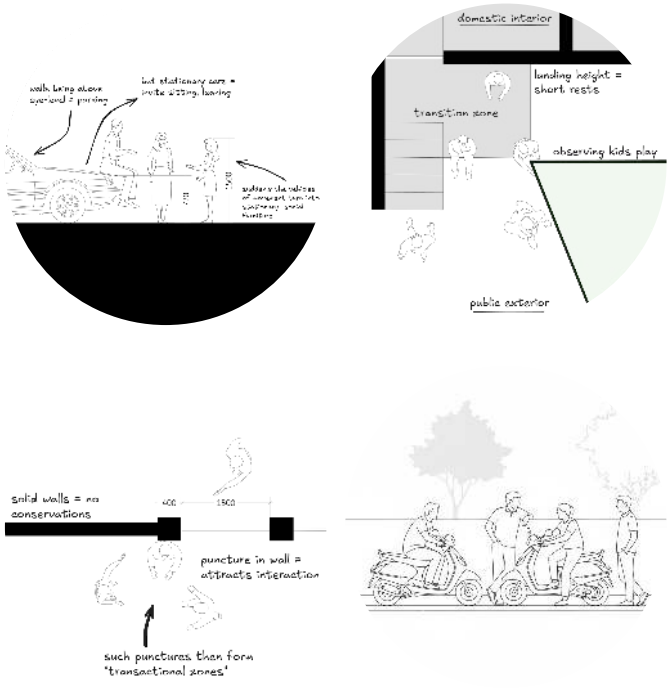
HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN MARKET	JAWAHAR COLONY ROAD
	
	
	
The Hazrat Nizamuddin Market displays the densest and most layered interaction between form and behavior. Its open, porous edges and wide section enable overlapping occupancies, vending, buying, walking, waiting, all coexisting within a constantly negotiated spatial field. Compared to other sites, this street most clearly demonstrates how porous thresholds amplify intensity, allowing multiple bodies to inhabit the same edge through shifting claims and temporal overlaps.	In contrast, the residential street in Jawahar Colony reveals a more intimate and domestically scaled rhythm. Its compound walls and parked cars create softer thresholds where interaction is casual and familiar rather than transactional. While less dense than the market, it sustains continuous everyday life through localized pauses and extensions of the domestic edge, showing that even limited porosity can sustain social occupation when mediated by comfort and familiarity.

Across the four sites, the analysis reveals a spectrum of behavioral intensity shaped by the degree of edge porosity and enclosure. The market street thrives on visibility and exchange, the residential street on familiarity, the narrow lane on privacy, and the highway market on negotiation. Together, they demonstrate that architectural form not

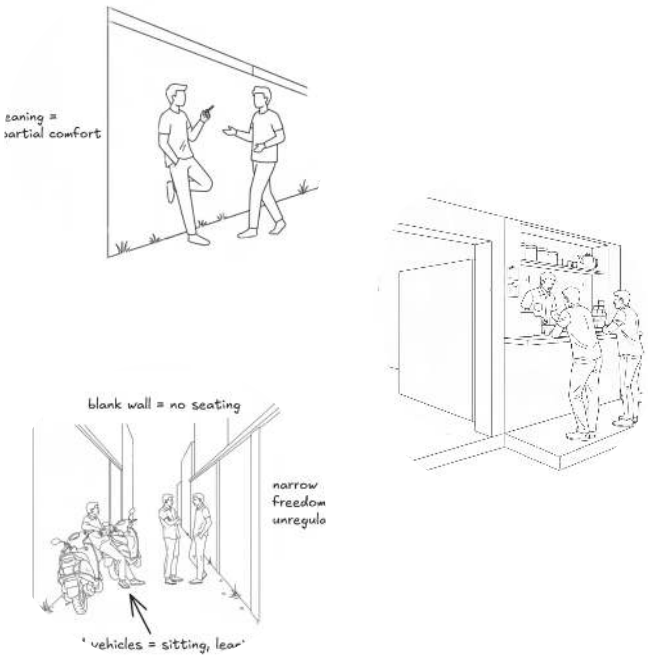
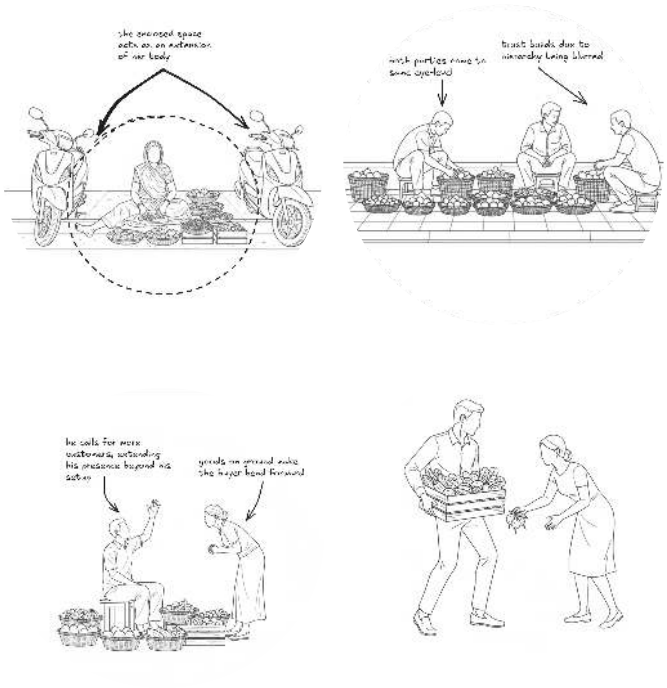
USMANPURA NARROW LANE	DARGAH ROAD
	
	
	
The Usmanpura lane demonstrates how enclosure and lack of visual porosity alter social behavior. High continuous walls and minimal openings restrict formal exchange, producing a condition of withdrawn freedom, where informal behaviors like smoking, chatting, or idling emerge precisely because of anonymity. Unlike the open markets, here privacy replaces visibility as the affordance for occupation, making the lane a spatial refuge rather than a site of commerce.	The market along Dargah Road, set against the speed and exposure of the highway, displays a hybrid condition, where the footpath functions as both safety buffer and vending ground. Though the number of activities is high, their spread remains linear and restrained due to the vehicular boundary. The section reveals how infrastructural form induces behavioral caution, producing a negotiated coexistence between mobility and transaction, visibility and risk.

only frames behavior but also defines its tempo, density, and social character, proving that even small spatial differences in section, width, and boundary condition radically transform how bodies occupy urban space.

5.3. MICRO-SCALE BODILY ENGAGEMENTS

HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN MARKET	JAWAHAR COLONY ROAD
	
The market's form produces dense, multi-layered bodily negotiations such as leaning, squatting, reaching, calling out. The body here is always in motion, responding to overlapping edges of trade and movement. Vendors occupy transitional thresholds between plinth and street, while customers constantly cross zones of pause and flow. Compared to other sites, the body in Nizamuddin is performative, it extends, gestures, and continually redefines the edge through commerce. The environment thrives on proximity and visibility, where even rest positions like leaning or squatting are shaped by the spatial economy of exchange.	The residential street demonstrates a quieter, domesticated pattern of affordance. Here, bodily engagement arises through familiarity rather than transaction, leaning on cars, sitting on steps, conversing across gates. Unlike the markets, where posture serves commerce, these gestures serve recognition and social continuity. The form's moderate scale, compound walls, setbacks, parked vehicles, sustains a comfortable rhythm of standing, resting, and pausing. This space exemplifies how intimacy replaces intensity, as social life depends more on repetition and presence than density.

Across all four sites, the body's behavior emerges as a direct measure of form's permeability, texture, and scale. In the market, openness fosters expression; in the residential street, familiarity sustains rhythm; in the narrow lane, enclosure breeds informal autonomy; and in the highway market, exposure demands vigilance. Each site reveals that the affordance of form is not fixed, but continually reinterpreted by bodily adaptation,

USMANPURA NARROW LANE	DARGAH ROAD
	
In the enclosed and narrow lane, bodily actions become both limited and liberated by form. High blank walls restrict visibility, yet enable private freedoms of behavior such as smoking, chatting, idling. The absence of porosity and surveillance transforms even small pauses into acts of appropriation. Compared to the open edges of Nizamuddin or Jawahar Colony, here the body's comfort lies in anonymity rather than exchange. The architecture doesn't invite activity; its very indifference allows occupation, turning neglect into a social condition.	The Dargah Road Market exhibits a complex tension between visibility and caution. Vendors occupy the elevated footpath, while buyers negotiate the edge of the carriageway, constantly aware of traffic. Here, the body performs balance and attention, rather than ease. Physical proximity is shaped by necessity and alertness, a posture of negotiation rather than leisure. Unlike the enclosed lane or residential street, this environment creates a behavioral choreography driven by exposure, where both mobility and transaction coexist through mutual adjustment.

leaning, sitting, pausing, or performing. Together, these observations affirm that architecture's social life unfolds not through design intent but through the body's capacity to read, resist, and reconfigure form, transforming every wall, step, or edge into a lived instrument of space.

5.3. ARCHITECTURAL USE

This thesis foregrounds a new way of reading and designing space, through the lens of form as behavior and behavior as form. By studying how bodies adapt, negotiate, and redefine architectural elements across different urban contexts, markets, residential streets, lanes, and highways, it positions the body as the true measure of design. For architects, this research provides a framework to understand how spatial thresholds, material affordances, and edge conditions shape patterns of use, and how in turn, everyday bodily actions reconstitute form beyond its intended function.

In doing so, it redefines architectural authorship: design no longer ends at the drawing of built form but continues through the life it enables and transforms. The study urges architects to see streets, walls, plinths, and even parked vehicles not as inert objects, but as potential instruments of occupation and exchange, capable of inviting diverse socialites through scale, texture, and accessibility.

Particularly in the Indian context, where public life unfolds through adaptation, improvisation, and informal claims, understanding these bodily negotiations becomes vital. It equips architects to design responsive urban environments that allow for appropriation, pause, and spontaneity, rather than suppressing them through rigidity or control.

Ultimately, this thesis advocates for an architecture that observes before it designs, one that learns from how people already inhabit and make sense of space. By recognizing the body as both the reader and writer of form, architects can craft environments that are not merely functional or aesthetic, but genuinely alive, constantly shaped and reshaped through human presence.

6.
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