

# La programmation de l'atmosphère dans l'espace urbain

A Study of the influence of architectural atmosphere on behavioural culture in the More London Estates



Une étude sur la culture du comportement engendrée par une atmosphère urbaine

L'influence de l'architecture sur le comportement humain

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## **Immersion réfléchie**

Le chercheur est au centre de l'expérience

**Auto-ethnographie** (Sarah Pink - Sensory Ethnography)

## **Environment**

Medium, Substances and Surfaces

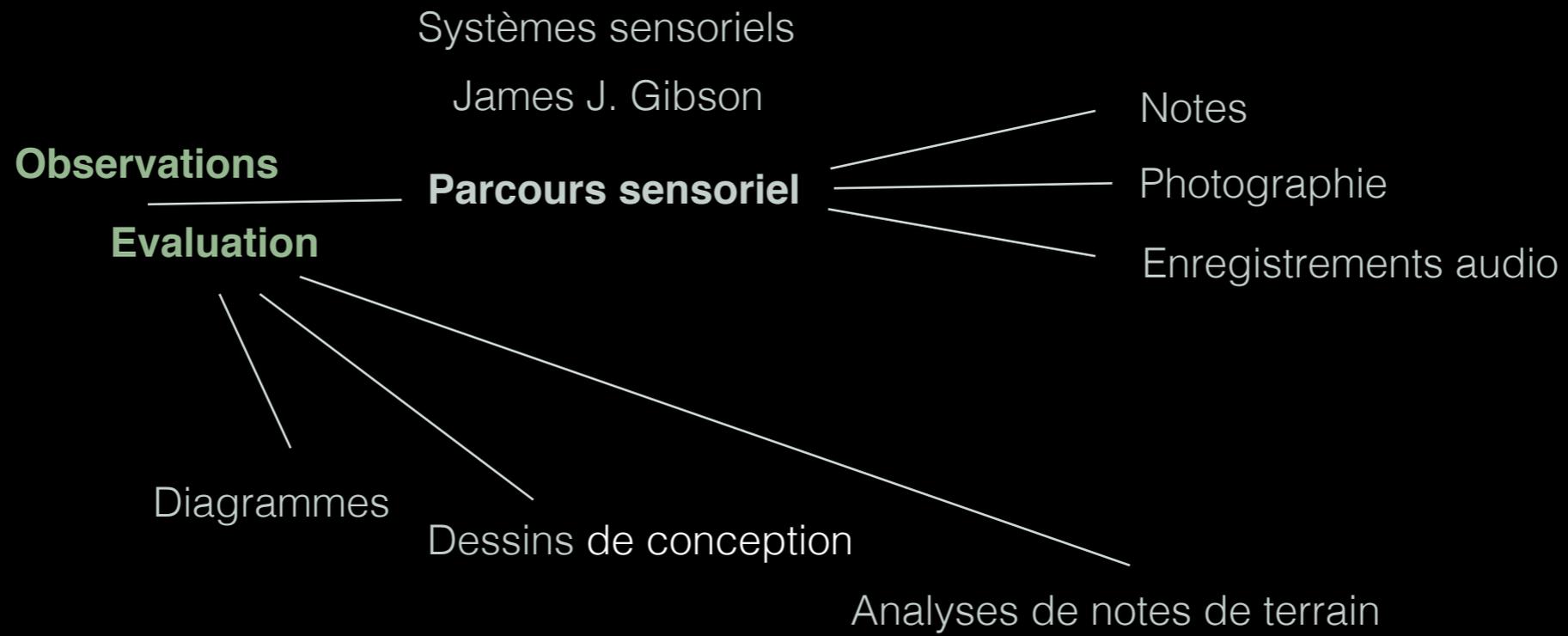
James J. Gibson - **Ecologie**

## **Méthodes**

**Caractéristiques des atmosphères dans l'architecture** (Peter Zumthor)

La présence de l'architecture, matériaux, sons, température, objets, mouvement,  
seuils de transition, échelle et distances, ombres et lumières (odeurs)

'Atmosphere emphasises a sustained being in a situation, rather than a singular moment of perception; atmosphere is always a continuum' (Pallsamma, 2014: 20)



‘A point of observation is never stationary [...]. Observers move about in the environment, and observation is typically from a moving position.’ (Gibson, 1983: 66)



*Two friends talking in an animated fashion. Is one of them upset?*

*A man, probably in his 60s, stands out from the crowd. He is wearing a black raincoat, black gloves and carrying a black sport bag. He walks in a measured pace while everyone around him hurries. As he passes the courthouse, he stops and looks. He starts walking again, but something draws him back to the courthouse. He stops and looks again before moving on.*

*A man walks very slowly holding a map, not looking where he is going. People around him skilfully avoid his path.*

*A man stops to light a cigarette.*

*A group of French teenagers passes nearby, taking photographs and singing. People hurry pass them. No one pays attention to them. [...] A moment later a security guard tells them off for jumping on the railing.*

*A couple walks through the site, immersed into each other's eyes, completely oblivious to anyone else.*

*A little girl plays with the water feature crossing the site. Her behaviour contrasts sharply with that of the adults around her.*





More London



*'In spite of reflected sunlight crossing through the site, the atmosphere remains cold. Any notion of warmth is absorbed by the cold grey surfaces. The ambiance is formal and rigid. People are dwarfed by the architecture. There is a perceptible distance and tension between people and the site'*



*These men dressed as maintenance teams exemplify the system they work for. Their job is to maintain a pristine environment. They clean, they tidy, they organise repairs, they control behaviour, they rationalise the atmosphere.*



'In order to defeat the cyclical times of days, seasons and years, shiny, hard, immutable surfaces are employed to shrug off the effect of the weather, dirt and accident' (Till, 1999: 3).

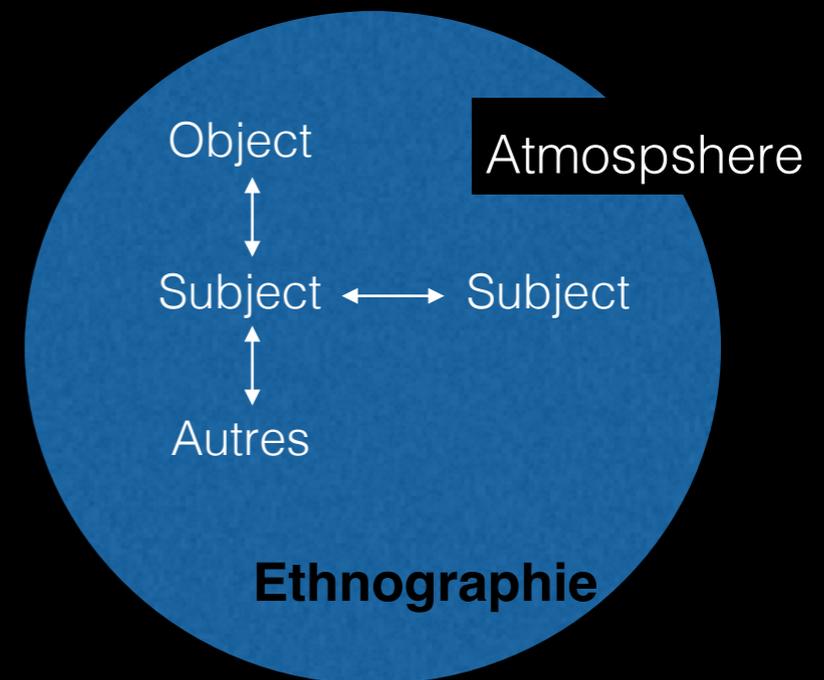


More London

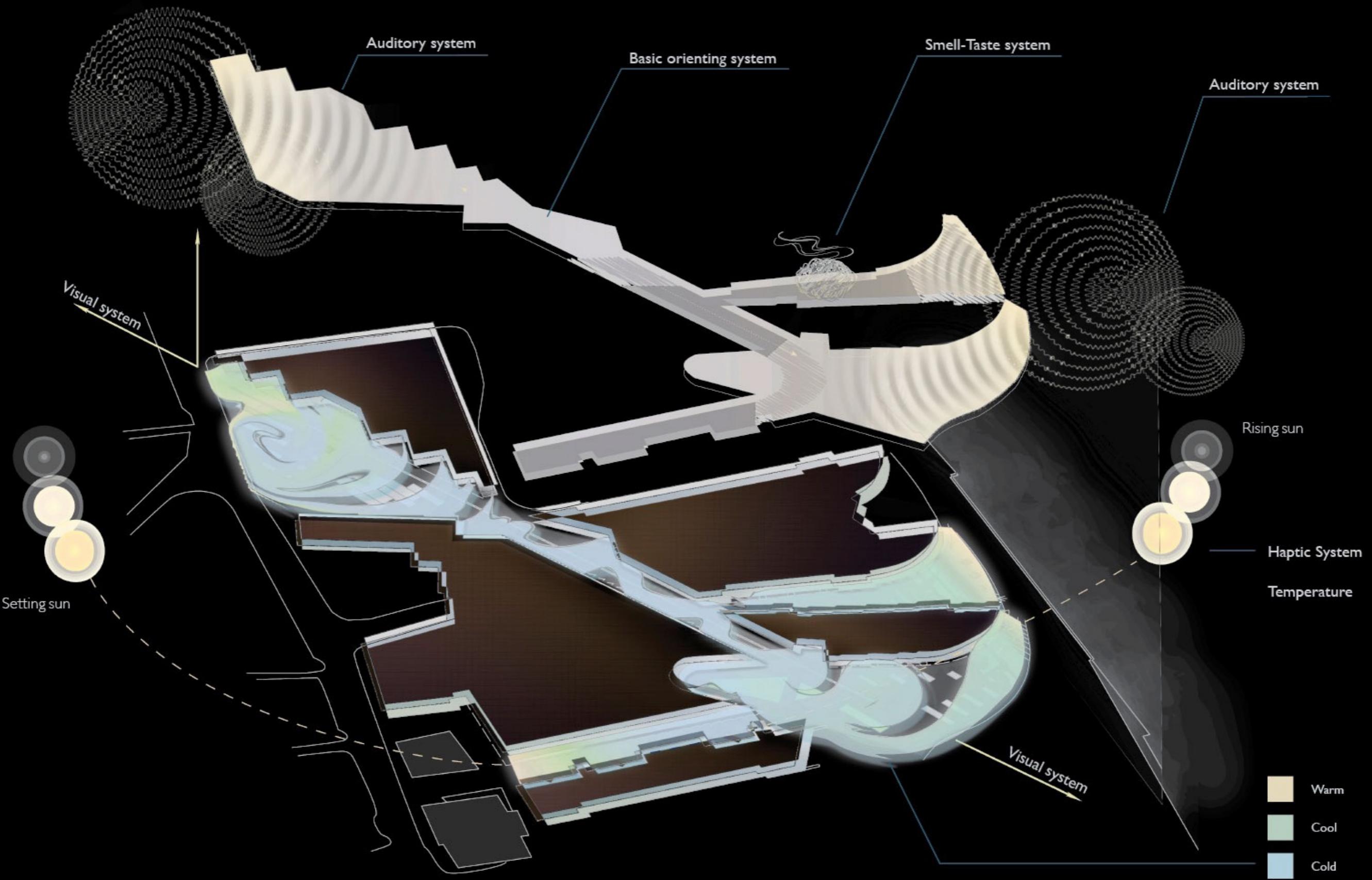
Quel est la correspondance entre l'atmosphère et le comportement?

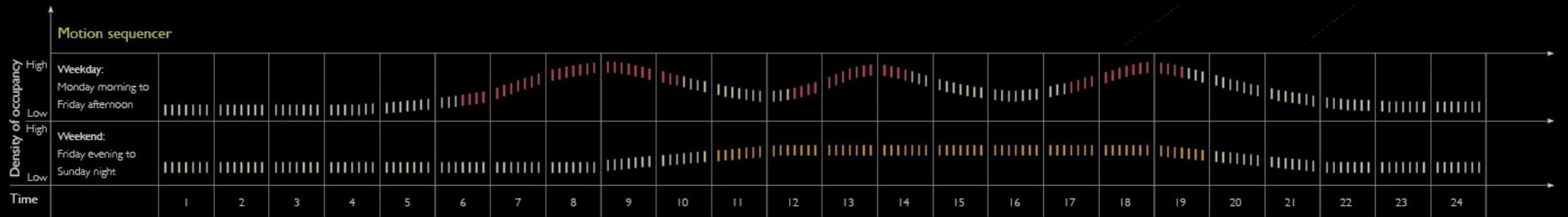
Quelle expérience avons nous d'une atmosphère conçue pour l'image?

'[...] we enter a space, the space enters us, and the experience is essentially an exchange and a fusion of the object and the subject.' (pallsmaa, 2014: 20)



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Chart completed</b>  | <p>On first impression, after only an initial scan of the environment</p> <p>After familiarisation with the environment ✓</p> <p>With an intimate knowledge of the environment</p>  |
| <b>Participation</b>  | <p>Active</p> <p>Passive ✓ Participation is programmed and controlled.</p>  |
| <b>Visual system</b>  | <p>Architecturally, this is the least interesting part of the site. Although it's atmospheric condition improves when lit at night, it never receives direct sunlight and the height of the buildings and cool tones of the materials create an unwelcoming and desolate atmosphere. The facades consists mostly of large vertical metal panels going up to the full height of the buildings, plain glass, set in standardised metal frames and large vents indicating the back of restaurant kitchens. The area feels like a larger version of the traditional back alleys found between buildings in city centres. Despite the provision of trees and seating on the river side it is the most neglected part of the site. The furniture is overlooked by people eating on the first floor of the restaurant so offers little privacy. The site is also much higher than the path adjacent to the Thames, like a mezzanine overlooking the river, so it is possible that people walking along the river simply don't notice this area. There's an incongruous metal and glass sculpture of a tree on the river side with no indication as to its provenance or meaning. It lights up at night bathing most of the area with a bright green glow. The area offers no opportunities for exploration despite interesting views to the North.</p> |
| <b>Auditory system</b>  | <p>It is extremely quiet, especially for central London.</p>  |
| <b>Smell-Taste system</b>   | <p>At times when restaurants are operating, a foul warm smell of fried oil and other unpleasant odours emanate from the vents. Even the air from the river cannot dissipate it fast enough.</p>   |
| <b>Basic-Orienting system</b>   | <p>Linear, North-South. The area is wide with no obstructions so orientation is straightforward. The view to the river and Tower of London acts as a landmark.</p>  |
| <b>Haptic system</b>  | <p>As with the rest of the site, materials include metal and glass with stone on the ground. Haptic opportunitites are limited but include the ground and at the very end only, the furniture and trees.</p>  |
| <b>Kinesthesia</b>  | <p>The zone at the junction between area 2 and 3 is similar to area 2 with straight lines and high walls and the area widens progressively towards the river end with the facades morphing into a curve on its West side, encouraging a more gentle pace. The ground changes into a ramp descending towards the river. The softer approach seems to be designed to allow people to enjoy the view offered by the river and North bank.</p>  |
| <b>Temperature &amp; Humidity</b>   | <p>The area is protected from the cool wind coming from the river by the buidlings on either side and so feels noticeably warmer and less windy than area 2.</p>  |
| <b>Stimuli</b>  | <p>The overall level of stimulation for a majority of the area is very low. There is little positive perceptual stimulation across the area's core, with large expanses of vertical metal cladding and large vents creating a bleak environment, despite the zone near the river offering interesting views.</p>  |





*Despite its generous proportions, the site remains underused compared to the density of other areas nearby. It is mostly used as a passage and few use the benches for long periods of time. Everything is hard, cold, with sharp edges and reflective materials. The site pushes people away, it generates a continuous flow of people moving through its interior.*

*Some people are fully absorbed in the micro-scale of their immediate surroundings. They know the site well, they mostly work there or pass through it regularly. They perform all kinds of activity while walking fast, smoking, chatting on their phones, talking to friends. They don't stop.*



*Others walk at a more leisurely pace. Their attention is turned towards the macro-scale of the architecture or each other. They look up, they take photographs, they stop and start. Their behaviour distinguishes them as tourists.*

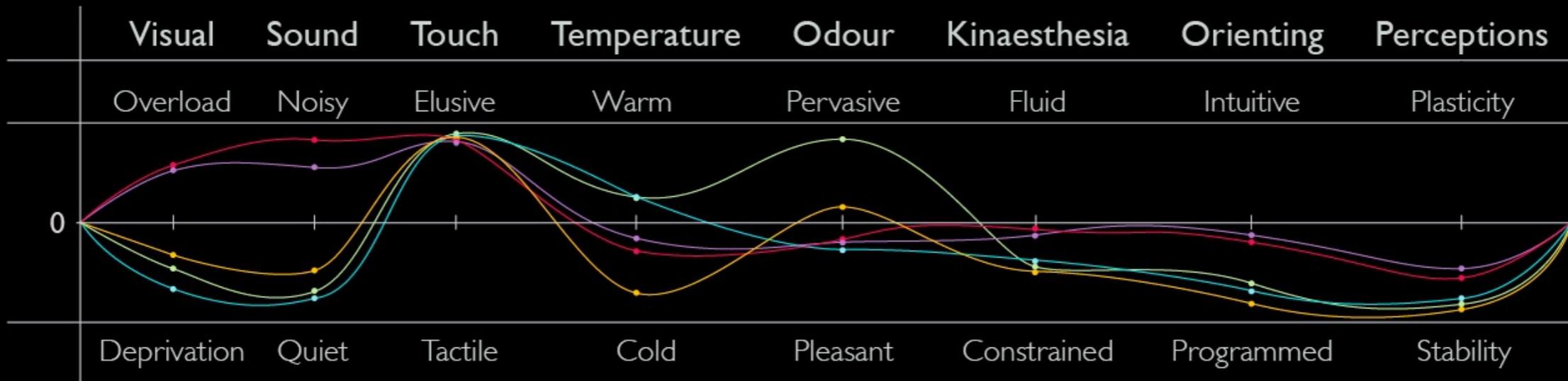


*Then all of a sudden a man helps his child out of a pushchair and starts playing with him. First he holds him upside down. Then they wonder at the narrow stream of water.*





### Sensory flow



- Area 1
- Area 2
- Area 3
- Area 4
- Area 5





*It's 8pm, the space is totally deserted despite striking riverside views. I notice the metal spikes embedded on the stone seating. A hostile feature designed to stop skateboarding. A lonely public art feature in the form of a lit tree looks incongruous, out of scale, and the space is bathed in a sickly green light. Everything about it says 'go away'.*