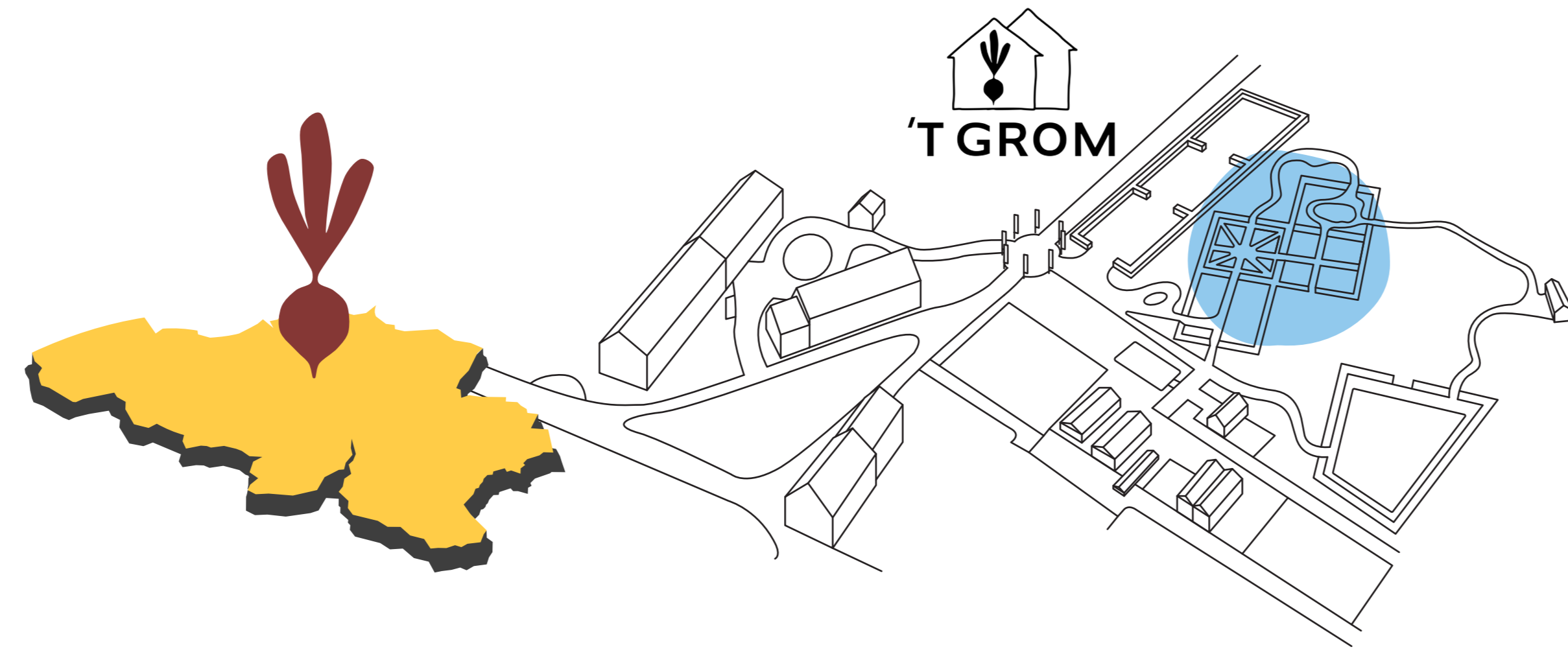


T'GROM GARDEN AND STORYTELLING

FOR AN ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE VEGETABLE MUSEUM



Project location: Belgium, Sint-Katelijne-Waver

INTRODUCTION

'T GROM is a vegetable Museum and cultural Heritage Site in Sint-Katelijne-Waver, Belgium. For the final project of my postgraduate design degree, a group of eight designers was to re-imagine the whole site: services and spaces of the museum. My main tasks during this project involved designing an educative, interactive and inclusive garden experience as well as define an overarching narrative for the new site.

After initial research: both on site, of the user journeys within the museum and its gardens, as well as multiple interviews with the director of the museum, I have defined a design goal which guided me throughout the design process. Of course, designing with the user and client in mind is essential, especially for places such as museums and I have intended to do my best in that task. Furthermore, attending a U-design Workshop allowed me to learn about ergonomics and how to design for people with various physical or mental disabilities. This point often tends to be overlooked therefore I tried to remind myself of it at every step of the design process and attempt to create an inclusive adventure experience.

DESIGN AIMS

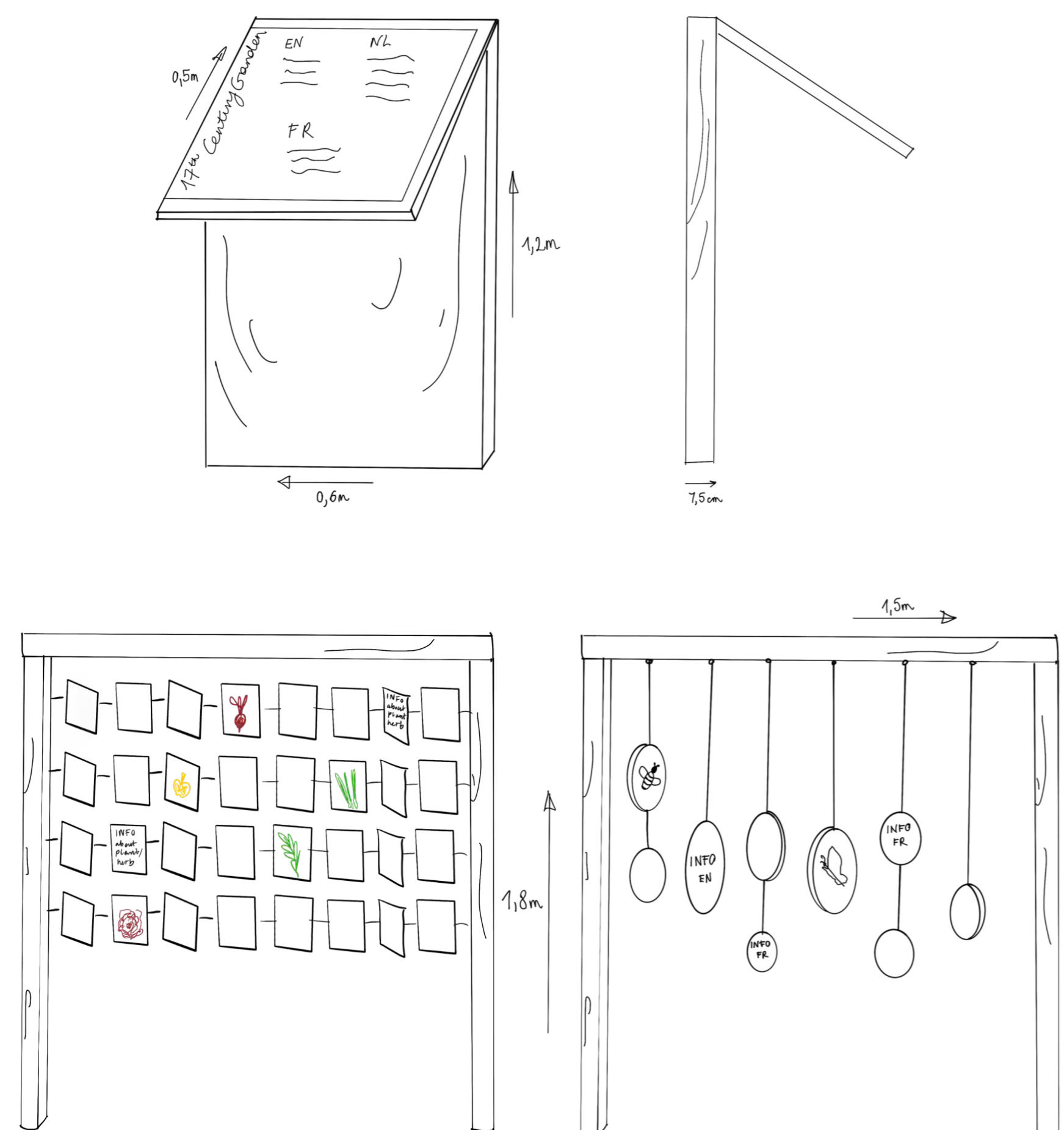
- Adding educational, interactive, and accessible elements into the 't Grom garden and increasing this space's potential.
- Creating an interesting inclusive narrative for the site of the vegetable museum.
- Ensure the whole site can be experienced with multiple senses: creating an adventure for everybody

DESIGN SOLUTION: GARDEN

As a design solution, I have decided to design a number of signs scattered throughout the 'historical garden' area of 't Grom (indicated in blue on the sitemap above).

The garden signs are touchpoints of additional services: increased interaction and education in the garden as well as information about sustainability (local produce, importance of biodiversity etc.). Such services add to the value of the garden of 't Grom: there is now more opportunity for garden-based-learning which has proven to be beneficial for children and adults alike.

The signs are made out of wood, an engraved metal plaque and moveable wooden elements. The frame structure (depicted below) can be adapted to the needs of the space, for example next to the Insect Hotel it includes oval, moveable elements with different insect species and the description of their importance for the environment. The information structure (depicted on the left) is an ergonomic one and can be read by children, adults and wheelchair users. For Those with limited vision, an audioguide version of the information is available on site for free in order to let everyone experience the beautiful story of 't Grom.



DESIGN SOLUTION: BOOK AS A SERVICE FOR A SPACE

With a background in social sciences and an education mainly based on theoretical learning and writing, I wanted to combine my knowledge and expertise with the design of 't Grom museum.

I have therefore decided to write a short children's novel: Lea's Adventures in 't Grom. Inspired by Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, the book tells a story which can be considered as a romanticized user journey throughout the site of the vegetable museum. The main character: Lea is lead through the museum by Mole: a small and sneaky mole who shows her all the interactive elements on site.

Lea learns about sustainability as well as the journey of vegetables from their very beginning to when they end up on her dinner plate. It is an educative and exciting experience for her.

The book was made with the youngest visitors of the museum in mind. Of course, it can be enjoyed at any age. It creates a clear guide for the museum and its surroundings. Moreover, it is a promotional tool for 't Grom and can be a recognizable element which visitors associate with the site.

The book is written in a conventional manner, however an audio version is available for those who prefer or need to experience the journey in an alternative manner.



EXPERIENCE THE SITE WITH ALL (AVAILABLE) SENSES

Apart from tangible touchpoints such as garden signs and a 'guide' book, I have also ensured that the whole site of the museum can be experienced not only with one, but with a multitude of senses. As mentioned before, this project was a group effort therefore I ensured everyone makes use of these five icons. They represent our five senses and are meant to show the inclusivity of the design of 't Grom. Every element can be experienced through looking at it, but if that is not available to the visitor, there is surely another interaction possibility which provides as much excitement as looking at the space: listening to the audioguide or the nature sounds around, touching plants and trees, tasting vegetables and herbs or smelling the different odors of the surrounding. The use of five senses is encouraged through the use of small icons all over the site. They are engraved into metal or wood and can therefore be felt by the visually impaired and are moreover explained in the audioguide of the museum.



Five sense icons: smell, taste, listen, touch and look.
An example of their use can be seen on the educational garden sign, where they are engraved at the bottom of the metal plaque.

