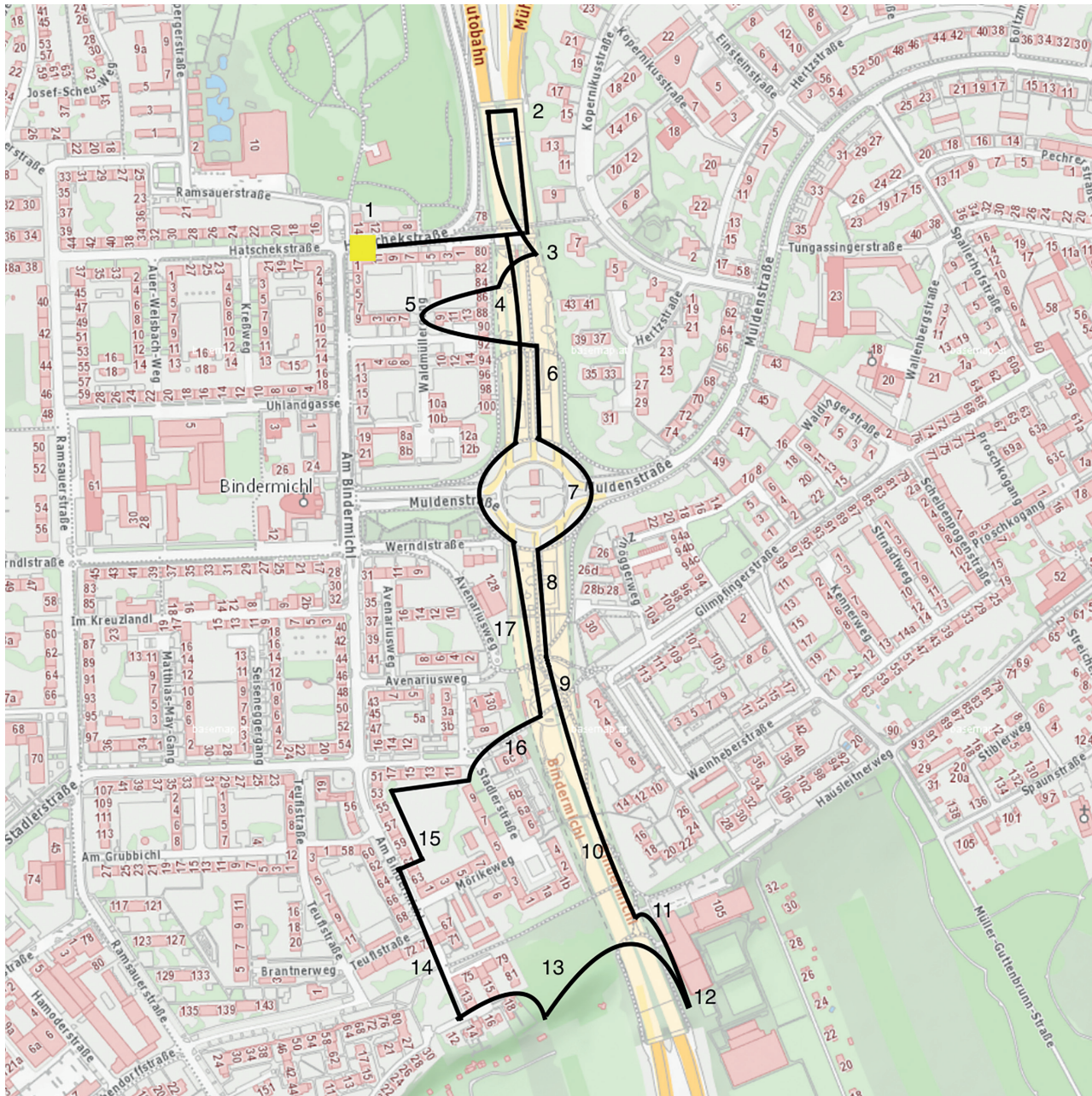
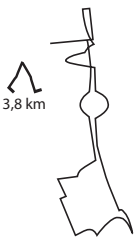


SOUNDWALK **Bindermichl**



Bindermichl

Roads, Buildings, Botany, Bindermichl

20 years ago, Bindermichl was a residential area bordered by the busy A7 autobahn that isolated it from neighbouring parts of Linz and caused increasing amounts of noise and dirt. Today it is transformed. The autobahn now runs underground, through a tunnel covered by an attractive green park designed for local people. Noise and air pollution are reduced and the next-door community of Spallerhof is easily reached by foot or bicycle. The park is an interesting place. Its shape is long and narrow, mirroring the autobahn below, and its botany has been carefully chosen. Mixed native and exotic plants grow in simple patterns amongst the open areas of grass. Shady spots have been created to sit and taller trees or hedges soften views of the buildings around the park's edge. There are up-to-date playgrounds for children and good sports areas for volleyball, mini-football and other activities. The park is obviously popular and well used – a notable planning success. Bindermichl's houses are interesting too. Many dates back to National Socialist building programs in the late 1930s and still retain their large green courtyards, which are islands of quiet in the current urban soundscape.

The soundwalk centers on the park and Bindermichl's older housing. It listens to the sounds that are there in detail and considers how the changes have positively effected the whole area.

Recordings from points on the soundwalk can be heard online by following the links in the text.

Start: Haltestelle Hatschekstraße, Linie 41, 43

1 – Meeting point Haltestelle Hatschekstraße (Linie 41, 43)

When ready please walk from the bus stop, along the paths, into Bellevue Park to point 2 on the map where the sound walk starts. On the way you may see the English phrase "Where we go one, we go all" painted on the asphalt. While walking start to acclimatise to the soundscape by listening to the sounds you hear however ordinary or familiar they are. What are they, who is making them, how do their positions and distances change as you move yourself?

2 – The north end of the park

Looking south the park's linear shape as far as the central roundabout is seen. It is rather beautiful, planted with exotic and native trees. The autobahn tunnel starts here and runs underground for the park length. The soundscape is dominated by constant traffic roar. Walls, trees and green plants, including metal posts overgrown with vines bearing large beans in autumn, hide the traffic from view. So, there is a strong mismatch between what is seen and what is heard. Does this feel strange? Usually we expect our eyes and ears to be more in agreement. Are there other sounds – perhaps very quiet in comparison?

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=50909&m=satellite>

From here walk across the stones between the plants, onto the grass and downhill to point 3. Can you hear your footsteps on the different surfaces, what happens to the traffic roar as you go, what other sounds appear?

3 – Beside the small fountains

Young children love these gentle fountains, splashing in the bubbling water and getting very wet. Maybe one will protest if a parent says they must leave. Once there were waterwheels and other water toys to play with, but, sadly, they are no longer here. What other sounds can be heard? There is a gurgling drain on one side. Maybe there is wind in the leaves and people speaking nearby, perhaps passing cyclists. The autobahn is still very obvious, but the detailed water sounds of the fountains are very close, which contrasts with the now more distant traffic and emphasizes the space between them.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51035&m=satellite>

When finished listening walk to point 4 over the gravel and grass, noting the sound of your footsteps and passing by the concrete wall of a plant covered building that may shield from the traffic noise in its acoustic shadow. Pause in front of the arch.

4 – Arch into the courtyard

This arch is a short tunnel into the courtyard of the 1930s apartment buildings. Walking through takes you from one sonic world into another; from the open park and autobahn atmosphere to the much quieter courtyard soundscape shielded from external sounds by the buildings. Inside the tunnel the reflections of your own sounds feel very close – clapping your hands is a good way to hear this. Once inside the courtyard murmurs of people through open windows, conversation, cooking, the TV, become noticeable. It is the atmosphere of home life. Maybe there are also leaves whispering in the trees or birds calling; during springtime birdsong will reverberate beautifully in this place. Lines of drying washing might flap a little in wind. It is worth listening for a while.

Make your way by paths or across the grass to point 5 on the map.

5 – Local traffic, interesting trees

It is a little busier here. Local traffic along Am Bindermichl, including passing buses, is audible. Slow moving cars pass very close to and from parking spaces. There are some lovely tall trees here, including an Indian Bean Tree that produces long pods in the autumn.

Walk towards point 6. This means crossing back into the park though another arch under the apartment building. The sound level goes up very clearly as you do this – I measured a 10dB (quite big) difference when I was there. Once again you are in the open park, where, unsheltered by the buildings, the autobahn traffic is ever present.

6 – Ramps up to the roundabout walkway

Paved and grassy slopes allow you to walk up to the walkway that circles above the traffic roundabout. Between the slopes are areas of sand for volleyball and astro turf for other games. All these activities take place enclosed on three sides by concrete walls that amplifies sounds inside but also prevents them reaching the nearby housing and disturbing the

neighbours. This is thoughtful sonic design. People often bring music to play while they exercise. I've heard house music for volleyball and heavy rock for weight training. The metal weights ring or clang if dropped and a huge rubber tire booms as it falls after being turned over.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=50901&m=satellite>

7 – The circular walkway above the road

The park's central roundabout is in brutal concrete. It feels strangely out of place when compared to the green plants, trees and residential buildings that surround it. Everyone must use this walkway to cross between the north and south park areas, so joggers, cyclists and walkers often pass by. Here traffic is dominant again. Looking down into the roundabout interior one hears not only local traffic, but also the roar emerging from the side tunnels that access the autobahn underground. The structures with revolving fans in the middle are ventilators for the tunnel below. There are intriguing views from this height – into the tops of trees or towards the Linz-St. Michael Parish church in Bindermichl, known for its unique stained glass – but the exposure and the noise encourages one to move on quickly.

It is interesting to imagine that children (and dogs) whose height is below the edge of the wall will be experiencing a soundscape different from that of taller adults. Kneel or bend down for a moment to check for yourself.

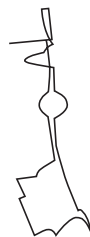
8 – Ramps with mini football and skateboarding

There is a symmetrical set of slopes down from the walkway on the southern side. The spaces between are for mini-football and skateboarding, often used by younger kids. This place resounds to kicked balls hitting wire fences and players shouting. Competition can be intense. Sometimes music (Turkish rap) plays.

Walking down on grass, or asphalt, one's own footsteps become more audible as the sound of traffic is left behind.

9 – Main play area for young children

The sounds of mini-football or skateboarding merge into those of younger children in the playgrounds here. There are always a few playing, but after school, at weekends or in good weather it can be very busy. Family groups and carers



sit to chat and look on. It is the communal centre of the park and is the only place where people, and children's, sounds are loud enough to drown out the autobahn traffic, which is at its most distant here. Playground surfaces are small stones, wood chip or sand, plus grass and gravel to walk on, so footsteps create a nice variety of sounds. Some kids bring mini-scooters and scream as they speed past. Dogs bark. It can be a lively place.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=50903&m=satellite>

Please walk from here, past the drinking water fountain, to map point 10.

10 – The southern park

The autobahn is loudest at the ends of the park where it emerges from the tunnel, but in between the sound can be heard as coming either from the north or the south. The point where this changes while walking the park length is surprisingly different on each visit. The sound is carried by wind, so which end dominates depends on the wind direction. At map point 10 the autobahn is likely to be heard from the south, but not always. How is it on your day?

Wind also creates sound in trees, which is different according to the species' leaf size, shape and height. When windy this can be heard throughout the park but along this path there is a variety of trees and other plants that demonstrate it well. Moving one's hand over a tree's surface is also a sonic experience. Rough, smooth or patterned bark all give particular sounds. There are some very pretty cypress trees with a crisscross bark pattern to try here. Also look out for an oak decorated with wooden medallions carrying children's names.

11 – Metal bridge

Approaching the southern end, the autobahn again comes into view. There are a number of new sports buildings with plants on their roofs and a pizza restaurant here. Rather unexpectedly, there is a short metal bridge over the brutalist concrete car park below that rings a little when walking across. The railing are surprisingly tuneful if slapped with the palm of my hand – one of the few metallic sounds to be heard on this soundwalk. The autobahn roar accompanies.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51038&m=satellite>

Walk down the steps along the side of this building to the level below.

12 – Skateboard hall

The facilities for young people in this park are pretty good. This skateboard hall has an impressive maze of curving, sloping surfaces to woosh down and up, pirouette and show off all kinds of tricks. It's good fun and sounds great. The spaces beneath the wooden floors boom and resonate loudly. Go inside to hear the sound of skateboards or scooters on the wooden hills, valleys and shapes of the floor. It's a wonderful sonic construction.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51037&m=satellite>

Whilst on this level walk into the car park. You must cross loose stones which sound to your footsteps. Clapping hands in the underground space creates nice echos.

13 – Up the wooded hill

The autobahn sounds loudest here but it cannot be seen though the trees. It is another extreme sound/vision mismatch.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=50907&m=satellite>

Walk slowly from here towards map point 14. As you pass through a narrow path between building the autobahn noise lessens and its direction becomes less obvious. It reflects from buildings making it more difficult to determine its direction.

Continue to the top of Am Bindermichl. On the way you pass a lamp post with a creeper hanging from light as if it is a head of hair.

14 – Am Bindermichl

Beside the large square with slightly wild grass and trees – one is an old pear tree – look downhill towards the block of housing that forms a bridge across the road. If the wind is from the south the sound of the autobahn reflects from the surface of the building but passing underneath the soundscape is immediately very local again. There is a motorbike shop

where sometimes customers are trying new bikes. Carry on until you see, on the right, an arch into an older residential building. Pass through to the courtyard inside.

15 – Peaceful green courtyard

This lovely green courtyard, with open grass, shady trees and line for drying washing, is typical of the late 1930s National Socialist housing in this area. The buildings protect the interior from outside sounds creating the quiet and peaceful atmosphere. Unusually this one has been left more or less intact with no space yet taken for parking cars. Distant church bells and nearby voices reverberate gently when they occur. Crow calls may echo two or three times. It is nice to stay here a moment just to appreciate the ambience and reflect on how building design and planning layouts effect the soundscapes of the cities and neighbourhoods where we live.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51036&m=satellite>

In the springtime bird's song will regularly fill the atmosphere. Walk around the inside of the courtyard to make your way slowly past point 16 and back to the park.

16 – Quietly humming transformer houses

This is one of the few obviously electrical sounds on this walk. It makes a quiet contrast with the people, children, footsteps, car movements that are also heard here. It is a totally linear sound – unchanging, constant. Electrical hum is one of the most fundamental and iconic sounds of our age, but its presence is so familiar we forget it is there.

Continue into the park.

17 – The end of the walk

The soundwalk ends at the communal heart of the park beside the children's playgrounds. Every Saturday at noon Linz tests its warning sirens. If you are there at the correct time this is a good place to hear it. Church bells ring immediately afterwards and continue for some minutes. Both these sounds are happening across the whole city simultaneously. Suddenly one is listening to the soundscape in the knowledge that the whole of Linz is hearing it too.

<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51034&m=satellite>

