

04 *unravelling heyvaertwijk: rue broyère and rue abbé cuylits*

hidden in plain sight

graduation report

hidden in plain sight
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tu delft
urban architecture
graduation studio 2025-2026

*unravelling heyvaertwijk:
rue broyère and
rue abbé cuylits*



rue broyère, brussels



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back as front

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How can a forgotten, hidden industrial fragment transform into a vibrant space of public gathering? This project began with a personal curiosity of the neighbourhood of Anderlecht, specifically Heyvaert and how the buildings shape the area it is today. These layers of time shown through unnoticed buildings and concealed façades reveal the complex nature of how the area was built up. Porosity serves as the main tool of research, to explore how to reactivate the plot on different scales. From large moments of interventions such as creating openings to connect one space to another, to smaller scales, such as the design of a single window opening. A cluster of buildings presents itself, containing the Islamic Academy of Brussels, a former ceramics factory, a primary school, housing and behind these façades, lays the former iron factory; the spine of the collection of buildings.

To reactivate the production identity of the Anderlecht, the former ceramics factory revives itself, producing architectural ceramics and household items, while the existing functions remain preserved. However, an extra layer is introduced to reactivate the social aspects of the neighbourhood. Heyvaert lacks social third spaces, which is an aspect that will be introduced in this project. Creating a passage from the street to the large hall, eventually connecting all the fragmented buildings into one space. Public functions such as a café and rentable spaces are added to breathe new life into the hall. To create porous spaces, some demolition is inevitable, but demolition always comes with improvement. Architecturally, the existing buildings are treated with care, and all the layers of change are evidently distinct. The new kiln for the ceramics factory stands at the heart of the hall, and not only invites users to gather round but also operates as a thermal provider. In this way, the kiln becomes both a social and environmental catalyst within the project. Porosity, in the end, is not only a tool, but an invitation to stitch the neighbourhood together.



The nollimap as an analytical tool of understanding porosity. The map challenges the binary view of walls as solid, impenetrable borders. By rendering private spaces as black, and “open” spaces as white, including the hidden courtyards, the nollimap reveals the true extent of a city’s shared terrain. It shifts the focus from ownership to accessibility, visually proving that the interior of the block is not a private dead-end, but a continuous, porous network waiting to be integrated into the public life of Brussels.

03 methodology: porosity

hidden in plain sight



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03

ap as a
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tanding
osity

A porous city does not stop at the façade. It penetrates like a fluid through doors, entrances and passages, extending right into the heart of the building block.

porosity

looking beyond what we see

entrances as thresholds

extending beyond the footpath

not framing things as before and after

not solving all the problems

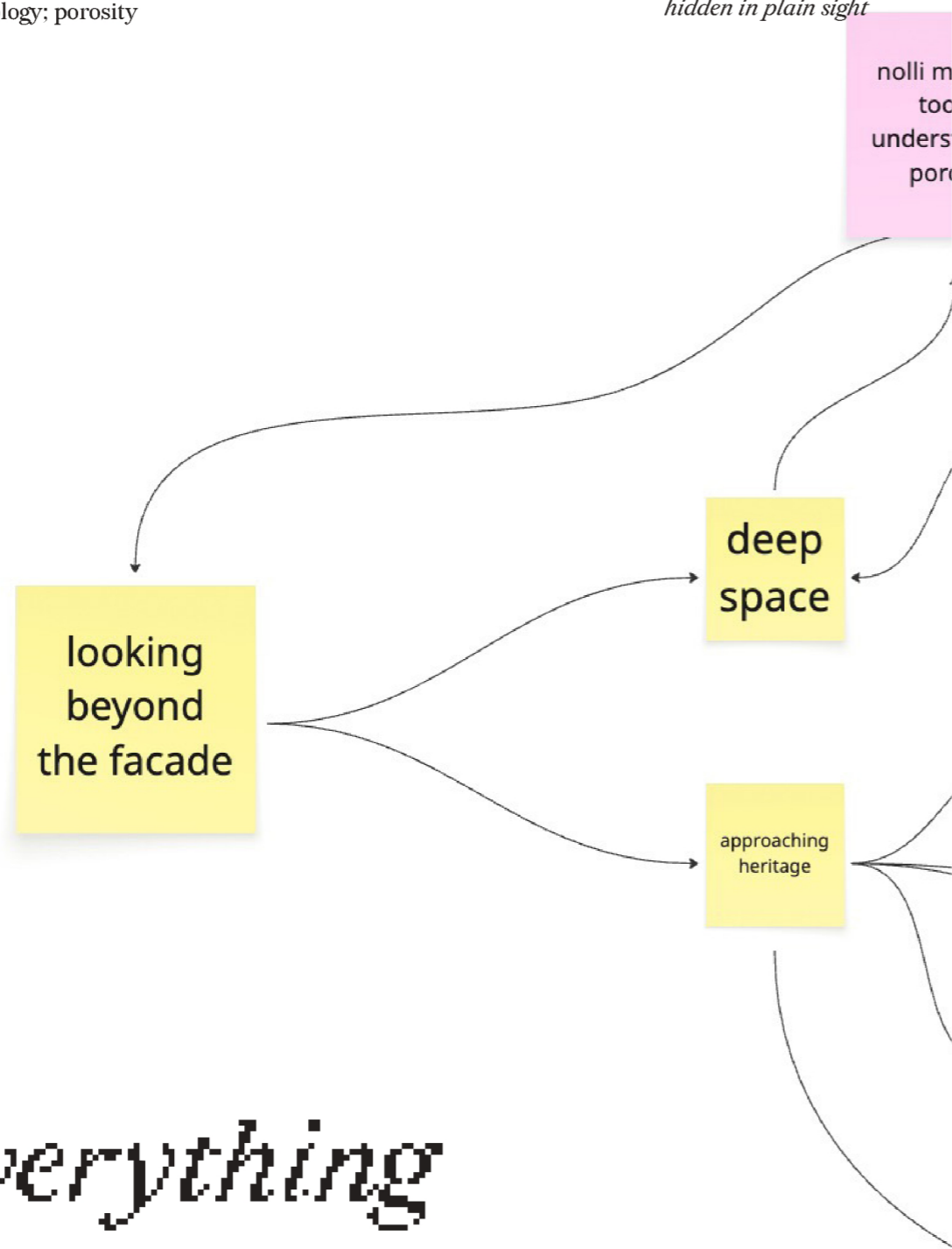
working with constraints

not freezing part of time, linking past and future

playing with the power of leaving things open

adaption and surprise

nolli m
toc
unders
por



*“everything
is already
there”*

*urban architecture
river ghost park
back as front...*

*...but what does
this mean to me?*

“Urban Architecture is a cultural practice of collecting, composing and re-using.”

The project engages the site as an accumulation of existing fragments rather than a blank slate. By reusing the former iron foundry and ceramics factory, it composes a new spatial narrative from what is already present, allowing the architecture to emerge through selection and reorganisation.

“We do not focus on the blanks to be filled in within an urban plan, but on sites where the urban plan falls short.”

The intervention targets the interior of the block, where the urban plan has failed to provide openness, accessibility, and connection. By working within these overlooked spaces, the project addresses gaps in spatial quality rather than simply adding new built form.

“Building thus means simultaneously articulating public, private and collective realms, in full awareness of how the structure to be designed relates to existing structures, how it intervenes in the city’s different scales, how it establishes material kinship, and how it acquires social relevance.”

The project carefully negotiates different degrees of openness, from public passages and shared halls to more intimate working and residential spaces. Through this layering, it establishes relationships between existing and new structures, while maintaining material continuity and social relevance.

“During their life span, they may have undergone adaptations to societal change, and so inspire us to develop new versatile structures or, even more so, to add to their biography other versions of themselves.”

The ceramics factory is understood as part of an ongoing story rather than a fixed historical object. The project adds a new chapter by reactivating it as a place of production and gathering, allowing past and present uses to coexist and evolve.

“We advocate an architecture that anticipates uses and fosters experience. Its novelty is fed by memory. Its multivalence embraces character, its economy avoids austerity, its specificity refuses arbitrariness”

The design creates a framework that encourages exploration, encounter, and multiple forms of use. Rooted in the memory of the site yet open to change, it prioritises spatial experience and adaptability, allowing the architecture to remain active and meaningful over time.

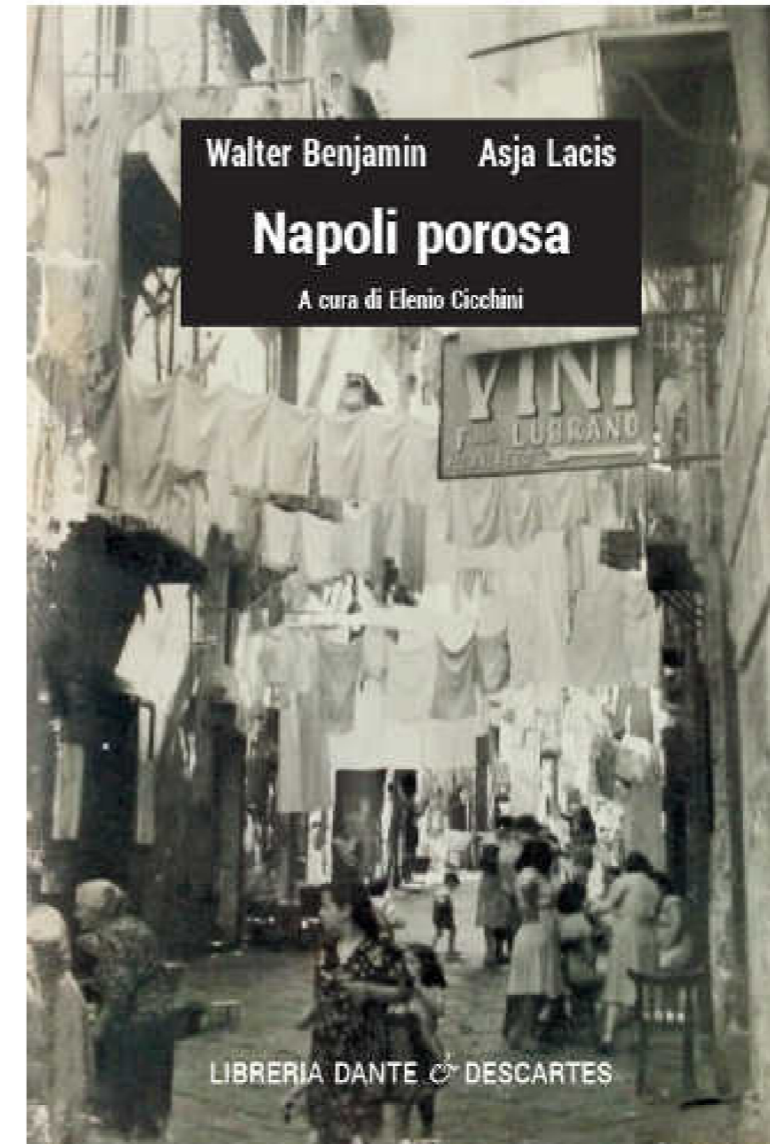
title: *hidden in plain sight*

project: *conversion of a former iron foundry into a third-party space, reactivation of former ceramics factory, masterplan of neighbourhood to connect surrounding buildings together*

location: *rue broyère and rue abbé cuylits, brussels*

This project is rooted in the existing context of the Heyvaert neighbourhood in Anderlecht, where the value of the site lies not in what is missing, but in what already exists within it. Behind a series of closed façades, the block contains a rich interior landscape of workshops, schools, courtyards, and industrial remnants that continue to support everyday life. The proposal begins from the recognition that these spaces already hold social, cultural, and productive significance. Rather than introducing entirely new programs, the project seeks to reinforce and expand what is present, ensuring that industry, learning, and community life remain embedded within the neighbourhood.

At the centre of the intervention is the revival of the former ceramics factory. Once a site of production, it is reimagined as a contemporary space for architectural ceramics, where making, learning, and exchange are brought together. The factory becomes both a place of work and a place of gathering, supporting local users while contributing to the ongoing transformation of the site. Alongside this, a series of third spaces are introduced throughout the block, informal environments that sit between domestic, educational, and productive functions. These spaces are designed to encourage interaction between different user groups, from residents and students to craftspeople and visitors, fostering a more connected and socially active environment.



"As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations."

Overlapping at the meso scale, porosity dictates how the various programmes within the project interact with each other. The design avoids rigid zoning, but instead fosters a shared infrastructures where groups can overlap. Shared “third” spaces such as the open garden, cafe, exhibition zones are interspersed where communities can meet each other.

Ultimately, designing with porosity offers a real, ground-level alternative to the typical choices of total demolition or gentrification hitting post-industrial Brussels. By working across different scales, this project proves that the true value of the Heyvaert neighborhood doesn’t need to be imported from the outside, its richness is already here, just hidden behind closed doors. By punching through the heavy, defensive walls of Rue Broyère and Rue Abbé Cuyllits, putting a new roof over the old industrial spine, and creating welcoming, active thresholds, the project successfully flips the block. It turns what used to be a closed-off industrial “back alley” into a vibrant, inclusive public “front.” When you look at it this way, porosity stops being just an academic theory. It becomes a practical building strategy, one that respects the deeply layered history of industry and migration here, while carving out a flexible, shared space for the neighborhood’s future.

Despite the richness of what exists within the block, its interior remains largely inaccessible. The primary barrier is not a lack of program, but a lack of permeability. Entrances are limited, passages are concealed, and the spatial depth of the site is hidden from the street. The project addresses this condition through the theme of “back as front.” This approach challenges the conventional hierarchy between façade and interior, proposing instead that the life of the block should extend outward and become visible, accessible, and inviting.

By opening up new entrances, reconnecting courtyards, and activating existing passages, the project transforms the interior into a continuous, navigable landscape. What was once considered the



“back” of the block becomes its new public face, a sequence of spaces that can be entered, explored, and inhabited. The long hall that cuts through the site acts as a central spine, linking one street to another while organising the various programmes around it. Within this space, the ceramics kiln becomes a focal point, both socially and environmentally, drawing people together while contributing to the atmospheric conditions of the hall.

Through these strategies, the project does not seek to overwrite the existing fabric, but to reveal and amplify it. It operates through careful reworking, allowing buildings to evolve while maintaining their identity and relevance. The aim is to create a porous and inclusive urban environment, where the boundaries between inside and outside, public and private, are softened. In doing so, the project proposes a shift in how the block is perceived and used, transforming it from a closed and fragmented entity into an open and interconnected part of the city.

hidden in plain sight

...what does this mean?

Urban porosity is not defined as literal holes or physical openings, but acts as a socio-spatial condition where boundaries between public/private, inside/outside, and production/domesticity become fluid. In this project it is used both as an analytical tool to map the hidden interiors of the block and as a spatial strategy to invert its defensive edge. At the same time, this architectural intervention does not impose external order onto the neighbourhood; instead it establishes a continuous navigable terrain where the revived ceramics factory and the third party space can act as porous thresholds.

To apply this method of porosity as an analytical framework, this requires a step back from the traditional top-down approach of urban-mapping that reads buildings as solid footprints on a two dimensional map. By treating the urban block of rue broyere and rue abbe cuylits as a three dimensional landscape, the interior complexities are revealed.

The translation of porosity from an analytical theory into a concrete architectural masterplan requires a design strategy. To avoid demolishing buildings for the sake of opening up, is not reason enough to do so. In my case, the buildings that are demolished, are always given back a space in the masterplan. By coordinating interventions across varying dimensions, the project systematically dismantles the defensive perimeter of the site, turning its hidden “back” into an active public “front”.

There are three scales of interventions the project comes across when dealing with porosity. The first being the macro scale, the project reworks the entire urban block bounded by the two streets. The primary intervention breaks the isolation by carving out physical pedestrian passages. The central organising element of this is the existing long hall placed in the middle of the block. Rather than removing this structure, it is adapted to serve as a porous public spine.

“a porous city does not stop at the facade. It penetrates like a fluid through doors, entrances and passages, extending right into the heart of the block”

This project *Hidden in Plain Sight* emerged naturally from the physical reality of the Heyvaertwijk neighbourhood, the theme of porosity that came out of site investigation, and the studio’s agenda of *back as front*. It reflects the realisation that the site’s true value is not something that needs to be imported, but something that already exists within its own context, just trapped out of view.

What is hidden? Beneath the surface of a seemingly quiet residential pocket between rue broyère and rue abbé cuylits, lies an active, complex landscape of industrial remnants, hidden courtyards, and neglected interiors. From the sidewalk, this spatial wealth is completely masked by a solid, defensive perimeter of domestic façades and sealed garage doors. The neighbourhood’s true social and productive value is already present; it is simply obscured by a total lack of urban permeability.

To unlock this trapped potential, the project adopts the idea of “porosity”, by looking at Walter Benjamin’s methodology of porosity. By deliberately puncturing the closed street wall, the intervention reverses the traditional urban hierarchies. The private, industrial *back* of the block is turned outward, to become a highly permeable, public face. Through this spatial intervention, the former ceramics factory and new third spaces are transformed into a continuous, navigable landscape that allows for people to traverse from one street to another through passages and courtyards. Architecture and collective social action interpenetrate, weaving a fragmented block back into the wider fabric of Brussels.

By reviving the revival of the ceramics factory as the central anchor, the project also aims to keep industry within the city, rather than pushing it out. The long hall acts as a spine within the block, softening the boundaries between the productive interior and the residential streetscape. This physical porosity is further supported by the informal third spaces, which function as social thresholds between domestic life and craft. Ultimately, the architecture does not impose an external re-order, but carefully reworks the existing fabric to create a resilient, inclusive urban interior.

brussel



03

hidden in plain sight

porosity *a measure of the void spaces in physical matter*

porosity
noun [U]

the state of being porous *

* *porous*
adjective [U]

- 2a: permeable to fluids
- b: permeable to outside influences
- 3: capable of being penetrated



porosity...

porous..city?

Zooming into Heyvaert, it is quite clear that the site is inhabited by industrial warehouses, shaped by layered histories of industry, migration and everyday life . Zooming in even more reveals clusters of buildings tightly packed together, forming a dense and continuous urban fabric. The area is calm and largely inactive, shaped by its location within a predominantly residential part of Heyvaert, where everyday life unfolds quietly and public activity is limited.

Through this analysis, it becomes evident that the site's quietude is a direct result of its impermeable perimeter, rather than a lack of internal vitality. To address this spatial lockdown, this project adopts porosity as its core design methodology. Instead of introducing radical external programs to force activation, porosity is used to soften the rigid boundaries between the public street and private interiors. By strategically puncturing sealed edges and introducing intermediate thresholds, the design allows for the quiet everyday life that is already existing to flow outward. In doing so, this method transforms a collection of isolated architectural fragments into a continuous, navigable landscape where community and industrial heritage can freely weave together.



- rue broyère & rue abbé cuylits



spine of the block



04 *unravelling heyvaertwijk; rue broyère and rue abbé cuylits*

hidden in plain sight

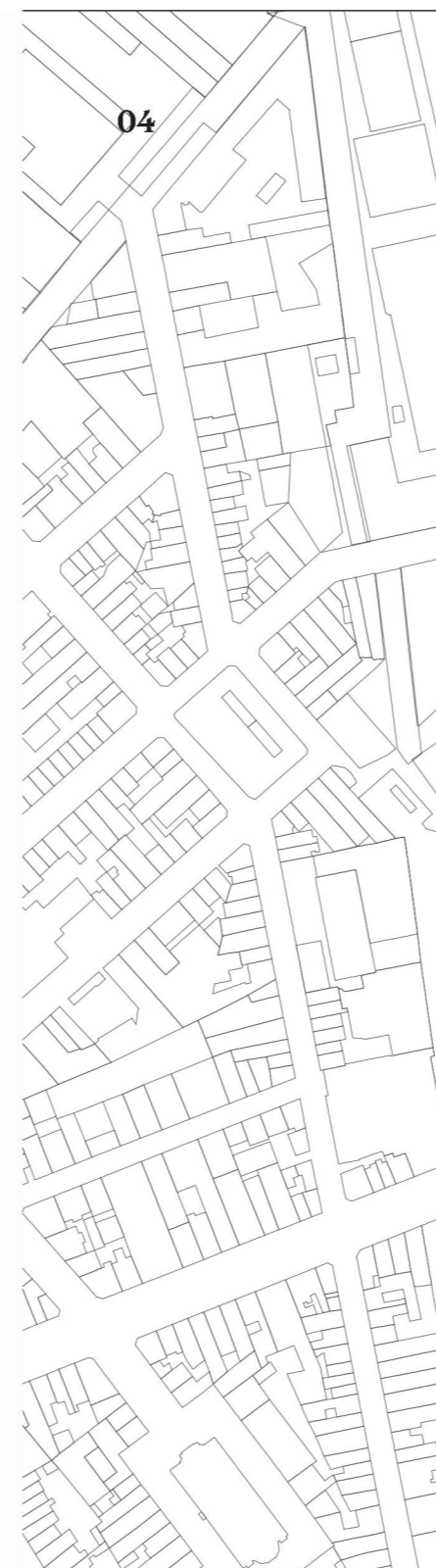
The collective research, materialised in the form of a newspaper, served as the primary tool for investigation, uncovering the rich, interior layers of Heyvaert. Through interviews at Ko'mun and Aïm El Fath, tracking everyday spatial practices like children playing or volunteers organising donations, the newspaper document a neighbourhood that is deeply-lived in and constantly in-flux. However, this collective mapping also exposed a sharp contradiction: while a vibrant social life unfolds dynamically behind closed doors, it remains completely trapped by an unyielding street edge. My individual methodology of porosity responds to this finding. By translating the fleeting moments, informal rules, and local hopes captured in the newspaper into physical architectural openings, porosity acts as the mechanism that dismantles these spatial barriers. It takes the active, daily life discovered through our group research and allows it to porous-ly spill out into the public realm, turning hidden community actions into the new public front of the city.

The newspaper

found the social porosity (informal agreements, overlapping uses and shifting life)

My architecture

provides the physical porosity (actual open gates, public spines, open courtyards) to support it



04

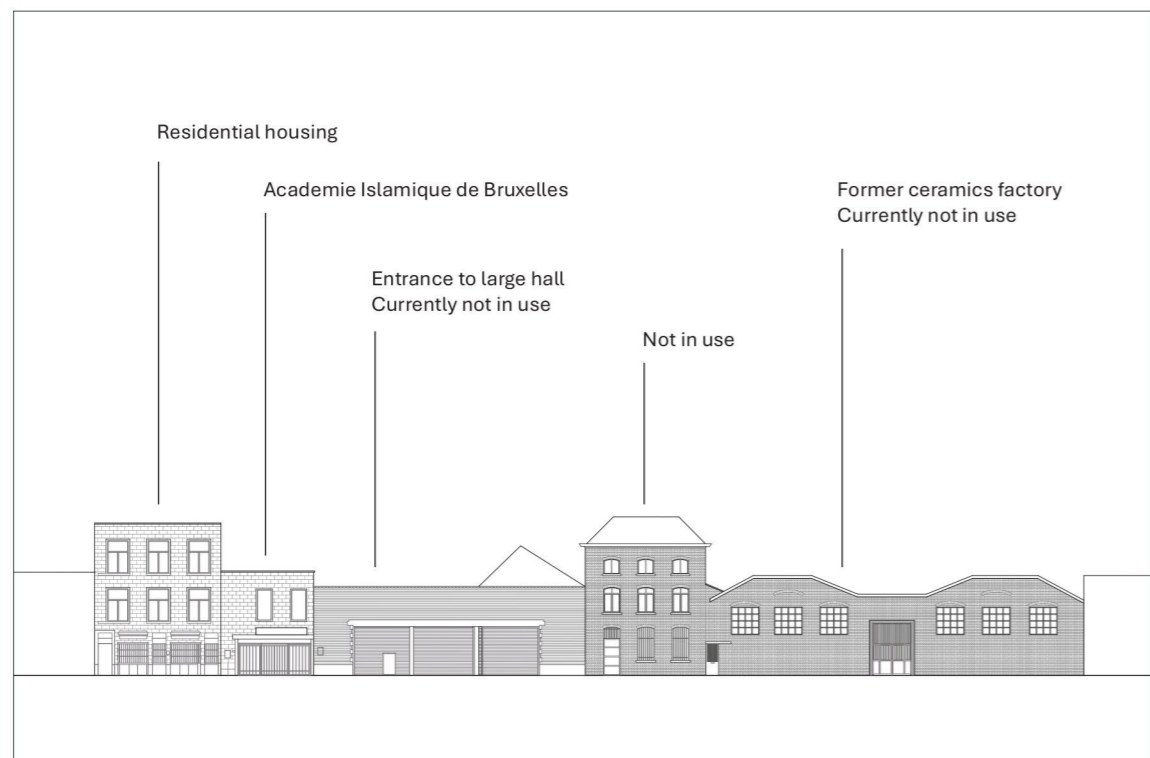
hidden in plain sight

Let's take a walk through the area...

Anderlecht, Heyvaertwijk in specific can be separated into different zones. Starting north of the area, we come across the unmaintained Parc de la Porte de Ninove, with the Institute Des Arts Et Métiers situated right behind it. Walking more south, appears the Parc de la Rosée which has gone through a lot of efforts to stand where it is today. On the other side facing the canal, we see industrial buildings parked on this strip. Newer efforts of architectural interventions have been put into place such as Hall des Sports Mohamed Ali and De Grote Hal, which is seen on a day to day basis crowded with kids. However past this sports hall, the efforts start to diminish. Large industry buildings, parking lots and abandoned buildings crowd the canal-facing street, just up till we reach the newly built housing block on the Quai de l'Industrie. And just south of this across the road, we finally get to the Abattoir. Known as a busy meat market, vendors also sell miscellaneous items such as clothings, toys, household items, perfumes and many more. On the off days, the market hall serves as a covered space where children can come to play and gather once school ends.

Walking back north of the site again, we come across the residential area of Heyvaert, where traces of industry still lie, and buildings are glued right to each other. Heyvaert leaves mystery, yet it is transparent. Reaching Rue Broyere, a bright green door appears, making a statement on the street; a feature hard to ignore. Beyond the white harmonious facades, stands a long hall with no access to the inside.





rue broyère



In Heyvaertwijk, a neighborhood in Brussels, the streets paint a clear picture of who is visible in public life. On any given day, men are the predominant presence, walking along the streets, chatting on corners, or running errands, while women are far less likely to be seen outside. Local observers note that women tend to remain inside homes, offices, or community facilities, creating a stark contrast between public and private spaces. Whether attending to household responsibilities, working indoors, or participating in activities within local centers, women's movements in Heyvaertwijk are largely confined to spaces behind closed doors.

This visible divide in public space use reflects broader social and cultural dynamics. The streets, bustling with male activity, suggest that public life in the neighborhood is dominated by men, while women's contributions, interactions, and mobility remain largely unseen. It also invites a closer look at how local infrastructure, community norms, and cultural expectations shape who is seen and who remains hidden in the daily life of Heyvaertwijk.

For the casual passerby, the neighborhood may appear as though the streets belong solely to men. Yet beneath the surface, women are active in shaping the community from within its buildings, ensuring that much of the neighborhood's life and energy exists just out of sight.

Meet the Men, Find the Women

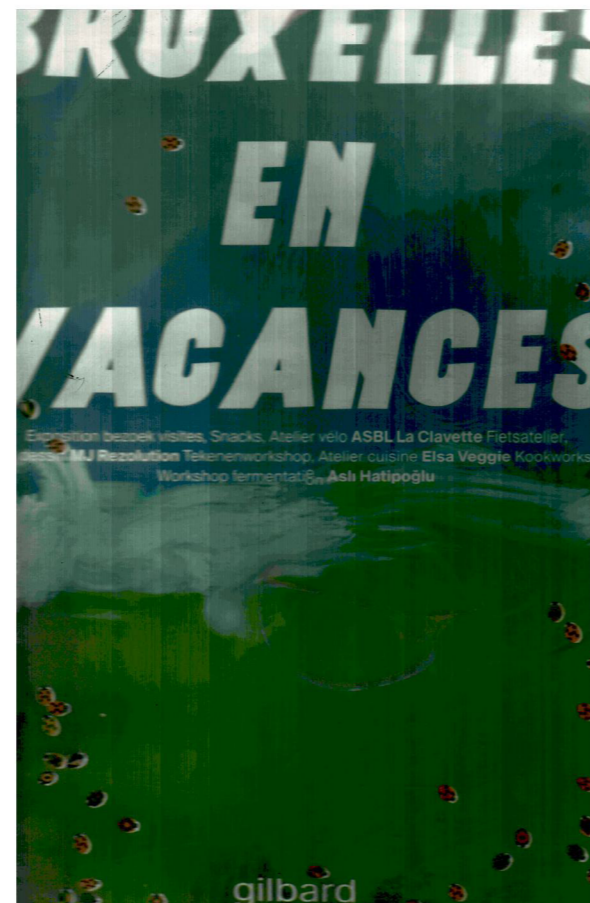
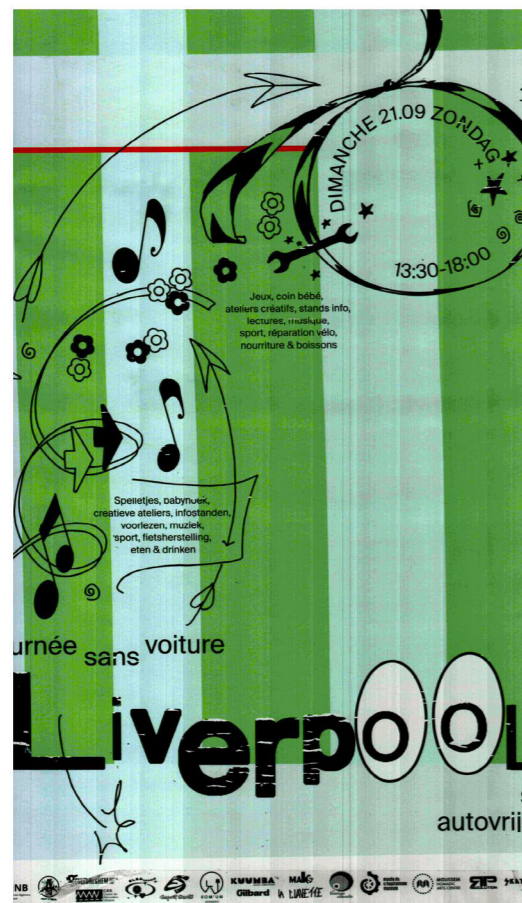
the
Doolmans
Beyouf



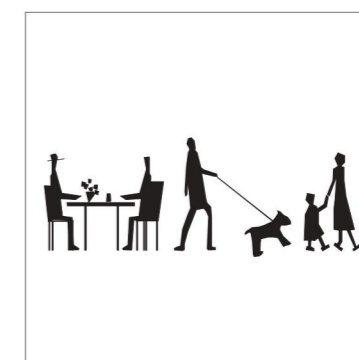
Women inside of Ko man Cultural Image

scattered communities

Beyond its physical infrastructure, Heyvaert is home to a vibrant yet fragmented ecosystem of localised cultural and social initiatives such as Ko'mun, Kuumba, Atelier Permanent, and Gilbard. While these scattered groups all operate as vital grassroots "third spaces" within the neighborhood, they currently exist in total with minimum communication or active collaborations bridging them together. Many of these organisations face severe spatial constraints, operating out of cramped interiors that completely lack dedicated outdoor areas or flexible public zones. By reviving the ceramics factory and creating an open, interconnected masterplan, this project acts as a shared physical platform designed to bring these scattered communities together, providing the spacious, open third spaces they lack to finally foster collective cross-collaboration.



(A) primary school



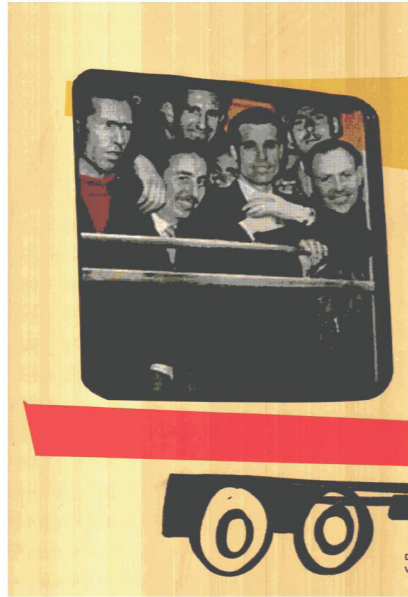
(B) residential



(C) islamic academic centre

(D) empty

productive city



Heyvaert stands as a historic, productive engine of Brussels, where making and living are uniquely packed together. Retaining this light industry within the city center is vital; it prevents gentrification, cuts down transport distances, and protects diverse, local jobs that keep the neighborhood self-sustaining. Today, the area is driven by a gritty mix of active used-car export businesses along the canal, metalworking shops, small-scale construction logistics, and leftover food processing facilities. By preserving this productive identity rather than erasing it, the project proves that urban industry can successfully coexist with a vibrant community.



ABÉCÉDAIRE ALIMENTAIRE

Réalisé par Hadja, Sara A., Aïcha, Salma, Grace-Divine, Achraf, Aminata, Sara Ferdaous, Ali, Ibrahima, Anan, Yassin, Lin, Iness, Darine, Hajer, Hadjje, Stéfane & Cultureghem et à la Rocée

(in)VISIBLE (wo)MEN

Man outside at Avenue Brasserie
Colored Image



Old Lead
Manufacture

The building was built in 1880 and was used as a lead factory. It was one of the last buildings of its kind in Brussels. The building is now a museum and is open to the public. It is a very interesting building and is worth a visit. The building is a very good example of the architecture of the late 19th century. It is a very good example of the architecture of the late 19th century. It is a very good example of the architecture of the late 19th century.



rue abbé cuylits

1m 5m 10m

Between Care and Control The realities shaping De Grote Hal

Walking along the canal, near De Grote Hal, we noticed several bags filled with essential goods carefully prepared and displayed in a shop window. De Grote Hal is a mixed-use community building that was created as part of the canal-side redevelopment, combining workshops, offices, exhibition space, and housing. Designed to serve both local residents and a wider public, the project aims to activate the street and create social connections in an area often defined by transit and industrial activity.

We met a woman who is the center's director, and she explained the history of the place since its transformation. The new building contains several workshops with office spaces and an exhibition room overlooking the canal street. A large section upstairs and at the back is dedicated to housing. Although the place was empty on the day of our visit, she assured us that the space is regularly used by the neighborhood for a wide range of activities.

The site hosts cycling classes for women, artistic performances, and various programs for young people during school holidays or after school. These activities aim to make the building accessible and welcoming, especially to groups who are often less visible in public space.

Despite these efforts, this thoroughfare remains a source of mixed feelings. While it brings joy and activity for some residents, others complain about dark corners that have become favorable spots for illicit transactions. The director explained that, overall, the project has been a success, but several adjustments had to be made in response to the realities of the neighborhood.

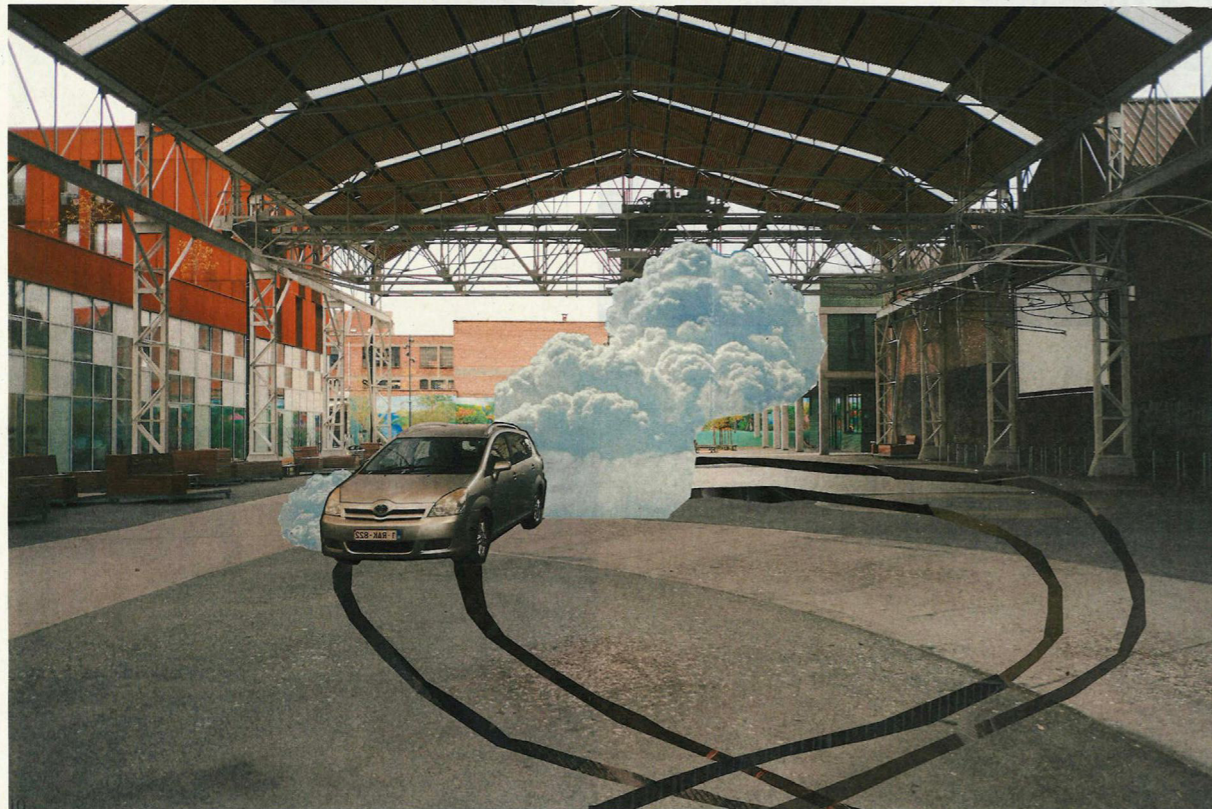
Before bollards were installed, cars would drive into the square to do donuts. Flowerbeds filled with stones encouraged some passersby to throw rocks at the building's windows. Over

time, and due to fears linked to crime in the area, residents of the building pushed for the installation of a gate at street level, which is now closed every evening.

Despite these setbacks, the director remains positive. She assured us that De Grote Hal has become integrated into the daily life of the neighborhood and continues to foster connections between residents. She also told us about a homeless man who regularly passes by the storefront and with whom she has gradually built a relationship.

Beyond its physical presence, the association running De Grote Hal works to reintegrate unemployed people into the workforce, achieving a reported success rate of around 70 percent.

Cars using open space to do donuts
Chapelle (Brussels)



04

hidden in plain sight



- rue broyère



- rue abbé cuylits



Children playing in the Sluaghbeek
Collaged scenario of the activity for Kids

Quarter
Automobile

Tea and coffee ready for visitors inside Cultureghum



A Space That Comes Alive: Cultureghem and the reuse of vacant space

Upon arriving at the site, we were met by an unexpected scene: children kicking a ball across the open space, laughing and shouting, closely supervised by a group of young counselors. The contrast between the site's industrial past and its current use as an informal playground was striking.

The former slaughterhouse site in Anderlecht is today primarily known as a large market complex, active only a few days a week and otherwise largely dormant. Once a center of industrial meat production, the site has gradually shifted toward commercial and logistical uses, hosting food markets, storage spaces, and transit flows rather than everyday neighborhood life. Outside of market days, its vast open areas and buildings often feel empty, awaiting new forms of occupation.

Curious about this unusual recreation center, we asked around and were directed to a building adjacent to the market halls. Inside, a woman at the counter welcomed us. She explained that she was a volunteer with an association that organizes activities for both young people and adults from the neighborhood and across the Brussels region. The aim, she said, is to create moments of encounter and shared use in a part of the city often defined by transit and commerce rather than community life.

The market itself operates only on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. For the remainder of the week, the vast space lies mostly empty, waiting to be reactivated. Cultureghem was created around ten years ago in collaboration with the slaughterhouse site as a way to offer Brussels residents a public, flexible, and communal space, one that could adapt to different uses depending on need and availability.

Although she does not live in the neighborhood, she comes to Cultureghem regularly and is deeply familiar with its rhythms. She spoke about the impressive number of unused spaces and vacant buildings scattered throughout the city, noting how much potential remains untapped. While she was unaware of the proposed linear park project planned for the Heyvaert district, she had heard about the idea of building a municipal swimming pool on the roof of one of the market halls. Her reaction was cautious. She acknowledged that a swimming pool would be a welcome addition, especially for children in the area, but questioned whether it should be prioritised over more urgent needs. For her, Cultureghem already demonstrates how existing spaces can be reimagined and shared, if only temporarily, to serve the community in meaningful ways.



Kids racing in the Slaughterhouse
Challenge: a memo of the activity for kids



Welcome Space inside Cultureghem



- rue abbé cuylits



- rue abbé cuylits

18.12.2025

04 unwraveling heyvaertwijk; rue broyère and rue abbé cuylits

hidden in plain sight

001 The Heyvaert Echo

Editors

Andéol Bellec
Anisa Mini
Max Wasserbäch

Voices of the Neighbourhood
Local Agenda
Spatial Practices
Conversations
Field Notes
Conditions of Use

Heyvaert Up Close

Through these pages, we explore Heyvaert from multiple angles. From the voices of locals at Ko'mun and Aim El Fath to the upcoming events of workshops, markets, and classes, we trace how daily life unfolds. Observing spatial practices, we follow how streets, courtyards, and buildings are used; children playing, volunteers organizing donations, gates shaping movement. Conversations on site reveal personal histories, fears, and hopes, while field notes capture fleeting moments of activity and tension. The conditions of use, rules, access, and informal agreements show how life is structured in the neighborhood, revealing a place both lived-in and constantly in flux.

Word on the Street

„Ici on vit pas, on survit“

group research



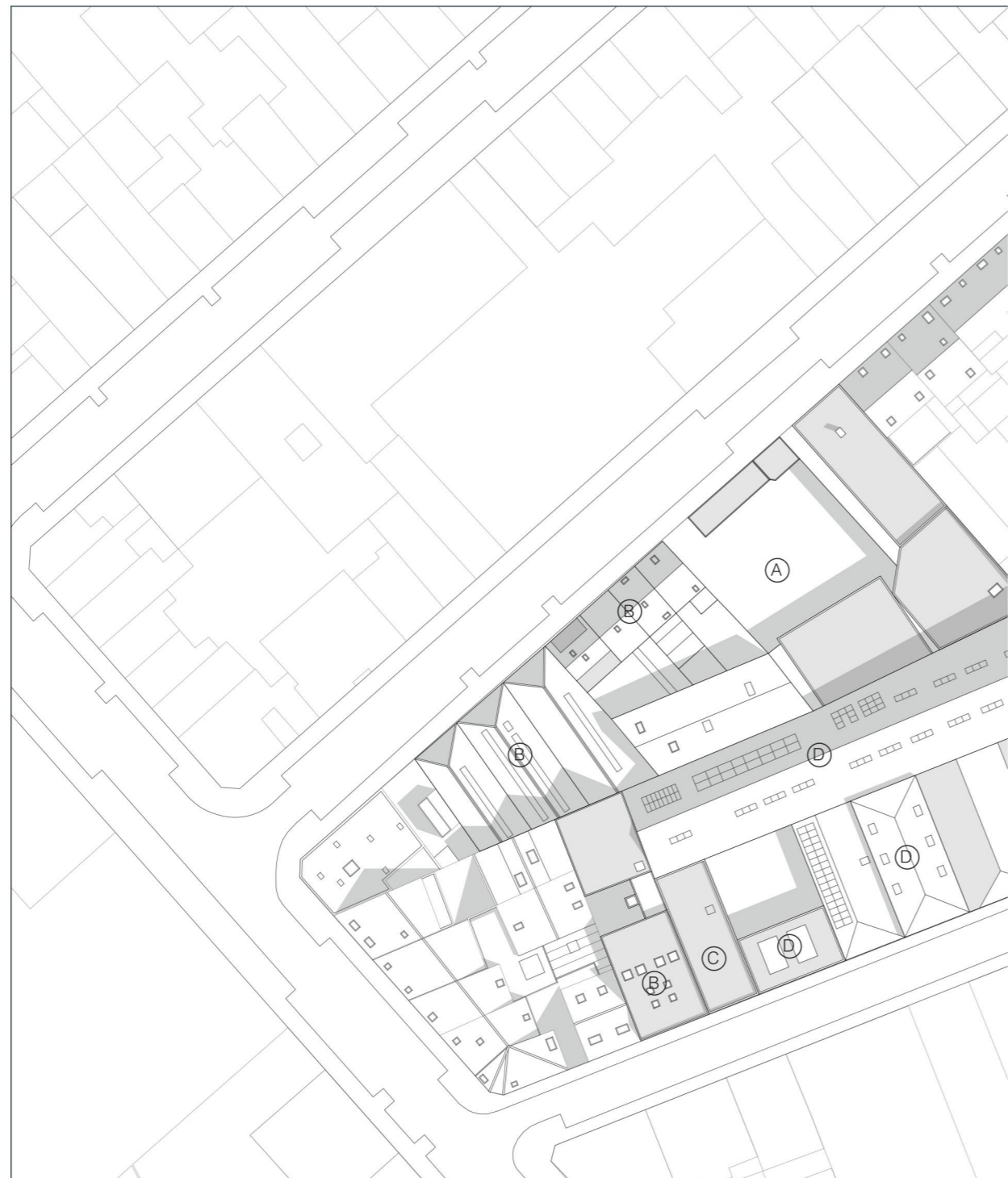
04

hidden in plain sight

The Abbé Cuylits housing project is something in the works currently. Ongoing public and private urban developments threatens to displace the area's most vulnerable residents through gentrification. To counter this, the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) is establishing a housing development on this site. By embedding this cooperative housing model with the porous fabric of the block, the design ensures that urban revitalisation actively protects, rather than excludes, the existing community. By seamlessly connecting the private garden of VERS.A architectes' housing scheme with the new public green space of my intervention, the proposed design works in harmony with these real-life development plans to establish a continuous, shared landscape within the block.



users of the site



personal stories

While speaking to a woman who was working at Kuumba, we asked her where she would go for her lunch break, or if there are spaces she likes to hang out around the Heyvaert area, and to our surprise she mentions that she would like to go out somewhere to take her lunch however a space is not provided in the area for her to do so. Hearing this, I thought to have in my intervention an open third space, providing the neighborhood with an inclusive environment for spontaneous gathering and collective pause.

PENDANT LE RAMADAN

VERS 3H. LE QUARTIER EST ENCORE VIVANT. C'EST JÀ À CETTE HEURE-LÀ. LES GENS PARTENT À LA MOSQUÉE LES CYCLES DE SOMMEIL CHANGENT. ON SE COUCHE PLUS TARD QUE D'HABITUDE ET LE CORPS PREND S'HABITUER. LE MÉTABOLISME S'ADAPTE AU BOUT D' D'ABORD TU AS MAL À LA TÊTE ET LE SYSTÈME DIGESTIF À L'ENVERS. MAIS ÇA NETTOIE LE CORPS POUR UN NOUVEAU. C'EST AUSSI UNE DÉTOX DU FOIE.

MALGRÉ LA FAIM ET LES HORAIRES DE SOMMEIL UN COURAGE AUTOMATIQUE ARRIVE POUR POURSUIVRE SON TRAVAIL. DE TOUTES FAÇONS. C'EST MIEUX D'ÊTRE POUR NE PAS SENTIR LE TEMPS PASSER. NE PAS SENTIR ÇA AIDE À TRAVAILLER LA VOLONTÉ.


ENCORE PLUS IMPORTANT QUE LE JEÛNE. LE RAMADAN EST UN MOMENT DE PARTAGE. ON DONNE DE L'ARGENT À CEUX QUI N'ONT RIEN. ON PEUT PARLER D'UN PARTAGE DE PARTAGE AVEC TOUT LE MONDE. MUSULMAN OU PAS.


À LA MOSQUÉE C'EST LA MÊME CHOSE. LA NUITE EN SALLE À MANGER OÙ UN REPAS EST OFFERT À CELLE QUI DEMANDE. IL Y A DE LA NOURRITURE POUR TOUT LE MONDE. PEUX MÊME DORMIR SUR PLACE!


LA FAIM C'EST AUSSI UNE PRÉPARATION. AU PARTAGE DE LA CHARITÉ. À CRÉER DES LIENS HUMAINS. AU CAS OÙ DES ÉPREUVES NOUS ARRIVENT.

LIQUIDATION SOCIALE

LES MESURES GOUVERNEMENTALES ONT UN VÉRITABLE IMPACT IC

 + 4000 personnes

 + 405 familles

 12000 habitant.es

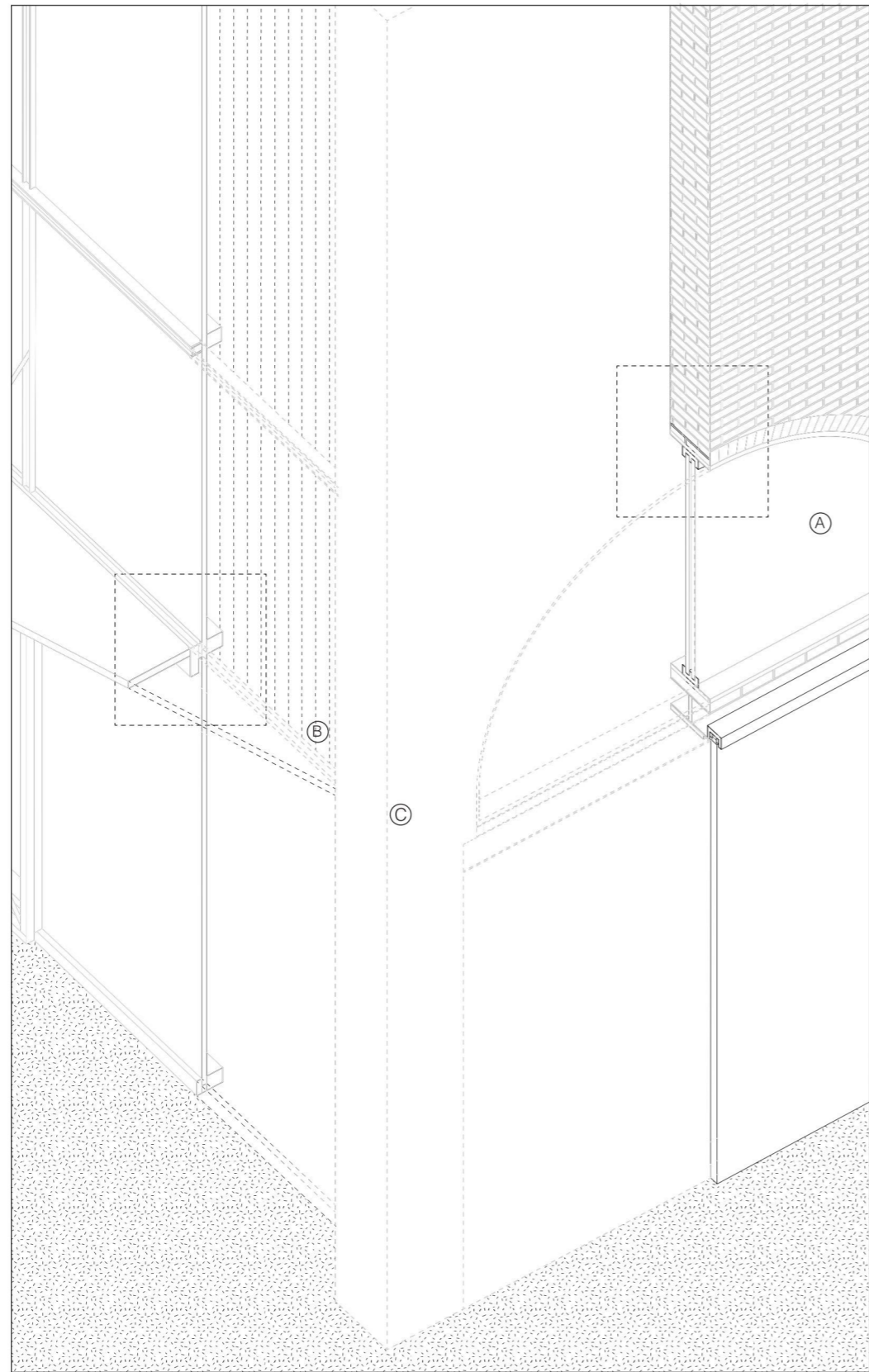
SOUTENEZ LE NON-MARCHAND!

FERMETURE-DEFINITIVE.BE

À L'INITIATIVE DES ASSOCIATIONS MOLENBEEKOISES - PROGRAMME DE COHÉSION SOCIALE - CULTURE, SOCIAL ET SANTÉ (SP) AIDE AUX PERSONNES

05 follow me into the building

hidden in plain sight



04

hidden in plain sight



follow me into the building

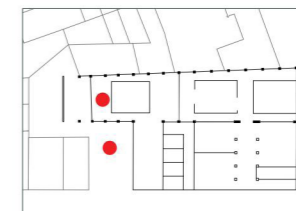




- Ⓐ Garden
- Ⓑ Entrance
- Ceramics factory
- Cafe
- Kiln
- Exhibition space

Scenario 1

An office worker breaks free from the fluorescent glare of their desk, stepping into the masterplan on a quest to reclaim their lunch hour



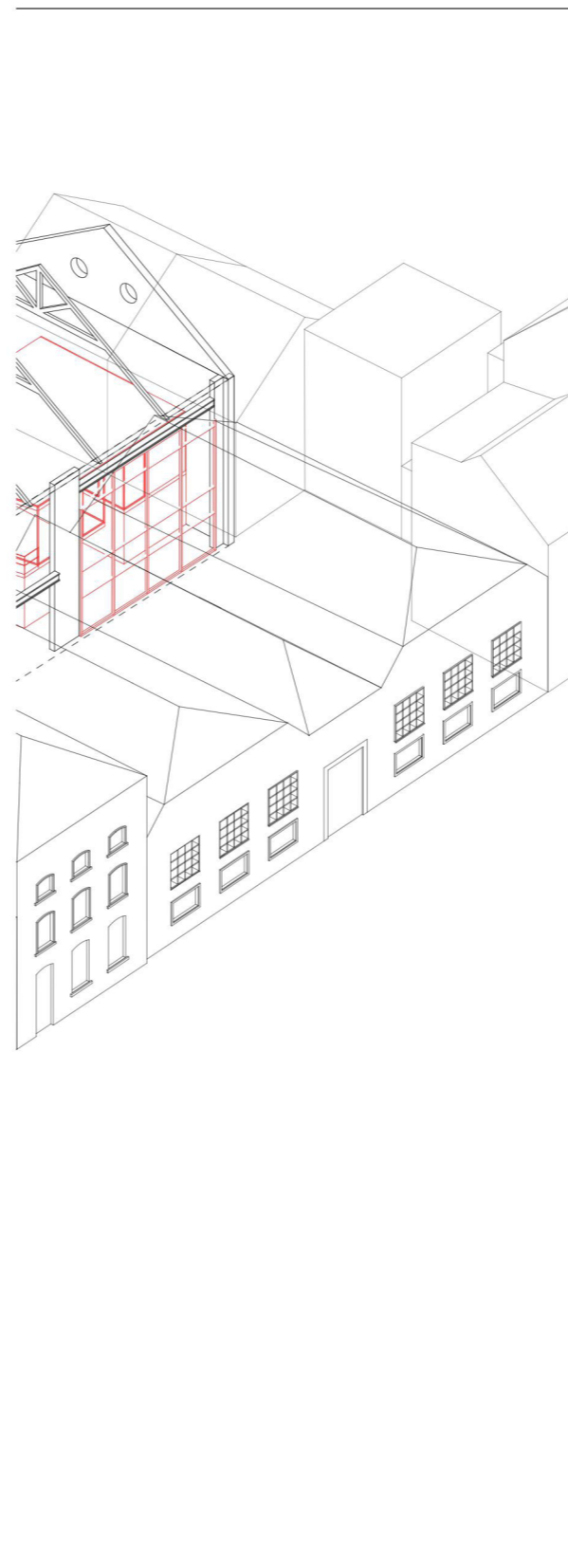


Observing from google maps, it can be seen that buildings are tightly packed together, with no room to breathe. Layers of walls and buildings from different time periods start to merge as one. Large industrial halls are situated deep within the clusters of the neighbourhoods, often not visible to the naked eye but hidden deep within the buildings. An open and large square lies within the residential area, yet it attracts no kids to enter it. How can one of very little green spaces in the area not allow for social activity?





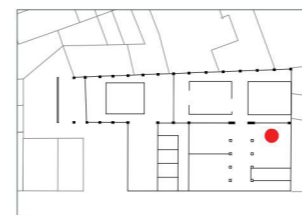
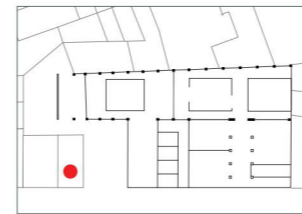
*what's
happening
inside?*



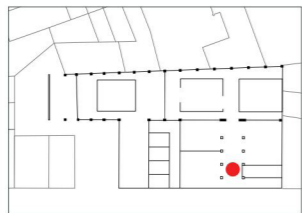
- Demolish
- New addition
- Existing



academie islamic de
bruxelles



existing conditions

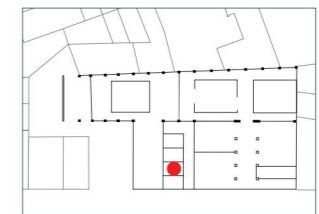


existing conditions





existing conditions



+1



existing conditions
inside the hall



05 *follow me into the building*

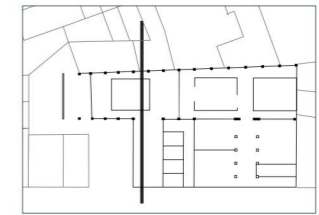
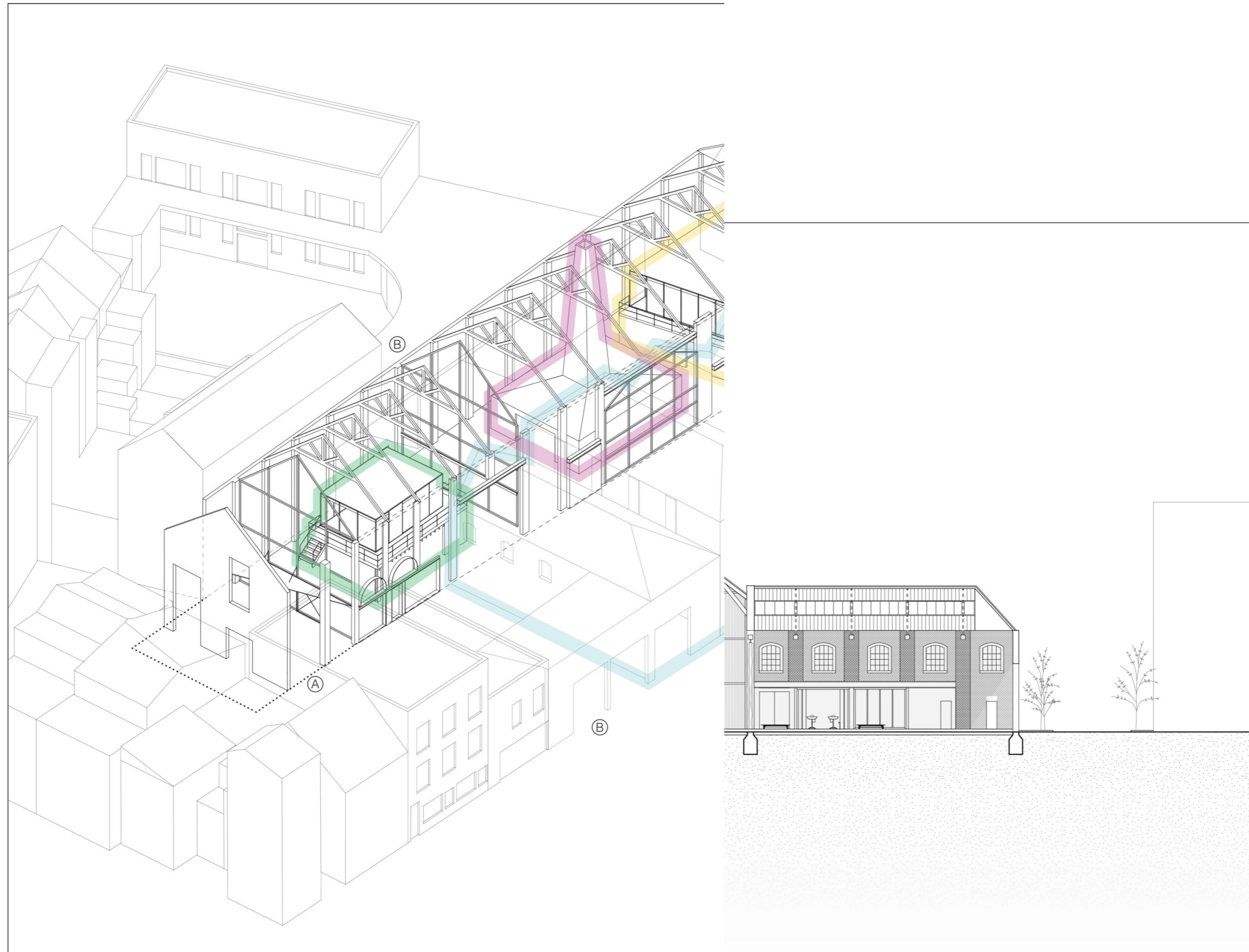
hidden in plain sight

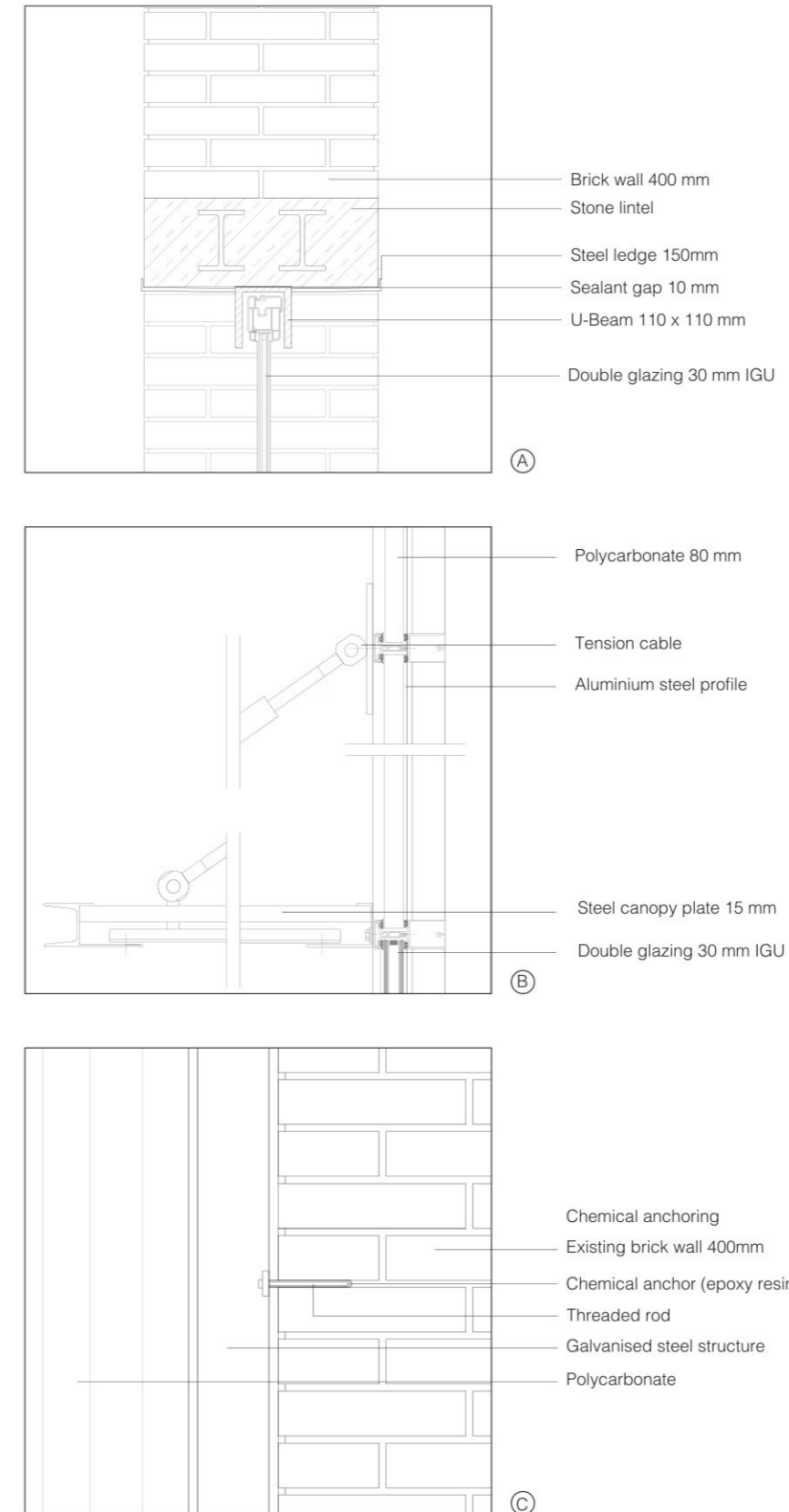
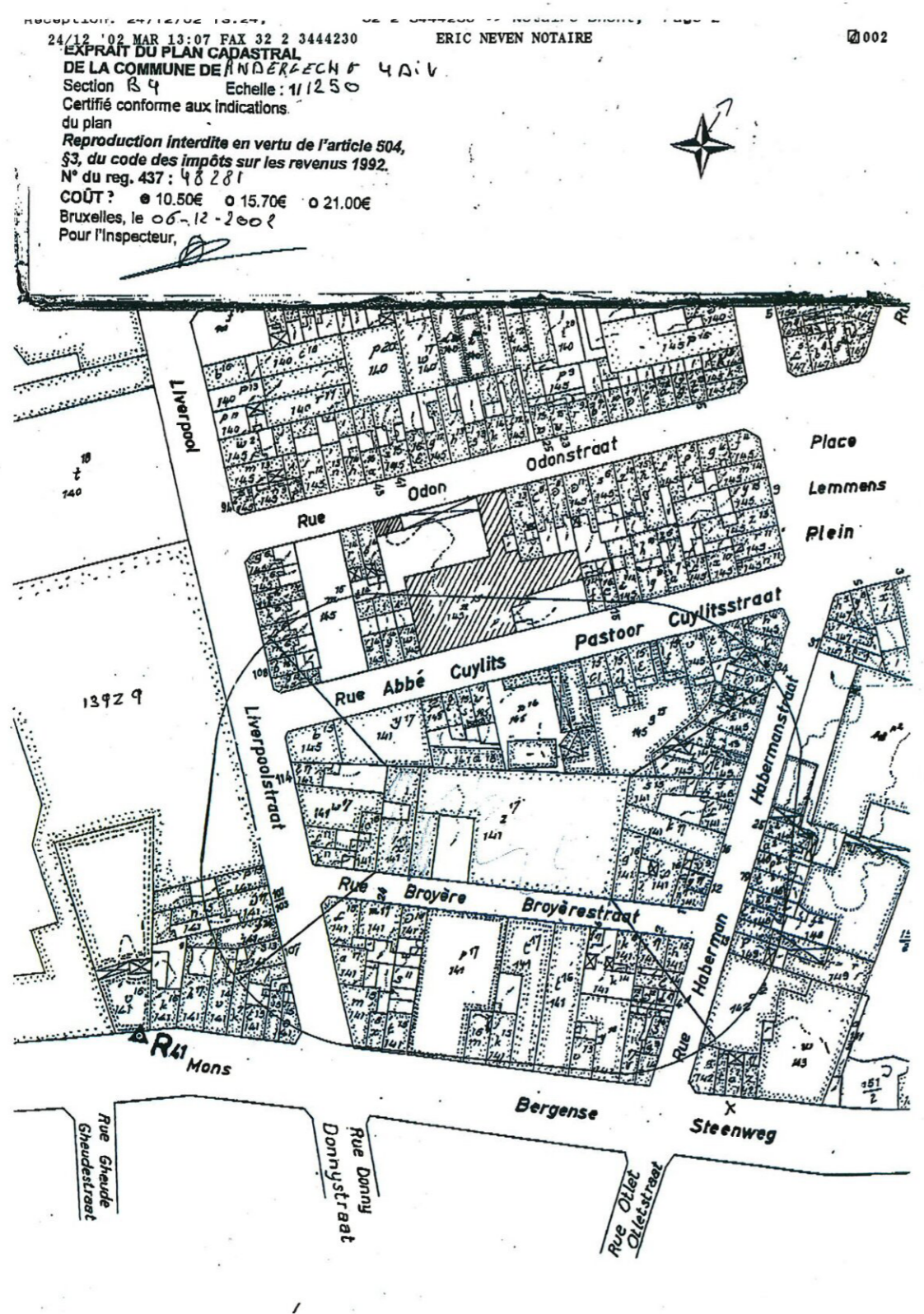
05

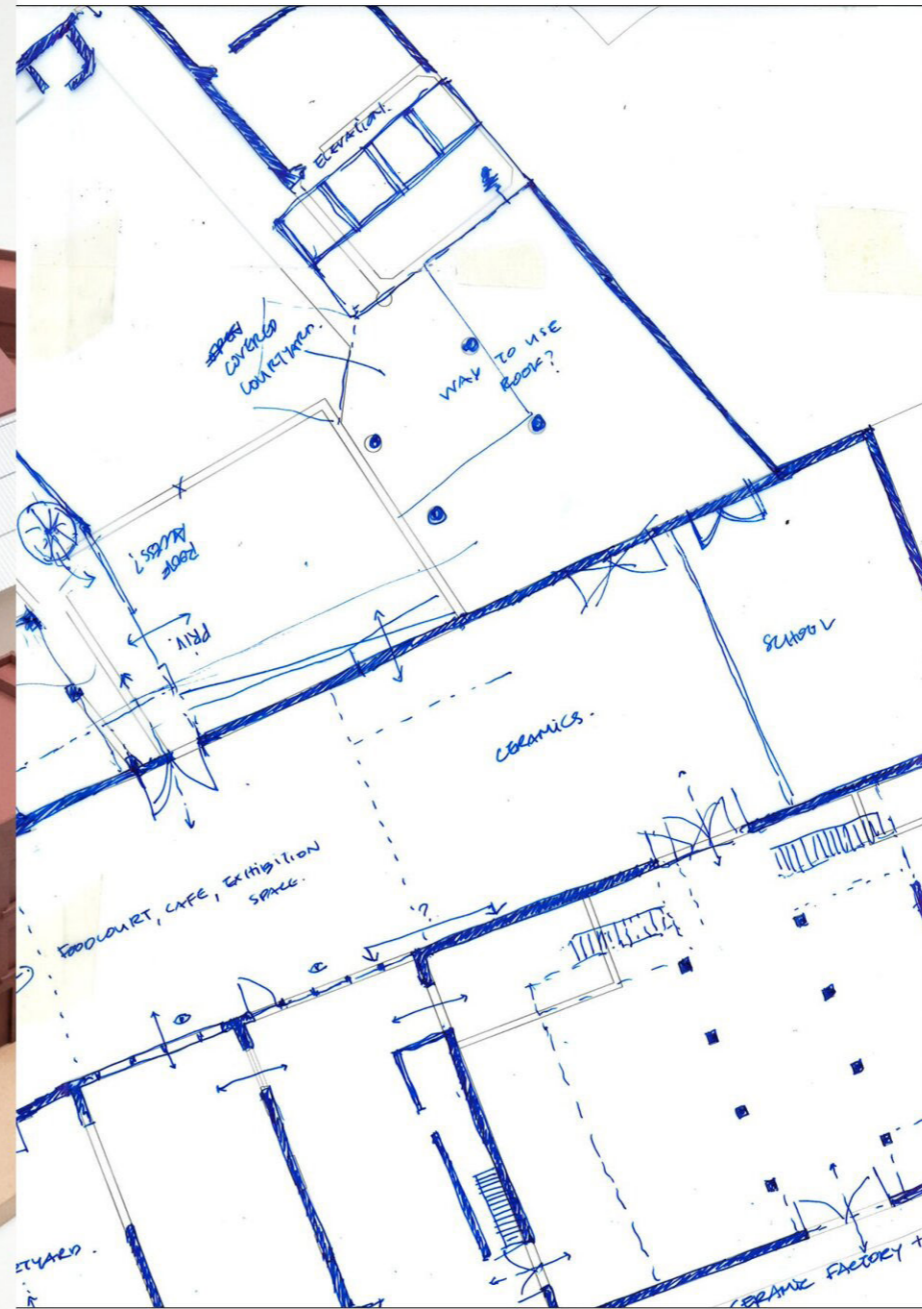
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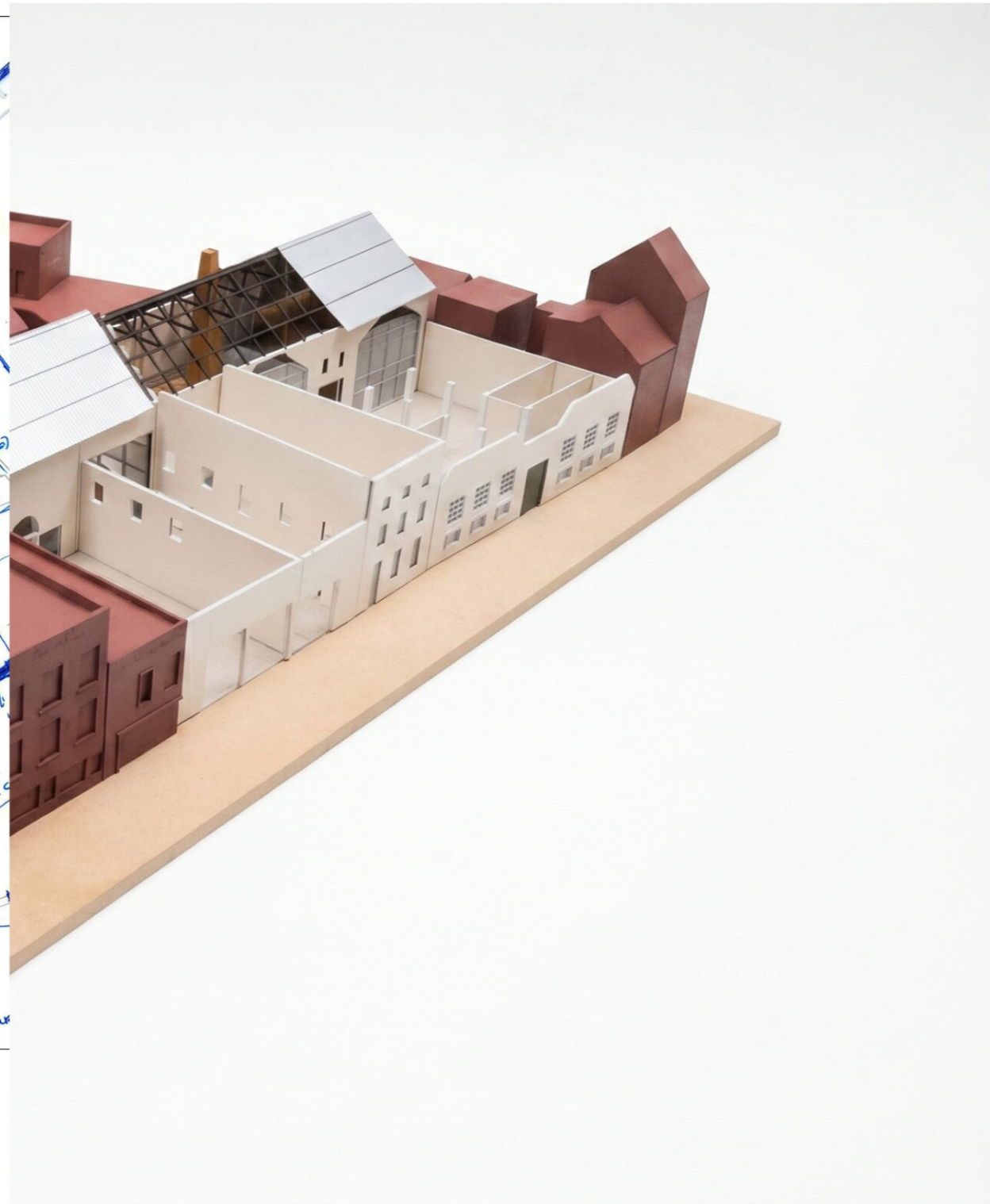
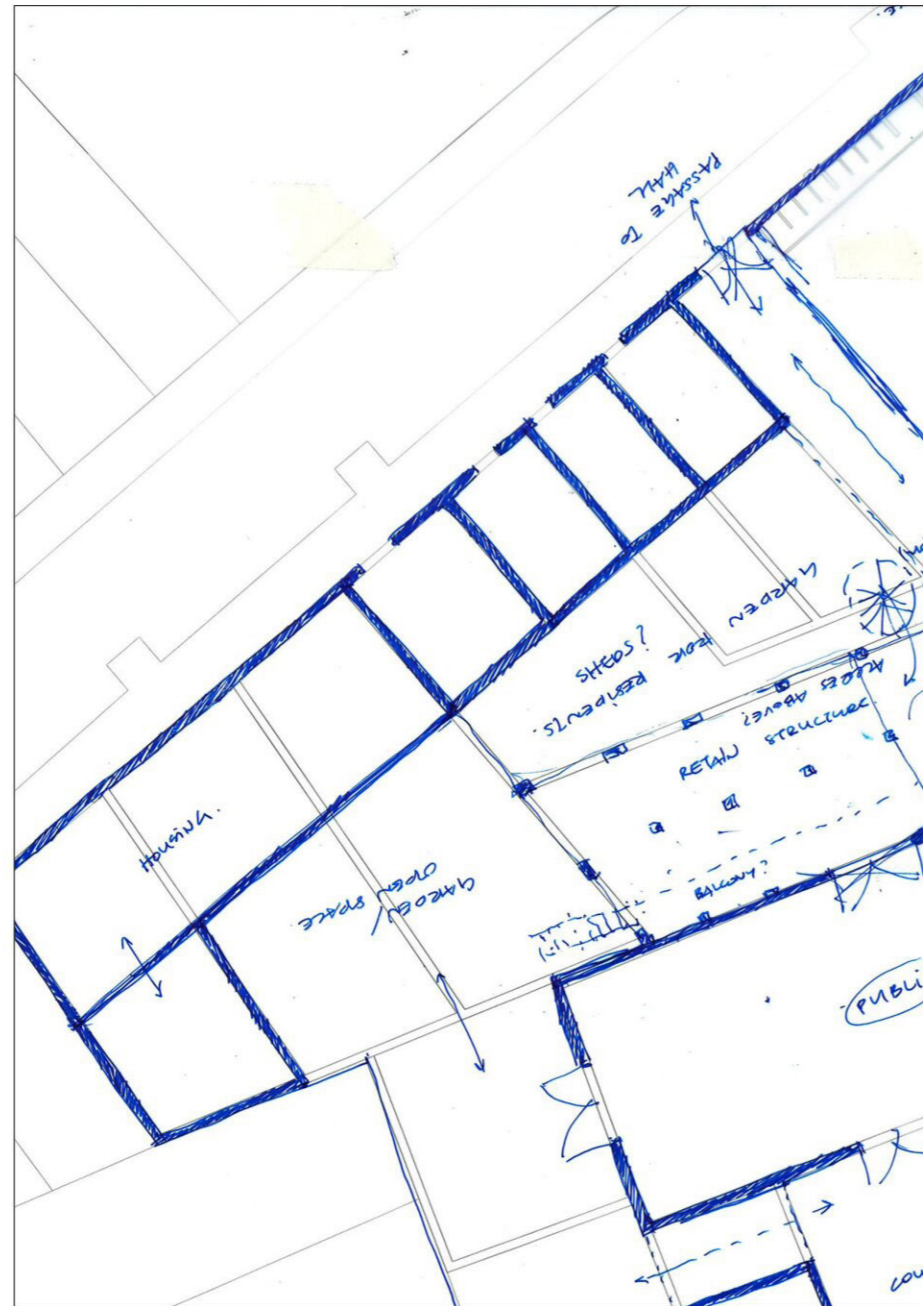


existing conditions
inside the hall



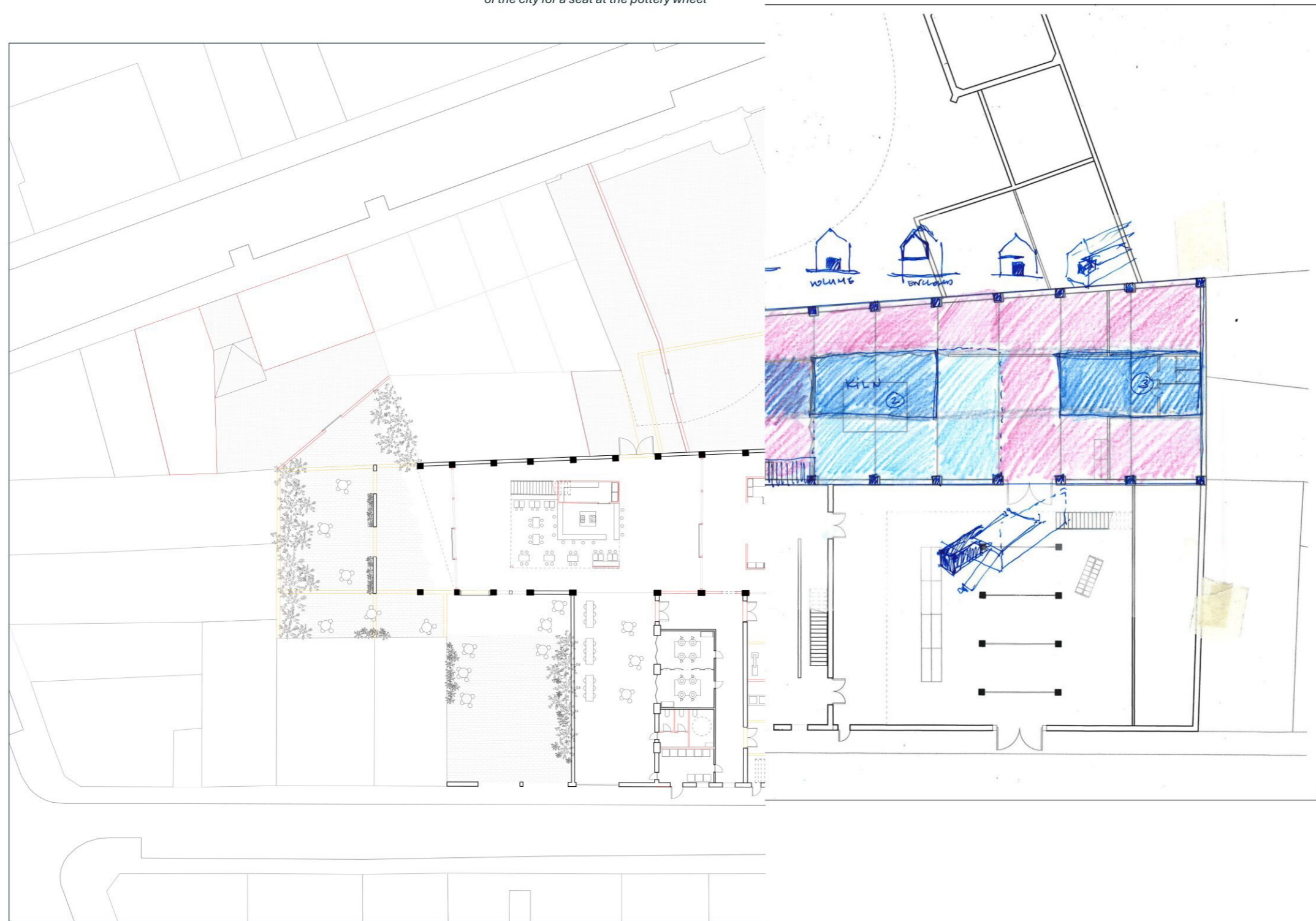


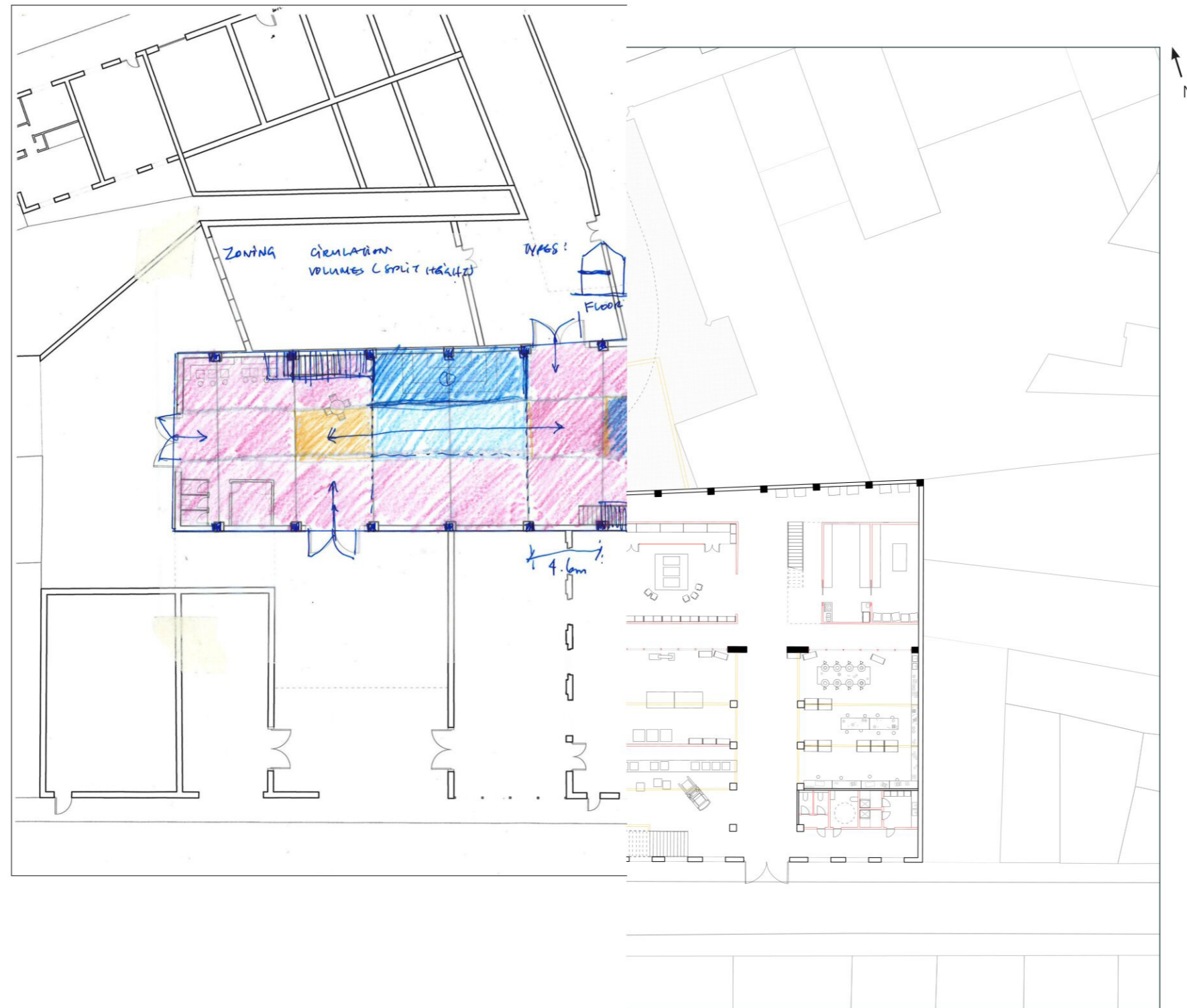




Scenario 2

Drawn in by a glimpse through a new street passage on rue abbé
cuyllits, a passerby stumbles into the hall and exchanges the rush
of the city for a seat at the pottery wheel



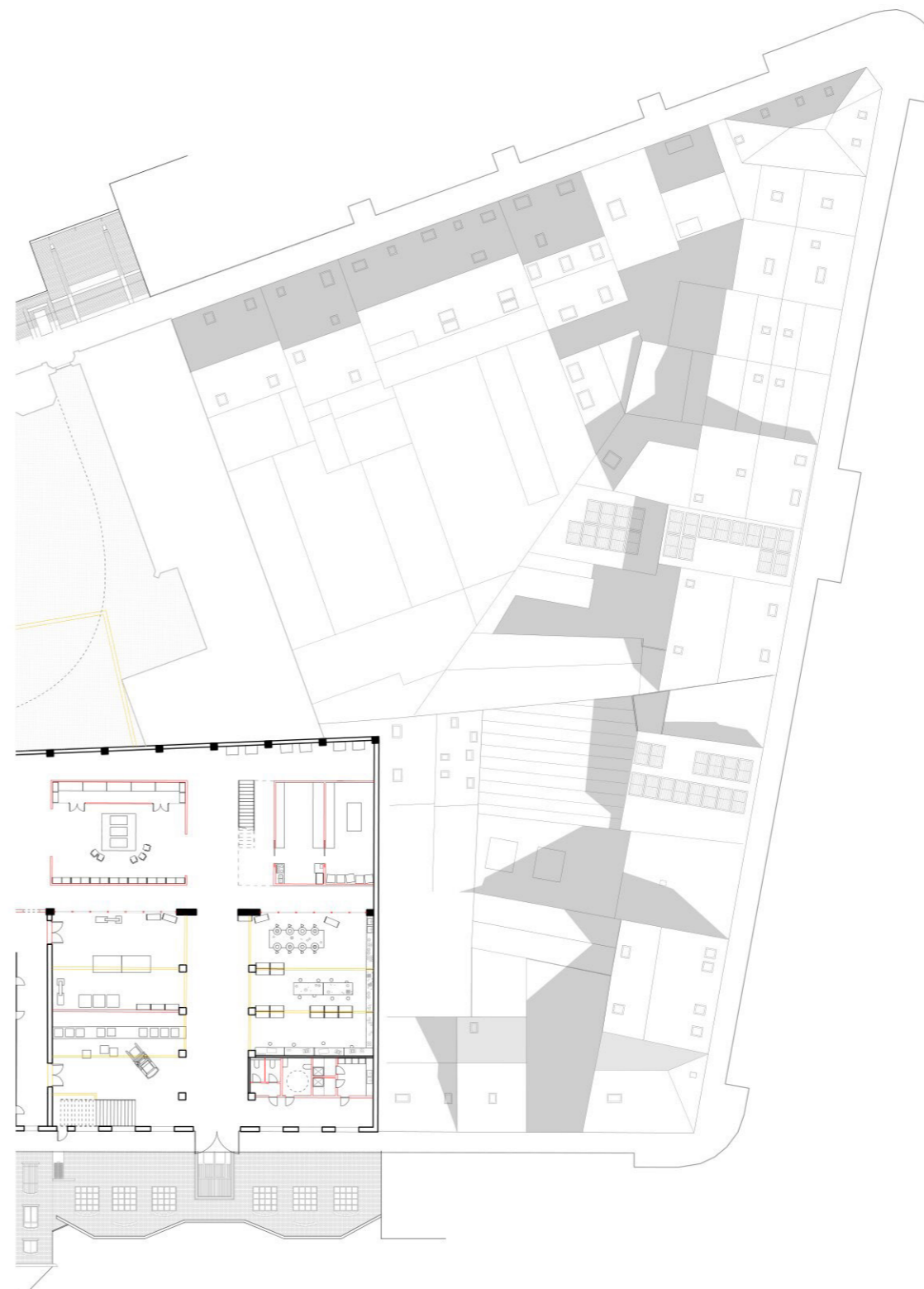


From raw to refined

A step-by-step architectural sequence mapping how raw materials enter the porous edge of the factory and navigate the thresholds of processing, throwing, firing, and final public exhibition.

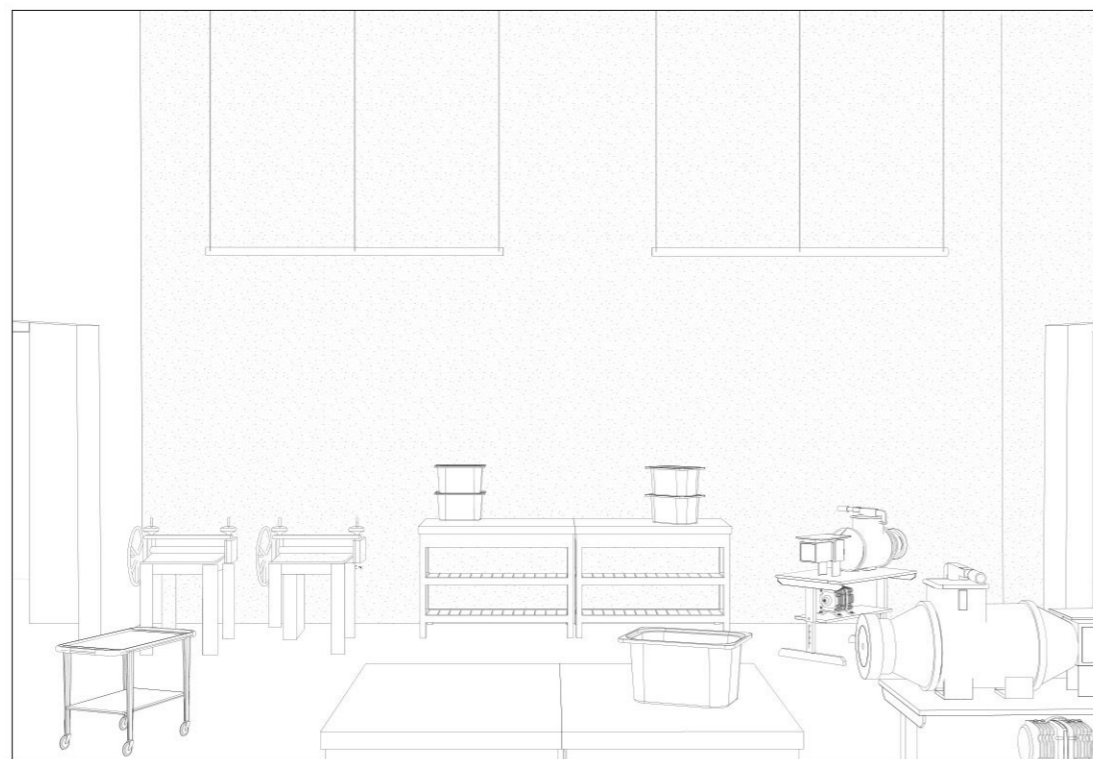


Step 1: The ceramic making process begins at the logistics hub, where raw clay is delivered and transported by forklift into the processing zone to be prepared for the makers.



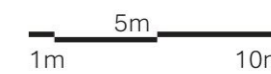
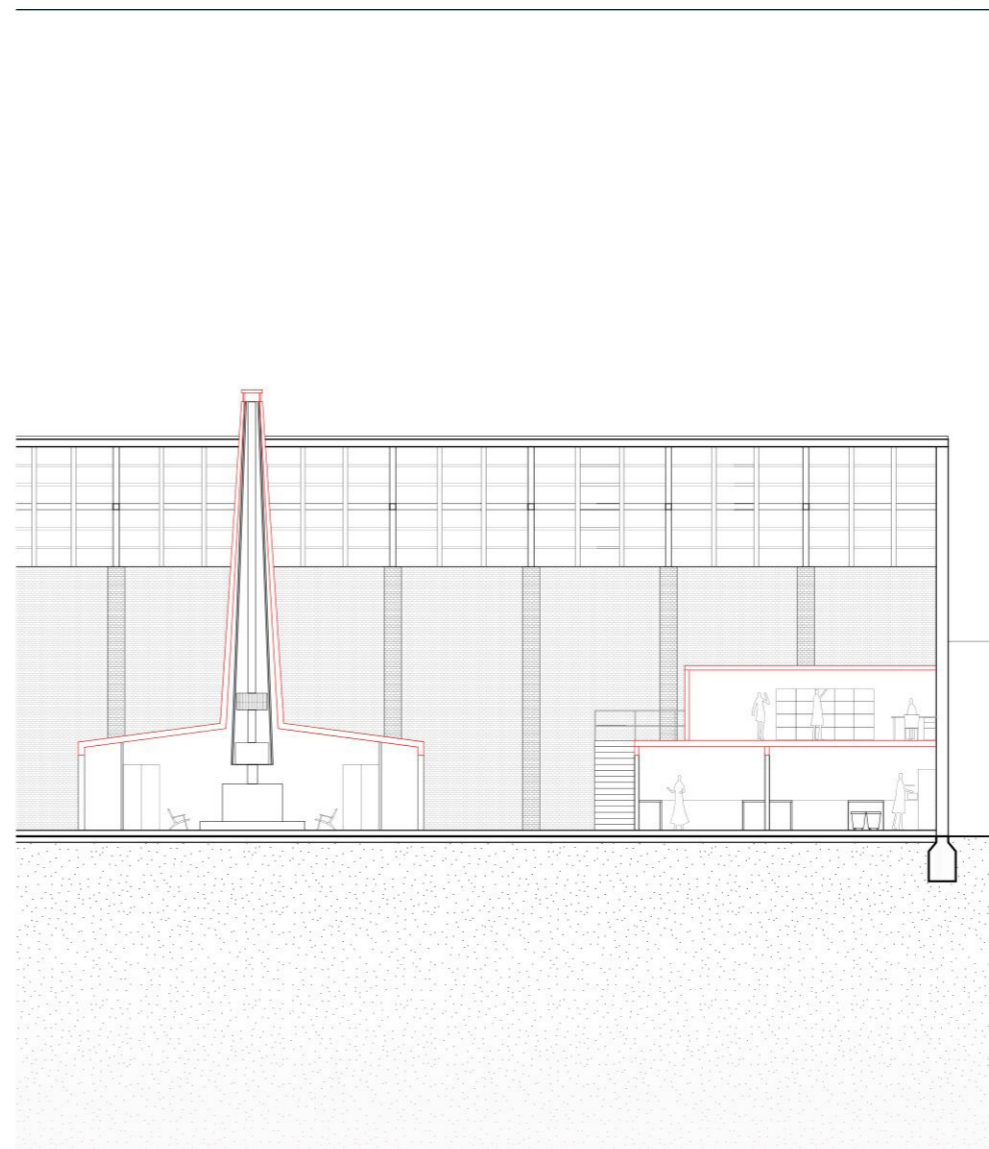
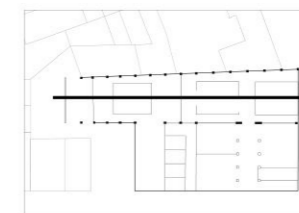


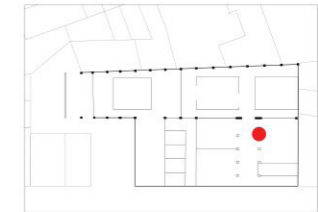
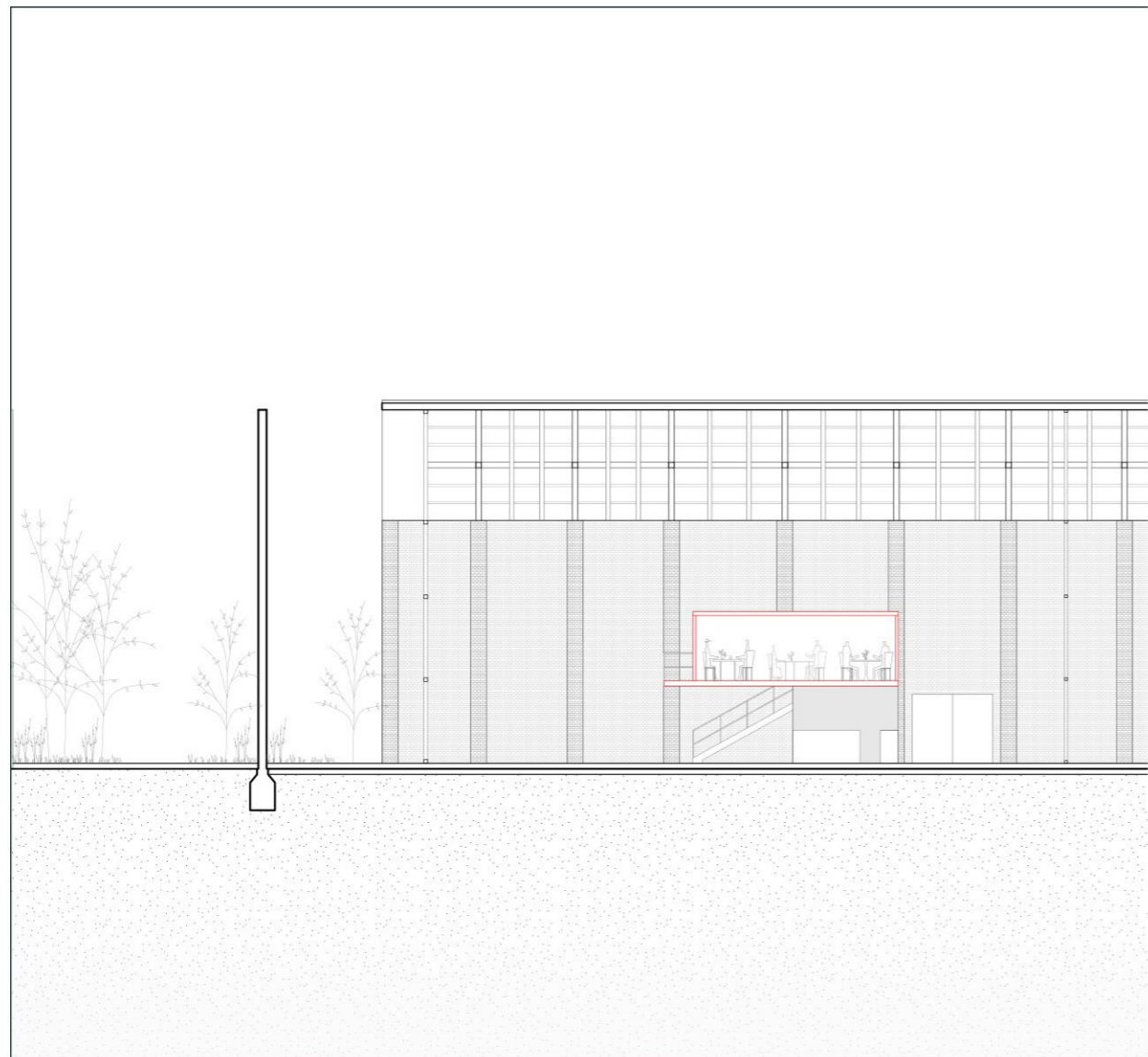
Step 2: Once unloaded, the raw material is held in storage crates, waiting for its turn to be fed into the processing machines for refinement.



Step 3: Inside the production core, the clay is fed into the pug mill and processing machines, refining its texture so it is perfectly primed for shaping into final products.

Step 4: The refined clay then moves to the creation zones, where makers use pottery wheels and hand-building techniques to shape the material into final ceramic products.



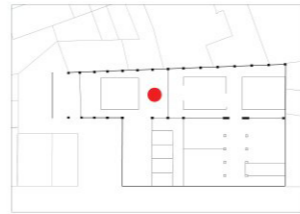


Step 5: After the pieces have completely dried, they enter the kiln room to undergo their first firing, followed by the application of glaze, before returning to the heat for a final, second firing.

Step 6: In the final phase, the finished ceramics either enter the packaging zone to be prepped for external distribution or are moved directly into the exhibition space to be exhibited to the community.

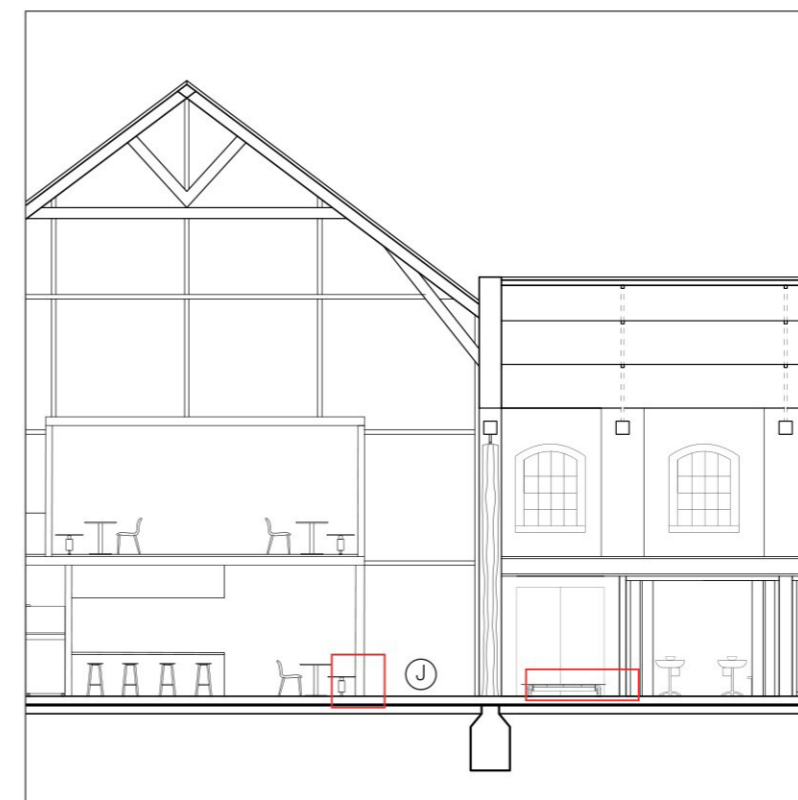
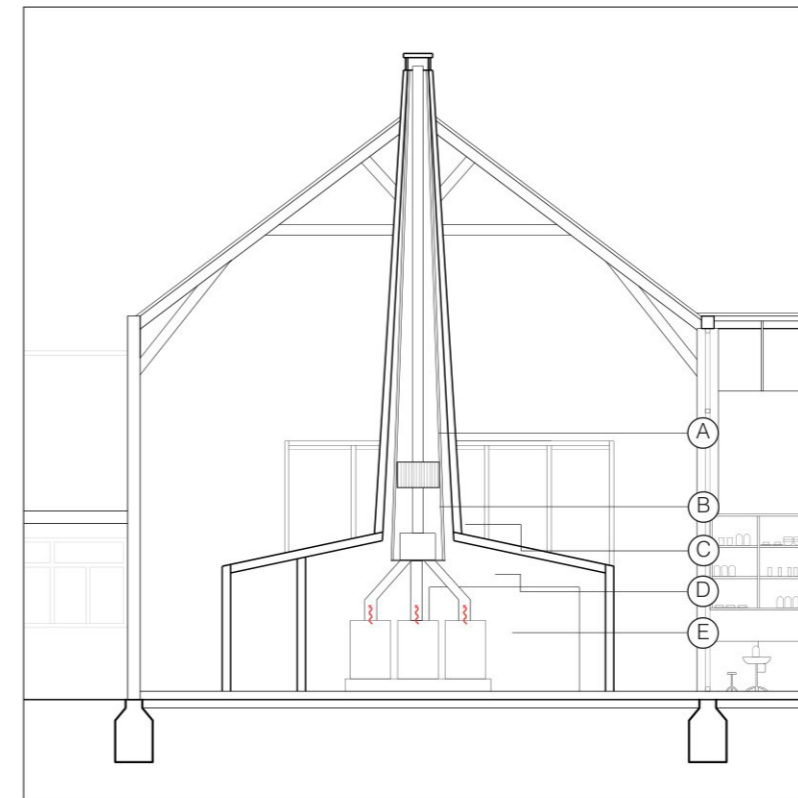
05 follow me into the building

hidden in plain sight

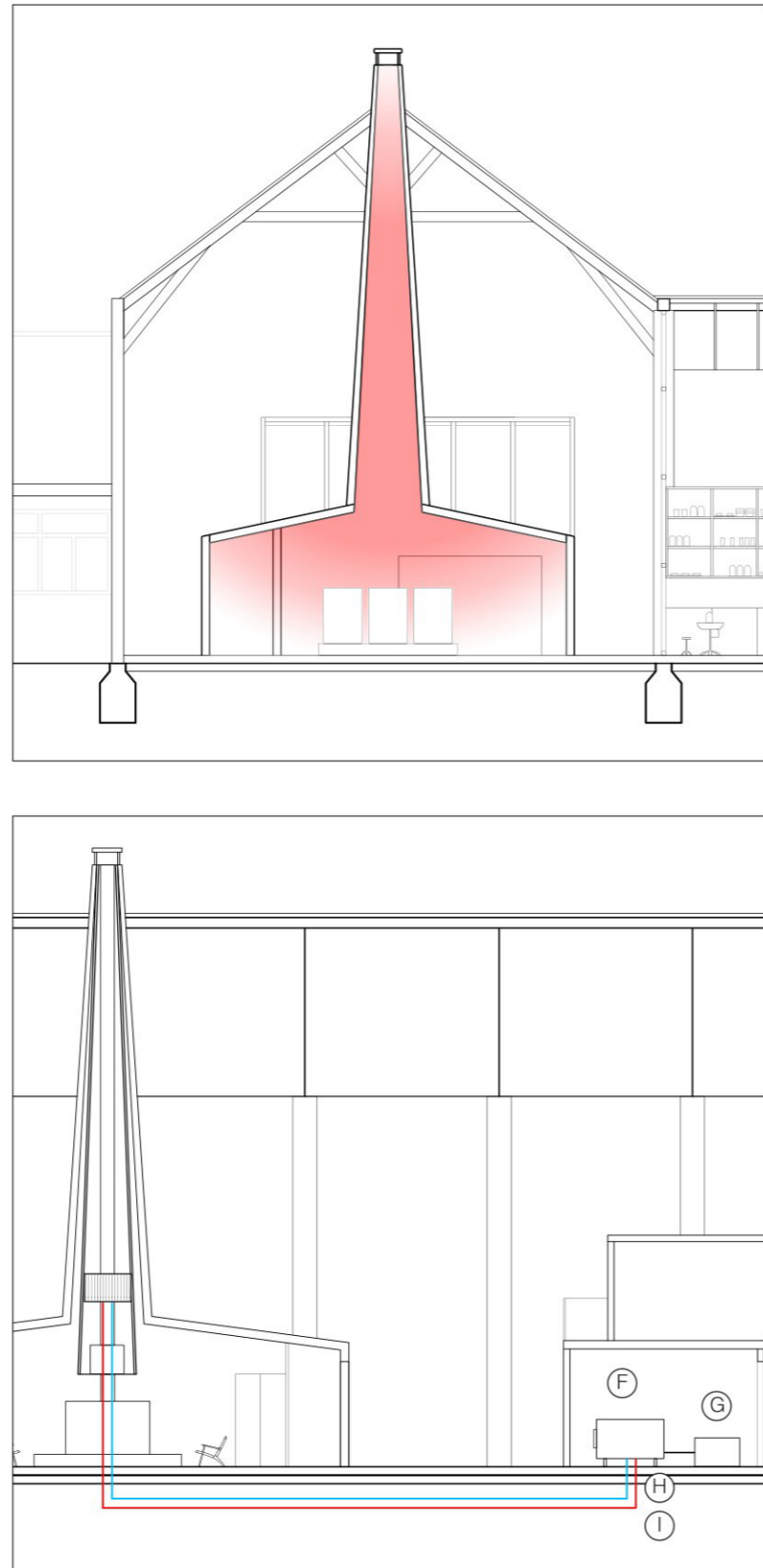


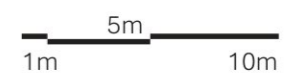
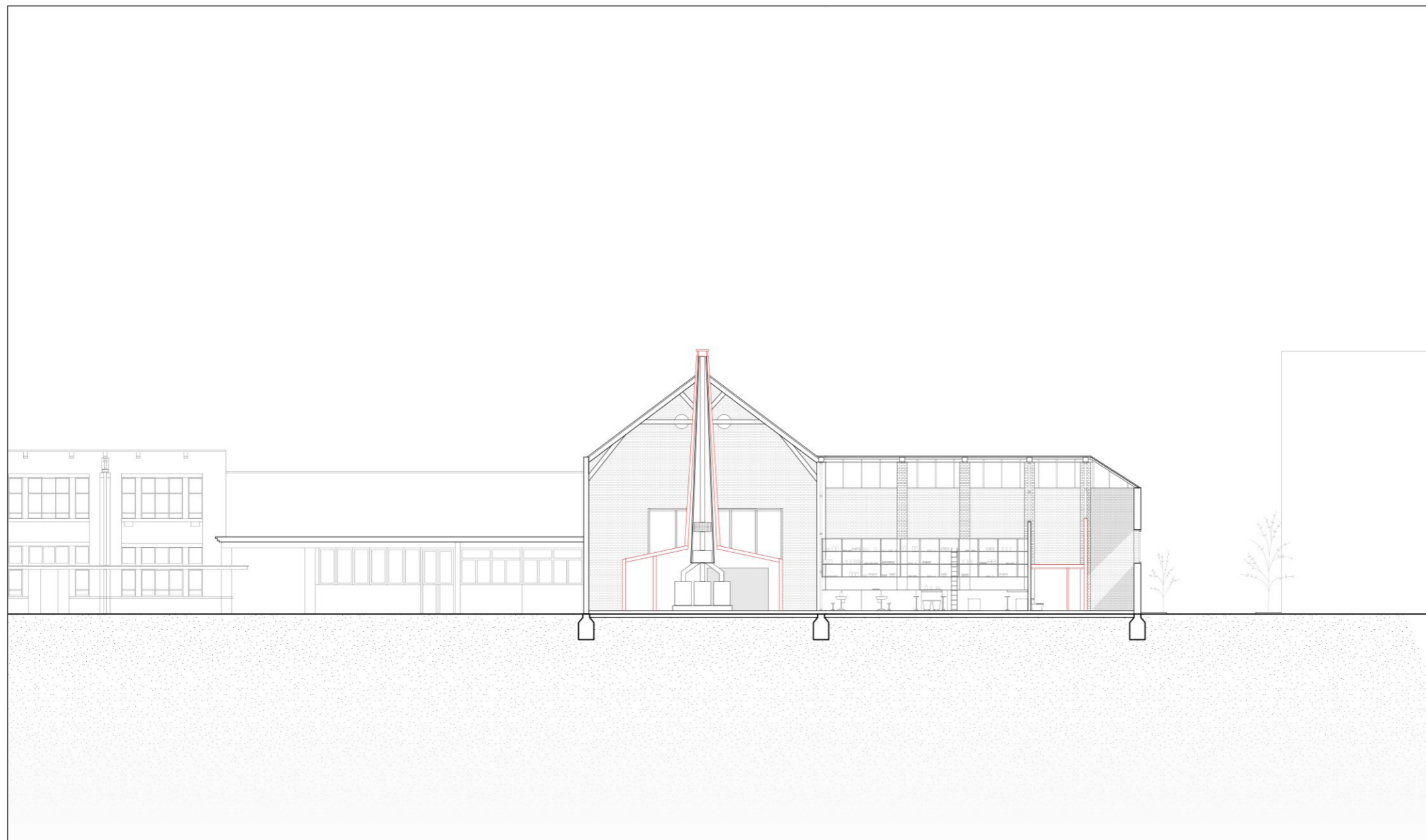
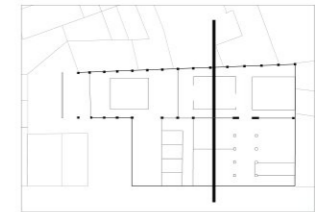
05

hidden in plain sight



- Ⓐ Economiser
- Ⓑ Adaptor
- Ⓒ Register plate
- Ⓓ Flue pipe
- Ⓔ Kiln
- Ⓕ Boiler
- Ⓖ Feedwater tank
- Ⓗ Cold water
- Ⓘ Hot water
- Ⓝ Built-in radiator benches





reflection

The Heyvaert neighborhood in Anderlecht is, at first glance, a fortress of industry. My initial site visits revealed a landscape of defensive perimeters, solid, unyielding walls and heavy garage doors that turned their backs on the public street. Yet, upon closer inspection, it became evident that these barriers were merely masks. Behind them lay a vibrant, messy, and productive interior world, waiting for a catalyst to bridge the gap between the private industrial machine and the public urban sphere. My project, Hidden in Plain Sight, was born from this realisation: the potential for urban revitalisation was not something to be imported from the outside, but something already existing within the block, merely obscured. This led me to develop a methodology of "porosity", a surgical urban strategy that transforms defensive industrial blocks into inclusive, productive public fronts.

The core question of this thesis is whether this diagnostic tool of urban porosity can be translated to other urban fabrics facing similar pressures of densification. When moving from the specific, gritty context of Heyvaert to other urban environments, the methodology must transition from a fixed architectural template into a dynamic diagnostic framework. It is entirely possible to transfer this tool, provided that one distinguishes between the universal spatial logic of porosity and the specific local morphology of the site.

The effectiveness of this approach rests on three core pillars that challenge standard development practices:

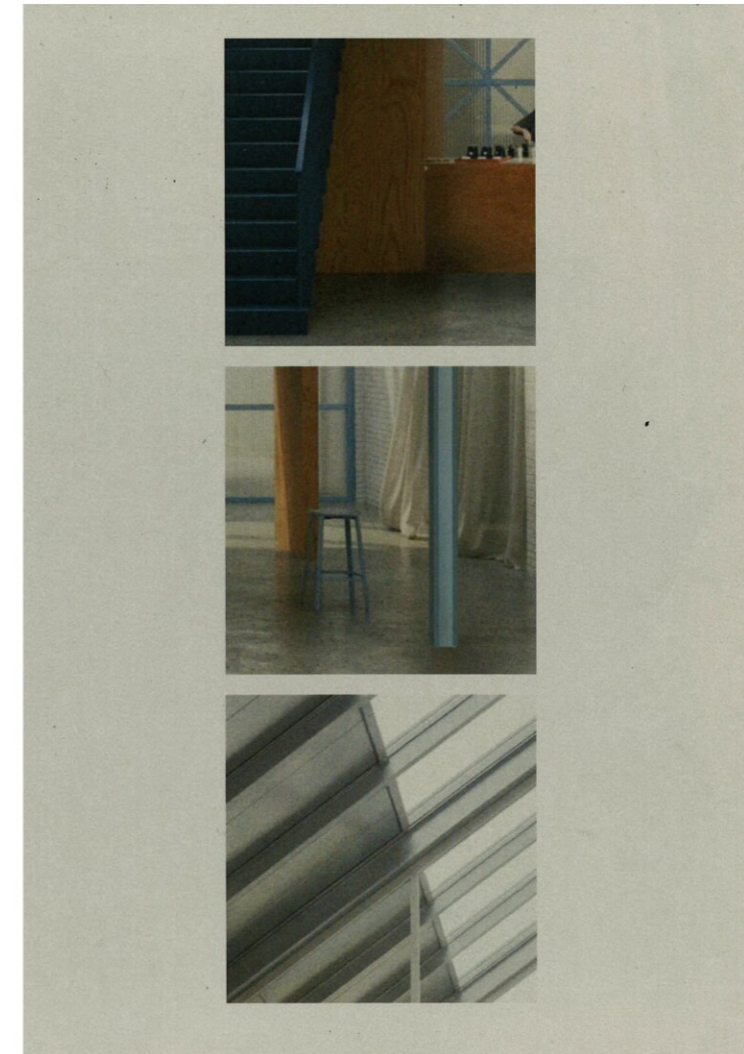
Redefining Density: In contemporary urban planning, density is often treated as a quantitative target a simple equation of floor area ratio and occupant count. Porosity redefines density qualitatively. It is not about how many people you can fit within a boundary, but how efficiently and inclusively the space is shared. By introducing permeable thresholds, the project increases the felt density of the city, allowing for more intense social interactions without the claustrophobia of typical dense developments.

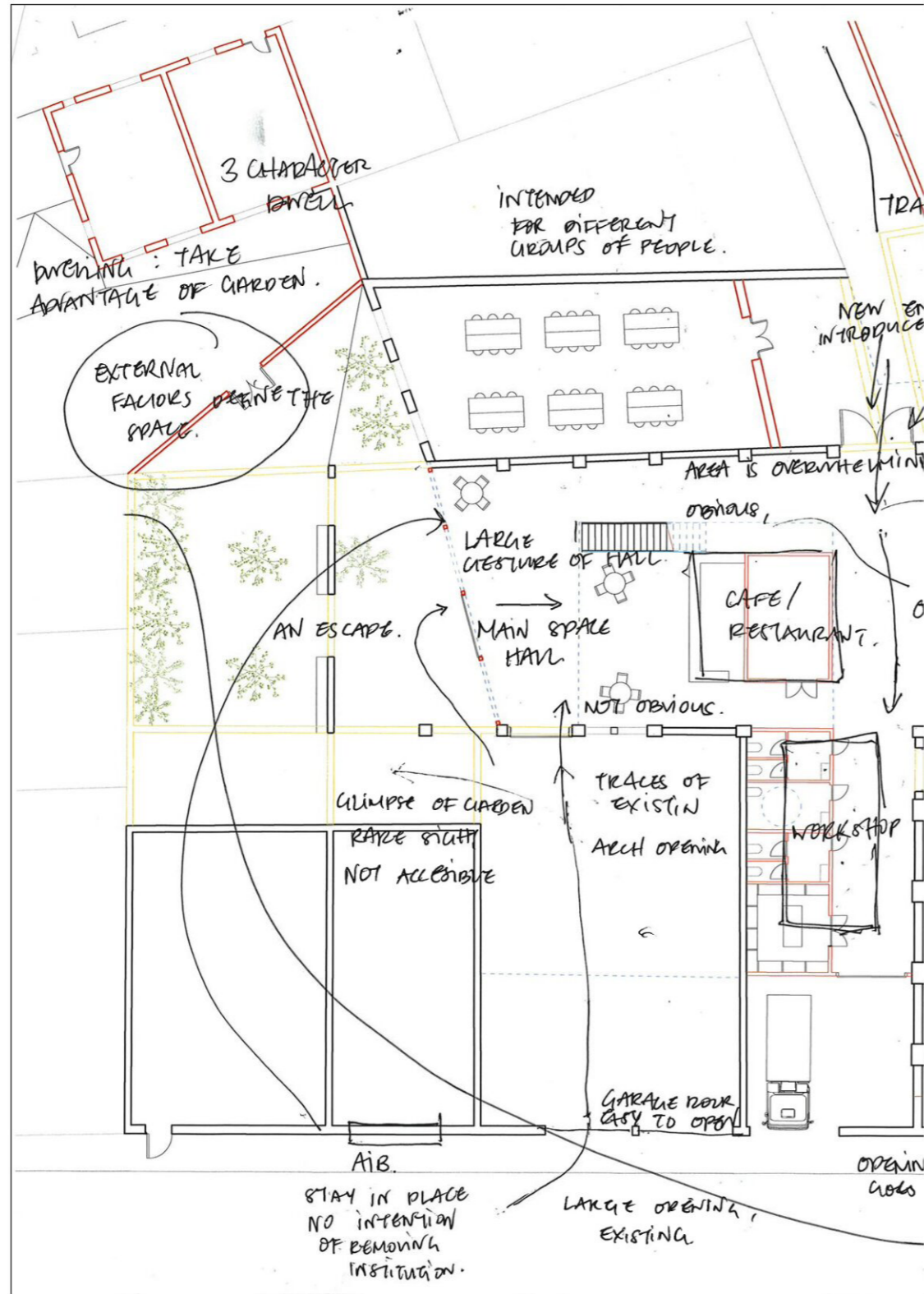
Exposing Hidden Spatial Capital: Every industrial site holds a reserve of "hidden capital" unused courtyards, underutilised roof structures, and fragmented interior voids. Porosity acts as an investigative tool, exposing these assets to the public eye. It turns the city into a site of discovery, where the "secret" industrial spaces of the past become the shared cultural infrastructure of the future.

An Anti-Monolithic Strategy: Porosity is fundamentally an anti-monolithic tool. By rejecting the "total demolition" model, it acknowledges that a city is a layered, historical organism. It encourages surgical interventions that break down the large, impenetrable blocks of the 20th-century industrial model, allowing the city to breathe and adapt.

While the logic of porosity is universal, its application is site-specific. Its effectiveness is contingent upon a delicate calibration of local variables. It cannot be "picked up and dropped" from one city to another without serious consideration of socio-political, ownership, and cultural realities.

In Heyvaert, the peculiar, fragmented nature of industrial plots provided a unique opportunity to stitch together disparate owners through design. In other urban fabrics, particularly those with rigid legal frameworks and highly consolidated land ownership, achieving physical porosity requires a complex orchestration of governance and policy. Creating a shared "void" is not just an architectural act; it is a legal and social negotiation. Furthermore, the cultural definitions of public space differ significantly across geographies. A threshold that fosters community in Brussels might trigger security anxieties in a different cultural context. Thus, the designer must act not just as an architect,





So can this methodology of porosity be transferred to other places?



Yes, however it is dependent on certain factors

porosity is a relational concept, not a physical product

Design Principles: Surgical Urbanism

Thresholds as Active Interfaces: Reimagining boundaries, walls, gates, and doors, as transitional, "in-between" zones that invite public engagement rather than acting as static barriers.

Precision-Led Intervention: Replacing total demolition with targeted, surgical removals informed by rigorous site analysis (light, airflow, and movement) to unlock the latent potential of existing structures.

Material and Narrative Continuity: Maintaining a site's historical identity by repurposing its industrial fabric, such as a "productive spine", to weave its past into a new, collective future.

reflections

How effectively does this diagnostic tool of urban porosity translate when applied to different urban fabrics facing similar pressures of densification?

When translating this methodology from the specific context of Heyvaert to other urban fabrics, the tool changes from a fixed architectural template into a dynamic diagnostic framework. It is very possible to transfer this tool, provided that it is distinguished between spatial logic and local morphology.

3 core points

- 1. It redefines density quantitatively to qualitatively
- 2. It exposes hidden spatial capital
- 3. It acts as an anti-monolithic strategy

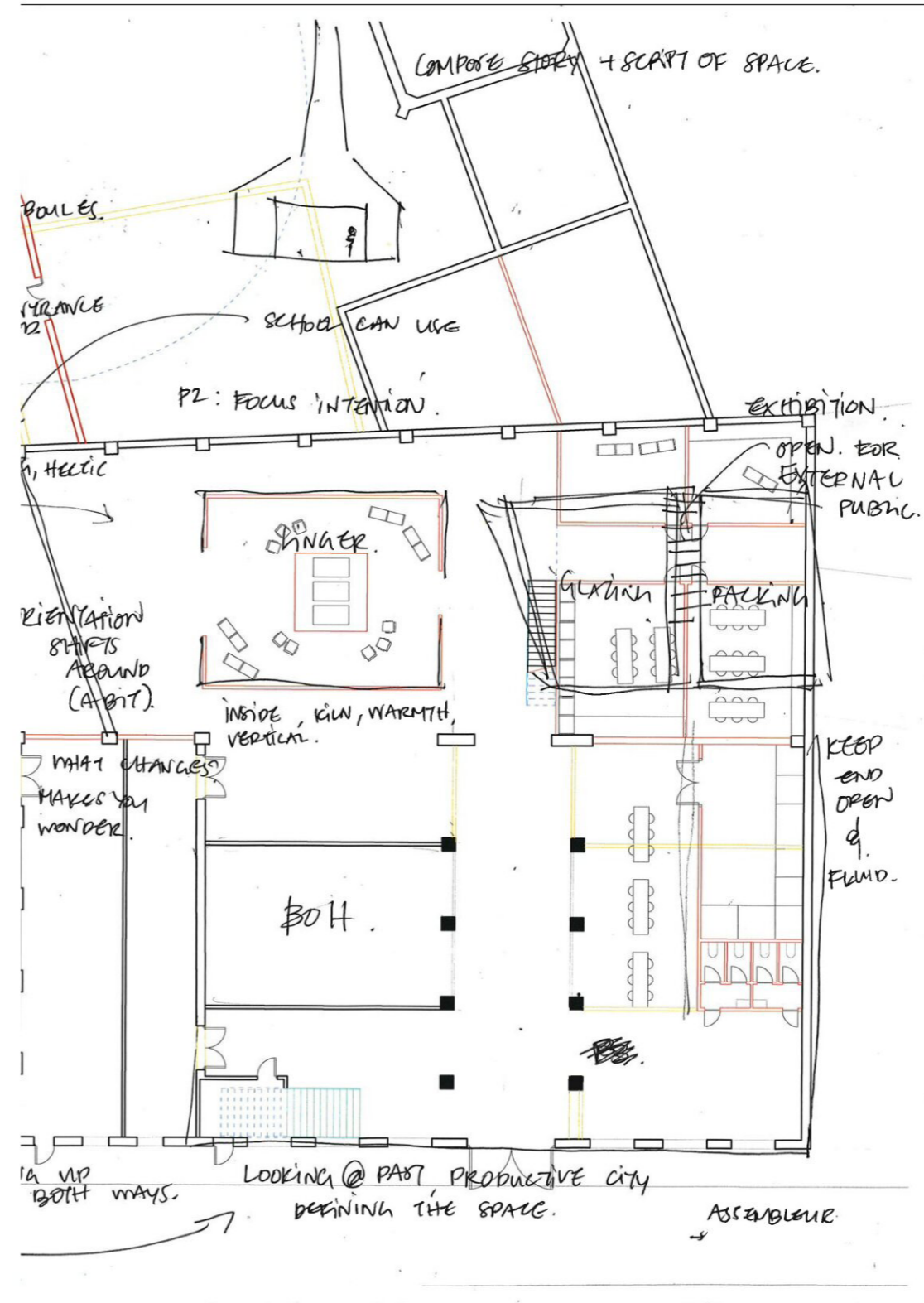
However its effectiveness depends on the local variables, as it cannot be simply picked up and dropped from one place to another

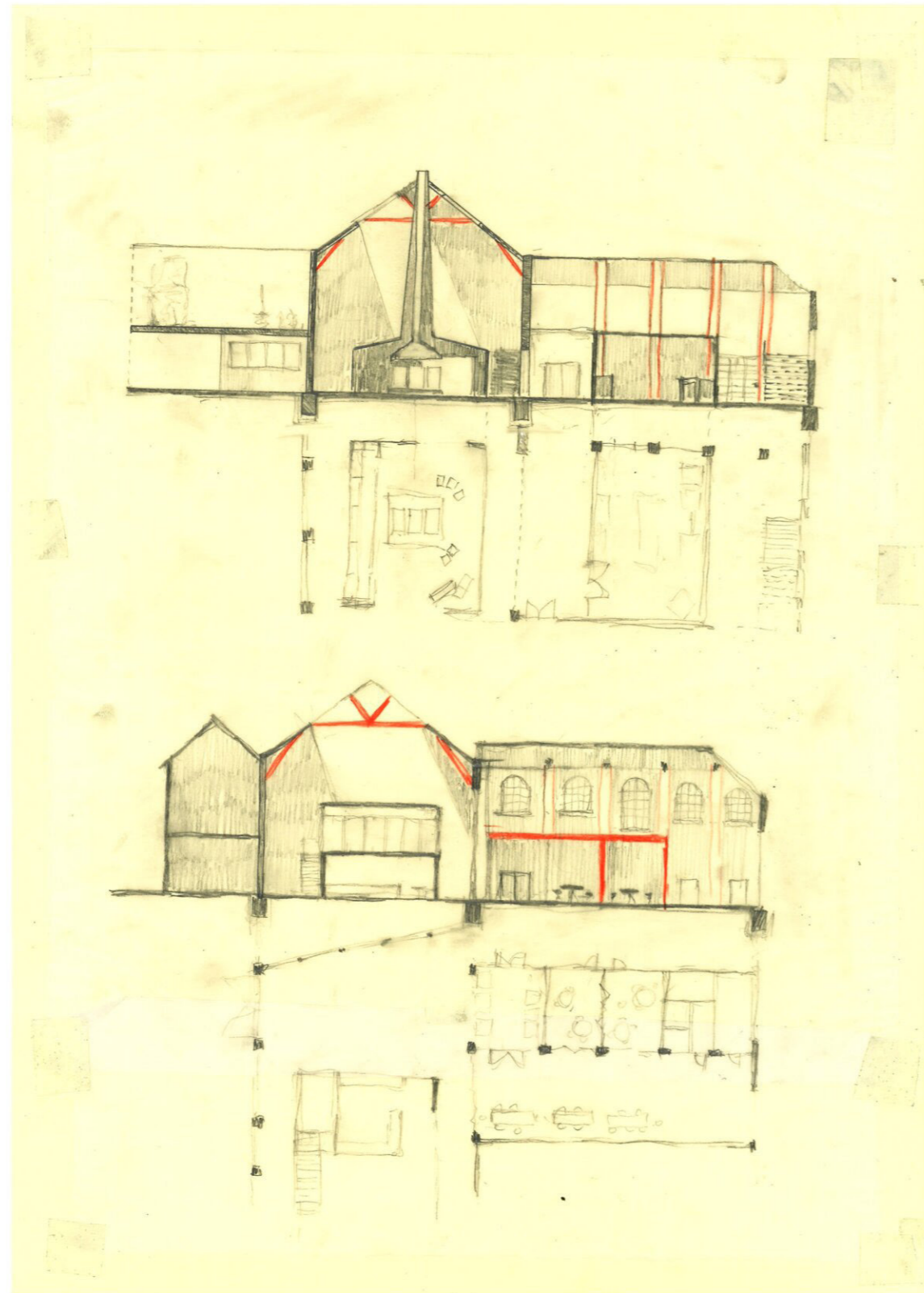
Socio-Political & Ownership Realities:

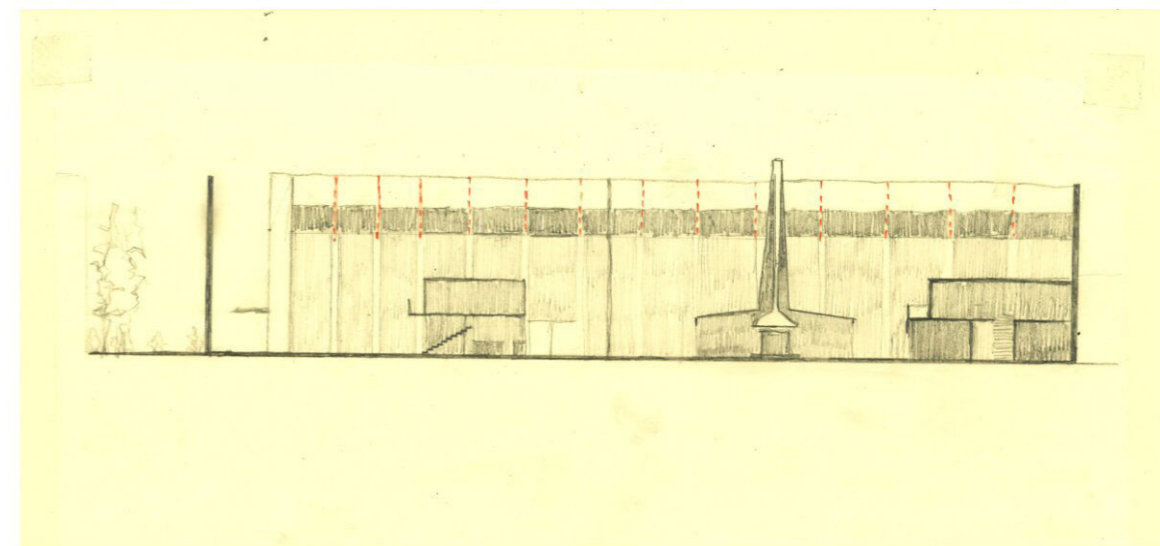
In Heyvaert, the specific layout of industrial plots allowed for certain interventions. In cities with strict property boundaries, creating physical porosity requires different legal and governance frameworks

Cultural Definitions of Public Space:

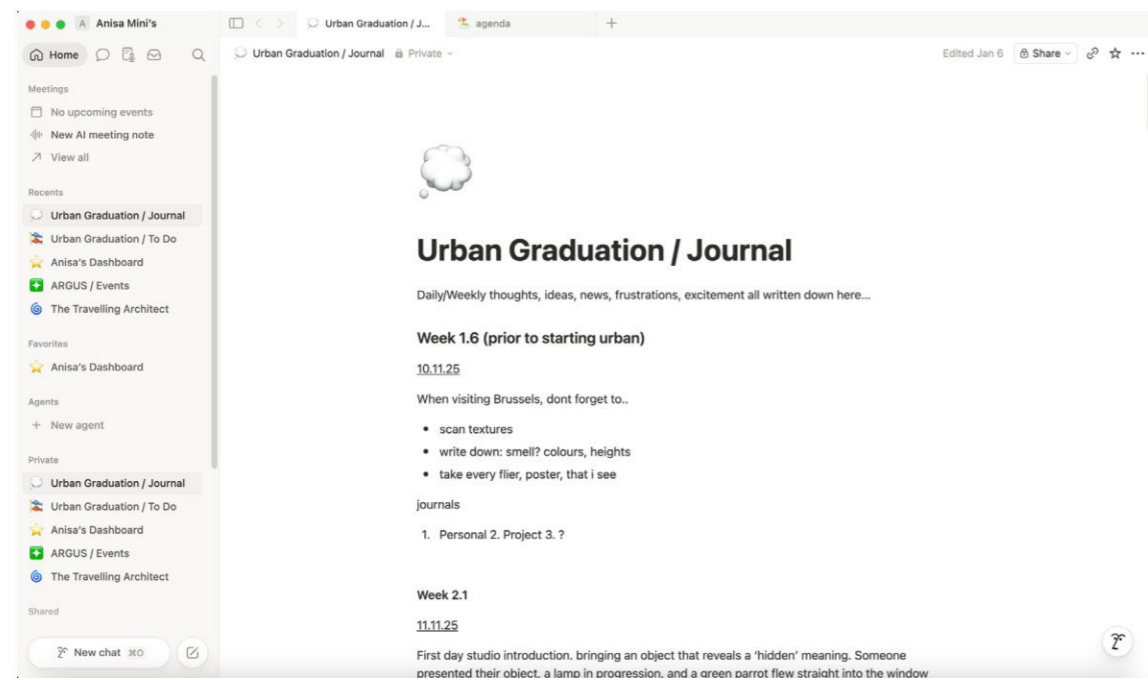
What constitutes an acceptable threshold or a shared 'void' varies wildly across cultures. A porous space that fosters community in one fabric might generate security concerns or friction in another



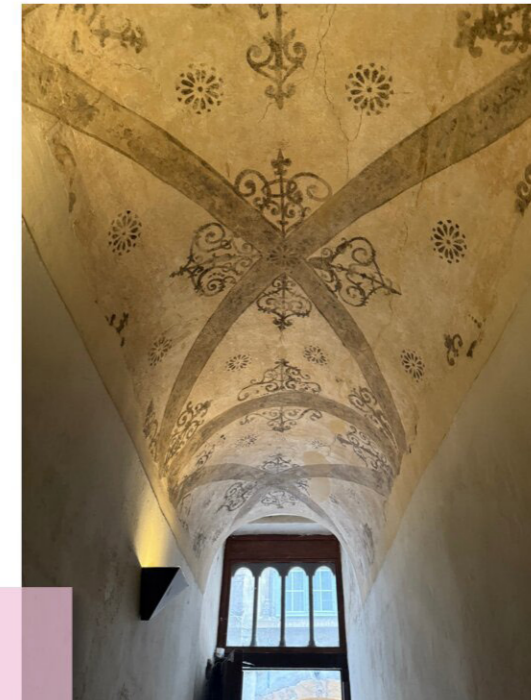




*thoughts,
reflections,
inspirations*



process journal



traboules



12.02.26

Lyon Excursion

In between the days of the 12th of February to the 14th of February, our studio went to Lyon for an excursion. We visited a bunch of places in Lyon, such as the Sucriere, Cathedrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Halle Girard, La Commune, but what was most striking to me and most relevant to my project were the Traboules around Lyon.

The traboules are a network "secret", covered pedestrian passages and stairwells that cut directly through private buildings and courtyards to connect two different streets.



Week 1.6 (prior to starting urban)

10.11.25

When visiting Brussels, dont forget to..

- scan textures
- write down: smell? colours, heights
- take every flier, poster, that i see

Week 2.1

11.11.25

First day studio introduction. bringing an object that reveals a 'hidden' meaning. Someone presented their object, a lamp in progression, and a green parrot flew straight into the window and feathers were floating all around. parrot is all good though - they are alive. very interesting objects... yarn, sieve, scale, swiss army knife, wine, clock, magnifying glass, roll of film - cute stuff . linking things to each other. long but succesful day



12.11.25

Today we started the 1:333 model - enthusiastic energy all around the studio. started model mock ups of how we wanted to represent the different buildings. studio divided to team of plotters, map researchers, model makers, etc.



14.11.25

Site visit to Brussels. Started off the day by meeting at "La Kantine du Canal", which was quite a cute and cozy canal, which was a drastic difference in comparison to the walk we had to reach there. Passing the slaughterhouse (meat market) hearing police sirens, unpleasant smells in combination with the grey and gloomy skies of Brussels, was not entirely an optimistic start to the day. At this cafe, we were given an introduction of the area in general by someone from Bouwmeister. Listening to the projects that were in discussion, and that have started, it gave the impression that Heyvaertwijk was headed into a good direction. We headed to La Bougie, a housing project currently in construction, done by 51N4E. We were given a talk about the building, everybody expressed their interests by asking what it seemed like a million questions to the architect

After the visit, we headed to the Circularium. I think I could speak for the rest of the studio that we were in awe by this scheme. The storage areas for homeless to pick out furniture, wood-working workshops, everyone occupying some space to host their ateliers, was quite a project to see. This made me realise as well that large-scale projects are also quite feasible to do in the area. Perhaps we could do the A2 in the Circularium? Strolled through the parks and saw other sights such as the Zinneke, etc. Ending the day with drinks at Flamingo.



24.12.25

Reference from my cousin Dora

- marseille friche belle de mai

people involved: cooperative shareholders, inhabitants, residents, artists, representatives of associations, employees, and public institutions from diverse backgrounds. Co-led and coordinated by cooperative shareholders and employees



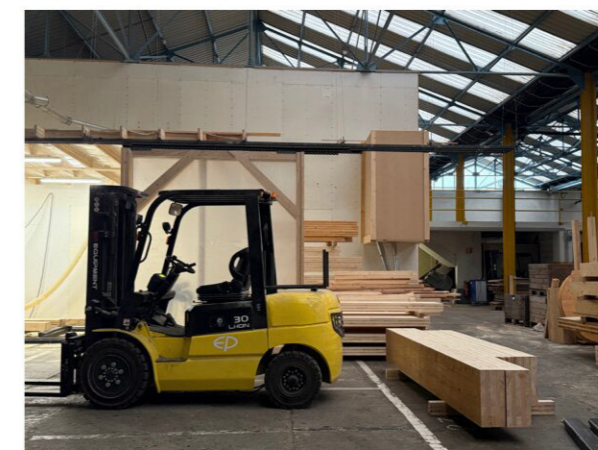
23.12.25

****Reading/ A Moratorium on New Construction****

****Charlotte Malterre-Barthes****

'To build is also to destroy — harmful consequences in motion... construction perpetrates the extraction, transportation, processing, and installation of materials; the allocating, inhabiting, exploiting, and commodifying of waste via demolition.' 29.

Lacaton & Vassal - Place Leon Aucoc Bordeaux, 'not against construction but rather for a pragmatic, frugal form of design, one with economy and upkeep at its center, they showed it was possible to be architects without building'. 39



15.11.25

Exploring heyvaertwijk. Somewhat "rough" encounters here and there, but we spoke to some locals in the area, who actually approached us first due to the confusion of them seeing us taking pictures of what they call a run-down area, or that they don't find the beauty in the area in comparison to other quarters of Brussels. The rest of the weekend was spent exploring other areas of Brussels such as the European Headquarters, Ixelles and Marolles.

Conversations:

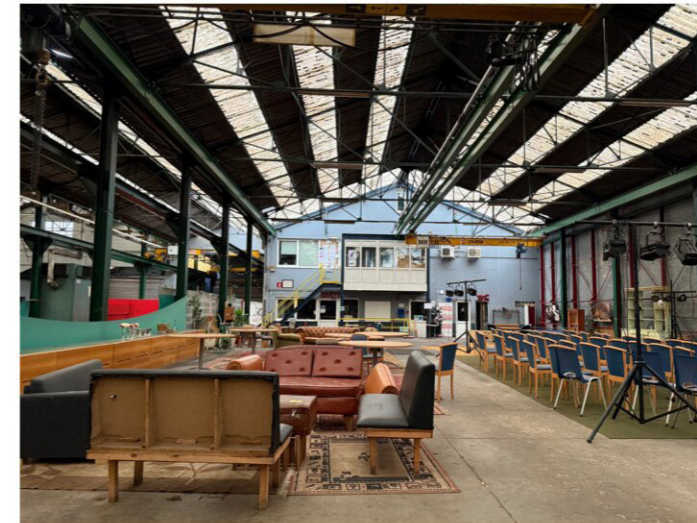
Person 1: Encountered while taking pictures of street.

He asked us why we were taking pictures.

Person 2: By the mosque. "Goodmove" movement in 2020.

Person 3: Car garage owner. Mentions there is obvious top down approach, municipality wanting to take over personal plots without speaking to people in the area to create the expansion of green spaces. Also mentions the good move movement.

*Note added 30.05.25 - took pictures of my site on this day without knowing it was going to be my selected plot



12.12.25

We finally settled on a medium today, in my research group with Max and Andeol, we decided to create a newspaper since we did not want to rule out any research we had.

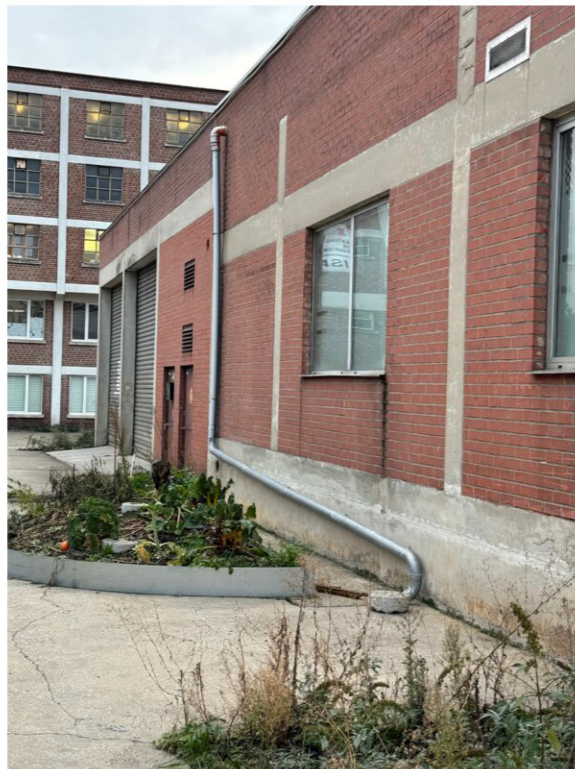
17.12.25

Argus Life Drawing. It was my first time doing a life drawing event. I used mainly charcoal as my medium. I realised that it was quite hard to draw the proportions well in relation to each other, as well as the given time used to draw each pose.



03.12.25

We went back on site today for the day. We departed from Rotterdam CS at 10am and was en route for 3 hours. Andeol, Max and I had decided last minute (the night before) to go back to site to conduct some informal interviews, or more so conversations with people we would come across. The 3 hours drive there was a struggle, with the nonstop talking from the bus driver, the christmas radio music playing the entire time, was not a good combination. Alas we arrive to the abattoir after taking the metro, and we start our fieldwork.



10.12.25

Going back to Brussels. We went back on site again today to speak to more people. first we stopped at ko'mun unintentionally as an unassuming opened door led us in. We were greeted by Fatima, a woman who ran the place. The rest of the day continued like this, wandering around the site, trying to speak to people in the neighbourhood.

Week 2.2

17.11.25

Veldworks lecture - cultural textures. *"the new is found within the old"*
Architectural grafting - 2 or more cultural textures or design fragments - repairing the connection.
Question - Considering AI can be a touchy subject for some, when there are people who heavily disagree with the use of AI in concern of it taking over human work, what position does Veldwerk place itself in this context?

Week 2.3

24.11.25

Modeling Heyvaert in 1:333.

In just under a week, the progress of building the site model with the entire Urban studio has been quite fast. Within a week we managed to build over half the buildings on site.

28.11.25

Plot Market

During the week, we have been preparing for today's plot market. Each person is assigned a plot on the 'tile' they have been modeling on for the past 2 weeks. Prior to this, we have been modeling the site model in 1:333 scale, which we have separated in 7-8 groups. The morning started off well, with each group introducing their tile and its overall characteristic. Then in the lunch we start to rank our 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices in terms of site we would like to pick for our graduation project. Feeling confident that my name was the only one that chose this site as a first pick, I was confident this site was going to me. However as some time passed, I realised that there was not only 1 yellow tag with my name on it, but 2 others as well.



02.12.25

Fieldwork Lectures by Leeke and Eireen.

Eireen gave an interesting lecture about the life of buildings. Below are some notes I took of the lecture. Understanding space as a very strict pattern, human viewpoint. Great invention of the renaissance = the perspective drawing. The building was in service of the human gaze. Durand > architecture as a system that you could compose

assuming that programmes is the most important part of the building, something that eireen and leeke does not agree with. this tends to make buildings as blocks. ever and always are buildings are part of situations. it seems static. programmes typically never fit building for a long time.

'give me a gun and i will make all buildings move' B. Latour and A. Yaneva, 2007

to see buildings as entities, other ways of looking and drawing at buildings

can we somehow device a gun? that will make the project move

Leeke spoke about the 6 acts when doing fieldwork. the gleaner, the detective, the collector, the bricoleur, the gardener, the gift-giver.



but as a cultural mediator, ensuring that the degree of porosity is calibrated to the social needs and expectations of the local residents.

If this methodology were applied to a new project, it would be grounded in a design philosophy termed “Surgical Urbanism.” This approach is defined by three specific elements that serve as cornerstones for future practice:

1. The Threshold as an Active Interface: The boundary, the door, the gate, the wall, represents the most potent design tool an architect possesses. Prioritising “in-between” spaces ensures that the threshold functions not merely as a point of ingress, but as a space of transition that invites the public into the private, and vice versa.

2. The Surgical Intervention: This philosophy acknowledges that some form of removal is often necessary to achieve true porosity. However, demolition is viewed as a surgical operation rather than a brute-force clearing. Maintaining meticulous site studies, mapping light, airflow, and historical circulation, ensures that any removal of material is conducted to maximise the quality of the remaining structure. It involves creating the specific “cut” that allows the organism of the city to heal and thrive.

3. Material and Narrative Continuity: This design method relies on materiality to articulate a narrative. By repurposing existing industrial elements, such as a “productive spine”, architecture becomes a storyteller. When designing in new contexts, traces of a site’s history can be integrated into the new design, ensuring that the architecture remains rooted in its location even while opening itself to a modern, collective future.

The Future of the Porous City

Ultimately, the methodology of porosity is not a rigid plan, but a philosophy of engagement. It serves as an invitation to look at the city not as a series of obstacles, but as a sequence of opportunities.

Can this methodology be transferred? Yes, but only with the humility to listen to the site first. Porosity succeeds when it acts not as an architectural imposition, but as an architectural uncovering. Future practice will continue to operate through “urban acupuncture,” identifying those pressure points in the city where walls are at their thickest and applying the surgical, porous interventions necessary to allow the latent, hidden richness of the city to emerge in plain sight. The design legacy to carry forward is the recognition that a city’s true value is rarely found in the shiny, new development on the corner, but in the potential unlocked when the doors are finally opened.

hidden in plain sight



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