



RESILIENCE ROOTED IN TRACES

PUBLIC BUILDING STUDIO

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INTRODUCTION

In modern times, despite growing sustainability concerns, demolition remains a wide-spread approach for buildings that no longer fulfill their function, yield profit, or have suffered from a lack of maintenance. The future of industrial heritage—especially those buildings without official heritage status and damaged by time and weather is often predetermined: they become piles of waste, making way for new development.

This continuous cycle of destruction and creation, though natural in the built environment, often leads, due to globalization and neoliberal economic policies, to a loss of identity. It results not only in the destruction of building fabric but also in the erasure of the unique and site-specific qualities of places, the small businesses that shaped the area's identity, and to the memories engraved in its walls and stories.

The connection to the past is lost, along with ties to neighbors with whom that past was shared, to Local communities are pressured to leave developing areas, often feeling deprived of their right to the city. This project aims to reclaim the residents' right to their area, proposing an alternative strategy for the triangular block located in the Haraldsgade area of Copenhagen.

Historically, Haraldsgade was an industrial zone. Today, we observe clusters of remaining industrial buildings from the 1920s to the 1940s. Many of these structures are vacant, neglected, and have been repurposed by local communities and creatives. Residents, small businesses, and diverse communities have organically shaped the area and its buildings - much like nature shaping a landscape. This transformation has allowed clusters of buildings to age, grow extensions, change façades, and become canvases for graffiti and street art. However, a lack of maintenance and ad hoc alterations have rendered many of these buildings ineligible for heritage protection, leaving them vulnerable under current development plans.

The beautiful quality of places is that they frame every interaction and emotion we experience - and we, in turn, reward these places with traces and meaning. People pass away, places change or fall into ruin, but the marks of time remain as a testimony of life.

Instead of focusing on destruction, erasure, or redefinition, we might embrace reflection and cultivation, allowing for growth and creativity rooted in acceptance and reinterpretation.

This project explores how new functions can be integrated through adaptation and activation, embedding interventions in the existing context, answering the question of:

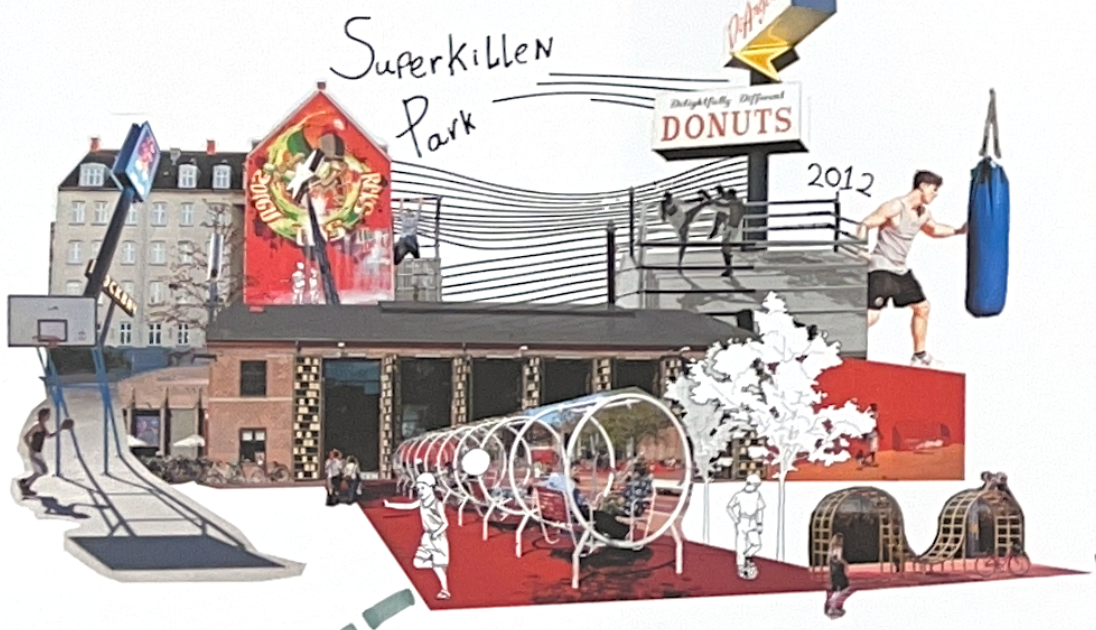
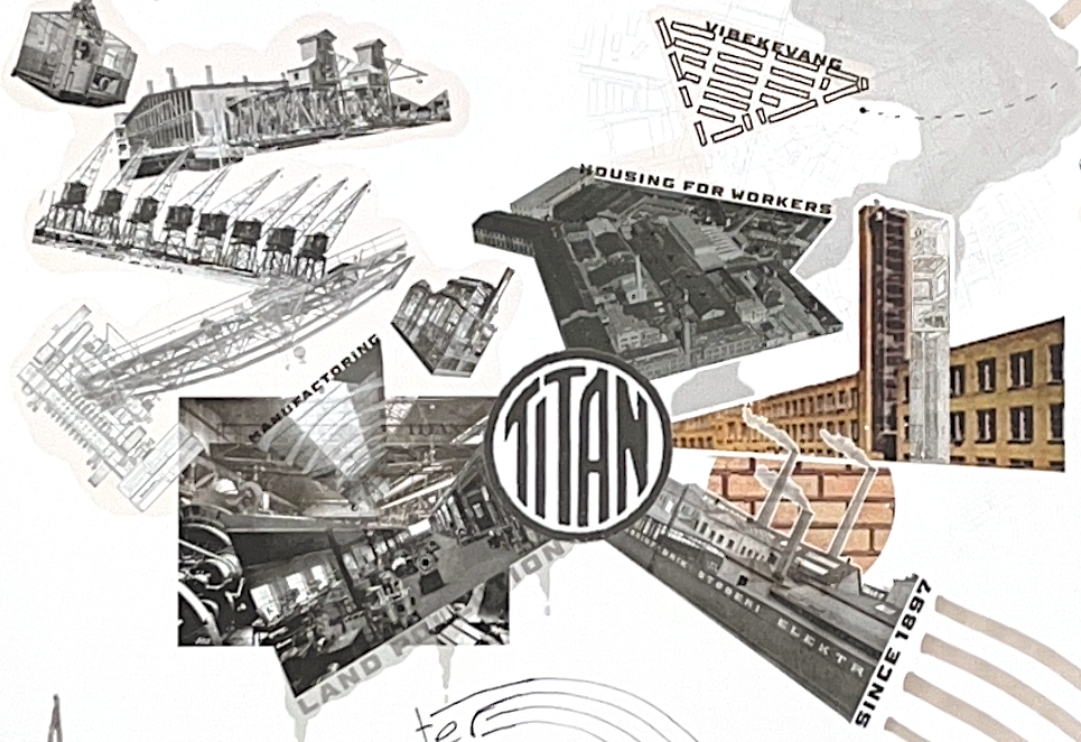
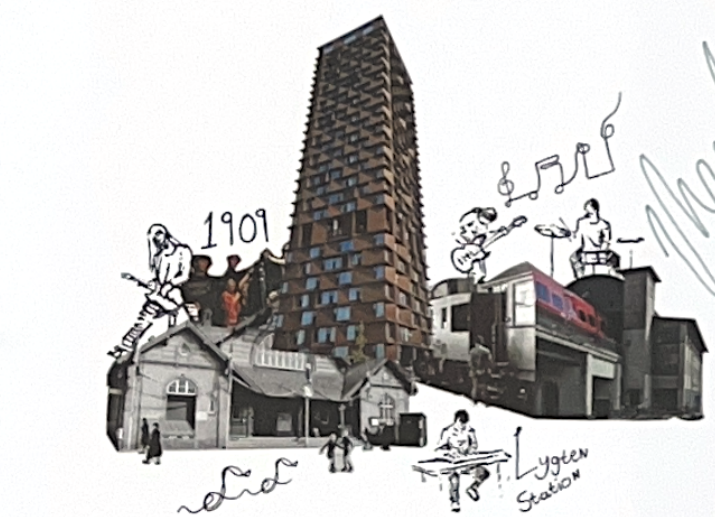
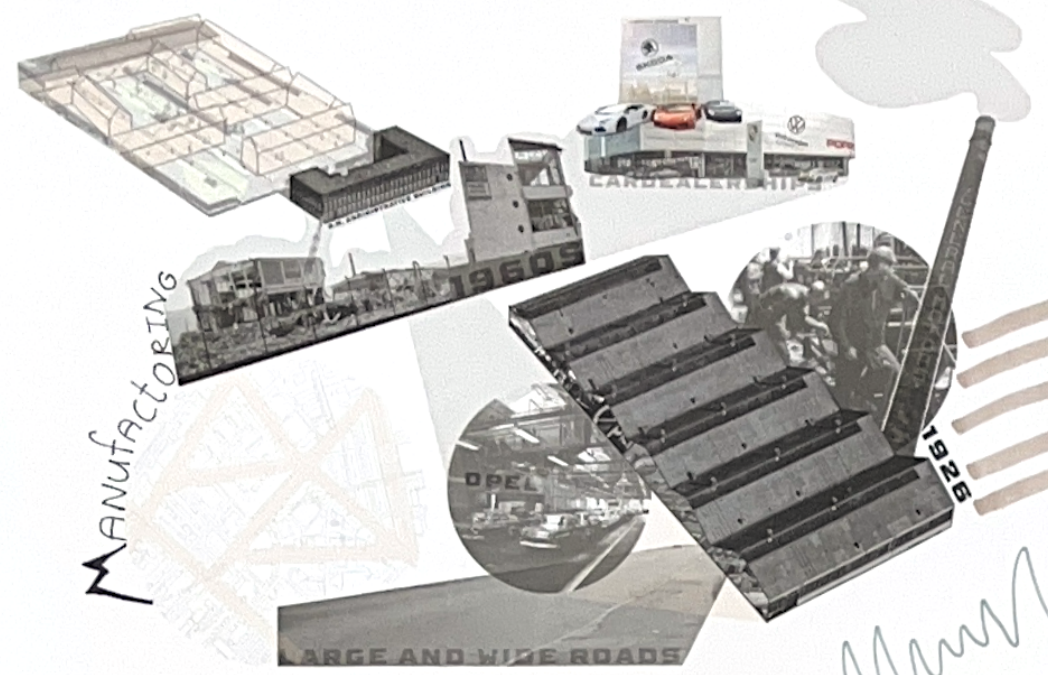
How neglected architecture can become a framework for human and non-human life and development?

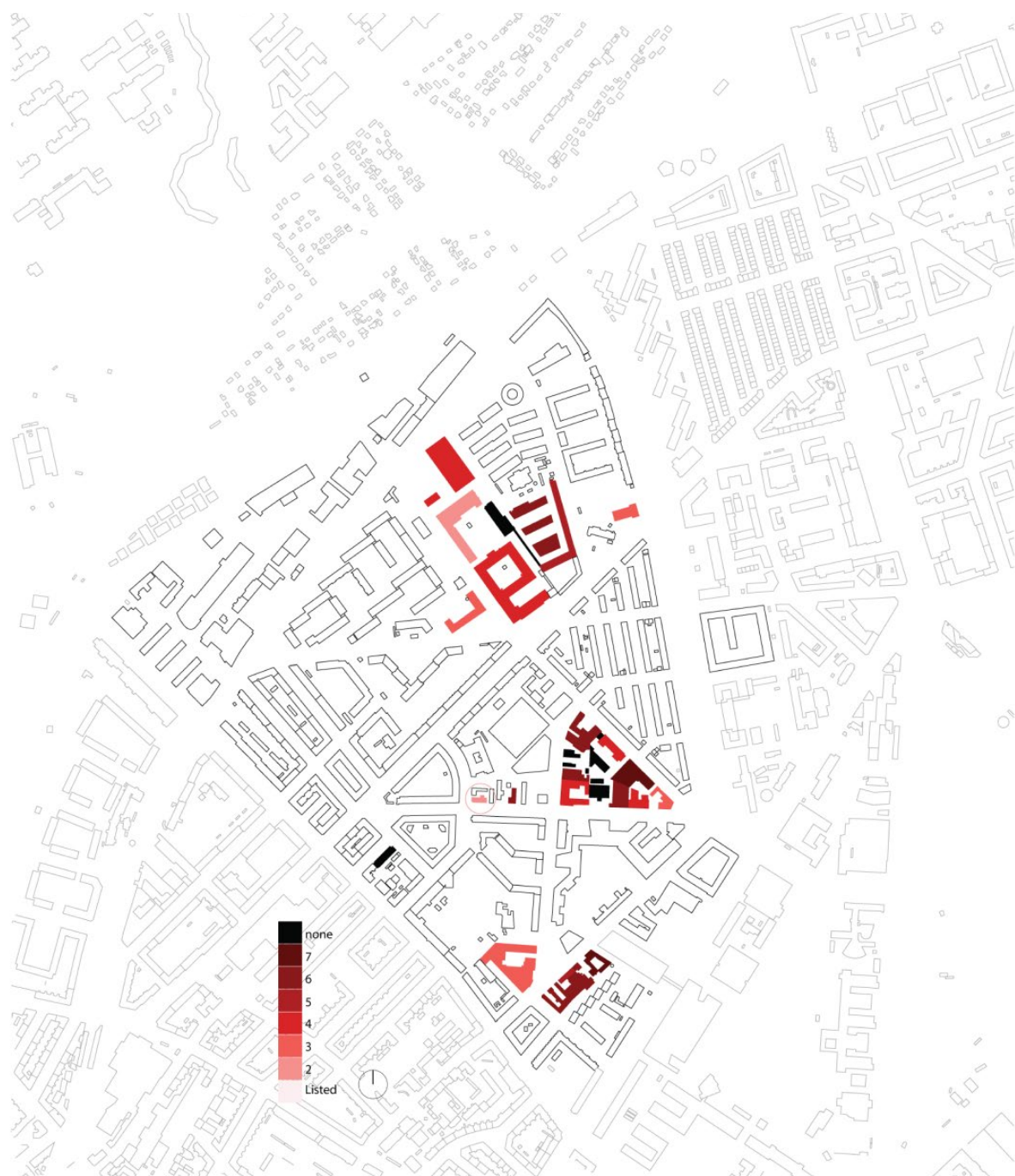
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1. LOCATION ANALYSIS

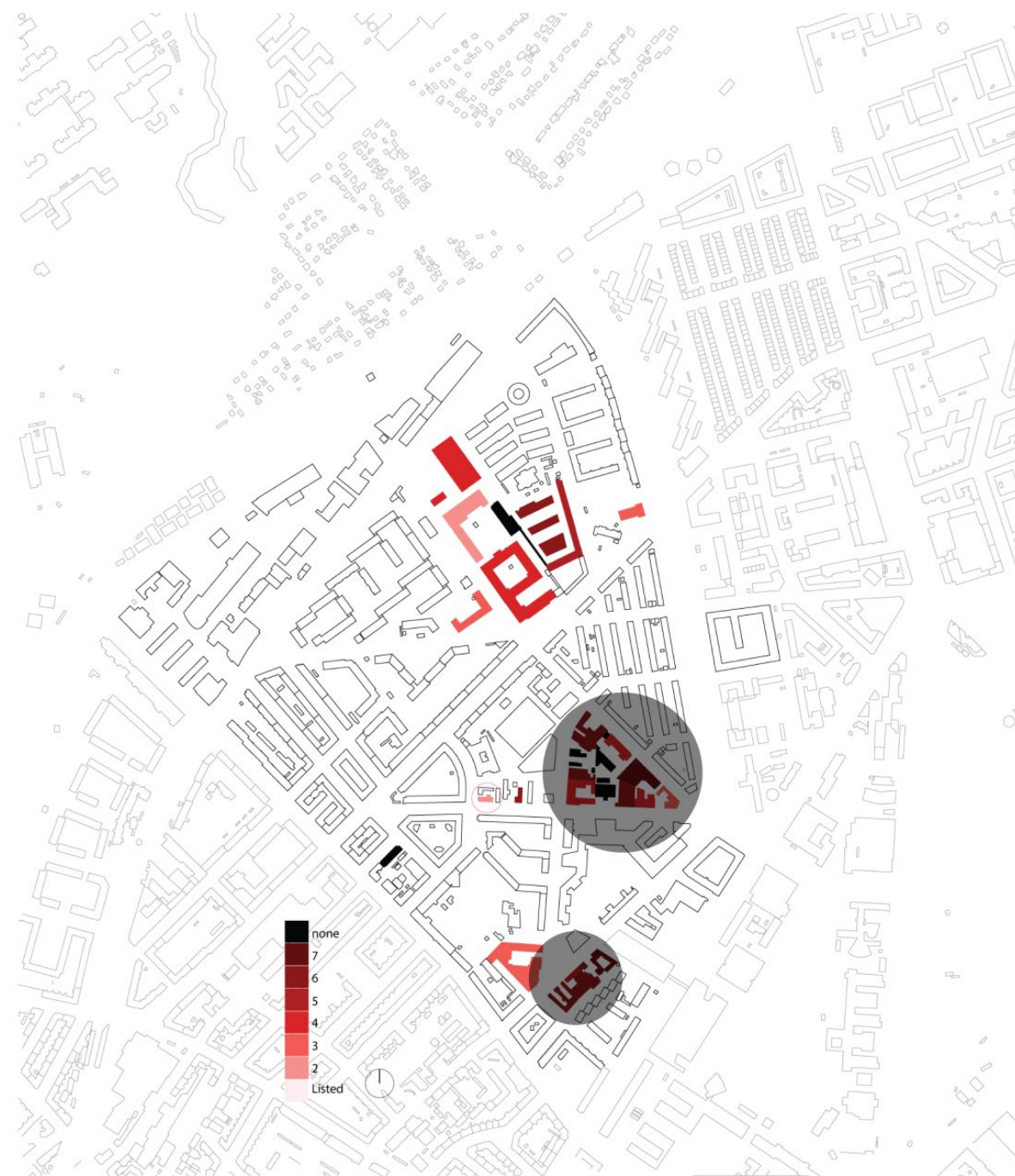
Let us begin by stepping into the Haraldsgade district of Copenhagen - a place caught in the quiet tension between what it has been and what it is about to become.

Sofia Paia, Joram Vianen,
Quinten van Buren, Justin Roelofs:
Mappa Imaginaria Hafeniae



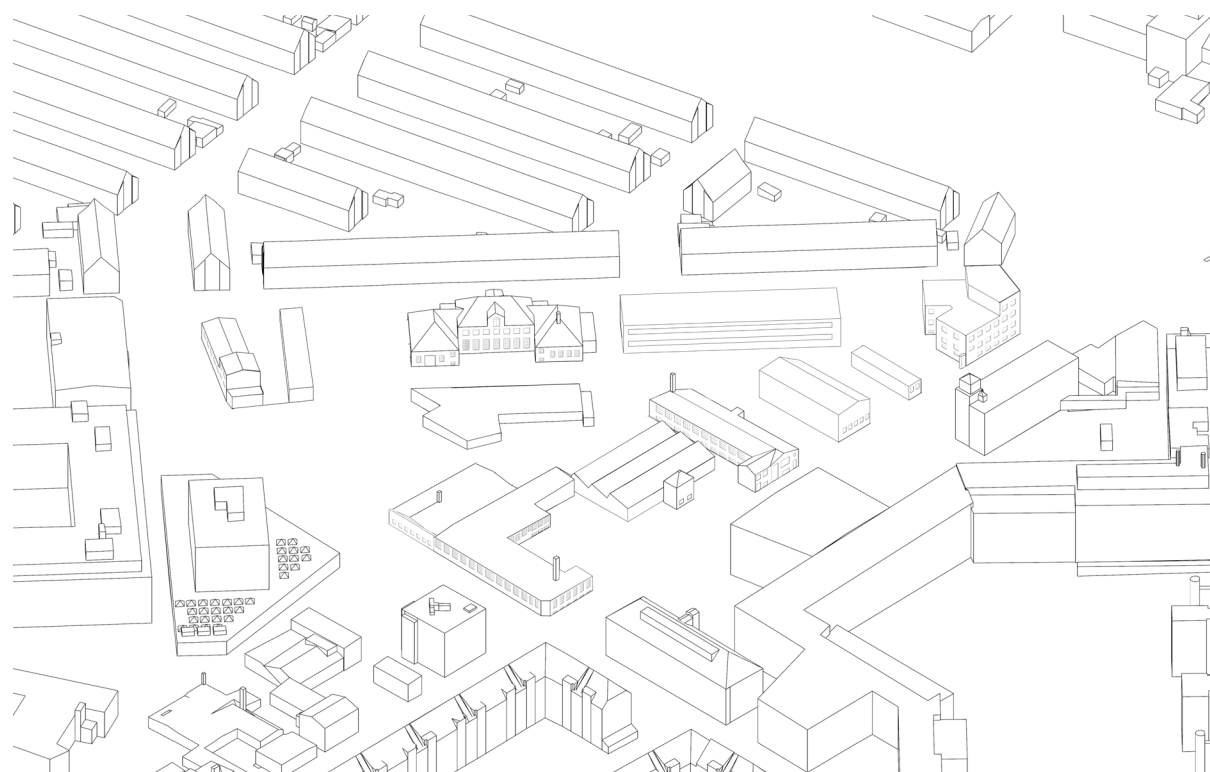


Of all the remaining industrial buildings in the Haraldsgade area, only one is officially listed as a heritage monument. While many of the others do hold a certain conservation value, it is often deemed too low for them to be recognized or restored as heritage. Over the years, numerous adaptations and alterations have further changed the original appearance of these structures, making their historical significance even easier to overlook.

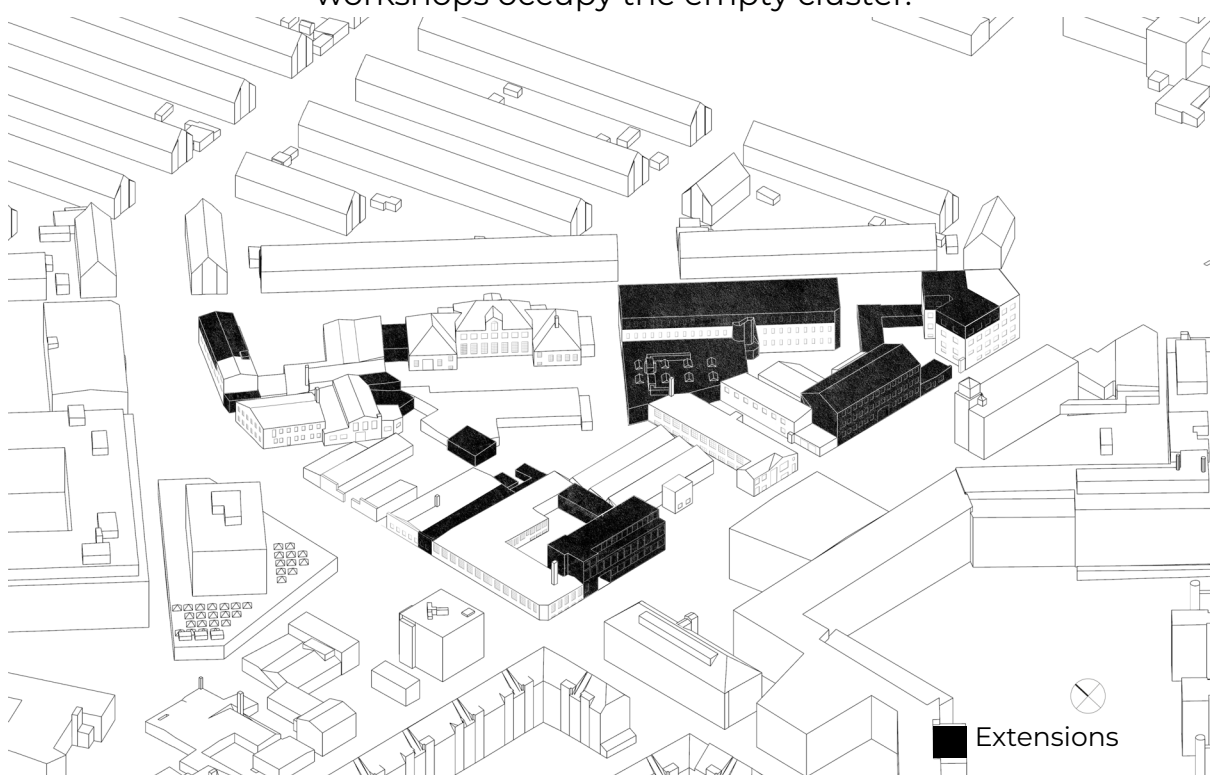


The areas marked by gray circles are slated for demolition to make way for new development: the Innovation District of Copenhagen—an ambitious project aimed at transforming Haraldsgade into a ‘knowledge laboratory.’ This rapidly progressing initiative is designed to meet the increasing demand for office space among innovative companies in sectors such as life sciences and IT. However, it is crucial to ensure that the interests of the existing local community and small businesses are not sidelined in the process of ongoing gentrification

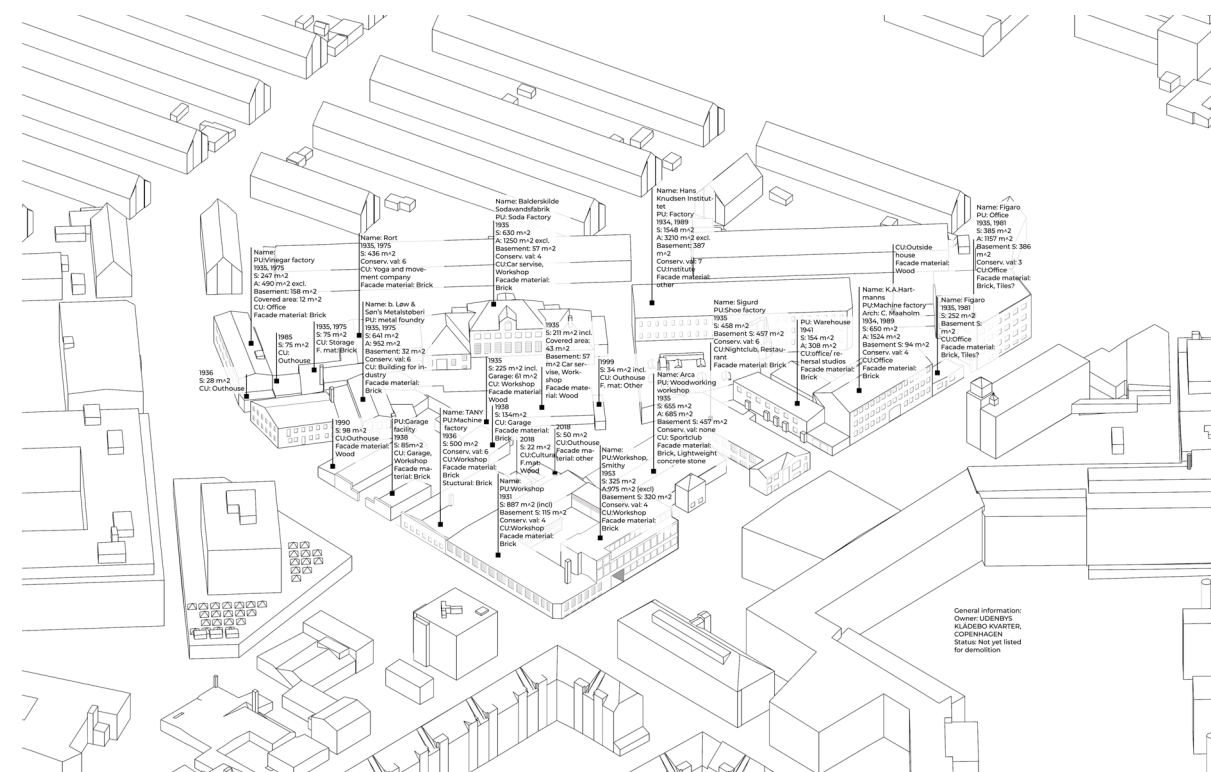




Back in 1936: when block has been developed. The block was formed by smaller industry following the big companies thriving here at that time. Soda , shoes, vinegar, machine parts, hairdresser`s union, and other small workshops occupy the empty cluster.



With time the block got densified. Almost nothing was demolished, densification similar to growth happened by parts being added to the existing industrial buildings, extensions growing to the top, to the side or connecting the existing buildings together.



Change of function altered each of the building in their own way, different owners adapted industrial buildings to their needs, later they were all bought by the state to free space for the science city project.



Historical photo from 1930s (Danmark Set Fra Luften: Siggurdsgade, Vermundsgade, Balderskilde - Det Kgl. Bibliotek, n.d.)

2.1 ACCEPT THE RUIN

It begins with acceptance
of time, of aging, of decay.
Acceptance of the quiet
traces left by use, by life,
by passage.



Time-woven Architecture

Globalization has popularized certain design trends worldwide, often making it difficult to preserve local identity while following these broader movements. Historically, industrial architecture also exhibited a certain uniformity across regions, yet over time, and through shifts in function, it evolved into something unique to each place.

How can the value of these patinated structures be understood today?

In exploring the remnants of the past, discussions on time and architecture become essential, expanding the conversation to consider how buildings serve as vessels of collective history and identity.

John Ruskin, a 19th-century art critic and social thinker, saw architecture as unique in its capacity to preserve the labor, intellect, and intentions of the people who created it.

In his *Lamp of Memory*, Ruskin argued that architecture alone bears testimony to the work and conditions of its creators, *embedding human endeavor into material form*.

To him, *buildings were like cultural artifacts, timeless repositories of human history, deserving reverence and protection as social memories that transcend any one life.* (Forty, 2000)

Aldo Rossi saw cities as layered fabrics of collective memory, where each building contributes to the shared experience of urban life. He believed that architecture should acknowledge and interact with these accumulated memories, actively shaping the city's character. (Forty, 2000)



Value of Decay

Alois Riegl, an Austrian historian of art and cultural theorist, made a lasting contribution to heritage theory through his 1903 essay *The Modern Cult of the Monument: Its Character and Its Origin*. In this foundational text, Riegl identifies several distinct value systems that guide the ways societies approach the conservation of historical buildings and artifacts. He categorizes monuments into three primary types: intentional monuments, created explicitly to commemorate an event or person for future generations; historical monuments, which acquire significance through their capacity to represent a specific phase of human cultural or technological development; and *age-value monuments*, which derive their importance from the visible traces of time—decay, wear, and weathering—that signal the artifact's age and longevity (ERA,2014).

For Riegl, age-value carries a unique cultural meaning: *it emphasizes the aesthetic and emotional resonance of natural deterioration*. Unlike monuments valued for their original function or formal qualities, those appreciated for age-value are *significant precisely because they evoke the irreversible passage of time*. In this sense, any object—regardless of its initial purpose—can become culturally meaningful if it exhibits the marks of temporal endurance.

Riegl also draws a tension between age-value and what he refers to as relative art-value, shaped by the historical will or *Kunstwollen*. He contends that this art-historical perspective often privileges novelty and stylistic coherence, which stands in opposition to the ethos of age-value that accepts incompleteness, decay, and fragmentation. This acceptance of the fragment - the ruin, the partial form, the weathered surface - prefigures a broader shift in modern cultural and critical thought (ERA,2014).

This brings us to a notion of ageing as an enhancement and the idea that the various markings and layers of a surface record and allow one to recollect earlier stages in the history of a building and the human life associated with it (M. Mostafavi).



Freedom for creativity

The idea that ruin and decay demonstrate a culture of the area and its public is rather wrong and disruptive in its essence, because the reasons for neglect are not directly related to the occupants of these buildings. At the same time decay played a role in creation of the image of the Haraldsgade neighborhood and its unique lively atmosphere. Isn't that contradictory that decline and ruination are often accompanied by vivid nightlife, diverse activities, development of art communities?

Riet Steel pedagogue and researcher at the Faculty of Human and Well-being of the University College Ghent and and Elly Van Eeghem, artist and researcher at the School of Arts wrote a book about social and artistic interventions on urban intermediate spaces in the city. They defined a term *Urban crack*, touching upon this phenomena. Urban cracks are spaces with a lively, colourful past, for which future plans exist, but that remain neglected at present (Van Den Bergh, n.d). They are usually situated between more defined or developed urban spaces, but is characterised, intrinsically, by an apparent void. Urban cracks are places that have lost their original meaning and instead inherited layers of new meanings due to the reduced level of control. Such places can also appear and be unsafe for this very reason. Visible marker of such areas is graffiti.

Artists find such forgotten places attractive because it provides space for creativity and freedom. Similar situation with nightclubs, communities and small businesses.

Haraldsgade is an area that is being developed now and we can see such neglected areas there ready to be demolished to free space for the future plans.

During these years it became well-loved and appreciated for its diversity and subcultures, it gained its recognition due to the people who developed their organizations in such Urban cracks in symbiosis with a ruin.



Similar to grass finding its way to grow through the cracks in concrete, and to nature reclaiming a ruin, culture and creativity find their way to grow in urban cracks, only to disappear again under the inevitable force of gentrification.





Creative community and the neighborhood

Has been working in this neighborhood for 50 years. Back in the day he used to create sculptures made from damaged pavement stones, which they got during the renovation of the harbor

**Sculpturer
Steffen**



**Architect
Lars**

Works on recreational spaces.

"This block is a bit of a lost area"
"Most of the buildings are falling apart."



**Simon from
Bike repair shop**

In Budha-bikes they bring old bicycles back to life, reusing parts, fixing painting and selling for fair price.



"What do we want for this area? We would be happy to have some competition! Make it more lively"

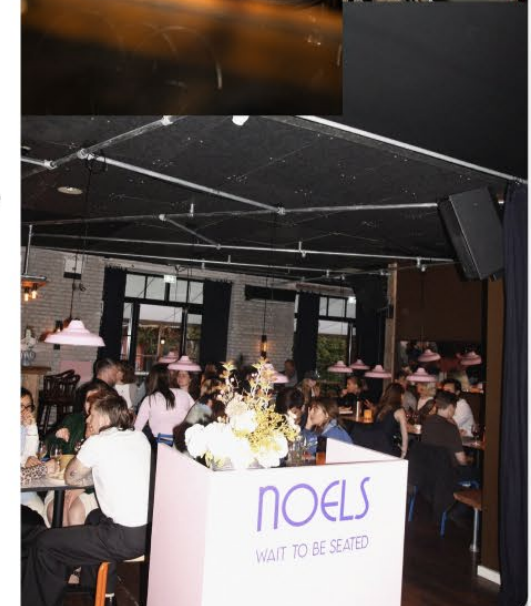
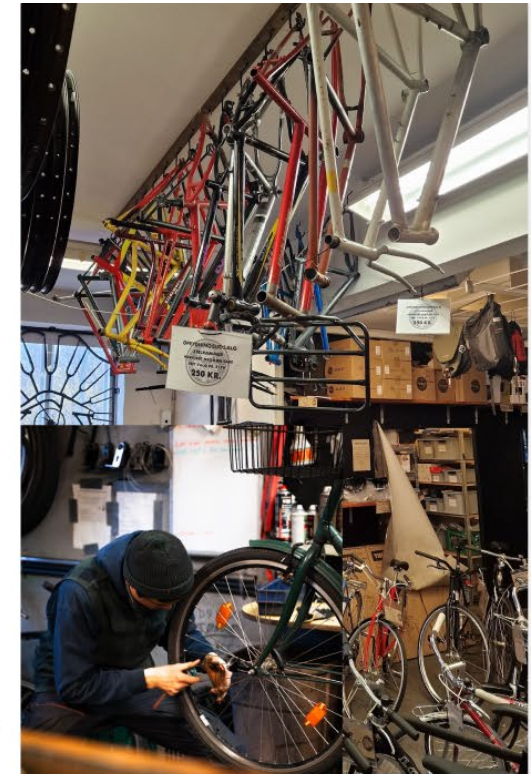
**Noel,
from the Sigurd Night-club (Family business)**



Family business that since 2007 attracts musicians and young people to the area. Sigurd which is now a bar and a nightclub also recently opened a restaurant and planning to become a concert hall.



Diverse communities and strong subcultures



Nature takes over

By granting nature time and space to thrive, rather than fighting against it, we reveal the beauty of decay. Instead of demolishing a building, allowing it to gradually transform fosters a new reality, re-integrating the structure with its surroundings and creating a place where local community can develop as a part of this system. This approach embraces a metamorphosis from building to landscape, inviting those who wish to contribute, to take part in shaping not only the place and structure but also its history and future.

Hannah Schubert

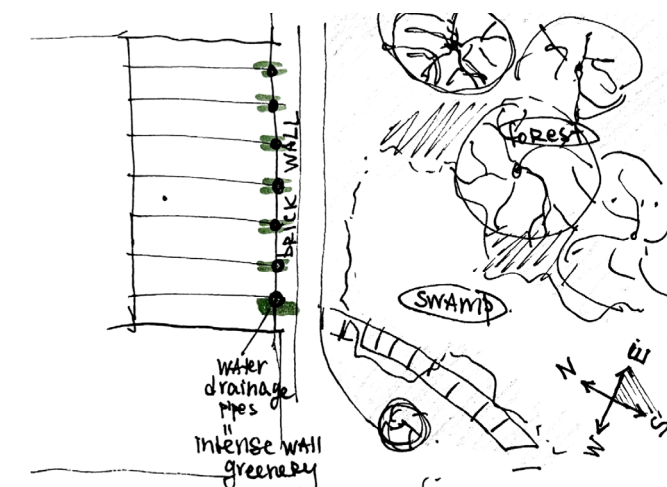
Hannah Schubert is a Dutch spatial designer and writer whose work explores the intersection of architecture, time, and nature. She challenges the prevailing notion that buildings must either be repurposed or demolished, offering instead a third, underexplored option: intentional inaction. Schubert views vacancy as potential - a condition where nature can reclaim space, and where time becomes an active design element. (Schubert, 2018)

Accepting the influence of time on a building and its gradual return to the landscape is an essential step towards thoughtful reuse. The process of nature reclaiming a building can be understood as a project in which every material is repurposed, but instead of architects, non-human species curate this process, each in their own way. First, lichens appear; then mosses and vascular plants settle into cracks, thriving in shade (Whittaker, 1982)

Such process is inspiring and comparable to the way subcultures and communities emerge and flourish in forgotten spaces: the freedom to exist and to grow generates a new, site-specific form of architecture. Ruins are often portrayed as evidence of a battle between human and nature, but is it truly a battle, or are we simply part of nature itself, participating in the recolonization and breathing new life into what has been forgotten and neglected?



Nature taking over an abandoned factory in Antwerpen

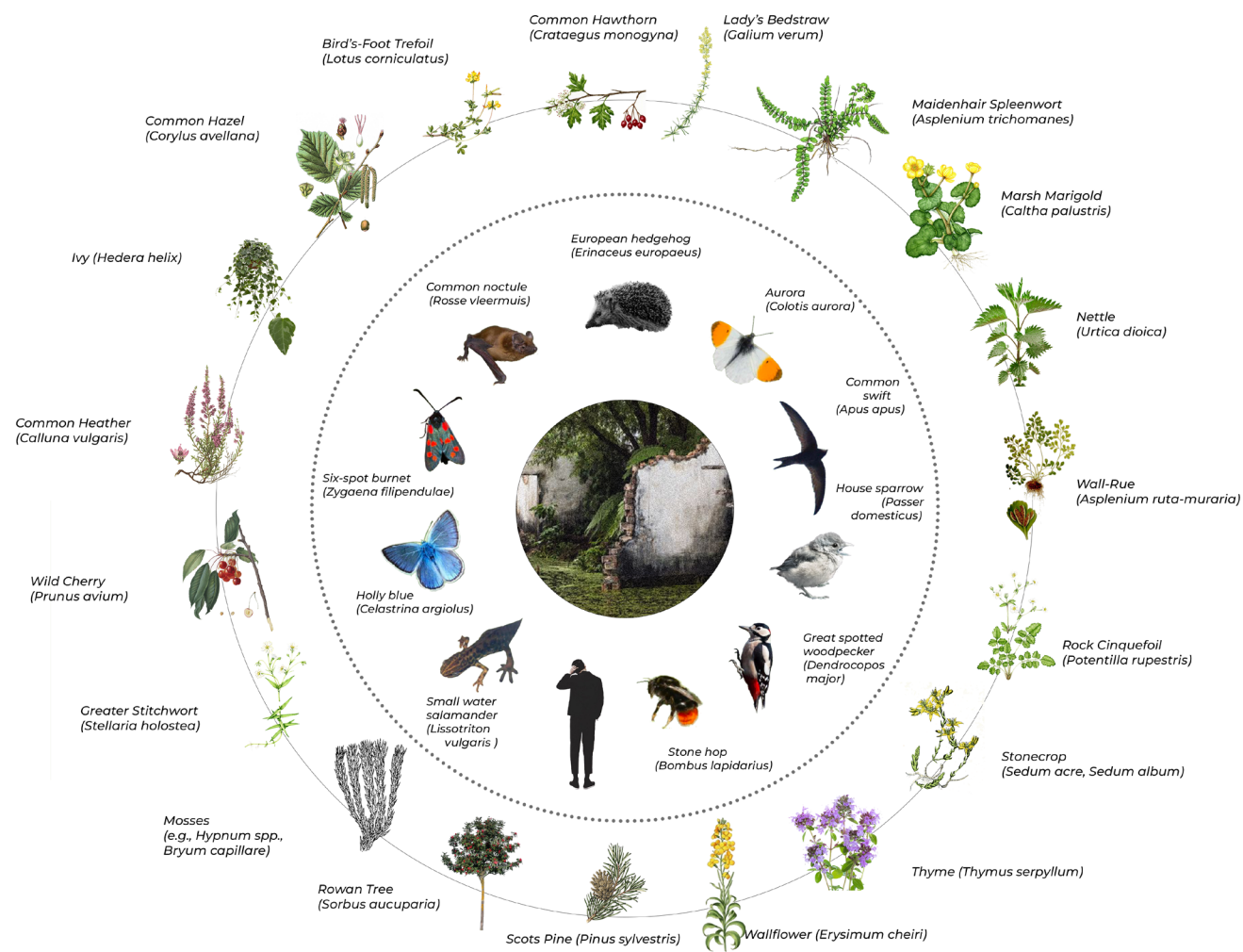


Sketch explaining conditions



Ruingarden becomes the first building stone in this story of acceptance. It opens the doors for humans and non-humans into the block by allowing nature to take over one of the buildings, the one with the lowest potential for renovation.

The selection of non-human species combines animals approved by the municipality for life in the city of Copenhagen with plants that can take root in the old walls and inhabit the Ruingarden.



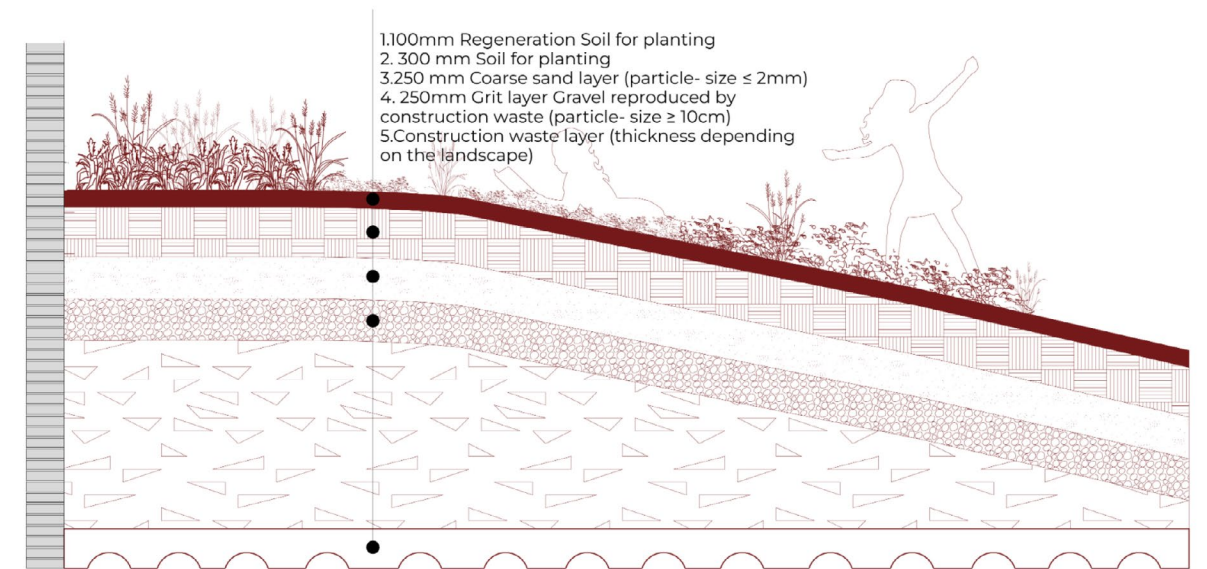
Name	Natural Habitat	City/Ruingarden Habitat
European hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	Woodlands, hedgerows, grasslands	Dense ground vegetation, log piles, leaf litter in garden corners
Common noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	Forest edges, old trees with cavities	Crevices in old walls, special nest spaces in walls
Six-spot burnet (<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>)	Meadows, grasslands, wildflower-rich habitats	Sunny wildflower patches, meadows in ruingarden
Holly blue (<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>)	Woodland edges, hedgerows, gardens	Ivy-covered walls, flowering shrubs
Small water salamander (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>)	Ponds, wetlands, moist meadows	Raingarden
Aurora (<i>Colotis aurora</i>) (actually should be Orange-tip: <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>)	Damp meadows, woodland edges	Flower beds, moisture-retentive flower patches
Common swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	Open air, cliffs, old buildings	Nesting in wall crevices, special nest spaces in walls
House sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	Farmland, hedges, human settlements	Special nest spaces in walls, climbing plants on walls
Great spotted woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>)	Mature forests, old trees	Large old trees left standing
Stone hop (<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>)	Meadows, grasslands, field margins	Flower-rich borders, old stone piles, ground cavities

Name	Optimal growing conditions
Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)	Shade to part sun, moist fertile soil
Common Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)	Part shade to full sun, moist, well-drained soil
Common Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>)	Acidic, well-drained, sandy soil, full sun
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	Well-drained fertile soil, full sun to part shade
Greater Stitchwort (<i>Stellaria holostea</i>)	Woodland edges, moist well-drained soil, part shade
Mosses (e.g., <i>Hypnum</i> spp., <i>Bryum capillare</i>)	Moist, shaded, humid environments
Rowan Tree (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Well-drained, slightly acidic soil, full sun to part shade
Bird's-Foot Trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>)	Poor, dry, well-drained soils, full sun
Common Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	Various soils, sun to partial shade
Lady's Bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>)	Dry, well-drained calcareous soils, full sun
Maidenhair Spleenwort (<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>)	Shady, moist rocky crevices
Marsh Marigold (<i>Caltha palustris</i>)	Wetlands, pond edges, rich wet soil, full sun
Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>)	Fertile, nitrogen-rich, moist soil, sun to partial shade
Wall-Rue (<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>)	Walls, rock crevices, partial shade
Rock Cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla rupestris</i>)	Dry, rocky, calcareous soils, full sun
Dry, rocky, calcareous soils, full sun	Dry, poor, stony soils, full sun



Plan of the "Triangle" block, 1:1000

A

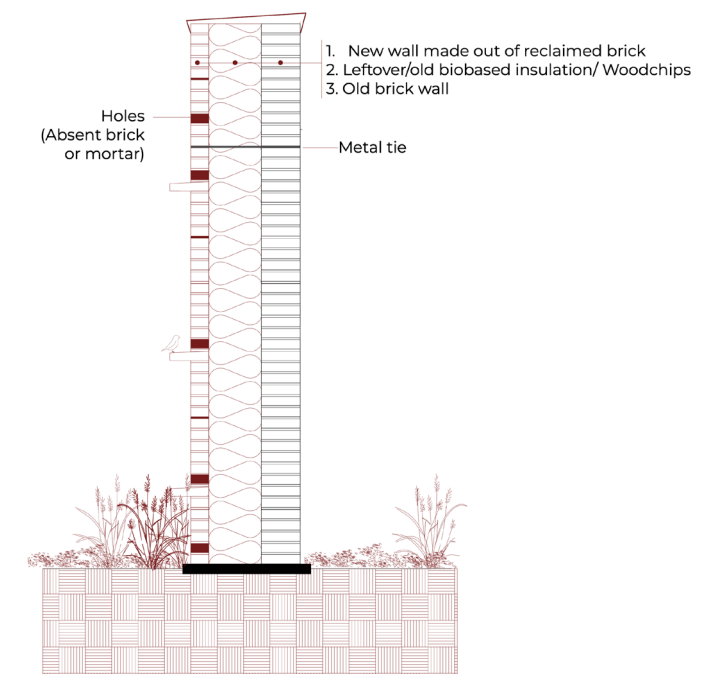


Landscape section

The most suitable habitats for plants are on walls built against soil and receiving water and nutrients through cracks (Darlington, 1982). This way the wall stays wet longer and can be fasted adapted by nature. At the same time landscape becomes an interesting addition to the garden.

B

Bats and birds can find a shelter inside the new structures. New layer of brick is added to some of the old walls in the Ruingarden and in-between the space is filled with wood chips. In the new wall (which is made out of reclaimed brick) holes are made so new occupants could enter. The construction is covered with small metal roof.

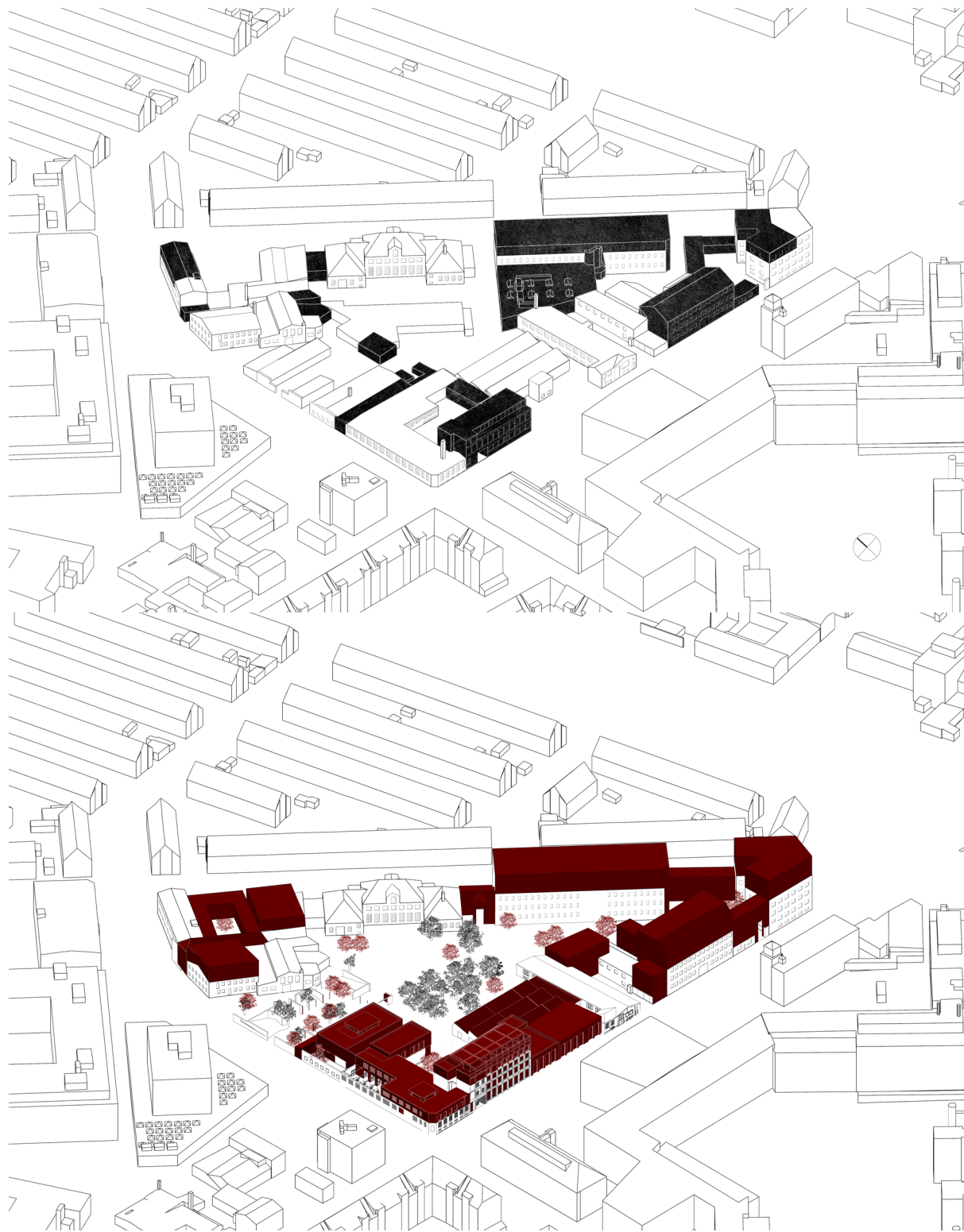


Garden wall section

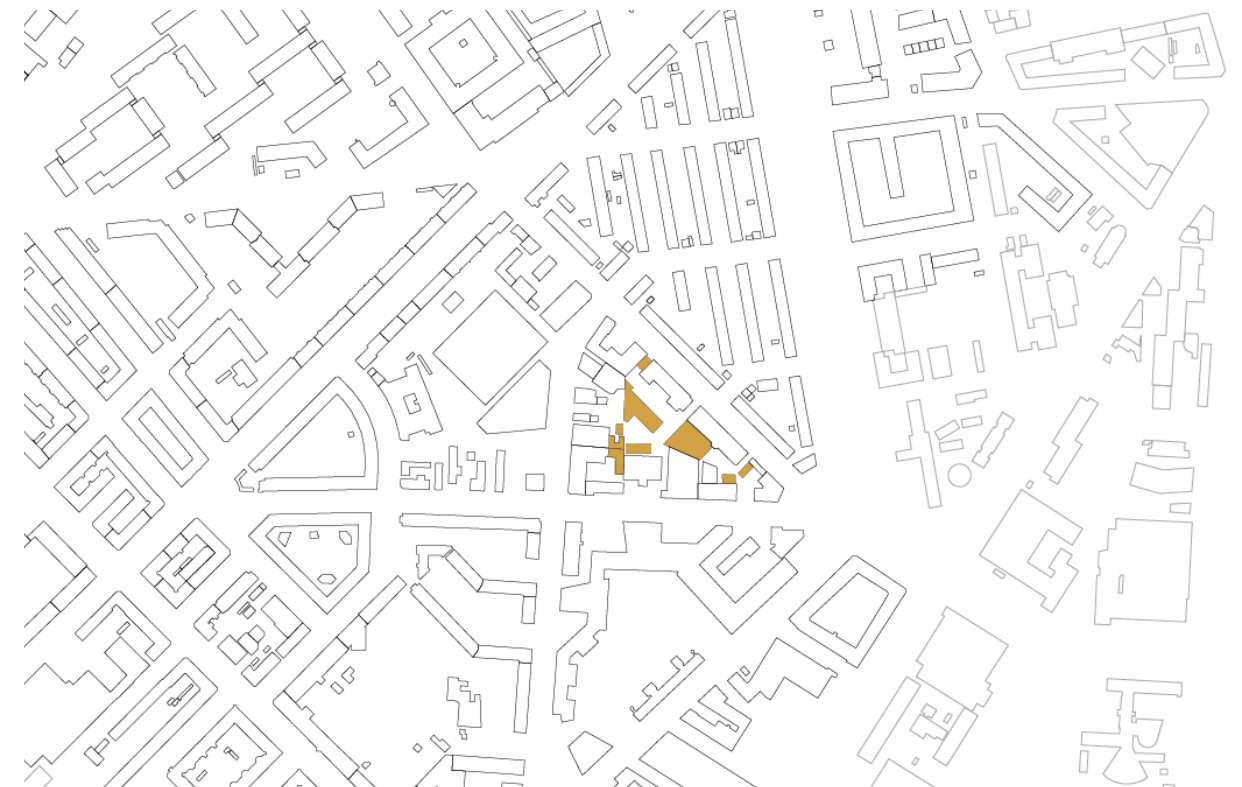


2.2 MAINTAIN CONTINUITY

This is not only about accepting decay as an inevitable process, it is also about recognizing the beauty in the way time shapes architecture. Organic development becomes part of the existing fabric, growing from the context and remaining rooted in it. When such continuity is preserved, it enables ongoing transformation that remains attentive to the past.



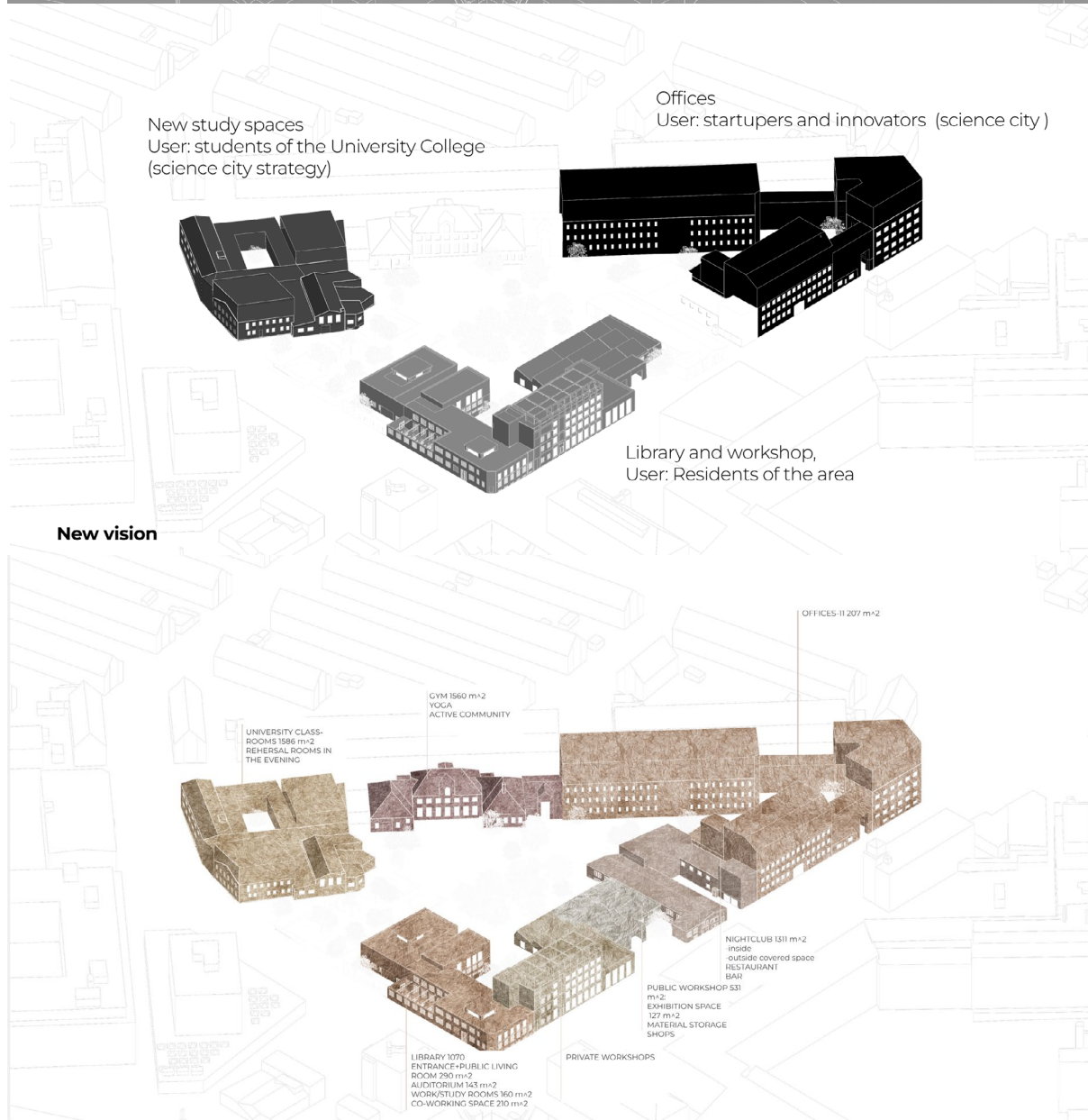
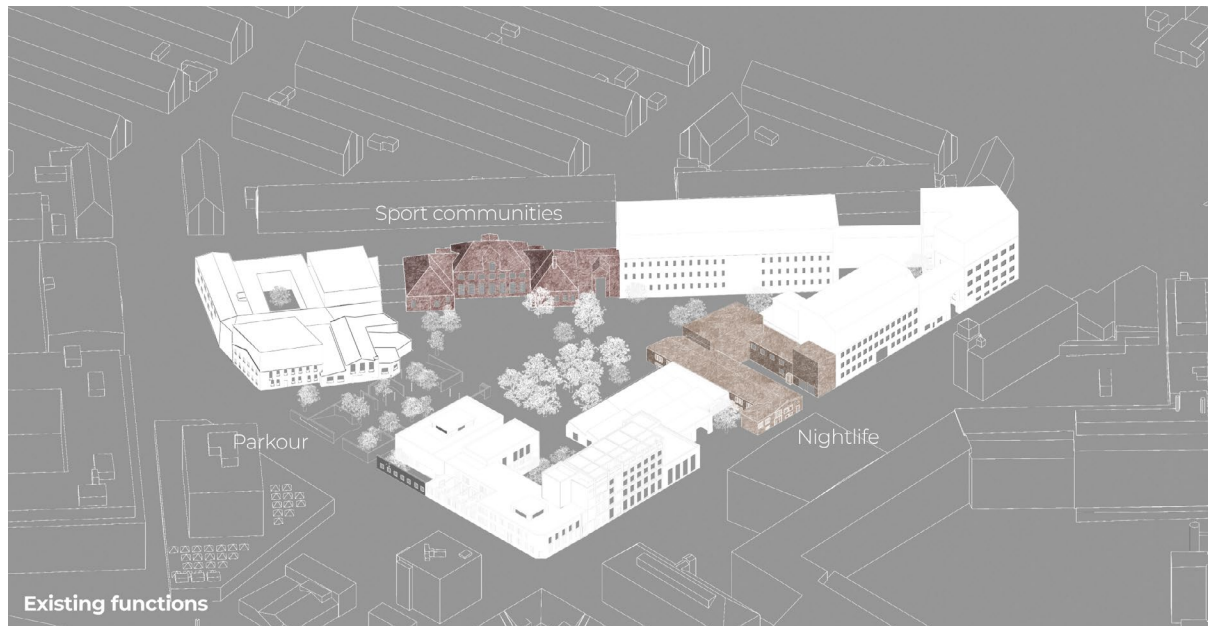
The new is following the already existing patterns of development, by extending the buildings already present on plot, while adapting them to the new functions like it has already been done throughout the years. Red=New



But now the middle of the block becomes free from the clutter of sheds and fences. Yellow= Demolished

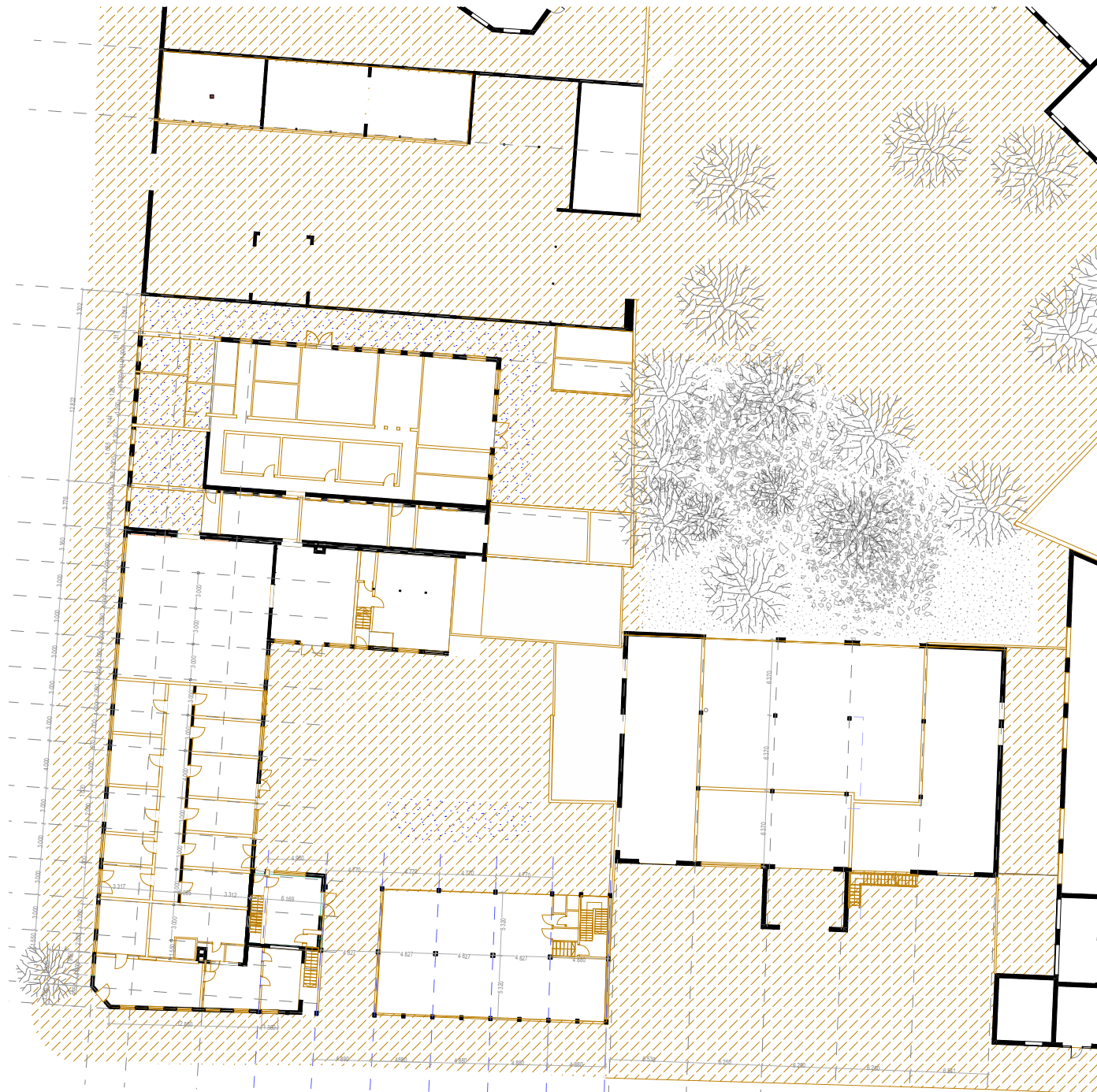


New structures are added as horizontal extensions closing the block and creating new spaces. Red= New





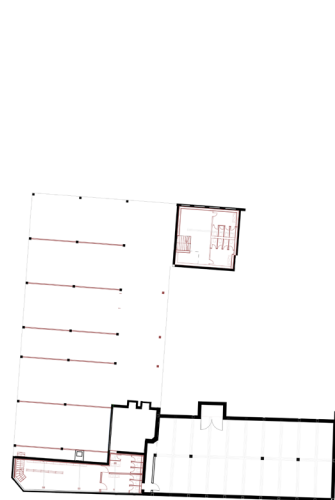
A physical model of the block,
1:500



Ground Floor Plan before the renovation 1:500 Yellow=Demolished



Ground Floor Plan after the renovation 1:500 and its functional layout;
Red=New



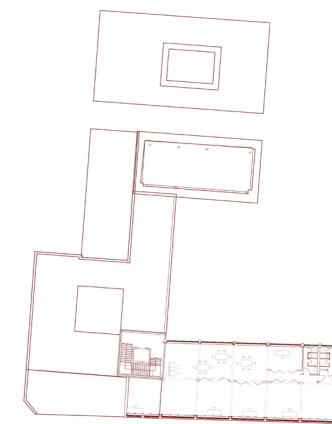
Level -1 Floor Plan 1:1000



Level 1 Floor Plan 1:1000

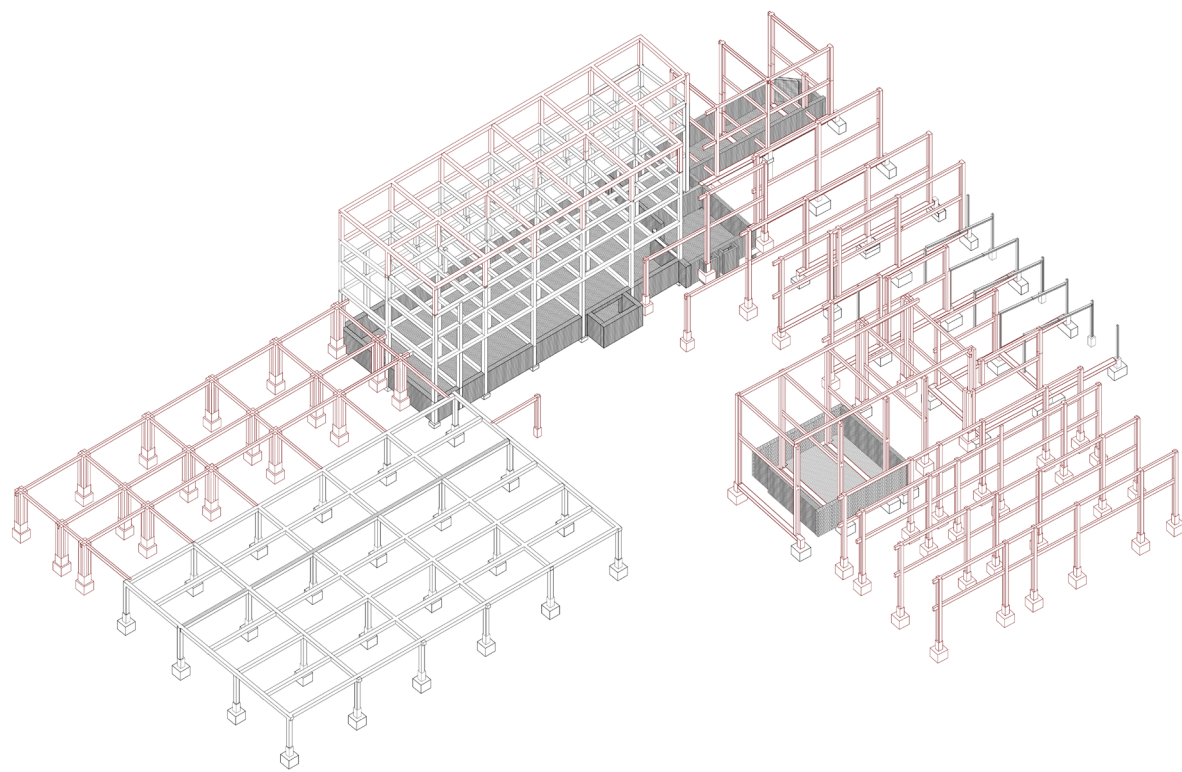


Level 2 Floor Plan 1:1000

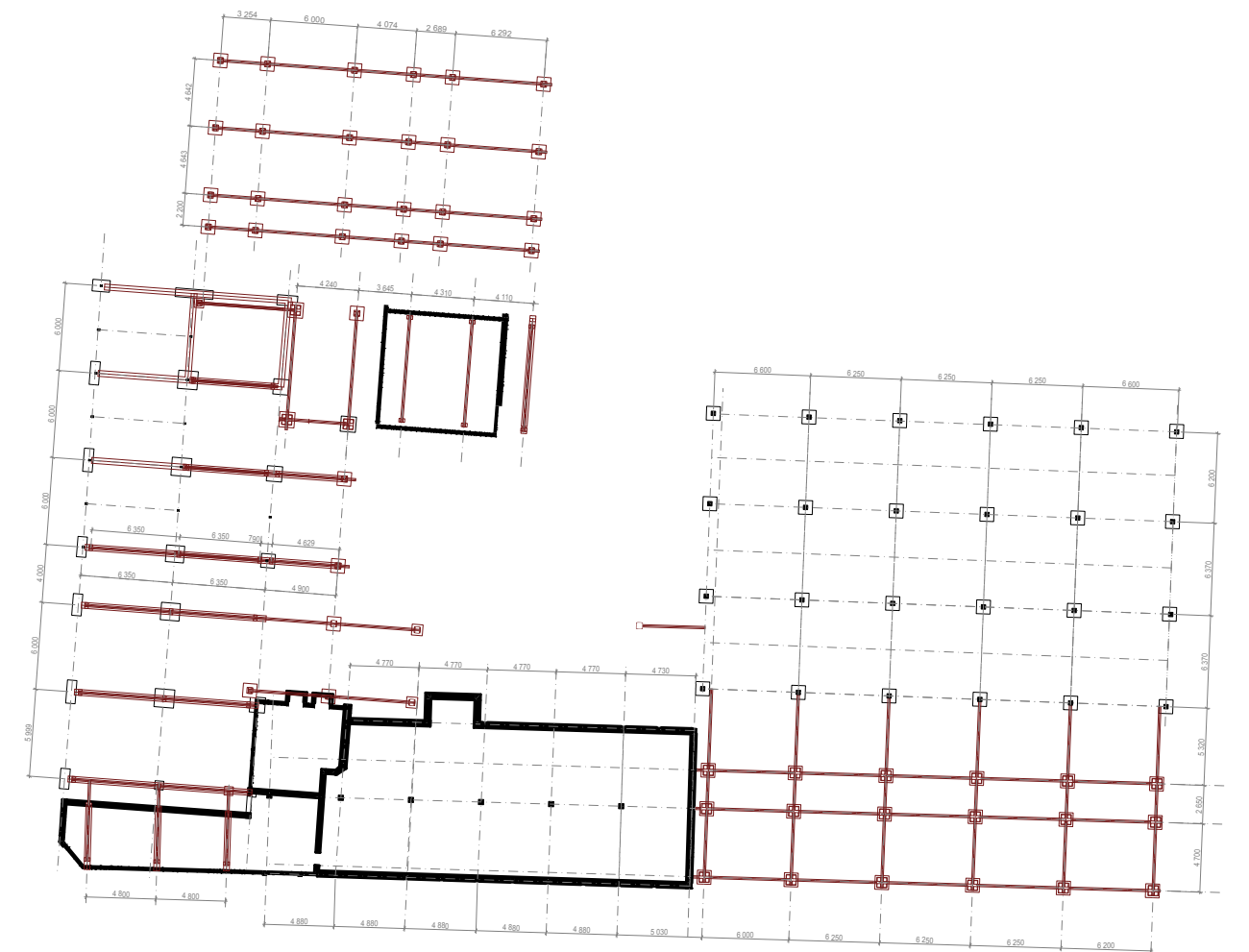


Level 3 Floor Plan 1:1000

- 1.Public living room
- 2.Library
- 3.Computer room
- 4.Small cafe Kitchen
- 5.Library reception
- 6.Entrance reception
- 7.Cafe
- 8.Break room with coffee corner
- 9.Clay workshop
- 10.Class rooms
- 11.Co-working space
- 12.Wood workshop
- 13.Room with machines
- 14.Exhibition and event space
15. Shops to sell and buy crafts
16. Entrance for materials
- 17.Storage
- 18.Auditorium
19. Archive
- 20.Offices
- 21.(Semi-) Private workshops

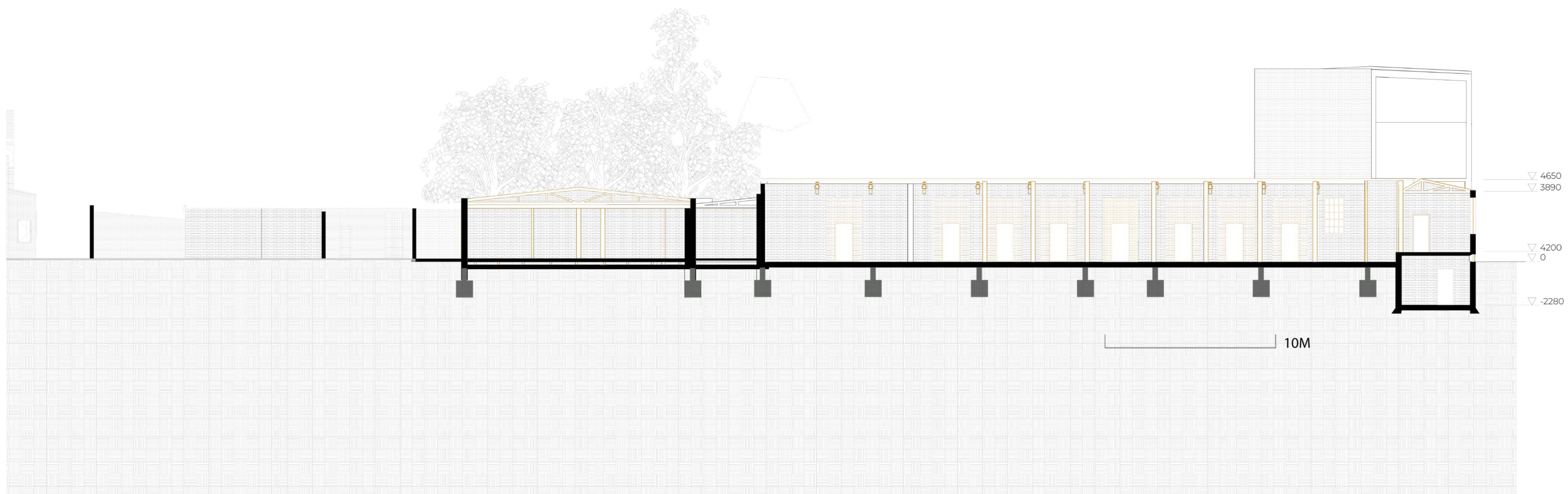
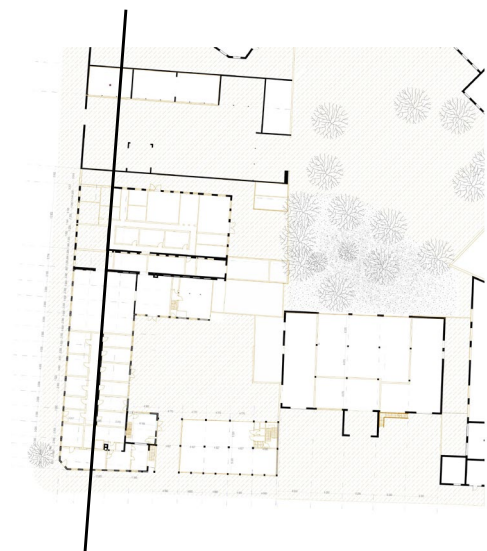


Structure
Red=New

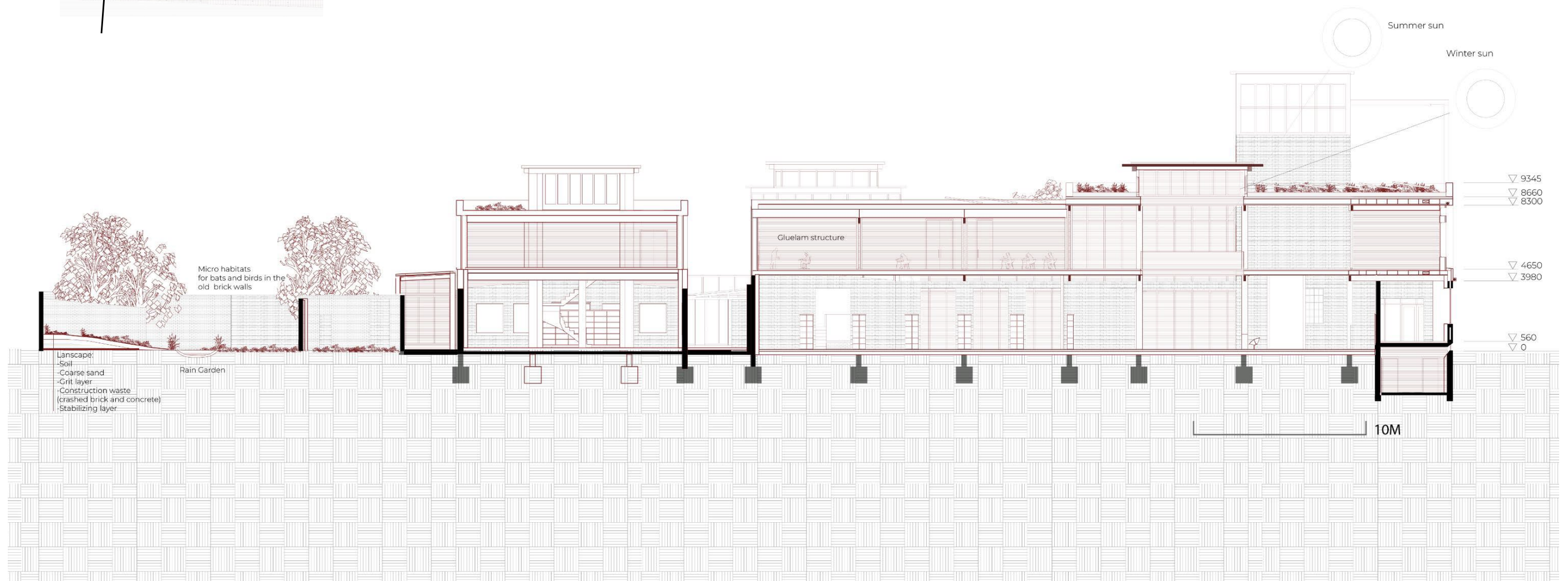


--- Existing beam: Concrete/Steel
 --- New beam : Glulam
 --- Existing concrete

Structural Plan
Red=New

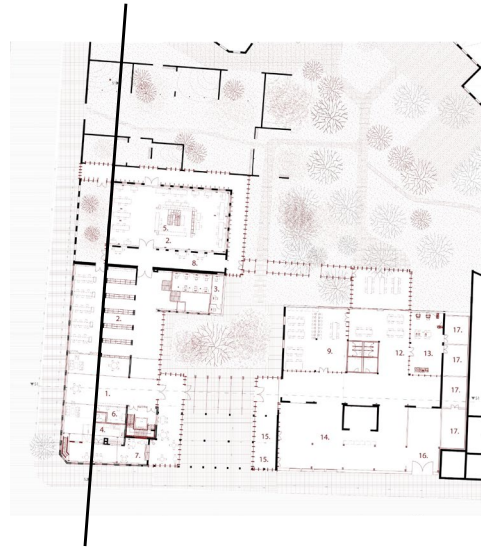


Section 1: Before
Yellow=Demolished



Section 1: After
Red=New

To ensure thermal comfort, several adaptations were implemented, including insulation, ventilation, heating, and cooling.

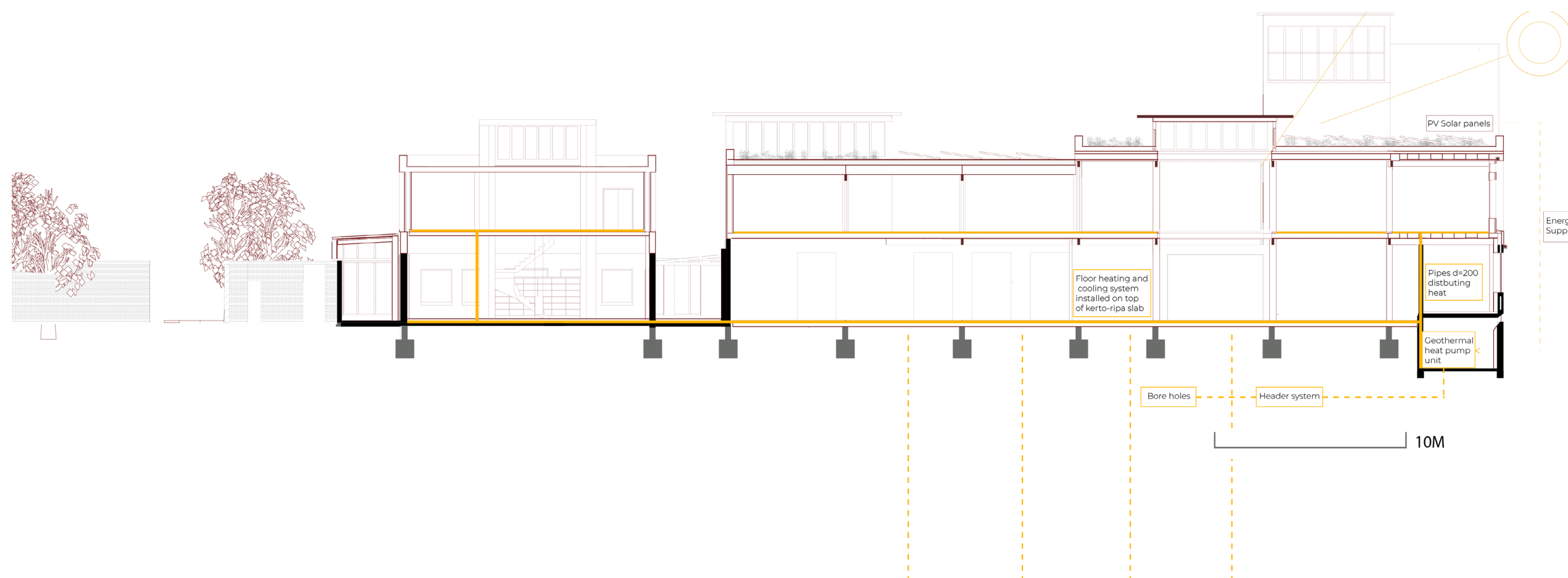
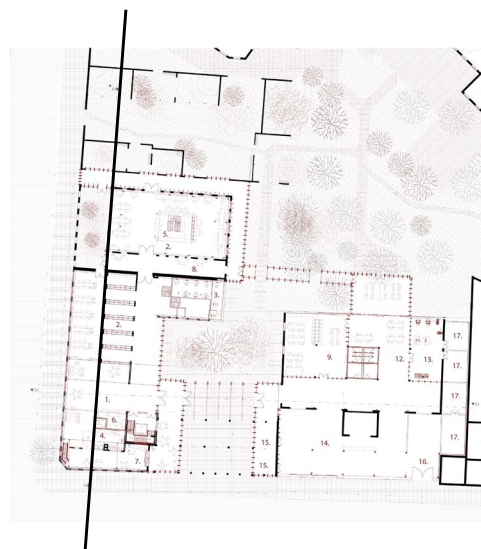


The objective is to construct in a sustainable manner, using bio-based insulation materials. Two types of insulation are employed: rigid Gutex wood fiber boards and soft cellulose insulation.



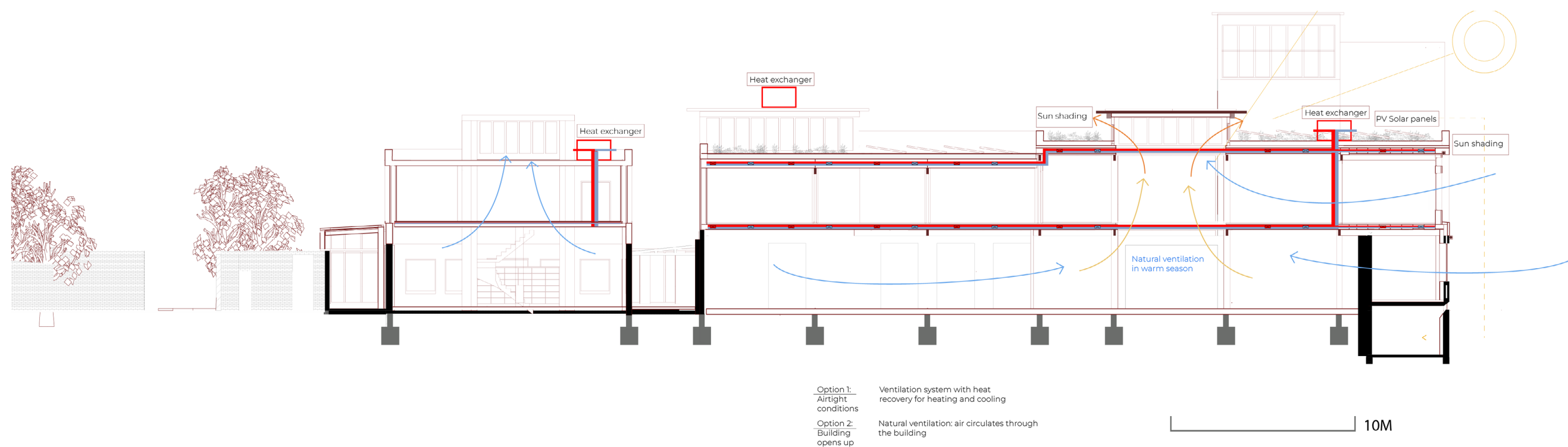
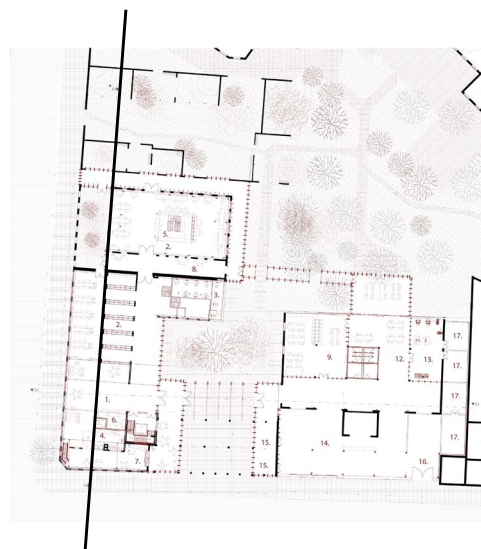
Section 1: Insulation

Geothermal energy is utilized for heating, with a heat pump that can be powered by solar panels when conditions allow.

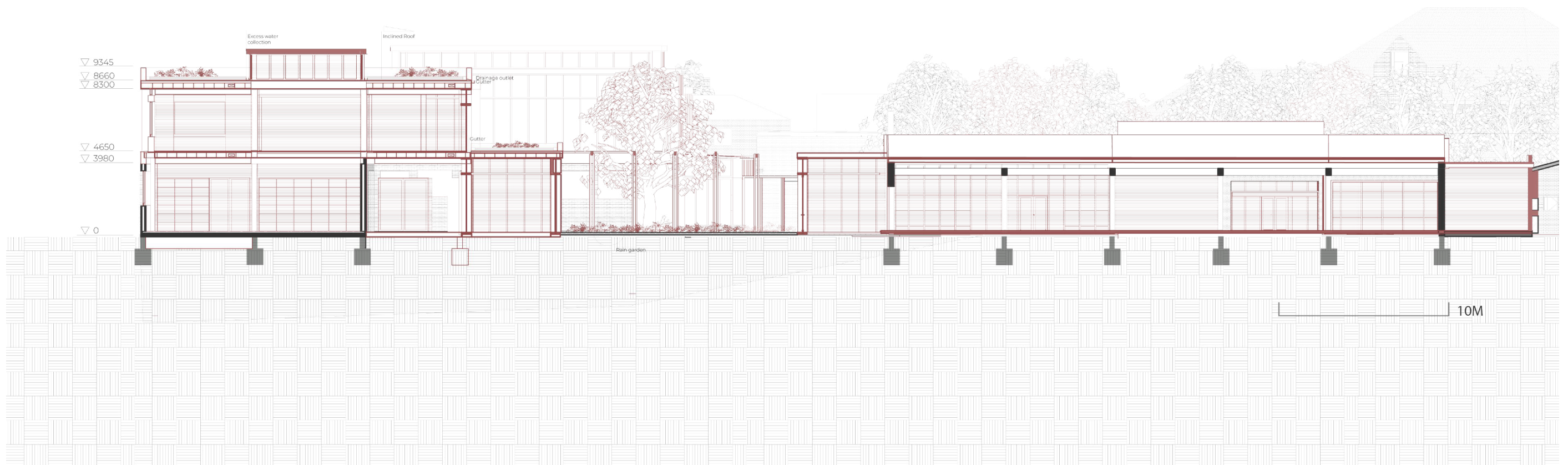
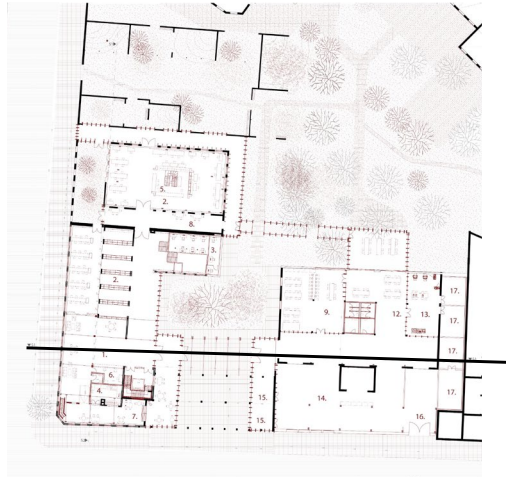


Section 1: Heating

The shape of the building and its openings allow for natural ventilation. At the same time, a mechanical ventilation system with a heat exchanger is installed.



Section 1: Ventilation



Section 2
Red=New

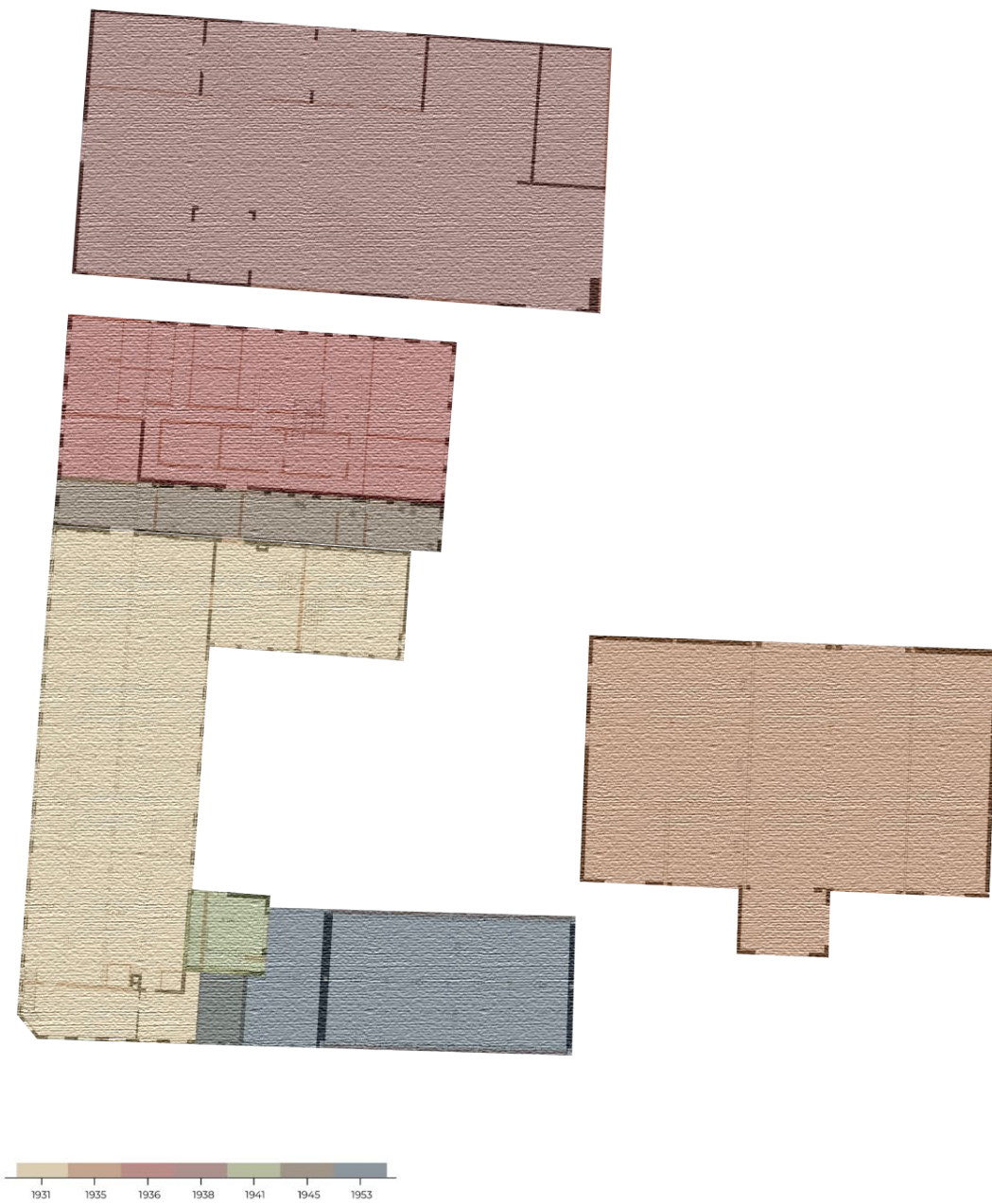
2.3 EMBRACE A FRAGMENT



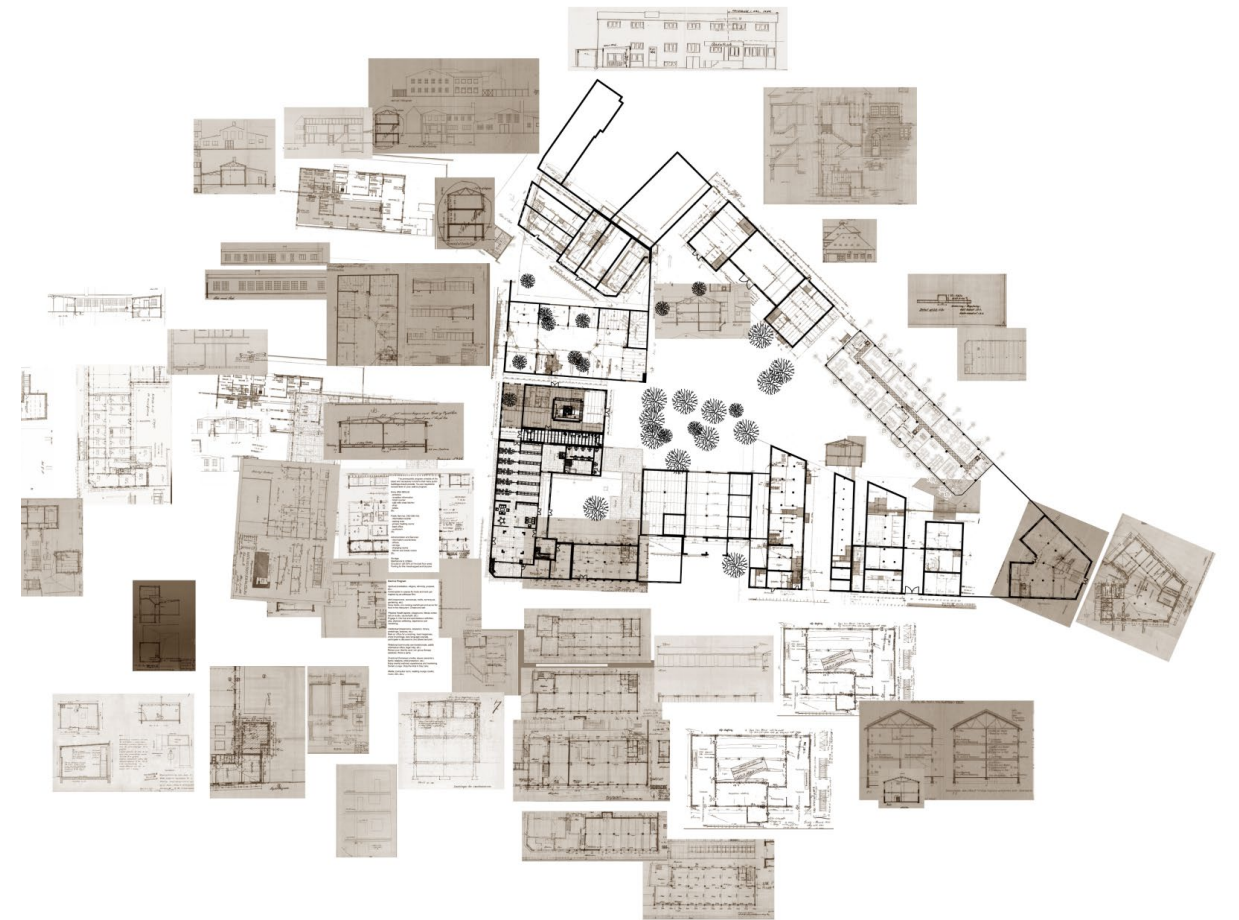
The value of the fragment lies in its ability to reveal complexity through incompleteness. In fragmented architecture, beauty is often subtle, easily overlooked yet deeply layered.

Like a collage, it is composed of diverse pieces that carry traces of the past, each bearing its own material memory and meaning. These fragments engage in a quiet dialogue with one another, forming a patchwork that is rich in contrast, rhythm, and texture. Each element invites the user into a unique interaction, while together they create a narrative of continuity, transformation, and belonging.

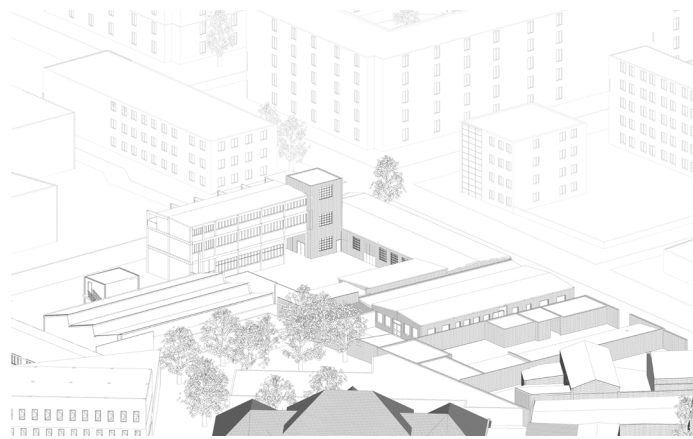
By paying attention to each fragment, and by allowing new ones to emerge, we embrace a continuous process of growth and transformation. This approach welcomes modification and adaptation over time. In accepting the fragment, we create architecture that lives and evolves, responsive to its context, open to change, and rooted in the existing.



The patchwork-like layout is visible not only at the scale of the block but also at the scale of the building. This presents challenges: consisting of multiple clusters built at different times and altered through densification, a single strategy for adaptive reuse would not work, as each structure requires a different approach due to varying constructions and materials.



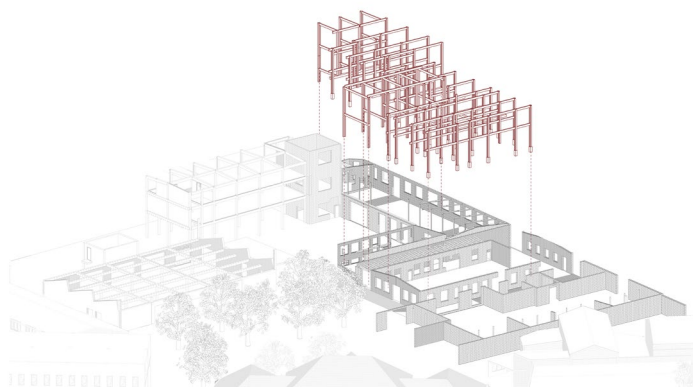
Archival research was performed to understand the characteristics of each building and approach each fragment with attention.



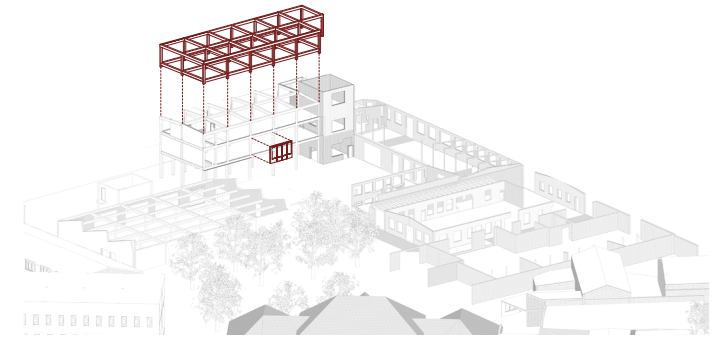
Current state.



After removal of roofs, interior walls, non-bearing walls.



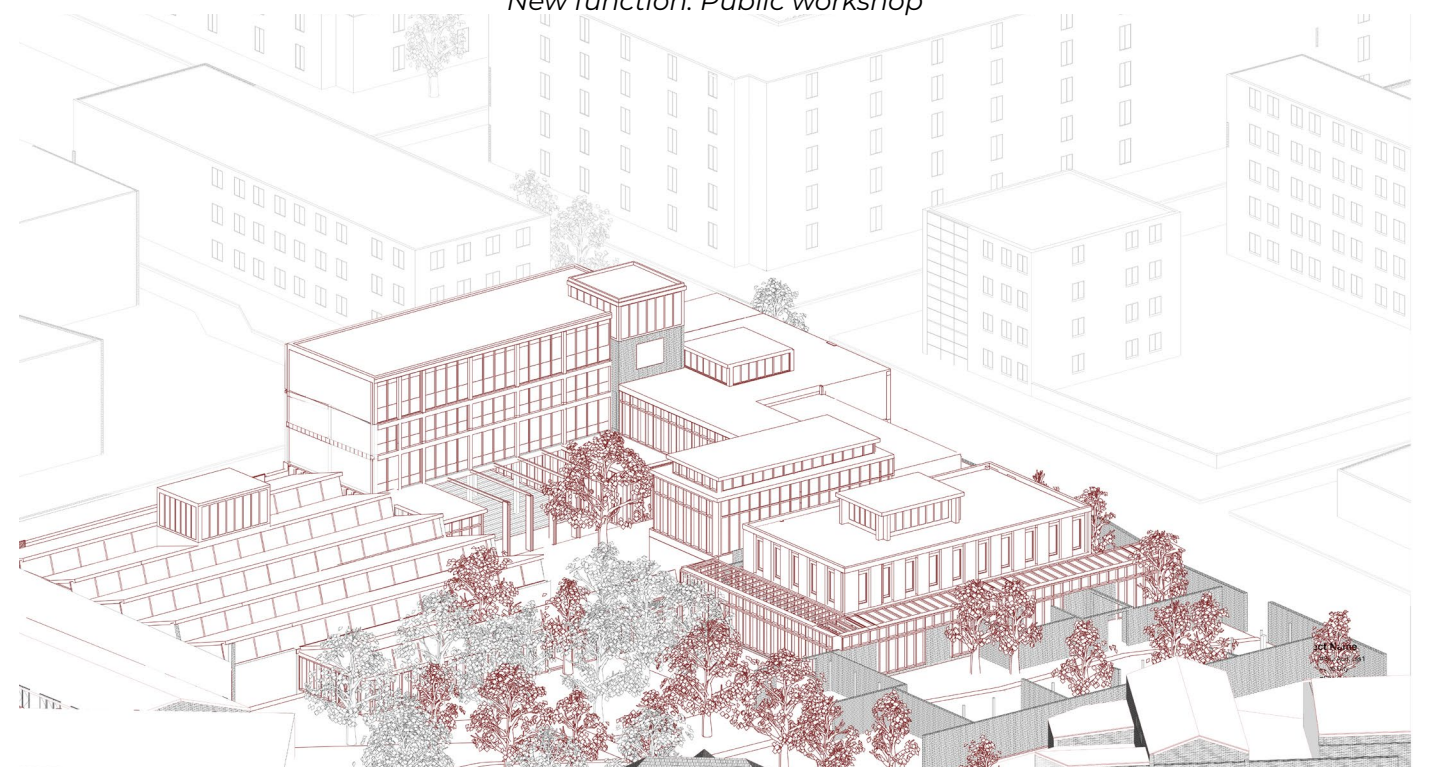
Intervention Building 1: Timber structure allowing for a vertical extension. New function: Library.

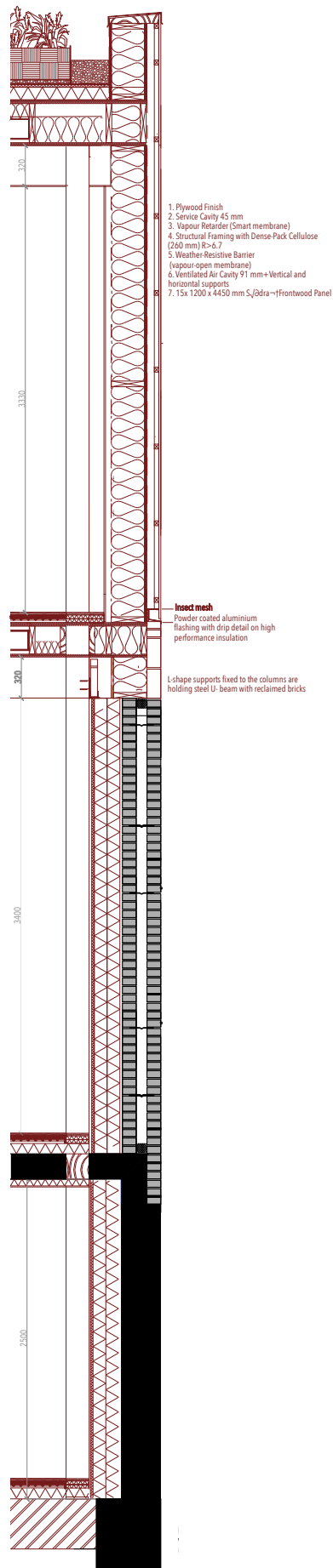


*Intervention building 2: Vertical extension; new timber-frame walls.
New function: Ateliers*



*Intervention building 3: Extension to the side; new walls made out of reclaimed brick.
New function: Public workshop*

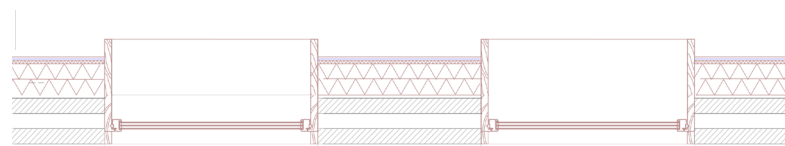




B1 Fragment 1:50. Cut through the wall.



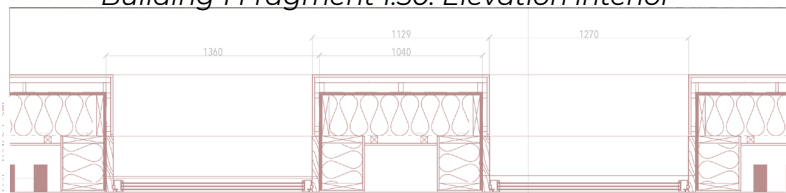
Building 1 Fragment 1:50. Elevation exterior



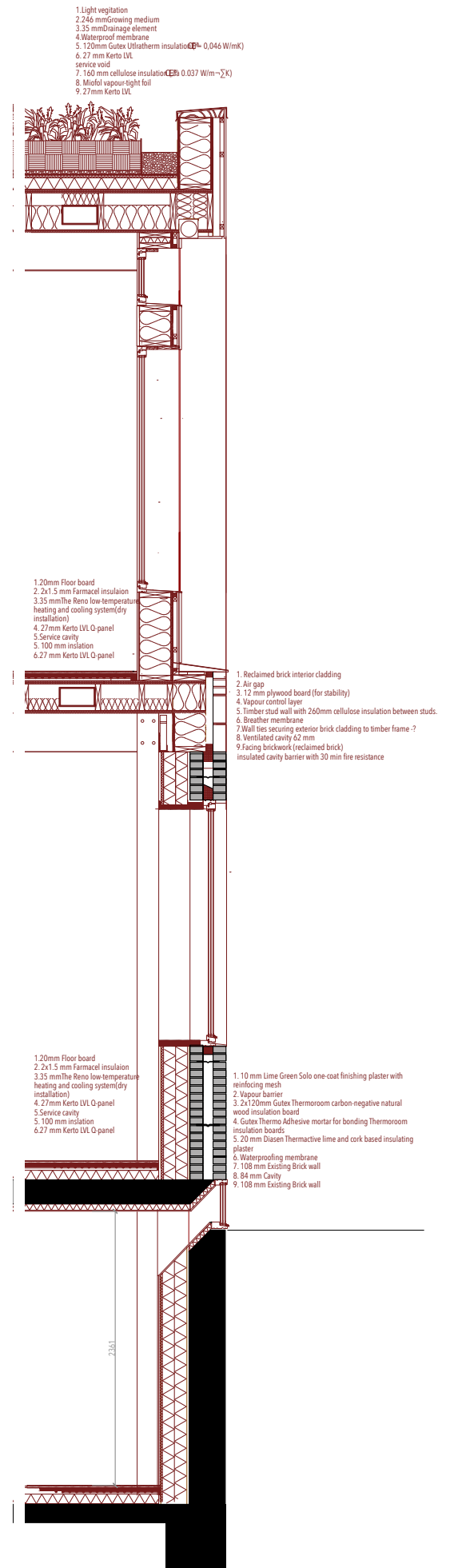
B1 Fragment 1:50. View from the exterior. Ground Floor;



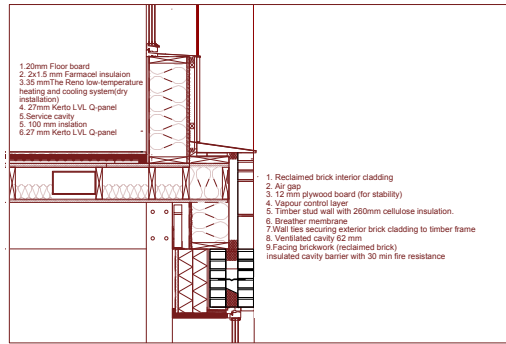
Building 1 Fragment 1:50. Elevation interior



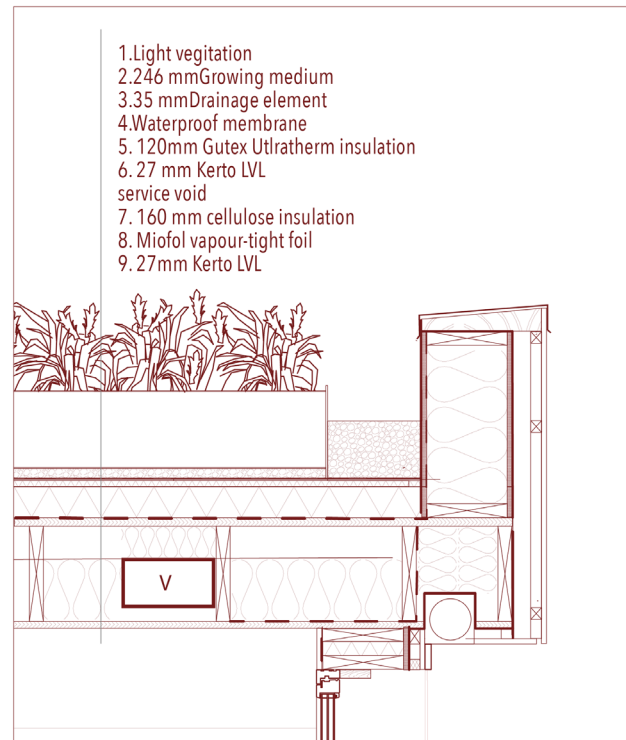
B1 Fragment 1:50. View from the interior. 1st Floor;



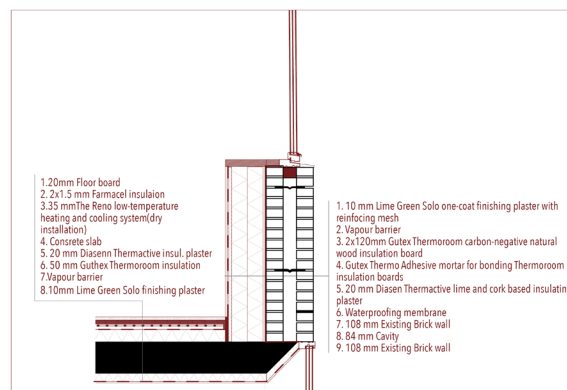
B1 Fragment 1:50. Cut through the window.



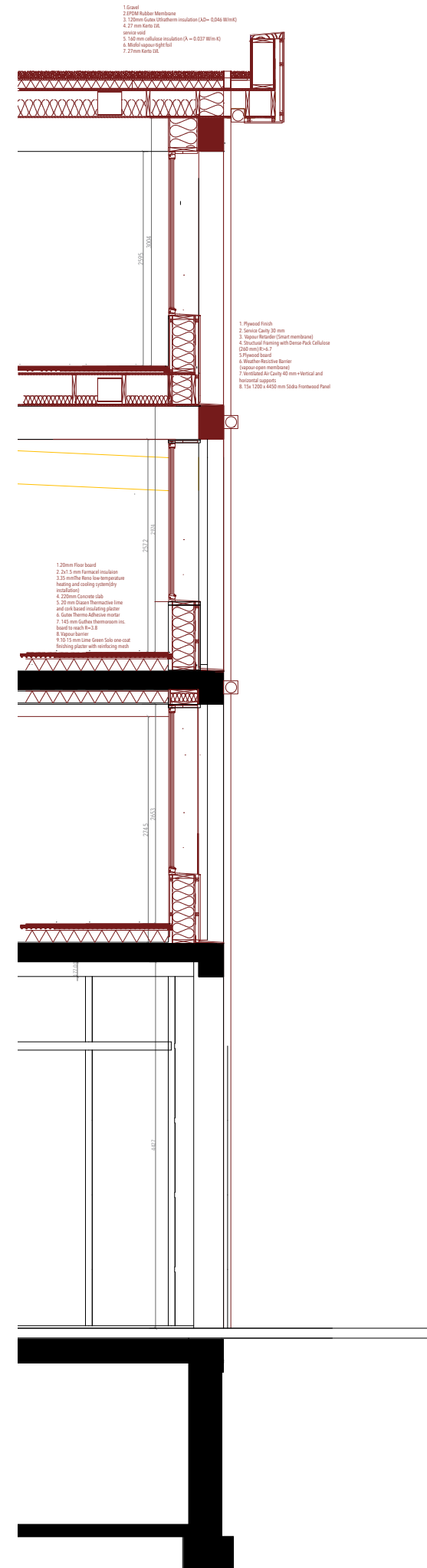
Building 1 Detail 1 1:20



Building 1 Detail 2 1:10



Building 1 Detail 3 1:20



Building 2 fragment 1:70

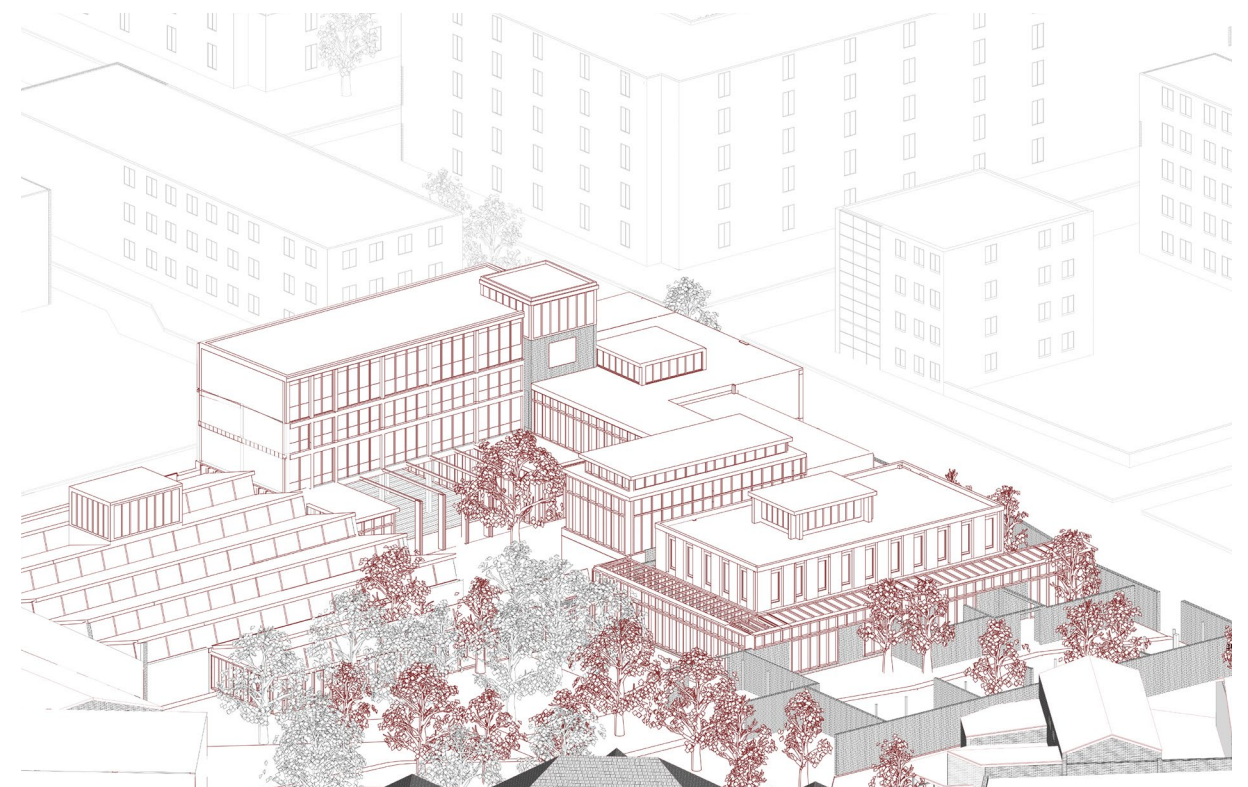
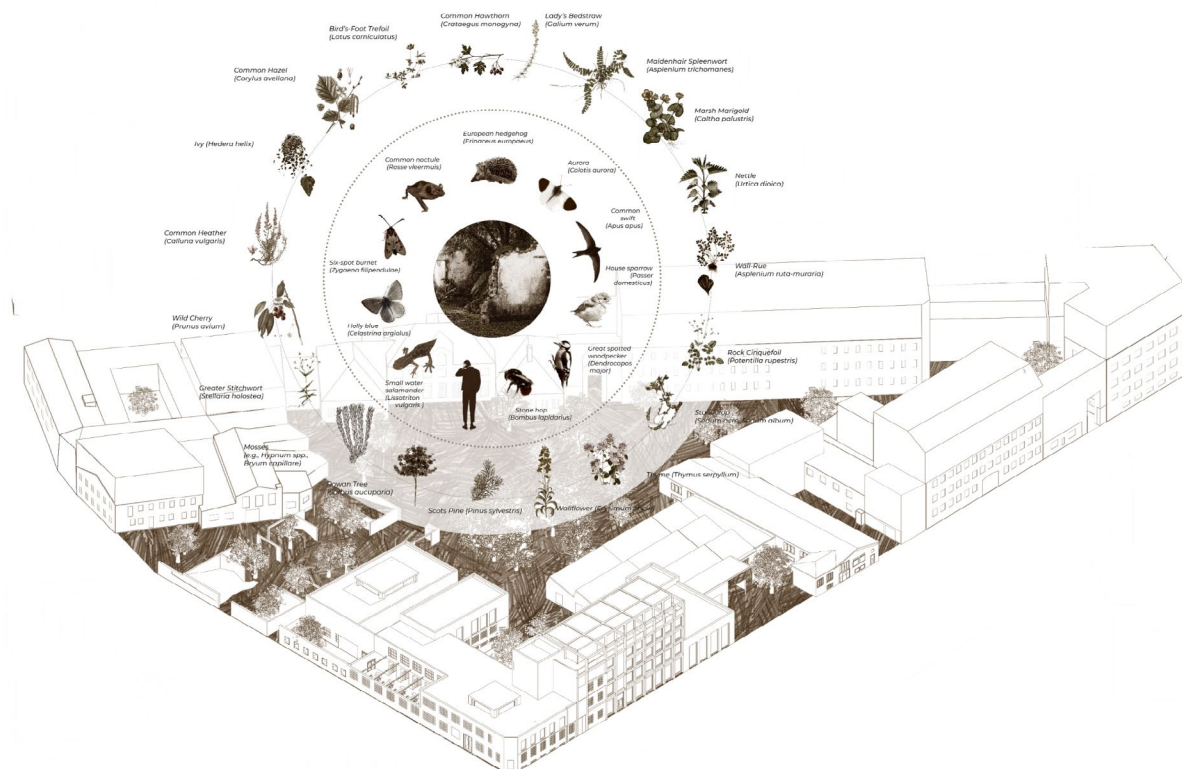






2.4 CREATE A BINDER

In production of terrazzo multiple diverse pieces are fixed together with binder which makes a reclaimed material resilient while each piece contributes to its beauty and value. Same holds with our patchwork of neglected heritage.



On the scale of the block such binder is the garden. It holds a value growing over time and connects all the diverse users as a recreational space.



On the scale of the building circulation spaces are marked with timber curtain walls connecting the fragments together and oppening the inner part of the building to the garden. This way navigation between the parts of the public building becomes clear .



2.5 MATERIALIZE CONTEXT

The key value of materiality brings us back to the importance of the fragment. The energy embedded in material is both a matter of sustainability and of aura. The process of material sourcing lays the foundation upon which the future life of the building is built. Its material roots extend from the very site it stands on to the Scandinavian countries.

Even after the building is completed, the processes of reuse, adaptation, repurposing, and reinterpretation continue.

The building functions as a workshop, half of which is dedicated to woodworking.

The Triangle (Block)



The Haraldsgade area



Copenhagen area



Nordic countries

conditions

Reuse of existing brick walls,
Foundations, concrete structures

Reuse of the materials after demolition

Another block in the Haraldsgade area is already undergoing demolition.
-Having the same owner as the Triangle grounds facilitates material reuse, as it avoids the complexities of the chain of custody.
-The transportation distance is approximately 300 meters, keeping transport costs low.
-The central garden within the developing block provides space for temporary material storage.
Brick buildings from the 1920s–1940s were typically constructed with lime-based mortar, which makes it possible to recover and reuse whole individual bricks.
Gamle Mursten offers testing and quality assurance of reclaimed bricks, enabling them to be CE-marked and reused in new construction.



Rådmandsgade 60, Rådmandsgade 58, Rådmandsgade 56, Rådmandsgade 54 and Rådmandsgade 52.

Possible sourcing of used material
Gluelam beams and columns
Timber Flooring



Växjö, Sweden



Krone
Aabybro, Denmark



Espoo, Finland



Solna, Sweden



TIMBER FACADE SYSTEM
Hultsfred, Sweden



Nordic Spruce
from Sweden



Oak from Denmark,
Sweden



Nordic Spruce, Pine from
Finland and Sweden



Nordic Spruce/Pine from
Sweden

material

Interior brick walls- whole bricks



Exterior brick walls- whole colored bricks



Exterior brick walls- whole brown/red bricks



Interior brick walls- crashed bricks



Crashed concrete, rubble



Images and Inspo: Christopher Dameron



Original
3-layer solid wood panel



Stained



Kerto LVL -
structural
laminated
veneer



Gluelam



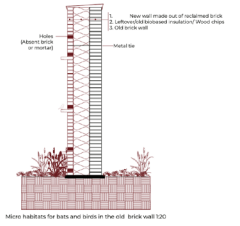
Timber

Gluelam

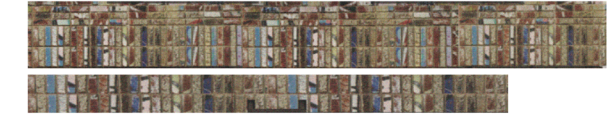


application

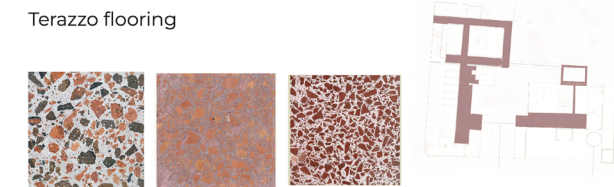
-new interior partitions
-outside structures in the ruingarden
working as micro-habitats
-pavement



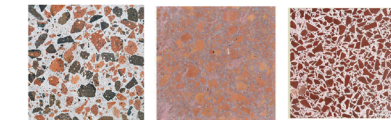
Exterior and Interior brick cladding



New horizontal building extensions



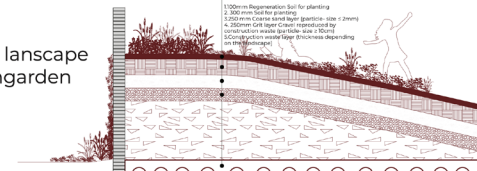
Terazzo flooring



recycled terazzo examples by Viamaterial and
Reynchemie

Flooring in the circulation spaces

Landfill creating lanscape
(hills) in the ruingarden



Frontwood Exterior Facade Panels



Triple Glazing windows

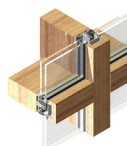


Kerto-Ripa floor elements



Timber frame walls (vertical extensions)

Beams and columns



BARK Stick curtain wall system

Every Saturday, residents of Haraldsgade can bring their excess materials, like an old wardrobe, leftover flooring from a renovation, or a broken chair, so they can be used in the workshop to create something new. This way, your old cupboard wall might become your neighbor's table, and their door could become your chair. In this way, the circulation of local materials begins.



The second half of the workshop is dedicated to ceramics. There, residents of Haraldsgade can learn sculpture and pottery, attend or arrange lessons, and, most importantly, create, produce, and build connections with one another through craft and material. This offers an opportunity to make something for their own homes and to leave a personal trace, displaying their creations on the building's facade.



The facade of the workshop facing street is made out of re-used brick, steel frames are screwed into the brick creating small shelves in between which you can put some kind of tile you make. It can represent something personal fun beautiful and let the facade be covered in traces live create, represent the community and speak through the materiality.



An experiment was conducted in which Maryna, who possesses some basic familiarity with ceramics, was tasked with creating a tile to demonstrate that the process is highly achievable.



*An example of clay tile 20x20 mm
by Maryna Paias*



*"The Beauty of Fragment" - The 1:50 model represents a
fragment of the final proposal, highlighting a patchwork of
diverse individual pieces working together*





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