on the threshold of identity

Bowling Buikslotermeerplein

Marcella Heijink | 4968735 | Heritage Transitional Identities
MSc3|4 | Lidy Meijers | Anèt Meijer | Lidwine Spoormans |
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Hoe kunnen wij het weten
Als langzaam verdringen
Niet tot onze grenzen behoort
Hoe kunnen wij het vertellen
Als de bruggen die we proberen te bouwen
Niet worden gehoord

Hoe kunnen wij het begrijpen
Als onze ogen focussen op
dat wat wij niet anders kennen
Hoe kunnen wij het zien
Als het verschil net zo zichtbaar is als twee druppels water
Dan valt er niets te ontwennen
Want wij kennen
De eensgezindheid
Van de bubbel die als een dun vlies
Niet open, vast en precies
De eensgezindheid boven alles verkiest

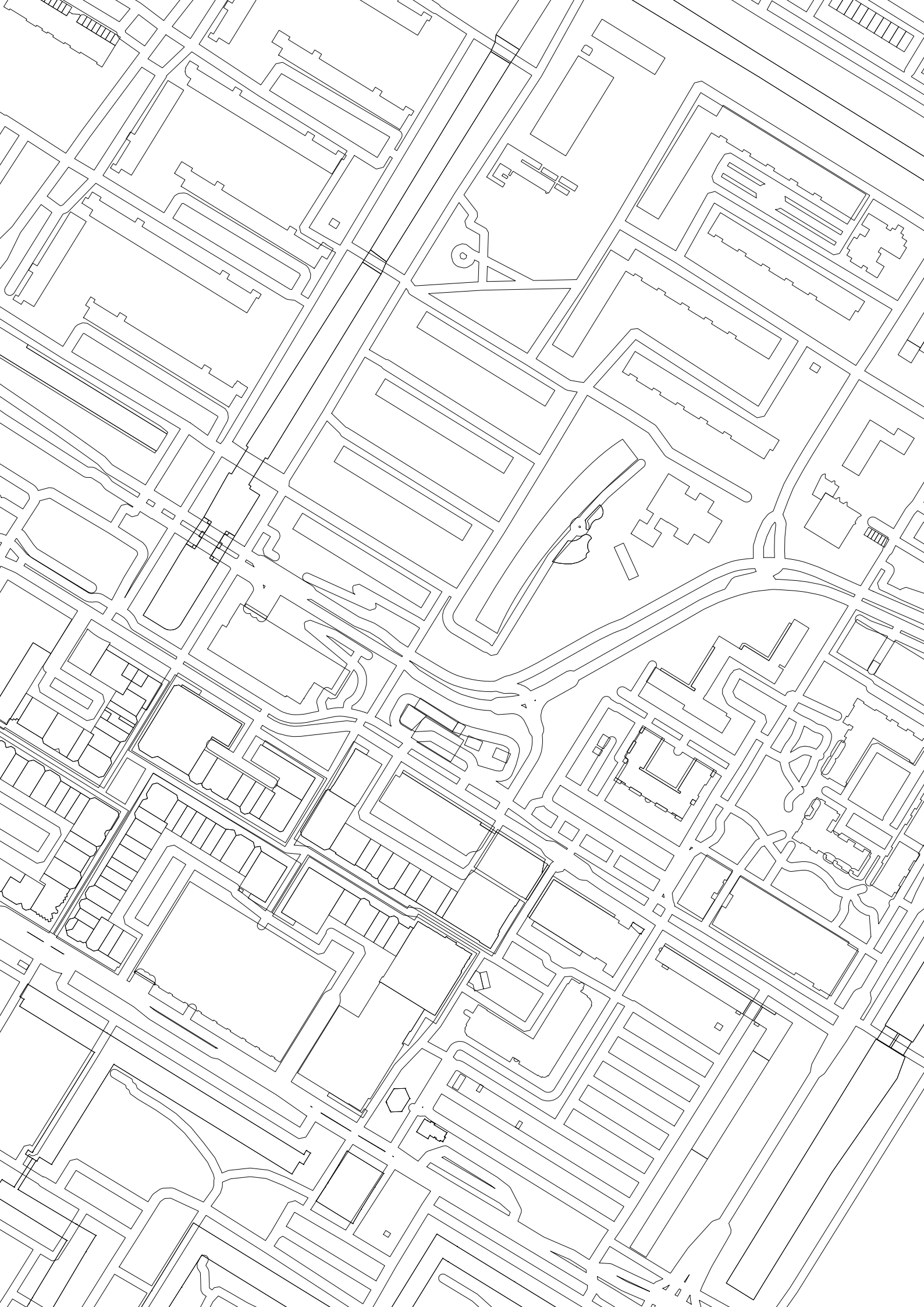
Hoe kunnen wij leren
Om ons te verhouden
de ander te onthouden
Waar de wortels lagen en die verdragen
Hoe kunnen wij omarmen
Het proces van verschuiven
‘een ongepolijst stukje Amsterdam’

Is net zo waar als dat gentrificatie
niet gebeurd
En de plekken
Van der Pek
Mosveld
Waddeweg
Noorderpark
Meeuwenlaan
Niet verder kleurt

Hoe kunnen wij zorgen
Als dat wat ons vertelt wordt
In kleine puzzelstukjes instort
Hoe kunnen wij lijmen
Om de canta en de bakfiets
Niet verder te verdrijven
En om te omschrijven
Wat soms al onomkeerbaar is
Amsterdam-noord
Wordt geen stukje erfenis

Verhoud je,
Als je massih hutak vraagt
Zou de oplossing kunnen zijn in een
woord
Maar op welke plekken verhouden
we ons
Als de straat, de pleinen en de ge-
bouwen
Onze bubbel niet verder verstoort?





“To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves, and the world...”

Marcuse, H. (1964)

Walking through Amsterdam, my home, I see a streetscape that is starting to look more and more alike. Especially in and around the center but also neighborhoods like the Jordaan and the Pijp, I see the same kind of monotonous facades popping up where the old wooden window frames are polished up with a pastel color paint, texts are depicted on the windows telling me what I can find in the space behind or who I should be. Looking around me, I also see a monotonous image of people wearing the same kind of shoes, jackets and caps. Despite the monotonous image, I hear different languages, which is what allows me to still make a distinction that people are coming from a different place. Furthermore, these people hardly make contact with each other, almost everyone walks past each other in a hurry, and there are few moments of encounter or friction. In Marcuse's words quoted earlier, I try to find adventure, transformation or the stimulation of the unknown in the streets and places around me. It seems like the rough edges of the city are becoming more and more lost. I wonder if those rough edges of the city can also serve as a catalyst for friction that creates a dialogue? And isn't dialogue what seems to be important in this increasingly polarizing society? A conversation with someone who thinks and feels differently could lead to greater understanding and coming together. But how do we still find each other when the places around us are driven from a capitalist perspective?

Perhaps the rough edges of the city are the places where genuine conversations can still take root. While architecture cannot guarantee that we approach others with openness and compassion—that responsibility ultimately lies within ourselves—it can create opportunities for dialogue. These moments of conversation, encounters,

and productive friction may unfold in the so-called thresholds, spaces that are further examined and defined in this research 2 . This exploration has inspired me to dive deeper into these thresholds, as they hold the potential to foster cross-pollination among diverse users. The upcoming project investigates how such thresholds might be designed.

Urban environments like Amsterdam Noord provide a fitting context to test, explore, describe, and better understand these thresholds. The current urban transformations in Amsterdam Noord aim to preserve its original character while simultaneously refining and perfecting the district. However, this dual approach may result in spaces that generate productive friction, while others gradually succumb to monotony. Buikslotermeerplein serves as a striking example of a district where these changes are both palpable and visible. The following section delves deeper into the plans and transformations shaping this area.

Abstract

Civic centers - thresholds - Amsterdam-north - Buikslotermeerplein - the Bowling - gentrification - neoliberalism - porosity

This report discusses the principles of threshold spaces, which could potentially lead to more porous places in the city. The developments of neoliberalism and gentrification threaten to make the city increasingly polished. The scripts that determine how spaces should be used are more strictly imposed, creating a homogeneous streetscape. This can lead to the exclusion of population groups that no longer want or can relate to this "perfect city." These developments become visible in the future plans for the Buikslotermeerplein in the North district. A situation threatens to arise in which the original residents disappear, and no connection is made with the future residents of Buikslotermeerplein. Buildings that do not fit into the "perfect" scripts, such as the Bowling on the Buikslotermeerplein, are in danger of being lost, while these buildings form the character and social anchor of the neighborhood. In order to make the Bowling future-proof for the expected changes this report searches for a new strategy for the Bowling, based on threshold spaces. Through the theoretical framework, which delves deeper into the political and social context, a theoretical foundation is formed for the remainder of the report. This framework shows that threshold spaces are important intermediate spaces in the urban and built environment. They consist of ambiguous spaces that can be both private and promote social interactions. Examples include niches, canopies, arcades, gateways and spaces at entrances. The collective memories of a place, formed by the rhythmic discontinuity, can encourage users to form new relationships, and thereby reinforcing the threshold space. Within the interior, threshold spaces translate into important pieces of furniture that promote the flexibility of the space.
Through case studies, fieldwork and interviews, threshold spaces are analyzed and how they manifest themselves in the reality of Amsterdam-North. This shows that types of thresholds, such as arcades, niches and canopies in combination with multiple zones and floor textures, promote the placement of elements and increase the adaptability of the space. Furthermore, the case studies show that programming, routing, various patterns, height differences, stages and interior elements make the space a threshold space. In doing so, they provide a more porous place within the urban fabric and at the building level. The personal experiences of the residents of Amsterdam-North support these findings, as evidenced by the interviews conducted.

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gentrification - thresholds

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Questions



Site model of buikslotermeerplein by MORE architecten. Architectenweb. (2024, December 17).

In 2012, the municipality of Amsterdam introduced the Centrum Amsterdam Noord (CAN) plan. This initiative aims to transform Buikslotermeerplein into the district's new central area. An important component of the plan is the development of Elzenhagen, an area east of Buikslotermeerplein, where 7,000 new homes are planned. The Noord-Zuid metro line will provide a direct connection to the area, with a station situated between Elzenhagen and Buikslotermeerplein. Around Buikslotermeerplein itself, an additional 3,000 new homes will be constructed, accompanied by several new functions. This will create a densely built environment featuring towers and modern developments as can be seen in the site model. Surrounding the area are historic projects such as het Plan van Gool, de Kleine Wereld, and the winkelcentrum boven 't IJ, all of which have contributed to the unique character of this part of Amsterdam-Noord. For instance, many long-term residents, often referred to as "Noordelingen" still live in 't Plan van Gool and de Kleine Wereld. The introduction of 3,000 new homes, particularly within a different price range than the existing housing, is expected to bring significant demographic and social shifts. These transformations are closely tied to the process of gentrification, a concept that will be explored in greater detail, including its various phases, in the theoretical framework. Gentrification often results in a more uniform architectural aesthetic and the loss of urban spaces that foster friction or unexpected encounters [1] . As these spaces disappear and demographic shifts reshape the area, the original character of the neighborhood risks further erosion. Not only the original character can be lost but also the urban tissue may also become less inclusive as it should be.

A few original buildings of Buikslotermeerplein will be preserved within the plan of the municipality of Amsterdam, namely the Bowling. The Bowling was designed in the 1980s and eventually positioned itself within this district as an important social point for the current residents of Buikslotermeerplein. Yet the preservation of this building is not without conflict. The municipality has considered demolishing the building several times, which has deprived the Bowling alley of its social function. Currently, the upper part of the building is being squatted, a sign of the current instability surrounding the building's use. In addition, the Bowling represents more than just a building; it is a social anchor in a rapidly changing part of the city. It is a place where the original residents once congregated, contrasting its history and function with planned new developments. Therefore, the disappearance or further decay of the Bowling would not only mean the loss of a meeting place, but also of a space that still causes friction in the city. Such places are crucial for a diverse and vibrant urban dynamic, where different social groups can meet and where the city is not just smoothed and standardized.

1.Boer, R. (2023). Smooth city: Against Urban Perfection, Towards Collective Alternatives.

Objective

This report aims to design practical solutions and designs of threshold spaces, focusing on the preservation and transformation of the Bowling at Buiksloter-meerplein. By translating the concept of threshold spaces - places that invite encounter, interaction and possibly even friction - into tangible and practical interventions, an attempt is made to ensure that the Bowling plays a lasting connecting role within Buikslotermeerplein. The research focuses on designing spaces that strengthen social cohesion in a changing urban environment. In this regard, the bowling alley forms an interesting case study because of its location on the dividing line of large social and demographic changes. This location provides an appropriate context to test how the concept of thresholds can help maintain a connective function within the neighborhood while resisting the homogenization and gentrification that often accompany urban renewal.

In addition, this research aims for a broader impact: the insights and interventions derived from this study can be applied to other community centers and places of gathering. The idea is to counterbalance the pursuit of perfection and efficiency in urban planning and architecture by consciously designing spaces that encourage diversity and interaction. In doing so, the project contributes to creating a more social, inclusive and resilient city.

From the problem statement and objective, the following main question arises:

"How can architectural threshold spaces be used to maintain the social function of the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein, while counterbalancing the possible effects of gentrification"

This main question serves as the foundation of the research, examining how thresholds can contribute to preserving the social role of the Bowling in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification and homogenization. To address this central question, it is divided into several sub-questions. The research combines both theoretical and practical approaches: the initial sub-questions establish a theoretical framework through a literature review, while the subsequent sub-questions focus on practical research conducted via fieldwork and case studies.

1. How have historical and social developments, such as the rise of community centers and the impact of neoliberalism and gentrification, influenced the meaning and role of the Bowling on the Buikslotermeerplein in Amsterdam-Noord?
This sub-question examines the history of the Bowling and how broader social and historical developments in Amsterdam-Noord, such as the rise of community centers and the impact of neoliberalism, have influenced the role and meaning of the Bowling. Gentrification plays an important role here, as it changes the demographics of the neighborhood and the accessibility of social services. This question forms the foundation for understanding the context in which the Bowling finds itself.

2. What is a threshold space, how do they contribute to social and spatial interaction within the building, and in what way do threshold spaces manifest themselves in buildings?
This sub-question further explores the concept of thresholds in an architectural context. Thresholds are understood here not only as physical objects, but also as elements that promote social and spatial interaction within buildings in the city. This theoretical framework provides insights that can be further applied to the Bowling and also be used to investigate threshold spaces in the urban tissue of Amsterdam-North.

Answering Subquestions 1 and 2 establishes a theoretical foundation that serves as a guide for the practical component of the research. These theories provide a more focused lens for identifying the characteristics of thresholds in Amsterdam-Noord. The second part of the research adopts a practical approach, where the methodology is explained in detail, outlining how Subquestions 3, 4, 5, and 6 are addressed. This includes a description of the specific methods and steps used to answer these questions.

3. At what different scales do thresholds occur, and what elements of thresholds can be found in different case studies?
This sub-question focuses on understanding thresholds at different scales - from small interventions within buildings to larger urban changes. By analyzing case studies, the different forms and functions of thresholds are explored, providing insight into how thresholds function in various building and urban contexts.

4. Which different thresholds can be found in Amsterdam-Noord, and by which elements are these thresholds characterized in the realized urban fabric?
This question looks specifically at Amsterdam-North, where different forms of thresholds may be present. The research looks at how these thresholds manifest themselves in the existing urban fabric and which architectural elements affect the experience of the city for its residents.

5. What might be a threshold for residents of Amsterdam-Noord to enter a community center?
This question explores the perception of Amsterdam-Noord residents and what barriers (physical, social, or perceptual) they encounter when entering community centers such as the Bowling. This provides insight into the practical barriers that affect the social function of community centers.

6. How can this research be translated into a design and program for the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein, applying the architectural principles of thresholds?
The final sub-question focuses on translating the findings from the research into a concrete design for the Bowling. Here it looks at how the principles of thresholds can be applied to promote interaction and how the design contributes to maintaining the Bowling's social role in the neighborhood.

Without additional adjustments that demonstrate resilience to the evolving context in the new plan, the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein may face the risk of losing its relevance. This would affect not only the physical property, but also the historical and social character that the building represents. Although Verdedig Noord has designed a new plan to preserve the Bowling [1] , it remains relevant to develop additional solutions specifically aimed at creating threshold spaces. Such spaces can encourage encounters and create friction between different groups of residents, which is crucial for social cohesion in a changing city.

The importance of open and imperfect spaces in cities is gaining increased attention. For example, the manifesto Interspheres by Studioninedots [2] advocates for the creation of more “porous places” in urban environments to foster diversity. Similarly, René Boer, in his book Smooth City, [3] highlights the negative consequences of overly homogenized cities, where differences are erased and opportunities for social interaction diminish. Both works underscore the value of spaces that encourage interaction and contrast, rather than being entirely streamlined. While these theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights, an important question remains unanswered: what do such open spaces look like in practice, and how can they be integrated effectively within existing buildings? The Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein offers an good opportunity to address this question by translating theoretical concepts into tangible architectural interventions. Beyond this specific case, the research carries broader significance. The notion of an “imperfect” city offers a framework for urban development that prioritizes inclusivity. By focusing on this case study, the project not only provides practical insights, but can be a contribution to the discourse on how cities can be designed to support diversity.

1.Baudier, E. (2024, 30 april). De Bowling – How squatting helped preserve Amsterdam Noord. Vrij Beton (Amsterdam Alternative). Geraadpleegd van [online krantnaam]

2.Architectenweb. (18 juli 2024). Studioninedots presenteert InterSphere: manifest voor de ongeprogrammeerde stad. Architectenweb

3.Boer, R. (2023). Smooth city: Against Urban Perfection, Towards Collective Alternatives.

Research
-
theoretical framework

1. Different notions on civic centers and the controllable city



The aerial view of Pueblo Bonito clearly shows the D-shaped layout and numerous kivas, typical of Chacoan architecture (Morris, 2018)

The next chapter explores the following sub-question of the research "How have historical and social developments, such as the rise of community centers and the impact of neoliberalism and gentrification, influenced the meaning and role of the Bowling on the Buikslotermeerplein in Amsterdam-North?" First, the origins of community centers will be further explained and with that linked how the bowling on the Buikslotermeerplein was able to function as a kind of community center. Then neoliberalism and gentrification will be further discussed which are important concepts to better understand the social and political context surrounding the Bowling. The conclusion of this chapter will answer the above sub-question.

Bringing together of different people within a community goes way back in time, and two thousand years ago its main purpose was to honor ancestors and gods. At Palenque, one of the most extraordinary structures from the Mayan culture that was active between the 6th and 9th centuries A.D., several objects can be seen revolving around rituals, gathering knowledge and bringing the community together for political purposes [1]. The buildings served as an ensemble where the community gathered to perform rituals. Various Maya symbols and inscriptions can be seen on the buildings that conveyed stories to future generations. Pueblo Bonito, which operated between the 9th and 12th centuries AD and is located in New Mexico, had a similar function. It is mainly known for its huge structures that are astronomically oriented. Social, ceremonial, political and trade purposes converged here. This central building ensemble was intended for the Puebloan community and acted as a collective center that brought together different communities from the southwestern Americas [2]. Rituals and stories were passed down through artifacts and artifacts, such as petroglyphs. Murals have been found in the region in which the Puebloan people shared their stories of events at Pueblo Bonito.

Although these historical examples are not directly referred to as cultural centers, the activities had a common purpose: to strengthen the community. The oldest example of a community center explicitly referred to as such is the Toynbee Hall in the United Kingdom, founded in 1884 [3]. Toynbee Hall was an initiative of wealthy townspeople who wanted to combat poverty and social inequality by offering educational and cultural activities to working-class families 4 . In the United States, the "settlement house" movement emerged around the same time, with institutions such as Hull House in Chicago (1889), led by Jane Addams. These houses provided services such as education, health care and legal advice to poor urbanites, mostly immigrants. In the Netherlands, the "verzuiling" played a major role in the rise of community centers in the early twentieth century. Neighborhood houses were often initiated from different political or religious movements. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, the government took a larger role in funding community centers, reducing the influence of political movements. The growth of community centers in this period was linked to a social and political context in which democracy and participation were central. Residents gained more control over community centers, which became an important place to be

1.Sharer, R. J., & Traxler, L. P. (2006). The Ancient Maya (6th ed.). Stanford University Press

2.Lekson, S. H. (2007). The architecture of Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. University of Utah Press

3.Addams, J. (1911). Toynbee Hall and the settlement movement. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 37(2), 1-12.



Toynbee Hall (The World Today Magazine, 1902)

heard and seen. In addition, community centers functioned as instruments of social policy. They were used to promote social cohesion in neighborhoods with mixed populations or social problems. The rise of the welfare state reinforced this role: community centers were funded by the gover

In the late 1990s, the role of community centers changed, as funding now had to come from local governments and the population itself. This led to a commercial approach to community centers, in some cases losing the social aspect. At the same time, a backlash arose in the political arena, calling for more market-oriented solutions to bring people together. Because of these shifts in funding and policy, many community centers fell into disrepair 4 . Currently, Dutch community centers primarily serve vulnerable groups in society, providing support with administrative tasks and education.

The development of community centers reflects the shift from collective goals to an increasingly individualistic society, influenced by the neoliberal system. Whereas historical and international examples focused on bringing communities together around shared values such as knowledge, religion, politics and economics, we see modern urban areas increasingly dominated by economic efficiency and market thinking. These dynamics can also be seen in Buikslotermeerplein and the Bowling, where changes in use and function reflect broader societal transitions. The next chapter delves deeper into how this location has evolved, from a beloved place to live and meet to an area struggling with social and spatial challenges. In doing so, it examines how neoliberal trends and urban restructuring play a role in the current position of Buikslotermeerplein and how this affects the future of community spaces such as the Bowling.

4.Nussbaum, M., & Sen, A. (Eds.). (1993). The quality of life. Oxford University Press

Originally designed as a bowling center, the Bowling was built in 1981 by Jan Brouwer Architects, who were also responsible for the construction of ‘t Wardeschip, the residential building adjacent to the Bowling. The Bowling is located on the Buikslotermeerplein and is part of the ensemble of the shopping center Boven ‘t Y, the residential building ‘t Wardeschip, the square itself and the parking deck. Between 2006 and 2015, André managed the bowling center and organized bowling nights for the elderly and disabled in the neighborhood. As a result, the bowling center quickly develops into a community center rather than a commercial sports facility. It becomes a popular place in the neighborhood, which consists of the Plan van Gool and de Kleine Wereld. Thanks to the initiatives of André and local residents, it becomes a place where residents can meet again. In 2011, the municipality of Amsterdam makes an attempt to demolish the Bowling due to new plans for the Buikslotermeerplein. Only in 2015 does the municipality succeed in taking André’s ownership. At that time, André had just taken out a 160,000 euro loan to refurbish the Bowling himself in order to preserve the building’s social character. The Bowling’s demolition eventually failed, after which the building was squatted. The plinth now houses a second-hand store de Lokatie, and the kiosk houses an information point and exhibition run by Verdedig Noord. The City of Amsterdam decides to keep the building anyway and gives Coöperatie 5711 the space for a new design. This attempts to better connect Buikslotermeerplein to future plans.

To understand these developments, it is important to highlight the history of Buikslotermeerplein and the Bowling. The area around Buikslotermeerplein dates back to 1629, when the first reclamation of Buikslotermeer took place. Because of its location on ‘t IJ, Buikslotermeer consisted mainly of farmland with some homes, mostly farmers. Due to the industrial revolution and its favorable location , more and more companies and factories settled in Amsterdam-Noord from the late 19th century. Around the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, Amsterdam became full and the city had to look beyond the area under ‘t IJ. Thus new neighborhoods such as the Volewijck and the Van der Pekbuurt were created, where mainly former “Jordanezen” went to live due to lack of space in the Jordaan. Later, Tuindorp Oostzaan and Tuindorp Buiksloterham were added, mainly working-class neighborhoods close to the factories [1].

Yet Amsterdam-Noord was often not recognized by the rest of the city. In 1935, the Algemeen Dagblad reported that the expansion plan for Amsterdam-Noord was an urban planning mistake. Geert Mak in his book De kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam 1 describes that mainly the “scum” of Amsterdam were sent to the north side of the IJ to work and live there. Only in the 1960s and 1970s did new development take place, with neighborhoods such as the Molenwijk, het Plan van Gool and De Kleine Wereld. It was remarkable that the atmosphere around these new developments changed: people became enthusiastic and wanted to live there. Different social classes settled in Amsterdam-Noord, from the lower to the higher educated. Marianne van der Veen, a resident of het Plan van Gool since 1975, says in the documentary Heerlijk Anoniem: “It was advertising people,

1.Mak, G. (2012). Een kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam (36th ed.). Olympus.



A view at de Bowling from the marketsquare in 2008 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 2008).

education people, theater people, all kinds of things. Higher educated people in any case. A lot of things were done together." [2] The shopping center Boven 't Y was a modern building at the time, with innovations such as an escalator - something many residents had never seen before. The center was built according to a modernist perspective with an American model, focusing on the car and accessibility. This is visible in the many parking facilities around the mall.

The Algemeen Handelsblad wrote on September 18, 1970:
"Shopping center-North is most beautiful in the Netherlands. The center has a good shape; all the chain stores are represented, as well as many medium-sized businesses. The 'landscaping' is unique in the Netherlands and contrasts sharply with the many unimaginative shopping centers. Public transportation is well arranged and there is an excellent parking situation [3] *.*

During the 1970s and 1980s, Buikslotermeerplein was a popular residential area. By the 1990s, however, the neighborhood experienced significant decline, marked by issues such as loitering youths, vacant properties, attempted burglaries, and shootings in the square. The municipality of Amsterdam made attempts to improve the situation, but failed to make the square safer. Interviews with community centers indicate that the square still has a high crime rate. An organizer of community center 't Bol says: "My children are not allowed to play on the square, and certainly not alone on the street there. Every week there is a robbery or a shooting, and I think a lot of drug dealing." Nevertheless, a strong social structure remains, says journalist Mark van Wonderen, who analyzes Buikslotermeerplein and the Bowling in his column Spuugmooi [4] . Marianne van der Veen would like to see improvements: *"But this has been going on for a long time, and they have tried so terribly much. I believe this is the sixth plan or so."*

Despite its social structure and residents' initiatives, Buikslotermeerplein remains a place where challenges such as crime and vacancy are visible. The history of the area shows how changing socioeconomic conditions can affect the physical and social layout of a neighborhood. While the municipality continues to develop plans to revitalize the square, the effects of these interventions are often ambiguous. On the one hand, they provide opportunities for renewal and improved amenities, but on the other, they put pressure on existing communities through rising rents and the arrival of higher-income groups. These dynamics are consistent with broader social processes such as gentrification, in which both social and spatial restructuring play a role. This phenomenon is strongly intertwined with neoliberal policy developments, in which market forces and economic growth often lead the way [5] . The next chapter examines how neoliberalism influences this urban transformation and how this is related to the changes in Amsterdam-Noord, including Buikslotermeerplein.

2.Hanselaar, C. (2019). Heerlijk anoniem: Wonen in Het Plan van Gool [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=<videolink>

3.Algemeen Handelsblad. (1970, 18 september). "Shopping center North is most beautiful in the Netherlands. The center has a good shape; all the chain stores are represented, as well as many medium sized businesses. The 'landscaping' is unique in the Netherlands and contrasts sharply with the many unimaginative shopping centers. Public transportation is well arranged and there is an excellent parking situation."

4.Wonderen van, M. (2018, maart 29). En de 'spuugmooiste' plek van Noord Holland is? Het Buikslotermeerplein! NH Nieuws. Geraadpleegd van NH Nieuws website

5.Metal, S. (2007). Gentrification, an overview. Gentrification. Flows and counterflows, OASE, (73), 7-28. Retrieved from https://www.oasejournal.nl/nl/Issues/73/GentrificationAnOverview



Buikslotermeerplein near number 5, showing crowd and bicycle registration at Pool tot Pool. Busselman, F. (1984, November 9).



the local market on the square (Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening, 1981)

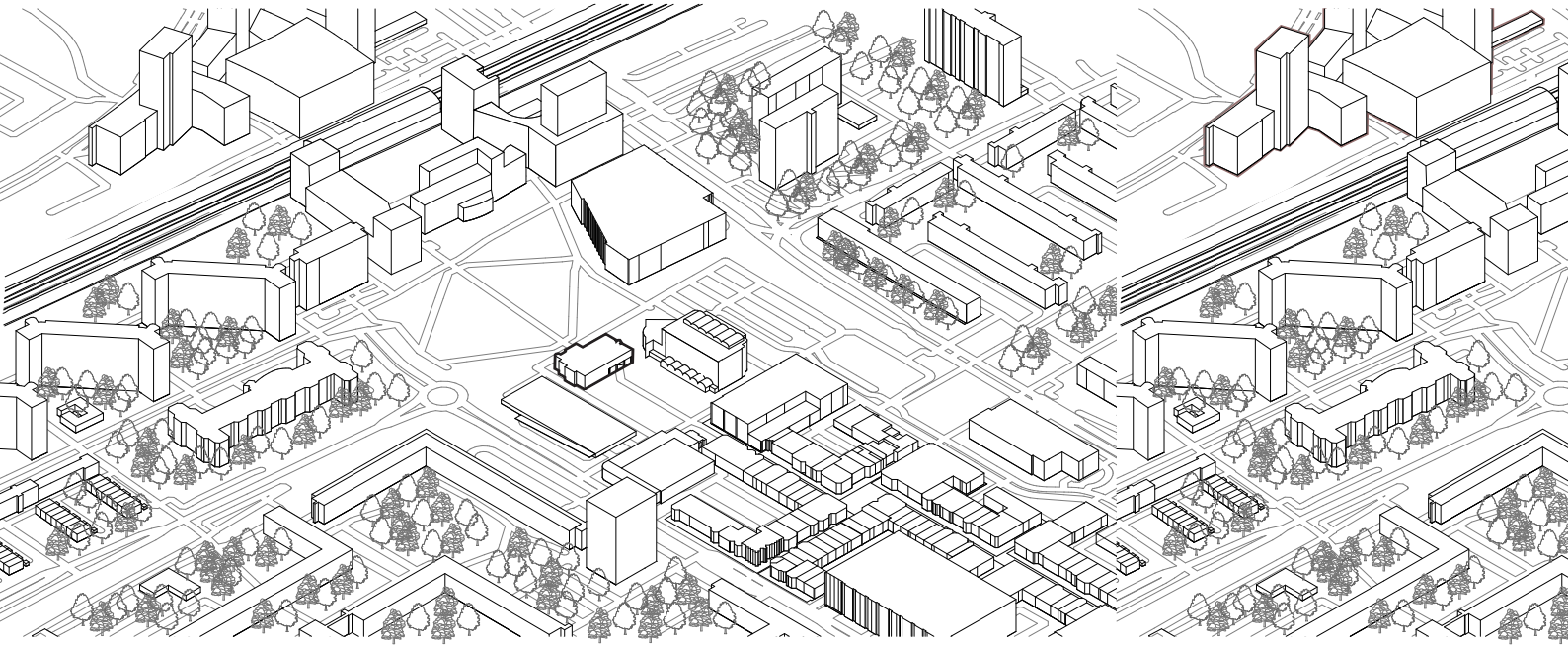


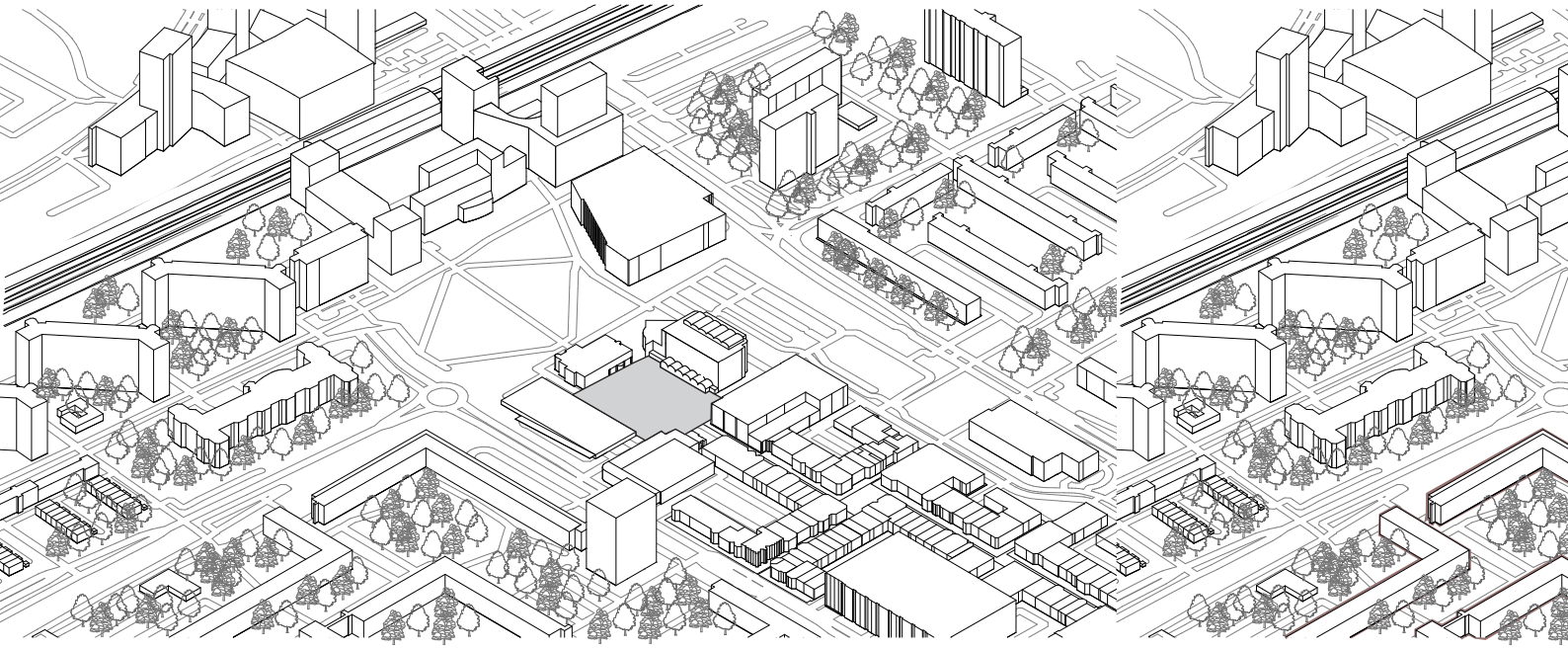
Het Breed under construction, and Buikslotermeerplein, Dienst der Publieke Werken, Afdeling Stadsontwikkeling. (1967, September).

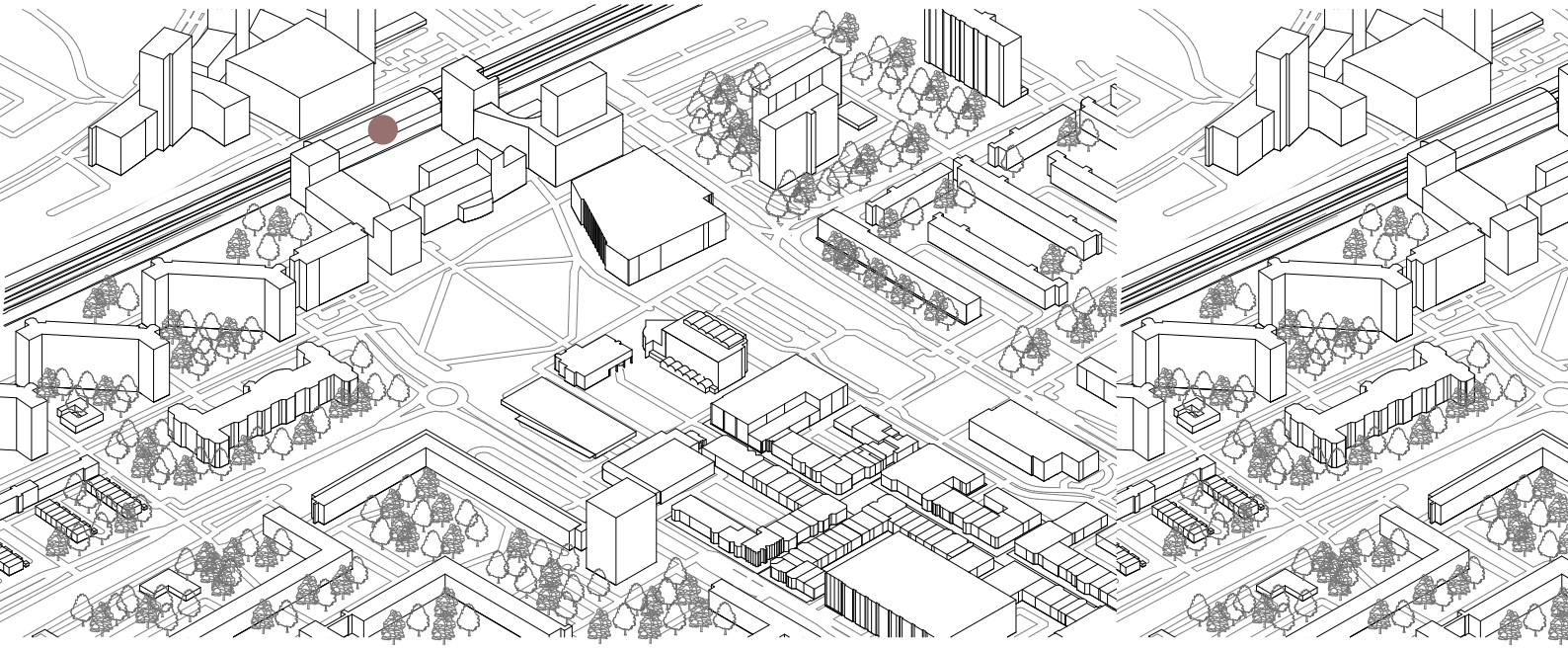
“Winkelcentrum-Noord is mooiste van Nederland, Het centrum heeft een goede vorm; Alle grootwinkelbedrijven zijn er vertegenwoordigd alsmede vele middenstandsbedrijven; De ‘landscaping’ is uniek in Nederland en steekt erg af bij de vele fantasieloze winkelcentra; Het openbaar vervoer is goed geregeld en er is een uitstekende parkeersituatie [3] *.”*

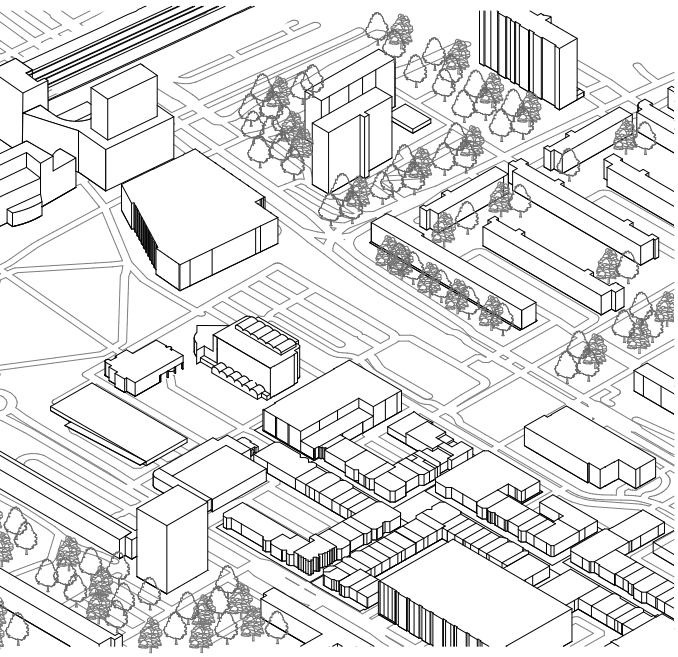


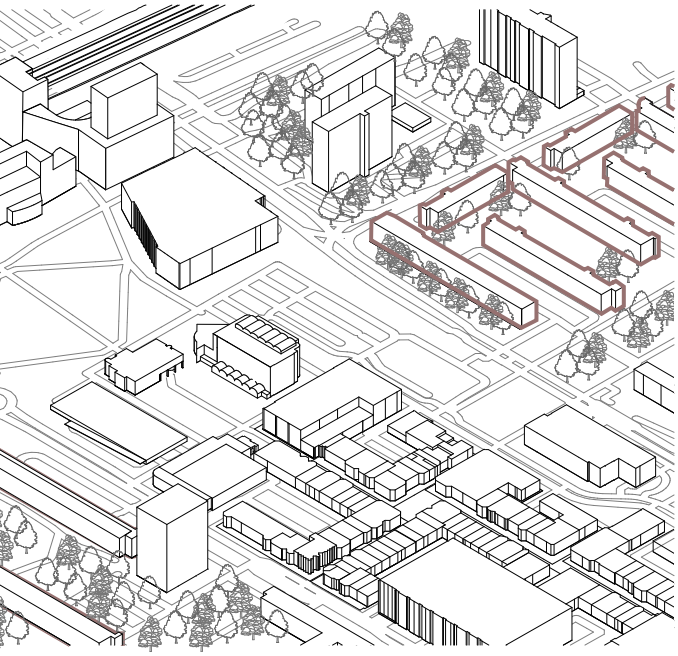
Buikslotermeerplein (Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening, 1981)

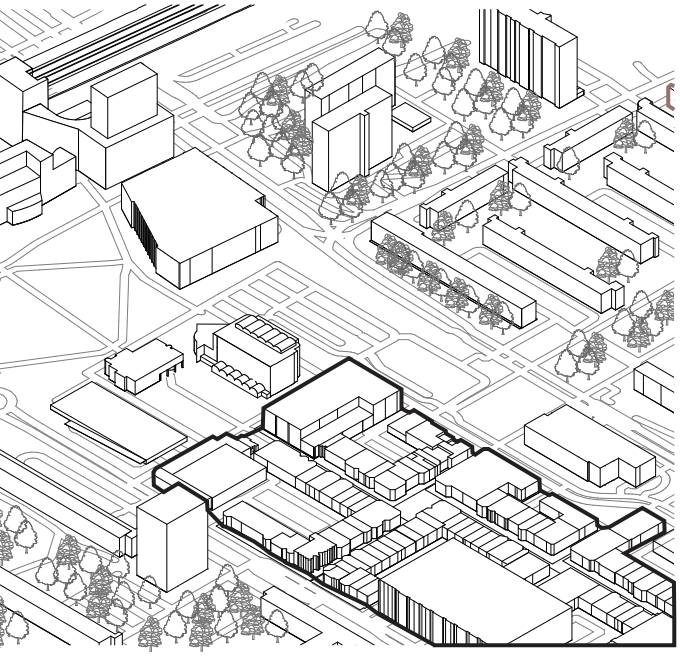














Nuova Pianta di Roma. Nolli, G. B., & Piranesi, G. B. (1748).

The desire to make cities more controllable and ever-improving goes further back in time than one might expect. During the early days of the Roman Empire, for example, Emperor Caesar Augustus was already, as he claimed, transforming the city of Rome from a city of brick to a city of marble and prestige [1]. Although this claim has been debunked by some researchers, it can be seen as a possible first indication of the emergence of a highly controllable city. By replacing bricks with marble, a material that is difficult to modify or daub, Augustus deprived the inhabitants of Rome of the ability to influence their own built environment.

Another, more recent example of large-scale urban renewal is the 1853 Haussmannization plan. The slogan of this plan, conceived by Georges-Eugène Haussmann, was aérer, unifier, et embellir - ventilate, simplify and embellish [2]. The plan involved opening up Paris with wide, airy boulevards laid straight through the medieval urban fabric. This approach aimed to combat epidemics such as plague and cholera, which were common at the time, by better ventilating the city. An additional agenda, however, was to increase control over the city's inhabitants. The wide streets made it more difficult to erect barricades during protests, while the army could move through the city more quickly and efficiently. The new layout of Paris made the city more attractive to large department stores and fashion houses, and more space was created for the middle class. In a short time, Paris changed from a city of tight-knit, diverse neighborhoods to one that revolved around functionality, consumption and the rise of the middle class. By cleaning up the city and increasing the benefits to the bourgeoisie, the first phenomena of capitalism emerged [3]. Capitalism is a system in which production and distribution are largely controlled by private ownership, with profit as the primary goal. This gave citizens the freedom to decide what happened to their property, rather than having the government decide it [4]. The capitalism Herbert Spencer refers to is often considered the second phase of capitalism, also called ultraliberalism [5]. Whereas the first phase aimed at gaining freedom and emancipation, the second phase led to a paradoxical effect. Friedrich Pollock argued in 1933 that capitalism would not end, but its liberal phase would pass. Companies began to focus on knowledge and science to improve products and gain prestige. These large investments had to be recouped through product sales, which led to control and prediction of consumer behavior. Pollock warned that consumers would eventually perish from the exploitation of the industrial revolution [6].

At the beginning of the 20th century, Walter Lippmann and John Dewey introduced the third stage of capitalism: neoliberalism [7] [8]. This system gave the state more control with the idea of creating equality of opportunity, but was often done in an authoritarian manner [9]. Michel Foucault foresaw in 1970 that neoliberalism would make citizens compete with each other, resulting in control through competition [10]. Globalization, which increased greatly in the 1980s [11], reinforced this system. Technological innovations, such as cheaper airfare and improved means of communication, connected local economies, forming a global neoliberal economy in which international competition became the norm. Neoliberal globalization leads to the fragmentation of the urban fabric through the prioritization of mass

1.Suetonius. (2009). The lives of the Caesars: The deified Augustus (J. C. Rolfe, Trans.). Loeb Classical Library. Harvard University Press. (Original work published c. 121 A.D.)

2.Moncan, P. (2009). Le Paris d'Haussmann. Les éditions du Mécène.

3.Spencer, H. (1884). The man versus the state. London: Williams and Norgate

4.Smith, A. (1776). The wealth of nations. W. Strahan and T. Cadell.

5.Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2013). The new way of the world: On neoliberal society. Verso Books.

6.Pollock, F. (1933). "Bemerkungen zur Weltwirtschaftskrise." Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung, 2, 321–354

7.Dewey, J. (2013). The Political Writings. Hackett Publishing Company.

8.Lippmann, W. (2005). The Good Society. Transaction Publishers.

consumption, as it began in mild form with the Haussmannization plan. More and more space is taken up, and governments prioritize big business and fashion houses. The neoliberal agenda causes parks to be leased for commercial purposes and public spaces to be sold to large investors for large-scale developments [11].

This leads to places in the city that are seemingly vacant or not intensively used being viewed as economic products that can be monetized. The built environment is given a price tag and subordinated to the neoliberal agenda of various governments. The neoliberal agenda not only brings changes in the use of urban space, but also creates segregation in neighborhoods where capitalist structures must be made room. Moreover, it deregulates the housing market. More and more housing is becoming privately owned by wealthy investors, who invest money in real estate through their companies. This creates a shift in the housing market. Where real estate used to be managed by the state or housing associations, it is shifting to private ownership. This causes a rise in housing prices in affected neighborhoods, as investors want to make a profit on their real estate properties. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult for lower-income people to buy a home [12]. This development, in which lower income groups are pushed out to other parts of the city as prices in their original neighborhoods become too high, while these neighborhoods are occupied by higher income groups, is called gentrification. This is discussed further in the next chapter [13].

It is important to recognize that global neoliberalism creates not only an economic system, but also a social system in which people are transformed into calculating citizens, as Erik Swyngedouw argues [14]. This is reinforced in part by digitalization, with individuals increasingly living their lives through a laptop or smartphone. As explained earlier in this chapter, it is essential for companies to gain as much knowledge about consumers as possible to increase their profits. In the 21st century, this is done through digitalization, with individuals sharing more and more personal information. This leads to people being consciously and sometimes unconsciously influenced in their behavior. Digitalization has further intensified the globalization of economies and social structures, and in some places we see a standardization of cultures emerging [9]. With the growing role of social media, also known as the "making of consent," this standardization of cultures is further reinforced. Social platforms enable large corporations, big tech firms and governments to collect more and more data and information, leading to an even greater degree of control over consumers. Byung-Chul Han argues that this makes individuals so transparent that their behavior becomes increasingly predictable [15]. This results in further stimulation of global neoliberalism and, as mentioned earlier, further fragmentation of the urban fabric.

Capitalism is closely related to the deregulation of society and the associated forms of social control. By understanding the origins of neoliberalism and how it has resulted in a digitized world, it becomes clearer where the fragmentation of city districts and social communities comes from. The focus on economic efficiency and competition has led to an urban fabric in which social connections are

9.Stiegler, B. (2019). The Age of Disruption: Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism. Polity Press.

10.Foucault, M. (2004). Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France (1978-1979). Seuil/Gallimard.

11.Purcell, M. (2008) Recapturing Democracy. Neoliberalization and the struggle for Alternative Urban Futures. New York: Routledge 2008

12.Boer, R. (2023). Smooth city: Against Urban Perfection, Towards Collective Alternatives.

13.Hochstenbach, C. (2021). Gentrification in the Netherlands: A qualitative study on gentrification processes in Amsterdam and beyond. Urban Studies.

14.Swyngedouw, E. (2007) 'The post-political city. 'In Urban politics now: re-imagining democracy in the neoliberal city, edited by bavo, 58-77. Rotterdam NAi Publishers, 2007

15.Byung-Chul, H. (2018). Saving beauty. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018 [originally published in 2015, translated by Michael Hamburger].

often undermined. In this context, it is essential to examine the phenomenon of gentrification more closely. Gentrification is a process in which existing communities and social structures are affected by economic and spatial changes, often in favor of higher-income groups. It is closely linked to neoliberal urban strategies, which restructure public spaces, housing and communities in line with market-driven goals. The next chapter takes a closer look at how gentrification manifests itself, what impact it has on urban communities and how it plays a key role in the process of urban transformation and social fragmentation.



Pissarro's depiction of Boulevard Montmartre captures the spatial scale and urban transformation of Haussmann's Paris (Pissarro, 1897).

In the 1960s, the phenomenon we now call gentrification began in cities such as New York and London. Before then, the middle class moved out of the city to live cleaner and more spacious lives in the suburbs. However, globalization and neoliberalism, as explained in the previous chapter, made it increasingly attractive to return to the city in the twentieth century. Old neighborhoods, large warehouses or local convenience stores were renovated by investors who saw opportunities to invest their money in this type of real estate. As a result, housing prices rose in those neighborhoods, making it increasingly difficult for some original residents to stay or buy a new home in the same neighborhood. This process, in which a lower income class is displaced by a higher income class, is called gentrification. The term is derived from the shift from landed gentry to urban gentry [1]. To better understand gentrification and its process, social researchers try to differentiate it into three distinct phases [2]. This study briefly describes these three phases to better understand the different manifestations of gentrification in the urban fabric.

The first phase is called the artistic phase. This phase is characterized by urban areas in a neglected state, often with a lot of vacancy. This provides opportunities for pioneers, mainly alternative youth and artists, to find housing at relatively low cost. These are often individuals who want to set themselves apart from the status quo 2 . The new residents refurbish neglected spaces, adding value to the neighborhood. At this stage, the new residents usually act modestly compared to the original residents. Not only alternative individuals, but also students, young graduates and often the first immigrants move into these neighborhoods. From the artistic phase, the second phase, the mixed phase, develops. In this phase, not only the pioneers, but also the middle class become interested in the neighborhood. As a result, more neglected buildings and public spaces are renovated and sold. It becomes more attractive for investors to invest in similar parts of the city. The arrival of new residents also stimulates the establishment of restaurants, cafes and more expensive stores in the neighborhood 2 . However, rising prices make it difficult for the original residents to remain in the neighborhood. Some speculators actively try to empty properties by bullying away sitting residents so that the properties can be sold for a large profit [3]. The final phase, often the most visible form of gentrification, is the upscale phase. In this phase, a new group of residents moves into the neighborhood: Young Urban Professionals, also known as yuppies [4]. These highly educated newcomers place less value on the character of the neighborhood and the original residents, and are primarily interested in the new developments and the appearance of the neighborhood. Housing prices continue to rise, causing even alternative and creative initiatives to disappear from the neighborhood. The new residents demand highly cultural amenities, upscale restaurants and exclusive stores [5].

1.Glass, R. (1964) 'Aspects of Change', in: Centre for Urban Studies (ed.), London. Aspects of Change, London 1964, p. xiii-xvi.

2.Gale, D.E. (1980) 'Neighborhood resettlement. Washington D.C.', in: S.B. Laska & D. Spain, Back to the City. Issues in Neighborhood Renovations, Elmford 1980, pp. 95-115.

3.Smith, A. (1776). The wealth of nations. W. Strahan and T. Cadell.

4.Gottlieb, D. (2020). Yuppies: Young urban professionals and the making of postindustrial New York (Doctoral dissertation, Princeton University). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University

5.Metal, S. (2007). Gentrification, an overview. Gentrification. Flows and counterflows, OASE, (73), 7-28. Retrieved from https://www.oasejournal.nl/nl/Issues/73/GentrificationAnOverview



The historical and contemporary photographs of Reestraat 5 illustrate heritage restoration by Stadsherstel (Stadsherstel Amsterdam, n.d.).



Shithouse to Penthouse Ramsay, M. (2017, July 17).

The different stages show that gentrification is a process with varying lead times and manifestations. Not every urban district goes through the entire process. Gentrification is often more visible in countries such as the United States and England, where in the 1950s and 1960s many city dwellers moved to suburbs, such as the so-called garden cities[6]. As a result, abandoned city neighborhoods fell further into disrepair. In European cities, the middle class was retained to a greater extent, partly due to projects such as the Haussmannization plan mentioned earlier[7]. As a result, gentrification in Europe is less visible, although globalization and digitalization are also making their impact here. More and more companies in sectors such as media, art, culture and knowledge are establishing themselves in the city. This attracts new residents, who are often part of the final phase of gentrification, the upscale phase[8].

Gentrification occurs not only because of vacancy or decay in a neighborhood, but also because of the presence of job opportunities and cultural amenities that make the neighborhood attractive. This process is closely linked to neoliberalism and globalization. Social scientists such as Jacobs, Lynch, Sennett, Raban and Lofland have done much to reassess the value of the city and its social dynamics[5]. Yet gentrification is feared by many because of the homogenization of the streetscape. Terms such as Disneyfication describe this as a fake, safe, controllable and politically correct context created by the loss of authenticity[9]. This trend, driven by the neoliberal agenda, can lead to superficiality and a loss of creativity in the streetscape. Certain groups, such as the LGBTQIA+ community, young urbanites, low-income and less educated, find little connection in the increasingly homogenous streetscape argues René Boer in his book Smooth City[9]. This process can lead to further social exclusion.

6.Lees, L., Slater, T., & Wyly, E. (2007). Gentrification. Routledge.

7.Jordan, D. P. (1995). Transforming Paris: The life and labors of Baron Haussmann. University of Chicago Press.

8.Florida, R. (2002). The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life. Basic Books

9.Boer, R. (2023). Smooth city: Against Urban Perfection, Towards Collective Alternatives.

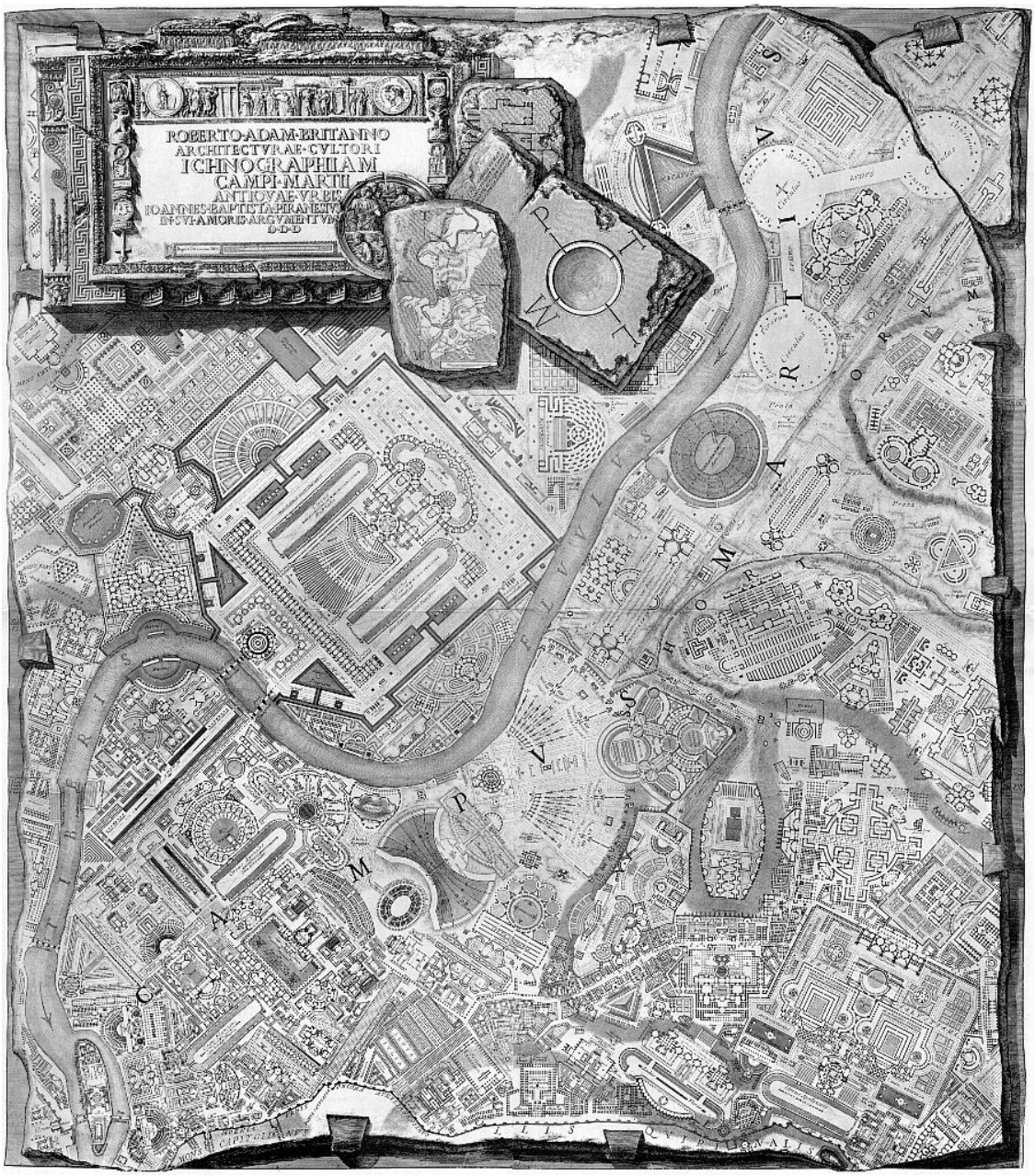
The introduction to this chapter posed the sub-question: 'How have historical and social developments, such as the rise of community centers and the impact of neoliberalism and gentrification, influenced the significance and role of the Bowling on the Buikslotermeerplein in Amsterdam-North?'. The previous information shows that social and urban transformations can significantly impact historic buildings such as the Bowling, which are increasingly under pressure from gentrification and neoliberalism. The Bowling reflects the broader changes that community centers and community venues have undergone in recent decades. Starting in the 1960s in the Netherlands, community centers were given an inclusive function, focused on social cohesion and participation, supported by government subsidies. However, the shift to market-based financing in the 1990s led to the decline of many community centers, while neoliberalism and gentrification contributed to an individualistic urban development. This broader framework also affects Buikslotermeer Square and the Bowling, where social functions are under pressure from economic priorities. The Bowling, built in 1981 as a commercial sports facility, transformed into a social anchor in the neighborhood thanks to local initiatives. However, the Bowling's history also shows the tensions between social and economic goals. Attempts by the City of Amsterdam to demolish the building for redevelopment show how market-driven ideas have put pressure on the Bowling.

The next chapter explores the concept of threshold spaces as a possible solution to preserving open and social places like the Bowling. These threshold spaces, according to Laurence Kimmel [1] and Stravos Stravides [2] , would lead to more porosity in the urban fabric and resist a capitalist environment. By getting a better look at the elements and construction of these spaces, a possible design can be developed for the Bowling.

1.Kimmel, L. (2021). Architecture of threshold spaces: A critique of the ideologies of hyperconnectivity and segregation in the socio-political context. Routledge.

2.Stavrides, S. (2010). Towards the City of Thresholds. Trento: Professional Dreamers. https://www.professionaldreamers.net

2. About thresholds



Campo Marzio. Piranesi, G. B. (1762).

“Essentially it is the struggle between architecture and the city, between the demand for order and the will to formlessness, that assumes epic tone in Piranesi’s Campo Marzio [5].”

The following chapter explores the following sub-question of the research "What is understood by thresholds in an architectural context, how do they contribute to social and spatial interaction within the city, and in what ways do thresholds manifest themselves in the urban fabric?" First, the definition of thresholds will be described with some historical examples in which thresholds are cited and linked to an architectural context. Next, more information will be given on what elements thresholds consist of and with what parameters a thresholds could be designed. The conclusion section will answer the above sub-question.

"Threshold is the intertwining of public space and semi-private interior. A focus on the concept of Threshold requires us to embrace the complexity of spatial aspects of life in their spatialized social context. This is beyond the physical characteristics of architecture" [1] .

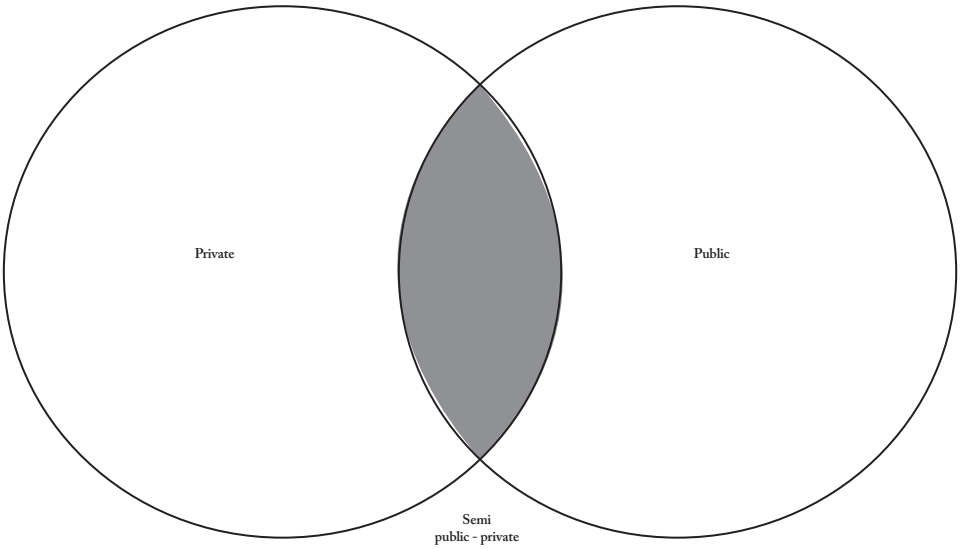
So a thresholds space is about a space adjacent to a public space and semi private space. Public are all spaces that are freely accessible without a ticket, meaning anyone, regardless of their situation, can use this space. It always remains open and accessible to everyone. Semi-private refers to spaces with functions controlled by an individual or organization, where access is limited. For example, a store that closes in the evening or a museum with areas restricted after ticket validation [1] . A thresholds space is a space in which anyone can wander freely without imposing what one should do in that space. There is also room for more private behavior for the individual in the thresholds space. Thereby, public and private spheres are part of a continuum and cannot be seen as completely separate social and physical spaces [1] . Thus, the thresholds space is a space that goes from public to semi public and then to semi private spaces. These spaces can be covered or open spaces. The degree of openness and density varies. What is important is that the spaces are fluid and can transform with the surrounding spaces that contain a more defining function. Instead of the visitor having to make a binary choice such as either be on the street and walk or buy something in a store, the thresholds spaces offer a more complex experience. "Changes in spatial configurations and the unfolding of the visual field open the perceptual process to changes in duration and give the experience a sense of 'becoming" [2] . Threshold spaces give everyone an equal opportunity to use and experience space in their own way. As a result, they can promote a sense of freedom and equality, contributing to a more open and democratic way of living together.

A historical example of how a socio-political context for a democratic society is used in public space is the Athenian Agora. The ensemble of buildings consisted of spaces intended for political, social or religious purposes. The Agora was meeting place for society and it was an important part of the ideas around civilization and the ideas around polis (the public) [1] . The spaces provided the opportunity to philosophize and debate with acquaintances or strangers. These manifestations of agora can also be seen in other historical examples previously named in the first chapter such as pueblo bonito or Palanque [3] . The image about the Agora shows that there are several unnamed and indeterminate spaces between

1.Kimmel, L. (2021). Architecture of threshold spaces: A critique of the ideologies of hyperconnectivity and segregation in the socio-political context. Routledge.

2.Deleuze, G. (1983). Cinema 1: The movement-image (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1983)

3.Ching, F. D. K. (2014). Architecture: Form, space, and order (3e ed.). Wiley.



the buildings. These spaces can also be traced back to a more recent example in history such as the squares and palaces in Florence in Renaissance times. A good overview of this can also be seen in the maps of Giambattista Noli [4]. who drew a map of the city of Rome in the 18th century. Instead of the traditional way of representing spatial context on a map, Giambattista depicted it by distinguishing between private and public. All spaces that are public (polis) are represented in white colored spaces and the more private spaces black. Piranesi through his etchings called the Campo Marzio criticized these spaces between the more private and public buildings by using a curious composition [5].

"Essentially it is the struggle between architecture and the city, between the demand for order and the will to formlessness, that assumes epic tone in Piranesi's Campo Marzio."

Walter Benjamin and Alsja Lacis described the thresholds spaces in more architectural elements they observed by looking closely at the city of Naples in southern Italy in 1924. The courtyards, the covered arcades, the basements, the open spaces, the windows and gates, the balconies are the characteristics of the city, all elements that hold the connective and momentary" [6]. In their essay, they try to make it clear that these architectural elements are a stage in public spaces to make the individual more visible. Benjamin and Lacis considered these spaces as mini theaters in which visitors are given the opportunity to collide with other individuals. "The series of threshold spaces of Naples as small theaters of social life affects the crowd, an effect we define as political" [6]. As an example the trend in Parisian theaters where it is both a public building but the balconies were placed as mini private interiors allowing the visitor to enjoy both the social gathering and individually the play. Another clear example Walter Benjamin cites

4.Nolli, G. B. (1748). La nuova topografia di Roma cominciata l'anno MDCCXLVIII [Kaart]. Geraadpleegd op 18th november 2024, van https://nolli.uoregon.edu/

5.Piranesi, G. B. (1762). Il Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma [Etching]. In Il Campo Marzio (Vol. 10). Rome: G. B. Piranesi. Geraadpleegd18th november 2024, van Harvard Art Museums collectie

6.Benjamin, W and Lacis, A (1978) "Naples," Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken, 1978), 166-167

are the Arcades in Paris seen in the image... “the Parisian arcades are archetypes of threshold spaces where multiple layers of meaning and interaction overlap. They remain a rich field for analyzing the interplay of architecture, culture, and the changing rhythms of urban life.” [7]

Thresholds spaces have been a topic of discussion for a long time and have been analyzed by different researchers in various urban tissues. Somewhat more recently in time, Lynch in his book “A theory of good city form” also described five aspects for associated with thresholds spaces [8] . The five aspects that are important according to Lynch are appropriation, disposition, use and action, presence and modification. Disposition could manifest itself in a space by opening up a certain rhythm in the space by deposition of form. Appropriation of a place could be by allowing the user to make the place their own. This aspect is related to modification which could be reflected in a place that the space is adaptable and can move with the user’s wishes. These two aspects could create a stronger representation for the community using the building or space. Use and action is related to there being something to do in the space. For example, benches or an elevation could encourage the user to be invited to sit [9] . Or another important element in a threshold space might be a fire pit that encourages conflict between communities [10] . These forms of spatial control have strong psychological values, including satisfaction and pride, people can perform “the right to be,” their absence can contribute to anxiety” [11] . Another important aspect for thresholds spaces are the framed views that invite a prospect or refuge which stimulates the user to take action [12] . In doing so, these frames can give us an idea of what happens further up the building in a more public context but the frames that focus on the interior give us an idea of what happens in the building on a more private level. These frames can come in the form of doors and windows but also by creating vistas into spaces.

At the programming level, it is important that the threshold space is always linked to a public space [1] . The public function gives the visitor a reason to enter the building. In doing so, the threshold space is linked to a more private atmosphere. The intermediate space is both public but will also contain an element more suited to private spheres. Think of niches, benches, welcome desk or a canopy. Thereby, the threshold space and the adjacent space work as a synergy with each other. Adjacent spaces extend the buildings [13] . Take, for example, a front yard at a public building. The building provides a reason why visitors want to go to that place, and the front yard provides social interactions so that perhaps even more visitors want to go to the building. This creates a flow. In doing so, it is important to continue to see the threshold space in differences scales. For example, there are intermediate spaces in a more urban context such as a plaza opens up several buildings. At the building level, in-between spaces are often located between the entrance and the adjacent road. At the interior level, these could be the spaces between different rooms 1 . To successfully design a threshold space, Laurence Kimmel describes a few aspects that are important in the design process. Namely, it is important to understand the socio-political context of the place to under-

7.Benjamin, W. (1999). The Arcades Project (H. Eiland & K. McLaughlin, Trans.). Harvard University Press. (Oorspr. werk gepubliceerd 1927–1940).

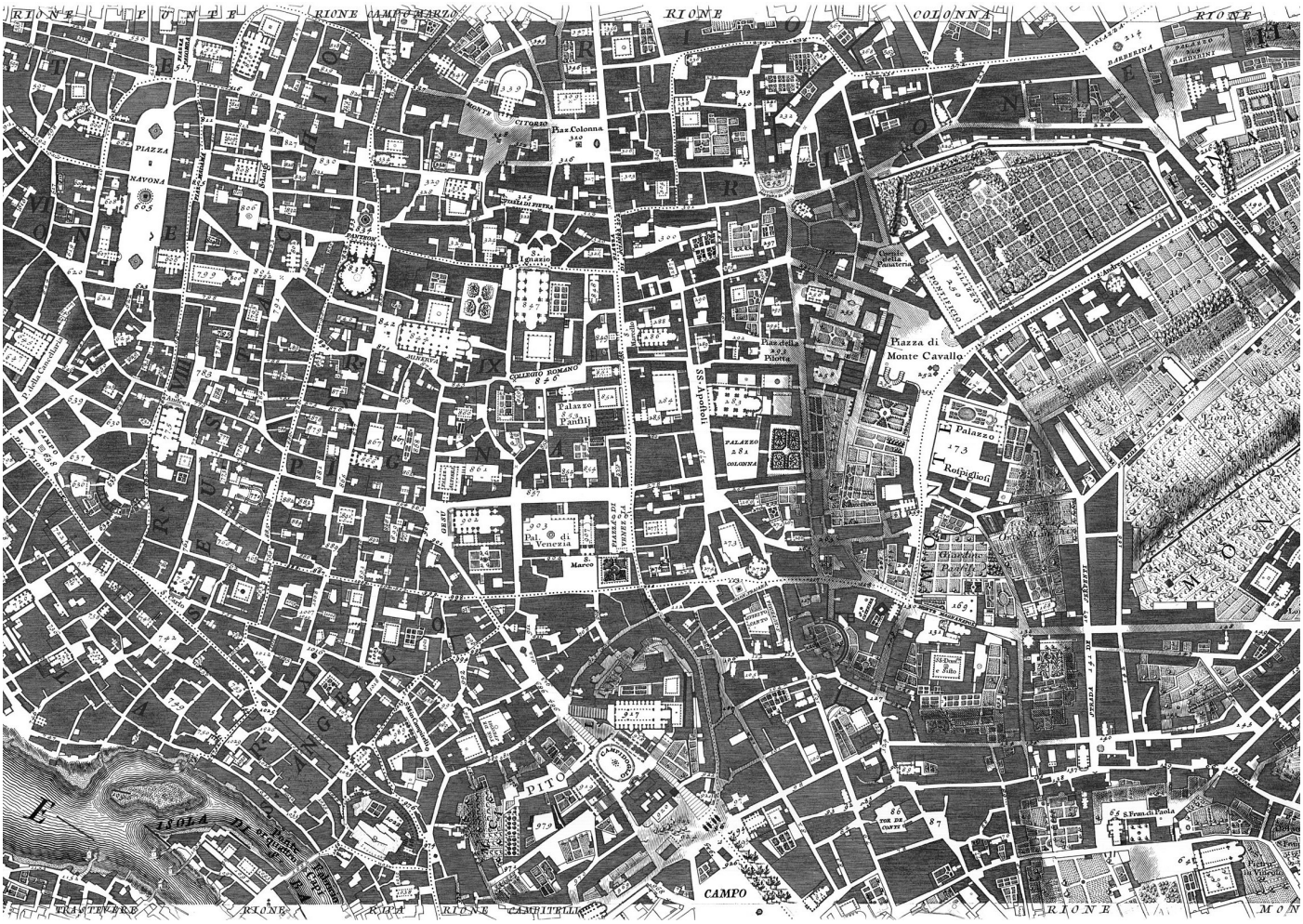
8.Lynch, K. (1981). A theory of good city form. MIT Press

9.Gehl, J. (2011). Life between buildings: Using public space (6e editie). Island Press.

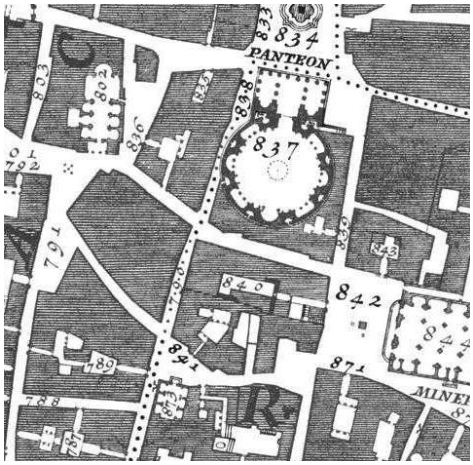
10.Iredale, J. (2020). Architecture of threshold spaces: a critique of the ideologies of hyper connectivity and segregation in the socio political context (p. 28). Routledge

11.Francis, M. (1989). Control as a dimension of public space quality. In I. Altman & E. H. Zube (Eds.), Public places and spaces (pp. 146). Plenum Press

12.Appleton, J. (1975). The experience of landscape. Wiley



The Nolli map of Rome presents a visual distinction between public and private space through figure-ground mapping (Nolli, 1748).



Nolli map of rome by Giovanni Baptista
"Mapping cultural space"

stand what the trend is for the particular location and be able to adjust the design accordingly. In addition, it can help not to apply the architectural program in a rational way but rather to look at force fields that apply to architecture [1] . Resources that can contribute to mapping threshold spaces include community presence, movements, uses, sightlines, light and other qualitative information.

A study cited by Stavros Stravides in his research "toward a city of thresholds" [14] suggests that collective memories in a place can also be an important aspect for the quality and design of the thresholds. For example, the National Technical

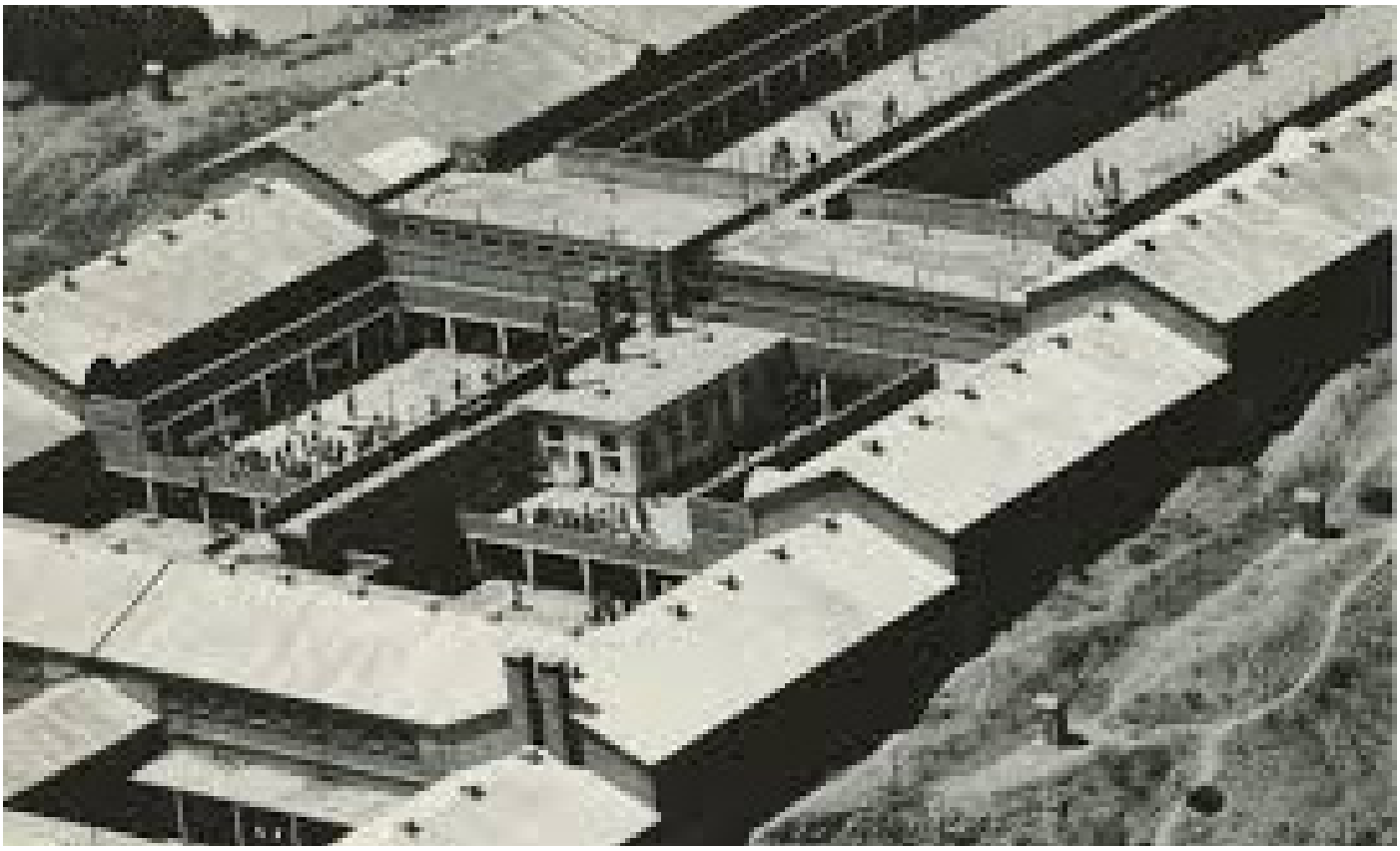
University of Athens dealt with the problem of reconstructing the deserted island of Gyaros as a place of collective memory [14]. The island is a good example of how this circuit of collective memory is constructed and contributes to a strong threshold experience. The research shows that it is mainly rhythmic discontinuities that reinforce collective memory and thus the threshold. In spatial planning and architecture, rhythm is a fundamental concept for understanding the relationship between people and space. Rhythm refers to the recurring patterns in daily life, habits and actions that structure the experience of space. When these patterns are interrupted, new possibilities for interpretation and meaning emerge. Such interruptions can contribute to the creation of thresholds: spatial transitions that connect, separate and define new relationships between different spaces and contexts. On Gyaros Island, a former prison island [14], this manifested itself with an abrupt loss of the residents' daily rhythms due to forced incarceration. Yet new routines emerged, such as shared meal preparations, organized classes and other collective activities. These new rhythms provided the opportunity for social organization and formed a basis for a shared residential culture. These processes show how rhythmic ruptures not only cause disorientation, but can also provide a basis for collective adaptation and memory.

A threshold is more than a physical separation; it acts as a transitional space that connects different contexts and experiences. Thresholds often arise in situations of rhythmic discontinuity, in which existing habits are replaced or supplemented by new rhythms. At Gyaros, these thresholds manifested themselves in simple spatial elements such as walls, trees and improvised shelters. These objects not only functioned as physical boundaries, but also stimulated new social behaviors [14]. Collective memory plays an essential role in understanding and contextualizing rhythmic discontinuities. Whereas traditional monuments often focus on highlighting large-scale events or heroic deeds, Gyaros' strength lies in remembering the everyday. It is not the extraordinary events, but the daily actions and routines that are central to the island's collective memory.

Rhythmic discontinuities mark turning points in time and are crucial moments for remembrance and reinterpretation. Thresholds spatially express these ruptures and invite critical reflection on the relationship between past and present. This reflection makes it possible to see discontinuity as a source of potential, rather than a final loss. Walter Benjamin described such moments of insight as a form of "profane enlightenment," in which the past is not reduced to a fixed narrative but approached as a set of alternative possibilities [7]. By making such ruptures spatially explicit, it becomes possible to cultivate a dynamic collective memory. Thresholds are thereby an important means of understanding and activating spatial transformations, both in a physical and conceptual sense. This approach emphasizes the importance of everyday experiences and marks how space can contribute to processes of memory, reflection and renewal. Gyaros's experience demonstrates that rhythmic ruptures not only mean loss, but also enable new forms of social organization and collective consciousness [14].

13.Akanbi, O., GhaffarianHoseini, A., & GhaffarianHoseini, A. (2021). Threshold Spaces: The Transitional Spaces Between Outside and Inside. Heritage, 7(12), 309. https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage7120309

14.Vrychea, A ., Guizeli, V., Kritikos, V., Polichroniadi, K., & Stravides, S. (2002-2003). Research project on the history of the Gyaros camp: Mapping collective memory and spatial indexes [Research project]. Greek Ministry of the Aegean.

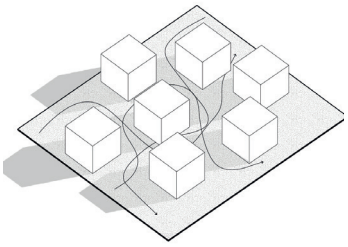


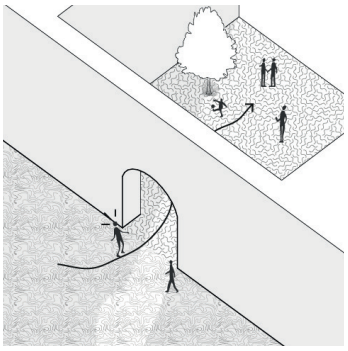
Gyaros Island prison. Unknown photographer. (n.d.).

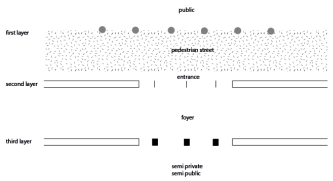
This chapter sought to answer the sub-question, “What is a threshold space, how do they contribute to social and spatial interaction within the city, and in what ways do thresholds manifest themselves in the urban fabric?” From the theory discussed, it appears that threshold spaces may play an important role in connecting public and private spheres while promoting social and spatial interaction in the city.

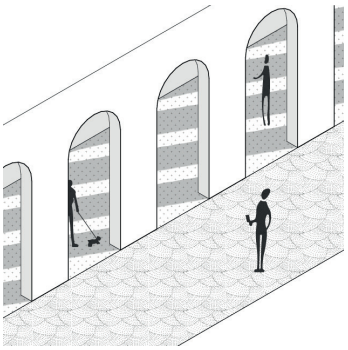
A threshold space is characterized by its ambiguous nature: it is a transitional area that combines elements from both public and private spaces. Important characteristics of a successful threshold space are the possibility of appropriation by users and the flexibility to adapt the space to changing needs. Elements such as benches, niches, canopies or counters can enhance the perception of privacy in a public space, inviting different behaviors and interactions. The quality of a threshold space is further enhanced by rhythmic discontinuity and the incorporation of collective memories. These features encourage users to establish new relationships with both the historical time layers and the community. In addition, the design of a threshold space is linked to the socio-political context of the site. Understanding the specific needs and stories of the community is essential to creating a threshold space that is representative and meaningful. Playing with frameworks and rhythms in architecture can stimulate actions, leading to greater dynamics and interaction within the urban fabric.

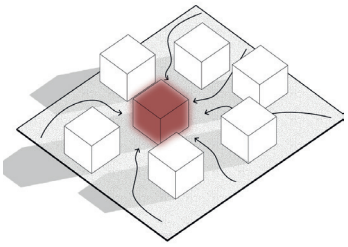
The previous sections of this report have described the socio-political context of Buikslotermeerplein and the influence of neoliberalism and gentrification. This provides a theoretical foundation for further research. The next section outlines the research methodology, with case studies, fieldwork and interviews contributing to answering the remaining sub-questions and concretizing possible solutions. This methodological approach builds on the theory discussed, with the goal of better understanding and utilizing threshold spaces in the urban fabric.



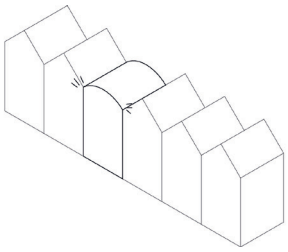


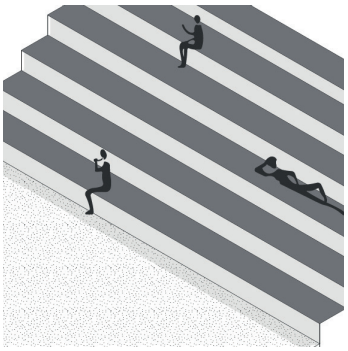

public
first layer
pedestrian street
second layer
entrance
foyer
third layer
semi private
semi public

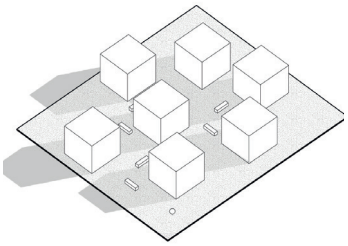












Research
-
methods

This research uses various methods to answer the main question and systematically investigate the sub-questions. The research is composed of both theoretical and practical components, combining the data collected from literature research, case studies, fieldwork and interviews to arrive at a design proposal for the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein. The methodology for each sub-question is described below, including the techniques used, materials and how the data is analyzed.

Subquestion 3: At what different scales do thresholds occur, and what elements of thresholds are found in different case studies?

The answer to this question is based on an analysis of five case studies, which explore different scales of thresholds in architecture. The selected case studies are:
1. Performance Art Center in Taipei (urban scale).
2. SESC Pompeia by Lina Bo Bardi (building scale level)
3. Moederhuis by Aldo van Eyck (street entrance scale level)
4. Engawa - Outside-in principle (outside-in transition)
5. De Vuuvrvogel by Jan Verhoeven (interior scale level)

For each case study, archival drawings, floor plans, sections and photographs are analyzed. The threshold elements from each project are identified and incorporated into axonometric drawings. Key information from theory is used to mark these threshold elements in different colors (e.g., mint green for threshold elements). A conclusion about the role of thresholds in social interaction and spatial organization is drawn for each project.

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Subquestion 4: What different thresholds can be found in Amsterdam-North, and by what elements are these thresholds characterized in the realized urban fabric?

This question is answered through fieldwork in Amsterdam-North, identifying and analyzing five types of thresholds. These five types of thresholds stem from the theoretical framework. The five types of thresholds are:
1. The entrance
2. The arcade
3. The gate
4. The canopy
5. The niche

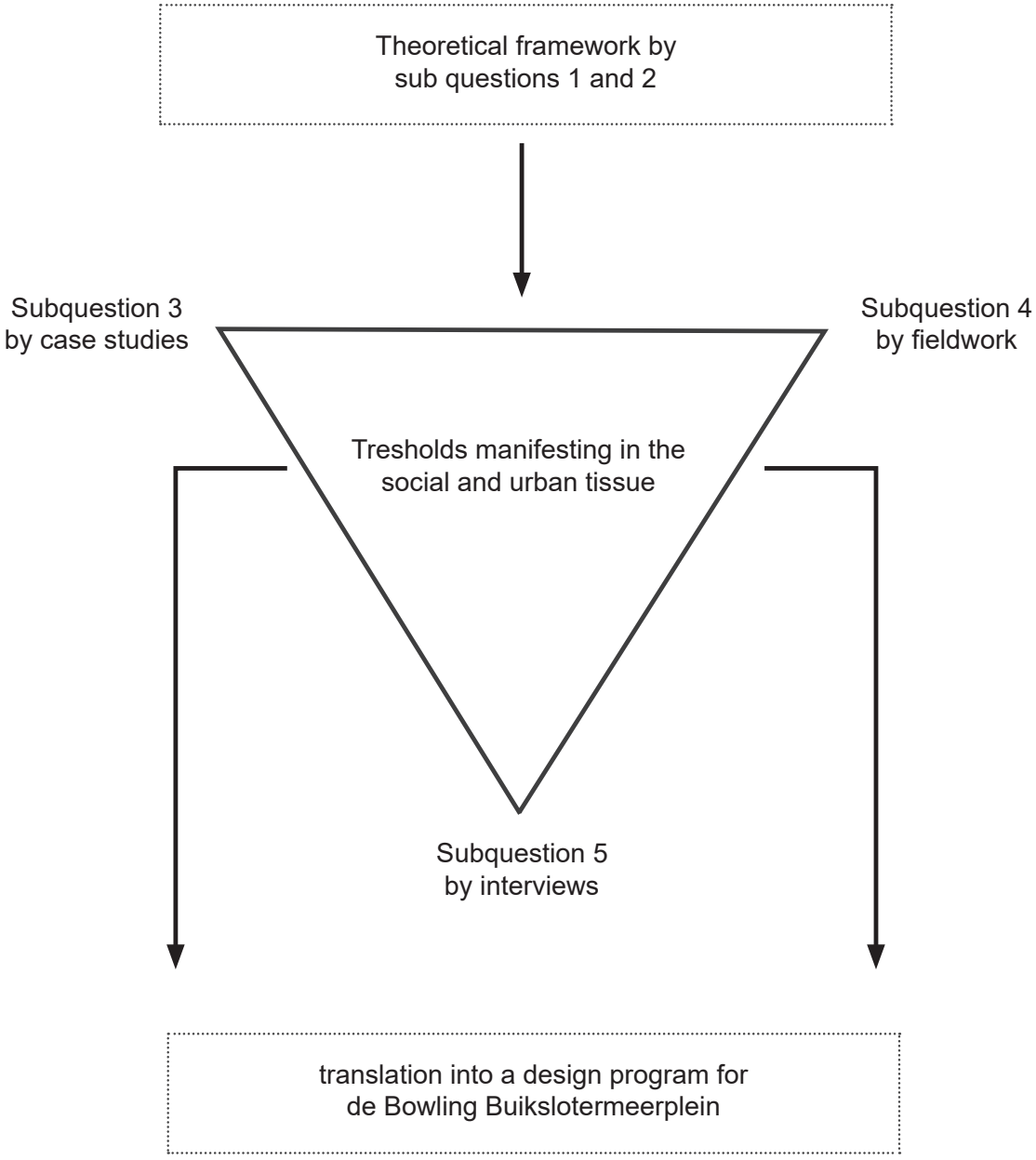
Thresholds are recorded through photographs and measurements. These data are then incorporated into three drawings: an axonometry for a complete overview of the place with its elements, a plan with dimensions and textures, and

a cross-section for elevations. The data are categorized according to different parameters, which emerged from the theory. The different parameters are: type of threshold, position, program, visibility, light, material, and possibility to sit or shelter. Based on these parameters, an overall conclusion is drawn about the threshold characteristics in the neighborhood.

Subquestion 5: What might be a barrier for residents of Amsterdam-Noord to enter a community center?
This question is answered through interviews with residents of Amsterdam-North, both old and new residents. The central question in the interviews is "What would be a threshold for you to enter a community center?". The interviews are conducted in Buikslotermeerplein, distinguishing between the experiences of original residents and new residents in order to better identify the differences. This includes asking for their first name and age to show in the research that a diverse group of people was surveyed. The answers are included in the appendix. Once all the responses were gathered, an effort was made to identify five subgroups to categorize the collected information. The subgroups were organized, and the information was further structured into two tables, distinguishing between 'unattractive' and 'attractive.' A conclusion was then drawn from these tables.

Subquestion 6: How can this research be translated into a concrete design and program for the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein, applying the architectural principles of thresholds?
The final sub-question focuses on translating the research findings into a concrete design and program for the Bowling at Buikslotermeerplein. Based on the findings from the previous sub-questions, a toolbox is developed with different threshold elements that can be applied in the design of the Bowling. This toolbox is tested on the specific case of the Bowling and provides different architectural solutions that promote social friction and interaction. The design is presented in the form of floor plans, sections and visualizations, integrating the thresholds as connecting elements in the space.

After sub-questions 3, 4 and 5 are answered, the findings are combined and analyzed through methodological triangulation. The methodological triangulation method is used to answer the practical research in which three different research methods were used, case studies, fieldwork and interviews to provide more validated evidence for different design interventions. For example, the interviews can reveal what thresholds promote or hinder social interaction, the case studies can reveal what physical elements are effective in shaping these thresholds, and the fieldwork provides insight into the reality of thresholds in the city and how some spaces are more appropriated and used. These combined findings will help create a design for the Bowling at Buikslotermeer Square.

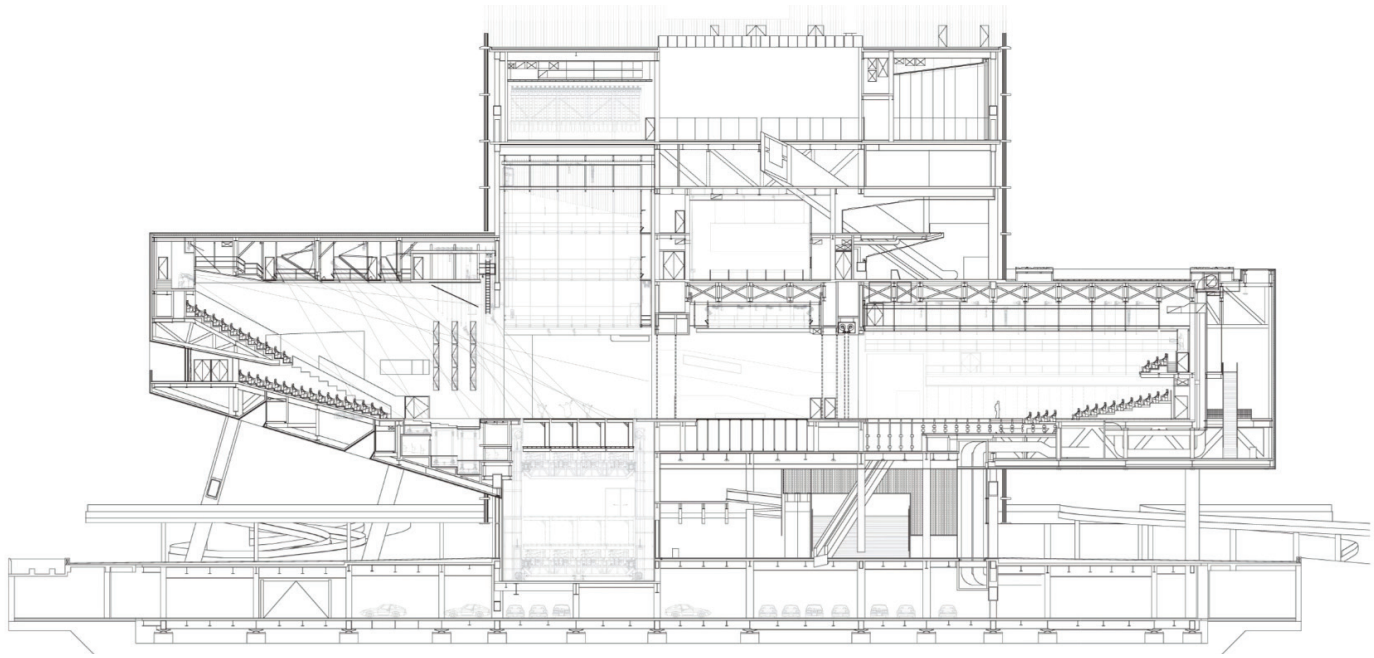

Theoretical framework by
sub questions 1 and 2
Subquestion 3
by case studies
Subquestion 4
by fieldwork
Tresholds manifesting in the
social and urban tissue
Subquestion 5
by interviews
translation into a design program for
de Bowling Buikslotermeerplein

Research
-
field research

3. Thresholds in the existing urban fabric various scales



Site plan of the Taipei Performing Arts Center, revealing its position within the urban context of Shilin District, Taipei (OMA, 2022).



Sectional drawing through the three theatres and backstage areas, illustrating the spatial organization within the central cube (OMA, 2022).

The Taipei Performing Arts Center (TPAC), designed by Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten of OMA, opened in 2022 in the Shilin district of Taipei, Taiwan. The building is located near the Shilin Night Market, making the street life busy and energetic. In the initial design, OMA aimed to integrate the market into the building, as reflected in the design model. However, this concept of extending the market into the building ultimately failed due to the significant distance between the market and the building, as well as the roadway separating them. Nevertheless, the design highlights the TPAC as an integral part of the city, where it not only provides a stage for performances but also creates space for social interaction and cultural exchange [1]. The design aims to create a space where various forms of performing arts can take place, while maintaining a strong connection to the city.

The TPAC consists of three auditoriums: the 800-seat Globe Playhouse, the 1,500-seat Grand Theater and the Blue Box, also with 800 seats. These theaters are integrated into a central cube that serves as a focus point for backstage and support spaces. The Grand Theater and the Blue Box can be combined into a larger space, which is named Super Theater, with a stage length of 60 meters. This allows for the production of experimental and large-scale performances [2]. In addition, this gives an additional dementia in flexibility. The auditoriums are characterized by remarkable forms. The three auditoriums are attached to the central cube as separate volumes, each with its own geometric shape: a sphere, a rectangular prism and a wedge shape. This arrangement means that the building does not have a clearly defined front and back, but rather shows multiple faces depending on the viewer's perspective. This ensures that the visitor can enter the building in different ways and that already in the first view no script is imposed on how to use the building. In doing so, this approach is consistent with the urban context of Taipei, where architecture is often layered and diverse [3].

The central cube, which is clad in corrugated glass and floats above a public square which serves as a meeting place for the city. This square features different patterns that should encourage people on the street to use the building. This can be seen in the axonometry shown in red as a pulsating circle in the middle of the square, almost at the spot at the beginning of the first possible route inside the building. Furthermore, the patterns are indicated by gray and white diagonal bands. The first possible route, also called Public Loop is a walking route through the building that usually makes hidden aspects of theater production, such as rehearsals and technical work areas, visible to visitors. This approach encourages interaction between the audience and the creative processes taking place within the performing arts [4]. The route also includes several platforms and at the very top of a stage where visitors could openly give a performance. The stairs that connect to this platform make it possible to sit. It is also possible to continue along

1.Yao, K., 2022. "Taipei's Public Approach to Art

2.Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). (2022). Taipei Performing Arts Center [Architectonisch projectbeschrijving]. Geraadpleegd op 1th december 2024, van https://oma.eu/projects/taipei-performing-arts-center

3.Shinohara, K, (1981). "Architectural Machines: Essays on Raw Aesthetics."

4.Koolhaas, R. (2022). "Remarks on the TPAC."

the route. The Public Loop allows visitors without a ticket to access parts of the building as well, maintaining the center's open character. According to Gianotten, this approach reflects the dynamics of Taipei, a city known for its openness to change [5]. This route is indicated in dark green in the axonometry. The other route, the Lobby route indicated in mint green, consists of several stair sections and platforms. The routes do not intersect but are visible. Thus, the user has several options to visit the building.

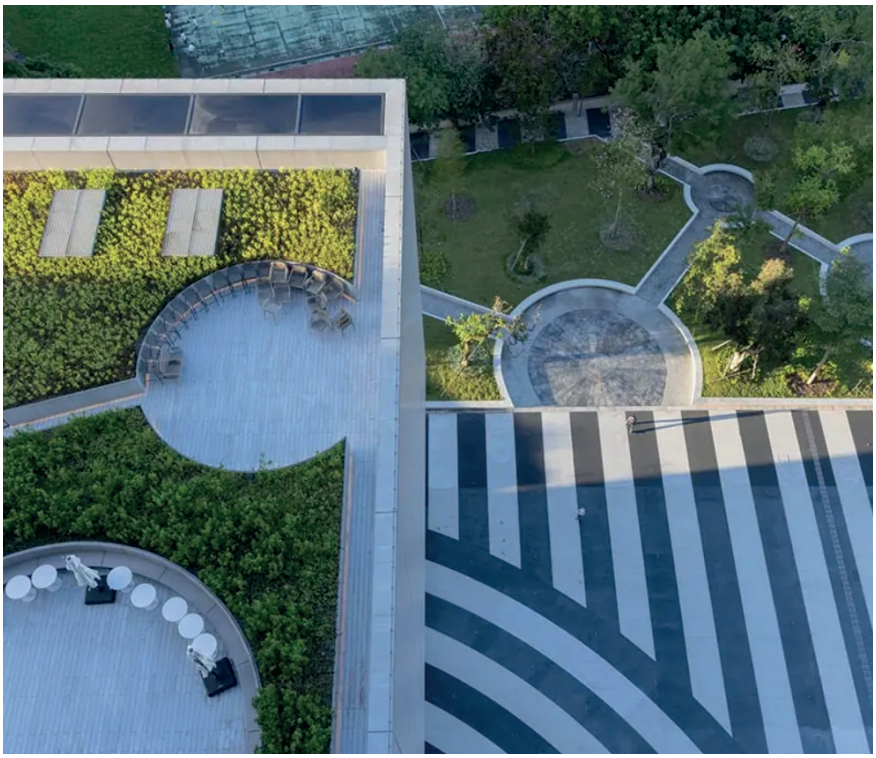
5.Gianotten, D. (2022). "Design Philosophy of TPAC."



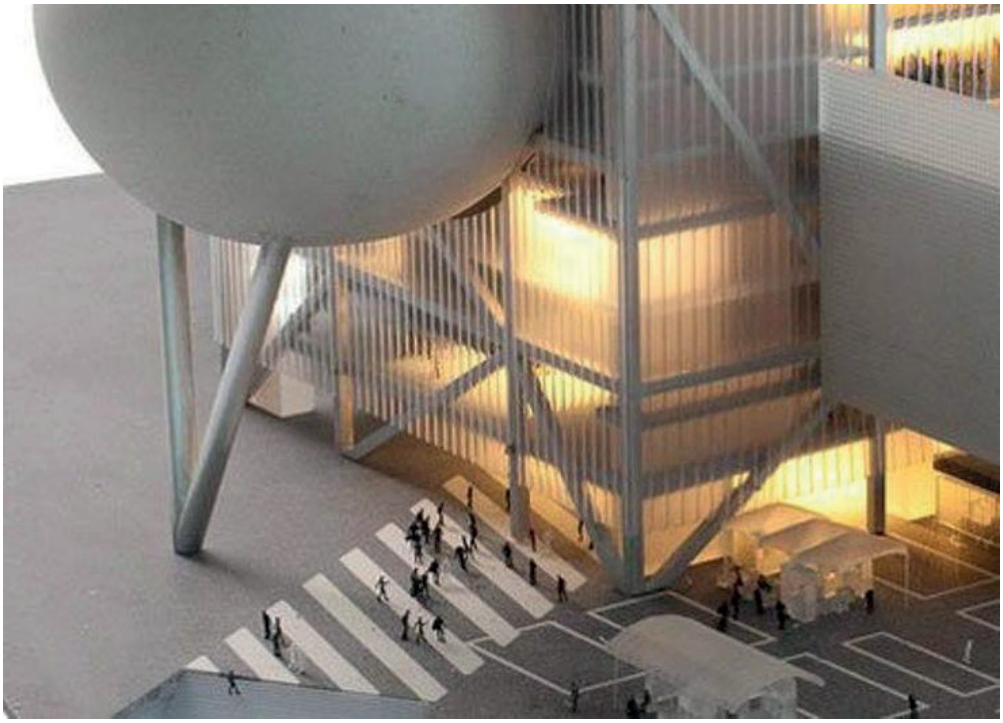
Perspective view from one of the busiest roads in Taipei (OMA, 2022).



View of the Performing Arts Centre from the market (OMA, 2022).



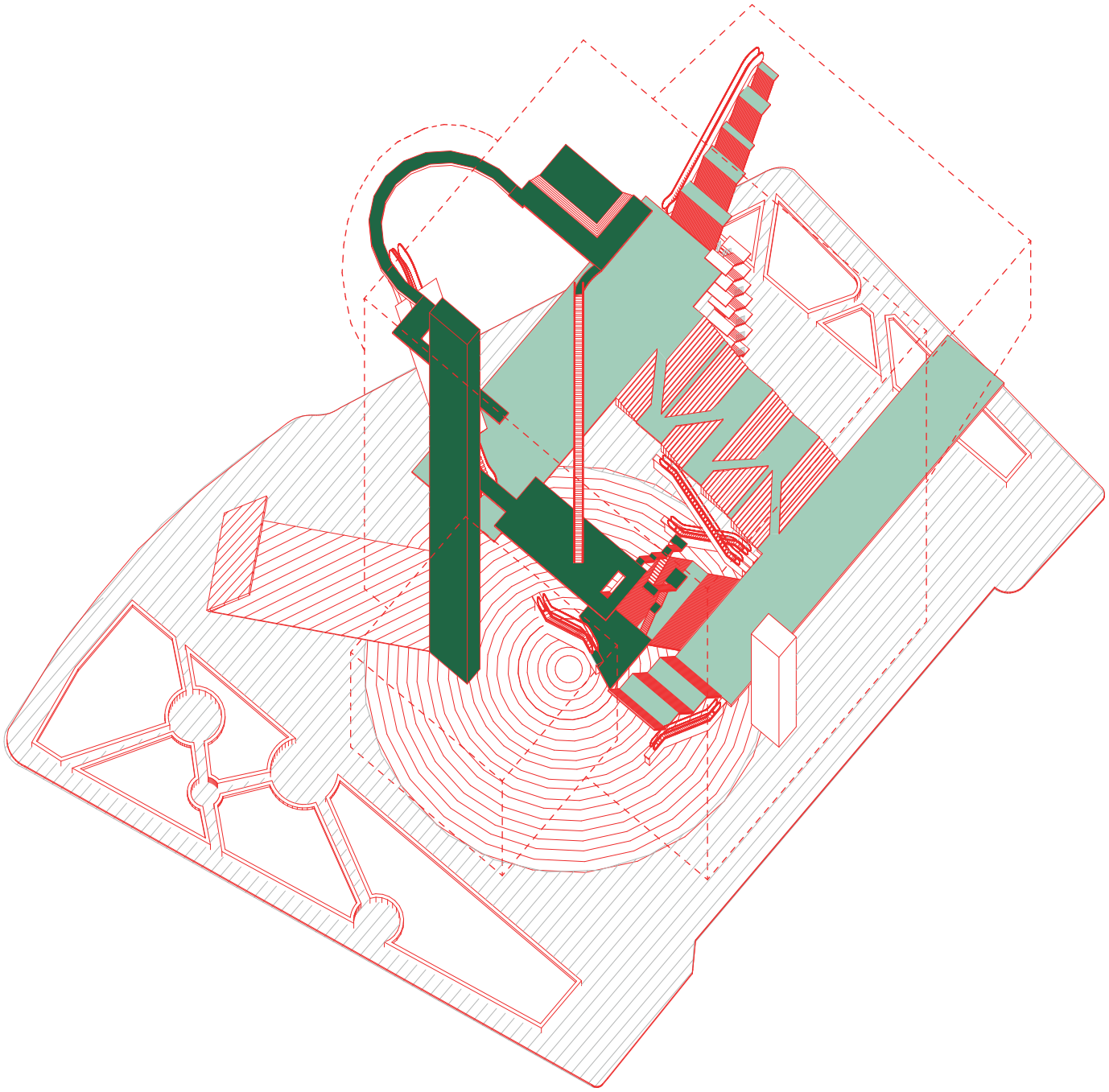
Aerial view of the Taipei Performing Arts Center, showing the elevated plaza and public realm integration (OMA, 2022).



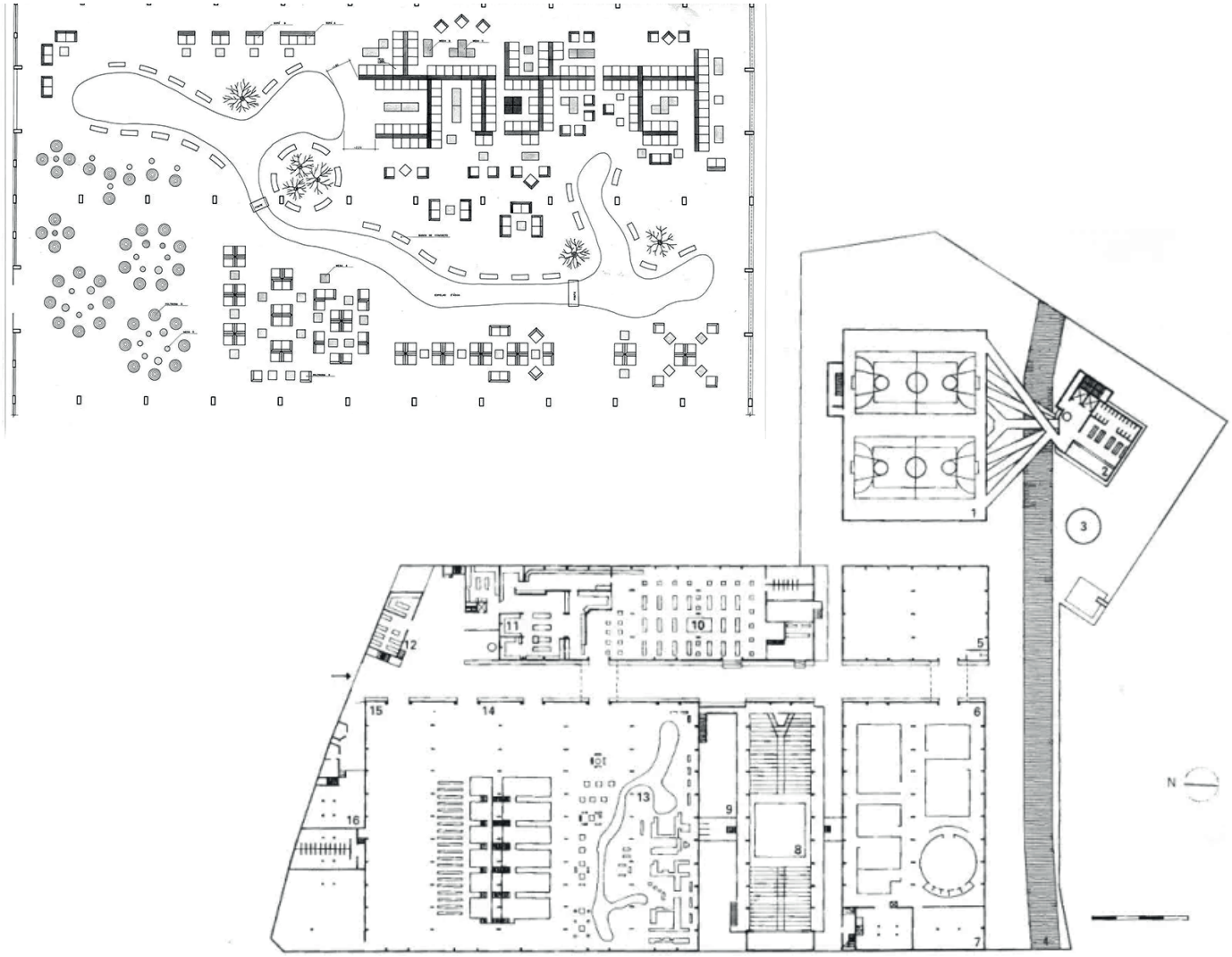
model of the performing arts centre with clear floor patterns (OMA, 2022).



the mobility spaces can be seen from the outside (OMA, 2022).



The drawing and theory showed that routing and circulation is important to connect a building at an urban scale level. Because there are multiple choices in routing and the routes are also free to enter, this appeals to a larger segment of society. The routes are given additional definition by the different patterns on the first floor square. This suggests what you could do there but it is not mandatory. Furthermore, both routes consist of stairs and platforms that would allow the user to sit there and also provide an opportunity for a performance or to show themselves. The stages located on both routes provide the user and opportunity to show themselves.



floorplan and zoomed in floorplan of the threshold spaces of SESC Pompéia Factory, São Paulo (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).



ariel view of SESC Pompéia Factory, São Paulo (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).

The SESC Pompeia, designed by Lina Bo Bardi in the years 1977-1986, is located in São Paulo, Brazil, and is possibly a good example of architecture that focuses on community and social connection [1]. The project is located in the Pompeia district, a dense urban area characterized by a mix of industrial, residential and commercial functions. The district, originally an industrial center, went through a transformation in the second half of the 20th century as factories gave way to new urban uses.

1.ArchEyes Team. (2022, July 9). SESC Pompeia by Lina Bo Bardi: Transforming an Industrial Factory into a Cultural Landmark. ArchEyes. Retrieved on 2 december 2024.

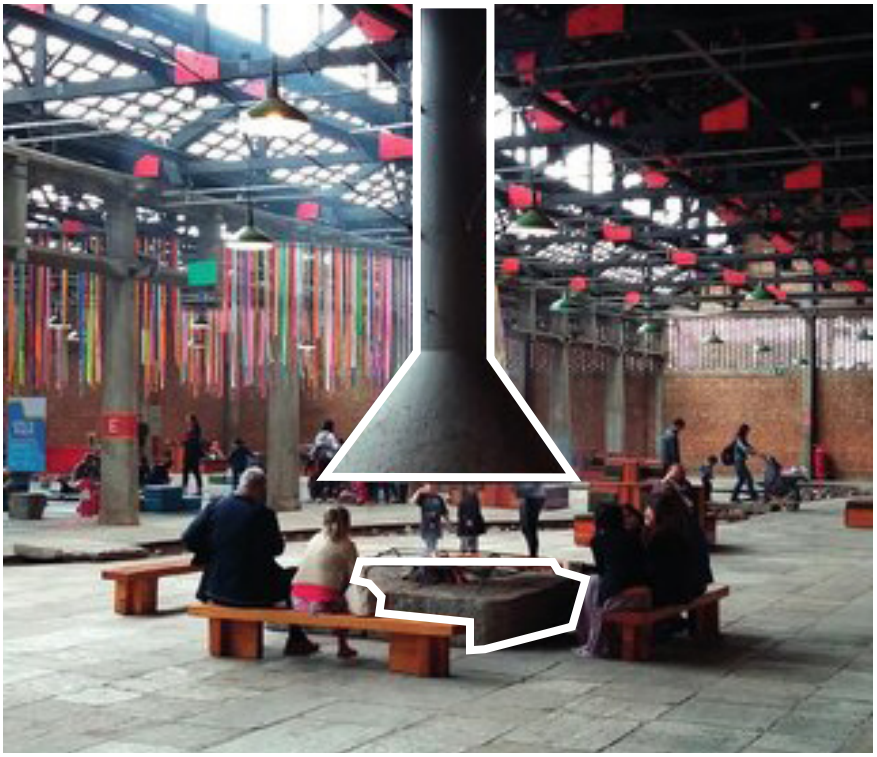
In this context, Bo Bardi took on the task of repurposing an old factory into a multipurpose social and cultural center. The design embraces the history of the site by preserving the existing factory elements and combining them with modern additions such as two concrete towers that house sports facilities. This project reflects Bo Bardi's vision well by not demolishing the building but repurposing it with what is already there.

Bo Bardi deliberately chose to leave the old factory, with its distinctive sheds, largely intact. She only added more definition to the interior. The open spaces in the sheds have not been given a definitive function and are free to be used by visitors. This creates spaces that are multifunctional, and within these spaces there is no set script on how the visitor should use the space. However, elements in these (threshold) spaces, such as specially designed furniture, invite users to interact. They are not empty spaces, but places that are inviting and attractive. For example, a fireplace can bring people together and encourage social behavior. The oversized foyer, for example, is suitable for small lectures or meetings. Different textures in the design create a subtle separation of spaces. This offers users the freedom to lay down their towels on wooden decking to enjoy the sun, for example, as visible in the outdoor spaces. For the new sports center, she designed two concrete volumes with a striking chimney. This structure serves not only functionally, but also acts as a visual beacon and anchor in the city. The volumes contain sports facilities and locker rooms. The sports center is strategically placed behind the factory sheds. This design forces visitors to move through the factory spaces before arriving at the most frequented facilities. This route lets them experience the various activities that take place at the site. The idea is that this can encourage people to participate in other functions, rather than everything having separate entrances.

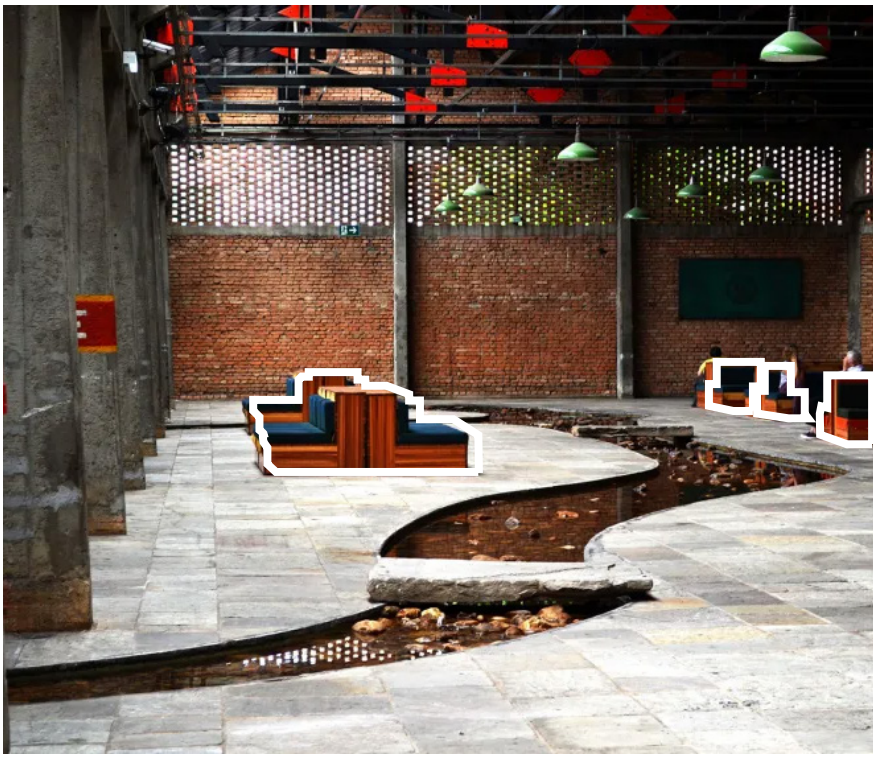
To preserve the collective memories of this place, Bo Bardi changed little about the factory's original sheds. The original construction remains visible in all spaces, keeping the history of the place palpable. Flexible elements, such as studios and libraries, subtly divide the open space without completely closing it off. This keeps the collective memory intact. When Lina Bo Bardi first visited the building, she noted that local residents were already using it as a meeting place. This was exactly what she wanted to encourage and preserve. Although the original mission was to build a sports center, she decided to support and expand the existing activities, such as repairs and lectures. The result was a multipurpose space in a city that Bo Bardi said needed places of meeting and creativity. She worked with the local community to ensure that the building remained their place, enhanced by the new opportunities it offered.



people making use of the different spaces outside the project of SESC Pompéia Factory, São Paulo (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).



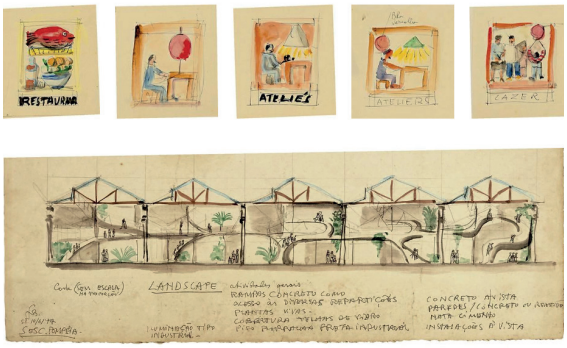
important threshold element in the open space to gather people (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).



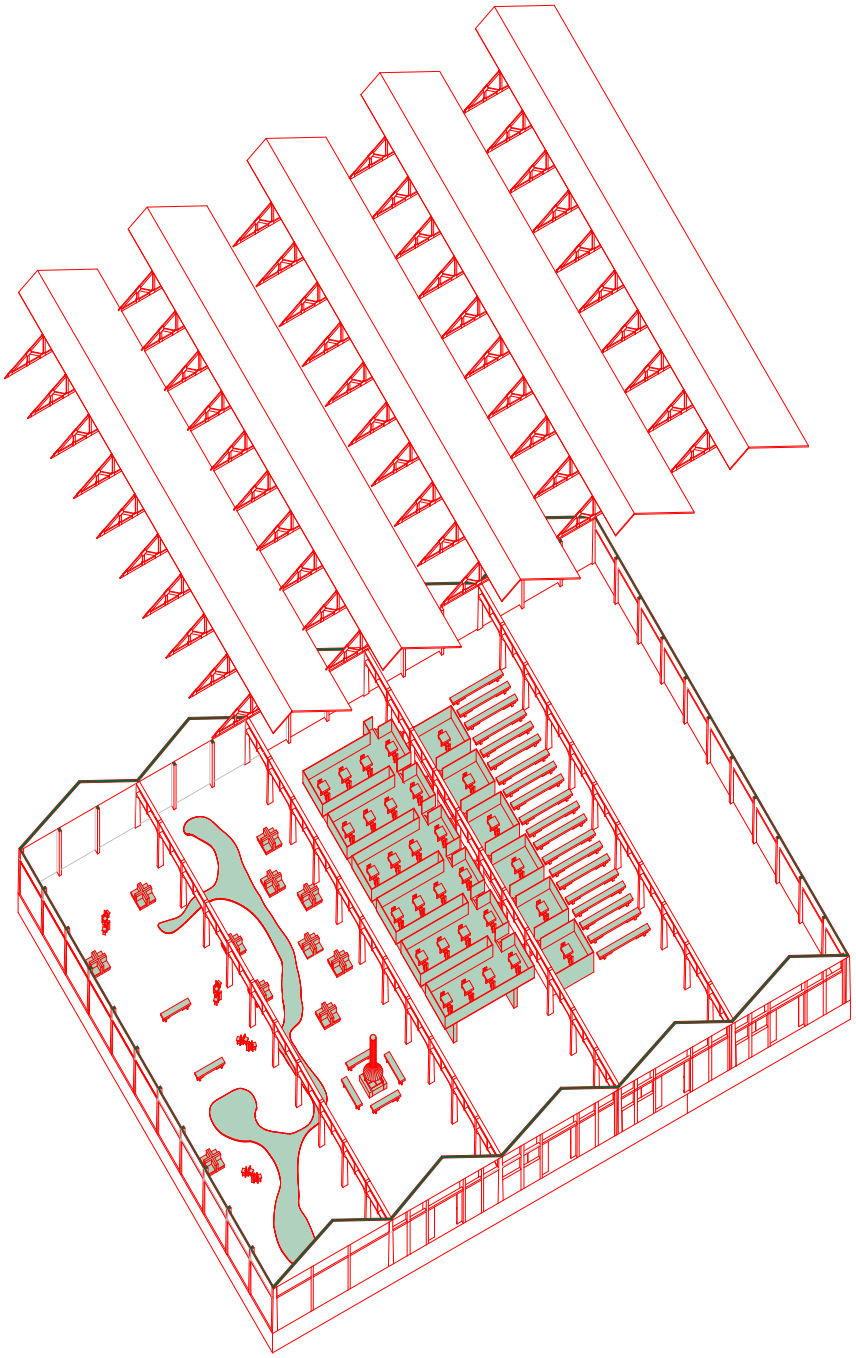
special designed furniture for the project (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).



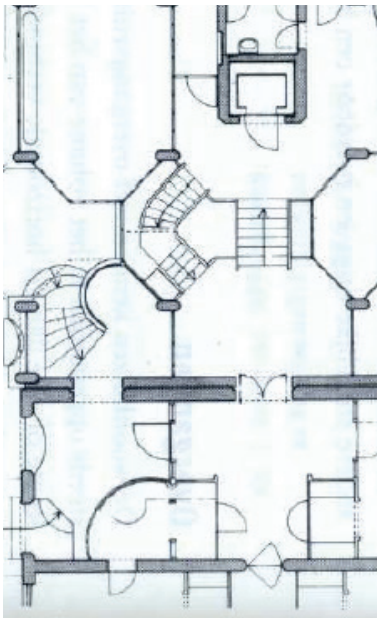
the ateliers with visable construction (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).

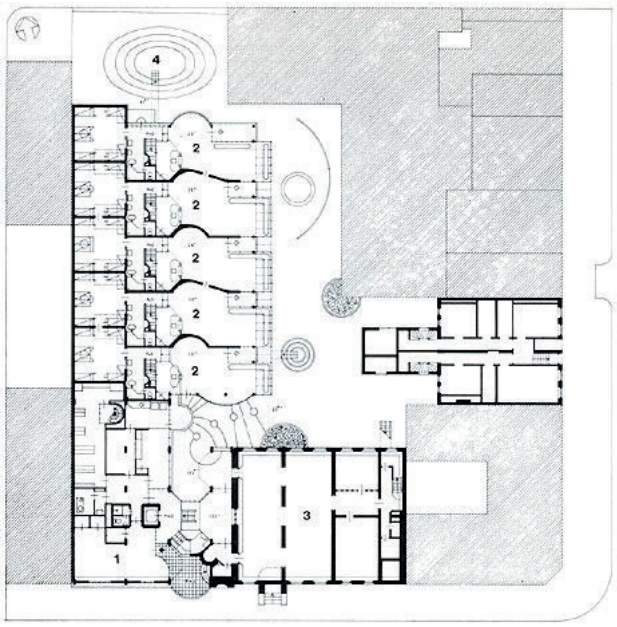


the first skecthes of Lina Bo Bardi for the project (ArchEyes / Miguel, 2022).



Summarizing from the text and drawings, the following findings can be made. Because Bo Bardi has designed with the elements and history that were already on the site, she has ensured that the collective memory has been preserved on the site. In doing so, she has decorated the sheds with elements and furniture that can be used for different purposes. The spaces mostly consist of open spaces that can change function due to the added elements. The most frequented function of the building, the sports functions in the concrete towers, Bo Bardi placed in a strategic position so that the user passes through the other spaces first. This puts the user in touch with the other different activities.





floorplan of Hubertushuis / Moederhuis, Plantage Middenlaan, (Van Eyck, 1982).



view from the plantage middenlaan on the sint hubertushuis (Van Eyck, 1982).

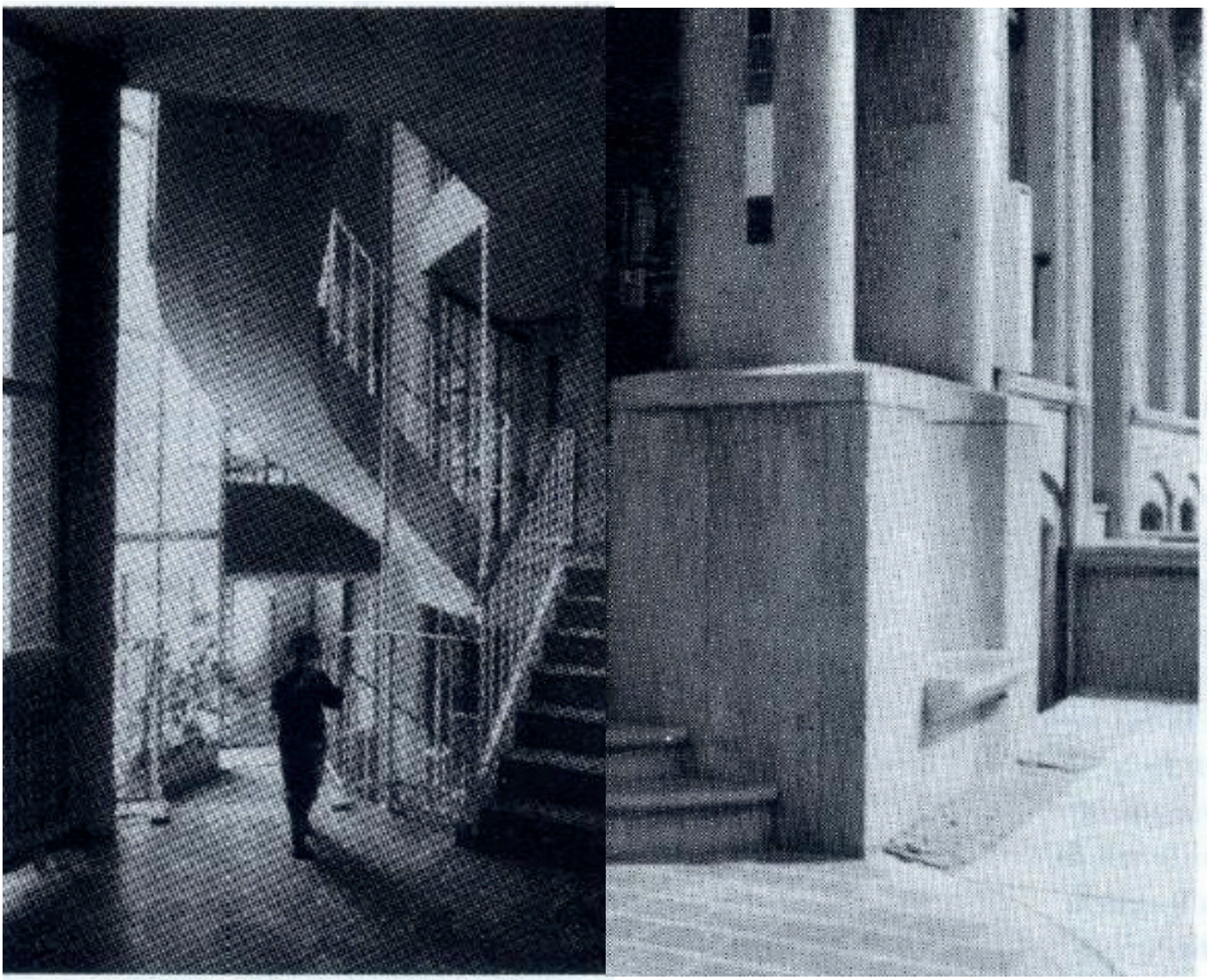
Het Moederhuis, which is actually called het sint Hubertushuis was designed by Aldo van Eyck and Theo van Bosch in 1978 1 . The Hubertus Society, founded in the nineteenth century for single mothers, was looking for a building where “fallen women” could stay with their children. At Plantagelaan 33 in Amsterdam, the association found a suitable place for this demand. The ensemble consists of two historic buildings with an intervening lot that had yet to be designed. The building had to provide space for about sixteen parents and 78 children and should be designed as a safe haven for mothers who were in an unfavorable situation. They could stay overnight in this home and use professional help.

1.Hertzberger, H. (1986). Aldo van Eyck: Hubertushuis = Hubertus house (2e druk). Amsterdam: Stichting Wonen / Van Loghum Slaterus.

Based on this, Aldo van Eyck and Theo Bosch designed a building that went out to encourage social contacts and stimulate social activities. Through visibility and that the children/mothers kept crossing each other’s paths, a sense of security would also be created. In doing so, the open lot between the two historic buildings acted as a hinge where these social activities should take place. The new infill consisted of different shapes such as a circle, octagon or rectangle shapes. The floor heights were placed at all different levels creating many different split levels. The use of many shapes and split levels creates a dynamic floor plan. Staff rooms for the staff and parents’ bedrooms were located in the two historic buildings. The newly designed building contained storage rooms, a kitchen and a nursery for the youngest children in addition to many in-between spaces. The transition room connected the homes to the courtyard and roof terrace.

As mentioned earlier, the new addition served as a link between the two historic buildings, and many threshold elements can be found here. The transition from entrance to street is an important transition. Because the entrance is 1.5 meters above street level, there is a softer transition between private and public. The landing of the entrance is clearly visible and in the supporting wall is a bench that invites to sit. Also the staircase to the platform has no standard shape and could be used to stay which is also called secondary seating . There is a small garden at the front. Because the linking space or hallway is covered with a glass wall, the linkingspace between the two historic buildings also participates in the transition from street to home. Because of the previously mentioned split levels, the users on each floor are clearly visible and the visual contact between street and dwelling is thus promoted. Many elements of a thresholds can be seen in this transitional space.

In addition to the unusual shapes in the floor plan, the mother house also consists of an unusual color coding namely purple, orange, yellow, red and green. ‘I don’t choose colors, my favorite color is the rainbow.’ Said van Eyck about the colors of the mother house. This sets the building apart from the two historic buildings.



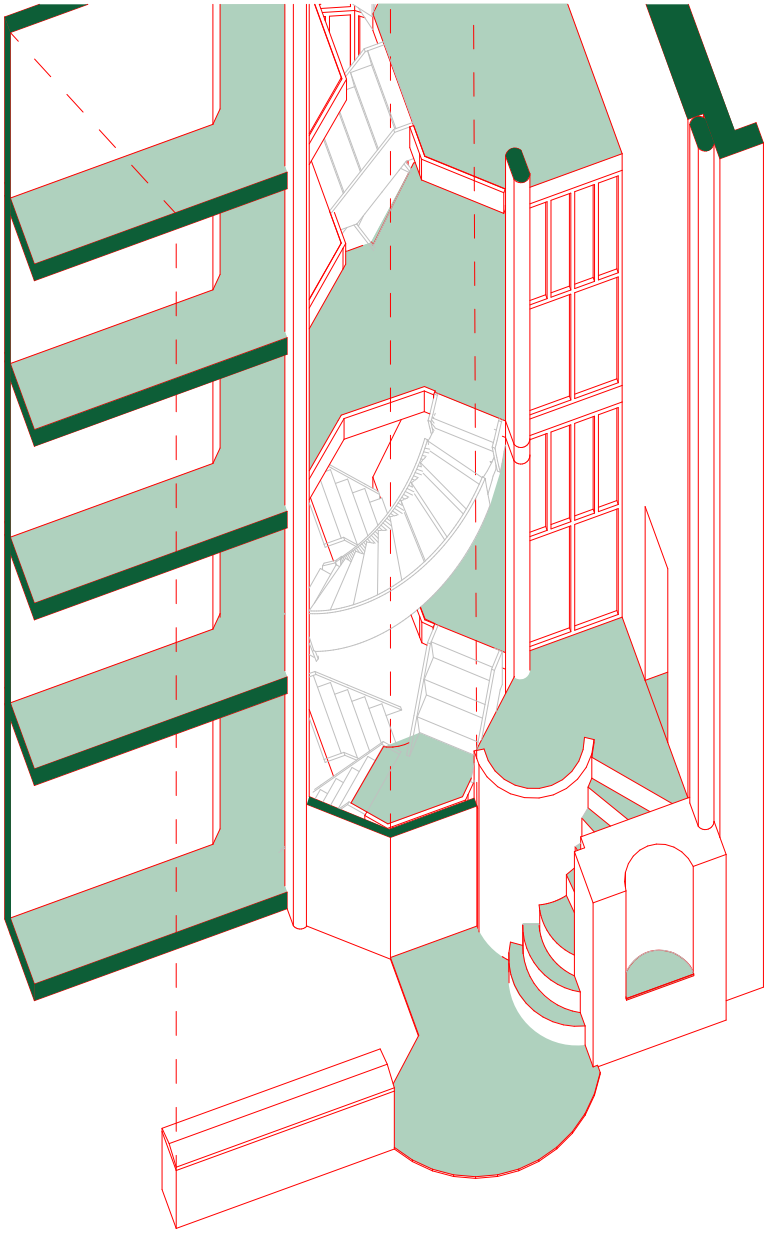
black and white pictures of the threshold spaces at the Sint Hubertushuis (Van Eyck, 1982).



inside sqaure (Van Eyck, 1982).



entrance space, an important threshold space, Sint Hubertushuis (Van Eyck, 1982).



Given the drawing and theory, it can be said that a diffuse transition between private and public supports the thresholds space. This has been done in het Moederhuis mainly by applying many different split levels so that the user of the space is visible. The traffic space is connected to the street by using transparent material between these spaces. The other elements that contribute to the thresholds space is the landing where the entrance is located. This is 1.5 meters above street level. Because a bench has been designed into the supporting wall, this creates an invitation to sit. The stairs are also an important secondary element as they are slightly wider and have a distinctive design. This would also allow the user to stay on the stairs.







the social activities on the engawa illustrated by Haranobu (Harunobu, ca. 1766), (Harunobu, ca. 1765), (Harunobu, ca. 1767), (Harunobu, ca. 1767/Minneapolis Institute of Art)

The engawa, a characteristic element in traditional Japanese homes, is a transitional space between indoors and outdoors. This space is often made of wood or bamboo and is sheltered by overhanging roofs. The word “En” in engawa comes from an ancient Buddhist philosophy and refers to “indirect causes,” a concept seen within Buddhism as that which gives meaning to everything that lives [1] . In addition, it symbolizes spontaneous encounters, connections and relationships that shape us as human beings. In addition to encouraging social interaction and connection, engawa also symbolizes the harmonious relationship between nature and architecture.

The engawa has a corridor-like structure that runs around the main rooms of the house [2] . This space is characterized by different types of sliding panels: the shoji, made of wood and rice paper, which separate the rooms from the engawa, and the amado, wooden shutters that close off the engawa from the outside world [3] . In modern designs, sliding glass panels are often placed behind the amado, which act as large windows. The versatility of the sliding panels and the use of materials such as glass and rice paper allow residents to regulate the amount of light entering the rooms. Sliding the panels open or closed in different ways creates subtle levels of shadow and light, which is often perceived as poetic (as described in In Praise of Shadows) [4] . Besides the aesthetic aspect, the sliding doors also contribute to the indoor climate of the rooms. During cold or windy weather, only the shoji can be closed to keep out the cold, while the translucent panels still allow diffused sunlight to pass through. During warm weather, both the shoji and the amado can be fully opened, connecting the interior directly to the outdoors. The overhanging roofs of the engawa then provide shade and cooling airflow, keeping the interior pleasant even on hot days.

The beginnings of the Engawa cannot quite be pinpointed but there seems to be a link to the evolution of roofs in historical Japanese architecture. During the early periods of Japanese architecture, deep eaves provided protection from rain and sun, forming a space where inner and outer worlds met [2] . In the aristocratic shinden style of the Heian period, the engawa evolved into a status and design object, forming a harmonious interplay between the house and the garden [3] . Suzuki Harunobu’s (1752) paintings record the social activities that could take place at the engawa [5] . These included drying clothes, drinking tea with neighbors and playing the banjo. The Engawa also had a philosophical significance that allowed people to look at nature like a painting, enjoy it and meditate on the engawa. The Engawa was a space for aesthetics and contemplation as well as social and everyday activities [6] . It was also a place where one left their shoes before entering the house or where neighbors met, the engawa acted as a social threshold [7] .

The materials used for the engawa vary by design. Some designers also laid the tatami mats through in the engawa while officially only the tatami mats are in the rooms inside the house. In historical examples, the engawa consists of bamboo floorboards and in later versions of the engawa, wooden planks. The dimensions of the engawa may also differ. For example, if the engawa is paired with a larger

1.Bodhi, B. (1995). The Great Discourse on Causation – The Mahānidāna Sutta and Its Commentaries (2e druk). Buddhist Publication Society.

2.Itoh, T. (1972). Traditional domestic architecture of Japan (pp. 55–66). Weatherhill.

3.Inaba, K., & Nakayama, S. (1983). Japanese homes and lifestyles (pp. 33–34). Kodansha International.

4.Tanizaki, J. (2001). In praise of shadows (T. J. Harper & E. G. Seidensticker, Trans.). Leete’s Island Books. (Originally published in 1933)

5.Kobayashi, T. (Ed.). (2023). Suzuki Harunobu taizen: Suzuki Harunobu [The Complete Works of Suzuki Harunobu]. Shogakukan Inc.



Engawa corridor in a traditional Japanese house. Naruse, N. (2022, April 5).



Engawa stepping stone corridor in a traditional Japanese house (Author unknown, n.d.).

public room, the engawa was designed wider so that people who came for a special event could wait or chat on the engawa before going inside. The floor heights is an important and consistent principle where the engawa is a lot higher with the outside floor while the floor of the house should be the same with the engawa.

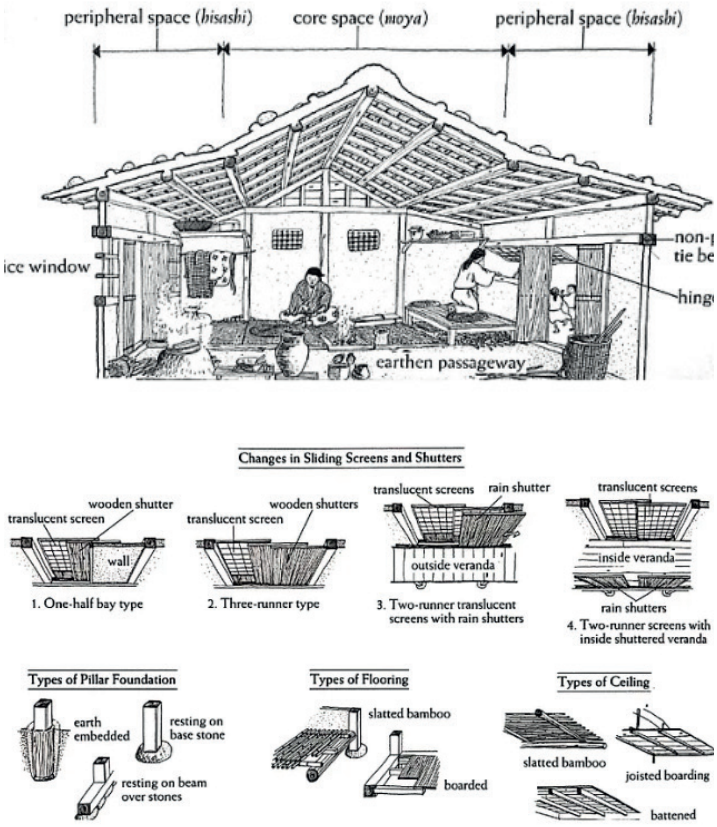
Although once an essential part of daily life in Japan, the modernization of architecture has led to the decline of engawa. Recently, however, this element has experienced a resurgence, both in Japan and internationally, with architects attempting to integrate traditional values with modern design principles. With the modernization of Japan and the introduction of Western architectural principles in the 19th and 20th centuries, the engawa was largely replaced by more insulated housing types. Privacy, comfort and security took precedence, discarding open and connected spaces such as the engawa [3]. This marked a shift from collective and natural connection to individualized living spaces. Currently, architects are trying to re-establish the engawa within architecture because of the resurgent individualism which is causing problems. Thereby, the modern interpretation of the engawa is much more about ambiguous spaces and the importance of working with light and different materials [6].

6.Harada, J. (1936), The Lesson of Japanese Architecture, pp.55

7.Ozaki, R., & Lewis, J. R. (2004). Boundaries and the meaning of social space: A study of Japanese house plans (pp. 93-94)



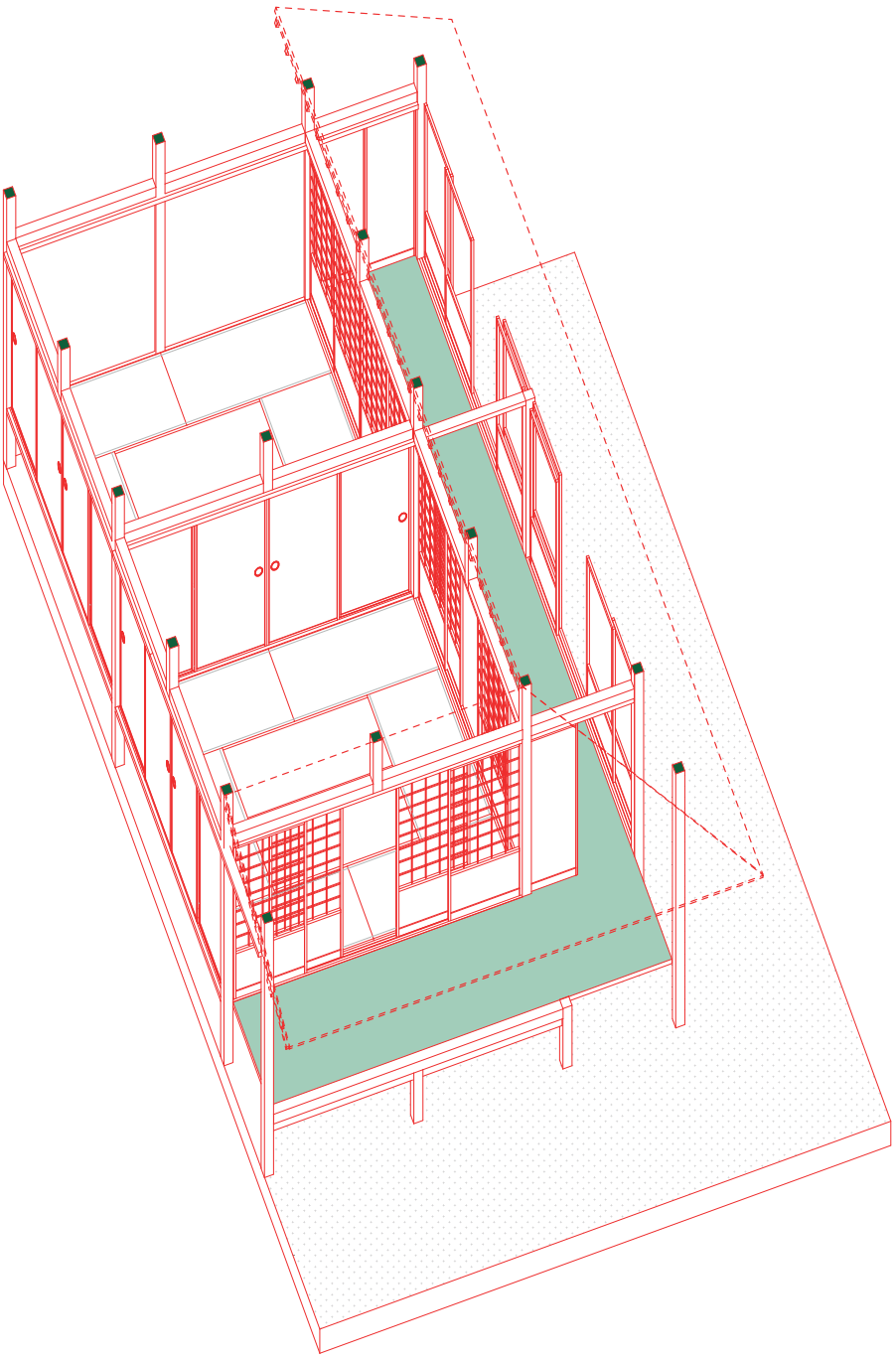
The Many Faces of Engawa (Interaction Green, 2017).



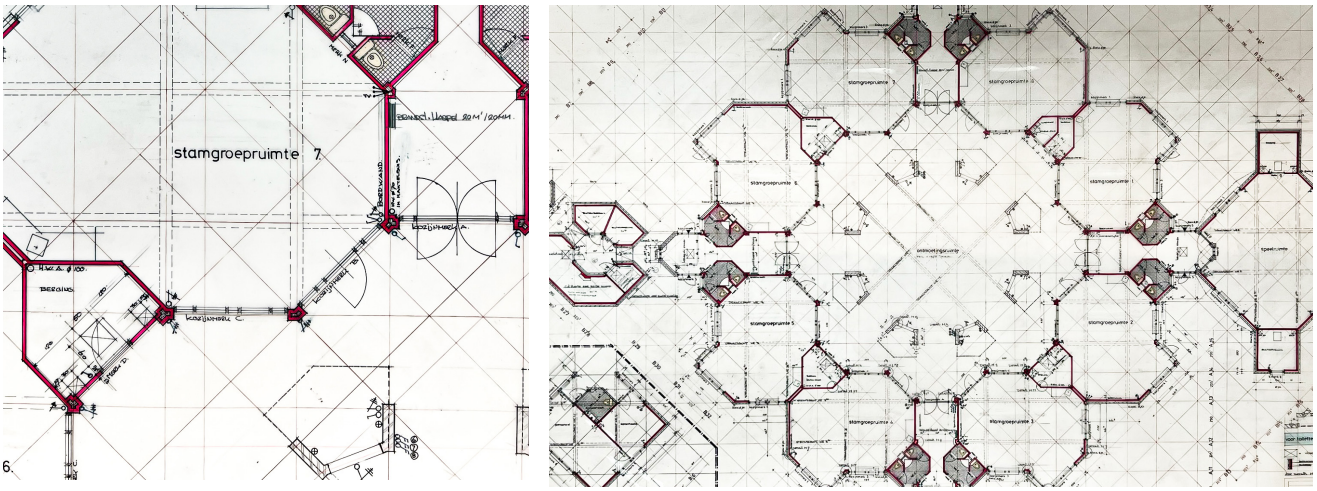
Techniques of traditional Japanese architecture. Inaba, N., & Nakayama, T. (1983).



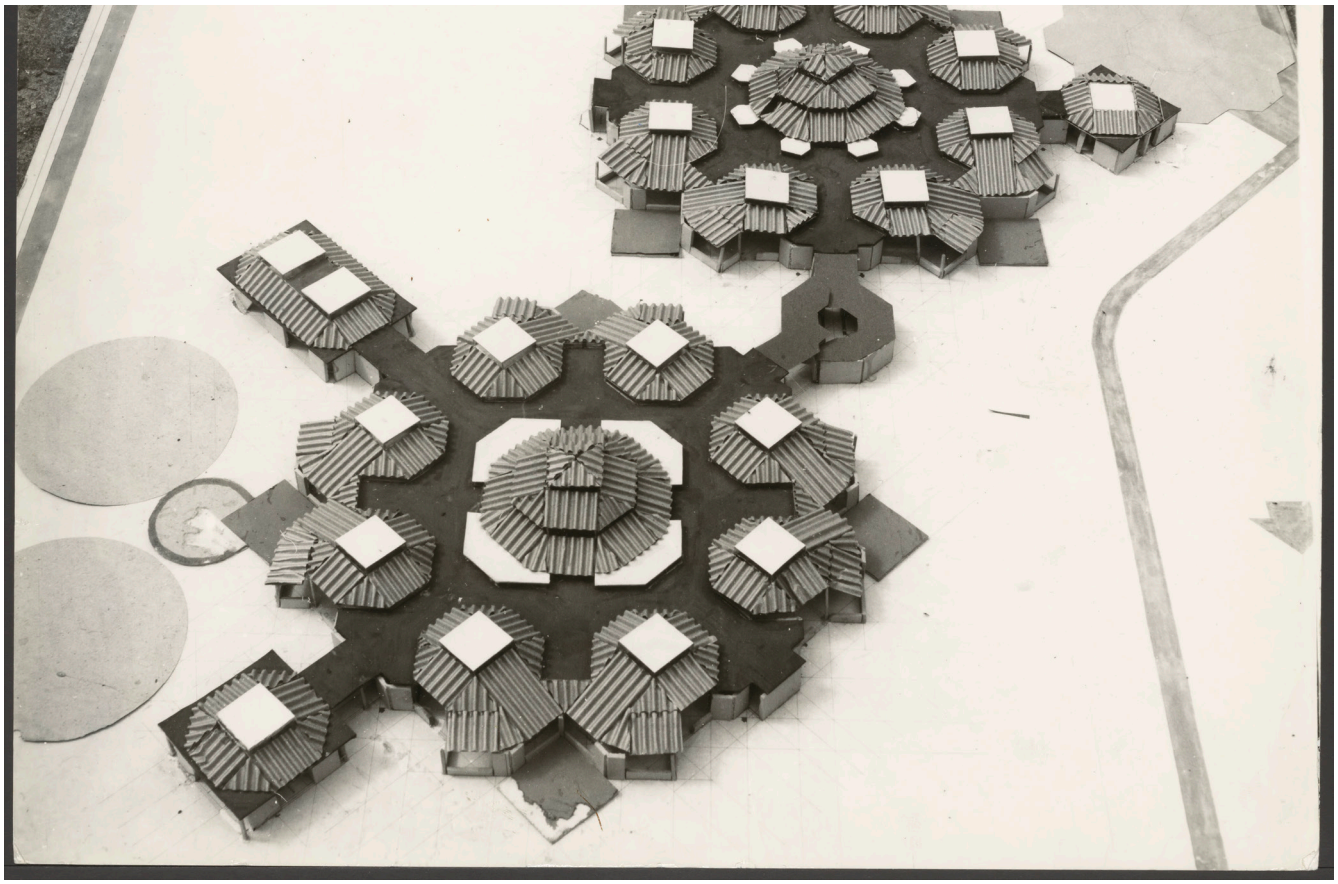
modern interpation of the engawa space by Lacaton Vassal. Transformation of 530 dwellings / Lacaton & Vassal + Frédéric Druot + Christophe Hutin architecture (Lacaton & Vassal, 2019).



In conclusion from the text and axonometry, a number of elements are important to the engawa. The elevation with the garden/street level provides the initial separation between these two spaces. Sometimes the engawa is open with the outdoor space, sometimes sliding panels are present and designed in different transparent materials. The engawa is equal to the floor height of the space behind. The separation of these spaces also consists the sliding panels. This gives the user the ability to control the climate and light. The dimensions of the engawa can vary but are mainly characterized by a hall-shaped structure.



Het Nieuwe Instituut, Final floorplan ground level de Vuurvogel



Het Nieuwe Instituut, Model school Heumen de Vuurvogel

Perhaps a familiar example is de Vuurvogel, a building designed by Jan Verhoeven. De Vuurvogel was built in 1978 in the municipality of Heumen and functions as a Jenaplan elementary school. Within the Jenaplan system, the individual and the relationship to the community is central [1]. Verhoeven designed the building with the idea that it should form a small community within a larger community. In doing so, he focused specifically on the transitional spaces between classrooms and how they reflect the community.

"From the individual, I want to try to come to a community. After all, we cannot live without each other. Many variations on this theme are possible, not only in terms of content: you can also express it in form." [2]
- Paraphrase by Jan Verhoeven in the publication "The sloping roof" M.A. gas + architecture (01-11-1974).

With this in mind, Verhoeven designed a transparent and social plan. As shown on the floor plan, the design consists of several octagons grouped around one large central octagon. All spaces are located on the first floor, creating a sense of equality in the architecture. As a result, most of the spaces are in equal proportion to each other and have good views of the surrounding playgrounds and vegetable gardens. The spaces are connected to both the surrounding outdoor spaces and the central interior hallway. There are multiple entrances to the building, without a clear main entrance. Because of this equal arrangement and the symmetry of the design, with identical octagons, Verhoeven was able to achieve a neutral facade in which no hierarchy is visible.

The only exception is the main reception hall. Designed as a larger octagon, this space has a unique construction that gives it a certain hierarchy. This is where the school community comes together. The meeting space is specifically designed to facilitate various social activities. The classrooms are accessed from this space. To create a subtle separation between the central space and the classrooms, Verhoeven introduced niches into the design. These niches are repeated radially and separate the entrances to the classrooms from the meeting space. They are constructed of brick and extend to the eaves. In the wall of the alcove is a rectangular opening that acts as a window between the meeting space and the space beyond. The side of the alcove facing the classrooms exuded more intimacy than the other side. Here there was a table and a chair, inviting a private moment for the user. The underlying idea was that a child could participate in the bigger picture but also focus on individual tasks. This reflected a broader social ideal: the user learns to relate to society as a whole, while remaining an individual within that society. Thus, the child learns to deal with both worlds and perspectives. The unusual design of the construction, in which not all elements are load-bearing, was intended to stimulate the user's imagination and inspire creative ideas. In addition, Verhoeven tried to use the construction to give a specific definition to the space so that it could be used for different events.

1.Zahle, M, Segaar-Höweler, DC, and Prins, A. (2012). Jan Verhoeven: Exponent van het structuralisme, 1926–1994. Rotterdam: Stichting Bonas.Wim van Heuvel. Structuralisme in de Nederlandse Architectuur (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1992).

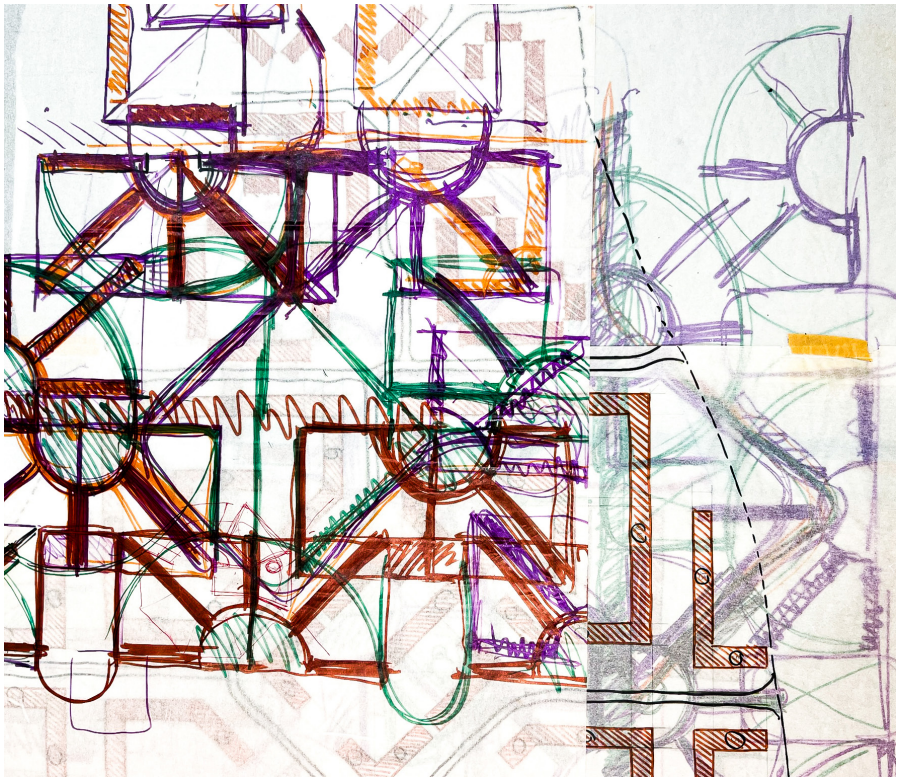
2.Paraphrase by Jan Verhoeven in the publication "The sloping roof" M.A. gas + architecture (01-11-1974).



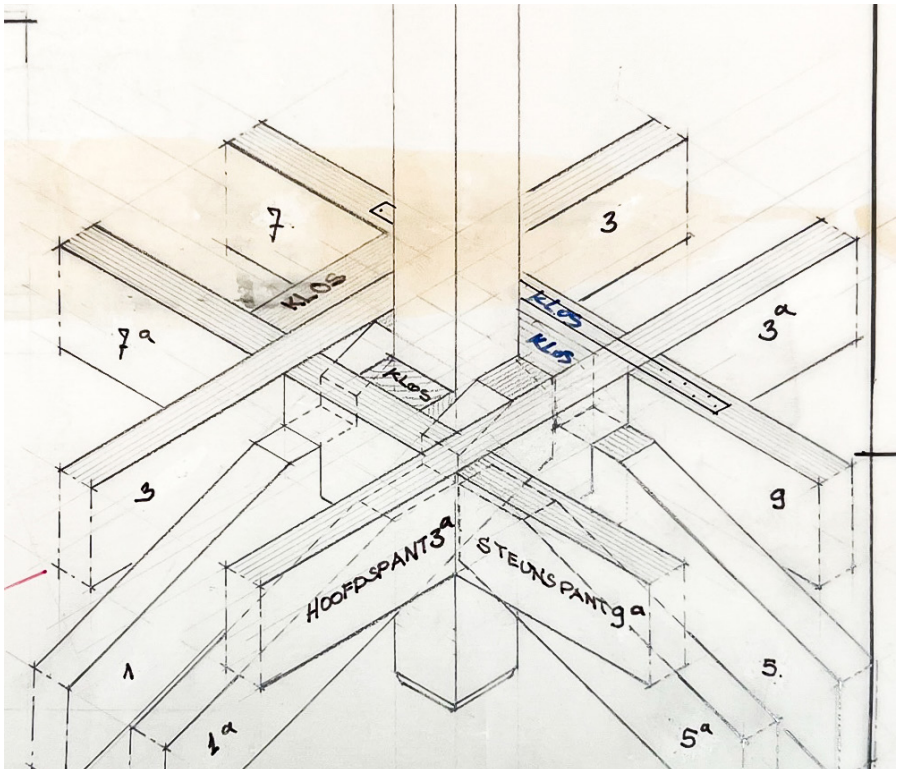
Het Nieuwe Instituut, "ontmoetings ruimte en de nis" de Vuurvogel



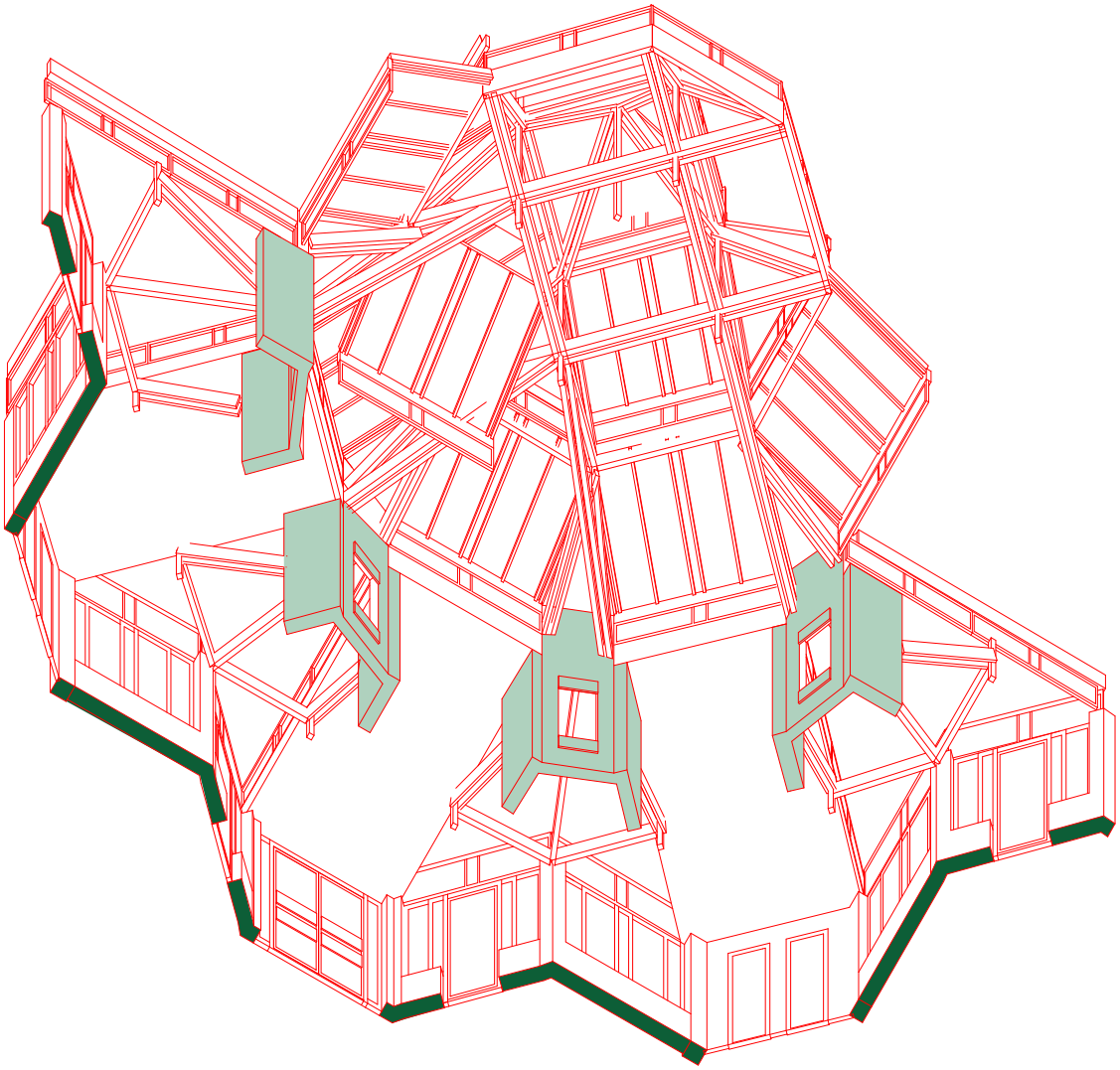
Het Nieuwe Instituut, wooden construction de Vuurvogel common hall



Het Nieuwe Instituut, first skechtes by Jan Verhoeven



Het Nieuwe Instituut, Details wooden construction in common hall De Vuurvogel

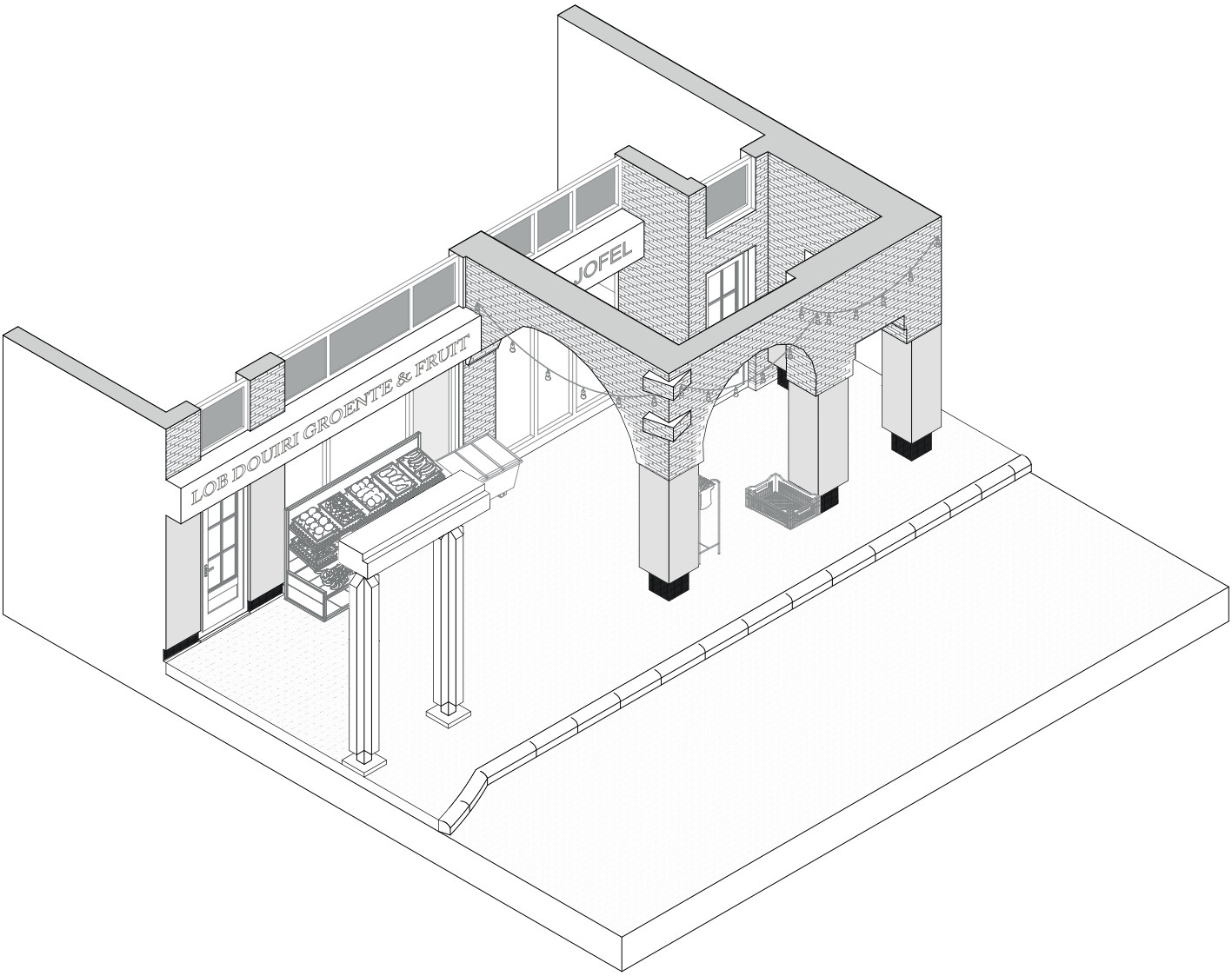


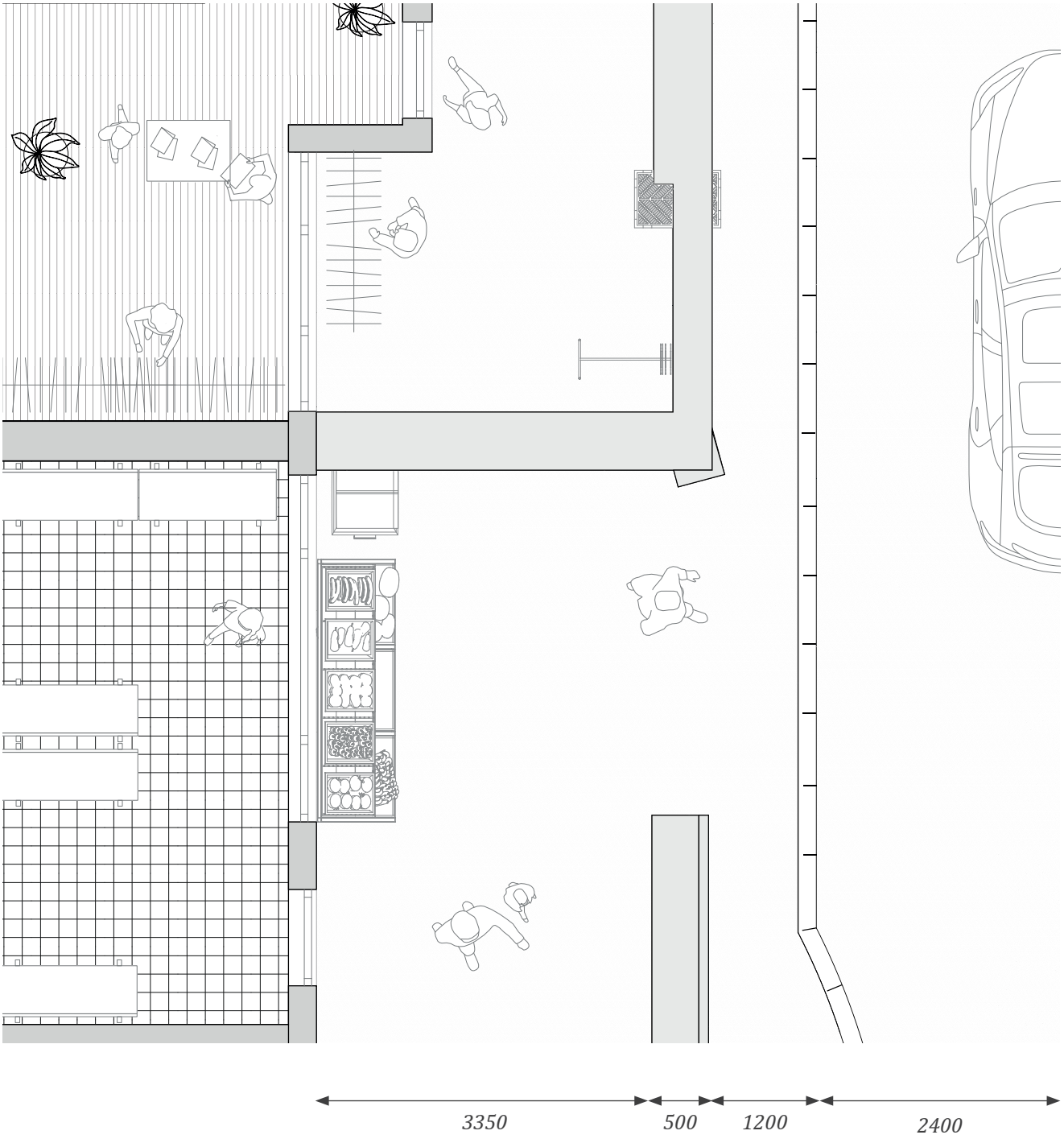
Summarizing from the text and axonometry, it was found that mainly the niches are a strong element which gives a soft separation between a large open space that is freely dividable. The niches allow for a moment of private behavior. This allows the user to choose to participate as an individual in the greater whole. Because there are openings in the niches, there is still contact between the space behind them and the meeting space. The design of the structure designed with extra attention ensures that more definition has been given to this space creating a slight form of hierarchy between this main meeting space and the surrounding classrooms.

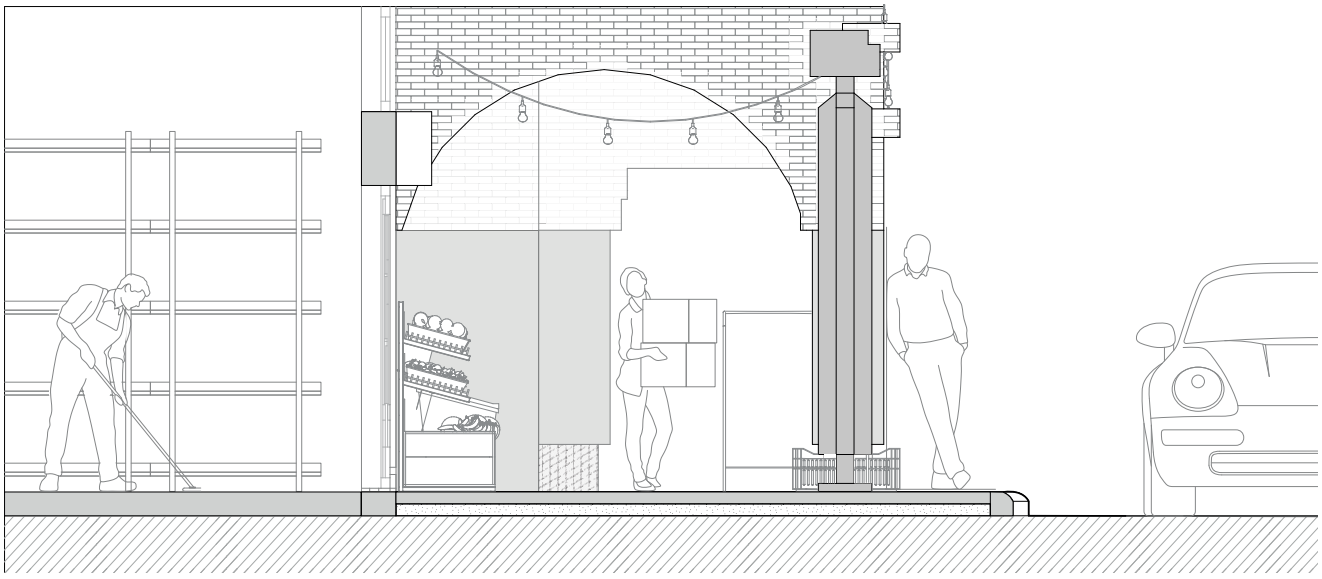


Thresholds manifesting in the urban and social tissue of Amsterdam Noord


JOFEL
SIRIUSSTRAAT
Tuindorp Oostzaan
JOFEL
open
JOFEL


JOFEL
LOB DOUIRI GROENTE & FRUIT


3350
500
1200
2400


3550

Type threshold: arcades

Posistion: entrances

Program: local shops

Visibility: semi visible

Light: shadow parts and light parts

Material:
yellow plaster
grey stone
smooth concrete
stones
brick different bonds
trespa
steel

Amount of floortextures: 1

Zones: 3

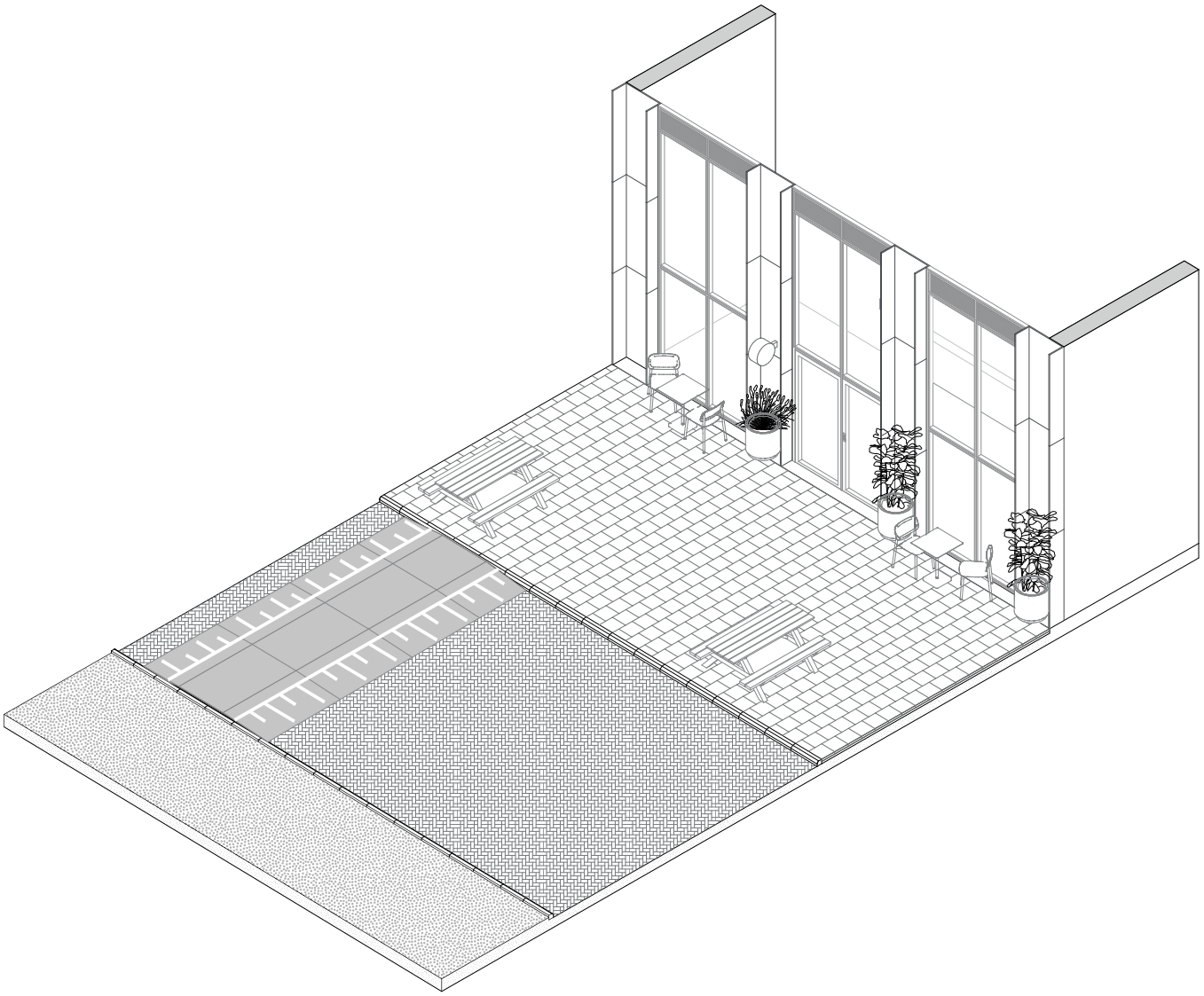
Possible to sit freely: no

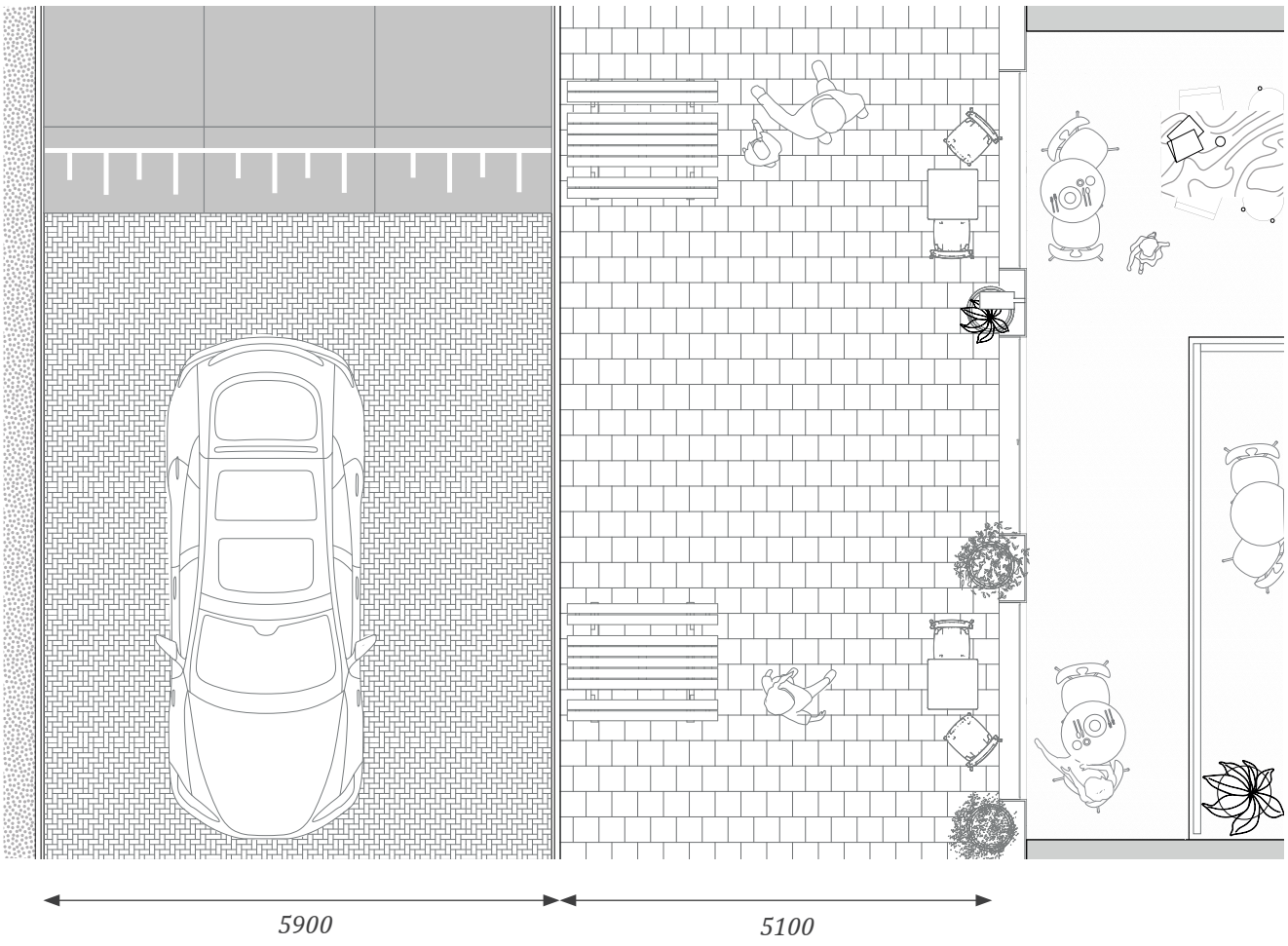
Shelter: Yes

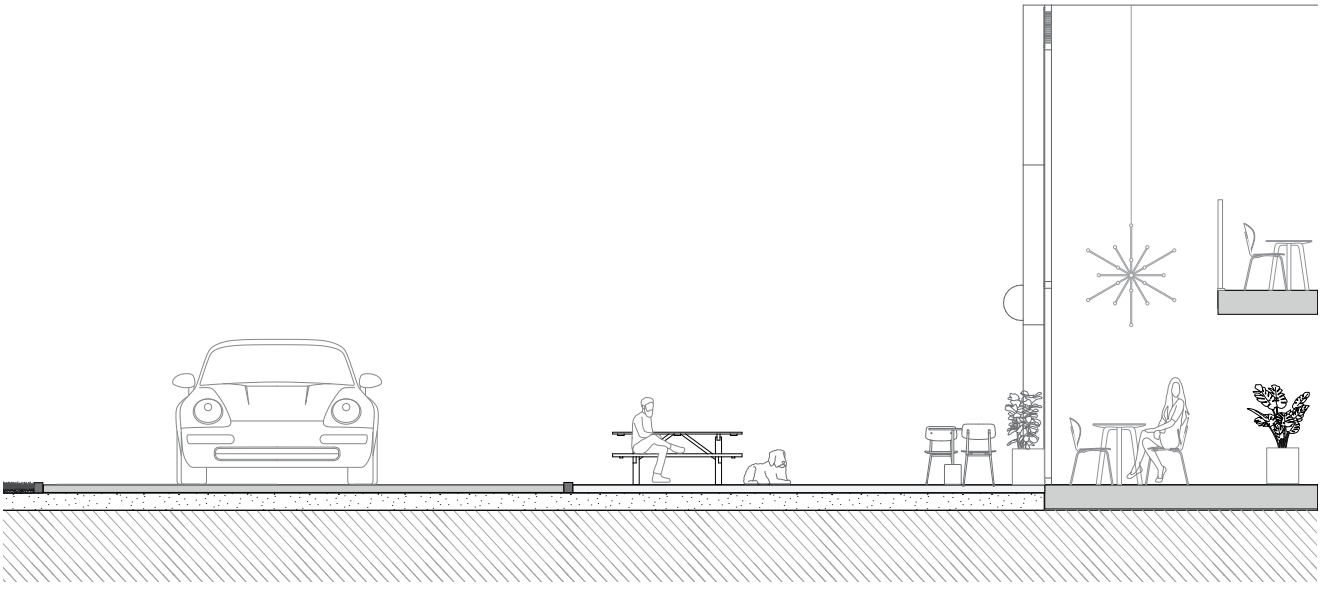
Elements: 8

Nooks: Yes


BAGELS & BEANS




5900
5100


3250
2200

Type threshold: entrance

Posistion: entrance

Program: coffee bar

Visibility: visible

Light: clear no shadow parts

Material:
Tiles 30x30
alumium
glass

Amount of floortextures: 1

Zones: 1

Possible to sit freely: no

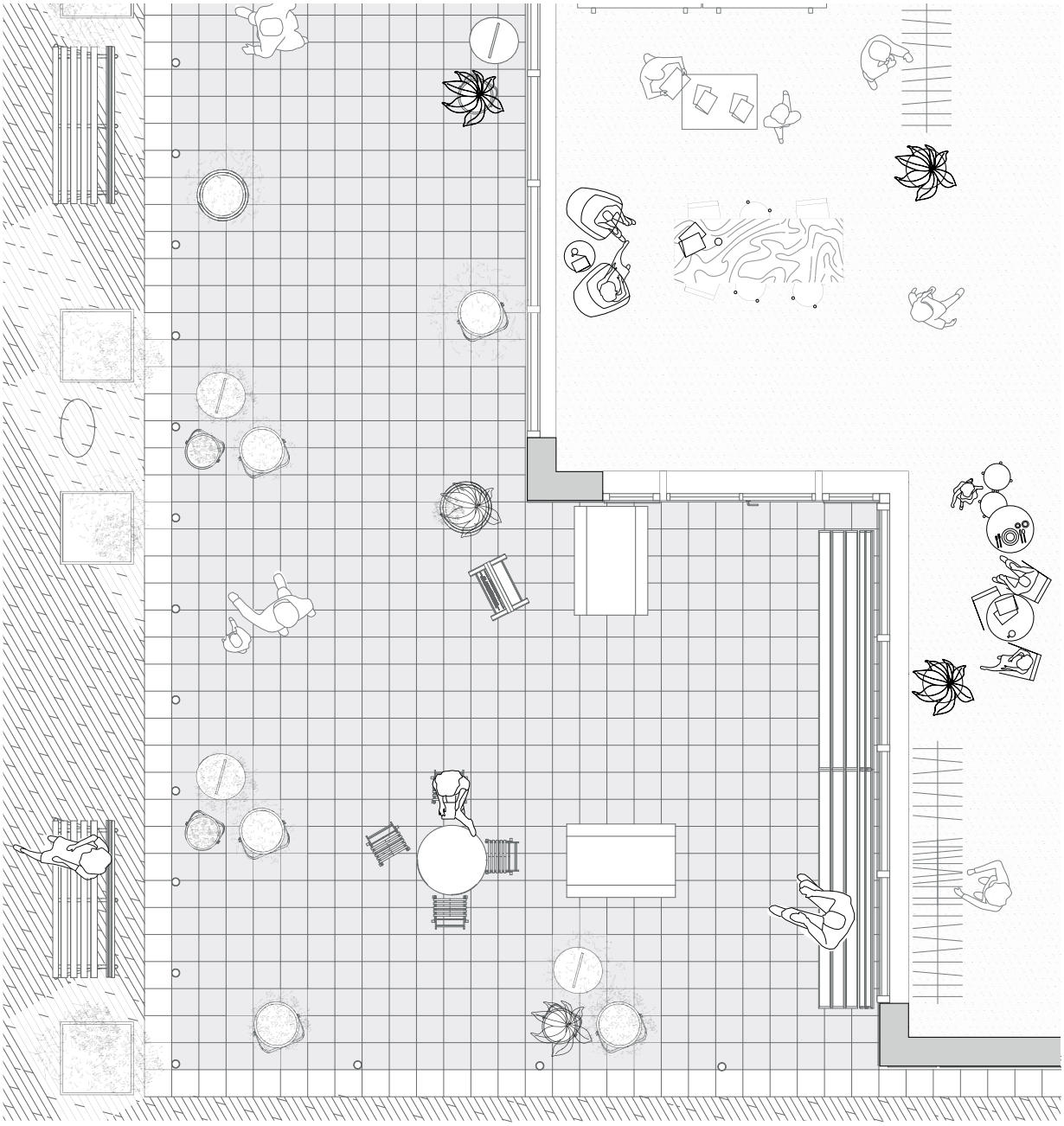
Shelter: no

Elements: 7

Nooks: no

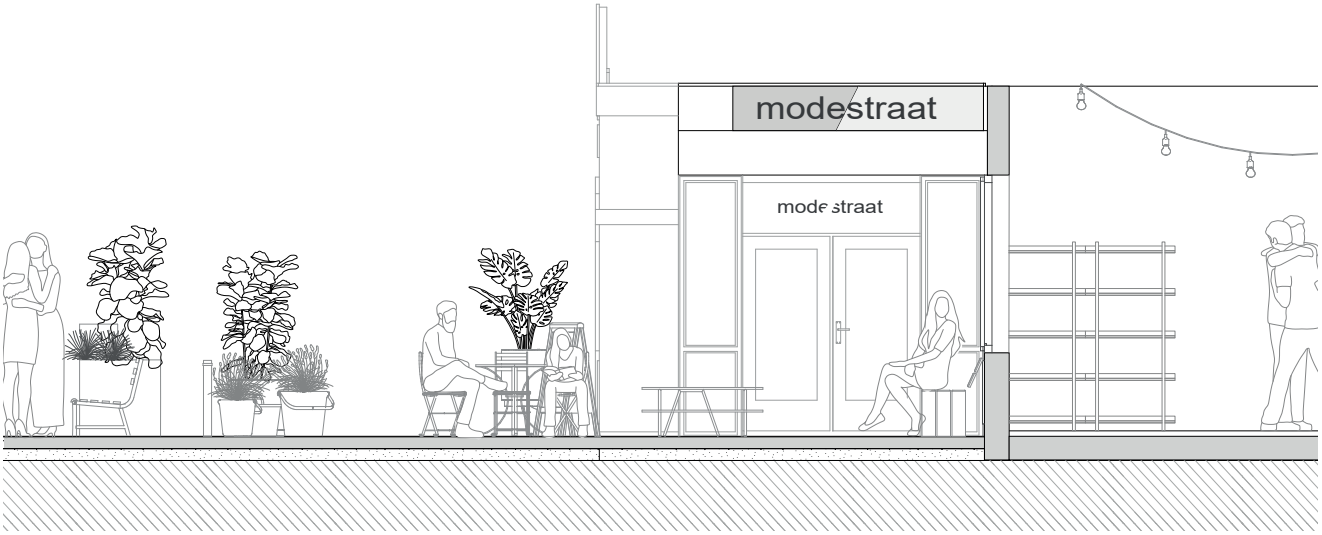

straat
workshops
koffie // lunch // ontmoeten
SPORTCITY


mode
ateliers
straat
workshops
modestraat
koffie
lunch
ontmoeten
mode straat



6200

3850



Type threshold: niche

Posistion: entrance

Program: civic centre

Visibility: visible

Light: clear, one shadow part

Material:
tiles 30x30 grey
white tiles 30x30
tiles pattern grey/white
trespa
glass
wood

Amount of floortextures: 3

Zones: 3

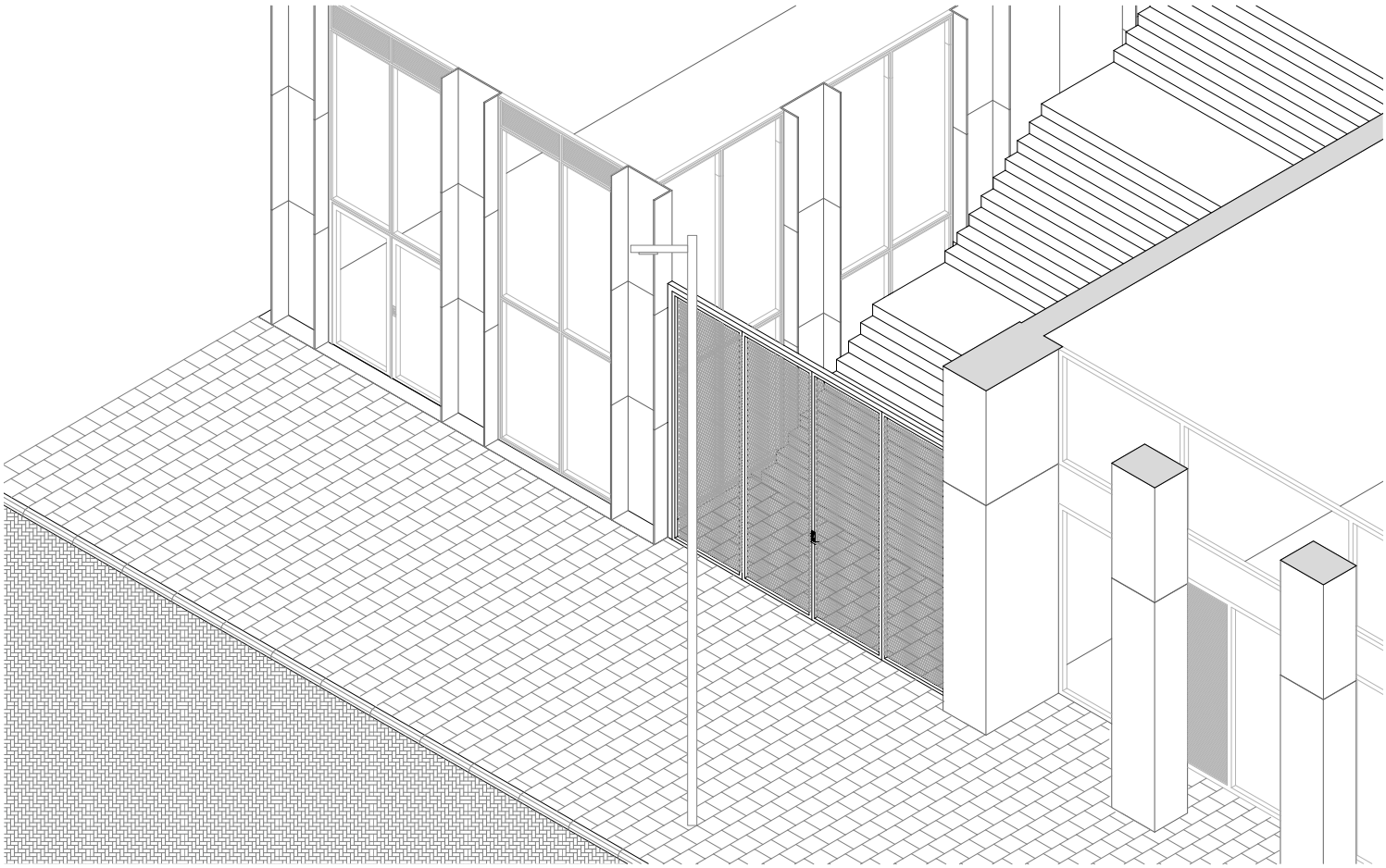
Possible to sit freely: yes

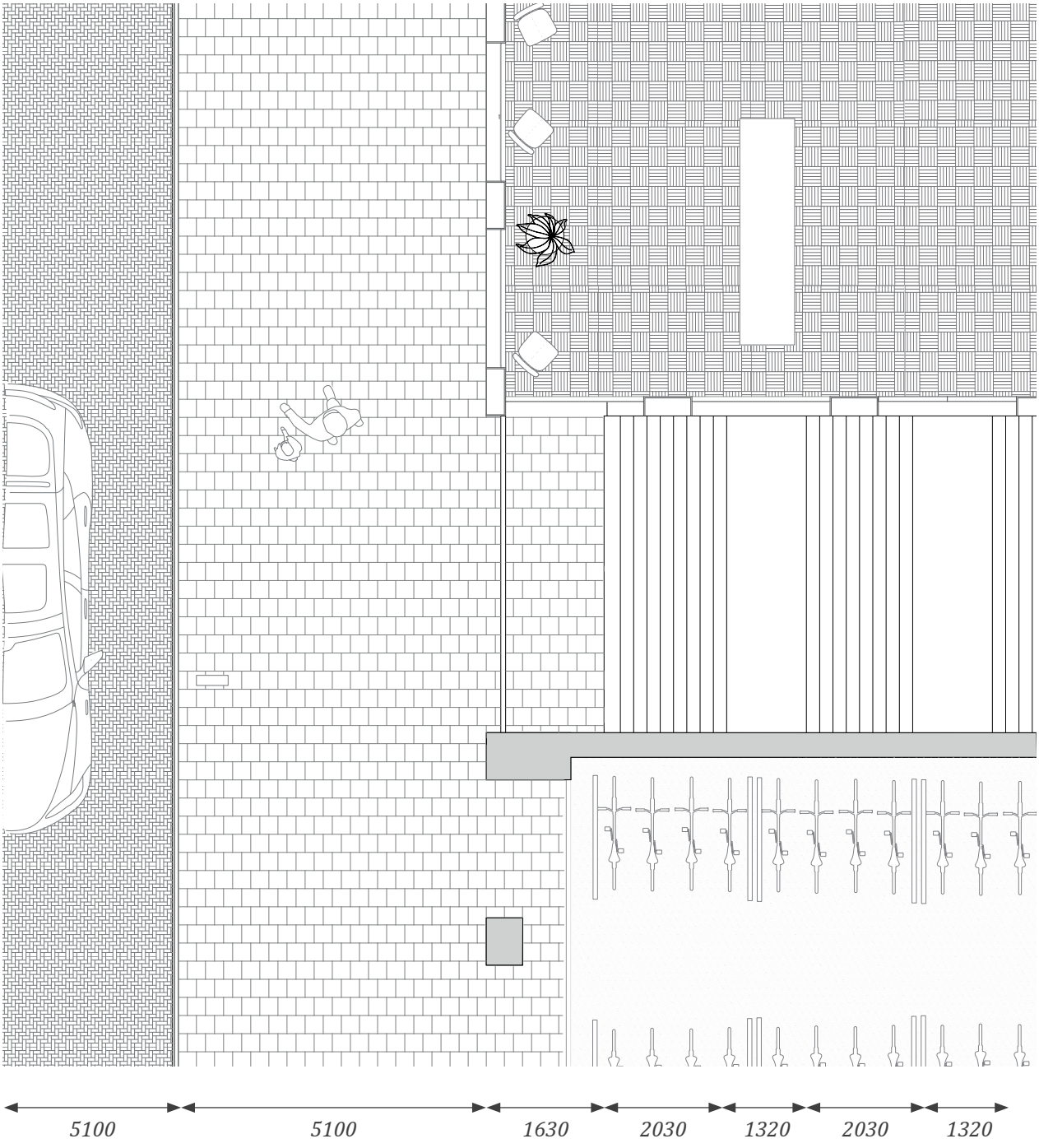
Shelter: no

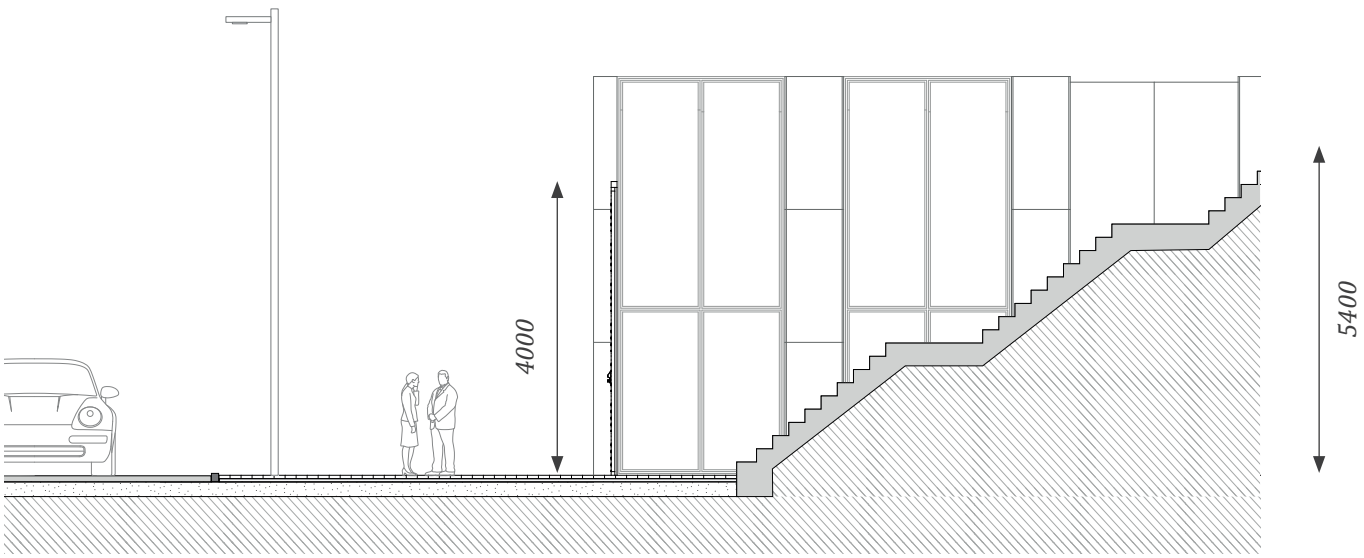
Elements: 27

Nooks: yes






5100
5100
1630
2030
1320
2030
1320


4000
5400

Type threshold: gate to courtyard

Posistion: entrances

Program: offices/appartments

Visibility: semi visible

Light: shadow

Material:
aluminium
tiles
concrete
mesh
glass

Amount of floortextures: 1

Zones: 3

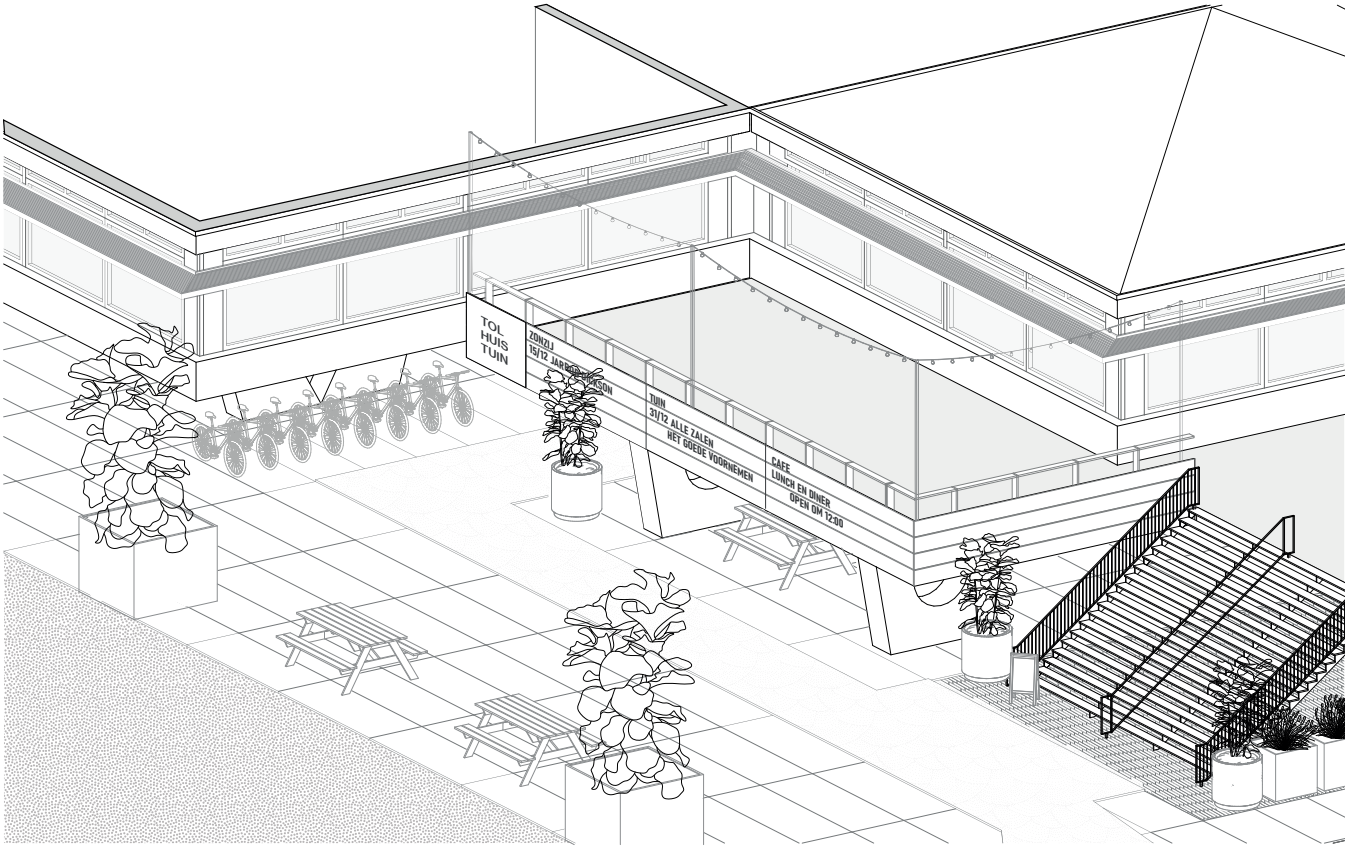
Possible to sit freely: no

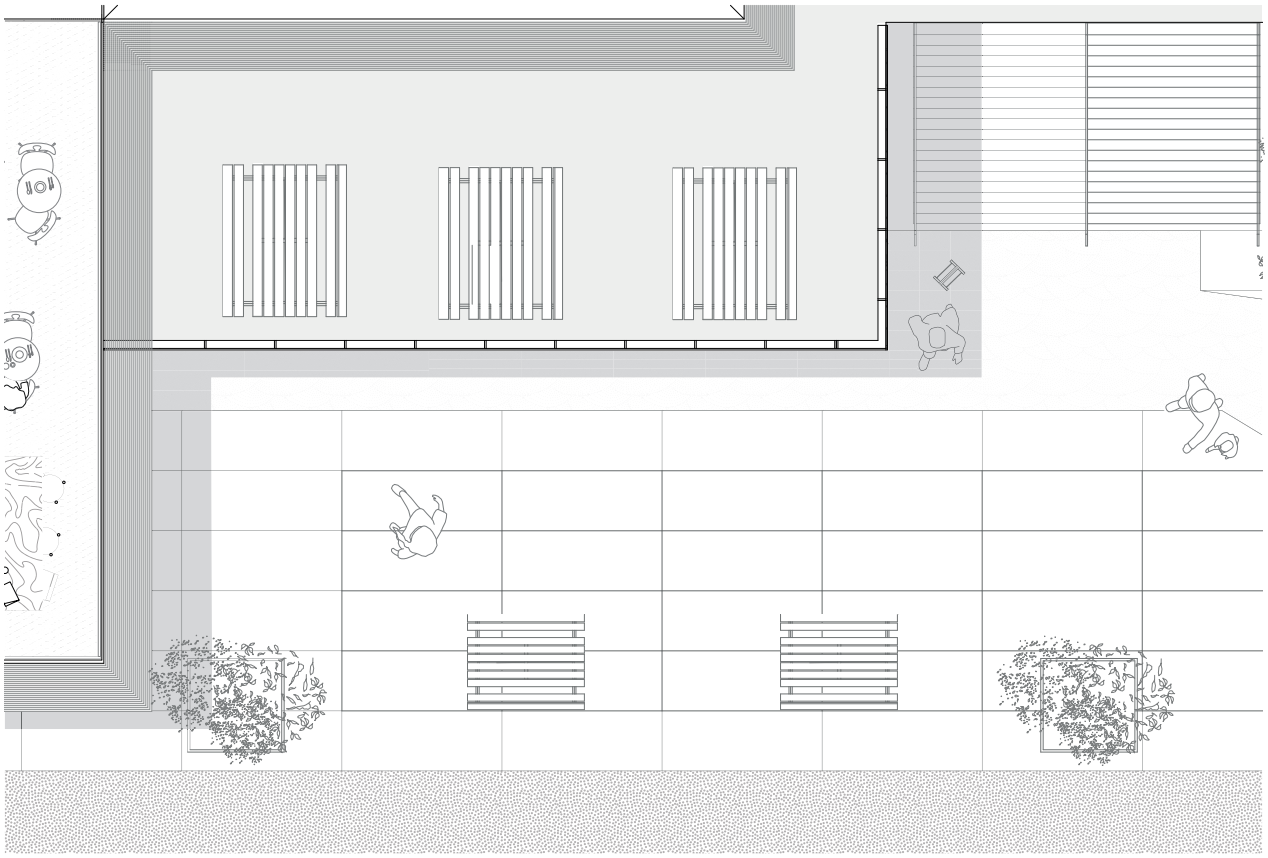
Shelter: no

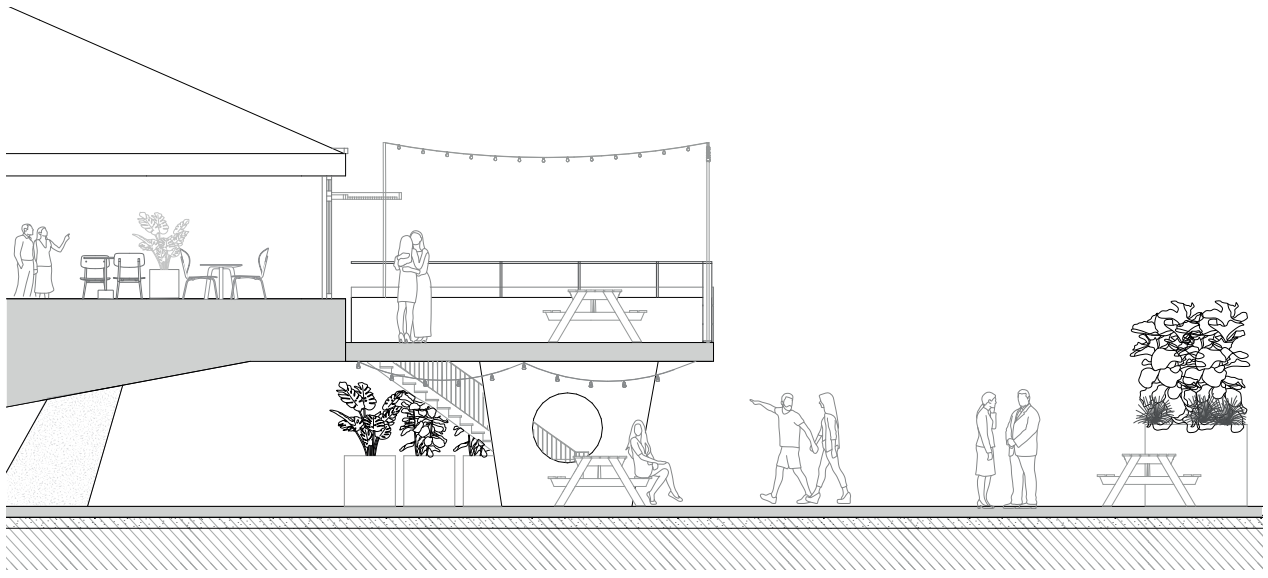
Elements: 0

Nooks: no


INGANG
RESTAURANT
KITCHEN


TOL
HUIS
TUIN
ZONDAG
15/12 JAR
TUIN
31/12 ALLE ZALEN
HET GOEDE VOORNEMEN
CAFE
LUNCH EN DINER
OPEN 6M 12:00


2400
6000


3300
2700

Type threshold: canopy

Posistion: entrances

Program: event centre

Visibility: semi visible

Light: shadow

Material:
smooth concrete
rough concrete
grey tiles 900x1200
red tiles 900x1200
bricks
pvc window frames
aluminium
wood panels

Amount of floortextures: 3

Zones: 4

Possible to sit freely: yes

Shelter: yes

Elements: 14

Nooks: no

Through axonometric drawings, floor plan illustrations, and cross-sections, an attempt has been made to answer the sub-question: *"Which different thresholds can be found in Amsterdam-Noord, and by which elements are these thresholds characterized in the realized urban fabric?"* Five different types of threshold spaces have been identified and further analyzed. By comparing various parameters, potential connections can be identified. The primary focus was on areas with more elements versus those with fewer elements. This analysis helps determine if and how the space is used. The elements also reveal human influences on the location. Examples of elements include benches, chairs, flower pots, containers, signs, lights, seating options, etc.

The first potential connection can be drawn between the number of floor patterns and the number of elements. For the threshold types gate and entrance, there are few distinct floor patterns. Similarly, few elements, particularly near the gate, are present. In contrast, at the niche, multiple floor textures and various patterns can be observed. Additionally, the drawings show that some elements are placed directly on these floor patterns, creating distinct transitional zones.
From the drawings, a potential connection emerges between the presence of two or more zones and the encouragement of element placement. For instance, in the arcades, the placement of columns breaks the sidewalk into three zones: under the canopy, the zone between the columns, and the area beside the columns. An element like a crate is placed against a column, while other elements are located under the canopy, within the zone between the column and the entrance.
Another, possibly, connection is the diversity of materials present in a space. In the drawings of the gate and entrance, there is minimal material diversity, whereas the canopy, arcades, and niche show a greater variety of materials.

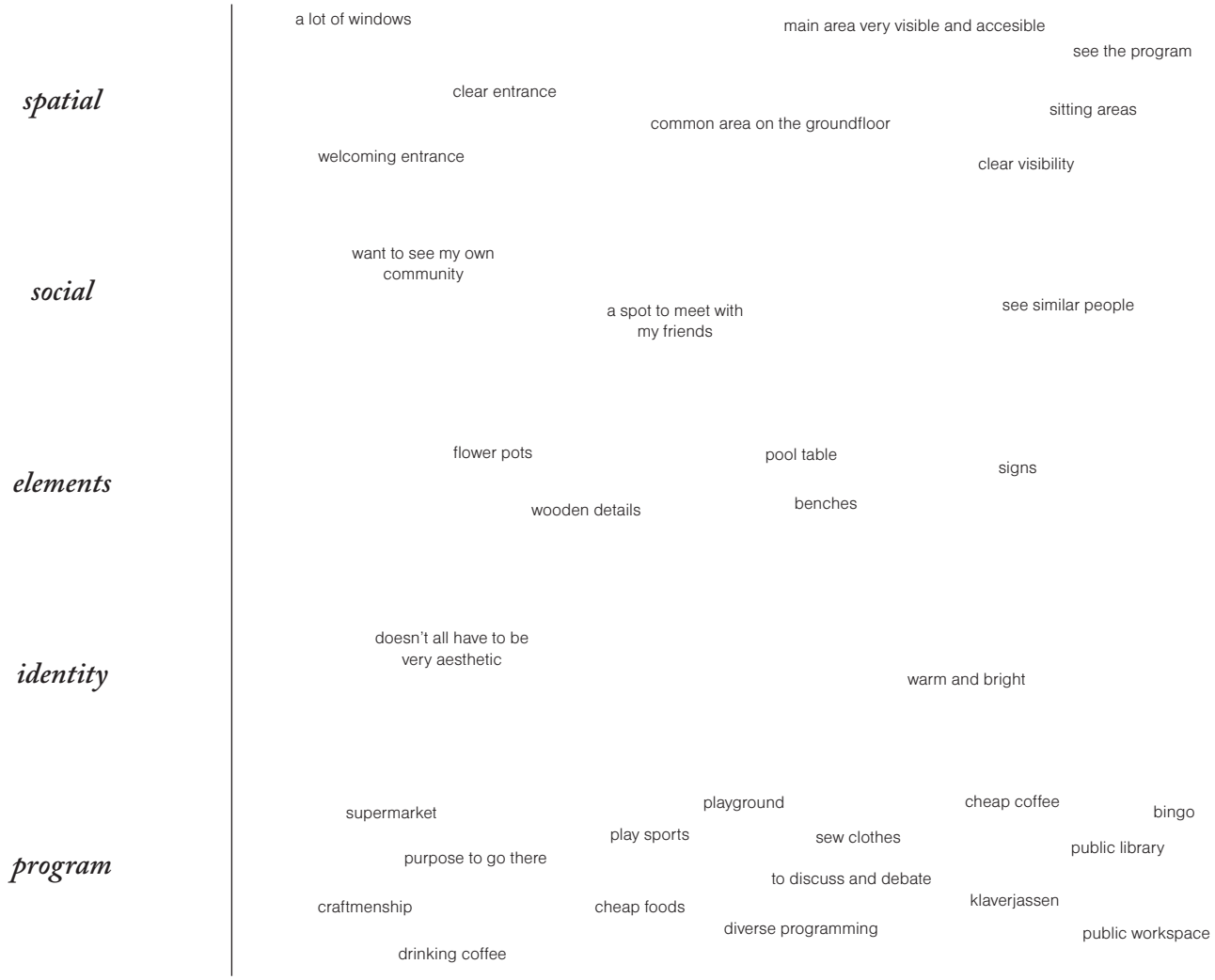
Nonetheless, the number of elements may also be influenced by the function associated with the space. The gate is located in an area with fewer social functions compared to other locations. However, the drawings of the entrance are linked to a coffeehouse, a meeting function. While the entrance contains more elements, the other locations still have more overall. This suggests that the previously mentioned connections may have a stronger influence than the associated function. Additionally, it is worth noting that the type of threshold itself could stimulate the placement of elements. To confirm this, more threshold spaces of similar types would need to be analyzed within the urban fabric of Amsterdam to create a well-founded comparison. Furthermore, the analyzed locations were observed in November and December, meaning that weather conditions may have impacted the placement of elements and how frequently the locations were visited.

In summary, the earlier mentioned potential connections, such as multiple floor patterns and the presence of multiple zones, can contribute to the placement of elements and thereby enhance the liveliness of the space

Not so physical thresholds in Amsterdam Noord

*“What would be a **threshold***
for you to enter a
community center?”

attractive


spatial
a lot of windows
main area very visible and accesible
see the program
clear entrance
sitting areas
common area on the groundfloor
welcoming entrance
clear visibility
social
want to see my own community
a spot to meet with my friends
see similar people
elements
flower pots
pool table
signs
wooden details
benches
identity
doesn't all have to be very aesthetic
warm and bright
program
supermarket
playground
cheap coffee
bingo
play sports
sew clothes
public library
purpose to go there
to discuss and debate
klaverjassen
craftmenship
cheap foods
diverse programming
public workspace
drinking coffee

unattractive

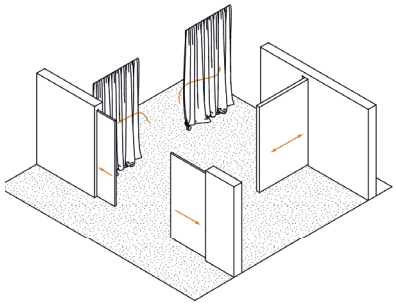


conclusion

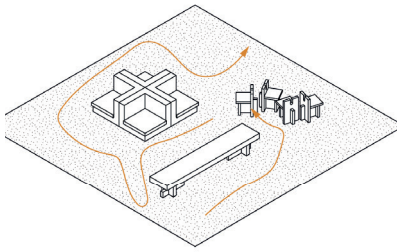
Various aspects emerged from the interviews. The tables show that a threshold can arise when people see a specific, non-familiar community present. Additionally, it can be a barrier for some individuals to enter a community center when the building appears closed and large, solid elements are placed in front of the entrance. In contrast, some interviewees mentioned that they would find it more inviting if it were clear what is happening inside and if there were a clearly visible entrance. Regarding the appearance of the building, interviewees noted that it would be a deterrent if the building looked old and dirty. At the same time, a building that appears too rigid, cold, or overly modern could also act as a barrier for visitors.

The interviewees often indirectly described what they would find appealing in a community center. Various programs were mentioned, such as a library, creative activities, a supermarket, and a place to eat. Coffee was the most frequently mentioned activity, as noted in the interviews in the appendix. Some elements, such as flower pots, benches, and signs, were suggested by interviewees as welcome additions that could lower the threshold for entry. Other mentioned terms primarily reflected a reaction to what interviewees found unappealing, such as large windows, visibility, and the opportunity to see people from their own community.

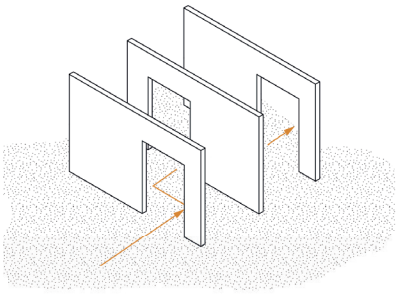
To conclude, thresholds for community centers can include physical barriers like closed-off entrances or outdated and unwelcoming designs, as well as social factors such as unfamiliar groups occupying the space. Addressing these issues by incorporating open and transparent layouts, inviting entrances, and relatable design elements can significantly reduce these thresholds.



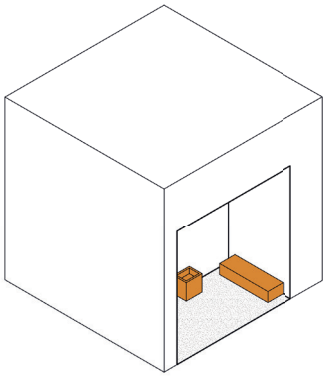
1. holding the momentary



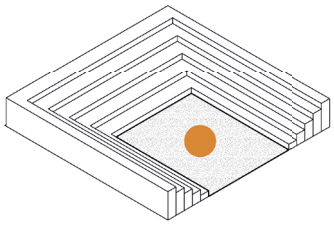
2. responsive elements



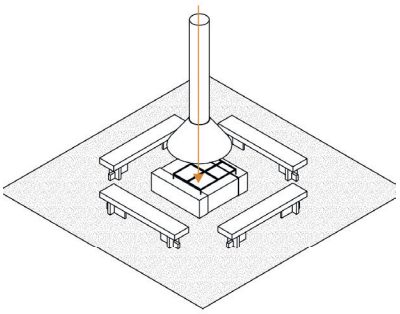
3. discontinuity



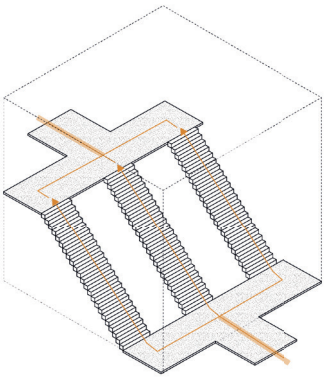
4. the niche



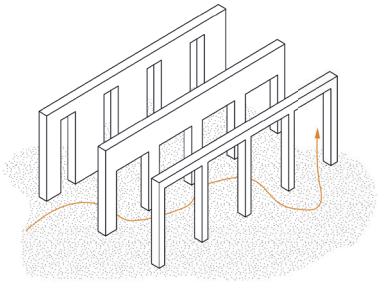
5. the stage



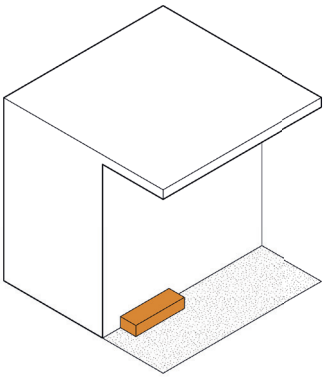
6. anchor elements



7. non hierarchy routes



8. the liminal space



9. the canopy

The images shown on the left page represent all the spatial elements that came out of the research and fieldwork. These elements were collected by mapping and making analytical drawings of various reference projects. Each element reflects a specific spatial quality or condition—ranging from holding the momentary, anchor elements, to the liminal space. Together, they form a catalogue of design tools that can help define and enrich threshold spaces.

These elements are not fixed solutions, but rather flexible tools that can be adapted to different contexts and scales. Some work well on a small, intimate scale—such as the niche or the stage, offering space for pause, interaction or retreat. Others—like non-hierarchy routes or responsive elements—can structure larger flows, guide movement, or respond to the dynamics of the urban environment. The combination and layering of these elements allow for diverse spatial experiences within the threshold zone.

What they all share is their potential to create moments of transition, connection, or even disruption—qualities that are central to threshold spaces. They are not only spatial in form, but also experiential in nature. These findings will be tested and explored further in the design phase for the project site: De Bowling.

Since threshold spaces are always strongly connected to their urban and social context, the next part of this booklet will zoom in on the site itself. Understanding its specific spatial conditions, flows, and narratives is essential to see how these elements can be applied, adapted or reimagined in the real setting.

Site

Despite the detailed information already provided about the Bowling, this section offers a short overview of the building and its context. The Bowling is located on Buikslotermeerplein in Amsterdam-Noord and was designed in 1981 by Jan Brouwer Architects. It forms part of a larger ensemble with shopping center Boven 't Y, the elevated parking deck, and residential building 't Wardeschip. The area was developed during a period of large-scale urban expansion in Amsterdam-Noord, following a modernist approach focused on accessibility and car use.

Originally intended as a bowling alley, the building later became a local meeting place under the initiative of owner André. Between 2006 and 2015, he organized weekly events for the elderly and people with disabilities, turning the space into a social hub rather than a purely commercial venue. His efforts, supported by neighborhood residents, gave the building new meaning within the community.

This introduction uses archive drawings, historical maps, and early design sketches to give insight into the development of both the Bowling and Buikslotermeerplein. Additionally, stills from the documentary Man bijt hond: De Bunker provide a visual impression of how the building was used and perceived during its active years.




BOWLING
NOORD
LOKATIE


BOWLING
NOORD
PEACE
NOW


Gezocht:
Cultuur-
optimisten
OPERA
Gala


ÖLM
pilsener
BOWLING





Het Parool

Bowling Noord op Buikslotermeerplein gekraakt

Een groep van ongeveer tien mensen heeft afgelopen zondag Bowling Noord aan het Buikslotermeerplein in Noord gekraakt.

Door: Hannah Stöve 22 maart 2016, 18:30

Bewaren Delen



'Troosteloos' Buikslotermeerplein ondergaat gigantische metamorfose: niet alleen meer voor oude Noorderlingen



→ Bowling Noord werd in 2016 gekraakt, daarna besloot de gemeente dat het moest worden gesloopt. Een groep actieve Noorderlingen stak daar een stokje voor. 'Het hoort echt bij het Buikslotermeerplein.' Jakob van Vliet

Articles about de Bowling (Parool, 2024)

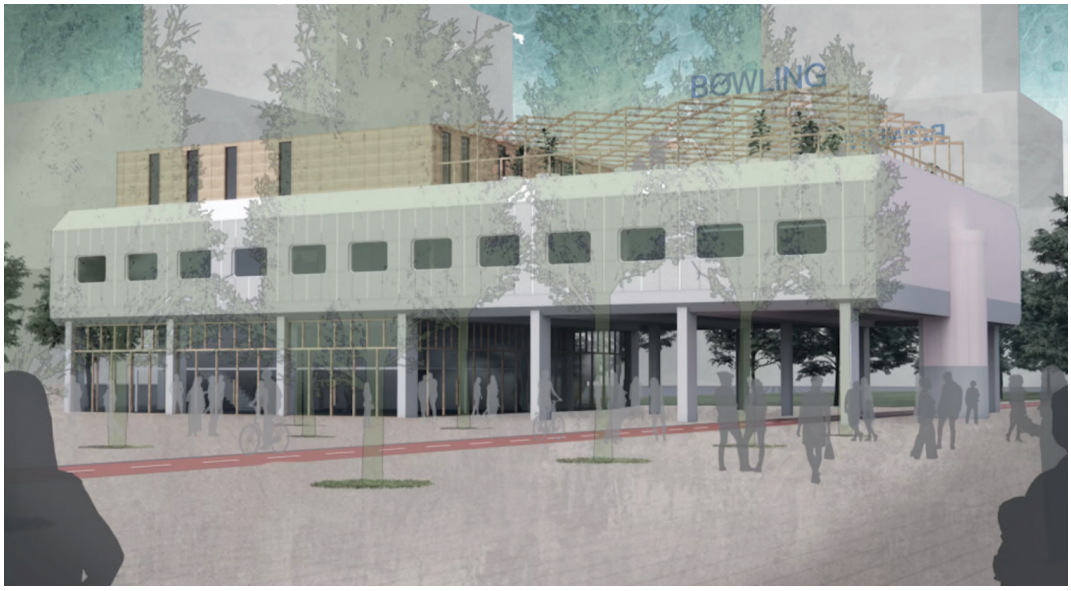








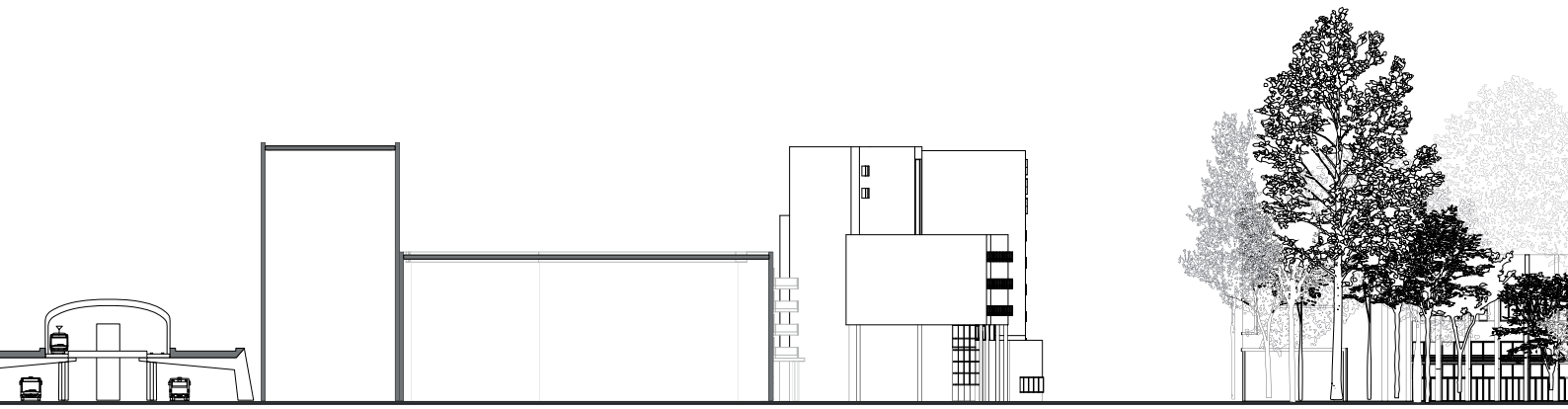
Images from the documentary De Bunker by Man Bijt Hond (NCRV, 2012)

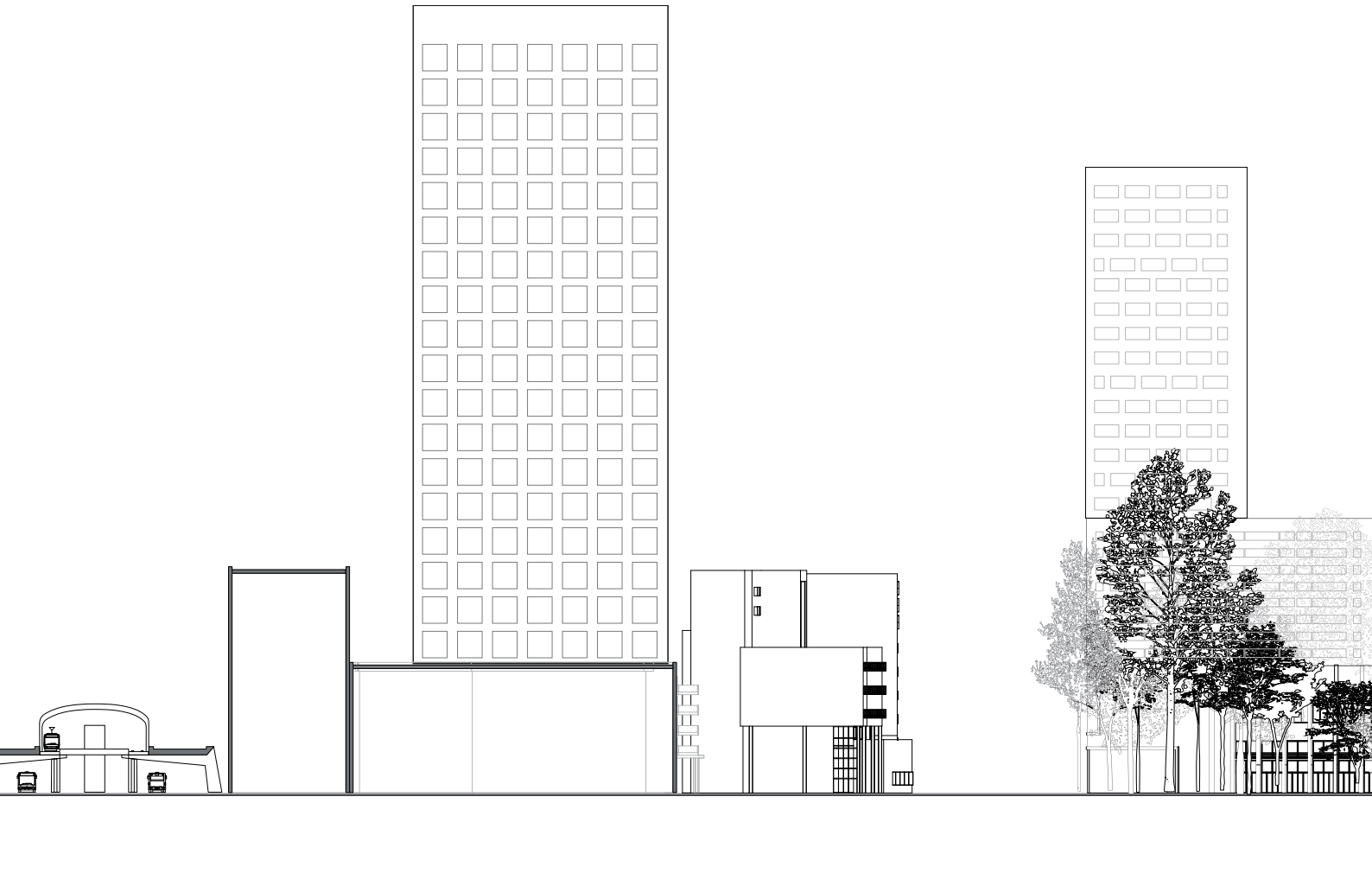




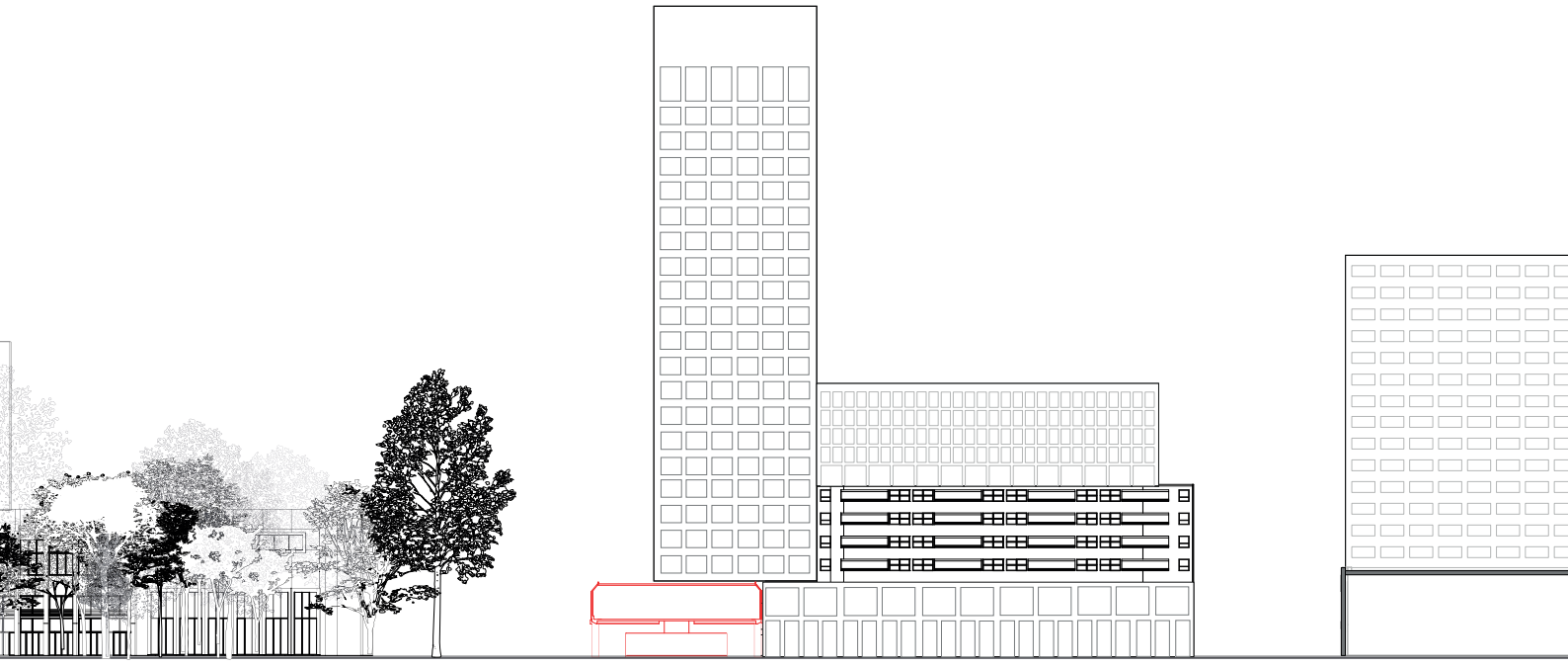
Impresions of the new design for de Bowling by De Nieuwe Ruimte (De Nieuwe Ruimte, 2024)

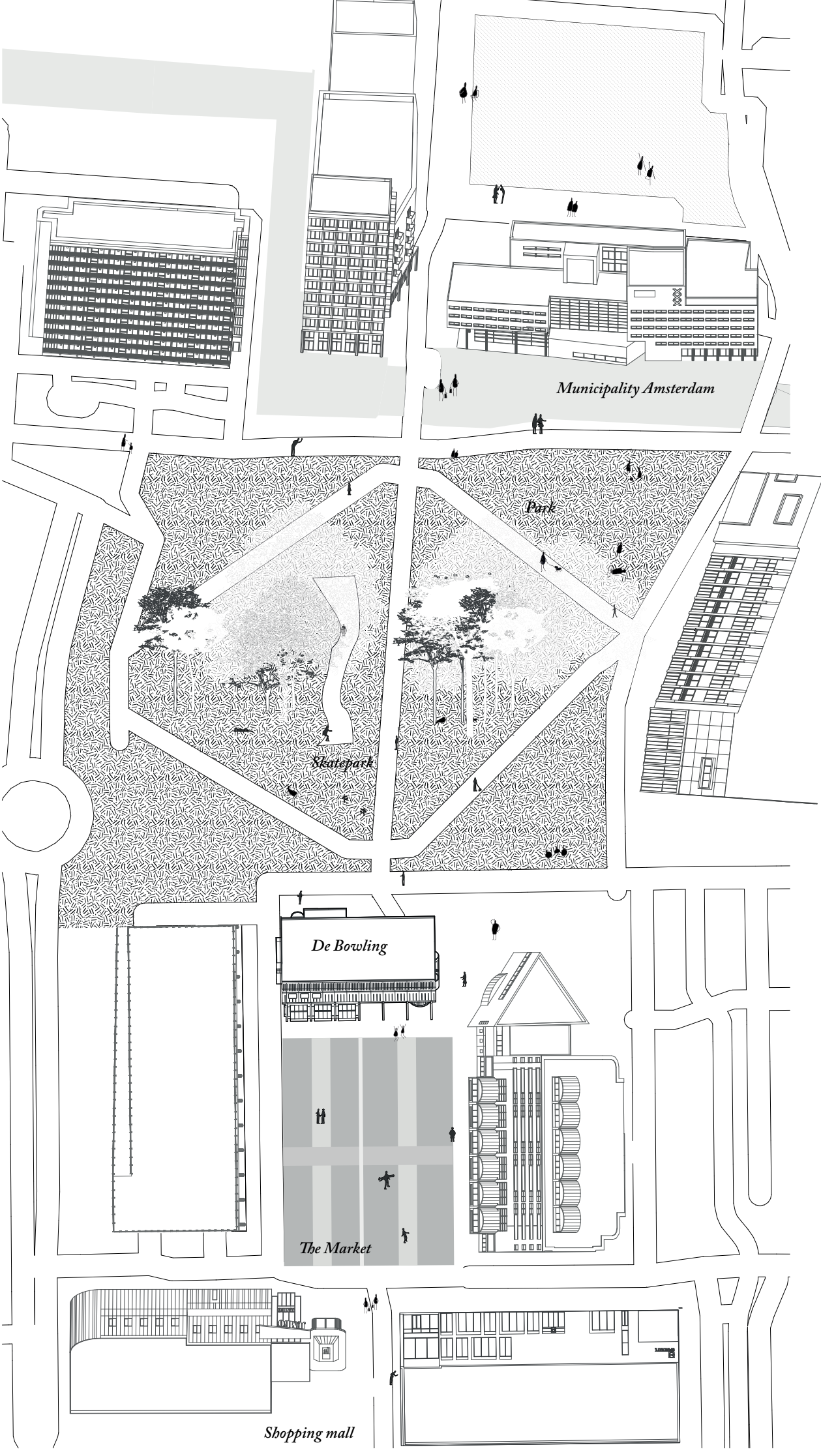
Urban section 1:1000 – existing and new situation according to the new plans of the municipality



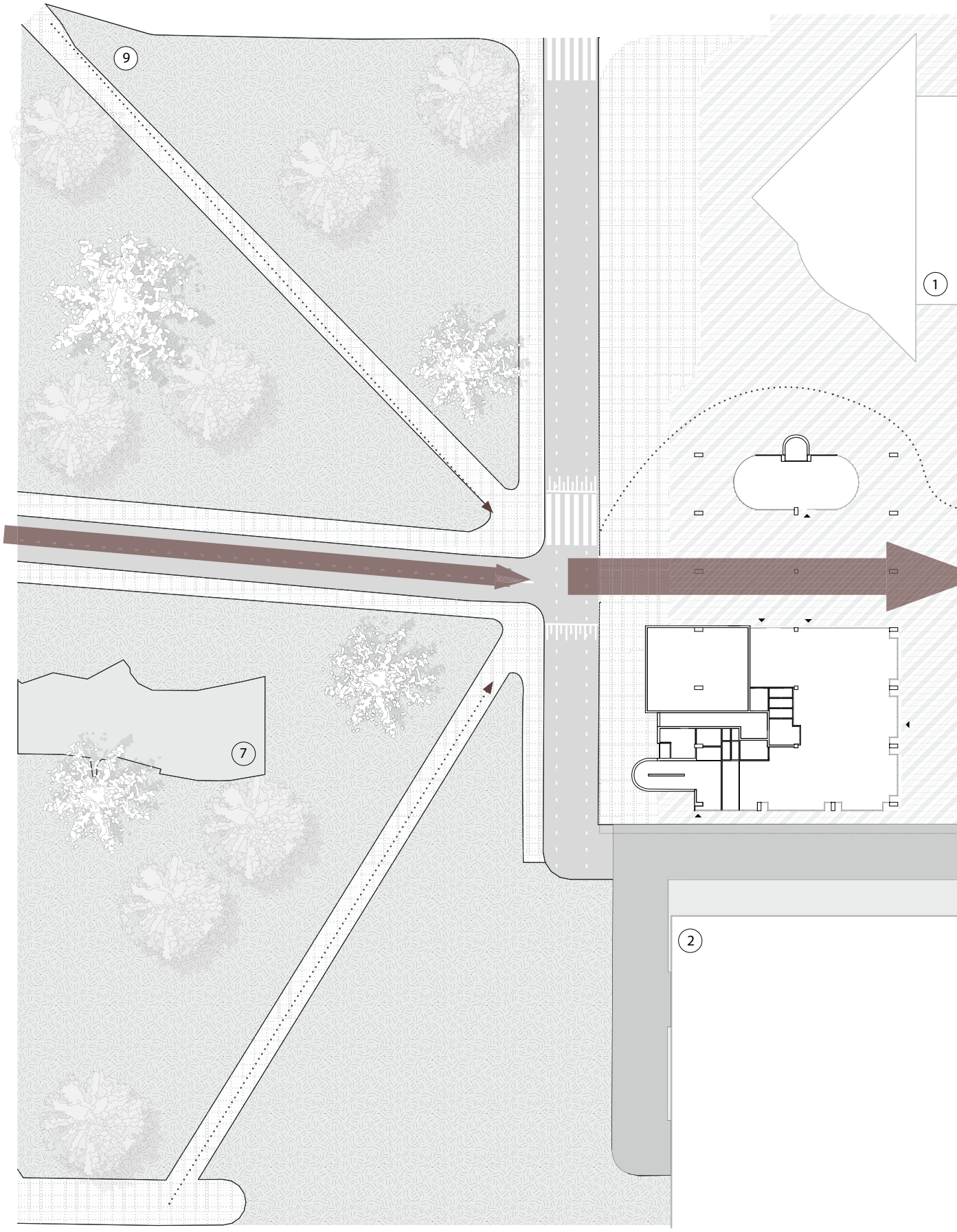






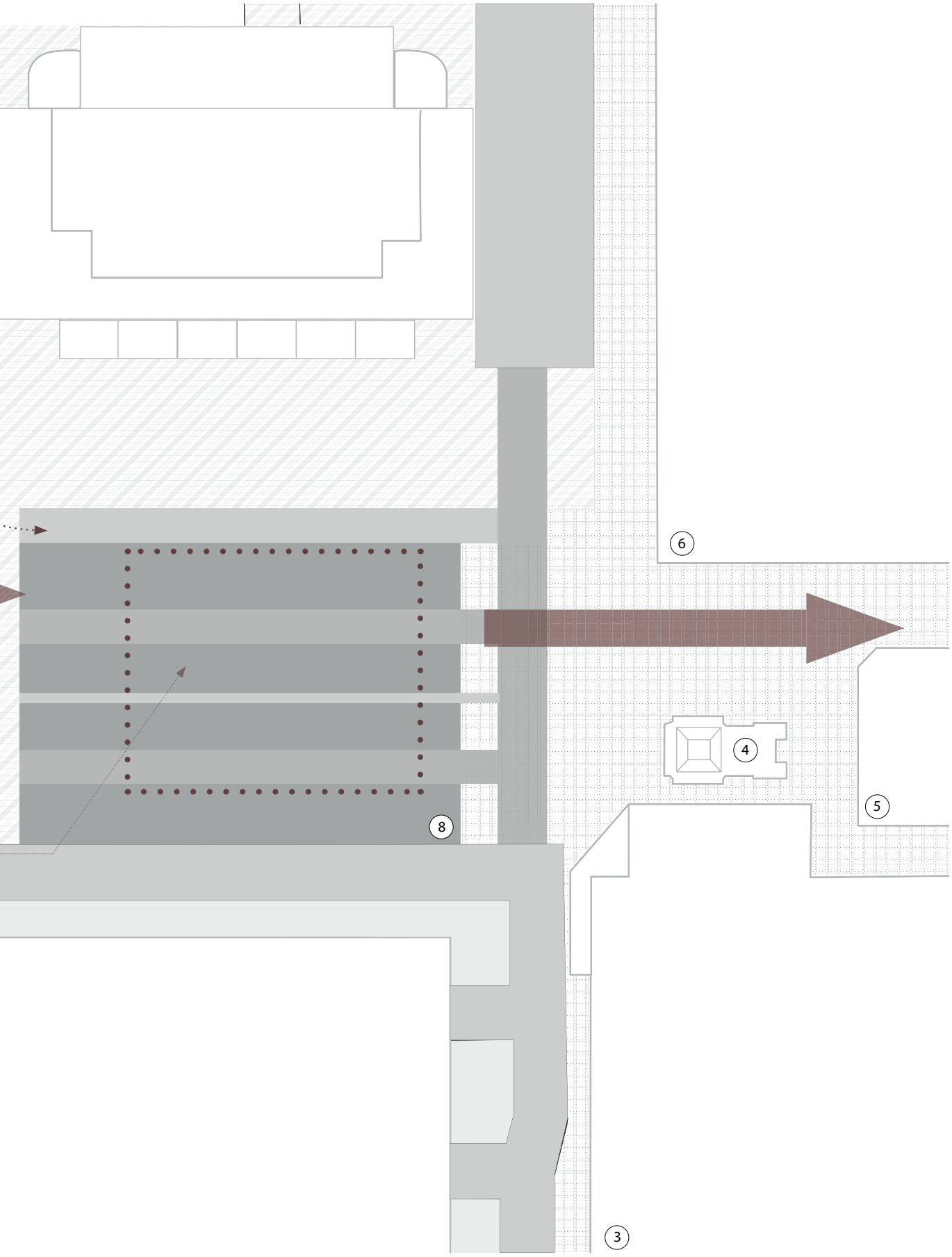

Municipality Amsterdam
Park
Skatepark
De Bowling
The Market
Shopping mall

Existing flow from metrostation Noord-Zuid to the shopping mall Boven 't Y surrounded with the ajdecent facades



1. 't wardeschip
2. parking deck
3. jumbo
4. febo
5. albert heijn
6. lidl
7. skatepark
8. market square

Site plan 1:500



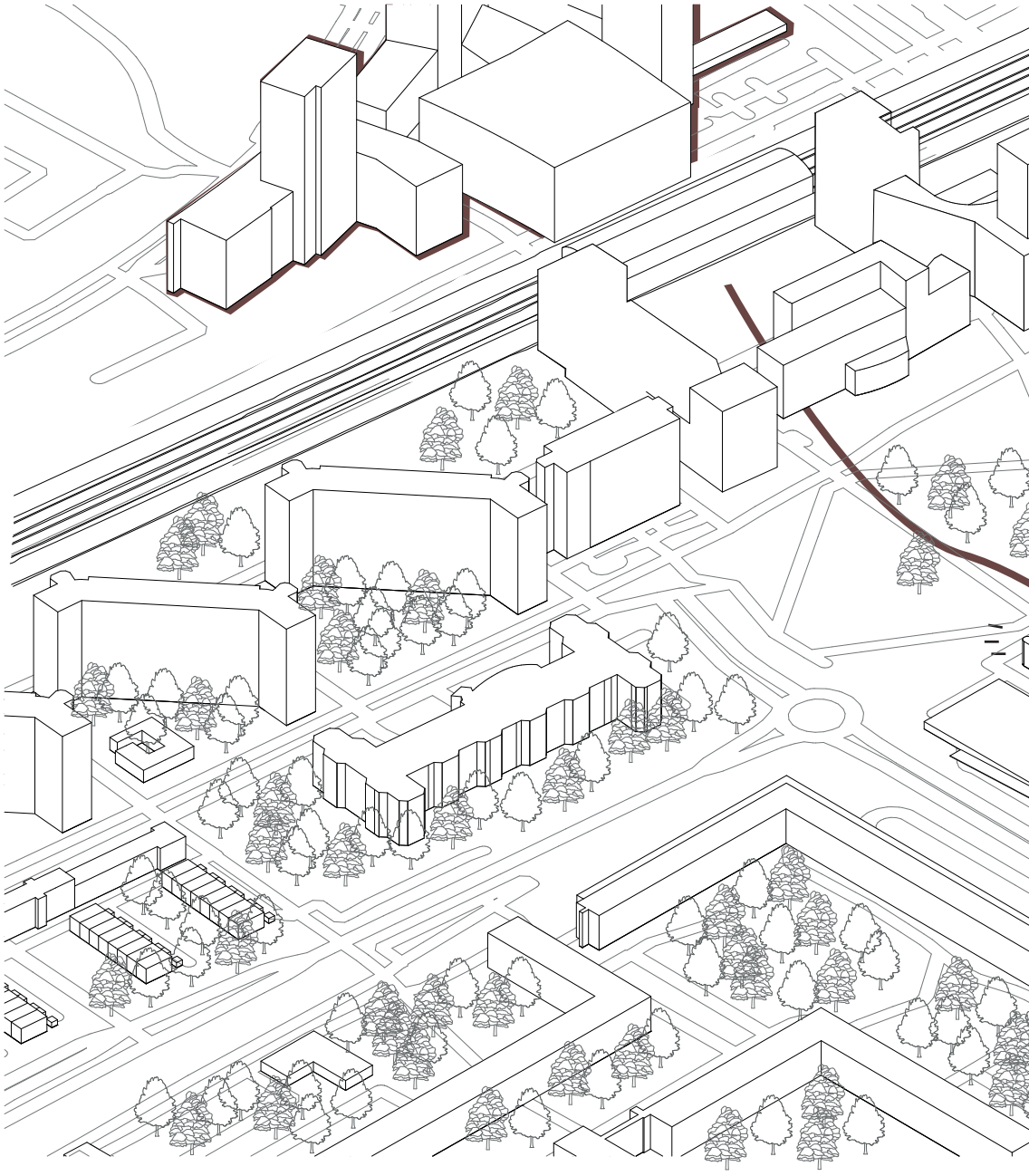
9. park



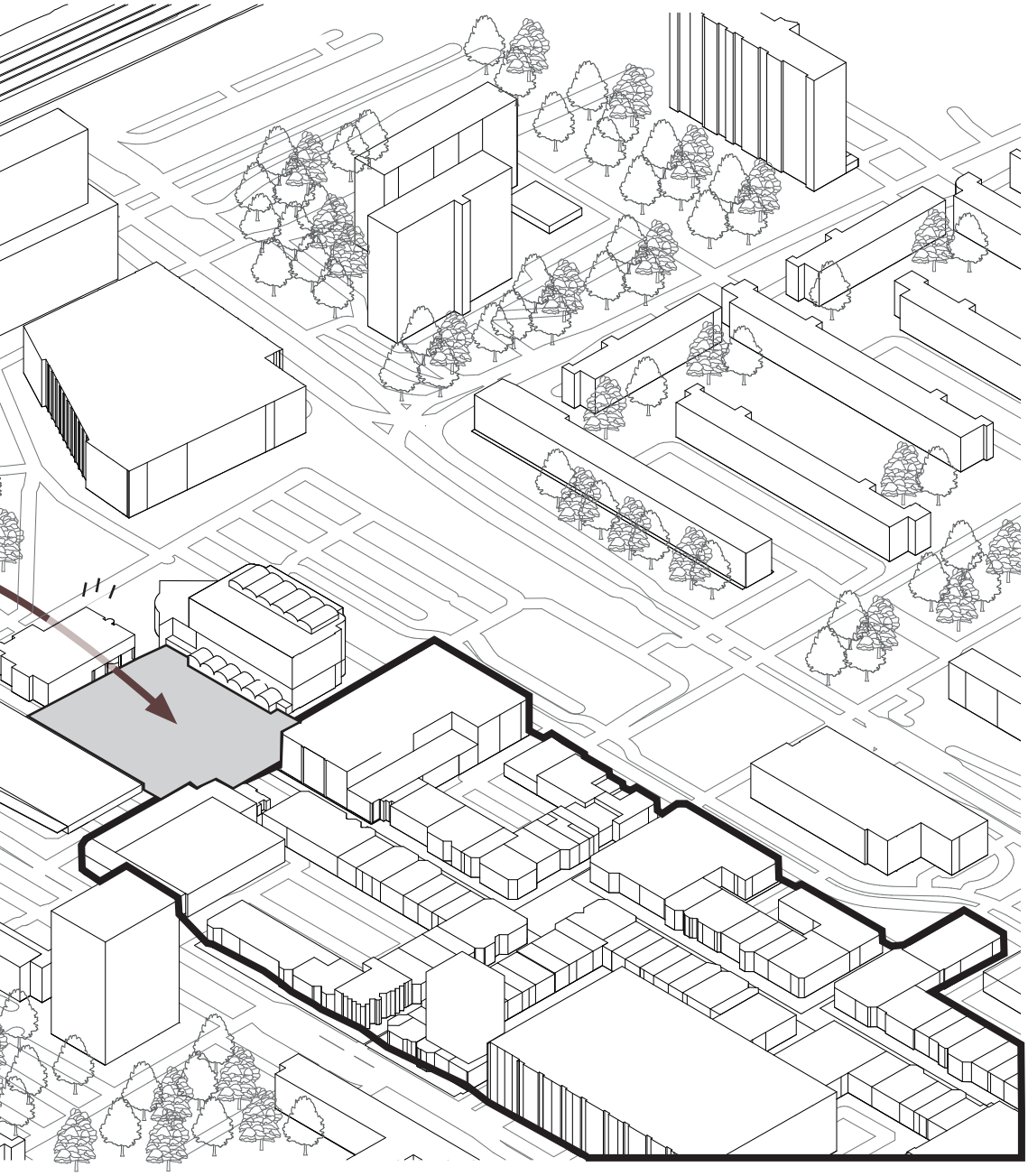
Model of the existing site

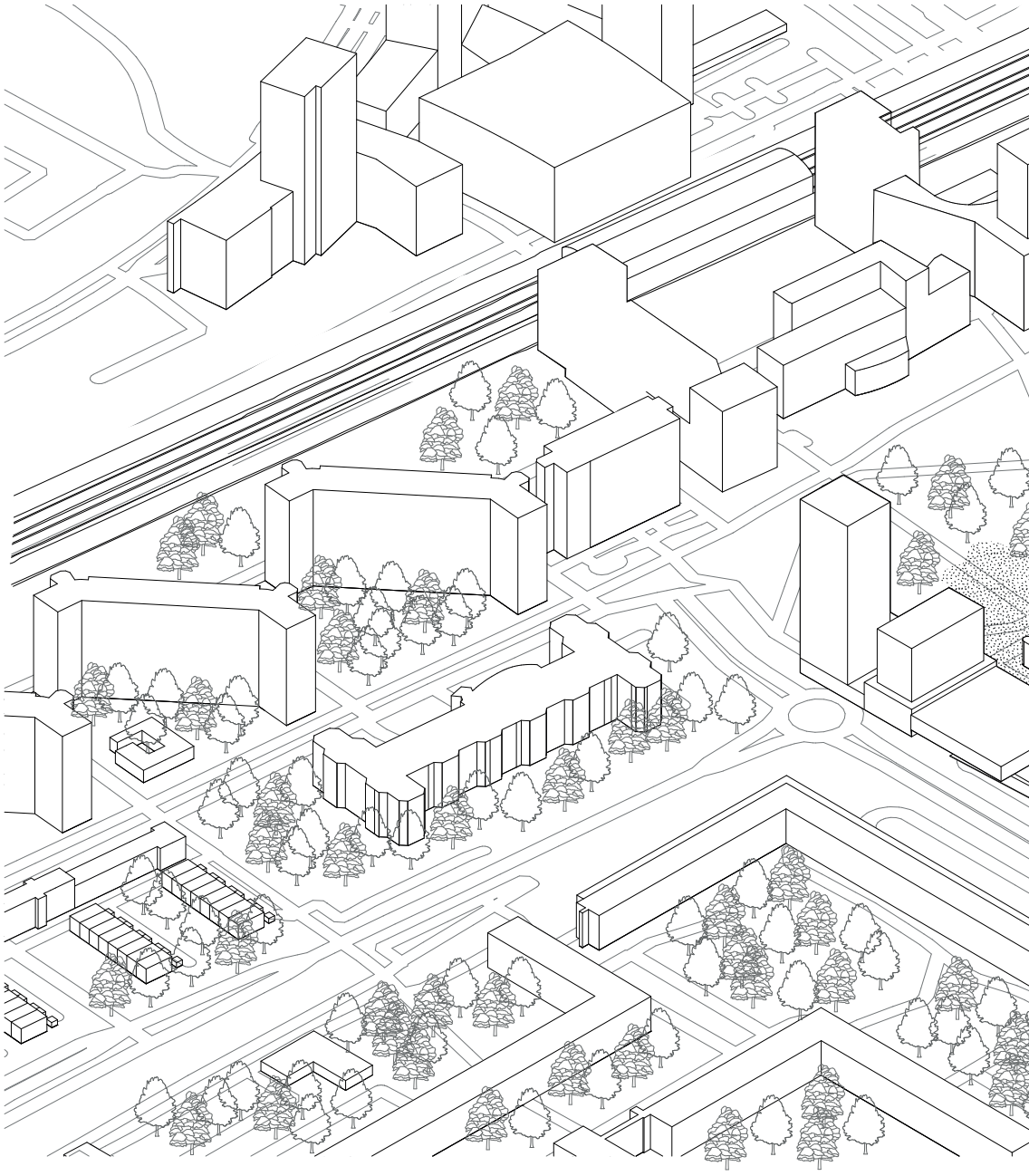


Model of the existing site

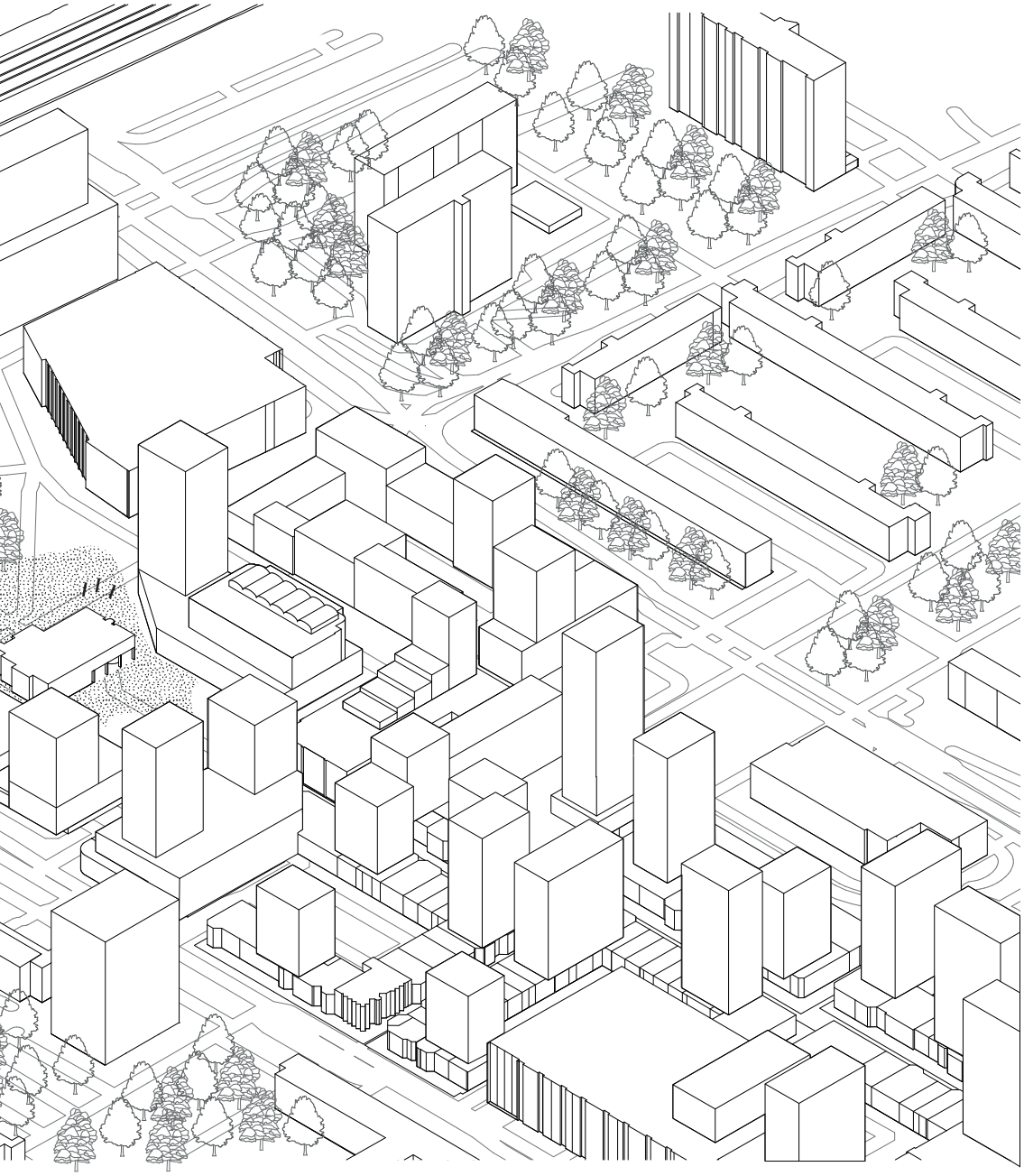


The Bowling in relation to the existing Urban Fabric and the most important flow in the area





The Bowling in the new situation according to the plans of the municipality of Amsterdam





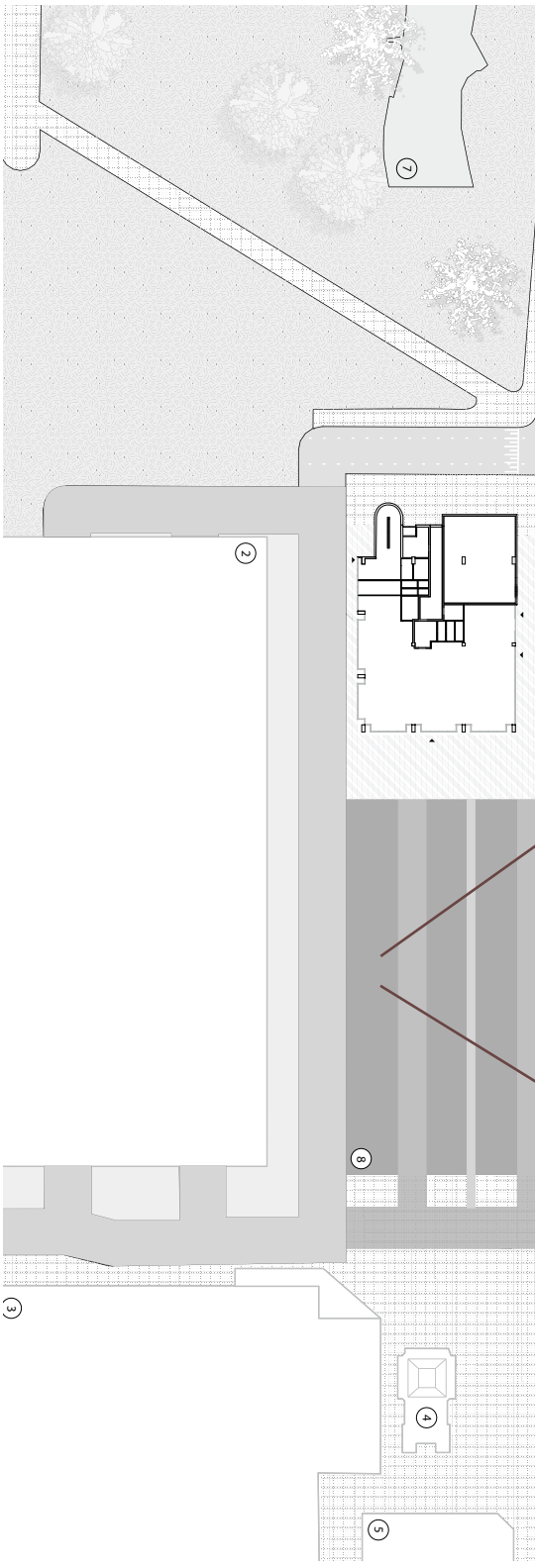
1.



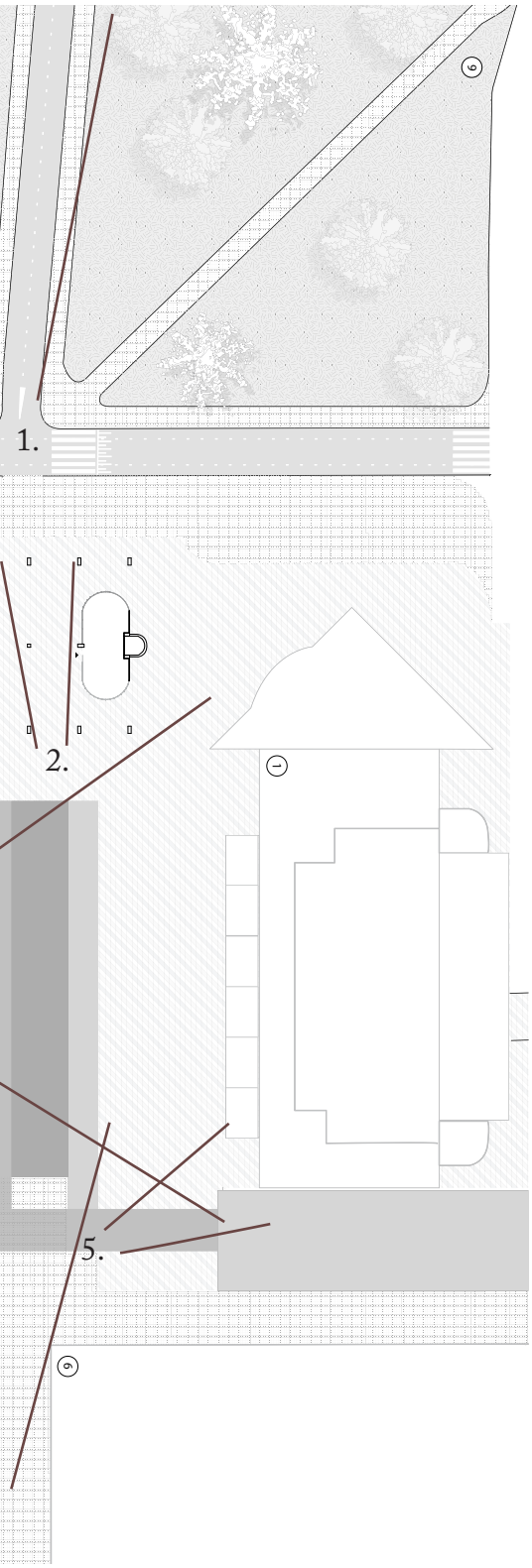
2.



3.



Pictures taken at the site





4.



5.



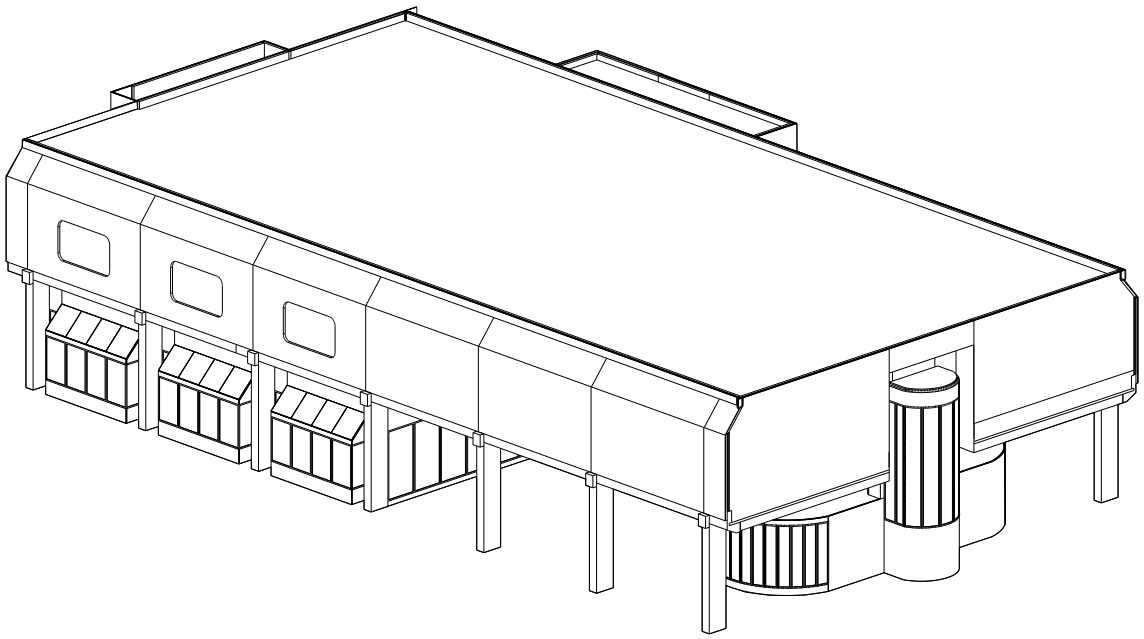
6.

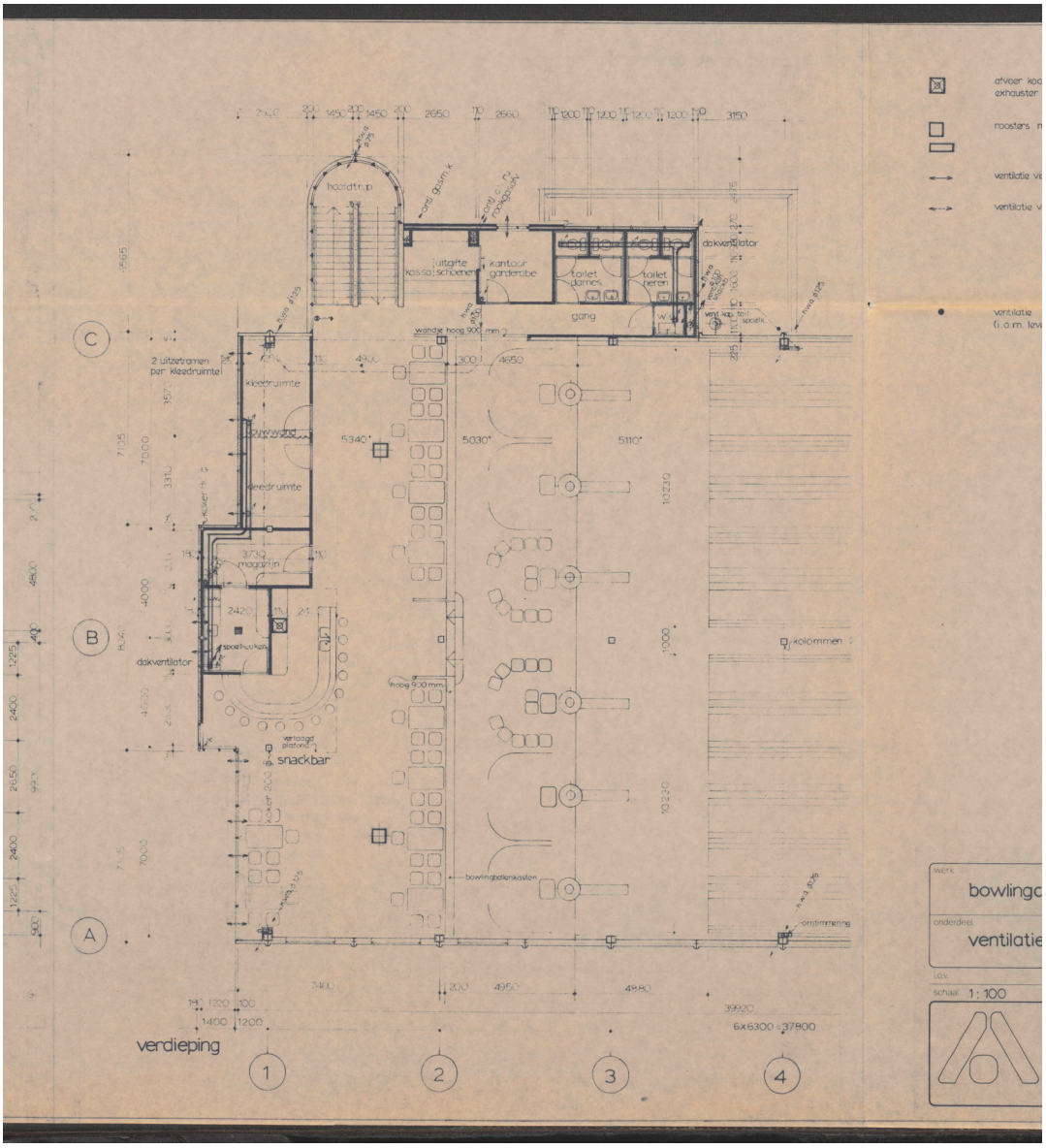
Existing building & Heritage

The Bowling was designed in 1981 by Jan Brouwer Architects with a clear focus on functionality and construction efficiency. The building followed a rational, system-based approach in which spatial organization and material logic were aligned. One of the technical features was the use of sandwich panel façades, reflecting construction innovations of that time and allowing for prefabrication and modular assembly.

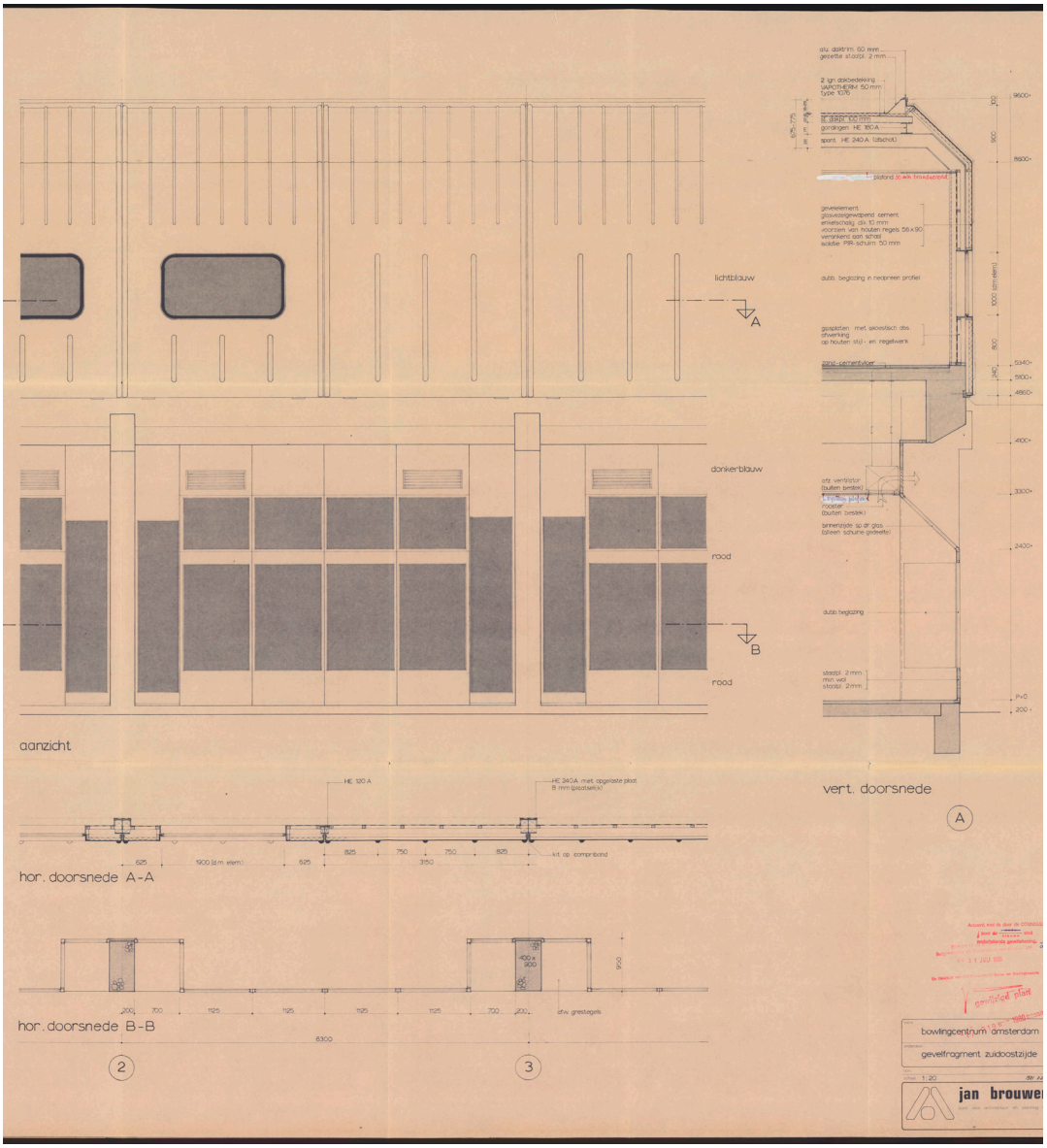
Within this system, a number of circulation elements such as external staircases, were introduced that break from the structural grid. These components form architectural thresholds and carry cultural value due to their geometry and informal spatial character. They are retained in the new proposal as key elements of architectural heritage.

The project builds on the original functional logic by preserving the steel structure and structural rhythm. Although the façade cladding must be replaced due to asbestos contamination, the systematic layering and construction method remain central. Two additional floors are added, continuing the existing logic while adapting the building to new needs. In addition to its physical qualities, the Bowling holds cultural significance. Photographs of the documentary by Man Bijt Hond shows how the space was actively used and appropriated by its visitors. The new design incorporates this collective memory by creating adaptable spatial conditions that support communal use.

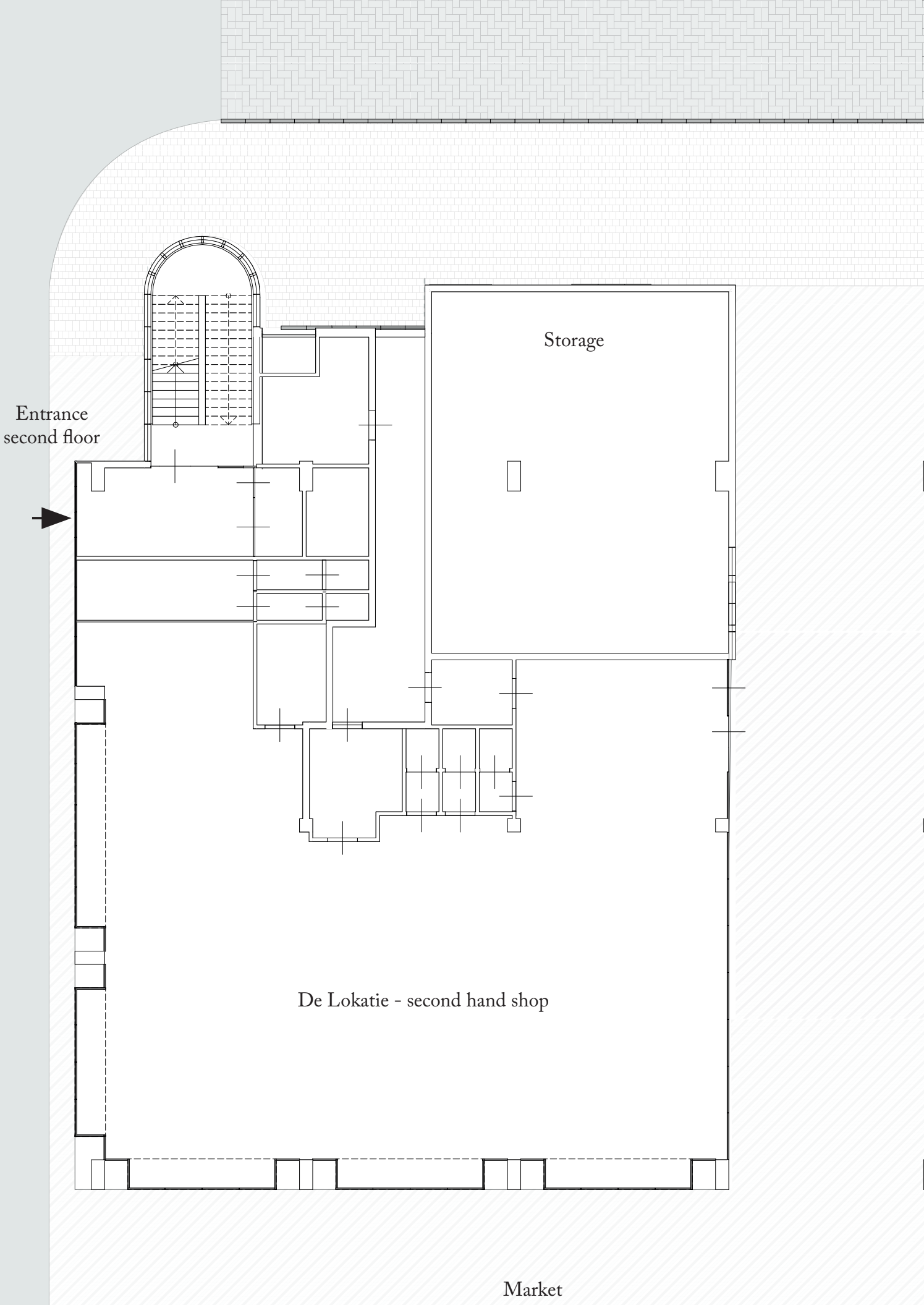




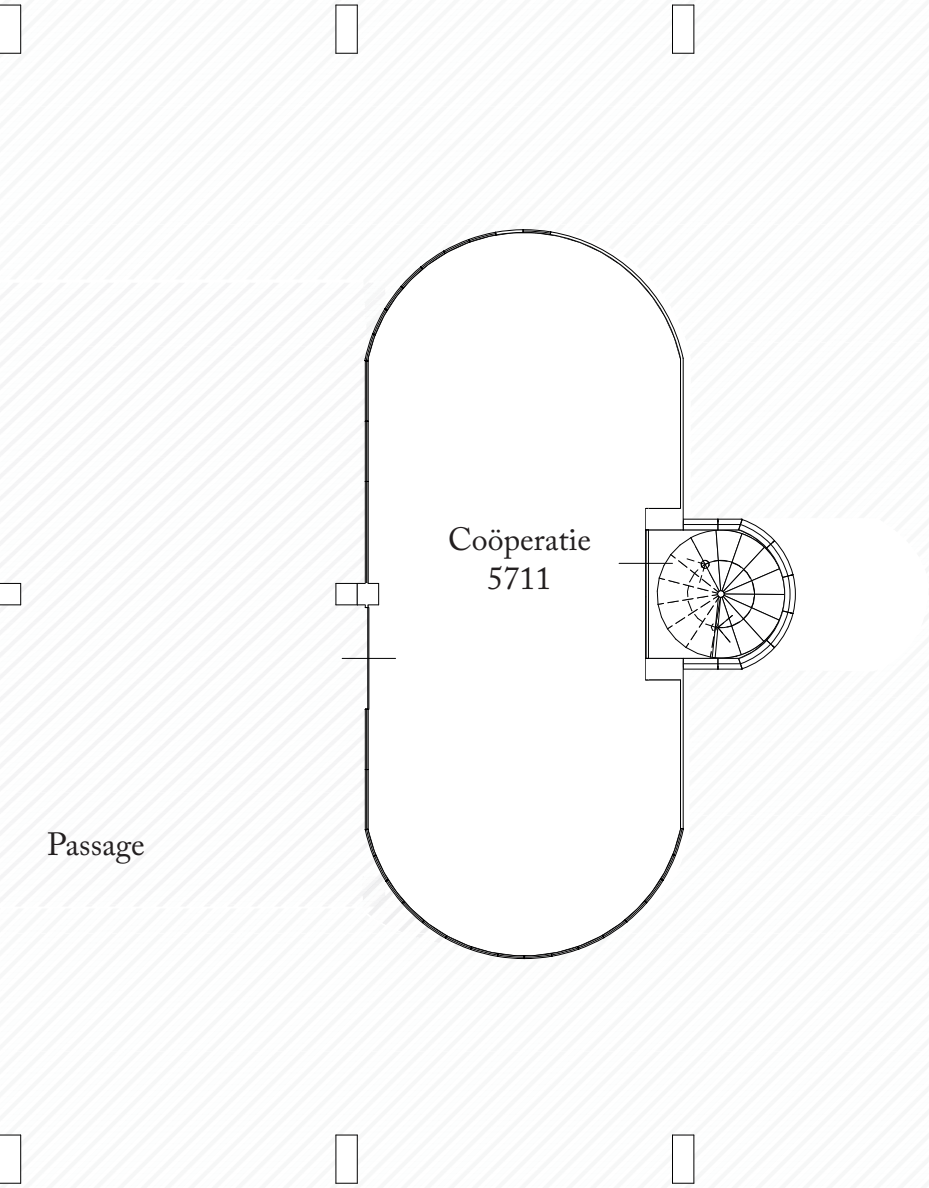
Archival floorplan first floor by jan brouwer architects

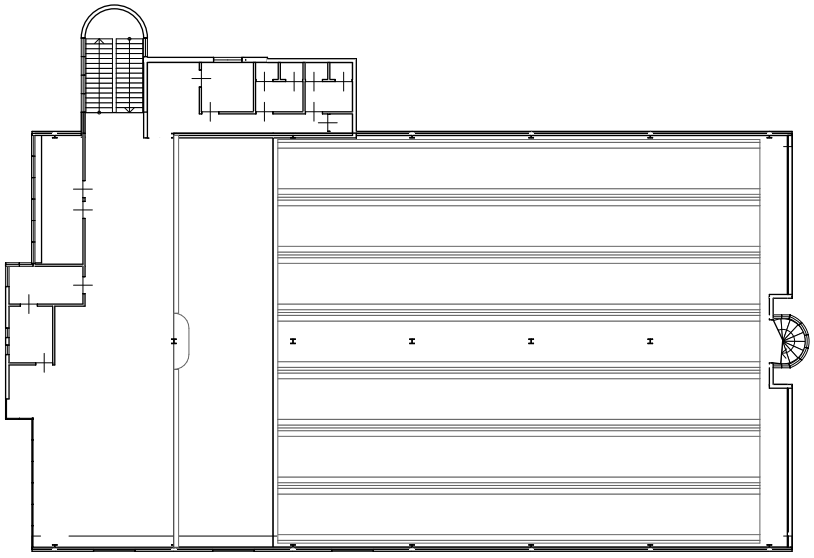


Archival fragment drawing by jan brouwer architects

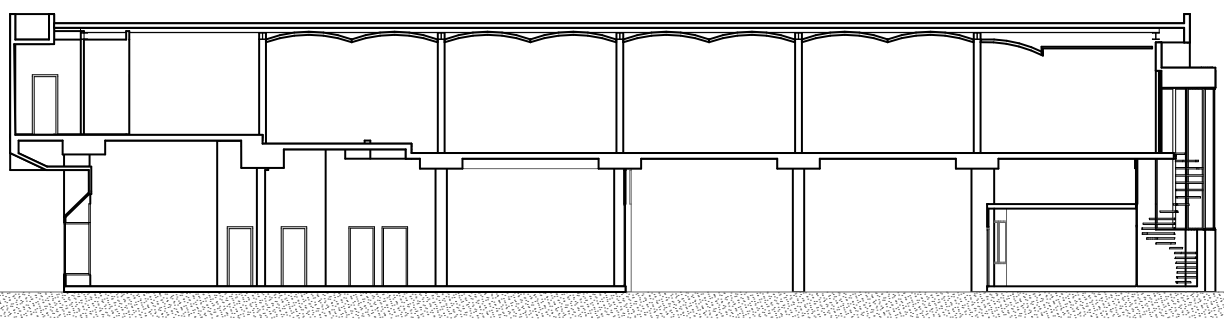


Existing ground floor 1:50


Coöperatie
5711
Passage

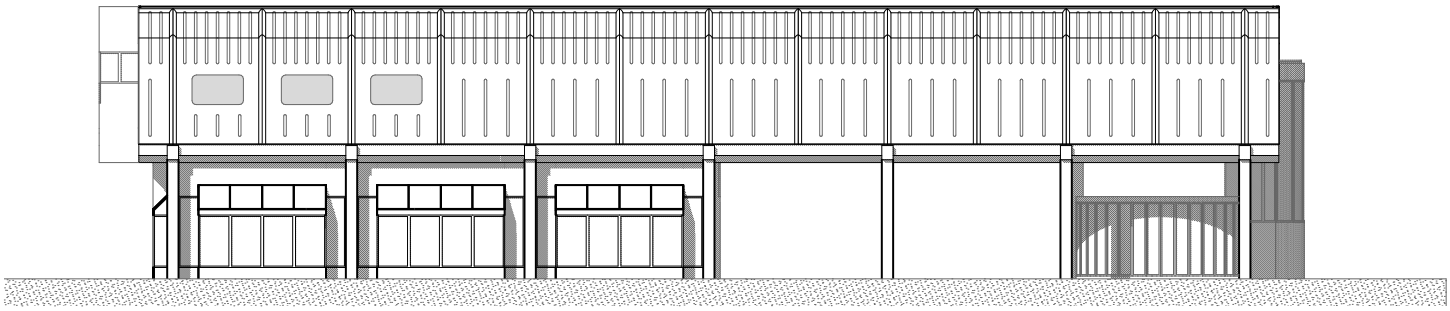


Existing second floor 1:200

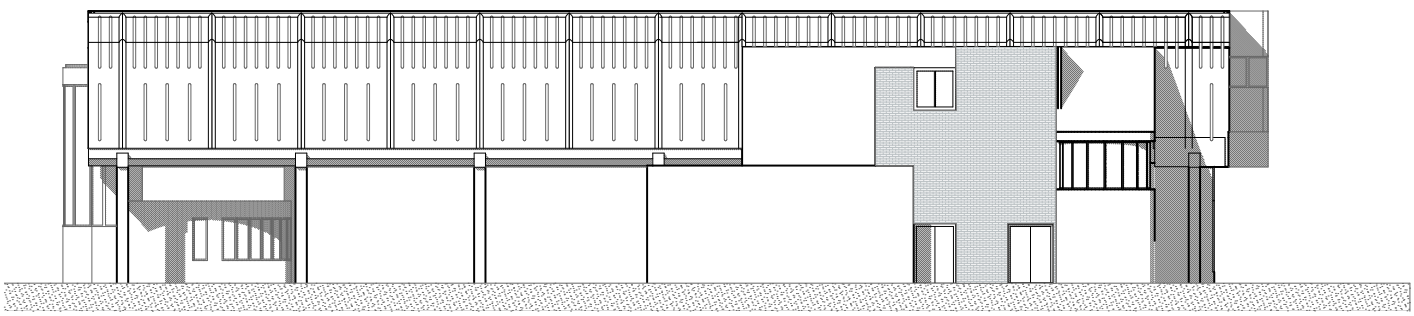


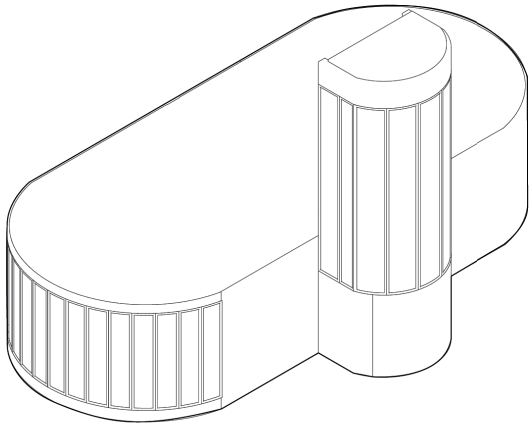
Existing section 1:200

Existing east facade 1:200



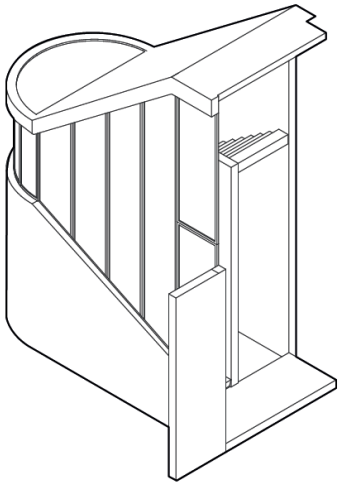
Existing west facade 1:200





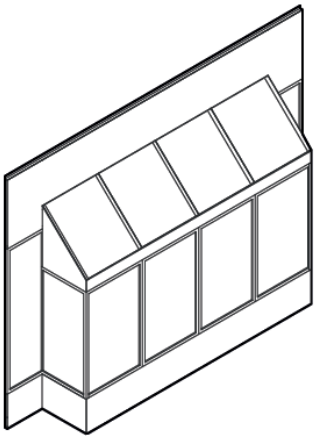
The Kiosk

Cementfiber panels
40mm insulation
double glazing
50 mm steel frame window
openings



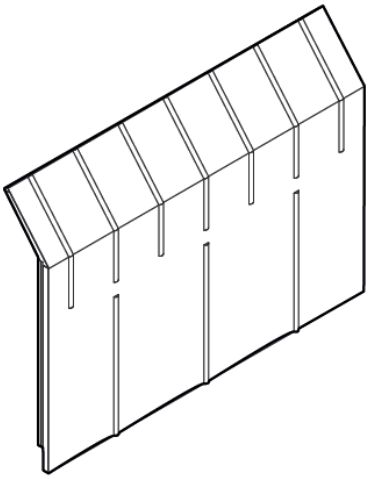
Entrance Bowling

Cement blocks 200mm
brick 110 mm
double glazing
50 mm steel frame window
openings



Plinth facade

double glazing
50 mm steel frame window
openings

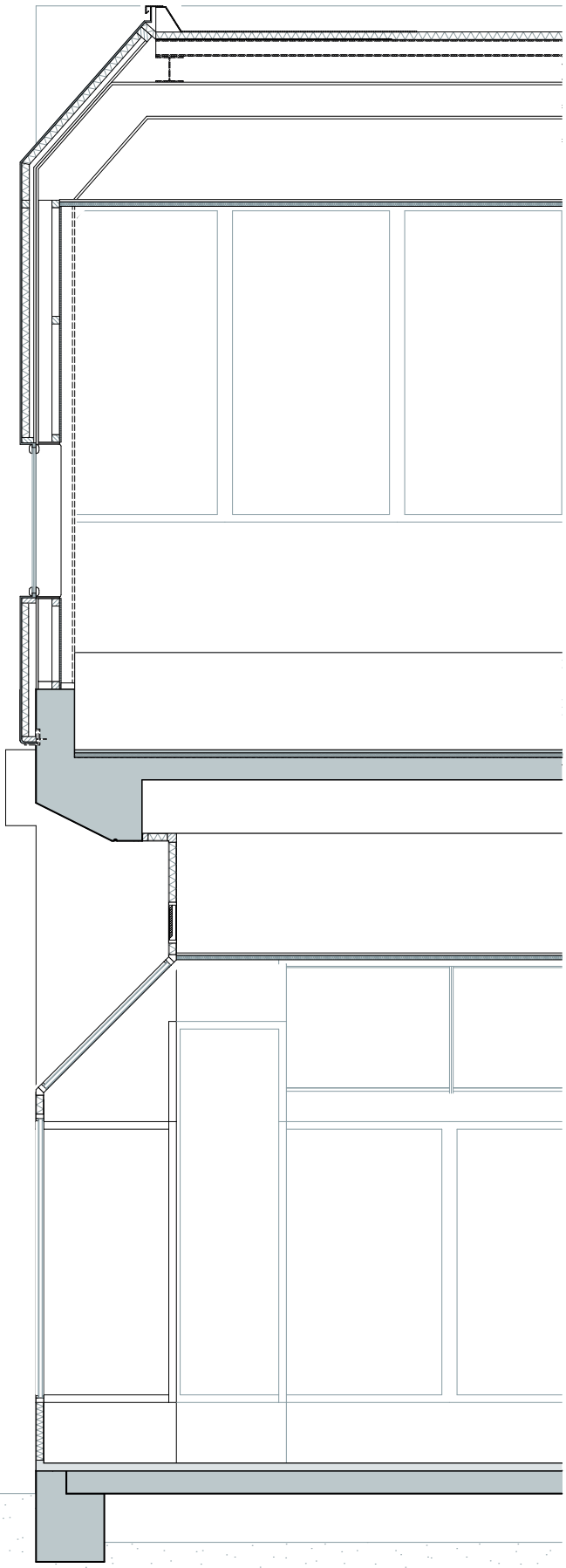


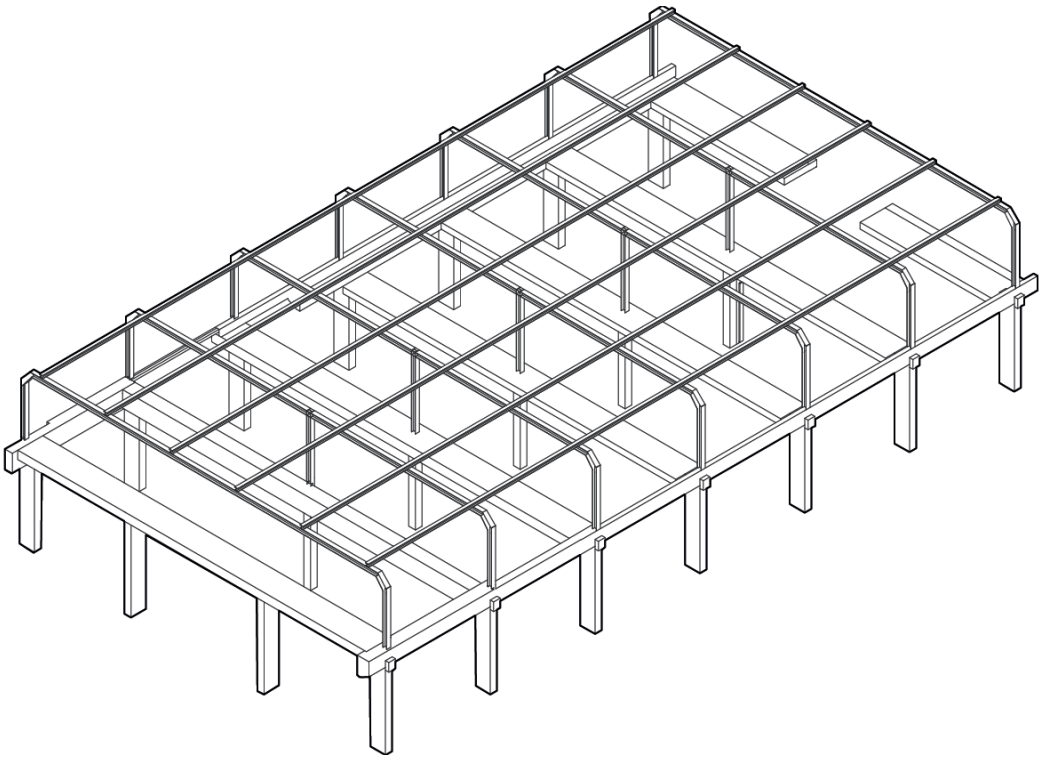
Cement fiber elements

Cementfiber panels
40mm insulation
double glazing
50 mm steel frame window
openings

Heritage elements found in the building and its materiality

Existing cross section 1:20





Construction

concrete first floor
900x400mm

second floor
HEA 240

Existing construction









Existing textures ground floor and square

Inspiration & Design concept

While developing a new vision for the Bowling, I started investigating how threshold spaces function in and around the existing structure. Many of these transitional zones such as staircases, overhangs, passages and flows and in-between spaces are already present in the building and its surroundings. They form a subtle but essential part of how the building connects to the urban fabric and the daily life of the neighborhood.

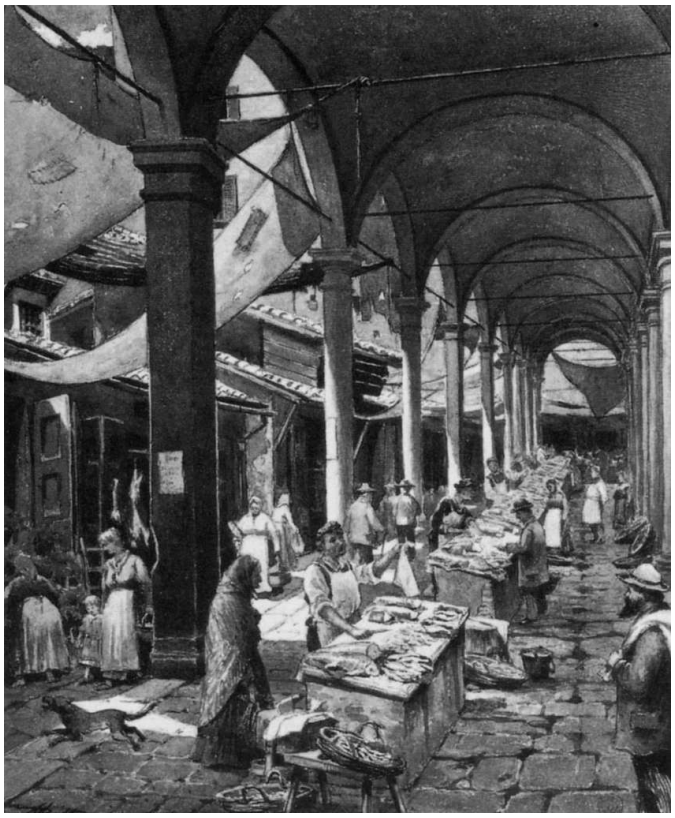
This on-site research led me to explore how these threshold conditions could be reinterpreted and expanded. The goal was not to preserve the existing structure as it is, but to develop a new spatial framework that introduces clear changes while still connecting to what is already there both physically and socially. In doing so, the building can open up to host a wider range of public and semi-public activities, creating spaces the neighborhood can appropriate in their own way.

Although not central, the layered spatiality in Piranesi's etchings helped me think about how architecture can guide movement and interaction across multiple levels and conditions. One key reference was the loggia, a typology that acts as both a building and a threshold and capable of accommodating a diverse range of uses.

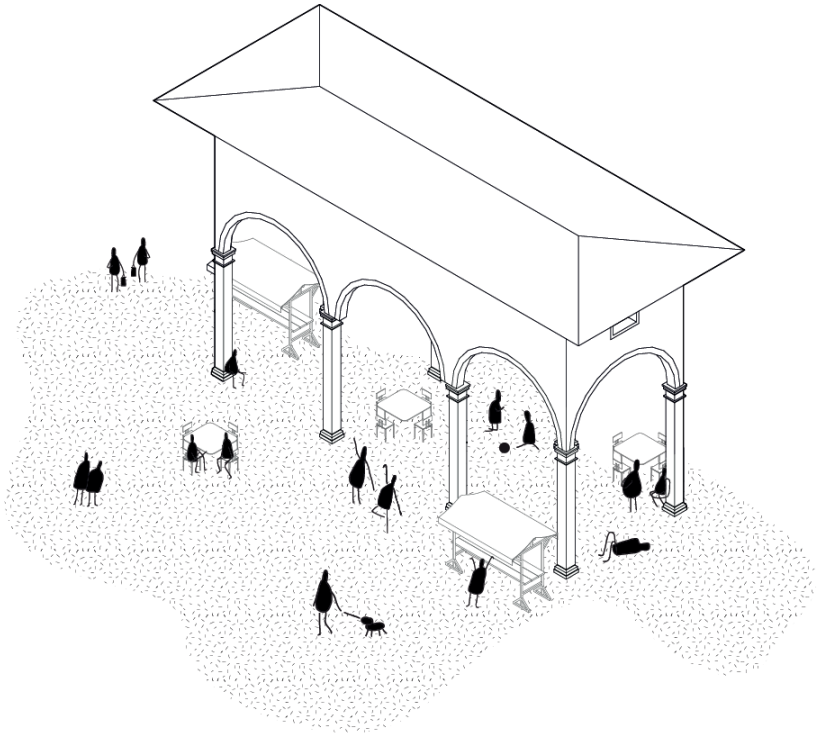
Through sketches and physical models, I began testing how the Bowling could be reimagined as a structure defined by openness and layered thresholds rooted in the site, yet flexible enough to evolve with the needs of its users.



a zoom in on the drawing of stairs by Piranesi, G. B. (1748).



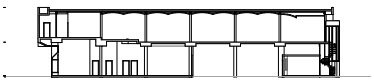
Loggia del Pesce, people hosting a market Florence 1569, Giorgio Vasari



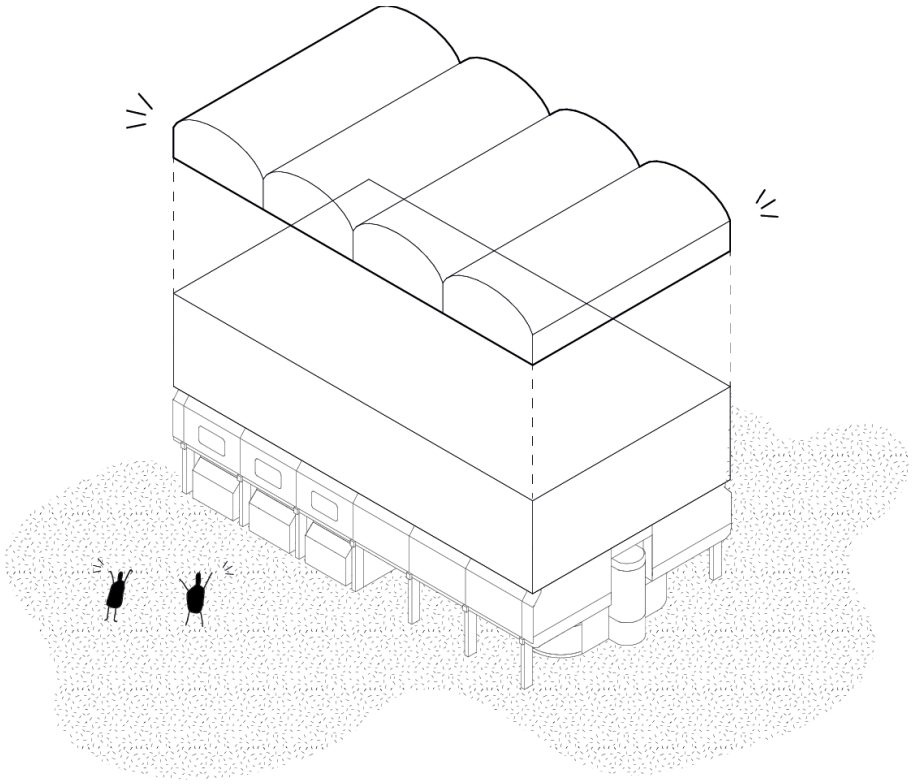
A structure giving space for many activities



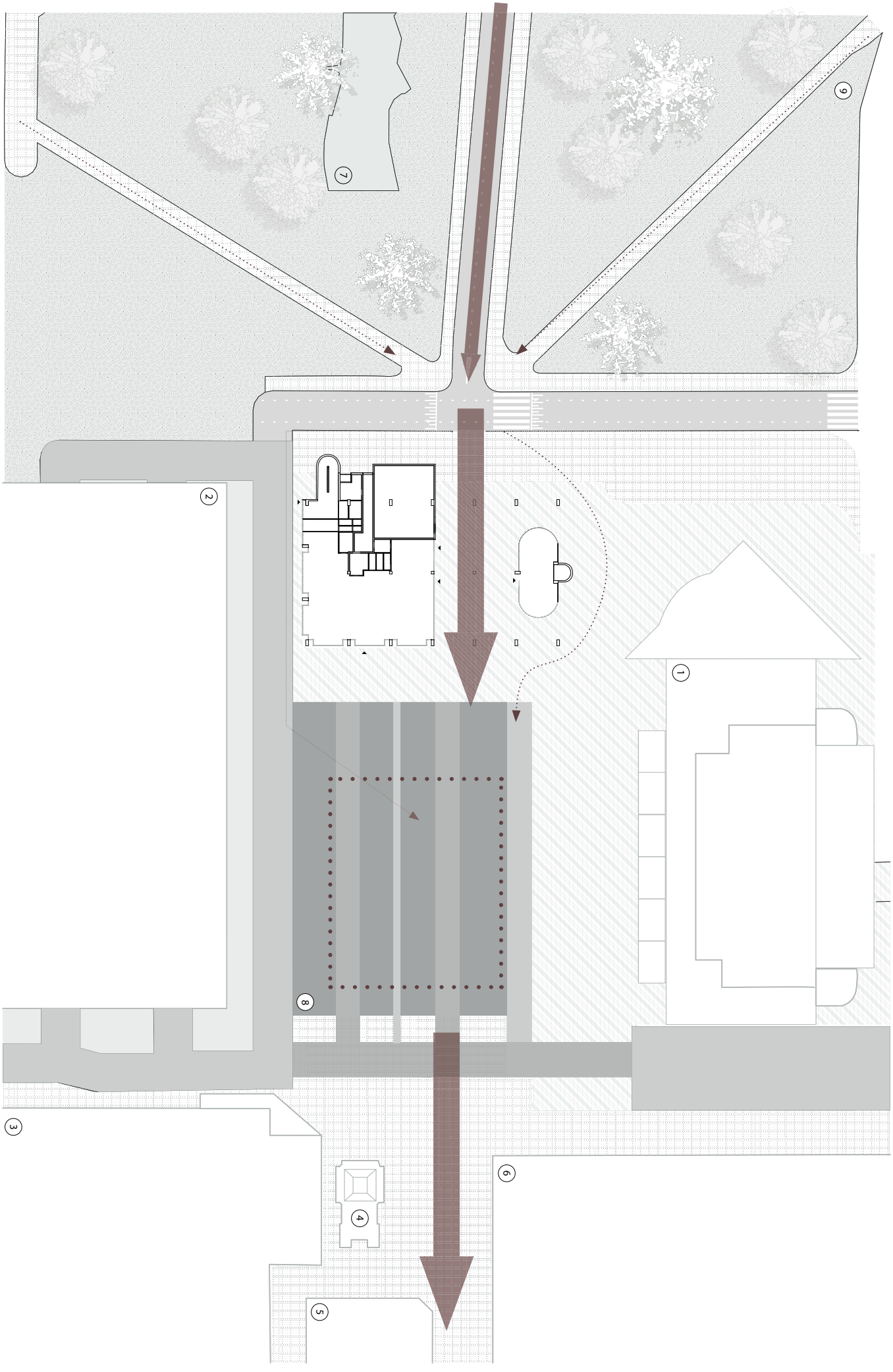
The plinth of "t Wardeschip (Stadsarchief, 2008)

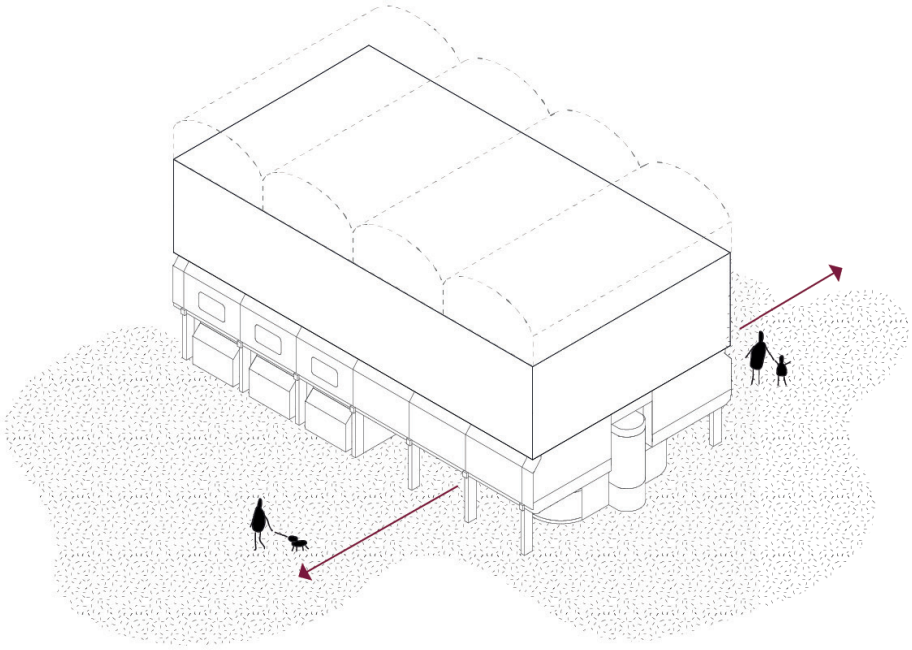


To create the first urban threshold, an expressive form is introduced — one that deliberately contrasts with the rigid grid of the new urban surroundings. Its curved roof refers to the arched roofs of the nearby building 't Wardeschip, a feature that will disappear in the new development. This formal language also existed in the original Bowling, visible in its arched ceilings. Although the building is being transformed and extended with two additional floors, the curved form is reintroduced as a gesture of collective memory — maintaining a visual and spatial connection to the past.



Introducing a visible form language as part of the collective memory

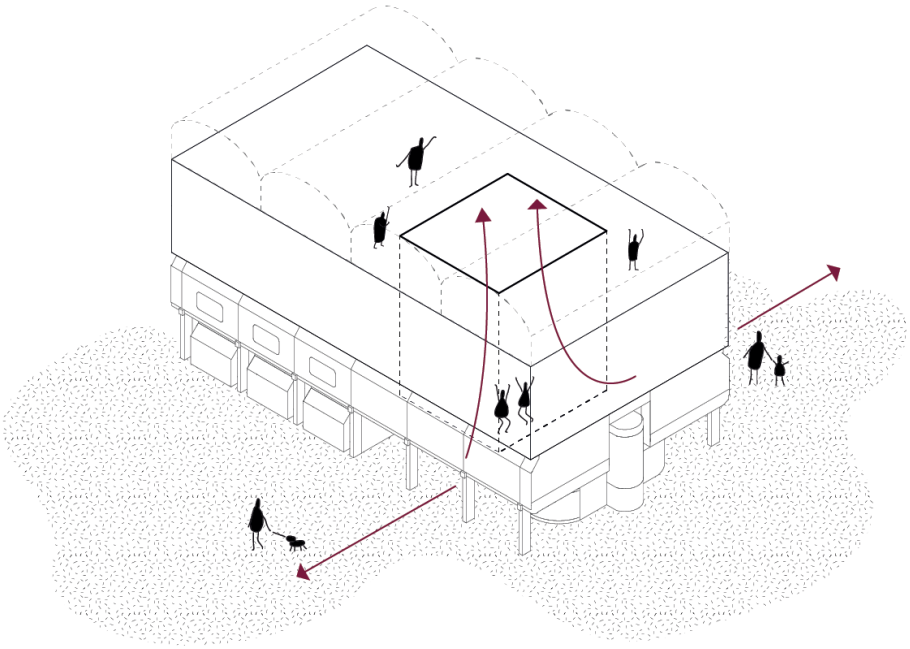

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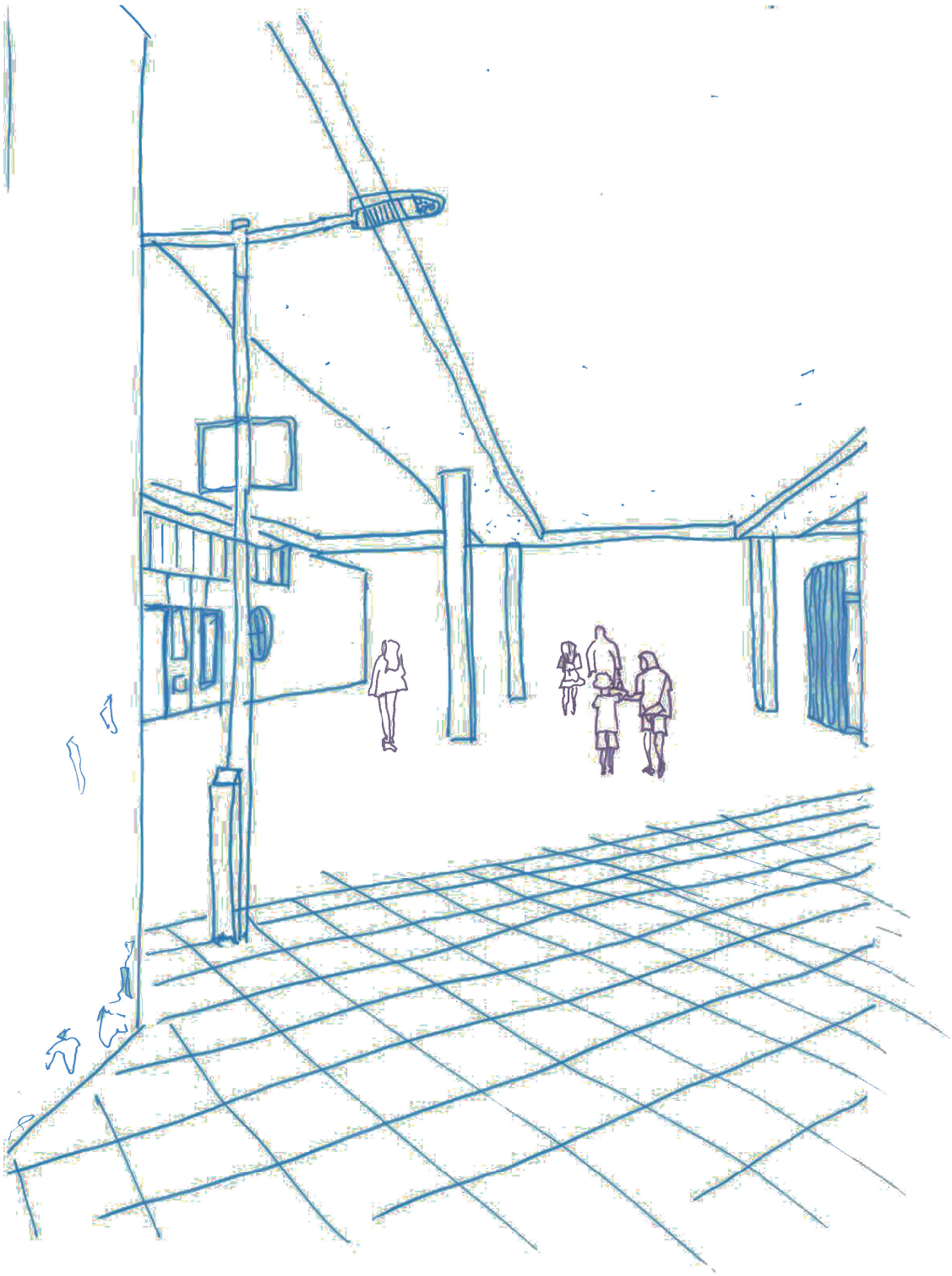
The passage, the strong flow that still will exist in the future plans



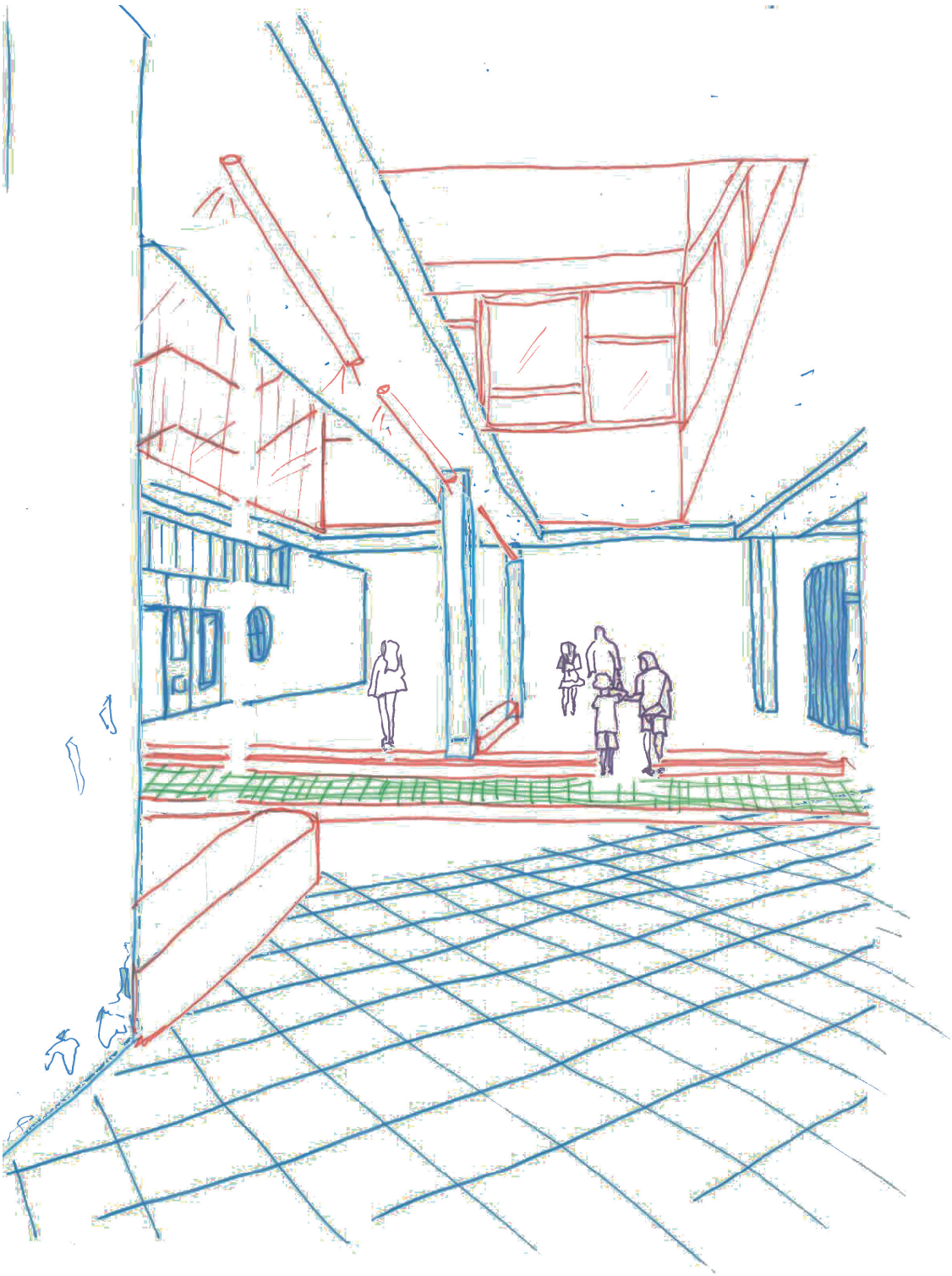
a zoom in on the drawing of stairs by Piranesi, G. B. (1748).



Extending the passage through the building to te roof connected with many stairs and sights



sketch of the existing situation of the passage



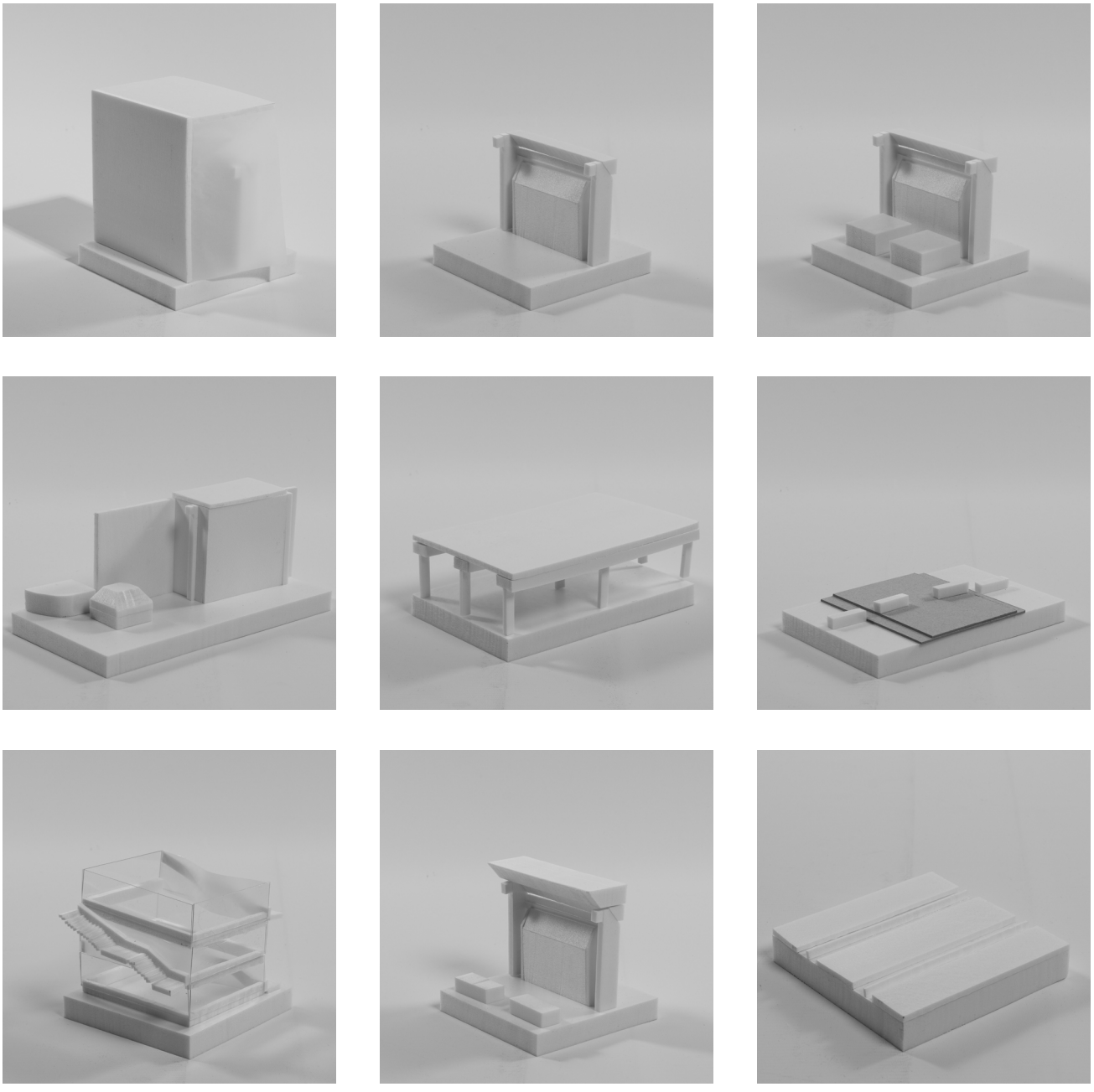
new proposed interventions with a big void connected to staircases above the passage introducing two steps to make people aware of the void above them



sketch of the existing east facade facing the market square
the bikes and planting pots creating almost a secundary facade



new proposed interventions for the east facade opening up the space and introducing a second zone and add primary benches adjecent to the market square and secundary benches into the facade



all the threshold elements made in models that can be found in the proposed design



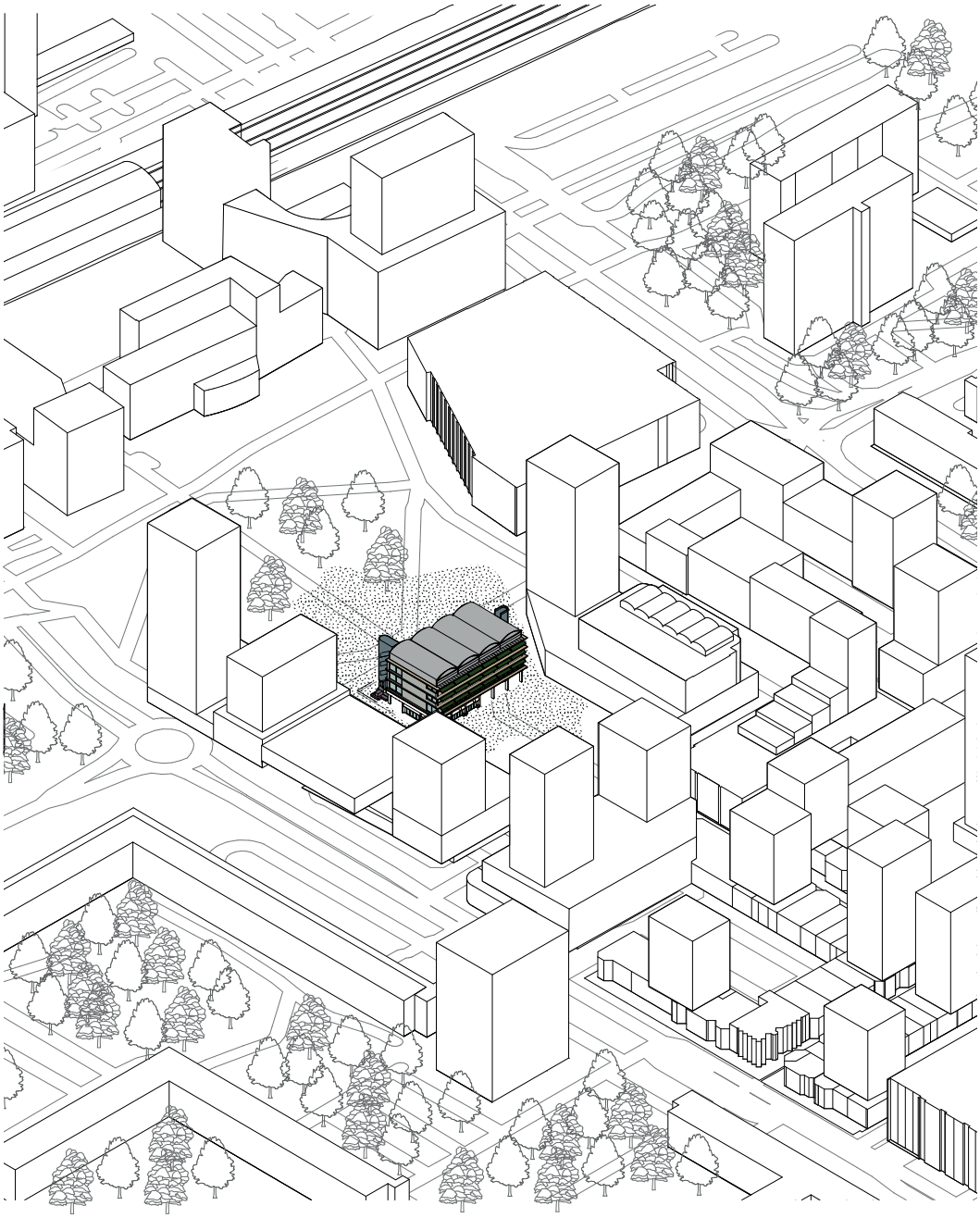
Making the first floor transparant to give more visibility to the mobility spaces

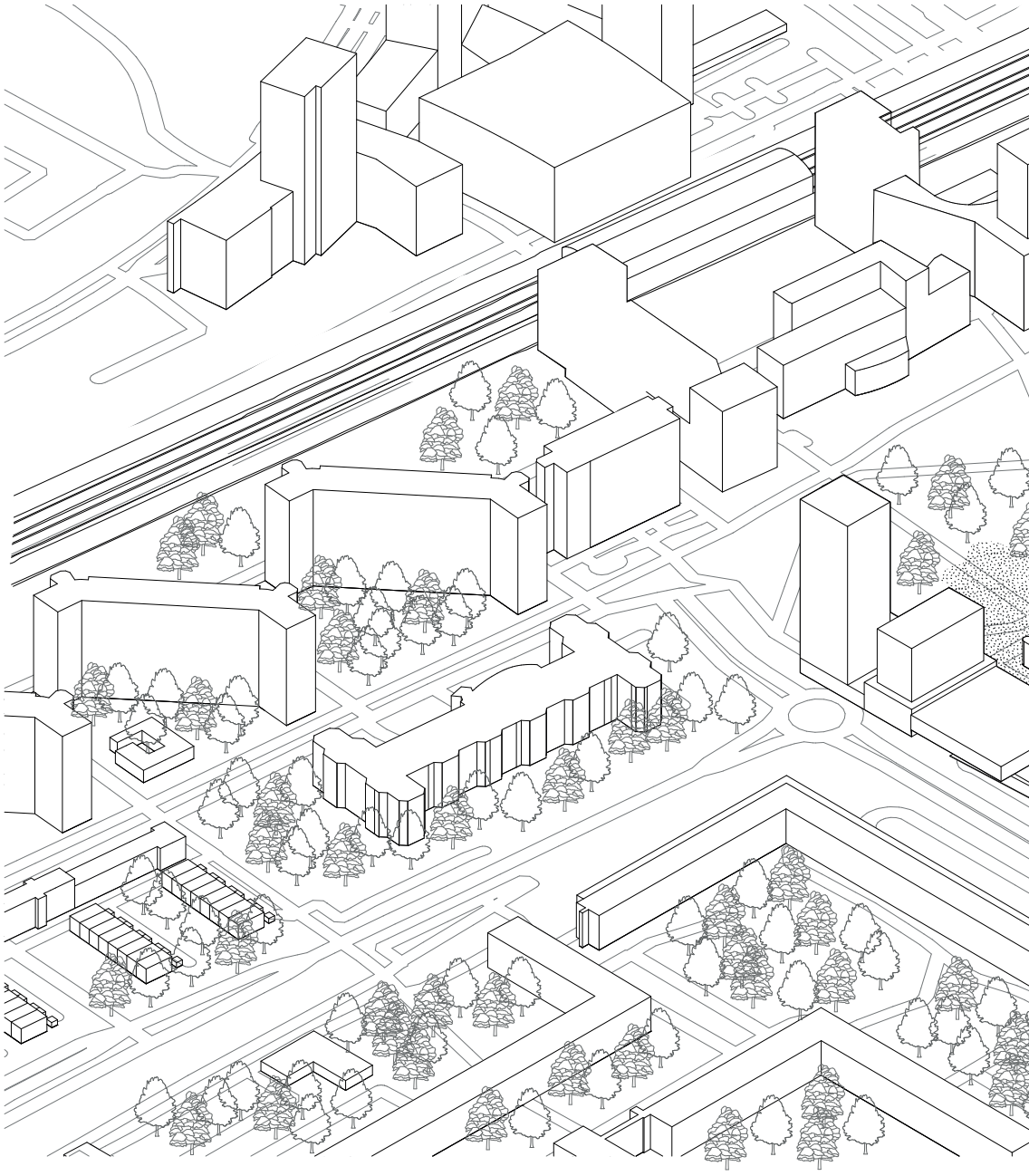
The Thresholds - urban scale

The first urban threshold is created through a roof structure that contrasts with the surrounding grid of the new development. Its curved form, made from reused steel, refers to the arched roofs of buildings like ‘t Wardeschip, which are no longer part of the new plan. The roof is open and transparent, and clearly visible from the park, the market, and surrounding buildings. From the other rooftops the roof of the new design is clearly visible and has views on the basketball court. In this way, the roof contributes to drawing people toward the building and creating a threshold on the scale of the city.

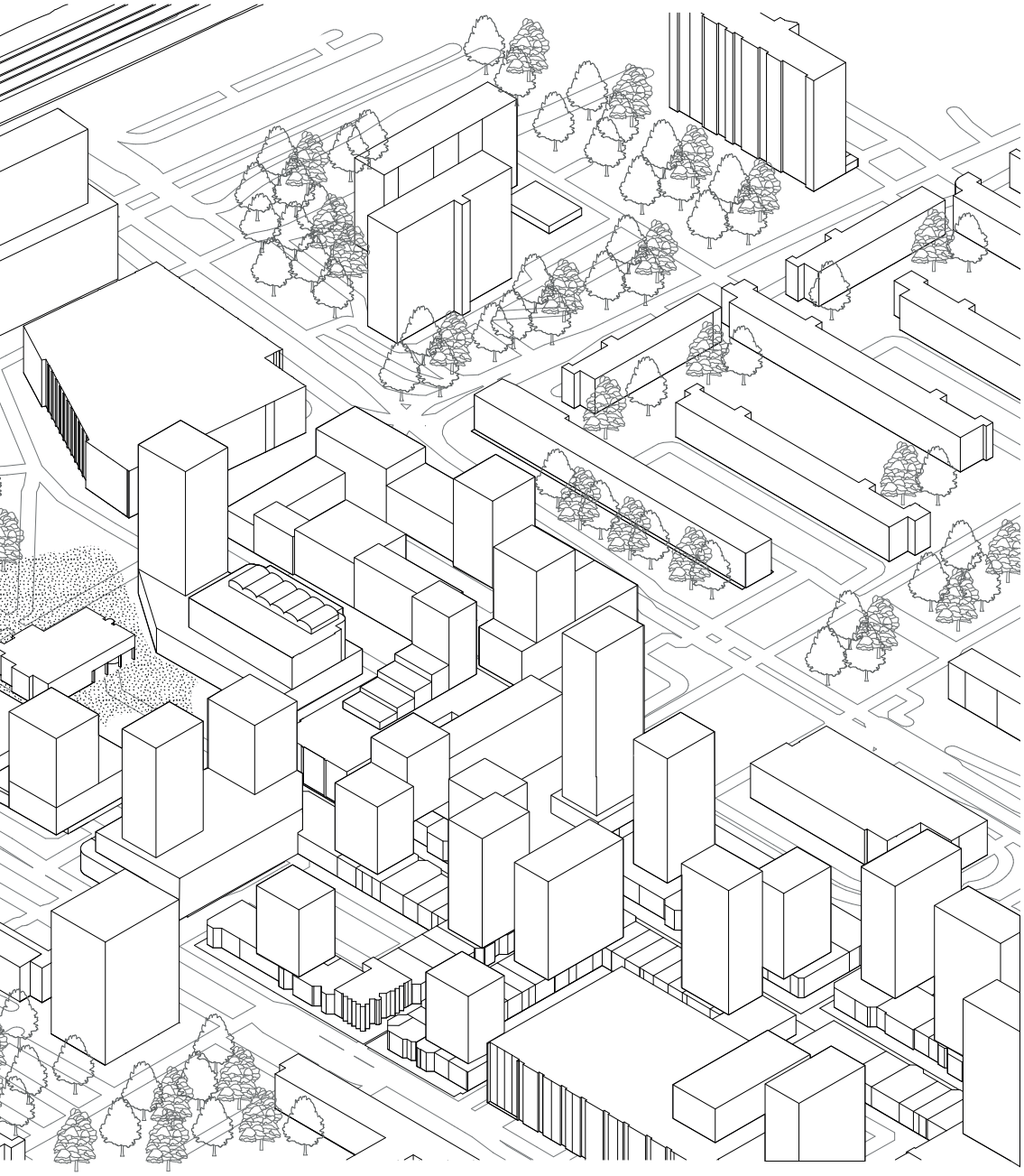
Above the passage is a large vertical void. This void is more than just a circulation space it creates a strong spatial connection between all levels of the building. Positioned above the passage, it allows light to filter through the structure and visually links the ground floor with the roof. A series of staircases wrap around the void, connecting each level and guiding movement upward. These stairs are open and positioned in such a way that they allow for views across the void, reinforcing transparency and interaction between different floors.

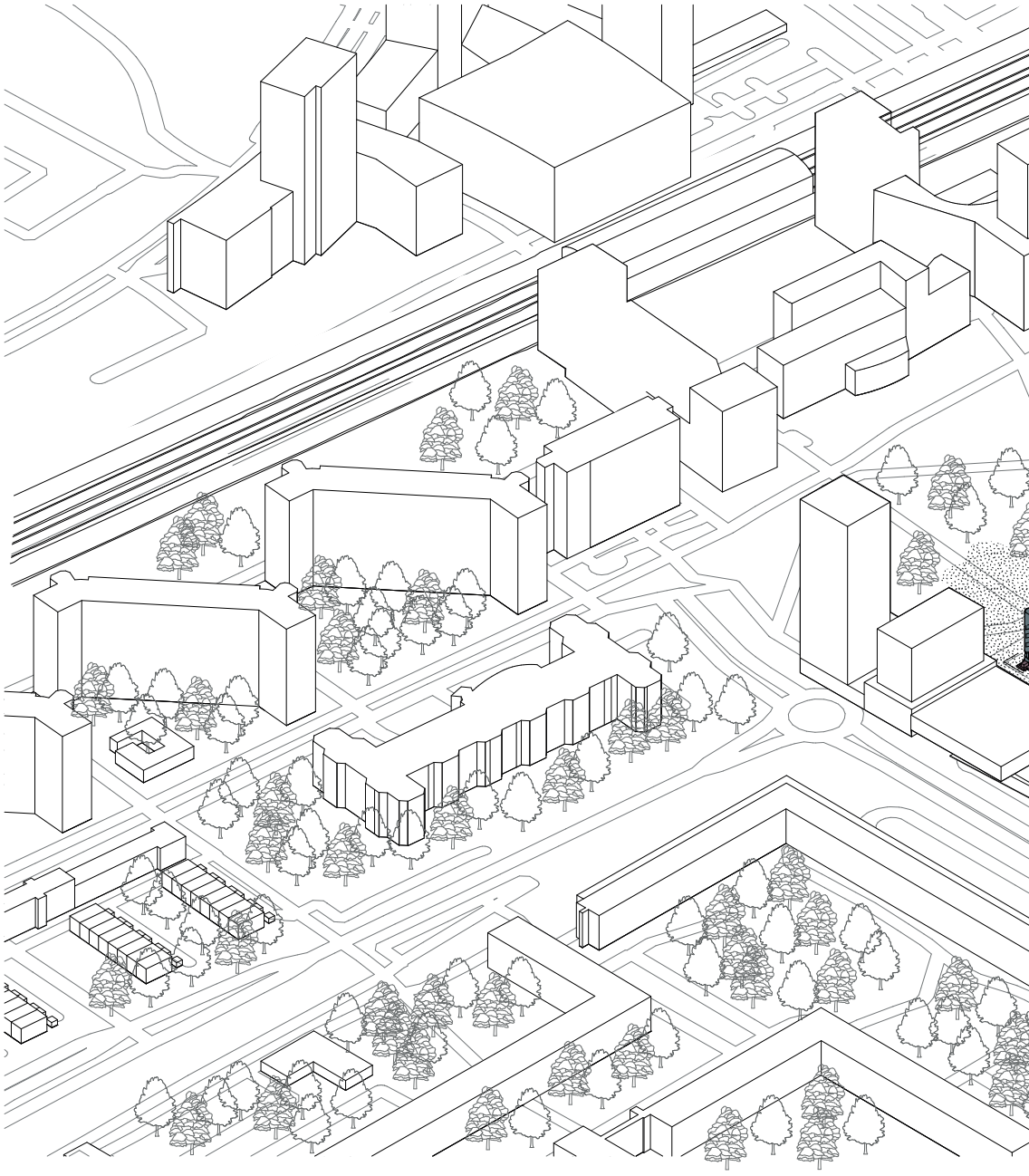
The void also plays an important social role. It makes the flow of people through the building visible, offering constant visual contact between those inside and those passing underneath the elevated structure. This creates a relationship between the activities in the building and the public movement along the park-market axis. As a result, the void contributes not only to orientation and openness, but also to a sense of social presence and safety within and around the building.



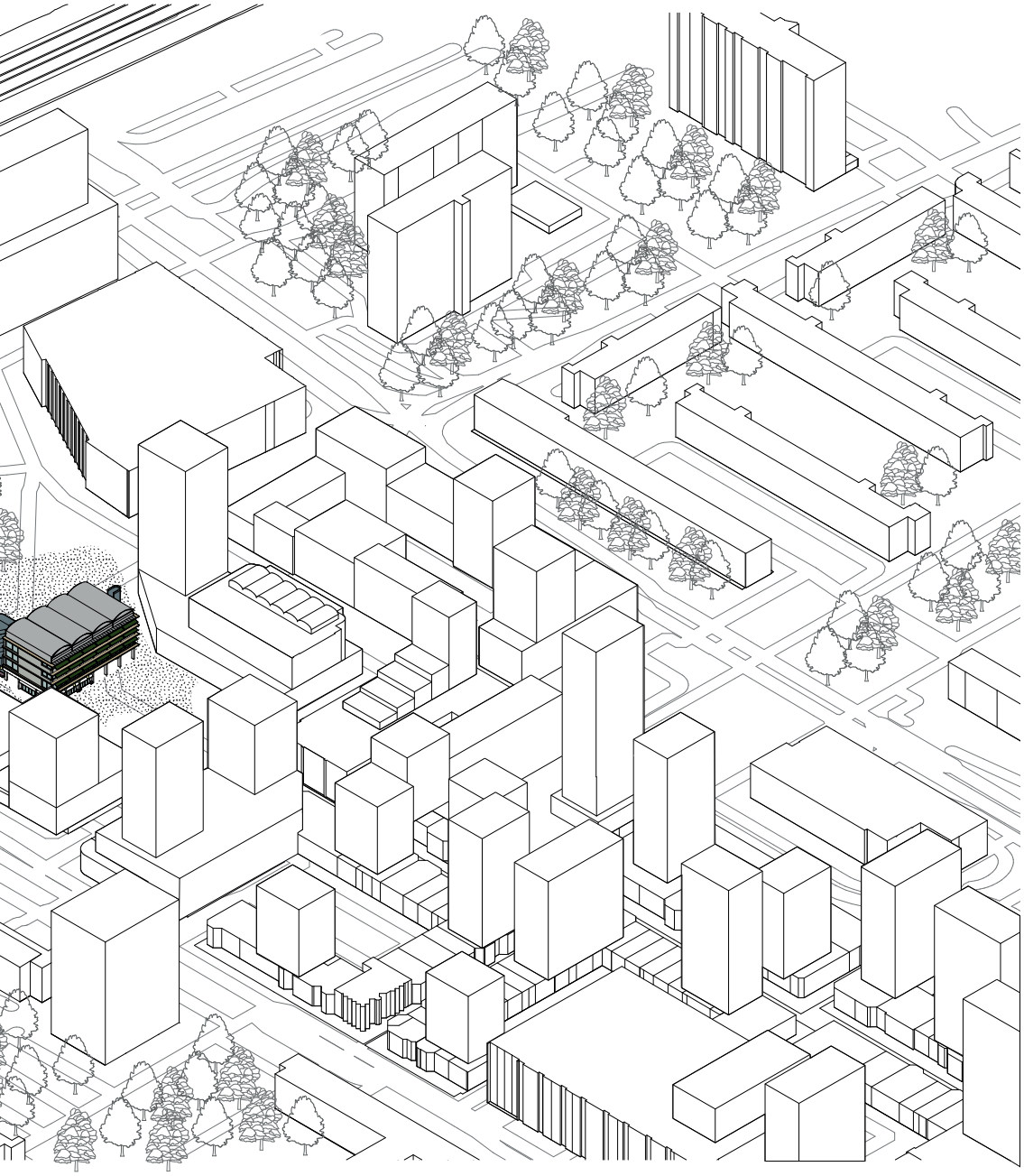


The Bowling in the new situation according to the plans of the municipality of Amsterdam





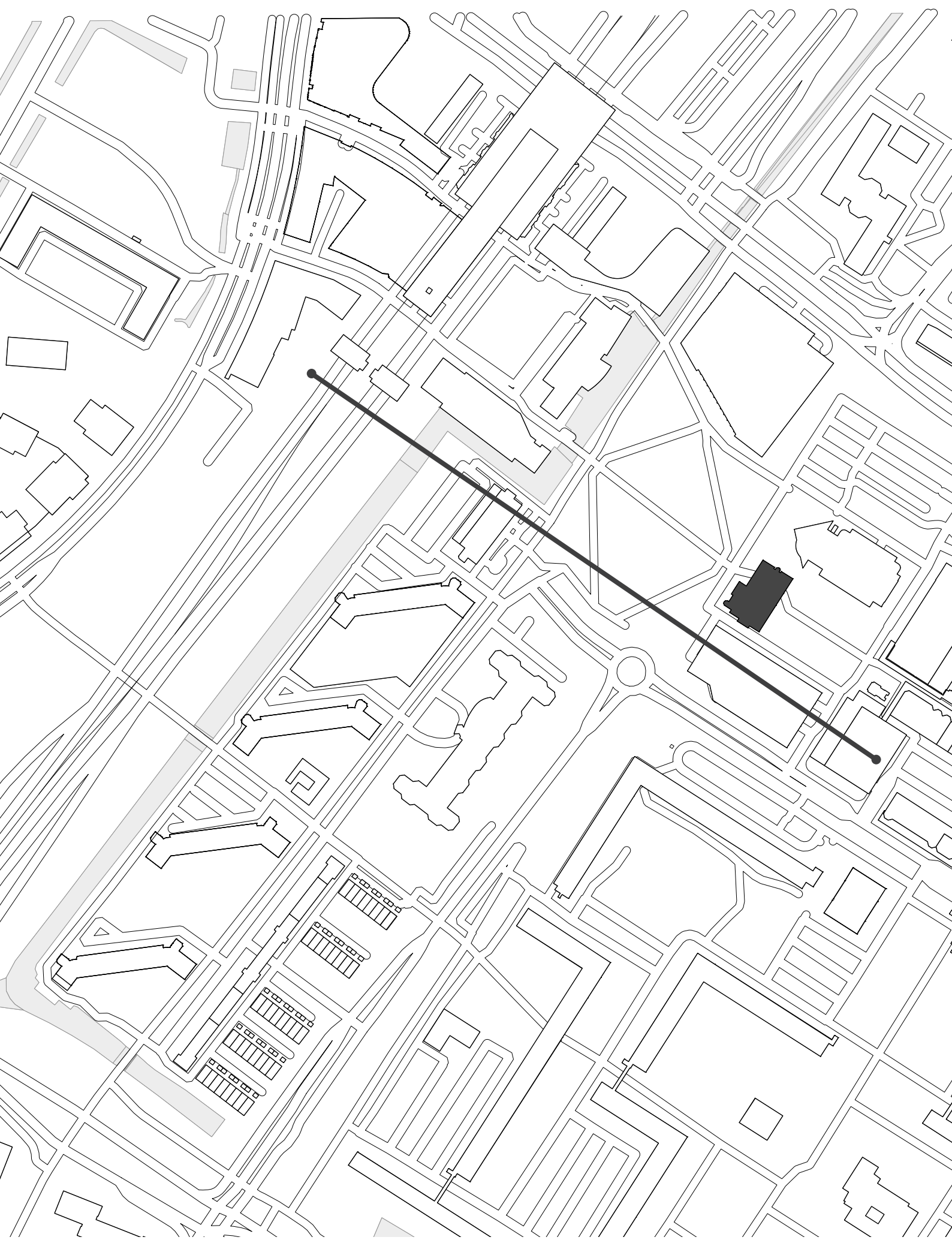
The new form in the future urban tissue





perspective view from the market square to the building
the arched roofs and the first floor are transparant and therefore visible

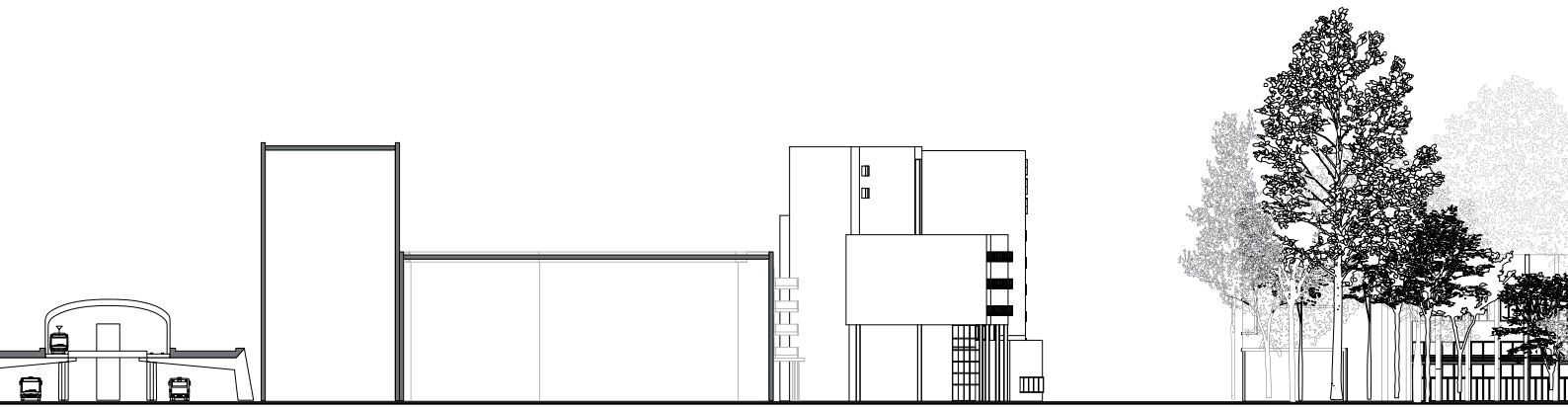


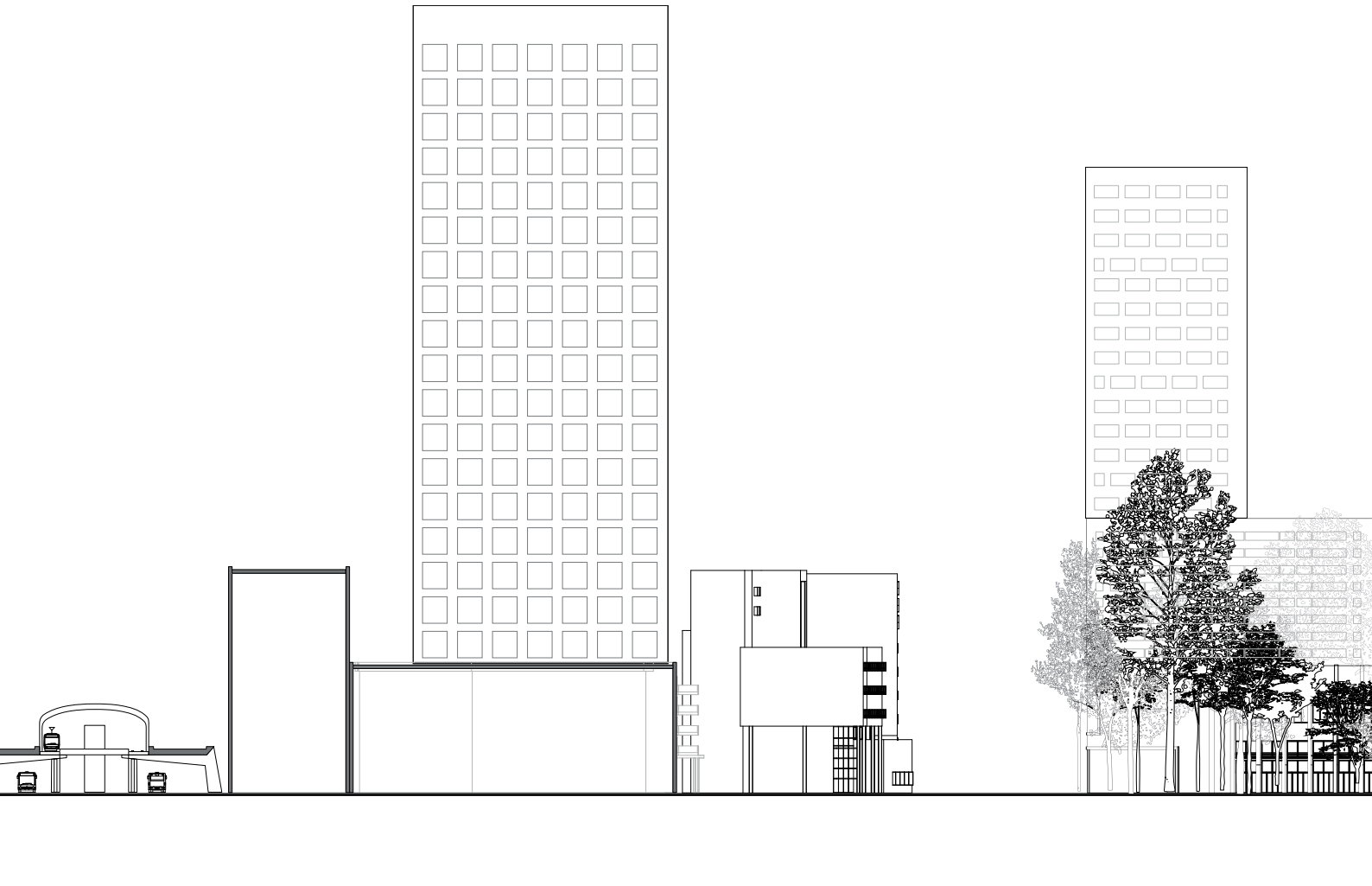


Situation 1:5000

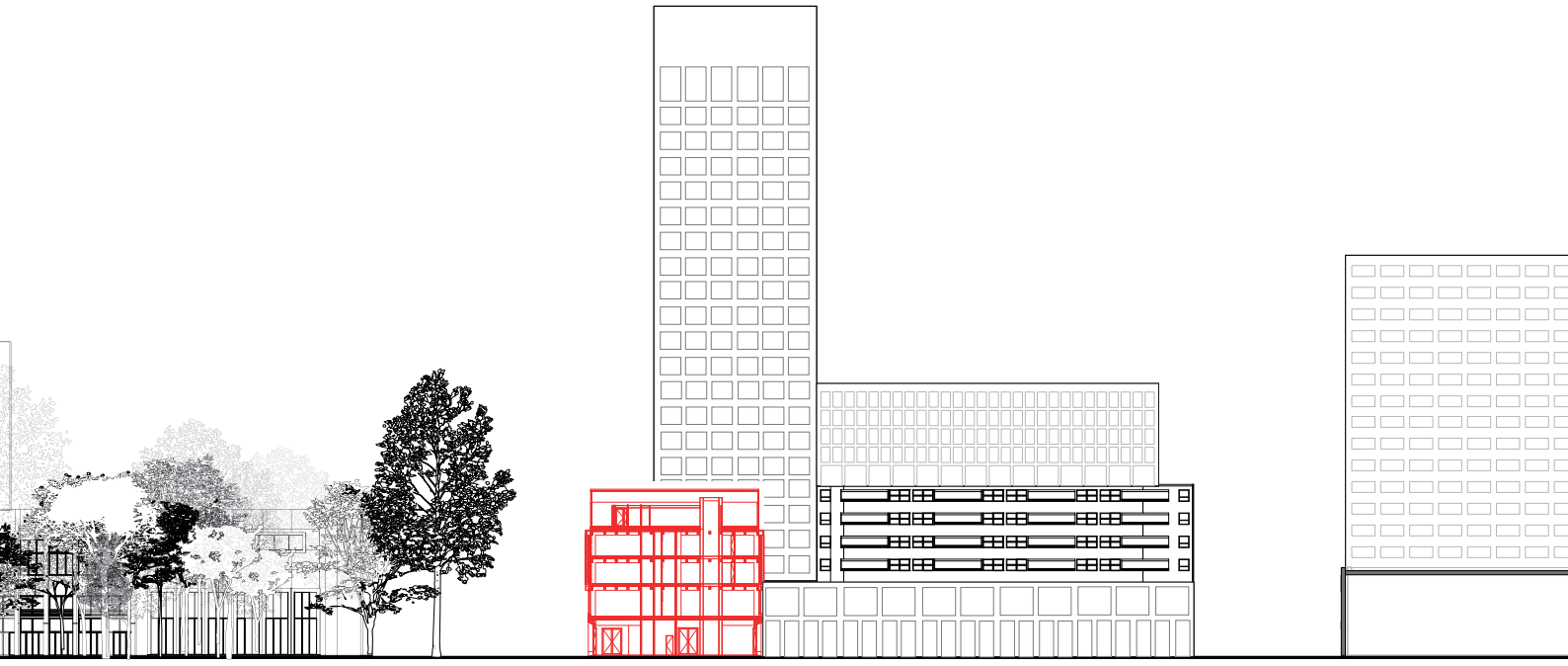


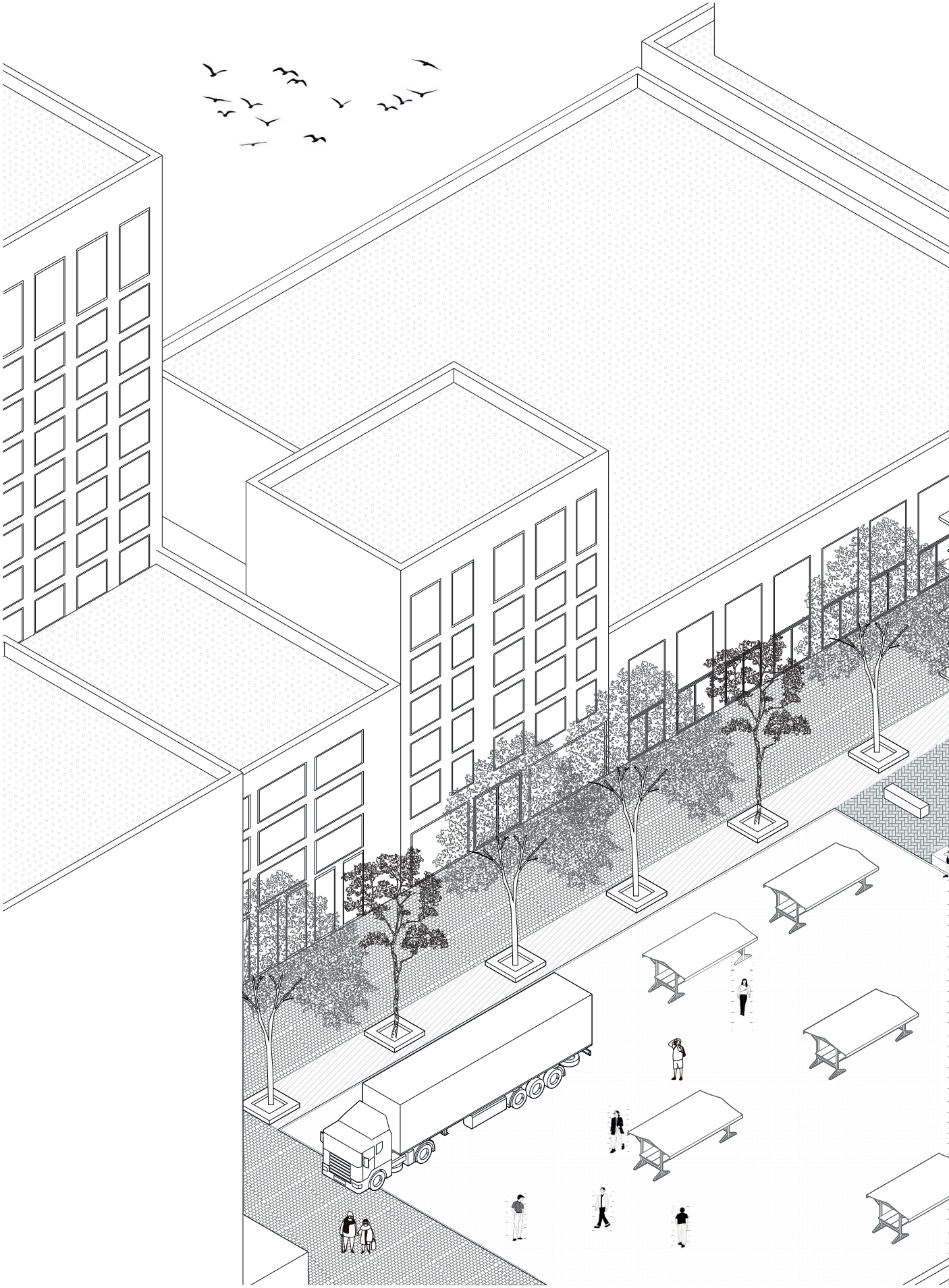
Urban sections 1:1000 – the new form in the existing and the new situation according to the new plans of the municipality



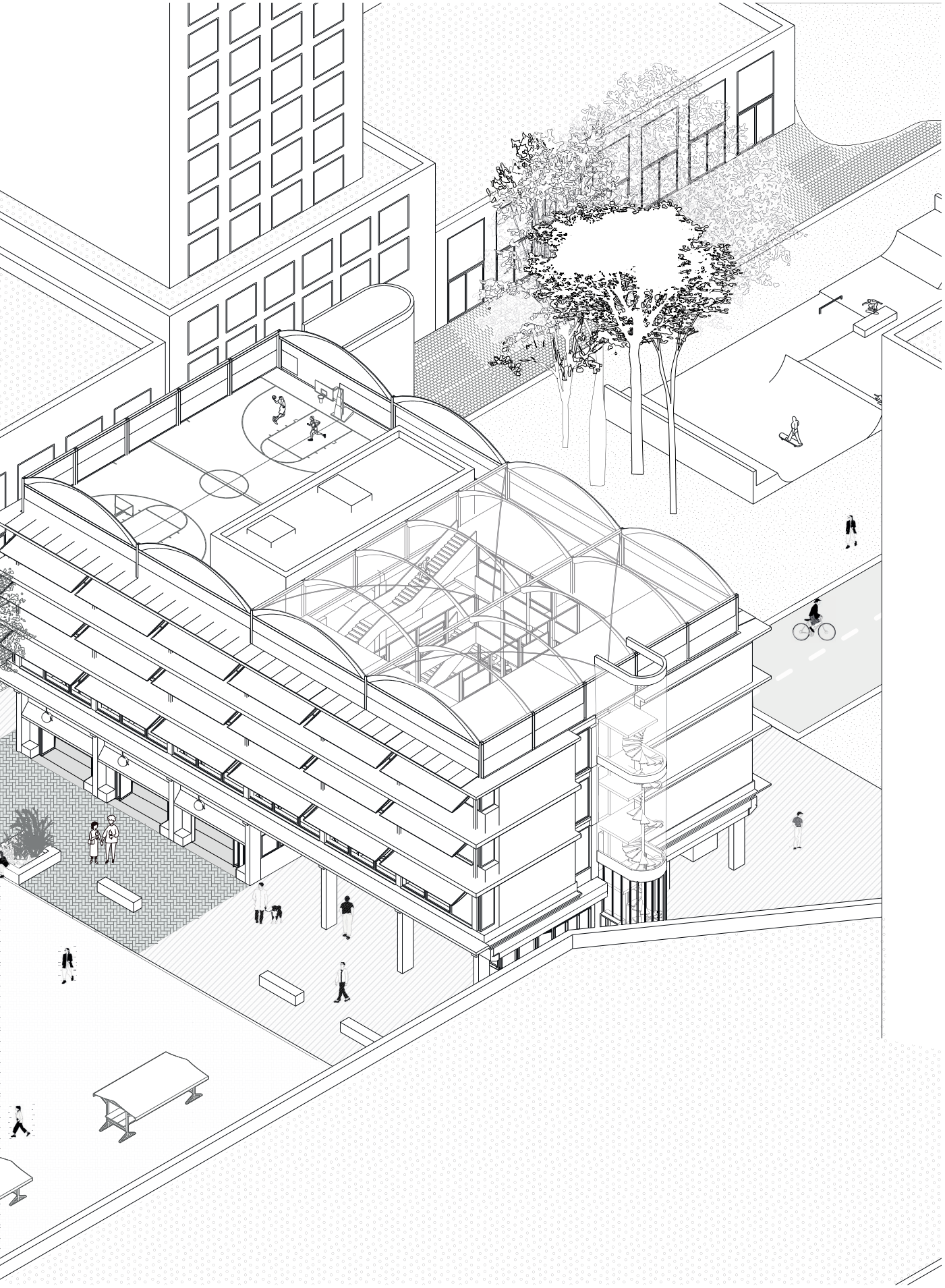


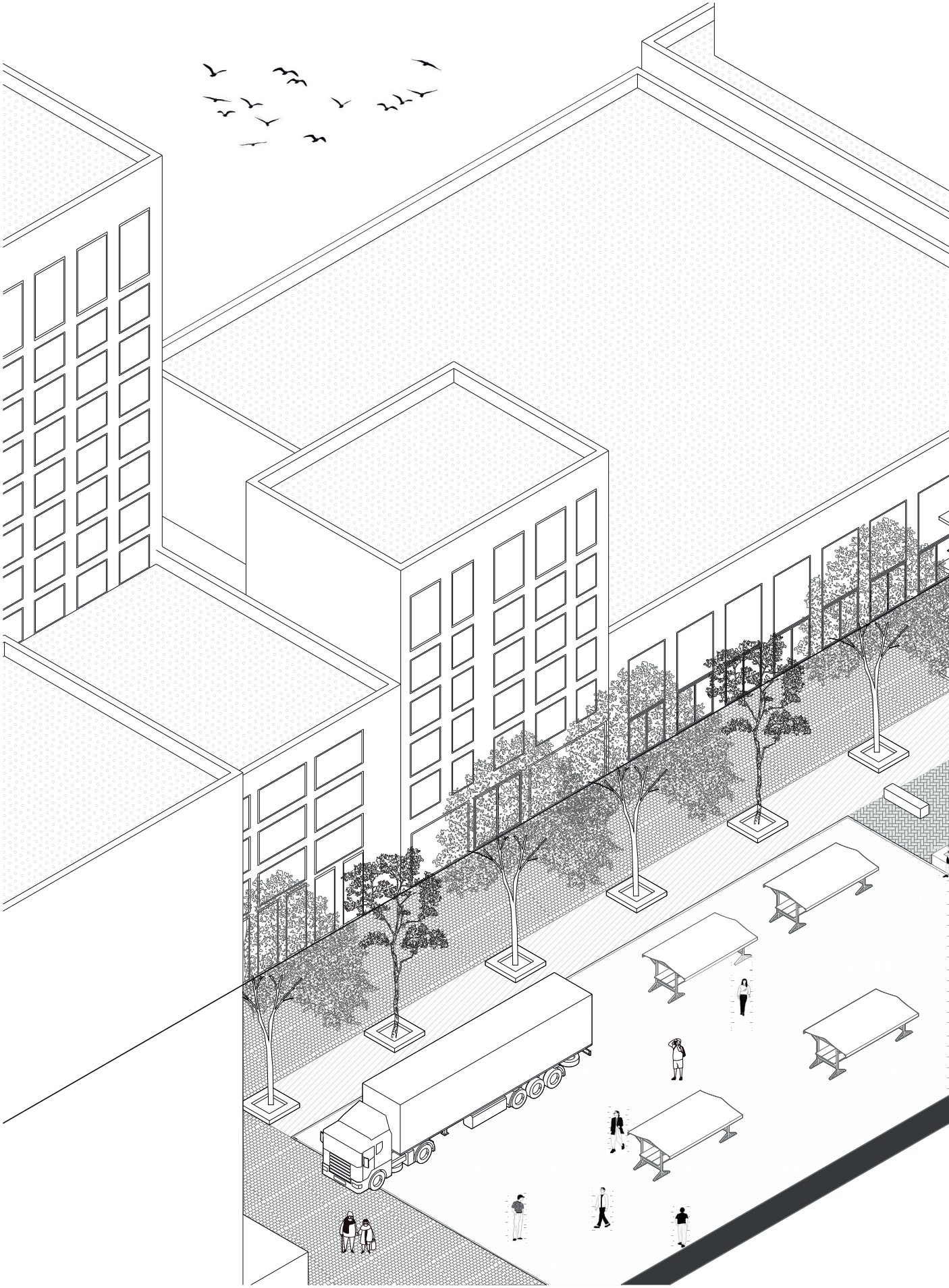




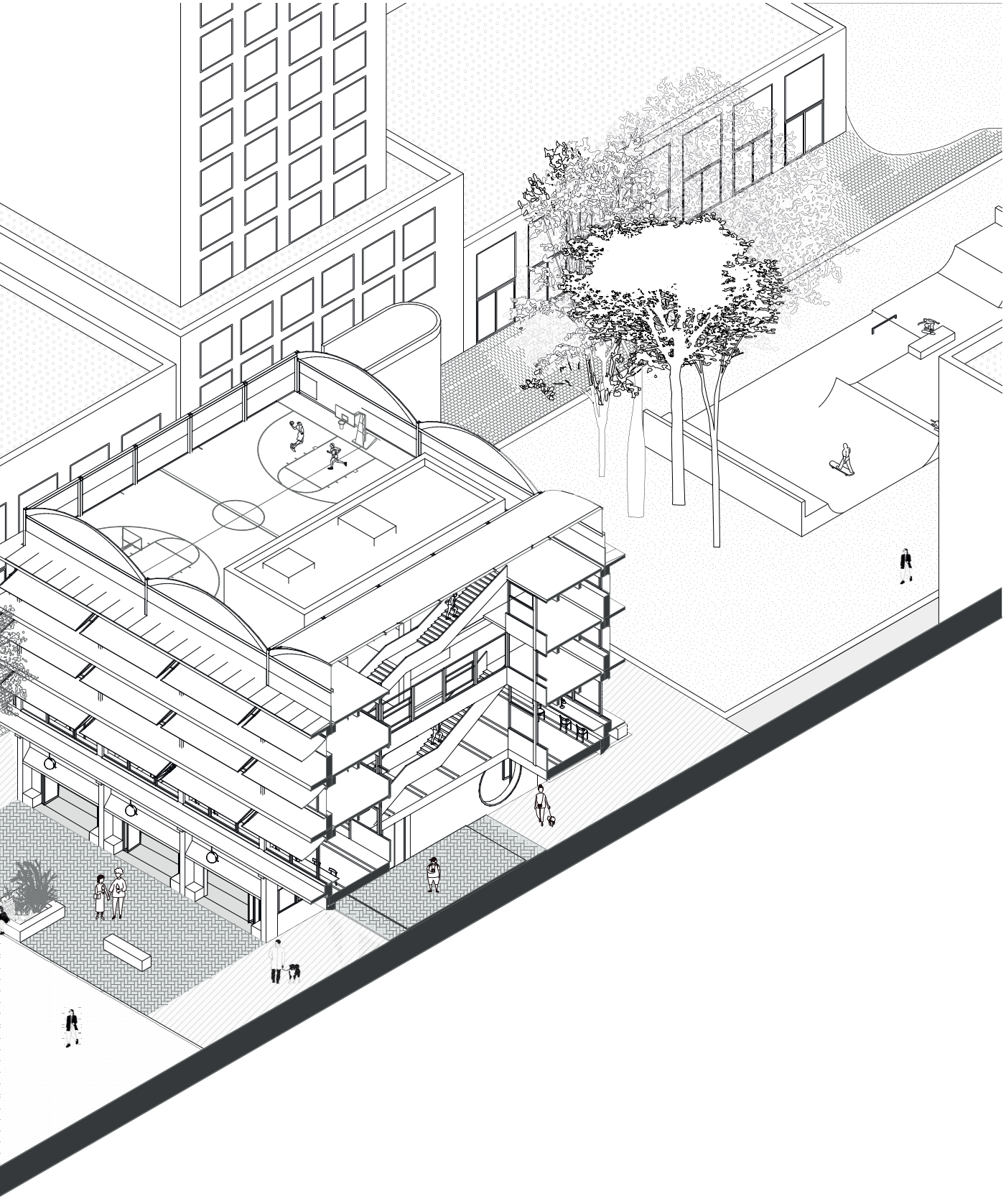


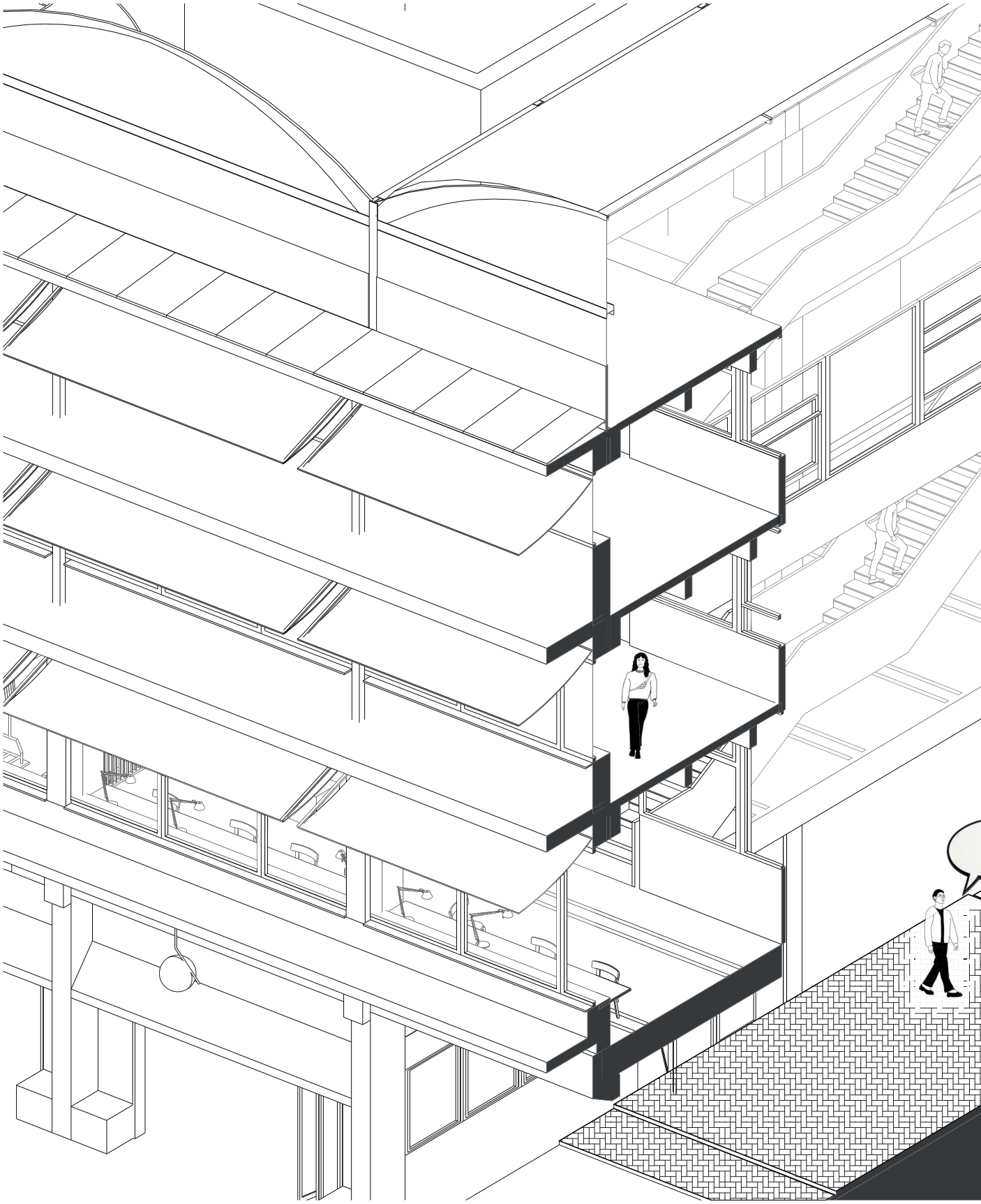
Axonometric view on the building and the connection to the park and market side



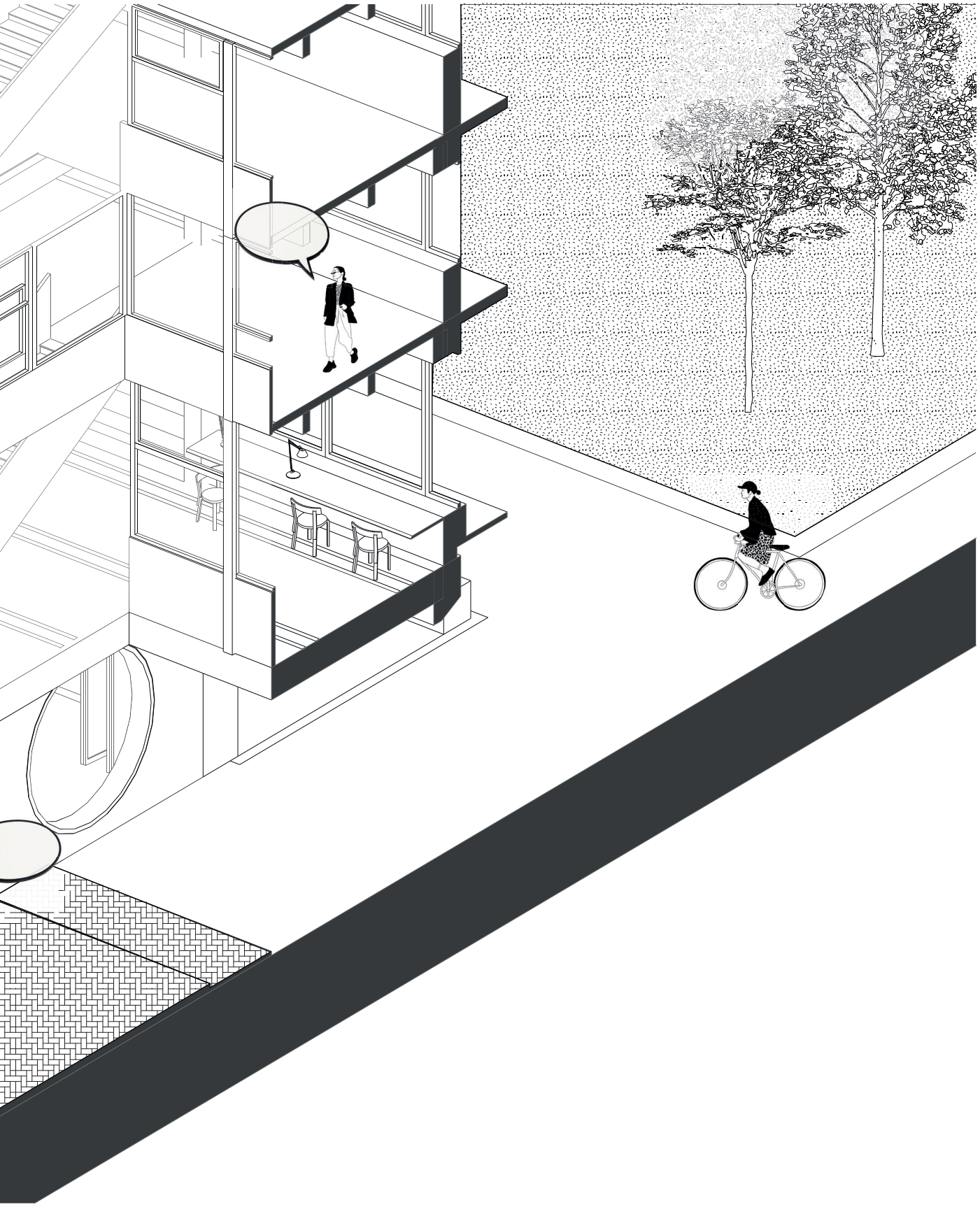


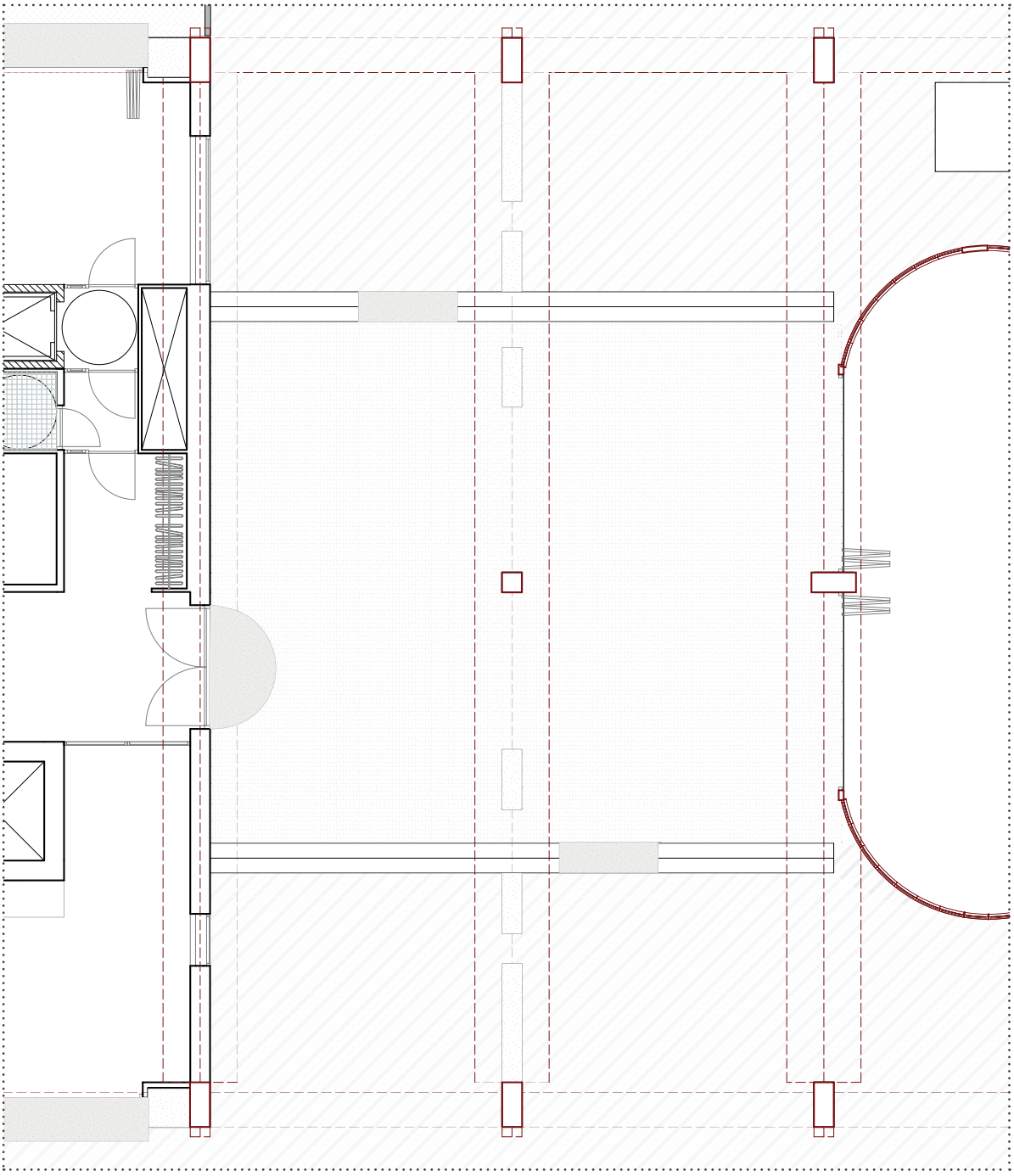
A section of the building showing the circulation space above the passage and the connection to the park en market side



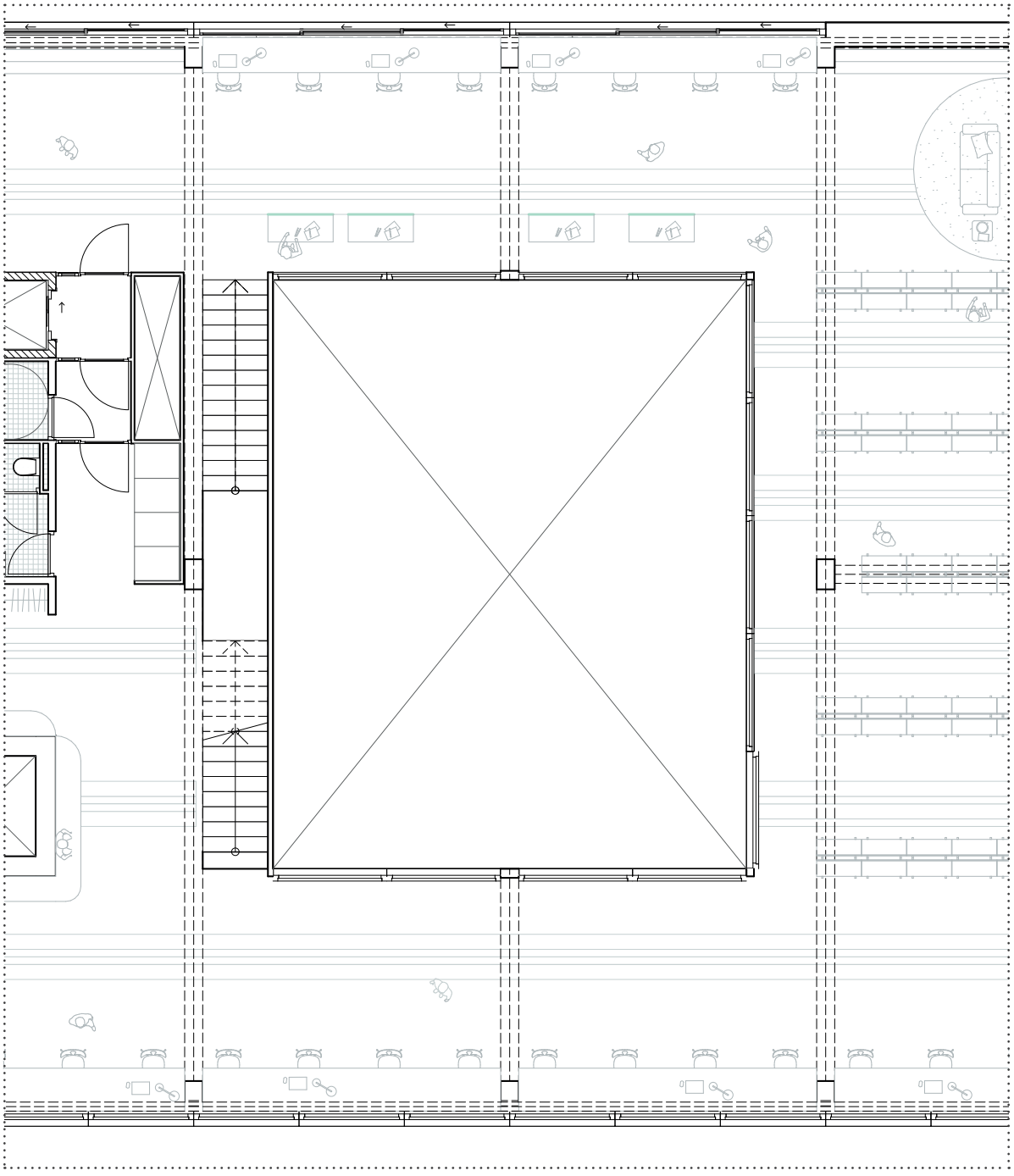


A zoom in on the void above the passage with its connecting stairs, showing the social role of the element

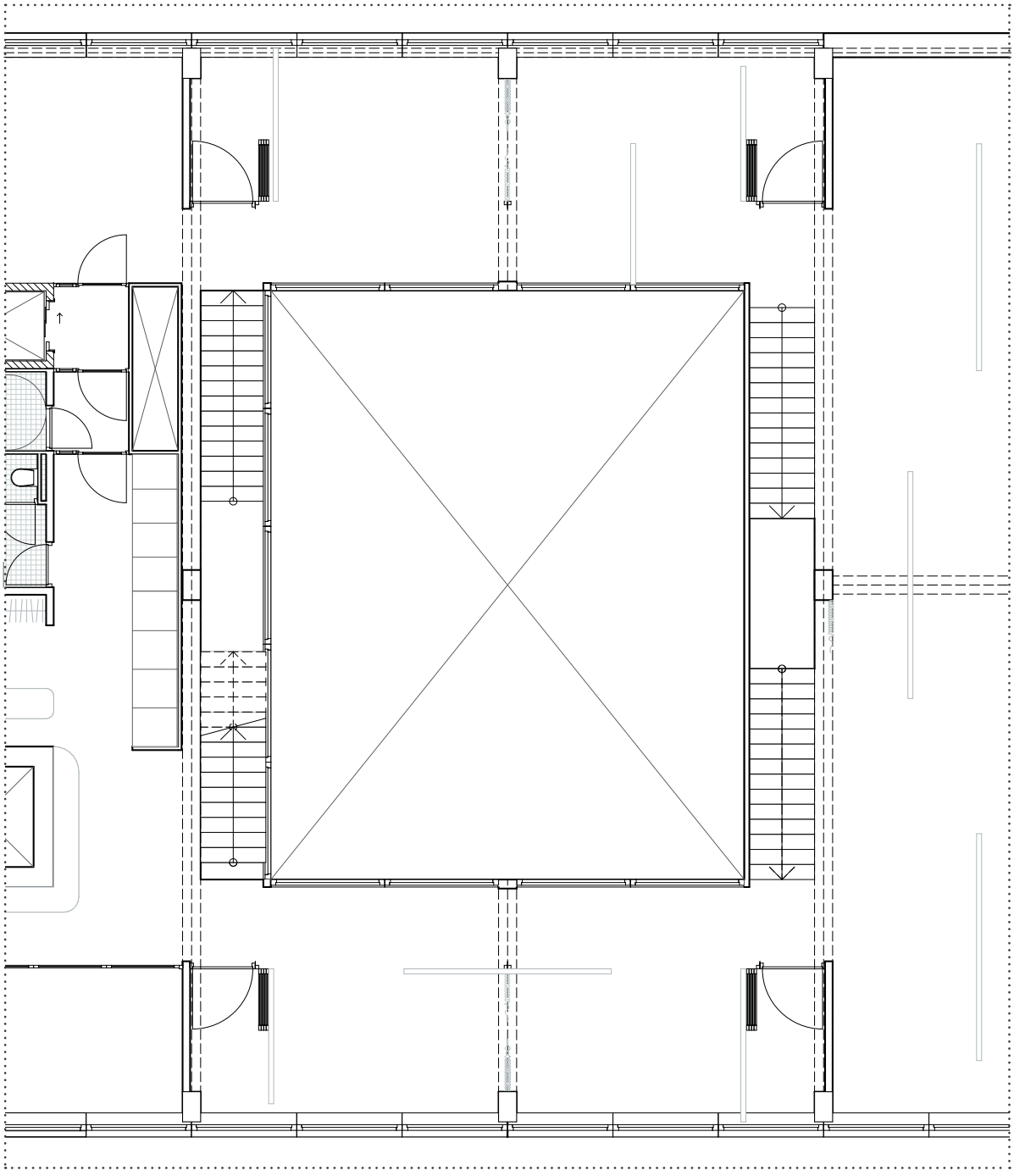




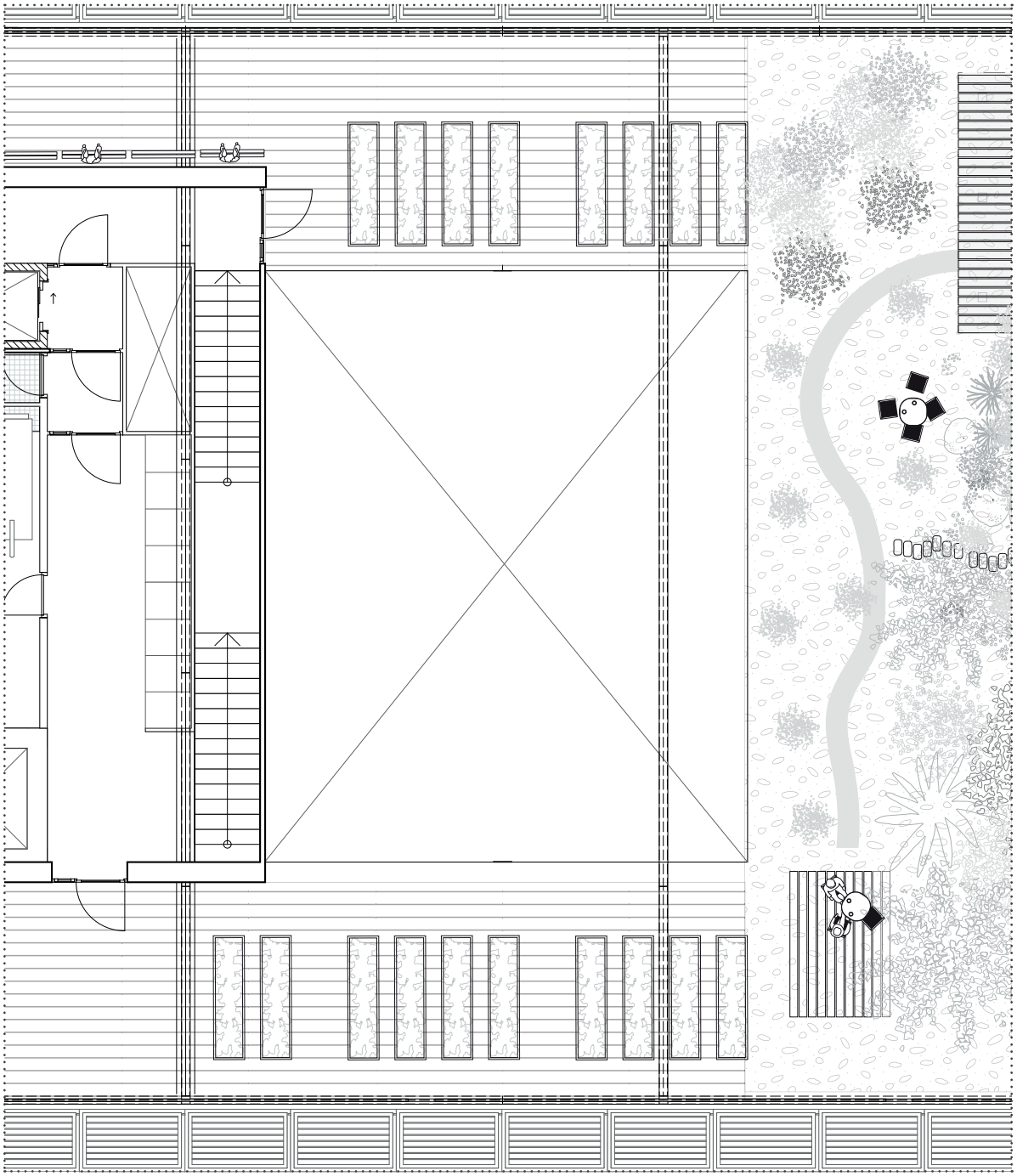
The void reflected on the ground floor with steps and special pavement



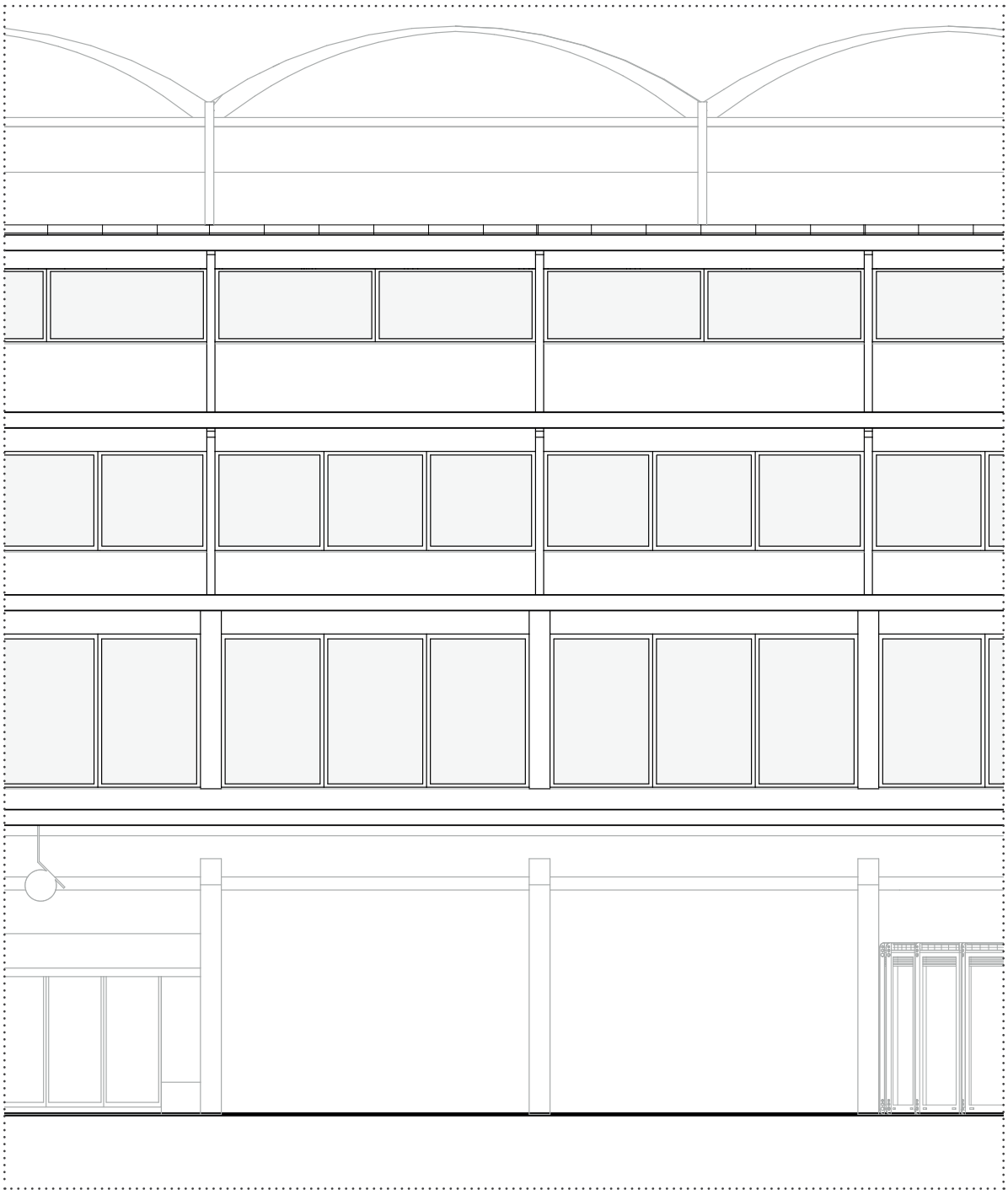
The void on the first floor connecting all the spaces and stairs



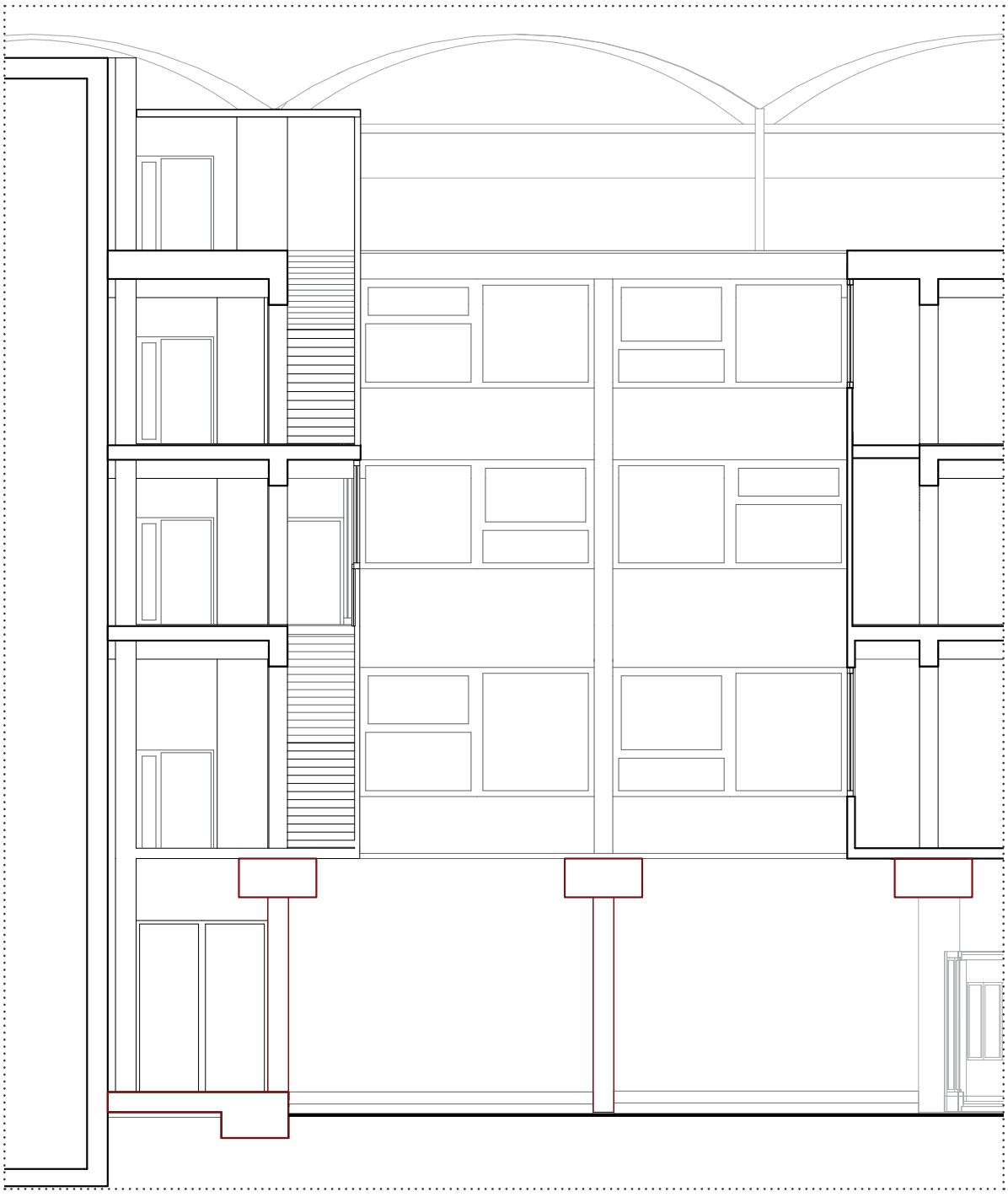
Flow of the void with its connected stairs



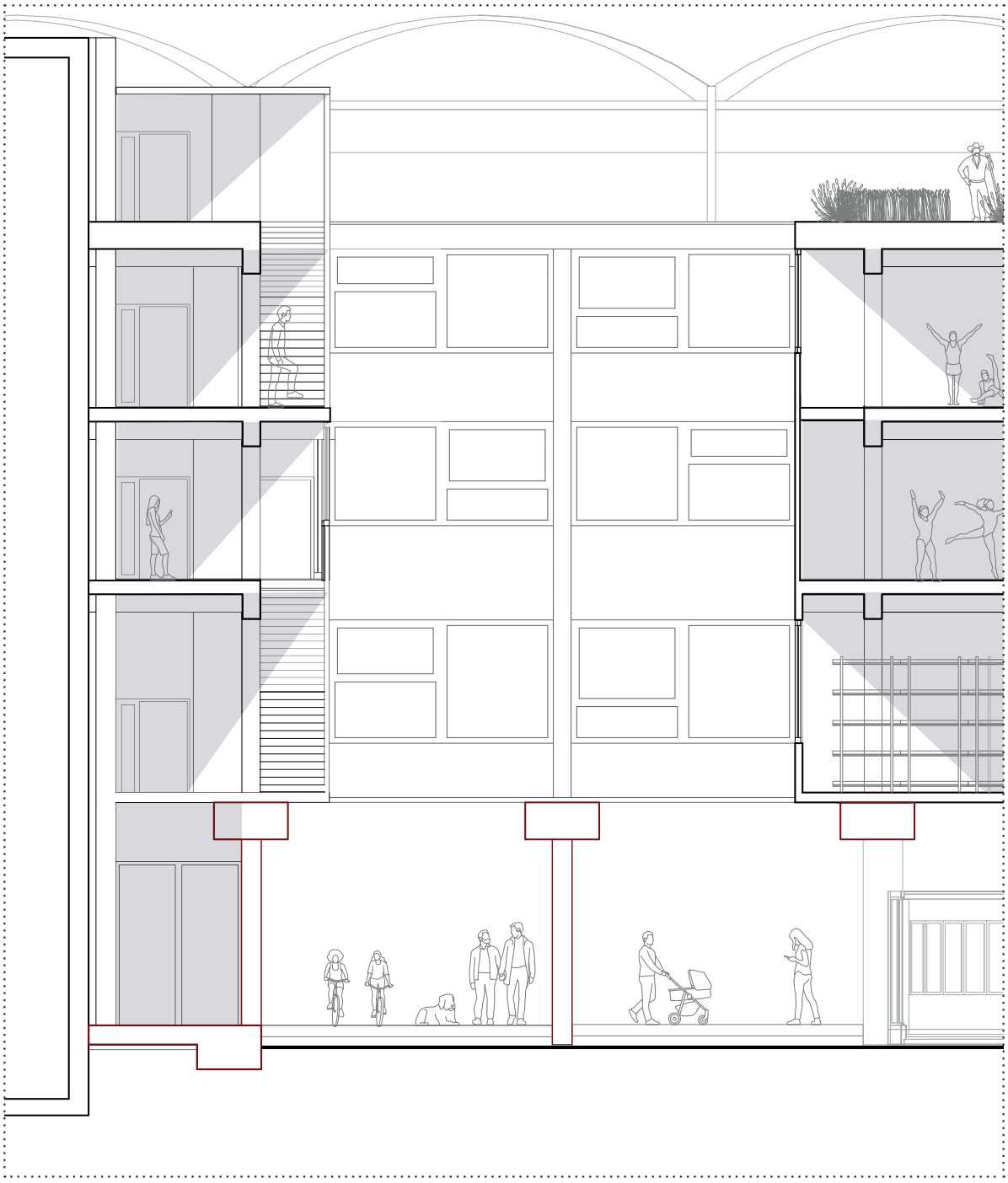
The void ending at the roof were there is a connection with the roof garden and the basketball court



The void in the east facade



The void in section



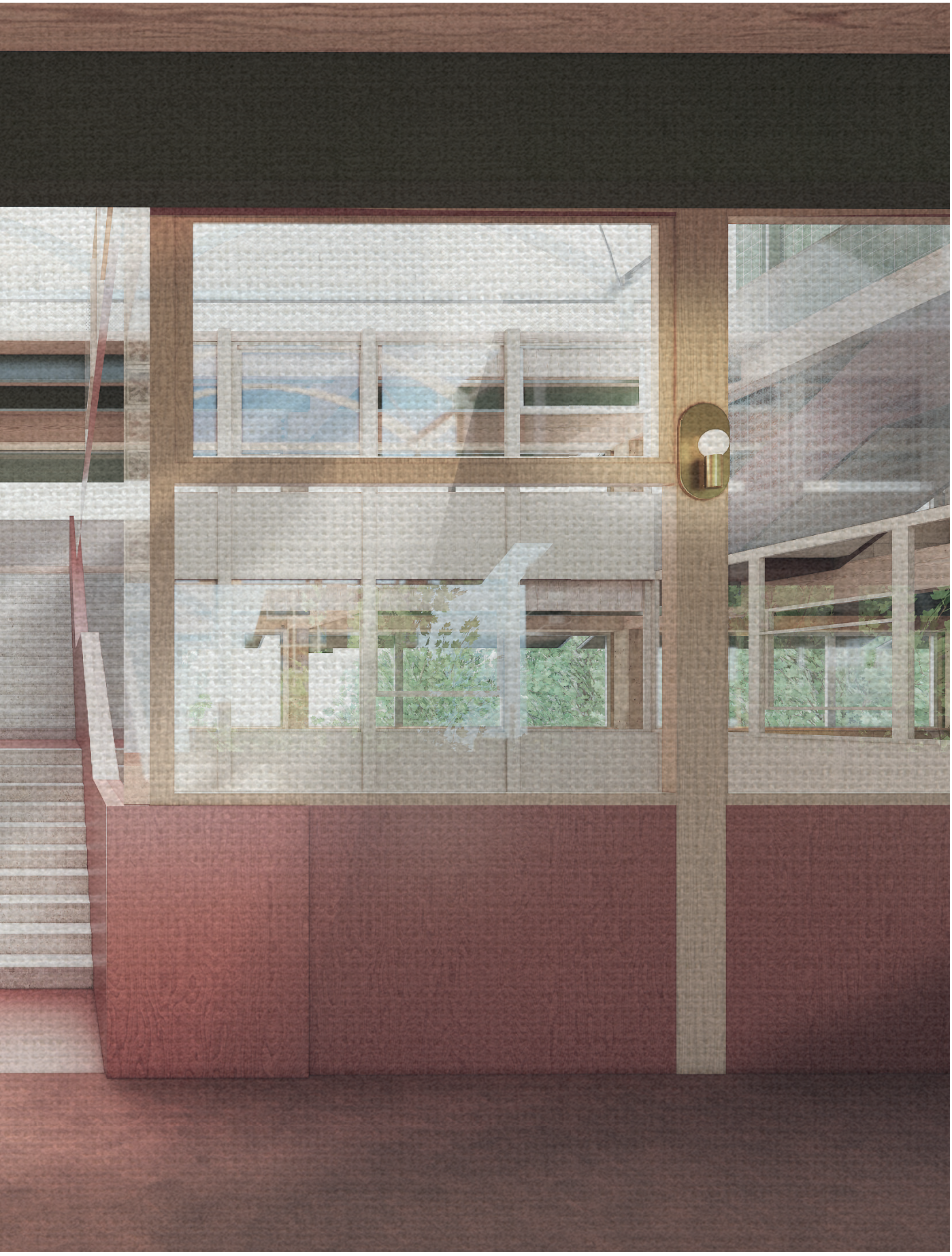
The void in section with daily uses



The void in section by night providing social safety



impression of the void and the connected stairs
The void offers visual connections to the adjacent and upper spaces





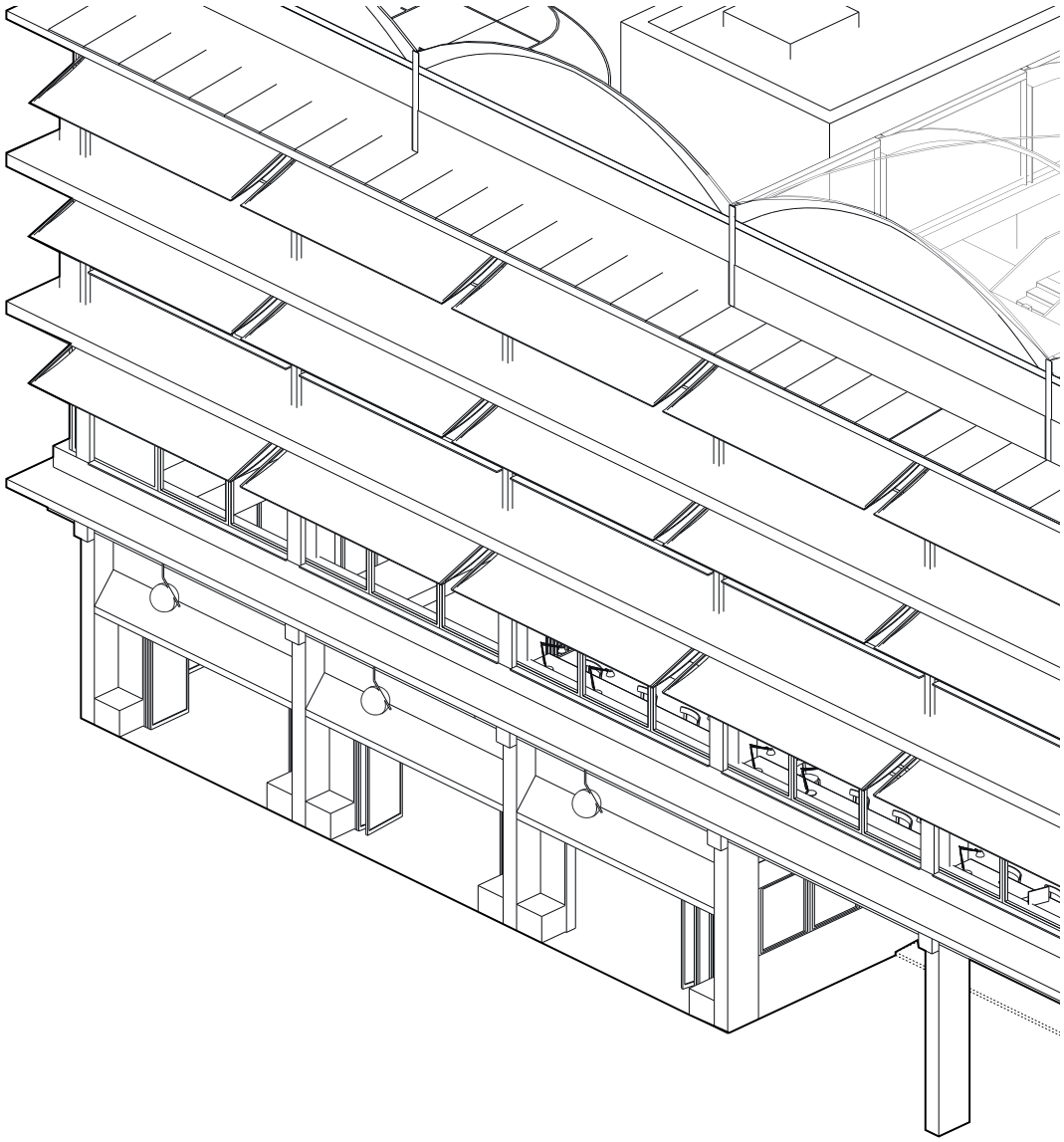
impression of the void
The interior spaces and their activities are visible from the ground floor

The ground floor - thresholds small scale

At ground level, a series of threshold spaces define the relationship between the building and its surroundings. Benches, transition zones, and subtle level changes create spaces where people can stay, wait, or meet. The use of flexible sliding doors allows the ground floor to operate as an ambiguous zone, flowing toward both the park on one side and the market on the other. This ambiguity makes the boundary between inside and outside less fixed and more open to interpretation.

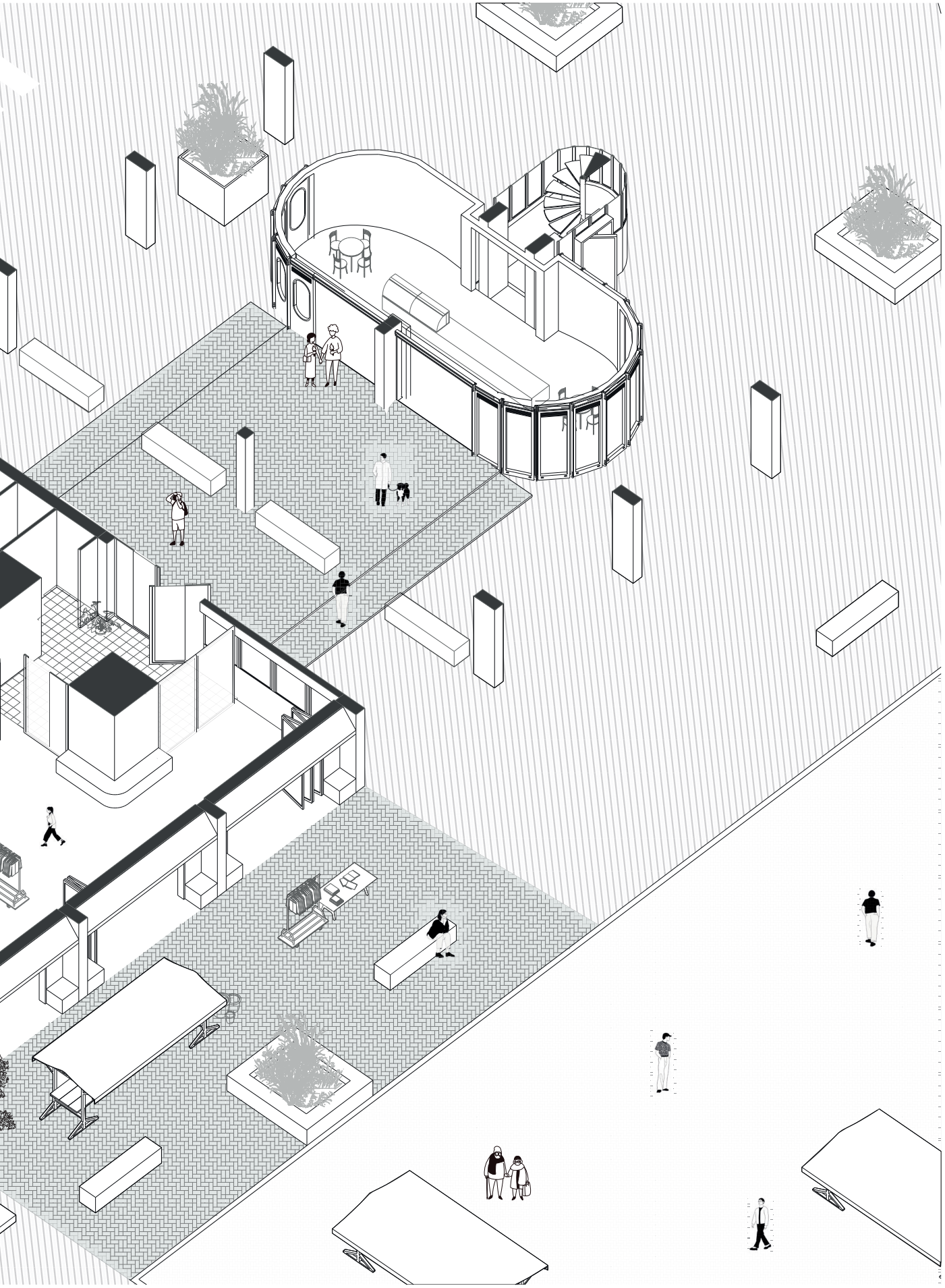
The transition zones are further emphasized through the use of different paving patterns, marking subtle shifts between public, semi-public, and interior spaces. These zones were made possible by removing existing storage units on the west side and planter boxes on the east side, creating more space for movement, meeting and stay.
Both primary and secondary seating elements have been integrated into the design and facade, allowing for different types of use — from short pauses to longer stays. On the west side, a recessed entrance creates a niche that offers a more enclosed, sheltered space to linger.
A canopy with integrated lighting has been added along the façade, providing additional shelter and contributing to the building's presence during the evening. This horizontal element helps define the edge of the building while reinforcing the threshold condition.

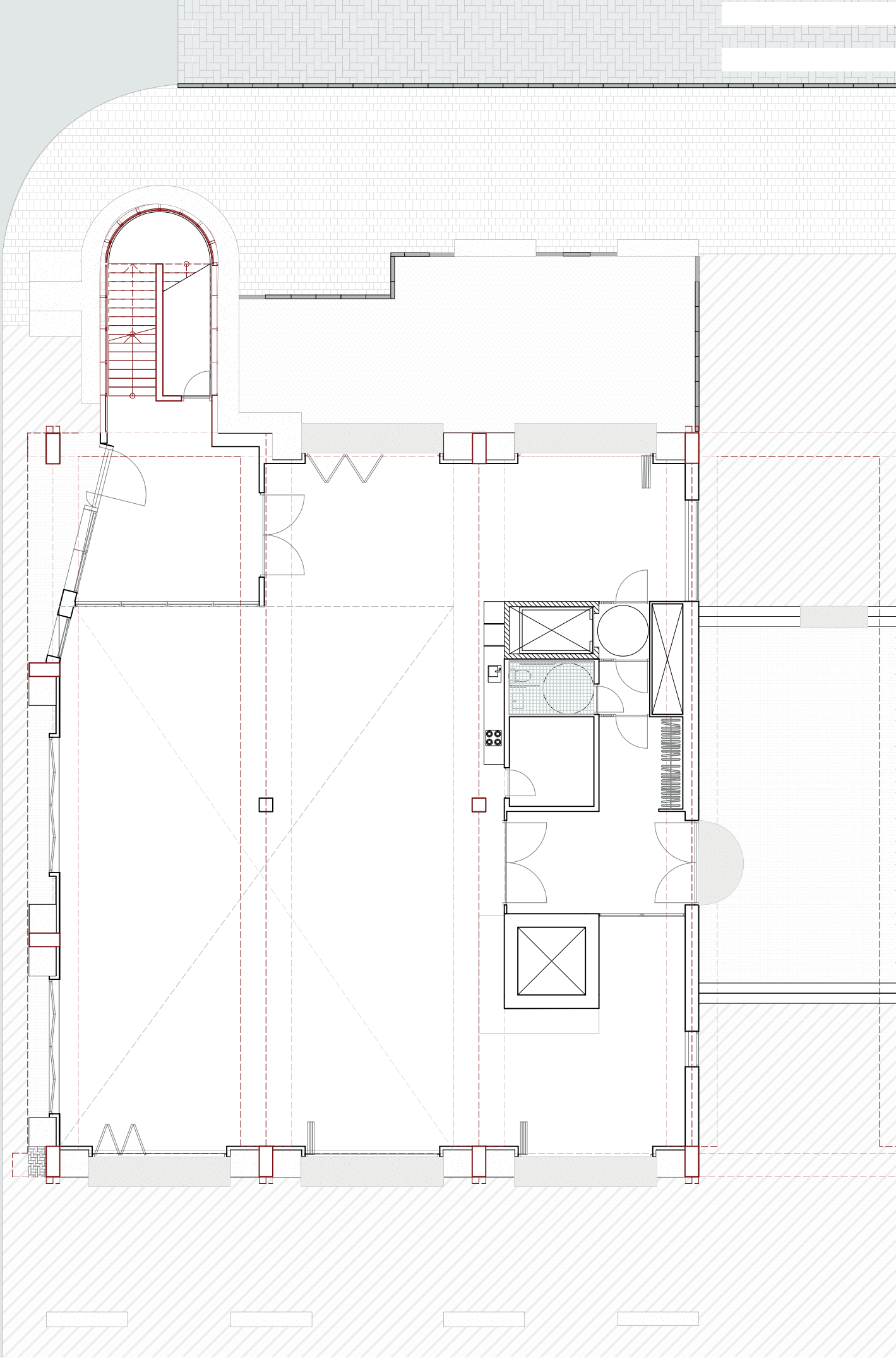
An existing mobility structure is reused and reinterpreted, extending vertically through the building up to the roof. It functions as a continuous circulation space and is given additional spatial emphasis in the new design. At roof level, signage is integrated into the structure, ensuring visibility from the surroundings and communicating the building's active use.



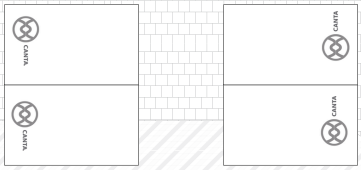


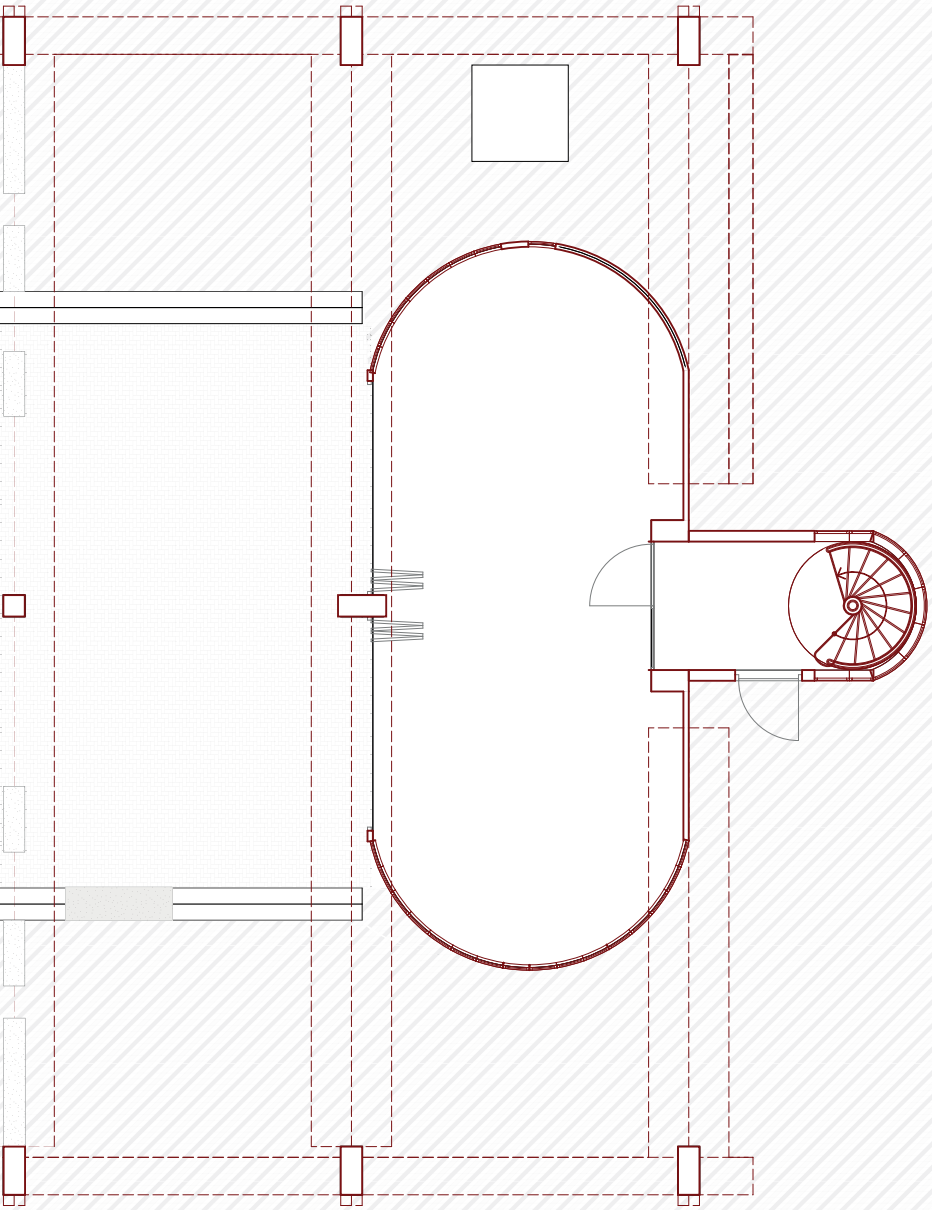
Axonometric ground floor level

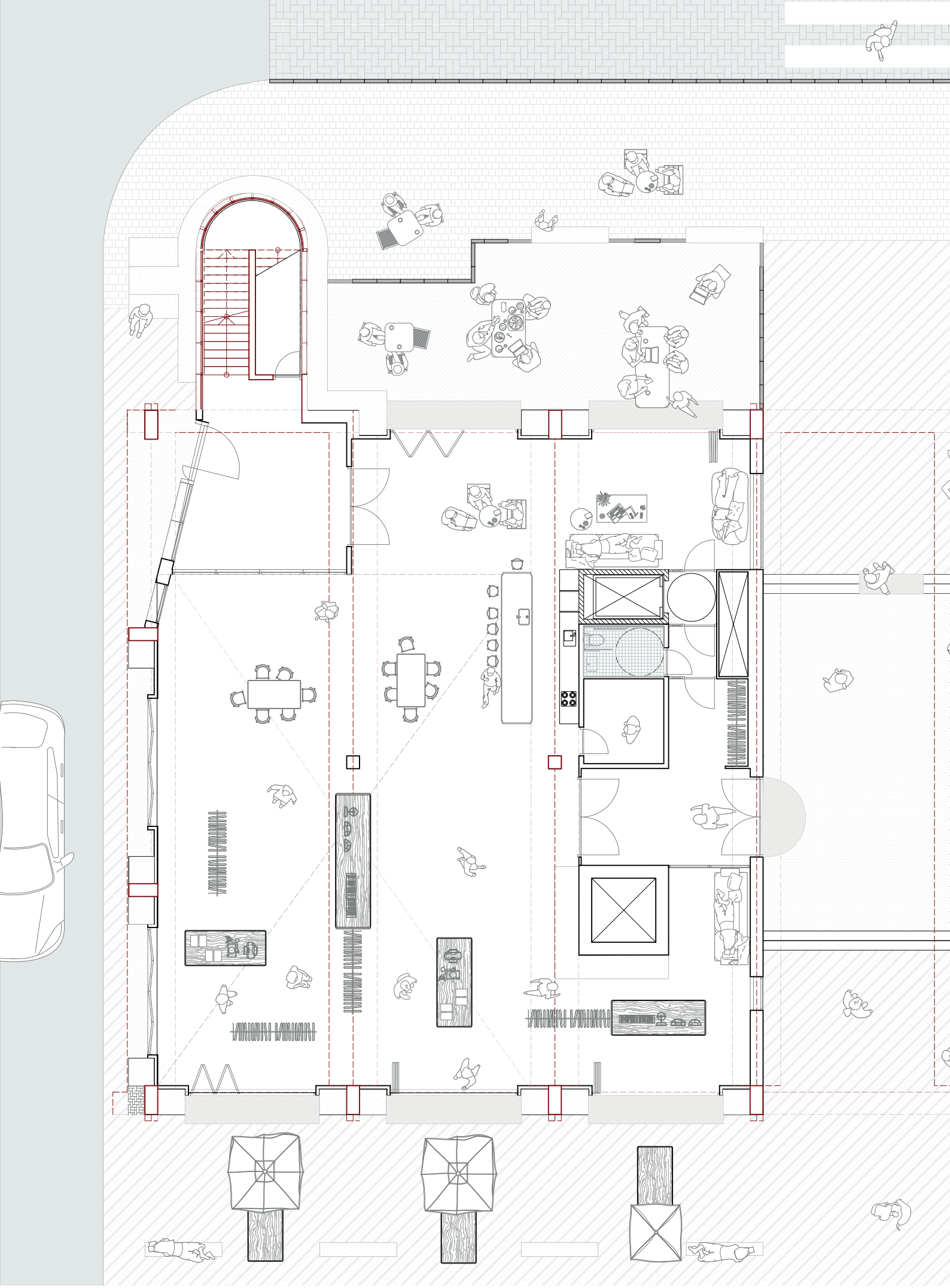




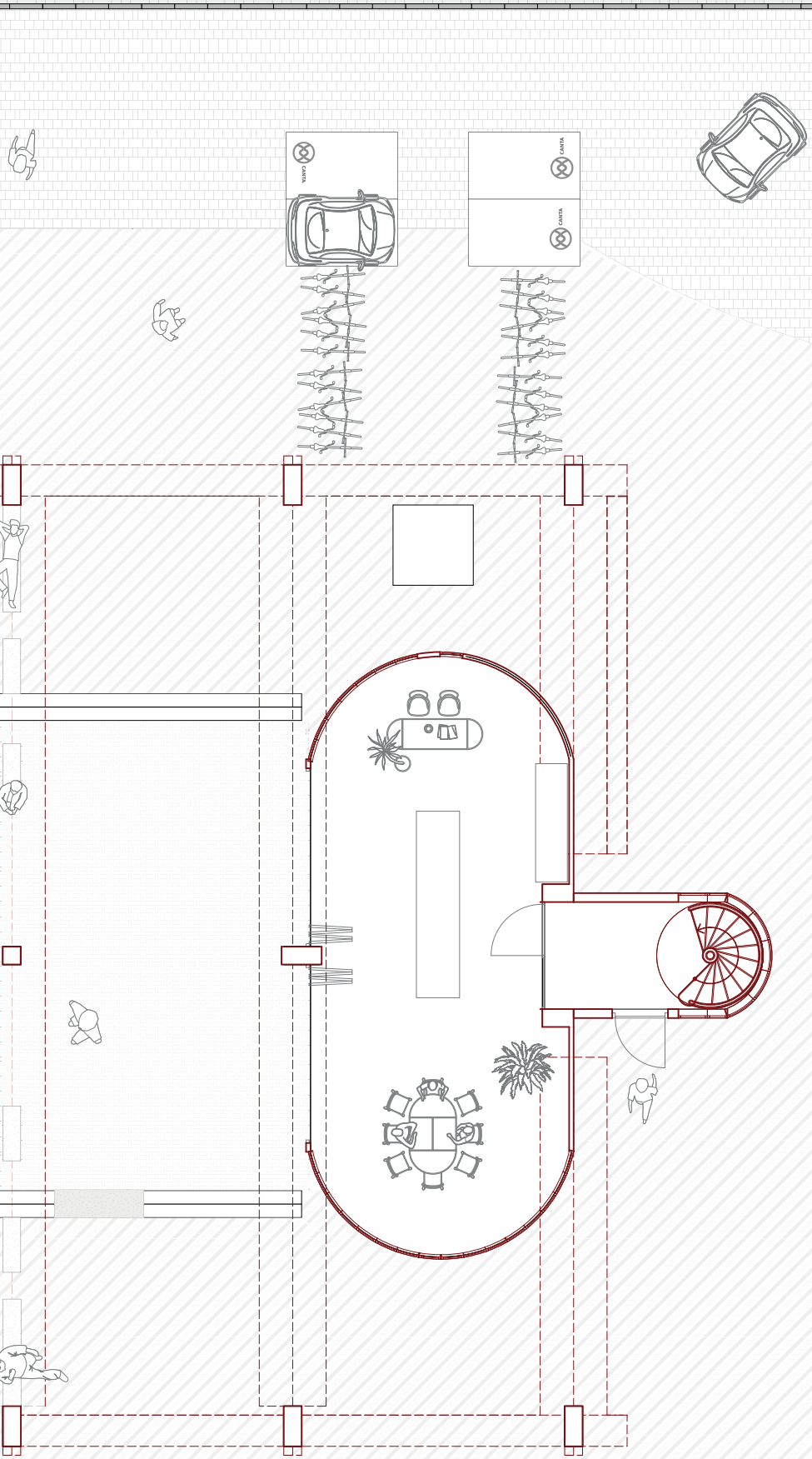
groundfloorplan 1:125

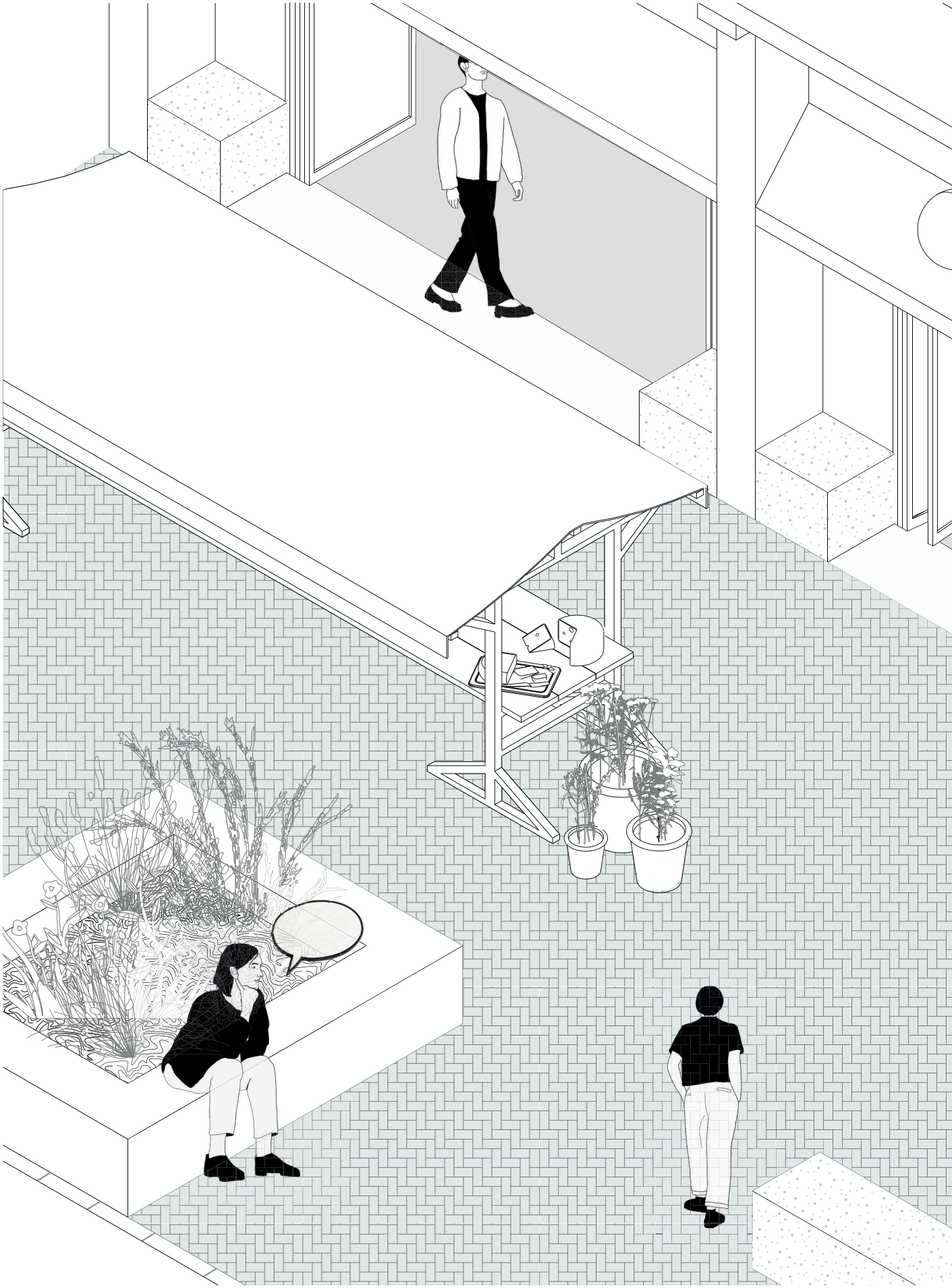




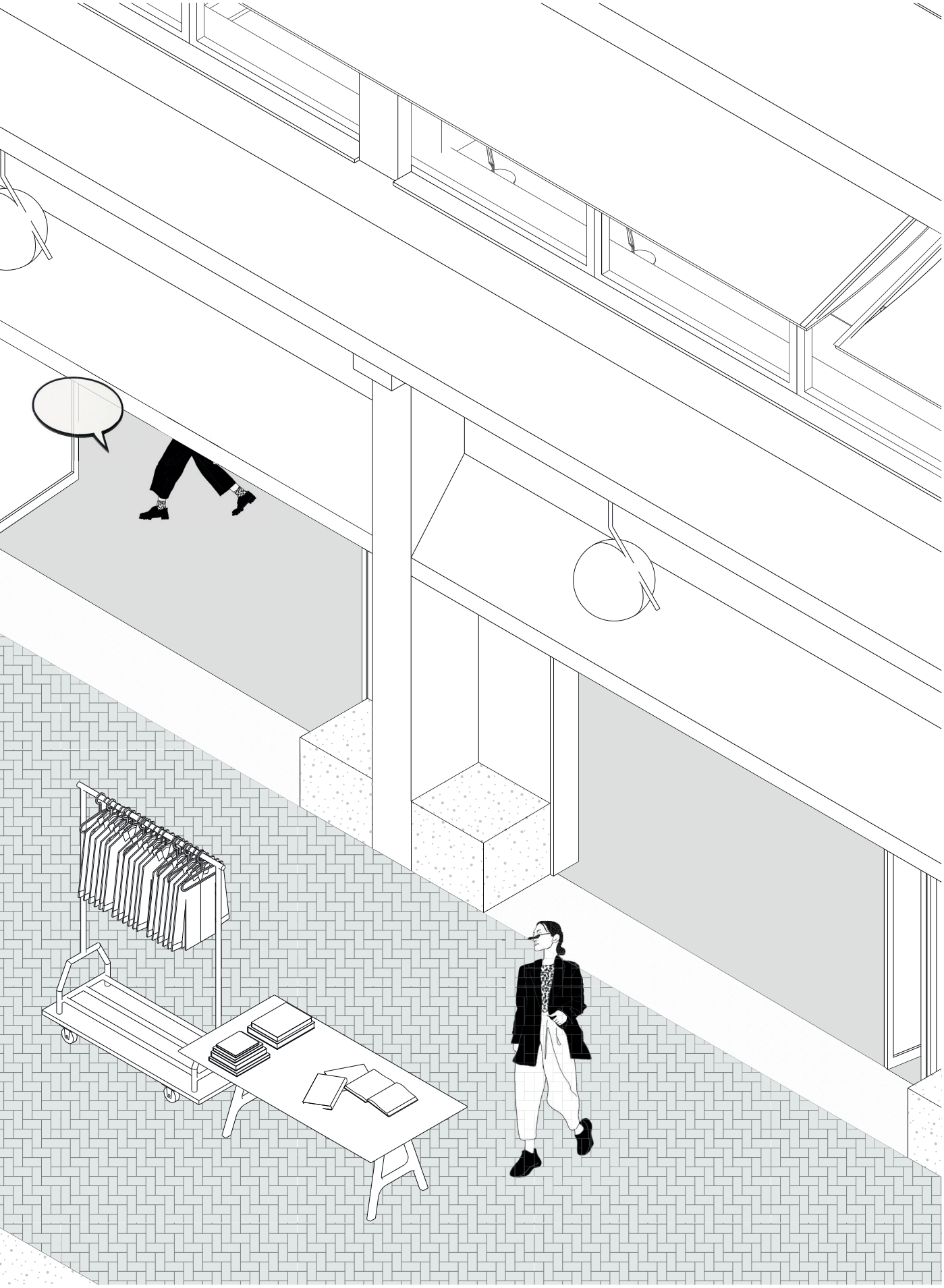


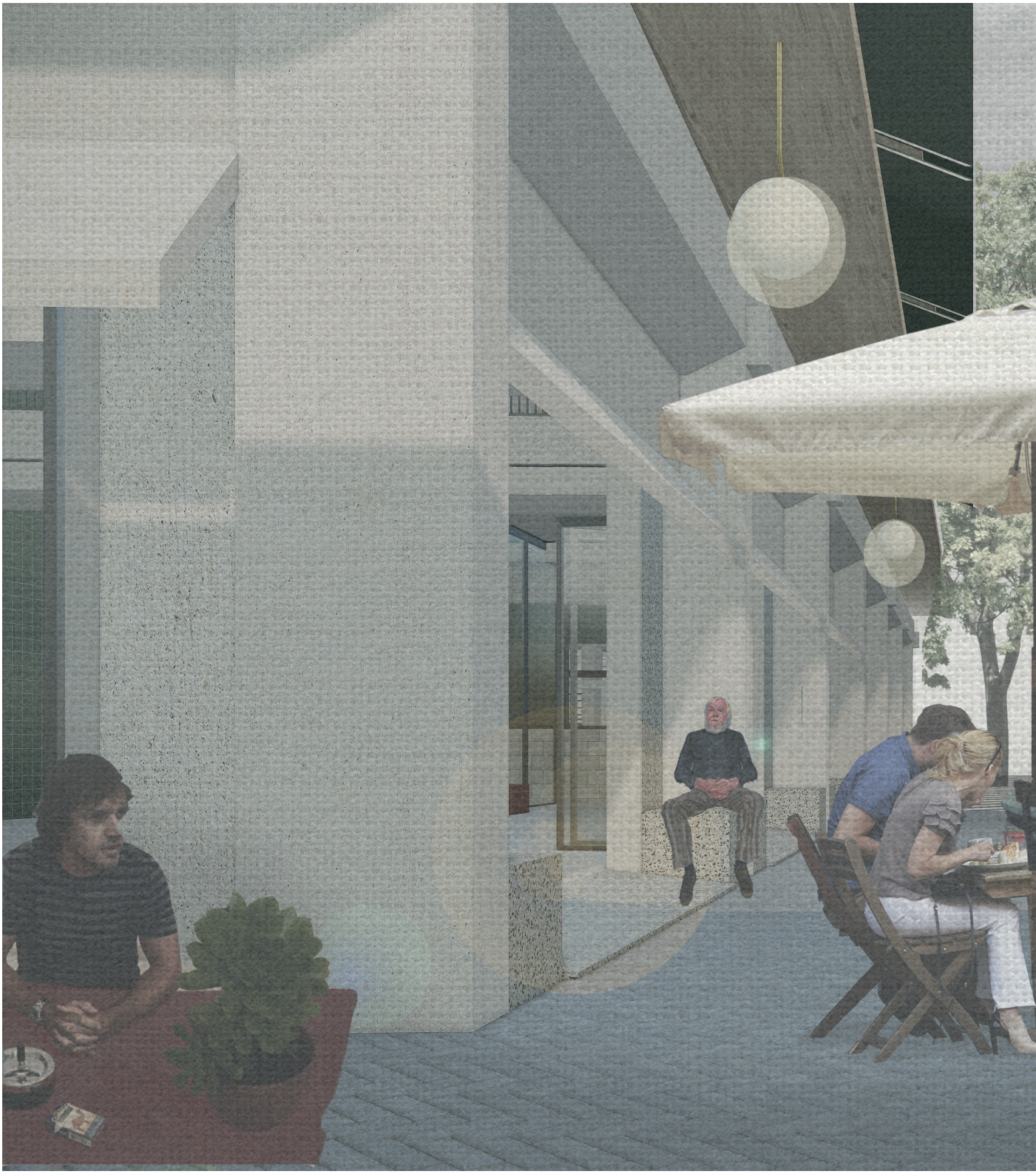
groundfloorplan 1:125 showing different activities





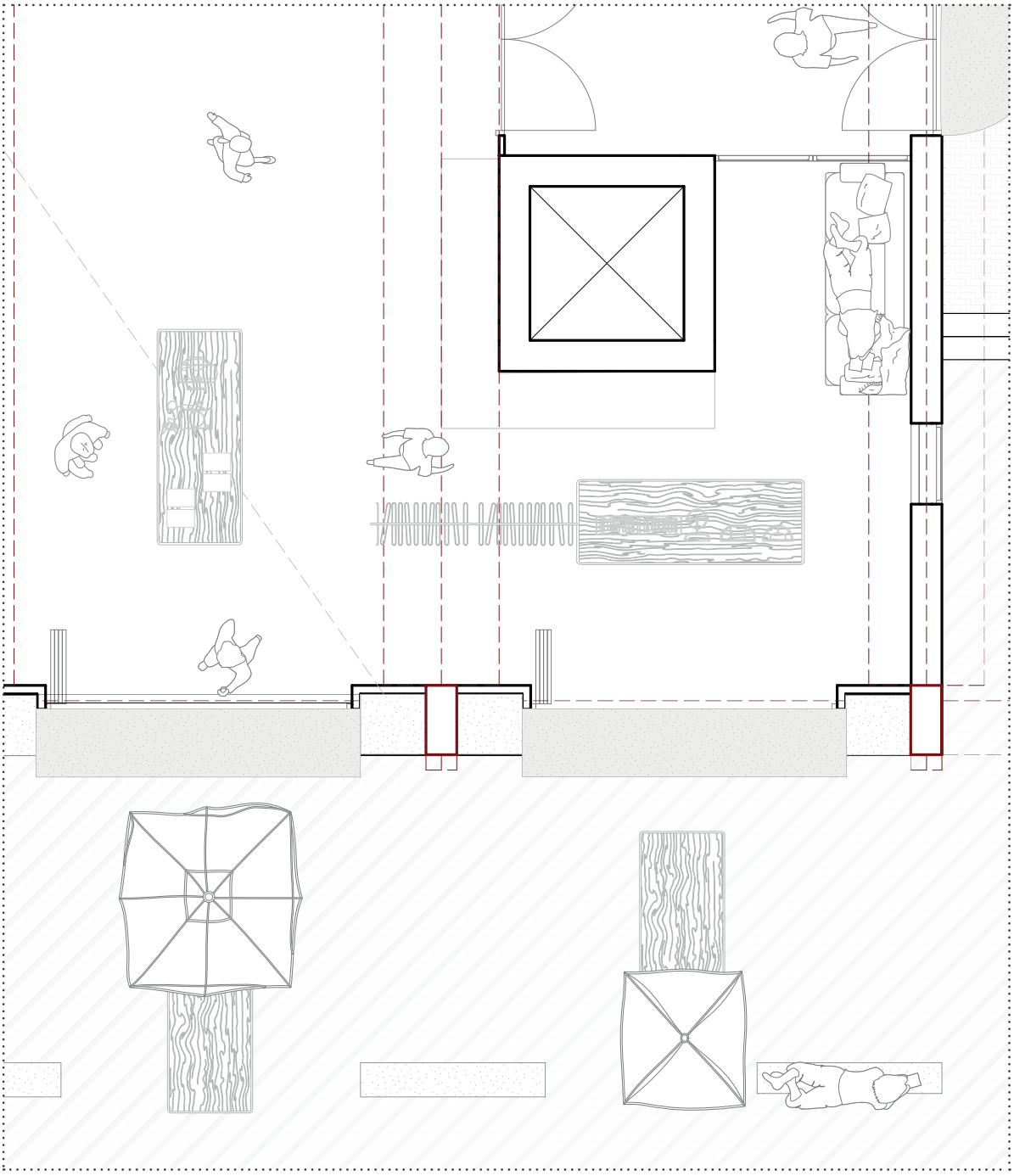
The transition zone between market side and building. Including different elements of seating and distuingish itself by different patterns



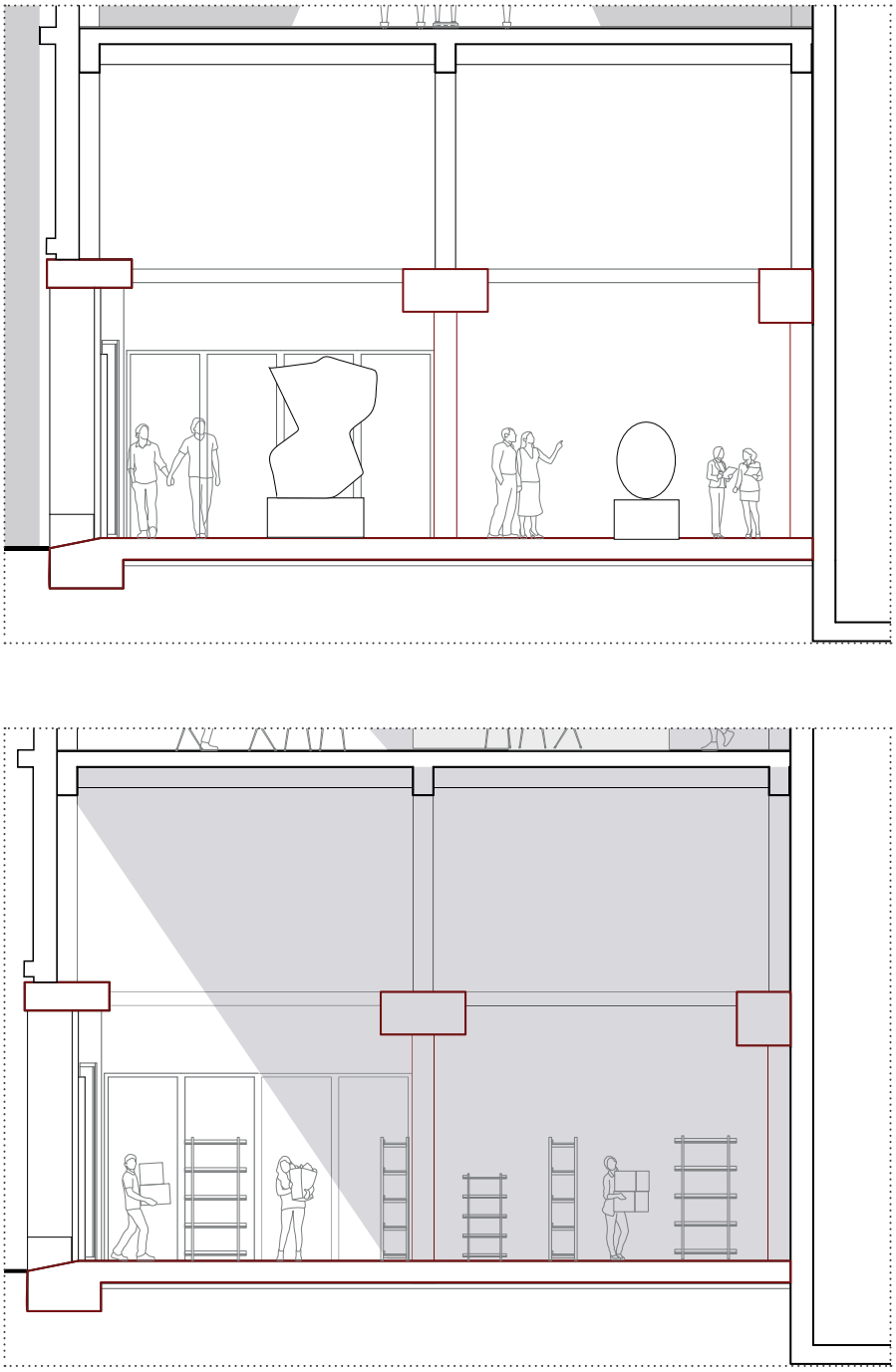


impression of the transition zone
providing space for differen uses, stays, seating and meeting





The transition zone at the east side in floorplan



Groundfloor activities in section by night and day

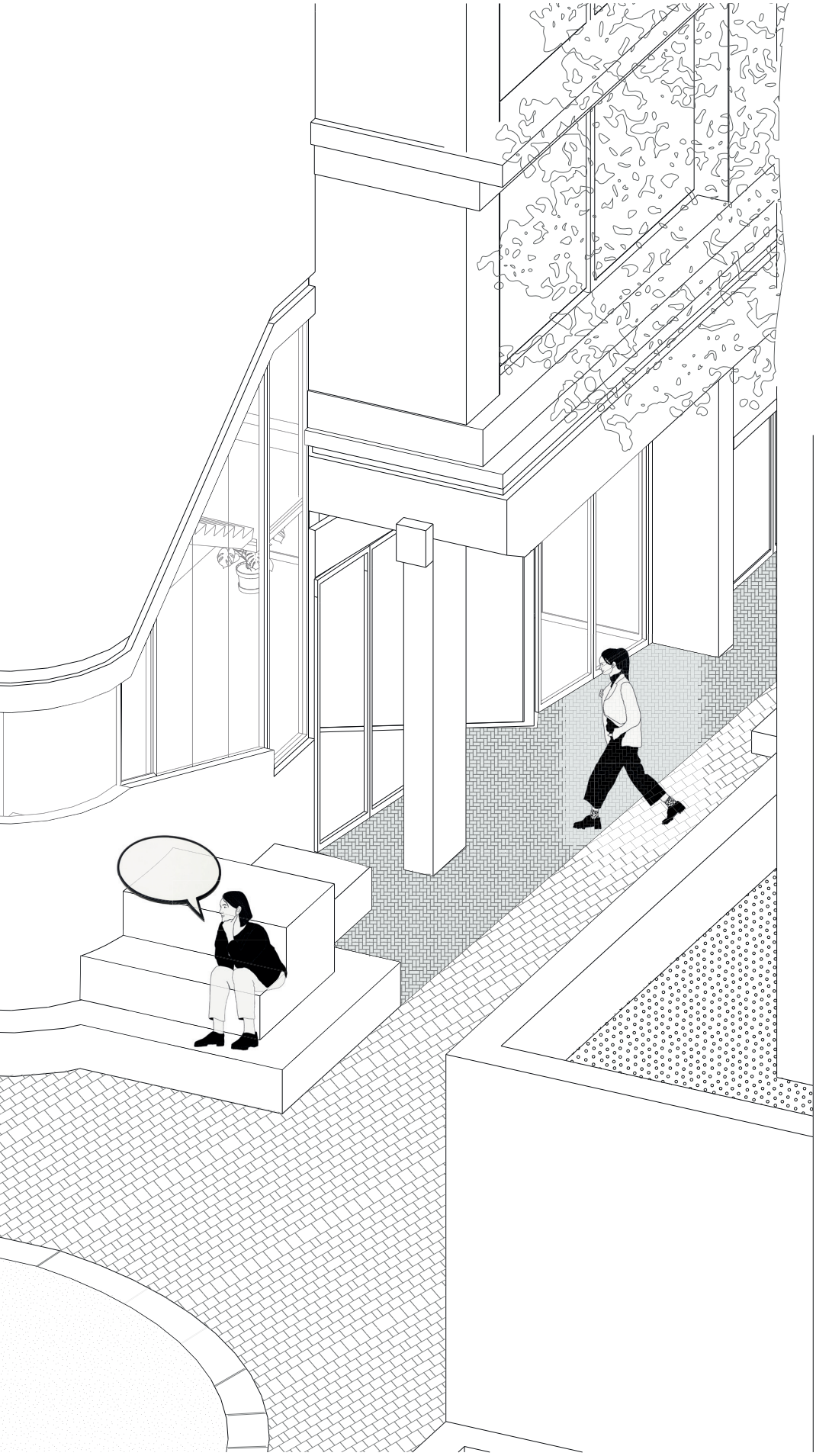


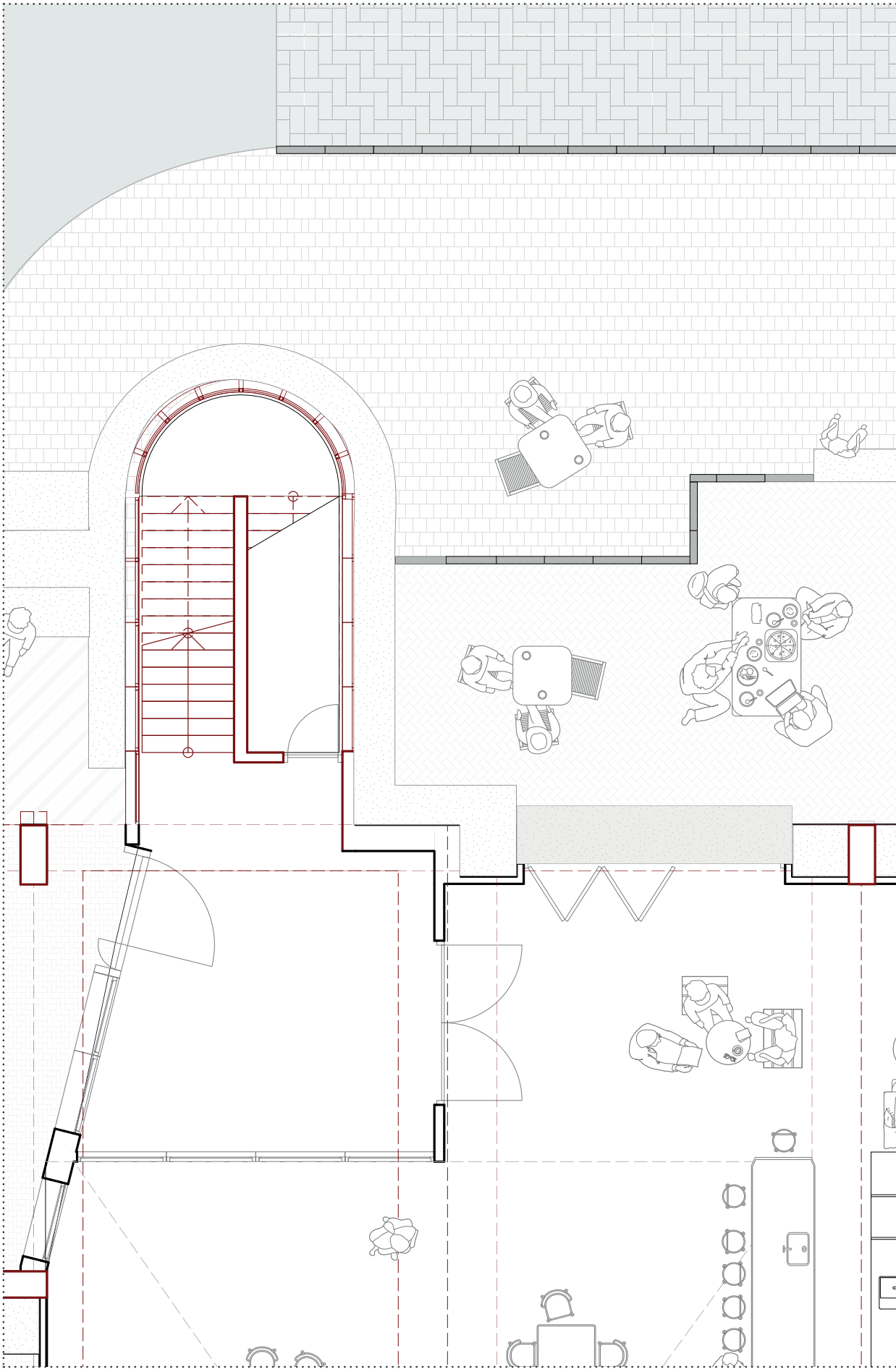
impression of the groundfloor
the groundfloor is open and ambiguous but still defined by
anchor elements like a fireplace or kitchen


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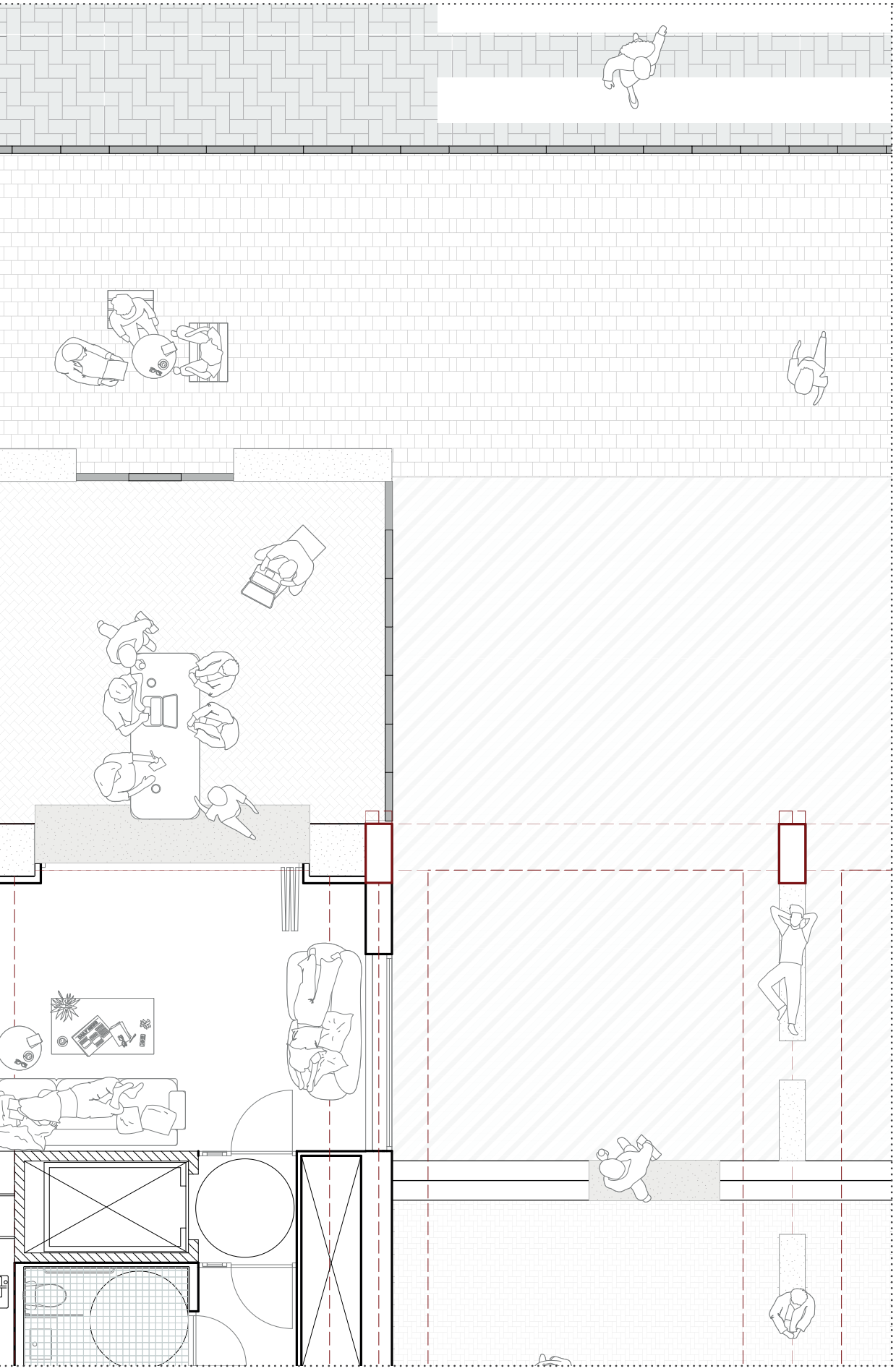


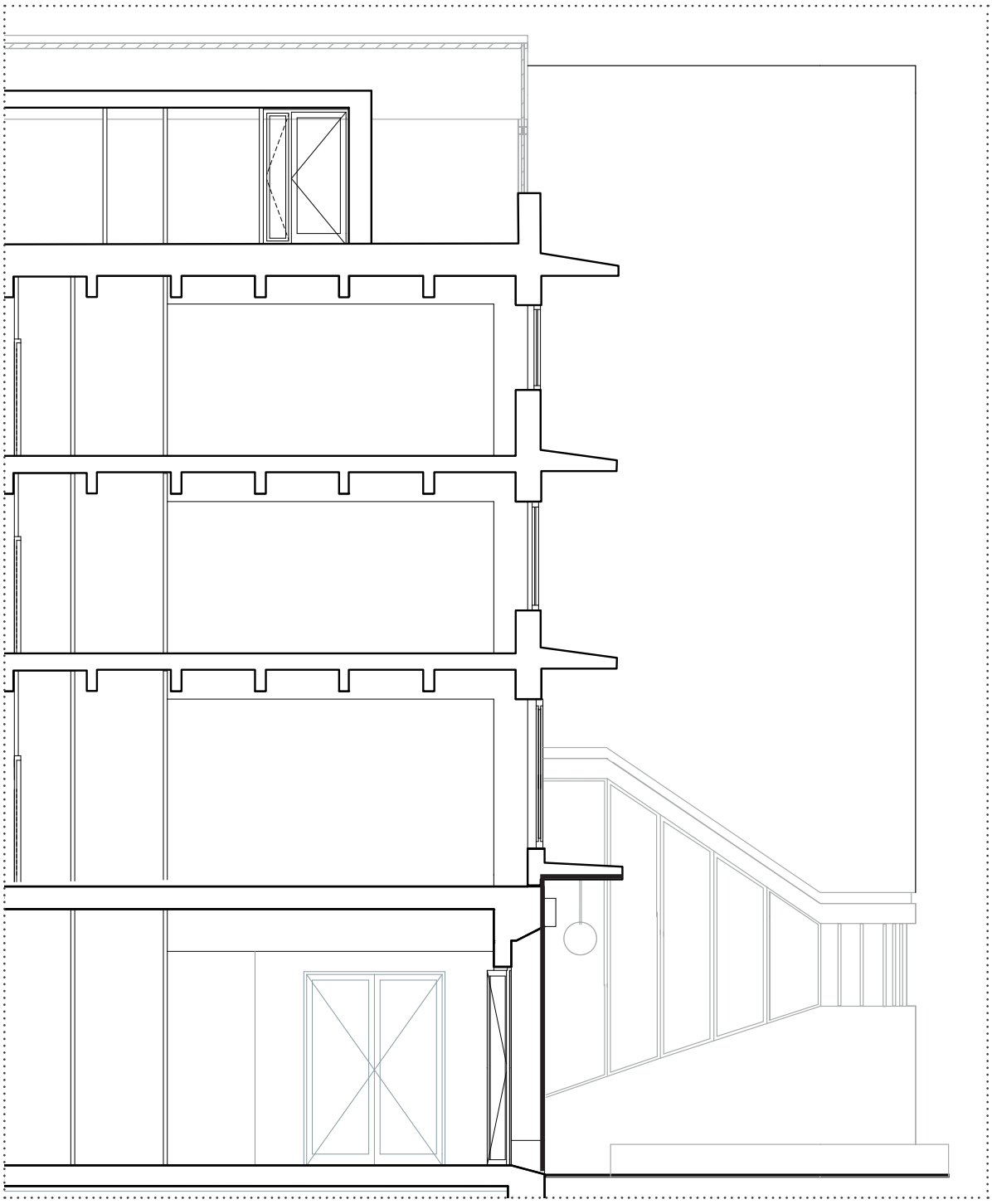
The niche on the west side, showing its connection to the park





The niche and transition zone on the west side in floorplan and the different activities in relation to te parkside





Sheltered space by adding horizontal elements and intergrated lights



The extended mobility space extended to the roof



impression of the transition zone at the west side with the extended mobilty space
Showing the relation to the park side with different pavements and seating possibilities


E
R



view by night to the west side
The extended mobility space is giving a clear signage to the surroundings

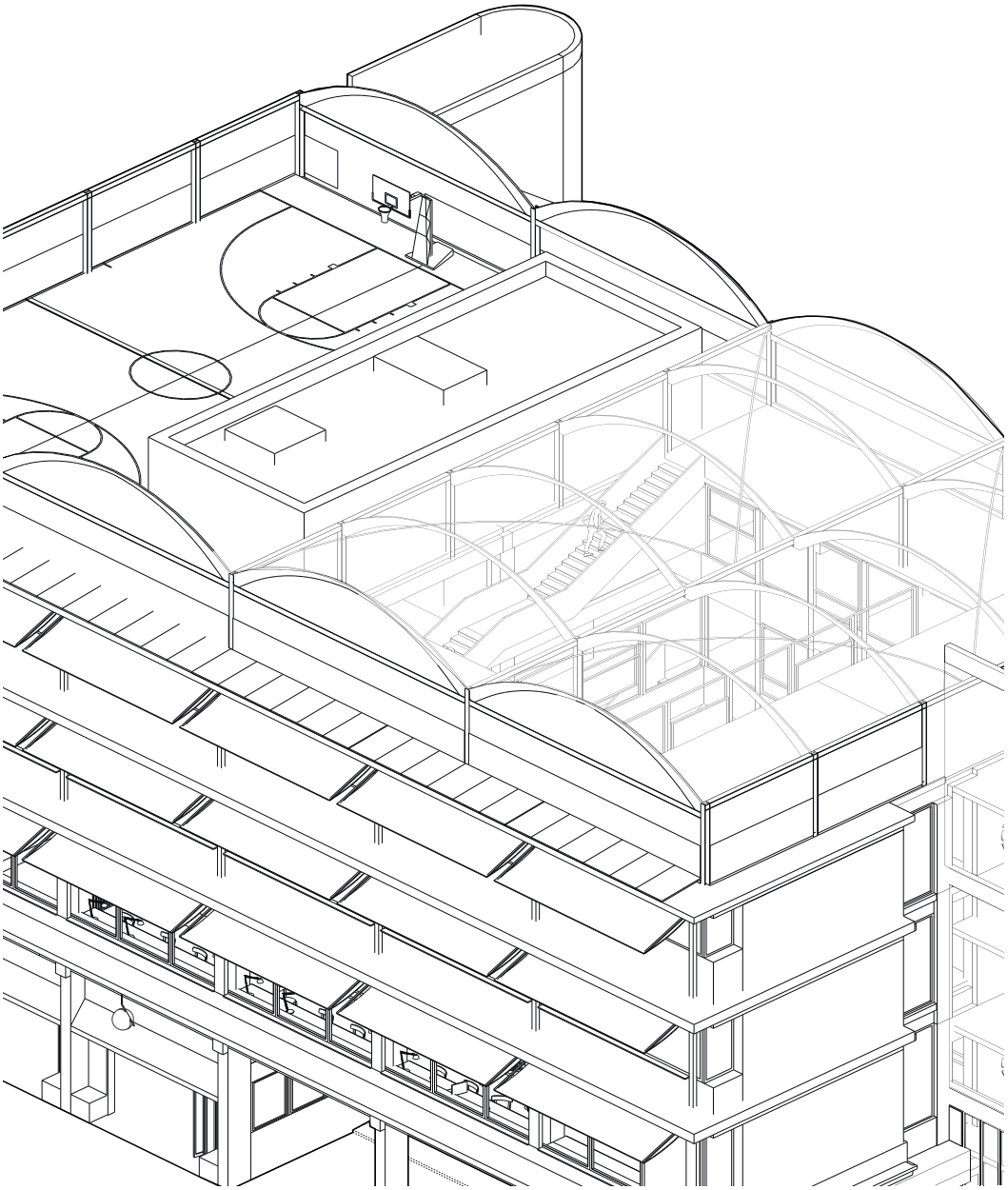
the floorplans - thresholds manifesting through flexibility and anchor elements

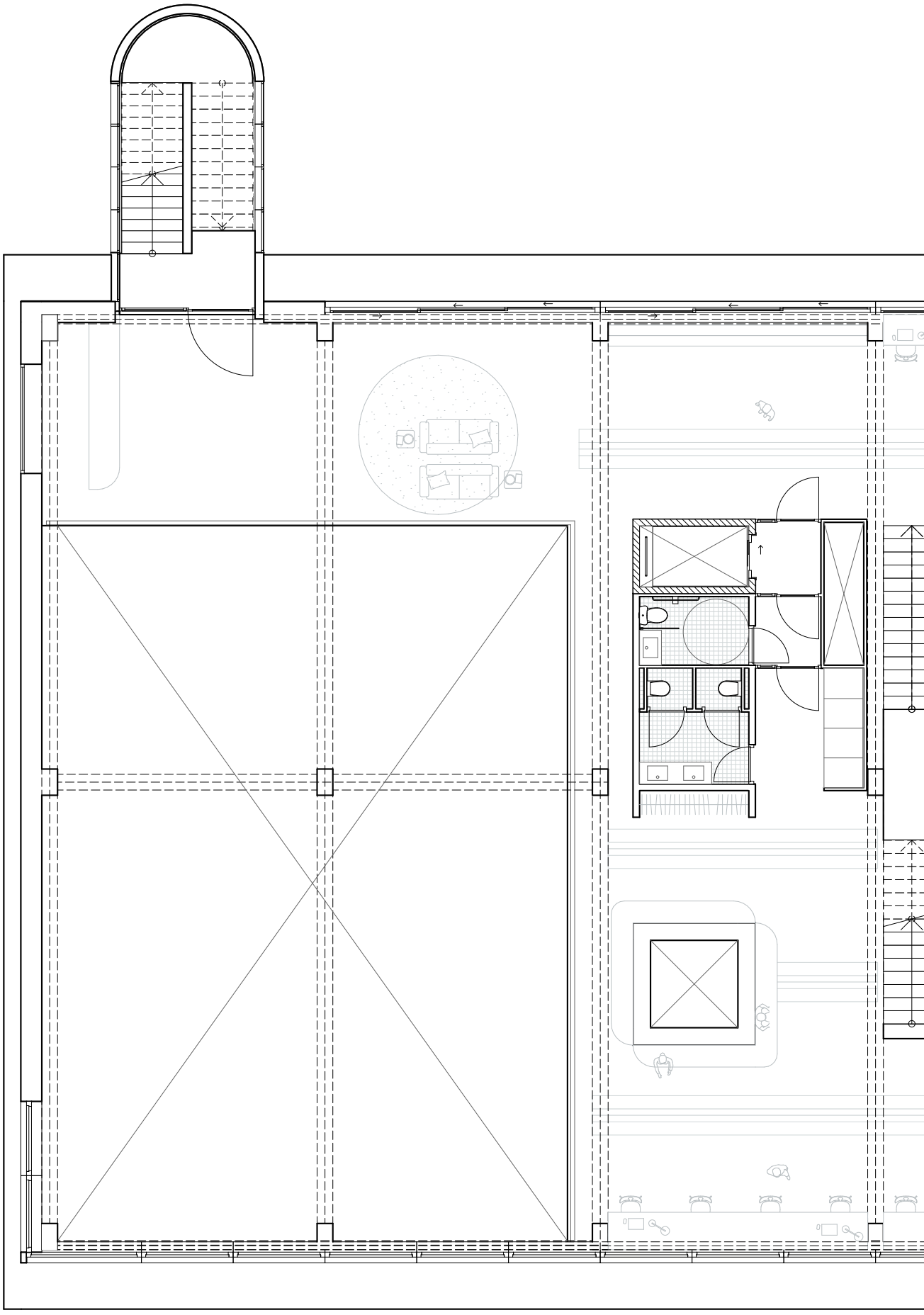
The interior layout is structured to support a range of public uses, moving from fixed to more flexible programming across the different floors. The first floor houses a library, which functions as a more defined and fixed program. It is part of the larger threshold space and acts as a public anchor within the building, drawing visitors inside and encouraging interaction. Positioned close to the void and circulation core, it remains visually connected to the rest of the building.

The second and third floors are designed as open and flexible spaces. Their layout is shaped by the structural grid, allowing for different interpretations and uses over time. These floors can be appropriated by users, in line with the cultural heritage of the original building, which was functional and shaped through collective use. The idea is not only to keep the space open, but also to provide subtle definition through integrated elements.

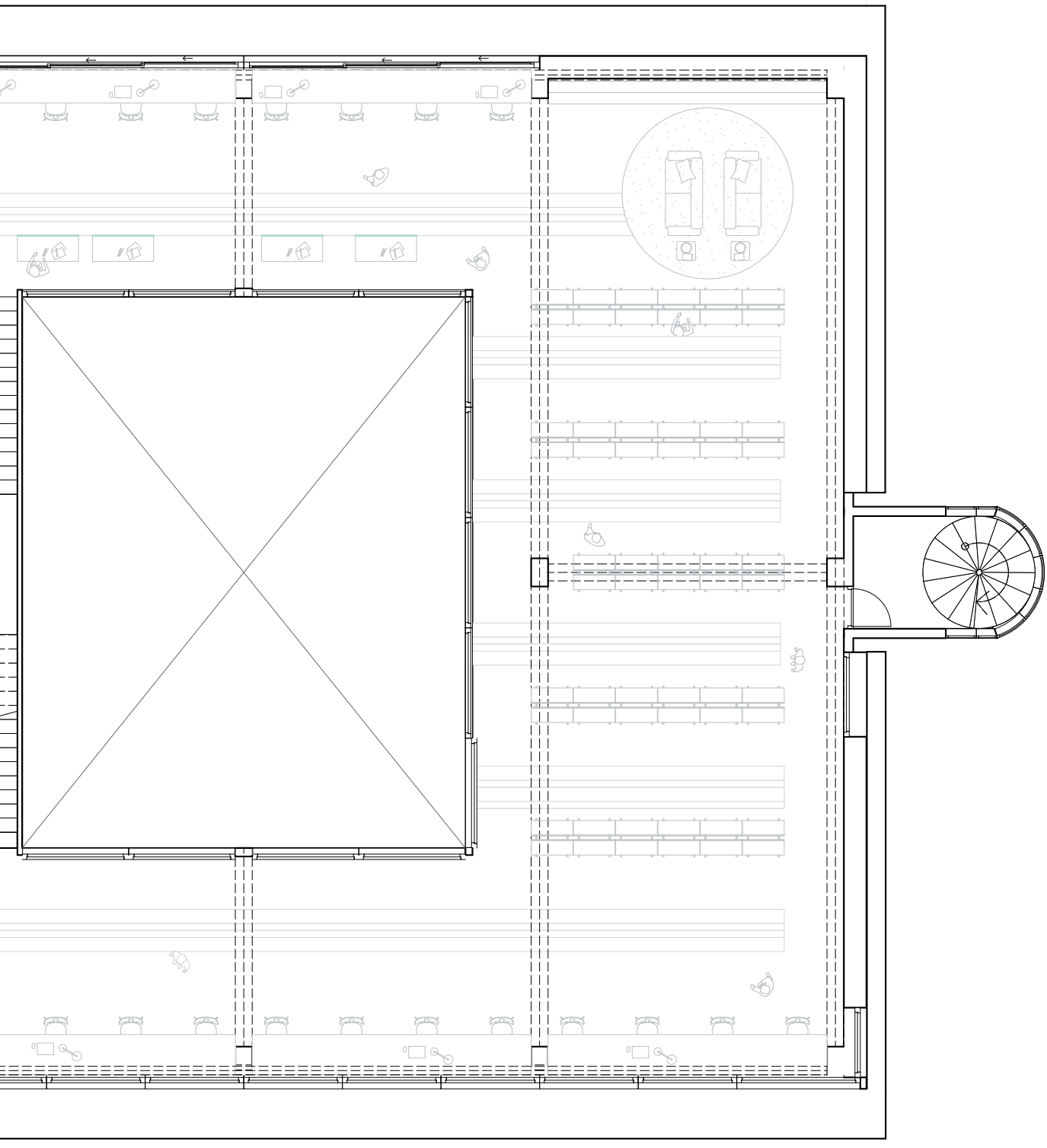
Built-in features such as worktables and a fireplace add moments of permanence and orientation within the open plans. These elements are partly integrated into the technical infrastructure of the building, which is further described in the following section. Together, they support a balance between flexibility and usability, allowing the spaces to remain adaptable while offering a sense of structure.

As described earlier, the rooftop is an important element in the overall design. It is not only a place for public program, but also highly visible from the surroundings including the adjacent park, the market, and nearby rooftops. Its curved steel structure reintroduces a spatial memory from the original building and makes the building recognizable in the urban landscape. The roof reinforces the idea of openness and visibility, and works in tandem with the void and vertical circulation to form a continuous spatial sequence from ground to roof.





firstfloor 1:100 the library

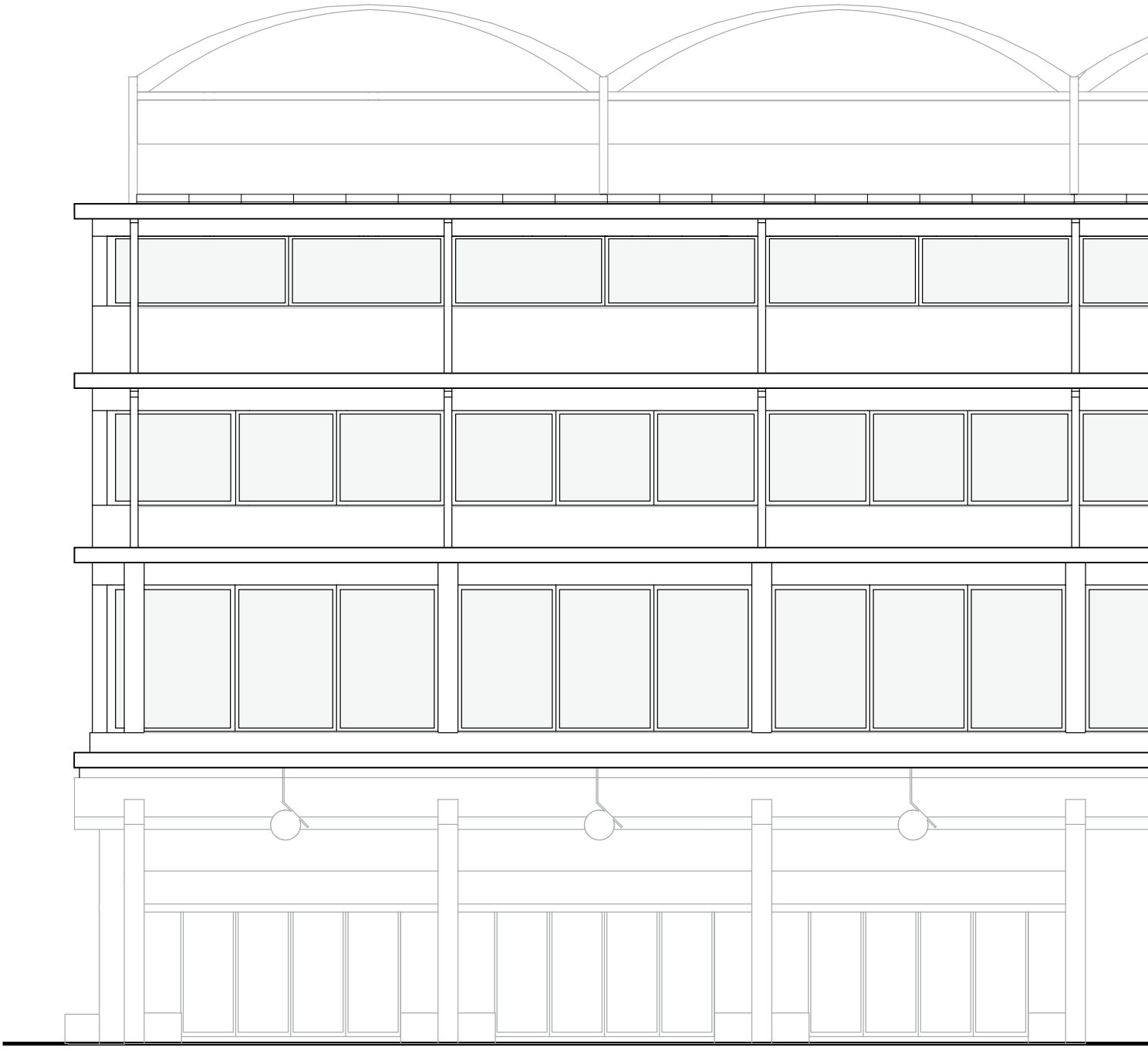


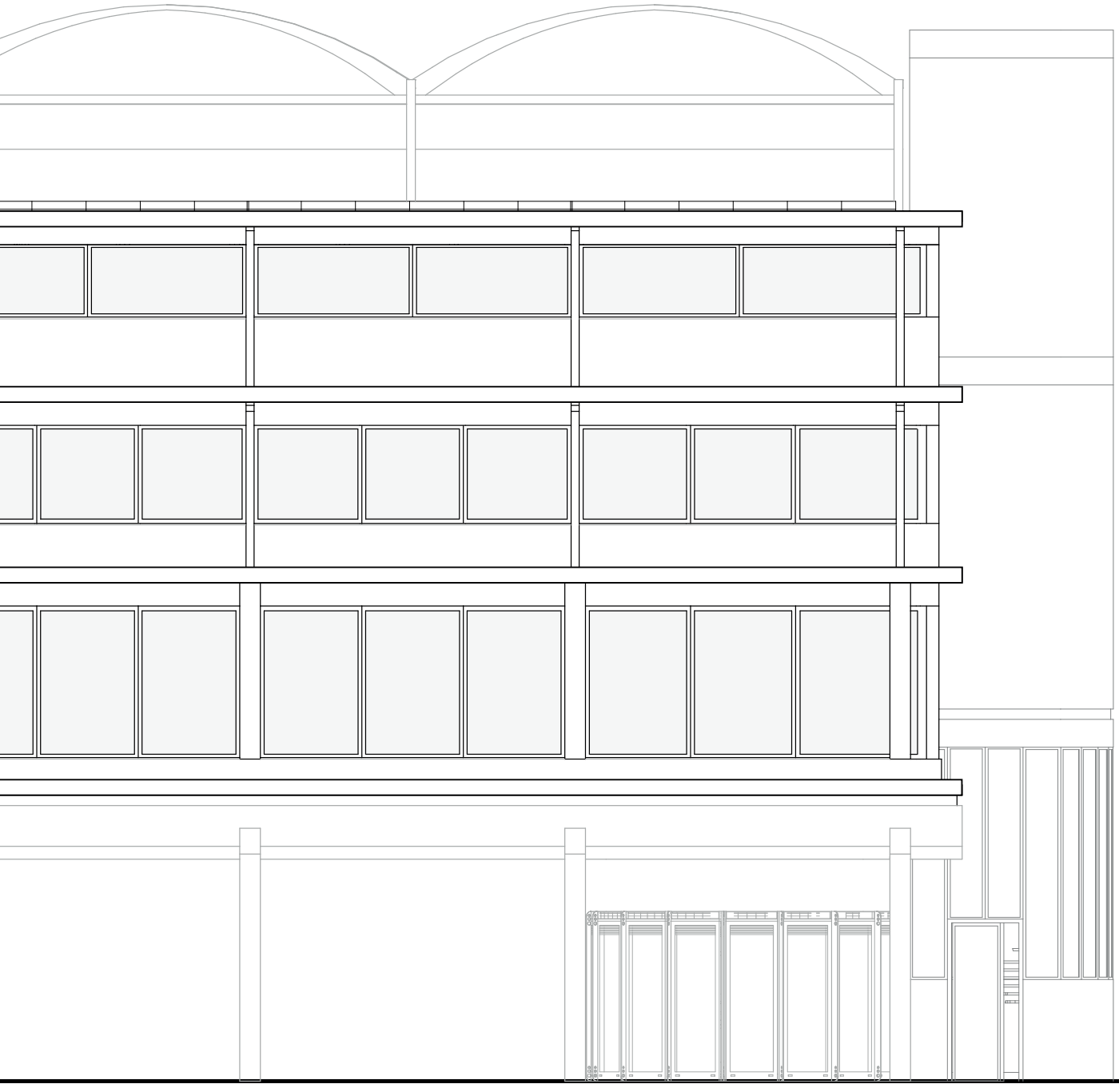


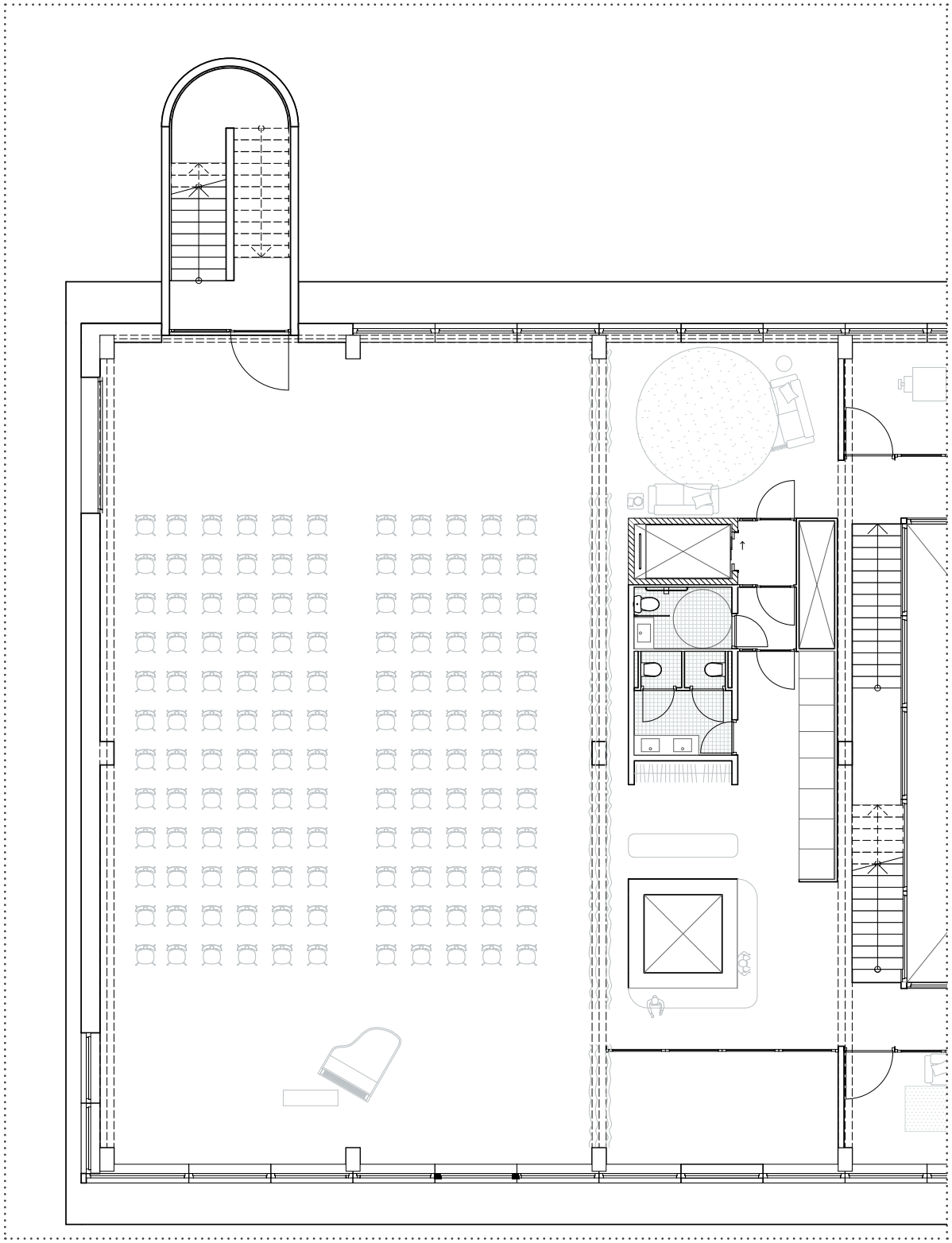
impression of the library with intergrated tables
The intergrated tables provides the possibility to work at and have a view to the market side



East facade 1:100





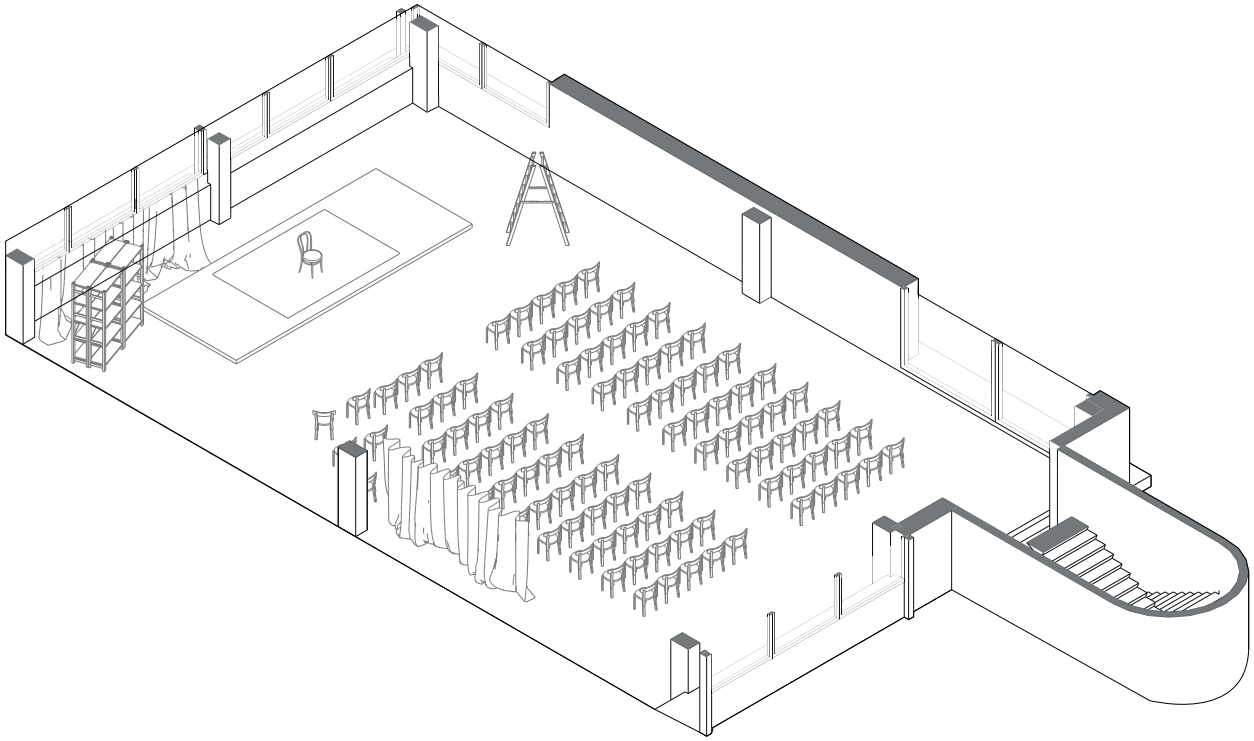


On the second floor there is a larger space for concerts or theatre plays

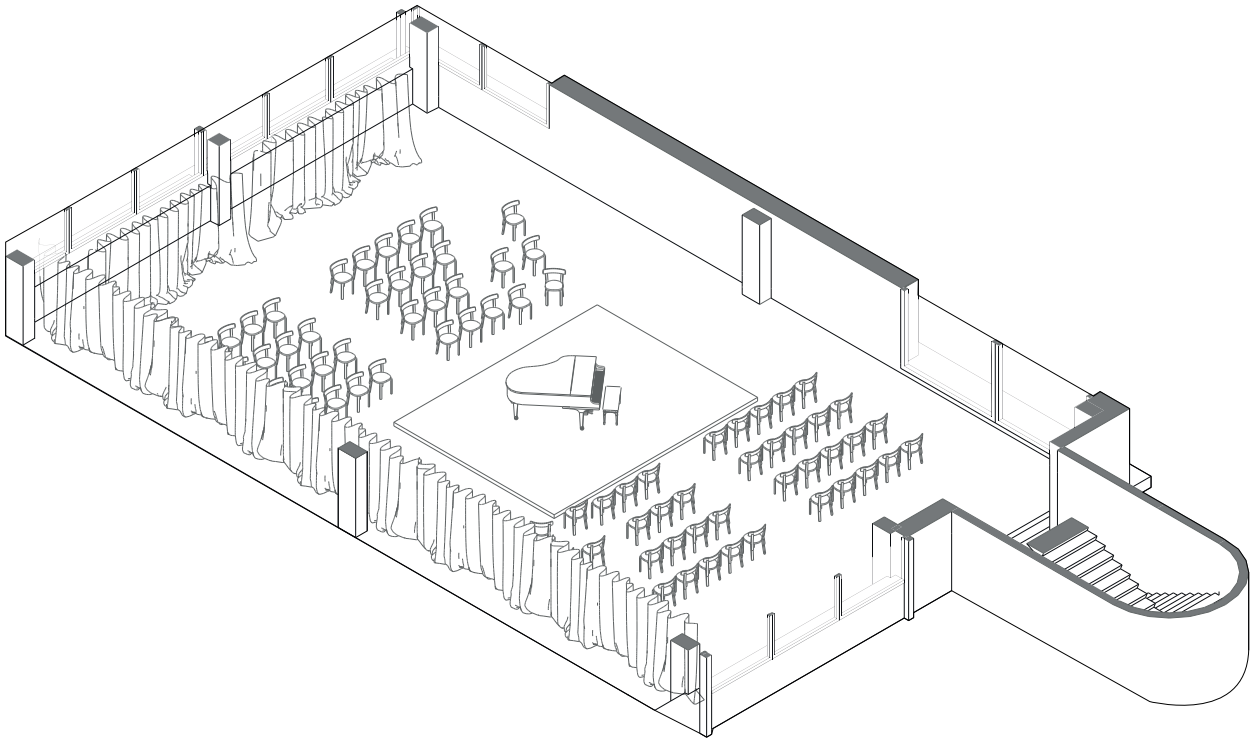


South facade 1:200

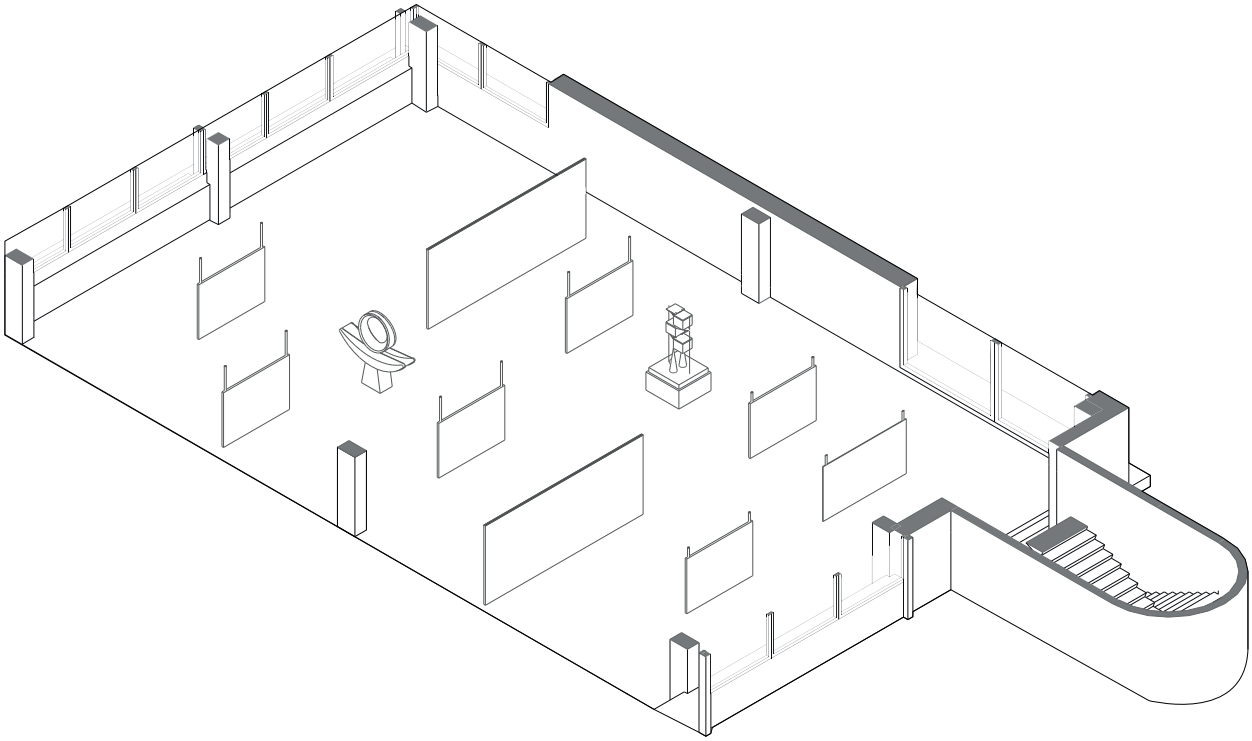
The south façade is more closed due to its orientation towards the sun but still has some larger openings towards the west for special lighting into the theatre space



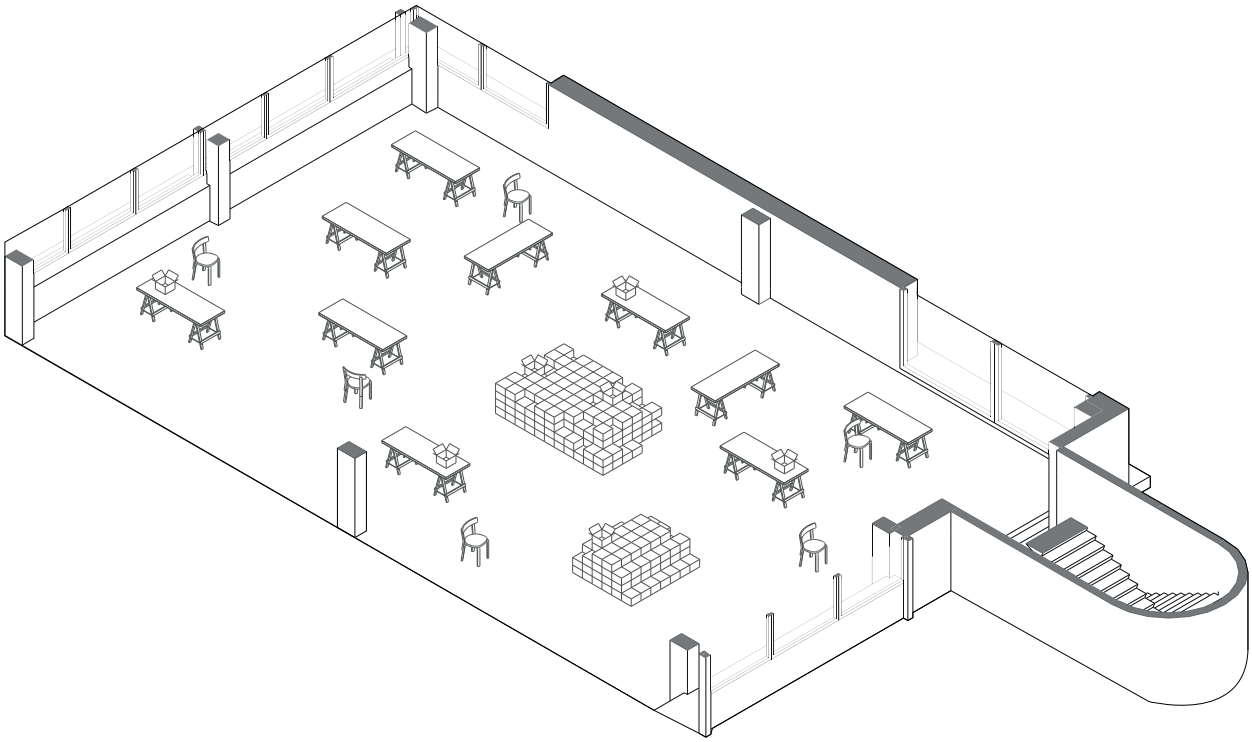
The bigger space as a theatre



The bigger space as a concert



The bigger space as a exhibition



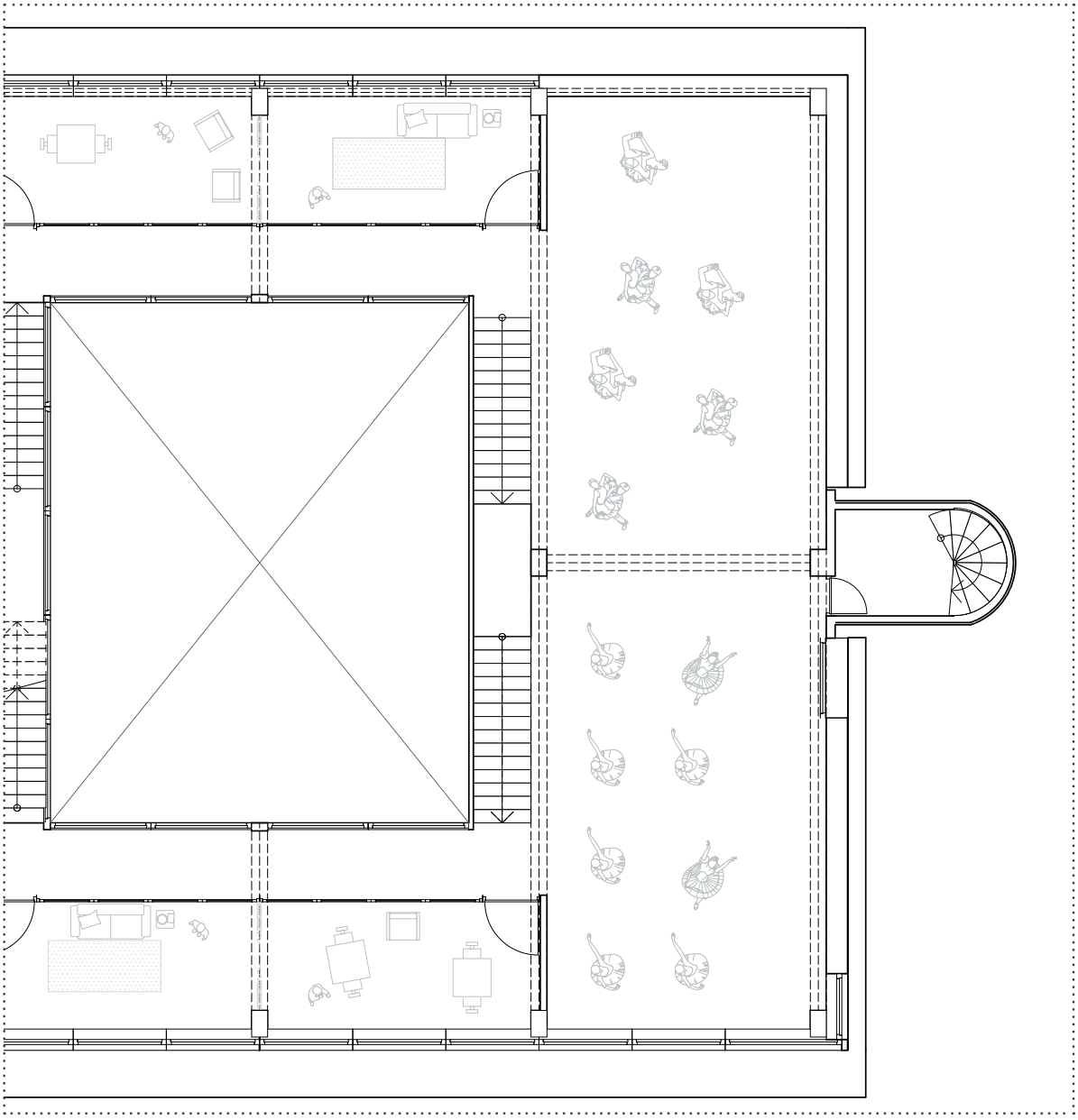
The bigger space using for charity activities



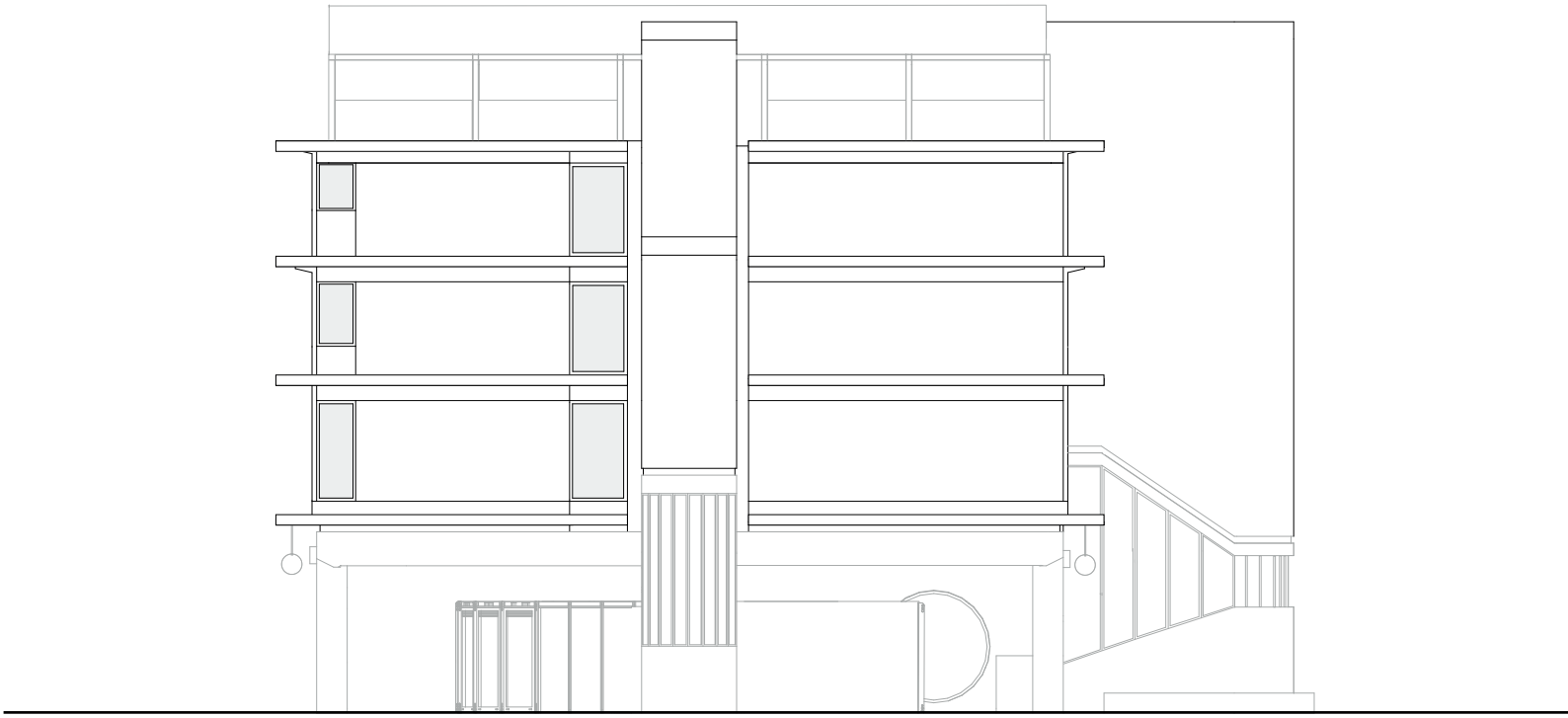
impression of the bigger space used for a piano play



impression of the bigger space used for a dance performance



Floorplan of the more intimate spaces



North facade 1:200

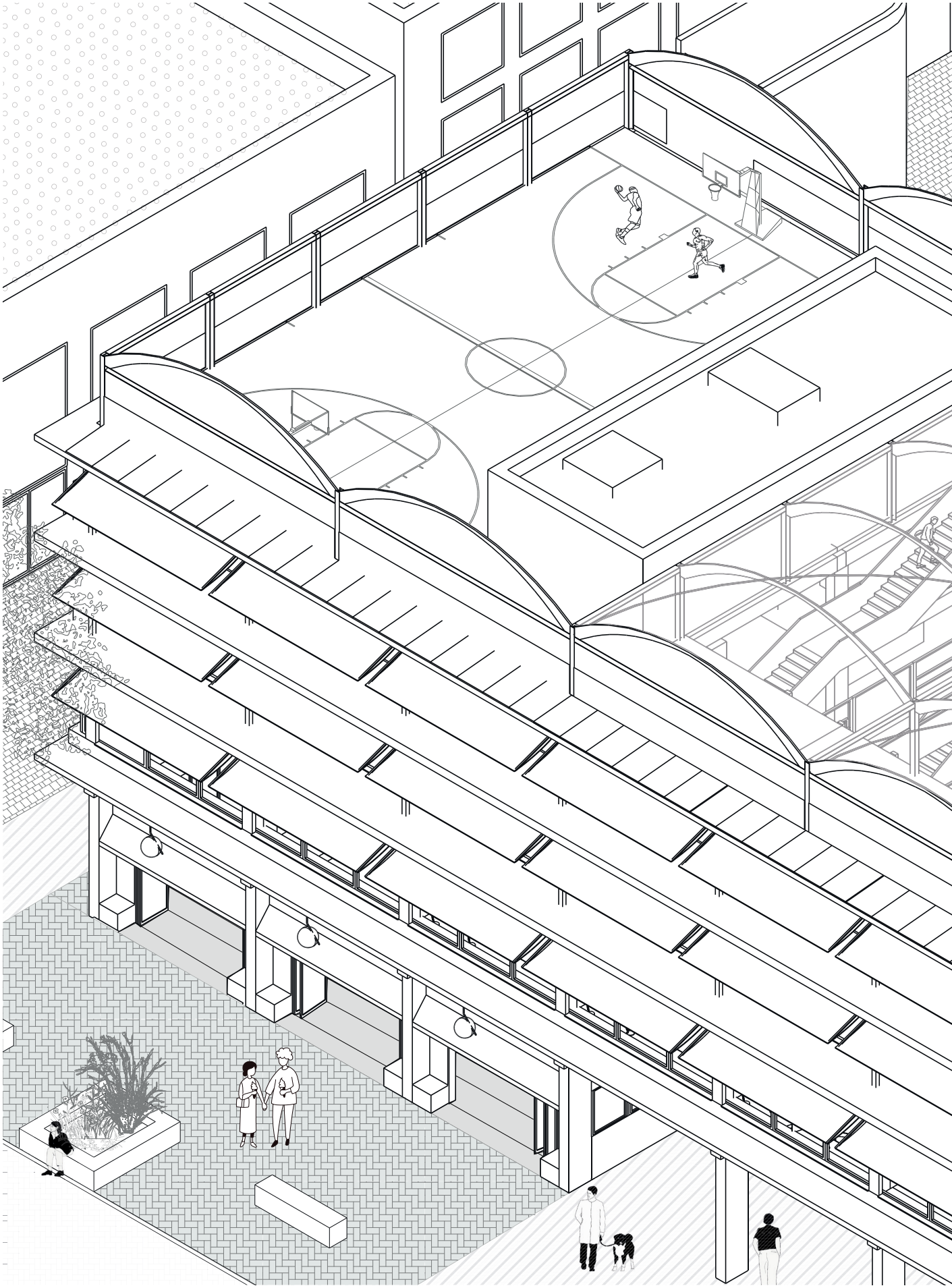
A more closed north façade accommodates the intimate spaces while also defining the original circulation area, which extends up to the roof



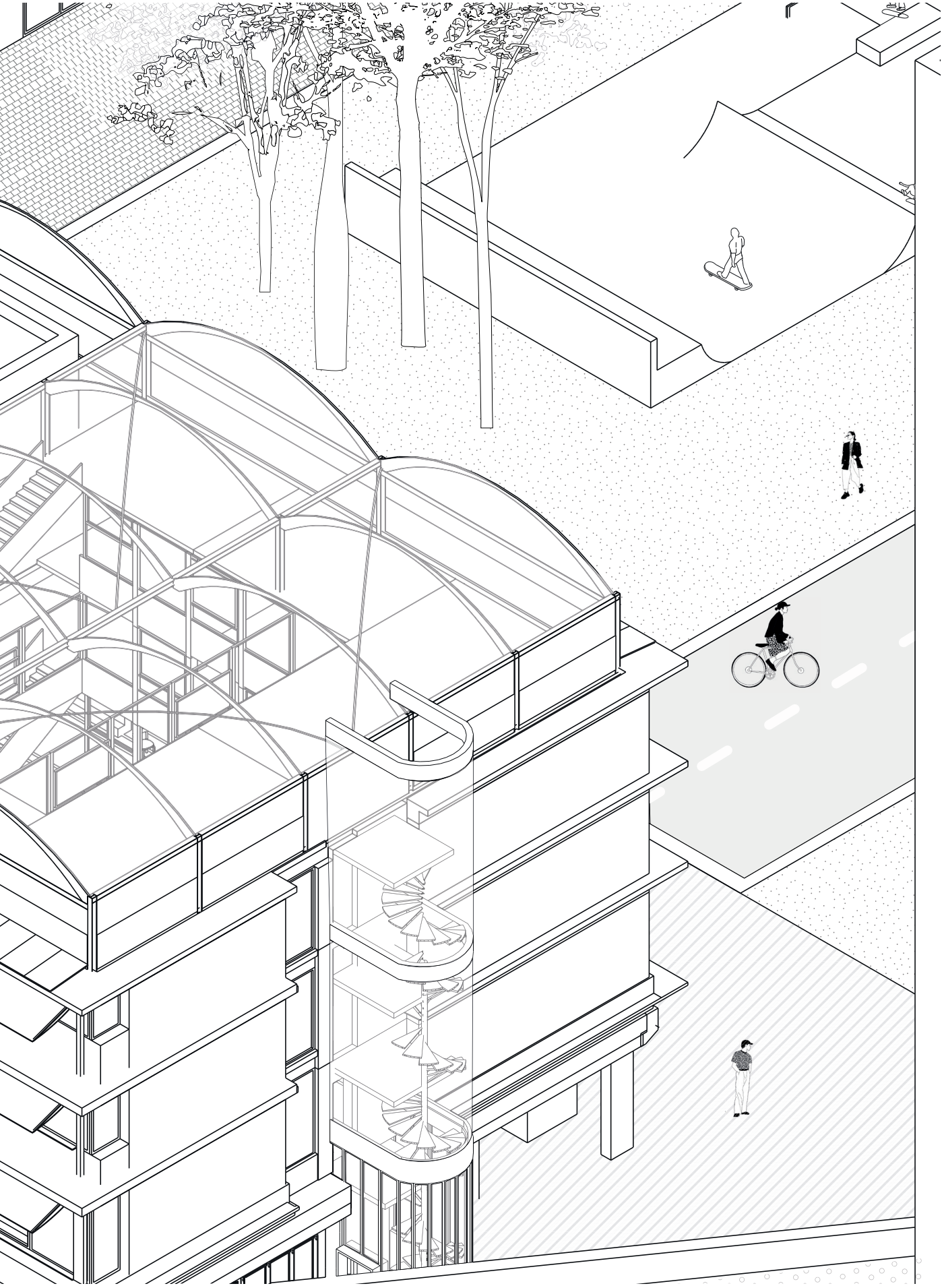
impression of the smaller space used for dance lessons

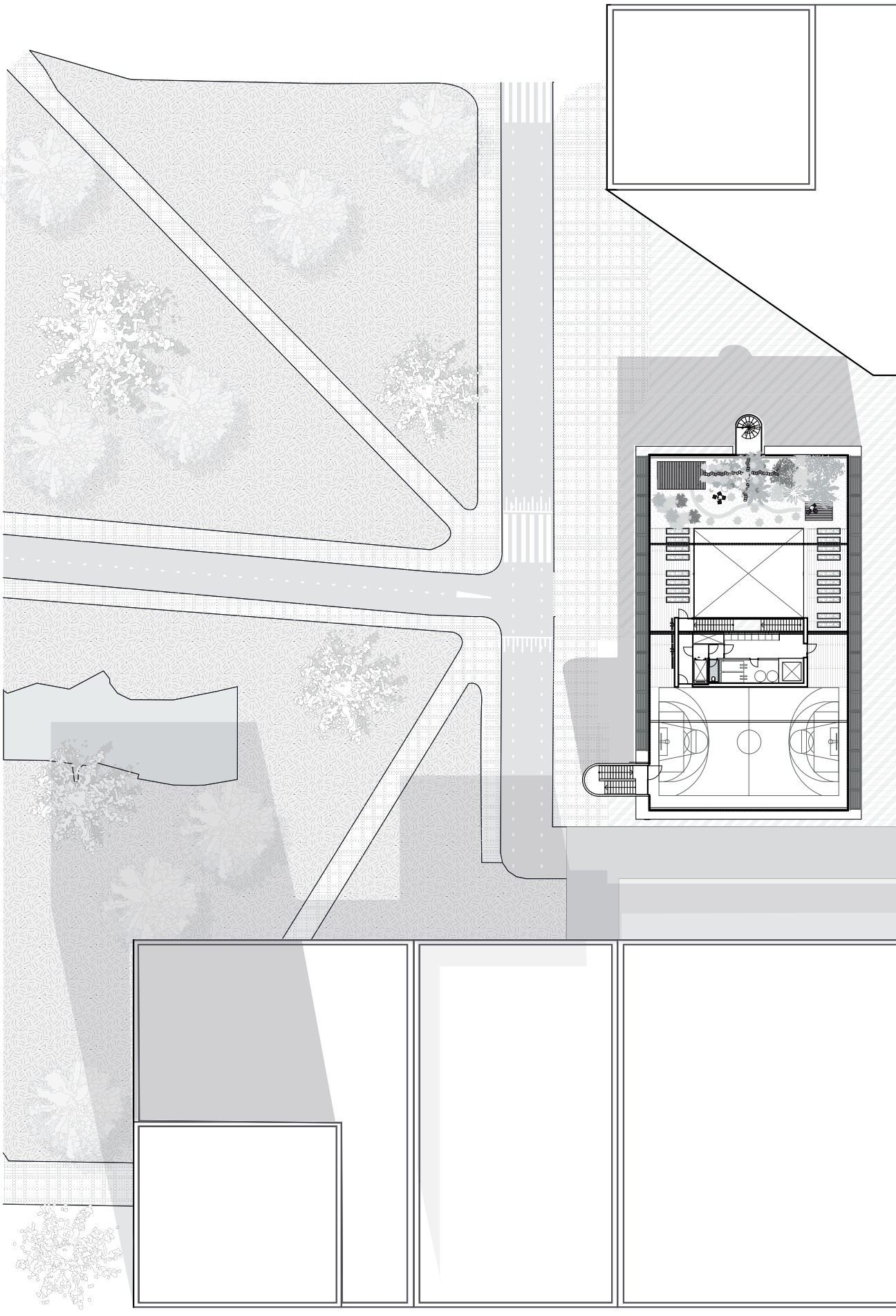


impression of the smaller space used for a neighbourhood meeting

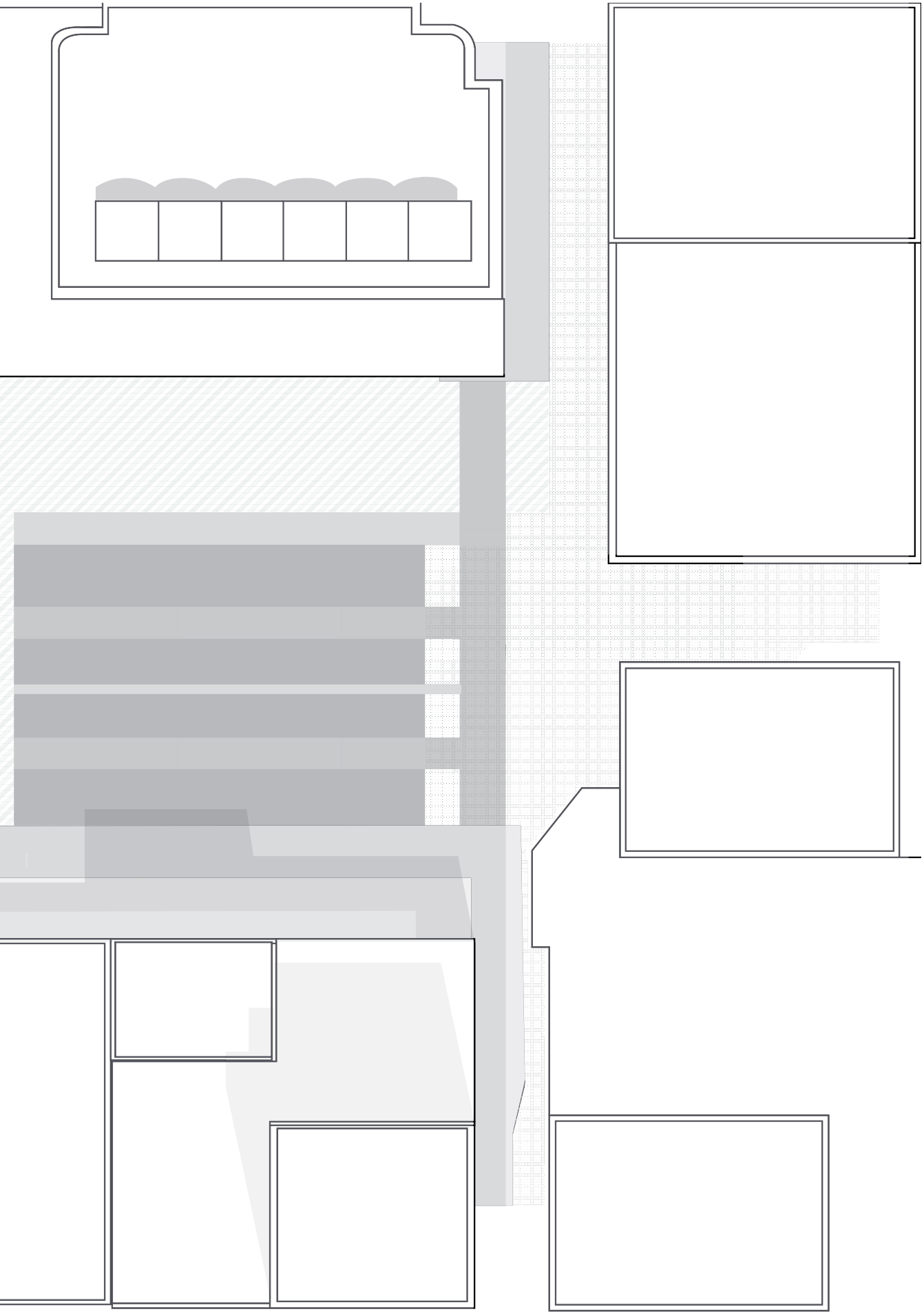


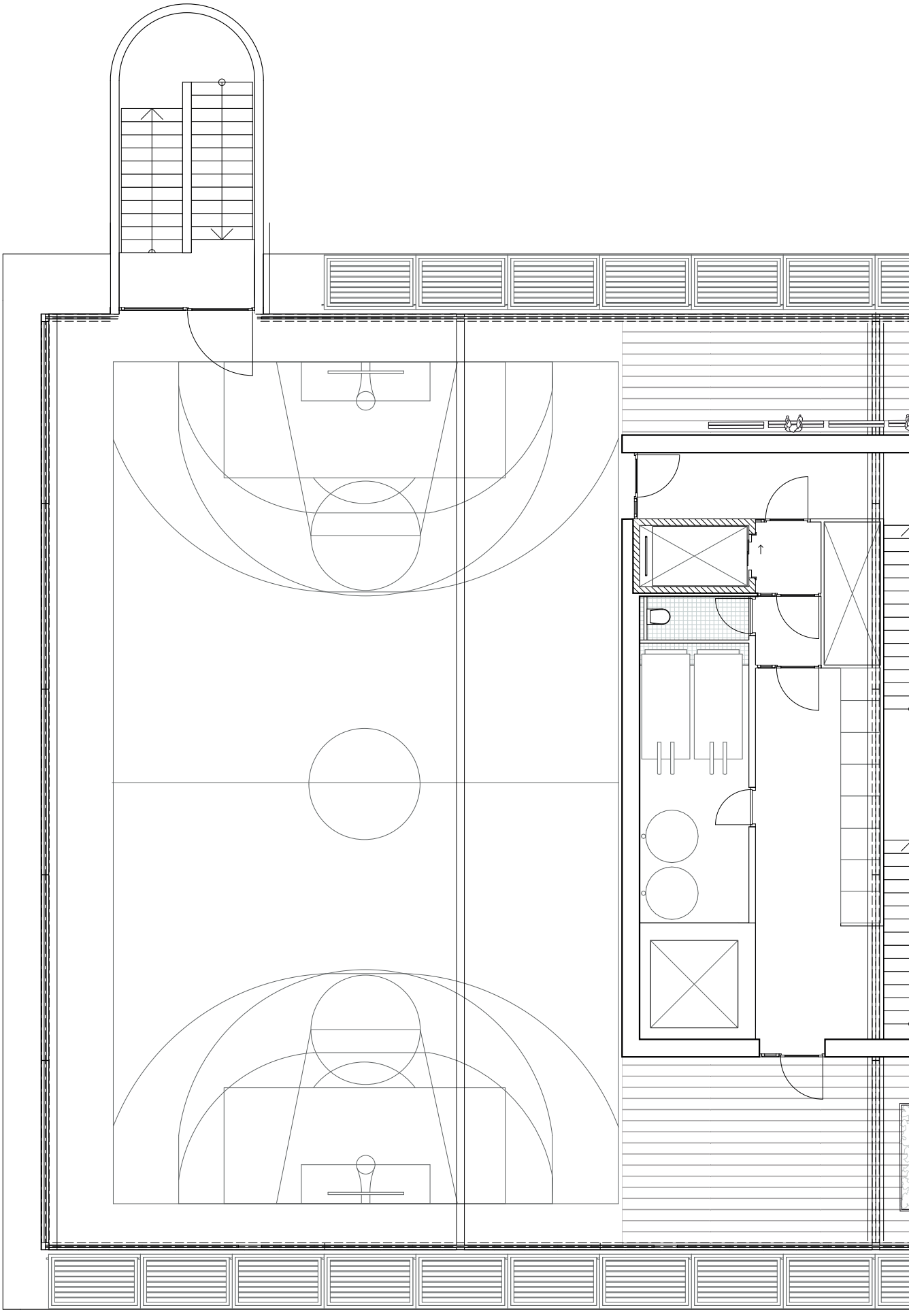
Axonometric of the roof



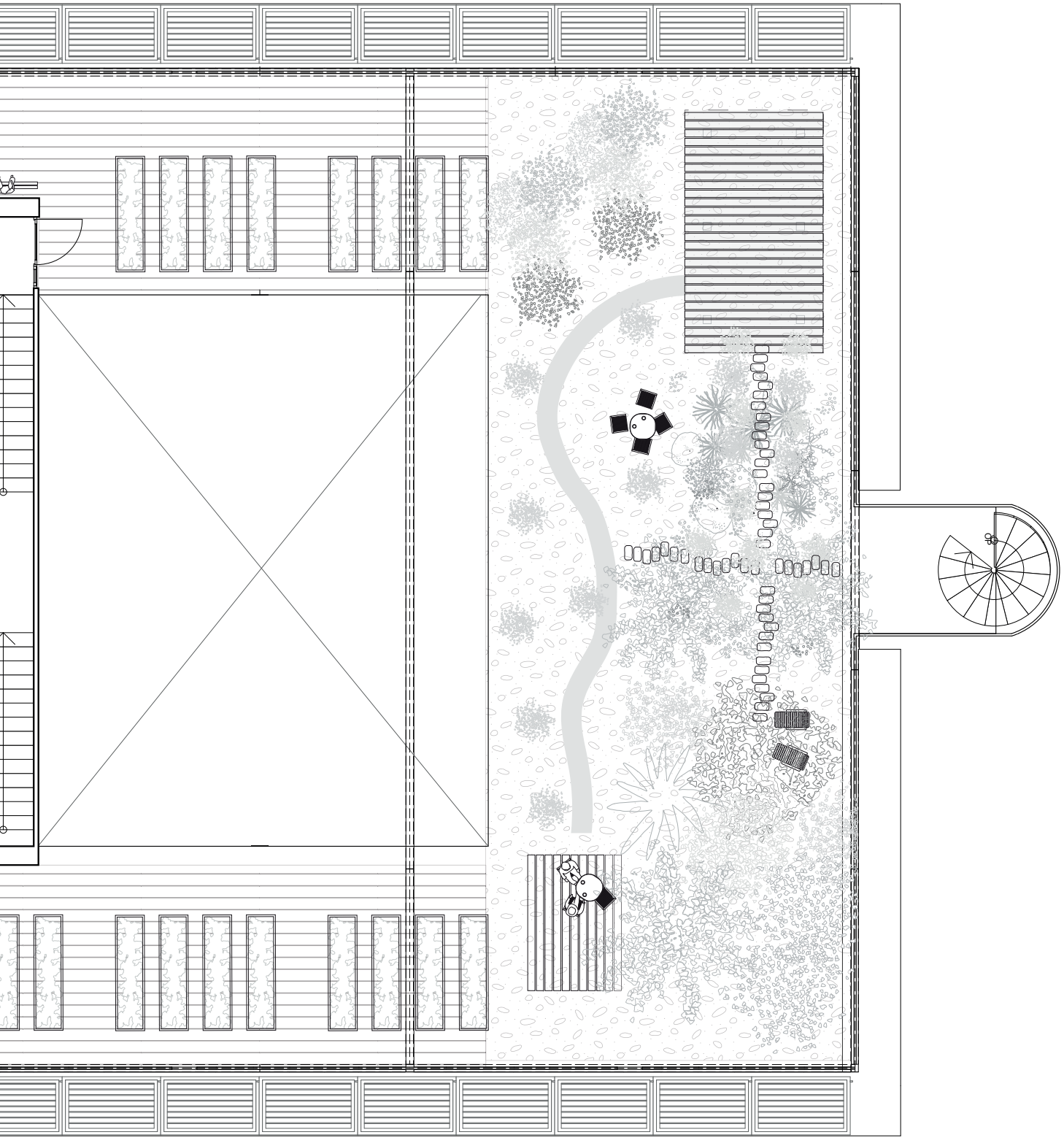


Roofplan 1:500





Roofplan 1:100





impression of the roof
the basketball court can also be used for movie nights with a view at the highrise towers


WELCOME TO
HAWKINS
NGER
NGS
TFLIX ORIGINA
TFLIX

thresholds in materiality and detail

The material approach builds on the layered history of the building and supports both functional and cultural continuity. A new timber skeleton structure is added on top of the existing concrete frame, reinforcing the building's functional character while referencing its constructional heritage. The reused steel structure from the former first floor has been repurposed to support the new roof.

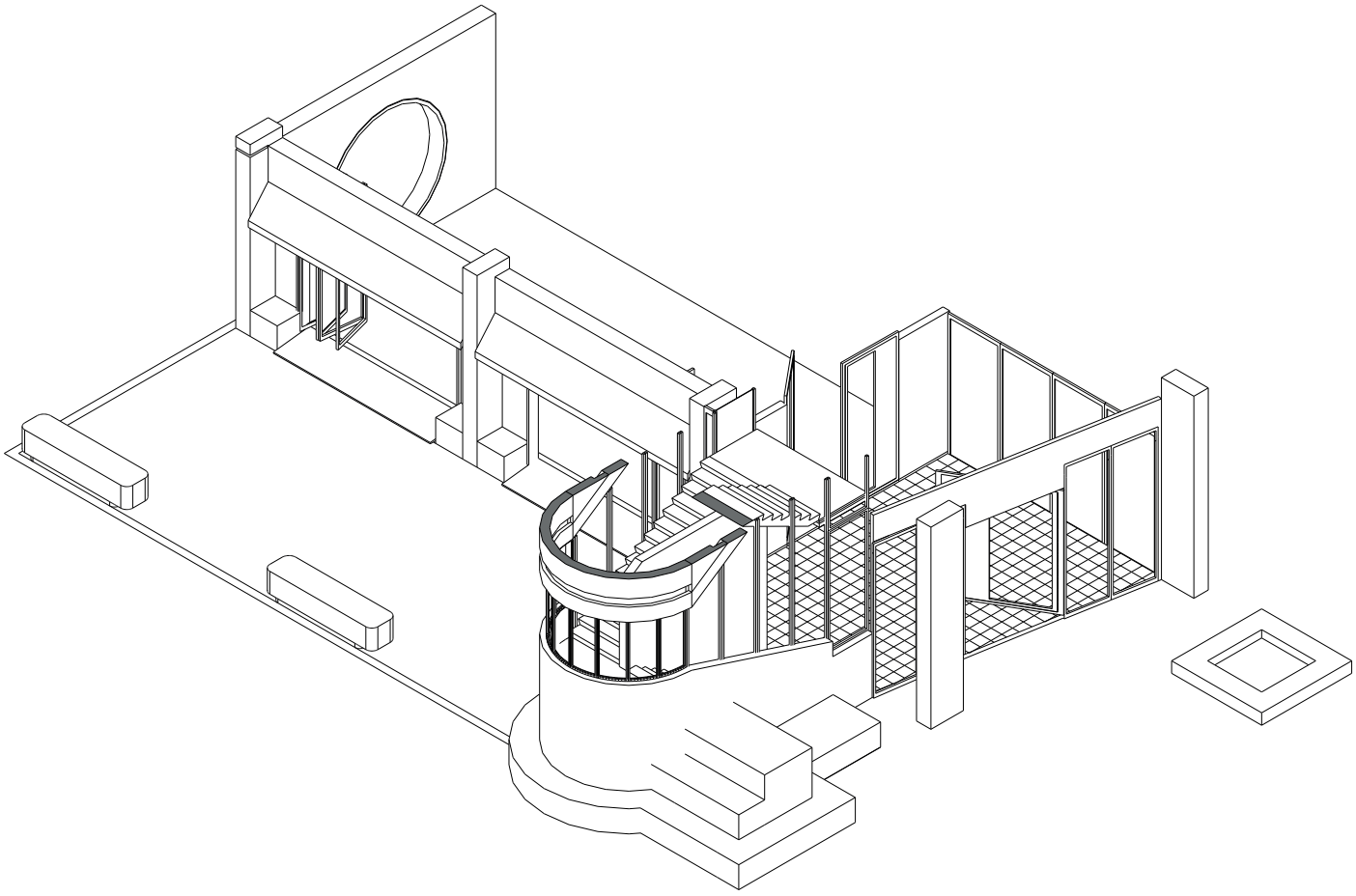
At ground level, threshold spaces are defined not only spatially, but also through material transitions. A variety of pavement patterns indicate shifts in use and orientation. Recycled terrazzo, made from concrete removed from the original first floor, is used to form sloped elements that guide the transition from exterior to interior. The same terrazzo material is applied in seating elements around the building, creating consistency and recognizability.

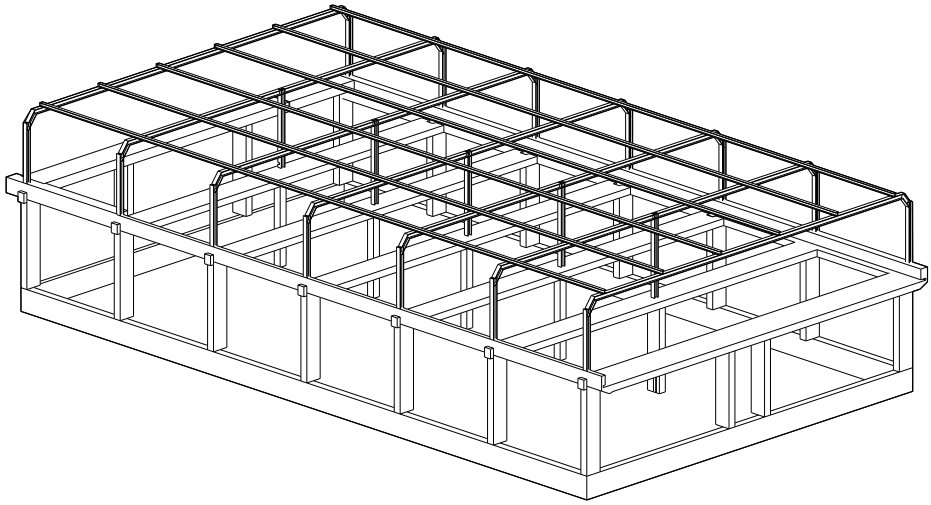
Green textile sun screens and canopies provide color and shading, adding a softer transition to the facade. The façade has been rebuilt using hempcrete blocks, replacing the former asbestos cladding with a healthy, breathable, and fully bio-based solution. The blocks are stacked within the original structural grid, aligned with the module dimensions of the former prefab panels. This modular dry-build process reflects the innovative spirit of Jan Brouwer's original design, while using today's sustainable materials. The hempcrete is finished with a thin, ribbed lime plaster for water protection and texture.

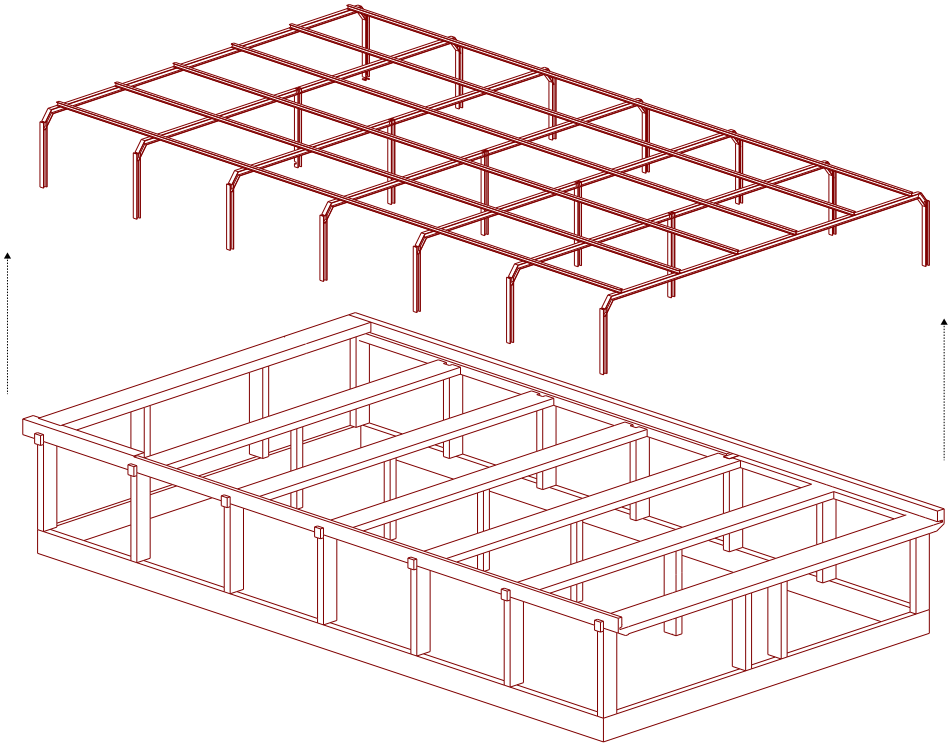
These materials and construction systems come together in façade fragments and threshold details where old and new meet. In some areas, a small architectural detail has been reintroduced that refers to one of Brouwer's original ground-floor concrete junctions, offering a subtle link between past and present.

Climate systems are integrated into the threshold spaces as well. A large fireplace, made from dense clay blocks, serves both as a meeting point and as a thermal core. It distributes heat (or cooling) through the surrounding floors and walls via radiation. On the roof, additional space is reserved for technical systems, which remain easily accessible for maintenance.

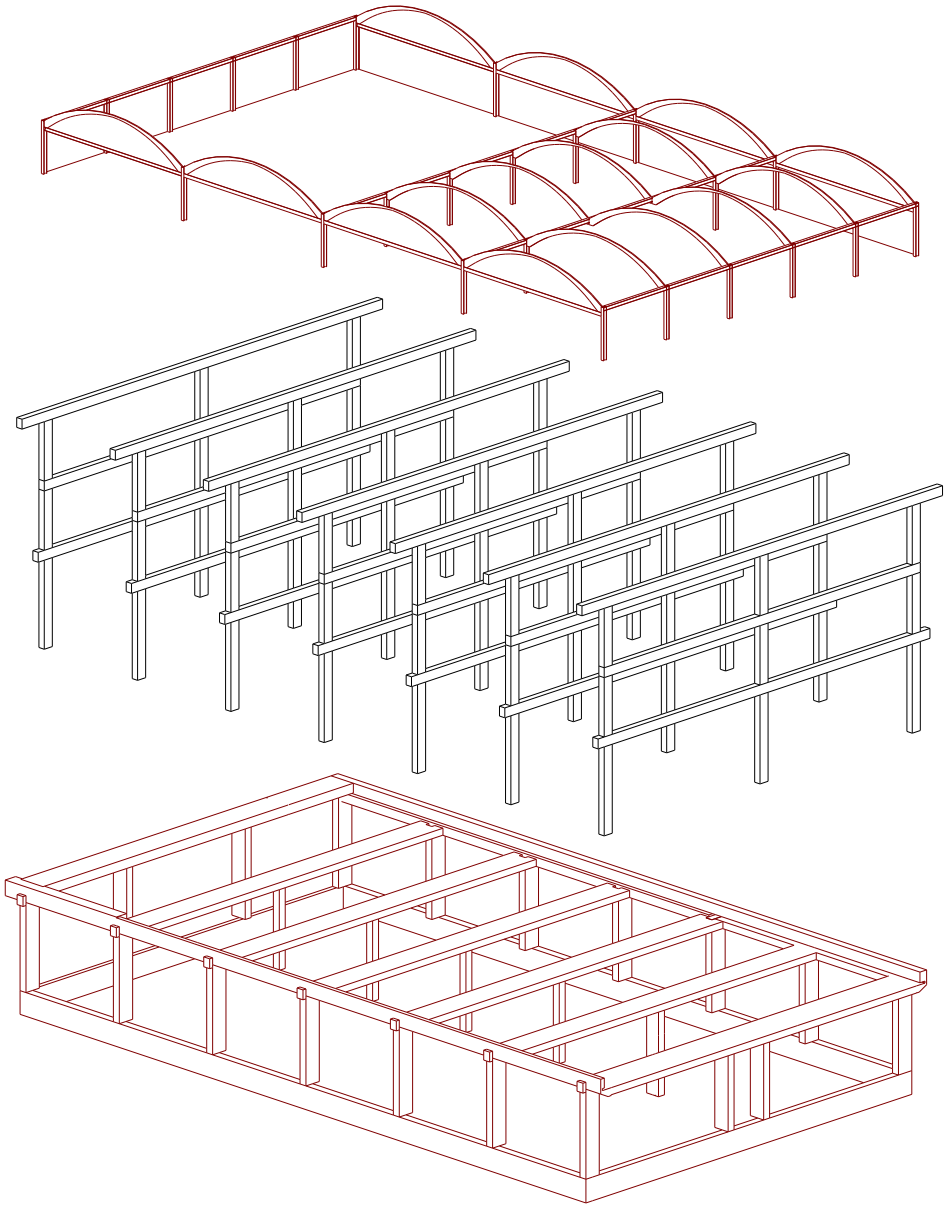
Seasonal comfort is further supported by sun screens and fabric canopies that offer passive shading. Ventilation is integrated through the floor build-up, located between the CLT slabs and raised technical floors, allowing for long-term adaptability of the system.



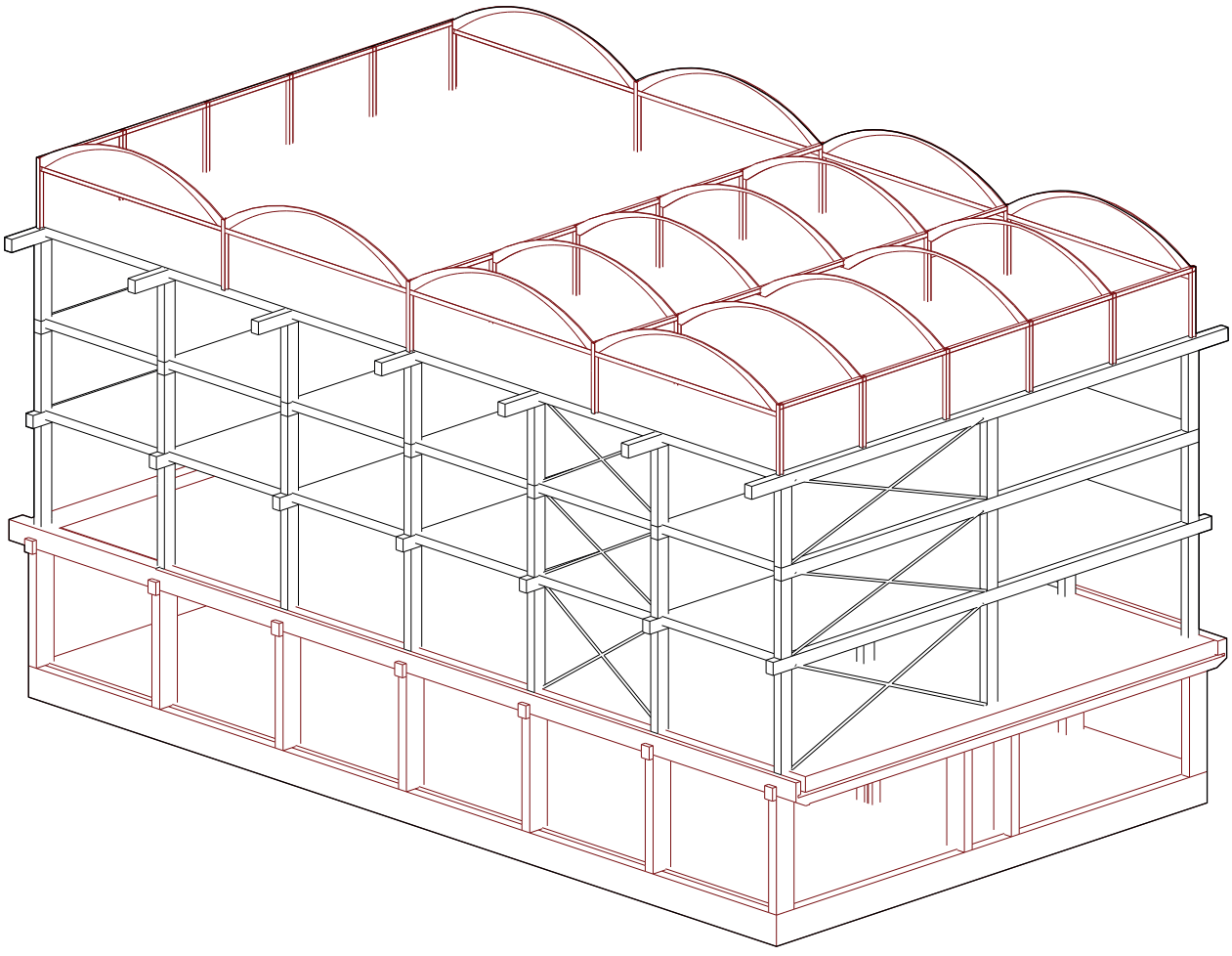




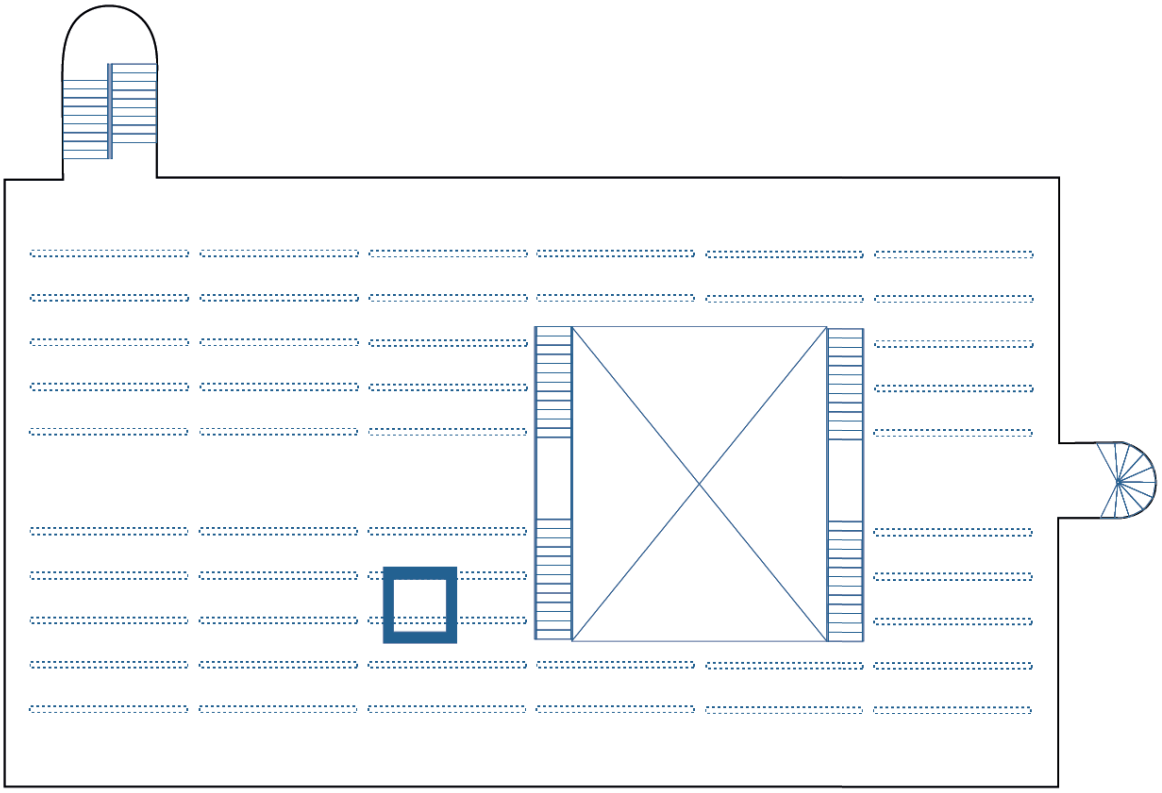
Existing construction and reuse of the steel construction

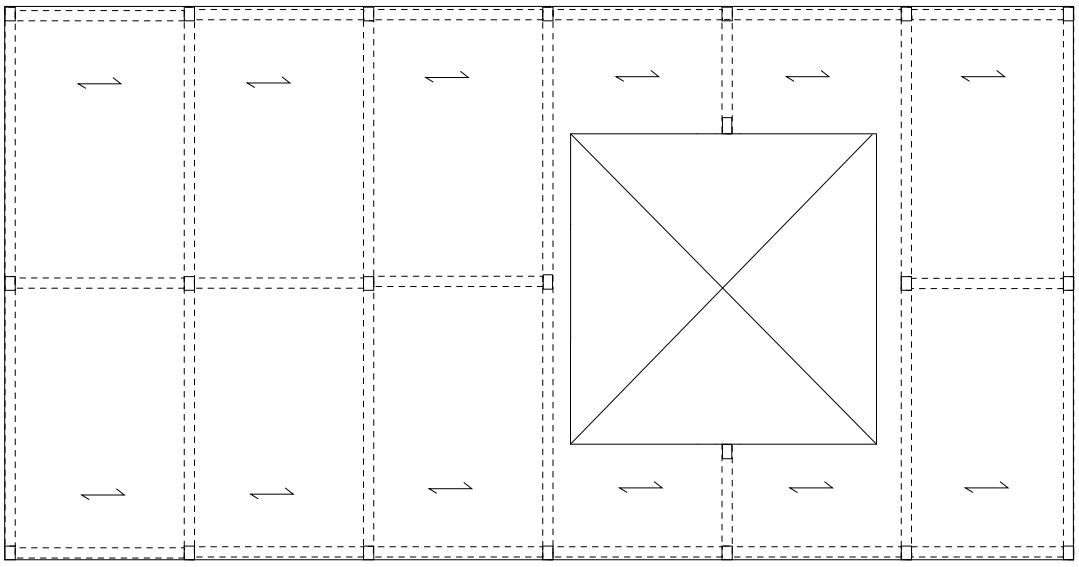


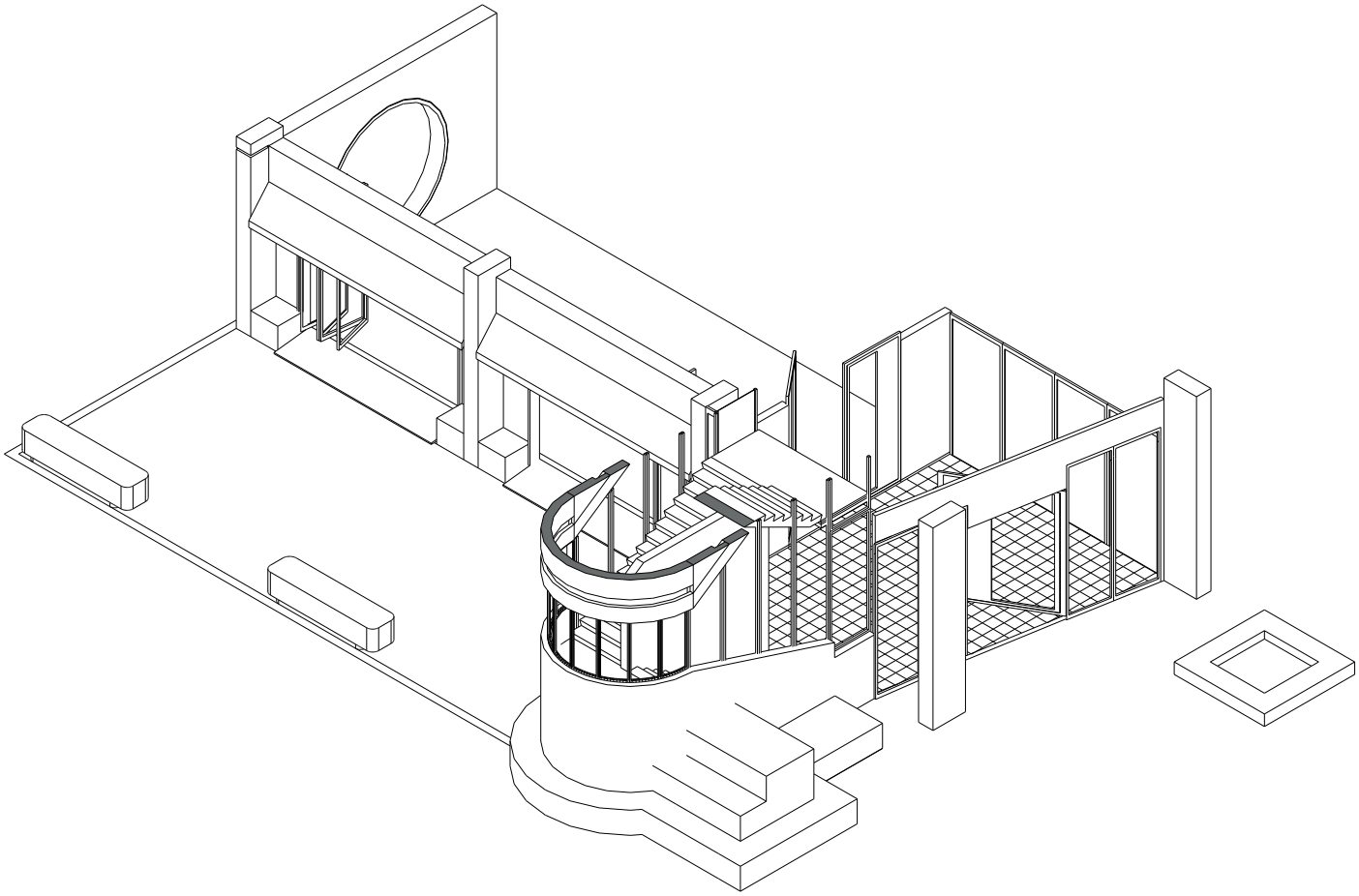
The new construction layout



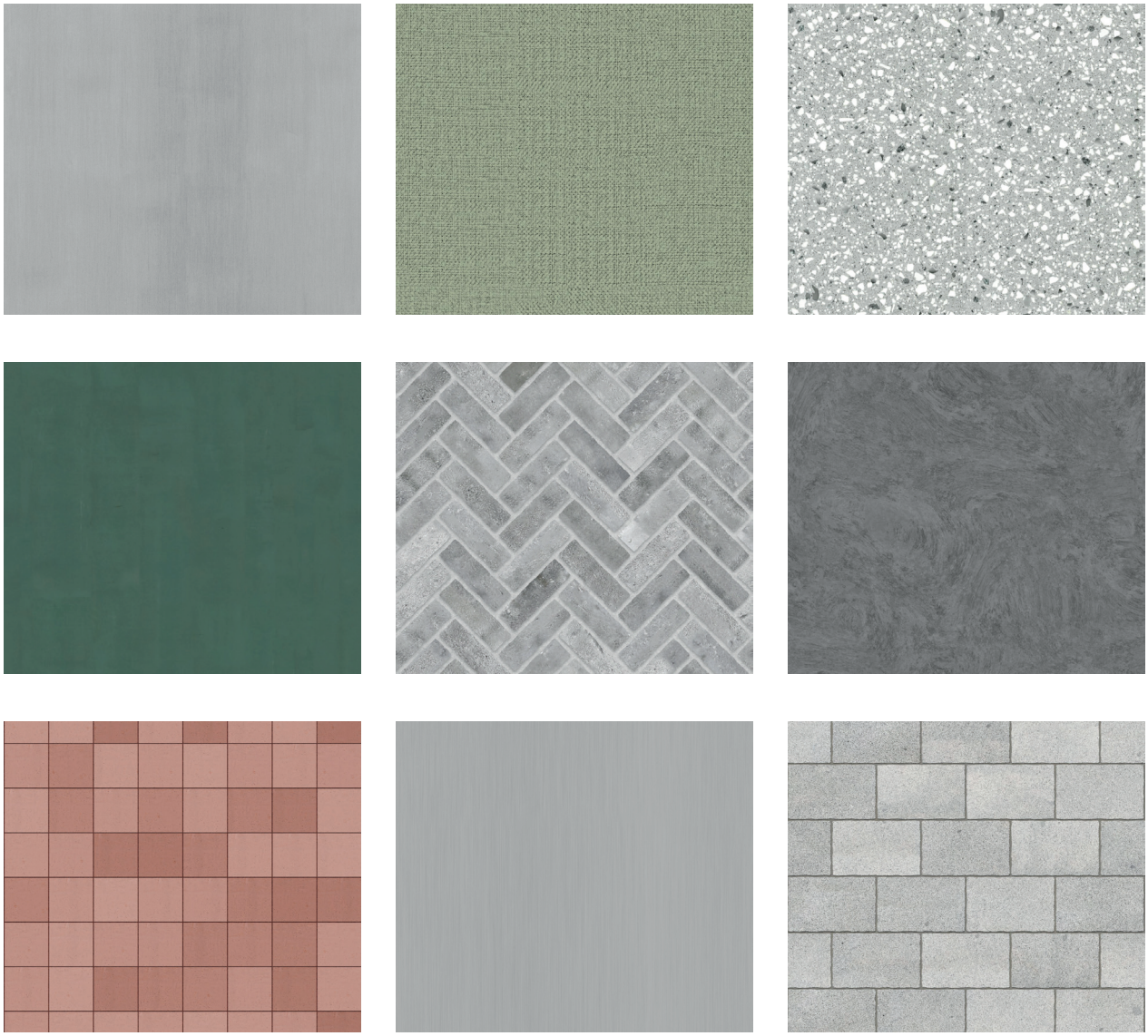
new construction scheme and axonometric view



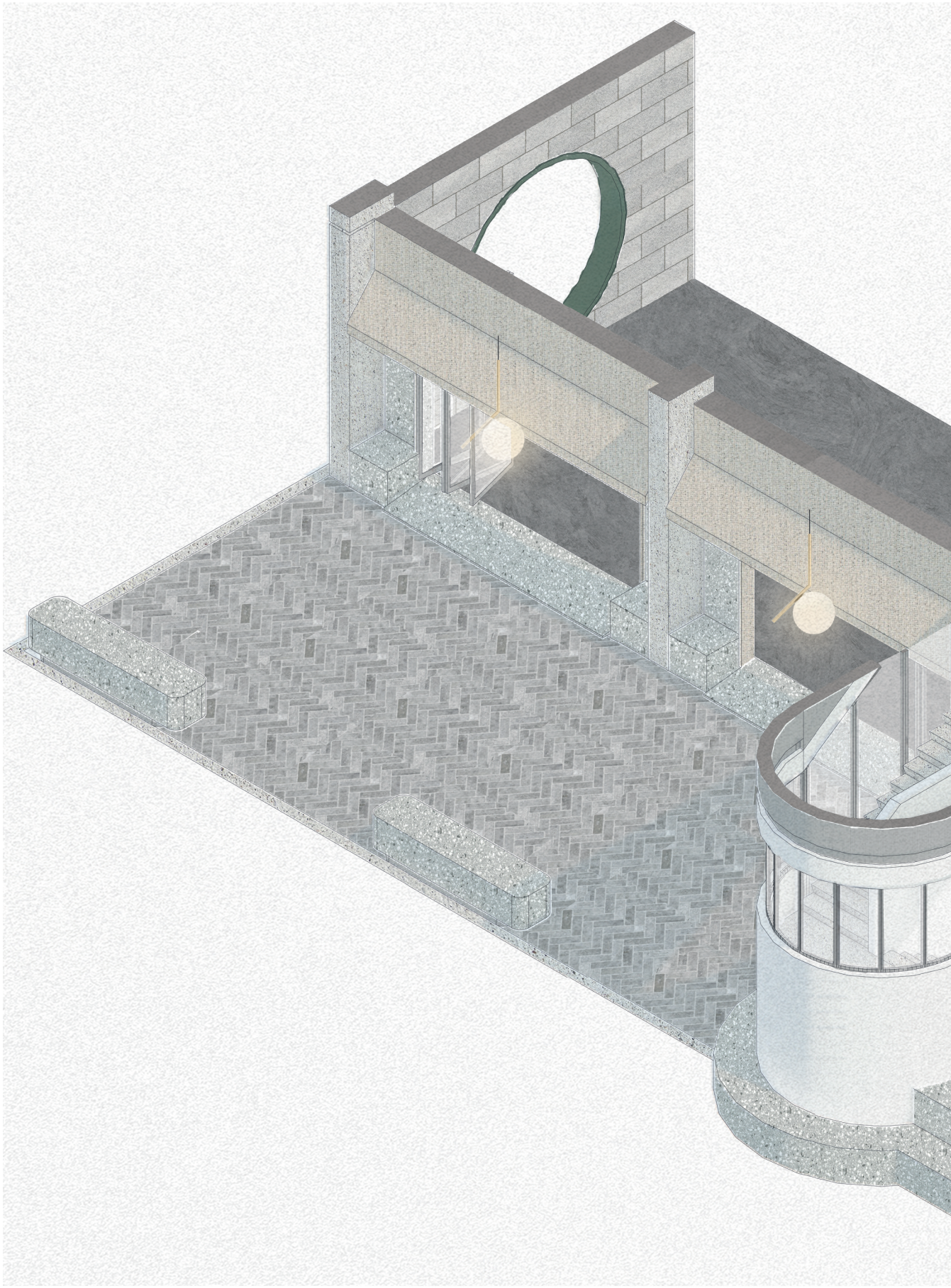




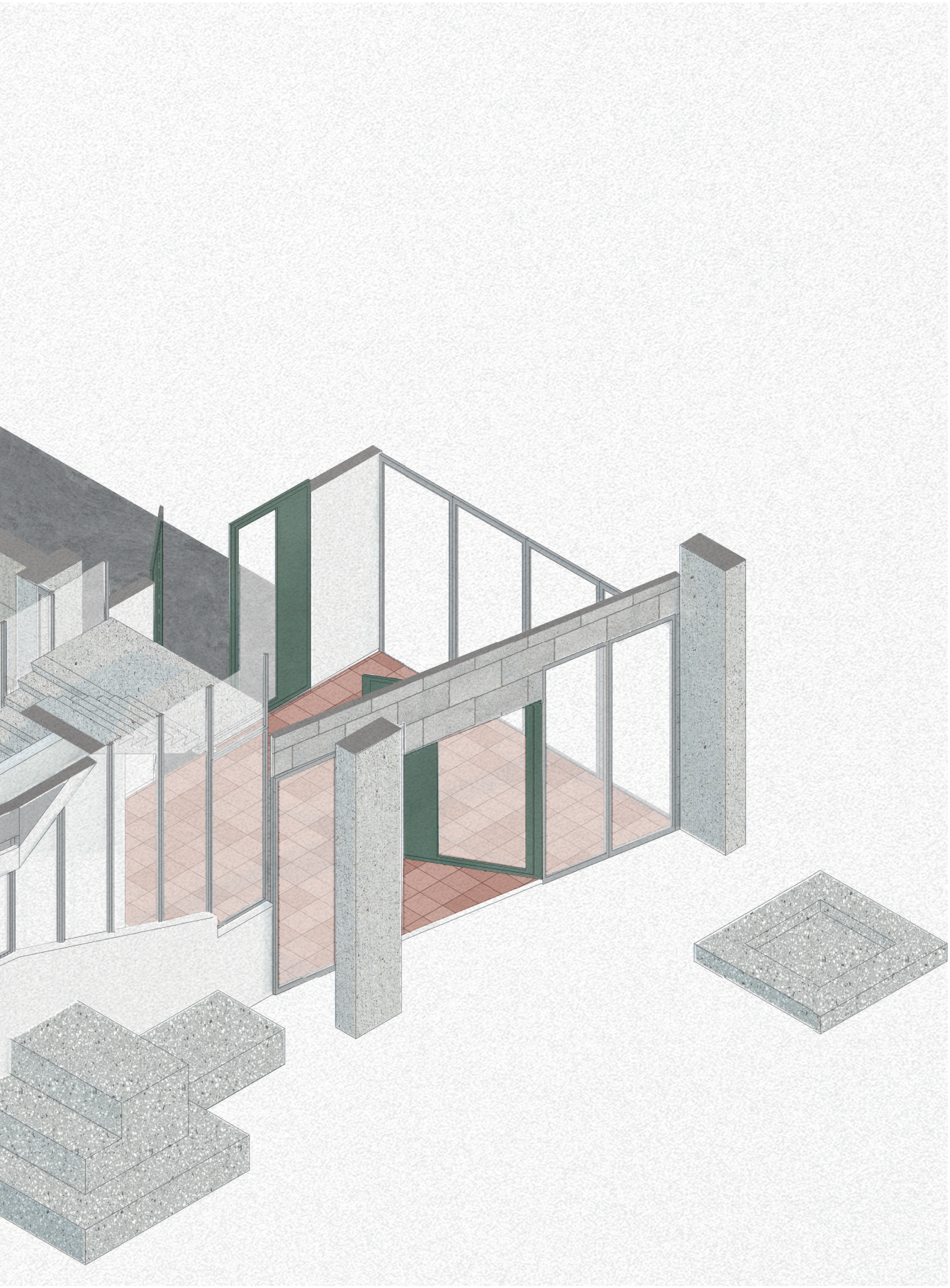
One of the transition zones at the ground floor



The different textures at the groundfloor



Axonometric view of the transition zones with the materiality



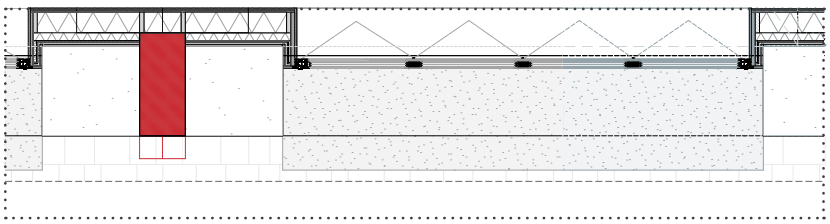


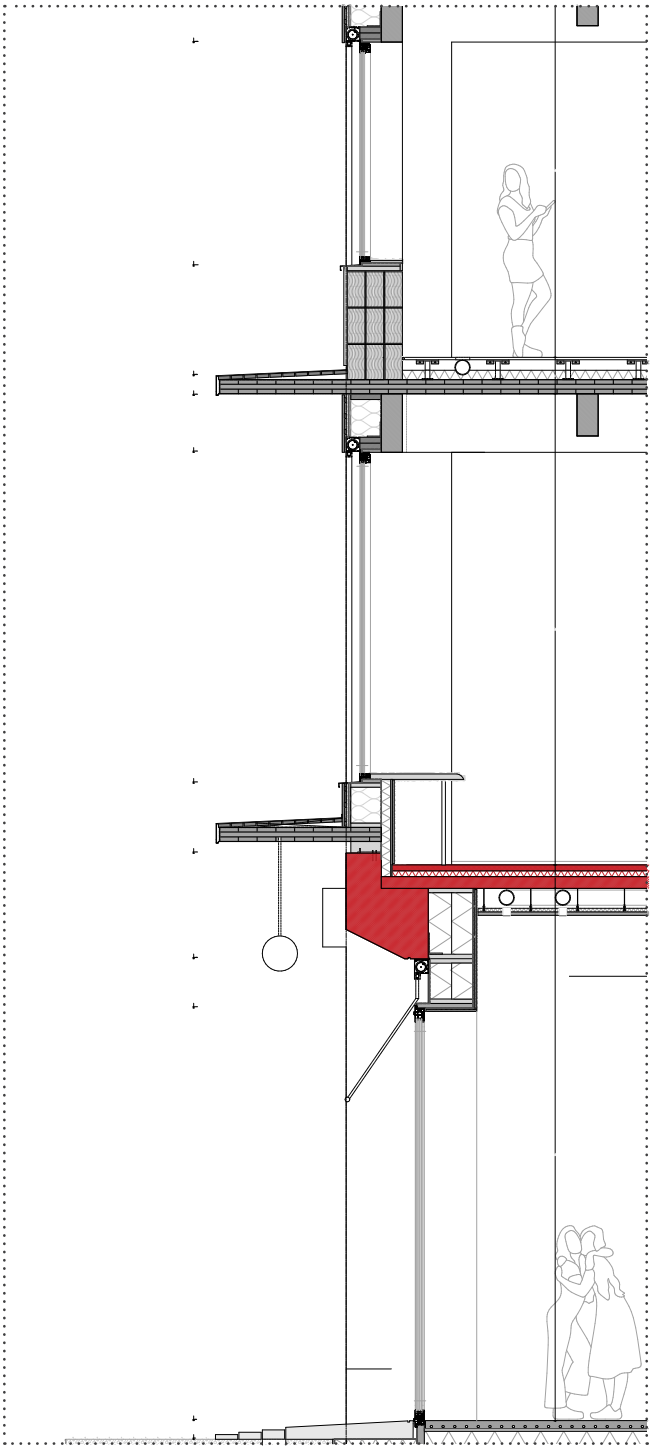
How hempcreteblocks can be used, research by Werkstatt architecten



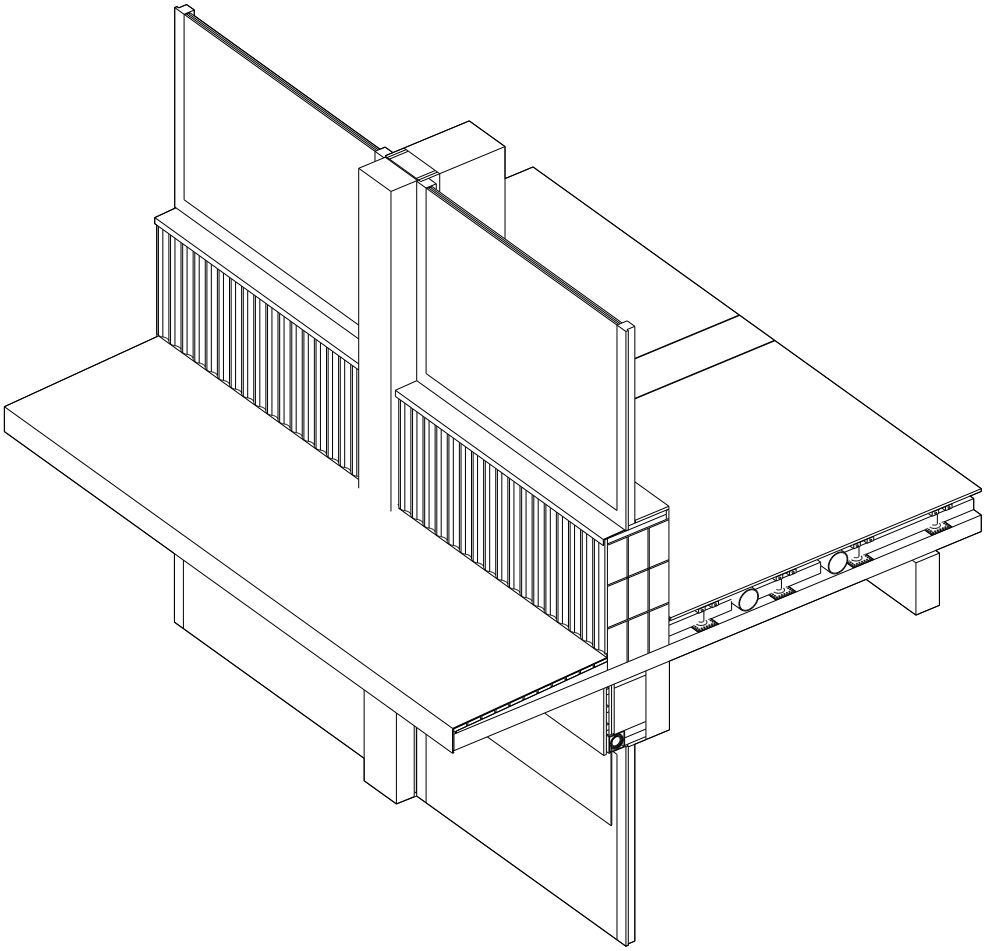
Texture of the hempcrete material finished with a lime plaster so its still breathable



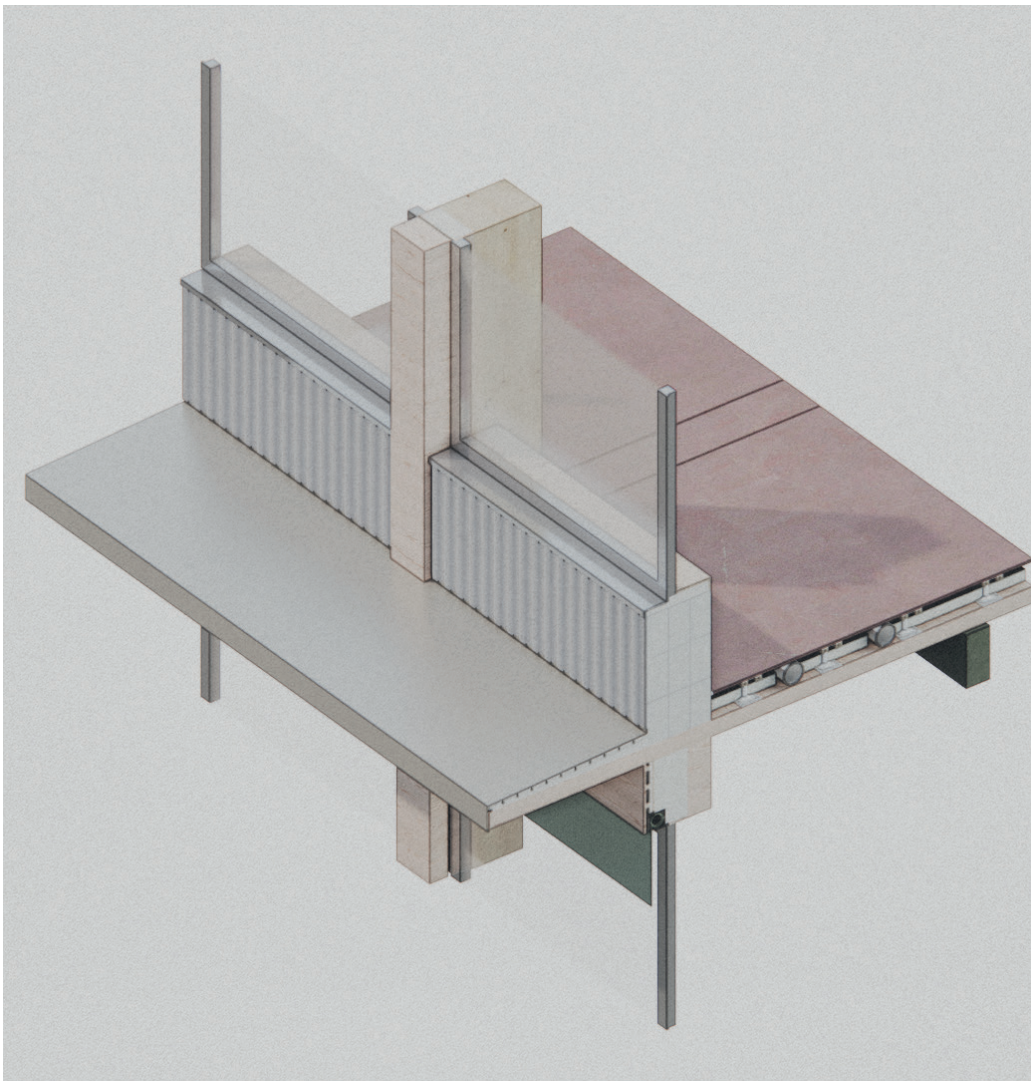




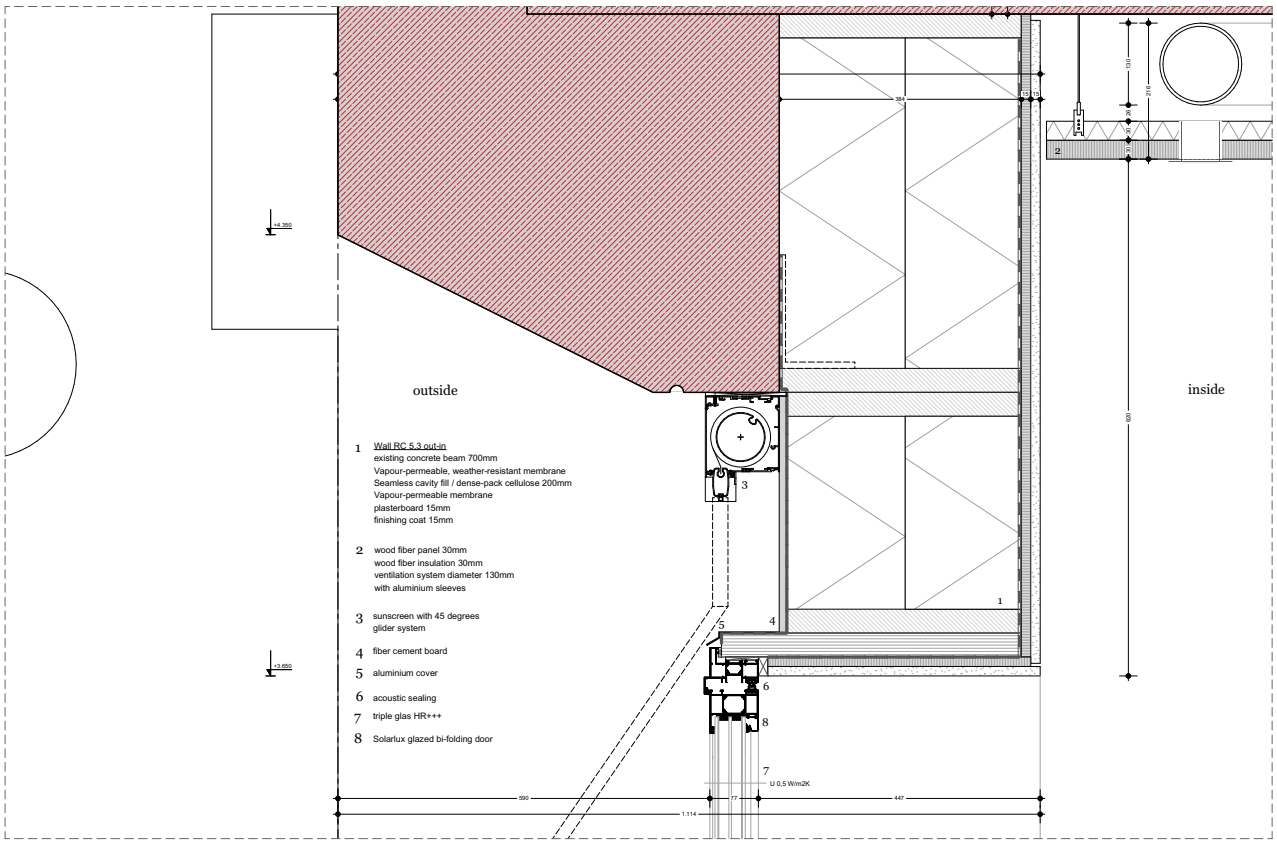
Section 1:20 east facade ground floor to second floor



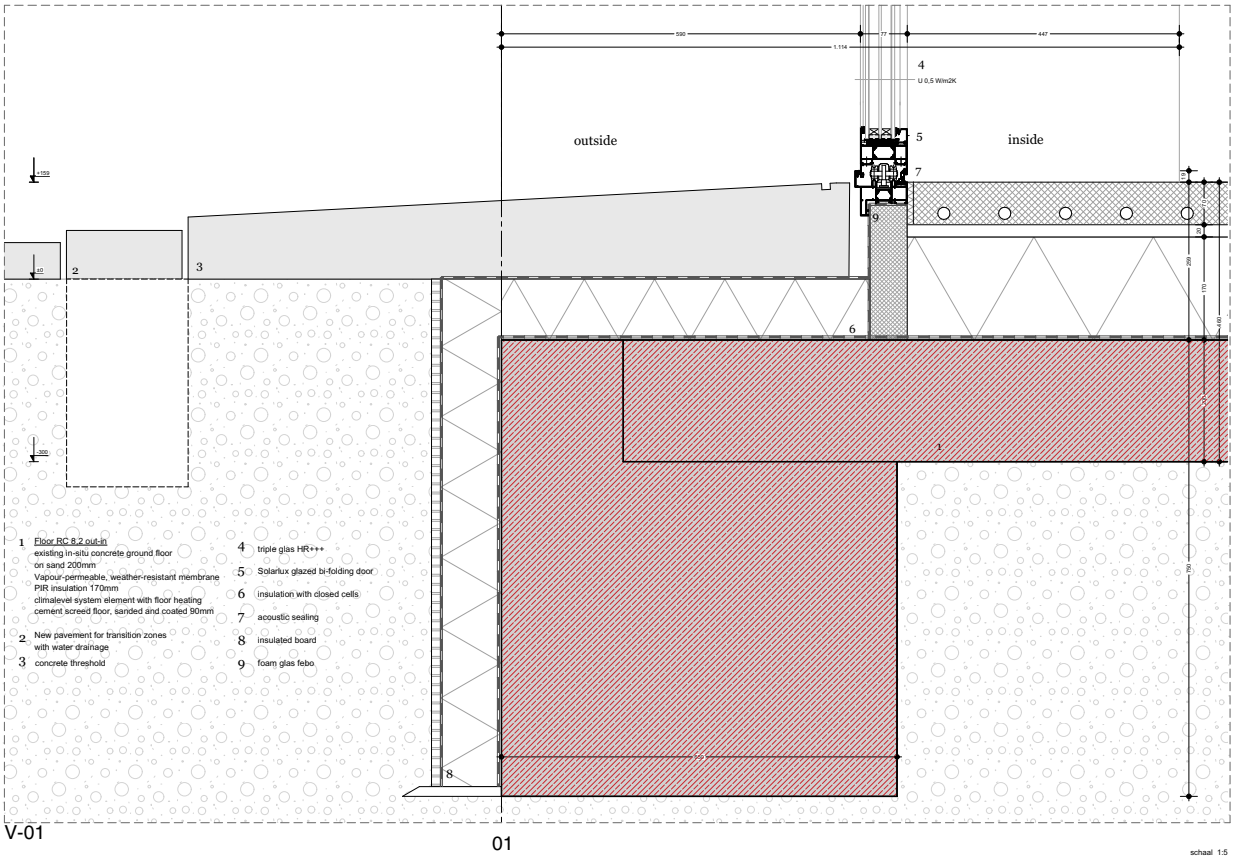
Axonometric drawing of the facade system



Axonometric view of the facde system with the added materials

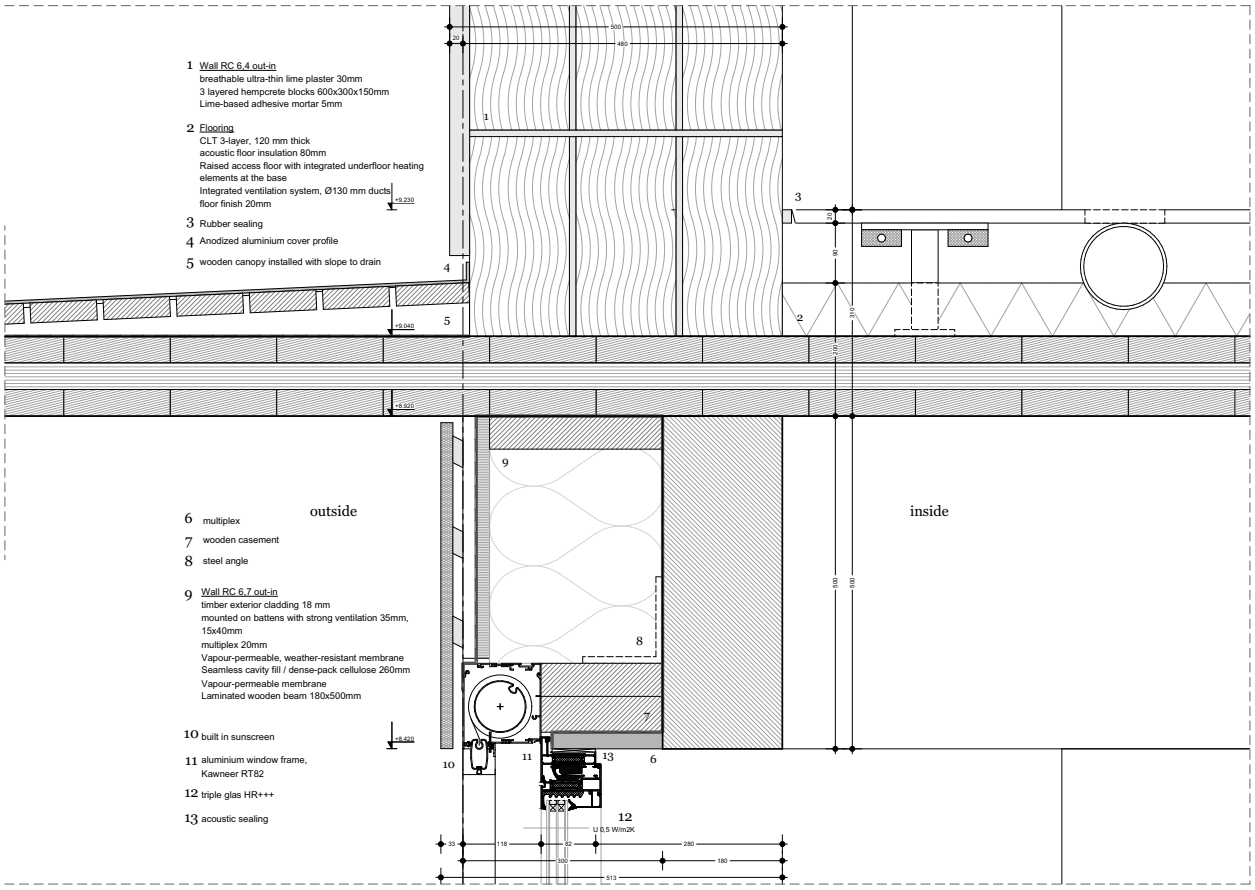


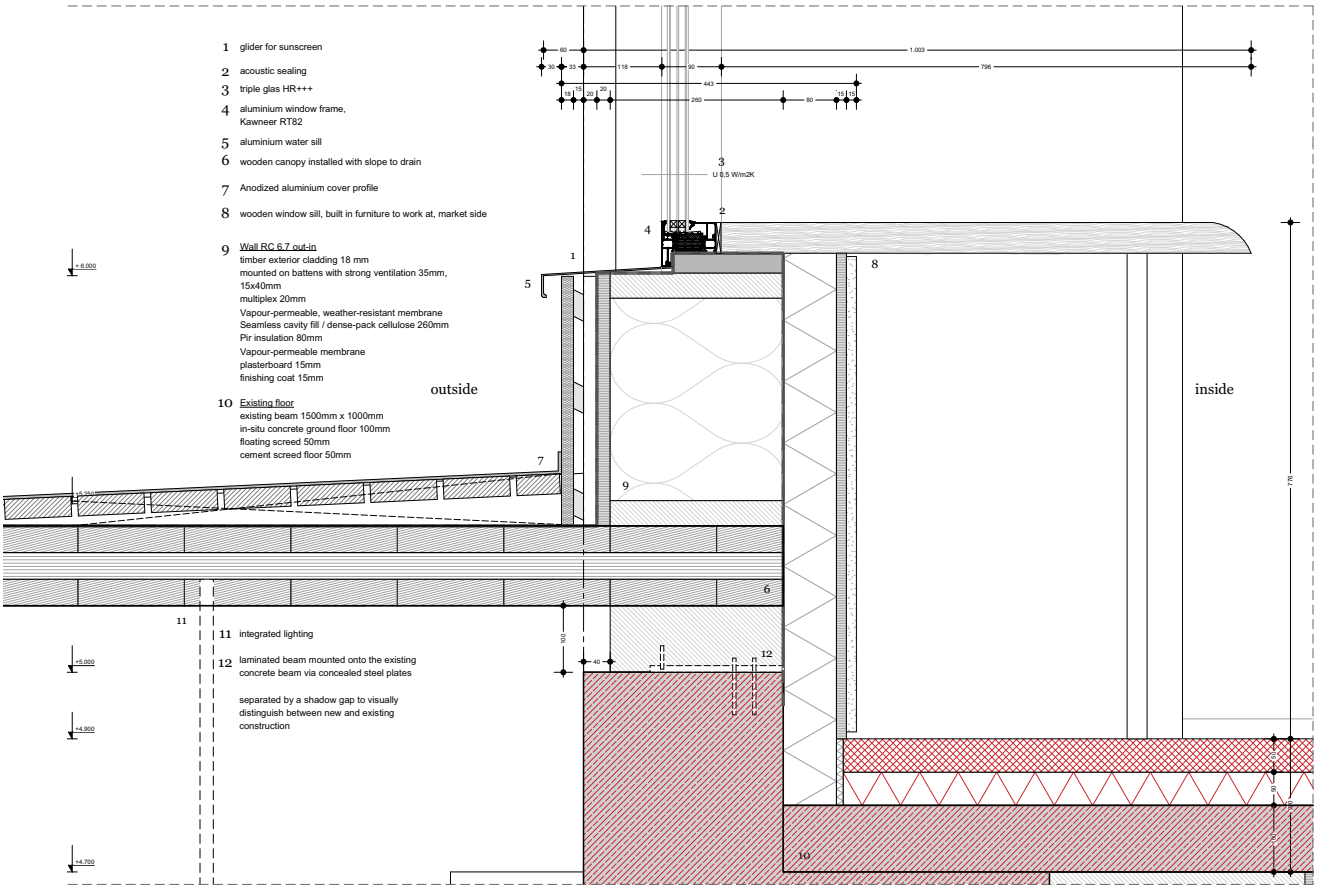
V-02 01 schaal 1:5



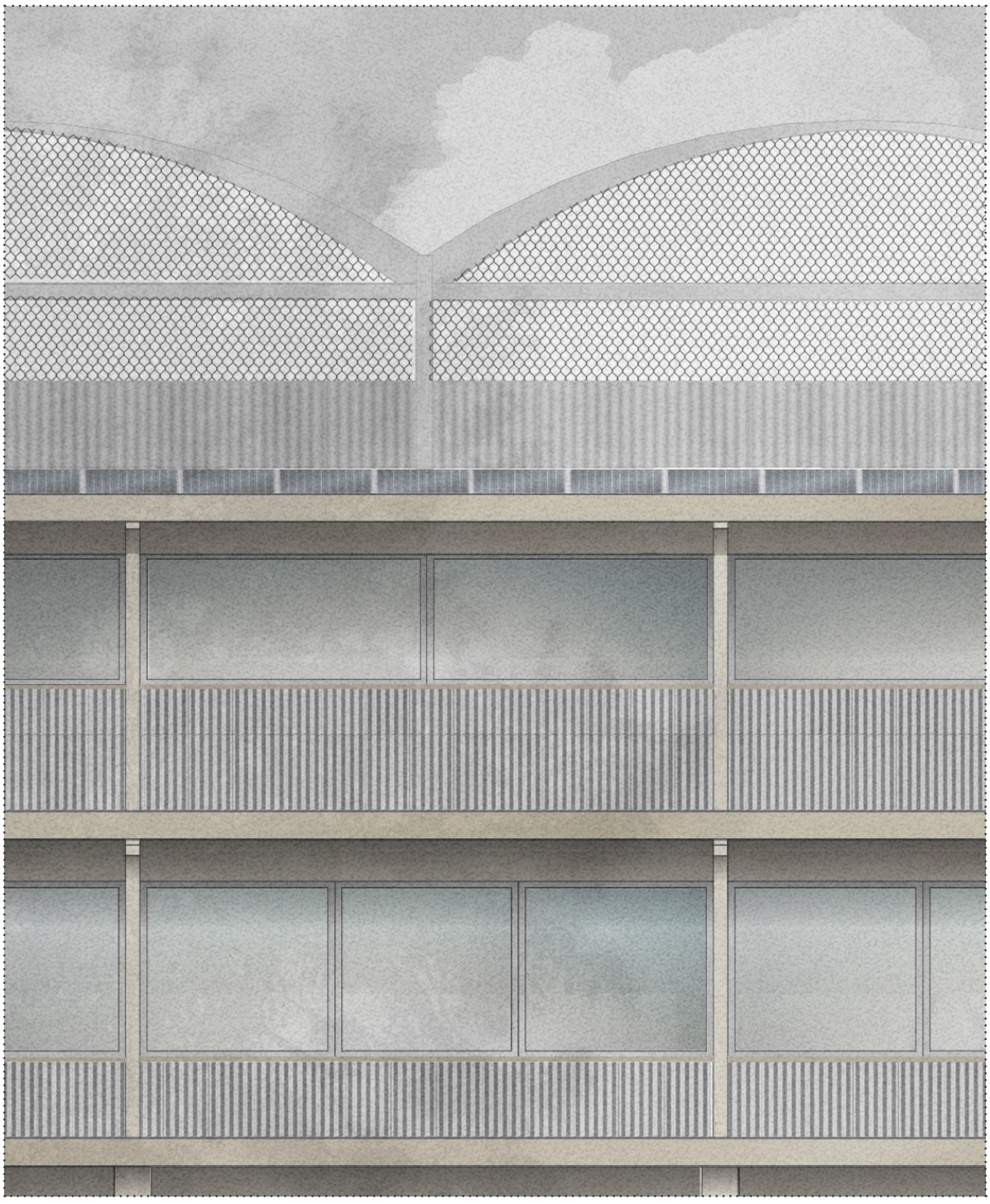
V-01 01 schaal 1:5

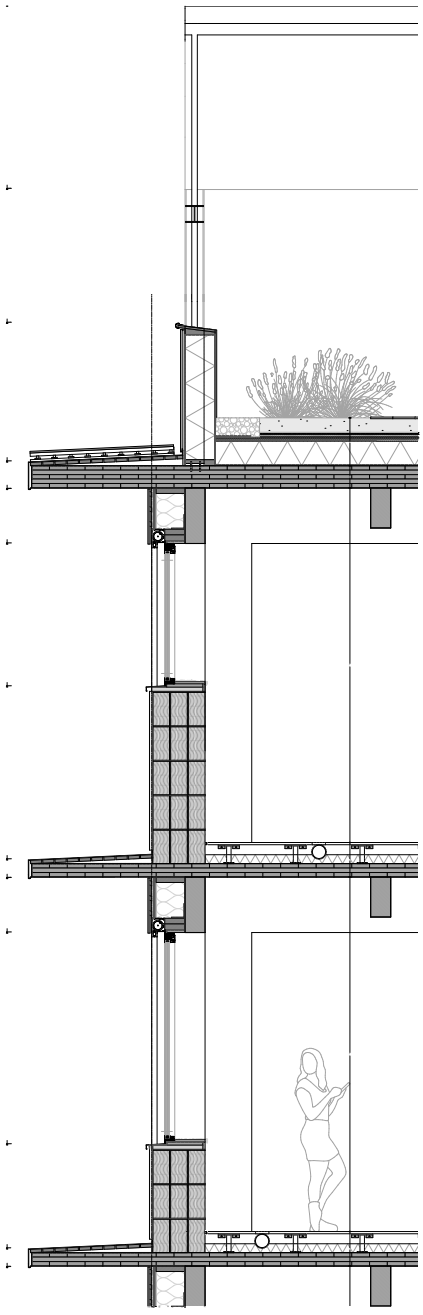
Details ground floor to first floor



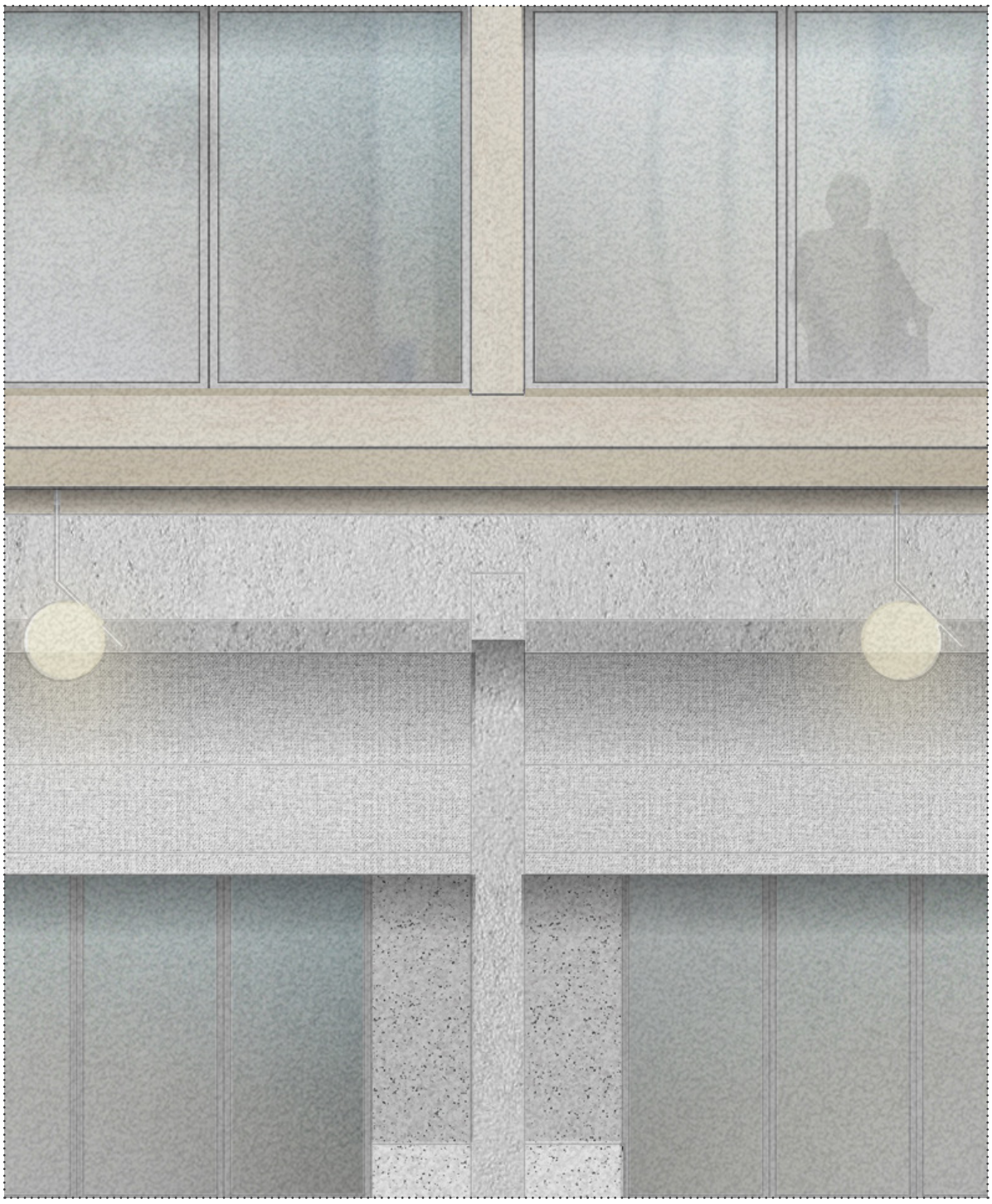


Details showing the system from first floor to the roof

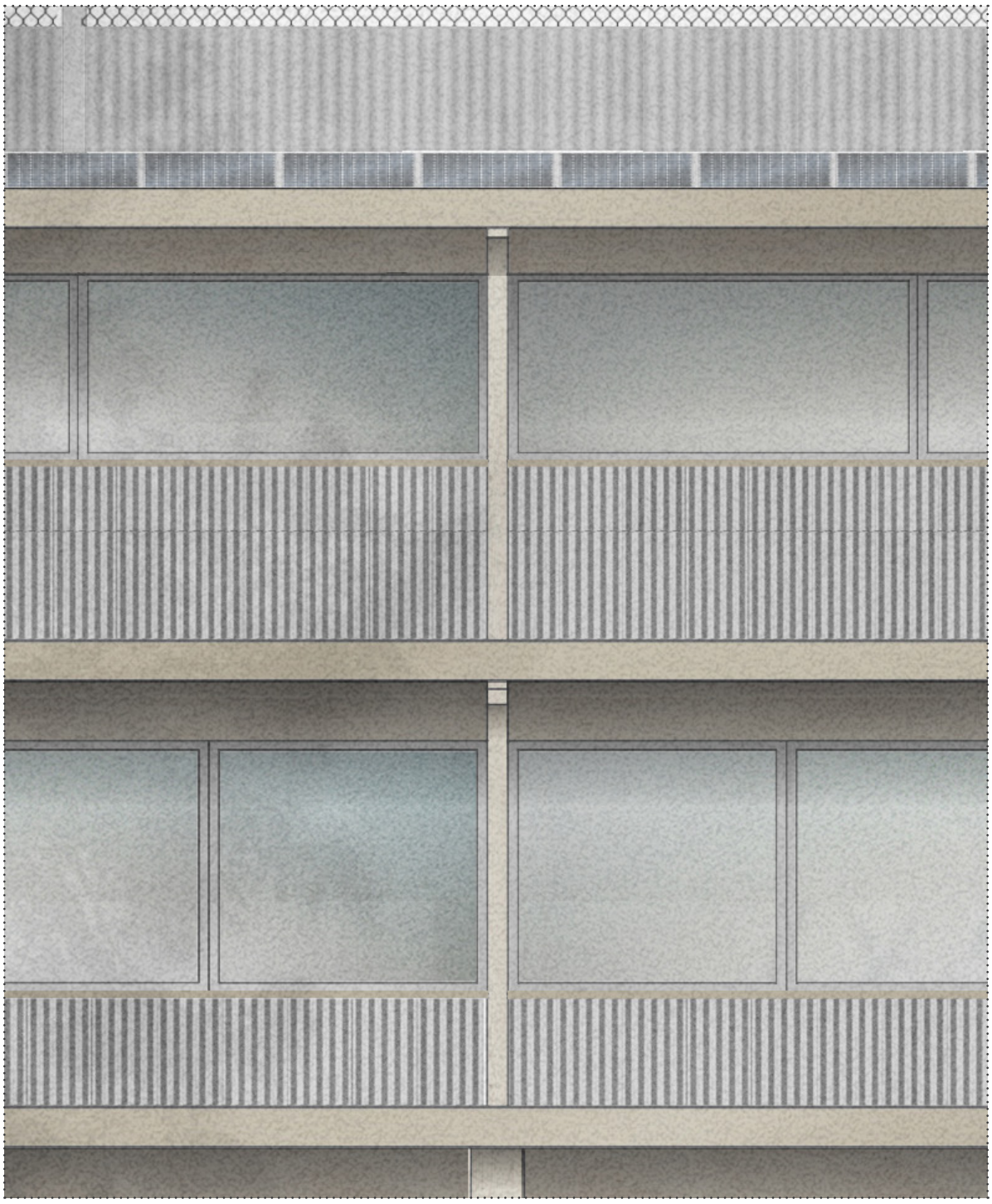




Section 1:20 east facade second floor to roof

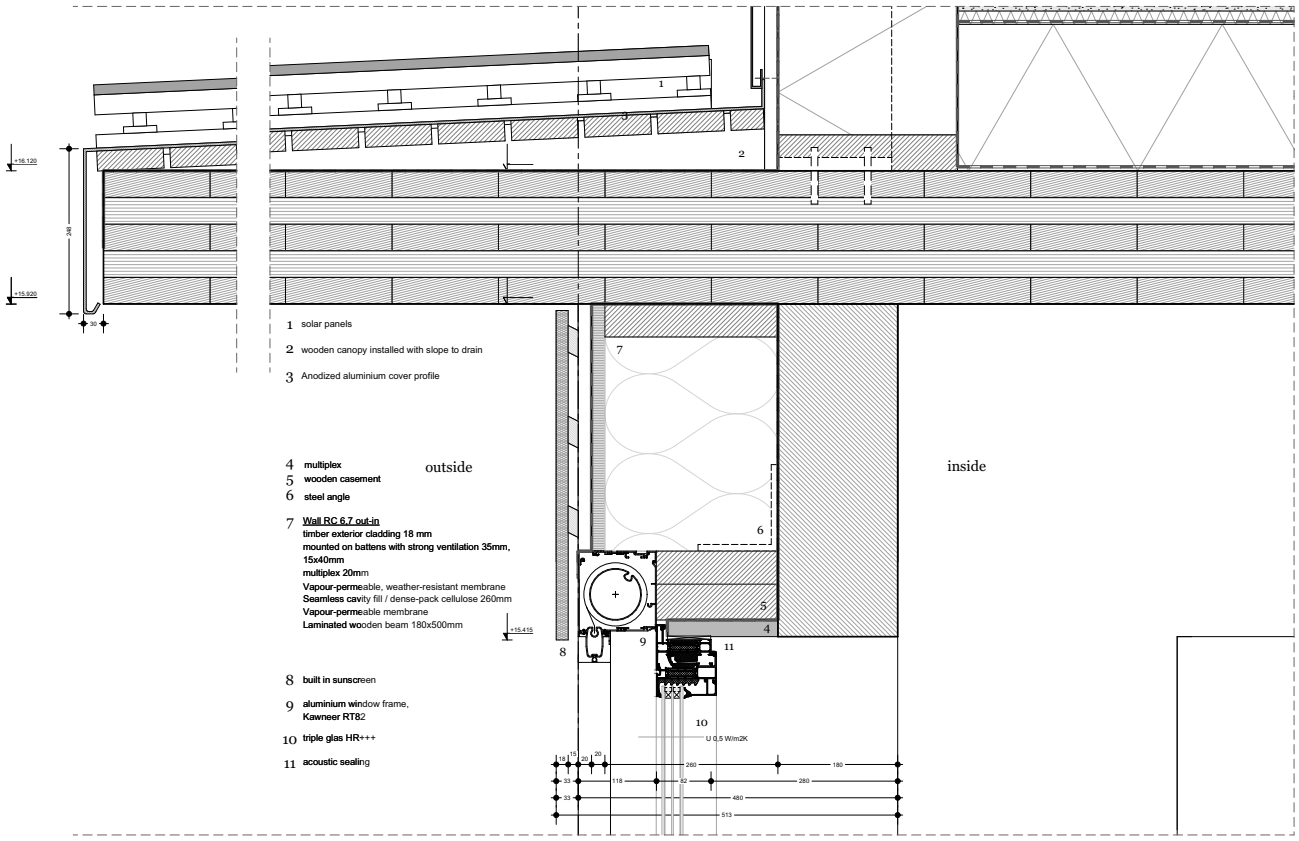


facade fragment ground floor showing the existing construction detail



facade fragment with a interpertation of the concrete existing detail

01



1 solar panels
2 wooden canopy installed with slope to drain
3 Anodized aluminium cover profile

4 **multiplex**
5 **wooden casement**
6 **steel angle**

7 **Wall RC 6.7 out-in**
timber exterior cladding 18 mm
mounted on battens with strong ventilation 35mm, 15x40mm
multiplex 20mm
Vapour-permeable, weather-resistant membrane
Seamless cavity fill / dense-pack cellulose 260mm
Vapour-permeable membrane
Laminated wooden beam 180x500mm

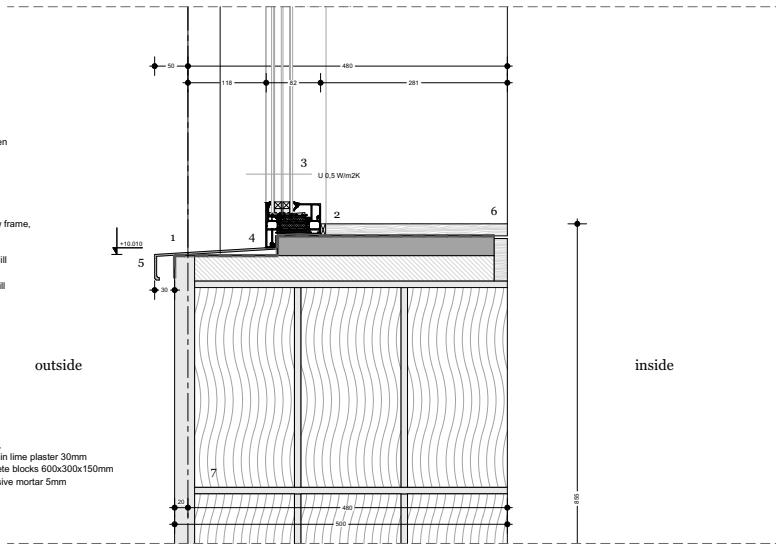
8 **built in sunscr**een

9 **aluminium win**dow frame,
Kawneer RT82

10 **triple glas HR+++**

11 **acoustic seali**ng

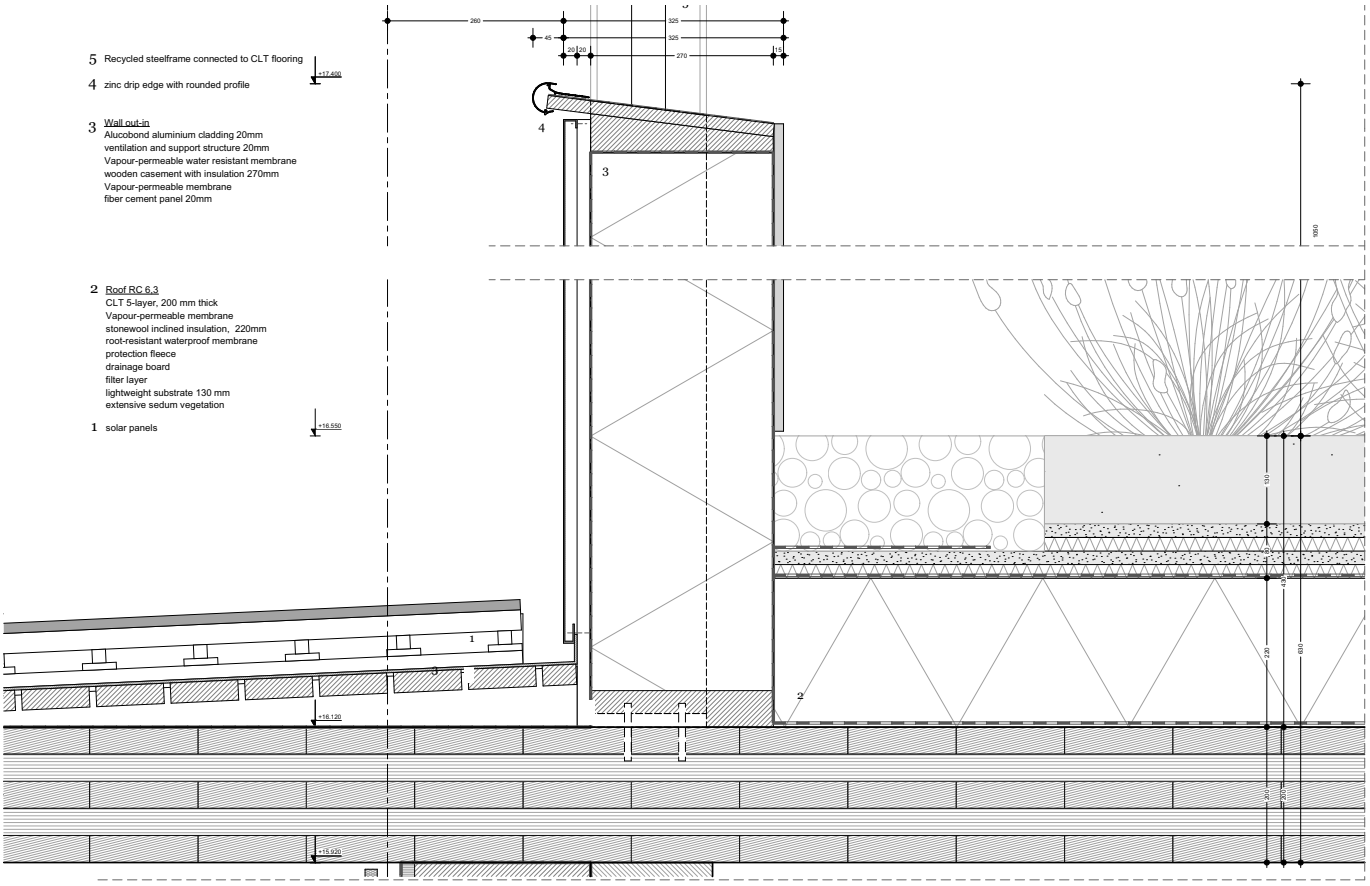
schaal 1:5



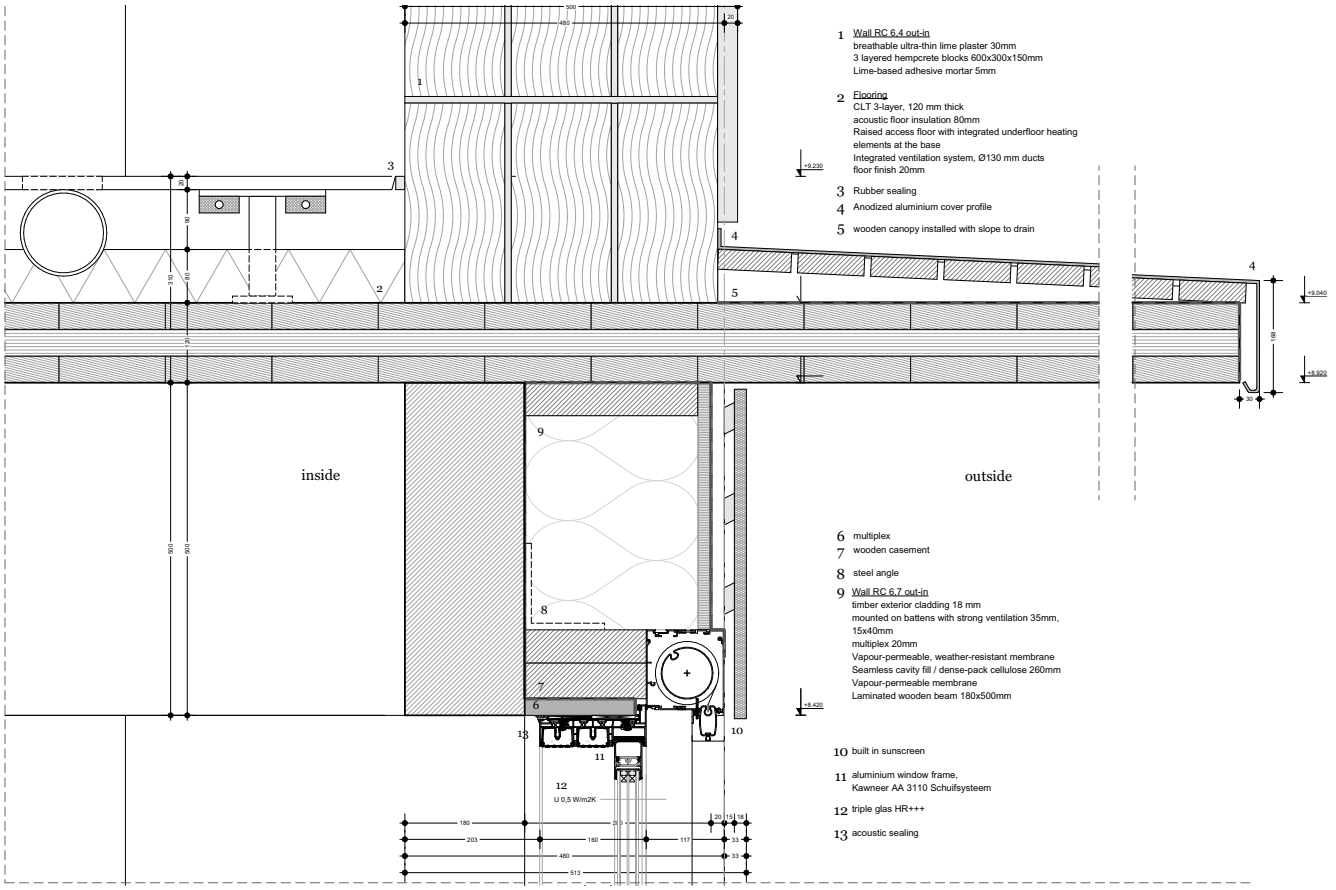
1 glider for sunscreen
2 acoustic sealing
3 triple glas HR+++
4 aluminium window frame, Kawneer RT82
5 aluminium water sill
6 wooden window sill

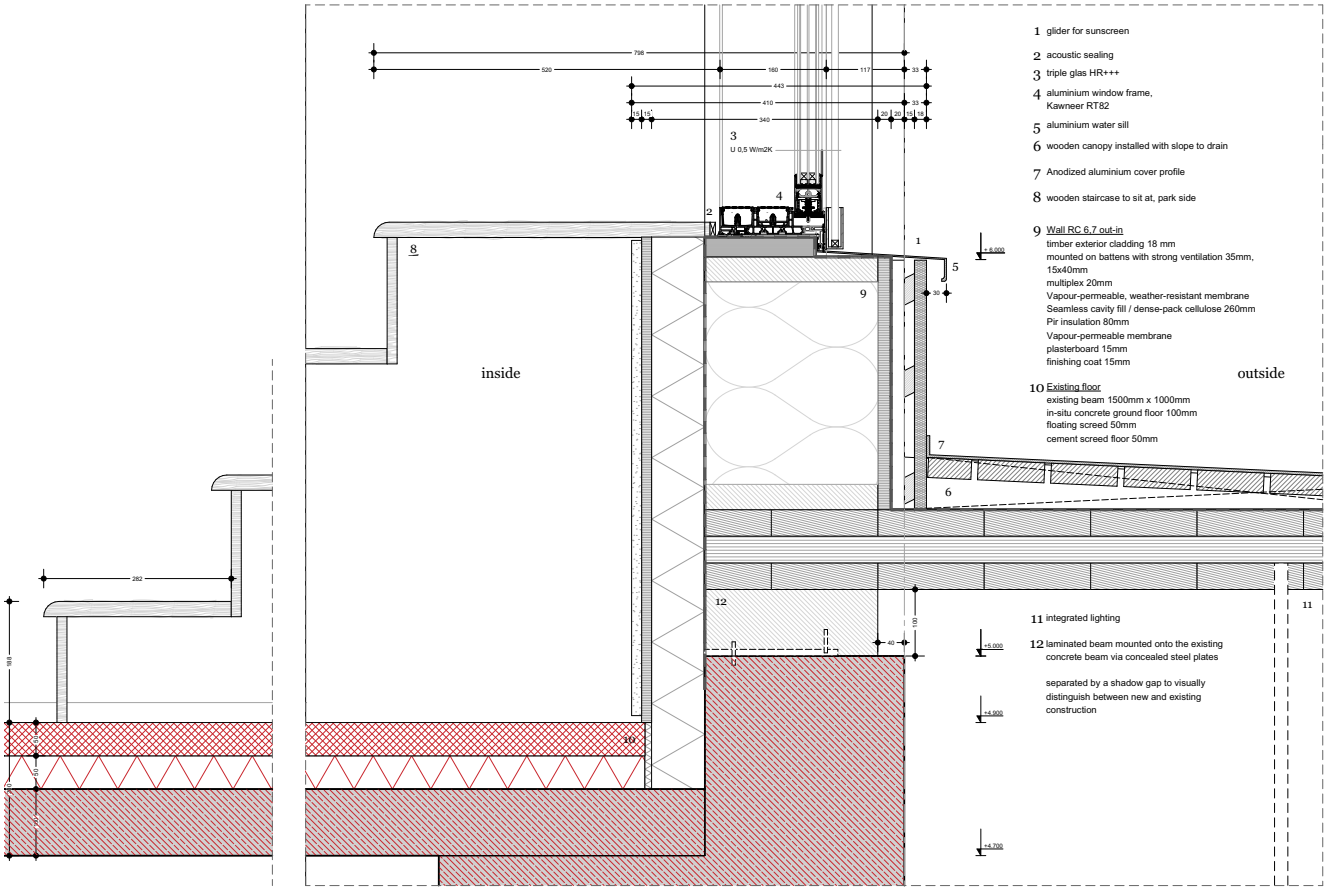
7 Wall RC 6.4 out-in
breathable ultra-thin lime plaster 30mm
3 layered hempcrete blocks 600x300x150mm
Lime-based adhesive mortar 5mm

Details connection roof

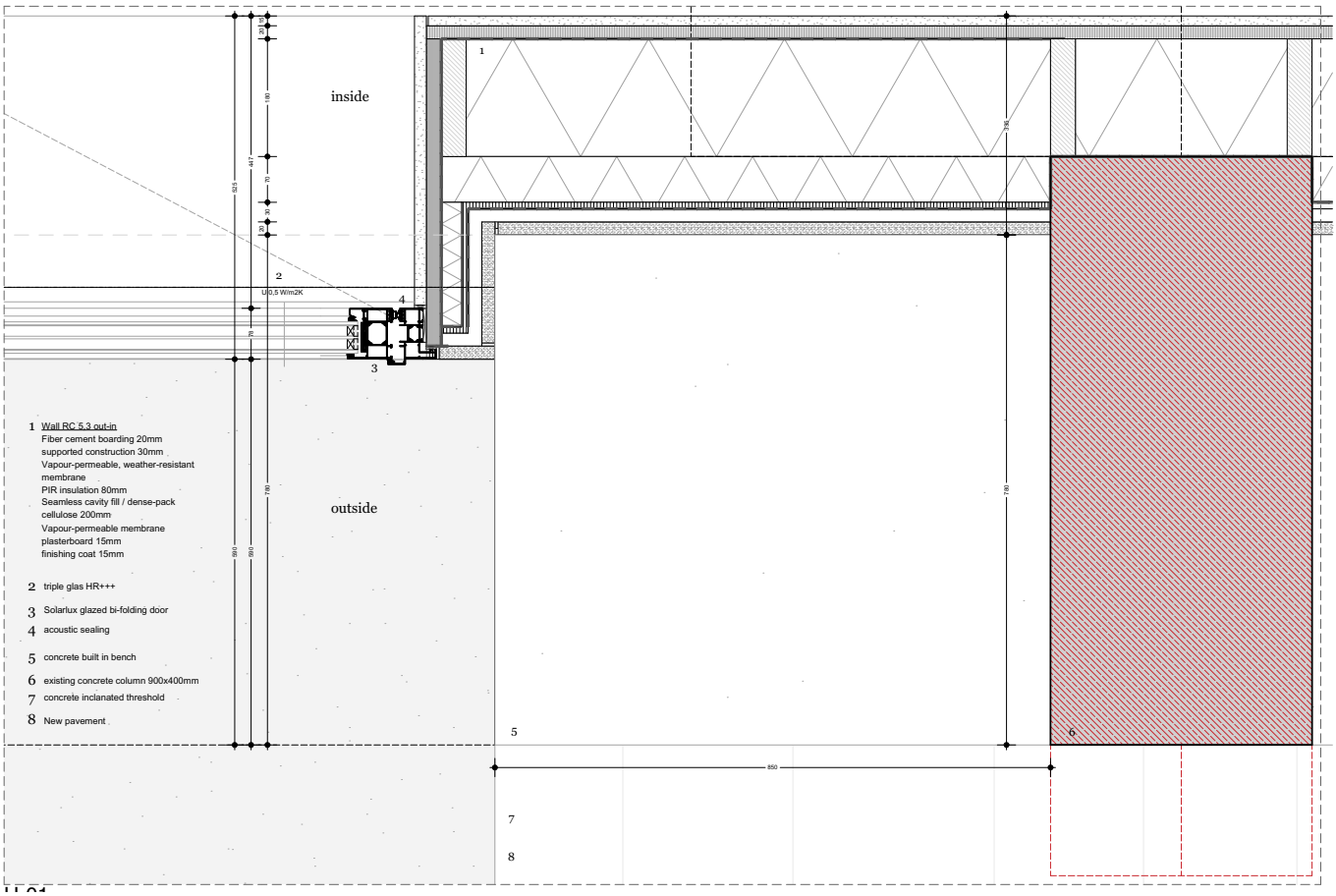


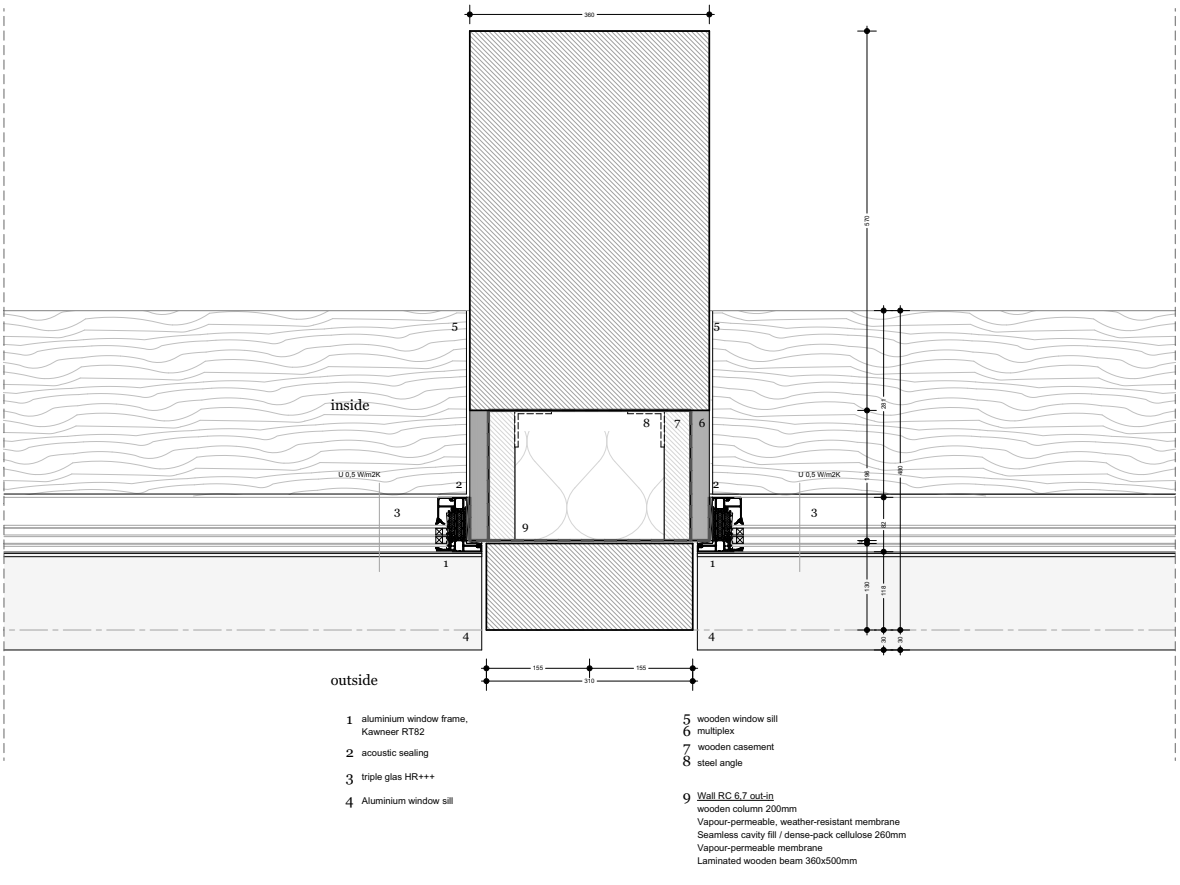
Detail rooftop with a green roof and vegetation





Details at the west side of the buildng to the parkside

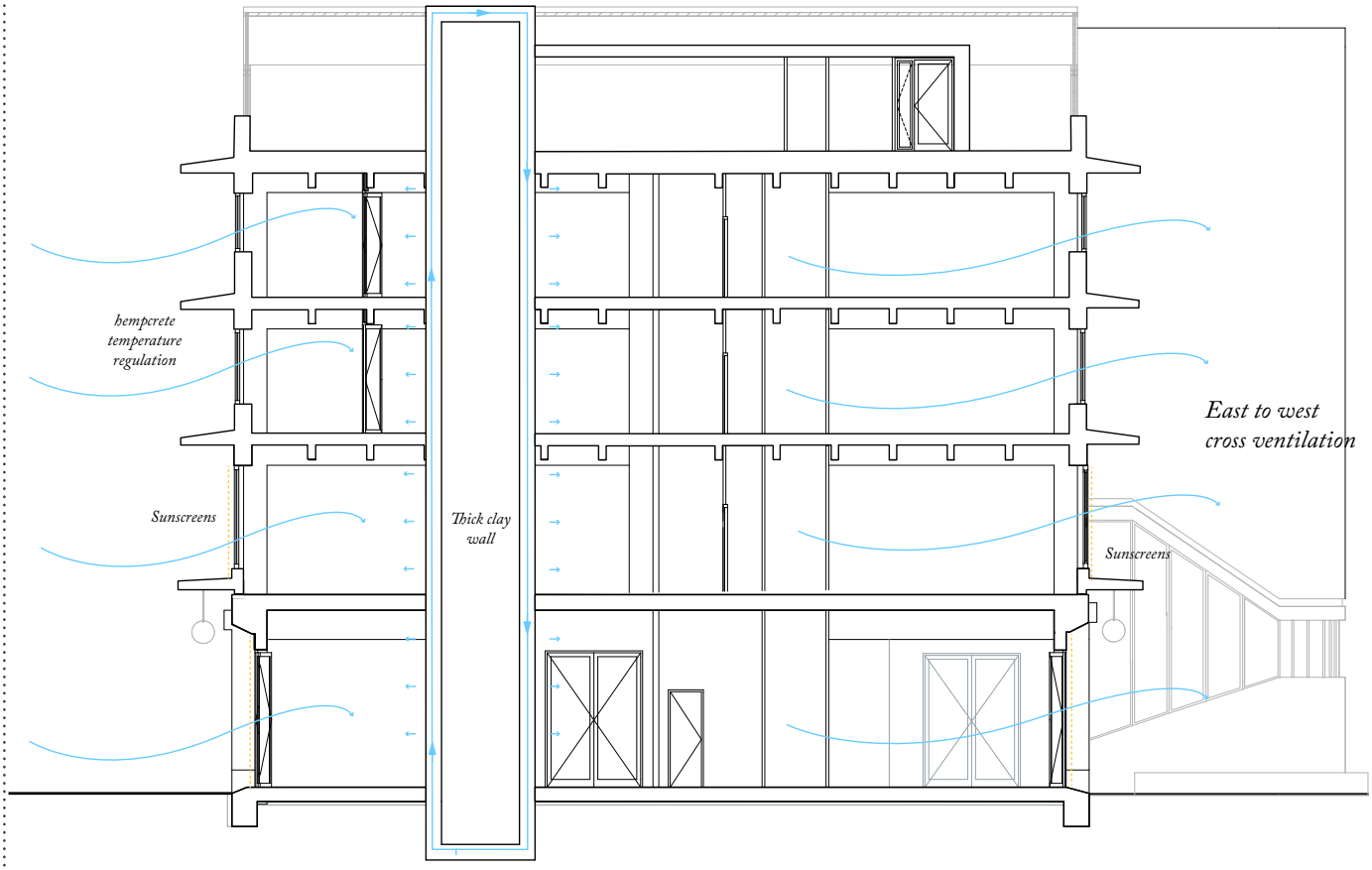




Horizontal details of the groundfloor and the building system



Climate system section BB Winter



Thermal energy storage system

Climate system section BB summer



Climate system section BB ventilation



The fireplace serves both as a social element and as a technical component in the building's design

conclusions

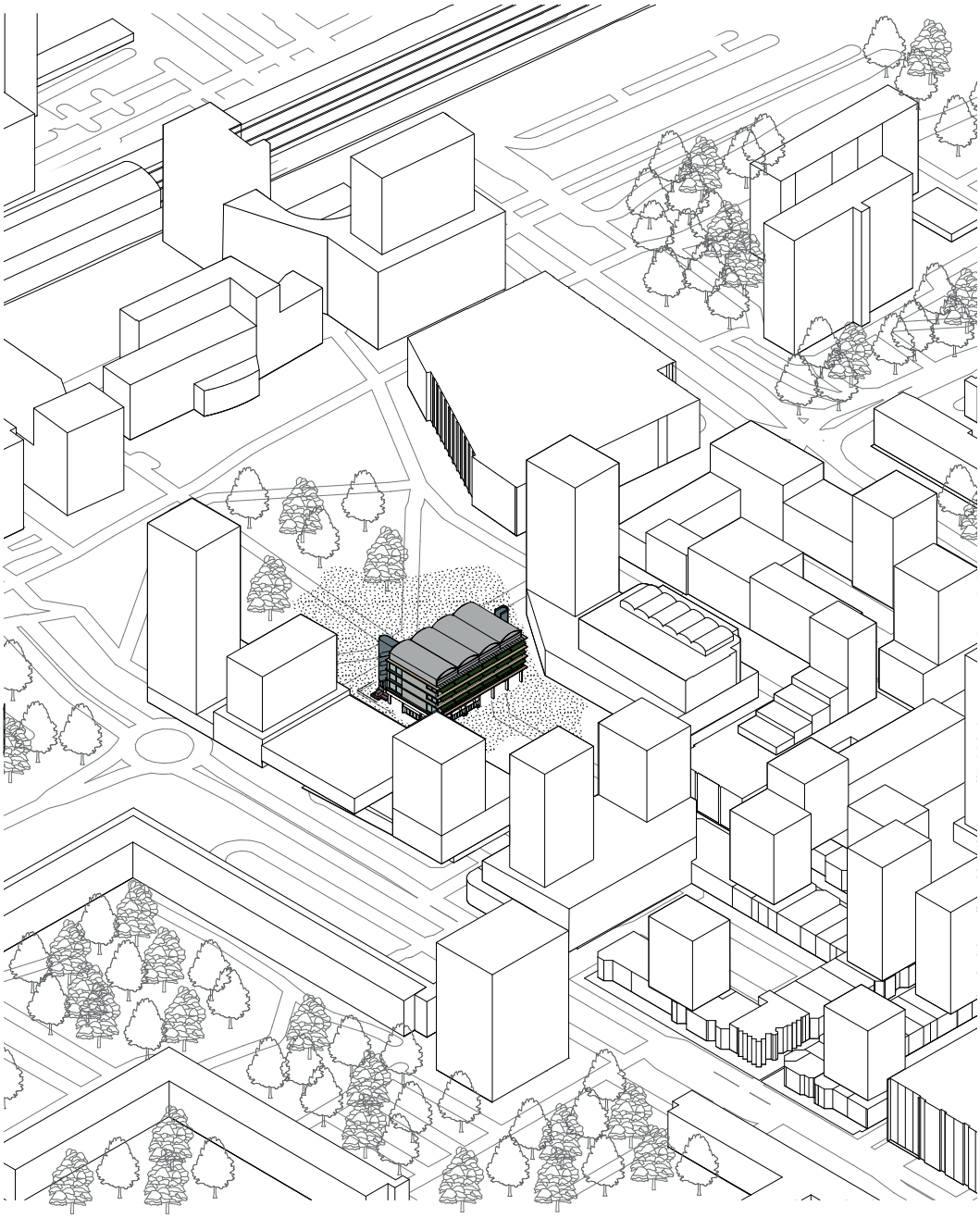
This project began with the question of how design can resist the effects of gentrification by creating spaces that are inclusive to people from all layers of society. Rather than introducing a new image or identity, the aim was to build upon what is already present socially, structurally, and spatially. Threshold spaces play a central role in this approach: they allow for informal use, invite appropriation, and remain open to multiple forms of occupation.

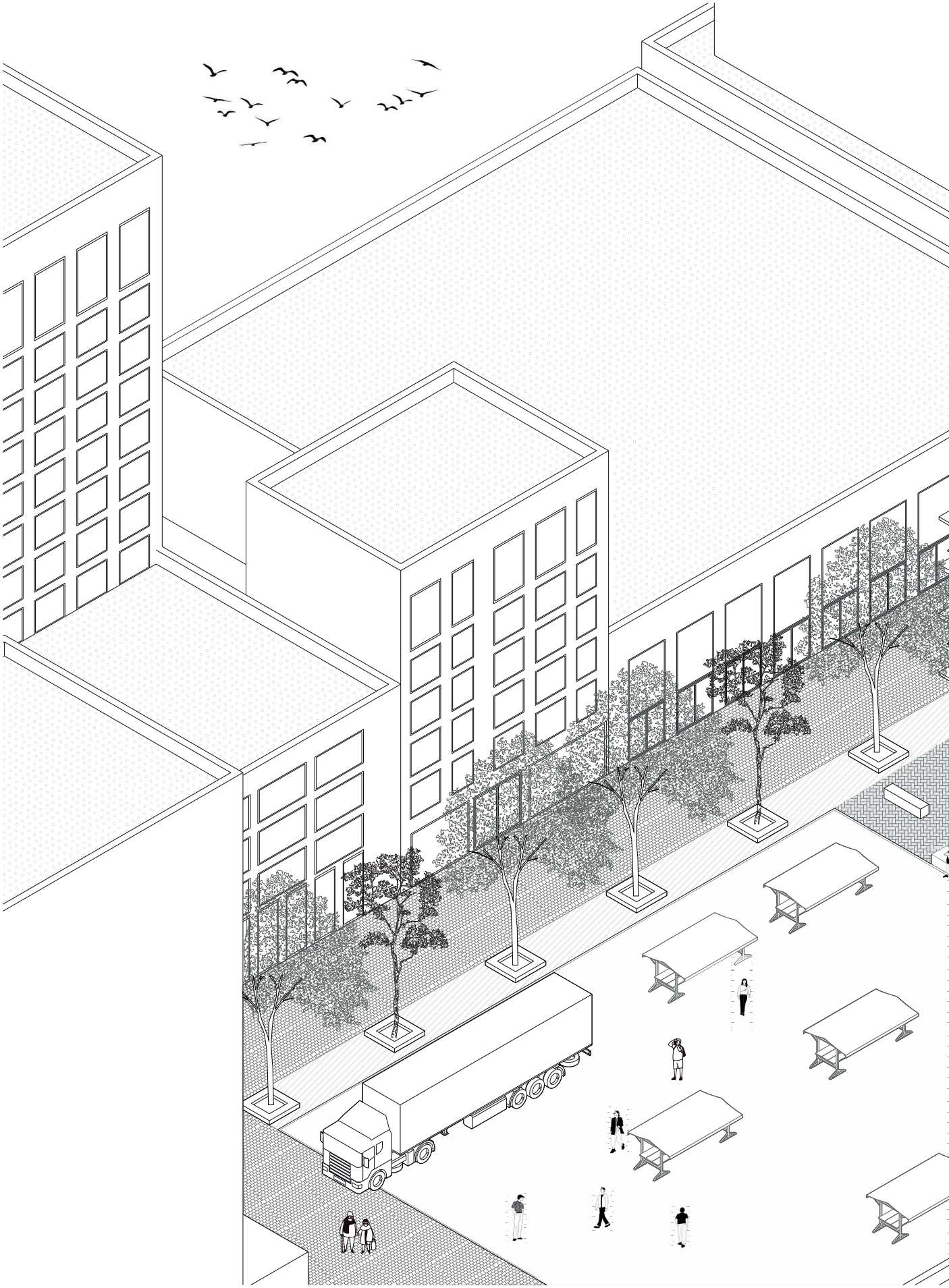
Through their ambiguity, these spaces support a more gradual and shared form of urban transformation. The design includes a range of spatial conditions from fixed programs like the library, to open and flexible upper floors, to the visible and accessible rooftop all intended to host a diversity of users and uses. Public elements such as seating, stairs, and open sightlines encourage interaction without enforcing it.

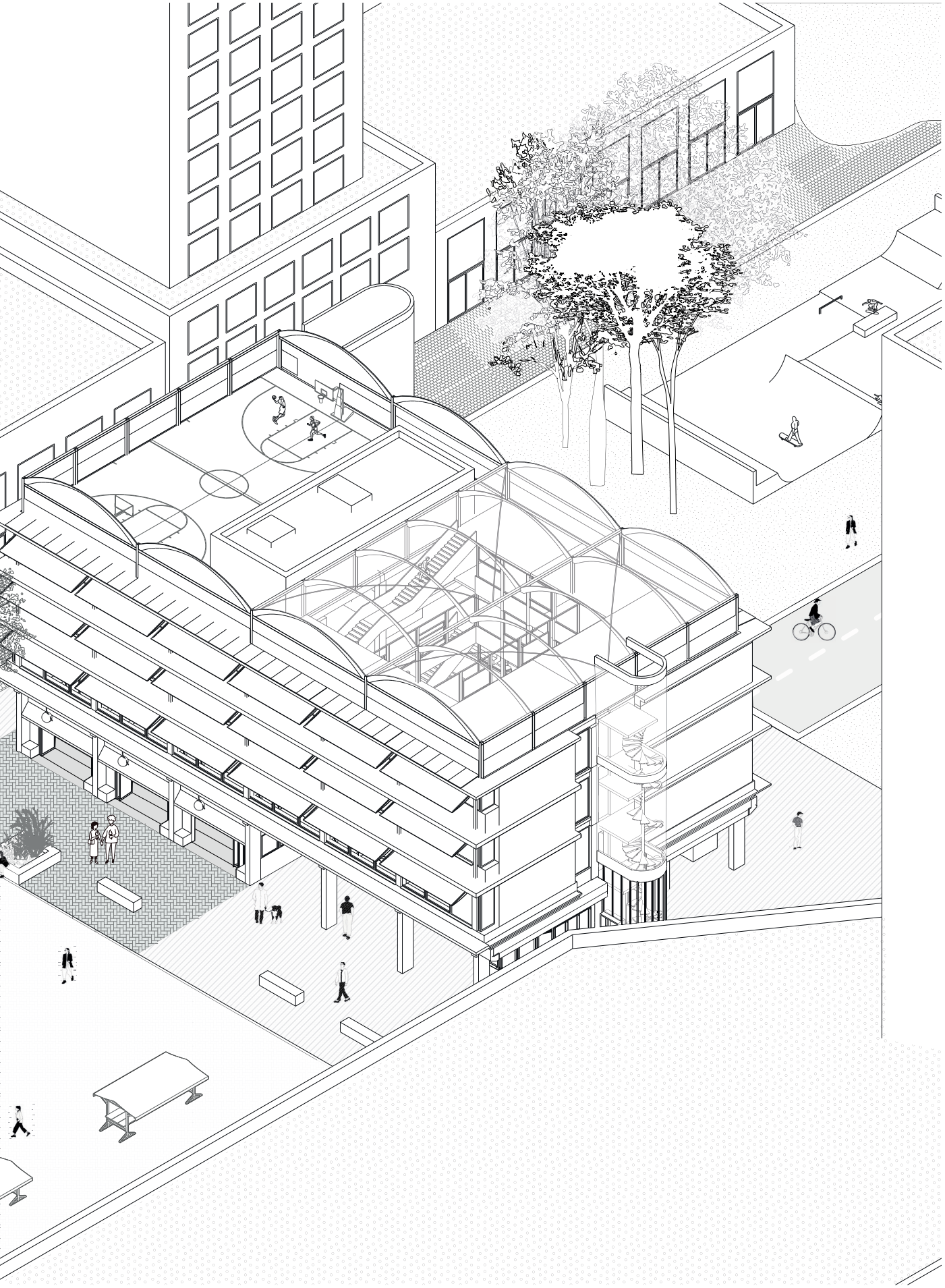
To support this inclusive use structurally and financially, the project also introduces a collective ownership model. A main tenant the library provides a stable foundation, while the remaining spaces can be accessed through memberships. This model distributes access and responsibility across multiple users from the neighbourhood. It strengthens the connection between people and place and reduces the risk that the building becomes vacant or marked for demolition again in the future.

At the same time, it is important to remain aware of the risks that come with openness. Threshold spaces can also become places of exclusion or neglect, as was the case in many semi-public buildings from the 1980s, where lack of maintenance and unclear ownership led to marginal use. The current design addresses this by integrating spatial clarity, passive visibility, and infrastructural care combining openness with a degree of grounding.

Rather than offering a fixed answer, the project creates conditions that allow the building to grow with its users. It resists the exclusivity often associated with gentrification not by controlling who uses it, but by making space spatially and socially for appropriation, shared use, and distributed ownership over time.



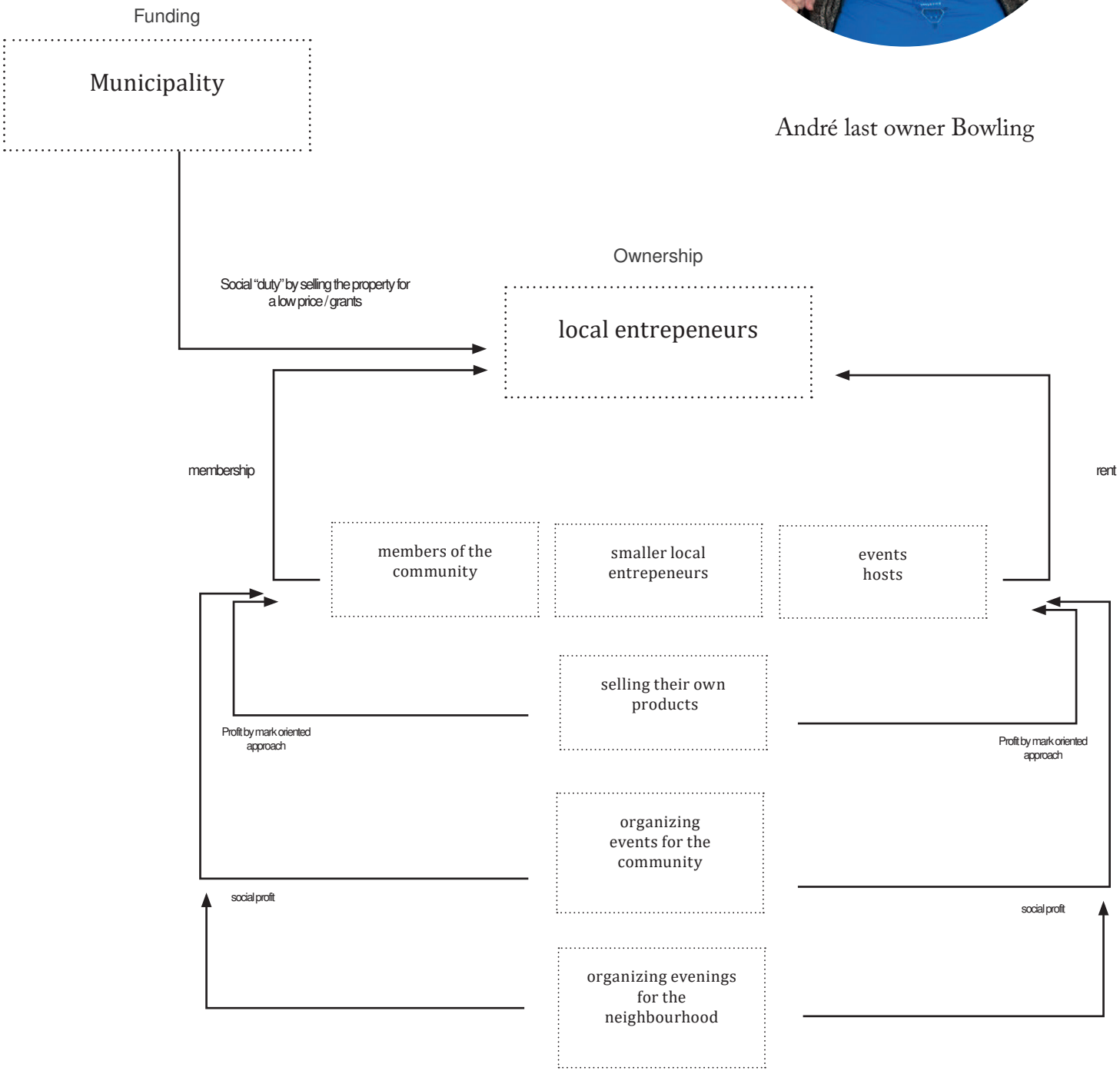




The financial and social model



André last owner Bowling







impression of the niche/entrance

It is important to address that the space can also be appropriated by homeless or marginalized people. Nevertheless, they remain highly visible, and the spirit of the times has changed



Impact

1. What is the relationship between your graduation topic, your studio, your master track, and the MSc AUBS program?

The graduation project “On the Threshold of Identity” explores how threshold spaces – zones on the boundary between public and private – can contribute to social interaction and connectedness in a neighborhood undergoing transformation due to gentrification. The selected case, De Bowling in Amsterdam-Noord, is a location where various urban developments intersect: restructuring, demographic shifts, and the debate between preservation and renewal. The project therefore raises not only a spatial question, but also an ideological one: how can social cohesion and collective memory be preserved in a neighborhood experiencing structural change?

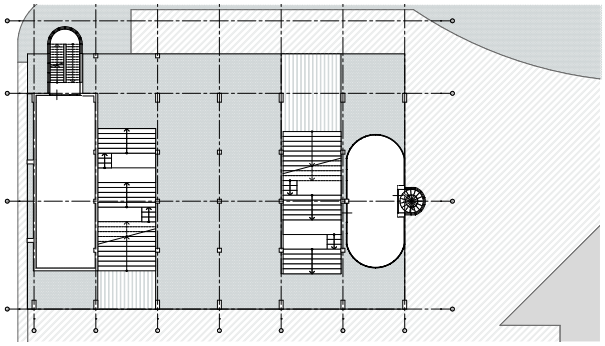
This theme is closely aligned with the studio “Heritage – Transitional Identities,” which explores how buildings with existing identities can gain new meaning in a changing context. Within this studio, a key question is how we, as designers, position ourselves within complex political, social, and societal dynamics. This reflective approach is a central part of the design education, where community centers are regarded as micro-societies in which tensions between old and new identities become visible. This setting challenges us, as emerging architects, not only to develop a design attitude but also to critically engage with our societal roles.

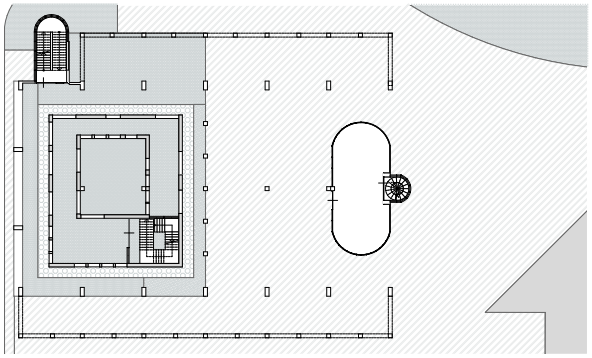
The relationship between design, context, and use is also central to the Architecture track, and more broadly to the MSc Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences. The program provides tools to approach current spatial challenges through both research and design, integrating societal issues into the design process. The project attempts to put this into practice by connecting theoretical research, fieldwork, and design research, and applying them to a current urban context.

2. How did your research influence your design, and vice versa?

The research phase provided an essential foundation for the design decisions. By developing a broad theoretical framework, I was able to more purposefully search for threshold spaces within the case. The findings led to a range of potential design interventions – varying in scale and form – that could contribute to the creation or strengthening of threshold spaces.

During the research-by-design phase, it became clear that not all theoretical elements could be directly applied to the specific context of De Bowling. One of the key considerations was safety. While the location offers potential for meaningful threshold spaces, the depth of the building creates spatial transitions that may feel unsafe. This required careful judgment, taking into account the social and political dynamics of the site.



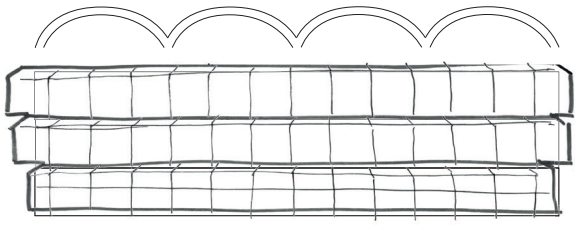


Some prominent concepts from the research – such as a large multifunctional staircase or a fully public ground floor – proved difficult to implement in this location. The need for social safety and visibility required a more nuanced approach. As a result, certain elements, like the staircase, were reinterpreted and repositioned in areas where they could support social control and accessibility.

Another important aspect was the preservation of collective memory. Since neighboring buildings at Buikslotermeerplein are scheduled for demolition in the municipality’s redevelopment plans, the possibility of preserving parts of De Bowling was investigated. Unfortunately, this proved unfeasible due to the poor structural condition of the building and the presence of asbestos. Alternative strategies were explored, such as reusing spatial rhythms, forms, and materials to evoke memories of the site. The programmatic continuity – maintaining functions that previously existed in the building – was

also considered as a way to retain user associations with the original identity of De Bowling.

In summary, certain elements from the research – such as benches, canopies, or open floor plans – were relatively easy to apply. Others, like large staircases or fully open ground levels, required adaptation to the local context. This demonstrates that threshold spaces must always be carefully tailored to the site's specific characteristics, and that collective memory cannot be generalized but must be re-examined and anchored within each unique architectural and social setting.



3. How do you assess the value of your methodology and the methods you used?

The applied methodology consisted of a combination of literature review, architectural case studies, fieldwork in Amsterdam-Noord, and interviews with residents. This triangulated approach generated valuable insights, both socially and spatially. Case studies were explored at various scales – from building to city to interior – providing a wide architectural vocabulary. Interviews offered insight into how users experience thresholds, while visual analysis methods, such as axonometric drawings and mappings, helped translate theoretical ideas into spatial strategies.

At the same time, the methodology had limitations. The interview group was relatively small and not fully representative in terms of diversity, which affected the breadth of the conclusions. Fieldwork was conducted over a limited period, making it difficult to observe long-term or seasonal use patterns. Furthermore, the research remained largely qualitative. Complementary methods – such as behavioral observation or time-based analysis – could have enriched the findings. Nonetheless, these limitations provided valuable learning experiences that I will carry forward in future design and research projects.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope, and implications of your project, including ethical aspects?

The debate on open urban space – often referred to as porous space – has become increasingly relevant in recent years. As gentrification increases in major cities, urban environments are becoming more homogeneous, often at the expense of inclusivity and diversity. This trend has been critiqued in several ways, for example in the recently published manifesto Interspheres by Studioninedots and René Boer's book Smooth City, both of which highlight the consequences of this shift. However, this line of critique is not new. Thinkers like Jane Jacobs, Michel Foucault, and Herbert Marcuse have long questioned how capitalist and controlling systems shape our cities. What is more recent is the exploration of spatial alternatives. Porous spaces – often linked to the concept of threshold spaces – are now proposed as a way to make cities more open, diverse, and adaptable.

Still, designing such spaces remains abstract in practice. Many theoretical proposals lack direct spatial translation. This research into threshold spaces aims to bridge that gap by translating abstract ideas into actionable spatial strategies and architectural principles. While the notion of thresholds in architecture is not new, this project seeks a renewed approach in which not just the form, but also the intent and contextual role of space are considered essential. Rather than simply asking what a threshold space looks like, the project explores what role it can play within urban redevelopment. Especially in newly developed or repurposed buildings, the way unprogrammed, ambiguous spaces are designed determines their potential for social interaction and appropriation.

From an ethical standpoint, the project raises an important question: can architectural elements meaningfully foster inclusivity? And where is the line between a space that is too 'complete' – overly controlled – and one so empty that nothing takes place? The project does not claim to offer definitive answers. Human behavior is complex and unpredictable, and space cannot be fully controlled. What this project does offer is a spatial test case – a practical exploration of whether threshold spa-

ces can indeed contribute to a more inclusive and heterogeneous city.

5. How do you assess the transferability of your project results?

The outcomes of this project are potentially transferable to similar contexts: community centers, social hubs, or public spaces in transition. The developed threshold toolbox includes practical design principles – such as architectural elements, layered transitions, and strategies for embedding collective memory – that can be applied elsewhere.

At the same time, the project is deeply rooted in the specific socio-political conditions of Amsterdam-Noord. What is most transferable is not the form or layout of the design itself, but rather the design attitude: a critically pragmatic approach that integrates theory, social analysis, and spatial experimentation.

6. To what extent can the design of threshold spaces contribute to preserving collective memory in transforming neighborhoods?

This project uses threshold spaces as locations where collective memory can be embedded, not through monumentality, but through rhythm, use, and spatial familiarity. Sightlines, places to sit, and transitions that reference previous uses or users allow the space to be continuously reinterpreted rather than forgotten. The project builds on the work of Stavrides, who argues that rhythmic interruptions and shared routines serve as the foundation for collective meaning-making.

7. How can architecture avoid unintentionally contributing to the very processes (like gentrification) it critiques?

This project acknowledges the tension between architectural ideals and urban reality. Even socially motivated designs can be absorbed into systems driven by economic interests. Therefore, the design applies deliberate strategies to foster openness and inclusion. These include programmatic flexibility – allowing functions to shift over time – and spatial roughness, leaving certain areas intentionally unfinished to encourage user appropriation. Input from users was also actively sought; interviews with residents and stakeholders informed key design decisions.

Nonetheless, the issue remains complex. Architecture always operates within larger systems of policy, economics, and regulation, limiting its autonomy. This project does not present a definitive solution but offers a critical spatial stance – a small but intentional act of resistance within those larger structures.





Reflection

As part of the studio, we began by reading various books to inspire and shape our graduation trajectory. One of the books I chose to read was “Smooth City” by René Boer. At first, I found it challenging to translate the theory from this literature into concrete examples and methods for investigating the topic. The concept of porous spaces remained quite abstract for me up until P1. I felt like I understood it, but because it is such a broad and interpretive concept, I found it difficult to explain it clearly. As I delved deeper into the theory, I gradually gained more clarity on the subject. What helped was translating the idea of porosity into the more architectural concept of threshold spaces. This made my research more concrete, easier to explain, and more applicable to the design phase. It took some time—even after P1—before I was truly able to articulate it clearly. Throughout the process, I often felt that I understood certain aspects well, yet had difficulty explaining them clearly to mentors or stakeholders. I actively worked on improving this—a skill I consider essential for my development as an architect: being able to clearly communicate ideas, concepts, and designs in a way that others can understand.

Once I made this translation, my research plan also became clearer, and I was able to proceed more purposefully. I found it important to develop a broad theoretical framework—not only to understand the context but also to justify the relevance of the topic. In addition, I wanted to apply various research methods to draw more substantiated conclusions. This approach worked well for me and formed a strong foundation for applying research by design, including the use of models, which eventually contributes to the chosen design strategies.

I have always greatly enjoyed working on this topic and have tried to follow my own path within it. One of my first professors at TU Delft gave me the valuable advice to surround myself with people who inspire me, and I’ve taken that to heart. I reached out to several professionals in the field about topics relevant to my graduation project, and I truly enjoyed the conversations, site visits, and insights that came out of those interactions. I especially learned a lot during the research phase, thanks in part to the feedback from my research mentor. Since I don’t come from a strong academic background, I sometimes felt uncertain about whether I was applying the right structure. The feedback I received helped me, and I tried to incorporate it in my own way—for instance, by quantifying interview data through highlighting recurring terms.

Shortly before P3, I made the decision to switch design mentors. The feedback I had been receiving felt often directive, negative, unsafe, or lacking in content. Despite multiple requests, I received very little constructive feedback on my design even after P2. In hindsight, switching mentors was the right decision, although it was a stressful period. Speaking up about my experience and the consequences—such as the story circulating and other students approaching me about it— had a significant impact. In hindsight, I would have preferred not to speak out and instead switch mentors anonymously. While other students in the studio with similar experiences chose to (temporarily) pause their graduation process and thus had the time and space to recover, I decided to continue. As a result, I missed a period of recovery, which has affected—and continues to affect—the progress and overall quality of my graduation project

Fortunately, the guidance from my new mentor provided direction again. The feedback offered concrete tools to bring my project to a decent level. I had to work hard to catch up, but I still managed to learn a lot during this phase—especially regarding the urban integration of the project and the qualities already present in the design, such as materiality, transitions, and scale.

To properly finalize the project, I would like to create models and visualizations that show how the open spaces function and how the building can be used in various ways. With this, I hope to demonstrate both the flexibility and the spatial qualities that the design offers to different user groups.

Hoe kunnen wij het weten
Als langzaam verdringen
Niet tot onze grenzen behoort
Hoe kunnen wij het vertellen
Als de bruggen die we proberen te bouwen
Niet worden gehoord

Hoe kunnen wij het begrijpen
Als onze ogen focussen op
dat wat wij niet anders kennen
Hoe kunnen wij het zien
Als het verschil net zo zichtbaar is als twee druppels water
Dan valt er niets te ontwennen
Want wij kennen
De eensgezindheid
Van de bubbel die als een dun vlies
Niet open, vast en precies
De eensgezindheid boven alles verkiest

Hoe kunnen wij leren
Om ons te verhouden
de ander te onthouden
Waar de wortels lagen en die verdragen
Hoe kunnen wij omarmen
Het proces van verschuiven
‘een ongepolijst stukje Amsterdam’

Is net zo waar als dat gentrificatie
niet gebeurd
En de plekken
Van der Pek
Mosveld
Waddeweg
Noorderpark
Meeuwenlaan
Niet verder kleurt

Hoe kunnen wij zorgen
Als dat wat ons vertelt wordt
In kleine puzzelstukjes instort
Hoe kunnen wij lijmen
Om de canta en de bakfiets
Niet verder te verdrijven
En om te omschrijven
Wat soms al onomkeerbaar is
Amsterdam-noord
Wordt geen stukje erfenis

Verhoud je,
Als je massih hutak vraagt
Zou de oplossing kunnen zijn in een
woord
Maar op welke plekken verhouden
we ons
Als de straat, de pleinen en de ge-
bouwen
Onze bubbel niet verder verstoort?

Appendix

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Not so physical tresholds

Nina (29) new resident in Amsterdam North, Volewijck
For me it would be a barrier if the community center is very specific to one target group. For example, there's a church around the corner from where I live. There is a big staircase and a lot of distance from the road. With that, I can't see what's going on inside. At the supermarket around the corner there is also a lot for one community but still I feel welcome there because I like and want to buy the same things.

Sabine (27) new resident Amsterdam Noord, van der Pek
Well I would go there especially if there is good coffee. I really enjoy reading a book in the sun with a cup of coffee? So maybe something like a bookcase or something and a coffee corner? Doesn't all have to be very aesthetic, I often sit at the Ceuvel too, or is that gentrified too? And I would emphasize a lot of windows! I really want to see whats happening inside.

Lonneke (36) resident of Amsterdam North, Tuindorp Oostzaan
My wife and I just had a newborn daughter. I think we would love to have a playground near the community center. And also a place where we could eat or drink coffee. Also to meet other parents. We also often come to the solar house so programming is also important for us. We would find it boring or have nothing to do ourselves if it is very focused on sports, for example.

Omar (17), resident of Amsterdam North, buikslotermeerplein
I would find it chill if there was a pool table inside. And that I can see what's happening inside. Wouldn't actually go there if there are old people sitting there. Also a spot outside or something where I can meet up with my friends. Modern look, not that old mess.

Ankie (63) resident Amsterdam north, the Breed.
Actually I always go to another community center, in Oud West. But the fashion street is nice too. Especially many creative things we can do. And I can easily go in there with my scooter. We do a lot of crafts or can sew clothes. I don't have anything with all those expensive coffee joints, just nice cheap food! And cheap coffee. Then I have something to do there.

Hasan (45) resident in amsterdam north, buikslotermeerplein
For me it would be a barrier if it looks closed. It would help if I can see what's happening inside. Just like that the entrance is clearly visible. I would like it if I see similar people sitting there. I would like to be able to discuss something or that there is a place where my sons could play sports.

Jochem (32) new resident in Amsterdam, Volewijck
Psychologically terrifying to enter a community center, what would be threshold lowering is if I have something to look for there. For example, once a week there

is klaverjassen at our community center. I did go to that once. Otherwise I would never dare to go there.

Roos (30) new resident in amsterdam noord, Volewijck
I agree, but even for a game of table tennis I wouldn't dare to go in there. I just don't really understand what goes on there. I have the idea that it's only for people with social problems. Kind of crazy people. I don't feel addressed by that. So I wouldn't actually go in there that quickly.

Leila (25), new resident Amsterdam north van der Pek neighborhood
I personally don't have much of a problem with that, but when I think of thresholds, it's quickly the "standard" thresholds like loitering, feeling unsafe, or not feeling welcome because the crowd inside looks different from yourself. If a venue is stuffy, I'd also be less likely to go there, same with a lack of windows so you can't take a peek inside beforehand. And generally speaking, there has to be a reason to want to go in somewhere. I would also never walk into our common living room of my neighborhood if there is no event e.g.. But for me, ultimately, the feeling of safety plays more of a role than the feeling of inconvenience. For a moment, I think the "lots of windows" is one I want to highlight as well. Even if something is on the ground floor, much better than e.g. on a second floor. Or that in a building you still have to search all the way.

Kees (55), resident Amsterdam north, Tutti Frutti village
I work hard and am not a talker, so I don't know if I will fit in among all the activities they organize there. What also holds me back is that the building looks modern and sterile from the outside, with few recognizable elements that appeal to me. It sometimes looks more like an office than a place you can cozy up in. If it felt more like a traditional neighborhood pub, with wooden details, an approachable entrance and an open feel, I'd be more likely to go."

Truus (72), resident Amsterdam north, 't small world
"I do like the neighborhood bingo, but sometimes I still feel a little uncomfortable going to the community center. If I see a lot of young people or unknown people hanging around at the entrance, I hesitate to go in. I'm afraid I won't feel comfortable or that it's not for "people like me. The building also feels a bit cold and modern; it doesn't remind me of the cozy atmosphere of the past. A warmer look, like benches outside or flowers at the entrance, would make it less intimidating for someone like me."

Aylin (14), resident Amsterdam north, the Breed
I'm afraid that there won't be anyone I know or that people will think I'm weird if I just come in. I feel like I don't know exactly what to do or say, and I'm afraid I won't really feel out of place. The large, closed door with no windows makes it extra awkward, because I can't look inside to see who's there. If it were more open and inviting, such as with glass doors or an inviting entrance, I might feel less insecure.

Sophie (28), New resident Amsterdam North, Vogelbuurt neighborhood
Hmm what do you mean by a community center, I guess I'm not that familiar with the concept. Oh where people get together? Ah yes so I guess it's not really something for me to go there anyway because I simply don't have a need for it. But what wouldn't attract me is if the building looks dirty. It should be open and clean and I should get a picture of what is going on inside. In my old neighborhood, I sometimes went to a public library with a coffee shop to work on my phd there. That might have worked as a community center, too?

Yvette (40), new resident Amsterdam North, Tuindorp Oostzaan
I want to be able to see what is happening inside. I would also like it if I can see in advance on the site what kind of a program there is so I also have a reason to go in. Many community centers are dark and drab anyway, I don't understand that very well. It's much more appealing when it's warm and bright, isn't it? So I say lots of windows too!!! No closed rooms. And especially the common area should be open and visible.

Gijs (36), resident Amsterdam North, Van der pek
I would find it a barrier if I don't see my own community sitting there. So it would help or that if I see my own kind of people sitting there or if there would be a diverse group of people there. Also it would be a barrier if the building looks dirty and old. So a modern look would be attractive to me.

Hanneke (50), resident Amsterdam North, nieuwendam
I'm not really attracted to community centers anyway, I would do fine volunteer work but I don't have much of a need to be there myself. Usually community centers look drab and closed. And dusty. It would be more attractive to me if there is a little garden in front of it, lots of flower pots, and a possibility to sit? And so if it looks new and clean!

Julia (32), New resident Amsterdam North, Ijplein
It will be a barrier for me because I don't think I will fit in or belong there. Thinking about that, I don't really know exactly what kind of people go to a community center, so what to imagine. Physically for me it will be the effort to go somewhere without having idea what you will go there for, so it would help if I have a purpose to go there or a good reason.

Fouad (28), resident Amsterdam North, The Breed
I wouldn't go inside if it looks old and cold. It is so cold lately, and I am a warmblooded person you know. So it would be more appealing if it looks cozy and warm. And what would help is if there are public sitting areas, or sitting areas that we're always allowed to go to. I think if there are a lot of people sitting in front of the community center more people would feel welcome.

Marcella (37) new resident Amsterdam North, Tutti Frutti village,
For me, it would be a barrier if it doesn't look open and clean. It would be nice if

I can see what's going on inside. I work as a creative freelancer so I like to work outside somewhere. So a public workplace that also serves good coffee would be very appealing to me. What also adds to the look of the building is if there are cozy things at the entrance. Flower pots, a bench and maybe a good hanging sign with what is happening inside.

Jeremy (19), resident Amsterdam North, buikslotermeerplein
I wouldn't just walk into a community center like that. What if it's only for little kids or old people? That'd be kinda awkward, right? Plus, pulling up alone and not knowing anyone would feel off. If the place looks boring or too stiff, I'm out. And honestly, I don't wanna get weird looks from people there-nobody likes feeling judged. On top of that, if I don't even know what's going on or what they've got to offer, I'm not gonna bother wasting my time checking it out.

Henk (50), resident Amsterdam North, waterlandplein
"Honestly, I don't know if I'd just walk into a community center. Being in my mobility scooter, I'd immediately wonder if I can even get in easily-are there ramps, and is there enough space to move around? Then there's the question of whether I'd feel welcome. Sometimes you get the sense people are looking at you differently, you know? That's not a nice feeling. I'd also think about whether there's anything for me to do. If it's mostly for younger people, why would I bother?

Fatima (21), resident Amsterdam North, buikslotermeerplein
"I'm not sure if I'd feel comfortable walking into a community center. If the building looks old or dull, it might feel uninviting, like it's not really a place for someone my age. I'd also wonder who's inside-are there people like me, or is it just older people or kids? If the entrance doesn't feel welcoming, like if it's dark or hard to spot, I might not even know if I should go in. And if I don't know what's happening inside or if it's worth my time, I'd probably just keep walking. It needs to feel open and easy to approach."

Marcella Heijink
4968735

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Mentors:
Lidy Meijers
Anèt Meijer
Lidwine Spoormans

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