

Site Plan: From Repelling to Attracting

The Dwellers of Väikesse Rannavärava

Abstract

The Dwellers of Väikesse Rannavärava proposes a new kind of urban ecosystem within Tallinn's Old Town—one that promotes coexistence among diverse groups by creating a system of shared resources and unique contributions. The project offers what is currently missing in the area: a cohesive, resilient neighbourhood. Through the adaptive transformation of the Väikesse Rannavärava Bastion, this intervention integrates everyday life with privatized activities, revitalizing both the space and its community.

Site and Historical Context

The Väikesse Rannavärava Bastion, while perceived as a 19th century heritage, was in fact rebuilt in 1986. Originally reconstructed for the Housing and Utilities Department, it later hosted the Tallinn Sports and Recreation Board, then the current Braavo Spa Hotel. Over time, the site became visually and functionally fragmented—its courtyard overtaken by parking leading to an ignored spatial potential. This project challenges that condition, recognizing the Bastion's significance as both a symbolic and physical threshold between the Old Town and the expanding city beyond.

Urban Systems and Flexibility

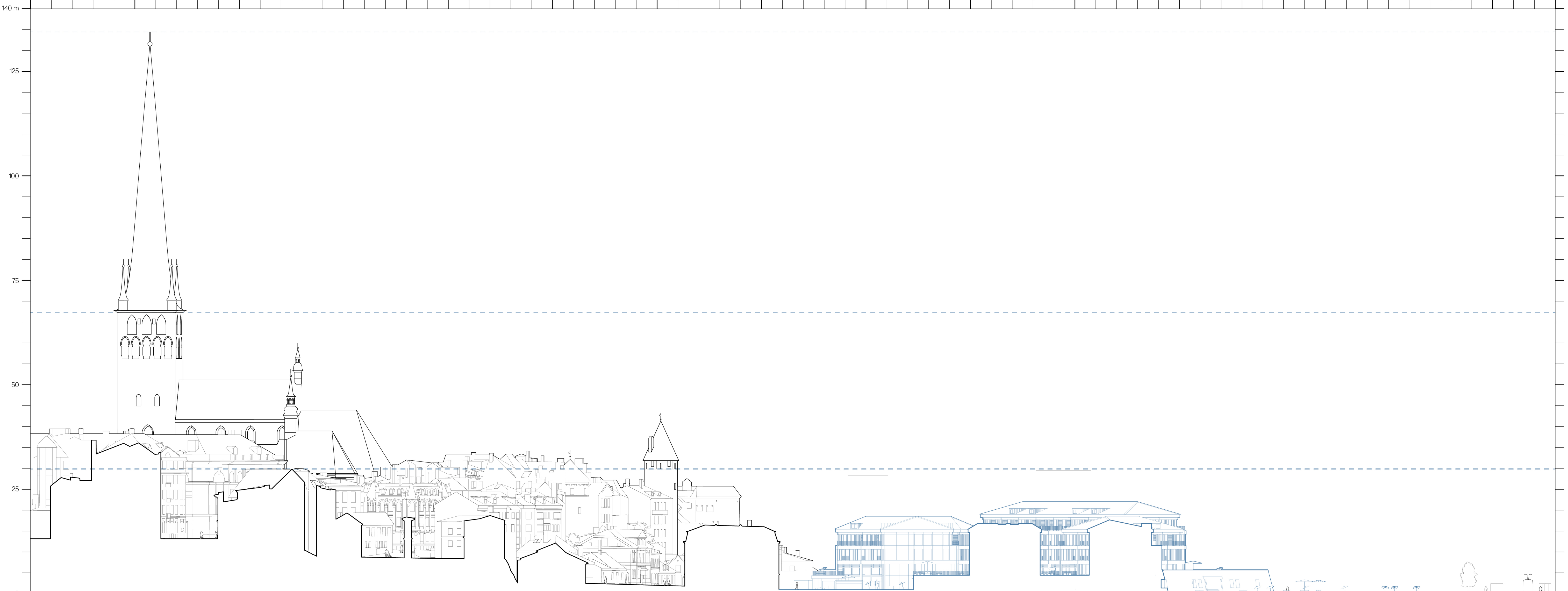
One of the core challenges was reconciling different scales and materialities surrounding the site. The Bastion itself has a peculiar geometry and material language, while the surrounding urban tissue ranges from fine-grain heritage to infrastructural voids. This tension was addressed through spatial strategies: framing views, articulating entrances, layering depth, and activating edges.

Academic and Societal Values

This design is a proposal for what is crucially lacking in Tallinn Old Town: a true neighbourhood. One that is socially inclusive and economically vibrant. While the site was selected based on a threshold analysis that revealed a clear physical and symbolic separation from the Old Town, the design response—puncturing the site into smaller, human-scaled elements and the creation of a public square respond directly to this condition.

Much of my learning came through grappling with the question of how architecture can work across scales—not just buildings, but systems of use and occupation. Weeks of uncertainty and unproductive work revealed the limits of piecemeal problem-solving. Only by shifting toward a more systemic approach did the project begin to resolve itself.

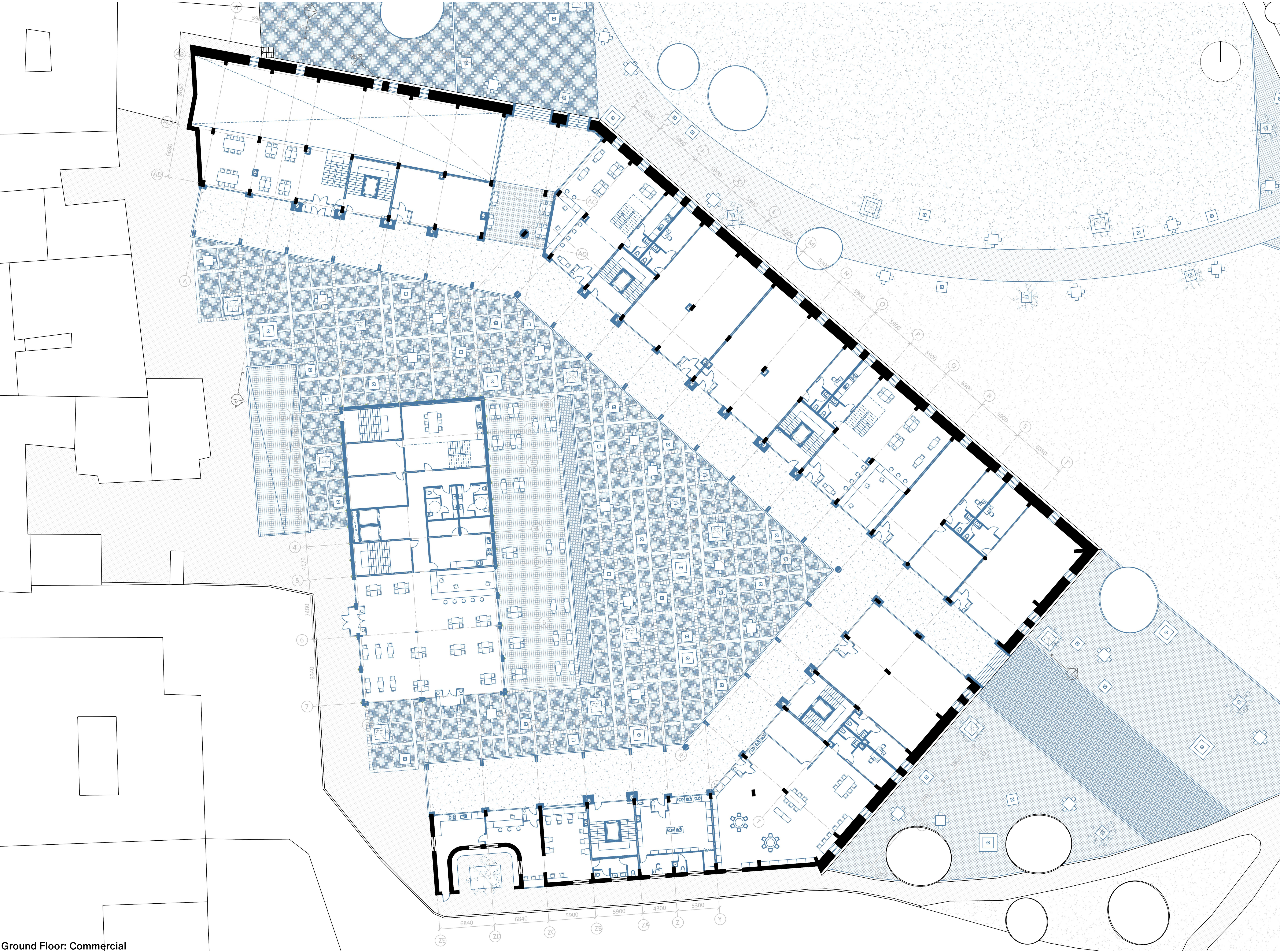
I also acknowledge the ongoing debate about preserving Tallinn's historical appearance. But, as Alatalu states, "today's creation is tomorrow's heritage." I believe that new interventions—if done with sensitivity, clarity, and care—can enrich heritage rather than diminish it. The Dwellers of Väikesse Rannavärava is my contribution to that evolving dialogue.



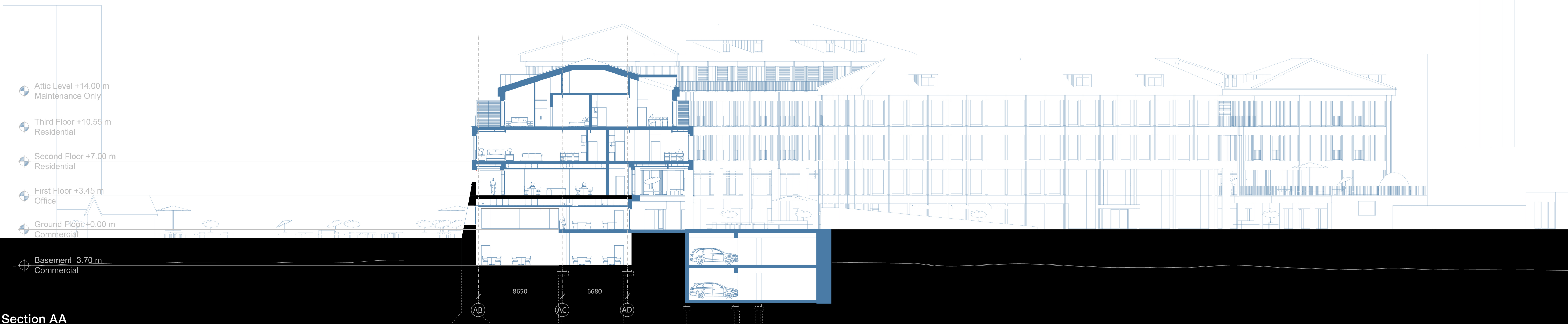
Urban Section: Becoming an Extension of Old Town and Start of New Developments



Framing the Old Town



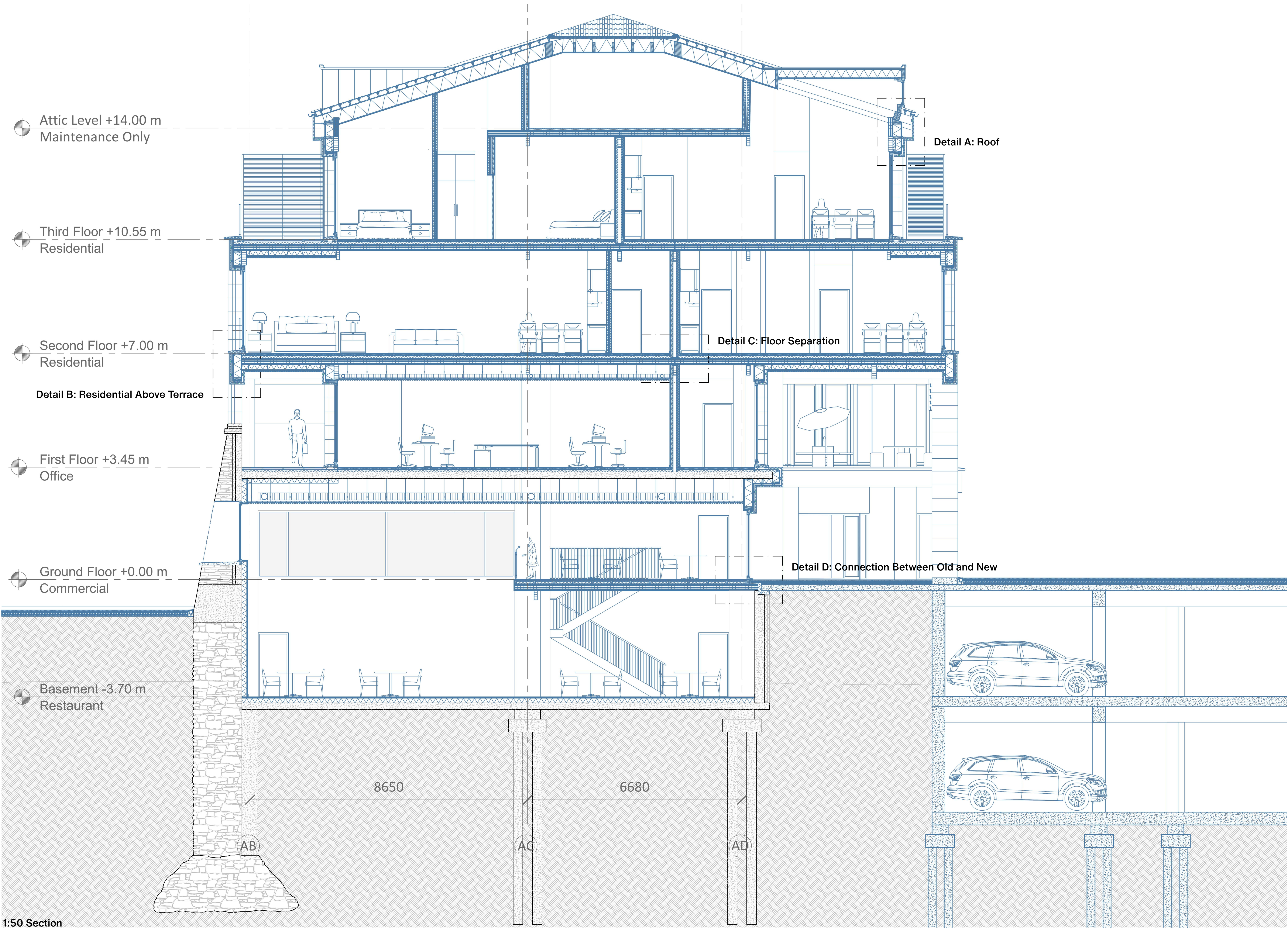
Ground Floor: Commercial



Section AA



Principle 03: Stimuli | Stimulating Environment Inside and Outside Attracting People to Stay



1:50 Section

