

THE INHABITED EDGES OF HOMS, SYRIA

How can locally grounded housing architecture support a renewed sense of belonging in post-conflict Homs through spatial configurations, façade components, materialisation?

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Extreme graduation studio

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what's happening?



A family outside its damaged home in suburb, Syria (New York Times, 2026) <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/19/world/europe/syria-aleppo-damascus-damage-reconstruction.html>

problem statement



Children looking at destroyed buildings in an Aleppo neighborhood. (Source <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/19/world/europe/syria-aleppo-damascus-damage-reconstruction.html>)

LOSS OF SENSE OF BELONGING

‘When we want to rebuild, we want to rebuild Homs by our hands, and based on our own architecture; not necessarily by adopting the traditional architectural style of Homs, but based on our traditions, and culture.’



<https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099102025095540101>

BUILDING MATERIALS

“ we want to expand the areas where we plant trees” - Ayham Abdul Qader, ministry of agriculture

bring it into context

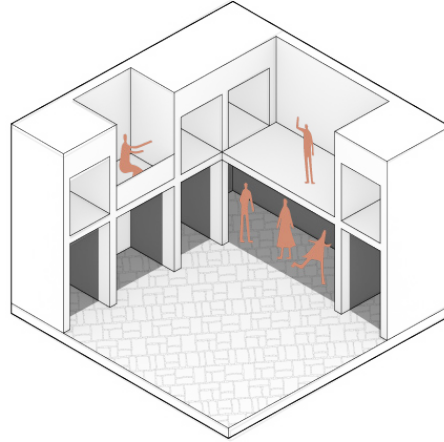
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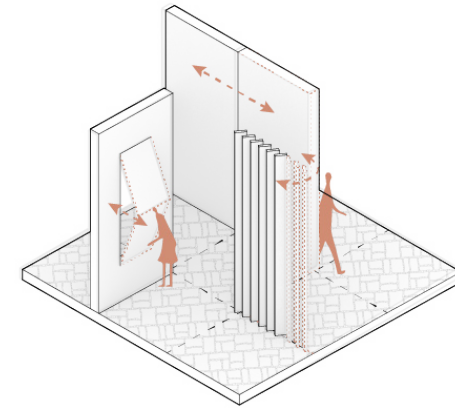


The spatial concept starts from a simple question: What happens if the courtyard is no longer a single element, but multiplied into a system? By repeating and connecting simplified courtyard volumes, a network emerges in which spaces are no longer defined as strictly public or private, but as part of a gradient of thresholds.

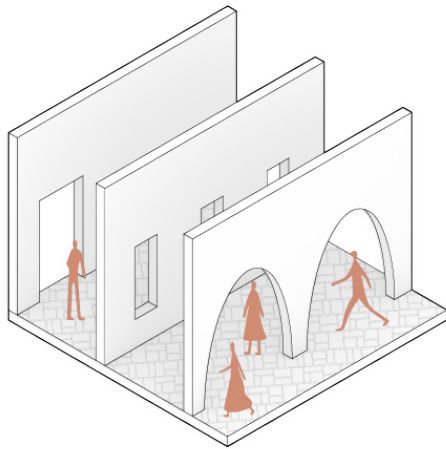
design principles



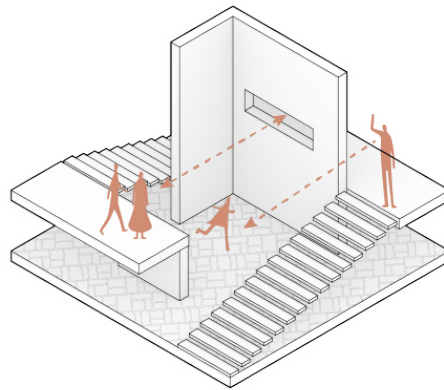
Facade as climatic and social tool



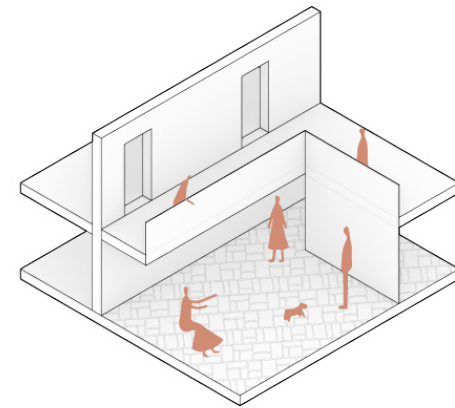
Privacy as something adjustable



Clear public – private gradient



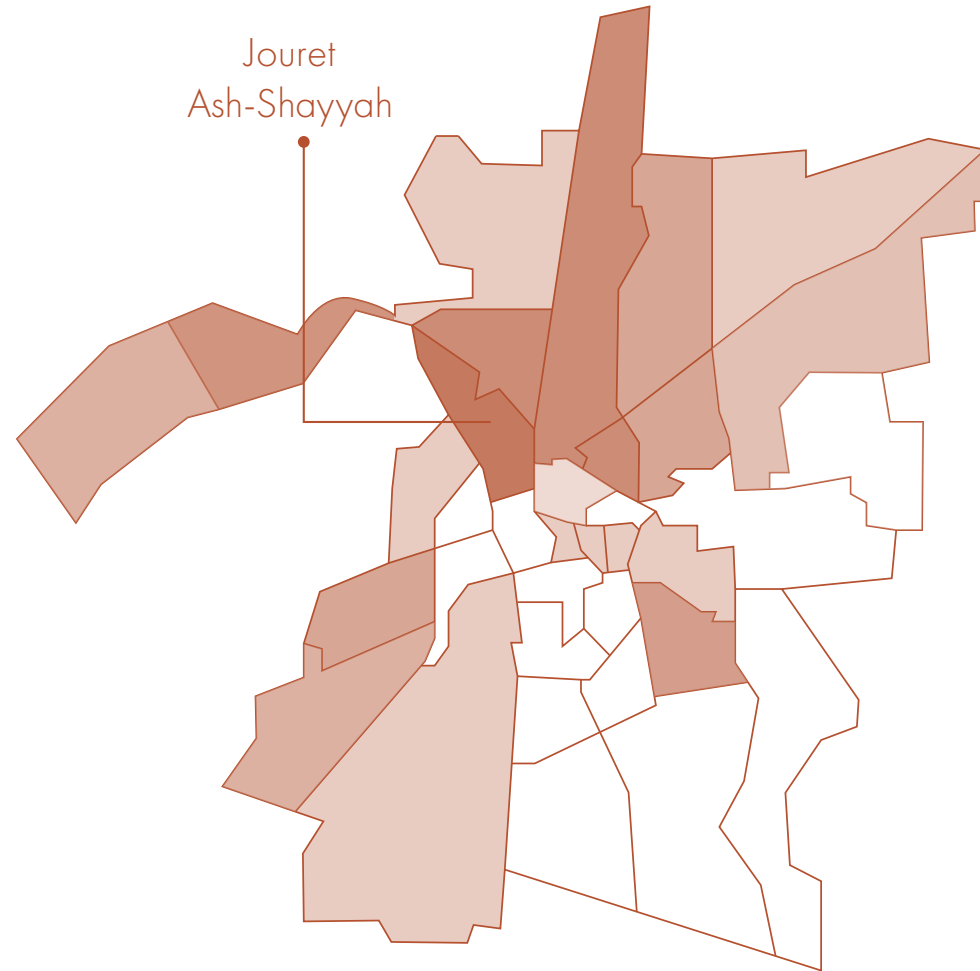
Support a structured co-presence and supervision



Create an inward-oriented shared outdoor room

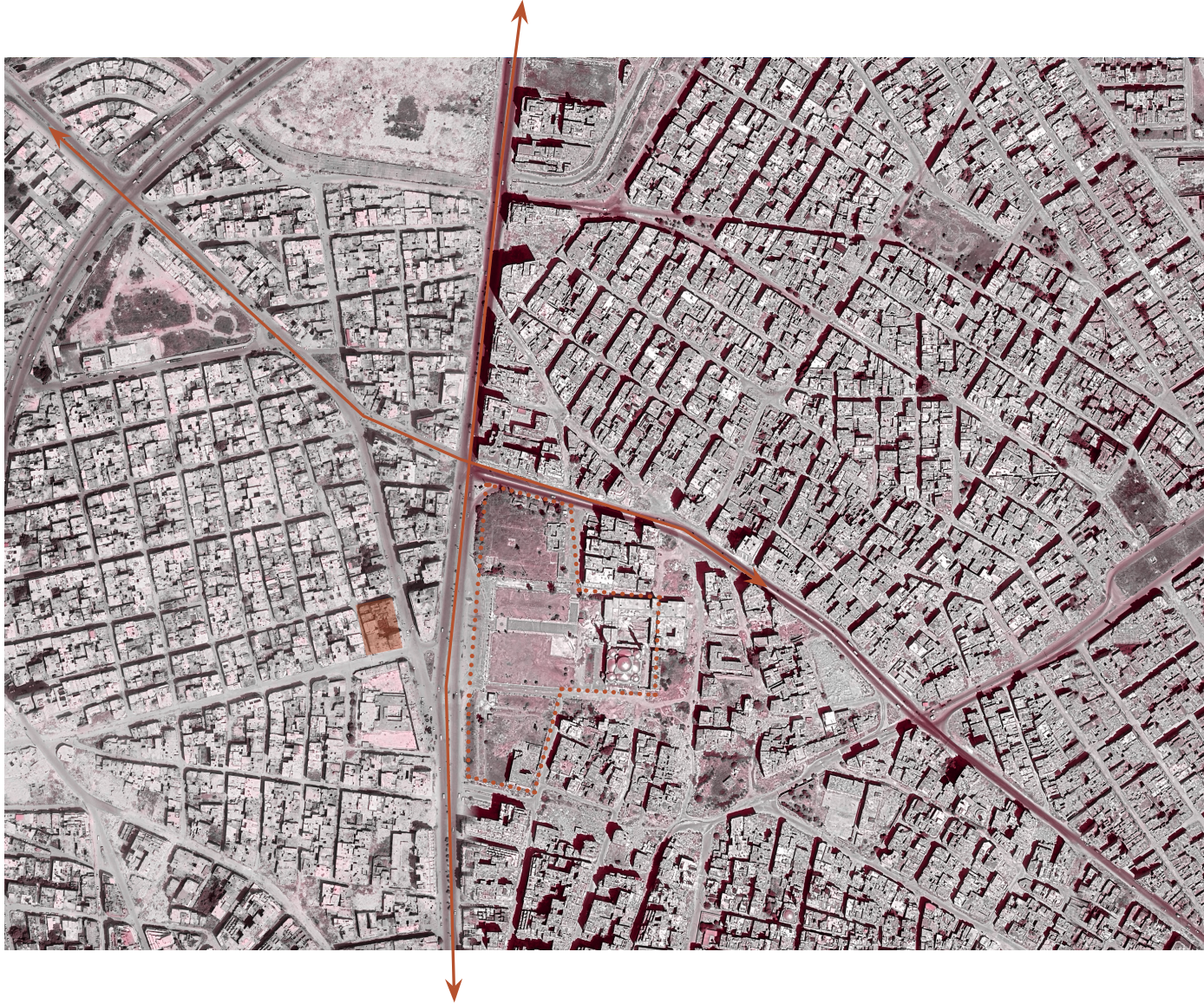
where?

site analysis



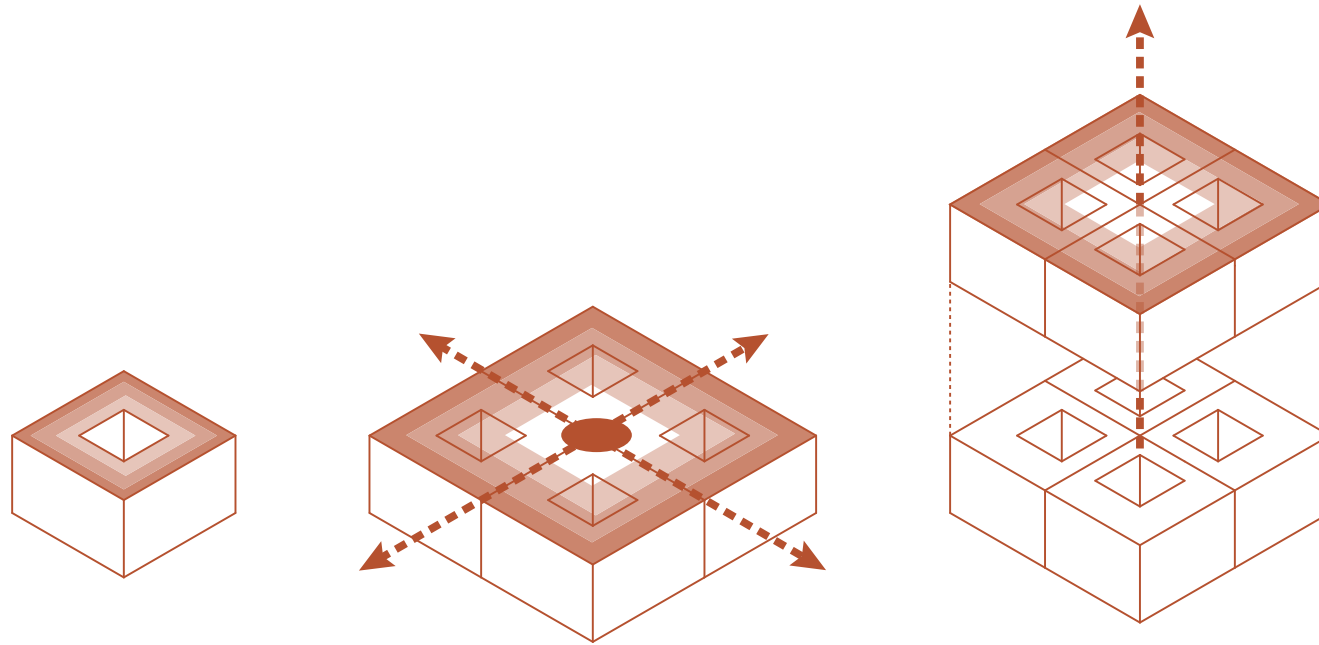
analysis

building plot



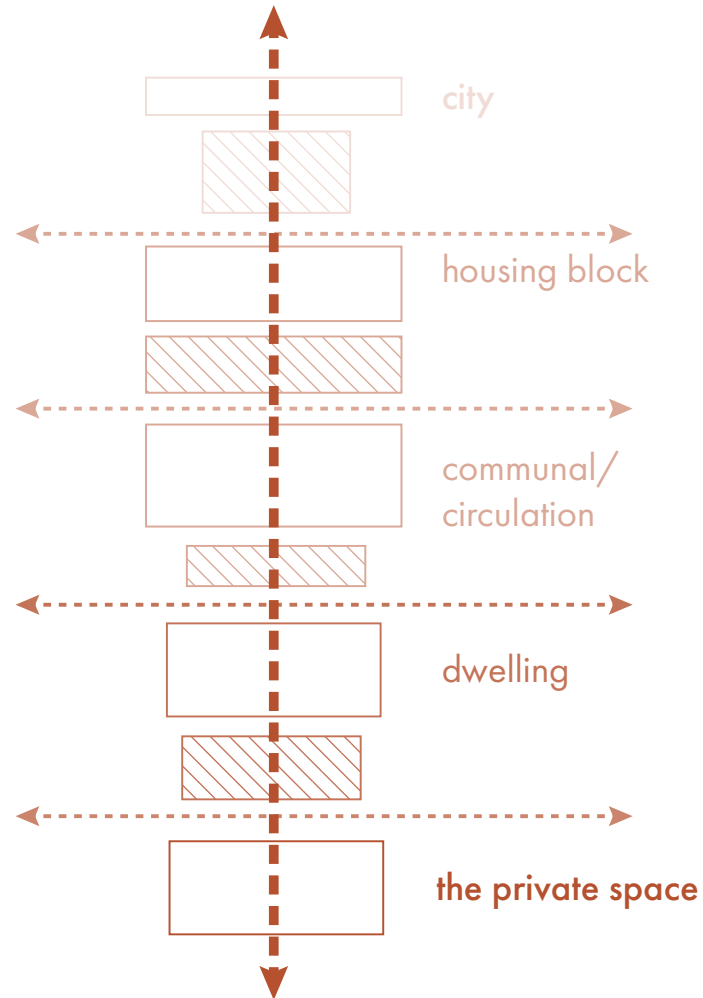
concept.

spatial layout

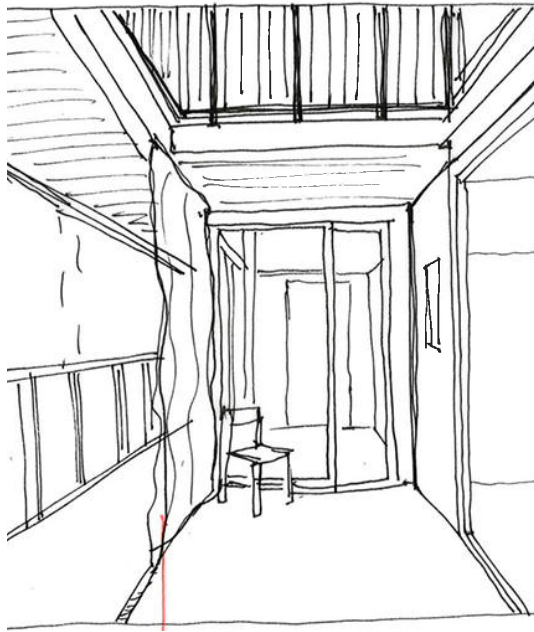


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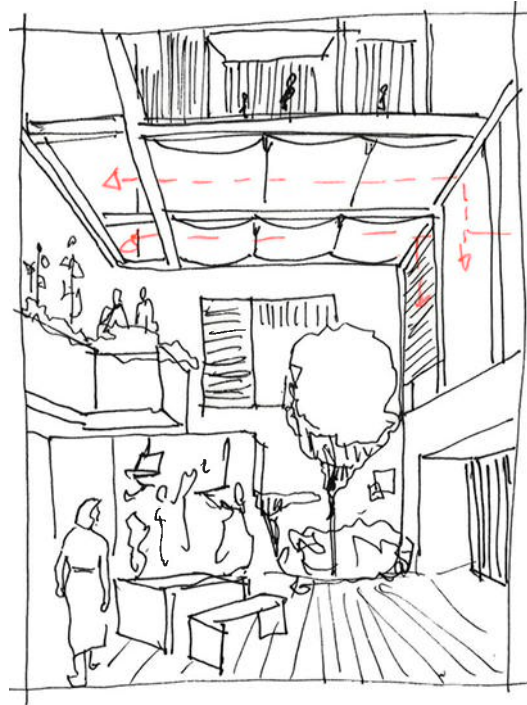
the concept of thresholds



atmospheres



Circulation. A wide gallery that refuses to be “just circulation”.

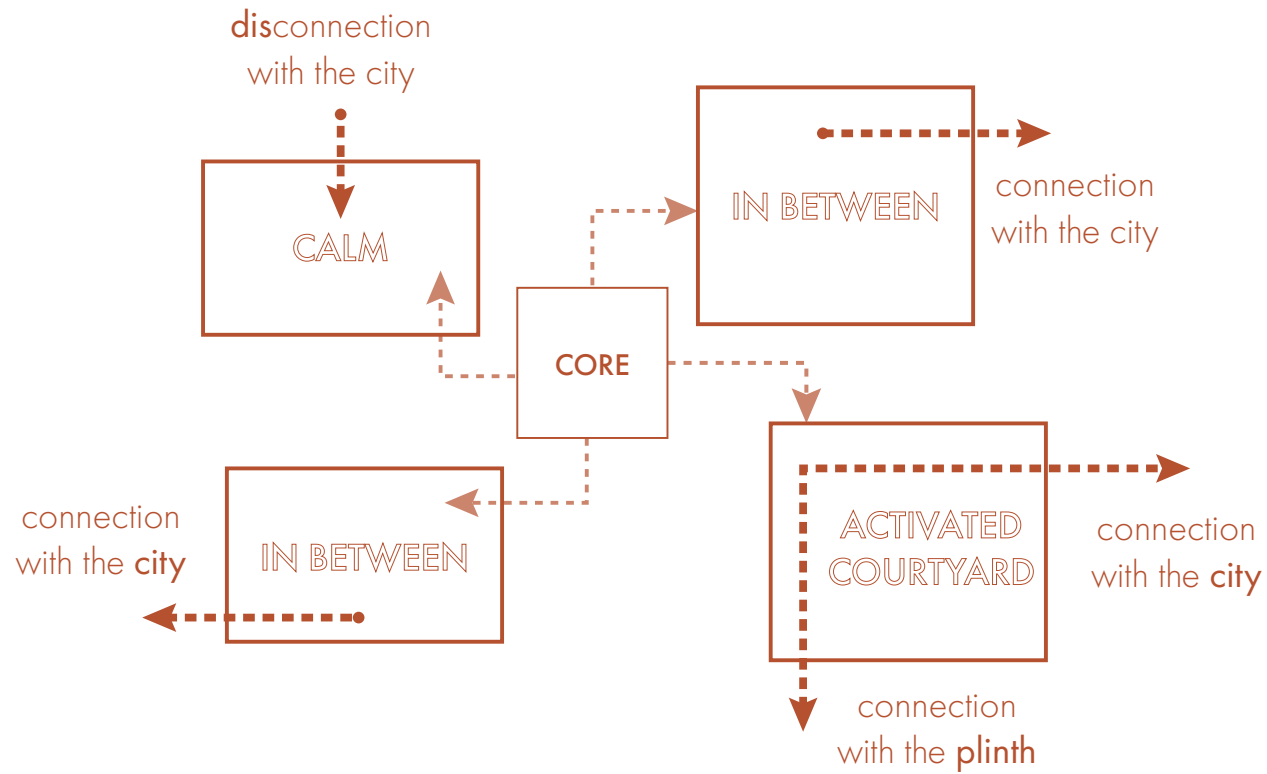


Buzzing. A bright, open courtyard buzzing with voices and clattering dishes, shaded by trees and lights on strings. It soaks up birthdays, shared meals and spontaneous game.



Soft. A smaller, sheltered pocket wrapped by planting and soft edges. Benches invite slow conversations, shared knitting, storybooks and naps.

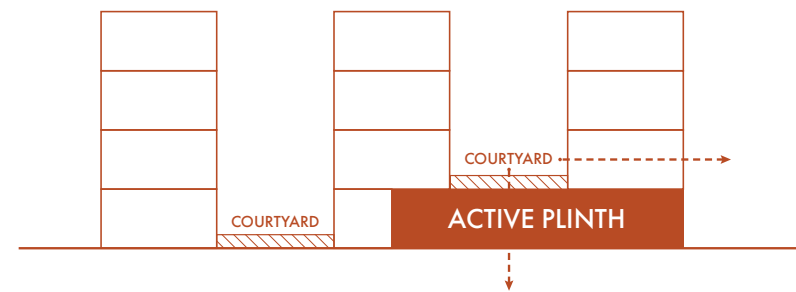
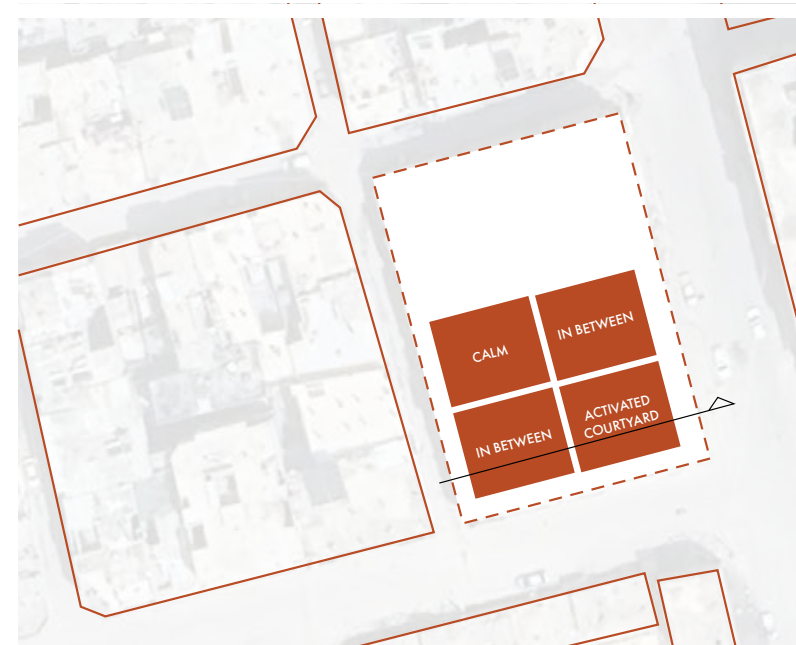
courtyards organisation



The spatial concept starts from a simple question: What happens if the courtyard is no longer a single element, but multiplied into a system? By repeating and connecting simplified courtyard volumes, a network emerges in which spaces are no longer defined as strictly public or private, but as part of a gradient of thresholds.

anchoring.

anchoring on site

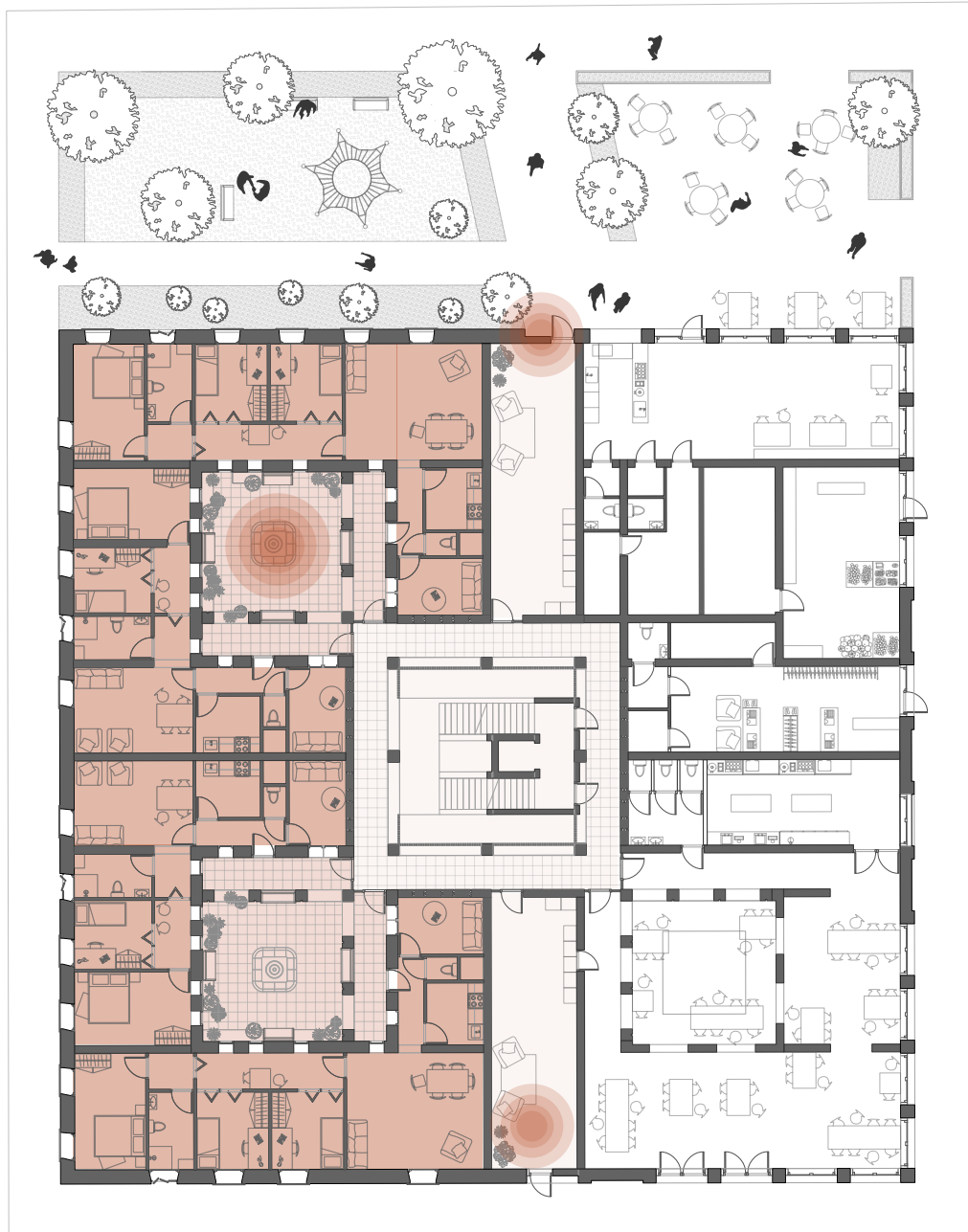
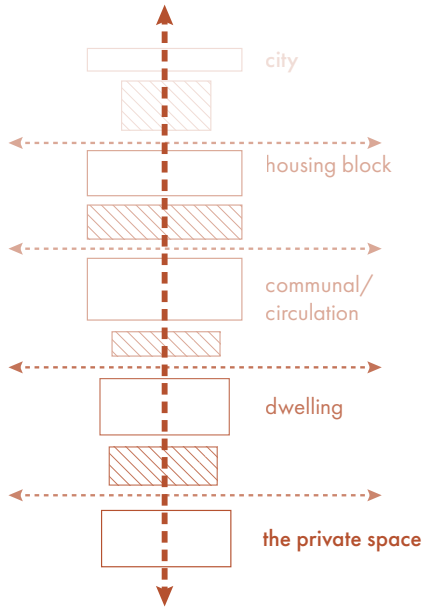


urban context

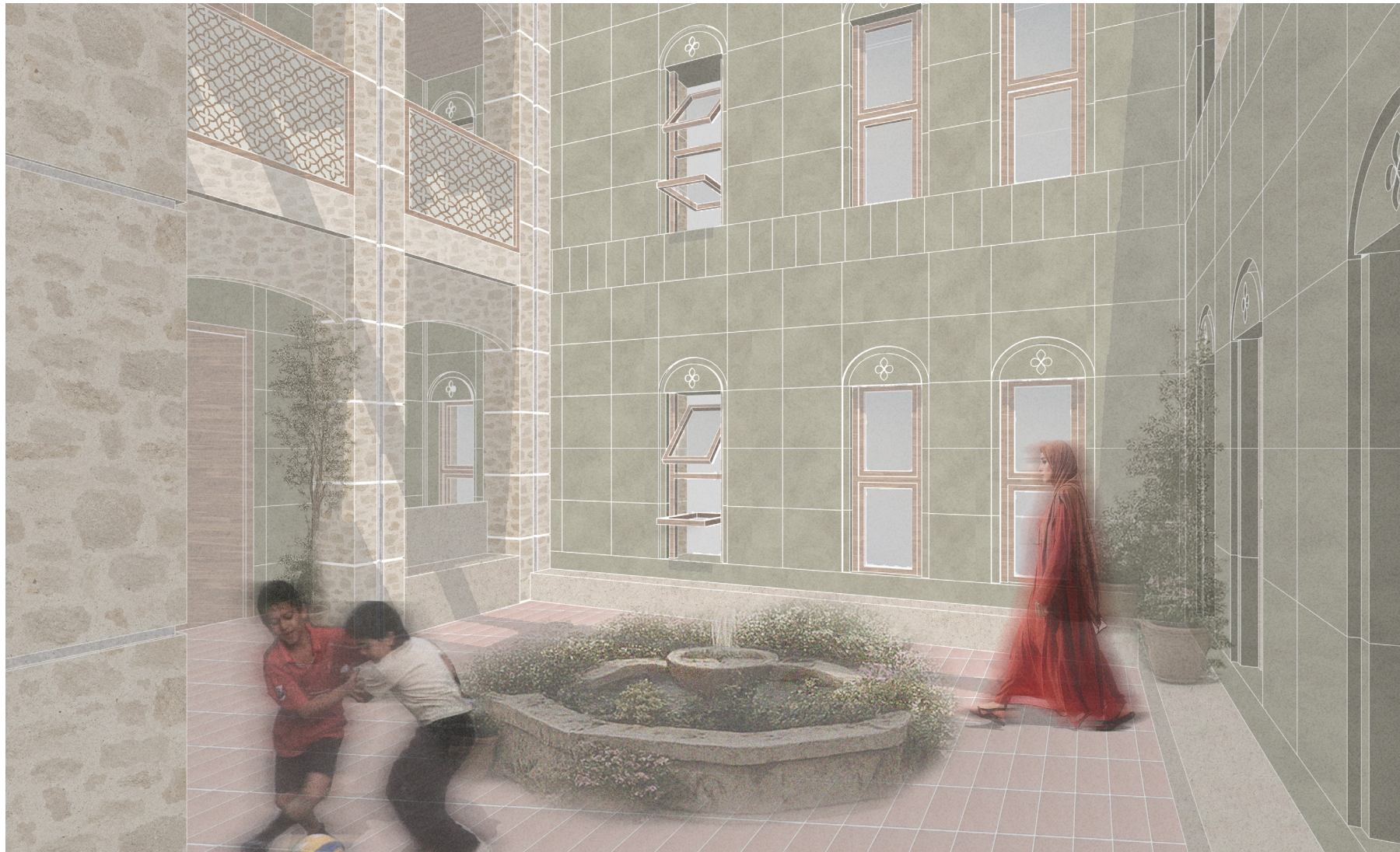


walk through.

entrance

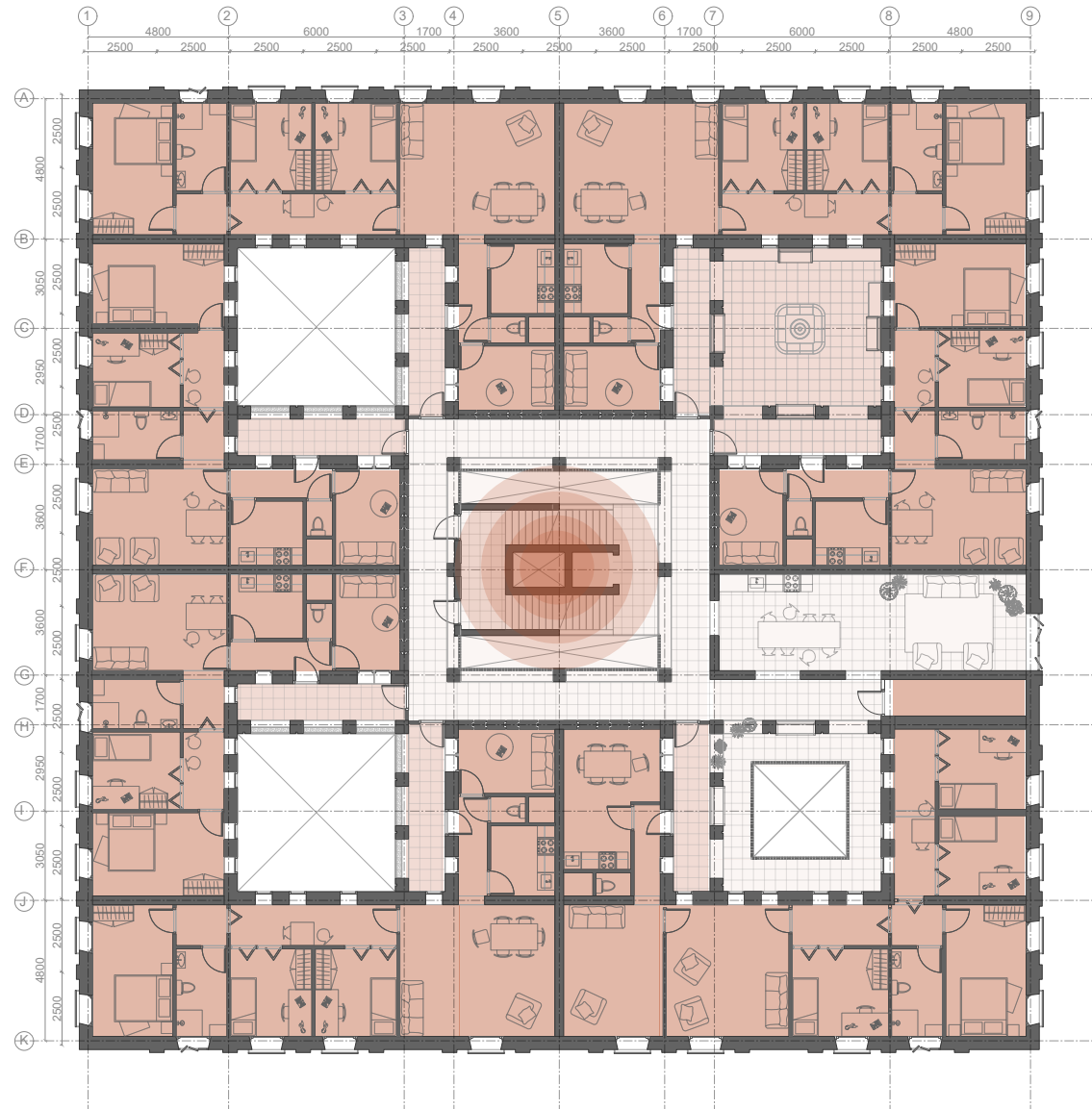


courtyard



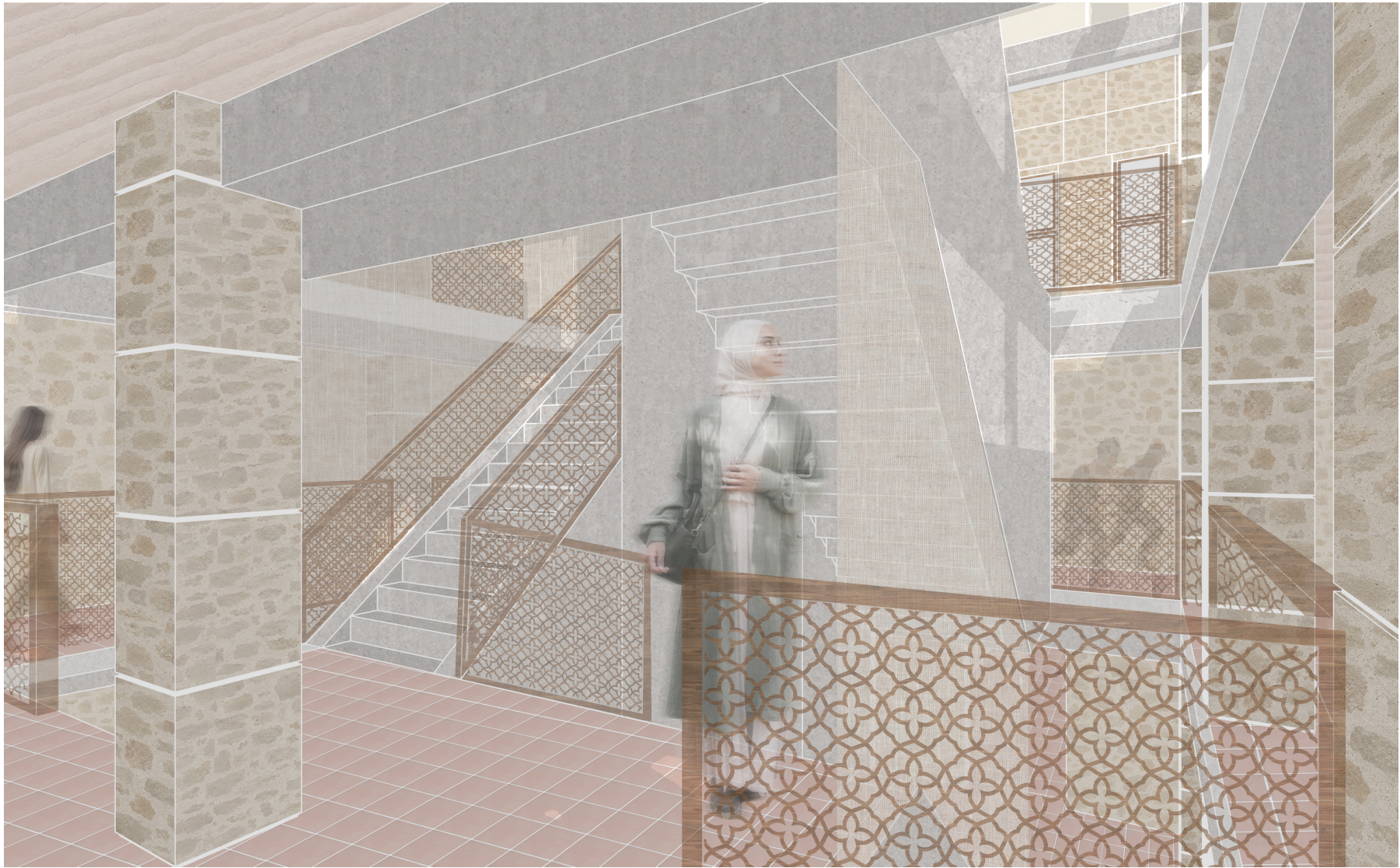
The courtyards are the social heart of the building. They are places where children can play, and neighbours can meet. At the same time, they are protected from the city, creating a comfortable and familiar atmosphere.

circulation



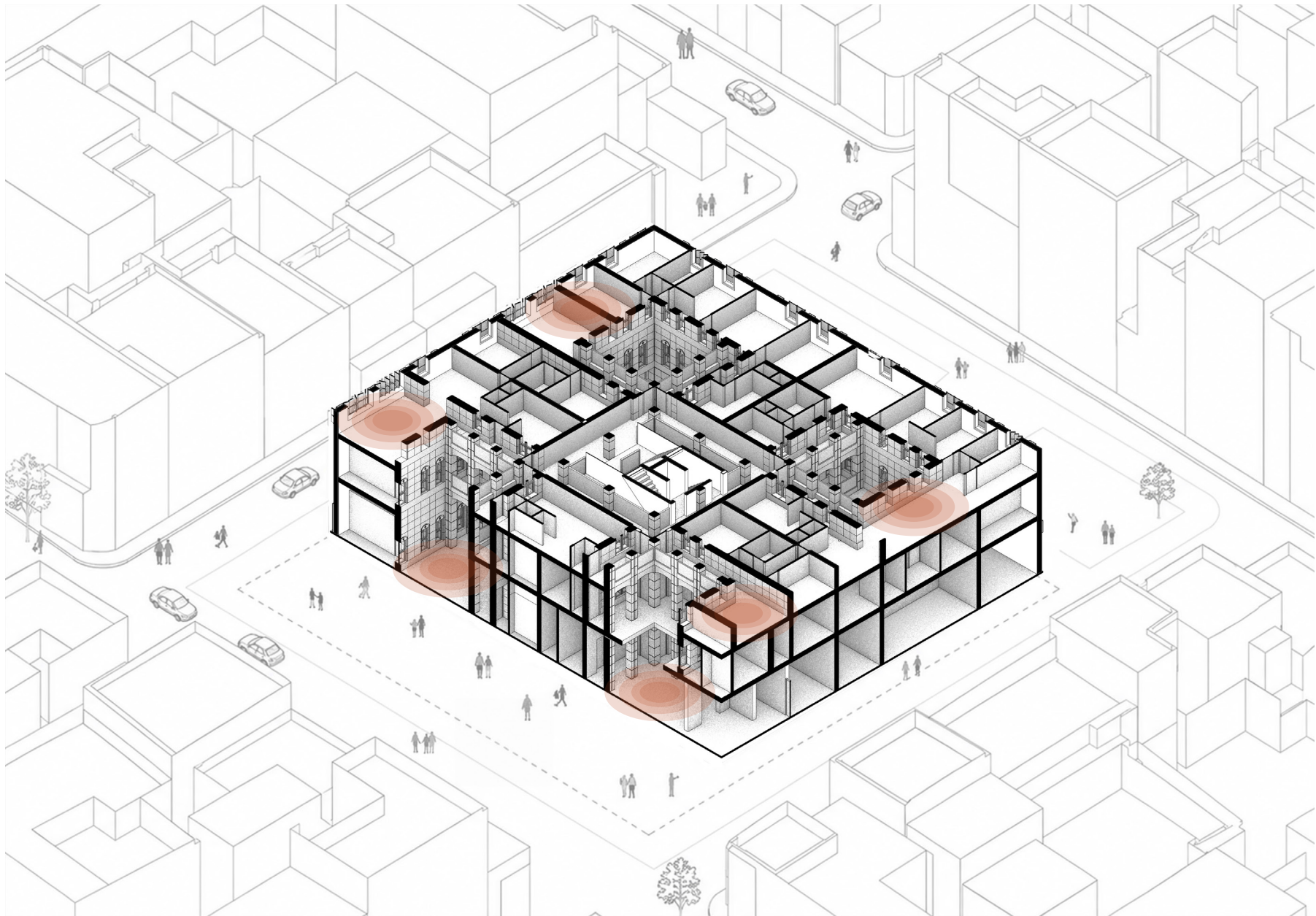
first floor

staircase

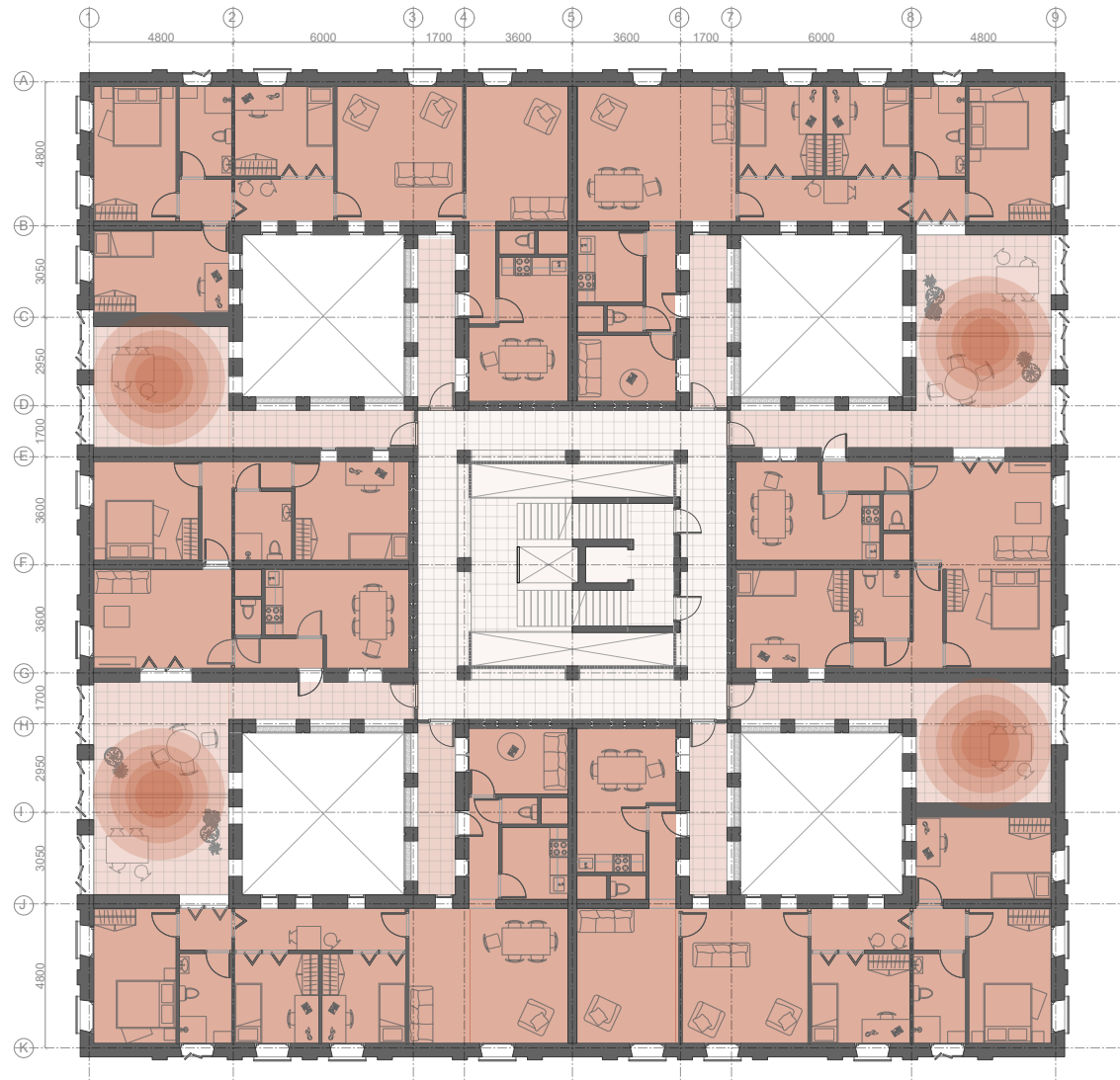


Rather than being only a functional circulation space, it becomes part of the spatial experience. Columns around the staircase and elevator create a pattern of open and closed views, making movement through the building feel gradual and comfortable.

outdoor spaces



private patios



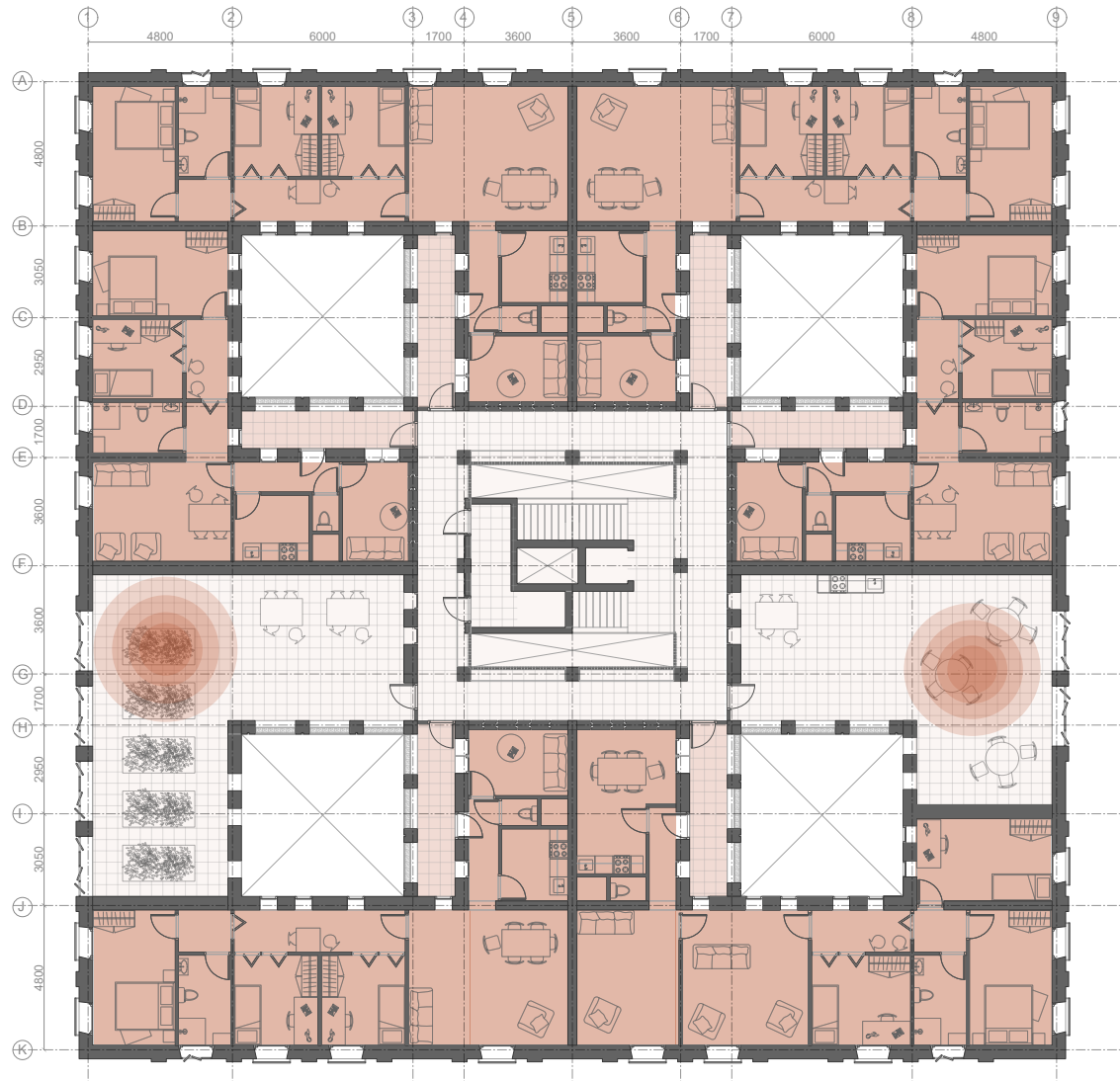
second floor

private patio



On the second floor, each home has its own private patio. They allow residents to spend time outdoors while remaining within the privacy of their own building block. At the same time, they provide views towards both the courtyards and the surrounding neighbourhood, creating a balance between privacy and connection.

communal roof



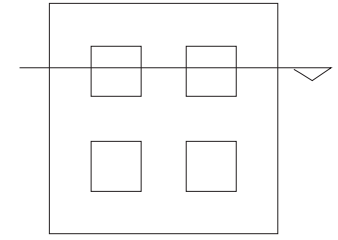
third floor

communal roof

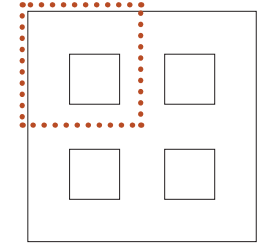
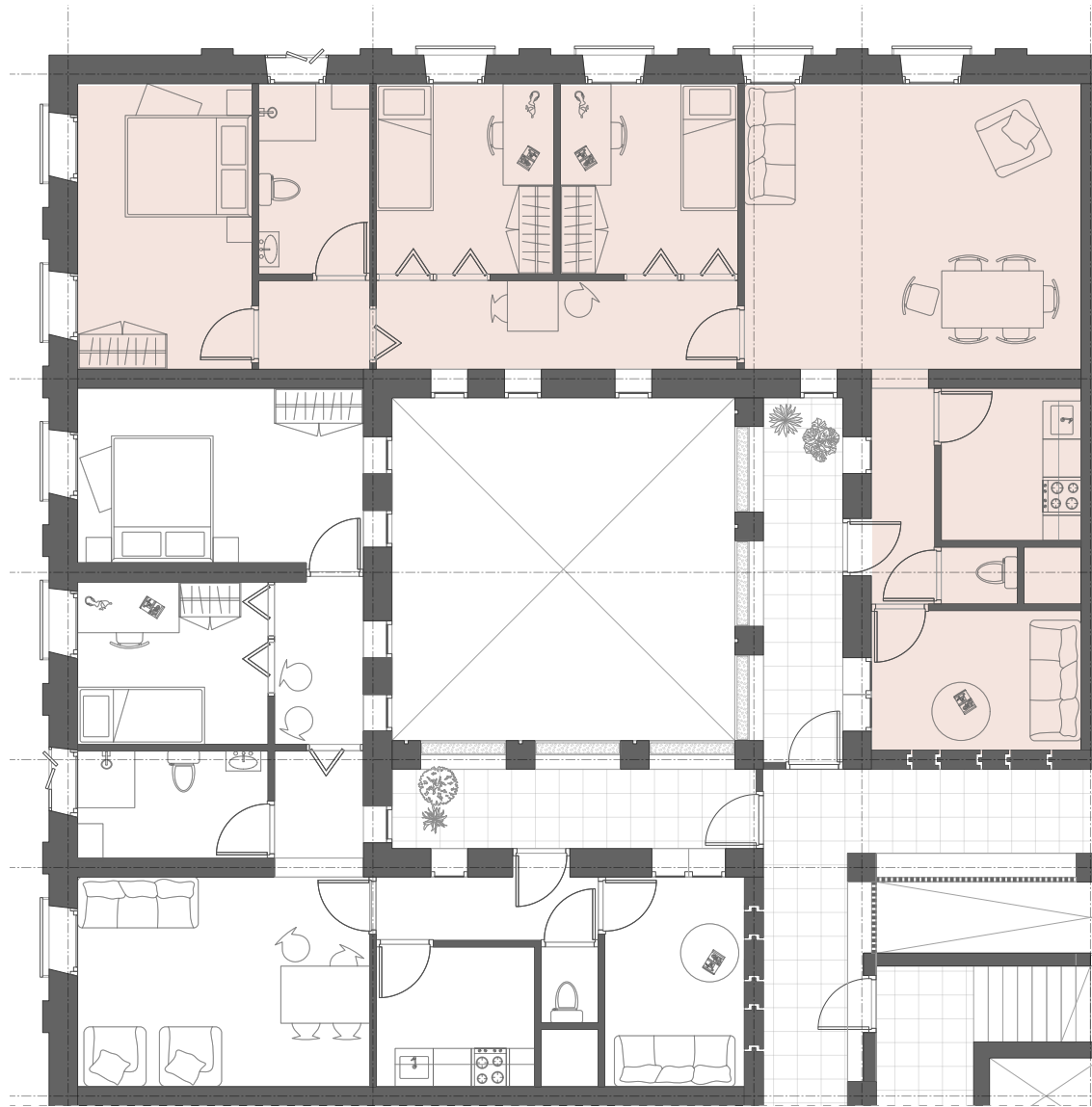


The communal vegetable garden on the roof encourage residents from different parts of the building to meet each other.

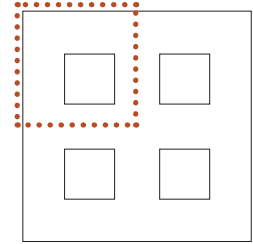
thresholds



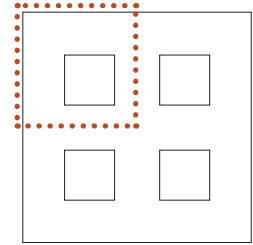
concept of the dwelling



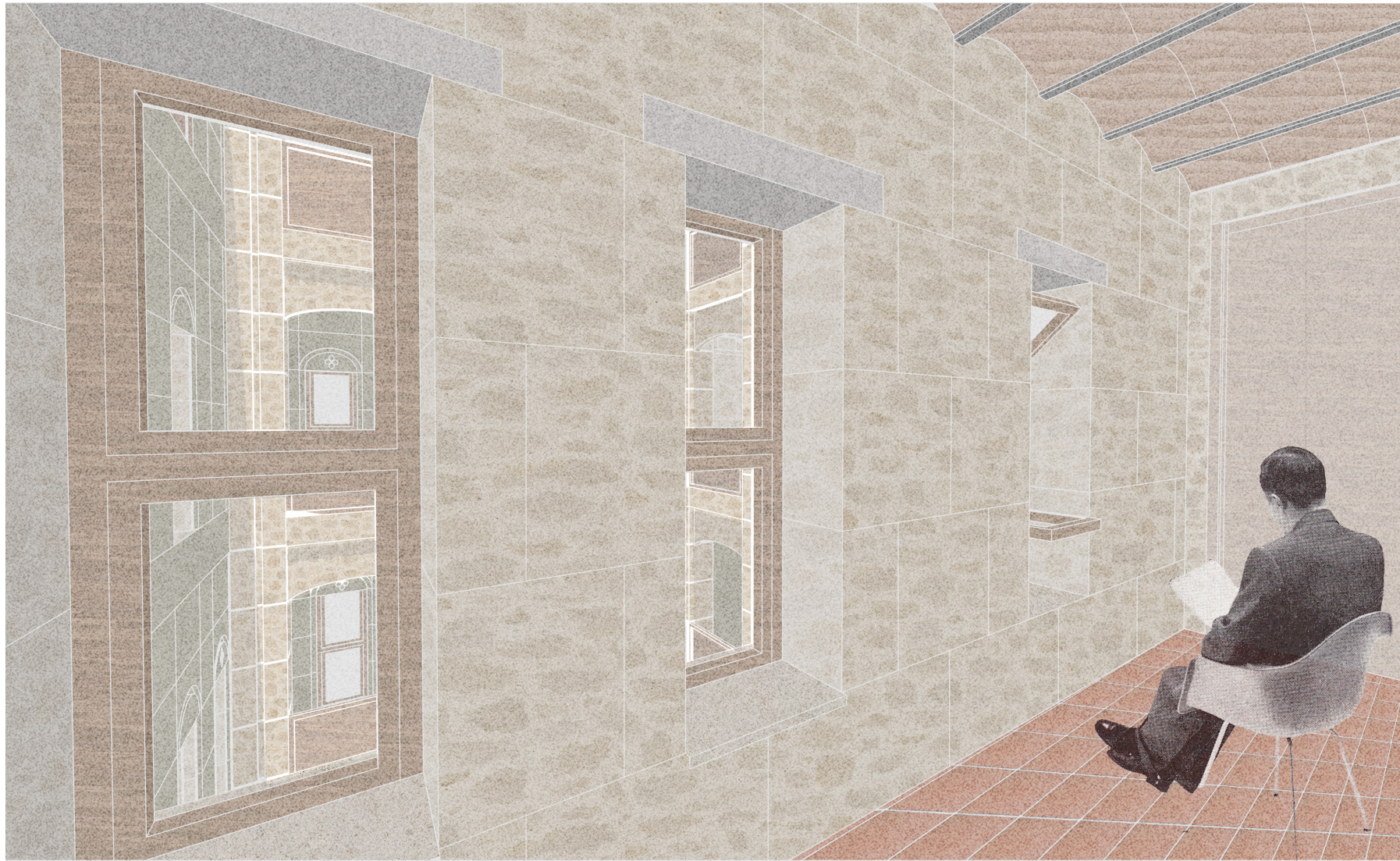
concept of the dwelling



concept of the dwelling



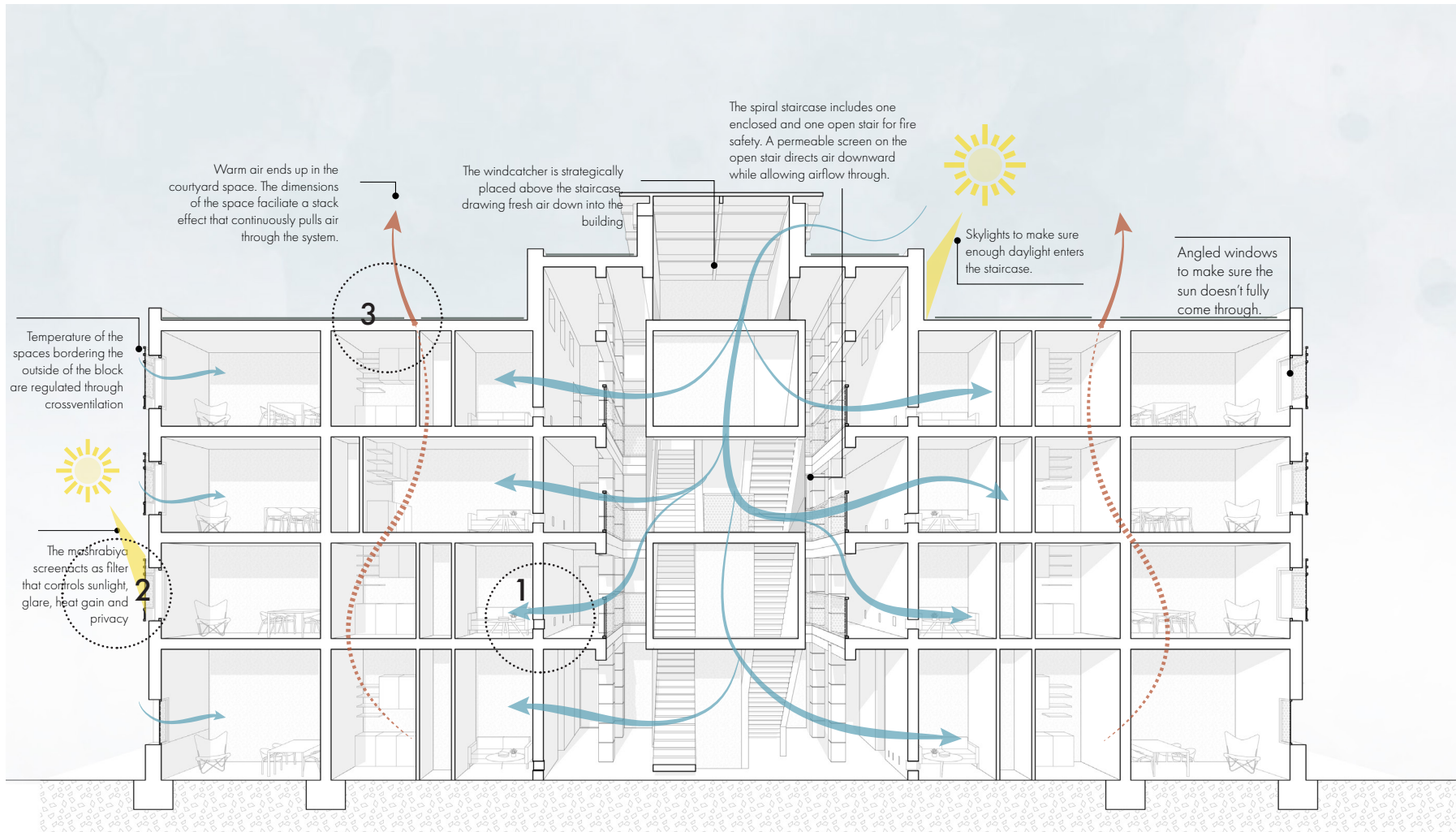
concept of the dwelling



Most homes have an L-shaped layout. This creates an internal circulation space along the courtyard side of the dwelling. Rather than functioning only as a corridor, the space can actually be used (supported by its façade design).

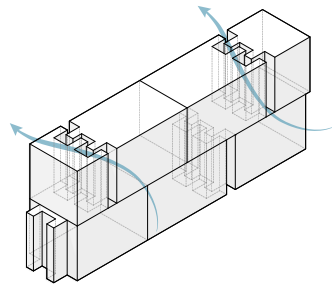
**comfortable
spaces.**

climate optimisation: system

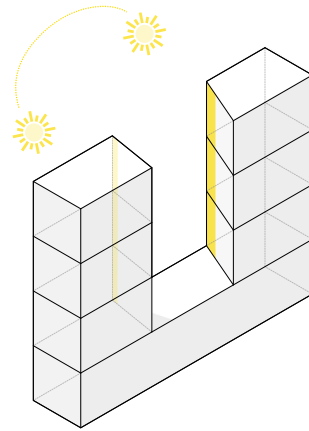


climate optimisation: element

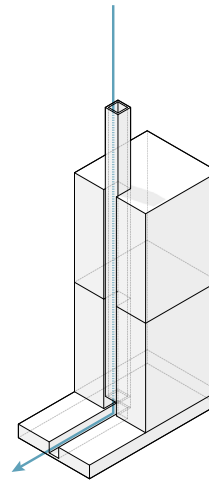
VENTILATION



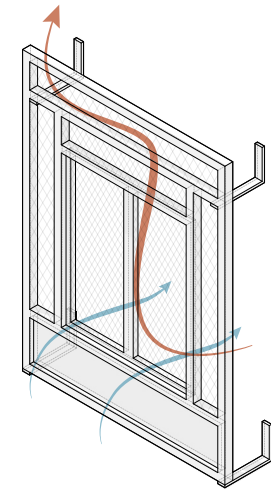
ANGLED WALLS



WATER



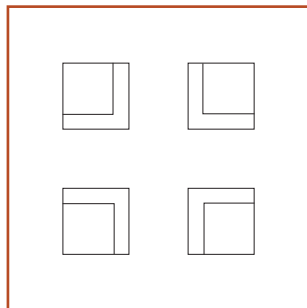
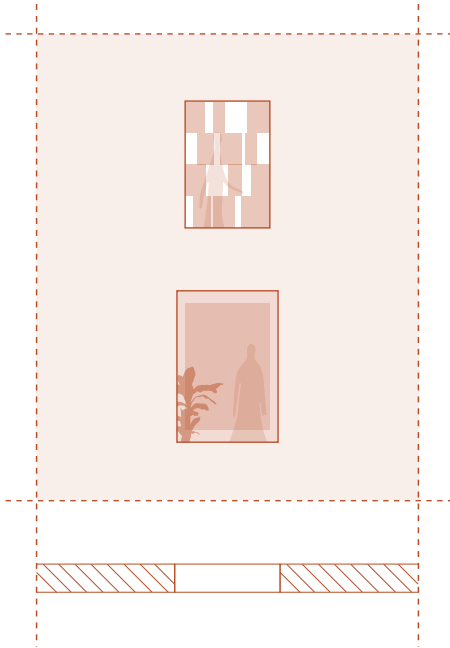
SUNLIGHT VS PRIVACY



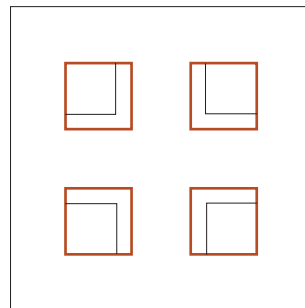
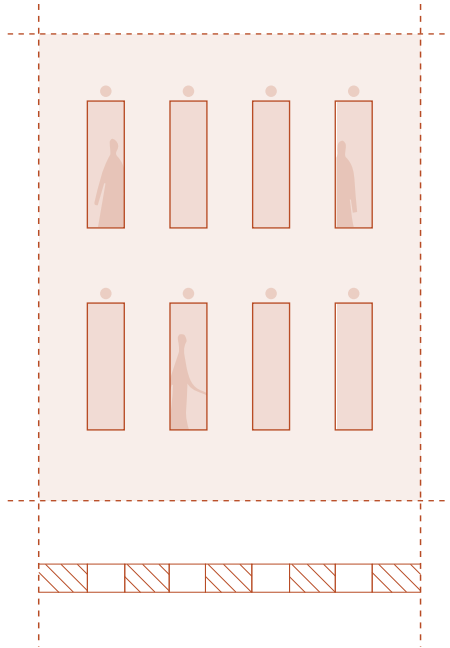
**material
system.**

facade concept

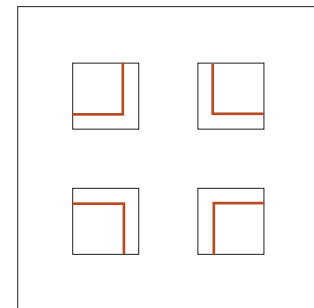
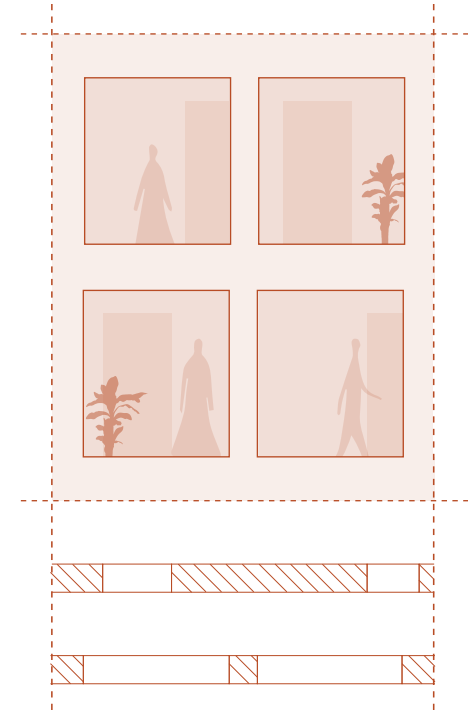
1. EXTERIOR FACADE



2. COURTYARD FACADE



3. GALLERY FACADE



facade fragments



facade fragments



facade fragments

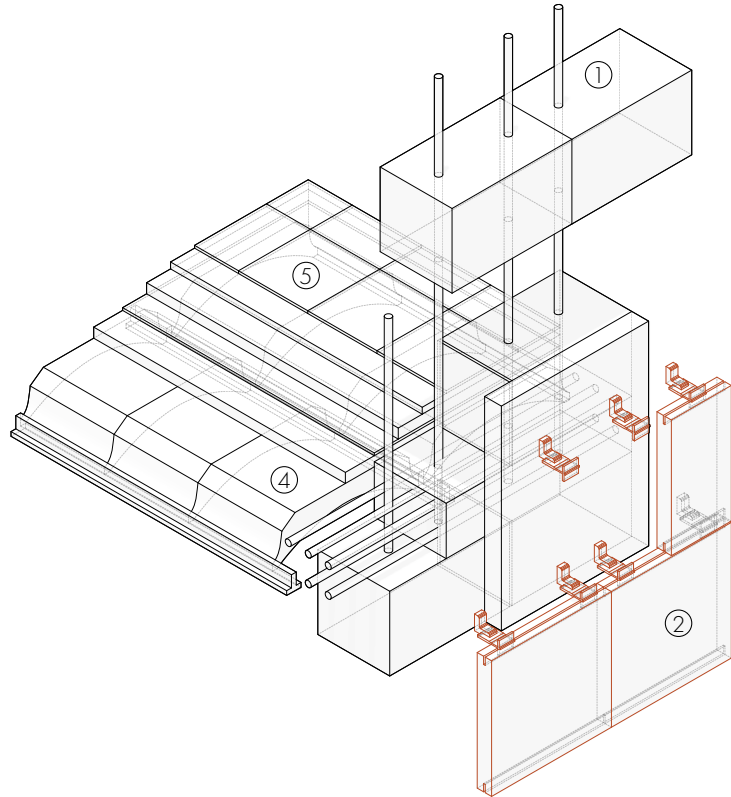


facade fragments

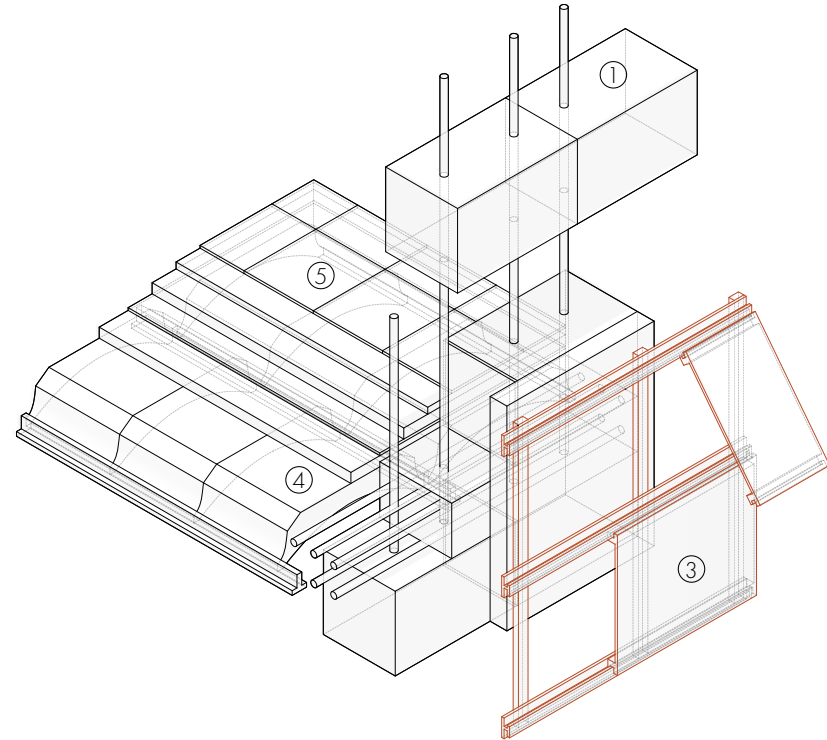


material strategy

EXTERIOR FACADE

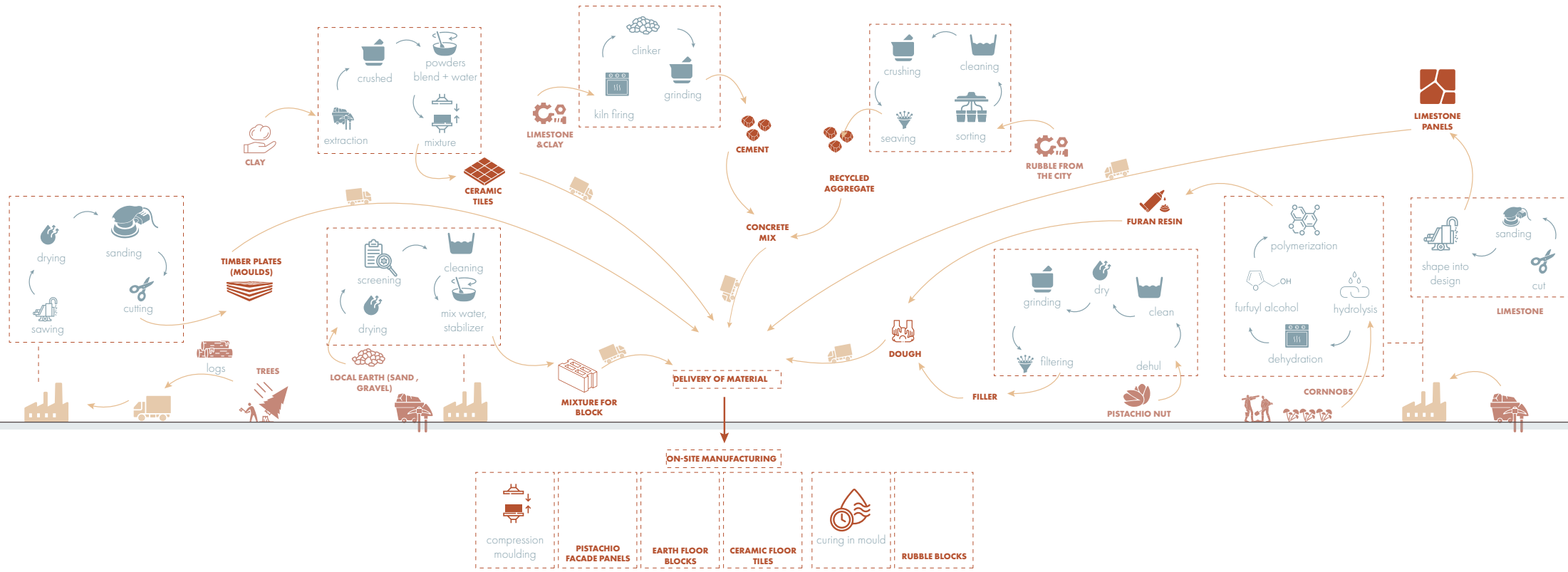


COURTYARD FACADE



1. Rubble concrete with reinforcement
2. Limestone panels
3. Bio-composite pistachio panels
4. Earth floor blocks
5. Ceramic floortiles

sourcing and manufacturing





By reinterpreting the spatial logic of the Syrian courtyard house, the project uses thresholds, courtyards, and facades to mediate between privacy and collective life. At the same time, it explores how locally available materials and construction systems can contribute to a more grounded approach to reconstruction.