Beauty in Dereliction

Designing with Ruins and Decay

Delft University of Technology - Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment - Olaf Bruins - April, 2017

Image from: http://www.doodlesandjots.com/2011/11/13/tree-leaves-primer/bass2/

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2 Theoretical framework & personal positioning

3 Design approach for the ruin of the Asten Castle

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6 Landscape design

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1 Fascination & wider social context

Image from: http://paradiseintheworld.com/yucatan-peninsula/

Image from: http://www.opacity.us/

Image from: http://www.desktopwallpapers4.me/

Image from: http://www.opacity.us/

"One person's dirt is another's patina."

Le Corbusier bluntly disdained patina as a careless accumulation of dirt. [...] For Riegl, such surface stuff was not dirt but patina, a much-valued attribute of significant buildings and artistic objects." (Cairns & Jacobs, 2014, p. 70-71)

Image from: https://www.klu.nl/artikel/69/toch+voor+de+eeuwigheid%85.html

Image from: https://www.wmf.org/

Cairns, S., Jacobs, J.M. (2014). *Buildings must die: a perverse view of architecture.* London, UK: MIT Press.

Western culture:

‘Ageing is shameful & imperfection is condemned’

Eastern cultures:

‘Ageing, death and the deceased form an integral part of life’

Reflected in design and architecture:

Wabi - Sabi

Image from: http://designculture.com.br/wabi-sabi-beleza-e-imperfeicao/

Deliberate monuments

"A work of man erected for the specific purpose of keeping particular human deeds or destinies alive and present in the consciousness of future generations."

Unintentional monuments

"A work of man with a certain meaning and significance, assigned by modern man, instead of value from the works themselves by virtue, of their original purpose."

Alois Riegl
(1858 - 1905)

Image from: http://athmcg.blogspot.nl/

Common restoration approach:

Preserve or reconstruct the monument to the original form, the form that was deliberatly meant to last.

Agree!

Common restoration approach:

Also, preserve or reconstruct the monument to a former state of its history.

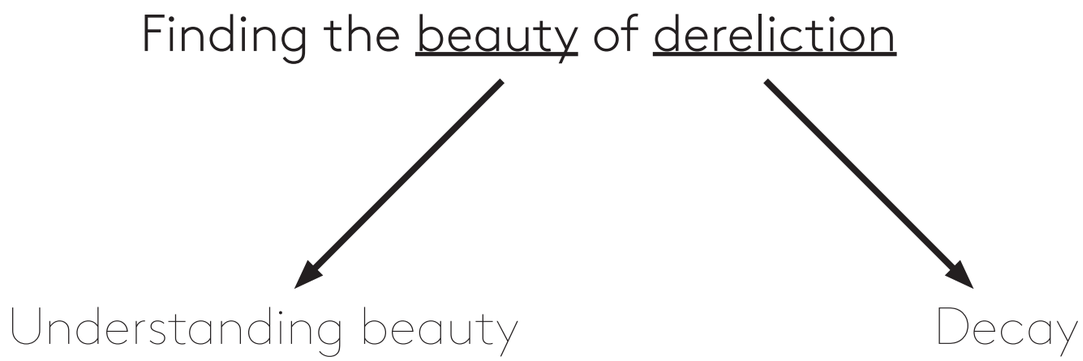
Agree?

The Beauty of Dereliction

Designing with Ruins and Decay

"Shine a different light upon decay and imperfection in architecture by establishing a personal position towards the topic and by expressing this position in an architectural design."

2 Theoretical framework & personal positioning


Finding the beauty of dereliction
Understanding beauty
Decay

Understanding beauty

Option 1:

Beauty as
an aesthetic judgement about an object

Option 2:

Beauty as
a property of an object

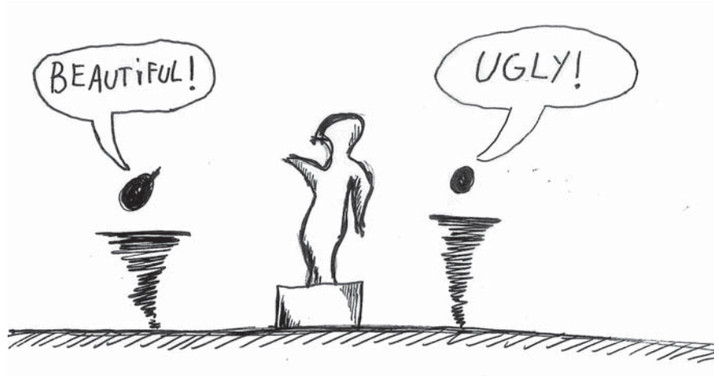
Understanding beauty

Option 1:

Beauty as
an aesthetic judgement about an object

Option 2:

Beauty as
a property of an object

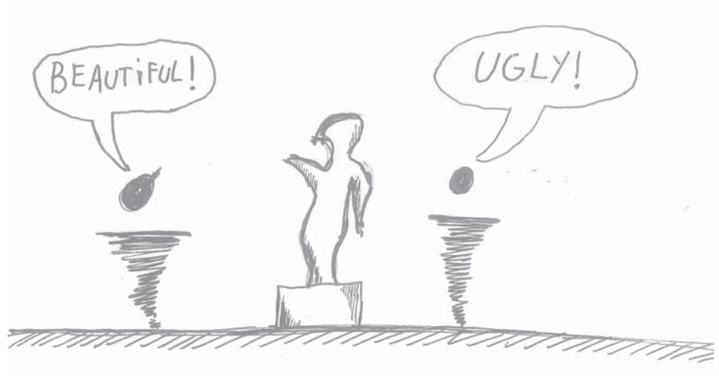


Beauty is not a propery of an object...

Understanding beauty

Option 1:

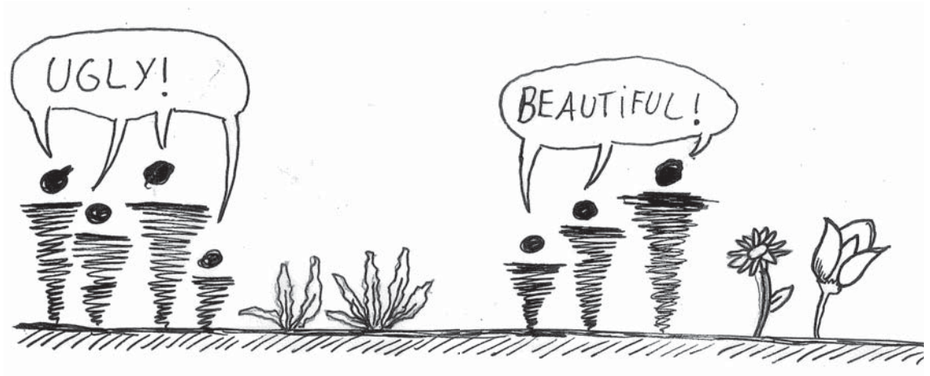
Beauty as
an aesthetic judgement about an object



Beauty is not a propery of an object...

Option 2:

Beauty as
a property of an object



Is beauty a property of an object or not?

Beauty is not an autonomous concept, but is related with associations.

1

Association with the concept of the object

2

Association with the context of the object.

Beauty is not an autonomous concept, but is related with associations.

Image from: http://detegels.top/onkruid-tussen-tegels/

Image from: https://www.dreamstime.com/

Free beauty

An aesthetic judgement, based on personal taste only.

Dependent beauty

An aesthetic judgement, also based on a concept which determines if an object is good.

Immanuel Kant
(1724 - 1804)

Image from: http://f--f.info/?p=3567

Image from: http://www.wallpapers13.com

Image from: http://hdimagelib.com/french+garden+wallpaper

Free beauty is:

IMPOSSIBLE / NON EXISTENT

Image from: http://www.wallpapers13.com

Image from: http://pan-szymanowski.livejournal.com/215095.html

Beauty is always dependent / associated / related to some concept

Conclusion:

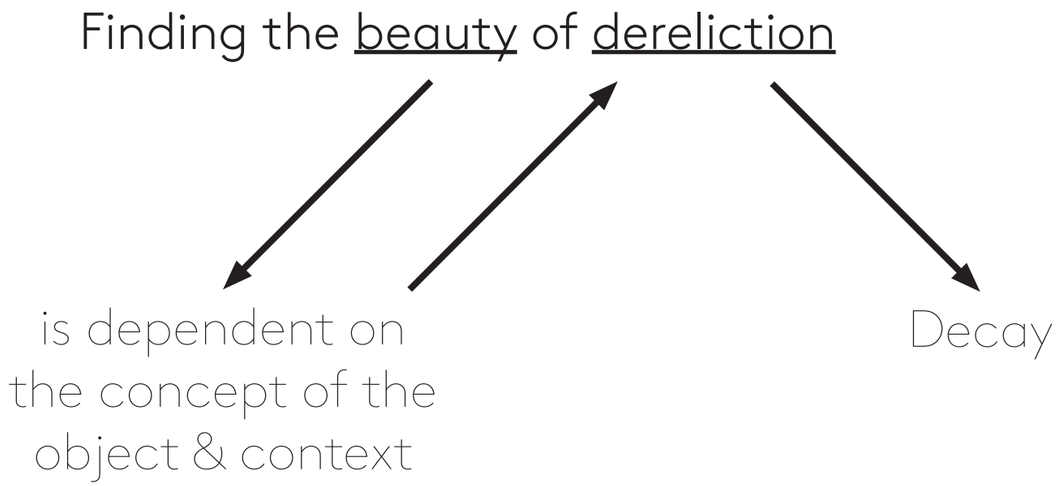
If the concept of an object and the concept of its context begin **to match** each-other, than the object and the context **increase in beauty**.

Image from: http://detegels.top/onkruid-tussen-tegels/

Image from: https://www.dreamstime.com/

Image from: http://thepaperbandit.com/

Image from: http://www.opacity.us/


Finding the beauty of dereliction
is dependent on the concept of the object & context
Decay

What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become gradually damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A gradual falling into an inferior state, progressive decline.

What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become gradually damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A gradual falling into an inferior state, progressive decline.

Decay is a process and can only exist in time

"Decay is the work of nature over time,
it is not the result, it is the process."

What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become gradually damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A gradual falling into an inferior state, progressive decline.

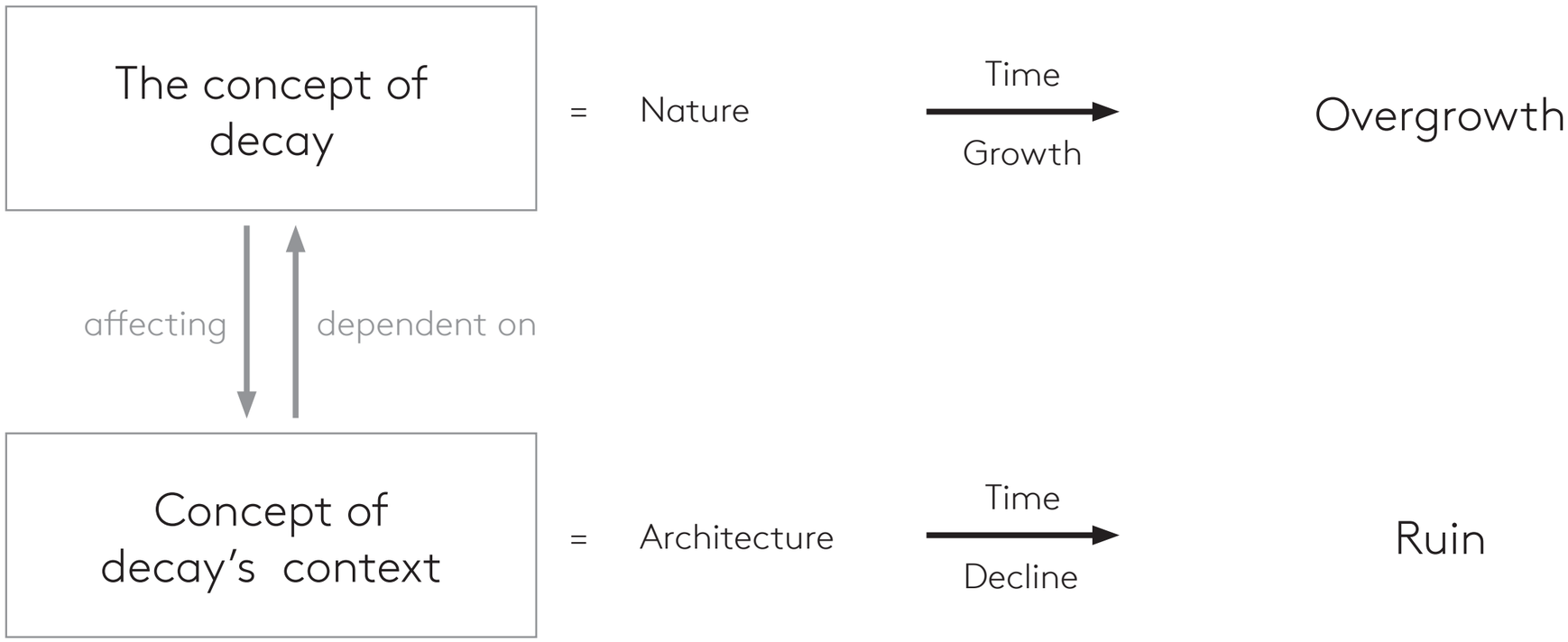
Decay is a process of declining and disappearence

"Without growth there can be no decline,
all matter and energy are constant"

Decay is:

"The work of nature over time as
a transitional process of

decline and **growth**."


The concept of decay
=
Nature
Time
Growth
Overgrowth
affecting
dependent on
Concept of decay's context
=
Architecture
Time
Decline
Ruin

3 Design approach for the ruin of the Asten Castle

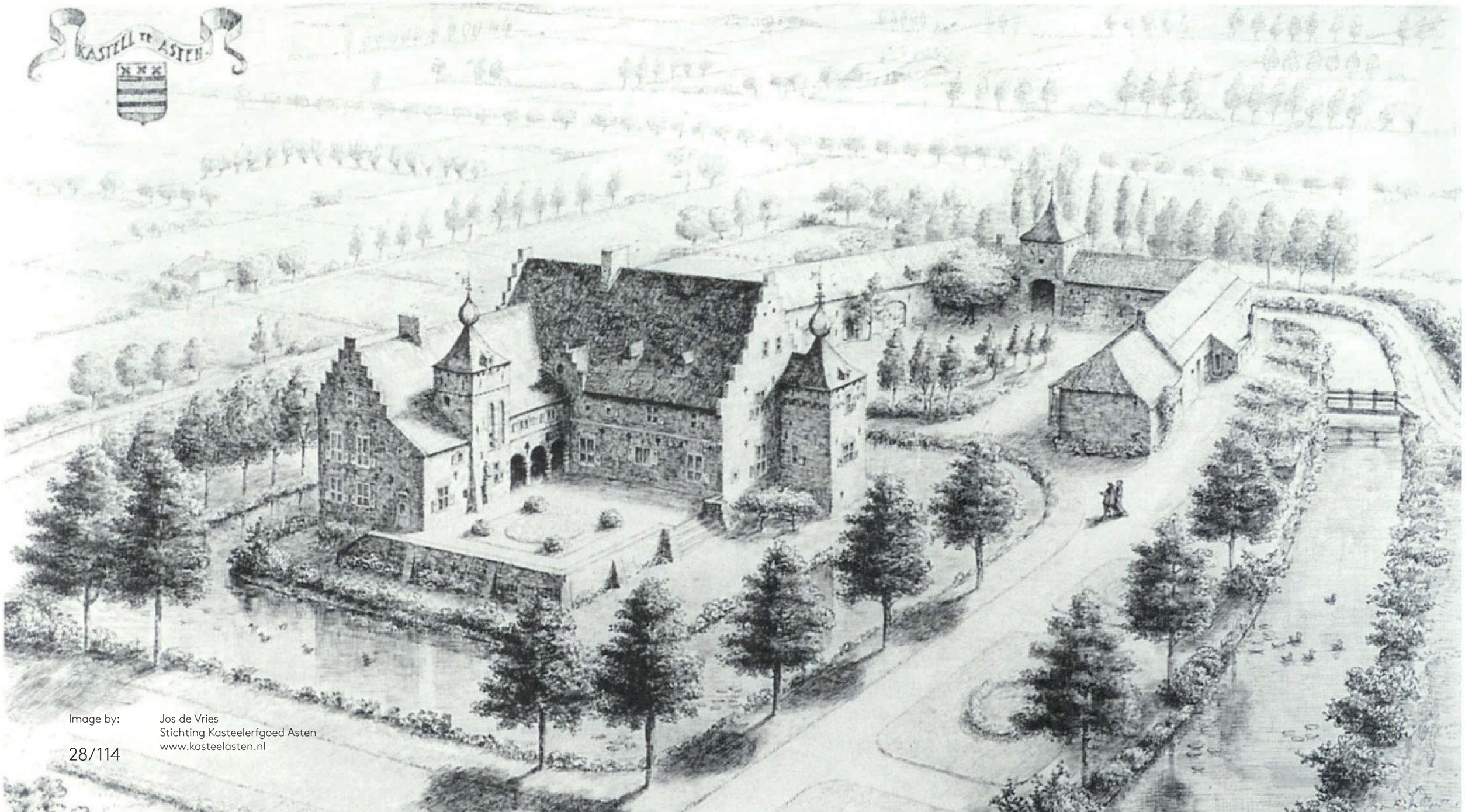
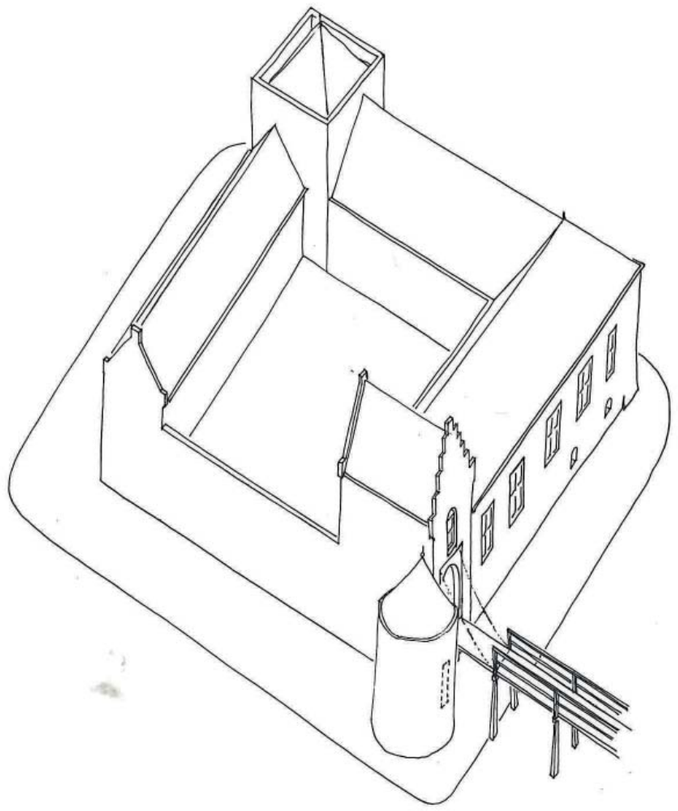
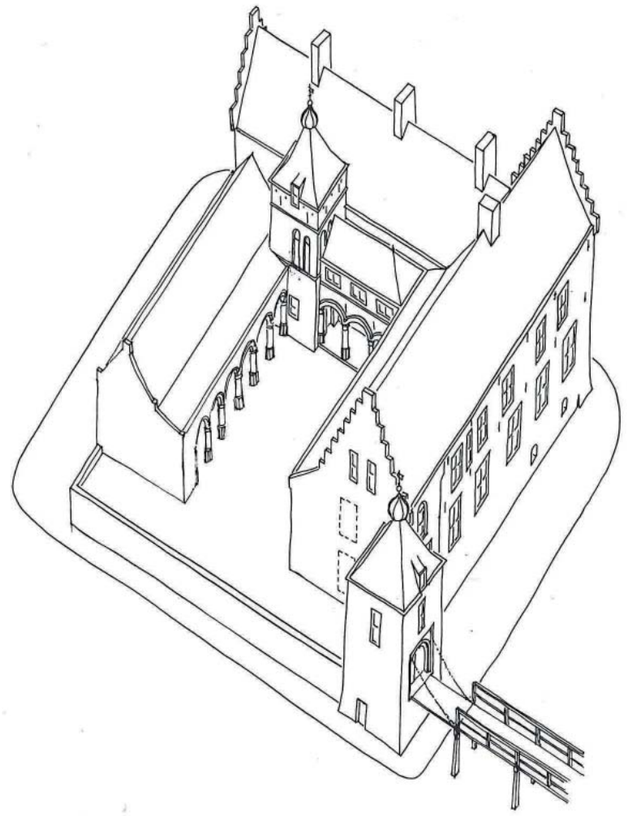


Image by: Jos de Vries
Stichting Kasteelerfgoed Asten
www.kasteelasten.nl

Image from: http://mkuijpers.nl/kastelen/kasteel-asten/



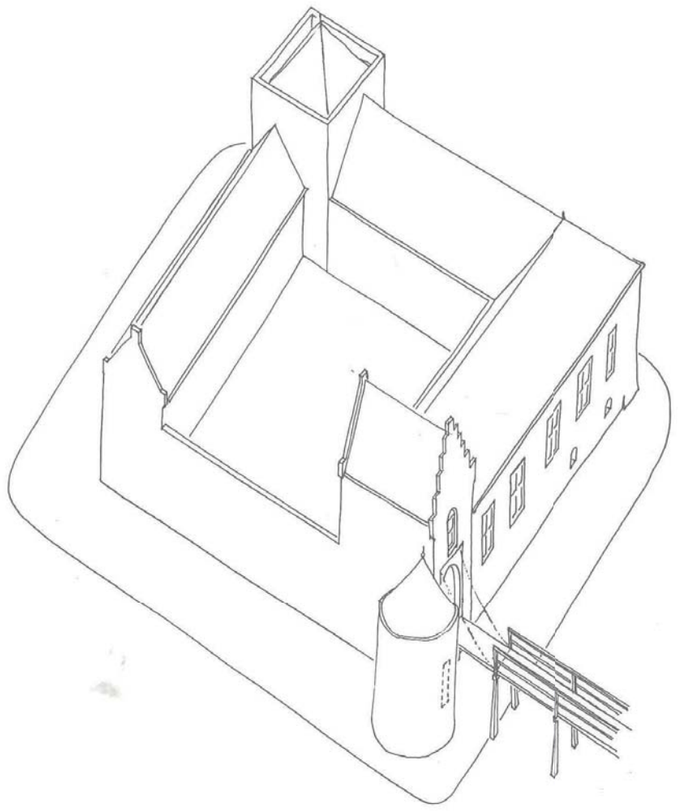
+/- 1430



1575 - 1625

Images from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

Unintentional monument!



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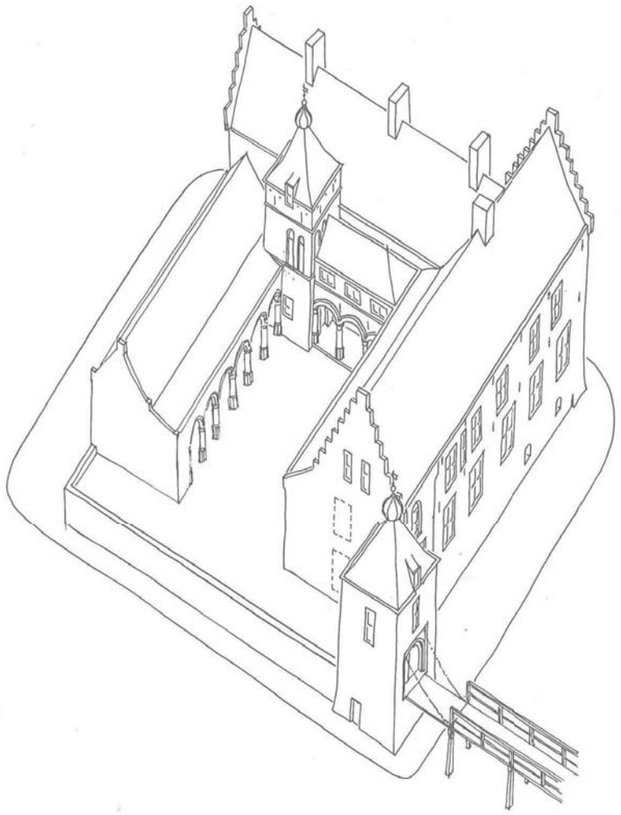


1575 - 1625

Images from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

Most important value:

A history of change which is revealed in the ruin its scars and imperfection

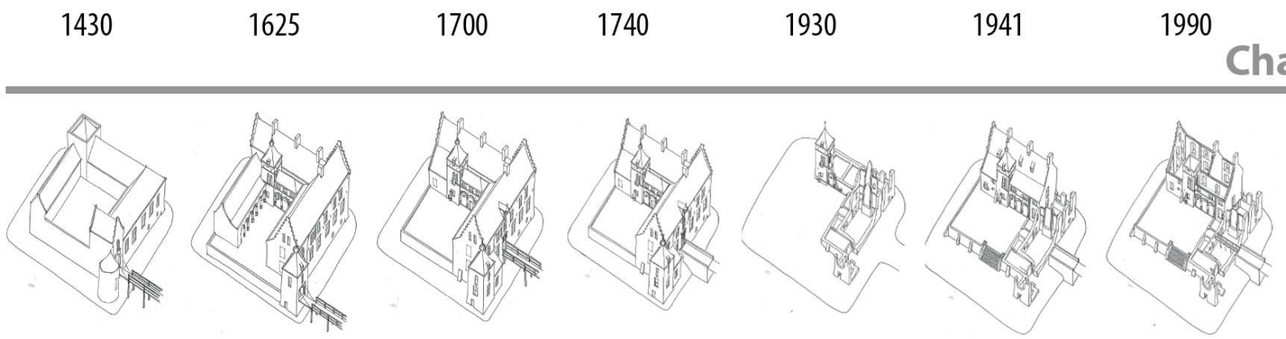
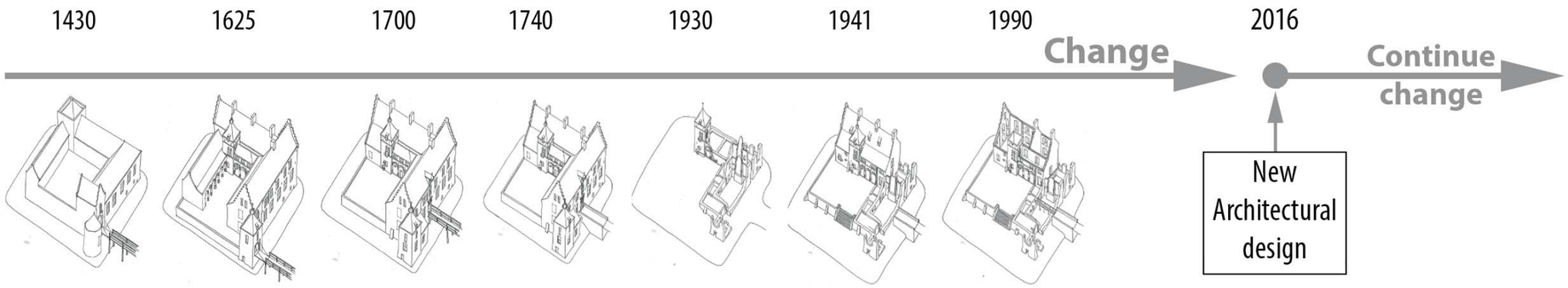


Image based from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

Main design approach:

Let the ruin be a ruin and celebrate its history of change, instead of trying to preserve it.



1.

Unintentional monument

2.

History of change as important value

3.

decay and ruin match and generate beauty

Image based from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

4 Decay & design concept

"The work of nature over time as a process of

decline and growth."

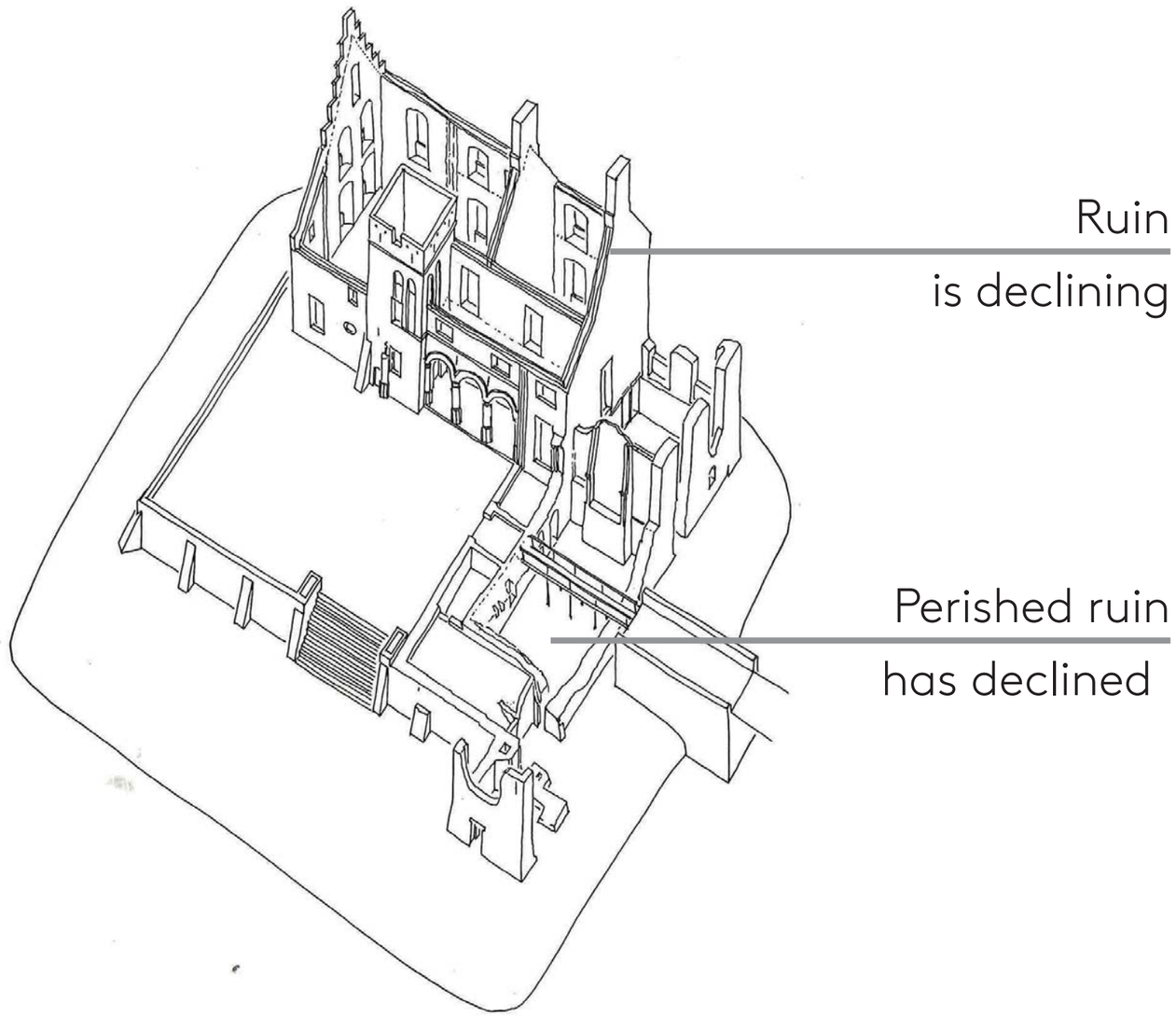
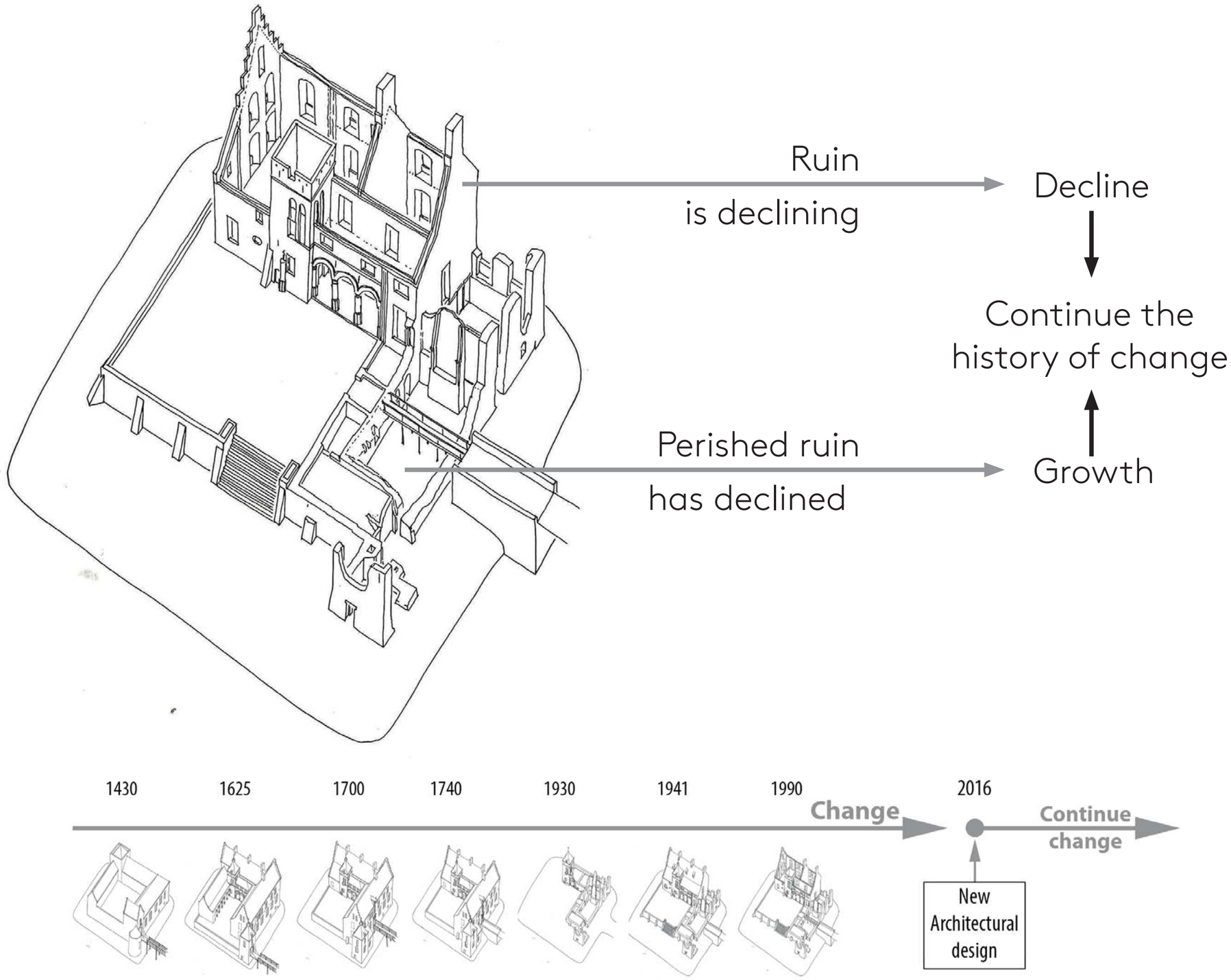
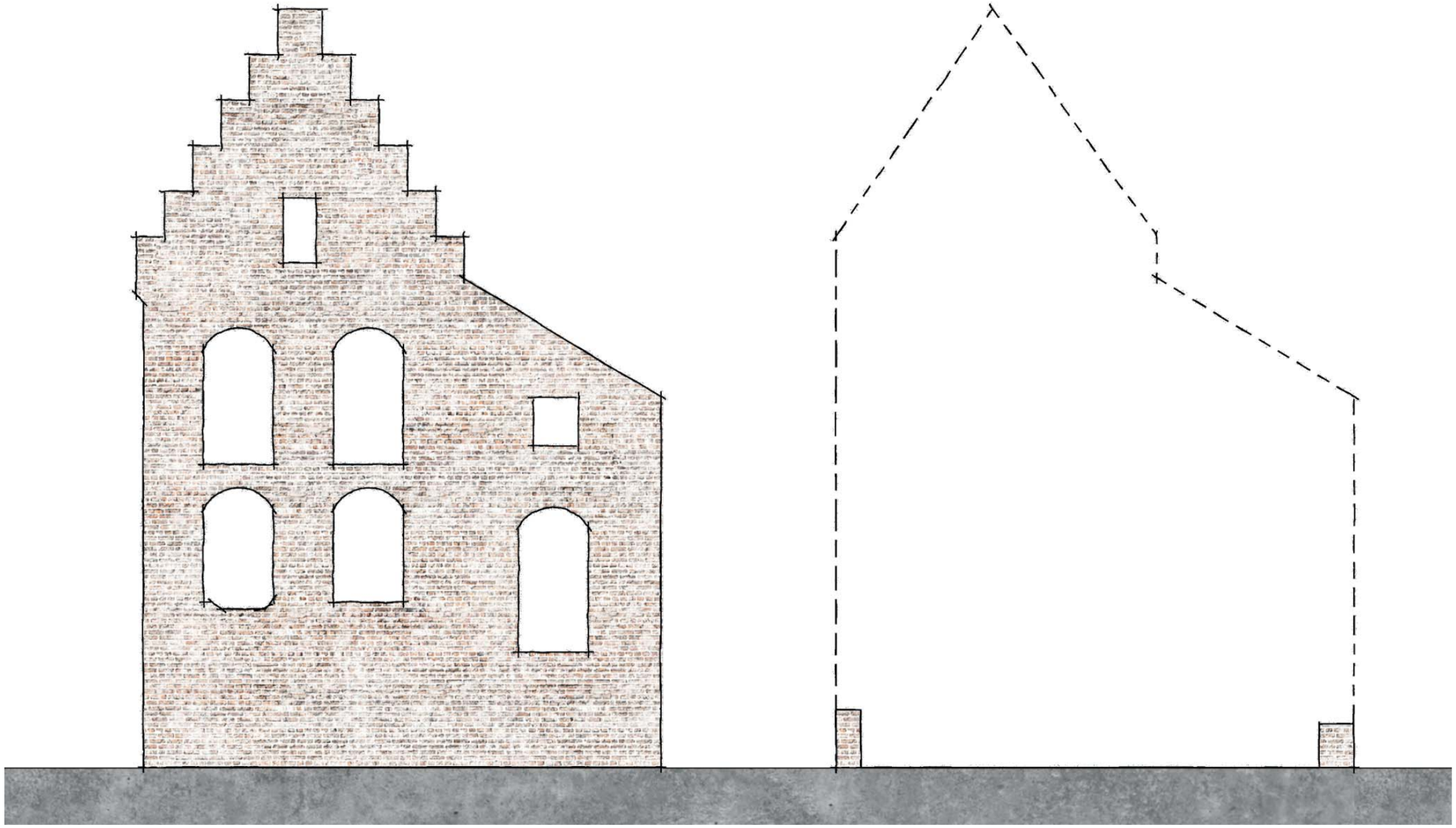


Image from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten*. Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

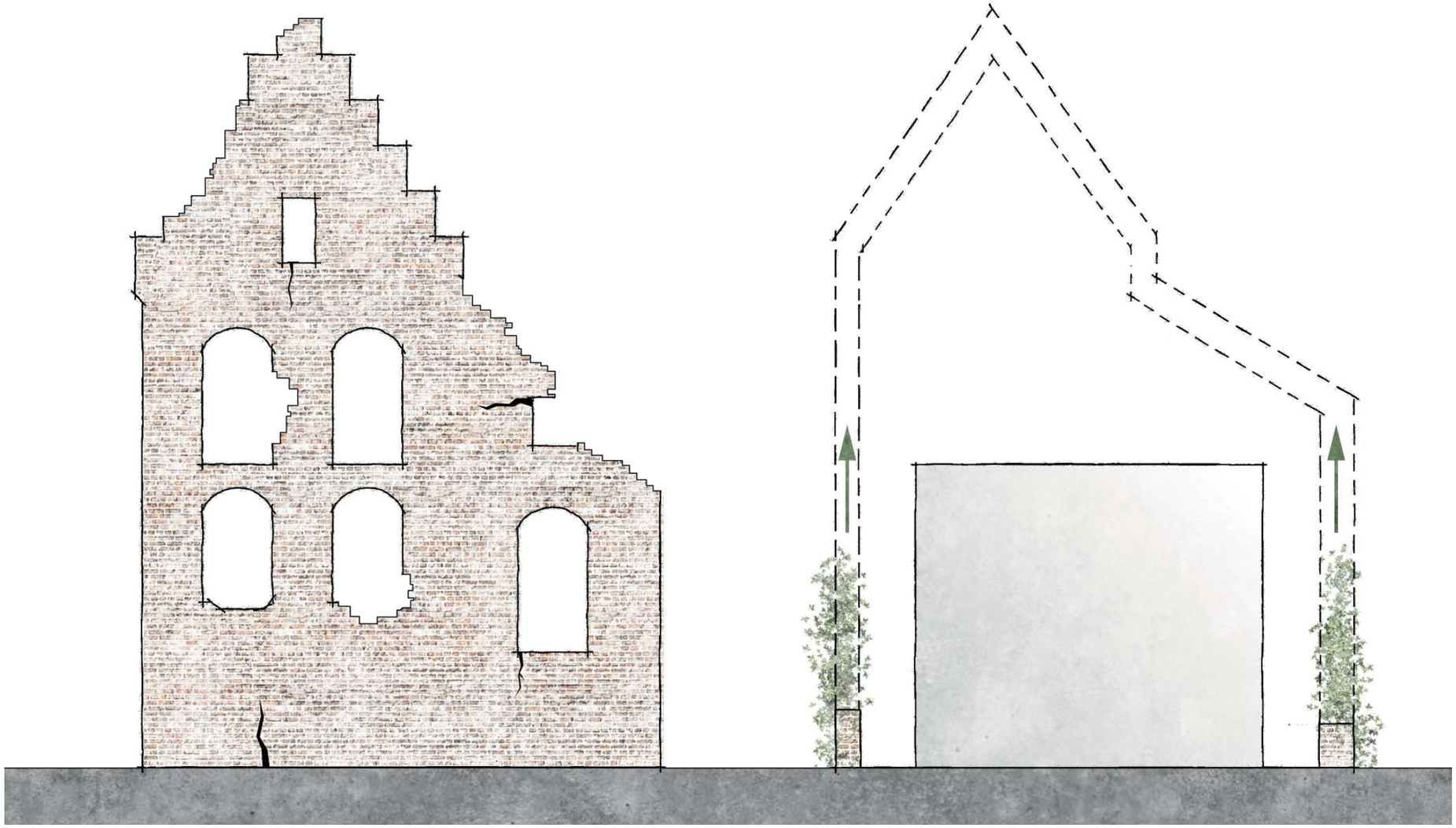


Images (based) from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.



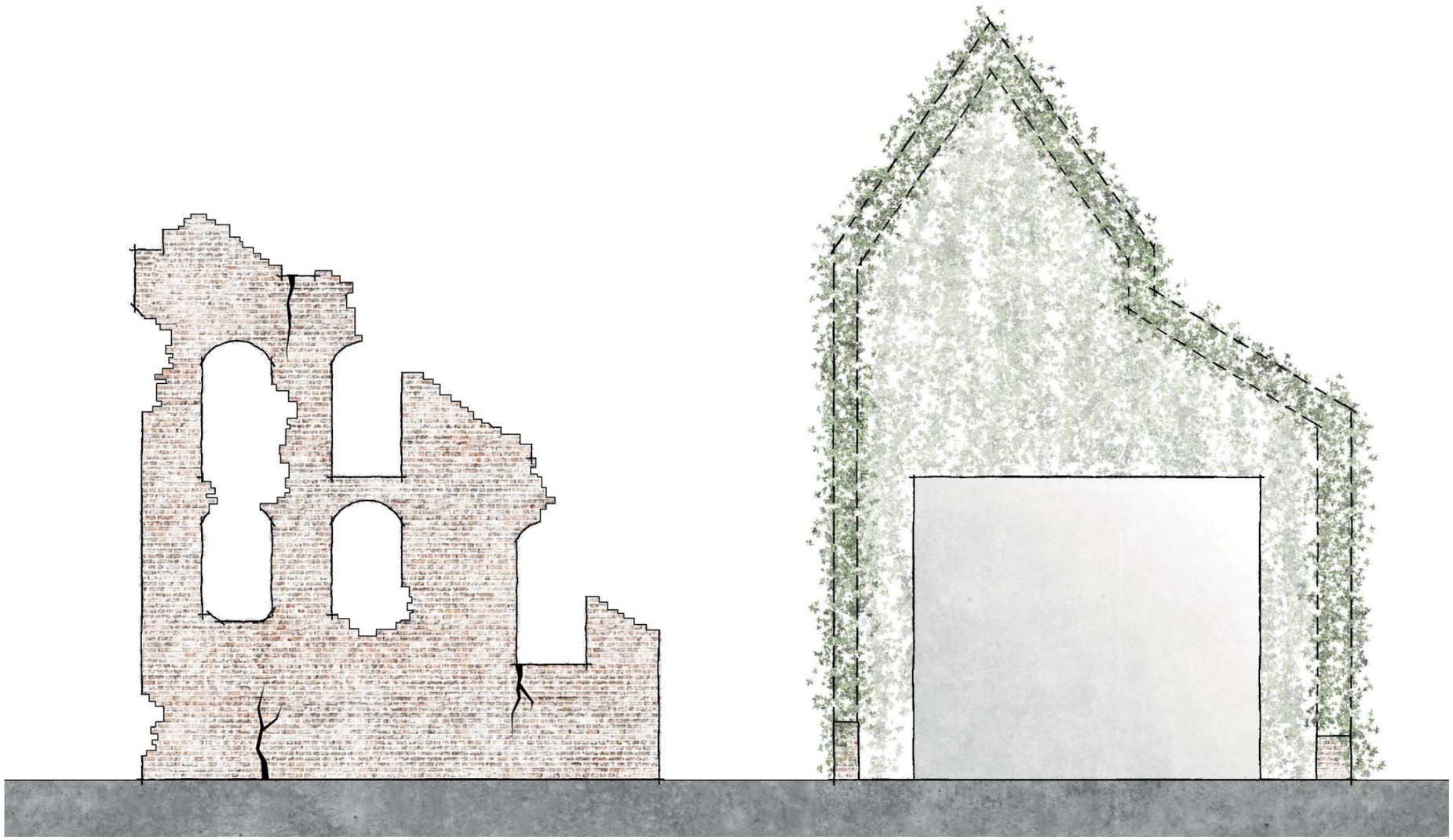
Ruin

Perished ruin



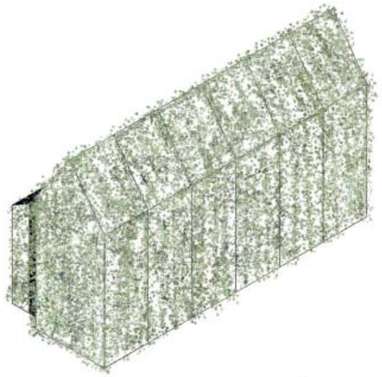
Leave as a ruin

Conditions for change

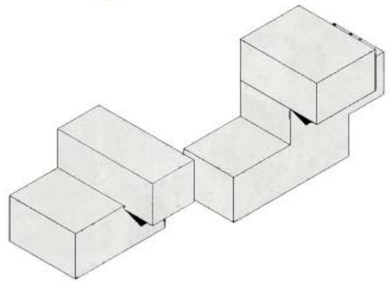


Decline

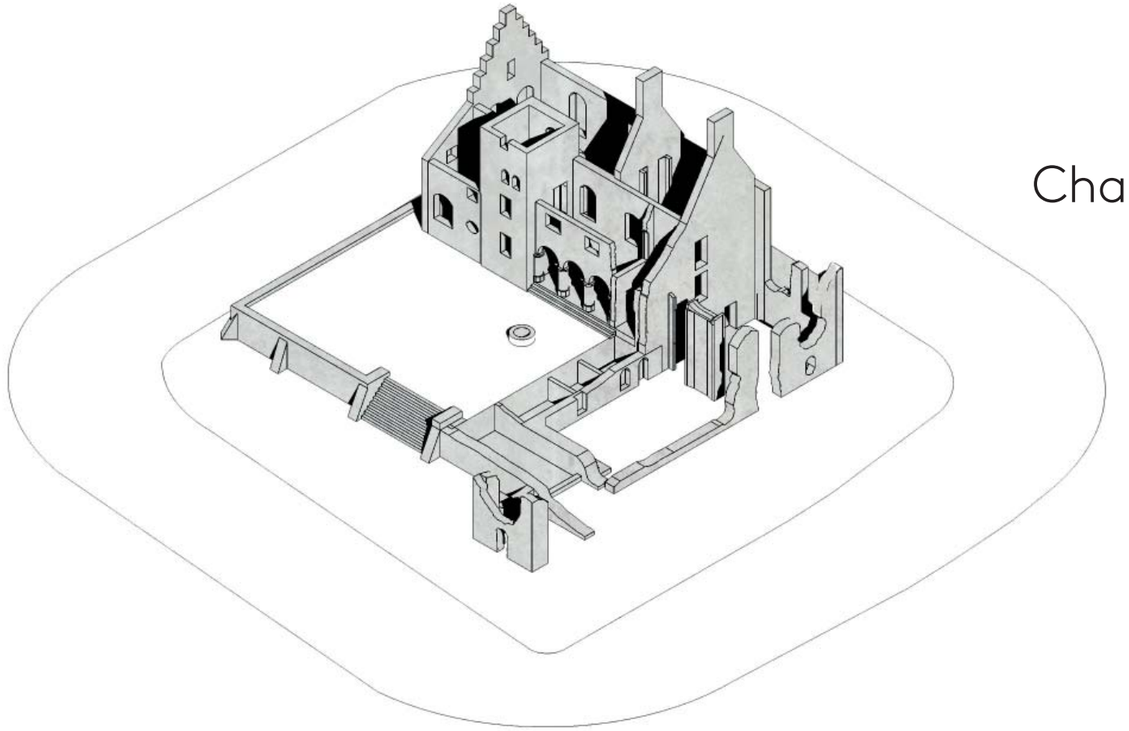
Growth



Change as growth

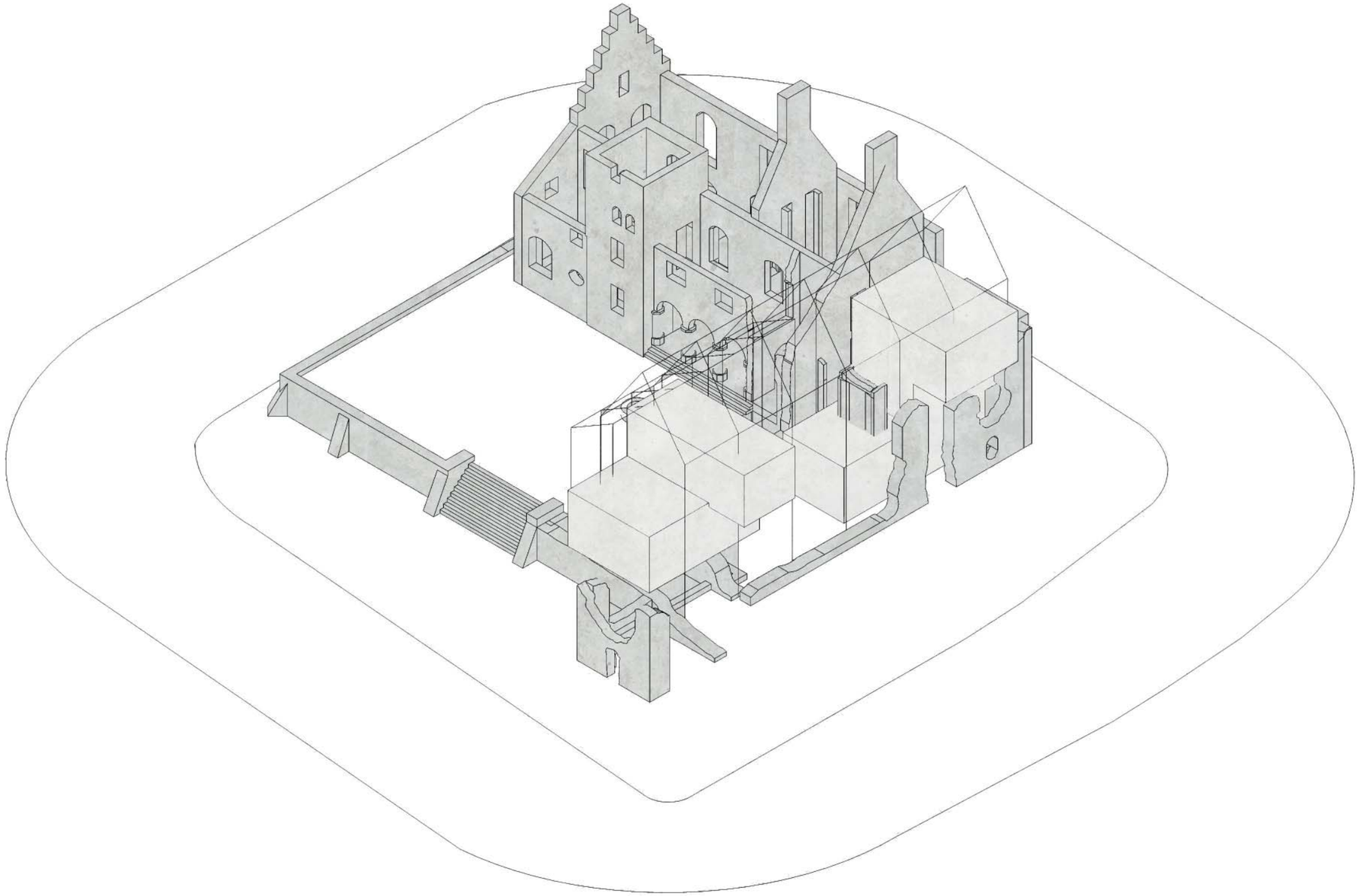


Witness of change

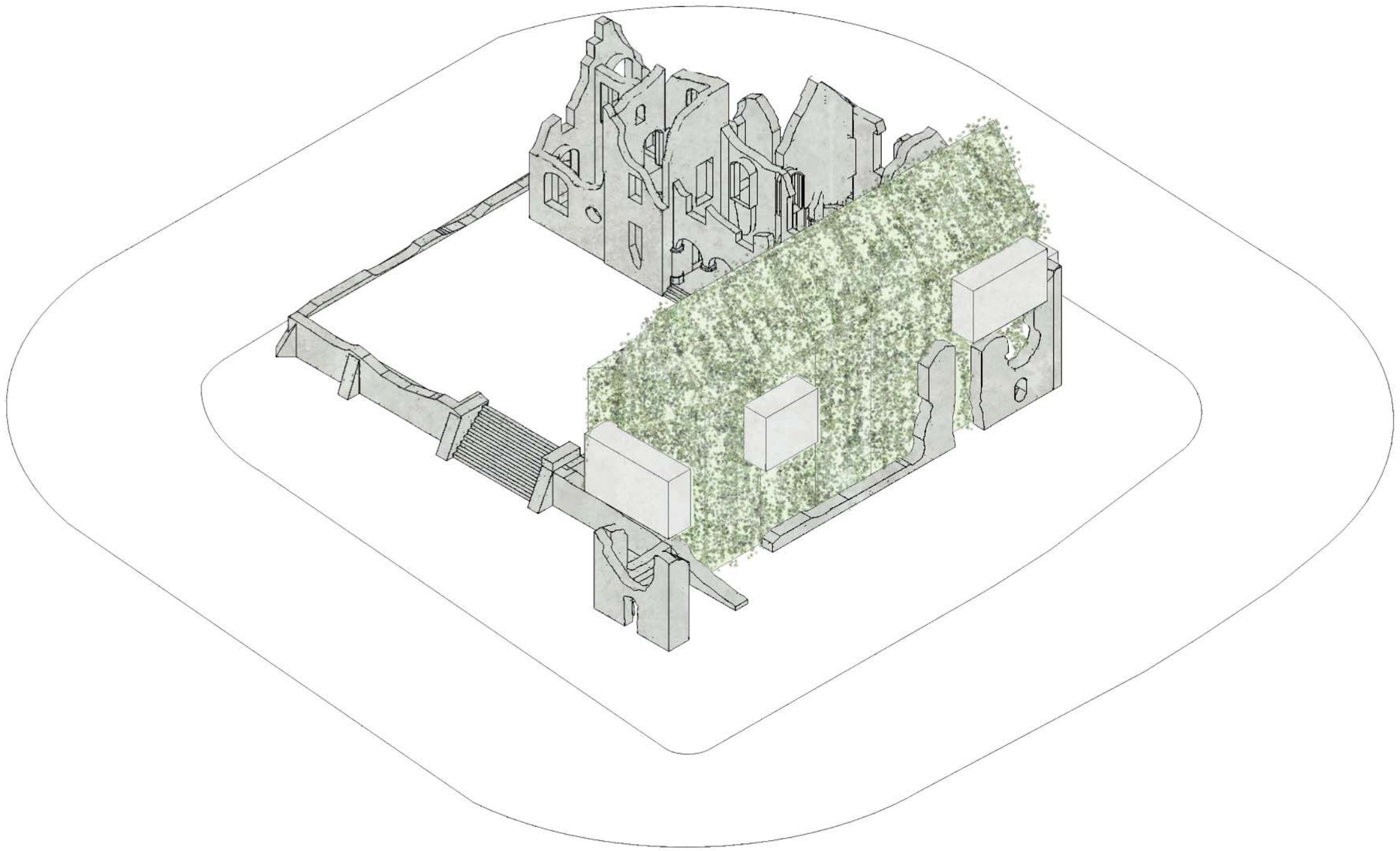


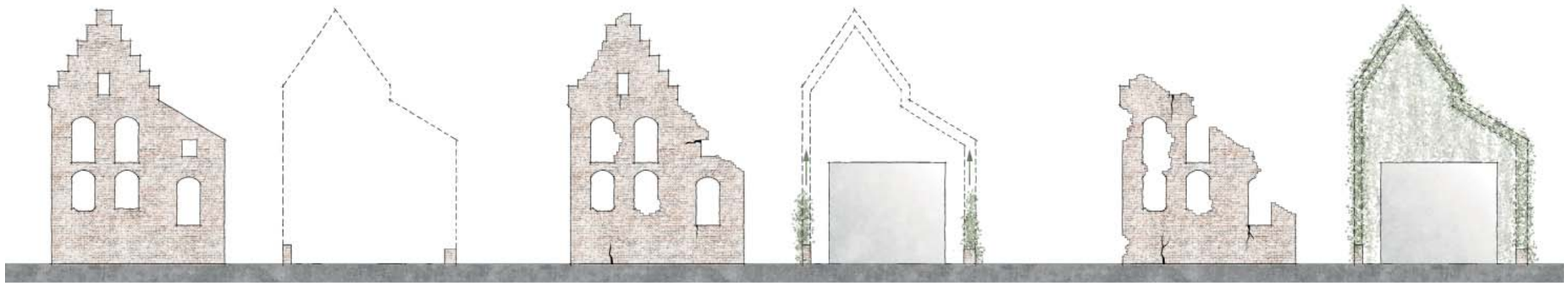
Change as decline

Decay & design concept



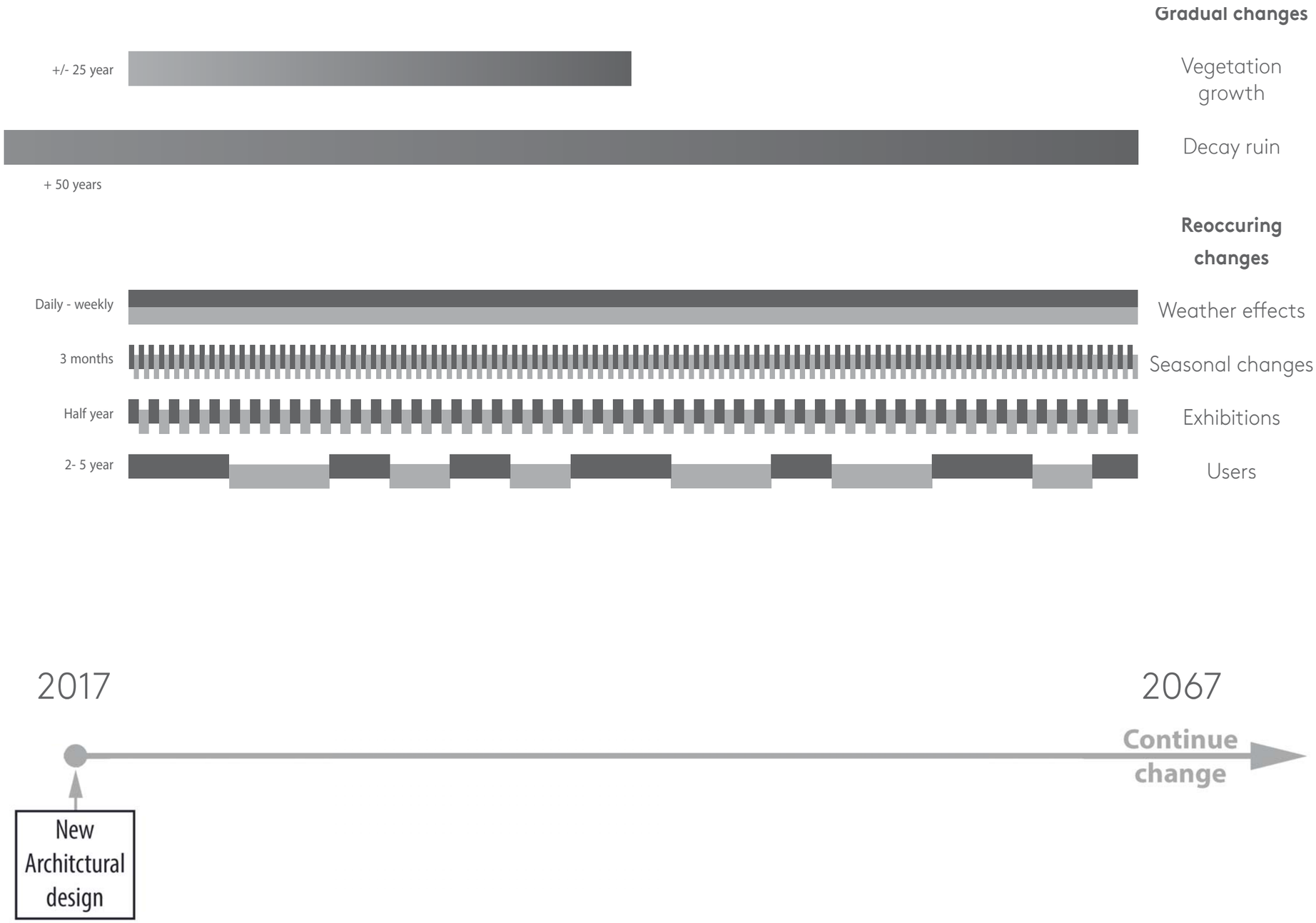
Decay & design concept





2016
Continue change
New Architctural design

Decay & design concept



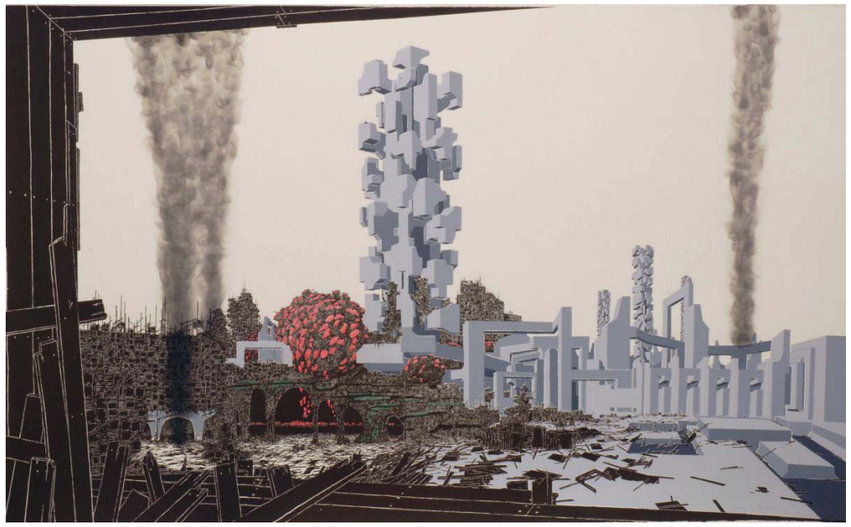
5 Program: ‘The artists ruin’

'The artists ruin'

A highly inspirational work, exhibition and living place for artists

Caspar David Friedrich - Abbey in the Oakwood
http://www.taringa.net/posts/imagenes/18355484/Caspar-David-Friedrich-romanticismo-Aleman.html

Marco Ricci - L andscape with Classical Ruins and Figures
http://www.getty.edu/



Rob Voerman - Pressure
http://www.dutchartevents.com/tag/rob-voerman/

Jacob van Ruisdael - Ruins of Brederode
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Jacob_van_Ruisdael_catalog_raisonn%C3%A9,_1928

'The artists ruin'

A highly inspirational work, exhibition and living place for artists

1

Temporary housing for artists located in the quiet and inspirational nature.

Image from: https://thenounproject.com/
by: Alfredocreates.com

2

Workplaces for artists located at the ruin

Image from: https://thenounproject.com/
by: Marco Galtarossa

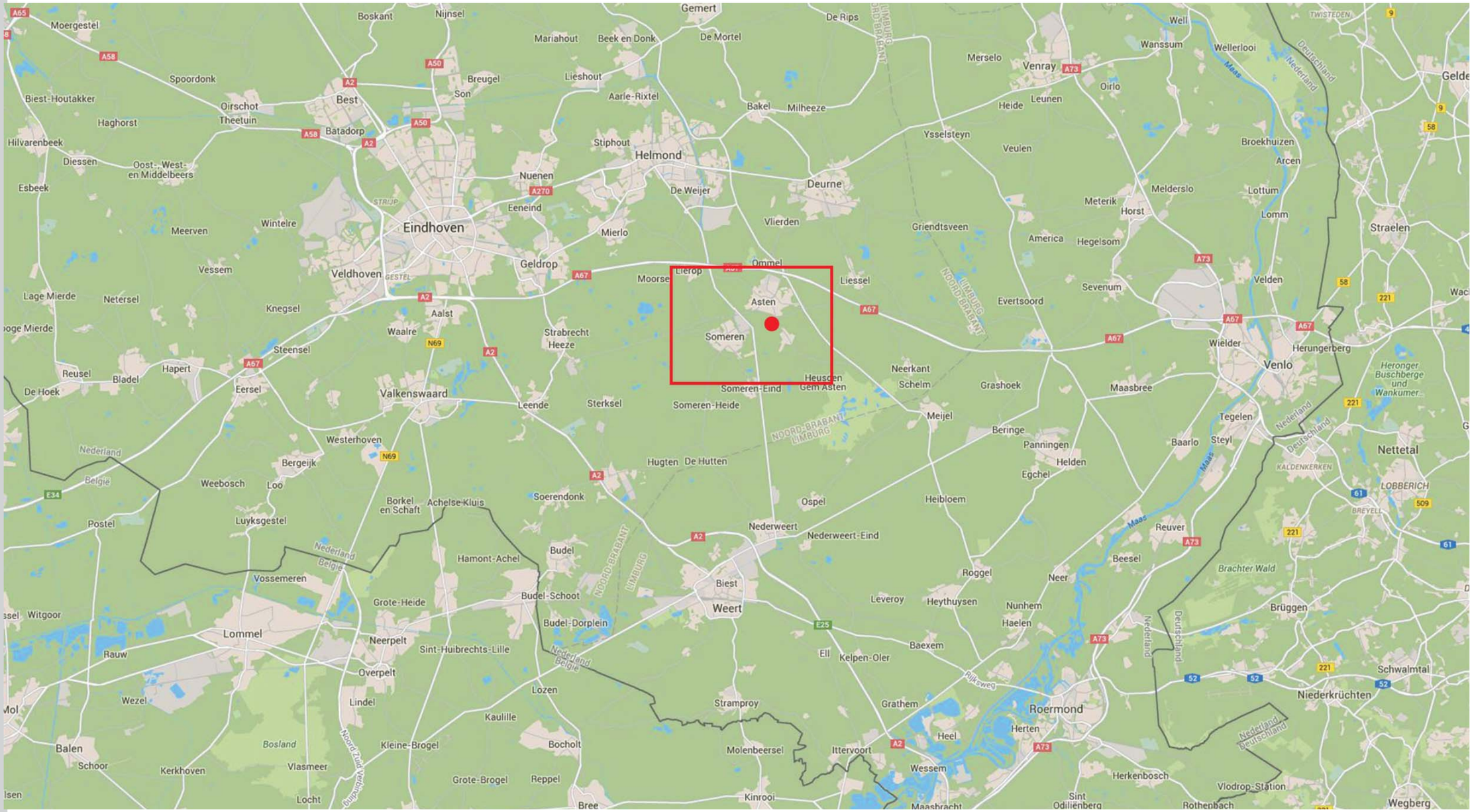
3

Visitable exhibitions located in and around the ruin.

Image from: https://thenounproject.com/
by: Nuno Lezon

6 Landscape design

Source: Google Maps

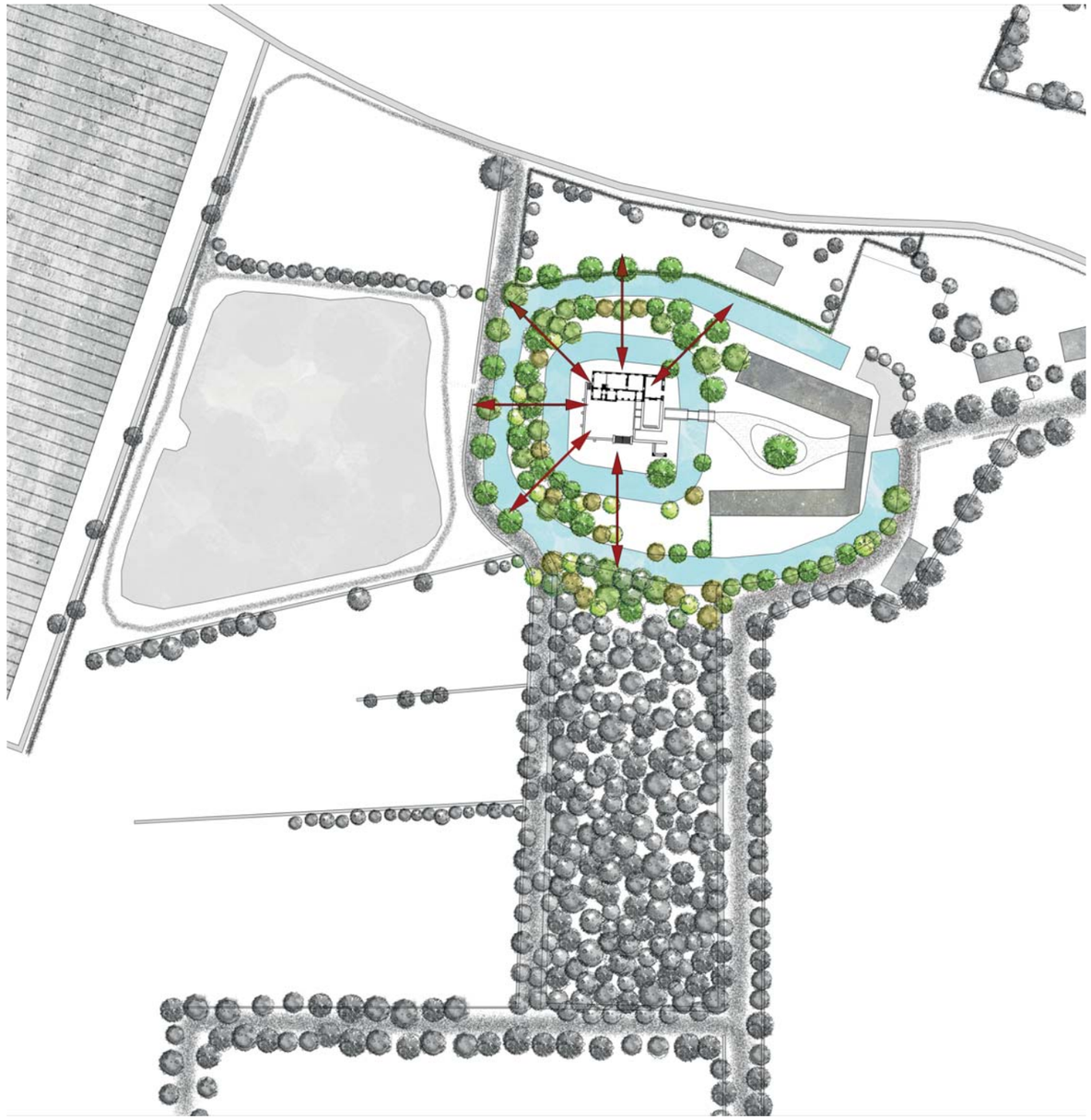


Source: Google Maps

Source: Google Maps

Image from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

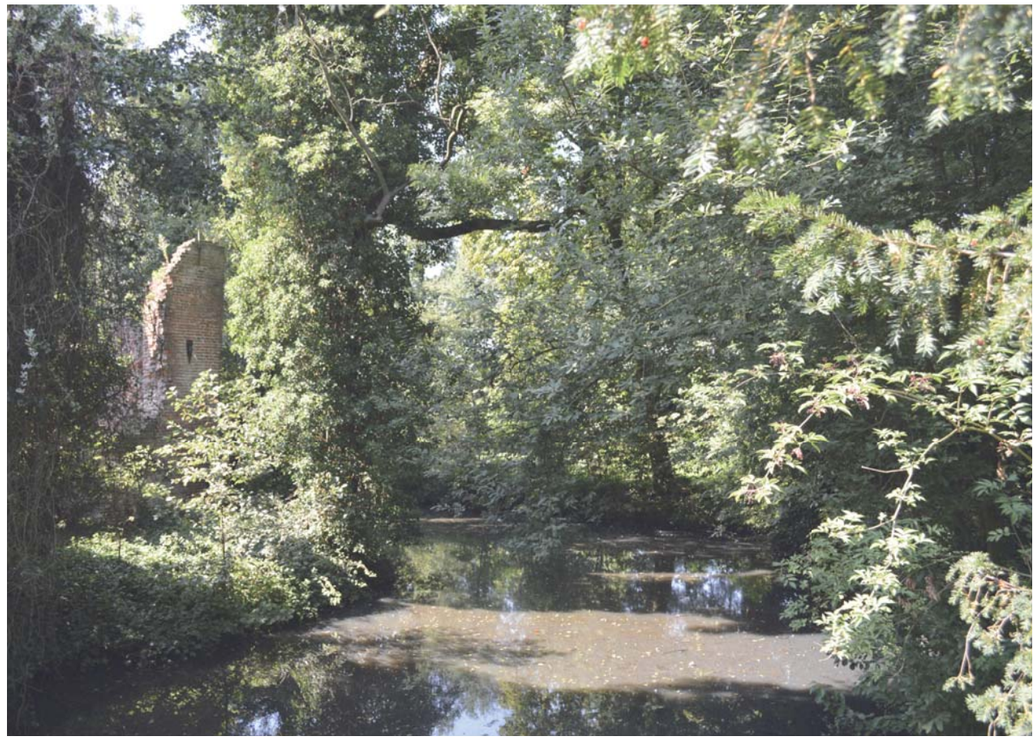
Image from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=ClJwliHGBds



Dense vegetation creates an enclosed and romantic scenery. The combined presence of the nature and the ruin make both the ruin and the nature more interesting.

N

Image from: http://mkuijpers.nl/kastelen/kasteel-asten/



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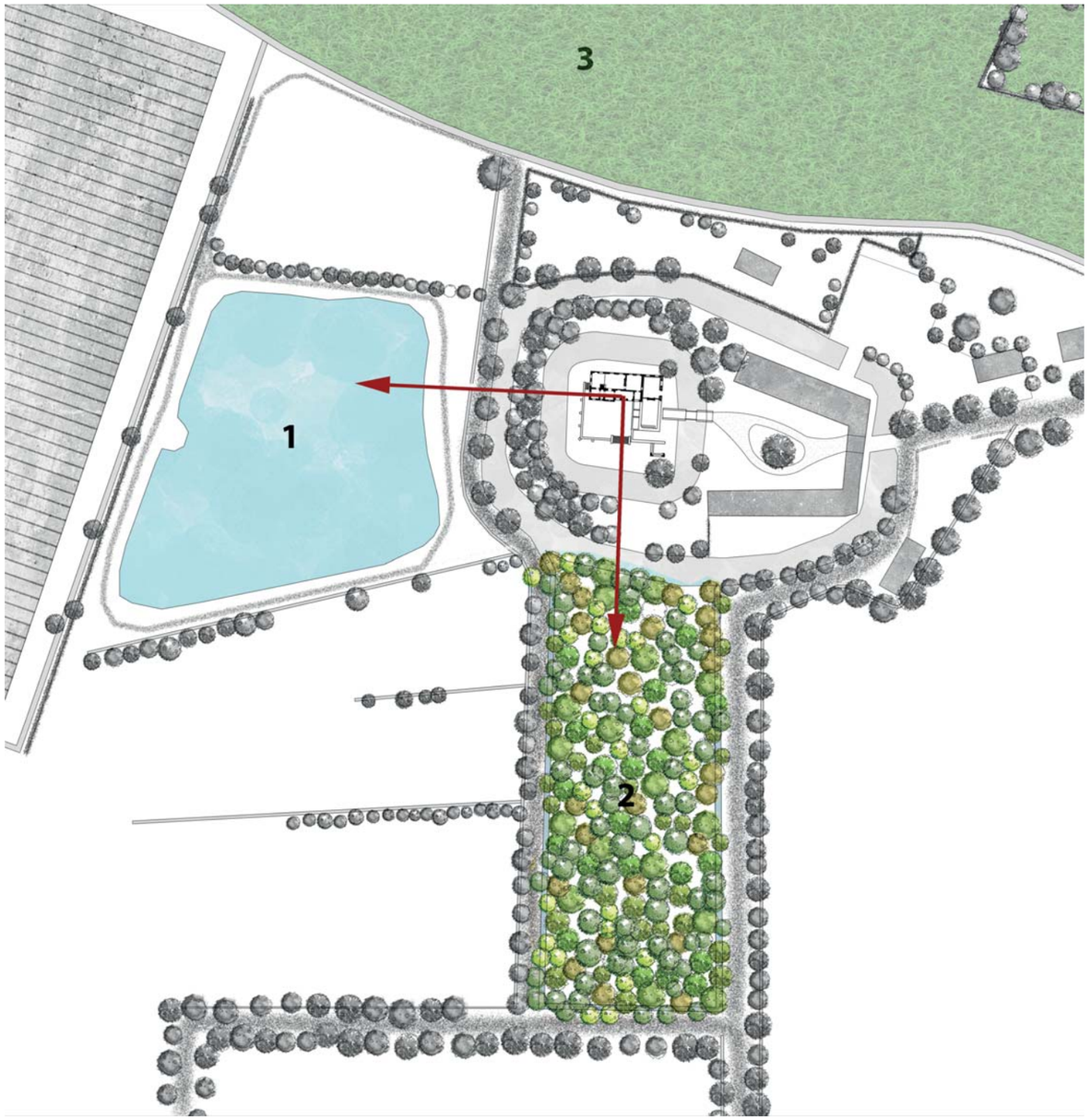
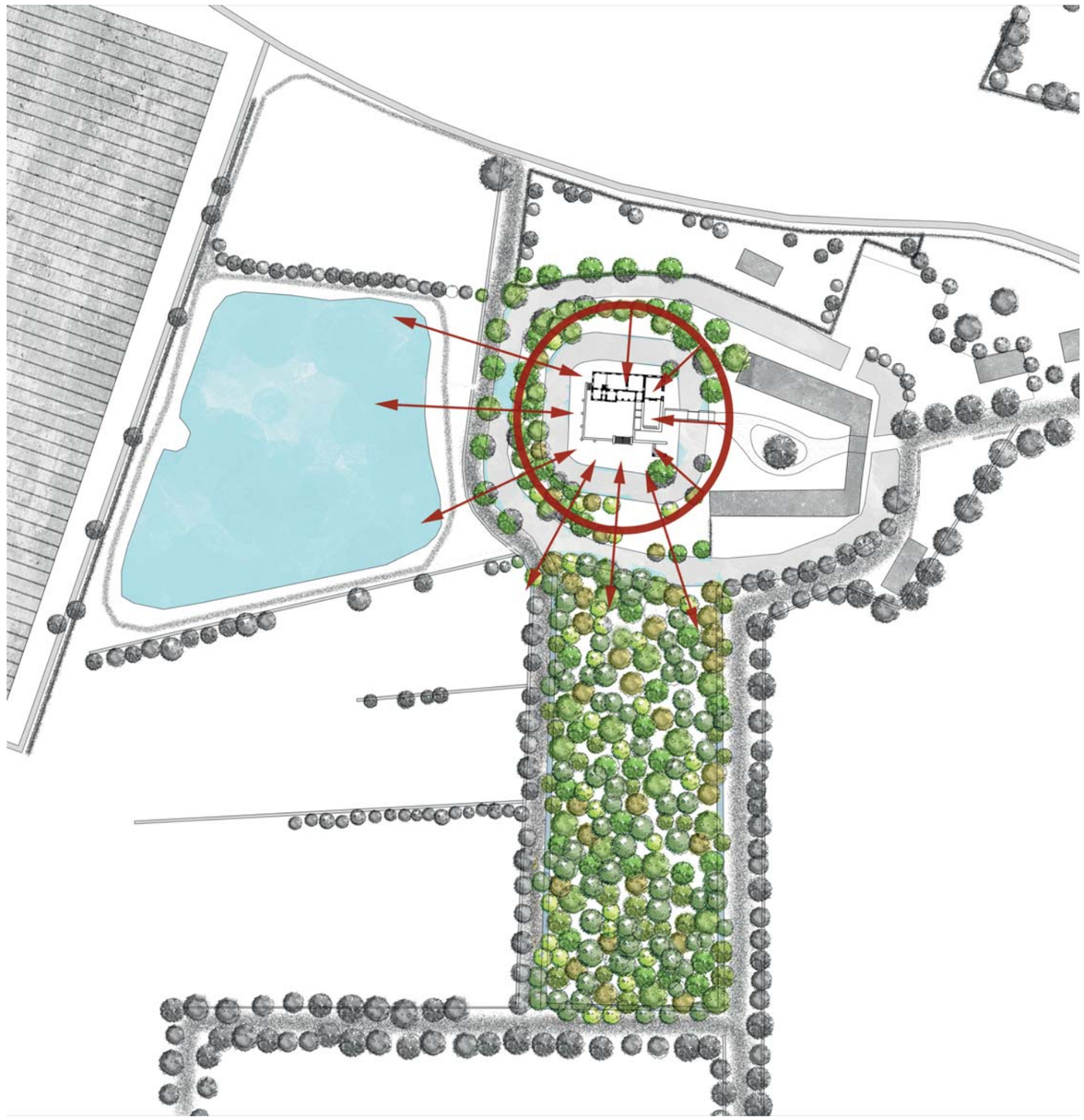


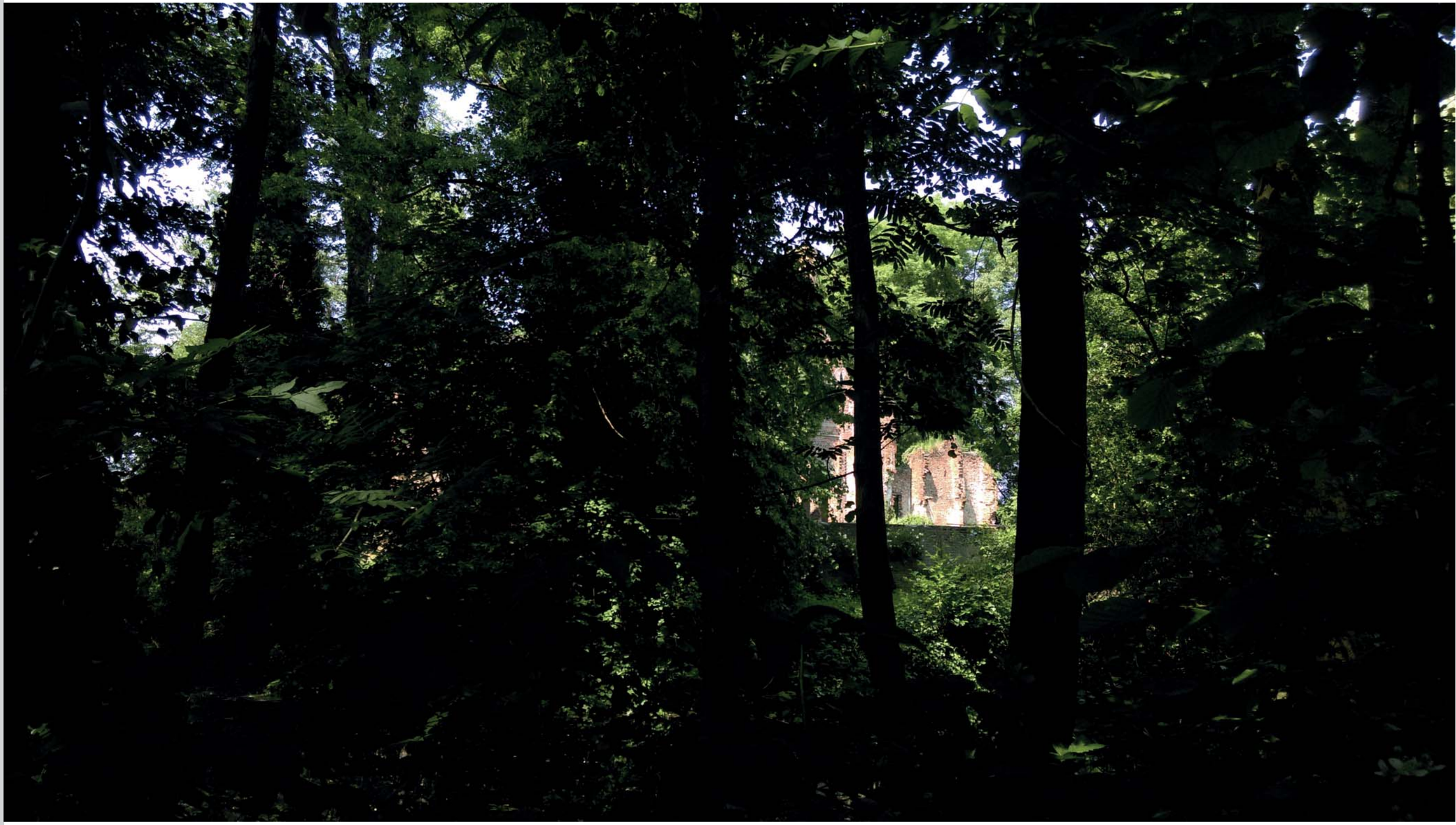
Surrounding qualitative landscapes:
a pond (1), a forest (2) and a meadow (3).

N



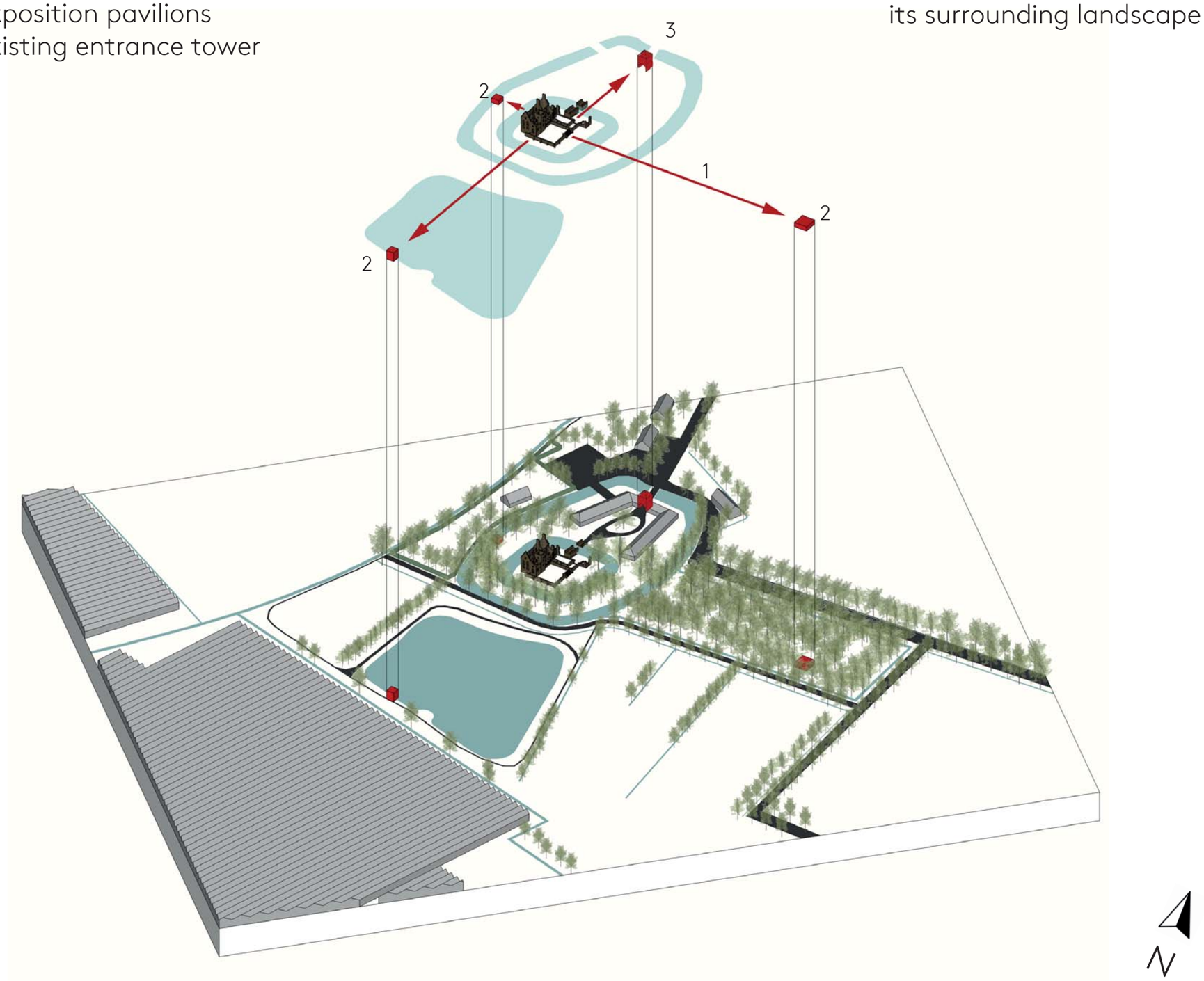
Regardless of the dense nature, the ruin is still visible from all around. In addition, the forest and pond are visible from the ruin as well.

N



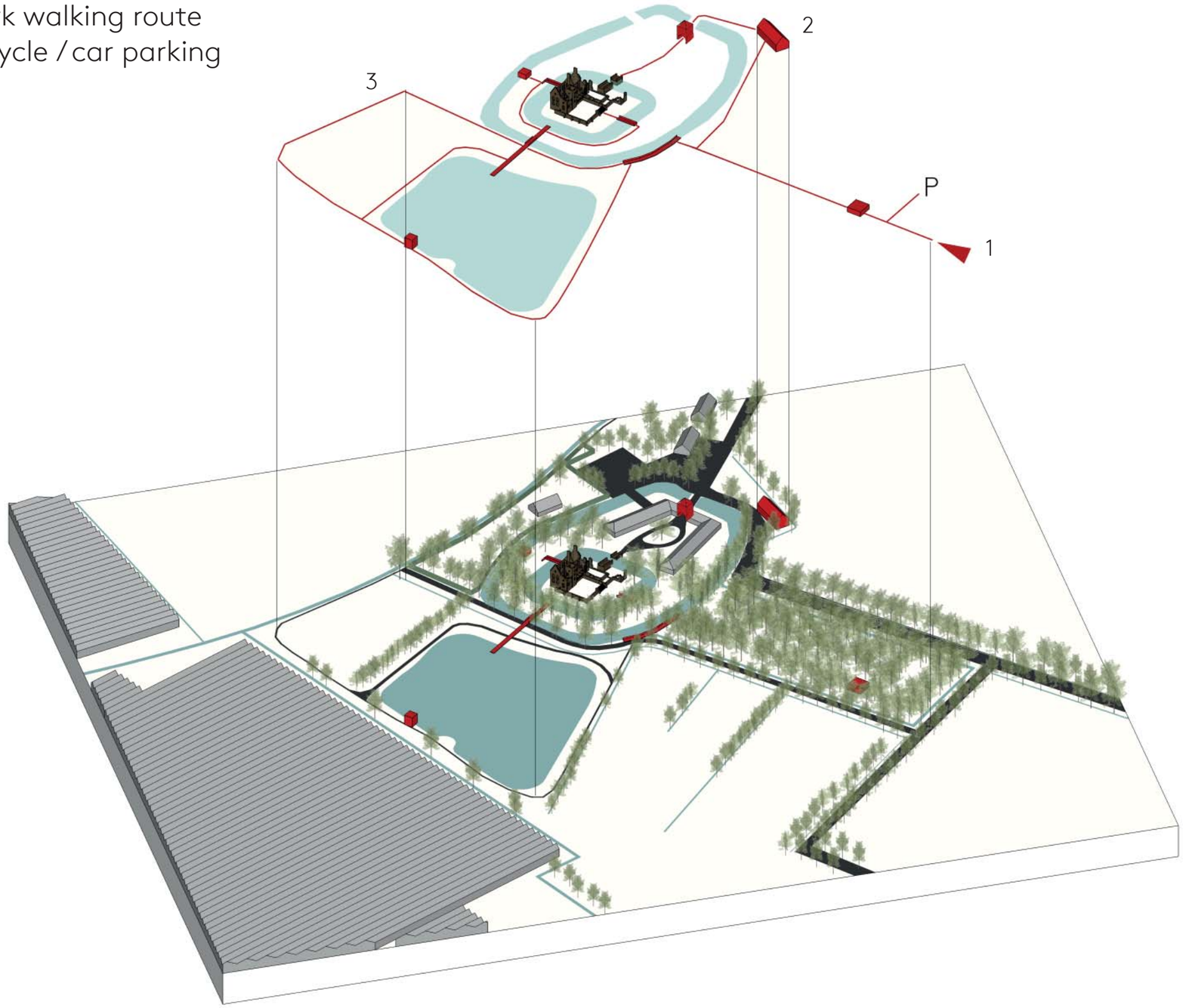
1 Connecting sightlines
2 Exposition pavilions
3 Existing entrance tower

Connecting the ruin with
its surrounding landscape

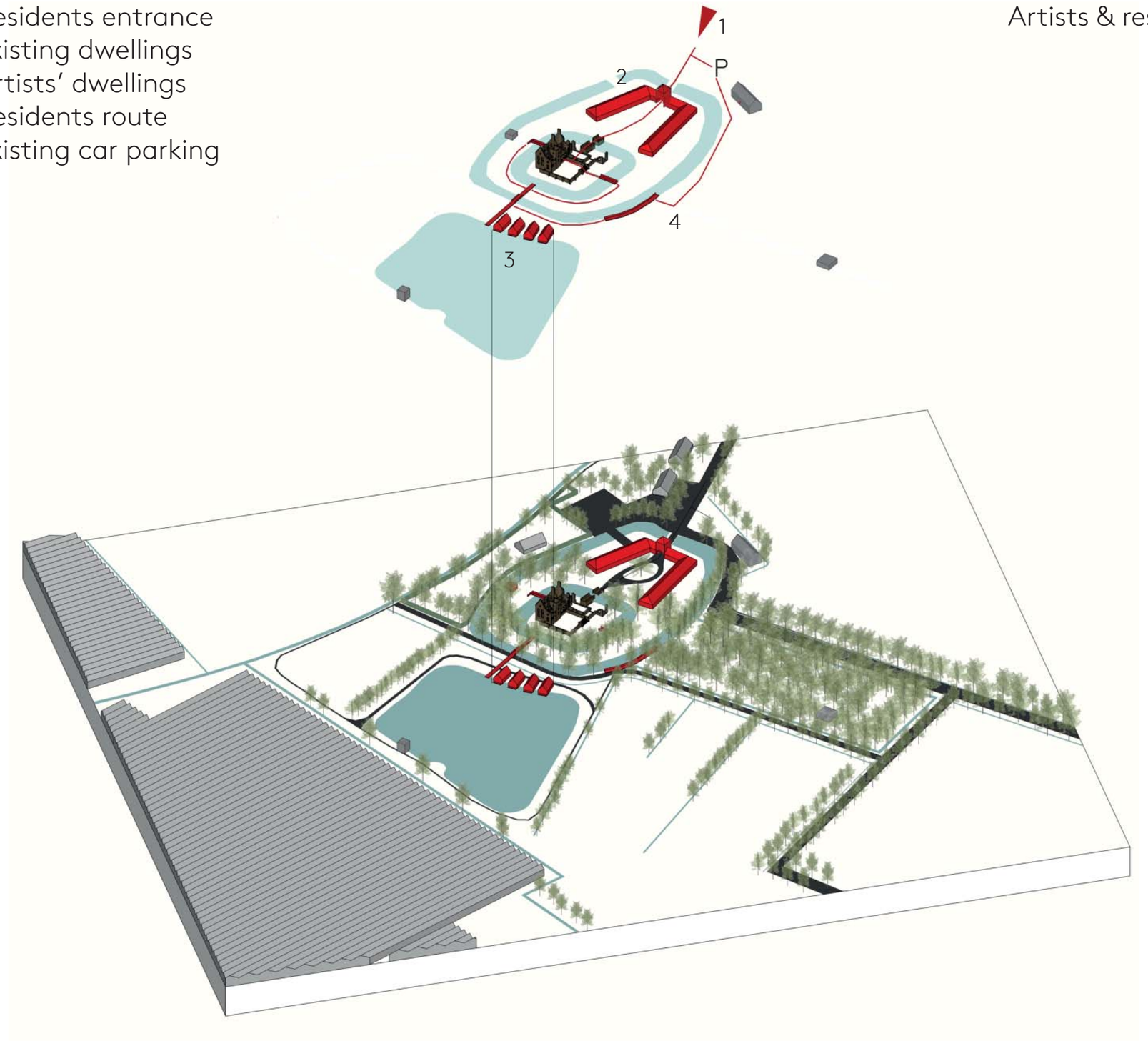


1 Visitors park entrance
2 ‘Anna Ceelen huis‘
3 Park walking route
P Bicycle / car parking

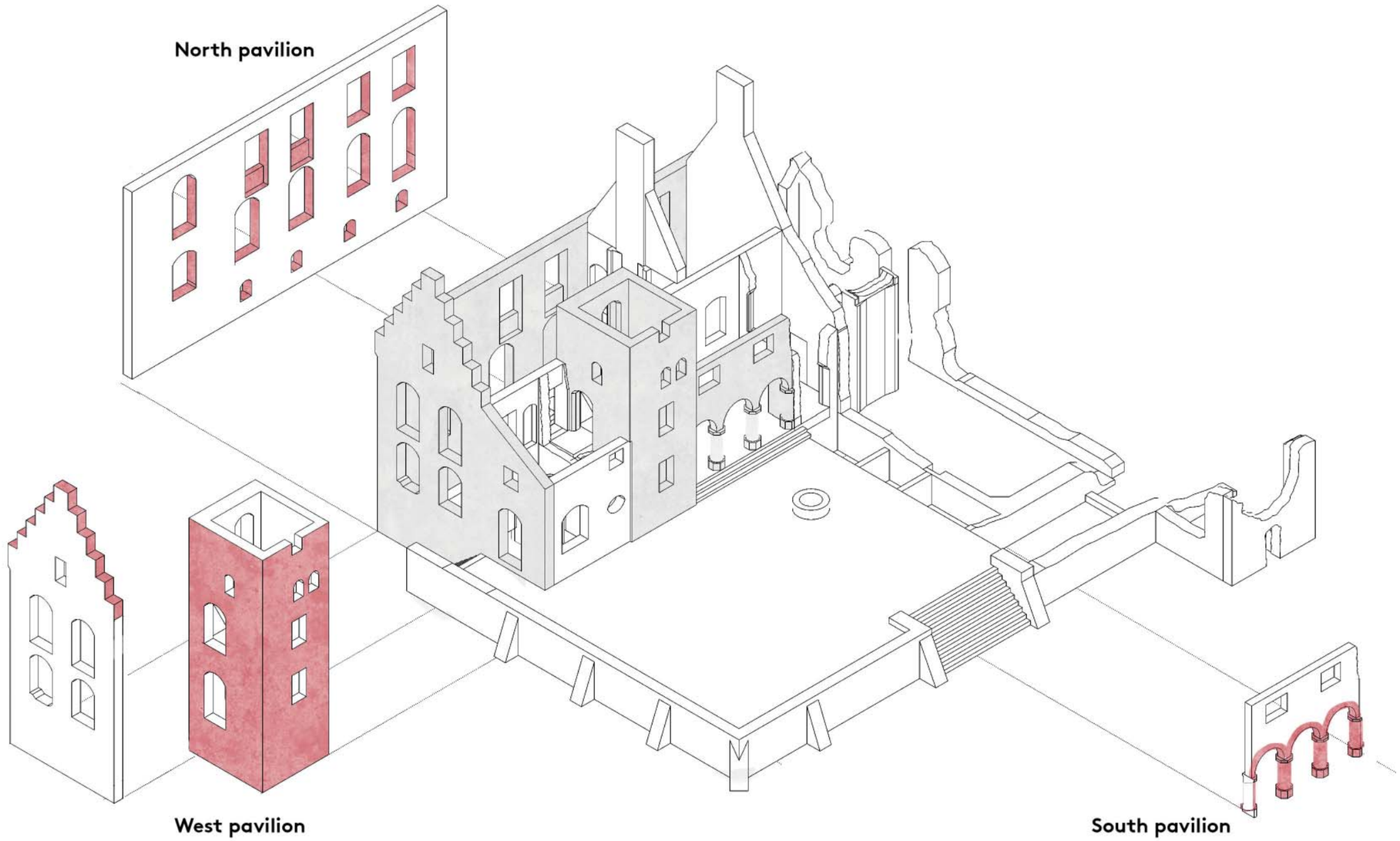
Visitable exhibitions

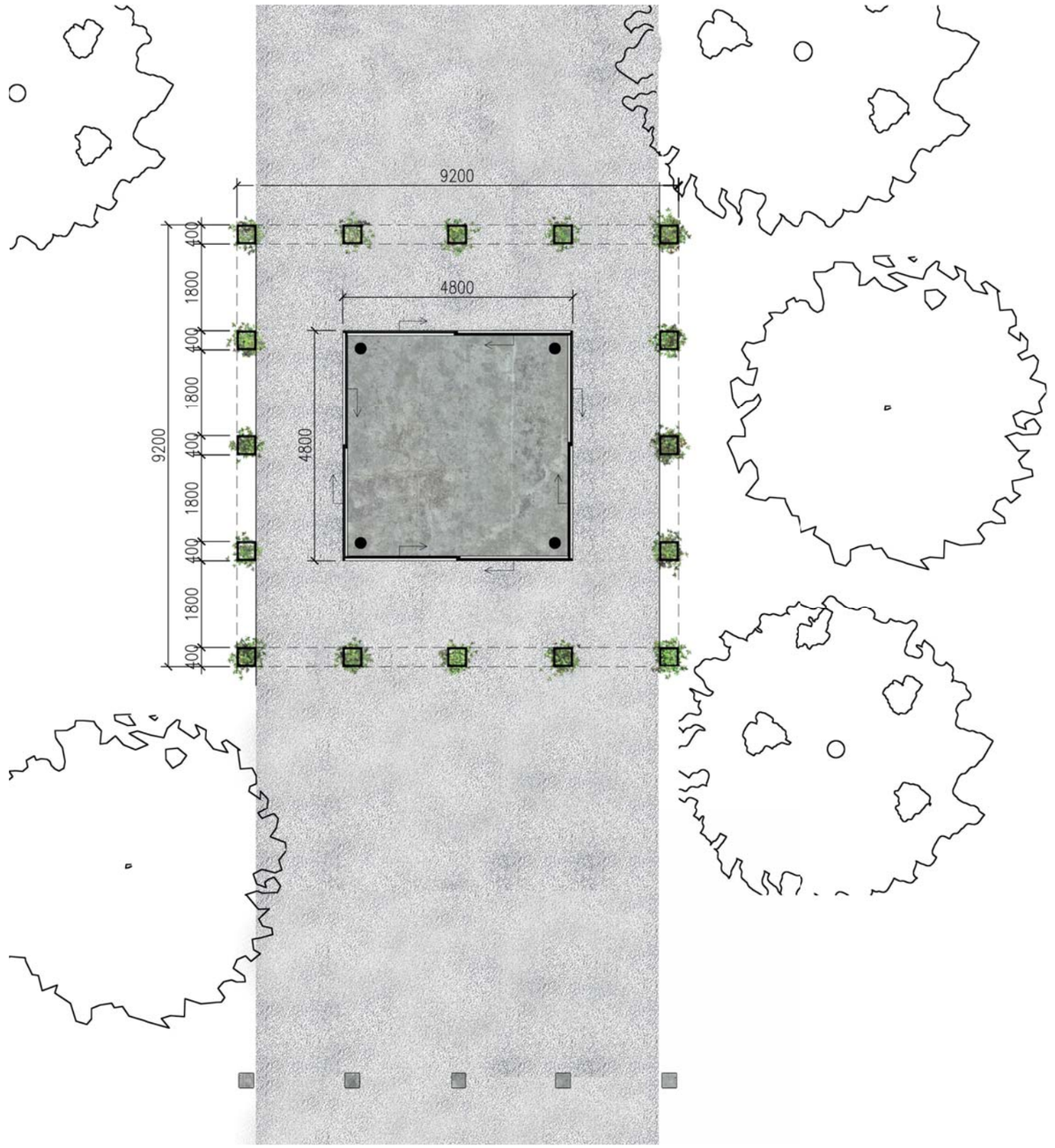


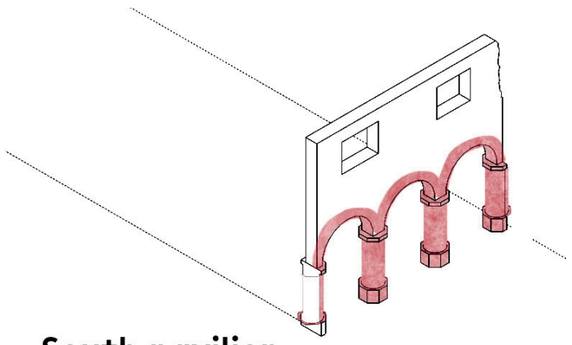
1 Residents entrance
2 Existing dwellings
3 Artists’ dwellings
4 Residents route
P Existing car parking



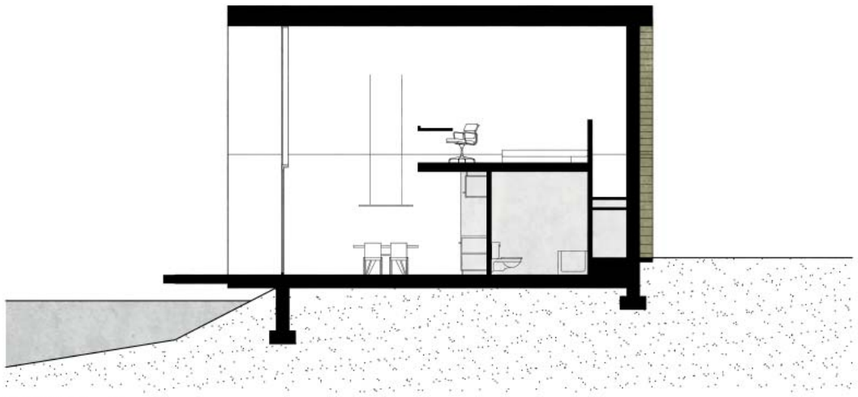
Artists & residents


North pavilion
West pavilion
South pavilion

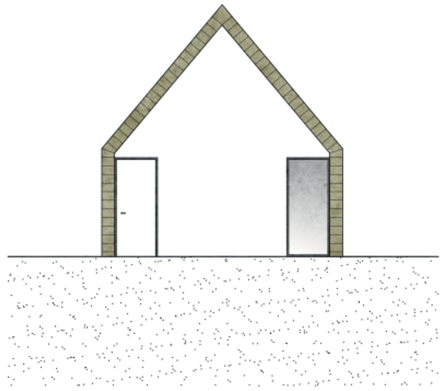




South pavilion



Section D



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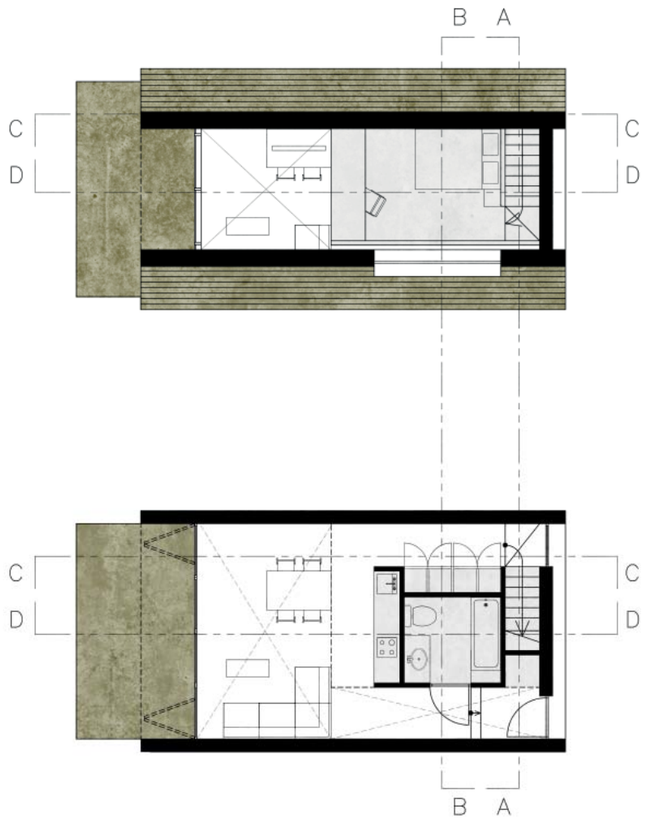

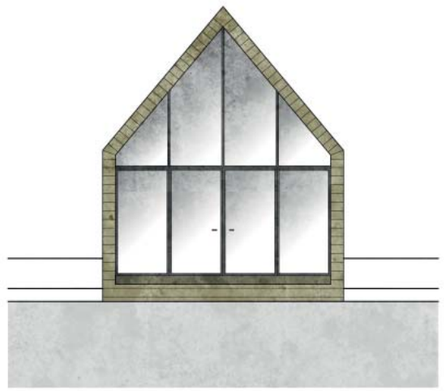

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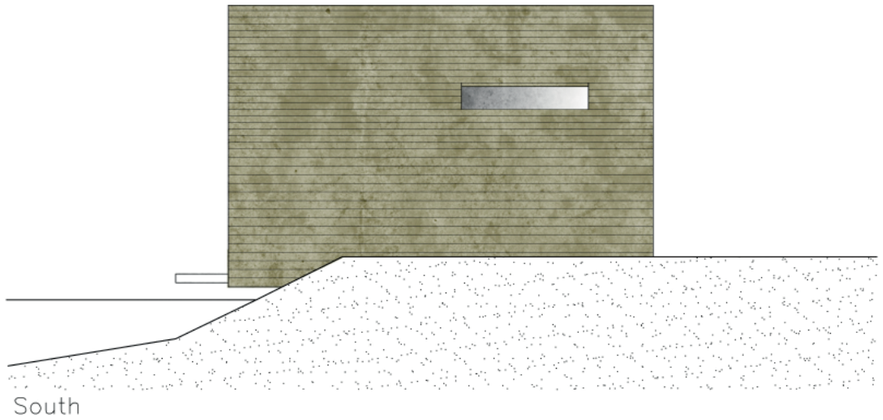
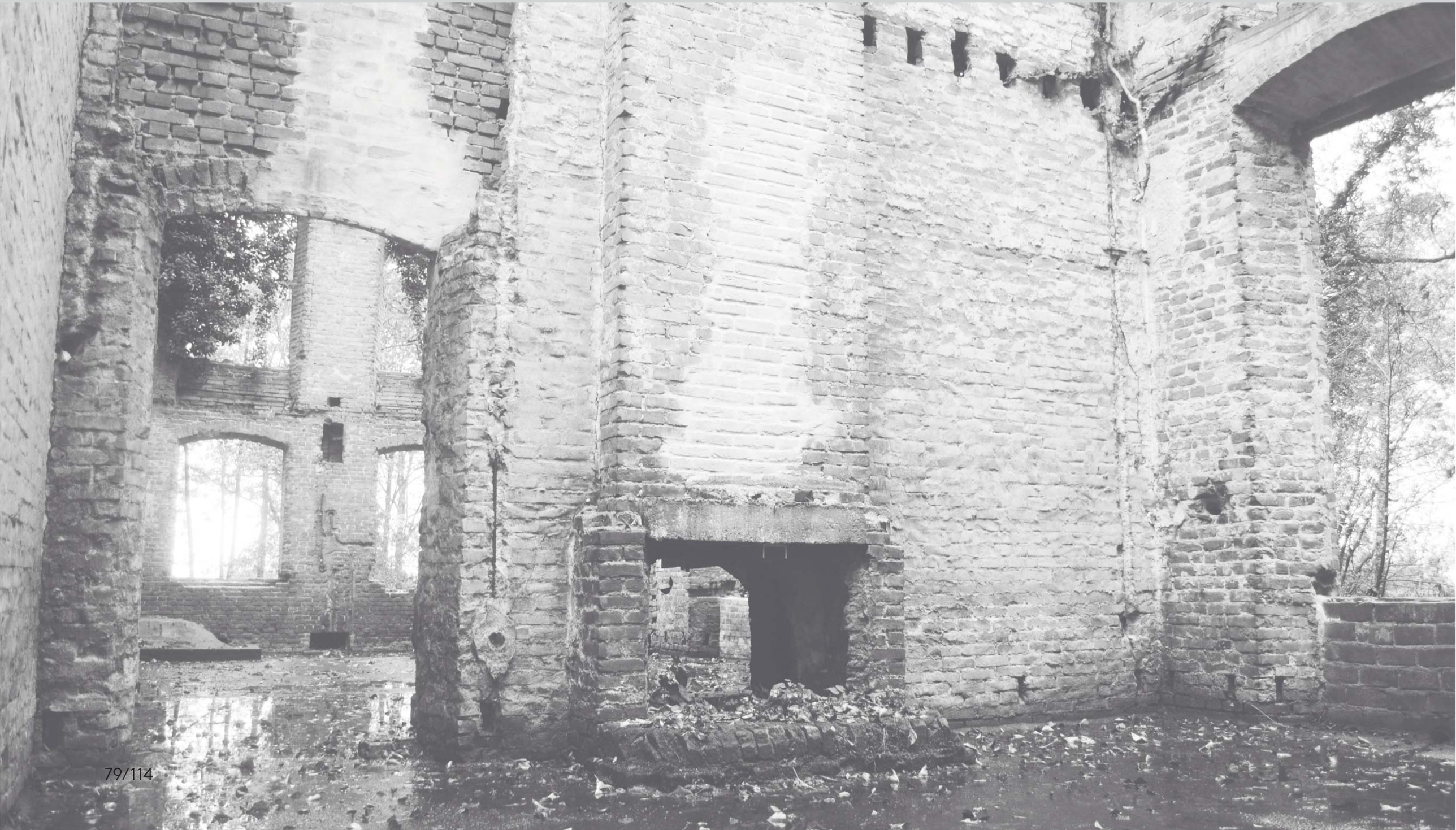
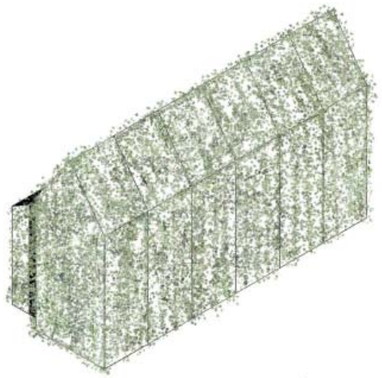


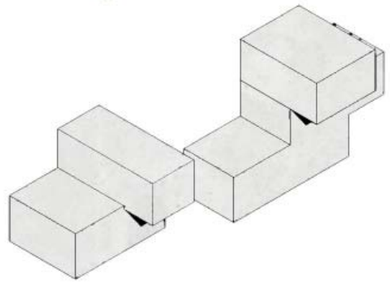
South

7 The design for the ruin

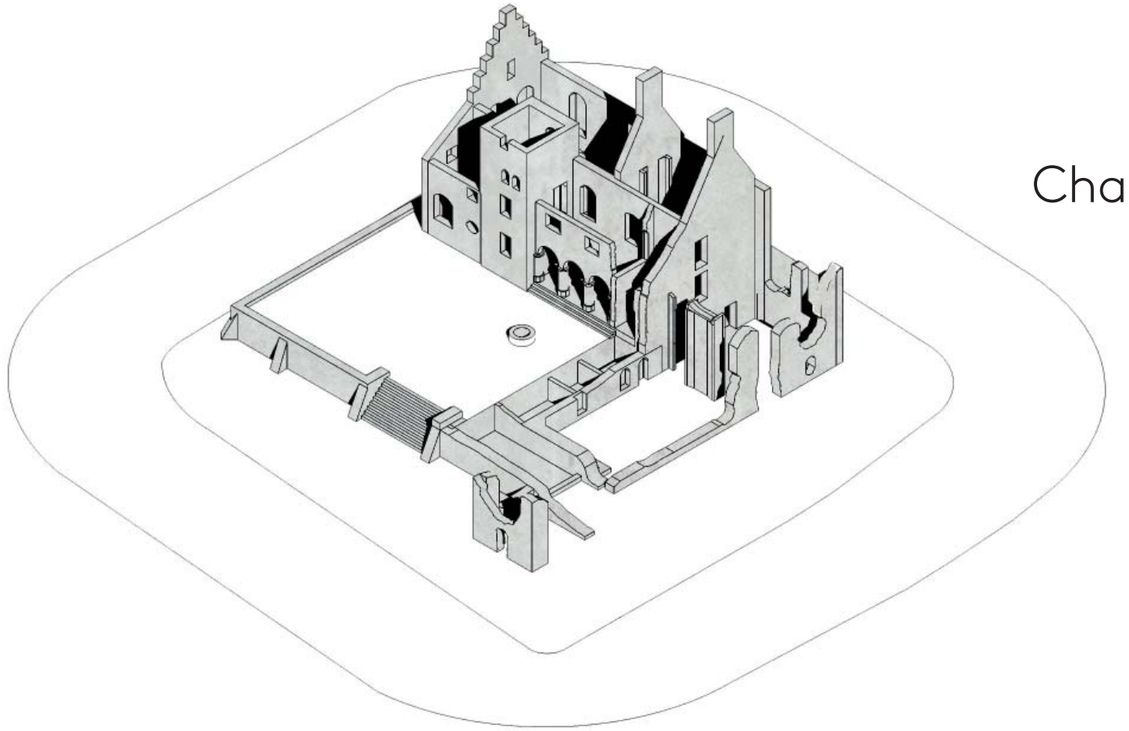




Change as growth

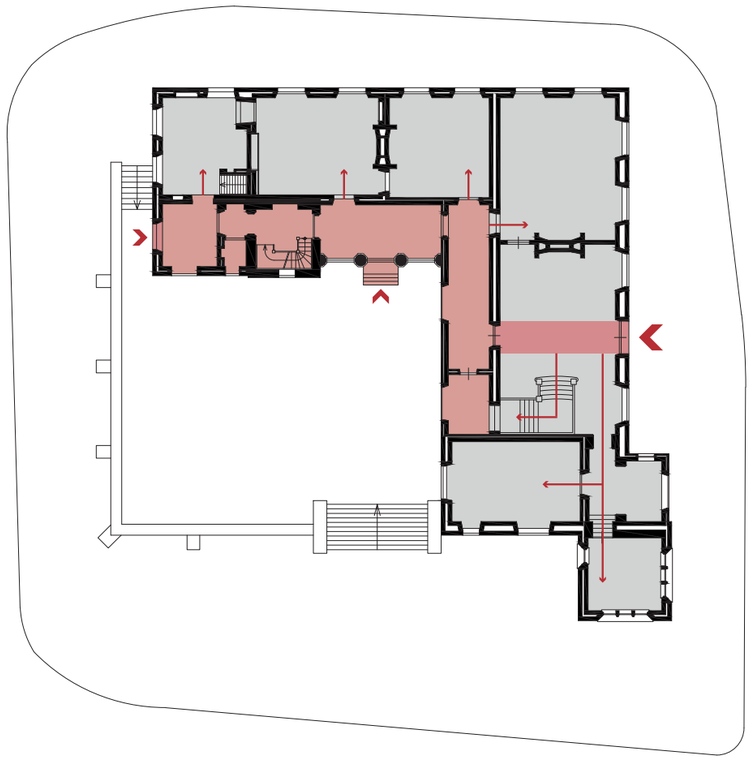


Witness of change



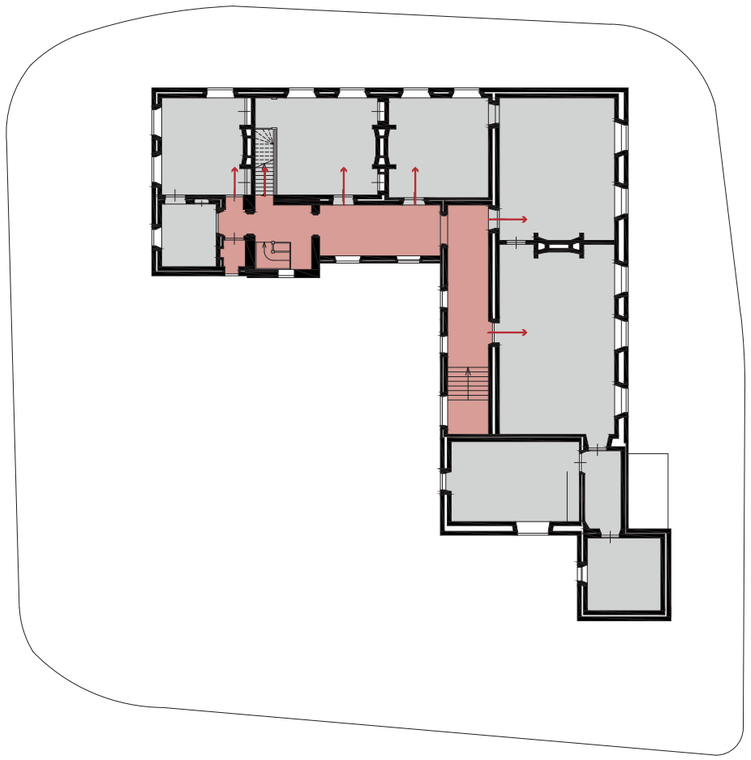
Change as decline

1
2
3
3
3
3
4
5
1 Atelier 33 m2
2 Atelier 43 m2
3 Decay gardens / exposition
4 Central access square
5 Visitors toilet
N

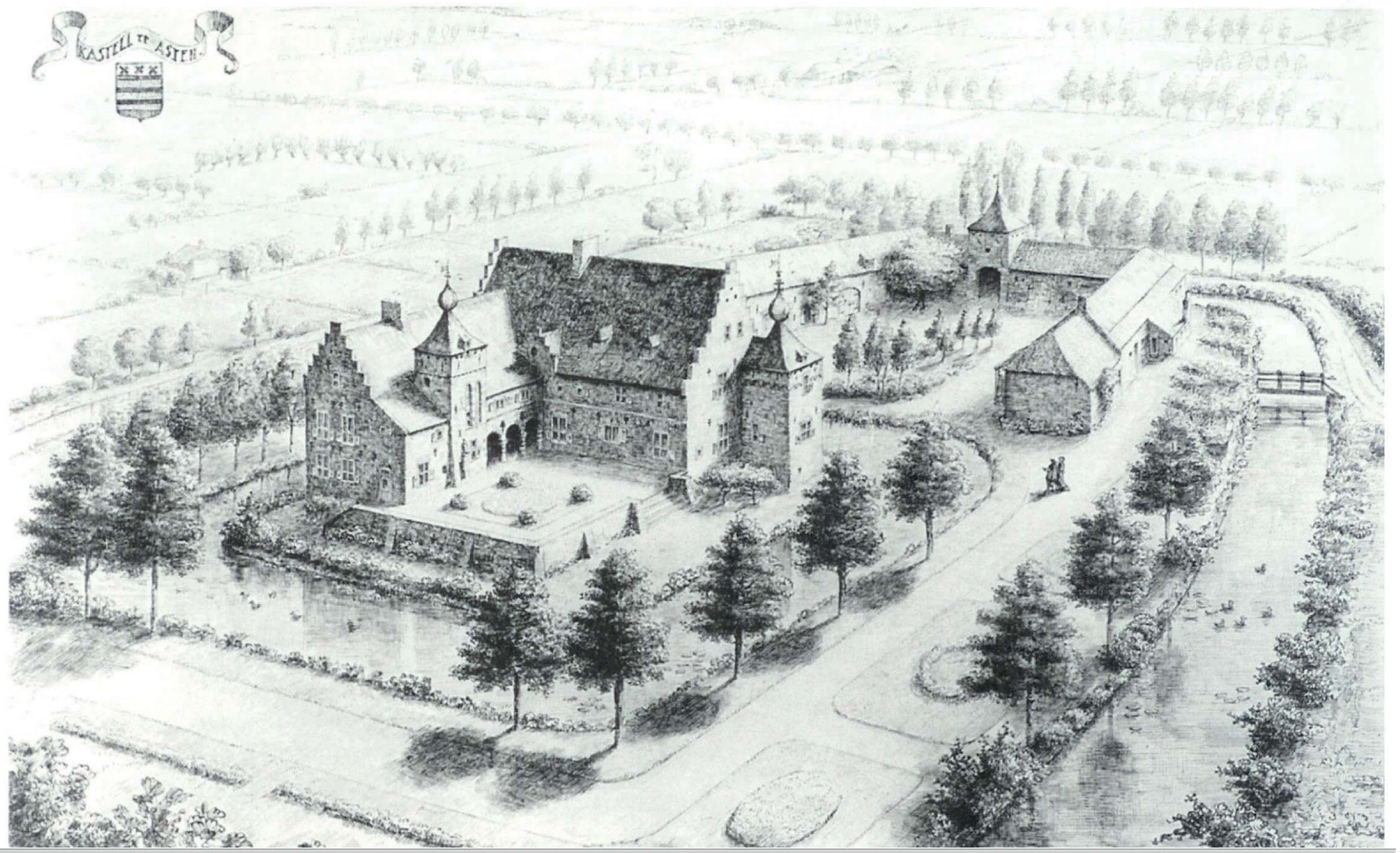


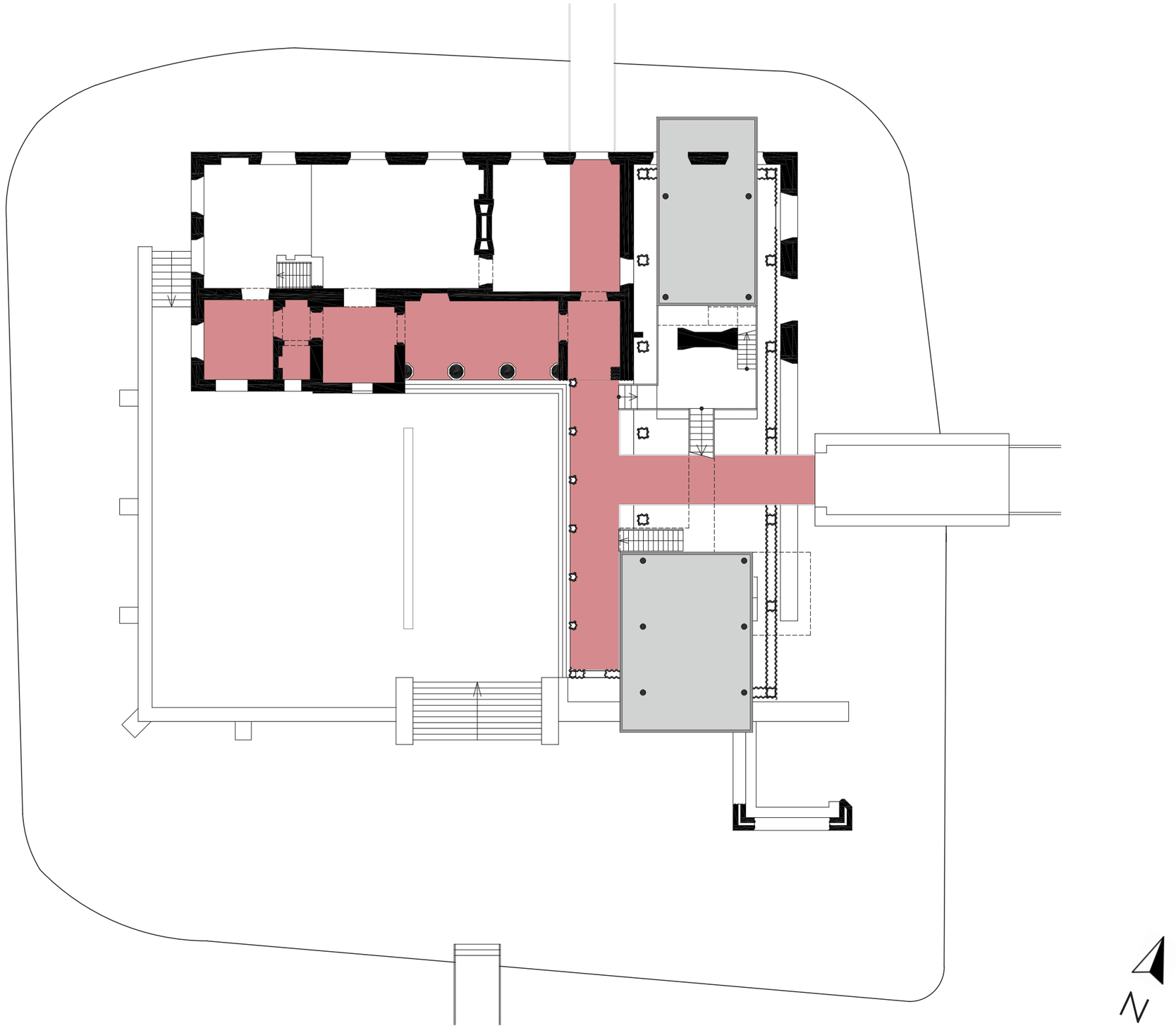
First floor

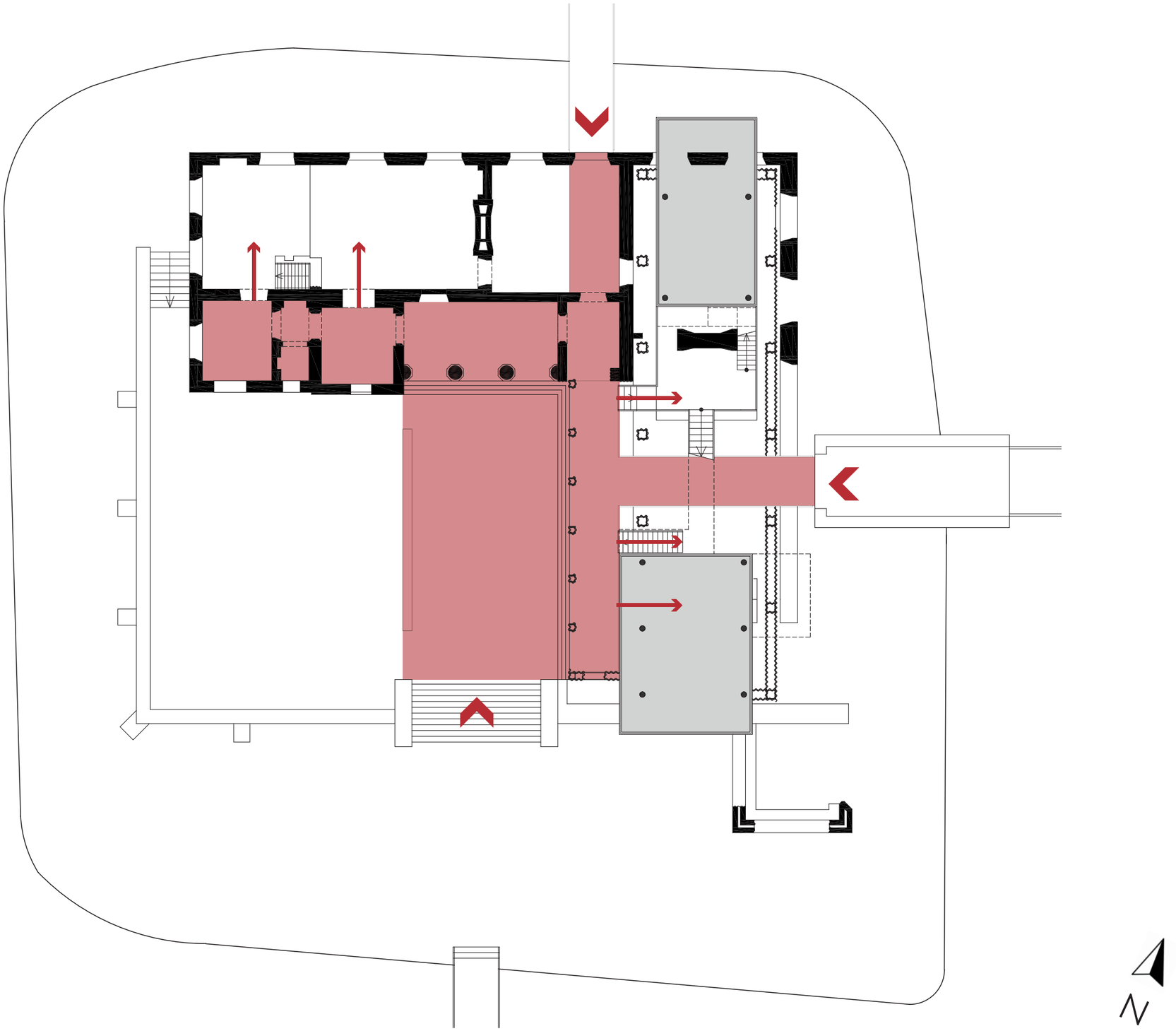
1935

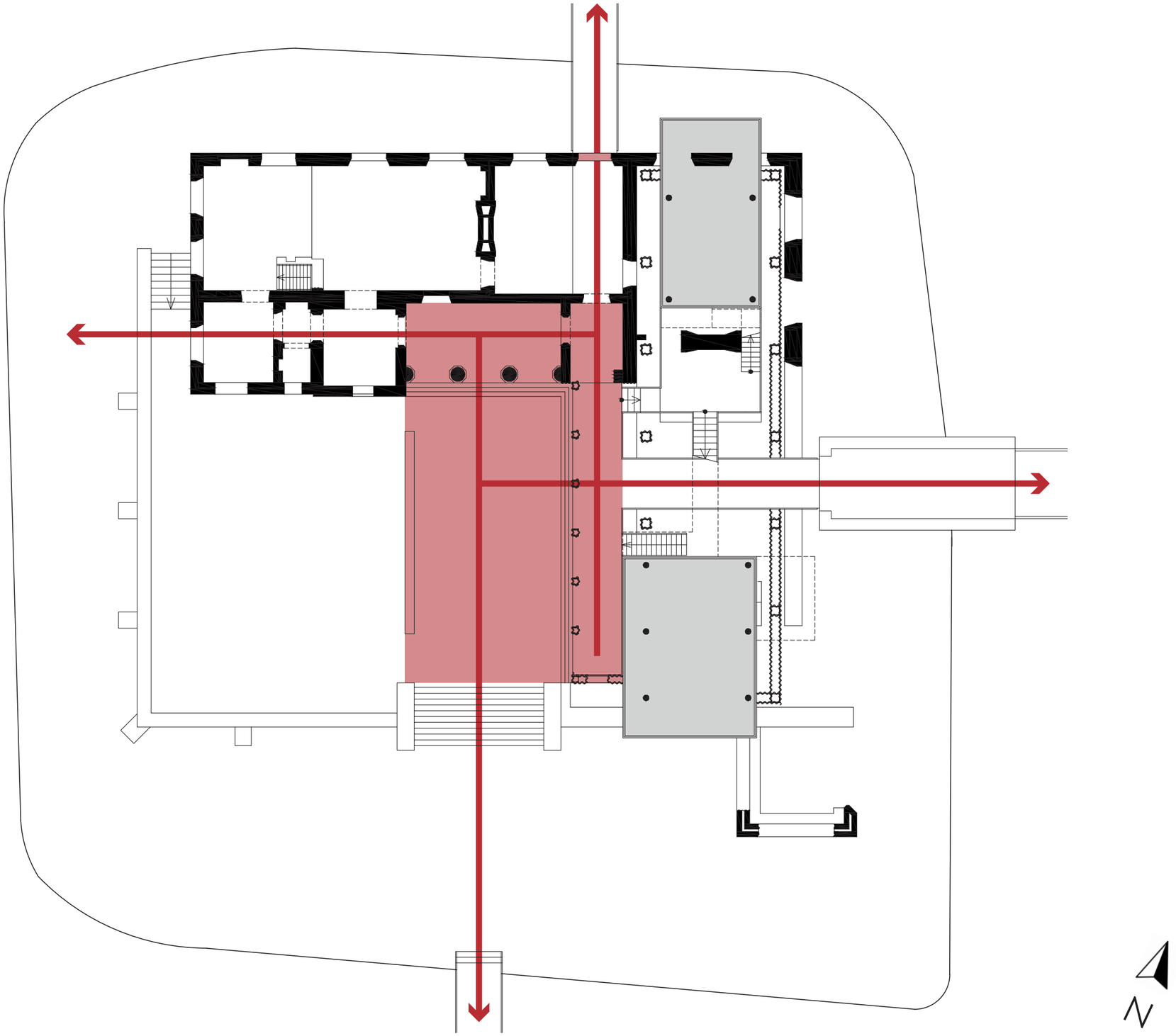


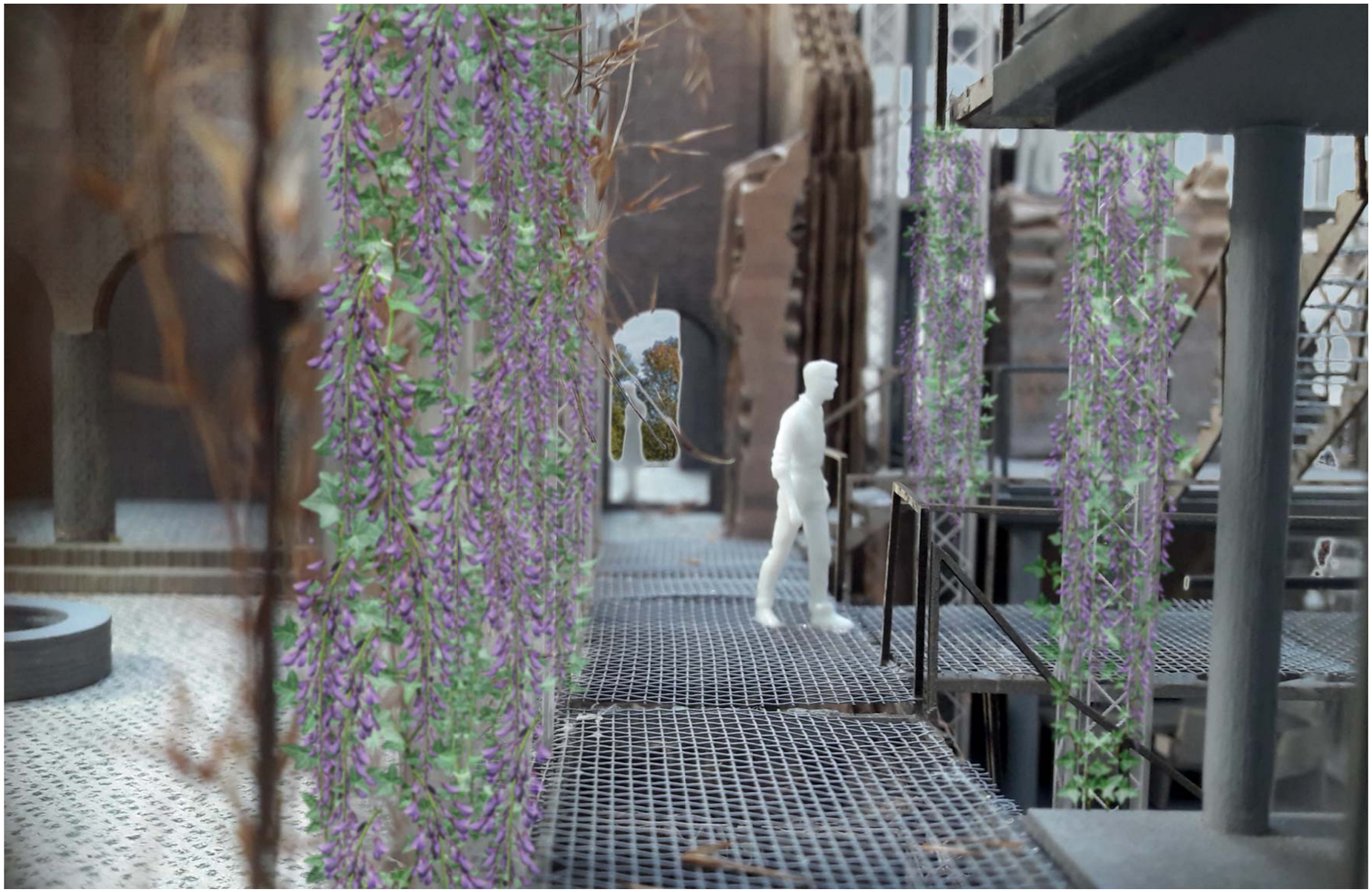
Second floor

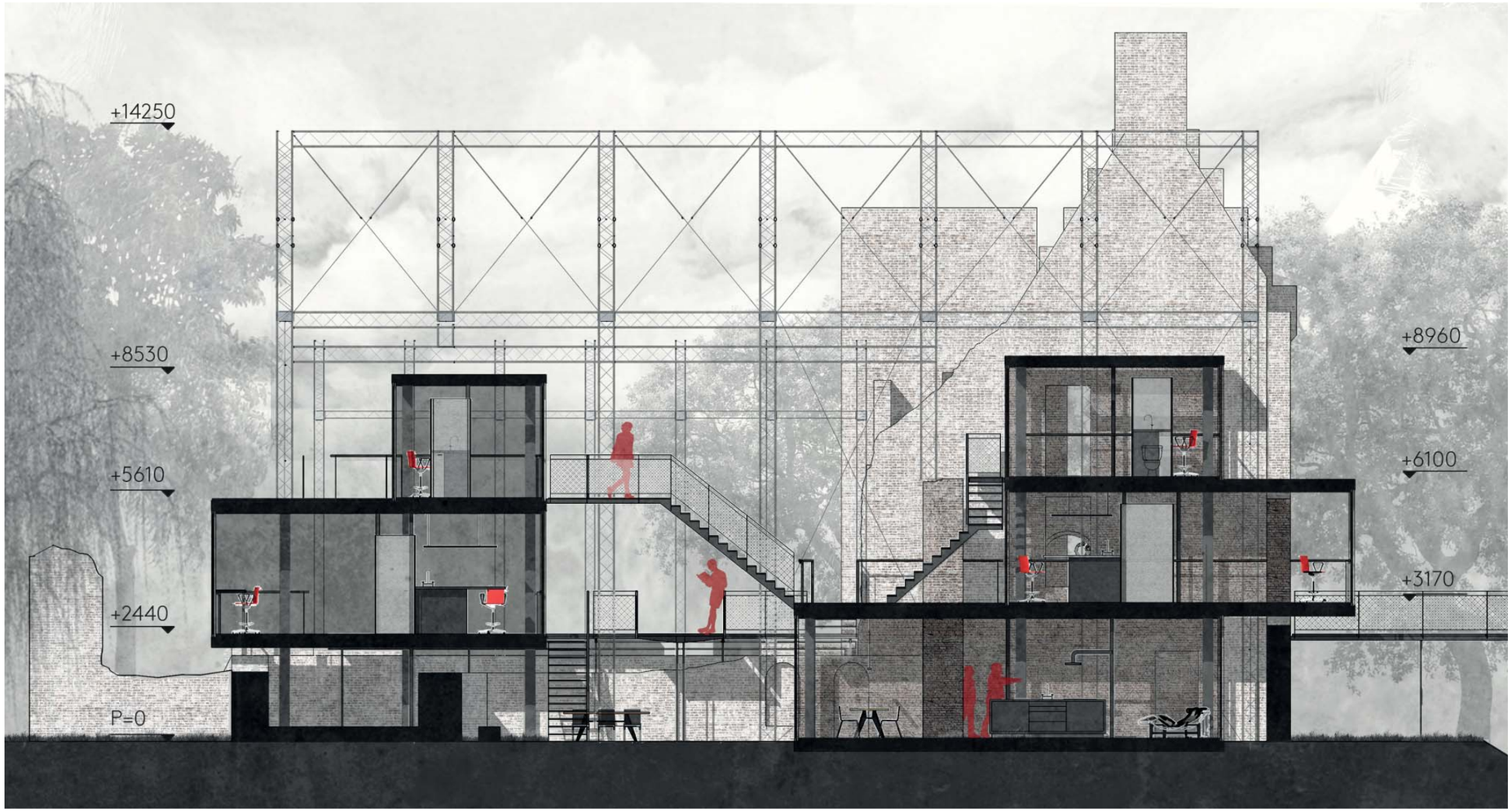

KASTEEL TE ASTEN



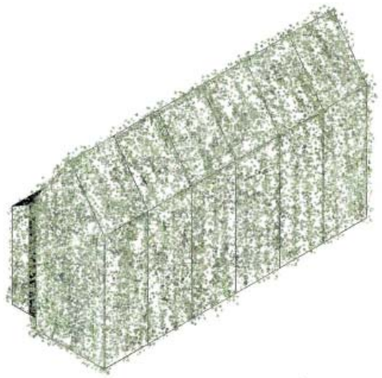




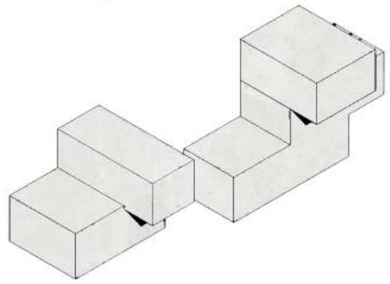



+14250
+8530
+5610
+2440
P=0
+8960
+6100
+3170

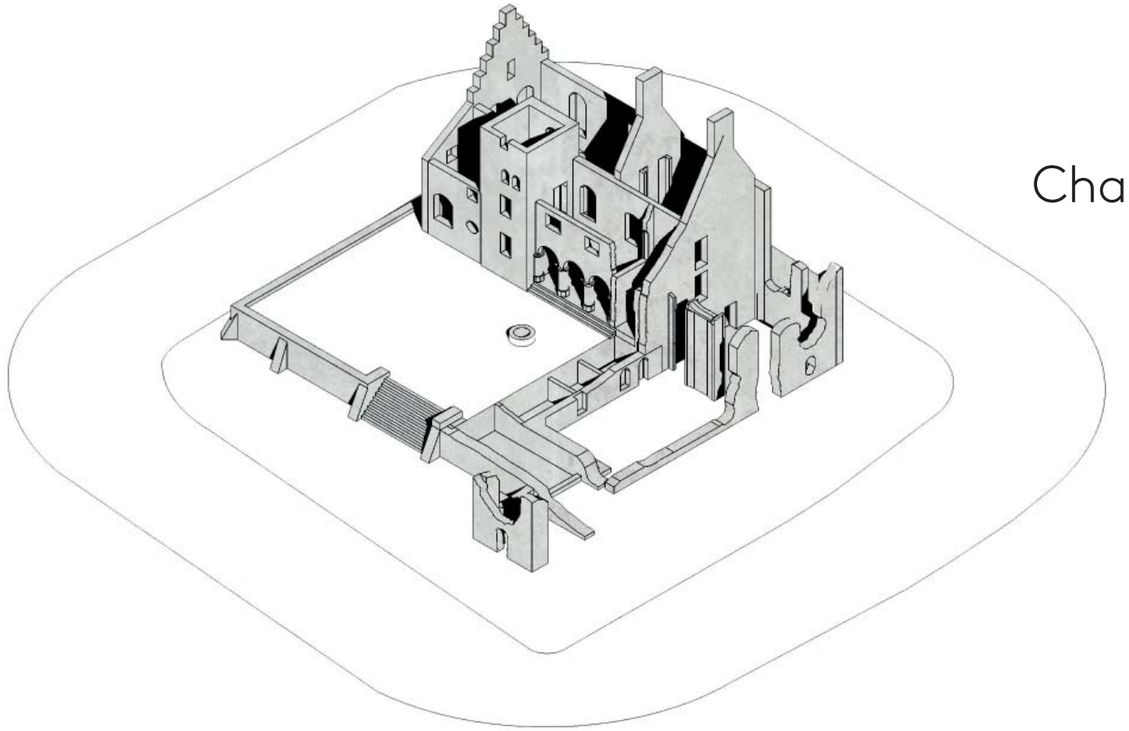
+14250
+8530
+5610
+2440
P=0
+8960
+6100
+3170



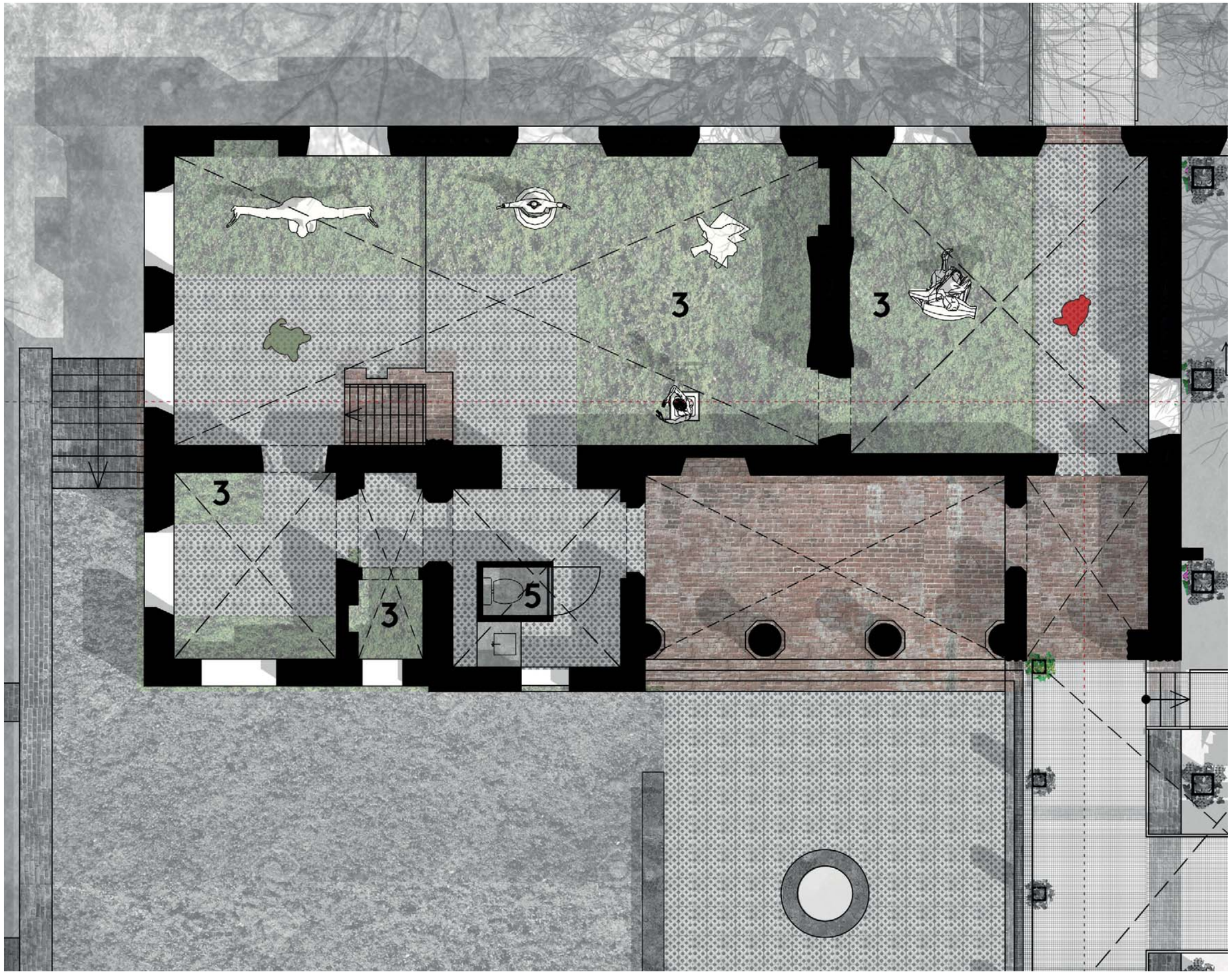
Change as growth



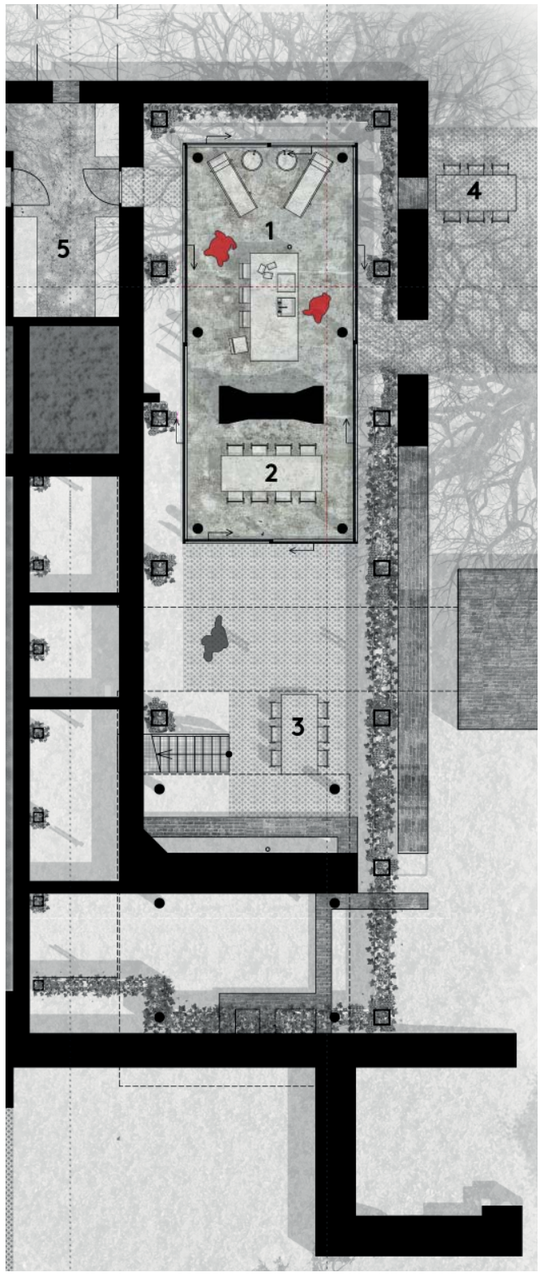
Witness of change



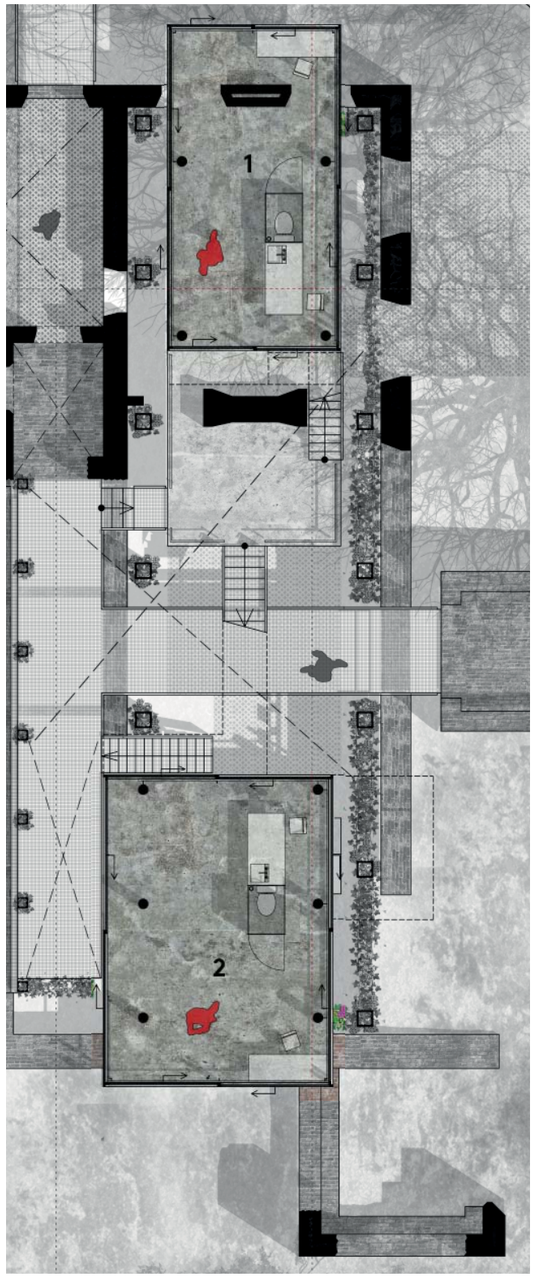
Change as decline


3
3
3
3
5

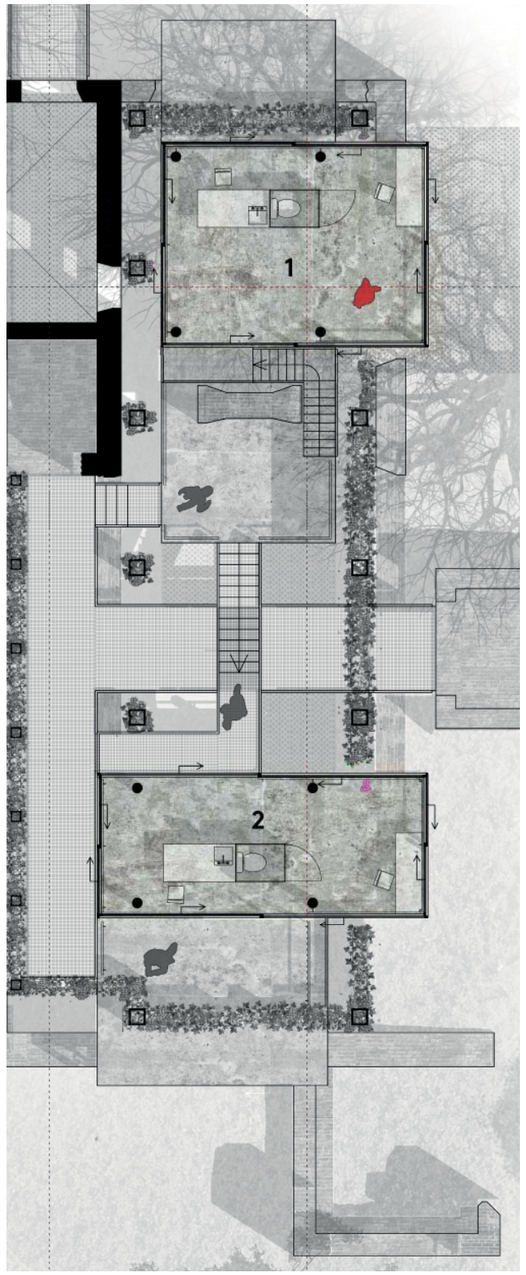
B
5
6
5



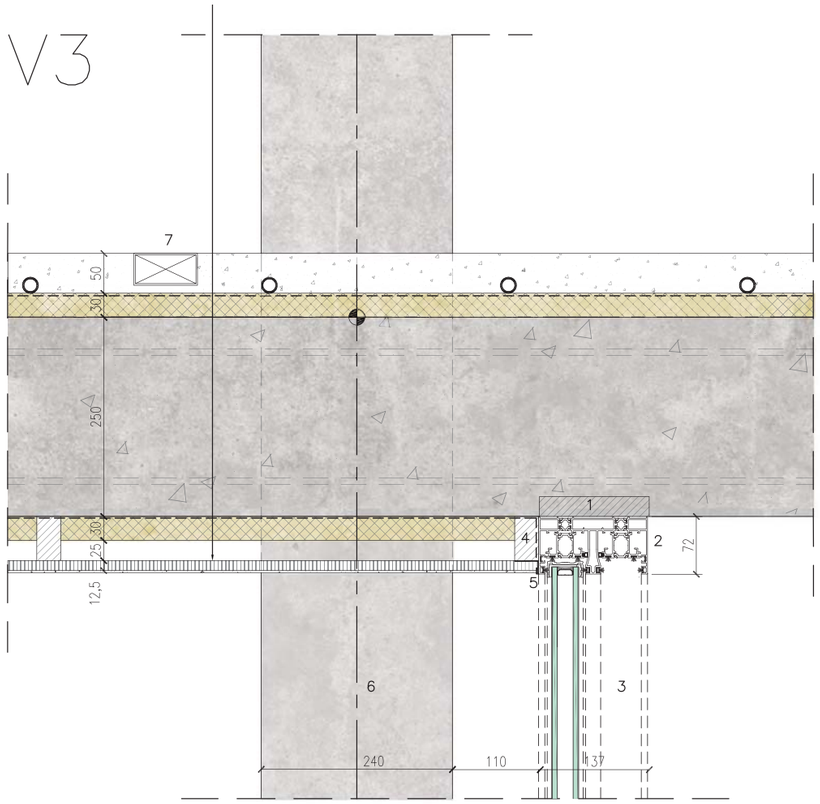
1st level

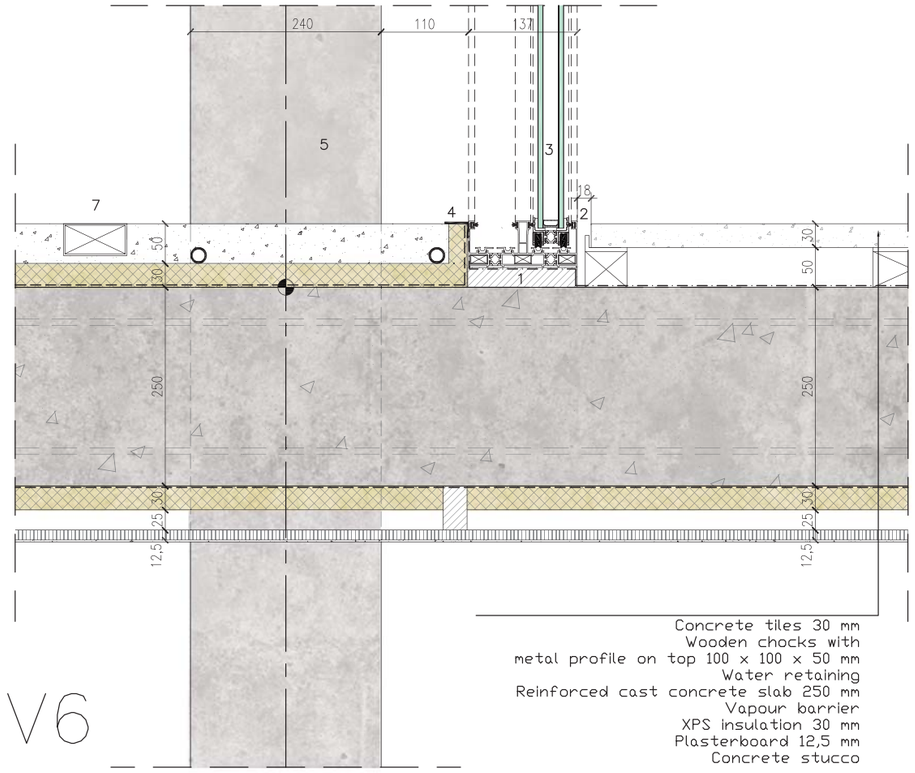


2nd level

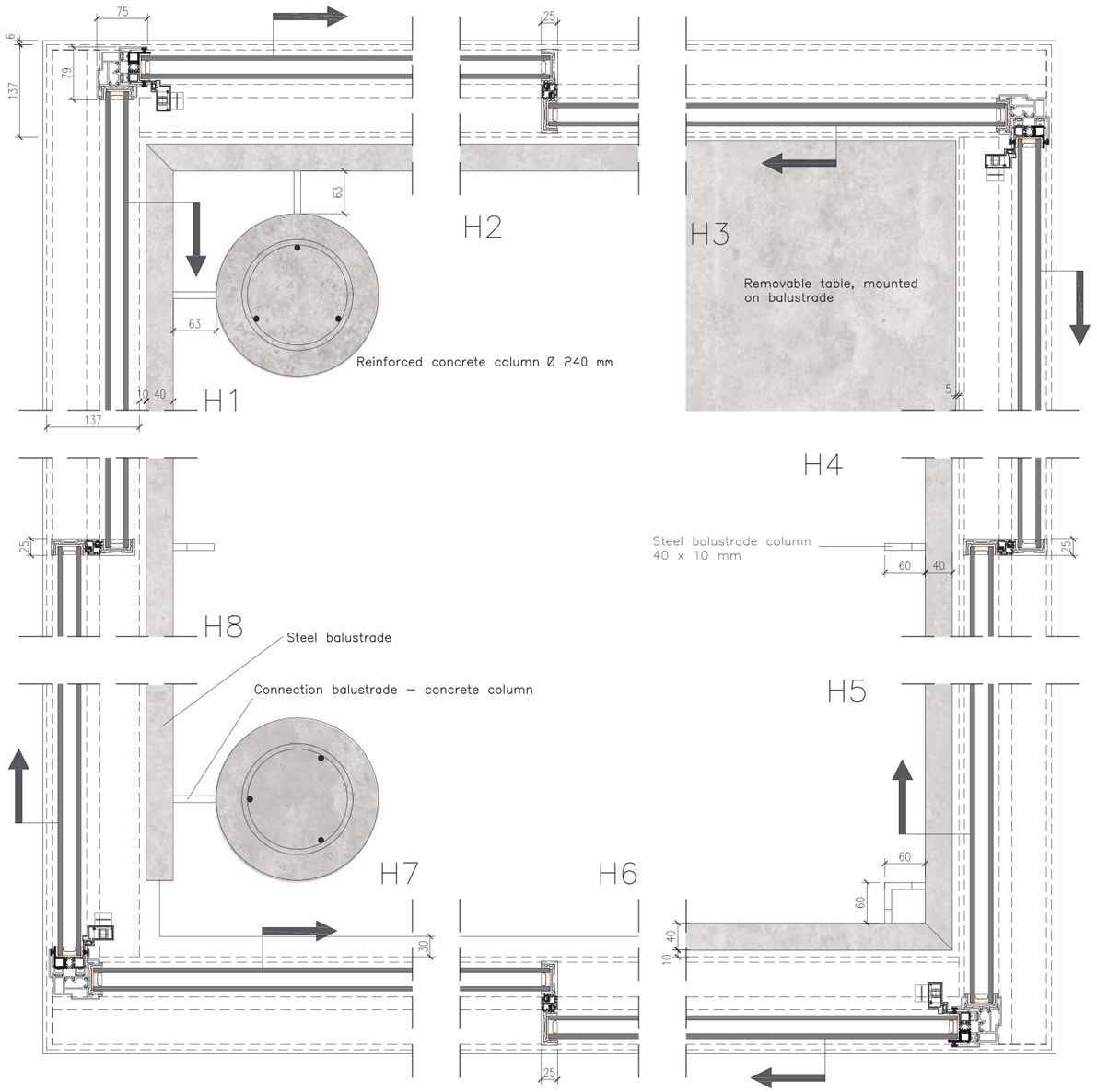


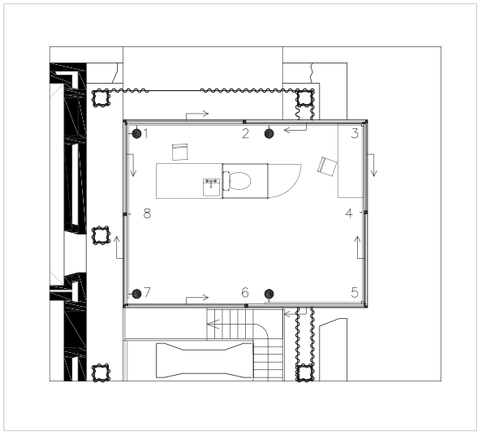
3rd level


V3
7
50
30
250
1
4
2
72
5
30
25
12,5
6
3
240
110
137


240
110
137
5
3
18
2
7
4
50
30
1
250
30
25
12,5
V6
Concrete tiles 30 mm
Wooden chocks with
metal profile on top 100 x 100 x 50 mm
Water retaining
Reinforced cast concrete slab 250 mm
Vapour barrier
XPS insulation 30 mm
Plasterboard 12,5 mm
Concrete stucco

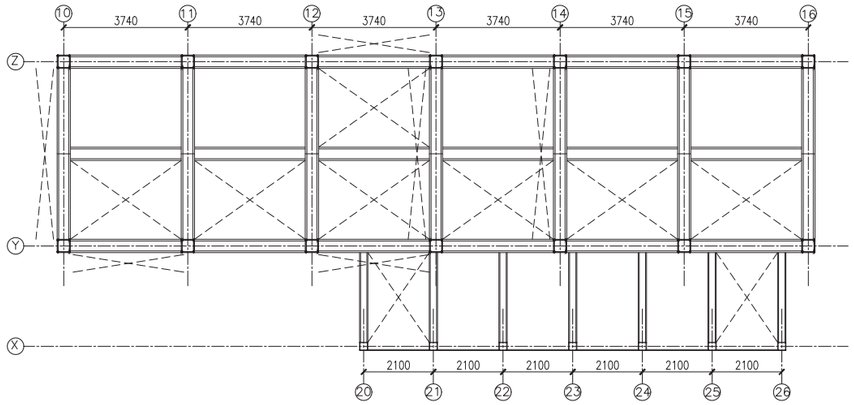
The design

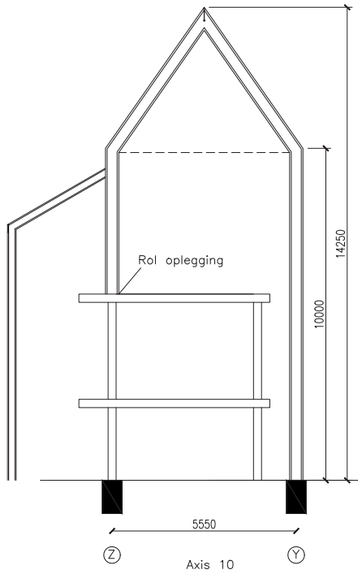


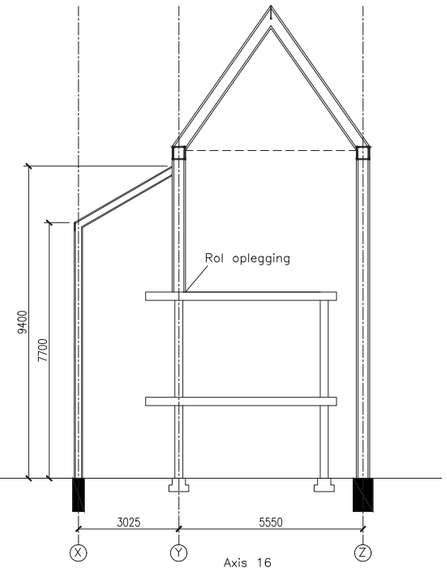


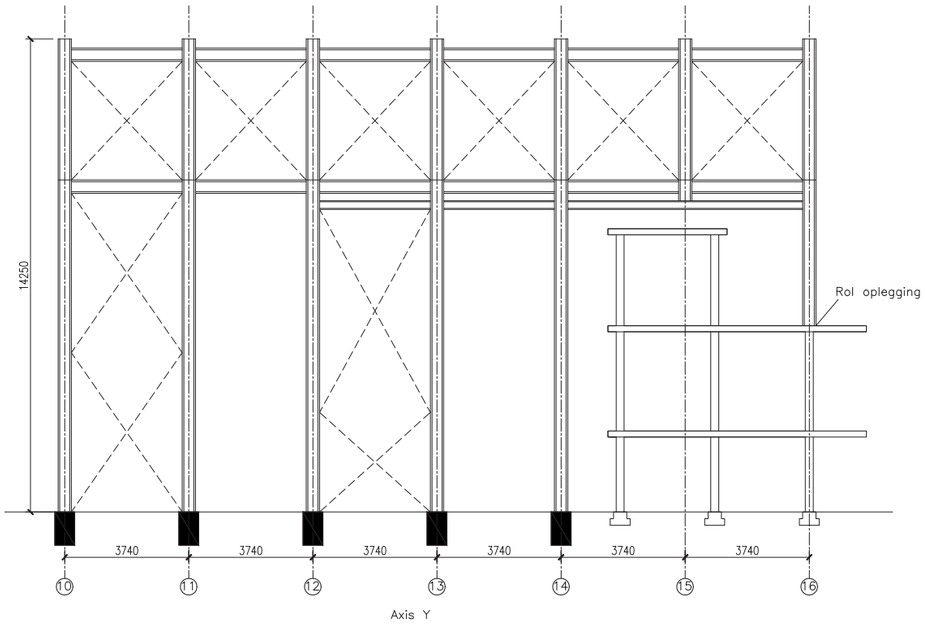
- Aluminium sliding doors minimal frame (Orama)
- Open corners when opened
- Door handle at 1100 mm height
- Balustrade at 1000 mm height

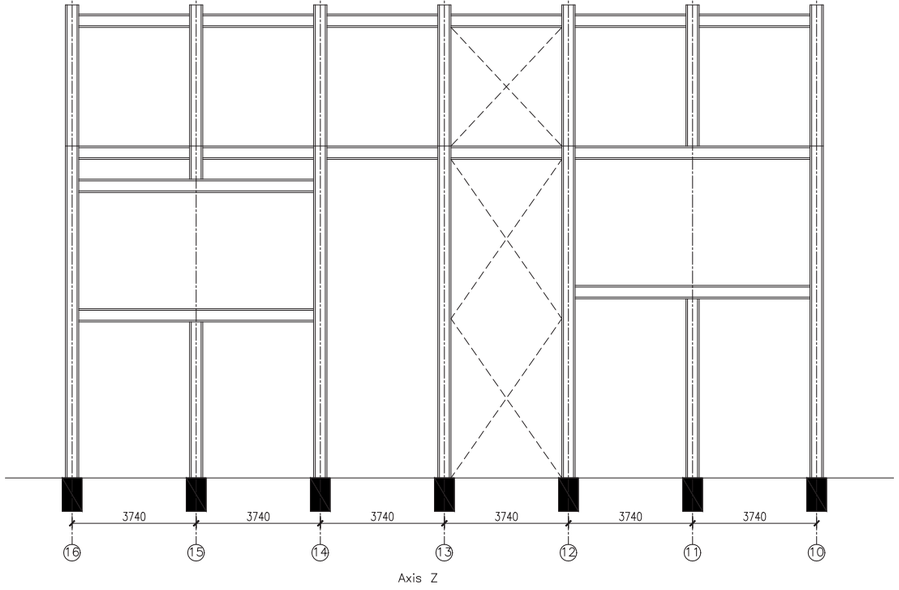
The design





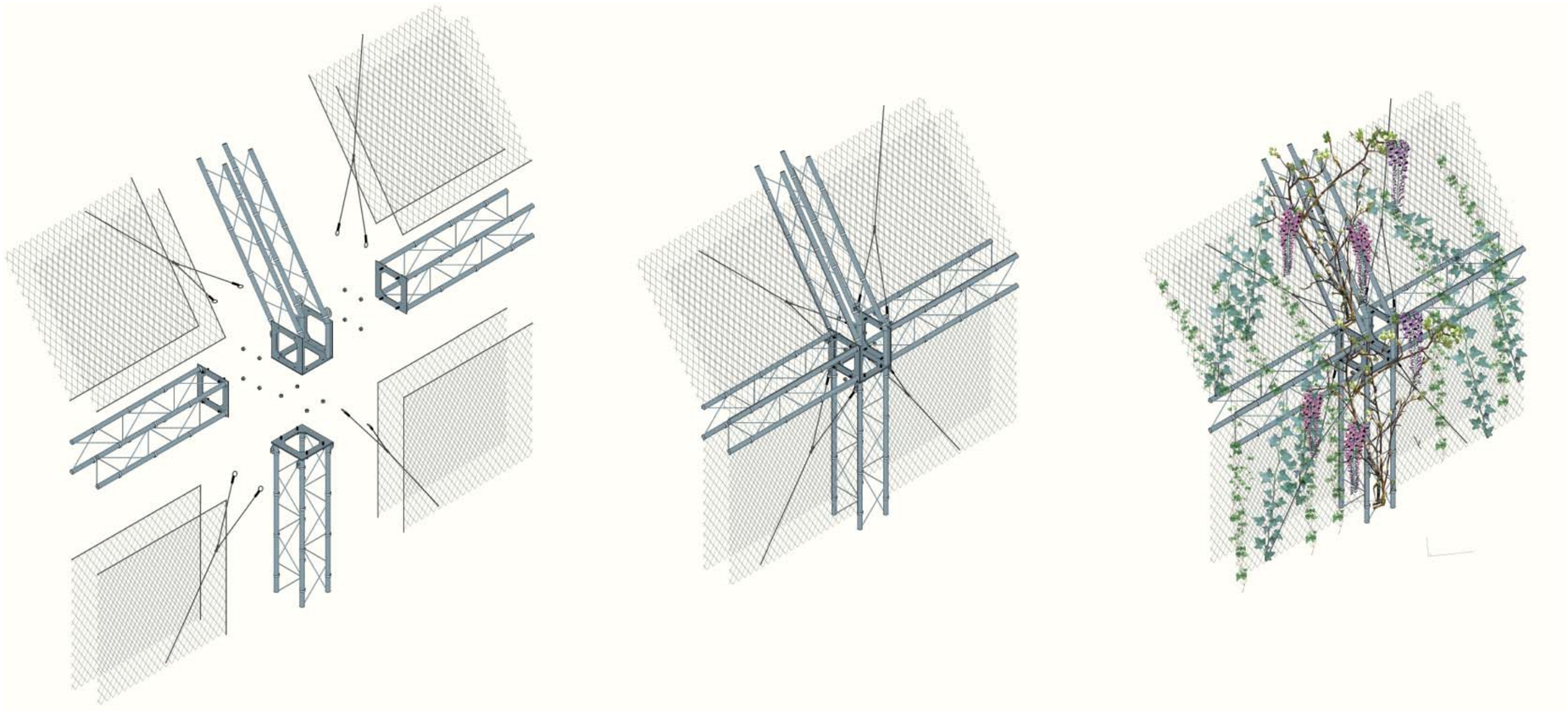






Galvanized steel construction:

Foundations:	See detail drawings
Columns:	Galvanized steel trusses (400 x 400 mm (4 x Ø 50mm) in Z and Y axis) (250 x 250 mm (4 x Ø 30mm) in X axis)
Stability:	Steel tension cables



Wisteria Sinensis Ivy

1 Has flowers in summer and loses its leafs in winter.
2 Can become of high age (oldest known is 144 years old).
3 Low demands in soil type
4 It lignifies, making it able to grow as a tree with a trunk.
5 Can reach a height of 10 meters.
6 In 10 - 15 year it will reach the top.

Decay processes:

Growth

In 10 -15 years

Wisteria Sinensis and overgrowth (weeds).

Decline

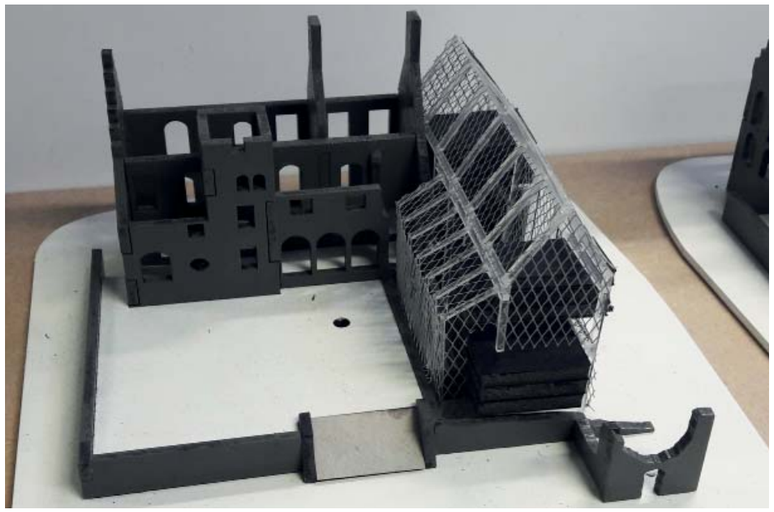
In 50 years

1859 1930

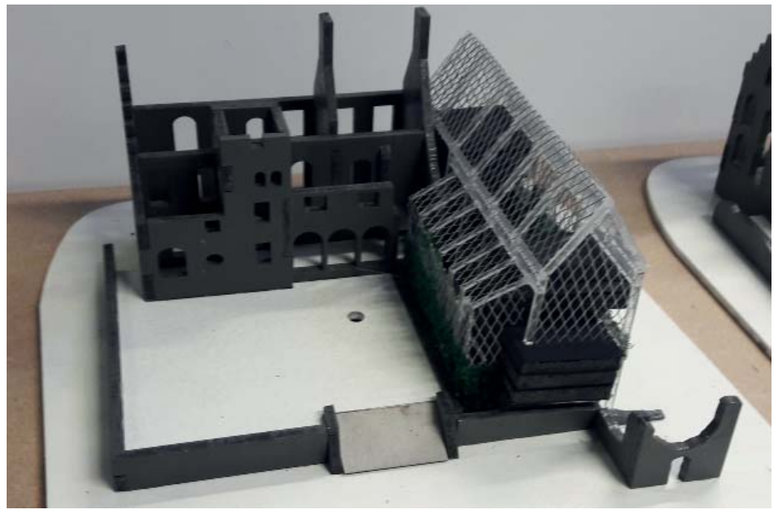
Castle Asten was vacant from +/- 1859 until +/- 1930 and ended up in a very advanced state of decay.

Images from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten.* Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.

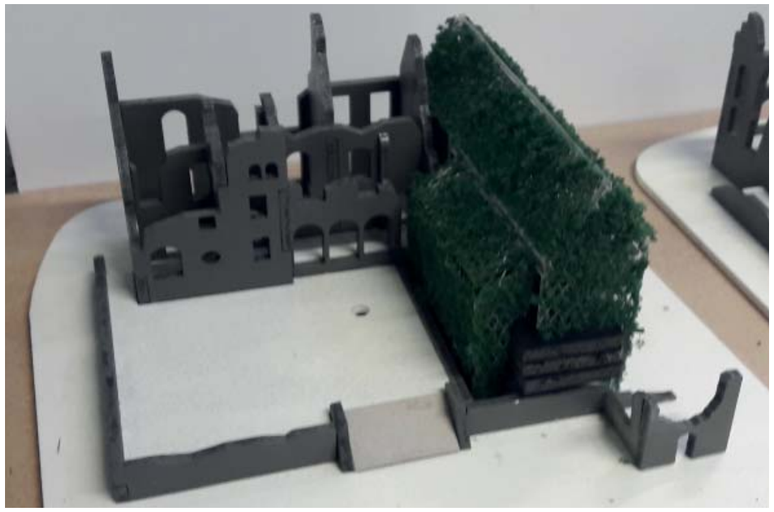
Decay processes:



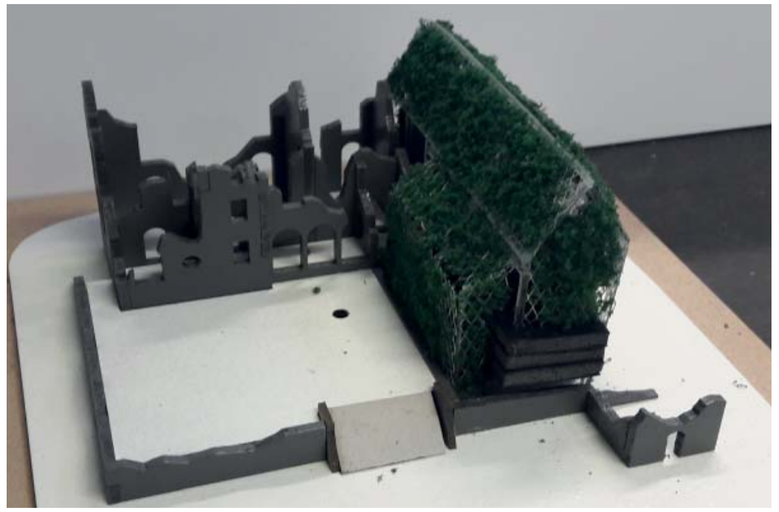
After completion



After +/- 5 years



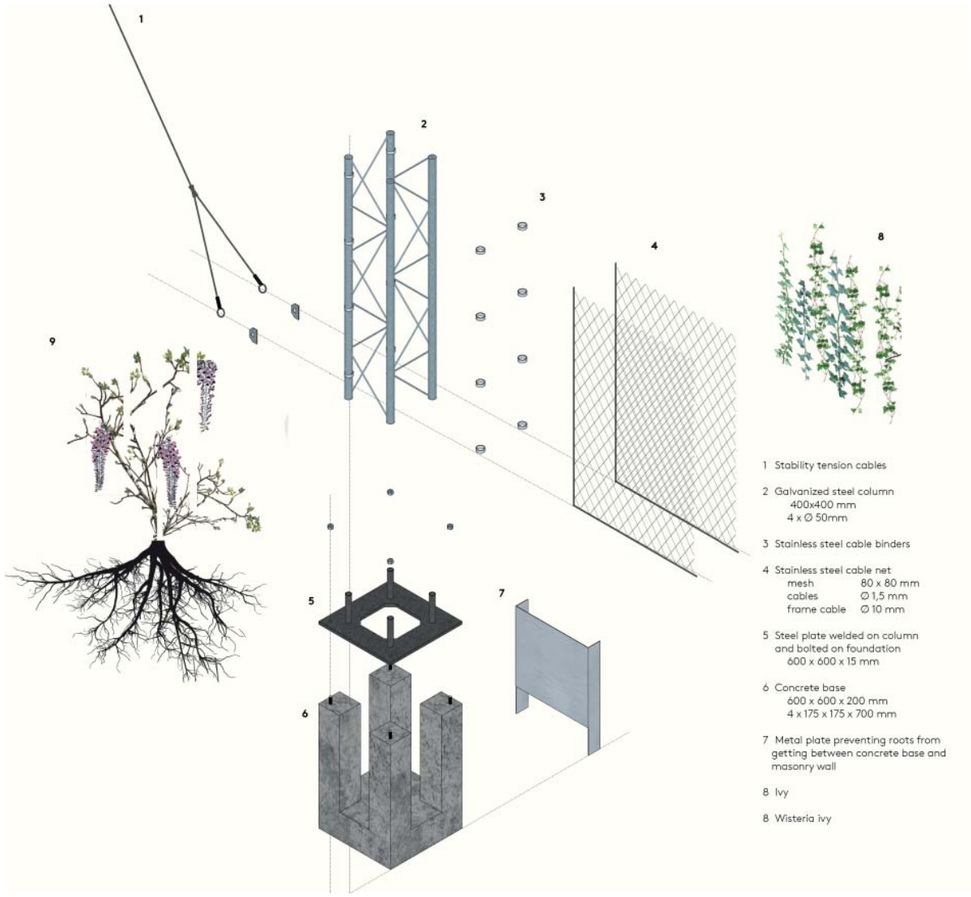
After +/- 15 years



After +/- 50 years

Gradual transition

The design



1 Stability tension cables

2 Galvanized steel column
400x400 mm
4 x Ø 50mm

3 Stainless steel cable binders

4 Stainless steel cable net
mesh 80 x 80 mm
cables Ø 1,5 mm
frame cable Ø 10 mm

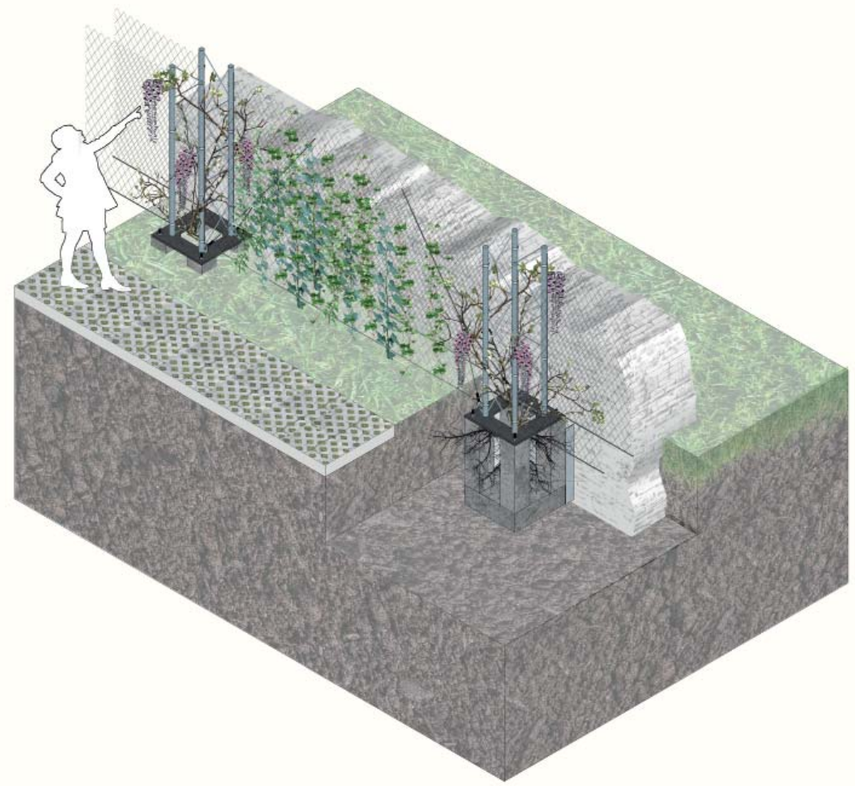
5 Steel plate welded on column and bolted on foundation
600 x 600 x 15 mm

6 Concrete base
600 x 600 x 200 mm
4 x 175 x 175 x 700 mm

7 Metal plate preventing roots from getting between concrete base and masonry wall

8 Ivy

8 Wisteria ivy



1 Conrete grass tiles

2 Wisteria ivy

3 Galvanized steel column
400x400 mm
4 x Ø 50mm

4 Stability tension cables

5 Stainless steel cable binders

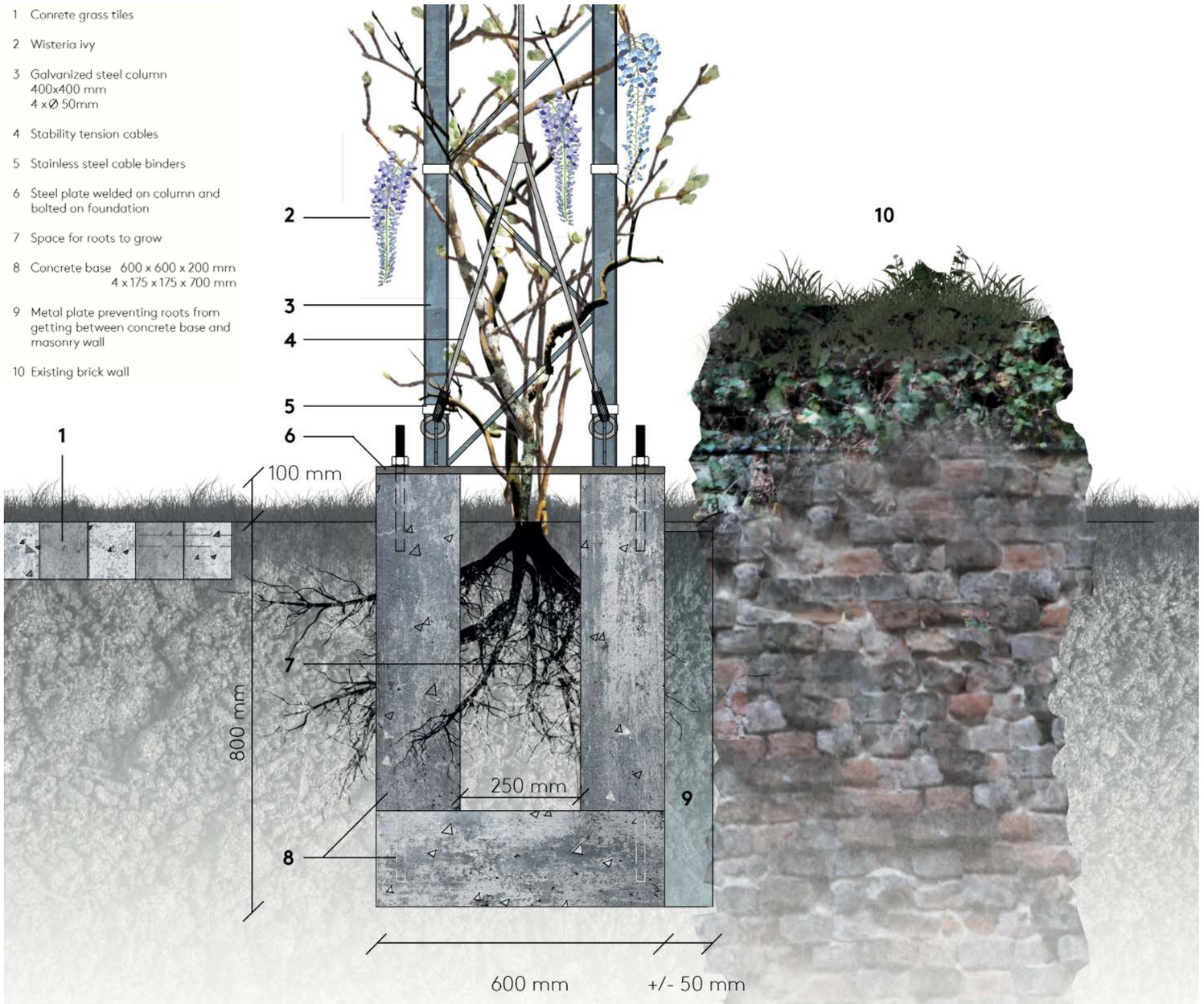
6 Steel plate welded on column and bolted on foundation

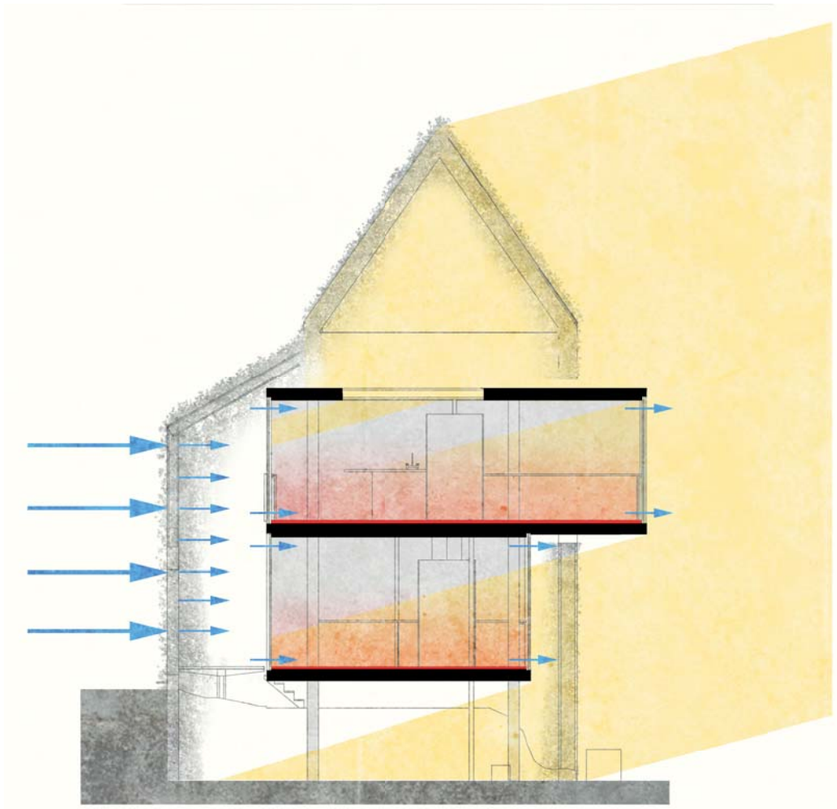
7 Space for roots to grow

8 Concrete base 600 x 600 x 200 mm
4 x 175 x 175 x 700 mm

9 Metal plate preventing roots from getting between concrete base and masonry wall

10 Existing brick wall

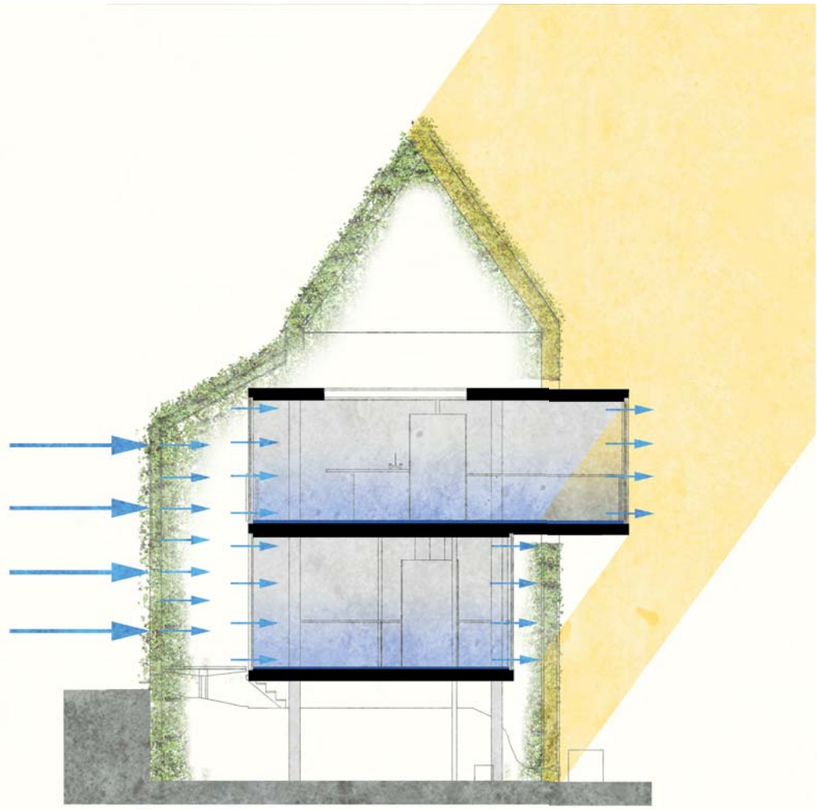




Winter
December 12:00

Temperature control: Floor heating.
No leafs, sun passes through and helps heating spaces.

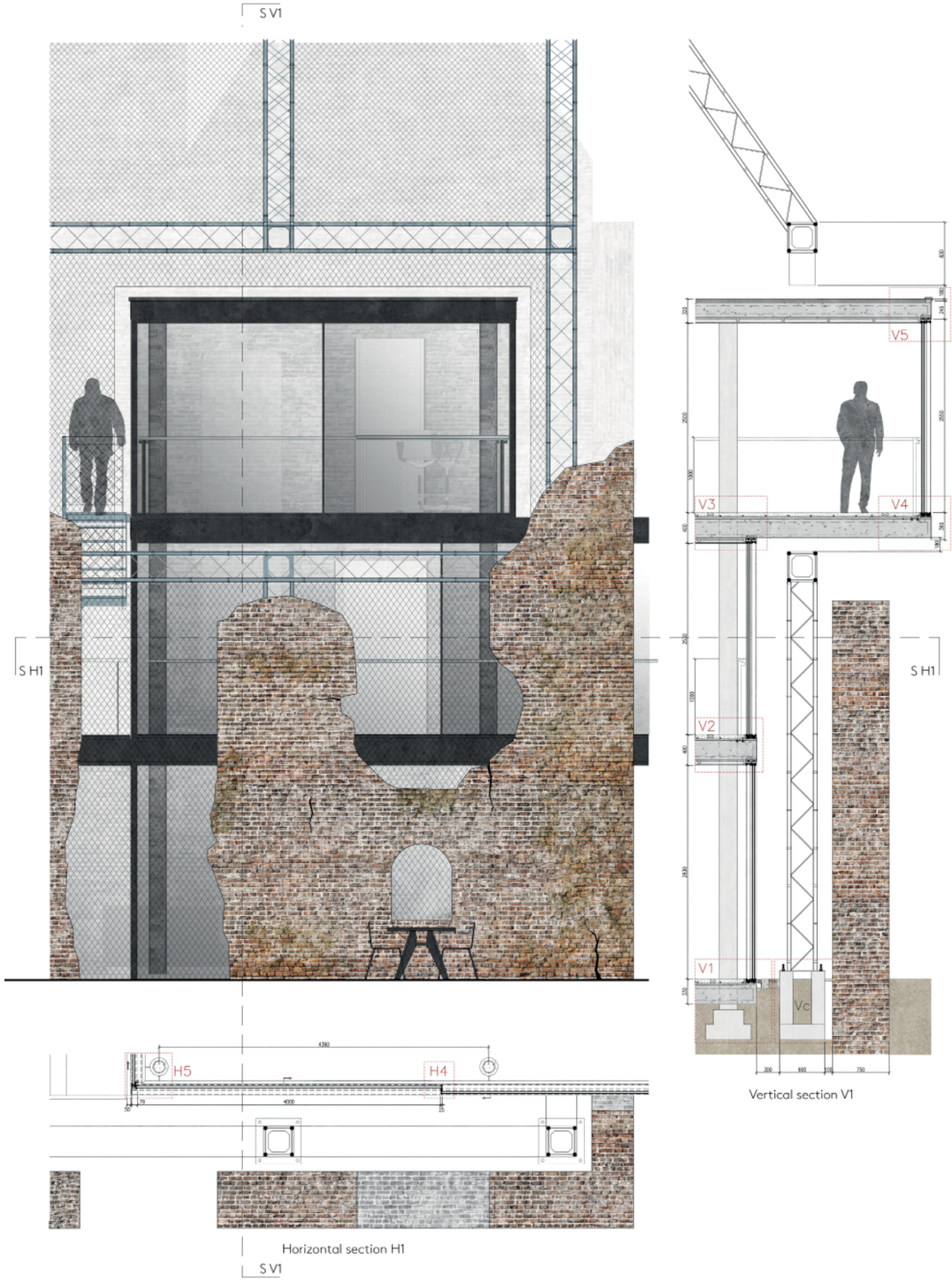
Ventilation: Vegetation breaks wind for comfortable natural ventilation.



Summer
June 12:00

Temperature control: Vegetation blocks sun and keeps air inside cool.
Sliding doors can be opened to let the cool air in.
Floor cooling may help for extra cooling

Ventilation: Vegetation breaks wind for comfortable natural ventilation.
Maximal ventilation possible by opening sliding doors



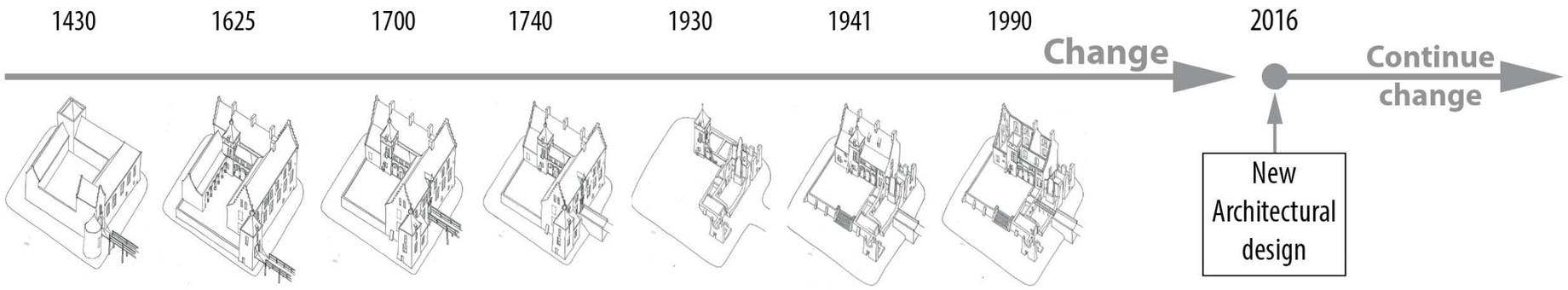
Vertical section V1

Horizontal section H1

8 Final words

"History is not static, the word itself indicates time and change, so honouring history by creating replicas and restoring buildings back to a certain phase of its history is not always justified. Moreover one does not necessarily honour history with such a design approach, but rather denies it by removing signs of time and change out of history and precisely these signs of age can reveal a places its true historical story.

So, historical value can be expressed in different and better ways than by restoration and preservation.



Images from: Maas,T. (red.). (1994). *Geschiedenis van de heerlijkheid Asten*. Asten: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Asten.