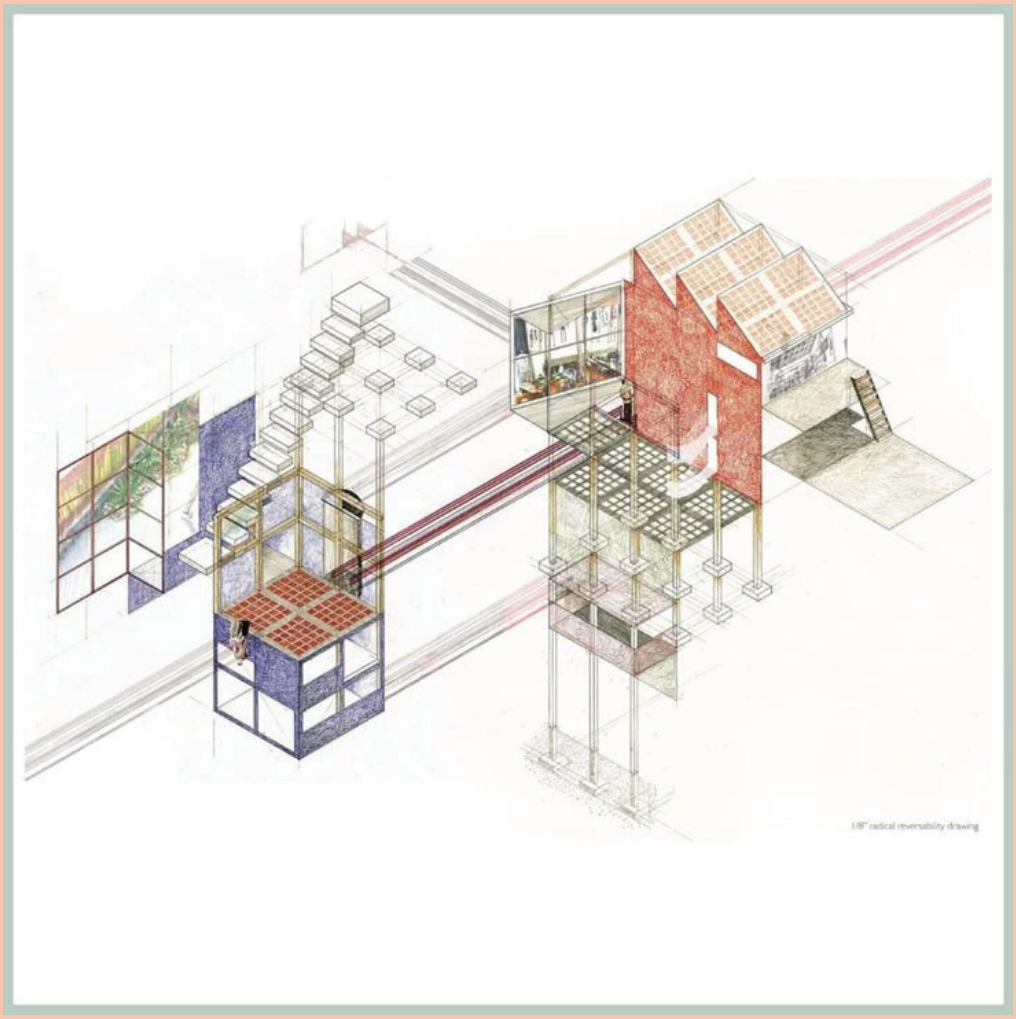
LIZA
ZAICEVA

MOVING STORIES.

Personal Memories in Architectual Design.



Urban Architecture

2024/2025

LIZA ZAICEVA
Master Graduation Project

2024—2025
Urban Architecture. TU Delft.

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This research investigates the personal experiences, memories, and desires of individuals who live or lived transient lives, shaped by the forces of globalization and relocation. With a focus on capturing the poetic and narrative aspects of place and movement, this study aims to deepen understanding of how individuals remember their previous architectural expiriences and identify the elements that help them form attachments to spaces in a constantly changing world. The study is linked to a later application in the design phase of a mixed-use building complex in Antwerp. Employing a method of portraying the memories of people who live or have lived in Antwerp through architectural drawings, this research will visualize and document personal stories, offering a new approach to the emotional and experiential dimensions of transience. By exploring these narratives, the study aims to broaden understanding of human relationships with place, memory, and identity in times of transience. Findings are expected to highlight recurring themes of forced relocation, adaptation, and the search for stability, offering valuable insights into the ways people navigate and emotionally anchor themselves within transient environments.

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ISLANDS OF MEMORY
MAKE IT LAST
HOW NOT TO FORGET

INTRODUCTION

Lasting memories. Why things we remember are important? Why stories are moving? Where are they moving?

This graduation project explores how architecture can give form to personal memory, particularly in the context of migration, underrepresentation, and post-industrial transformation. Set in Lageweg – Blikfabriek, a former factory district in the rapidly developing south of Antwerp, the project engages with a complex urban condition shaped by layered histories, diverse communities, and shifting economic functions. At its core lies the ambition to give a spatial stage to the stories of those often unheard—migrant residents, working-class families, and transient communities whose experiences are rarely reflected in the built environment.

The research began with collective fieldwork at the Blikfabriek, a creative hub that embodies themes of impermanence, appropriation, and belief in collaborative making. This phase initiated an interest in scenography as a lens through which space is continuously reinterpreted. However, a shift followed—from representing artists' interventions to focusing on the everyday lives of local residents. Interviews were conducted with three individuals—Asim, Amina, and Elisabeth—who shared meaningful spatial memories that ranged from childhood bedrooms to urban balconies, ritual prayer, and shared student housing. These memories—sensory, emotional, and fragmented—did not always speak in architectural language, yet they revealed deep attachments to space and place.

The challenge became how to work with such ephemeral, subjective material within the architectural discipline. In response, a method was developed based on collage-making, narrative drawing, and repeated interviews. Through this process, seven design principles emerged—each addressing a different aspect of memory: sequence, ritual, longing, shared experience, sensory perception, uncertainty, and emotional scale. These principles guided the design decisions and framed the spatial strategies.

The architectural outcome consists of both a masterplan and a detailed design intervention. It proposes a new urban fabric that balances the monumental scale and rawness of preserved industrial buildings with the softness and warmth of housing, public facilities, and communal courtyards. The plan integrates local materials, reuses demolition waste, and applies low-tech, cost-effective construction methods that serve both environmental and social sustainability.

This project treats memory not as nostalgia, but as an active force capable of shaping inclusive and grounded architecture. It argues that design can be more empathetic, more just, and more enduring when it listens to lived experience—turning personal narratives into spaces of belonging, care, and meaning.

LAGEWEG

The site is Lageweg – Blikfabriek, a former factory complex in the south of Antwerp. Once a space of labor, it now operates as a cultural hub—a place where people make, repair, invent, and express.

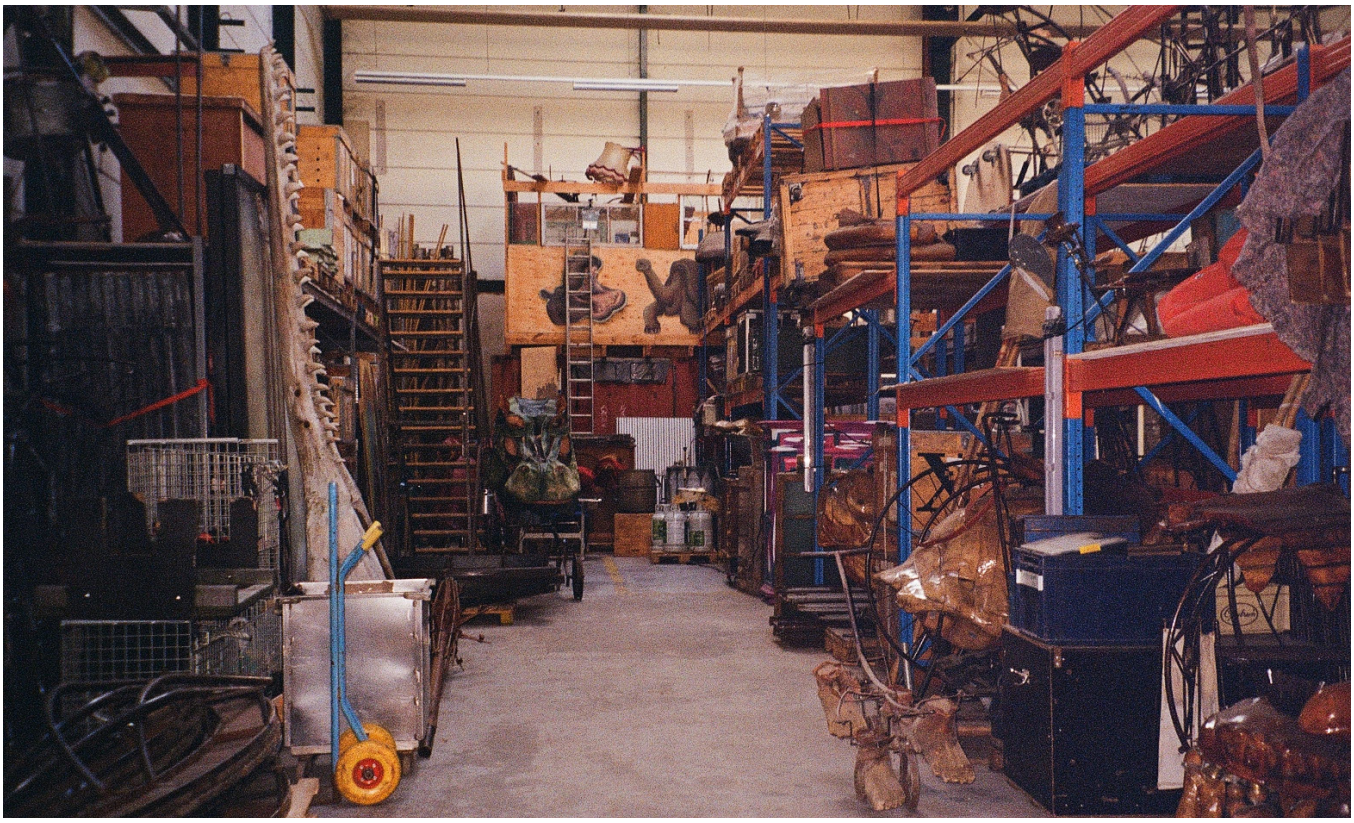
CANTIN

Architecture

The architecture is unpolished, but generous. It doesn't dictate; it receives. It allows people to reshape it with their own hands and intentions.
Vast halls, leftover materials, and wide spans offer more than just space—they offer possibility.

Catching light

Sometimes, poetry emerges in unexpected places. A corrugated metal façade becomes a reflective screen, catching the soft movements of water nearby.



Portraying memories

A mess of activity and material on one side; careful geometric sculptures and moments of precision on the other. It oscillates between chaos and calm, between improvisation and order.

Loneliness

Just the trace of someone who was here. These are the fragments memory holds onto. Not plans or programs, but presence.

مسجد هوبوكن
Moskee van Hoboken

Exclusion

Those who belong in the Blikfabriek build their own space—places to work, to rest, to gather. But many others—residents of Hoboken and Zwansjes—remain outside this ecology.

BELIEFABRIEK

Fieldwork.

Location: Lageweg 21, Antwerp, Belgium.

Discovering the Blikfabriek

This research begins with a phase of exploration—an open-ended **fieldwork** inquiry conducted with a group of fellow architecture students at Blikfabriek, a nonprofit creative hub located in the rapidly transforming southern district of Antwerp. The site consists of a series of former industrial buildings, now informally reimagined as a vibrant patchwork of studios, workshops, and shared spaces. At this early stage, our focus was not yet on defined outcomes, but rather on understanding what this place is—and could become—for us as observers and participants.

From our first site visit, rich in spatial observations and conversations with its users, Blikfabriek made a lasting impression. It felt like a **self-contained world** where individuals pursue their own creative practices while remaining connected to a larger collective energy. A shared sense of **belief** seemed to unite the community, without suppressing the diversity of voices and identities within it. Of course, tensions and challenges exist too—nothing here is static or perfect—but the prevailing sentiments were those of belonging, solidarity, and purpose.

The theme "**Make Belief**" gradually emerged from this process of immersion. It became a lens through which we could begin to interpret the qualities that set this place apart. What makes Blikfabriek feel so distinct? Why does it resonate so strongly? Unlike more formal artist centers, this site reveals itself through the spontaneous accumulation of furniture, installations, and objects—almost like a stage set built collectively and organically. This temporary, ever-changing character brings a theatrical quality to the space, where every element seems fleeting, yet intensely present.

As our understanding deepened through conversations, observations, and collaborative reflection, scenography emerged as a meaningful method to capture and represent what we were sensing—both spatially and ideologically. Certain scenes stood out during our fieldwork, drawing our attention through their spatial arrangements, social interactions, and symbolic potential. These selected moments form the basis of our representational experiment.

The result is the performative piece "Beliefabriek", a theatrical representation of the Blikfabriek experience. Acknowledging the impossibility of capturing the full complexity of the site, we chose to focus on just one act, composed of six scenes. Each scene is enacted within three physical zones of a custom-designed dollhouse stage.

To communicate these enacted spaces, this catalogue is organized into six sub-catalogues, each dedicated to a single scene. In each, we present both the visible stage and the unseen backstage, accompanied by spatial documentation, character descriptions, and contextual motivations.

This first phase does not aim to offer conclusions. Instead, it invites you, the reader, to step into the world of make-believe and begin to experience the layered beliefs, actions, and architectures unfolding within the Blikfabriek.

The Stage

In the "Make Belief" project, scenography and theatrical play were chosen as tools to communicate architectural experience because they allow for emotional complexity, layered narratives, and shifting perspectives. Architecture, in this approach, becomes more than a built environment—it becomes a stage on which memories are hosted, beliefs are enacted, and stories unfold. The Blikfabriek, as a site, already suggested this interpretation: a space constantly changing through events, crafts, gatherings, and personal rituals. These transitions made it ideal for theatrical interpretation.

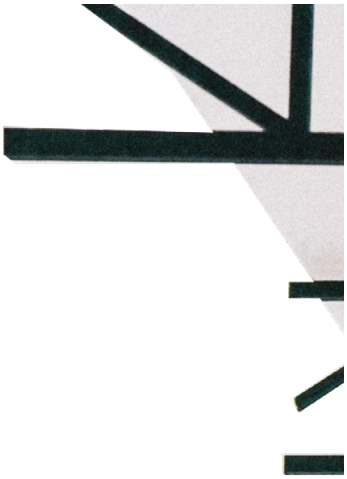
Scenography helped capture the transient, improvised quality of the site—its sense of incompleteness and freedom. Through a theatrical lens, architecture is no longer static; it responds to its actors, spectators, and changing scenes. "Belief," in this context, refers to the invisible frameworks that guide people's use of space—the trust, habits, and unspoken codes embedded in their daily practices.

By portraying personal stories as scenes in a play, the project embraces subjectivity. Memory becomes a source material: not as a factual record, but as a felt and interpreted truth. Learning from stories means acknowledging lived experience as a valid form of knowledge. The stage—both literal and metaphorical—becomes a space where architecture reflects human presence, identity, and the quiet power of being seen.

Empty Stage

Architectural model of the Blikfabriek hall. Made to host the play.

Scene 1



Narrator: Here are two coffee roasters filming a promotional video in the Foyer hall.

Meanwhile, they are discussing something with the Cantin manager. *Open your eyes.*

Points spotlight to center of Foyer

Coffee Maker: This place is really cool! We've just started roasting coffee as a passion project, but since we are a tiny business, we
don't have enough profit to fund our activity. Do you think we can set up a small roastery here for cheap rent?

Cantin Manager: Yes for sure, you can take a corner spot in this hall! You know what? How about you pay your rent in coffee beans, since we need them in the cantin?

Coffee Maker: oh wow, of course, that would be perfect! Thank you for the opportunity, we are excited to join the community!

Footsteps. Chatter in the background becoming louder. Business meeting noise.

Narrator: Close your eyes and imagine walking towards the adjacent hall. What is this background chatter becoming louder?
...

Scene 2

Narrator: This large hall, the expo, is hosting a job-hunting event, debatably coherent with the atmosphere Joris dreams of. Open your eyes.

Points spotlight to center of Expo

Narrator (continues): Ah, there he is, discussing with one of the artists who has her atelier in the same hall (light inside atelier turns on) She welcomes people with autism to voice their creativity through painting and sculpture.

Painter: It's Monday and it's supposed to be a quiet day, but here's again an event, last week they were demounting another one... this chaotic condition is rather common...

Joris: I know, I'm sorry this impacts your atelier so much. I don't like these events, but I need to accept a few per year to finance the Blikfabriek.

Narrator: close your eyes again. while some artists are in close contact with events, most of them have their atelier in the Maakfabriek, a makers' hub with shared machines and selfbuilt
ateliers.

umicore
Samen
maken we
Antwerpen.
BAKER BAKER

COCA-COLA
EUROPACIFIC PARTNERS

Scene 3

Footsteps. Courtyard sound. Kids screaming. Garage door opening slightly. Soft Maakfabriek
sounds.

Narrator: Imagine walking through the central courtyard, and seeing a black garage door stating "backstage: artist only" with enough space to sneak
under the door...

The set design of the Expo is removed from the stage

The set design of the Maakfabriek is placed on stage

Narrator (continues) : More than 70 tenants share this heterogeneous, vibrant workspace. Everyone works for themselves, but they exchange knowledge, tools, and materials. Open your eyes.

points spotlight to machine at the center of Maakfabriek

Woodworker man: Careful cutting at that angle! You probably don't realize this, but hardwood is a lot more challenging to work with than softwood. I can show you some easier options.

Woodworker woman: Actually, I know well how to work with this material. I've been using it for years in my projects.

Woodworker man: Okay calm down...I just wanted to help...

Scene 4

Narrator: The more "silent" artists have their ateliers in another hall, the Stelling. Close your eyes, and follow us in the courtyard again and into another factory hall.

The set design of the Maakfabriek is removed from the stage
The set design of the Stelling is placed on stage

Narrator (continues): ... from here, the Maakfabriek seems kilometers away. Silence reigns, interrupted by sporadic noises echoing in the hall. Imagine looking up at the ateliers, all similar here. At the corner of the balcony, two textile artists are having a coffee break together, as they regularly do. Open your eyes. You can overhear their conversation...

Clothing designer: I met a friend after a long time, and she told me I look so much happier now compared to a year ago.
I was so stressed and unhappy working in that stupid clothing store in the city centre! Talking with this friend reminded me of how lucky we are to work in Blikfabriek, without such commercial pressure and surrounded by caring, like-minded people.

Textile artist: I know, right?! Since my burnout, I can't even think of living in the same rhythm as people in the city. Here, we can live and create things at our own pace.

Clothing designer: yes, here we can fit in.

Narrator: enough to overhear... close your eyes again.

LAPSI

Scene 5

Narrator: if you go behind the building, you access a space only the frequent users of Blikfabriek know. Here, in his container kitchen, Pirre cooks delicious, homey meals for regular customers. Transitional between the Blikfabriek and a little forest, the backyard is also hidden spot for boys from the neighborhood to hang out and smoke some weed. Open your eyes, here they are.

points spotlight to backyard

Pirre (talking to himself): ouff oeff, long day, too many clients I didn't expect...I didn't prepare enough food...

Boy: Hey Pirre! Are you shutting down the kitchen? Do you mind us sitting here to smoke a joint?

Pirre: sure, why not, it's your moment to relax... how come you choose to sit all the way here?

Boy: It's a nice hidden spot, and we don't want other children or our parents to see us smoking weed...

Narrator: Close your eyes, once more. We'll leave the boys to relax in peace at their favorite spot and head to the foyer hall.

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GATEWAY
CONTAINER

GATU 1269605
22G1
6

Scene 6

Narrator: We are back in the Foyer. The central spot that Andy coffee roasters used only yesterday for their promotional video is now taken by... cake. Open your eyes. Students from TU Delft set up a cake to thank the artists who helped with the interviews. Everyone is invited to gather and have cake at 12.00, with no specific occasion. Various artists, intrigued by the set up, pass by and join for a chat. Most of them didn't know each other before. They've been chatting for some time...

The set design of the Foyer is placed on stage, with the cake installation props

Installation artist: I've been here for 3 years. People come and go quickly,
and it is hard to keep up with many artists.
Textile artist: Indeed, there are many different people, right? But we have the
same mindset. We have a passion for creating and we make products without
money as a priority. Installation artist: And that makes the Blikfabriek an island, a city within the city. Like Antwerp, though, its diverse but some groups don't integrate with each other. Kids from the neighborhood come here but remain segregated, it would be nice if they could fit in.

Screen Printing Artist: I try to talk with people of the neighborhood to welcome them. We can't force them, but we can try. Blikfabriek is a public space with many stages for people to be themselves.

Blikfabriek gives us stages to perform our arts, I dream that the neighbors can find their stage here too.

CONNECTING ISLANDS

Masterplan Phase.

Island / Porous / Woven Systems and the Bottom-Up Approach

As the project moved from observation toward spatial intervention, it became evident that the Blikfabriek and its surrounding area cannot be understood as a unified whole. Instead, it revealed itself as a fragmented landscape—a collection of **"islands,"** each functioning independently, with minimal interaction between them. These islands represent different spatial, social, and cultural micro-contexts: a glassnworkshop isolated from the event hall; a temporary garden unused by nearby residents; or an artists' studio block disconnected from the more commercial zones. Each of these islands held its own logic, rhythm, and set of users, making a one-size-fits-all approach not only inadequate but counterproductive.

Given this fragmented structure, we recognized the need to approach each island individually, while still imagining their potential to weave into a more cohesive and connected system over time. Several scenarios from our fieldwork illustrate this complexity: one area might host a thriving maker space with a strong sense of community but remain physically cut off by fences or parking lots; another might show signs of creative energy but suffer from neglect or a lack of visibility.

This phase of the project is therefore not based on imposing a new, fixed order, but on carefully evaluating the existing situation, recognizing the value already present, and designing through a **bottom-up, participatory lens**. Crucially, our proposals are informed by the research outcomes gathered prior to fieldwork—including interviews, observations, and collaborative workshops. By incorporating these insights, we aim to prioritize the needs of existing communities, safeguard their rights to remain and thrive, and actively counter the risks of gentrification.

This chapter sets the stage for exploring how these separate islands can begin to form connections—not through forced unification, but through carefully designed porosity, local engagement, and the amplification of existing social, cultural, and ecological networks.

Fragmented site:
The masterplan is organized around the idea of multiple interconnected islands—each with its own character, program, and role within the broader urban tissue. These islands respond to the fragmented nature of the existing Lageweg–Blikfabriek site, where industrial remnants, informal green pockets, and residential structures coexist without a clear structure.

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Urban Architecture
Group 3
Materplan
Drawing tittle :
Demolishing plan
Drawing 1 - Existing Situation

Scale 1:2000
Paper Size A2

Legend

Existing Construction
Demolished Parts
New Constructuion

Demolishon:

Instead of opting for total erasure, the project identified structures that were either structurally unsound or spatially incompatible with the proposed future uses. These were carefully removed to make room for new, context-sensitive interventions.

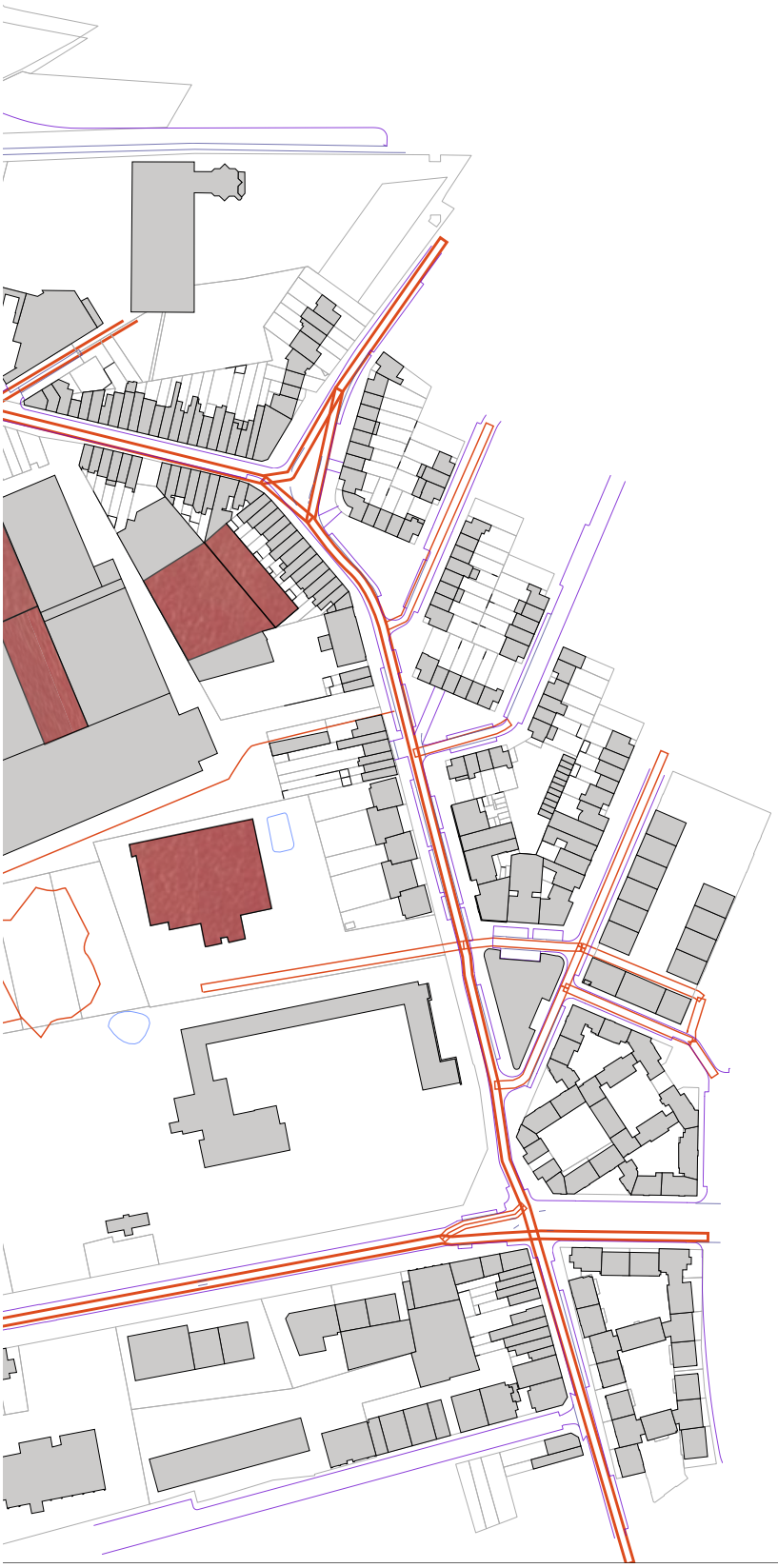
The demolition process was guided by a philosophy of reuse and continuity—not as a tabula rasa, but as an act of editing the existing fabric. Materials from the demolished buildings, such as bricks and steel elements, were salvaged and integrated into the new constructions, reinforcing both sustainability and memory preservation.

Group 3
Materplan
Drawing tittle :
Demolishing plan
Drawing 2 - Demolishing Programm

Scale 1:2000
Paper Size A2

Legend

Existing Construction
Demolished Parts
New Constructuion



Leftover:

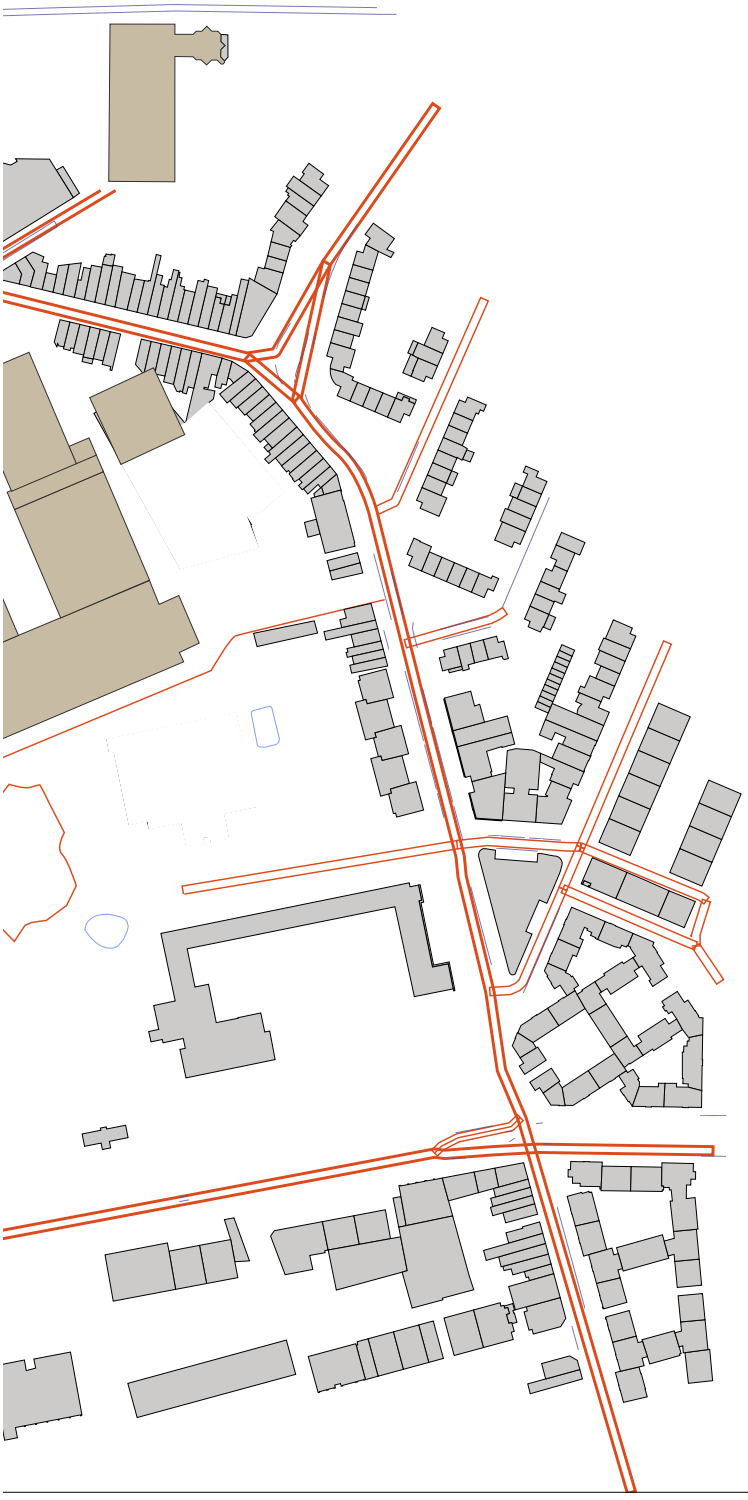
Approach allowed f
the creation of oper
public spaces and g
infrastructure while
maintaining a dialog
with the past. It ope
opportunities to rec
circulation, introduc
light, and reprogran
site without losing i
industrial character
demolition, the site
space—not only phy
but socially and ecc
as well.

Group 3
Materplan
Drawing tittle :
Demolishing plan
Drawing 3 - Preserved Factory Building

Scale 1:2000
Paper Size A2

Legend

Existing Construction
Preserved Parts
New Constructuion



Masterplan

The masterplan responds to the evolving context of Hoboken by introducing a sensitive and inclusive urban strategy. Rather than imposing a radical transformation, the approach builds upon the strengths of the existing urban fabric.

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Urban Architecture
Group 3
Masterplan stage
Drawing tittle :
Masterplan

Scale 1:1000
Paper Size A1

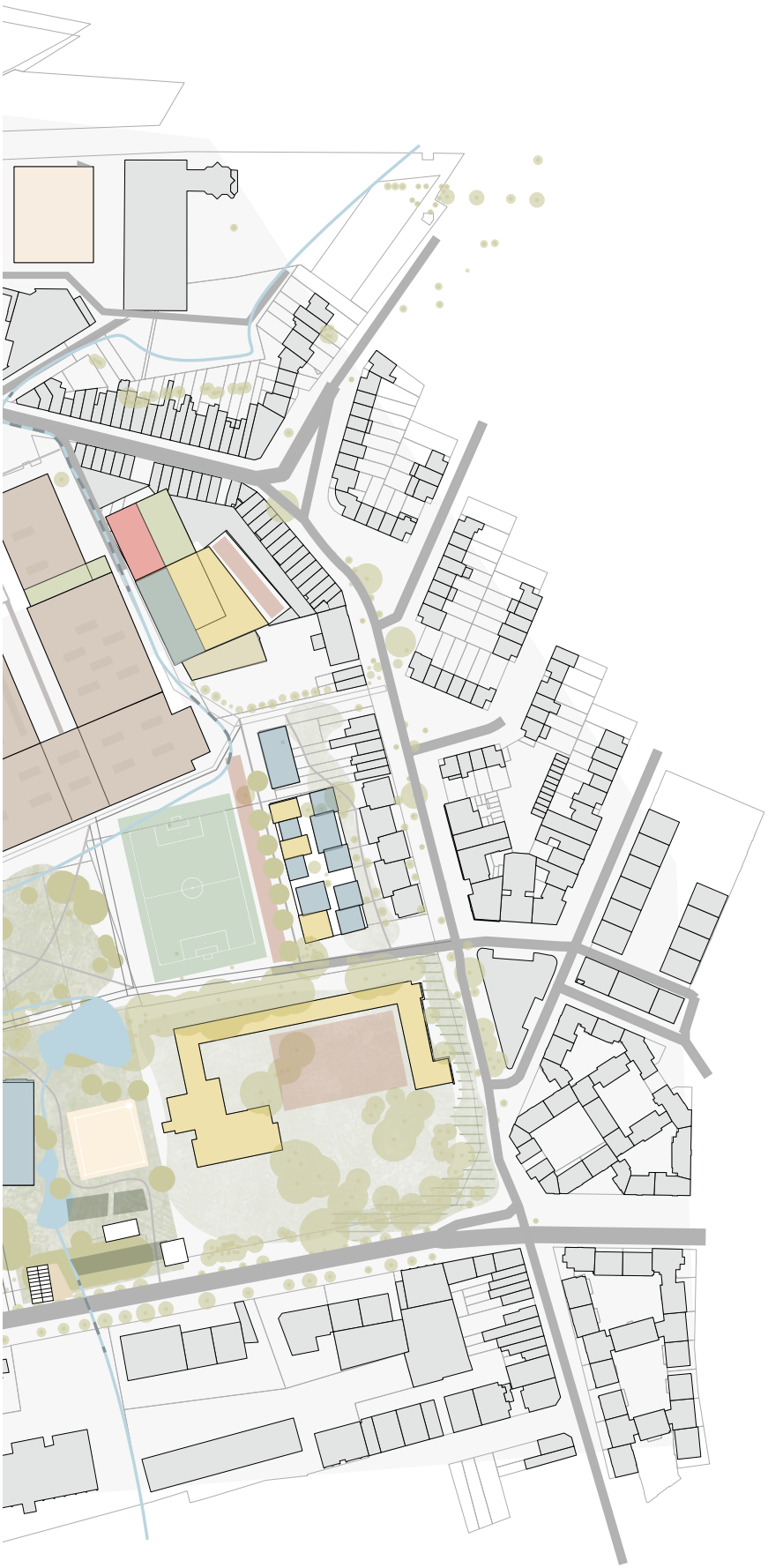
Programm

The plan introduces a carefully curated mix of functions—education, housing, health care, local markets, and green spaces—to support long-term neighborhood growth. One of the central concepts is the education belt, a zone of learning and community support that helps foster upward mobility. The green structure is significantly strengthened through a variety of public gardens, parks, and soft landscaping, addressing the district's urgent need for accessible outdoor space.

2024/2025.

Urban Architecture
Group 3
P2
Drawing tittle :
Functions and Programm

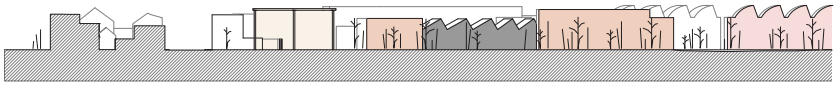
Scale 1:1000
Paper Size A1



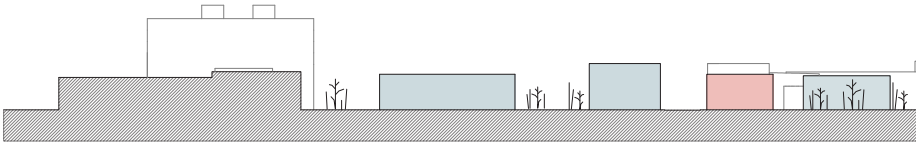
Housing
Education
Green Sheltered Spaces
Shops And Local Catering
Public Sport Facilities and Recreation
Offices and Atteliers
Industrial

Height:

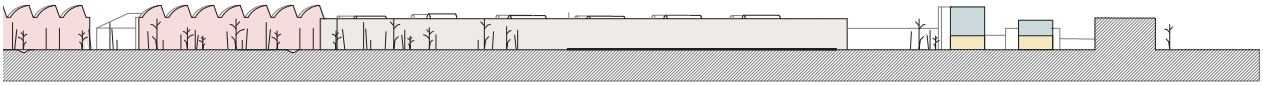
In terms of density, the plan remains modest. Around 500 new housing units are introduced—not through towers or radical vertical growth, but through gentle layering and smart infill. The decision was made not to densify drastically, and not to interrupt the existing cityscape with an unfamiliar scale.

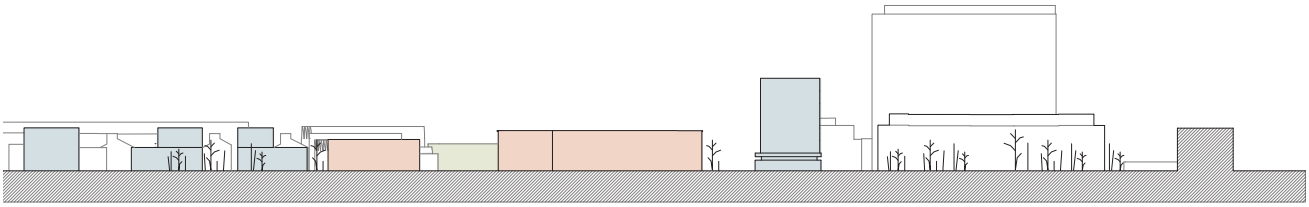


SECTION AA - Through central green



SECTION BB - Through internal street (Parallel to Krugerstraat)





Architectural Intention: A Place that Protects and Cares

The intention for the architectural intervention was to create a place that cares. A space that doesn't just serve functions, but offers shelter—both physically and emotionally.

The design was imagined as a protective environment. Closed from the outside by a mysterious fence, yet open and soft within. It responds to a world where not everyone feels welcome in public space—and offers a counter-image: a safe, grounded place that holds its own rhythm.

A tutor once said: "It's okay to design an island."

And that stayed. But the island, if it exists, must be meaningful. It must have texture, layers, and identity. It must feel real—like a place someone would choose, not a place they end up in.

That became the foundation: to design an island that speaks quietly, but holds strong. A space that protects without isolating, and shelters without erasing.

2024/2025.

7 MEMORY PRINCIPLES

How can memories be pictured? What are their rules? How to collects significant memories related to architecture and urban design?

Method 1: **Drawing**
Method 2: **Literature review**
Method 3: **Essay writing**
Method 4: **Interviews**

This chapter presents a methodological framework for working with personal memories in architectural design, developed through extensive fieldwork and experimentation. The process began with the premise that memory, while subjective and often fragmented, holds great potential as a tool for creating spatial meaning and belonging—particularly within marginalized or underrepresented communities. To investigate this, various techniques for capturing and translating memory into design were tested, including sketches, visual storytelling, graphic novels, and collages.

In parallel, three in-depth interviews were conducted with residents connected to the neighborhood of Hoboken. These participants—Elisabeth, Amina, and Asim—were asked to reflect on their life experiences and meaningful spatial memories, not only tied to the local environment but also from the countries they or their families came from. The conversations were informal and open-ended, often unfolding over several sessions, in person and online. The aim was to understand how memory intersects with identity, routine, and emotional attachments to space.

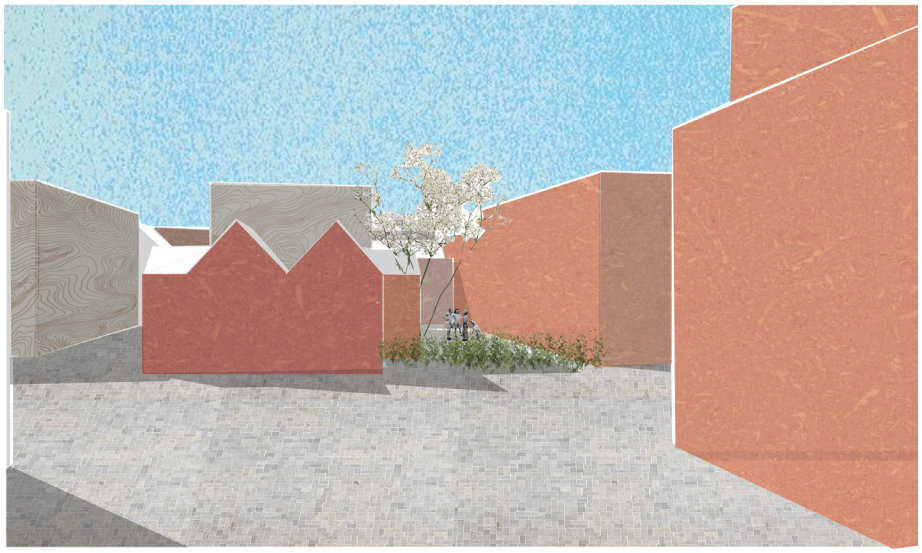
As the research developed, it became clear that a structured yet flexible framework was needed to apply these insights to design. The result is a set of seven principles for working with memory in architecture. These principles were not abstract inventions but derived from recurring themes and emotional cues that emerged in the interviews. They were then directly applied in the architectural proposal, shaping spatial sequences, programmatic choices, and atmospheres.

Ultimately, this framework serves as a way to give voice to individual experiences, making space for memories that are often left out of dominant architectural narratives.

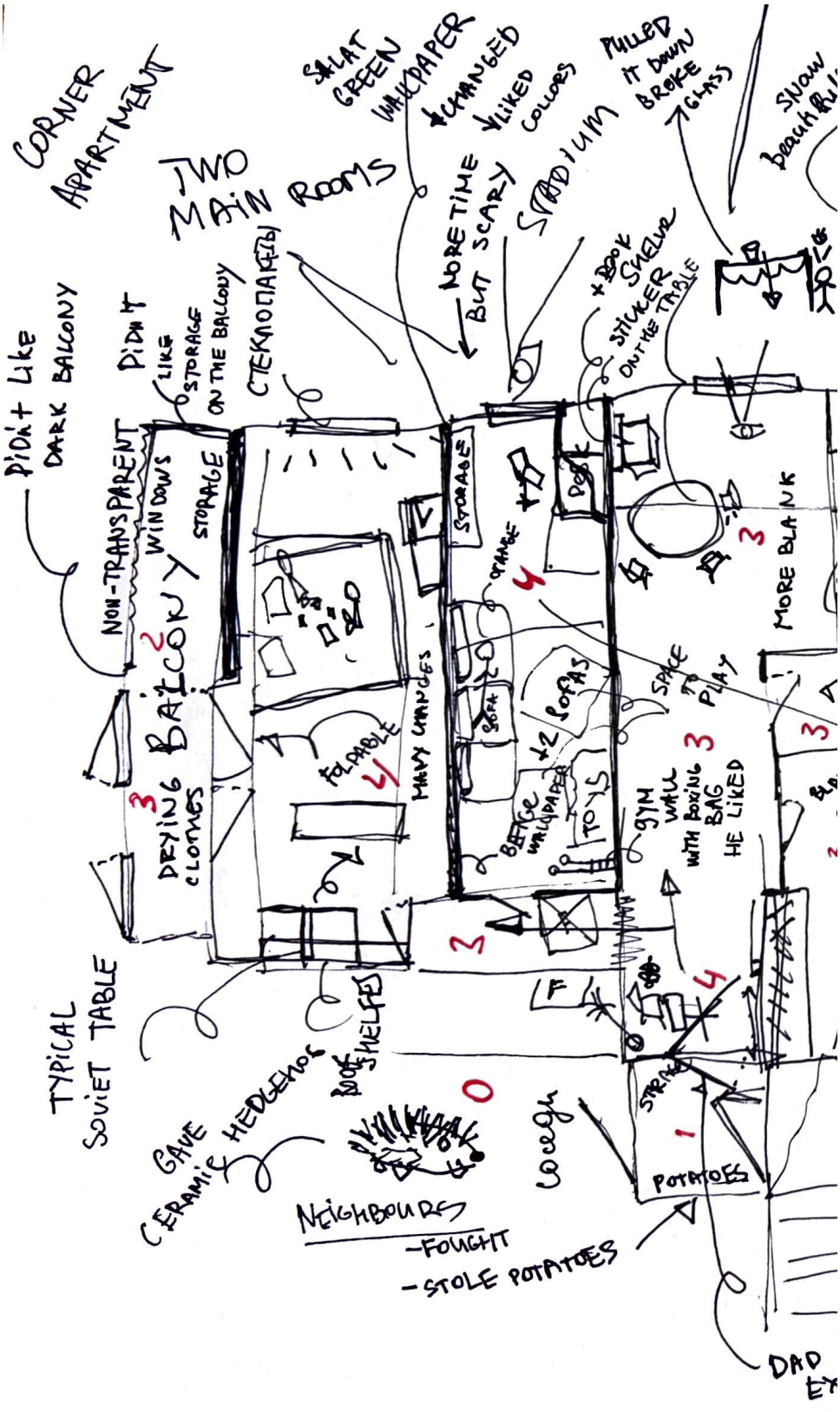
Method 1: Drawing

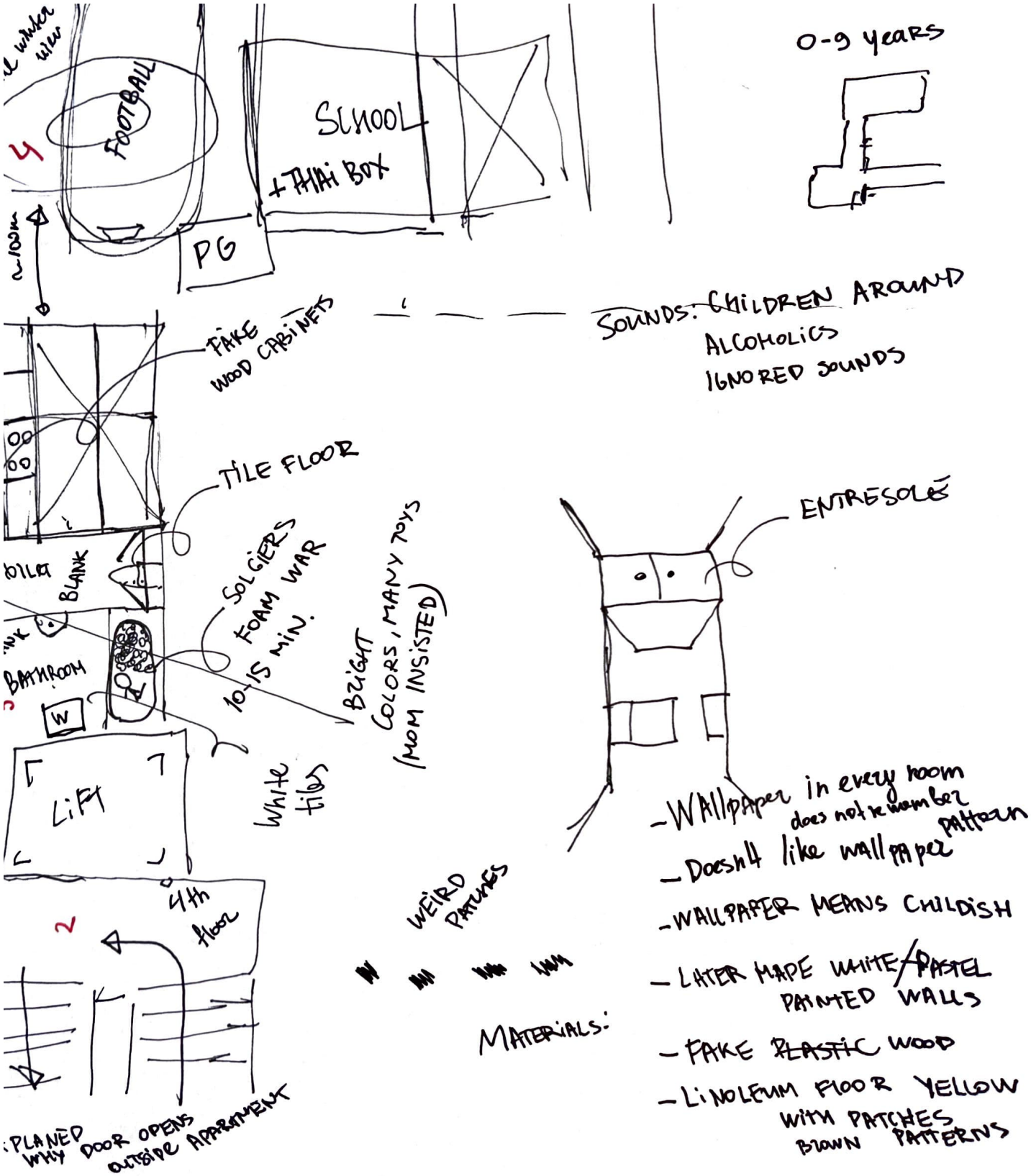
Several drawing methods were tested: freehand sketches, graphic novel formats, collages, and spatial diagrams. Each method offered different advantages. Sketches were quick but often too vague. Comic-strip storytelling helped reveal sequences, but lacked architectural depth.

Method 1: Drawing

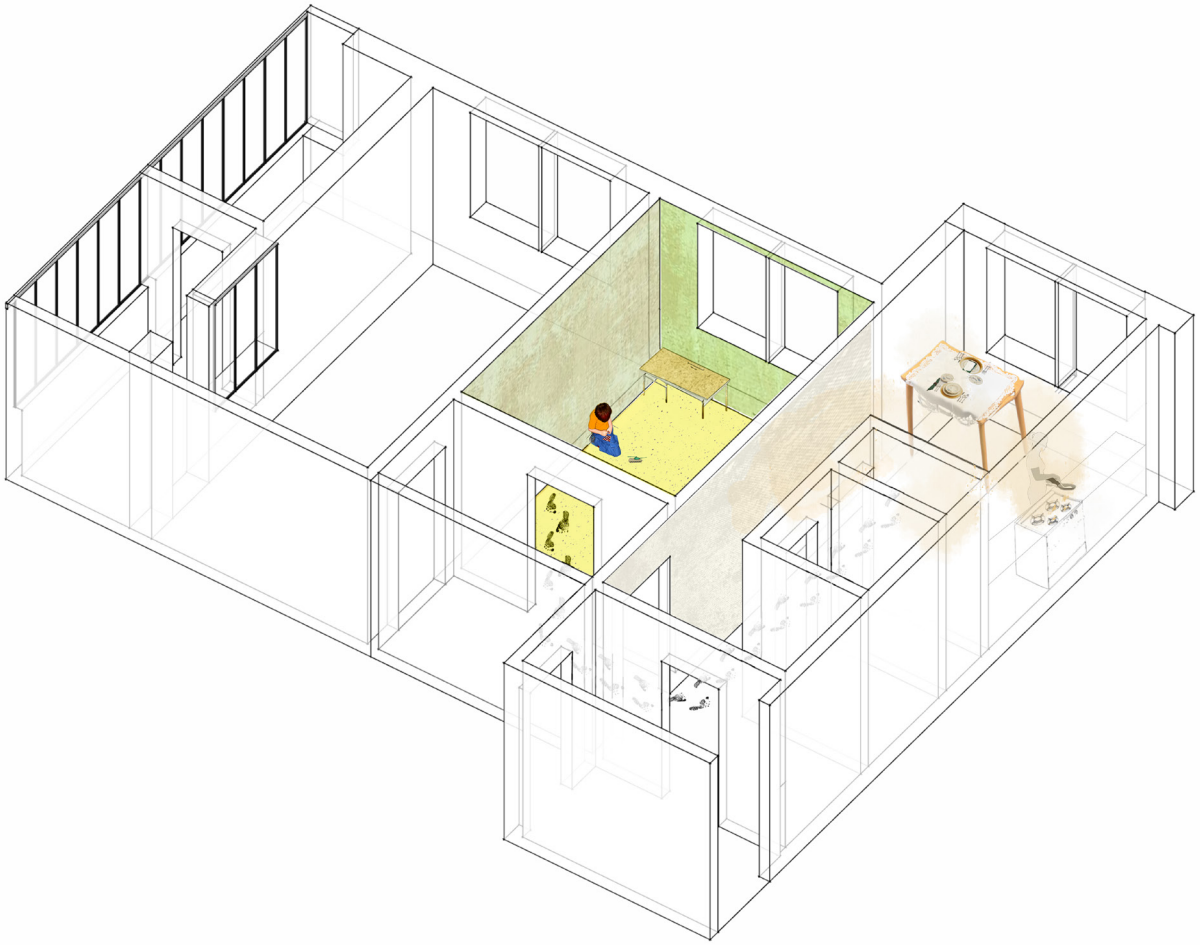


Method 1: Drawing




FOOTBALL
SCHOOL
+ THAI BOX
PG
0-9 years
SOUNDS: CHILDREN AROUND
ALCOHOLICS
IGNORED SOUNDS
FAKE WOOD CABINETS
TILE FLOOR
SOLDIERS FOAM WAR 10-15 MIN.
BRIGHT COLORS, MANY TOYS (MOM INSISTED)
BATHROOM
LIFT
White tiles
4th floor
ENTRESOLE
WEIRD PATCHES
MATERIALS:
- Wallpaper in every room does not remember pattern
- Doesn't like wallpaper
- WALLPAPER MEANS CHILDISH
- LATER MAPE WHITE/PASTEL PAINTED WALLS
- FAKE PLASTIC WOOD
- LINOLEUM FLOOR YELLOW WITH PATCHES BROWN PATTERNS
PLANED WHY DOOR OPENS OUTSIDE APARTMENT

Method 1: Drawing



Method 2: Literature review

The authors referenced throughout this research were selected for their critical perspectives on memory, place, and the human experience of architecture. Each contributes uniquely to a layered understanding of how personal narratives and spatial design intersect.

Aldo Rossi's The Architecture of the City laid the foundation for thinking about collective memory as a formative element of urban identity. However, this project takes his notion further by exploring personal memory—subjective, emotional, and fragmented—as a legitimate driver of architectural design. In contrast to Rossi's emphasis on permanence, this research draws from ephemeral, often overlooked stories.

Kenneth Frampton's Critical Regionalism reinforced the importance of working with local identity and culture rather than against it. His advocacy for grounding architecture in context—both physical and social—supports the choice to engage with underrepresented communities and incorporate their experiences as valid contextual material.

Daniel Schacter's The Seven Sins of Memory introduced a psychological lens, emphasizing that memories are not factual records but reconstructions rich with emotion and personal meaning. This understanding legitimizes a design approach that works with imperfect, suggestive recollections rather than objective data.

Juhani Pallasmaa and Gaston Bachelard added a sensory and poetic dimension, reminding us that architecture is remembered through sound, smell, and tactile impressions. Their insights supported the decision to include sensory triggers—like water, light, and texture—in the design.

Jane Rendell and Tim Ingold helped bridge theory and practice by exploring how stories and spatial practices form identity. Finally, John Till's Architecture Depends emphasized the relational, open-ended nature of design, aligning with the project's participatory and empathetic methodology.

Together, these authors guided the move from abstract theory to a concrete framework of seven memory-based design principles, allowing personal stories to meaningfully shape architectural form and social engagement.

Casa en Procida, Bernard Rudofsky

Method 3: Essay

From Collective Memory to Foreign Narratives

There are many theories in the contextualist discourse of 20th-century architecture. I believe that contextual study must follow a framework that embraces clear identities while responding to the modern challenges of migration, globalization, and cultural layering. This essay aims to reflect on key theories of contextualism—particularly those dealing with identity—and to propose a new layer that responds to the conditions we face today.

Many urban areas across Europe are experiencing an identity crisis. Entire neighborhoods shaped by modernist planning lack grounding—they are abstract, functional, and detached from their surroundings. Aldo Rossi called this placelessness, criticizing the modernist tendency to ignore history and locality. For Rossi, this was not merely a stylistic failure; it was an erasure of urban memory. By rejecting historical continuity and cultural context, modernism created spaces that felt unfamiliar, temporary, and emotionally disconnected.

Rossi argued that architecture gains meaning through memory—that cities grow through time, and the identity of a place is reflected in its enduring forms: monuments, streets, rituals, and urban artifacts. For him, context was not just material or spatial—it was cultural and temporal. When architecture draws from the history, climate, and social fabric of its site, it becomes a vessel for identity. And when people recognize themselves in the built environment, they form emotional, narrative relationships with space. They know where they are, and they know why it matters.

But Rossi's theory is also rooted in a Eurocentric narrative, one where collective memory is relatively stable and tied to a singular cultural identity. In a globalized world, shaped by migration and displacement, memory is far less cohesive. Inherited architectural practices travel across borders; new communities settle in unfamiliar landscapes. The result is a collision of narratives, and with it, the risk of creating generic, globalized expressions—buildings that belong nowhere, speaking in borrowed tongues.

Here, Kenneth Frampton's Critical Regionalism offers a complementary response. Like Rossi, Frampton was concerned with the loss of identity in globalized architecture. He argued for an architecture rooted in local material culture, climatic conditions, and craft traditions—a regional expression that resists the flattening effects of modernity. Yet Frampton was careful to emphasize that this regionalism must be critical, not nostalgic. It should reinterpret tradition, not reproduce it, and engage with modernity from a grounded point of view.

Still, I propose we go even further.

In today's postcolonial and diasporic context, we must expand our understanding of context beyond local terrain. We must consider the memories people bring with them—memories from other geographies, shaped by migration, exile, or dislocation. I propose that architectural context can include foreign narratives and personal memory, without abandoning regional materialization, typological clarity, or place-based identity. This means designing buildings that are grounded in local language and form, but that carry stories from elsewhere—layered, intimate, and often invisible.

Architecture must not only remember the

place—it must also remember those who arrived.

Memories. Why personal memories matter?

Architecture has to tap into an occupant's past meaningful experiences through their senses and their emotion. Architecture also has the power to set the stage for occupants to create new meaningful experiences—and memory plays a key role in helping to make all of this possible.

Aldo Rossi designed with memory as his central material, but he worked with collective memory—shared symbols, urban archetypes, and monuments that embody the identity of a place across generations. His architecture was grounded in the idea that the city remembers through form, and that meaning is embedded in continuity. In his view, memory was stable, historical, and tied to a singular cultural narrative.

My position diverges from this. I propose that architecture can—and must—also be designed from personal, subjective memory, especially in contexts where collective memory has never been allowed to form. In postcolonial, diasporic, or migratory environments, what persists is not monumental memory but transience—individual recollections, shifting identities, and lived experiences that are fragmented and often unspoken.

Where Rossi uses collective memory to express permanence, I use personal memory to embrace impermanence. My architectural framework recognizes that the most meaningful narratives are not always shared, and often not visible. I am interested in designing with the unheard voices, the intimate histories, and the everyday rituals that structure life in neglected urban areas—stories that never became part of the official narrative, but which quietly shape the experience of place.

Many migrant neighborhoods in European cities have become anonymous, not only due to modernism's erasures, but also because of prolonged neglect. These spaces were never intended to reflect identity or foster belonging. The people who live there often come from multiple countries, speak different languages, and carry many layered histories. As a result, collective memory—as defined by Rossi—does not exist. But this does not mean there is no memory at all.

There is memory in the small and the specific—a scent from home, a pattern of light, a borrowed wall, a quiet gesture. These are the materials of microhistory, and I believe architecture can give form to them. In these spaces, architecture becomes not a monument, but a medium of acknowledgment, translation, and belonging.

Rather than seek a unified narrative, I choose to work with plural truths. Rather than monumentalize, I aim to attune—to listen, to interpret, and to design with care for that **which is fragile, subjective, and in motion.**

How can memories be translated into architectural language? Principles

In this final section, I propose a framework for architects to approach personal memory—not as anecdote or nostalgia, but as a generative design material. Working with memory means entering uncertain terrain: it is emotional, interpretive, and often invisible. Yet it is also deeply relational. In participatory processes especially, memory surfaces not as static fact, but as a story in motion.

These principles draw on neuroscience,

memory studies, and architectural practice. They are intended not as rules, but as tools for attunement—ways to think and design with the fragile, complex, and powerful phenomenon of remembering.

1) Memories can be shared.
Despite seeming deeply personal, memories often grow from shared experience. Think of the hallway where neighbors meet daily, or a playground remembered not alone, but full of voices. Maurice Halbwachs' idea of collective memory reminds us that individual memories are shaped by group life. Designing for memory, then, is not about isolating people into personal bubbles, but rather making room for overlap—places where strangers become familiar.

2) Longing and absence.
People don't just remember what they had—they often remember what they lacked. A child who never had a quiet place to read might dream of one more than the one who did. Absence leaves as deep an imprint as presence. Designing with memory means making space not only for nostalgia but for longing. It asks what was missing, and answers in built form.

3) Embrace uncertainty.
Memory isn't always clear. In fact, it rarely is. When people recall the past, they often fill in gaps unconsciously. This doesn't make memory less valuable—only more layered. Rather than force clarity, architecture can celebrate multiplicity. A plaza might be a basketball court today and a community gathering tomorrow. Space becomes richer when it resists a single definition.

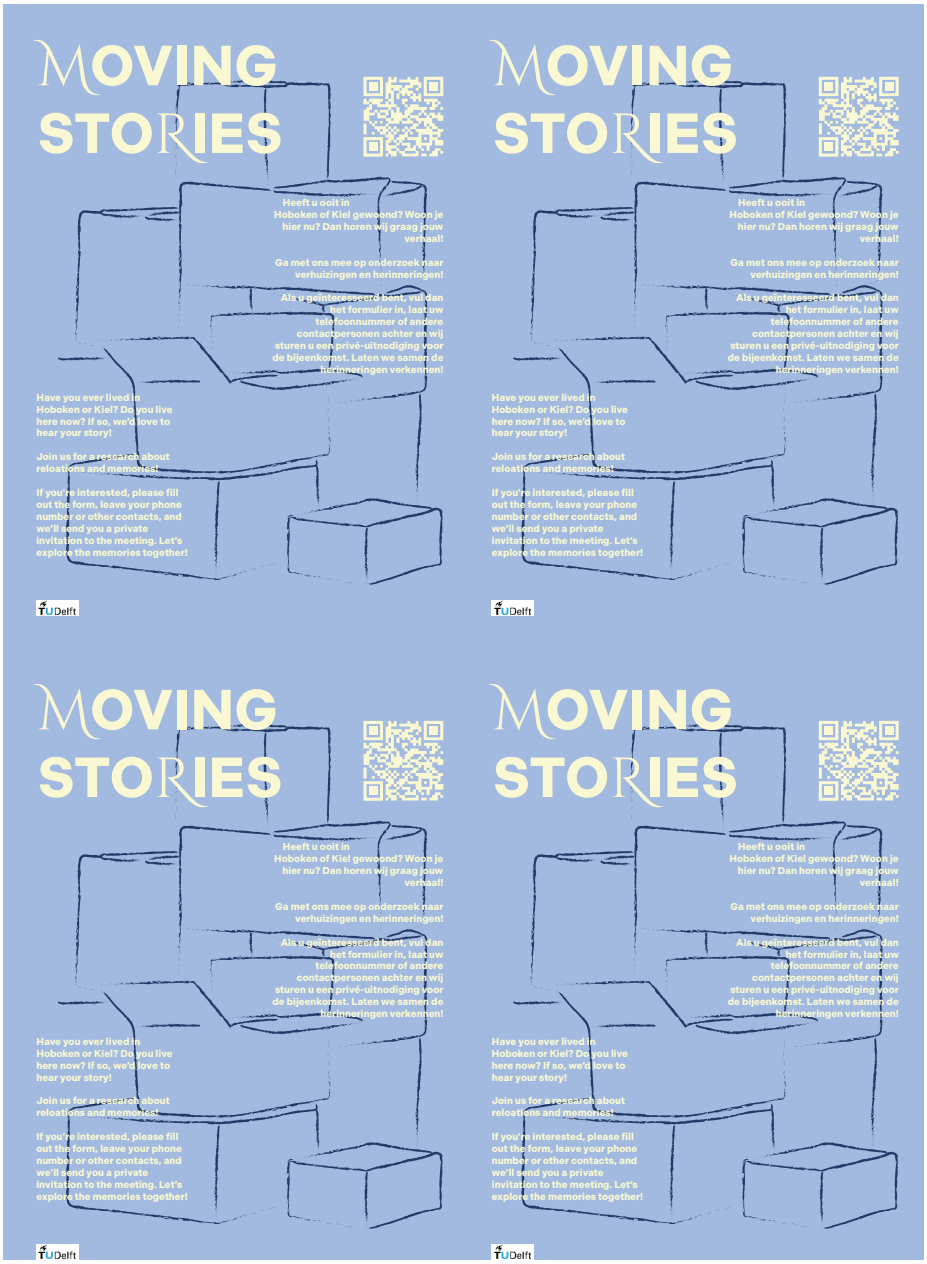
4) Memory can be a sequence.
Memories often unfold in motion: walking to school, coming home for dinner, turning a corner and meeting someone unexpected. This principle asks designers to choreograph movement. Think not only in terms of static rooms, but how one space leads to another. Transitions, thresholds, and timing all shape the experience—and therefore, the memory.

5) Memory as a ritual.
Daily repetition anchors meaning. It's not the grand gestures, but the consistent ones that shape who we are. Sitting on a stoop every evening. Hanging laundry on a shared balcony. These everyday performances make space sacred through rhythm. Architecture can enable and highlight such rituals—offering space for habits that root people in place.

6) Not only visual.
Too often, design privileges what can be seen. But many of our strongest memories are tied to smell, sound, texture. The scent of rain on warm concrete. The echo in a tiled stairwell. Architecture that engages more than the eye—through acoustics, materiality, and thermal comfort—creates deeper, more emotional connections.

7) Memories can lie.
Not in a deceptive way, but in how they distort, compress, or exaggerate. Someone might remember a childhood bedroom as enormous, when it was actually quite small. This doesn't discredit the memory—it reveals how space feels. Designing from memory means translating emotion, not reproducing exact replicas. The point isn't accuracy, but resonance.

Taken together, these principles offer a way to work with memory—not as static history, but as living material. They provide scaffolding for designing spaces that are not only functional or efficient, but truly felt.


MOVING
STORIES
Heeft u ooit in Hoboken of Kiel gewoond? Woon je hier nu? Dan horen wij graag jouw verhaal!
Ga met ons mee op onderzoek naar verhuizingen en herinneringen!
Als u geïnteresseerd bent, vul dan het formulier in, laat uw telefoonnummer of andere contactpersonen achter en wij sturen u een privé-uitnodiging voor de bijeenkomst. Laten we samen de herinneringen verkennen!
Have you ever lived in Hoboken or Kiel? Do you live here now? If so, we'd love to hear your story!
Join us for a research about reloations and memories!
If you're interested, please fill out the form, leave your phone number or other contacts, and we'll send you a private invitation to the meeting. Let's explore the memories together!
TU Delft

Method 4: Interviews

Interview transcript examples:

Interviewee: Elisabeth, 27 years old, originally from the United States, currently living in Kiel with her dog and doing her PhD in Medical Science.

Story 1: Memory Can Be Shared

Me: Elisabeth, can you share a memory from your student years that you think shaped how you view shared space?

Elisabeth: College was its own kind of universe. I remember living in a shared dorm in Boston. The walls were paper-thin, the kitchen always smelled like someone else's dinner, and people I barely knew wandered in and out of our room. At first, I found it chaotic. But eventually, I loved it. It was a space where people just showed up—friends of friends, neighbors from down the hall, someone stopping by to borrow tea or to cry about an exam. It wasn't always deep, but it was constant. You never knew who might show up, and somehow that made the room feel alive, like it had its own pulse.

Me: Did it change the way you felt about privacy?

Elisabeth: Definitely. Privacy felt less about walls and more about understanding. We didn't need locked doors—we needed mutual respect. The dorm was noisy, yes, but it was a space of learning. Not just school learning, but life learning. You grow fast when you have to coexist. And it was beautiful—because everyone rought a piece of somewhere else. It felt like the whole world passed through that hallway.

Me: Would you want to design spaces like that again?

Elisabeth: Yes, but not identical. Shared doesn't mean crowded. It means porous. It means soft
boundaries, where you can retreat or reach out. Architecture should let that happen.

Interview transcript:

Me: What's something you miss—something you've always wanted in your everyday surroundings?

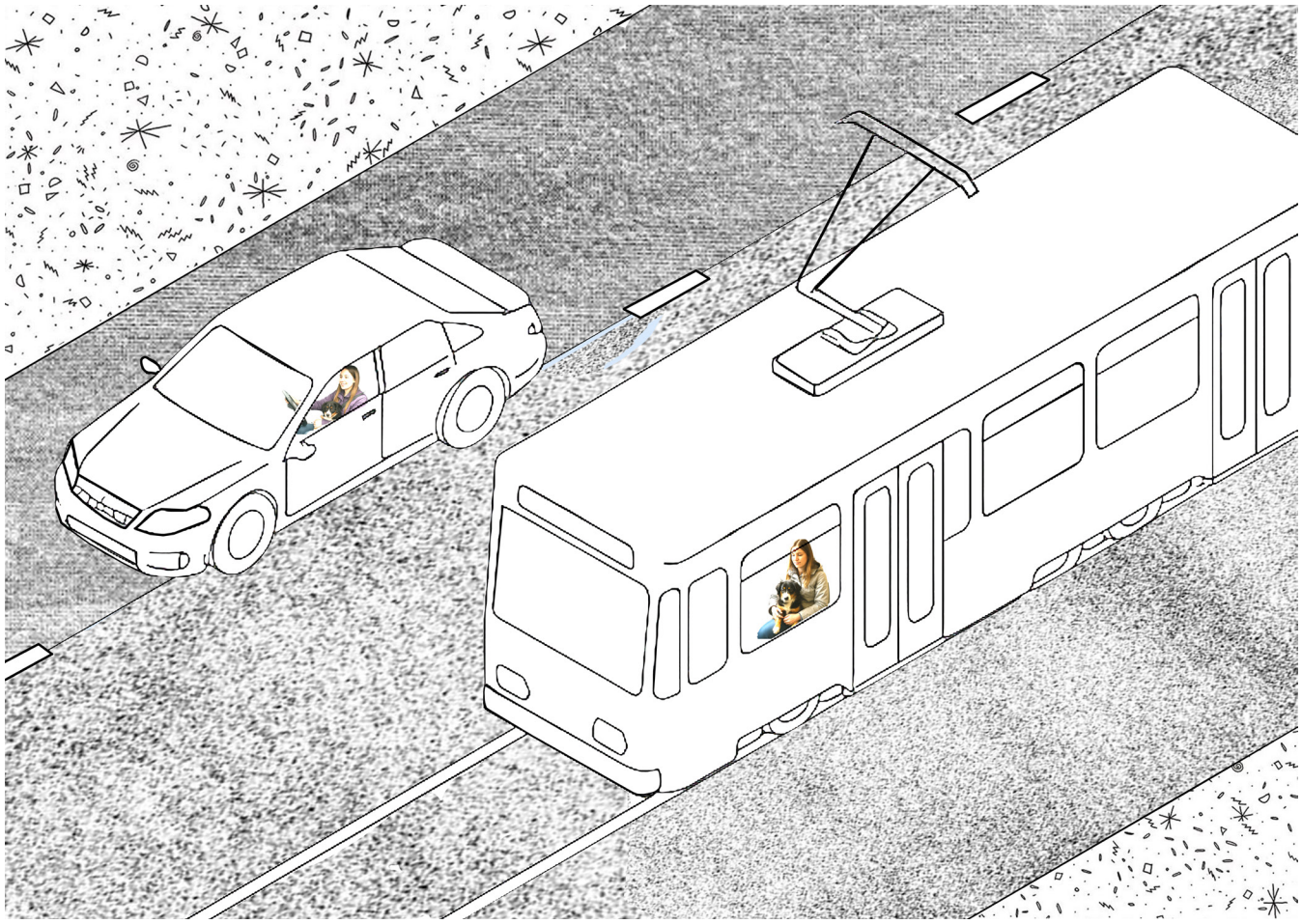
Elisabeth: A park. That sounds simple, but it's true. When I lived in the U.S., our backyard was big, but my dog got bored of it quickly. We'd drive out to the park just so he could sniff something new. Then I moved to Kiel. And here, no backyard—so I take him on the tram almost every day to get to a park. It's fine, but... I miss the ease. I miss stepping outside and just walking into green.

Me: Do you think that shaped how you feel about the city?

Elisabeth: Yes. A city isn't a city without soft spaces. Without spaces that ask nothing from you—just let you be. Walking your dog, sitting alone on a bench, touching grass. That's not luxury, that's home. Right now, I feel like I live 'near' the city, but not 'in' it. The green is always somewhere else.

Me: If you could add something to your neighborhood, what would it be?

Elisabeth: A green thread. Not just a park tucked away, but a visible, walkable route. Somewhere I could walk every day and see it change with the seasons. Somewhere I could go without planning it. That's what I long for—uncomplicated access to calm.



Interview transcript:

Conducted in Kiel, after a basketball game

Interviewee: Asim, 31 years old, administrator of the Facebook group 'Muslims in Belgium'

Story 1: Praying in the Courtyard

Me: Can you tell me about a moment of prayer that has stayed with you?

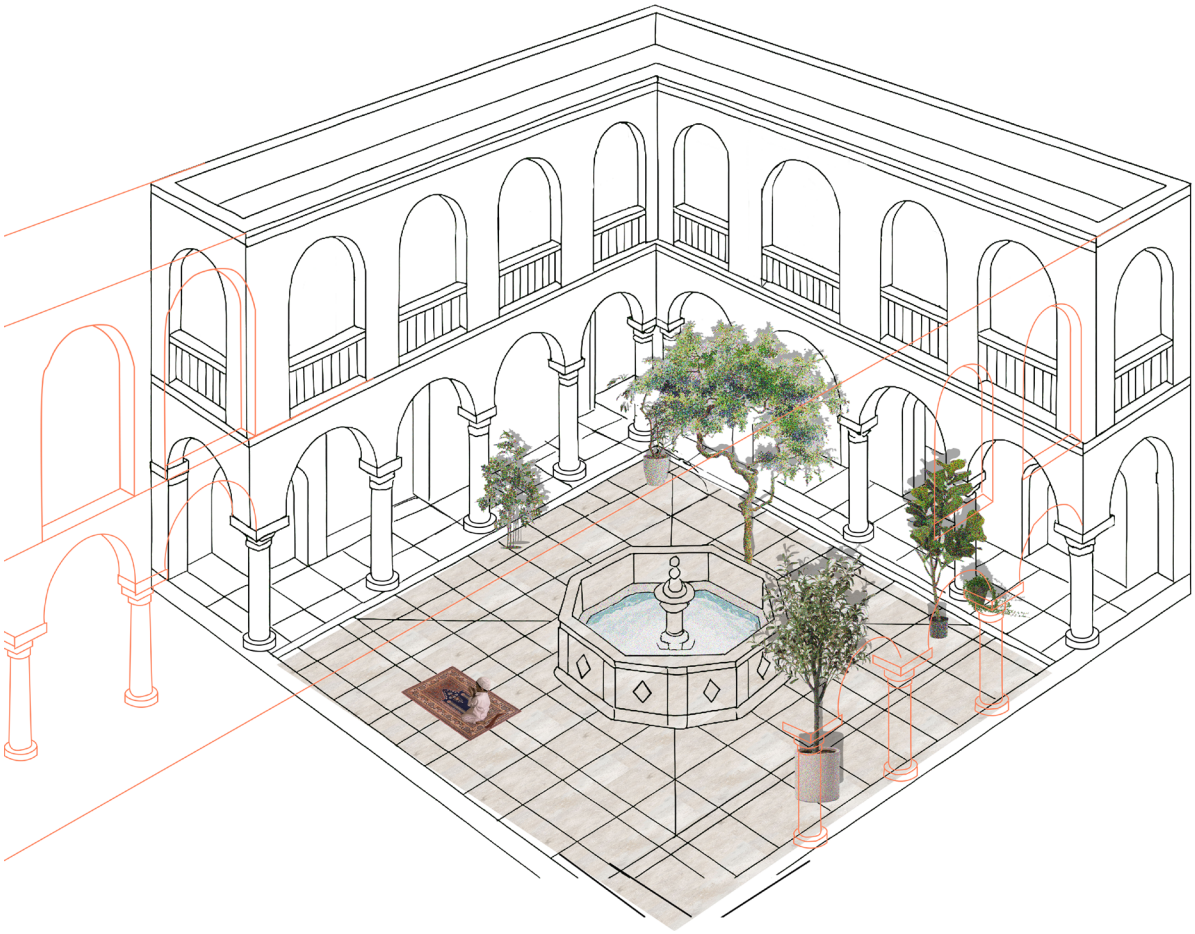
Asim: It was in Morocco, during Hajj. I remember stepping into the courtyard of the riad, barefoot, the air still heavy with the afternoon sun. We were many, but it was quiet. I faced my rug, but my ears tuned to the fountain behind me. That sound—it wasn't loud, just rhythmic, continuous—like breath. The water trickling over stone felt like a whisper of time itself. It didn't just cool the air, it cooled the heart. You weren't alone. There was something eternal in that space, as if everyone who had ever bowed there left behind a thread of their presence.

Me: Did that change how you experienced the prayer?

Asim: Absolutely. In most places, prayer is private. But in that courtyard, it felt shared. Not in a social way, but in a spatial one. The light filtered in from above, the stone walls curved like arms. The architecture wasn't decorative, it was devotional. It shaped the prayer—not with grandeur,but with gentleness. I've never felt that again, not even in the most majestic mosques. It was the smallness, the simplicity... and the sound of water. That is what I remember most vividly.

Me: Do you think those elements—the water, the openness—could be designed into other places?

Asim: I think they should be. Too often, sacred spaces are sealed off. But that courtyard reminded me that devotion needs breath. A space that lets in sky, lets in sound... becomes more than walls. It becomes presence.



Interview transcript:

Me: You mentioned once that Cairo taught you something about being outside inside. What did you mean by that?

Asim: Cairo summers are merciless. The walls trap the heat like a secret. But in the evenings,
people spill out onto the balconies. Not for the view, but for the air, for each other. I remember
sitting with my older brother—him with his book, me just watching the city exhale. All around us,
life hung on lines: laundry, laughter, even silence. You could hear the neighbor tuning his oud,
someone stirring tea, the soft clink of glasses, a whispered call from one balcony to another.

Me: Did people talk much?

Asim: Sometimes. But often, no. That was the beauty of it. We were together, even when we
weren't speaking. The balconies weren't just add-ons—they were extensions of the soul of the
house. Private enough to be yours, public enough to belong to the street. A threshold of sorts.
You knew who was awake, who was resting, who was grieving. It was a social fabric stitched not
with words but with glances, habits, rituals.

Me: Do you see any of that here, in Belgium?

Asim: Not really. Balconies here feel ornamental, boxed in. They don't invite participation. They
don't become space—they stay as surface. I miss that sense of being outside and being with
people while still being at home. That's what those balconies gave us: community without
intrusion. It's a small miracle that architecture can offer that.

2024/2025.

Interview transcript:

Me: So we just finished a game—how does this place feel to you?

Asim: It feels like a rhythm. I've played here for years now. It's not beautiful, not remarkable. But it's a place where I forget the rest of the world. When I step onto the court, I enter a zone. The lines, the bounce of the ball, the sound of sneakers—it becomes a kind of ritual. I don't notice the buildings around me anymore. I'm not sure if there are trees. That's how deep the focus goes.

Me: That's fascinating. So the space becomes defined by the activity?

Asim: Yes. The court isn't just a surface. It's a memory factory. Every missed shot, every pass, every win or loss—it stays in the concrete. You build trust here. Not just with people, but with the ground. I know where the cracks are. I know how the light shifts in the evening. The space remembers you back.

Me: That's beautiful. Do you think that could be designed—those kinds of spaces of immersion?

Asim: I think it can be encouraged. A space that doesn't try to be everything at once, but gives people a structure—a frame—to bring their own meaning. The court works because it's humble. It doesn't distract. It lets the story happen. That's the difference between space and place: the place is where the story gets told.

Me: And what's your story here, on this court?

Asim: A story of freedom. Of movement. Of being seen without needing to explain. That's what architecture should offer, I think—not answers, but room enough for someone to write their own chapter.

Interview transcript:

Interviewee: Amina, 19 years old, born in Belgium to Moroccan parents. Currently studying social
sciences in Antwerp.

Story 1: Memory as Sequence

Me: Amina, can you describe an everyday memory from your childhood that stayed with you?

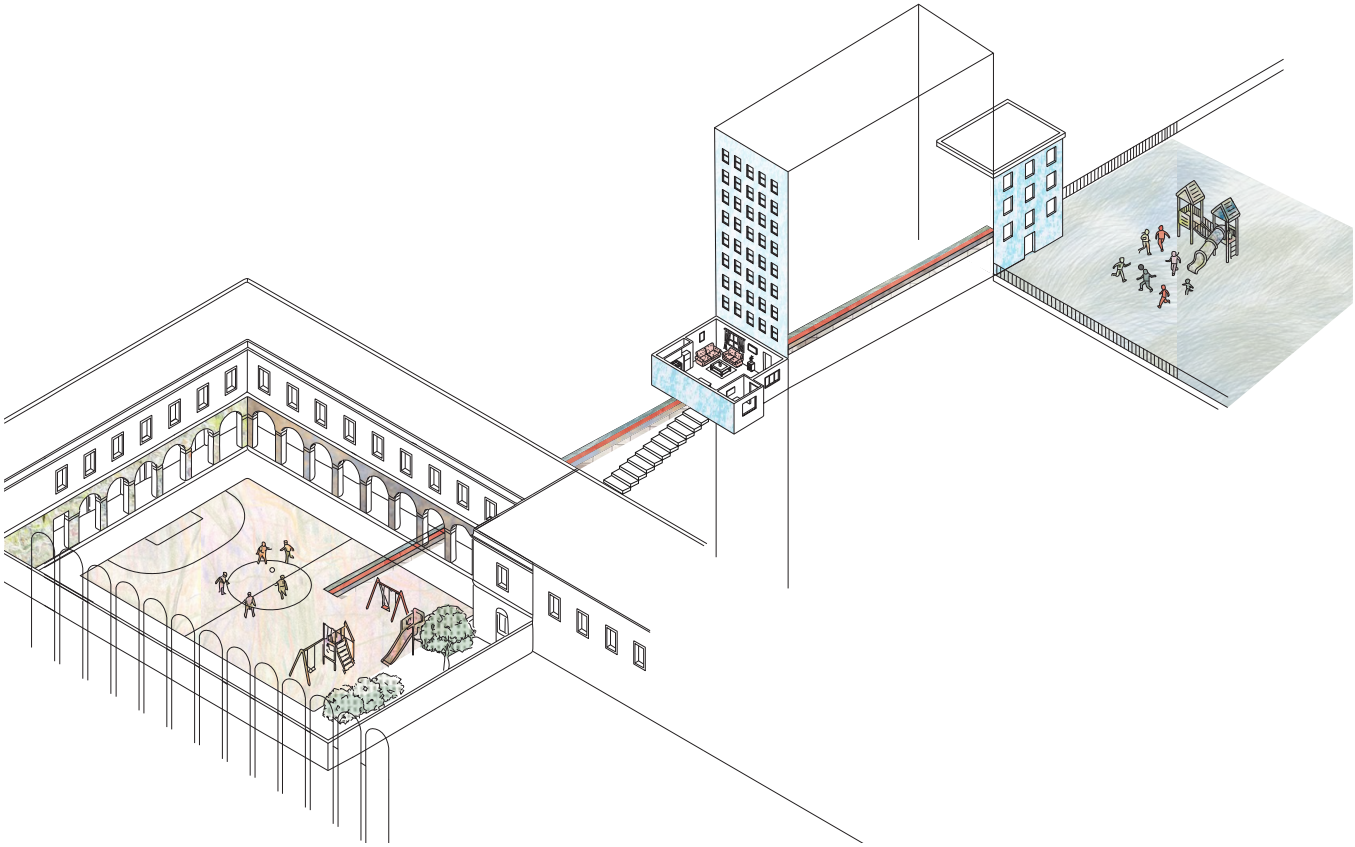
Amina: It's funny, but I remember the way my after-school routine always followed the same rhythm. First, we'd be let out of school, and the playground was where all the loudness started. I would rush through the gate, but never straight home.
The walk home was like a pause. I'd go upstairs, drop my bag, and sit at the kitchen table. My mom always asked how school was while I did my homework. Then came the best part—the evening. That's when I could go play outside again, but only with the neighbors' kids. My mom trusted them. She could see us from the window.

Me: What did that sequence mean to you?

Amina: It felt safe. Like the day had its own story. I knew the chapters by heart. The schoolyard was noise, home was focus, and the courtyard was freedom. I remember my mom always watching from the window. That made it feel okay. Like she was part of the space too, even if she wasn't outside.

Me: Do you think spaces today still support those kinds of routines?

Amina: Not really. Everything feels rushed. Or maybe too separated. I think when places are connected—not by roads, but by feelings—you remember them more. They shape your habits without forcing them. That's what I miss in a lot of new housing areas. There's no rhythm. Just entrances and exits.



Interview transcript:

Story 2: Memories Can Lie

Me: Can you tell me about a room from your past that you remember clearly?

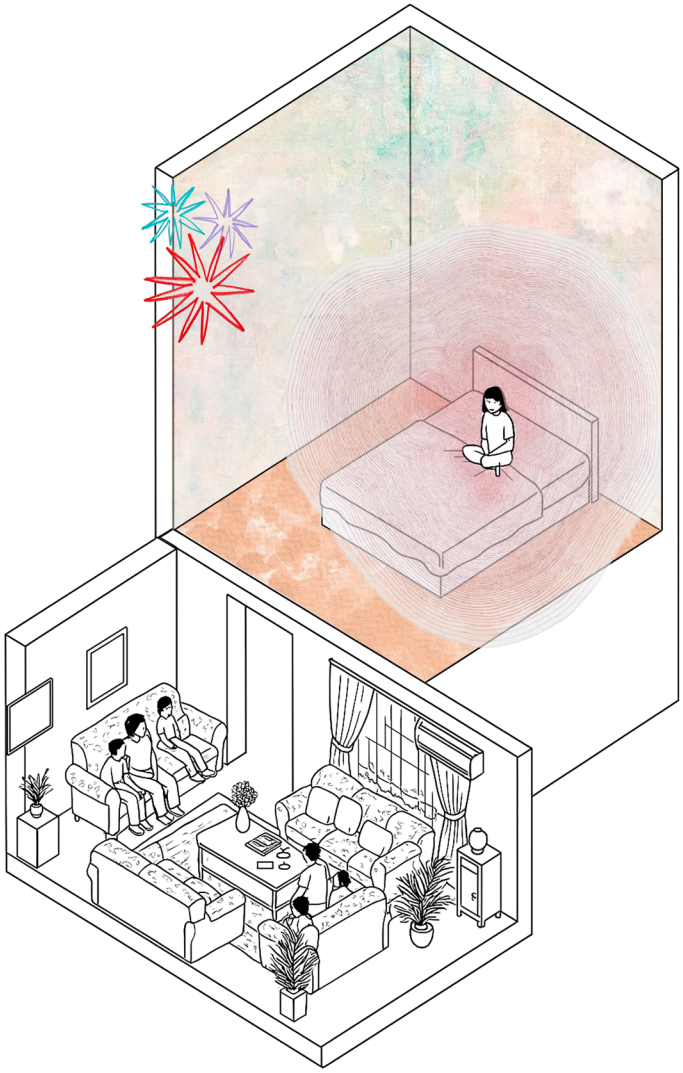
Amina: I always say my childhood bedroom was huge. I'd tell people, "It was massive!" But then I visited the old apartment recently, and it was tiny. Like really small. I laughed. I don't think the room got smaller—it's just that I felt big inside it, back then. It was mine. I was often there alone, drawing or reading. That made it feel endless.

Me: That's beautiful. Do you think that emotion shaped your memory more than the facts?

Amina: Yes, definitely. I think memory is emotional architecture. You don't measure in meters—you measure in moments. I still remember the ceiling feeling high above me, like the sky. Now it's just a white ceiling. But it carried my thoughts then.

Me: If you could design a room to hold that feeling again, what would it look like?

Amina: It would be tall. Not wide, but tall. And quiet. Maybe a window high up, letting in sun but not views. A place that feels like a tower inside. A place where solitude isn't loneliness—it's
space to grow.



ISLANDS OF MEMORY

Design of the mixed-use complex including

Private housing;
Co-housing,
Private Atteliers and Workshops
Medical Center,
Daycare facilities,
Playground
Cortyards and
Comunity Center

The design proposal that emerged from this research is deeply rooted in the translation of personal memory into spatial and architectural decisions. Building on the previously established framework of seven memory principles, the project sought to test and apply these concepts within a real context: the adaptive transformation and expansion of the Blikfabriek site in Hoboken, Antwerp. This site, a former industrial complex turned cultural hub, presented both a rich architectural heritage and a complex social reality—marked by a disconnect between creative actors using the space and the surrounding local community, many of whom remain underrepresented and spatially excluded.

The architectural design aimed to create a new urban fabric that respects the spatial language of both the Flemish domestic typology and the raw scale of industrial heritage. It introduces a hybrid program of housing, community services, and shared infrastructure—such as a kindergarten, workshops, and medical facilities—organized around collective courtyards. These courtyards became a central spatial and social strategy, echoing memories of gathering, protection, and shared rituals.

Each design choice was informed by specific personal memories collected during interviews—reinterpreted not literally but through emotional, spatial, and sensory cues. For example, the contrast between large, quiet private spaces and smaller, dense communal areas was inspired by memories of solitude and collectivity. Other features, such as narrow balconies, enclosed yards, and water elements, reflected stories of climate, routine, or spirituality. Materials were selected to reinforce this memory-driven narrative, using reclaimed bricks and corrugated fiber cement to evoke familiarity and economy, while addressing ecological goals.

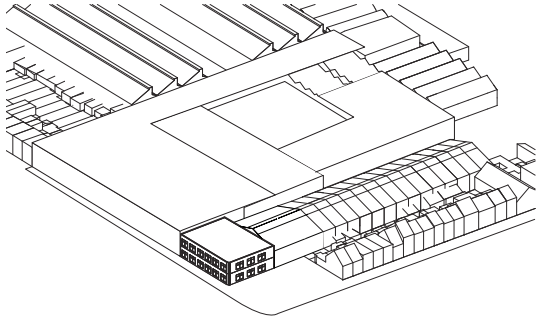
The result is a site-specific design where architecture becomes a vessel for stories. It does not simply respond to the past, but uses personal memories as a foundation for imagining inclusive, place-specific futures—creating space for both existing and new residents to feel seen, represented, and safe.

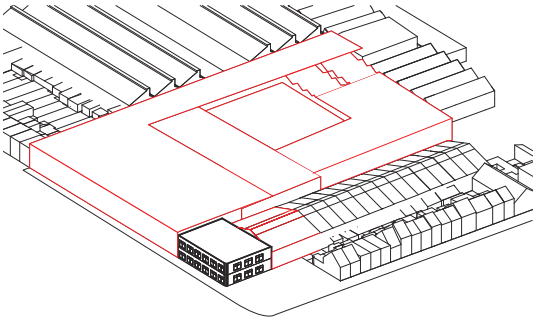
Concept

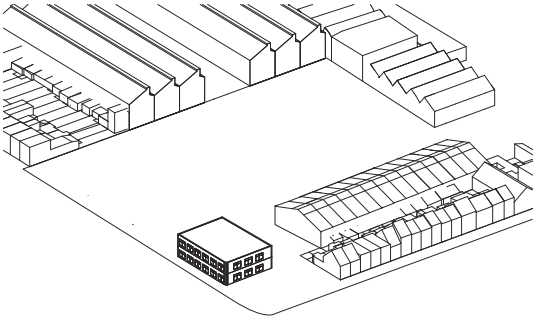
In the local demolition process, deliberate choices were made to reshape the spatial character of the site. Rather than erasing everything, the intervention focused on selectively removing the most monotonous and generic volumes—those that had little architectural or cultural value. These often uninspiring and box-like buildings were taken down to reveal and celebrate the more unique and expressive industrial structures behind them. With their playful rooflines, irregular silhouettes, and honest materiality, these industrial facades brought back visual richness and a sense of identity to the area.

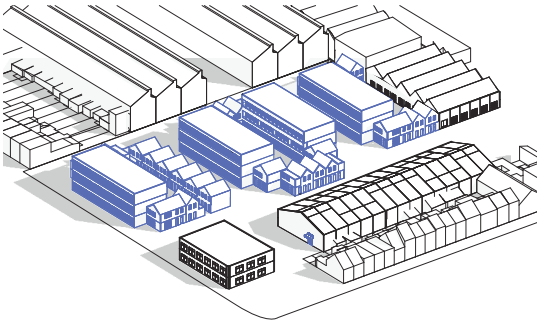
This act of subtraction became a way of addition—by unveiling what was already there, the project re-centered attention on the architectural legacy of the site and opened up spatial opportunities for new development.

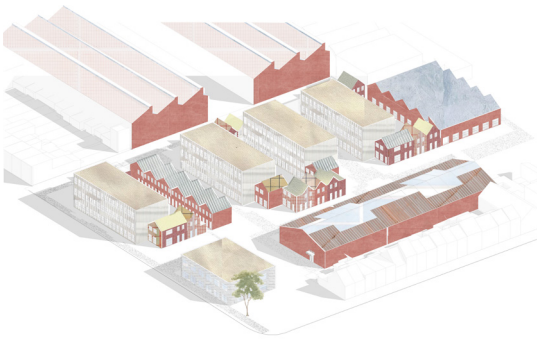
Alongside this, a new residential typology was introduced to respond to the evolving needs of the community. The site now hosts a hybrid of small-scale private houses and three-story co-housing apartment buildings designed specifically for young adults. This typological mix fosters both intimacy and collectivity, offering different scales of domesticity within the same neighborhood fabric. The result is a place where different forms of living are supported side by side, and where the coexistence of old and new becomes an opportunity for architectural dialogue and social inclusivity.

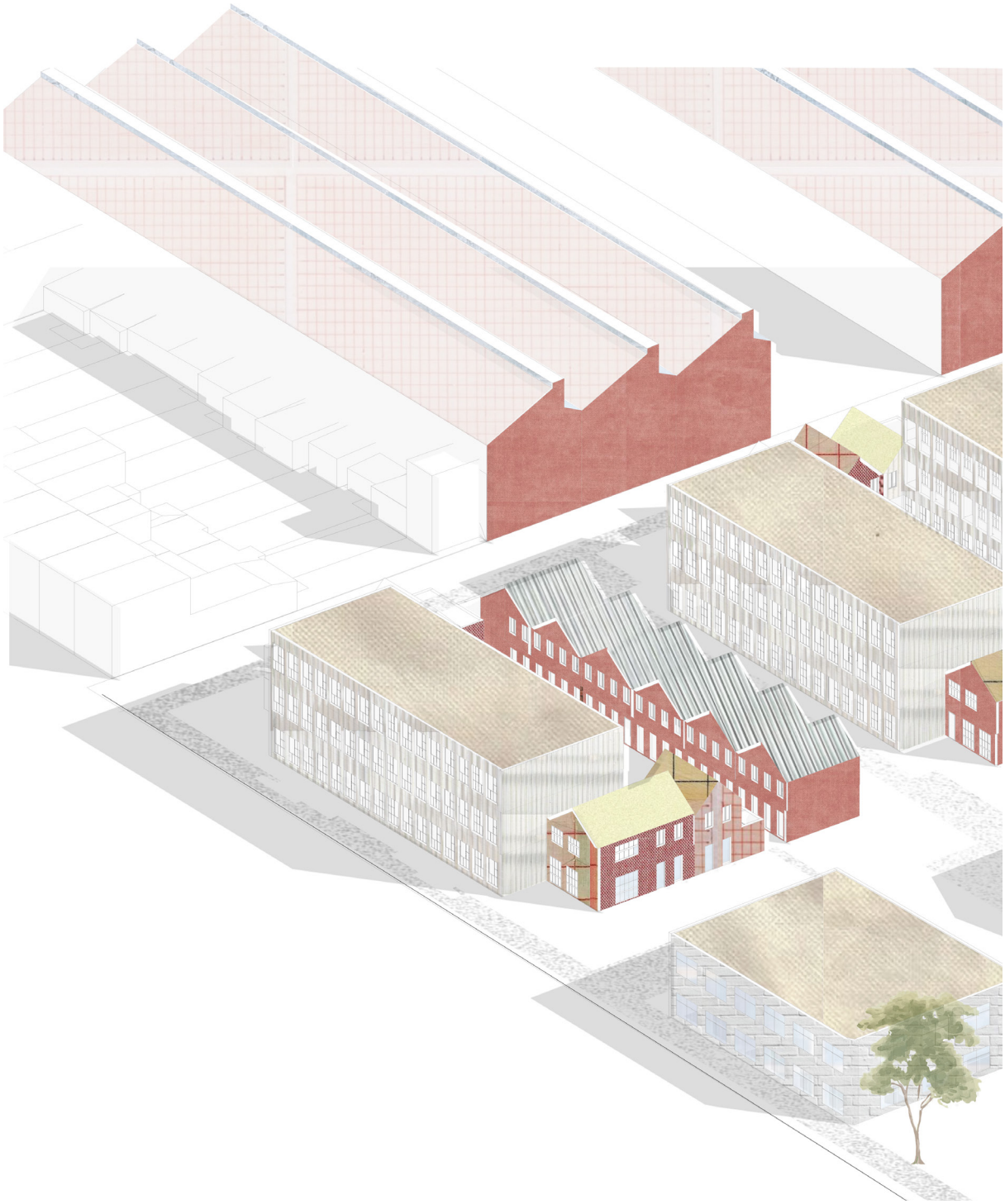












classroom 1
teachers' room
classroom 3
WC
changing room
flexible space
reception
Garderobe and storage
Waiting area
kitchen stuff room and storage
kitchen

waiting room
reception
wc
wc
consultation room
consultation room
small cafe
kitchen stuff room and storage
examination room/lab
test room
stuff room and office
reception
wc
wc
elevators
technical storage
Urban Architecture
P4
Drawing tittle :
Programm
Scale 1:200
Paper Size A1
Comunity Center
Apartment building
Individual homes
Ateliers and Skill center
Medical center
Daycare
Existing
Demolished cutouts
New
N

classroom 1
teachers' room
classroom 3
WC
changing room
flexible space
reception
Garderobe and storage
Waiting area
kitchen stuff room and storage
kitchen

small cafe
kitchen stuff room and storage
consultation room
consultation room
wc
reception
wc
waiting room
technical storage
technical storage
elevators
wc
wc
examination room/lab
test room
stuff room and office
reception

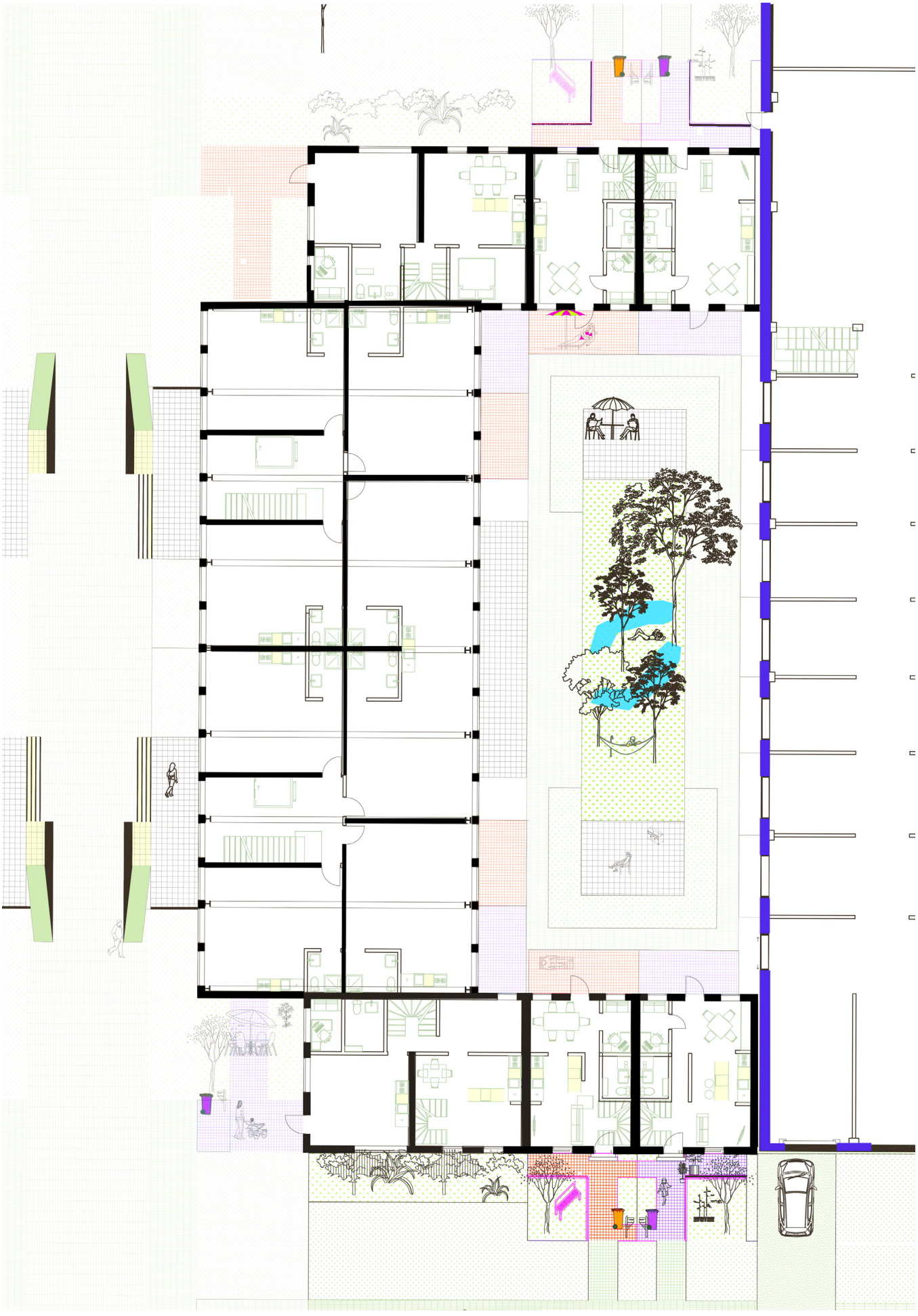
Cluster

This plan illustrates how the residential block is carefully connected to a series of private art studios, creating a fluid relationship between home life and creative workshops. The layout is organized around a central courtyard that acts as the shared heart of the block. This courtyard not only provides daylight, ventilation, and greenery but also serves as a social space that fosters informal encounters between residents and studio users.

The studios are placed along the right side of the plan , forming a linear band that runs parallel to the parking and service zone. This allows the studios to remain accessible independently, without interfering with the private domestic zones. At the same time, they are directly integrated with the housing block through shared entrances, interior visual connections, and overlapping functions—such as common rooms and workshops that blur the boundaries between living and working.

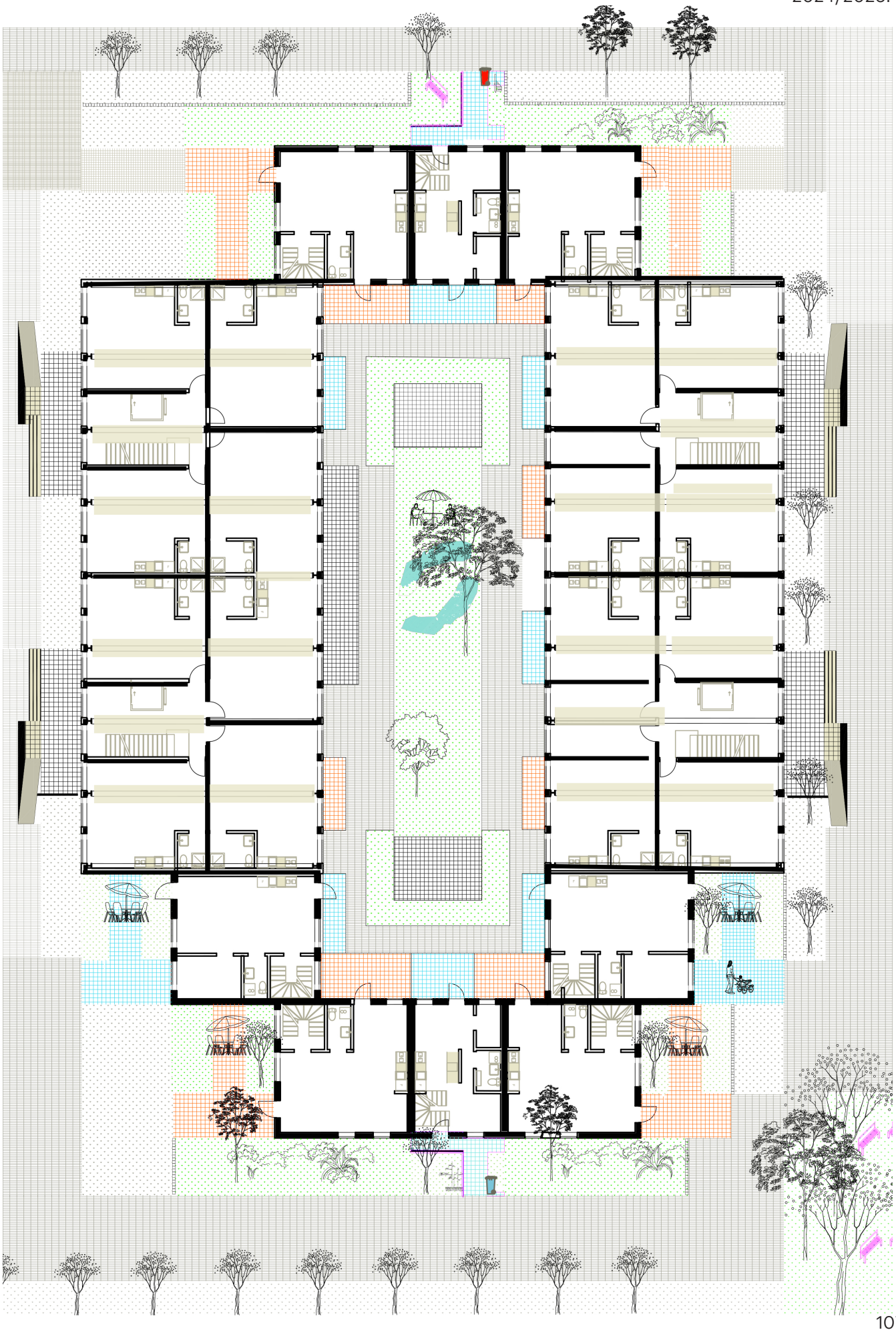
Some of the studios feature double-height ceilings and open mezzanines, catering to a variety of artistic practices. This architectural decision reinforces the flexibility of the block and supports the principle of versatile reuse—a key element of the site strategy. Private porches and intimate transition zones between each housing unit and the studios provide a gradient from public to private, allowing residents to choose how much they engage with the communal life.

Overall, the block enables creative individuals to live and work within the same spatial ecosystem.



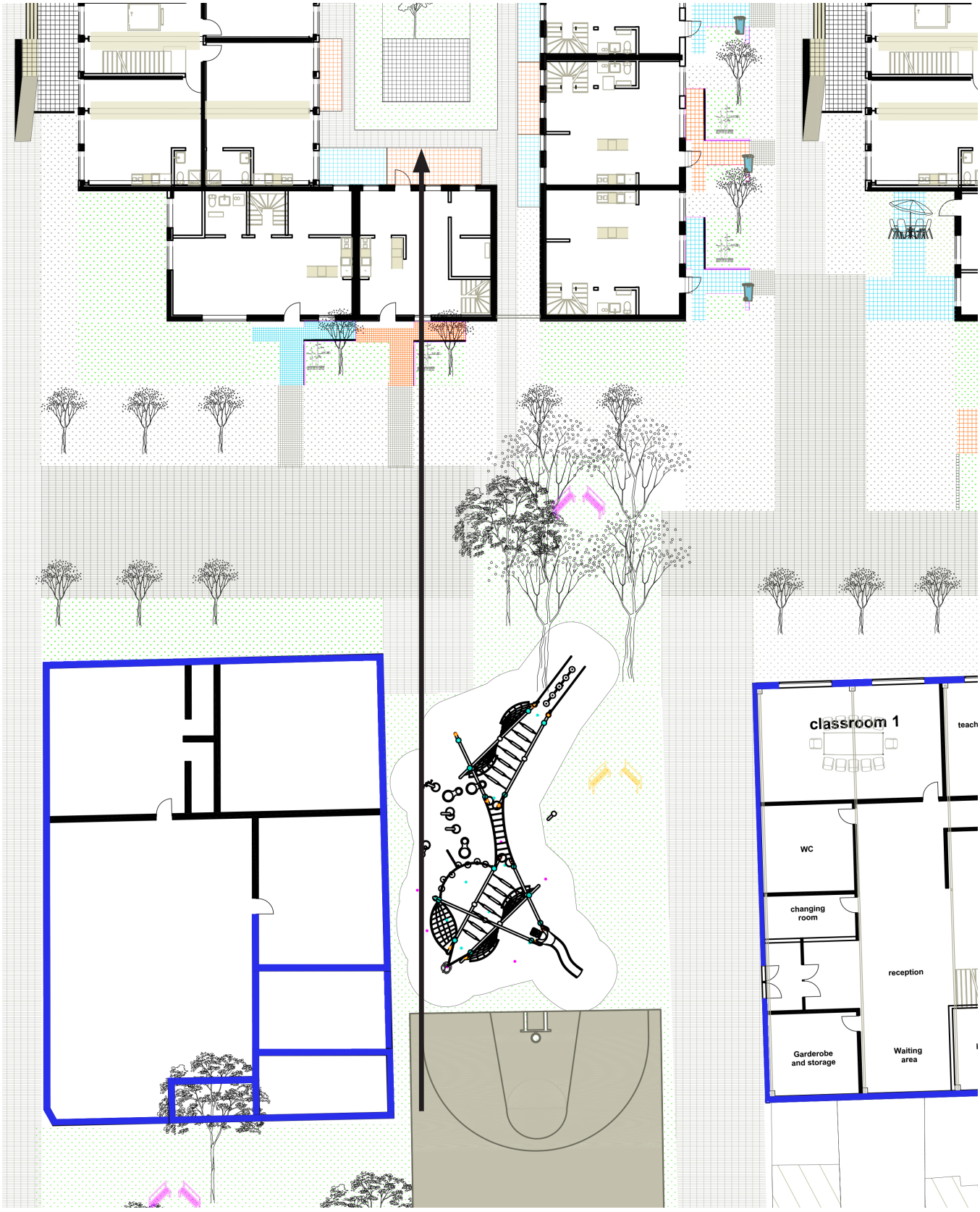
Co-housing

The co-housing units are organized into clusters, each sharing a generous common room that functions as the social heart of the group. This shared space includes a collective kitchen, a coworking area, and flexible zones that can be adapted for workshops, group dinners, or educational activities. Designed to foster a collective spirit, the room encourages everyday interaction and supports a sense of belonging among residents. It offers both practical functionality and emotional comfort, allowing neighbors to build relationships, share resources, and co-create experiences. The adaptability of the space reflects the community's evolving needs while reinforcing the values of collaboration and mutual care.



Sequence

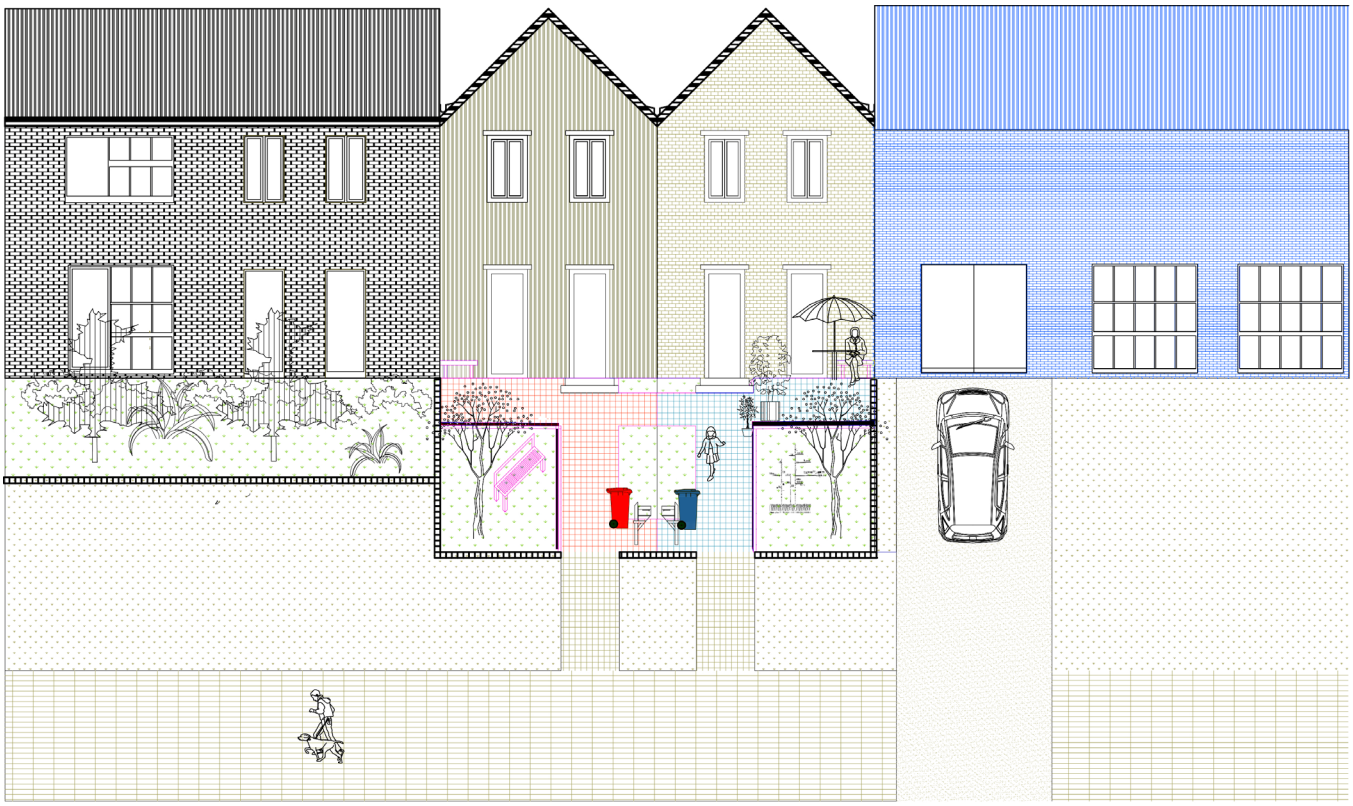
This memory describes a daily routine: after school, the walk through the playground, going home to do homework, and then playing with neighbors until dark. The sequence ends with a moment of trust—"My mom let me because she knew them and could see me from the window."
This type of memory is structured not by one space, but by a chain of spaces connected through time and habit. Each place gains meaning from the next one. Architecture here is not about the singular object—it's about how space unfolds and supports life throughout the day.
Slide 38
In the design, this principle led to the creation of a clear spatial sequence: from school to home, from private to collective, from indoors to public courtyard. Playgrounds, residential access, and shared outdoor areas are connected through a legible path. The aim was to design for movement and rhythm, not just function. When spaces are arranged in a meaningful sequence, they support routines—and those routines become memories.


classroom 1
teach
WC
changing room
reception
Garderobe and storage
Waiting area

Concept

The design of personal porches—small transitional zones between the private home and the collective courtyard. These porches serve not only as entries, but as everyday stages where moments unfold: drying laundry, chatting with neighbors, drinking tea.

Each porch is slightly different. Some offer more enclosure, some more openness. They are places of in-between-ness, where home meets community.
The spatial rhythm—moving from street to workshop, to porch, to house—emphasizes gradual transitions and respects both privacy and collectivity.

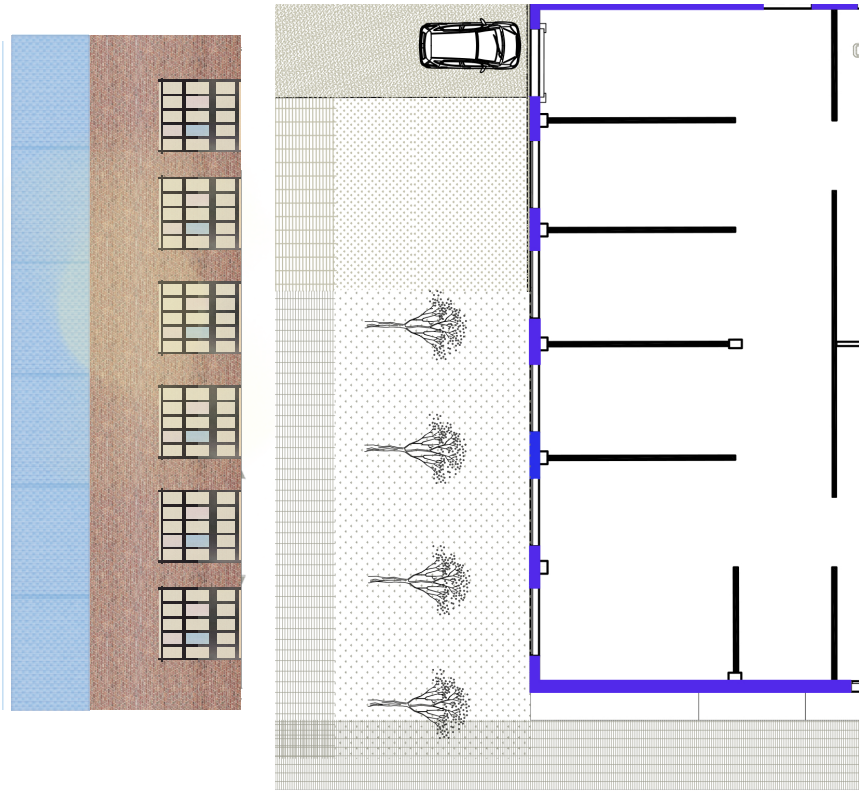


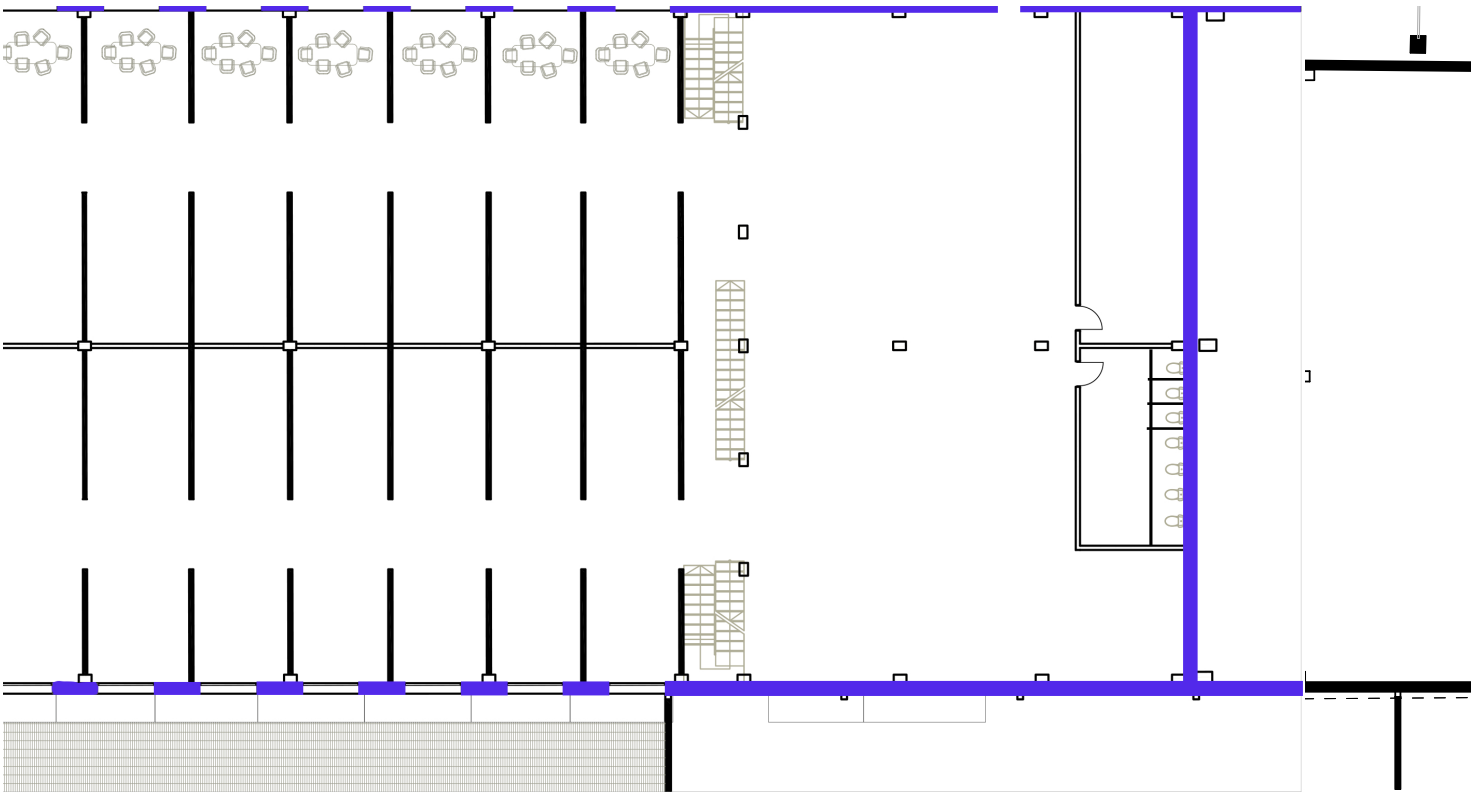
Home

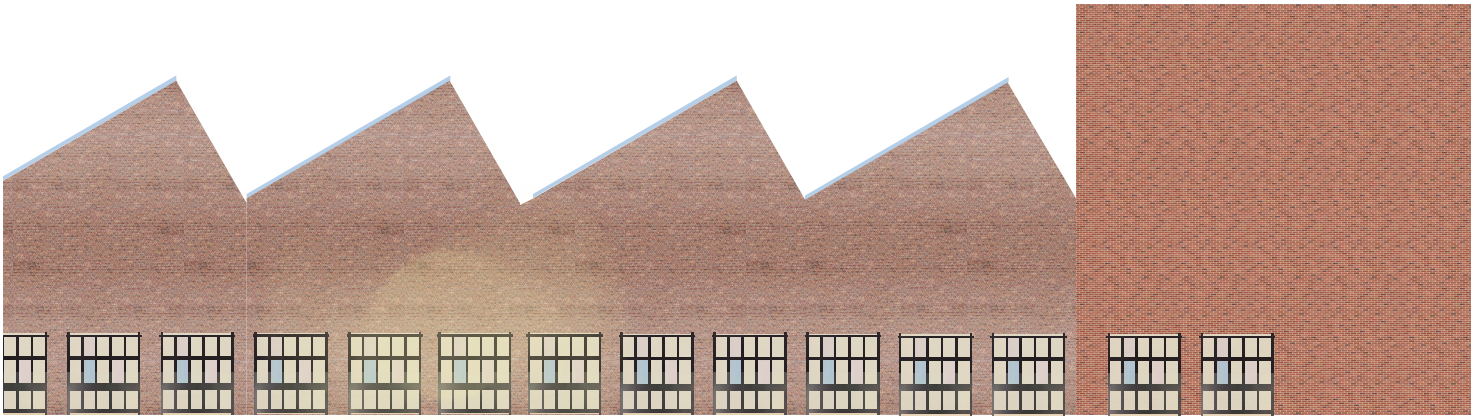
In this case, the feeling of spaciousness was interpreted through tall ceilings in private rooms and a contrasting compactness in collective areas.
By compressing the social spaces and expanding the bedrooms, the design exaggerates the sense of personal territory, especially for children. It creates a spatial contrast that reflects how architecture can echo feelings, not just facts.

Facades

A crucial design decision was to leave out windows on the ground floor façades.
This approach reflects the historical use of these buildings. Originally constructed as industrial sheds positioned between larger structures, they had no external windows at all—light entered from above, through skylights or clerestory openings.

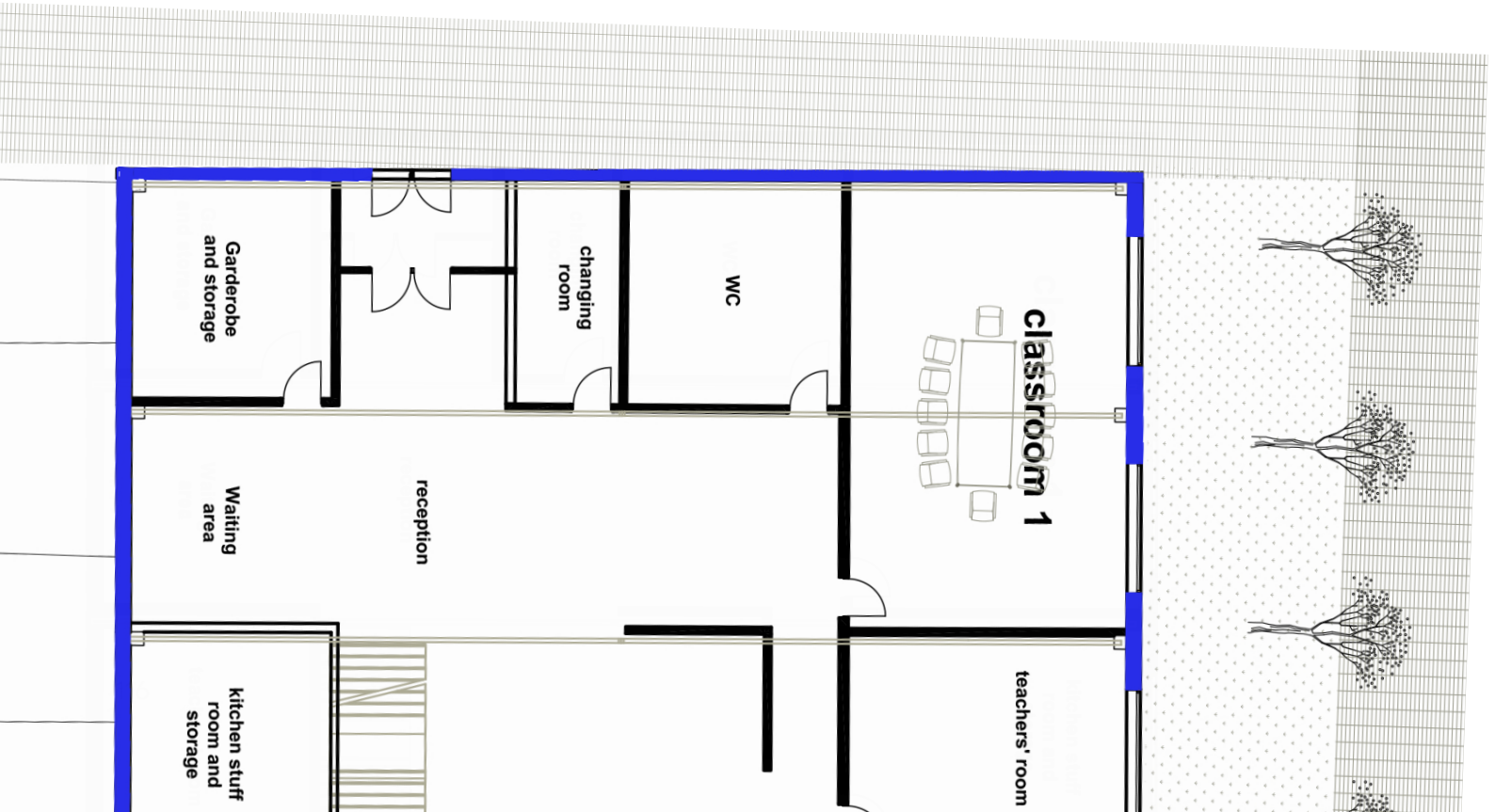






Protection

The decision to reduce windows in certain buildings aligns with the broader value of safety and protection. This architectural choice creates a subtle barrier between the public and private realms, offering residents a sense of enclosure and security.



Flexibility

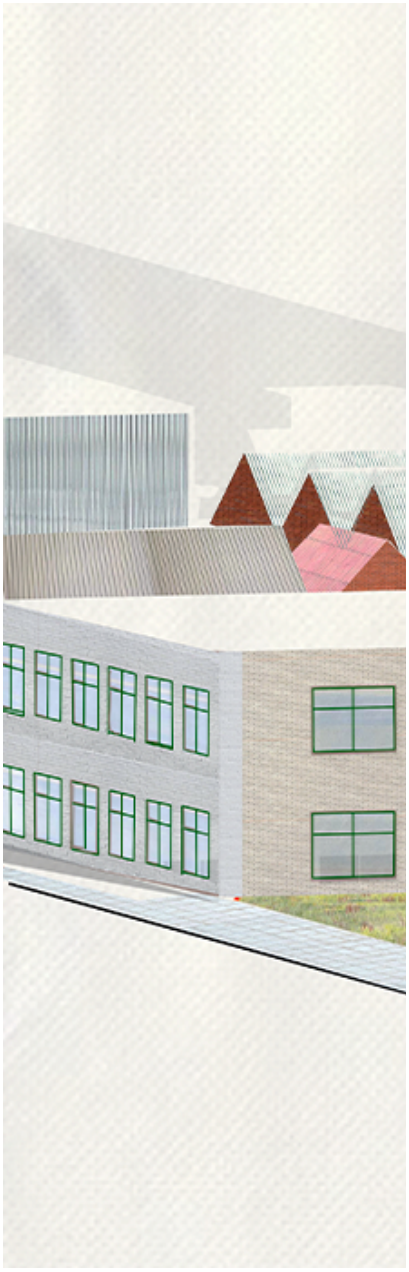
The ateliers are designed for maximum adaptability to suit the diverse needs of their users. Whether an artist requires a tall, open space for large-scale work or prefers a more compact layout with a mezzanine for storage or sleeping, the infrastructure supports both. The system of partition walls and flexible floor platforms allows each unit to be personalized—users can modify height, volume, and spatial configuration according to their practice.

Community

The inner yards are divided into multiple zones, allowing different groups of neighbors to use the space simultaneously without needing to interact. This spatial separation respects varying social preferences, offering both communal and semi-private areas that support coexistence without pressure for constant engagement.

Ambiguity

The design for the basketball area embraces ambiguity and change. It's not a fixed monument. It works as a sports field, a public square, and even a small event space. The court is framed, but the edges are loose. Trees may come and go. Functions may shift.
The principle here is to leave room for interpretation—both in how space is remembered and how it can be used. Not everything has to be defined. Uncertainty can become a spatial quality..



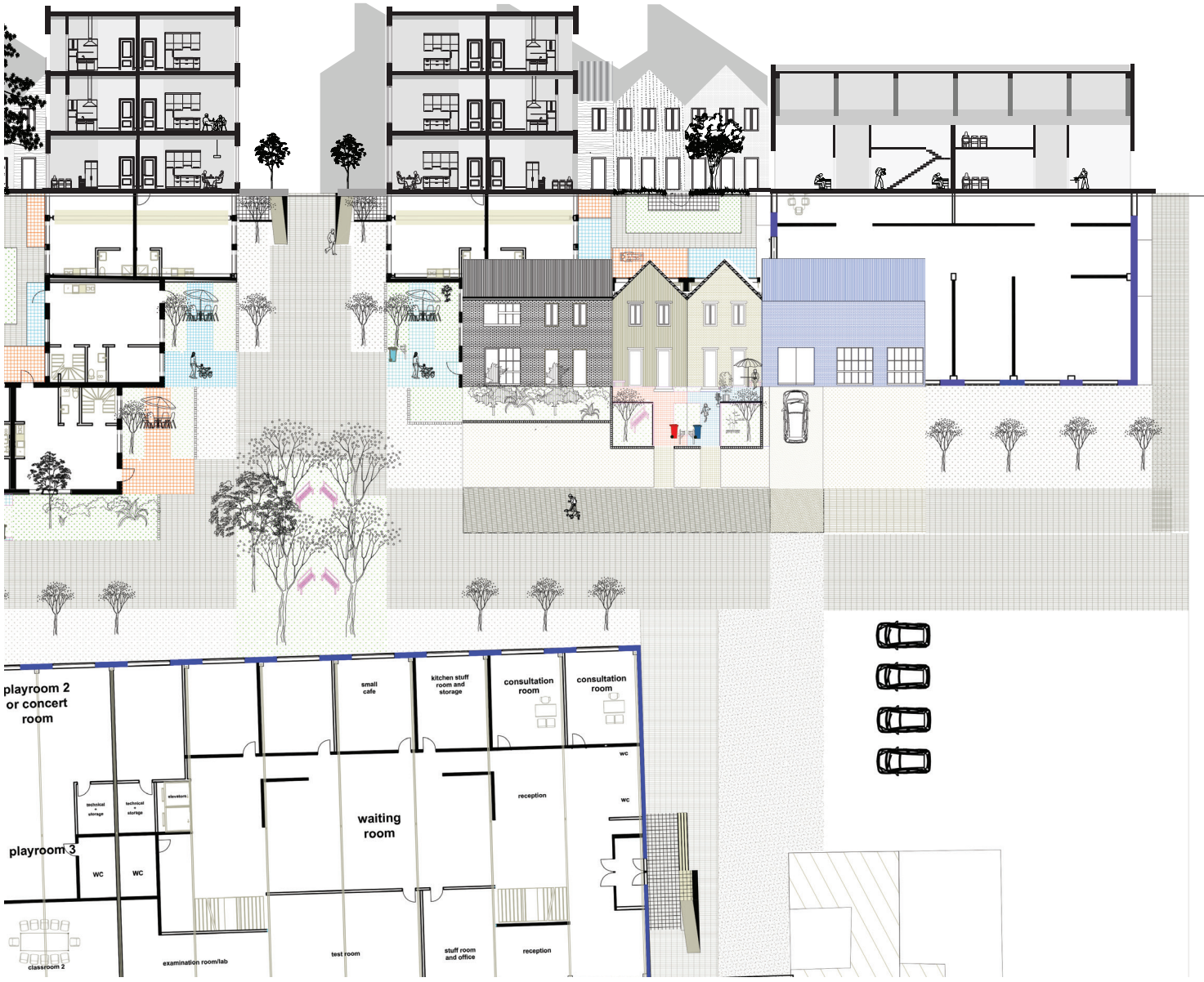
Heights

The ceiling height in the apartment buildings is 4 meters, while in the small houses it is 3 meters.
This difference comes from the aim to mimic the spaciousness of the original industrial architecture in the apartment blocks.

Heights

This type of memory is structured not by one space, but by a chain of spaces connected through time and habit. Each place gains meaning from the next one. Architecture here is not about the singular object—it's about how space unfolds and supports life throughout the day.

2024/2025.


playroom 2
or concert
room
small
cafe
kitchen stuff
room and
storage
consultation
room
consultation
room
wc
wc
reception
waiting
room
playroom 3
WC
WC
classroom 2
examination room/lab
test room
stuff room
and office
reception

MAKE IT LAST

Sustainability matters,
Preventing Gentrification,
Climate Strategy,
Fire Safety and
Detailing

Sustainability Strategy –
The sustainability approach of the project responds to three main challenges: ecological responsibility, economic accessibility, and cultural continuity. The ambition was to design a low-tech, affordable, and robust building system that reflects both the environmental and social needs of low-income and migrant communities in Hoboken.

The structural system is a hybrid of reused steel and biobased timber. Steel columns and beams were sourced from on-site demolition and treated for fire resistance, while Lignatur box elements and CLT panels provide floor and wall structure using carbon-storing materials. This reduces embodied carbon and connects the building's identity to the industrial past of the site.

For energy, the strategy uses a centralized air-to-water heat pump, paired with underfloor heating, enabling low-temperature and cost-effective warmth throughout the year. Natural ventilation is combined with mechanical extraction, minimizing energy use and system complexity.

Rainwater is collected and managed on site through a wadi system—a shallow, vegetated basin that slows runoff, enables infiltration, and turns the courtyard into a microclimate. This passive approach improves ecological resilience while enriching spatial quality.

Material choices—such as reclaimed brick and fiber cement cladding—support circularity and reflect the industrial context, offering durability without compromising dignity. Each construction layer is legible and breathable, avoiding unnecessary finishes and reducing material waste.

Overall, sustainability in this project is not an add-on but a core framework—driving design decisions from structure to spatial experience, always balancing climate impact with affordability and cultural grounding.

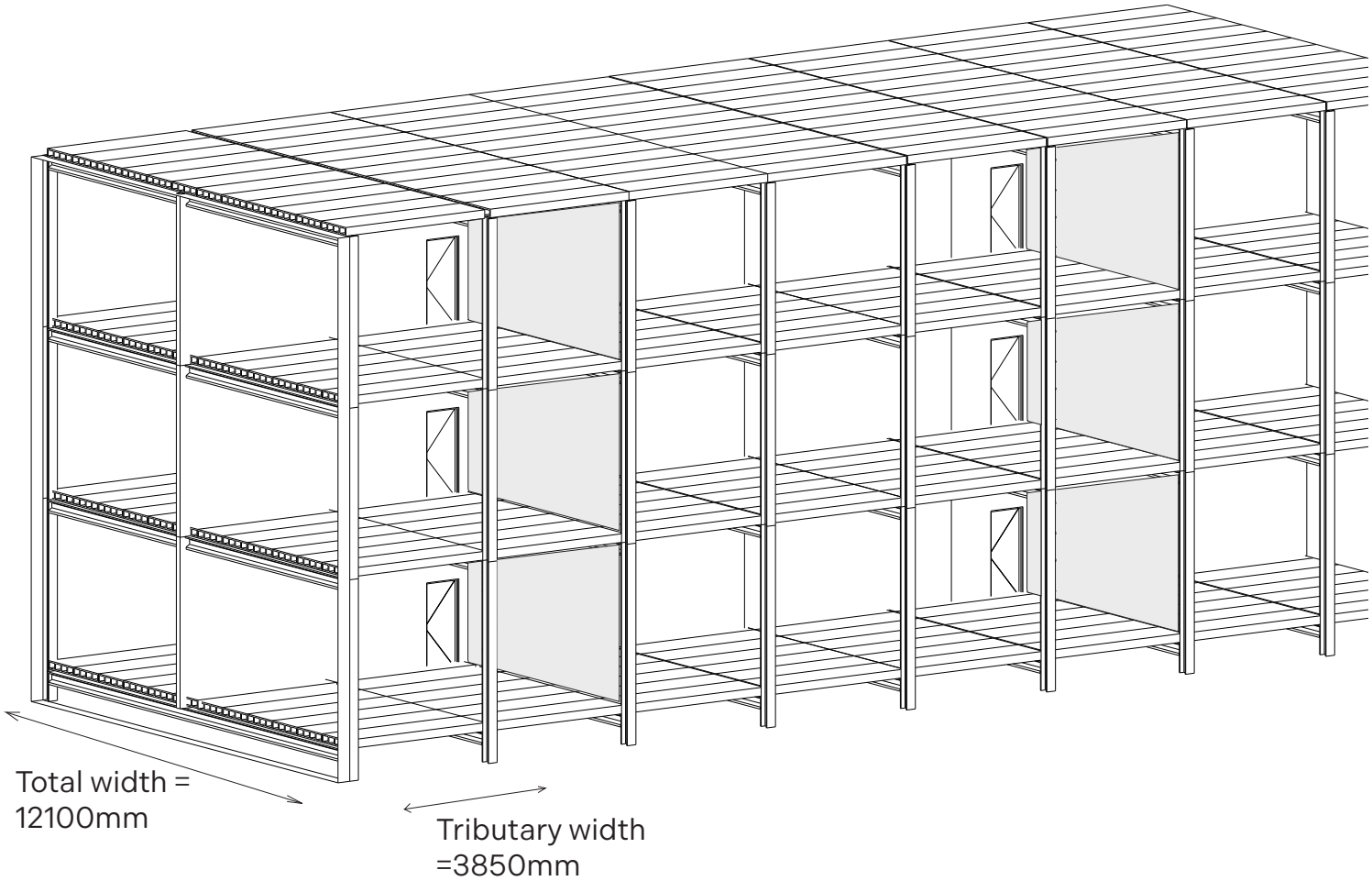
Strategy

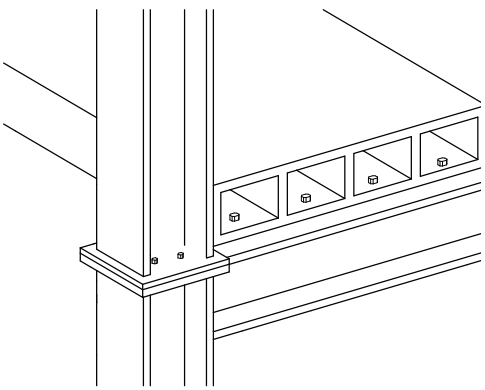
“This diagram captures the core driver of my sustainability approach: social sensitivity. It begins with the recognition that I’m designing for low-income migrant communities in Antwerp, and that means architecture must respond not only to environmental goals, but to economic and social realities.

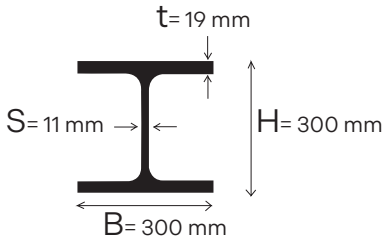
SOCIAL SENSITIVITY

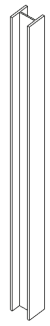
Low-Cost Efficiency
Material Reuse
Biobased Materials

Structural Elements



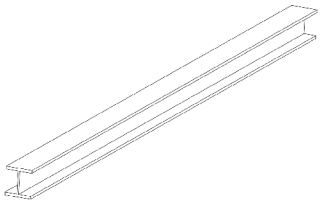






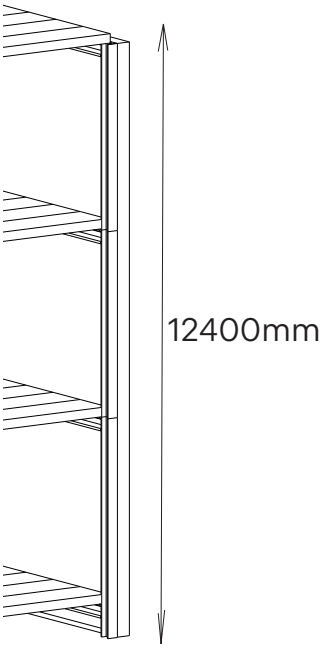
Steel Column HEB 300

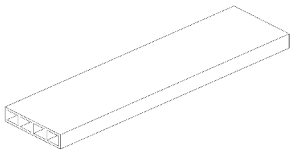
- Reclaimed
- The Most Often repeating around the area
- Height 4100- 1 floor height



Steel Beam HEB 300

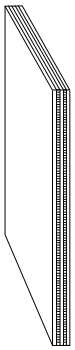
- Same as columns
- Also a reclaimed, found on the site
- Length 6000 mm
- Height 300 mm





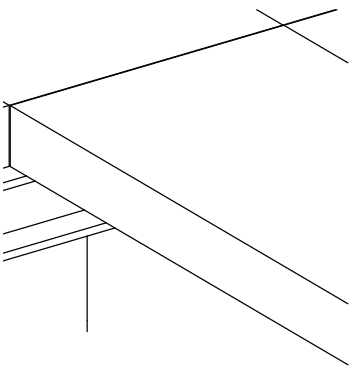
Lignatur hollow timber

- CO2 -1,1 kg CO2e/kg
- Glued laminated spruce (GL24h)a
- Length 3850 mm
- Height 240mm



CLT Shear Walls

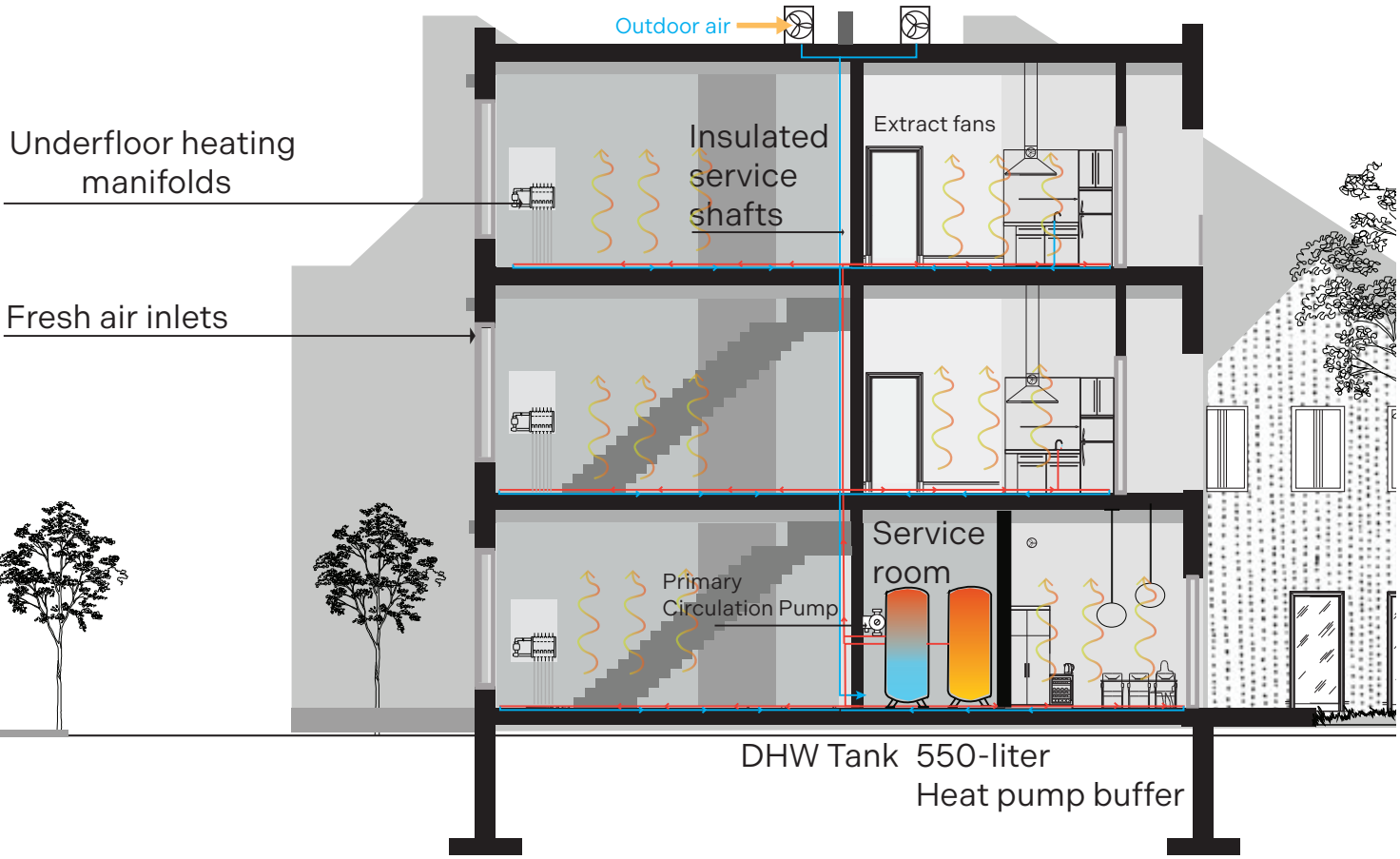
- CO2 -1,1 kg CO2e/kg
- Glued laminated spruce (GL24h)a
- Length 5850 mm
- Height 3700mm



Energy

Heat - Air-to-water heat pump

Air to water
Heat pump unit 2 pc. 27kW Capatity each.



Total heated area = 22 apartments × 35 m² = 770 m²

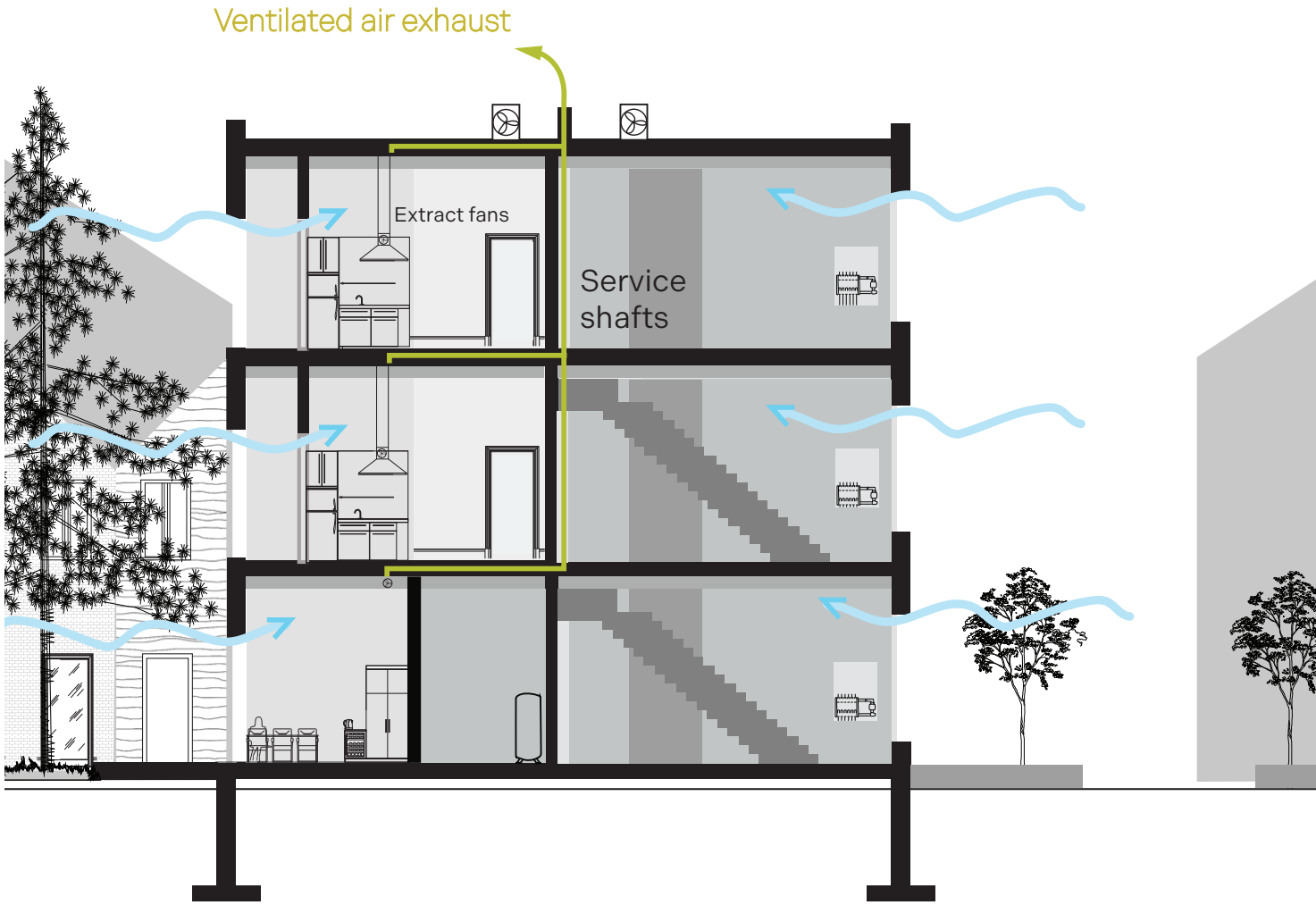
Design heating load = 40 W/m² ≈ 30.8kW

Heat pump total capacity = 2 × 27 kW = 54kW

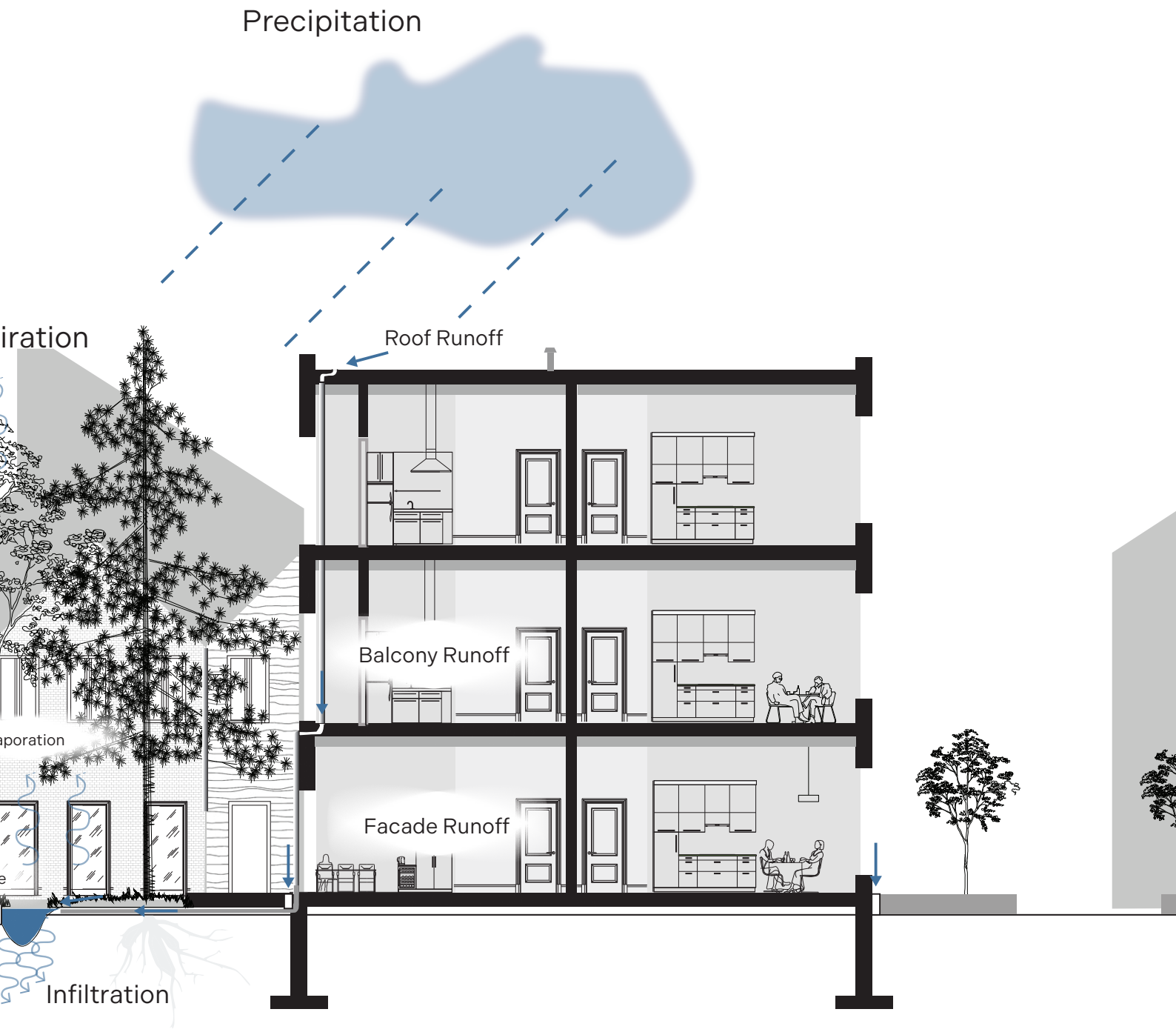
Buffer tank volume = 550 L for heating and DHW

COP of heat pump = ~3.5 Estimated annual energy use in kWh

Ventilation System Type C



Water

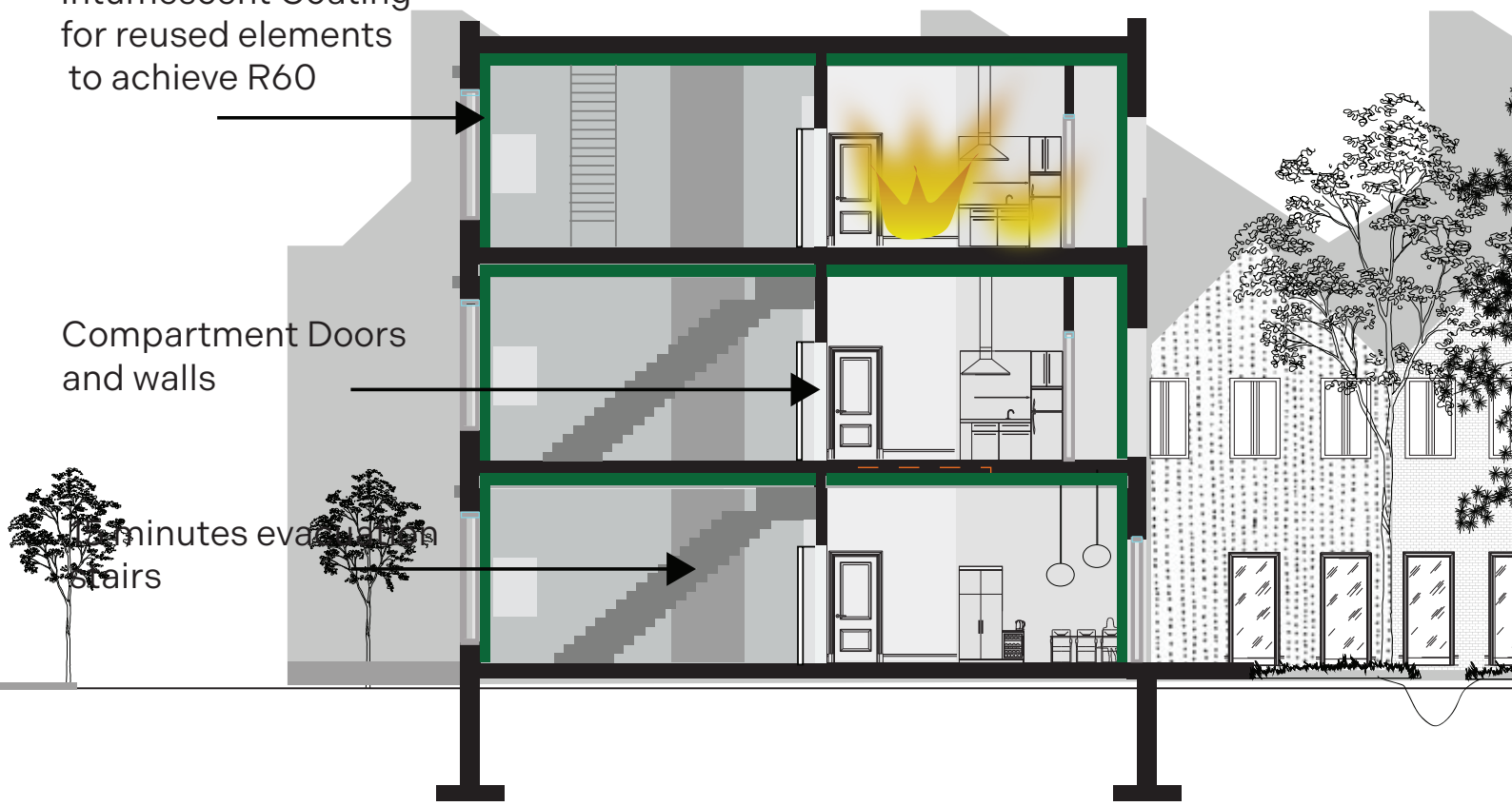

Precipitation
iration
Roof Runoff
Balcony Runoff
aporation
Facade Runoff
Infiltration

Fire Safety

Tinted Fire Retardant Intumescent Coating for reused elements to achieve R60

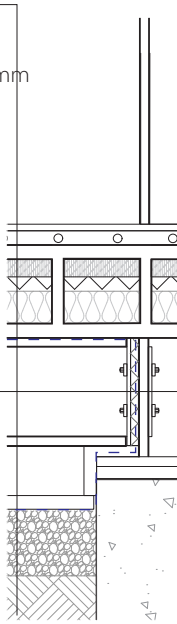
Compartment Doors and walls

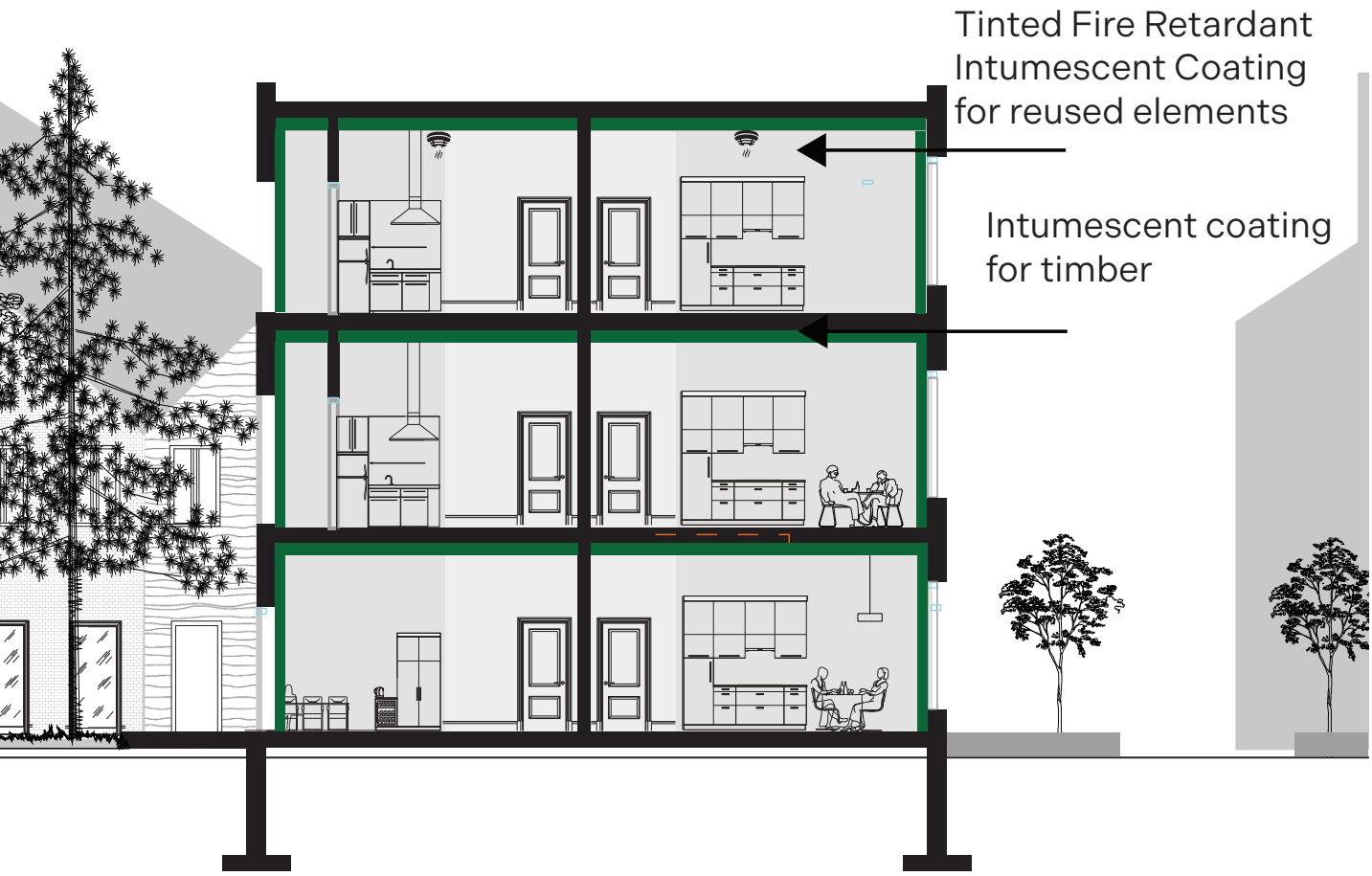
minutes evacuation stairs

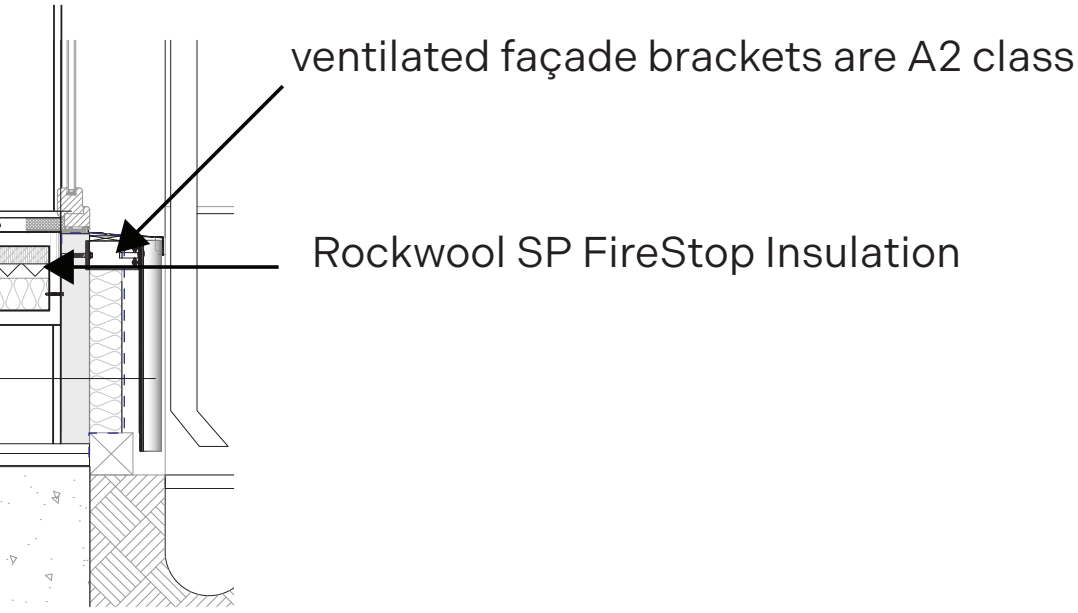


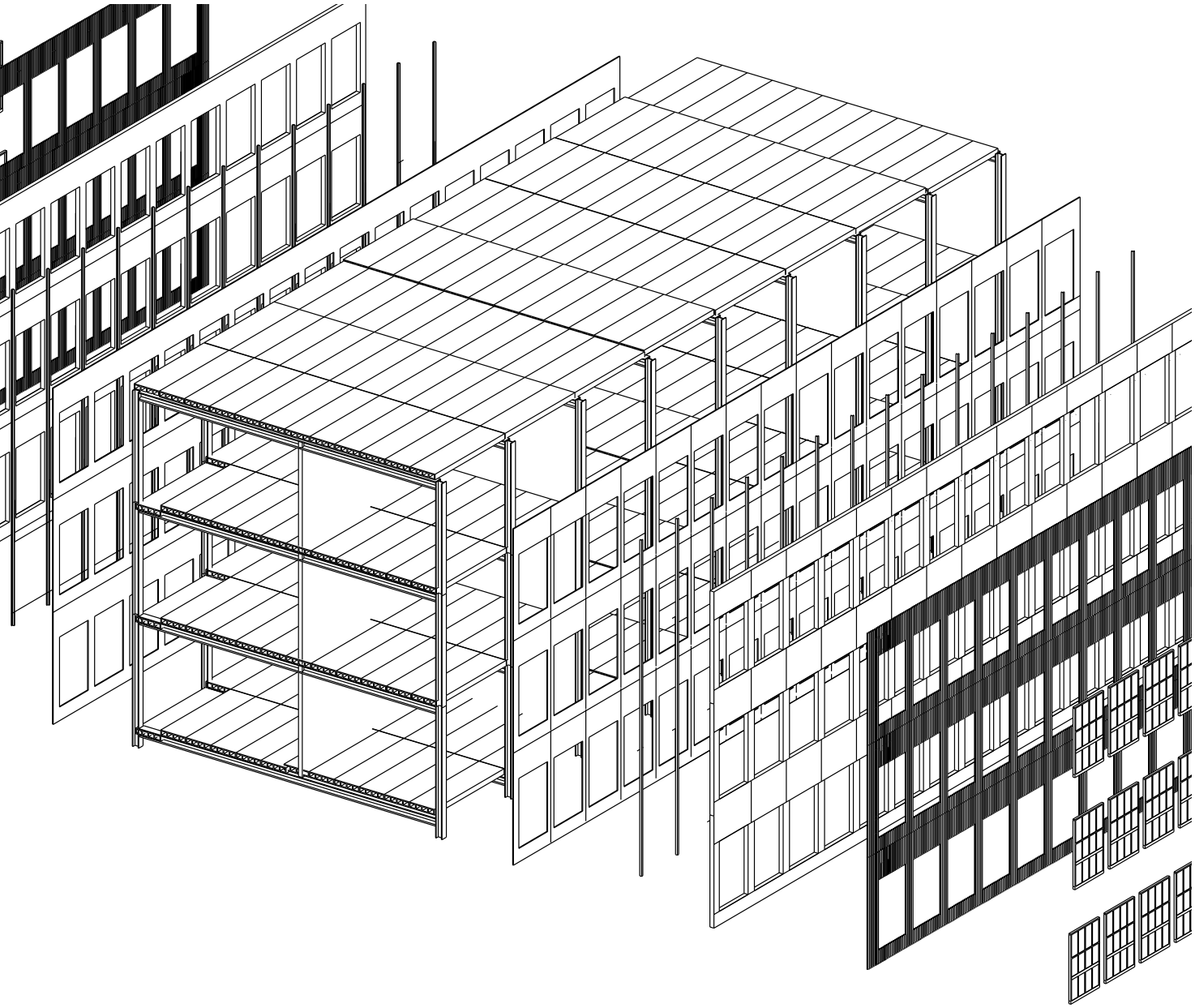
Top to Bottom:
Floor Finish – Tarkett – 3 mm
Underfloor Heating System
Lignatur Box Floor – Lignatur LFE Element – 260 mm
Air/Vapor Control Layer (AVCL) – Pro Clima Intello
Cellulose Insulation - 200 mm
Vapor Barrier Over Ground – PE Foil
Gravel / Capillary Break Layer
Ground Soil Base

Left to Right:
Steel Beam HEB 300
Connecting Plate with Bolts
Heat Brake
Air/Vapor Control Layer (AVCL)
Connecting Plate
OSB Board
Celulose Insulation
Air/Vapor Control Layer
Air Cavity
Metal Rail
Equitone Fiber Cement Corrugated Sheet

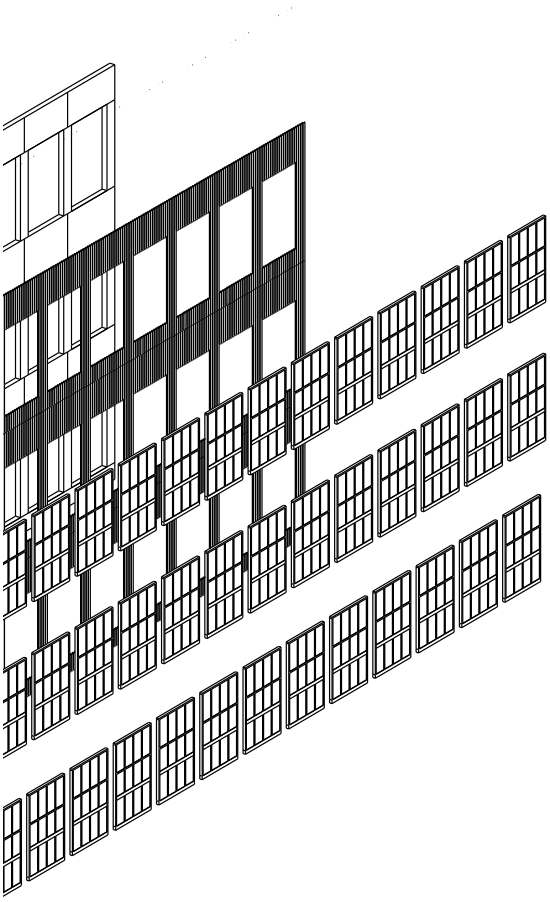



Tinted Fire Retardant
Intumescent Coating
for reused elements
Intumescent coating
for timber

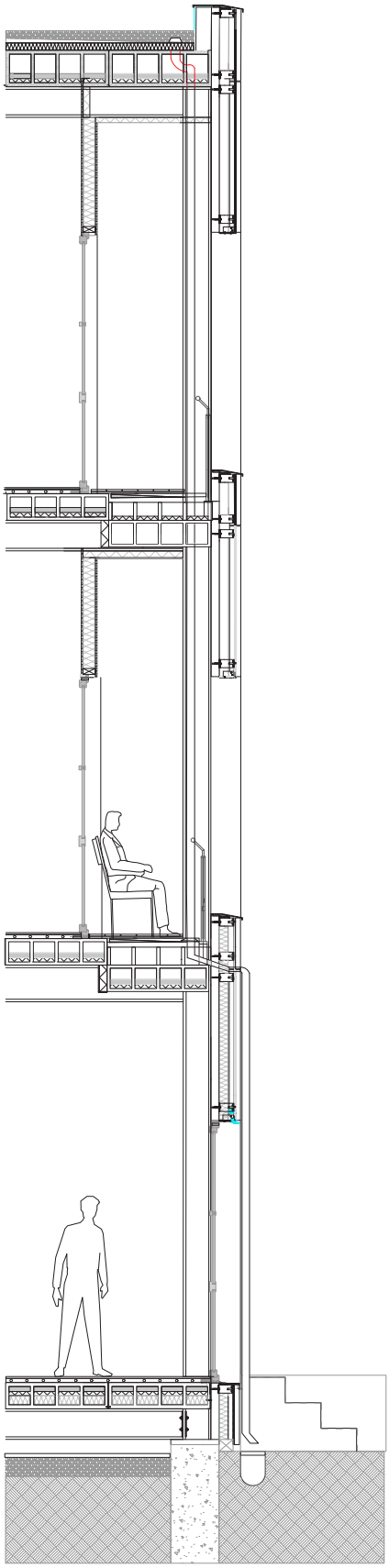

ventilated façade brackets are A2 class
Rockwool SP FireStop Insulation

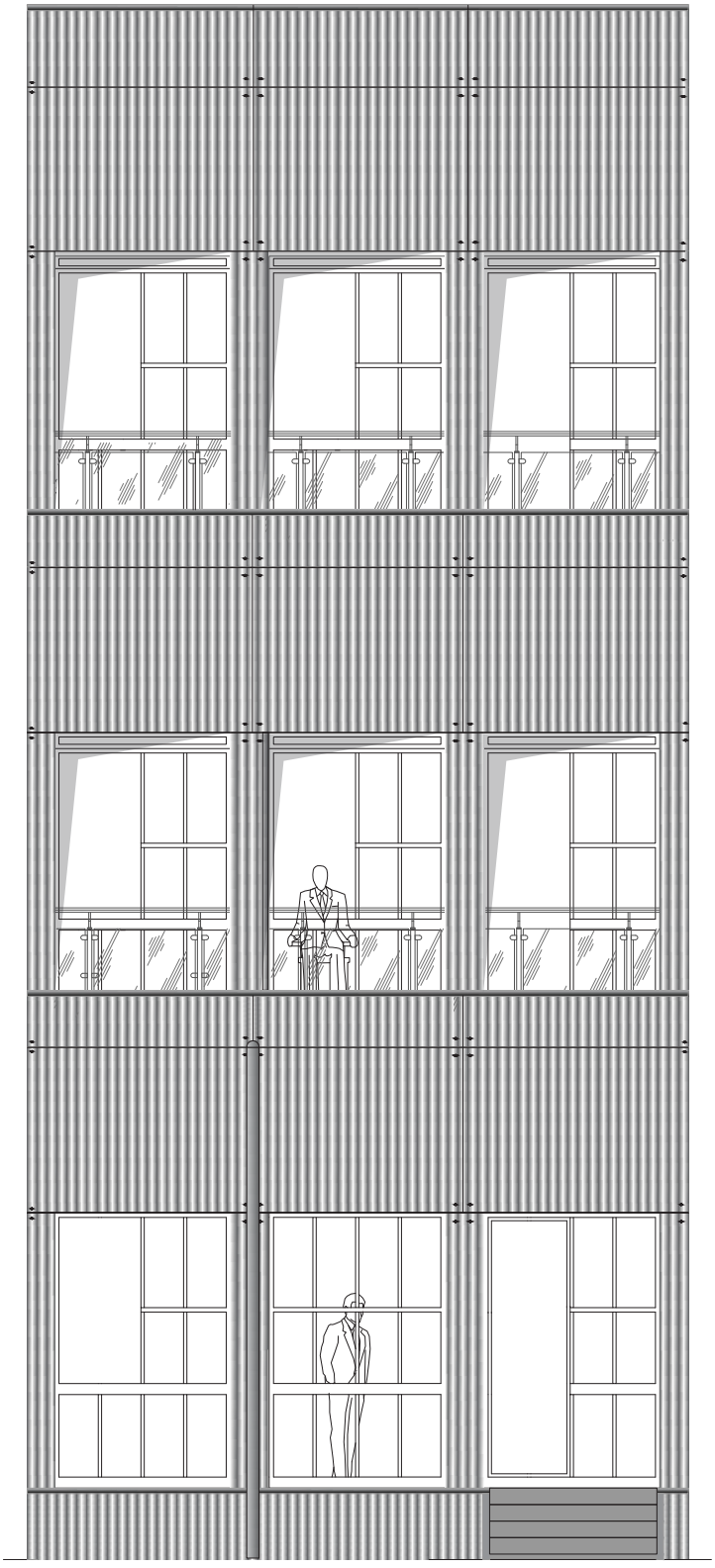


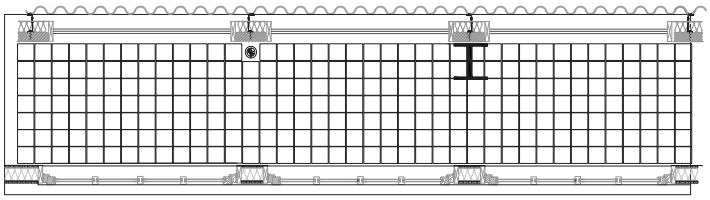
Facade Composition



Layer	Material / Brand	Product Name	Thickness (mm)
Interior finish	Gypsum board / Fermacell	Fermacell gypsum fibreboard	12.5 mm
Structural sheathing	OSB / Egger	Egger OSB 3	15 mm
Air & weather barrier	Membrane / Pro Clima	Solitex Fronta Quattro (UV-resistant)	\~1 mm
External insulation	Cellulose / Gutex or Isonat	Gutex Thermofibre or Isonat Cellulose	160 mm
Ventilated cavity	Timber battens	Vertical counter battens	40 mm
Cladding	Fiber cement / EQUITONE	EQUITONE \[natura] or \[tectiva]	10 mm





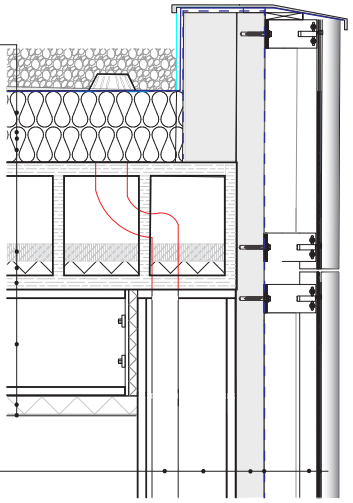


Detail

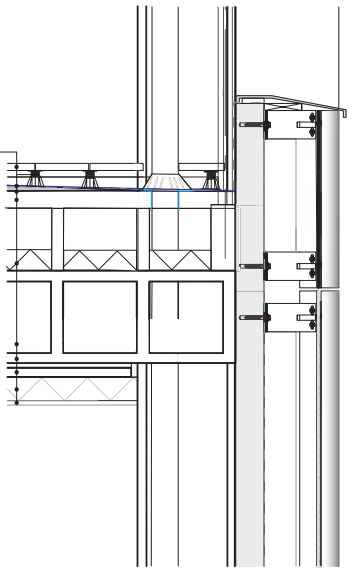
Each one integrates reused steel, biobased insulation, and breathable membranes. The details highlight how structure, insulation, and weatherproofing are layered simply — without suspended ceilings or hidden cavities — to support both material clarity and low-tech construction.

Top to Bottom:
Gravel
Slope for water drainage
Water and vapor membrane
Soft Celulose insulation
Lignatur Box Floor
Sound insulation
Temperature Hard Insulation
Steel HEB 300 Beam
Temperature Hard Insulation
Balcony Interior Finish

Left to Right:
Water Pipe
HEB 300 Steel Column
OCB Board
Vapor Barrier
Cavity
Metal Rail
Corrugated Fiber Cement Clading Equitone



Top to Bottom:
Wooden Deck Tiles
Adjustable Pedestals – Buzon DPH Series
Protection Fleece – FDT Geotex 300 – 5 mm
Waterproofing Membrane – 2 mm
Slope for water – Kingspan Therma TR26 – 30 mm
Water and vapor membrane
Soft Celulose insulation
Lignatur Box Floor - 260 mm
Steel HEB 300 Beam
Temperature Hard Insulation
Balcony Interior Finish



Top to Bottom:
Floor Finish – Tarkett – 3 mm
Underfloor Heating System
Lignatur Box Floor – Lignatur LFE Element – 260 mm
Air/Vapor Control Layer (AVCL) – Pro Clima Intello
Cellulose Insulation - 200 mm
Vapor Barrier Over Ground – PE Foil
Gravel / Capillary Break Layer
Ground Soil Base

Left to Right:
Steel Beam HEB 300
Connecting Plate with Bolts
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Air/Vapor Control Layer
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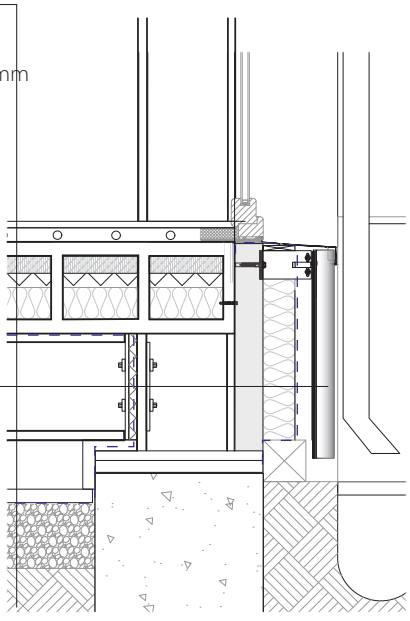
Equitone Fiber Cement Corrugated Sheet



Materials

“This final image brings us into one of the shared interior spaces, where the key ideas of the project become tangible. We see the exposed reused steel columns, which have been coated for fire protection, but crucially — their original green color is preserved. This is a direct reference to the Blikfabriek, the industrial site from which these columns were reclaimed. It’s a subtle but powerful way of keeping the memory of the place alive — not just through reuse, but through visual identity.

The space around these elements is kept warm and clear: CLT walls and Lignatur ceilings remain exposed, acoustically soft, and biobased. The furniture is simple, modular, and meant for communal use — again reinforcing the social sensitivity at the heart of the design.

HOW NOT TO FORGET

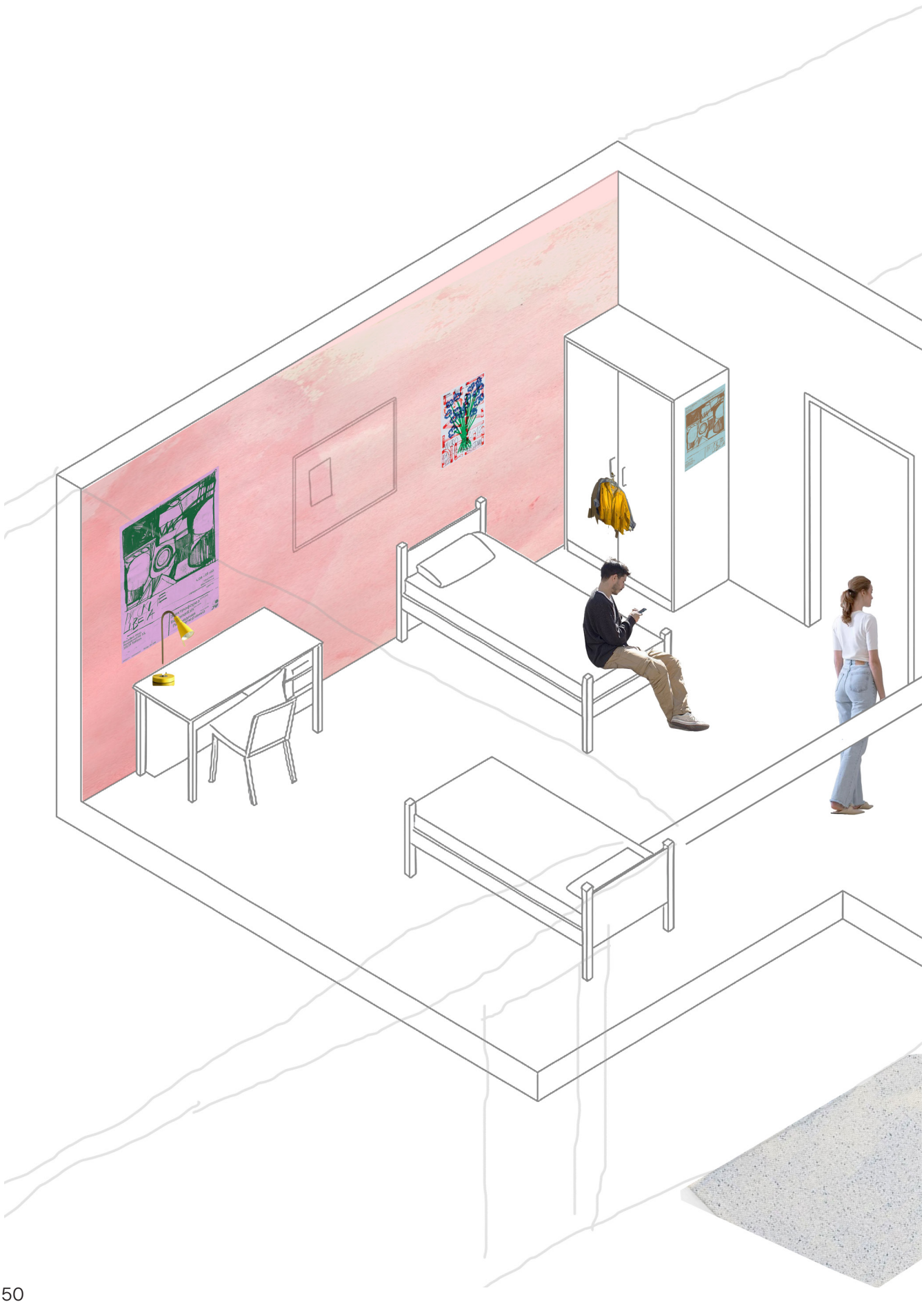
Lasting memories. Why things we remember are important? Why stories are moving? Where are they moving?

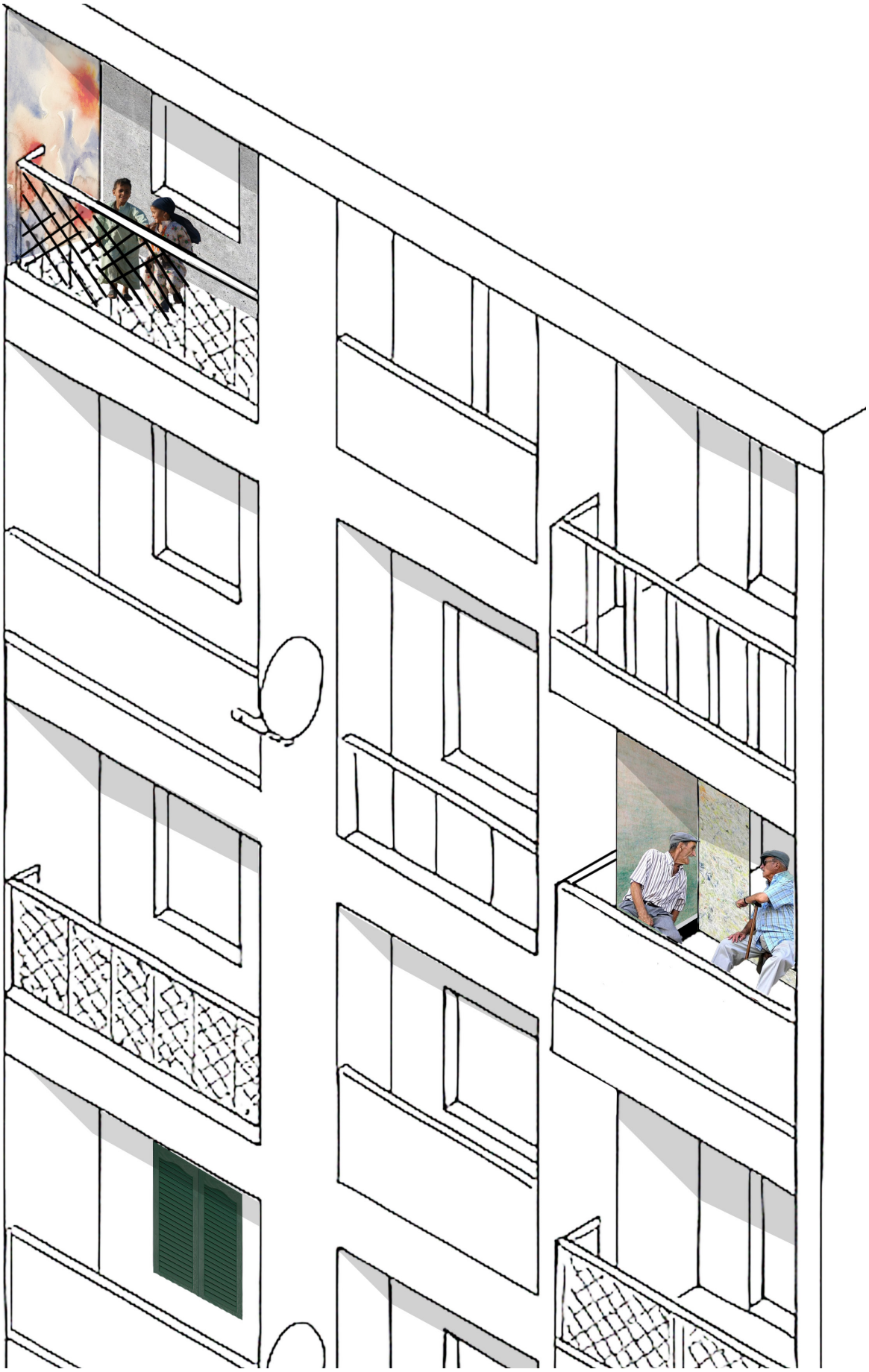
This thesis explored how architecture can become a medium for memory, identity, and belonging—particularly for underrepresented communities. Starting from a deep investigation of the Blikfabriek site in Hoboken, Antwerp, the project identified both spatial potential and social gaps. While the creative hub offers freedom to artists and entrepreneurs, the surrounding neighbourhood lacks places that make its long-term residents feel equally seen and included. This project responds to that absence.

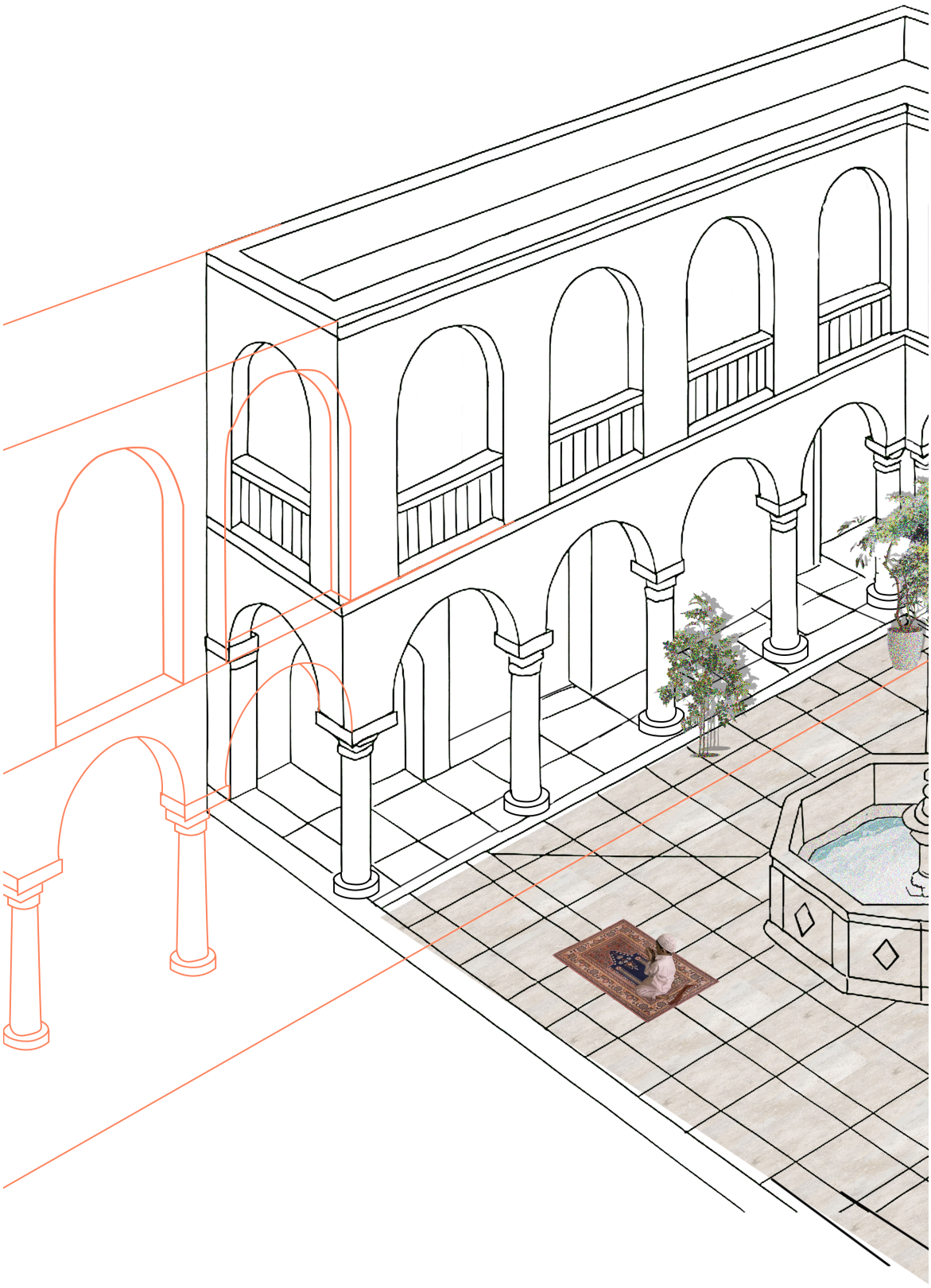
Through a method rooted in fieldwork, interviews, and narrative-driven design, the research developed seven principles for working with personal memories in architecture. These principles—ranging from acknowledging uncertainty to designing for ritual and sensory experience—were applied in a process of translating subjective stories into spatial strategies. The interviews with Elisabeth, Asim, and Amina revealed how fragmented, intimate recollections could be transformed into design concepts that are both empathetic and contextually grounded.

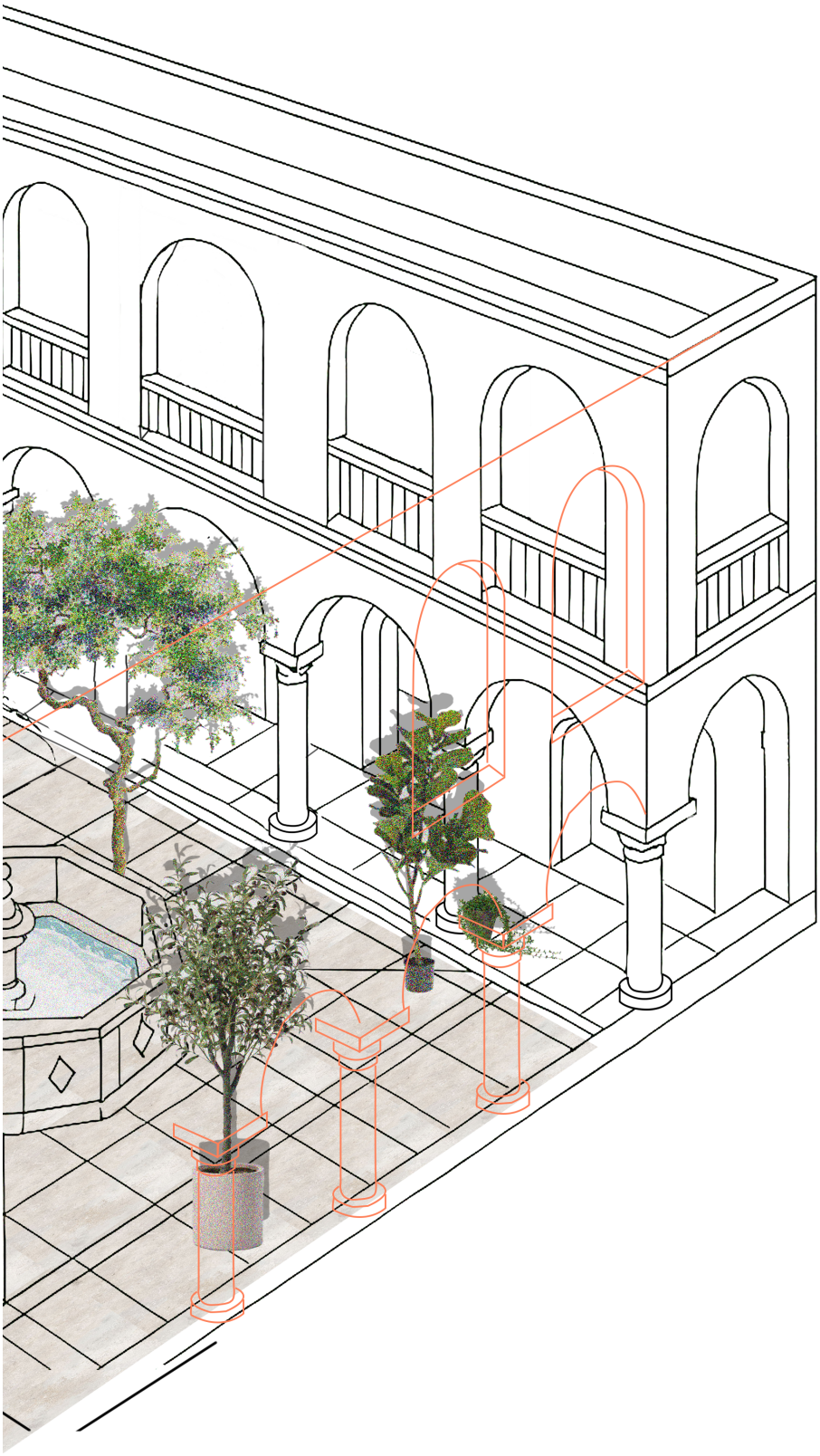
The final design proposed a mixed-use community complex within the Blikfabriek site that combines daycare, medical care, ateliers, and housing. The architecture draws from the industrial typologies of the site and balances them with the softness and scale of domesticity. Sustainability, circular building strategies, and local material reuse reinforce the design's commitment to resilience—both environmental and social.

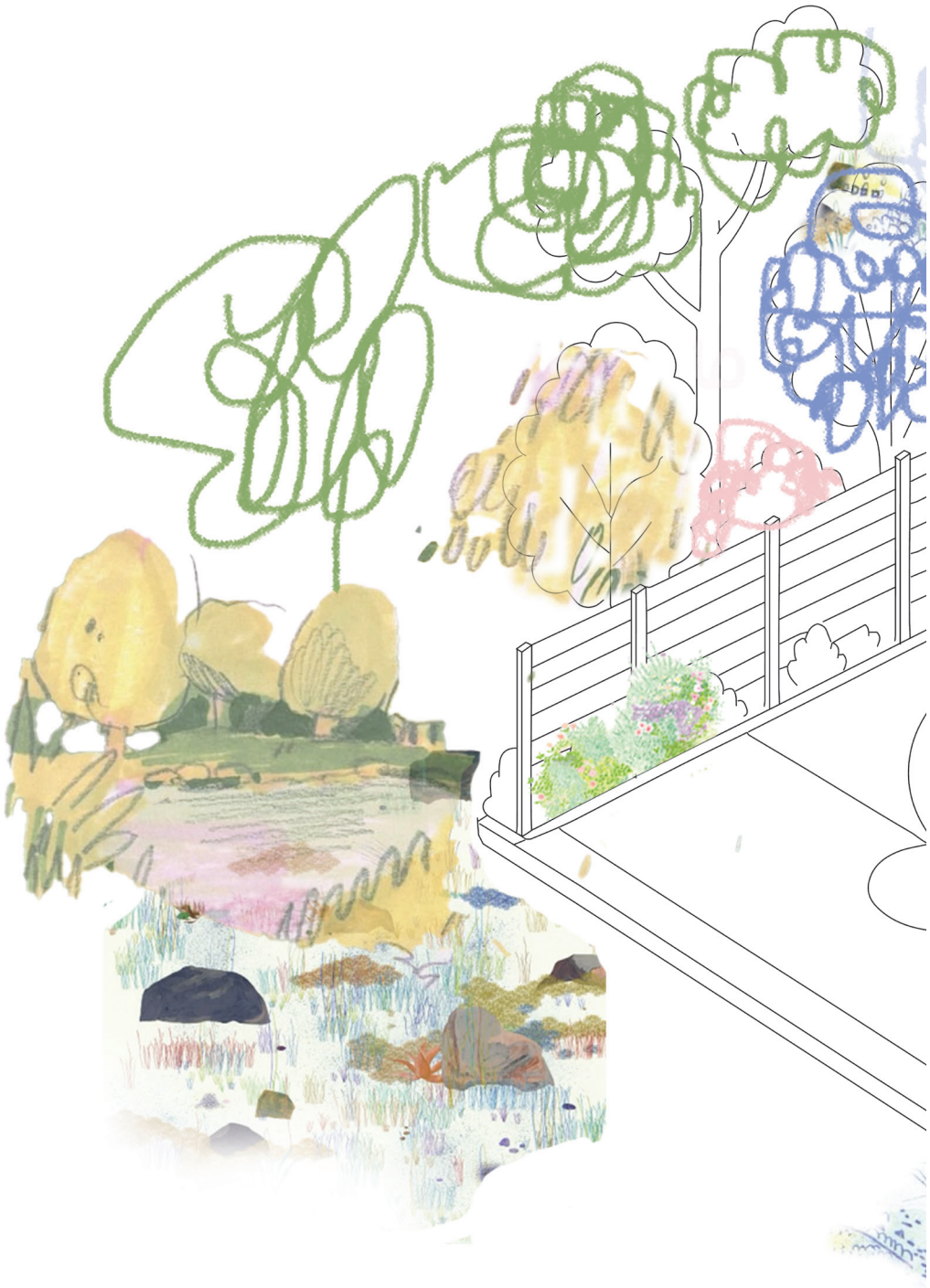
Ultimately, the project demonstrates that memory, even when personal and ephemeral, can serve as a valid design input. It argues that architects not only can—but must—give space to narratives that are usually overlooked. By making these voices visible in built form, architecture gains a chance to cultivate new collective memories and reinforce spatial justice. In a rapidly changing urban context, this approach offers a grounded way to shape inclusive, layered, and deeply human environments.











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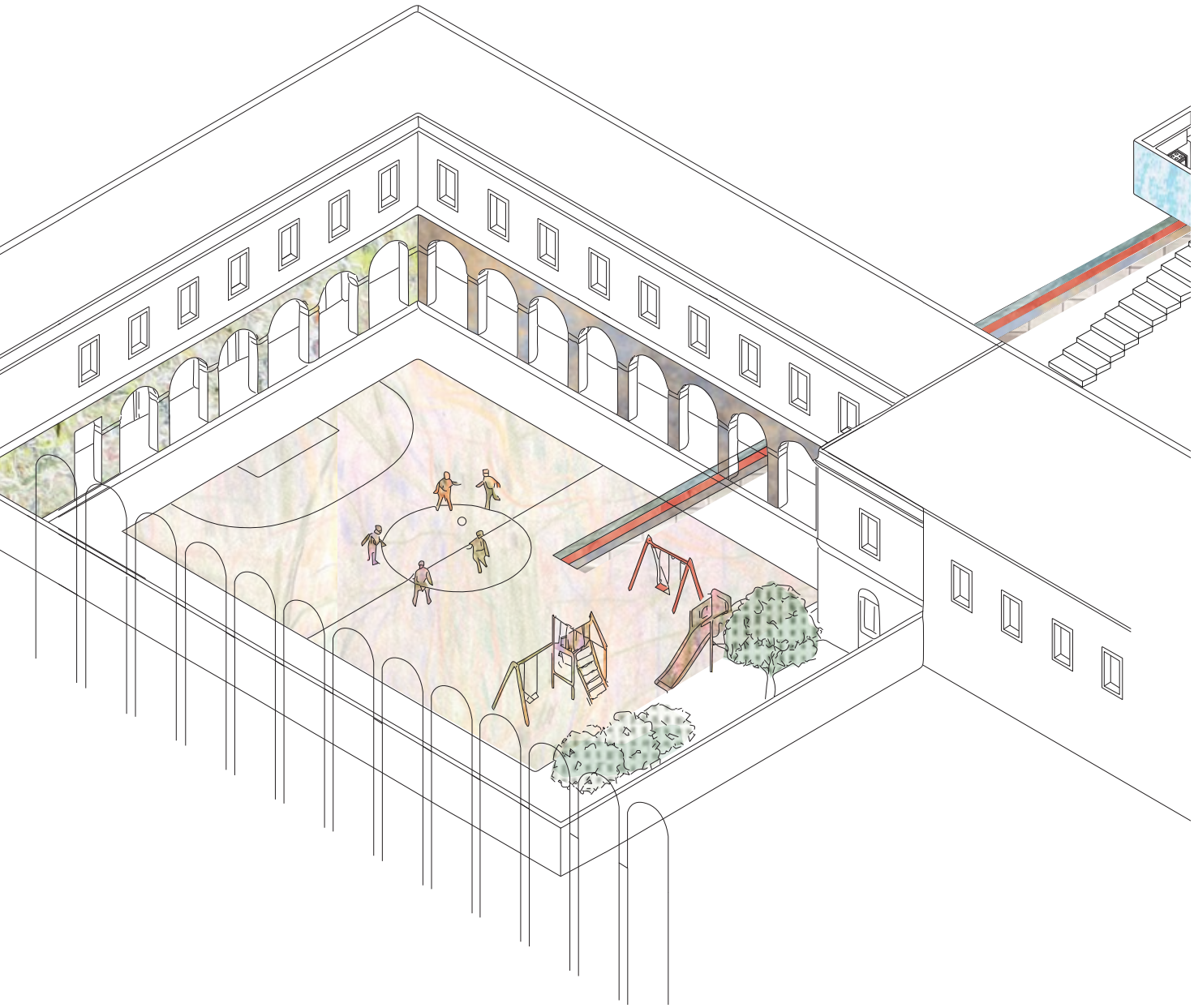

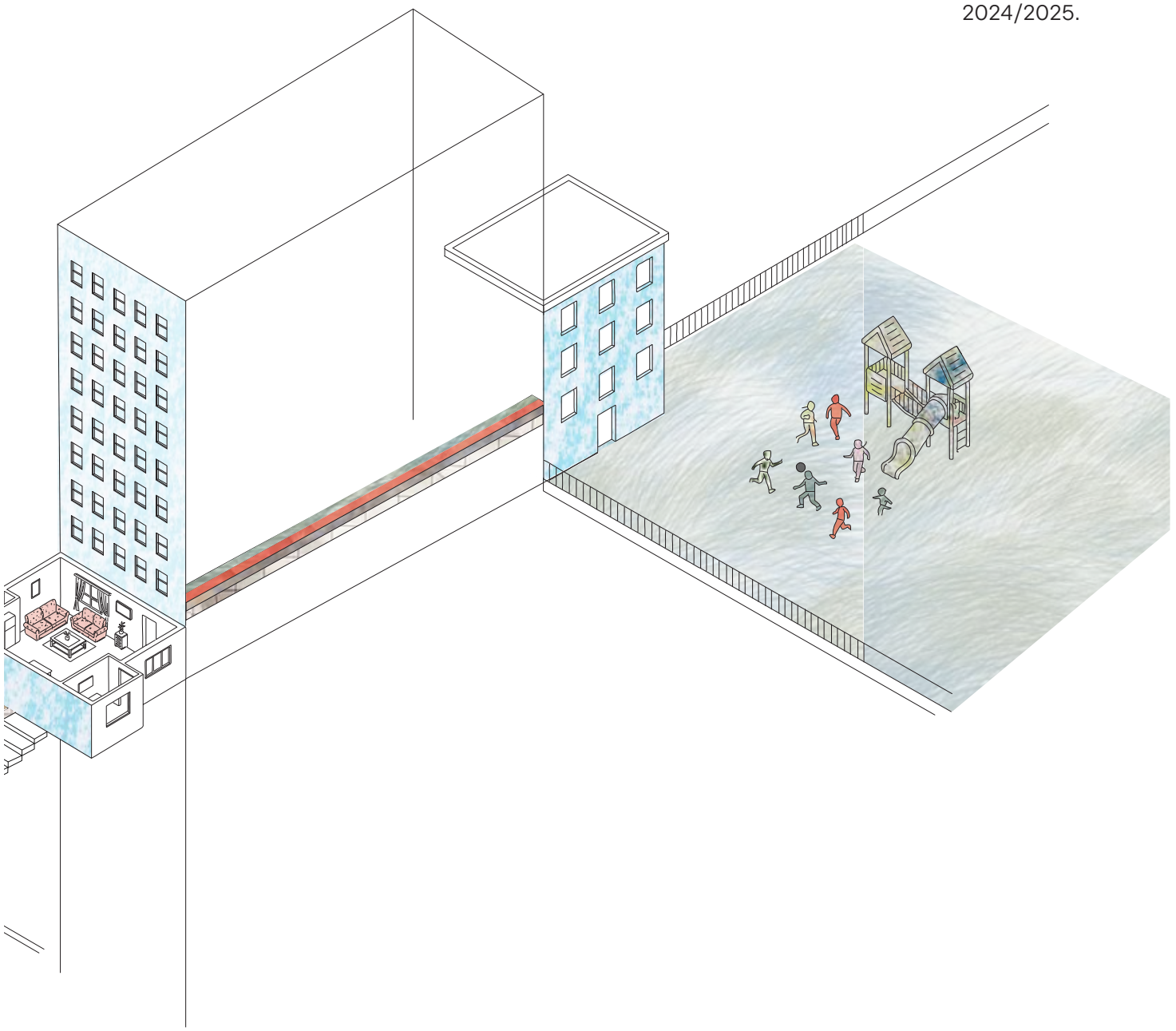

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Crawford, N. J. W. (2017). *The urbanization of forced displacement*: **UNHCR, urban refugees, and the dynamics of policy change. Cambridge University Press.** This book explores the urban impacts of forced displacement, examining how displaced populations adapt to new environments due to economic pressures, conflict, and policy shifts. Crawford provides a comprehensive look at the experiences of refugees and the complexities of urban integration, offering a foundation for understanding the social context of transience and displacement. This resource will inform the research's broader themes of mobility, memory, and the forces behind frequent relocation.

Alexander, C., Ishikawa, S., Silverstein, M., Jacobson, M., Fiksdahl-King, I., & Angel, S. (1977). **A pattern language: Towns, buildings, construction. Oxford University Press.** A Pattern Language presents a structured approach to creating human-centered spaces, organized around "patterns" that address various spatial needs and relationships. The book emphasizes designing spaces that feel intuitively familiar and supportive of human activities. Its insights into patterns that foster comfort and familiarity provide a valuable framework for examining how architectural elements influence memory and attachment in transient individuals.

Bachelard, G. (1994). *The poetics of space.* **Beacon Press.** Bachelard's The Poetics of Space is a philosophical exploration of how intimate spaces evoke memories and emotional connections. Focusing on the poetic aspects of places like rooms, corners, and shelters, Bachelard examines how these spaces linger in memory, shaping personal identity and attachment. This book's reflections on memory and the emotional resonance of spaces are foundational to this study's exploration of how transient individuals remember past places.

Chow, C. (2016). *Dream storeys.* **Ethos Books.** Dream Storeys by Clara Chow combines narrative with architectural illustrations to portray personal experiences within various spaces. Chow uses short stories alongside visuals to capture how people perceive and relate to the built environment. The book's narrative and visualization techniques offer valuable examples for representing memories and personal stories visually, supporting this research's architectural drawing method.

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Unknown Artist. (n.d.). Untitled architectural axonometric drawing. Pinterest. Available at https://pin.it/2oJoiMlka.

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ANNEX 1
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Personal and Background Questions
Can you tell me about the different places you've lived throughout your life?
What were some of the reasons behind your moves? (e.g., family, work, education)
How would you describe your feelings toward moving frequently?
Do you consider any of these places "home"? Why or why not?
How do you define "home," especially in the context of frequent relocations?

2. Emotional Connections and Memories
Are there any particular places you've lived that hold strong memories for you?
What kinds of emotions do you associate with these memories? Are they mostly positive, negative, or a mix?
Are there specific events or experiences that you remember vividly from any of these places?
What do you think triggers these memories? (e.g., certain objects, smells, sounds)
When you think back to a specific place, what comes to mind first—the layout, objects, people, or something else?

3. Sensory Details and Memory Retention
Are there certain sensory aspects (like a particular smell or sound) that stand out in your memories of past homes?
How much do you remember about the physical details of your previous homes? For instance, do you recall the layout or specific design features?
Do any of your memories of these places feel more vivid than others? Why do you think that is?
How do you feel about seeing photographs of these past places? Do they align with your memories?
Are there any places where you've lived that you barely remember? If so, why do you think that is?

4. Impact on Identity and Personal Preferences
How has moving frequently influenced your sense of identity?
Do you feel that your experiences with moving have shaped your personal preferences for spaces?

Are there specific features you seek in a living space now because of your previous experiences?
How would you say your relationship with "home" has changed over time?
Do you feel you have a better understanding of what you want in a living space due to your transient lifestyle?

5. Relationship with New Spaces
How do you approach adapting to a new place? Are there certain things you do to make it feel like "home"?
Are there objects or routines that help you settle into a new space?
How long does it typically take for a new place to start feeling familiar or comfortable to you?
When moving into a new space, what do you notice first, and how does it impact your impression of the place?
Do you feel more or less attached to places that you knew were temporary from the start?

6. Perceptions of Stability and Final Destination
Do you envision yourself settling down in one place eventually? Why or why not?
Do you feel that your frequent moves have affected your sense of stability? If so, in what ways?
What would an ideal "final destination" look like for you?
Is there anything you miss about a previous place, even if it was temporary?
If you could recreate any one space you've lived in, what would it look like, and why?