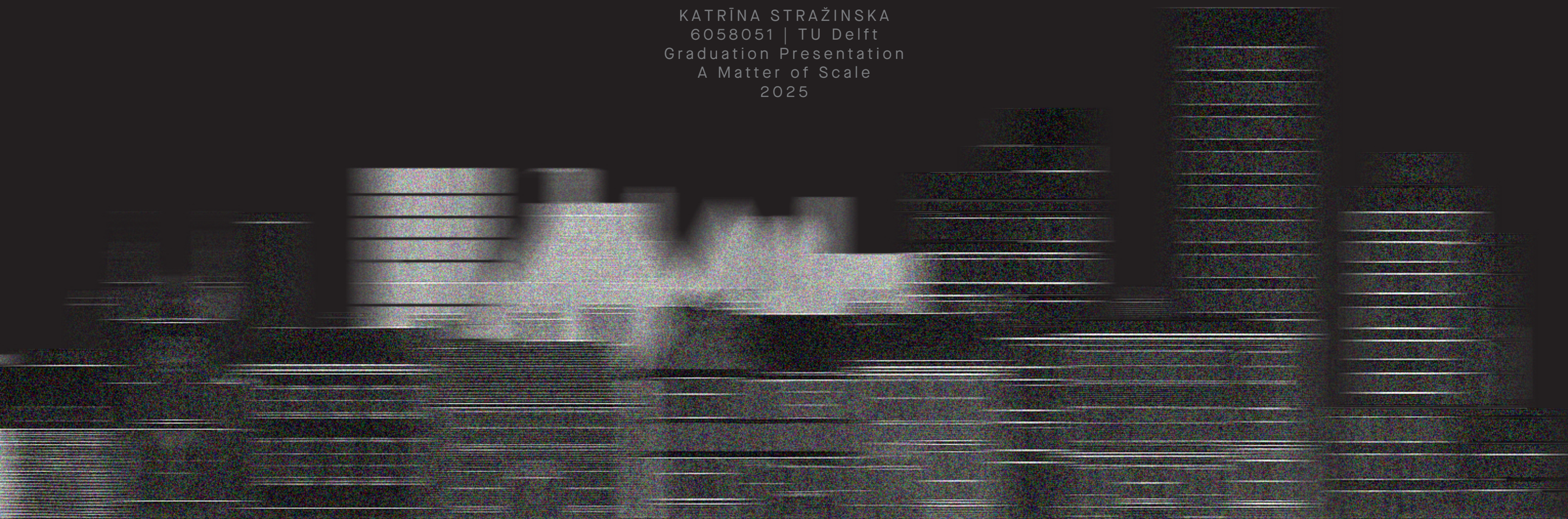
BEYOND GENERIC

DESIGNING FOR MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

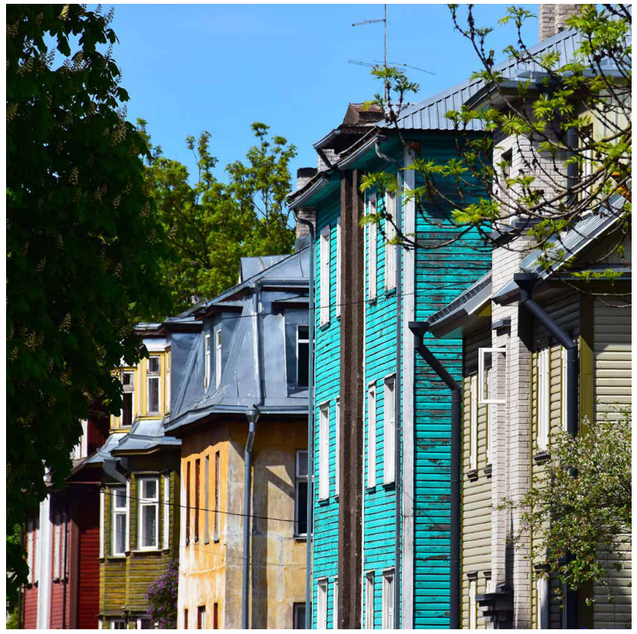
KATRĪNA STRAŽINSKA
6058051 | TU Delft
Graduation Presentation
A Matter of Scale
2025



THE LAYERED CITY
TALLINN

Tallinn Old Town

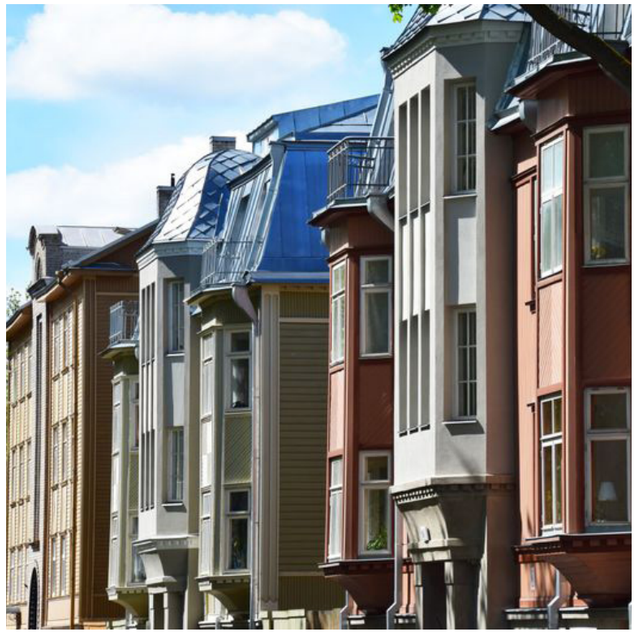
Town Hall Square



Kalamaja district

Telliskivi Quarter

Rotermann Quarter



Kalamaja district

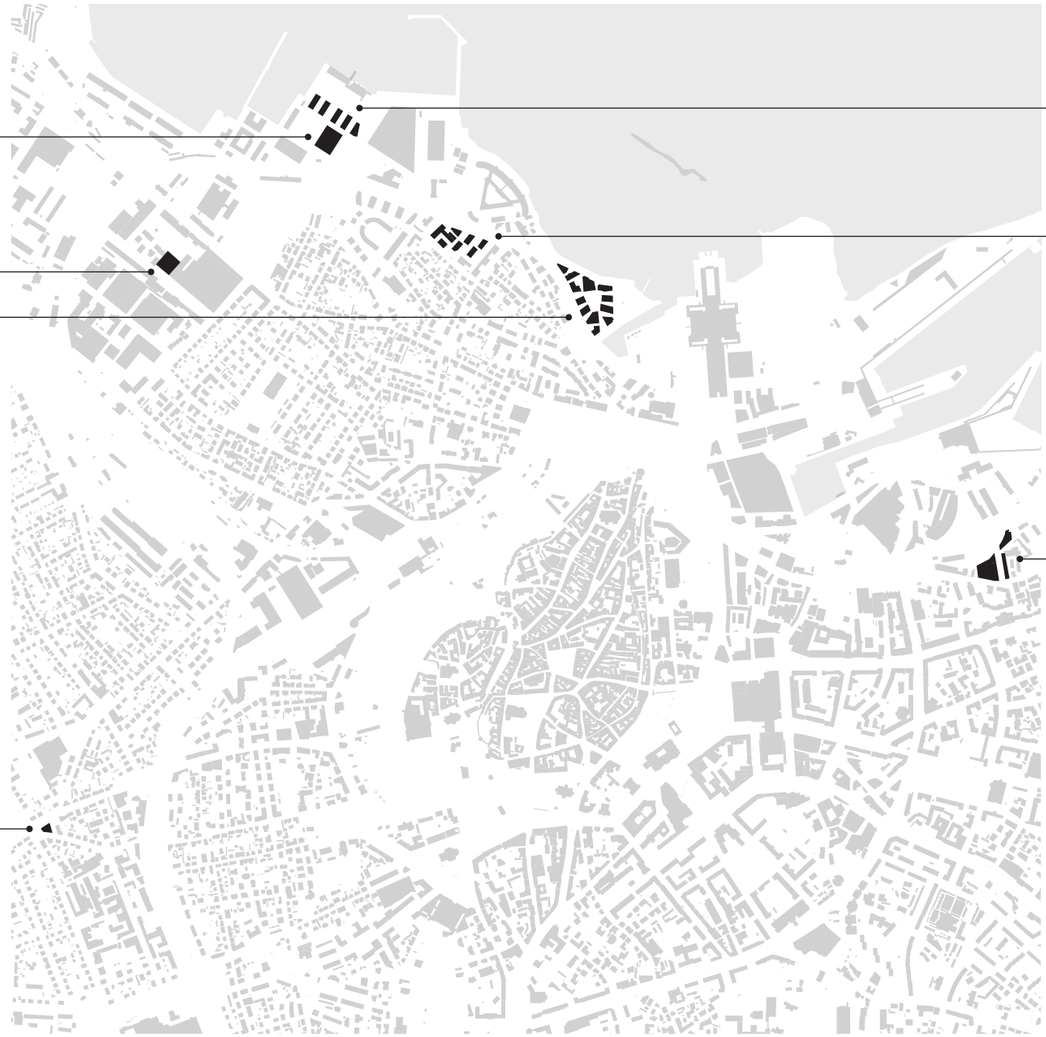
THE NEW LAYER
TALLINN / 2022-2025

Allveelaeva maja / 2023

Uus-Volta 8 / 2025

Kalaranna 8 / 2025

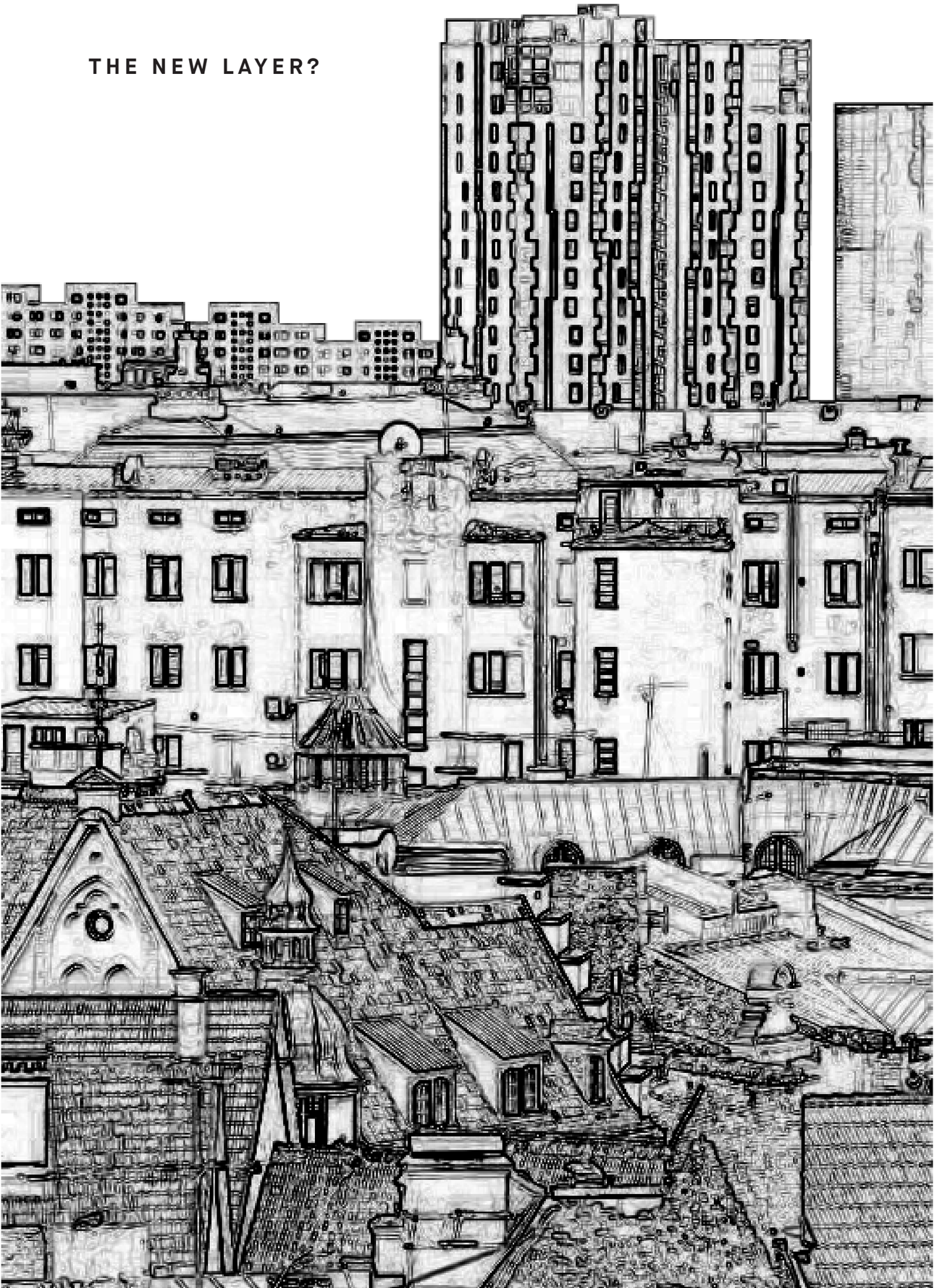
Madara 1 / 2023



Vesilennuki 18 / 2023

Küti kvartal / 2023

Uus-Holland elurajoon / 2022



view from the Old Town to Maakri maja, Tallinn

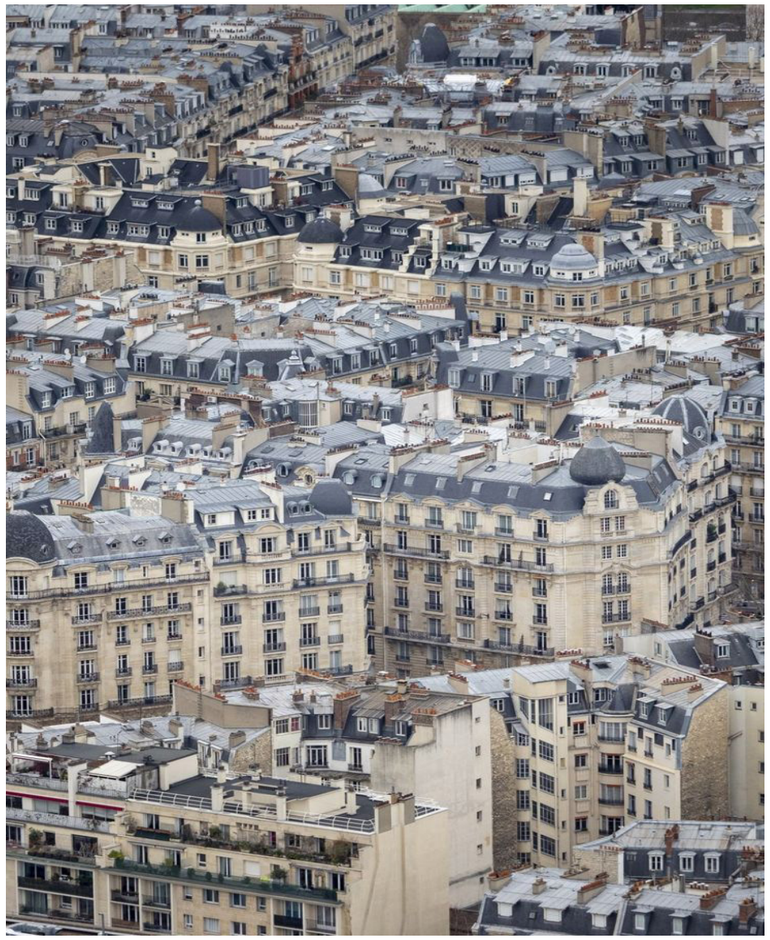
"The Generic City is fractal; it is possible to reconstruct it from its smallest entity, a desktop computer, maybe even a diskette."

- Rem Koolhaas, S,M,L,XL

TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN CITIES
TYPOLOGICAL REPETITION

Barcelona, Spain

Utrecht, the Netherlands



Paris, France

Generic (adj.) - characteristic of or relating to a class or group of things; not specific.

GENERIC DESIGN IS A
SYSTEM OF DECISIONS
THAT MODERNIZATION DID NOT INVENT,
ONLY EXPOSED

HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS?

THE NEW LAYER
ANALYSIS

CLOSED
PERIMETER BLOCK

Allveelaeva maja, Tallinn

INWARD-FACING
COURTYARD

EXTRUSION FROM FOOTPRINT

Küti kvartal, Tallinn

MONOTONOUS FORMS

INDEPENDENT,
DECORATIVE SKIN

Noblessneri kvartal, Tallinn

SUPERFICIAL
VARIATION

FUNCTIONAL SEPARATION

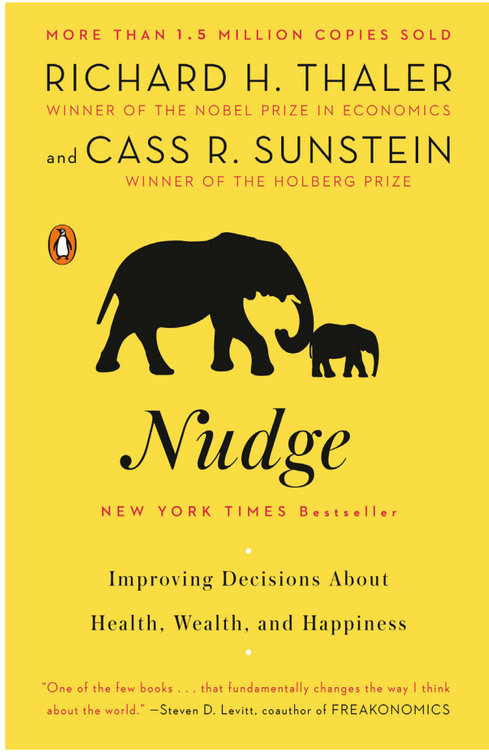
Kalaranna kvartal, Tallinn

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION

HUMAN &
ARCHITECTURE

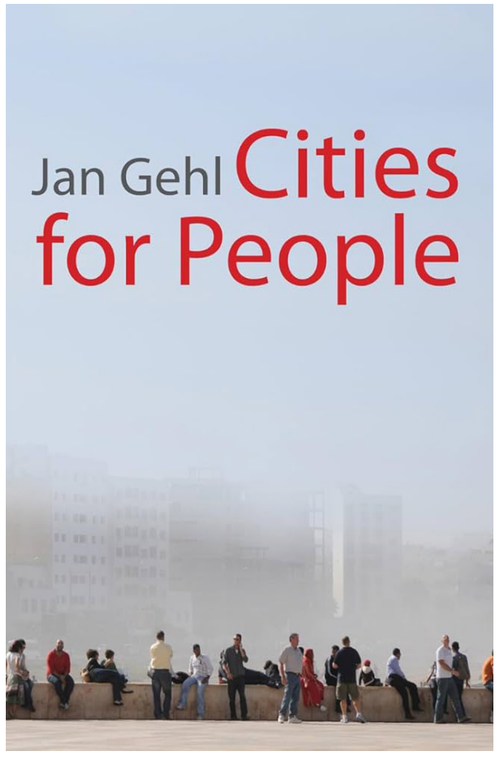
"Well-being and behaviour can be strongly influenced by architecture"

- Nudge Architecture



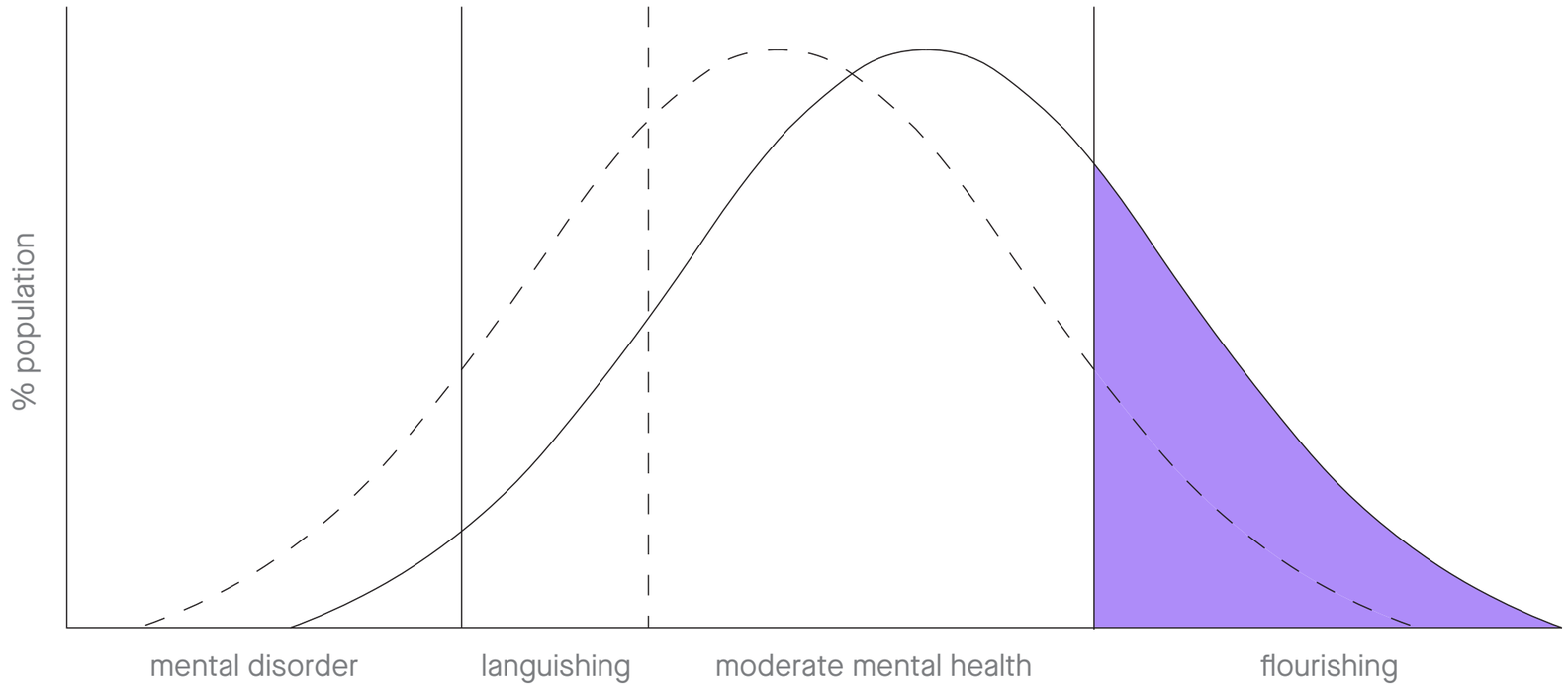
"The experience of comfort and wellbeing in cities is closely tied to how city space harmonize with the human body, human senses, and corresponding space dimensions and scale."

- Jan Gehl, Cities for People



RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT SPATIAL AND DESIGN STRATEGIES CAN RECONFIGURE HOUSING SYSTEMS TO INTEGRATE PUBLIC SPACE, PROMOTE WELL-BEING AND RESIST URBAN HOMOGENIZATION?



1. Connect
2. Keep Active
3. Take Notice
4. Keep Learning
5. Give

5 ways to well-being are shown to be influenced by physical design characteristics

Anderson, J. (2014). Urban Design and Well-being. Cambridge: Doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge.
Thaler, R., & Sunstein, C. (2008). Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Vartaniana, O., Navarrete, G., Chatterjee, A., Fich, L., Leder, H., Modrono, C., et al. (2013). Impact of contour on aesthetic judgments and approach-avoidance decisions in architecture. PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA), 10446–10453.

1. CONNECT create visible spaces for social interaction

2. KEEP ACTIVE

3. TAKE NOTICE

4. KEEP LEARNING

5. GIVE

1. CONNECT

2. KEEP ACTIVE provide rewards for the movement

3. TAKE NOTICE

4. KEEP LEARNING

5. GIVE

1. CONNECT

2. KEEP ACTIVE

3. TAKE NOTICE — create opportunities to stop and observe

4. KEEP LEARNING

5. GIVE

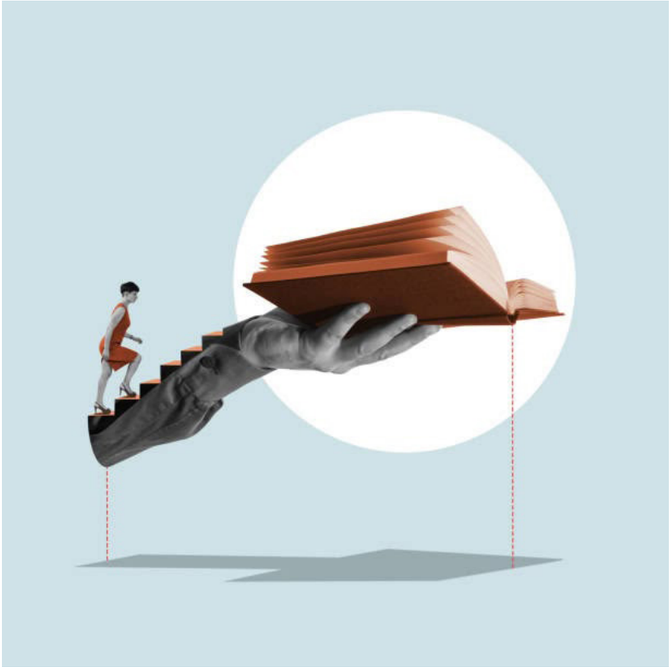
1. CONNECT

2. KEEP ACTIVE

3. TAKE NOTICE

4. KEEP LEARNING design safe spaces to engage in cultural activities

5. GIVE



1. CONNECT

2. KEEP ACTIVE

3. TAKE NOTICE

4. KEEP LEARNING

5. GIVE

proximity to nature & communal space promotes helping behaviour

HYPOTHESIS

INTEGRATING FULLY **VISIBLE PUBLIC ACTIVITY** & **GREEN AREAS** IN THE HOUSING DESIGN CAN COUNTERACT PERCEPTIONS OF GENERIC DESIGN WHILE ENHANCING HUMAN WELL-BEING

⇓

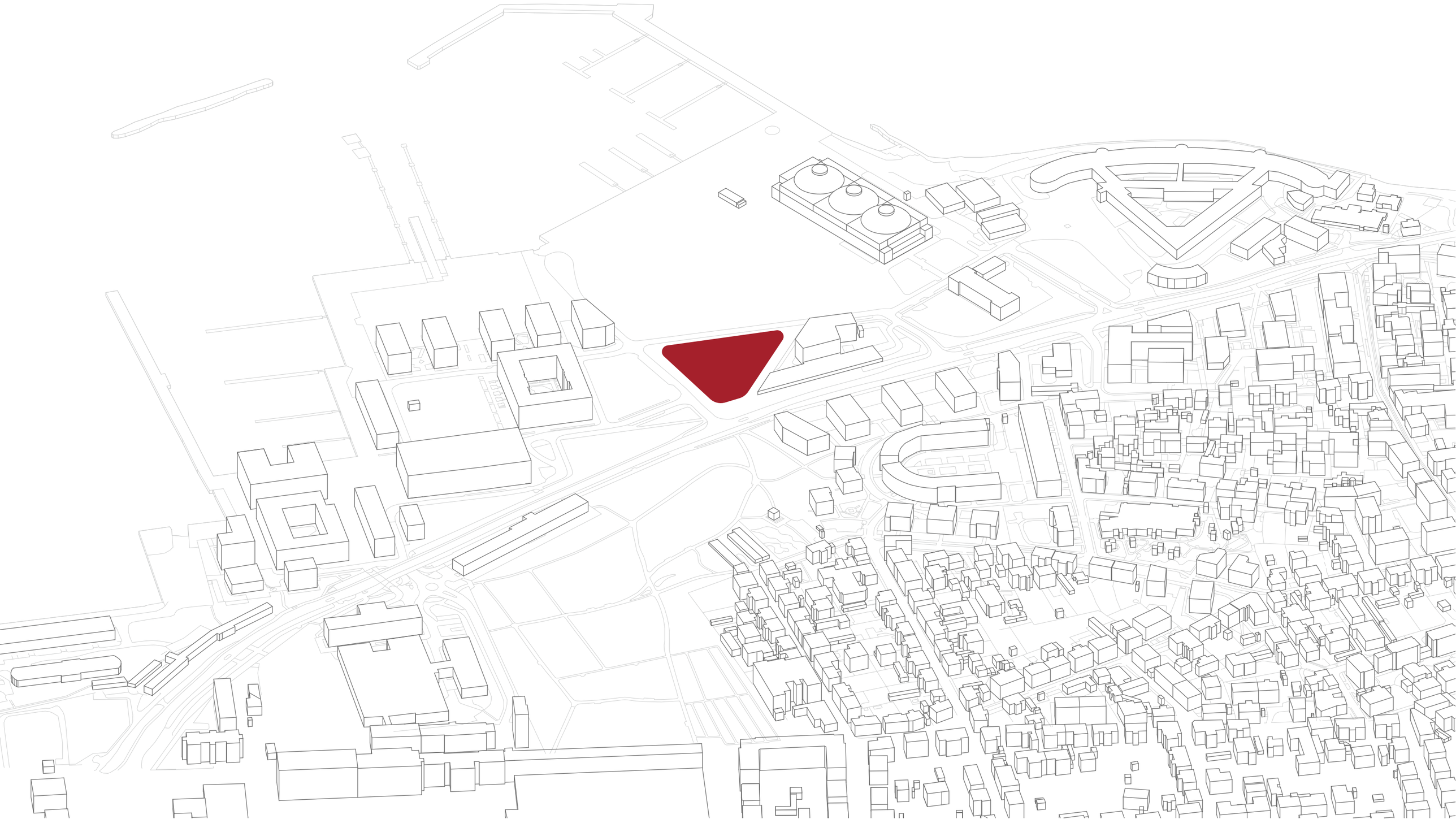
MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

SITE LOCATION
TALLINN

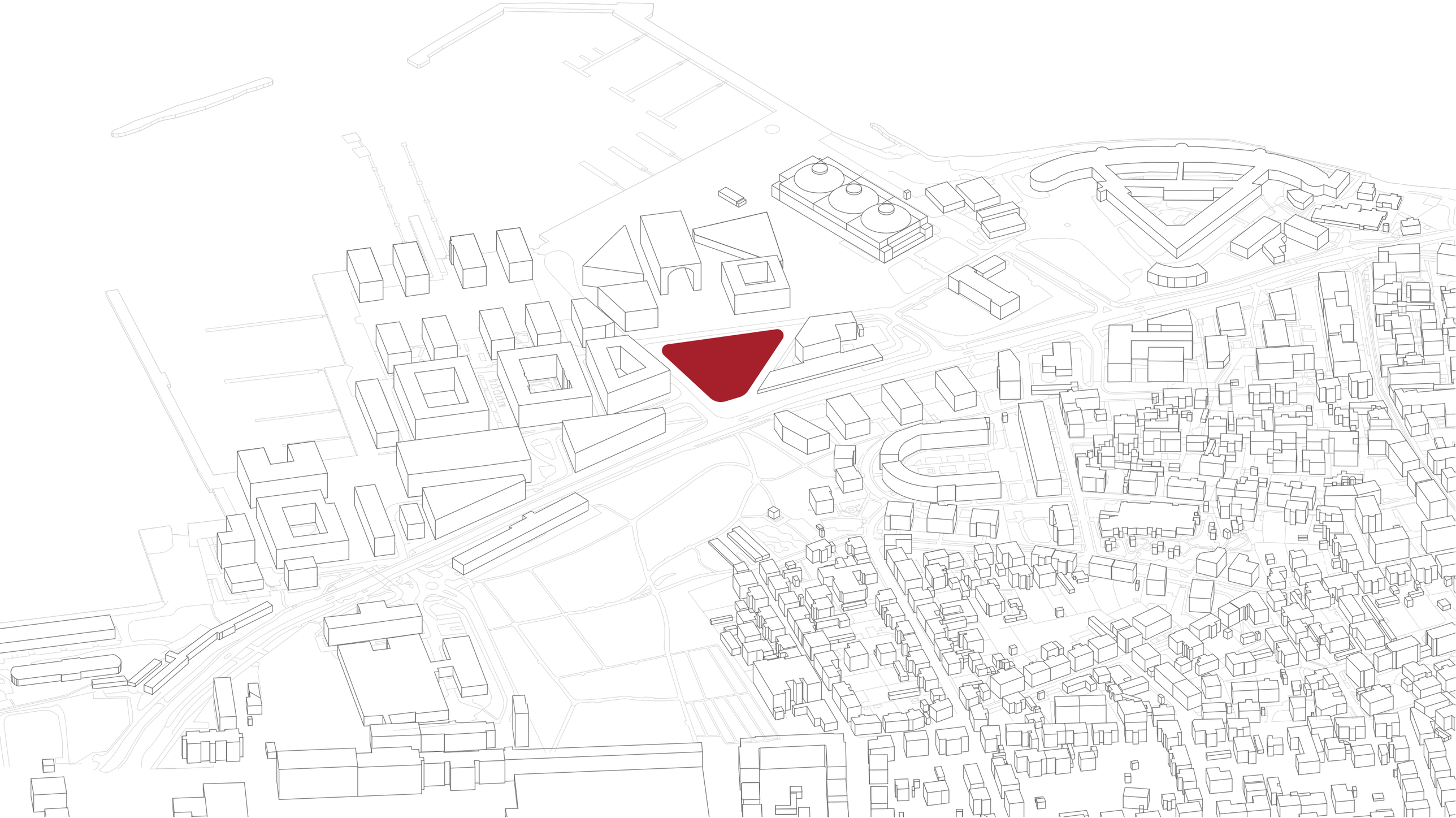
SITE LOCATION
TALLINN

SITE LOCATION
EXISTING SITUATION

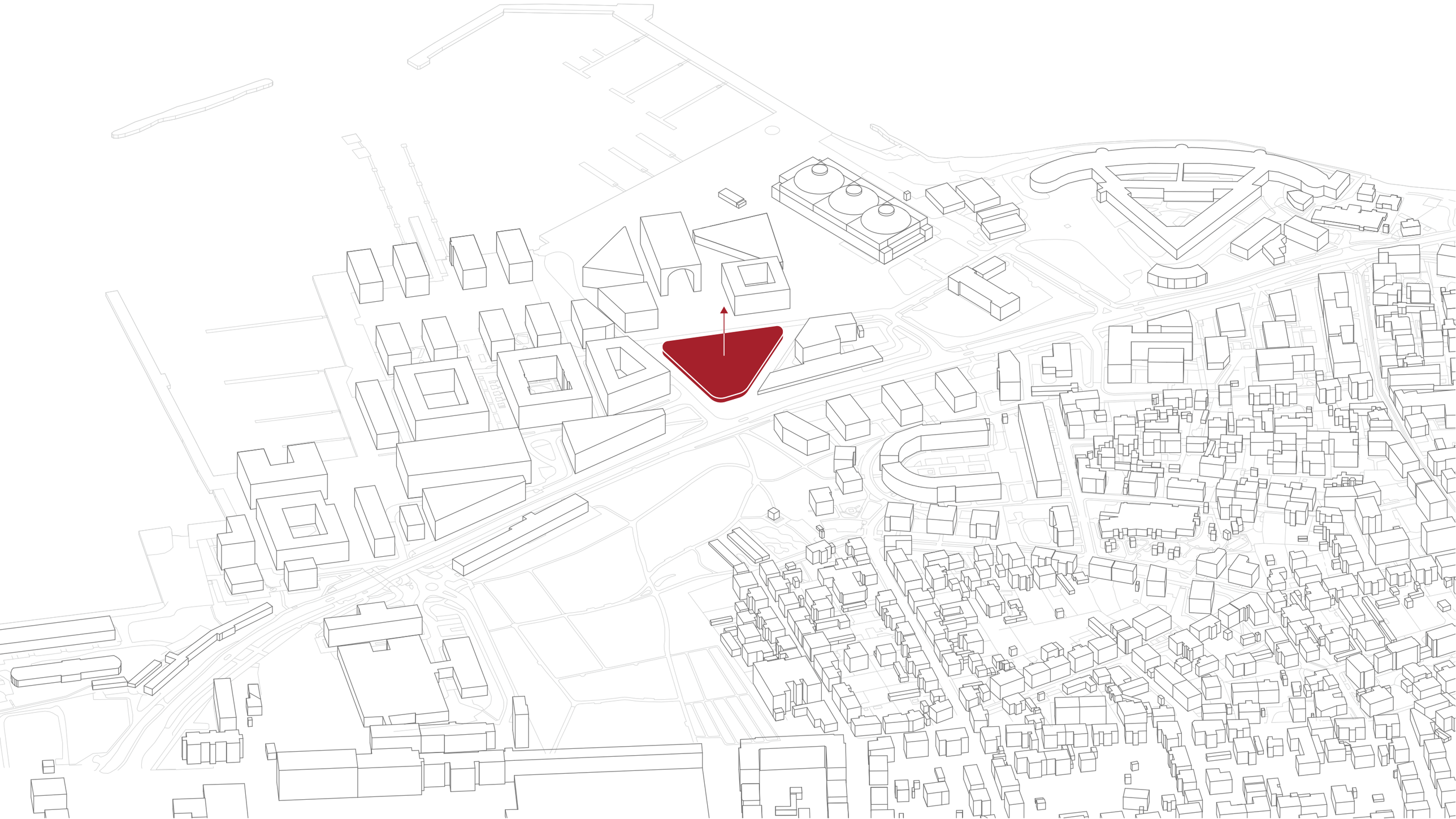
CONTEXT
EXISTING



CONTEXT
PLANNED



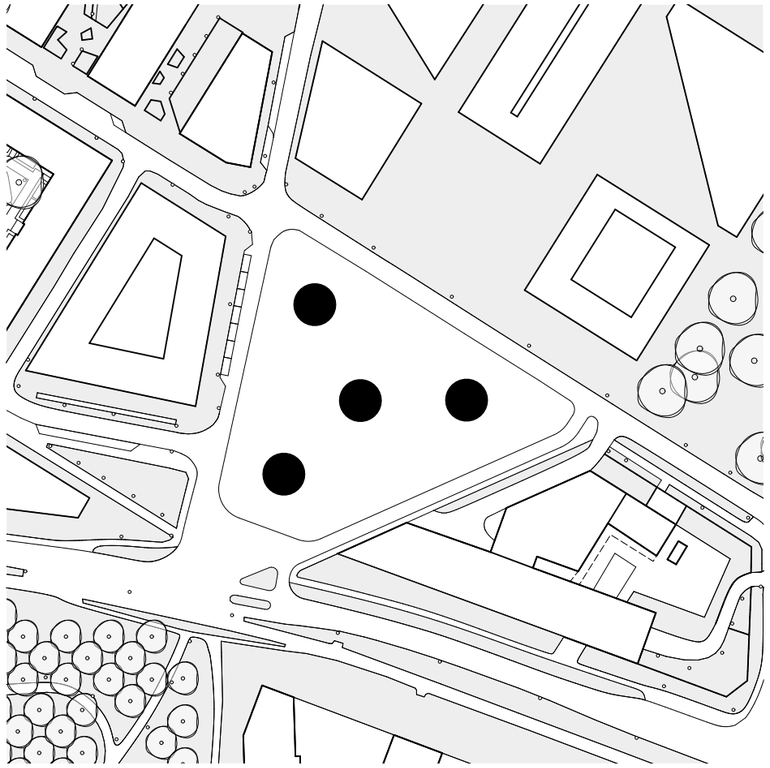
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
URBAN HALL

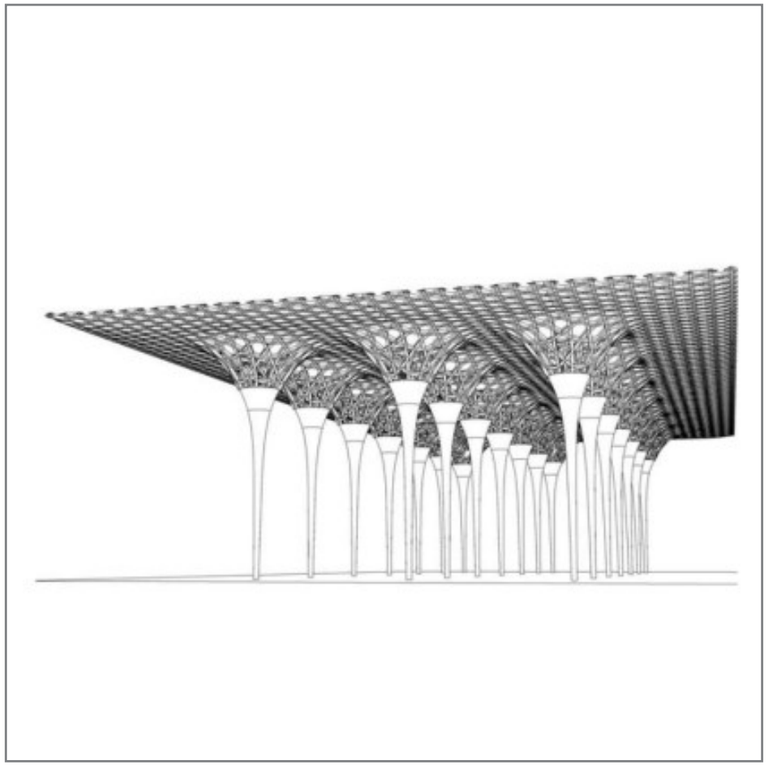


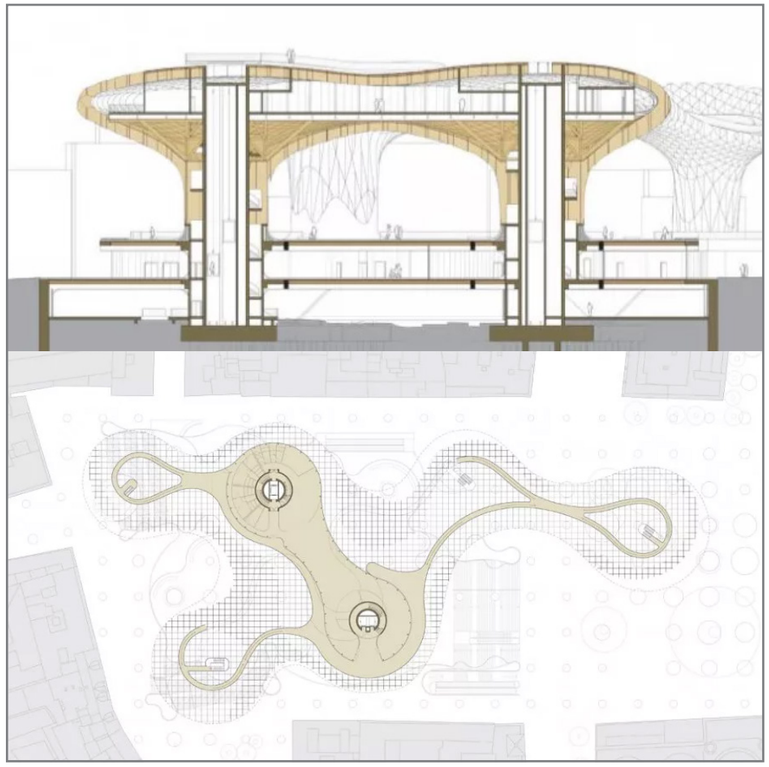
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
URBAN HALL STRUCTURE

Haesley Nine Bridges Golf Club House / Shigeru Ban / South Korea / 2009

Ground floor structure reference: Metrapol Parasol / J. Arquitectos Mayer / Sevilla, Spain / 2011

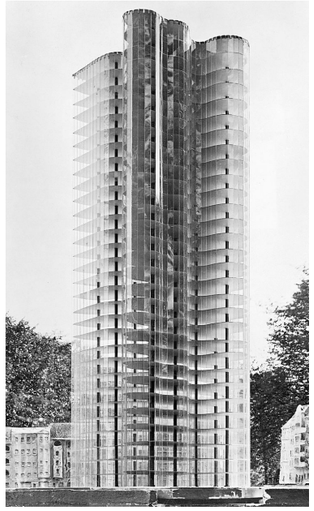






CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
SHAPE OF THE URBAN HALL

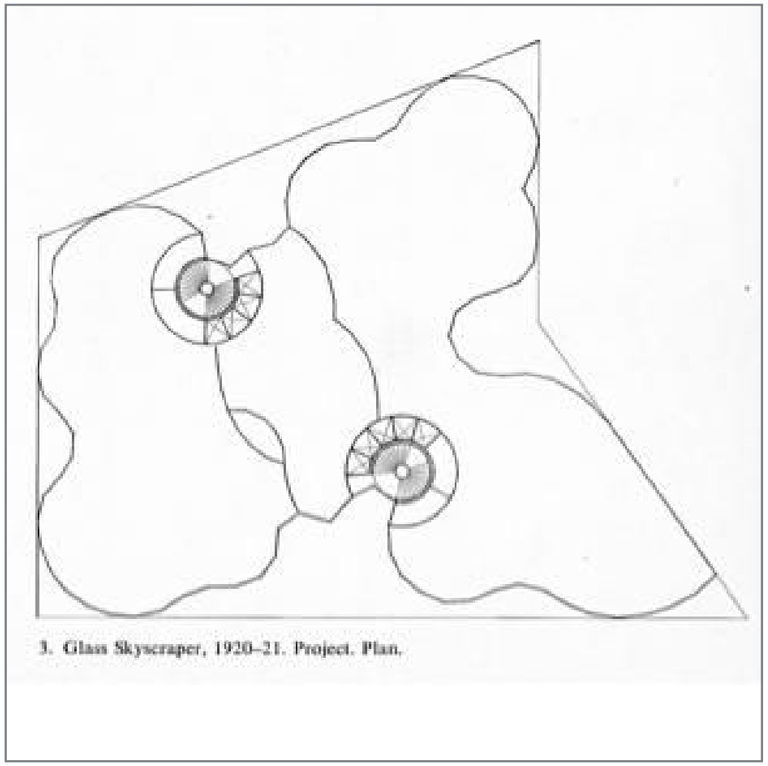
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
PRECEDENT STUDIES

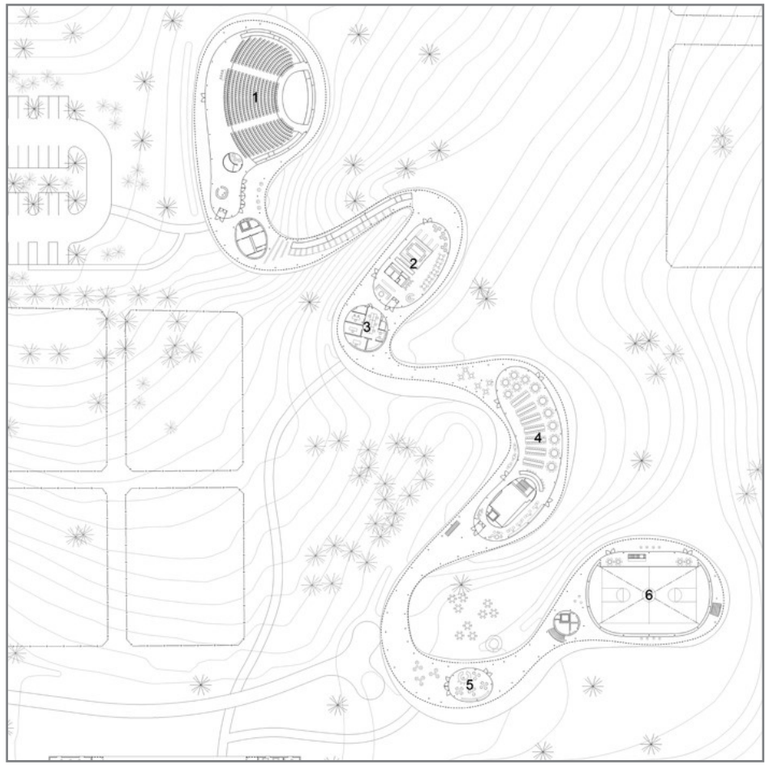


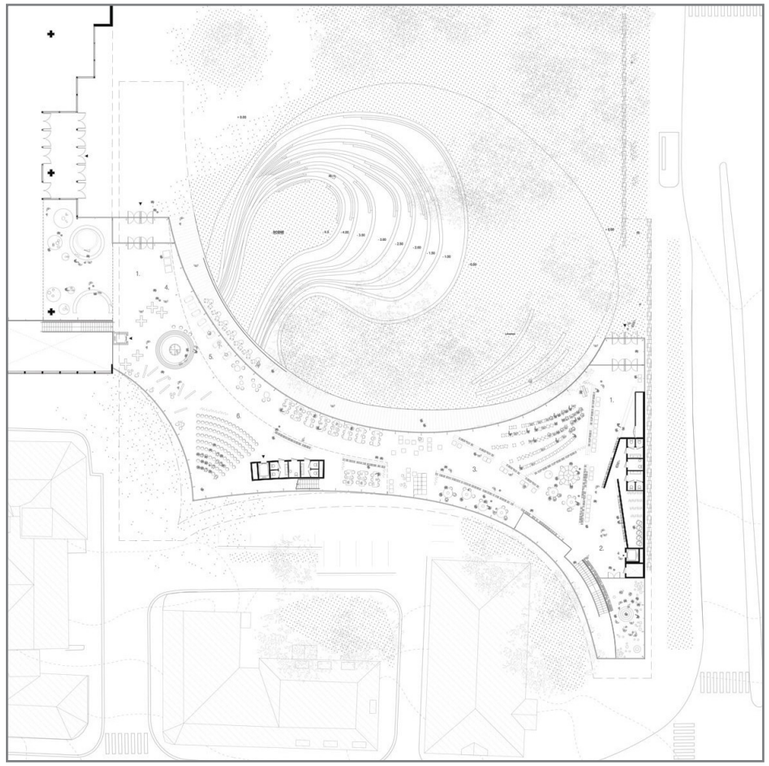
Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper concept/ Mies van der Rohe / Berlin / 1921

Grace Farms / SANAA / New Canaan, USA / 2015

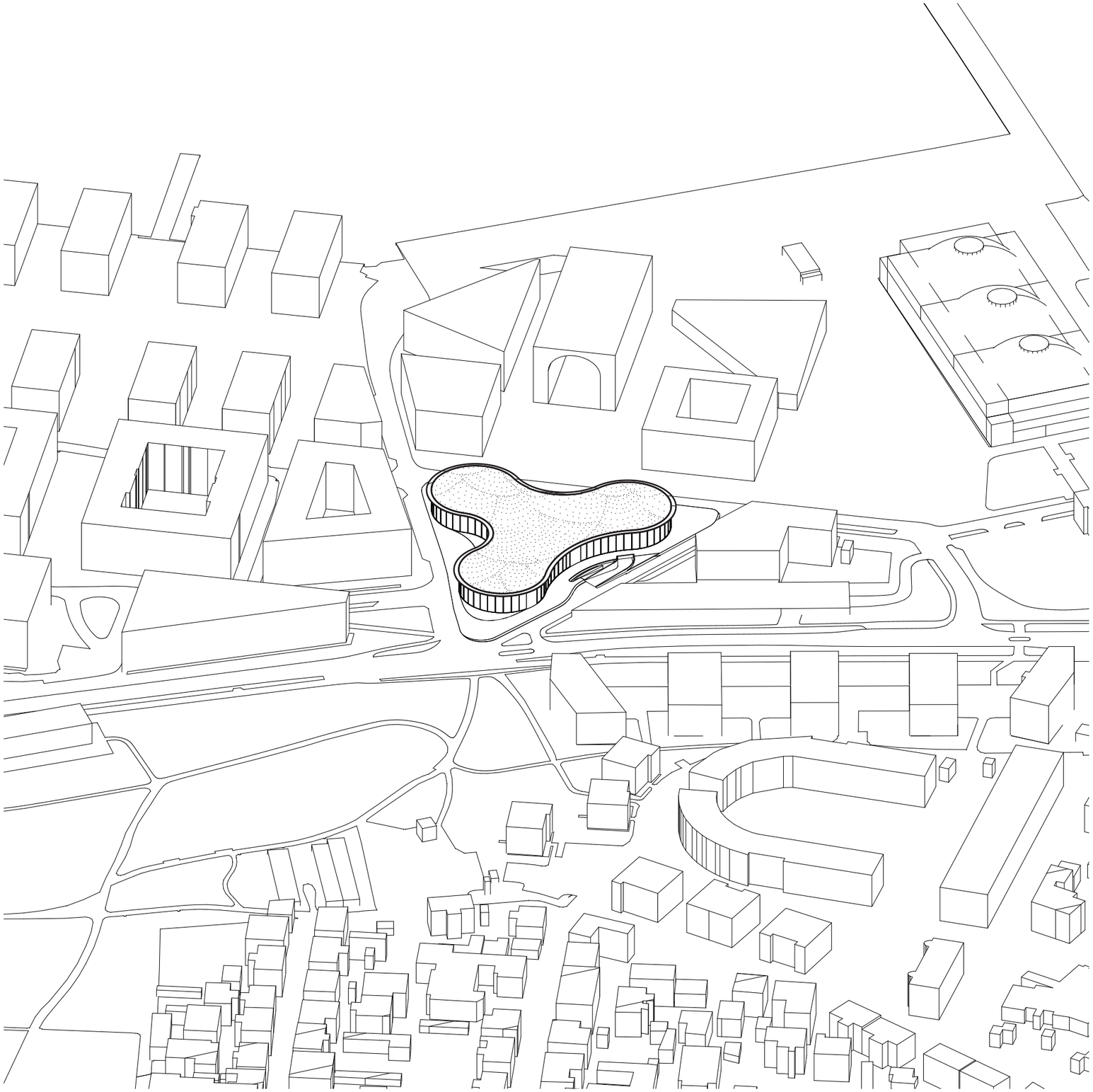
Ibsen Library / Kengo Kuma and Associates & Mad Arkitekter / Skien, Norway / 2021







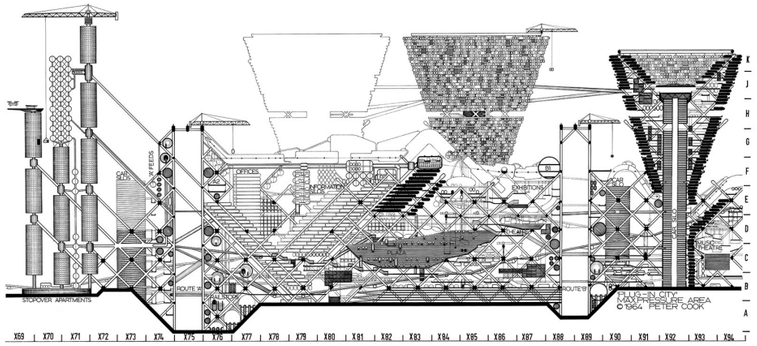
DESIGN STRATEGY
TRANSLATING CONCEPTS TO TOOLS



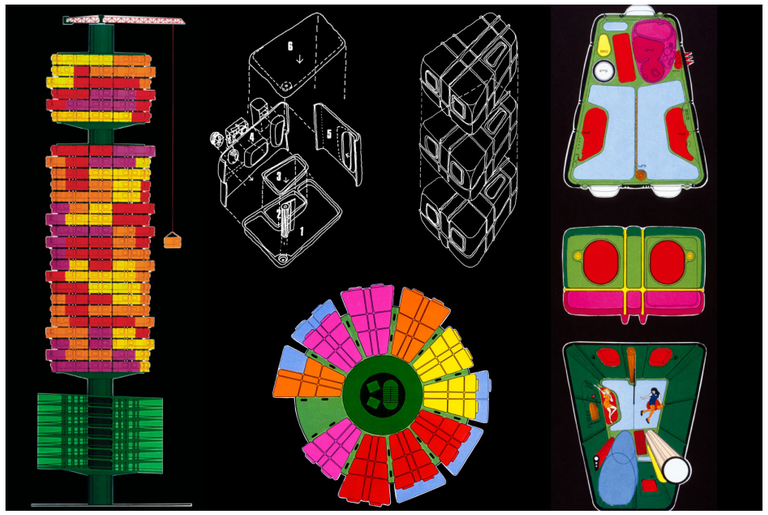
DESIGN FOR WELL BEING

- visible public activity
- public & communal gardens
- resting areas with natural light

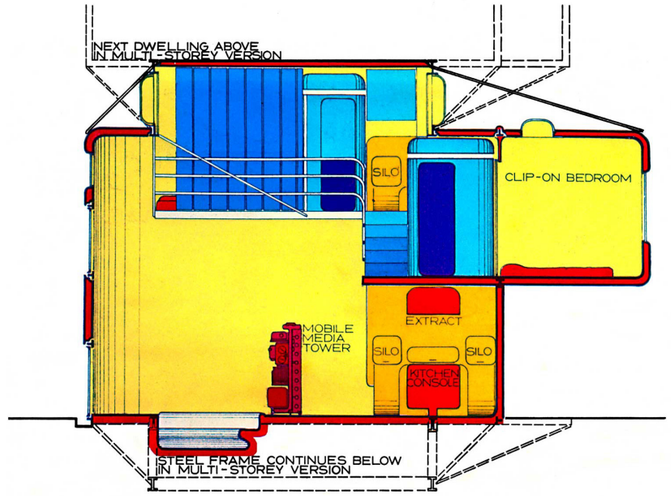
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
THE PLUG-IN CITY / ARCHIGRAM



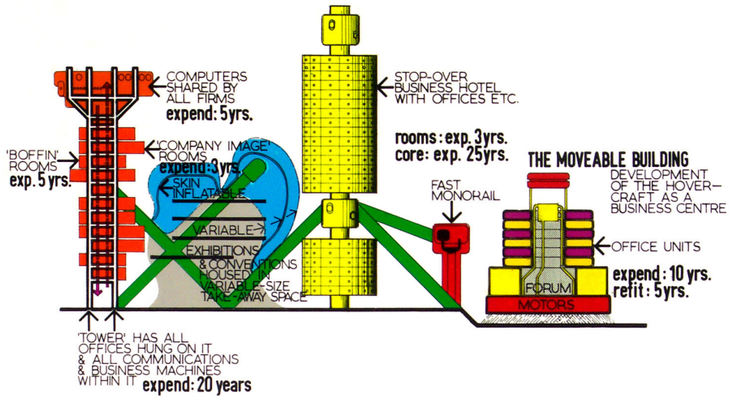
The Plug-in city / Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton

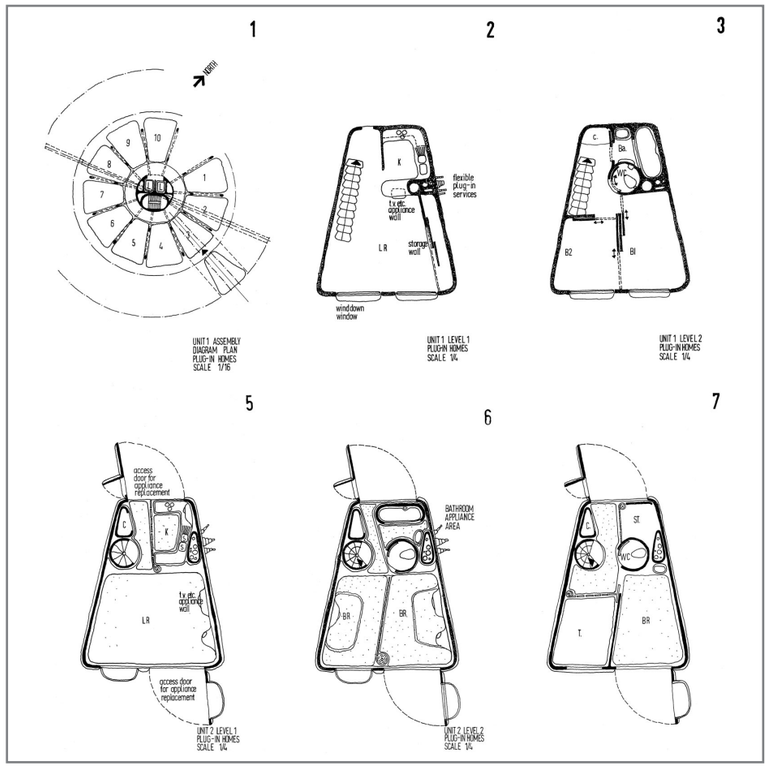


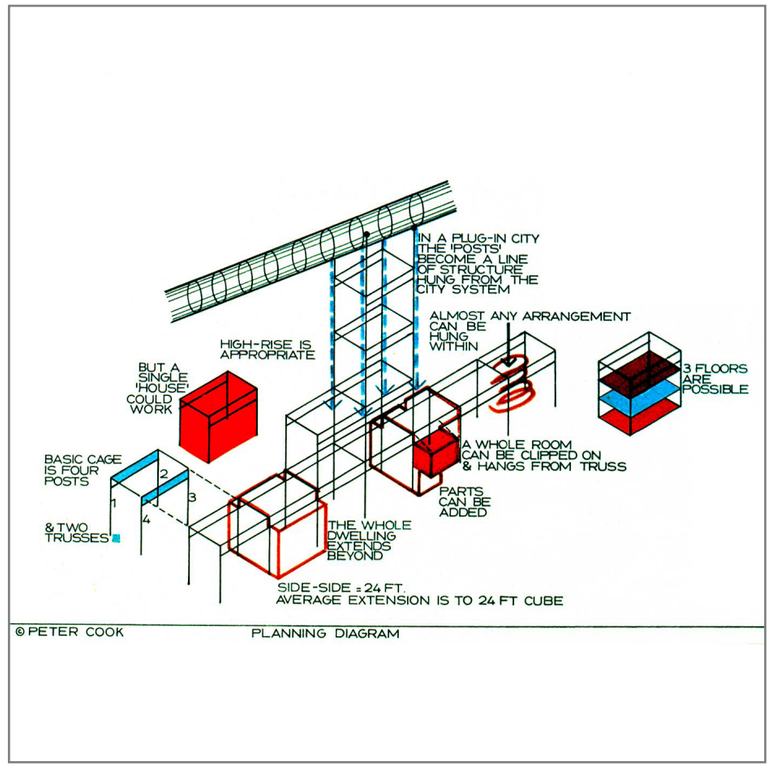
Capsule Homes / Warren Chalk



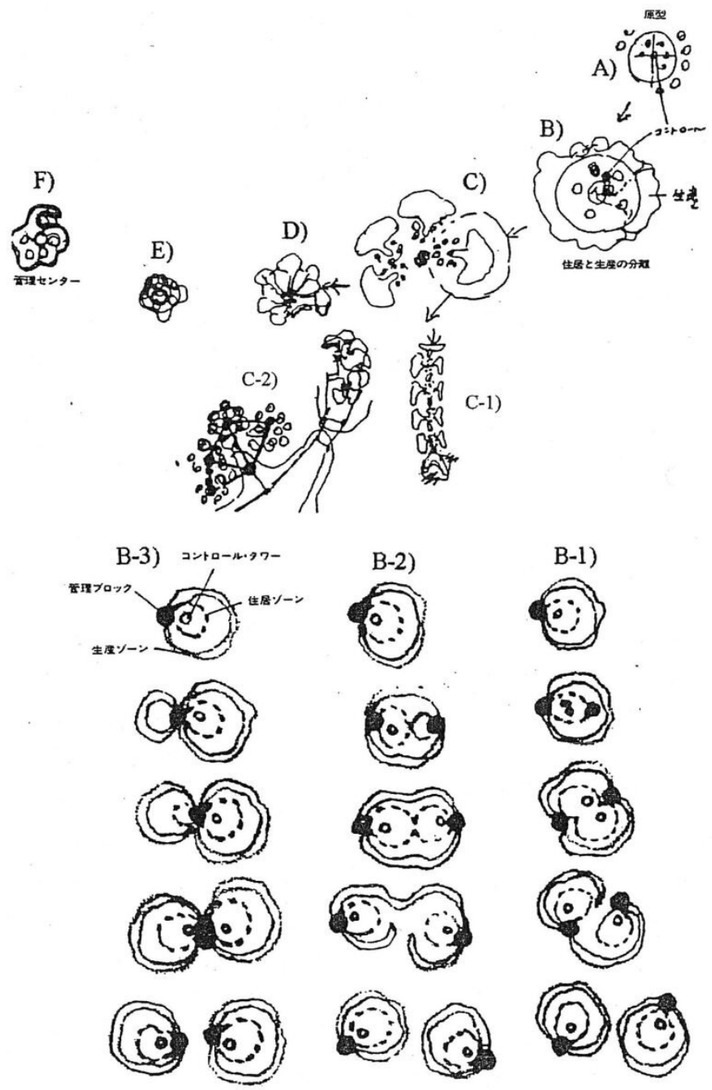
Plug'n Clip House / Peter Cook

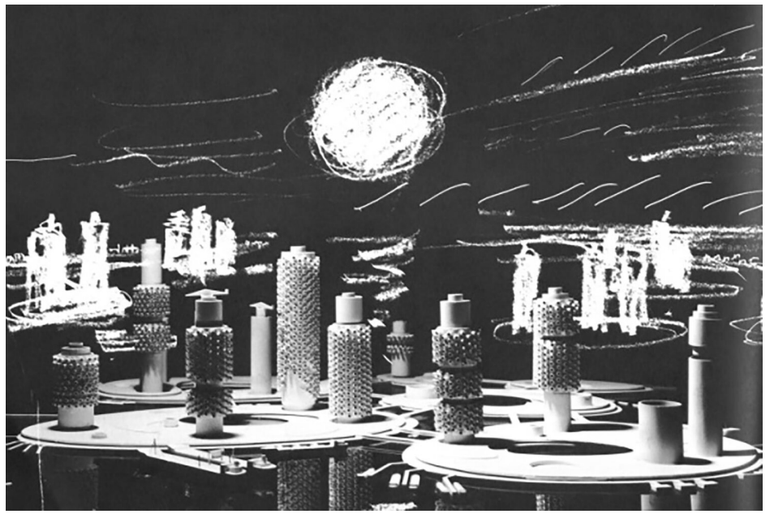






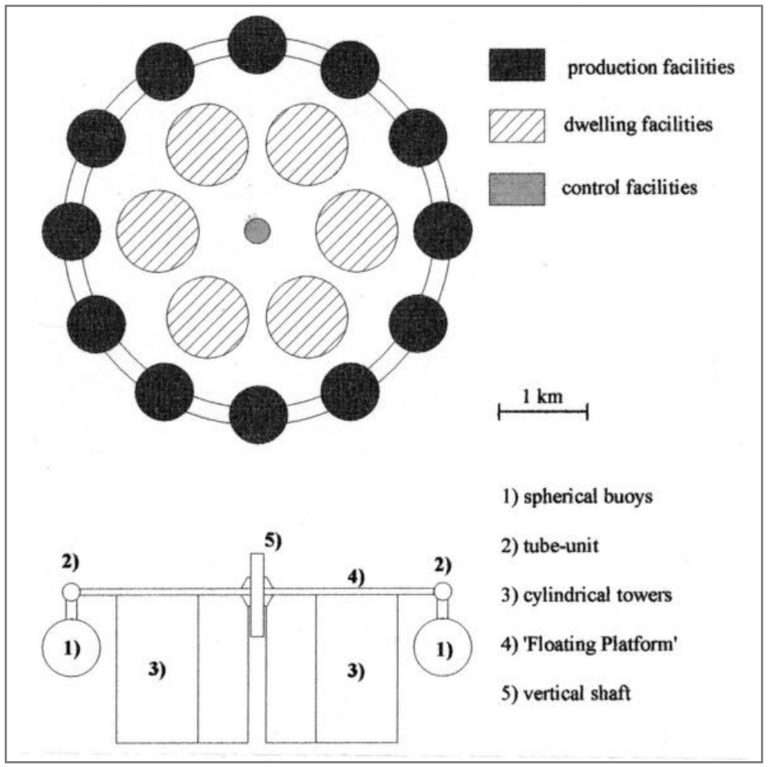
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
JAPANESE METABOLISM

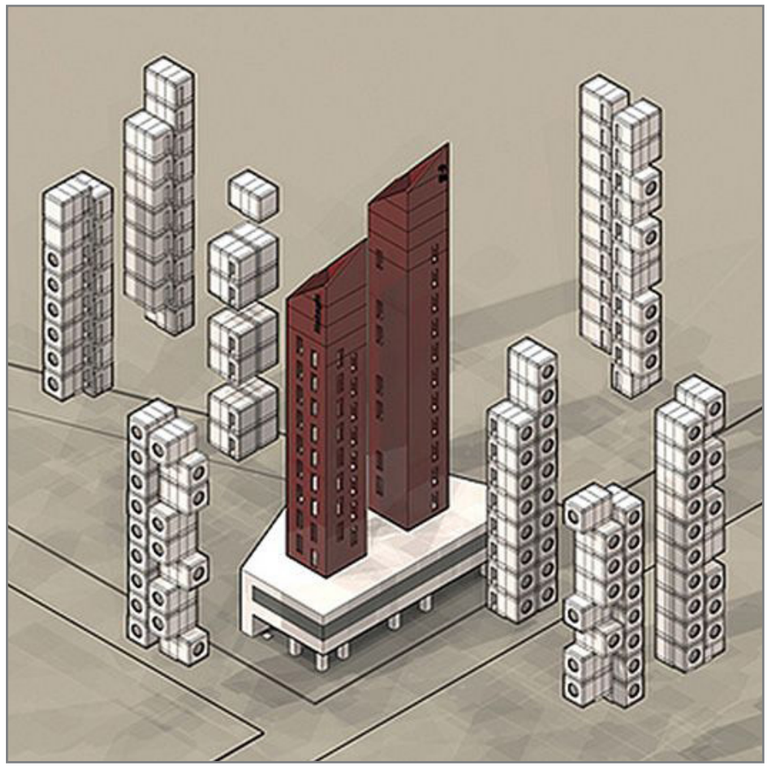




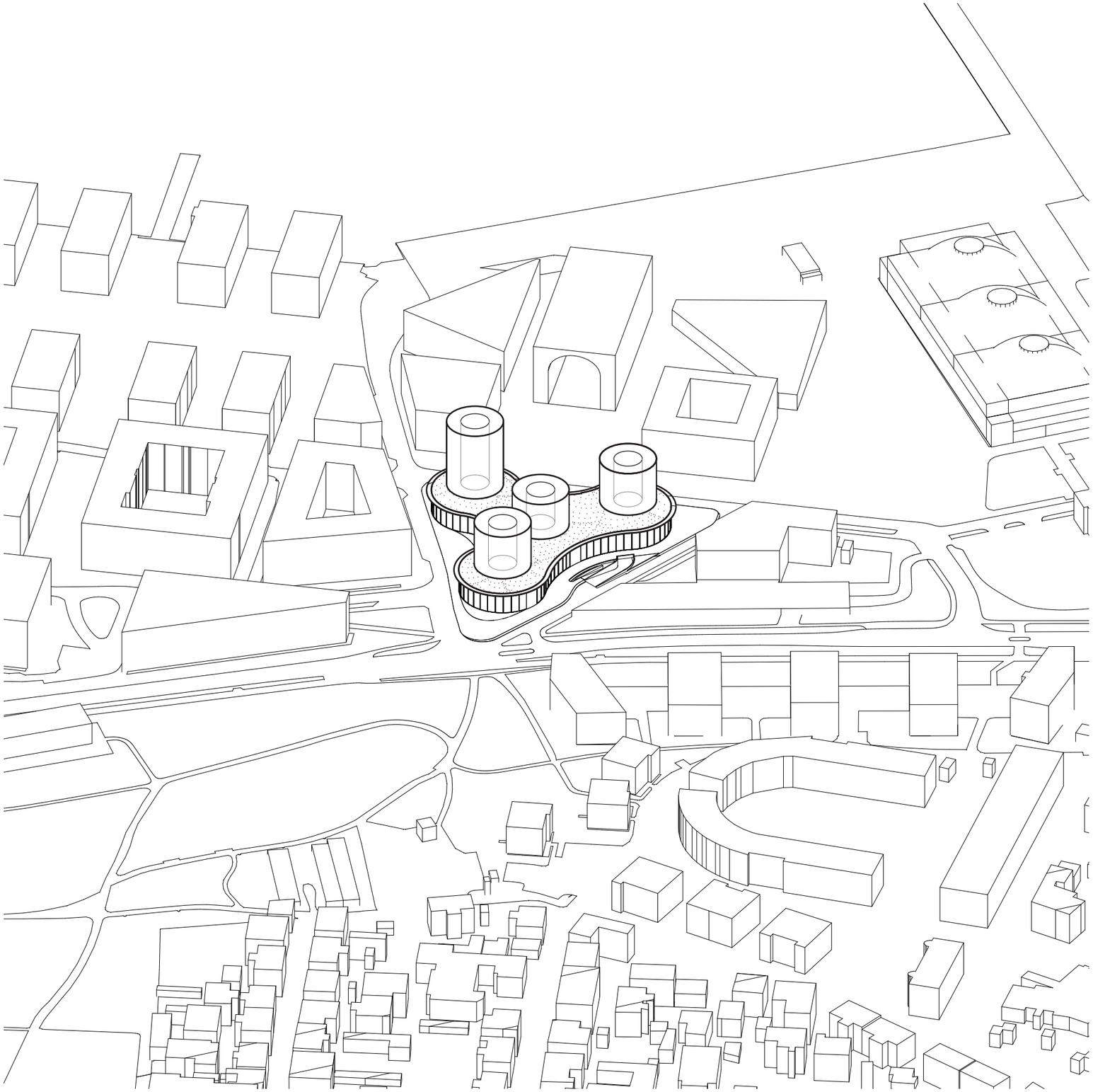
Marine City / Kiyonori Kikutake

Nakagin Capsule Tower / Kisho Kurokawa Architects / Tokyo / 1972





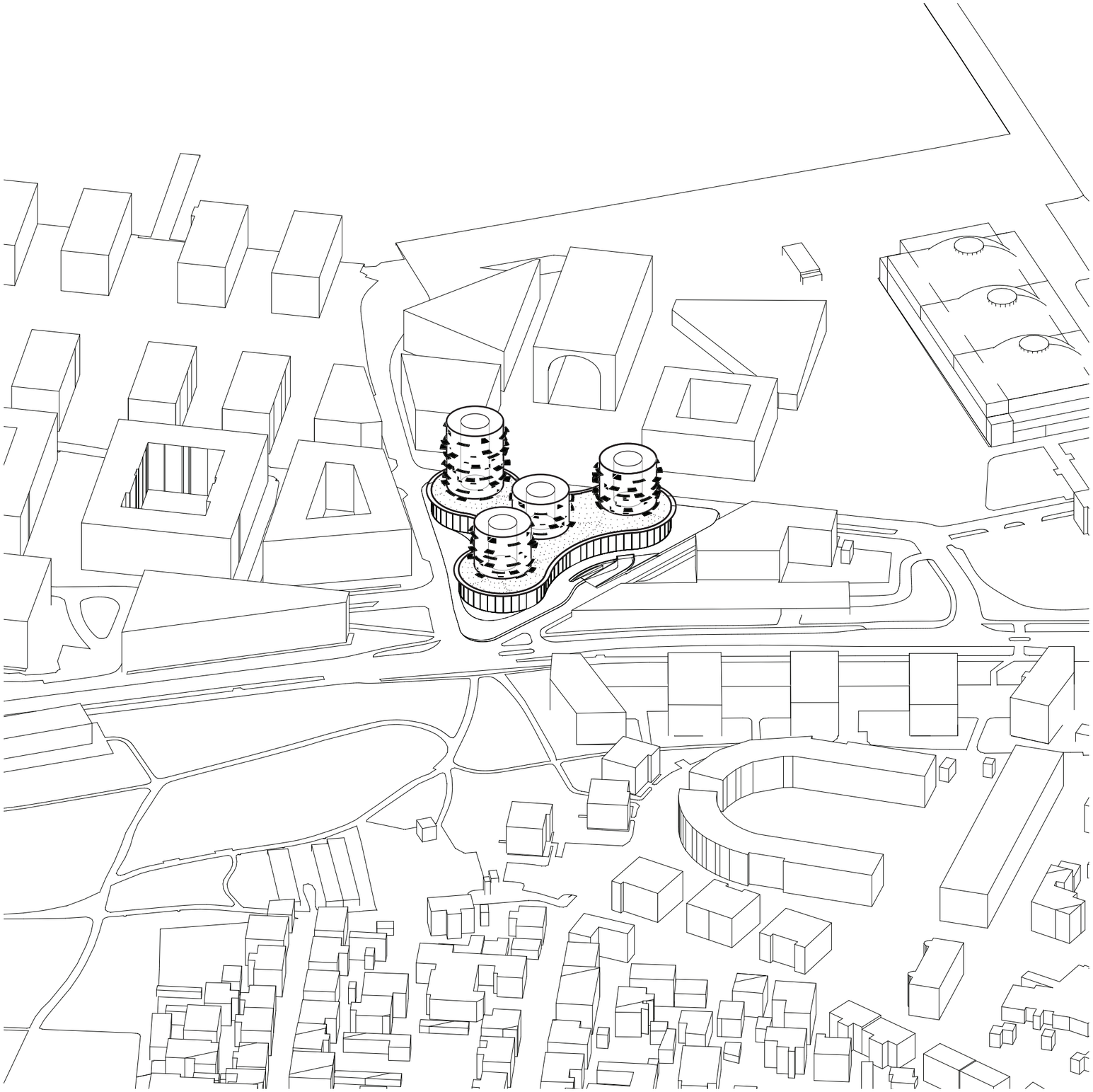
DESIGN STRATEGY
TRANSLATING CONCEPTS TO TOOLS



CORE STRUCTURE

multiple cores and cantilevered units, inspired by Japanese metabolism and the Plug-in city

DESIGN STRATEGY
TRANSLATING CONCEPTS TO TOOLS

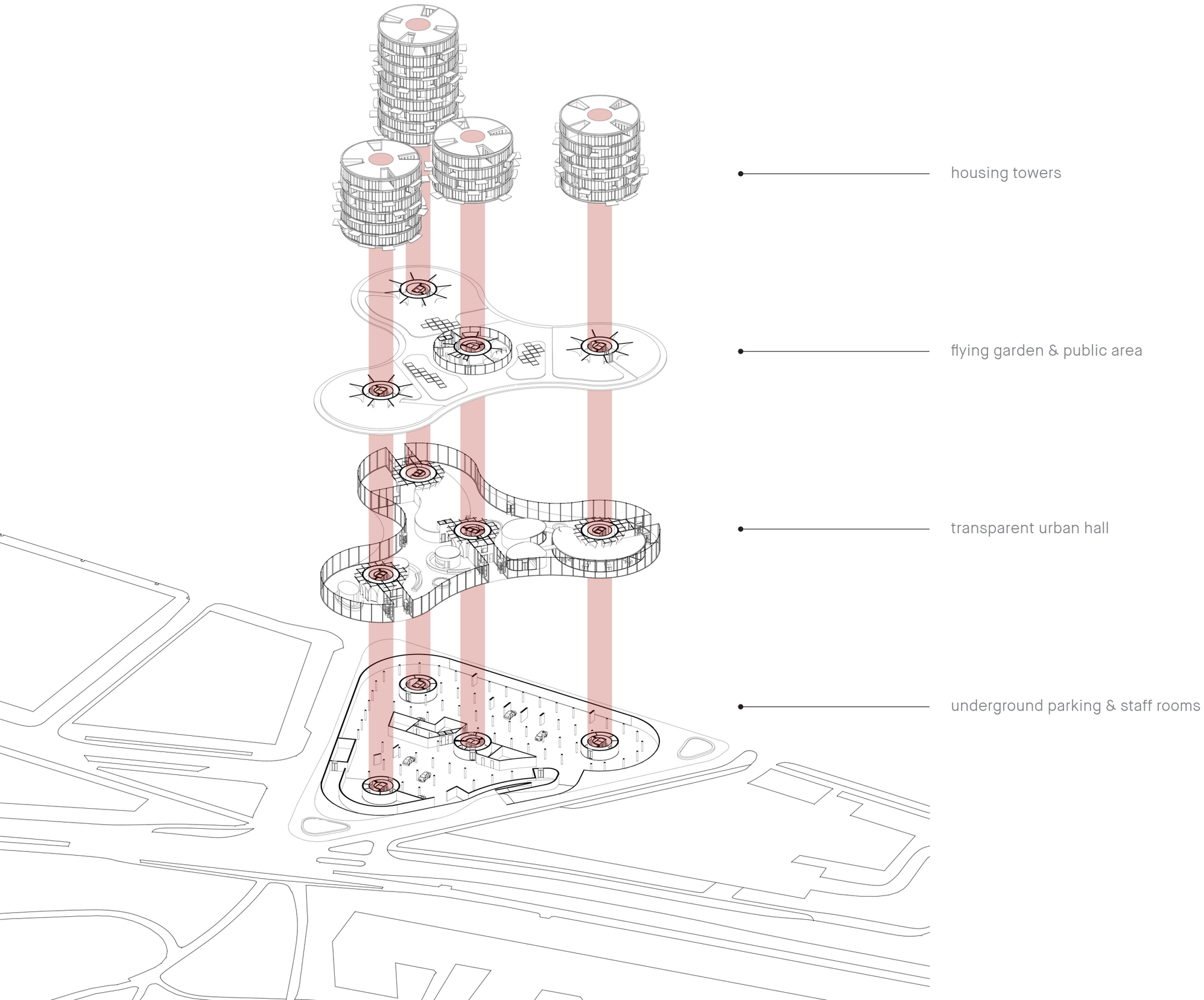


DIVERSITY

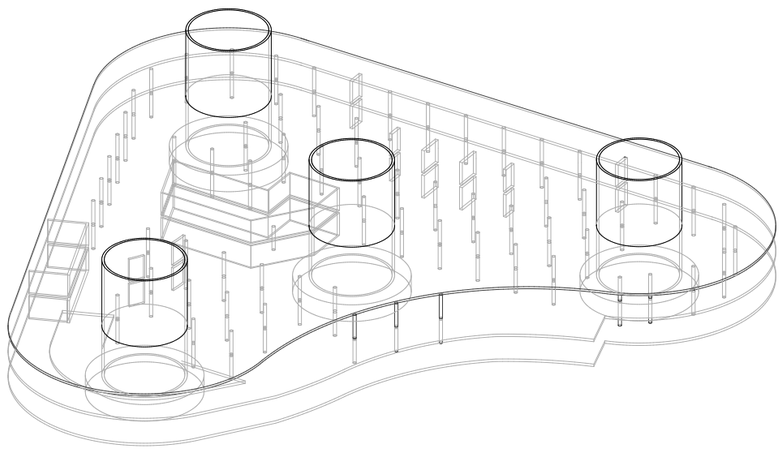
variety in heights, facade elements & materiality

DESIGN & STRUCTURE

DESIGN
PROGRAM DIAGRAM

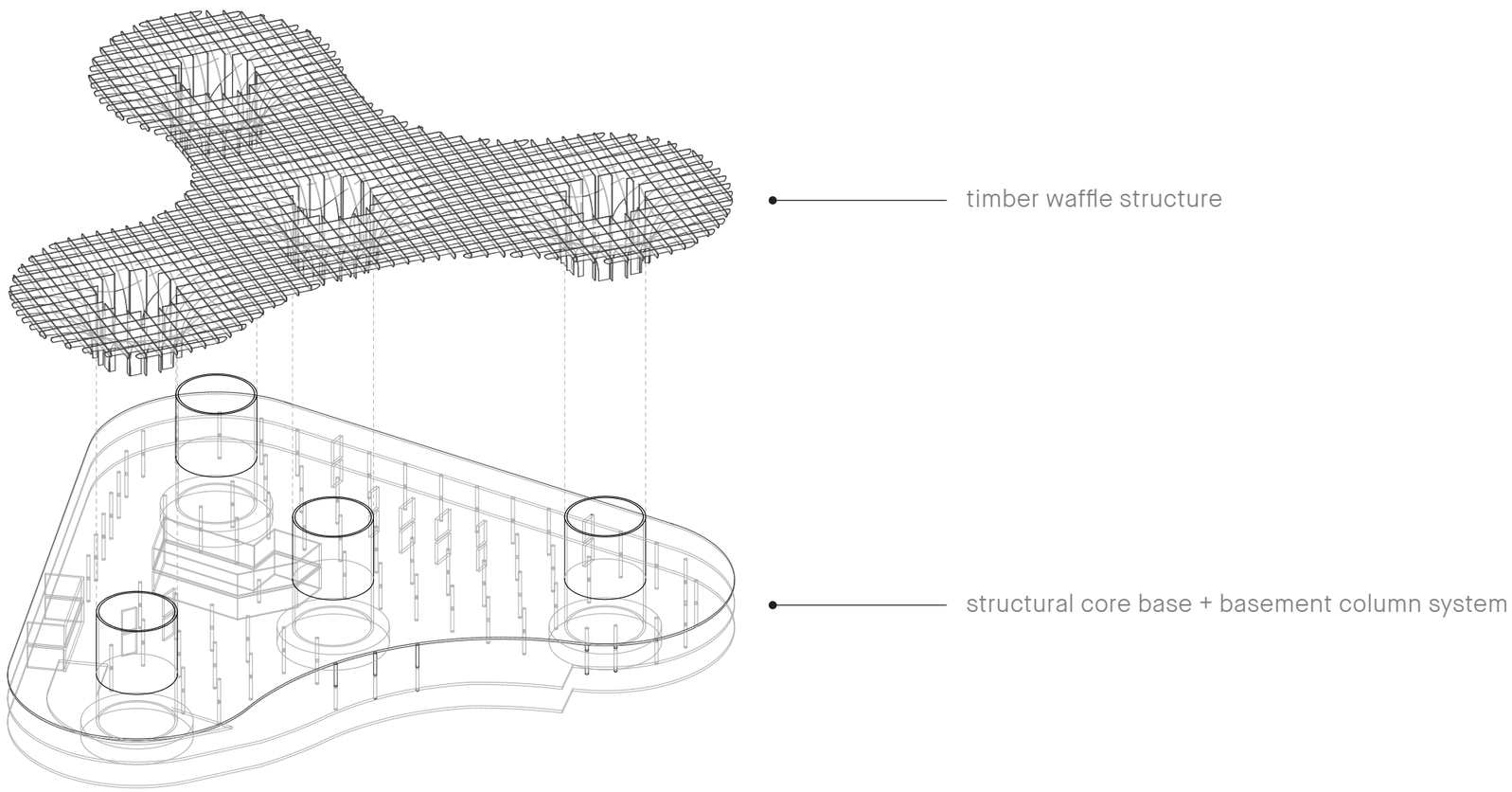


DESIGN
STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

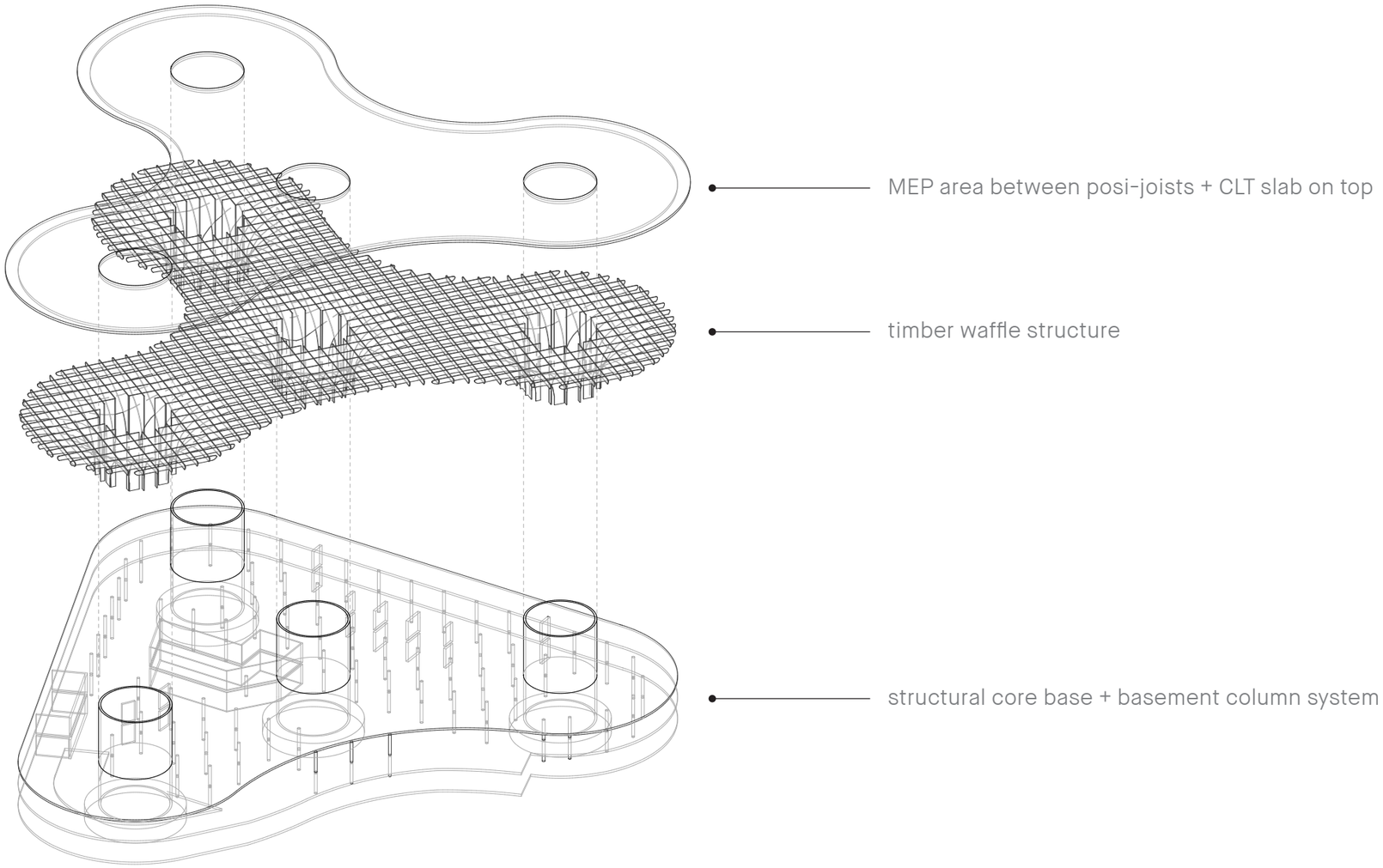


structural core base + basement column system

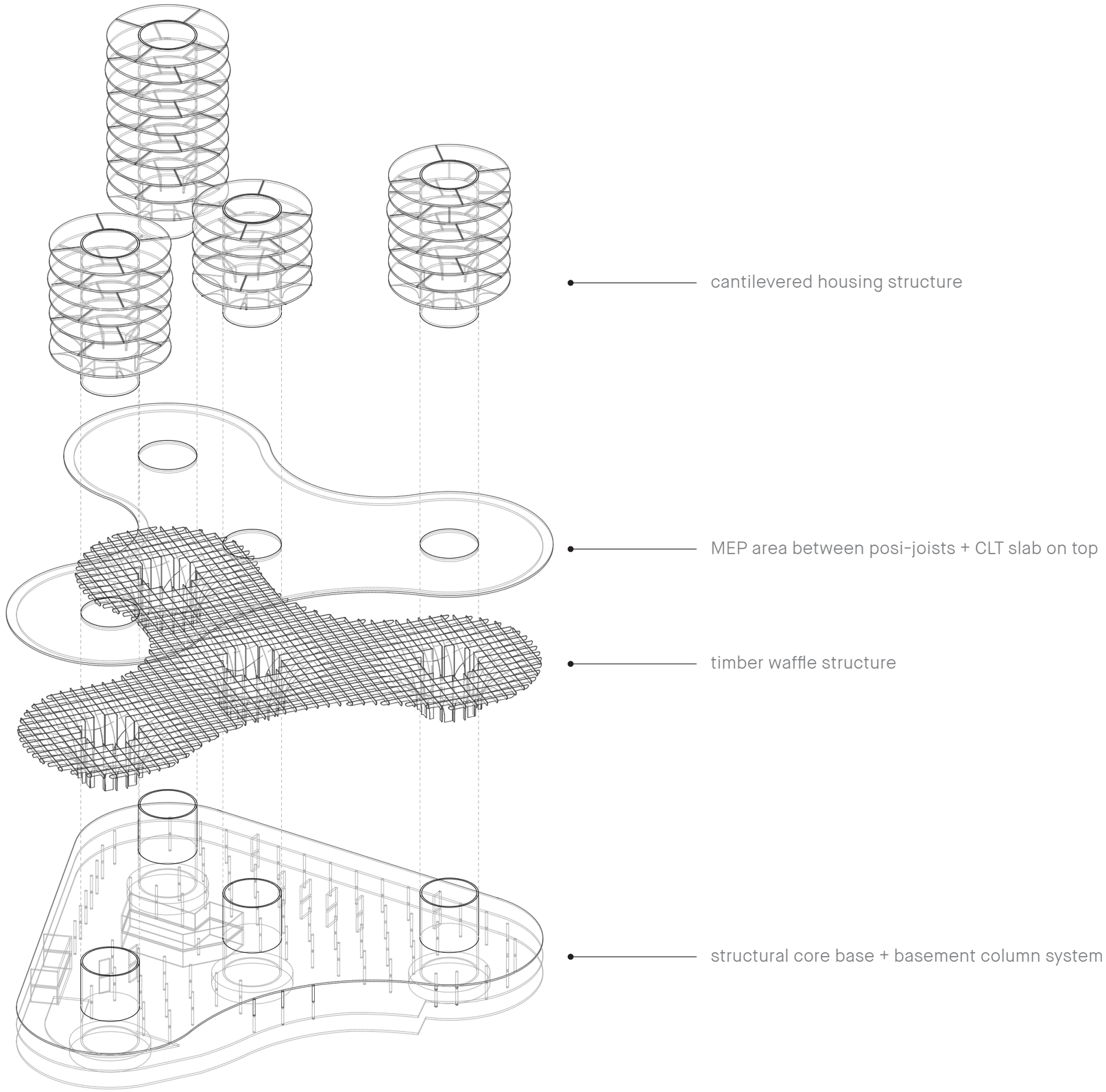
DESIGN
STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



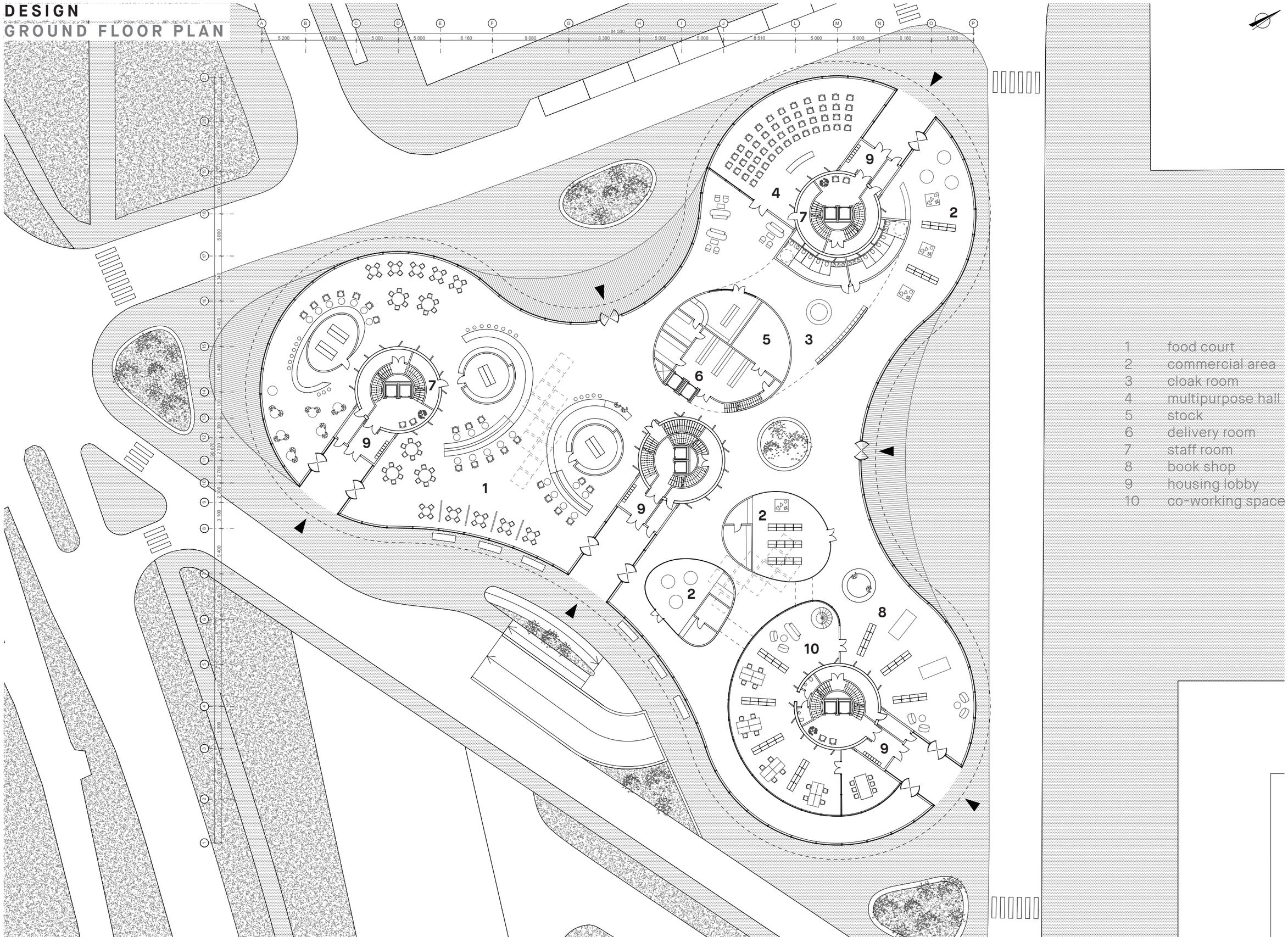
DESIGN
STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



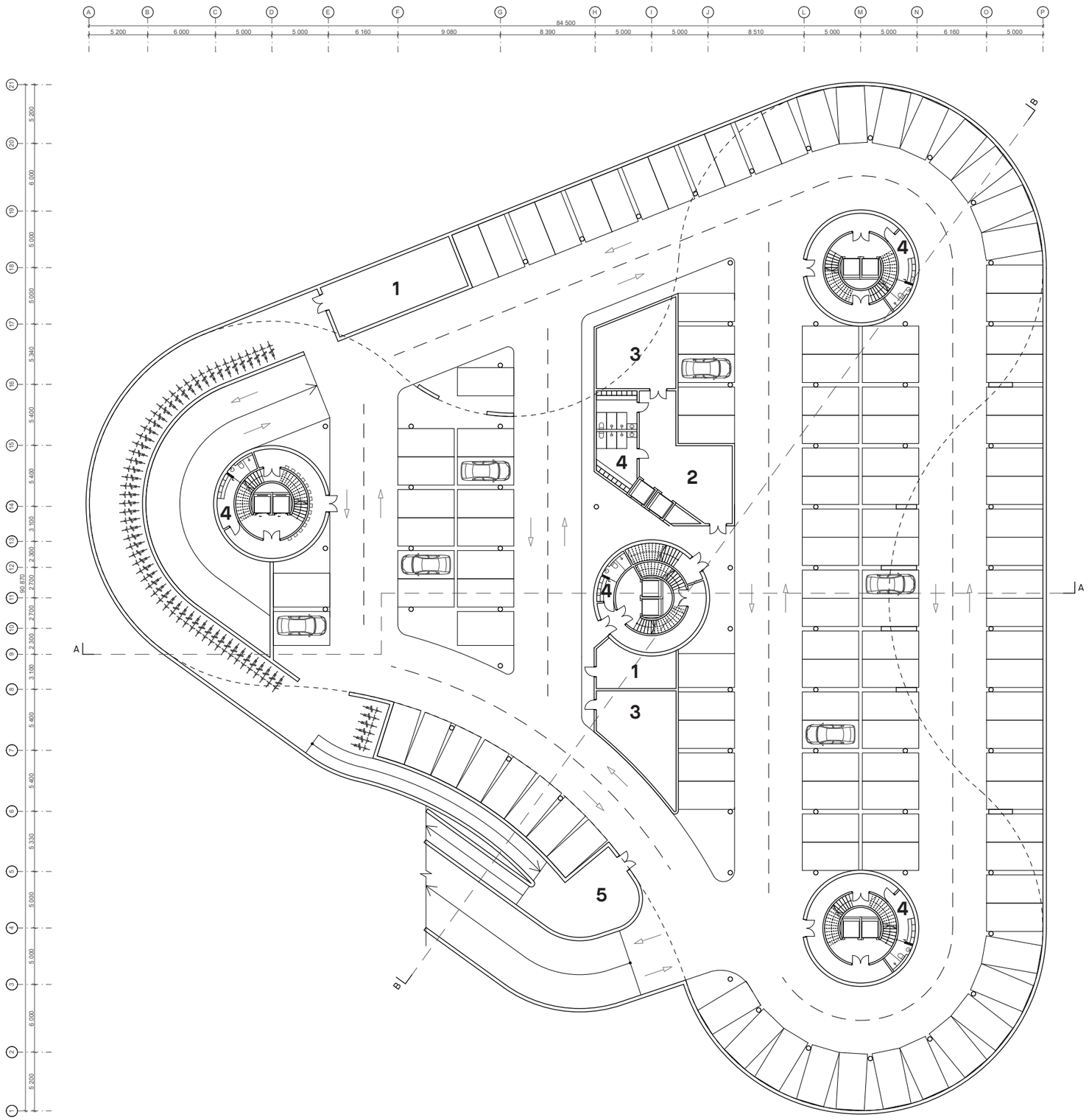
DESIGN
STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



DESIGN
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

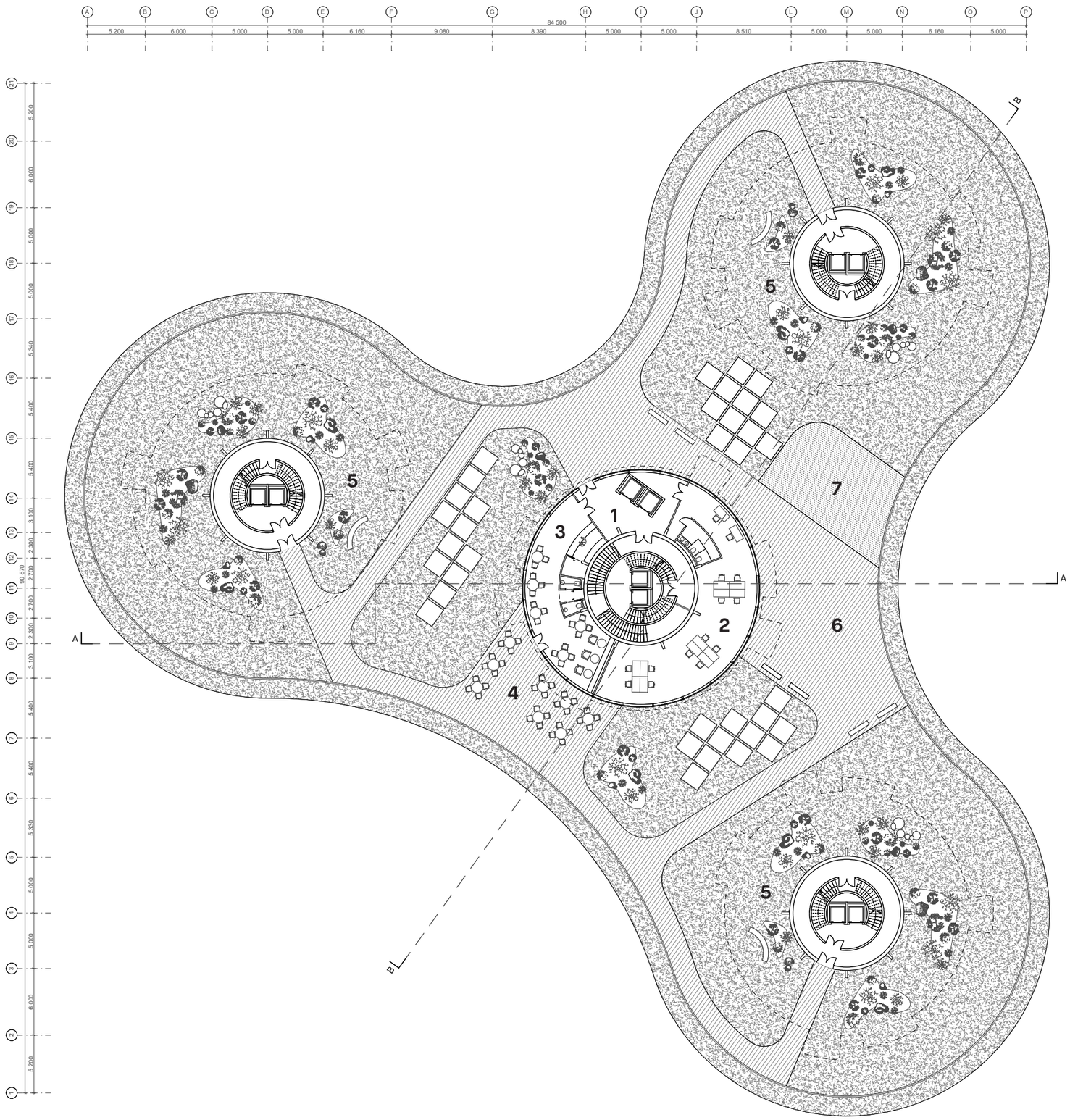


DESIGN
BASEMENT PLAN



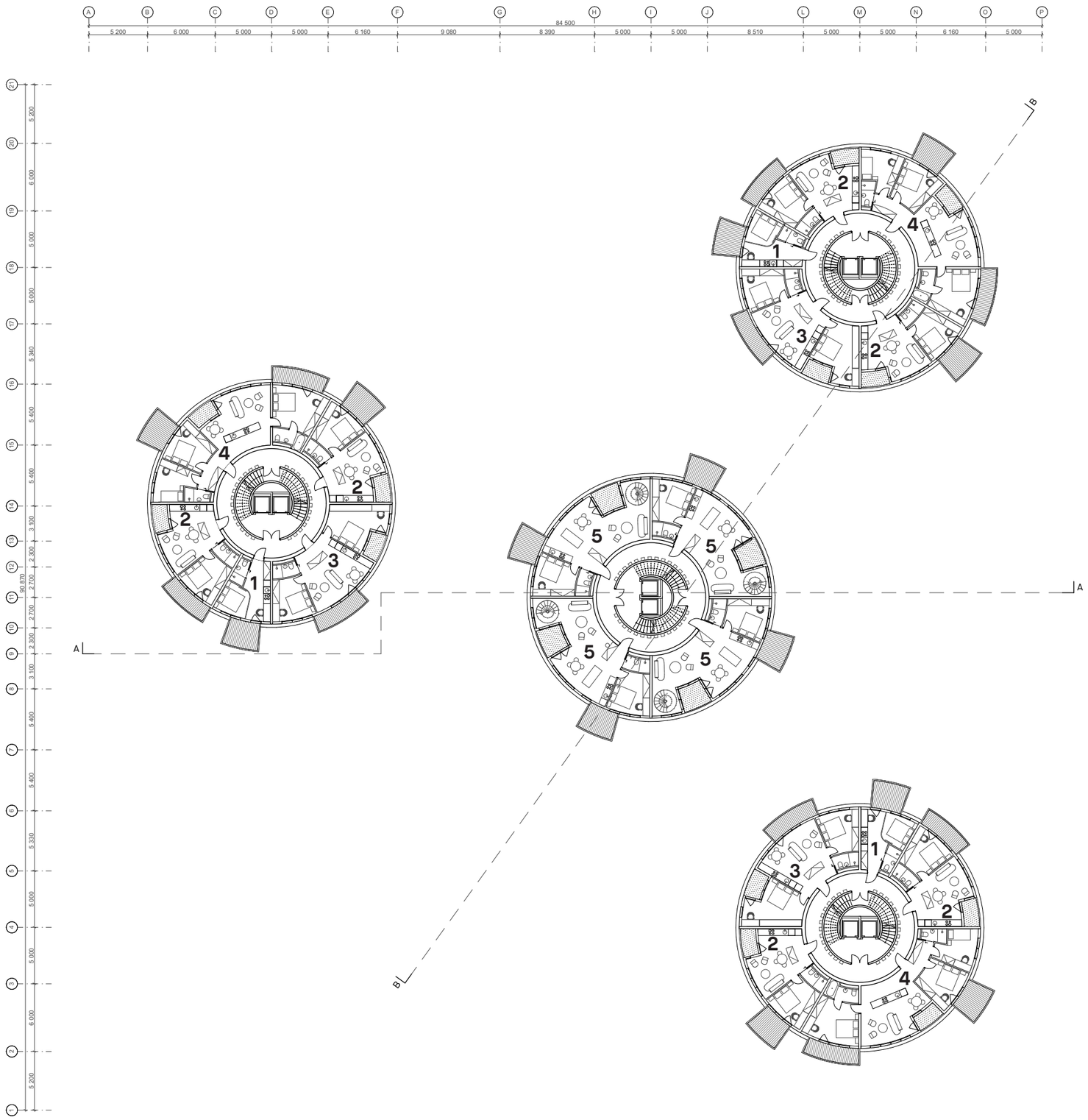
1 mechanical room
2 delivery room
3 stock
4 staff room
5 security

DESIGN
GARDEN PLAN



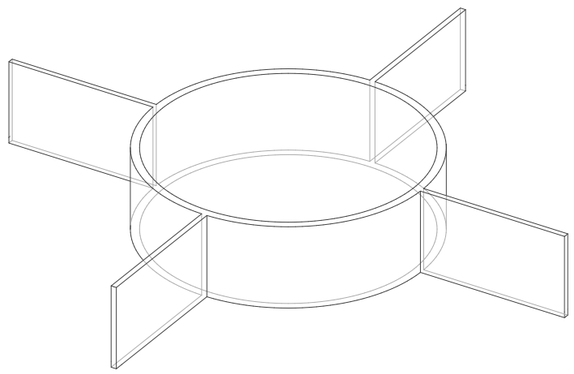
1 public access
2 office
3 cafe
4 terrace
5 zen garden
6 viewing platform
7 playground

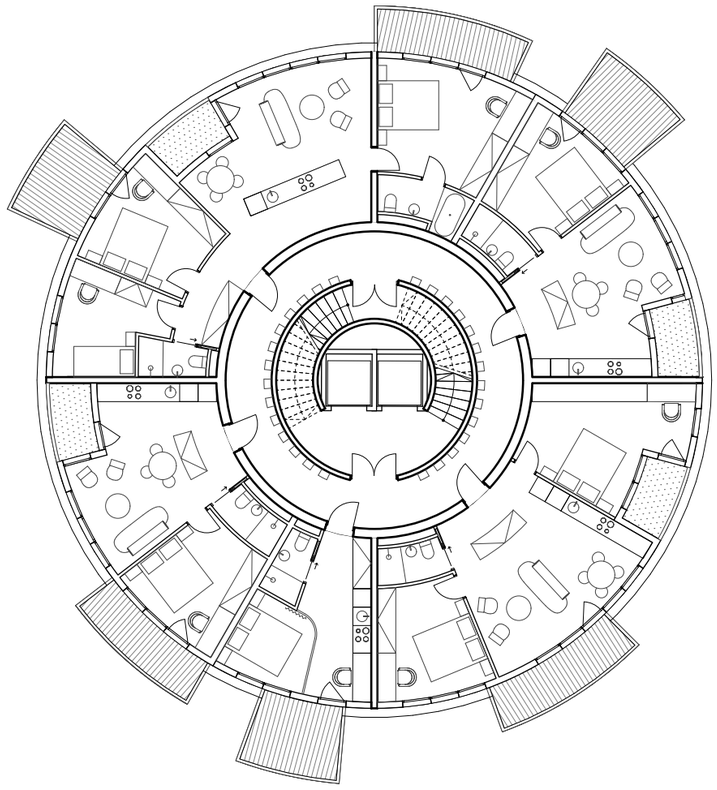
DESIGN
HOUSING PLAN



1 studio
2 1-bedroom apt
3 2-bedroom apt
4 3-bedroom apt
5 duplex

DESIGN STRATEGY
HOUSING CONFIGURATION





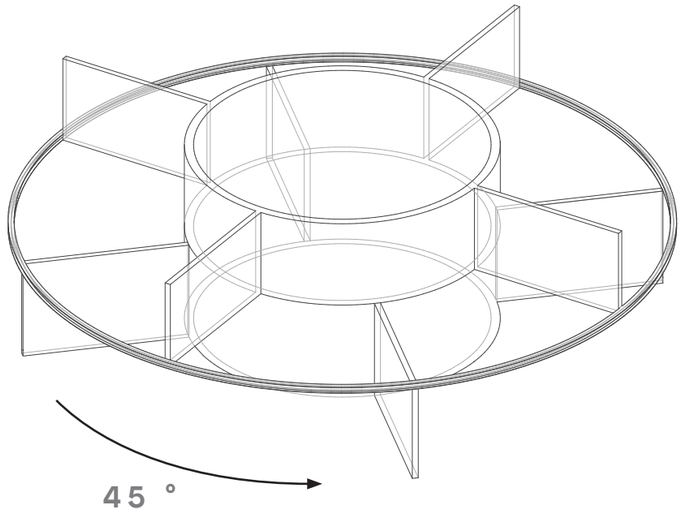
STRUCTURAL BEHAVIOUR

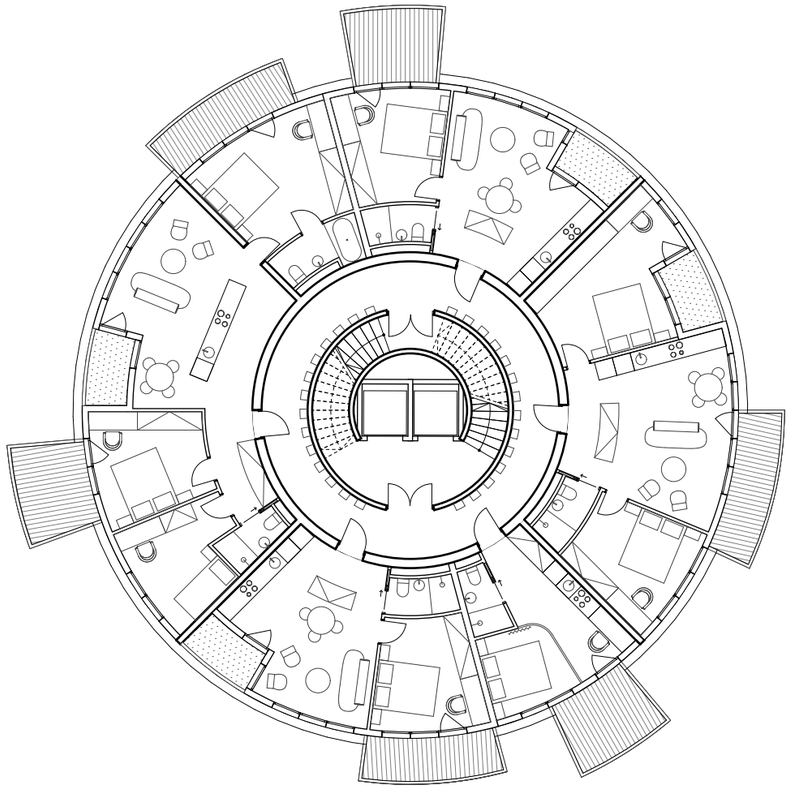
Vertical loads: cantilevered CLT walls → ring beam → rotated CLT walls → back to core

Horizontal thrusts: resisted by ring beam in compression/tension

Stability: provided by the reinforced concrete core & foundations

DESIGN STRATEGY
HOUSING CONFIGURATION





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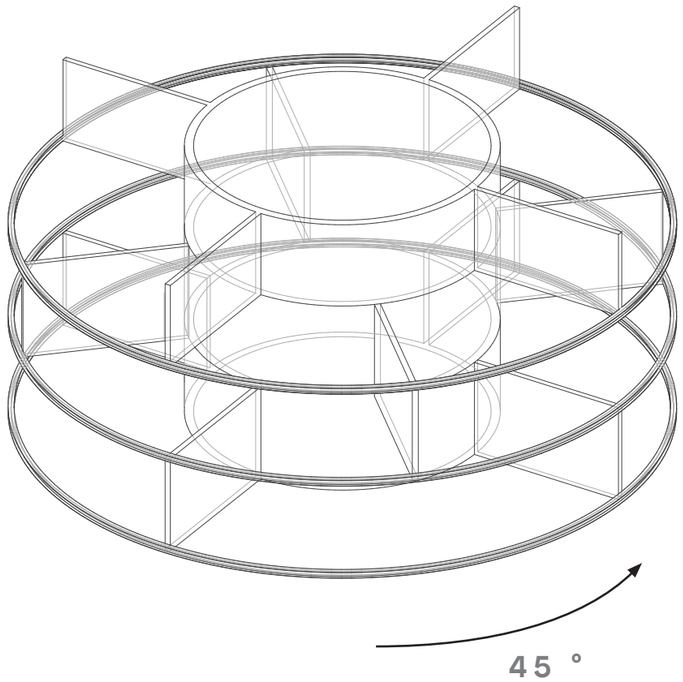
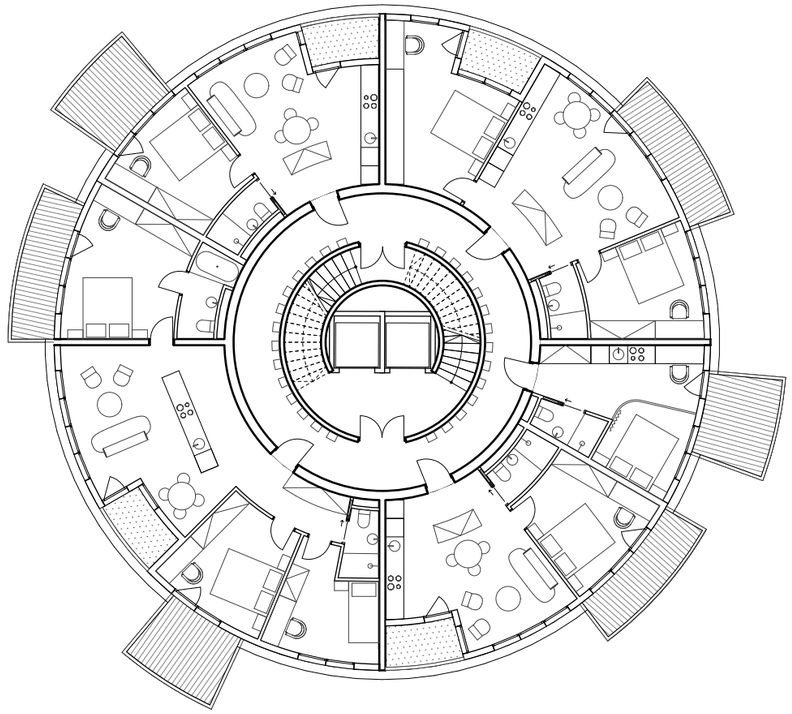
HOUSING CONFIGURATION





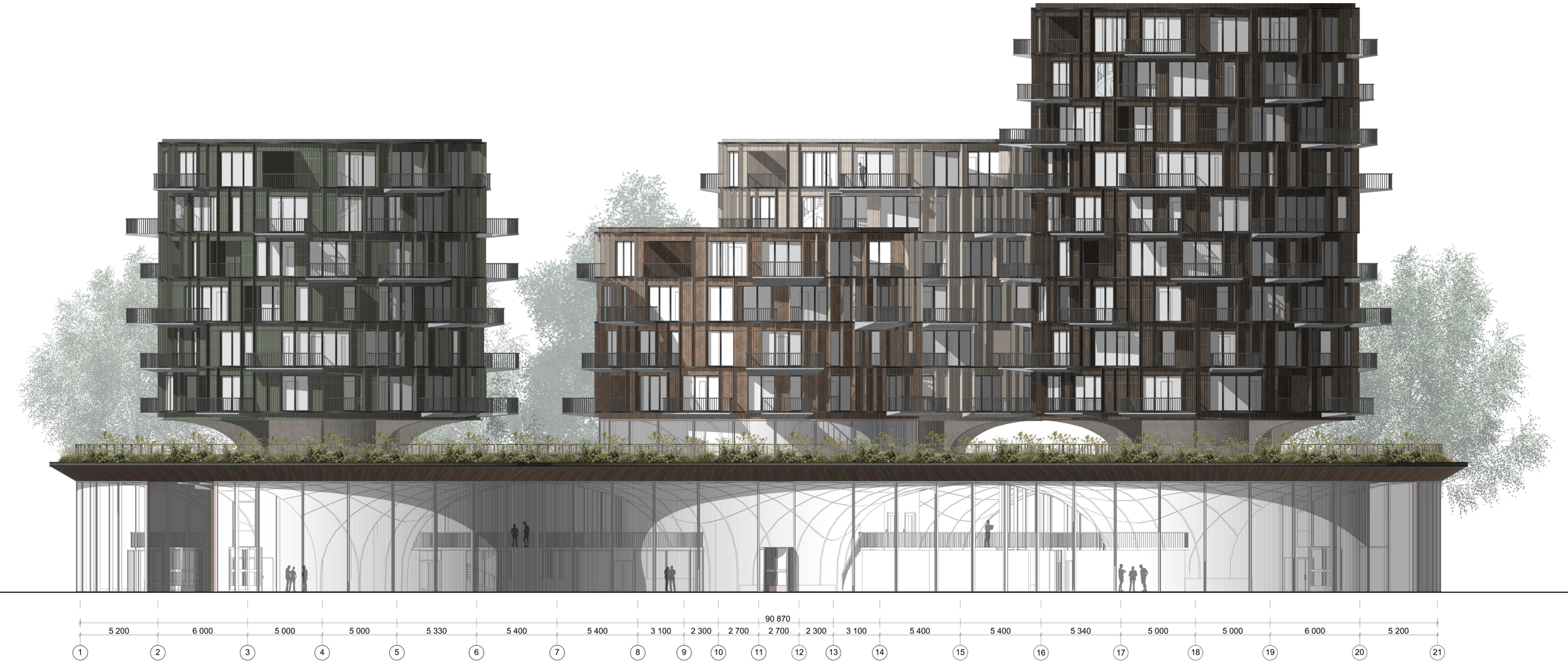
STRUCTURAL BEHAVIOUR

Vertical loads: cantilevered CLT walls → ring beam → rotated CLT walls → back to core

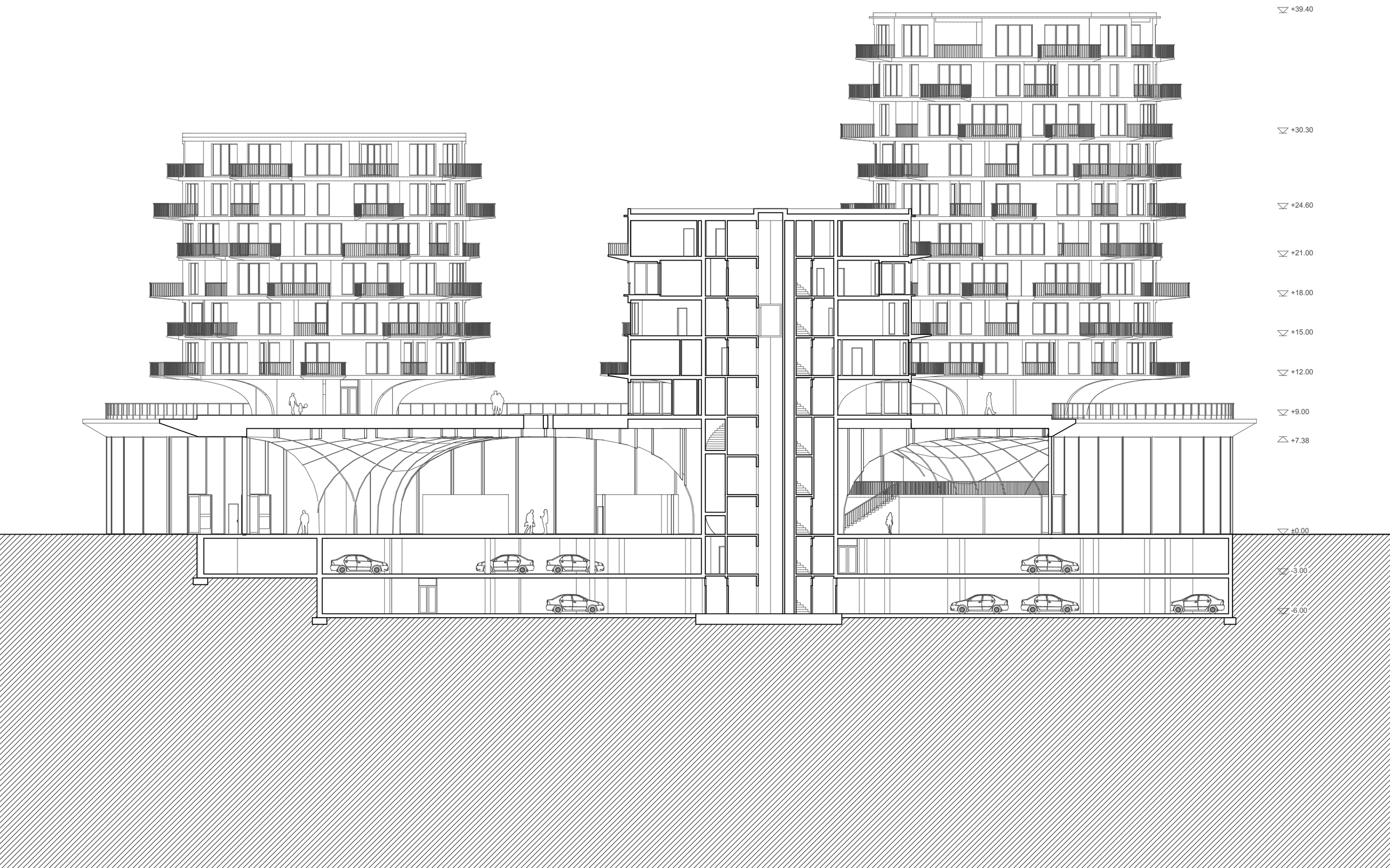
Horizontal thrusts: resisted by ring beam in compression/tension

Stability: provided by the reinforced concrete core & foundations

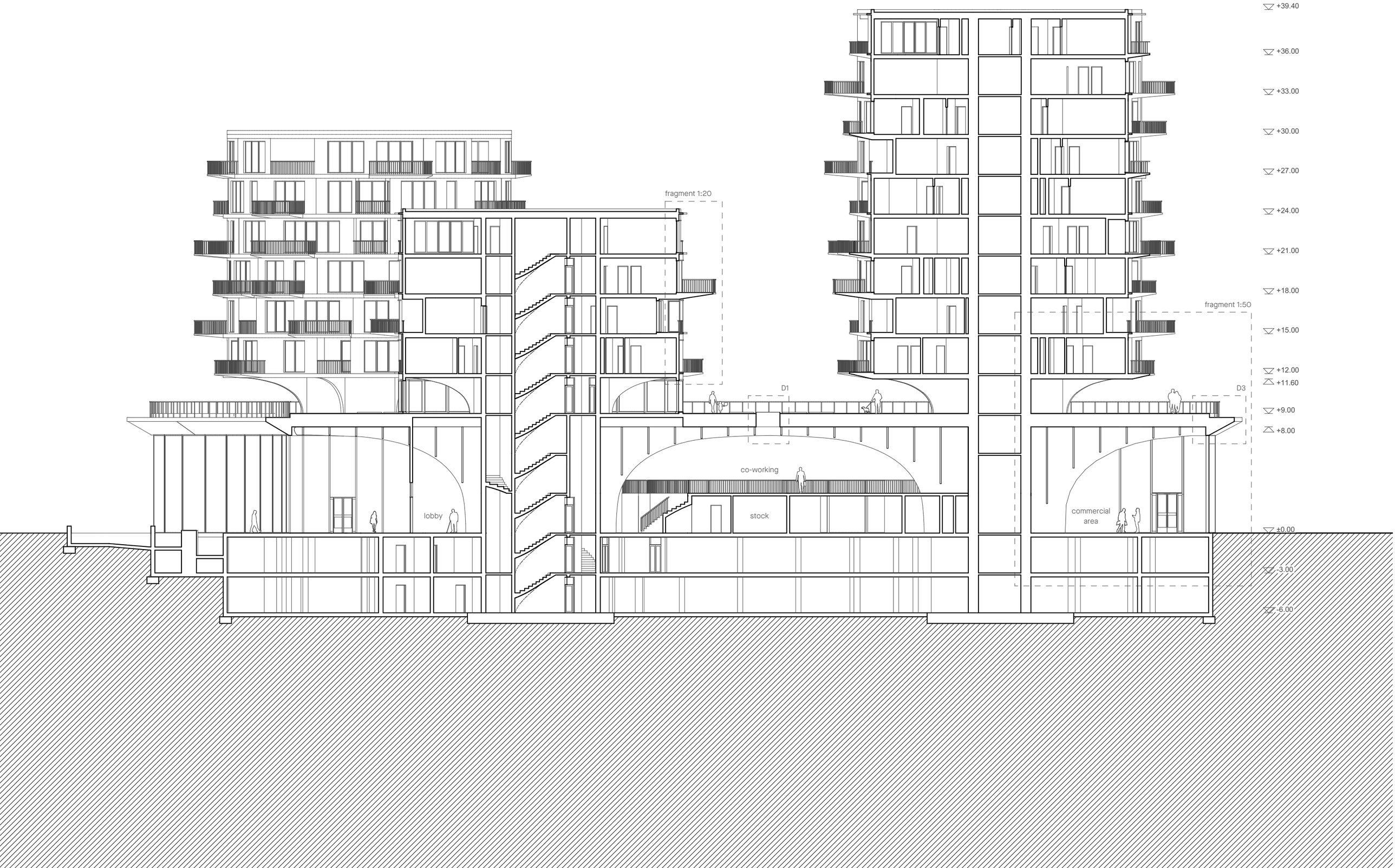
DESIGN
NORTH FACADE



DESIGN
SECTION A-A

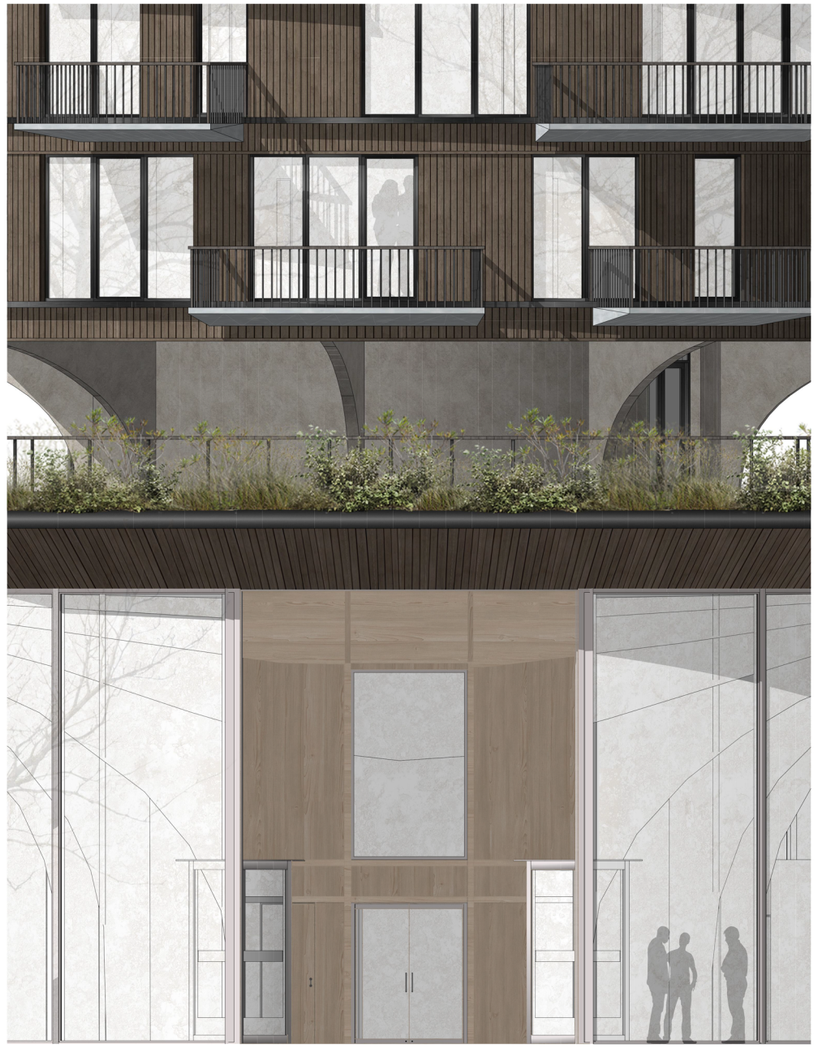


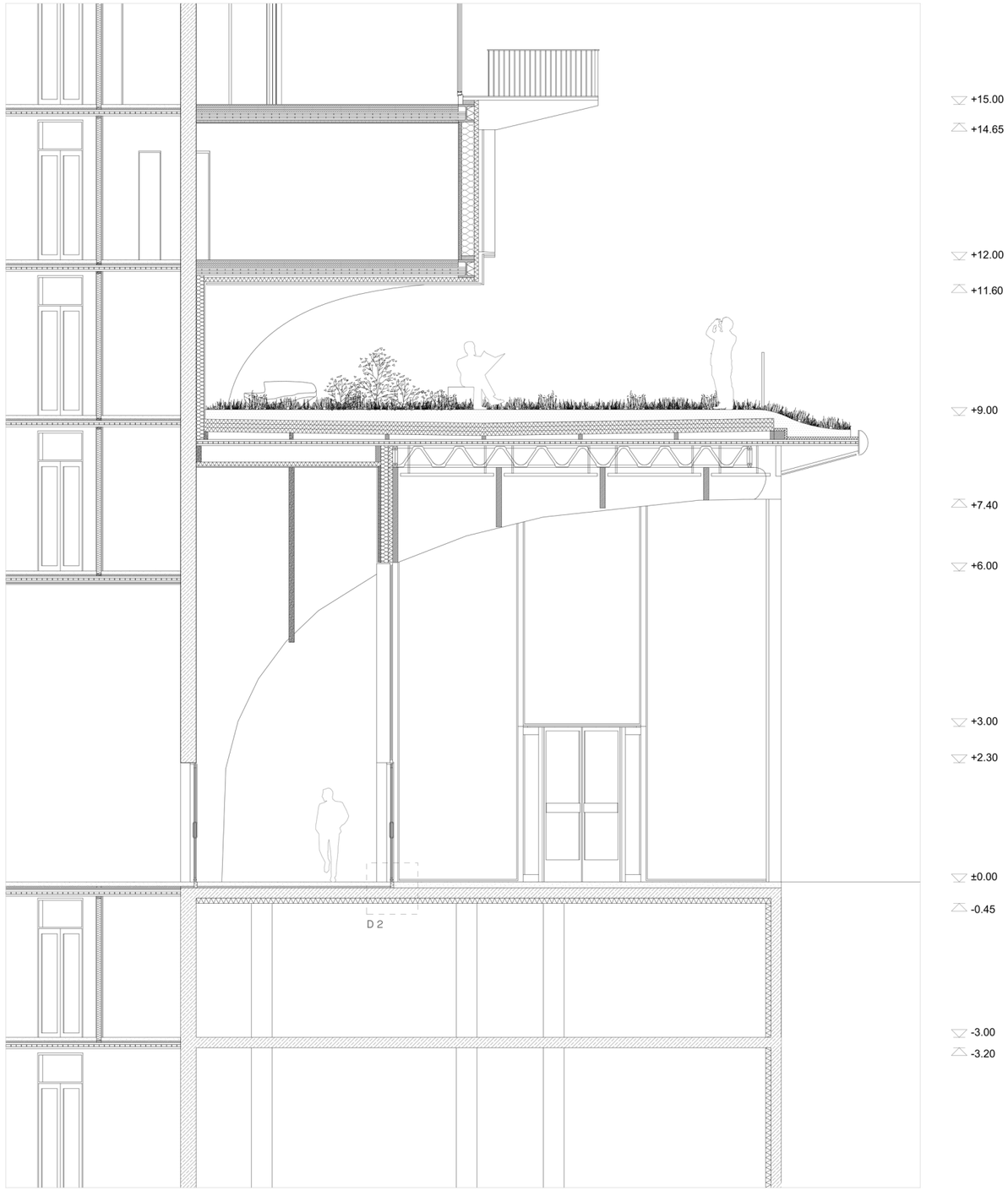
DESIGN
SECTION B-B



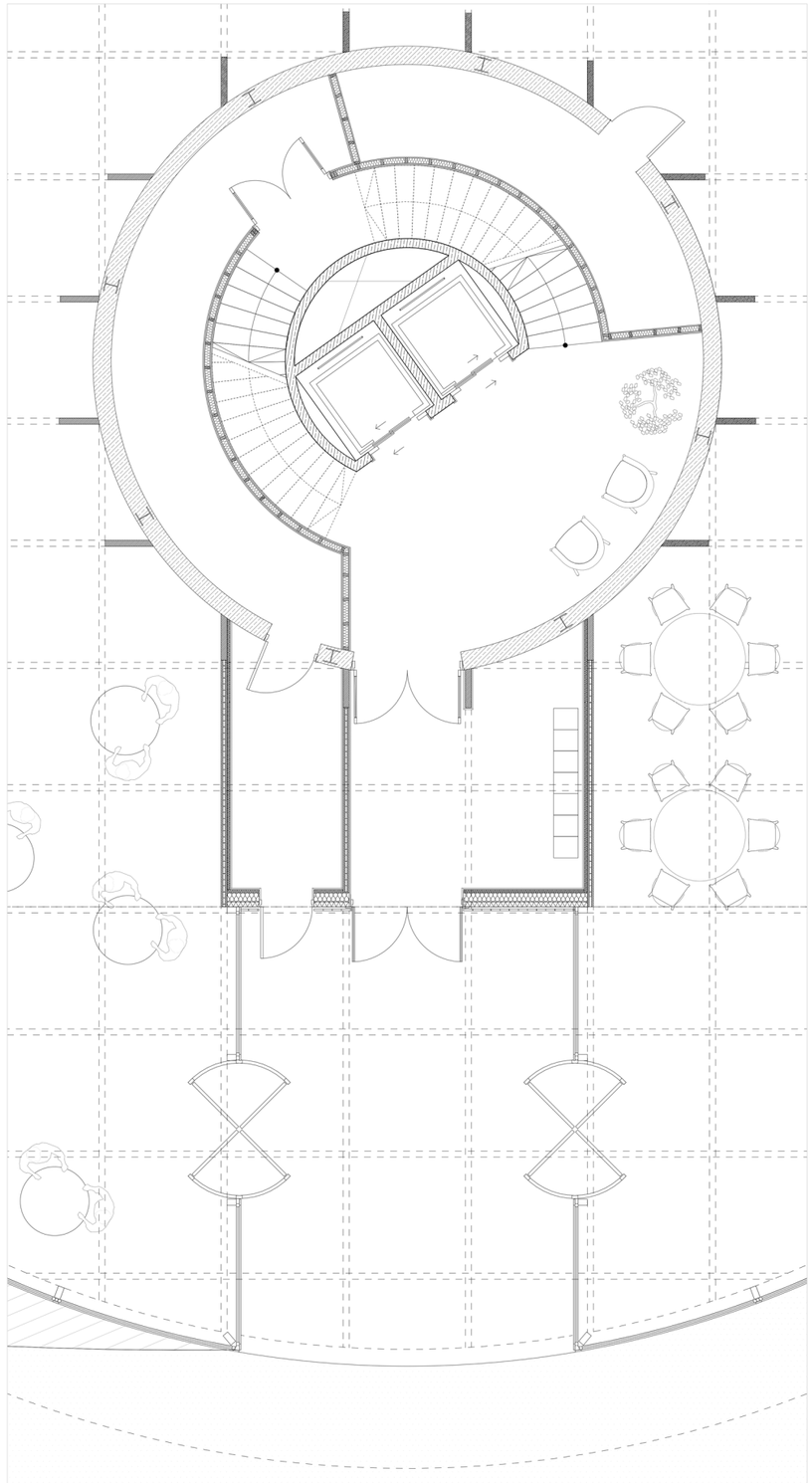
MOMENTS
OF CONTACT

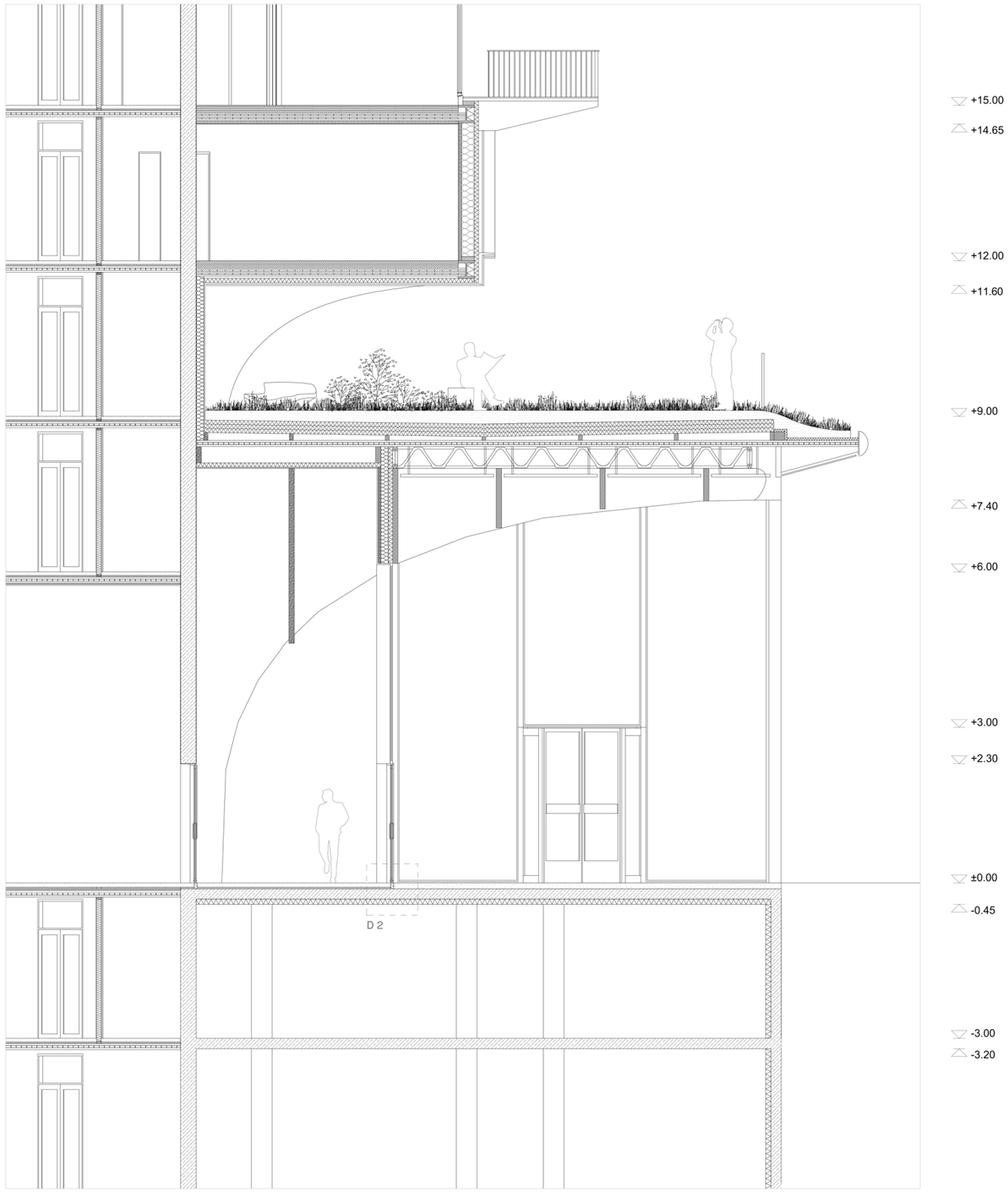
DESIGN
ENTRANCE FRAGMENT





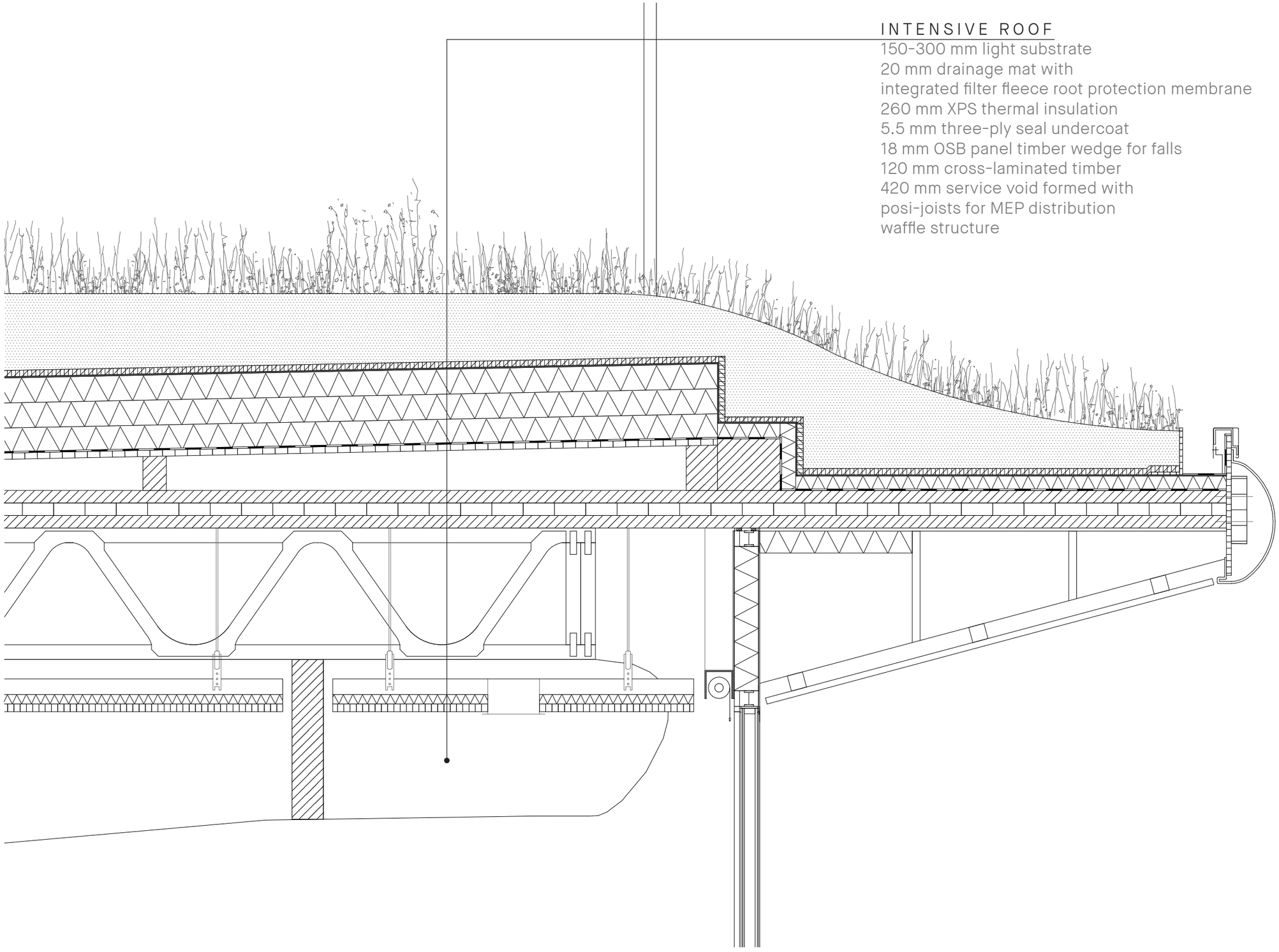
DESIGN
ENTRANCE FRAGMENT





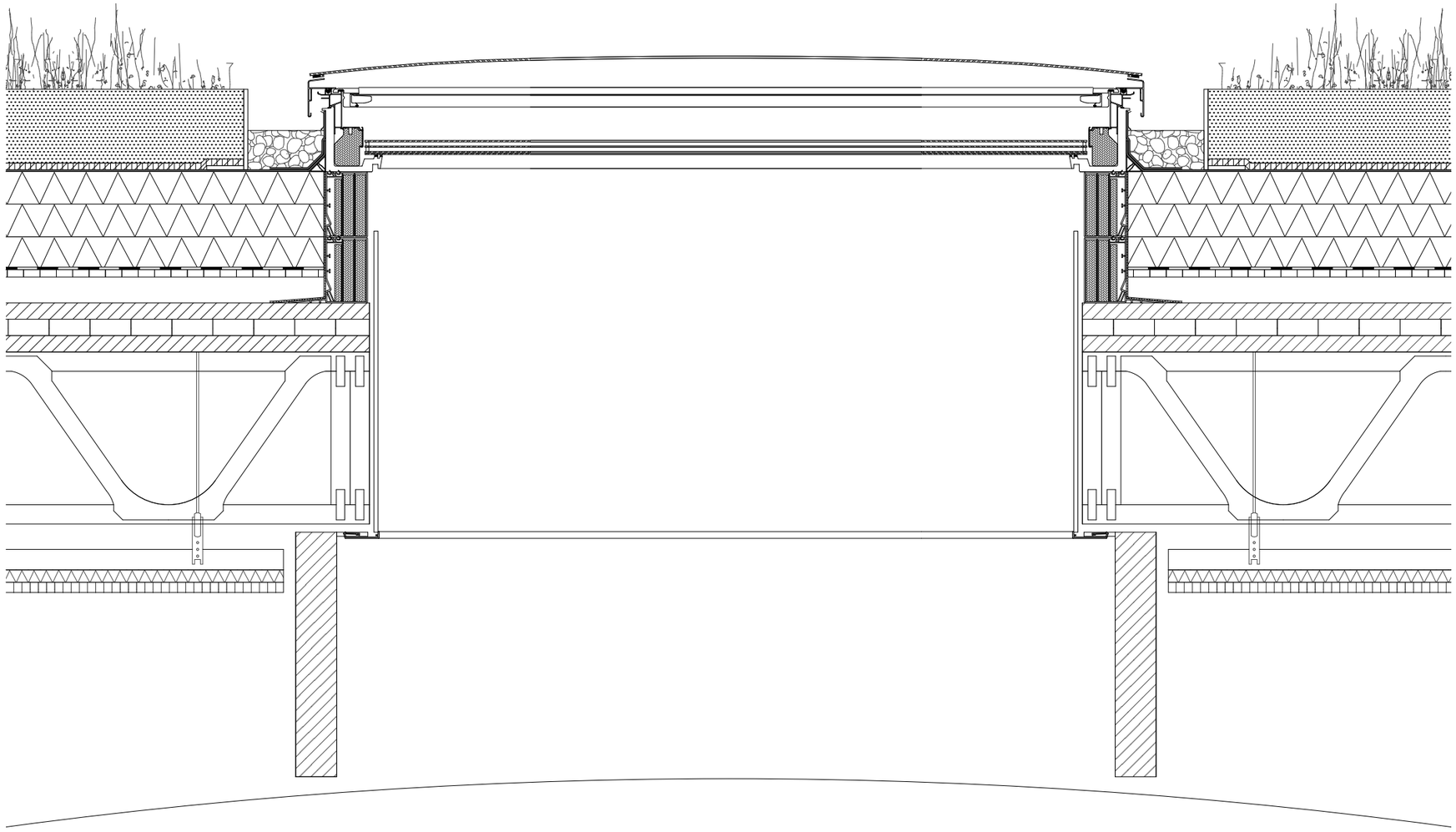
DESIGN

GARDEN EDGE DETAIL

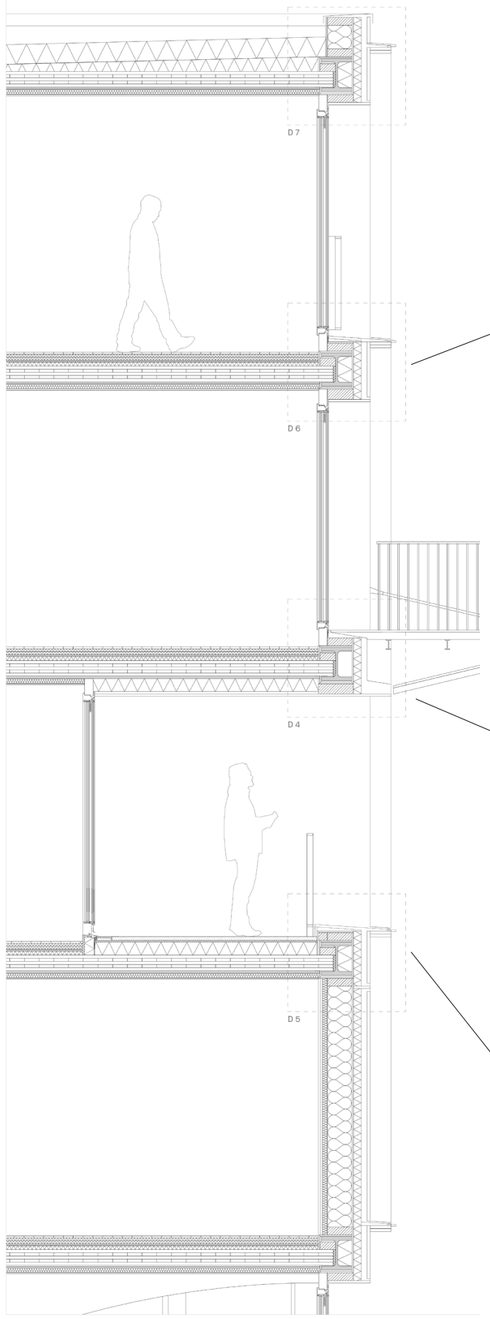


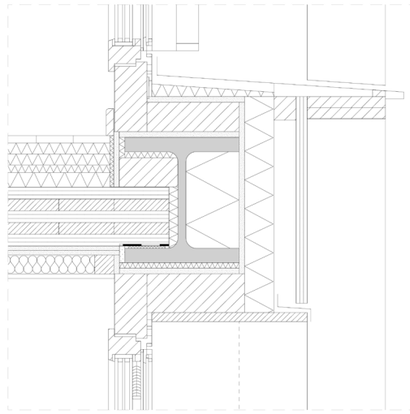
DESIGN

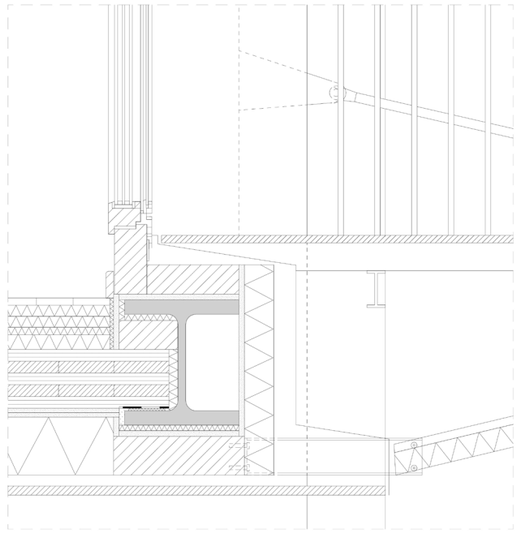
SKYLIGHT DETAIL

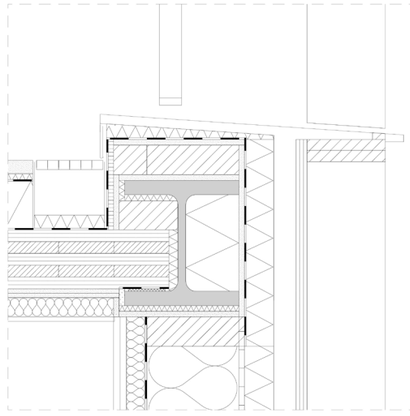


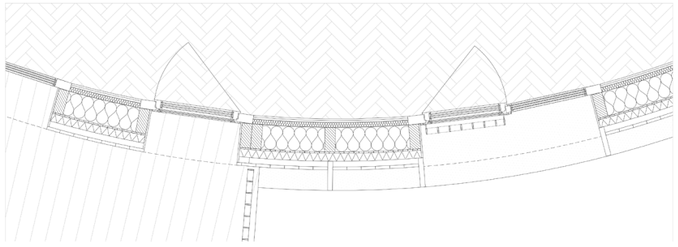
DESIGN
FACADE FRAGMENT

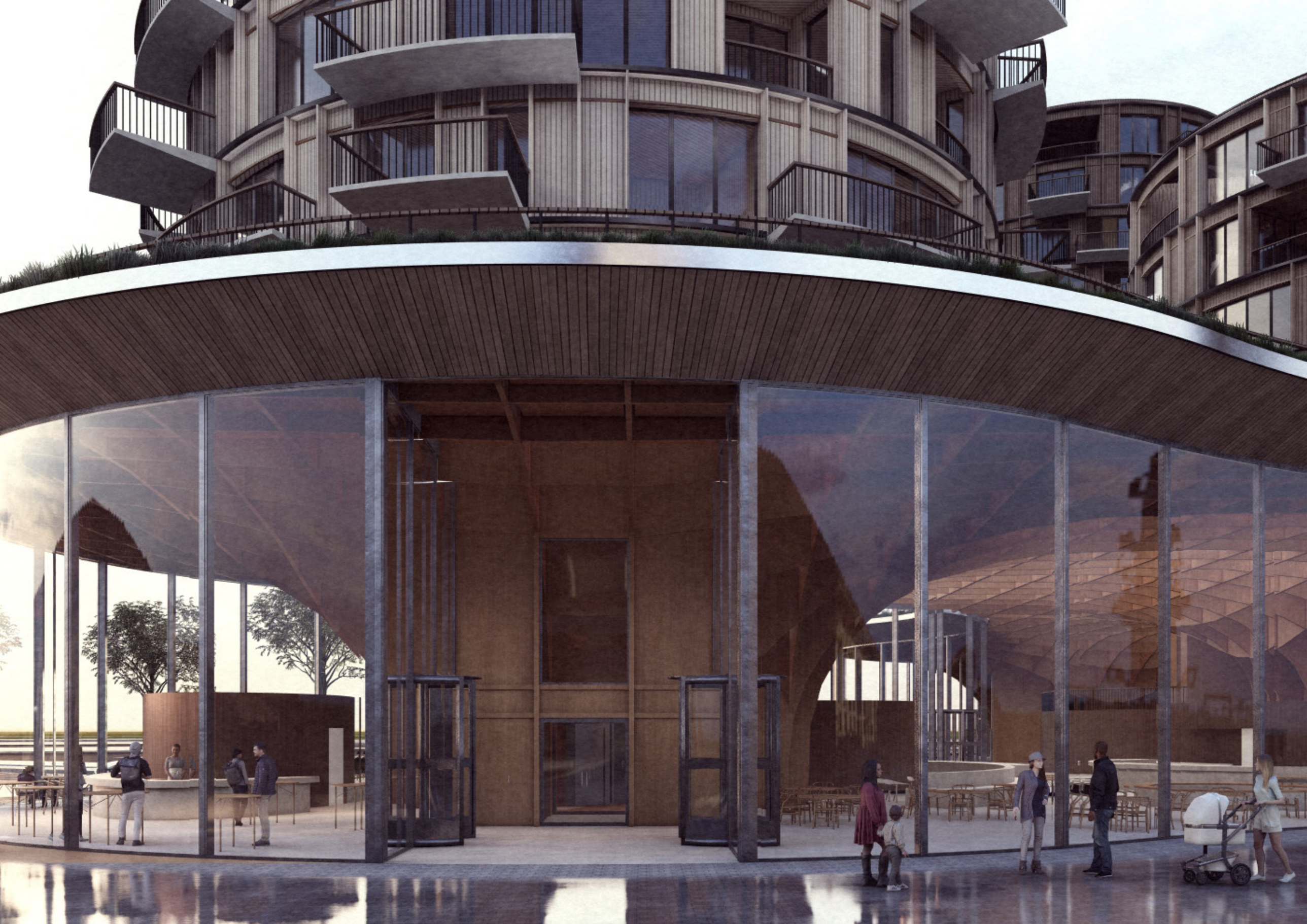












FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

POROUS CITY WITHOUT WALLS

REFLECTION
ARCHITECTONIC & SOCIAL RELEVANCE

- provides a scalable framework that could be adapted to other urban contexts
- a porous base typology dissolves the barrier between public and private
- promotes mental and physical well-being through spatial diversity

THANK YOU!