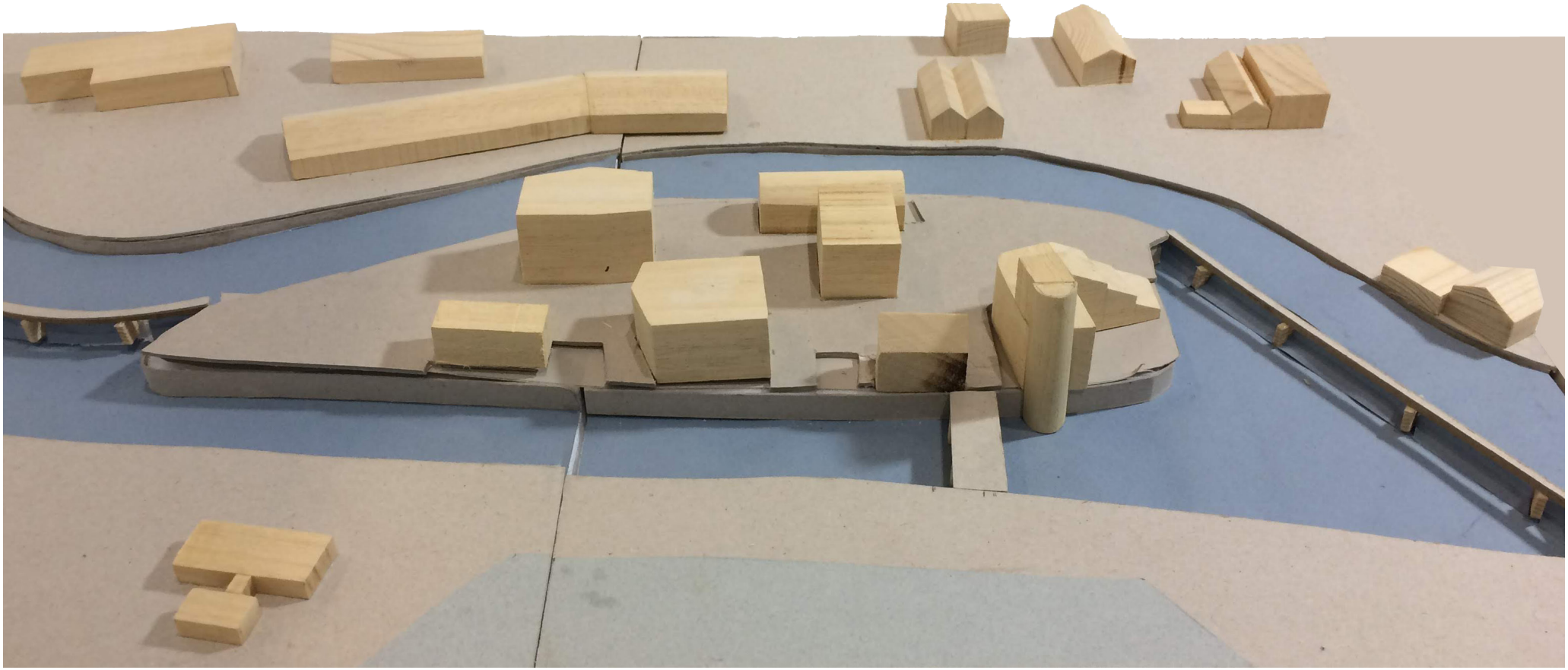
# Our Mutual Home

P5 Presentation



*Benjamin Summers*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**2. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:** Lessons from Stockholm Kollektivhus

**3. OVERALL DESIGN:** Site strategy & co-design workshops

**4. BUILDING DESIGN:** The Ziggurat Cohouse

# 1. INTRODUCTION

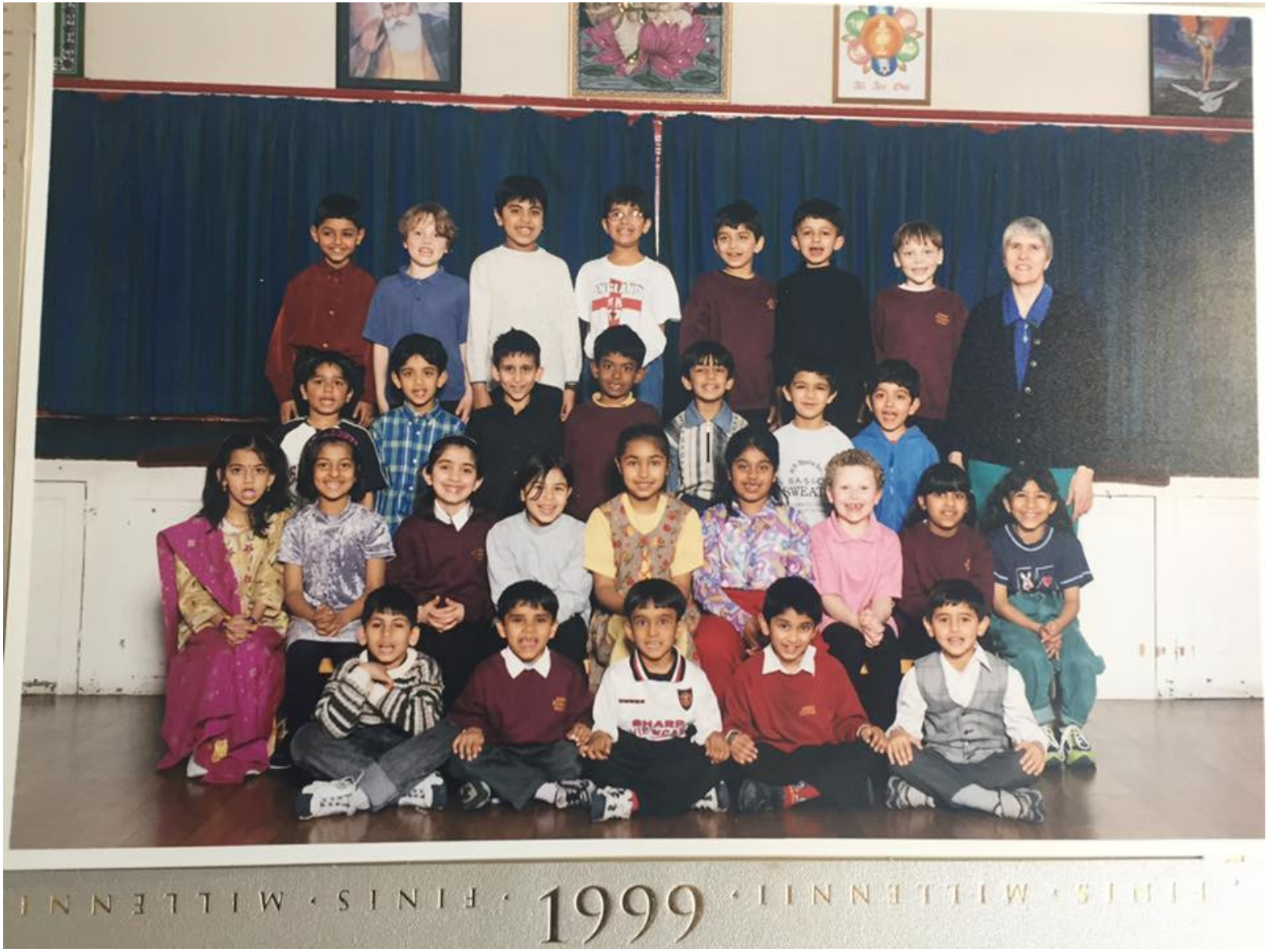
## 2. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS: Lessons from Stockholm Kollektivhus

## 3. OVERALL DESIGN: Site strategy & co-design on Soar Island, Leicester

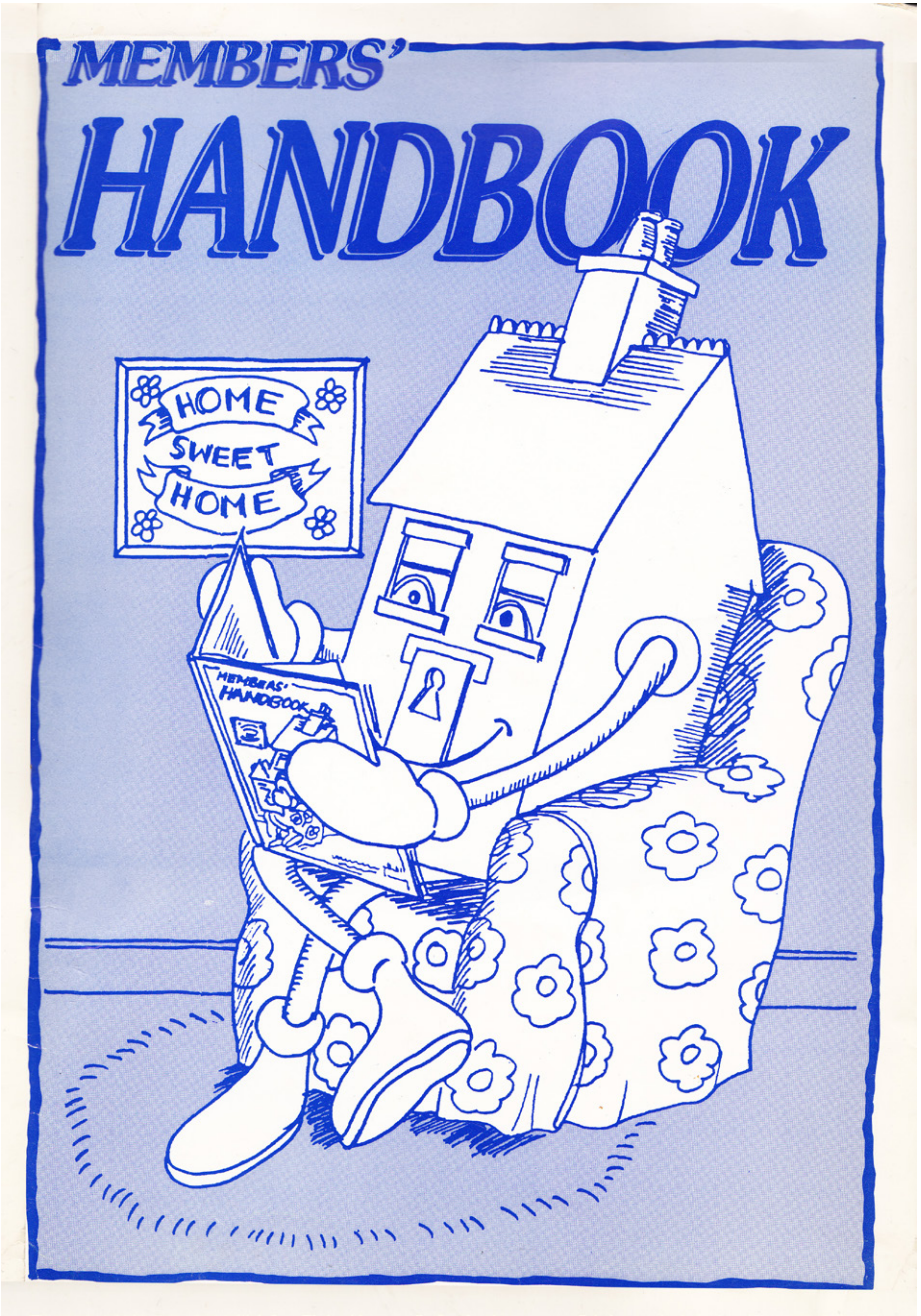
## 4. BUILDING DESIGN: The Ziggurat Cohouse

I grew up in a small house in Leicester, England.

In a small family, as an only child




In a very multi-cultural area




With parents who were part of a housing co-operative, and helped run a community printing press.

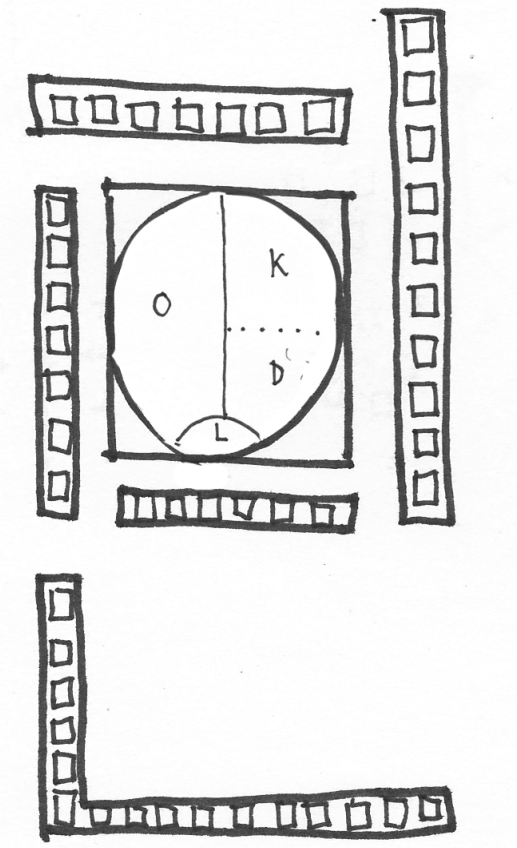
So although it took me a while to learn how to share, I was quite good at ‘cohabitation’

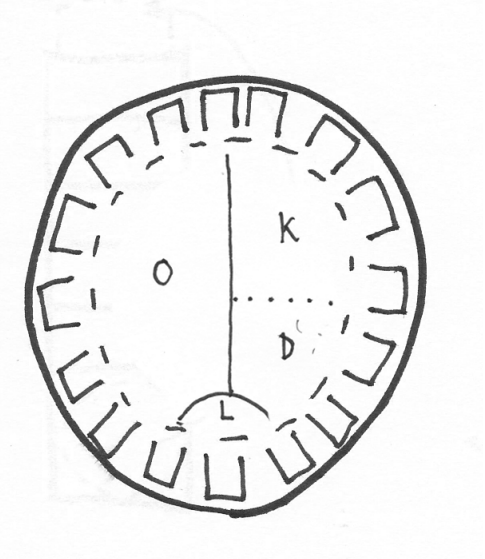
And after leaving home I've lived in 7 shared houses (plus one apartment)

Despite all this sharing, the sharing sort of stopped at my own four walls: I never knew my neighbours....not once!

Thankfully it turns out some people are better at knowing their neighbours than others, and I was lucky enough to work on a cohousing project for around 18 months with this lovely bunch.

And they finally moved in just in time for Christmas last year.

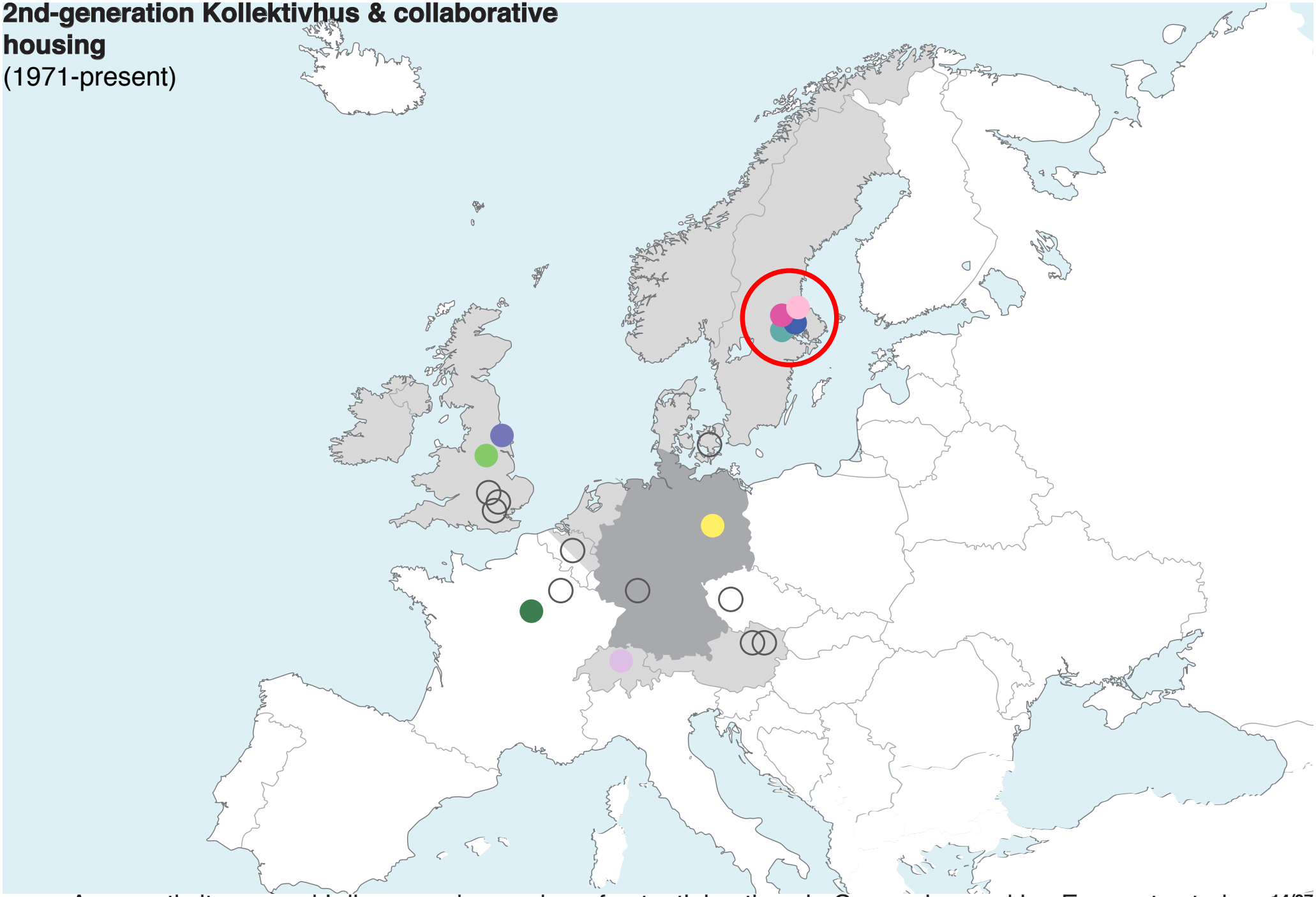





?

But I was left wondering: could cohousing be condensed to take place within a single building?

**2nd-generation Kollektivhus & collaborative housing**
(1971-present)



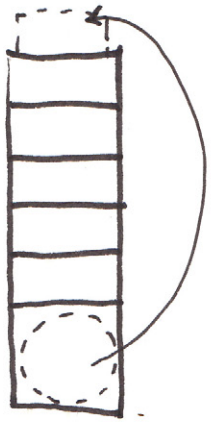
Apparently it can, and I discovered a number of potential options in Germanic-speaking Europe to study.

1. INTRODUCTION

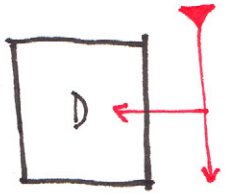
**2. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:** Lessons from Stockholm Kollektivhus

3. **OVERALL DESIGN:** Site strategy & co-design on Soar Island, Leicester

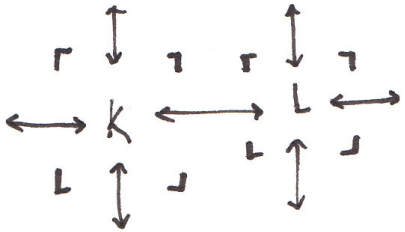
4. **BUILDING DESIGN:** The Ziggurat Cohouse



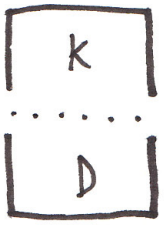
1



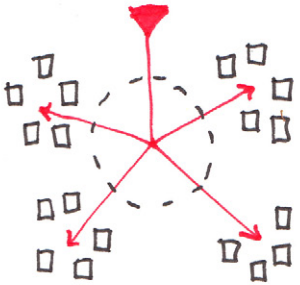

2




3




4



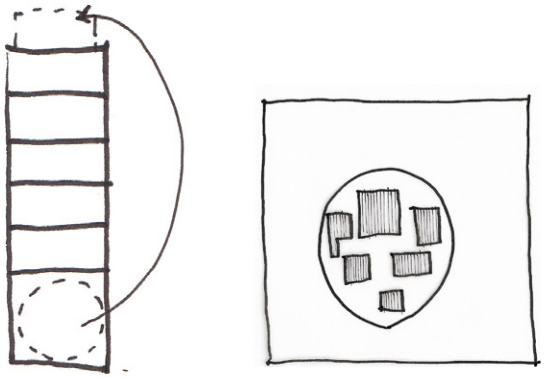
5

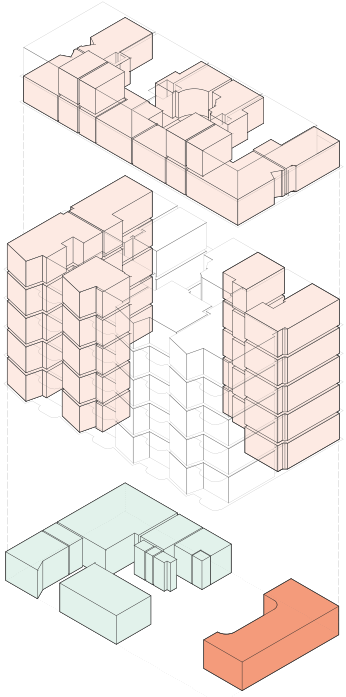
6

Most concretely, I derived a set of 6 design principles, describing a specific typology that had been produced and refined in collaboration with residents for the past 30 years.

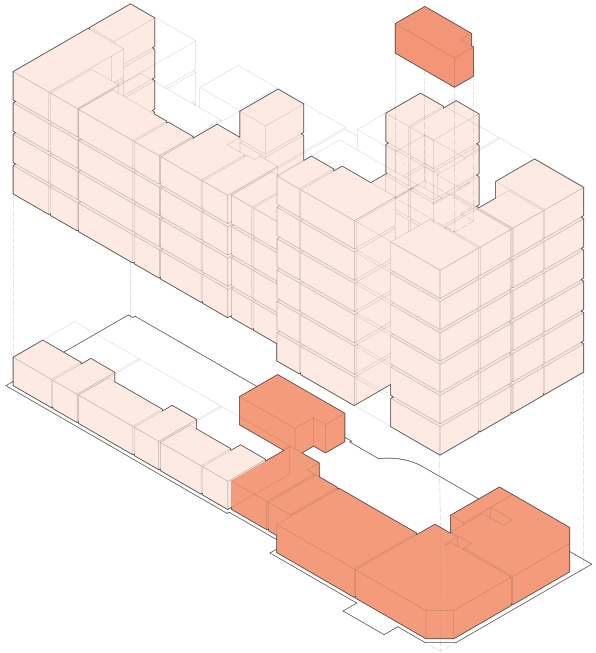
# Design principle 1

Collective facilities are centralised and generally located on the ground floor

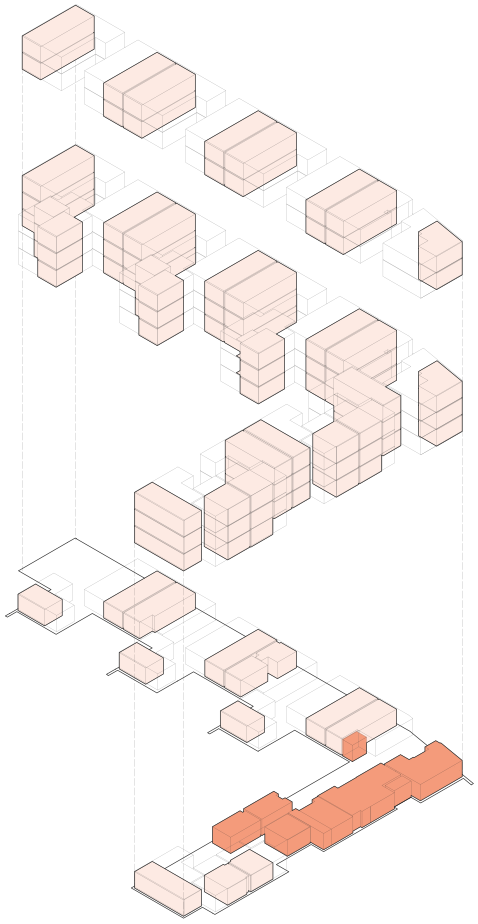




**Kollektivhuset (1935)**



**Färdknäppen (1993)**



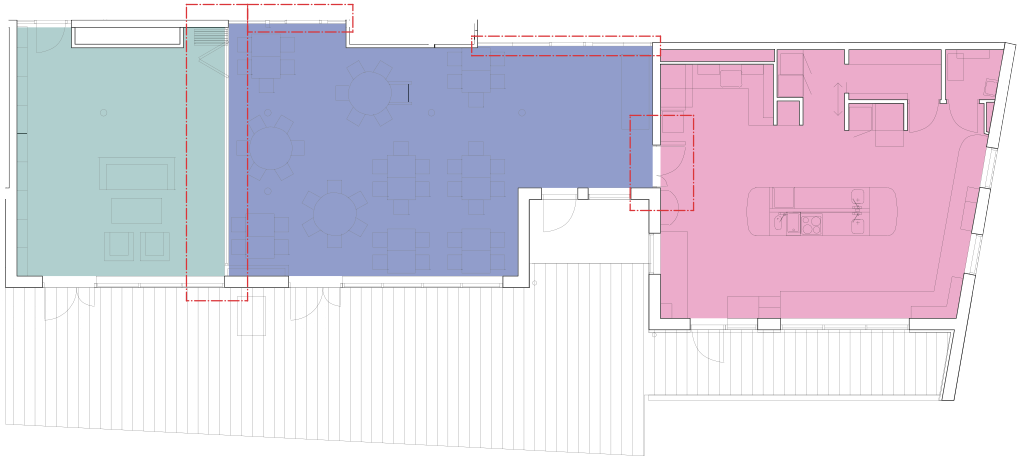
**Sjöfarten (2007)**

***Key:*** Collaborative (primary) Collaborative (tertiary) Internal space/services (publicly accessible)

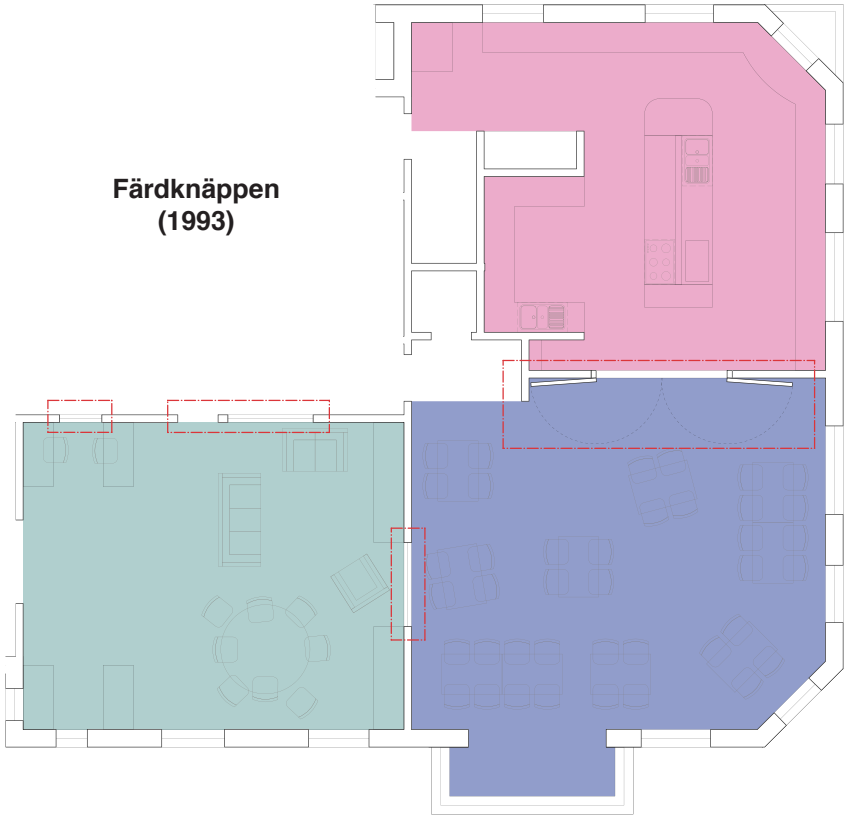
# Design principle 4

Crucially, the threshold between kitchen and dining room always allows connection

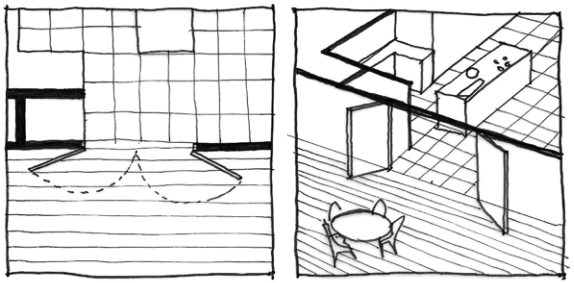
**Sjöfarten (2007)**



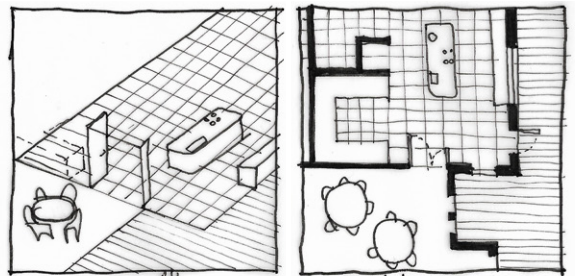
**Färdknäppen (1993)**



**Kitchen/dining threshold**



Double doors



Double doors

***Key:***

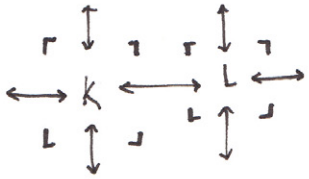
Dining room

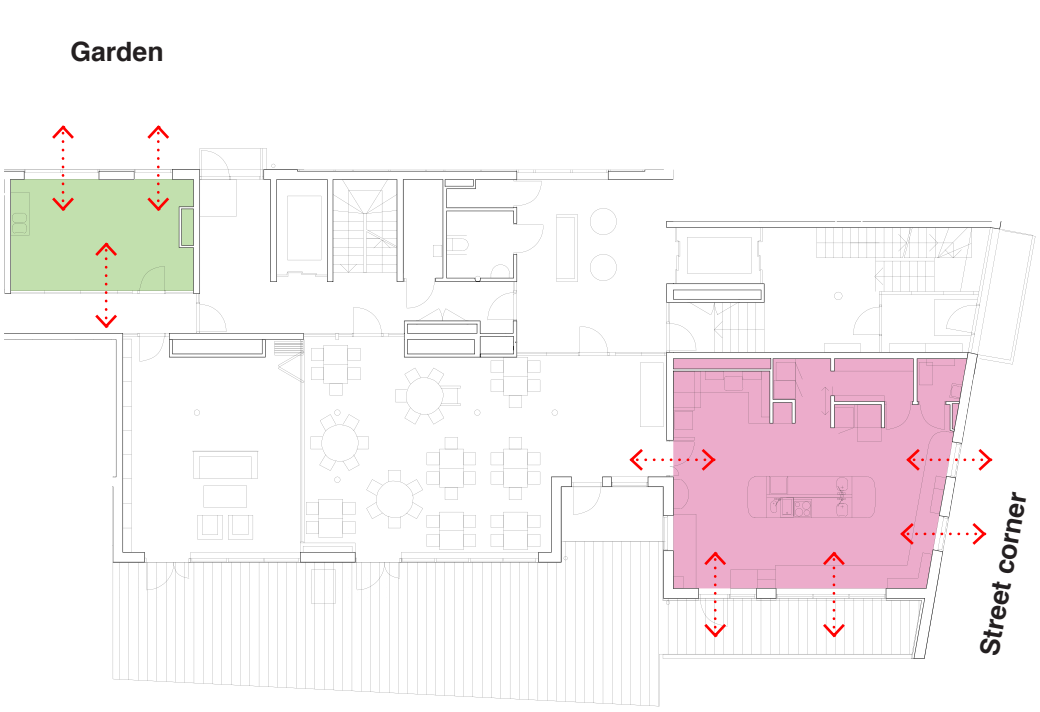
Kitchen

Living room

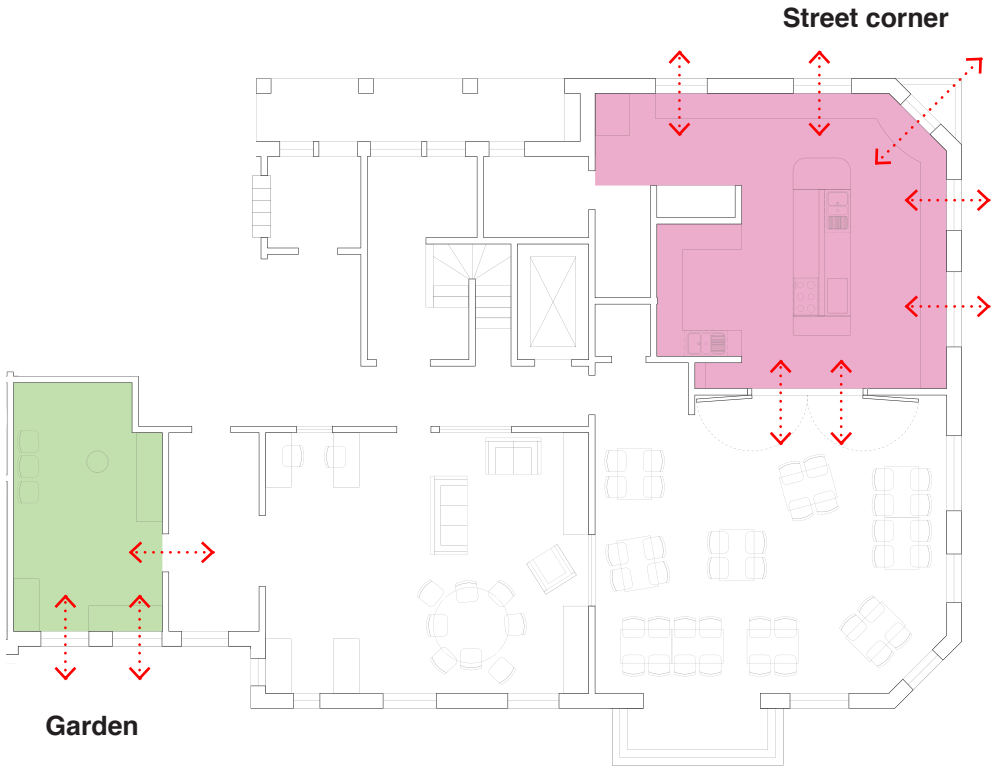
# Design principle 5

The kitchen and laundry are seen as important collaborative spaces and as such have prominent, connected and visible locations






**Färdknäppen (1993)**




**Sjöfarten (2007)**

***Key:*** Laundry Kitchen

**Kerstin Karnekull**
*Resident & chairperson at Fardknappen*
*Head of National Kollektivhus Association*

**Kerstin Karnekull**
*Resident & chairperson at Fardknappen*
*Head of National Kollektivhus Association*

“You can’t build houses like this if you don’t build the communities at the same time...

Out of the 19 *kollektivhus* built in Stockholm during the 80’s & early 90’s, only the 6 that did not involve the future residents in the design process failed.”

Interview (December 2017). Stockholm.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

2. **RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:** Lessons from Stockholm Kollektivhus

**3. OVERALL DESIGN:** Site strategy & co-design on Soar Island, Leicester

4. **BUILDING DESIGN:** The Ziggurat Cohouse

?

**How can the Swedish kollektivhus typology work in Leicester?**

# Co-Design Workshops

Future residents' social network

**J,P&R**

Jenny, 58; Paul, 70 & Rosa, 11

*HE Lecturer, Retired & Student*

**B&K**

Ben, 26 & Kelsey, 26

*Violin teacher & PhD student*

**H&J**

Helena, 26 & Jonny, 26

*Project manager & opera singer*

Graham, 59

*Social worker*

Sue, 57

*Teacher*

Nico, 51

*Engineer*

**E**

Emmanuelle, 47

*Teacher*

**T&E**

Turner, 23 & Etienne, 25

*Art historian & Salesperson*

Lara, 25

*Digital strategist*

Ann, 55

*Teacher*

**M&C**

Michael, 72 & Caroline, 73

*Retired teachers*

Vijay, 38

*Marketeer*

Pratick, 26

*Graphic designer & salesman*

**N&V**

Nathu, 83 & Vijya, 80

*Retired*

**R**

Radhika

*Psychologist*

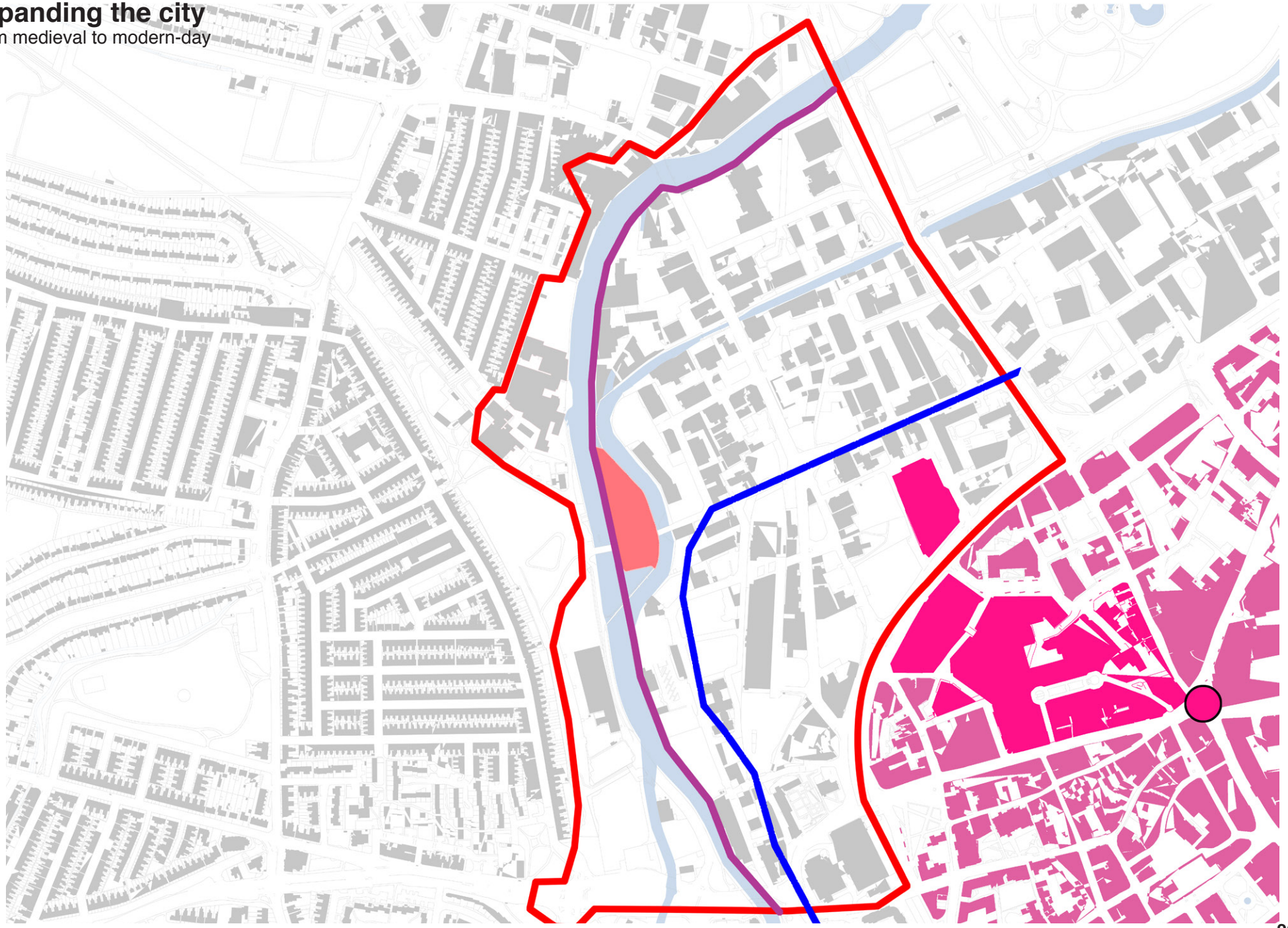
**N**

Nilesh

*NHS Advisor*

# Expanding the city

From medieval to modern-day



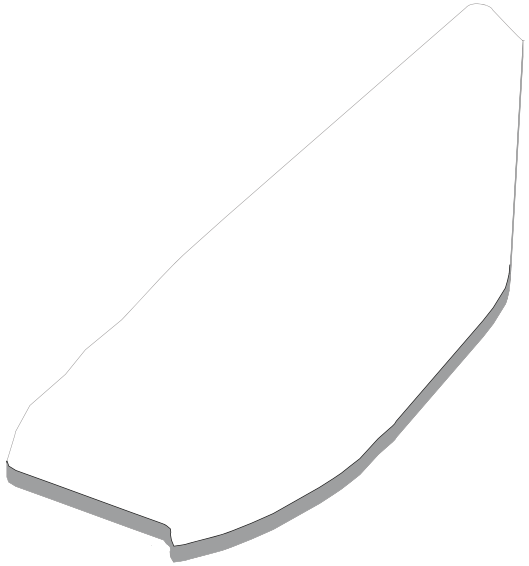
# Our Mutual Home

Co-Design Workshop Plan

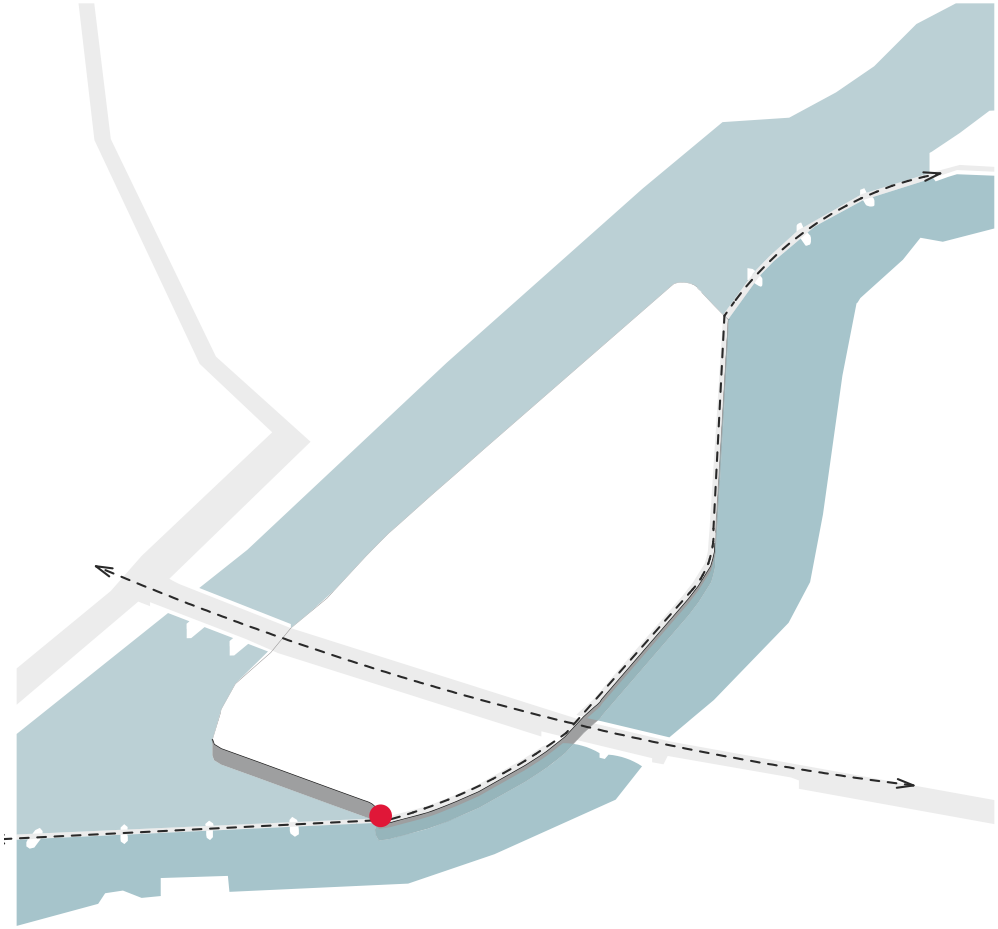
*Benjamin Summers*

35

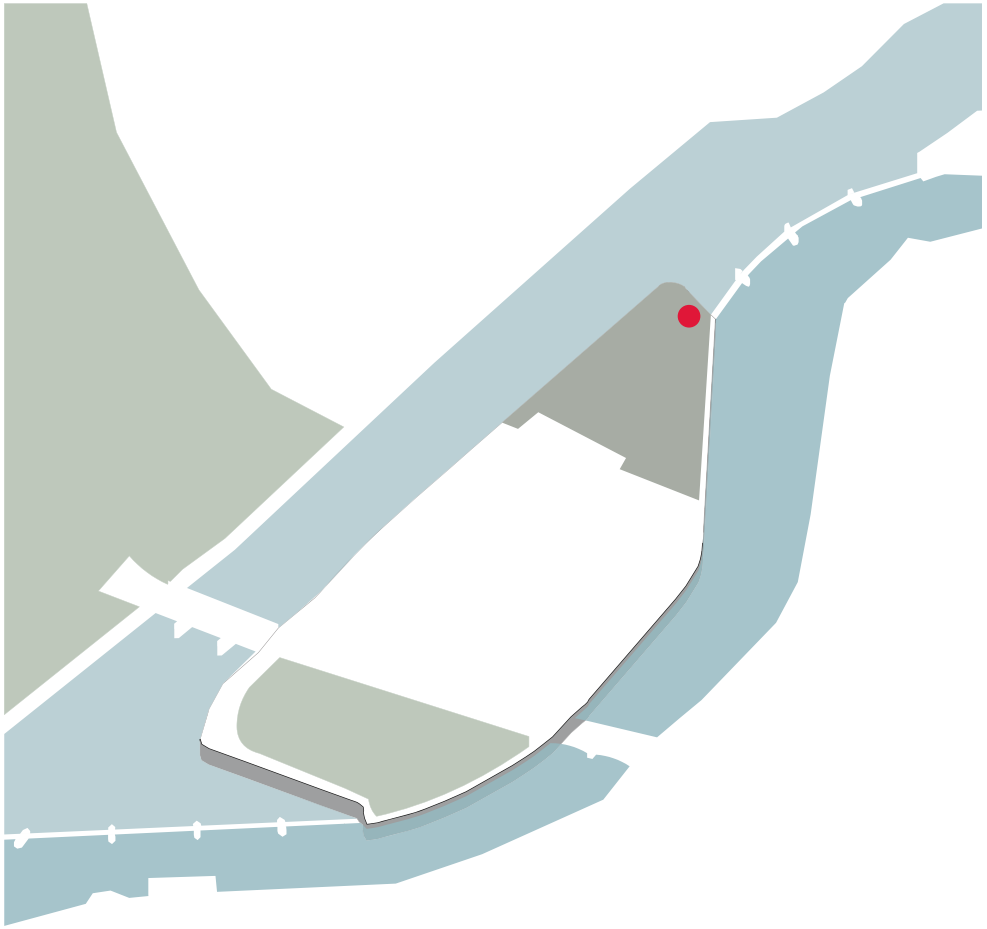
BREEDON



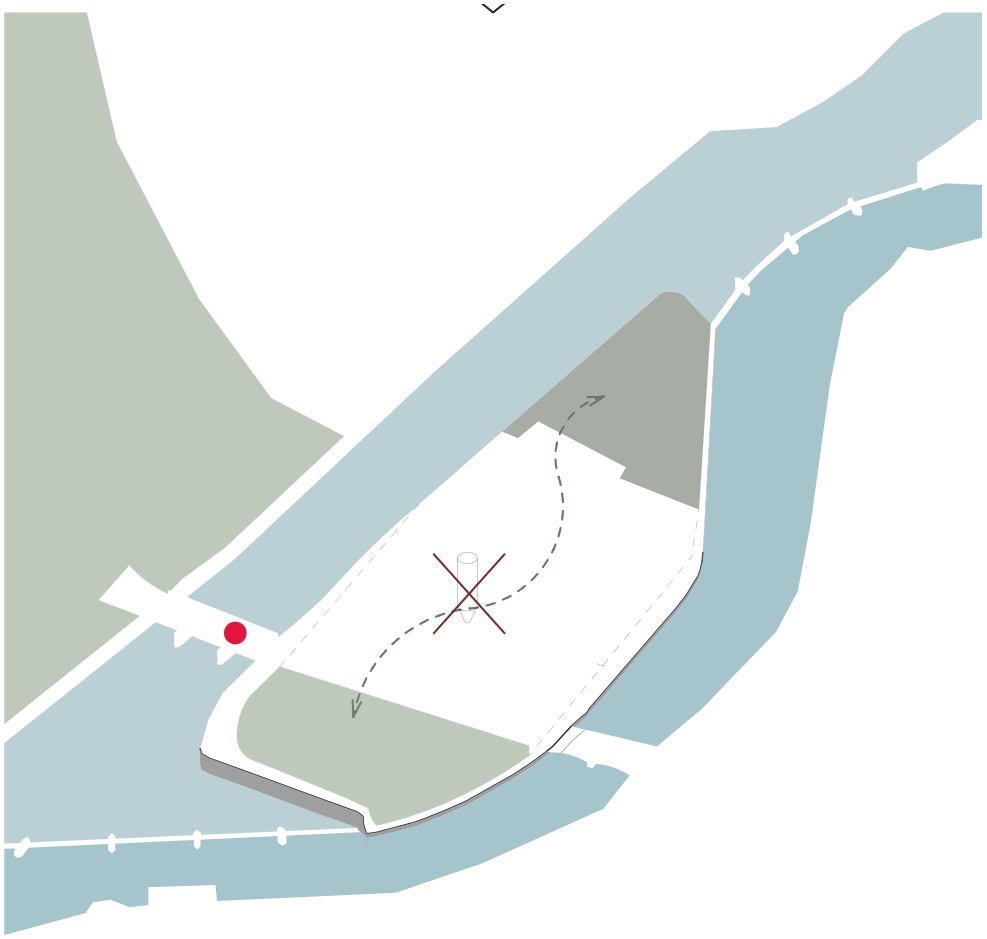
The island is essentially one large built mass - a form of brick ‘plinth’.



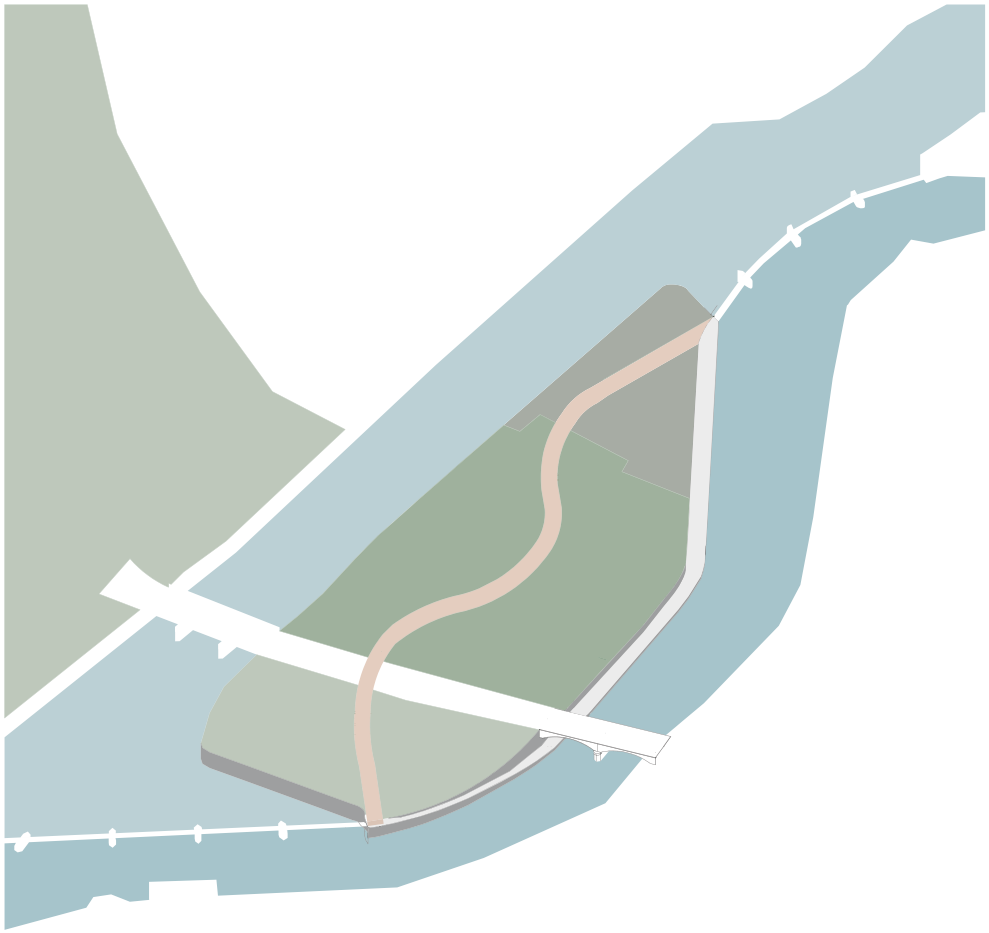
It remains constrained by the functional historic axes, although they have been re-appropriated by cyclists and pedestrians, and the canal towpath is part of the National Cycle Network (NCN).



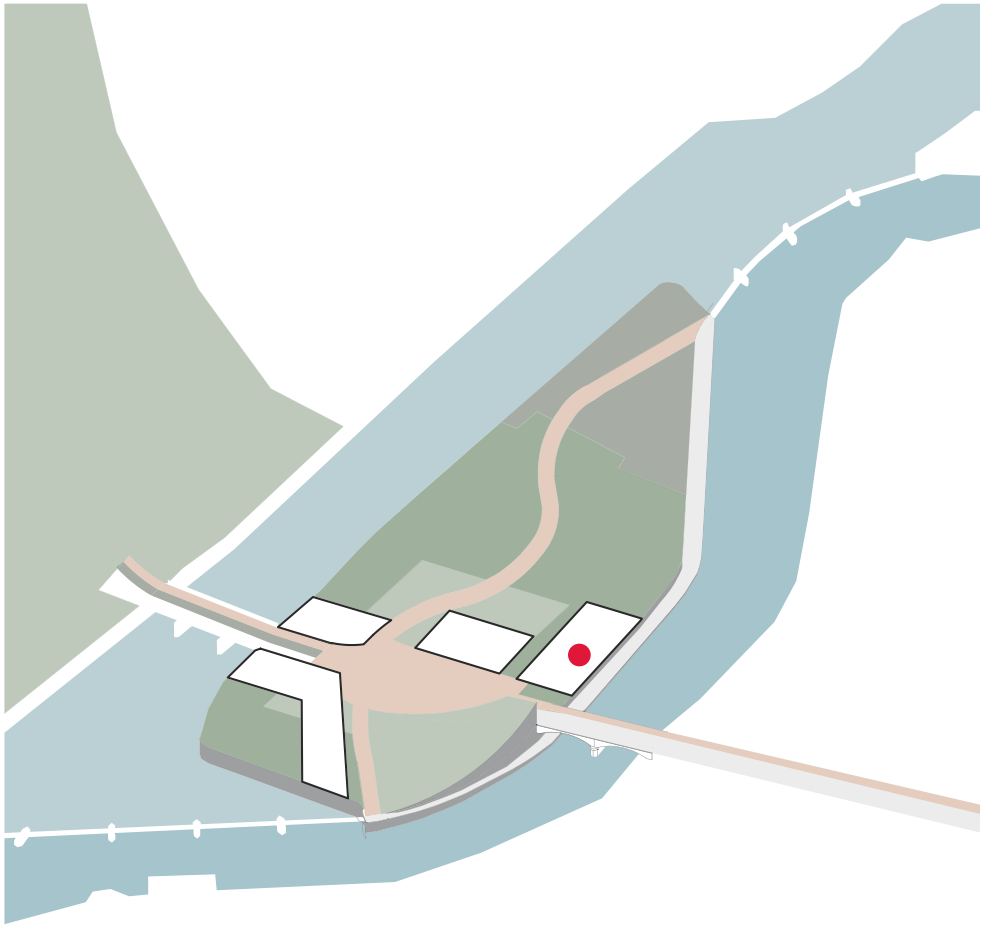
The North tip of the island is overgrown but still popular with the locals (even if only to drink cheap beer & smoke cigarettes), while the South tip is a more well-kept grassy mound.

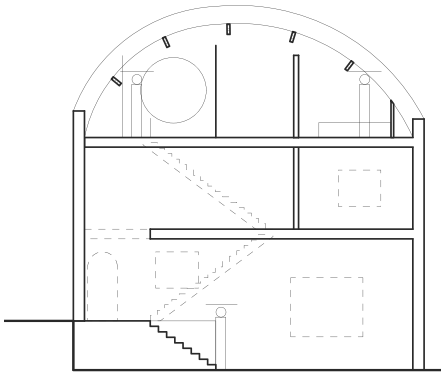


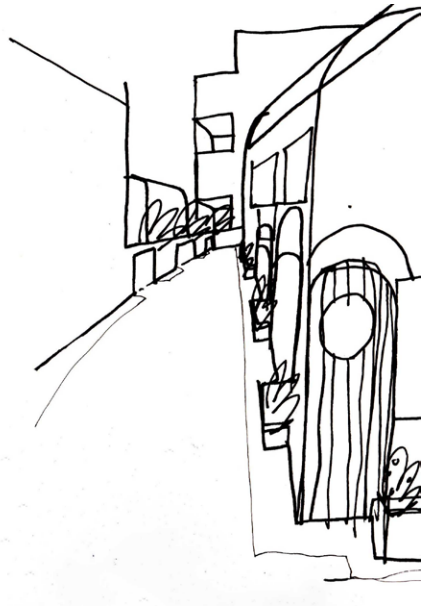
Working with the group, we observed that a nice intervention could work to re-connect the tips of the island, overcoming the current obstacle of the industrial plant.



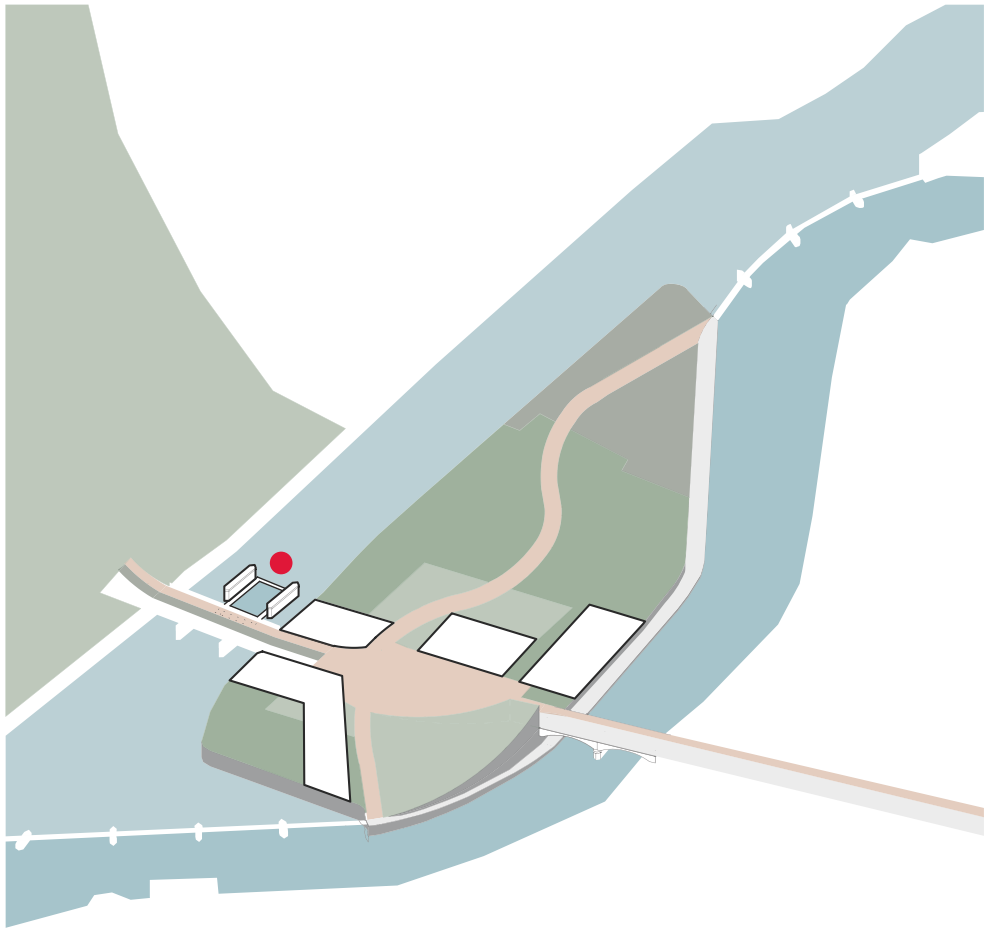
And with some interpretation on my behalf, I suggested that this new connection could have something of the quality of an English garden path.

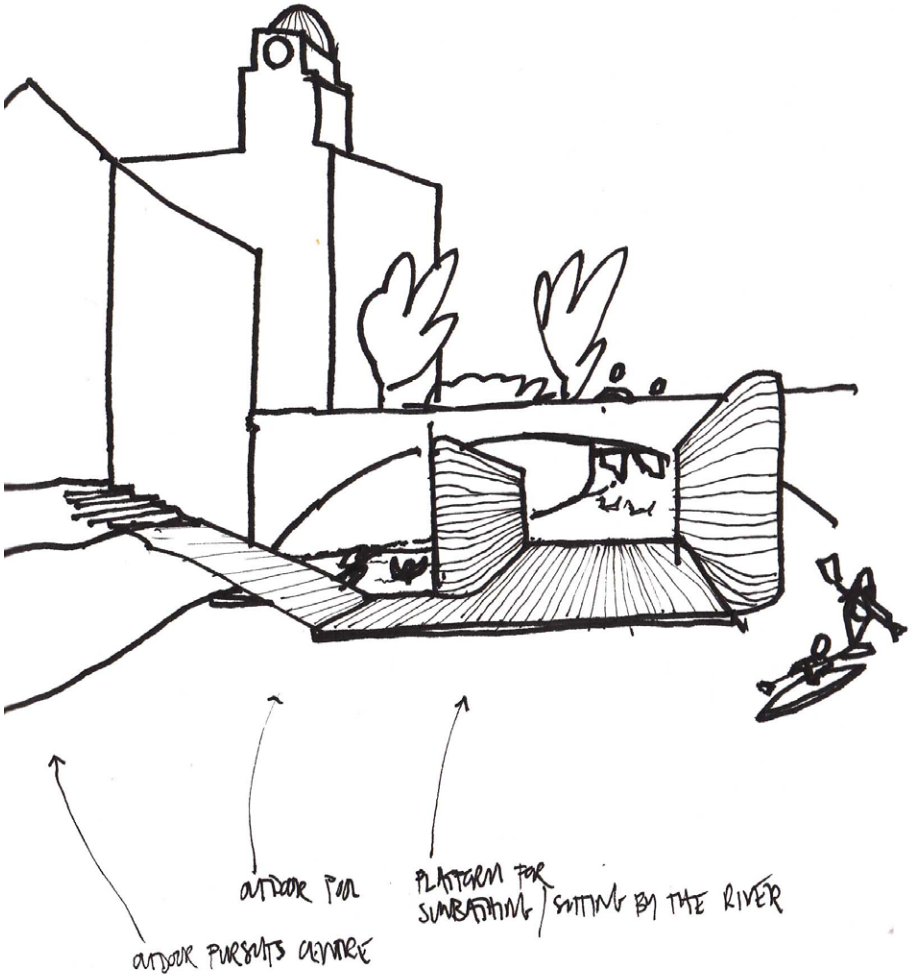




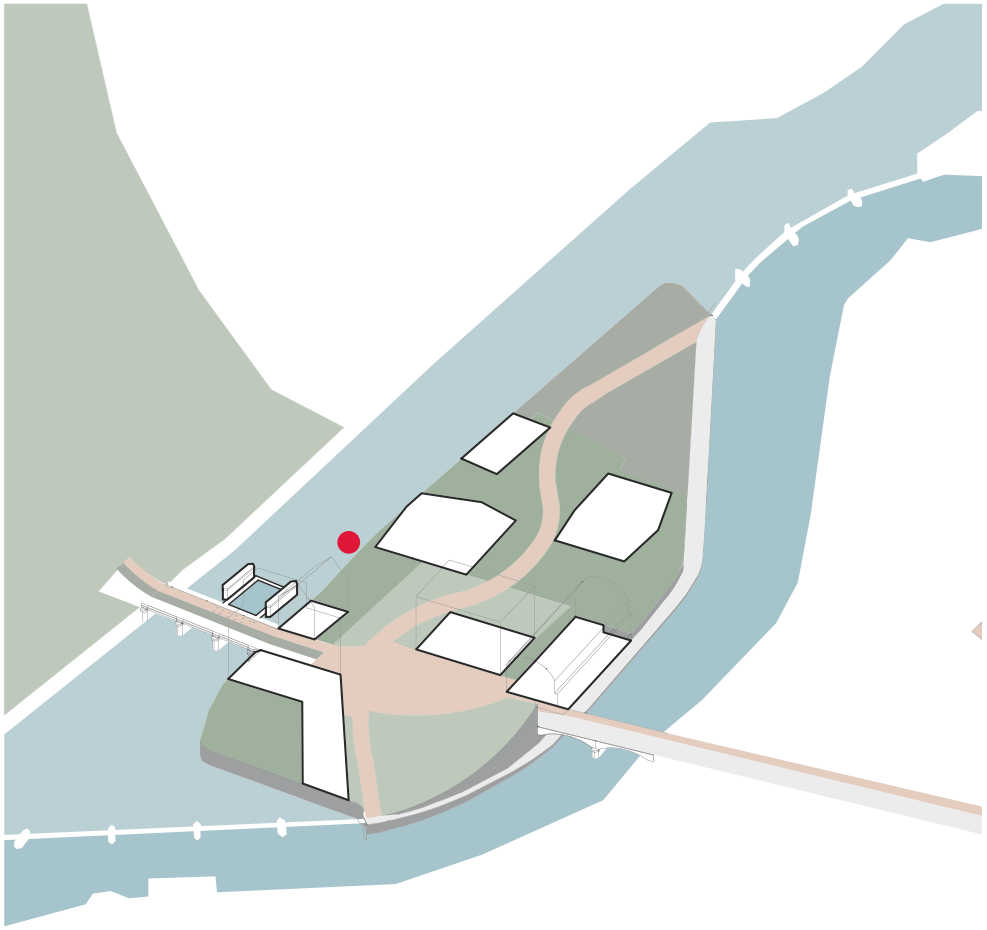


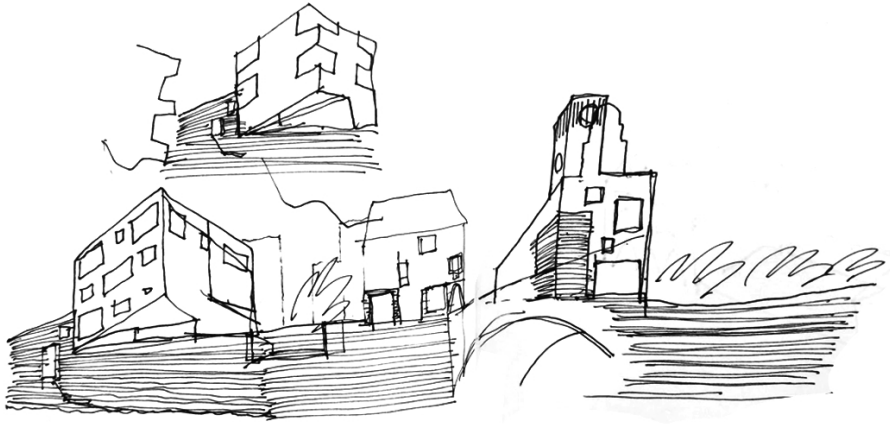
The elevation facing the canal would be an important one, and I devised an unconventional row of split-level terraces as live-work units for small-scale makers and creatives, with studios facing onto the water as well as shopfronts onto a street.



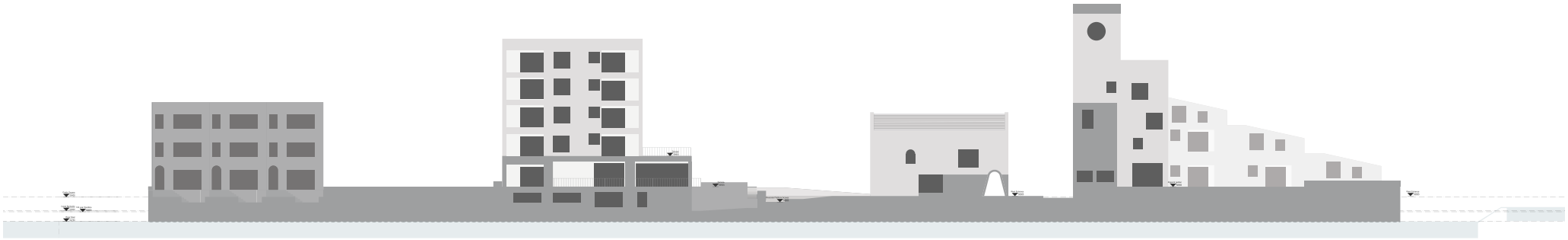


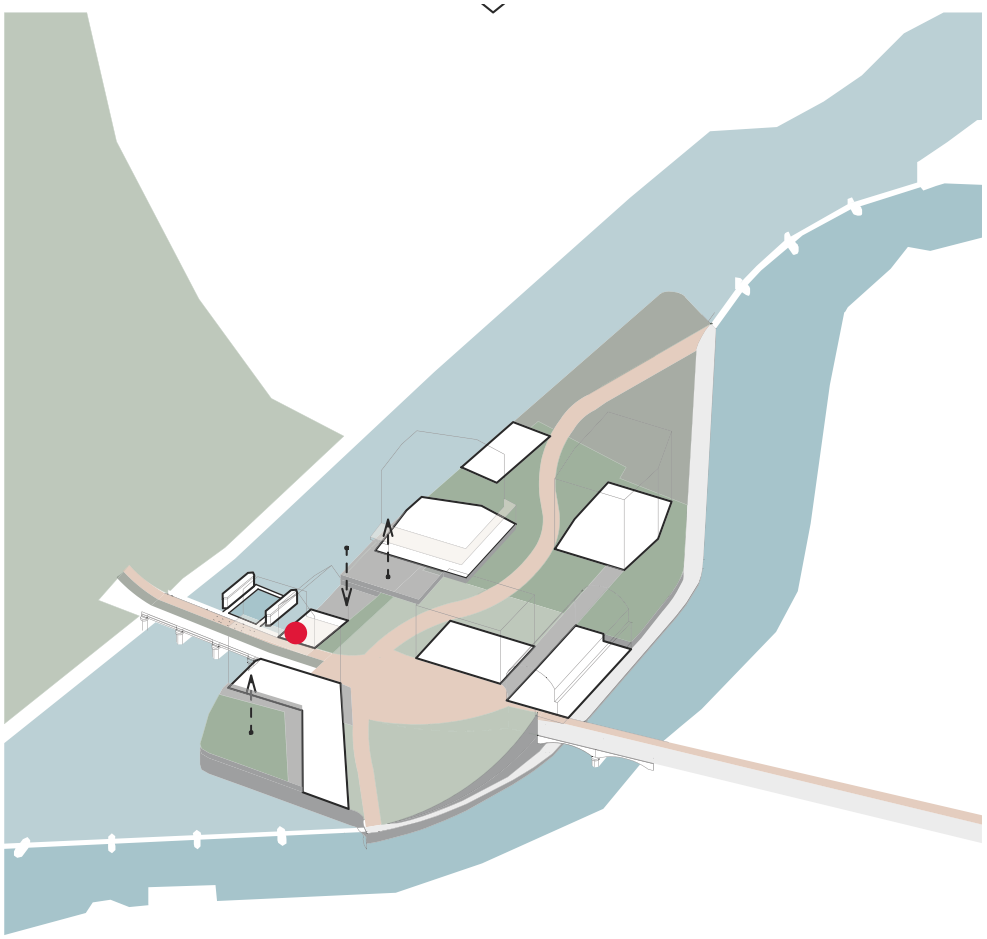

Another question from the group was how to re-use a pair of piers left over from a demolished railway bridge. My thought was to create a platform and freshwater pool that could be used by the public as well as by outdoor pursuits enthusiasts.

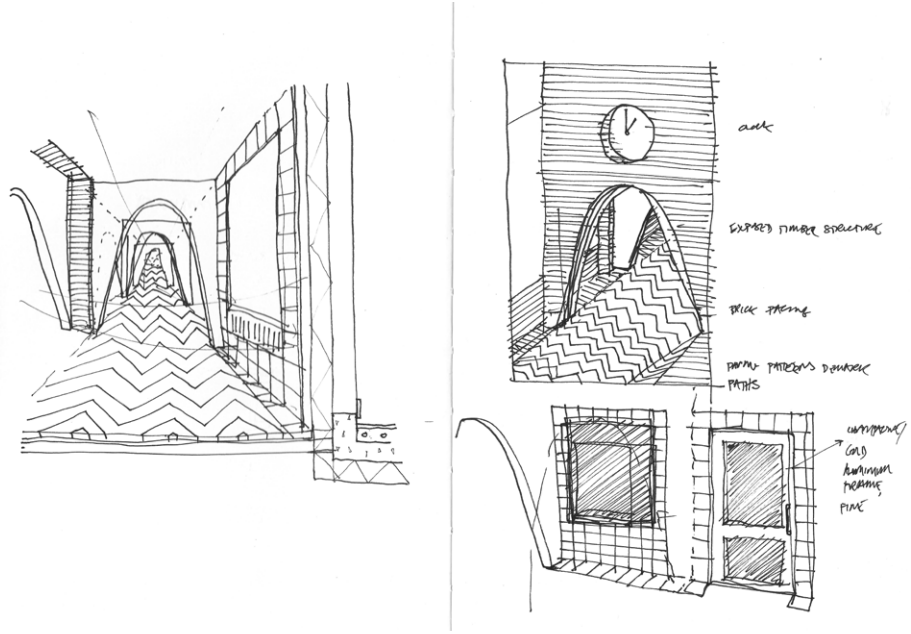




Returning to the notion of an extending the city wall, I sought to reinforce the perception of the island as a brick plinth by setting buildings along the island edge that could all become part of the same undulating surface.







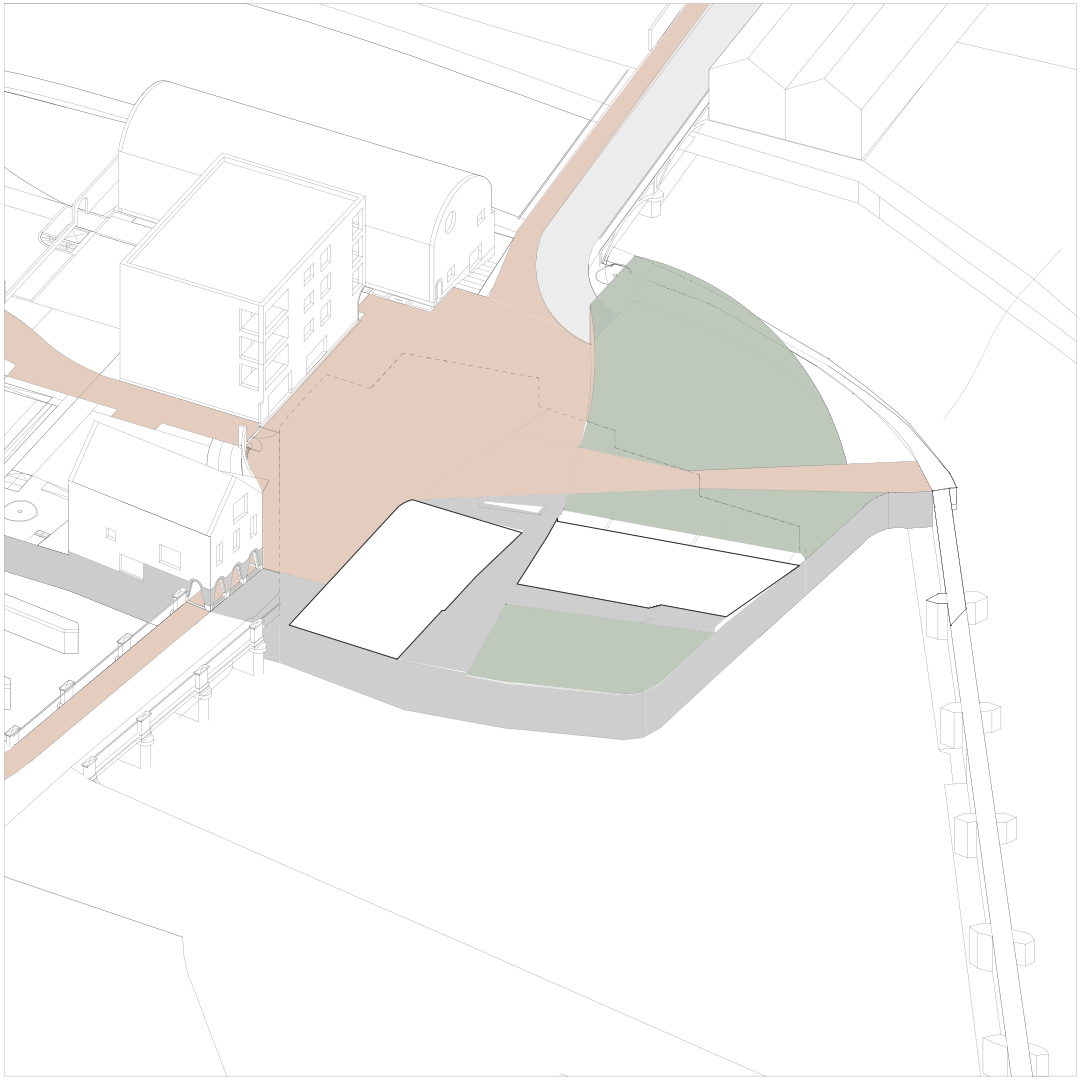
And extending that idea of a brick plinth, I proceeded to transform the ground plane to designate senses of ownership, privacy and quality of space: raising and lowering levels; differentiating between materials; and imagining the plants that could grow there.

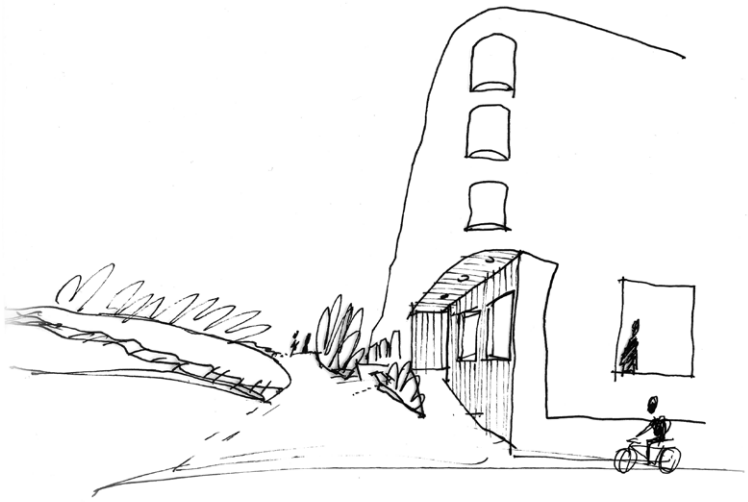
1. INTRODUCTION

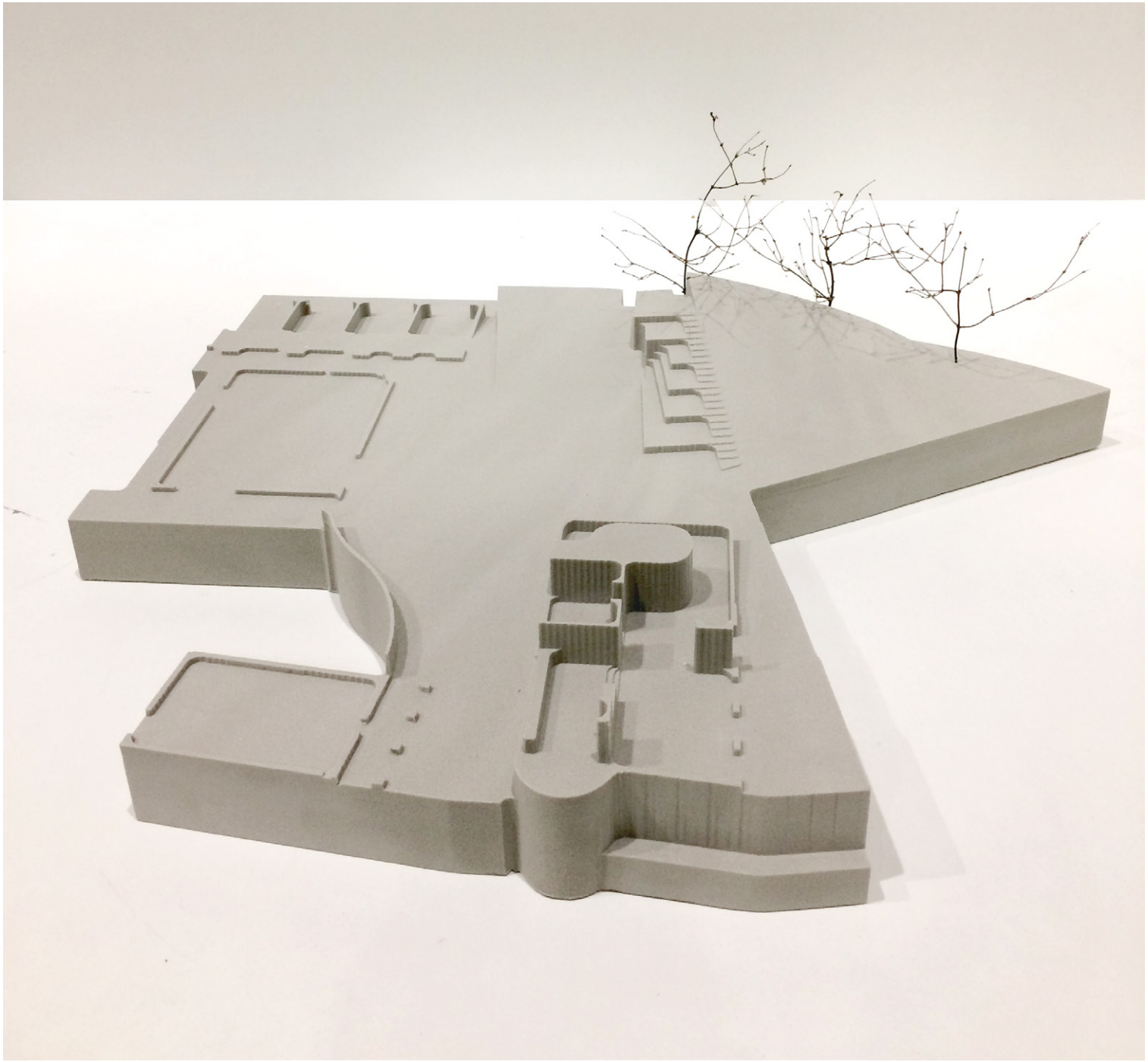
2. **RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:** Lessons from Stockholm Kollektivhus

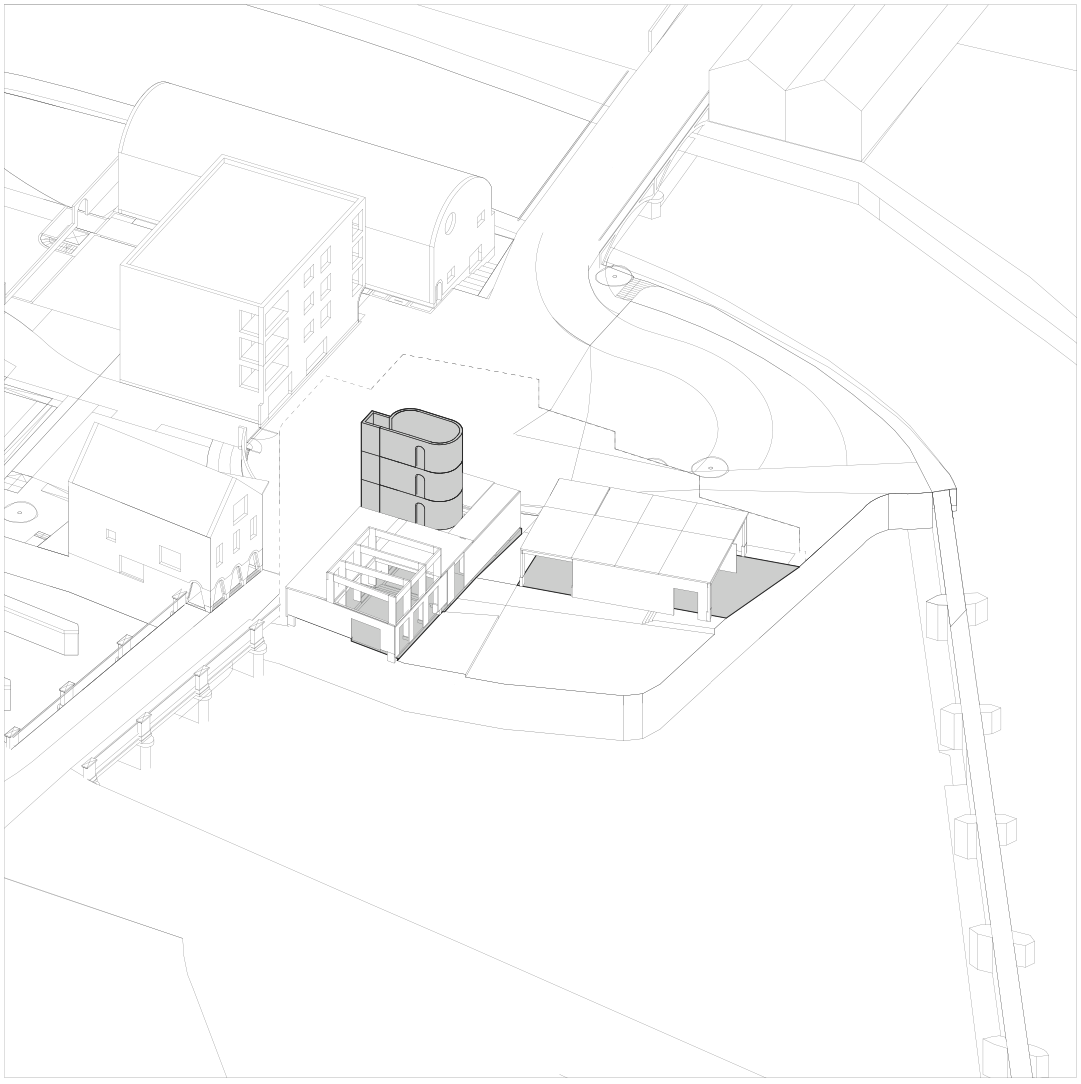
3. **OVERALL DESIGN:** Site strategy & co-design on Soar Island, Leicester

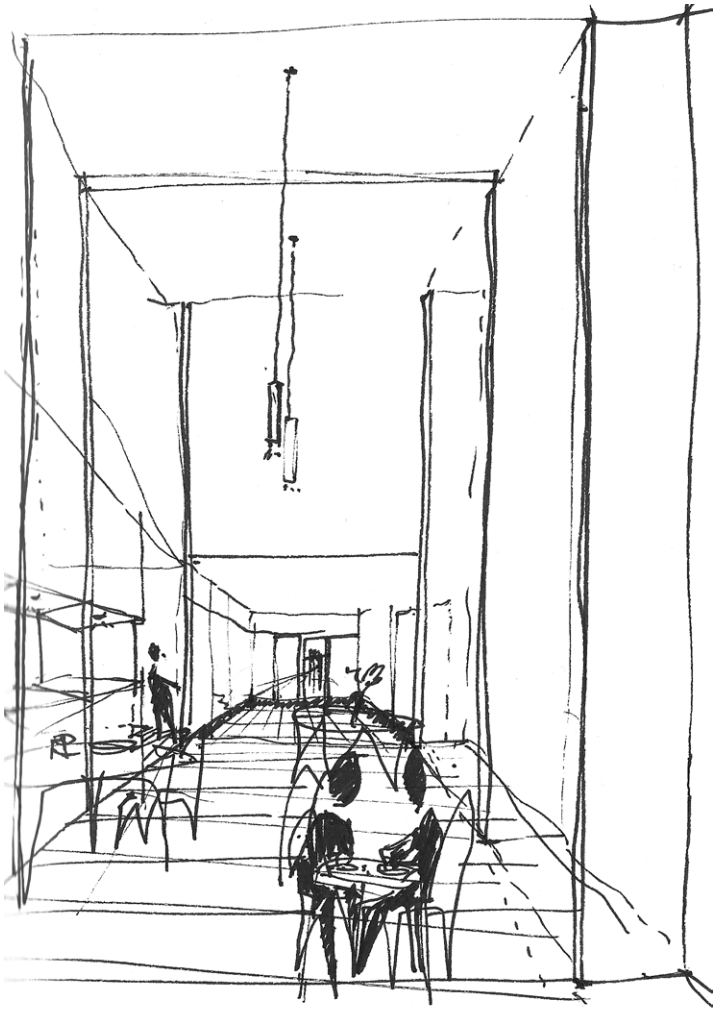
**4. BUILDING DESIGN:** The Ziggurat Cohouse

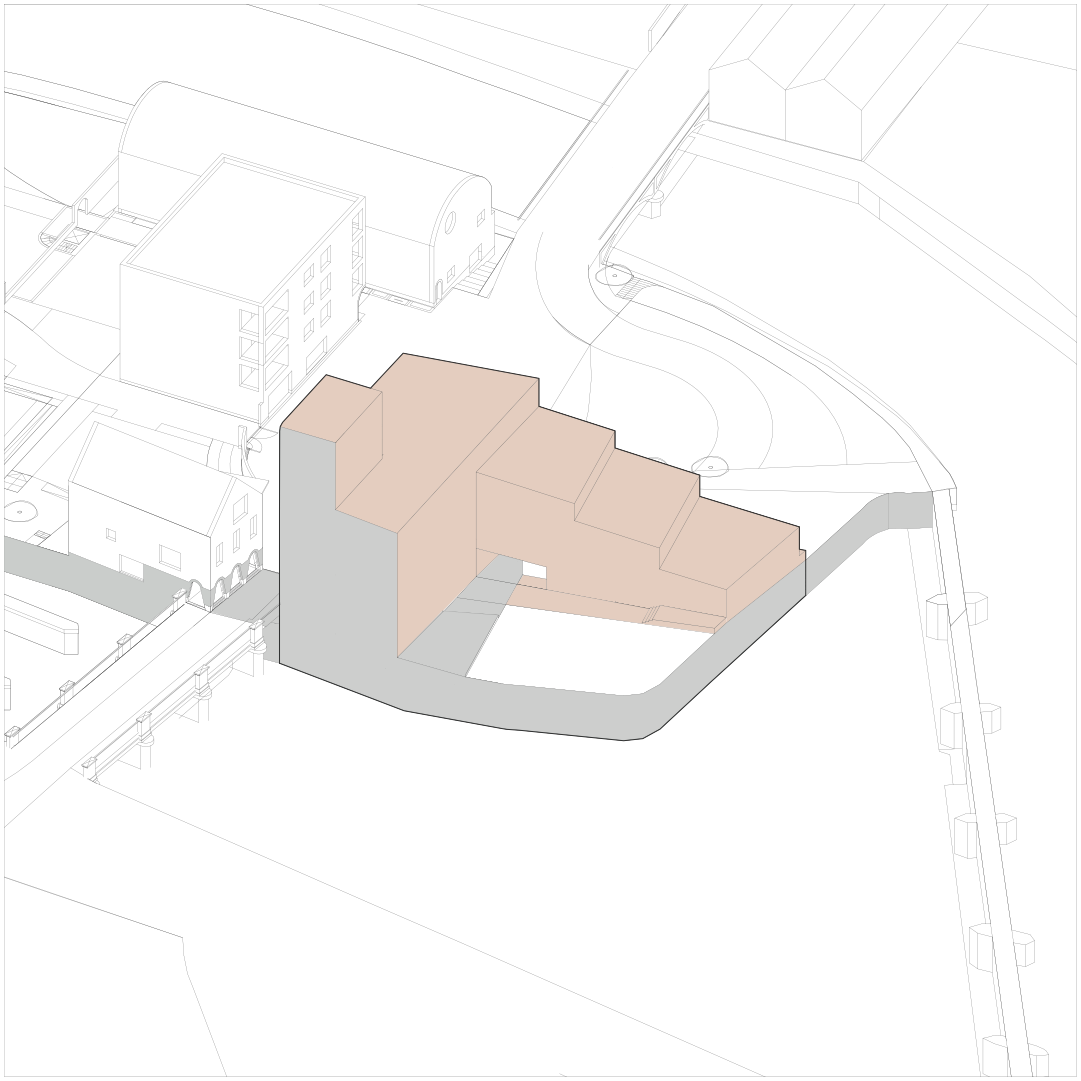


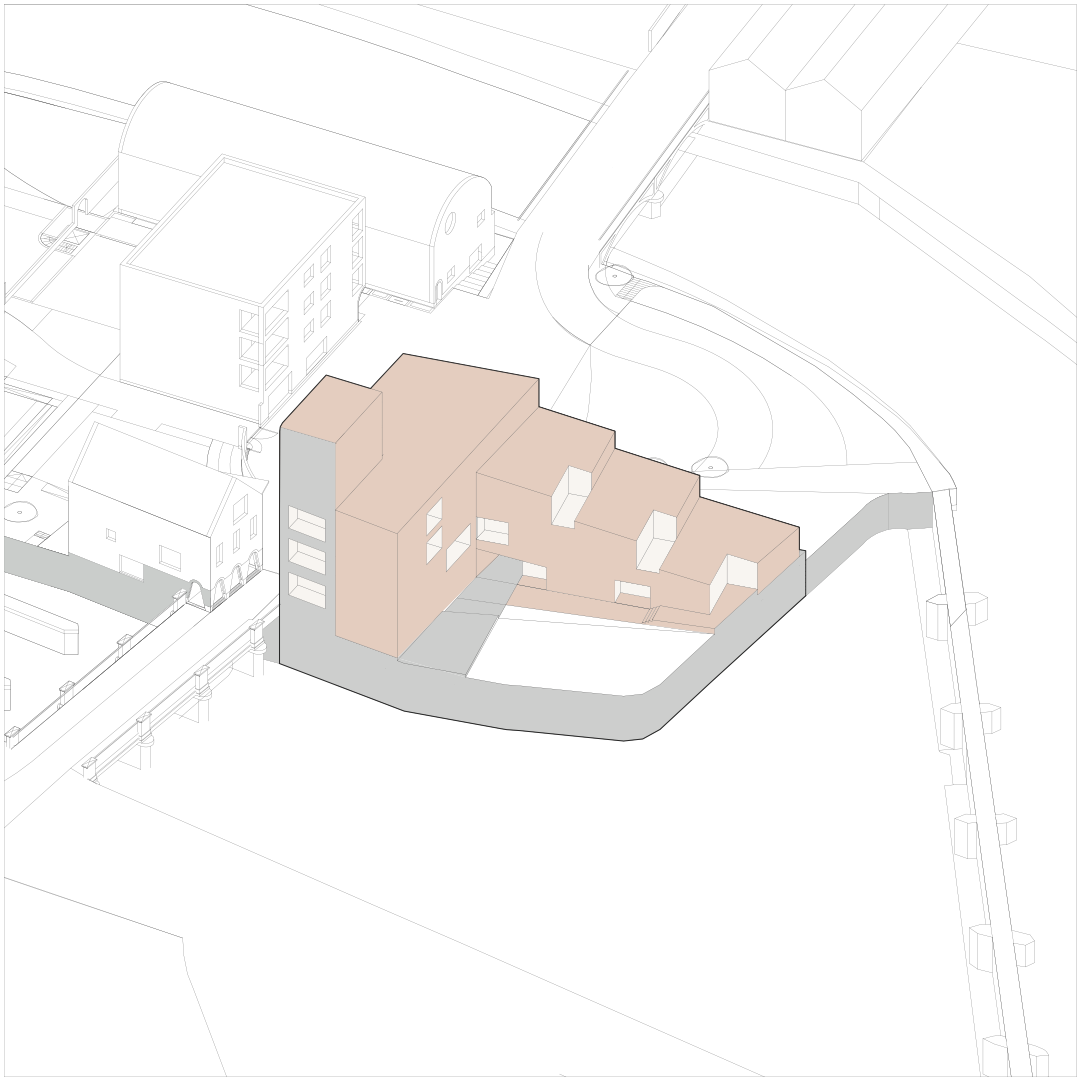




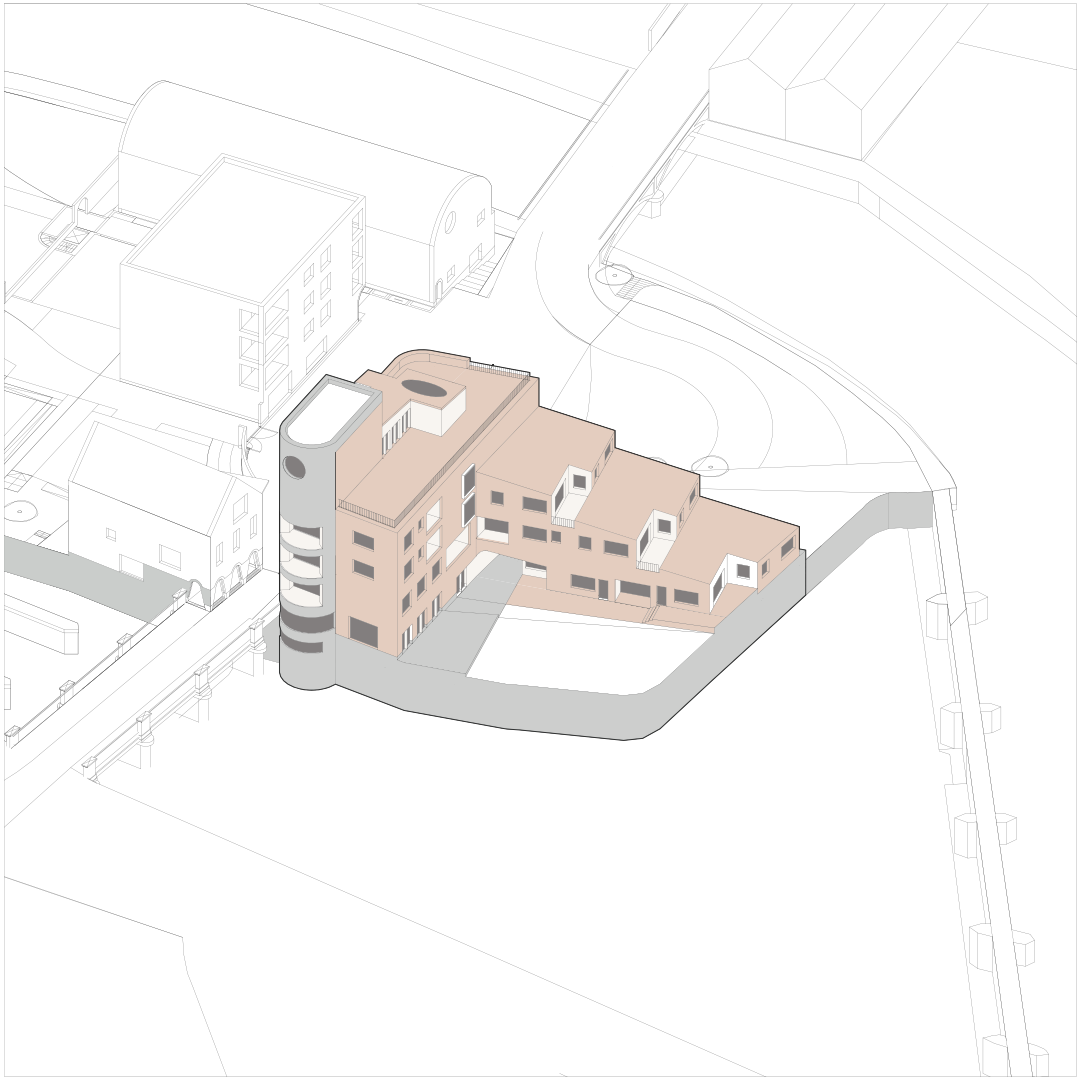


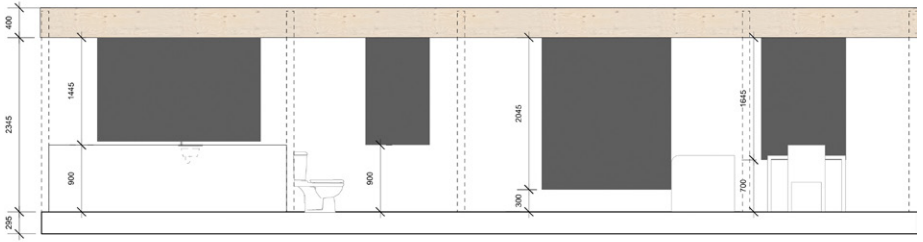






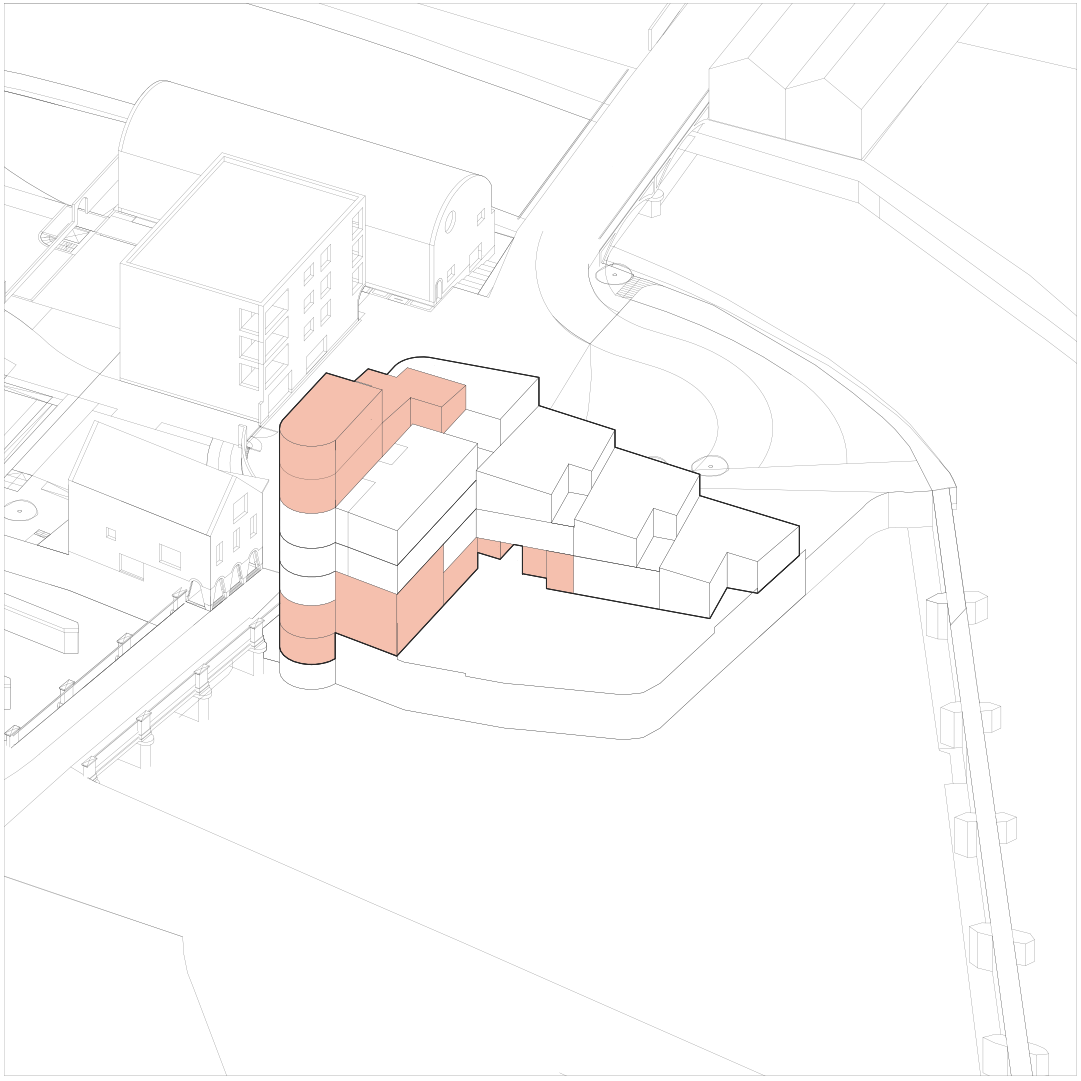
TIMBERYARD

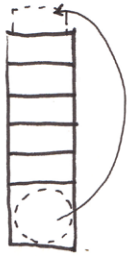



400
2345
295
1445
900
900
2045
300
1945
700

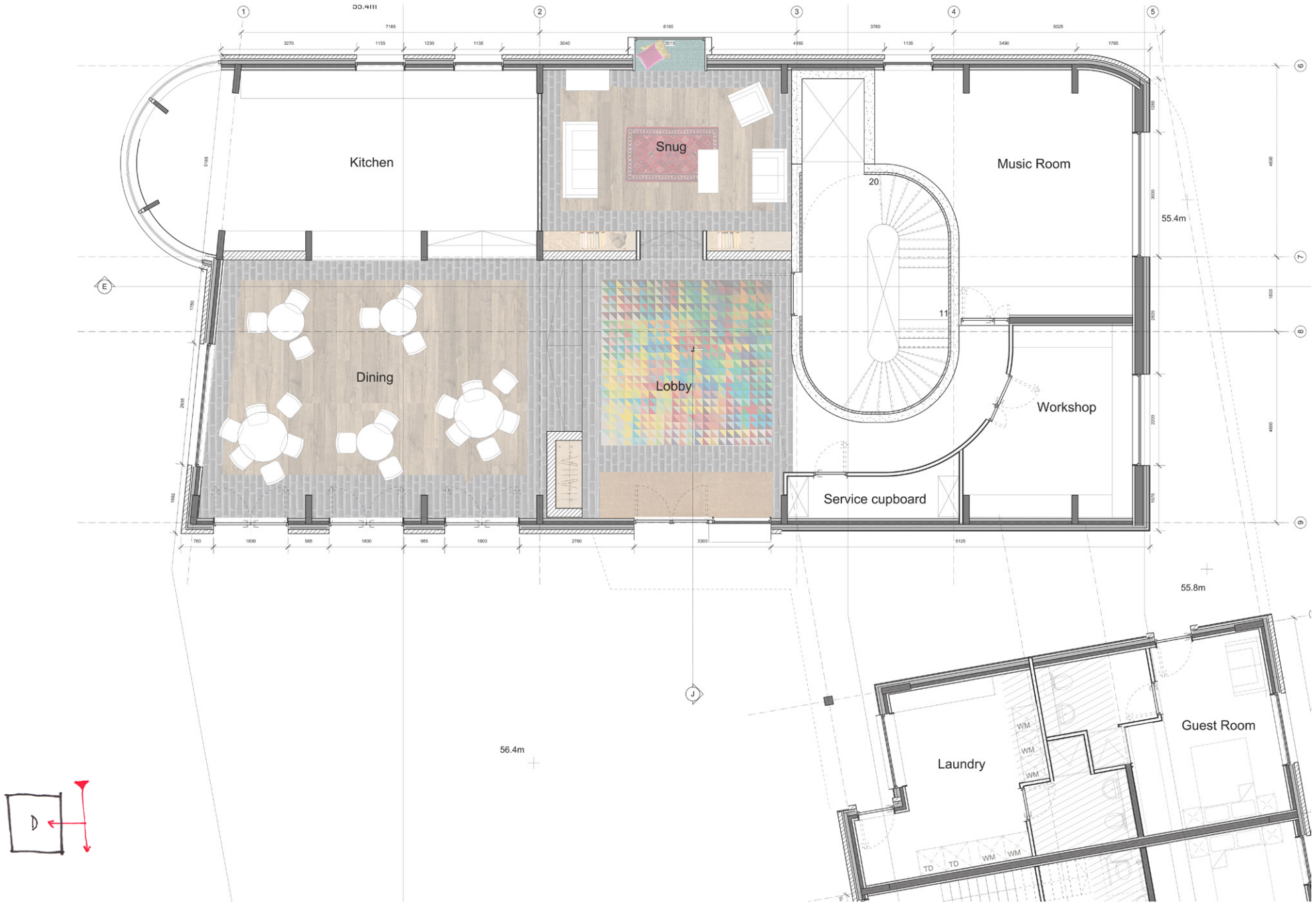
?

**But what about the design principles?**

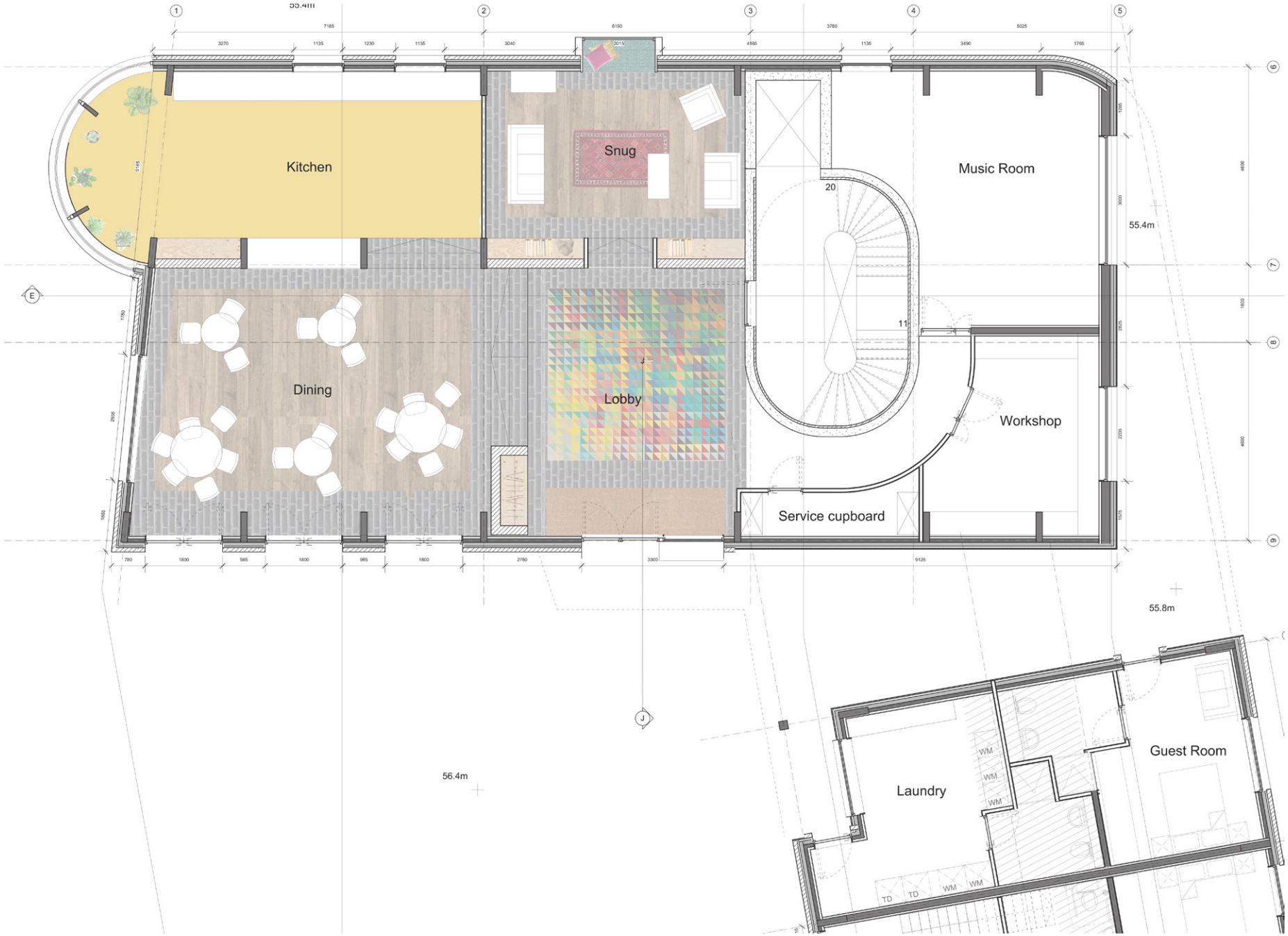




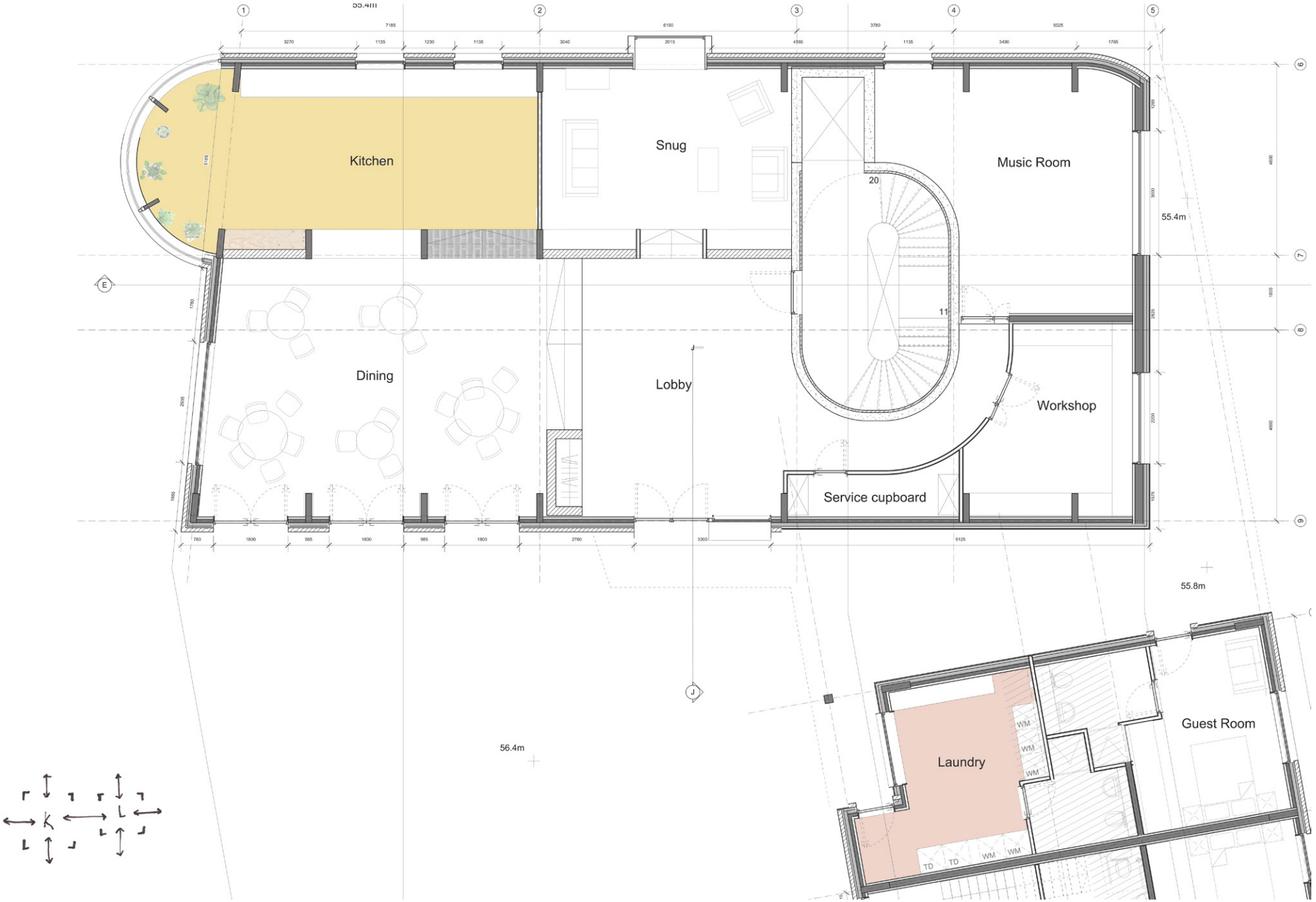
1


Kitchen
Snug
Music Room
Dining
Lobby
Workshop
Service cupboard
Laundry
Guest Room
WM
TD
55.4m
55.8m
56.4m

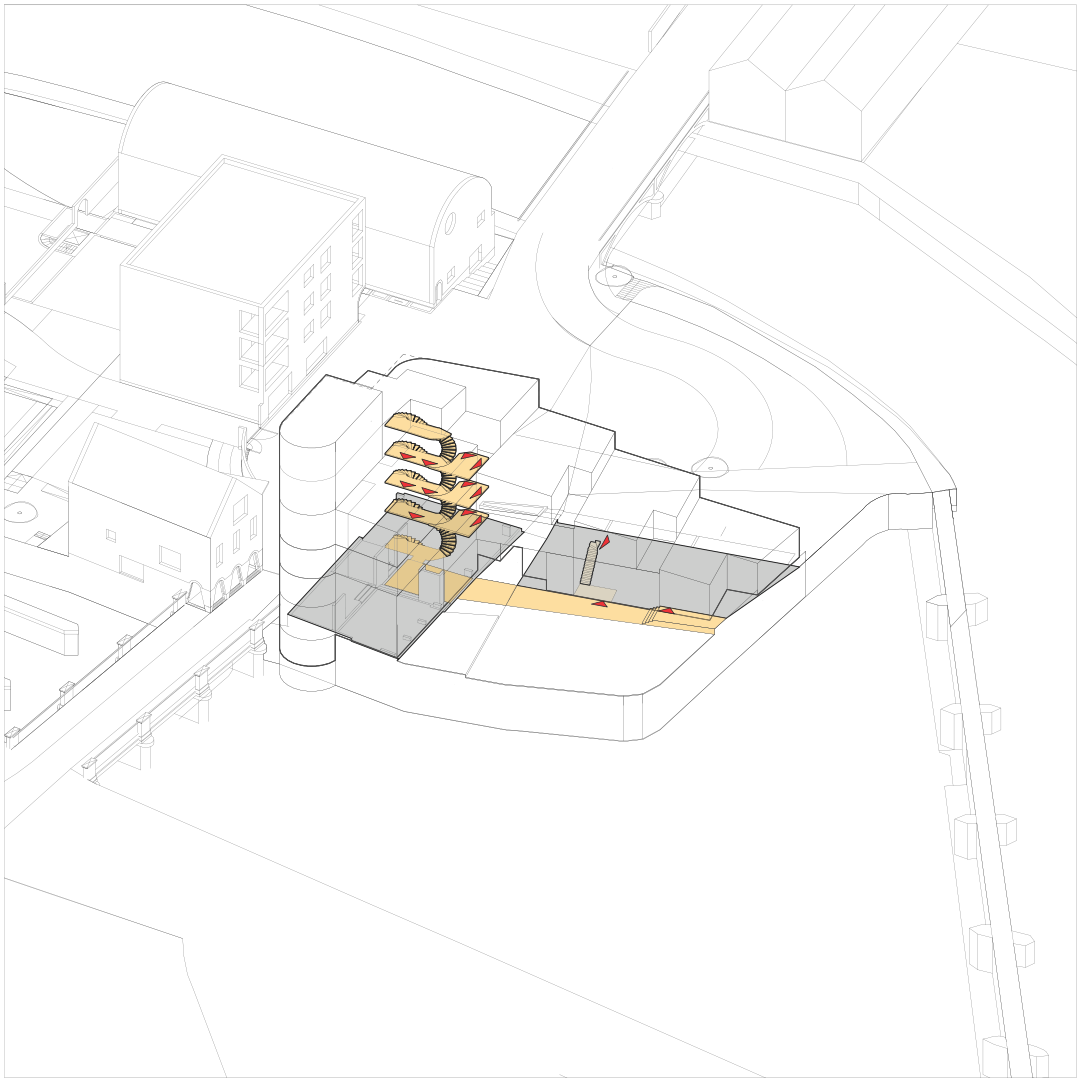
2

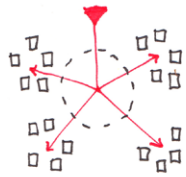

Kitchen
Snug
Music Room
Dining
Lobby
Workshop
Service cupboard
Laundry
Guest Room
WM
TD
55.4m
55.8m
56.4m

4

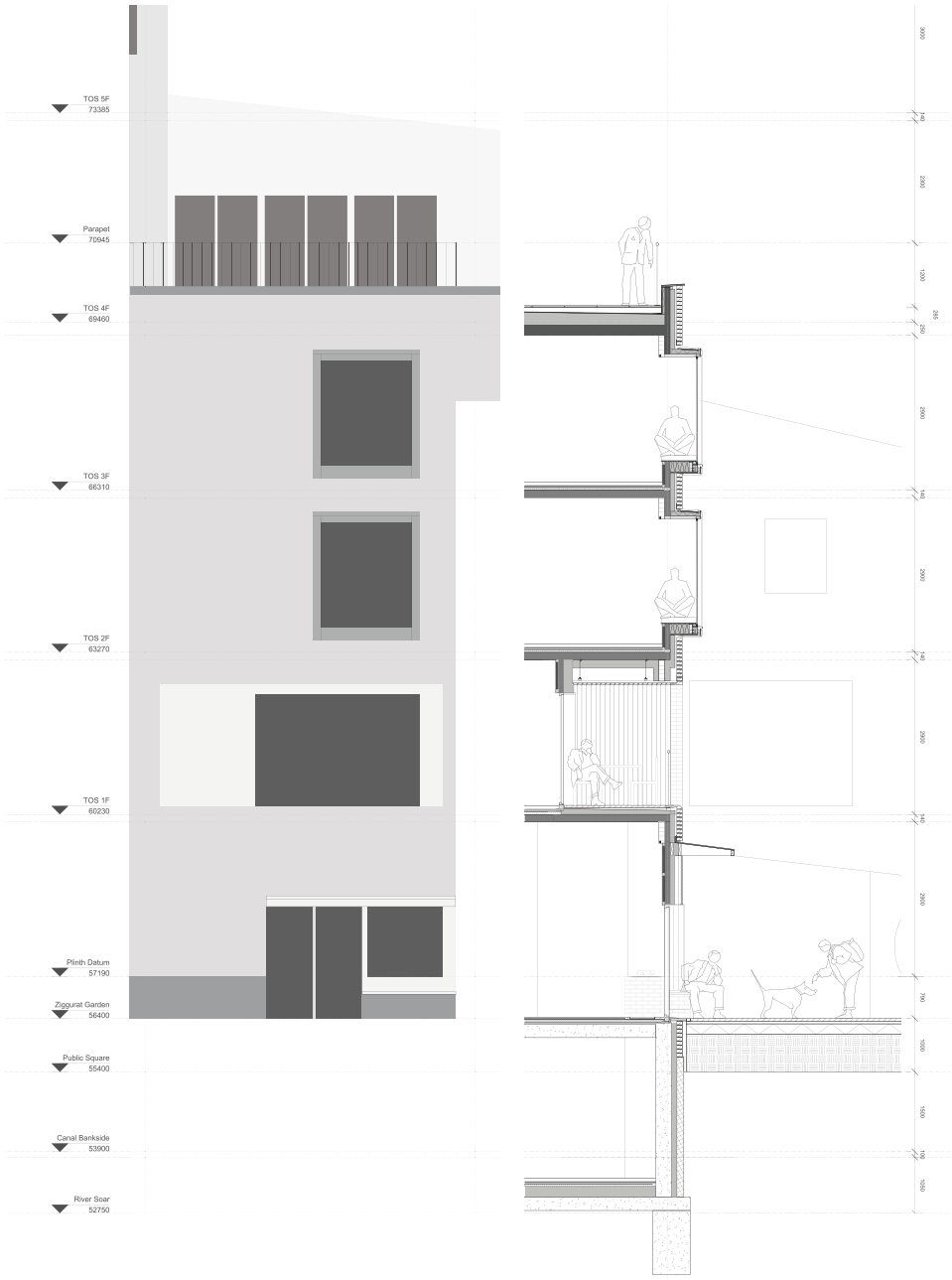

Kitchen
Snug
Music Room
Dining
Lobby
Workshop
Service cupboard
Laundry
Guest Room
WM
TD
55.4m
55.8m
56.4m

3





5


TOS 5F
73385
Parapet
70945
TOS 4F
69460
TOS 3F
66310
TOS 2F
63270
TOS 1F
60230
Plinth Datum
57190
Ziggurat Garden
56400
Public Square
55400
Canal Bankside
53900
River Soar
52750
3000
140
2300
1300
395
250
2000
140
2000
140
2900
140
2000
700
1000
1950
150
1950

**Peter Korn**
*Furniture make & author*

“It is a given that, individually and collectively, we think our world into being. The question is: How do we choose to go about it? Do we passively assemble our narratives from a cultural smorgasbord? Or do we test the recipes of others in our own kitchens? Do we take responsibility for some small portion of the world as we create it?”