

THROUGH CRAFT AND CARE

Reclaiming Civic Ground in
Mamoiada

PROJECT JOURNAL

Matteo Saba



“Anche voi, osservate le forme e i colori in questi miei lavori, che sono un modesto tentativo di guidare la vista per scoprire con innocenza l’incanto delle cose e dei gesti semplici e dignitosi della gente, rimasta magari tutta buona e in spirito di verità”

“You, too, observe the shapes and colors in these works of mine, which are a modest attempt to guide your eyesight to discover with innocence the enchantment of the simple and dignified things and gestures of people, who remained perhaps all good and in the spirit of truth.”

Costantino Nivola, 1986

Introduction

early fascinations and emerging questions
about public life in Sardinia's rural towns

A sight

I found myself thinking more and more about Sardinia — not just as the place I come from, but as a place I had distanced myself from and slowly returned to with different eyes. It started unconsciously: noticing details during visits home, being drawn to certain stories, scenes, atmospheres. It was a slow accumulation of questions, of images — rural towns that felt empty and yet still full of something. Moments like the carnival that made everything come alive for two days and then disappeared again. I started paying attention to those moments and spaces that seemed suspended between past and present — not quite gone, but not quite functioning either.

One of the first themes I kept returning to was the tension between heritage and change. In Sardinia, tradition is deeply tied to landscape, territory, and identity — it's a source of pride, but also of inertia. Things change slowly, and at first I saw that slowness as a limitation, something that made these places resistant to architectural intervention. But over time, I began to see it differently — not as a problem to fix, but as a structure in itself. That resistance wasn't just cultural; it was a way of holding together forms, rhythms, and relationships across time. It could be a point of departure, not an obstacle.

One moment that crystallized this shift for me was a visit during the summer to the Museo Nivola in Orani. It wasn't just the museum itself, but everything around it — the way the intervention transformed an entire area of the town without erasing it, without trying to fix or perfect it. It was a reactivation unlike any I had seen before. A new expression of public space was introduced — clear, strong, rooted — but without pretending to correct the imperfections of the town. It worked with what was already there, both materially and immaterially. The groundscape that led up to the museum was quiet and beautiful, made with local materials, carefully chosen and crafted. From the hill, it overlooked the town without detaching from it. A system of water canals that carried spring water from near the museum down into the city. There was something incredibly moving in how the unfinished buildings, the rawness of the edges, were not hidden or cleaned up — they were simply allowed to exist. And somehow, in this new context, they acquired a different kind of beauty. Not one of perfection, but one of acceptance.

That visit stayed with me. It changed how I thought about what architecture could do — not as a tool for solving, but as a way of revealing and reinforcing. A gesture that doesn't dominate, but supports what already has value. I started thinking differently about materials, scales, and timeframes. Not everything had to be new or complete. Maybe the most powerful interventions are those that simply allow a place to speak more clearly — to hold memory and present life together without forcing a reconciliation.



Museo Nivola courtyard facing Orani
source: own

A common ground

During the visit to the Museo Nivola in Orani I also discovered Costantino Nivola's own visionary ideas and project for Orani, called Pergola Village. In this only partly built proposal, he imagined connecting the homes of the town through a continuous network of suspended vines over the streets, creating a sort of vegetal roof. It was a way of reinforcing the architectural character of the town, intensifying the sense of interiority and domestic continuity that already existed in its public spaces. The piazza, he wrote, would remain uncovered — left open like the great central room of a Mediterranean home, emphasizing its role as the town's shared interior.

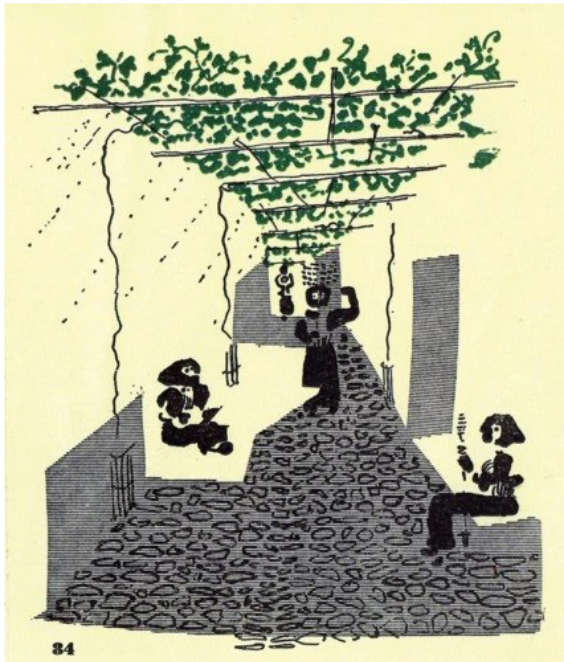
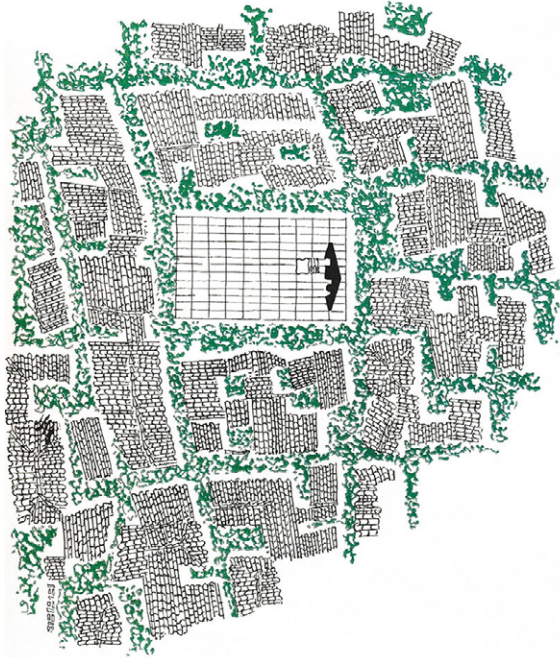
From New York, where he lived and worked, Nivola looked back at Orani with both love and urgency. He saw modernization as a threat to the kind of cohesive, solidal society he had grown up in — one where architecture and life were deeply intertwined, and where collective spaces played a central civic role. His drawings and writings were full of this attention to how people moved, gathered, and related to one another. He imagined civic centres not as institutions, but as everyday spaces of aggregation — places where people could simply be together.

That way of thinking about space — as something social, collective, and interior — left a deep impression on me. It helped me understand that the real center of architectural work in these towns might not be form or style, but the relationships it can foster and sustain.

After the visit, I began tracing the everyday choreography of other towns: the piazza that turns into a vast living room on summer evenings, plastic chairs claiming informally the space. During Autunno in Barbagia—a travelling autumn festival where, each weekend, a different mountain town opens its houses, courtyards, and cellars to visitors—these scattered rooms merge into one continuous interior: doors stay open, food and stories flow across thresholds, and the town feels momentarily seamless. But once the crowd disperses, the fabric contracts and those improvised rooms fall quiet again.

Meanwhile, villages are recasting themselves to satisfy the market for “raw nature,” “authentic experience,” and “slow living.” Costa Smeralda perfected a pristine fantasy for outsiders, and even Autunno in Barbagia now flirts with spectacle. When tradition performs for the tourist gaze, what remains can be a polished shell, emptied of daily use. My question, then, is how architecture can reinforce the spaces residents already inhabit—without excluding guests, yet without designing only for them. By giving gentle form to the spontaneous and stitching back small routines, design can help these towns imagine futures authored from within rather than staged for an audience.

I started to see architecture as a way to reclaim space for the community — not through nostalgia, but through continuity, care, and attention to what still works. A way to restore agency, reinforce everyday spaces, and quietly stitch back what has been fragmented. Supporting the informal, giving form to the spontaneous, and helping rural towns imagine futures shaped from within became central to my approach.



Pergola Village, Orani, 1953
source: Museo Nivola

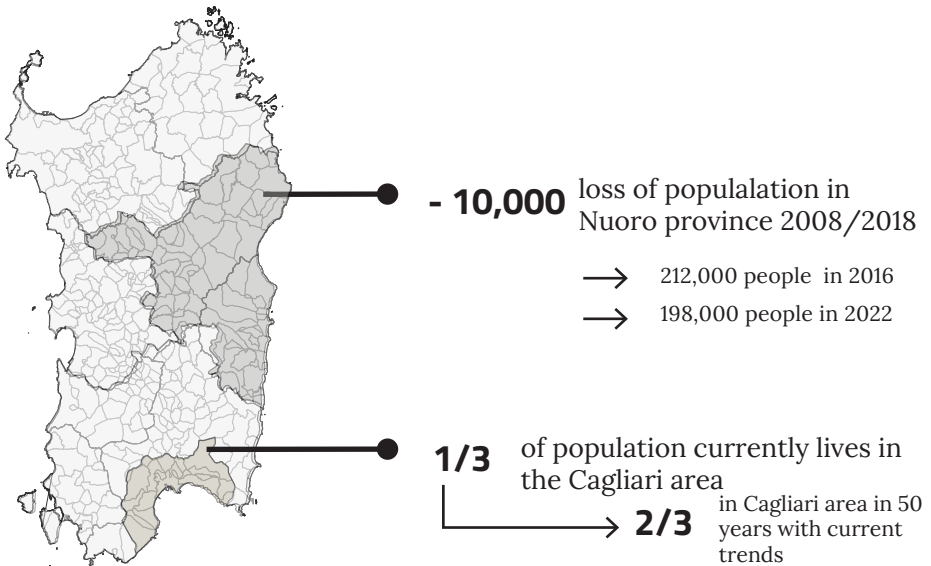


Initial collage illustrating my fascinations
source: own

- 5,000 yearly regional loss of people
→ 471,000 less people in 2065

70% municipalities in the last 10 years
that have lost population
→ 270 out of 377

31 municipalities at risk of complete extinction



261,120 Abandoned houses → 28% of total built environment
→ 80% are in small towns

Data about Sardinia's depopulation
source: Associazione Nino Carrus

Week 1

Middle ground

Seeking a middle ground

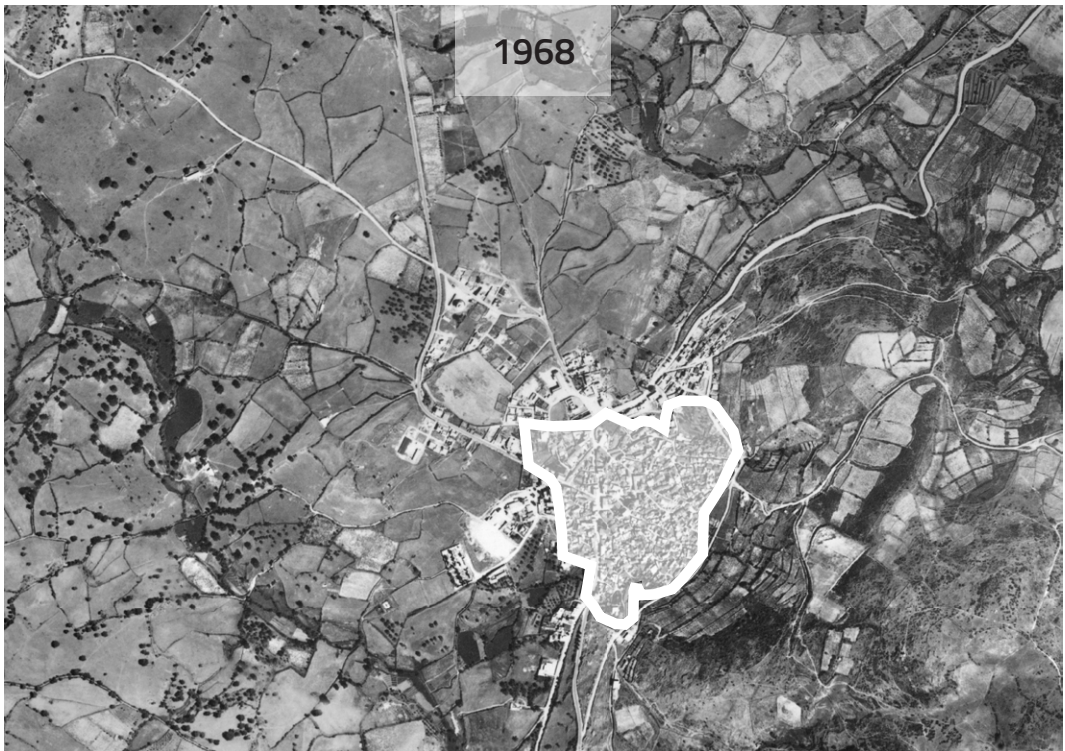
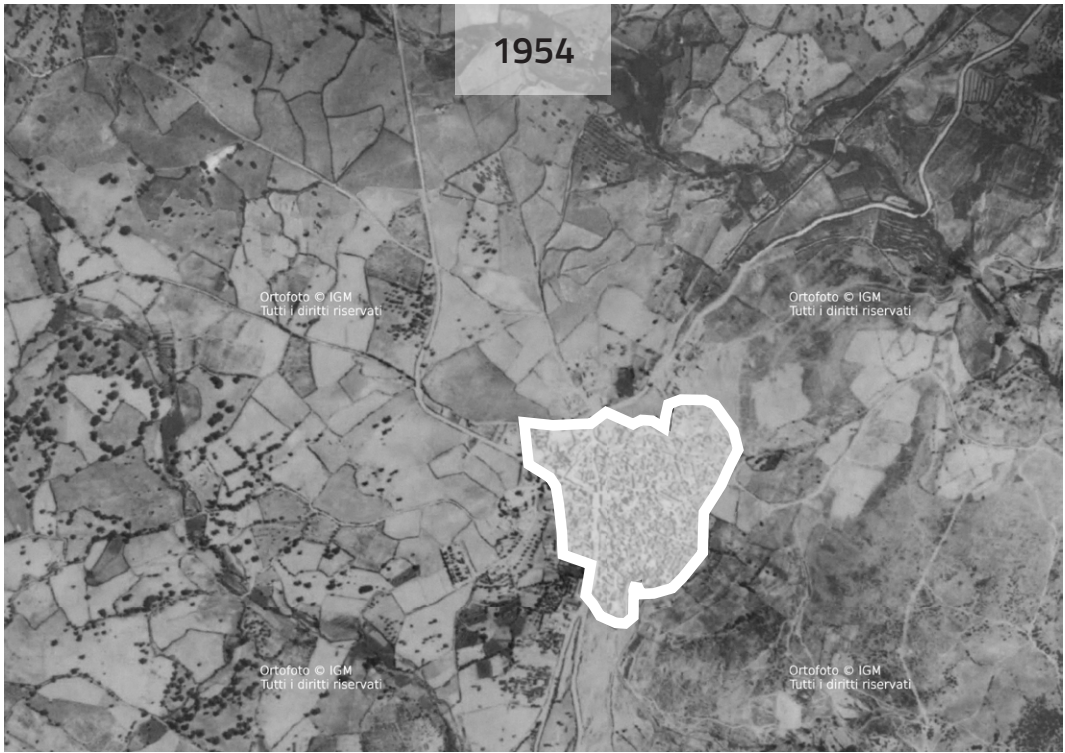
Every headline tells the same story: cities swell, countryside drains, and the gap widens year after year. Rural Italy is often treated as picturesque backdrop—quiet in winter, frenetic for a festival, then quiet again—while planners fixate on metropolitan links and big-city hubs. I keep asking where the middle ground went. Surely smaller towns could host life that is steady rather than seasonal, creative rather than nostalgic.

Because I know its rhythms firsthand, I chose to look at Sardinia. Growing up there, leaving, and returning with fresh eyes gives me both intimacy and distance—enough to read its silences as well as its celebrations. And nowhere makes the swings clearer than Mamoiada. During carnival or Tapas, buses clog the road, courtyards become dining rooms, and every spare bed is booked. Two weeks later the same streets feel hollow; half the houses are shuttered, their owners long gone or living elsewhere. New concrete shells rise on the outskirts while old stone dwellings in the historic core crumble. The population graph drifts steadily upward in age, punctuated by brief spikes of visitors who never stay long enough to tip the balance.

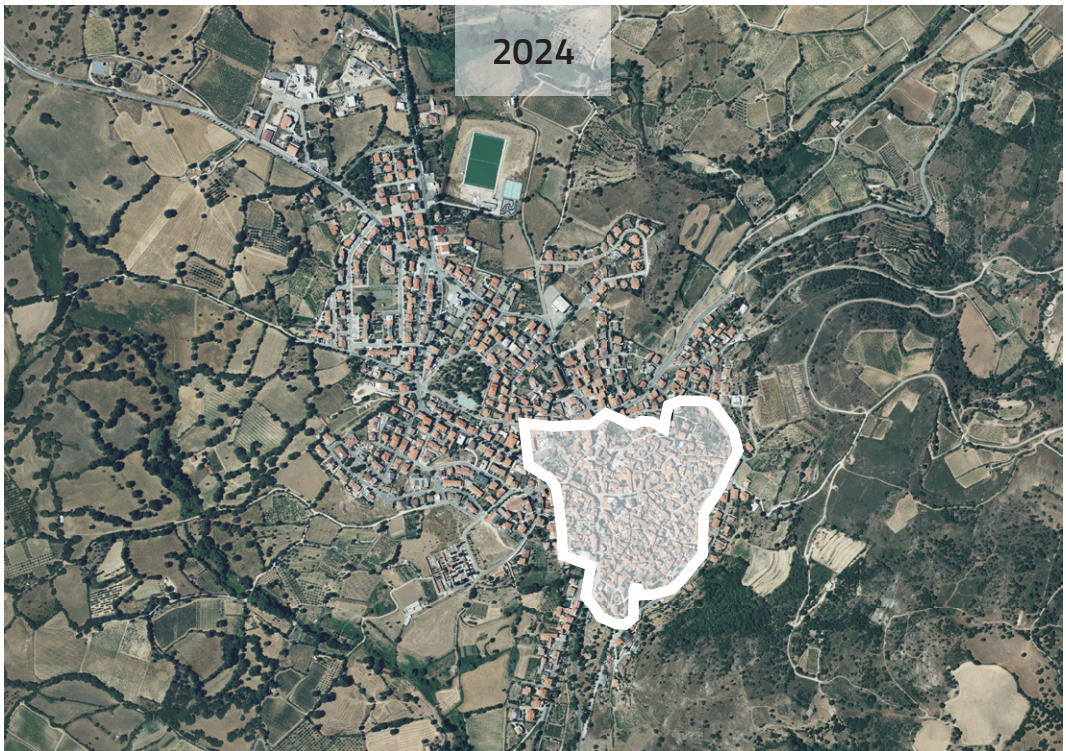
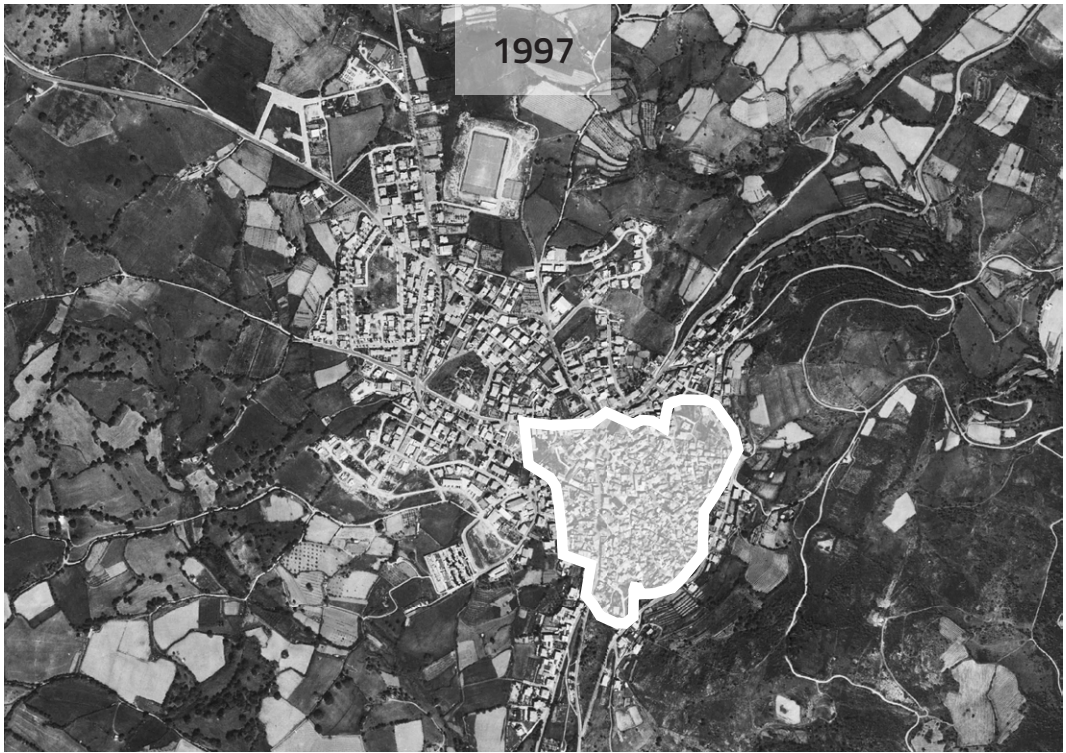
My first instinct is that architecture could smooth these extremes. Re-inhabit empty buildings before approving more construction. Weave small workplaces into domestic courtyards so young people aren't forced to commute. Design public rooms that can host carnival crowds yet feel comfortable for twenty neighbours on an ordinary Tuesday. Today the responses are fragmented—one family renovates, another builds a villa, the municipality repaves a square—but nothing links these gestures. If I can find a spatial strategy that moderates the highs and lows, that might be the starting point for giving Mamoiada, and towns like it, a more even pulse.



Same square in Mamoiada, above during carnival, below during a normal day
source: Barbaricina.it (above), Lamiasardegna (below)



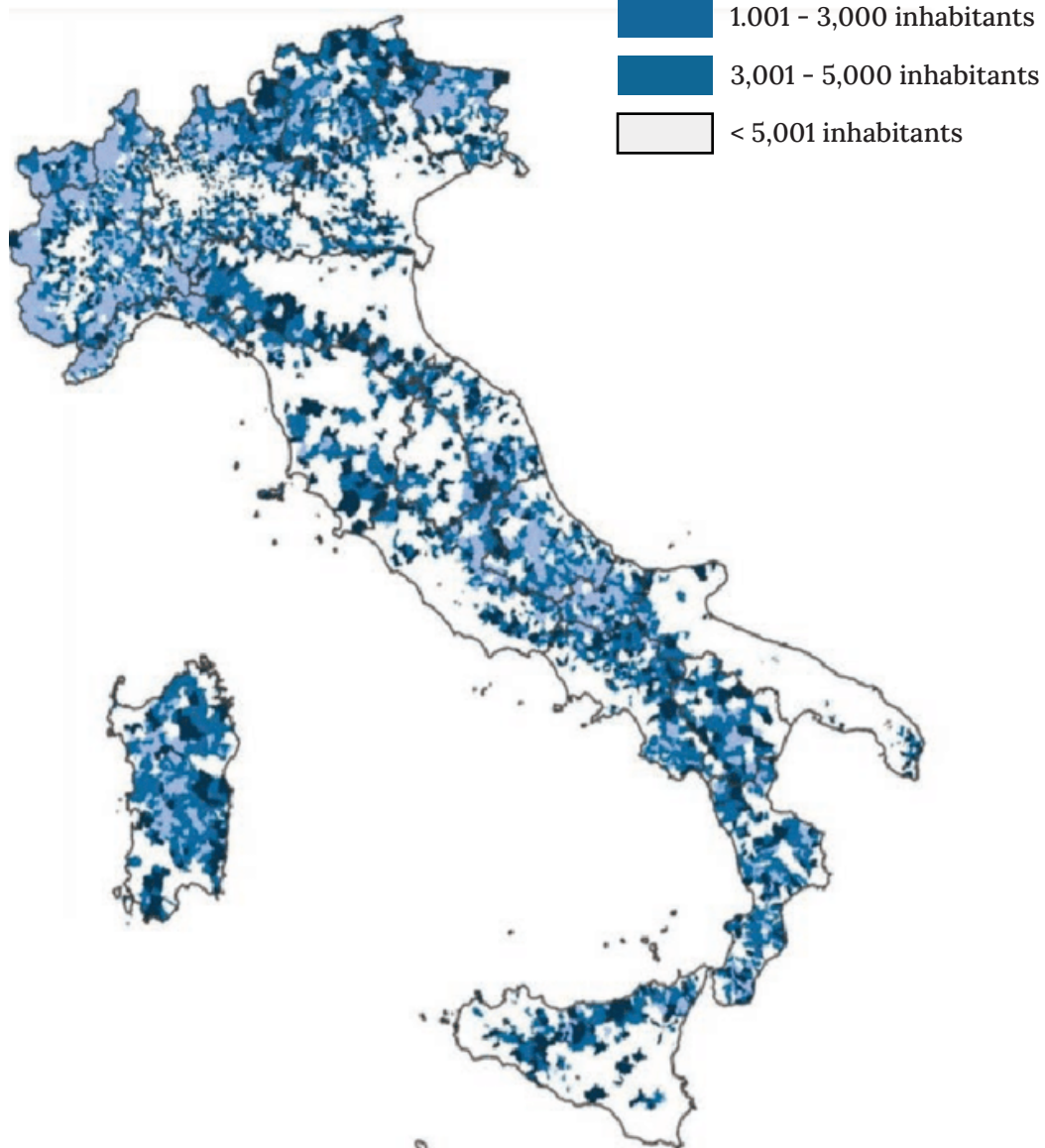
Aerial photo of Mamoiada
source: Regione Sardegna



Aerial photo of Mamoiada
source: Regione Sardegna

A country of towns

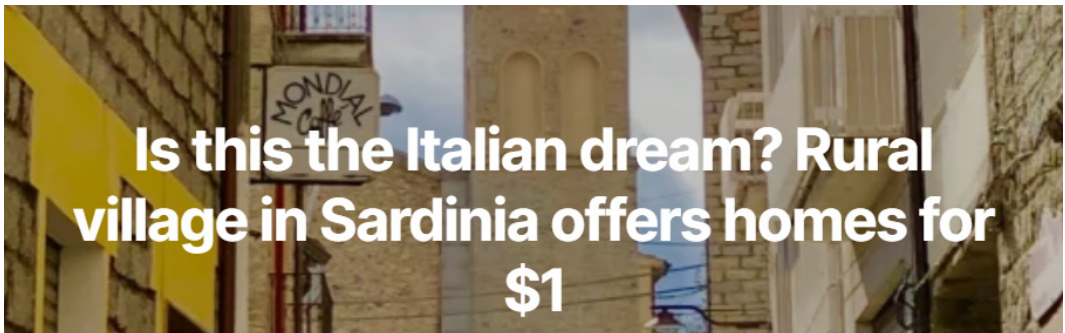
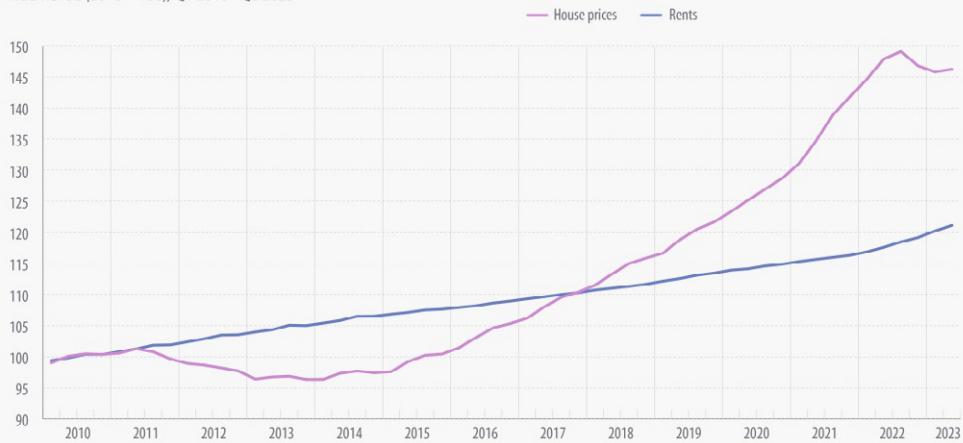
Riccardo Vedovato



Italian municipalities under 5000 inhabitants
source: ISTAT

House prices and rents, EU

Index levels (2010 = 100), Q1 2010 - Q2 2023



Perceived unbalance in conditions
source: EUROSTAT and The Guardian

<p>EXPECTED TRENDS</p>	<p>exponential growth of cities</p>	<p>shrinking and a population</p>
<p>ALTERNATIVE</p>	<p>improve desirability to live in rural towns</p>	<p>retain and young who want</p>
<p>EFFECT</p>	<p>Balancing the trends</p>	<p>Diversifying rural</p>

making
aging
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and attract
people
nt to stay

ified age
age

tourist
attractions

diversify
businesses

varied and
solid local
economy

Defeat expectations of
what rural towns will be

provide alternative
development models for
rural towns

Generate positive for the
community

Week 2

Culture, tradition, resources

A new perspective

“New eyes are needed to understand Barbagia,” warns sociologist Benedetto Meloni, and that sentence unsettles the memories I carried of Mamoiada. Archival maps, parish ledgers, and elders’ stories sketch an older cadence that once ordered house and hillside. Each spring pastures flashed green, ewes lambed, cheese vats steamed beside dry-stone shepherds’ enclosure; by late summer drought pushed whole flocks south toward rented winter ranges. Village space echoed the seasons: single-room dwellings curled round the hearth, brushwood stacked in tight courtyards, evenings spilling into the piazza as a collective living-room. Access to the *cumonale*—the “land of everyone”—was renegotiated yearly, tying survival to a delicate code of reciprocity. Life revolved around careful adaptation to shifting conditions, marking the land not through aesthetics but through shared labour, necessity, and ritual. Stability came from this constant, negotiated balance rather than fixed boundaries or permanent forms.

This arrangement fractured under external pressures. Migration and commuting hollowed daily routines, scattering residents between the village and distant jobs, and subtly shifting priorities away from collective care toward individual survival. Global habits in diet, building, and lifestyle crept in quietly, eroding local material traditions and seasonal patterns of work. Today, the village’s streets are either too quiet or too crowded, alternating abruptly between emptiness and brief bursts of tourism-driven activity. Events like Carnival or the autumn festival *Cortes Apertas* draw visitors eager for “authentic experiences,” compressing the village’s annual rhythms into short-lived spectacles, after which a deeper silence returns. The longing many villagers express for the rhythms of past daily life isn’t merely nostalgic—it points to a dissatisfaction with current modes of inhabiting their space, which struggle to accommodate both the inherited logic of community life and contemporary demands.

To consider architecture’s potential in Mamoiada means acknowledging this disrupted balance and understanding why previous changes failed to find resonance. Any new proposal must start by carefully reading those inherited spatial practices—courtyards once lively with everyday work, lanes connecting home and land, rooms that flex between private gathering and communal events. It means finding ways to pair these old, familiar spatial logics with new uses that respond gently, rather than impose themselves forcefully. Rather than creating static images or postcard memories, architecture here must accommodate shifts and seasonal variations, offering spaces where daily life, collective labour, and shared celebrations coexist in dialogue, restoring meaning to places that risk becoming hollow façades.



DRAWINGS
Costantino Nivola, DDT in Sardinia. Fortune, 1953

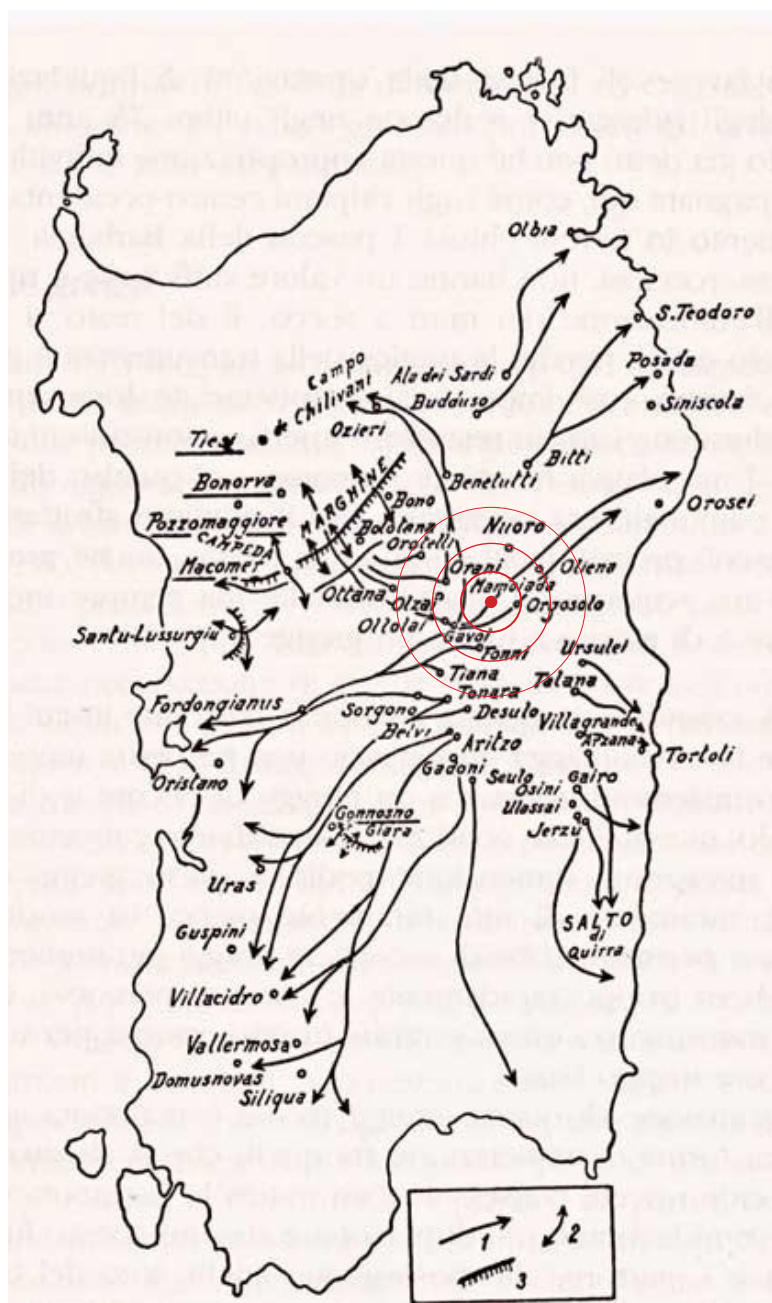


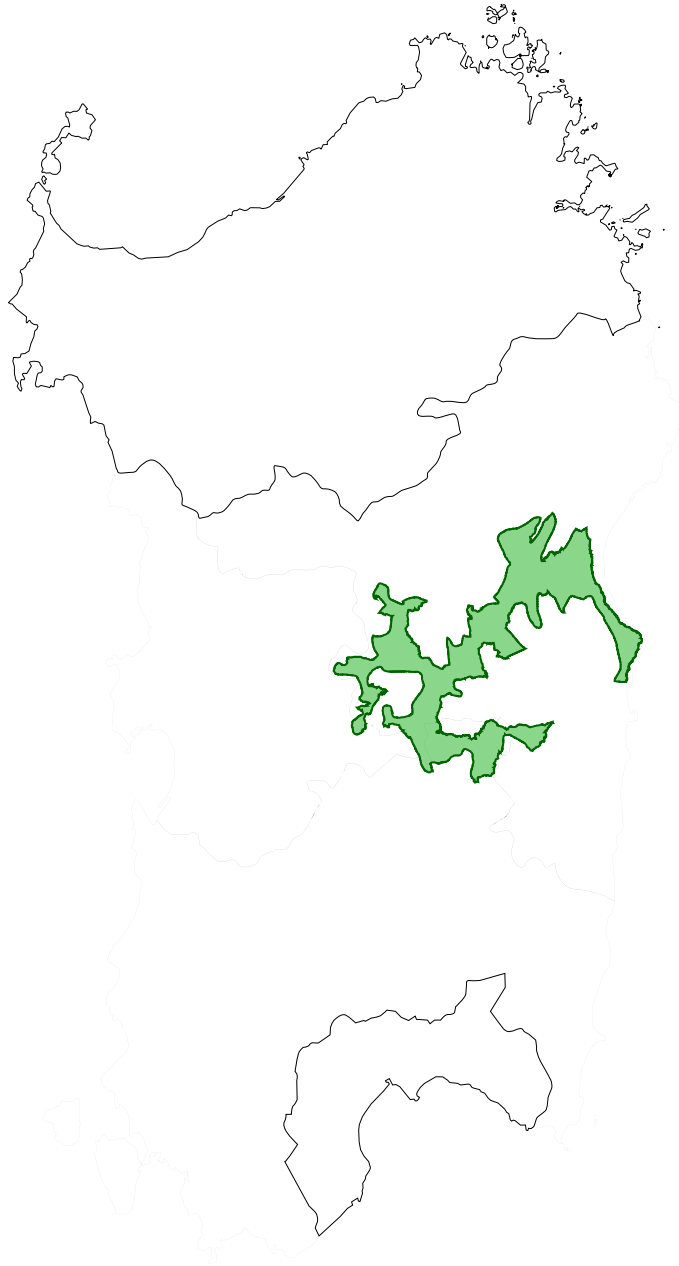
FIG. 21. LE DIRETTRICI DELLA TRANSMANZA. Scala 1:2.000.000

1. transumanza lontana;
2. piccola transumanza;
3. principali distlivelli che comandano la piccola transumanza.

Transhumances routes
 source: Maurice Le Lannou, Pastori e contadini di Sardegna



Cuile - Shepherd's temporary shelters
source: Wikilok



In 1998, the Italian government proposed creating the Gennargentu National Park, aiming to protect the landscape and promote tourism. The proposal was met with strong local opposition, especially in Barbagia, where residents saw the land not as scenery but as vital grazing ground. For many, the idea of preserving nature for leisure conflicted with generations of pastoral use.

Gennargentu National Park extension
source: Wikipedia



Nature is not romanticized. It is rugged, unpredictable, and above all, a place of work. Hillsides are valued for their yield, not their view; beauty is measured in utility, not serenity. The landscape is shaped by necessity, not admiration.

- Bachisio Bandinu, Pastoralismo In Sardegna

Mamojada view with its natural landscape
Source: Facebook

Failed modernization

If the first task was to understand how life had once been balanced between land, labour, and ritual, the second was to trace what had disrupted it. What had fractured the quiet agreements between village and hillside, between individual and commons? I began to follow the historical scars. And in Mamoiada, memory is not passive. It is precise, unfinished, and often political. It speaks not only of what was lost, but of how it was taken, as well as a matter of remembering/reconstructing it.

The first wave came with the extraction of natural resources under state oversight. In the 19th century, forest lands ceased to be spaces of communal negotiation and became sites for harvesting wood and iron to fuel the Italian railway. These were not faceless shifts—they were felt as theft. Antonio Gramsci, writing in 1919, called those who profited from Sardinia's deforestation "corpse robbers," describing a land bled dry by a state that extracted here and invested elsewhere. The social contract between land and community had been broken from above.

Under Fascism, land that had never been cultivated was ploughed under the regime's Battaglia del Grano, disrupting grazing cycles that had long defined the local ecology. Yields were poor, the work unfamiliar. The landscape was made to look productive, even when it no longer was. Families left. Rhythms of work were abandoned not because they had failed, but because they were no longer legible to power.

The Piano di Rinascita, drafted after the war, promised jobs, dignity, and modernization. In nearby Ottana, chemical plants rose in the 1970s, attracting labour, reshaping expectations—and then collapsed just as quickly, leaving concrete shells and yet another generation pushed to migrate. Around the same time, vast tracts of land were taken for military training. Where transhumance paths once passed, fences were erected. Commons became exclusion zones.

Each wave registers in memory as dislocation. The landscape was not transformed—it was interrupted. What remains is not just material ruin, but a cultural consequence: a community taught to mistrust intervention.

This is where memory becomes protest. When people recall the older rhythms of life, they are not asking to rewind the clock. They are asking why no one ever replaced what was broken. Why nothing new came that acknowledged the intelligence of what had existed. They point to the logic that had once held life together, and that any new gesture, architectural or otherwise, will be measured against.

For me, this means that design cannot begin with form. It must begin with listening—deeply—to how space holds memory, and how that memory critiques everything that came in the name of progress. Only then can architecture offer something back. Not to revive what's gone, but to build trust again—carefully, and with full awareness of the ledger that history has left behind.



Shepherd and his flock with the Ottana petrochemical's plant in the background
source: Nuova Sardegna



The Distretto Culturale del Nuorese - DCN is a cultural association comprising a network of institutions and business in the Nuoro region. It was founded to promote the region's identity and cultural heritage and support the creative industries through intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth.



In Mamoiada, cooperation has slowly emerged as a powerful counterpoint to the region's traditionally individualistic work culture. Brings together over 70 members and 22 vineyards. It represents more than shared production—it's a shift in mindset, a collective effort to root economic resilience in community rather than isolation.



Sara Muggittu Photo 2005



Sara Muggittu Photo 2005



Archivio Barbaricina.it



Archivio Barbaricina.it



Archivio Barbaricina.it

Mamojada - Loro

While researching Mamojada, I found Barbaricina, a local blog that reconstructs the town's memory through its spaces. Narrow streets, fountains, courtyards, churches—were places tied to gestures and stories. It showed me that architecture here isn't just built form, but lived memory.

Historical and current pictures of parts of the town
source: Barbaricina.it

Week 3

Archive and Terms

Archiving

When I started building the archive, my goal was to gather references—texts, drawings, projects, images—that could support the development of my research. I was looking for material on themes I was already interested in: rural identity, architectural continuity, public space in small towns, and the risk of traditional environments becoming frozen or commodified. In retrospect, I realise I wasn't just collecting: I was steering. The selection, categorisation, and commentary I wrote were already framing the research in a certain direction—valid, but more opinionated and projective than I had initially acknowledged.

That kind of positioning isn't a mistake. It's a critical act, and in many ways it's what gave shape to the direction I've taken. But I've come to understand that this type of interpretation might not belong in the archive itself. It's something more appropriate for formats like the project journal, where reflection, critique, and narrative can be developed. The archive, by contrast, should be a tool for access—a place to search for information, to revisit sources, and to build a shared body of work that supports not just my interpretation, but the broader context of the research.

Looking forward, my aim is to structure the archive around the topics I'm working with, while resisting the urge to pre-empt meaning. I want it to function as a resource: something that holds texts, projects, and documents in a way that allows connections to emerge, but doesn't dictate them. It's less about preserving my opinion, and more about storing—and sometimes choosing not to store—material that can continue to feed the research as it evolves.

This week I finalised my project's terms. These articulate the principles and objectives guiding the work, drawing from the reflections, research, and intentions developed so far. Presented as a municipal resolution, they outline a commitment to safeguard Mamoiada's cultural and material heritage while enabling its transformation.

The terms focus on several key points: recognising the town's identity as rooted in its traditions, landscape, and everyday practices; supporting the reuse and adaptation of existing structures over new construction; and emphasising the importance of community involvement in shaping architecture that reflects local knowledge and use. They advocate for an approach that values continuity, resists commodification through tourism, and promotes environmental and social sustainability by using locally sourced materials and involving residents directly.

By compiling these terms now, I have clarified the project's direction. They act as a reference against which I will continue to test decisions, ensuring the work stays grounded in Mamoiada's realities while imagining future forms of living that remain deeply connected to place.



TERMS

- considering** that Mamoiada experienced population decline due to younger generations being drawn to urban centers in an increasingly interconnected world, and that an aging population places additional strain on the social fabric and creates psychological challenges for a shrinking community;
- recalling** the centuries of isolation through which Mamoiada has retained its distinctive identity while gradually experiencing the homogenizing effects of globalization since the 1950s;
- emphasizing** the town's ability to adapt and evolve in harmony with its traditions, shown by a collective pride in sharing Mamoiada's cultural and historical heritage with the wider world;
- bearing in mind** the abundance of abandoned and under utilised built environment, which present notable opportunities for regeneration and thoughtful reuse consistent with the preservation of local history and character;
- recognizing** the centrality of work and craftsmanship to the town's identity and pride, wherein the production of each artifact constitutes a vital expression of communal heritage and personal skill, reflecting the dedication and artistry of local practitioners;
- acknowledging** the plentiful, cost-effective resources readily available in the surrounding territory—such as cork, wool, wood, and granite—and the deep expertise of local inhabitants in assessing, collecting, and skillfully utilizing these materials;
- underscoring that** while tourism can showcase Mamoiada's culture and craftsmanship, over-dependence on tourism may leave the town vulnerable to a "monoculture";
- stressing that** the community's sense of identity and worth does not rest on economic value alone, but on the recognition that each artifact is part of the town's cultural fabric, shaped by the locals who preserve their heritage through traditional practices and locally sourced materials.

DELIBERATIONS

- commits** to fostering an architecture that supports a sustainable, attractive, and resilient community by providing spaces for both local and regional initiatives, striking a balance between traditional techniques and innovative methods, and thus contributing to a diversified local economy.
- endorses** the pursuit of architectural research and solutions in historically marginalized, rural, and peripheral areas, recognizing them not as a mere alternative but as an essential counterbalance to the often unsustainable pace of urbanization and densification from both environmental and social standpoints.
- calls for** the repurposing, adaptation, and reuse of the existing built environment as the principal method of architectural intervention, recognizing this approach as vital to reviving communities with underutilized or abandoned structures, as well as pivotal in addressing sustainability, which too often and easily overlooks effective reuse in favor of new construction.
- supports** the community's endeavors to safeguard and sustain its material and immaterial heritage through direct involvement of local residents, while celebrating and showcasing these cultural assets to a global audience.
- stresses the importance of** harvesting resources locally, both to minimize environmental impact and to reinforce a sense of identity, thereby shaping an architecture that genuinely reflects and serves its place of origin.
- considers essential** that architectural projects be acknowledged by local inhabitants as part of their collective identity, deriving legitimacy from local resources and heritage, as well as the involvement with residents, institutions, and community groups.
- suggests** a moderate focus on tourism, that complements local initiatives and sustains economic diversity, ensuring that residents remain primary beneficiaries of any growth in visitor numbers while preventing overreliance on tourism as an economic driver.
- Proposes** the integration of decorative elements in the design process as a means of creating an identity-driven architecture, made for the community and by the community, ensuring that it holds lasting cultural and emotional value for its residents.

APPROVATION

The project of Mr. Matteo Saba, which aims to guide ongoing transformations by strengthening the town's attractiveness, safeguarding its material and immaterial heritage, and integrating contemporary solutions that embrace progress without compromising its identity and traditions, recognizing that true preservation lies not in freezing heritage in time but in allowing it to evolve as a living expression of the community.



COMUNE DI MAMOIADA

DELIBERATION OF MUNICIPALITY

OBJECT Approval of the terms upon which Mr. Matteo Saba shall conduct a research and design study on the territory, inhabitants, and cultural heritage of Mamoiada.

TERMS

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the commissioner (Municipal Council)

the commissioned (Matteo Saba)

Week 4

Site

Meaning, image, symbol

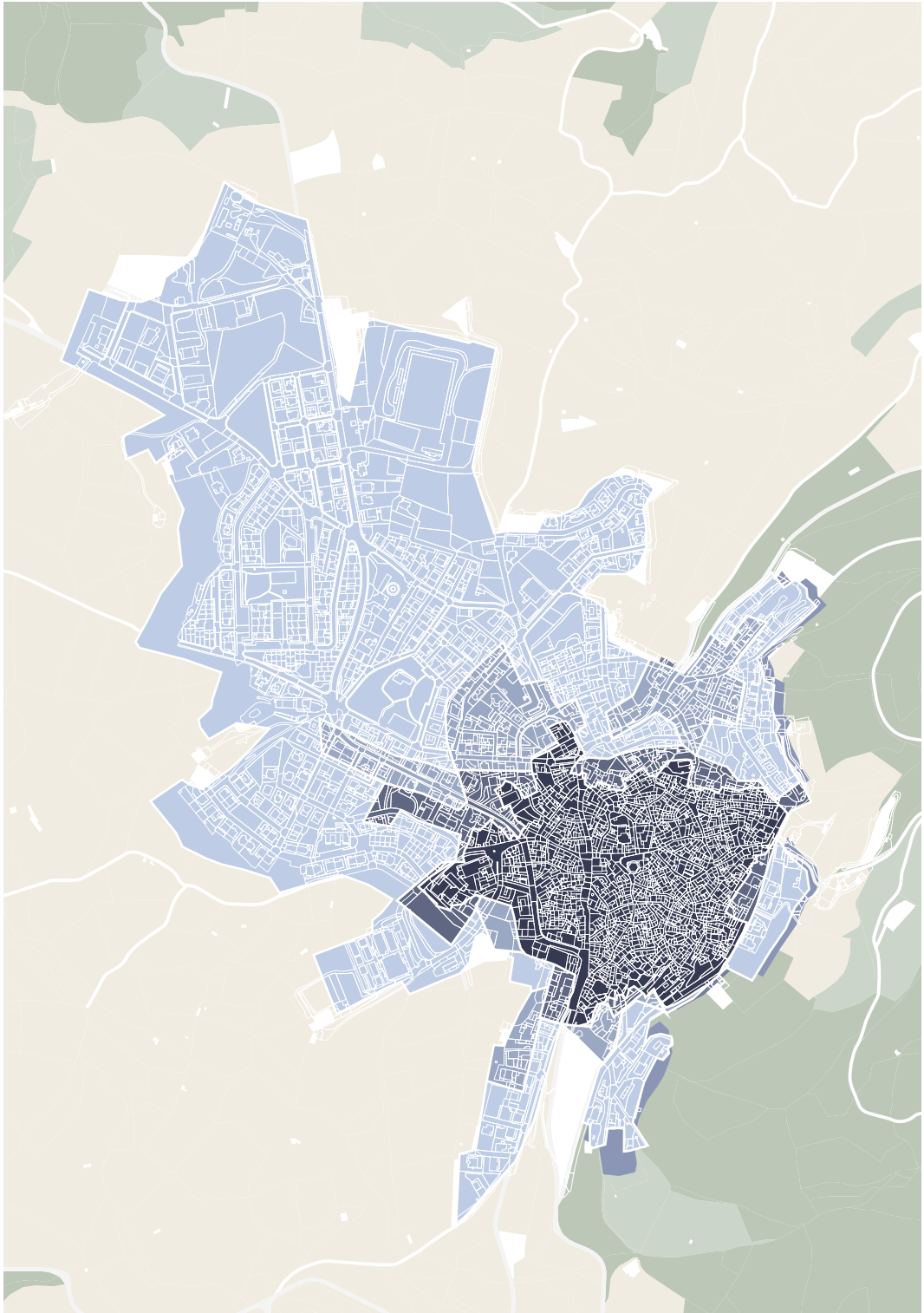
This week I've been reflecting on the way Mamoiada's historic centre is treated—both institutionally and architecturally. The PPCS defines the city centre as an area composed of buildings of low material quality, often altered spontaneously by residents using concrete blocks or other accessible means. Despite this, the document acknowledges the urban value of the area: a fabric that, even in its disorder, maintains a form of spatial and social coherence—where communal streets, public squares, and private courtyards still coexist and support a way of life.

The aim of the PPCS is to preserve that value, yet its strategy leans heavily on visual unity and formal control. Preservation is guided by strict guidelines about what techniques and materials are considered acceptable, aiming for an idealised image of tradition. In doing so, the plan often reconstructs a version of the past that never existed—cleaner, neater, more consistent than the reality of how the town has actually evolved. Rather than working with the logic of how the place grew—through need, adaptation, and compromise—it tries to bring it back to a state that is more imagined than remembered. This invented architectural tradition is seen as the key to reclaiming the centre's attractiveness and identity.

At this point in my work, I've started to find a parallel in the approach of Dimitris Pikionis. What strikes me in his work is the refusal to isolate a single version of the past. His interventions, especially the path to the Acropolis, resist the idea of restoring a monument to a fixed, glorified moment. Instead, he constructs a space where multiple layers of history can coexist—sometimes in harmony, sometimes in tension. What matters to him is not just formal continuity, but the ability of architecture to hold and narrate the full story of a place: the fragments, the contradictions, the forgotten traces.

The way he worked—with reused stones, asymmetries, stopping points, and subtle interruptions—suggests a different kind of preservation: one that doesn't freeze the past, but gives it space to resonate in new ways. He reclaimed the territory around the Acropolis not as a sacred backdrop, but as a lived part of the city—refusing to strip it of its messy, real past, including the moments that didn't fit the national narrative.

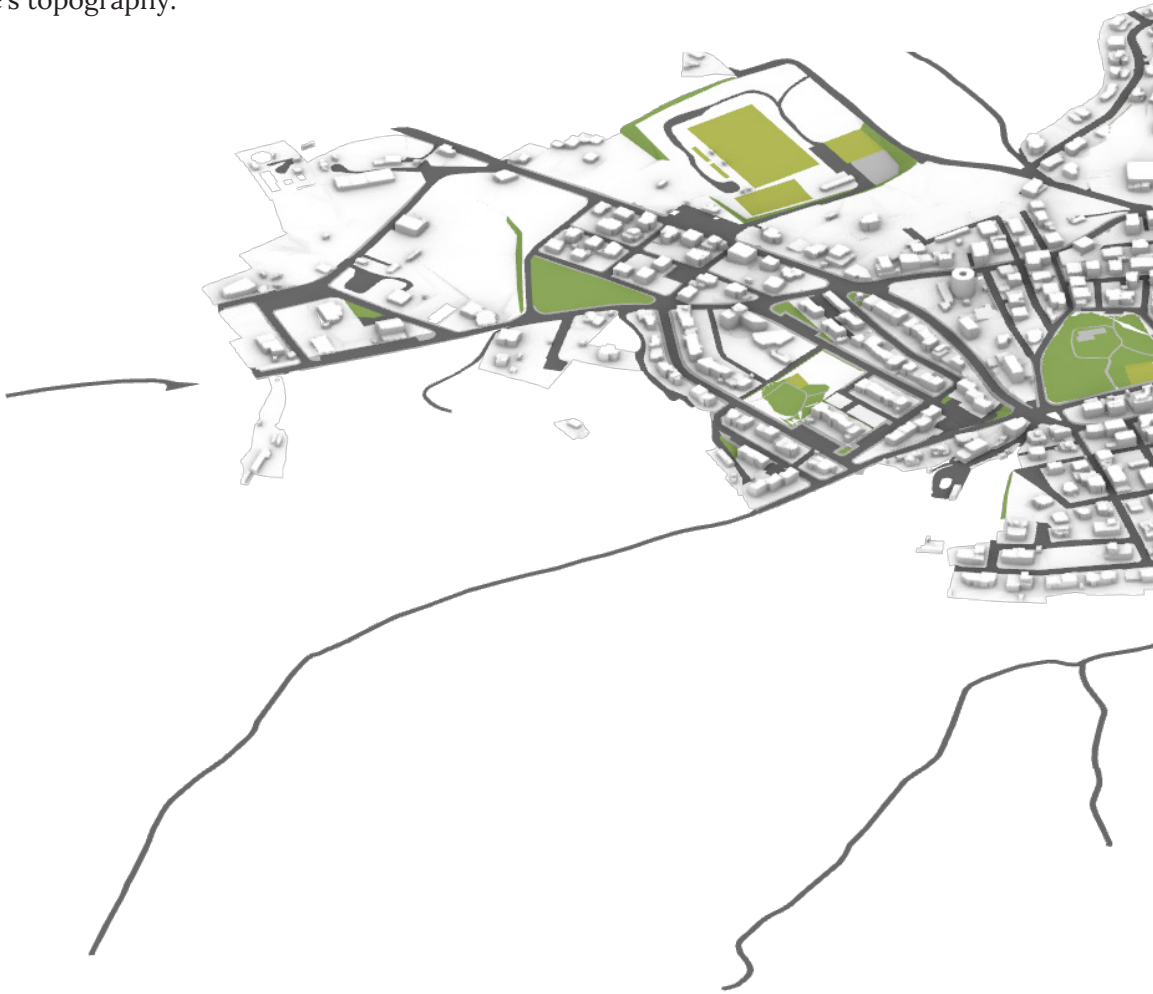
This has helped me reframe my thinking in Mamoiada. Places like this risk becoming hollow if we treat them as postcards of tradition rather than living environments. The challenge is not just to preserve material forms, but to allow them to continue evolving—telling the full story, not just the comfortable one. Architecture can participate in that process not by replicating appearances, but by working with the ground, the fragments, the uses, and the spaces in between. It's not about restoring order, but about reconstructing meaning.



● Original center ● before 1900s ● 1900s - 1950s ● Post 1950s

3D Model advancements

For the way I work—and especially given the complexity of the site’s topography—it was essential to develop an accurate 3D model as early as possible. This would allow me to orient myself both within the site and in relation to the wider town. I assembled the model by extracting data from regional geographic databases. The challenge was that while all elements came with detailed attributes—such as roof height and topographic elevation—they were only represented as 2D polygons with data attached. Using QGIS, I was able to link these height values to their corresponding geometry, extruding the building footprints according to their roof heights. This process allowed me to generate a proper 3D model with buildings, terrain, and roads accurately following the site’s topography.





Reflecting on the PPCS

The PPCS is a document that clearly aims to protect something valuable: the memory of a town that has developed over centuries, marked by poverty, improvisation, resilience, and shared rituals. Yet in trying to preserve that past, it often ends up constructing a version of it that never quite existed.

The PPCS tries to formalise vernacular architecture by setting rules for elements like roof edges, window proportions, and paving materials. While this might aim to preserve cohesion, the result often feels more like an idealised projection than a reflection of how the town actually developed.

In Mamoiada's older neighbourhoods, the most meaningful spaces—cortes, narrow streets, wells—weren't designed through rules but shaped by necessity and use. Their richness comes from layering: patched walls, reused stones, informal thresholds. The PPCS, by contrast, imposes fixed forms and styles, often assigning aesthetic value to what was never about aesthetics, but survival and adaptation.

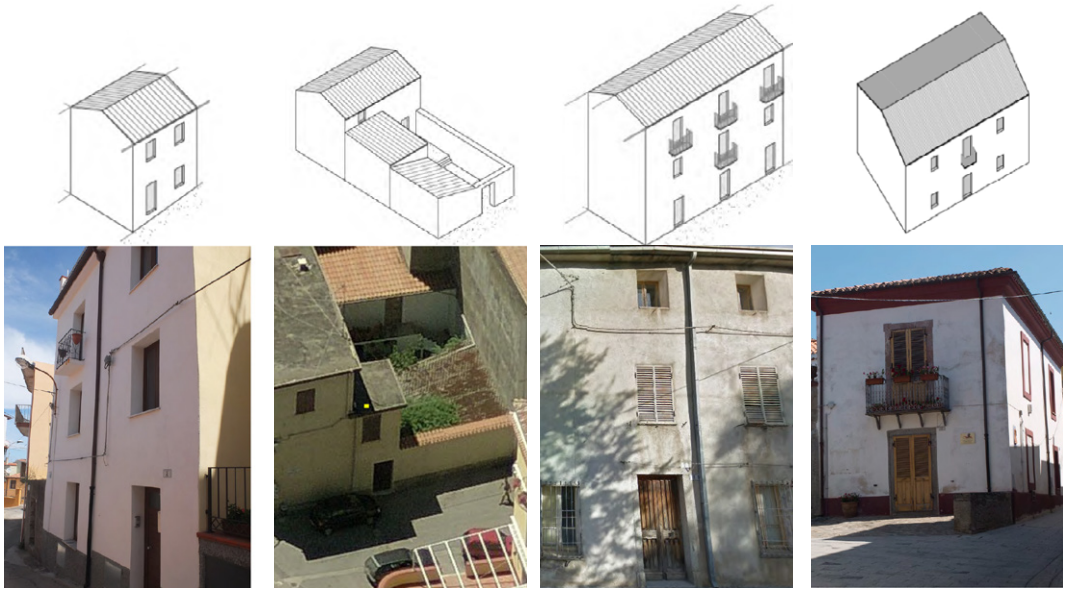
What's also telling is the way the plan evaluates the existing fabric: over 90% of the buildings are deemed replaceable. This suggests a model where architecture is understood primarily through form and surface, rather than lived experience, use, or adaptation. It raises the question: if almost everything can be replaced, what are we really preserving?

The document tries to preserve identity through image, but in doing so, risks flattening the complexities of Mamoiada's actual story. Its rigidity can sometimes stand in opposition to the social and spatial dynamics that gave the town meaning. It promotes continuity through visual coherence, yet ignores the everyday messiness and multiplicity that actually holds the town together.

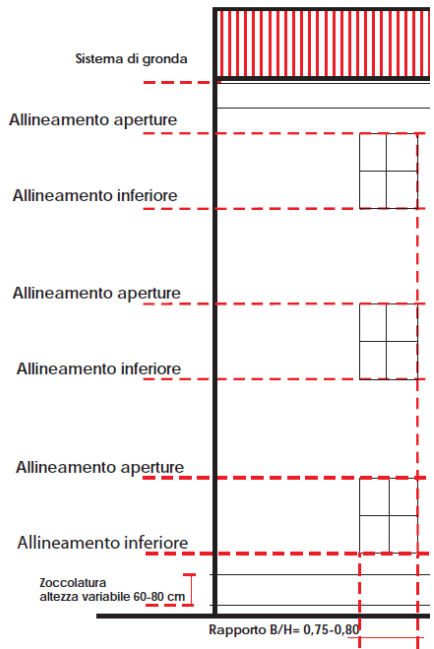
There is, however, something to learn from it—not in its prescriptions, but in the way it inadvertently reveals what's missing. Its attempt to reconstruct a civic image points to a deeper desire to re-establish the town as a place of collective life. And that's something I share. But rather than rebuilding through stylistic codes, I believe that effort should begin with understanding the ground: the real relationships between space, people, and use.

My approach moving forward is not to oppose the PPCS entirely, but to work critically alongside it. To treat its idea of preservation not as a fixed image, but as a process of recognition, care, and adaptation. To reveal the stories still embedded in the town's fabric—not by freezing them, but by allowing them to evolve through new forms of continuity. In that sense, architecture doesn't preserve by copying, but by participating—carefully, precisely, and in response to what is already there.

Building typologies



Regulations

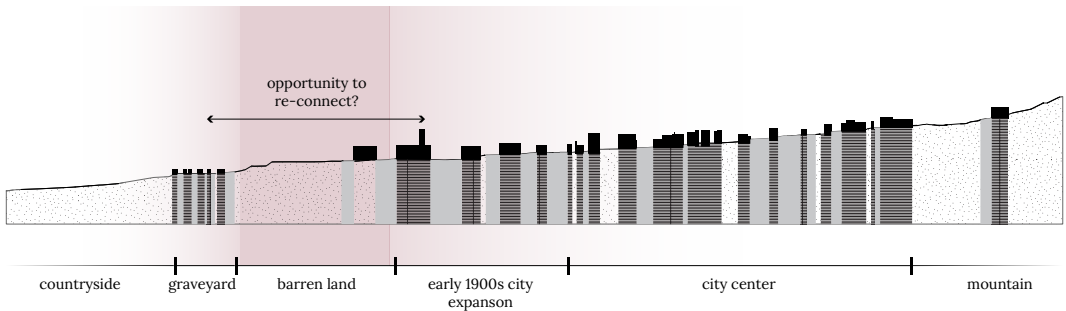


Vernacular architectural elements



Site 1: Spatial Scenario

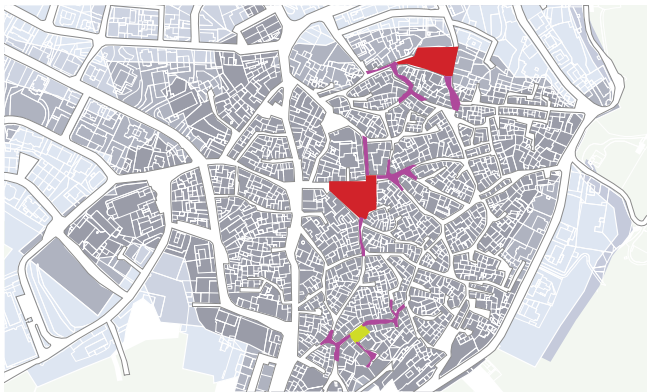
Extending the city center with new buildings and a new logic in a site which carries significance, reconnecting town and landscape? interiority of a new city district yet interacting with town and landscape?



Peter Barber
Donybrook Quarter
London – 2005

Site 2: Urban Patterns

Layered terrain by drawing from the morphology of the past—its hierarchy of voids and solids, its transitions between inside and outside—without replicating form, but translating meaning? Can the language of modern construction root itself in the patterns that shaped Mamoiada, to restore legibility, civic life, and connection with the landscape?



- **“SA PRATHA”**
The plaza(s)
- **“SU PUTHUS”**
The fountains
- **“SUS GUTTEROS”**
The narrow roads



Aires Mateus
House in Alcobaça
Alcobaça - 2011



Dimitris Pykionis
Pathway towards the Acropolis
Athens



Rafael Moneo
Murcia city hall
Murcia, 1998

Week 5

People

Private, public, and collective ground

This week I tried to summarise and make sense of the contradictions I had been observing in Mamoiada over the past weeks. On one hand, there's an evident care and pride in preserving tradition—festivals, rituals, dress, and memory—matched by a huge online presence of archives, images, and personal initiatives to document the town's identity. But this presence feels strangely detached from the physical spaces of the town itself. It often seems like these conversations, memories, and forms of collective life are more active online than in the streets or squares of Mamoiada.

This led me to explore the idea of the “collective ground”—a concept I connected to the work of Jan Gehl and Ray Oldenburg. Their theories helped me name what I had been sensing: that the informal, spontaneous spaces of encounter (what Oldenburg calls “third spaces”) are being lost or displaced. These spaces aren't just public in a technical sense—they are where collective life happens, where people meet without a fixed purpose, where identity is reinforced through repetition and contact. Gehl insists that these spaces must support both everyday use and larger communal moments. In Mamoiada, I started to ask: where are those spaces now? What has replaced them?

Using that lens, I returned to the built environment and began mapping. I looked at how the town has expanded and changed, and how that affected the presence and continuity of collective space. Through this process, I started to realise that the spontaneous logic that once shaped the town's public life—visible in its cortes, public wells, shared thresholds—had been disrupted. Unlike what the PPCS seems to suggest, that coherence hasn't been preserved. And this, to me, became one of the core issues I want to address.

I started defining “collective ground” in my own terms: not just public space, but shared space that enables informal, intergenerational, and non-transactional forms of social life. Spaces that belong to the people who live and work there, not as symbolic heritage, but as active infrastructure for daily use and mutual recognition.

To better understand what this might mean today, I identified a few key figures in Mamoiada whose actions, in different ways, reflect a desire to preserve, share, and activate collective life. People like Sara, who has built a large digital archive of memories and folklore. Luciano, the mayor, whose personal history speaks to collective healing and future-making. And various associations that organise events and services for the community. These figures became a lens through which to see the town—not just its built form, but how people inhabit it, represent it, and try to hold it together.

All of this has made one thing clear: I want my project to respond to the erosion of these informal, lived spaces of connection. I want to design a space that gives something back to the people of Mamoiada, reestablishing the kind of everyday.

PRIVATE

Spaces clearly belonging to individuals or households (e.g., residences, courtyards, private gardens), intended primarily for personal or family activities and restricted to outsiders.

COLLECTIVE

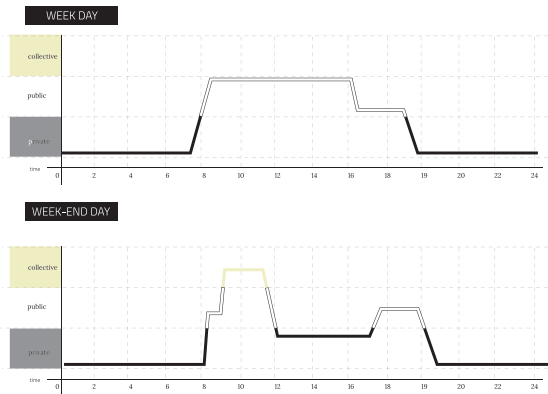
Shared spaces specifically designed to stimulate social interaction, community gatherings, and spontaneous meetings (e.g., streets, squares, public plazas, pedestrian areas), reinforcing communal life.

PUBLIC

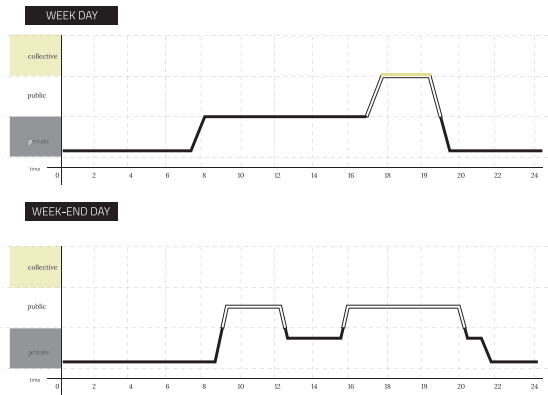
Spaces accessible and usable by everyone, but typically meant for functional or infrastructural needs (e.g., roads, parks, administrative buildings), which might not inherently encourage spontaneous interaction or social cohesion.



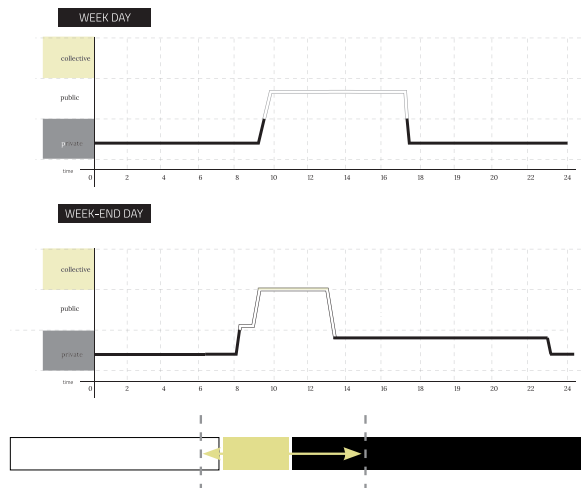
Luciano speculative typical day
balance between public, collective and public life



Sara speculative typical day
balance between public, collective and public life



Association member speculative typical day
balance between public, collective and public life





→ stories about the place in the photo

→ recalling a person who was living there



reconstruction of the story of photo road became part of a private terrain →



→ remembering when she lived in the town

→ sharing a recent event

→ saying this event should be organized again

Week 6

References

Reactivating a rural community: Oстана

LOU POURTOUN

Revives traditional Occitan typologies like the “pourtoun” alleyway as social space. Hosts coworking, exhibitions, residencies (OSTANA RES), and public events. The café (Merenderia Alpina) fosters daily interaction. Centrally located, it connects locals, visitors, and artisans, linking culture with sustainable tourism.

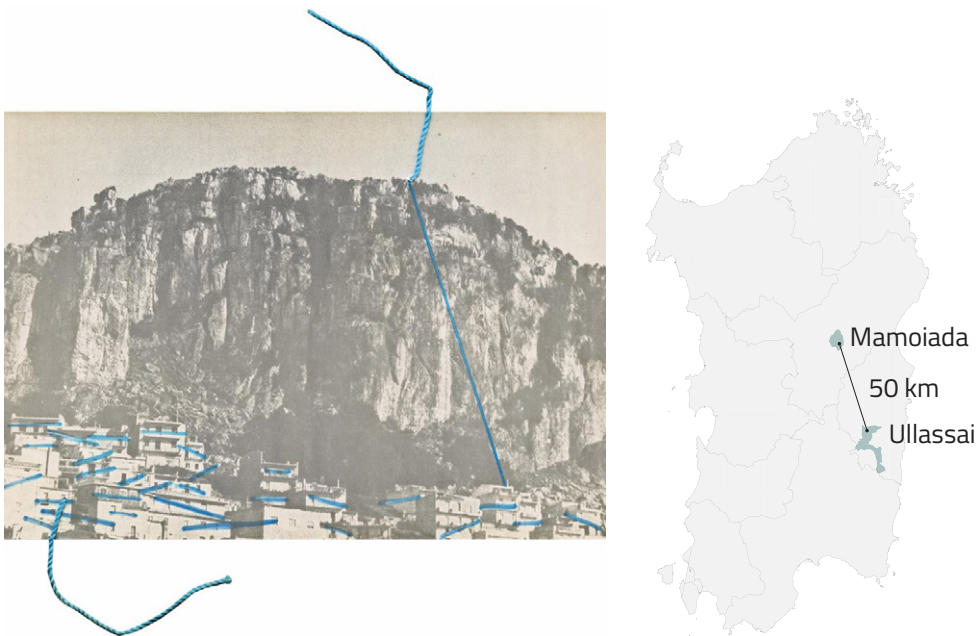


FORESTERIA

Flexible housing for artists, researchers, and families in OSTANA RES. Encourages exchange with locals, supporting skill-sharing and sustainable resettlement.



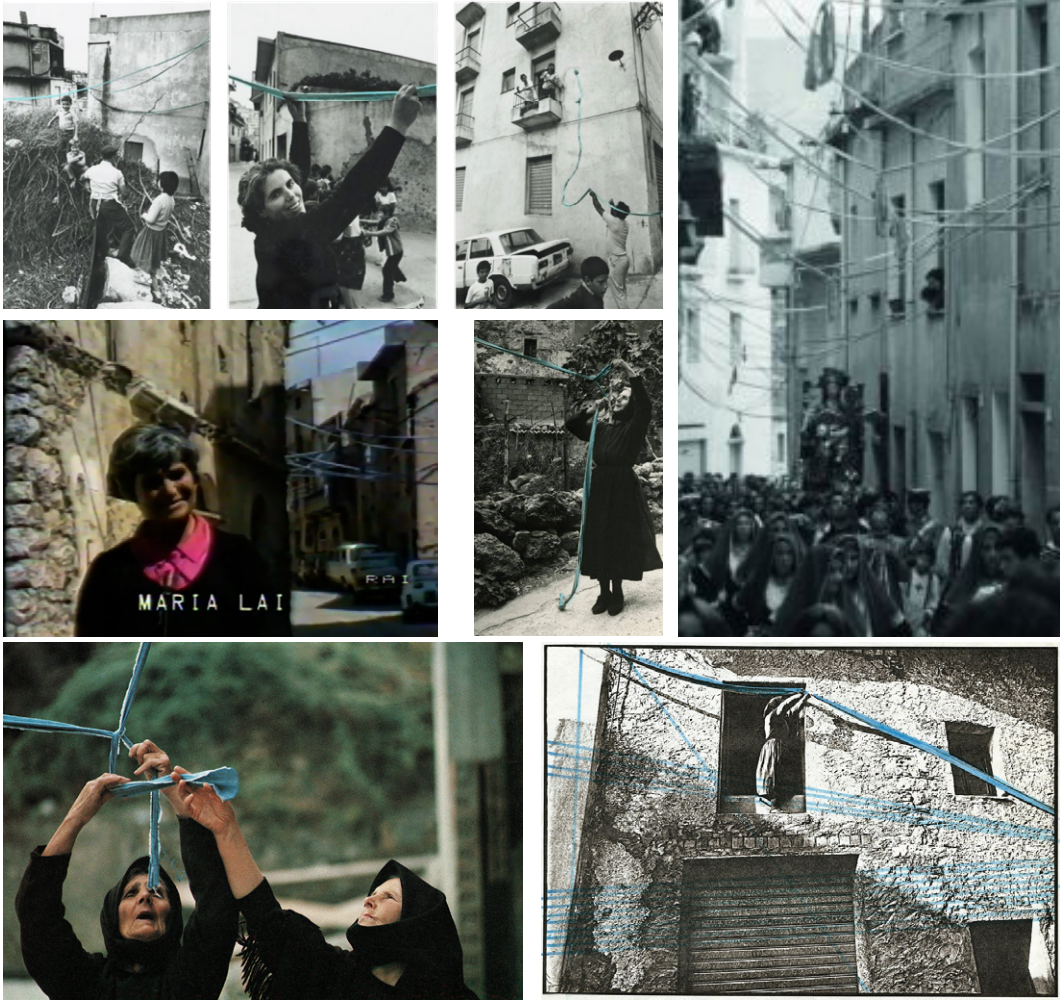
Reactivating a rural community: “Legarsi alla Montagna”



Maria Lai’s *Legarsi alla Montagna* (1981) was a collective art performance in Ulassai, where she invited residents to physically connect their homes with blue ribbons—each representing different types of relationships: knotted for friendship, threaded with bread for love, and straight for neutrality or unresolved tensions. What began as a poetic gesture made private, often invisible bonds visible, transforming them into a shared, public experience. More than symbolic, it sparked real change—reviving dialogue, trust, and ultimately leading to the creation of a textile cooperative. The project demonstrated how art could reveal and strengthen social ties while respecting individual identities, reshaping both the cultural and economic fabric of the village. This translation of solitary traditions into a collective gesture forms a core precedent for my approach in Mamoiada.

“I want to build something for the living, not the dead”
- Maria Lai



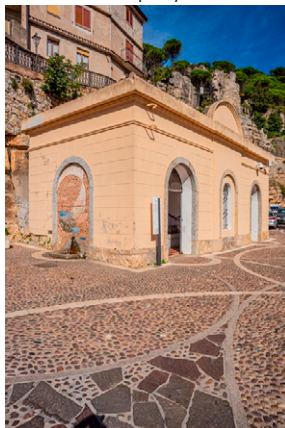


CONSEQUENCES OF THE PERFORMANCE

cooperative
textile



public permanent art
displays



art station



Reflections on the weekly brief

Both projects chosen—Ostana’s regeneration and Legarsi alla Montagna by Maria Lai—emphasize long-term community involvement, yet their spatial and symbolic impacts differ. Ostana brings together working, living, and cultural spaces in a way that embeds visitors into everyday village life. It doesn’t treat the town as a backdrop but as a living host. This highlights the value of designing for sustained rituals of use, not just built forms. Actions like repainting a wall, reopening a shutter, or reheating a kitchen are not mere maintenance—they’re part of a living cycle that keeps a place socially active.

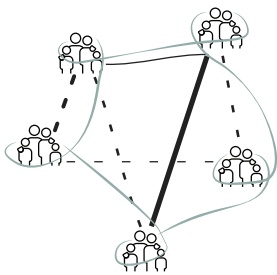
Rather than compiling a conventional list of rooms, the brief is being articulated as a set of relationships: What happens between a kitchen and a courtyard? Between a mask workshop and a market stall? Between a waiting room and a community archive? The project begins to take shape as a hypothesis—what if a civic building in Mamoiada could hold memory, care, and production together—not as isolated functions, but as a shared infrastructure? These are not vague ideas; they must be tested through drawing, modeling, and storytelling. The challenge now is to build a case—to show that these relationships are not only desirable but spatially possible, materially grounded, and temporally sustainable.

What stands out in both Ostana and Lai’s work is their attention to time: seasonality, daily rhythms, and long-term transformation. A professor’s question—“What is the state of the thing that’s made? How long is it there?”—shifts the focus. The concern becomes not only what a building is, but how it is maintained, revisited, and reinterpreted over time. In Legarsi alla Montagna, the symbolic act of tying houses with ribbon was ephemeral, yet it triggered lasting spatial and social change. Similarly, Ostana’s design choices reactivate overlooked typologies, infusing them with new, flexible programs. These projects resist monumental permanence; they embrace layered, evolving presence. This is the spirit that informs the Mamoiada proposal: to design spaces that breathe with the life of those who stayed, left, and might return.

Another critical dimension is participation—not simply inviting people to interact with architecture after construction, but involving them in its conception, funding, and ongoing relevance. A provocation from Daniel—“Who pays for this? Who maintains it? Who uses it, and when?”—raises fundamental questions about the economic ecology of Mamoiada. Could a small-scale, open workshop be both a space of learning and earning? Could a community courtyard host a mobile health clinic once a week? These aren’t additional features—they are the brief. Design must accommodate multiple actors across multiple timescales.

Drawing inspiration from Kalmar and Snozzi’s “urban dentistry” in Monte Carasso, the project explores how subtle, surgical insertions—like reactivating stairs, passages, or thresholds—can reconnect Mamoiada’s scattered spaces. Rather than grand gestures, the focus is on mapping where public interiors meet exteriors—showing how daily life flows through courtyards, shops, and welfare offices. Architecture, in this context, becomes a quiet support for movement, pause, and encounter.

Acknowledging existing relationships—whether visible or not—to encourage cooperation, spark dialogue, and generate new opportunities and connections



+

Offering a diverse cultural and productive infrastructure to foster cooperation, support local production, and attract new residents—making the multifunctional civic center a catalyst for both social and economic regeneration.



Resources in the town

Mamoiada's history reveals a deep connection between community, labor, and construction. From the collective effort of the 1930 "zorrónada" to build the town hall using locally sourced stone, to artisans working on Sardinia's railway and later contributing to the coastal tourism boom of the 1960s, building has long been a shared, adaptive skill rooted in local knowledge. These episodes highlight a form of community wealth—not just in materials, but in craftsmanship, cooperation, and resilience. Inspired by this, I've started mapping local artisans and trades—masons, woodworkers, weavers—not only to document their knowledge, but to imagine how a building could emerge from the community and for the community. Like Maria Lai's gesture of connecting homes with ribbon, this project aims to stitch together people, skills, and place to create architecture that is truly embedded—physically and culturally—in Mamoiada.

cork



granite



wool



wood





- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| ● woodworkers | ● bed & breakfasts | ● metal working | ● wineries |
| ● construction | ● restaurants | ● Weavers | ● bars |

Research plan preparations

This week we had to prepare and present our research plan to Klaske, one of the project tutors, to introduce her to our topic and explain the objectives, scope, and methodology guiding the work. The document I developed brought together the research so far, including Mamoiada's socio-economic context, the challenges of cultural commodification, and the question at the center of my project: how can communal spaces support everyday social life, foster cooperative economies, and help preserve identity within a changing rural context? I organized the plan around three main themes: memory and identity, collective space, and architecture as a tool for connecting individual practices into shared structures. I also detailed my methods—spatial analysis, precedent studies, and fieldwork—and included references like Maria Lai's Legarsi alla Montagna, the Ostana regeneration project, and adaptive civic typologies from Peccioli and Songyang.

A key development in this phase was selecting the site I plan to investigate further: Piazza Europa, at the southern edge of Mamoiada. This square brings together many of the tensions I've been studying. Once imagined as a civic space, it has gradually lost its collective function—today, it's dominated by cars, with most of its surface used for parking. Despite being called a "piazza," it functions more like a road. The surrounding area reflects a clash between the older urban logic of the town—narrow streets that serve as extensions of domestic and communal life—and newer, fenced-off, car-centric developments that fragment social rhythms. The site sits between the historic center and recent expansions, embodying the spatial and symbolic conflict between rootedness and modernization, between gathering and isolation.

In the document, I included a set of annotated images and site photographs that illustrate these conditions. One juxtaposes a historic postcard of Piazza Europa—when it was still imagined as a civic space—with its current state, dominated by asphalt and cars. Others capture the contrasting qualities on either side of the site: to the left, fenced housing and suburban-style layouts; to the right, streets that flow naturally into courtyards and shared thresholds. These images serve not just as documentation but as fragments of analysis—showing how space reflects larger social dynamics and hinting at the architectural possibilities of reclaiming this area as a genuine civic node.

Choosing Piazza Europa as a test site has helped me spatialize the abstract questions driving the project. It is where Mamoiada's past, present, and future come into visible tension—making it an ideal place to explore how architecture might mediate between continuity and change.



fascinations from within the town: fenced off, car centric developments on the left, streets as natural extension of homes on the right

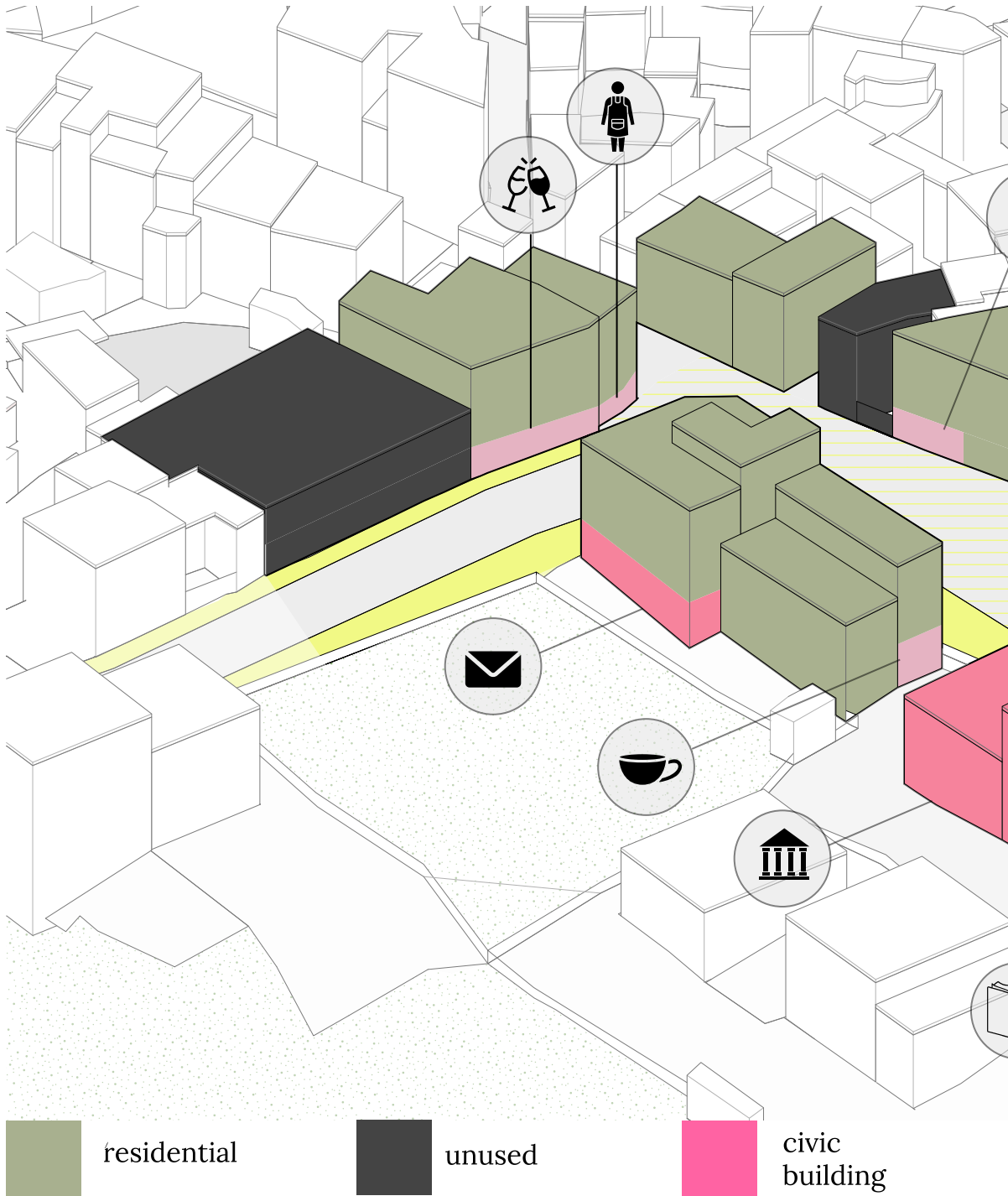


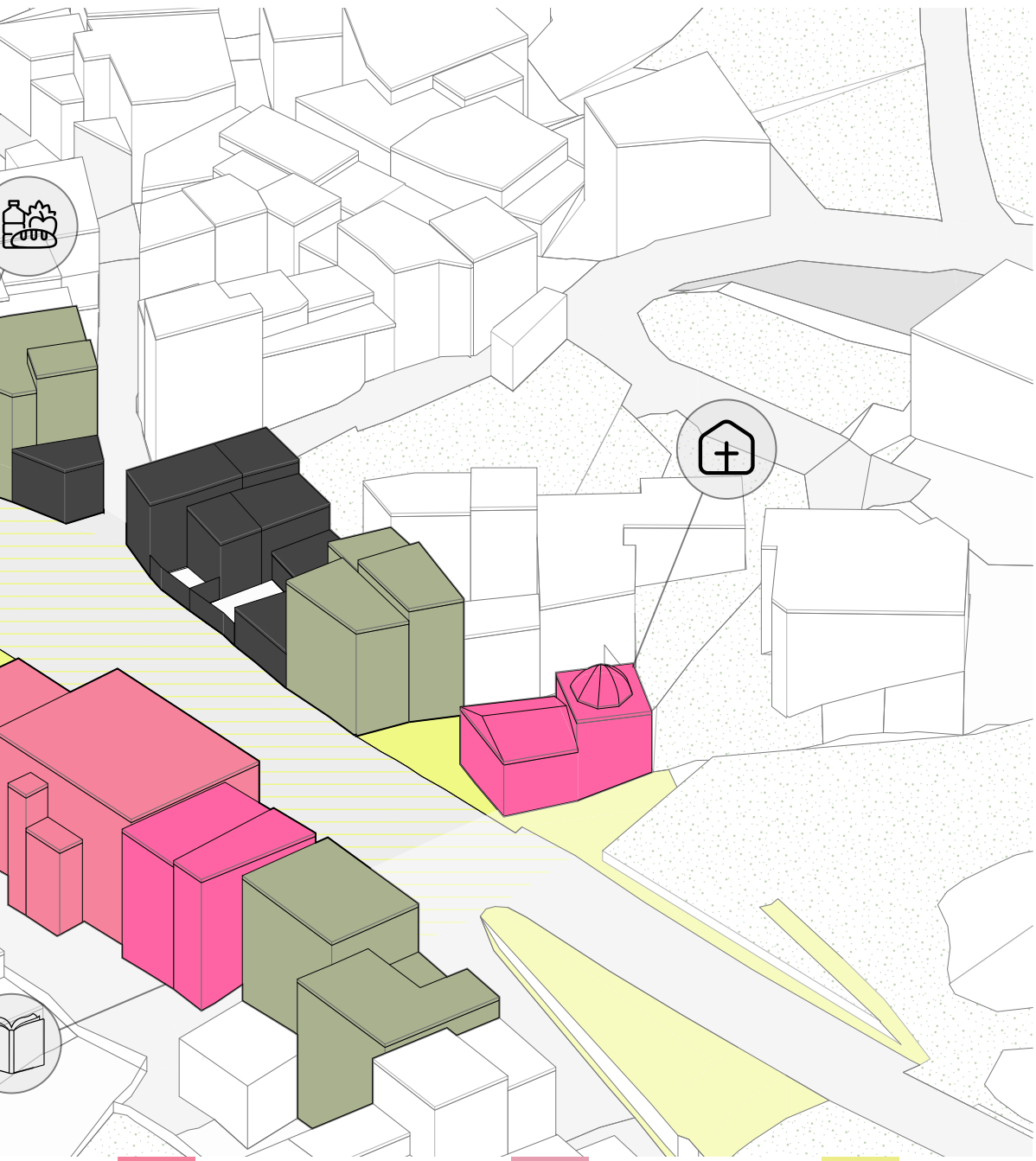
postcard and current state of Piazza Europa, site where the conflicts between new expansions and city center centuries old ways clashes, in an area which is called "square" but looks more like a road



More examples from the site: abandonment, car-dominance: the square lost its meaning of collective space and most of the space is to stop the cars

Site: Piazza Europa





public building



commercial



collective space

Week 7

Thresholds as key elements

Closed windows

To begin surveying my site, I started mapping not the buildings themselves, but the windows. Through them, I tried to understand which homes around the square are still inhabited—and which are not. The reality is harsher than expected: many houses are abandoned, sold, or visited only occasionally. The facades say everything, if you learn to read them.

There are walled-off windows—sealed, definitive. Others hide behind eternally shut wooden shutters, masking the void within. Some are only partially closed, filtering sunlight into lived-in rooms. Others swing wide open—not to freshen the air, but to reveal hollow interiors, uninhabited for years. A balcony dressed with flowers becomes a small sign of presence; life remains behind that wall. But just as often, those same balconies now display only a “For Sale” sign, the flowers long gone.

Then there are the windows that open for an hour or a weekend—a breath of air into a home abandoned long ago, briefly visited by its distant owners. Shutters waiting to be opened not by a returning resident, but by a tourist, staying for just a few nights. Roller shutters cover ground-floor workshops and storerooms—some for the evening, others permanently. A storefront either welcomes or repels, depending on the hour, or on the fate of the business behind it.

Along some walls, historic photographs have been attached to the façades—images of past lives placed in front of lifeless windows, transforming them into windows onto a time now gone. A door in the churchyard left ajar offers shade to a few seated residents, folding chairs arranged outside to catch a breeze. Nearby, an awning over the bar extends the same function—shelter, comfort, social warmth.

And then, the museum—largely shut, with minimal openings. In its silence and opacity, it resembles the masks it holds: closed faces with only the eyes revealed. Do these buildings also wear masks? Their facades still watching, but no longer speaking—yet saying so much.

Courtyard gates, once semi-public thresholds, are now often locked—except during “Cortes Apertas,” when the community opens up what was once private, offering it, momentarily, back to the public.

This is not metaphorical. It is a visible process: a slow extinguishing of light, of voices, of presence. Windows closing as people leave, or as their lives end. Mamoiada’s walls and facades tell the story with painful clarity: a story of memory, identity, and loss—but also of resilience and adaptation. A town speaking of itself, through its surfaces.

And still—there are the sounds of children playing in the street.



Closed windows

From this act of reading façades, a brief has begun to take shape—grounded in what the place reveals, in what's still present, and in what's missing. The square and its surroundings speak of disconnection, abandonment, but also of latent potential. Through this lens, the project begins to unfold not as a fixed design, but as a sequence—a gradual reactivation of space, presence, and relationships.

I imagine the work unfolding in four phases:

Phase 1: Reactivating the built fabric — intervening immediately by reactivating abandoned buildings through minimal, tactical measures. This includes enabling new forms of dwelling and working, allowing people—whether locals, returnees, or newcomers—to inhabit the center again without delay.

Phase 2: Expanding functions and enabling cooperation — introducing shared, flexible spaces that support collaboration and coexistence. This includes multifunctional structures where care, production, learning, and exchange can happen informally—spaces that create the conditions for cooperation to emerge.

Phase 3: Reclaiming and linking public space — rethinking how public space operates beyond isolated squares, re-establishing connections across streets, thresholds, and residual spaces. These spaces can become active again through everyday uses, informal gathering, and seasonal rituals.

Phase 4: Supporting collective life — strengthening the infrastructures that sustain Mamoiada's collective rhythms: Carnival, Cortes Apertas, grape harvests, communal meals. Architecture here works in the background—quietly enabling logistics, participation, and intergenerational continuity.

The aim is not transformation through a singular gesture, but a strategy of care, rhythm, and return. To support what already exists, and to make space for what could begin again.



need

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4

missing
services

work together

gathering

celebrating

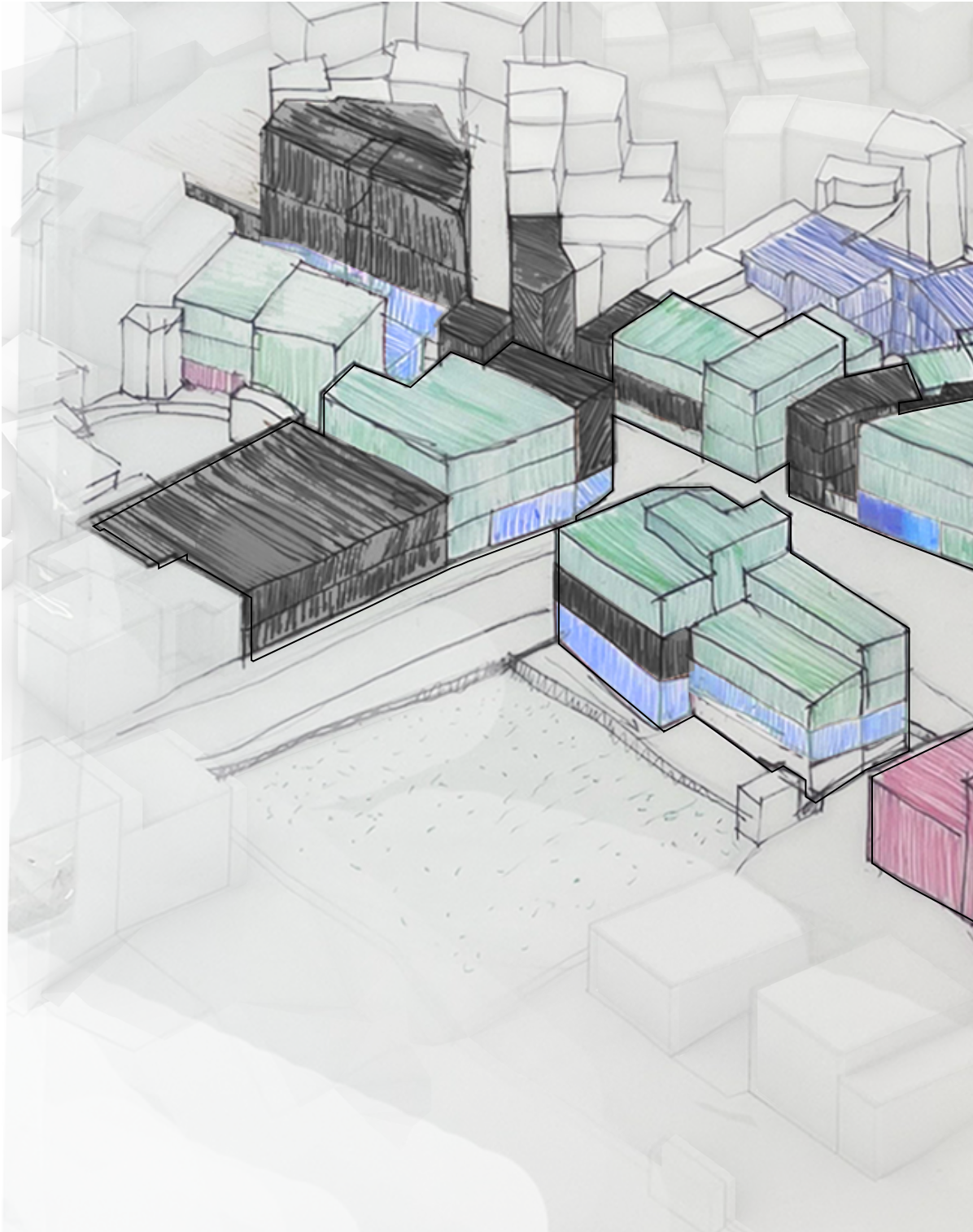
architectural response

providing
health and
production
spaces

collaborative
process

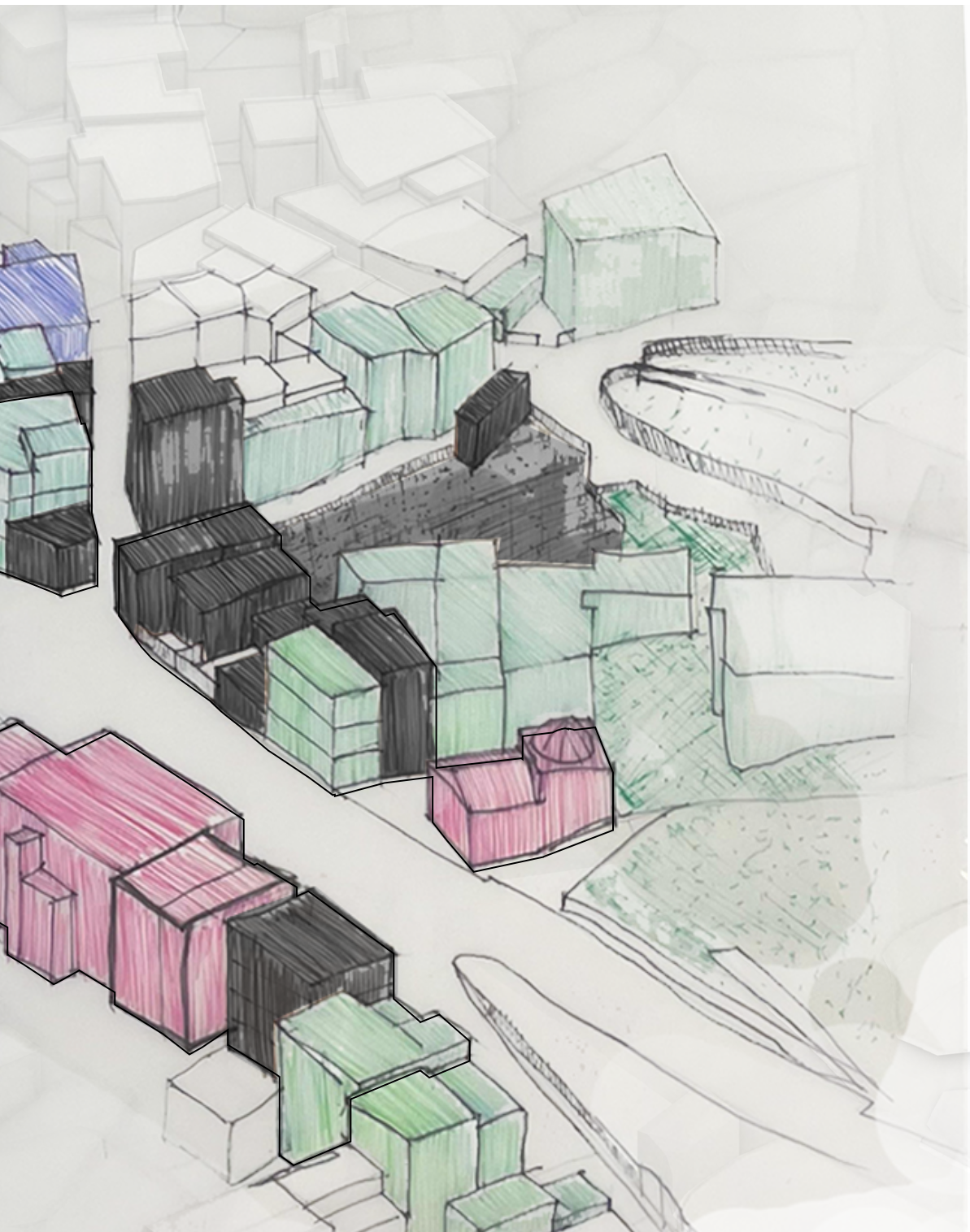
designing public
squares

designing
temporality



● Residential

● Abandoned



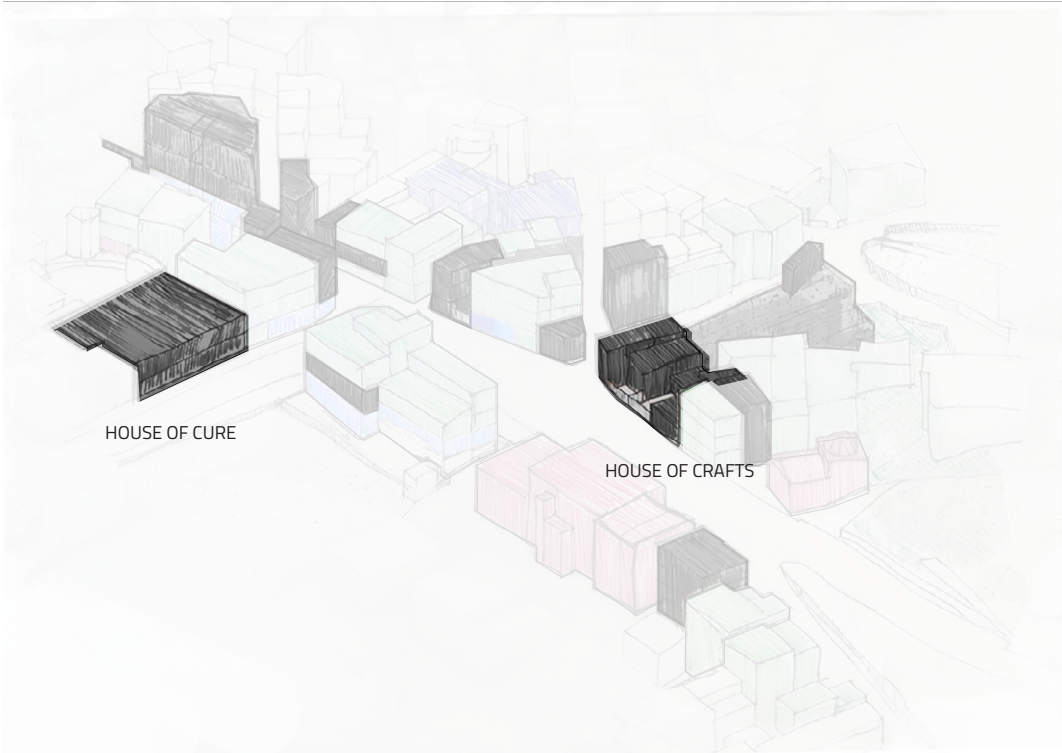
Cultural



Services / Shops

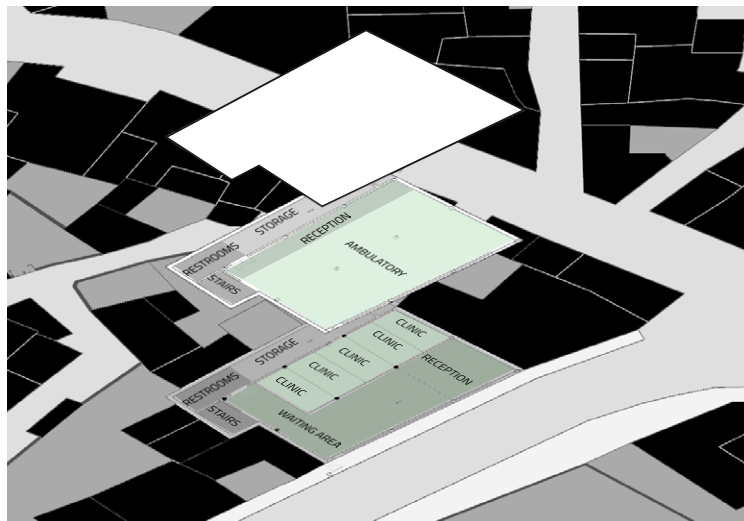
STEP 1

- Address urgent needs (social and economical)
- Immediate reuse of spaces
- Spark networks of cooperation



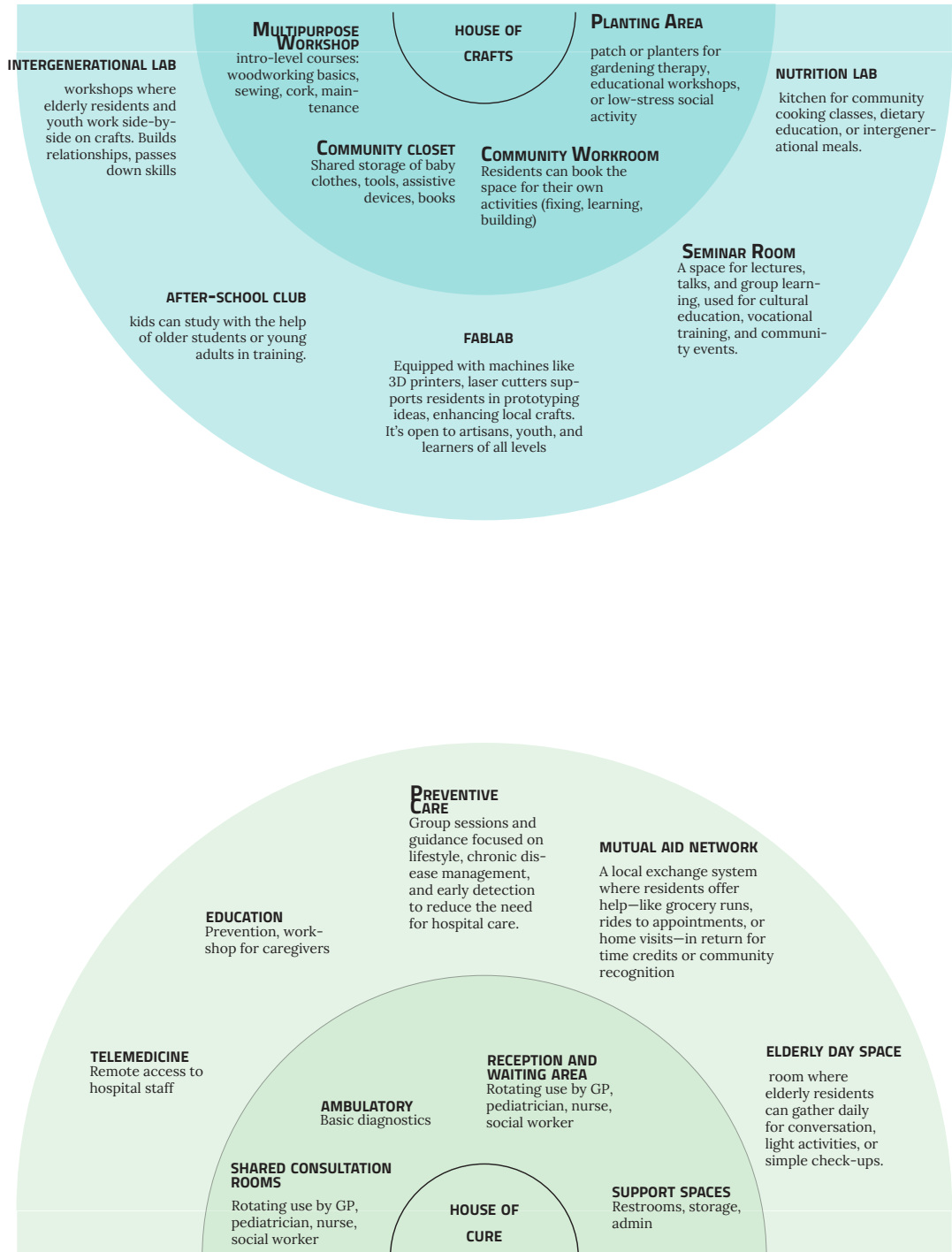
HOUSE OF CARE

- AMBULATORY**
Basic diagnostics
- SHARED CLINICS**
Rotating use by GP, pediatrician, nurse, social worker
- RECEPTION AND WAITING AREA**
Rotating use by GP, pediatrician, nurse, social worker
- SUPPORT SPACES**
Restrooms, storage, admin

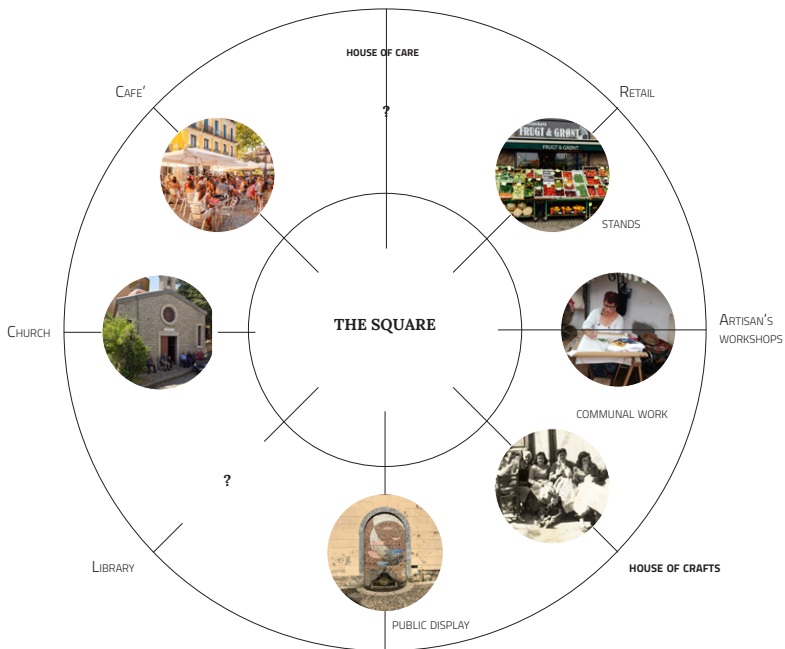
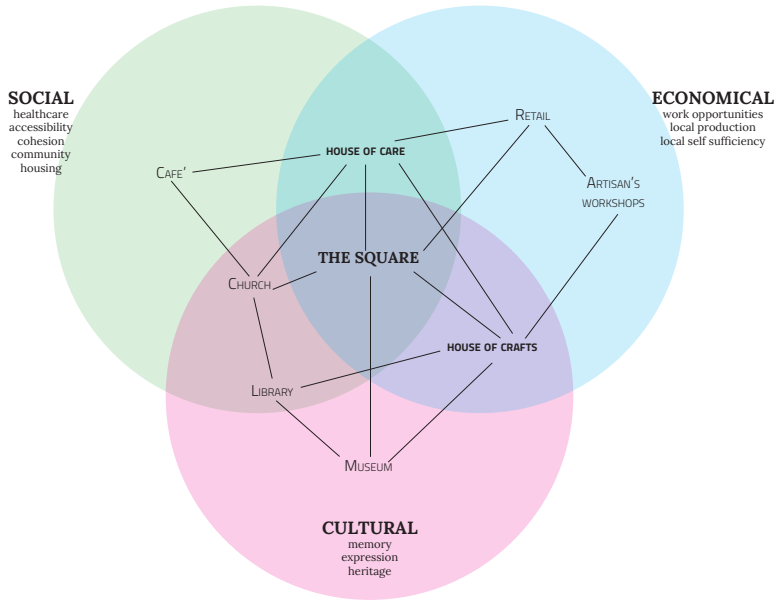


STEP 2

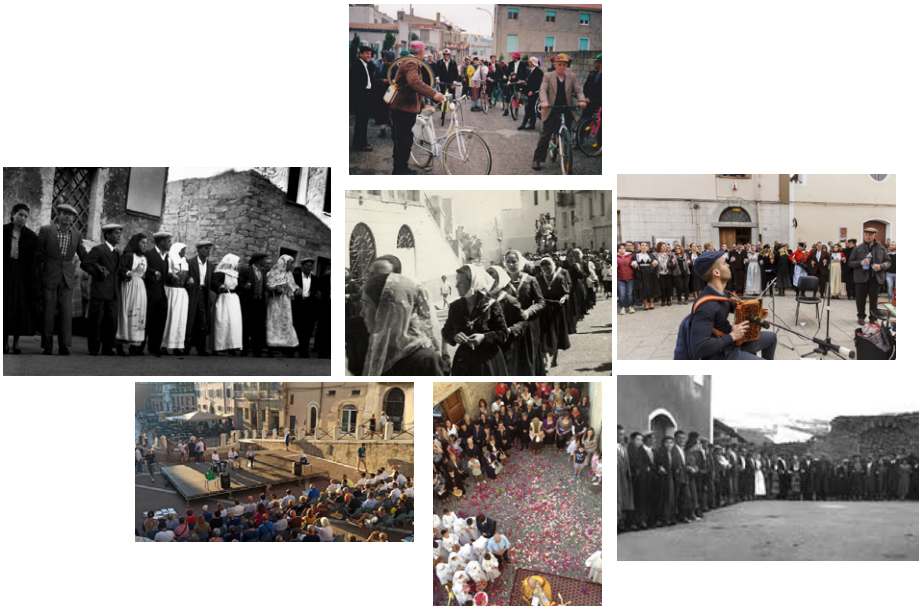
- design is shaped by users needs
- collaborative process between users, designers, builders



STEP 3
 - design the network of relationships
 - designing the square



STEP 4
- design temporal structures and outdoor
furnitures for collective events happening in
the square
- everyday life as special as festive



Week 8

Site visits

29.03.2025 - MARIANGELA AND ANDREA

On my first visit to Mamoiada, I walked through the historic center with my aunt and uncle. As we moved through the streets, they shared their reflections on the town's changes—what had been lost, what had been reshaped, and how the town today often feels disconnected from the identity of its people.

We passed by the local police station, a fenced-off and isolated building that, to them, symbolized the exclusion of state presence—functioning more as an imposed object than a civic anchor. When we stopped outside my aunt's family home, she pointed out something simple but powerful: the sound of children playing nearby. For her, and for many in the town, that sound signals something deeper—a sign of life returning. In Mamoiada, the presence of people matters more than the perfection of buildings. The town's future lies in its inhabitants, not just its aesthetics.

As we continued walking, we discussed the town's recent urban developments. They were critical of the new paving in the center—too flat, too polished, lacking texture. They also commented on the stylistic inconsistency of the buildings, which, in their view, reflect a confused identity. We talked about the municipality's plan to apply an invented “Sardinian style” to bring visual coherence to the town. My critique was that this aesthetic references a past that never truly existed. My aunt confirmed that houses were historically made of granite and, when resources allowed, were plastered—not left in raw stone as is often done today under the guise of authenticity. In this light, many current “restorations” feel more like architectural fiction than continuity.

Later, we had lunch at a small restaurant-market facing my project site. It's run by Andrea, a local winemaker and restaurateur, who transformed what used to be the town's main market—previously run by his father—into a hybrid space that functions as a shop, restaurant, and production site. While we decided what to eat, he was busy labeling wine bottles at a table made from barrel planks crafted by his father. Although he and my aunt had never met, when she mentioned her father—the town's former veterinarian—Andrea immediately recognized the name. He remembered him as an “omine,” a man deeply respected by the community and often asked to mediate family conflicts. Despite having moved to Sassari later in life for medical care, Mamoiada remained his emotional center. “Bidda,” my aunt said, meant Mamoiada—always.

Andrea welcomed us warmly, and we ended up having a long and layered conversation. He spoke of what he considers a good life: breathing clean air, being close to the land, interacting with clients, picking grapes and tasting them during harvest. He was proud that his wine reaches people from over 20 countries, and yet he said he doesn't feel removed from the world—he meets the world through his work. For him, hospitality isn't about maximizing profits but about building relationships. The return of a guest is more valuable than their first visit. He believes people don't come to Mamoiada for its beauty, but for the authenticity they feel through the people who live there.

That connection, he said, is contagious.

This belief also fuels his strong stance on land ownership. He worries about vineyards being bought by outsiders, which could make the next generation of Mamoiadini dependent on non-locals. He sees a clear and necessary connection between territory, community, and self-determination.

We talked about how the town changed since the 1990s. Andrea recalled the “harsh times”—periods of internal conflict and a lack of institutional support that led to people being sent away under police protection. My aunt mentioned how, historically, the absence of state structures forced people to rely on revenge as a form of justice. Since then, the town has experienced a shift. The opening of the museum in 2000 acted as a cultural catalyst, sparking community pride, the formation of local associations, and the foundation of a winemakers’ cooperative.



My uncle pointed out how this cultural revival has physically shaped the landscape—Mamoiada is now surrounded by vineyards. The cooperative pays one of the highest wages in Sardinia’s agricultural sector: €13 per hour. Both men and women work in the fields. Young people study and some return to apply their knowledge locally. This contrasts with other rural areas where agriculture is increasingly disconnected from the land and often depends on migrant labor.

Still, toward the end of our conversation, Andrea acknowledged a contradiction: many young people still leave. This reinforced for me the importance of imagining more diverse opportunities for those who want to stay—beyond winemaking and tourism. While both industries are valuable, they can’t carry the future of the town alone.

What I took from this day was not just a deeper understanding of Mamoiada’s physical and social fabric, but a clearer sense of the emotional infrastructure that sustains it. The value of the place lies not only in its history or scenery, but in the network of relationships, memories, and commitments that people like Andrea and my family continue to nurture.

02.04.2025 - SARA

I arrived in Mamoiada around 10 a.m. to meet with Sara, a local woman whose blog and community projects I had followed with interest for some time. We sat down in a small bar in the town center, ordered coffee, and began talking. I had come with questions about tradition, memory, and transformation—but the conversation quickly unfolded into something richer, shaped by Sara’s strong opinions, sharp observations, and deep care for her town. She didn’t speak in abstractions; everything she said was tied to places, gestures, buildings, and lived experience.

Across the course of that morning, we talked about many things: the contradictions of architectural restoration, the erasure of local toponymy, the disappearing traces of shepherd paths, and the commodification of traditions like the Mamuthones. We also spoke about the challenge of intergenerational connection, the limits of institutions, and the kinds of spaces needed for a community to care for itself.

1. Architectural Contradictions & Urban Identity

We talked about Mamoiada’s architectural contradictions. Sara explained that plaster—historically essential for protecting granite homes in the town’s humid climate—was abandoned in the 1970s, when exposed stone became fashionable. Seen as a sign of authenticity, it proved damaging: churches were stripped, suffered moisture damage, and many were eventually demolished or re-covered. The result was a built environment shaped more by trend than by care.

She noted the irony that Costa Smeralda—a tourist enclave—preserves more architectural continuity with Sardinian traditions than Mamoiada’s own so-called restorations. For her, these choices reflect an underlying discomfort with local identity.

I shared my impression of Mamoiada as a town in flux—spatially and culturally. Sara agreed, though she emphasized that many of these changes were poorly executed. A telling example was the expropriation of farmland to create new neighborhoods. She recalled “il mandorleto,” a grove where children once played and collected almonds—long gone, though the name survives in the neighborhood it once defined.

2. Landscapes, Paths, and Cultural Continuity

Despite her critique, Sara doesn’t dwell in nostalgia. She’s pragmatic: her focus is on preserving what remains and building from it. One area she’s passionate about is reclaiming the shepherd paths that once crisscrossed the landscape—routes shaped by the practice of transhumance. Historically, these paths were open and accessible, part of daily life. Today, most are fenced off behind private property. Yet on historical maps from the IGM (Military Geographic Institute), they’re still visible. For Sara, these routes are not only relevant for trekking, but vital for restoring public access and cultural continuity.

3. Rituals, Memory, and the Role of the Museum

When we turned to the subject of tradition, Sara posed a pointed question: “Cosa è rimasto del tempo delle maschere?”—What remains of the time of the masks? She explained that the Mamuthones and Issohadores once emerged from a worldview rooted in the land, seasonal cycles, and the sacred. Wearing the mask was a ritual, not a performance—an act of communication with nature’s forces. Today, she worries, that meaning has been diluted. The rituals risk becoming spectacles, repeated outside their original context, often for tourism or funding. “What are we really representing now?” she asked.

Her critique is not nostalgic but grounded in care. She grew up with these traditions and saw her father craft masks with purpose and respect. She isn’t calling for a return to the past, but questioning how such practices might evolve without becoming hollow. “Preservation is not the opposite of change,” she said, “but a way of caring through change.”

She also shared her concerns about the local museum. While it once helped restore pride in the town’s heritage, she now sees it as increasingly static and distanced from everyday life. In her view, it could benefit from being complemented by more hands-on, participatory initiatives—spaces that allow for cultural practices to continue and adapt, rather than remain confined to display cases.

4. Future Generations, Infrastructure, and Everyday Practices

Sara shared a story about an elderly woman who had offered to donate her house to the municipality to turn it into a care center. The proposal was declined—a missed opportunity, in her view, that pointed to the limits of institution-led initiatives and the need for more citizen-driven solutions.

She also spoke about generational divides. At events like the carnival, older residents gather in central squares while younger people tend to separate. For Sara, this reflects not apathy, but the lack of spaces that foster intergenerational exchange—something that must be intentionally designed.

One of her ongoing efforts, *le vie dell’acqua*, traces the town’s historical wells and water infrastructure. Once central to neighborhood life, most have disappeared under car-centric redevelopment. She wonders whether it’s time to shift priorities toward a more walkable, socially responsive urban fabric.

Sara is pragmatic about preservation. Not everything should be revived—some elements no longer serve a purpose. But what remains meaningful should be cared for. She and her family, for example, restore old furniture discarded in renovations—a quiet act of resistance against the erosion of local skills and self-sufficiency.

For her, Mamoiada too often realizes the value of its identity only once it’s nearly lost.

08.04.2025 - SARA AND STUDENTS

The day before leaving Sardinia, I joined Sara on a guided walk through Mamoiada's historic center, initially organized for a local middle school class and a group of Spanish exchange students. Though informal, the walk offered a valuable lens through which to observe how built heritage, everyday space, and cultural memory intersect in practice—particularly when activated through collective experience.

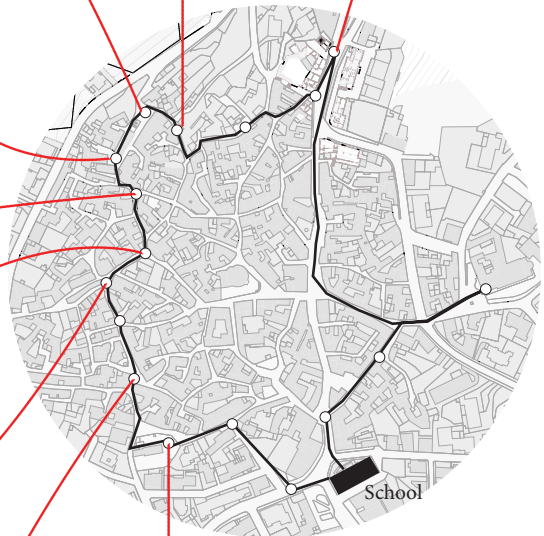
Sara led the group through key sites—churches, fountains, squares, and former wells—linking them to the town's layered spatial and social histories. What stood out, however, were the unplanned interactions that emerged along the way. In one small square, a grandmother spontaneously handed out candies to the students playing near a shaded fountain, revealing how marginal public spaces can still serve as informal social nodes.

A mural illustrating a local legend meant to scare children away from wells and then statue of the Tenores, a local traditional type of singing, prompted conversations about oral histories and traditional songs, illustrating how material elements in the urban landscape can continue to mediate intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Later, a resident opened access to one of the town's remaining wells, describing its historical role in structuring both domestic routines and communal interaction—offering a direct contrast with today's more individualized infrastructure.

These encounters did not represent exceptional moments, but rather pointed to the latent capacity of everyday places to support learning, memory, and belonging when re-engaged through shared use. I chose to document the route through a selection of photographs—not for aesthetic purposes, but to trace how space is inhabited, interpreted, and briefly reactivated during collective movement.

Seen through this lens, the walk becomes a case study in how spatial form and social function can be momentarily realigned through participation and narrative. In the context of my broader project, it reinforces the idea that meaningful engagement with place does not depend on new architectural forms or large-scale interventions, but on recognizing, reactivating, and connecting what is already there—physically and socially.



08.04.2025 - RINA AND FRANCA

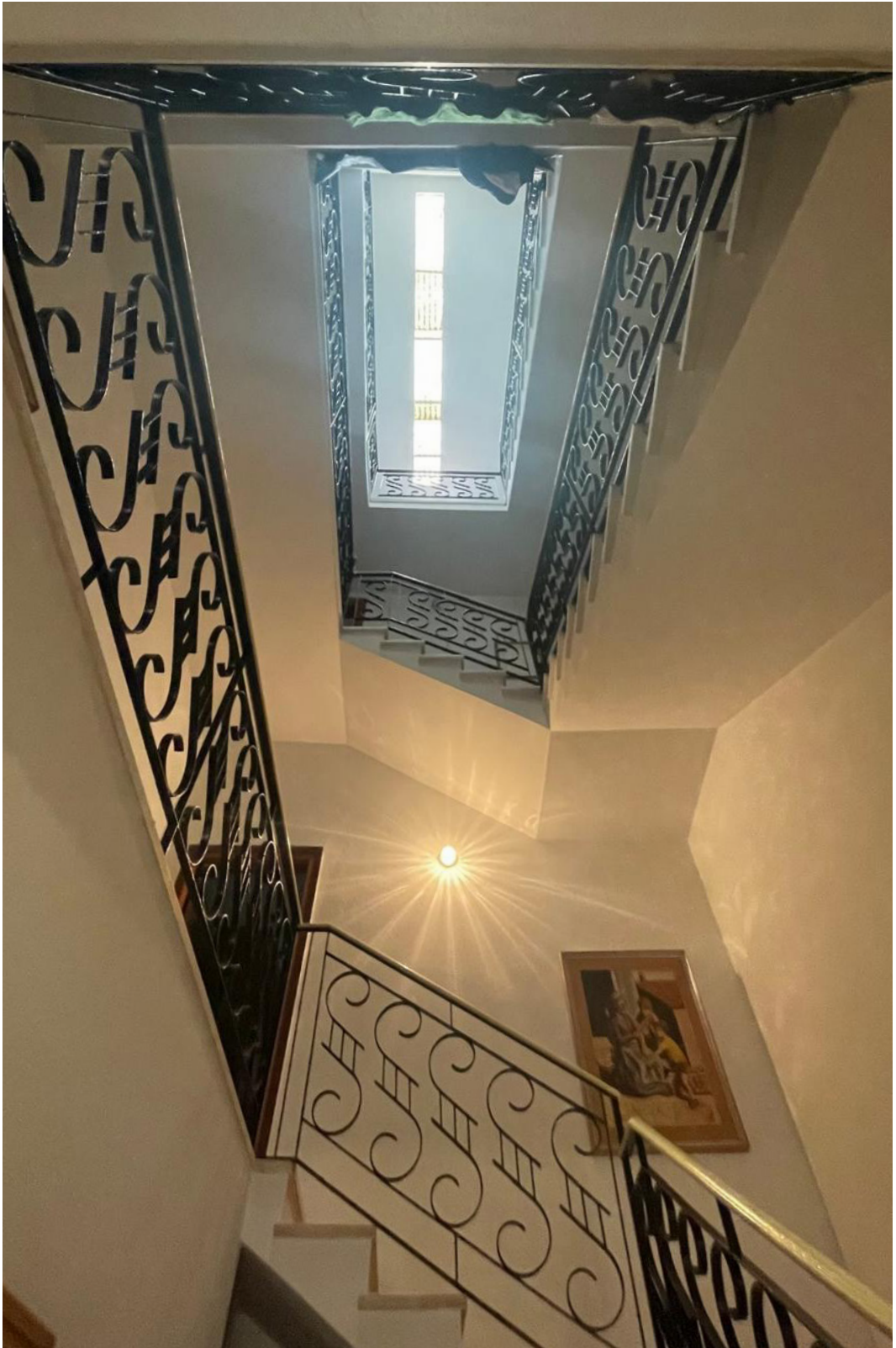
After the tour, I went to visit Rina, a shopowner in the city center and a former neighbor of my aunt's family when they lived in Mamoiada. Although we had never met before, she welcomed me with warmth and generosity, and we quickly fell into a rich conversation about daily life in the town.

Afterwards, I visited Rina, a shopowner in the city center and a former neighbor of my aunt's family. Although we'd never met, she welcomed me warmly. She and her sister live in their family home, a large multi-story house built slowly by their father over a lifetime. Despite its size and elegance, she kept apologizing for not being "prepared" to host. In truth, she and her sister were incredibly kind, and they even invited me to stay for lunch.

As we ate, we spoke about the town's changes over the years. They told me they feel people in Mamoiada have grown more individualistic, contrasting with a past where people acted with a deep sense of mutual support, trusting that good would come back around. "Having less," they said, "made people more empathetic." A simple story captured this ethos: about fifty years ago, their mother was wearing her traditional costume during a town event when it started to rain. A woman, without hesitation, gave her an umbrella. That small gesture is still alive in their memory—symbolic of a way of thinking that valued care and connection over self-interest.

As they put it, when you have little, what you do have becomes deeply meaningful—and when it's missing, you understand its weight. Sharing, then, isn't just generosity, but solidarity. They illustrated this with a story about their mother: around fifty years ago, during a town event, she was wearing her traditional costume when it began to rain. A woman from the town offered her umbrella without hesitation. That small gesture stayed with them—not because it was extraordinary, but because it reflected a mentality of care that has since faded, when people instinctively supported each other, knowing what it meant to go without.

We also spoke about the local museum, another symbol of this shift. Rina told me that it used to be run by people from Mamoiada and felt like a true extension of the community. Residents would lend traditional costumes, heirlooms, and handmade masks to be displayed—objects that held personal significance but were shared proudly to tell the town's story. The museum was a point of pride, and its purpose was clear: to celebrate and promote the culture of Mamoiada. But in recent years, it has become a "national" museum, with stricter rules and external management. In Rina's words, it is now run by "outsiders," and feels increasingly disconnected from the people it represents. The focus, she said, has shifted from cultural storytelling and community pride to revenue generation. What was once a participatory resource has become something more distant, more transactional.



Week 9

P1 presentation

09.04.2025 - On my way back

What struck me most was not the sense of loss—that's visible enough—but how differently people relate to that loss. Some fight it directly, like Sara, tracing forgotten paths on historical maps, calling out architectural fiction for what it is. Others, like Rina and her sister, hold on to what remains—not as nostalgia, but as quiet resistance. Others still, like Andrea, build something new from what's left—not replicating the past, but drawing strength from it.

Together, they revealed not just a town in transition, but one that's split between forms of remembering and forgetting. Between those who feel excluded from the shaping of their future, and those who try, with the tools they have, to influence it—sometimes by restoring old furniture, sometimes by fermenting wine.

It's not about who's right. It's about what it means when a place no longer reflects the people who live there—when design decisions and policies abstract away from lived experience. What happens when tradition is curated rather than embodied? When memory is institutionalized, but no longer shared? These aren't architectural questions in the narrow sense, but they cut straight to the heart of why architecture matters.

Being there made me think about how public space functions—not just physically, but symbolically. How a fountain or a square can either hold a community together or become invisible when daily life moves elsewhere. And how sometimes the most important thing isn't the presence of people, but their sense that they still have a claim on the place.

There's also something I only started to grasp in the last conversations—this tension between pride and fatigue. People like Sara or Andrea invest so much emotional labor into the town, but there's a limit. The recurring sense that someone else should care too—that institutions, younger generations, the municipality—should take up their share of the work. This fragility of hope, of local effort without structural support, is what stuck with me the most.

So as I return to the Netherlands, it feels less like coming back from a research trip and more like coming out of a long conversation I wasn't just listening to—I was implicated in. My role isn't to “give voice” to Mamoiada. The voices are there, loud and clear. My responsibility is to make space for them in the work I do—to ensure that my proposals don't just “reference” context but grow out of it, answer to it, carry its contradictions.

This project can't be about solving problems. It has to be about holding tensions: between old and new, inside and outside, visibility and care. That's what Mamoiada showed me—through its people more than its spaces. And it's what I'll carry with me now: not a fixed understanding, but a more grounded uncertainty.

P1 presentation

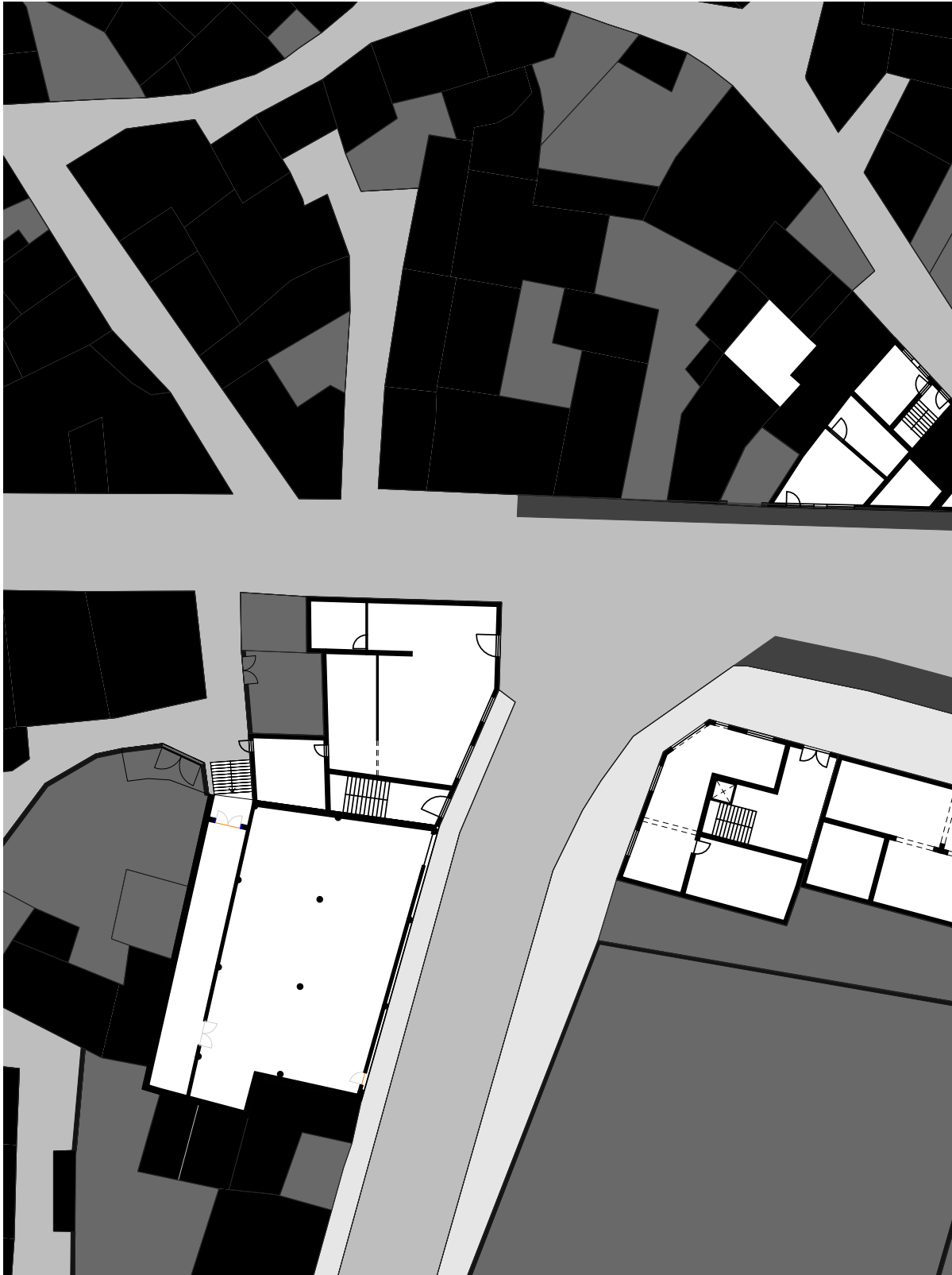
I began with a short film—intuitive, narrative, observational—intended to immerse the viewer in the atmosphere of Mamoiada. The film wove together footage of daily life, abandoned buildings, interviews, and landscape shots, aiming to communicate the emotional and spatial conditions of the town. It wasn't yet a project, but an attempt to frame the problem through presence: showing the town as it is, and suggesting what might be missing.

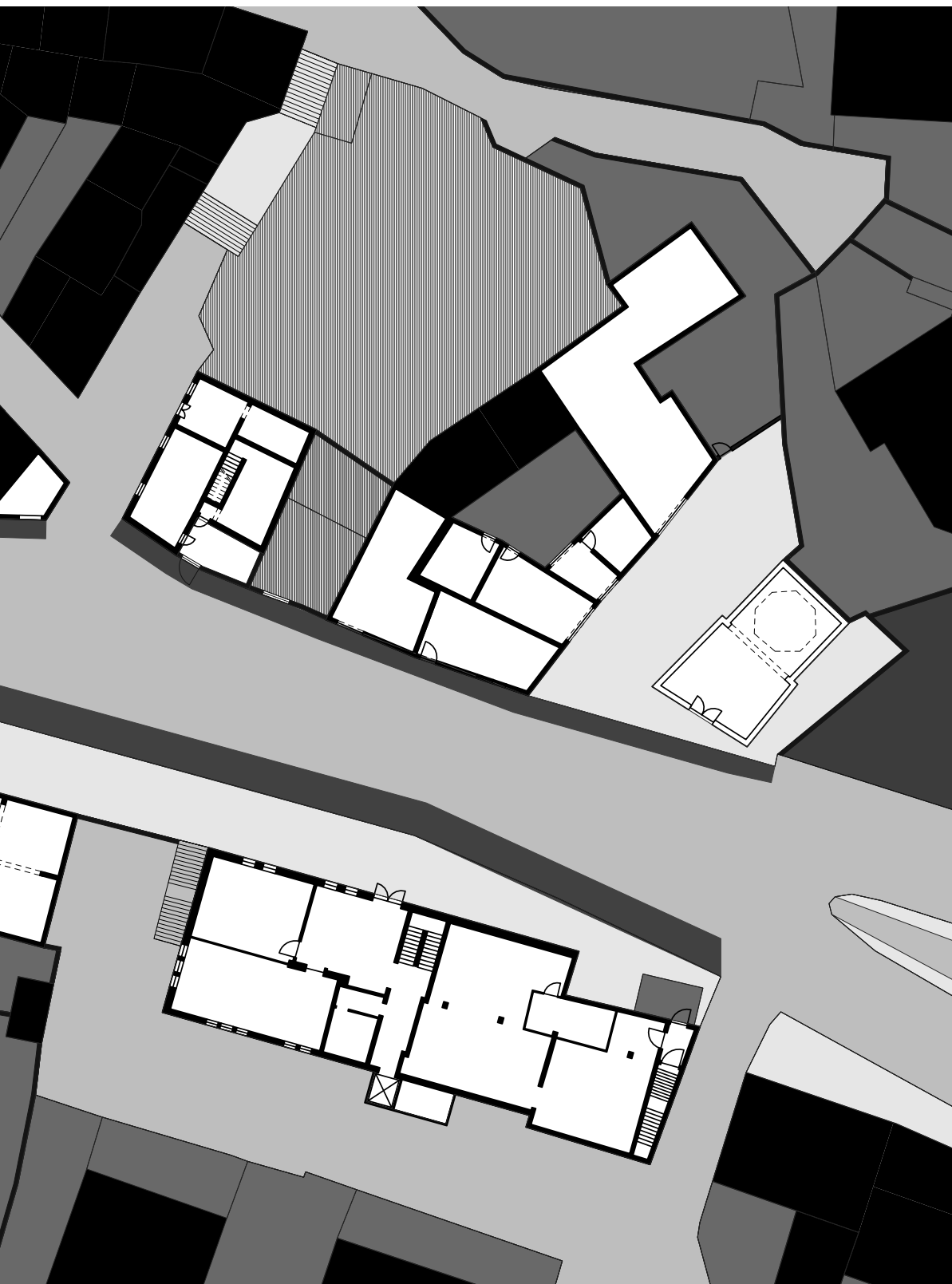
From there, I organised the work thematically, around the social narratives I had collected and the tensions I had observed: the gaps between generations, the loss of coherence in the urban fabric, the abundance of unused spaces, and the potential of collective life still lingering in rituals and crafts. I introduced the House of Care and Crafts as a way to address some of these tensions—through a program that brought together health, production, and gathering. It was conceived as a catalyst for revitalising Mamoiada by meeting people's needs while reinforcing existing social structures.

What the feedback revealed, though, was that the proposal still felt somewhat imposed. The logic was programmatic, not spatial. The town shows clear signs of erosion—not just socially, but physically: spaces have been filled arbitrarily, extensions built without coherence, and public ground gradually lost to curbs, parking, or leftover infrastructure. The real task, then, wasn't to add more, but to understand what holds the place together, and how that might be reinforced. The film was useful in setting a tone, but I hadn't yet translated that sensibility into architectural clarity.

The feedback also pushed me to reconsider scale. Many of the strongest parts of the site—the moments where streets widen, where green spaces bleed into urban ground, or where walls and thresholds quietly define relationships—aren't about programme, but about spatial intelligence. As Matteo suggested, rather than designing “new” things, I needed to understand and reveal these everyday places, how they function, and what they need to keep functioning. This meant paying closer attention to walls, gates, wells, edges, thresholds—elements that organise public and private life in Mamoiada, often without drawing attention to themselves.

From that, I understood that the project could not begin with a final object like the House of Care and Crafts. That might still exist later on, but it must come as a result—not a starting point. The starting point had to be the ground: drawing, modelling, documenting, and observing what is already there. As Matteo said, “if you draw it, you know it.” This has shaped my approach since, moving from programme to place, from concept to continuity.





WEEK 10

Research plan
P1 Reflections

(re)Framing

The week after P1 was the first moment I could fully focus on what I had clearly been missing: a strong and coherent narrative. Up until then, I had thought people were the key to explaining it—but I realised that wasn't enough. The Research Plan assignment became the opportunity to completely restructure my thinking and define a set of consistent and grounded topics that could guide and communicate the core of my research.

I started by looking back at what I had most recently developed: the proposal for the House of Craft and Care, and the initial narrative I had begun to build around abandonment—primarily observed through the windows of the town, and how this condition directly affects the built environment. My instinctive response had been to address that abandonment head-on: to stop the bleeding. I imagined a process of interventions that would trigger the occupation of empty spaces, which in turn would stimulate further acts of care and reappropriation.

But through the feedback I received, particularly during P1, it became clear that what I had framed as the third phase of my proposal should in fact be the starting point. The direction was to begin from what is already there, to recognise and support what still works—its spaces, its people—and understand what they need. Only from that can new programmes emerge and abandoned spaces be gradually reintegrated.

That shift in perspective also came through conversations and idea-sharing with Stephanie. Despite the different contexts, our projects deal with surprisingly similar conditions: the loss of collective public space, the residual landscapes left behind by modernisation, and the disrespect or neglect of existing structures. We're both looking at the past not with nostalgia, but with the intention of recognising what was working and understanding how to support or reintroduce it in meaningful ways.

One project in particular crystallised this shift for me: 7 Small Interventions in Monte, a rural Swiss town facing many of the same spatial challenges as Mamoiada. The modesty of their approach—the scale, the attention to daily life, the quiet presence of craft—felt like a direct response to the questions I was asking. Seeing the before-and-after photos was symbolic. It helped me see my role not as a problem-solver proposing bold programmes, but as someone working carefully and precisely, facilitating daily life through well-crafted, minimal interventions that invite people to care for their spaces again.

To absorb all this and give the project a clearer frame, I began writing down in as few words as possible what I aim to do. The result was a set of verbs that now guide the work:

revitalise – repair – restore – reconnect – redefine – rebuild – **restitch**.



Studio SER, 7 small interventions in Monte, 2022
 source: Studio SER

Collecting case studies

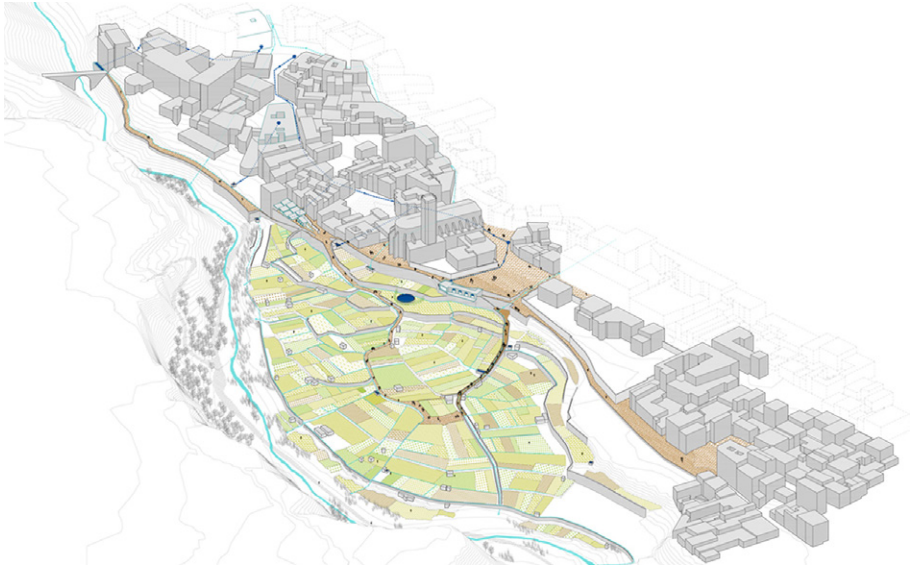
The research plan became the tool to give clarity and structure to my scope. I needed to define what is driving me, what I'm aiming to do, and how I position myself in relation to the challenges facing towns like Mamoiada. Small towns make up a large part of Europe's landscape and cultural identity, yet they are increasingly losing their spatial coherence and social function. In many cases, they are turning into fragmented outskirts, bypassed by development, with their public spaces reduced to leftover infrastructure and their historic forms replaced by detached, suburban typologies.

My objective is to work against this tendency—not through major transformation, but through small, precise, and place-specific interventions. I'm interested in how the town can be restitched: physically, socially, symbolically. The question is not only how to revitalise abandoned spaces, but how to support what still exists, reinforce the patterns that continue to hold meaning, and give spatial clarity to what has become incoherent. In Mamoiada, everything is already there—sometimes visible, sometimes hidden, often disconnected. My task is to reveal and reconnect.

Many case studies helped shape and affirm this position. Beyond **Monte**, where minimal interventions revealed how small changes could improve daily life, other examples offered equally valuable insights. The **Irrigation Path in Caldes de Montbui** reframed a neglected agricultural edge as shared space, reconnecting public life with traditional water systems and self-managed farming. In **Oliana**, subtle ground reshaping and surface treatments restored continuity to a fragmented centre, making terrain and movement legible again. **Ripoll** used a new steel canopy and footbridge to reconnect the town across the river, transforming a void into a civic threshold. **Monte Carasso** showed how architecture rooted in local form and material can quietly reorganise a town's core, while **Salemi** demonstrated how ruins could be embraced as open civic space, resisting nostalgic reconstruction and instead creating new collective meaning.

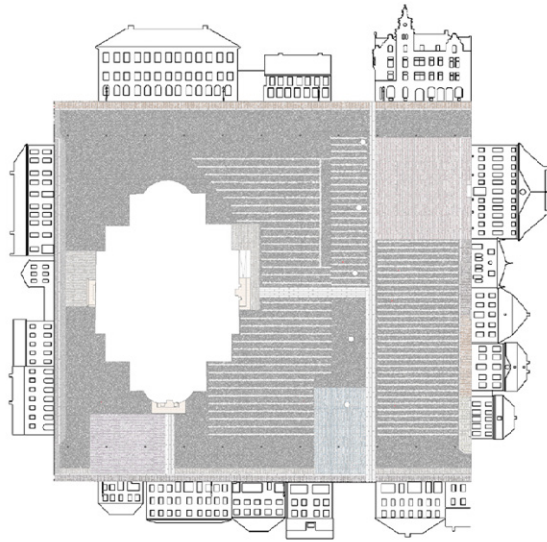
Across these examples, the common thread is a strategy of repair and reconnection, not replacement. They share an ethic of doing only what's necessary, but doing it well: stitching back the broken urban fabric, reinforcing social infrastructure, and using architecture to give dignity and coherence to everyday life. They work on the ground level, using local materials, modest means, and attention to terrain, craft, and memory. They are not about solving everything—they are about making space for life to return.

What I carry forward is a project grounded in careful observation and deliberate action—one that works through small, site-specific gestures to reconnect the town with its landscape, its rhythms, and its people. Rather than proposing a single building or overarching masterplan, the aim is to intervene where it matters most: on the ground, in the everyday, through a process of subtle transformation that gives coherence back to what has been lost or fragmented.



CAVAA arquitectes, Recovery of the irrigation system at thermal gardens in Caldes de Montbui, 2017
source: divisare

Alvaro Siza, Salemi, 19XX
source: [arquitectureviva](#)



Caruso St John Architects, Stortorget Square, Kalmar, 2003
source: architectureviva

Architect as weaver

This way of working—careful, precise, grounded in context—found strong echoes in the practices and projects I was drawn to. The more I studied architects working through minimal, site-specific, and respectful interventions, the more I began to understand not just what I wanted to do, but how to think about my role.

These projects resonated not only for what they produced, but for how they worked: embracing modest means, drawing from what exists, finding value in the overlooked. They gave language to what I had been circling around—the metaphor of the architect as a weaver emerged from there.

It didn't emerge from theory alone, but from looking closely at projects that dealt with fragmented territories, residual spaces, and layered histories—projects that mended the urban fabric without erasing its irregularities.

The image of the patchwork became especially important here: not a uniform surface, but a composition of distinct parts, stitched together with care. Its strength lies in its difference—its beauty in the juxtaposition of textures, patterns, and colours. **The aim is not to smooth things over, but to hold them together meaningfully.**

The town of Mamoiada is already a kind of patchwork—physically, socially, and historically. Built over time through layers of adaptation, its fabric is shaped by agricultural terraces, clustered homes, stone walls, seasonal rituals, and the slow erosion of modern neglect. There's no single figure that defines it. What exists is a dense set of relationships, partly visible, partly obscured, stretched between the centre and its productive landscape. The ground holds traces of what the town once was, and also of how it continues to be lived—transhumance paths, hidden courtyards, informal thresholds between private and public. This complexity is not a weakness, but a resource—a condition to work with.

The role of the architect in this context is not to simplify or systematise it, but to carefully reconnect what has been broken or overlooked. This happens at different scales: stitching across disconnected public spaces, reinforcing the relation between built and cultivated land, and adjusting small thresholds—walls, steps, gates—that shape everyday experience. It's about finding continuity in fragments, not through replication, but through resonance. And it's through this patchwork—this assembled, situated composition—that Mamoiada's identity can be read and strengthened, not by returning to an idealised past, but by weaving a future that grows from what still holds meaning.



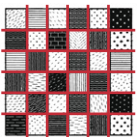
1. gathering FRAGMENTS / what lingers

Mamoiada today is marked by fragmentation—spatially, socially, and culturally. Empty houses, isolated workshops, and disconnected public spaces signal more than abandonment: they reflect a deeper erosion of continuity and coherence. Yet each fragment holds meaning, memory, and latent potential. This project begins by closely observing these pieces—walls, courtyards, paths—understanding their condition and the forces that shaped them. Through drawing and precise interventions, the aim is to reframe, revalue, and reconnect them, enabling Mamoiada’s urban and social fabric to reemerge with new clarity.



2. laying THREADS / what holds together

Stitching becomes a method to reconnect what has been fractured. Small places where life still gathers—spaces shaped by use rather than design—serve as anchors. Interventions do not aim to unify by force, but to create coherence through continuity. These threads—of habit, memory, material—tie together what was previously separate without erasing difference. They offer new perspectives on what exists, making collective life visible again.



3. STITCHING / what comes together

Stitching is the architectural act: working across ruptures in scale, use, and meaning to restore a livable ground. The built fabric reveals scars—failed plans, shifting regulations, modernizations without direction—but also traces of care. Through gestures of repair and redefinition, tradition becomes a tool to reclaim continuity. This project draws from these fragments not to glorify the past, but to work with what persists—mending through space, surface, and social use.



DRAWING

Anni Albers, Design for a rug not executed, 1927



abandoned house with historical picture of bread-making process covering a window
source: own

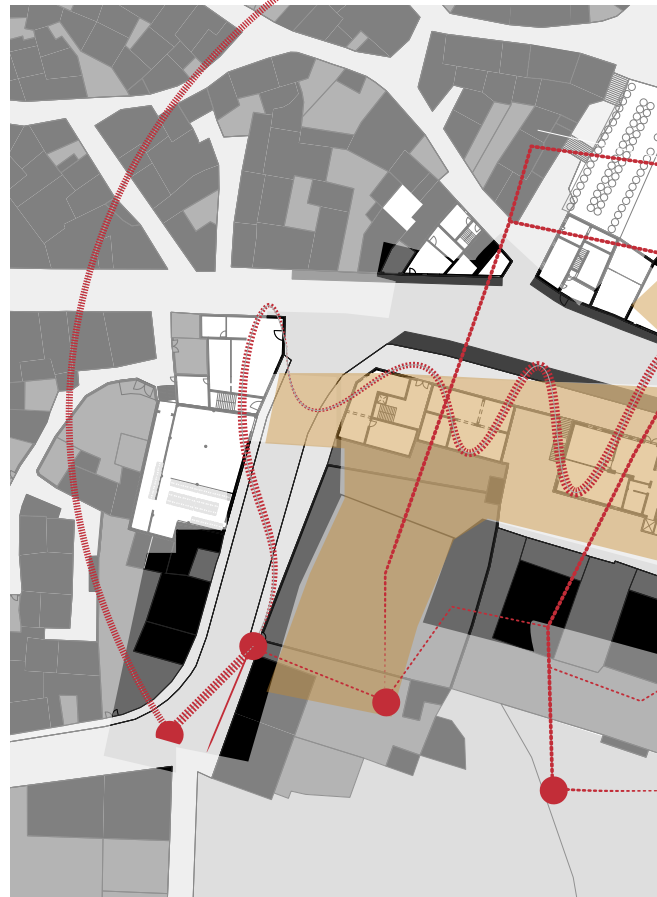
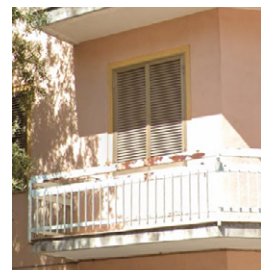


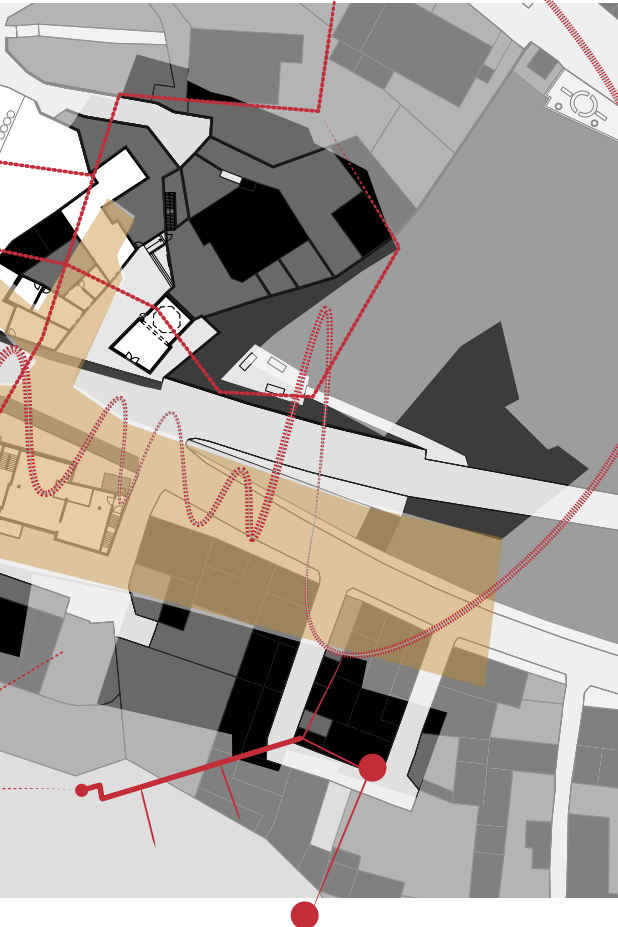
Wall painting portraying the barber shop of the town below, above a legend of the town depicted on the facade of a house

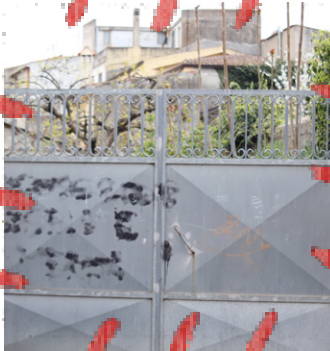


abandoned house on the left, painted and newly restored facade on the right

Fragments of the site









WEEK 11

Reconstructing through drawing

Foundations

The first step after my P1 presentation—and the new sense of direction that followed—was to begin drawing and modelling the ground and the town itself as it is. This shift came in response to a key comment during the review, which helped me clearly articulate the problem I had originally identified. I realised that the proposal I had developed—the House of Craft and Care—was already a concrete answer to that problem, but it needed to emerge from a deeper process.

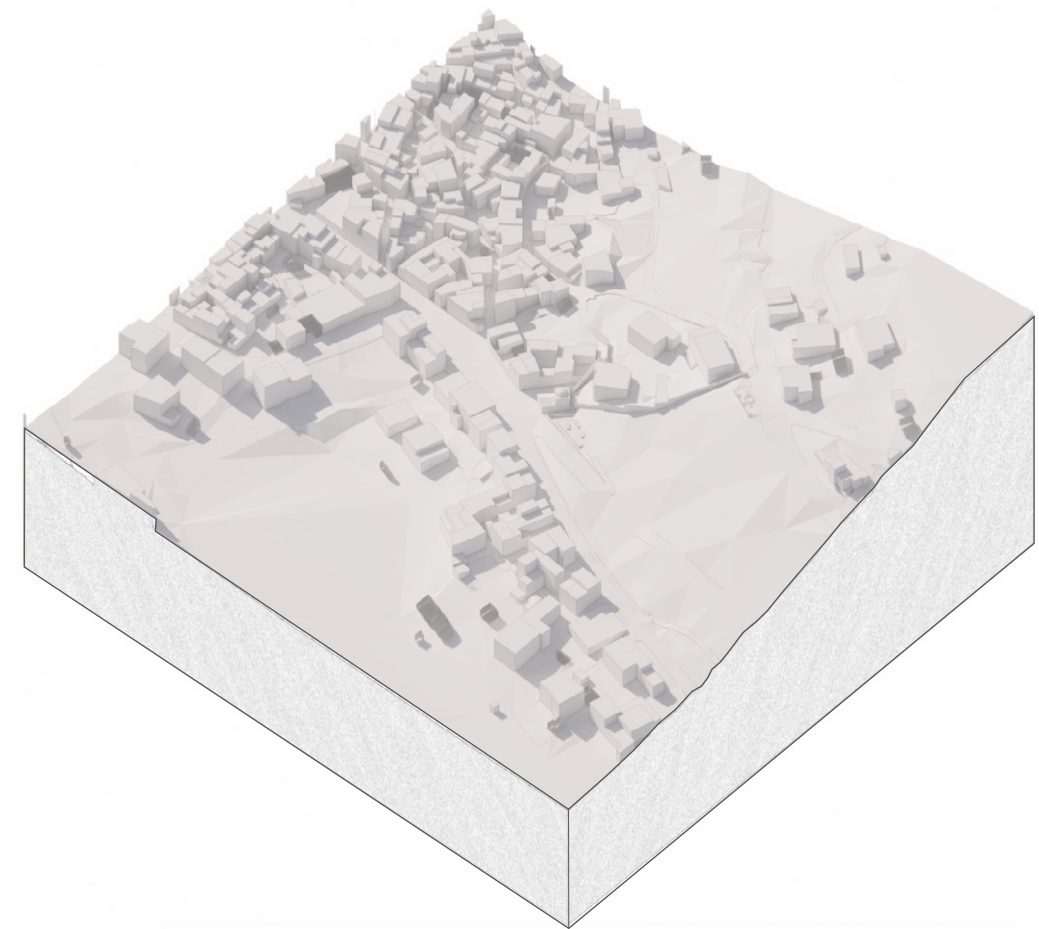
Mark's suggestion to focus on the town for what it is, to start from the ground and the existing, reframed my approach. At the same time, Daniel's comment that the House of Craft and Care could represent the final, most visible layer of a longer process of change pushed me to reconsider the structure of the work itself. These reflections helped me understand that the architecture I proposed shouldn't be a starting point—it should be a consequence.

After finalising my research plan, I returned to the idea of craft and care. I realised I had to look again, and more carefully, at what I already had: the ground, the built fabric, the spaces in between. I needed to understand the site not only through programme, but through an architectural lens—one that recognises how cultural, social, and economic threads have shaped the way people live and have lived in Mamoiada, beyond simply what is there or missing.

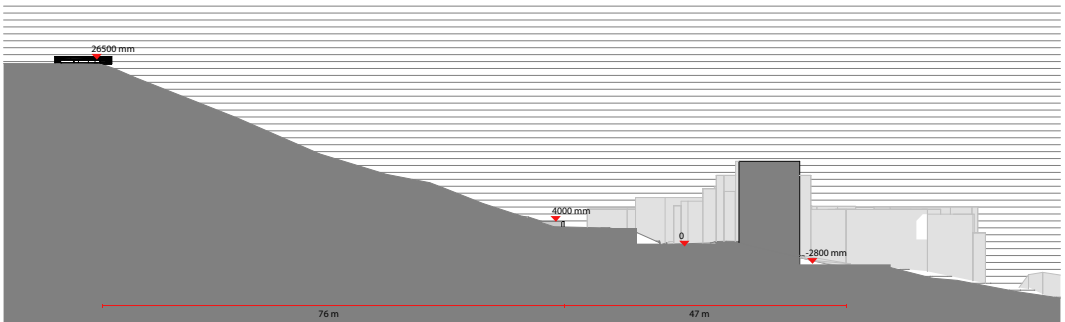
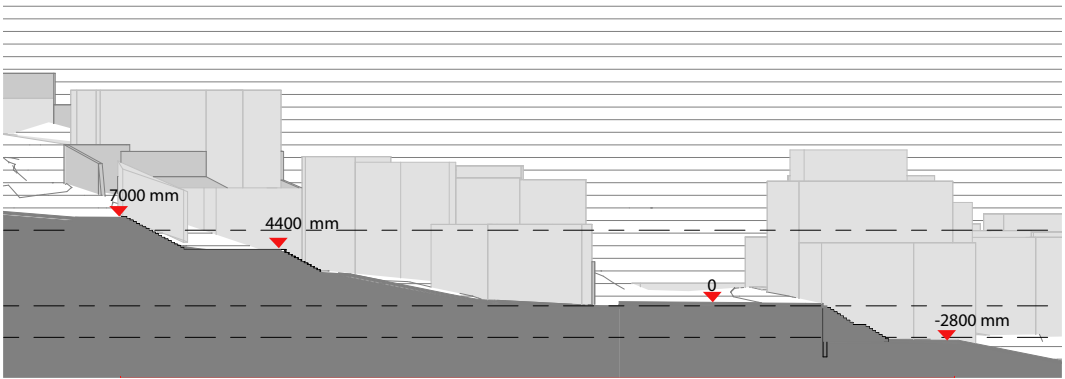
I now think the goal might be to support what already exists, allowing it to re-emerge or thrive in the way people actually want to live—not through addition, but through recognition. There were signs of this reasoning in my P1, but only after the feedback and through the process of writing the research plan did I fully understand its potential depth.

So the first step became returning to my 3D model—not just as a tool for diagrams, but as a canvas to explore the layered material story of the site. I revisited previous mappings of Mamoiada's material culture with a clearer sense of purpose, focusing this week on redrawing elements like walls, gates, and thresholds. These are not just details, but fragments—often overlooked yet deeply meaningful. By modelling them alongside the terrain and town, I'm working to re-situate them within the urban fabric and understand how they still shape the place.

A central part of this has been refining a detailed model of the terrain. This is something I'm still working on, and it's proving fundamental. Understanding the topography—especially the subtle height shifts across the site—is the foundation of what it means to work “on the ground,” as was suggested during P1. The system of terraces and slopes, carved by centuries of adaptation, reflects how Mamoiada has always negotiated between the mountain on one side and the valley on the other. This terrain isn't just a backdrop—it is the town's form, its structure, and its logic. Reconstructing and understanding this is where the project begins.







WEEK 12

Looking carefully



The street is unpaved, enclosed by continuous stone walls but open to movement. In the center, two men dressed in traditional costume stand talking, while on the left, two women are transporting water. A horse-drawn cart, one of the principal means of transport, prepares in the background.

The facades of the houses are built from rough granite or schist, left unplastered. Openings are small and sparse: low, narrow windows and modest doors, often framed by painted borders, probably in white, ochre, or blue. Thin, weathered wooden beams serve as simple lintels, reinforcing the essential character of the construction.

Above the continuous walls, the roofs show two types of construction. Most houses are covered with terracotta tiles, while one structure, likely used as storage, is roofed with stacked branches. Its rough and improvised construction reflects the pragmatic, resourceful approach to building. In the background, a plastered house with an iron balcony and wooden overhang stands out among the rougher stone structures, suggesting a higher social status.

Further beyond, the dome of the Church of San Giuseppe rises at the edge of the town. In the moment captured by the photograph, the church is in an advanced state of abandonment, partially overtaken by surrounding vegetation. The deteriorating structure and the encroaching landscape highlight the direct, often difficult relationship between the built environment and the natural world. Nature appears not as a romantic backdrop, but as a fundamental and sometimes hostile presence: necessary for work and survival, yet constantly in tension with the inhabited space. The dome, despite its decayed state, still marks the symbolic and physical threshold between the clustered fabric of the village and the open landscape beyond—a point of passage between settlement and countryside.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Mamoiada, 1905
source: Regione Sardegna



The street is now paved with light stone tiles and dominated by cars: rows of parked cars line the edges, and the street functions primarily as a service and circulation space. They limit pedestrian use and informal gathering. Movement still flows through the space, but it is now shaped by different forms of mobility.

The facades of the buildings reveal a layered and inconsistent material condition. Stone has often been covered or replaced with cement blockwork and standardized bricks, marking a shift that began with the introduction of mass-produced materials. Surfaces form a patchwork of plaster, paint, and exposed concrete, with little continuity between buildings. Windows and doors vary widely enlarged or replaced with generic, modern components. Balconies mimic past forms but are often left unused.

Despite the visual density of the built environment, the street feels emptied. Shuttered, closed and inactive windows and ground floors, appear alongside traces of ongoing modification. The result is a condition where density and vacancy coexist. The built fabric's relationship to everyday life and use has grown more diffuse. While the underlying spatial logic persists – one of functional adaptation, economic necessity, and material substitution, the appearance of the street has become starkly disrupted and increasingly incoherent, with each layer contributing to the growing disconnection between form and use, presence and habitability.

In the background, the edge of the town has blurred. New developments fill what once marked the transition between village and countryside. The dome of the Church is no longer visible in the frame, physically obscured by layers of new construction. A large photo of a Mamuthone covers an abandoned window, offering a familiar image within an otherwise incoherent setting. The relationship between built space, the landscape and the sky is less immediate, now mediated by layers of asphalt, concrete, and cars

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 2025
source: own

Recollection

These past two weeks have been an important moment of recollection—a time to look back at the material gathered over the past three months, which I’ve referred to as “fragments.” While the Research Plan helped establish connections among these themes, my focus during this period was to organize the information and begin shaping both the project journal and the research repository. If the “thread and needle” methodology clarified my research direction, this phase of reflection—making sense of the fragments—was essential to forming a grounded and coherent design foundation.

Throughout the past quarter, I tried to follow the weekly briefs while also developing my own line of inquiry, which often led to an overload of material. A critique from Daniel—one that’s become clearer in hindsight—was that my work sometimes felt disconnected from the briefs, as if I were mostly following my own path. Although I saw coherence in how I was linking the briefs with my personal research and proposals, I now realize that the connections weren’t always clear, making the narrative feel fragmented.

The development of the Research Plan helped me reframe and refine the project’s direction, giving clearer purpose to the themes I chose to explore. It was also during this past week that I began drafting the project journal in its current format. Before developing this layout, I was simply amassing thoughts and process notes in a disordered Word file, but I soon realized the importance of creating a single, coherent, and visually engaging document to represent the journey more clearly and meaningfully.

As I spent time looking back over the work done so far, one moment stood out in particular: a visit to Mamoiada at the end of March with my aunt—the first since beginning the thesis. As we talked about how the project was unfolding, she expressed genuine happiness with the direction I was taking. She pointed out that even if much of what I was reading or collecting wasn’t directly architectural, it reflected a broader effort to understand and connect with the culture of the place. That comment stayed with me.

Since that visit, and as I’ve become more familiar with the town and its people, I’ve started to better understand what she meant. This reflection has grown into an ongoing effort to approach the community with care—to listen more closely, observe more patiently, and allow those insights to shape the development of the project.

In our most recent tutorial, Daniel mentioned that my work seems to be about revealing the beauty I see in this place—a beauty that may simply need to be reframed to be fully appreciated. Looking back over the work so far, I think what I’ve been trying to express is the quiet, inherent harmony of a town that has grown slowly over generations—in close balance with its people, their homes, and the surrounding landscape.

WEEK 13

Tectonics

A wall

This week, my focus has been on drawing and modelling the town's physical condition in more detail. The deeper I got into it, the more I became fascinated by the richness and variety of materials that define its built environment. Observing the walls—how they're made, how they age, how they relate to the terrain—opened up an entire way of reading the town. Each wall becomes more than a boundary; it tells a story. Differences in material, building technique, and height all point to different times, needs, and intentions. From concrete blocks to dry-stacked granite, from thin wire mesh to decorative iron fences, these structures constantly shift between transparency and opacity, between revealing and hiding.

After having looked at windows as a potential thread to follow, walls are beginning to emerge as another key element in my research. Like windows, they define thresholds—moments of transition between spaces. But while a window frames a view out, the wall frames what's next to or behind it. Sometimes it's a glimpse into a private courtyard, other times an abandoned building, a narrow garden, or just a lone tree growing against all odds in the tight weave of the urban fabric. A retaining wall might hold back a garden plot three meters above the street, quietly telling of the land's slope and the effort to make it usable.

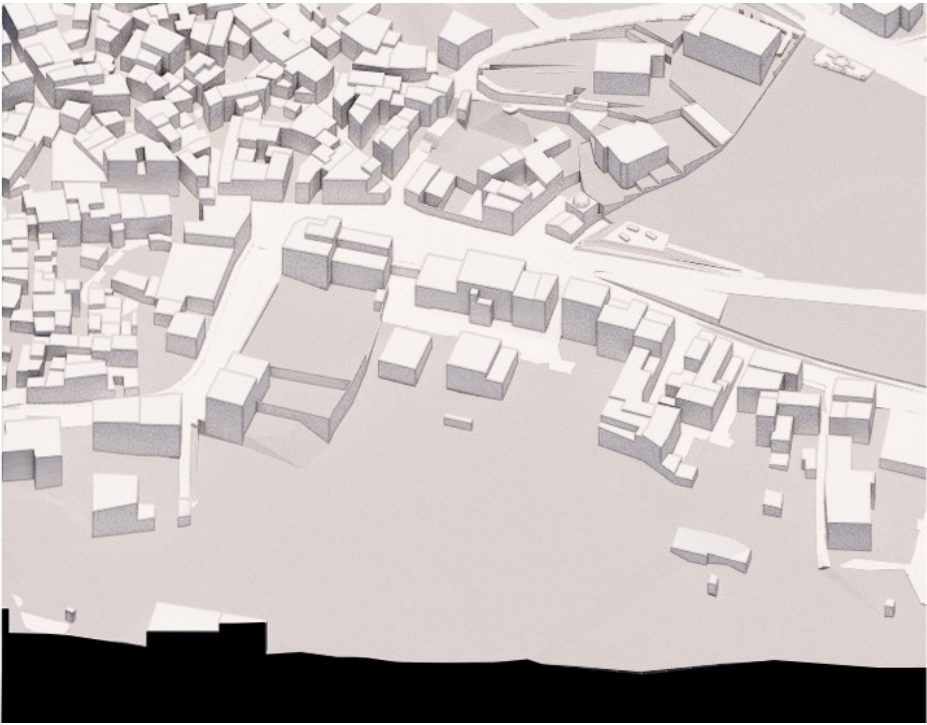
In the historic centre of Mamoiada, walls are more than divisions—they are instruments of introversion. They define a way of living that turns inward, protecting courtyards and domestic life from the public realm. This condition isn't only architectural—it's social. The wall marks the separation, but it also regulates how much is shared. And the gate, inserted into this structure, becomes the key point of mediation. It isn't just an access point, but a passage loaded with symbolic weight: filtering what enters and exits, what's seen and what remains hidden.

Working with aerial photos and translating them into 3D models has helped make these spatial relationships clearer. The walls, visible from above as lines, become tools to understand relief, property boundaries, and land use on the ground. They divide space, define edges, and often carry the clearest signs of use and ownership. In this way, they are key to interpreting the structure of both the town and its productive landscape.

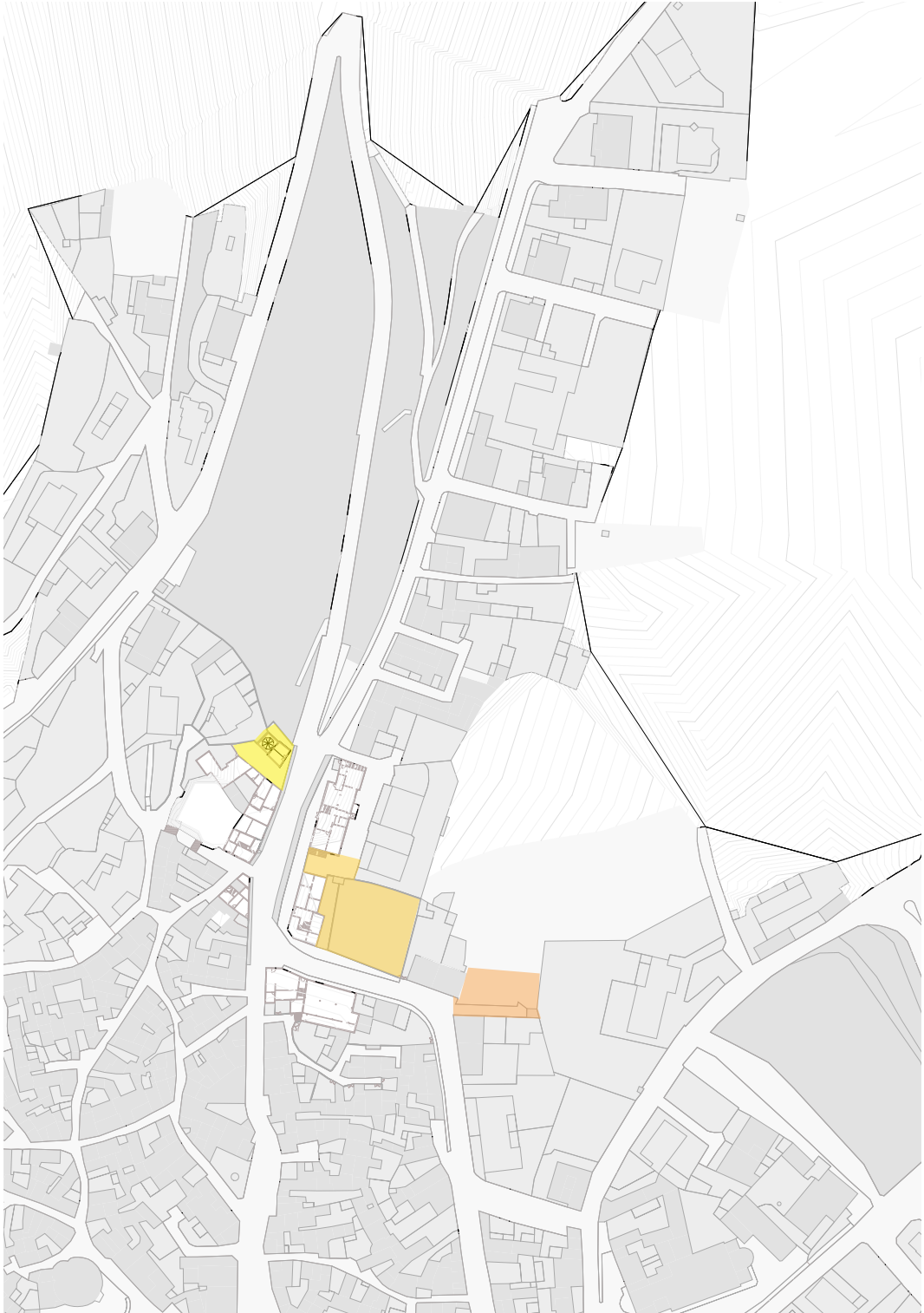
Looking closely at these walls also reveals the history and transformation of Mamoiada itself. Their layers, repairs, and shifts in construction techniques speak to economic changes, changing regulations, and personal adaptations over time. Whether carefully built in stone or roughly thrown together in cement, each one contributes to a complex language of place. The more I study them, the more they seem to contain—practically, visually, and symbolically. As my research continues, I see them not only as architectural features, but as tools to navigate and reconnect the visible and invisible structures of the town.



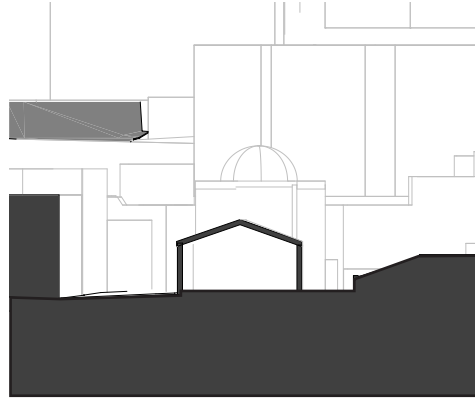
Behind the wall



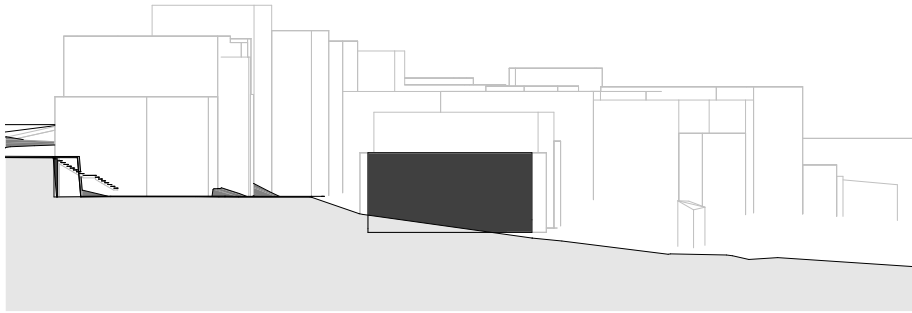




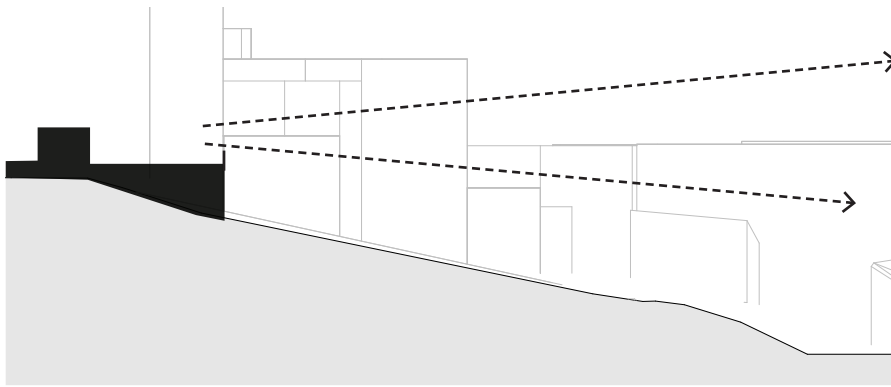
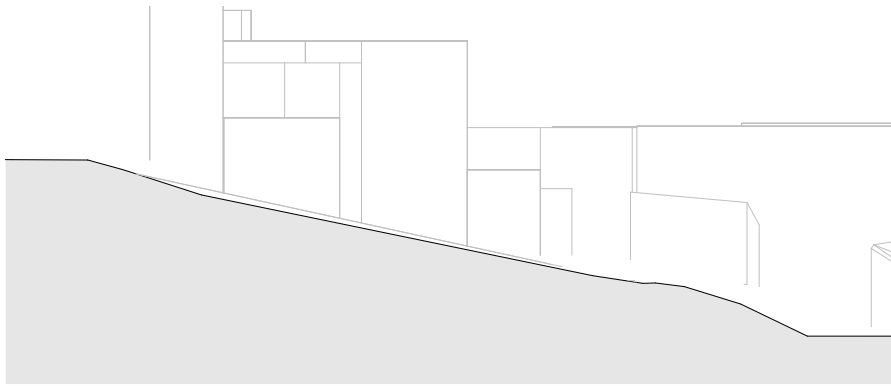
Week 13 development of masterplan



Church area and fountain



Back of museum



Panorama

WEEK 14

Mapping the landscape

City as territory

The first thing I did after the tutorial was read through the project Daniel suggested: *Caminhos da Água* by Studio Estar, in Guimarães. What stood out immediately was the way the project frames the city as territory—not separate from the landscape, but emerging from it. Urban and rural are seen as parts of a continuous system. This helped clarify how I look at Mamoiada, where expansion often seems disconnected from the surrounding land, even though the relationship is still physically present.

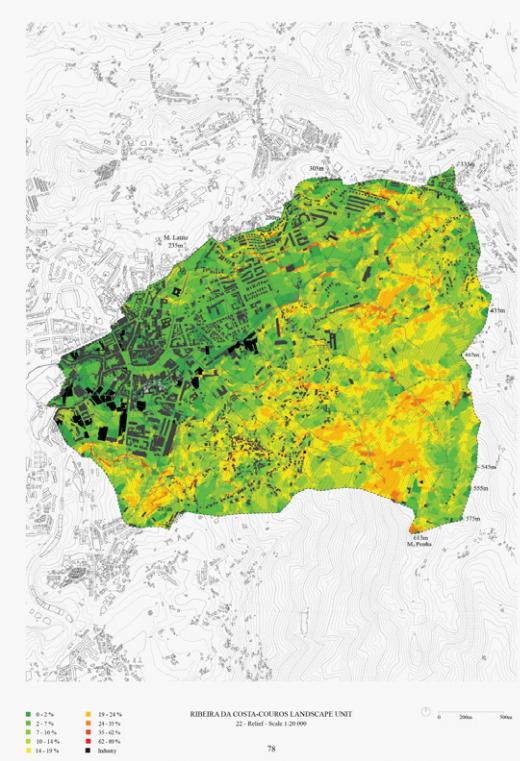
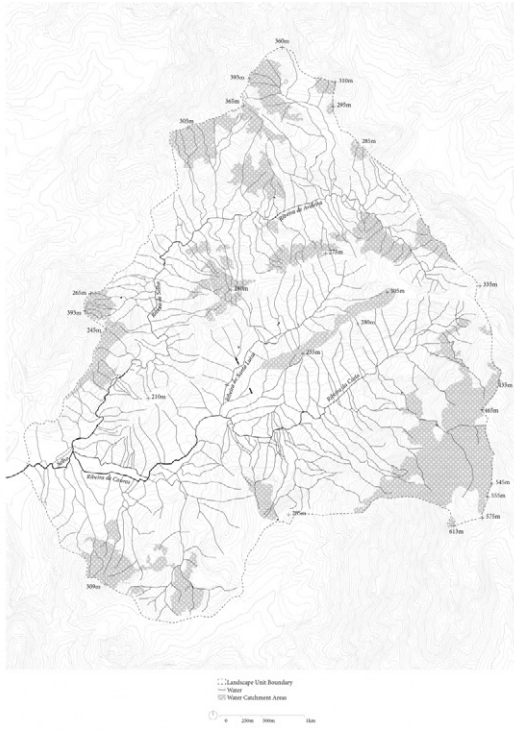
In Guimarães, water played a fundamental role in shaping production, infrastructure, and daily life. Tanneries, mills, and cultivated areas developed along its flow, structuring both the economy and the layout of the town. The connection between water and territory wasn't only functional—it shaped distances, timings, and patterns of shared use. This parallel feels particularly relevant to Mamoiada. Here too, water shaped the land—not through industrial systems, but through vineyards, wells, fountains, seasonal cycles, and small-scale agriculture.

The project traces water systems—springs, irrigation paths, old mills—as a method to understand how space has been inhabited and shaped over time. This approach is useful for my work in Mamoiada, where mapping water, terrain, and land use can help reveal how the town and its landscape remain deeply connected. The countryside isn't an extension of the urban—it is the city, shaped by sun, slope, water, and shared use.

Even without large-scale infrastructure, Mamoiada still carries this logic. Water was already an essential element to understand the town, from spring sources to fountains and wells. It guided where people worked, how they moved, and where collective life unfolded. Tracing its presence helps reveal how people, the town, and the landscape have long been interconnected. These systems haven't disappeared—they've simply faded from view: buried. The project is about on bringing these traces back to eyesight as to

The project by Estar works across scales—starting from topography and hydrography, layering in the visual basins of key landmarks, historic paths, and productive uses of the land. They examine how the sun hits, how the slope falls, and how water flows—all of which shape how people settled, cultivated, and oriented themselves. What emerges is not a diagram of use, but a spatial understanding of how life was structured through environmental logic and cultural habit.

My project is starting to get a very clear direction: it's about making this connection apparent again. The project must emphasise the reconnection between the town and its territory—understanding and working with the environmental and social logics that have always been there. Mapping becomes a tool not of classification, but of recognition—revealing a way of inhabiting that's been overlooked, but never fully lost.



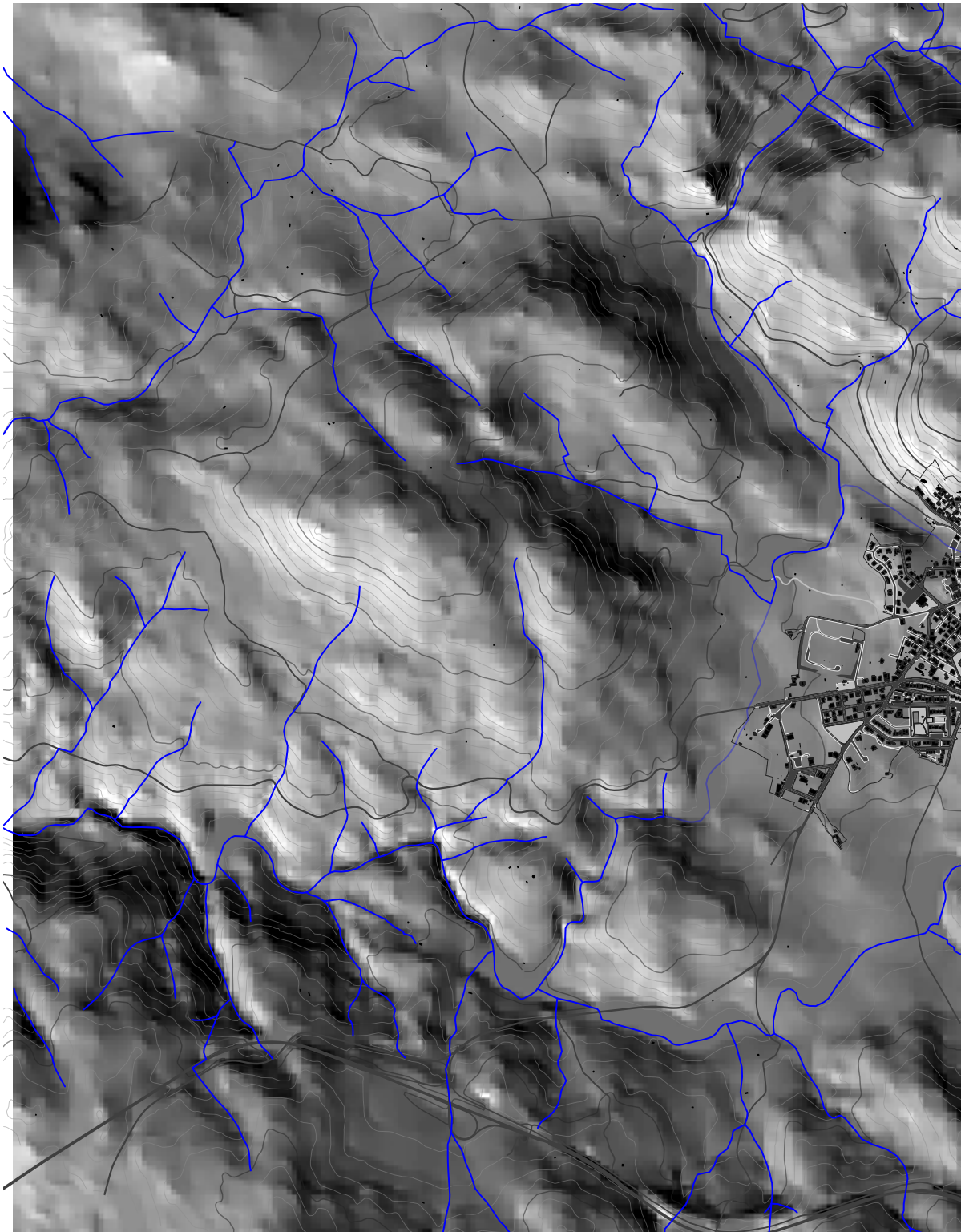
Drawing a map

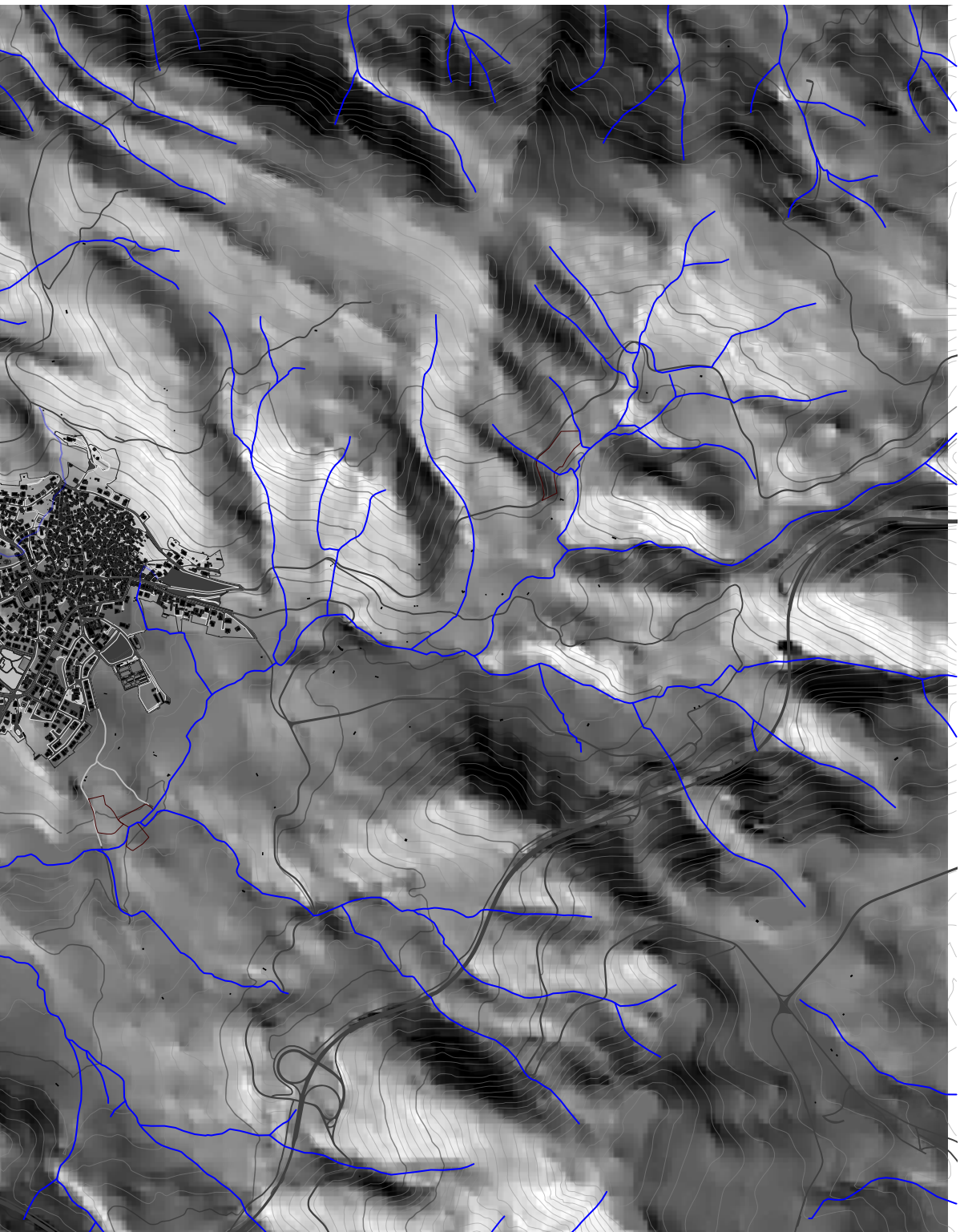
By the end of this week, I had gathered a huge amount of information about the landscape—land divisions, types of boundaries and walls, what is produced where, how water moves through the terrain, contour lines, access paths, and more. The result is a dense, layered dataset that risks becoming unreadable if treated in a purely technical way. That's why the objective of the drawing I'm working toward isn't just to map this information—it's to make it legible without relying on a legend.

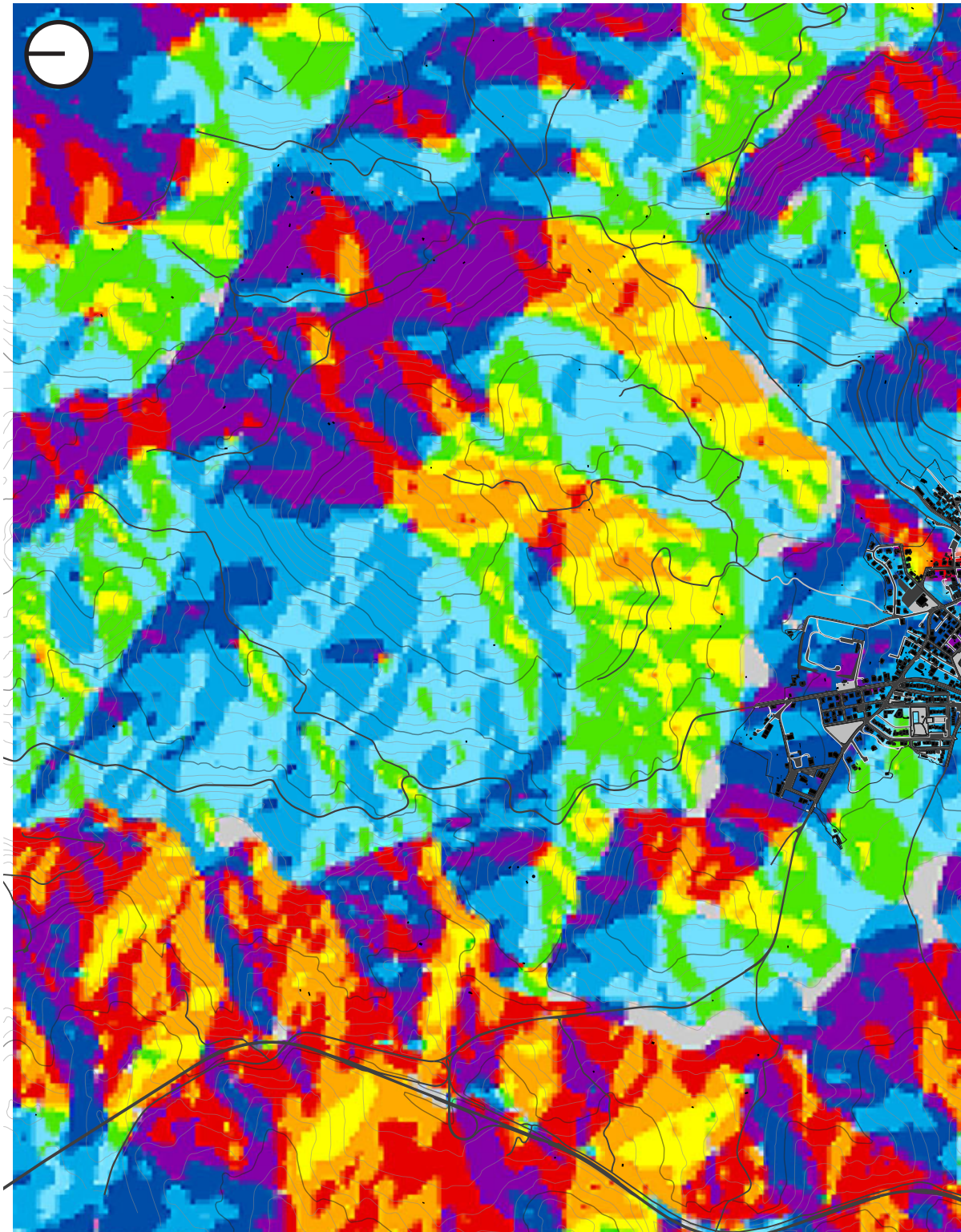
The goal is for the drawing to carry meaning visually and intuitively. A viewer should be able to look at a plot of land and understand what it's used for—not because it's filled with a labelled colour, but because the drawing shows the character of that use. A vineyard, for instance, should appear as a vineyard—its rows, rhythms, and structure drawn in a way that communicates its scale and labour. A pasture should feel open, maybe with a tree, a few animals or a trace of a path, suggesting rotation and movement. A well-maintained vegetable plot might show subdivision, planting beds, or irrigation lines. The idea is to communicate through drawing, not through symbols.

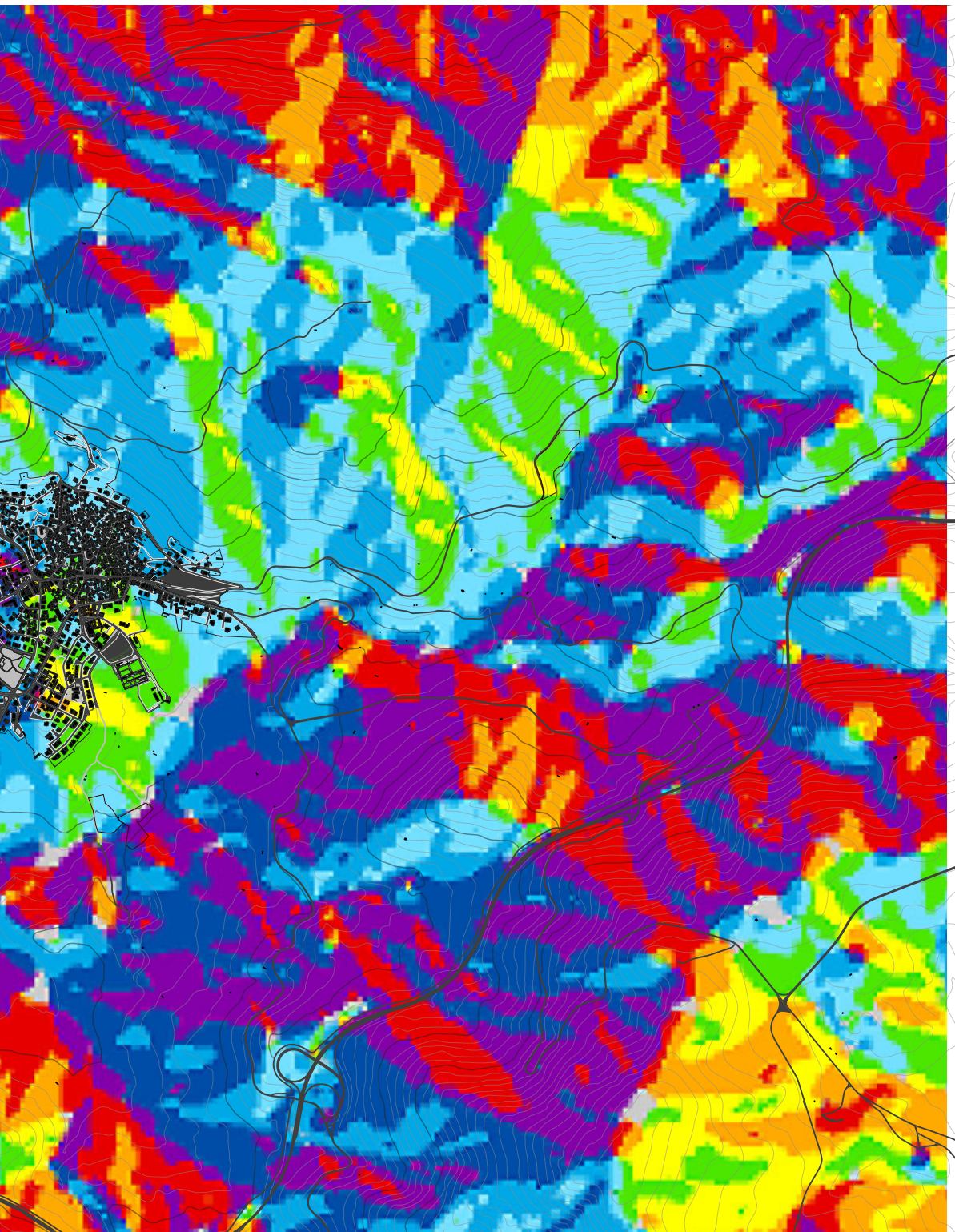
This type of representation doesn't simplify complexity—it processes it. It translates a heavy and detailed body of knowledge into a form that can be understood at a glance, that invites reading without instruction. It turns data into experience, helping to show not only how the land is used, but how it feels, how it works, and how it relates to the town around it. The drawing becomes a way to process and communicate this spatial intelligence in a way that's accessible, narrative, and grounded in what's actually there.

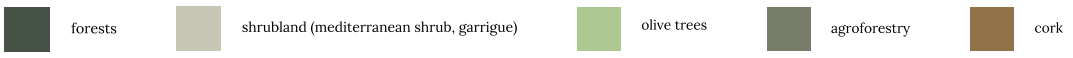
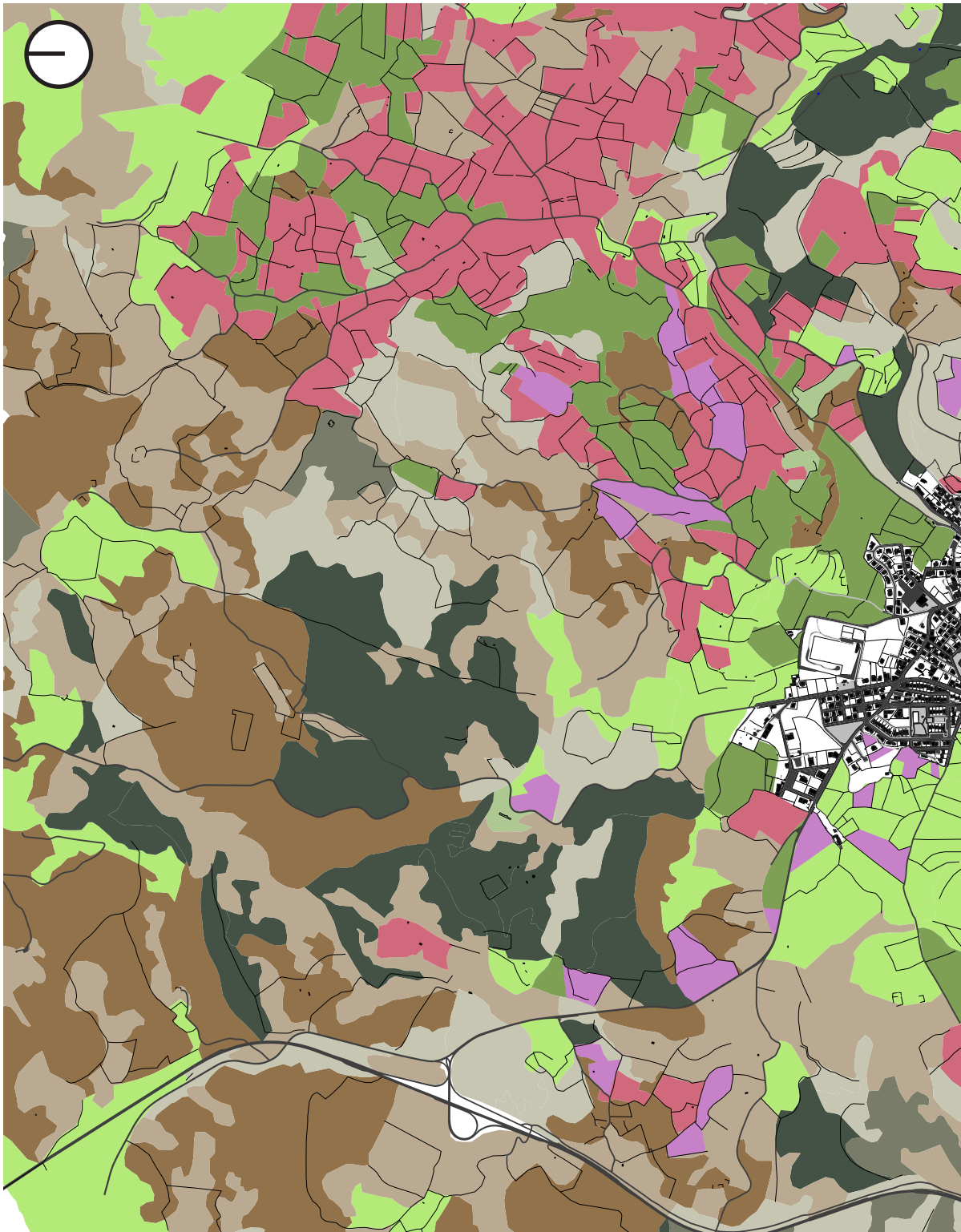


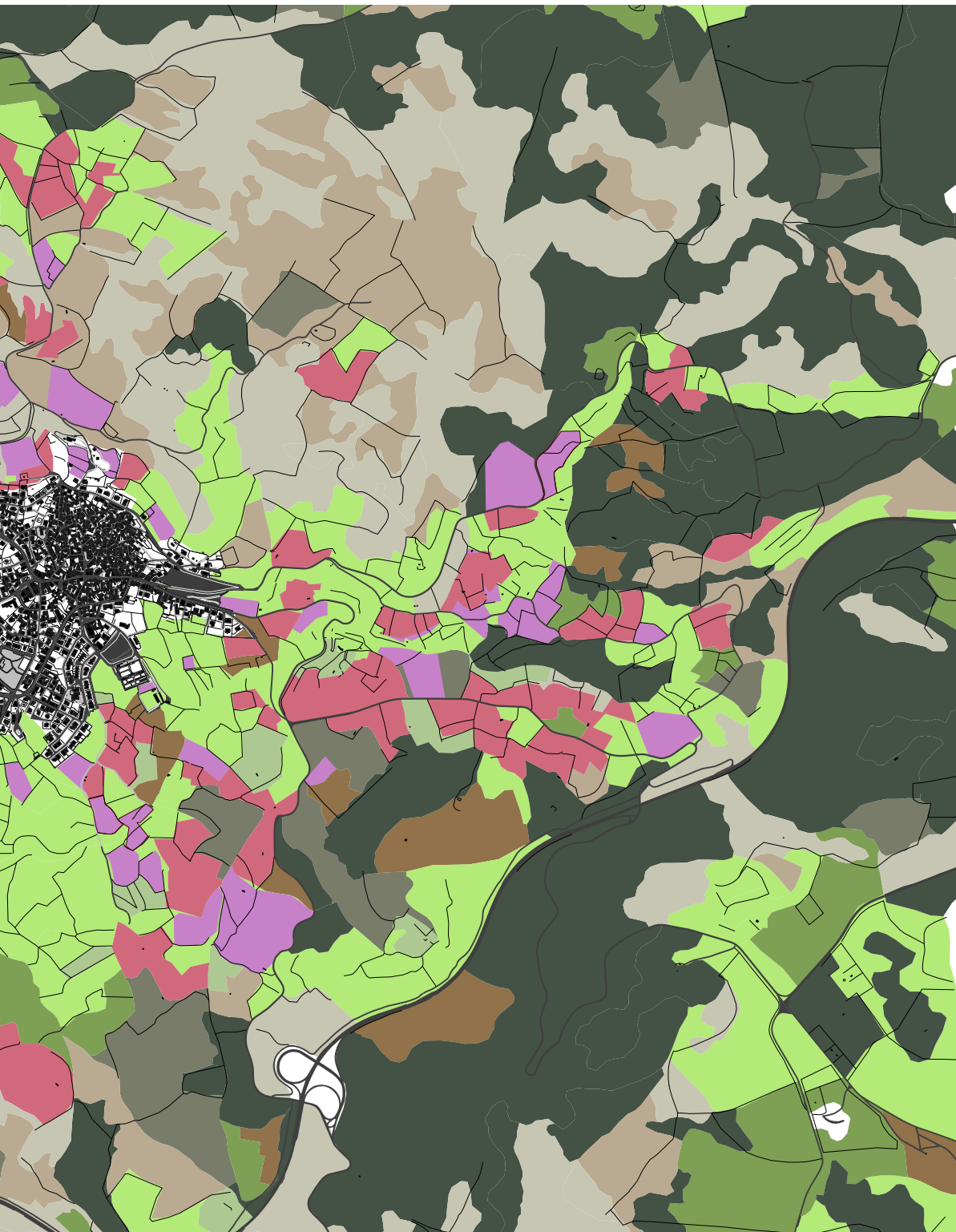












■ grazing land ■ Forage ■ cultivation ■ vineyards ■ new vineyards (last 15 years)

WEEK 15

Wine infrastructure

Cantine sociali

The cantine sociali (cooperative wineries) emerged in Italy in the late 19th century, inspired by German cooperative models. Their purpose was to help small-scale grape growers collectively process and market their grapes, providing access to shared resources, expertise, and improved market positioning to ensure fair prices and economic stability.

The model became especially prominent in the aftermath of World War II. The post-war period saw a significant expansion of cantine sociali driven by favorable agricultural policies, financial support from regional and national governments, and a growing market demand for affordable table wines. At that time, the cantine sociali primarily targeted quantity rather than quality, focusing on producing large volumes of accessible, inexpensive wines that catered to everyday consumption, both domestically and internationally.

For several decades, this model proved successful. It allowed rural communities to maintain economic viability, offered employment opportunities, and created a stable market outlet for local agricultural production. Members of these cooperatives benefitted from guaranteed purchases of their grapes, technical support, and the distribution of financial gains among all cooperative participants. Locally, these cooperatives were generally perceived positively, as they strengthened community ties and offered economic security, even though externally their wines gained a reputation of being low-quality and mass-produced.

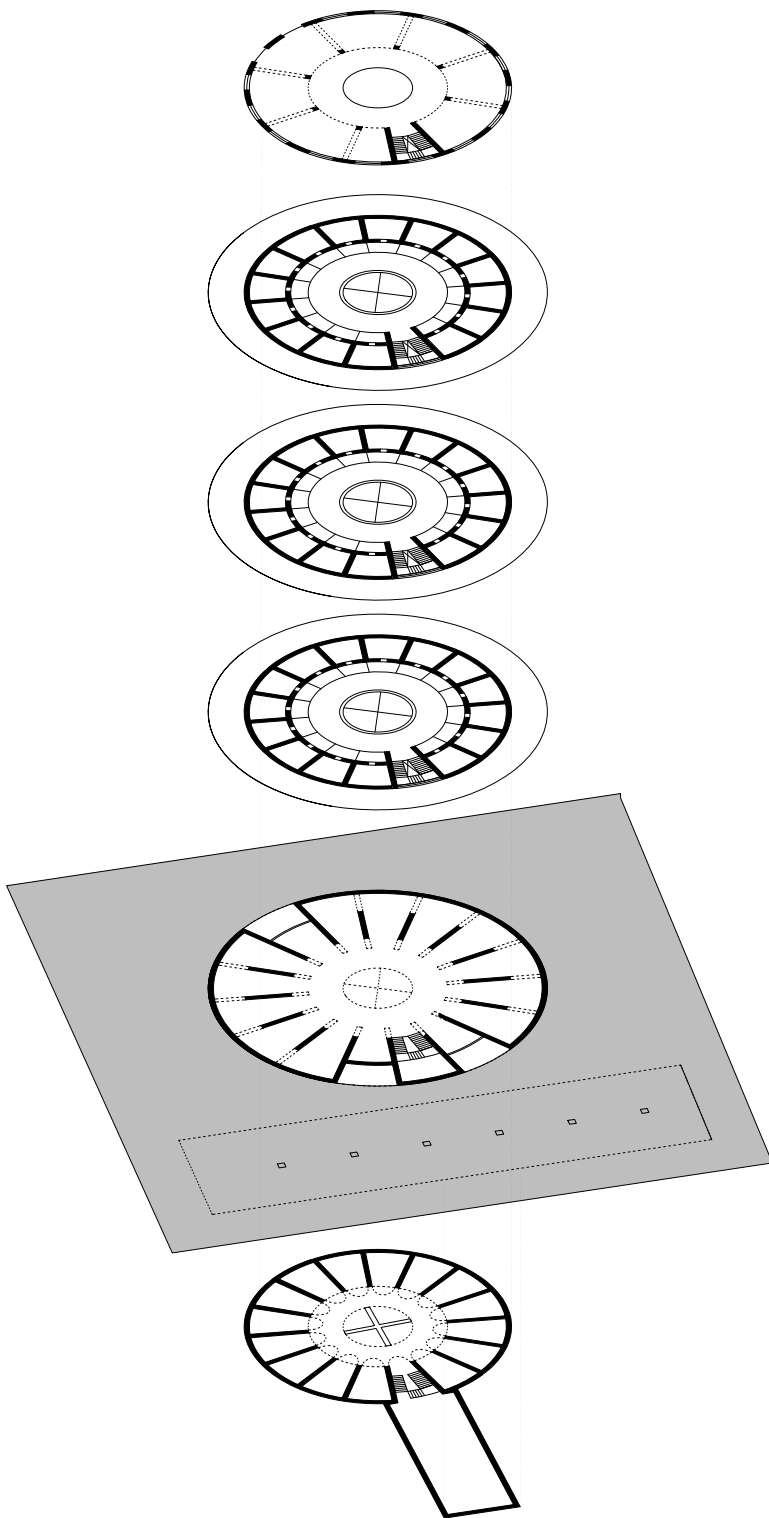
However throughout the 1980s, significant shifts occurred in the wine market. Consumer preferences began moving away from bulk-produced table wines towards higher-quality, more refined products. The decreasing demand for low-cost, mass-produced wines caused a deep crisis in the cooperative model, forcing many cantine sociali to either close, merge, or significantly restructure their operations.

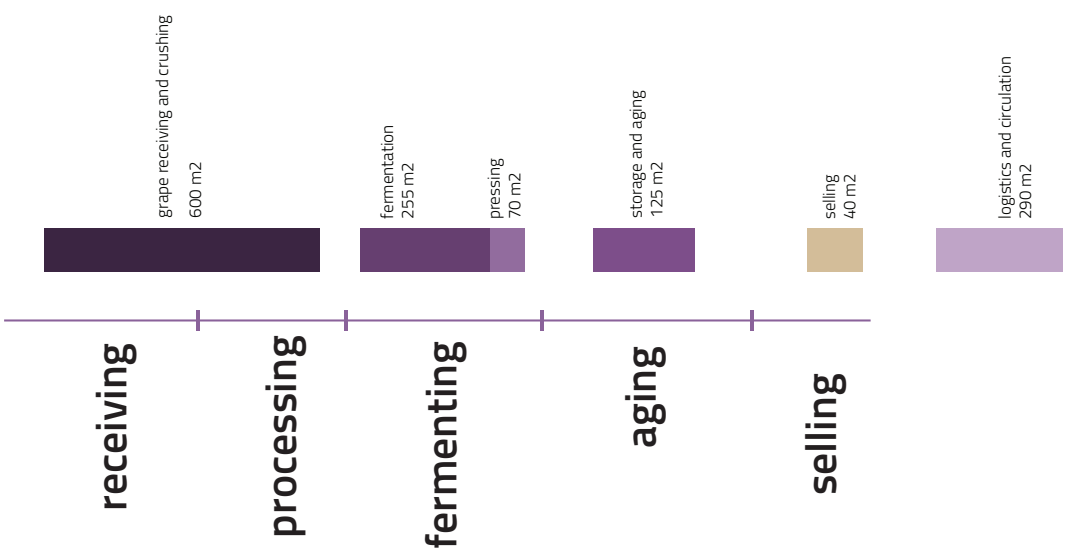
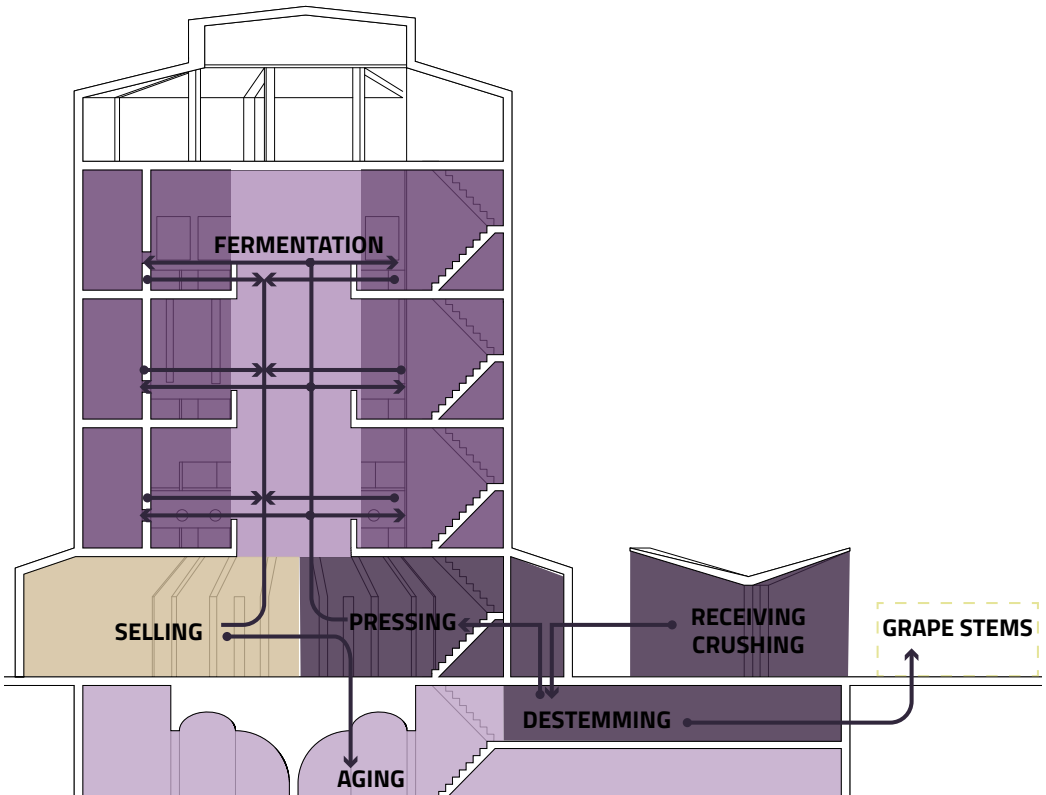
To adapt to changing market conditions, many cantine sociali shifted from bulk wine production toward higher-quality, smaller-scale wines. This required significant investments in technology, processes, and cooperative restructuring. While several Italian cooperatives successfully transitioned, the cantina sociale in Mamoiada closed and was privatized in 2005, unable to overcome economic challenges.

Despite the closure of Mamoiada's cooperative winery, local vineyards independently continued producing, improving wine quality. Rather than a fundamental flaw in the cooperative model itself, but rather to a process of individualization and fights among the community. Consequently, the present conditions in Mamoiada suggest the possibility—and perhaps the necessity—of revisiting cooperative or collective structures, potentially identifying new collective spaces or organizational forms that align better with contemporary social, economic, and environmental goals.

MAMOIADA - ANNI '60







Terra comune

In the mountainous regions of Sardinia, such as Barbagia and towns like Mamoiada, communal access to land was historically the foundation of rural life. For generations, families depended on shared use of forests, pastures, and marginal lands for grazing, firewood, and cultivation—an informal but deeply rooted system known as *ademprivi*. These rights were not based on ownership, but on belonging to a community that collectively managed and depended on local resources.

This system was gradually dismantled during the 19th century, when the Savoy government introduced a series of legal reforms aimed at privatizing land. The 1820 Enclosures Edict (*Editto delle Chiudende*), followed by the formal abolition of *ademprivi* in 1865, transformed communal rights into violations of private property. What had once been shared became fragmented, fenced, and commodified. In 1907 a law went even further, granting permanent private ownership to those who had enclosed and worked formerly communal land, accelerating the erosion of collective tenure. These top-down interventions ignored the complexity of local systems and often facilitated speculative land grabs.

Where communal rights once recognized land's multiple functions—economic, ecological, and social—the shift to private property reduced it to a resource to be fenced, extracted, and sold.

The physical manifestation of this shift remains visible across Sardinia: stone walls, many still standing today, were built to enclose lands that had previously been open and shared. These walls did not merely organize space—they marked a rupture, formalizing exclusion and asserting the logic of property over that of community. They stand as material evidence of a process driven by state power, legal abstraction, and private accumulation.

The transformation of land into property, and property into capital, unfolded with little regard for those who depended on access to it for survival. Sardinian communities lost not only land, but the means to sustain forms of cooperation and self-sufficiency that had defined rural life for centuries.

Usi civici, introduced as a legal compromise after the abolition of *ademprivi*, were meant to preserve limited collective land access but have never fully restored traditional communal practices. Today, while they help protect land from privatization under environmental laws, they remain more symbolic than functional—legal remnants of a dismantled commons that rarely guarantee real community use or governance.

The walls remain, cutting across the terrain, dividing not only property but the very memory of collective life. They silently reaffirm the transformation of Sardinia's rural landscape from a system of access and reciprocity to one of enclosure and exclusion—a legacy still shaping how land is imagined, regulated, and contested today.





Manifesto: weaving a shared ground

This project begins with two elements that still connect Mamoiada's people, land, and identity: water and local products, especially wine. Shaped by the territory and shared through rituals, they generate belonging, pride, and continuity.

By working with what is already meaningful, the project aims to reweave the broken ties between town and landscape, memory and community. These threads—once held together by agricultural rhythms and shared spaces—are now scattered, but still present. The goal is not to reconstruct the past, but to make these deep, co-dependent relationships visible again.

At the center is Mamojà, the Association of Winemakers. Formed after the closure of the town's social winery, it embodies a renewed collective energy—where winemaking is both personal and civic. The project builds around this energy, placing Mamojà not as a client, but as a catalyst for a new kind of rural infrastructure.

Two symbolic places anchor this strategy:

- The Spring

Once the town's namesake, now hidden in a wall niche. Restored as a public space, it becomes a daily ritual of ecological care and shared resource.

- The Panorama

A civic viewpoint over the cultivated landscape. A place to pause, reflect, and reconnect with the land's ongoing transformation.

These gestures open into a broader spatial strategy: a diffuse food and wine infrastructure rooted in town life and extending across the territory.

- A communal kitchen and canteen, echoing the festive long tables of Mamoiada. Spaces for daily meals, spuntini, and intergenerational exchange.

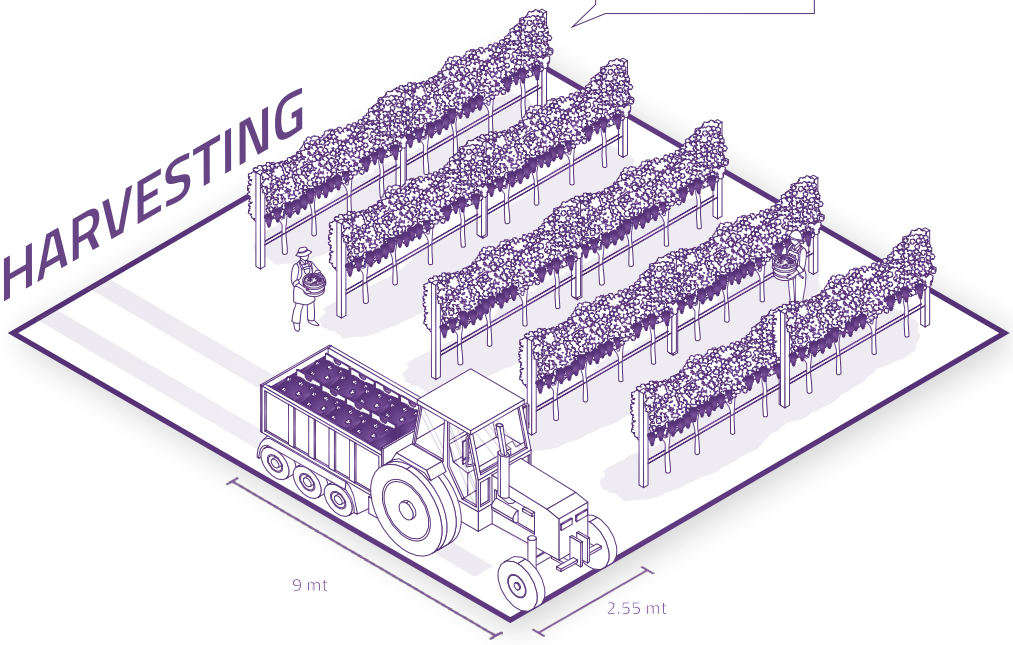
- A support structure for Mamojà, enabling small-scale wine production, fermentation, and distribution—giving visibility even to modest initiatives like Andrea's.

- A flexible platform for hybrid roles, where one can be a winemaker, cook, host, and storyteller—reinforcing identity through shared action.

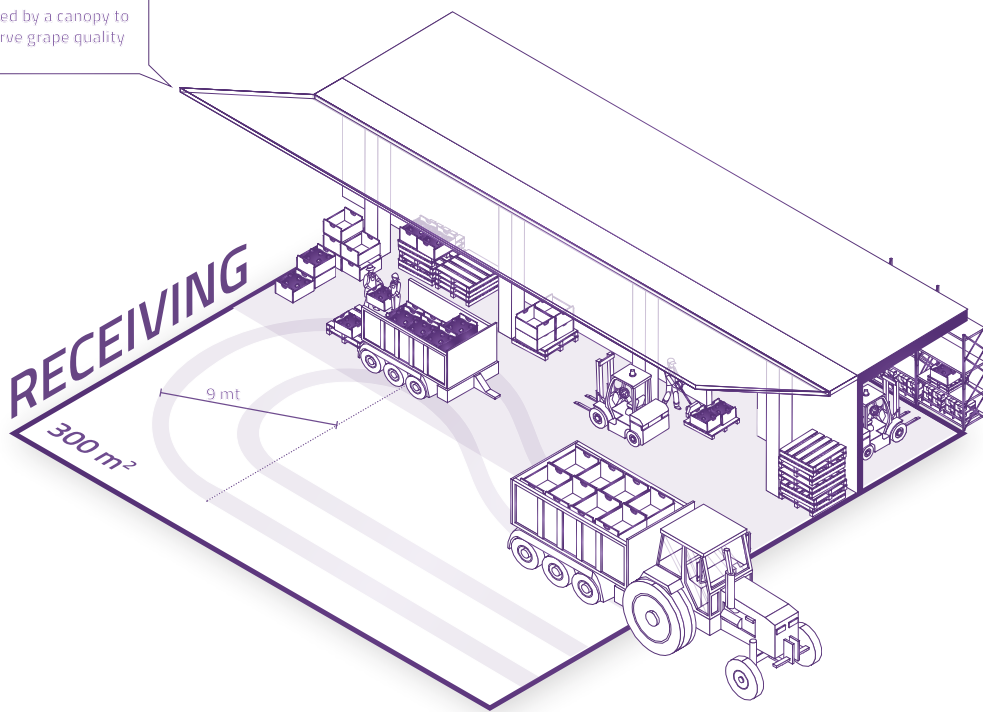
This is not a project about building more, but about revealing what already binds people and place. Through light, adaptable, and grounded architecture, it proposes new spaces for presence, pride, and collective life. By reconnecting what has been scattered, the project offers Mamoiada not only physical interventions, but new forms of togetherness rooted in land, labor, and care.

HARVESTING

BUSH VINE
require less water,
manual harvesting

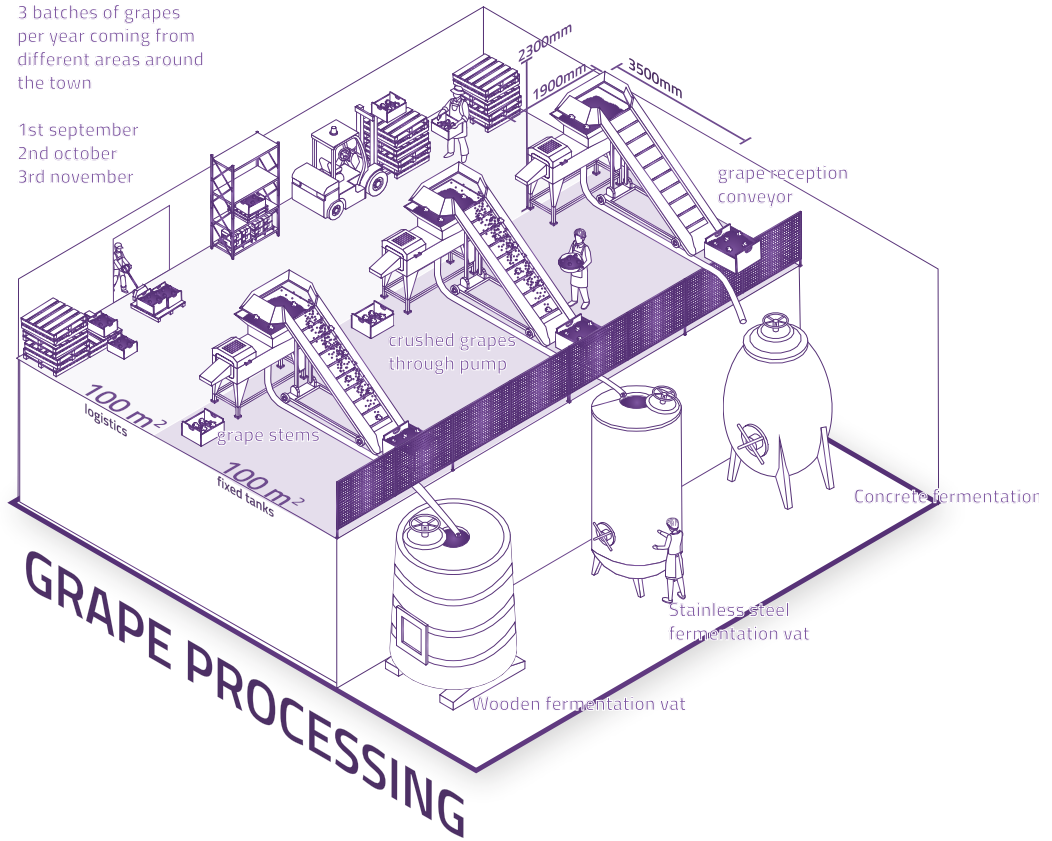


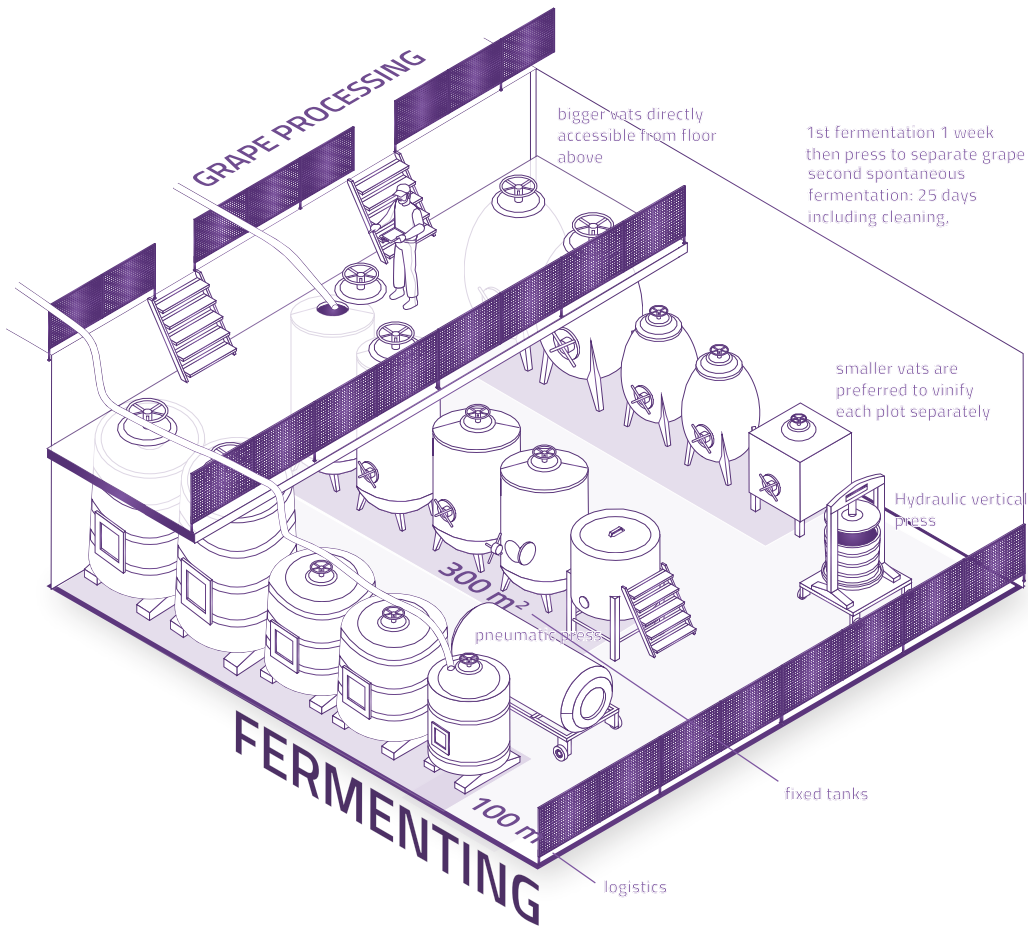
Covered by a canopy to preserve grape quality

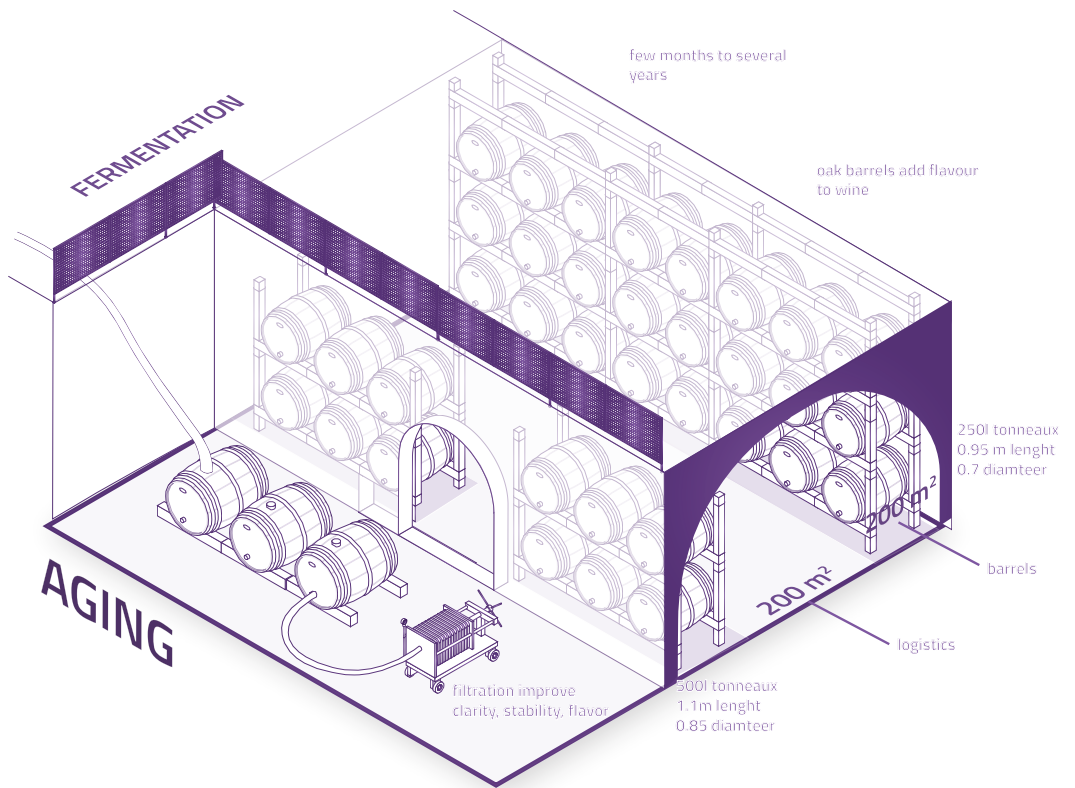


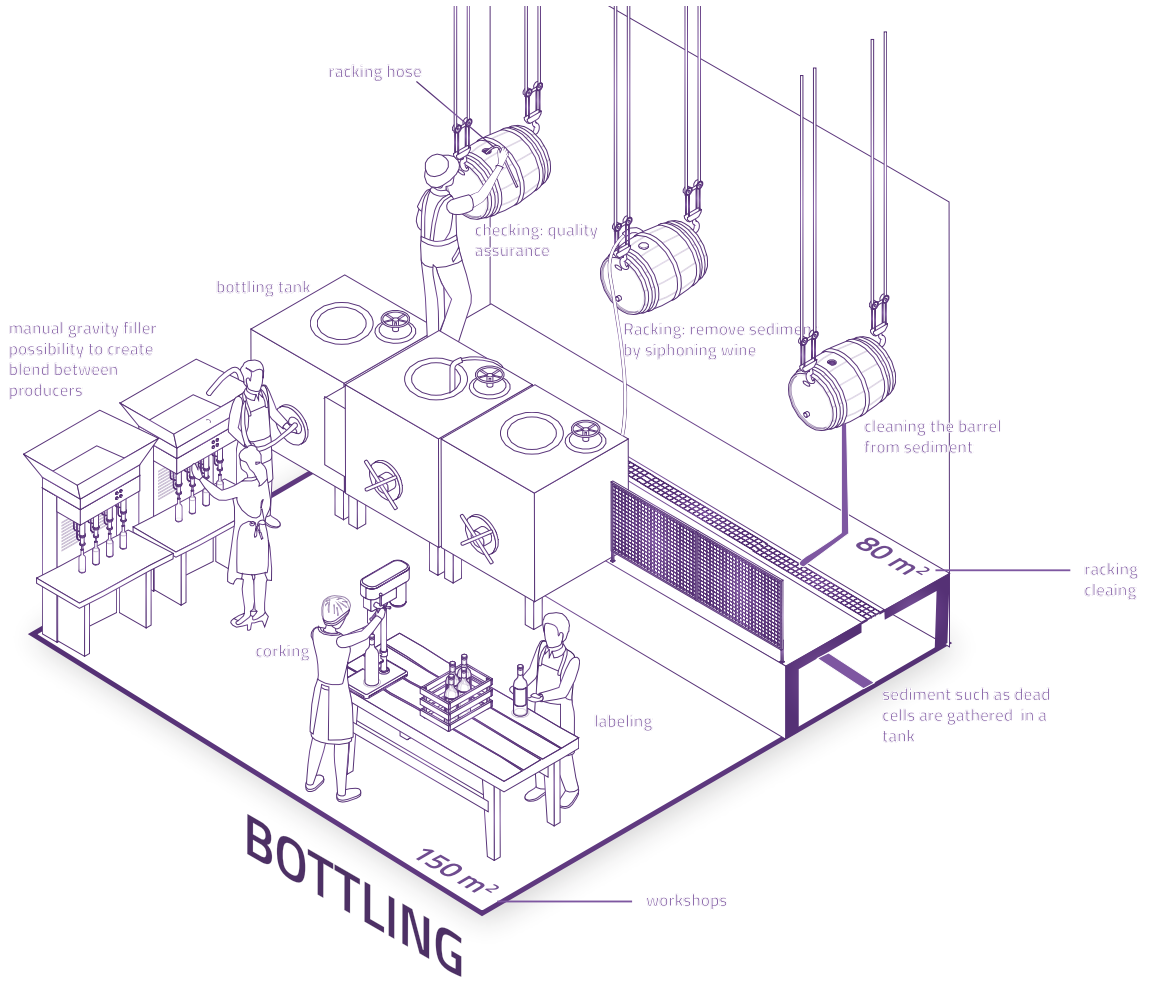
3 batches of grapes
per year coming from
different areas around
the town

1st september
2nd october
3rd november

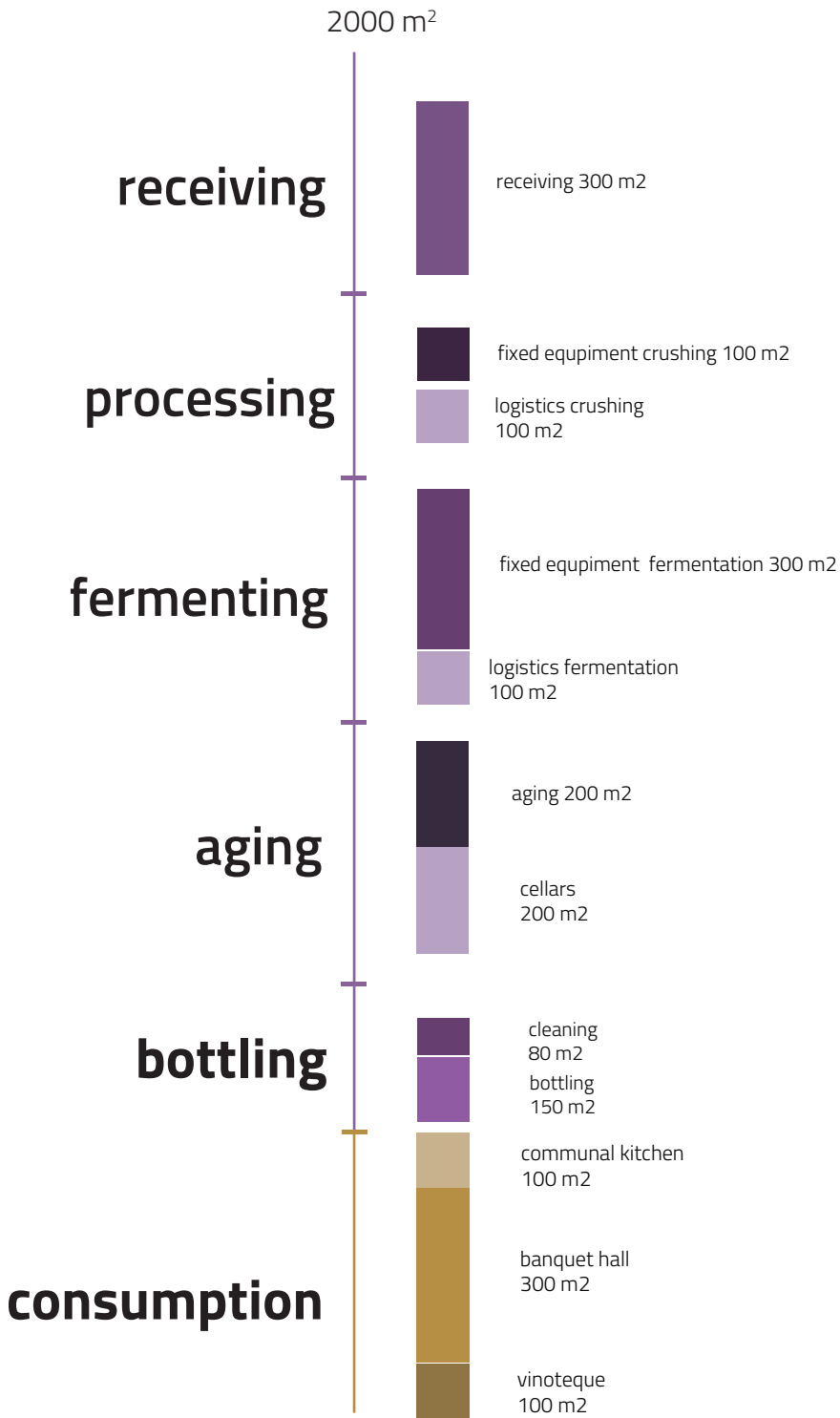


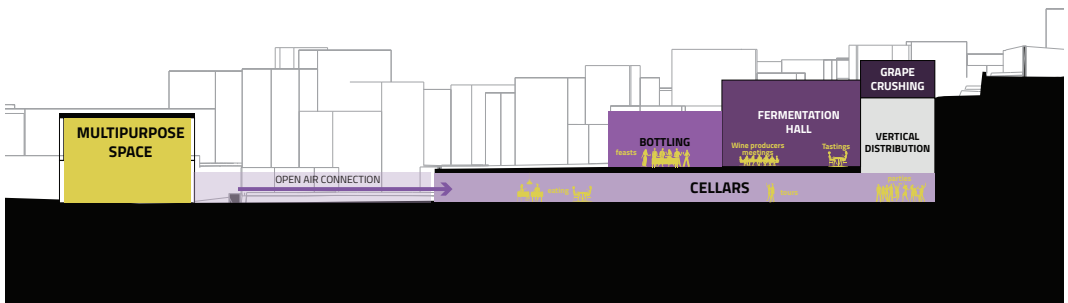
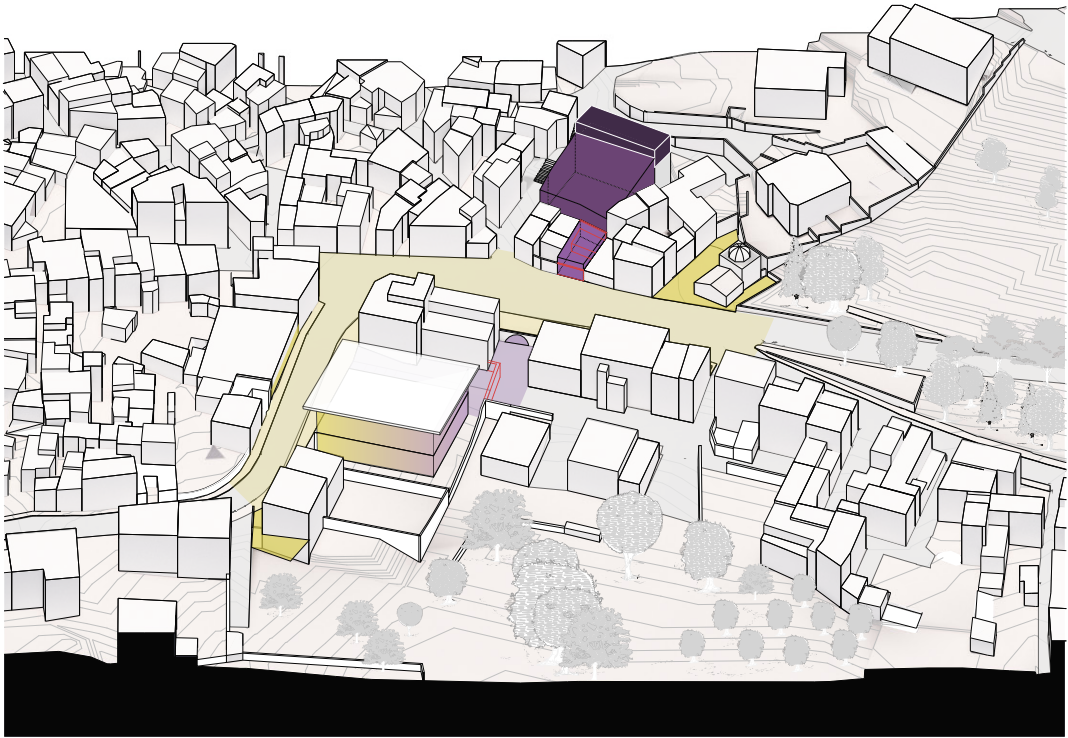






BRIEF





P2 REFLECTIONS

The feedback has affirmed that the research into the “landscape unit” and the interdependence of town, territory, and people is a solid foundation, but it has also highlighted a critical gap between this theoretical understanding and its physical reality. The comment that I am currently “excavating in a place already excavated” is the pivot point for the next phase; I must move from observing the fragmentation of Mamoiada to actively constructing its repair. The project effectively understands the “why,” but now it must rigorously answer the “how”—spatially, tectonically, and typologically.

To address the critique that the intervention feels “autonomous,” the design development will focus on the concept of reciprocity and “tending.” The architecture will not be an imposed monument but a form of civic maintenance, utilizing an economy of means to stitch together the fragmented edges of Piazza Europa. This involves a direct engagement with the existing abandoned supermarket and the obscured water spring, transforming these residual elements into a cohesive “collective ground” that mediates between the domestic scale of the town and the vastness of the productive landscape.

The programmatic strategy will shift from a generic social winery to what was discussed as an “infrastructure for the many.” Recognizing that winemaking in Mamoiada is deeply familial rather than industrial, the architecture will provide a facility that supports individual domestic producers rather than replacing them. This means designing spaces for shared processing and individual storage—a library of wines rather than a single vat—culminating in the Su Cumbidu, a communal dining hall that formalizes the ritual of the spuntino. This approach answers the professors’ question of how spaces of production can consolidate urban life, creating a venue where the landscape is not just viewed, but consumed and celebrated collectively.

Moving forward, the work will prioritize precise architectural representation over general diagrams. As advised, I will focus on producing large-scale sections and physical models that demonstrate how the new rooflines and walls negotiate the topography and connect the church, the spring, and the vineyard slopes. The goal is to prove that architecture can act as the framework that allows the community to “tend” to their landscape, fostering a cycle where the town looks after the territory, and the territory, in return, sustains the town.

SUMMER BREAK

Wineries visit, first draft design

Visiting “Sella & Mosca”

The visit to Sella & Mosca during the summer provided a critical perspective on the intersection of industrial viticulture and historical urbanism. As one of the largest wine producers in Sardinia (yielding nearly five million bottles annually), the scale of the facility presented a dramatic contrast to my own project, yet the opportunity to observe a fully industrialized operation proved invaluable. I was particularly struck by the historical narrative of the site, which was established in the early 20th century as a specialized center for grafting local vines with American rootstocks to combat the phylloxera parasite. This scientific necessity required a permanent, year-round workforce, leading to the development of a self-contained social ecosystem. This small village (complete with its own church, workshops, and residential quarters) evolved into a dense cluster that mirrors the organic growth of a town like Mamoiada, albeit centered entirely around production.

This “winery as a village” model reinforces my research into the social potential of industrial spaces. The historical core of Sella & Mosca demonstrates that when workers live where they labor, the architecture must expand beyond utilitarian sheds to include civic and communal functions. Even as the facility grew into a massive modern plant, it retained this sense of a small, autonomous town surrounded by a vast landscape of vineyards. Seeing this integrated social structure in person validated my own efforts to design a multifaceted complex where production, circulation, and public life are woven together. The site functions as a concentrated node of activity (a territorial anchor) that defines the character of the surrounding land through its specific technical requirements.

While the modern industrial additions often lack the refined architectural poetry I am pursuing, their internal organization is characterized by an impressive level of order and logistical precision. The facility frequently resembles a massive power plant (an observation that highlights the sheer mechanical intensity of high-volume winemaking), but the efficiency of its systems is undeniable. This visit marked the first time I could physically experience the scale of large fermentation tanks and the complex infrastructure I have been studying theoretically for months. Witnessing these systems in operation provided a clear sense of the spatial volumes and technical clearances necessary for my own design.

Ultimately, the experience at Sella & Mosca helped bridge the gap between the monumental requirements of mass production and the sensitive integration of architecture into an existing fabric. The logistical clarity of the industrial plant, combined with the historical precedent of the “productive village,” offers a balanced framework for my project in Mamoiada. I am now more confident in designing a productive core that functions with mechanical precision while serving as a civic heart for the community. The challenge remains to synthesize this industrial efficiency with a more evocative material language, ensuring that the final intervention is both a high-performance machine and a meaningful public space.







Visiting “Azienda Vinicola Cherchi Giovanni Maria”

The visit to the Azienda Vinicola Cherchi Giovanni Maria offered a compelling look into the architecture of a high-quality, family-run operation where the scale of production is intimately tied to a long-standing tradition of expertise. In contrast to the vast industrial powerhouses I have visited, this winery presents a more compact and ordered structure that feels deeply immersed in its surrounding vineyards. The building is organized with a clear functional verticality: the upper floor serves as the primary technical hub, housing the fermentation tanks and heavy machinery, while the level below is dedicated to the cellars. This simple but effective separation of levels allows the gravity of the production process to dictate the flow of the building, providing an atmospheric subterranean environment for aging while keeping the active, mechanical processes at the surface.

One of the most striking aspects of the Cherchi facility is the presence of a dedicated workshop area, which revealed a side of the wine industry that is often overlooked in larger industrial precedents. I discovered that there is a profound level of craftsmanship involved in the final stages of production, specifically regarding the manual corking and tagging of bottles. Observing this manual labor highlighted a specific artisanal quality that I want to reflect in my own project. It suggests that the winery should not only be a place of large-scale mechanical fermentation but also a space for tactile, human-scale craftsmanship. This realization has led me to reconsider the secondary spaces within my design, ensuring that there is adequate room for these manual workshops where the final, delicate touches of the winemaking process can be performed with the care they deserve.

The aesthetic of the winery is defined by a simple but effective architectural language, featuring a prominent exterior canopy that mediates between the interior boutique and the expansive landscape. This space serves as a point of transition where the family’s deep knowledge of viticulture is shared with visitors through wine tastings. The order and cleanliness of the facility, despite its smaller size, demonstrate that a family business can maintain a high level of professional rigor without losing its intimate character. This reinforces my decision to pursue a design that balances technical precision with a sense of place, where the building feels like an extension of the family’s heritage and the land they cultivate.

By studying the Cherchi winery, I have gained a better understanding of how to manage a two-story facility that integrates both the heavy, industrial requirements of the tanks and the quiet, thermal needs of the cellar. The experience has encouraged me to think about the “boutique” aspect of my own project as a space of education and storytelling, where the craftsmanship of the workshop and the history of the family are put on display. This visit has provided a necessary bridge between the massive scale of industrial plants and the refined, detail-oriented nature of boutique production, helping me to refine the spatial and social goals of my intervention in Mamoiada.







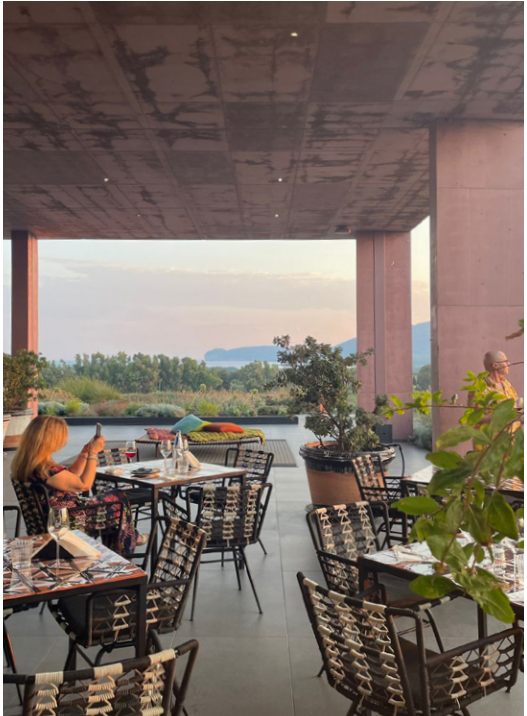
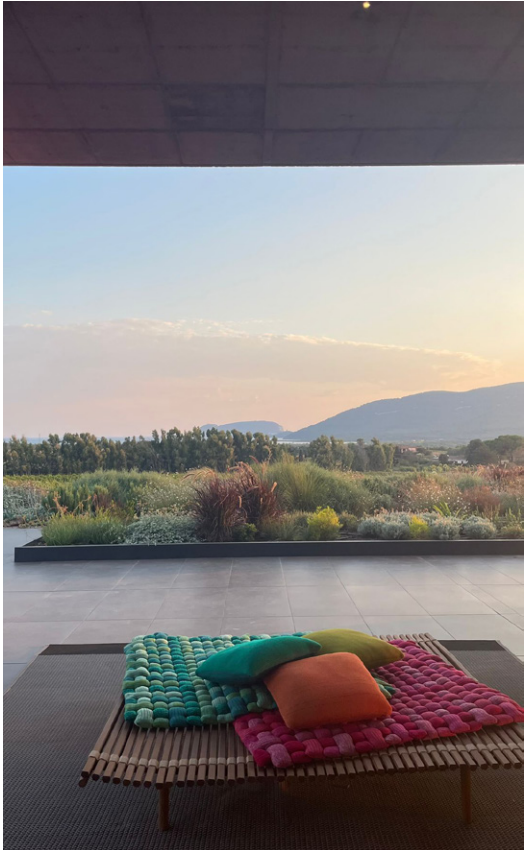
Visiting “Podere Grande”

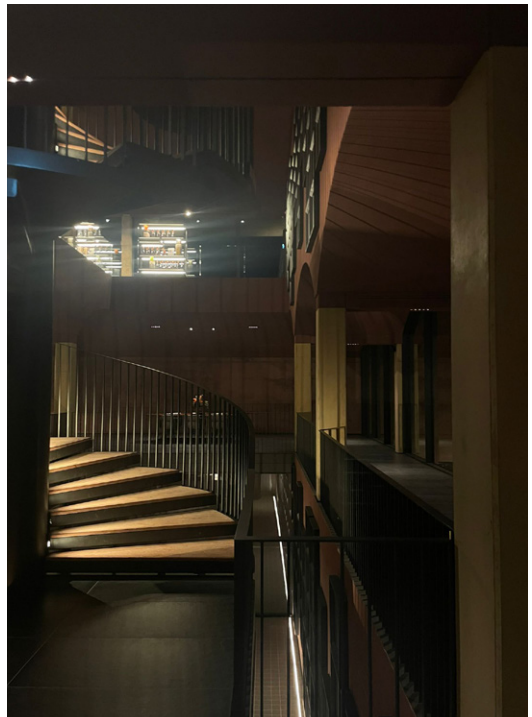
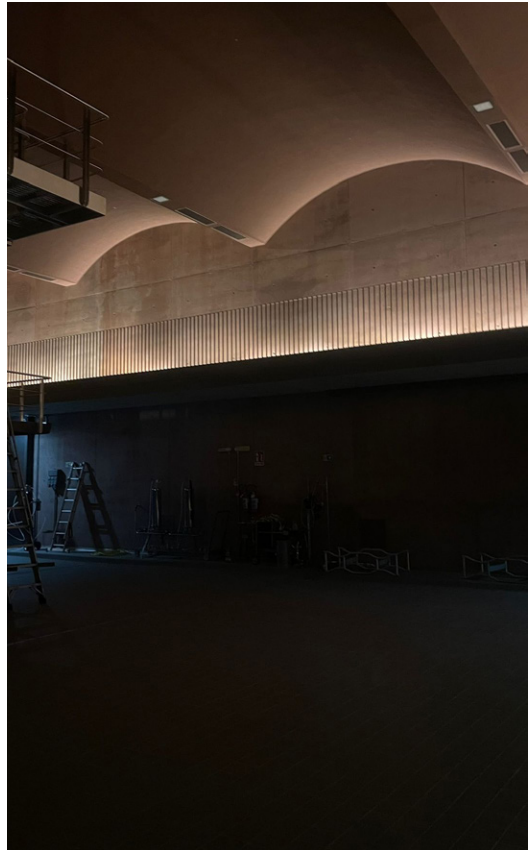
The summervisittoPodereGuardiaGrandeinSardiniaofferedasignificantcontemporary benchmark for the architectural and experiential potential of a high-end winery. As a recently opened flagship project, the building exhibits a striking aesthetic beauty and a rigorous approach to construction that immediately commands attention. A detailed tour with the facility’s management provided invaluable technical insights into both the modern wine production cycle and the complexities of the construction process required to execute such a high-precision project. While the building follows the somewhat stereotypical typology of an isolated, poetic volume set within an expansive vineyard, its execution as a self-contained architectural statement is undeniably masterful.

The most profound realization from the visit occurred during the tasting experience, where the sensory qualities of the wine were presented in direct dialogue with the surrounding environment. The managers articulated the flavor profiles by encouraging a visual connection with the landscape elements that shaped them, such as the salty air originating from the distant, visible sea. This method of describing the wine through its geographical influences underscored the importance of site-specificity in winery design. It demonstrated that the architecture serves as a lens through which the terroir is understood, transforming the act of tasting into a holistic observation of the territory.

This experience reinforced the value of framing the landscape within my own project. The idea that the environment—the sea air, the soil, and the topography—is a tangible ingredient in the production process justifies the architectural effort to maintain a constant visual link between the interior spaces and the outside world. By designing the winery and the cellar to interact with their specific surroundings, the architecture does more than house a technical process; it provides the necessary context for the product itself. The lessons from Podere Guardia Grande confirm that the success of a winery lies in its ability to translate the raw characteristics of the site into a sophisticated, legible spatial experience for the visitor.







Visualizing the concept

To kickstart and understand the scope and appearance of what I'm designing, during the summer I tried to imagine how the program I developed throughout the first semester could inhabit and settle within the landscape and the town.




For the diverse sites I chose, I tried to approach each by letting the existing situation suggest how I should negotiate my project within the existing, as well as deciding what functions should be there. I have first compiled a sort of matrix which summarised what I want to do, where I want to do it, and what name it should have. I found the advice to give a name specially useful, as assigning a name and a typology to each intervention made it extremely clear in my head.

"The shed" is envisioned as an open, permeable roofed space which frames the landscape, and let people use it as they please, giving townsfolk a flexible space which allows for many events and things happening, similar to the Miller & Maranta Market square building in Switzerland I have as a reference.

"The cellar" is imagined as a reuse of the existing abandoned supermarket, and I wanted it to feel like an extension of the town and a house for the community. To do so the first idea was to reimagine the facade and the building itself through elements typical of the house in the region. I wanted to emphasize the domestic scale production happening in the town by making the ground floor some kind of public cellar, and the first floor some kind of public/domestic space.

"The terrace" draws inspiration from the way people inhabit rugged landscapes, similar to how its done in the region: the terrace is intended as a typology to negotiate the building with the topography, to recreate and renegotiate the way the town and its topography are related: the building itself becomes both a productive space and a way to reconnect different parts of the town, of the landscape. I experimented with the idea of basically the building developing below the public ground, and this public ground above being different terraces that extends the square to the level of the town.

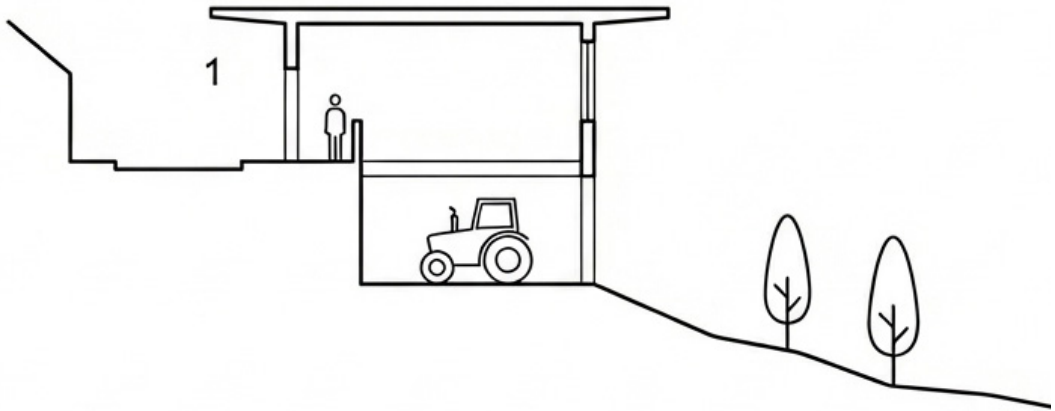
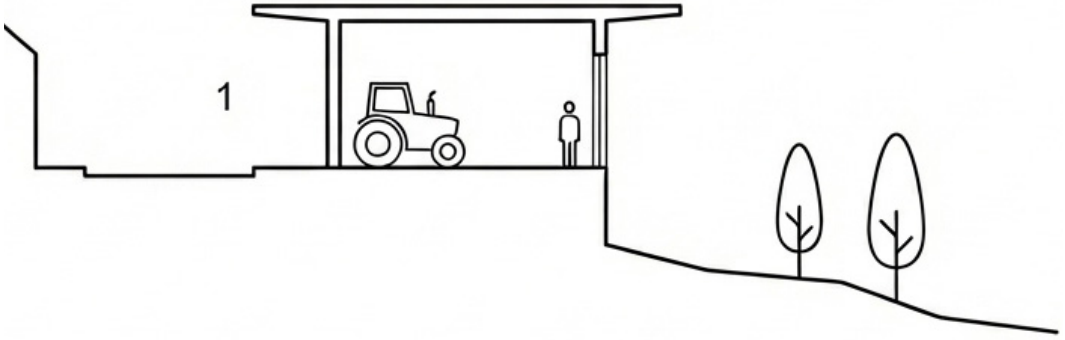
From the feedback I received this week, it is necessary to realise a maquette which showcases this intricate relationship of topography, town, landscape, existing. The products I have developed so far are not able to communicate well enough the complexity of my site and my idea.

SPAZIO/INT.	FUNCTION	TYPOLOGY	REFERENCE
① "THE SHED" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRAPE RECEIVING 300m² OR FEST VENUE BEEN DAY (LOCAL AFTER WORK) FESTIVITIES (WINE TASTING) PROCESSING 200m² <i>BRIGADE WINE</i> TASTING PERFORMING 400m² ON TERRACE 	<p>The shed</p> <p>TERRACED BUILDING ON 2 FLOORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gravity fueled winery progetto  BARCASSE → Attachment alla chiesa HERZOG De H. → 
② "THE CELLAR TERRACE"	MALE WINE?	OLD SUPERMARKET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPAQUE VS TRANSPARENT FACADE ALPHERO CANTINA
③ "THE CELLAR" (• AGING 400m ²	RE USE OF ABANDONED BUILDING	- Reference Figo
④ "THE WORKSHOP"	• BOTTLING 200m ² SHOP LOCAL + TOURISTS	RENOVATION OF MUSEO (EXISTING)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> find nice reference - Riserivato, Alpghero - BELVEDERE DI UGOLINI
⑤ "THE WINE LIBRARY"	• MUSEO DELLA CULTURA e LIBRERIA DEL LAVORO x m ² <i>DELLA VINO</i> <i>expositiva</i> <i>Tourists / LOCALS</i> (CONFERENCE ROOMS) <i>meeting rooms</i>	RENOVATION AND DEMOLITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> progetto con piscina AL CENTRO / VASCHE DI RACCOLTA progetto dell'amico di UGOLOM
⑥ "THE PERGOLA"	• PUBLIC EATING SPACE COMMUNAL		
⑦ "THE WATER SPRING"	• PUBLIC FOUNTAIN WITH SQUARE		

"LE VIE DEL VINO"

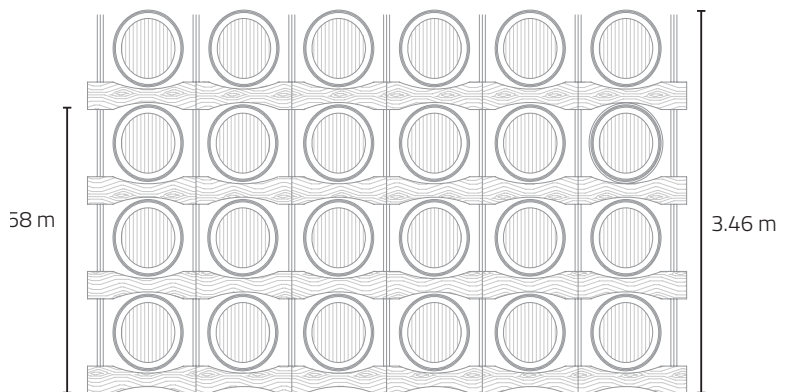
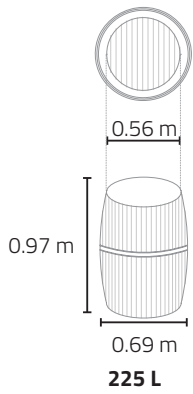
The shed



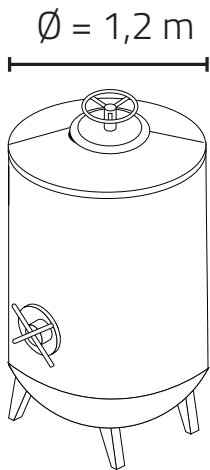
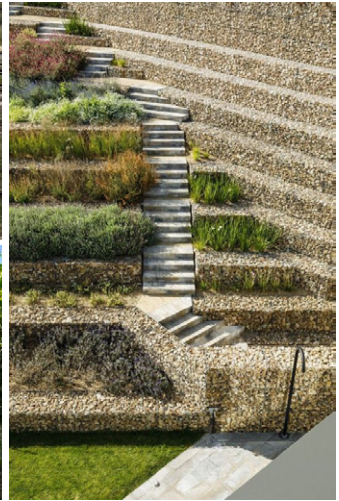


The cellar





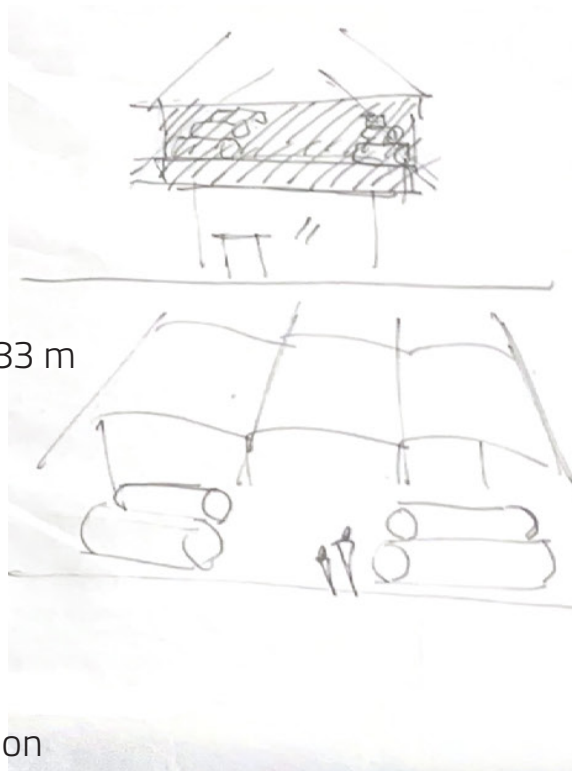
The terrace

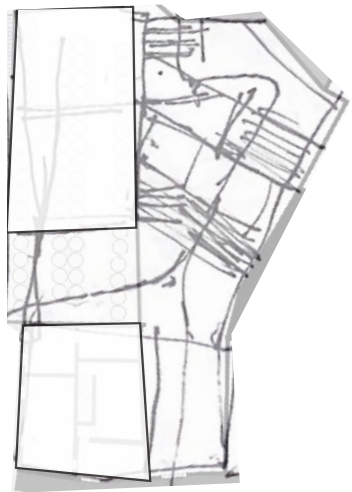
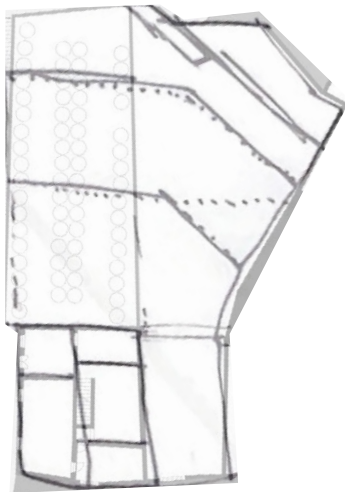
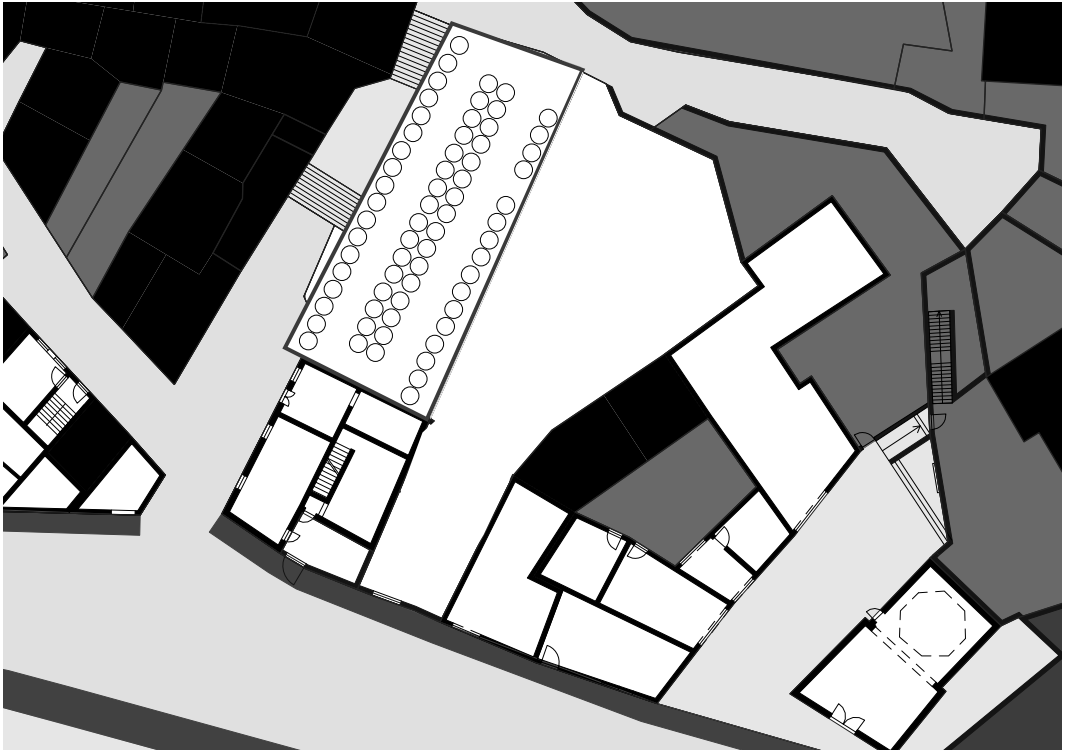


$h = 1,83 \text{ m}$

1600 L

fermentation tanks
328 needed for a year production





WEEK 21/22

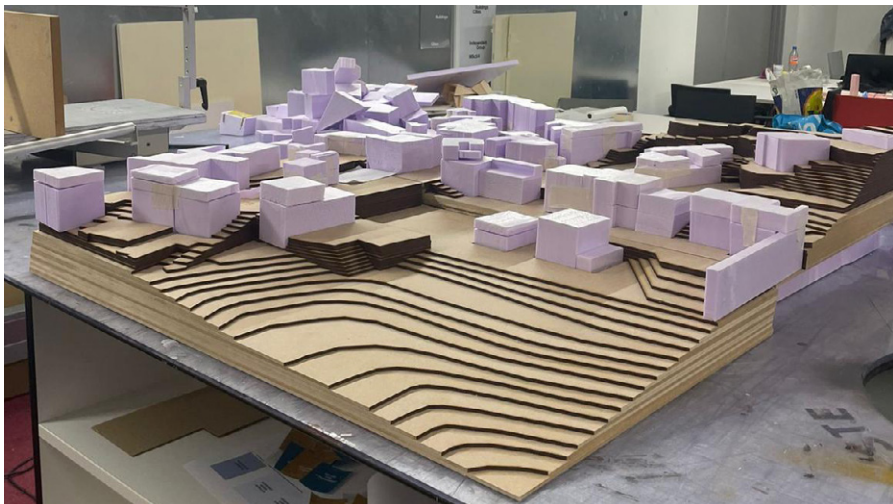
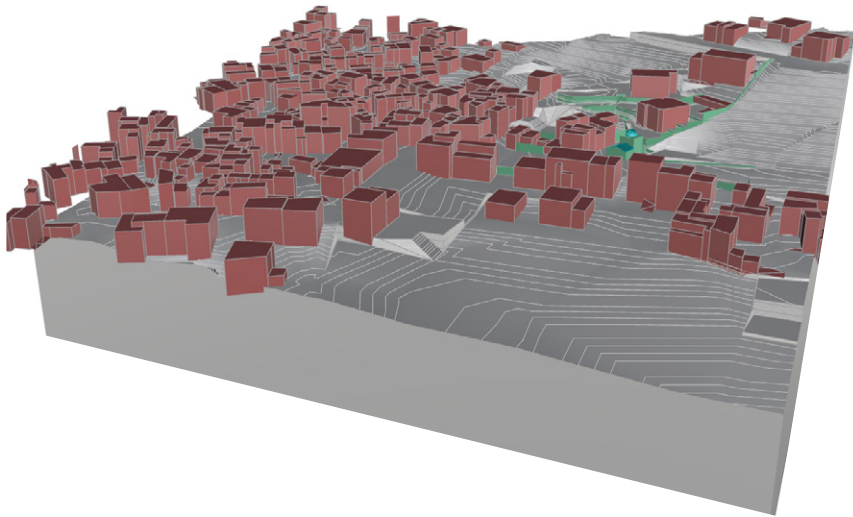
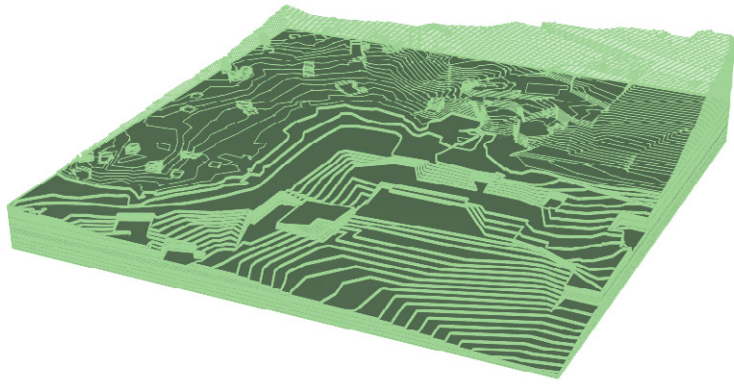
Physical maquette, drafting 3D proposals

Building a physical model

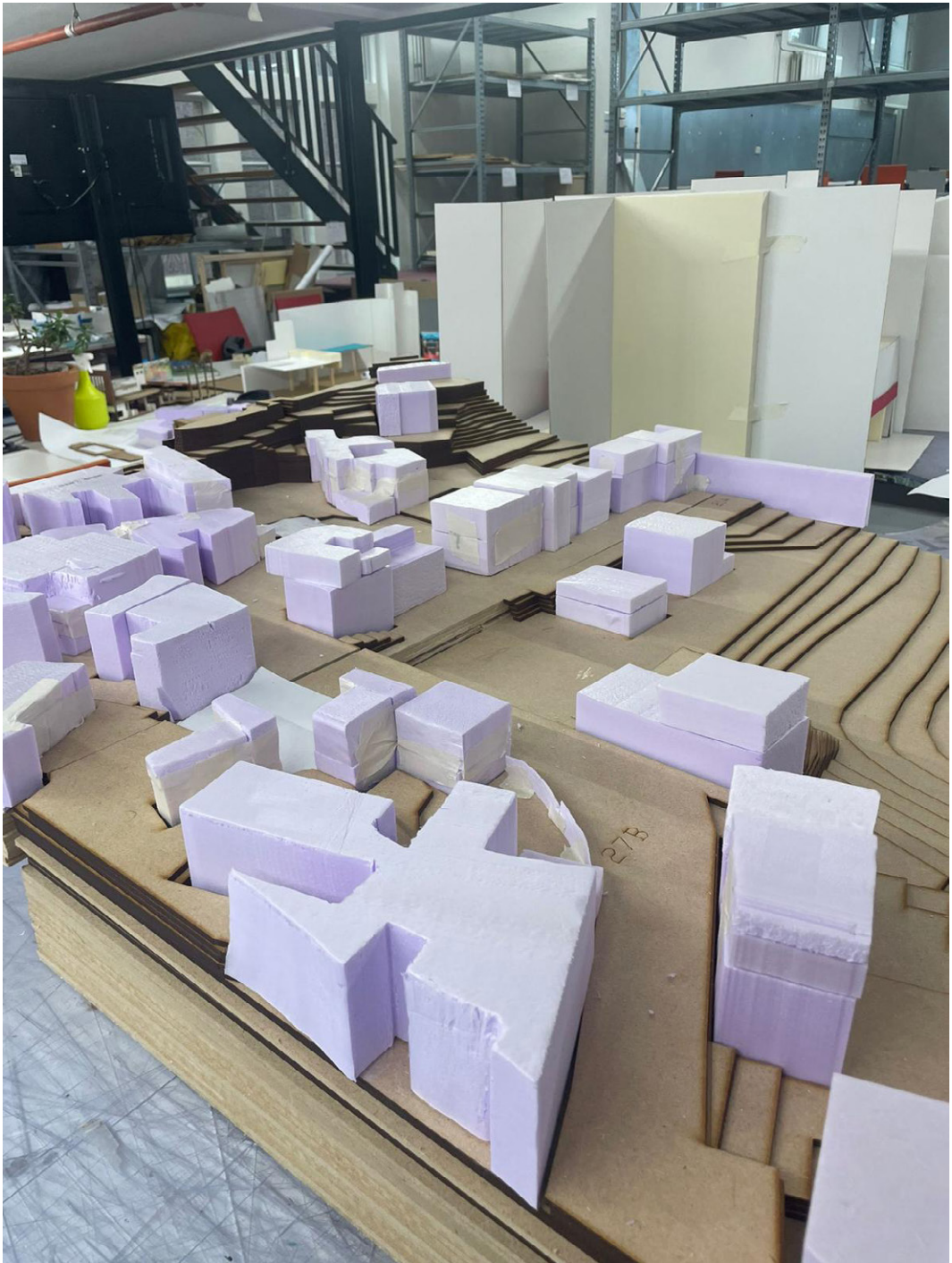
The process of building the landscape model began by referencing my digital 3D model of the town to determine an appropriate scale. I chose a scale that balanced the broader urban context with the specific details of the site's slope. Translating the digital contours into a physical object involved laser cutting several sheets of material to represent the varying elevations. This physical terrain provides a clear visualization of the vertical drop that defines the project site and served as the foundation for the design work.

Putting my hands directly into the model became the primary method for making design decisions. Using physical materials forced me to resolve spatial problems that were less apparent in the digital version. The studio process became more engaging during discussions with Daniel and Khun. We used pieces of foam and cardboard to suggest immediate changes and explore different iterations. This method allowed us to quickly debate and test ideas for what to do next without the delay of digital drafting.

This approach was instrumental in kickstarting the project massing. Given that the intervention is highly site-specific, the way the building volume sits within the terrain is the most important aspect of the design. The model allowed me to see exactly how the massing responds to the topography, testing how it might extend the street level or split across different elevations to accommodate functional needs like tractor storage. The physical blocks made it possible to see the direct relationship between the building and the land, ensuring the massing was developed in response to the specific conditions of the site.







WEEK 23 - 24

Materials, detailing existing

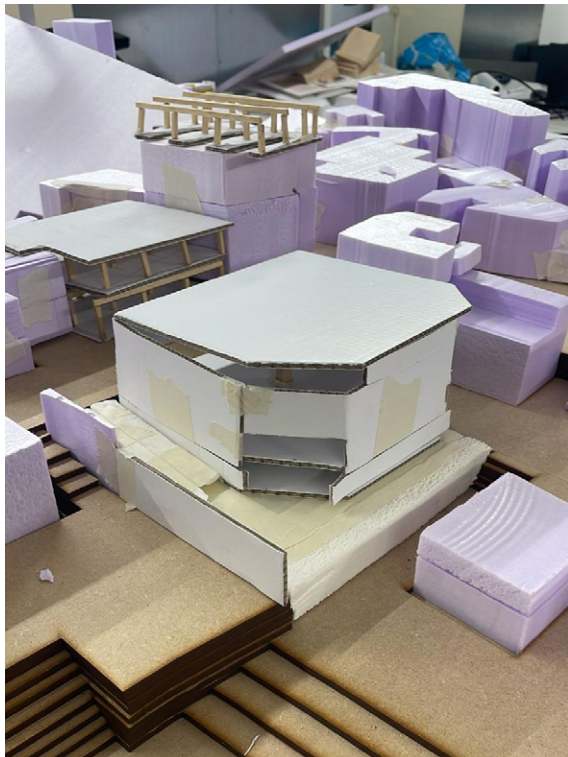
Massing and character of the buildings

During this week of design development, I focused on initial massing experiments to test the site's logistical requirements. My first iteration involved a closed structure with a solid roof and a large ramp facing the main square. The intention was to facilitate movement by directly connecting the public ground level with the first floor of the winery. This massing was primarily concerned with how the building could act as a functional bridge for transport and logistics.

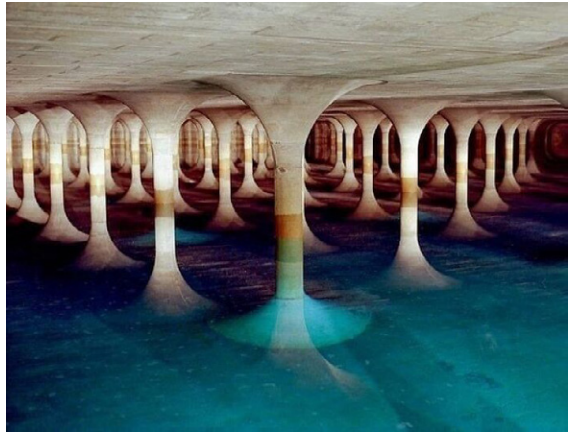
Tutoring sessions provided a different perspective on how the building should interact with its surroundings. We discussed the idea that framing a landscape is not limited to a choice between opaque walls or transparent glass. Instead, the structure itself—the columns and the roof—can define a view. This approach allows the architecture to suggest a relationship with the landscape without imposing a specific direction or focal point on the user.

Another significant shift involved reconsidering the building's role in vertical circulation. Since the adjacent square already provides access to the higher points of the town, the building does not need to function as a staircase or a primary path between levels. Instead, the intervention can focus on negotiating and reconstructing a specific part of the town's fabric. This led to experiments where the terraced topography of the site is brought inside the building, rather than being treated as an external public space. I also explored placing an industrial shed on the site of the roofed square. This showed that the structure could rest between two levels and occupy only a portion of the site, creating a more nuanced relationship with the existing terrain.

Current fascinations for the project include specific atmospheric and material qualities. I am interested in using vaulted ceilings for the barrel room located beneath the roofed square. The roofed square itself is envisioned as a light, inexpensive, and simple structure. For the fermentation room, I am exploring the use of breathing materials to respond to the requirements of the internal environment. These initial ideas help define the character of the intervention as it negotiates the different levels of the site.



BARREL ROOM



FERMENTATION ROOM



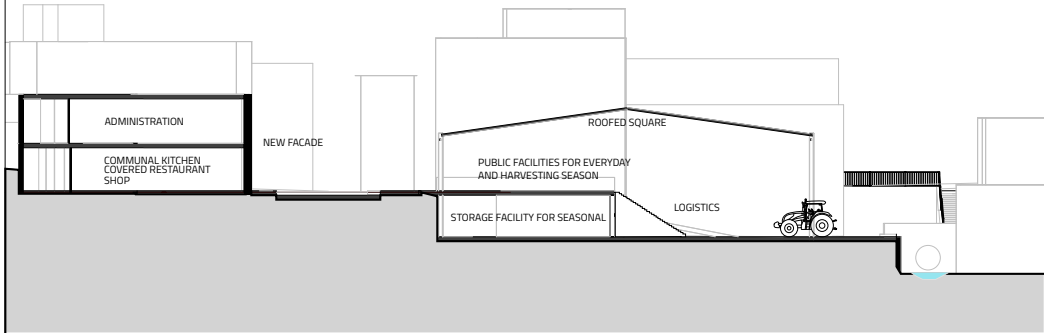
ROOFED SQUARE



Current fascinations for the project include specific atmospheric and material qualities. I am interested in using vaulted ceilings for the barrel room located beneath the roofed square. The roofed square itself is envisioned as a light, inexpensive, and simple structure. For the fermentation room, I am exploring the use of breathing materials to respond to the requirements of the internal environment. These initial ideas help define the character of the intervention as it negotiates the different levels of the site.

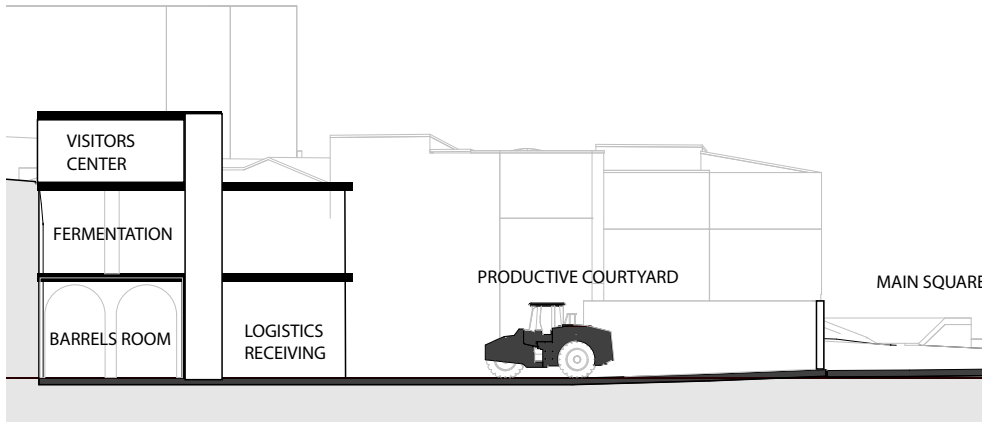
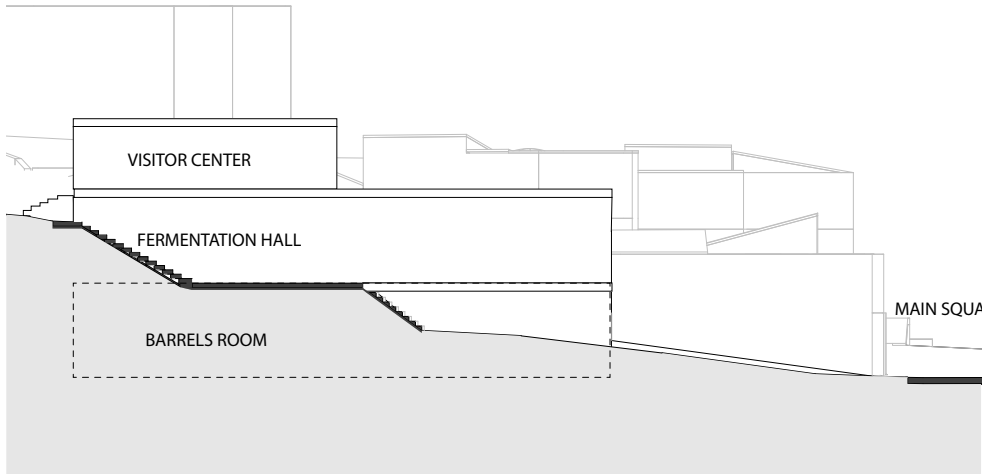
The roofed square

experimenting with an industrial shed within the site to define the scope of the intervention of the roof



The winery

Understanding how to articulate vertically the winery and its functions



WEEK 25 - 26

From concept to designing

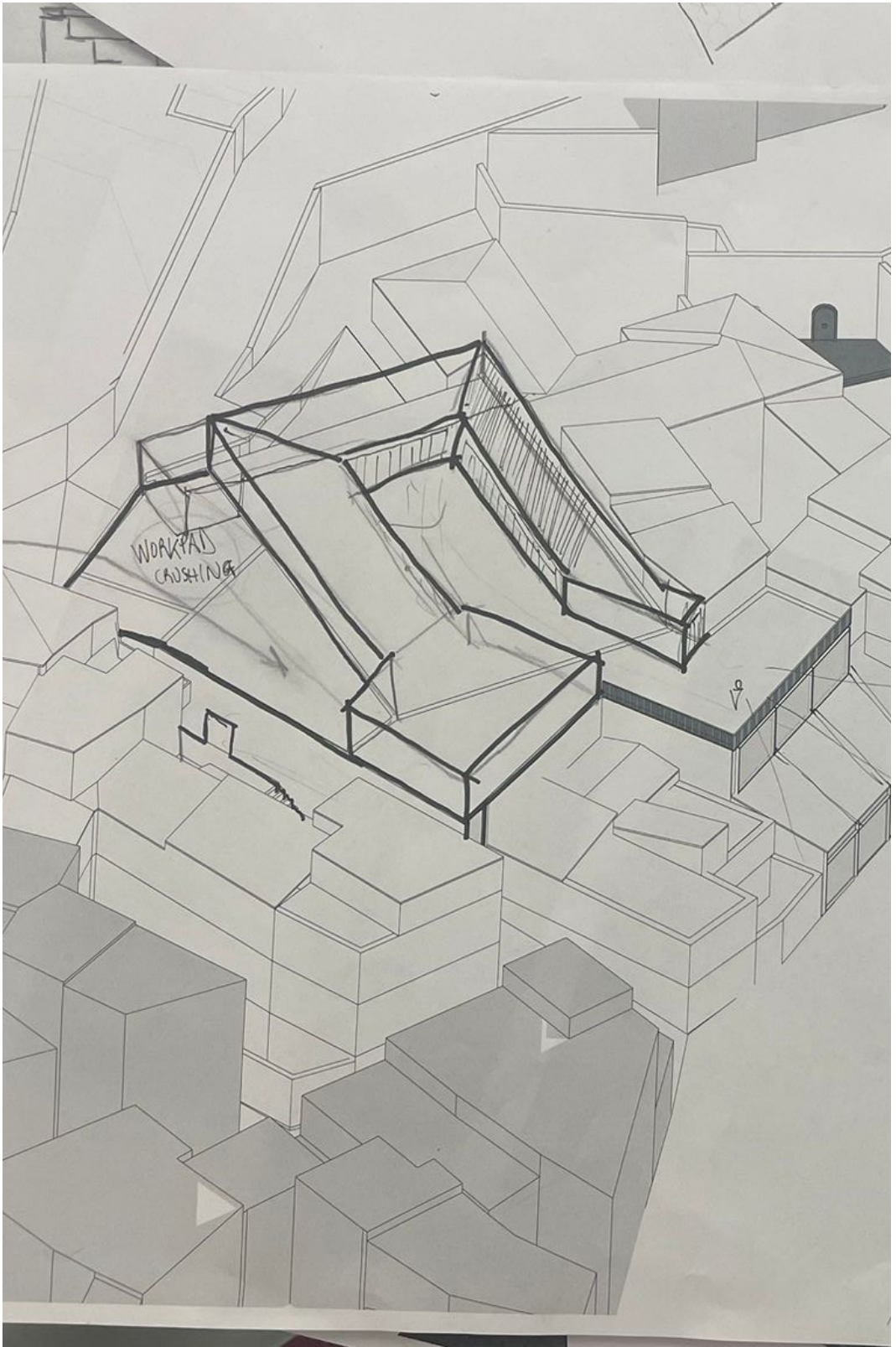
Developing the winery

The recent phase of the project has been defined by a rigorous focus on the technical development of the buildings, specifically through the resolution of the winery and cellar floorplans. These two components demanded the highest degree of precision due to their complex functional requirements and the strict spatial criteria inherent to wine production. The design process sought a definitive equilibrium between technical efficiency and architectural expression, ensuring that the logistical demands of circulation and production were met while upholding the spatial qualities of the chosen typologies: the terrace and the roofed square. This stage required an iterative methodology, where a thorough investigation of the site conditions became the primary catalyst for solving the architectural arrangement.

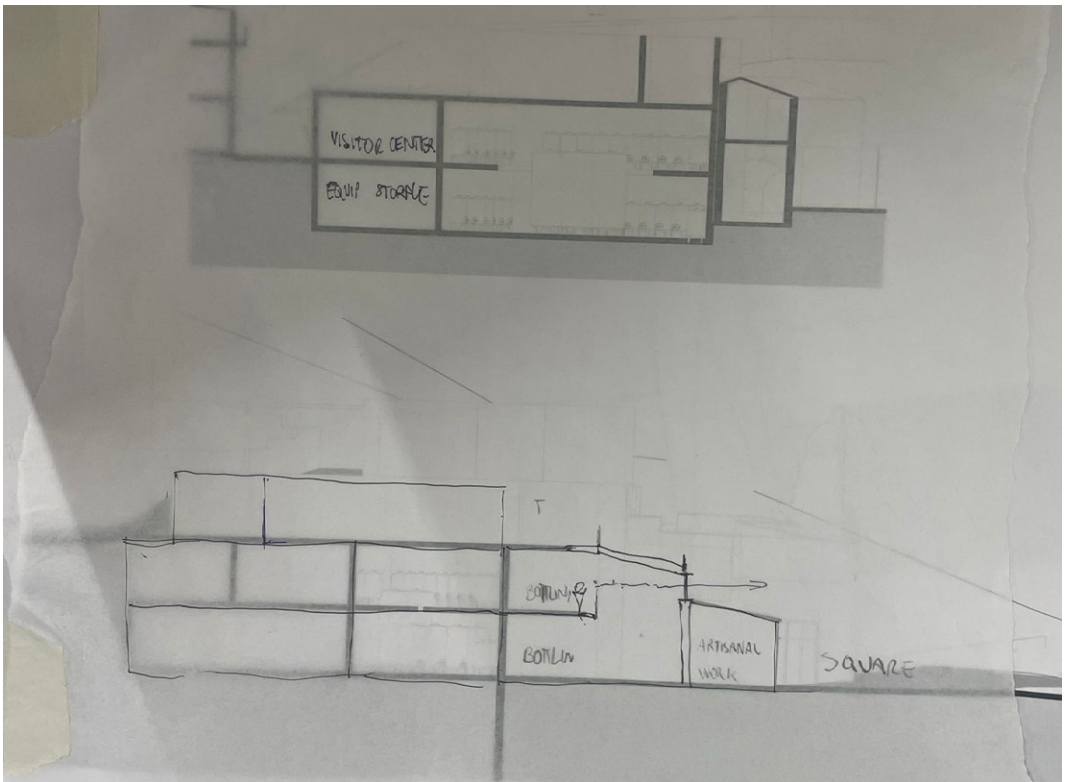
The evolution of the winery's form was deeply influenced by the realization that the productive heart of the building needed to occupy the maximum footprint afforded by the site. By aligning the primary volume as a vast longitudinal rectangle parallel to the adjacent staired road, the project successfully accommodated the necessary production capacity within a constrained topography. In this configuration, the productive core serves as the foundational anchor of the project, while all supplementary functions are designed as attached volumes that mediate the transition between the industrial interior and the surrounding urban fabric of the town. This structural hierarchy resolved the initial difficulties regarding volume and scale, transforming the production area into a central void that remains visually present from every ambient space within the building.

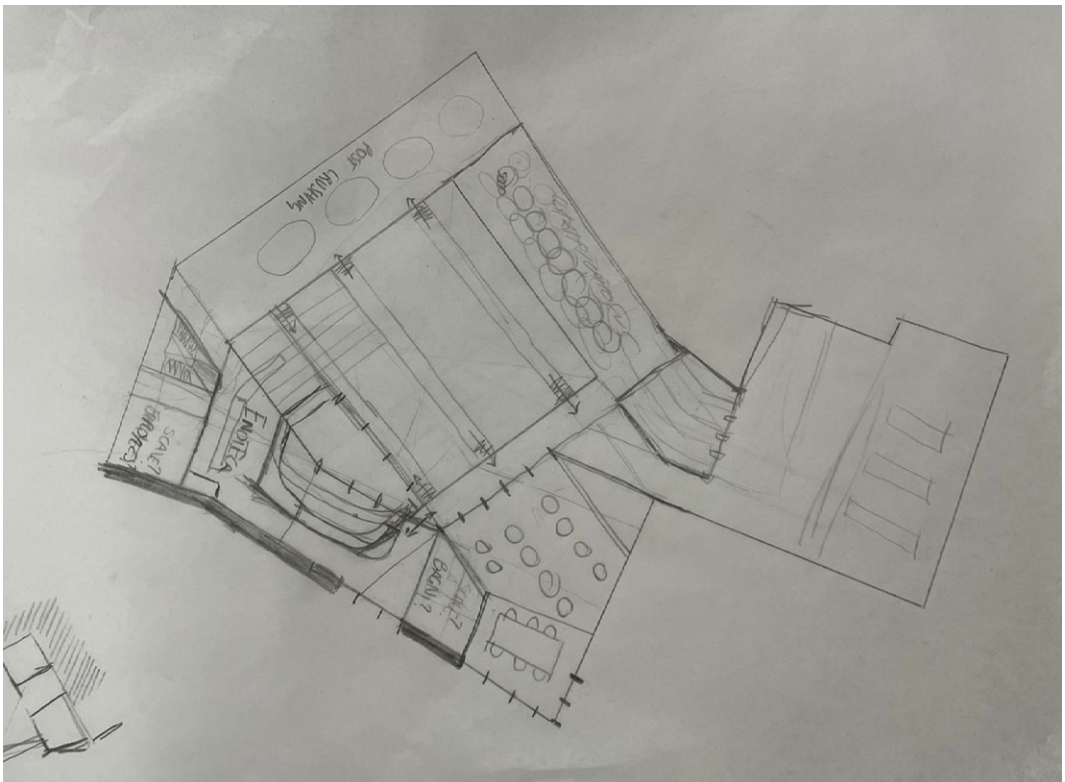
Integrating such a substantial volume into the site introduced a unique set of challenges regarding the interior atmosphere and the building's relationship with the sky. The productive core is conceived as a continuous, open environment characterized by its specific environmental conditions, yet it remains integrated into the broader architectural experience. To enhance this connection, the second floor is designed as an elevated terrace that overlooks the internal activity, creating a sense of transparency and oversight. This spatial depth is further articulated by a skylight roof system, which introduces controlled natural light into the expansive, enclosed environment of the core.

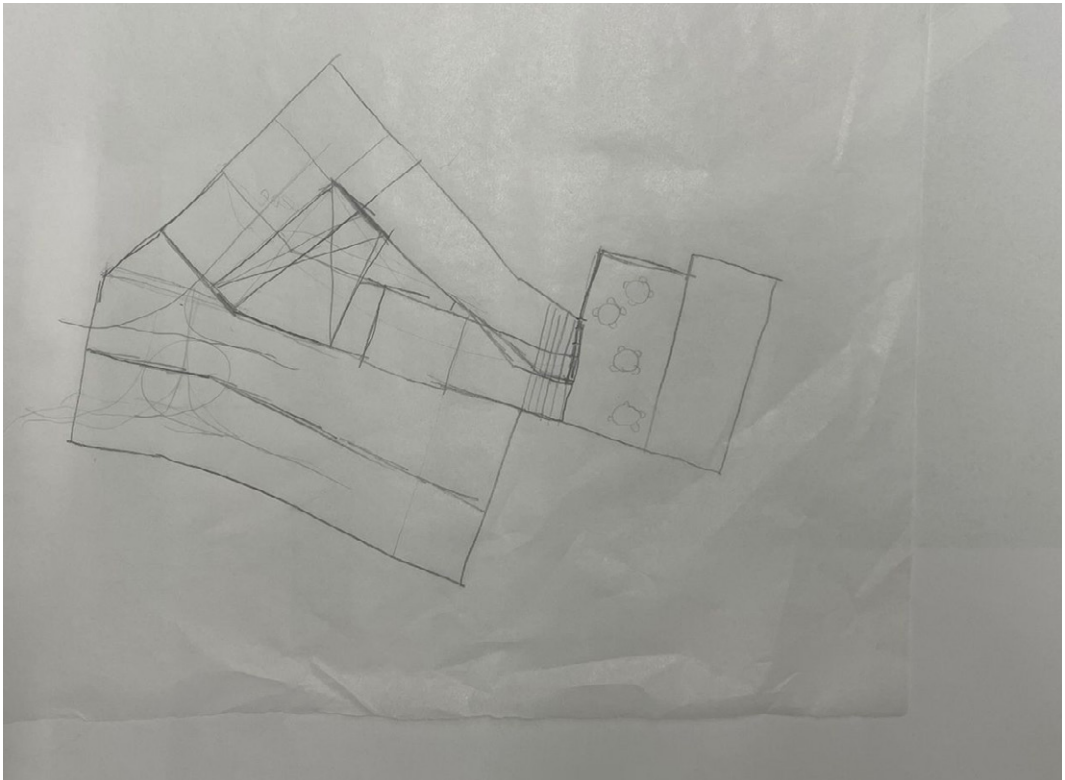
The synthesis of these ideas was achieved through a constant dialogue between two-dimensional floorplans, vertical sections, and three-dimensional modeling. Each iteration helped to solidify the elements that provided the most value to the project, allowing for the refinement of the architectural language in response to the site's complexity. Ultimately, this process of experimentation and technical adjustment led to a coherent design that respects the constraints of the landscape while fulfilling the ambitious functional goals of the winery.



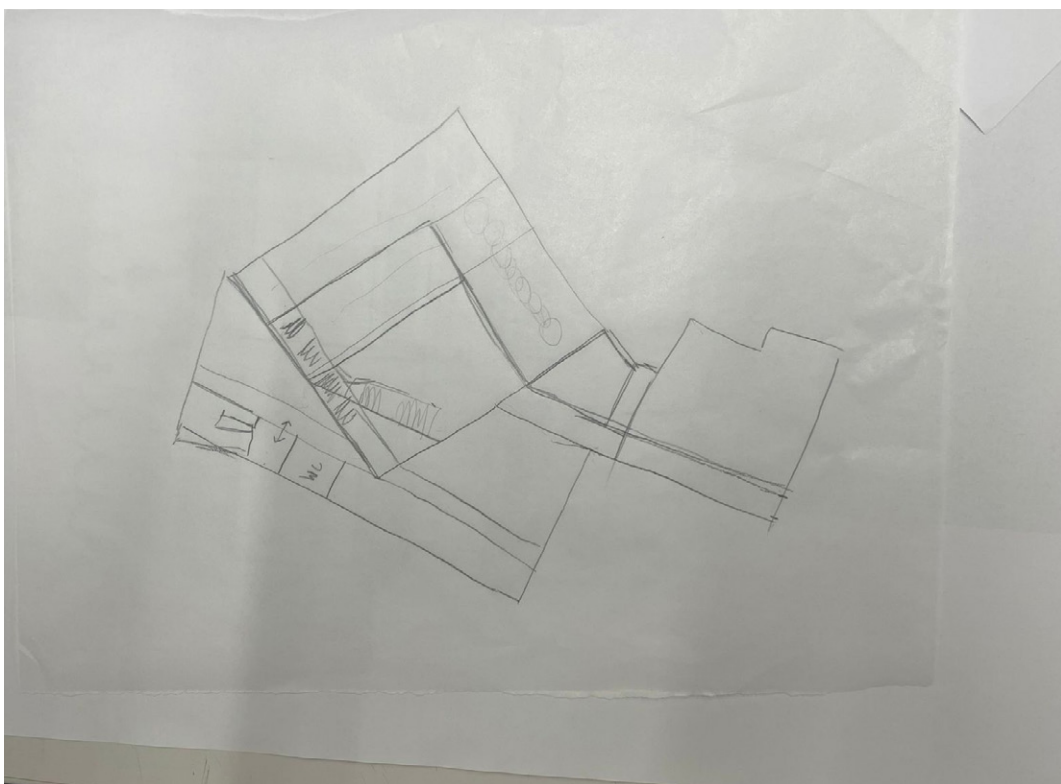
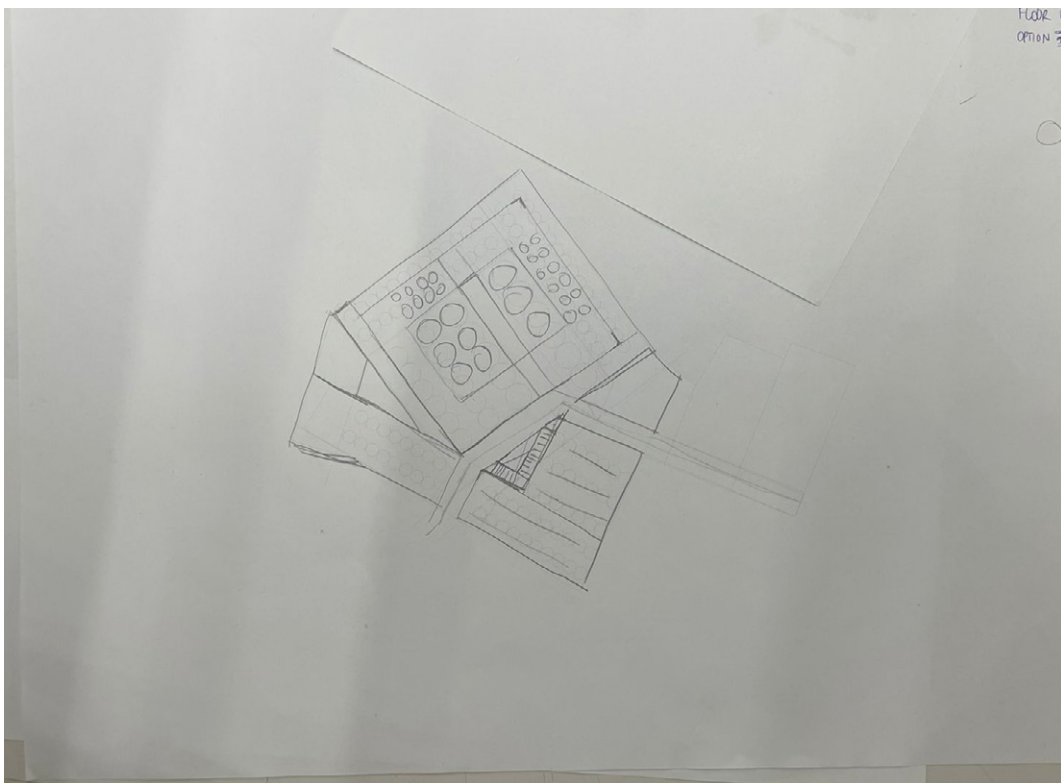


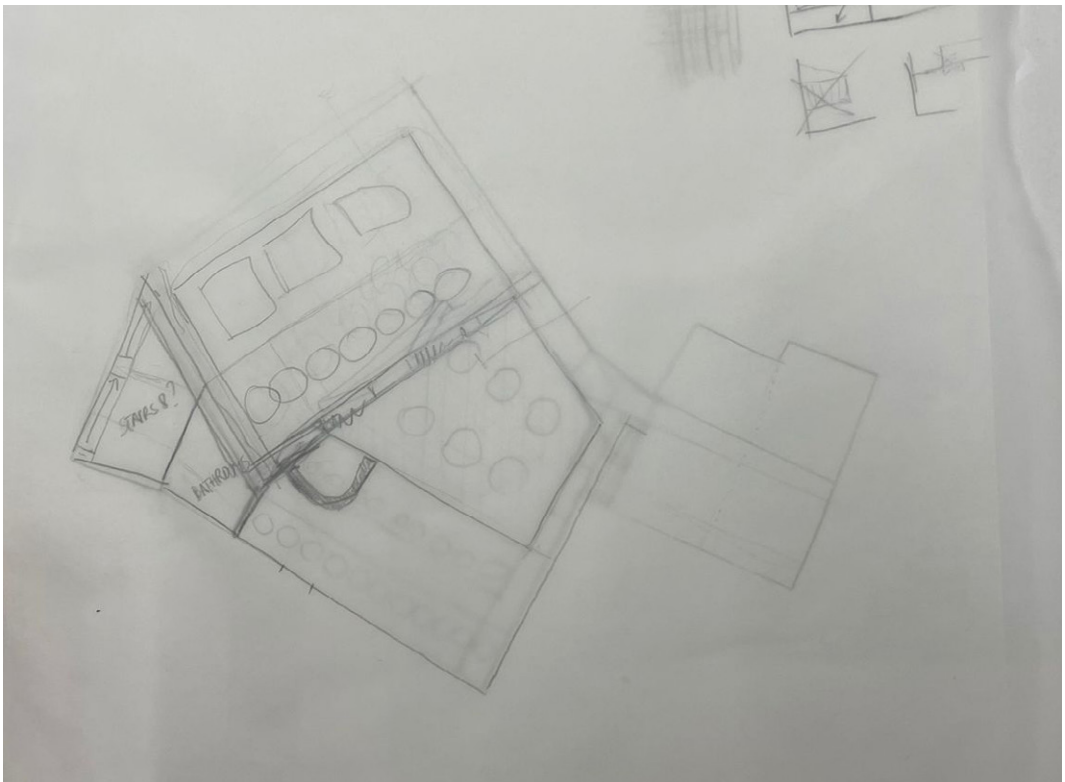
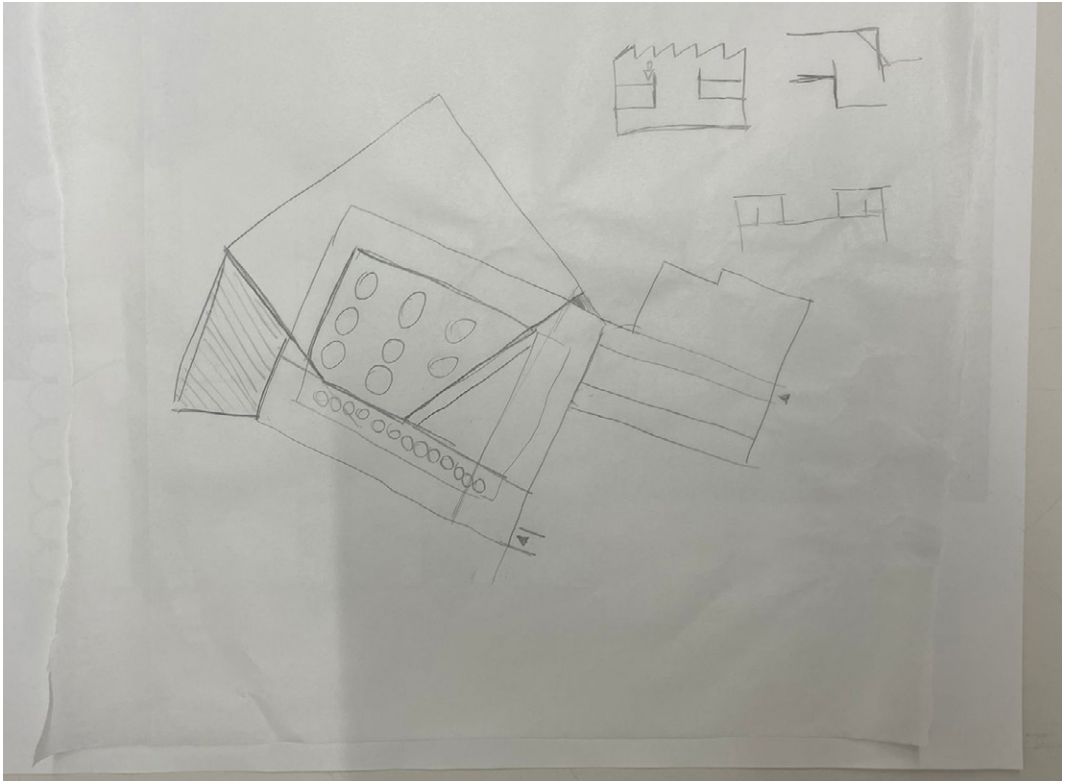


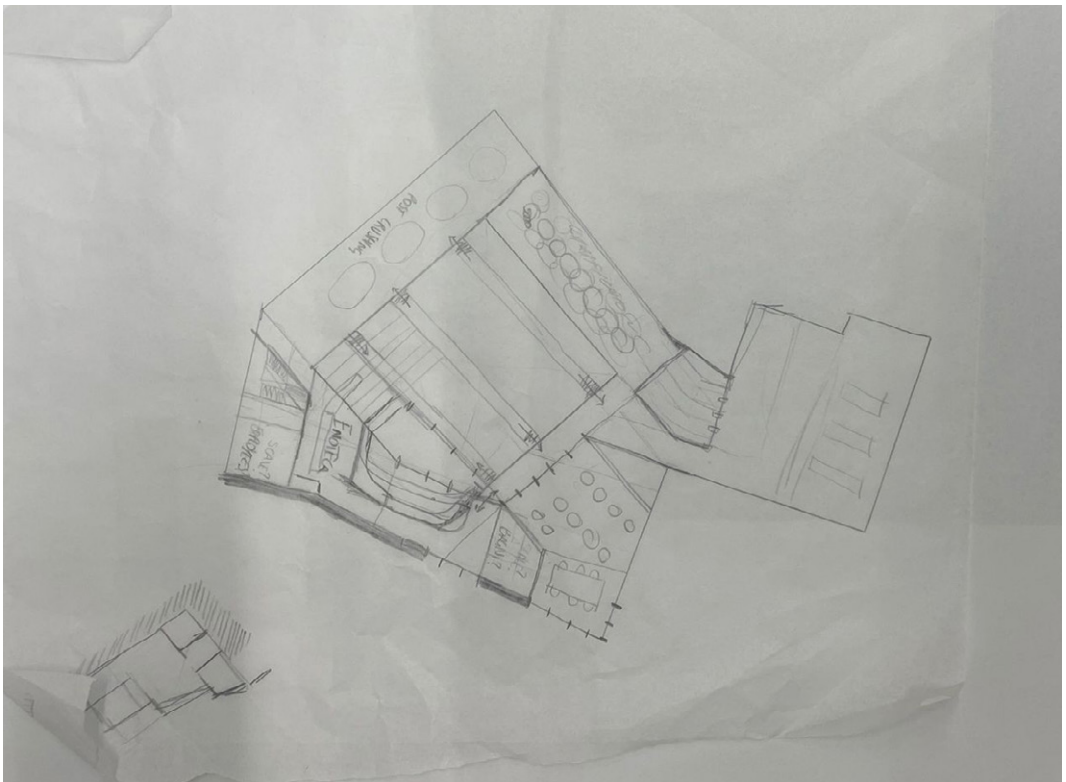
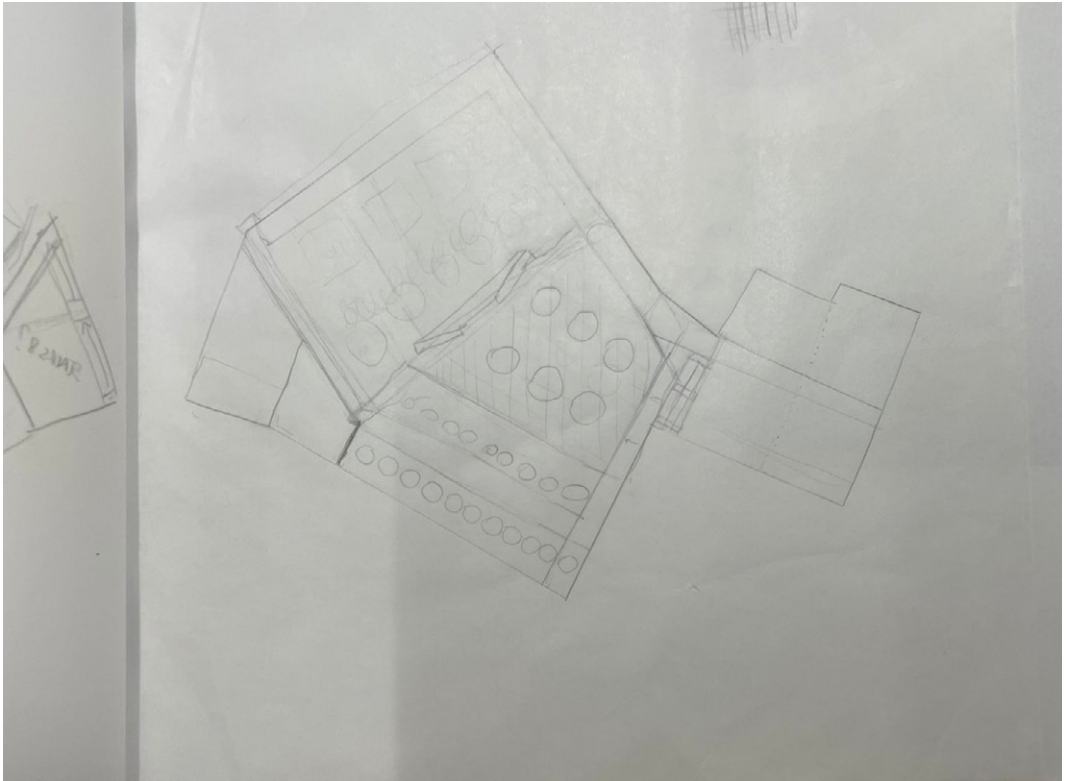


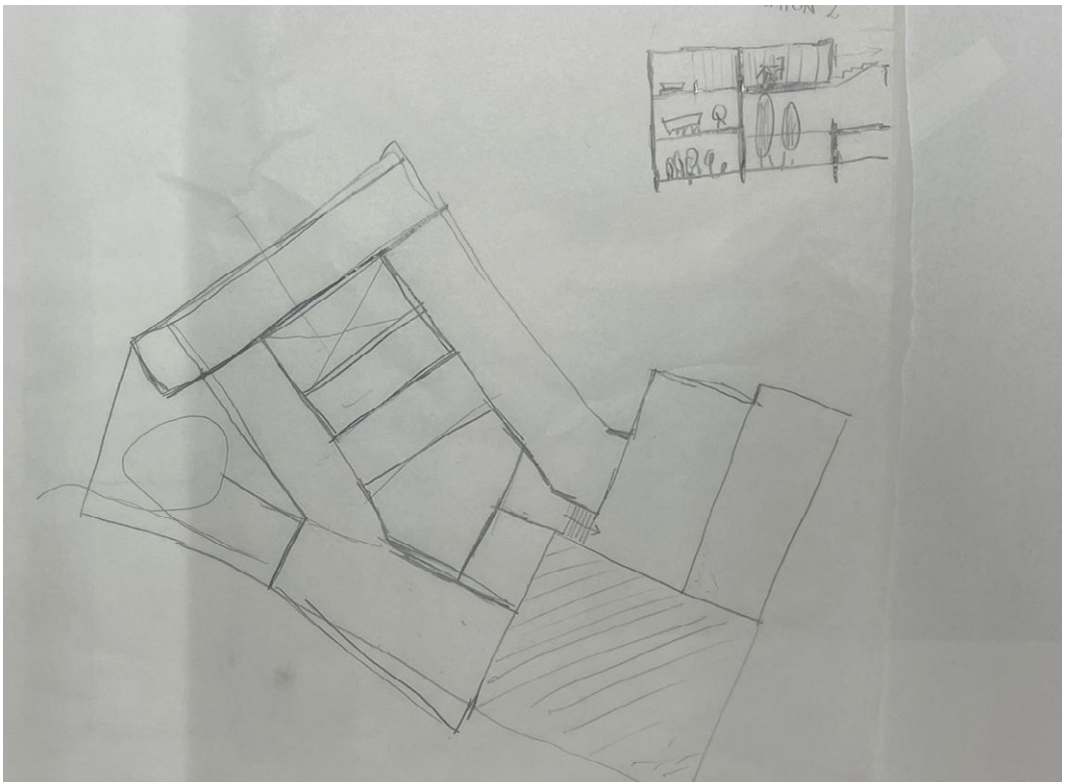
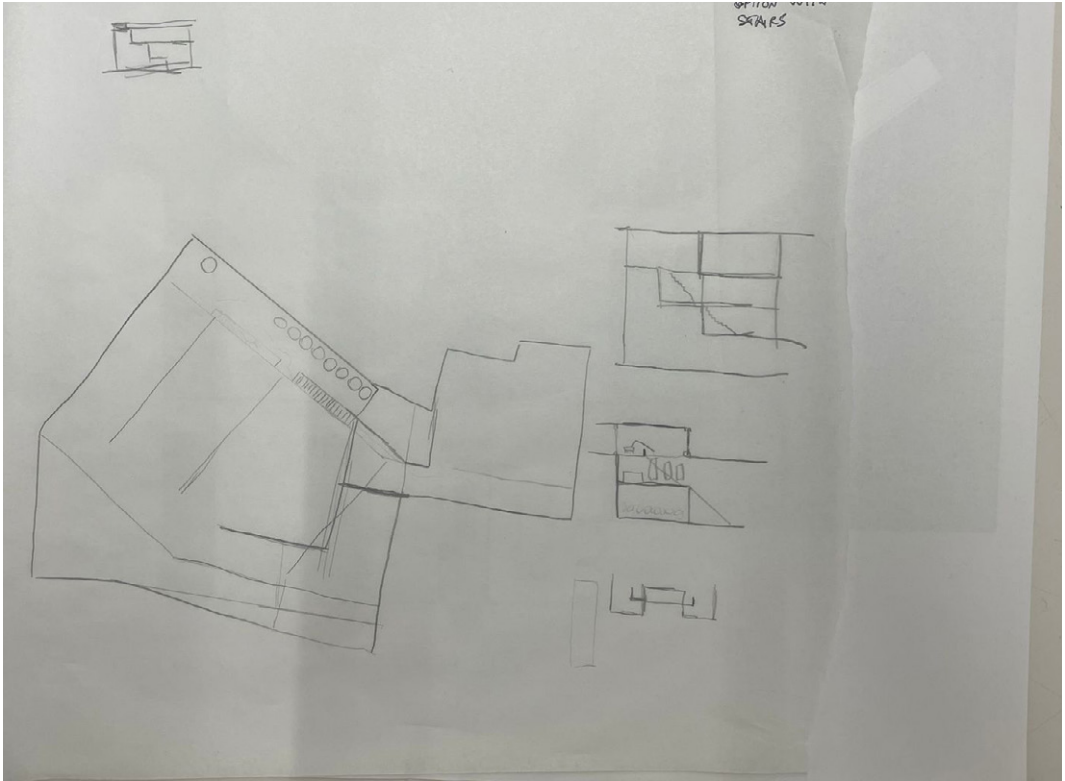


FLOOR
OPTION 2









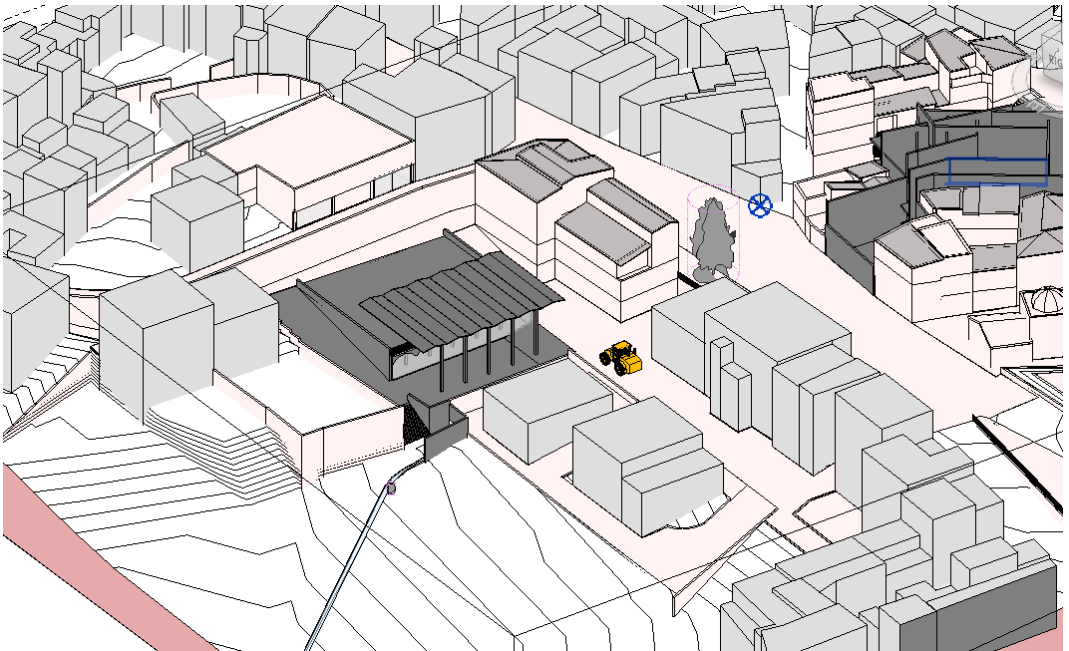
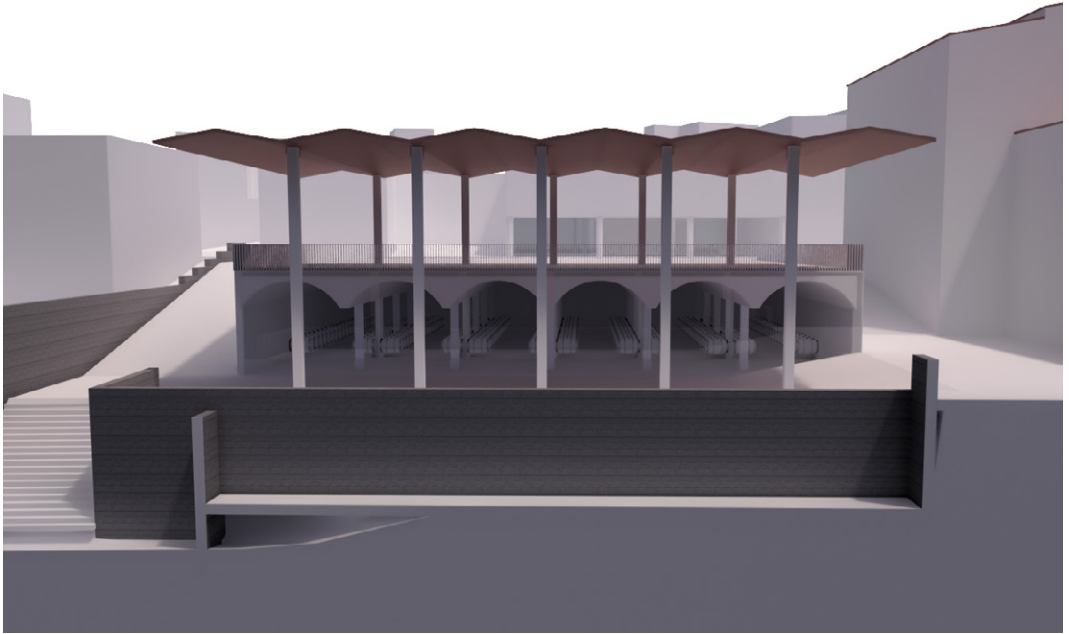
Developing the cellar

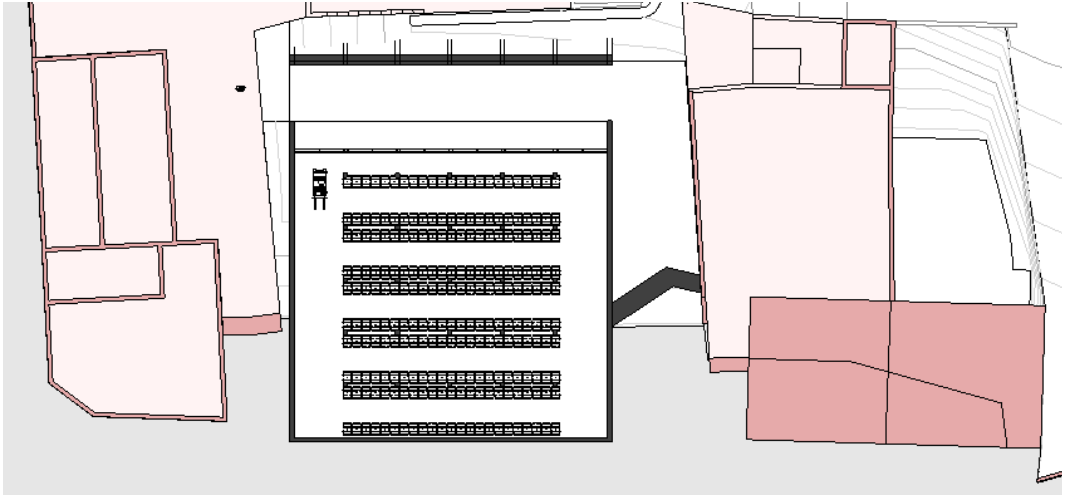
In contrast to the complexities of the winery, the development of the cellar followed a remarkably direct and intuitive trajectory. Despite the steep topography of the site, the project found its resolution through a singular volume that facilitates a clear connection between the two primary elevations. This foundational clarity allowed for an immediate transition into the more nuanced aspects of the building's composition, focusing on its visual identity and material presence. The initial concept of an industrial shed evolved into a sophisticated lightweight roof canopy that serves as a focal point for the site. This structure performs multiple roles, framing the distant landscape while providing essential shade for a new public square situated at the upper street level.

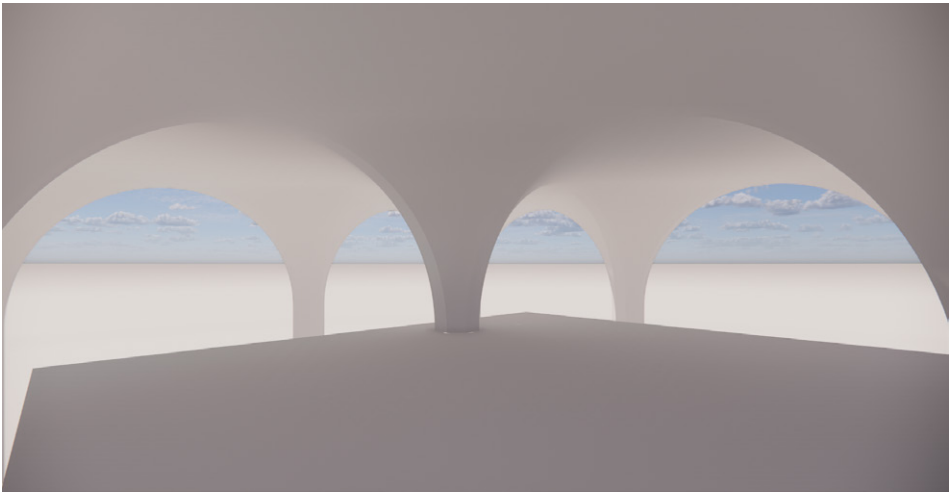
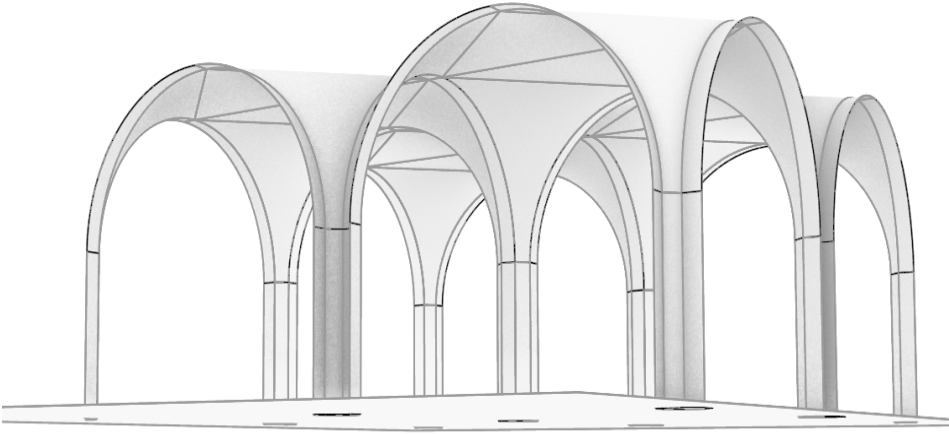
The architectural character of the cellar is defined by a deliberate dialogue between two distinct structural languages: the heavy and the light. Below the street-level square, the building is comprised of massive, crossed arched vaults. These heavy elements provide the necessary structural support for the public space above and ensure the thermal stability required for the cellar's internal environment. The placement of the lightweight, triangular-shaped roof structure above is directly informed by the rhythm of this heavy substructure. The spacing of the vaults was specifically engineered to accommodate and optimize the arrangement of the barrels within, creating a rigorous alignment between the subterranean functional requirements and the overhead architectural expression.

Positioned at the perimeter of the square, the roof canopy acts as a critical mediator between the urban fabric of the town and the expansive natural landscape. The juxtaposition of the massive masonry vaults with the precision of the lightweight canopy creates a powerful architectural language that defines the project's identity. This synthesis of weight and transparency was established from the earliest sketches, ensuring that the two systems work in total harmony. The resulting design successfully transforms a challenging topographical condition into a coherent public amenity that serves both the technical needs of the cellar and the social needs of the community.

A dedicated phase of the design process was committed to an in-depth study of the shape and composition of the vaulted ceilings. Through a series of iterative digital models and renderings, I analyzed the precise geometry of the cross-vaults, focusing on how their intersecting forms create a powerful and rhythmic spatial experience. This investigation allowed me to fine-tune the curvature of the arches and the volume of the resulting bays, ensuring they not only provided the necessary structural integrity and thermal mass but also achieved a monumental quality. The interplay of light and shadow upon these curved surfaces was a critical aspect of the study, informing how the natural light from the perimeter would be sculpted by the massive forms to create a unique internal atmosphere within the cellar.







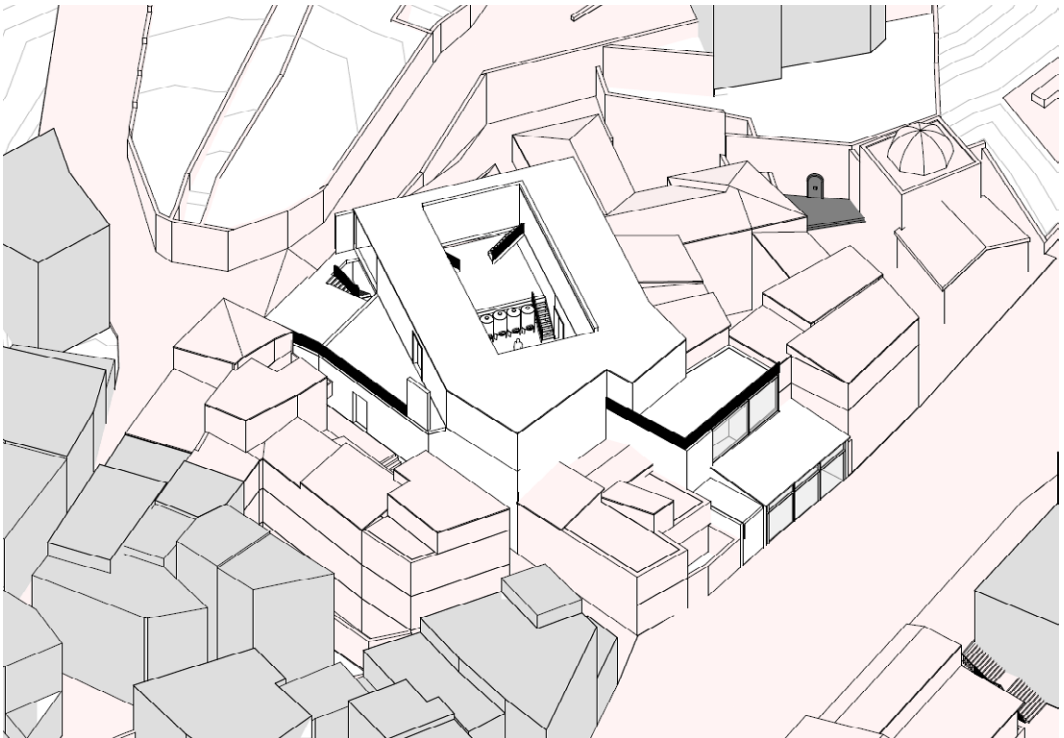
Reflections on the iterative process

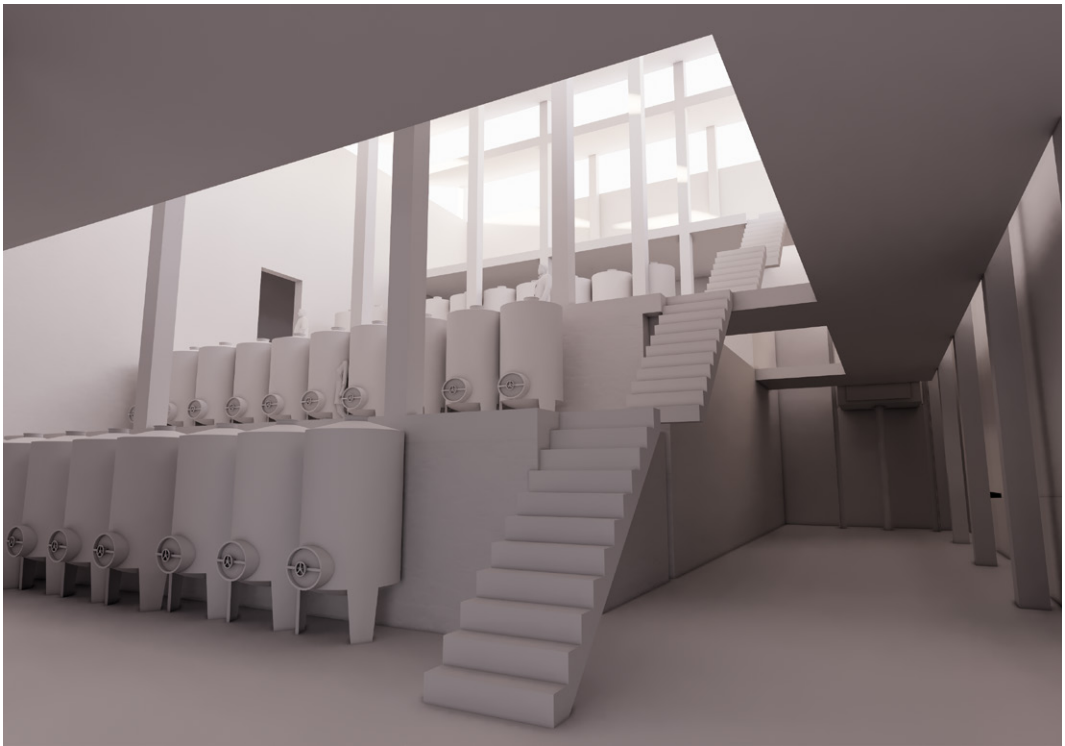
The conclusion of this two-week iterative cycle has provided a definitive understanding of the project's overall massing and the specific scope of the architectural interventions. Following the recent tutoring sessions, the design direction has shifted toward the amplification of existing intuitive successes. The terraced podium within the productive core, which serves as the primary circulation artery, is now expanded to the furthest extent the site allows. This decision reinforces the podium's role as the central organizational element, ensuring that movement through the building is inherently tied to the visual experience of the production process.

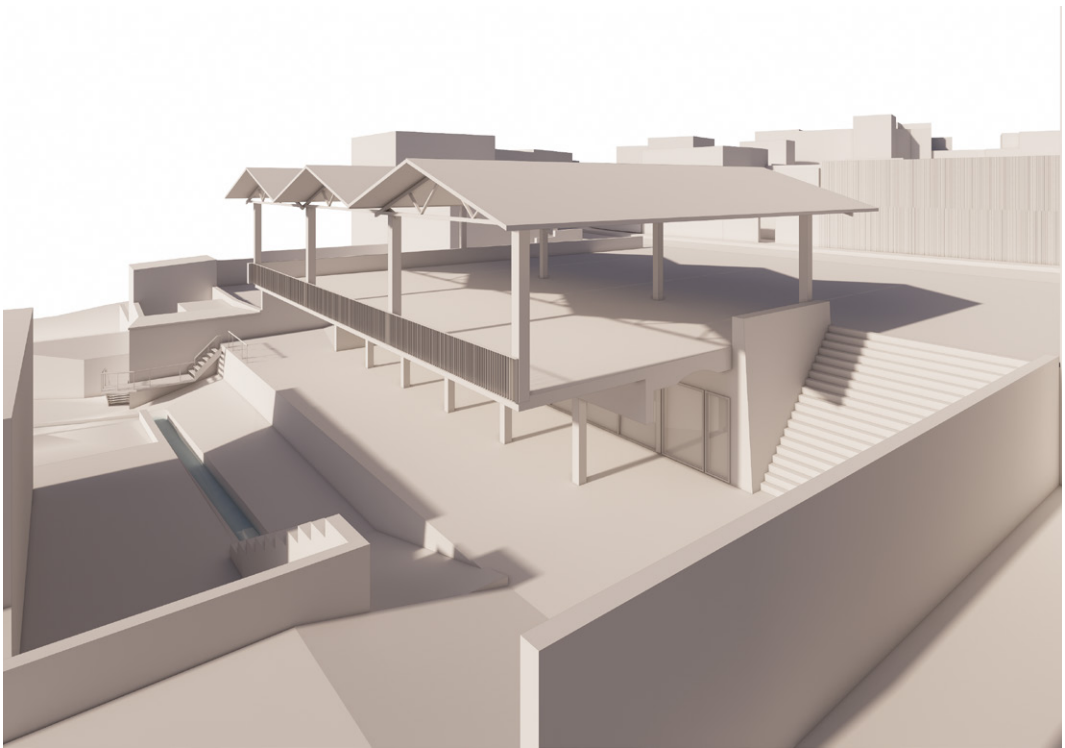
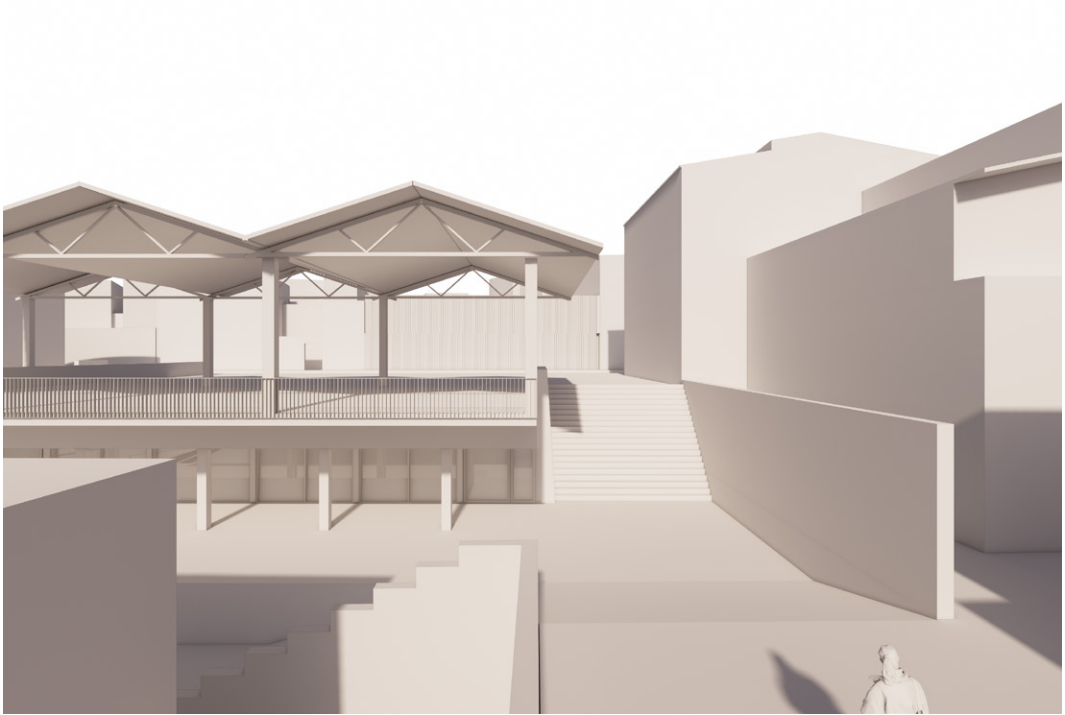
The terraced podium and industrial identity

The spatial organization of the winery is now defined by its unapologetic industrial nature. The productive core remains open to adjacent environments, creating a transparent internal landscape where the technical operations are fully visible. To support this, a dedicated logistics area is established on the left side of the plan, grounding the building's lofty architectural goals in the practical realities of industrial workflow. This layout ensures that the building functions as a high-performance machine while maintaining its integrity as a designed space.

The extended square The roofed square is expanded to reach the site's boundaries, maximizing the public and functional footprint of the intervention. This extension creates a substantial sheltered zone at the lower level, specifically designed for logistics and receiving operations. By sheltering these industrial tasks beneath the primary architectural gesture, the project integrates the necessary movement of goods into the site's overall composition. The resulting structure acts as a monumental mediator between the town and the landscape, utilizing its large-scale canopy to provide both a public amenity and a highly efficient industrial interface.





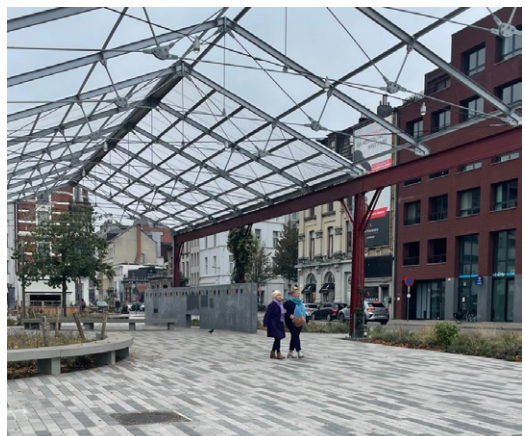
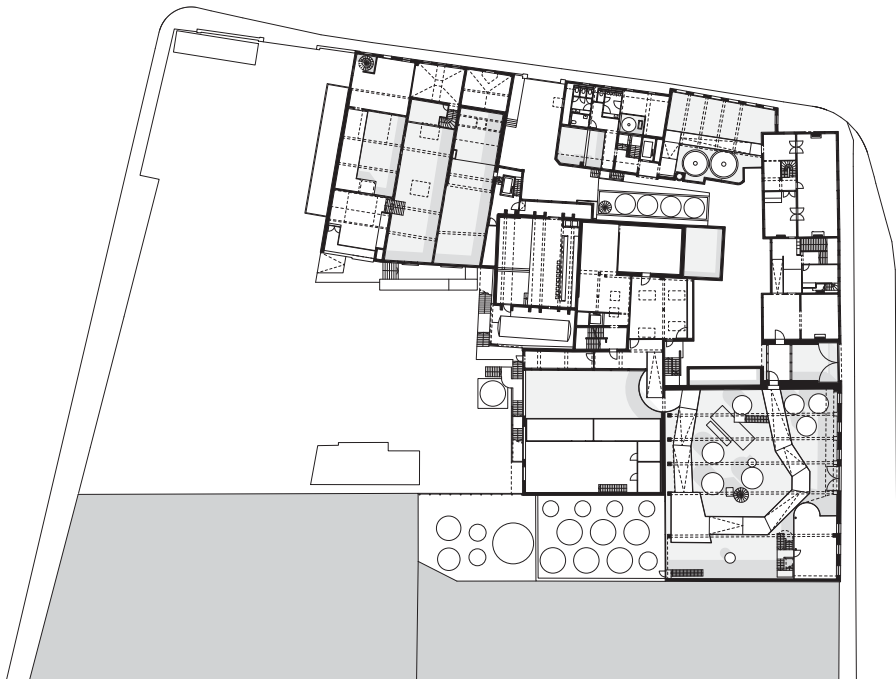


Antwerp - De Koninck and Zuidpark

The past week included a visit to Antwerp, an excursion that unexpectedly provided a profound external validation of the architectural themes I have been pursuing throughout my thesis. Several projects within the city resonated deeply with my current work, offering a tangible perspective on the integration of industrial production and public life. The De Koninck brewery, in particular, stands as a compelling precedent for the successful insertion of a productive facility within the urban fabric. Originally situated on the periphery, the site is now a dense cluster that manages to maintain a monumental entrance while simultaneously blending seamlessly into the town's grain. The way the brewery, museum, restaurant, and bar are organized around a central hub mirrors my own investigations into a square-based typology. Observing this vibrant, functional complex boosted my confidence in the feasibility of my project, confirming that a large-scale productive core can coexist with and even enhance the social vitality of an urban environment.

Further exploration of the city led me to the Zuidpark, where a long, elemental structure covered by a lightweight roof offered a striking example of the social potential of simple architectural gestures. This pavilion acts as a versatile stage for a wide array of public activities, demonstrating how a singular, well-defined canopy can foster diverse forms of human interaction. Seeing people spontaneously inhabiting and taking ownership of the space beneath this roof provided a powerful confirmation of my goals for the roofed square. It highlighted the efficacy of using a lightweight, protective structure to frame the landscape and create a sheltered civic space that remains open to the city.

These experiences in Antwerp have served to solidify the conceptual foundations of my design, bridging the gap between theoretical modeling and the lived reality of the built environment. The visit reinforced the importance of the "roofed square" as a catalyst for community life and the "industrial core" as a legitimate urban actor. By observing these successful precedents, I have gained a clearer understanding of how to manage the scale and presence of my interventions, ensuring they function both as efficient technical facilities and as meaningful public landmarks.



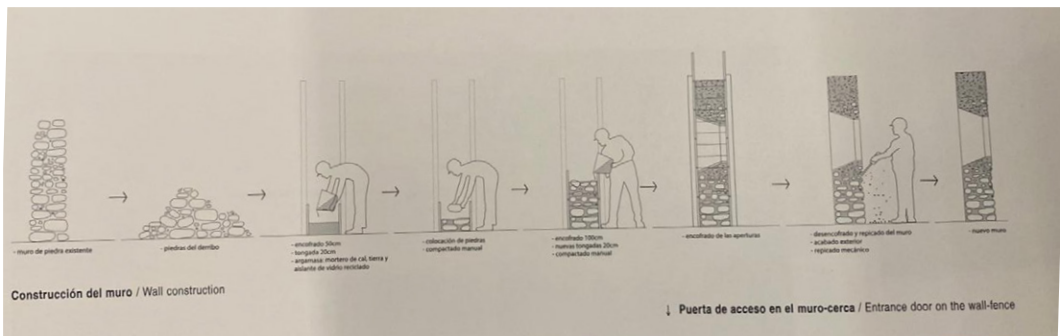
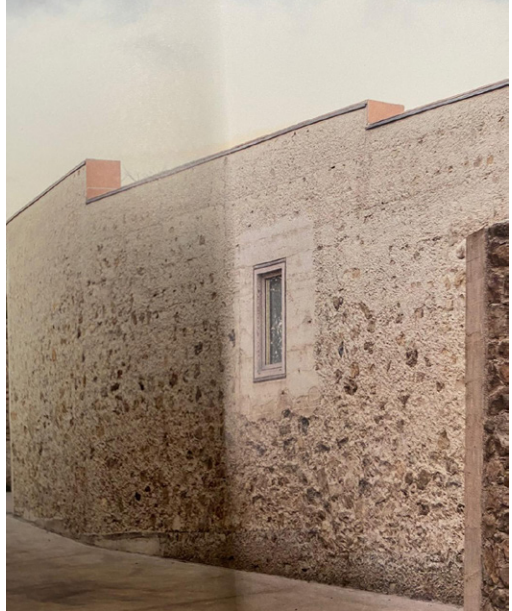
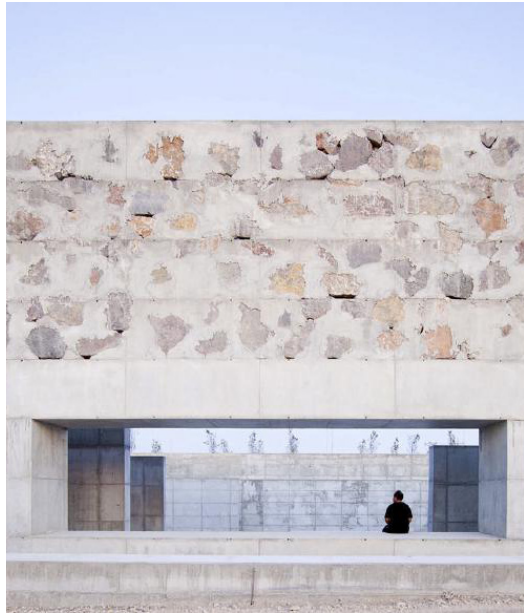
Materialization of the project - Stone and concrete

The investigation into the project's materiality focuses on the theme of thermal stability, expanding the relationship between the building and the ground through a unified construction process. Each structure, while distinct in function, shares a common tectonic language where the elements that reconstruct the topography also serve as a foundational "new ground." These load-bearing walls are composed of a concrete and stone aggregate, a technique that allows the architecture to emerge directly from the geological context of the site. By harvesting stone from the immediate surroundings and the site itself, the building achieves a deep material integration, utilizing the raw stone both as large inclusions within the formwork and as crushed aggregate within the concrete mix. This cyclopean approach to construction creates a massive thermal envelope that regulates the internal environment, echoing the natural cooling properties of the earth.

The execution of these walls involves a deliberate layering process where stones are carefully placed within the molds before the concrete is poured, resulting in a surface that reveals the mineral character of the landscape. Within this system, a clear hierarchy of concrete quality is established to address specific structural and environmental demands. A high-density, high-quality concrete is reserved for the reinforced components, such as lintels and horizontal ring beams, which stabilize the walls and act as structural belts to unify the mass. This superior grade of concrete is also utilized for all sections in direct contact with the soil, providing a necessary barrier against moisture through its increased density.

This material strategy allows for a nuanced visual and functional differentiation between the various parts of the building. The bulk of the walls utilizes a lower-strength concrete that highlights the visible stone inclusions, creating a texture that feels traditional and rooted in masonry heritage. In contrast, the precision-engineered reinforced elements provide the necessary tensile strength and structural clarity required for larger spans. This creates a compelling dialogue between the "heavy" monolithic base and the "light" structures that will eventually rest upon it.

The resulting aesthetic is one of permanence and geological weight, where the building does not merely sit on the site but becomes a physical extension of it. By focusing on the composite nature of these materials, the project explores the potential of a heavy architectural language to provide both structural integrity and a high-performance thermal environment. This investigation into the heavy and the light continues to serve as the primary driver for the project's visual identity, ensuring that the industrial nature of the winery and the atmospheric quality of the cellar are expressed through a singular, coherent material logic.



The architectural expression - heavy and light

The architectural language of the project is defined by a rigorous tectonic duality: the Heavy and the Light. This dialogue responds directly to the topographical and climatic demands of Mamoiada. By renegotiating the steep 8-meter height difference of the site, the architecture acts as a mediator, using the “Heavy” to anchor the building into the mountain and the “Light” to frame the community’s relationship with the horizon.

The New Ground: Heavy Tectonics

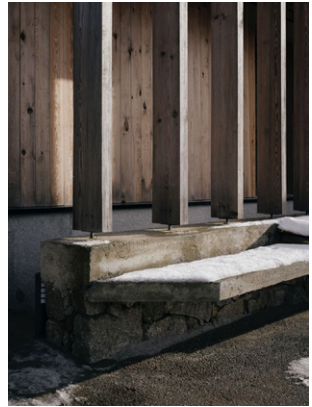
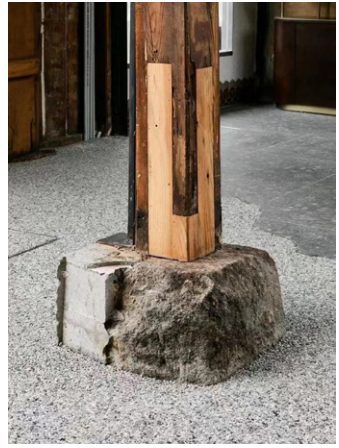
The foundation of the intervention is the “New Ground,” a series of load-bearing, massive elements that reconstruct the fragmented topography. Using a composite of concrete and stone aggregate—harvested directly from the site and the surrounding landscape—these walls function as a thermal battery. The production and storage areas are literally embedded within this artificial geology to harvest the maximum thermal stability required for red wine.

The structural logic follows the nature of the material: massive load-bearing walls support vaulted systems, which are the optimal geometry for sustaining heavy compression loads. While the walls absorb these downward forces, the lateral tension of the arches is channeled directly into the terrain. This “New Ground” acts as both a foundation and a thermal regulator, minimizing the need for deep excavation while creating a high-density barrier against moisture. Within this mass, a hierarchy of concrete is established: high-density reinforced “ribbons” or beams stabilize the structure and manage the contact points with the earth, while lower-quality, stone-rich concrete provides the textured, traditional finish that resonates with the town’s built heritage.

The Superstructure: Light Tectonics

The “Light” superstructure consists of lightweight wood systems that sit upon the heavy stone podiums. These structures serve specific programmatic needs, acting as permeable floors for equipment or as expansive roof canopies. In the winery, the wood structure sustains the upper-floor logistics and the visitor center, while in the cellar, it becomes a refined canopy at the edge of the square.

This lightweight roof acknowledges its role as a mediator between the town and the distant landscape. It frames the view, provides shade for the “Roofed Square,” and gathers rainwater into cisterns carved into the heavy ground below. The transition from the massive stone vaults below to the delicate timber frames above creates a clear architectural hierarchy, facilitating a journey from the dark, thermally stable production areas to the bright, public, and airy communal spaces.



WEEK 27 - 28

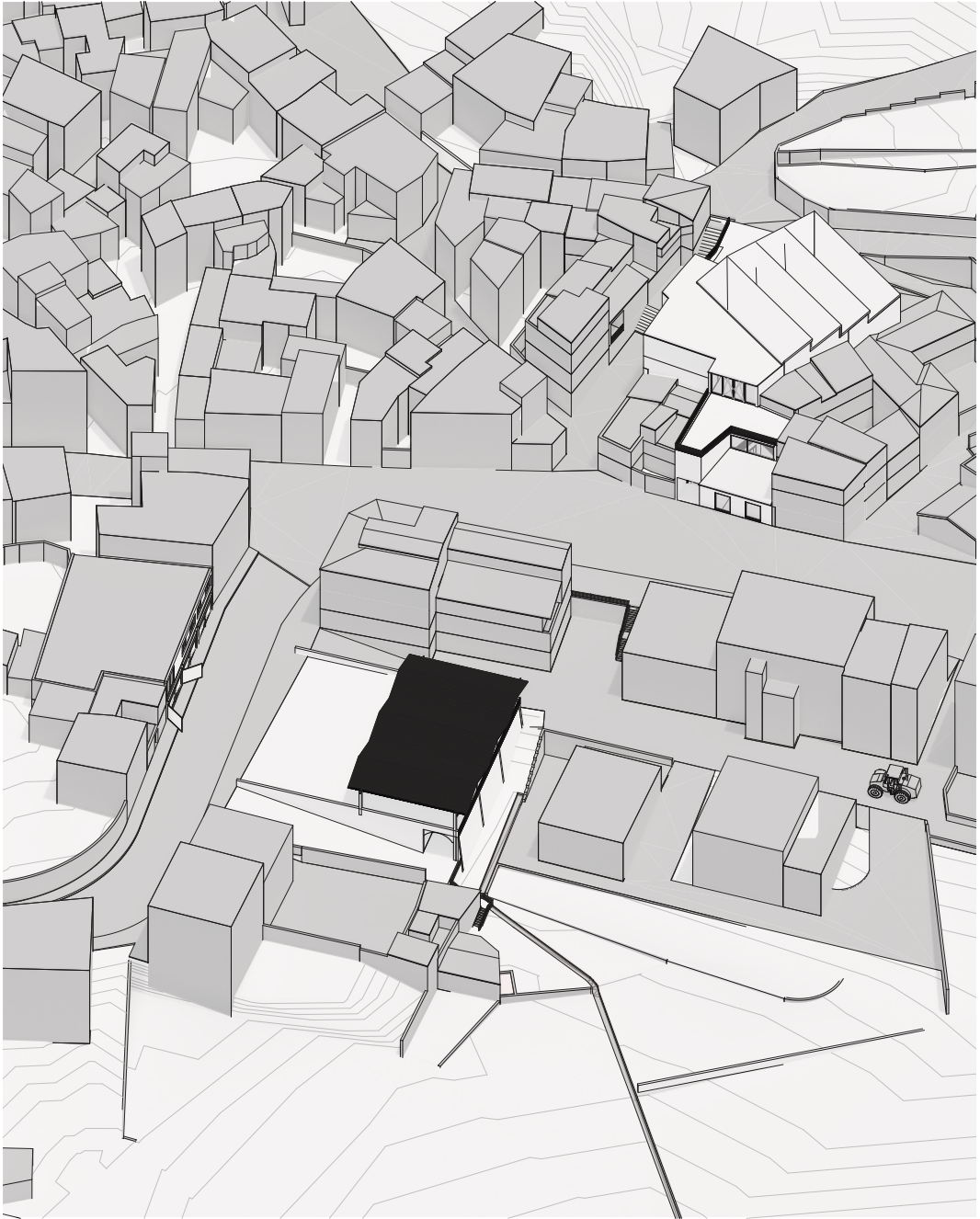
P3 preparation

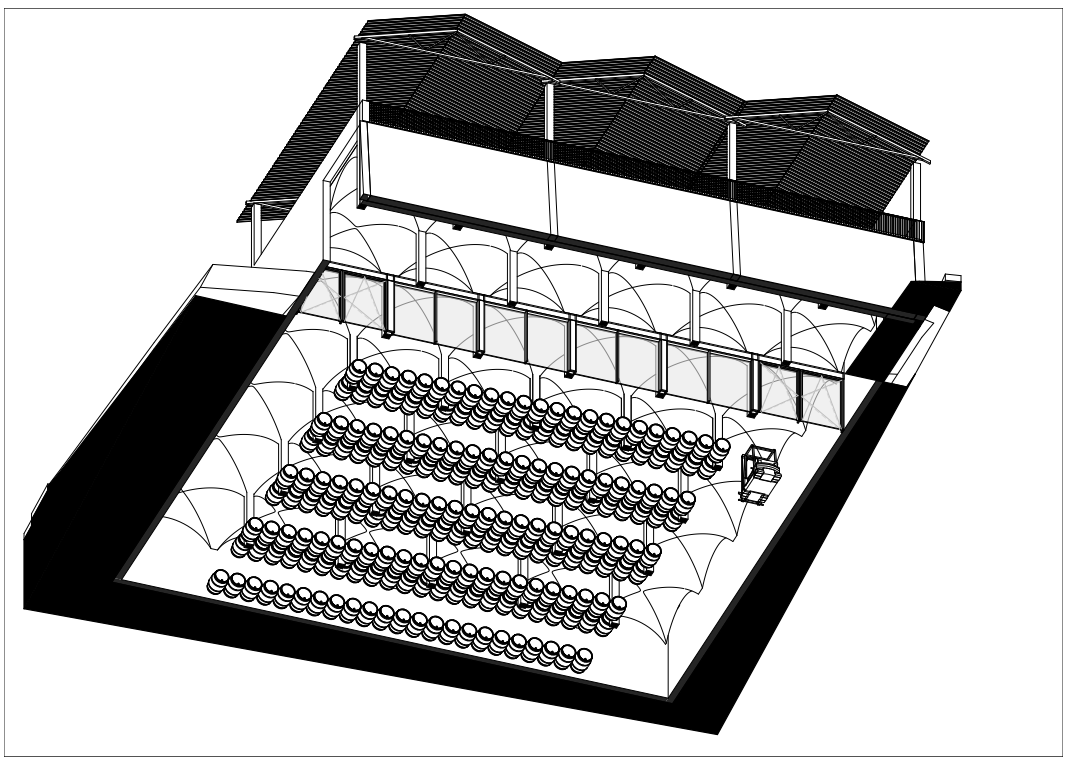
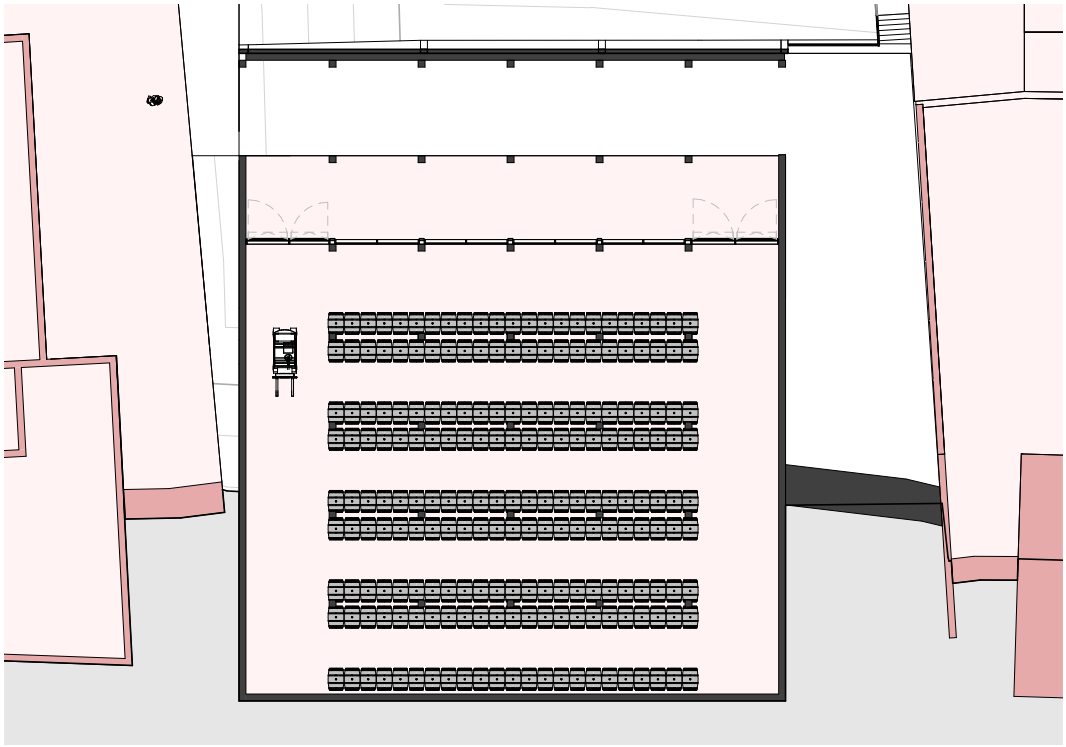
Rehearsing my narrative

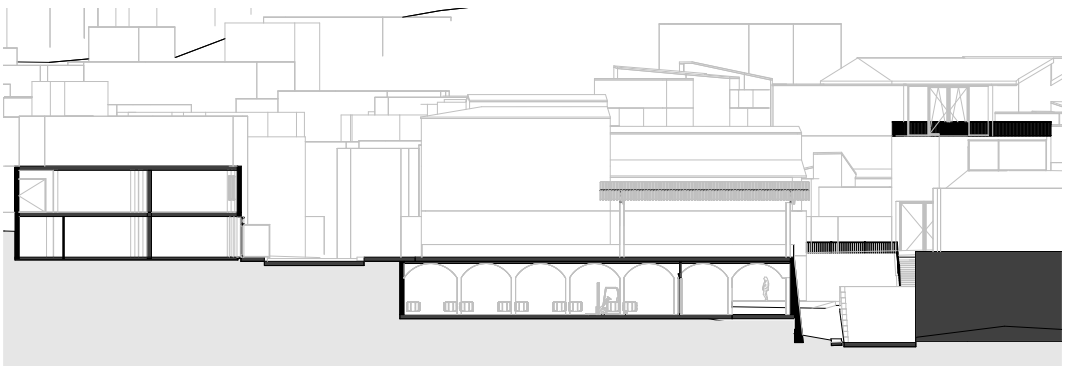
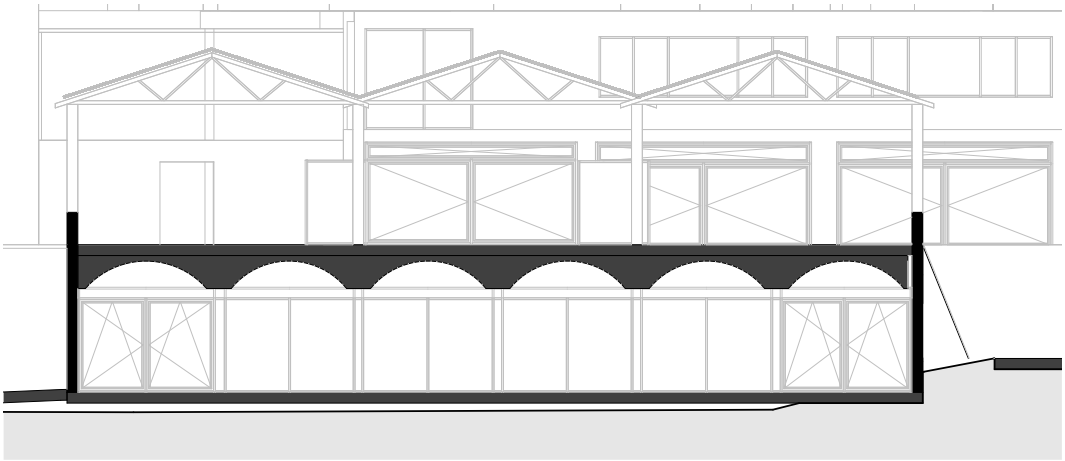
Having established the conceptual framework of “Through Craft and Care,” the focus shifted toward the formal resolution of the winery, the cellar, and the community house as a singular, interconnected infrastructure. The primary challenge was determining how to insert a high-performance industrial program into a sensitive urban void without disrupting the town’s grain. This led to the definitive strategy of the “New Ground”: using the building’s primary structure to renegotiate the site’s aggressive 8-meter topography. By the end of this week, the decision to use a heavy, stone-concrete composite for the subterranean levels was solidified, serving as a thermal and structural foundation for the lighter, timber elements to follow.

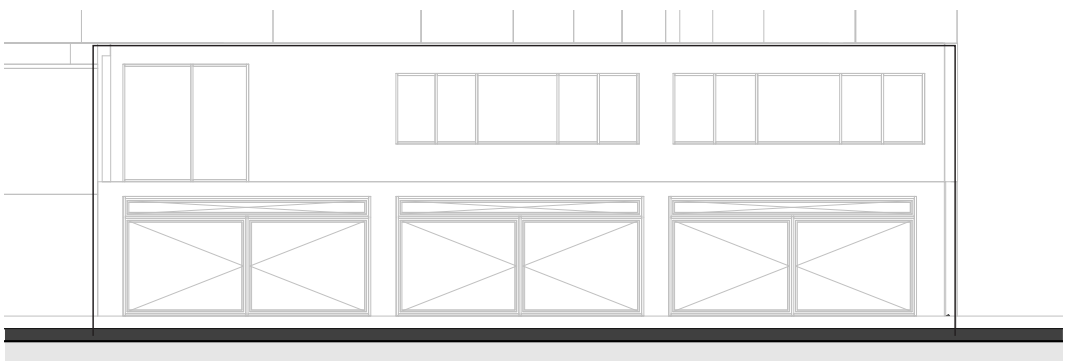
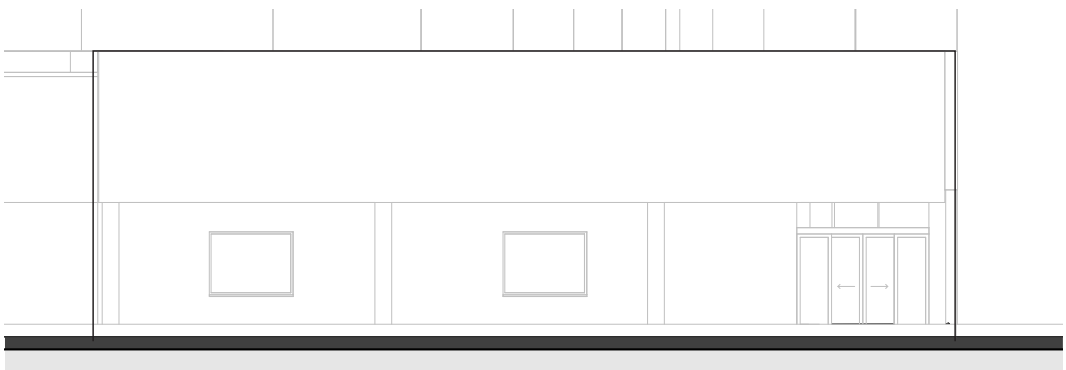
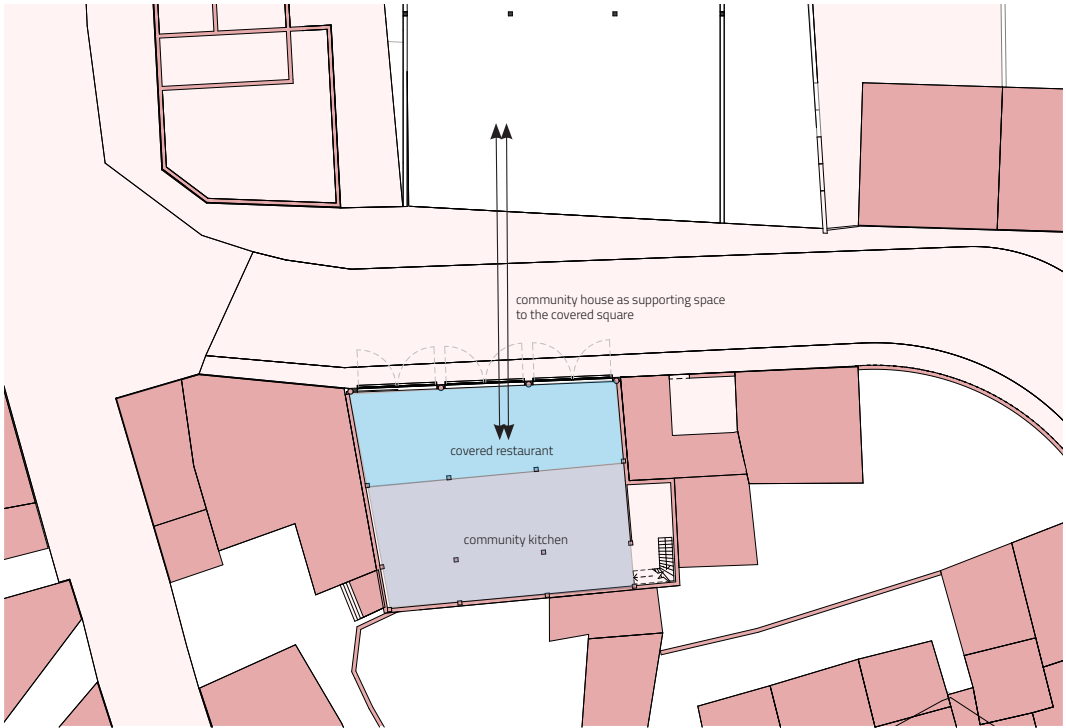
At this stage, the project was organized around a series of key components—the square, the cellar, the canopy, and the winery—each performing a specific role in the winemaking process. I spent this time calibrating the “Fermentation Hall” to sit as a monumental, regular volume within the slope, maximizing the site’s footprint to accommodate forty fermentation tanks. This decision was driven by the desire to create a “productive heart” for the town, a space that is as much a technical facility as it is a public landmark. The cellar was conceived as a vaulted chamber supporting a new public square above, effectively doubling the usable ground of the town. This structural dialogue between the massive vaults and the square above was my first attempt at “stitching” together the industrial needs of wine aging with the social needs of the community.

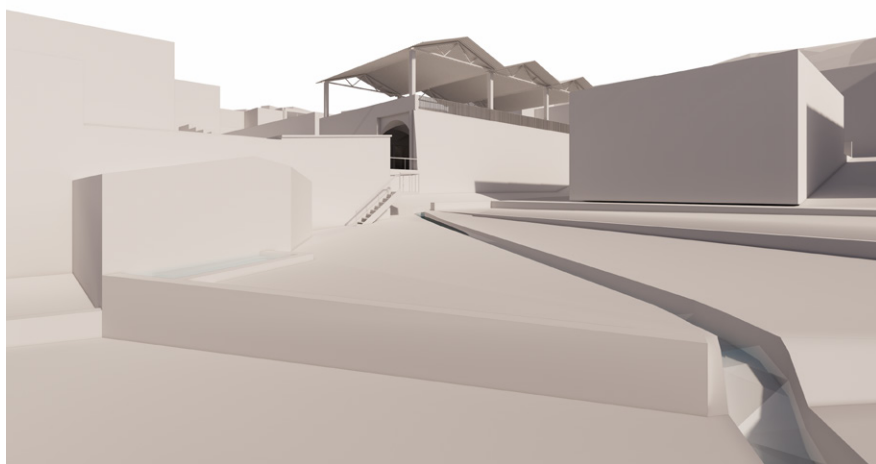
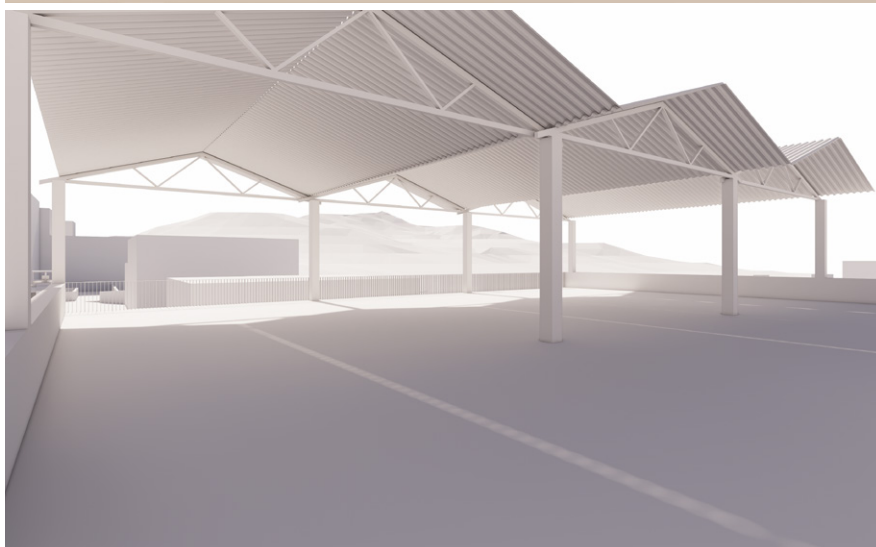
The methodology during these days was one of continuous mediation between contradictions. I wanted to ensure that the winery remained a highly specialized production system while maintaining the permeability of a public building. This led to the development of the “public ground” concept, where the city’s pavement extends directly into the fermentation hall. The community house was positioned as the social mediator, utilizing a community kitchen and dining area to bridge the gap between the industrial square and the residential street. By P3, the ambition was clear: to move away from isolated buildings toward a network of interventions that allow the town to “belong” to the production process.

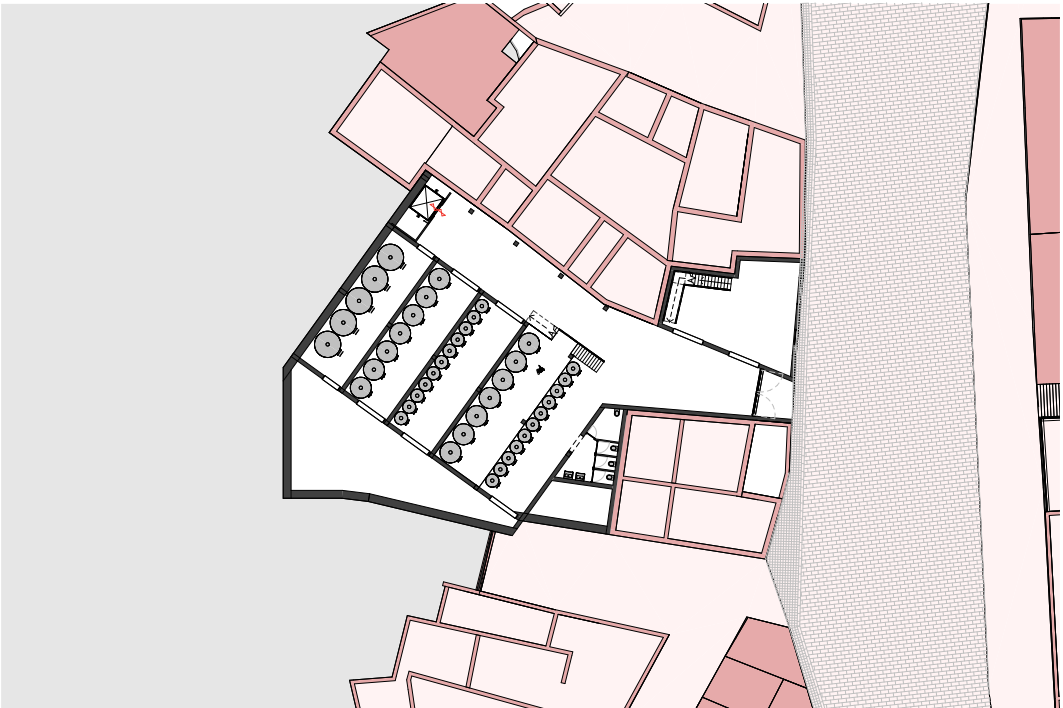
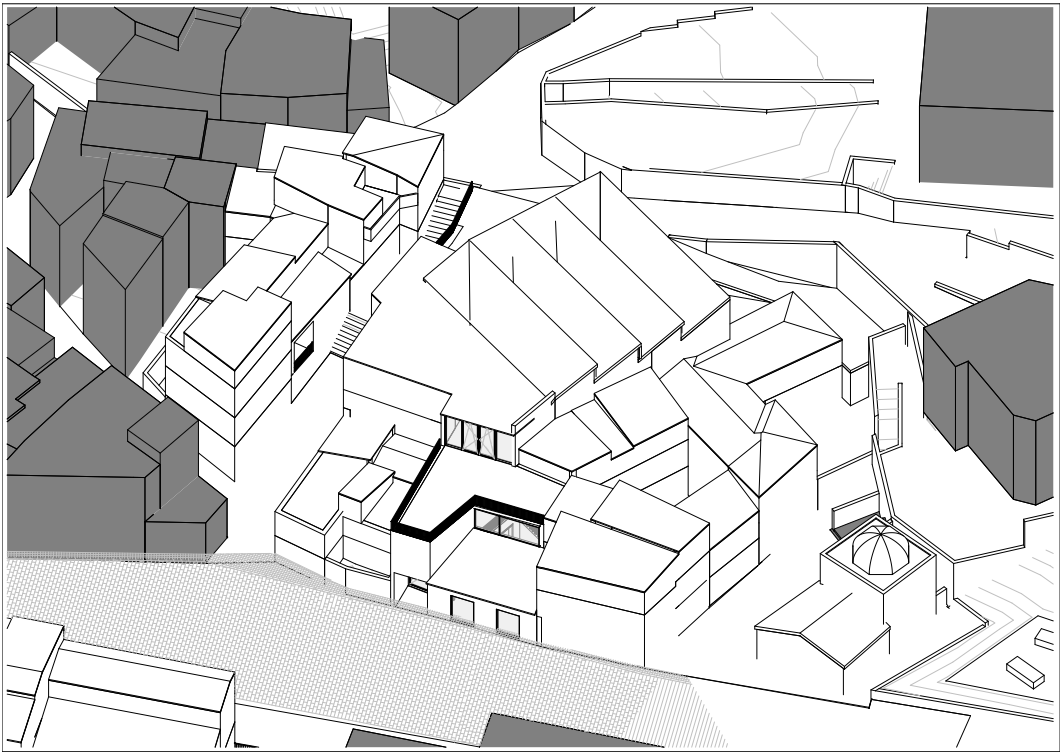


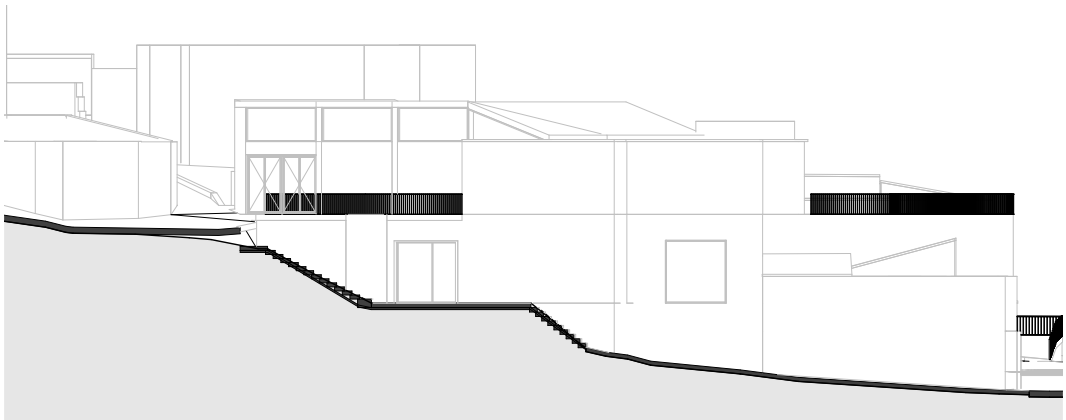
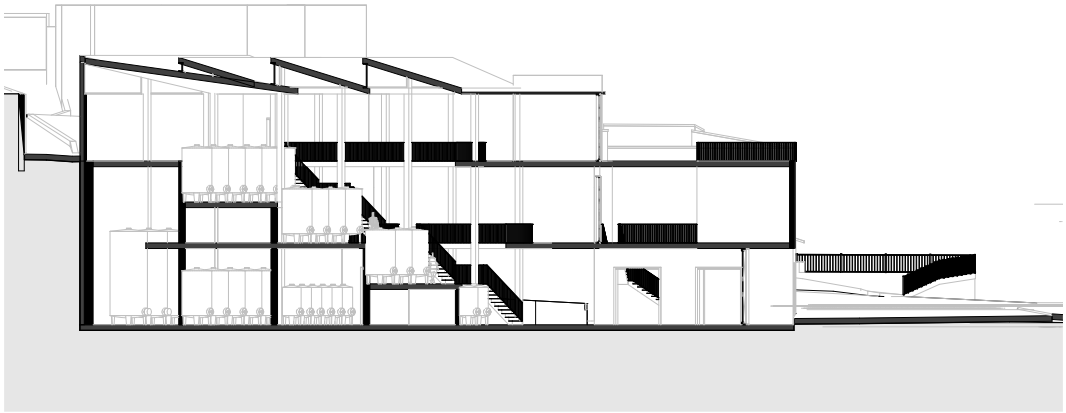
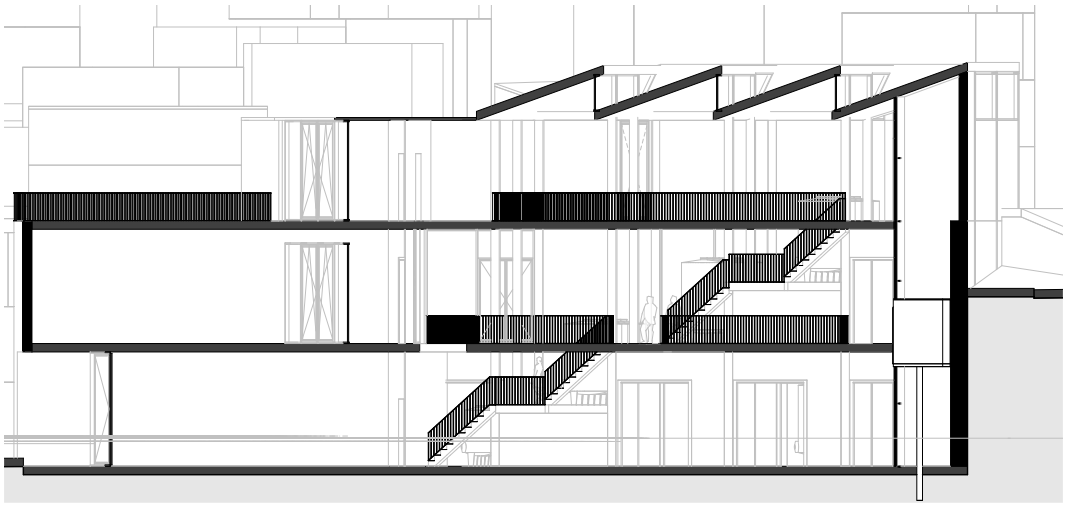
















P3 REFLECTIONS

The feedback received during the recent review has been instrumental in shifting the focus from conceptual research toward rigorous architectural refinement. The commentary highlighted the necessity of clarifying the specific roles and hierarchies of the project's components—the square, the cellar, the canopy, the winery, and the community house—while questioning the dialogue between industrial production and urban life. A primary critique centered on the spatial autonomy of the square; currently, it appears objectified and separated from its neighbors by existing roads. To address this, I am investigating how the square might cross the street, treating the ground material as a unifying element that asserts its presence over the tarmac. This transition is not merely aesthetic but functional, requiring a technical study of drainage and “wash-down” capabilities, where the water used to clean the production surfaces could potentially be managed by the vaulted cisterns below.

The relationship between the heavy, grounded structures and the lightweight elements emerging from the topography remains a central tectonic theme that requires further nuance. The professors questioned the material composition of the vaults and how the architecture evolves as it leaves the earth. I am refining the language of the “new ground,” where the massive stone and concrete composite gives way to more delicate, lightweight systems in the upper reaches of the buildings. This distinction must be clearly articulated in the drawings to differentiate between permanence and the temporary. Furthermore, the “industrial” character of the interior needs to be amplified. The current passenger-scale lift, for instance, must be replaced with a robust freight system capable of moving heavy equipment, ensuring the winery does not just look like a building, but functions as a high-performance machine.

A critical part of the feedback involved the socio-economic reality of the intervention. I must precisely calculate the production capacity—identifying exactly how many liters of wine are being produced, the volume of the tanks required, and the growth potential of the facility. Unlike the “Schieoovers” in Delft, where industrial sites are often restricted by encroaching residential zones, my project must define its own future within the limits of the plot. I am tasked with “knitting together” the production process with the social one, exploring how the festive calendar of Mamoiada aligns with the wine calendar. This duality should be expressed through representation: one image showing the square as a festive space with lights and communal gatherings, and another showing it as a gritty, productive site filled with trucks, grapes, and the “trash” of the harvest.

The community house also requires programmatic clarity. It is envisioned as a versatile entity—a community kitchen and covered space that could potentially host wine sales, festive events, and seasonal workers. The idea that “every part must be productive” suggests that during the harvest, tourists or Airbnb guests could become pickers, blurring the line between the visitor and the producer. I am exploring how the facade can open up to the town, allowing the internal life of the building to spill out into the street. By minimizing the sensation of the building as a “pier” isolated by roads and instead grounding it through architectural extensions, I can better define the mix of public and private spheres. The final stage of the project will focus on these architectural refinements, using detailed representation to demonstrate how the industry will change the dynamic of the town and what “new rules” will govern this mingling of public and private life.

WEEK 29 - 34

Through Craft & Care

Through Craft & Care

The transition from the P3 milestone into the final production phase represented a significant shift in the rhythm of the project. By this stage, the fundamental architectural and conceptual decisions had reached a point of maturity; the programmatic distribution, the structural logic of the “heavy” and “light” systems, and the strategic positioning of the interventions within the topography were all firmly established. With the internal conflict of “what” to build finally resolved, the final weeks were dedicated to the “how”—specifically, how to articulate this complex year-long research through a graphic and narrative language that does justice to the sensitivity of the context. This period became a meticulous exercise in representation, moving beyond mere documentation toward a form of storytelling that aims to unveil the hidden connections between the town’s past and its potential future.

The core of this final push was the challenge of representing the project’s dual nature: its technical rigor as a high-performance productive infrastructure and its poetic resonance as a civic heart. I realized that to properly communicate the essence of “Through Craft and Care,” the drawings needed to be as considered as the construction methods themselves. I moved away from generic architectural renders in favor of representations that highlight the material continuity of the stone-concrete aggregate and the atmospheric qualities of the vaulted spaces. The focus shifted toward the “interstitial”—the spaces between the buildings, the roads that become squares, and the thresholds where the private intimacy of the town meets the public life of the winery. This effort in representation was about demonstrating how simple, targeted interventions can act as catalysts for a town-wide network of communal ownership.

Reflecting on the evolution of the project, the move from P3 to the final output allowed me to reconcile the various contradictions I had been navigating. By focusing on the “extra-ordinary” details (the way a drainage channel follows the slope or how a wooden roof sits on a massive wall), the drawings began to mirror my methodological approach of stitching back the fragmented pieces of Mamoiada. The project finally moved from being a set of individual buildings to a coherent “shared infrastructure.” This time was essential not just for the final presentation, but for me to internalize the role I want to inhabit as a professional: an architect who uses representation not just to show a finished product, but to dignify the existing stories and simple beauties of a place.

Ultimately, the finalization of these ideas has been a process of radical simplification. I have learned that the power of architecture in a rural, sensitive context lies not in complexity, but in intentionality and respect. The work now stands as a proof-of-concept for how we can leverage underutilized urban sites to counteract narratives of decline. As I close this chapter, the project serves as a manifesto for my future practice—a commitment to being an empathetic professional who cares deeply for the people and the territories I craft for, ensuring that every line drawn is a reflection of the care and craftsmanship that the context deserves.

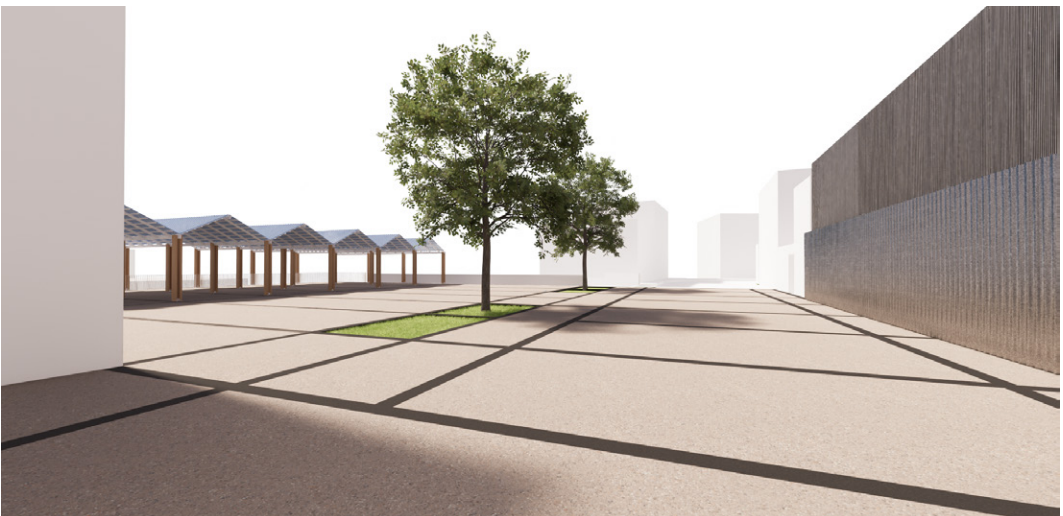


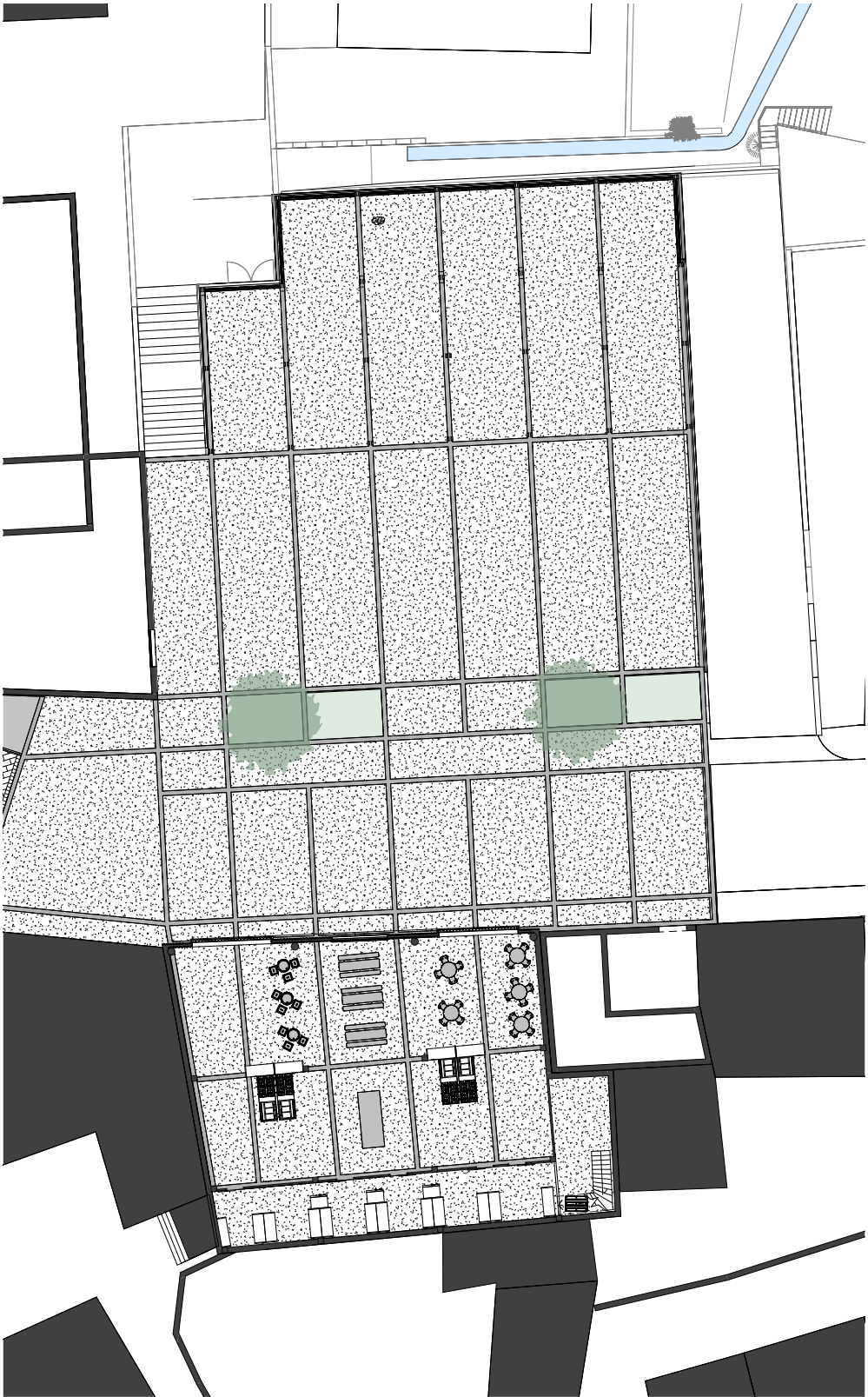
The Community House

The community house serves as the social anchor of the intervention, acting as a permeable interface between the formal production of wine and the daily life of the town. The building is designed to keep the memory of the existing fabric alive, utilizing the rhythms of the original facade while transforming the interior into a flexible civic resource. The ground floor portals are opened completely toward the square, a move that pulls the public pavement deep into the building's interior. This structural transparency allows the ground floor to function as a natural extension of the public realm, blurring the boundary between the exterior square and the sheltered communal spaces.

The program is centered around a community kitchen and a large dining area, spaces designed to accommodate the town's festive and agricultural calendars. During the vinification period, these areas provide a vital place for workers to take breaks or for temporary storage during the transit of goods. In the summer and during local festivals, the facade opens to allow the dining activities to occupy the square, utilizing the shaded areas under the lightweight timber canopy. This versatility ensures that the building remains a productive part of the town's economy, hosting festive events, communal meals, and providing a space where locals and visitors can engage with the winery's output.

The materiality of the community house follows the project's overarching tectonic logic, where the heavy masonry of the lower levels supports the life of the square. The building provides a sense of permanence and belonging, offering a space where the community can gather to reflect on the value of their surroundings. By integrating a commercial entity—a place where wine can be bought and shared—within a social facility, the design reinforces the idea that every part of the project must be productive. This synergy between social gathering and economic activity helps to “stitch” together the fragmented pieces of the town, ensuring the community house remains a lived environment that responds to both the daily needs and the extraordinary moments of the Mamoiada calendar.







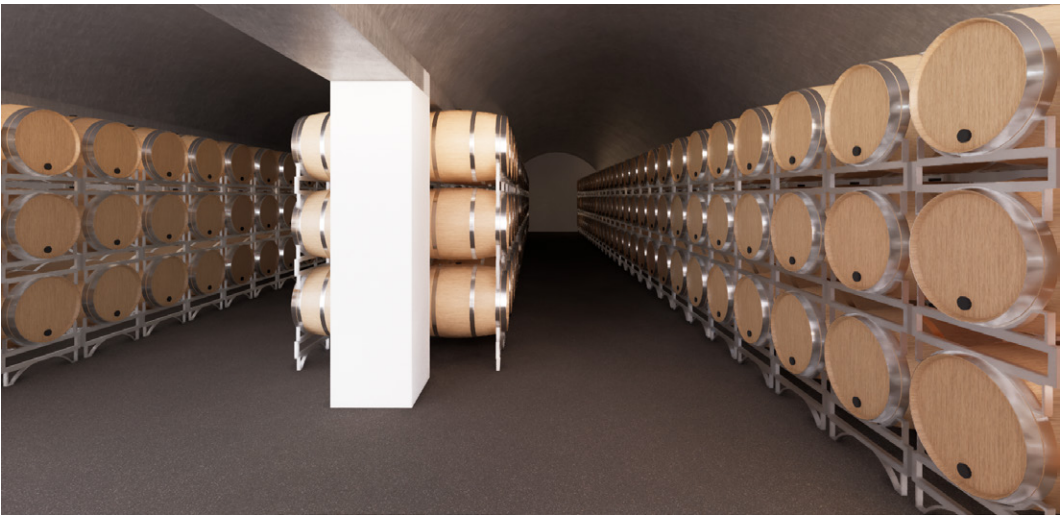
The roofed square

The cellar is conceived as a monumental extension of the town's terrain, acting as a "new ground" that mediates between the public square and the vast agricultural landscape beyond. Structurally, the facility is defined by a series of massive barrel vaults constructed from a stone and concrete composite. These vaults are oriented perpendicular to the terrain to manage the lateral pressures of the slope, terminating in a row of crossed vaults that facilitate the movement of vehicles. This heavy masonry provides the thermal mass necessary to insulate the subterranean environment, creating the stable, cool conditions required for both the initial grape receiving and the long-term aging of the wine.

The spatial layout is driven by a clear logistical path designed to maintain efficiency during the intense activity of the harvest. Vehicles arriving from the surrounding farms unload grapes within the shaded protection of the vaults, where the harvest is processed before being moved to the main winery. Once the picking season concludes, the cellar shifts into a quieter phase of the production cycle, housing barrels brought in for aging. The flexibility of the structural bays allows the space to be utilized by the collective or partitioned for private producers. Integrated into the western edge of the cellar is a substantial water cistern that harvests runoff from the square and adjacent roofs. This stored water serves the practical needs of the facility, providing the high volumes required for cleaning equipment after heavy use and supporting local agricultural irrigation.

The architecture facilitates a seamless transition from the urban fabric to the countryside through a dedicated garden and stair system. A narrow stone staircase follows the path of a nearby torrent, descending from the street level to a small, existing garden. This space serves as a meditative threshold, bordered by natural vegetation and irrigation tanks, offering a clear view of the cultivated lands that sustain the town. The garden allows the project to reconnect with the valley, potentially opening new pedestrian paths that link the town center to the distant vineyards and the graveyard.

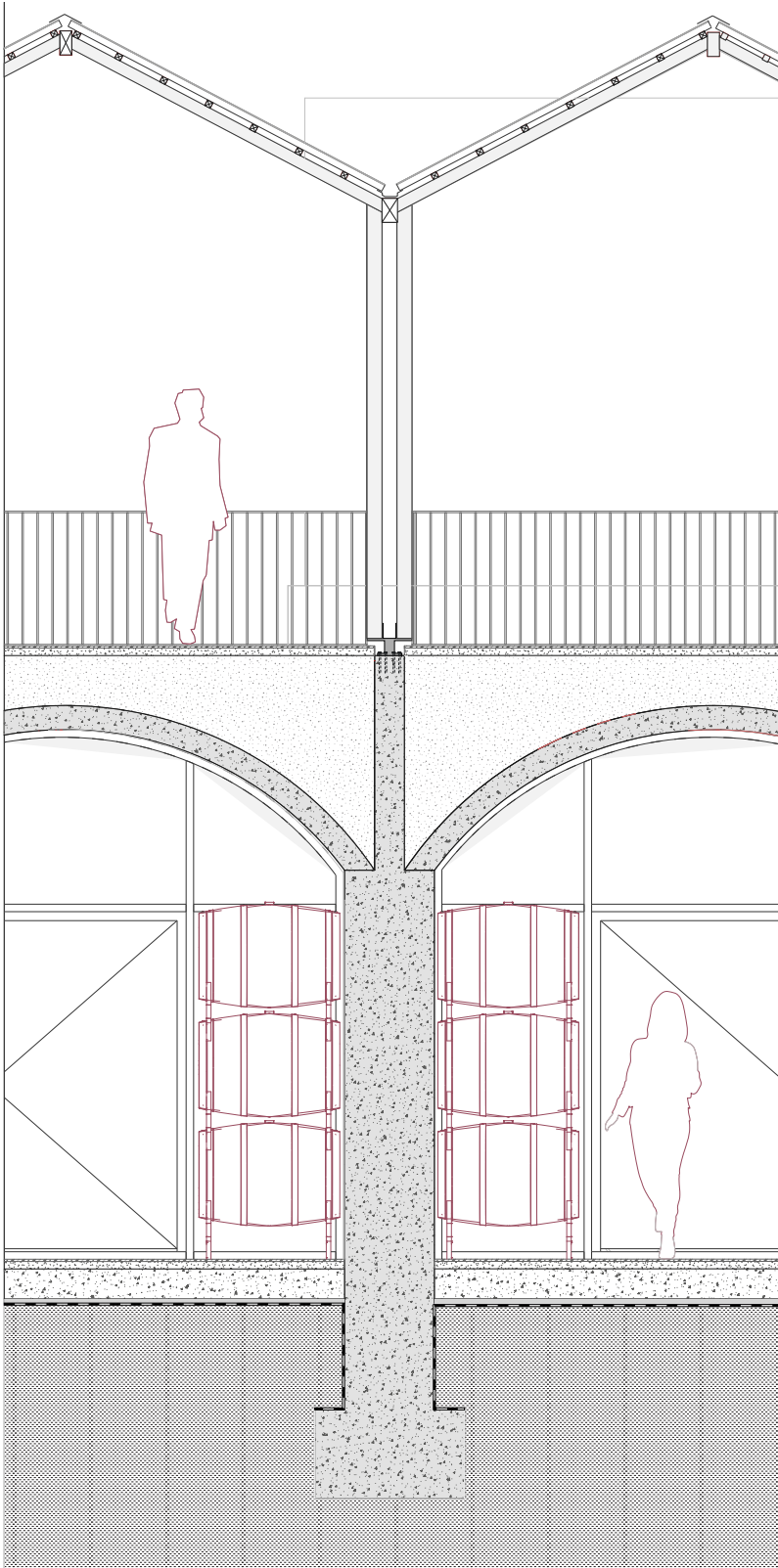
Above the cellar, a lightweight timber roof sits gently on the heavy stone podium. Positioned at the edge of the square, this canopy frames the horizon and provides a sheltered civic space for the community. The square itself is defined by a distinct pavement drawing that crosses the road, unifying the two sides of the street and expanding the perceived boundaries of the public realm. This intervention redefines the town's edge, creating a functional interface where the industrial logic of wine aging exists in total harmony with the social life of the square.

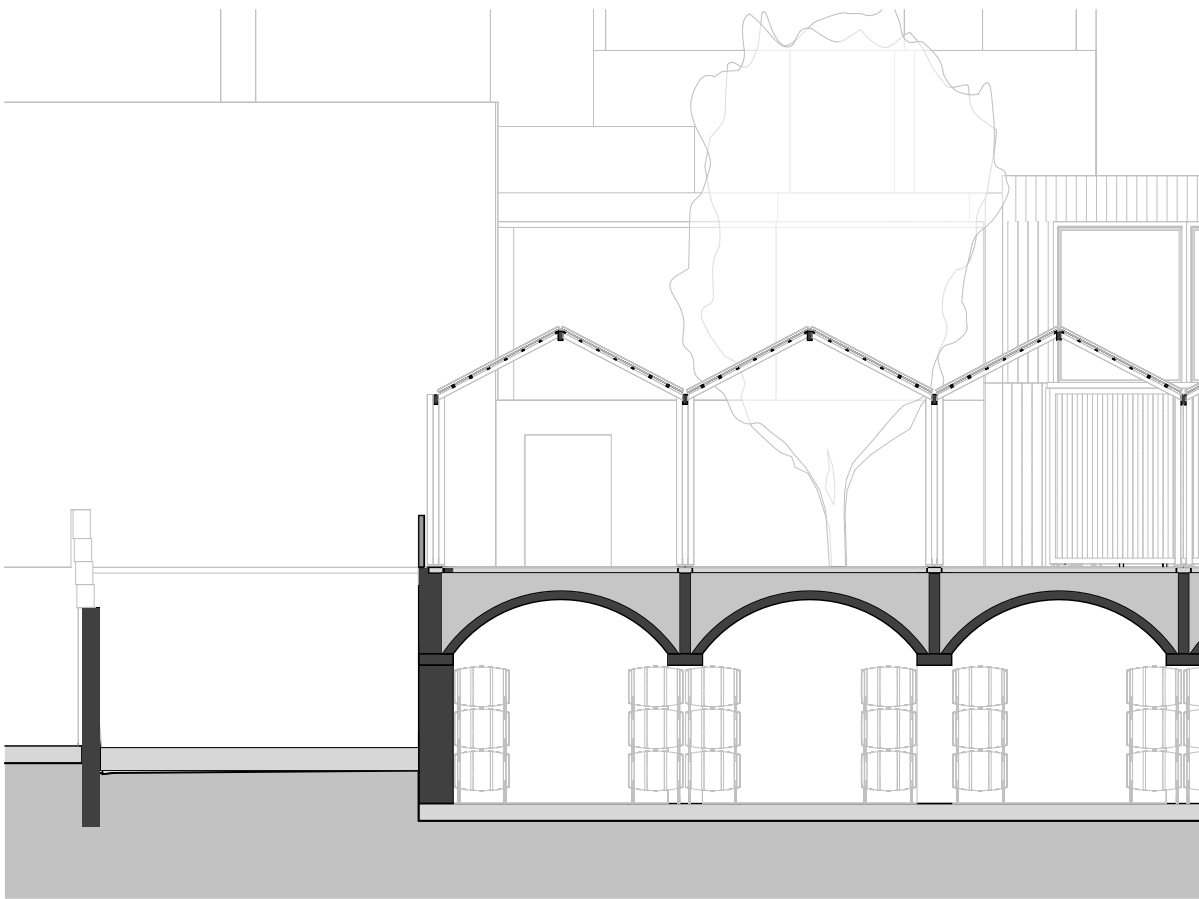


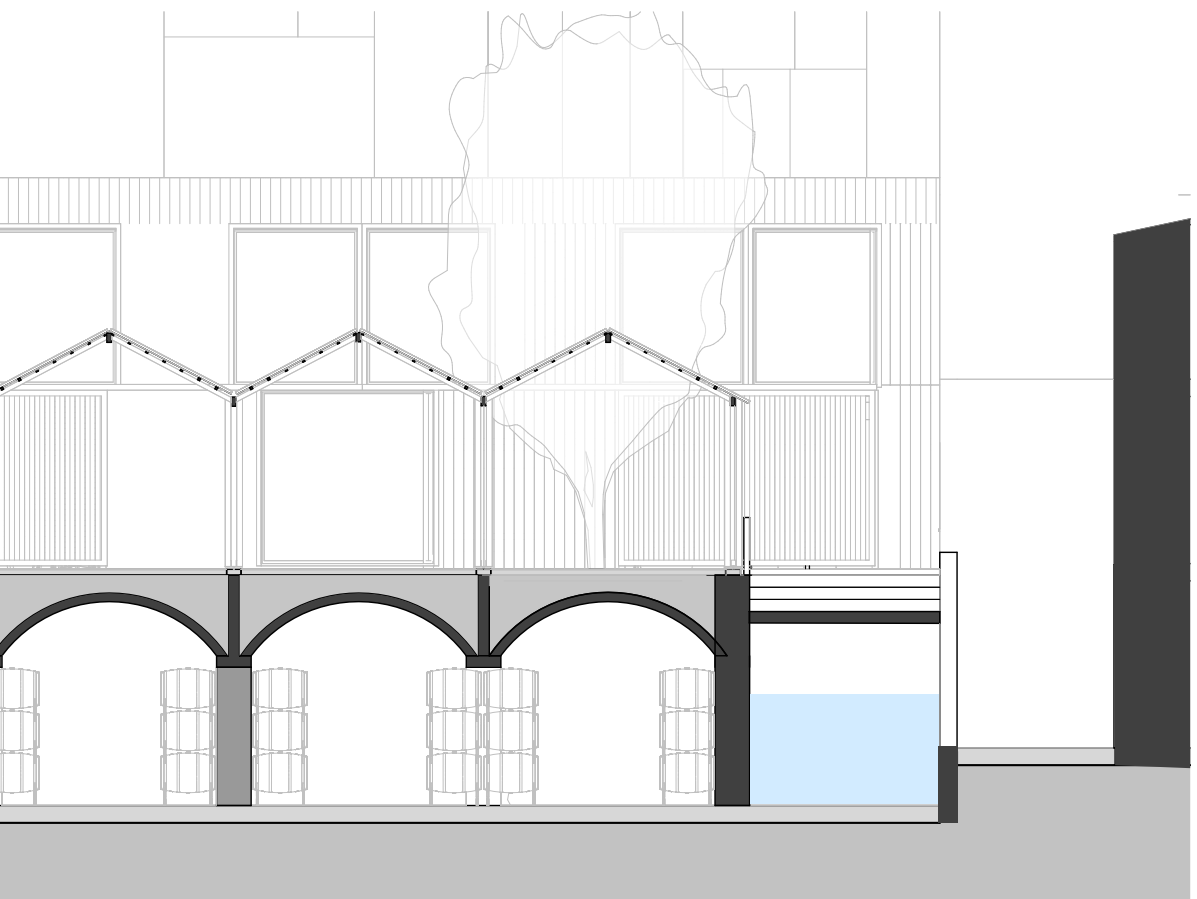


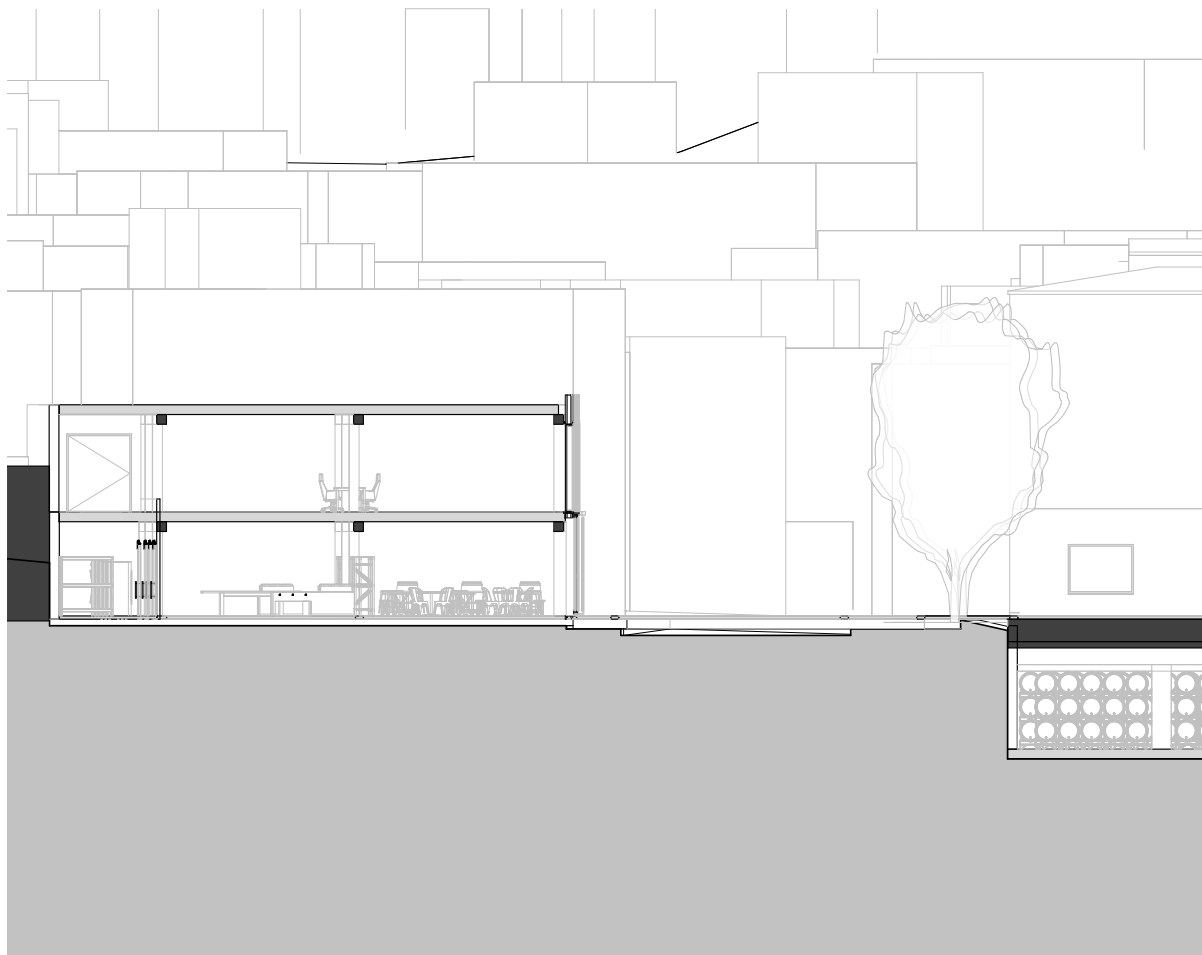


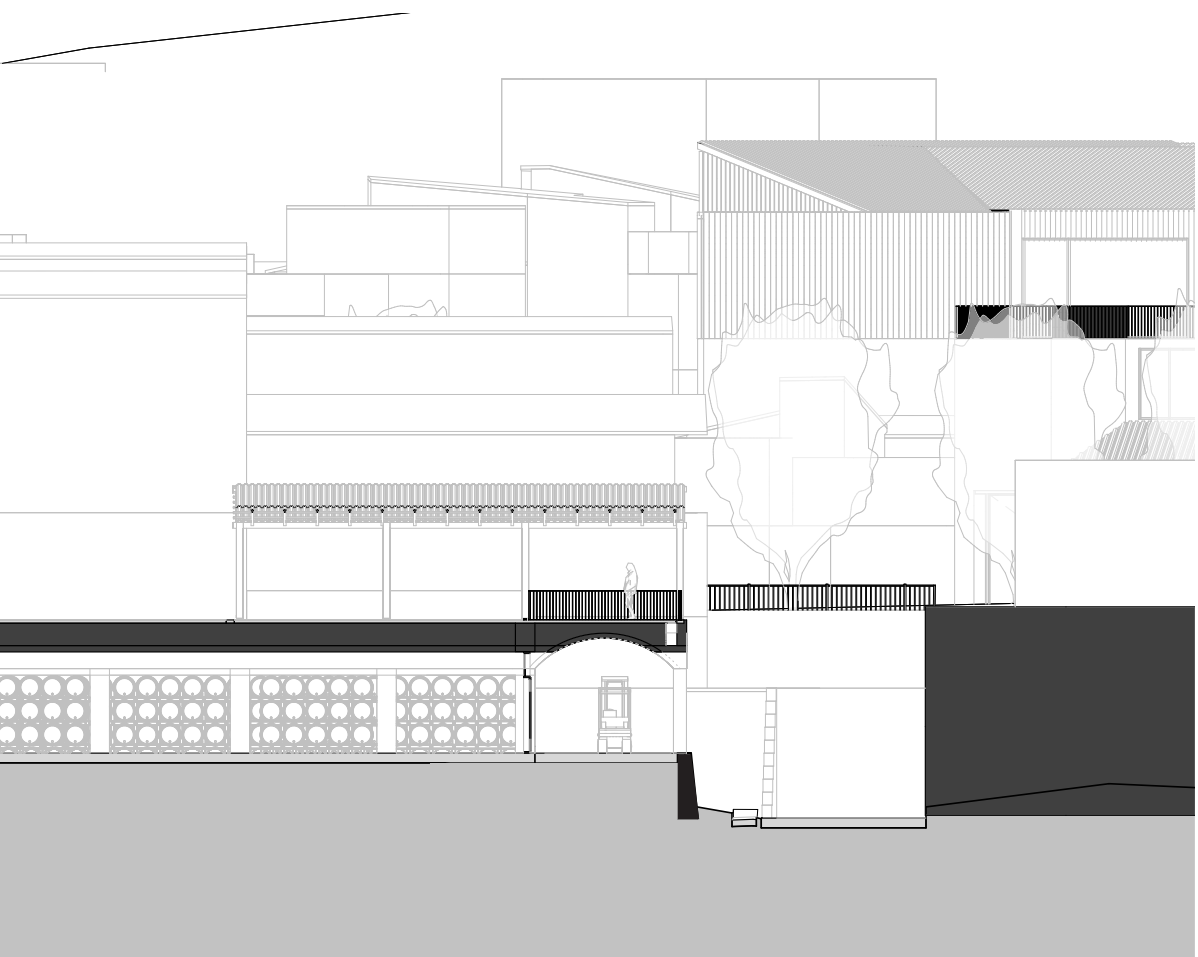
























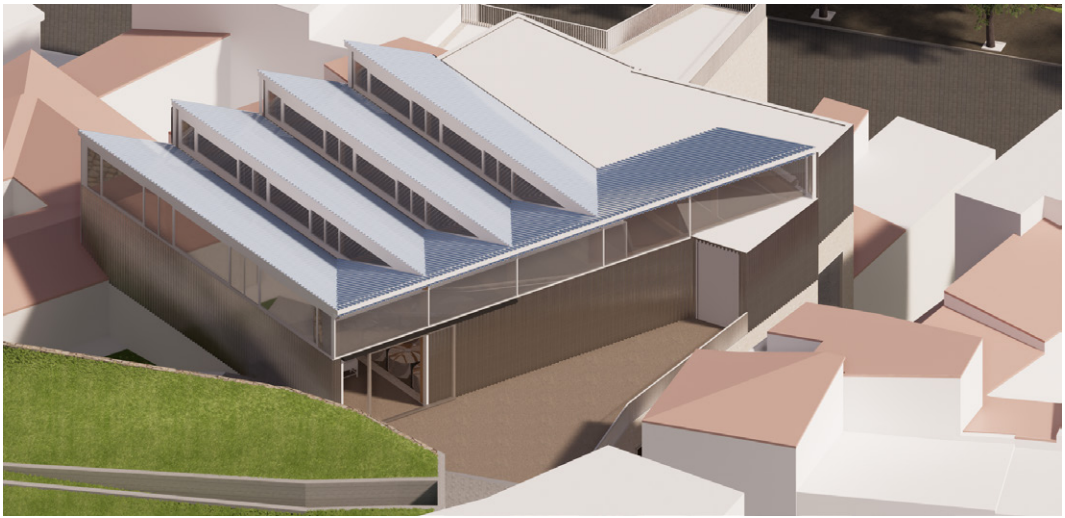
The Winery

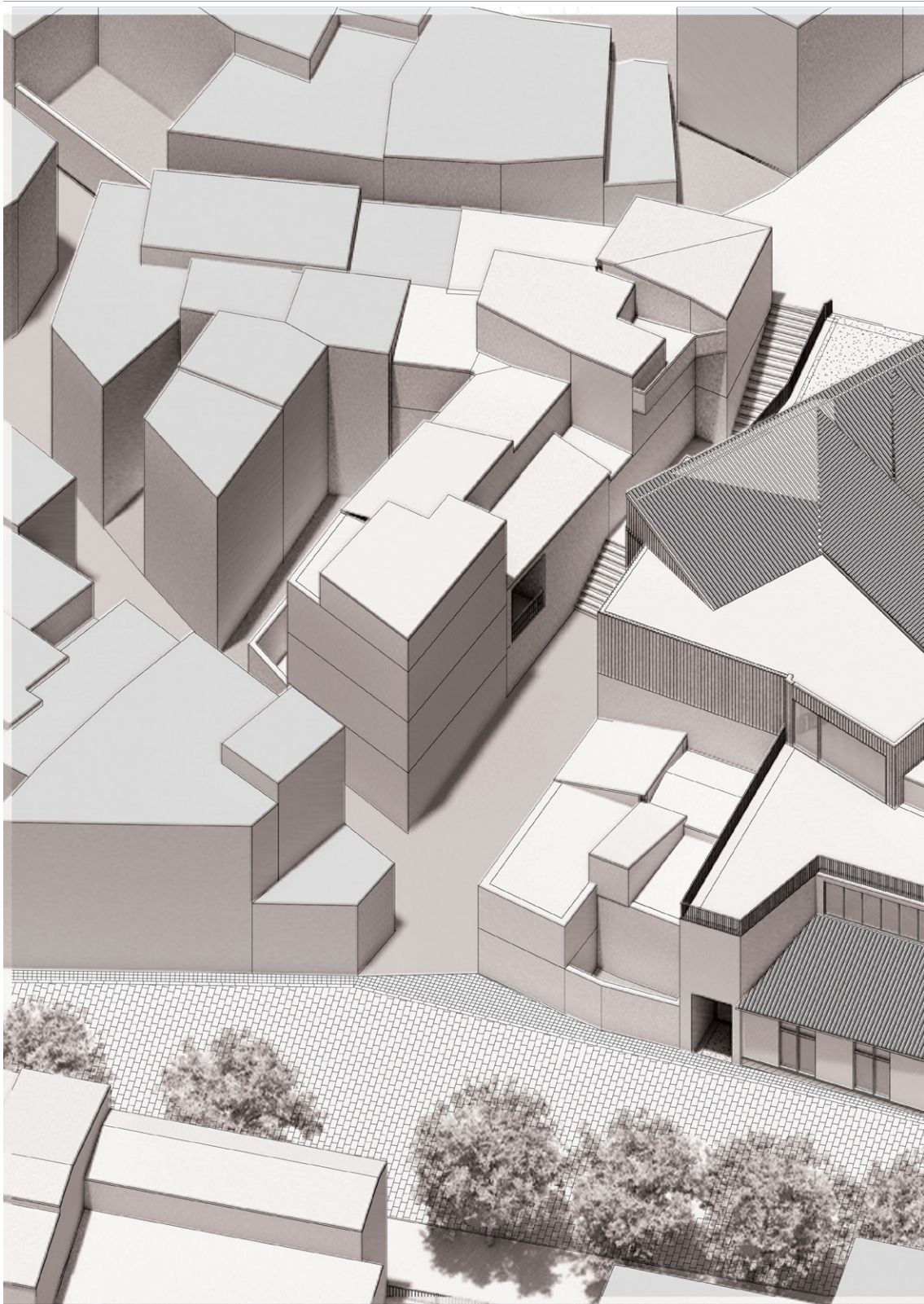
The design of the winery is defined by its role as the productive heart of the project, serving as the primary site for the transformation of grapes into wine. The building remains partially hidden from the town, slowly unveiling its scale and complexity as visitors discover its interior terraced topography. At the square level, a gateway element marks the entrance, leading into the Fermentation Hall. This central space is characterized by a “public ground” where the exterior pavement of the city extends deep into the building, reinforcing the continuity between the streets and the industrial interior. The fermentation hall is constructed as a vast, regular volume, maximized to the limits of the site to house forty fermentation tanks that serve the needs of local producers.

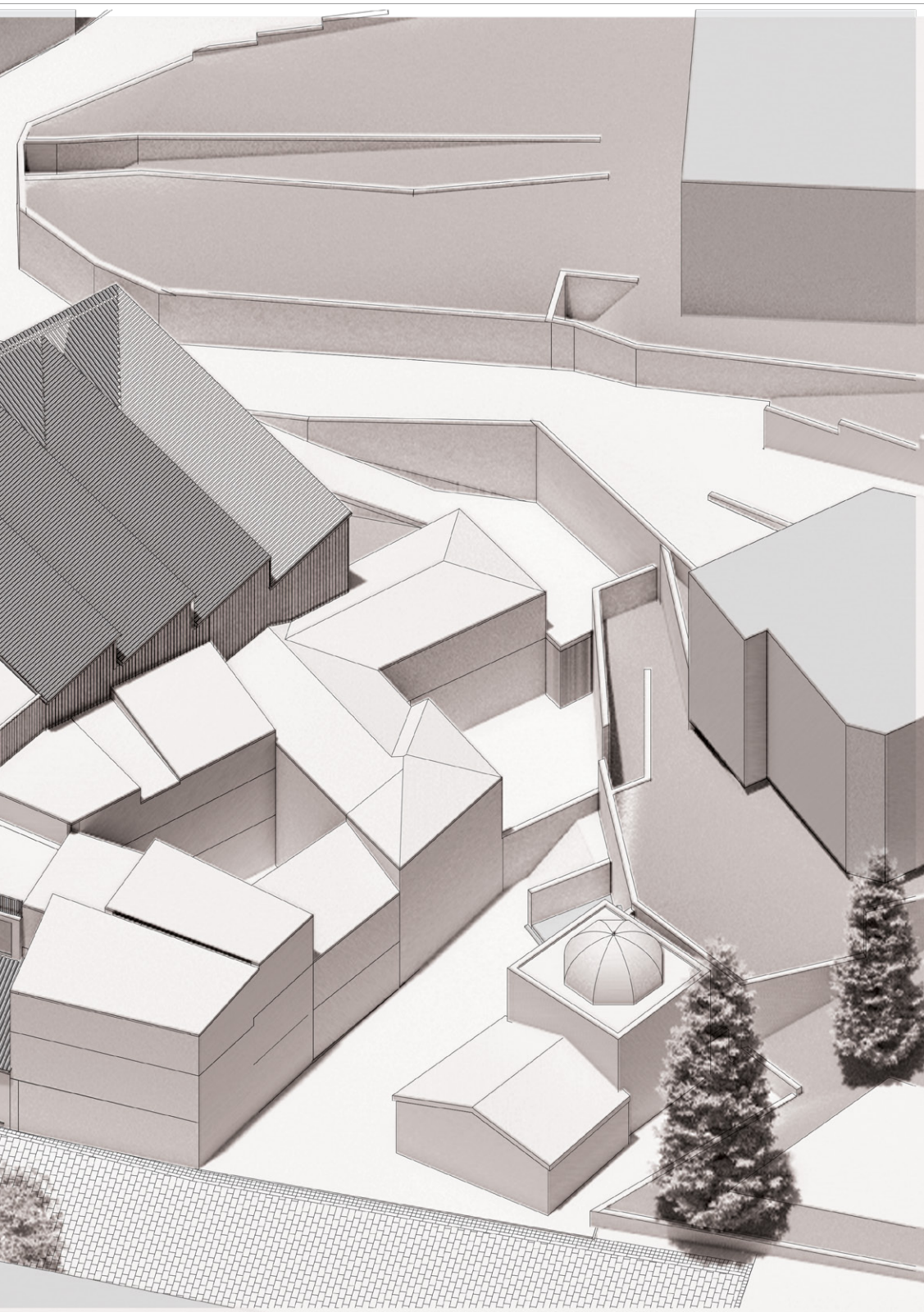
The structural logic of the winery is rooted in the “New Ground” system, utilizing heavy load-bearing walls of stone and concrete aggregate to manage the site’s steep topography. This massive construction provides the necessary thermal mass to stabilize the internal temperature, which remains at a constant 15°C. To further regulate the climate, ground-source heat pumps are connected to the mountain, while the roof system allows for natural ventilation through the chimney effect. Below the main podium, the building hosts a variety of fermentation tanks designed for diverse users, ranging from large-scale producers to those engaged in experimental or controlled micro-vinification.

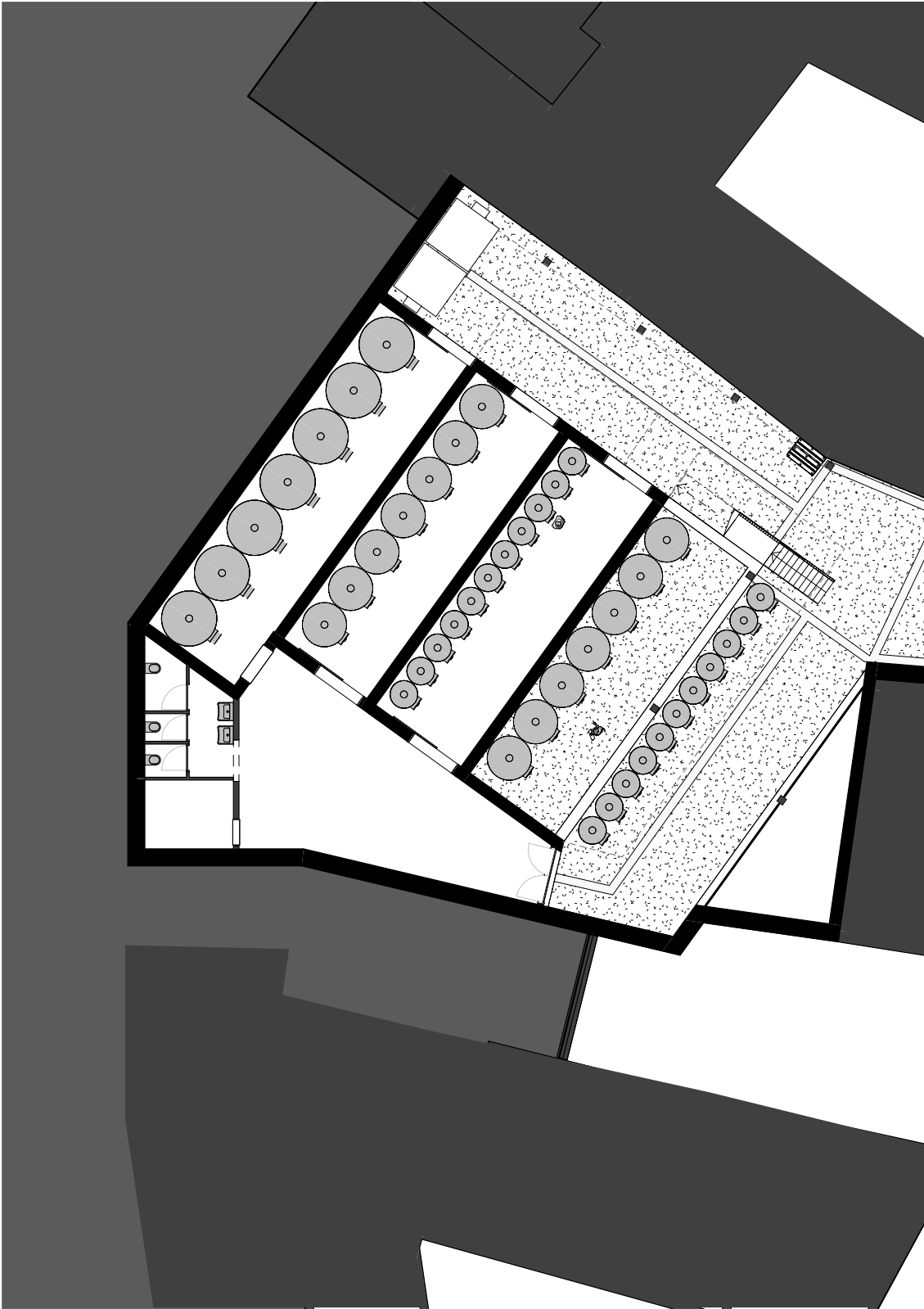
Logistics and gravity dictate the vertical organization of the winery. On the uppermost floor, an apron-like public space allows vehicles to deliver grapes directly to the processing area. This strategic placement enables a gravity-flow system, where the wine is fueled downward into the fermentation tanks, significantly reducing energy consumption. This floor also serves as a buffer for the existing urban fabric, ensuring that neighboring buildings maintain access to sunlight. As the wine moves through the facility, it transitions from the heavy fermentation hall into specialized zones for bottling and artisanal workshops. These spaces facilitate the “craft and care” of the project, providing areas for manual corking, labeling, and personalizing bottles before they are sold in the integrated boutique.

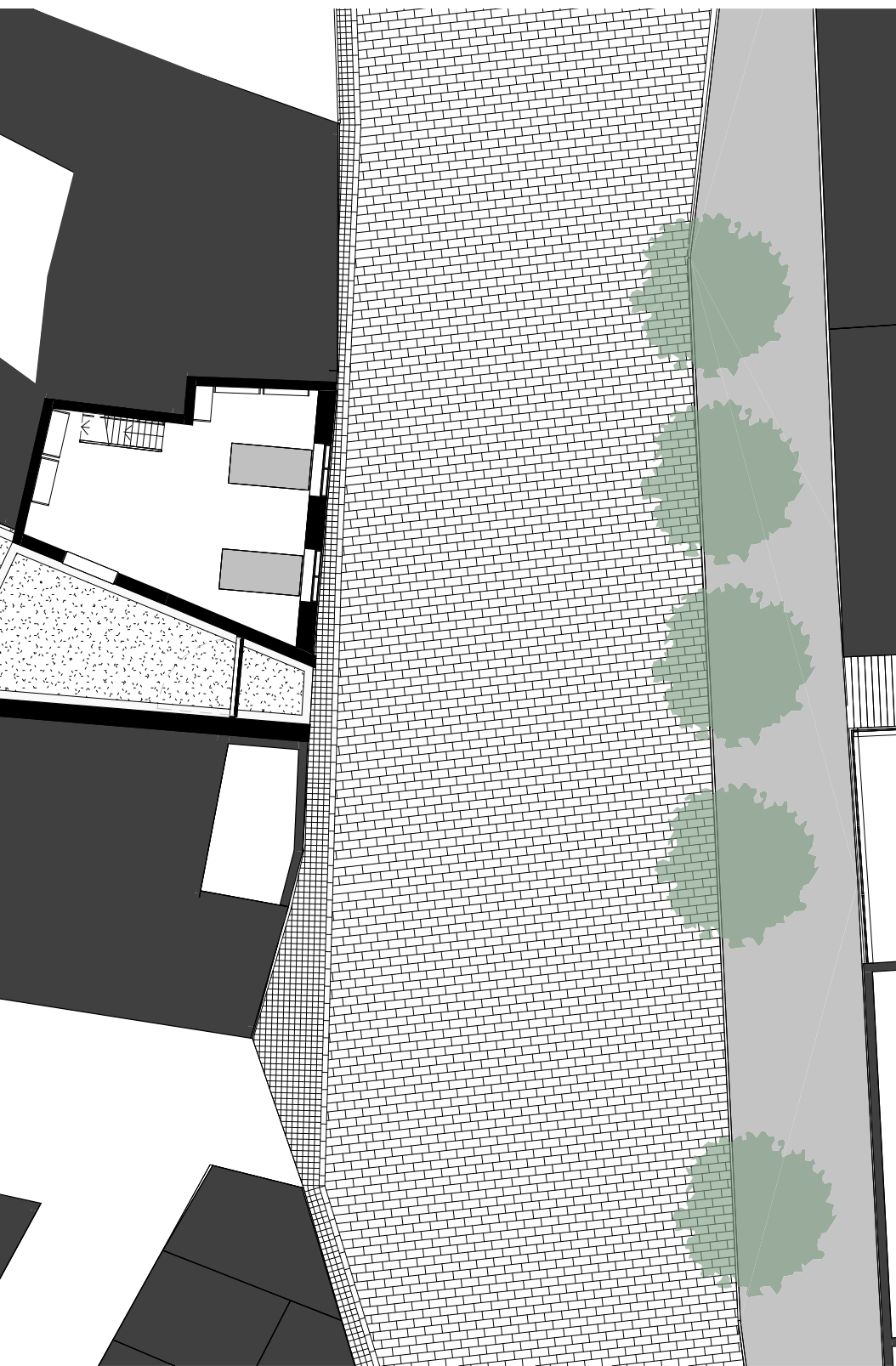
The upper levels of the winery are constructed with a lightweight timber system, which supports the logistical corridors and the visitor center. This lighter structure stands in clear contrast to the massive subterranean base, housing the administrative and social functions of the building. The journey through the winery culminates at the rooftop terrace, a mediation space that offers a singular view of the entire intervention: the square, the community house, the cellar canopy, and the distant landscape. This terrace serves as the definitive point of convergence, where the technical reality of the industrial process meets the social and territorial ambitions of the project.

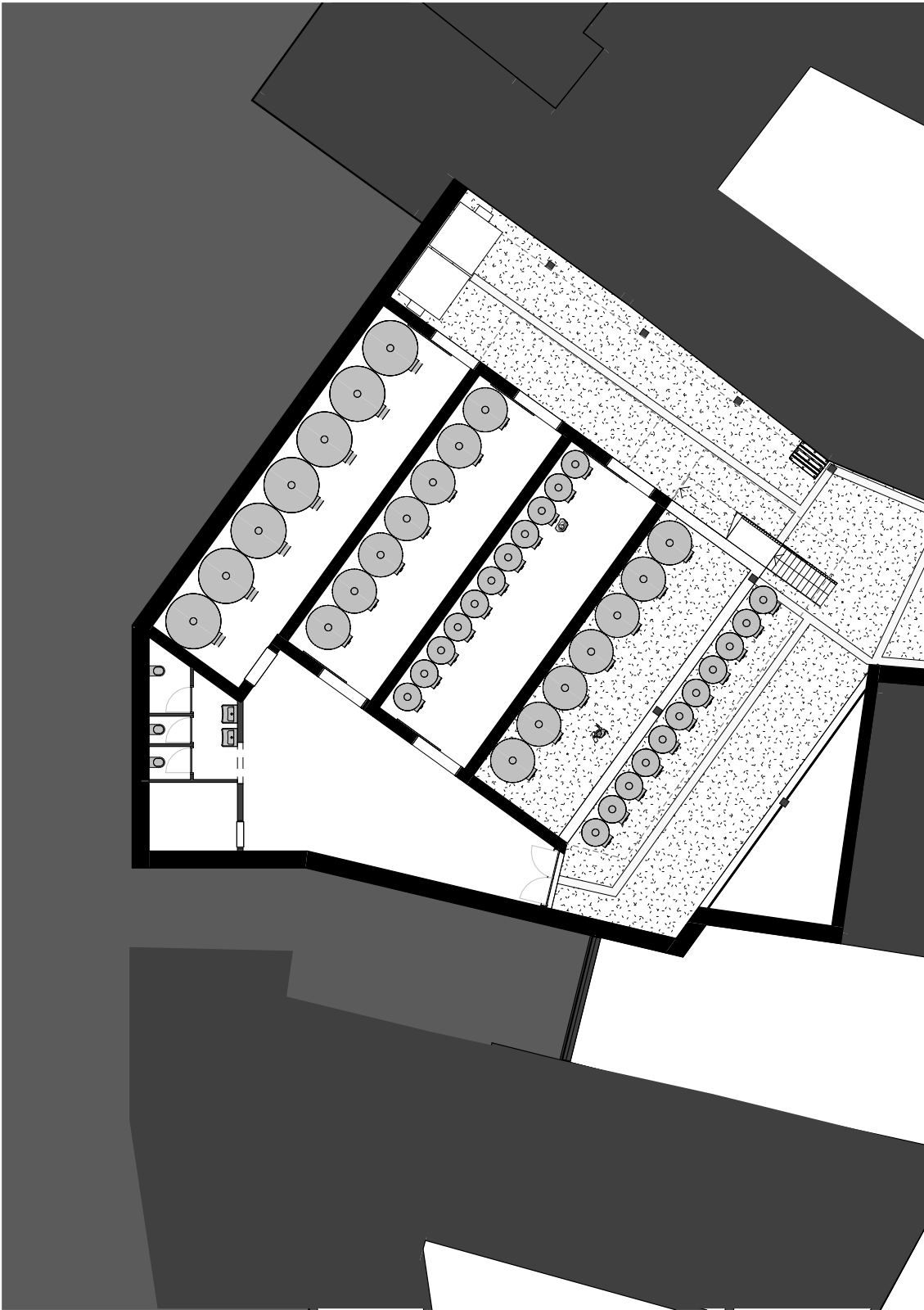




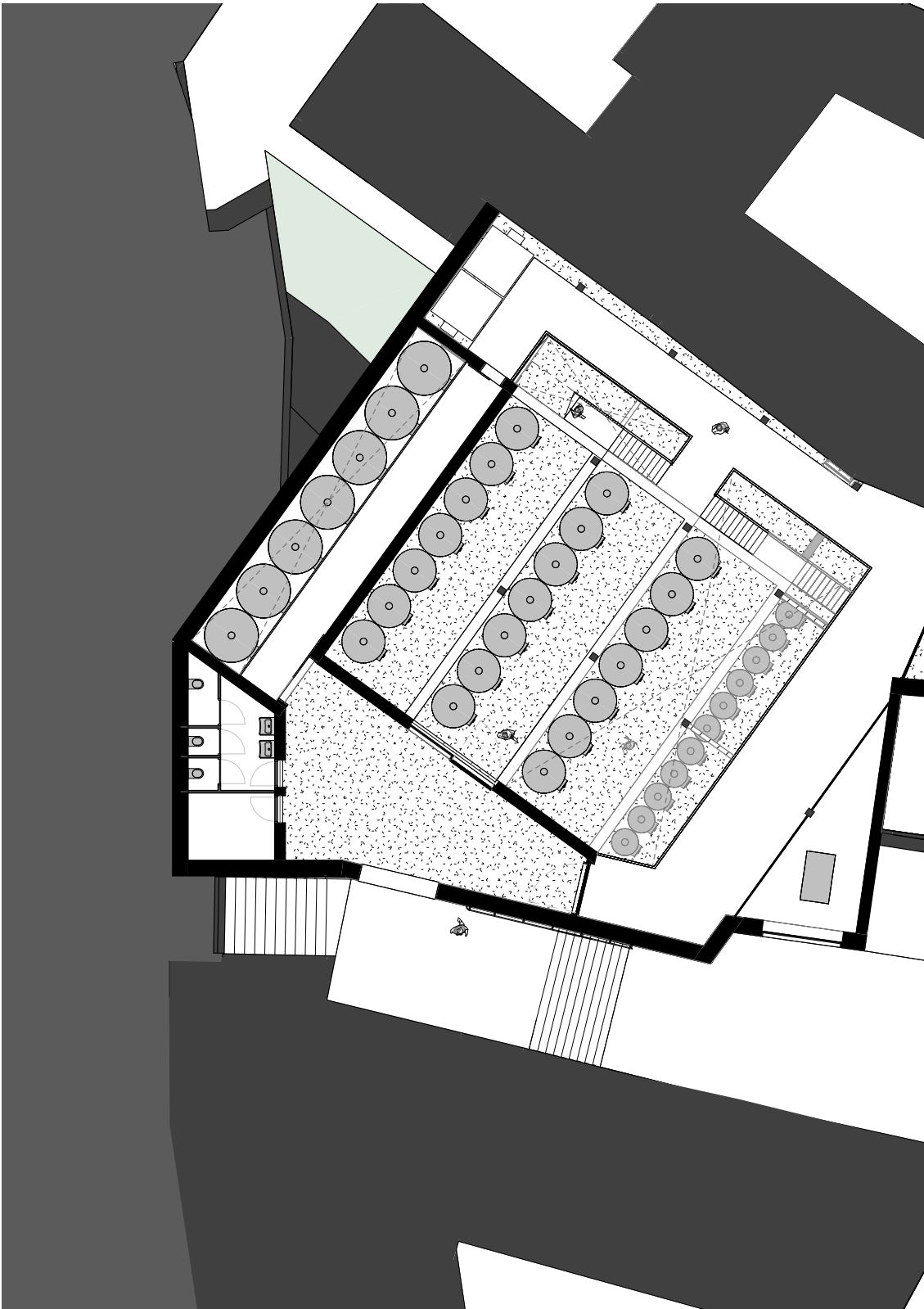


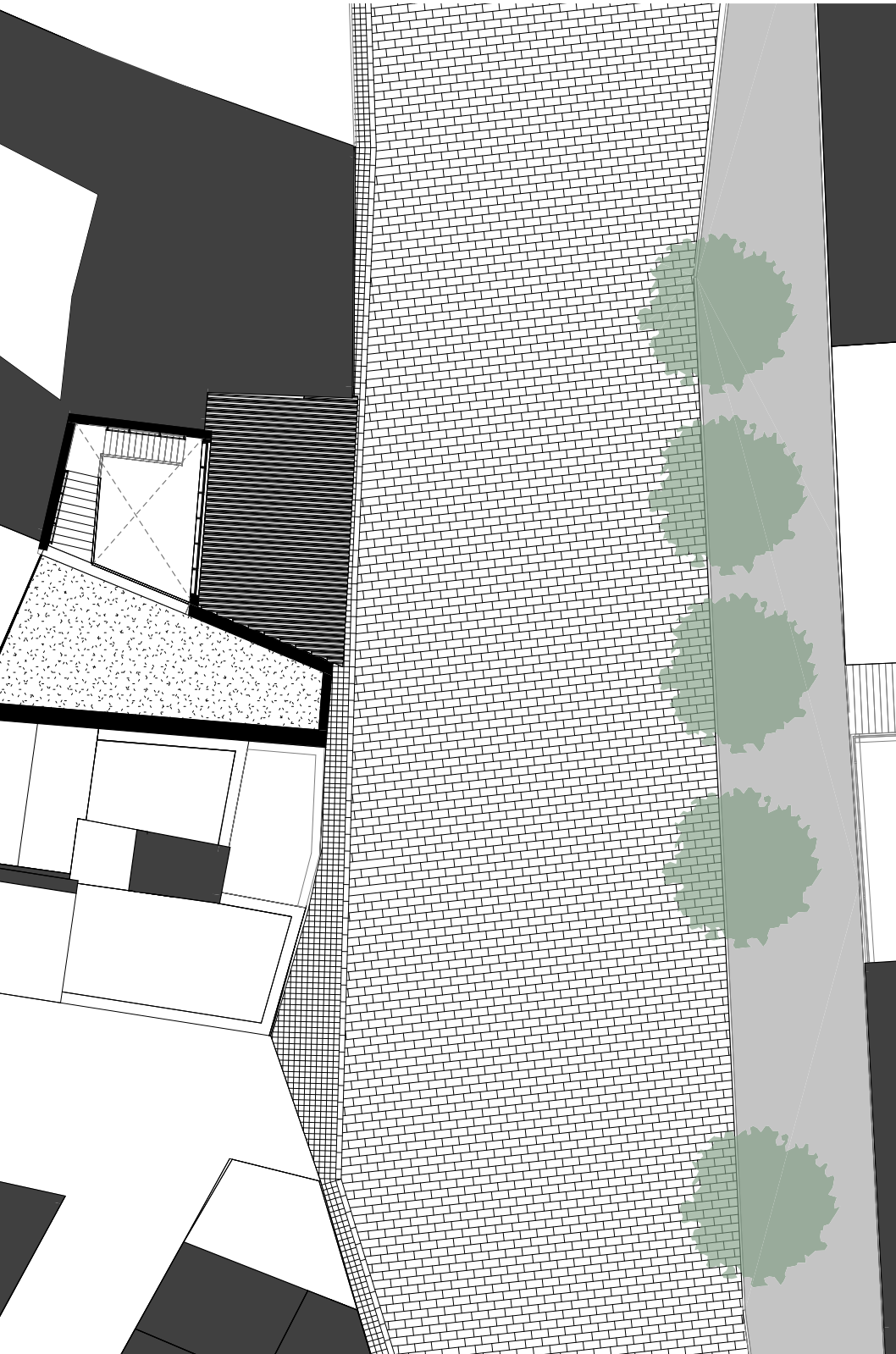


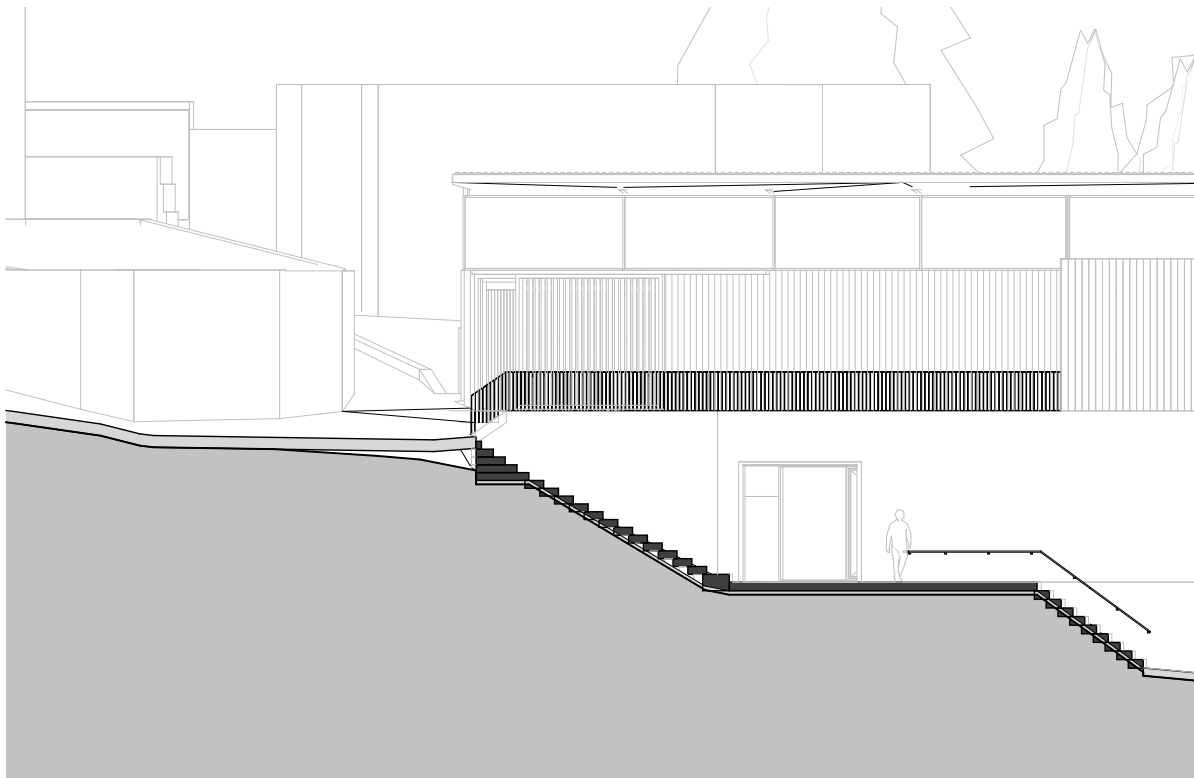
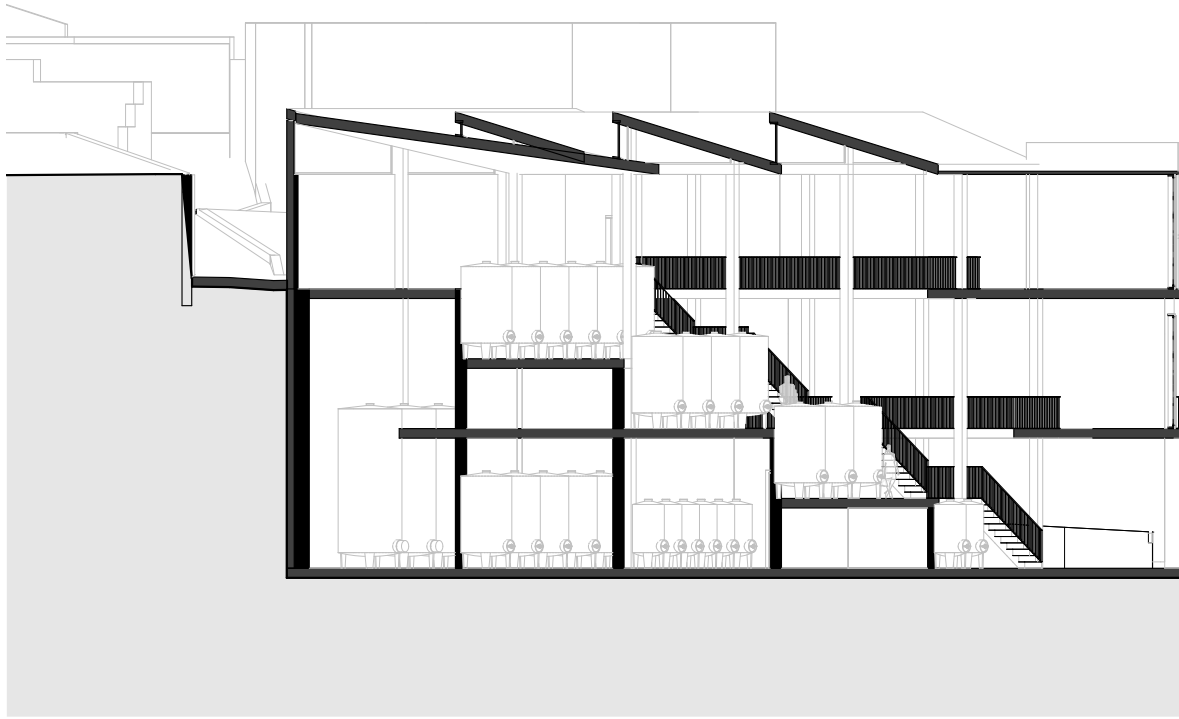


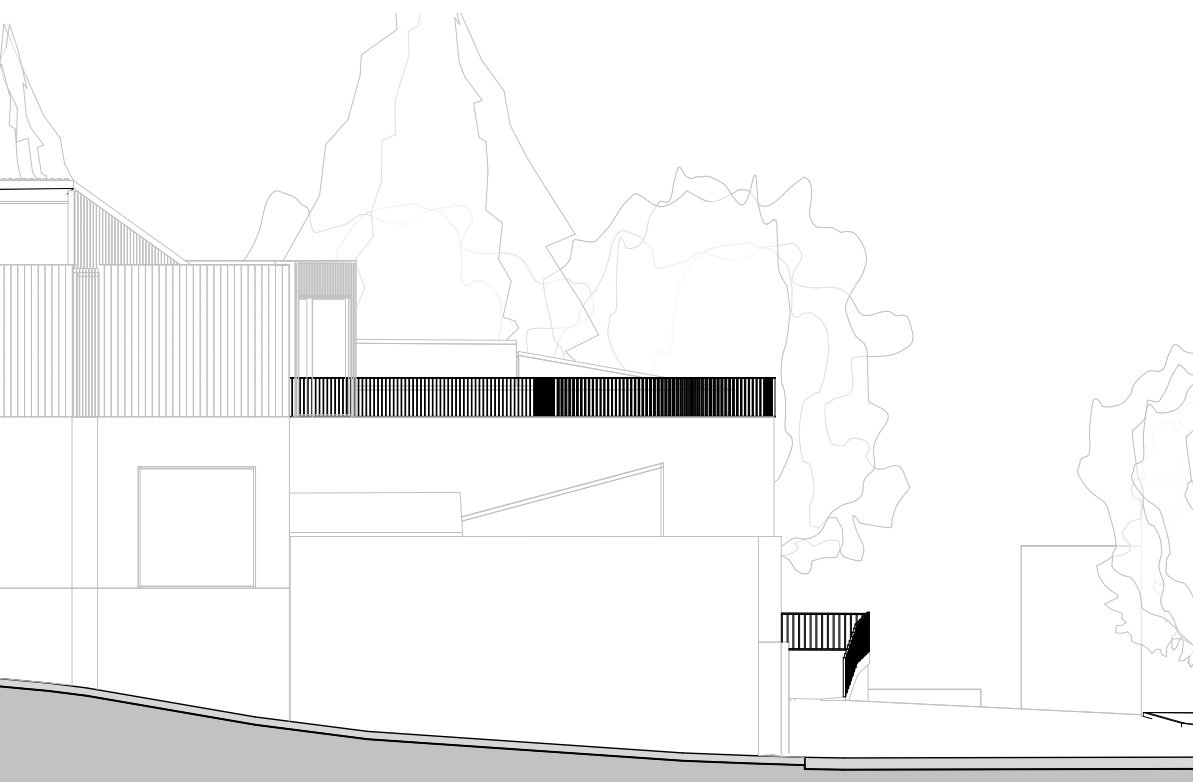
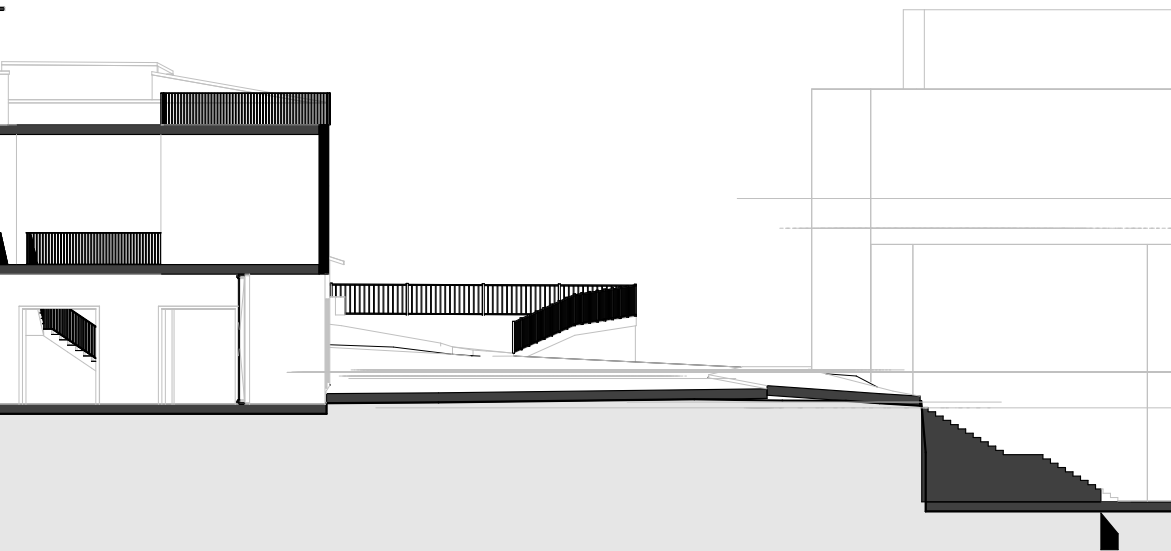


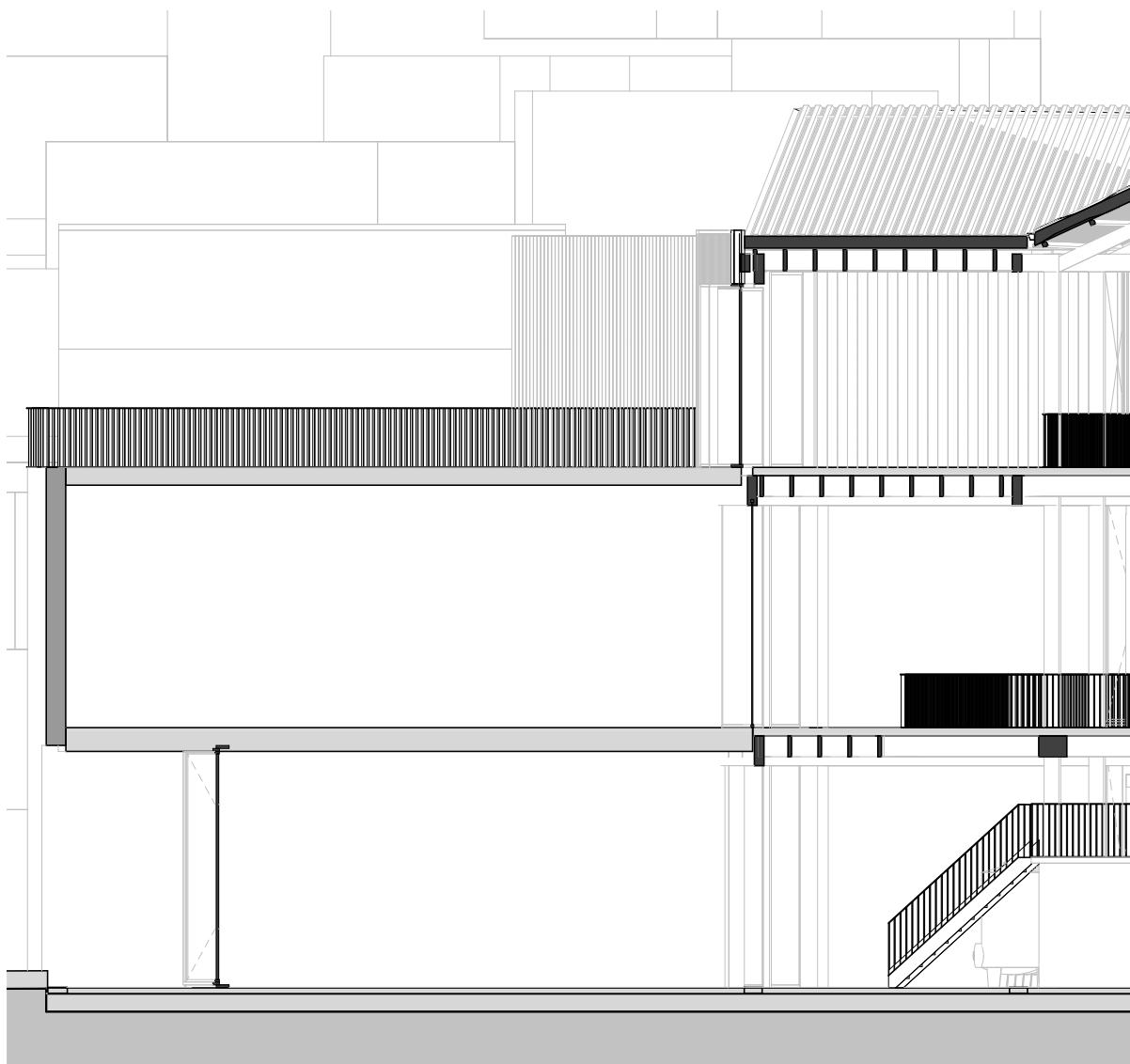


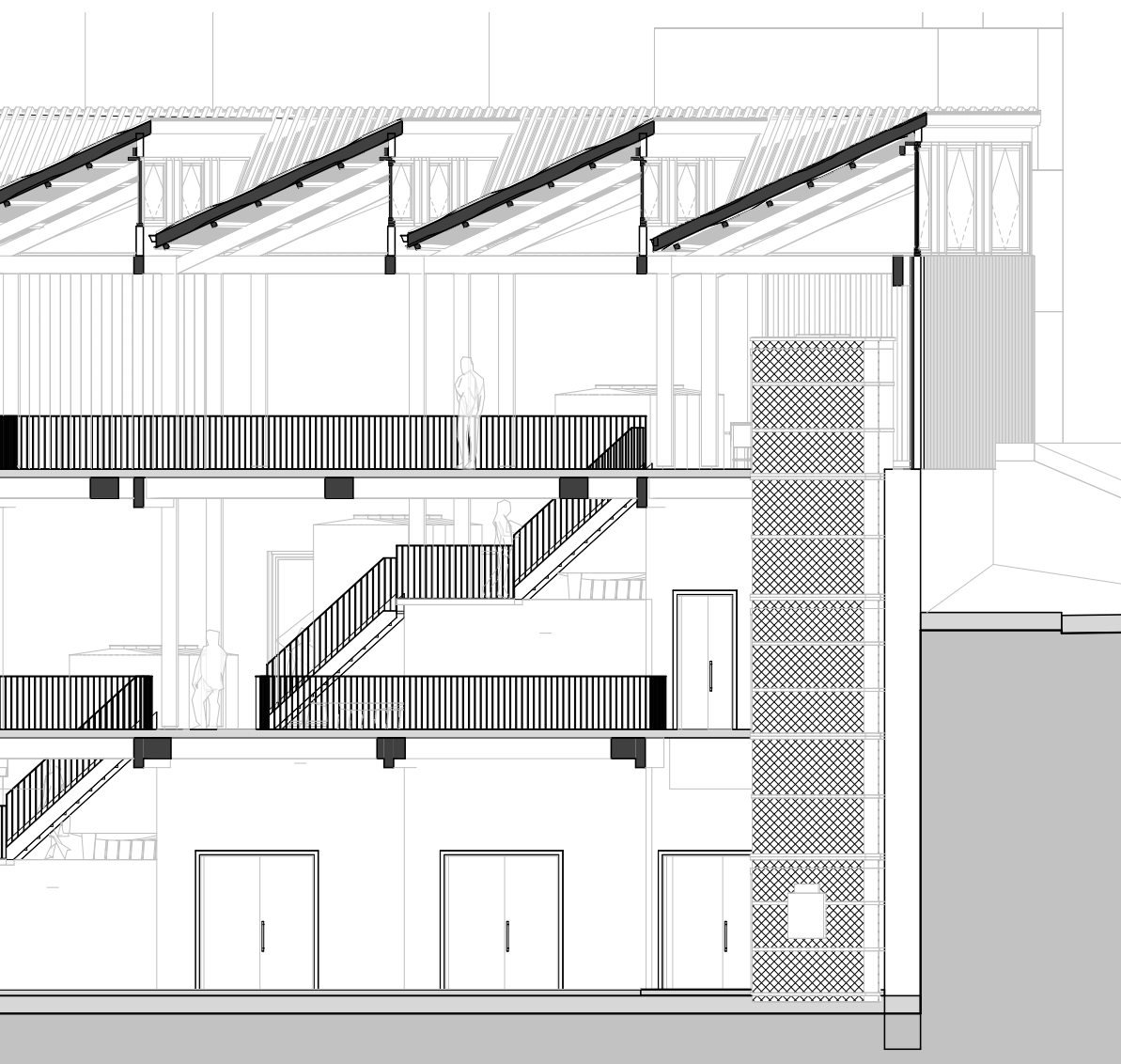


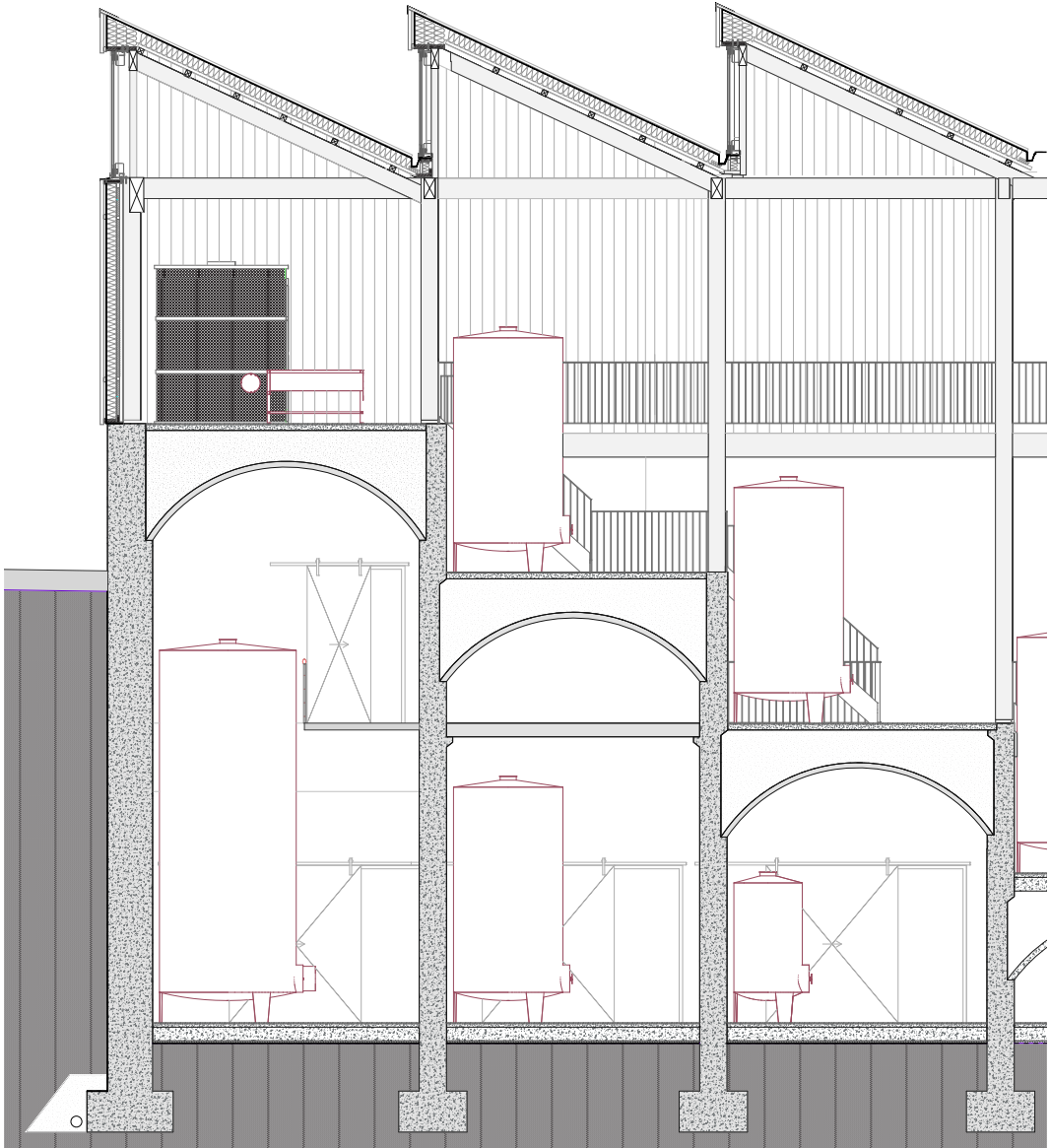


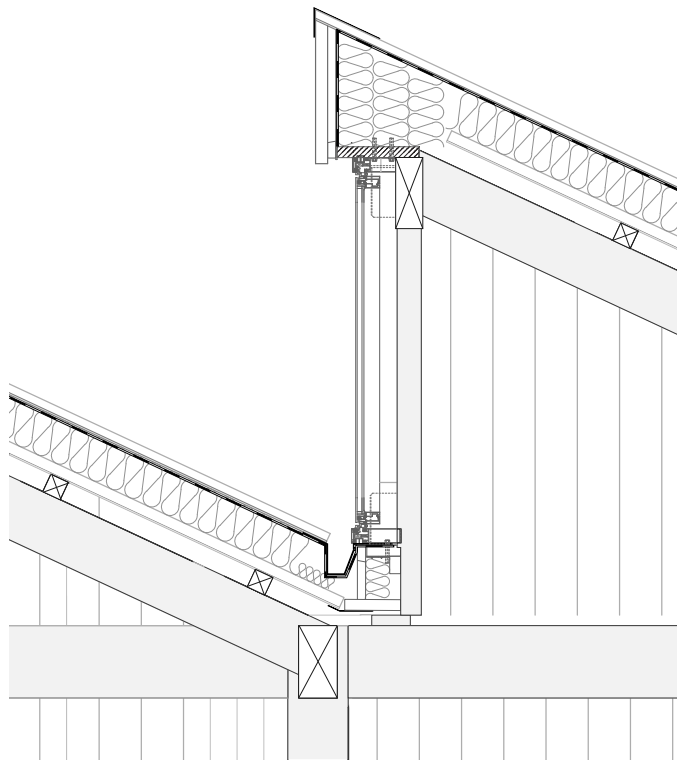




















FINAL REFLECTIONS

“Through Craft and Care” represents a year-long effort to understand the profound complexities surrounding rural areas. The project’s central premise is to directly address the conflict between economic pressures causing emigration and a local identity fighting against cultural commodification and preservation, attempting to reconcile the past, present, and possible futures for these territories. The project takes place in Mamoiada, a town in the mountainous region of Sardinia, an area characterized by centuries of relative isolation, abruptly connected, whose urban and social fabric have been scattered by modernization . The resulting architectural proposal is a network of interventions—a shared productive and social infrastructure centered around winemaking—that aims to reweave the town’s fragmented social and urban fabric through renewed community ownership and tending of space.

The initial research explored Mamoiada’s logic of development and sustain across the centuries, revealing a fragile equilibrium rooted in its collective spaces. This system was defined by an intricate interdependence where houses blended with the street, and the town seamlessly blended with the landscape, operating on a logic of subsistence economy, and therefore reliance on the surrounding resources. The contemporary decline is marked by the fragmentation of these hybrid urban spaces in favour of zoning and residential intimacy, leaving the historic center in an ambiguous state: partly abandoned, yet holding onto “fragments of liveliness” during community events.

The relationship between research and design was fundamentally reciprocal. My initial fascination with the town’s embedded complex, age-old system of interdependence with its surroundings and its community was the engine of the entire thesis. This core logic was amplified by the study of wine production, from cultivation to communal consumption, confirming it as one of the keys cultural and economic ritual still holding the system together.

The critical turning point came when I realized my role was not to impose a predetermined solution but to act as an innovator: to radically look, understand, and respect what the community was already doing, offering architectural support and strengthening those existing relationships through a shared urban facility.

Subsequently, the process of designing the interventions around Piazza Europa began to influence the research in return. The spatial and logistical prerequisites of the communal winery—specifically the need for thermal stability, efficiency across three complex levels, and material continuity—demanded a rigorous investigation into materiality and construction. This exploration led to the selection of the concrete-stone aggregate and vaulted systems, with a lightweight wood system sitting on top of this heavy material, grounding the aesthetic, logistical, and climatic performance of the architecture in the local context.

While the project ambitions have remained the same since my initial fascination, I didn’t expect the architectural solution to evolve so drastically. Initially, I assumed that solving a social issue would require architecture to “fix” it by

creating complex social and economic spaces.

The surprising realization was that the answer was not found in complexity, but in simplicity and intentionality. I never expected the answer to be simple, targeted interventions, nor did I foresee the need for the heavy, grounded approach to construction. The core shift was the realization that architecture didn't need to "fix" anything, but rather needed to create simple, meaningful spaces that also serve as productive parts of the town. This meant intricately uniting the town and territory through radical, yet simple interventions that offer people the space and capacity to reflect on the value of their surroundings, helping them see that what is already there is as important as what is being added. This validated the core belief that letting people be free to think and stay where they want can lead to even greater, enduring value.

The title itself, "Through Craft and Care," is not only the ambition of the final project but also a concise description of the methodological approach employed. This involved a careful, considered, and respectful engagement with a context often approached with generalized solutions. The core value of this methodology was the continuous mediation between contradictions, by "stitching" back the fragmented pieces of the town, trying to make sense of what was and what is, between future prospects and today's problem. In general, the approach I used was able to make the coexistence of many topics and themes that would have been retained contradictory possible: I always envisioned the space to be a community, multi purpose facility, and yet I wanted the wine production to be protagonist. I wanted to create a space that was productive in its nature in the city centre, I wanted to have a production specialized system like wine making and yet I wanted the square centrality and the permeability of the building to coexist. I believe that the role of an architect who wants to innovate is to work with these ambiguities and make it possible that two very different things can work together and generate synergies that were not considered before.

The academic and societal value of "Through Craft and Care" lies in its contribution toward designing places where a community can belong, rather than simply designing a building for production. Furthermore, the design care as much for the town's urban fabric and the surrounding landscape as for the community. This required abandoning preconceived notions and prioritizing a thorough respect for context. The resulting architecture extends the town into the building, in a extremely site specific intervention, allowing people to claim and live it.

While production is a core aspect, the design ultimately provides collective, flexible spaces—not just specialized production facilities. This open nature ensures the building is used by everyone and does not command use, but rather allows the inhabitants to interpret, occupy, and use the space however they please, generating community ownership and tending.

One of the main values of the project's results is defined by its replicability and proliferation across the urban fabric and in similar contexts. The traditional model

of scaling up a productive building—increasing size and productivity—is deliberately rejected as incompatible with this site’s nature and limited expansion room. Instead, the project is conceived as a kickstart for a new communal paradigm by offering new cooperative economic and social models where the value of communal bonds and effort is far greater than the produce itself. The project acts as a proof-of-concept for leveraging the abundance of abandoned, underutilized sites that challenge the town’s topography. By articulating the program across these discrete locations—using their specific characteristics to its advantage and reactivating the spaces in between—the idea can be scaled to a town-wide network of mid-sized, collective facilities. Crucially, it demonstrates a broader, transferable logic: that the unused power of space can be unlocked through micro-interventions, generating distributed, and socially cohesive urban system that successfully counteracts the narrative of decline.

Throughout the year, what I believe influenced me and the project the most was the notion of “looking carefully.” Learning the reason and history behind the urban fabric imbues every piece of work with profound meaning: from a simple house built brick-by-brick by a parent, to a kind gesture made fifty years ago whose echo still informs community memory. What I observed for a year has been the entire horizon for generations past living only within the town. Everything surrounding us is not just built environment, but a treasure of countless stories that will outlive us.

This year long project has inspired me to be an architect and a professional that cares about the people he’s crafting a space for, and in return to the people who I will work for I want to return a great dosage of care. I want to be an architect that tells a story, that unveils existing connections, an empathetic professional who will be able to surprise its clients, and be surprised when I noticed and find a very ordinary thing that for another person is or was of great importance, dignifying and give value to that (extra)ordinary thing. I want to be an architect which is able to see and is able to show to other people, as many as possible, the beauty of simple things, the beauty of something that in its simplicity is able to embody a great amount of thinking, aswell as help people value what they have.

Matteo Saba, 04.12.2025