



THE MIDDLE GROUND

Of Social Debate

Public Building Graduation Studio
2022-2023 (AR3AP100)

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Graduation Plan

Problem Statement

The tumultuous history of Berlin is that of clashes between ideologies. This created a divided city from an architectural point of view as well as from the socio-political one. The initial field-work in Friedrichshain (and in Berlin in general) has shown that diverse people with different and sometimes opposing ideologies congregate in the same public space. An ideological background of the residents results from the combination of the shared beliefs in religious, cultural, and societal identities. This difference plays a crucial role in the formation of each individual's worldview, which forms their ideologies. The various social groups observed in the analyzed area show almost no interaction, with each group discussing their ideology and social problems internally. This leads to polarization in the local community.

Therefore, ideology represents a prism through which people can deal with real social-political problems, presenting a singular point of view for each problem. By becoming exposed to a different ideology (looking at the prism from a different direction), people can understand other points of view and start a conversation that brings them closer to a common ground. Such a place is already present in Berlin (as in other cities), though to a different degree, namely the presence of street expressions such as protests or creative elements (posters, stickers of graffiti) that tries to spark interest and discussion of the people passing by. Architecture can play a role in such a process by taking a proactive role and providing a meeting point in the debate. Such a role of architecture is not new, and as Vladimir Mako states in his thesis 'Architecture and Ideology', historically, architecture was a direct political and ideological practice that expressed the societal debate and, as such, contributing to the cultural identity.³

Research Questions

How can architecture act as a middle ground in the ideological debate?

How to incentivize the users to take a proactive role in the development of the community?

How can architecture be used in the amplification of the public debate?

How can the spatial organization contribute to the starting of discussion and interaction between different socio-economic groups of people in the Friedrichshain neighborhood?

Design Assignment & Result

This design research aims at understanding the division in Friedrichshain and discovering ways for architecture to act as a middle ground and contribute to the mediating conversation. By amplifying the existing effect of the public space, people can exchange their views and approach local problems more constructively, while at the same time celebrating the diversity of opinions that enrich the community. As such, the design project consists of creating a hybrid

structure, combining the traditional structures of a debate forum and a cultural center in order to amplify the community debate already present in the district. This translates into the program on three layers of interaction: leisure, skills, and knowledge. The leisure functions are designed with the scope of attracting people from the neighborhood by providing activities that are not present in the district. The residents expressed interest in such as performance spaces, art galleries, gathering spaces, and others that encourage the concept of 'Kiez' ("Kinder-Eltern-Zentrum" which emphasizes the community as a family) present in Berlin.

The "skills" functions activate the community by providing space for creative or co-working and the so-called skills labs. They are implemented in community centers and intended to teach residents specific skills that can improve the community and learn about the challenges arising from the division and problems in the community. These skills labs are accessible to people from all socio-economical backgrounds present in the neighborhood, including the homeless and squatters who are marginalized and ignored. In the skills labs, people work in close proximity or have workshops together to learn how to interact more, even if they are part of different groups, and open up about certain problems and learn to see other points of view regarding the community.

Finally, the center of the project, the knowledge functions, with the debate space at the center, activate the discussion and different ways of information communication and debate that provide a wide range of media for different types of people to get involved in the community. In the traditional auditorium, residents learn and interact with specific presenters. The library (physical and digital) and the exhibition space provide space for residents or guests to present works or exhibit specific topics, showing the different possible points of view. The users of the center can take the knowledge gained from the program in the "forum" and present different world views about the community and the richness of diverse opinions, thereby helping the neighborhood to develop in harmony.

In addition to the program that sparks and amplifies the debate, the building itself plays a role in it by including different architectural theories and ideologies about the creation of a community space. 'An Architecture of Anarchism' by Michael Coates explains that in order to activate the community in the development of the socio-political landscape, the architect, instead of holding all the power over the design, should only provide the framework for development and "surrender some elements of their power to residents/users of these projects."⁴ As such, the design should create a balance between the space that is designed and the un-designed space. It can be then 'colonized' by the users and their needs, and involve the users in the design in order to create a debate first about the development of the building and then the development of the neighborhood.

As a result, the project is not thought of as a finite element but as an evolving organism at different stages. First, the stage of the construction of the fixed spaces mentioned previously is meant to encourage dialog and show the potential of the space. Second, the stage of the implementation of the additions is decided by the users and can range from studio spaces, workshops, offices, or any function needed by the community. To facilitate this evolution, the additions can be created as a modular structure that can be easily joined and configured to host different functions.

Method Description

The research is constructed around a critical literature review of previous research in order to understand the core problem in the polarization of different social groups and to understand how architecture can play a role in sparking the discussion by taking a proactive role and providing a middle ground for debate incubators. In addition, the research will include the analysis of various case studies of the previous architectural project which tries to generate debate/knowledge centers, such as the example of the Seattle City Library or the Amsterdam deBalie. Furthermore, the research is based on interviews on one hand of people already involved in the creation of debate spaces, such as the director of the deBalie debate center. On the other hand, the research will be based on interviews with the local community in order to understand the necessities of individuals impacted and in order to include them in the design phase for the purpose of creating a flexible space that can adapt and morphs around the community needs.

Reflection

The topic of debate at the center of the interaction of different cultures and ideologies is at the center of the development of direct democracy at the base level of cities. The topic of my graduation project is primarily based on the four core pillars of the public condenser innovative idea, which represent the main studio topic. These four pillars are multiplicity, hybridity, sustainability, and resilience. Multiplicity by creating a middle ground for debate between people from different cultural and ideological backgrounds present in the district but also by creating a space that celebrates the diversity of opinions. Hybridity by creating a space that celebrates and integrates different forms of expression from cultural functions to community and technological functions. And finally, resilience and sustainability by offering the creation of a space at the core of the community which can be modified and adaptable for the needs of the community not only in the present but also in the middle to long-term future.

In addition, the research on the role of architecture as the middle ground for social interaction and the understanding of how the architecture itself, through its organization, functions, and aesthetics, influence the interaction between individuals is an essential aspect in understanding and developing the future public building. As such, the research and findings of this graduation project can become part of the understanding of the development of the public condenser concept and the development of public buildings in future cities that should help in the creation of a more inclusive and democratic society by celebrating diversity.

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Precedent:

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Abstract

Problem statement

The turmoil history of Berlin is a history of clashes between ideologies. This created a divided city not only from an architectural point of view but also from a socio-political background. The initial fieldwork research in Friedrichshain (and in Berlin as a whole) has shown diverse people with different and sometimes extremely opposing ideologies congregating in the same public space. The ideological background presented by the inhabitation is the result of the combination of the shared beliefs regarding religious, cultural and societal self-identification. This difference plays a crucial role in the formation of each individual's world view which forms their ideologies. The various social groups observed in the analyzed area show almost no interaction with each other, with each group discussing their ideology and social problems internally. This leads to a polarization in the local society.

As such, the lack of interaction between different social groups creates tensions that burst and create ideological extremes, such as the current examples of the rise of the far right movement and the far left, which obtain 5% and 17.7% of the votes respectively, in the last election of 2017¹. According to the study published by Abigail Greene in Columbia Journal of Transnational Law, this polarization can be attributed to the historical absorption of the East Berlin by the West which led to the imposing of the western model of economy and social structure over the East Berlin. This led to the East Berlin population to feel estrangement from the city and its politics with the election turnouts in East Berlin and Friedrichshain specifically being lower than the national average².

Importance

As Vladimir Mako states, 'ideology is a phantasmatic construction which serves as support to our reality, in other words, it is an illusion which structures effective social relations and masks traumatic social divisions or confrontations which could not be symbolized, therefore the function of ideology is to supply us with bearable social realities'³.

In other words, ideology represents a prism through which people can deal with real social-political problems, presenting a singular point of view for each problem. By becoming exposed to a different ideology (looking at the prism from a different direction), people can understand other points of view and start a conversation that brings the problem closer to a solution. Such a place is already present in Berlin (and in every city), though to a different degree, namely the presence of street statements such as protests or art elements (posters, stickers or graffiti) that tries to spark interest and the discussion of the people passing by. Architecture can play a role in the sparking of the discussion by taking a pro-active role and providing a middle ground in the debate. This role of architecture is not new and as Mako states, historically architecture was a direct political and ideological practice which expressed the societal debate and as such contributing to the cultural identity. Only during the post modernism movement, the architecture tried to detach itself from the ideological debate, trying to adopt a 'neutral' stand on the local level.

Research Aim

As such, this research aims at understanding the reason behind the division in the Friedrichshain neighborhood and discovering ways for architecture to act as a middle ground and contribute to the start of the conversation by amplifying the existing effect of the public space, where people can exchange their views and approach the local problems in a more constructive way.

Research Question

How can architecture act as a middle ground in the ideological debate and contribute to the starting of discussion and interaction between different socio-economic groups of people in the Friedrichshain neighborhood?

Sub-Questions

What is the influence of ideology on architecture from a techno-aesthetic and techno-artistic point of view?

What functions can enhance the social interaction of people from different ideological backgrounds?

Methodology

The research is constructed around a critical literature review of materials and previous research in order to understand the core problem in the polarization of different social groups and to understand how the ideology can be translated into architecture in order to create a debate incubator. The research will include the analysis of different case studies of previous architecture project which tries to generate debate/knowledge centers, such as the example of the Seattle City Library. In addition, the research is based around interviews in order to understand the necessities of individuals impacted and in order to include them in the design phase for the purpose of creating a flexible space that can adapt and morphs around the community needs.

Bibliography

1. The Federal Returning Officer. "Results Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg - Prenzlauer Berg Ost - the Federal Returning Officer." The Federal Returning Officer, 2021. <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2021/ergebnisse/bund-99/land-11/wahlkreis-83.html>.
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Week 1

Product: The creation of a collage representing our image of the public building and the importance of the public building in relation to the city

Description: The public building should be located in the centre of the community. This location should not coincide directly with the geographical centre of the city but rather at the converging point between different areas, communities, and group of people in order to enhance the interaction and serve all people regardless of their backgrounds. The polarization around the centre represents the shift in the society values. While in the past the focus of the city were the public buildings, regardless of the values that they hold such as religious, cultural, or political, since the introduction of the neo-liberalism such values have shifted and are not focusing on private companies, with the headquarters of the private corporations dominating the skylines and the public realm of the cities.

Assignment 1 - Collage / Montage

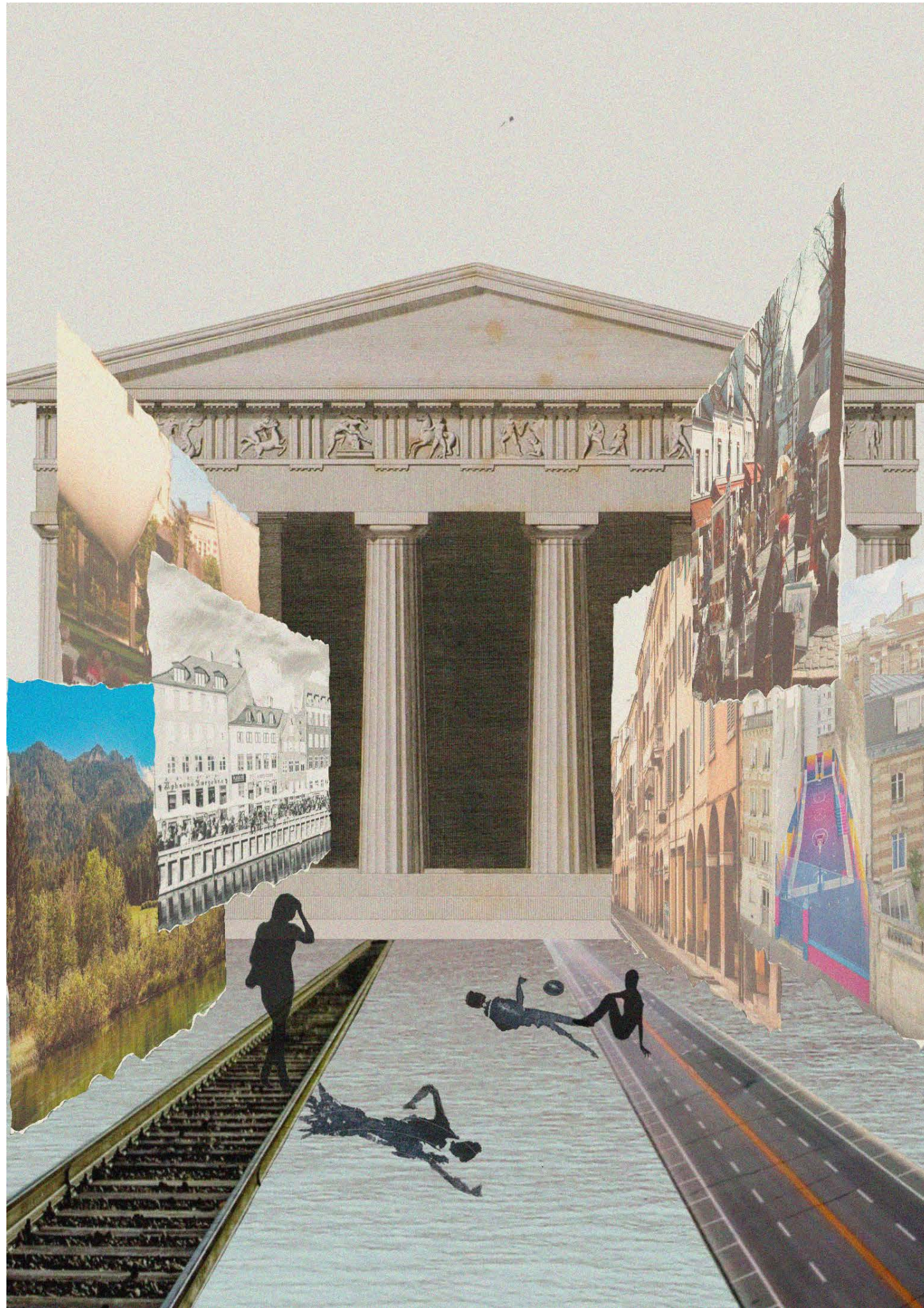


Week 2

Product : The creation of a collage representing our image of the public building and the importance of the public building in relation to the city

Description: The public building should be located at the converging place of different social groups which are represented by the presence of different ways of transportations that should provide access to the public building for every group. The buildings should take inspiration from the organically developed public space, namely the street and should be a direct mirroring of the people's needs and, beliefs and activities. While the building itself represent only the shel that such as the Greek temples acted as gathering places, hosting different functions not only religious, the interior should be left empty in order for the community to be able to appropriate it and model it around their needs.

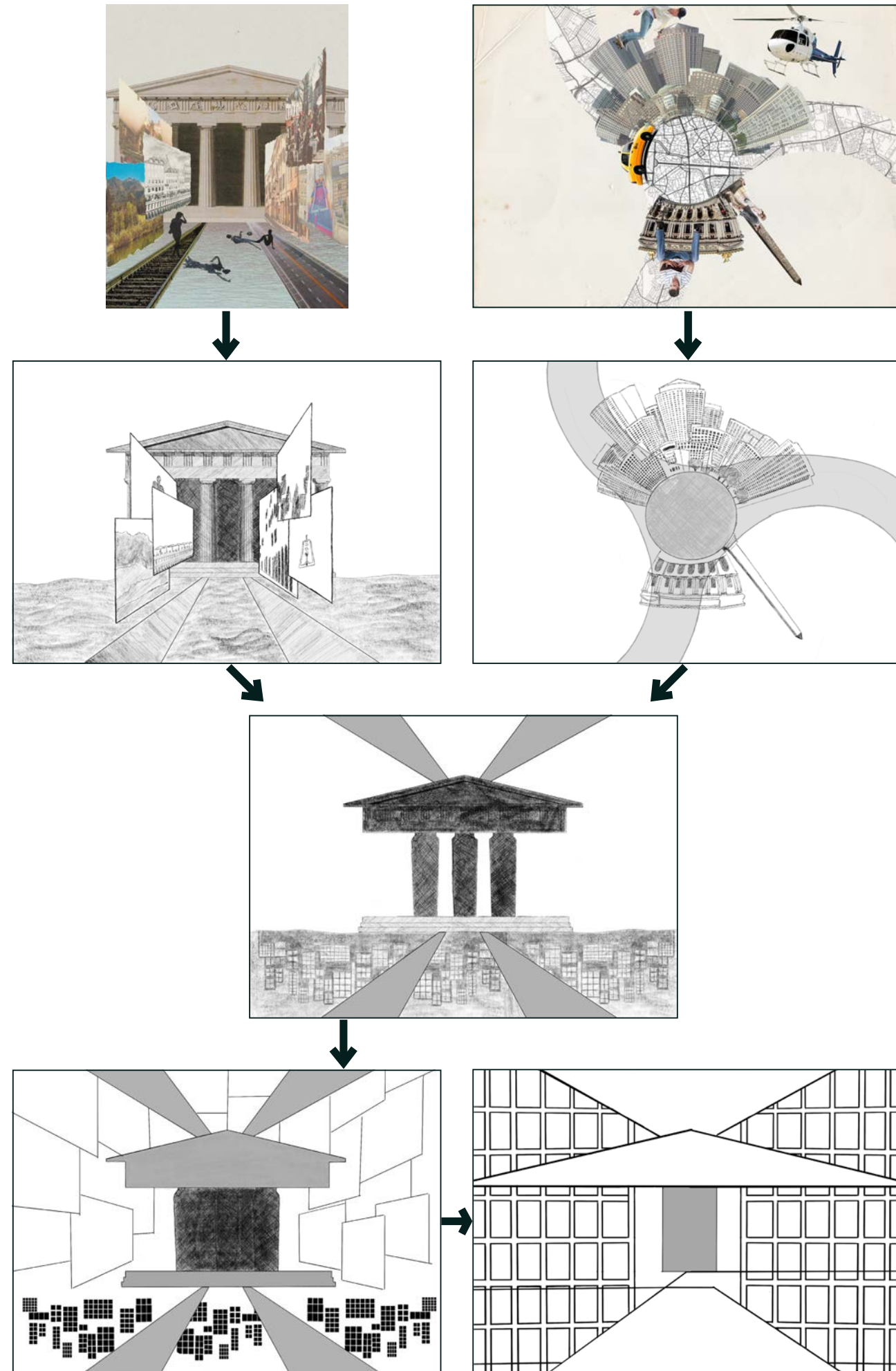
Assignment 1 - Collage / Montage



Week 3

Product: The creation of a series of 5 diagrams based on the previous collages that combine them and deconstruct them in order to express the key elements of the concept.

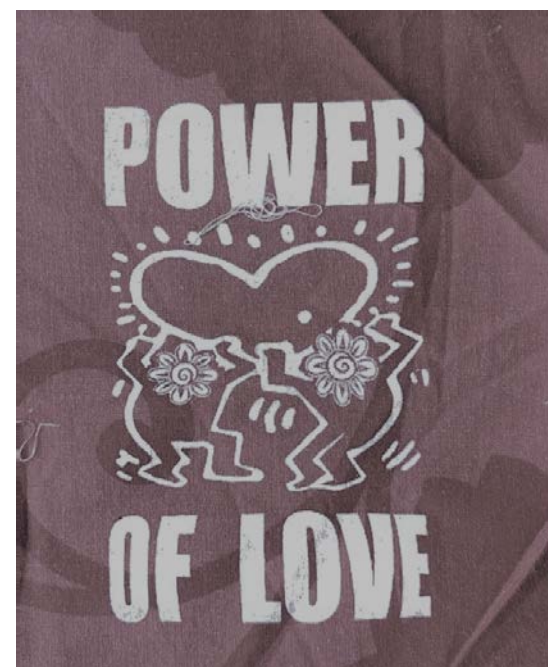
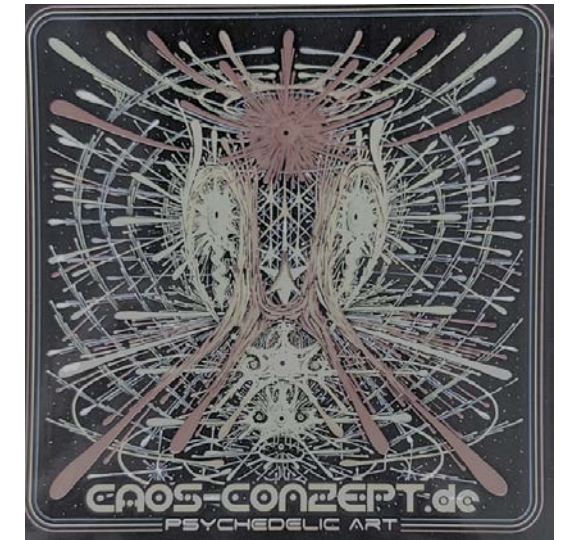
Description: The Diagrams extract the most important elements of each collage such as the shell represented by the public building and its emptiness, the mirroring of the society, the centrality and the present of the modern social values represented by the presence of the retentiveness of the windows and the monotony of the surrounding environment.



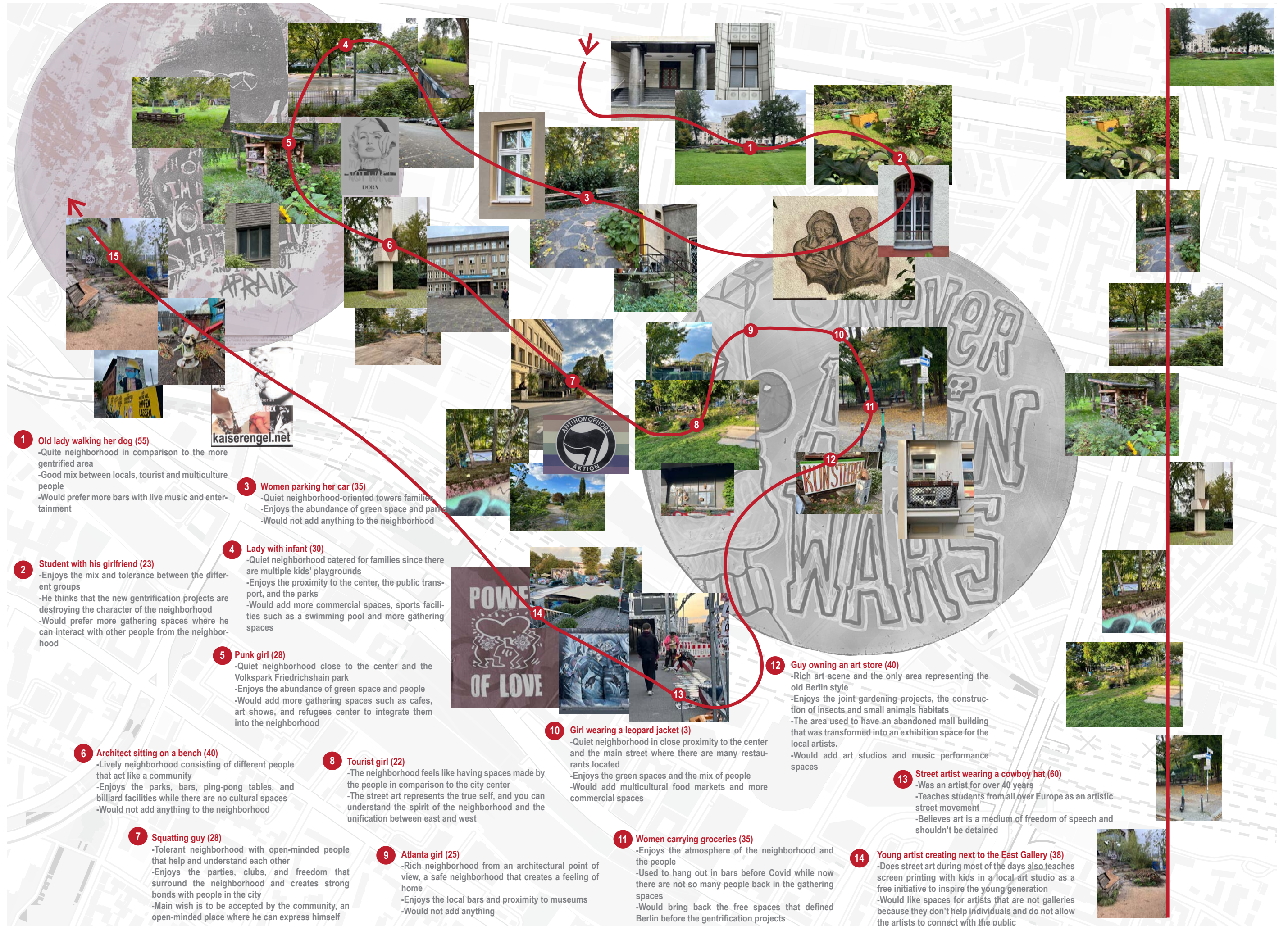
Week 4

Product: The collection of elements representing the analysed neighbourhood and the creation of a psycho-geography map of the neighbourhood during the study trip to Berlin.

Description: The study trip led to the collection of art elements (posters, graffiti, and sticker) that represent the core values and spirit of the neighbourhood and which spark a discussion for the people passing by. By juxtaposing them with images of the use of the public space, which can be categories as formal and informal, created the first understanding of the neighbourhood and the people. In addition, the presence of the route and the interviews should the different personas encountered in the neighbourhood and the share variety of people belonging to different social groups in the neighbourhood.



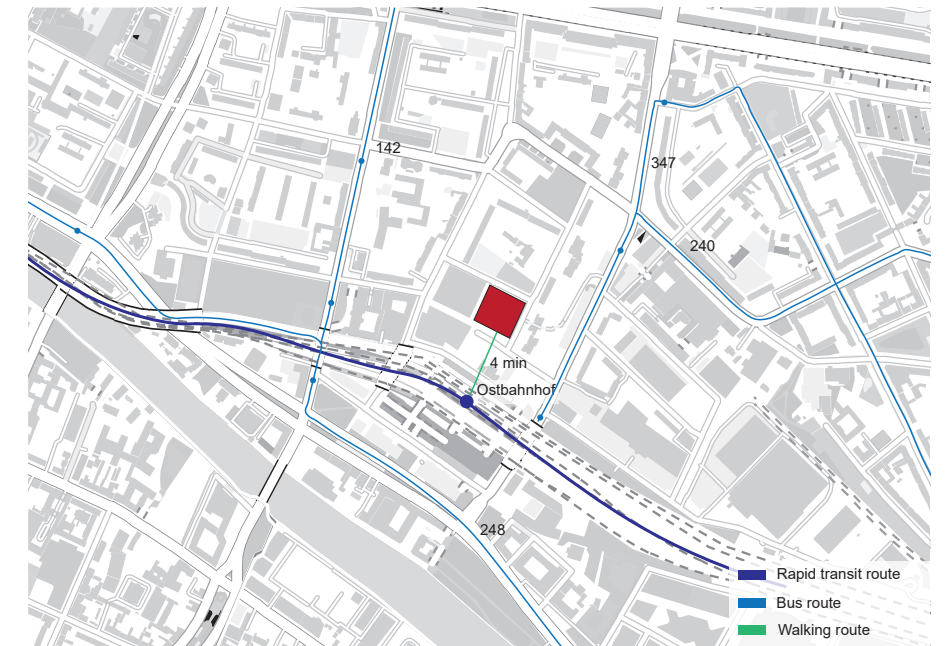
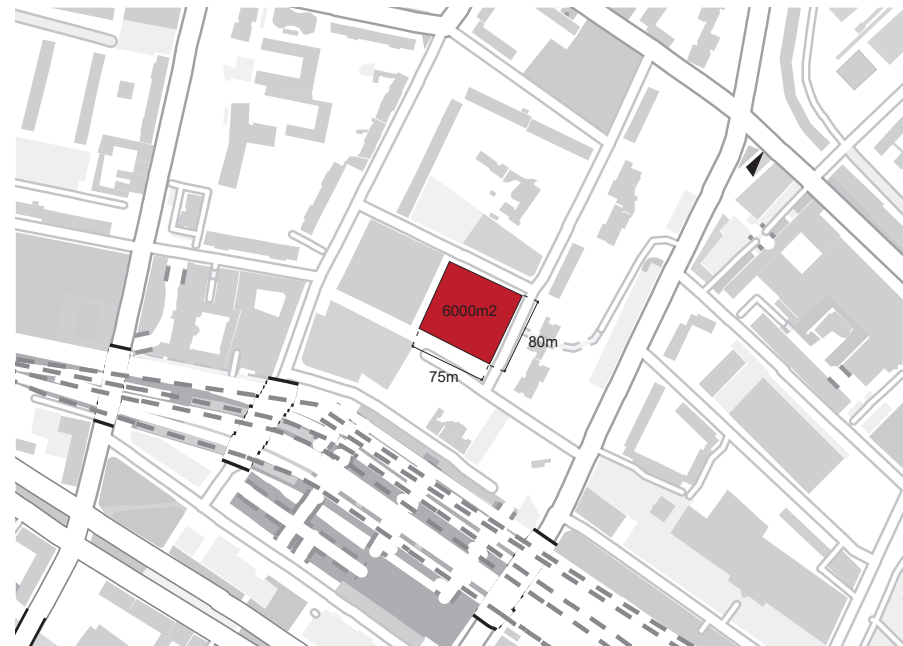
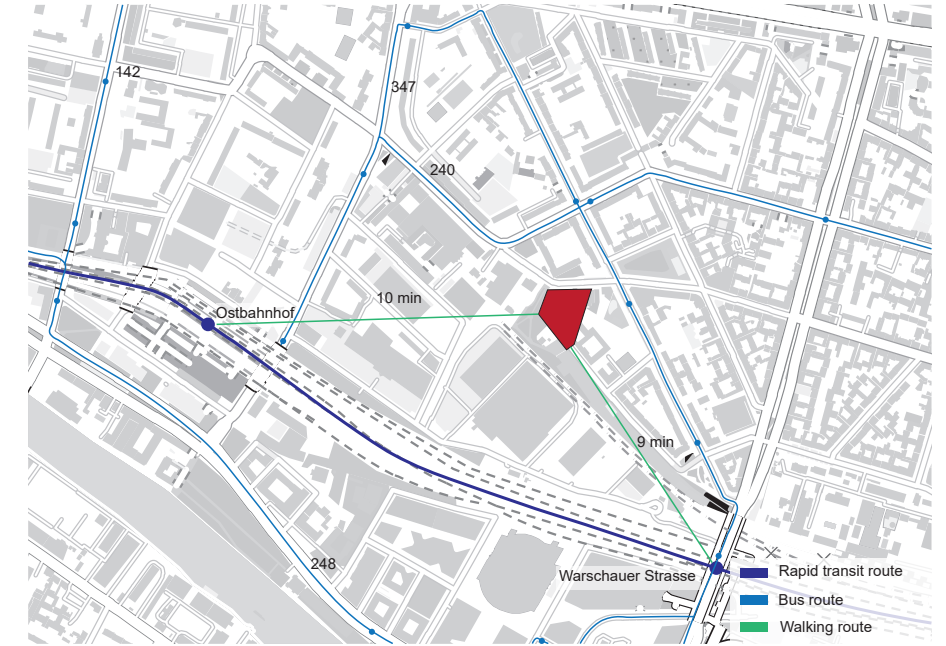
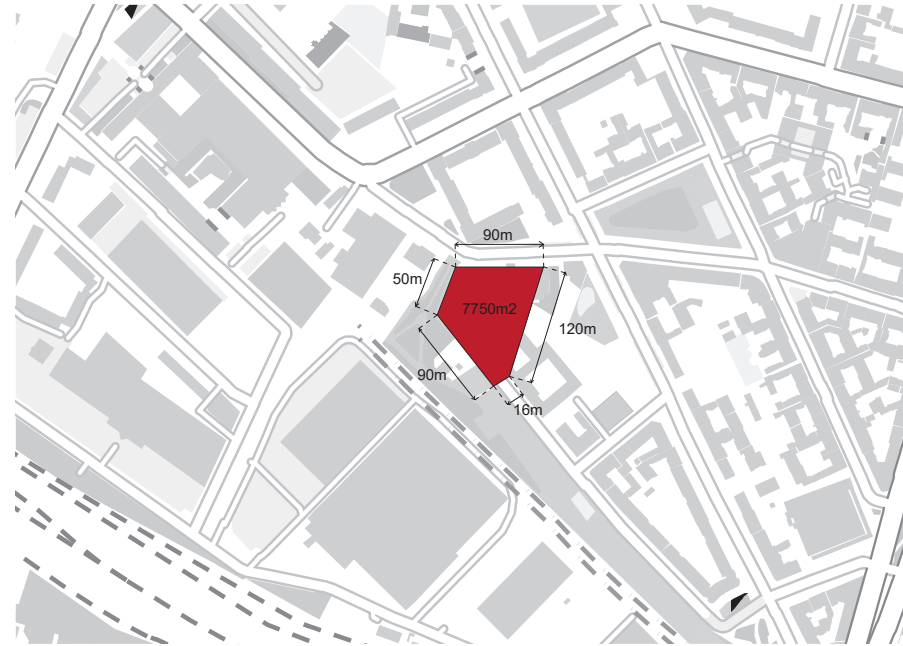
Assignment 3 - Psychogeography Map



Week 5

Product: Compiling the finding of the study trip and choosing three sites that can host the public condenser based on a set of requirements.

Description: The excursion in Berlin offered the opportunity of exploring the design area and understand the different groups inhabiting the specific zone, their backgrounds, ideologies, needs, and beliefs. Understanding the community present in the site-specific area can offer insight into the needed program to create a public condenser. Although the site inhabits completely different groups of people with diverging ideologies, the present situation shows the coexistence and interaction between them. While in normal conditions, various groups are segregated into distinct areas or neighbourhoods, the contrary is true in the case of Berlin and Friedrichshain in particular. Visiting the neighbourhood, you can find within the same area, or sometimes even in the same building block, families living in gentrified buildings, elderly living in social housing or buildings part of the old Berlin, artists from the underground artistic Berlin stage, and squatters or left-wing activists, all of them leaving in harmony and tolerating each other. Interviewing the inhabitants shows striking similarities regardless of the social group they are part of, the age groups, or case-specific criteria. Some general remarks are that the inhabitants love the proximity to the centre area and public transport, the diversity of the neighbourhood, and the presence of green spaces, with the desire to incorporate more green space and enhance the coexistence in the neighbourhood without the intervention of exterior forces.



Findings

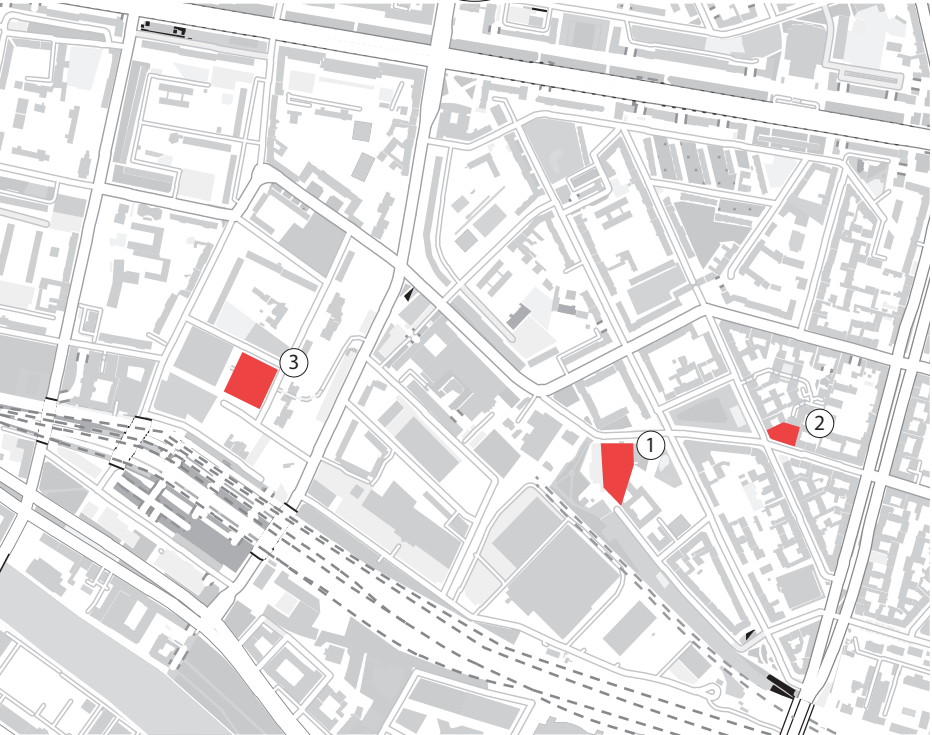
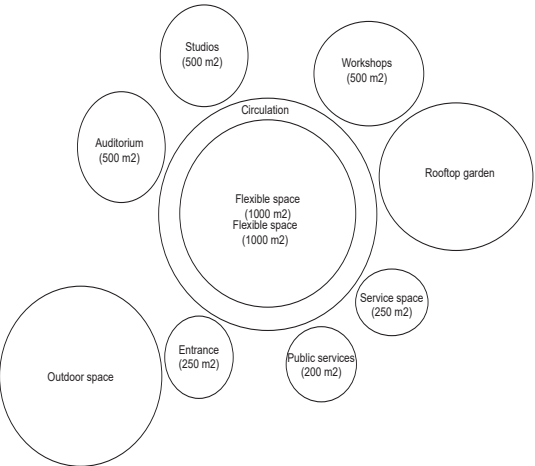
The excursion in Berlin offered the opportunity of exploring the design area and understand the different groups inhabiting the specific zone, their backgrounds, ideologies, needs, and beliefs. Understanding the community present in the site-specific area can offer insight into the needed program to create a public condenser. Although the site inhabits completely different groups of people with diverging ideologies, the present situation shows the coexistence and interaction between them. While in normal conditions, various groups are segregated into distinct areas or neighborhoods, the contrary is true in the case of Berlin and Friedrichshain in particular. Visiting the neighborhood, you can find within the same area, or sometimes even in the same building block, families living in gentrified buildings, elderly living in social housing or buildings part of the old Berlin, artists from the underground artistic Berlin stage, and squatters or left-wing activists, all of them leaving in harmony and tolerating each other. Interviewing the inhabitants shows striking similarities regardless of the social group they are part of, the age groups, or case-specific criteria. Some general remarks are that the inhabitants love the proximity to the center area and public transport, the diversity of the neighborhood, and the presence of green spaces, with the desire to incorporate more green space and enhance the coexistence in the neighborhood without the intervention of exterior forces.

Problem statement

How might we create a public condenser that becomes the framework in order to allow the different groups present in the neighborhood to come together and shape the space without interventions from a power base institution?

Concept

The task of creating a public condenser is to create a space that can bring together as many groups present in the neighborhood and allow freedom for these groups to shape the spaces on their own. To do so, the main program specific to the building should be a flexible space that can be adapted for different uses in order to cater to the diverse needs of the community. These needs can range from indoor markets, sports activities catered for kids or adults, live music performances, and art displays to more general open space areas for gathering.



Site Specifics

1. Wriezener Bahnhof

 - Converging area of all 3 neighborhoods
 - Quiet area during the day (family oriented)/ lively during the night (young people oriented)
 - Connection between the past, industrial era, and present through an architectural language
 - Proximity to green space and potential for expanding it by incorporating it into the design through the creation of additional park areas or terraces and rooftops.
 - Proximity to public transport, which will allow an influx of visitors
2. Weberwiese

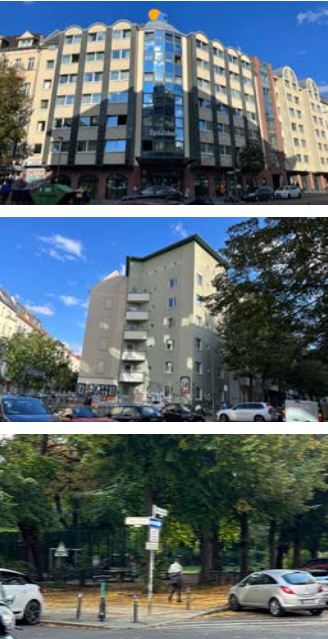
 - Converting an existing structure, increasing the circularity of the project, and saving materials
 - Centre location in the Weberwiese neighborhood allows for the incorporation of the local character into the design. Typical Berlin building blocks dimensions
 - Proximity to green space and potential of integrating it in the design by creating a green façade to create a visual connection
 - High pedestrian traffic which can be taken advance by creating an open façade on the ground floor in order to invite inside the people passing
3. Andreasviertle

 - Family-oriented neighborhood, focusing on creating an inclusive community space for families and kids
 - Modernist-style buildings, large open spaces, and greenery
 - Presence of a weekly market
 - Proximity to the Ostbahnhof station

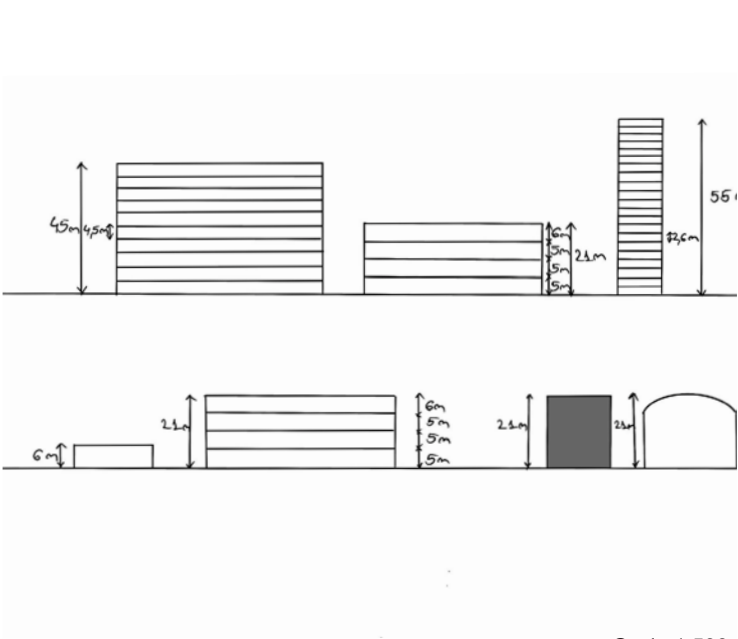
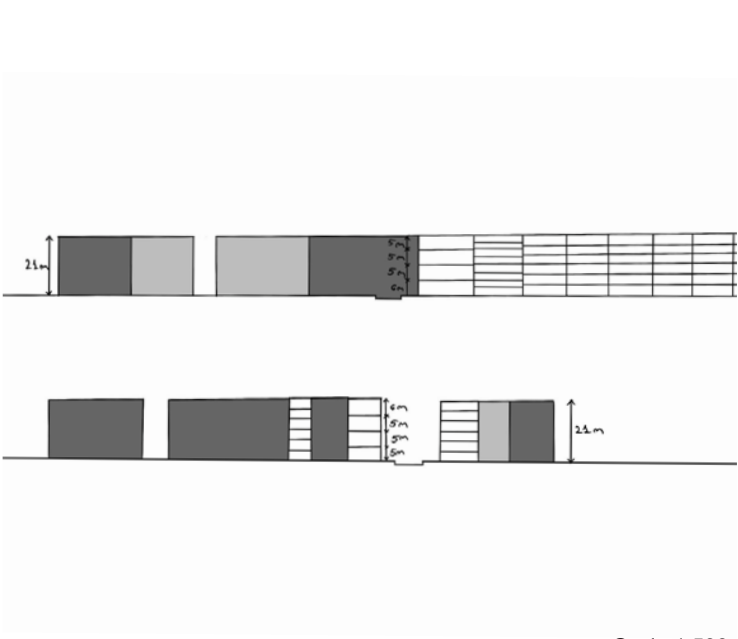
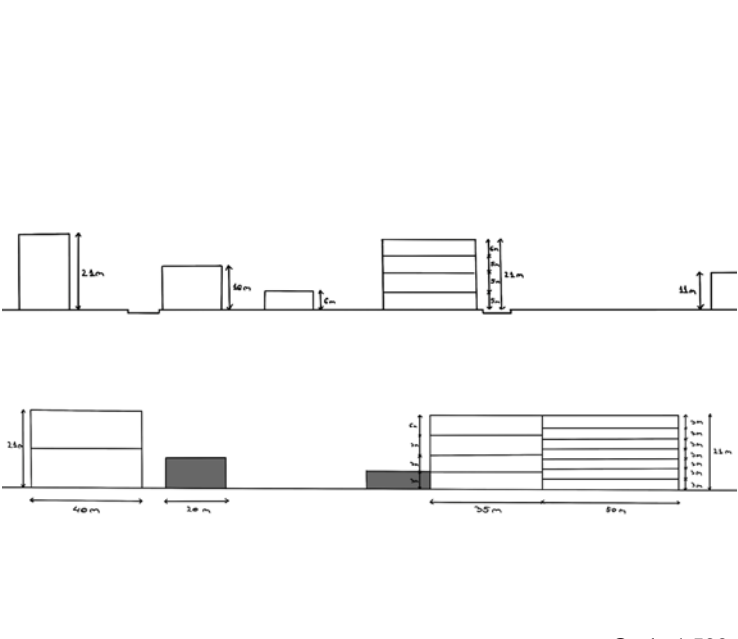
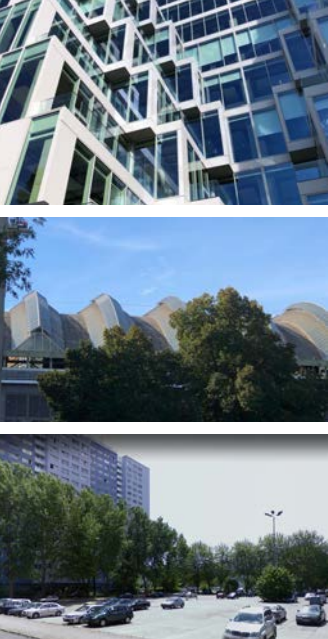
Site 1



Site 2



Site 3



Week 6

Product: Recreate the psych-geography map in order to shift the focus of the street debate and the illustrations retrieved from the neighbourhood.

Description: the public building represents the climax of the social discussion. While all the architecture is a direct translation of the society and its beliefs, the public buildings play an even more important role being able to play a role of the middle ground for social interaction from different social groups. This is also true when it comes to Berlin and as illustrated in the map. The various social groups observed in the analysed area show almost no interaction, with each group discussing their ideology and social problems internally. This leads to polarization in the local society. By becoming exposed to a different ideology (looking at the prism from a different direction), people can understand other points of view and start a conversation that brings the problem closer to a solution. Such a place is already present in Berlin (and in every city), though to a different degree, namely the presence of street statements such as protests or art elements (posters, stickers of graffiti) that tries to spark interest and the discussion of the people passing by.

Assignment 4 - Psychogeography Map

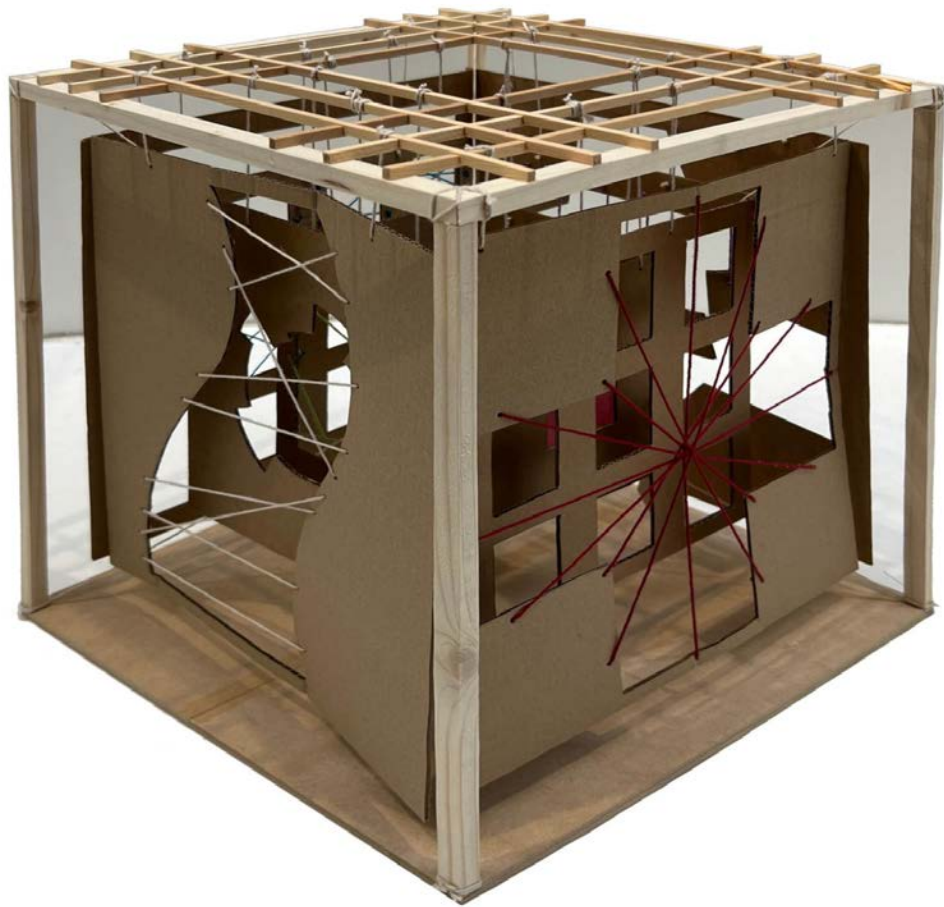


Week 7

Product: The creation of a physical model by assembling day-to-day items in order to illustrate the conceptual interpretation of the public condenser

Description: Each person has a different view on the same problem which is represented by the black box in the middle and this view is influenced by the societal and community influence and by its own individual beliefs, which all form the person's ideology. These influences are represented by the 3 concentric layers of the model which influence the view of the observer. The layers represent the intake of the societal, community and individual's beliefs regarding the four major ideologies present in the neighbourhood (capitalism, socialism, ecologism and anarchism).

Assignment 4 - Assemblage

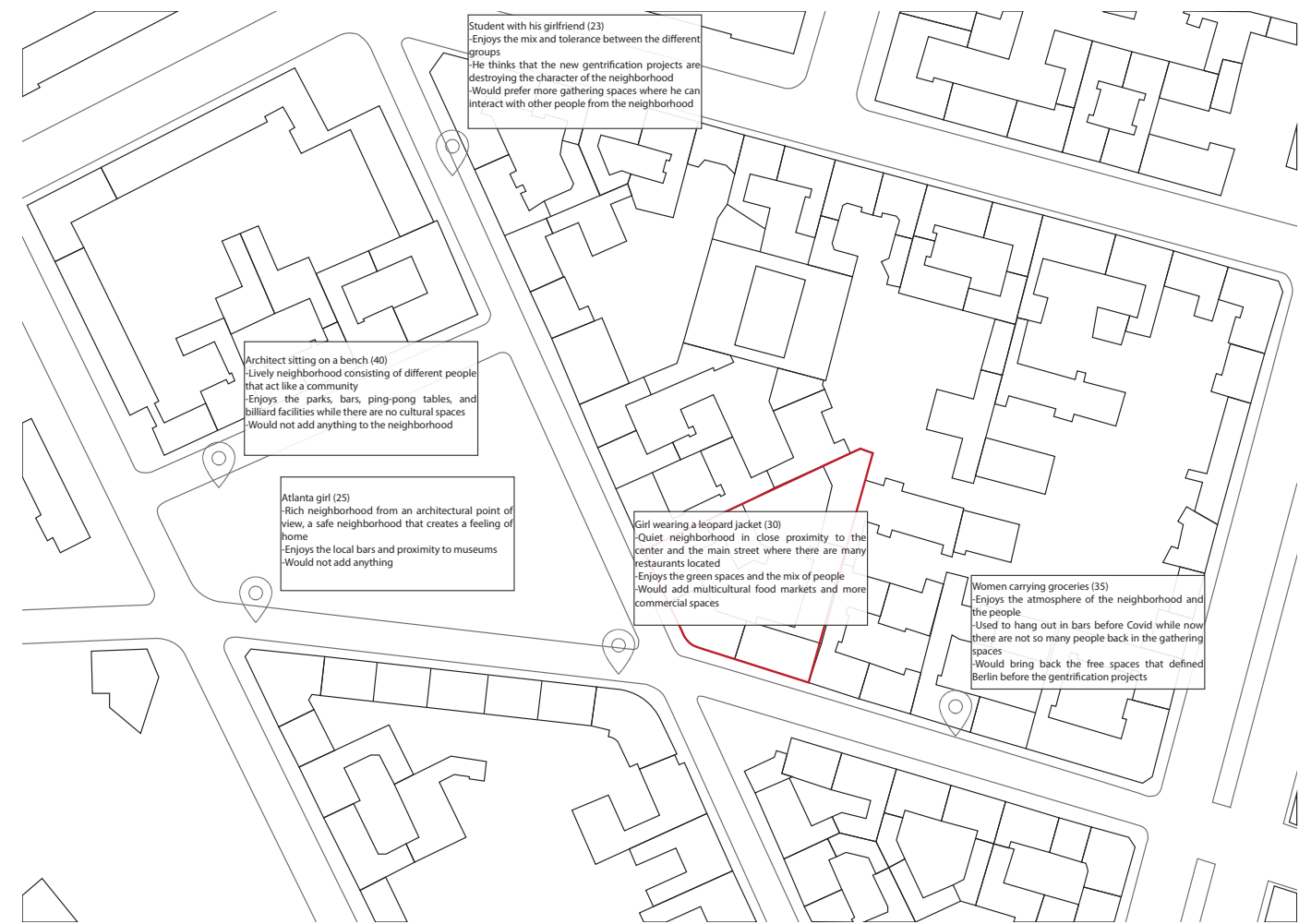
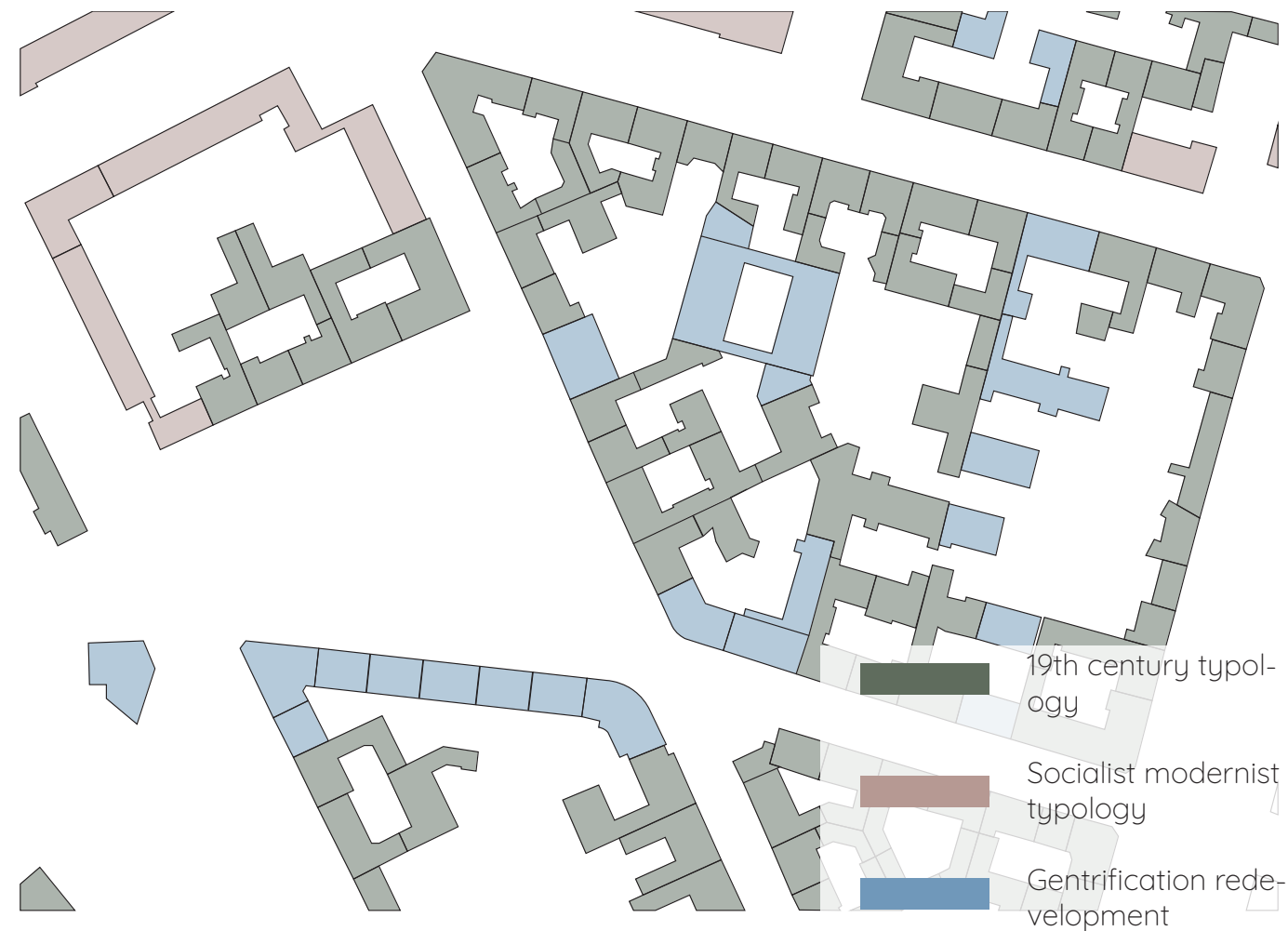


Week 8

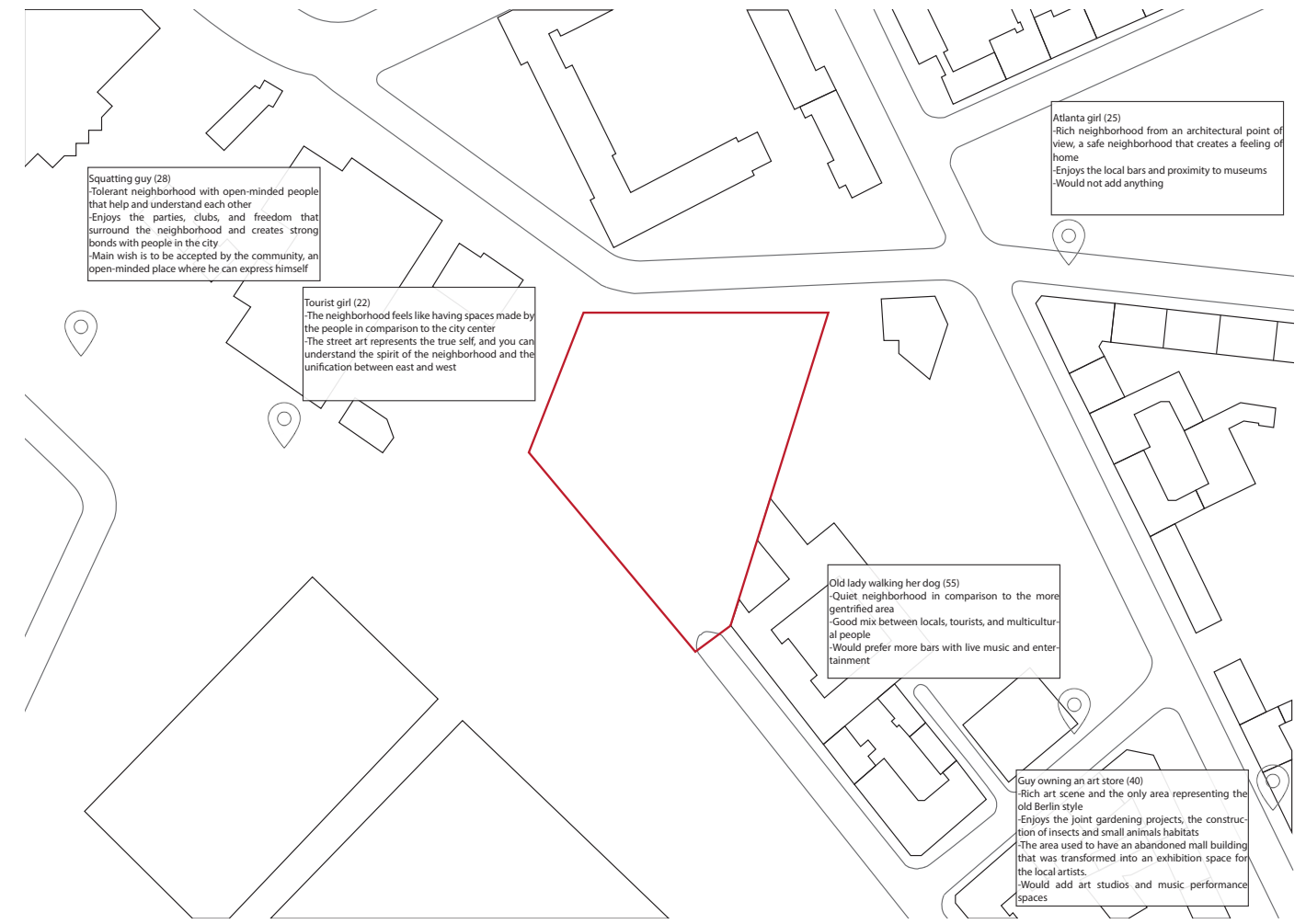
Product: Analysing the three sites from different points of view in order to understand the dynamic of each area

Description: This level of interaction is different for every one of the 3 sites and in order to understand this dynamic of the three sites the maps analysed them from 4 different points of view. The typology of the buildings and the open spaces which plays an important role in the interaction of people, then from the point of view of the functions already present on the location and lastly the people themselves, their ideologies and their beliefs around the neighbourhood and its public space. Starting with the first site, the one located next to the Comeniusplatz park. The analysis showed that this neighbourhood is more kiez oriented, being one of the last parts of Friedrichshain resembling the typical berlin building block, with interior semi-public garden that act as small, enclosed communities. It's quite a gentrified area, with many new young workers and new families. With the people enjoying the intimate community, the functions around such as many shops, cafes, and culture sites like a theatre right next to the chosen site. In addition, this small platza is already a busy place which can provide a perfect location for a public.

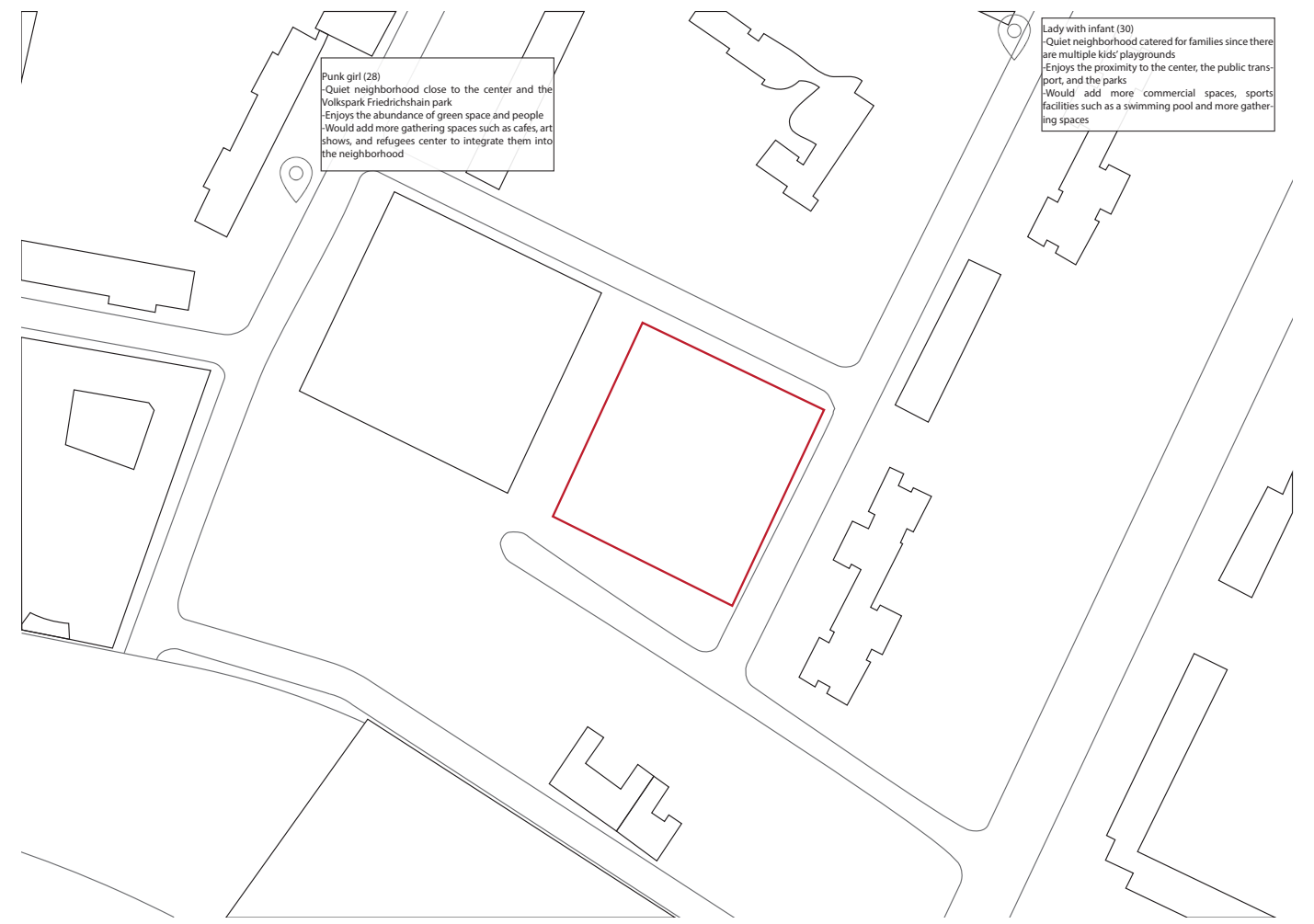
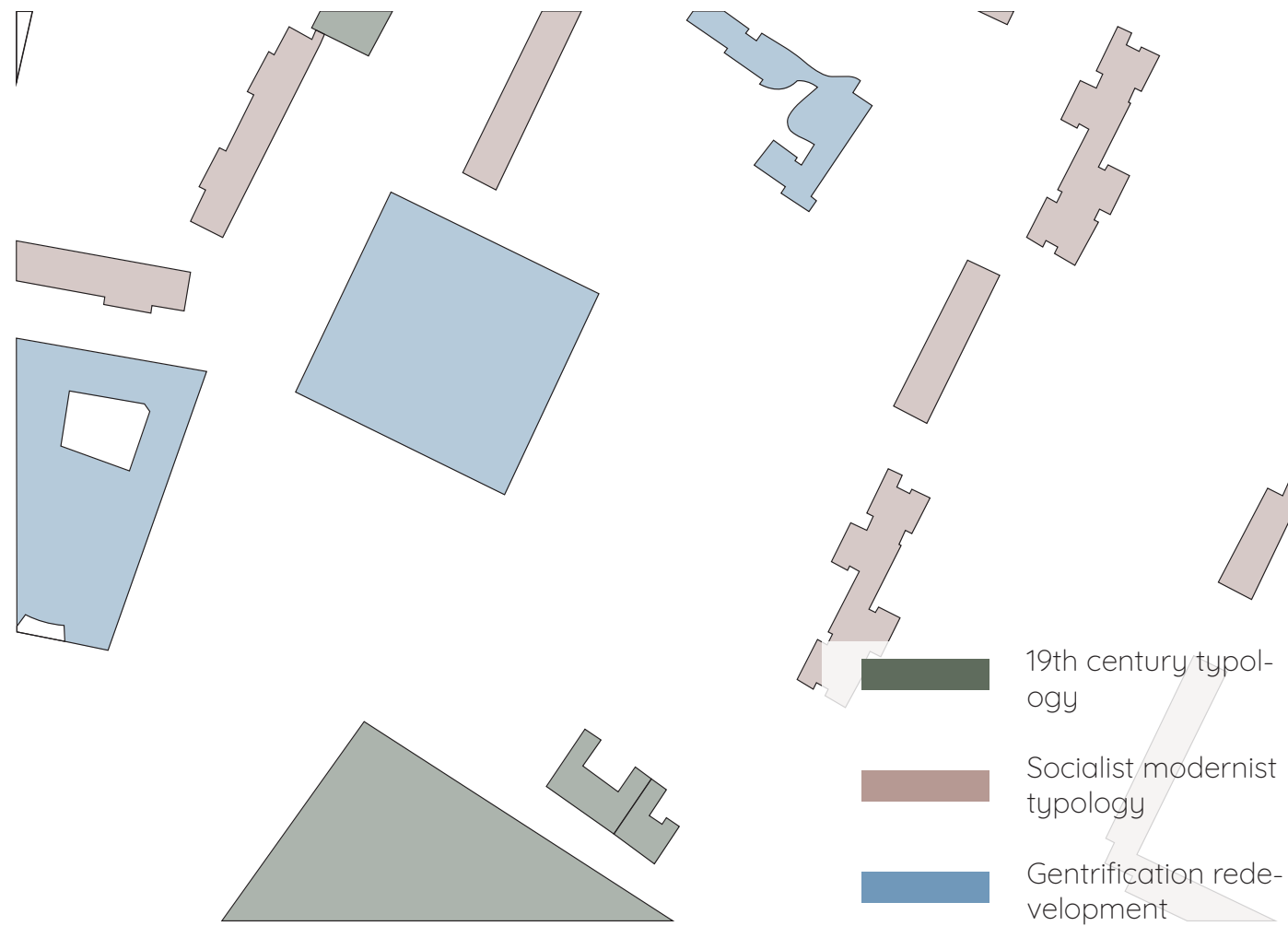
The second site is more of an atypical location, not only due to the close proximity to Berghain, a world renounce club that bring many tourists around the location. But also due to the fragmentation of the site. Both from a physical point of view. Having many physical barriers, building typologies and land uses, being located next a semi-industrial area. But also, from a societal point of view. The presence of this park in the centre brings together people from many social groups and with many ideologies. There are newcomers living in the newly gentrified buildings, old socialists living in the modernist building blocks, anarchists, and squatters which claims the area next to Berghain as their home and many more. And this translates in the social discourse of this peoples.



Site Analysis - Site 2



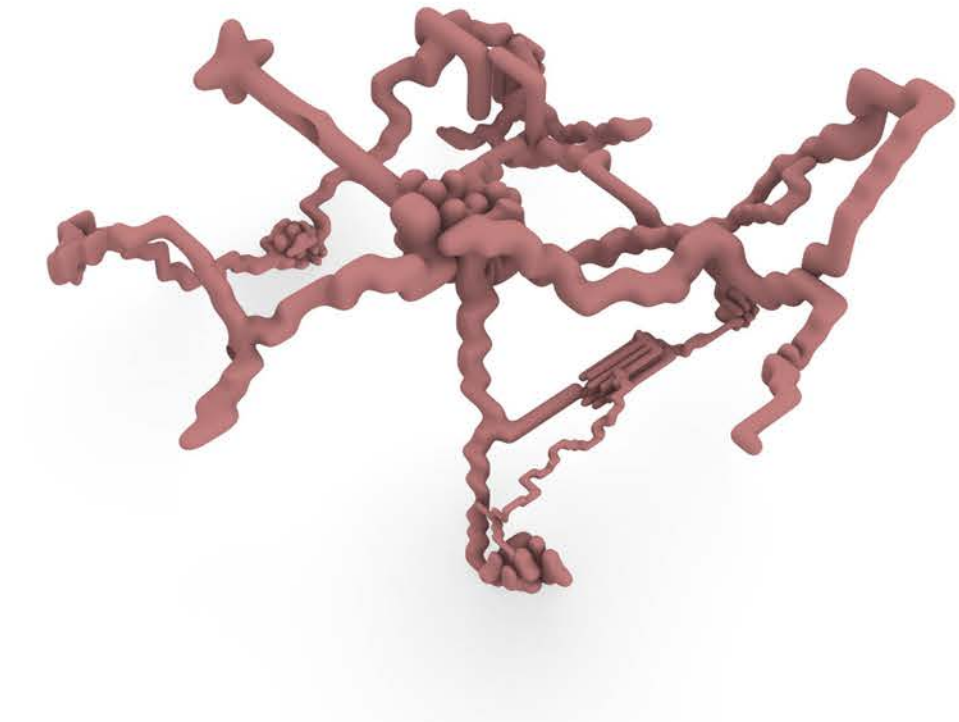
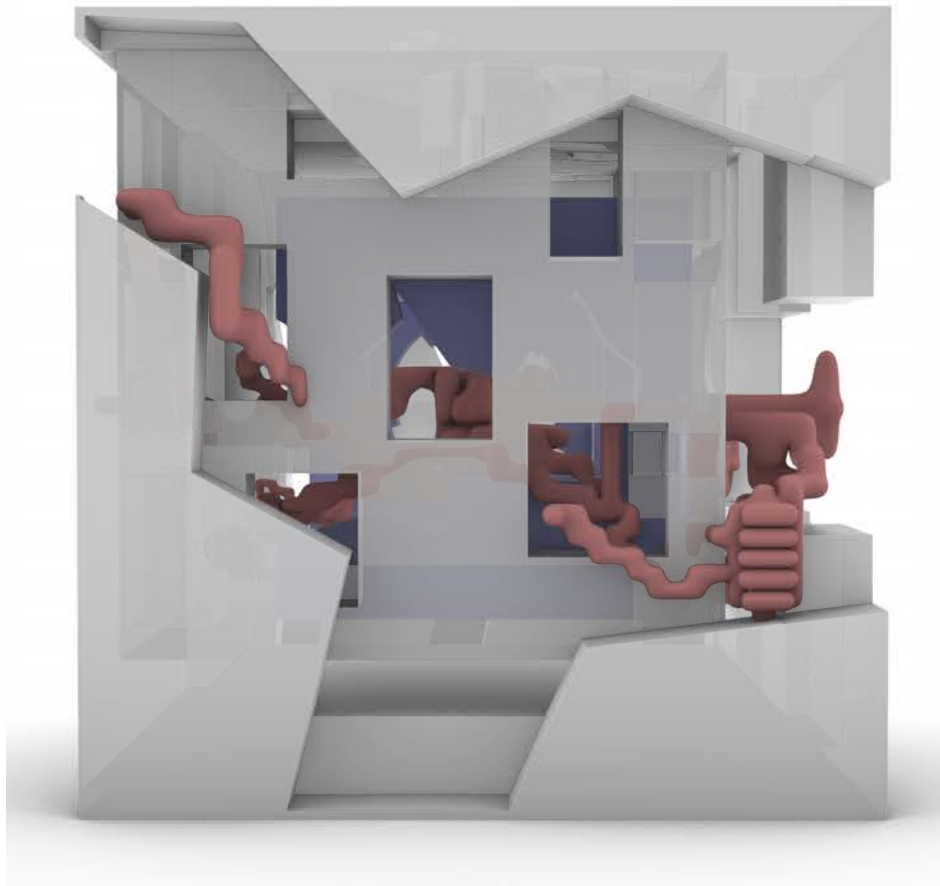
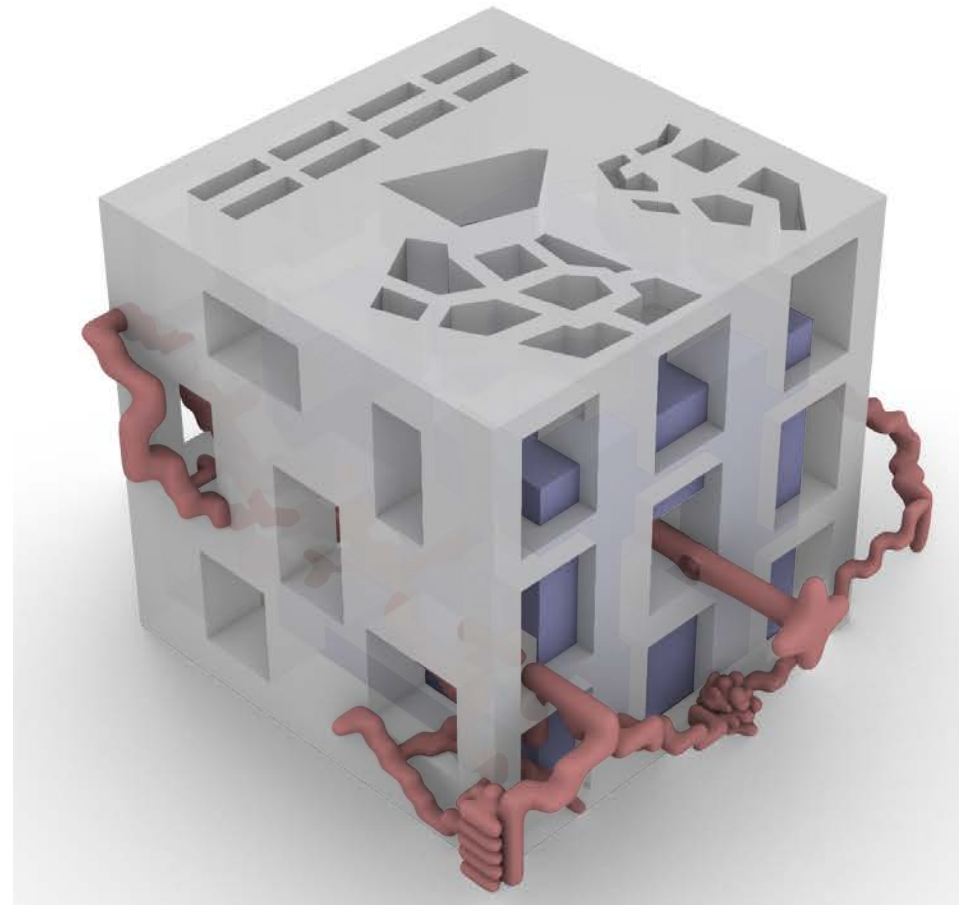
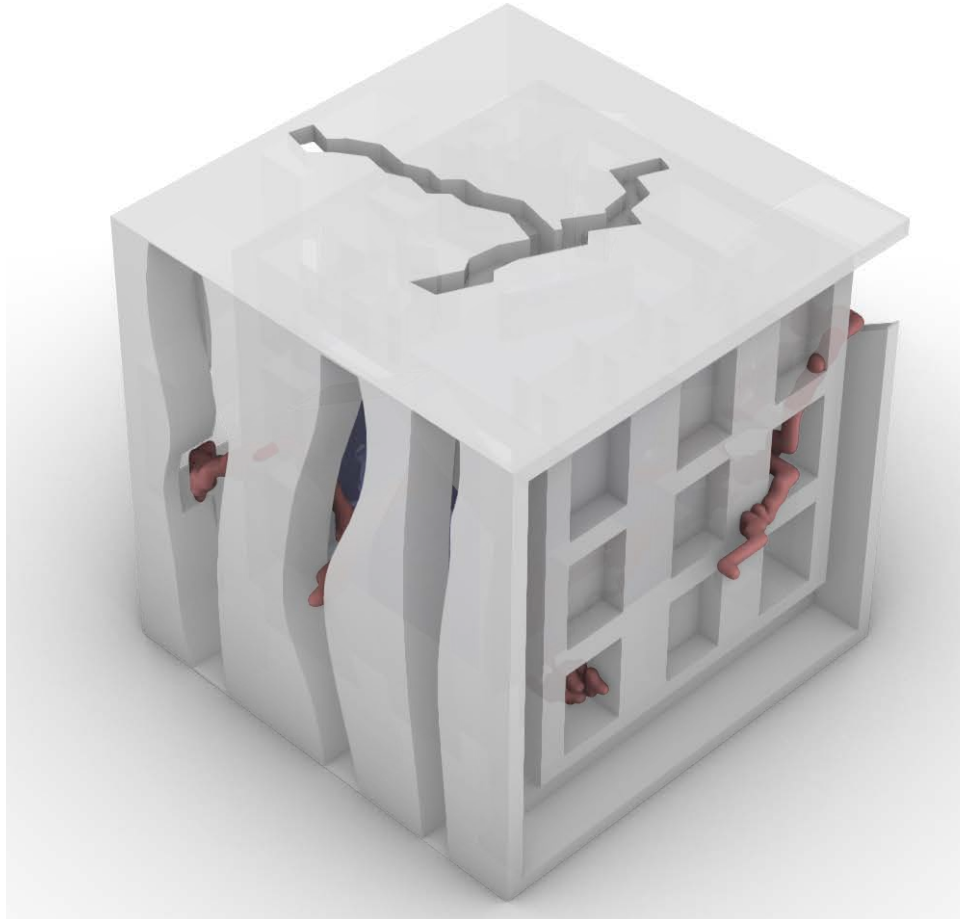
Site Analysis - Site 3

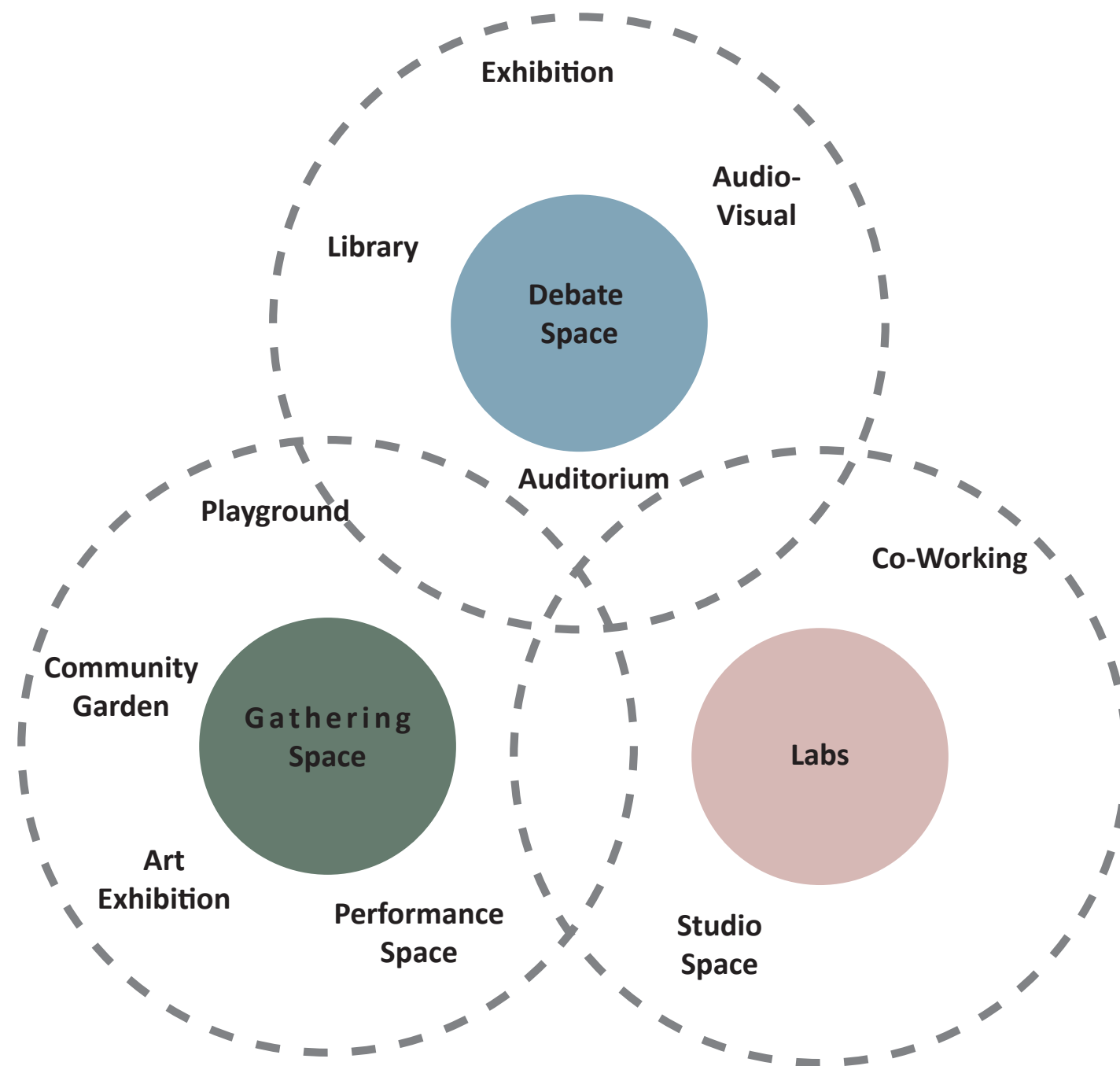
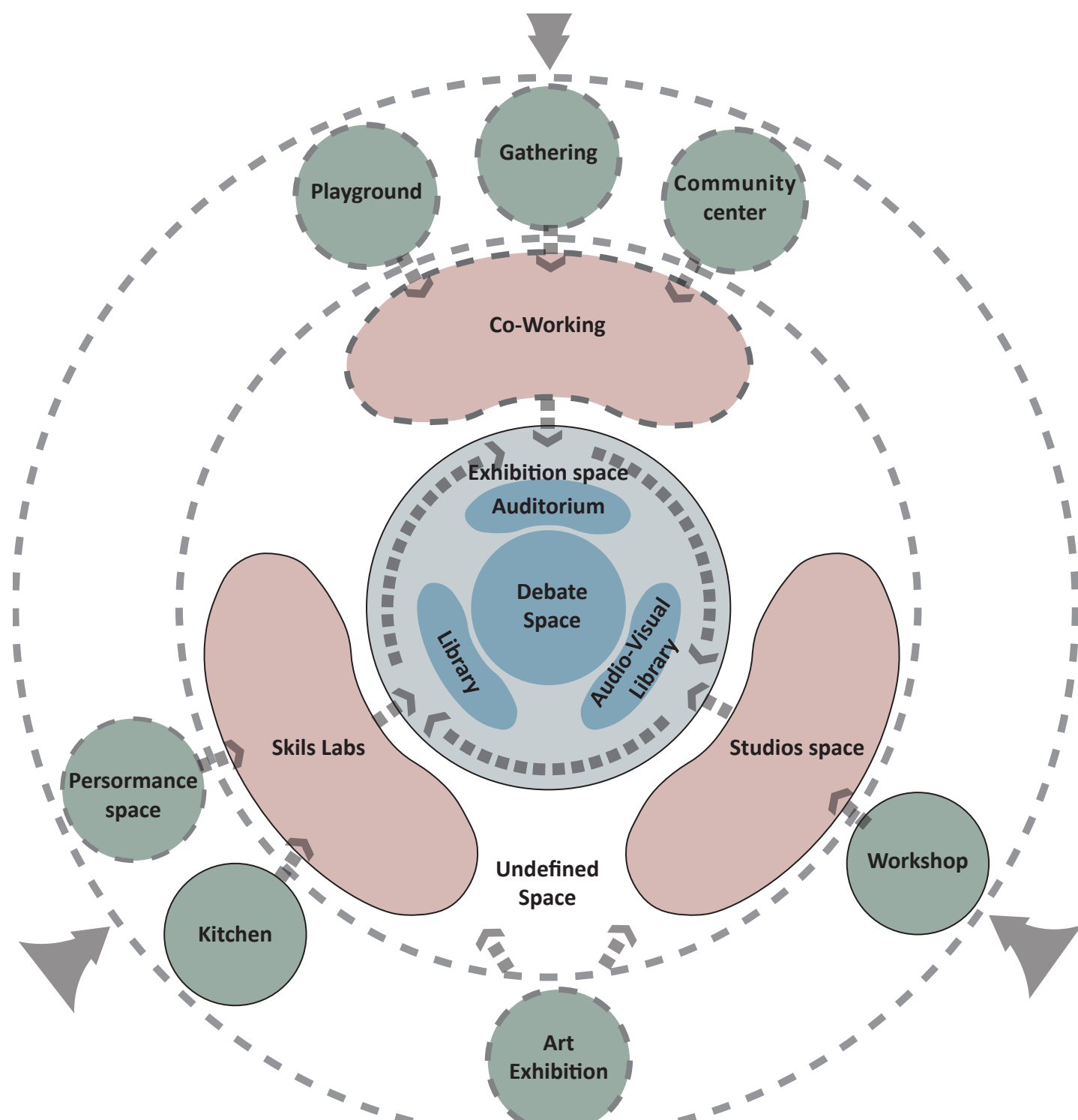


Week 9

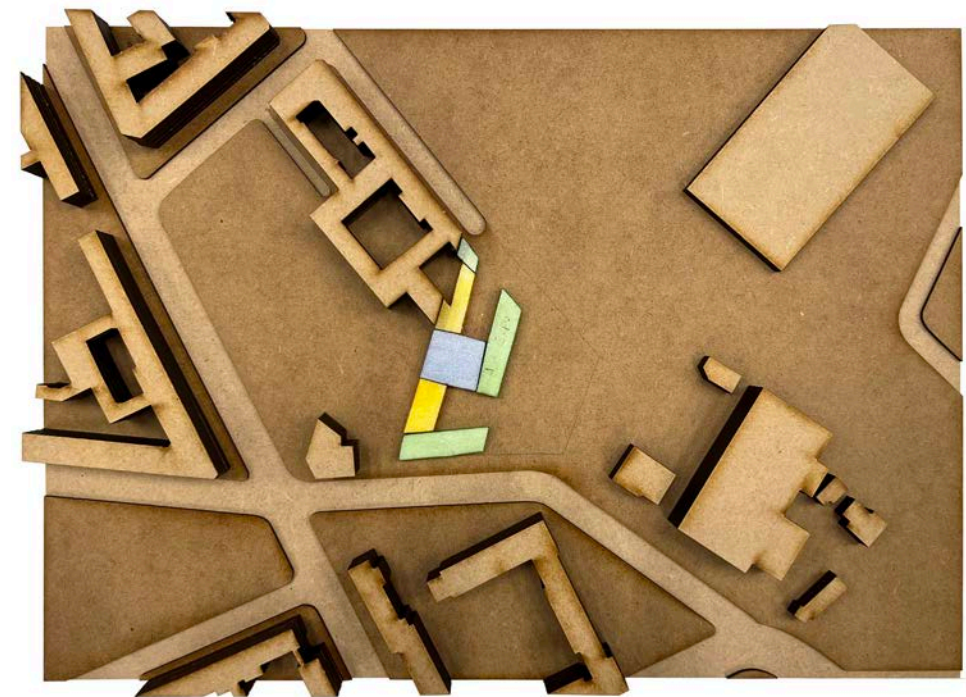
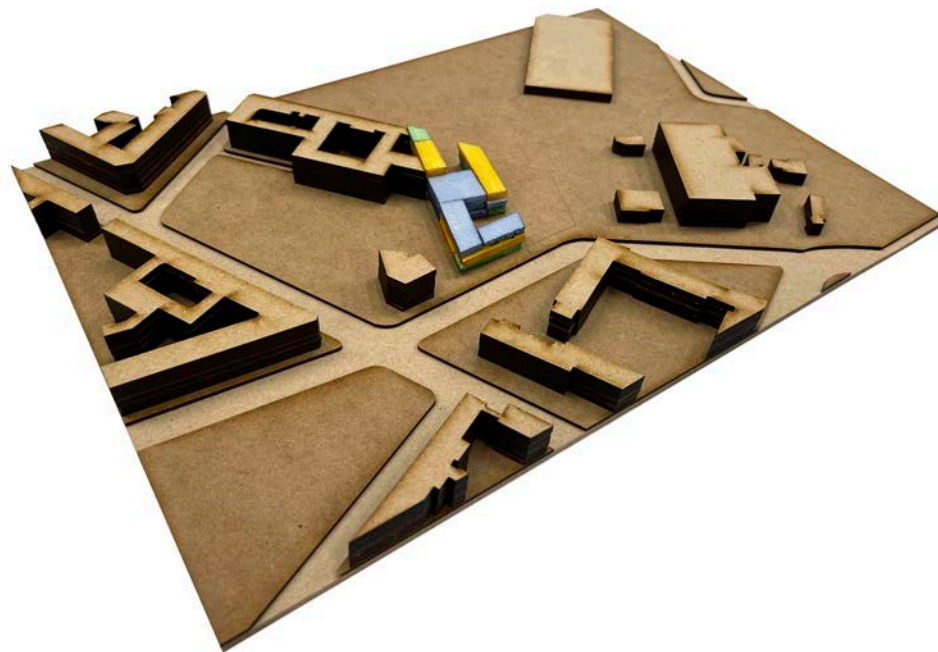
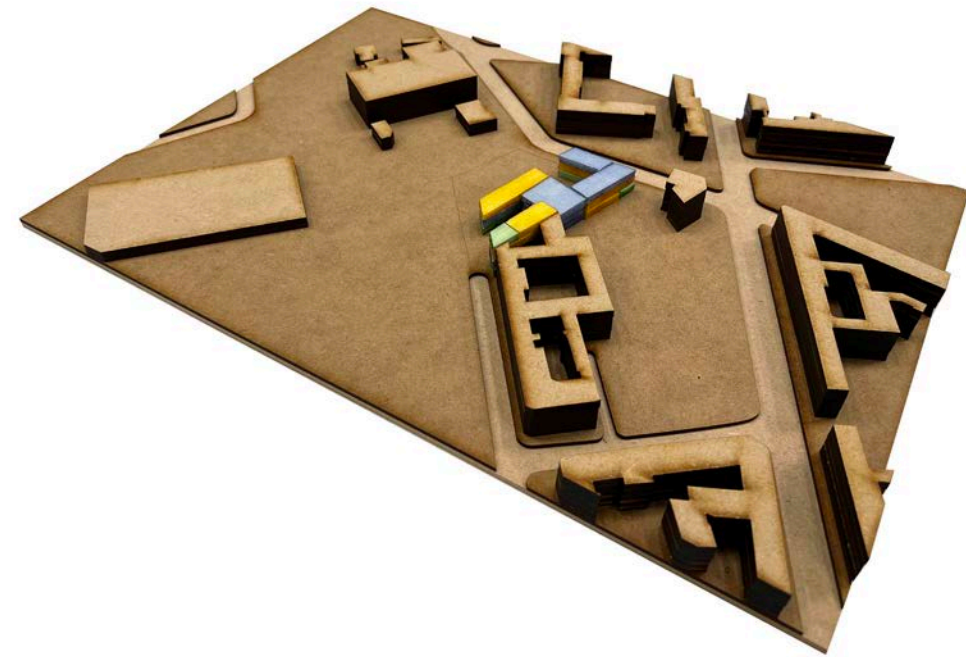
Product: The translation of the physical model into a digital model that express the implementation of the concept on the site which is then translated into the program strategy. The creation of three physical site models allows the testing of the program on each particular site in order to understand both the effect of the surroundings over the plot and vice-versa.

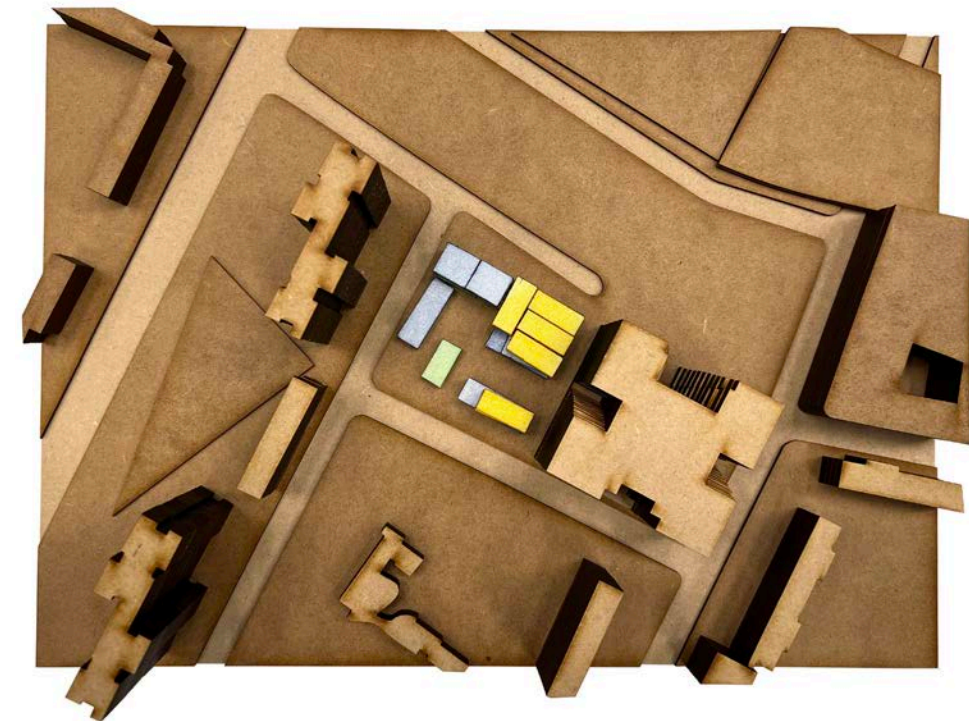
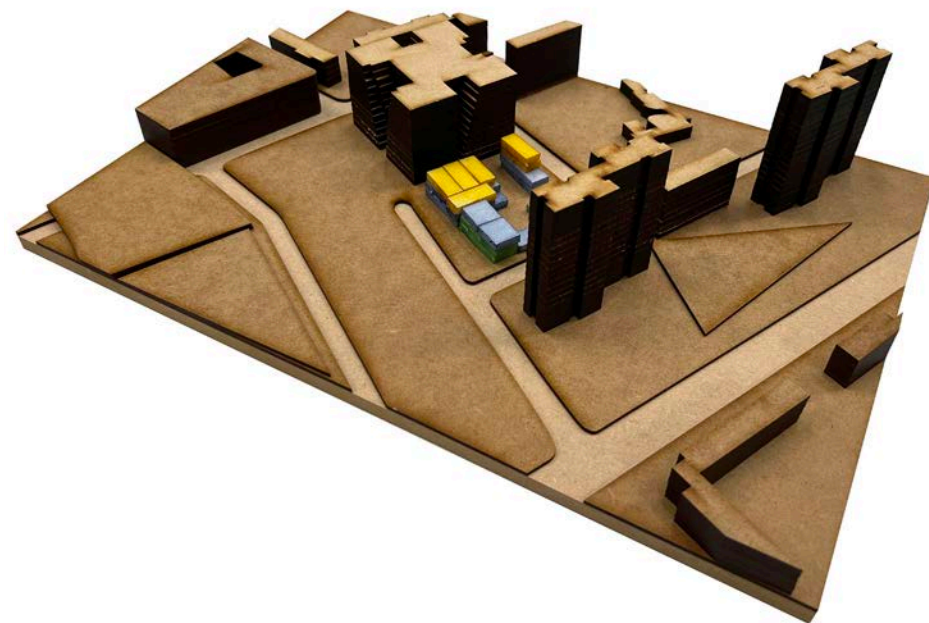
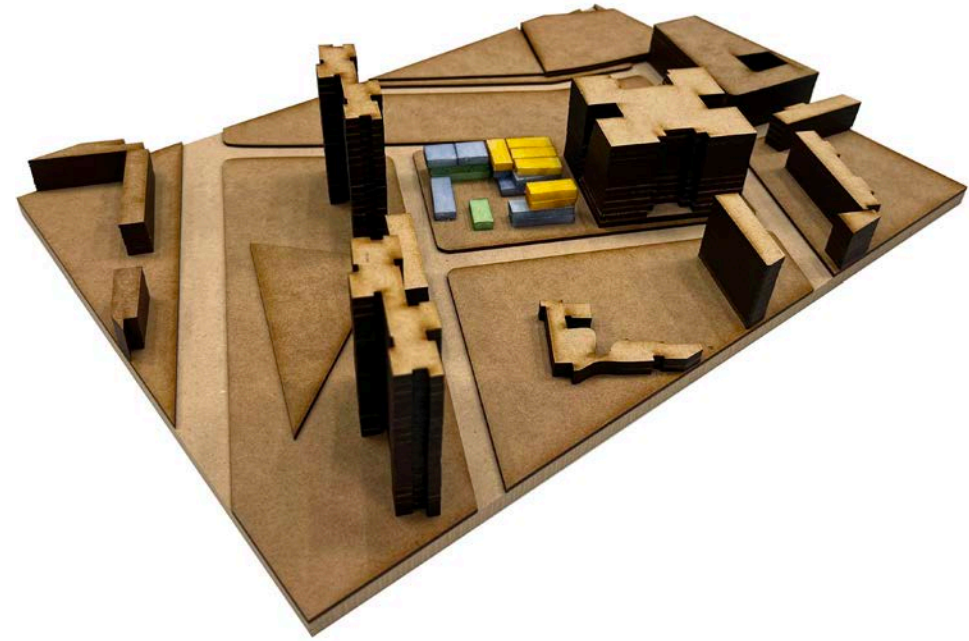
Description: As showed in the digital model. This influences, these layers do not overlap exactly leaving room for interaction which should be amplified by the condenser, not only in the centre where they all meet but also in the space between the cubes, taking a different form of interaction. And such, the public condenser should act as a middle ground and contribute to the start of the conversation by amplifying the existing effect of the public space, where people can exchange their views and approach the local problems in a more constructive way. This translate into the program on three layers of interaction, which are knowledge, Working and leisure. Starting from the leisure level with functions that should attract the public in, which are functions that the people in there has expressed their wish for, such as performance spaces, art galleries, gathering spaces and so forth. Then they move in the 'working' area which tries to activate the community by having co-working spaces, or skill labs which focus on skills needed in the community. And finally, the centre points the knowledge part, with the debate space at the centre, which can take different shapes. And in order to activate this debate, there are different ways of information catered for different people types. Is the more typical auditorium with talks on certain topics, then the library, which can be a more traditional or modern one, and the exhibition space which target the people which are more visual and don't like to get involved in discussion that much.











Week 10

Product: The creation of collages that compiles the analysis of the three site and the creation of diagrams that explain the strategies for each individual site moving forward.

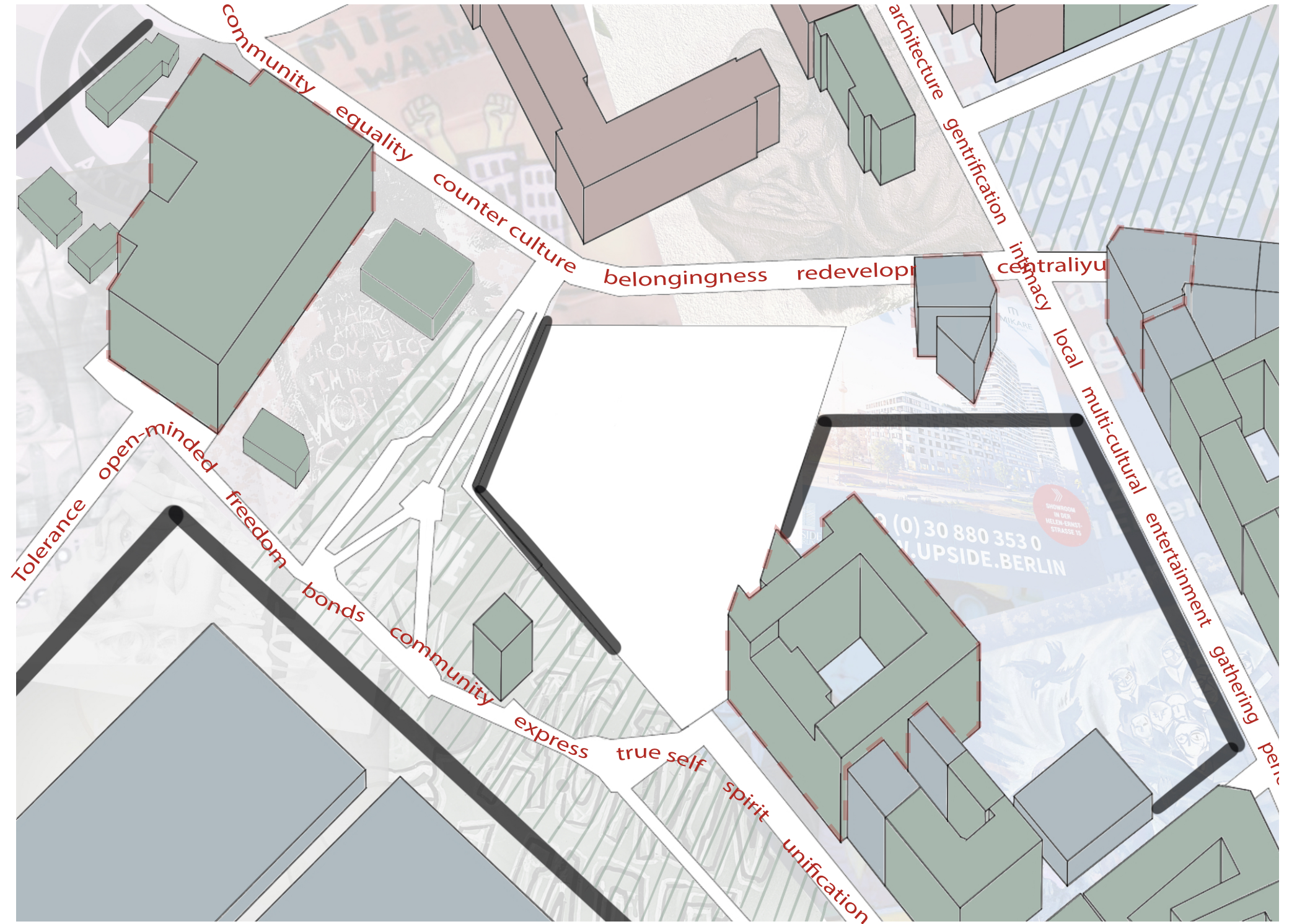
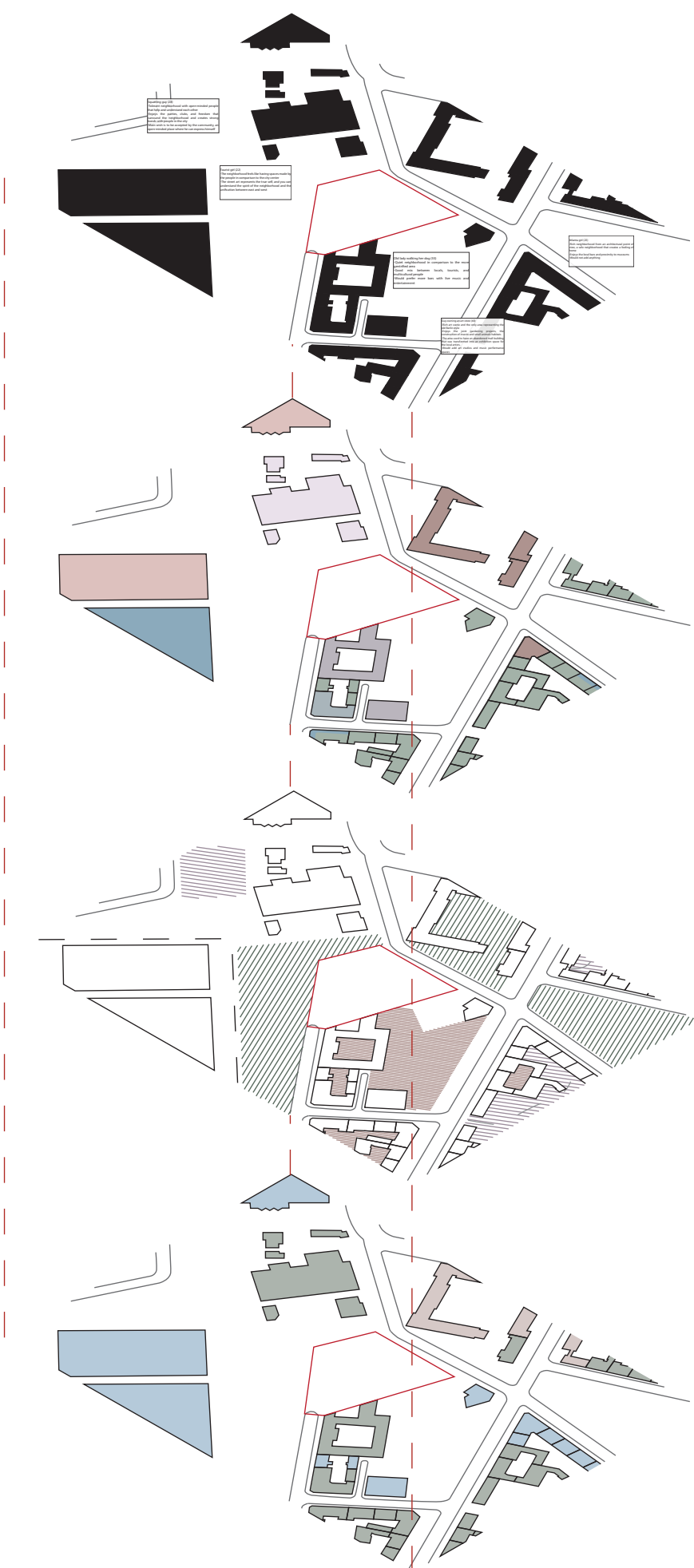
Description: Each individual strategy shows how to implement the prototype on the different sites. The first one is an already existing block that is partially abandoned and on the verge of being demolished. And this can be refurbished. The program would be catered to the local community which would take the shape of more modern library form, focusing on the education of kids and young workers and being more kiez oriented. In the first diagram the green buildings would stay as they are, already working well, while adding another building, the blue building which would connect the block and close of that space which right now is a fire wall façade. And in order to open up the courtyard the ground floor of the front building would be completely opened up and create a direct connection with the semi-public open space in the back, further connecting the entire block. The function would revolve around the interior courtyard which would be left to be developed as a community garden or free playground. And the exhibition space would be combined with the circulation so people passing by can catch a glimpse of the neighbourhood problems. While the debate space, would function more of a gathering space where people can discuss the problems in the community.










The second site would act more like a neighbourhood cultural centre, being located at the converging space of different types of neighbourhoods and having already a rich culture heritage. It would develop not only the building parts but also the area around by connecting the fragmented public spaces and uniting them, offering a park area which can interact directly with the functions around and be shared, with the surrounding clubs, the homeless shelter and the school being involved in the creation of this centre. The volumetric structure shows the overall position of the function,

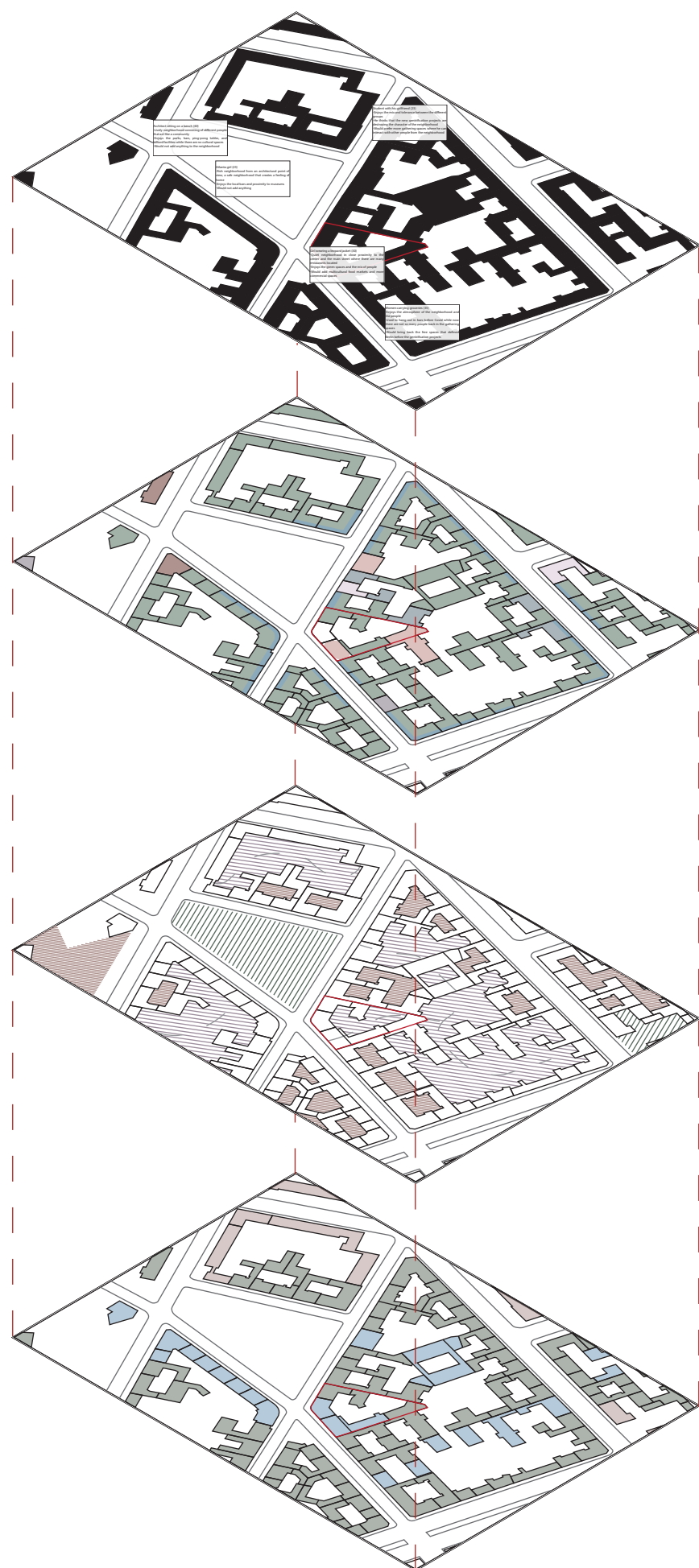
with the debate space at the centre which would take the shape of a forum while the functions around are strategically placed to attract visitors from different axis. These volumes can either be left separate, with undefined space in between which can be developed by the community, or can be connected, and in a ay align itself to the existing building typology and closing of the block. Or a hybrid solution which can be flexible enough.










The third site can act more as the catalyst for the creation of a community centre and feeling, being more skills or community focused, while bringing back some of the functions lost in the gentrification of the area, such as the open market or some commercial spaces. And also, the building can create a relation between the different buildings and open spaces in between by acting as a uniting element, connecting the small space in front of Ostbahnhof with the undefined green area in front of the modernist

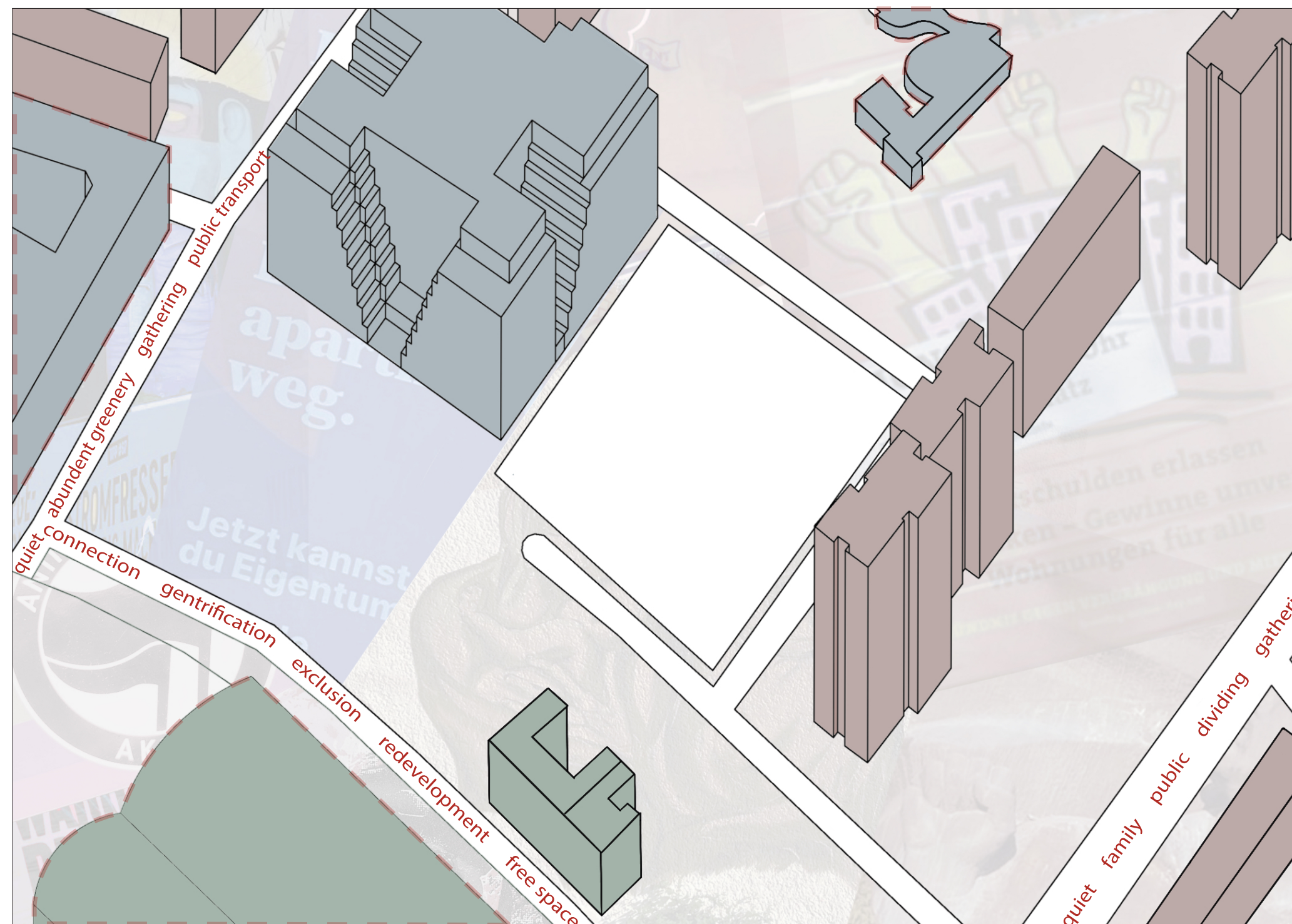
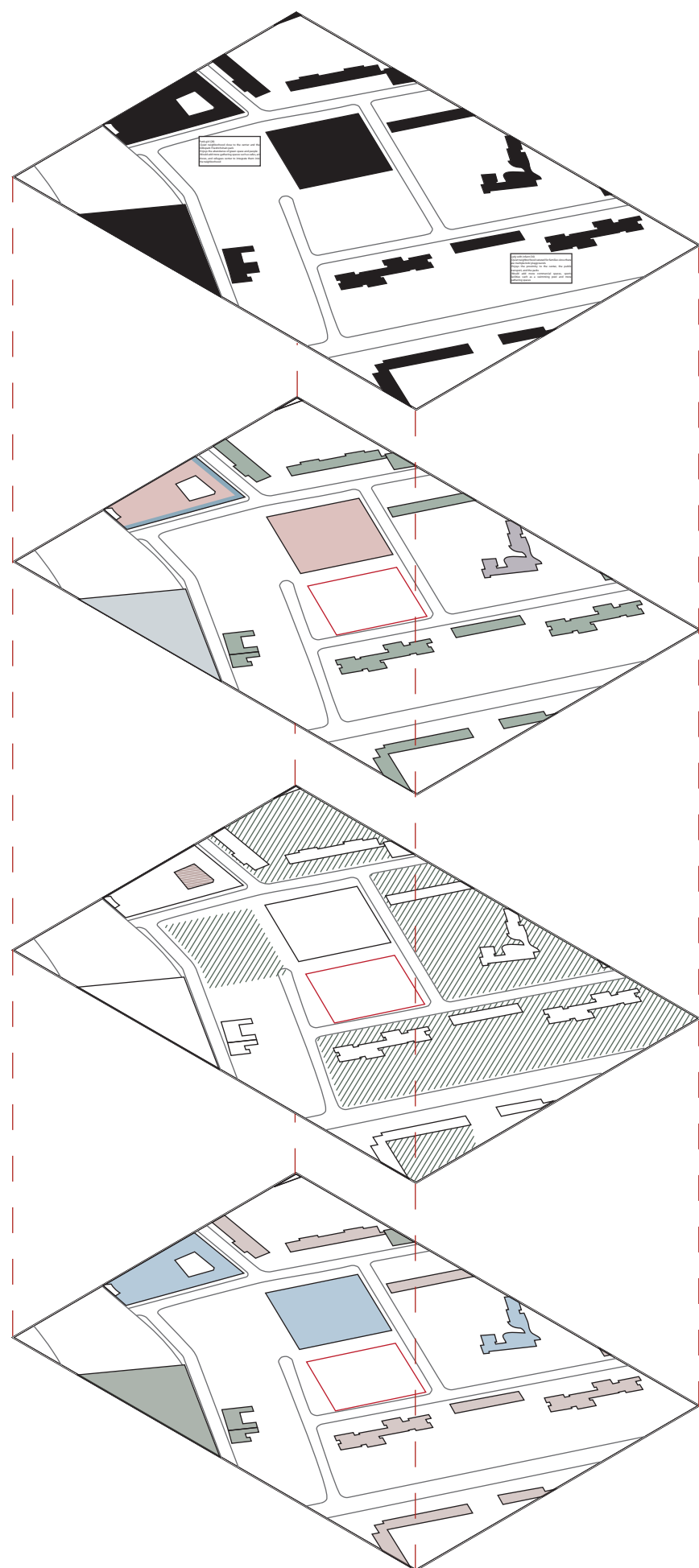
CRITERIA	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Location	● ●	● ● ●	●
Surrounding func-	● ●	● ● ●	●
Accesibility	● ● ●	● ●	●
Diversity of people	●	● ● ●	● ●
Proximity to green-	● ●	● ● ●	●
Prototype	●	● ● ●	● ●
Potential	●	● ●	● ● ●
Total	12	19	11












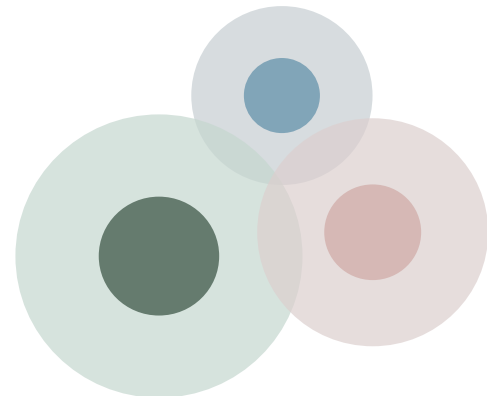
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  19th century typology |  Public space |  Physical barrier |
|  Socialist modernist typology |  Semi-Public Space |  Relevant functions |
|  Gentrified redevelopments |  Private Space |  Interviews keywords |



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  19th century typology |  Public space |  Interiour routes |
|  Socialist modernist typology |  Semi-Public Space |  Relevant functions |
|  Gentrified redevelopments |  Private Space |  Interviews keywords |



- | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|---------------------|
|  | 19th century typology |  | Public space |  | Interiour routes |
|  | Socialist modernist typology |  | Semi-Public Space |  | Relevant functions |
|  | Gentrified redevelopments |  | Private Space |  | Interviews keywords |

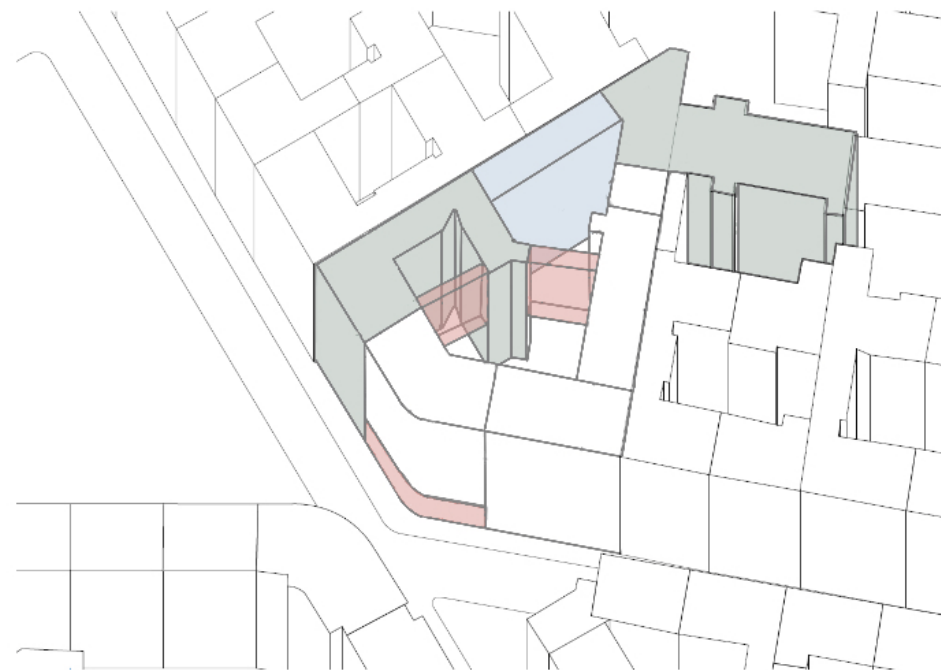


Program

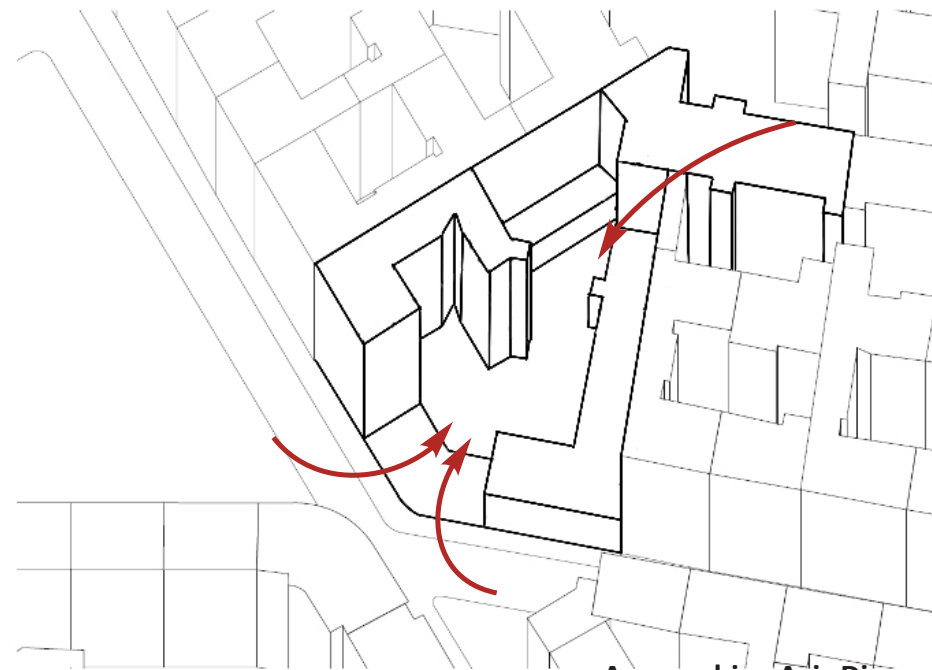
Debate space/Gathering space	500m2
Auditorium	200m2
Library -Reading Area	500m2
-Audio-Visual Lab	1000m2
Workshop	300m2
Exhibition space	500m2
Co-working space	1000m2

Undefined

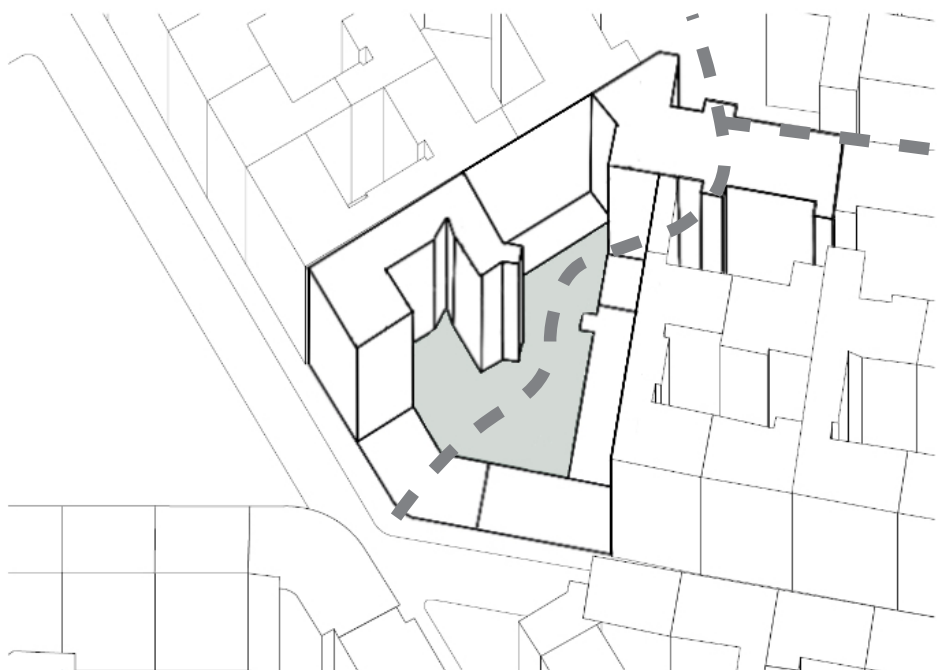
Exteriour Playground
Rooftop Garden
Community Garden
Animal Shelters



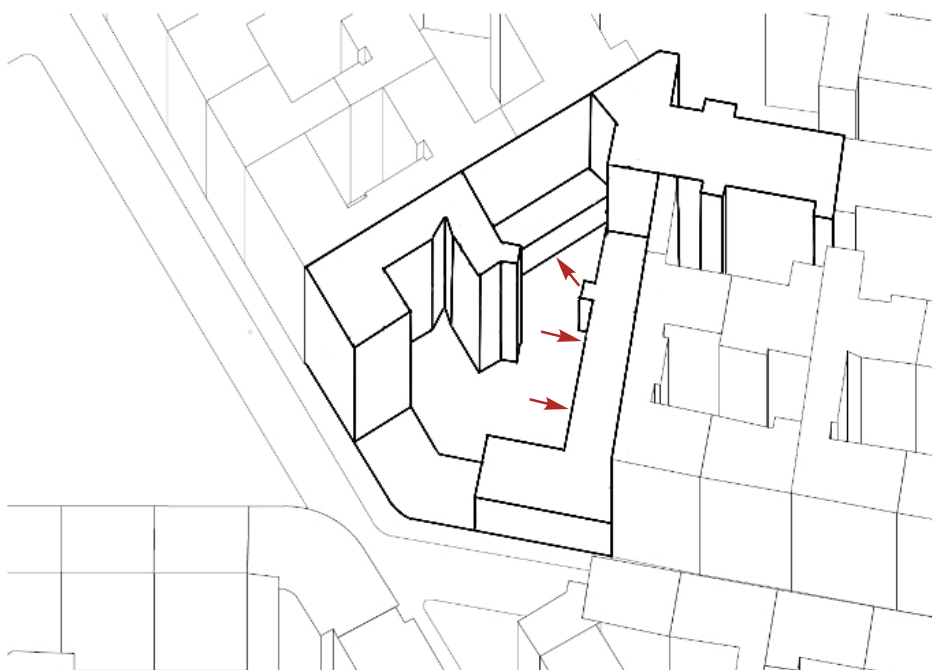
Overall Massing Diagram



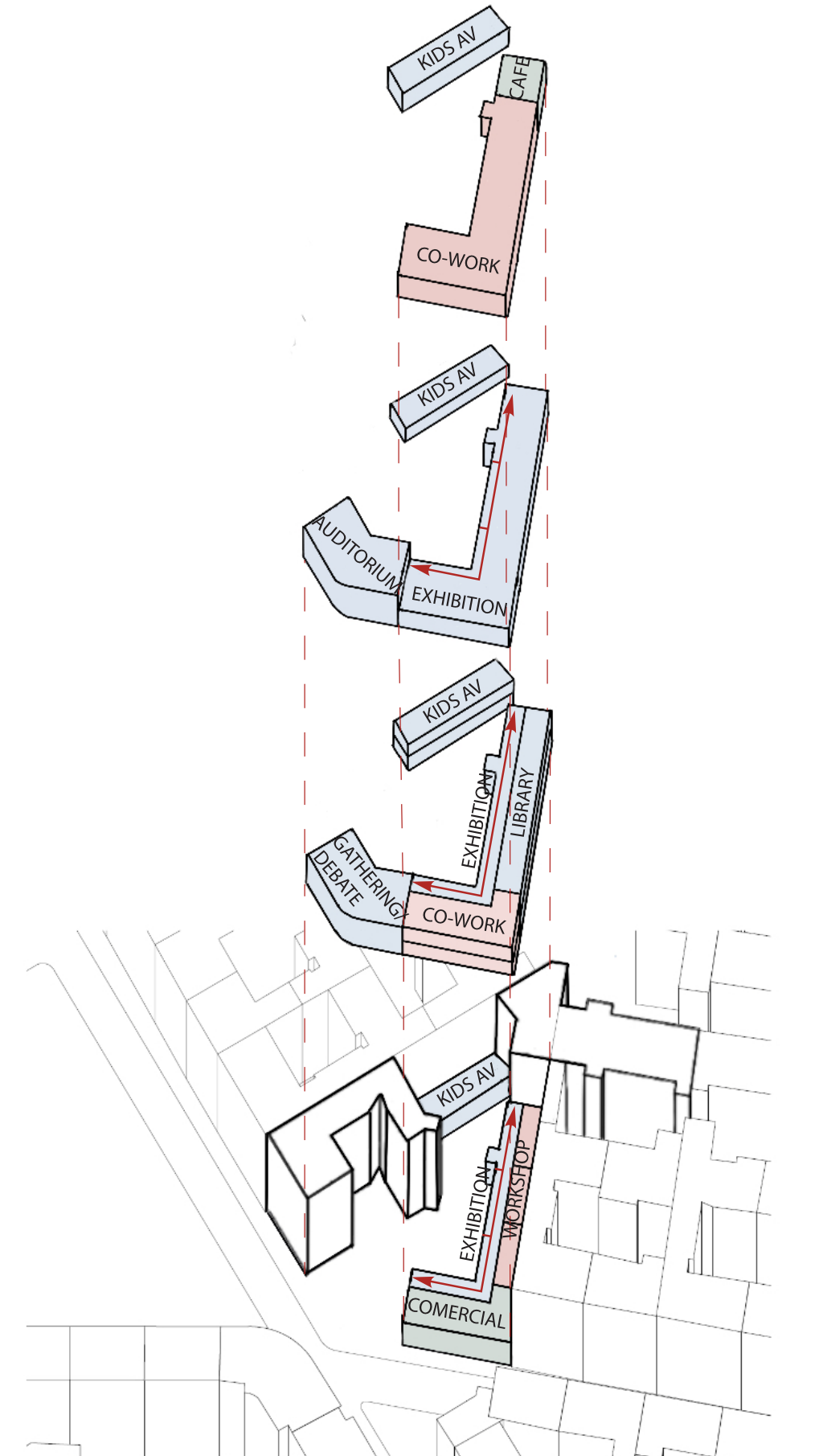
Approaching Axis Diagram



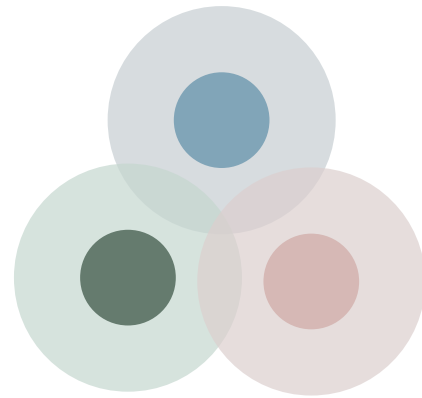
Open Space Diagram



Accessability Diagram



Program Diagram

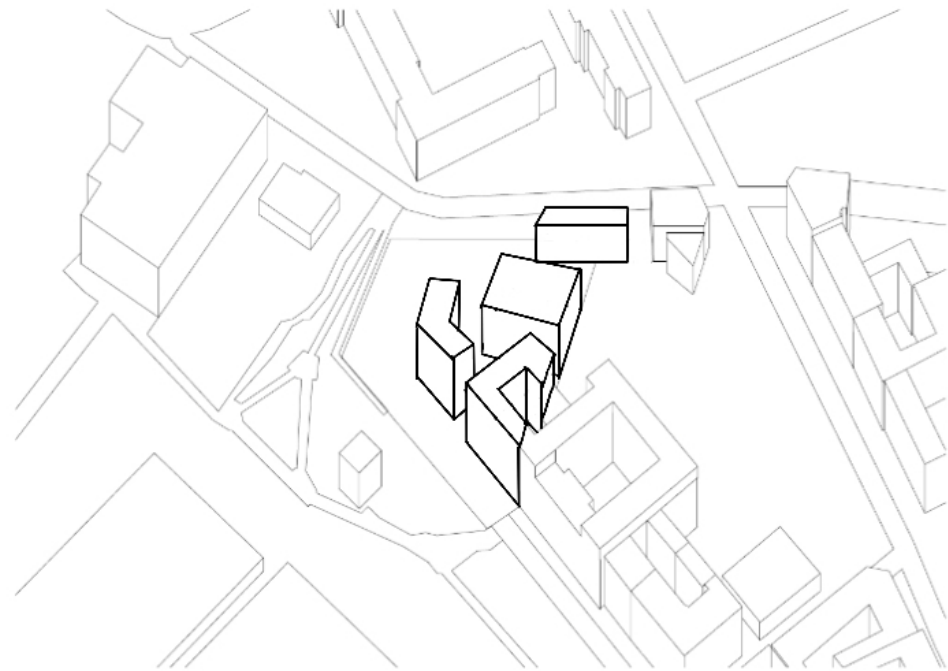


Program

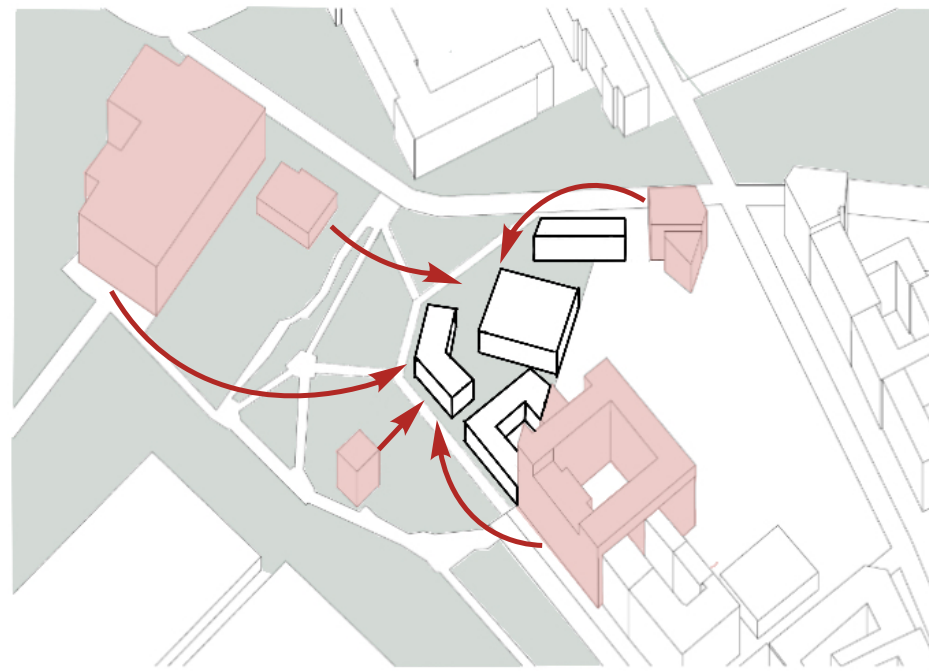
Debate space	
Exhibition space	500m2
Library -Reading Area	300m2
-Audio-Visual Lab	200m2
Auditorium	500m2
Art Exhibition	500m2
Skill Labs	1000m2
Studio Space	500m2
Performance space	100m2

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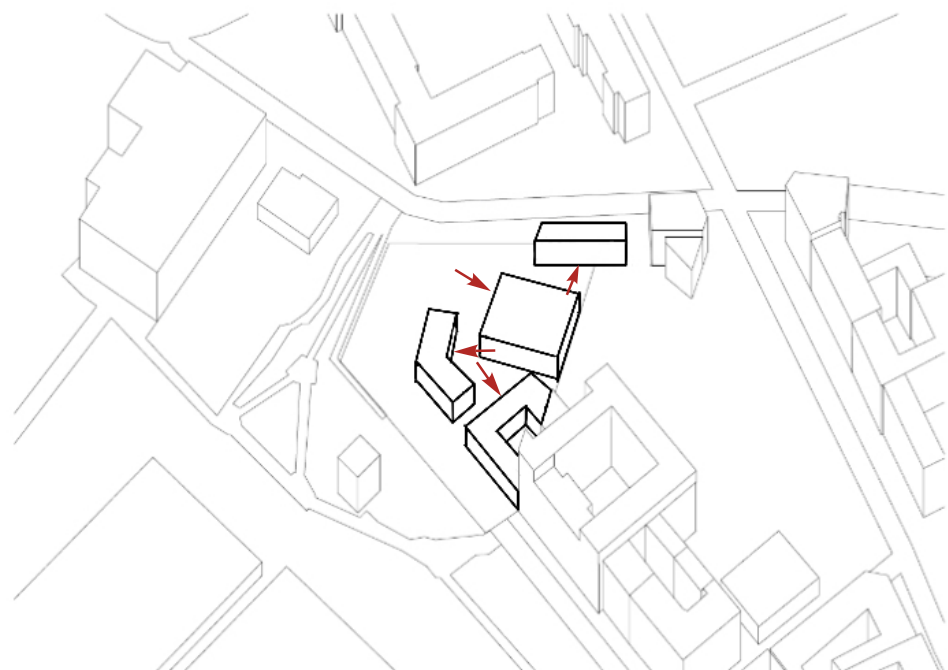
Exteriour Playground
Rooftop Garden
Community Garden
Animal Shelters



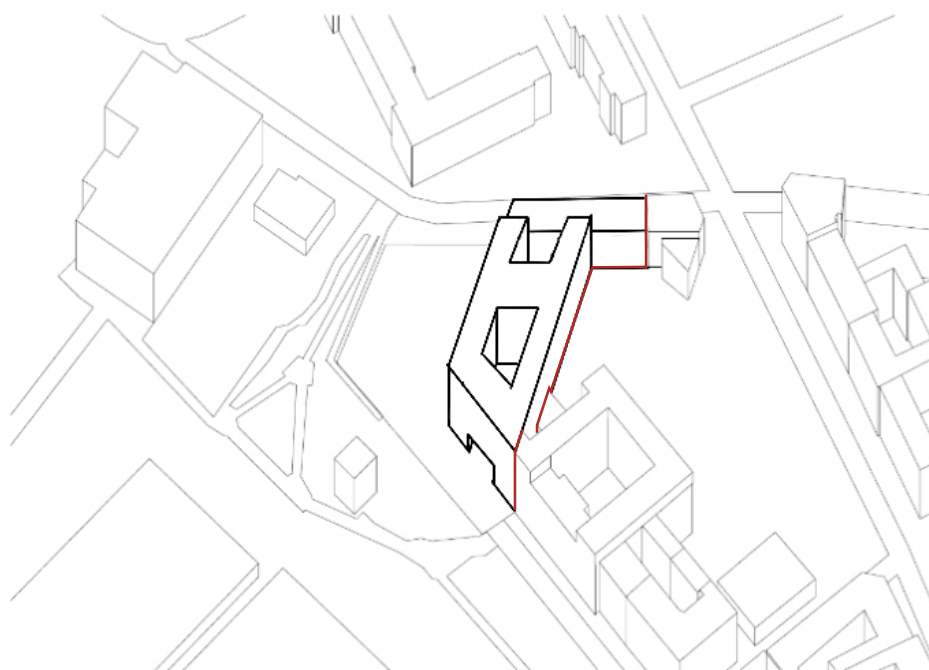
Overall Massing Diagram



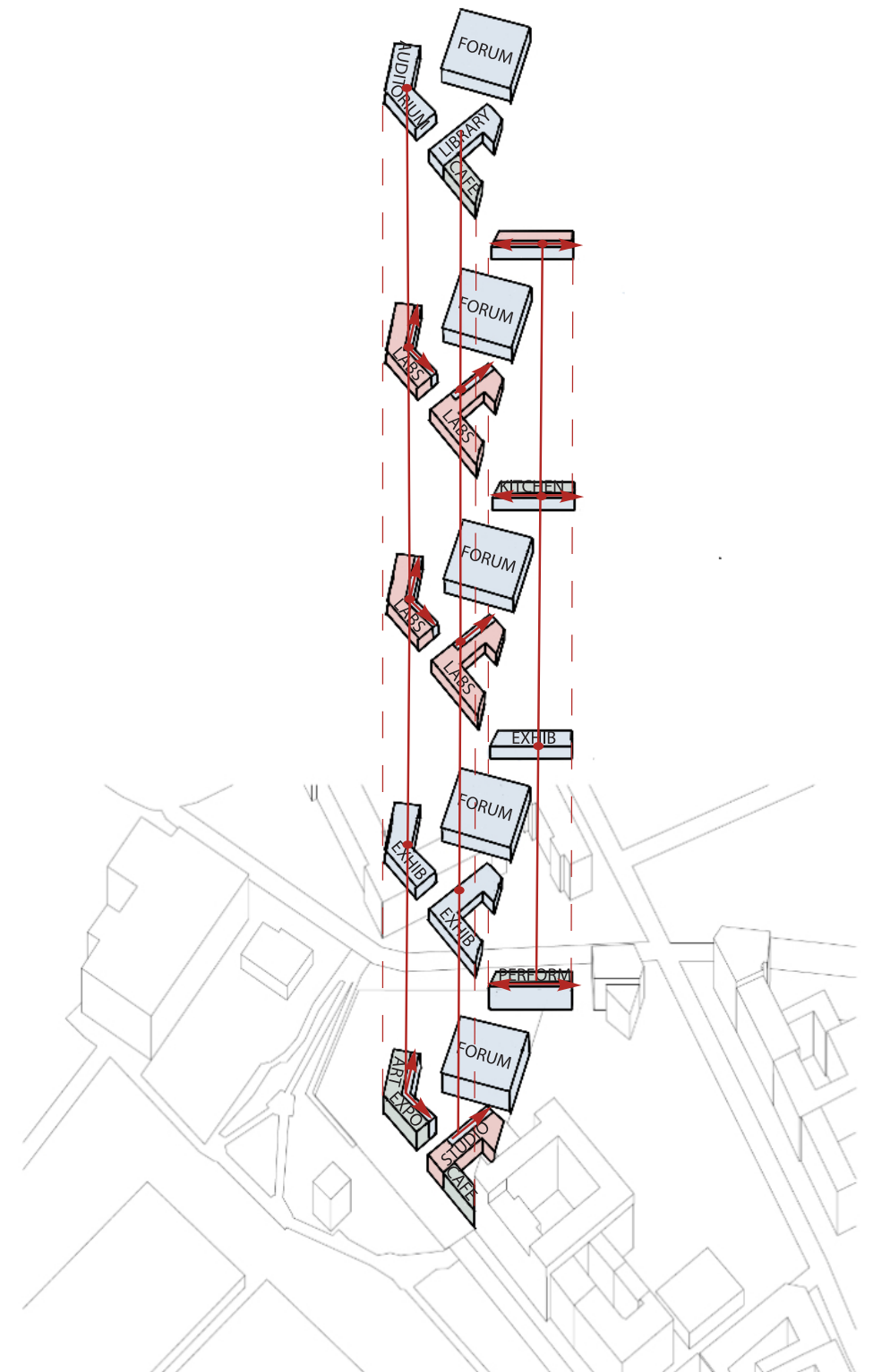
Approaching Axis Diagram



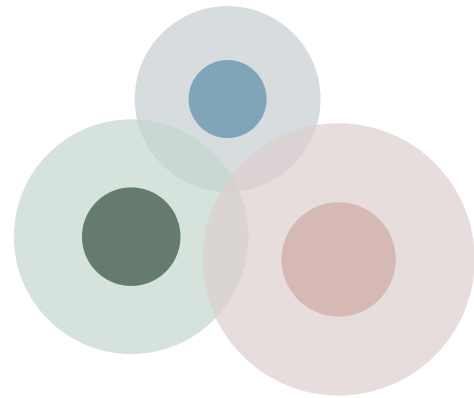
Accessability Diagram



Building Typology Diagram



Program Diagram



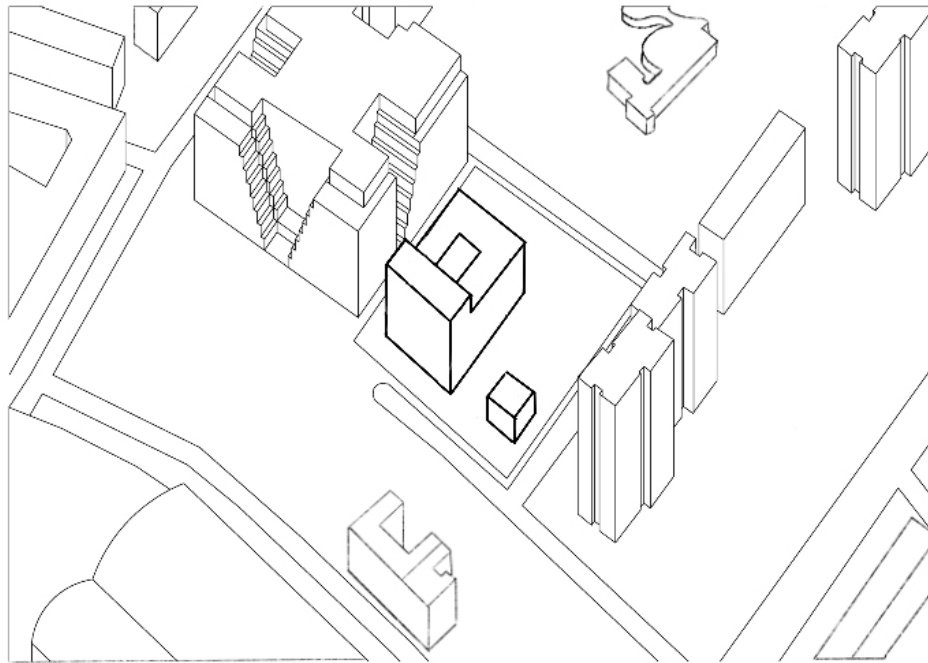
Program

Debate space
Exhibition space
Library
Kitchen
Labs
Community Centre
Commercial Space

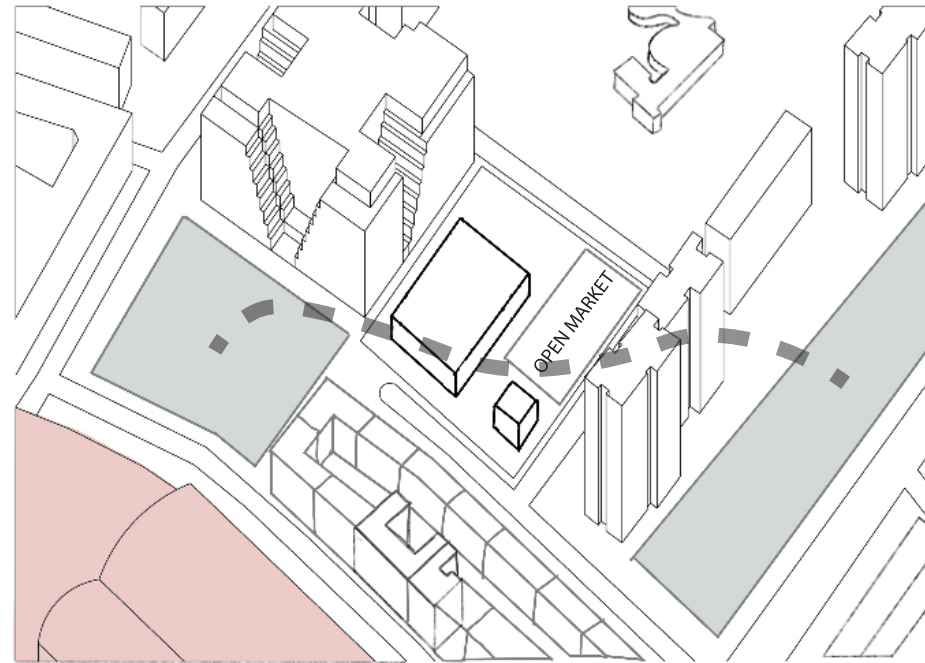
500m2
200m2
500m2
300m2
1000m2
1000m2
500m2

Undefined

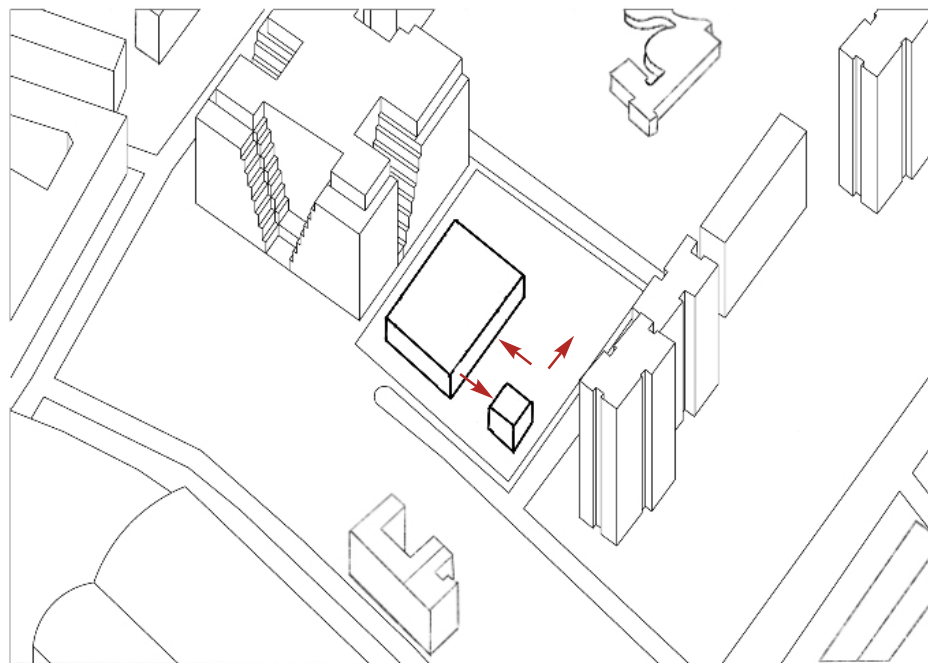
Exteriour Playground
Rooftop Garden
Community Garden
Animal Shelters



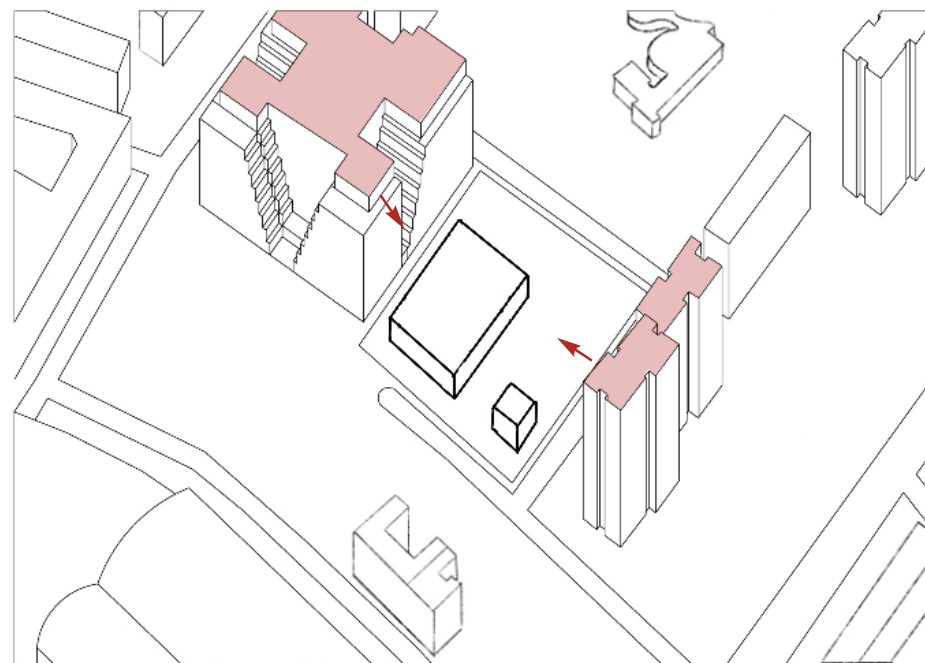
Overall Massing Diagram



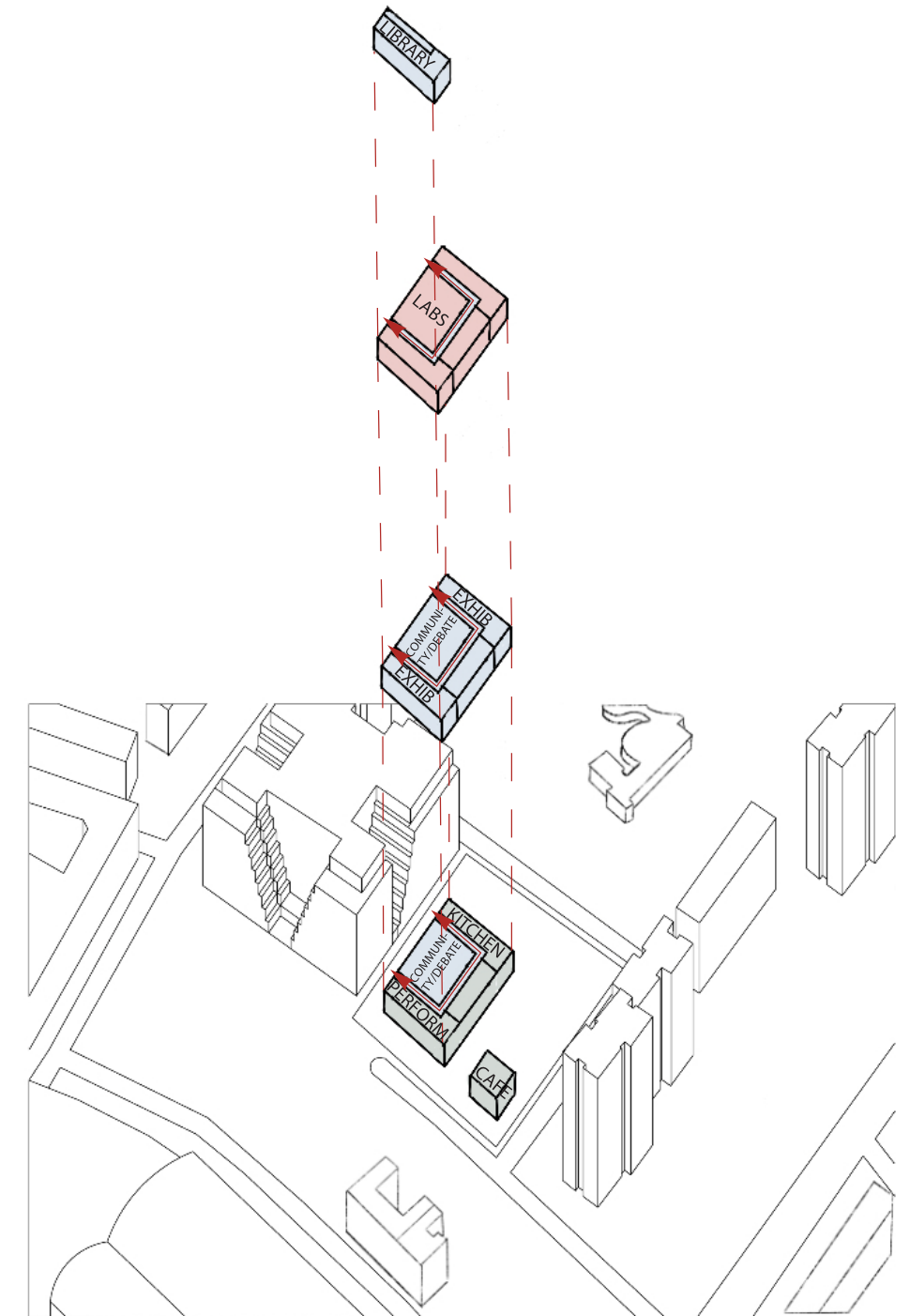
Open Space Diagram



Accessability Diagram



Context Diagram



Program Diagram



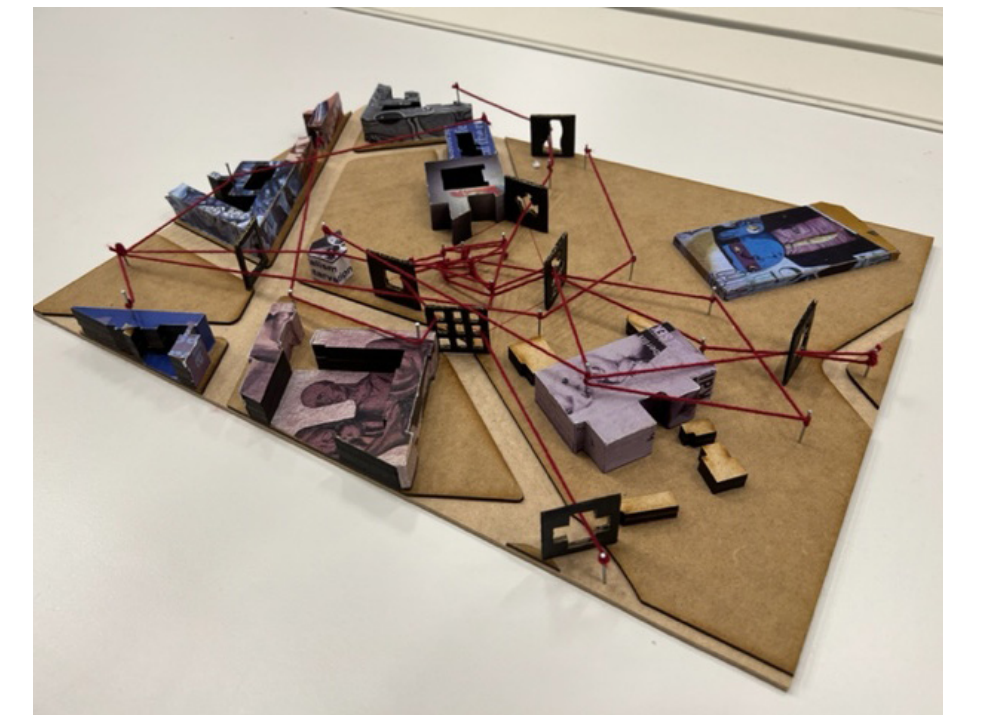
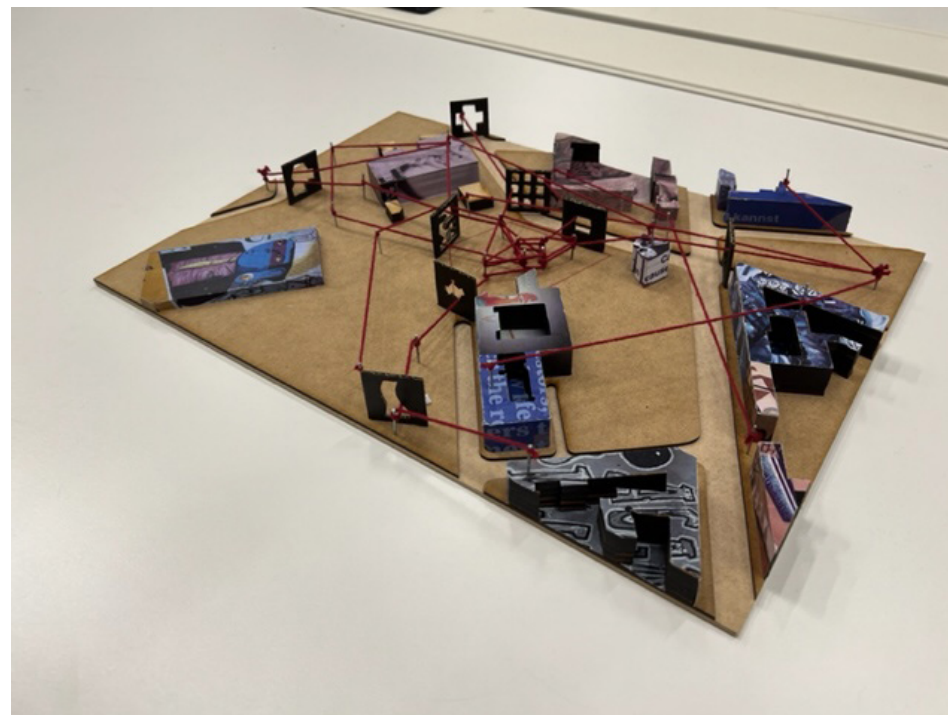
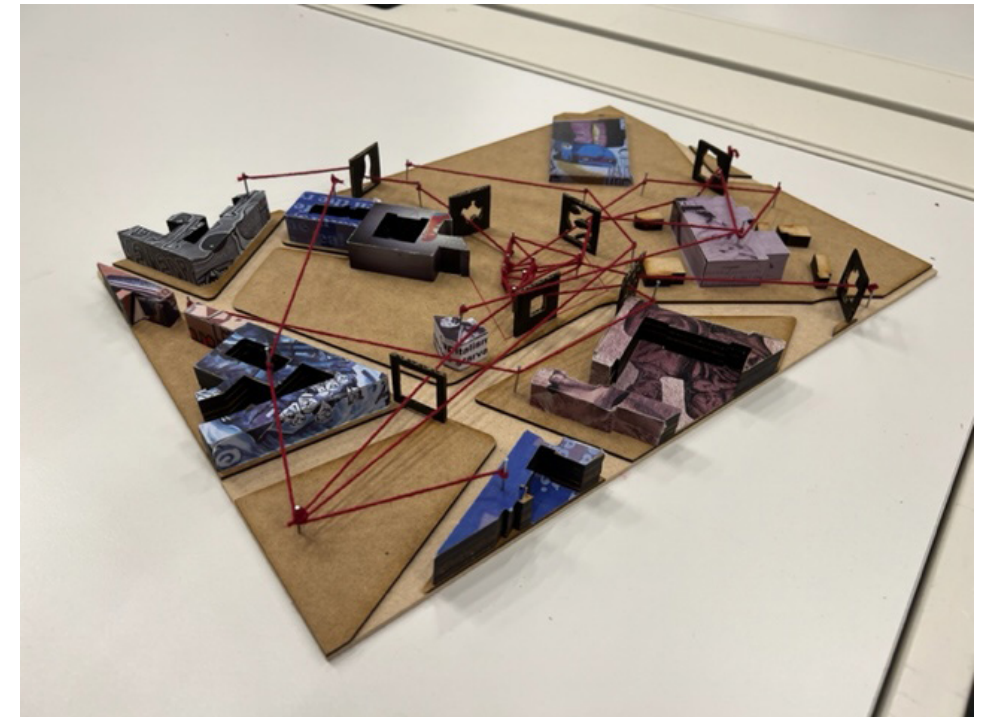
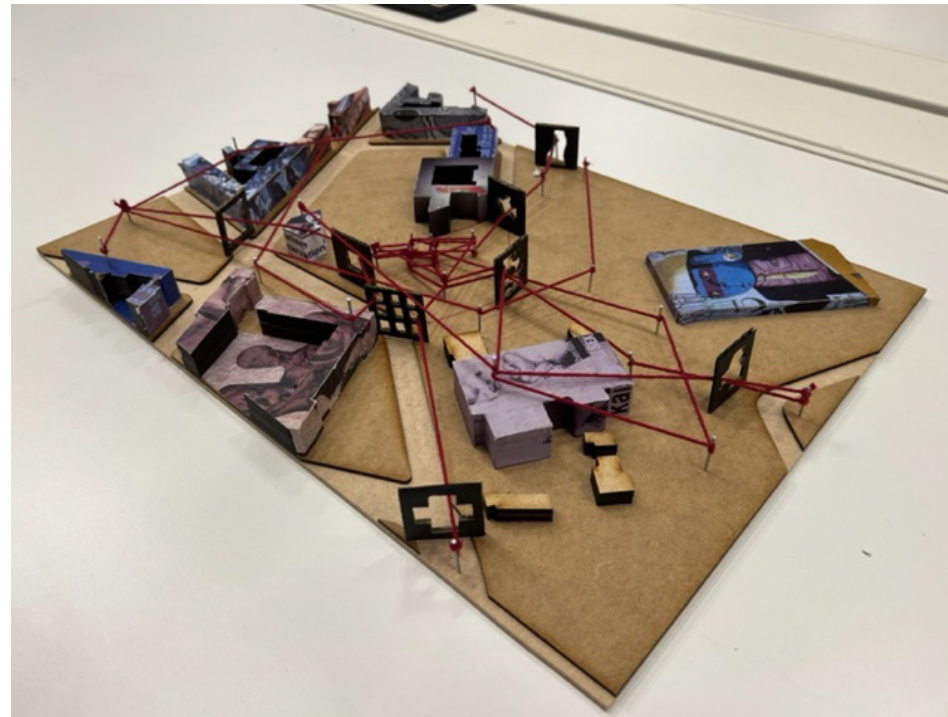
THE MIDDLE GROUND

Of Social Debate

Q2

Week 2.1

Remix

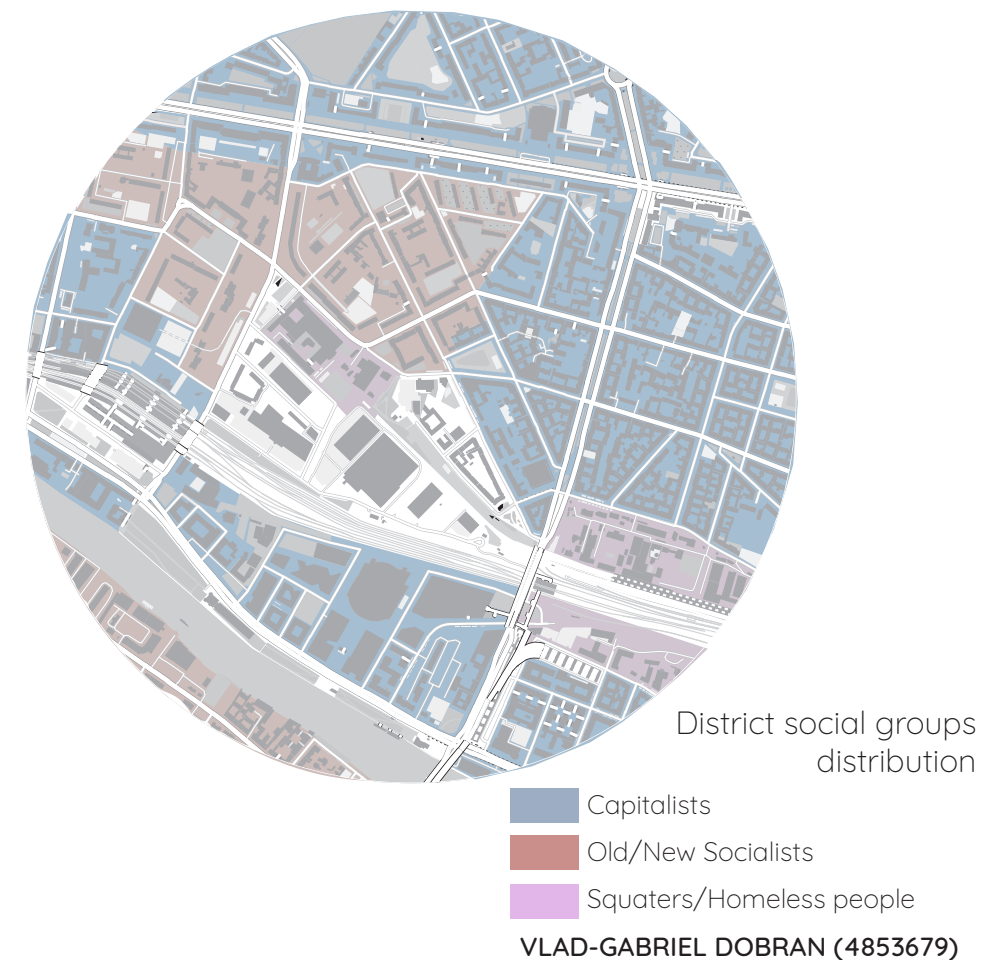
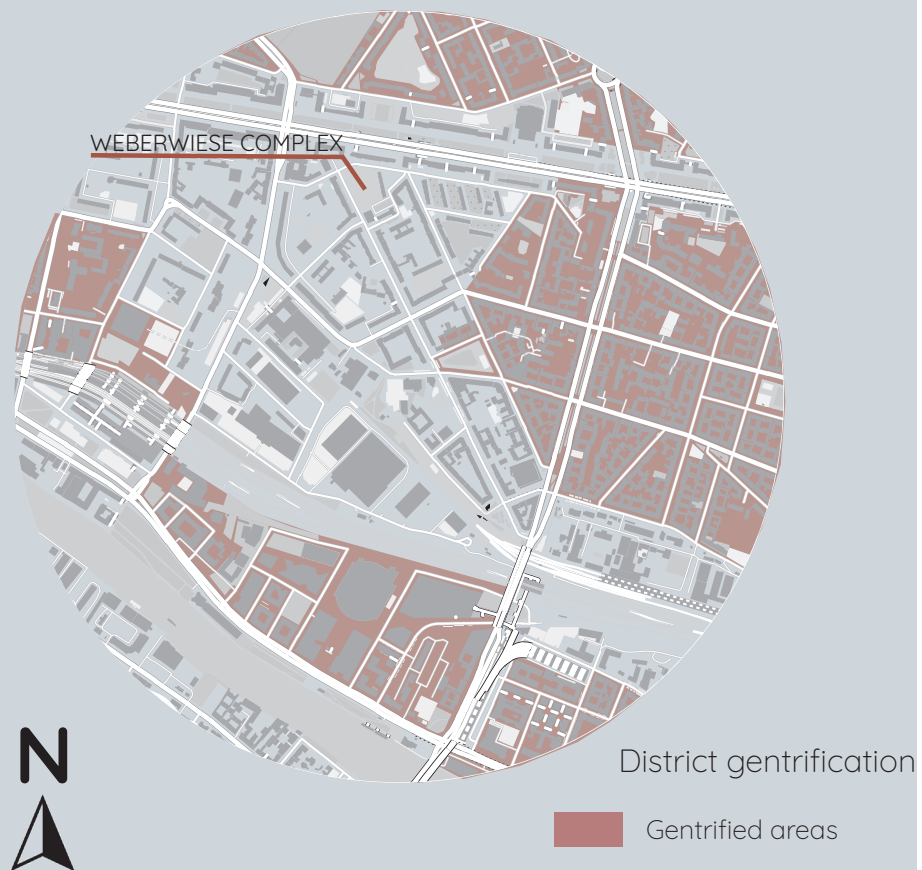
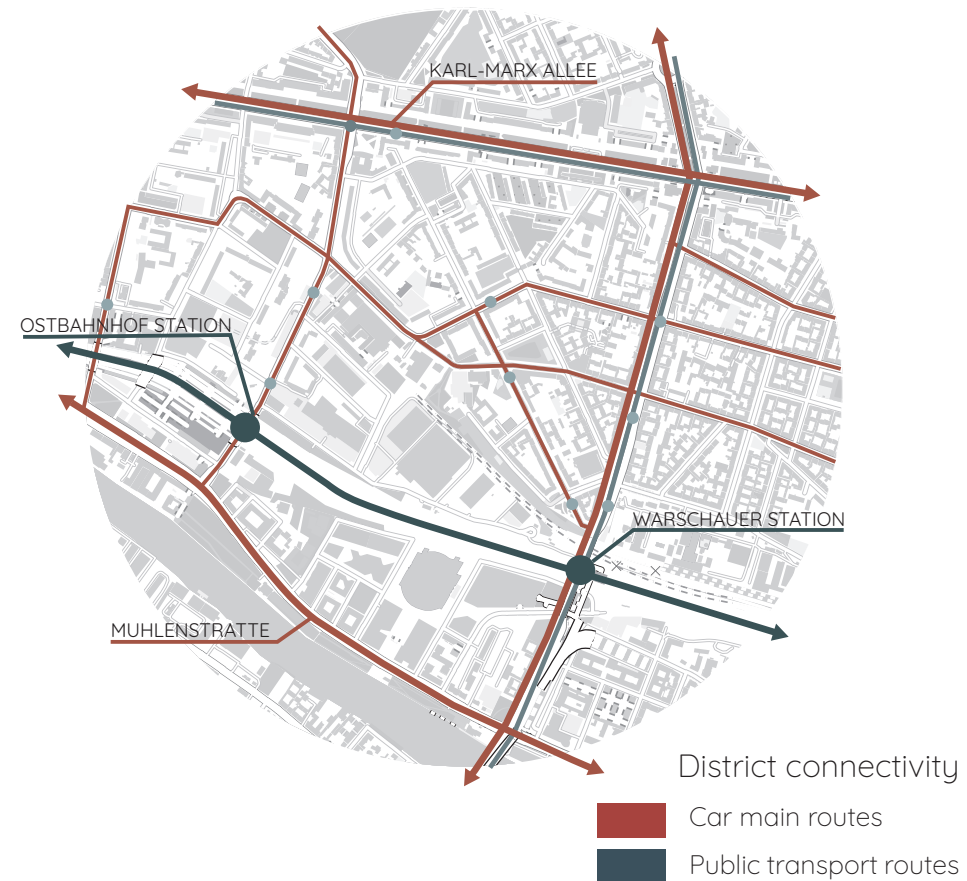


Week 2.2

District Analysis

Key Findings

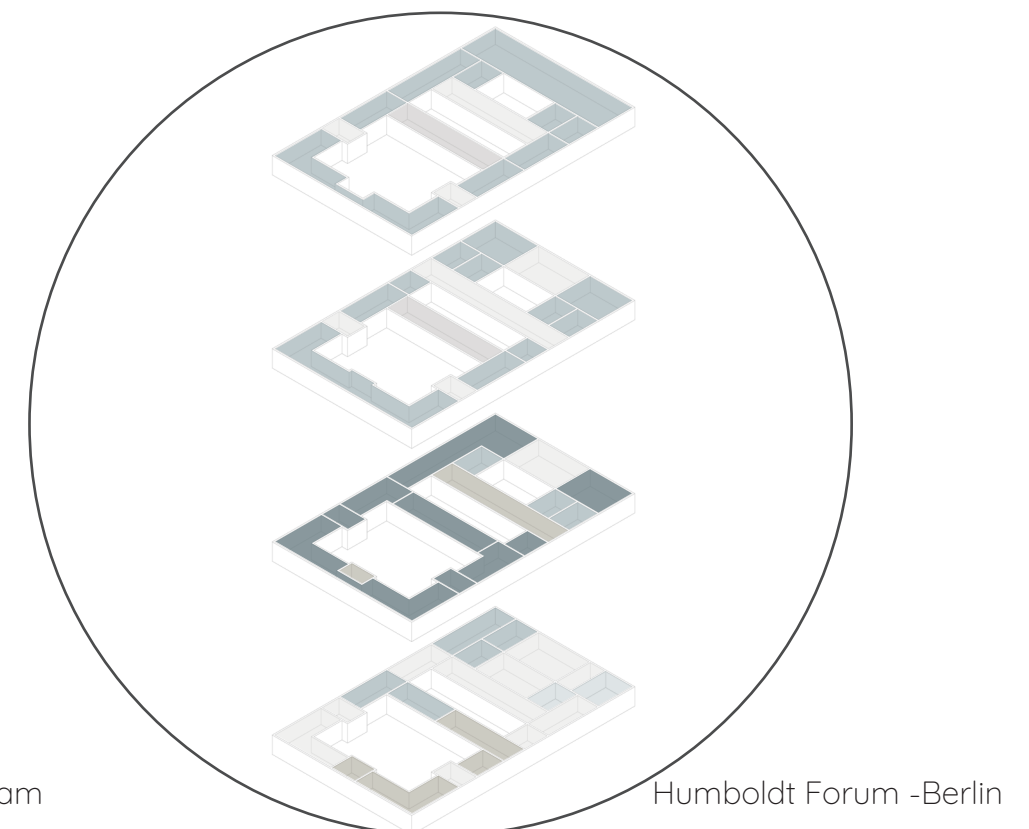
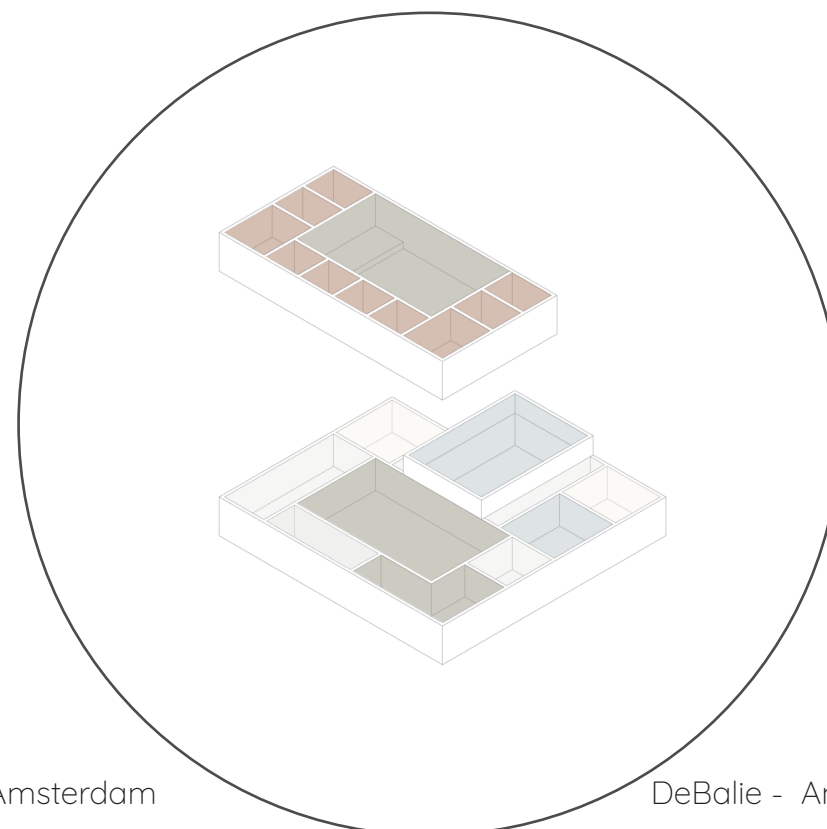
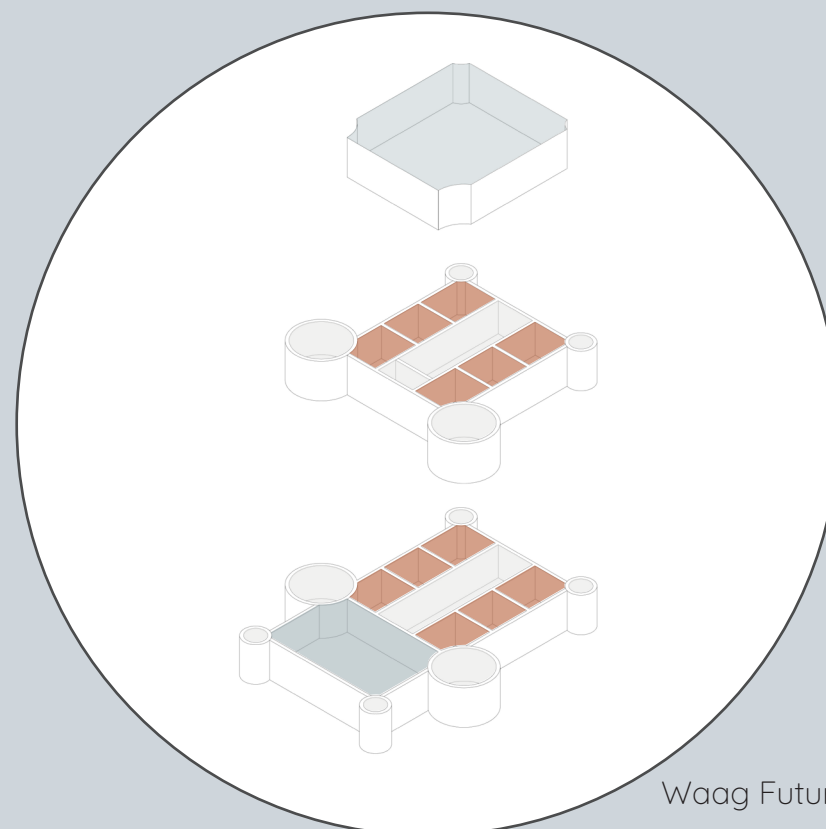
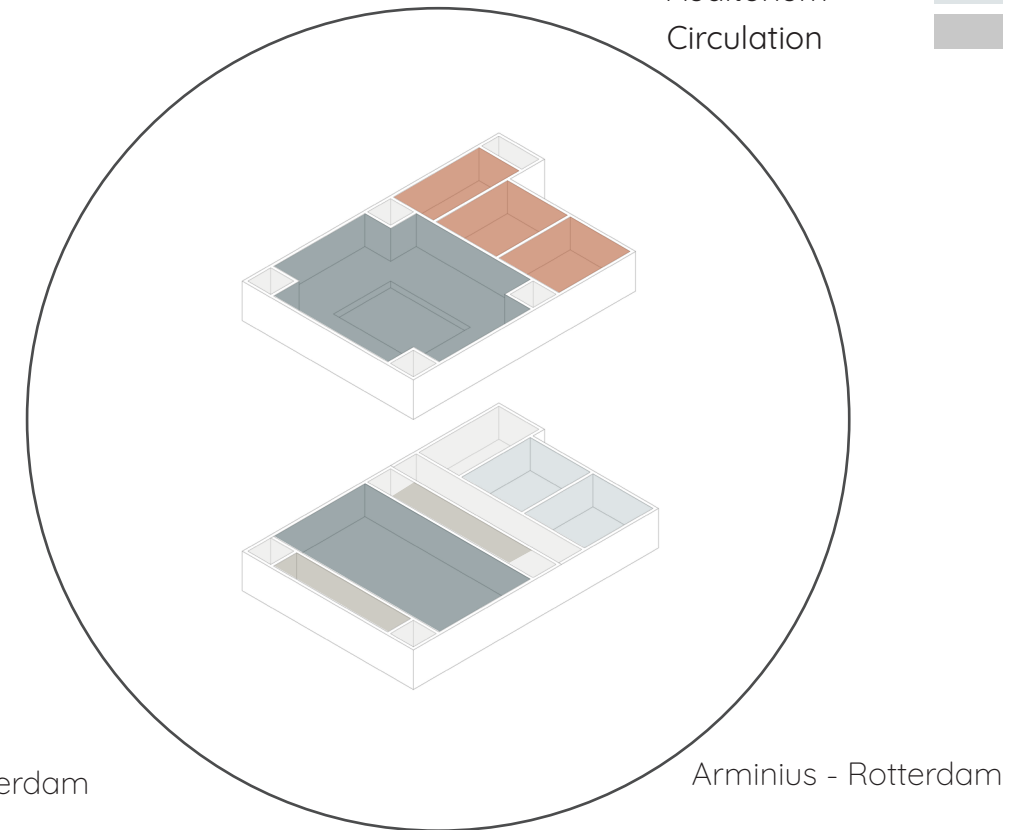
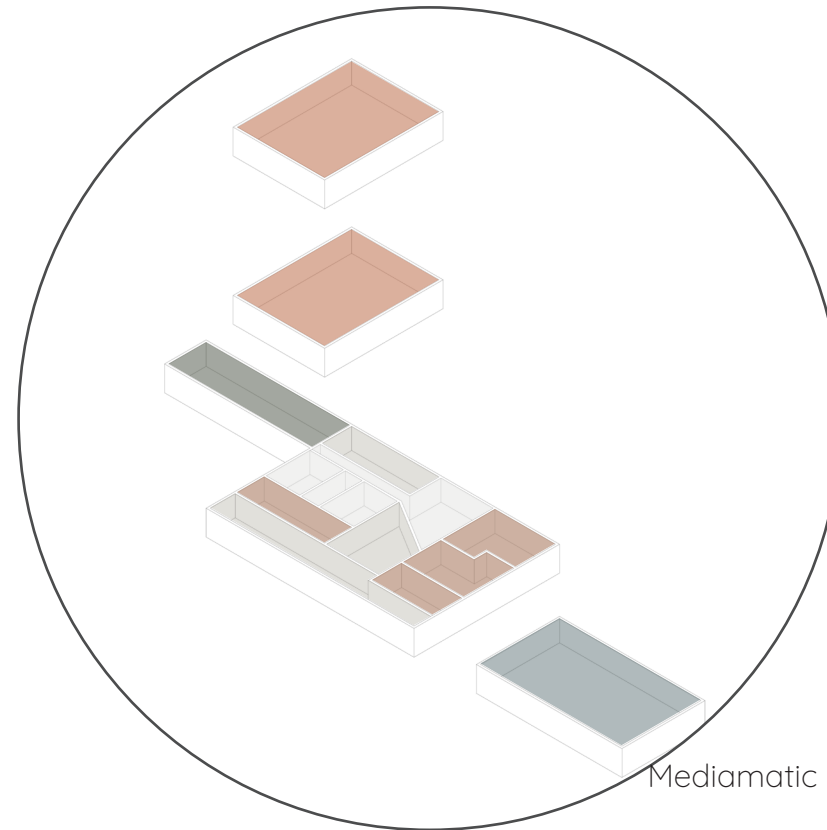
- Highly interconnected with the rest of the city
- Fragmented neighborhood from a typological point of view
- Affected by the Gentrification process
- Strong divisions between different socio-economical groups



Week 2.3

Case Studies

- Labs
- Working space
- Debate space
- Restaurant/Cafe
- Exhibition space
- Auditorium
- Circulation



Mediamatic - Amsterdam

Mediamatic is a center located in Amsterdam that focuses on the creation of a platform to educate the local population when it comes to ecology and biology and the use of modern technologies in order to adapt the cities to their environment. They host multiple workshops and debate talks that are catered to spark interest for the natural environment. In addition, they use the water view restaurant and greenhouse to produce quality ecological food and show the visitors the benefits of small-scale ecological farming.

Program:

- Debate room – Main space (Sluisderenvloeds) (172m²)
 - Hosting weekly debated and specific topics alongside presentations, receptions, and meeting
 - Is located in a refurbished warehouse that can host up to 80 people and have a flexible configuration being able to adapt to the needs of the event
- Restaurant
 - Consist of an indoor and outdoor space that offers a space for dining for both the people present for the different events or for the large public (120m²).
 - Can host up to 43 people, with the indoor space being able to adapt to different configurations for the tables
- Studios
 - Located at the top floor of the center and having a different access point from the rest of the functions, it can host various workshops for the local community in order to get the people involved in the center's goal.
 - It can host up to 30 people, and the open plan and amenities can adapt to any kind of program from cooking workshop to advance biology lectures.
- Greenhouse
 - Consist of a greenhouse attached to the rest of the building (118m²)
 - It is providing the herbs and vegetables for both the restaurant and the workshop while also hosting events to educate the visitors about circular farming
- Conference room
 - Consist of a round conference room (47m²) that can be rented and host events for private individuals or businesses
- Event rooms
 - The center consists of three event rooms (Tuinkamer-27m², Plantkamer-62m², Haeckelkamer-48m²) that offer different atmospheres and configurations for events such as presentations, performances, lectures, talk shows, parties and concerts

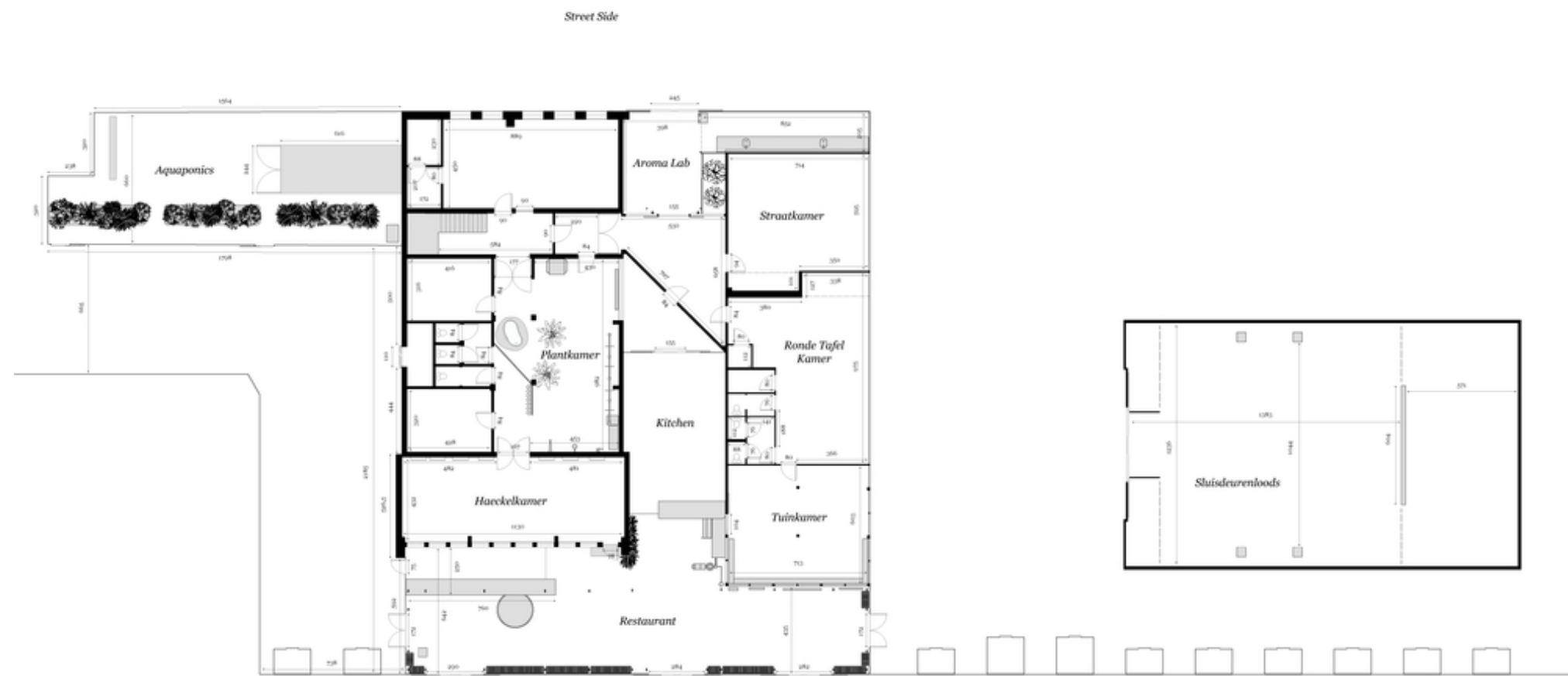


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Arminius - Rotterdam

Armenius is a cultural and political debate platform in Rotterdam focusing on providing a space for different events, from art and photography exhibitions to concerts and debates. The building was created to offer a cultural center for the city and it is located in one of the oldest churches in the city, being recently refurbished in order to become a symbol for debate and social interaction.

Program:

- Big room (480m²)
 - The main room of the center can host up to 400 people, and it is organized with a flexible layout that can be reconfigured for different events such as debates, presentations, parties, or receptions
- Upper room (120m²)
 - The upper room is an event hall that can be adapted for different functions such as workshops, brainstorming sessions, meetings, or presentations.
 - The room is organized separately from the rest of the building, being able to access it through a different entrance
- Sub-rooms (200m²)
 - The center presents a series of sub-rooms that can be transformed into event rooms that can host different functions such as theater, school, cabaret or art-exhibition
 - Each room has a different atmosphere and is more catered for a more formal or informal meetings.
- Terrace
 - The center entrance is surrounded by a terrace that acts as a café that can serve both the guests of the center and the people passing by.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

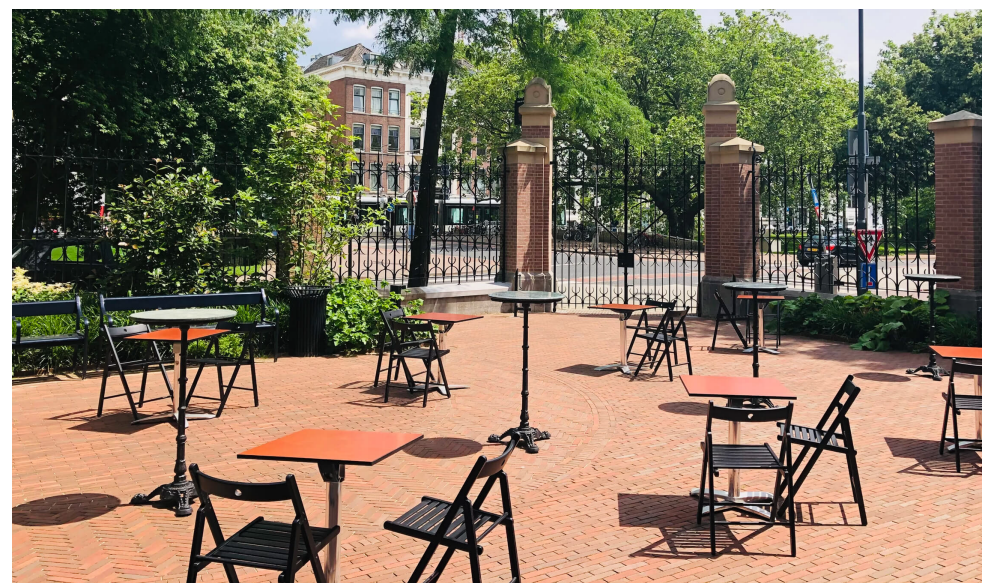


Figure 9.



Figure 10.

Waag FutureLab - Amsterdam

The Waag Futurelab is a media center located in the center of Amsterdam which focuses on the development of technology and its integration into society with a specific target of understanding the morality of the digitalization of society. The media lab is organized around six so-called Labs, with each one focusing on one particular aspect of the digital debate. Each Lab organizes workshops, educational functions, and debates related to their specific topic. The center promotes a cross-disciplinary approach to technology by combining art, culture, and science in order to create a critical reflection on technology, develops technological and social design skills, and stimulate social innovation in order to create an open and inclusive future. The center's target group is young people and 'Amsterdammer', with the program catered to the local population, with future plans to extend the reach of the lab to international people living in the city.

Program:

• Labs

- Research labs focusing on research and development are carried out on technological and social issues
- Future internet lab - researching and shaping the morality of technology
- Wet Lab - focusing on critical making in the field of biotechnology
- Open Design Lab - Focusing on critical making in the field of manufacturing industry
- Creative Lab, Creative Care Lab, and Future Heritage Lab - crossover labs with education by creating an educational platform to teach the visitors in the three specific fields.

• Workshops

- Representing the hands-on element of the media center, which tries to teach the participants real-life skills that they can use in the new hybrid society

• Exhibition

- Catered to attract new visitors, the exhibition space tries to showcase the research done in the center and to start a discussion in society relative to the chosen topic

• Educational courses

- The creation of lecture rooms that educate the participants on certain topics or bring in new visitors by creating partnerships with other education institutes

• Restaurant

- The Restaurant-Café is the most public element located on the ground floor, having the function of attracting newcomers and presenting the visitors a glimpse of the debate happening in the center



Figure 11.



Figure 12.

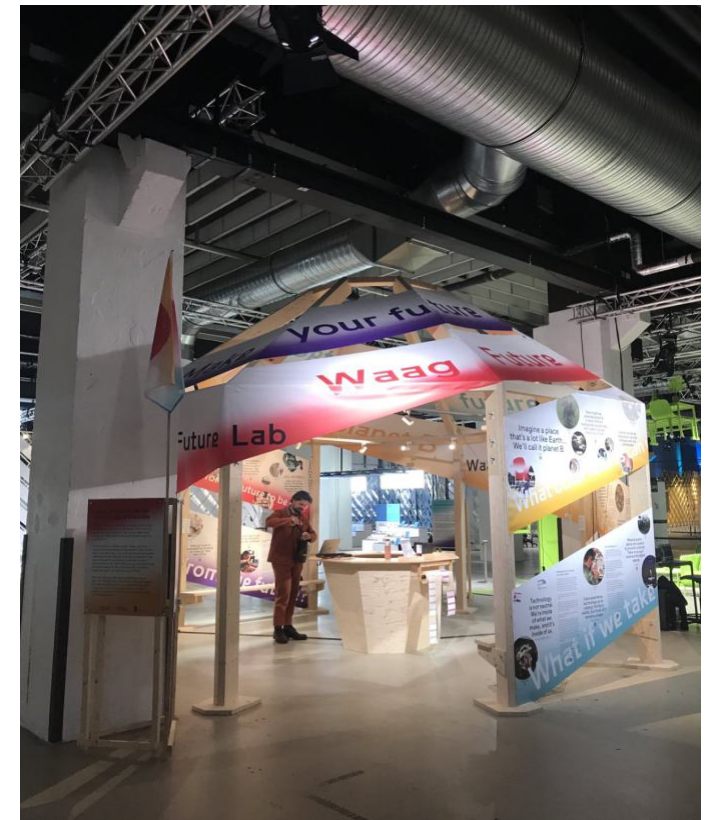


Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15.



Figure 16.

De Balie - Amsterdam

De Balie is a debate center located in the city center of Amsterdam which strives to create a constructive stage for discussion related to art, science, and politics. It is organized around a café and restaurant which tries to bring together people from different social groups and make them discuss, with its motto 'talk with your mouth full'. The organization is oriented on engagement on the entire city level but also international scale, bringing guests from all over the world and approaching diverse topics from various cutting-edge disciplines.

Program

- **Grand Café**
-The grand café is the main space of the debate center. During the day, it acts as a restaurant with its kitchen, and during the evening can be transformed to host either presentations and talks or night parties.
- **Big Room**
-Consisting of a courtroom-style room, it is the main event hall (185m²) and hosts lectures, debates, presentations, and film projections
-It is a formal debate space that can host talks with local and international guests and is organized around a stage suited for talk shows, concerts, or theater
- **The Salon**
-A small-scale meeting room (61m²) that can host meetings, presentations, or informal gathering
-It has a flexible layout that can be adapted for different events
- **Pleinzaal**
-A studio for recording talks or music that can also be transformed to host hybrid events such as culinary talks
- **Foyer**
-The foyer is the space connecting all the halls, which can be transformed to host the receptions for events happening in the other rooms or to become a presentation room itself and host debates, parties, or coffee breaks alongside art galleries or exhibitions.
- **Meeting rooms**
-The center consists of 2 meeting rooms (44m²) that can host meetings or presentations



Figure 17.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.

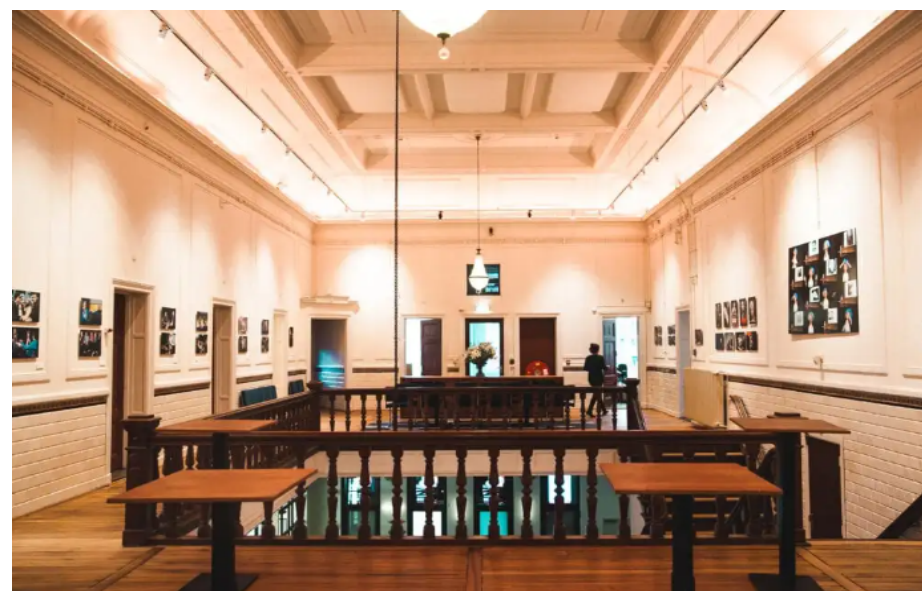


Figure 21.



Figure 22.

Humboldt Forum - Berlin

The Humboldt Forum is a cultural center located in the historical heart of Berlin that tries to amplify socio-political debates that are current within German society, such as the facing of the colonial past or the contemporary forms of racism in social life. The center focuses on creating a space for debate by creating inclusive exhibitions that bring together diverse perspectives and create spaces for debate, including voices from various local and global perspectives. The center's target group is the Berlin public while also trying to attract international institutes and reflect on common problems that multiple societies are dealing with. The forum is organized around a so-called new model of museum exhibition while also providing educational and research space alongside discursive and performative events.

Program:

- Exhibitions space
 - The exhibition space is the main type of debate present in the Humboldt Forum.
 - The space is divided into multiple exhibitions, some permanent while others changing regularly. These exhibitions are divided into geographical locations such as Oceania, America, or Africa or on topics such as the Colonial Past of the exhibition focusing on climate change.
- Auditorium
 - The forum has two auditoria which are used to host events that bring together talkers with different views and socio-political subjects and start a critical debate regarding that topics
- Library
 - The first floor of the forum is dedicated to the public library, which creates an educational space for visitors or the Berlin University, with a section of the library dedicated to this university.
 - The library is divided into a traditional formal library with study tables and a more informal space with individual working spaces which can be used by the public and a conceptual space that can be used for interaction between the visitors
- Restaurant
 - The complex presents multiple restaurants catered to both the visitors and the people passing by, being located in the most touristic part of Berlin.
 - The restaurants are constructed based on the exhibitions surrounding them, in this way trying to attract the people passing by into the exhibition space



Figure 23.

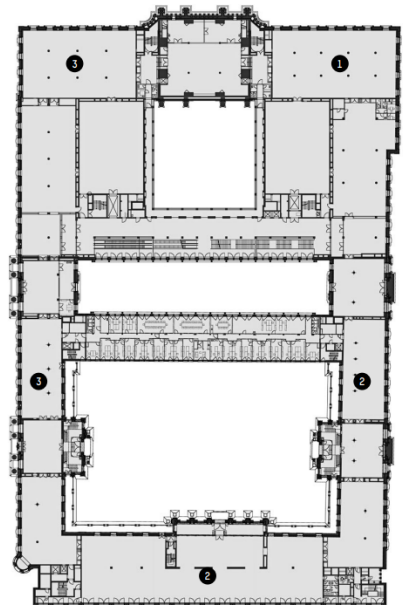
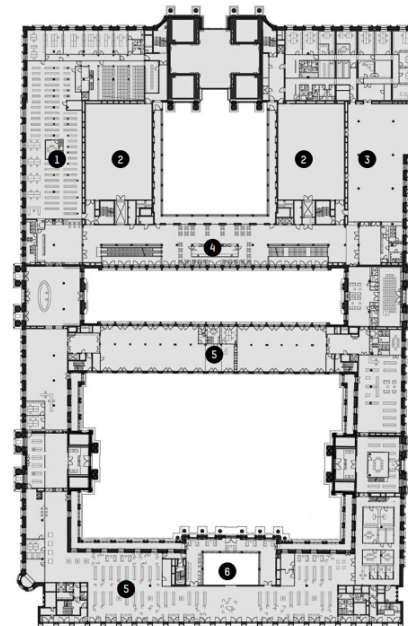


Figure 24.



Figure 25.



Figure 26.

Week 2.4

Program Concepts

Three layers of interaction

- **Leisure functions**

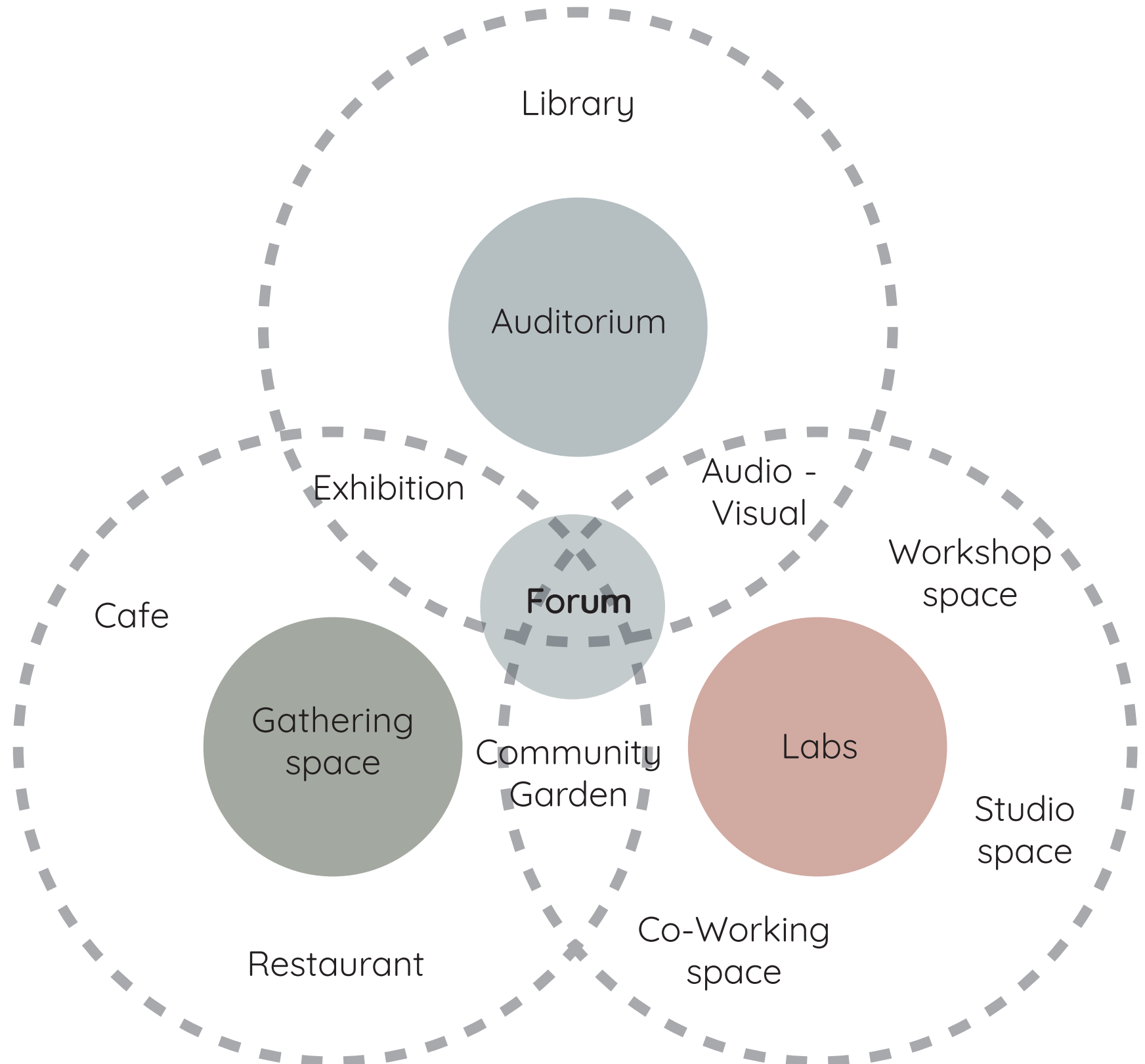
- Designed with the scope of attracting people from the neighborhood by providing activities that are not present in the district

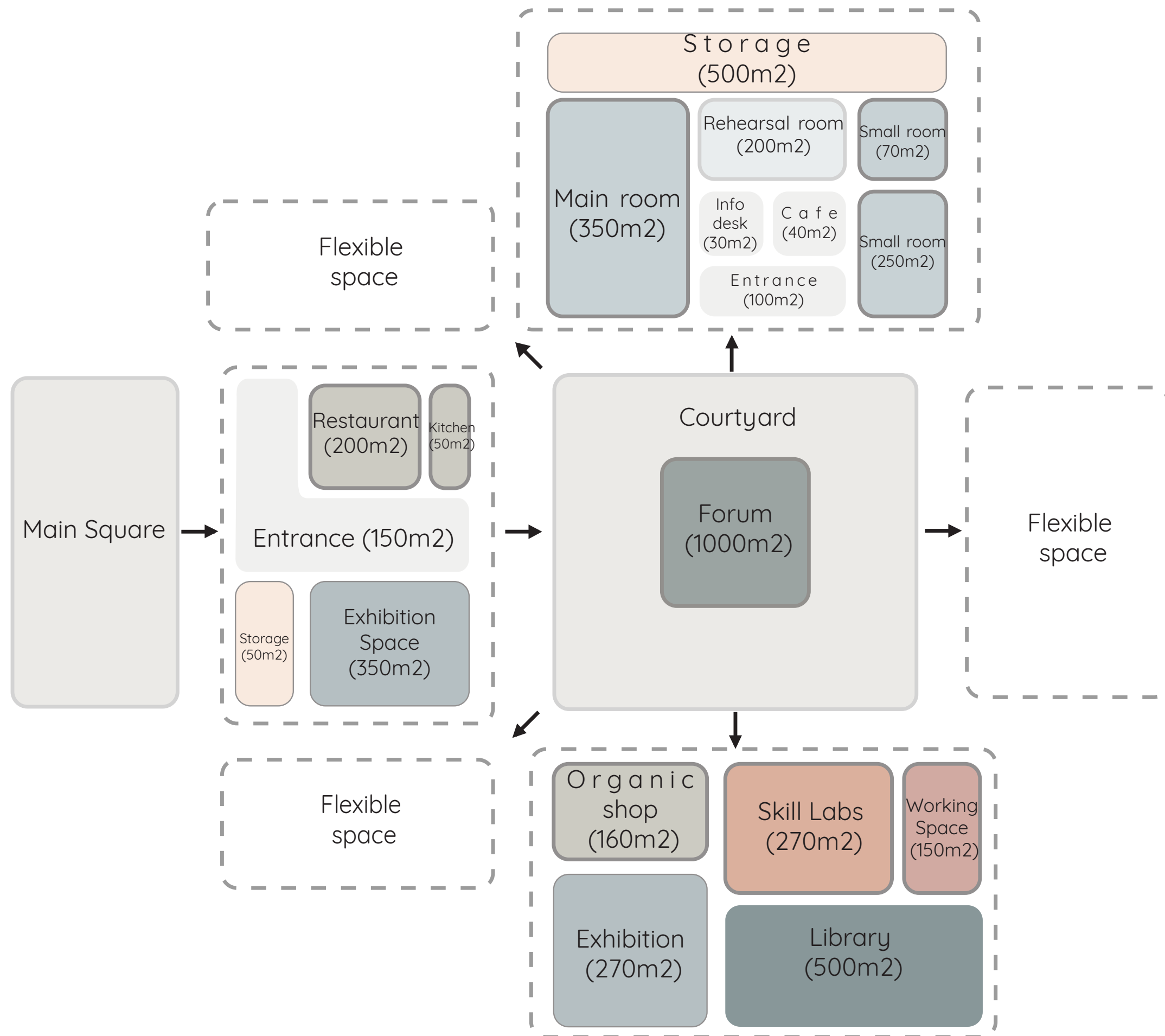
- **'Skills' functions**

- Activate the community by providing space for creative or co-working and the so-called skills labs
- Intended to teach residents specific skills that can improve the community

- **Knowledge functions**

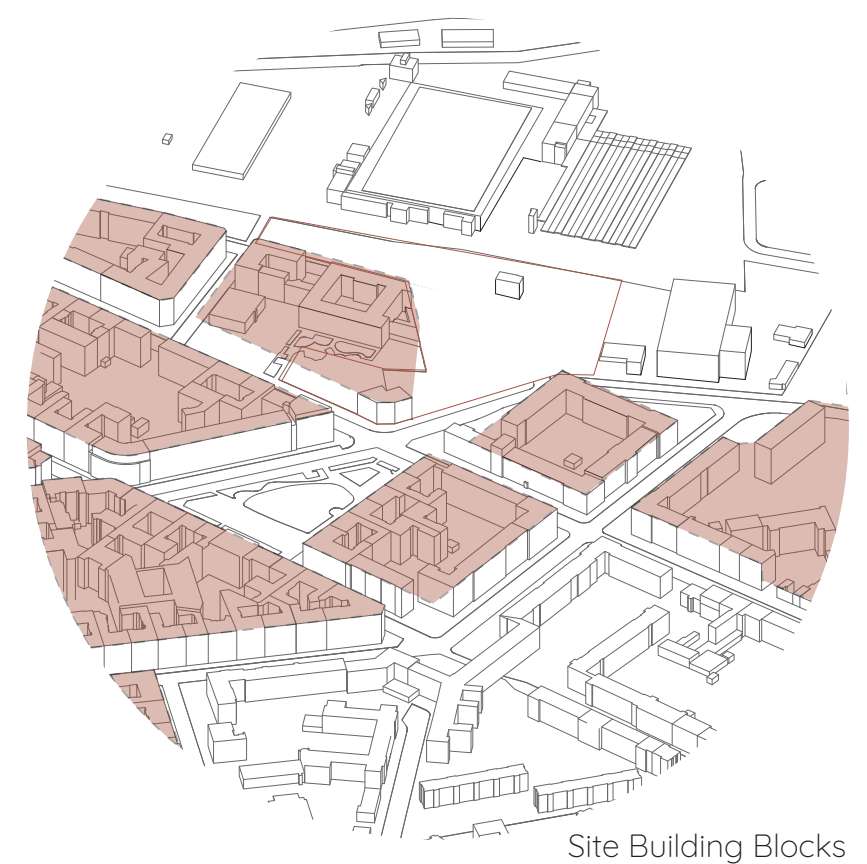
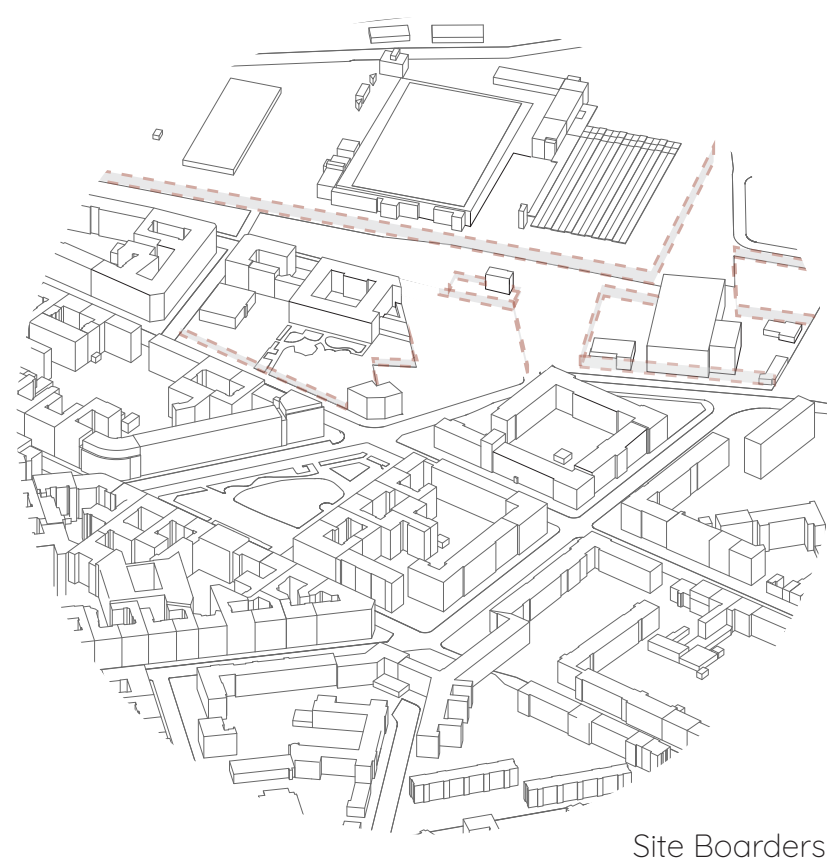
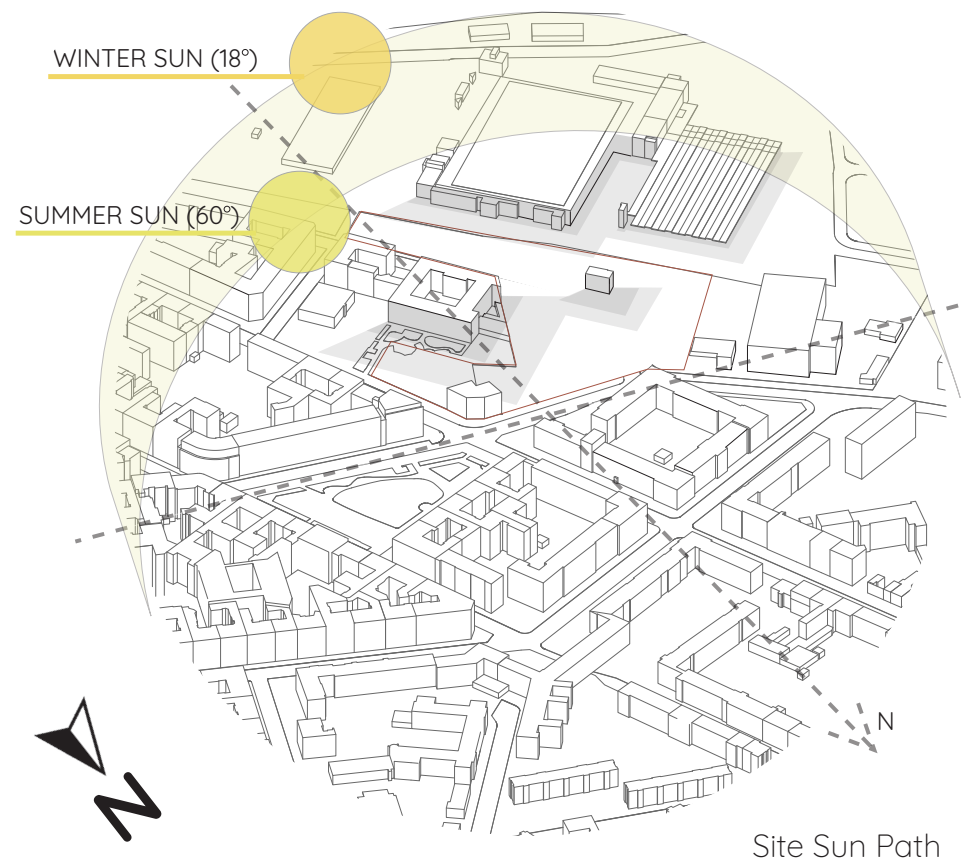
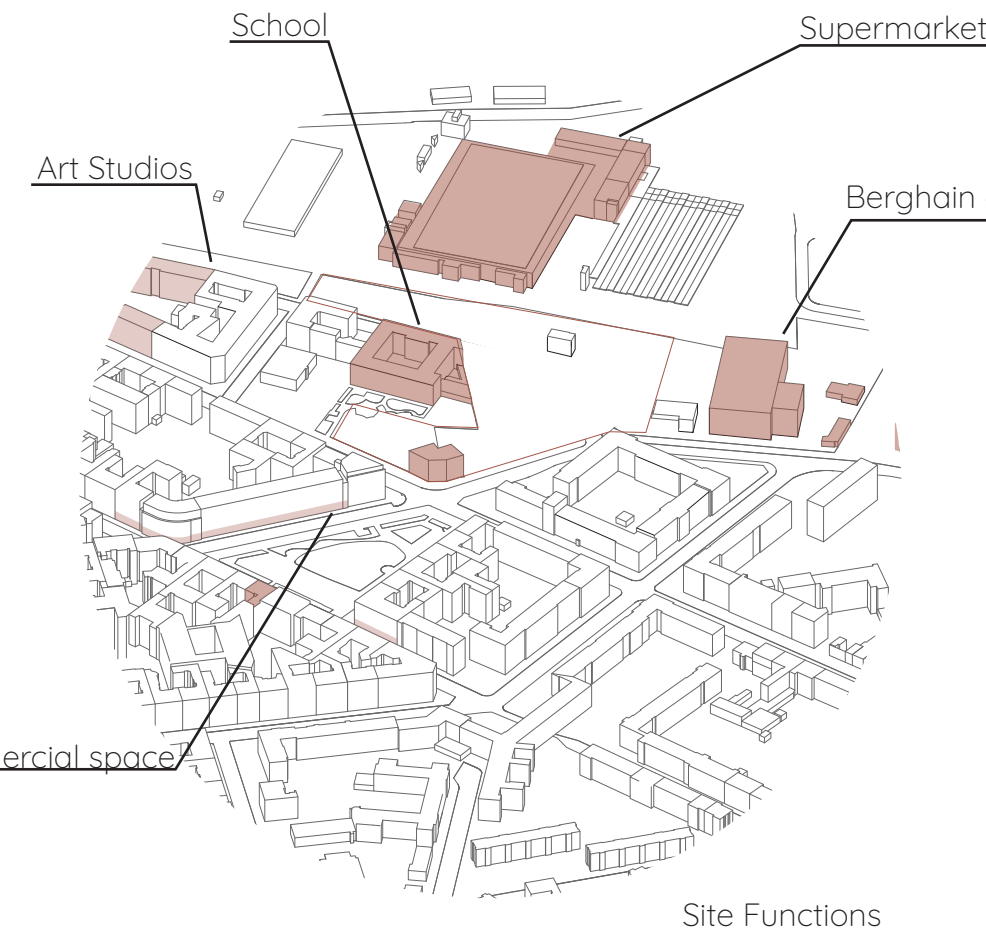
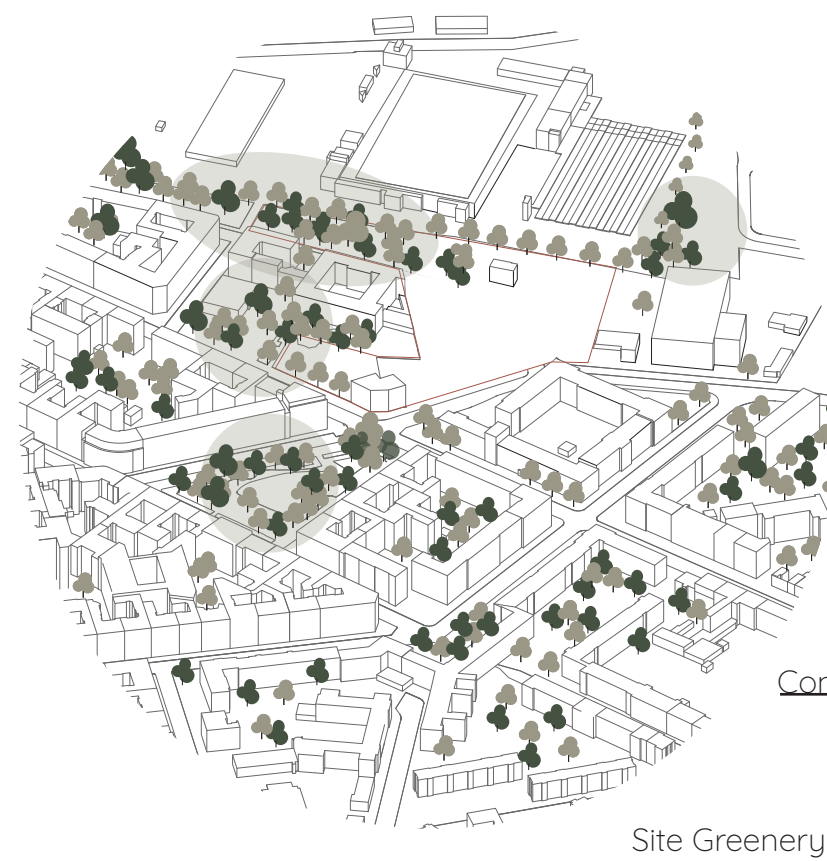
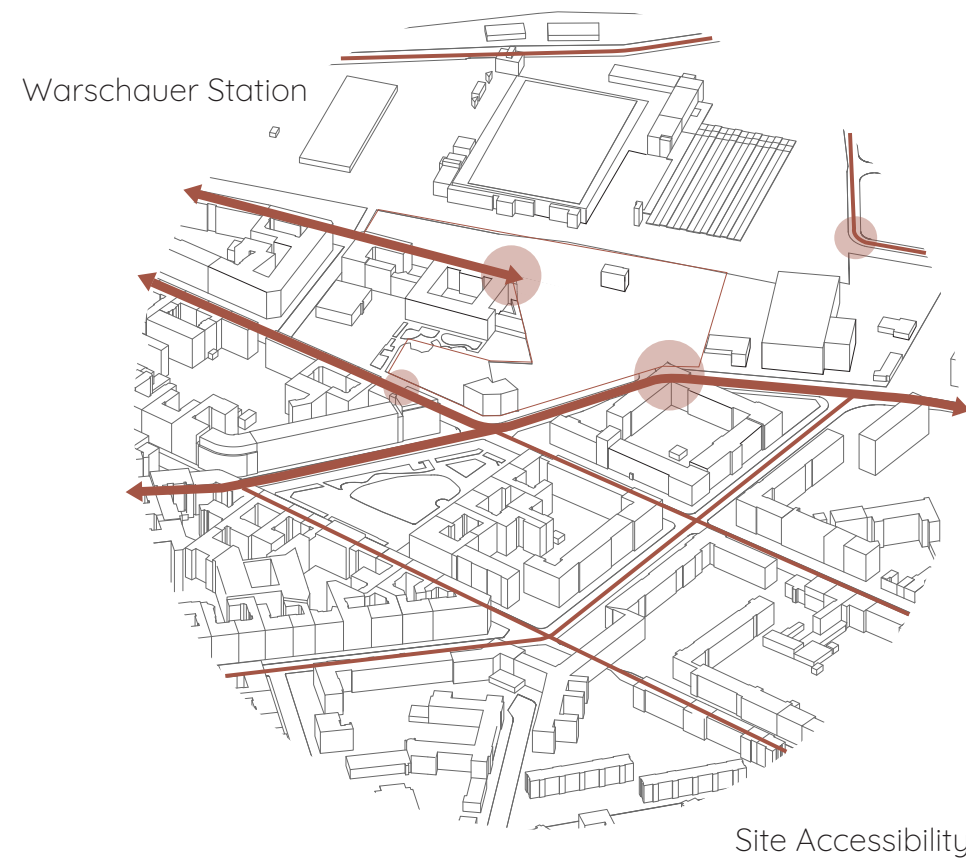
- Activate the discussion and different ways of information communication and debate that provide a wide range of media for different types of people





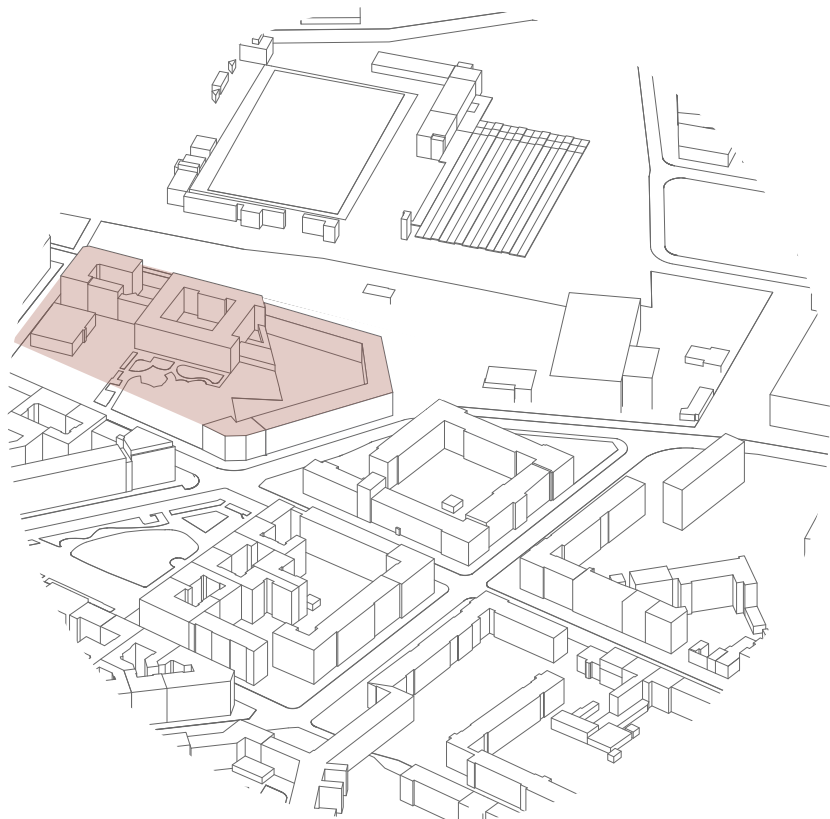
Week 2.5

Site Analysis

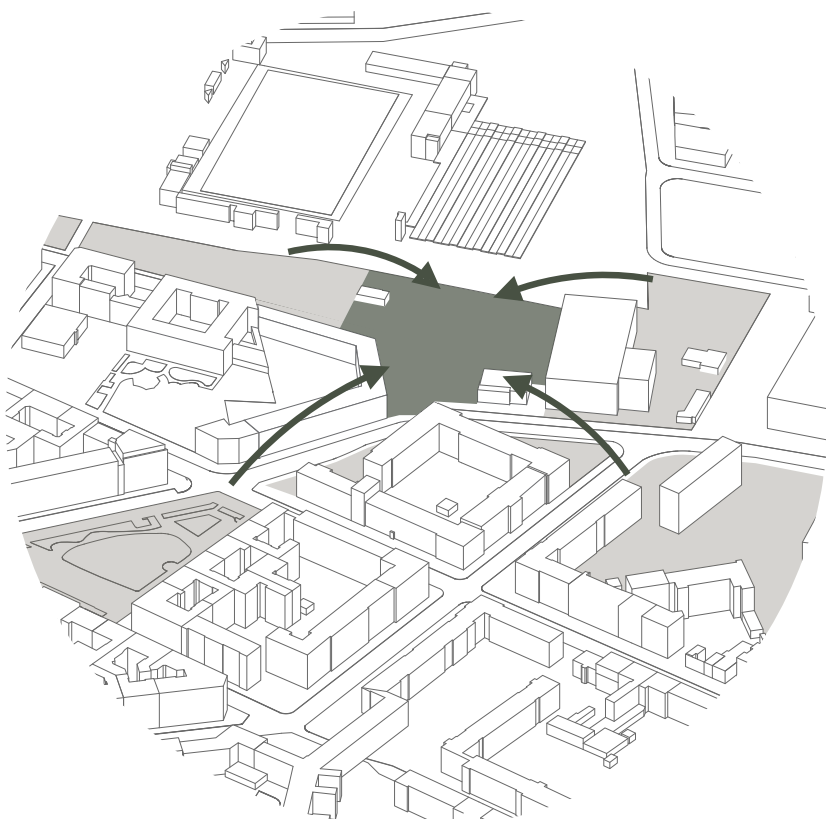


Site Plan Strategy

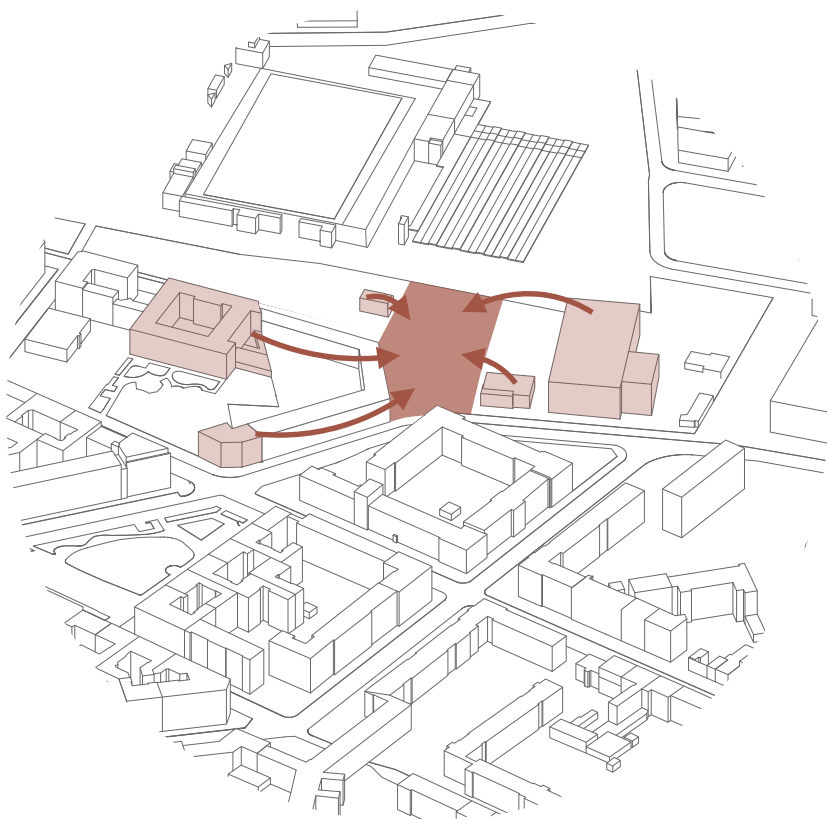
club



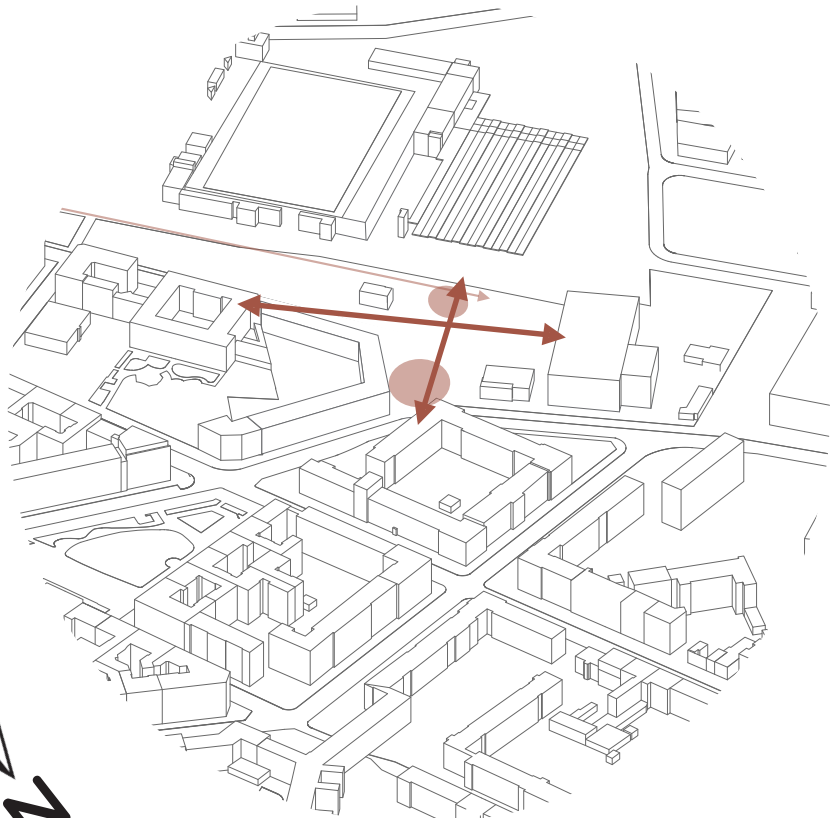
Finish the Building Block



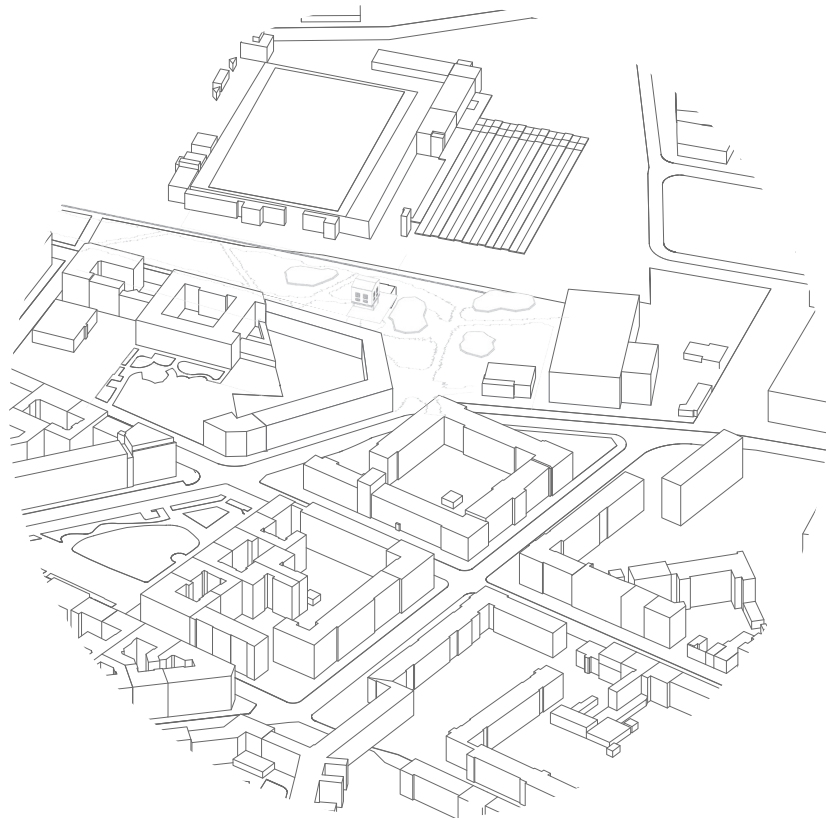
Green Corridor



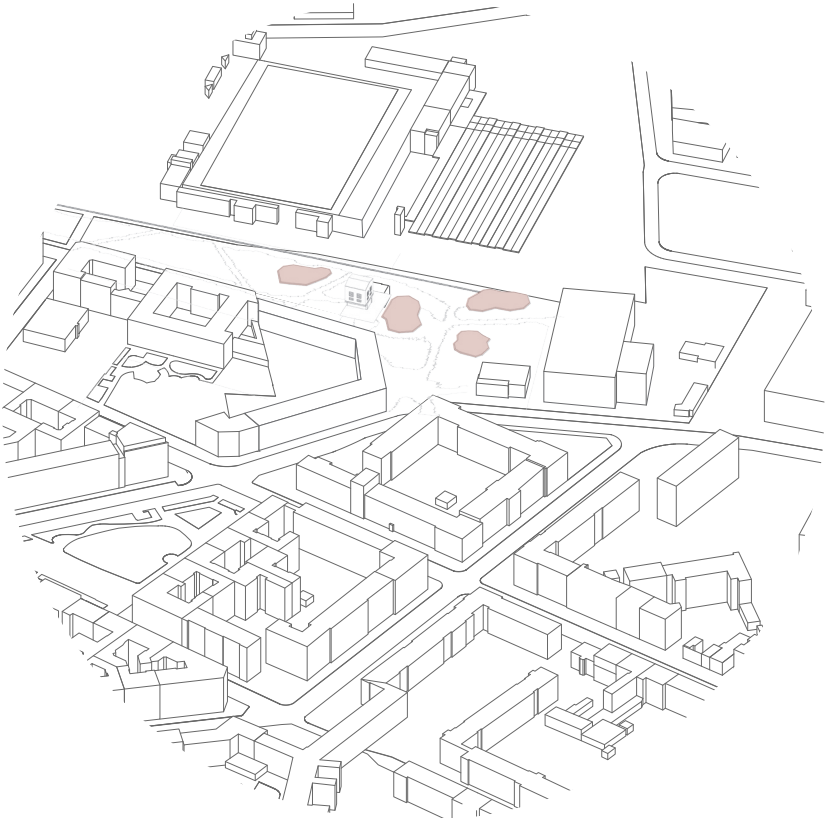
Functions synergy



Main axis



Path blending into the greenery

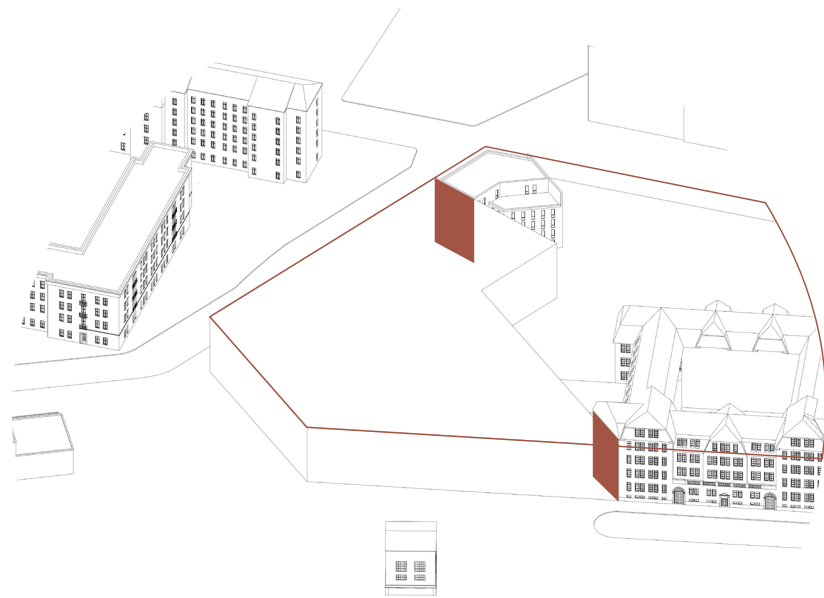


Breaking Islands

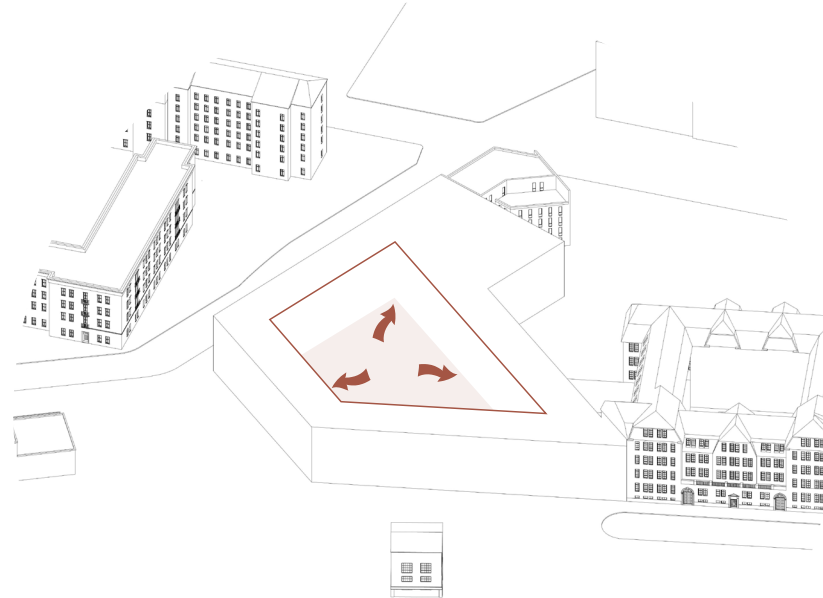


Week 2.6

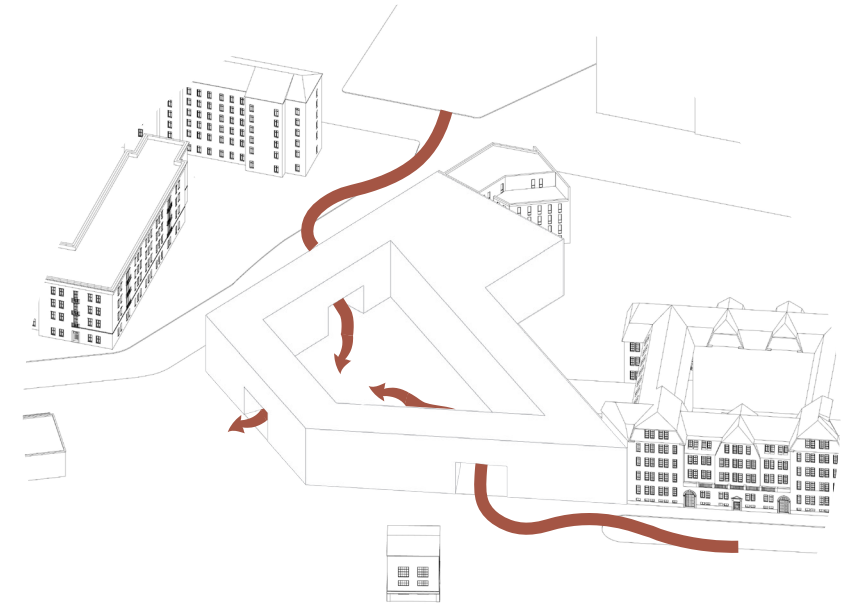
Building Strategy



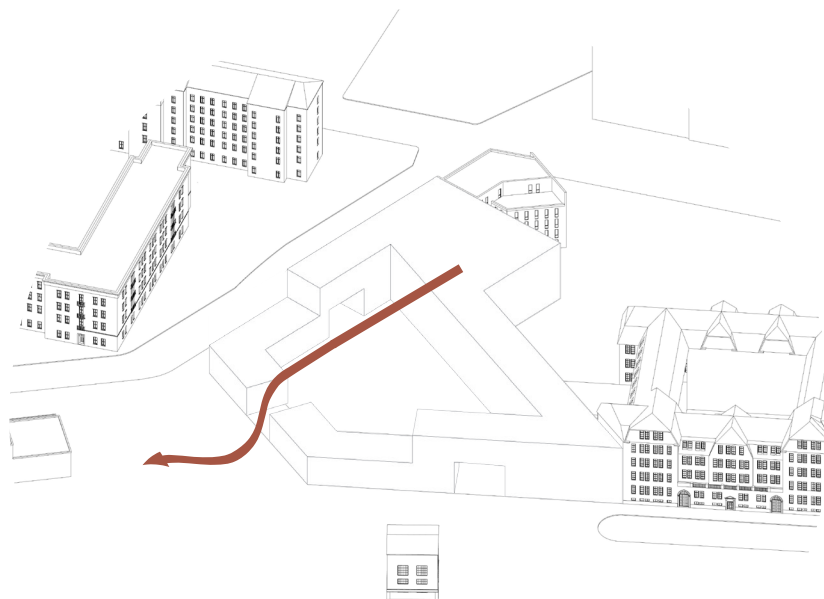
Building Block Enclose



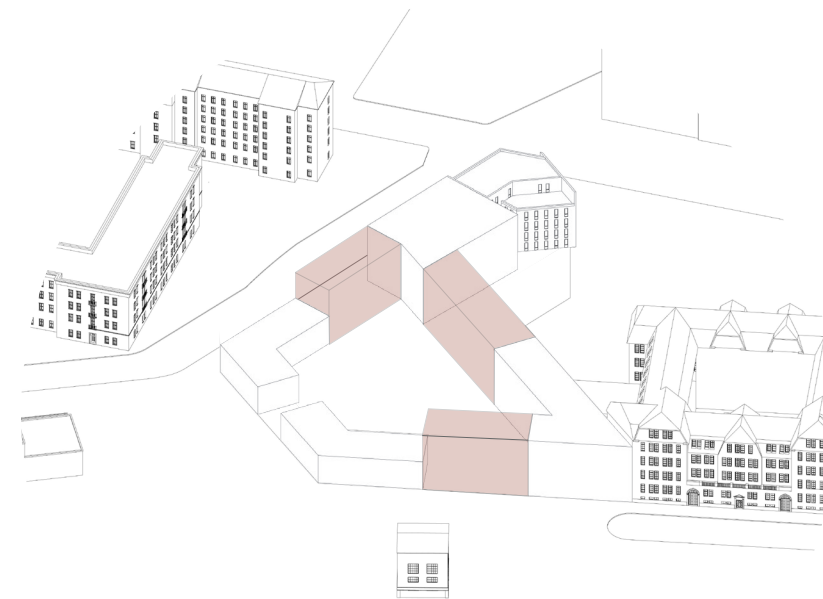
Courtyard Organization



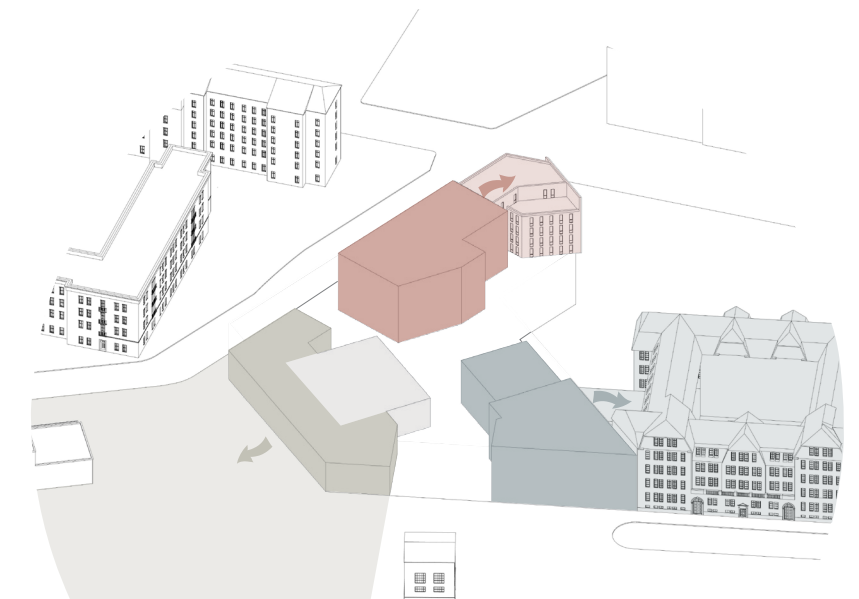
Pathway Flow



Height Transition

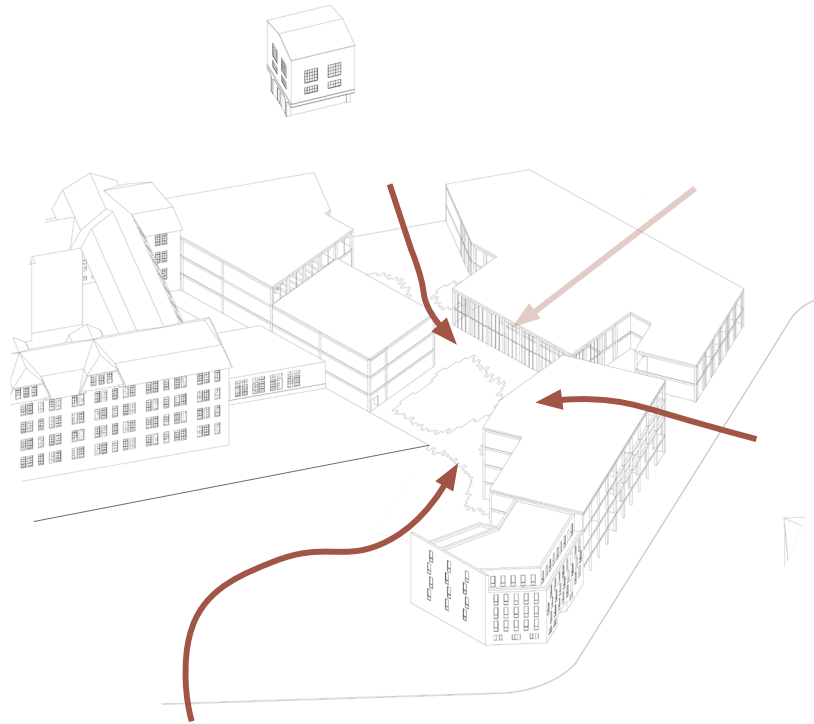


Future Development

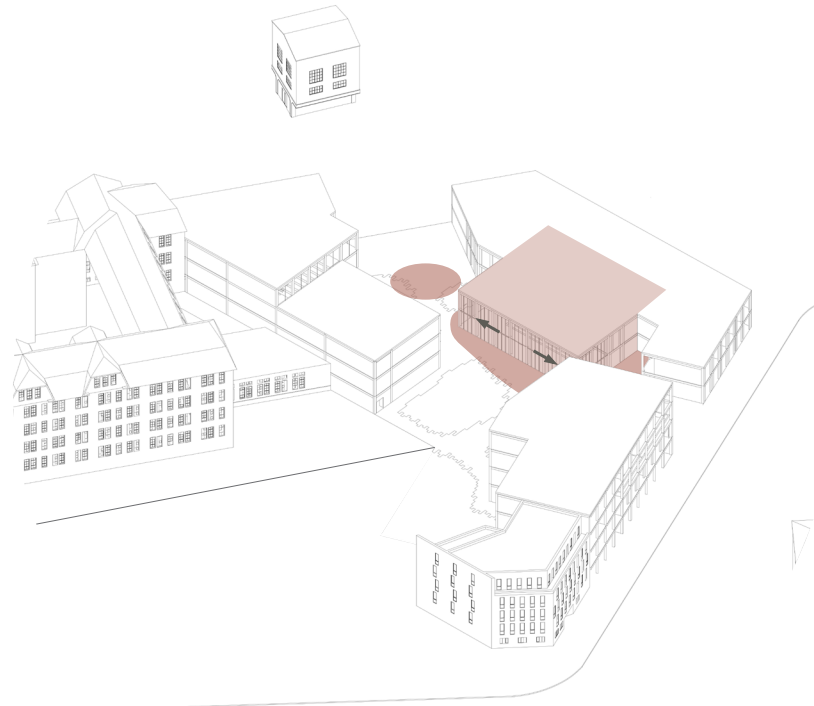


Program Relation to the Surrounding

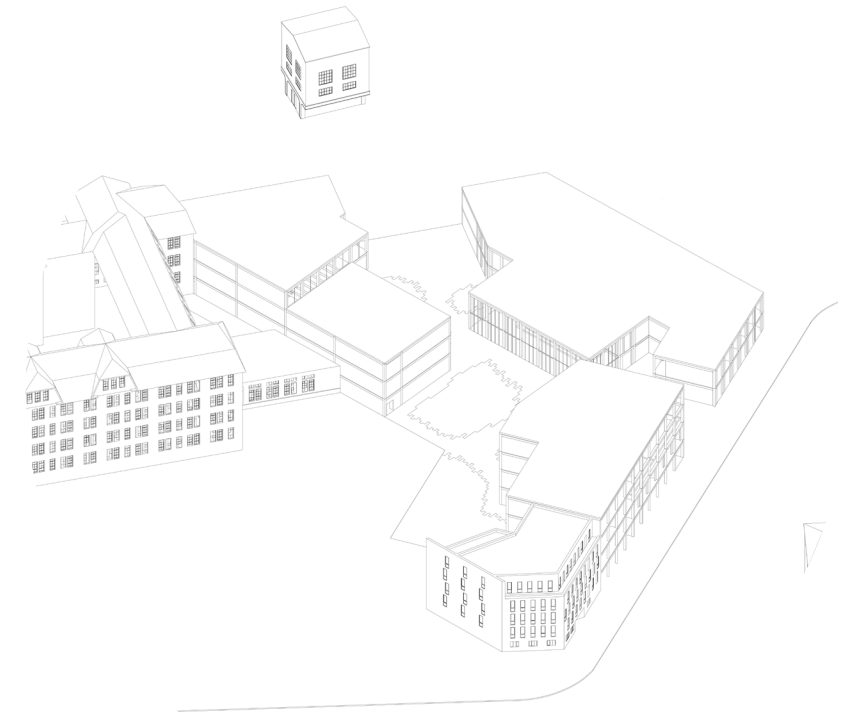
Courtyard Strategy



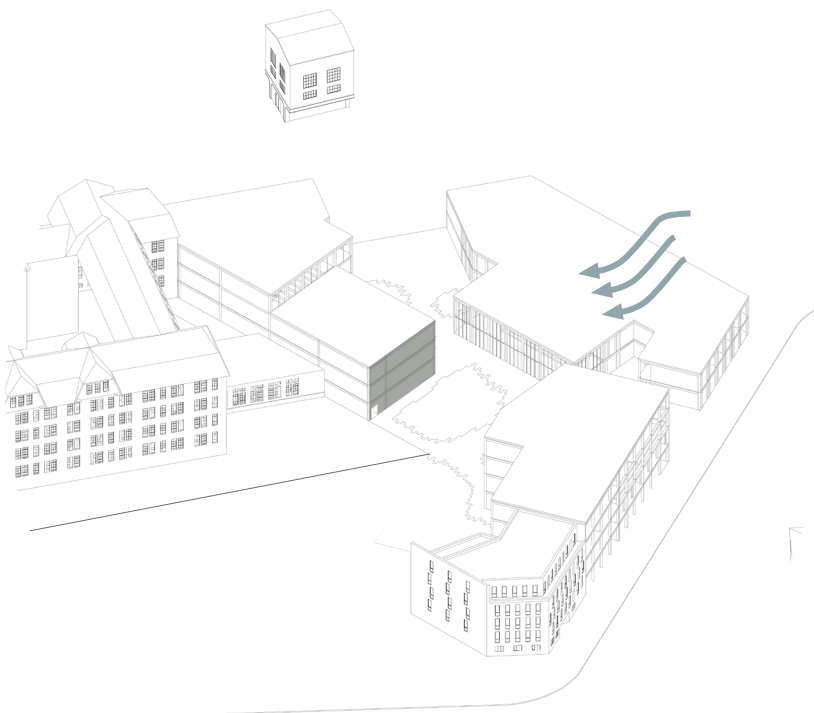
Approaching axis diagram



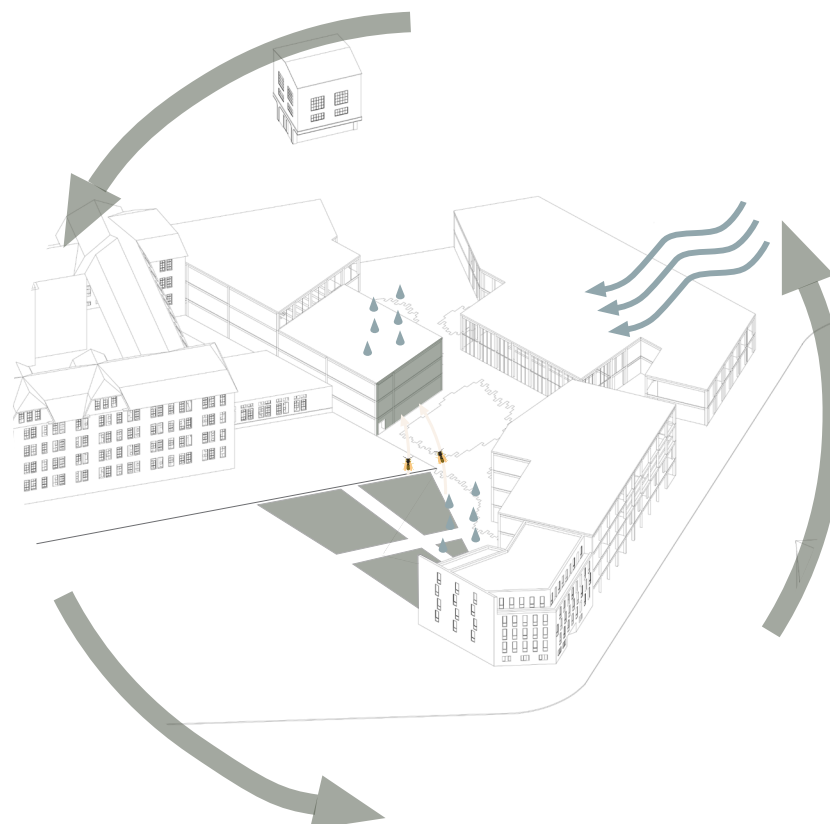
Central Square Diagram



Pathway Flow



Green Wall Purification

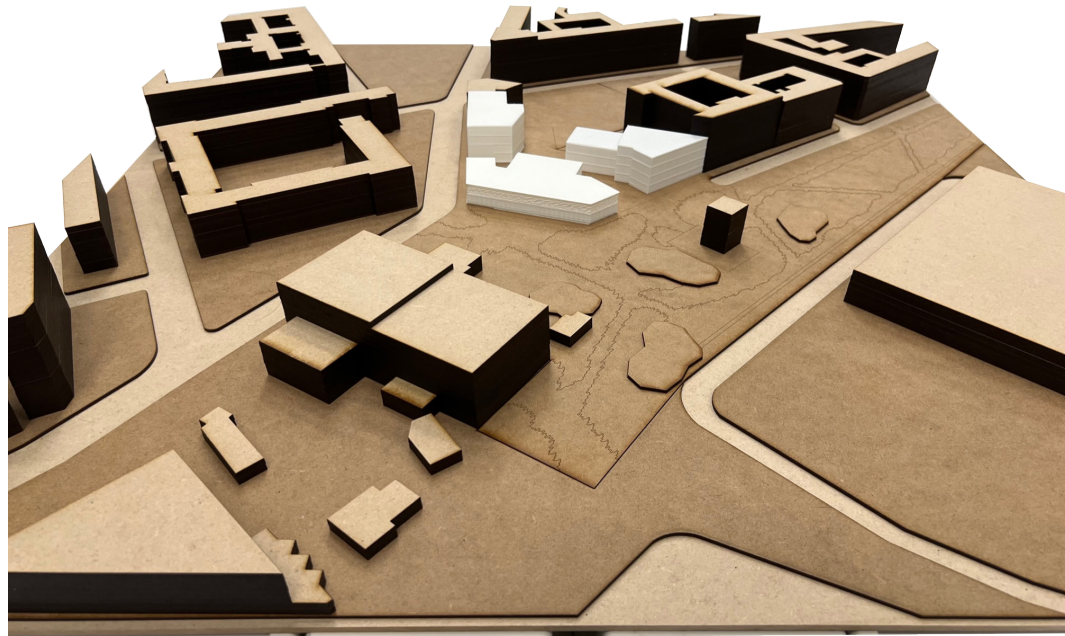


Self-Sustaining Ecosystem

Path blending into the greenery

Week 2.7

Site Model



Structure Strategy



Figure 27

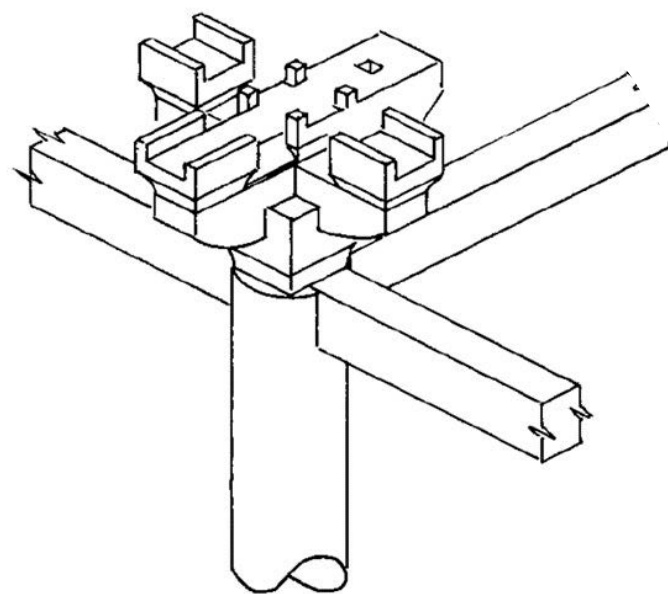
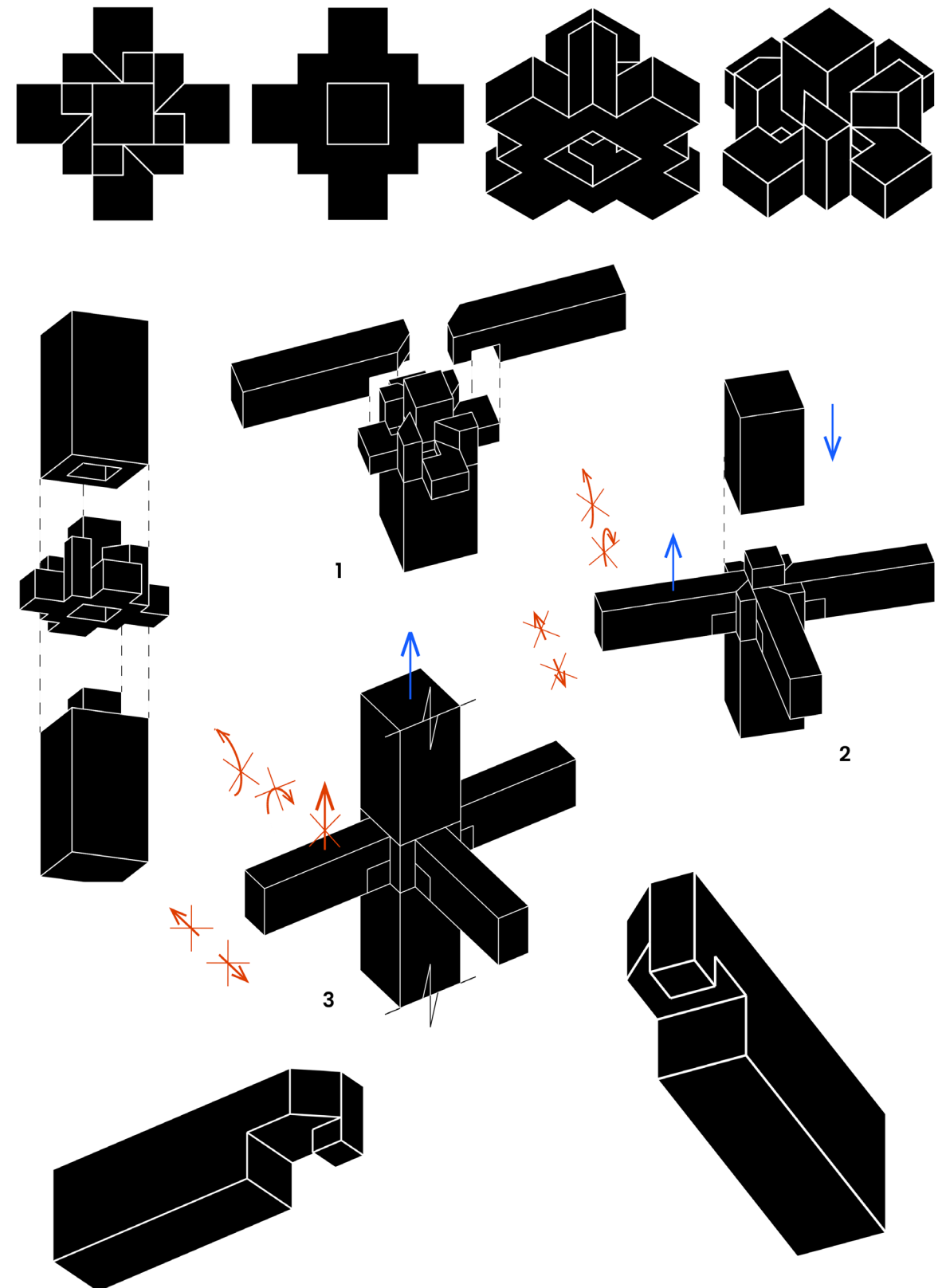
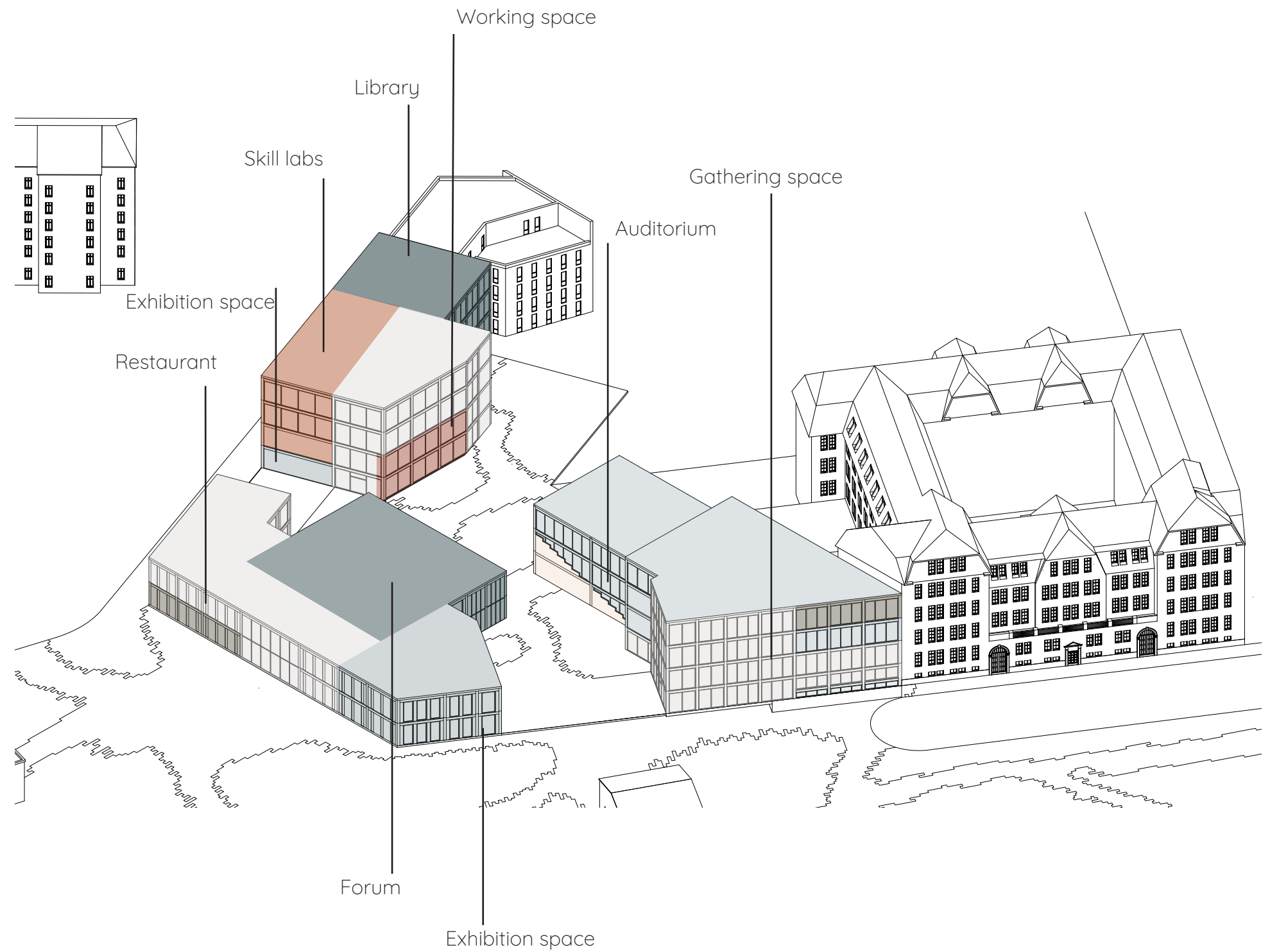


Figure 28



Structure Diagram

Week 2.8-2.10

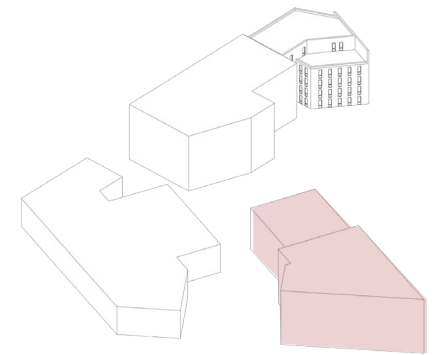
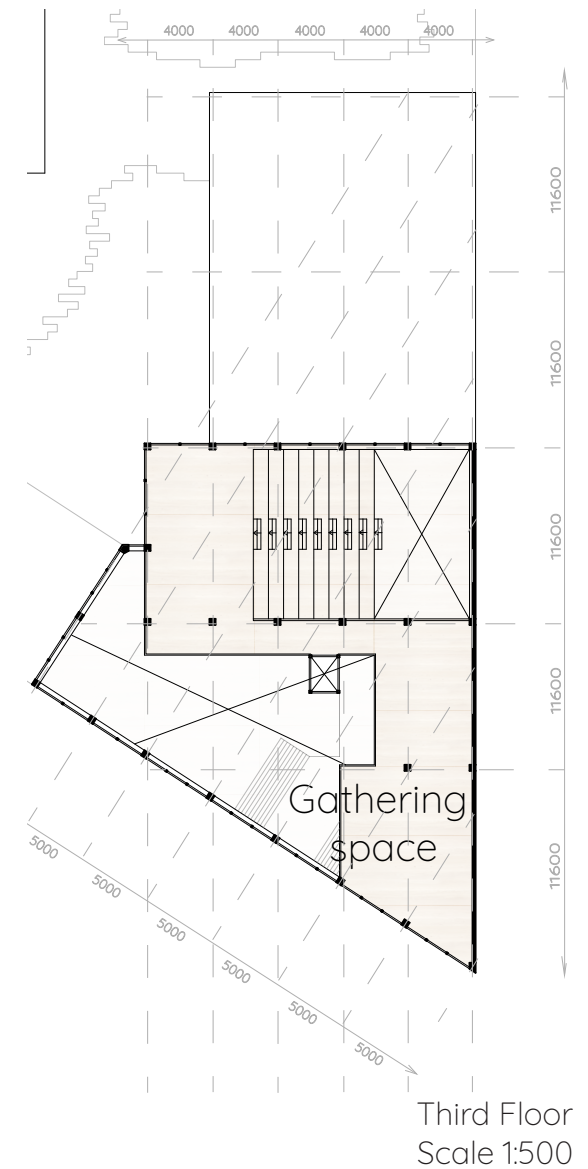
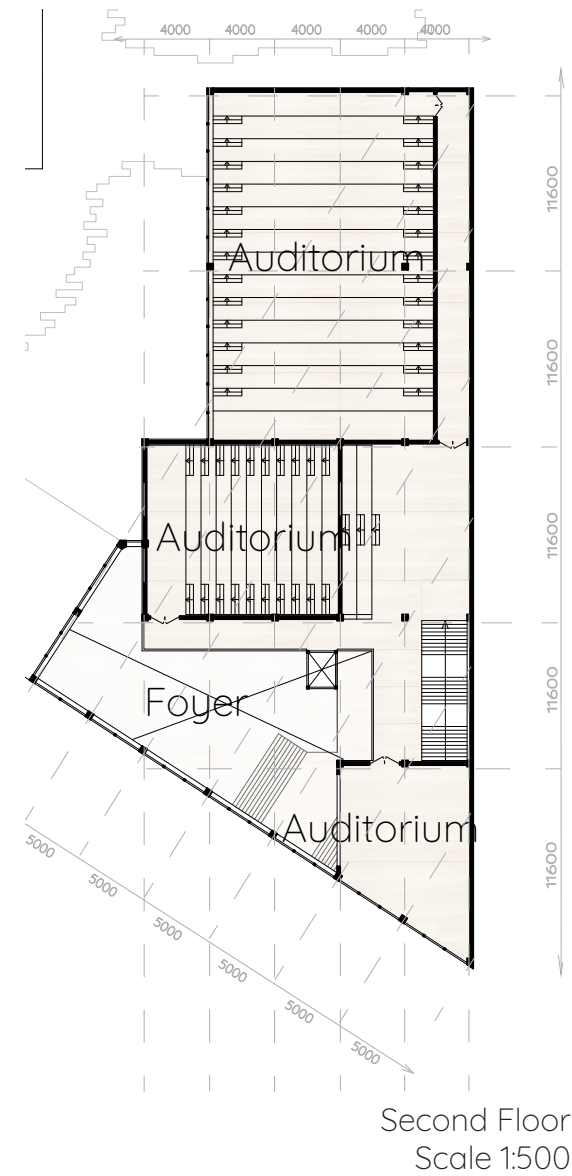
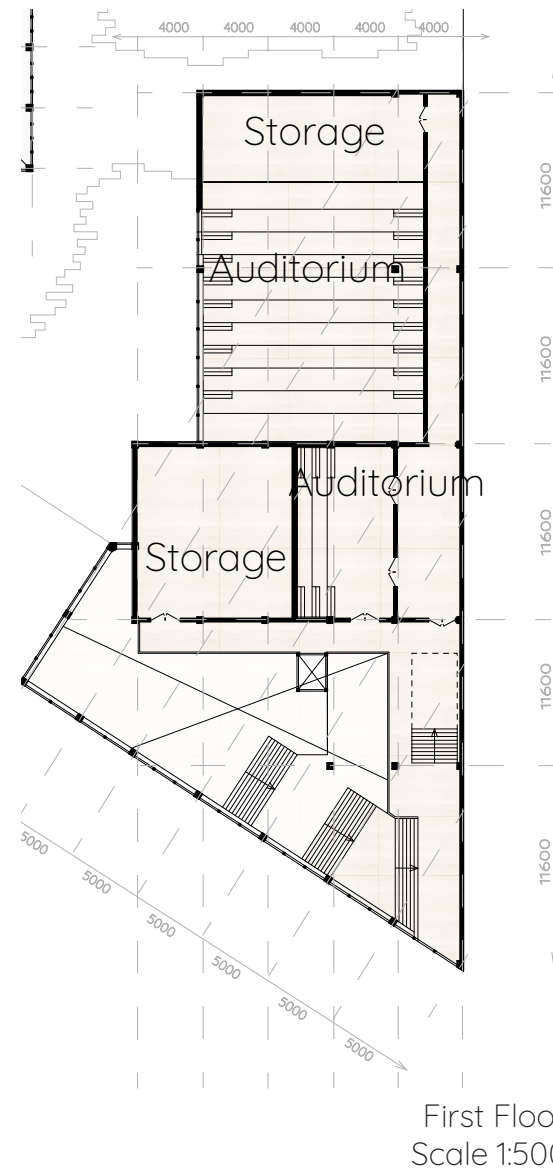
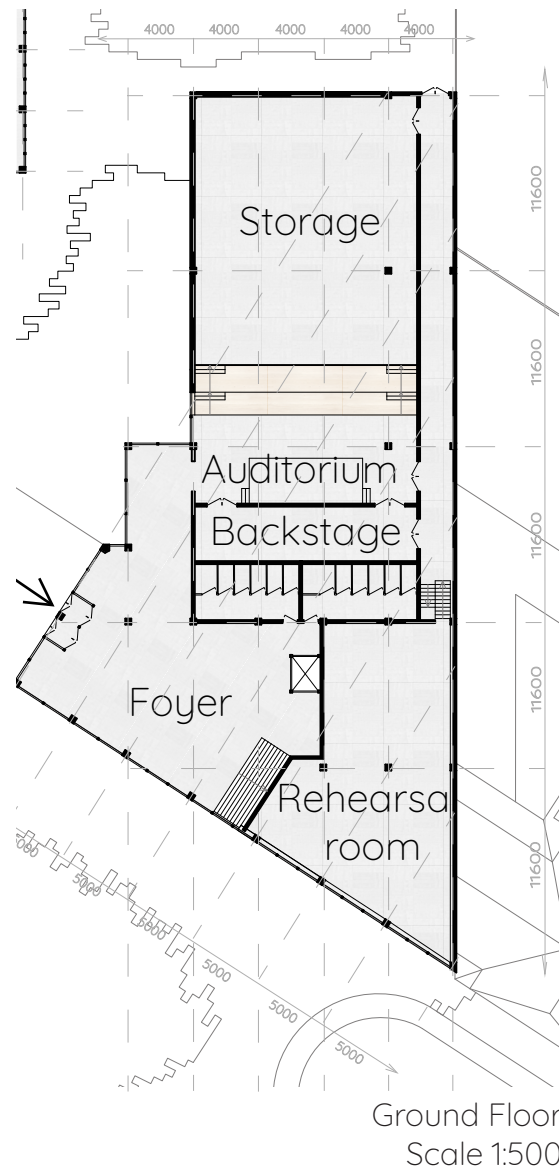


Program Organization Axonometric Drawing
Scale 1:500

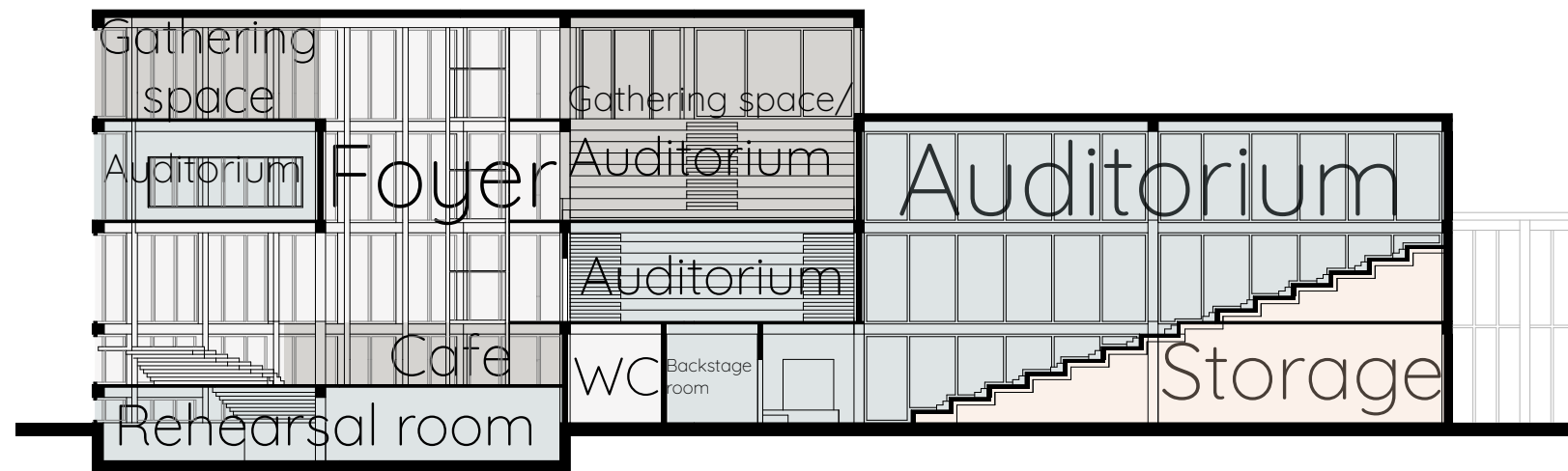
Master Plan



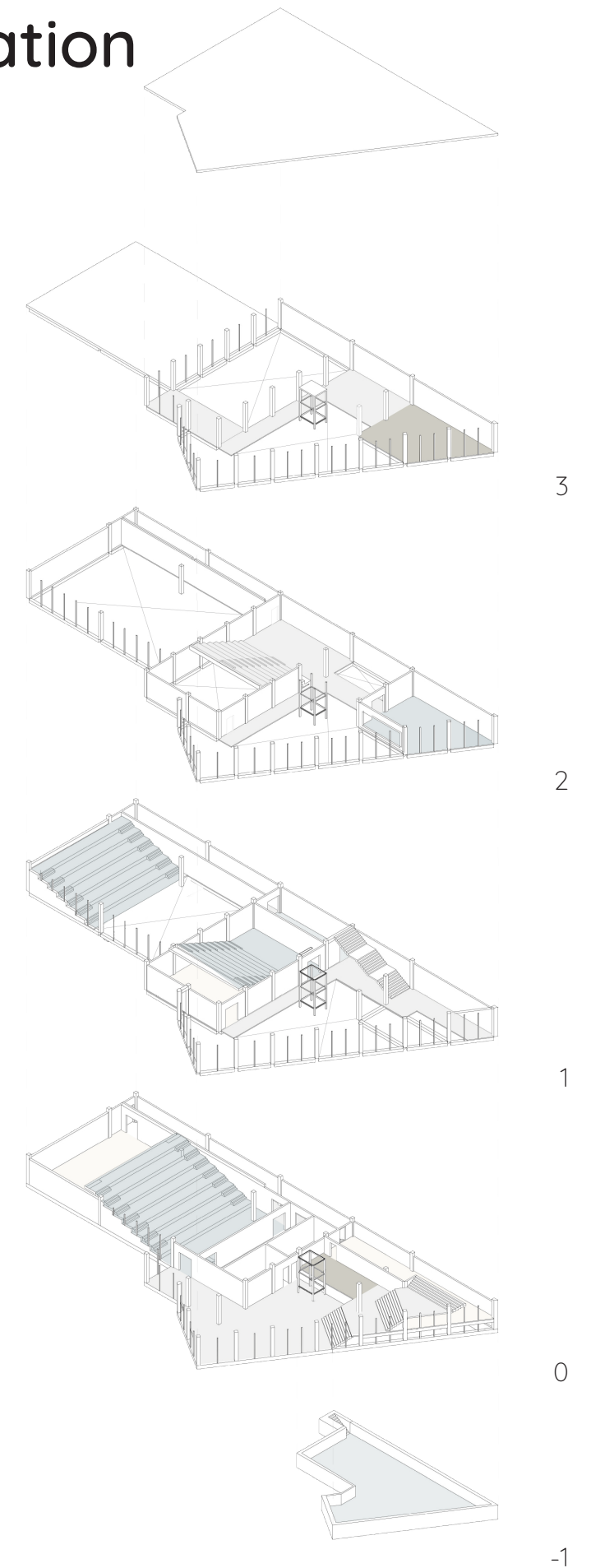
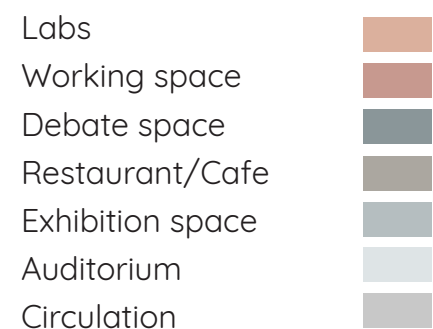
Auditorium Building - Spatial Organization



Auditorium Building - Spatial Organization



Section
Scale 1:500

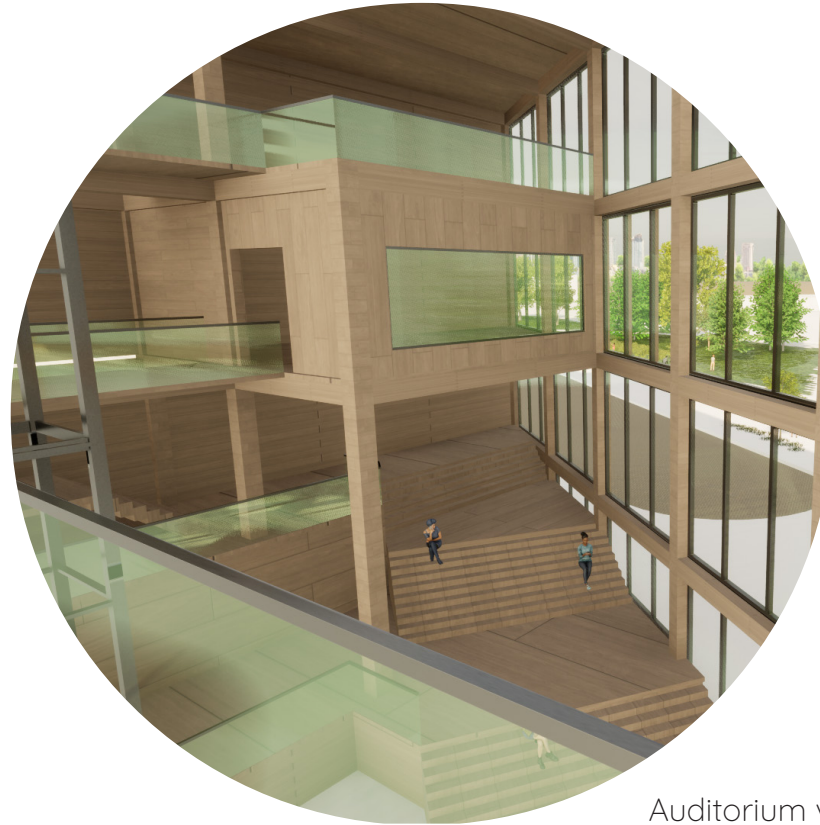


Auditorium Program Axonometric Drawing
Scale 1:500

Auditorium Building - Circulation



Figure 29



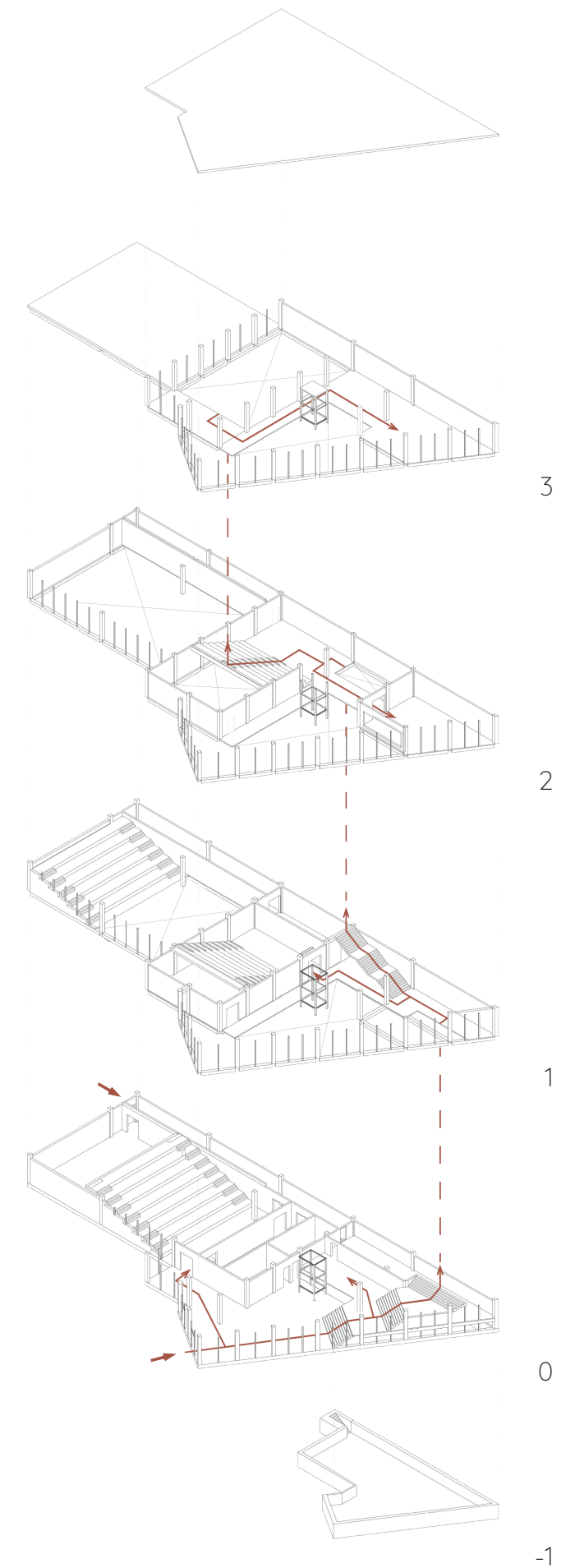
Auditorium view 1



Figure 30

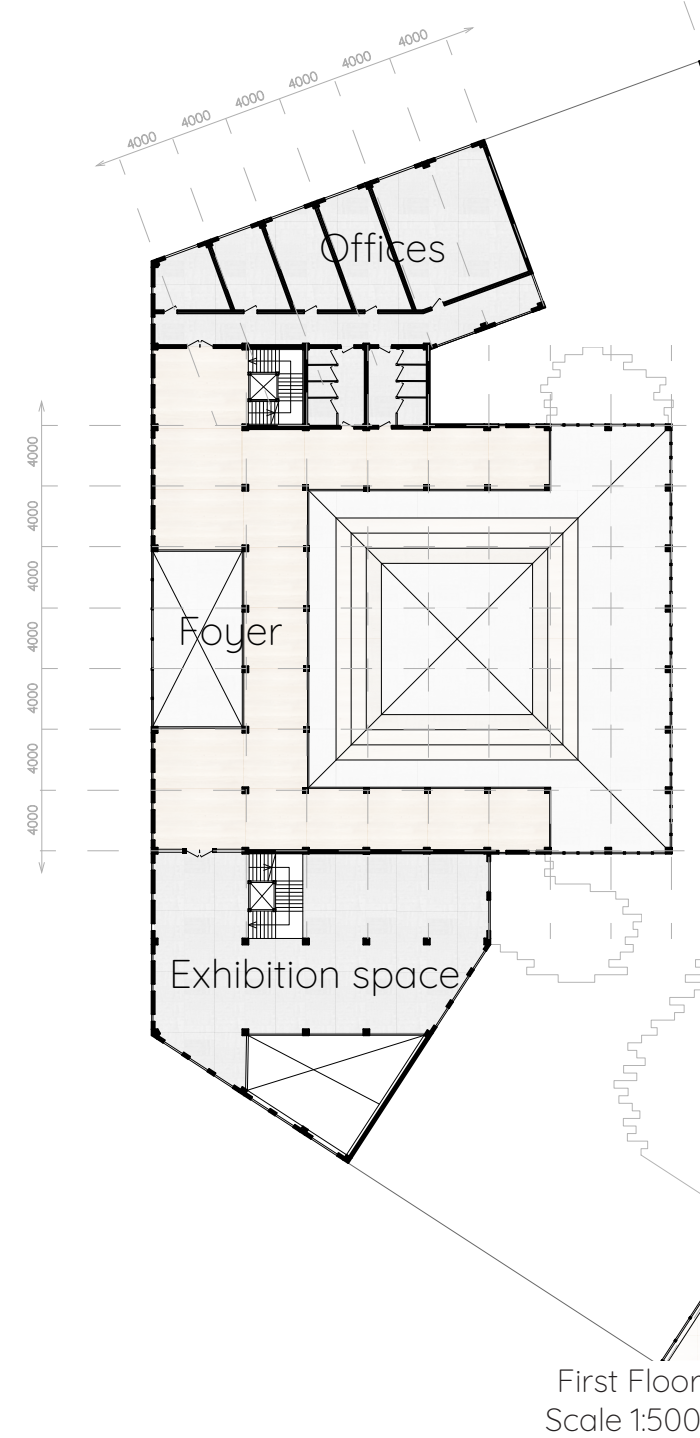
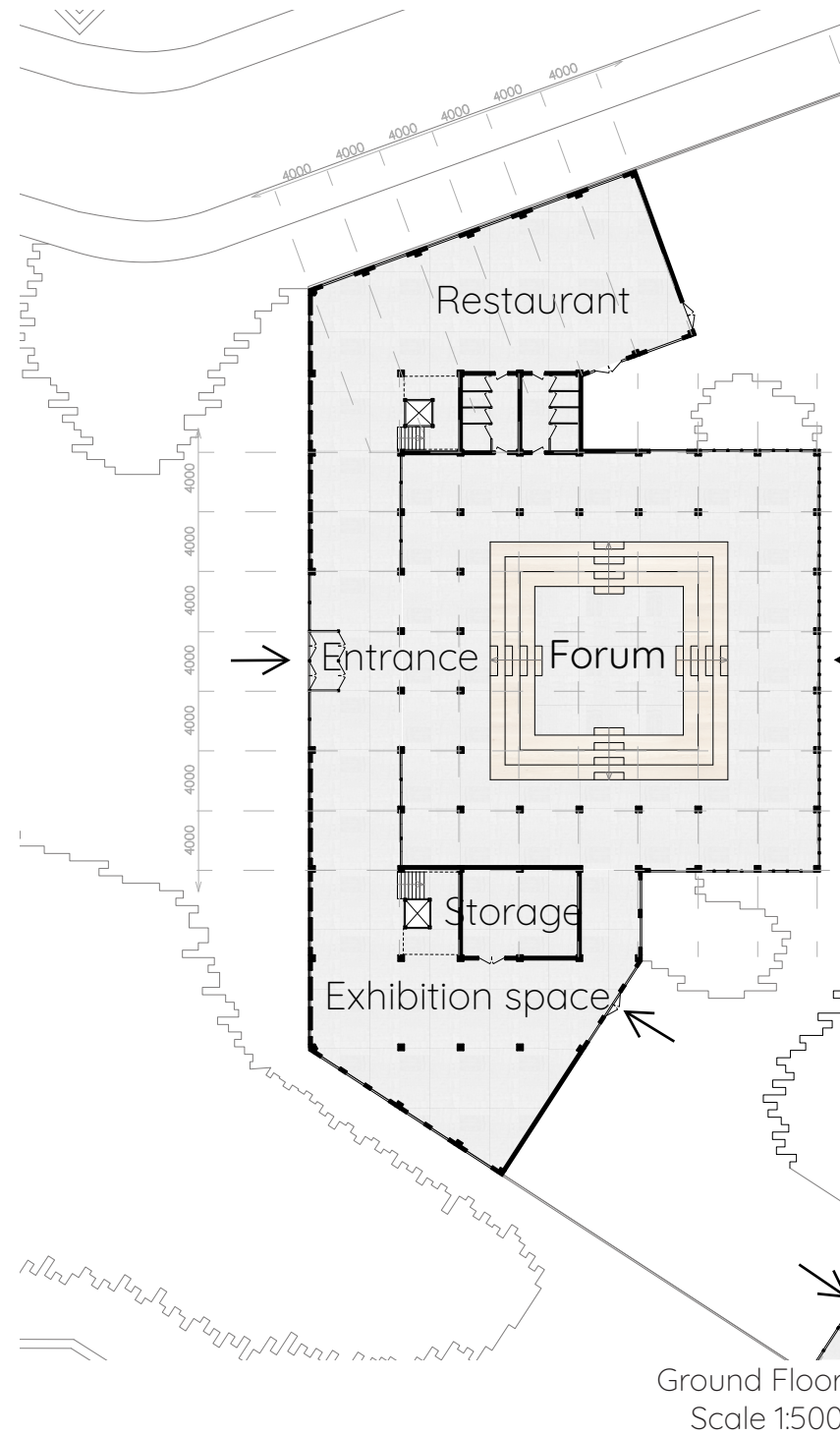
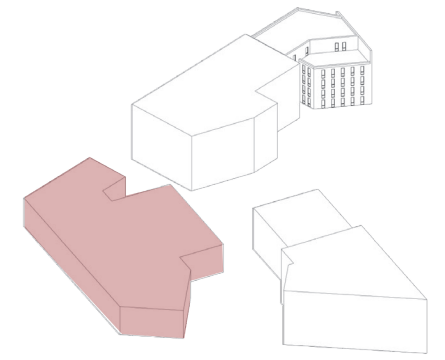


Auditorium view 2



Auditorium Circulation Axonometric Drawing
Scale 1:500

Forum Building - Spatial Organization

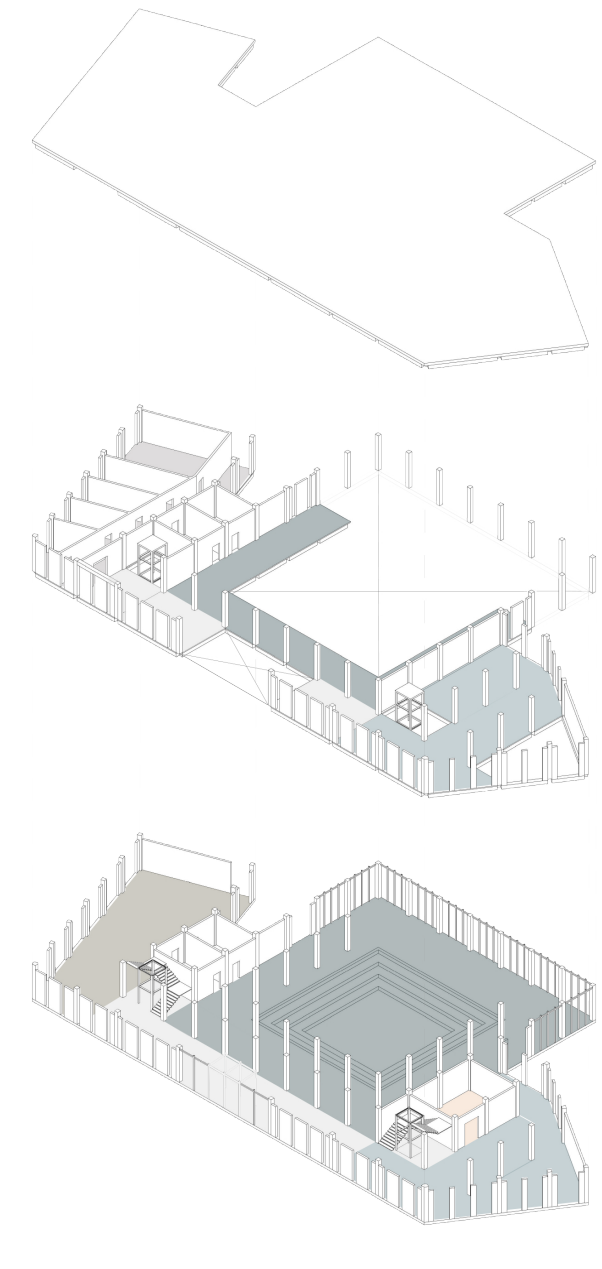


Forum Building - Spatial Organization

3



- Labs
- Working space
- Debate space
- Restaurant/Cafe
- Exhibition space
- Auditorium
- Circulation



Forum Program Axonometric drawing
Scale 1:500

Forum Building - Circulation



Figure 31



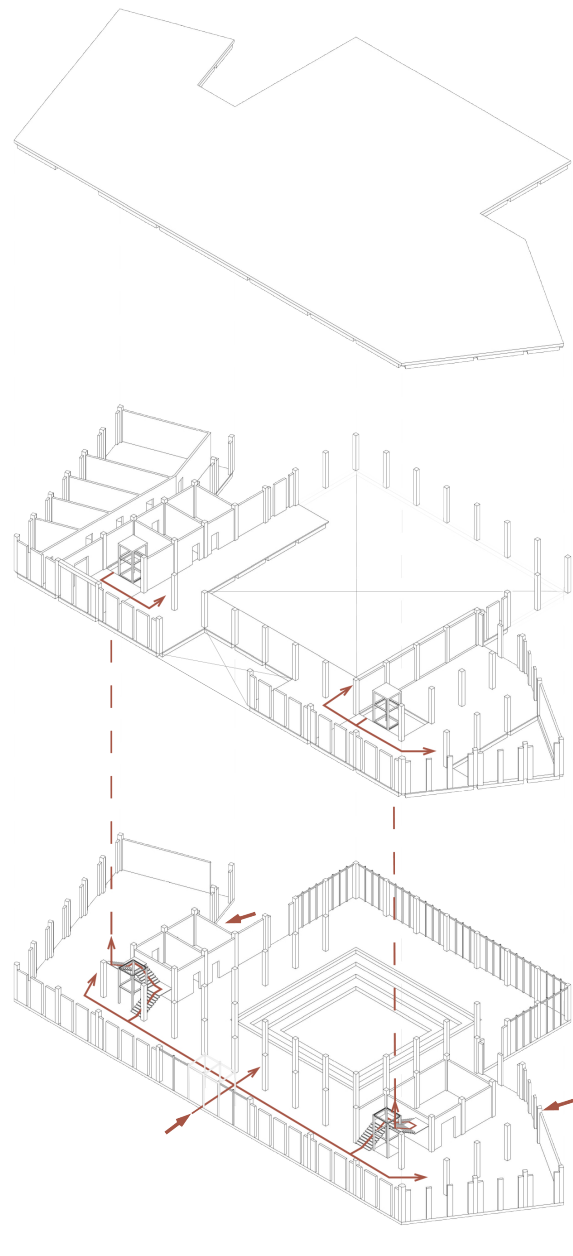
Forum view 1



Figure 32

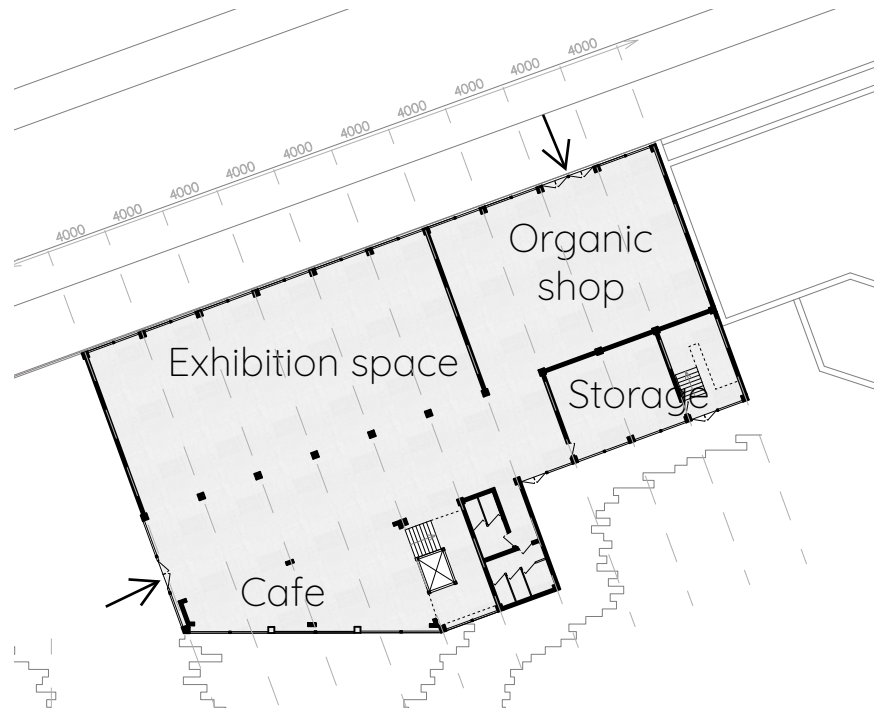
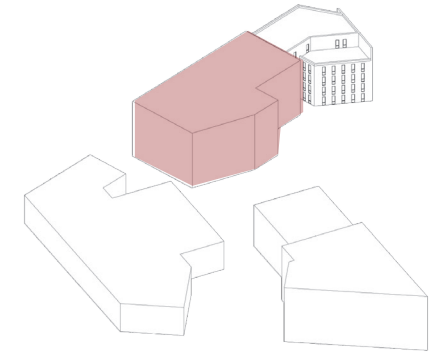


Forum view 2

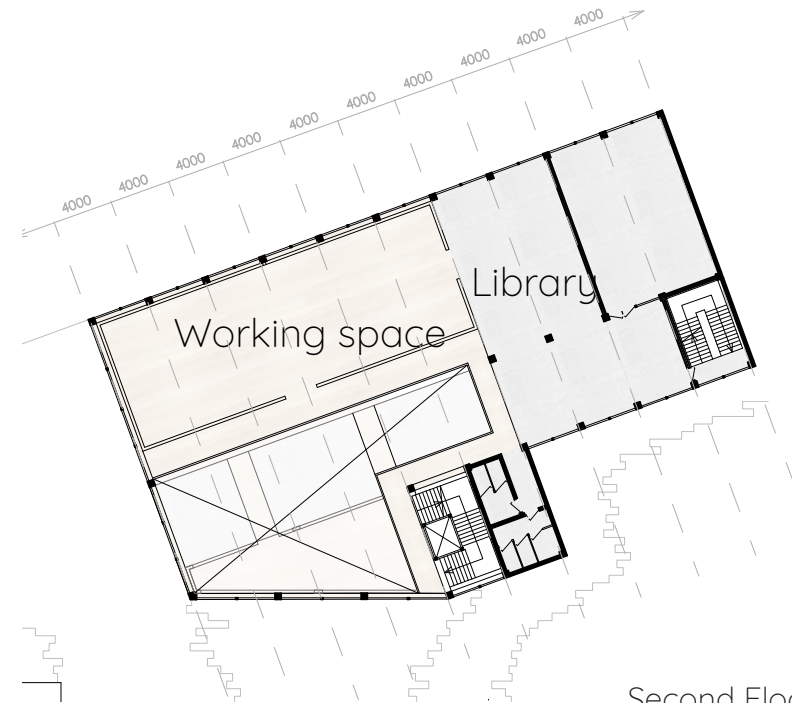


Forum Circulation Axonometric drawing
Scale 1:500

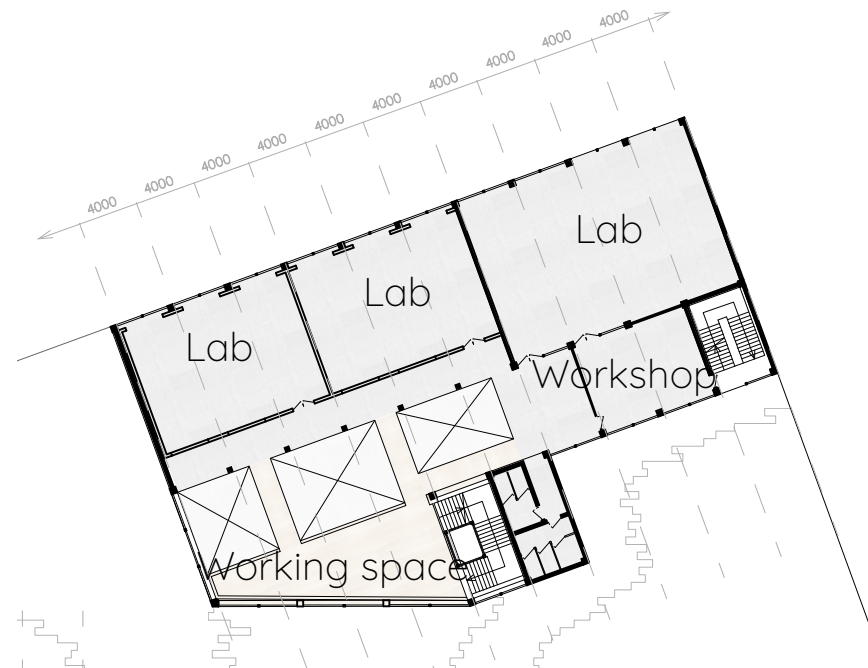
Skill Labs Building - Spatial Organization



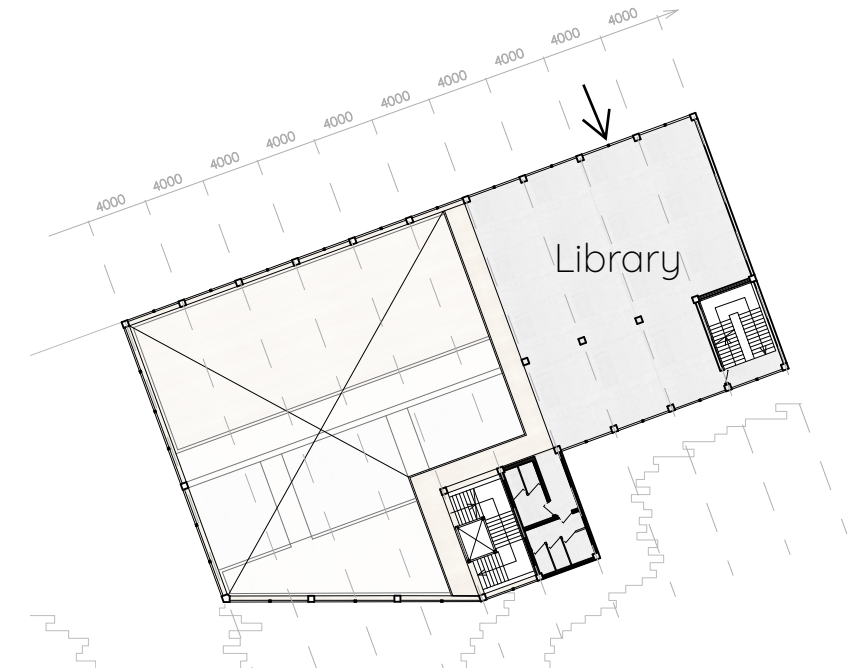
Ground Floor
Scale 1:500



Second Floor
Scale 1:500



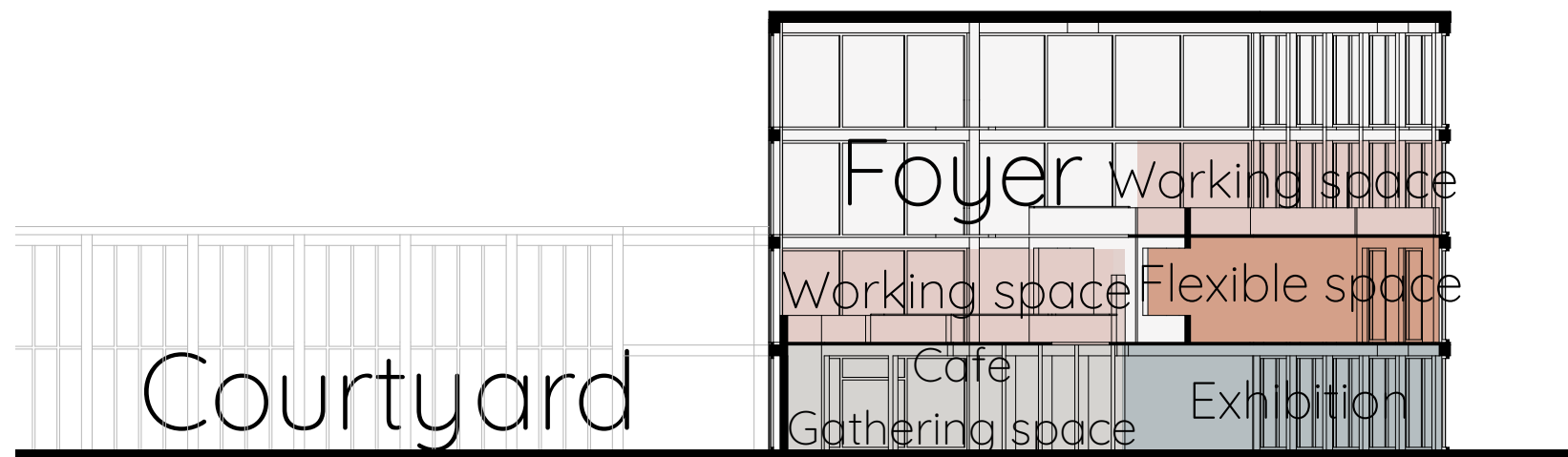
First Floor
Scale 1:500



Third Floor
Scale 1:500

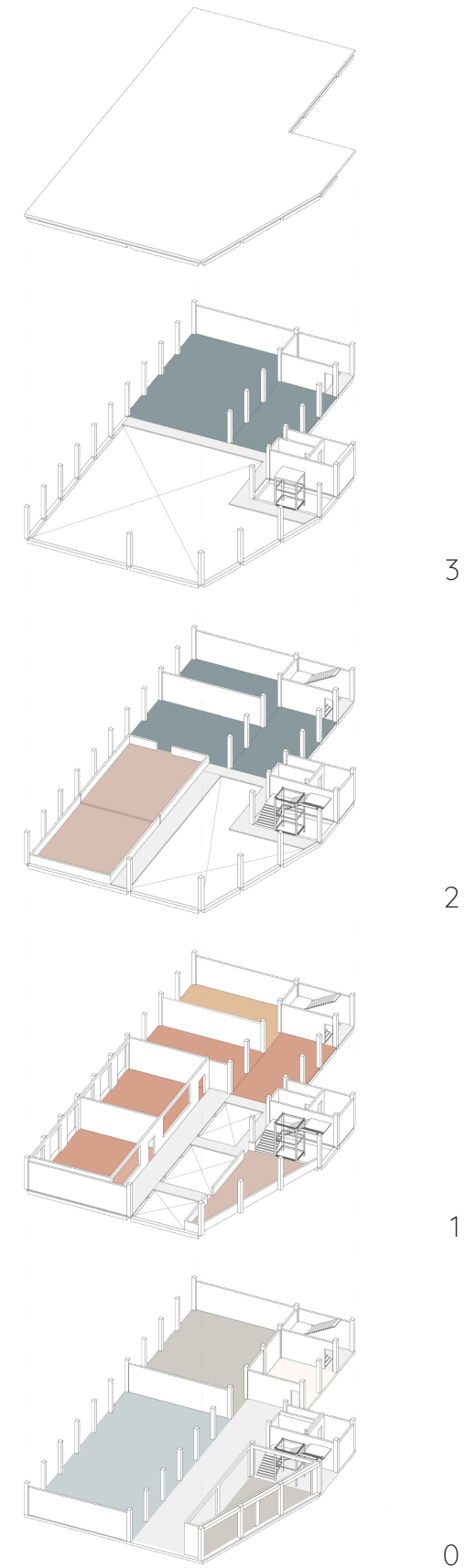


Skill Labs Building - Spatial Organization



Section
Scale 1:500

- Labs
- Working space
- Debate space
- Restaurant/Cafe
- Exhibition space
- Auditorium
- Circulation



Skill Labs Program Axonometric Drawing
Scale 1:500

Skill Labs Building - Circulation



Figure 33



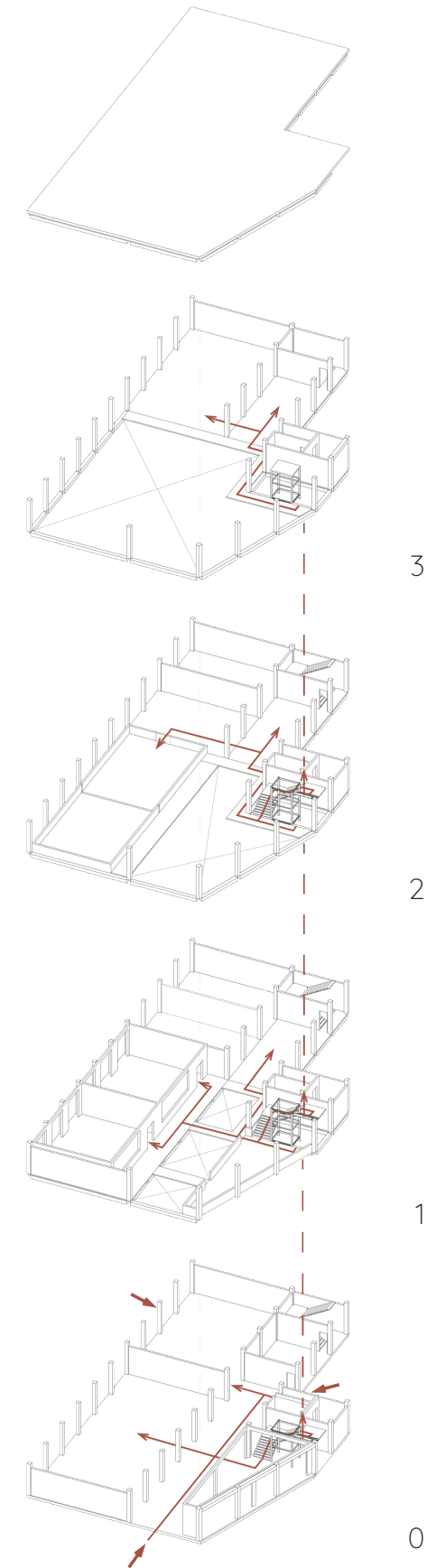
Skill Labs view 1



Figure 34

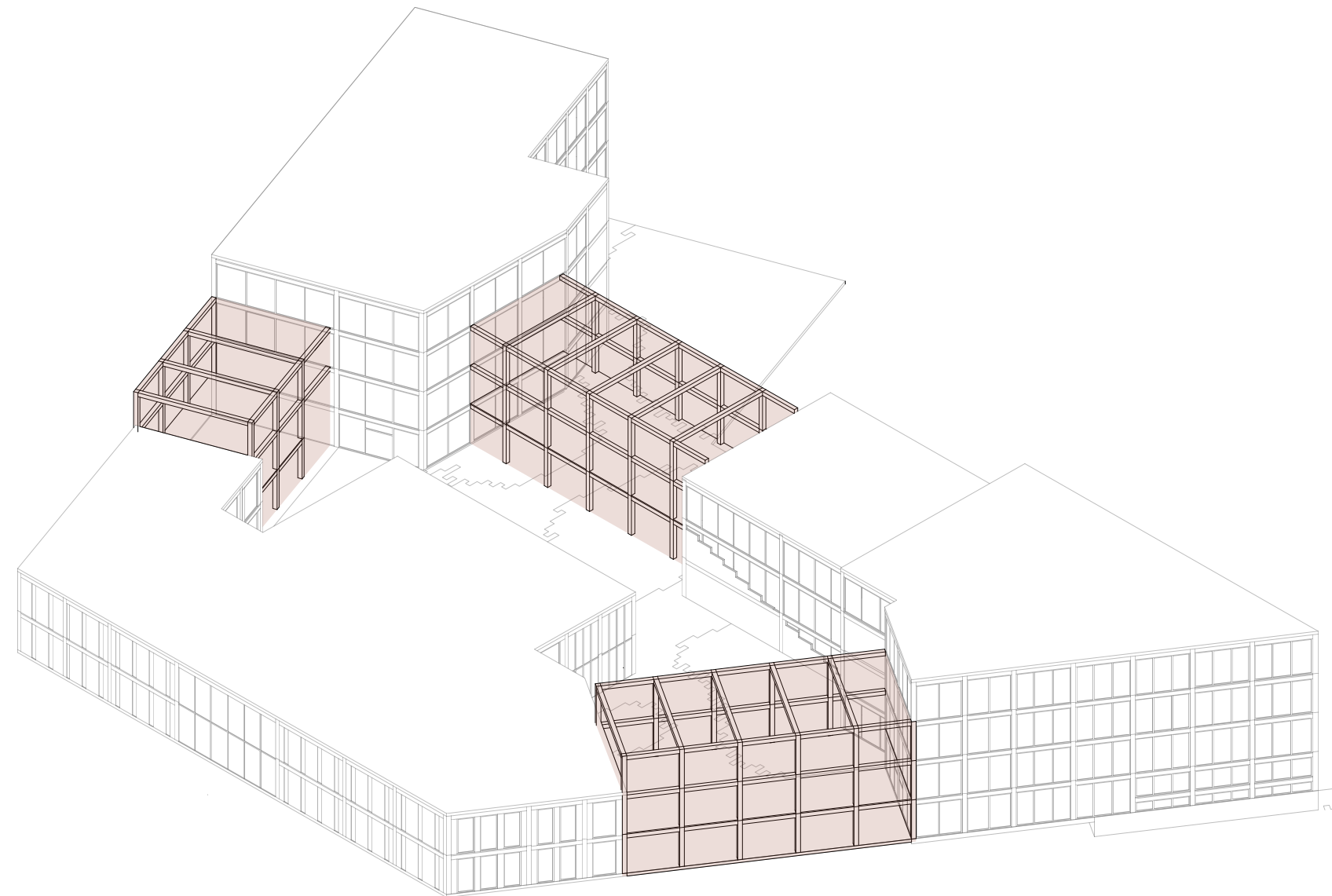


Skill Labs view 2



Skill Labs Circulation Axonometric Drawing
Scale 1:500

Future extensions



Extensions Axonometric drawing
Scale 1:500

Courtyard Atmosphere



Courtyard view 1



Courtyard view 2



Skill Labs view 3



Skill Labs view 4

Reflection

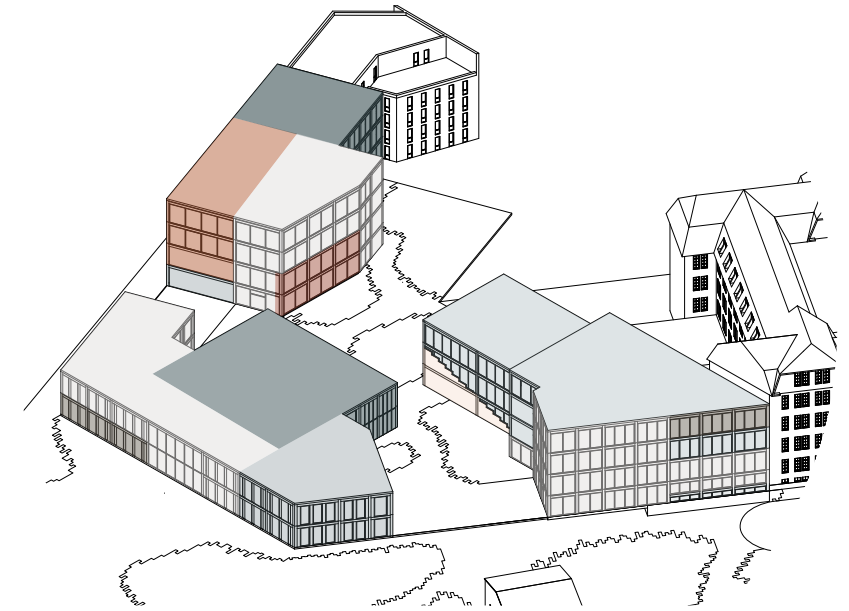
4 Core Pillars

The topic of debate at the center of the interaction of different cultures and ideologies is at the center of the development of direct democracy at the base level of cities. The topic of my graduation project is primarily based on the four core pillars of the public condenser innovative idea, which represent the main studio topic. These four pillars are multiplicity, hybridity, sustainability, and resilience. Multiplicity by creating a middle ground for debate between people from different cultural and ideological backgrounds present in the district but also by creating a space that celebrates the diversity of opinions. Hybridity by creating a space that celebrates and integrates different forms of expression from cultural functions to community and technological functions. And finally, resilience and sustainability by offering the creation of a space at the core of the community which can be modified and adaptable for the needs of the community not only in the present but also in the middle to long-term future.

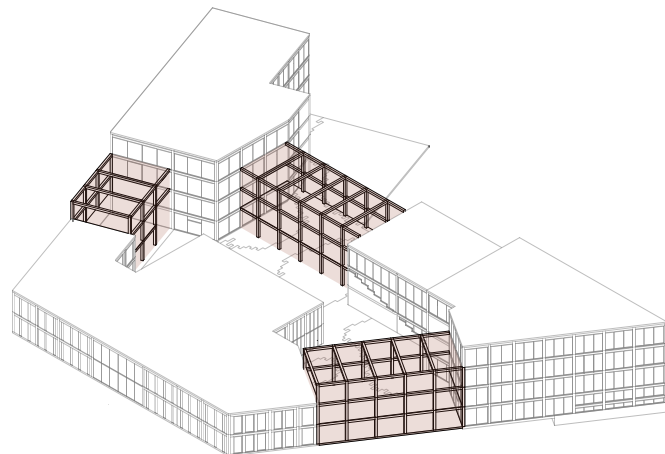
In addition, the research on the role of architecture as the middle ground for social interaction and the understanding of how the architecture itself, through its organization, functions, and aesthetics, influence the interaction between individuals is an essential aspect in understanding and developing the future public building. As such, the research and findings of this graduation project can become part of the understanding of the development of the public condenser concept and the development of public buildings in future cities that should help in the creation of a more inclusive and democratic society by celebrating diversity.



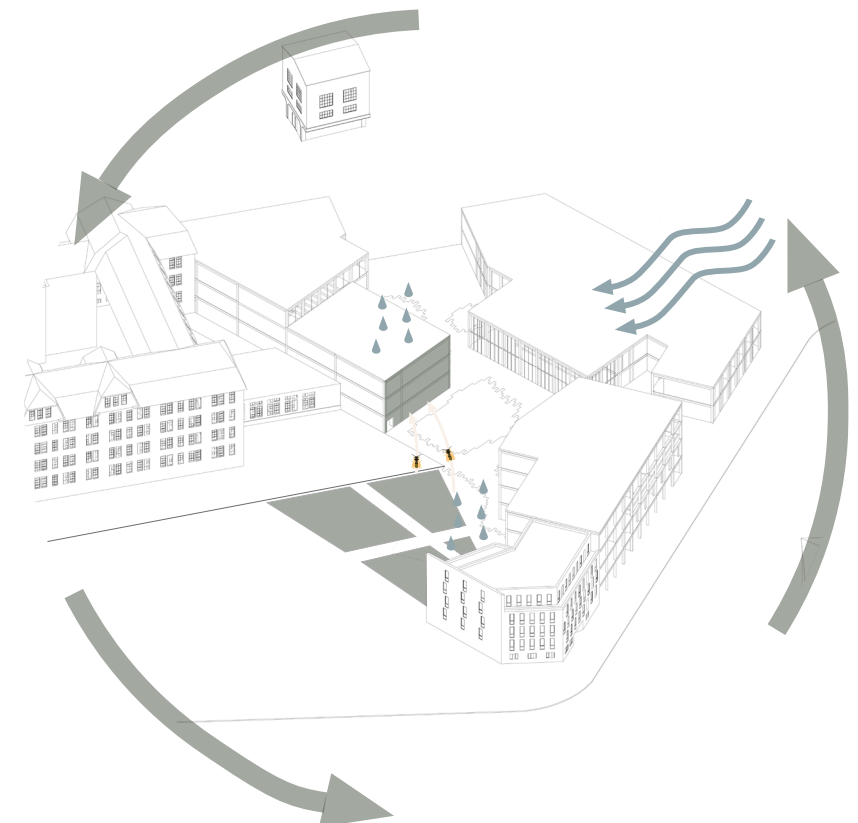
District social groups distribution




Program Organization Axonometric Drawing



Extensions Axonometric drawing



Self-Sustaining Ecosystem



THE MIDDLE GROUND

Of Social Debate
Q3

Week 3.1



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38

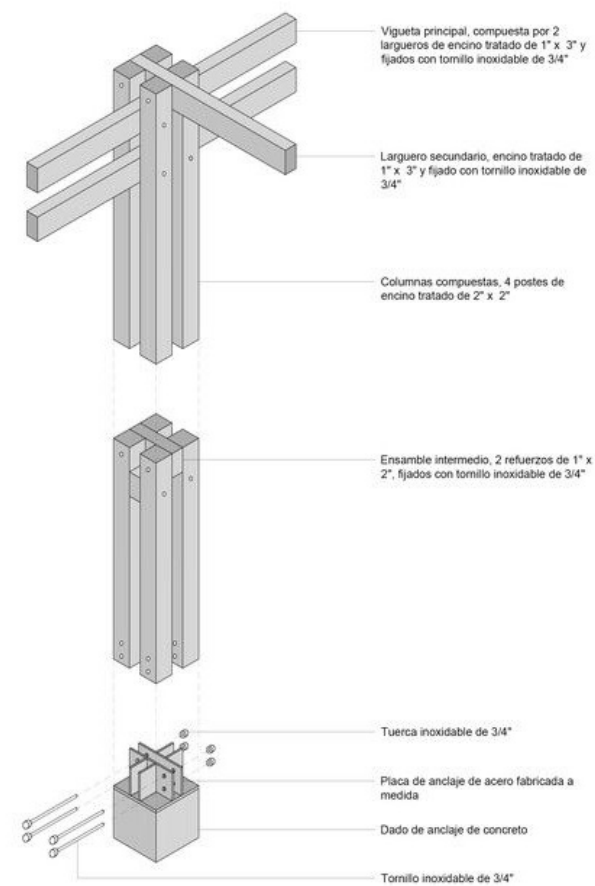


Figure 39



Figure 40

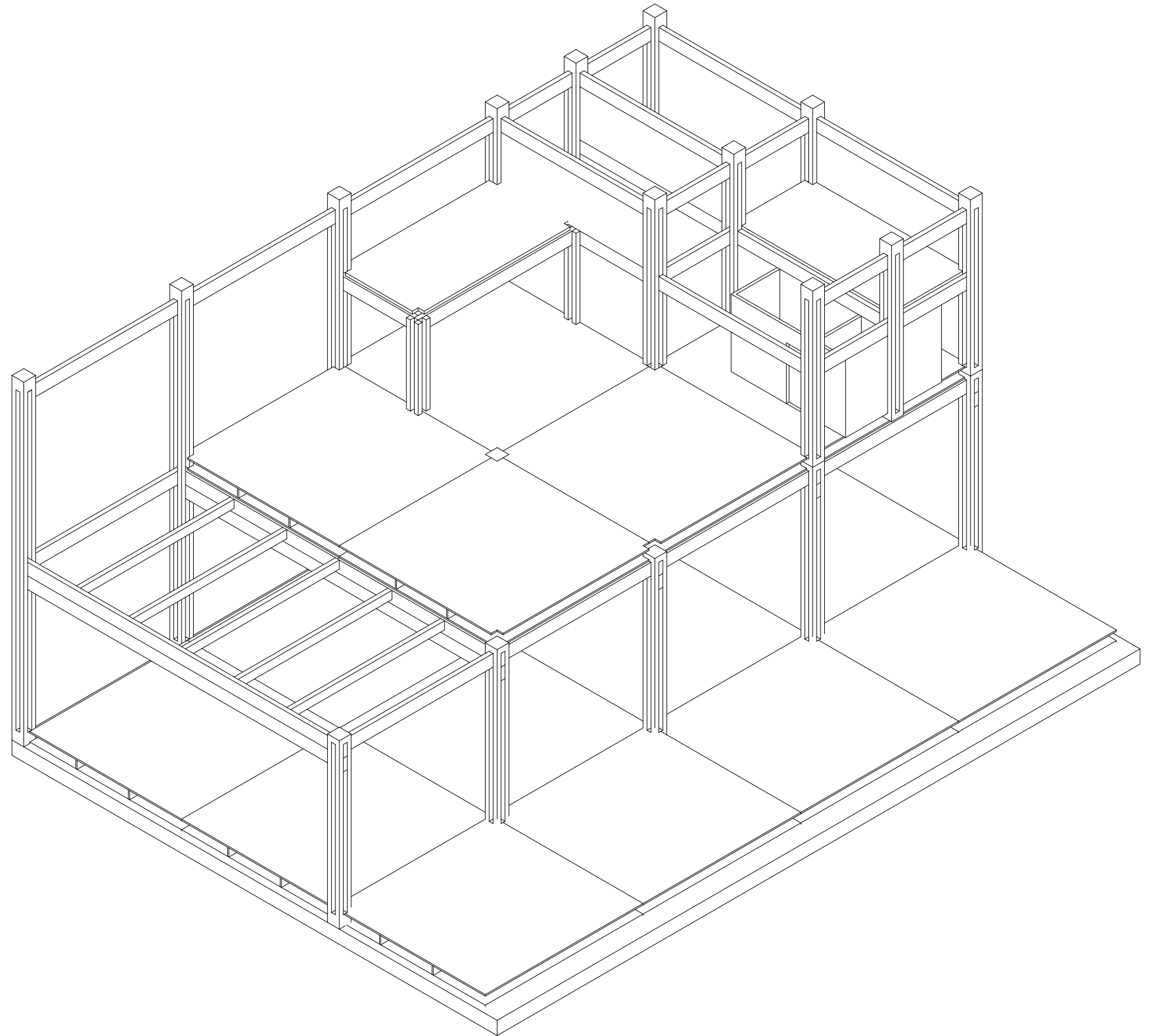


Figure 41



Figure 42

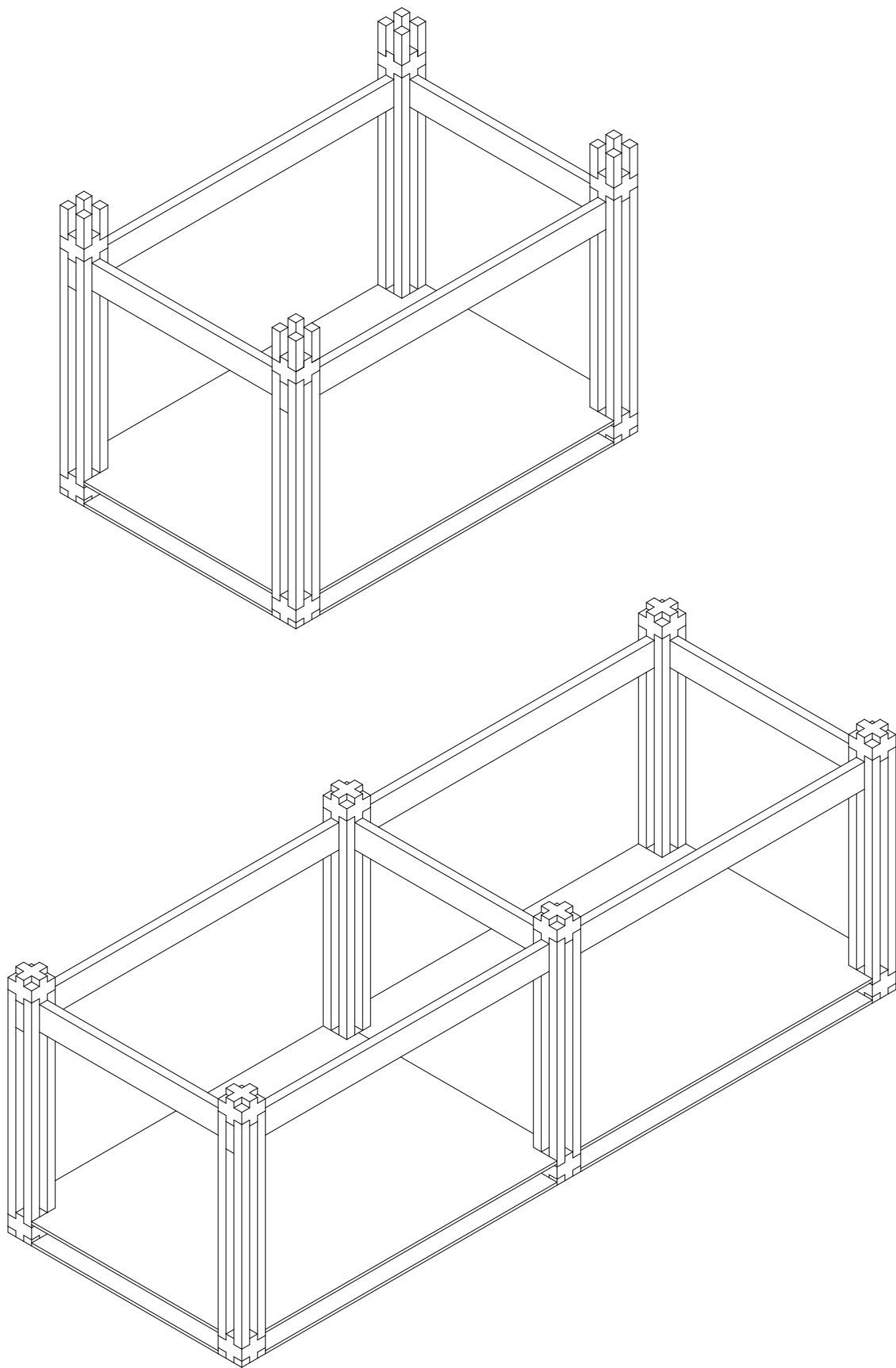
Week 3.2



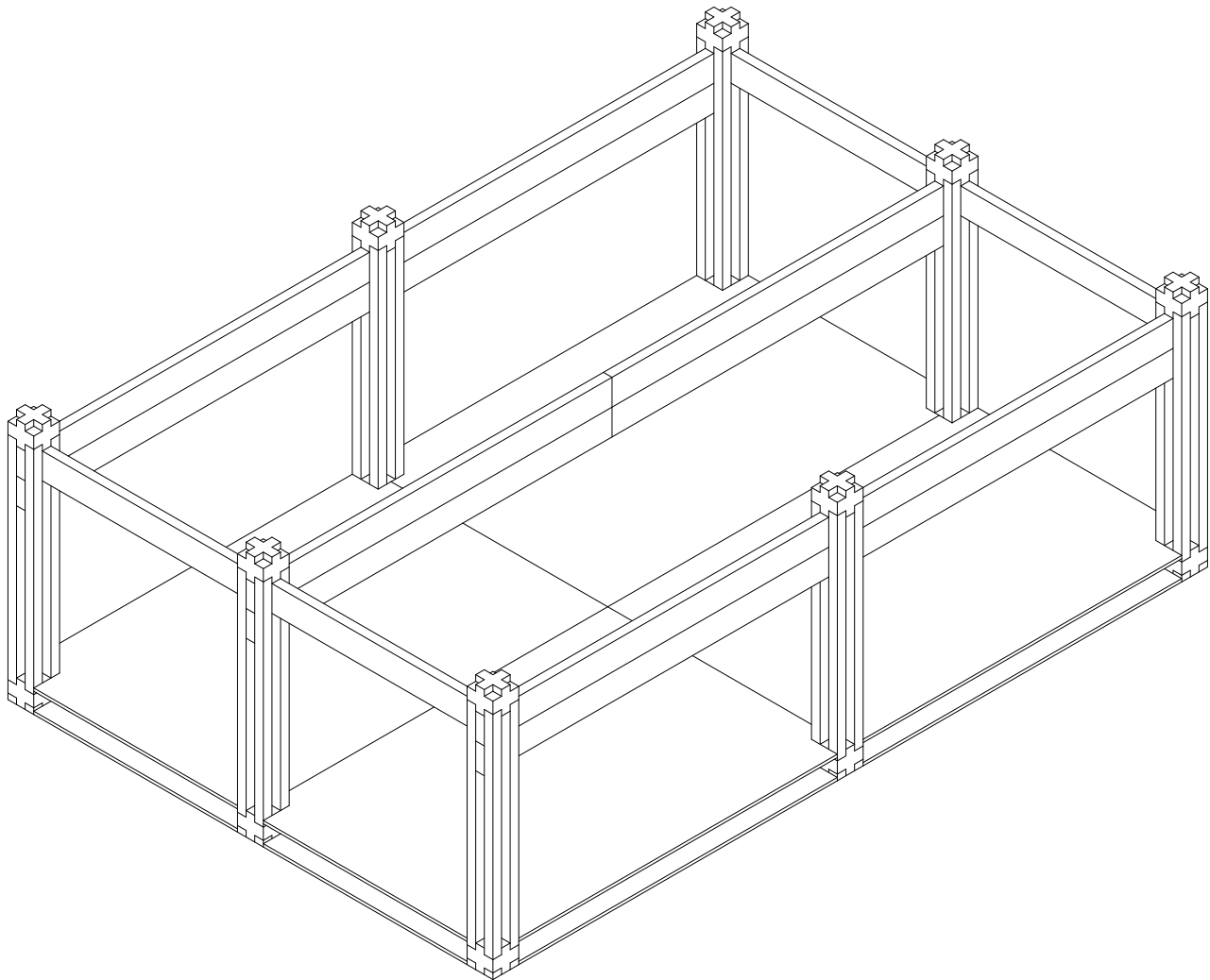
Modules schematic diagram

Initial Unit (Office/Studio)

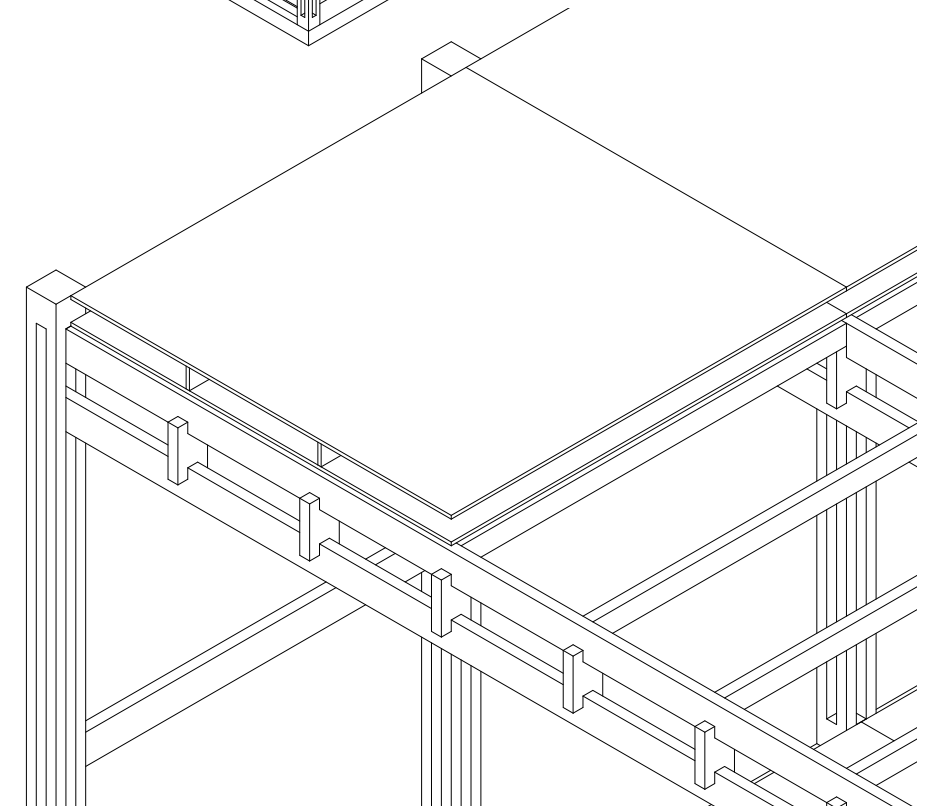
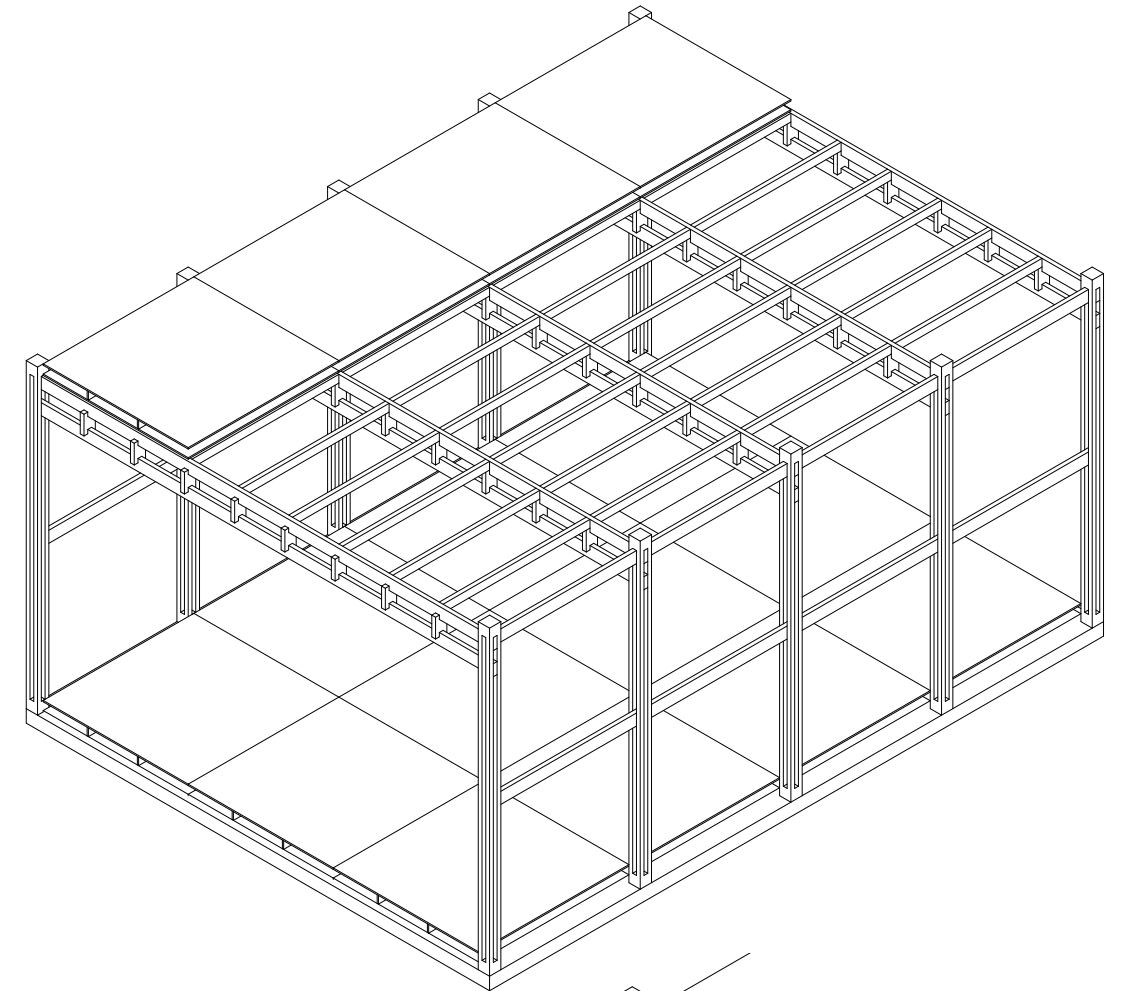
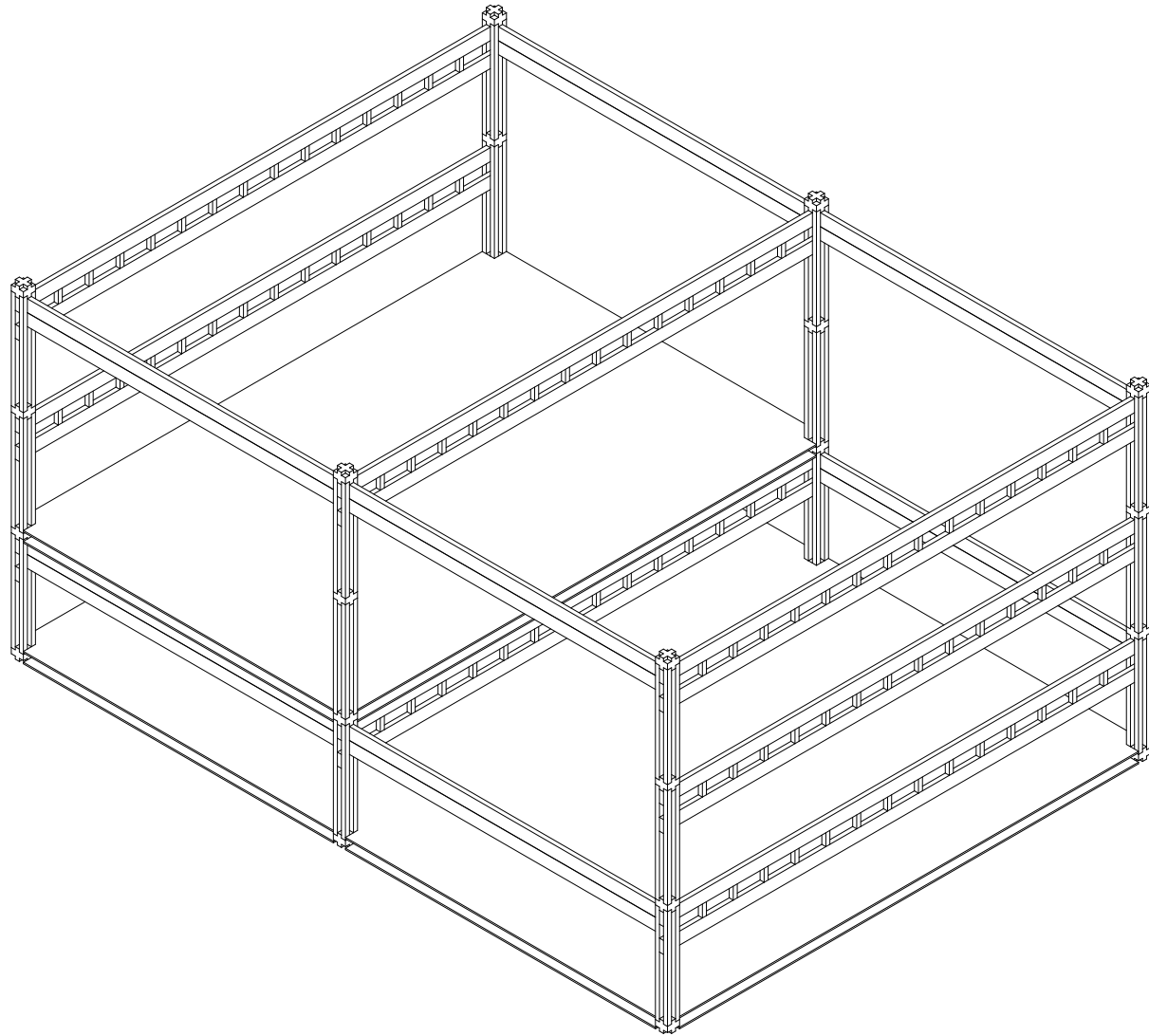
Dimensions - 4x6 m



Long Span - Workshop

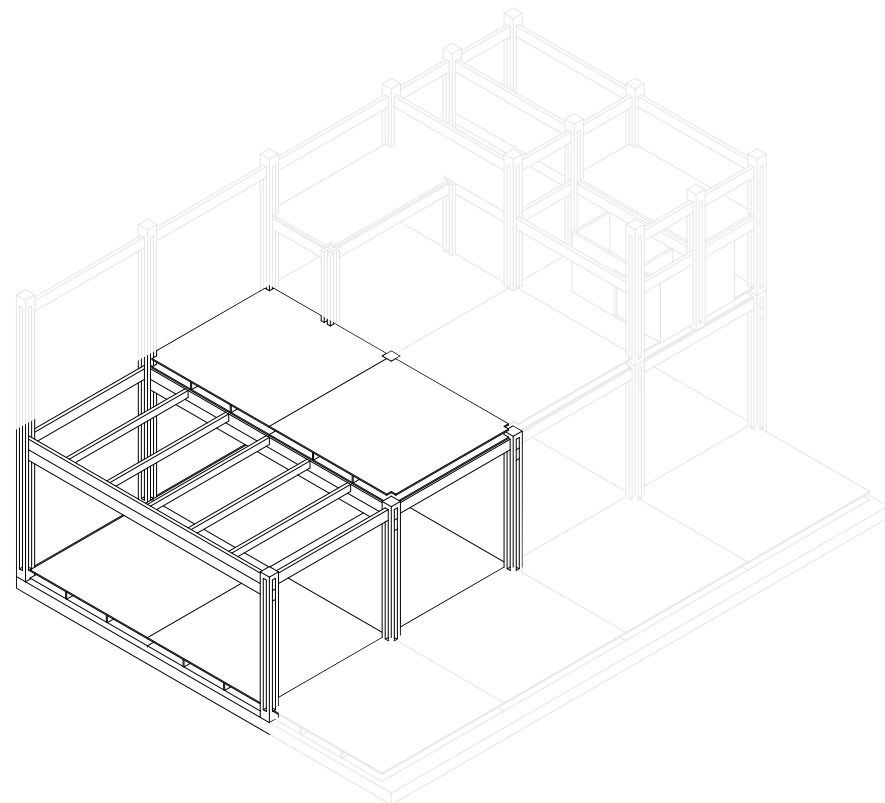


Types of structure



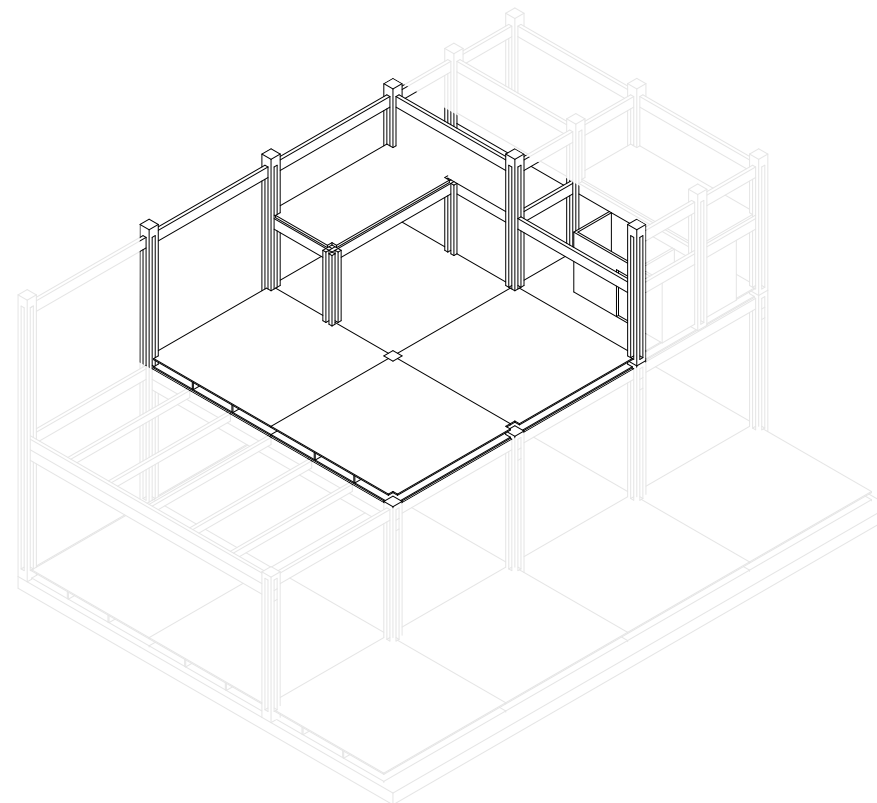
Scenario 2

- Workshop space
- Span 12x12 m
- Utilities are hidden in the hollow floor
- Ventilation is exposed
- Can be re-compartmented as needed



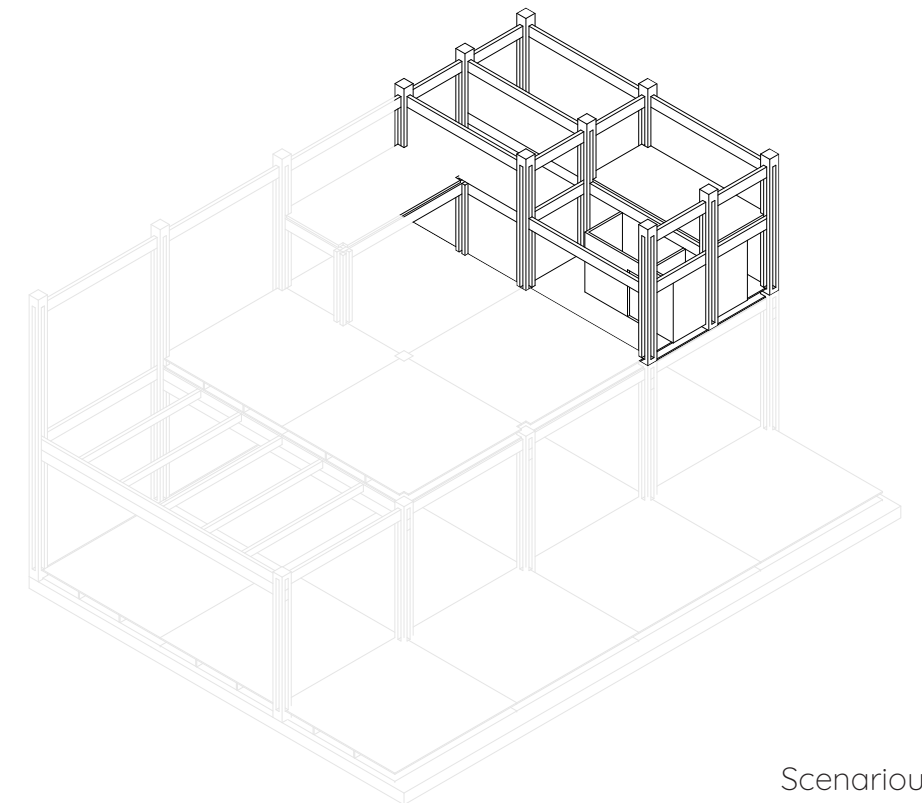
Scenario 3

- Study/Working space
- Open space, using furniture to create the organization of the floor
- Floor level can be split and created half floors 2.6m high

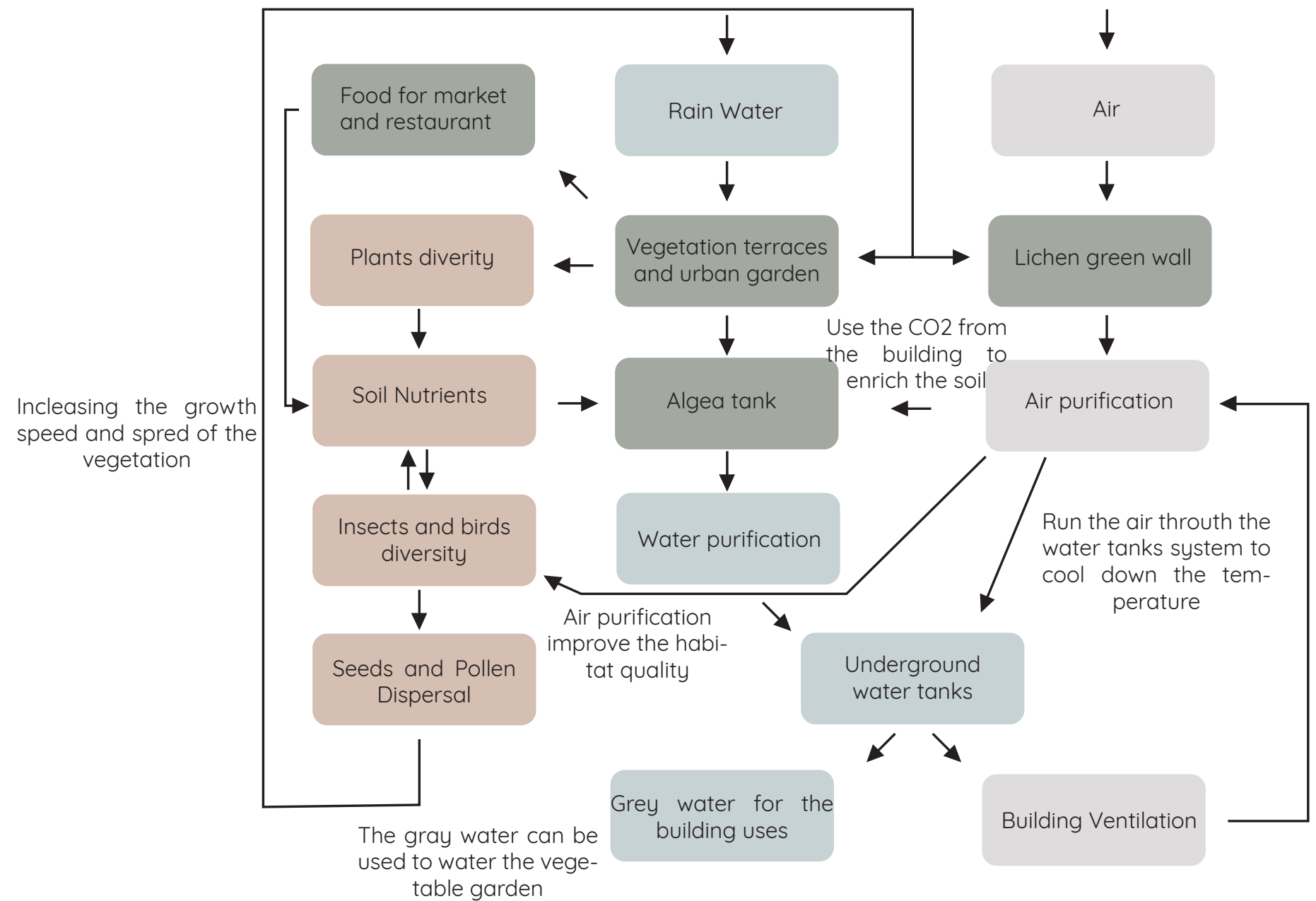


Scenario 4

- Studios
- Span 12x3 m
- Loft apartment, the second floor used for the bedroom
- Utilities going in the hollow shaft which lead to the hollow floor

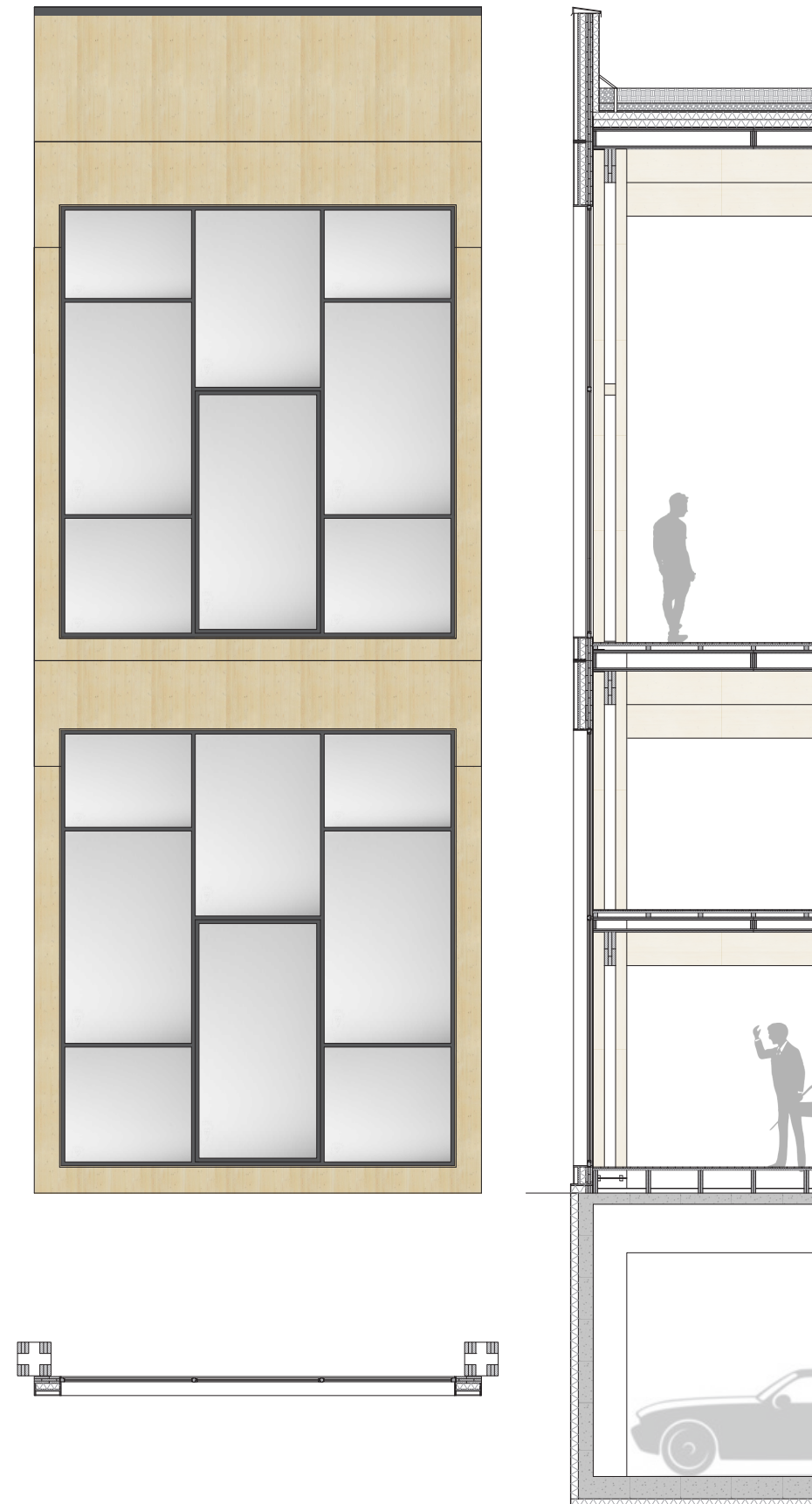


Week 3.3



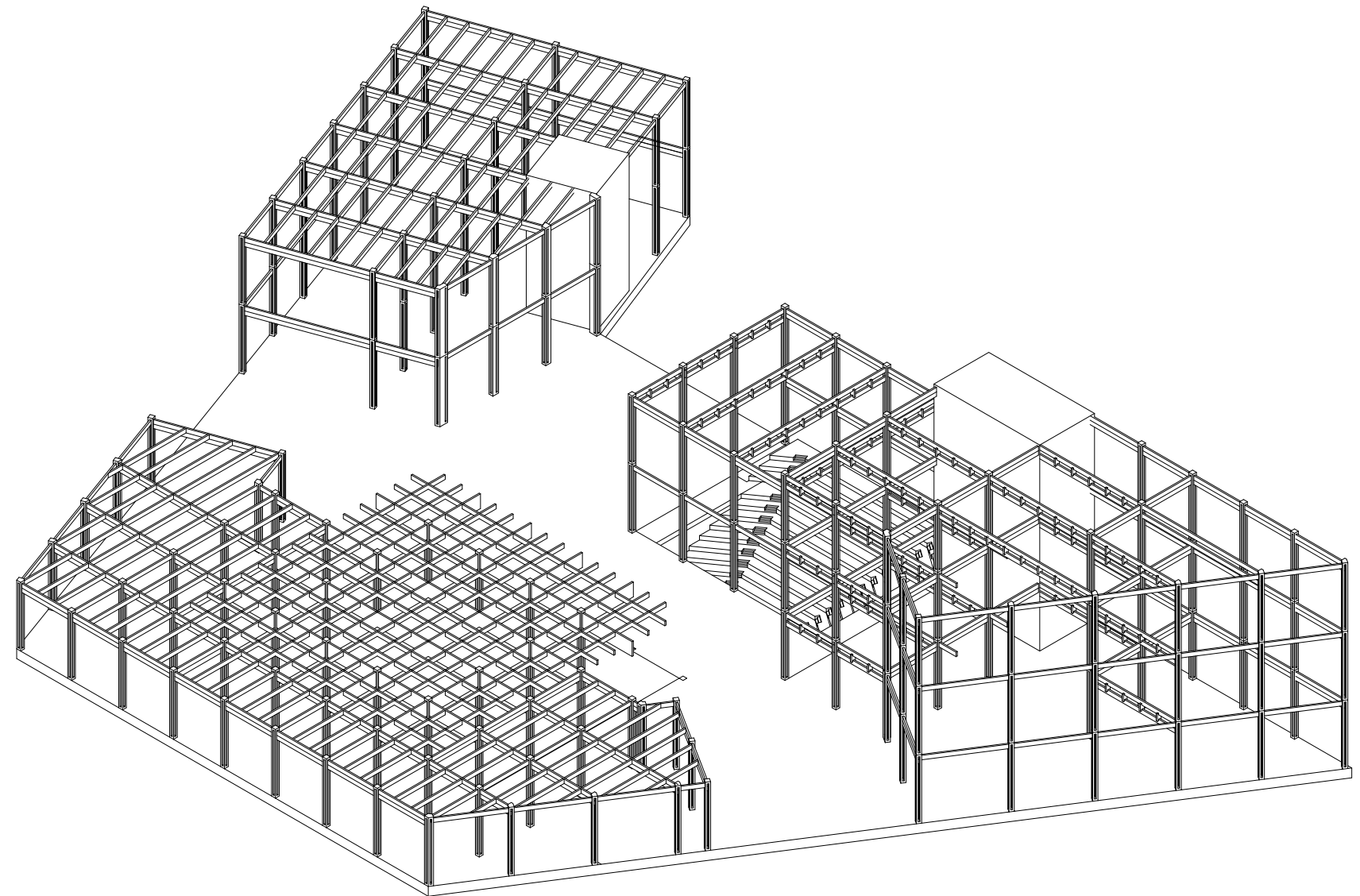
Ecosystem Diagram

Week 3.4



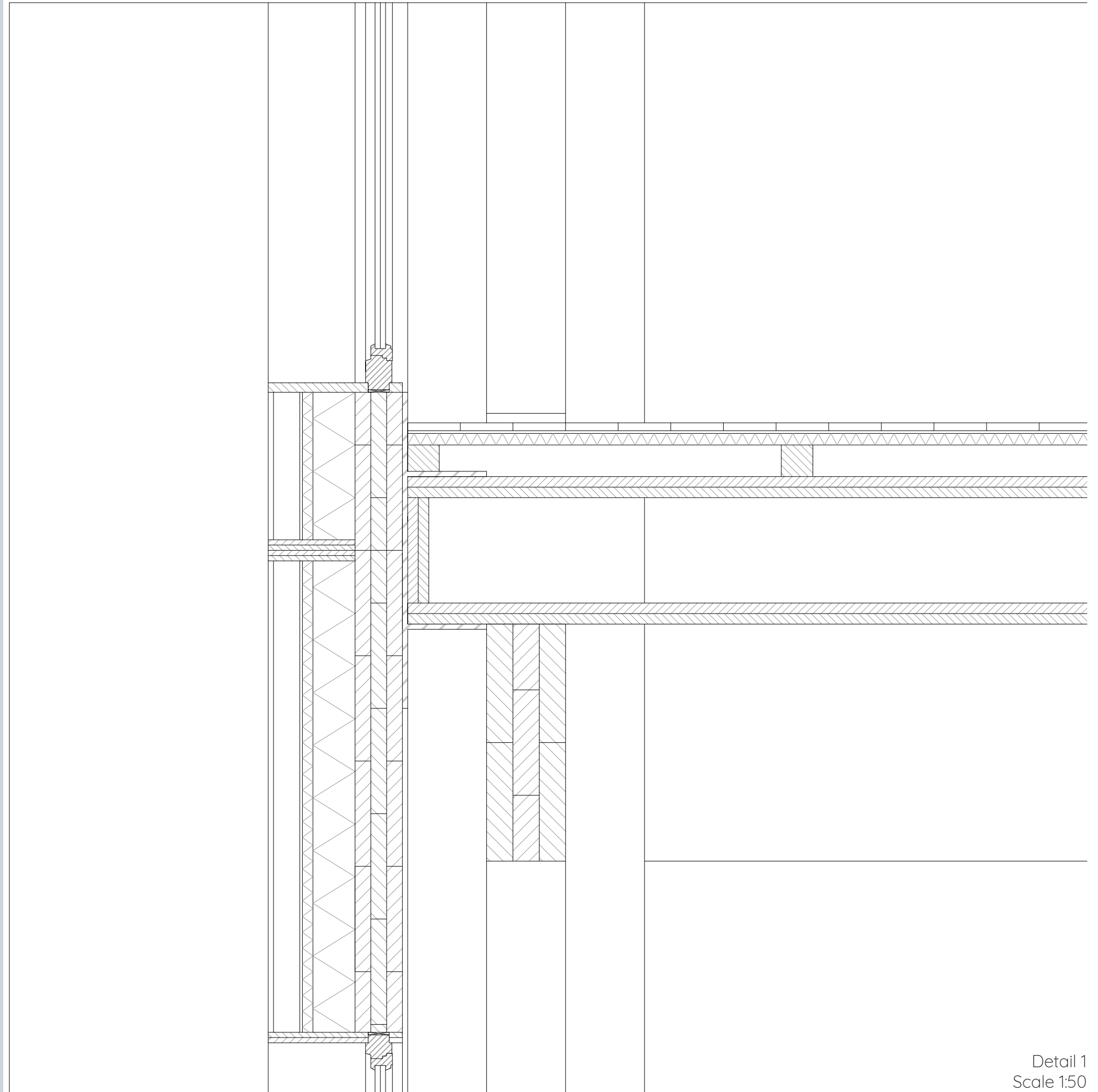
Combination drawing

Week 3.5

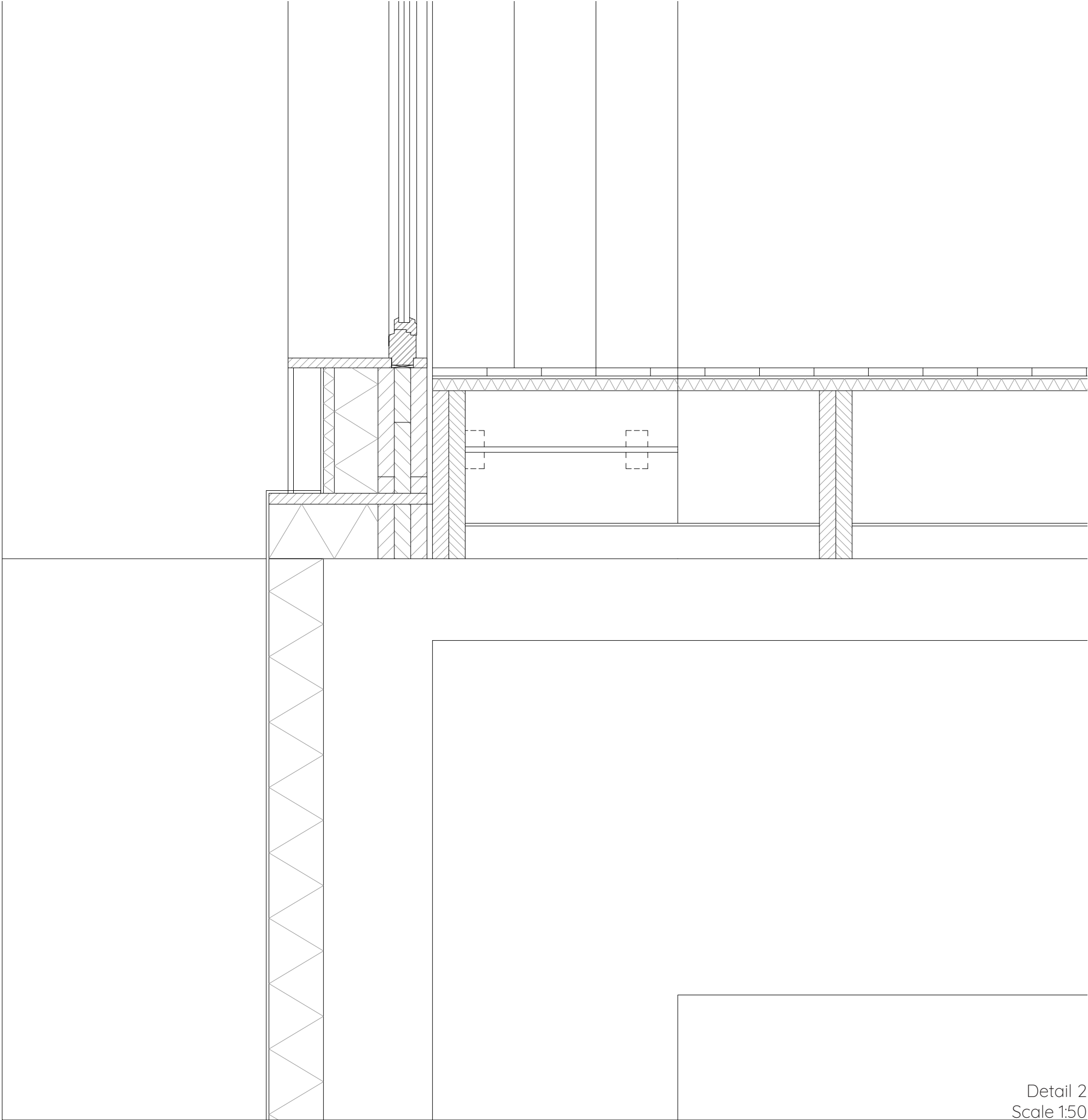


Structure diagram

Week 3.6

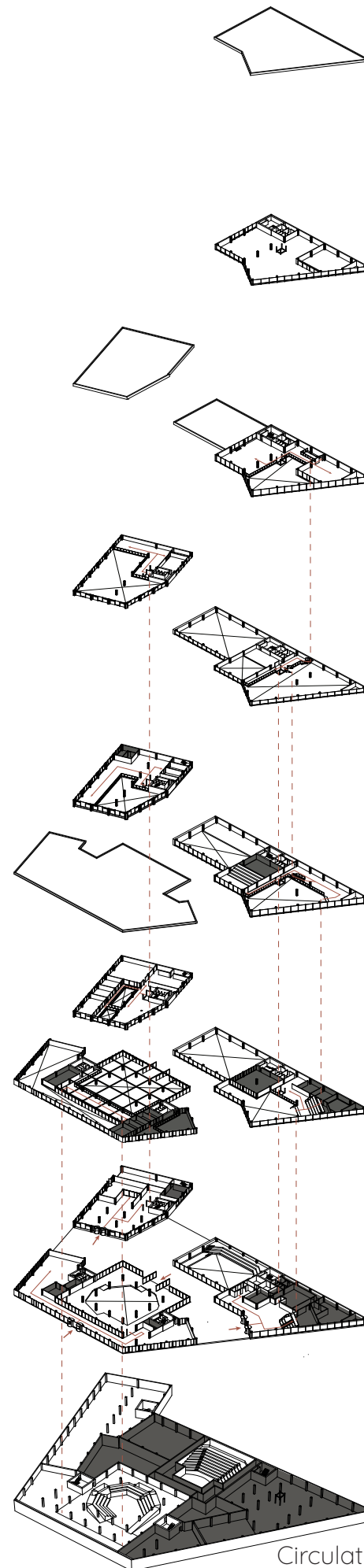


Detail 1
Scale 1:50

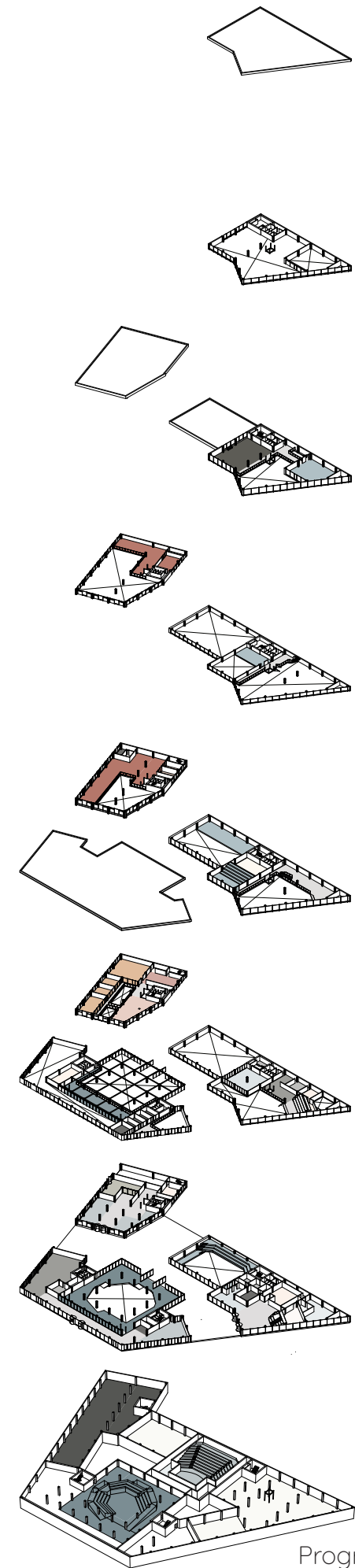


Detail 2
Scale 1:50

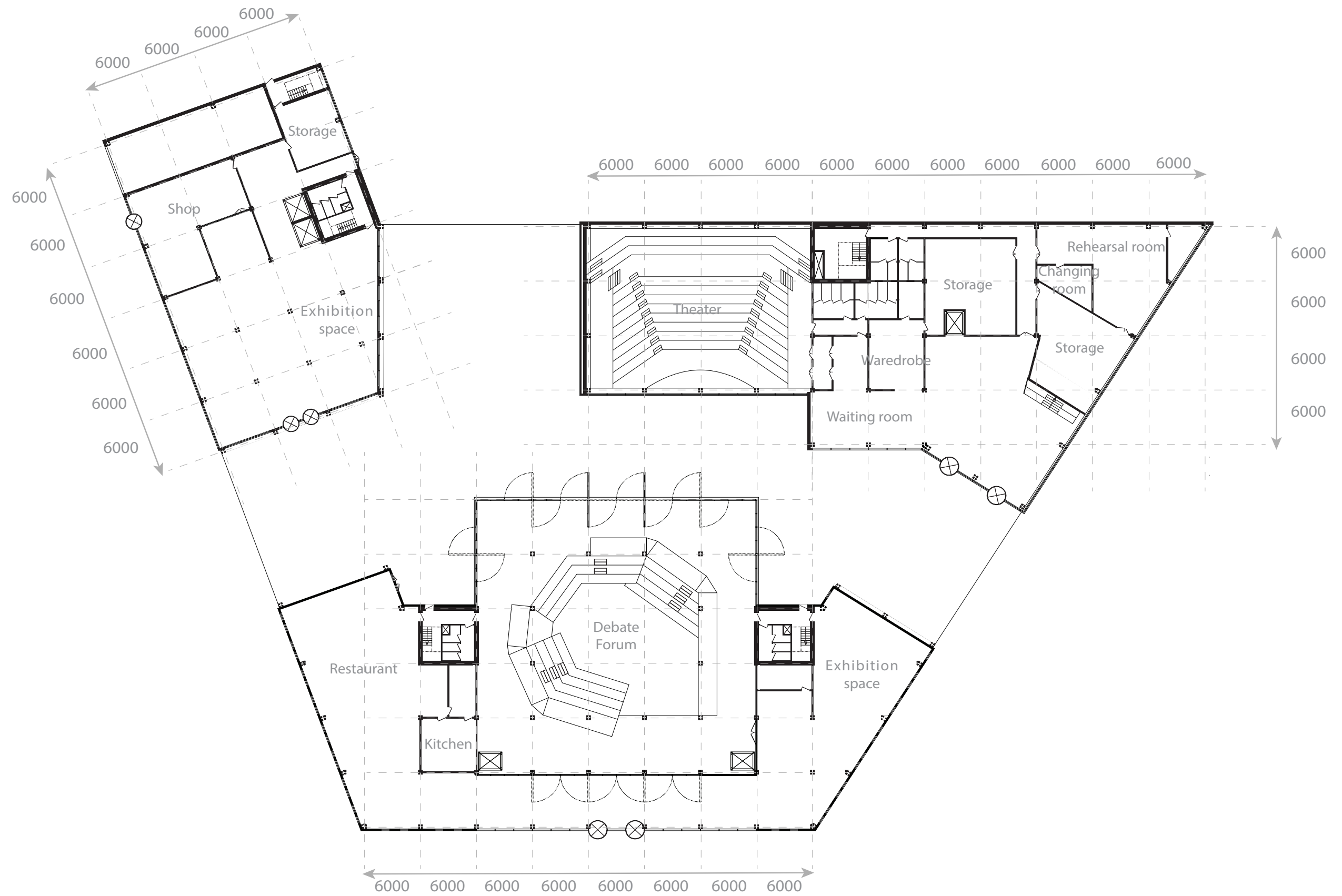
Week 3.7-3.8



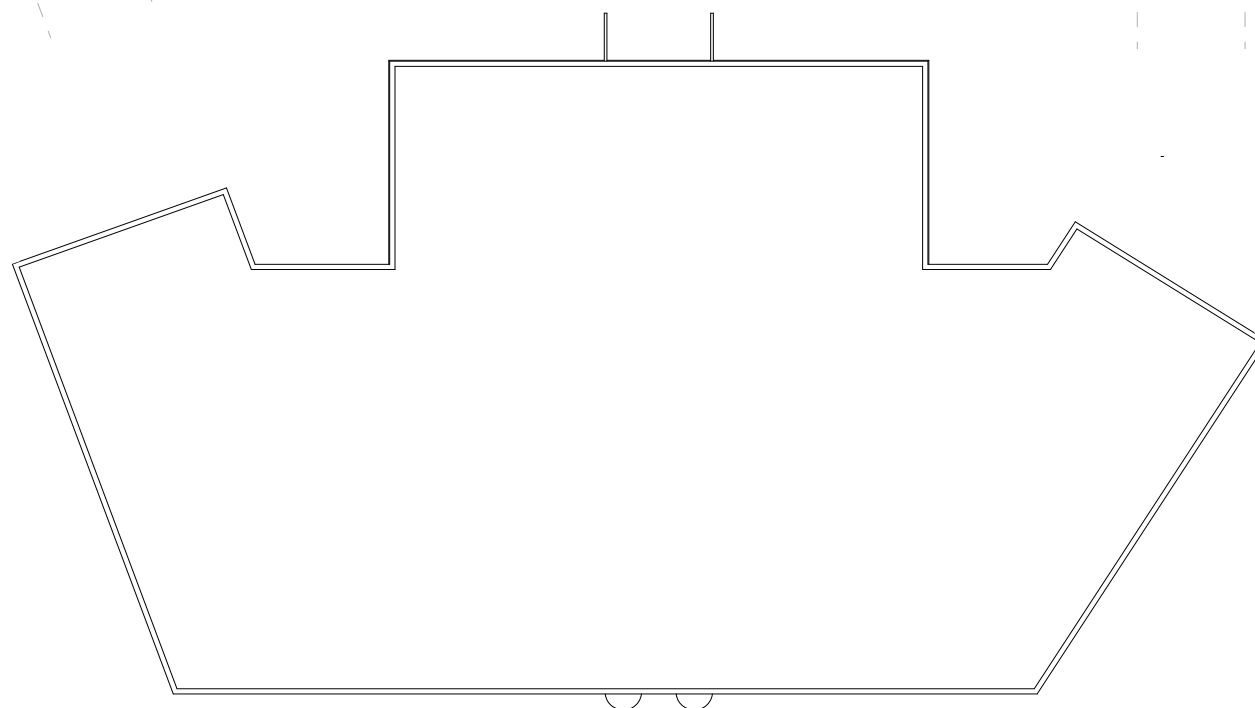
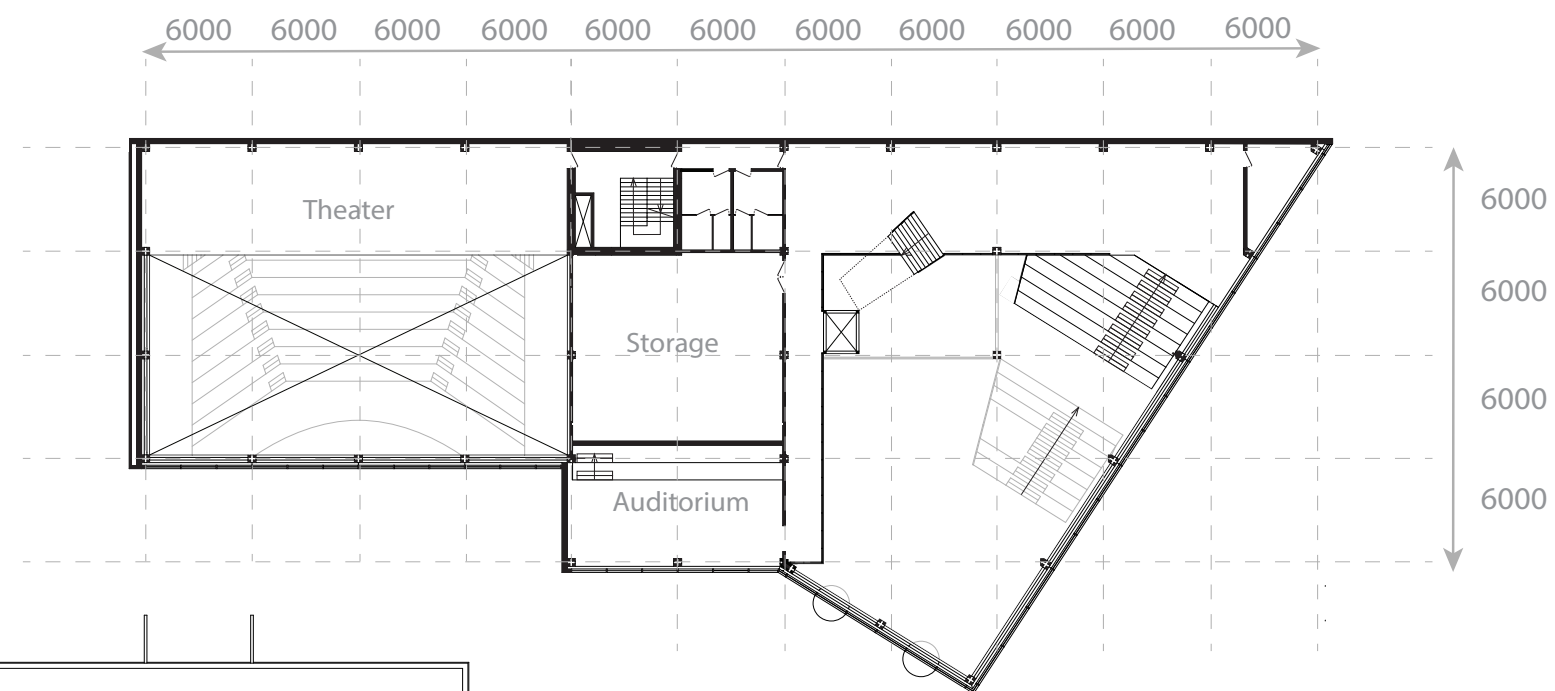
Circulation Axonometric Diagram



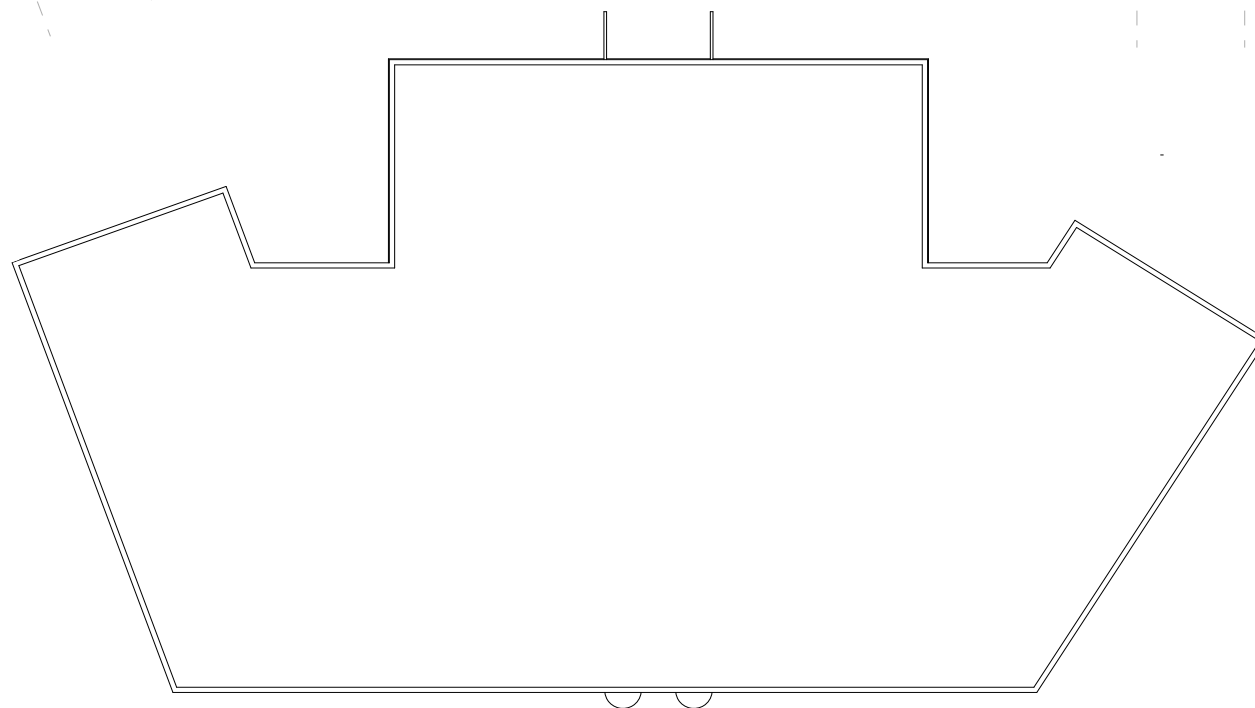
Program Axonometric Diagram



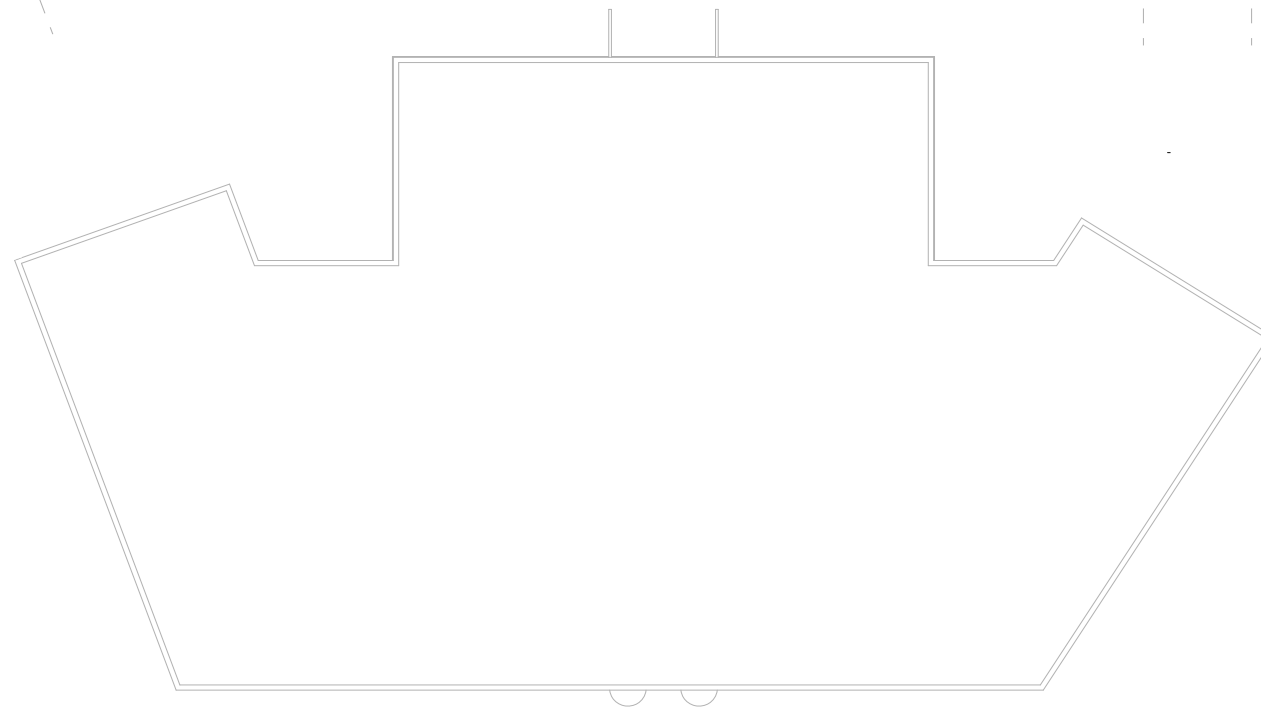
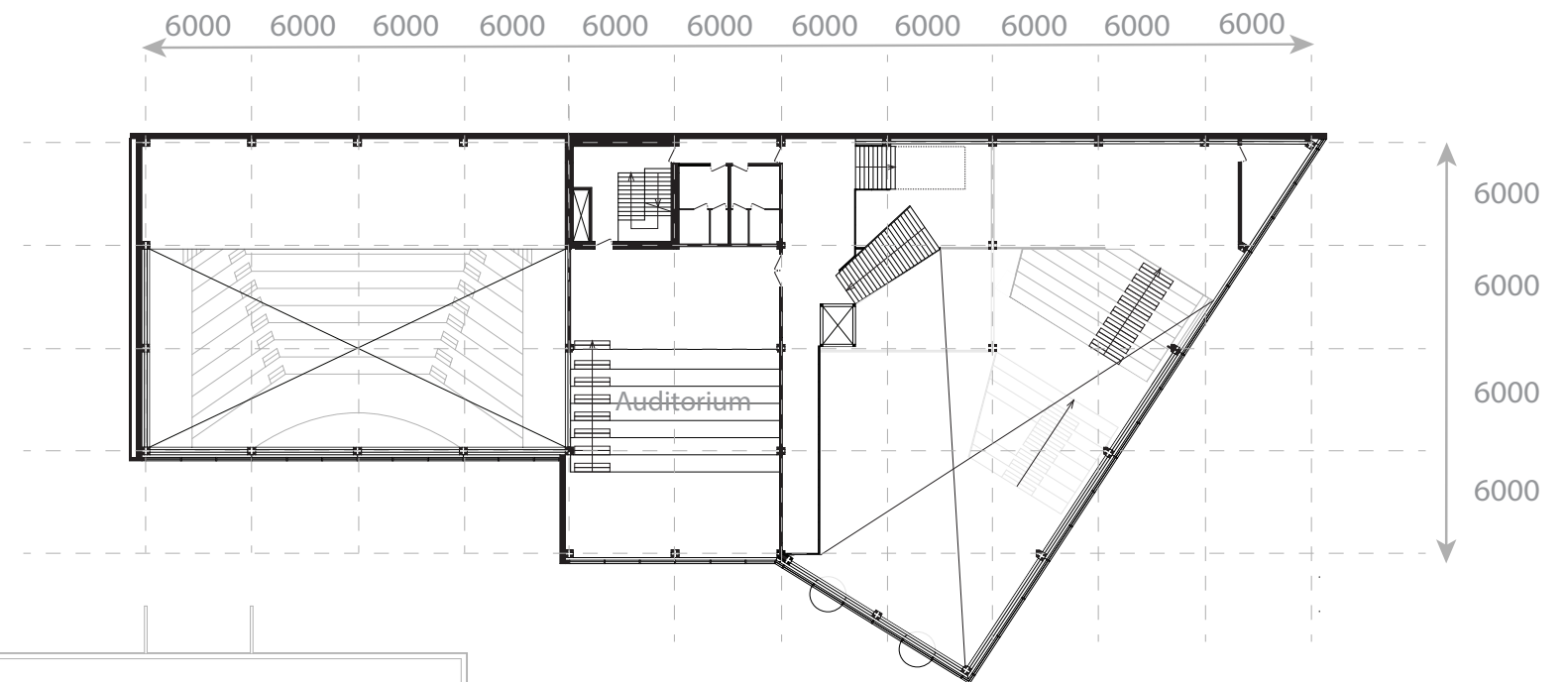
Ground floor plan
Scale 1:500

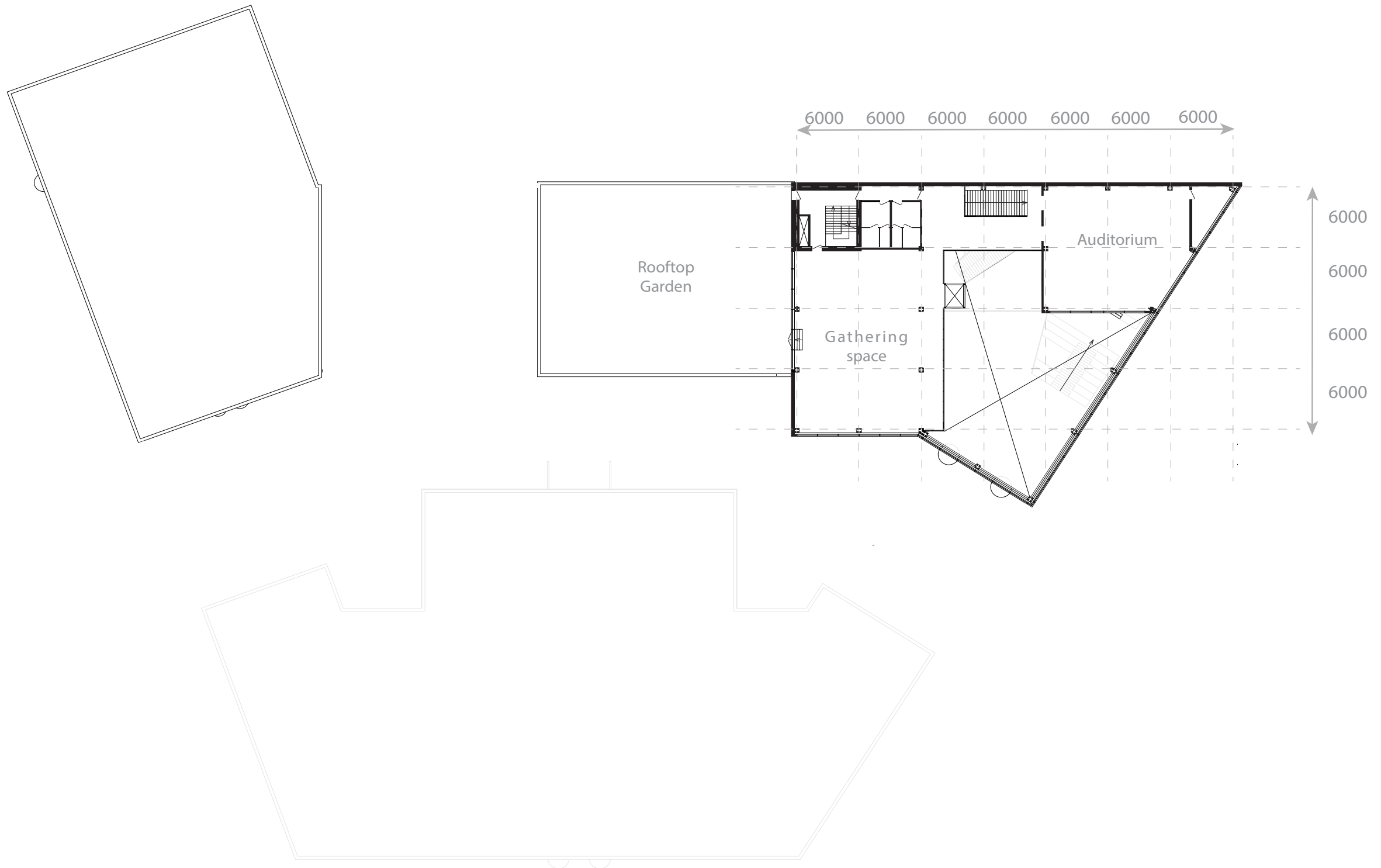


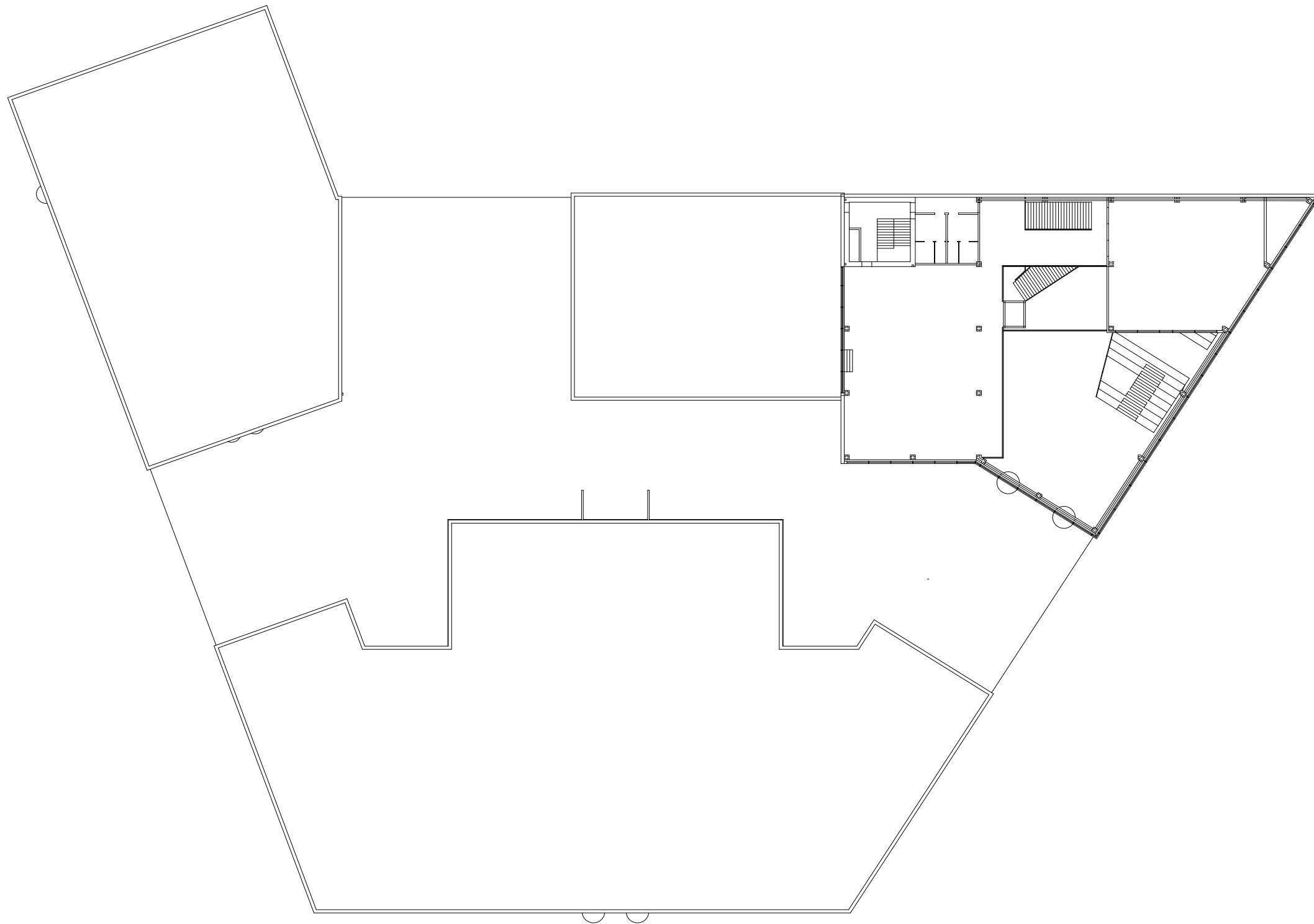
First floor plan
Scale 1::500

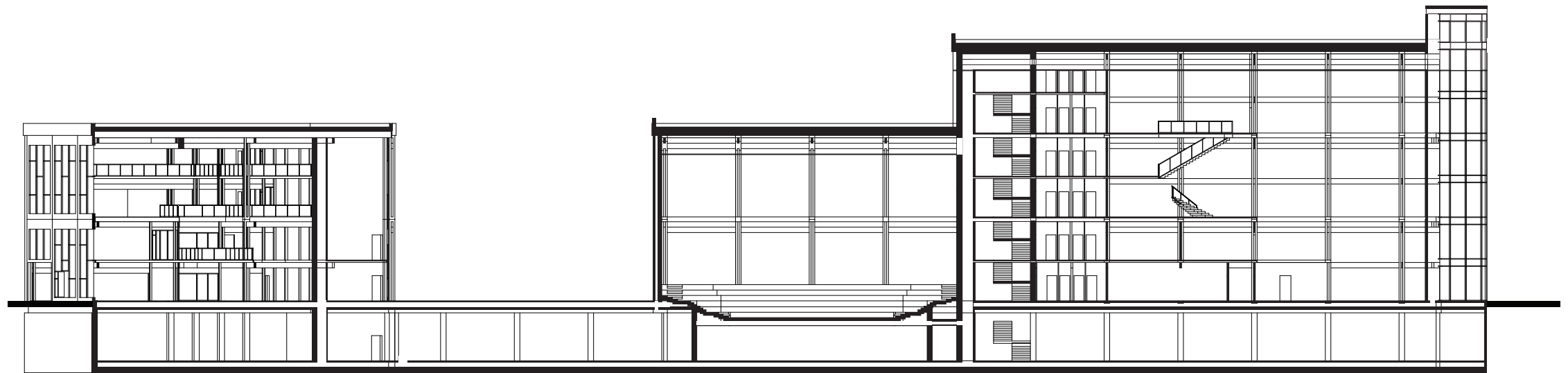


Second floor plan
Scale 1::500

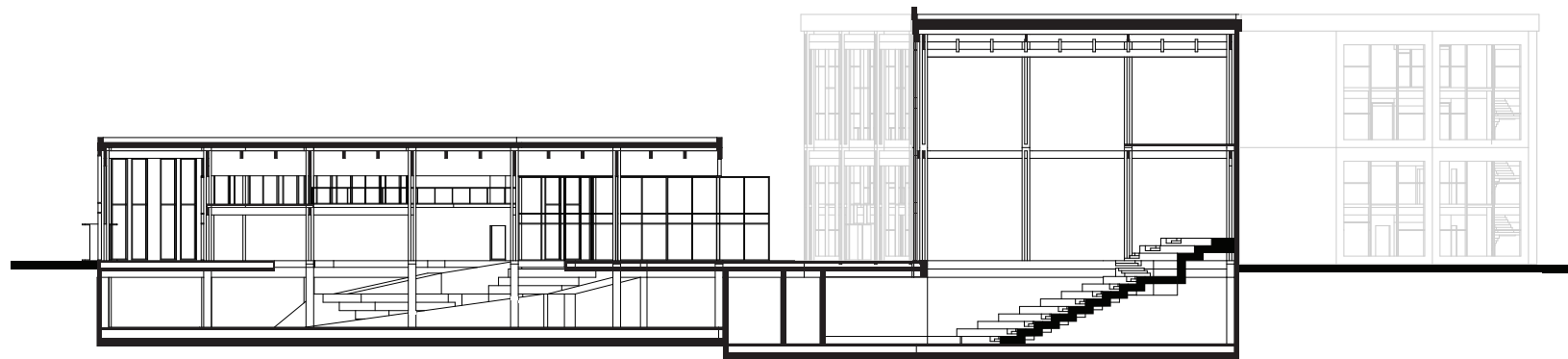


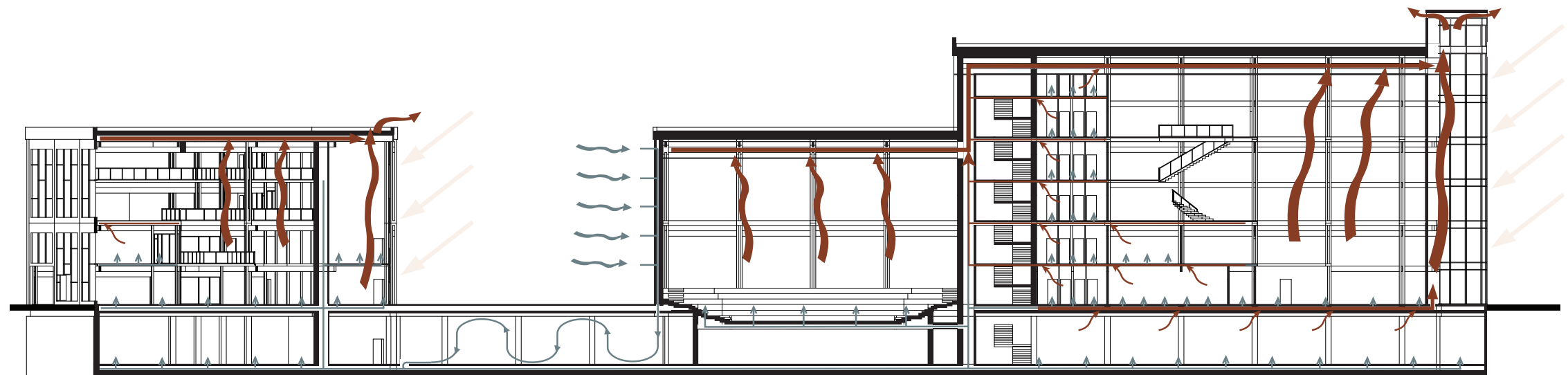






Section 1
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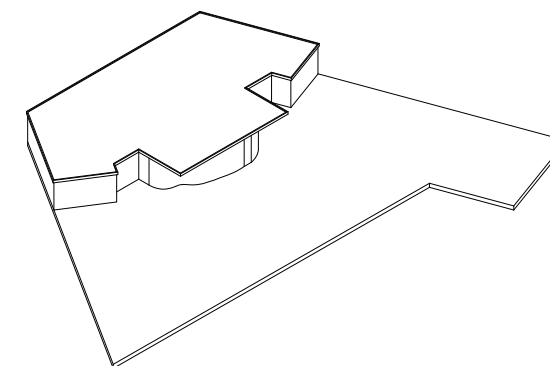
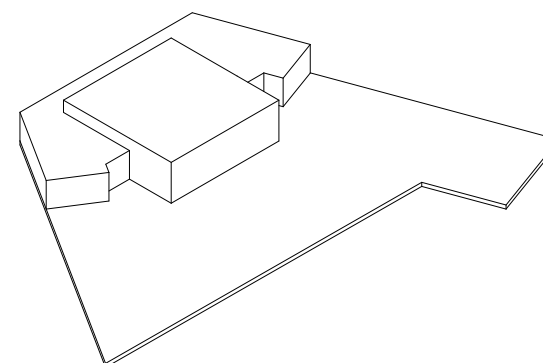
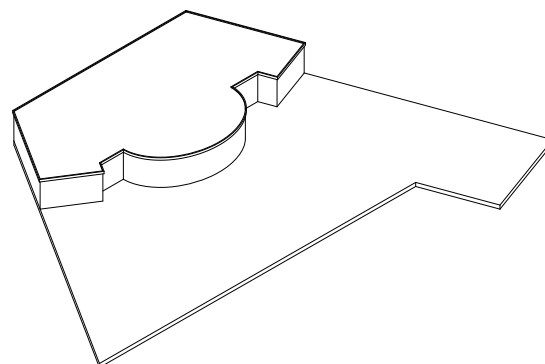
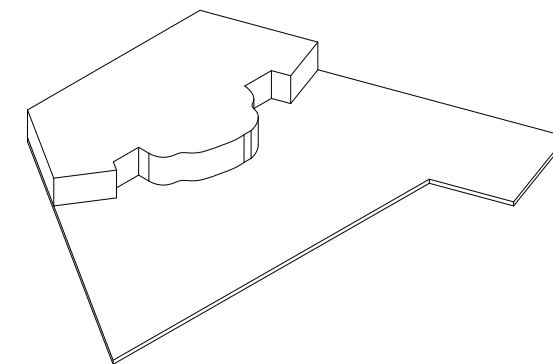
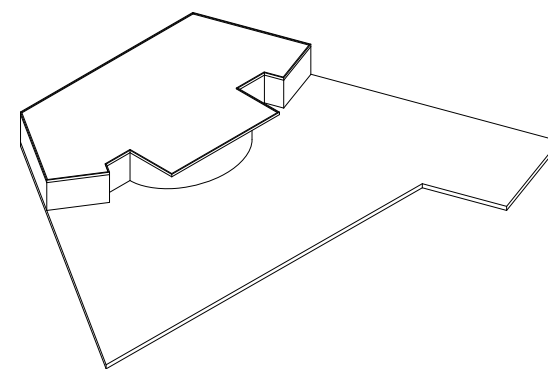
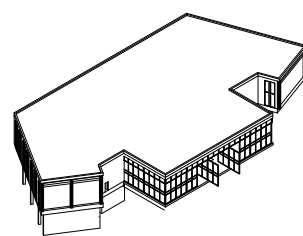
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THE MIDDLE GROUND

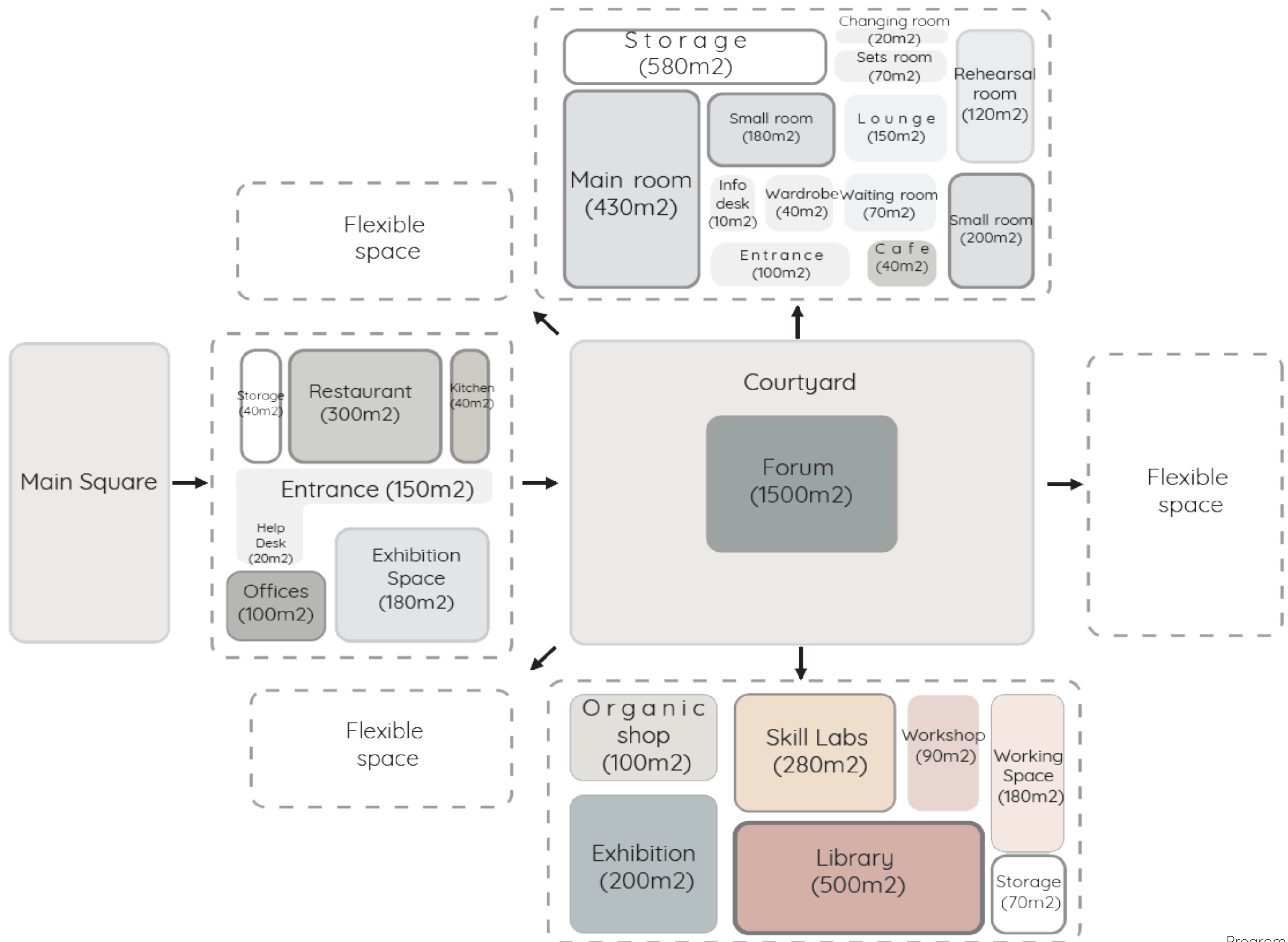
Of Social Debate

Q4

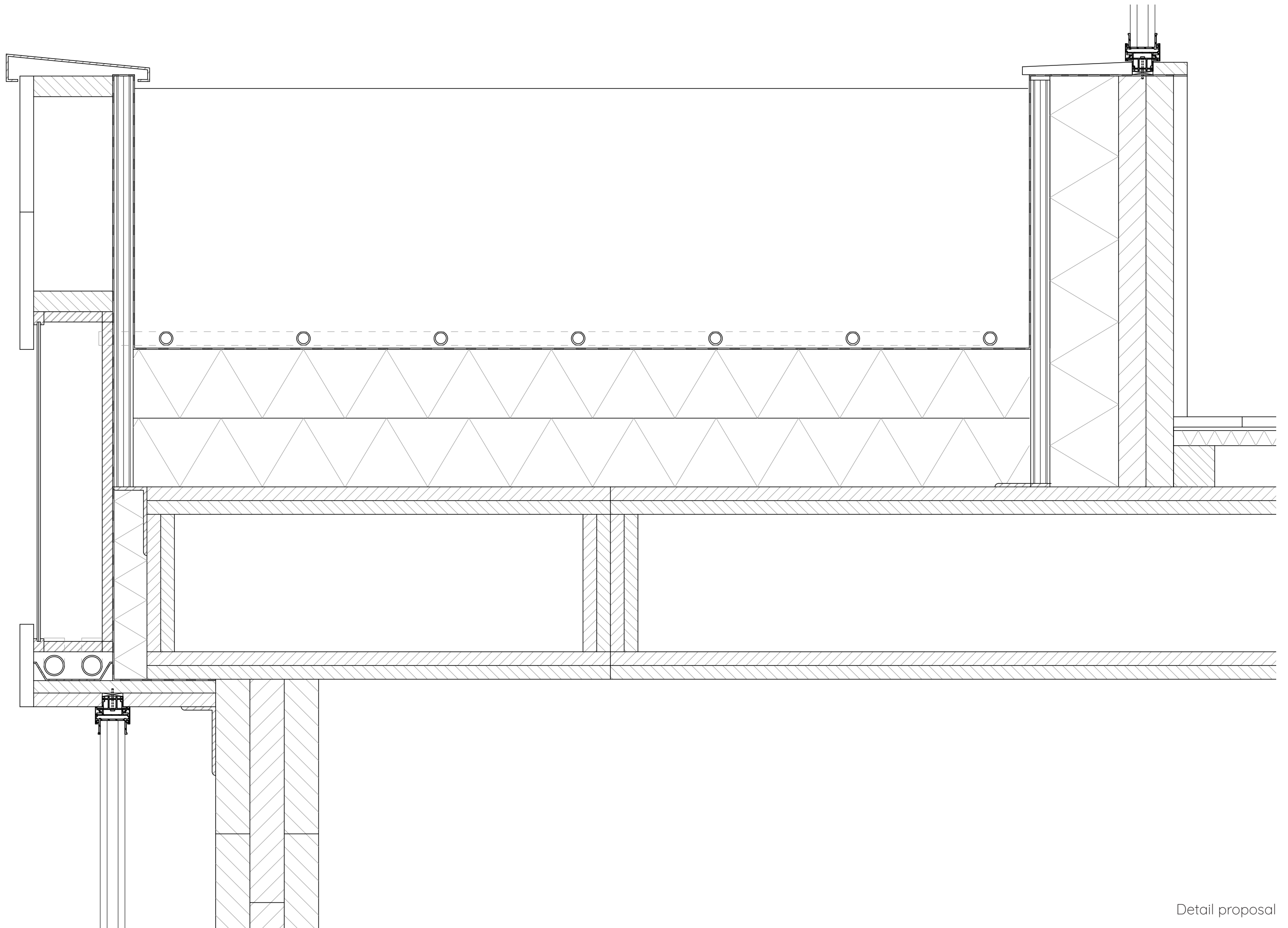




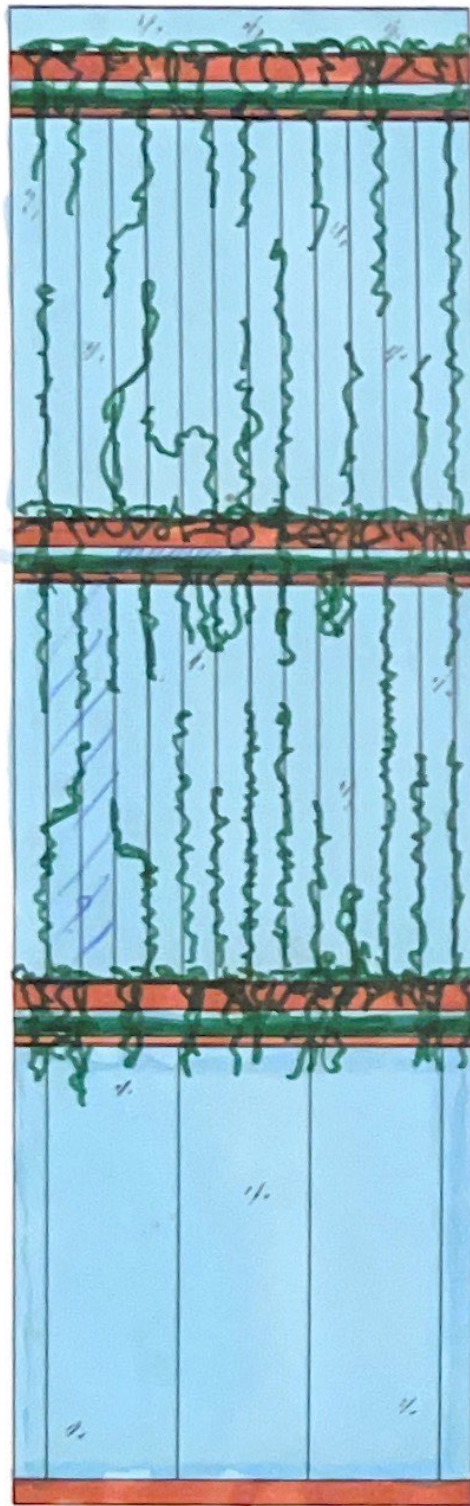
Forum shape variants



Program diagram



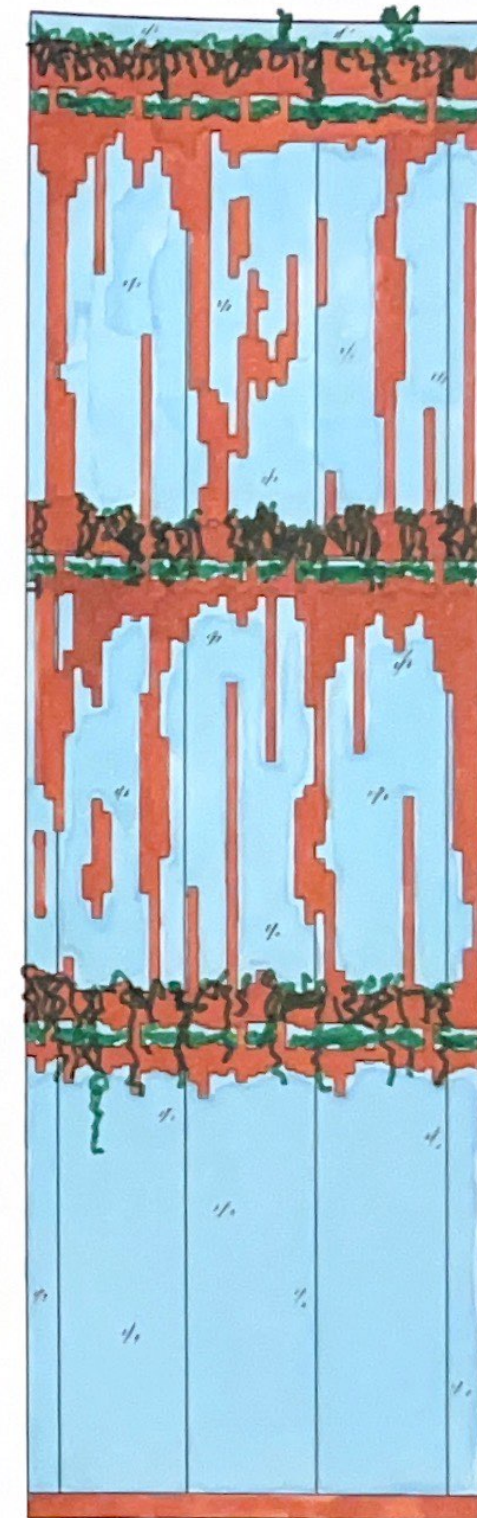
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Variant 4

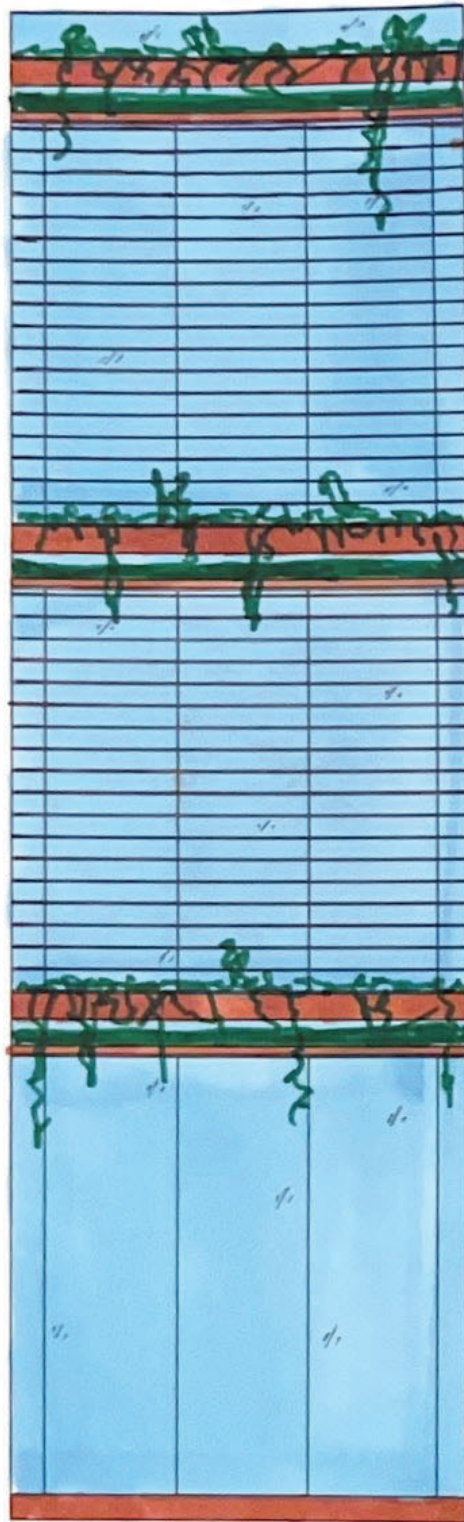


Variant 5



Variant 6

Facade Variants



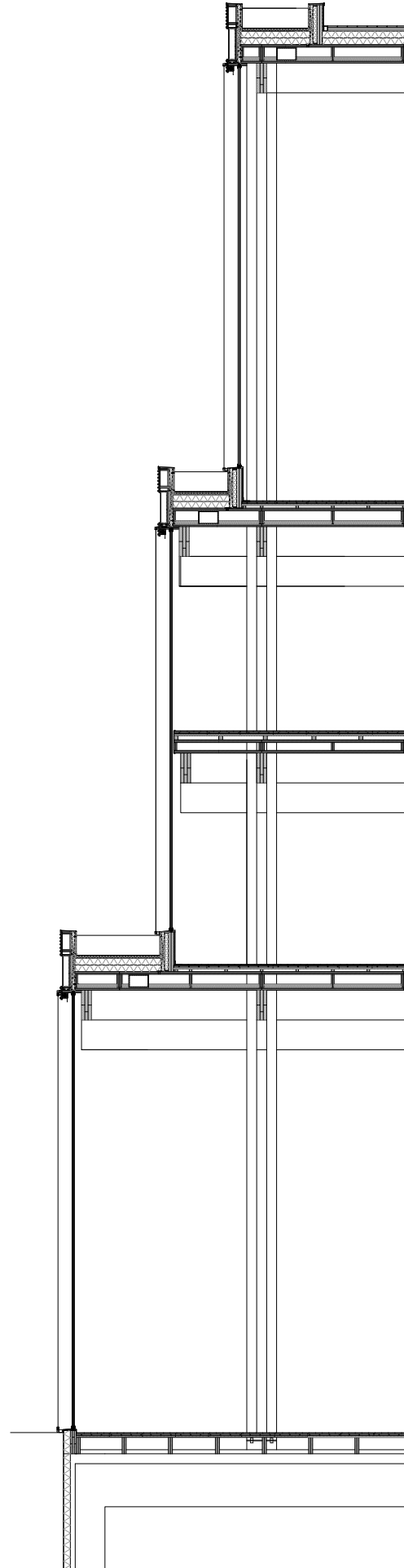
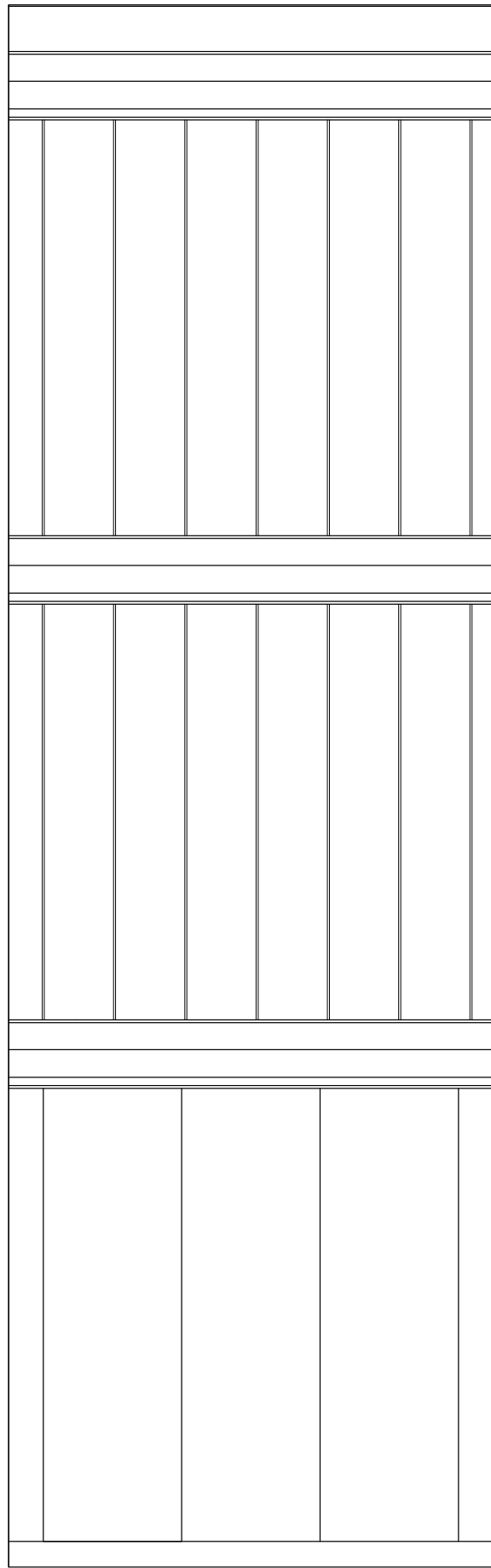
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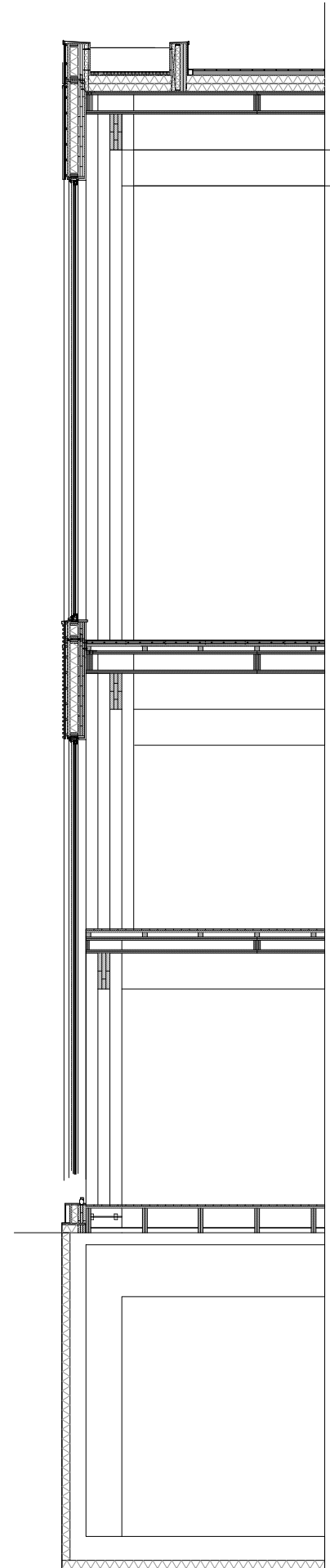
Variant 2



Variant 3



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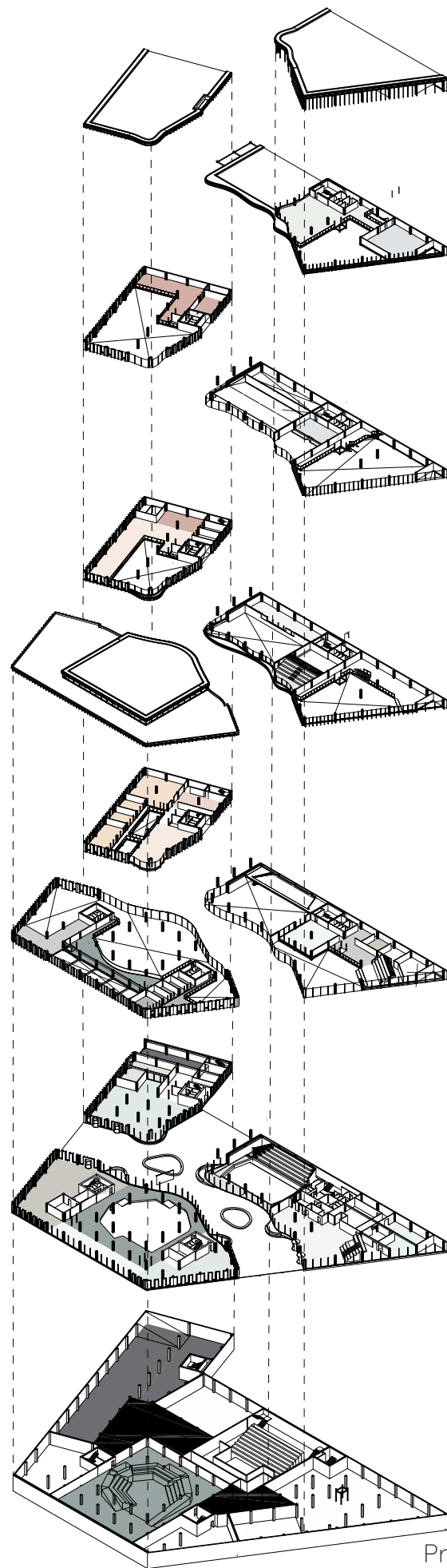


Combination drawing 2

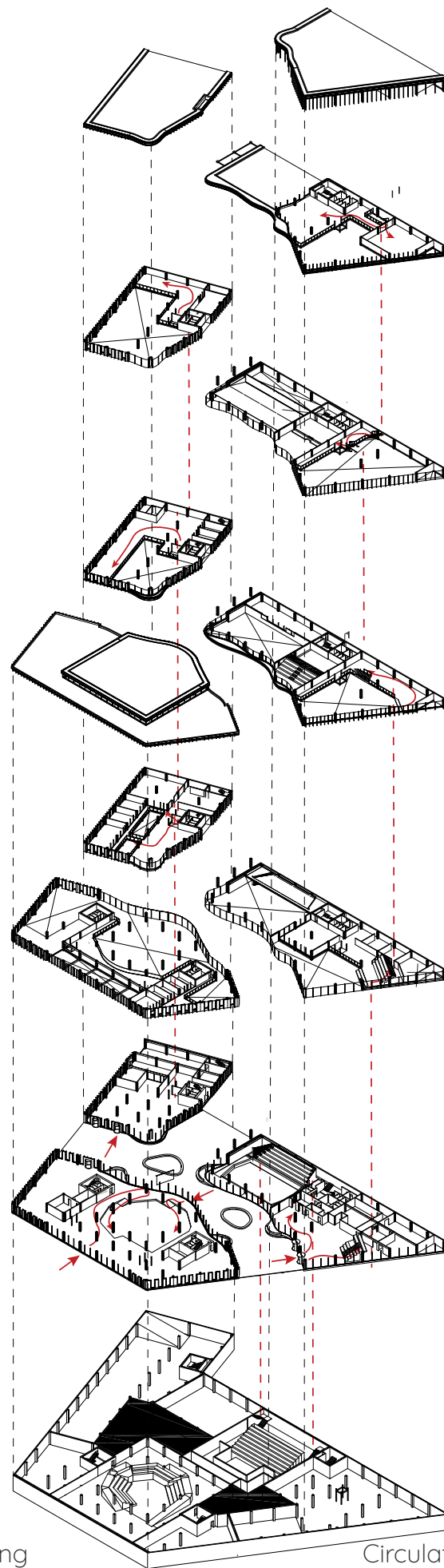
P4 Presentation design



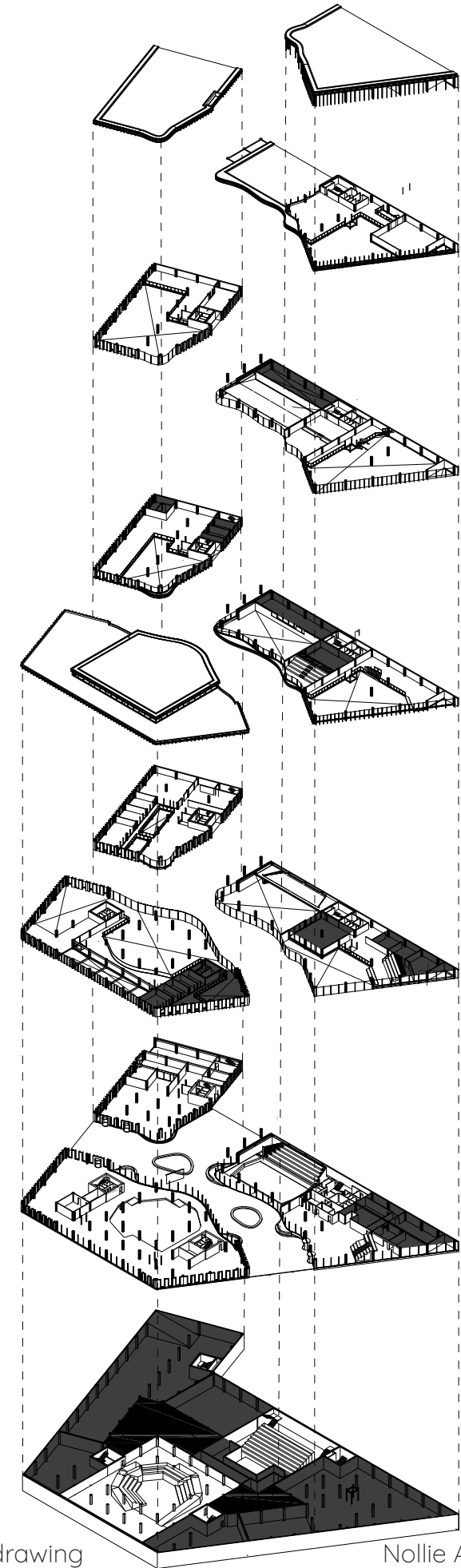
Site Plan



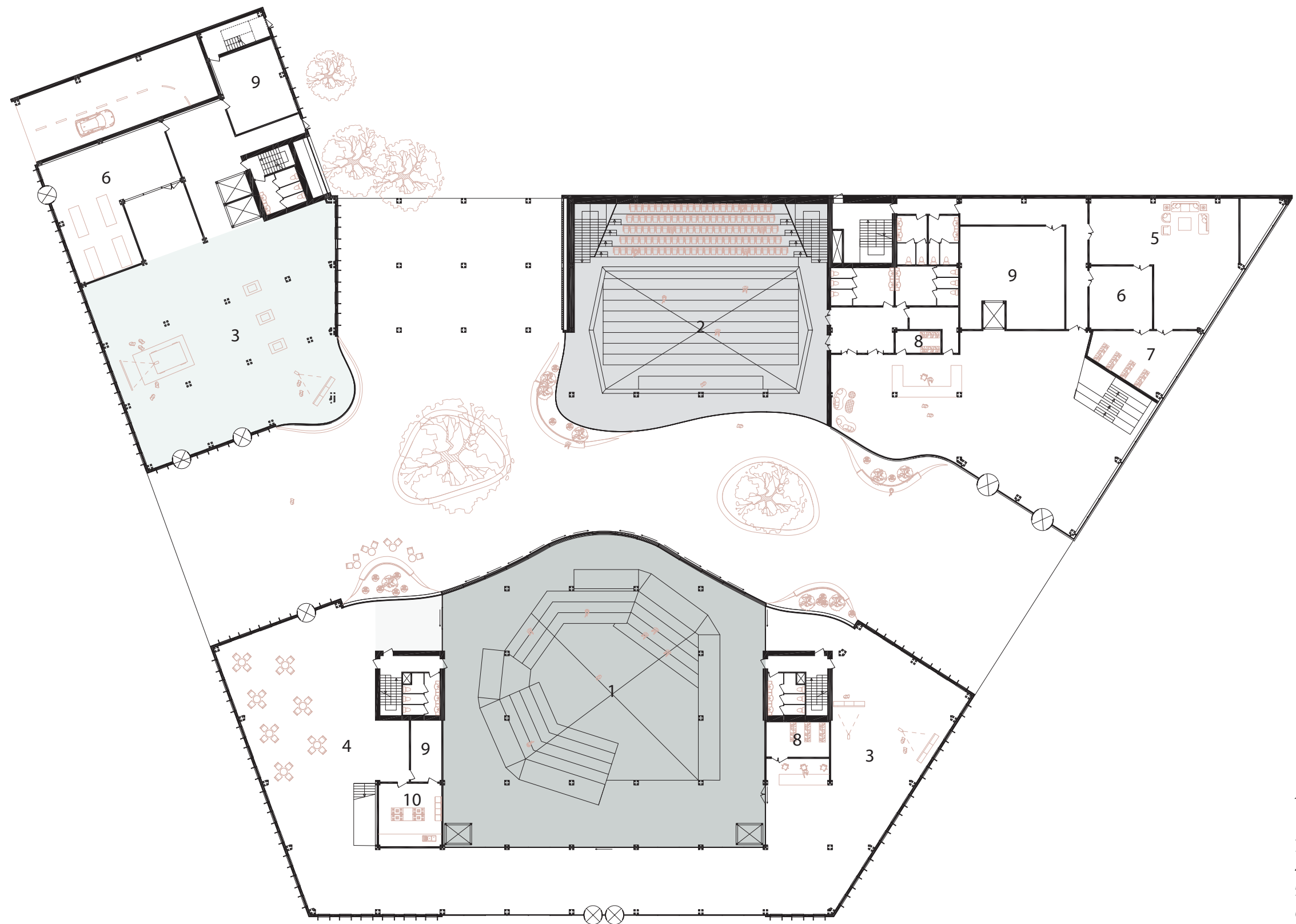
Program Axonometric drawing



Circulation Axonometric drawing

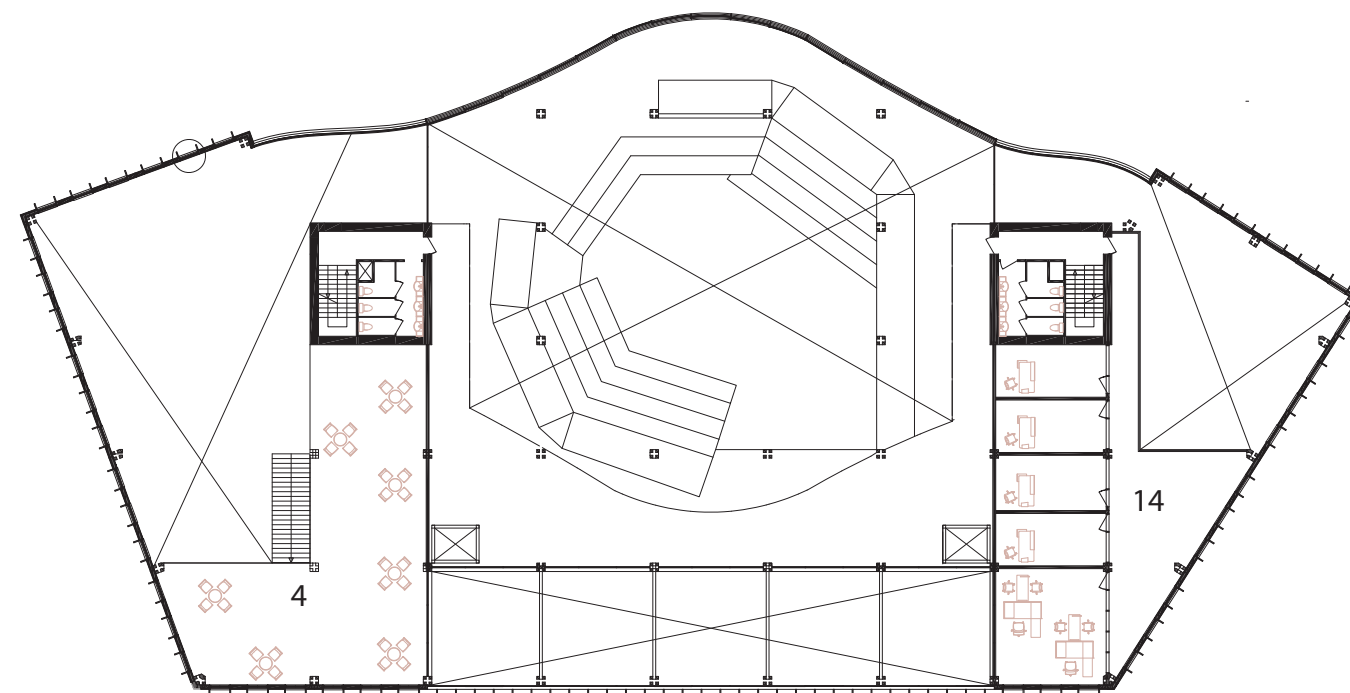
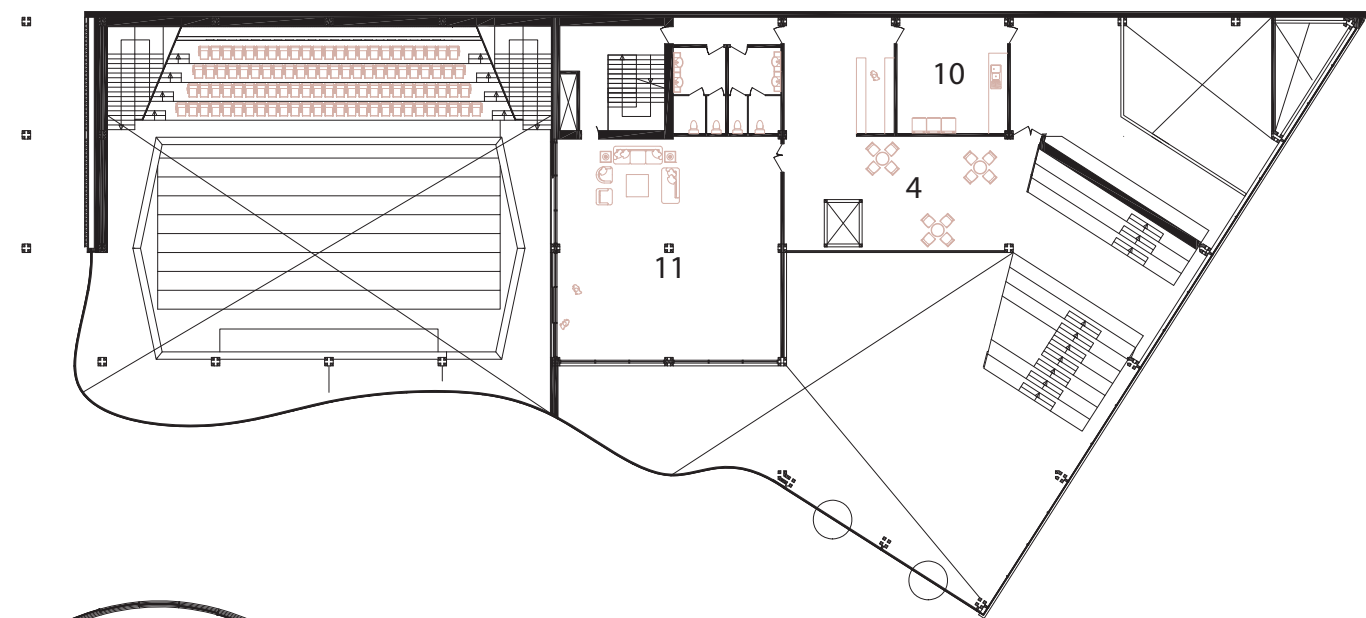
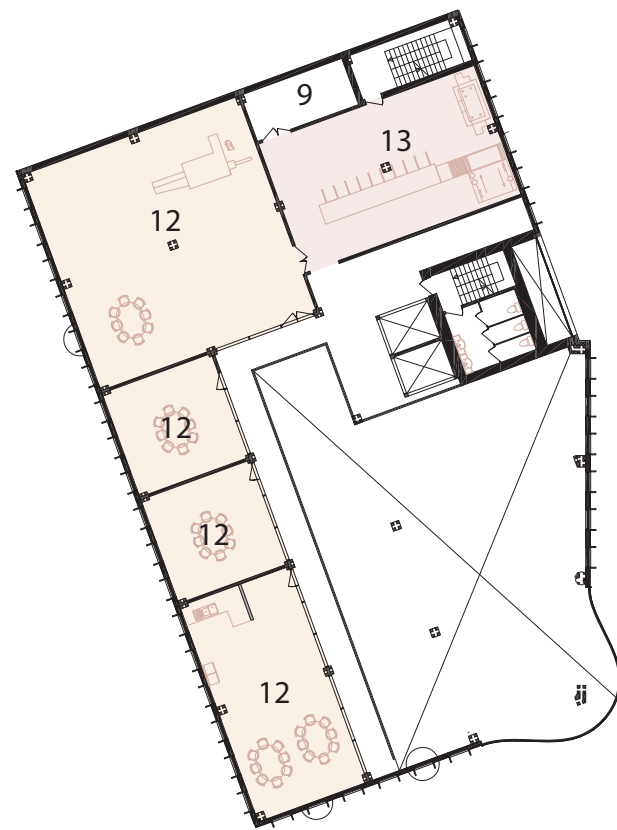


Nollie Axonometric drawing



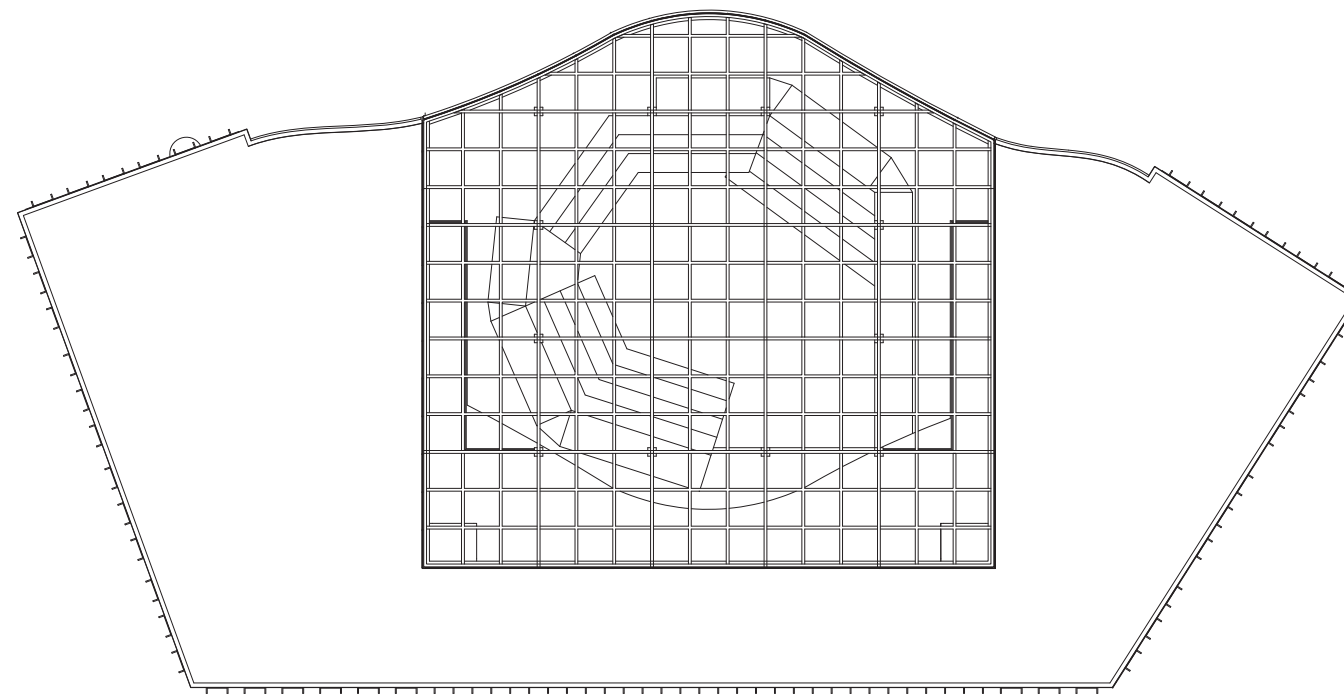
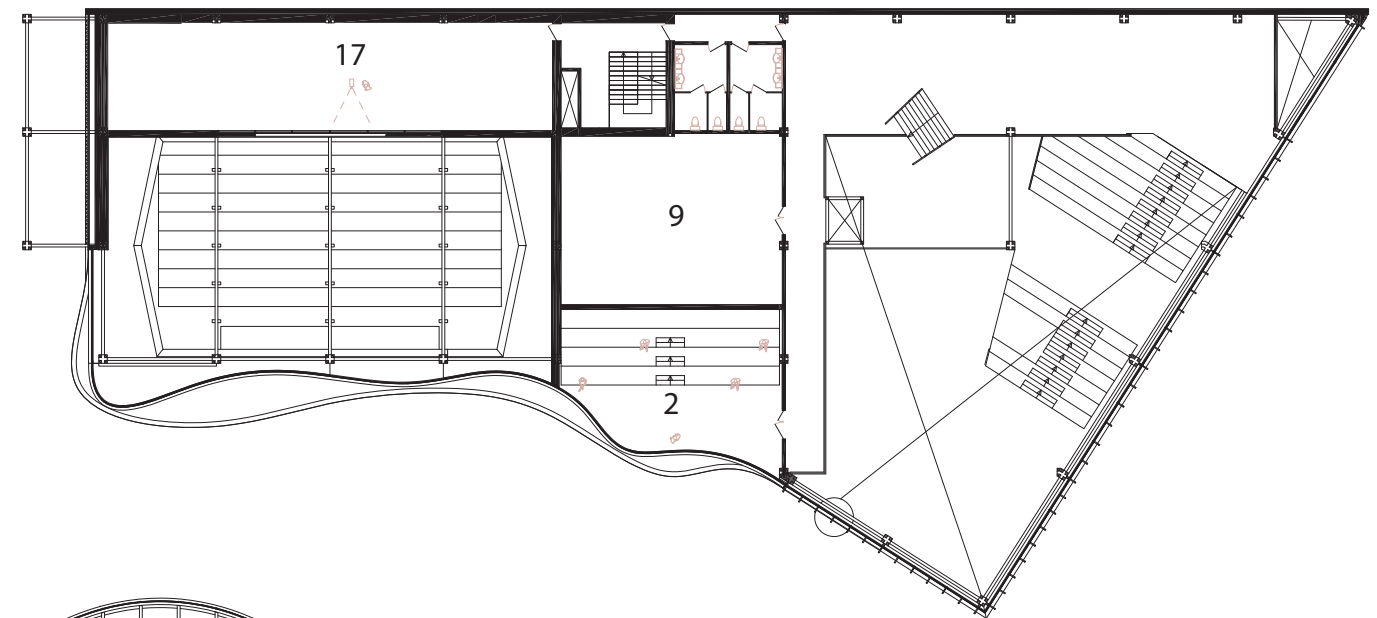
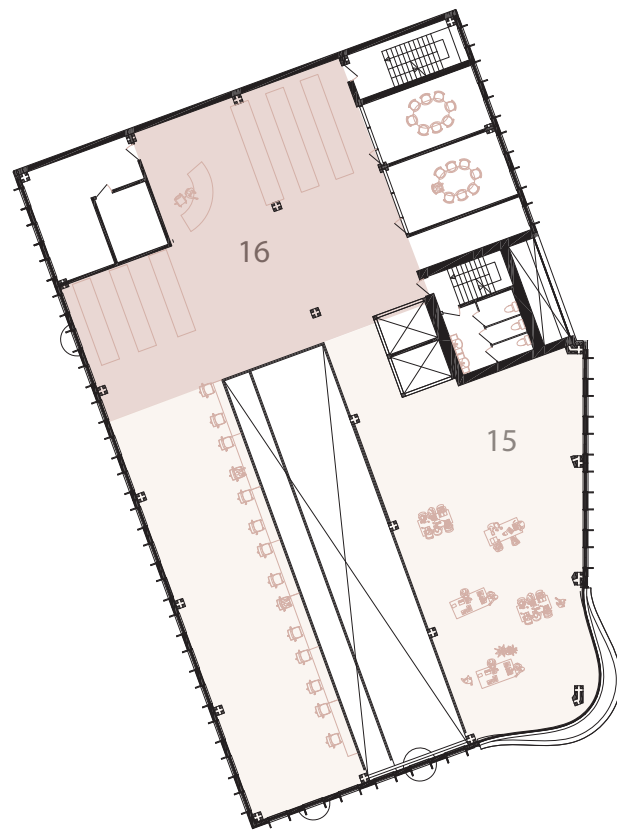
1. Debate Forum
2. Auditorium
3. Exhibition space
4. Restaurant
5. Rehearsal room
6. Changing room
7. Costume storage
8. Garderobe
- 9.Storage
- 10.Kitchen

Ground floor plan
Scale 1::500

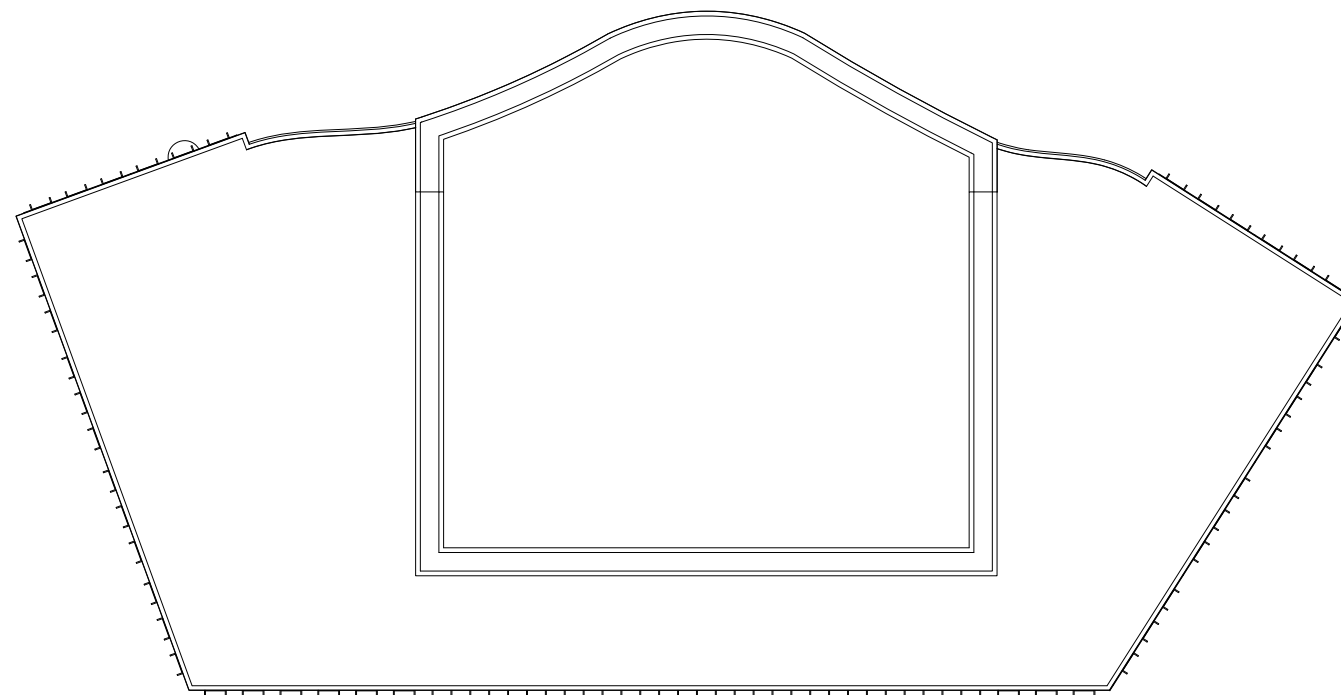
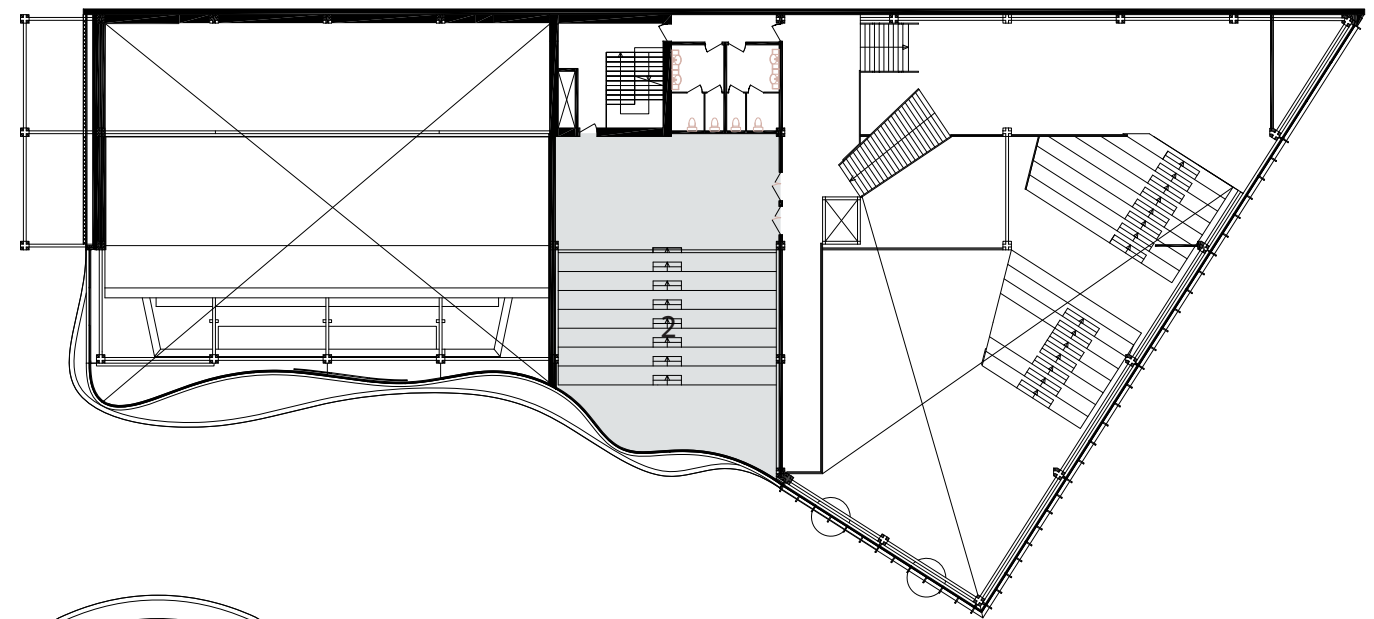
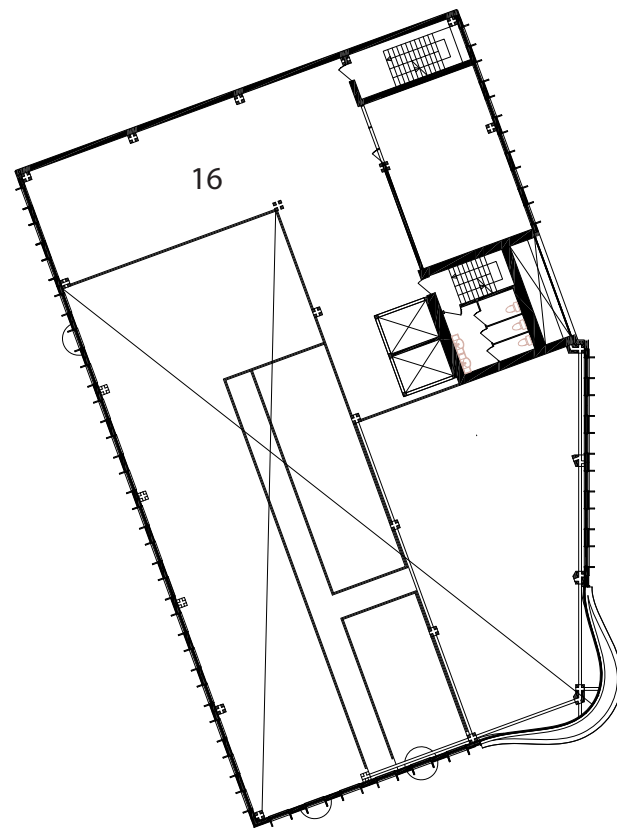


- 10. Kitchen
- 11. Lounge
- 12. Skill Lab
- 13. Workshop
- 14. Office

First floor plan
Scale 1:500

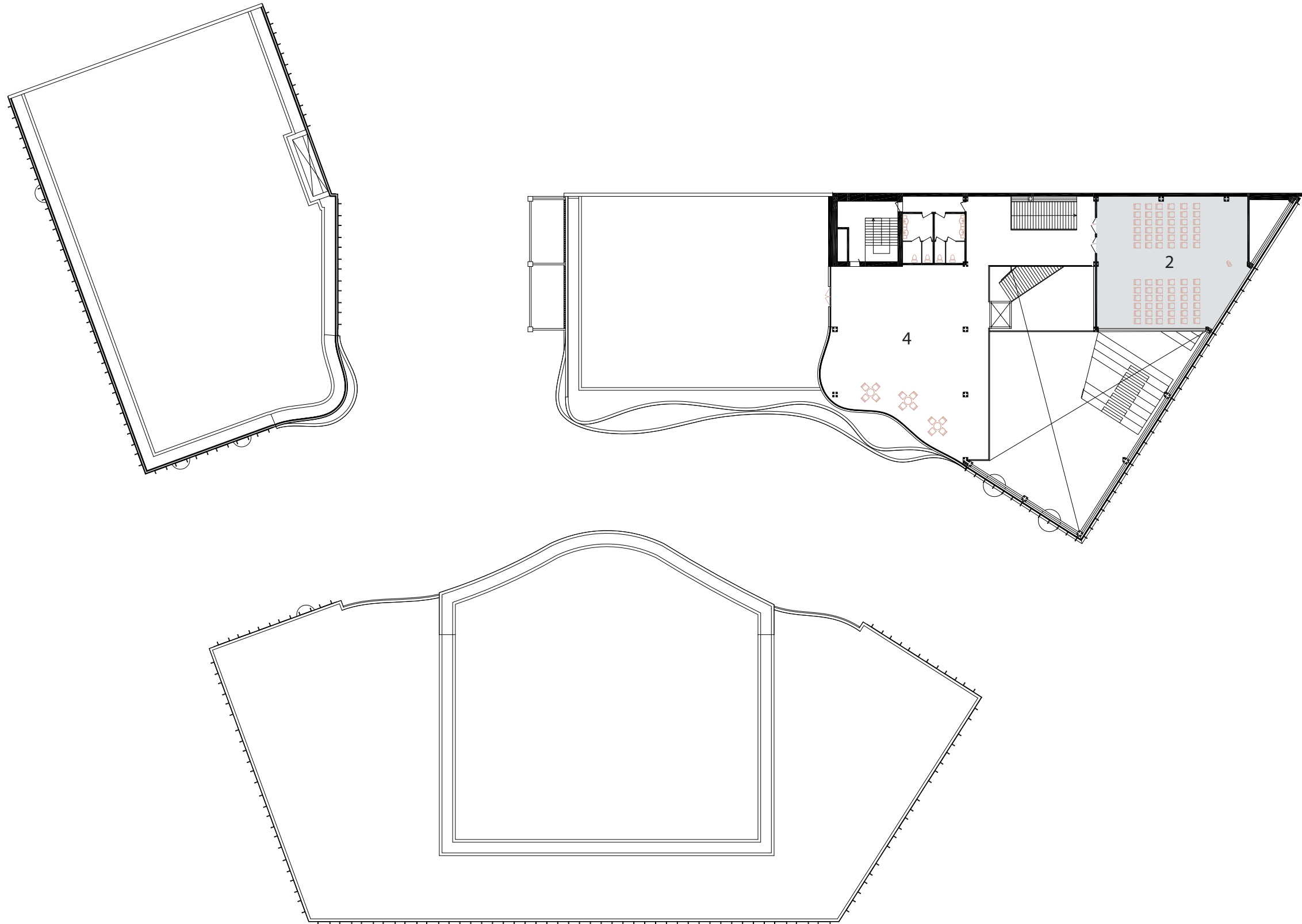


- 2. Auditorium
 - 9. Storage
 - 15. Working space
 - 16. Library
 - 17. Technical room
- Scale 1:500



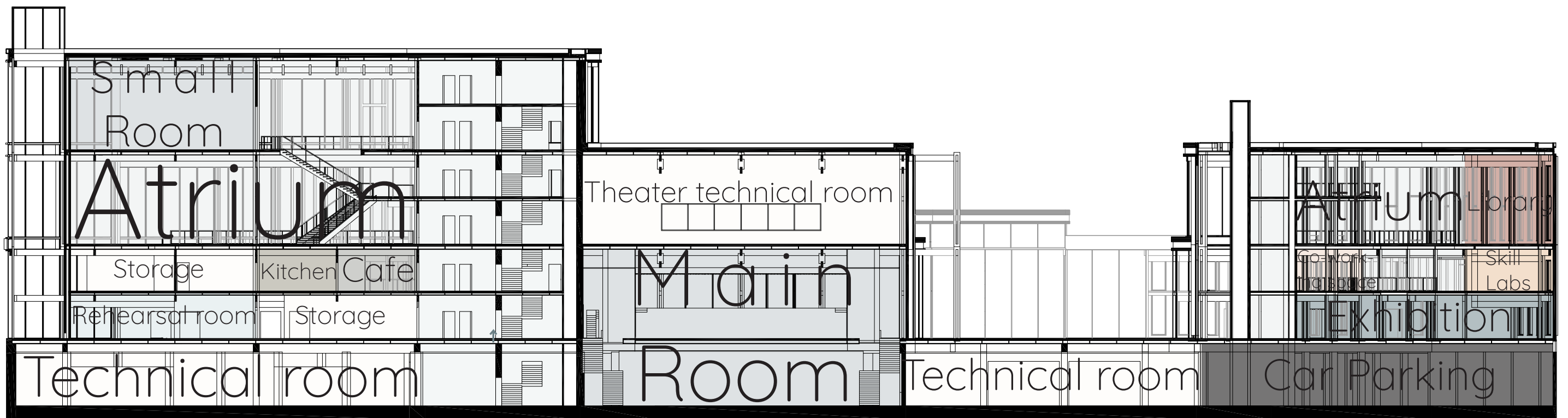
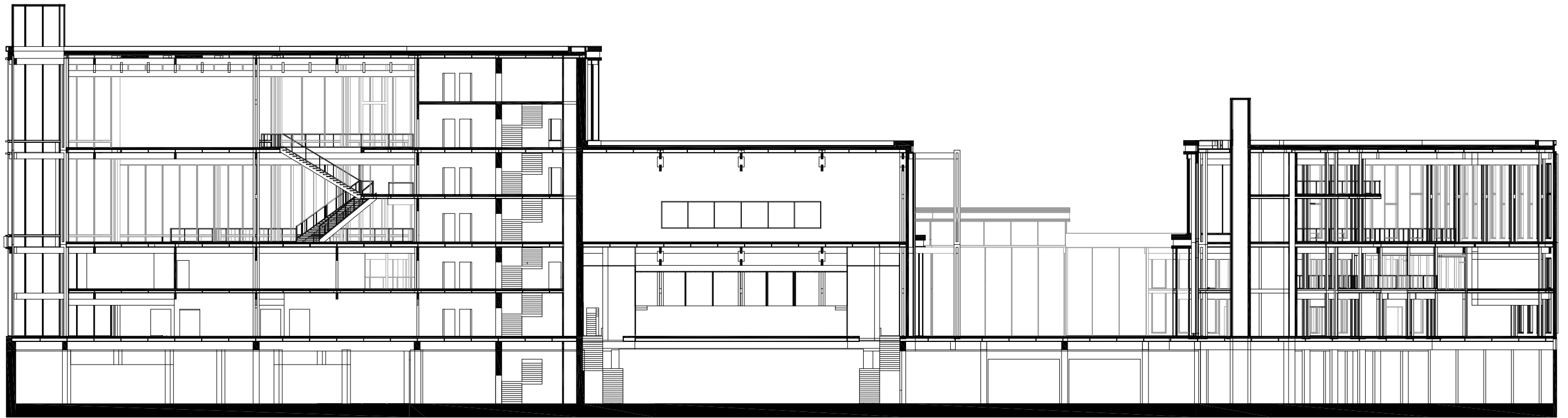
2. Auditorium
16. Library

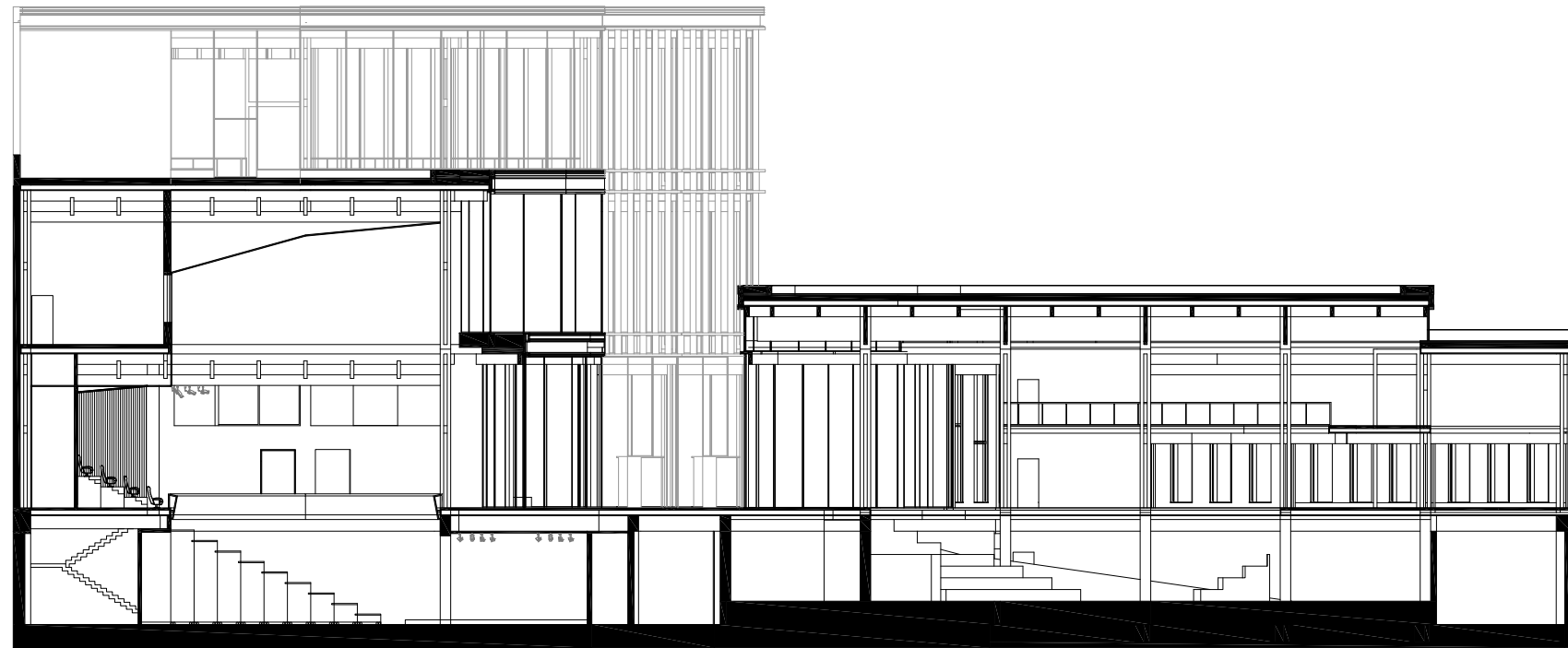
Third floor plan
Scale 1::500



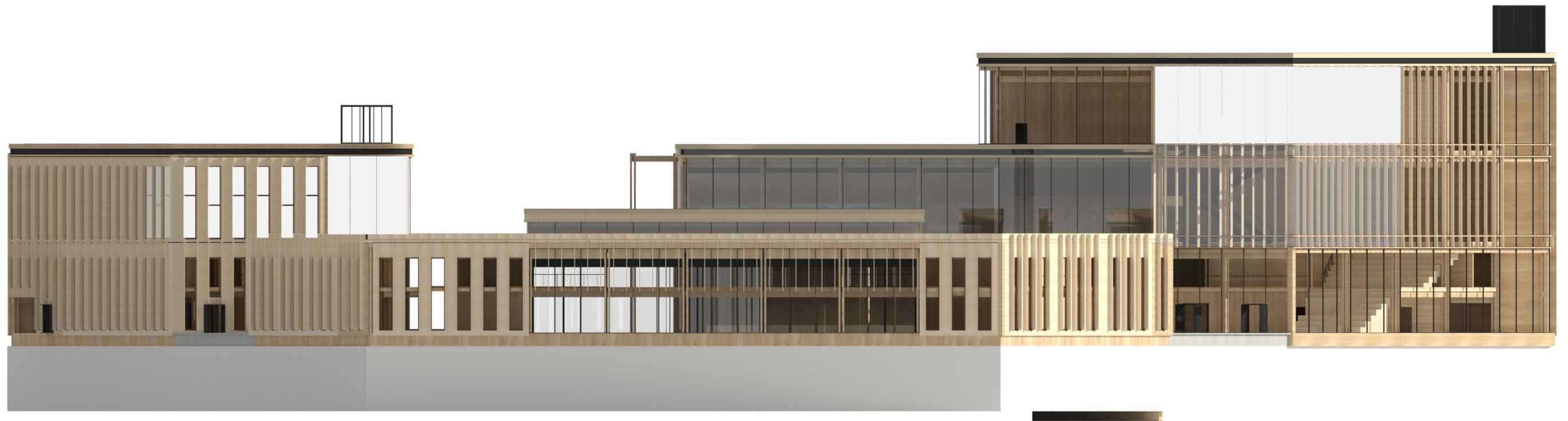
2. Auditorium
4. Restaurant

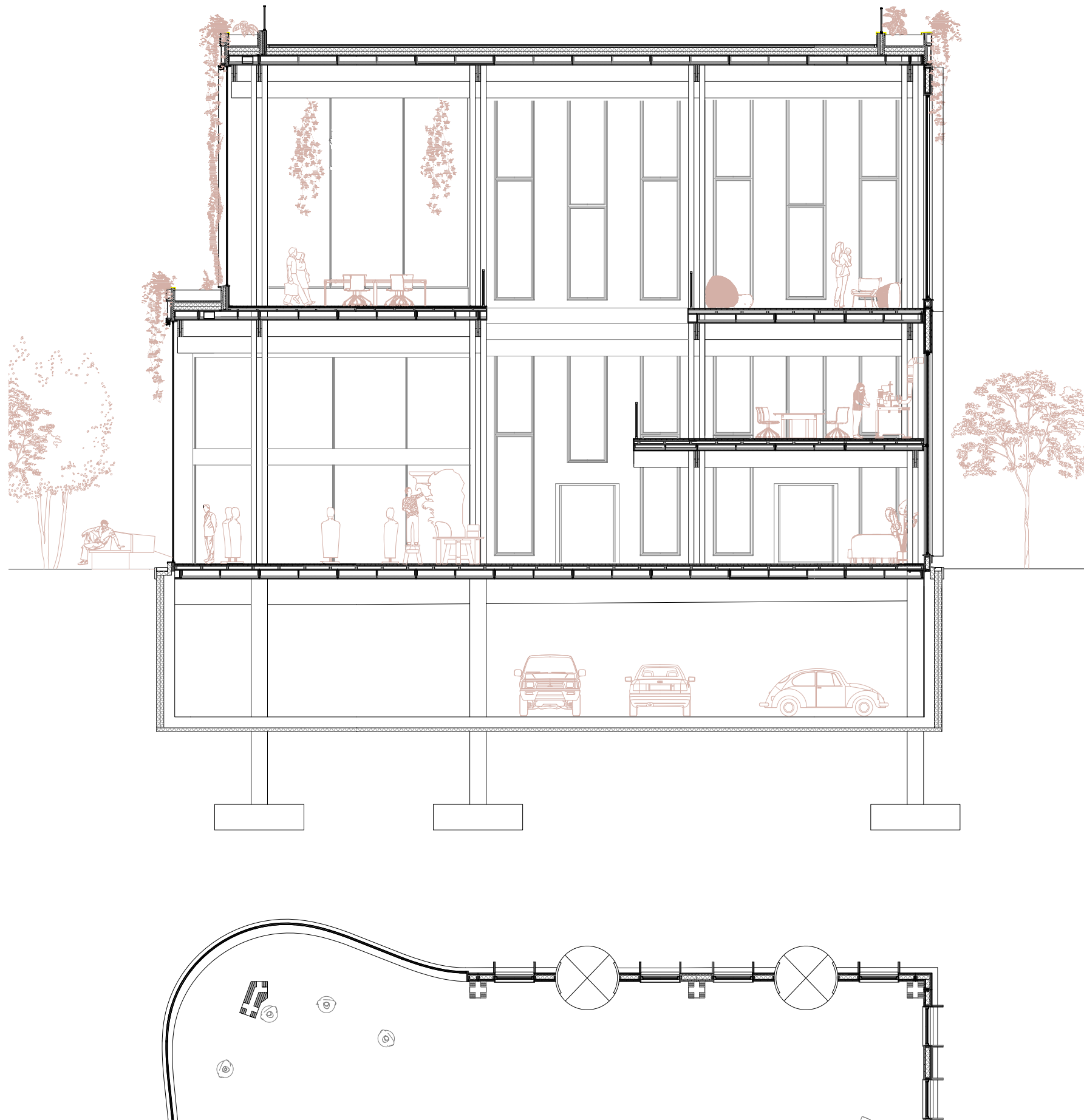
Fourth floor plan
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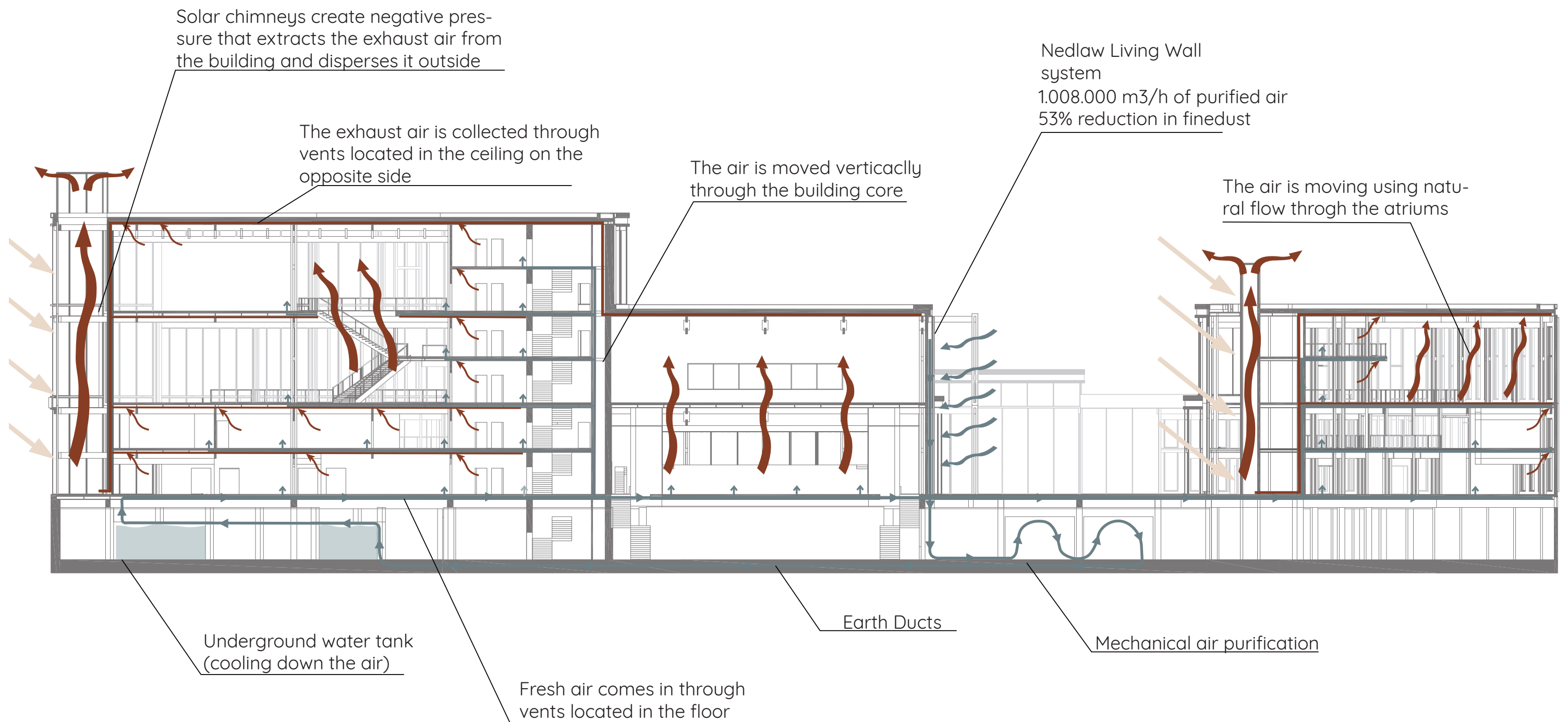


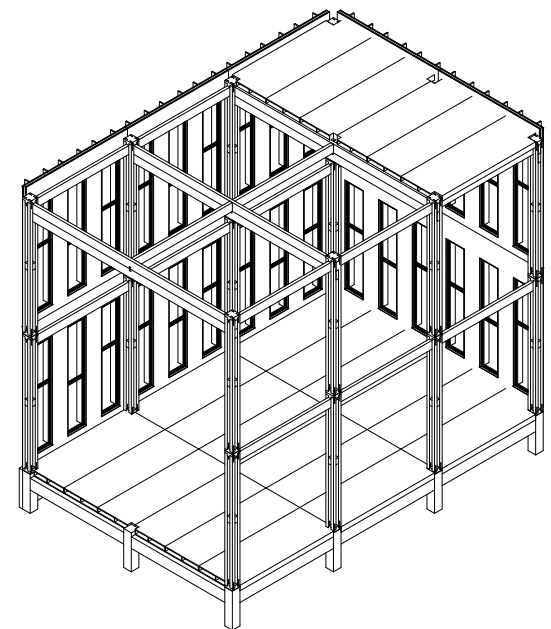
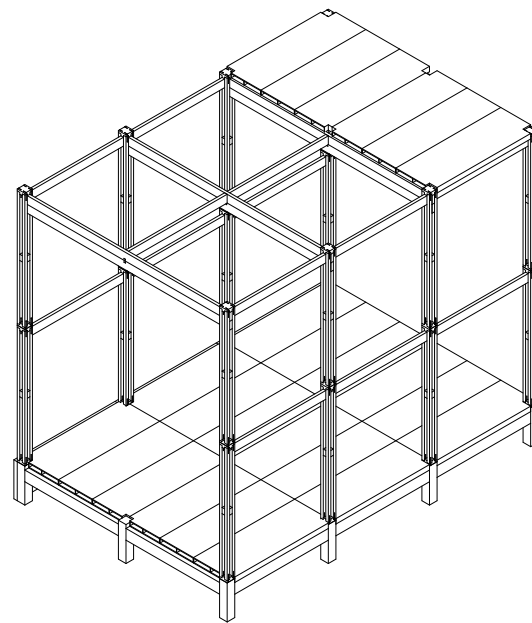
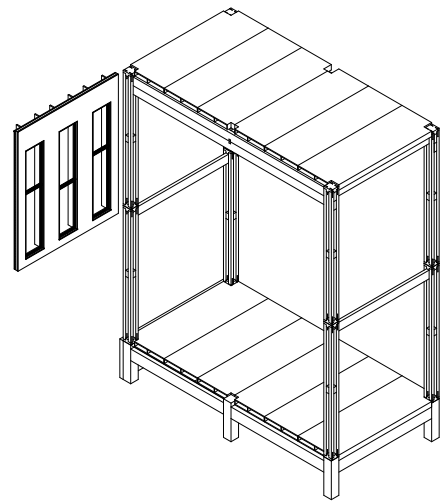
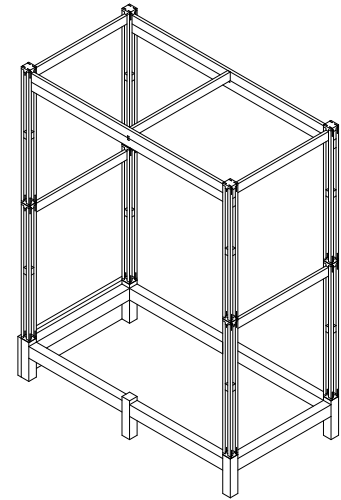
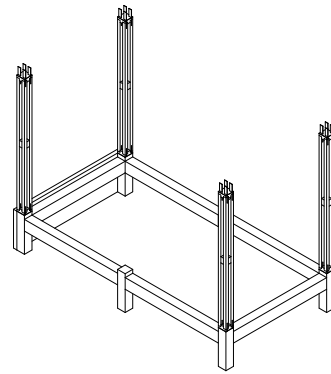
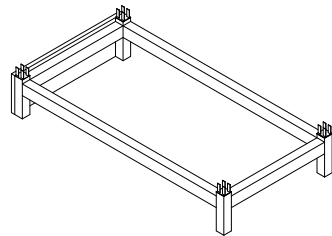
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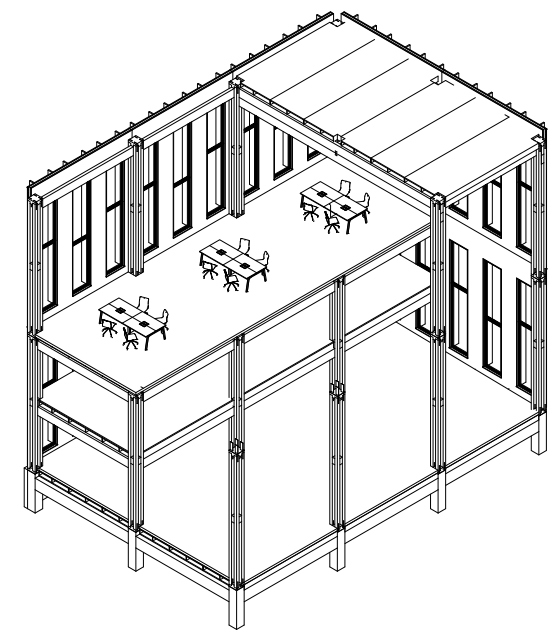
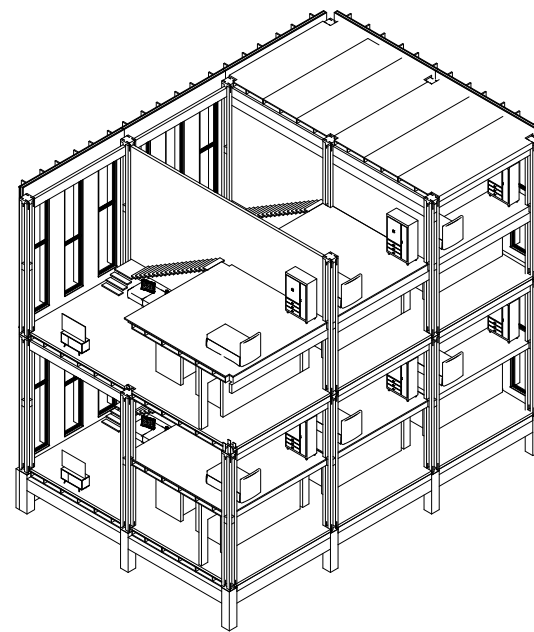
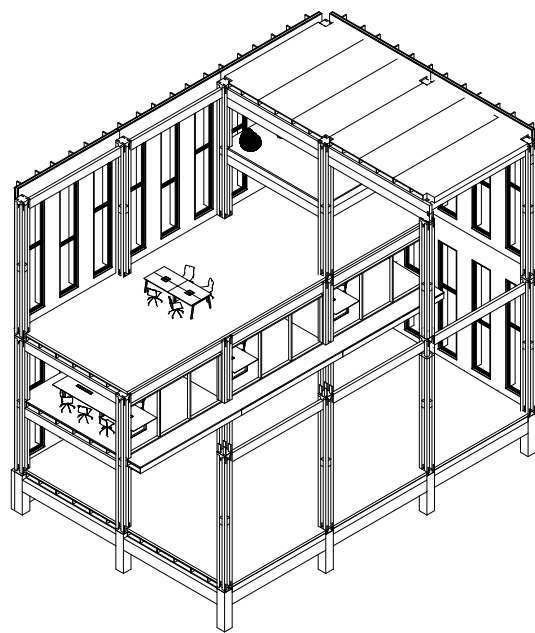
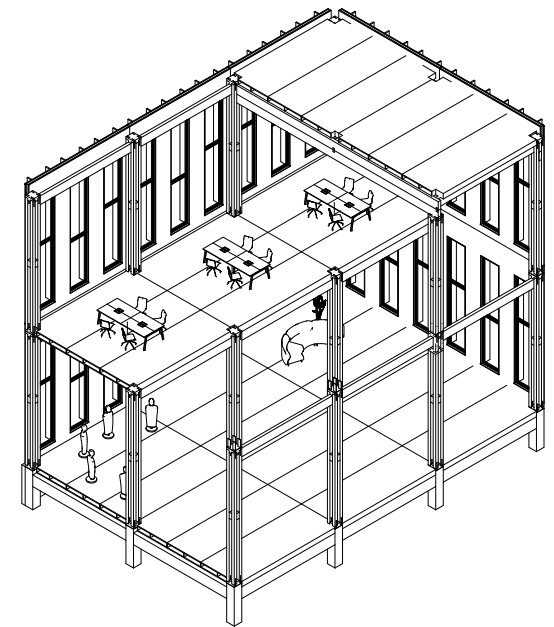
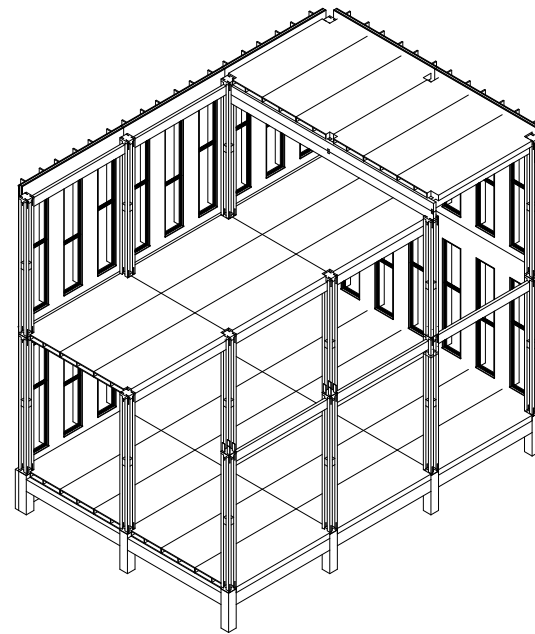
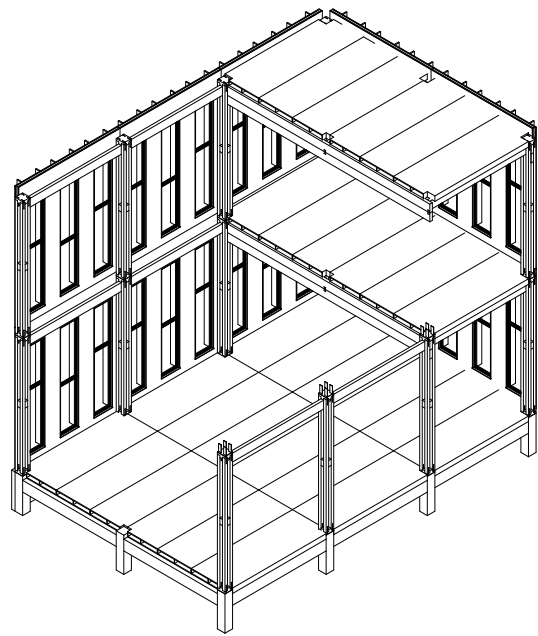


Building Fragment

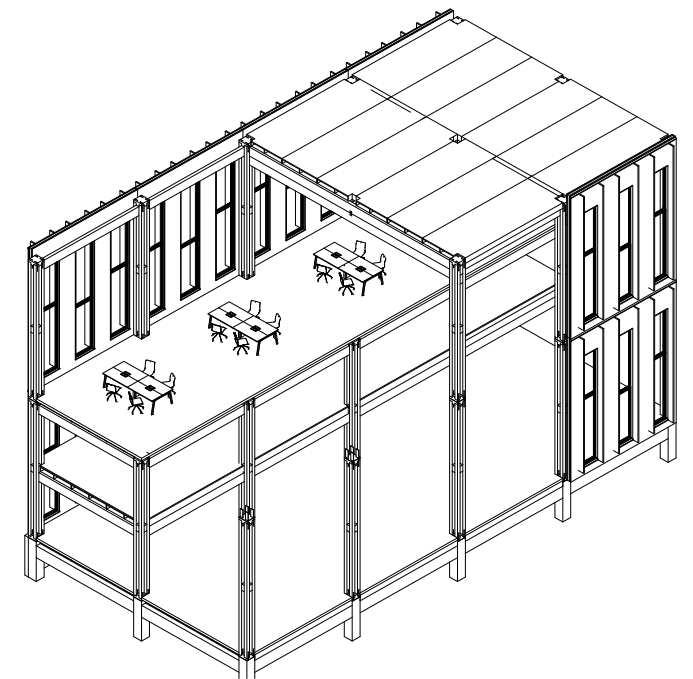
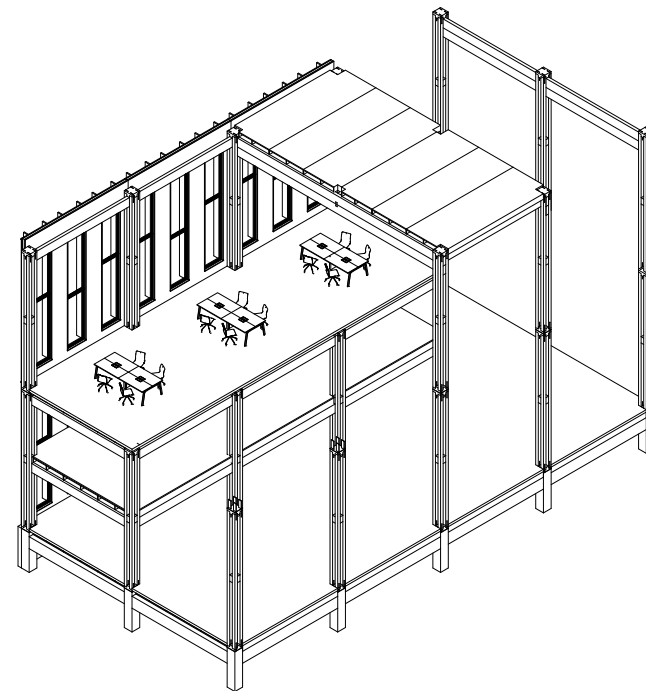
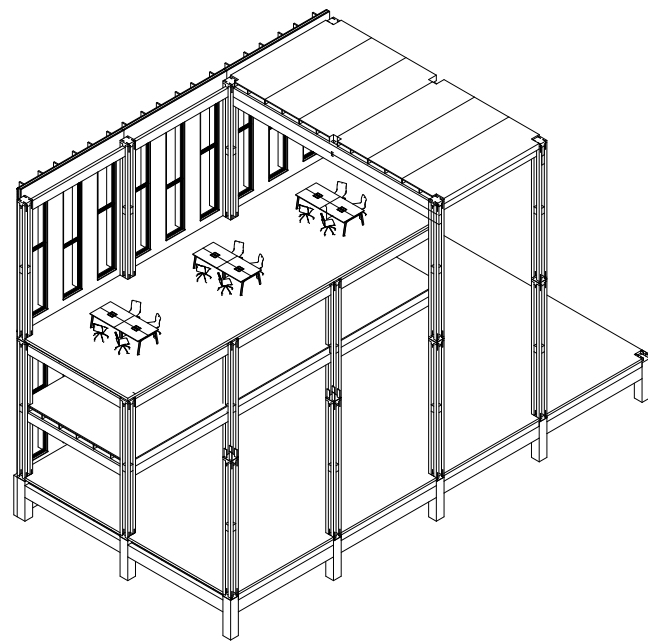


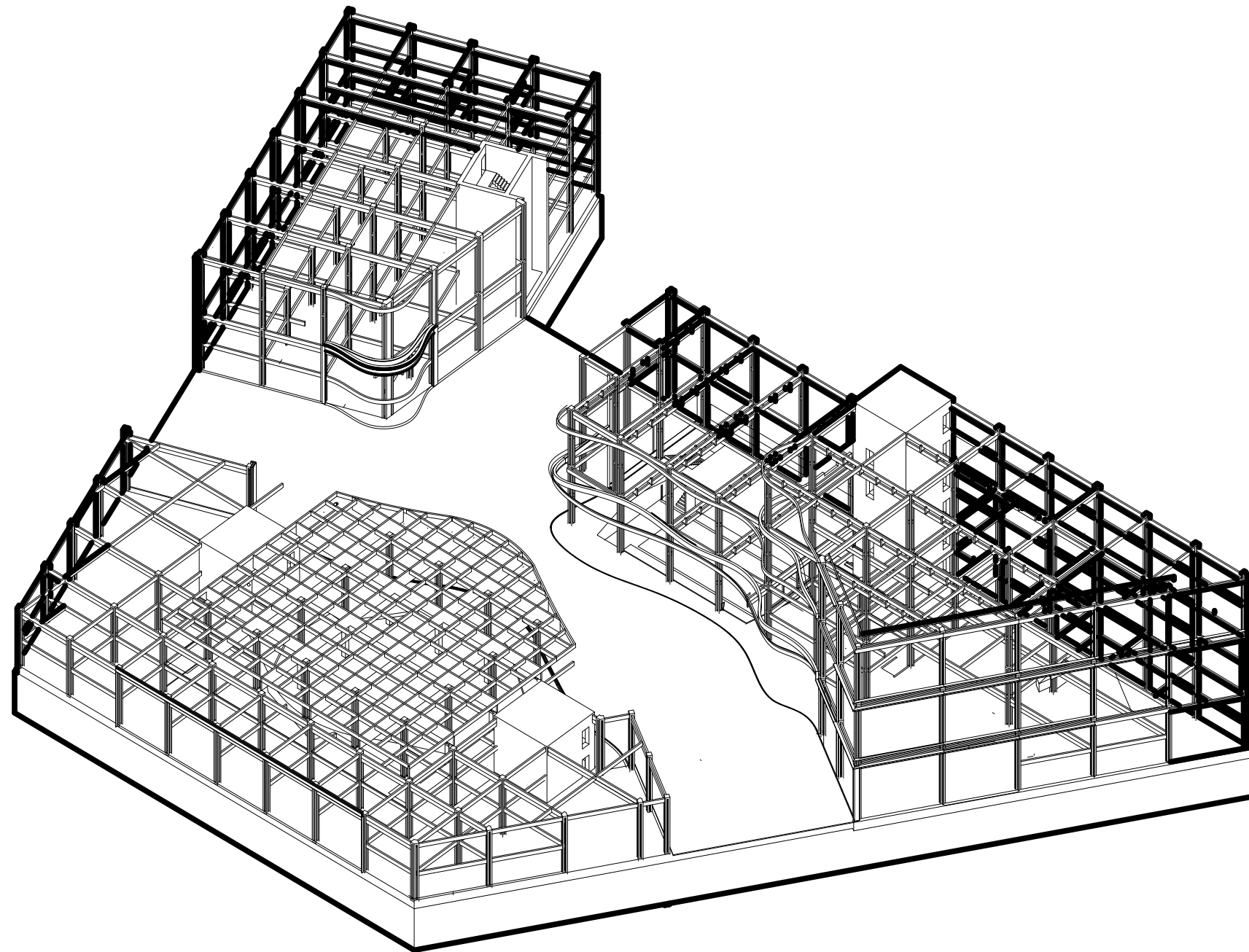


Assembly diagram

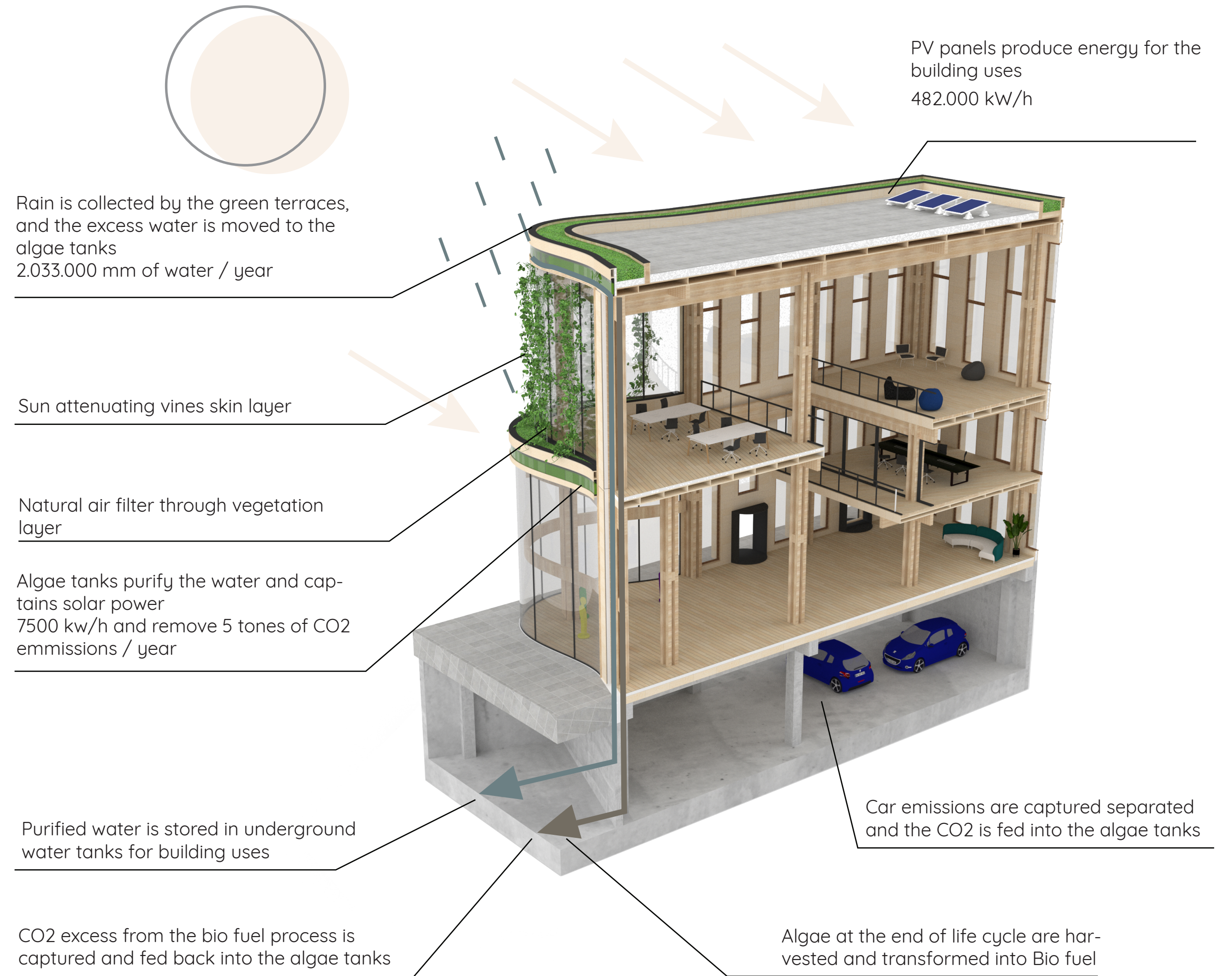


Assembly diagram

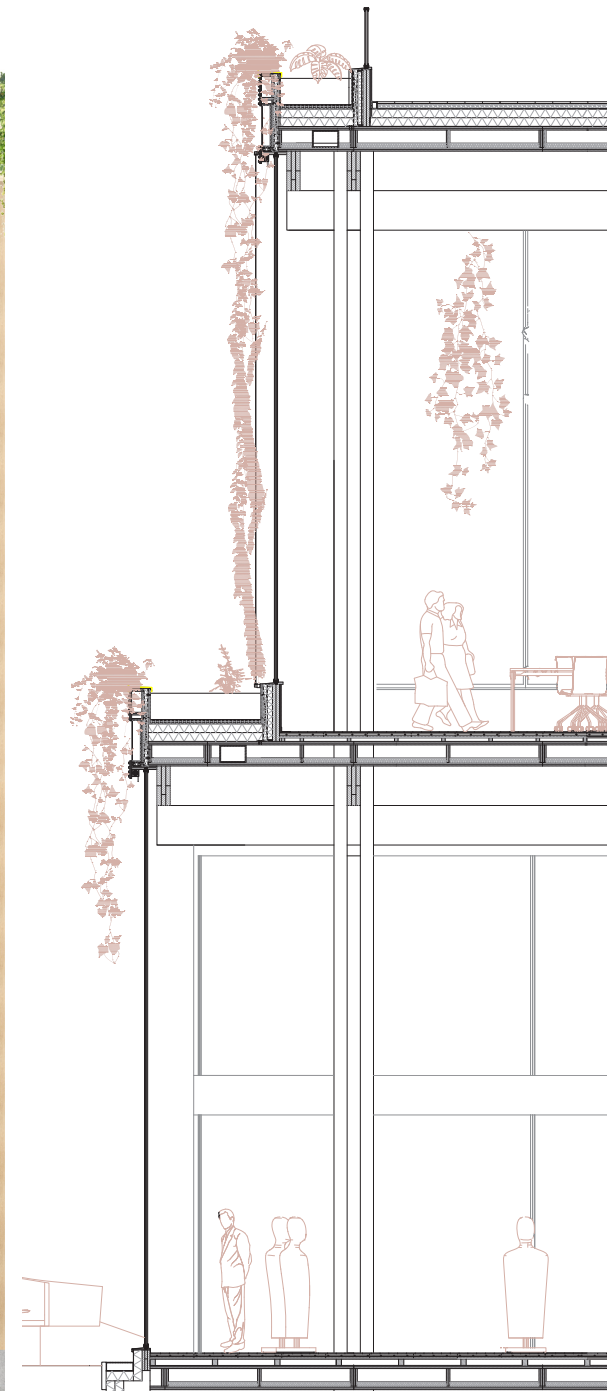
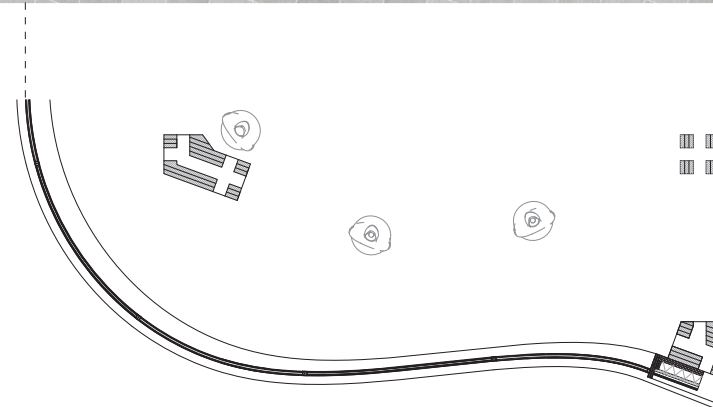




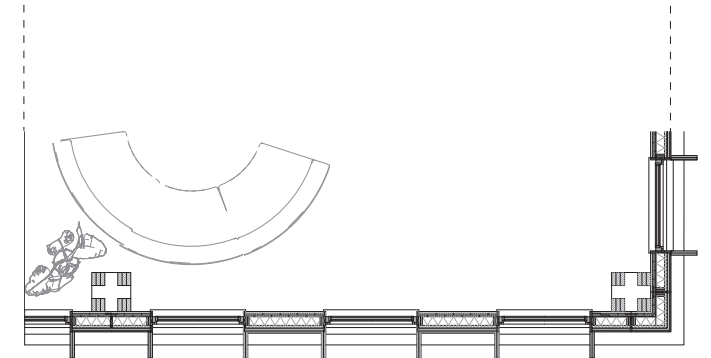
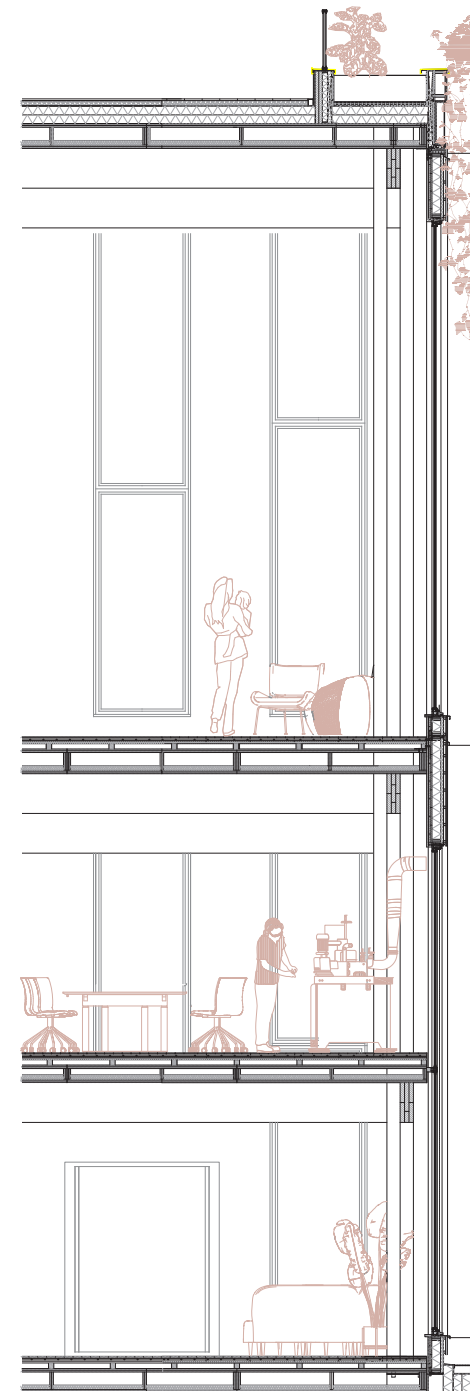
Structure diagram
Scale 1:500



Fragment climate diagram



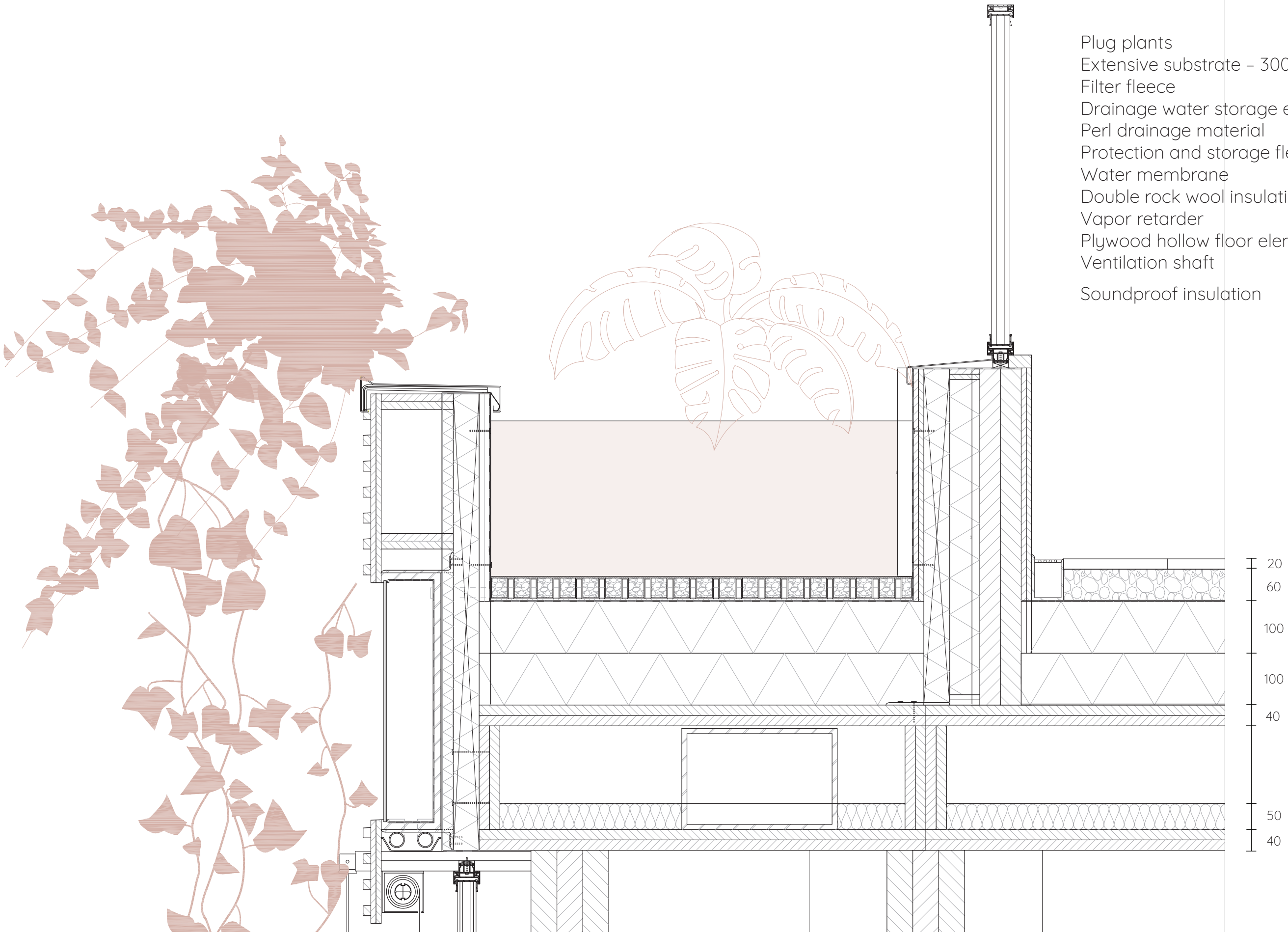
Combination drawing 1
Scale 1:20



Combination drawing 2
Sale 1:20

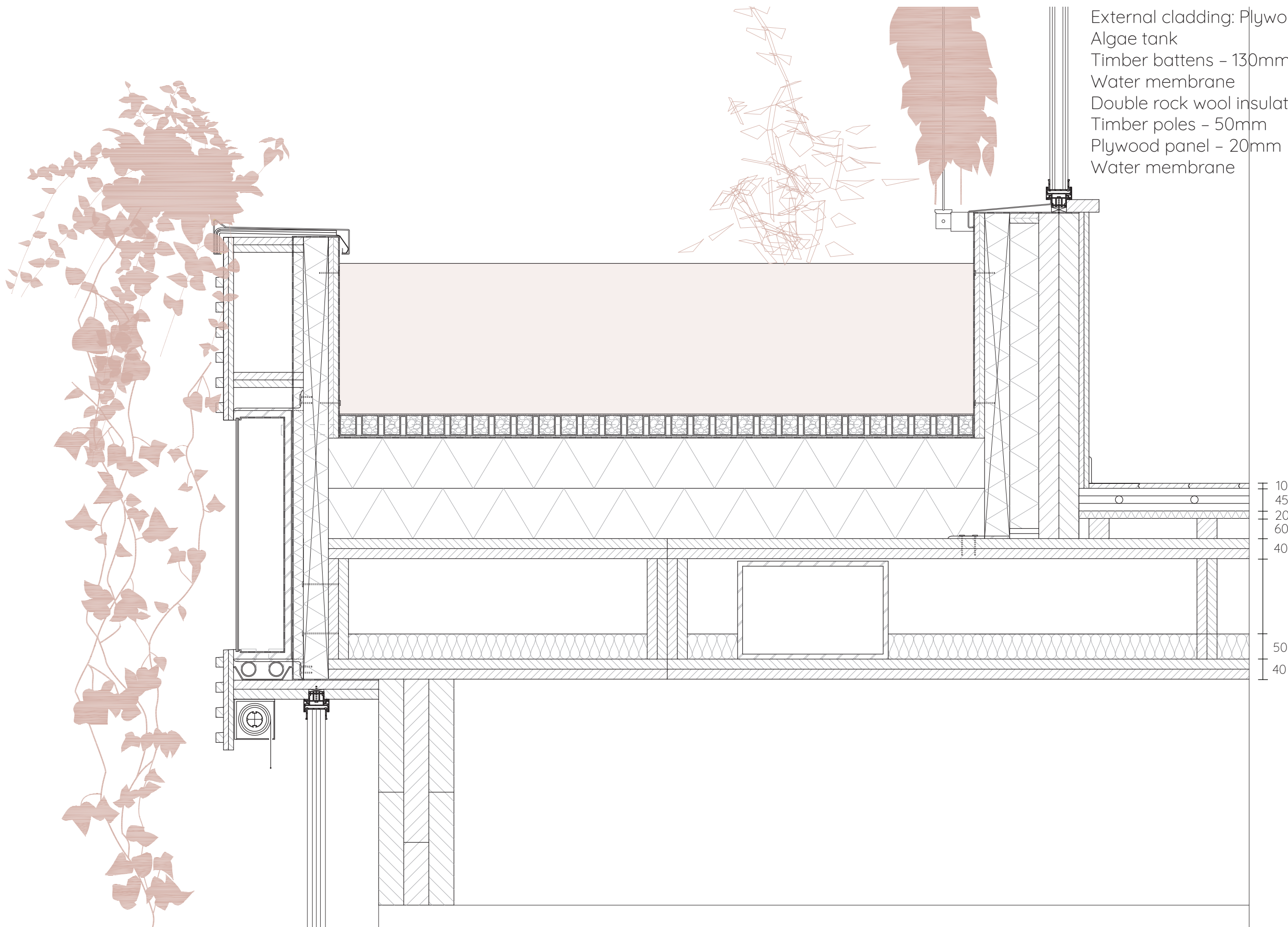
1. Green Terraces

Plug plants
Extensive substrate – 300mm
Filter fleece
Drainage water storage element – 40mm
Perl drainage material
Protection and storage fleece
Water membrane
Double rock wool insulation – 200mm
Vapor retarder
Plywood hollow floor element – 280mm
Ventilation shaft
Soundproof insulation



Detail 1
Scale 1:5

2 Green Terraces



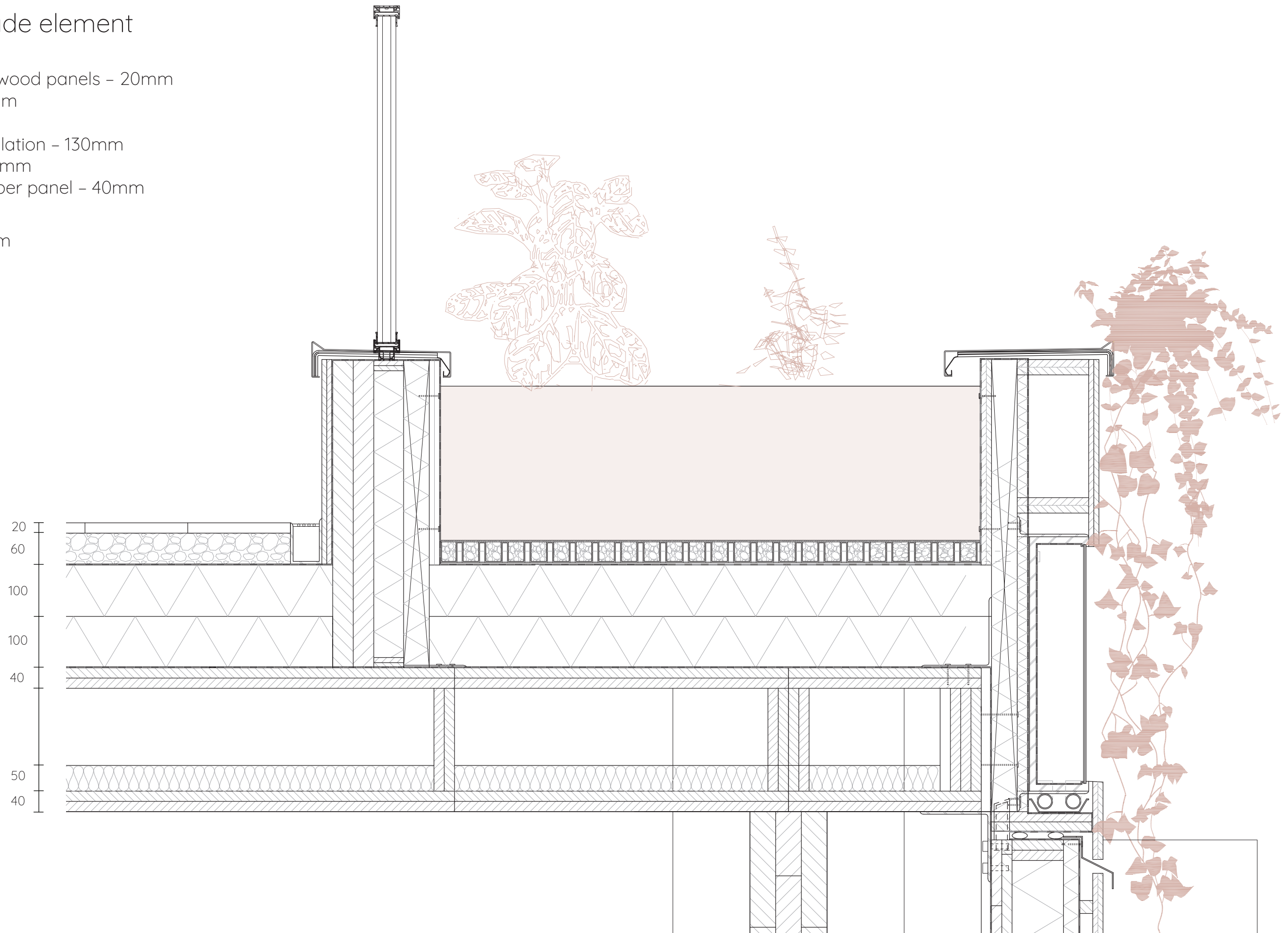
External cladding: Plywood panels – 20mm
Algae tank
Timber battens – 130mm
Water membrane
Double rock wool insulation – 70mm
Timber poles – 50mm
Plywood panel – 20mm
Water membrane

10
45
20
60
40
50
40

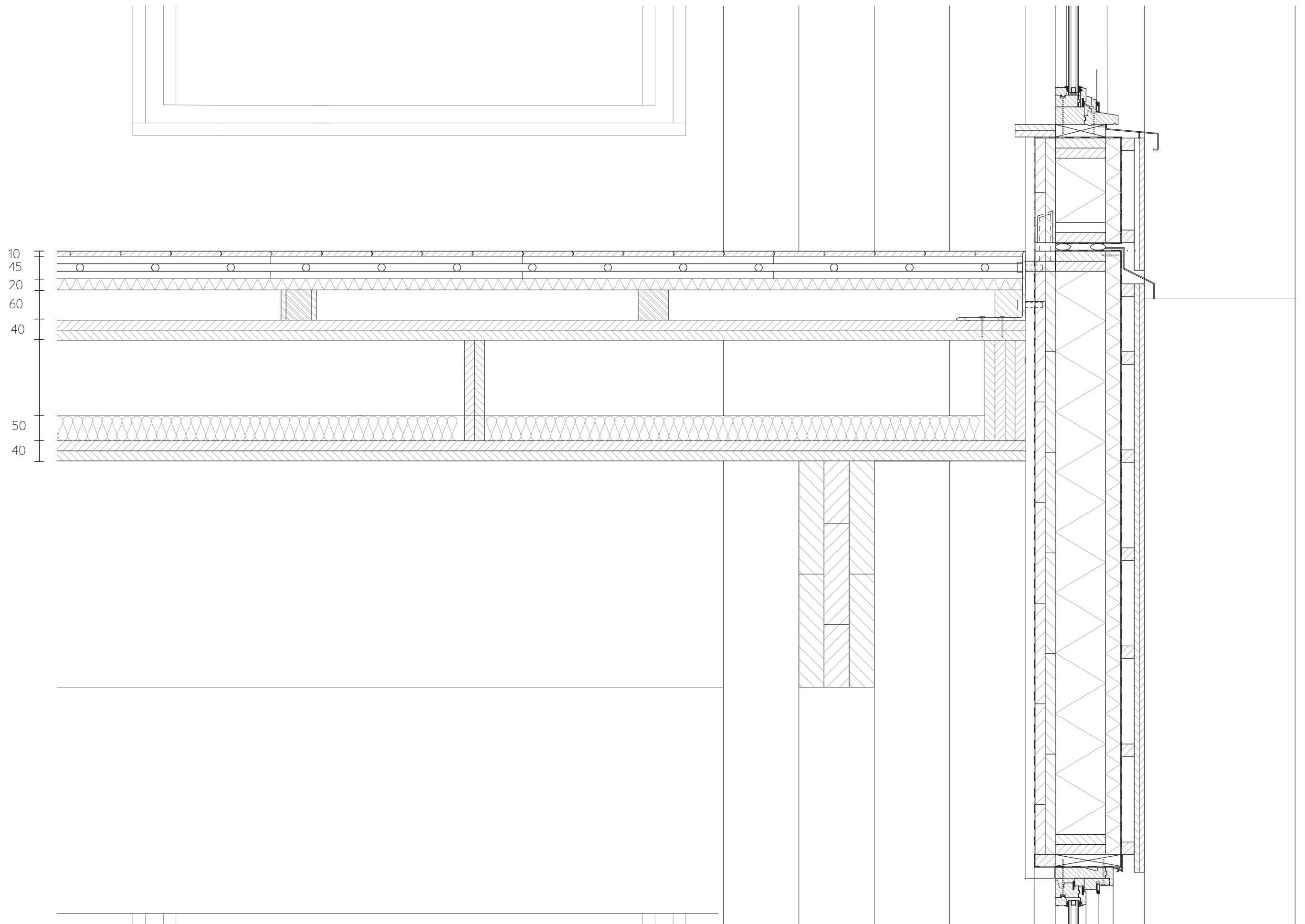
Detail 2
Scale 1:5

3. Modular facade element

External cladding: Plywood panels – 20mm
Timber battens – 25mm
Water Membrane
Double rock wool insulation – 130mm
Timber transom – 100mm
Cross Laminated Timber panel – 40mm
Vapor retarder
Gypsum board – 18mm



Detail 3
Scale 1:5



Detail 4Scale 1:5

Reflection



Figure 1. Conceptual map of the neighborhood's research

Research Context

The development of the project started with the research of the location from a critical literature review point of view in order to understand the area and a hands-on approach by visiting the city of Berlin and the neighborhood of Friedrichshain in particular. Both types of research pointed at the existence of a divided city from an architectural point of view as well as from a socio-political perspective. The literature review showed the tumultuous history of Berlin, a direct clash between ideologies, being at the front of the division between 'East' and 'West.' In addition, the fieldwork in Friedrichshain has revealed that diverse people with different and sometimes opposing ideologies congregate in the same public space^{1 2}. These people are fundamentally divided by their shared beliefs on religion, cultural and social identities which are the central aspect in forming their ideologies³. The interviews of the neighborhood's inhabitants showed that various social groups observed in the analysis show almost no interaction, with each group discussing their ideologies and social problems internally. This leads to polarization in the local community.

This division was exacerbated by the gentrification process, with Friedrichshain being one of the most gentrified areas of Berlin and which fragmented the neighborhood not only from an architectural point of view but also socio-politically, with enclaves of people from different social groups living in close proximity to each other. As such, the following research questions arise in order to understand and guide the design in the direction of trying to bring cohesion and create a space that can solve some of the divisions of the neighborhood.

Research Questions

How can architecture provide a middle ground in the ideological debate?

How to incentivize the users to take a proactive role in the development of the community?

How can architecture be used in the amplification of the public debate?

How can the spatial organization contribute to the starting of discussion and interaction between different socio-economic groups of people in the Friedrichshain neighborhood?

Conceptual Framework

A series of case studies of projects that implement similar ambitions were analyzed in order to understand how they manage to intensify the discussions from the community. In general, the program of each center revolves around the debate aspect, which can take the form of larger auditoriums for talks or exhibitions, both formal and informal. Furthermore, these spaces are surrounded by practical functions, such as workshops, to create a sense of community and teach the participants practical skills. In this way, architecture can act as a middle ground in the ideological debate by providing a physical space for the converging of different ideologies without favoring one over the other, in this case, a debate center that is designed

to encourage the interaction between different social groups by creating events that bring together people with different beliefs, with the goal that people that are working or spending time nearby are more likely to try to understand each other's point of view.

As such, the design project consists of creating a hybrid structure, combining the traditional structures of a debate forum and a cultural center in order to intensify the community debate already present in the district. The central concept is to create a program and spatial organization that incentivizes the interaction between different groups by providing either the same functions or events that are relevant for different groups or separate functions that are located in close proximity to each other; in this way, the spaces adjusted become the meeting ground. This translates into the program on three layers of interaction: leisure, skills, and knowledge.

The leisure functions are designed with the scope of attracting people from the neighborhood by providing activities that are not present in the district. The residents expressed interest in performance spaces, art galleries, gathering spaces, and others that encourage the concept of 'Kiez' ("Kinder-Eltern-Zentrum," which emphasizes the community as a family) present in Berlin. These functions should act as gathering spaces for the neighborhood and would be the first interaction for the newcomers with the rest of the functions. They would be oriented directly toward the street in order to attract the people that are passing by and submerge them deeper into the center.

The "skills" functions activate the community by providing space for creative or co-working and the so-called skills labs. They are implemented in community centers and intended to teach residents specific skills to improve the community and learn about the challenges arising from the division and problems in the neighborhood. These skills labs are accessible to people from all socio-economic backgrounds present in the neighborhood, including people experiencing homelessness and squatters who are marginalized and ignored. In the skills labs, people work in close proximity or have workshops together to learn how to interact more, even if they are part of different groups, and open up about specific problems and learn to see other points of view regarding the community.

Finally, the center of the project, the knowledge functions, with the debate space at the center, activate the discussion and different ways of information communication and debate that provide a wide range of media for different types of people to get involved in the community. In the traditional auditorium, residents learn and interact with specific presenters. The library (physical and digital) and the exhibition space provide space for residents or guests to present works or exhibit specific topics, showing the different possible points of view. The center's users can take the knowledge gained from the program in the "forum" and present different world views about the community and the richness of diverse opinions, thereby helping the neighborhood to develop in harmony.

In addition, in order to incentivize the users to take a proactive role in the development of the community, the project makes use of the strategy of 'Architecture of Anarchism' explained by Michael Coates⁴ and which is incorporated by creating a balance between the spaces that are designed and the un-designed spaces that can be 'colonized' by the users and their needs and

involve the users in the design to create a debate first about the development of the building and then the development of the neighborhood. This is done in order to change the role of the architect, and which instead of holding all the power over the design according to the modernist understanding of the role of the architect as the designer of all aspects related to the building and the human interaction, the architect would provide only the framework for development and "surrenders some elements of their power to the users"⁴ to create a sense of empowerment and collaboration for the development of the community.

Insight

The feedback provided during the P2 and P3 presentations was incremental to the evolution of the design, with the tutors pointing out the relation between the generic aspects related to the spaces and structures and the specific and how the architecture can highlight the balance between the designed and un-designed spaces by using same elements such as the structure in different ways. Another comment was related to the additions of the building and to the creation of scenarios or alterations and changes of the program and how they can be achieved without compromising the strategy of cooperation between the architect and the community by leaving some of the design to the users.

As such, the next stage was to research how the spaces can be designed with flexibility in mind, such as creating a modular structure that can be used directly for reconfiguring the spaces with minimal disturbances. The project is based on the structure exemplified in Figure 2, which is a combination of traditional German and Japanese wood joinery, to allow a certain degree of freedom with the spaces being able to be converted in the second stage by creating half floors and divisions for similar uses, or in stage 3 by creating exterior additions utilizing the same structural elements differently and provide space to grow for other functions such as workspace, meeting rooms, workshops or even studio spaces depending on the needs of the community. These spaces represent around 50% of the surface of the project, while the rest is occupied with fixed functions that are at the core of the project, such as the debate space, which is the middle point that gathers people from all social groups.

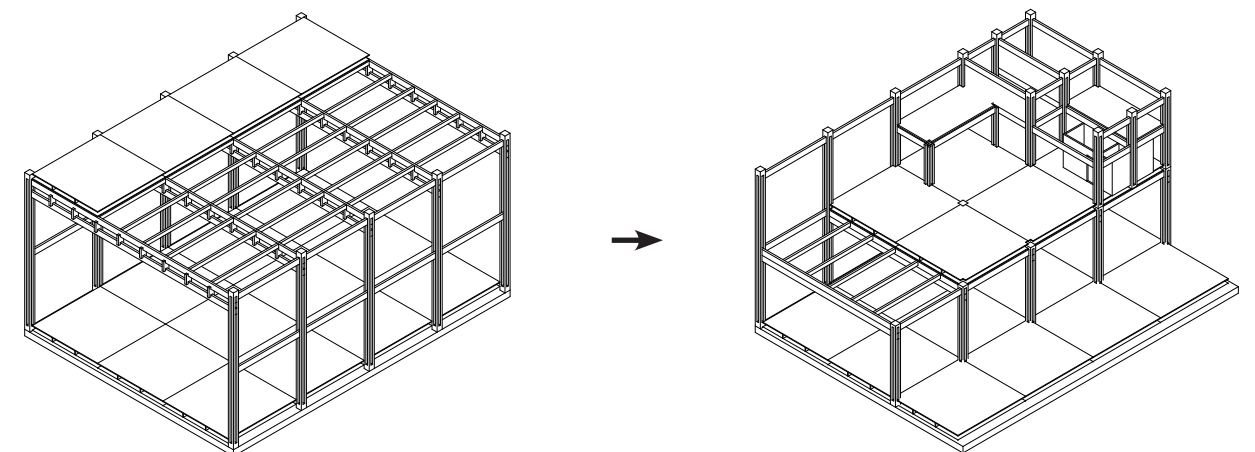


Figure 1. Modules Transformation

of the maintenance of the building. In addition, the use of predominant bio-based materials helps reach the goals regarding climate change and CO2 reduction, with the majority of the construction elements being CLT elements that can also be disassembled and reused at the end of the life cycle of the building.

Relation to the master track

The project is the result of the knowledge accumulated during the master track of architecture, starting from the analysis methods used that were a crucial aspect for identifying the problem and needed present in the analyzed area. Although most of the information gathered proved essential for the design phase, some of it was either too conceptual and impractical, or some methods that were supposed to be included, such as the interviews of the debate center's program managers, were not feasible.

In addition, the understanding of causality and the impact of every decision that was taught during the master track helped with the understanding of the complexity related to the design phase of a public condenser. Furthermore, the relationship with the Master Program of Architecture, Urbanism, and Building Sciences contributed to the project's development on all scales starting from the urban scale and moving to the detail scale, which included the knowledge regarding technological and sustainability solutions for the improvement of the built environment.

The research on the role of architecture as the middle ground for social interaction and the understanding of how the architecture itself, through its organization, functions, and aesthetics, influences the interaction between individuals is an essential aspect in understanding and developing the future public building. As such, the research and findings of this graduation project can become part of the understanding of the development of the public condenser concept and the development of public buildings in future cities that should help create a more inclusive and democratic society by celebrating diversity.

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