

# NETWORKS OF CARE

The image is an architectural rendering of a modern building's interior. The space is characterized by a high ceiling and floor made of horizontal wooden planks. Large, light-colored wooden columns support the structure. On the left, there is a glass-enclosed area. The central part of the image shows a wide, open space with a curved path leading to a courtyard. The courtyard is filled with lush green plants and trees. Several people are depicted in the scene: two people are sitting on the floor in the foreground, looking out towards the courtyard; a group of people is walking along the path in the middle ground; and more people are visible in the background near the trees. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting a sunny day. The overall atmosphere is one of a bright, open, and community-oriented space.

A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OF  
INFORMAL CARE AND COMMUNITY  
Designed by Emmy Vermeulen

## Colophon

Design Booklet  
23.06.2025

Emmy Vermeulen  
Student no. 4881869

AR3AD110 Dwelling Graduation Studio:  
Designing for Care in an Inclusive  
Environment

MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building  
Sciences

Faculty of Architecture and the Built  
Environment TU Delft

First Mentor: Birgit Jurgenhake  
Second Mentor: AnneMarie Eijkelenboom  
Third Mentor: Birgitte Hansen



# NETWORKS OF CARE

A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OF  
INFORMAL CARE AND COMMUNITY

Designed by Emmy Vermeulen

# <sup>4</sup>URBAN PLAN

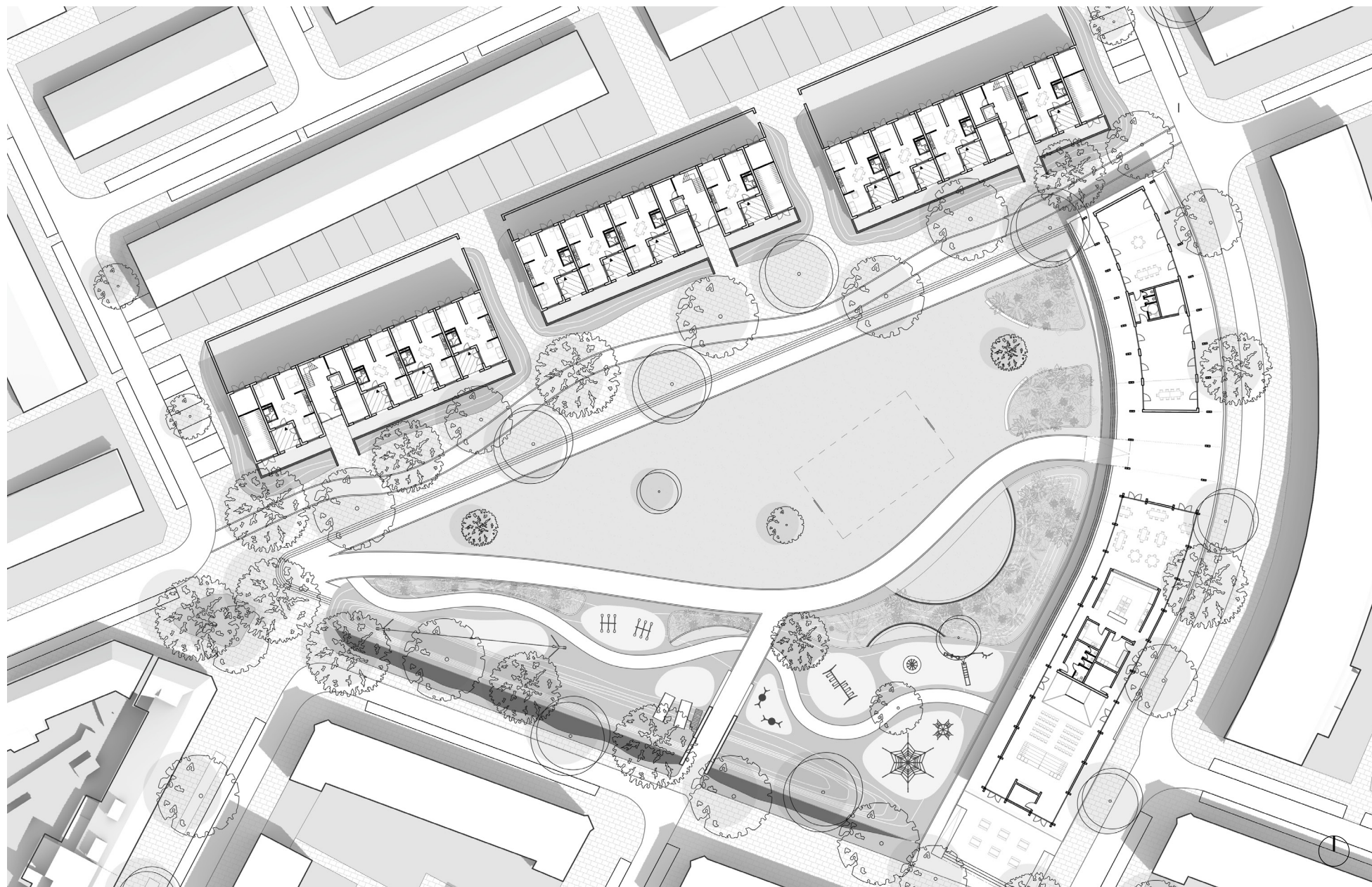
This project is situated in Tarwewijk, a neighborhood in Rotterdam South characterized by a high population density, limited green space, and socio-economic challenges. My urban plan seeks to reinforce existing informal care networks by introducing new public, semi-public, and residential spaces that foster interaction, safety, and mutual support.

The design creates a gradual transition from public to private, enabling different levels of social engagement. At its heart lies a multifunctional square that acts as the neighborhood's largest care node, surrounded by buildings that include communal programs like a neighborhood kitchen, multifunctional spaces, and inclusive housing. Together, these components create a spatial framework that supports informal acts of care, from spontaneous encounters to deeper, long-term relationships.

The plan emphasizes walkability, sightlines, and porous boundaries to invite movement and informal meeting. Inspired by feminist care ethics and

spatial justice, the intervention aims to create a city that not only houses, but also shelters, connects, and sustains its residents.





# <sup>6</sup>COMMUNITY KITCHEN

The community kitchen is the spatial and symbolic heart of the intervention. Rather than functioning as a restaurant or social enterprise, it is conceived as a shared, open space for everyday acts of cooking, eating, and being together. The kitchen enables care through food, not as a commodity, but as a relational act.

Its design prioritizes accessibility and flexibility: multiple entrances make it approachable from different directions, and the interior layout avoids rigid separations between preparation and dining. The multifunctional hall adjacent to the kitchen hosts collective activities such as shared meals, workshops, or informal gatherings.

A defining feature of the building is the wooden colonnade that defines both of its long public edges. It creates a generous transition zone between the interior and the surrounding public space. The use of timber contributes to a warm and welcoming atmosphere, while the rhythm of columns adds structure and clarity to the public realm. The colonnade provides shelter from rain and sun, supports informal lingering, and allows for

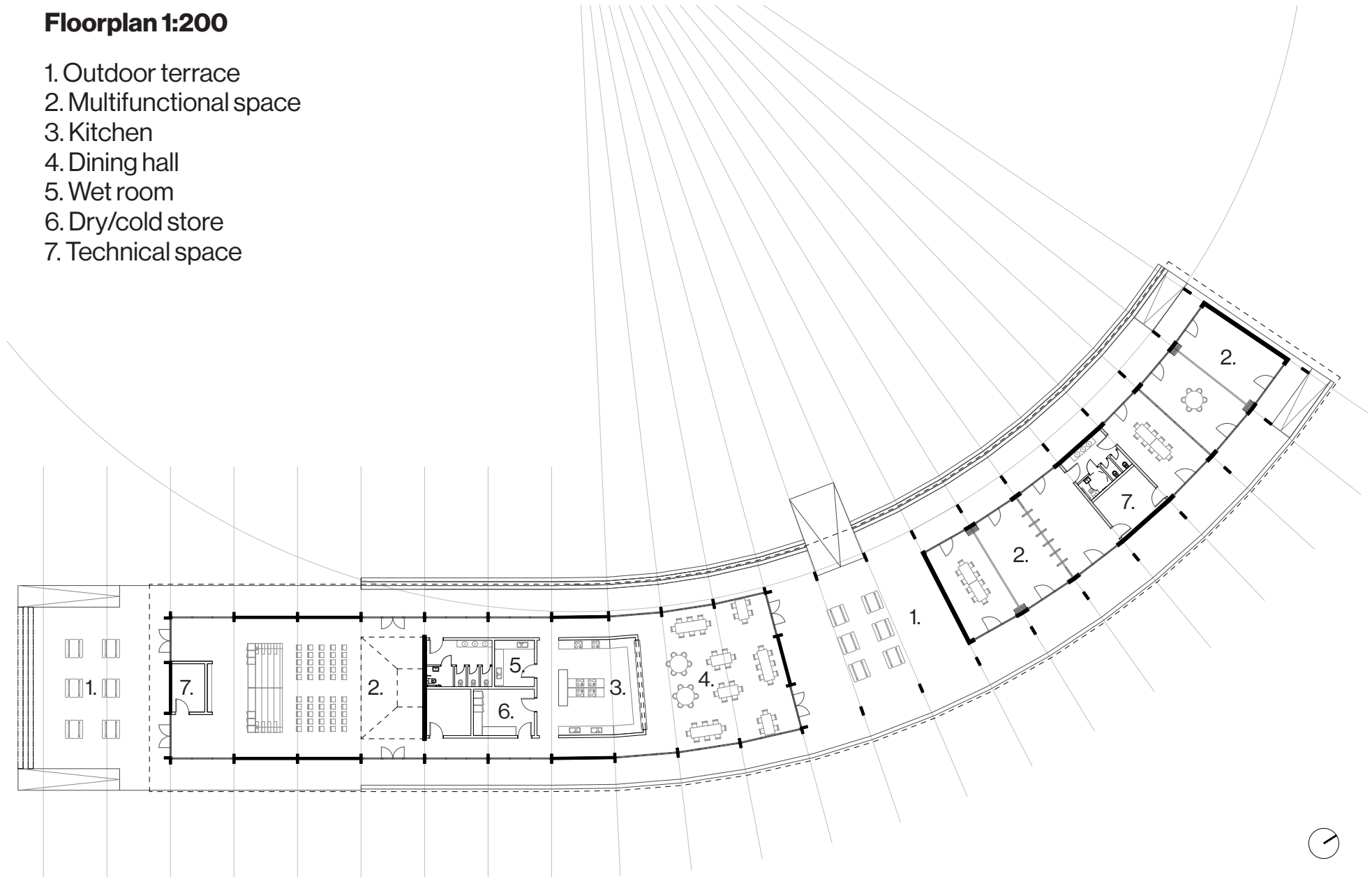
visual connection without requiring participation. In this way, it fosters low-threshold interaction, an architectural gesture of invitation that reflects the project's broader ethics of care.





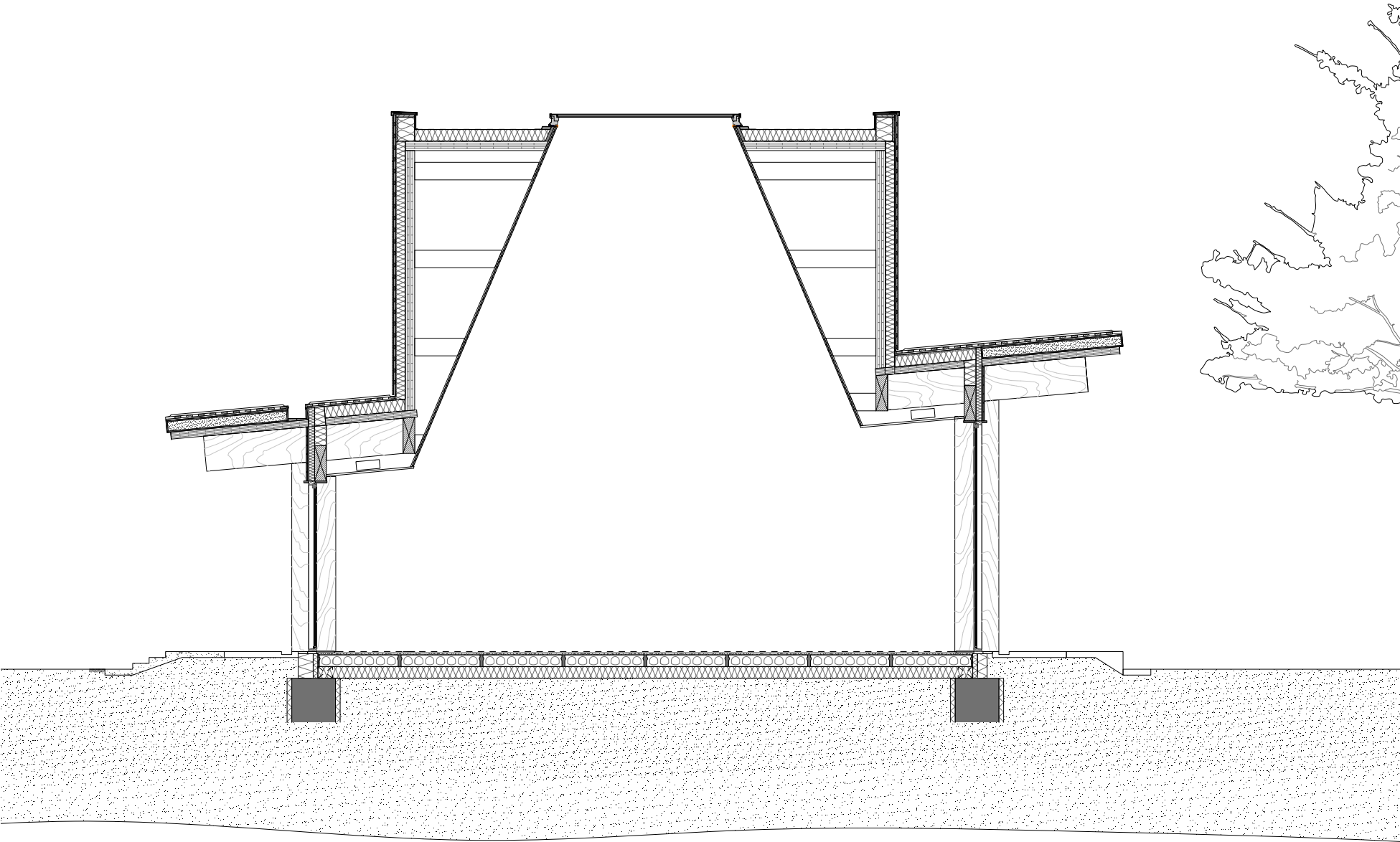
**Floorplan 1:200**

1. Outdoor terrace
2. Multifunctional space
3. Kitchen
4. Dining hall
5. Wet room
6. Dry/cold store
7. Technical space











## The Light Chimney

I refer to this vertical spatial element as a light chimney. The term draws on the traditional notion of the chimney as a central, symbolic anchor within the home, historically tied to the fireplace and the hearth, where warmth and social life converged. In this design, however, the element no longer channels smoke or fire, but instead becomes a passage for light. It reinterprets the chimney as a spatial and atmospheric core, a luminous centre around which the building is organized. In doing so, it reclaims the symbolic role of the hearth, yet transforms it to reflect contemporary needs for openness, orientation, and presence.













## Multifunctional modules

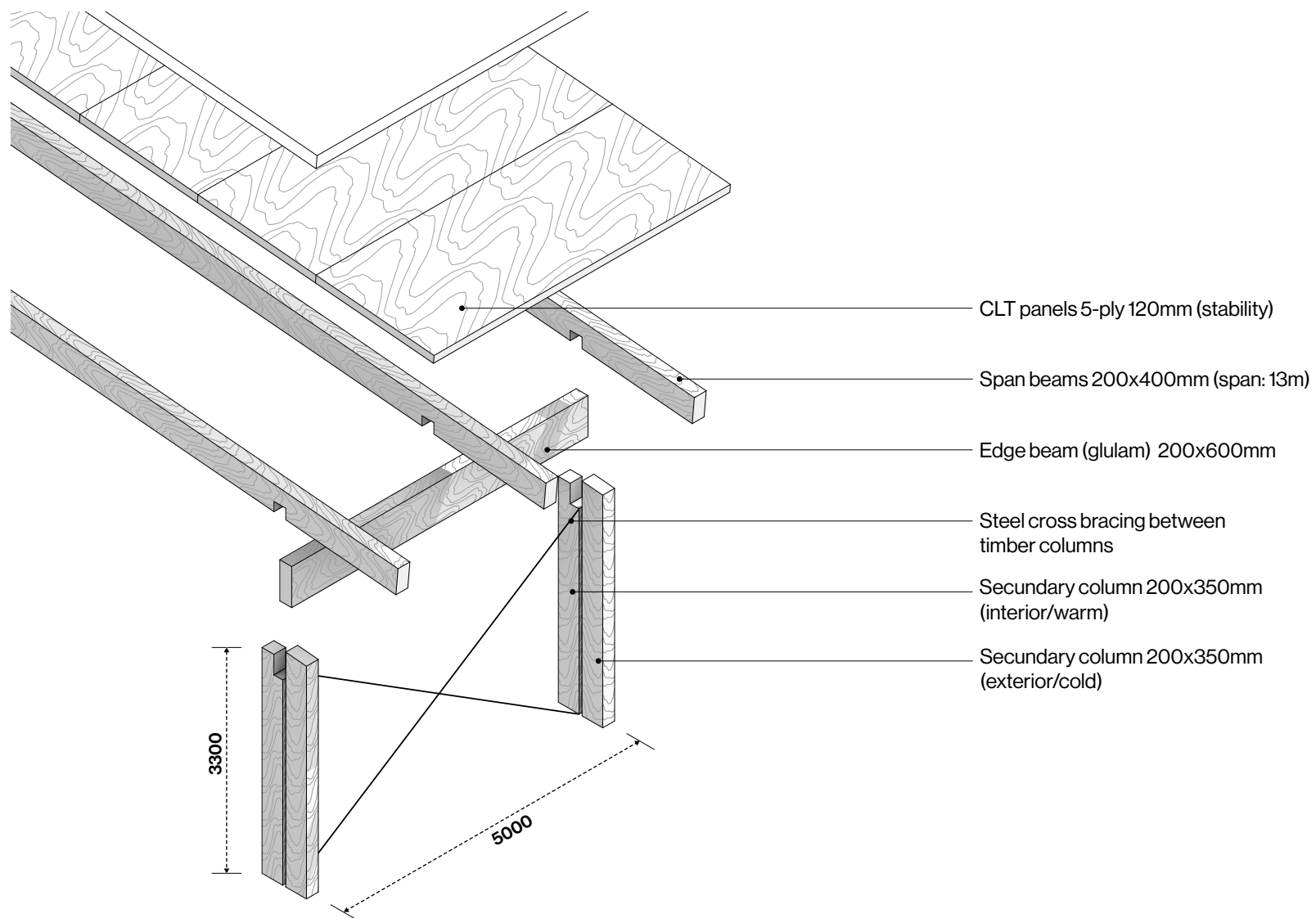
The multifunctional modules form the northern wing of the community kitchen and are designed to offer spatial and programmatic flexibility. These rooms are separated by sliding partitions, allowing them to expand or contract depending on use. This architectural openness invites a wide range of activities: from intimate workshops to larger communal events.

Inspired by what I observed during my field-work, where residents organized informal initiatives like sewing circles, language classes, or community meals, these spaces are meant to be rented, borrowed, or shared. They give residents the opportunity to take initiative, express care, and build community on their own terms.

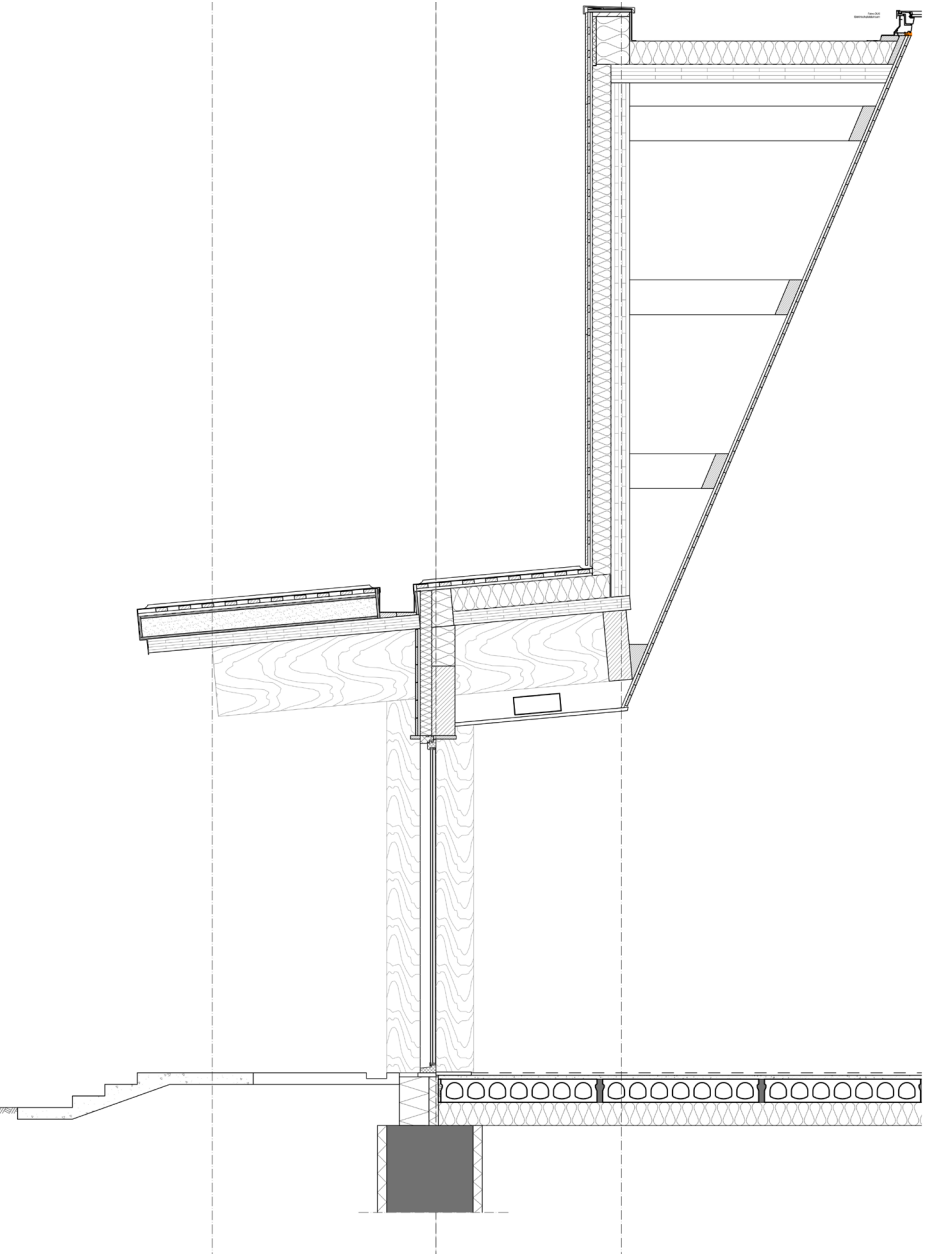
Rather than prescribing what care should look like, the modules offer potential: they provide literal and figurative space for residents to care, for each other, for themselves, for the neighborhood. Whether used for mutual aid, celebration, mourning, creativity, or simply being together, the multifunctional modules are intended as containers for care in all its forms.



## Structure - principle





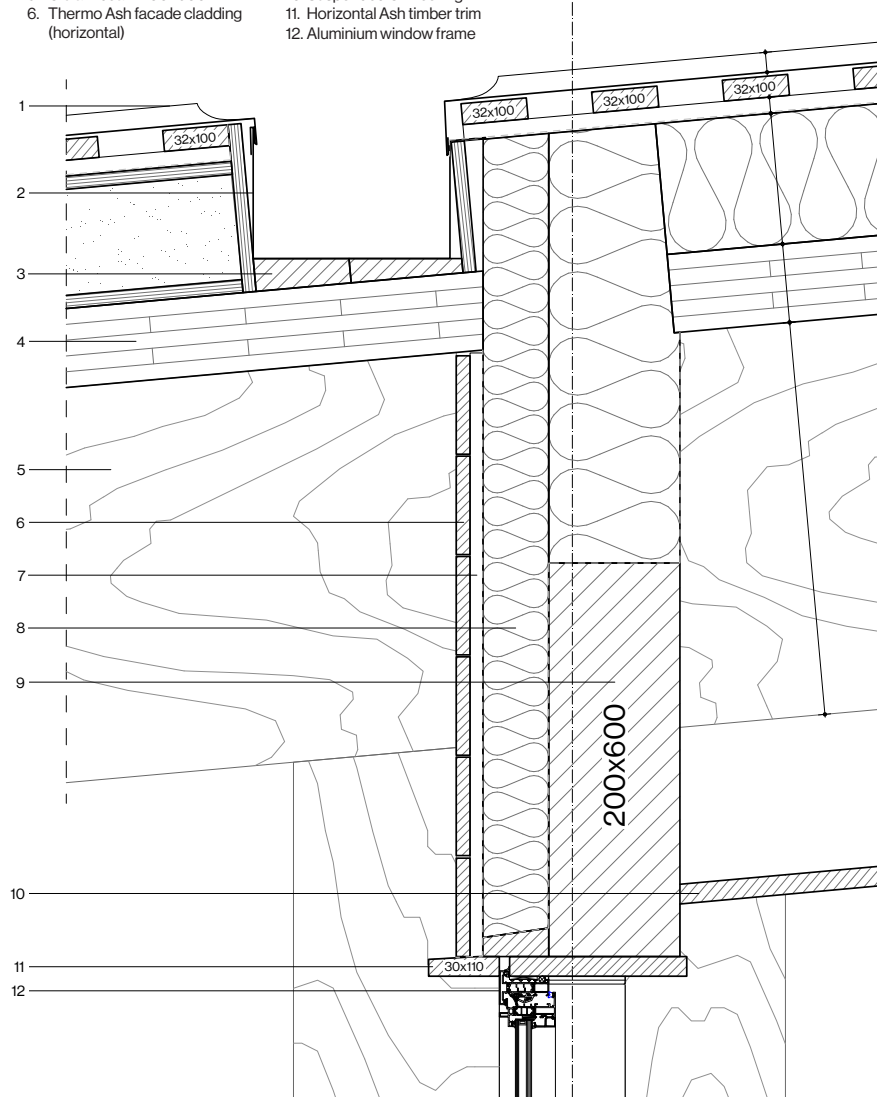




## Detail V4 1:5

Facade: RC > xm² K/W

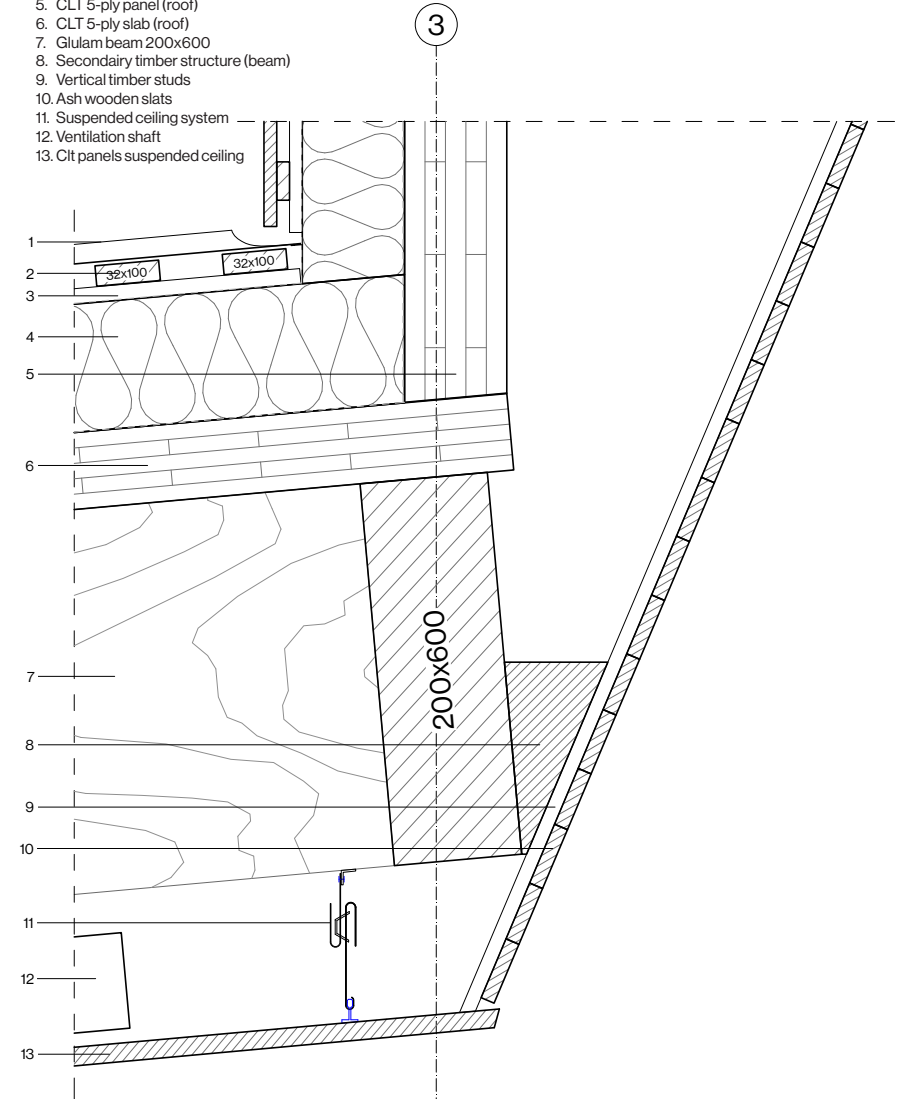
1. Standing seam aluminium roofing
2. Zinc coated steel gutter
3. Support timber for gutter
4. CLT 5-ply slab (roof)
5. Glulam beam 200x600
6. Thermo Ash facade cladding (horizontal)
7. Wooden ventilation battens 20x60 (vertical)
8. Wood fibre insulation
9. Glulam edge beam
10. Suspended CLT ceiling
11. Horizontal Ash timber trim
12. Aluminium window frame



## Detail V3 1:5

Roof: RC > 6,5 m² K/W

1. Standing seam aluminium roofing
2. Wooden ventilation battens 20x60 (horizontal)
3. Wooden ventilation battens 20x60 (vertical)
4. Insulation (mineral wool)
5. CLT 5-ply panel (roof)
6. CLT 5-ply slab (roof)
7. Glulam beam 200x600
8. Secondary timber structure (beam)
9. Vertical timber studs
10. Ash wooden slats
11. Suspended ceiling system
12. Ventilation shaft
13. Clt panels suspended ceiling







“In the most general sense, **care** [is] a species activity that includes everything that we do to **maintain, continue, and repair** our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and **our environment**, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web”

- *(Tronto & Fisher, 1990)*

# INCLUSIVE DWELLINGS

The inclusive dwellings offer a range of housing typologies that support care at the scale of the home. While my research focused mainly on care in public and semi-public domains, I translated insights from feminist architectural theory and personal experience to shape the domestic environment.

Each unit is organized according to a regular structural grid of 3.6 by 3.6 meters, which generates a series of equally sized rooms throughout the building. This modular rhythm creates clarity and repetition, but also offers flexibility: residents can decide how to inhabit and adapt the spaces according to their own needs and relationships, whether as bedrooms, studies, hobby rooms, or shared living areas.

The generous gallery-balcony along the façade is also based on this 3.6-meter module, resulting in a depth that is far greater than in conventional housing blocks. This space serves as a social threshold: wide enough to sit, pause, or converse, yet never forcing interaction. It enables low-pressure encounters between neighbors, fostering famili-

arity and informal support without compromising privacy or autonomy.

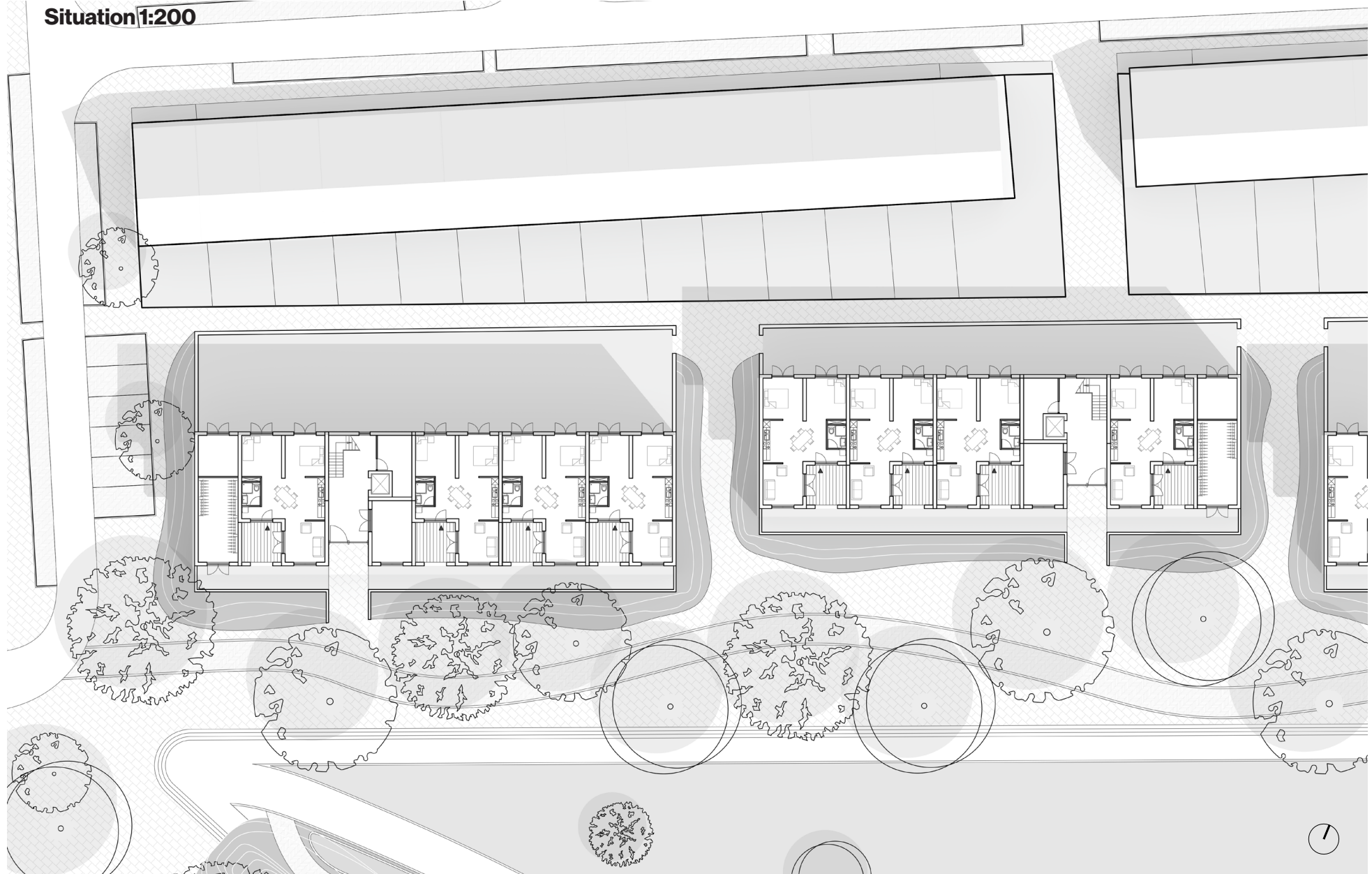
The layout balances private rooms with semi-public thresholds such as shared balconies, stairwells, and communal courtyards. Kitchens are placed centrally, echoing the communal kitchen on site, to encourage shared use and spontaneous encounters.

The material palette, timber, soft transitions, and layered thresholds, aims to create an atmosphere of calm, warmth, and openness. By enabling both autonomy and connection, the housing reinforces the project's central ambition: to create a spatial condition for care.

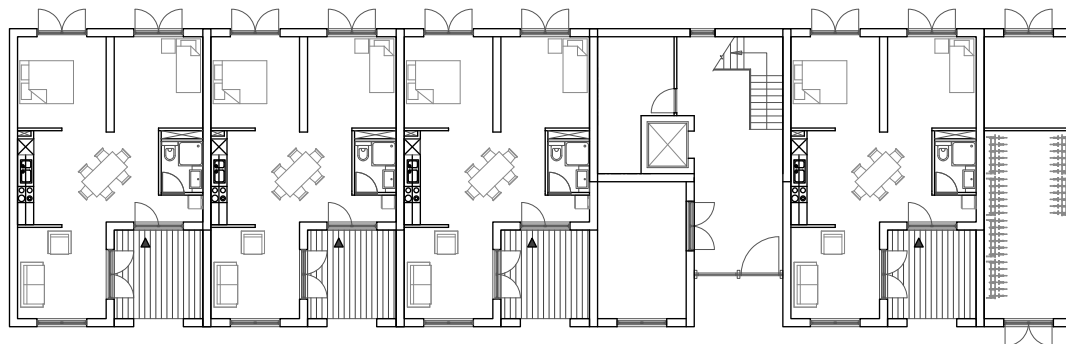
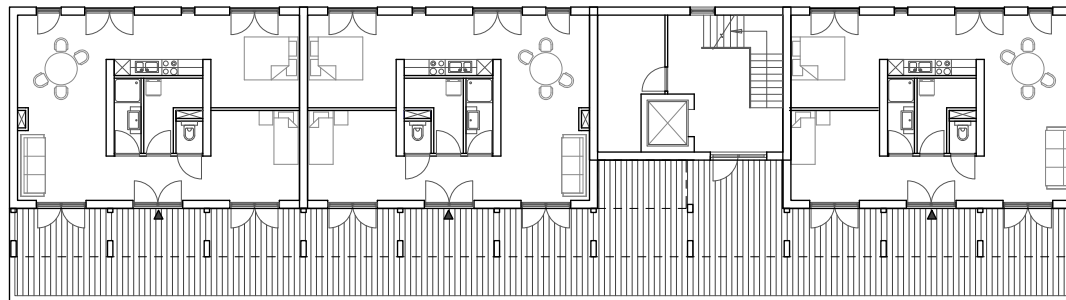
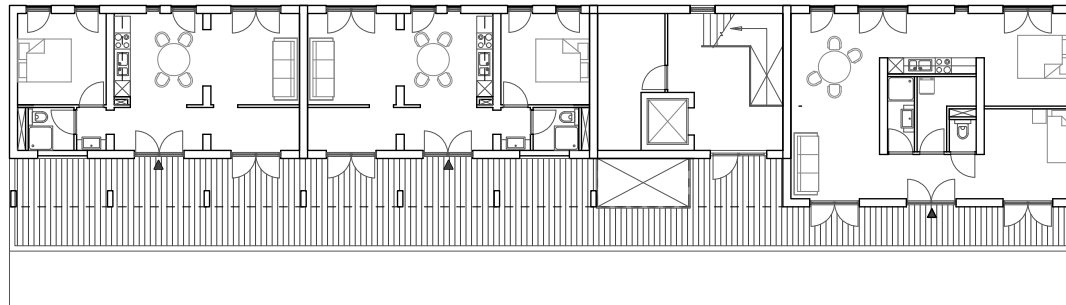


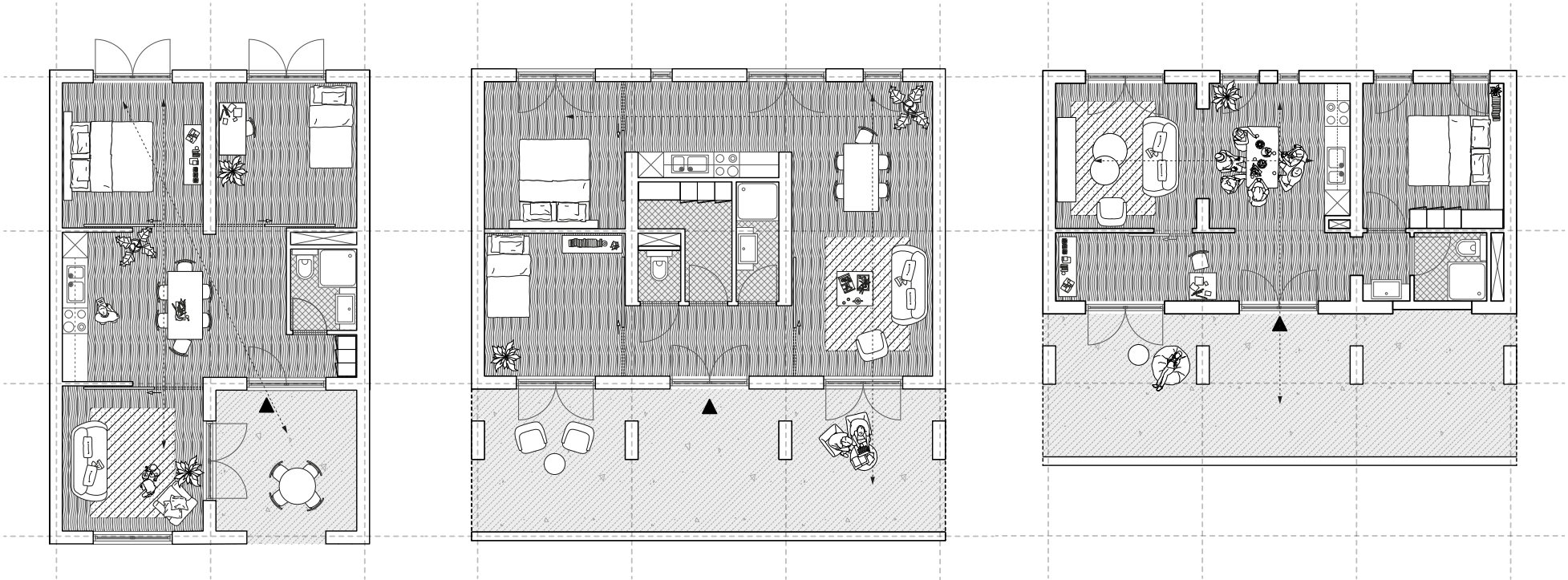
















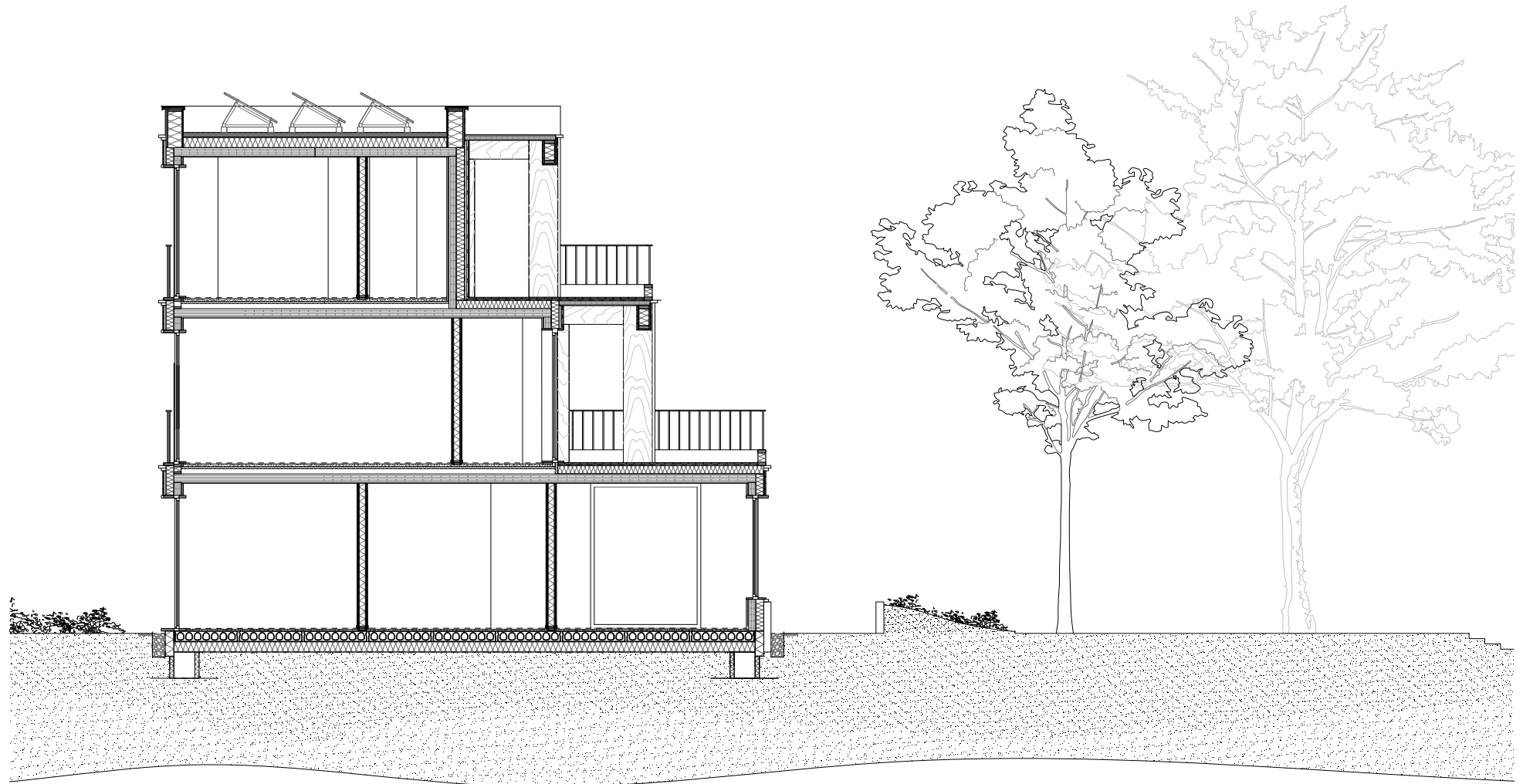




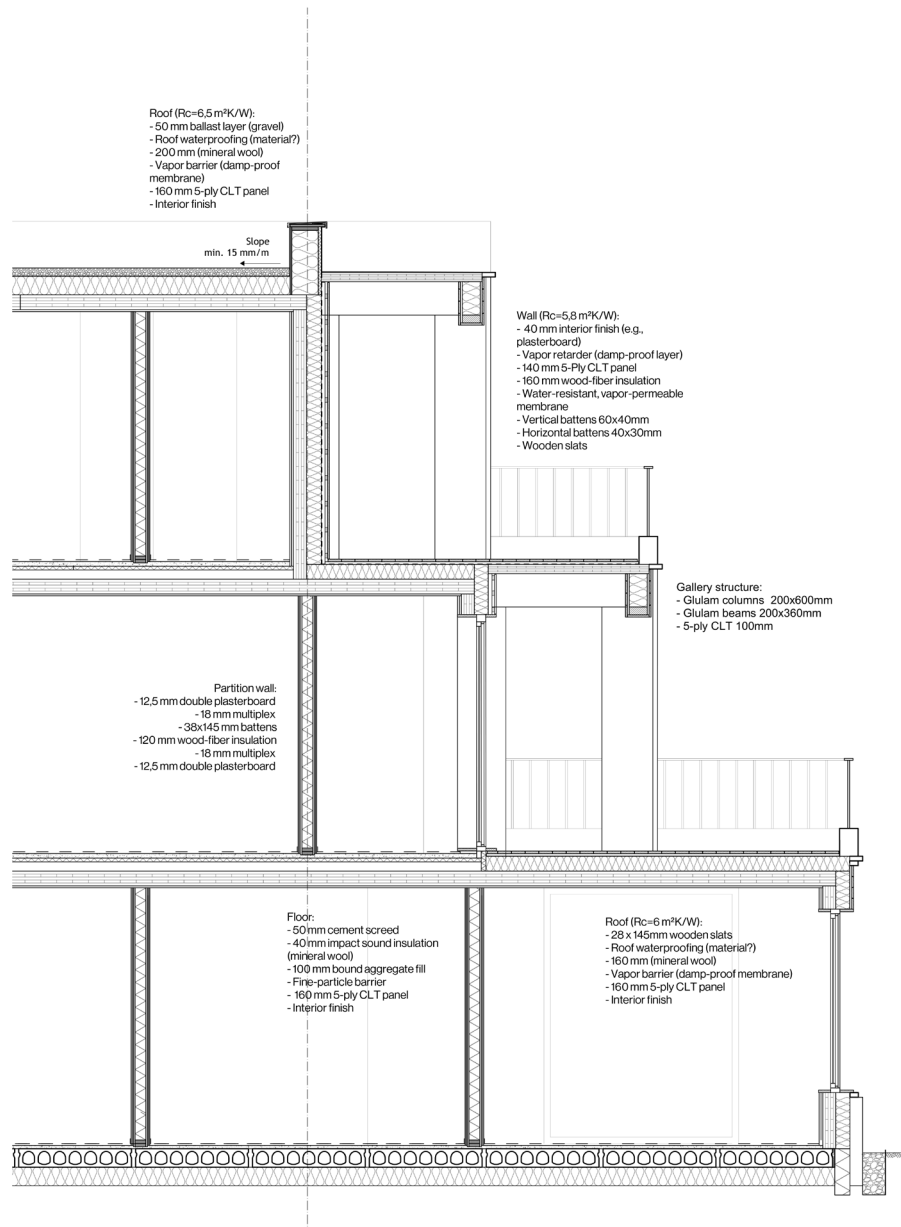
















“Cities have the capability of providing something  
**for everybody**, only because, and only when,  
they are created **by everybody**.”

- *(Jacobs, 1961)*

