Hidden Myths
in the
Infectious Voidscape

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Watch the movie at:

Hidden Myths

in the

Infectious Voidscape

This catalogue holds the contents of the HIDDEN MYTHS manifestation that can be carried out near the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad.
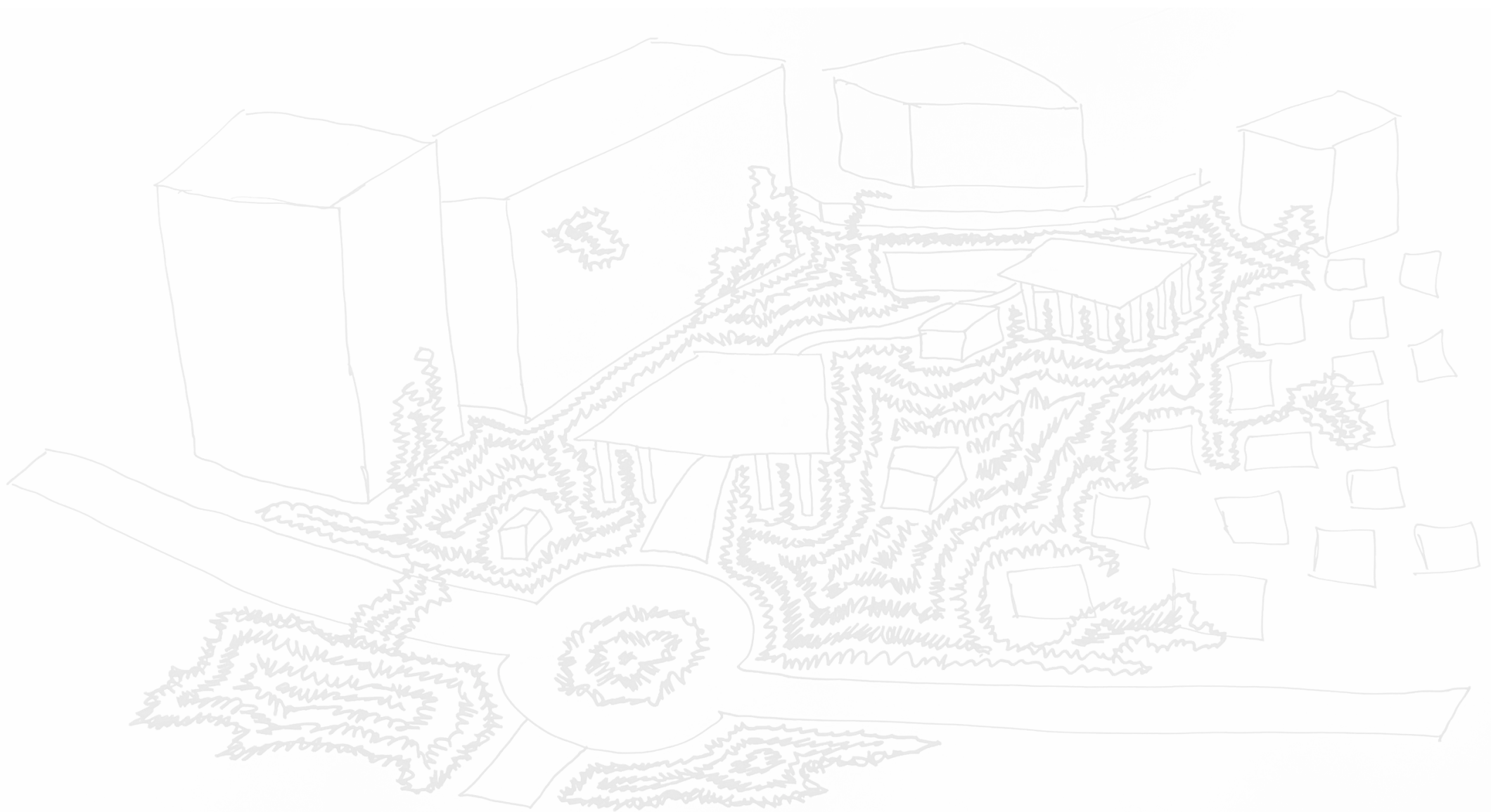
Manifesto

HIDDEN MYTHS is a transgressive manifestation. It is a symptom of and reaction to a larger phenomenon; a series of Infectious Voidscapes that can be found throughout the city of Mashhad.

HIDDEN MYTHS is situated between religious cosmology and everyday inhabitation. It offers a space for both residents and pilgrims of Mashhad to glimpse into each other's rooms of perception.

HIDDEN MYTHS is an empty Landscape populated by both actors and an audience. Its demarcation creates a 'here-and-now', which is the Landscape, and a 'beyond' which is the peripheral city. The Landscape is affected by a multitude of simultaneously occurring conditions that seemingly clash, yet actually co-exist, as the landscape is a public garden, construction site, material storage facility, infrastructural network, private guesthouse, functional bazar, and quiet prayer space in one.

HIDDEN MYTHS unravels its site's history through a palimpsest, and activates the remains of passed activities, alongside long forgotten memories, and traces of futuristic optimism that it finds.

HIDDEN MYTHS is operated by a set of procedures, that are carried by a set of characters, that transform the site into a living entity. These procedures establish everything but a status quo. Each procedure is provisional and prepares the landscape for something to happen on it, whilst it is also a happening in itself.

HIDDEN MYTHS constantly reshuffles its soil conditions, boundaries, and material elements. With the condition that no material is to leave the site. This is necessary for the procedures to succeed, and ultimately creates a lasting state of the landscape feeling 'unfinished' and 'unpolished'.

HIDDEN MYTHS consists of a range of elements, that each have distinct tectonic qualities. Their anatomy is visually comprehensible and every single one of them creates some form of space. Together, these elements form various constellations, that gracefully submerge within the Landscape. Each element co-produces the landscape just as much as the other one right next to it, the landscape in the end becomes the product of the sum of all of them taken together

HIDDEN MYTHS activates the forgotten memories of the site, through its physical catalogue of elements, procedures, and constellations. Through creating a landscape that is simultaneously full and vacant, alive and provisional, a negotiation with the nature of the Voidscapes found in Mashhad emerges, with the intention of uniting the people that reside, visit, and embody the city. It is through combining the religious cosmology of the site with everyday inhabitation, that slowly become apparent the invisible myths that are hidden within this Voidscape.
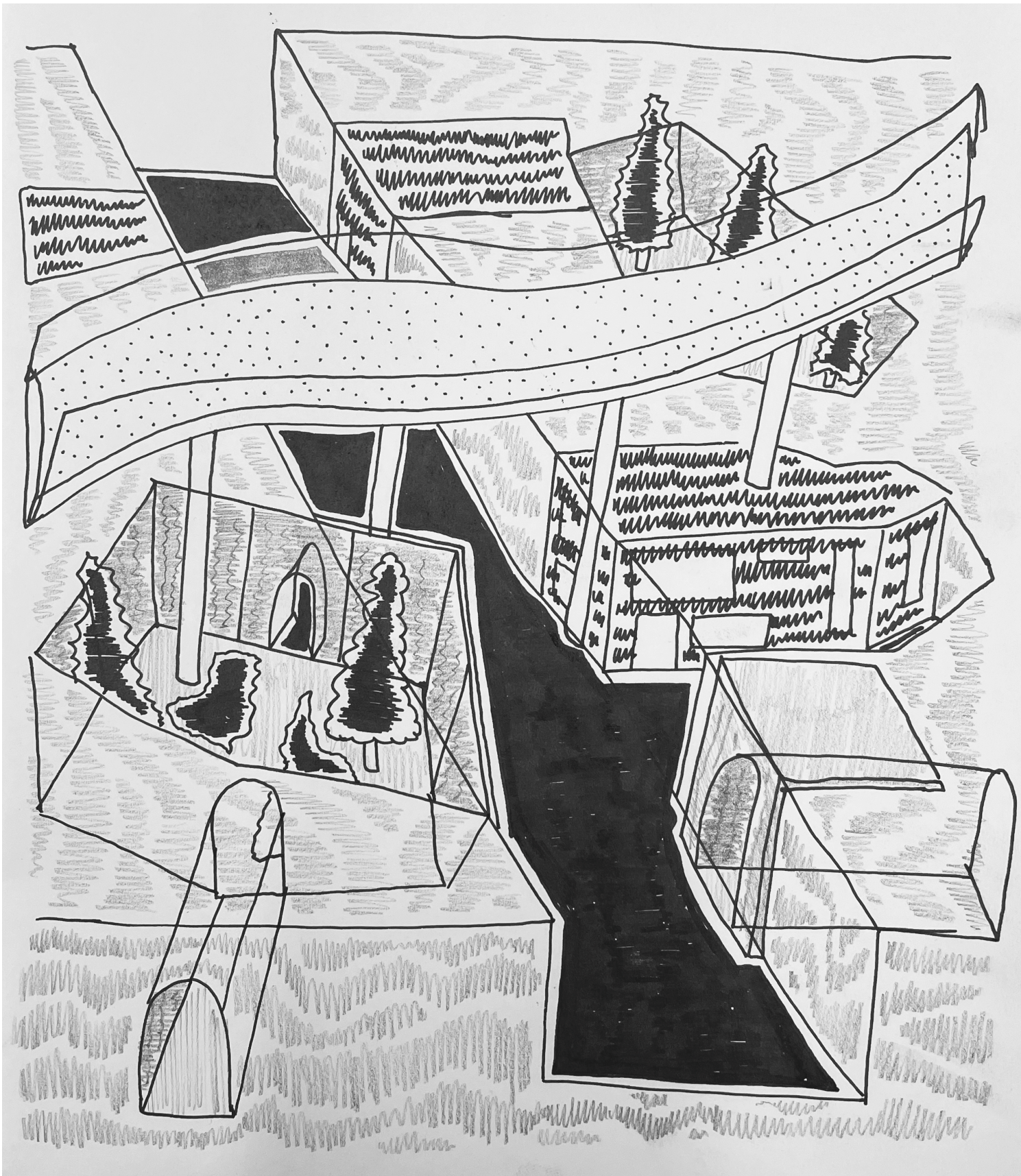
HIDDEN MYTHS generates a Landscape in the city of Mashhad, that consists of the following layers, which are co-produced by each other.
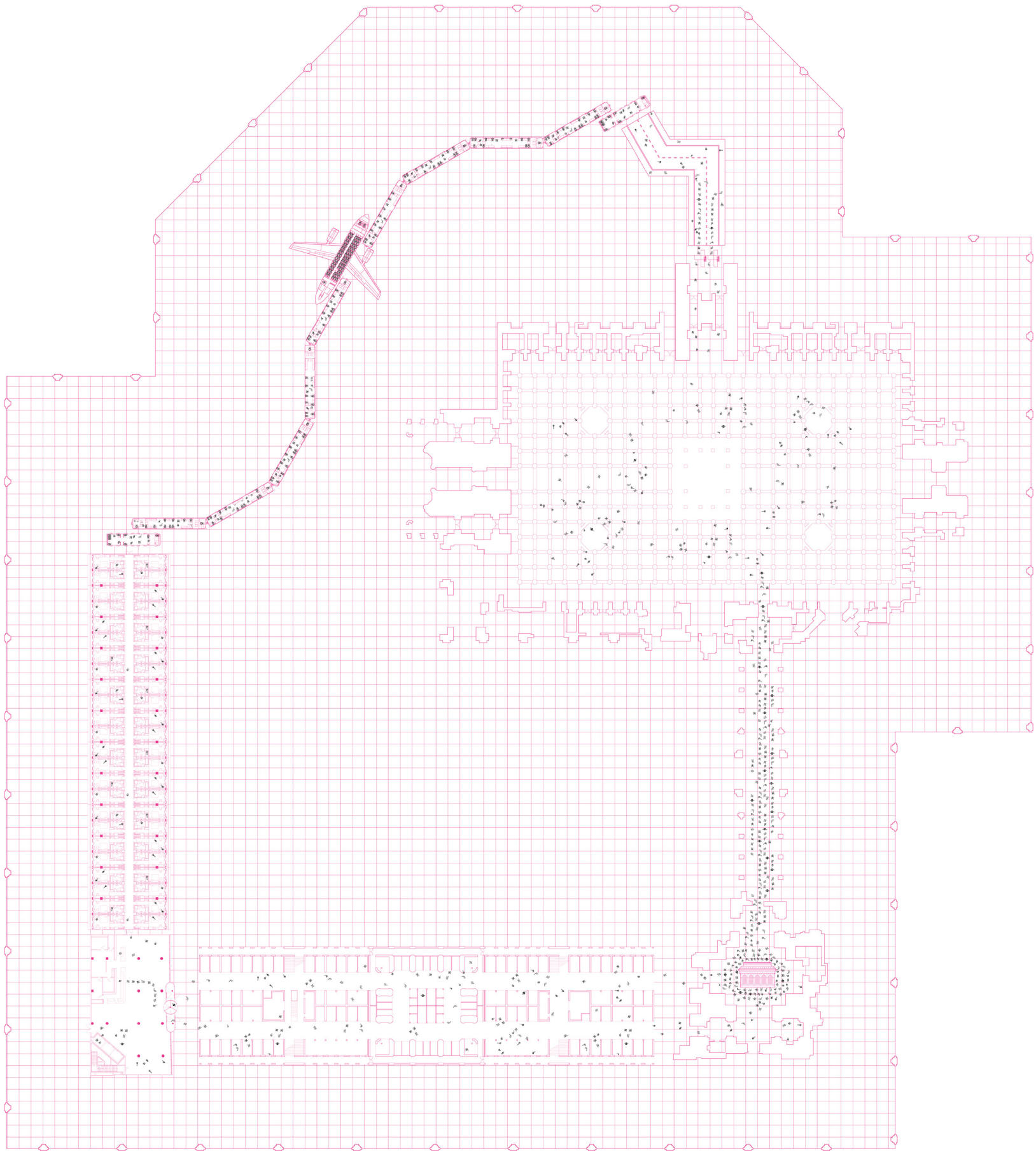
Catalogue

ROOMS

Rooms 1-10
Enter

What happens when tourists reign a city? When endless flows of imported beings form ever-growing mountains of bodies, that roll and spread through the city like tidal waves, covering everything and everywhere. What happens when houses are one-by-one razed to the ground and rebuild as hotels, when precise local craftmanship is replaced by mass-produced knockoffs? What happens when local culture is overthrown in favour of market trends, when traditional rituals have become a trained show that's put on. In other words: what happens when the city itself is commodified into a liveable experience, when the city itself is the apotheosis of tourism?

It would be a Hotel City.

The conceptualisation of Hotel City tries to answer the question how a scaffolding of tourist attractions, can affect, disrupt, and transform the city around it in such a way that the perception, purpose and methods of the city itself change entirely.

What does the Hotel have to do with it?

The Hotel is the interface through which tourists interact with the city; a territorial device that allows its visitors to extent their beings within the city. In Hotel City, it acts as a metaphor for describing and understanding the effects that tourism has on the city. Each Hotel City functions as a machinery that presents itself through a specific reading of isolated parts of the city, as in the notion of the Oligopticon by Bruno Latour: "Far from being that in which we all reside, Society is produced, on a tiny scale, within these numerous laboratories that coexist" (Latour & Hermant, 1998, plan 30).

What do we learn from this conceptualisation?

Hotel City questions the ambivalent nature of cities shaped by tourism, by specifically looking at the systems that enable tourists (unknowingly or not) to take a hold of the city, as if it's a condition. Comprehending the ways in which the tourist dwells, experiences, and orientates him or herself, reveals the prerequisites of this condition, allowing us to understand it, and possibly intervene in it. In this essay, these systems have been compartmentalised into different rooms, numbered 1 to 10. Each room is briefly introduced in italics and represents a discussion that generates a space in which certain notions circumscribing Hotel City can be nurtured and pruned. It is through this framework of thought sequences that one is able to grasp the conditions that enable Hotel Cities to come into existence.
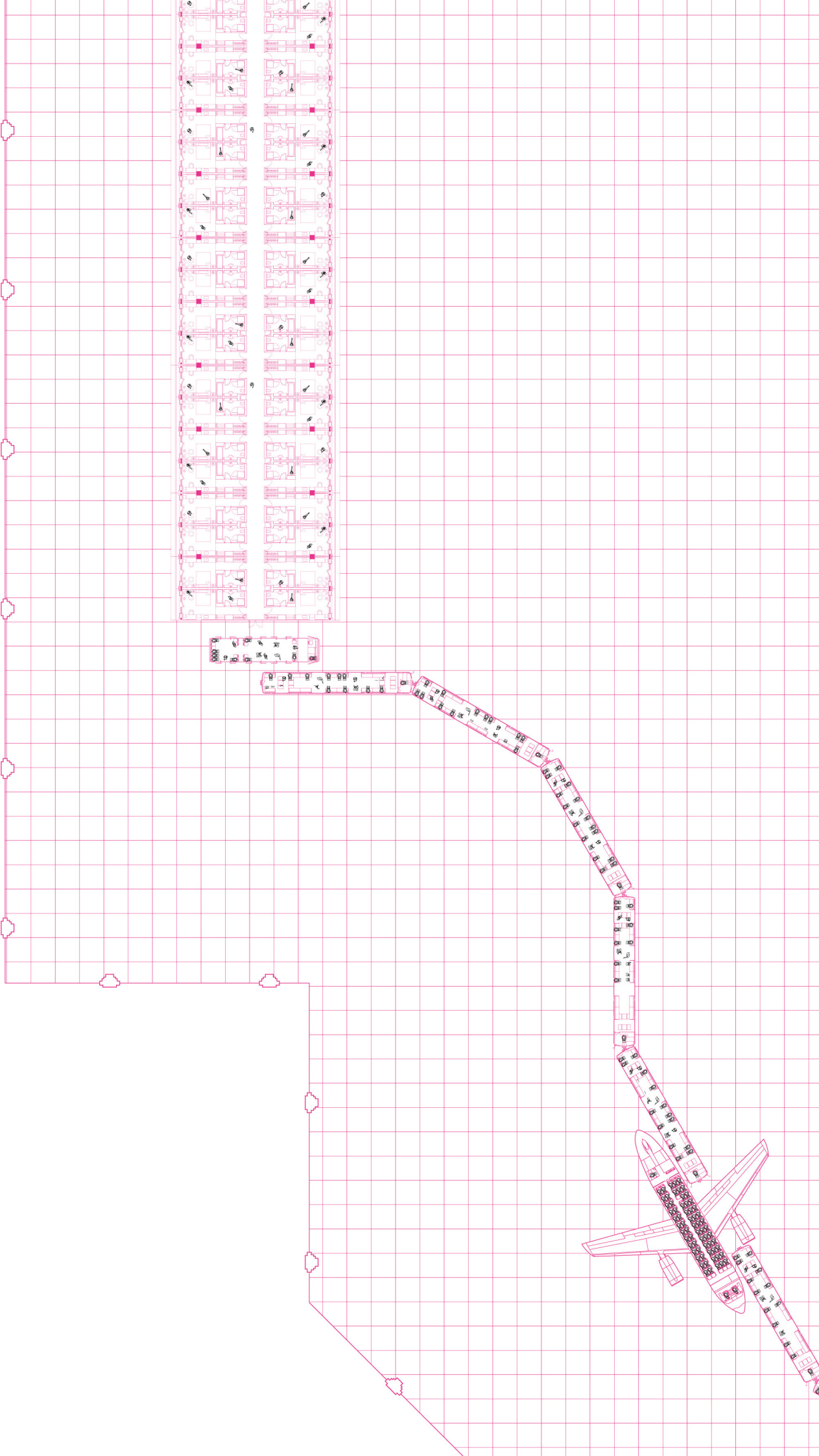
Room 1
Lure

Hotel City is you waking up in the morning, standing in the bathroom, and facing your mirror. In your reflection you find a smile, accelerated by excitement. Hotel City vitalised you with its luring promise: today, finally, you will go to visit the place that you've been dreaming of. A shiny, new, moving, and transformative experience awaits you. What are you waiting for? Hotel City attracts you; it has something you seek, something you desire. With your trolley packed, Hotel City makes you leave your apartment.

The time that the landscape dictated our movements has long been lost. Infrastructures that empower methods of displacement now reign and define our territory on planet earth. Movements over the globe are facilitated through flight-price comparison websites, whilst concrete is being poured in every corner, on every island, through every desert. The result is an infrastructure of hubs and spokes, ports and stations, airlines and waterways, freeways and underground tunnels, that all intersect with each other, enabling the privileged soul to circumscribe the entire world in less than 48 hours.

Take the airport: a typology materialising in every global city. Within an airport, one finds itself in a perfectly regulated environment in which all kinds of actors intertwine with each other. Inside this place, there's a rhythm to be found; a carefully orchestrated choreography of departures, arrivals, announcements, taxi drivers calling for your attention. This dance of carriages is conducted by invisible systems. Packed like sardines in a crushed tin box, airplane passengers carefully align themselves inside rows of narrow seats, constituting a cabin crowded with over 50 nationalities, every one of them staring blankly at televisual screens that play the latest trends in entertainment. Marc Augé (1995) baptizes these globalised infrastructural hotspots as 'Non-Places': they all resemble each other, constructed in a both functional and clinic kind of architecture, cleansed by rooftops adorned with air-conditioning units of its outside meteorological realities. Interestingly, it is these very 'non-places', with their globalised, or rather standardised, network of signs, that enable the erasure of frontiers over the world, resulting in a seamless exchange of people from all places. Keller Easterling (2014) coins the term 'Extrastatecraft' to describe the influences that certain infrastructures have in rewriting how societies live, work, and coexist with each other, of which the airport is the perfect example.

It is in within these infrastructures that Hotel City thrives. Through the multiplication of these non-places across the globe, tourists are enabled to spread their wings, leave their flock, and fly towards their desired destination.
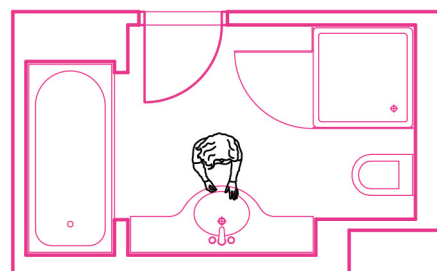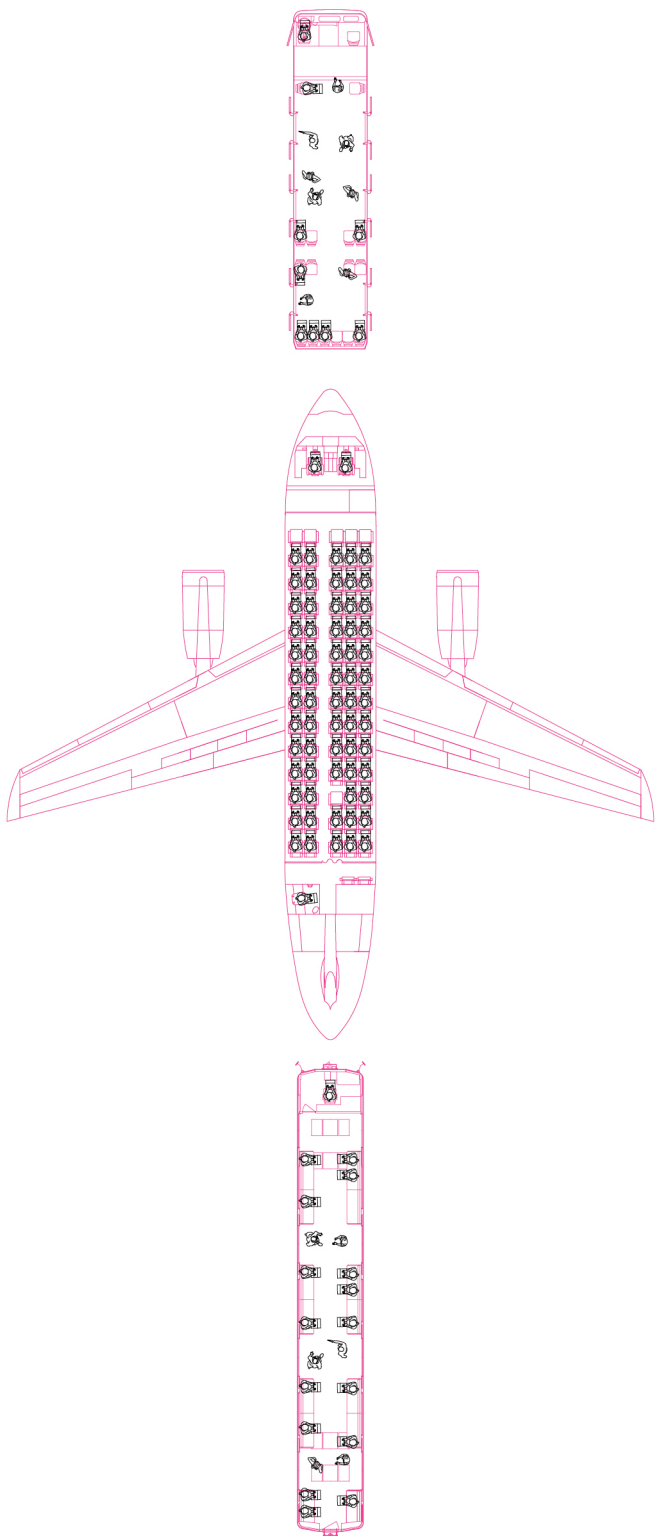
Room 2
Exchange

Hotel City is a dome of air surrounding you, like a personal bubble. When traversing the sidewalk after exiting your carriage, you breathe the bubble's air, heavily polluted though it is with sounds, smells, and everything you're actually not supposed to be breathing. As your lungs expand, your eyes open wide; you see your prize, exactly as Hotel City wants you to see it. Behind barriers of traffic lights, crosswalks and wide, grey, dead asphalt lies Hotel City's core, its main attraction. You are gravitated towards it, drifting along endless corridors full of identical numbered doors, buildings, and floors.

Once you step out of the non-place, displaced from wherever you came, you'll find yourself in a new world. Each new environment you arrive in consists of collections of scraps of localities, and you are moving right through it. What do you see?

"The outside, the general framework, is not what dominates me; it is what I dominate with my gaze. But what I dominate I don't see unless I refrain from looking outside, otherwise I'm immediately limited to my own point of view" (Latour & Hermant, 1998, plan 8). This quote from Latour's description of the 'Invisible Paris' captures how each individual is effectively confined within her or his own personal gaze upon the world, an understanding that Edmund Husserl beautifully resonates when he writes "each Ego has its own domain of perceptual things and necessarily perceives the things in a certain orientation." (Husserl, 1983, p.165). This bubble, in which one finds itself, is what John Urry and Jonas Larsen (2011) refer to as the 'tourist gaze'; the condition to which tourists are subjected, defining what they actually can and cannot perceive. Louis Turner and John Ash, in acknowledging this gaze, place the tourist at the centre of a 'strictly circumscribed world' that is defined by the entrepreneurs of touristic places, and thus becomes "a small monotonous world that everywhere shows us our own image; … the pursuit of the exotic and diverse ends in uniformity" (Turner & Ash, 1975, p. 292).

This suggests that the touristic sphere, in light of how it's created, operates independently and regardless of the city, and in a way, would not respond to the city's forces that be, rather it would be a kind of counterpoint to it, as it's in the tourist's perception that things would appear as 'exotic'. It is within this veil of perceptions, appearing if one adds up all tourists' gazes, that Hotel City slowly subjugates its host city.
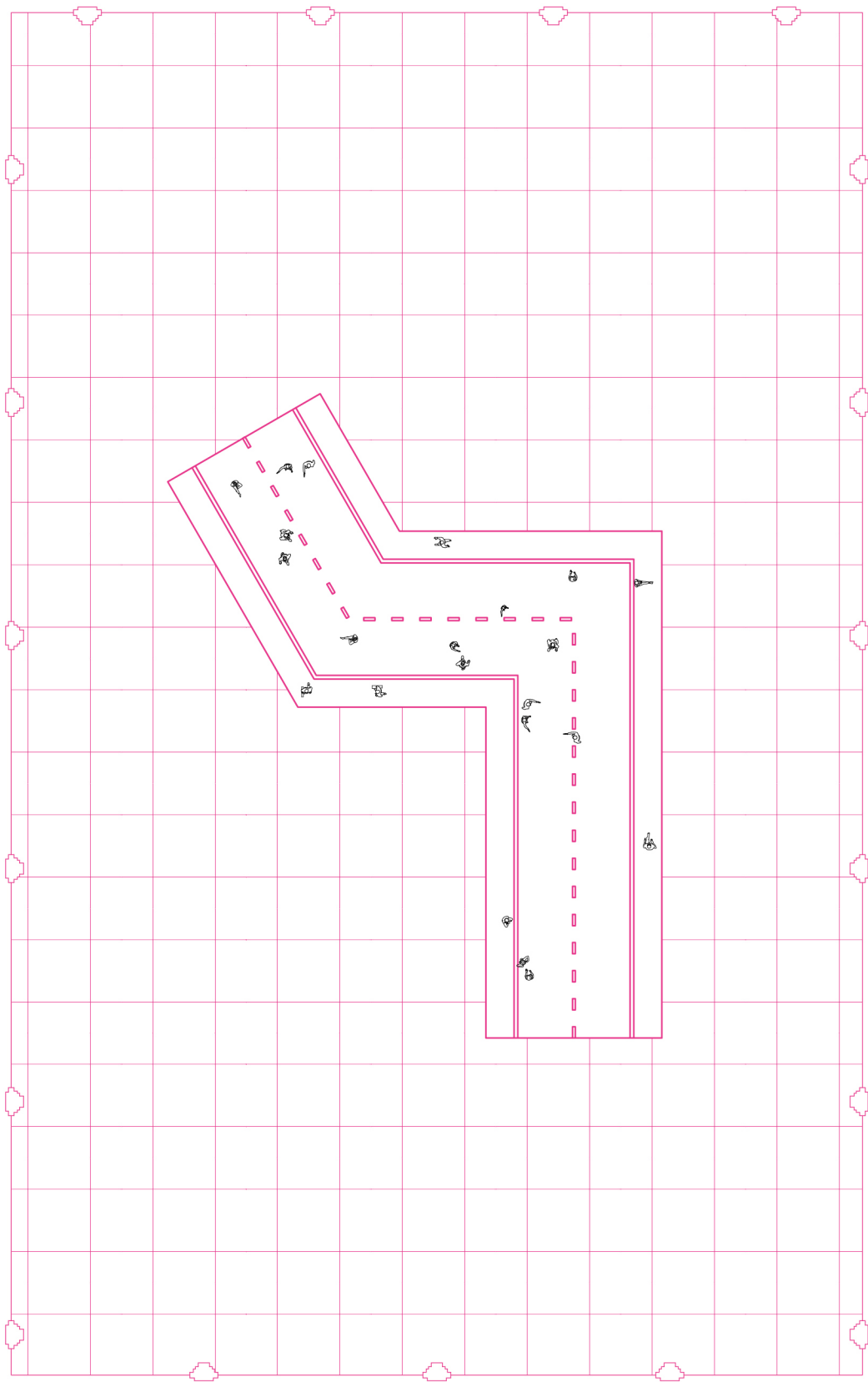
Room 3
Gaze

Hotel City is a dome of air surrounding you, like a personal bubble. When traversing the sidewalk after exiting your carriage, you breathe the bubble's air, heavily polluted though it is with sounds, smells, and everything you're actually not supposed to be breathing. As your lungs expand, your eyes open wide; you see your prize, exactly as Hotel City wants you to see it. Behind barriers of traffic lights, crosswalks and wide, grey, dead asphalt lies Hotel City's core, its main attraction. You are gravitated towards it, drifting along endless corridors full of identical numbered doors, buildings, and floors.

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Room 4
Secure

Hotel City is heavily supervised by a rainbow of rays of protection. Hotel City's core organs are fortified with security gates, camera's and x-rays, that monitor everyone who enters and leaves, govern every square meter, and fill up hard drive after hard drive, all 24 hours a day. As you step into one of Hotel City's entrances and raise your arms for an electromagnetic full body scan, the guard topples his coffee, as he accidentally interprets your belt for something actually dangerous. Of course it's a false alarm, as it always is.

On a rather concerned tone, Paul Virilio (2002) describes how the frontiers of the state have passed into the interiors of cities, as every place deemed important now has become a well-defended fort on its own. He further elaborates on how this implies that the notion of the city's border is shifting. Because what is the true façade of the city, when you are time after time frisked and searched when passing places within the city? It might indeed be that the city has lost its outside borders, as Fuller and Harley state that "cities are full of visitors; people from elsewhere who may or may not be 'just tourists' and need to be surveilled" (Fuller & Harley in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 222). Thus, slowly, cities are transformed into panopticons, as every oddly looking or behaving individual starts to look like a potential terrorist. Latour, just like the tourists that have no choice but to cooperate with this security frenzy, seems to have little problem with it: "I'm neither in control nor without control: I'm formatted. I'm afforded possibilities for my existence, based on teeming devices scattered throughout the city. I go from one offer to the next" (Latour & Hermant, 1998, plan 33).

As a tourist, having passed one of the checkpoints, you enter the controlled unknown that is Hotel City. As your freedom of movement inside this place is completely controlled, it is the systems of checks and allowances, parenting this control, that govern and decide your every behaviour.
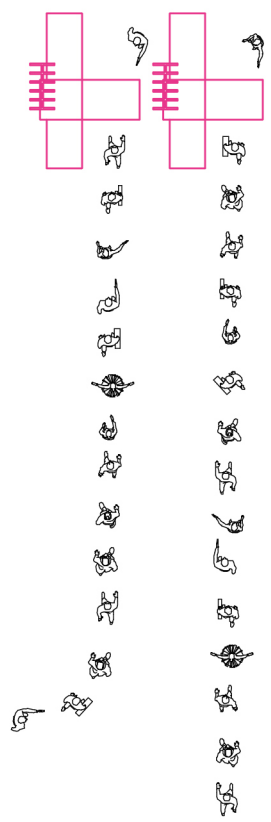
Room 5
Build

Hotel City stretches as far your eyes can reach. Now standing on the biggest and most prominent pedestrian-only square, you are dwarfed by walls of buildings that demarcate the square. Hotel City is thoroughly cleaned day in and day out, and you are amazed by its cleanliness. No specks of dust are to be found here, on its shining marble floors that are beautifully ornamented. Overlooking the square are slender towers, minaret-like structures, equipped with speakers that shout instructions you don't understand. Luckily, Hotel City is fully equipped with an army of signposts in precisely your language, which you silently read and obediently follow.

Like a museum's collection that's grown over centuries, the artifacts and landmarks that are found within the city give scale and prominence to it. Whilst minute and extravagant structures were sculpted by kings and kin, life was allowed a place within and around; continuously redefining its buildings and their respective contexts. Architecture, as Marc Augé mentions, "transmits the illusions of the current dominant ideology, … the aesthetics of which support those illusions and expresses the triumph of the system" (Augé, 1995, p. xvi). If the physicality of the environment is a representation of the invisible systems that govern the environment itself, what does this tell us about the ones who visit these places? In the case of ancient places, surely, these places don't serve their original function anymore, since most of them were not built for the delight of tourists. Does this imply that tourism is in these cases some form of archaeological sight-seeing, or even time travelling – as one walks amidst the remains of former realities? And in the case of 'modern' structures, what is the ideology that they reflect, having been built specifically for the usage of tourists?

In Hotel City, previously prevailing artifacts have become pawns in a game of worship and ownership, as they in many cases still prevail under their new contemporary ideology. In places where heritage remains unprotected, however, greedy development is replacing ancient fabric with buildings catered especially to the ideals of Hotel City, as is the case in the context of Mashhad, Iran, where in the periphery of its most influential tourist attraction a "great amount of luxurious shopping centres and high-rise buildings … have violated the reconstruction and renewal rules in significant ways" (Jalali, Davoudpour & Tabibianc, 2018, p. 10).
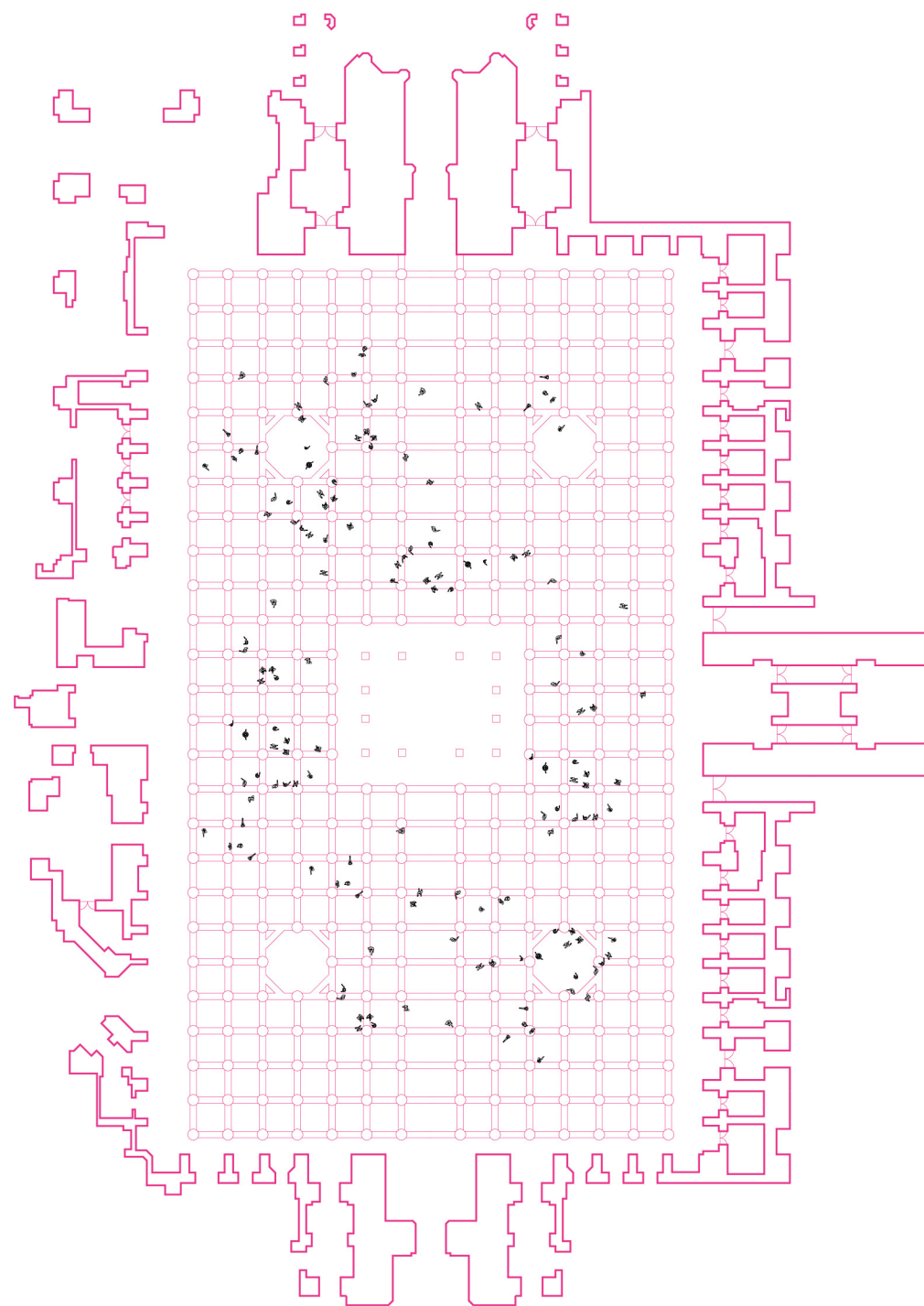
Room 6
Convulse

Hotel City is full of corridors that guide you towards its attractions. The closer you get to one of them, the more crowded it appears to be. As you enter one of the corridors, your find yourself in a traffic jam of people queuing for the same thing for which you came. In Hotel City, space is swarmed by people you don't know and most certainly will never see again. Yet, those people are somehow familiar, as you can identify with them, their place in the world being the same as yours.

The built environment is flooded with waves of bodies, rolling over its streets and crashing into its spaces. Tourists inhabit cities through occupying its hotels, attractions, gift shops, streets, transport carriages, and every other corner deemed worthy of their gaze. This inhabitation deals with what Soile Veijola and Eeva Jokinen describe as the 'corporeality' of travel: "the body breaks with established routines and practices. … Here [on holiday], we know it in our conscious bodies that are temporarily united in an utterly physical ritual" (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994, p. 133). It's precisely in these corporeal aspects of tourism that matters of phenomenology also kick in, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests that "spatial forms or distance are not so much relations between different points in objective space as they are relations between these points and a central perspective: our body. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.5). We start understanding that it is actually through our corporeal experiences, that we perceive, structure, and order the world that surrounds us. Merleau-Ponty goes on to explain how "our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It implies itself to space like a hand to an instrument" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.5). To say our bodies are similar to instruments, is to say they're similar to tools; capable of '(re)sculpting' the very spaces we inhabit. Sara Ahmed (2006) acknowledges this notion when she illustrates how bodies extent themselves into space. She explains the '(re)sculpting' as a necessary outcome of the act of dwelling, which is what tourists are doing as well with their corporeal inhabiting of cities.

Thus, the question arises whether this bodily extension of tourists within Hotel City leads to any form of '(re)sculpting', and whether this is confined, regulated, or problematic in any way. If erosion becomes a product of alien inhabitation of the spaces within Hotel City, would it matter, or would it simply be the sign of a successful enterprise?

Room 7
Attract

As you enter Hotel City's core facility, its main attraction, its dragon's lair, you find yourself amidst a crowded room, full of people that all share the same desire. As one body everyone gravitates and rotates around it, swarms it, touches it, kisses it. How can a single place affect so many? Even you wanted to see it, believe it, and live it. Now you are here, experiencing the very thing Hotel City promises and promotes. Do you feel it? Does it move, transform, or affect you? Hotel City originates from and revolves around a centrepiece: the main attraction of the city, which in most cases is destined to become an island within the city, slowly converting its existing surrounding fabric into a temporal periphery. That which was long-lasting becomes short-lived: an experience becoming a fleeting memory.

Now the lure of Hotel City has successfully affected you, and you finally find yourself amidst the experience that you desired, the question arises: what is actually happening here?

The main attraction of each Hotel City could be seen as nearing the status of being something 'absolute' if we're to take all the attention it receives seriously. 'Absolute', in the reasoning of Giorgio Agamben (1999), refers to how something is a thing in itself; in solitude, separated, but acquiring a position towards the whole from which it has been separated. The main attraction, along this line, reads like an island floating in the belly of the city, completely isolated, a perfect alternate reality found within the city. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, contrary to Agamben, regards the 'absolute' as the result of "everything becoming one" (Hegel, 2018, p. 11). This would translate in an understanding of the main attraction as being the natural outcome of all preceding processes; the main attraction as neither the heart nor the fingertip of the body of the city, it not being distinguishable from its context. This line of thinking resonates with the case of pilgrimage tourism, as here it is the whole journey that could be considered as the main attraction, and thus something 'absolute'. Through a succession of rituals, the pilgrim becomes one with his spiritual goal. This realisation takes places in what Arnold van Gennep describes as 'rites de passage' (Van Gennep in Turner, 1974). Victor Turner goes on to divide this ritual sequence into three phases; (1) separation: the pilgrim leaves his "earlier fixed point inside of a social structure", (2) liminality: the pilgrim "passes through a cultural realm that bears no resemblance" to where he came from, (3) reincorporation: "the passage is completed, the pilgrim possesses new rights and obligations vis-à-vis others", as he returns to where he came from (Turner, 1974,
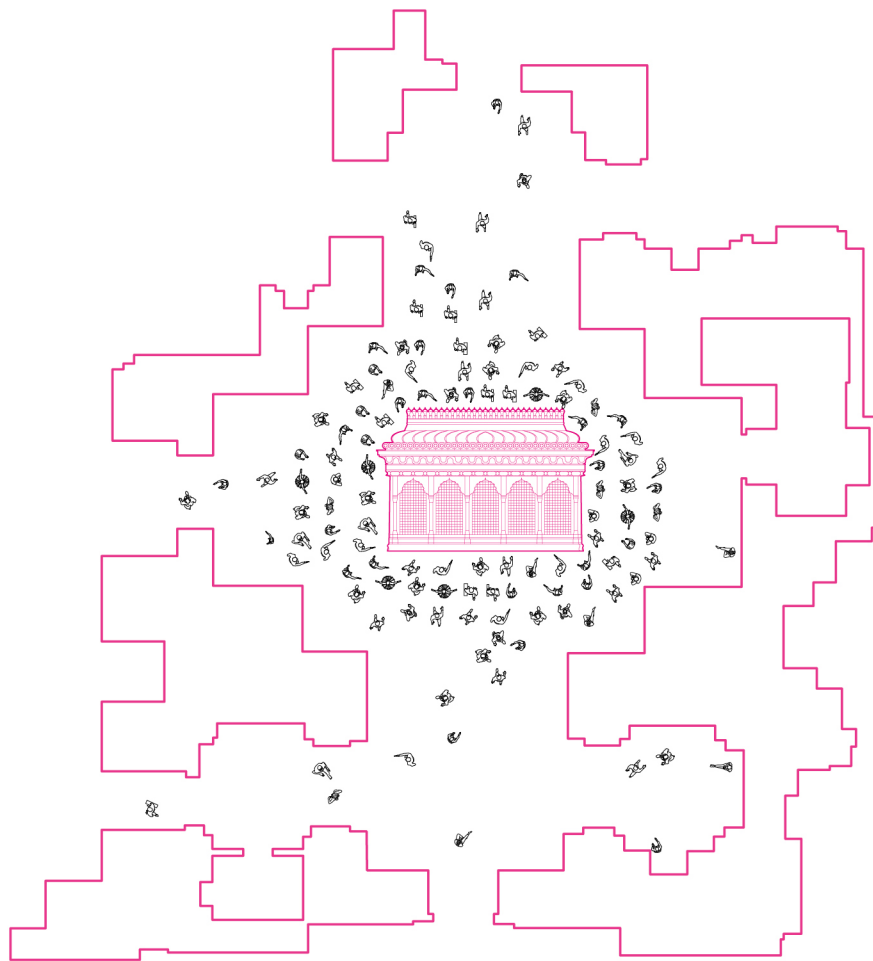
p. 94). It is in these 'liminal spaces outside space or time' of phase 2, that everyday relations, obligations, and structures are reversed, and one finds itself on the thresholds of the 'absolute'. And actually, don't these three stages of the 'rites de passage' awfully resemble the stages a regular tourist also goes through during his travels to, in, and from Hotel City? Therefore, I deem that the main attraction of Hotel City possesses exactly these liminal qualities that Turner describes.

Another quality that can be attributed to this other reality found within main attractions, is that it is 'hyper-real'; a term that Jean Baudrillard (1983) coined to describe things created to trick our consciousness in believing that they are more real than the real thing, and thus more worthy of our time; capable of delivering us the virtue we so desperately seek. Hyper-reality is characterised by its surface qualities: it is with carefully designed, detailed, and ornamented facades that hyper-real places convince us of their own realities. Umberto Eco gives the example of how wax statue museums market themselves as "one of the most thrilling experiences of your life", and how "their concern with authenticity reaches the point of reconstructive neurosis" (Eco, 1986, p. 23); revealing hyper-reality's quest to become reality itself. Other examples are the 'skyscape' installations of James Turrell, in which Turrell through a framing of surfaces, captivatingly focuses all our bodily senses intensively on an ordinary piece of sky: elevating its reality into a hyper-reality. Daniel Boorstin regards these "synthetic novelties that flood our experiences" as 'pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1964, p. 9), referring to those pre-staged happenings that are found within tourist experiences; a 'flash mob' parade on the main street of Disney Land, a 'sudden' procession of herded goats through the Alpine village of Zermatt, or the elaborate dusting of a Holy Shrine.

If Hotel City delivers us one thing, it's an unforgettable memory, derived from its own marketing of itself being the 'absolute' experience in a lifetime, which consequently is made real by layers of hyper-reality that are clad onto it.

Room 8
Commodify

Hotel City profits from its visitors through the gift shop. It materialises in a myriad of unsexy ways and sells millions of wares that awfully resemble each other, though are separable in terms of price and quality. Hotel City emerges with the growing economic benefits of tourism for the city. In Hotel City, values are subjected to the desires of economy; culture is commodified and sold to the highest bidder; tradition is thrown over in favour of standardised processes. The organically grown Bazar became an artificial shopping mall. The independent vendors became employees. The authentic wares became imported products.

'Exit through the gift shop', a line made famous by Banksy, holds true for most experiences that are easily within reach. Whether it's a themed rollercoaster in your local theme park, the St. Peter's Church in the Vatican, or the MoMa in New York; exiting a place means having to wade through displays of wares that can possibly become physical memories of what you just have experienced, that is, if you buy them. The experience itself has been commodified; its appearance materialised inside a miniature keychain, fridge magnet, or stuffed animal. But merchandise is not all, as Guy Debord (1967) explains how also cultural happenings are being commodified, resulting into what he calls the 'society of the spectacle'. According to Debord, as cultural rituals are being subjugated to the economy and turn into (pseudo-)events with a price tag, our societies become dominated by a fetishism of the commodity. This results both in people's estrangement from each other, as now their interactions are founded on production and making profit, and a loss of quality, as quantity becomes the deciding factor in the development of all things. Malcolm Crick (1989) seems to not have any problems with this apparent loss of quality, as he points out how cultural behaviour is anyway continuously being invented and reinvented, resulting in an absence of authenticity. And if there is no such thing as authenticity, who is to judge what holds quality and what not?

Thus, even though commodification paired with masses of visiting tourists might have the power to alter or even overthrow local cultures, the question remains whether this is favourable or not, because this commodification in many places does become a dependable source of income for the local communities. However, this dependency also comes at its costs, cause if the stream of tourists suddenly halts, so does the flow of income (Crick, 1989).
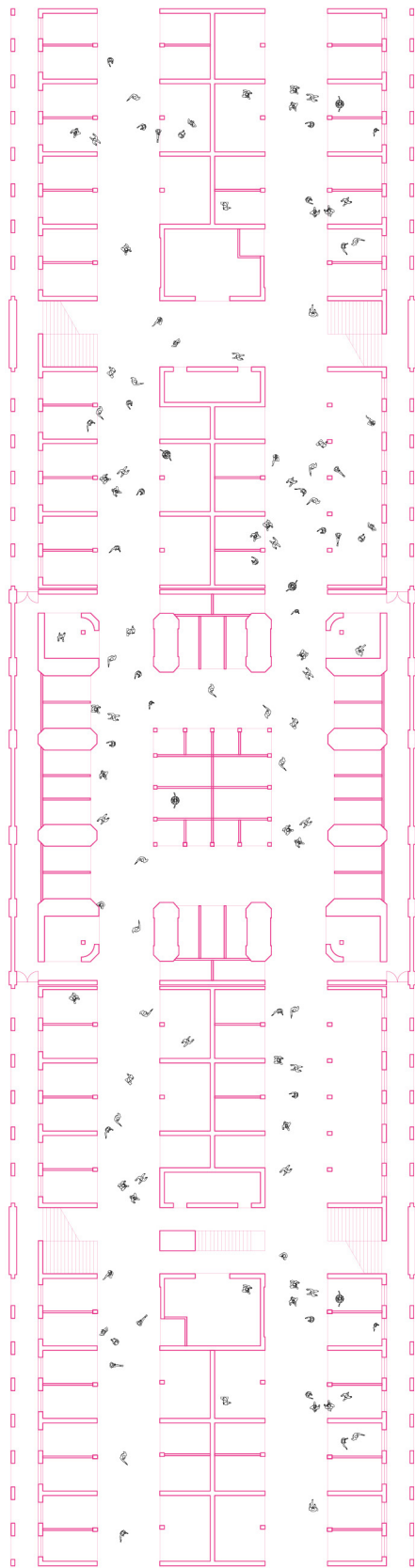
Room 9
Rotate

Hotel City gladly includes everyone, and it makes no exceptions. As long as you check-in in its lobby, you are welcome, yes thank you very much. You are serviced by a local; one of the many faces that represent Hotel City's interface. As you turn around after check-in, you notice the vacant expressions of the other guests waiting behind you; they too had their once-in-a-lifetime experience today. Hotel City rotates a constellation of people, interactions, events and places, of which the backstage is invisible for its visitors; carefully worked out of sight. In Hotel City, everything amounts to nothing, as every week is a repetition of the previous week, and a re-hearsal for the coming week.

Every operation has its backdoors, ranging from invisible alleys filled with heaps of garbage bags, to obscured structures of tax evasive labouring. As a visiting tourist, you're mostly unaware of the hidden worlds that are found behind those shiny shop-fronts surrounding you. Much of these parts remain in the shadows, though there's one curtain that's easily lifted, which is found in the interactions that tourists have with the staff of each place they visit. Mark Gottdiener (2001) describes those who serve the mobilised tourists as the 'immobilised bodies', who effectively enable the functioning of the tourism industry. Urry and Larsen refer to these interactions between serving and served as what they call "strange encounters" that involve "exceptional levels of 'non-interaction'" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 29). This is resonated by Jacques Bugni-court who puts forward that most tourist related jobs are unskilled, which results in a lot of "flunkey training" (Bugnicourt in Crick, 1989, p. 316). And even though these unschooled workers might be looked down upon, these immobilised bodies on the front line do perform what former SAS airline president Jan Carlzon calls 'moments of truth' (Carlzon, 1987). These are the 15 seconds on average that an interaction takes, that completely define the way the customer sees the place he's interacting with. Carlzon, in recognising these 'moments of truth', acknowledges the significance of these immobilised bodies, as to the point that he deems that they are the most important part of any customer experience. This relationship of giving and receiving between the mobilised and immobilised thus appears to be mutual, as it is both parties who could potentially benefit from it.

To think of Hotel City as a chain of interactions between alternating visitors, a fixed front line of foot soldiers, and an invisible backstage, seems to acknowledge this still undiscovered hidden world that is found behind any enterprise. To to be a tourist, thus, could be seen as being one cell in a greater network; each interaction creating a series of relays through an interface that interacts with the city.
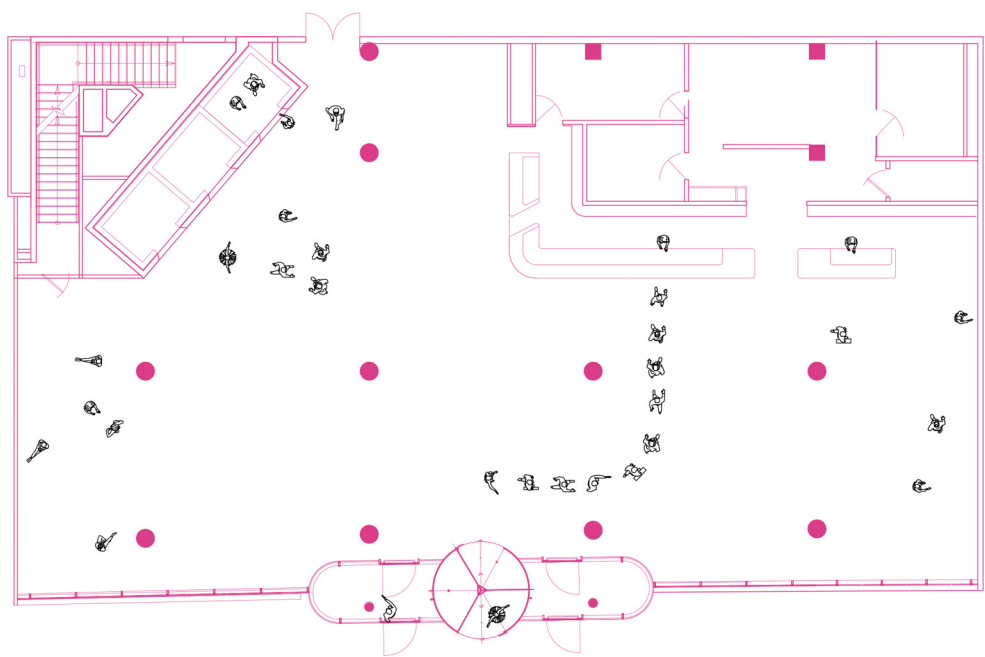
Rooms 10-1
Coming Home?

Hotel City's rooms are comfortable. They cater to your needs, muffle your bad habits and refine your peculiar thoughts. The room you just entered eerily resembles your own room, the one you left this morning. When you lie down, the bed smells the same as your own bed, a fresh and empty kind of clean. In Hotel City, even though all are guests, everything is familiar, everyone finds their way, and everyone feels at home.

What happens when you (temporarily) live in Hotel City? Could you ever call this place a home? If we're to believe the phenomenologists of Room 6, every space in which the act of dwelling is exercised, sooner or later ends up as an extended part of oneself. The entrepreneurs of Room 5 would gladly make us believe that we actually are at home, though the philosophers in Room 7 would argue how we in the end should need to return to our original habitats, as to complete our ritual transition, otherwise we'd be stuck forever in liminality, although; what would be wrong with that? And more importantly, could we actually feel at home in a place that is as fortified as Room 4, or as serviced as Room 9? Would we feel confined by living a premediated experience, as the sociologists point out in Room 3? And even if we did, we could easily escape this confinement through one of the infrastructures found in Room 2. It could also be some other place that's being broadcasted from Room 1, luring us away from what we, at least now, call home.

Can you give me a conclusion of Hotel City?

Hotel City is a sum of its city's spaces, structures, smells, and sounds; capable of delivering you an unforgettable experience, that, paradoxically, in some ways is as generic as a hotel room, if it weren't for its fantastic cladding. Hotel City is capable of transforming its visitors into absolute believers of whatever reality it has to offer. And even though this all might be true, the real answer to Hotel City lies in the question that still remains:

"And what is the secret?" "What the revealed religions have been unable to reveal. The secret lies beyond." (Eco, 1989, p. 208)
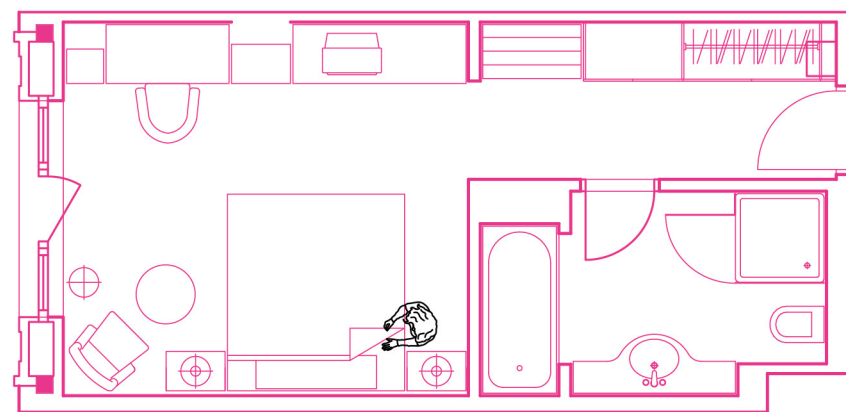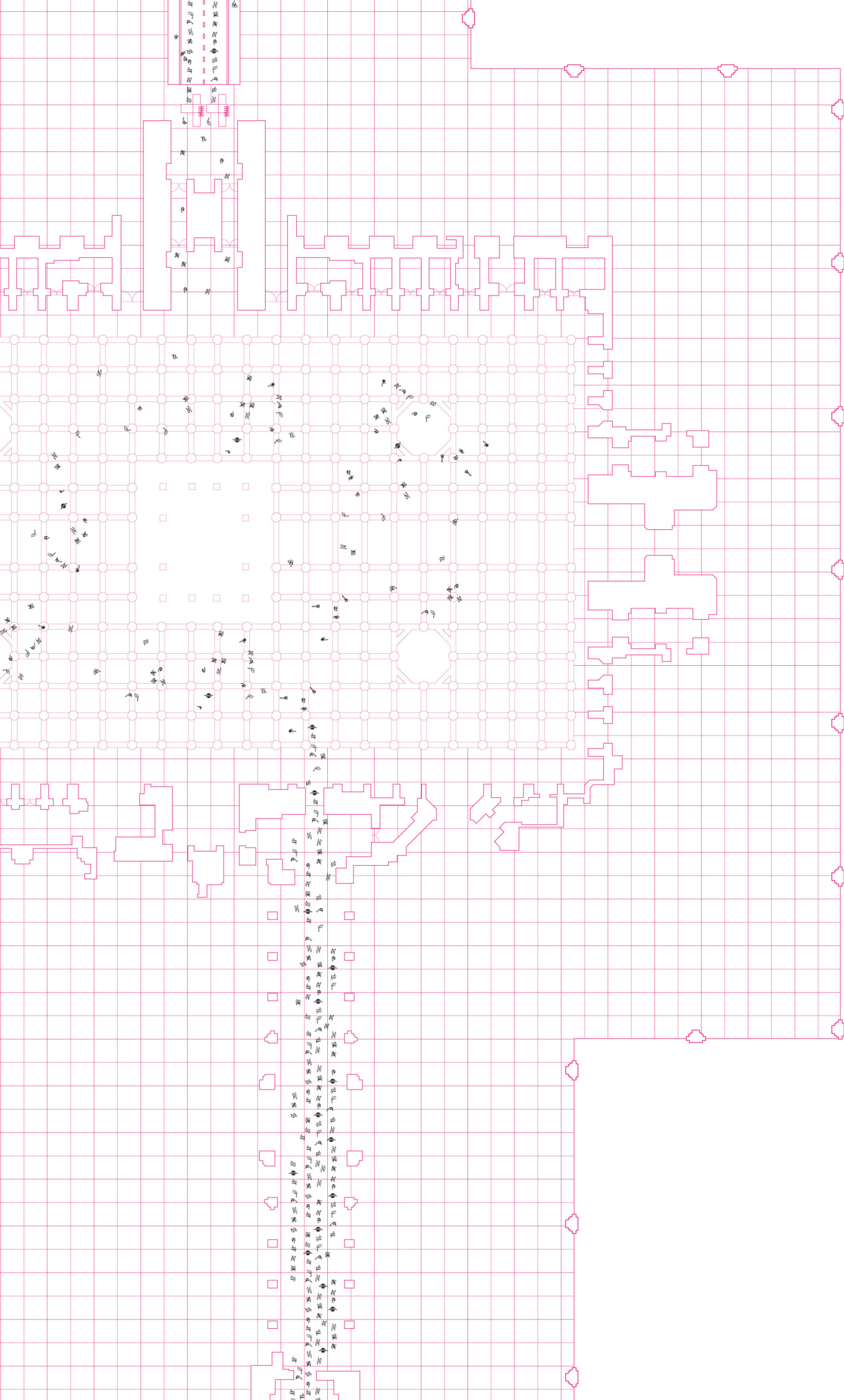
You are in the hotel lobby and you check in; what do you check in?
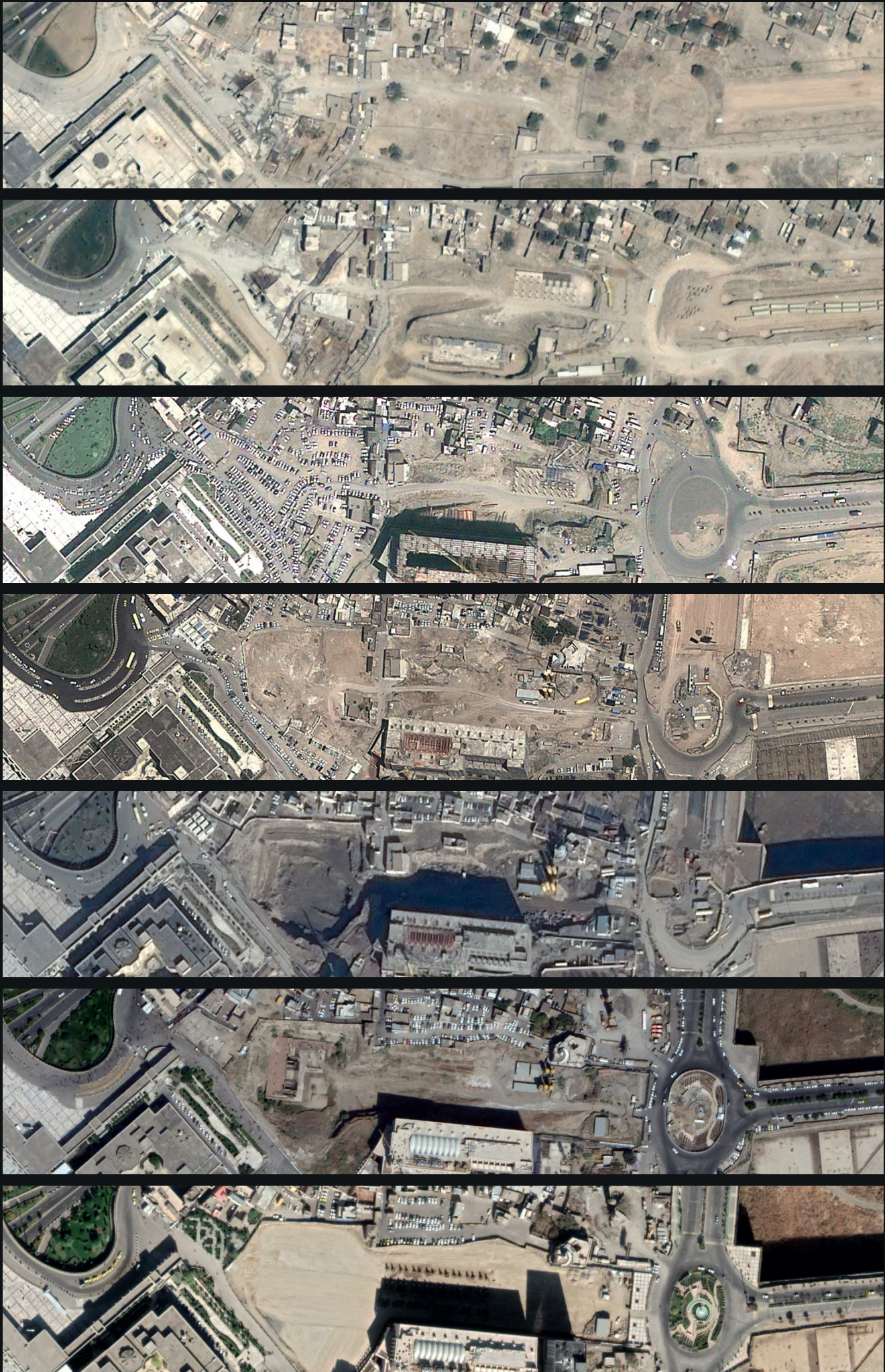- Yourself?

No. You leave yourself behind.
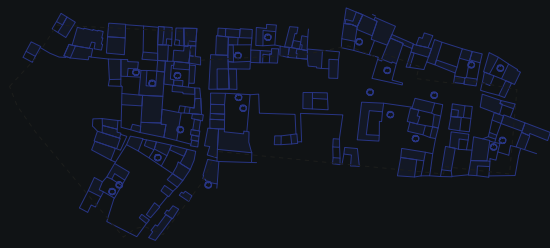- Where?

In Hotel City.

PALIMPSEST

Delayering the
Palimpsest

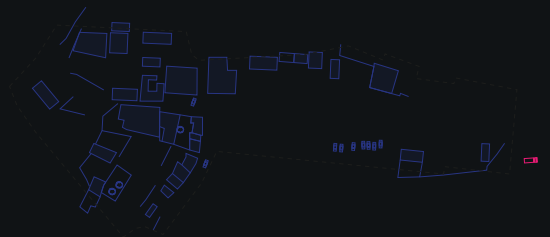Sattelite imagery from 2004 until 2021
(Google Earth, 2021)

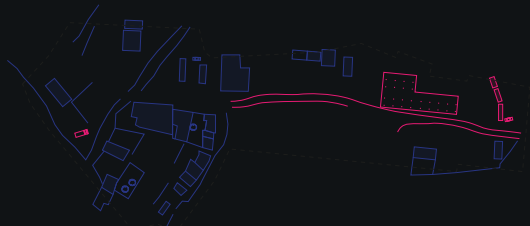Before conditions of change affected the
site.
The site didn't exist.

2000

Large machines and vehicles start appear-
ing.
They slowly demolish existing houses.

2004

Tracks of the machines erode in the ground.
Construction of a new building starts.

2006

A construction site is demarcated by fences.
The left-over space created by the demolish-
ing of houses is turned into a car park.

2009

The construction site is enlarged.
A few houses remain within it.
More machines appear.

2012

Soil is being dug out of the site, transported
away from it. Slowly, a big hole with a depth
of about 20 meters appears.
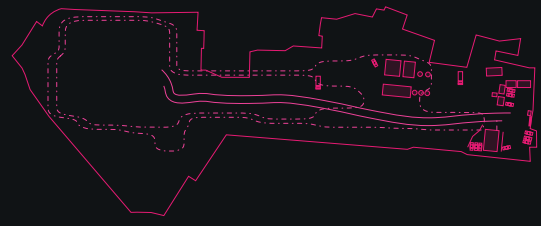
2013

Inside of the hole the construction of a new
building starts. It will never finish.
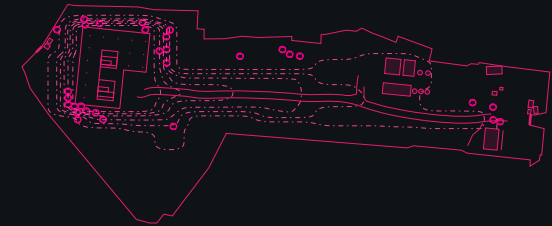
2018

The big hole is filled up with earth again.
Construction efforts leave the site.
The site has been completely cleansed: it
has become a tabula rasa.
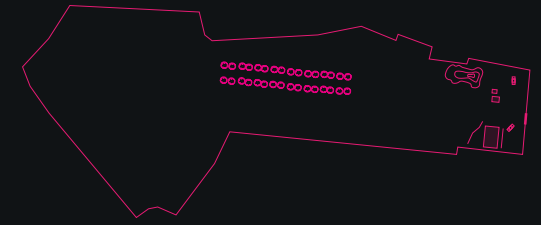
2020

Layer 1.
Roads
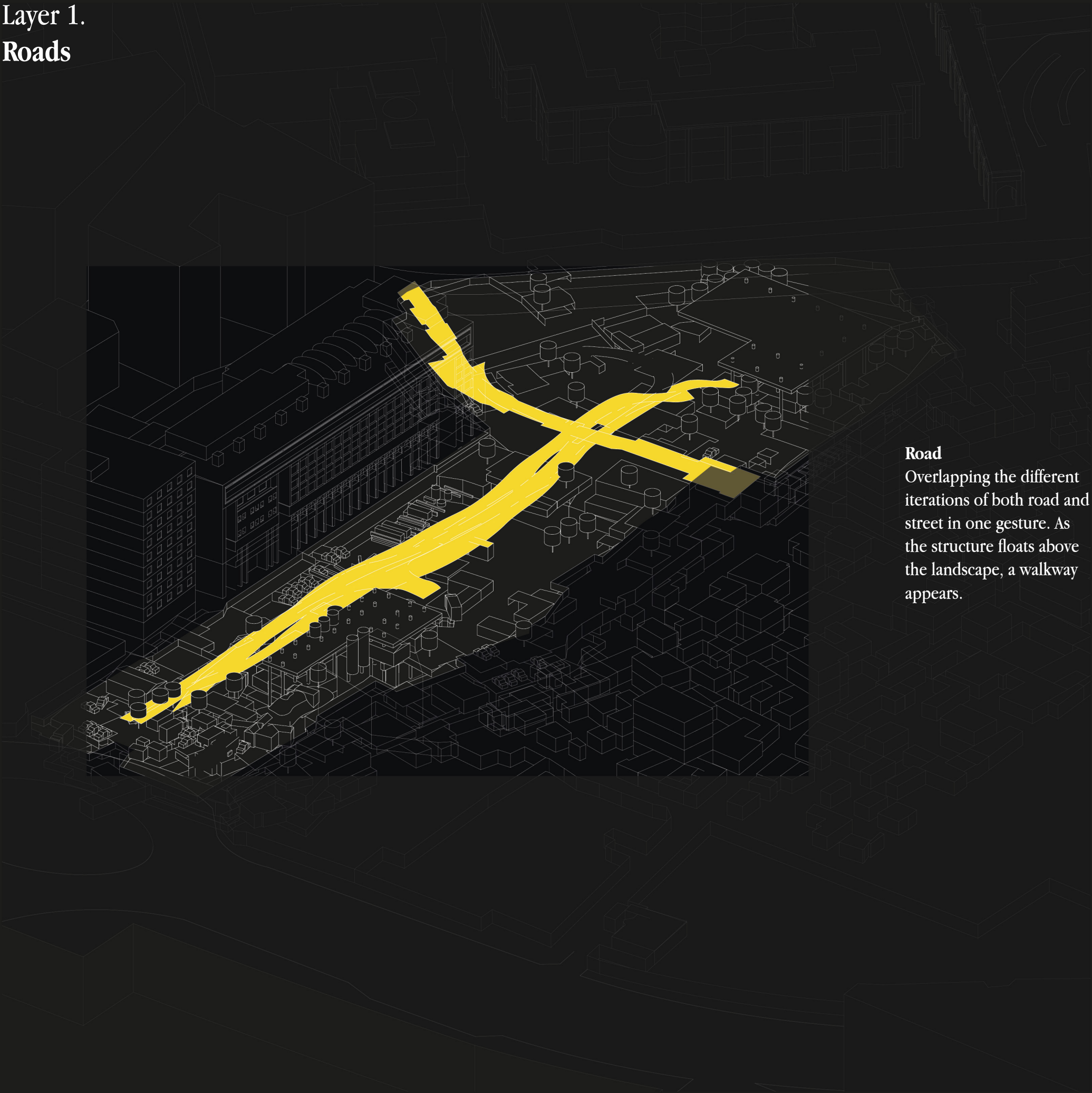
Road
Overlapping the different iterations of both road and street in one gesture. As the structure floats above the landscape, a walkway appears.

Layer 2.
Trees

Trees
Replanting eradicated trees
and other deemed weeds
gradually reverses the flow
of time and counters the
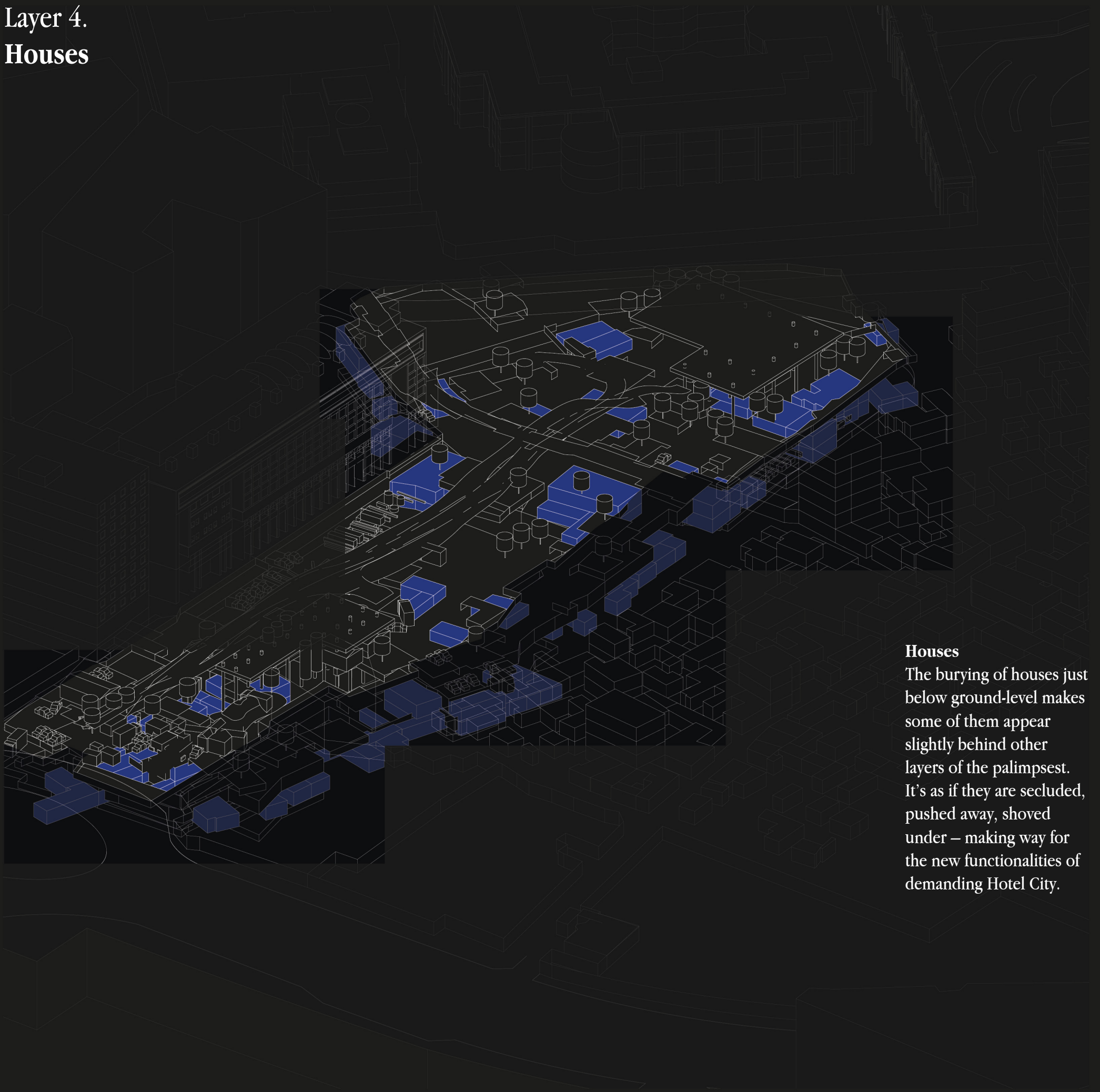ever-growing accumulation
of concrete within the city.

Layer 3.
Construction Materials
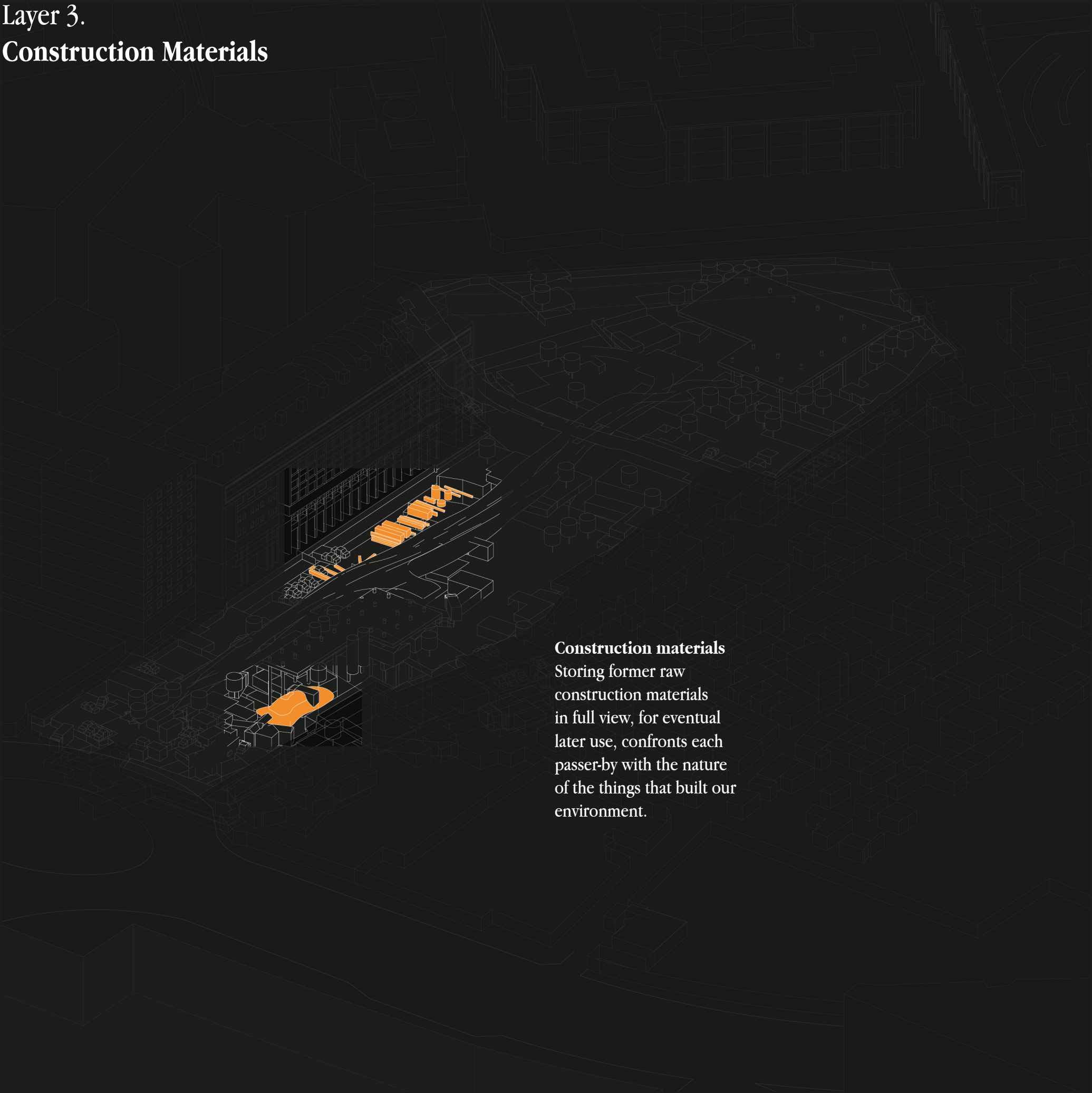
Construction materials
Storing former raw
construction materials
in full view, for eventual
later use, confronts each
passer-by with the nature
of the things that built our
environment.

Layer 4.
Houses

Houses
The burying of houses just below ground-level makes some of them appear slightly behind other layers of the palimpsest. It's as if they are secluded, pushed away, shoved under – making way for the new functionalities of demanding Hotel City.

Layer 5.
Gardens
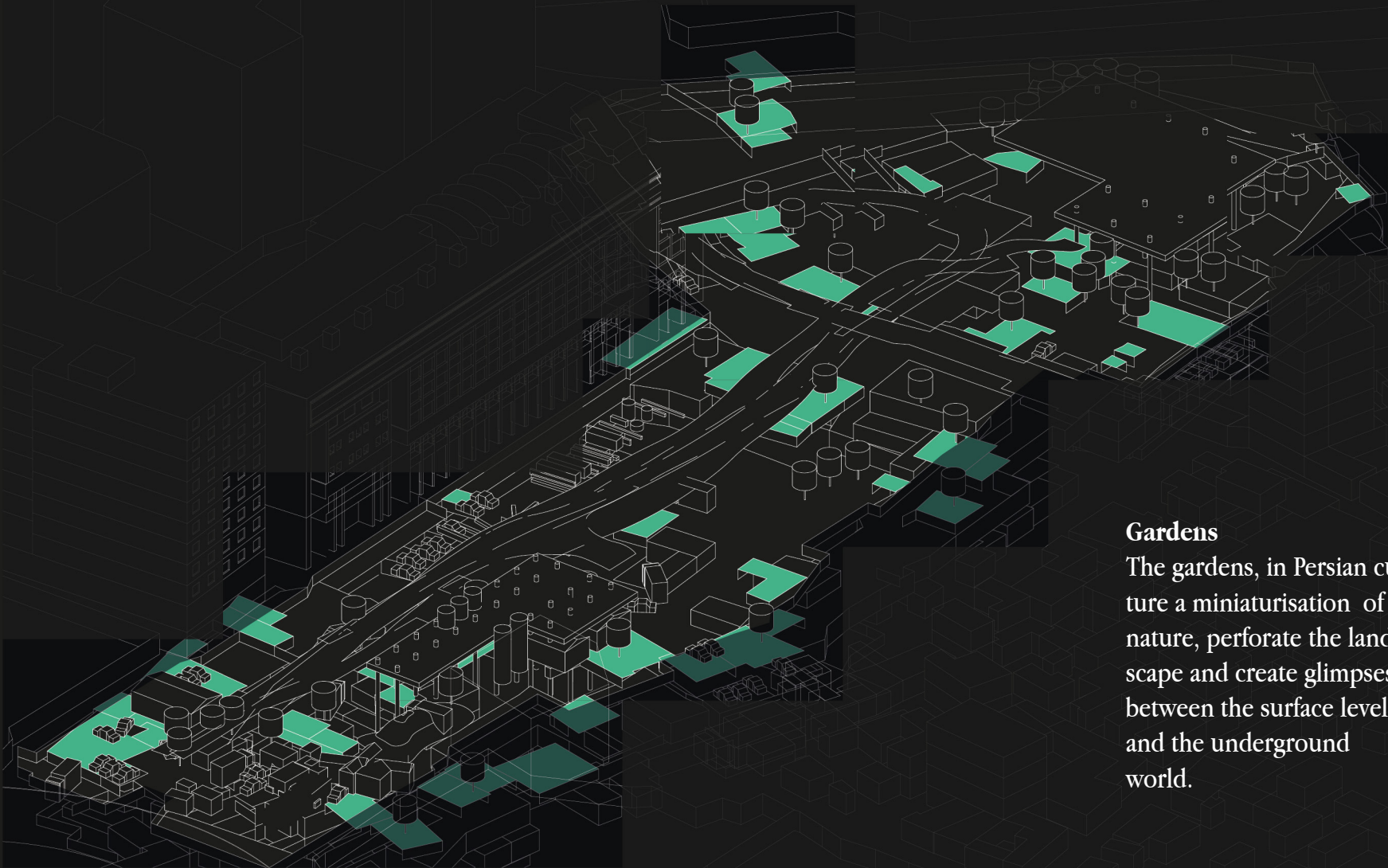
Gardens
The gardens, in Persian culture a miniaturisation of nature, perforate the landscape and create glimpses between the surface levels and the underground world.

Layer 6.
Cars
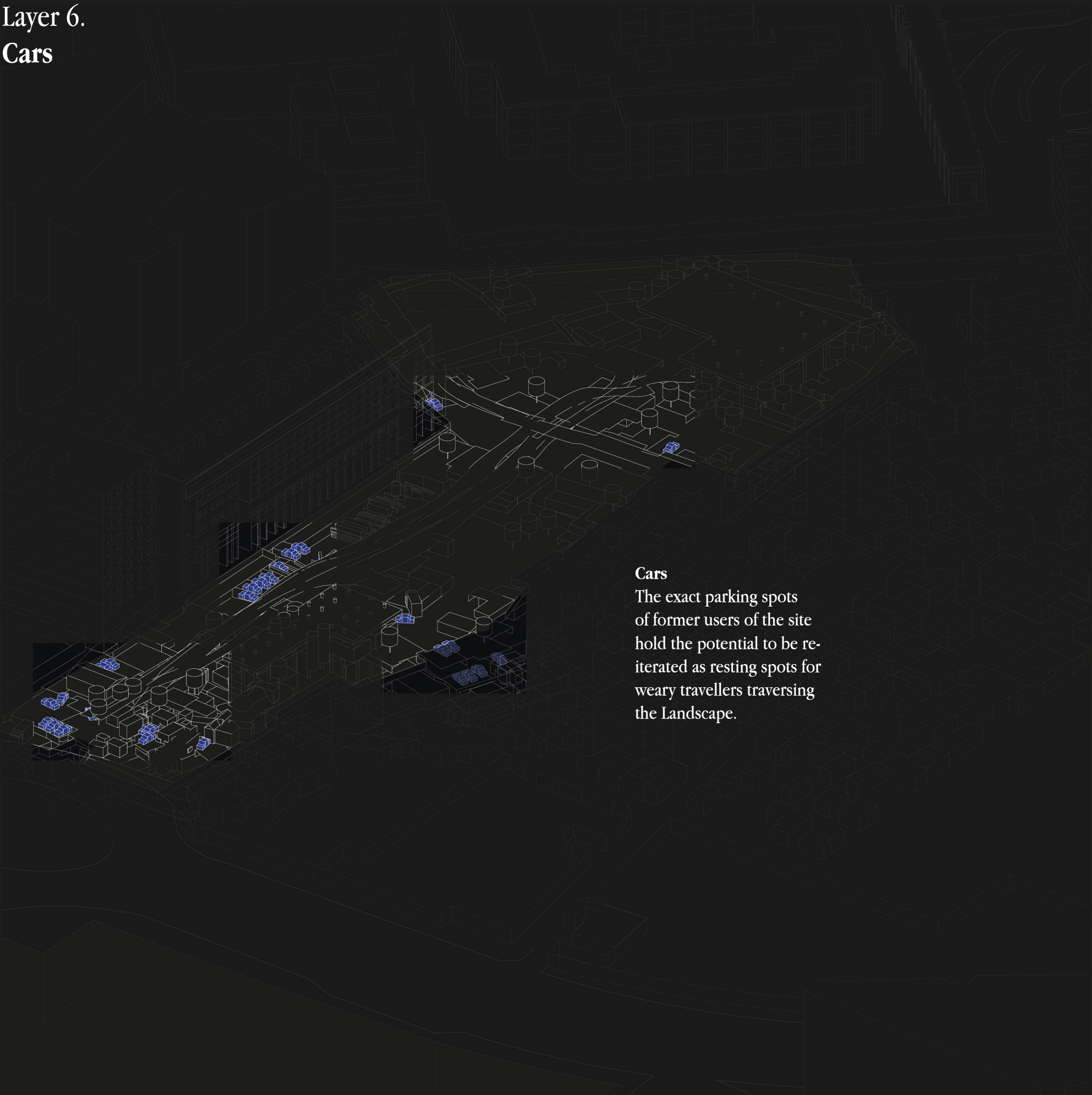
Cars
The exact parking spots
of former users of the site
hold the potential to be re-
iterated as resting spots for
weary travellers traversing
the Landscape.
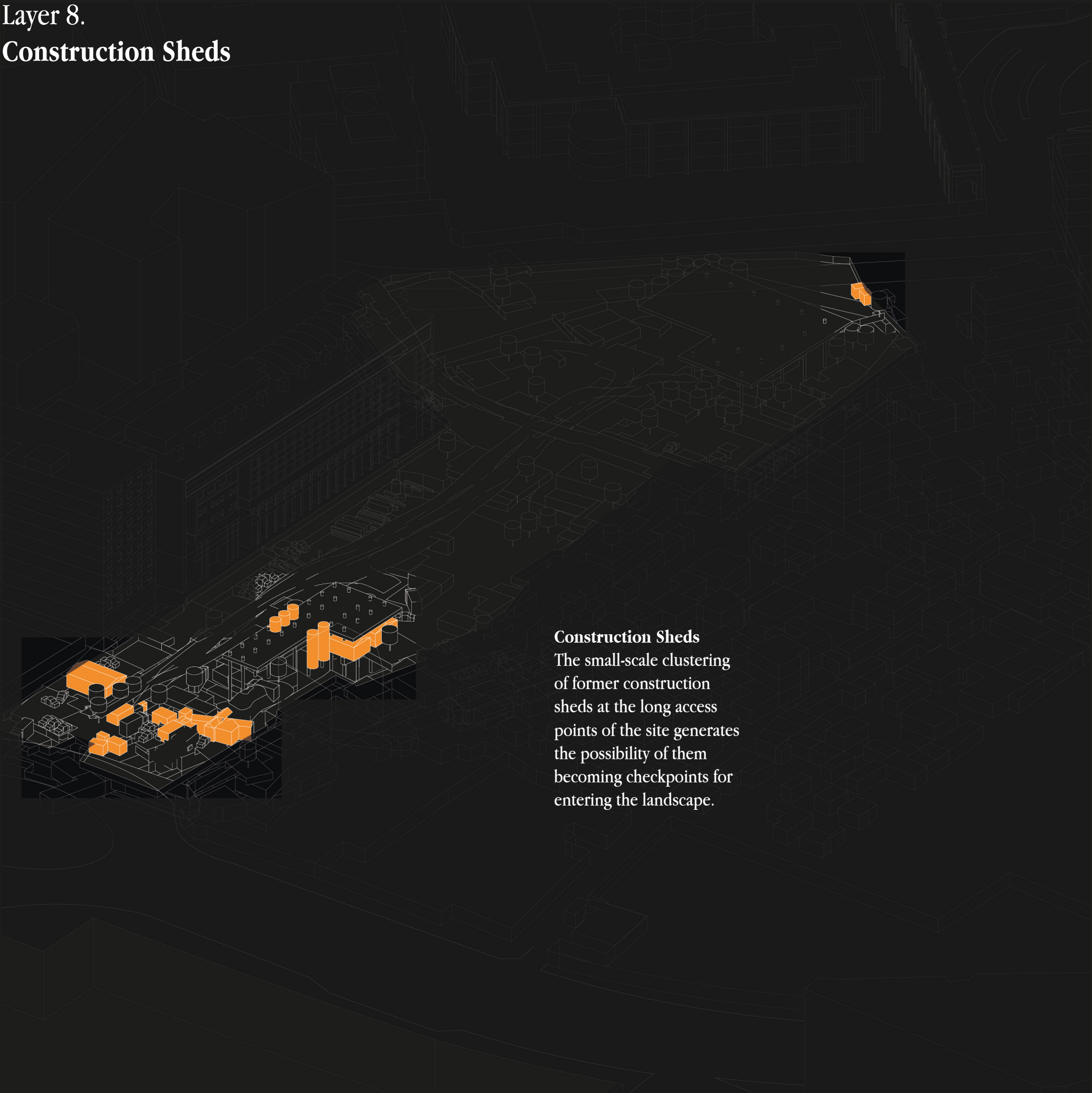
Layer 7.
Trucks
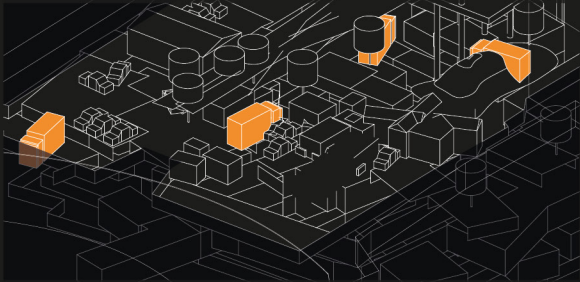
Trucks
The roaring and polluting
vehicles that enable our
societies are physically re-
incarnated in some materi-
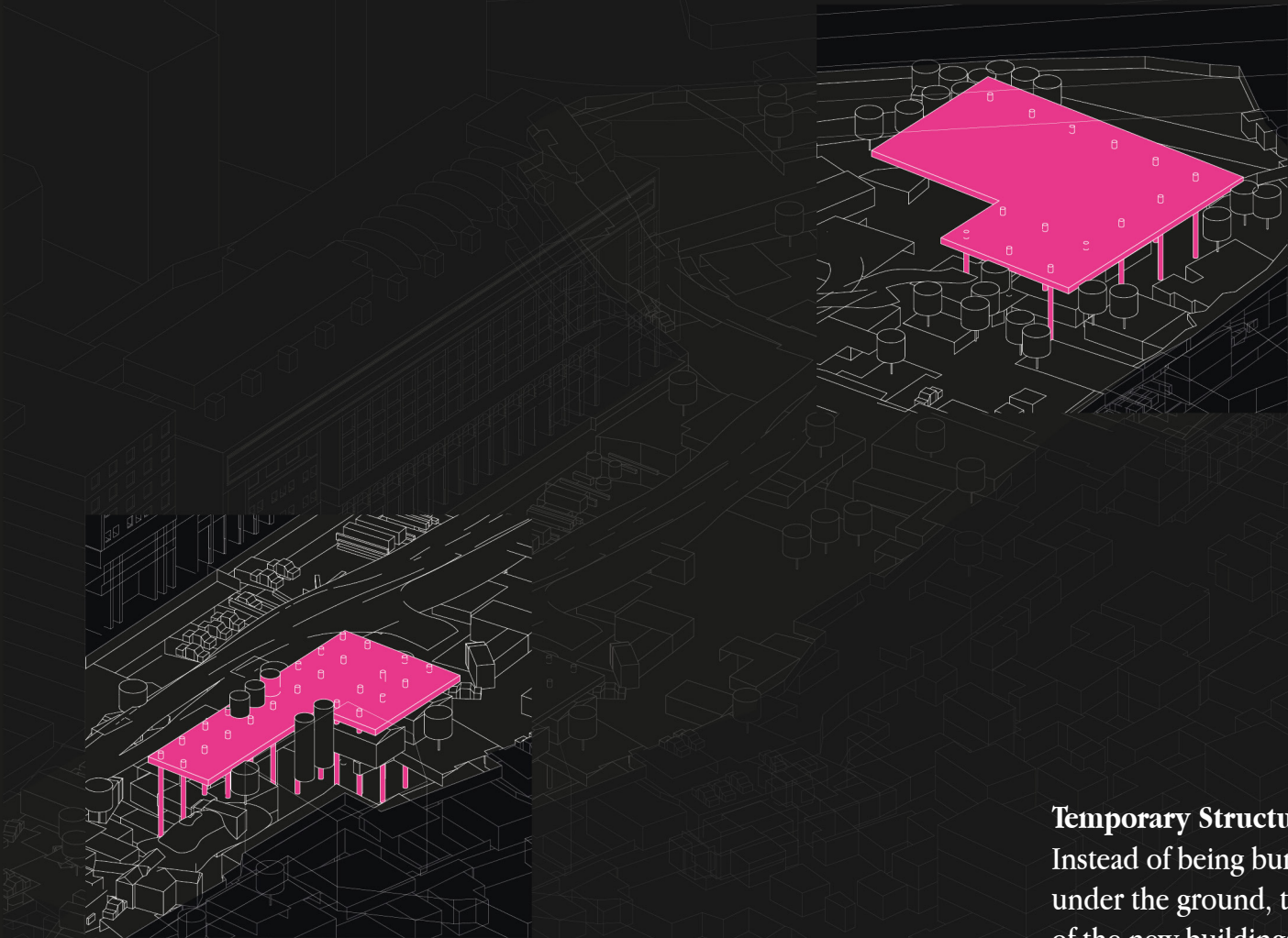al form, as to pay tribute to
their achievements.

Layer 8.
Construction Sheds

Construction Sheds
The small-scale clustering
of former construction
sheds at the long access
points of the site generates
the possibility of them
becoming checkpoints for
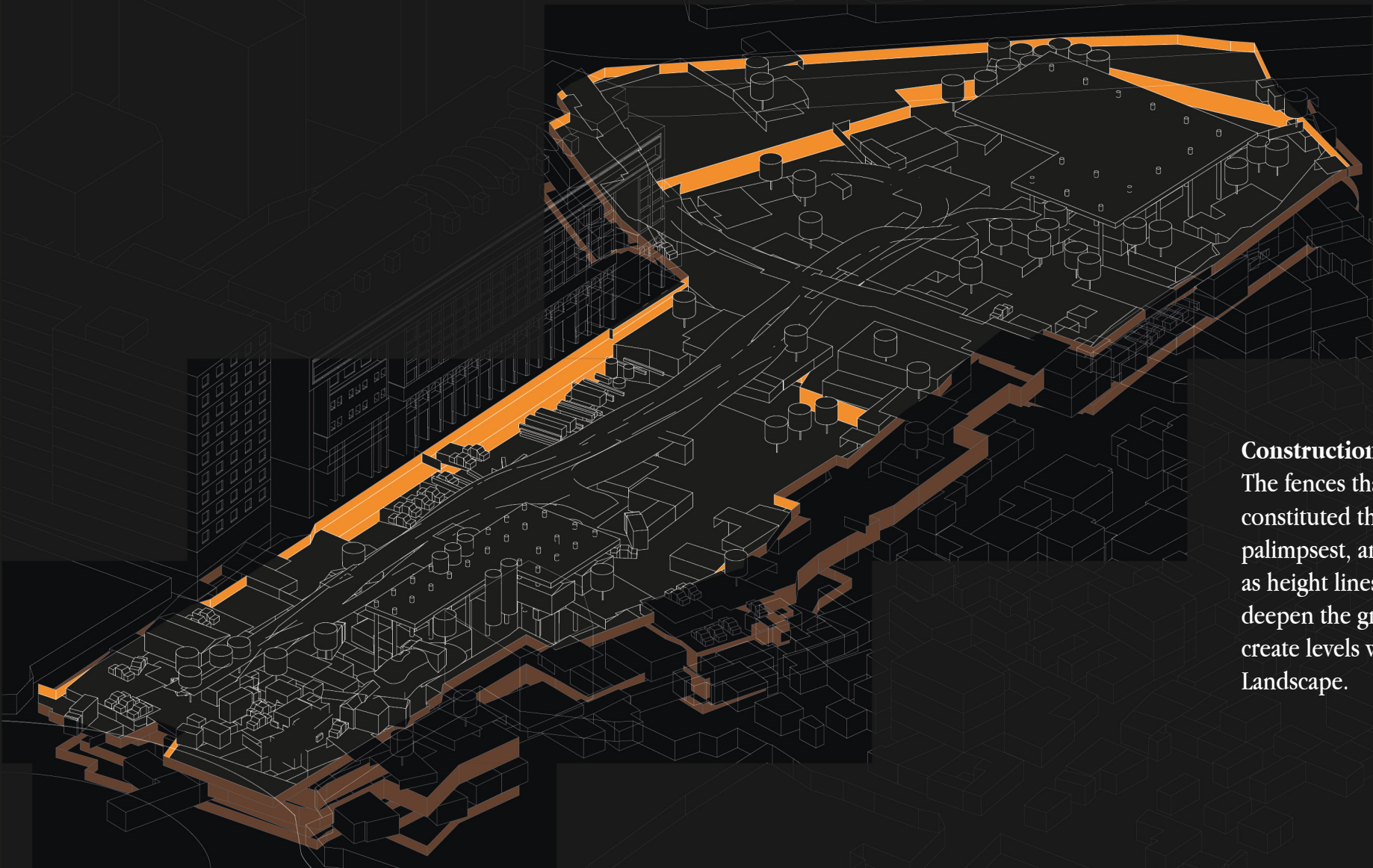entering the landscape.

Layer 9.
Temporary Structures

Temporary Structures
Instead of being buried under the ground, the start of the new buildings of Hotel City are raised by their columns, becoming both canopy and landmark.

Layer 10.
Fences

Construction Fences
The fences that over time constituted the site of the palimpsest, are now used as height lines as they deepen the ground and create levels within the Landscape.

PROCEDURES

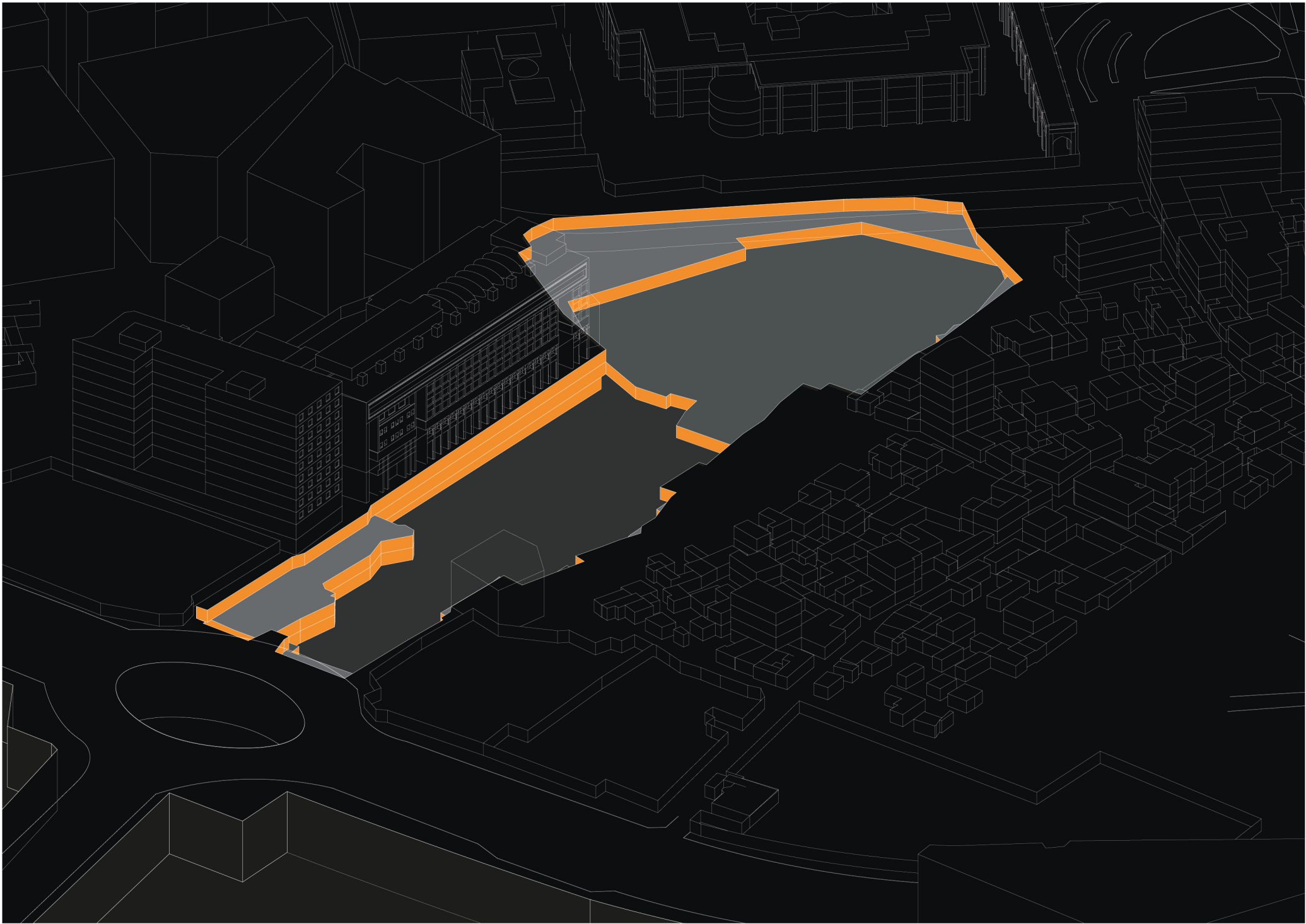|			
I.	*Dig**	**VII.**	*Sculpt**
II.	*Fill**	**VIII.**	*Assemble*
III.	*Displace**	**IX.**	*Disassemble*
IV.	*Delineate*	**X.**	*Store*
V.	*Perforate*	**XI.**	*Thrash*
VI.	*Flatten**	**XII.**	*Plant*

* Carried out by Machines.

Procedure I.
Dig

To dig into the soil of the Landscape, in
search of its past.
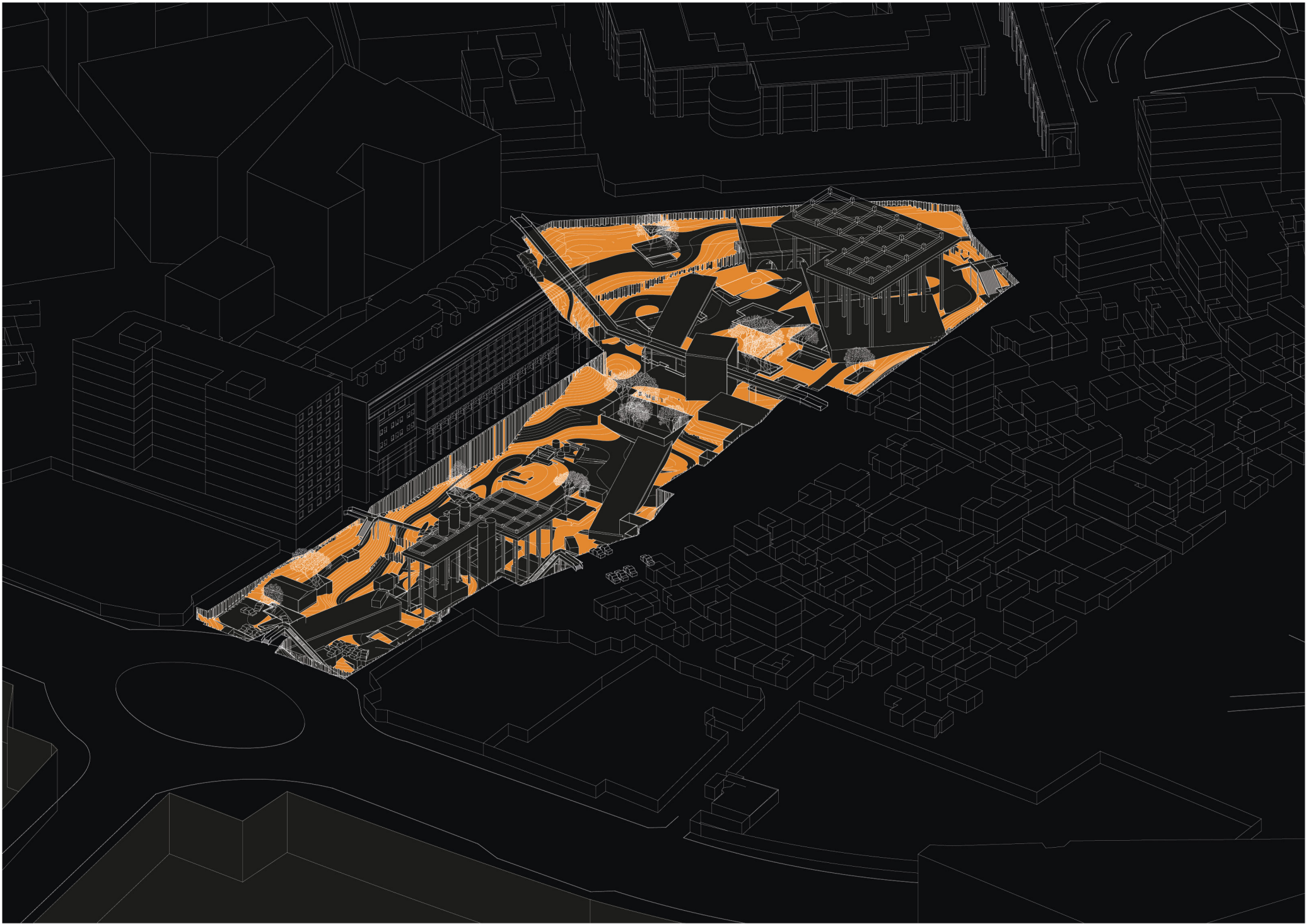
Procedure II.
Fill

To fill the Landscape with new material,
shapes, forms, and bodies, as to populate it
with new life.

Procedure III.
Displace

To displace existing material within the
Landscape, as to create new possibilities for
what is already there.

Procedure IV.
Delineate

To delineate and demarcate places within
the Landscape to create a 'here-and-now',
which are the spaces of the Landscape, and a
'beyond' which is the peripheral city.
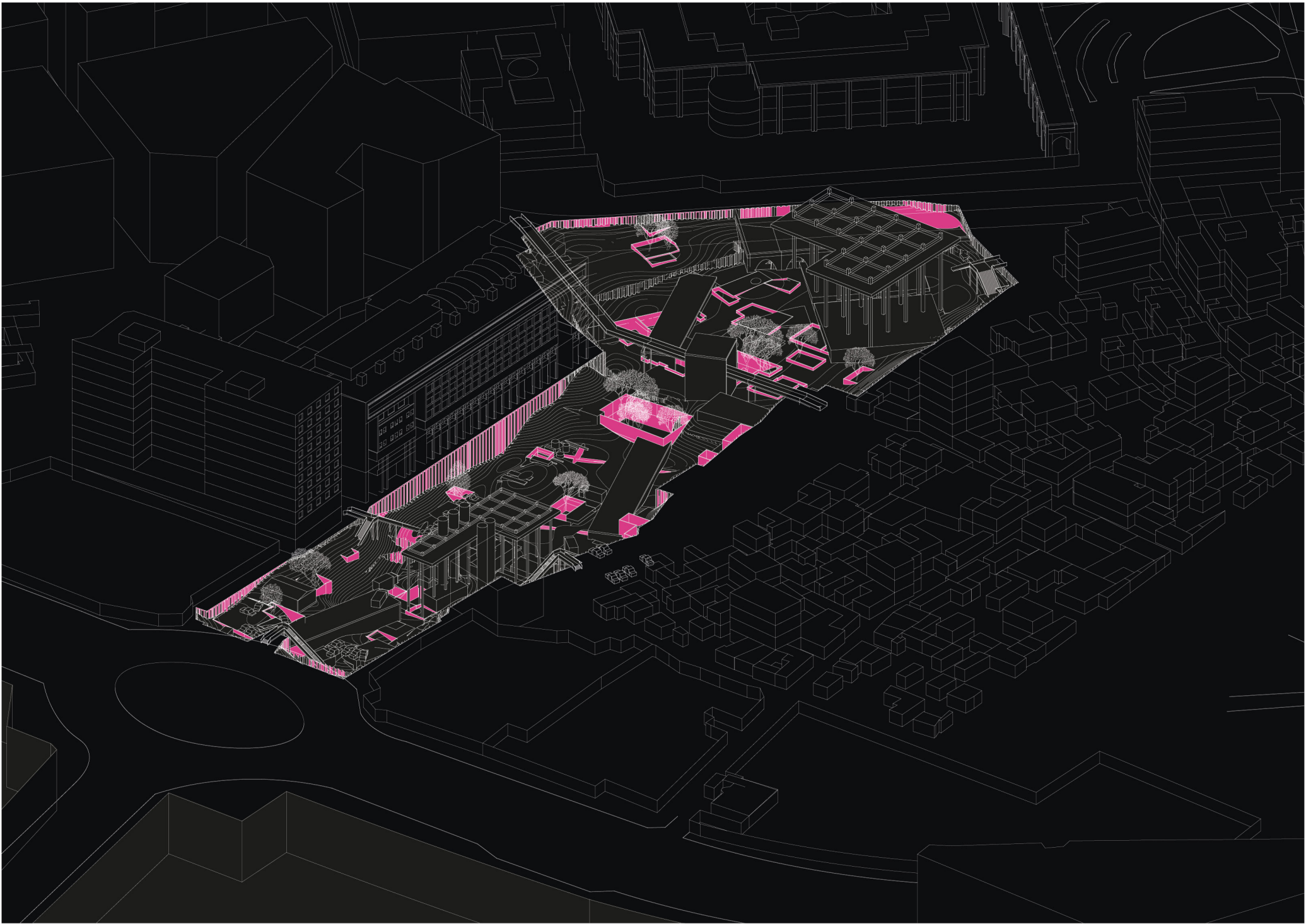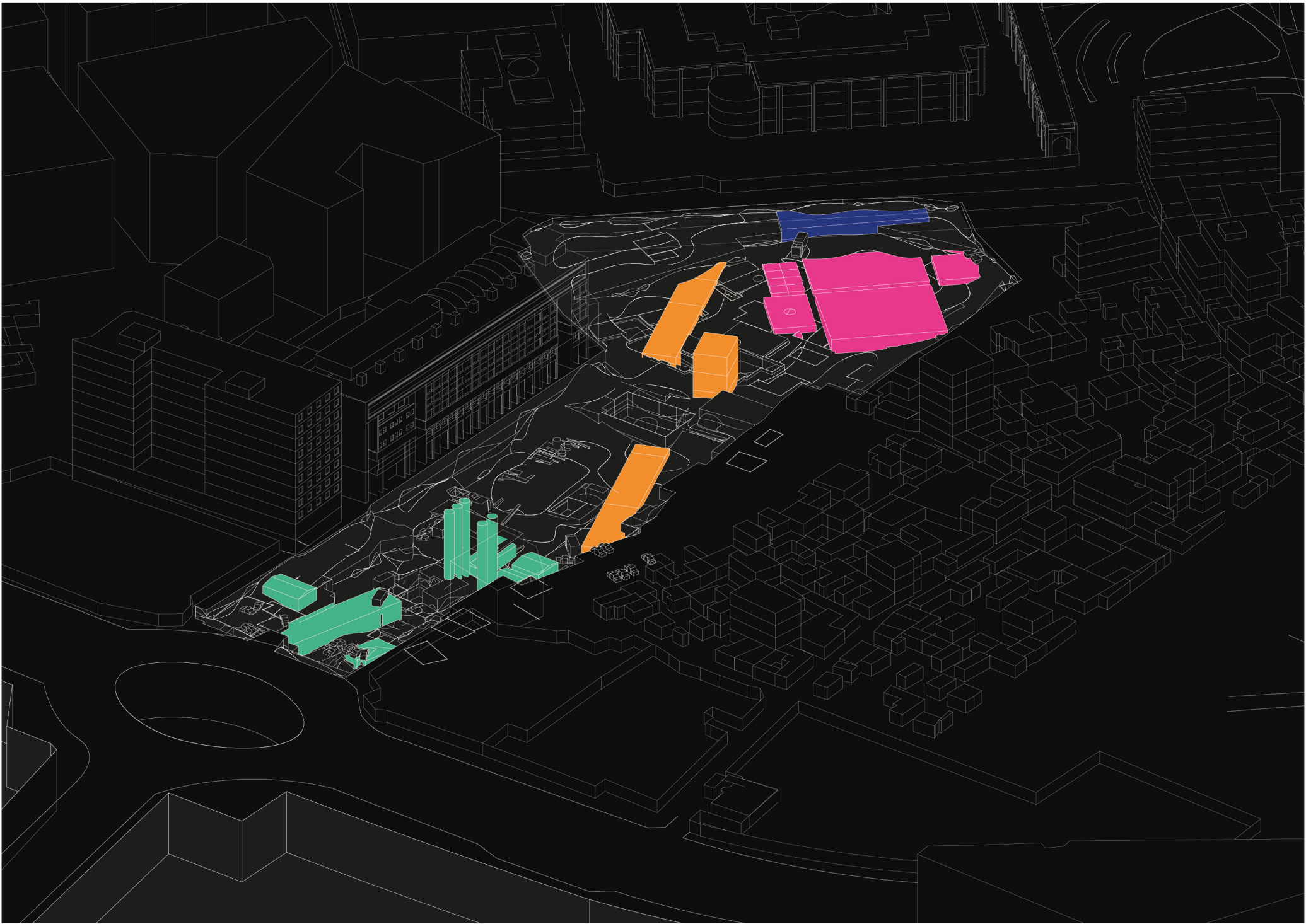
Procedure V.
Perforate

To fill a void with voids. To perforate the Landscape, precisely with the outlines of the actual spaces that once where and now reside in the memories of the people that used to live here (as found in the palimpsest).
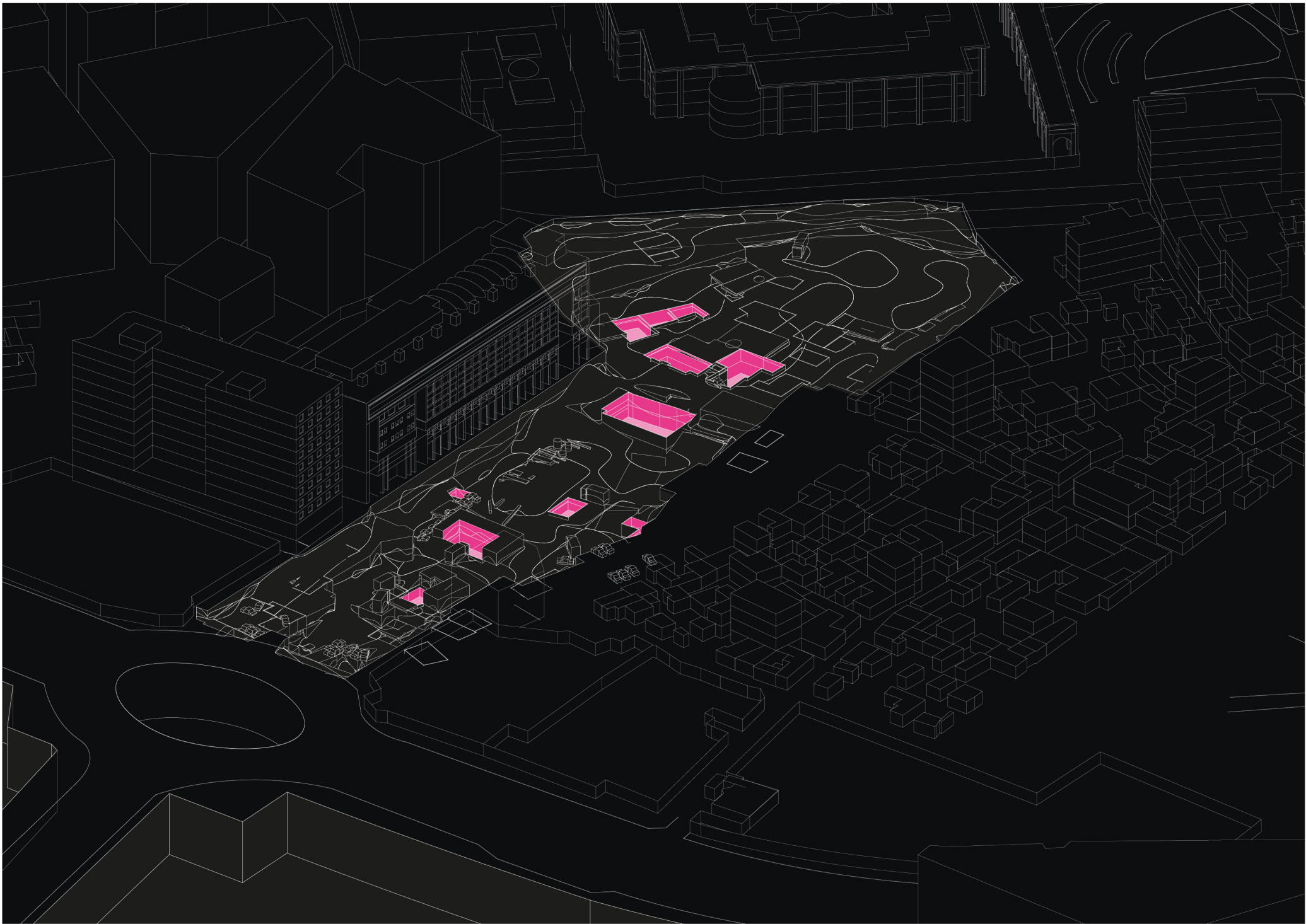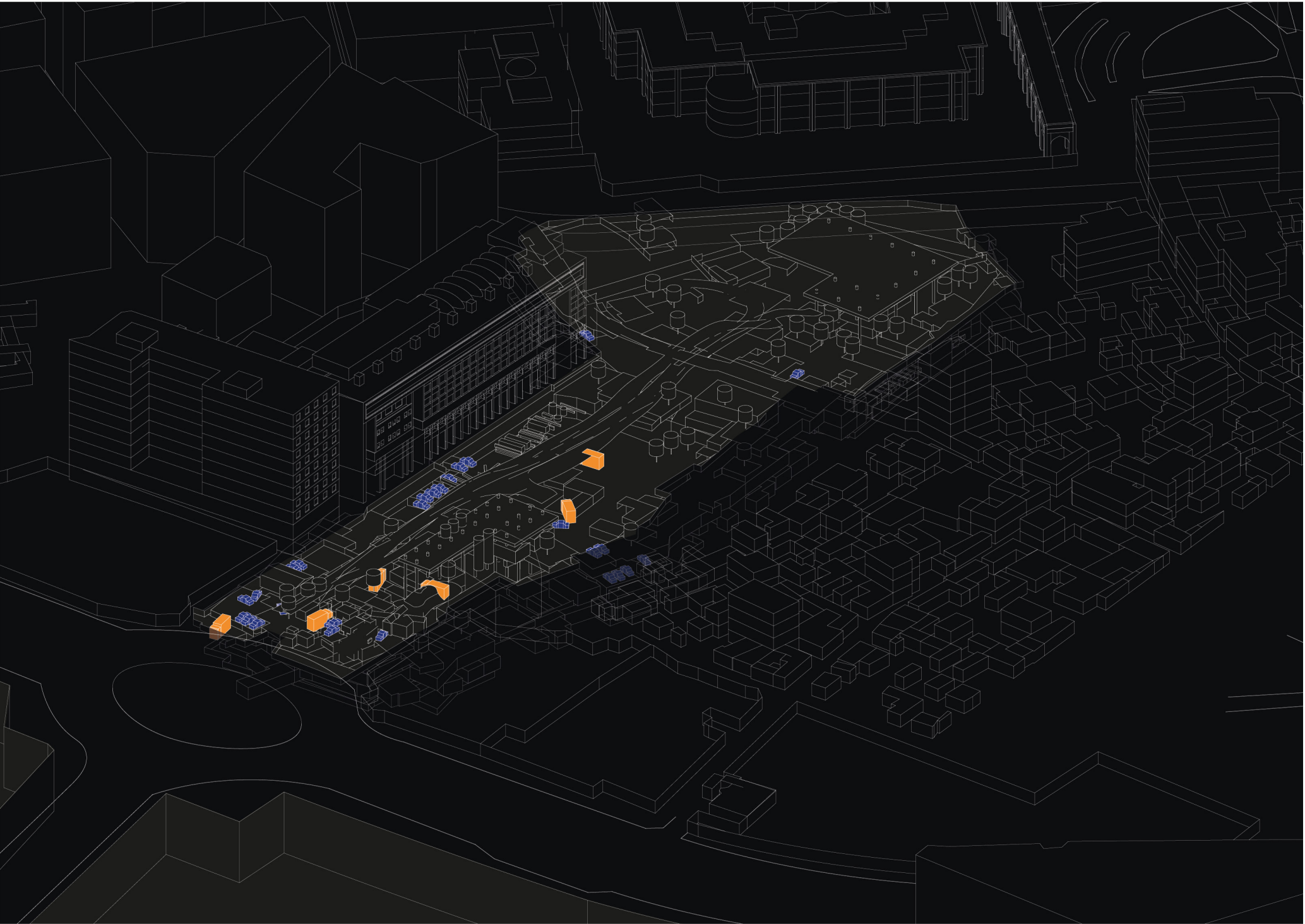
Procedure VI.
Flatten

To flatten the Landscape, as to prepare it for
visitors to trespass it, or events to happen on
it.

Procedure VII.
Sculpt

To sculpt the materials on the Landscape into
meaningful and desirable shapes.

Procedure VIII.
Assemble

To assemble Elements within the Landscape
as to generate usable spatial Constellations.
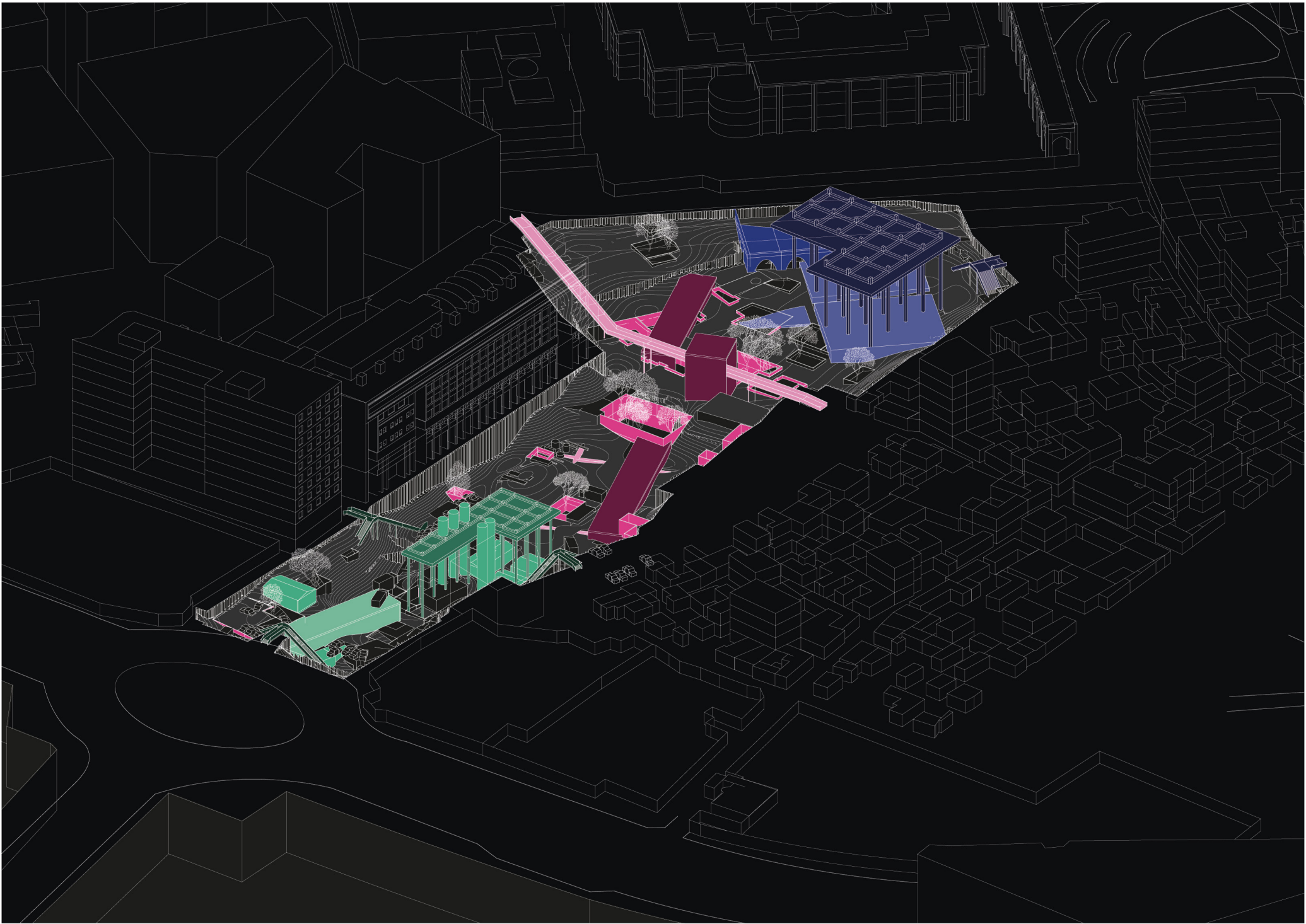
Procedure IX.
Disassemble

To disassemble Elements within the
Landscape. An endless reshuffling of earth,
bodies, and buildings.
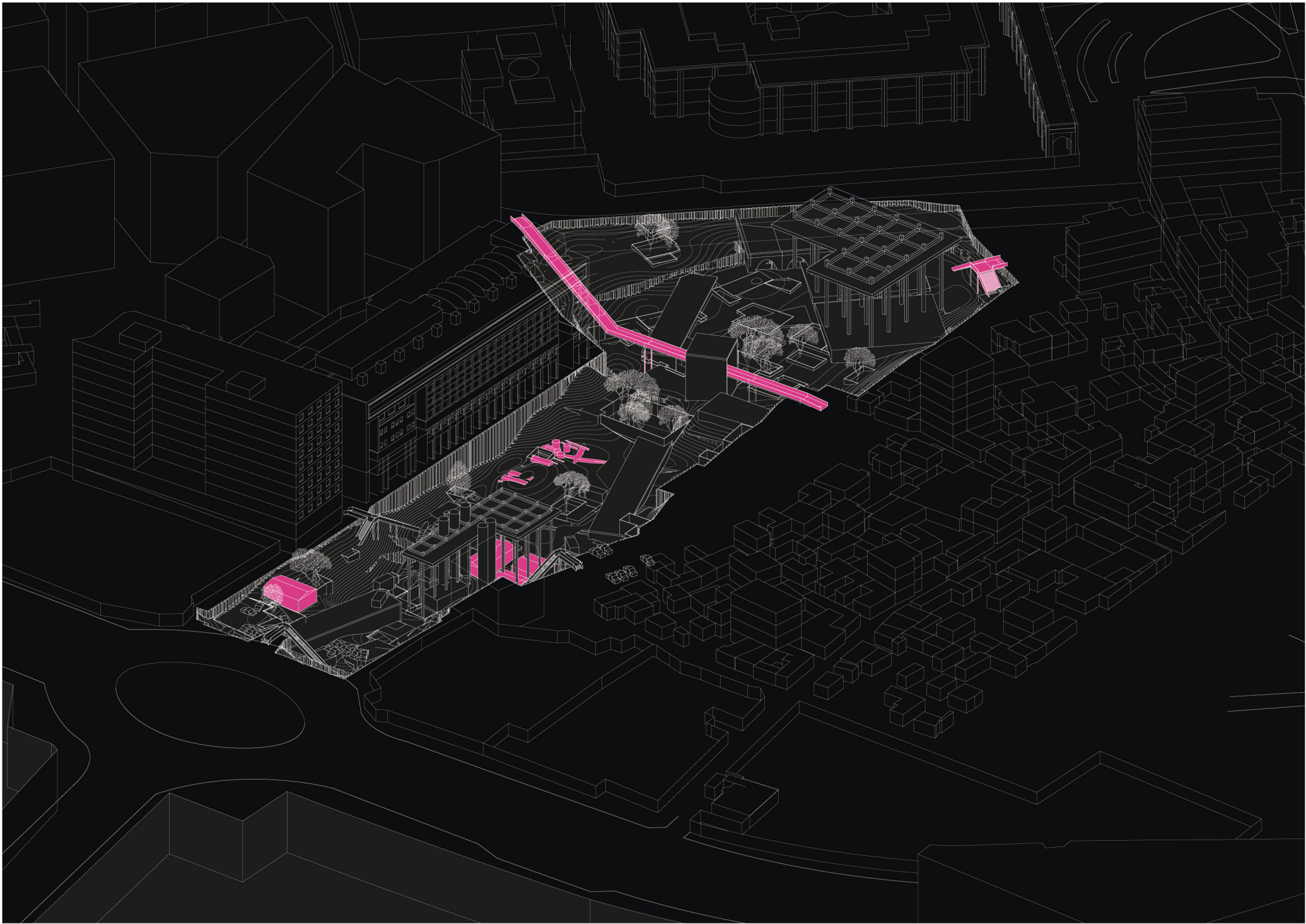
Procedure X.
Store

To store material in the Landscape, as to
safeguard it for later usage.
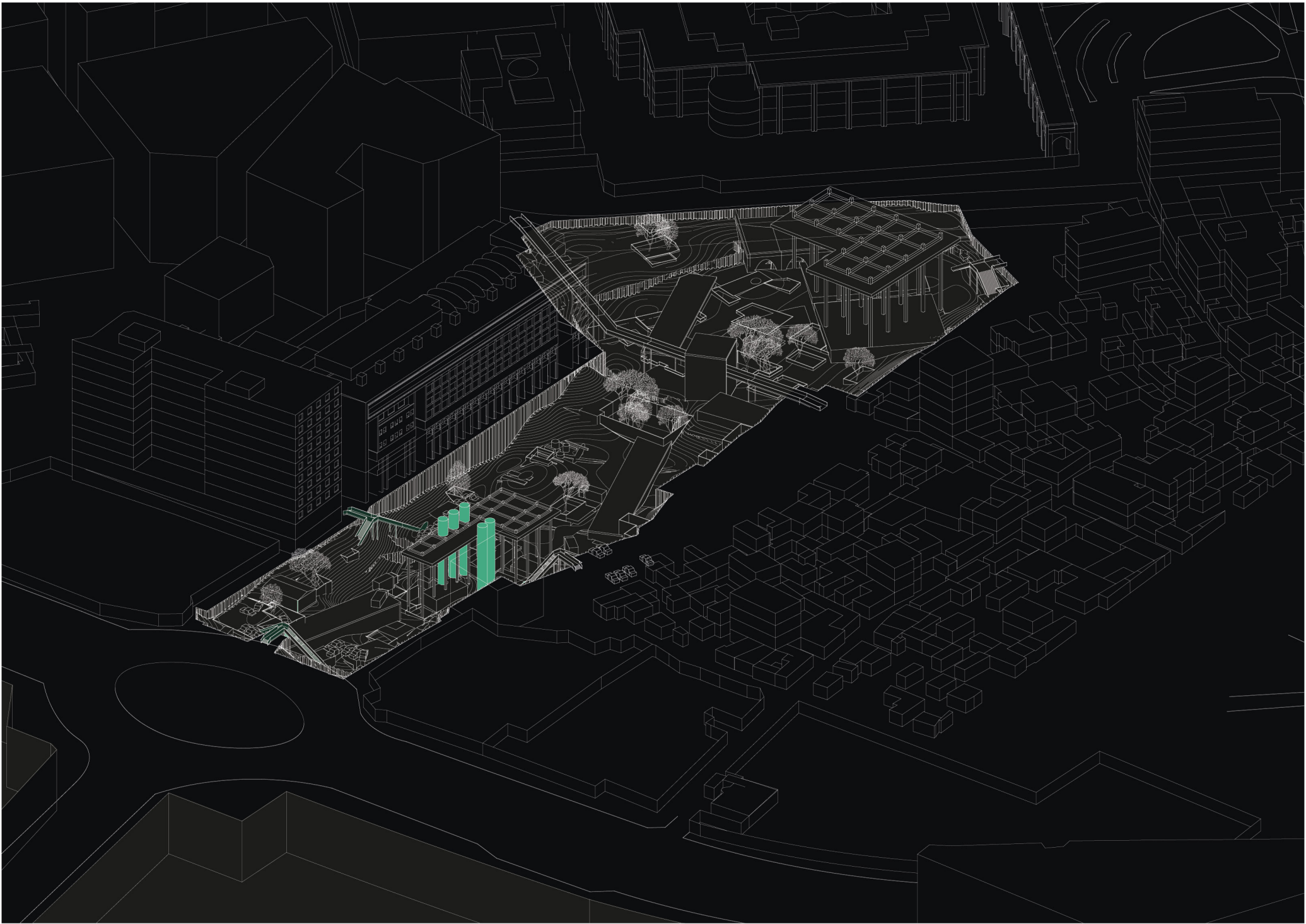
Procedure XI.
Thrash

To deliberately thrash anything as to make place for something new.
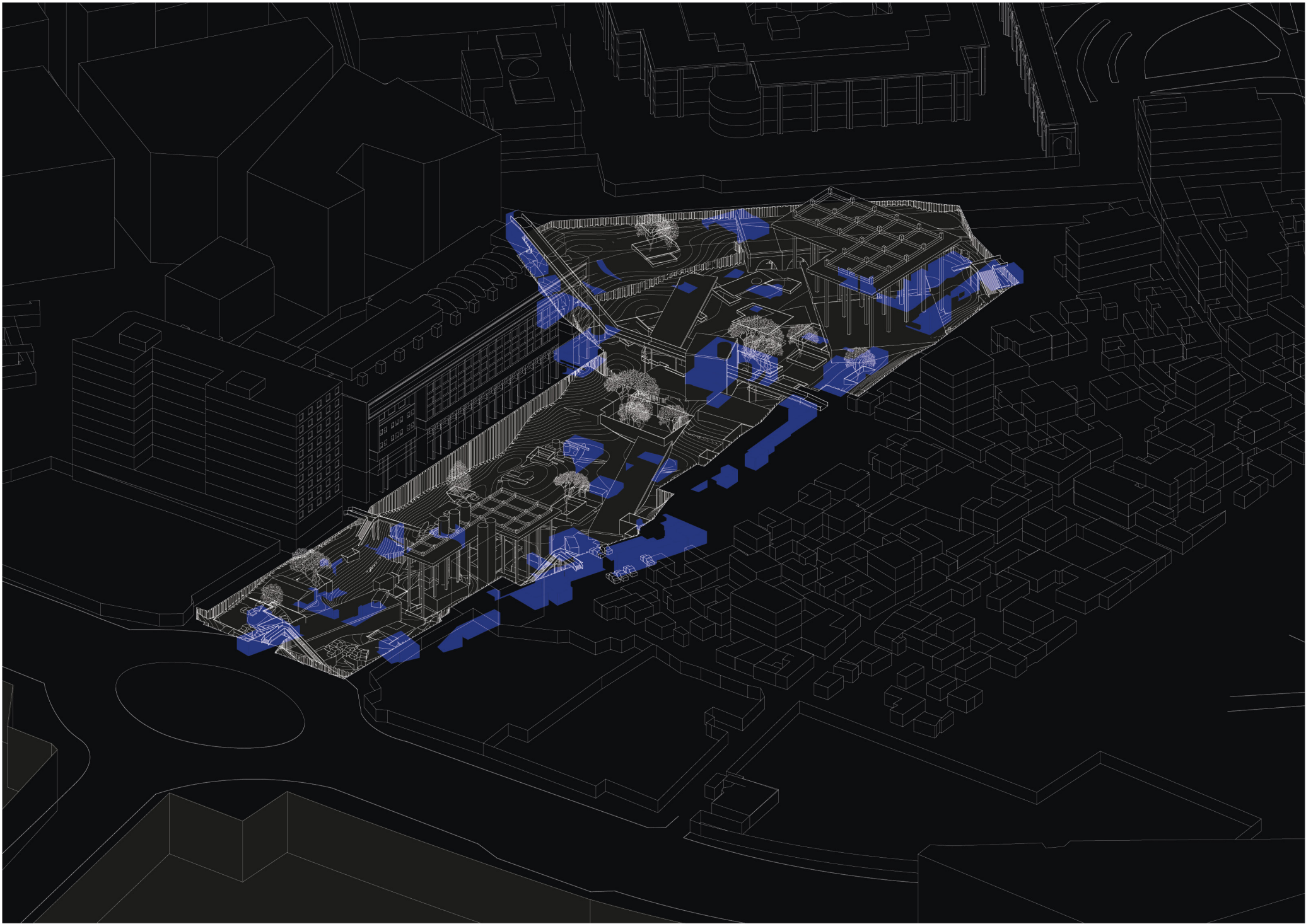
Procedure XII.
Plant

To generate life.
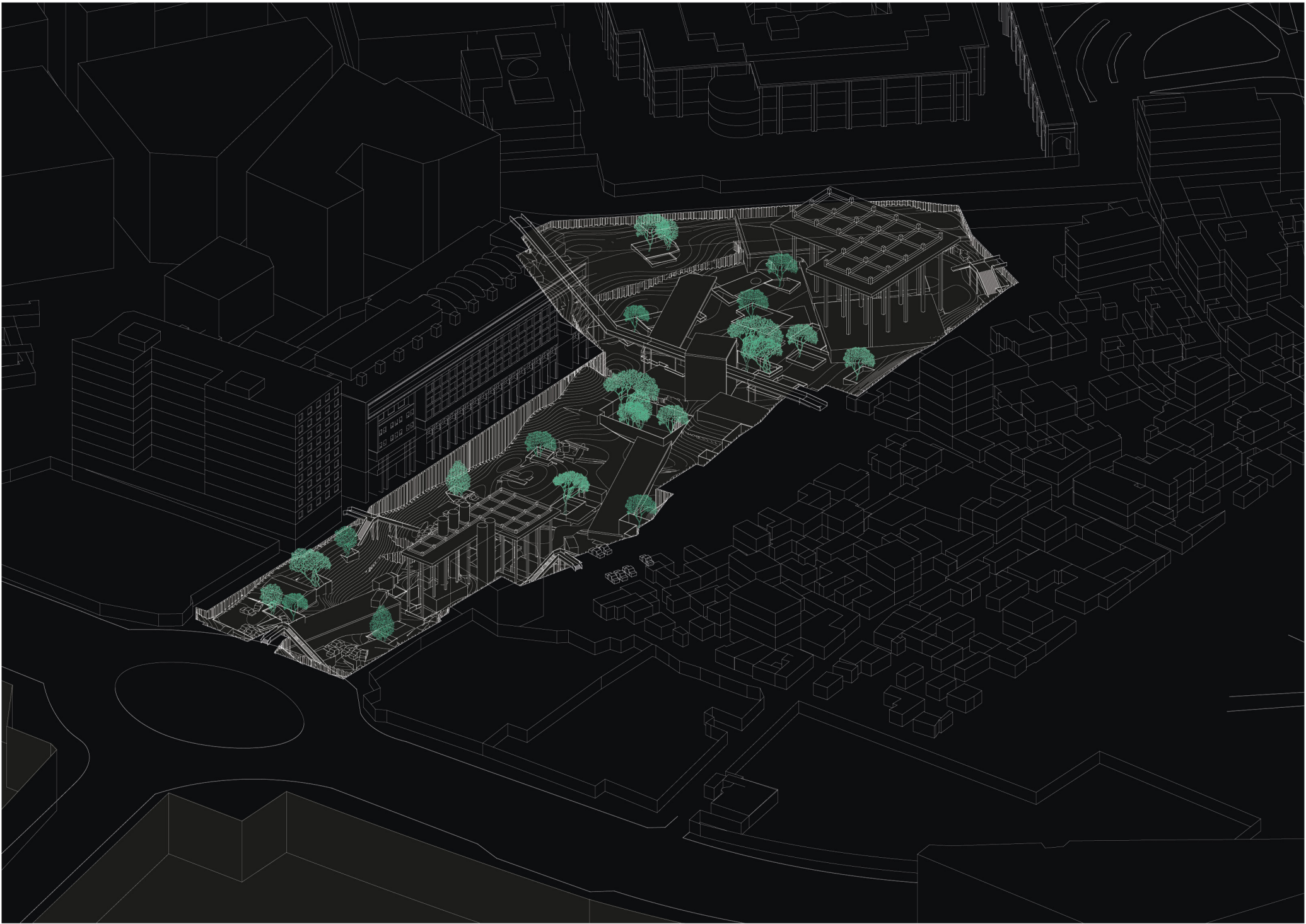
ELEMENTS

A. *(Processed) Soil*

B. *Retaining Walls*

C. *Rectangular Blocks*

D. *Sloped Square*

E. *Walkways*

F. *Brick Walls*

G. *Tunnels*

H. *Silos*

I. *Sheds*

J. *Canopy*

K. *Vegetation and Wildlife*

L. *Machinery*

Element A.
(Processed) Soil

Soil, being the most numerous element in the landscape, needs to be processed before it can be put to actual use. This scheme shows the treatment of raw soil found on site through different procedures into different products, that each find their use in the landscape. Processed soil might be used as rammed earth to create temporary pathways through the landscape, or rammed sculptings of former palimpsest existences such as a once parked car that now becomes a bench. Processed soil is also featured in the foundation work of the other elements.
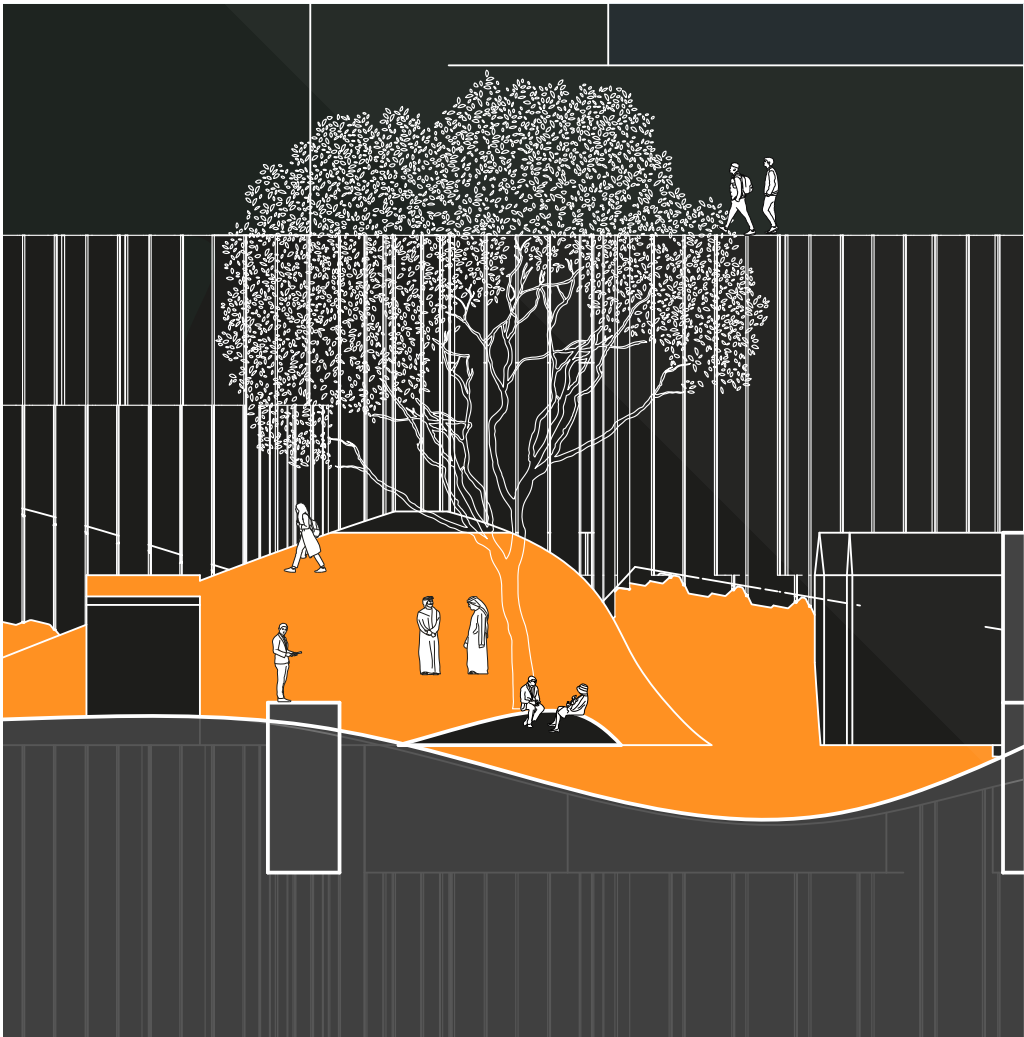
Types of Processed Soil

Rammed Earth
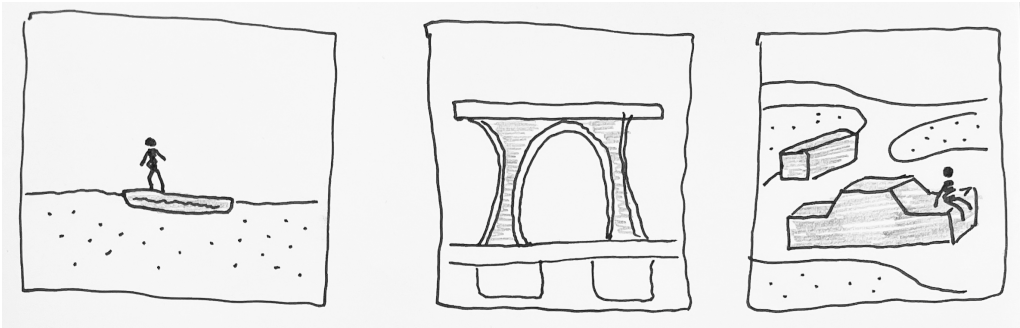
Paths *Construction Material* *Sculptings*

Soily Concrete
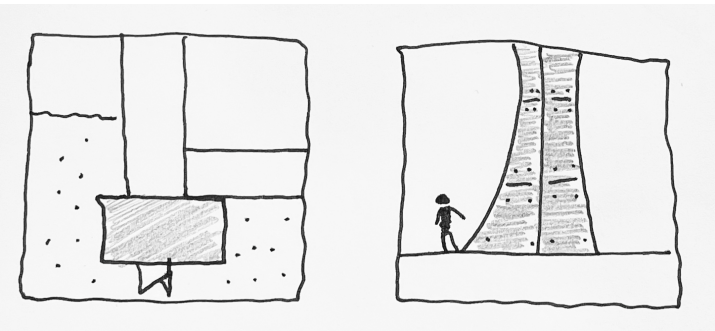
Foundation Work *Cladding Material*

Sub Soil
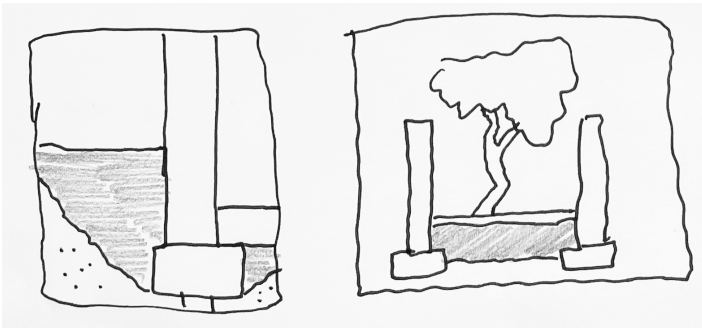
Top Soil

Permeable Soil Layer *Permeable Soil Layer* *Nourishing Soil Layer*
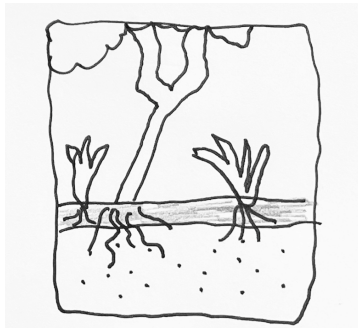
Element B.
Retaining Walls

Steel sheet piling is driven into the ground
to create and outline the 'site'. These rows of
sheet piles function as retaining walls, as they
generate the possibility to excavate it, whilst
they also become the borders of different
accessibility levels within the landscape.

Material: Steel Sheet Piling
Procedures: Dig, Displace, Delineate, Assemble
Structure: Interlocking Piles
Dimensions: Up to 30 meters depth
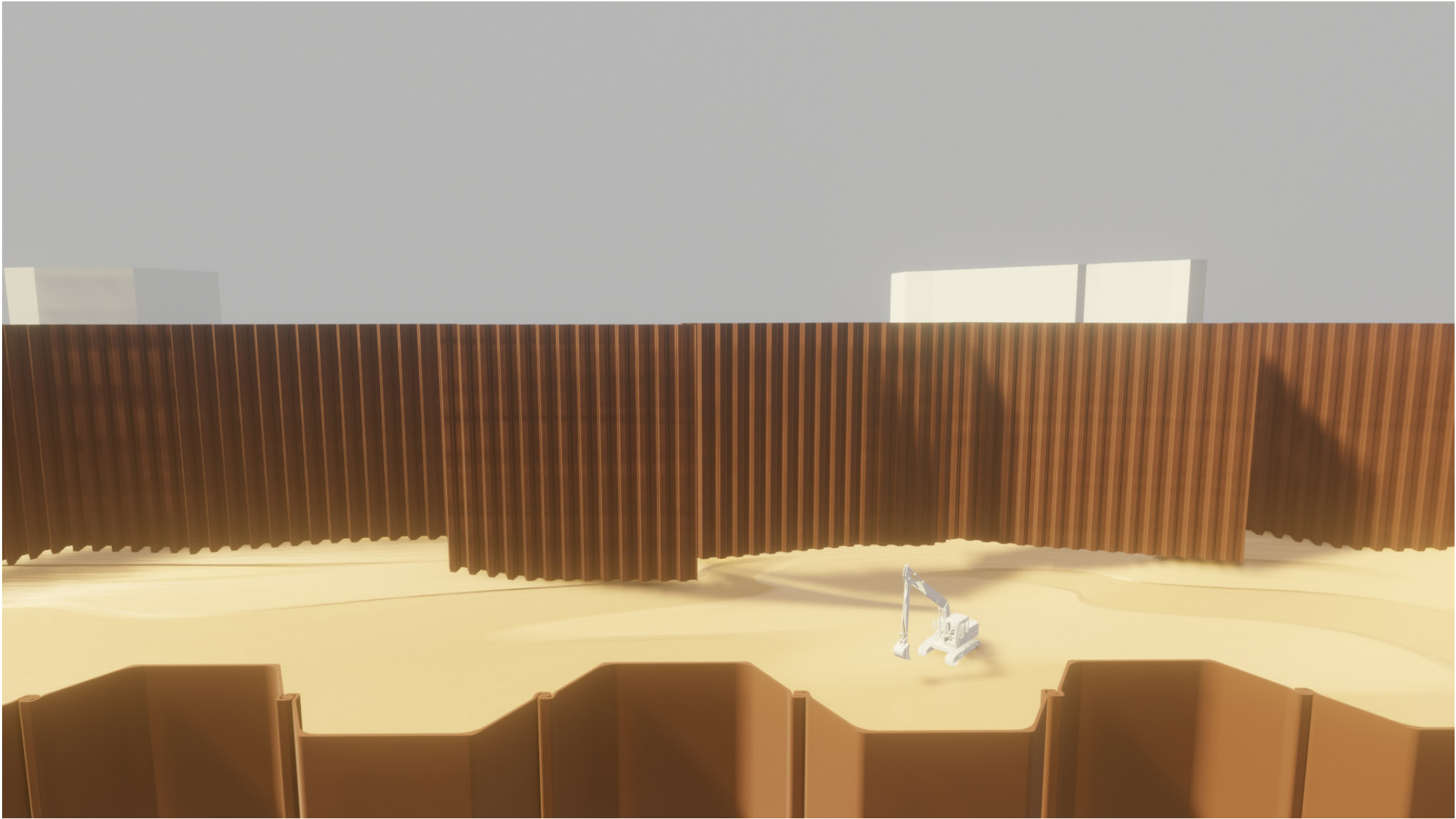
Element C.
Rectangular Blocks

These are oriented towards a certain destination. They are sturdy and made out of processed soil using the following method:

(I) ground mis dug out and a building pit appears, (II) A concrete foundation is cast using a mix of cement (from the silos on site), water and processed Soil.
(III) Prefab concrete flooring systems form the basis on which (IV) concrete shells are placed that are shaped into pieces of arches, which are held together by steel rods.
(V) In-between these shells, Processed Soil is rammed, making the columns on big monolithic structure, on which
(VI) the roof is placed.

The dimensions, directionality and internal program of each block differs. In a way, the rectangular blocks are reflections on the 'face-less' towers that are driven out of the ground in the periphery of the Holy Shrine. utilises processed soil in a three-fold manner: firstly, for foundation work, secondly for concrete shells that are prefabricated on the landscape, and thirdly for ramming earth in between those shells, which solidifies the whole structure into one monolithic element. This element, with its vaulted structure is used multiple times within in the landscape
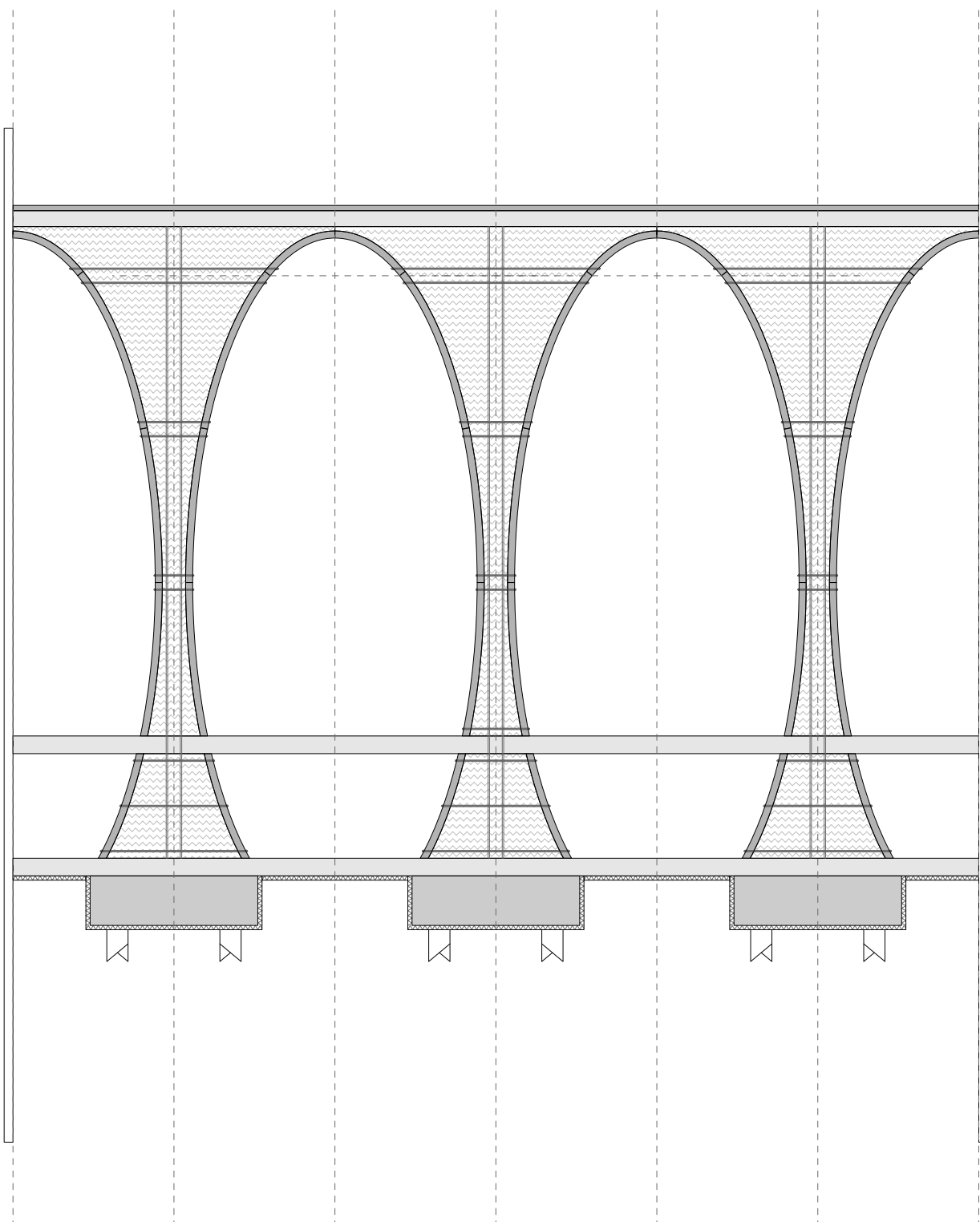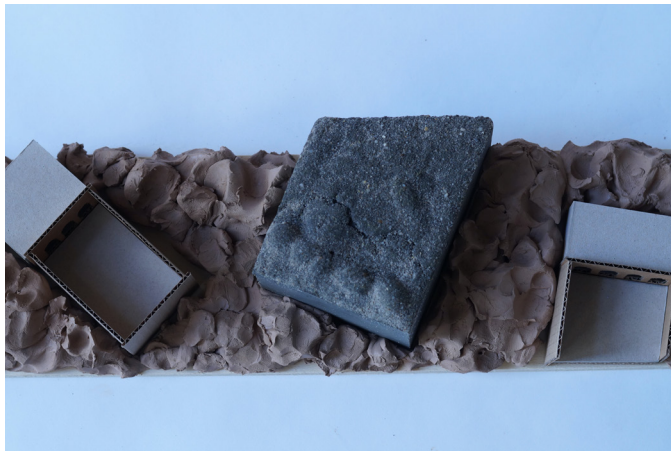
Material:	Soily Concrete
Procedure:	Pre-casting (on site)
Structure:	Interlocking Panels
Substructure:	Rammed Earth, Pre-cast concrete
Dimensions:	Grid of 9.1m
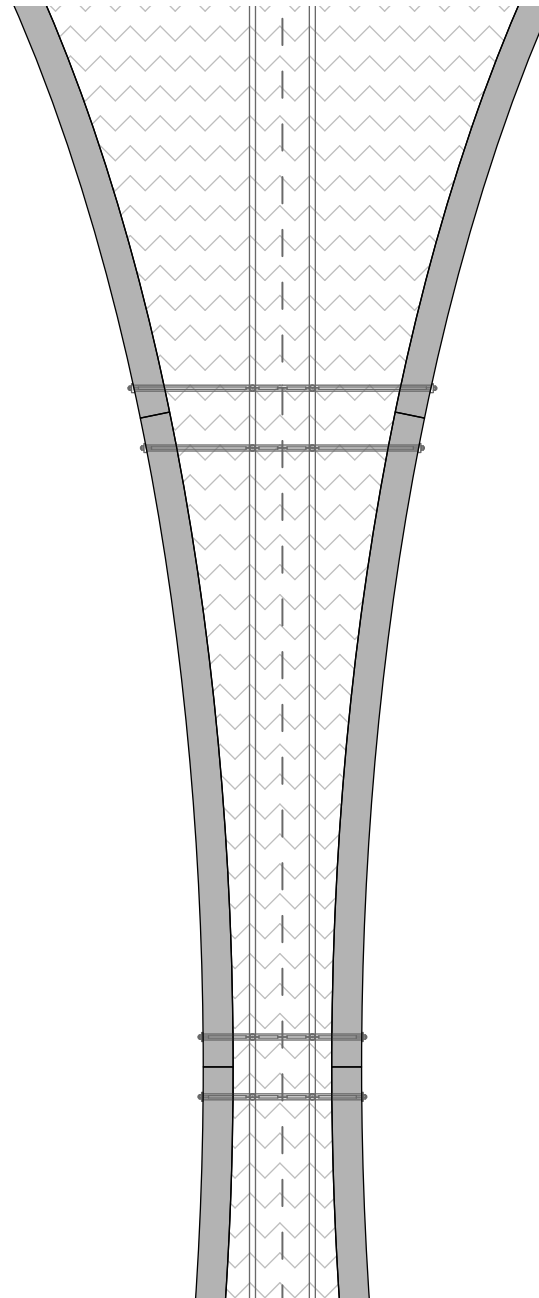
Assembly:

1. Driving in Sheet Piling
2. Digging Out Raw Soil (for later processing)
3. Casting Foundations In Situ
4. Placing Prefab Concrete Flooring (Waffle Slab System)
5. Place a Prefab Concrete Shells (Cast on Site)
6. Ramming Earth between those Shells
7. Place next layer of Prefab Concrete Shells
8. Repeat until a Prefab Concrete Roof can be placed

Element D.
Sloped Square

The sloped square sinks down in the landscape and generates easily accessible fields of movements of function. They are monolithic in their appearance, as one single material completely shrouds their structure, tiles of a locally sourced natural stone: Green Onyx. a heavy-duty spaceframe structure literally embodies the square as it becomes a surface on which the Onyx tiles are clad following its direct proportions. This space frame creates a hollow interior space that has the same proportions as the square above it. This interior space is cladded with the same Onyx tiles; however, these are cut to a width of 1mm, and placed between two sheets of glass, which allows the Onyx to actually become translucent, and allow arrays of LEDs behind this onyx sheeting to light up these interior spaces. direct sunlight comes into this sub square space via the columns of the canopy, which gladly perforate the spaceframe structure, of which the created gap is sealed off with milky glass, which allows light to shrine through.
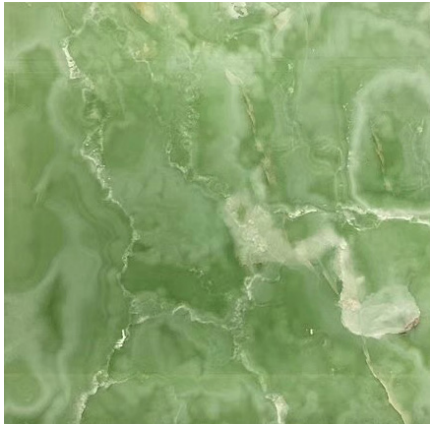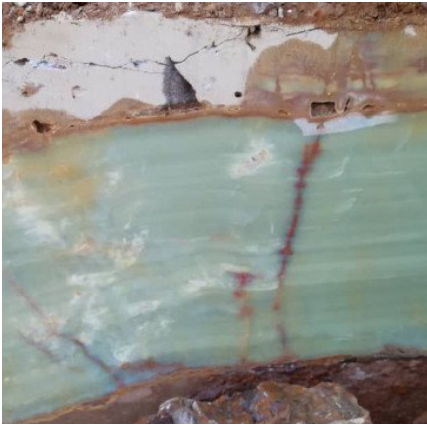
Material: Locally sourced natural stone (Green Onyx)
Procedure: Assemble on Site
Structure: Steel Space Frame
Substructure: Soily Concrete Foundation
Dimensions: Triangular Grid of 1.26m

'Sloped Square' Corner Detail B. – Scale 1:20

1	50 mm	Green Onyx Tiles (1000 x 1000 mm)
2		Water Resistant Membrane
3	200 mm	Corrugated Steel Panels w/ Insulation
4		Vapour Resistant Barrier
5	70 mm	U-Profile Substructure
6	1800 mm	NS Space Truss (1800 x 1260 mm Double Layer Grid)
7	640 mm	Mechanical Ventilation Air Ducts
8		LED Strips inside Aluminium U-Profile
9	6 mm	Glass (4-Way Spider Fitting)
10	1 mm	Green Onyx Sheet (4-Way Spider Fitting)
11	6 mm	Glass (4-Way Spider Fitting)

1	50 mm	Green Onyx Tiles (1000 x 1000 mm)
2		Water Resistant Membrane
3	200 mm	Corrugated Steel Panels w/ Insulation
4		Vapour Resistant Barrier
5	70 mm	U-Profile Substructure
6	1800 mm	NS Space Truss (1800 x 1260 mm Double Layer Grid)
7	640 mm	Mechanical Ventilation Air Ducts
8		LED Strips inside Aluminium U-Profile
9	6 mm	Glass (4-Way Spider Fitting)
10	1 mm	Green Onyx Sheet (4-Way Spider Fitting)
11	6 mm	Glass (4-Way Spider Fitting)

'Sloped Square' Corner Detail A. – Scale 1:20

Element E.
Walkway

They rise over the landscape and deal with fast and vast flows of people, as they create shortcuts over the site. The Walkway's modularity allows it to be dimensioned according to the number of bodies passing over it. The Walkway creates a new vantage point for perceiving the landscape as one actually looks down from it onto the landscape instead of being in the middle of it. This effect is accelerated due to the walkway's light structure: it can be hung or placed upon slender beams, and is finished off with galvanised grated panels, that allow light to pass right through it.
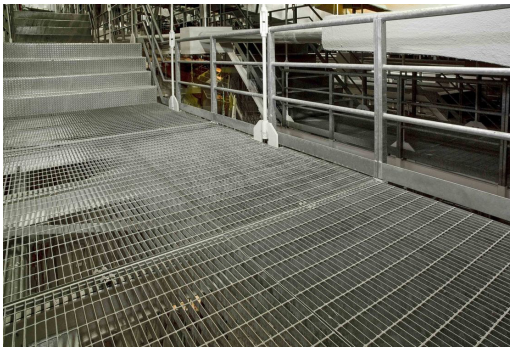
Material: Galvanised Steel Grating Panels
Procedure: Assemble on Site
Structure: Steel Profile Beams
Substructure: Soily Concrete Foundation, Suspended Cables
Dimensions: Modular Grid of 1.2m

Walkway Detail, 2.4m, Supported – Scale 1:20
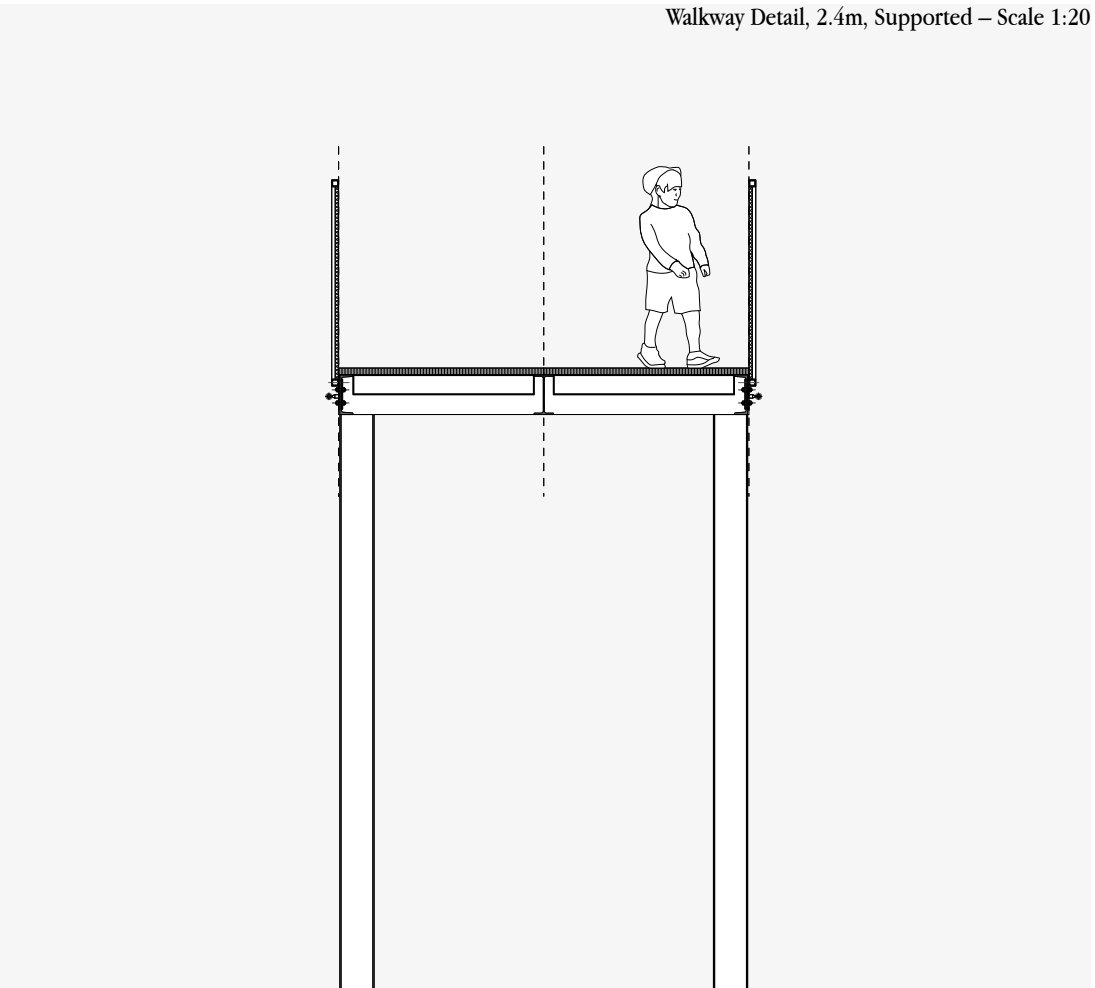
Walkway Detail, 4.8m, Suspended – Scale 1:20
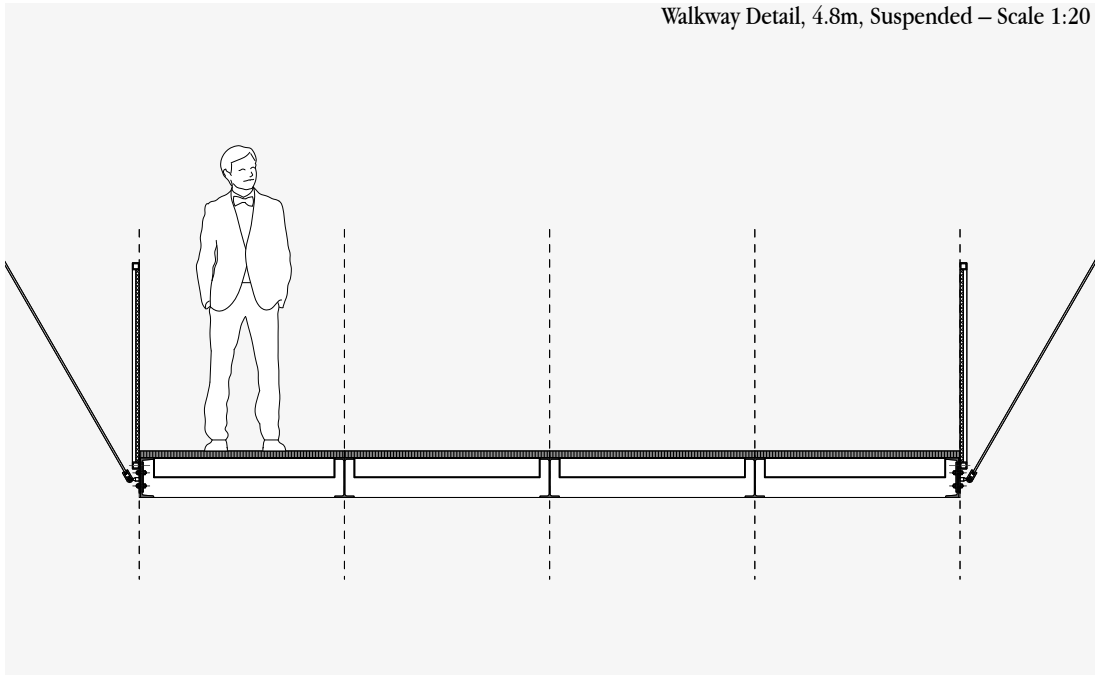
Walkway Detail, Suspended – Scale 1:20
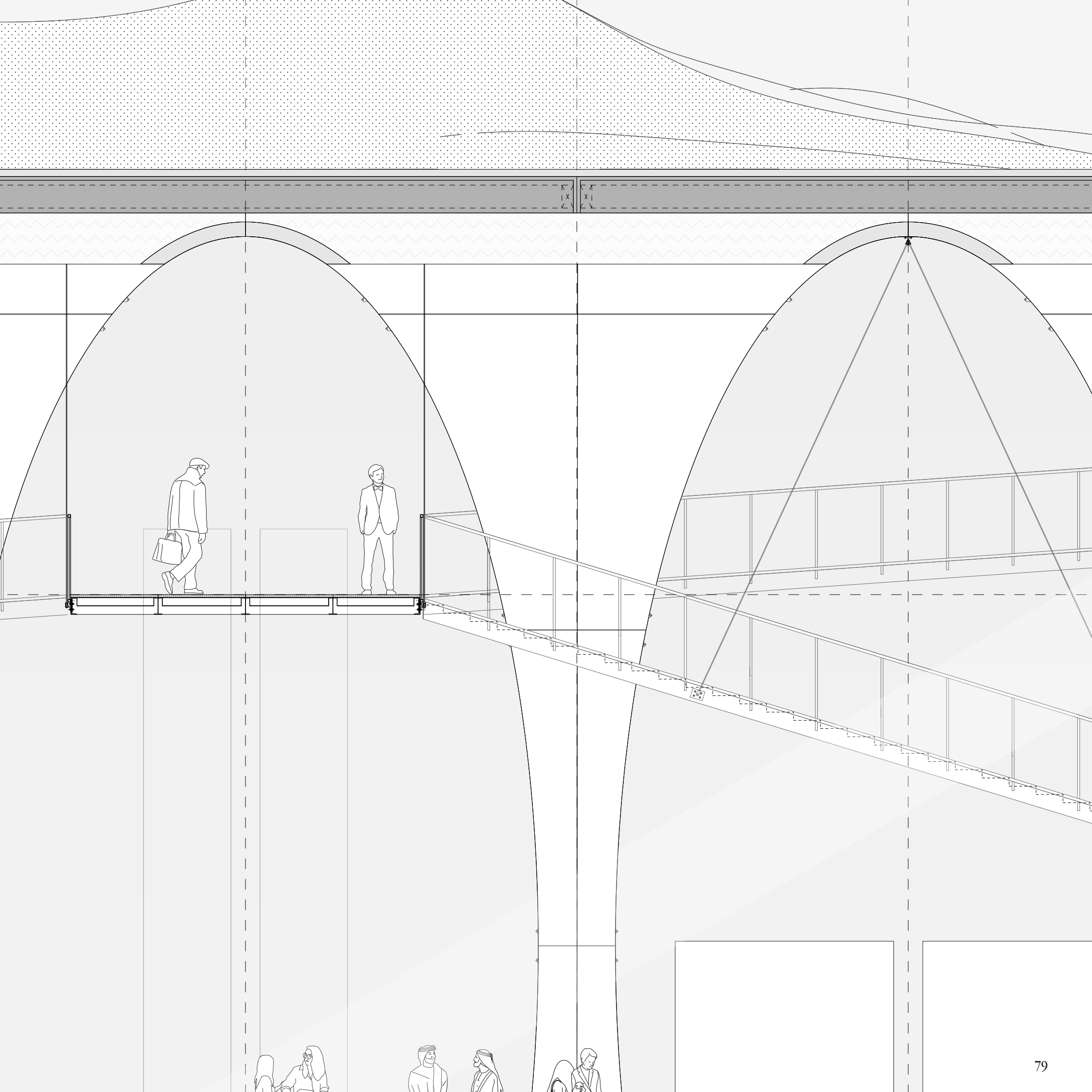
Element F.
Brick Wall

Each Brick Wall traces an outline of one of the former gardens that is found in the Palimpsest. Inside the space created by a Brick Wall, Processed Soil is scattered, and young Trees and Plants are planted. Due to the varying heights of the Landscape, each Brick wall might be a just a small row of protruding bricks, or actually a retaining wall that transforms the space it creates into a garden pit, like the one shown on this drawing.
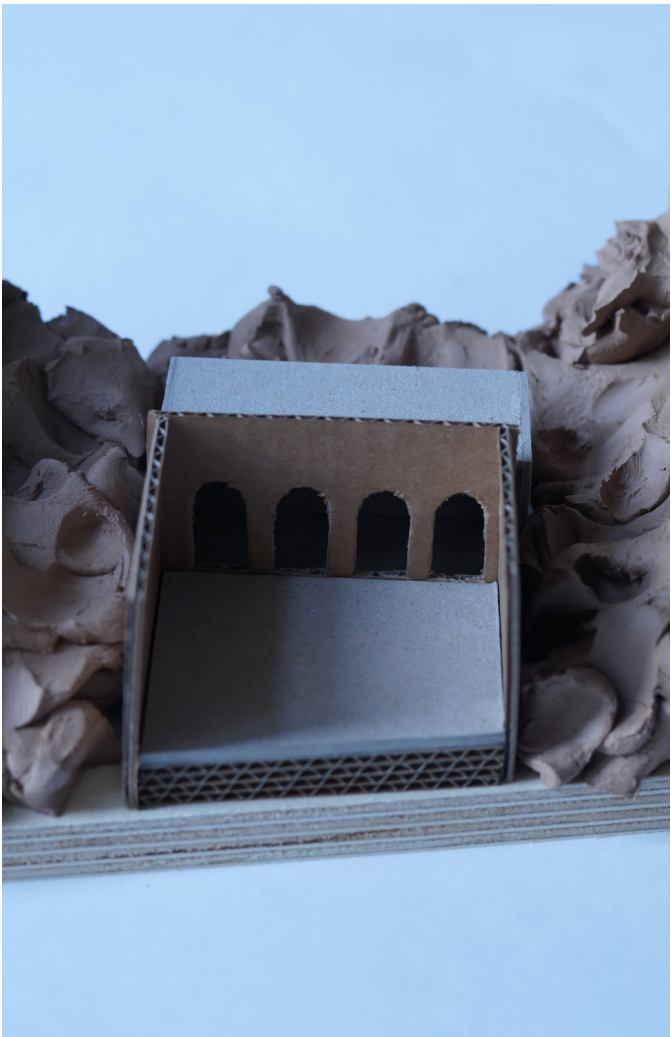
Material:	Brick
Procedure:	Digging, Filling, Assembling
Structure:	Rammed Earth Retaining Wall
Substructure:	Soily Concrete Foundation Work
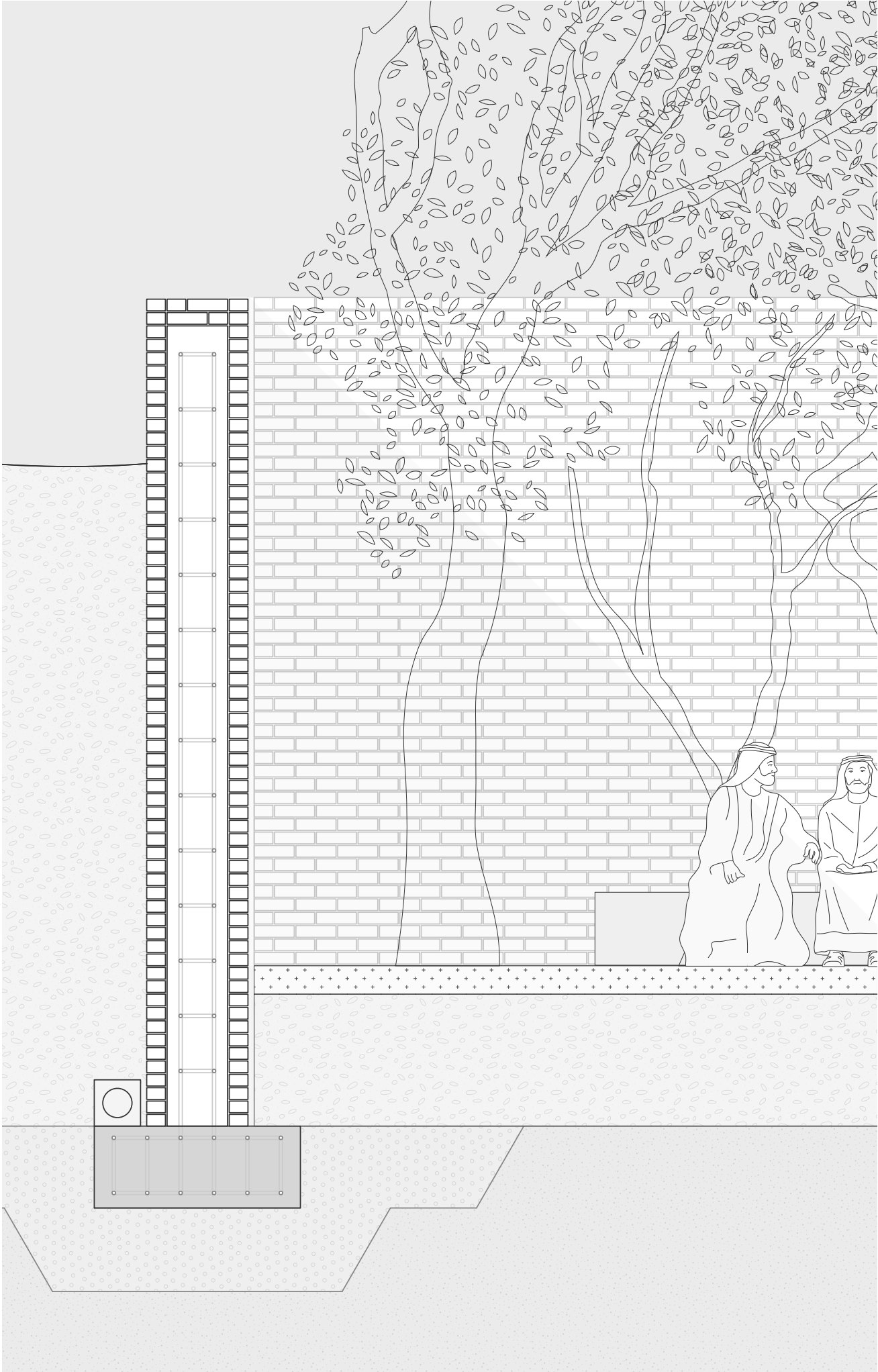
Element G.
Tunnel

A system of tunnels is hidden under the landscape. These tunnels are built with locally sourced bricks, and their strong elliptic shapes allow them to be buried deep under the Landscape. These tunnels are dimensioned according to its use, here shown is a nearly privately used tunnel for reaching your bedroom. Once, every 4 to 5 meters, the top row of bricks is replaced by a small and strong glass window. When this window is not covered by the soil of the Landscape, it lets light through, allowing the user of the tunnel to experience a visual connection with the upper laying Landscape.

Material:	Brick
Procedure:	Digging, Filling, Assembling
Structure:	Self-carrying brick structure
Substructure:	Soily Concrete Foundation Work
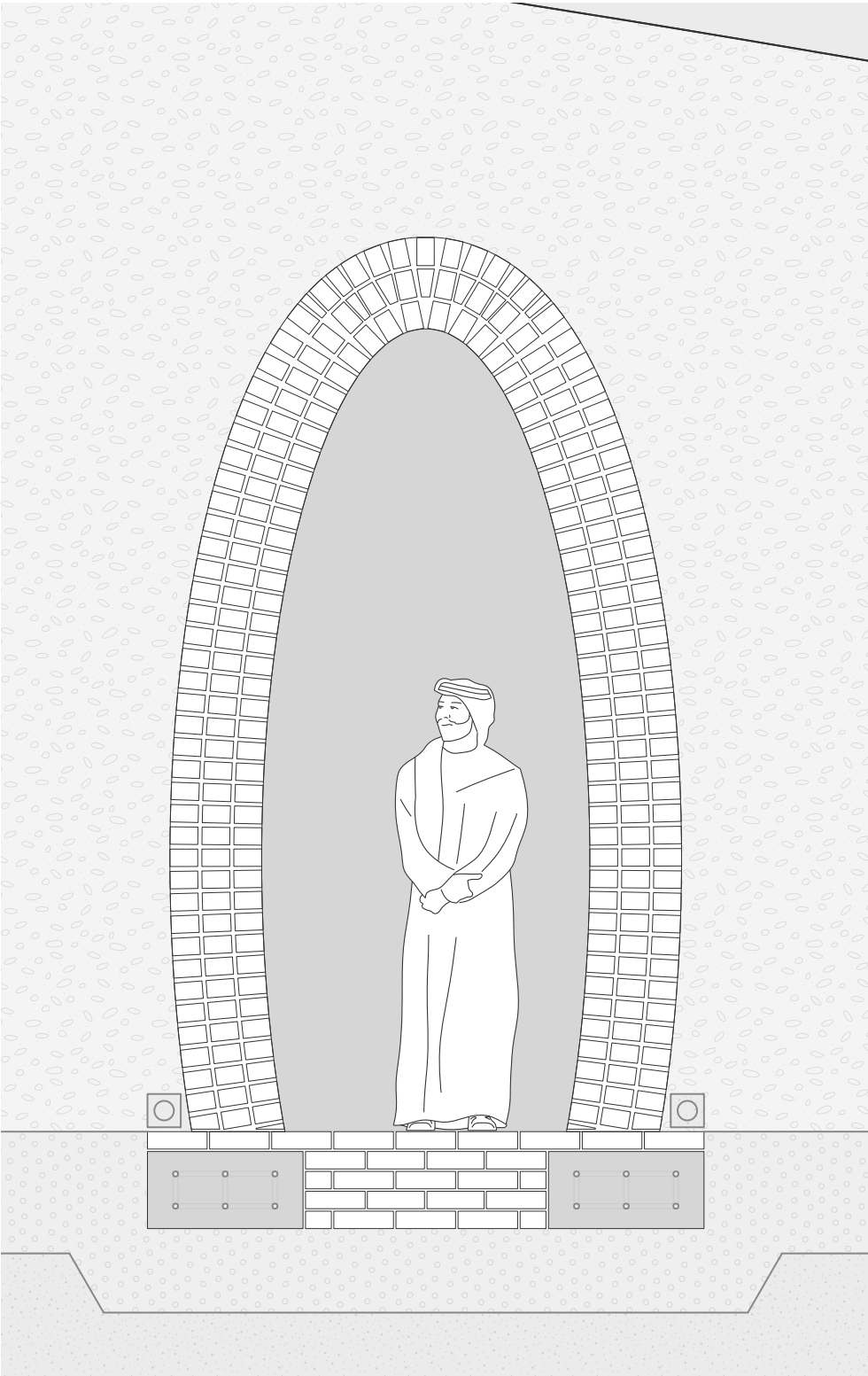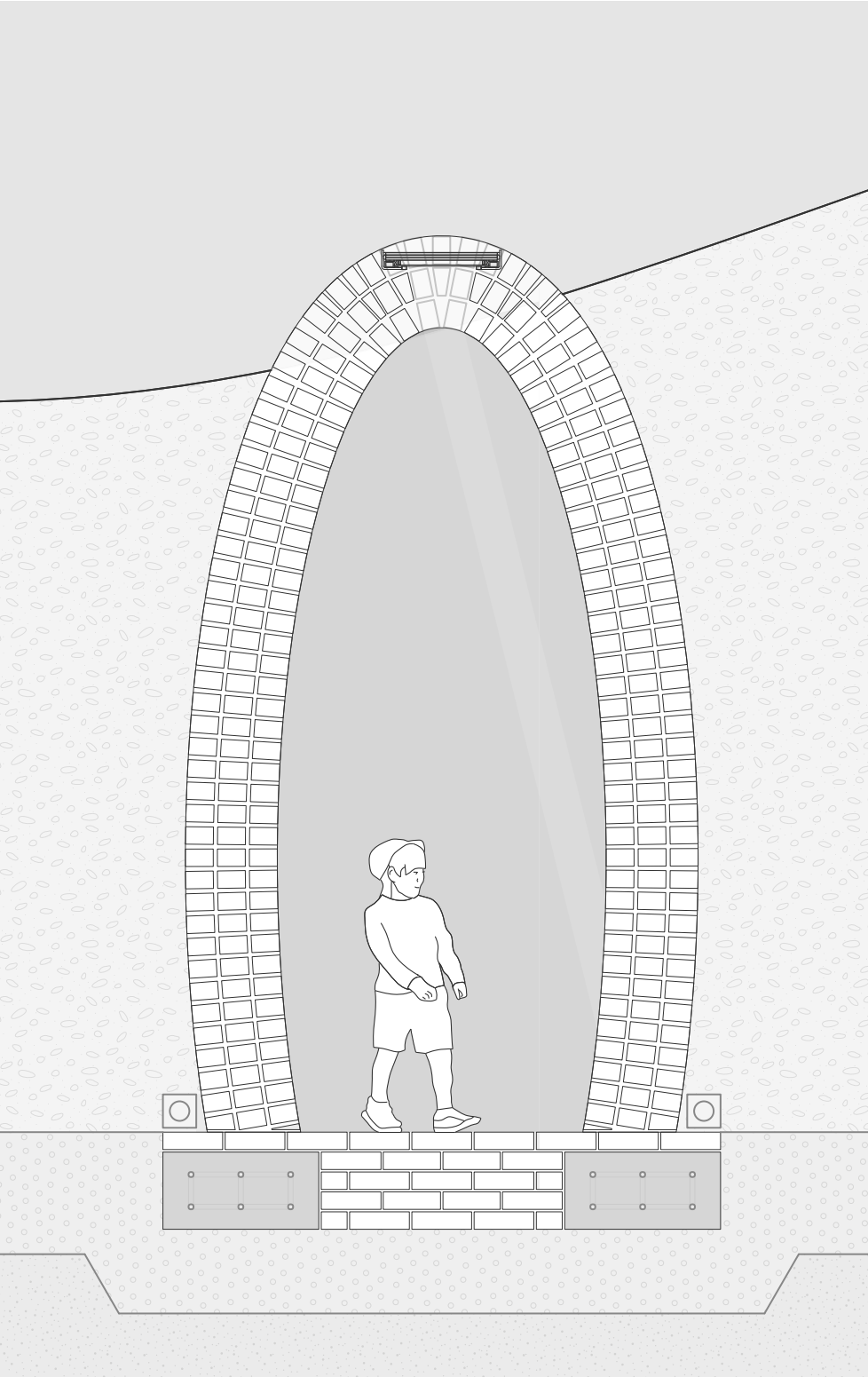
Element H.
Silos

Twenty-six-and-a-half meter high Silos provide the necessary conditions for the material balance that is sought within the Landscape, as they are used for the storage of construction materials such as cement and pure sand, which allows these raw materials to be processed on-site through the procedures which are carried out in plain sight. Unused silos are linked to the underground airduct system to act as solar chimneys.

'Silo' acts as solar chimney and wind catcher

Air duct connected to "Silo" wind catcher

Natural throughflow of air

Passive Cooling Underground
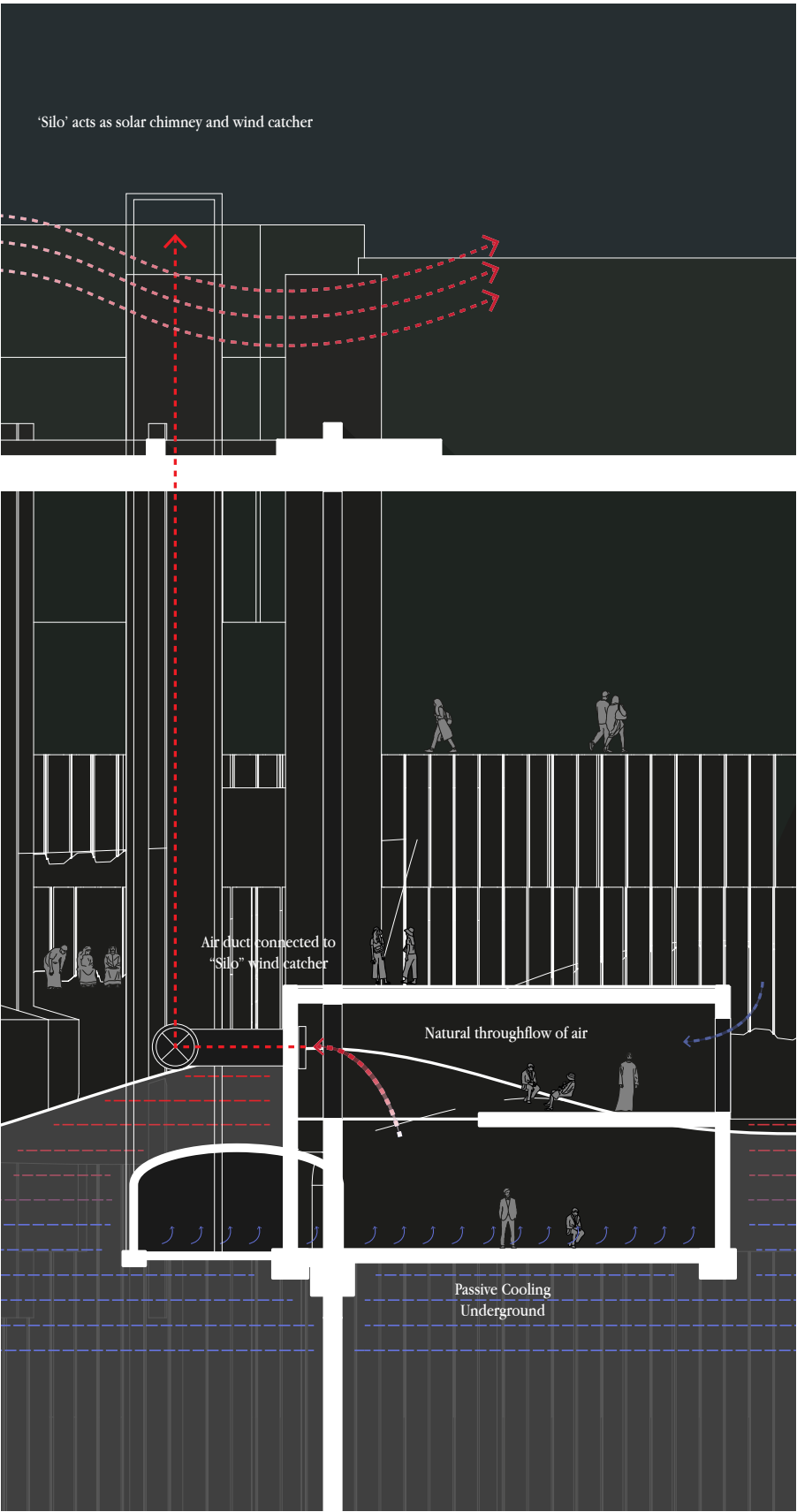
Material: Bolted Steel Sheets
Procedure: Assemble, Store
Structure: Self-carrying steel structure
Dimensions: 26.5m high, 2.5m diameter
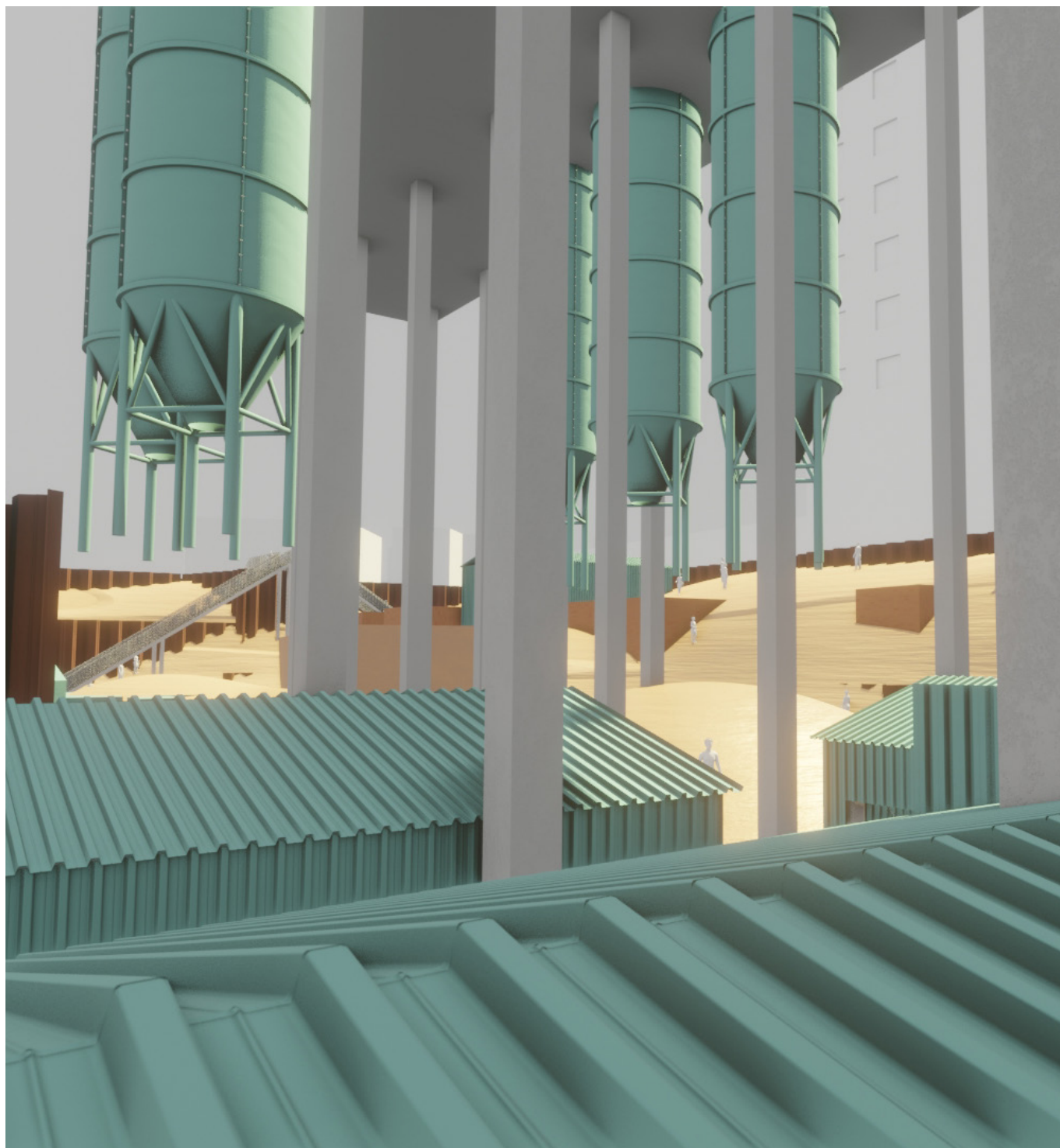
Element I.
Sheds

Simple in their construction and assembly methods, these basic sheds are placed where former construction workers once were housed on the site, to again facilitate the workers on the Landscape. After construction is finished, these sheds shall become part of the Gift Shop Constellation, as they are transformed into small outlets.

Sattelite image of the characteristic construction sheds and their blue roofs that are found throughout Mashhad (Apple Maps, 2021)

Material: Corrugated Steel Sheet Panels
Procedures: Assemble, Disassemble
Structure: Steel Beams
Substructure: Steel Cable Bracing
Dimensions: Former Sheds
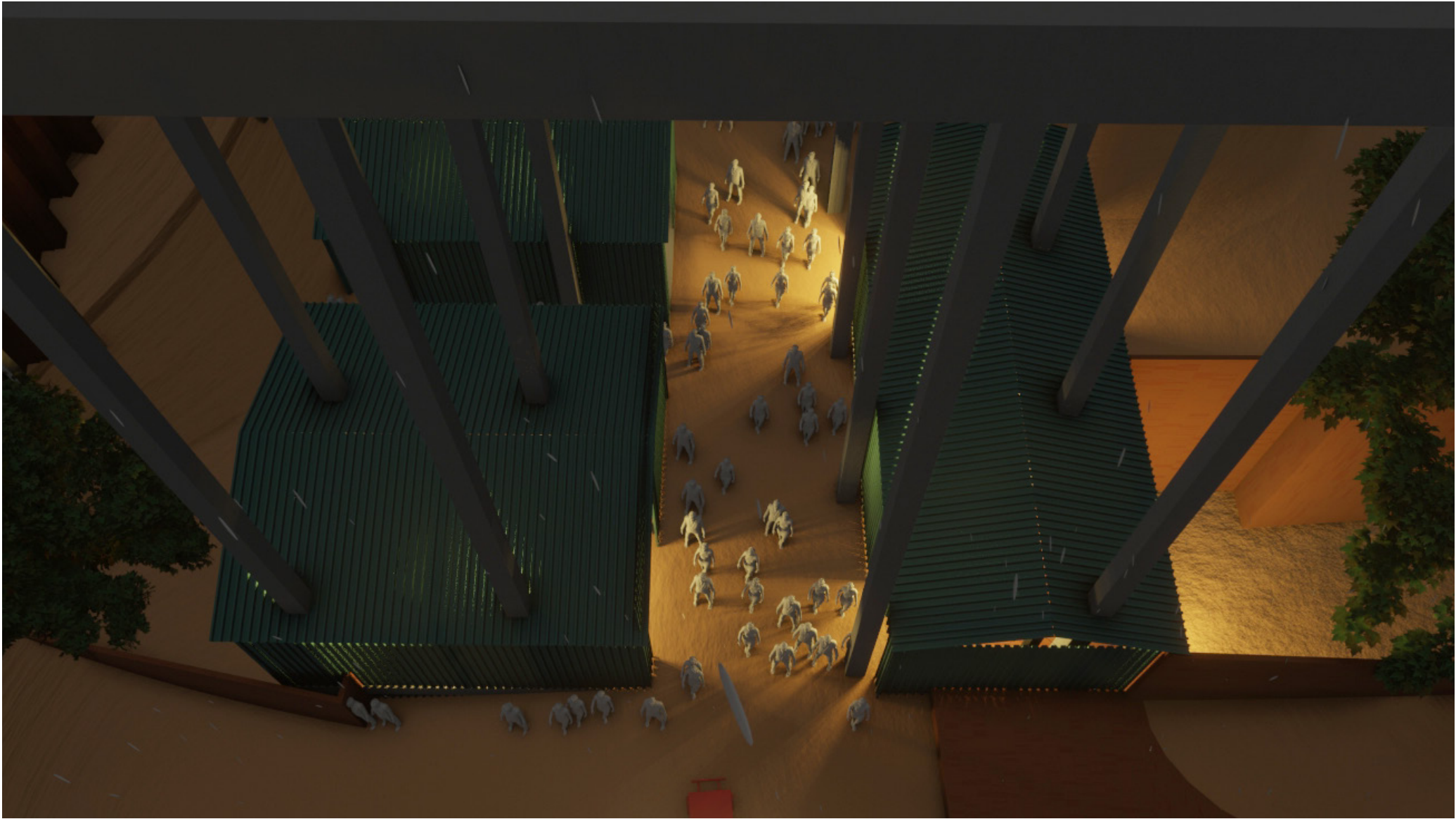
Element J.
Canopy

Two large canopies float 14 m's over the Landscape, relative to street level. They pose as wayfinding, placemaking, and landmarking elements within the Landscape that create pleasant spaces underneath them, protected from weather conditions. These two concrete Canopies are actually recast versions of column and foundation work that once was started on the Landscape, and as their placement is identical to their previous iterations (albeit at a different height) one funnily enough walks under the past history of the site.
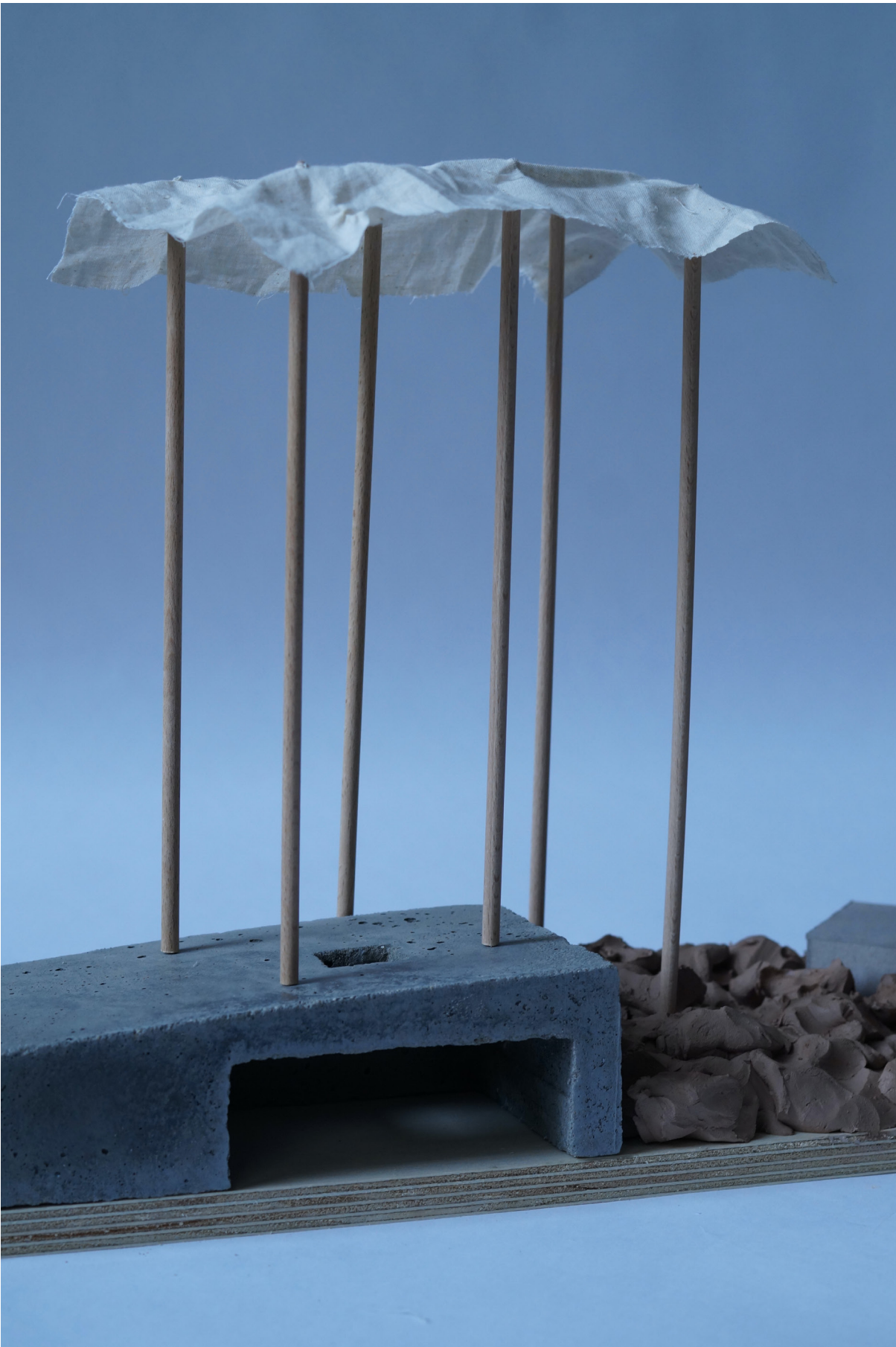
Material: Soily Concrete
Procedures: Dig, Drive, Flatten, Assemble, Store
Structure: Soily Concrete Columns
Substructure: Processed Soil Foundation
Dimensions: Grid of 8.2m
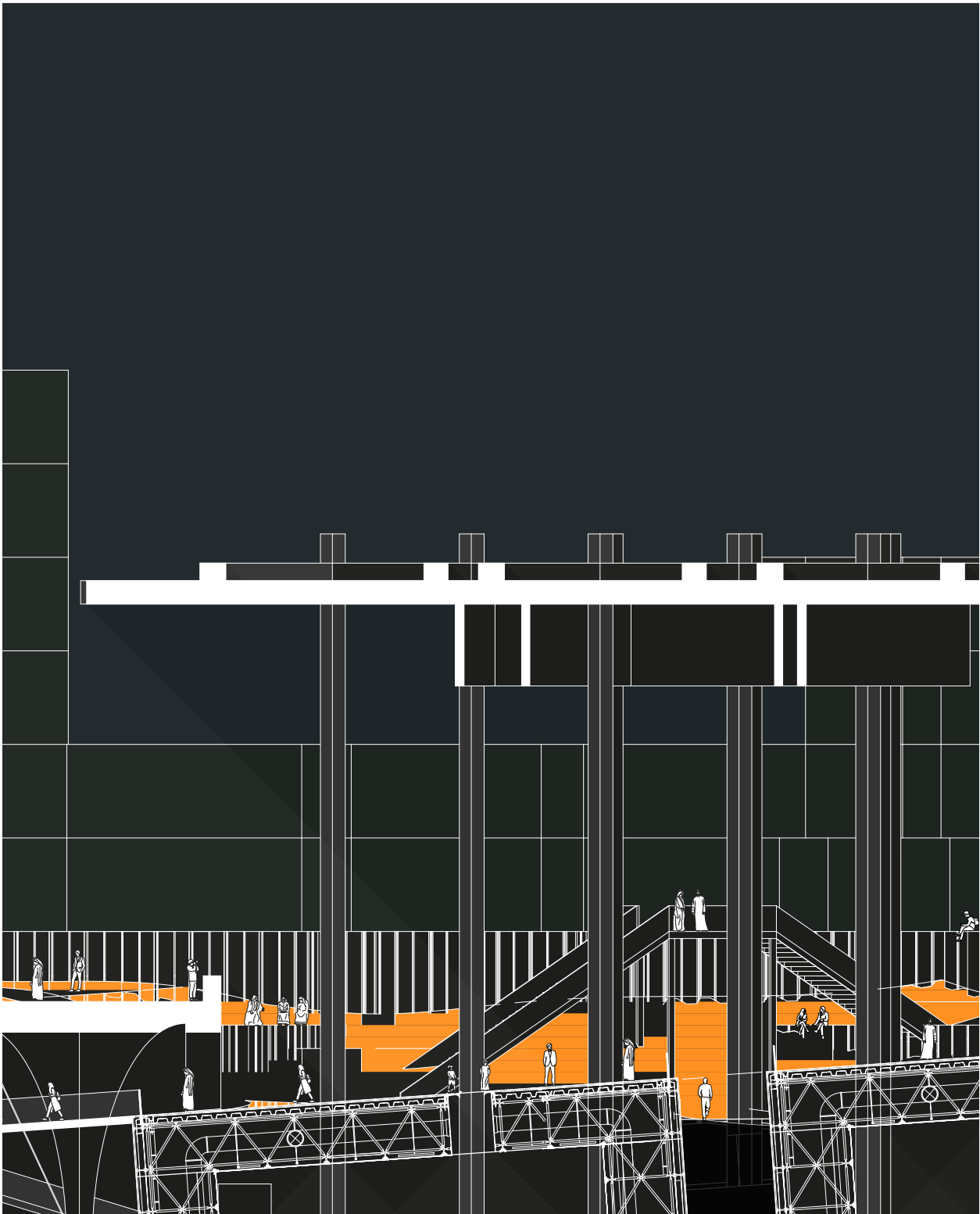
Element K.
Vegetation and Wildlife

Vegetation within the Landscape is initially confined to the garden pits. Where with careful consideration a selection of plants and trees is planted, that resembles the plants that were found in the Palimpsest. If, and when, nature takes over, and the Landscape is gradually overgrown; no action is undertaken.
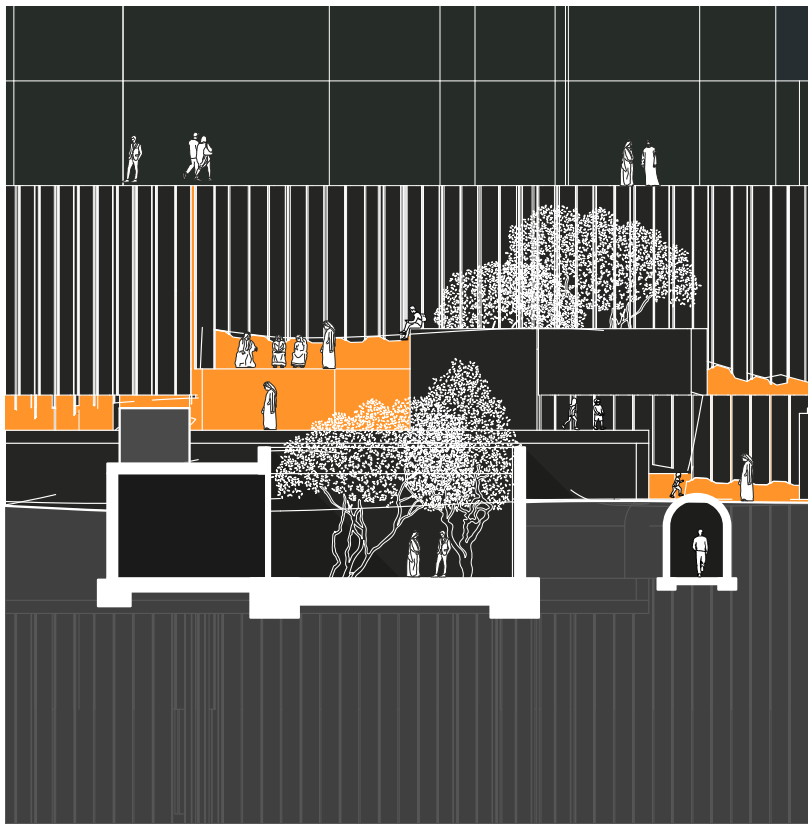
Material:	Seeds and Saplings
Procedures:	Dig, Fill, Store, Plant
Structure:	Top Soil
Substructure:	Sub Soil
Dimensions:	Between 0.5m and 2m in height per year.

Element L.
Machinery

Most procedures are carried out by a workforce that consists of people from Mashhad, who transform the landscape through their employed in a community project. However, the devious procedures that deal with raw earth are carried out by a secondary workforce that consists of pre-programmed machines. These machines move slow and carefully, in a different speed as humans would do. Therefore, they read as if they are from another cosmic order, as they change the landscape appropriately for building pits, seasons, and events. These machines in turn, become elements themselves as they too become part of the landscape.

Machines

A. Vibrating Screen

B. Trommel Drum Screen

C. Soil Crusher

D. Crushing and Screening Plant

E. Small-Scale Soil Mixer

F. Soil Mixing Plant

CONSTELLATIONS

Landscape

A. *Subway Station*

B. *Guesthouse*

C. *Giftshop*

Constellations
Landscape

The Landscape is the overarching gesture of the project that takes over the site as we know it, as it completely covers and continually redefines it, in a state of perpetual change, which is accelerated by the aforementioned Procedures. The actual Elements that reside within the Landscape, come together to form various programmatic constellations throughout it. At first sight, these constellations seemingly clash, yet actually co-exist, as the Landscape is a public garden, construction site, material storage facility, infrastructural network, private guesthouse, functional bazar, and quiet prayer space in one.

1:1000

0m   10m   25m   50m
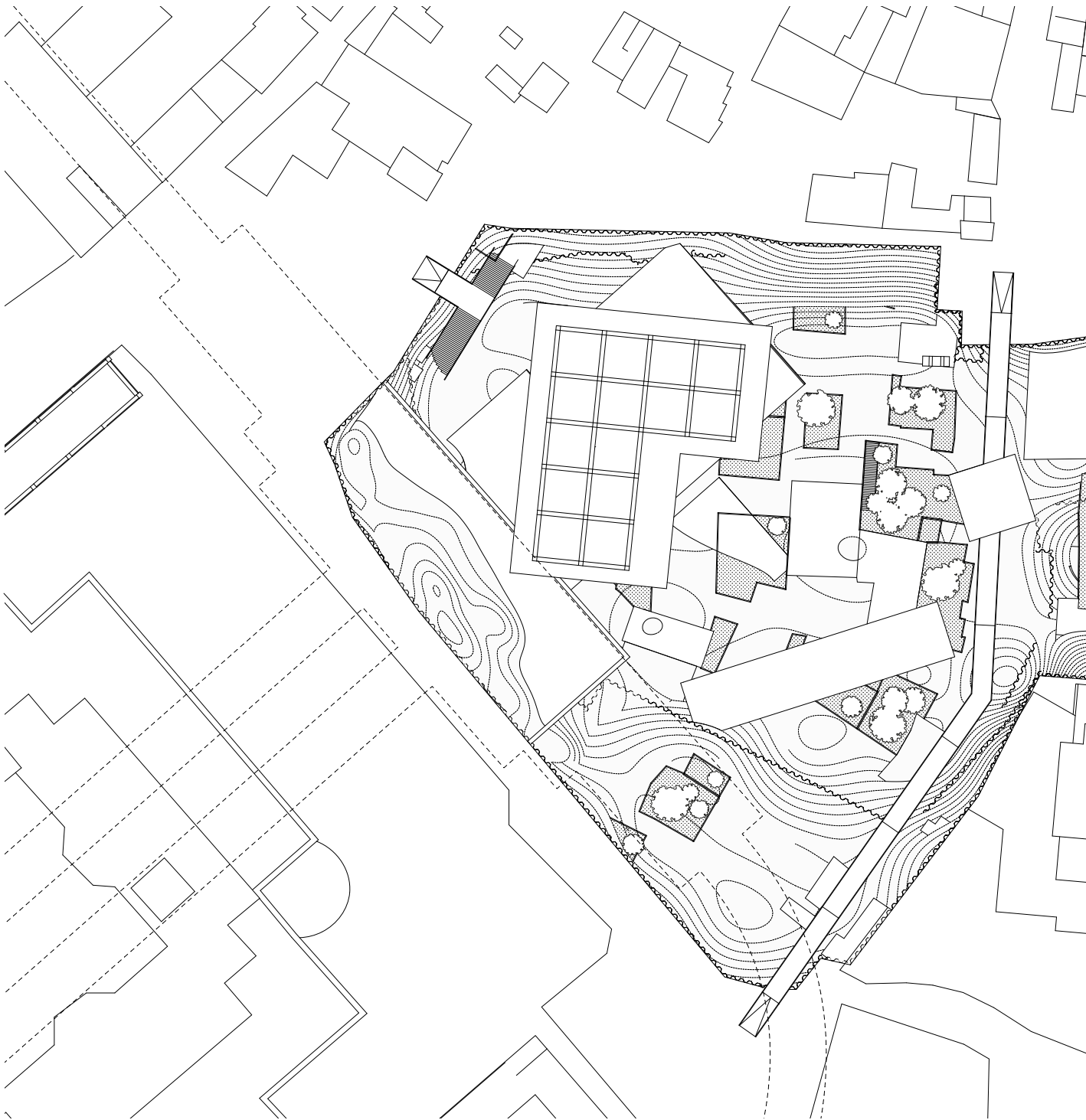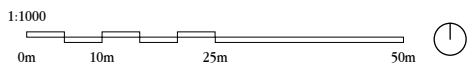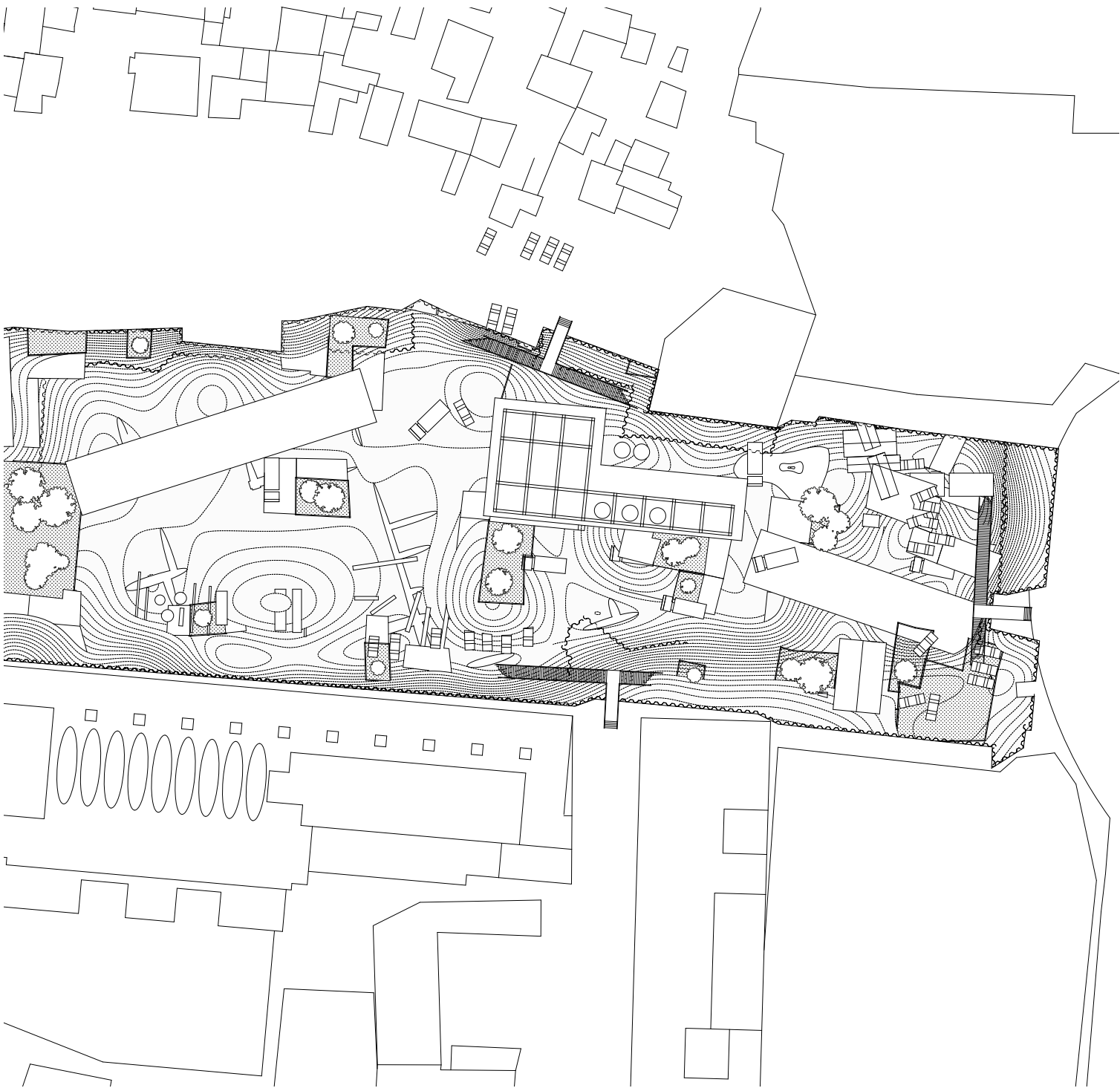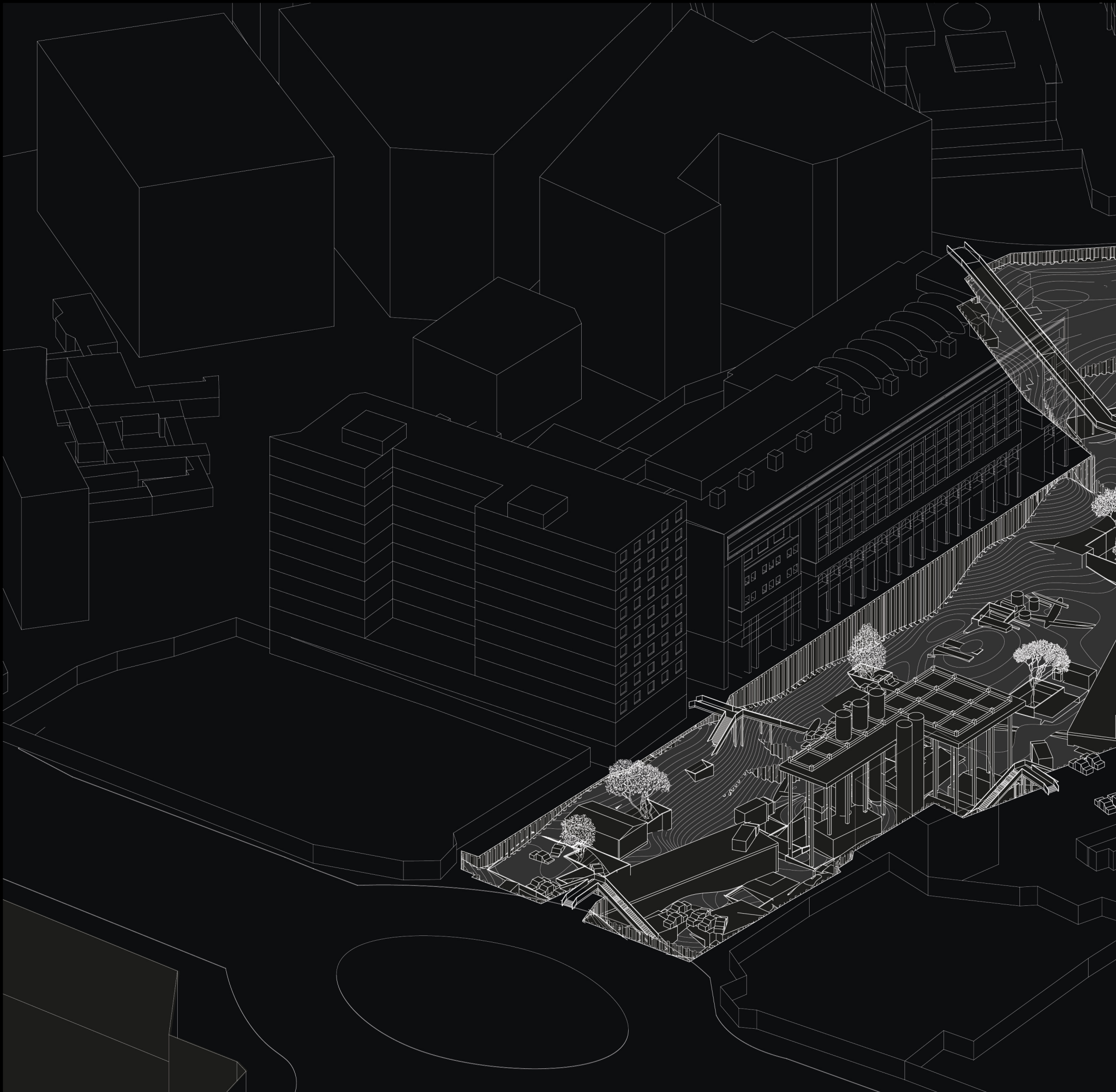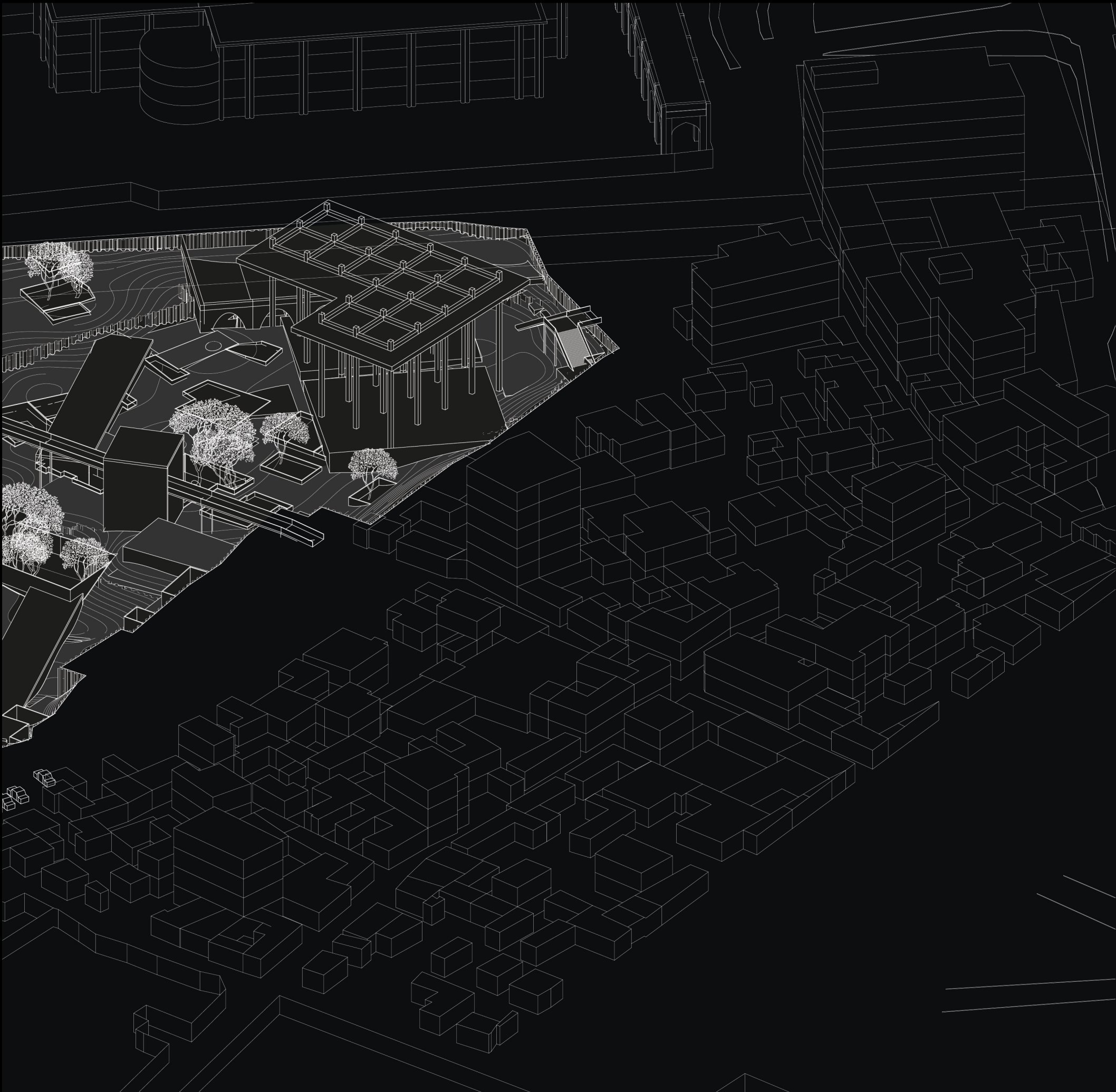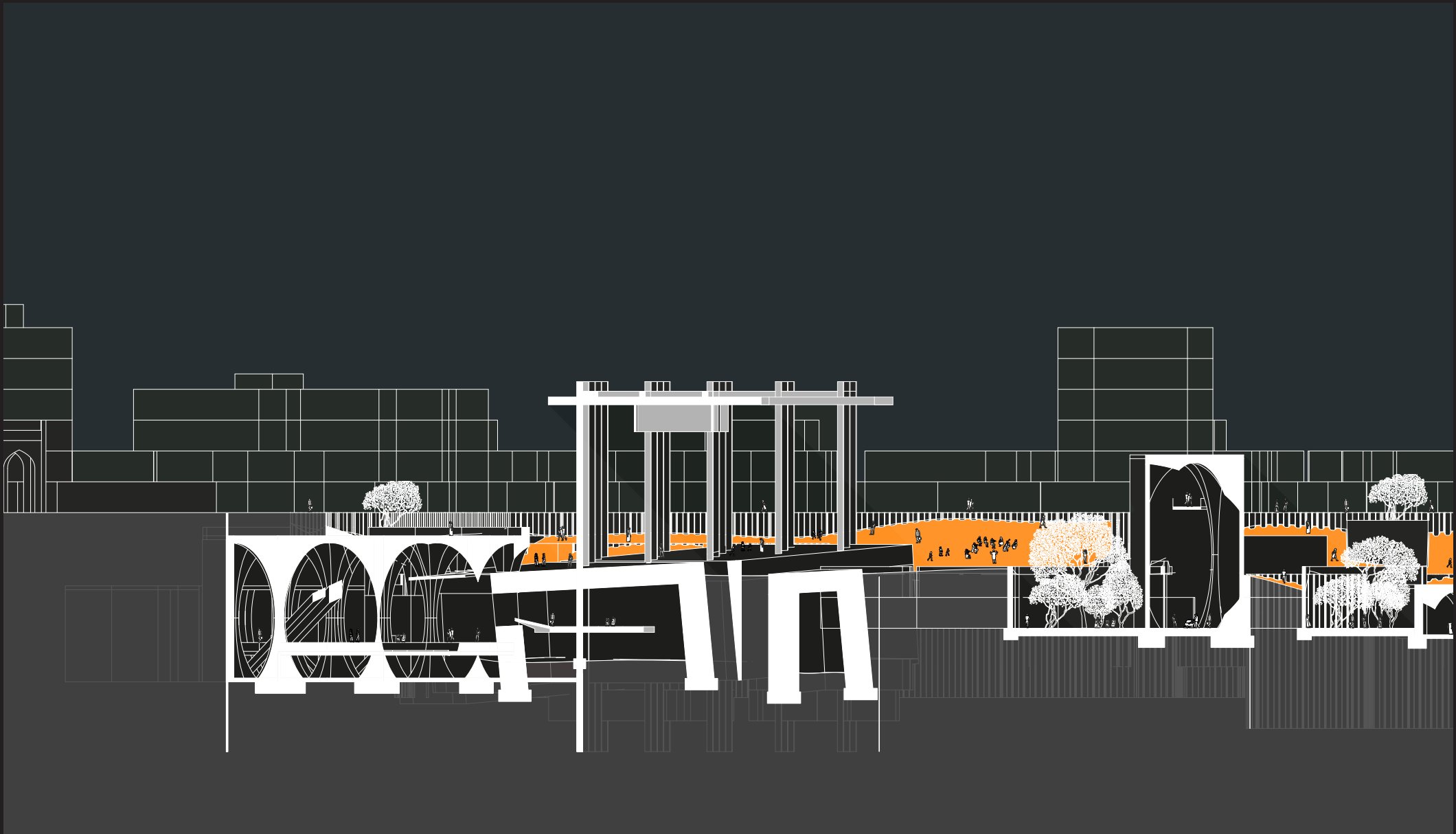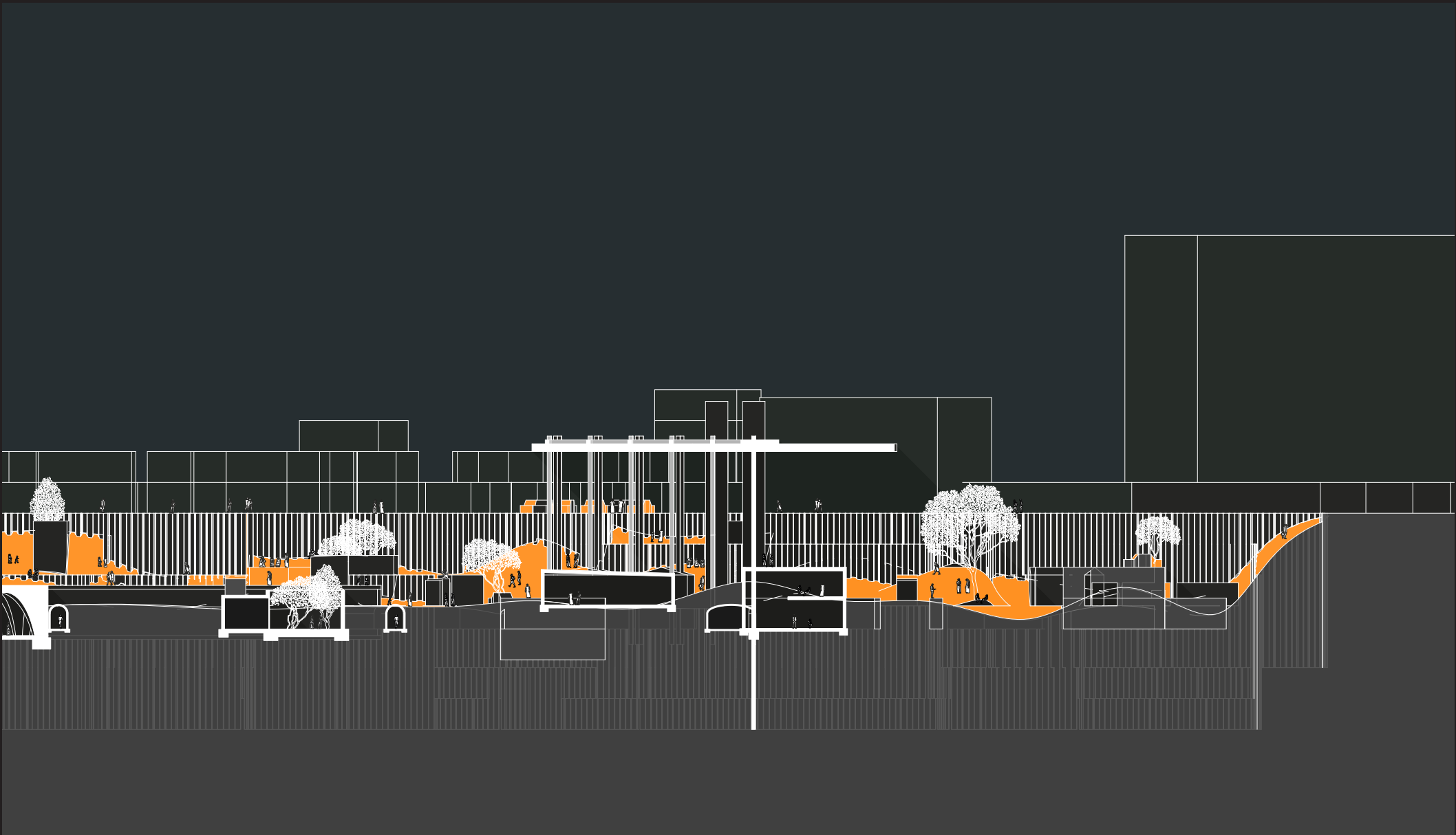
West East Section – Scale 1:1333

Constellation A.
Subway station

The subway station is the hinge of the landscape, as it anchors it into the Holy Shrine, and provides a new large and covered public square to the city.
The Subway Station's Sloped Square marks the entrance of the station, as its surface tilts right into Rectangular Building Blocks that make up the actual platforms and arched ceiling of the station.

Multiple Walkways in different sizes create a series of suspended platforms that are hanging between the arches of the subway station, that organises the flow of people.

The Tunnel towards the Shrine follows the angle of the sloped square, and glides pilgrims from the subway carriages towards the

In the interior spaces of the four aligned Sloped Squares, which are oriented towards Mecca, is found a configuration of prayer rooms. One can enter the prayer rooms via large staircase that leads people from the suspended walkway inside the Metro Station towards the entrance room. The floors of the prayer rooms are simple concrete slabs that are placed on the columns of the Canopy. The columns of the canopy cut through the space frame structure, and allows natural rays of sunlight to enter the prayer rooms.
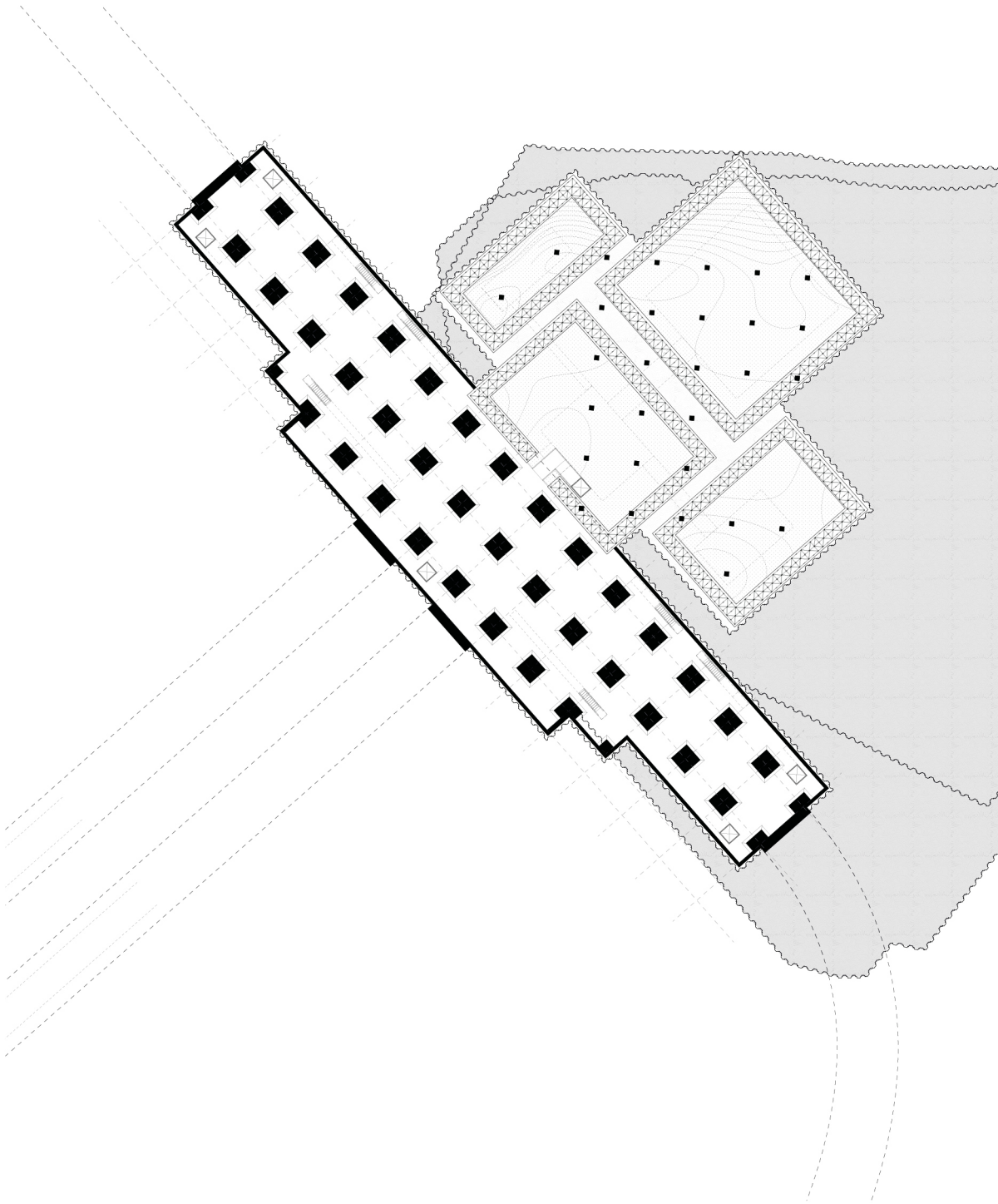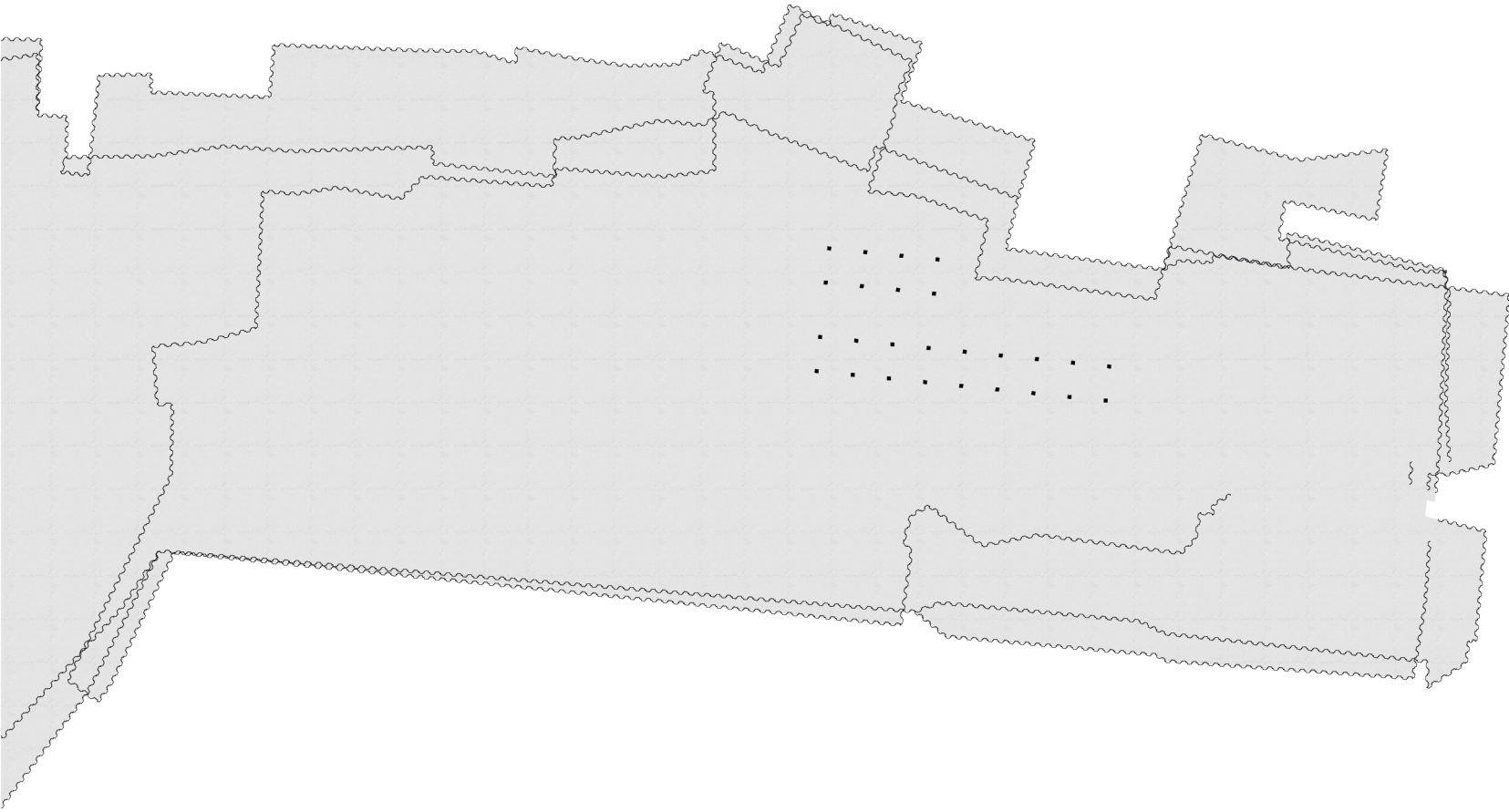
Floor Plan Subway Station
-20m

1:1000

0m   10m   25m   50m
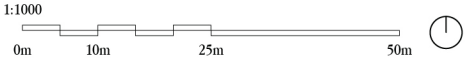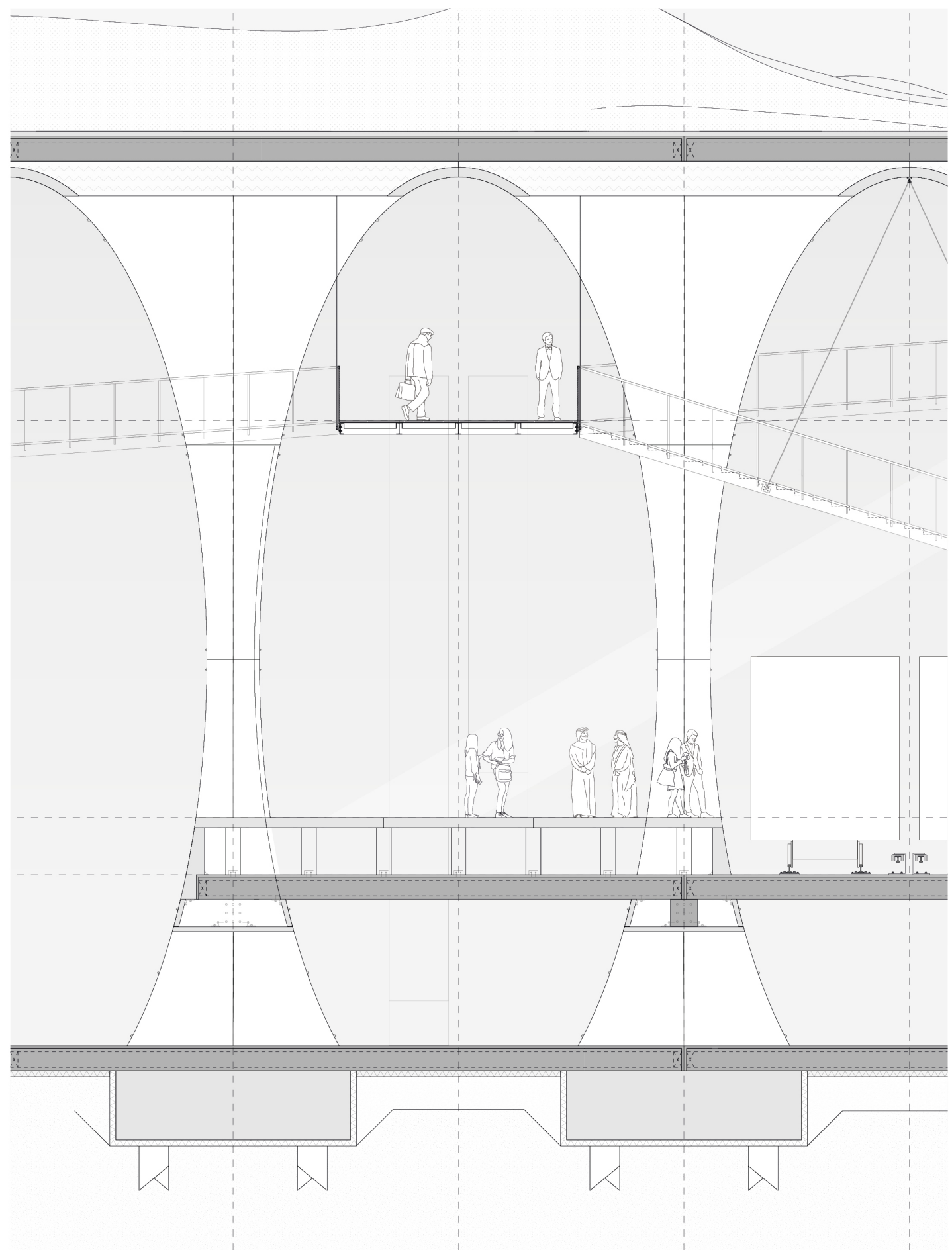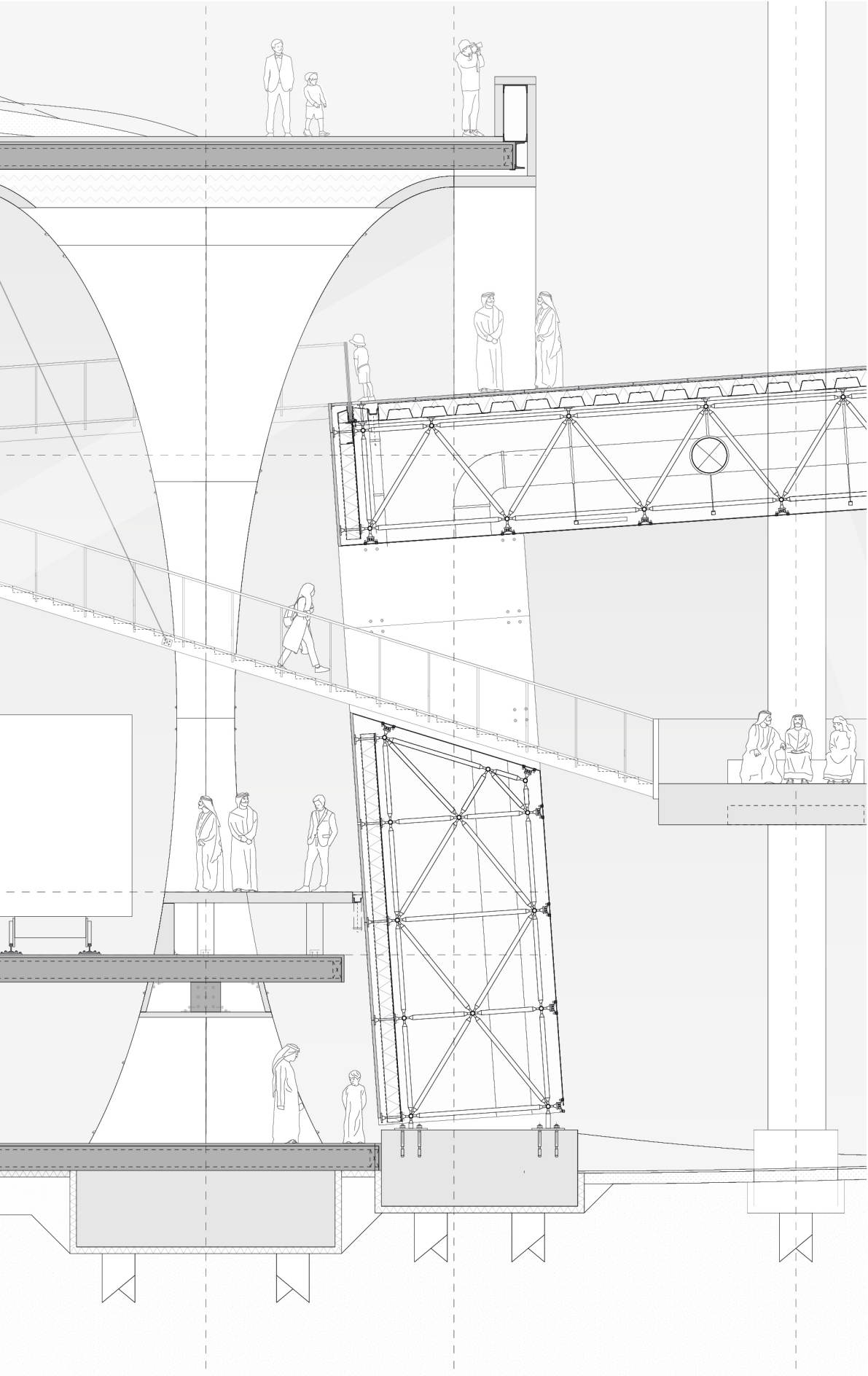
Detail Section – Scale 1:20
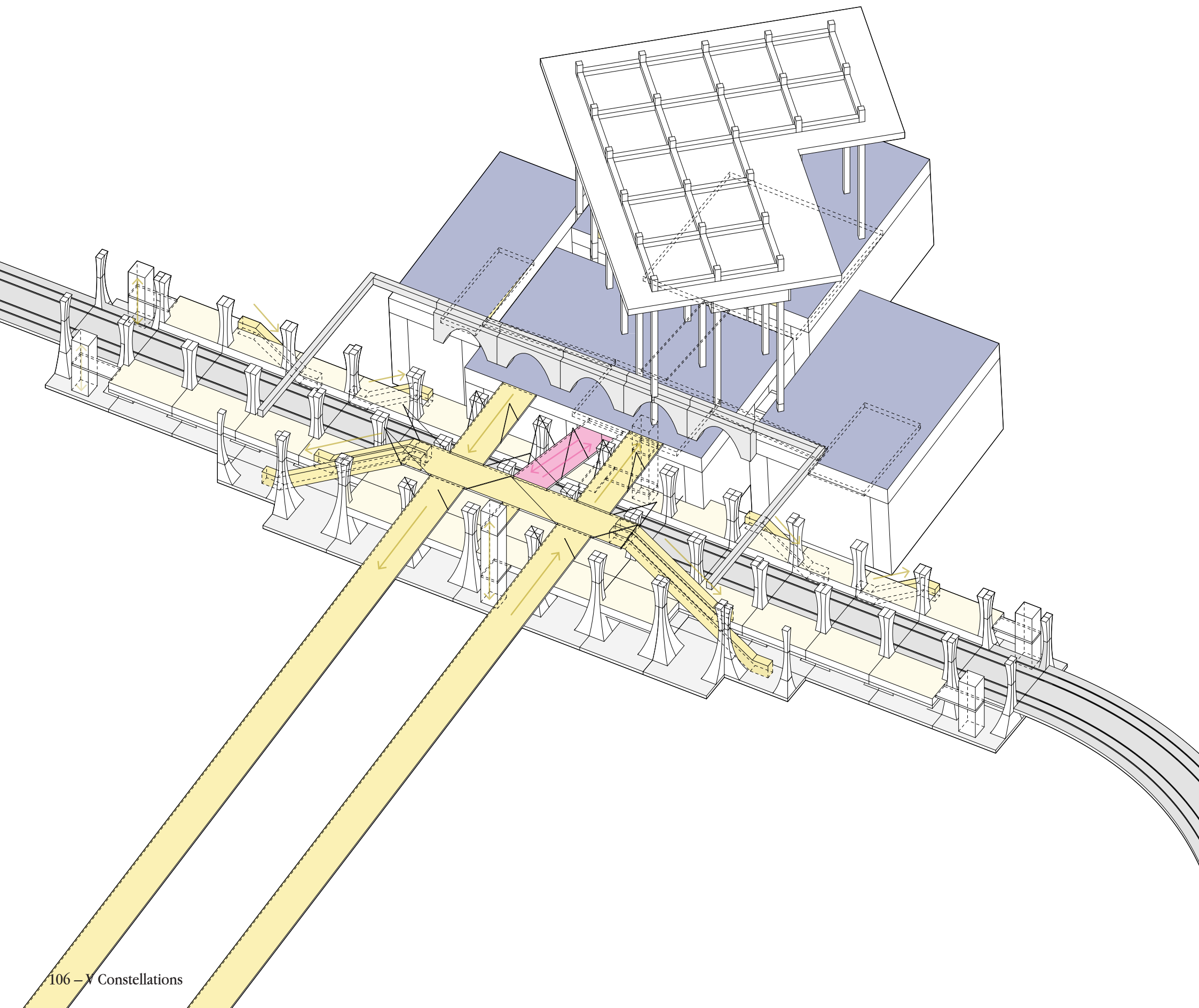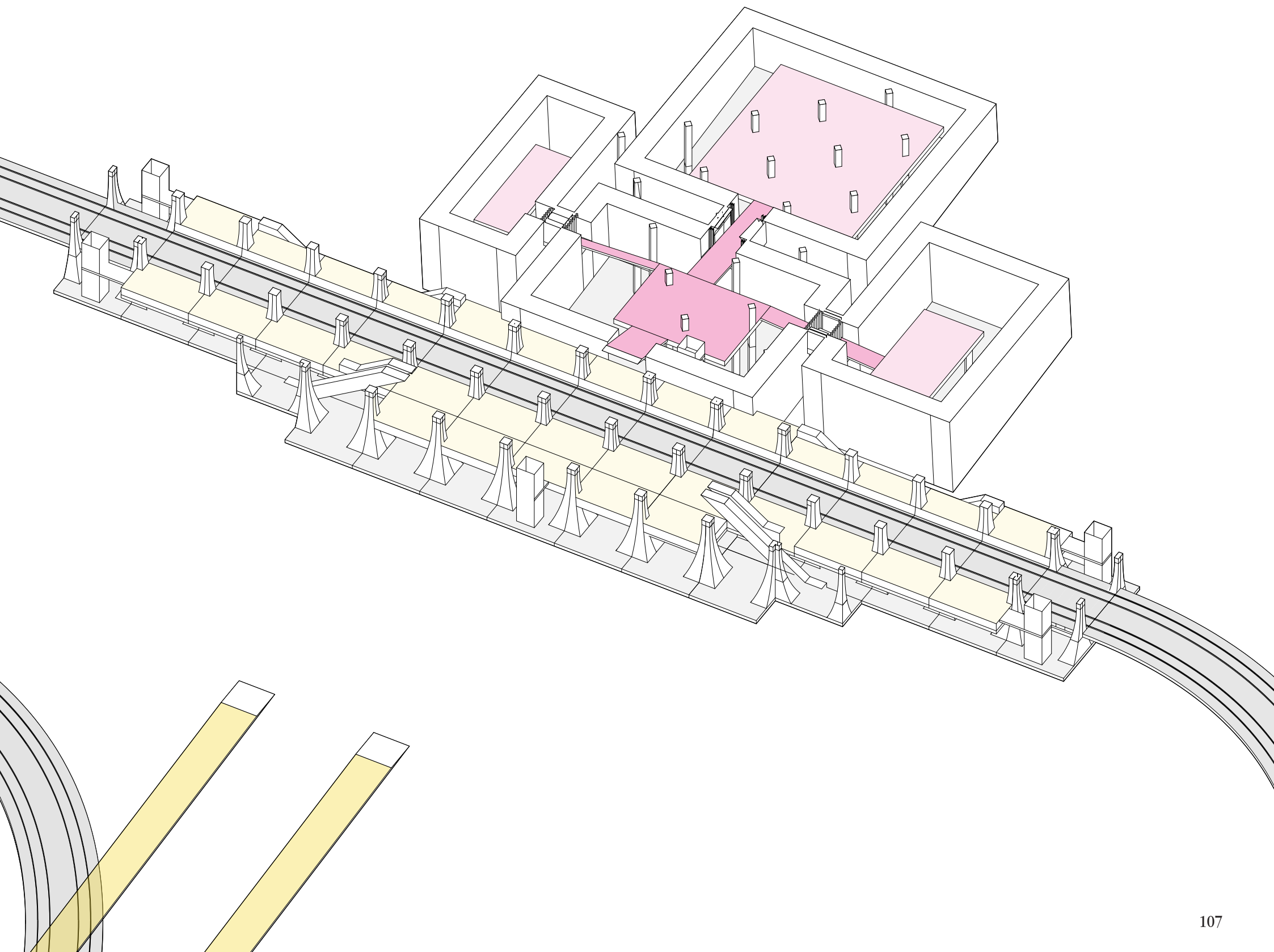
1:200 Floor Plan of Prayer Rooms
-14m

1. Entrance Walkway
2. Elevator
3. Welcome Desk & Shoe Storage
4. Area for taking off Shoes
5. Walkway towards Prayer Room
6. Connective Brick Tunnel with Soundproof Curtains
7. Prayer Room S (10 people)
8. Prayer Room M (15 people)
9. Prayer Room L (80 people)
10. Exit Walkway

7

6

5

6

5

9

5

4

3

6

10

1

2

4

5

6

8

1:200

0m   2m   5m   10m
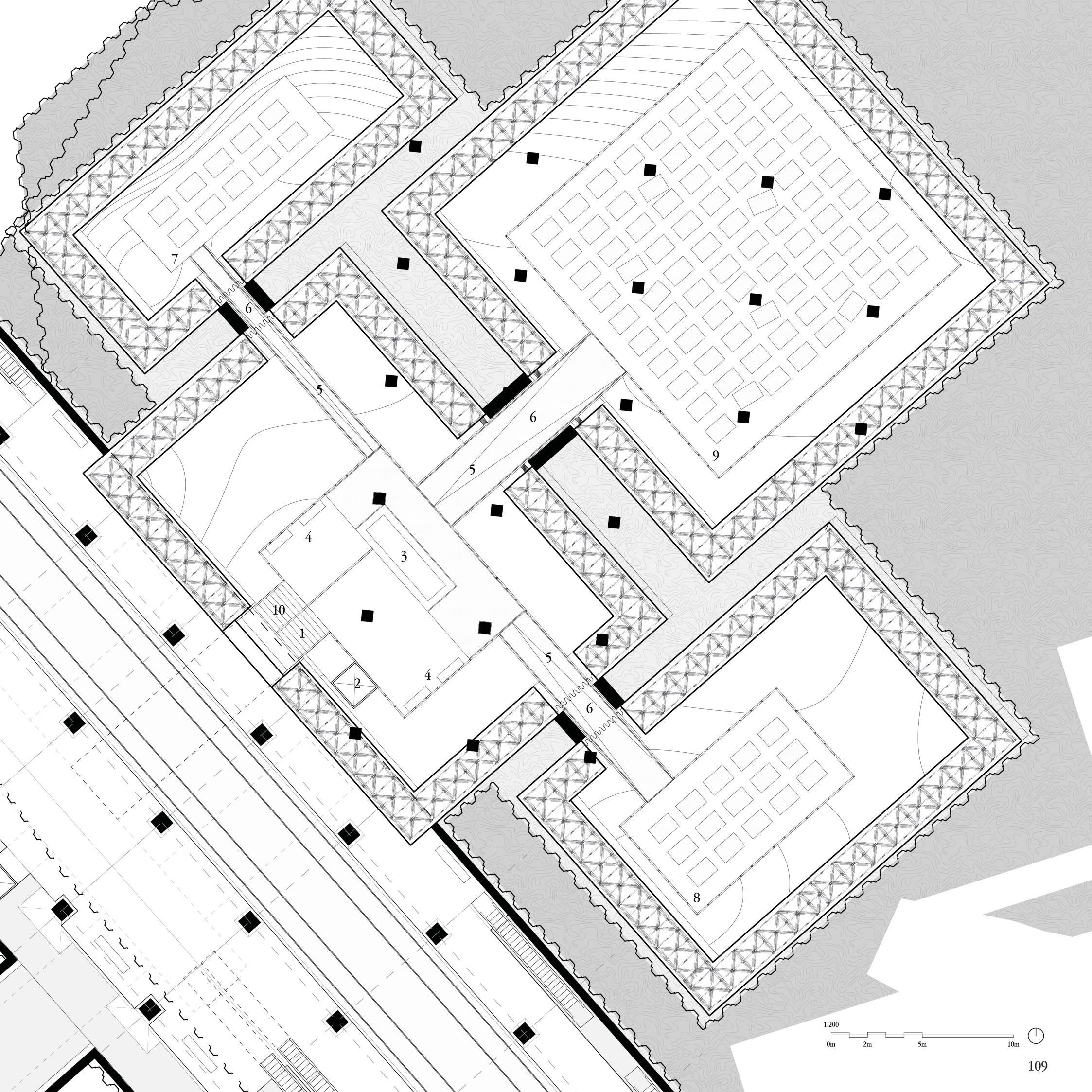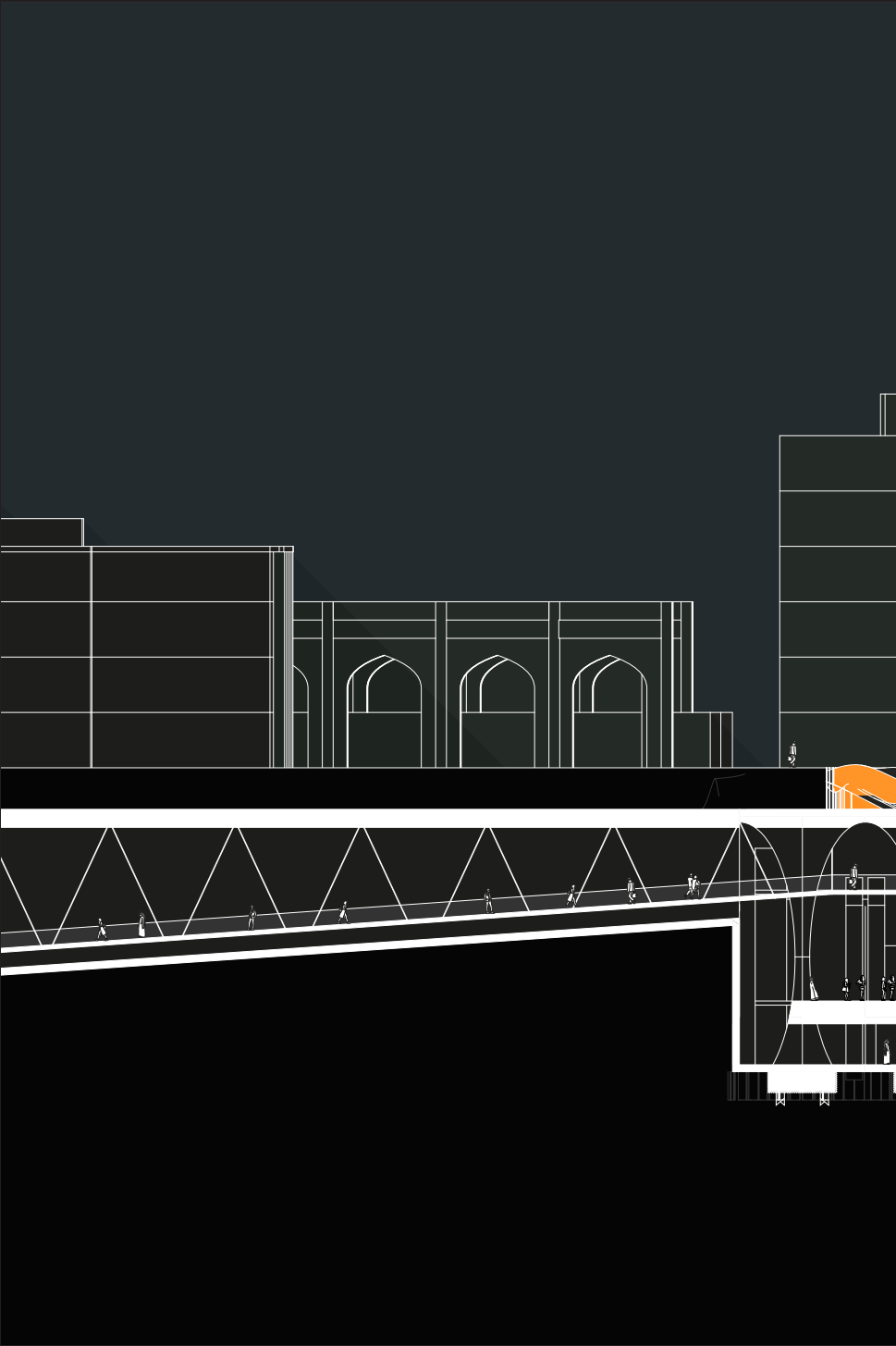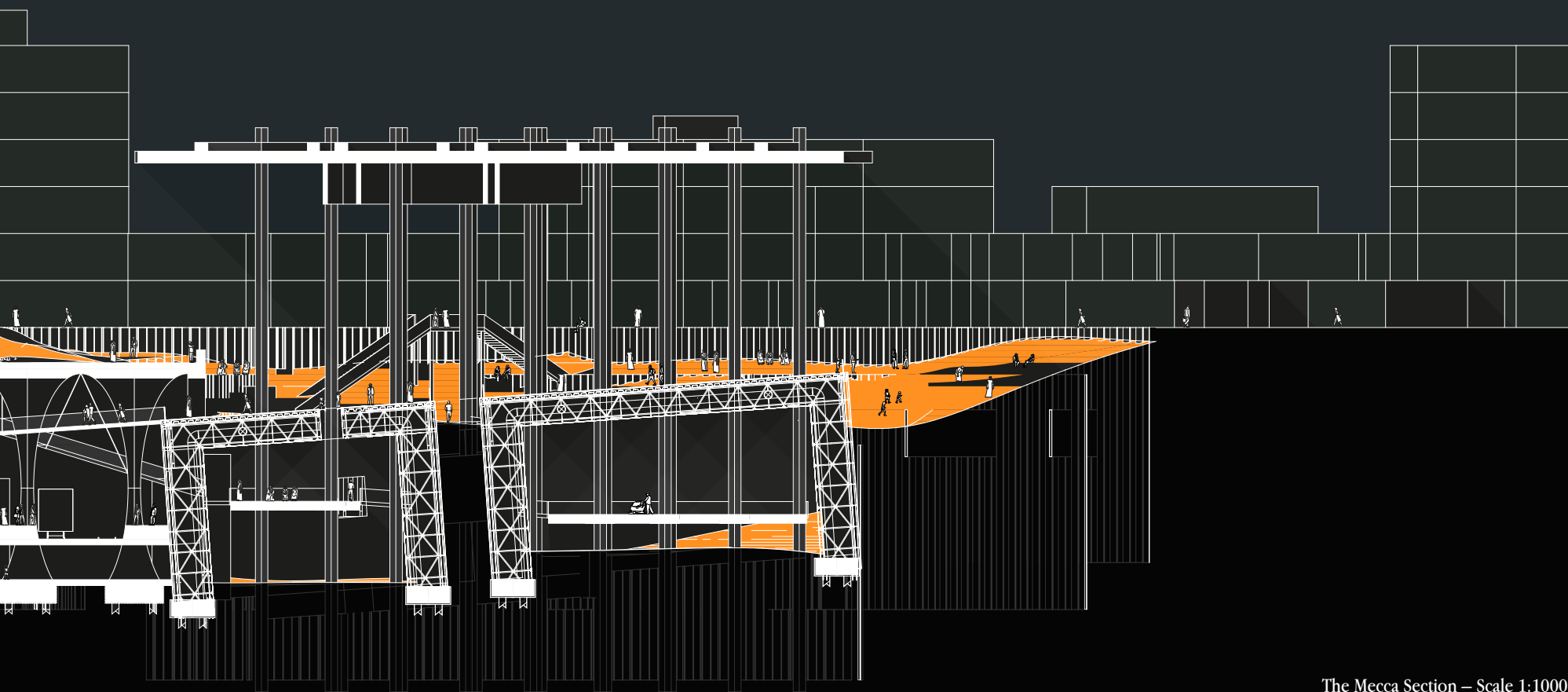
The Mecca Section – Scale 1:1000

Axonometric view of Constellation A. Subway Station
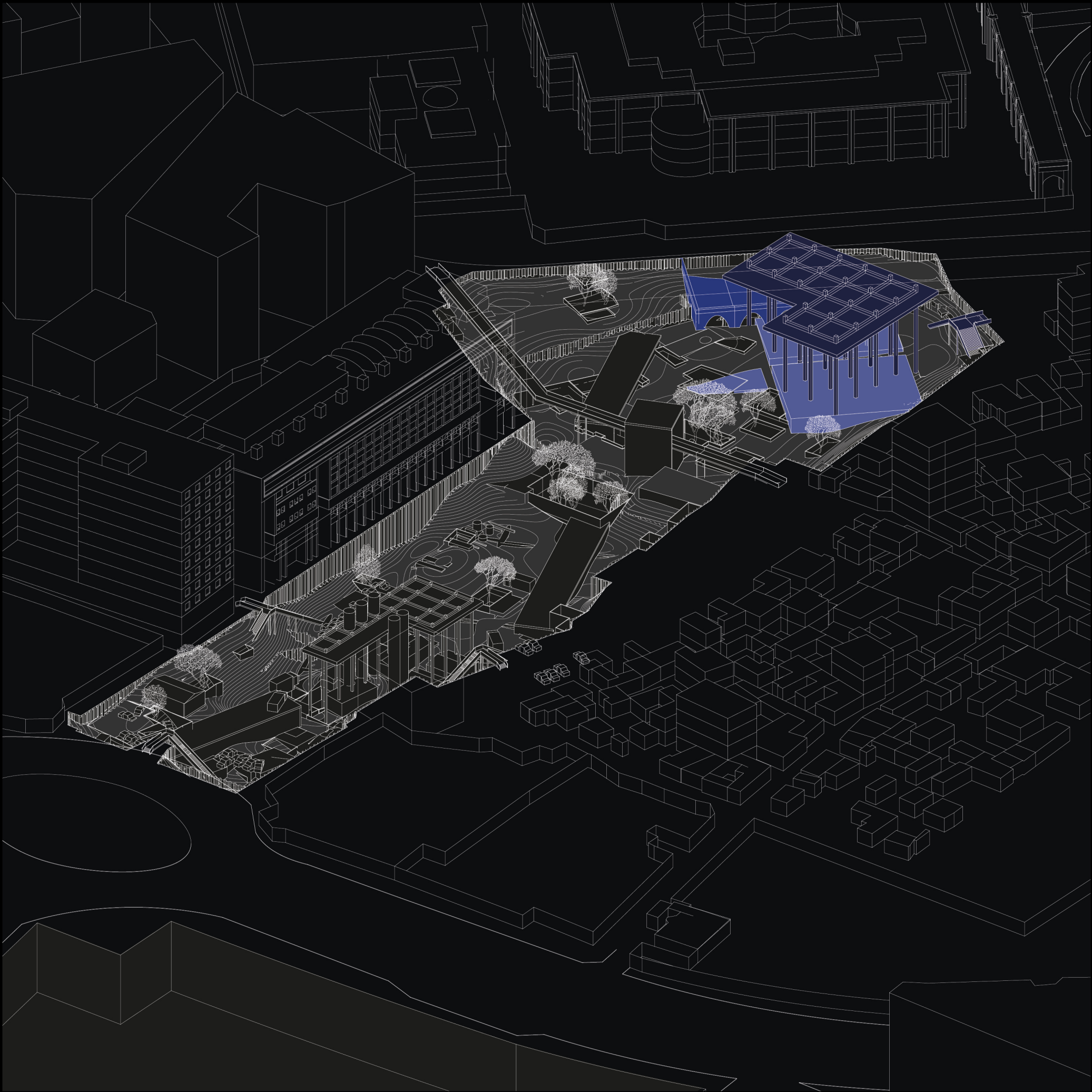
Constellation B.
Guesthouse

The Guesthouse is a small-scale hotel that is embedded within the landscape through the use of specific elements. Its main configuration consists of three rectangular block elements. The vertically free-standing middle one, is connected to a walkway that crosses the Landscape, which marks the main entrance of the Guesthouse. The other two blocks, that are submerged in the landscape, are the facilities of the guesthouse, being a dining room and a bathhouse. The actual rooms of the guesthouse are mostly hidden under the Landscape, as they are connected to garden pits that created by the Brick Walls that perforate the landscape.

The total structure almost resembles a piece of organic city fabric. This is no coincidence however, as the actual bedrooms of the guesthouse are the exact outlines of former rooms or small houses that once stood on the landscape. Each of these bedrooms is directly connected to one of the previously mentioned gardens, that perforate the landscape.

Being buried underground has some climate perks, such as the passive cooling that happens through the rooms lying below the warmer top surface. The gardens simultaneously create pleasant microclimates within the landscape, as water evaporates from the vegetation within them. A system of air ducts connected to a 23.5-meter-high silo element, that acts as solar chimney and wind catcher creates under pressure, which enables a passive airflow out of the rooms, and thus generate passive ventilation.

The Guesthouse offers a total 35 Rooms to the landscape, ranged from single bedrooms to family size apartments, in which pilgrims visiting the Shrine can reside in manner that is not a simply extruded concrete hotel tower. Overall, the constellation of the guesthouse offers a quite private and hidden way of overnighting right next to the Holy Shrine.

Floor Plan Guesthouse
-14m

1:1500

0m   15m   37,5m   75m

115
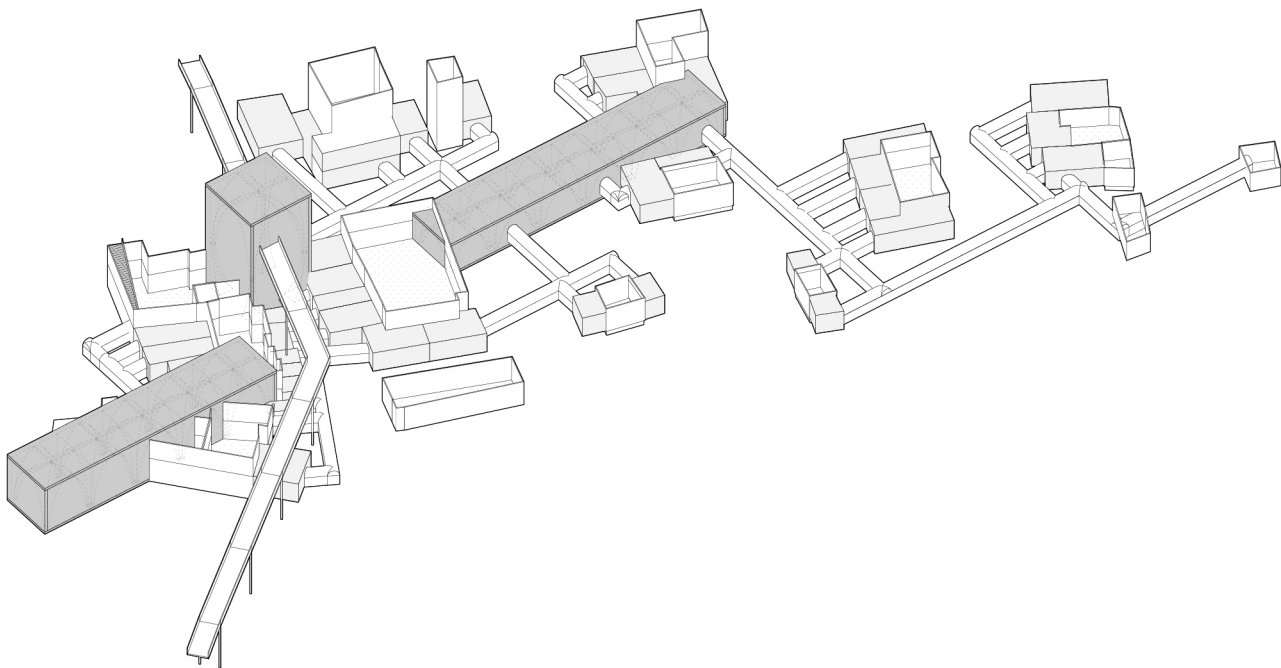
1. Reception
2. Entrance/Exit Garden
3. Lift towards Walkways
4. Bathhouse Block
5. Cafetaria Block
6. Tunnel
7. Bedroom
8. Garden Pit
9. Kitchen

5

9

7

7

7

6

7

7

1:200 Floor Plan Guesthouse
-14m

1:200

0m   2m   5m   10m

117

Axonometric view of Constellation B. Guesthouse
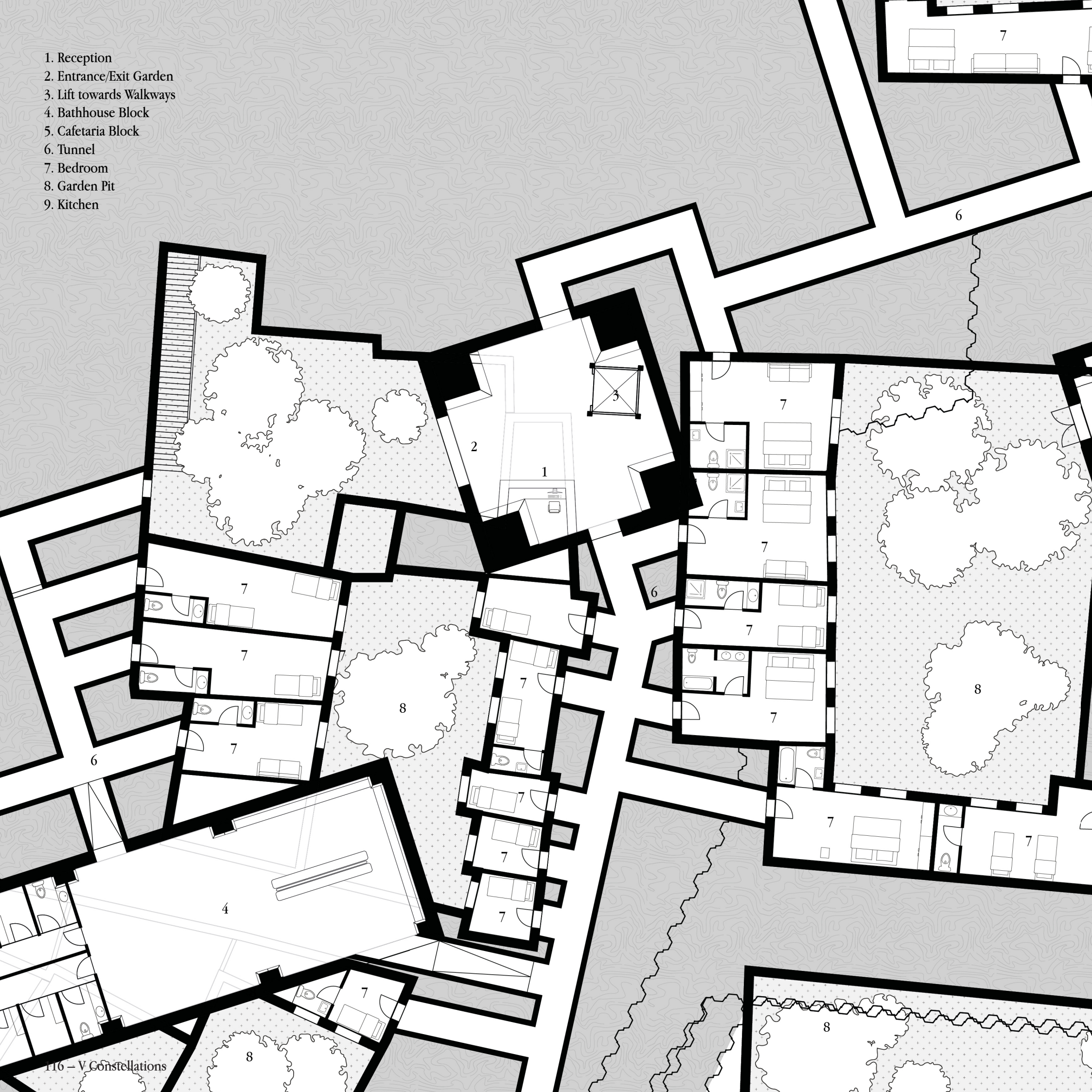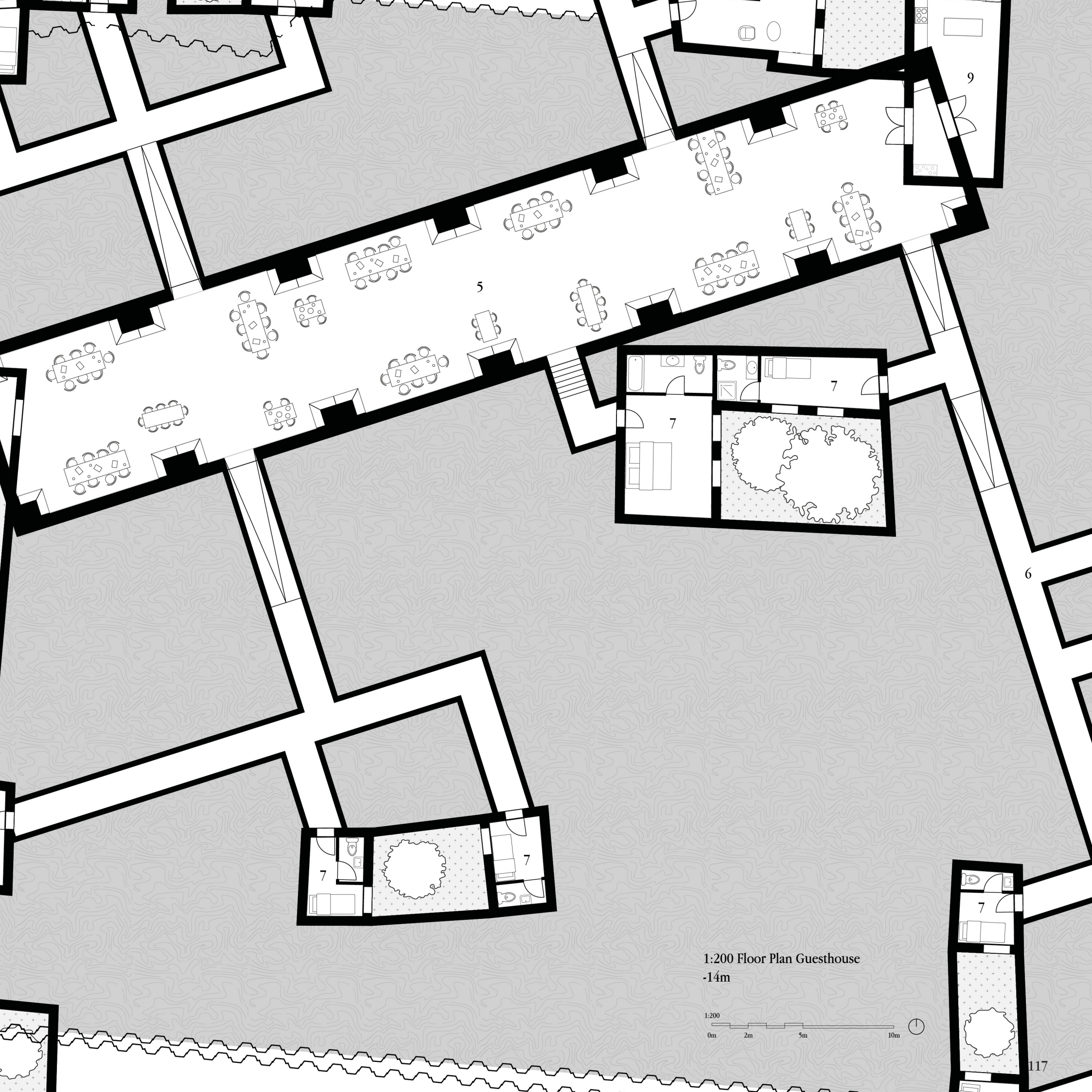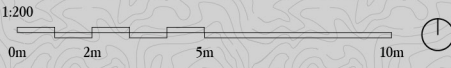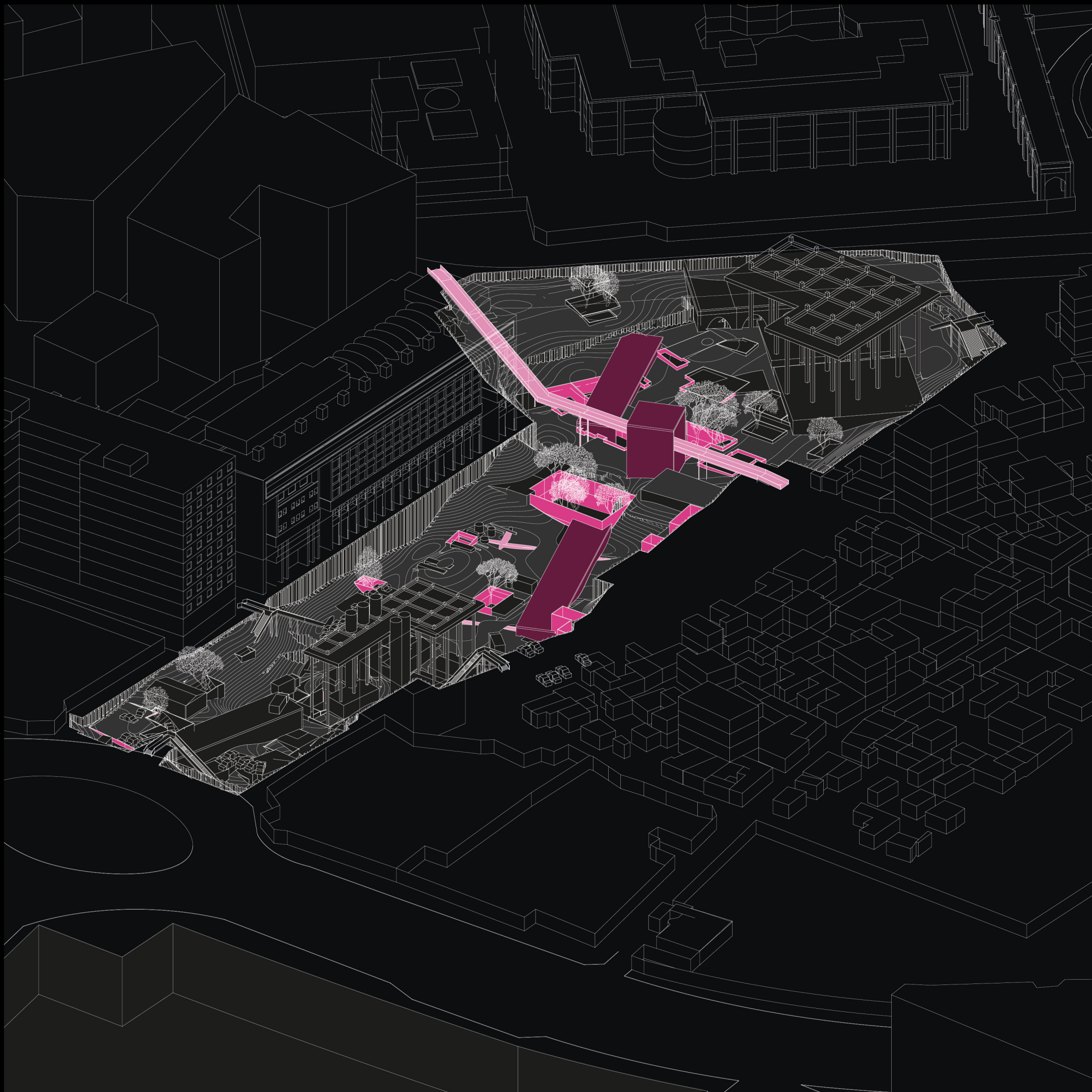
Constellation C.
Gift Shop

As construction of the other configurations finishes, the sheds and silos which were used for construction work, now stand empty and are taken over by the Gift Shop. This constellation of Sheds, Silos and one Rectangular Block forms a miniature Bazar underneath the smaller Canopy on the site.

Floor Plan Giftshop
-5m

1:1500

0m   15m   37,5m   75m
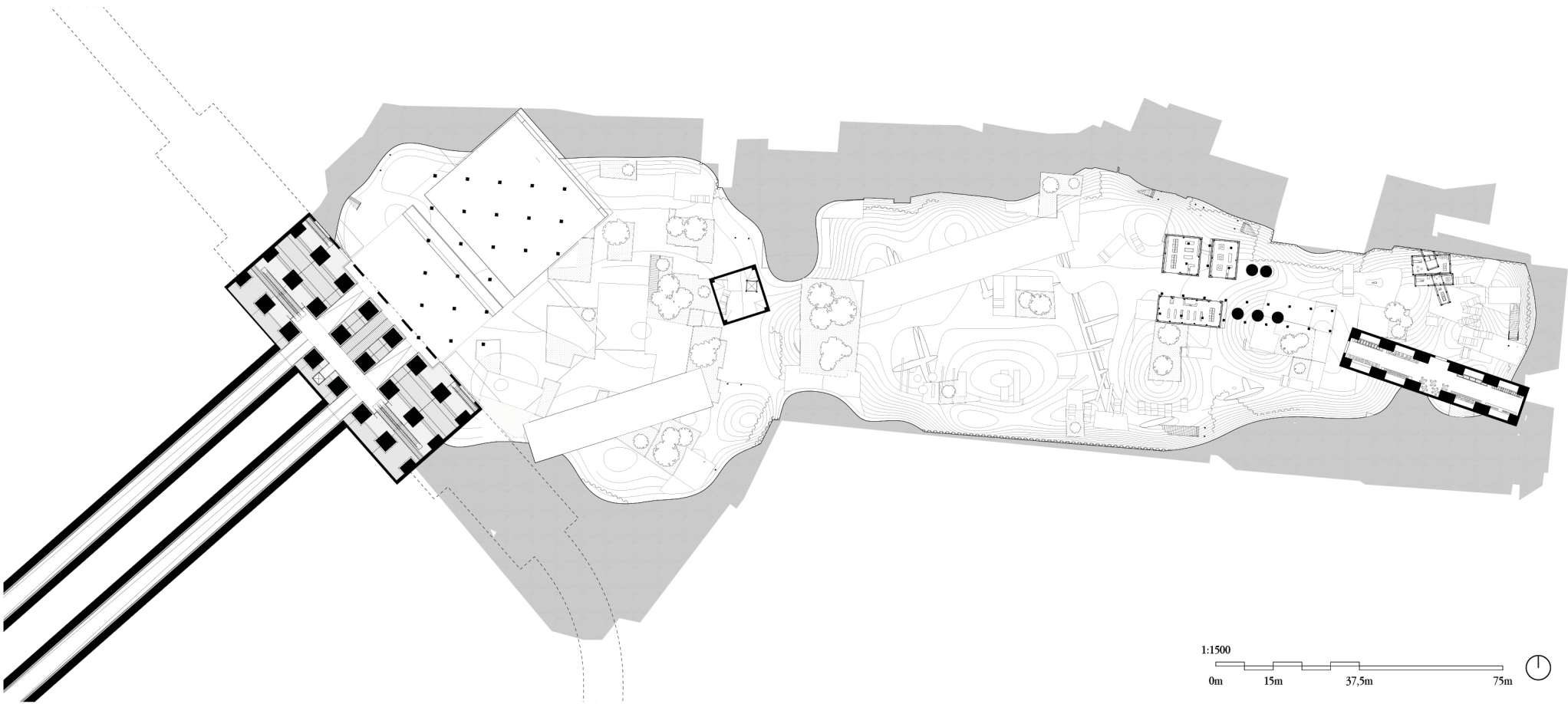
1:200 Floor Plan Gift Shop
-5m

1. Gift Shop
2. Bazar Block
3. Silo
4. Walkway Stairs Entrance
5. Garden Pit
6. Canopy Columns

1

1

1

6

5

4

2

1:200

0m   2m   5m   10m
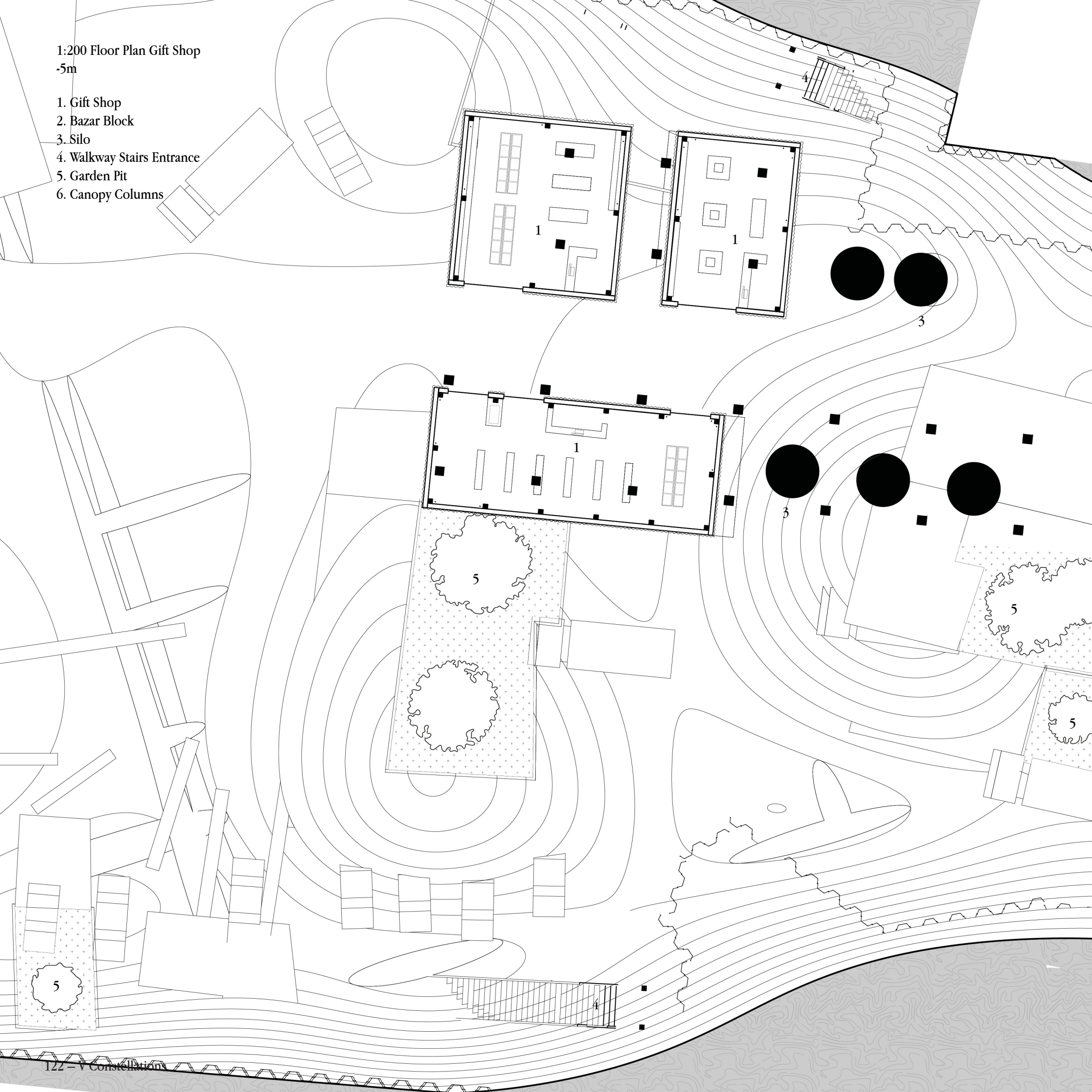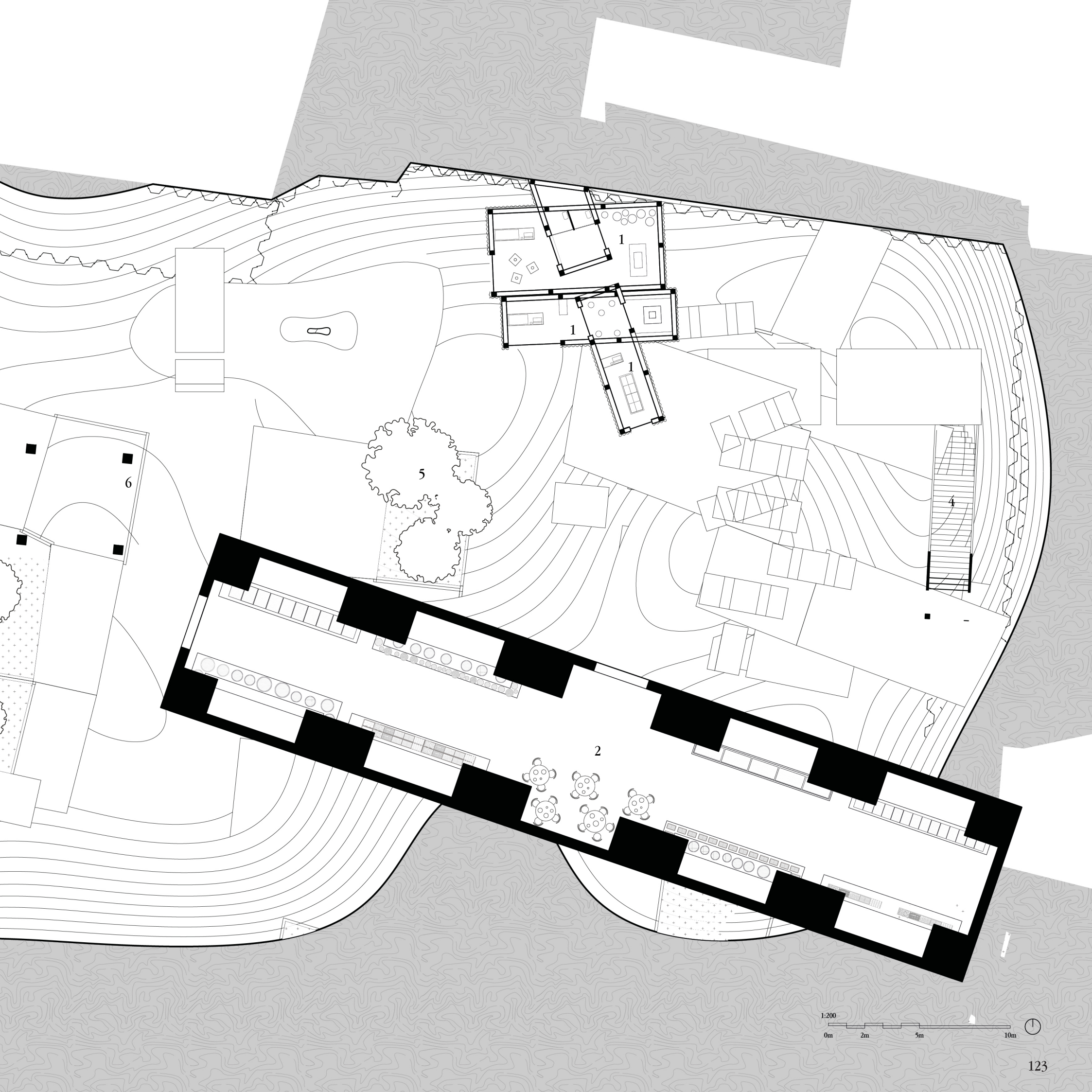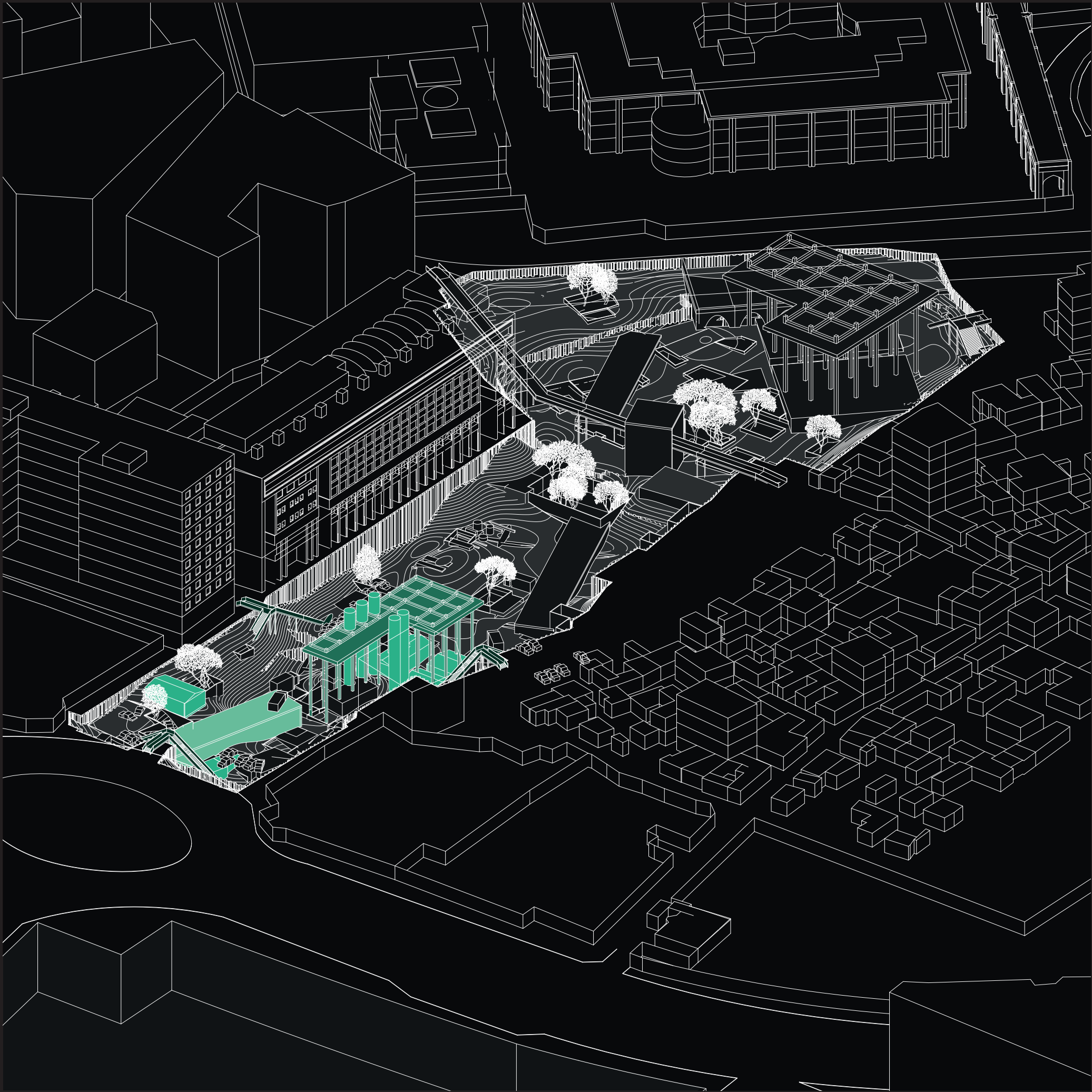
CONVERSATIONS

Part I *Hotel City*

Intermezzo

Part II *Hidden Myths*

Voices

Daniel, British male: narrator.
Oliver, British male: theory and depth.
Kaj: live.
Ava, British female: evidence, subjective experience. More cynical.
Grace, Australian female: evidence, subjective experience. More positive.

Kaj   Hi, please all mute yourselves, and open this link in your browser.
You'll find a video there.
If everyone is ready, I'll count down, and you press play.
The video will introduce itself.

Part I: Hotel City

Mashhad / Holy Shrine / Hotel City

This part takes about 10 min.
We go together towards the city: a Pilgrim experience.
Set the context and frame it broadly.
What do you expect?
We discover the beauty and business of the shrine.
We gradually start seeing it as a machine: perfect, and well-oiled. It aligns us, makes us similar (us, the imperfect humans).
We are taken through its rooms, by hand.
The experience meets your expectations, your expectations are that of the generalised person, the collective humanity.
We start to see it clearly: a package holiday, you don't have to do anything.
The theoretical framework is put forward.
All the questions are raised in the air:
Some doubt is raised about the consequences of this well-oiled machine, what does its presence in the city culminate to…?
We end with a fly through video of linear Hotel City.
But then…

Rooms 1 to 10

[Everything is black. You just hear the voice. Maybe some form of colour breathing?]
[Big letters in the middle of the view: PART 1: HOTEL CITY]

Daniel

Part 1. Hotel City.
Welcome.
You are about to be part of a tourist experience, to, and from, Hotel City.

[Mashhad relative to Iran]

This place is circumscribing the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza, situated in the city of Mashhad, which lies in the north-eastern mountain ranges of Iran.
You will find that this experience will take you through different rooms.
Now, sit back, and relax, as I gently guide you through them.
Oh, and please, enjoy.

Room 1. Bedroom Lure
[Vaguely a room appears. It's a hotel room. Some shots
are with moving cameras. The viewer is starting to believe/
accept he himself is a pilgrim.]
[Black screen]

Daniel	Gently you open your eyes.

[Fade to perspective drawing of bedroom: viewpoint from bed]

Daniel	It's 6:45 AM, and your room is still dark. People told you:

[Multiple people saying this, overlapped:]

Grace	"You must come and see this in person."

Oliver	Unsuspectingly, we are all affected by the tourist condition.

[Postcards of Mashhad fly past]

Oliver	Through a circulation of images, anticipation is incubated within us, as we're audio-visually bombarded with last-minute getaway advertisements, holiday pictures of friends, and catchy bits of tropical music.

[Some rosy drawing of what the viewer imagines to be the experience]

Oliver	And so, we are incepted with what Rob Shields calls, 'imaginative geographies'; mindscapes of desired distant places, that seduce us to embark on journeys and leave our everyday lives behind for what they are, in search of something. 'Beyond'.

Daniel	As you close your front door, you leave your home, with your trolley clacking behind you.

Room 2. Infrastructure. Exchange.
[Travelling across landscapes. Scenery flying past you.
Motionless you sit amidst it. You are being transported,
formatted.]

[Scenery flies past, it's beautiful.]

Oliver

The time that the landscape dictated our movements has long been lost.
Infrastructures that empower methods of displacement, now reign and
define our territory on planet earth. Keller Easterling describes them as
'Extra state craft'; those systems capable of rewriting how our societies live,
work, and coexist with each other.

[A dance of carriages, on music, slowly unfolds.]

Daniel

You are in the airport.

Staring out of one of its big glass panes, you notice its rhythm; a carefully
orchestrated choreography of departures, arrivals, announcements, taxi
drivers calling for your attention. This dance of carriages is conducted by
invisible systems.

[Inside the cabin; the camera seats itself inside one of the rows, scenery flies
past.]

Daniel

You carefully align yourself amongst your fellow passengers inside a row of
narrow seats: all packed like sardines in a crushed tin box. Together with
them, you swoosh through air, screech over rails, plough underground, and
scrape over asphalt.

[A grid appears. You are moving over it. Buildings start popping up, scraping alongst you. A map of the city slowly unveils itself, though is continually iterating, as layers and colours change with the understanding of your perception.]
[A 2D grid appears, a car flies past]

Daniel — You step outside your transport carriage onto the street. A car dashes past you. You've arrived in Mashhad. Look around you: what do you see?

[A map emerges on top of the grid, focused on the shrine in the centre]

Grace — "I see a city, spread out around the Holy Shrine..."

[The map further zooms out, now the whole of Mashhad is visible on it.]

Oliver — Bruno Latour describes how each individual is effectively confined within her, or his, own personal gaze upon the world.

[More colour changes, now going towards pink as we hear about the tourist gaze.]

Oliver — This bubble, in which one finds itself, is what John Urry and Jonas Larsen refer to as the 'tourist gaze'; the condition to which tourists are subjected, defining what they actually can, and can't perceive.

[The map focuses on the shrine again, and the streets towards it.]

Daniel — In the distance you see your prize, the very thing for which you came to the city: The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza. In a straight line, you drift towards it.

[The dome appears around these parts, like a wall, confining the grid.]

Oliver — The tourist finds himself in a 'strictly circumscribed world', that is defined by the entrepreneurs of touristic places, and thus becomes, in the words of Louis Turner and John Ash; "a small monotonous world that everywhere shows us our own image; … the pursuit of the exotic and diverse, ends in uniformity."

[The map turns 3D, as we rotate with it, then it freezes, the image melts into the 2.5D model with levels of perception, different pictures materialise.]
[The words Hotel City appear in view]

Daniel — It's as if Mashhad has two sides, the one being its everyday side, where normal life takes place, the other being what I will call, Hotel City. This is the reality in which you and the tourists find yourselves: perpetually rotating in a merry-go-round of attractions. Two levels of perceptions, intertwined within one city.

Room 4. Gate. Secure.
[Security check procedure. Video footage of this? Through this lens?]

[…]

Oliver   Cities are full of visitors; people from elsewhere who may or may not be 'just tourists' and need to be surveilled.

Daniel   As you near the Holy Shrine, you are guided by signs and fences towards a security checkpoint. You raise your arms for an electromagnetic body scan, as you put your belongings inside an x-ray machine.

[...]

Oliver   Latour mentions: "I'm neither in control nor without control: I'm formatted. I'm afforded possibilities for my existence, based on teeming devices scattered throughout the city. I go from one offer to the next."

[...]

Daniel   When, have you entered Hotel City? What are its frontiers, when you're continuously passing thresholds?

Room 5. Square. Build.
[Text.]

[Clinic view of the courtyard]

Daniel	You now stand on the biggest and most prominent courtyard of the Holy Shrine. Its marble flooring is completely circumscribed by identically ornamented arches.

[Growing floor plan of the shrine]

Oliver	"Architecture", as Marc Augé mentions, "transmits the illusions of the current dominant ideology, the aesthetics of which support those illusions and expresses the triumph of the system."

[Video footage of playing children]

Grace	"In the courtyards one sees children playing around, whereas the old and mature are praying hard."

[Clinic view; now with high-rises emerging.]

Daniel	Overlooking the courtyard on which you stand are high-rises of hotels, and numerous construction cranes, busily working to create even more towers.

[Axonometric city view, with skyscrapers slowly emerging: cloud city.]

Oliver	In Hotel City, previously prevailing artifacts have become pawns in a game of worship and ownership. In the periphery of the Holy Shrine, heritage remains unprotected, and greedy development is replacing ancient fabric with buildings catered especially to the ideals of Hotel City.

[Pictures of the demolishment of surrounding city fabric.]

Oliver	An example of which is the Bazar-al-Reza, a 1-kilometre-long structure that was thumped on top of residential houses. In other places, fabric is demolished but nothing is built instead of it, the result of this is a series of voids surrounding the Holy Shrine.

Room 6. Corridor. Convulse.
[Slowly moving through the corridor with many bodies inside of it. Maybe animate the bodies as a conveyor belt. They are moving in rows, like robots on a production line, all in unison.]

Daniel · You are one out of 30 million tourists visiting Mashhad each year. As you enter one of the corridors, you find yourself in a traffic jam of people queuing for the same thing: the tomb of Imam Reza. The space is swarmed by people you don't know, yet, these people are somehow familiar, as you can identify with them, their place in the world being the same as yours.

[Video footage of people around the tomb.]

Grace · "I was given simply a sheet, which all the time tried to slip off my hair. There were women who saved me as they tied the entire structure."

[Video footage of people around the tomb.]

Ava · "It is very crowded so you need to hold hands otherwise you can lose your group."

[Some to be created drawing of bodily extension… Otherwise slow pans of bodies in clinic model?]

Oliver · Maurice Merleau-Ponty explains how "our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It implies itself to space like a hand to an instrument"; capable of 're-sculpting' the very spaces we inhabit.

[Clinic 3D merges into the Clay Model, alternating gritty and neat.]
[Rumi: Some way of visualising the bodily extension into spaces?]

Oliver · Sara Ahmed explains this as a necessary outcome of extending one's body into space, which is exactly what tourists are doing with their bodily inhabiting of cities.

[Some to be created drawing of bodily extension… Otherwise slow pans of bodies in clinic model?]

Daniel · Thus the question arises, whether this bodily extension of tourists within Hotel City, leads to any form of 're-sculpting', and whether this is confined, regulated, or problematic in any way. If erosion becomes a product of touristic inhabitation of Hotel City, would it matter, or would it simply be the sign of a successful enterprise? Are the voids surrounding the Holy Shrine a necessary by-product, or are they a loss worth remembering?

If erosion becomes a product of touristic inhabitation of Hotel City, what would be the consequence? Loss of something… But what?

135

Room 7. Main Attraction. Attract.
[Building upon the previous room, yet now with the focus on the tomb.
The viewer starts meditating upon the ideas of the absolute and how this
borderlines with this clinic hyper-reality.]
[Clinic 3D: Slowly entering the previous room, yet now with the tomb.
The camera starts rotating around the tomb, with so many bodies standing
around it.]

Daniel

As you finally reach the tomb chamber of Imam Reza, you are in the heart
of Hotel City, inside its main attraction; its dragon's lair. The space is
completely filled with people that all share the same desire. As one body,
everyone gravitates and rotates around it, swarms it, touches it, kisses it.
How can a single place affect so many? Even you, wanted to see it, believe
it, and live it. Now you are here, experiencing the very thing Hotel City
promises and promotes. Do you feel it? Does it move, transform, or affect
you?

[Video footage of people around the tomb.]

Ava

We tried to touch the shrine for blessing, but it was not an easy thing to fight
off the pilgrims in trance.

[Video footage of people around the tomb.]

Grace

Believers roared and rushed in, and they were squeezed out crying bitterly.
This scene is indeed rare in the world. Shocking.

[Some to be created drawing of the liminal …? Signifying the bodily
inhabitation of this space]
[Rumi: Is this a moment when one is alone in the middle of a crowd, quite
separate in a multitude of people, sounds, smells?]

Oliver

Through a succession of rituals, the religious tourist becomes one with his
spiritual goal. Victor Turner divides this ritual sequence into three phases:
separation, liminality, and reincorporation. In the liminal places of the
second phase, everyday relations, obligations, and structures are reversed,
and one finds itself on the thresholds of the 'absolute', outside of space, and
time.

[Video footage of people around the tomb.]

Ava

I wanted so much to touch the shrine itself but that was too dangerous and
impossible, unfortunately. The women kicked me, took away my abay as
they tried all to touch the shrine. At one point I couldn't breathe at all. It was
a horrible feeling, being in danger in a holy place like that.

Daniel

How can such a holy place be full of such un holy attitudes? Is this what to be liminal means? To transcend the daily realities, in this spiritual depth?

Grace

Some cry when they kiss or touch the cage in which Imam Reza lies, others mutter prayers. Most stash money through the iron bars.

Grace

You will feel mental peace over here and inner satisfaction. Also sometimes miracles happen, and the sick and the lame get cured.

Oliver

Djahn Baudri-lahr coined the term "hyper-real", to describe things, that trick our consciousness into believing that they are more real, than the real thing itself, and thus capable of delivering us the virtue we seek. It is with carefully designed, detailed, and ornamented facades, that hyper-real places convince us of their own realities.

Daniel

How did you think the shrine got so many people to believe in it?

You now realise you're inside one of these hyper-realities. Suddenly, you can see the construct right before your eyes. The simplicity of it. How it feels like to be inside of a staged, created experience. Somehow, it's similar to this very video you're watching right now. Is this the liminal trance, capable of delivering you the virtue you seek?

Room 8. Gift Shop. Commodify.
[Here we start exploring the relations between the tourist and the servicing bodies around him.]

[Clinic 3D: we slowly pan from the shrine into the Bazar, then a map fades in, showing the bazar from above, which opens up and zooms in on one of the stores.]

Oliver   'Exit through the gift shop', a line made famous by Banksy, holds true also for the Holy Shrine, whose surroundings have been filled with a myriad of gift shops, tiny and large. Here, your tourist experience has been commodified inside a miniature keychain, fridge magnet, or stuffed animal.

[Video footage of the Bazar]

Grace   Best place to buy all stuff in Mashhad, but one has to know the art of bargaining.

[Video footage of the Bazar]

Ava   This place should be called the Bazar of Mamoon. Shop owners in this bazar are famous in Iran for being thieves and swindlers.

[Video footage of the Bazar]

Oliver   But merchandise is not all, as Guy Debord explains how also cultural happenings are being commodified, resulting into what he calls, the 'society of the spectacle'.

[Detailed map of the bazar, in which interactions between tourist and resident have been made visible.]

Daniel   As a visiting tourist, you're mostly unaware of the hidden worlds that are found behind those shiny shopfronts surrounding you. Yet here, in the Bazar, you directly interact with someone, as you try to buy your souvenir. Can you identify with him? You ask for the price of a prayer chain. Would you like to get to know him? He asks too much for the Tasbih. You move along.

Room 9. Lobby. Rotate.
[We exit the Bazar and enter the Hotel Lobby now, as we start thinking further about the relation between the tourist and his servicing bodies.]

[Clinic 3D: it stops in front of the receptionist of the Hotel.]

Daniel

When you reach your Hotel, you check-in in its lobby, hello and welcome, yes thank you very much. You are serviced by a local; one of the many faces that represent Hotel City's interface. Hotel City rotates a constellation of people, interactions, events, and places, of which the backstage is invisible for its visitors; carefully worked out of sight.

[Slide show with pictures/footage of the Ghashr Talaee International Hotel]

Grace

Everything is so nice. The hotel lobby with its huge chandelier is the first thing that catches your eyes.

Ava

They only have a good lobby that tricks many people."

[A map that shows both realities within the city.]

Oliver

Mark Gottdiener describes those who serve the mobilised tourists as the 'immobilised bodies'. Mashhad is full of them. One discovers a hidden world in this chain of interactions, between visitors, these 'immobilised bodies', and an invisible backstage. To be a tourist then, is to be a cell in a greater network; each interaction you have, creates a series of ripples that seep into the lives of the citizens.

[A video with real Mashhad footage, a montage, of the immobilised bodies starts. They are almost dancing to the music, as they clean, rotate, service, etc. Takes about 30 seconds.]

Rooms 10 to 1. Bedroom. Coming home?
[Text.]

[Clinic 3D: similar footage to the first room, rendered, small, slow-motion motions through the room.]

Daniel   At the end of the day, when you step inside your hotel room, you notice it eerily resembles the room you left this morning. When you lie down, the bed smells the same as your own bed, a fresh and empty kind of clean. What happens when you live in Hotel City? Could you ever call this place a home?

Grace   "I've spent 24 nights in Mashhad. I can never get enough of it. I really pray I can live there forever. God willing. Amen."

[The camera rotates to the window of the room, the animation of all the rooms flying past you starts; you feel like we're reaching some sort of conclusion.]

Oliver   What happens when tourists reign a city? When endless flows of imported beings form ever-growing mountains of bodies, that roll and spread through the city like tidal waves, covering everything and everywhere. What happens when houses are one-by-one razed to the ground and rebuild as hotels, when precise local craftmanship is replaced by mass-produced knockoffs? What happens when local culture is overthrown in favour of market trends, and traditional rituals have become a trained show that is put on. In other words: what happens when the city itself is commodified into a liveable experience, when the city itself, is the apotheosis of tourism?

Daniel   Hotel City is a sum of its city's spaces, structures, smells, and sounds; capable of delivering you an unforgettable experience, that, paradoxically, in some ways is as generic as a hotel room, if it were not for its fantastic cladding. Hotel City is capable of transforming its visitors into absolute believers of whatever reality it –

Daniel   At the end of the day, when you step inside your hotel room, you notice it eerily resembles the room you left this morning. When you lie down, the bed smells the same as your own bed, a fresh and empty kind of clean. What happens when you live in Hotel City? Could you ever call this place a home?

[At this point, the camera is high-jacked, sound and image distort mid-sentence, and 'the video' cancels. We experience that we 'exit' full-screen mode video viewing, and now are back to the zoom call, we see Kaj quite large in view.]

[Playback is cancelled.]

Kaj   Oof. Sorry guys, I had a feeling that this might happen. Don't worry, I have a back-up slideshow presentation at hand.

Intermezzo

This part takes about 6 mins.
We start with a slideshow presentation. Kaj's face is seen through Zoom. It should appear as if he is standing in Room Q in the faculty, with the same clothes as he wears at the final presentation.
He starts talking about a landscape, ambitions, elements, procedures, things that you naturally don't really get; as they are, for now, contextless. It is a very technocratic and rational explanation of the Delft-y side of the project: some Kraftwerk-feels?
It's quite boring and slow, yet simply beautiful.
There's somehow this tension that something eventually will happen, because surely this isn't how this presentation is going to end?
Then, at some point, we are catapulted back into the 'video' presentation, through a short dialogue with the narrator.

[Kaj now 'shares' his screen.]

Kaj   Thoughts about landscape.

[A slideshow starts that revolves the whole/partial catalogue of all the constellation of things. Maybe one line per element/idea? Don't clutter it too much with unnecessary information… However, the main ideas about each of the elements should be absolutely clear.]

Kaj   Landscape, 1. The Landscape unravels its site's history through a palimpsest, and activates the remains of passed activities, alongside long forgotten memories
Landscape, 2. The Landscape constantly reshuffles its soil conditions, boundaries, and material elements. With the condition that no material is to leave the site. This is necessary for the procedures to succeed, and ultimately creates a lasting state of the landscape feeling 'unfinished' and 'unpolished'.
Landscape, 3. The Landscape is situated between religious cosmology and everyday inhabitation. It offers a space for both residents and pilgrims of Mashhad.
Landscape, 4. The Landscape is affected by a multitude of simultaneously occurring conditions that seemingly clash, yet actually co-exist, as the landscape is a public garden, construction site, material storage facility, infrastructural network, private guesthouse, functional bazar, and quiet prayer space in one.
Landscape, 5. The Landscape is produced by Procedures.

Kaj

Procedures.
Procedure 1. Dig.
Procedure 2. Fill.
Procedure 3. Displace.
Procedure 4. Delineate.
Procedure 5. Perforate.
Procedure 6. Flatten.
Procedure 7. Sculpt.
Procedure 8. Assemble.
Procedure 9. Disassemble.
Procedure 10. Store.
Procedure 11. Thrash.
Procedure 12. Plant.
Procedures 1 to 7 are carried out by machines.
Procedures 1 to 12 create Elements that sit within the Landscape.

[Maybe some elements should need further explanation... One or two shorts sentences to explain them.]

Kaj

Elements.
Element A. Processed Soil. The most numerous element in the landscape.
Element B. Retaining Wall.
Element C. Block.
Element D. Square.
Element E. Walkway.
Element F. Brick Wall.
Element G. Tunnel.
Element H. Silo.
Element I. Shed.
Element J. Canopy.
Element K. Trees, Plants, and Wildlife.
Element L. Machinery.
Element A to L come together to create programmatic constellations.
Constellations.
Constellation 1. The Subway Station. A way for 35.000 daily passengers to arrive and leave the Holy Shrine.
Constellation 2. The Guesthouse. 52 rooms, with multiple adjacent gardens make up the guesthouse. Guests can stay here the night, to rest.
Constellation 3. The Gift Shop.

Daniel   Kaj... What are you doing?

Kaj   The Gift Shop consists of...

Daniel   Kaj?

Kaj   Hello? Who's there?

Daniel   It's Daniel, your narrator.

Kaj   Nice to meet you.

Daniel   Yes. Well, I'm back. Shall I take over?

Kaj   I guess I have no choice.

[Kaj (still in the upper right corner) holds his hands in the air, as the narrator seemingly clicks away his slideshow presentation, only to reveal that the video was there all the time, and now we're suddenly back in the white and clinic rendered world, slowly drifting towards the landscape.]

Part II: Hidden Myths

Infectious Voidscape/ Hidden Myths/ Back Again

This part takes about 13,5 min.
Having just seen the whole catalogue of elements, it's now time to see them in action.

Through a series of vignettes, an understanding of the experience of the project is conceived. These vignettes are like tiny sketches, movements, ideas, that float over and through the project. They are linked with each other in either narrative/visual/audio/dialogue/etc. relations and cues. Different here, is that the computer's voices now have become human, as we hear real people narrate.

Architecture: not a mutual background for whatever one needs to do, but an active stage, that forces one to look around, come out of this A-to-Z mode of going about life. We opt out of the prescribed.

Nowadays, people get suspicious, surprised, if there are no signs. Everyone (supposedly) wants to take the shortest distance, the quickest route. What if architecture forces you to forget about this?

You are confronted with something you don't understand exactly.
In the Landscape, you are closer to the elements that make the experience; primeval things.

American tourists, they are lost, when not everything is catered for. They don't turn off the road.

If you move things a little bit outside the logic, everything changes.

There's this incentive to go against a certain monetary/time-efficient incentive… We want people to behave streamlined, so we can maximise our profit from them. What if we forget about this? What happens? > NICE.

At the End, you go back.

There, and back again.

Characters (in order of appearance):
Taxi Driver
Passenger
Farhad
Hossein
Woman Voice
Director

Scene 1: Moving towards the Site.
[20 seconds.]
[the words 'PART 2: HIDDEN MYTHS' appear large.]
[Everything is white. We're moving out of the Shrine. The Sand looms in the distance. We're slowly moving over it, towards the other side, sounds of the city fly past us.]
[The Narrator.]

Daniel   Part 2. Hidden Myths.

Scene 2: Arriving Inside the Car
[25 seconds.]
[We're inside the car. We stop at the edge of the Landscape.]
[Stepping out of the car. Camera moves out of the car.]
[We see the Shrine in the distance.]
[Walking onto the site, as sheet piling slowly sinks down.]
[We look up, to the big hotel.]
[Conversation between taxi driver and passenger:]

Taxi Driver   This is your stop. That'll be 60.000 tomans.

Passenger   I'm sorry. I don't have that money on me.

Taxi Driver   What do you mean you don't have that money on you?

Passenger   Can I give it tomorrow?

Taxi Driver   What?

Passenger   Can I give the money to you tomorrow?

Taxi Driver   I don't know. How do I know I'll ever see you again?

Scene 3: Looking down from the big hotel onto the site.
[35 seconds.]
[We look out of a window onto the Landscape towards the Car. The camera slowly moves backwards to reveal that we're inside the Hotel City bedroom. The conversation starts.]

Safar   How did you sleep last night?

Zahra   I didn't sleep. You snored like hell.

[At the word "Hell", Sheet Piling glides down past the window, blocking our view. Very softly music kicks in: Let it Go, Léon Phal. The Sheet Piling visibly glides downwards.]

Safar	Why didn't you tell me?
Zahra	How could I? I tried everything; you wouldn't wake up. It's hopeless, trying to sleep next to you.
Safar	I'm sorry.
Zahra	That doesn't change anything.

Scene 4: Inside a machine changing the Landscape.
[50 seconds.]
[The music continues as we're now in one of the machines on it. With grace we attack the sand, slowly, we dig a deep pit.]
[Then, we hear a voice of someone, is it the person controlling the machine? We don't see any hands; we don't know whether we're in control or not.]

Woman voice	I had a dream last night.

I was lying in bed, and when I woke up, and looked outside my window, the whole world was completely covered in snow.
But, when I looked more closely, I saw that it wasn't snow.
It was some sort of gold dust, glistening in the light of the morning sun.

[Slowly the perspective changes, as we're now suddenly inside of the dream, experiencing these very things as ourselves.]

Woman voice	And then suddenly that gold dust started to move from above me, and as more and more material came, I felt this need to go outside and touch it. When I felt its warmth, my hands started digging and before I knew it, I was on top of it, above my bedroom.

Then I saw I was only at the bottom of it, and everywhere around me was this gold dust.

People started emerging, and before I knew it, everywhere was anywhere.

Scene 5: Descending the stair into the Voidscape.
[1 minute 20 seconds.]
[Two persons (Farhad & Hossein) are standing on the edge of the Landscape; they slowly walk down the staircase onto it.]

Farhad   How did you sleep last night?

[It turns out to be a movie set, after we hear "Cut!", the camera changes to see the director and crew standing there, landscape in their back, as they film this very scene.]

Director   Cut! Hossein, why don't you answer? You're supposed to say: 'I didn't sleep at all, you snored like hell.' That's all. Go back up now. You understand?

[Camera back to the 'shot'.]

Showrunner   Shot 5, take 2.

Farhad   How did you sleep last night?

[At "Cut!", the camera jumps back to the 'director', only now have things changed in his background. It's as if the Landscape is resisting his directions. The Sloped Square is now sunken into the background.]

Director   Cut! Speak, my friend! Why don't you say your lines? Go back up.

                  Farhad, don't look at him too long as he goes downstairs. Farhad! Understand?"

[As becomes apparent, the actors don't necessary do as the director tells them to, as they won't speak their line.]

Farhad   Yes

[Camera back to the 'shot'.]

Showrunner   Shot 5, take 3.

Farhad   How did you sleep last night?

Director   Cut! Why don't you say something? Did you forget your lines?

Hossein   Sir, I can't do it.

[Camera back to the 'shot'.]

Director	What do you mean? What's wrong?
Hossein	I can't. It's just… I really didn't sleep at all.
Director	I see.

Scene 6: Walking over the Sloped Square, looking down into the Prayer Room.
[35 seconds.]
[We're back to the viewpoint towards the film crew, only now they're gone, and we follow two other people as they move towards the Canopy and Metro Station.]
[A conversation between two people.]

Person 1	What is your dream?
Person 2	To have my whole family visit me here.
Person 1	That isn't too hard, is it?

[Person 2. As they now walk over the sloped square, towards the Metro Station, we now start to hear the bustle of it.]

Person 2	It's only that they don't have the means to do that, my brother works in the turquoise mines, he never comes here. My sister is in Tehran, living a hectic life, she doesn't have time

[Person 1. The sound of a nearing subway train gradually emerges.]

Person 1	I see. Hardly ever dreams come true.

Computer Voice; First in Farsi, then in English	The next stop is … Holy Shrine of Imam Reza. The next stop is … Holy Shrine of Imam Reza.

[Slowly the camera starts to move backwards, to reveal a full train. The camera stops to focus on a mother with two children.]

Mother	Tahereh, Abbas, this is our stop! Quickly now. Get the bags, yes. Okay. Here now
Abbas	Mom…?
Mother	Yes?
Abbas	How do you always know which way to go?
Mother	It's a matter of repetition. Here, step on it. If you do the same thing multiple times, things tend to go quite easily, as if by themselves. When you're older you'll understand.
Abbas	But we've never been here before…
Mother	That is correct.

Scene 8: Bargaining inside the Gift Shop.

[30 seconds.]
[A bargaining conversation that (as opposed to Hotel City) results in a direct interaction, leading to recognition of each other's feelings.]
[The camera is fixed on the counter. We only see the Tasbih lying there, and the general shape of the costumer. In the distance we see the landscape glowing.]

Tourist	Is this Tasbih made with Turquoise beads?
Shop owner	That is correct.
Tourist	How much do you want for it?"
Shop owner	200

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Tourist	Are you out of your mind? That's way too much.
Shop owner	I'm sorry? This is handcrafted by my eldest, Abbas. Made with precious stones that were dug out of the earth in this region, by my cousin, Hossein, who works in the mines. And then, do you even know how much it costs for me to sit here all day? I think 200 is a bargain for the tears that went into this Tasbih.
Tourist	100, then.

Scene 9: Walking through the Shrine Tunnel; Dividing People over the Walkways.
[55 seconds.]
[People are standing on moving sidewalks. They are moving through the long tunnel, which is dimly lighted, towards the Landscape.]

Person 1	Okay, we have a deal.
Person 2	Wait… Are you sure you want to do this?
Person 1	Yes. You give me no choice.
Person 2	Okay then. Good. I'll see you tomorrow, same time, same place. Remember to bring the ingredients.
Person 1	Yes.

[Slowly but steadily the light in the distance grows. We now follow someone who tries to converse our gaze towards a new conversation that takes place.]

Person 3	Do you know where the Imam Reza Guesthouse is located?
Subway Station Employee	Ah yes, it lies in the middle of the Sand.
Person 3	The sand?
Subway Station Employee	Yeah. Just walk up there, and you'll see it.

Person 3   Okay. Thank you.

Subway Station Employee   No problem.
                                  (...)
                                  Yes! This way towards the Shrine, that way towards the Public Park, and
                                  down there are the Prayer Rooms.

[The camera continues to move over the suspended Walkway/platforms, now
down the steps towards the prayer rooms. More conversations move past
our ears, until we focus on this one, which are two people leaving the prayer
room.]

Person 4   Did you hear what they want to do here?

Person 5   No?

Person 4   Yeah, it's something like a big park, but then, instead of lush green trees,
                                  they want to fill it with heaps of sand…

Person 5   Sand? But we already live in the desert.

Person 4   I know. It's absurd. As if they don't understand that.

Tahereh	Lord, please Lord, forgive them. Forgive them... Forgive those who are greedy and cheap. Forgive those who are greedy and miserly. And those who deceive and cheat or grow rich by paying miserable wages. Dear Lord, forgive them. Forgive them. And Lord, forgive those who humiliate and desecrate. Forgive those who torture and kill. Forgive those who bomb and destroy cities and villages. Forgive those who are dishonest, those who lie and are false. Forgive governments who withhold the truth from the people. Dear Lord, forgive them. Forgive those who are heartless, merciless, and quick to pass judgement. Please Lord, forgive them. Forgive courts that pass sentences too harsh or convict the innocent. Forgive them.

[Shrine Official. After everyone has left, except him and the girl.]

Shrine Official	Tahereh... We have to close and lock up now.
Tahereh	Forgive newspapers and TV channels that mislead. That distract attention from that which is important. Dear Lord, forgive them.
Shrine Official	There now, Tahereh. We have to close and lock up now.
Tahereh	Dear Lord, forgive them. Forgive them.

Scene 11: The flying kite over the Landscape.
[25 seconds.]
[The camera dissolves during the last mutters of prayer into the sky, and we see a boy lose his kite: it slips out of his hands.]
[We follow the now randomly flying kite as it flies from between the remaining residential fabric towards the Landscape. As the kite flies, and the camera twists and turns, the landscape every time is changed a little bit that we see it again.]
[The kite eventually flies through a garden pit into the Lobby of the Guesthouse Entrance Block.]

Scene 12: Checking in inside the Guesthouse.
[35 seconds.]
[Now inside the Lobby, which is homely decorated, we see a man with his wife and two children waiting in front of a desk. Someone walks to him.]

Guesthouse Employee	Did you call for me?
Hossein	Yes. I wanted to check-in here. I booked a room for my family.
Guesthouse Employee	Okay, let's see. What is your name?
Hossein	Jafarian.
Guesthouse Employee	You are Hossein Jafarian?
Hossein	Yes.
Guesthouse Employee	Okay. Good. If you could just sign here, here, and… here. Yes. Perfect. You will stay in room 52. It's through that tunnel, follow it until you get to a T-junction, take a right, then, take the first turn left, and then you will find that room 52 is the 2nd door on the right.
Hossein	Okay.
Guesthouse Employee	Dinner is served in the dining room at 7. You are welcome to use the bathhouse and the other facilities any time. Have a pleasant stay!
Hossein	Thank you!

Scene 13: Walking through the Guesthouse Tunnels.
[15 seconds.]
[Light seeps through.]
[We cross someone else.]
[We are going towards our room.]
[A footstep darkens the tunnel, we go through the sand onto the landscape.]

Hossein	It should be here… right?
Wife	He explained it to you, I hope you were listening.
Hossein	Well, yeah.

Scene 14: Preparing dinner in the Guesthouse.
[30 seconds.]
[We see smoke coming out of a chimney.]
[As the conversation starts, we follow the chimney down, through the soil, and end up inside a kitchen, where we only see hands moving next to a cooking pot.]

Director	That smells great. What are you cooking?
Bagheri	Grilled Eggplant. It was requested for dinner.
Director	Bagheri?
Bagheri	Yes?
Director	What was the dish before last night?
Bagheri	Sour herb stew.
Director	How do you make that?
Bagheri	Sour herb stew?
Director	On second thought, tell me this instead: Isn't your wife jealous that you're the better cook?
Bagheri	She used to be… But she isn't around anymore.
Director	You mean…?"
Bagheri	Yes. She's Dead.
Director	God rest her soul. So you're alone now?"
Bagheri	Yes.

[20 seconds.]
[We are now inside one of the guesthouse gardens. One person is sitting on a bench, under a tree. A man stands next to her, holding a dog.]
[Woman.]

Woman	Here I sit in a garden and stare.
	The whole world waits for me out there.
	I'm a miserable wench. On an ugly bench.
	Is it strange to pray?"
Man	No, it's okay.
Hossein	For something to take me far away.

Scene 16: Singing at the Dining Tables.
[2 min. 15 seconds.]
[The camera is panning through a Brick Tunnel.]
[A song emerges from the distance: Kärlekens Tid, Benny Anderssons Orkester]
[As we turn a corner, into the dinner room, we now notice that it's completely filled with people. They're all sitting and obviously singing. Food is waiting in front of them.]
[The lyrics are subtitled]

Touch me now
Fill my life to the brim
I was a child once
Looking for my song

[The camera slowly moves past them, perfectly in the middle.]

Who took away my song?
Who deprived me of my gift?
Who gave me my strength?
I was a child

[As the song reaches its climax. Suddenly everyone stands up.]

The time of love
Has preserved my longing
I was a child once
Looking for my song

[Then the camera moves up, we go through the roof.]

Touch me now
Fill my life to the brim
You gave me my hunger
I am a child

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Scene 17: Rain and Thunder. People taking shelter under the Canopy.
[1 minute.]
[The camera moves now through the roof, and we rise into the landscape with the final couplet, which now is nearly empty. Someone just moves out of the frame. Everything looks a bit grey.]
[With the final note of the song, a roll of thunder bangs, and rain kicks in. We now hear just the sounds of rain, thunder, city in the distance, it's clear we here are in a safe haven, away from the city.]
[As we slowly pan across the landscape, we see people have gathered under the canopy, taking shelter under it. The camera stops panning.]
[Slowly the landscape gets soaked by the rain. Sand starts to move. Paths are dissolving. They'll have to be remade.]
[More thunder rolls and claps, as someone walks into the frame, going to stand under the canopy.]
[As she stops walking and stands underneath the canopy, the rain slowly stops.]

Scene 18: The Weather Clears. People Bake in the Sunlight.
[1 minute 30 seconds.]
[Slowly the weather clears.]
[Gradually, a ray of sunlight shines onto the people standing under the canopy. The people rather slowly, one by one, look up, directly into it.] As they do, the camera starts panning again, and follows their gaze over the landscape, as we now see a small machine that traverses the landscape, visible stamping a new path in the soil.]
[As we follow the machine, we move past more and more people, who've apparently started laying blankets on the Landscape.]
[Now everywhere, people are lying in the sand, as if it's a beach. There are loads of blankets, machines, trees, tents, everything.]
[Then, the machine stops out of nothing, and starts to dig down]
[We make a jump in time and see that this digging has dug up a stage, and now people are sitting around it, on benches created with processed soil.]
[Everybody claps, as now a small orchestra/band/choir walks on stage, and starts to play one of the following songs:]

Summertime, Zombies
Orchestral Suite in D. Minor, Aria
One More Kiss Dear, Vangelis
Blue Bayou, Linda Ronstadt

[While they start playing, the camera extremely slowly starts zooms out, and move up, towards the sky, to reveal the whole Landscape.]
[As we become one with the clouds, the screen fades to a colour.]
[The name of the project emerges…]

[THE END.]

VIGNETTES