Low Town Dialogues: in *between* *living* and *learning*

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Collaboration

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When an architectural object is introduced into space, whether deliberately or unintentionally, it defines a boundary.

Across all scales, from the urban to the interior, this edge is rarely a clear line, rather, it is a space with depth, a moment of friction and negotiation.

existing

Lageweg, located in of Hoboken
on the southern periphery
of Antwerp, sits between
the consolidated city and a
transforming edge that has never
been fully absorbed.

Rooted in its industrial past, the
site has been shaped primarily by
a functional logic, from the grid of
the factory to the organization of
transport, storage, and enclosure.

As these uses have receded and
transformed, clarity has given
way to ambiguity. What was
once purposeful now drifts, its
intentions blurred.
As function fades or shifts, it
leaves behind forms that are
hard to reappropriate. Walls and
access routes remain, but their
meanings weaken, destinations
lose definition.

Currently Lageweg operates
according to a logic of adjacency
rather than connection.
Programmatic fragments sit side
by side: housing beside factories,
schools beside storage, without
shared thresholds, without
common ground. Its walls, fences,
dead ends, and undeveloped plots,
along with the absence of signage
and unclear ownership, close it off
to proper engagement.

View of the site in the early 2000s, following the closure of the Hayes Lemmerz plant and Crown
Packaging facilities. The withdrawal of these major industries left behind large vacant structures,
initiating a long period of spatial and programmatic uncertainty.

building

all things in this world are a product of the formula:
(function times economy).

all things are, therefore, not works of art:
all art is composition and, hence, is unsuited to achieve
goals.
all life is function and is therefore unartistic.
the idea of the 'composition of a harbour' is hilarious!
but how is a town plan designed? or a plan of a dwelling?
composition or function? art or life?????

H. Meyer, 1928

approaching

In larger sites, multiple orders
overlap and interfere. Colliding
logics create friction and, most of
all,

      specificity.

I investigate the site through
its seams — as conditions that
reveal tensions, boundaries, and
potentials.

I follow the fractures and
overlaps, where parts rub or
hesitate, to sense what the current
arrangement allows, neglects, or
resists.

Layers of past and present development merge across the site, forming a fragmented yet continuous
landscape. Active facilities, industrial remnants, residential additions, and temporary uses overlap
without hierarchy.

it is necessary to investigate "The accidents or catastrophes of space and the multiplicity of spatial varieties. What is the closed? What is the open?... What is the continuous and the discontinuous? What is a threshold, a limit? Elementary program of a topology."

"From now on there is space, or the spaces, that are the condition of the old stories. The spaces by which I have the chance of acquiring a new knowledge. And myths are written on them."

Michel Serres, 1977
Discours et parcours

Beneath, framing reveals little.

Above, things stay unresolved, a tangle of forms without clarity.

Edges fray, surfaces press, logics misalign.

In this landscape, things lean into each other without fully meeting. Held together by tension, pulled apart by time. What appears static is, in truth, shifting: use flickers, abandonment lingers, traces accumulate.

Friction is not loud here. It hums in the gaps, in the seams, in the places where one thing nearly touches another.

A disused industrial hall, now repurposed as a sports center, shares a wall with a house.

That wall does not mediate, it separates.
Mismatched scales, incompatible uses and materials coexist in isolation.

IN - BETWEEN

MARGIN

THRESHOLD

INTERSTICE (to be between)

systems that regulate
the relationships
between the multitude
of objects

it is through the reading of these systems
that the dualisms they identify can be
compared and interpreted

Our world is clearly arranged according to the word "function", as is clearly divided into black and white. But isn't real life sustained by the innumerable acts that lie between them?

Gradations lie in various places. Between inside and outside, between architecture and city, between furniture and architecture, between public and private, between theatre and museum, between house and street, between object and space, between morning and evening, between known and unknown, between movement and rest.

Sou Fujimoto, 2008
Primitive future
"Gradation"
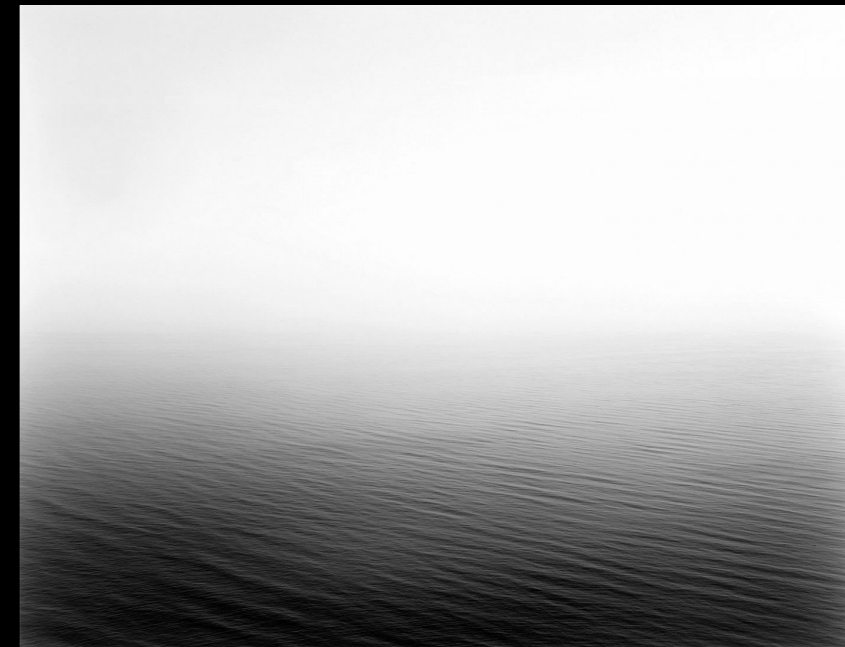
Paths promise passage but end in silence. Bricked up, fenced off, turned inward. Streets fold into themselves, wary of intrusion, stubborn in their stillness.

Access isn't always denied, but rarely announced. A gate as if meant to deter. Beyond it, a quiet clearing.

House after house, factory after factory, no pause.
Repetition becomes a wall.

How does one cross a line that never breaks?

*The way out feels unreachable. Visible distance holds back to speed and scale.*

fragmenting

Images don't describe Lageweg; they listen to its hesitations, its small resistances, its accidental rhythms.

The site speaks in fragments.

Rather than offering a clear reading, it demands to be navigated through discontinuities.

Understanding does not unfold through wholeness, but through what breaks away and defines:

        textures,
   residues,
        edges.
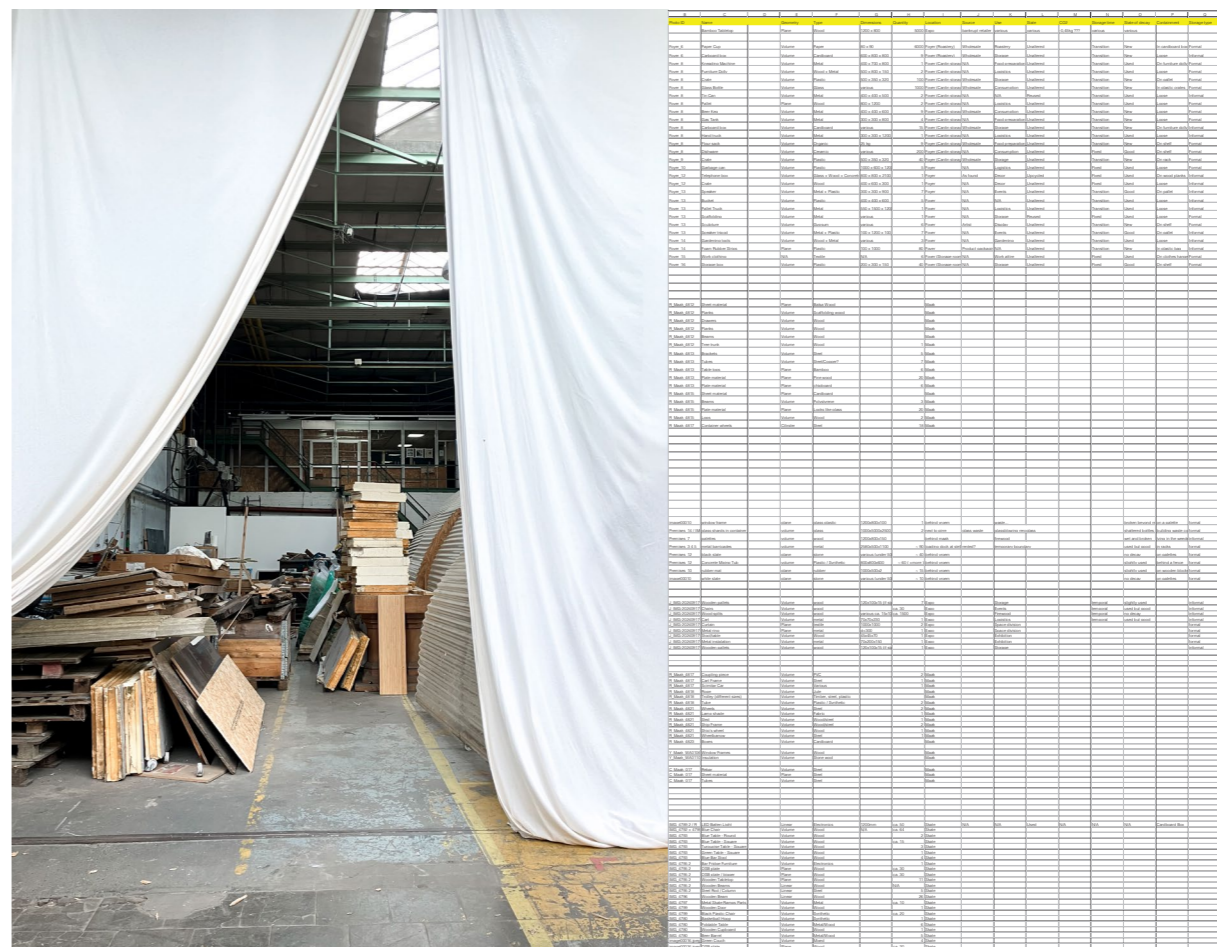
Much like a garden, the place does not present itself through order, but through traces: material left behind, material still in use, material waiting.
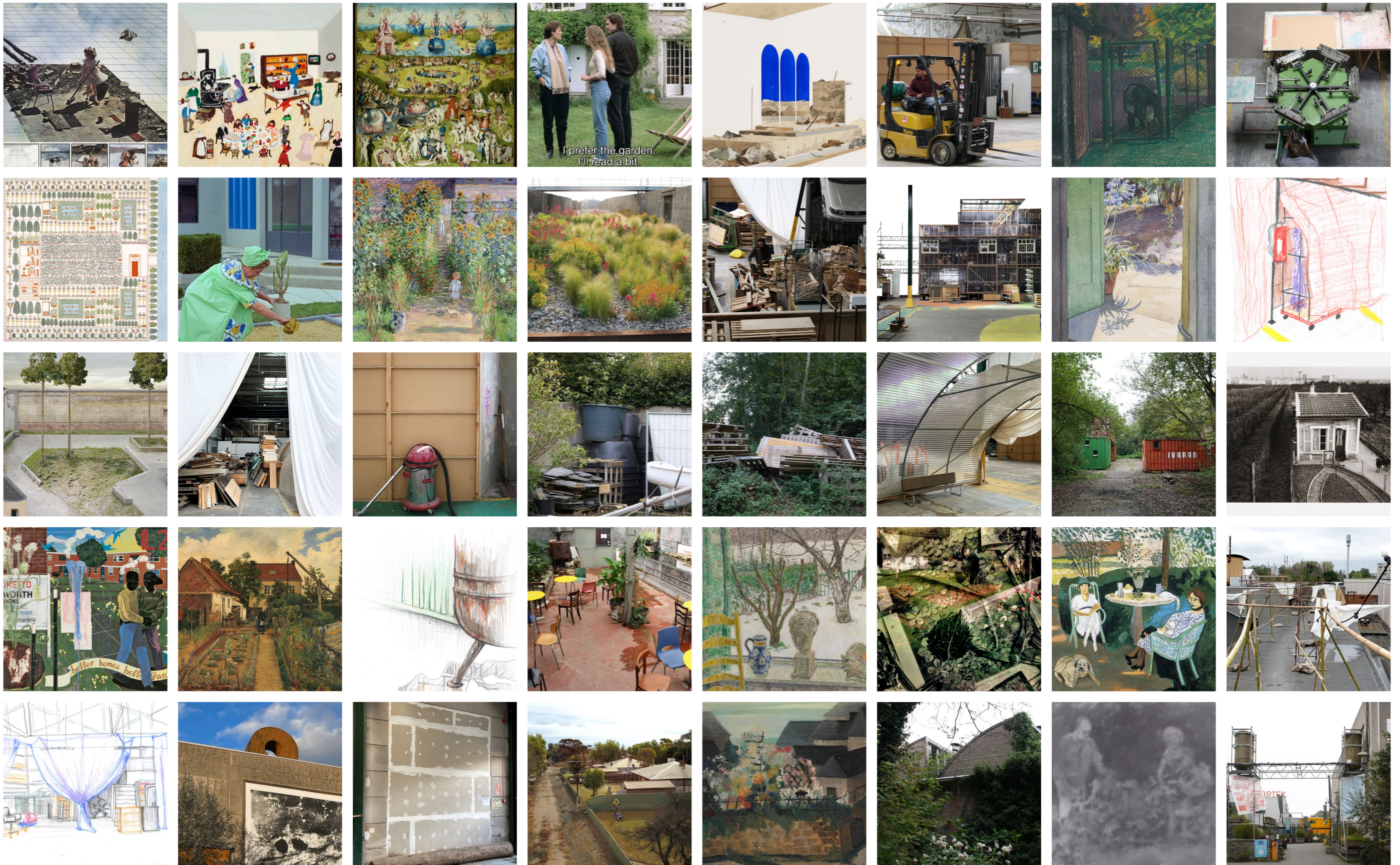
Blikfabriek is reimagined as a garden, as a system of relationships, flows, and cultivated conditions.
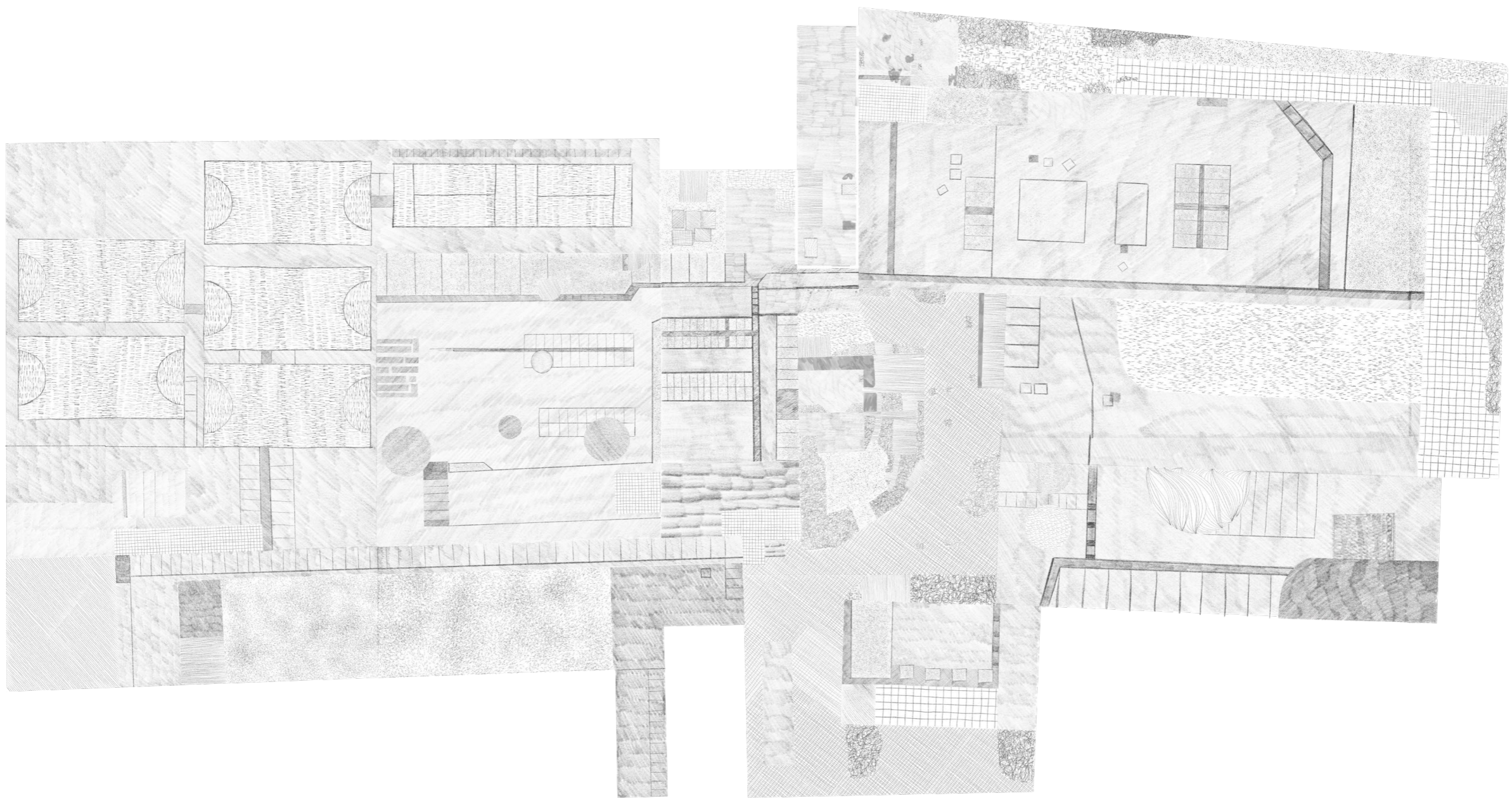
By translating the building into a garden plan, enclosures and walls are broken down and treated as soft boundaries rather than fixed separations. Surfaces are mapped like soil beds: receptive, layered, and interconnected. Through this new reading of the site, partition leaves place to porosity. The drawing becomes a tool to explore the Blikfabriek not as a container of functions, but as a living field of exchange in continuous transformation.
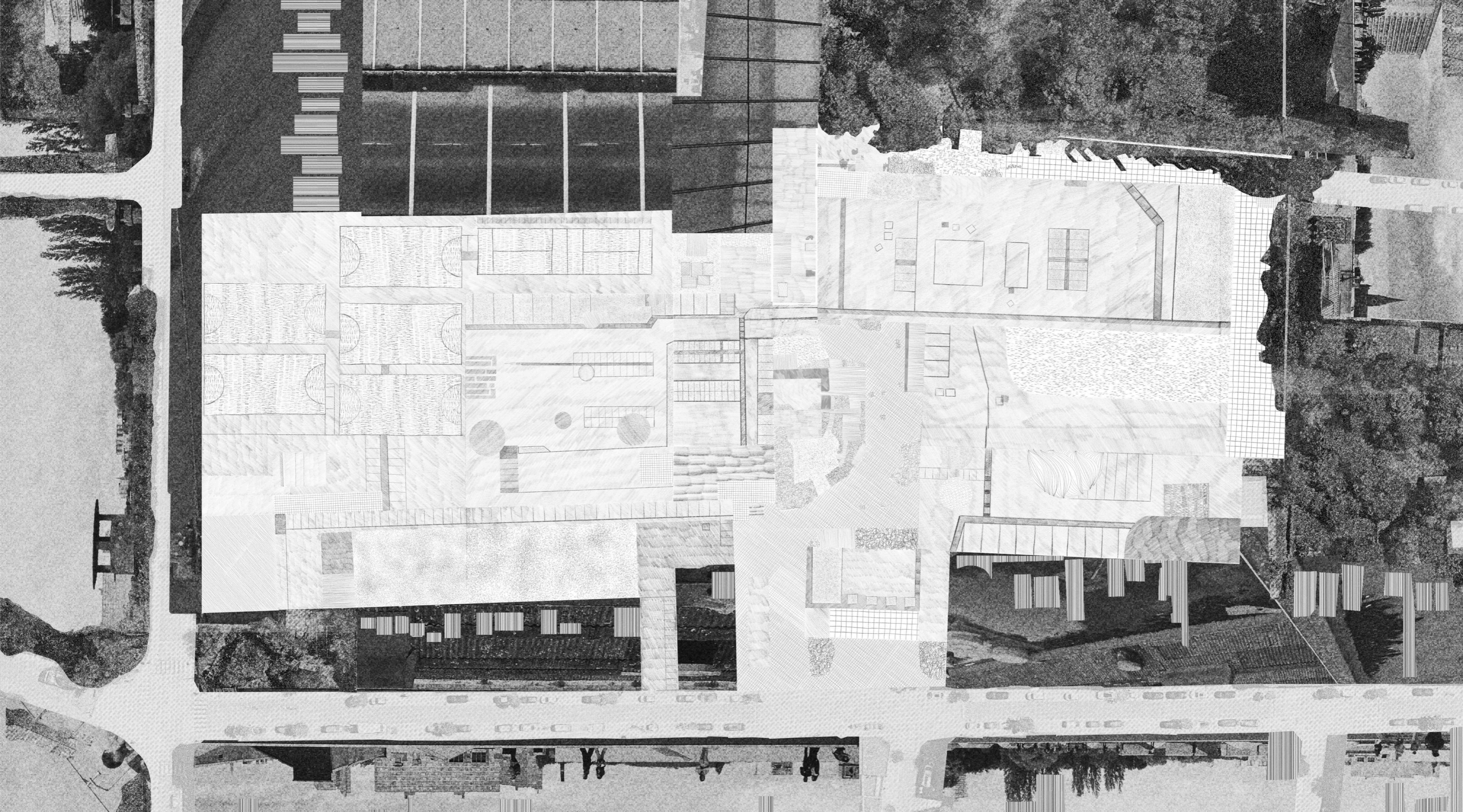
Placing the garden plan within its broader context reveals how the building negotiates its boundaries in relation to the outside. The enclosure of the site acts much like the edge of a walled garden: clearly defined, protective, and intentional.
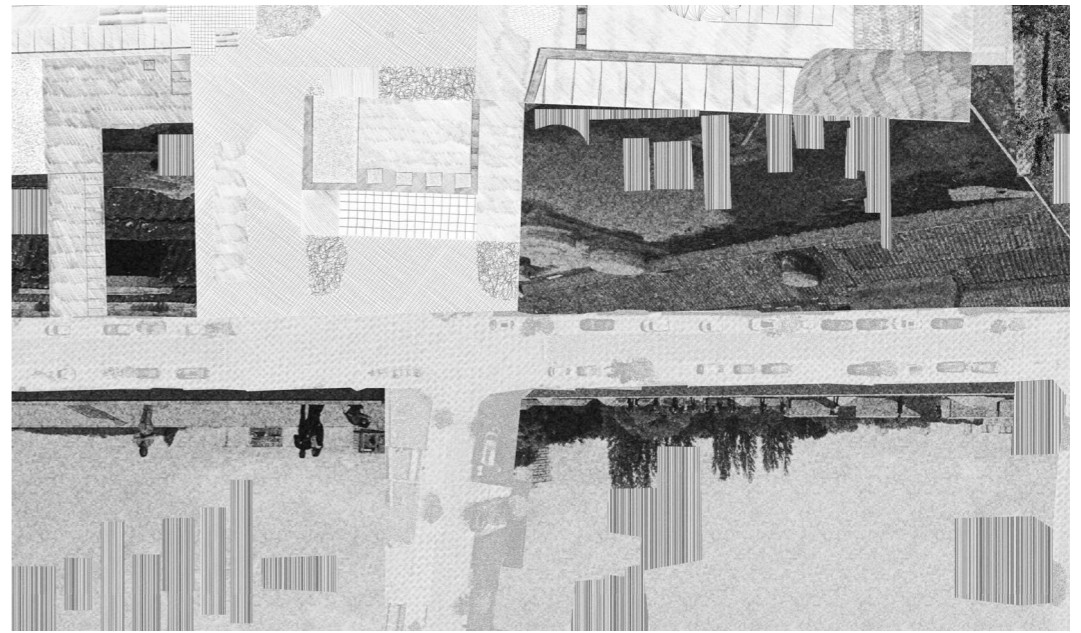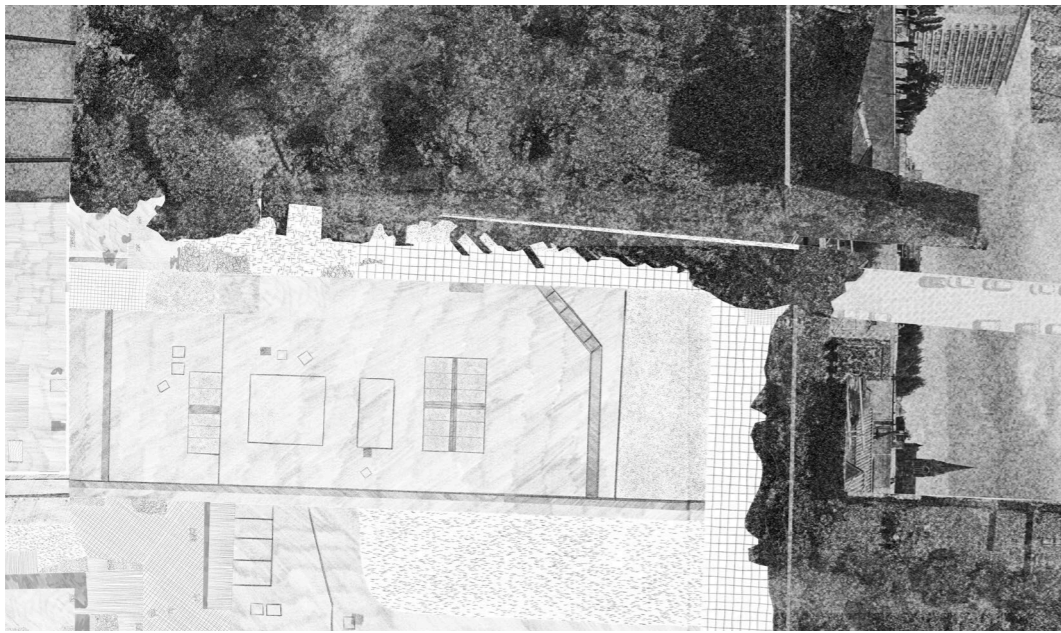
Yet this edge is not fully impermeable. There are unintentional moments where spontaneous growth blends in and programs spill out, seeking for contact and exchange between users, between uses, between timeframes.
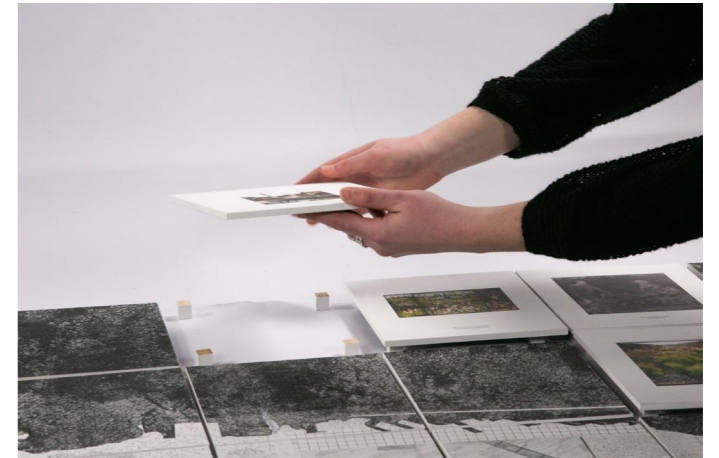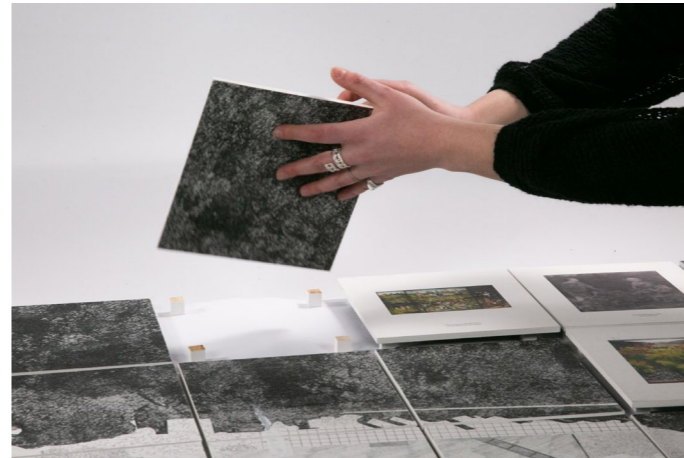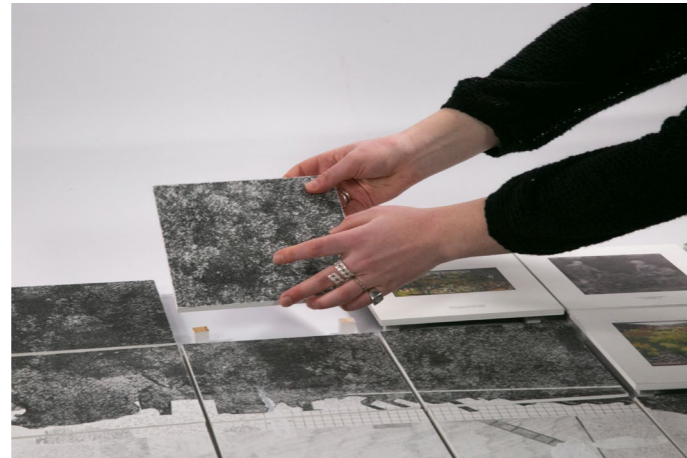
The garden unfolds in its pieces: broken, flipped, and reassembled. Each fragment is a lens, tinted by time, wear, conflict, or care, revealing not the site itself, but the forces that shape it.

The Material Garden of Gift and Waste uncovers a shifting ground defined not by its walls, but by the flows of material and immaterial exchange. Here, material moves and paths are carved out by it without being planned. Materials arrive and depart, are repurposed and redefined, carrying traces of previous lives. Seasonality and availability govern what can emerge, and when.

Blikfabriek is structured through relationships: between actors, materials, and time. Its organization depends not on fixed programs but on social networks, informal maintenance, and acts of care.

Within its boundaries, the site remains in constant transformation: a cultivated system, alive and provisional, held together by exchange.

breaking through

What begins as an edge around
a building becomes a pattern of
separation on a larger scale: the
enclosure around Blikfabriek
reflects a condition that extends
across the entire site.

Vacant plots, overgrown gardens,
dead-end streets, and fences
interrupt the continuity of space,
reinforcing a fragmented and
inward-facing landscape. These
physical elements, some the result
of neglect, others of regulation,
contribute to a patchwork fabric
where circulation is blocked, views
are obscured, and uses remain
disconnected.

Yet the frictions that arise
from these separations are not
inherently negative. They reveal
moments of tension where one
program brushes up against
another, where access is unclear,
or where boundaries are tested
by informal use. These zones
of overlap and hesitation are
precisely where potential resides.
Rather than erasing them, the
proposal begins by reading and
reworking them, seeking to
open up the plot through small
shifts, new connections, and the
reactivation of what already exists.

Enclosures
Potential Accesses

Enclosures
Potential Accesses

Enclosures
Potential Accesses

NO FRICTION, NO MOVEMENT

"without friction, wheels cannot grip the road to drive vehicles forward.

like small stones in a mighty wall standing firm against the centuries, the weak are made stronger by the shared friction that holds them together."

Phineas Harper, 2024
Six Frictions

- without an abundance of friction there is no potential for change.

could the existing not be the instigator or catalyst of the new? can it trigger new relationships, intensifying our subjective experience of space?

tabula rasa is for cowards, but there are no coherent rules for playing the game on a board filled with pieces. challenge what is there, reactivate it, make it part of the current but allow it to cause friction, to resist. the moment we let go of sentimental values but holistically assess the given and have it fight for its place in the here and now, we might reendow the old with new architectural agency.
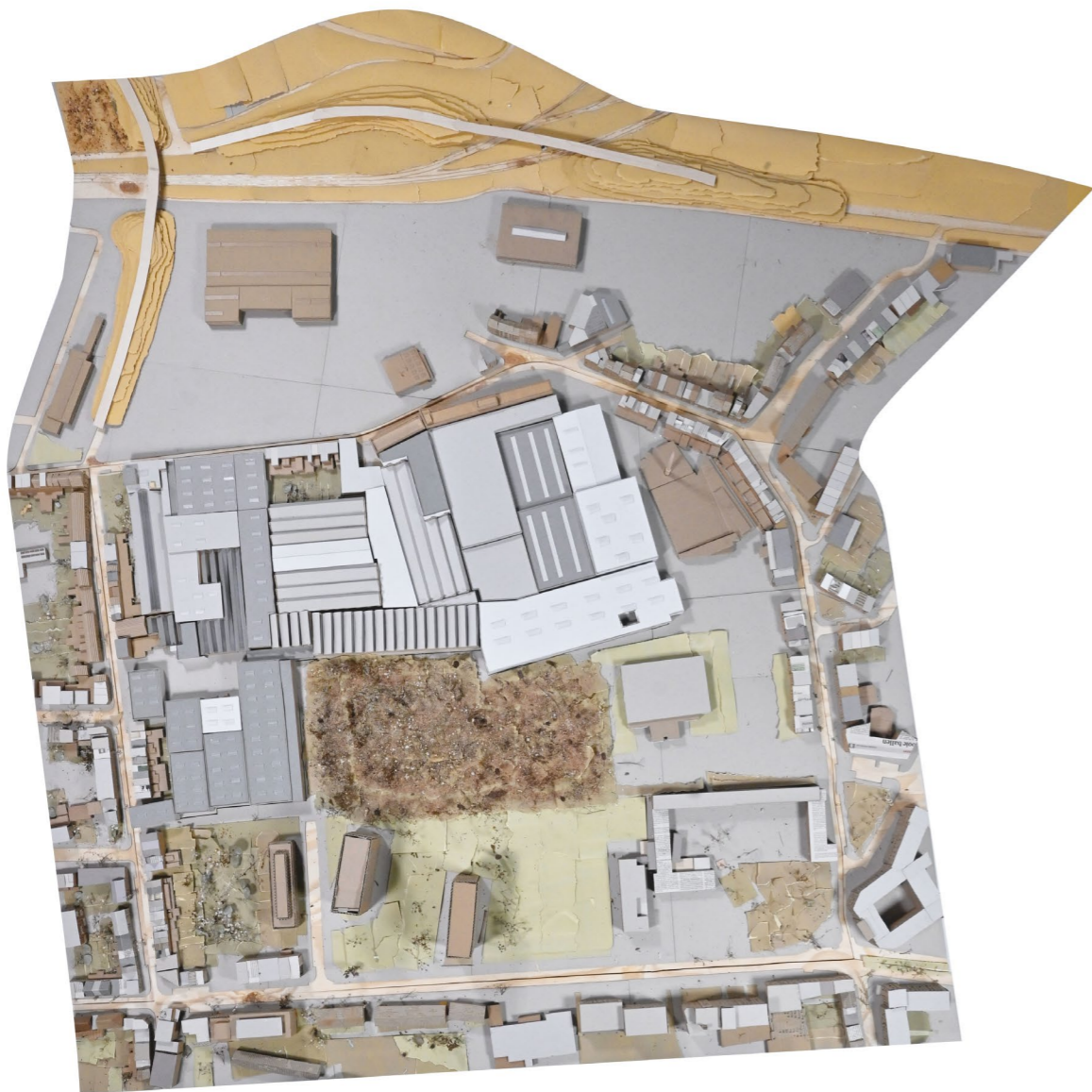
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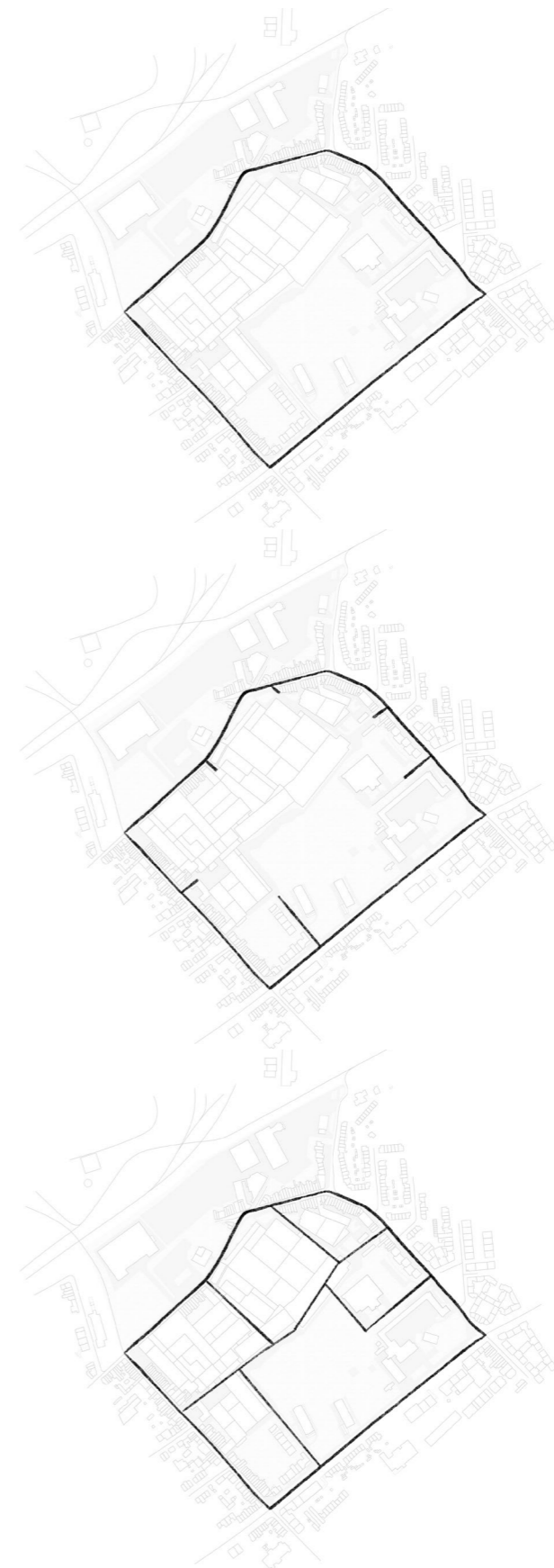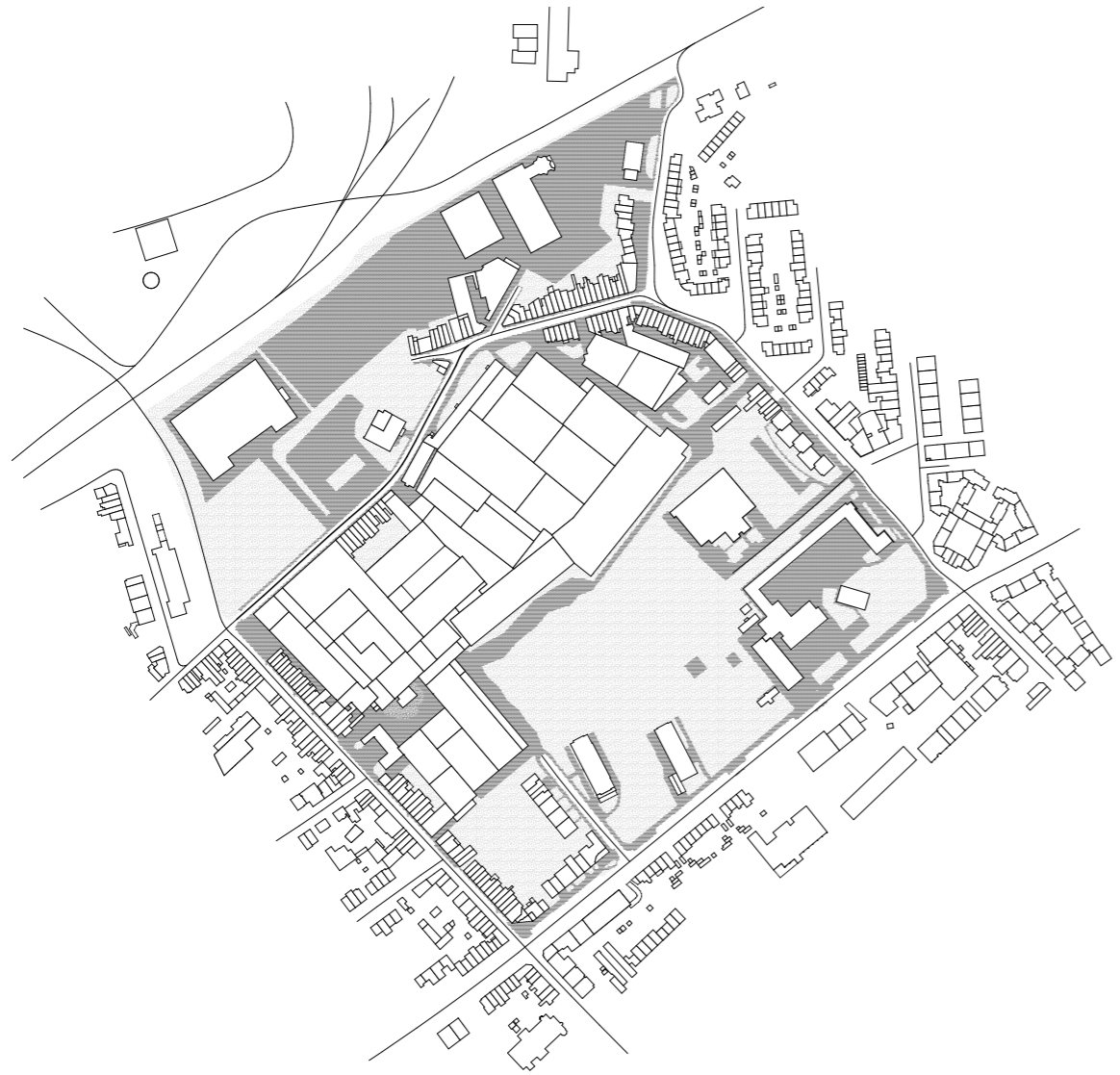
Existing

Proposed

PRE EXISTING

consider the pre existing as an inspired landscape
of architectural qualities, which we can complement
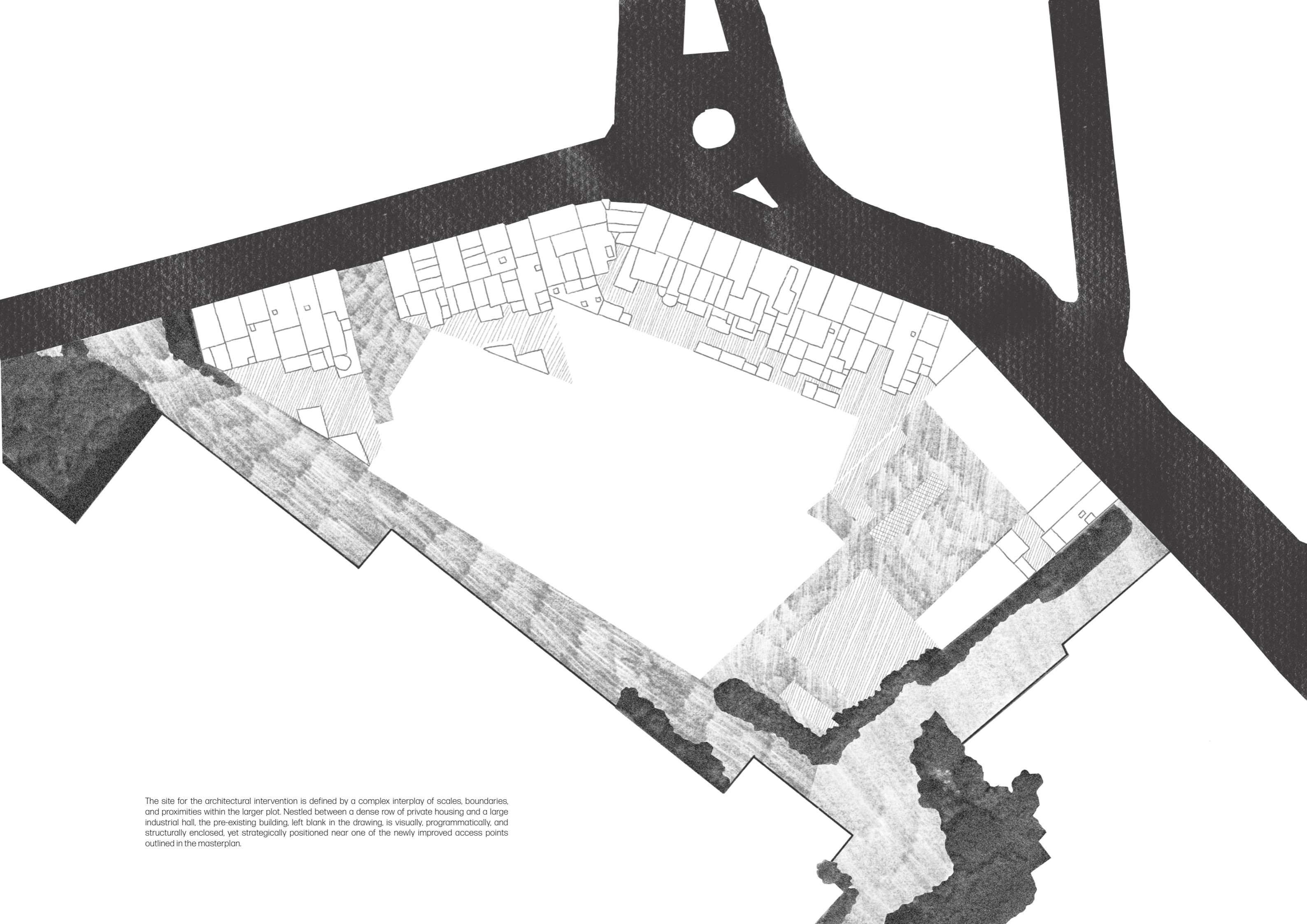and enrich through negotiations with the new

Existing

Proposed

The site for the architectural intervention is defined by a complex interplay of scales, boundaries, and proximities within the larger plot. Nestled between a dense row of private housing and a large industrial hall, the pre-existing building, left blank in the drawing, is visually, programmatically, and structurally enclosed, yet strategically positioned near one of the newly improved access points outlined in the masterplan.
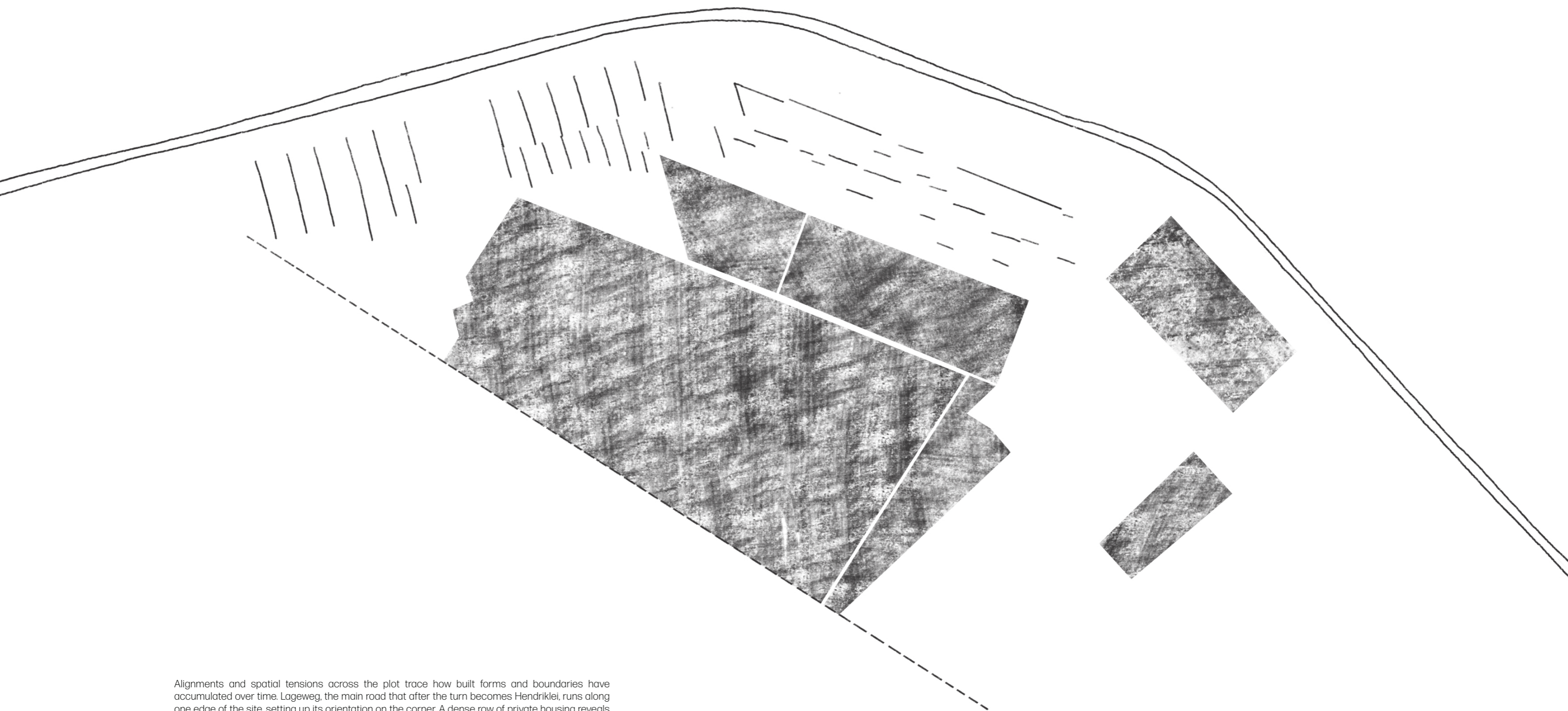
Alignments and spatial tensions across the plot trace how built forms and boundaries have accumulated over time. Lageweg, the main road that after the turn becomes Hendriklei, runs along one edge of the site, setting up its orientation on the corner. A dense row of private housing reveals layers of informal additions: sheds and outbuildings gradually built into back gardens, forming a fragmented and uneven barrier toward the central building. Opposite this, a large industrial hall asserts itself with clarity and scale, aligning along the far edge of the plot.

The existing edges function as significant architectural and spatial elements that reflect historical processes, programmatic functions, and inherent tensions. These boundaries define not only where the site ends and the outside begins, but also how the building relates to its immediate context.

The juxtaposition of domestic scale and industrial order creates a tension that defines the core of the site, one shaped as much by improvisation as by planning.

negotiating

At the core of the chosen site is a former industrial laundry facility built in 1961, now temporarily inhabited by a primary school.

Within its robust shell, spatial logics once devised for machines and linear flows are repurposed, stretched, and reinterpreted to accommodate the scaled-down rituals of childhood and care. Here, educational needs, historical traces, and improvised arrangements do not align seamlessly, they collide, overlap, and occasionally resist one another.

In its transformation, the building's inherent incompatibilities with its new function become painfully apparent. The misalignment between the building's original design and the improvised, adaptive strategies employed to make it usable for a school highlights the ongoing negotiation between these conflicting temporalities.

The outcome is a space that exists in a constant state of tension, never fully resolved, reflecting the ongoing dance between fragmentation, improvisation, and the possibilities embedded in the gaps and overlaps.
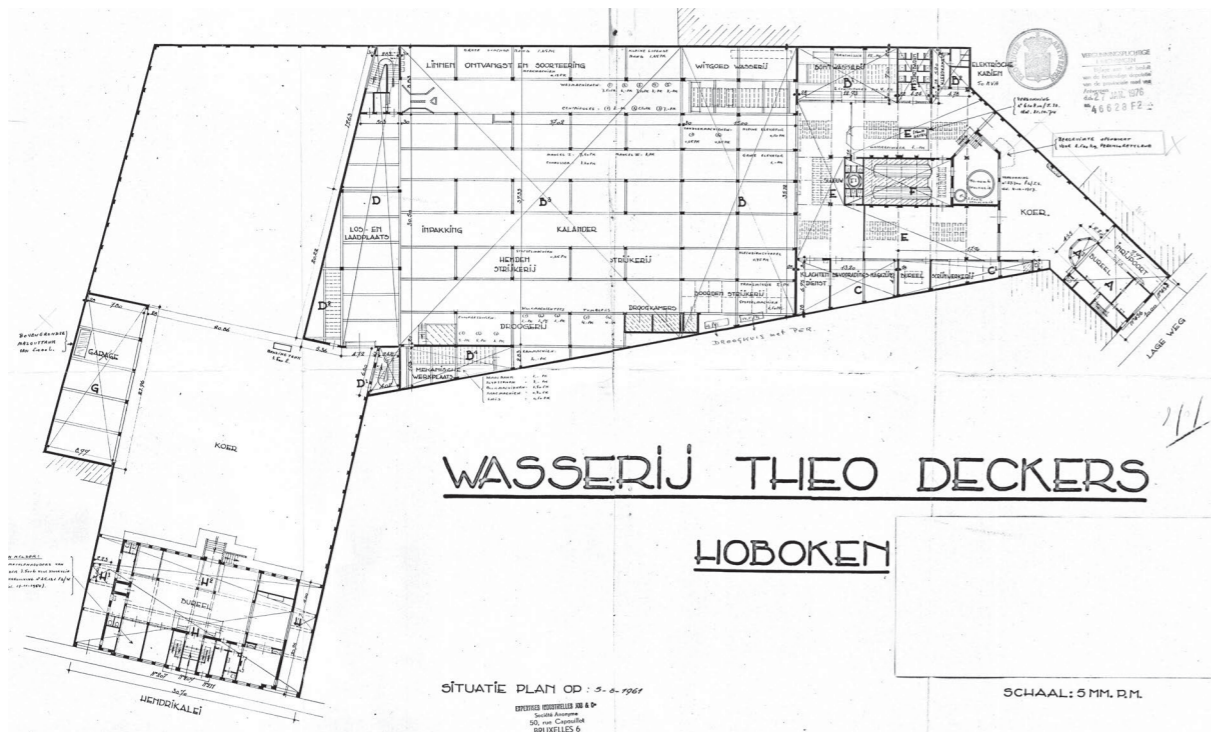
Wasserij Theo Deckers, 1961

Lucerna Basisschool, 2025

drawing order in/and disarray

in accelerated times, design justified through program is born dead. programs are not stable, and typically, despite most well-meaning intentions, misalign with people's behaviors. monofunctional organizations foreclose possibility. how, then, might we order architectural space in times of flux?

to this end Umberto Eco's *Opera Aperta* (1989) describes a beautifully useful approach captured in his conjecture of openness, which characterizes an author's cultural production as a "decision to leave arrangements of some constituents of a work to the public or to chance." in architecture, we can imagine this idea as the construction of a spatially open framework or loose order and situate it in opposition to programmatic, and typological, plan-making approaches. such is an attitude that puts forth semiautonomous spatial organizations that accommodate, or even merely tolerate, evolving configurations of activities and things. these open orders can have an underlying structural or material logic, but are just as well allusive, compositional, figurative, or arbitrary. here the architect exceeds the role of translator, a converter of needs and wants into plans, or rearranger, fitting preexisting spatial archetypes within a site, and instead becomes an author. it is where all alibis vanish and we are left to our own devices.

Once a public passage, this corridor was closed for safety, its function entirely redefined by the school's presence. Circulation becomes constraint, and access is transformed into a boundary.
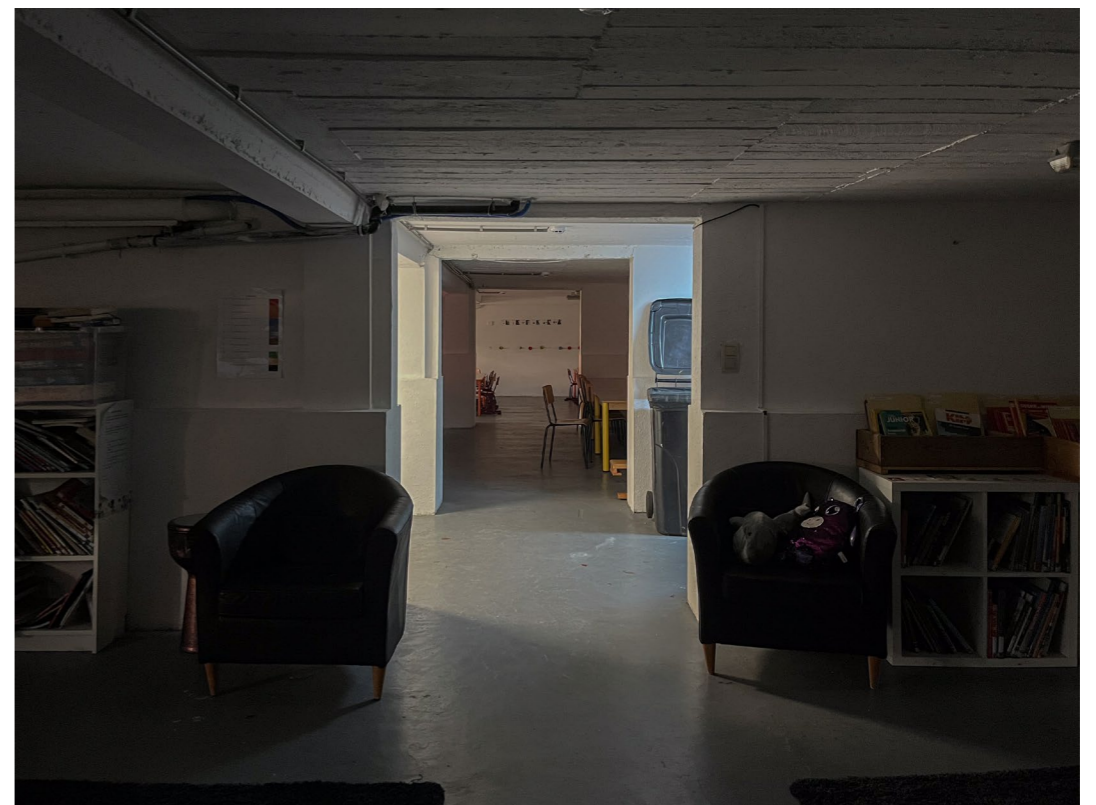
Existing arches from the original laundry structure remain open, creating enfilades between classrooms. Rather than dividing, the space flows. Industrial openness supports new forms of shared learning.

framing is a fundamental creative act.
framing a space drastically changes its perception.

im some cases frames CANNOT be avoided

it's all about
CAREFUL DELIMITATION

HOW TO LIMIT.

when defining an edge through an architectural
object the core is not the object itself,

rather something that the object can show but
would go unnoticed without it

The school courtyard is fully walled in, folding the space inward and severing all visual or physical connection to the outside. Perhaps its intimacy was seen as incompatible with the surrounding industrial scale

The school secretary's office sits opposite an improvised play area, a makeshift solution that unexpectedly creates spatial overlap. In this shared room, different uses coexist, blurring roles and functions and inviting informal encounters.

A separation wall divides the schoolyard from the private gardens beyond, yet one tree stretches across the boundary, its branches spilling into the school's space.

organizing matter/s

The existing edges of the
school function as significant
architectural and spatial elements
that reflect historical processes,
programmatic functions,
and inherent tensions. These
boundaries define not only where
the school ends and the outside
begins, but also how the building
relates to its immediate context.

The analysis of walls, fences and
transitional spaces reveals their
complex and often ambiguous
roles within the site, identifying
crucial points for intervention,
whether through reinforcement,
redefinition, or subtle
modification.

In this framework, edges become
active agents in reshaping spatial
relationships.
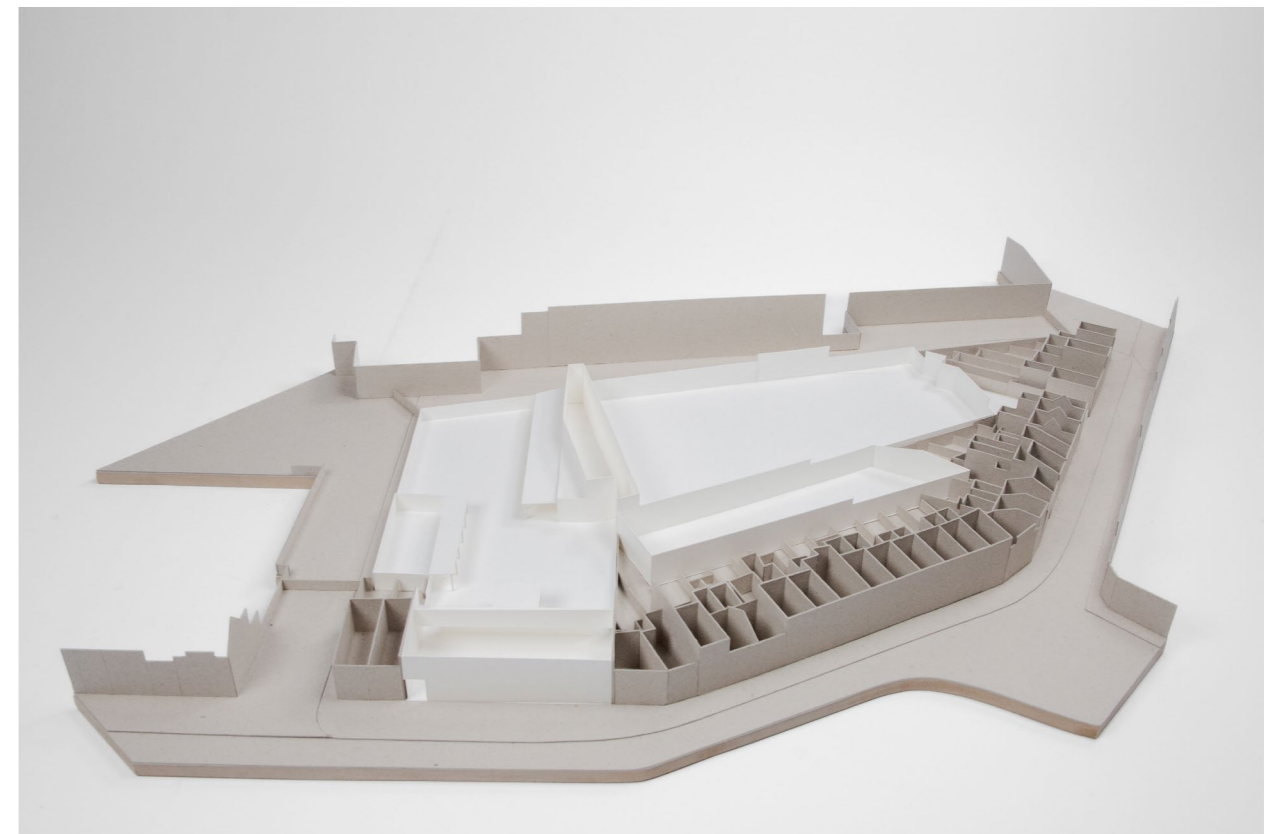
Existing edges

how might we meaningfully organise matter(s) in our increasingly volatile world?

can we surpass our desire for stability to discover a new beauty in the _evolving_, the transient, and the erratic?

architecture can become the brief _rearrangement of the substance_ that constitutes our world

↓

organizational strategies that can develop rather than be rigid and controlled

assemblies trigger exchange or confrontation, they evoke wonder or realization, affect our sense and insight and create a confluence of influences.

how to embed arrangements in the current, how to envision their interfaces, their edges, their borders.
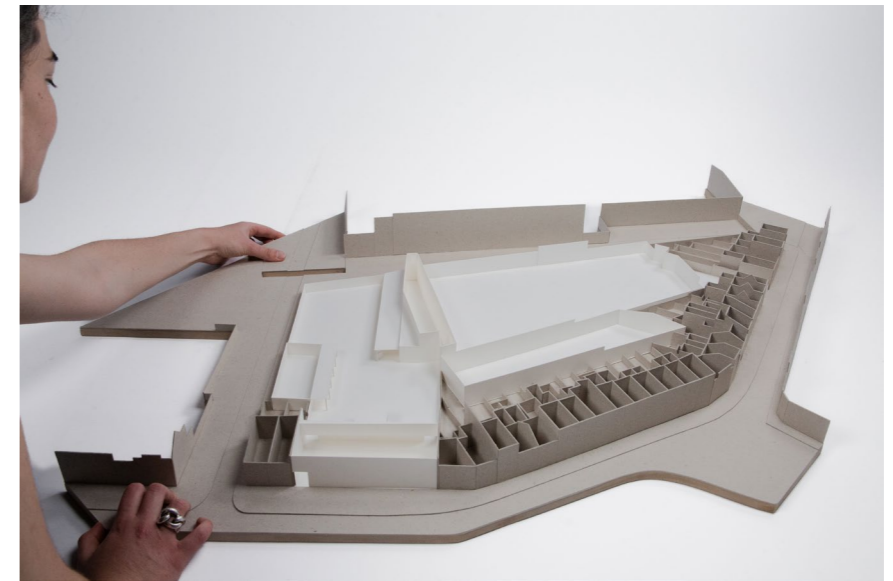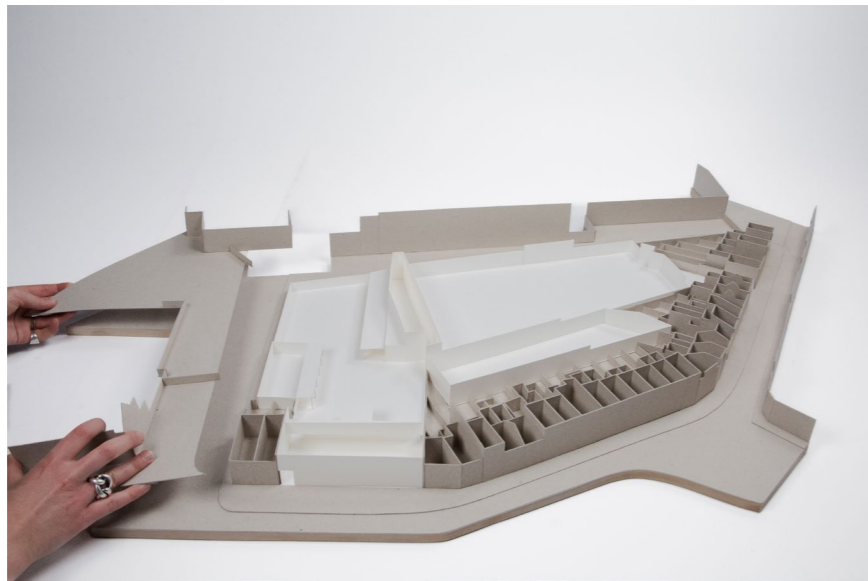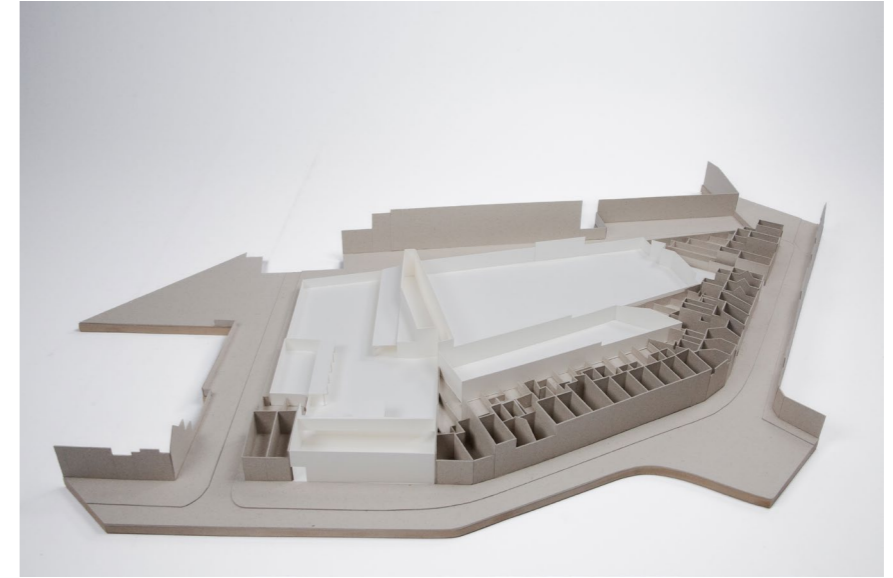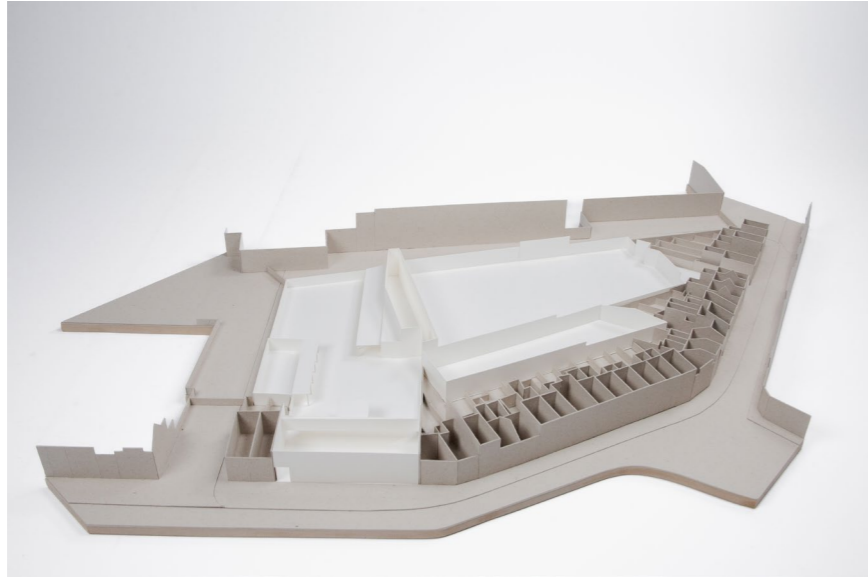
Trasforming an overgrown, fenced courtyard into a new main axis through the site
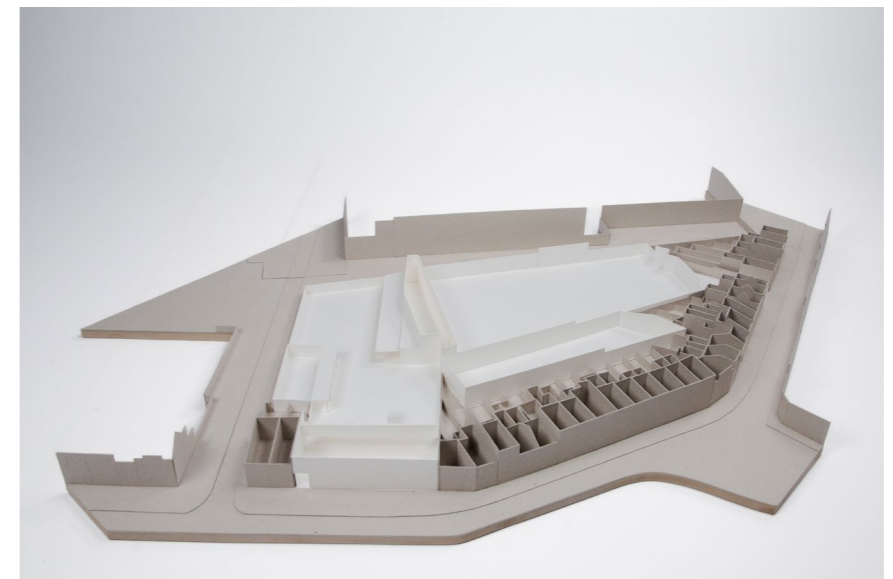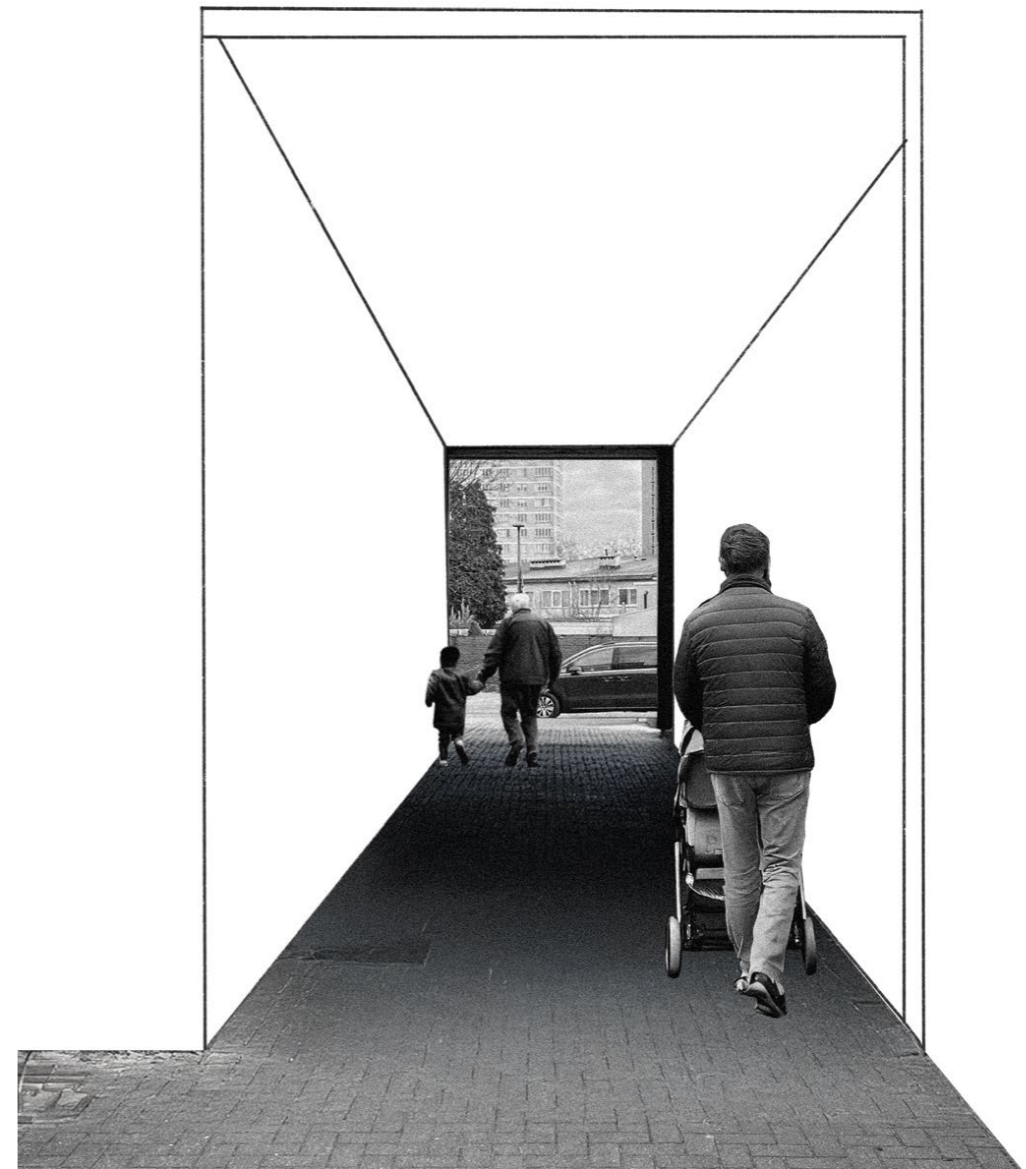
Opening back the public passage
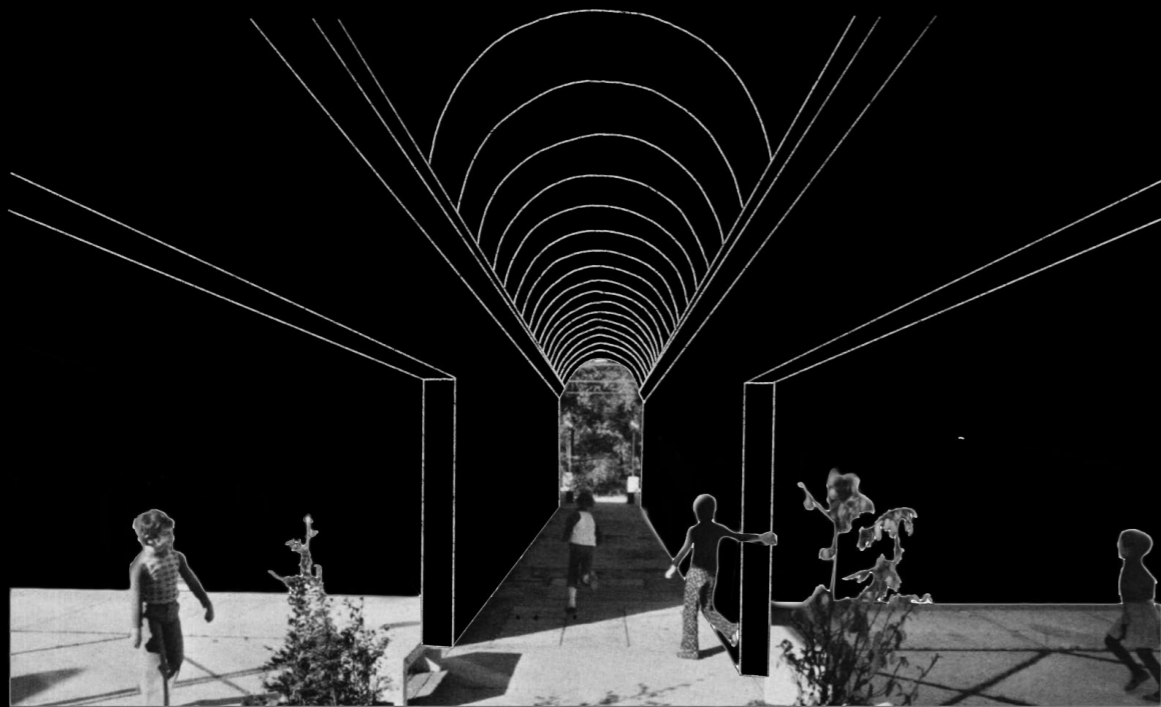
Livio Vacchini, 1972-1978, Elementary School in Locarno
Directing

Livio Vacchini, 1972-1978, Elementary School in Locarno
Framing

Existing

Proposed
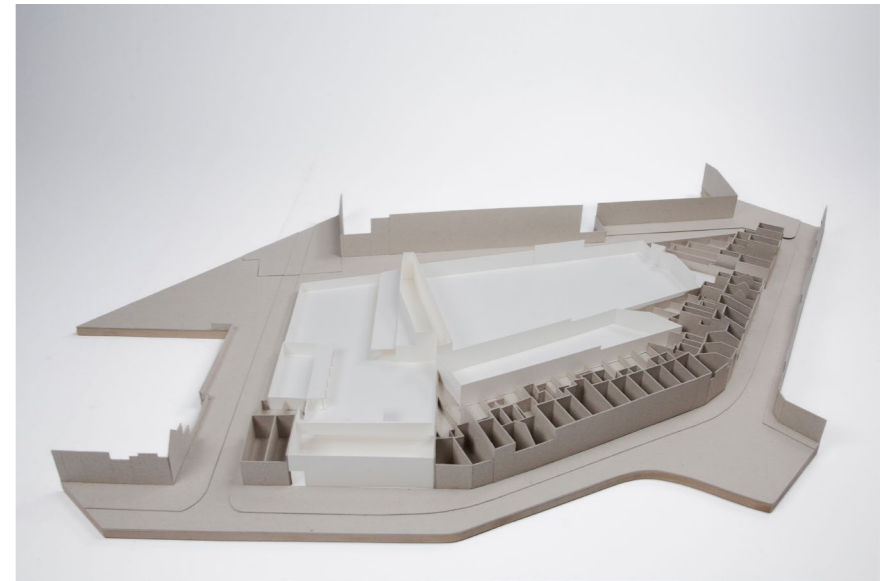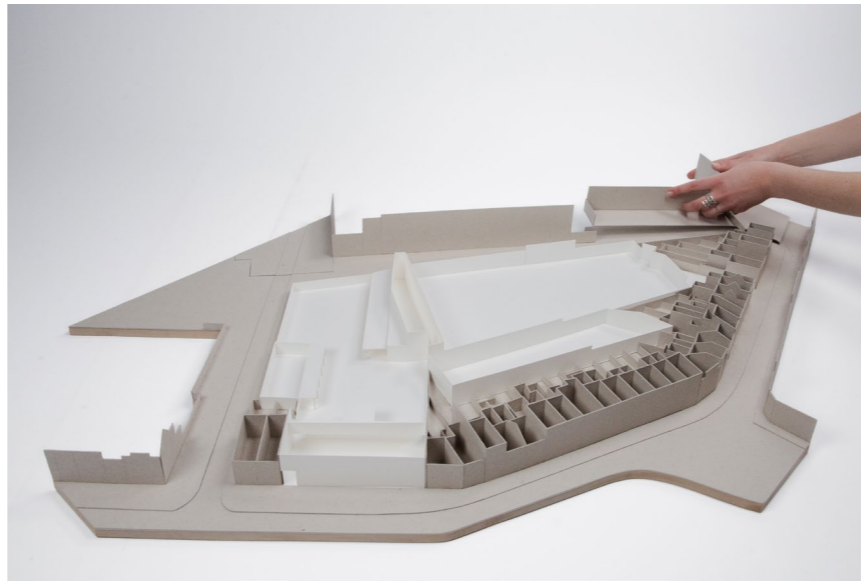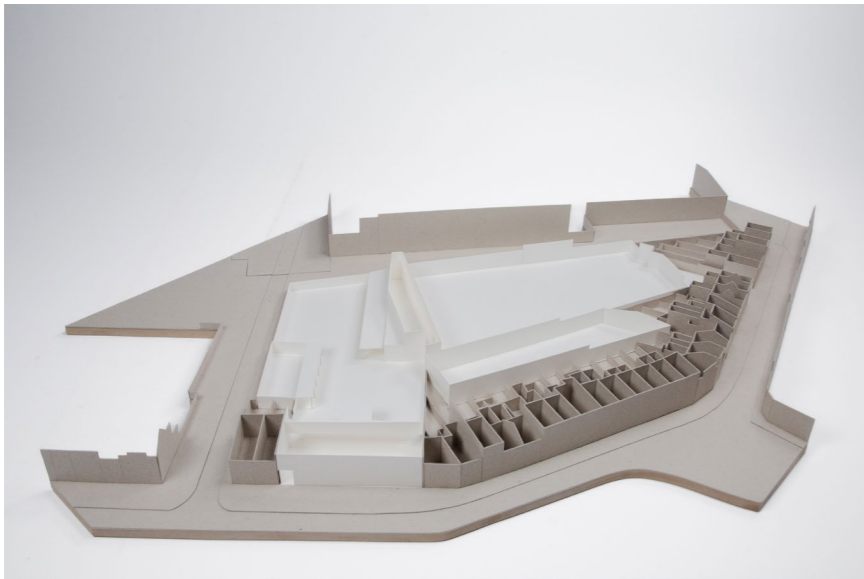
Removing the gate creating a new point of access to the industrial facility located behind the site,
enabling loading and unloading
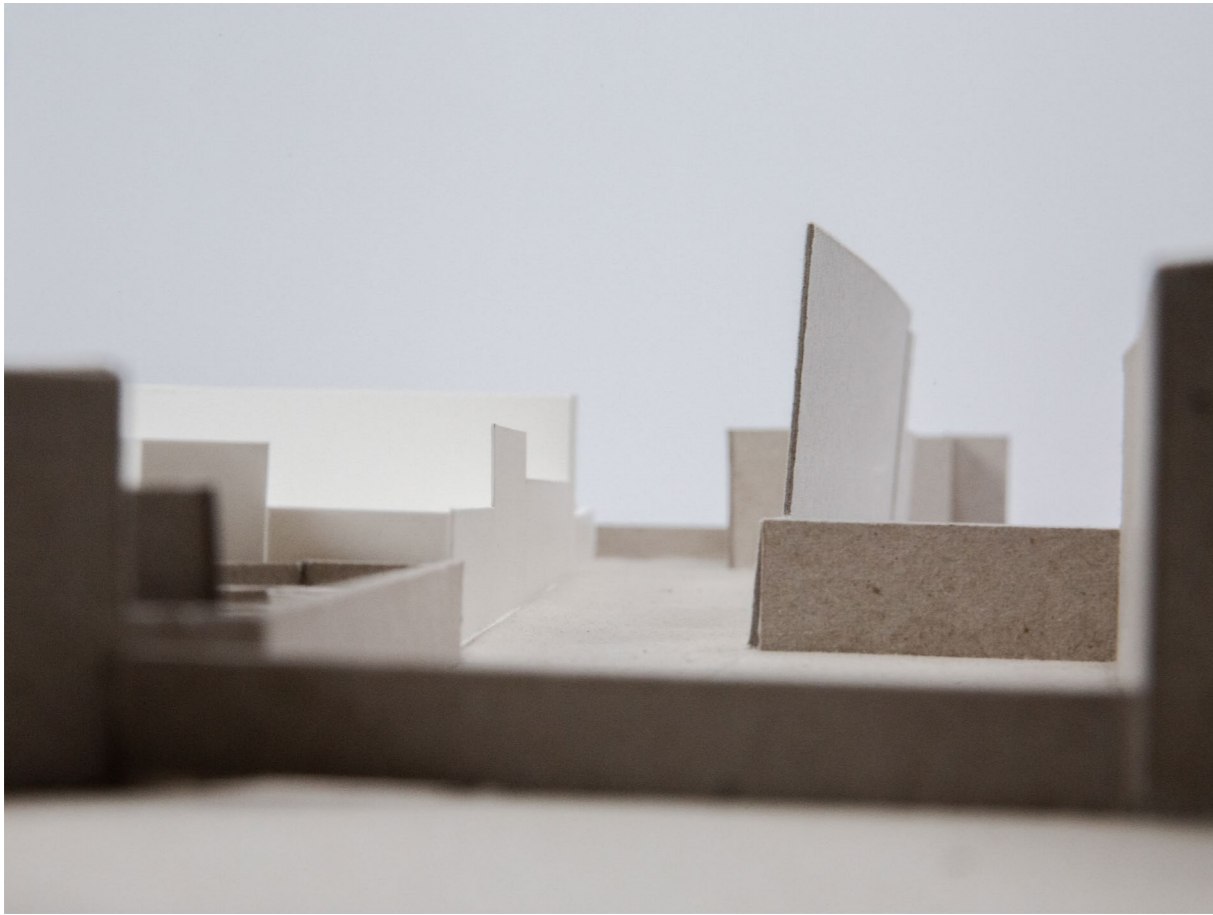
Existing

Proposed
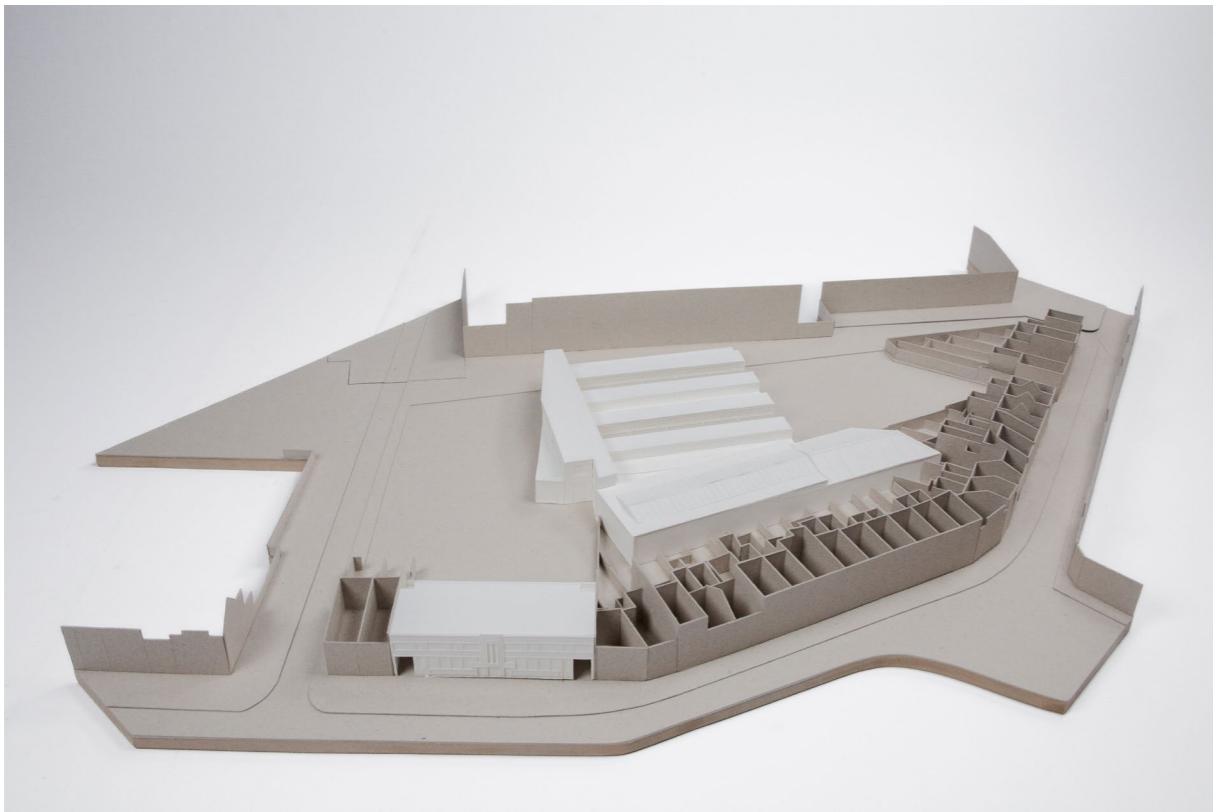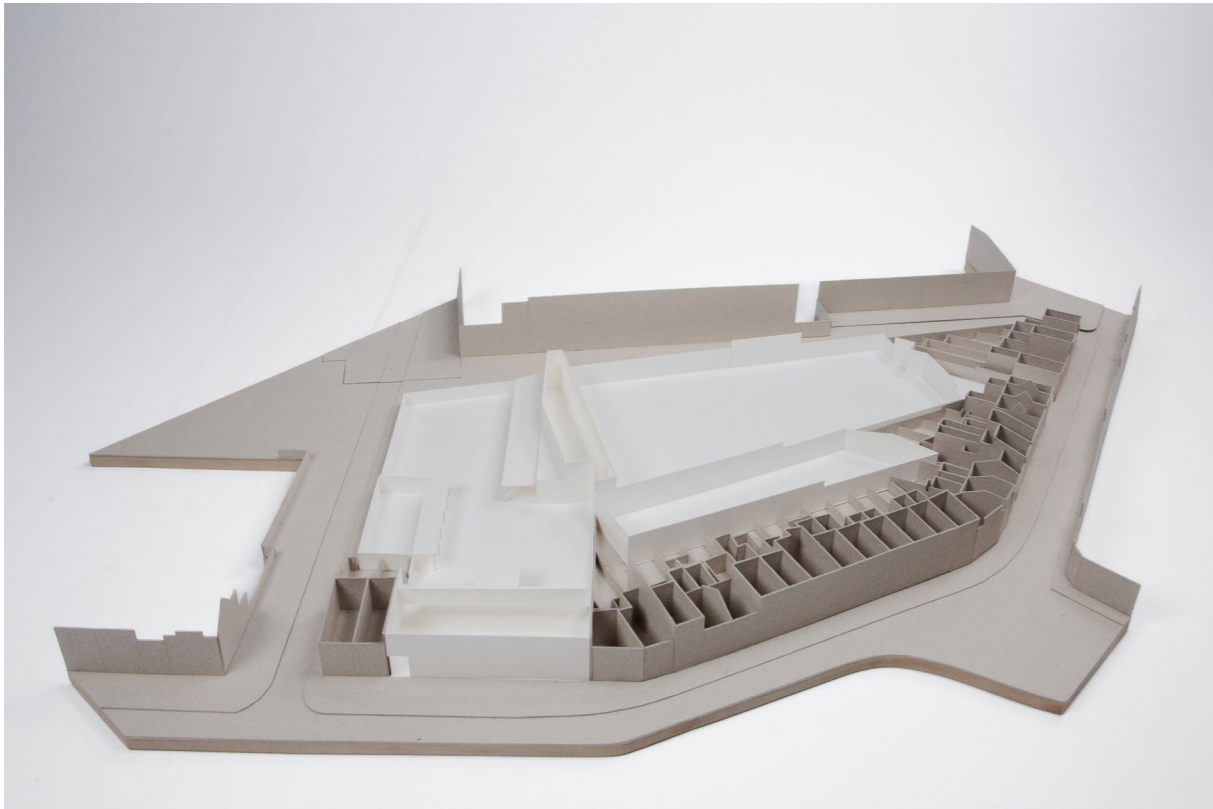
Removing the enclosure and partially demolishing the existing building to make space for two new public squares
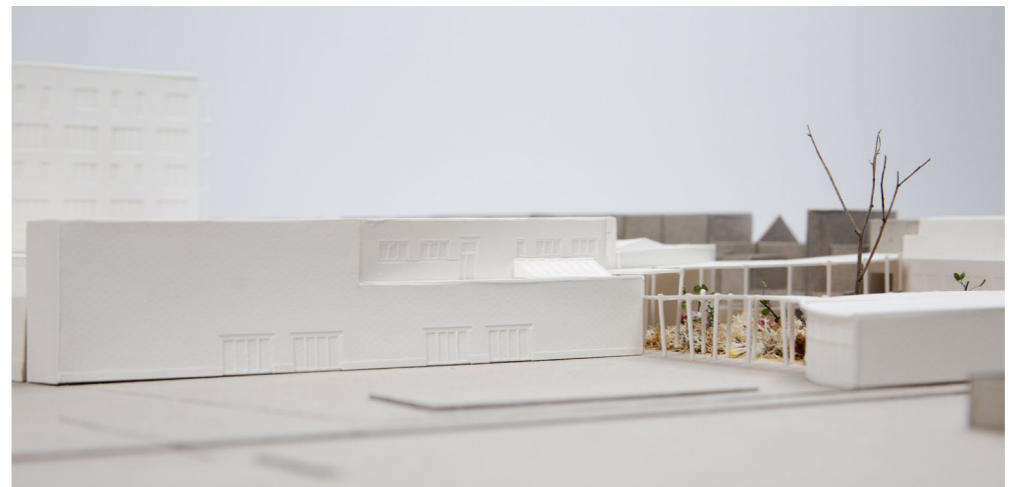
Existing
Proposed

Existing

Proposed

in *between*   *living* and *learning*
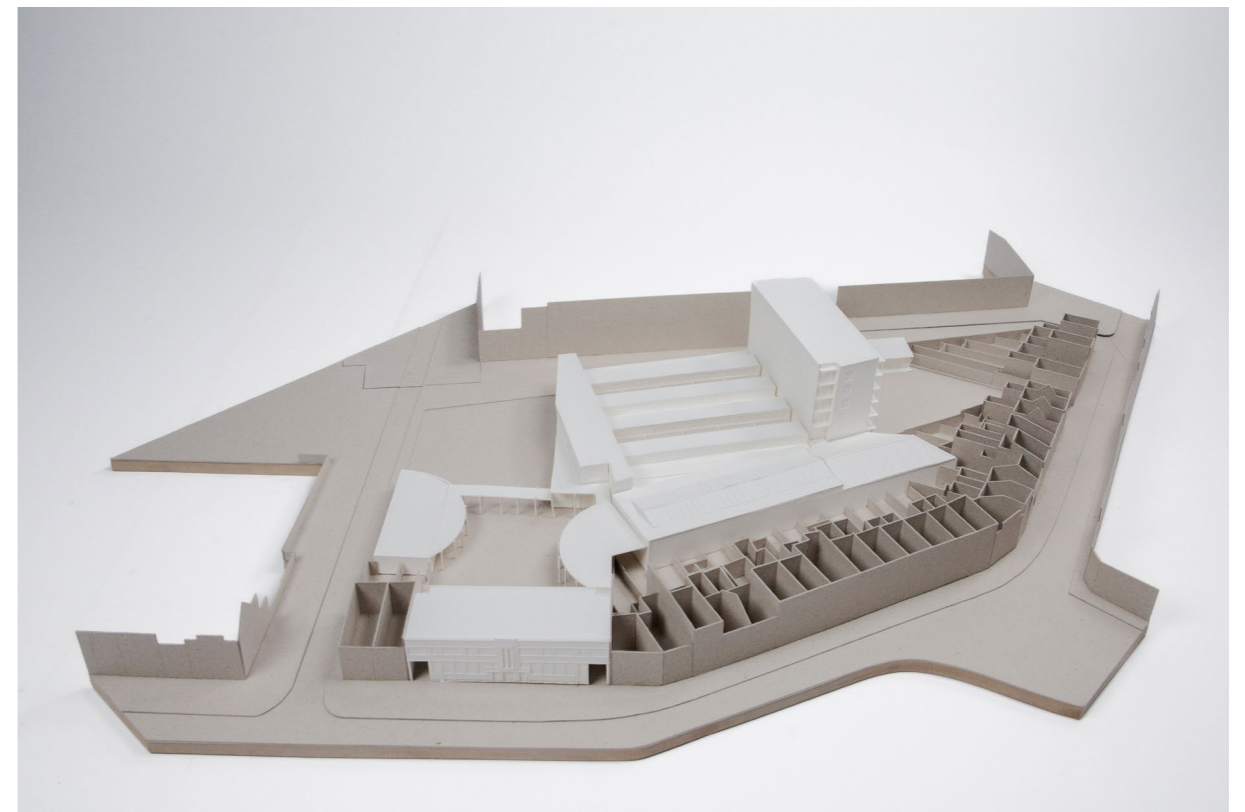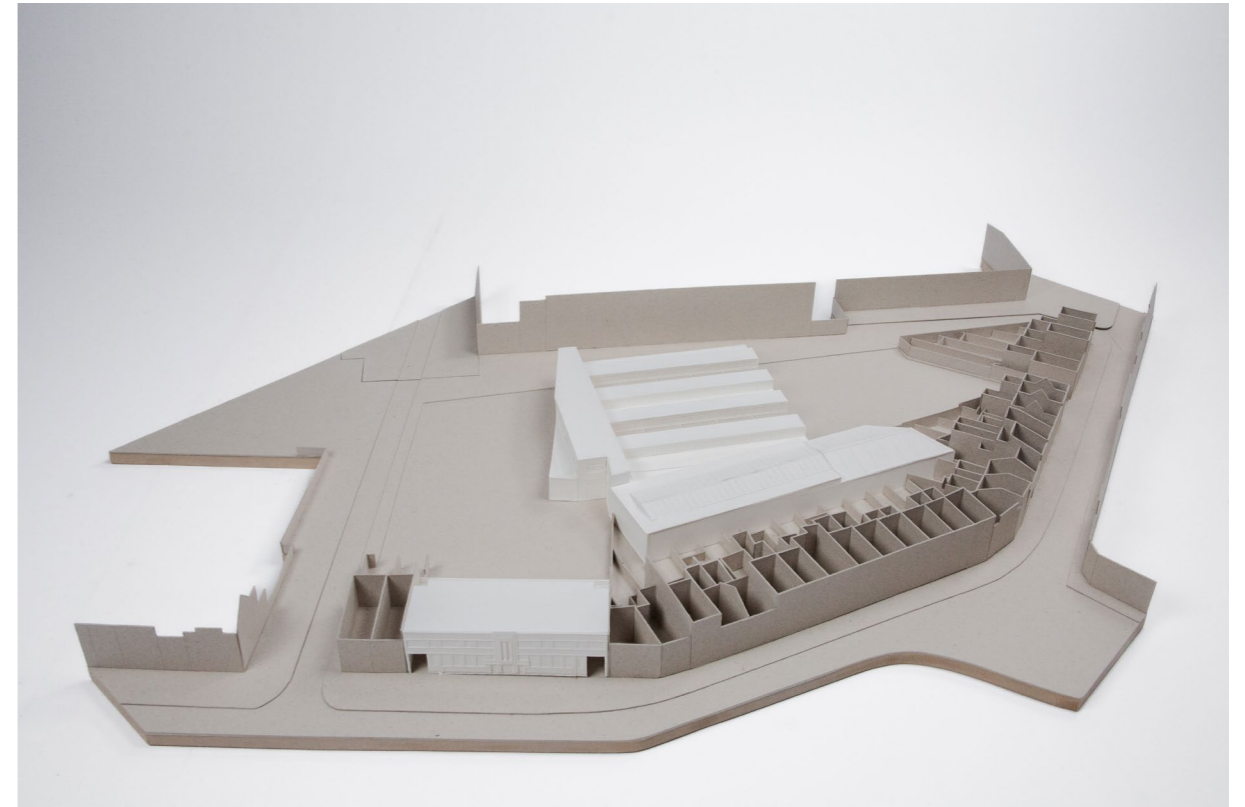
What remains of the existing
structures now calls for
complementary additions.

These are not put together a
simple sum of functions, but as an
articulated system of temporal and
spatial relationships.

Existing
Addition

a. housing
b. classrooms and staff
c. gym and auditorium
d. canteen
e. child care center
f. community livingroom

Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
Ground Floor Plan

Primary School on Hendriklei
Ground Floor Plan

Primary School on Hendriklei
Garden Facade
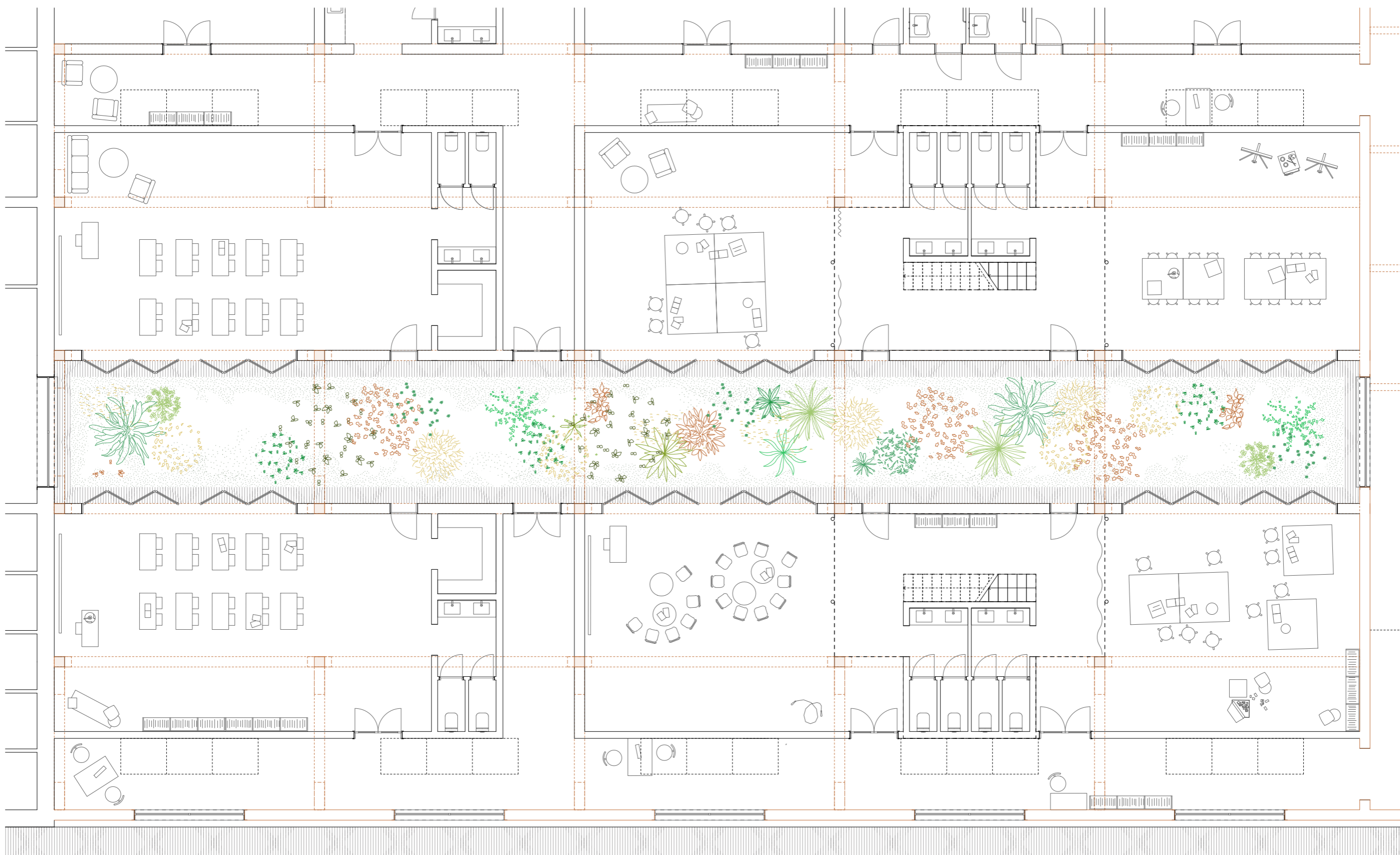
Primary School on Hendriklei
Garden Facade

Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
In-between wall

Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
South Facade

Housing on Hendriklei
Duplex Plan
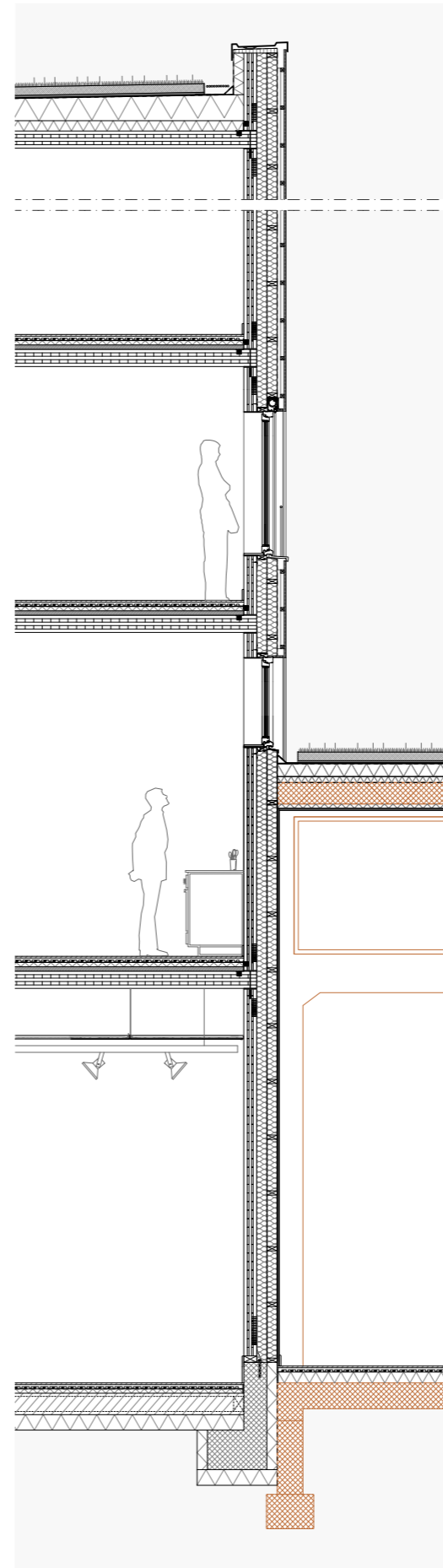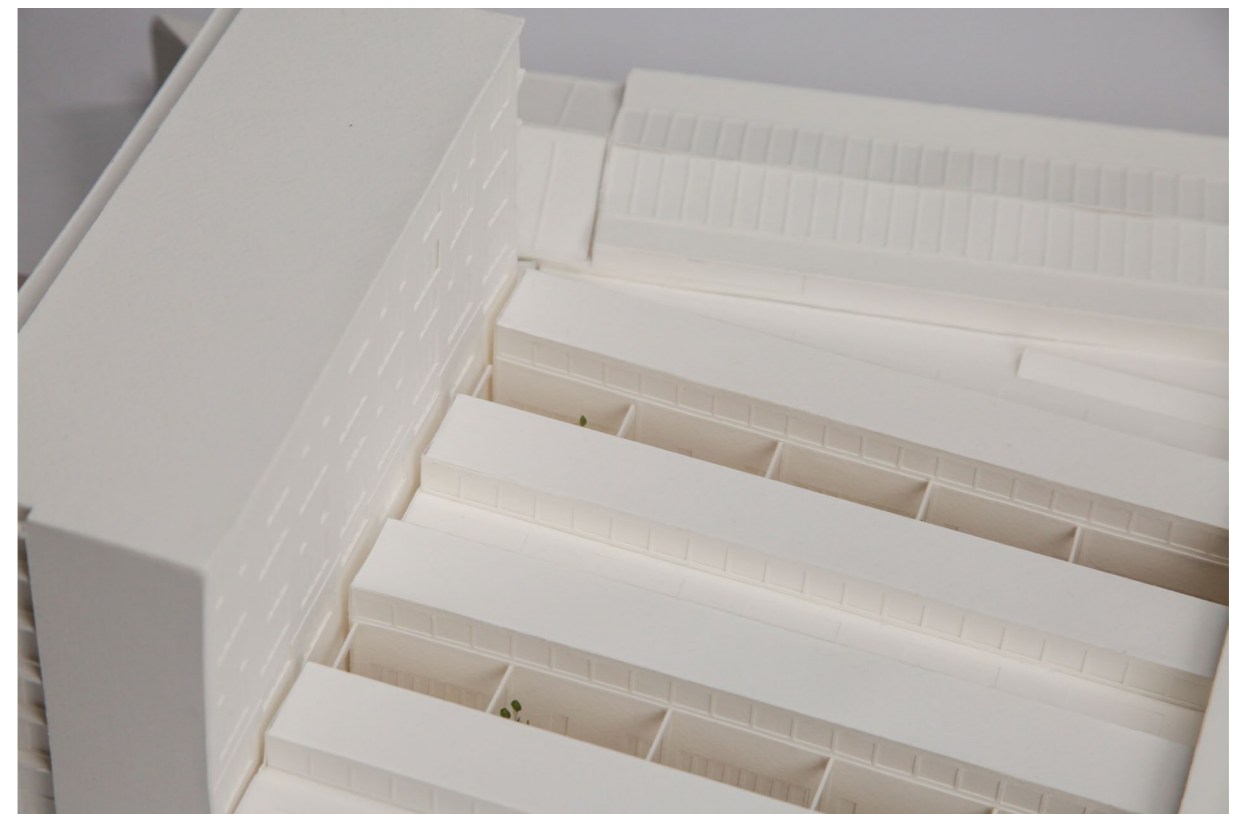
Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
North Facade
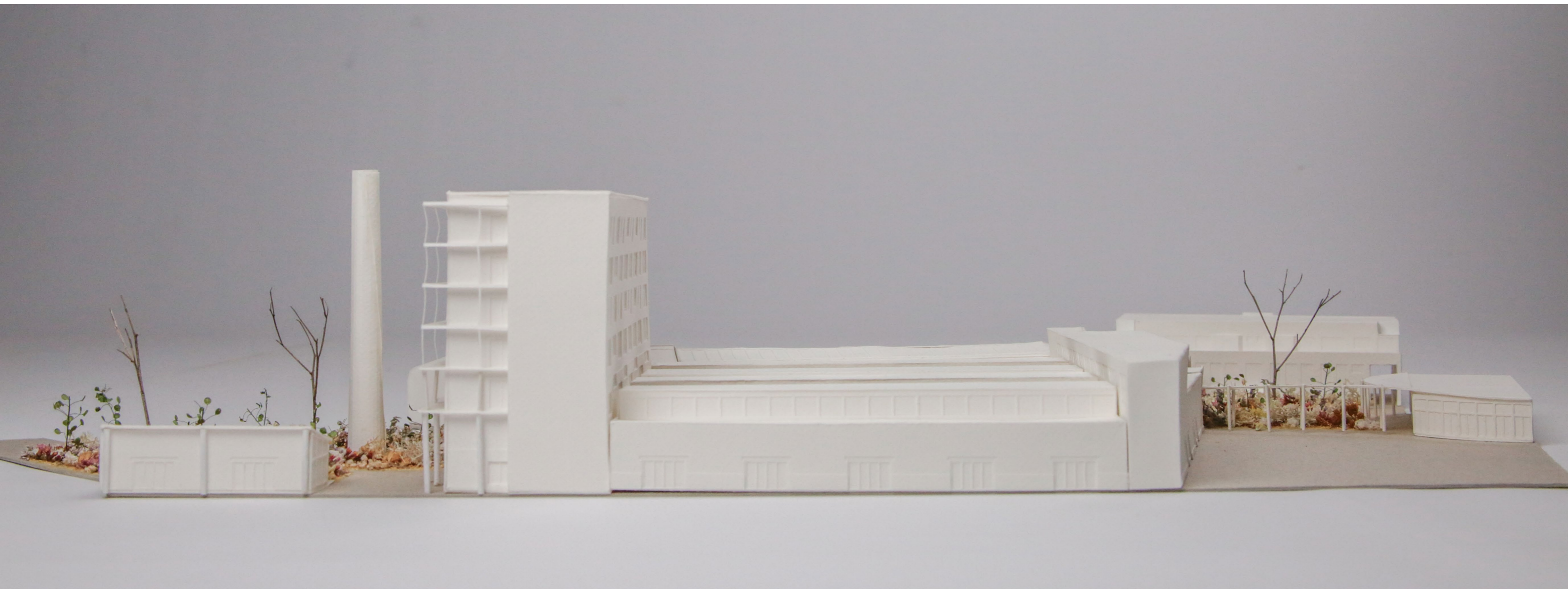
Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
West Facade

Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
Housing Courtyard

Housing and Primary School on Hendriklei
School Courtyard
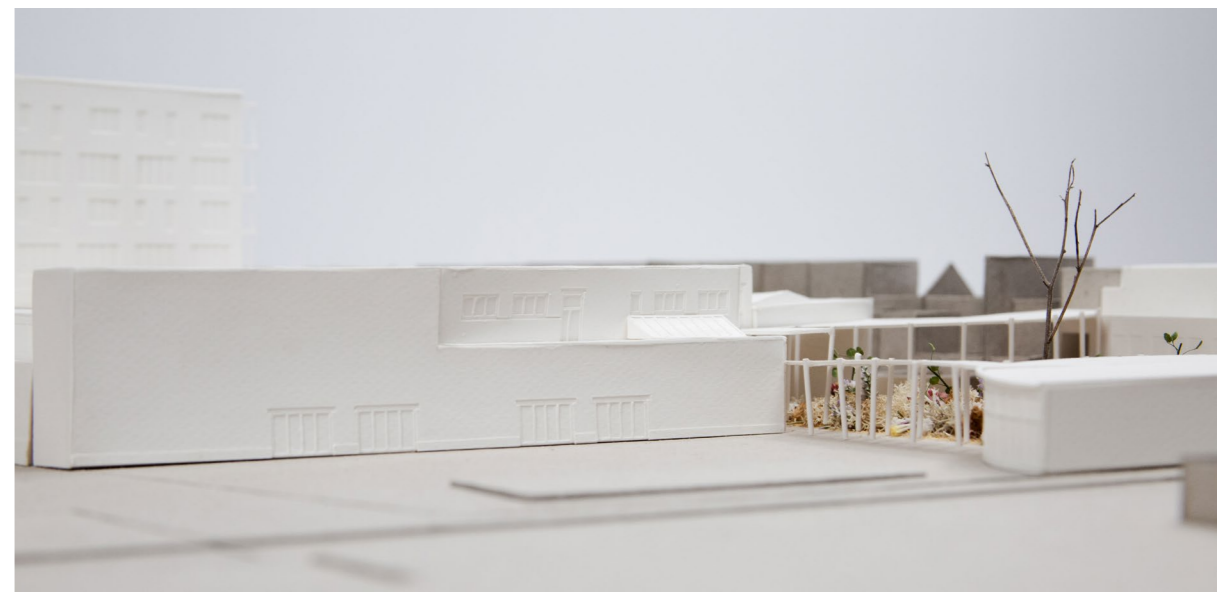
L'uomo è in gran parte quello che lo fanno la casa, la scuola, le piazze e le strade della sua città, e i fatti che dell'infanzia hanno colpito la sua mente.

Il problema che si presenta all'architetto che deve progettare una scuola è quello di sapere in quale conto debba tenere i caratteri tradizionali della città; se debba cioè allontanarsene o se debba invece metterli a fuoco nella sua opera. Se cioè debba cercare di armonizzare il nuovo col vecchio oppure no, ed esprimere il suo pensiero in un linguaggio libero da ogni vincolo ambientale (ammesso che egli possa liberarsene).

La scuola primaria non deve recingersi in un quartiere in cui gli episodi sono necessariamente limitati e si ripetono quotidianamente a tal punto da non destare più alcun interesse nel fanciullo.

Una scuola che si recinge non è più un organo vivo della città ma un organismo autonomo che si aggrega ad altri organismi, anch'essi autonomi che si ignorano o che possono anche assumere un atteggiamento di difesa l'uno verso l'altro.

L'urbanistica che ha creato il quartiere come limite di conoscenza (o di spazio) per l'edificio scolastico ha tradito lo spirito della scuola. Come ha tradito lo spirito della città (che invece è aperto alla conoscenza e alla collaborazione) frazionando la popolazione in nuclei satelliti, in centri specializzati direzionali o residenziali. La scuola presuppone una struttura collaborante; una possibilità di incessanti contatti e di incessanti scambi.

A partire dalla scuola, una tessitura sottile di passaggi e sentieri e strade deve e dovrebbe, se la scuola è viva culturalmente e quindi umanamente, denunciare gli infiniti e perenni interessi che la legano alle costruzioni e agli spazi della città

Man is, to a great extent, shaped by the home, the school, the squares and streets of his city, and by the events of childhood that have left a mark on his mind.

The challenge faced by the architect who must design a school is to understand how much consideration should be given to the traditional character of the city: whether to move away from it, or rather to bring it into focus within the work. That is, whether to seek harmony between the old and the new, or instead to express their vision in a language free from environmental constraints (assuming one can ever truly be free of them).

A primary school should not enclose itself within a neighborhood where the daily events are necessarily limited and so repetitive that they no longer spark interest in the child.

A school that encloses itself is no longer a living organ of the city, but an autonomous organism, joined with other equally autonomous organisms that ignore each other—or may even adopt a defensive stance toward one another.

Urban planning that created the neighborhood as the limit of knowledge (or space) for the school building has betrayed the spirit of the school. Just as it has betrayed the spirit of the city—which should instead be open to knowledge and collaboration—by fragmenting the population into satellite nuclei, specialized centers, and residential zones.

A school presupposes a collaborative structure; the possibility for constant contact and continuous exchange.

From the school, a subtle fabric of paths, passages, and streets must—and should—if the school is culturally and therefore humanly alive, reveal the endless and enduring ties that connect it to the buildings and spaces of the city—ties that give it meaning and from which it draws nourishment for its vitality.

a cui da senso e da cui trae alimento per la sua vitalità.

L'edificio scolastico sarebbe così il centro di ritrovo, e l'aula scolastica una delle molteplici aule che offre la città all'educatore perchè egli possa servirsene nel momento opportuno o per l'uso più appropriato.

La città diverrebbe così città-scuola e tanto più lo diverrebbe quanto più acquistasse via via conoscenza di questa sua funzione.

Così dovrebbe essere l'edificio scolastico. Non più scuola definita, precisata, nei suoi limiti e nei suoi caratteri fisici, non un fatto architettonico raggiunto, non un esempio, un modello di scuola, ma semplicemente uno spazio in continua costruzione di se stesso per le infinite possibilità che offre alla vita del fanciullo e della popolazione che è ad un tempo il richiamo, l'esaltazione, della vita della città e della vita associata, libera da ogni costrizione teorica o formale o paternalistica.

Uno spazio in cui ogni fanciullo può costruire con qualche elemento mobile un suo ambiente ad immagine del suo mondo e del suo momento.

The school building would thus become a gathering center, and the school classroom just one of the many "classrooms" that the city offers to the educator, so that they may use them at the right time and for the most appropriate purpose.

The city would thus become a school-city, and it would do so more and more as it gradually became aware of this very function.

This is how the school building should be: no longer a school that is clearly defined and delimited in its physical features and characteristics; not an accomplished architectural object, not an example or a model to replicate, but simply a space in continuous construction of itself, shaped by the infinite possibilities it offers to the life of the child and of the broader community—a space that is at once a reflection and celebration of both city life and communal life, free from theoretical, formal, or paternalistic constraints.

A space where every child can construct, with a few movable elements, an environment that reflects their world and their moment.

Giovanni Michelucci, La scuola e la città

reflecting

The project begins with the site, considered the richest field of investigation from which to draw directions for research and design action.

Lageweg, immediately revealed itself as a liminal space, suspended between marginality and potential.

Situated within a fragmented and transitional urban context, it currently represents a threshold between the consolidated city and a transforming periphery that has never been fully integrated. At its core is an abandoned factory, inactive since the 1970s, which has become an urban void, both physically and symbolically. Over time, this space has accumulated traces of spontaneous, informal, and temporary reactivations. Today, the partially abandoned areas and industrial buildings need to be reimagined to better meet the needs of the community.

process as a knowledge tool

From the outset, the layered complexity of this place asked for a process of deep understanding, which evolved into a continuous investigation and a critical reinterpretation of its characteristics, with the goal of formulating an architectural response that is strongly rooted in its specificities.

The entire design journey unfolded in successive phases, each of which called for different methodologies, involving multiple actors and tools. Just as in professional processes, each stage raised new questions, redefined priorities, and activated meaningful collaborations with peers and tutors, who brought diverse views and expertise.

collective lens

The first phase of the work was dedicated to building a shared knowledge on the site through collective research. The gathered material was organized into seven key themes, each assigned to a group responsible for offering a personal, thematic reinterpretation. Each group explored a specific dimension of the site - physical, social, historical, ecological - allowing for unexpected connections.

Through the theme of the "Material Garden of Gift and Waste," we proposed our reinterpretation of the Blikfabriek, a temporary occupation supported by the community and institutional donations. This place, with its highly distinctive character, is currently a meeting point between work, leisure, and creativity, offering alternative modes of interaction with the city and its resources.

We used the metaphor of a garden to map Blikfabriek both as a physical place and as a system of material and social relations. The goal was to reflect on themes such as the site's enclosure and its role as safe haven, the dynamics of care and maintenance of spaces and materials, the seasonal rhythms that characterize its life cycle, and the social networks that emerge through material exchange.

In this phase, fieldwork played a crucial role: direct observations, photographic documentation, redrawing the existing, and

informal conversations with the site's users helped to build situated and concrete knowledge. An equally important aspect was the in-depth research of references and images, which converged into the final research product.

The product was presented to a wider audience during the first exhibition. This moment was particularly stimulating: in the weeks leading up to it, a productive dialogue with the tutors had been established, helping us to broaden the perspective on more topics. The decision of how to represent our findings led us to experiment with a personal visual language, creating an exhibition piece based on an interpretive drawing and a series of visual suggestions. However, the result turned out to be more open-ended and conceptual than expected: feedback highlighted that our presentation was cryptic for those viewing the work for the first time. This interaction provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of tailoring language to the context and audience. It was an important lesson on balancing expressiveness and communicative clarity.

The overall collaboration between groups and the methodological fragmentation of this phase proved successful for me. It allowed individual readings to overlap and provided a representation of the site that was not objective, but multifaceted, in which subjective interpretations were integrated into a more articulated understanding.
A complex and contradictory reality like Lageweg, perhaps, can only be grasped through this overlap of partial viewpoints, which only together can get close to the truth of the place.

designing with multiple voices

The first design phase was a natural continuation of the collective work. Once again, the process was driven by collaboration, this time with two fellow students, with whom I combined perspectives to develop a masterplan for the intervention area.
The masterplan emerged from interweaving our perspectives, united by a set of guiding principles that we consistently upheld throughout the process: openness, identity and balance.

Once again, it was the site itself that guided our choices. We did not follow a predetermined plan but responded to the critical issues and potentials that emerged during our exploration. The absence of a rigid vision allowed the masterplan to develop in an open and gradual way, shaped by the context's demands.

I found it particularly meaningful to tackle this phase collaboratively, not only due to the complexity and scale of the area, but also because it reflected truthful dynamics of design practice.

personal lens

Alongside the collective design phase, the synthesis of emerging themes allowed me to identify the fascinations that influenced my project.
Lageweg appeared to me as a fragmented mosaic of structures and functions: despite hosting a variety of uses, from residential to industrial, from logistics to education, the predominance of productive activities and the rigidity of its physical boundaries have gradually limited opportunities for encounter and exchange.

In an attempt to define my personal lens for reinterpreting Lageweg, I began my individual research focusing on its spatial and programmatic discontinuity. From there, the investigation turned toward the possibility that heterogeneous functions, living, producing, learning, etc., might not only coexist within the same perimeter, but also mutually activate each other through meaningful relationships.

To explore this theme, I expanded my research to broader theoretical and design fields, delving into questions such as the definition of function and multifunctionality, weak or punctual architecture, the relationship between building and program, non-functional spaces, and the dynamics that unfold between objects, edges, and connections. A selection of texts, projects, artworks, and drawings, guided this initial exploration, helping me build a theoretical framework to refer to.

References were an important starting point for me, like invisible interlocutors to engage with. However, at first, it was difficult to narrow down a specific interest within the wide scope of emerging topics. The conversations with my tutor were valuable in raising questions, highlighting critical issues, and strengthening the need to identify a personal lens through which to read the site.

If theoretical readings initially offered comfort and affinity, real progress came when I began to critically rework them, putting them into dialogue with the site's specificities. I progressively narrowed my focus, concentrating on spatial devices capable of generating interactions and tensions. In particular, I turned my attention to boundaries, not as sharp lines but as spaces with depth, places of negotiation. I started to interpret points of contact and friction within the site, recognizing friction not as an obstacle but as an architectural condition capable of generating new possibilities for use, relationships, and meaning.

Fieldwork was my primary source of information. I visited the site multiple times, documenting it through photographs, sketches, and conversations with its users. It was not easy to identify a single method to approach the topic, which is why I experimented with various strategies, from drawing to physical models, from mapping to photographic suggestions, in an attempt to develop a personal language.

Being open to tools not traditionally used in architecture helped deepen my understanding of the site. Although this methodological freedom initially generated uncertainty about my interests and expressive language - sometimes perceived as too implicit or abstract - it was also an opportunity to engage with alternative modes of communication and to strengthen my confidence in more familiar tools, such as architectural drawing and theoretical reflection. In a group rich with strong voices and immediate languages, this path helped me regain confidence in my own expressive identity and interests.

from research to design practice

The beginning of the design phase marked the moment when all the threads of my research began to intertwine in a concrete way. It was the point at which the themes explored during theoretical investigation, insights from collective work, impressions gathered during site visits and excursions, and the studied design references started to take on a tangible form.

The project emerged from engaging with a specific portion of the site, defined by existing buildings and established physical boundaries. From the start, I questioned the spatial and symbolic implications of this condition: *what frictions exist between the*

existing volumes? What types of relationships do they establish? Is there hidden potential in these tensions? And how can the existing limits be transformed into design resources?

This reflection helped me identify elements of the site with untapped potential, as well as areas that needed rethinking and transformation. My project begins with these transitional spaces, aiming to break free from the site's closed, monofunctional nature and turn it into an integrated place.

The choice to work on a site characterized by a repurposed industrial building now functioning as a school led me to reflect on themes of care, growth, and learning. Defining the program was one of the most complex and stimulating aspects. I aimed to construct it not as a sum of functions but as an articulated system of temporal and spatial relationships.

From this vision, the idea emerged for a new school building that also includes a residential addition, offering the opportunity to experiment with forms of interaction between them.
During this phase, the project became more concrete and operational. The tutoring sessions helped me identify key aspects and refine the design direction. The introduction of technical aspects further solidified the project. Defining the construction system, materials, and environmental strategies led to adjustments that grounded the project in reality.

A key aspect of this moment was learning to manage the complexity of the project over time. Balancing ideas, ambitions, and expectations with deadlines and presentations required continuous selection and synthesis.

relevance

The aim of the project was never to deliver a definitive answer, but rather to initiate a sensitive design process capable of remaining attentive to the place and its material, social, and cultural dimensions.
This experience taught me that architecture is, above all, an exercise in sensitivity. It is a form of personal expression that should never be self-referential: it must always engage with and be balanced by the external conditions that shape it. To design

is not to impose, but to engage in dialogue. It means being able to read the layers of a context, to embrace its complexities and contradictions, and to translate them into sensitive design choices.