

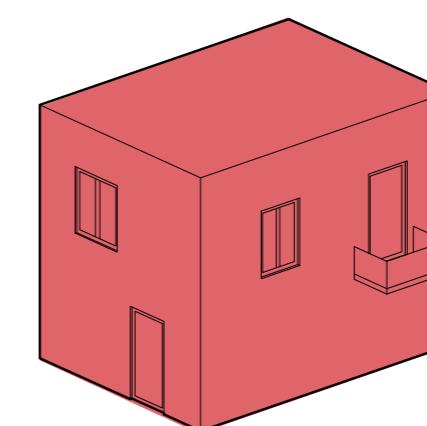
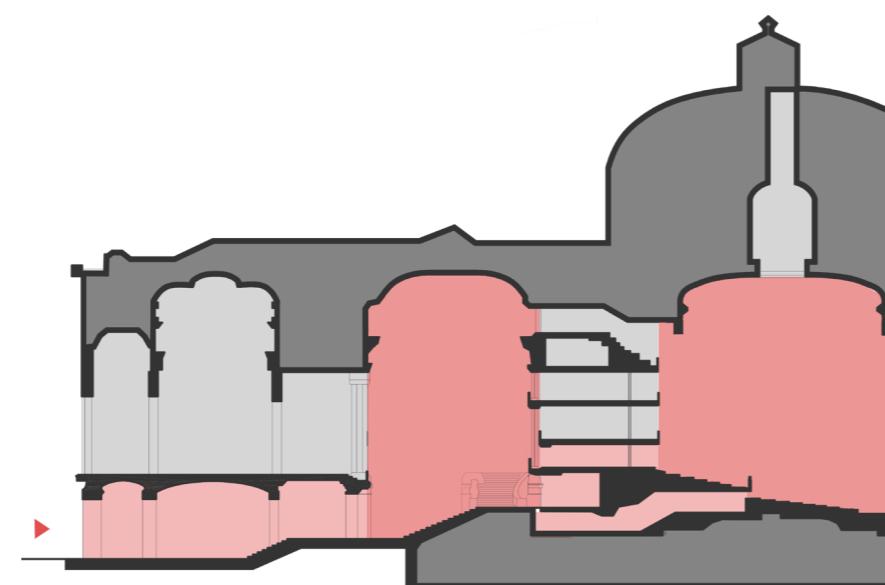
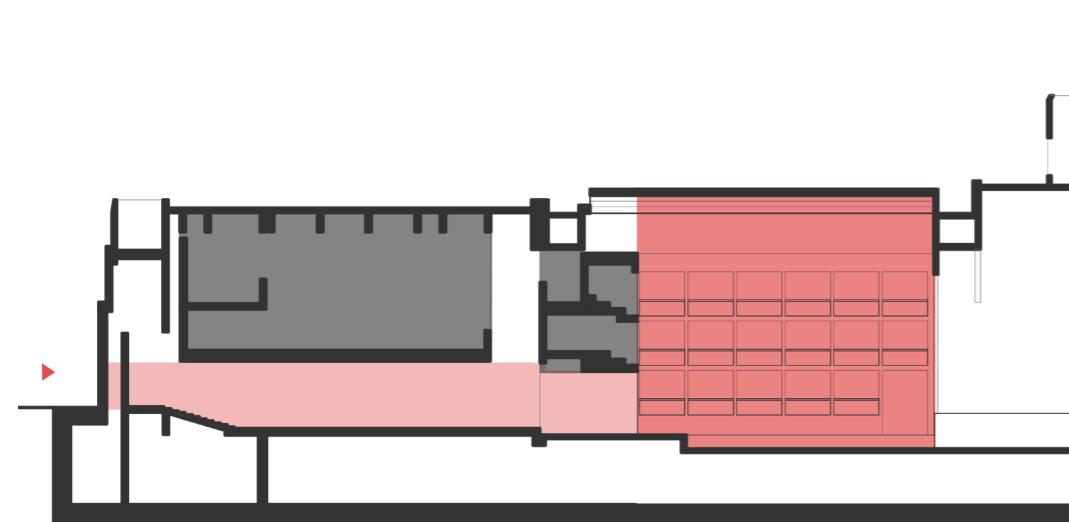
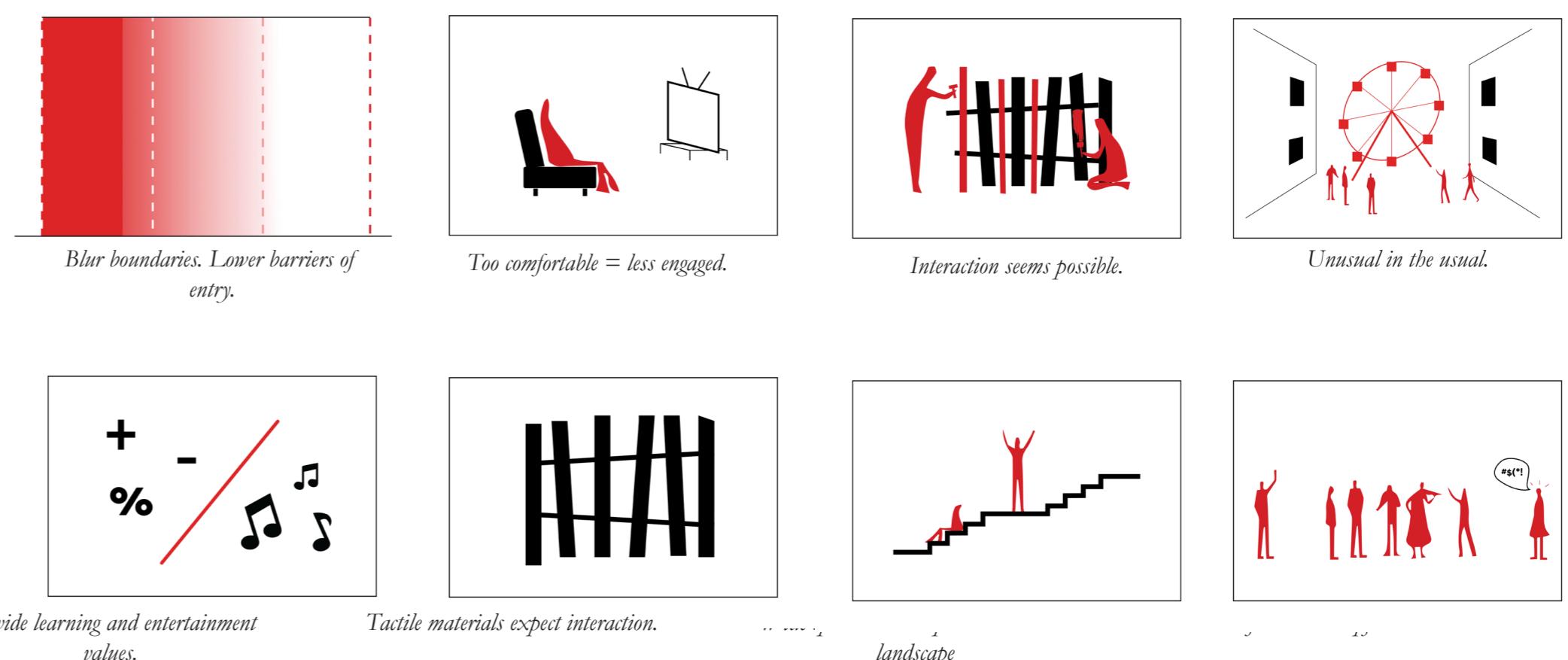
# + theatre

Theatre has gone through periods when it served as a community-building exercise and utilised surrounding scenery as its backdrop, to the periods when performers were disconnected from the crowd, interested not in seeing the performance but in showing themselves, in auditorium decorations most distanced from the surrounding city scenery. Understanding theatre as a method of engaging with the city can help us find ways to foster interactions in spaces where it has been lost.

In this study, I analyse the theatre as a model for spaces of engagement and a citizen institution. That is, an institution of citizens, or city-people, that make the urban landscape into a city.

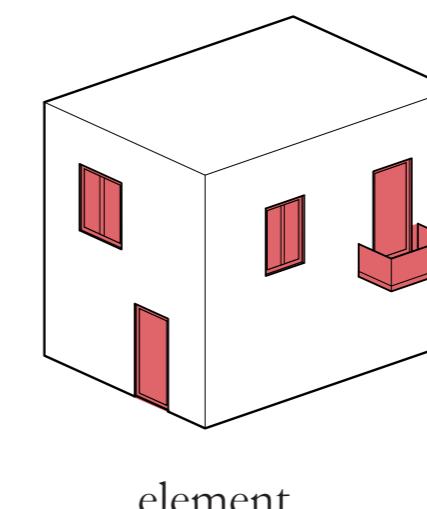
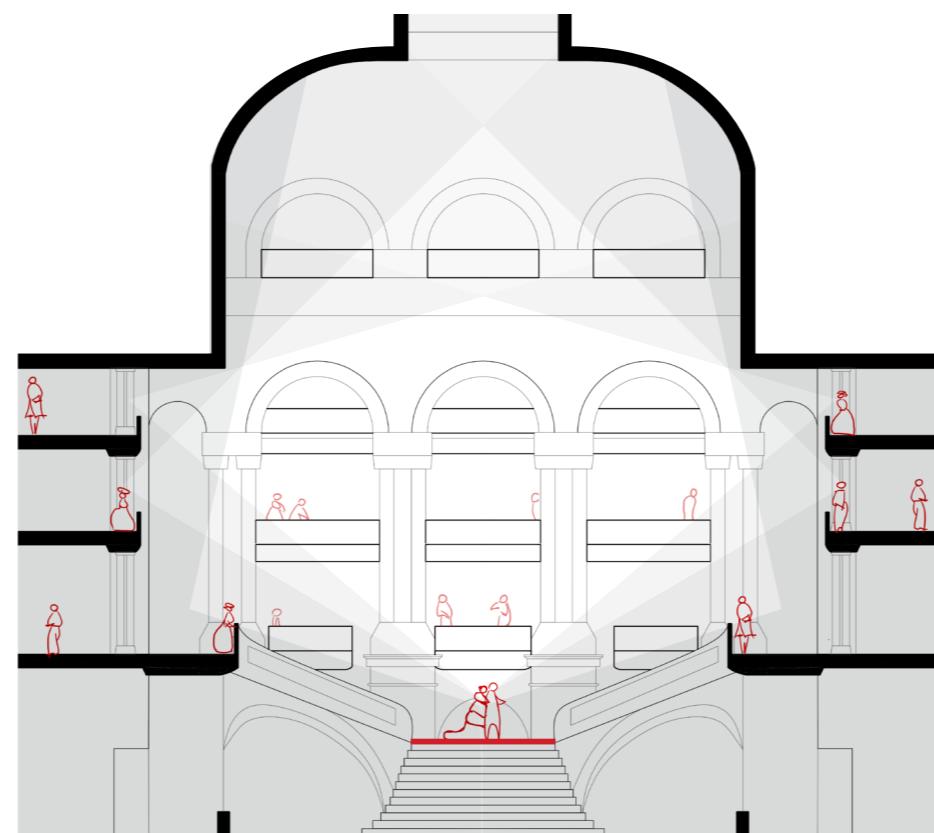
Can theatre address the issue of passivity in the civil sphere? While people in the cities grew disconnected from each other, they distanced from the city itself. In the case of Rostov-on-Don, a regional city in South-West Russia, the municipality gained a strong foothold in what happens to the city fabric development. The lack of public action prevents a joined response against the city authorities. The losses of historic developments ensue in exchange for highly valued real estate.

This research focused on the spatial qualities of theatre that make the artform and its "host" architecture interactive, and then distilled them into loose design guidelines.



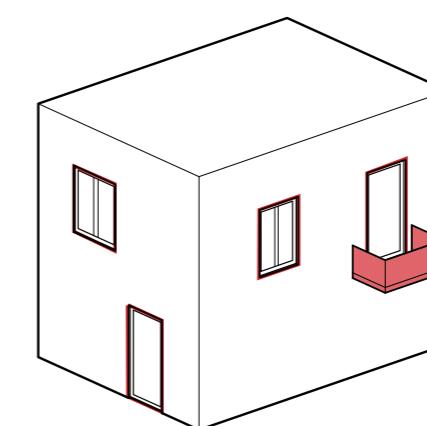
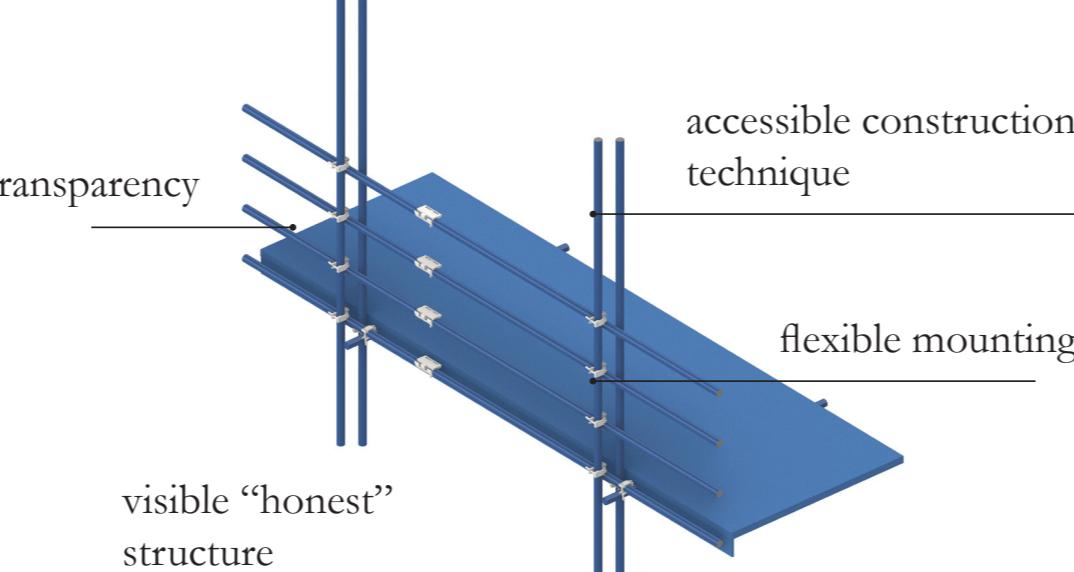
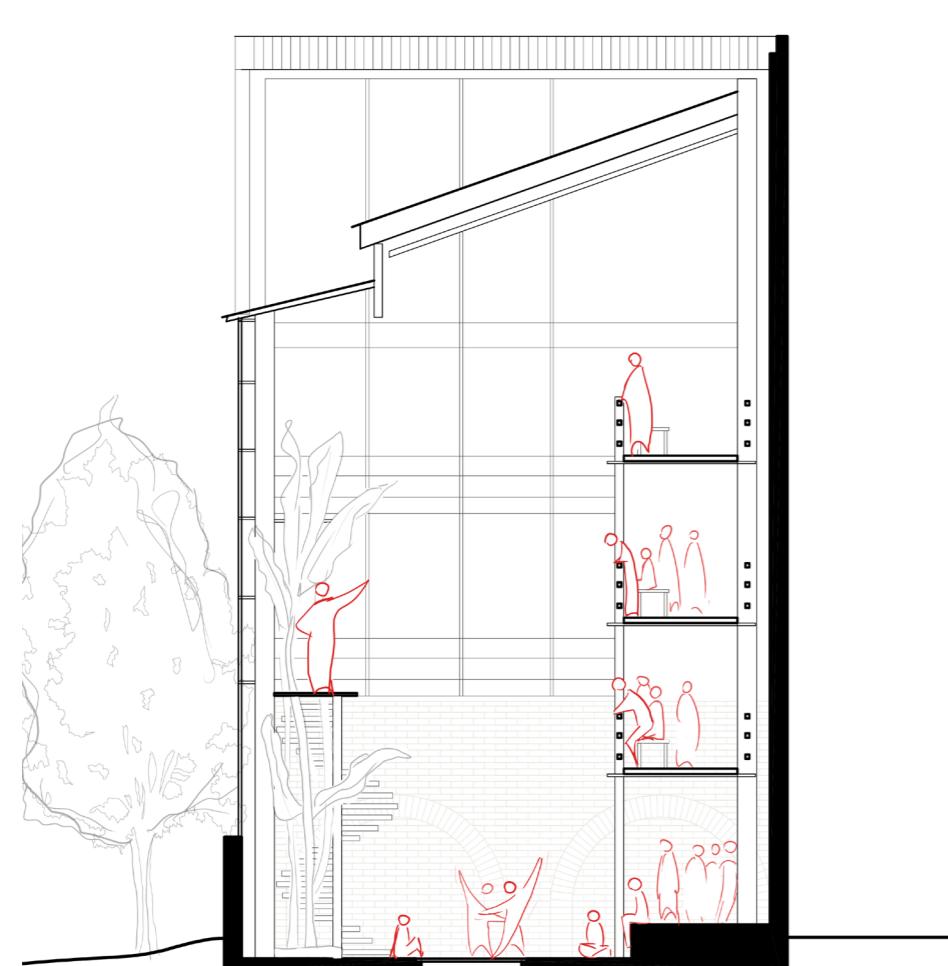
Large volumetric gestures. Changes in height as spaces. Cloakroom, ticket office, foyer; many spaces precede the auditorium. Spaces that prepare the audience for the performance. Spaces that tame the audience. Spaces that let the audience play.

In this part, I looked at the bold strokes of theatre typology on a building scale.



The monumental staircase is a centrepiece of a hall that is surrounded by balconies and galleries. These become places for the "audience" of the social performance. Below, on the first step, there is a figure of attention, the actor – one who activates the space. Above are the spectators, looking down from all four sides, indistinct in their mass.

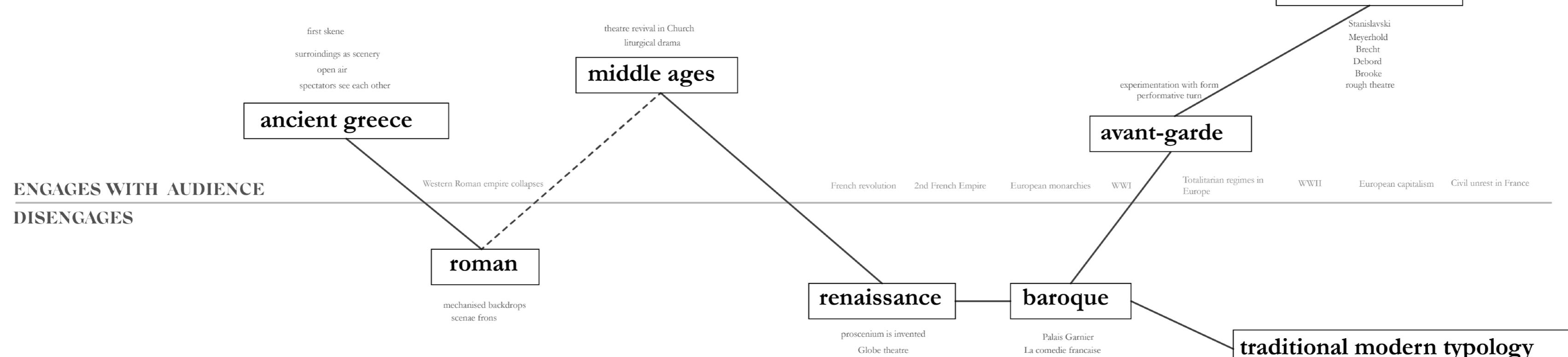
Such are the social plays within a theatre on the scale of an architectural element. Staircase, balcony, window – wide spatial landscapes for a wide social landscape.



Tactile materials, flexible structures, self-built podiums – the most inviting places considered the experience on a detail level. User agency is important, and spaces that were seemingly built to interact with will attract more attention.

From its emergence in the 17th century, scenography – or the art of scene design – has caused theatre to embrace contradictory impulses. Throughout its history, the theatre has tried to alternatively embrace the confines of the stage or attempt to reach beyond its bounds.

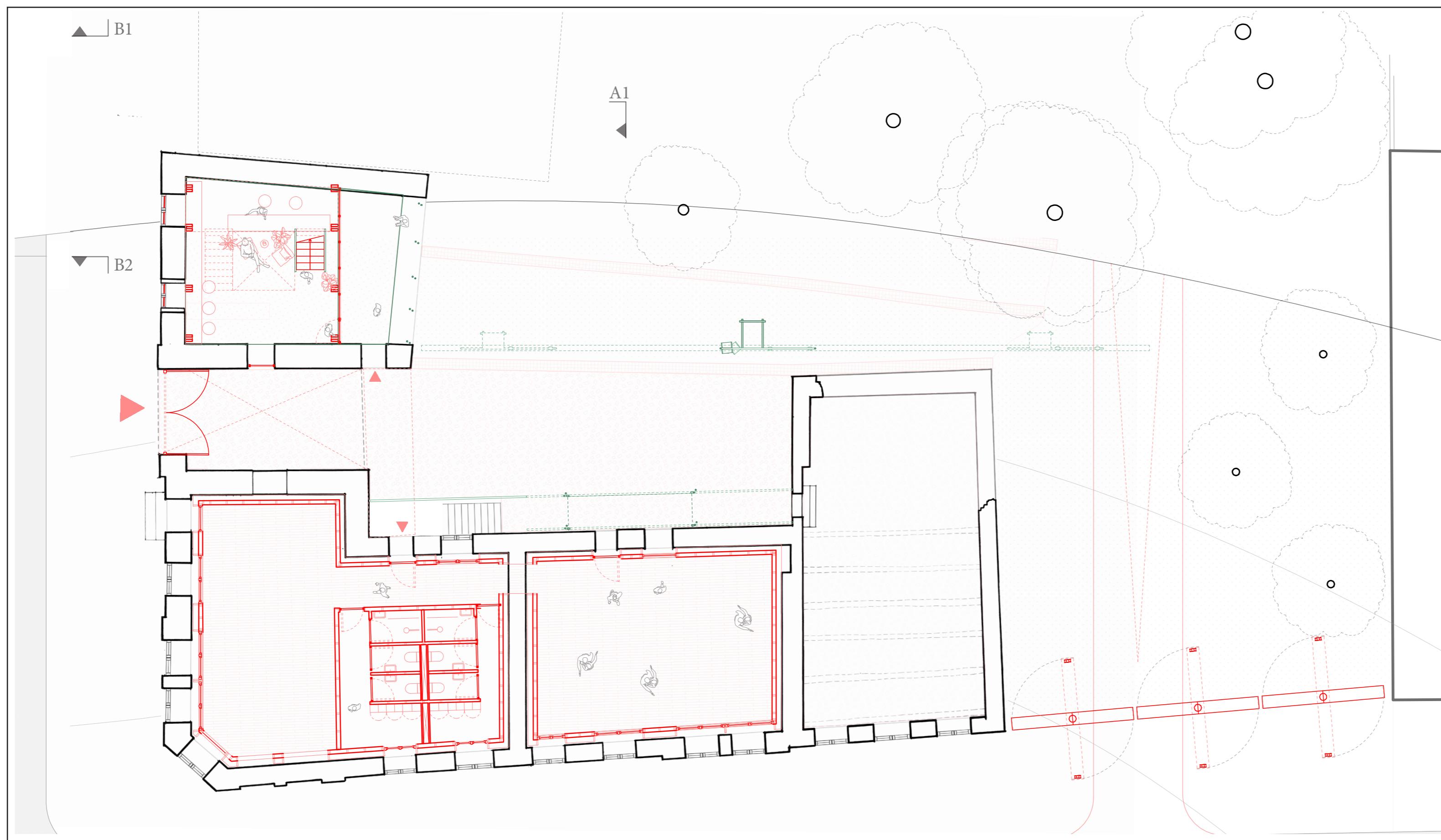
This oscillation has been acutely changing the ways in which theatregoers engaged – with each other, with the performers, the material of the performance, and its setting. I studied these oscillations to define the spatial and architectural qualities most relevant to making a place participatory.



# city + theatre

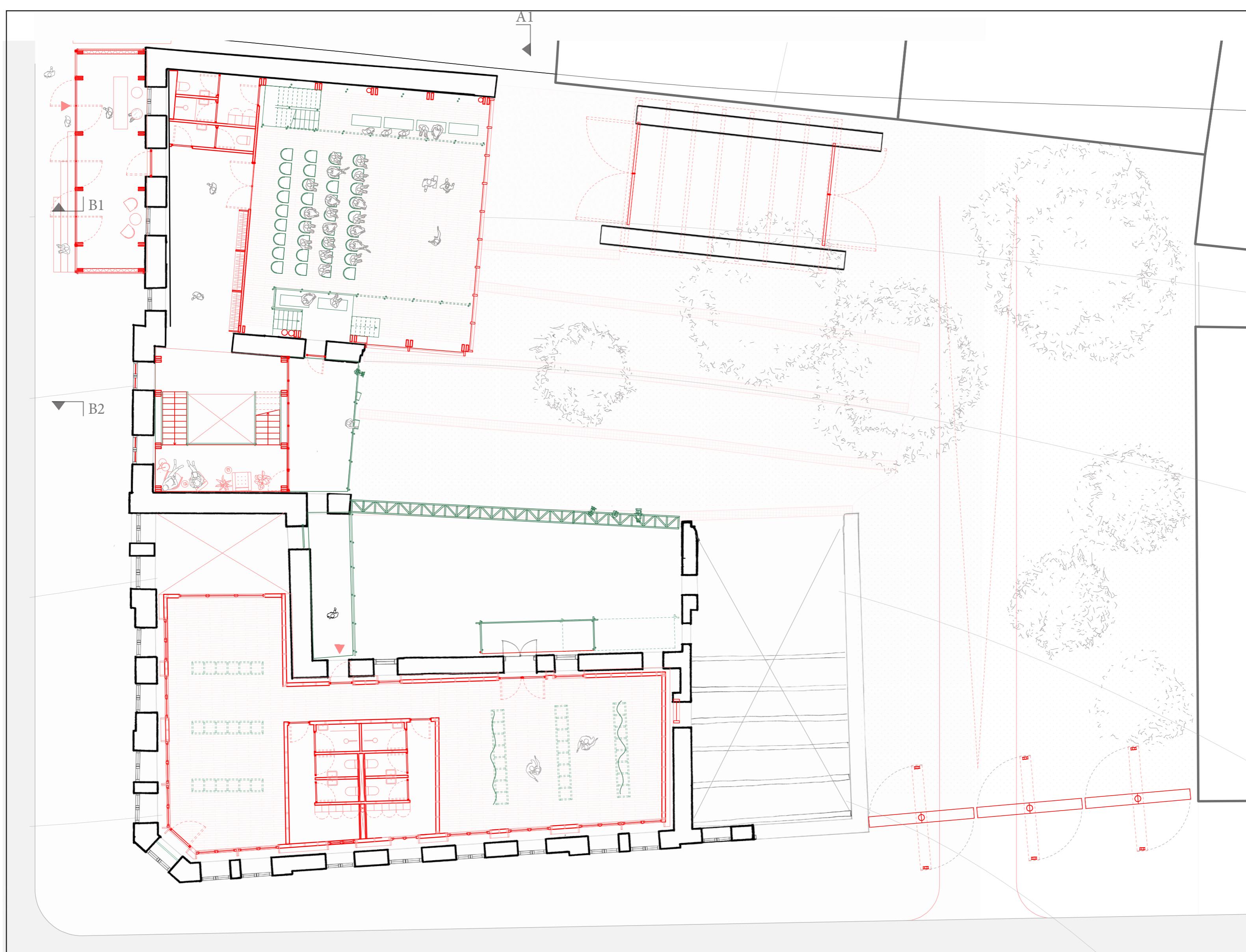
Designing a place in the city means navigating tensions: private and public; busy and quiet; maintenance as a feature and over-design as a flaw. The role of a designer is not to choose one or the other, but to balance within the spectrum; provide affordances for people to make their own choices. No strict choices in the design should mean no hard boundaries in the space. Blurring the edges, creating transition zones within in the city that negotiate public and private is required for a cohesive interaction.

Encouraging interaction of people with and within spaces is in large part also about creating an atmosphere of possibilities for agency. Places that are easy to adapt and that invite to do so are more engaging than stationary pre-designed environments. Features that show the wear and tear of spaces come across as informal.



Ground floor

Entrance points. Viewpoints. Moments where the city and the theatre "touch". Project fringes and spaces around.



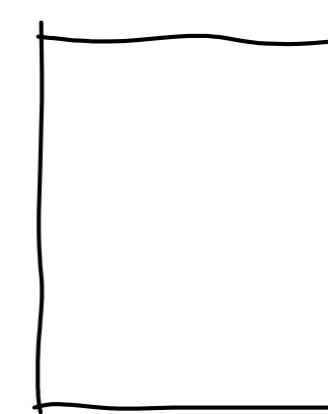
First floor

Diversity of functions and spacetypes. Wide landscape of spatial qualities.

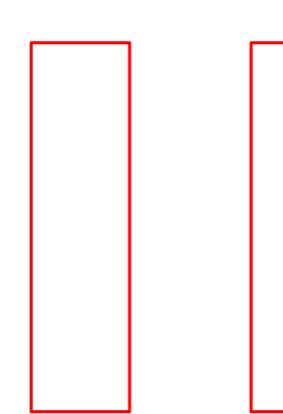
# theatre + city

The layers of new architecture are tectonically different to the original structures. Existing self bearing mass brick constructions are left as they are. Extras in light skeletal timber are added to make the ruin back into a building - new floors, stairs and rooves are constructed as such. Last layer - metal scaffolding - is the translational layer from architecture to theatre, which makes the space adaptable for a variety future permutations.

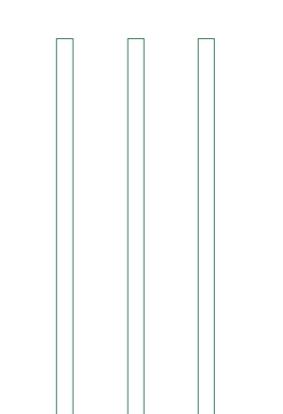
The idea of "turning the entire building into a theatre on a whim" is taken seriously. New architectures translate the existing spaces into spaces that allow such agency.



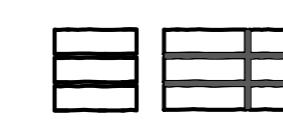
existing = self-bearing



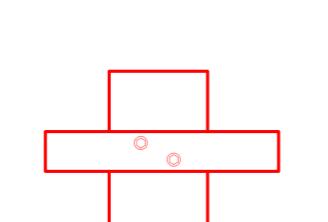
timber = translational



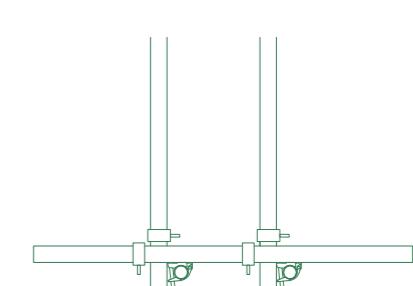
metal = theatrical



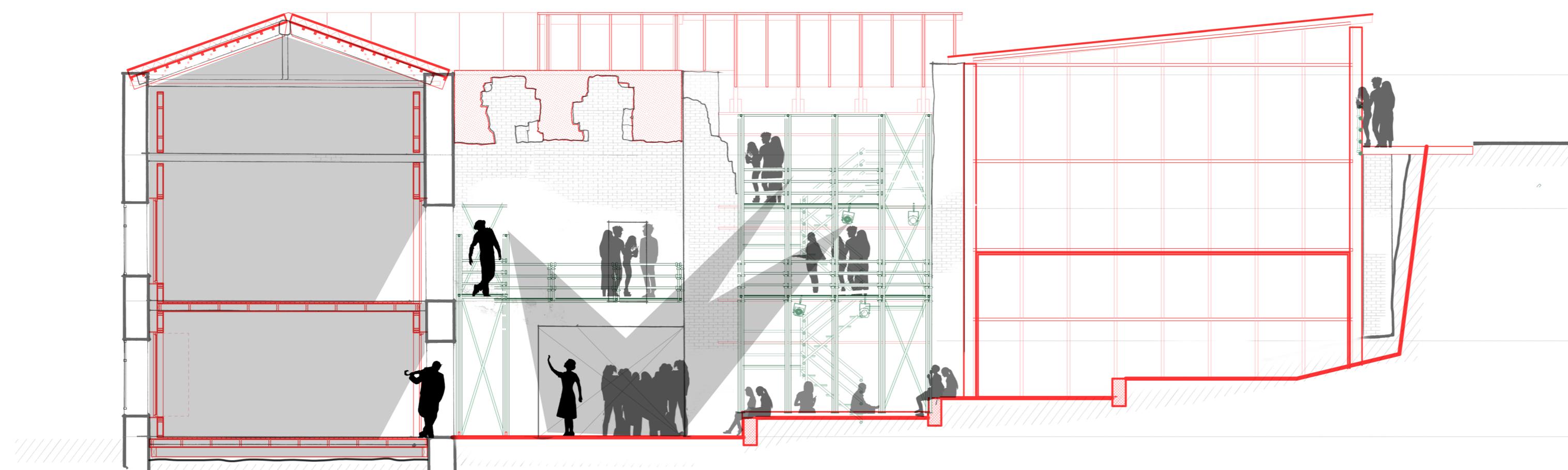
mass: masonry + mortar



skeletal: lumber + bolts

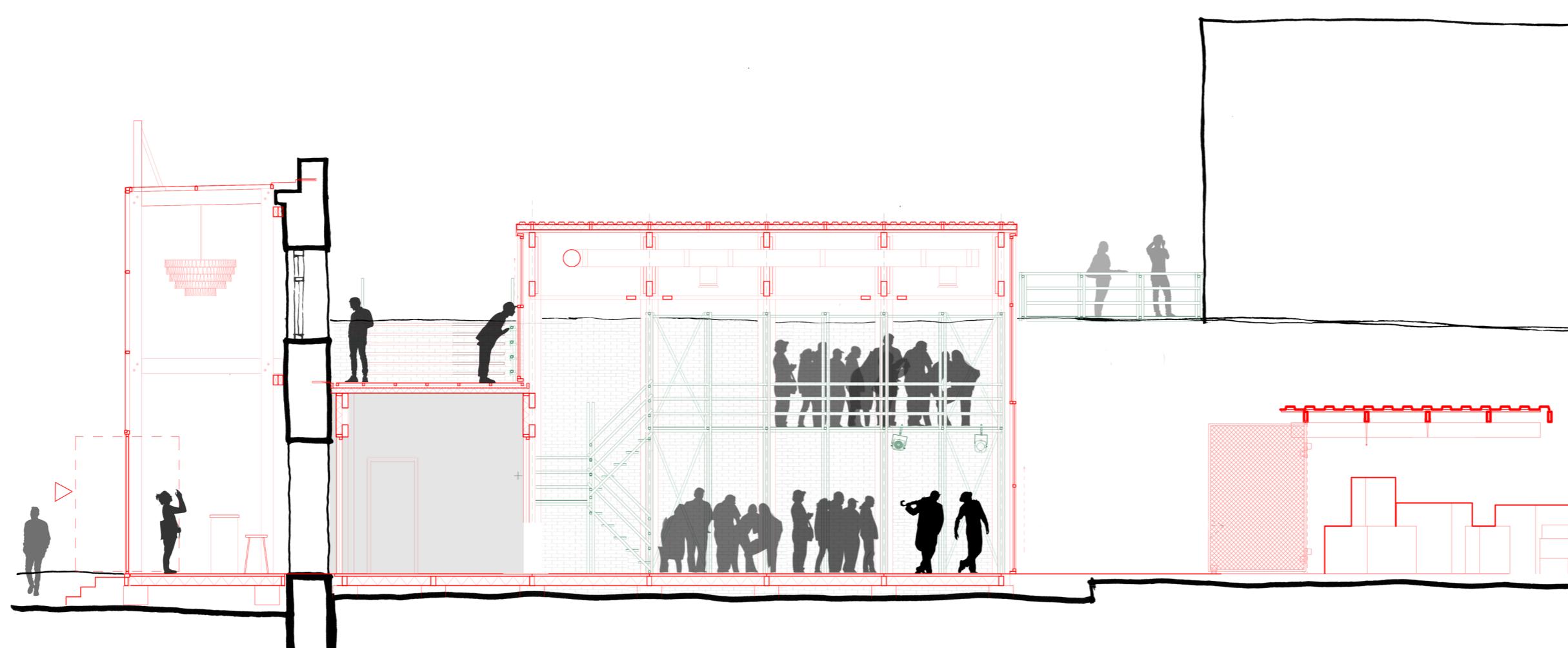


skeletal: pipe + clamps



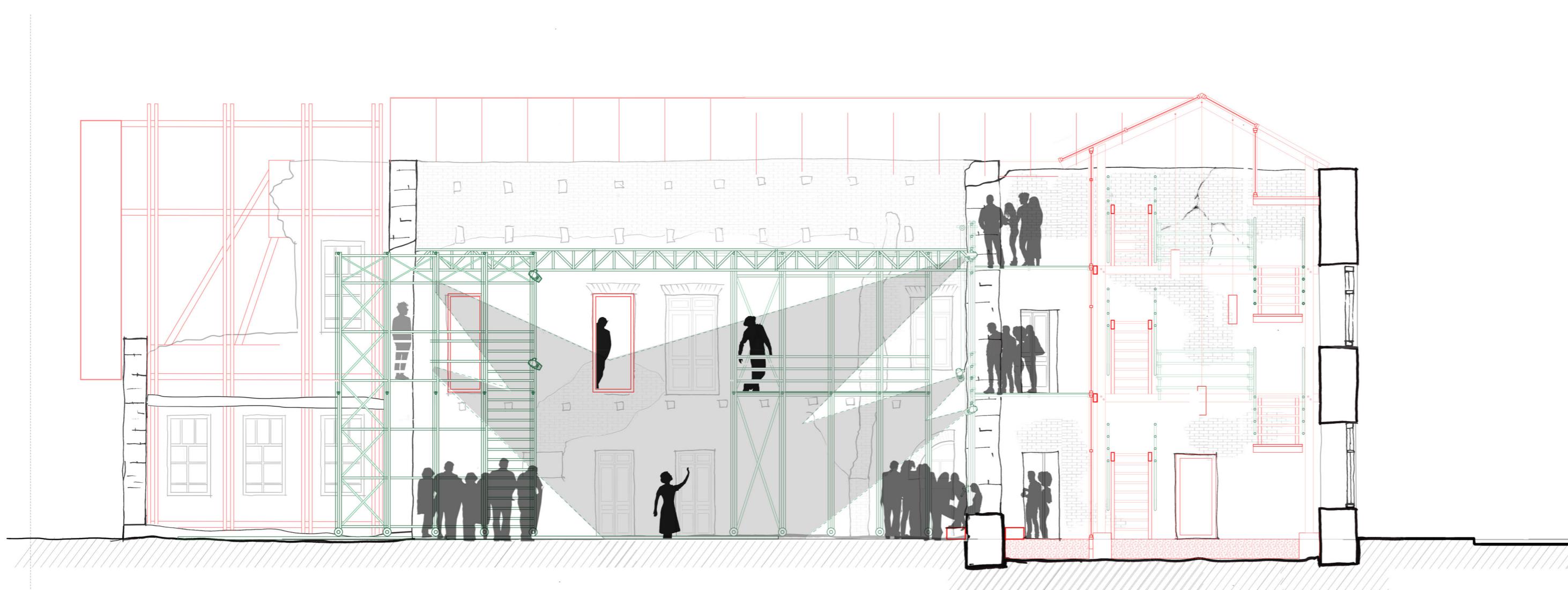
The interiors serve not only as a backdrop, but as the deeper spaces of the stage, allowing the performance to work on both a scale of a small room to the entire building and its large courtyard.

Section A1 1.100



Multiple points allow the "mixing of flows": the backstage is overseen by a public balcony; the second entrance is from a park to the roof. Blur the barriers to entry.

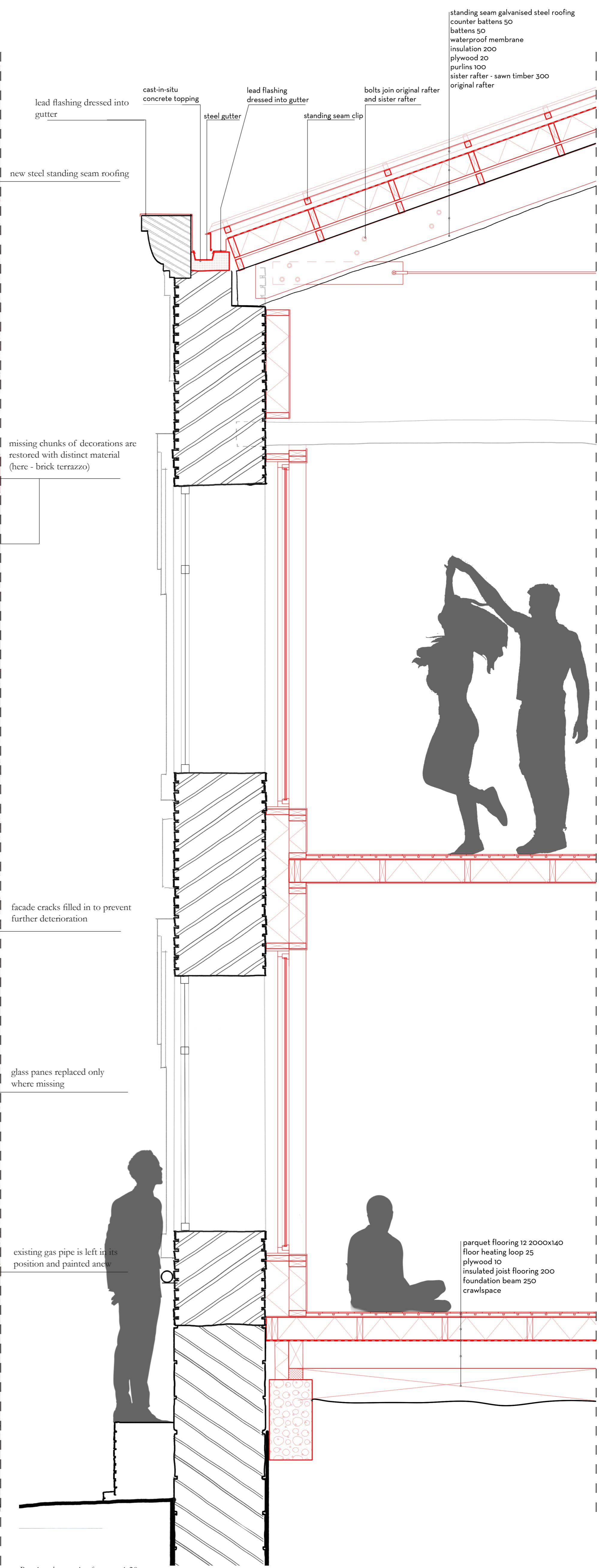
Section B1 1.100



Courtyard slowly becomes the heart of the project, the open stage. Balconies and staircases become both the theatre backdrop, the backstage, and the tribune.

Section B2 1.100

# + detail



Monumental facade fragment

# + city

Rostov-on-Don, or simply Rostov, is a city in southwest Russia. It is a port city, historically important for trade over the river Don, and Azov and Black Seas, to which it flows. With a population of over a million people, it is an administrative centre of the Southern Federal District of Russia and an important cultural hub of southern regions.

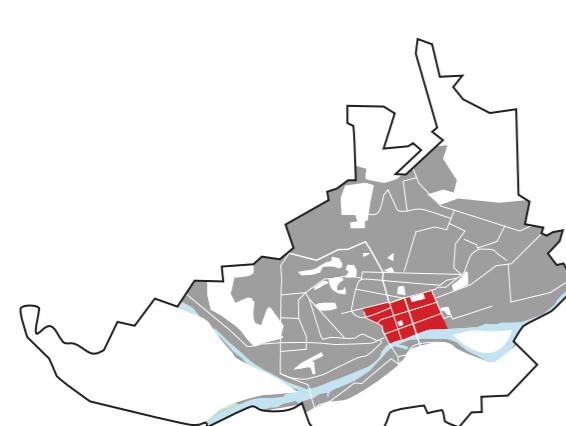
As seen in the top map on the rightspread, the part of the city now considered a historic centre developed during the 1800s; rapid expansion happened in the era of “the first Russian Capitalism” of the early 1900s and post-revolution urbanisation.



country



region



city

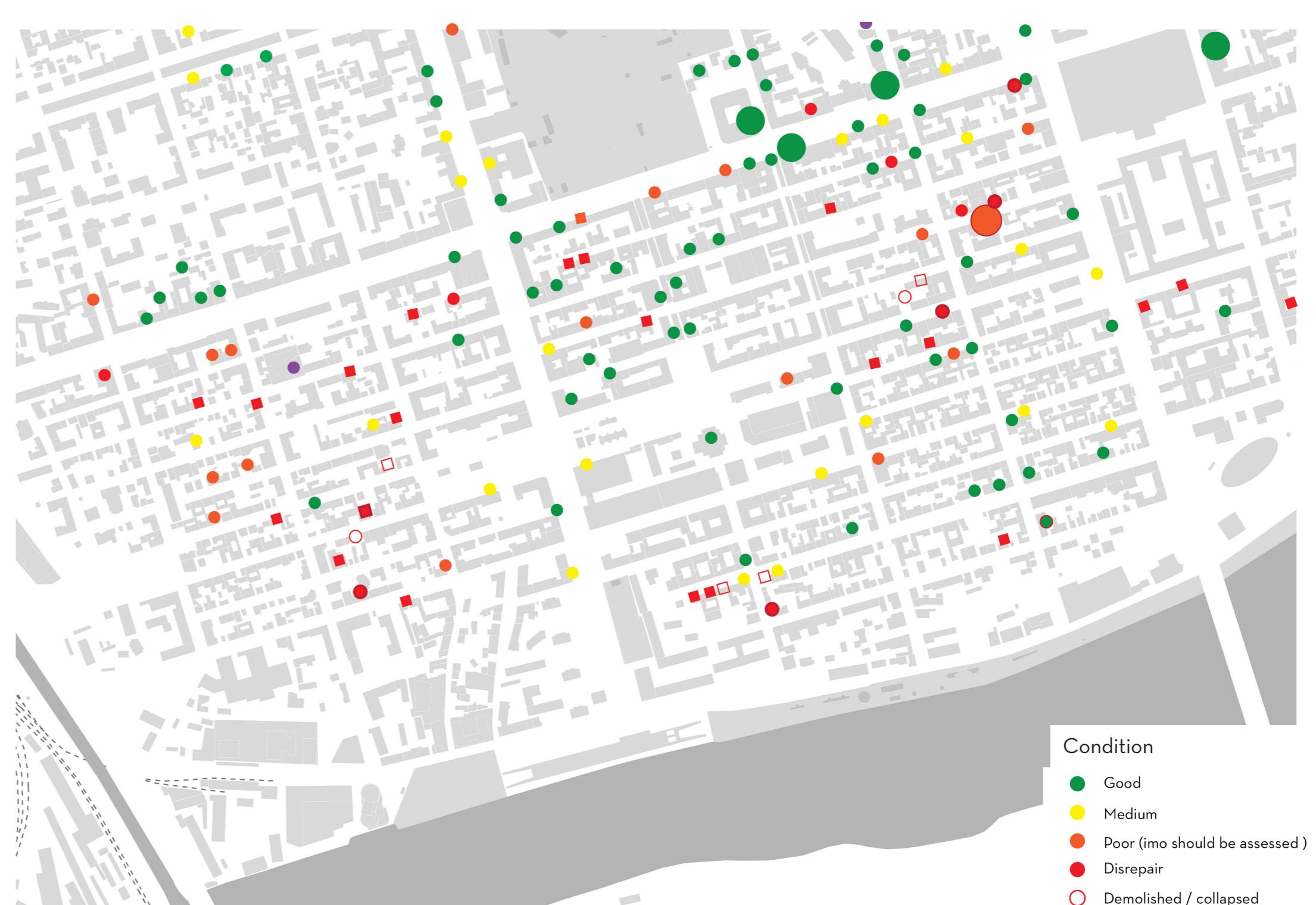
This is the part of the city littered with the remaining historic stock. Though originally the research started with a political definition of “civil engagement” in mind – one of interaction between the citizen and the state – I quickly learned that the lack of engagement in the Russian periphery persists in all manners of intra-city interactions.

One such missing – or poorly present – interaction is engagement with historic city architecture. While the city centre consists largely of pre-Revolution buildings, their conditions range from moderate to appalling. The potential for heritage loss is growing exponentially with years. But the citizen involvement in preservation is disappointingly little, and the efforts of the municipality are consistently misplaced.

In the second map, a list of heritage buildings is cross-referenced with the list of buildings slated for demolition in Rostov’s centre. We see many red circles. These are the buildings in legal limbo; those which must be demolished as they are a danger to public safety, but those which are historically important and thus must be preserved.

In the end, many of such buildings await their fate for so long, that they crumble before they see any restoration effort.

This is where my project lies. Abandoned heritage structures, with rich pasts and gloomy futures.



## OCCUPY

### ① Urban workshop

#### REMEMBER THE RUIN

### ① Murals, theatre-shack, bar

#### CREATE PUBLICITY

### ② Circulation core, lookout point

#### TAME THE RUIN

### ③ Workshops, courtyard stage

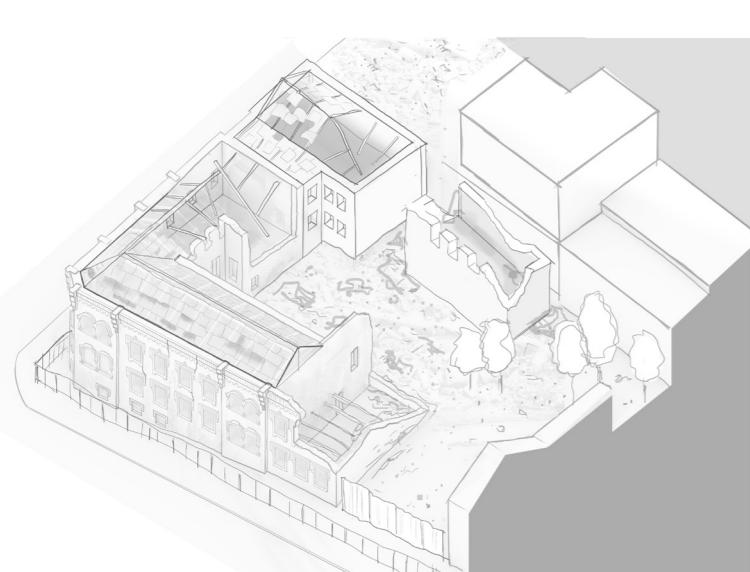
#### INVOLVE AT EVERY STEP

### ④ Site continues as a city-theatre and beyond

#### LIVE THE RUIN



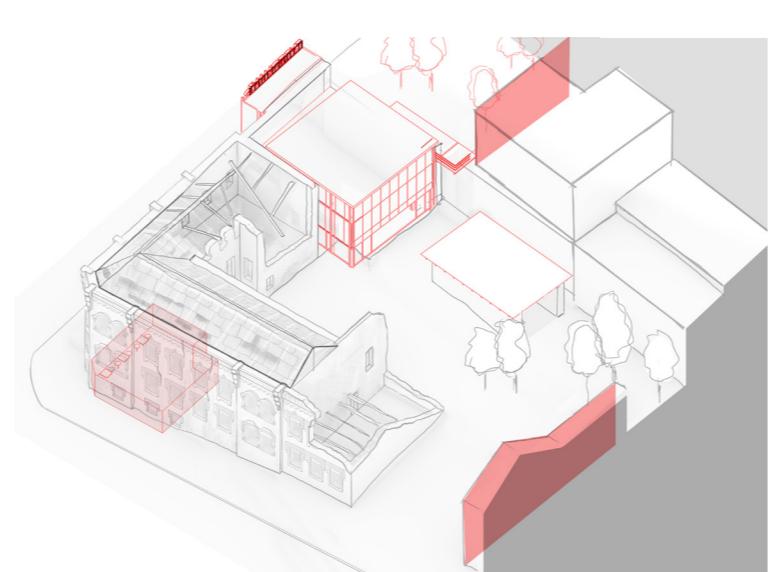
Current situation



Urban workshop cleanup



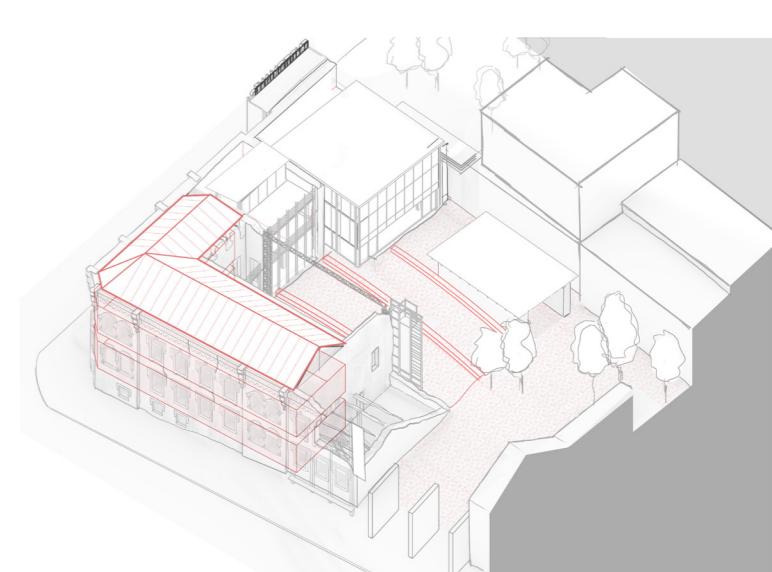
Phase 1

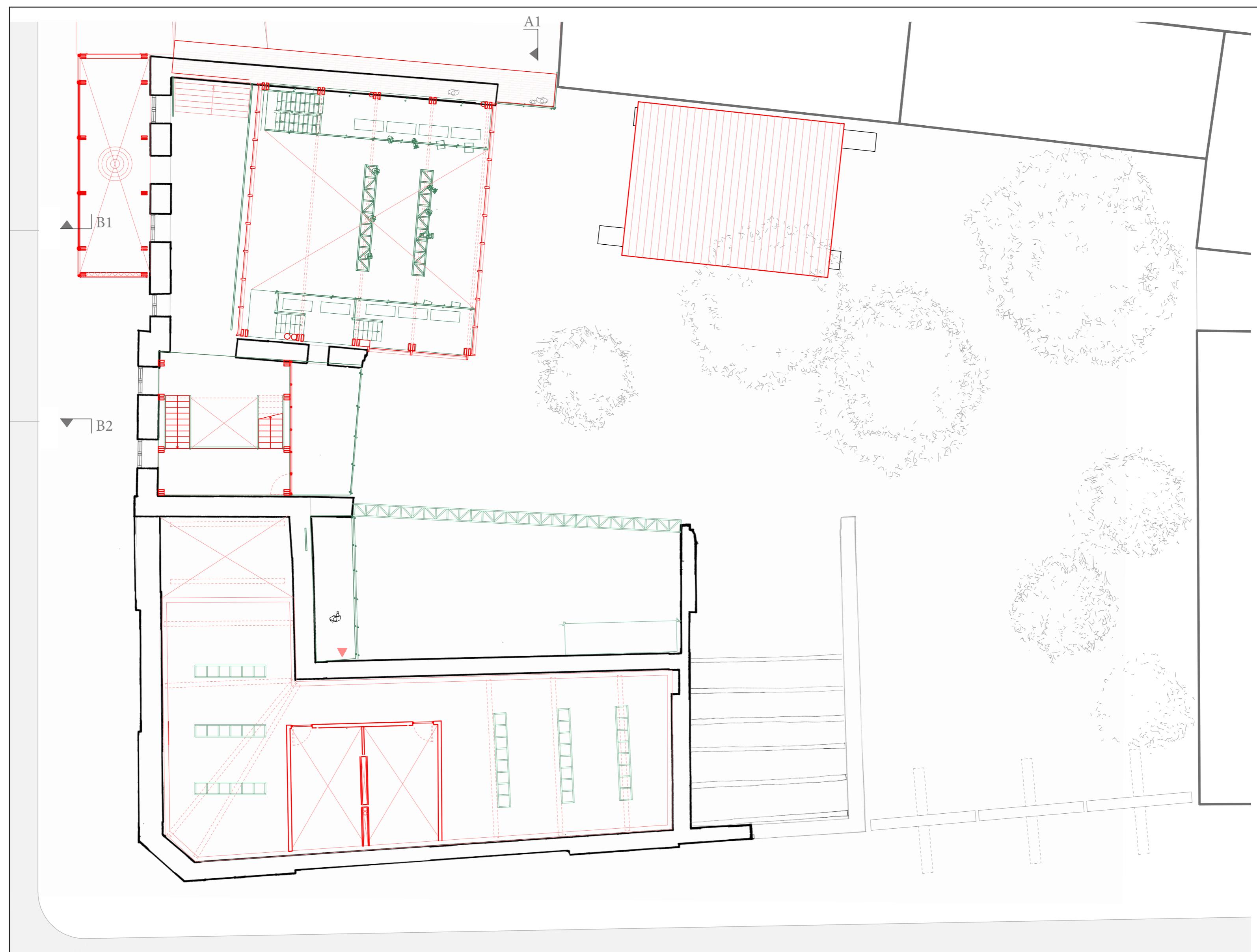


Phase 2



Phase 3





Second floor



Roof

