

# In conversation with the river

*giving voice to the Vistula in Warsaw*

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BT tutor: Georgios Karvelas

# Bar by the Pond



Bar by the Pond in 2015, source: Google Maps

# Bar by the Pond



Bar by the Pond in 2021, source: Google Maps

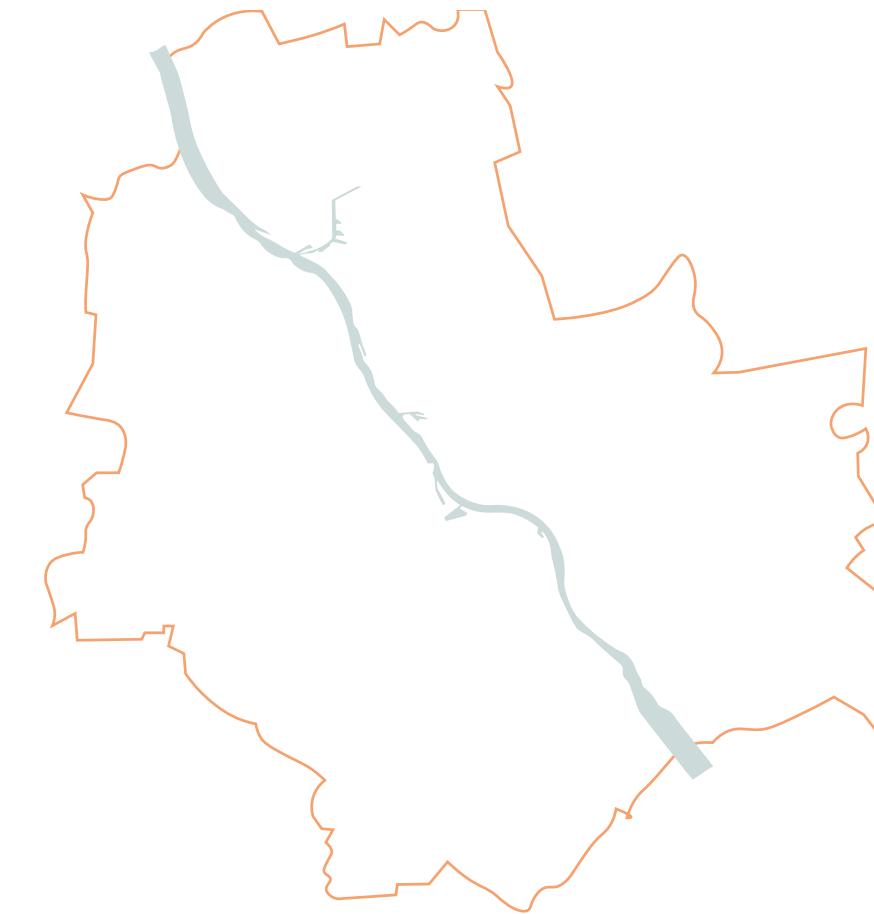
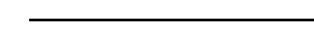
# Warsaw by the Vistula



# the Vistula River in Warsaw



the Vistula in Poland



the Vistula in Warsaw

# the Vistula River in Warsaw

*the central point of social life*



“View of Warsaw from Praga” (fragment) by Bernardo Bellotto, 1770

# the Vistula River in Warsaw

*inter-war peak*



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe

Warsaw residents by Vistula before WW2, photo: National Digital Archive

# the Vistula River in Warsaw

*decline from the 70s onwards*



New road along the Vistula, 1975, source: [tubylotustalo.pl](http://tubylotustalo.pl)

# the Vistula River in Warsaw

*Warsaw facing the Vistula again*



Boulevards and museums near the old town, source: [zzw.waw.pl](http://zzw.waw.pl)

# extreme climate events



Flood in Poland in 2024, photo: Adam Hawałej



Drought in Poland in 2024, photo: Maciej Jaźwiecki

# what would the river say?



Port Żerański, photo: Adam Stępień/AgencjaWyborcza.pl



The future of Port Żerański - public consultation

# giving voice to the river

## *research question*

how can understanding the voice of the river help to better connect it with the urban landscape,  
taking into account the river's needs?

What makes up the identity of the river?

How to represent the complexity of the river?

How to give voice to the water and hear it ourselves?

How to include the river's voice in the debate about its future?

# how to find the river's voice?



experience the river



engage in activities



talk to people who know it better

# constructing the narrative

*individual narratives from interviews*



*biodiversity hotspot*  
*coexistence of people and nature*  
*direct contact with Vistula*  
*constant flux*

*I have many faces and cannot be locked up  
In one identity  
It is impossible to step into the same river twice  
And impossible to twice in the same manner hear  
Its voice  
And yet it's beautiful to listen  
To the kaleidoscope of monologues*

*Sometimes I change drastically.  
Sometimes you follow me along  
my banks, and you meet a different  
river.  
(...)  
We could work together towards the  
same goal. To preserve the resources  
and the joy that I want to give you.  
And above all to protect nature to  
whom I give life.*

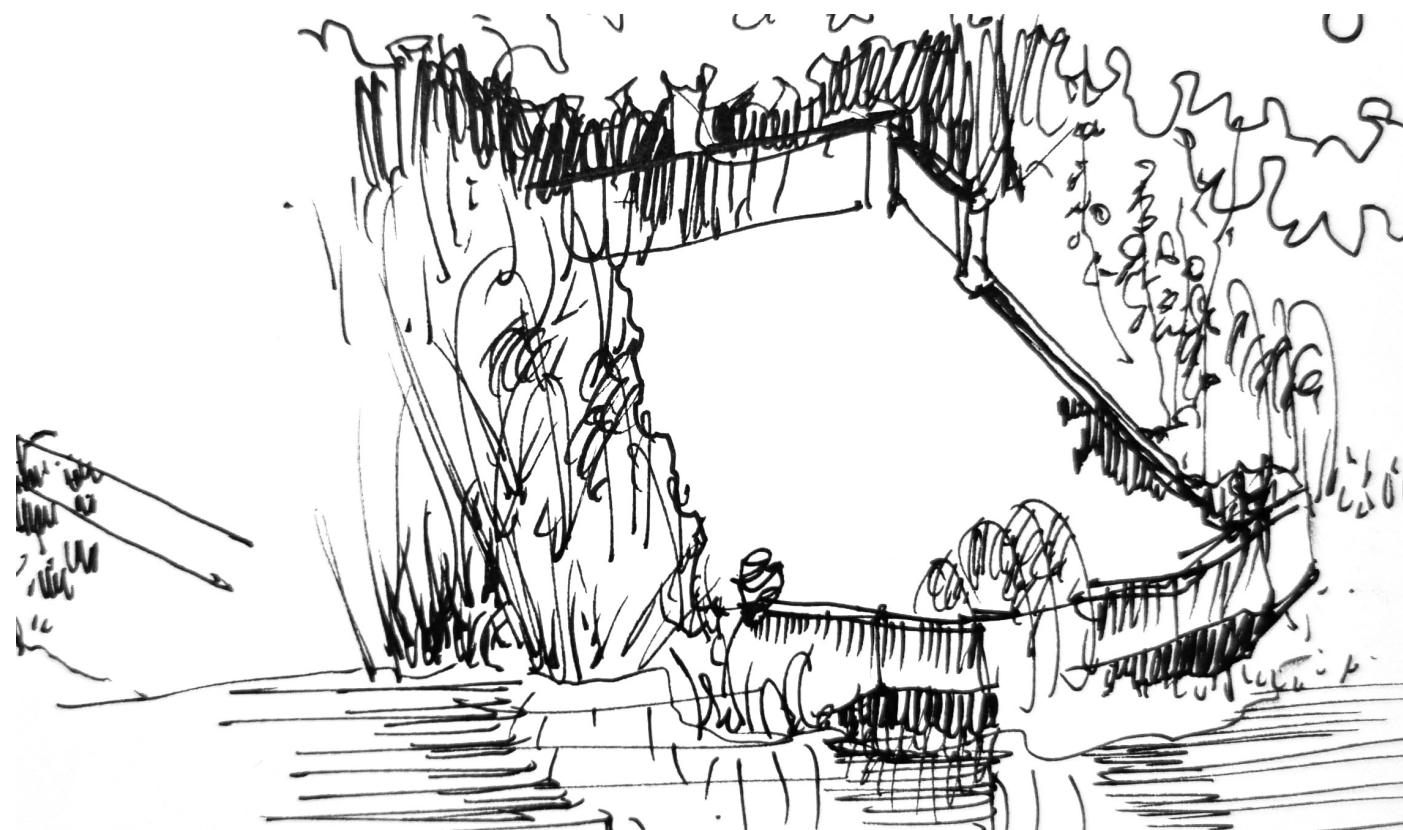
# constructing the narrative

## individual narratives from interviews



# constructing the narrative

*my own encounters with the river*



*There is almost always a medium  
between me and the river.*

*a deck*

*the seat of a canoe*

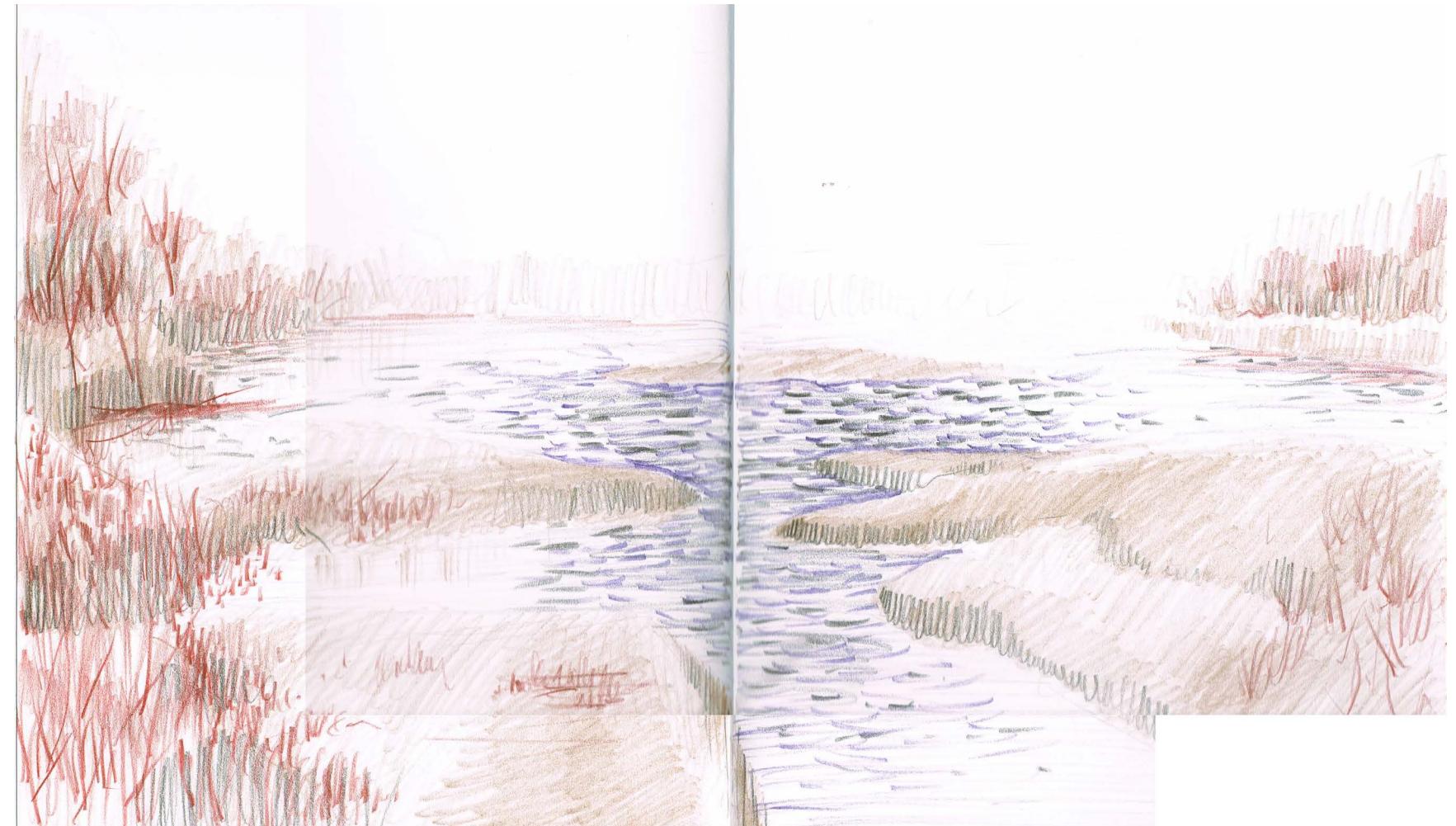
*a step*

*reeds*

*inflatable mattress*

# constructing the narrative

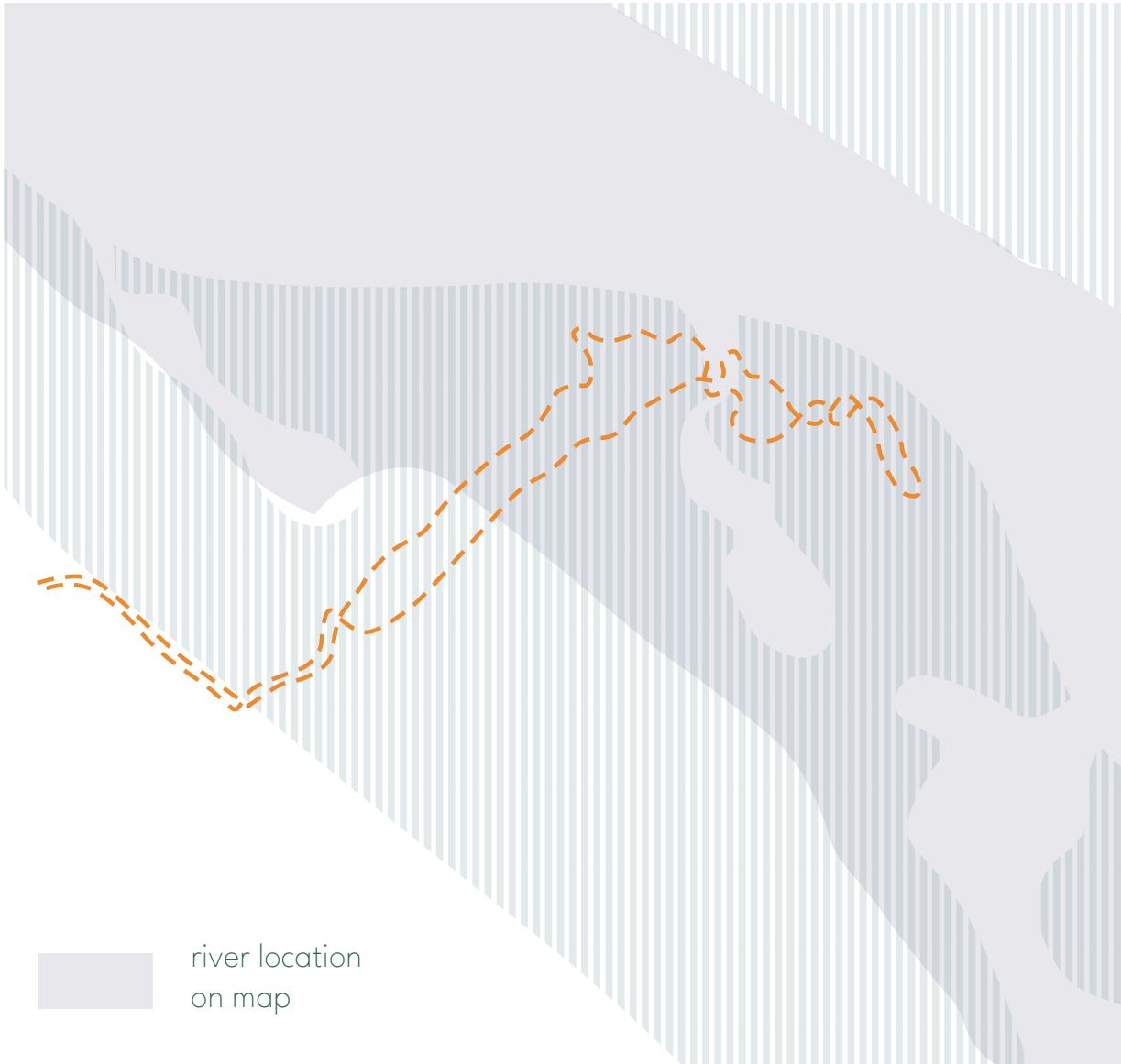
*my own encounters with the river*



*We want to meet, but somehow we find it difficult. We build walls and footbridges, just to avoid touching each other. It's as if we deliberately keep our distance. Although if I'm honest, I think distance sometimes does us good.*

# constructing the narrative

*my own encounters with the river*



*I look at the map and see myself walking on water on the screen. I dip my foot deeper. But I plunge it into the soft, loose sand. And again I ask myself - where is the river? Is it possible to draw its boundary?*

# constructing the narrative

*documenting the river through photography*



users



infrastructures



landscapes



perseverance



patterns

# constructing the narrative

**Mateusz  
Senko**



Baikov, David socialist member. From Zelenograd area member. He made his first socialist statements in 2010. He is a member of the local socialist group and makes a socially active job. To this end he engages in discussions with the local socialist group and authorities at a higher level.

*In the beginning there was Nature  
My voice was not disturbed, because there was no reason to distract it  
Now I have become sensitive  
I am more easily offended  
But I know that animals will find a place  
The question is, where you want to keep them with you  
Or please request me to leave.*

**US OR THEM?**  
You find a hard to believe, but I know  
That we will endure anyway  
Our collective perverseness will outlive your ideals

*Certainty, the identity of the river is created by nature. In my opinion, the Vistula is also a natural entity, which is not created by man. The river is a natural entity which has existed. Whether has basically opened it to the Vistula.*

*There is very good information associated with the river that I think it is natural that the river is a natural entity. The river is a natural entity, which is a part of the Vistula river, it is not a name as a high-minded thing. That is changed*

*There is a kind of bewilderment in Warsaw, and kind of a confusion about the Vistula, to be precise, that the [printing of legal permission] could really end. And I think that this could be a good opportunity to start a new discussion about the Vistula.*

*Conversations with the river*

*There is almost always a medium between me and the river.*

*deck*  
*the seat of a canoe*  
*step*  
*seeds*  
*inflatable mattress*



A close-up view of a plant with long, thin, yellowish-brown leaves growing from a cluster of brown, dried, and crumpled leaves on a textured, light-colored surface. The plant appears to be a type of palm or cycad, with its new growth emerging from the base of the old, dead foliage.



*I look at the map and see myself walking on water on the screen. I dip my foot deeper. But I plunge it into the soft, loose sand. And again I ask myself - where is the river? Is it possible to draw its boundary?*



A top-down photograph of a person's feet in blue and white polka-dot rain boots standing in shallow, rocky water. The water is clear, and the person is looking down at their boots.



A landscape painting of a river flowing through a valley. The river is in the foreground, with its surface reflecting the light. On either side of the river are banks covered in tall, dry grasses and some small trees or shrubs. The background shows a distant shoreline with more vegetation and a clear, blue sky above.



# CONVERSATION WITH THE RIVER

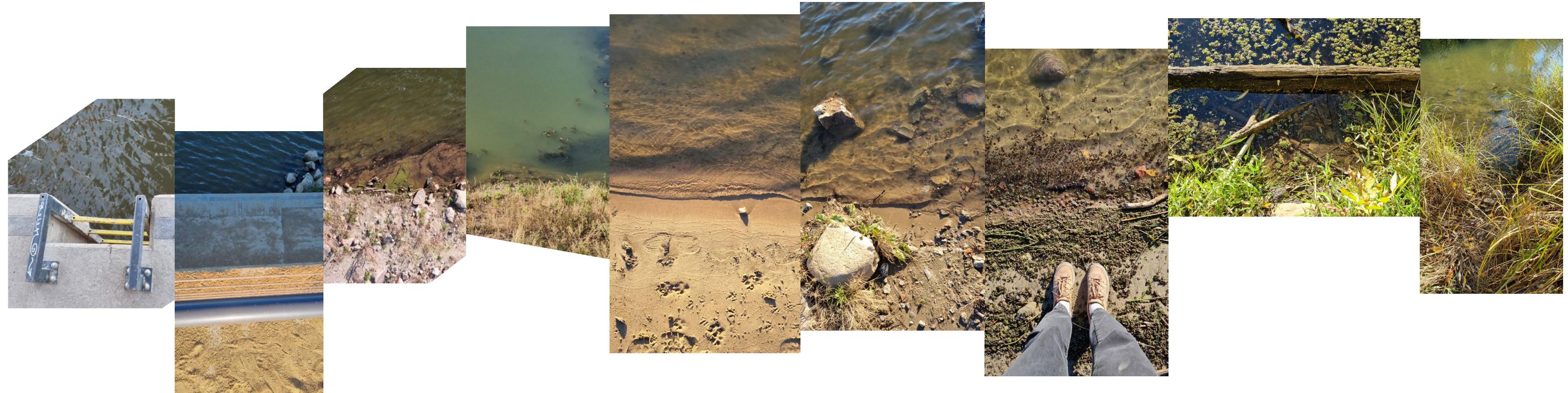
Katarzyna Prokopiuk | P5 presentation



*We want to meet, but somehow we find it difficult. We build walls and footbridges, just to avoid touching each other. It's as if we deliberately keep our distance. Although if I'm honest, I think distance sometimes does us good.*

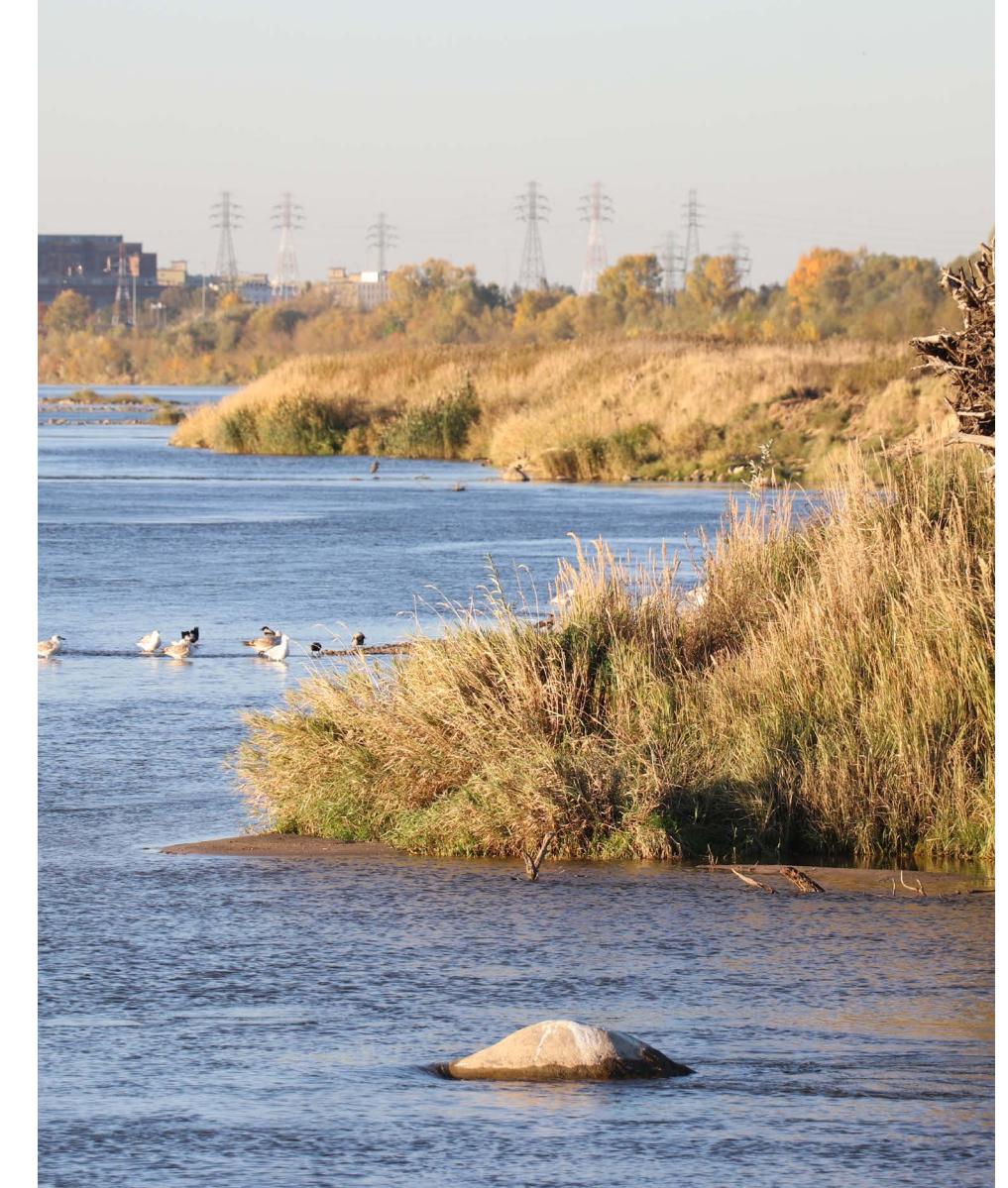
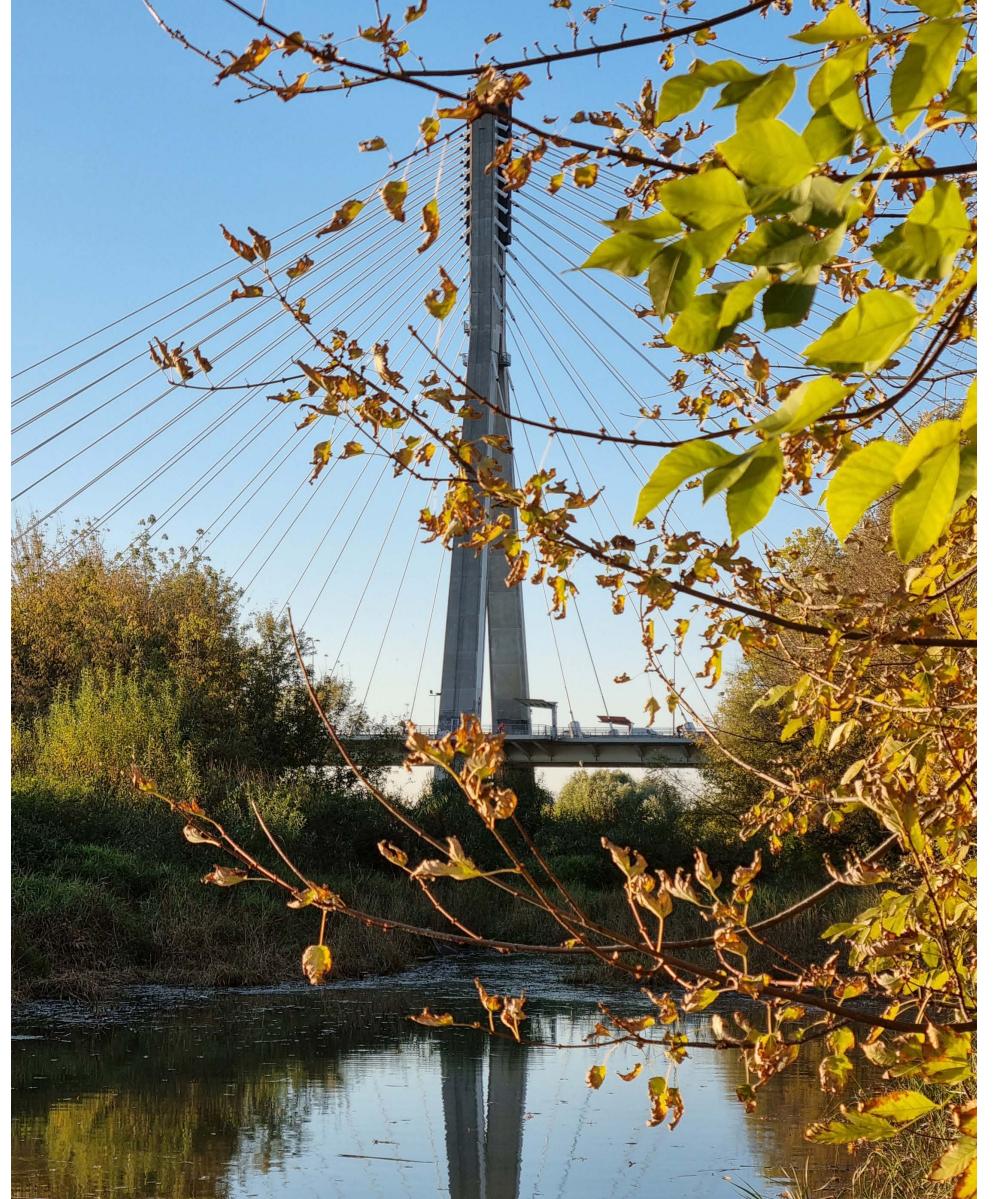
# no man ever steps in the same river twice

*narrative of the river*



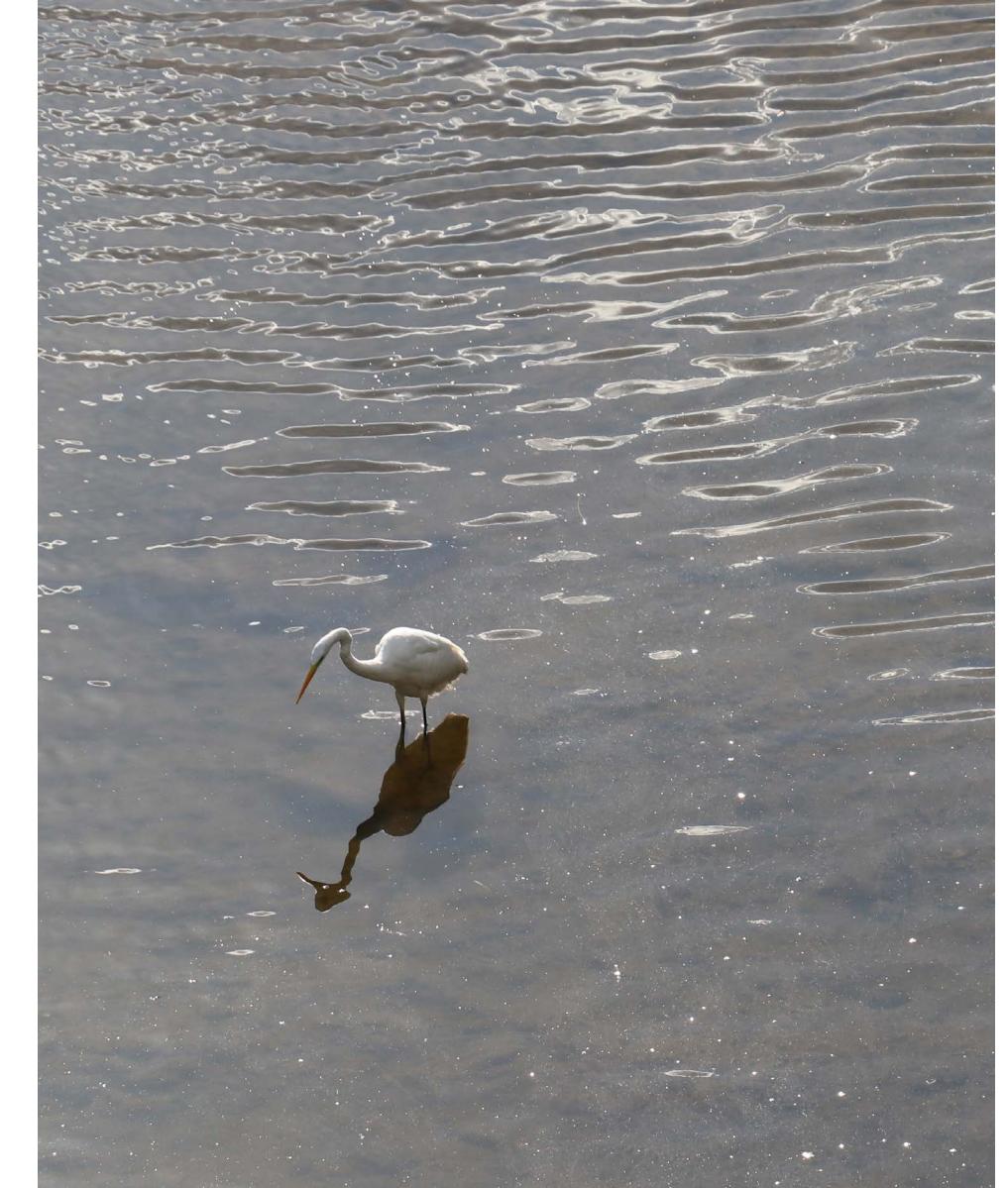
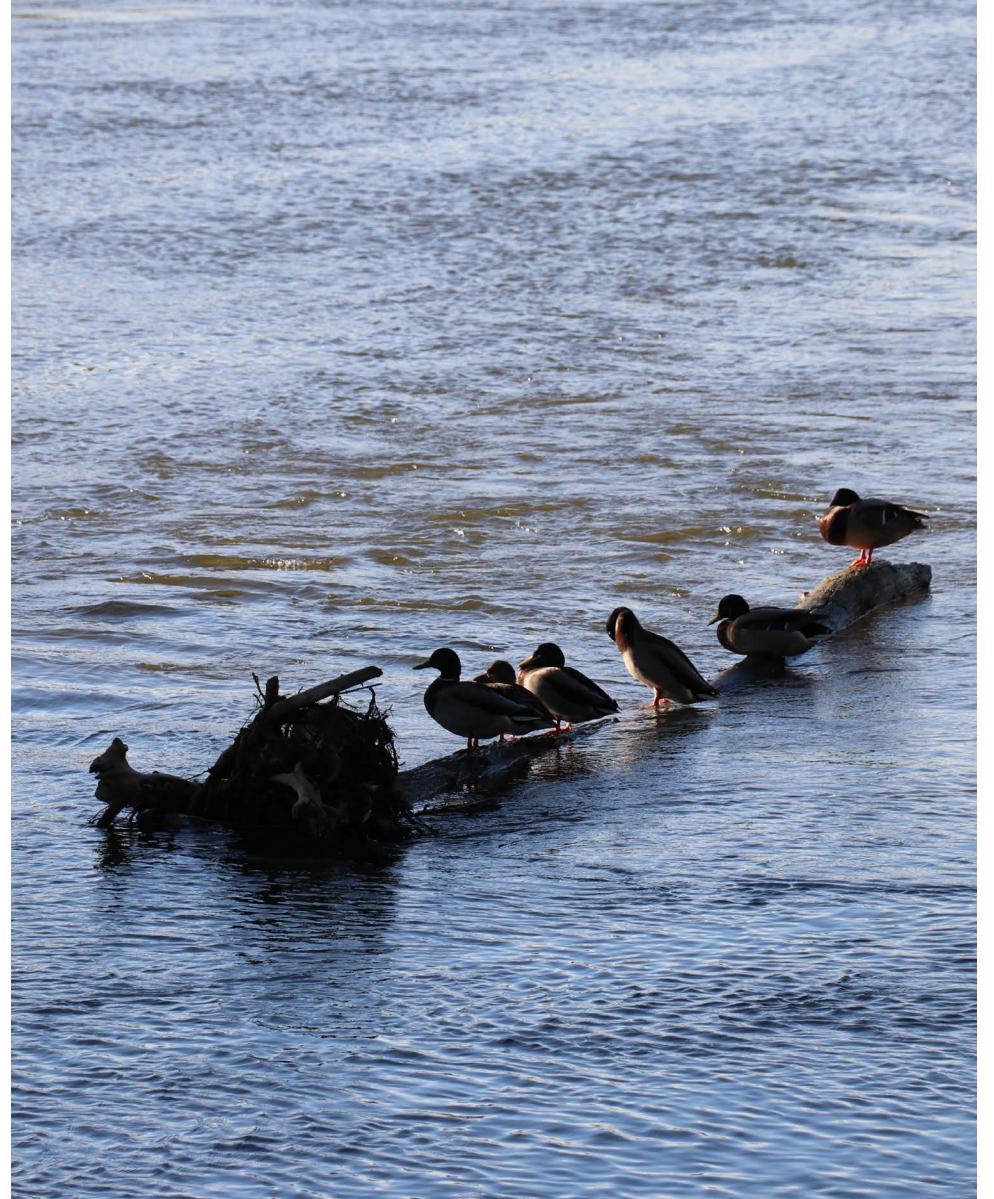
# the voice of the Vistula

*beauty, life and connection*



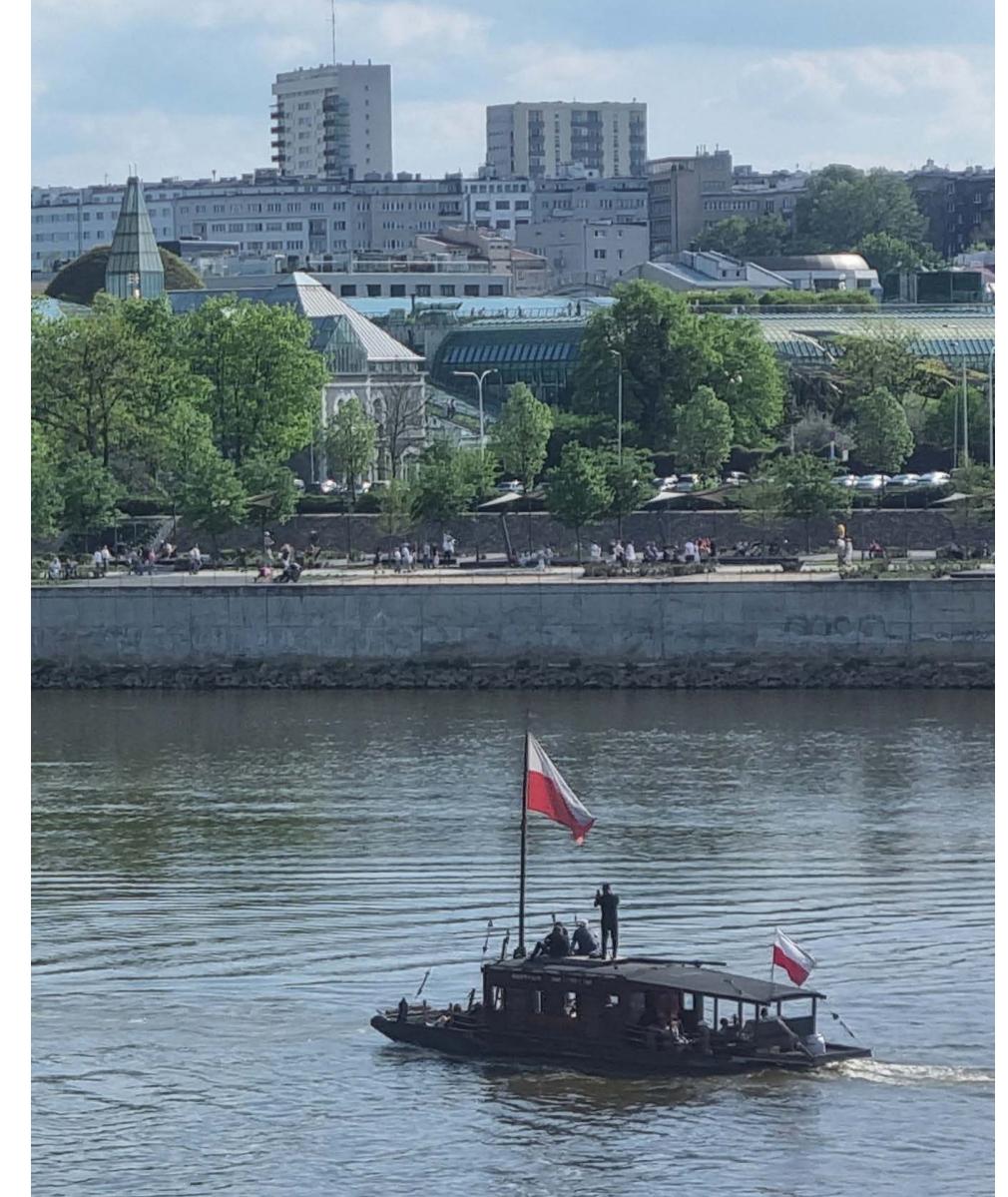
# the voice of the Vistula

*animals as the main inhabitants*



# the voice of the Vistula

*strengthening the relationship between people and the river*



# the voice of the Vistula

*critique of activities driven solely by financial profit*

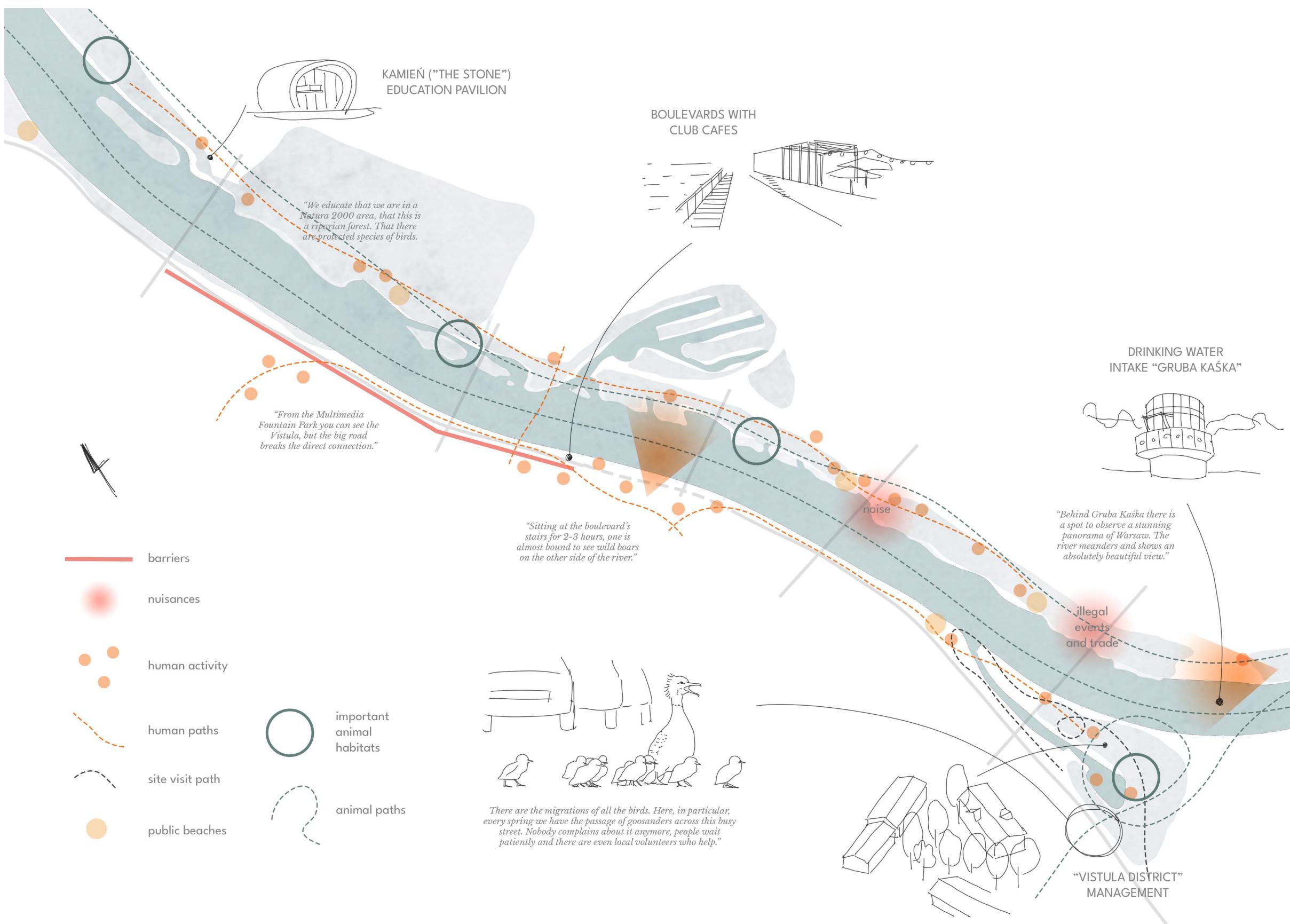


# the voice of the Vistula

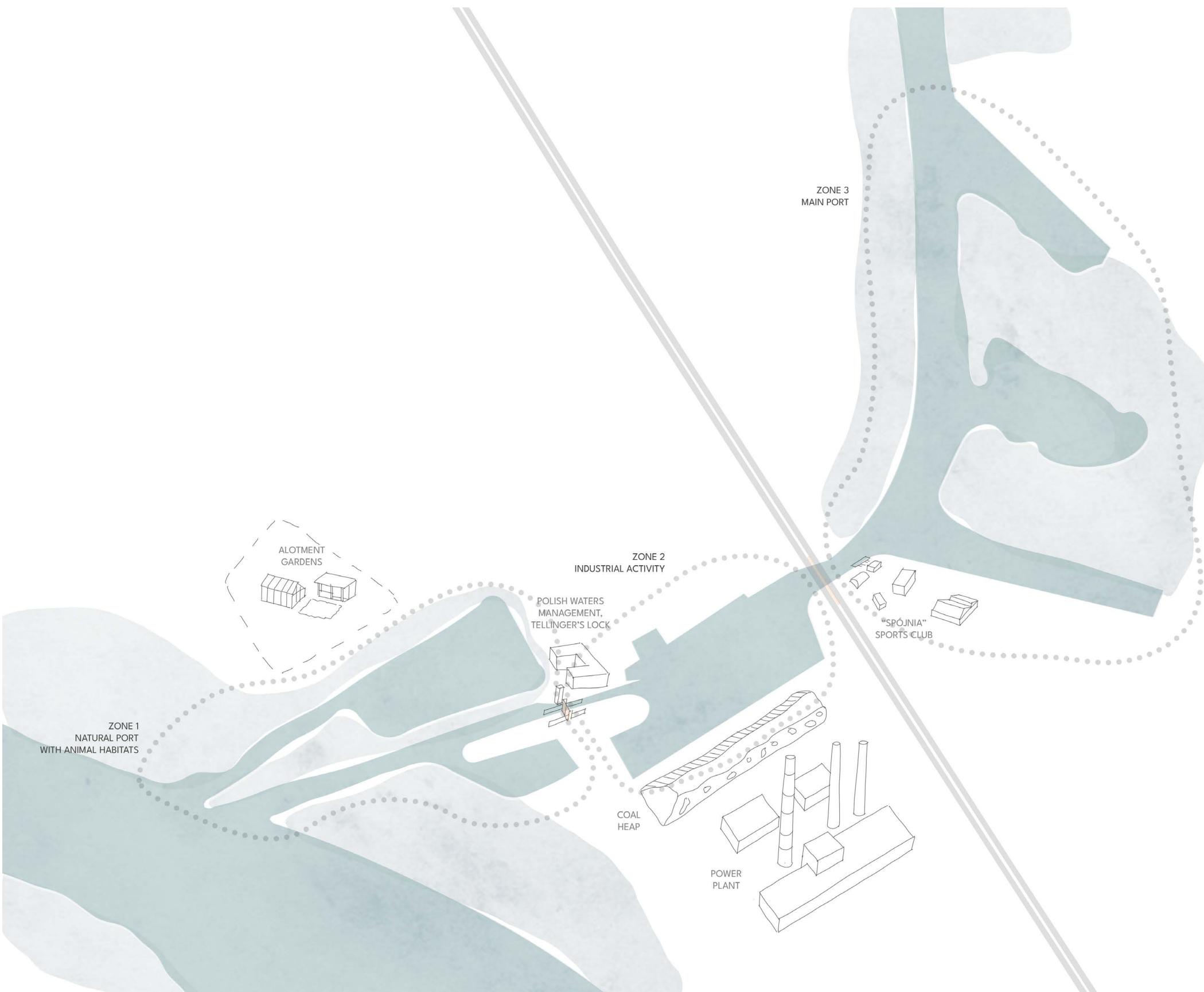
*respectful coexistence*



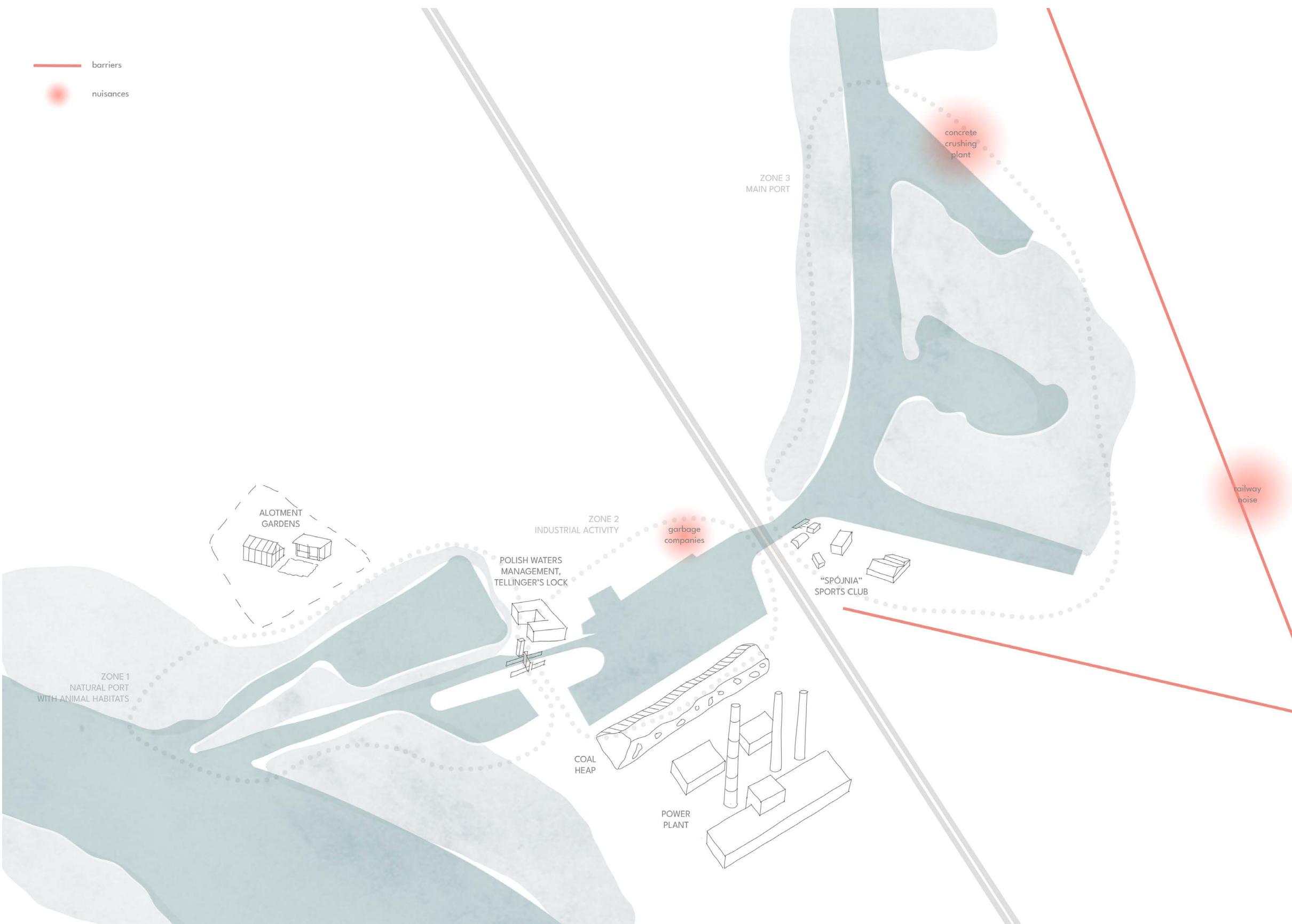
# mapping the voice



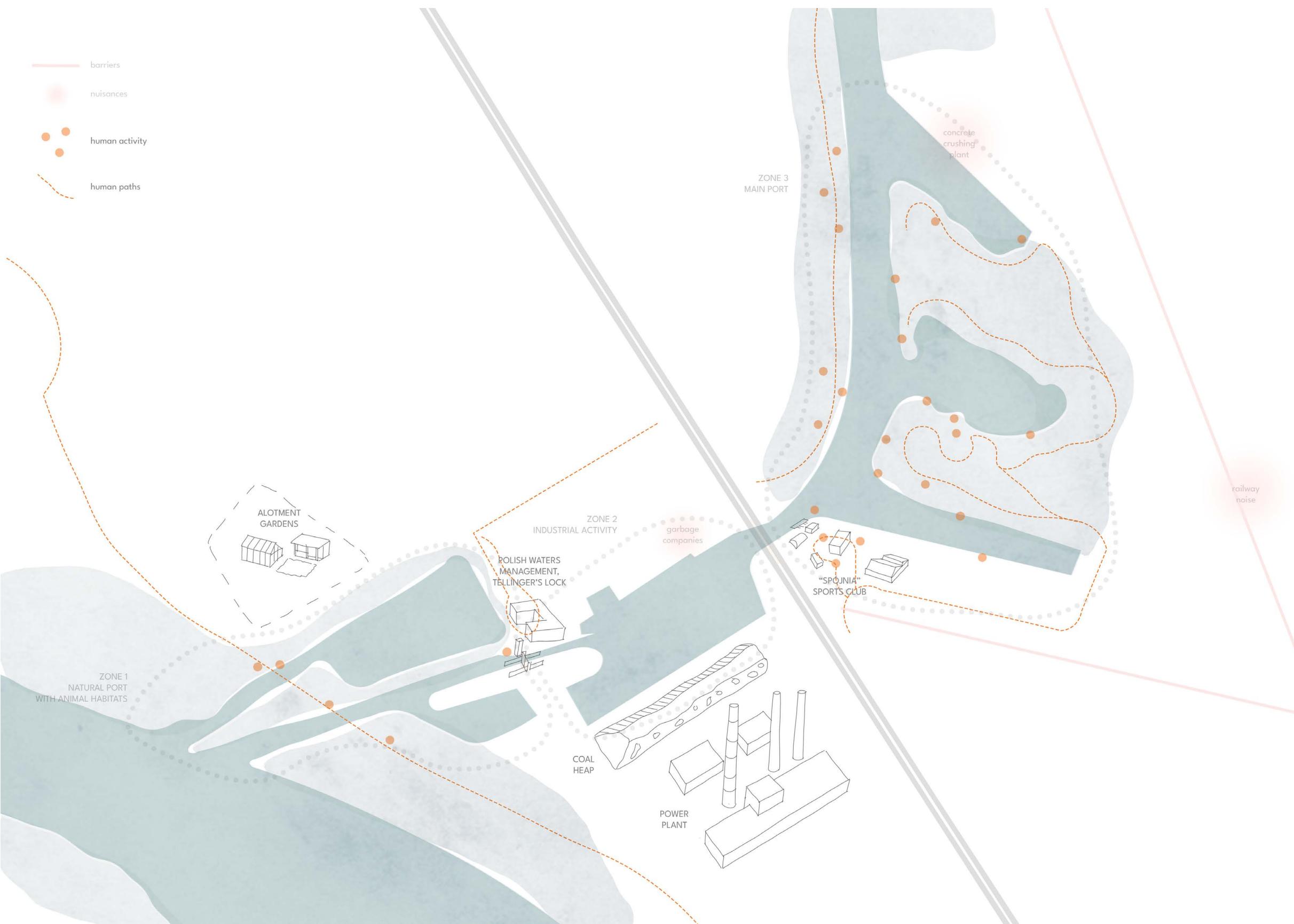
# mapping the voice



# mapping the voice



# mapping the voice



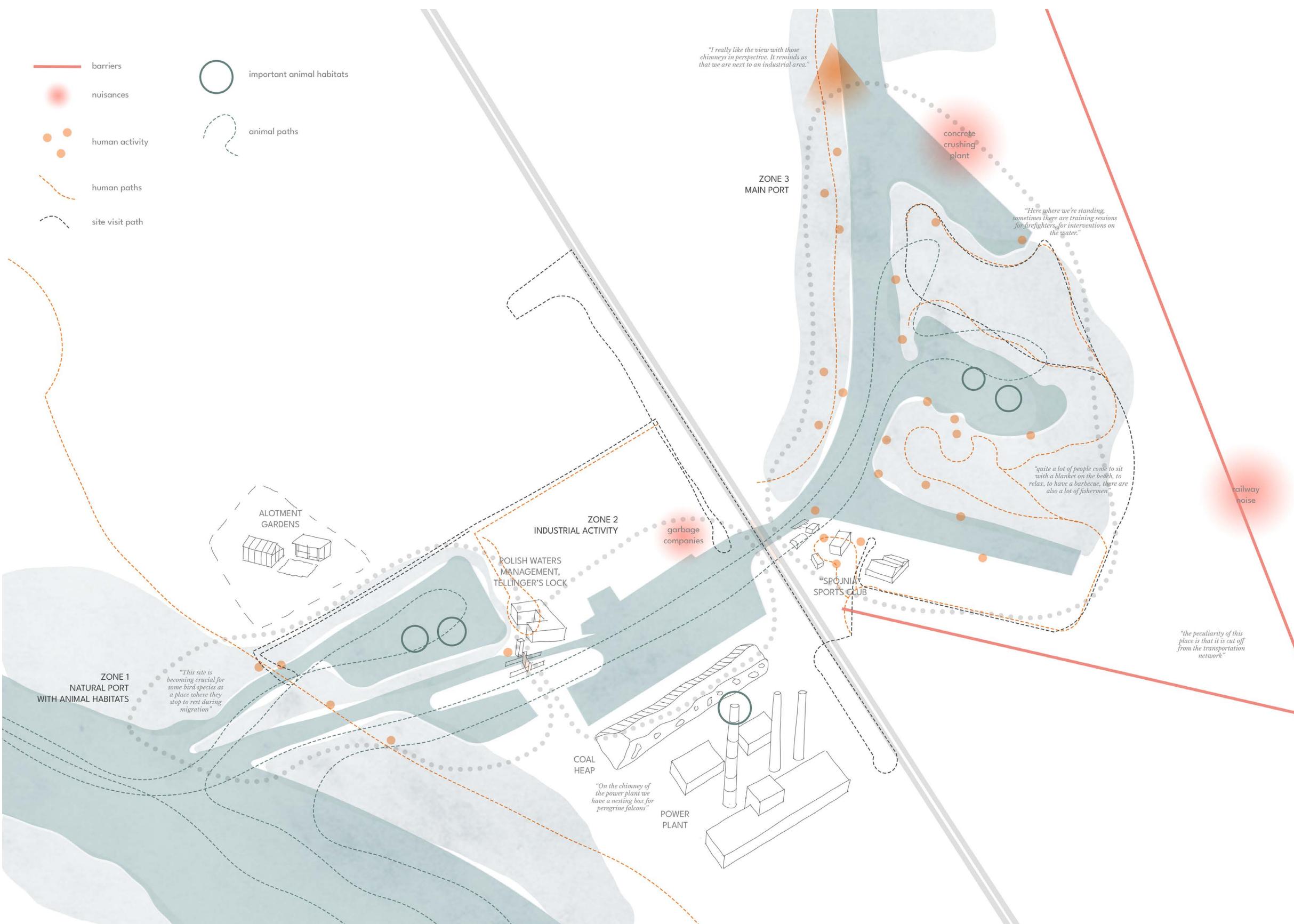
# mapping the voice



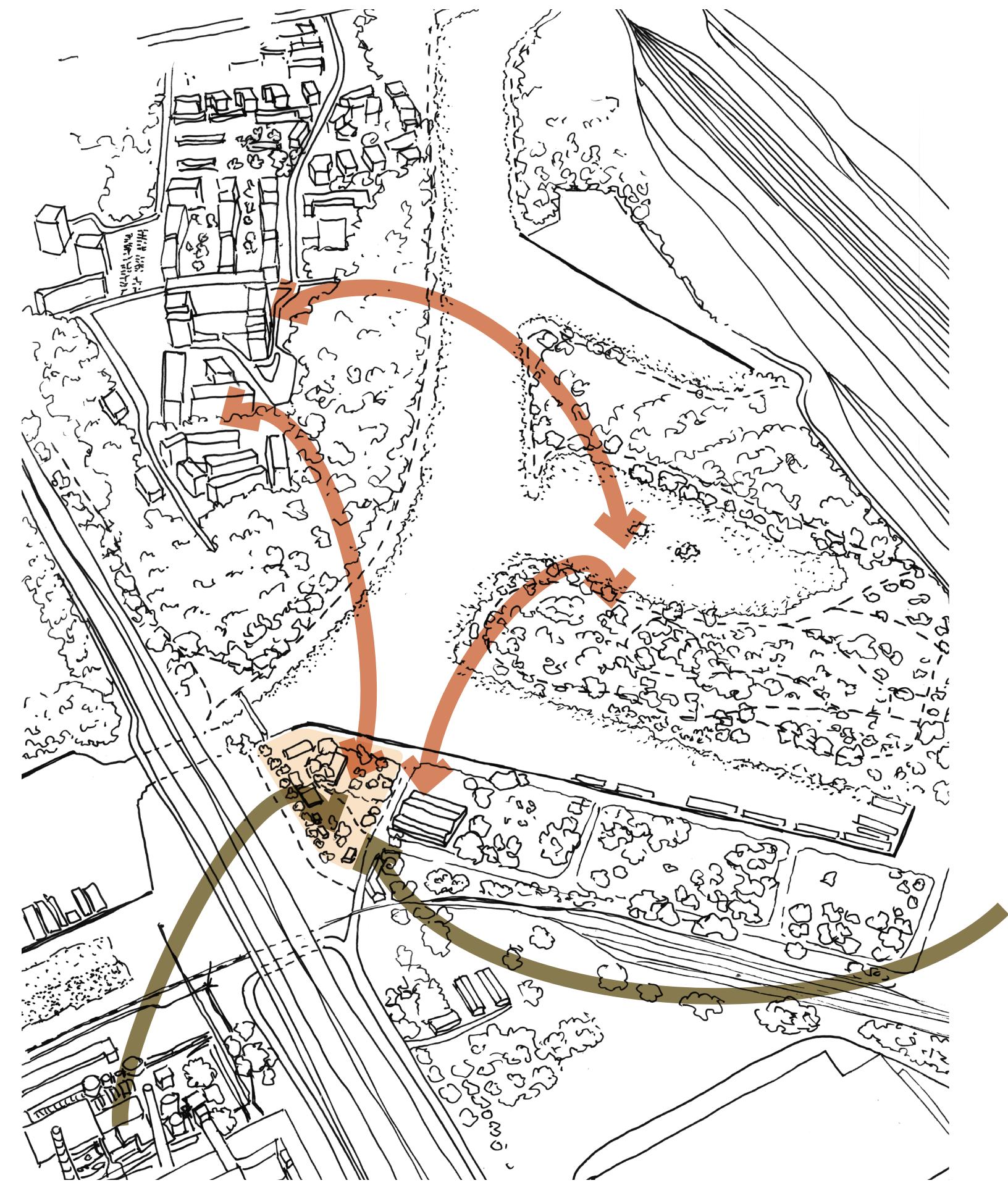
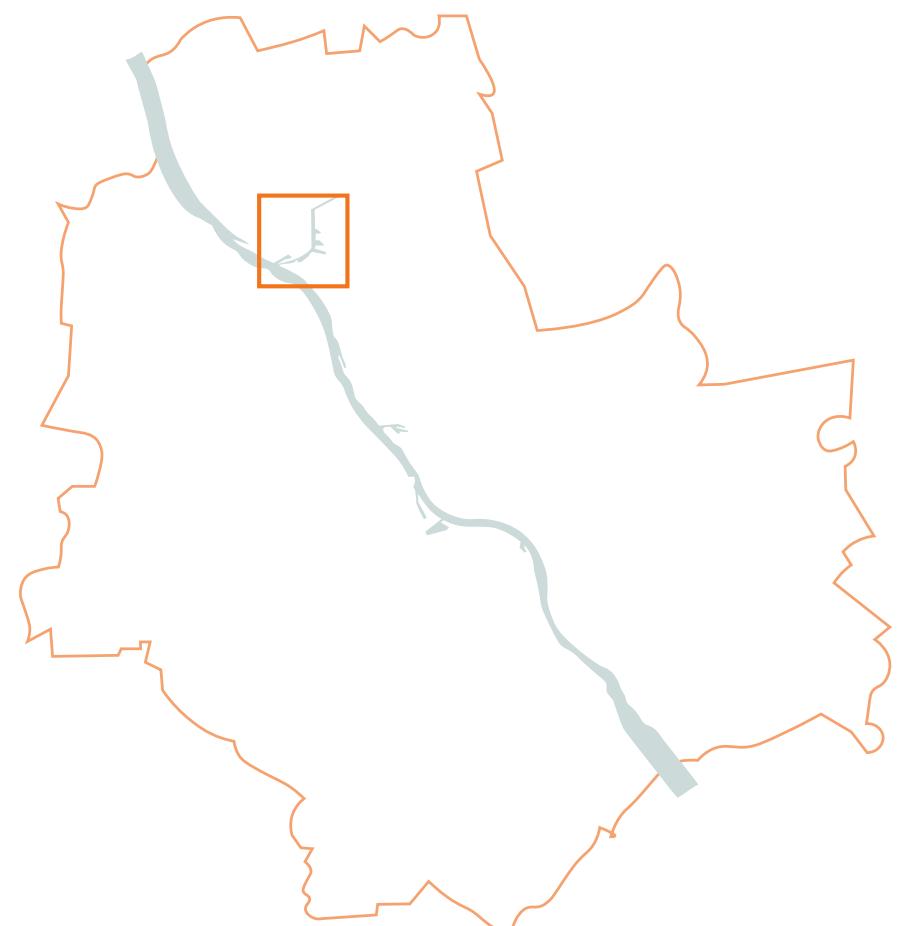
# mapping the voice



# mapping the voice



# Port Żerański



# water sports



source: Google Earth

# water sports and nature



source: Google Earth

# water sports and nature



# water sports and nature



# water sports and nature



# what future for the port?



The future of Port Żerański - public consultation





biodiversity hub, natural park

“informal” functions and facilities in natural landscape: camping, fishing, natural swimming pool

Warsaw water sports center

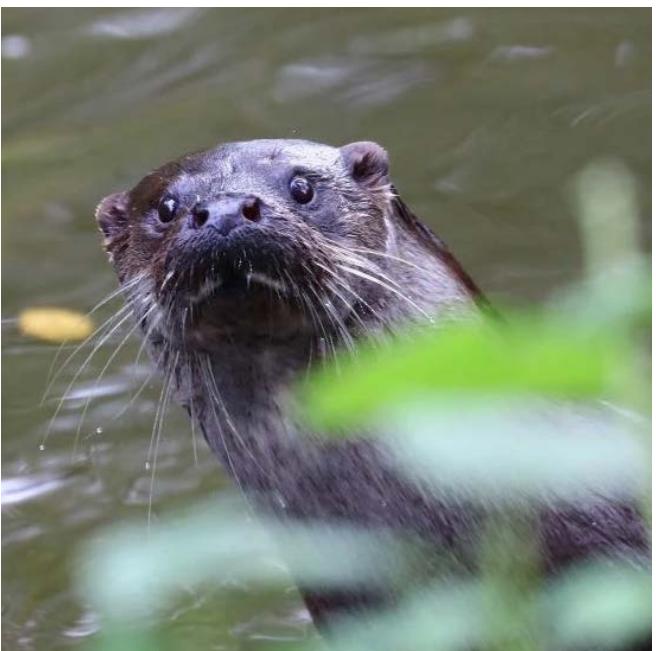
organized social functions: restaurant, crafts, events etc.

# prioritize nature

*Just imagine the little tippy taps of a beaver proudly carrying his log, the soft touch of an otter's paw and the barely noticeable pinching of a crayfish. Being woken up from daydreams by the singing of thousands of birds. I will never cease to be amazed.*



# primary users



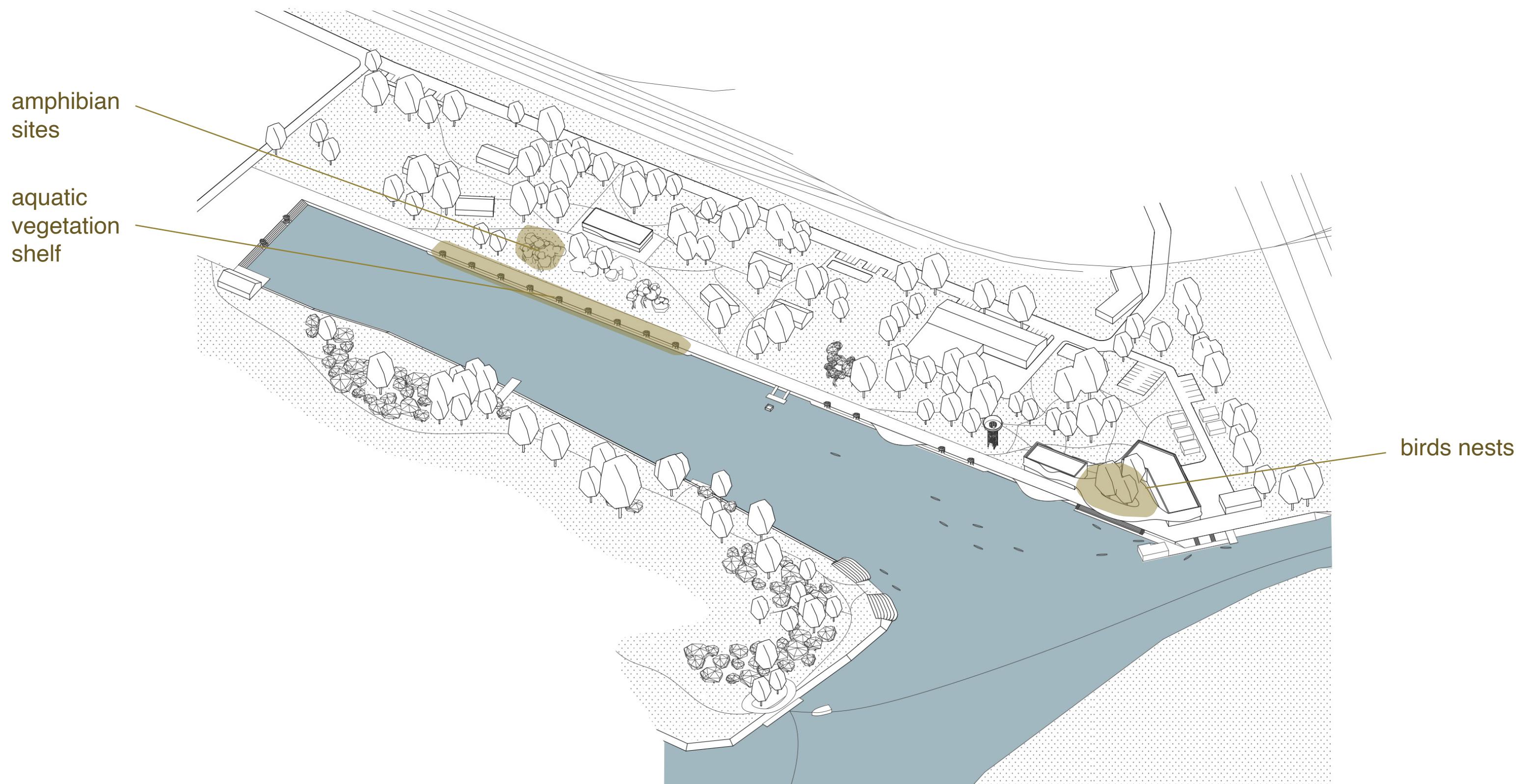
## existing green spaces



# separated from water

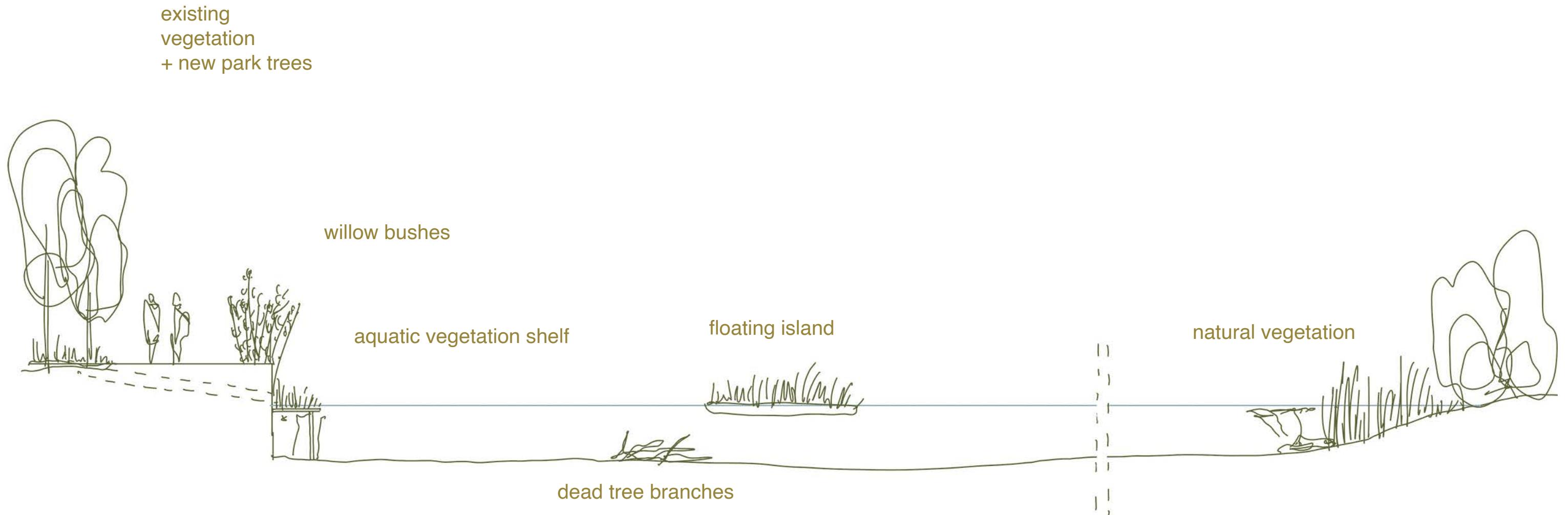


# new animal habitats



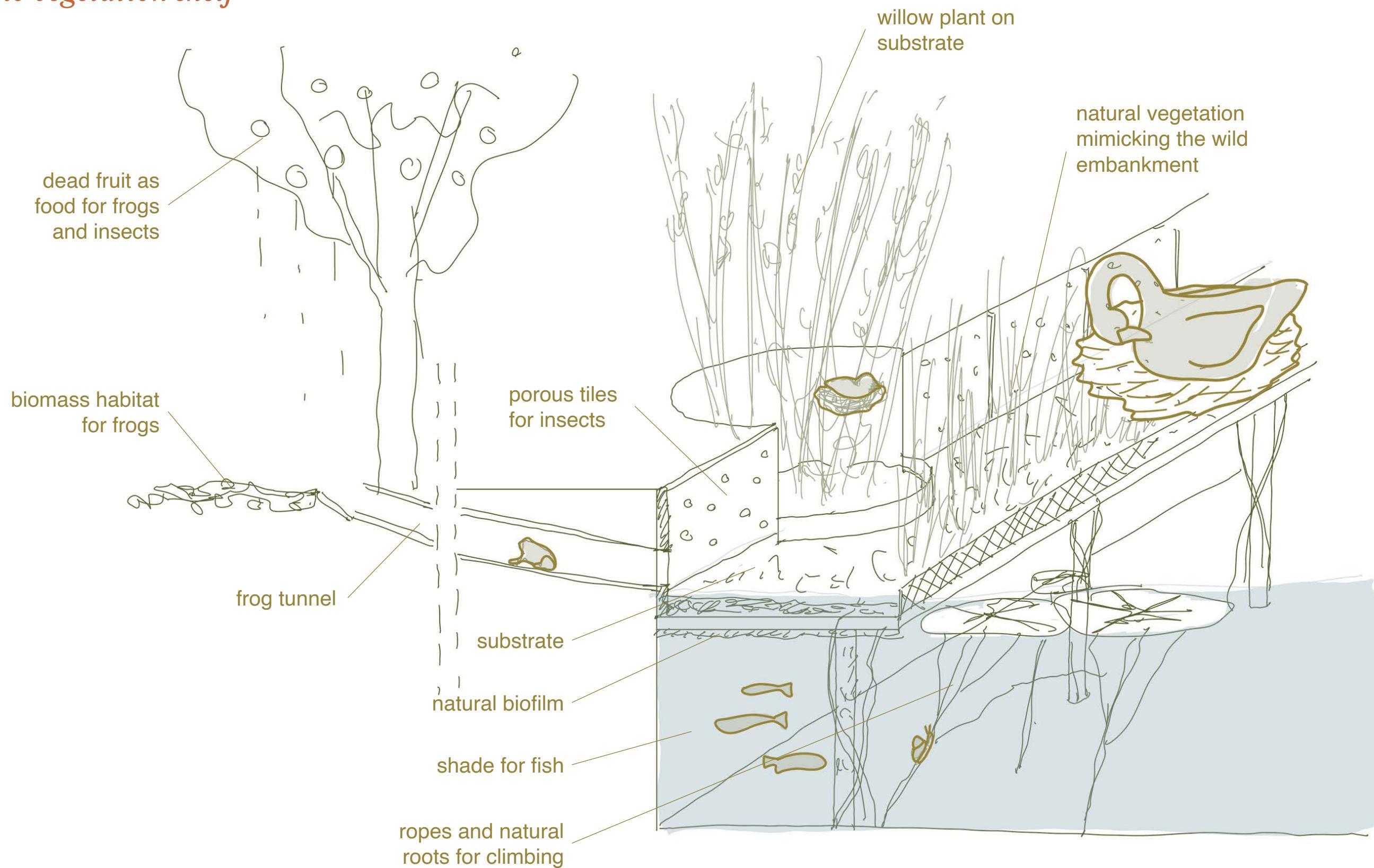
# new animal habitats

*reconnecting with the river*



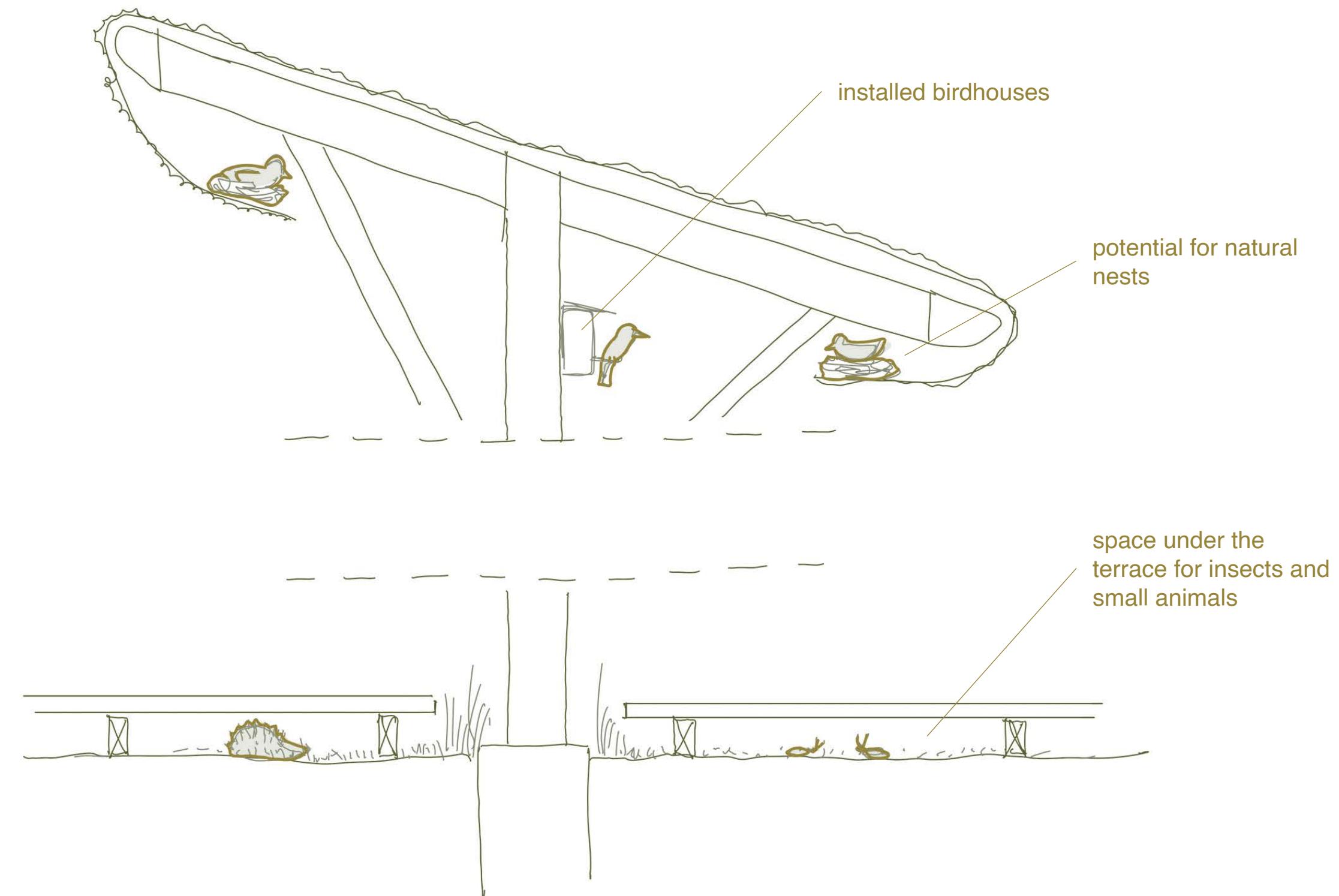
# new animal habitats

## *aquatic vegetation shelf*

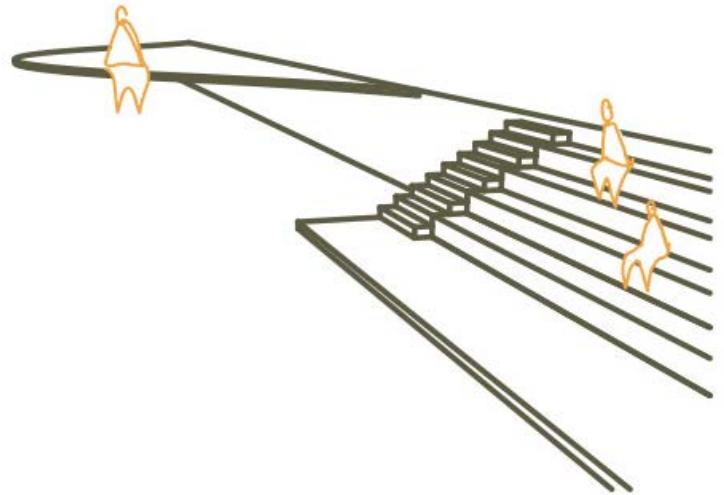


# new animal habitats

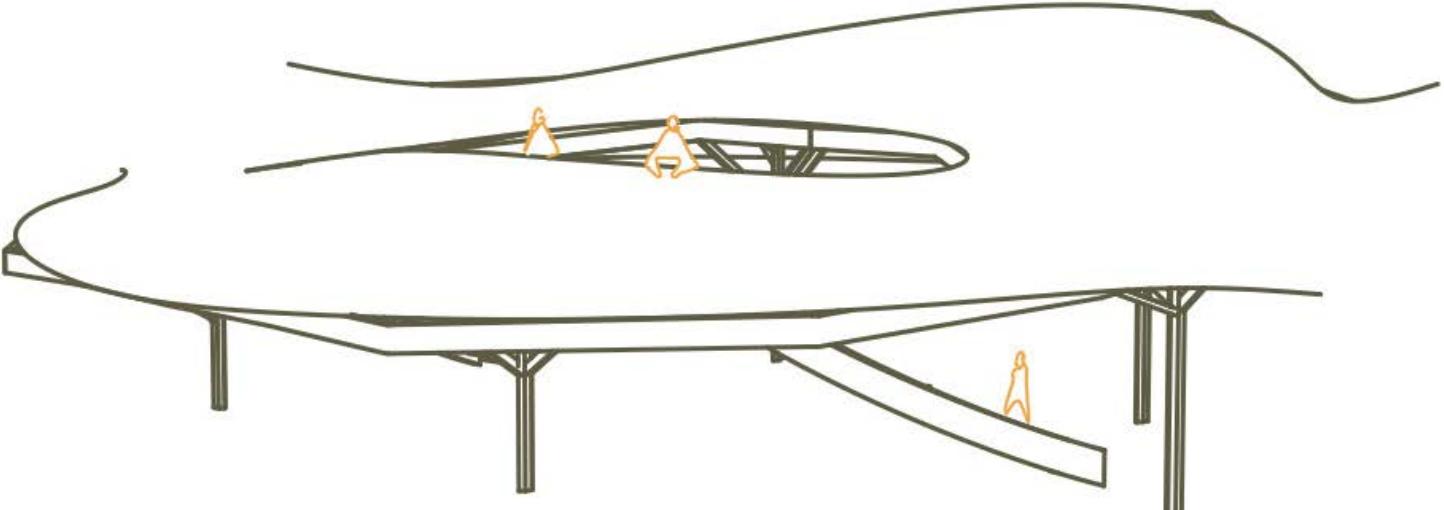
## *the canopy*



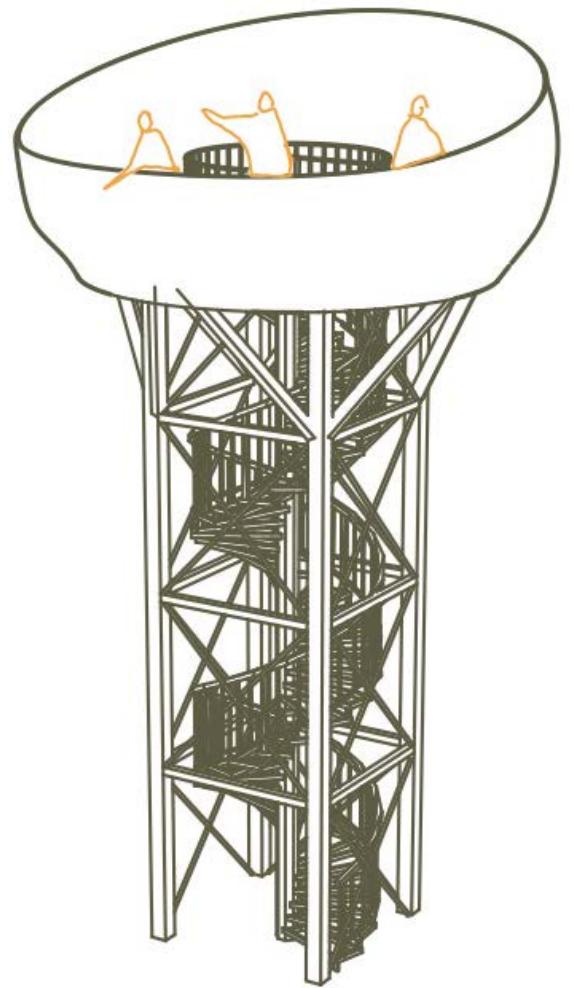
# different levels of observation



0 - 1 m



3,5 m



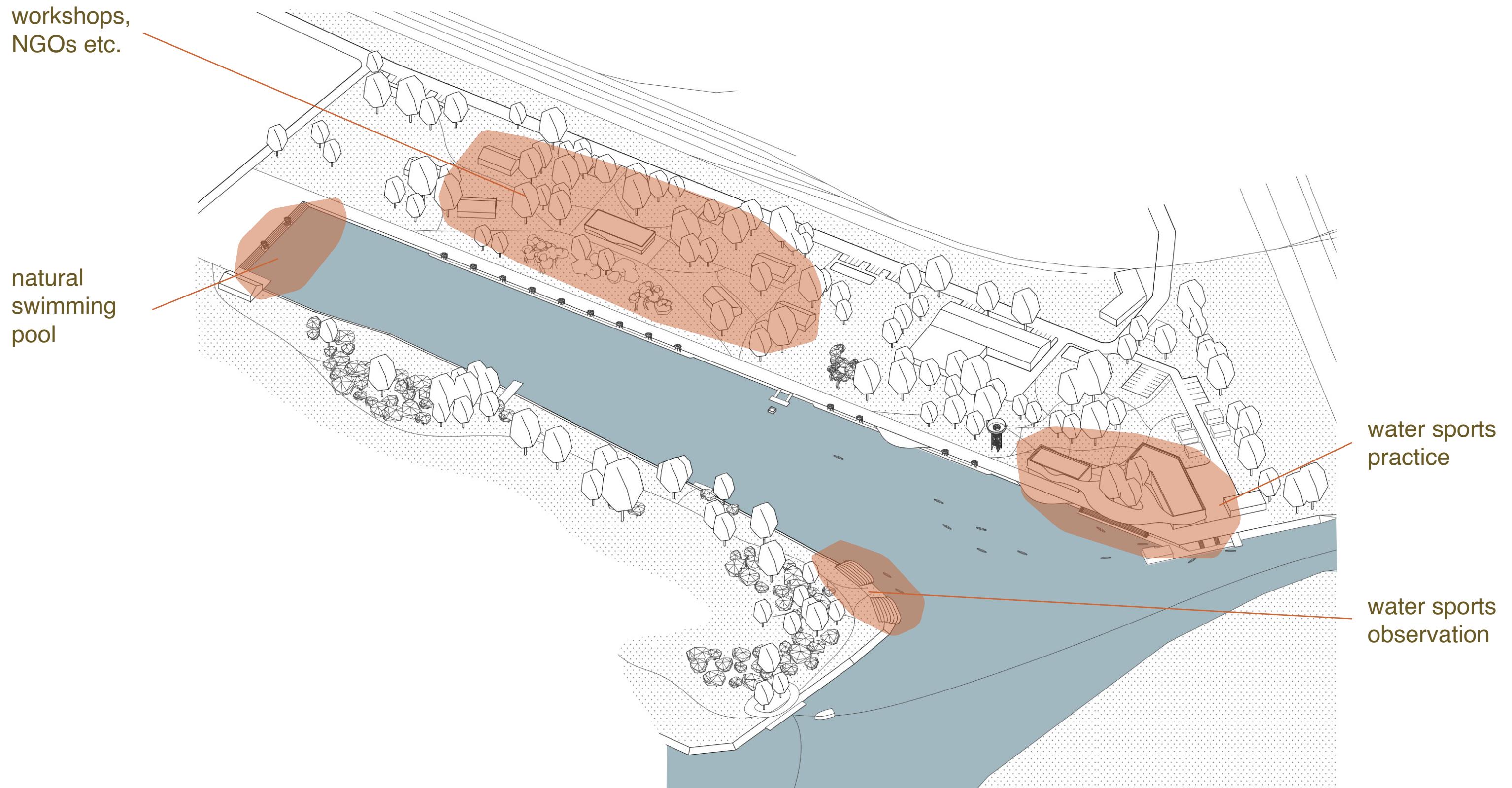
10 m

# build a relationship with the river

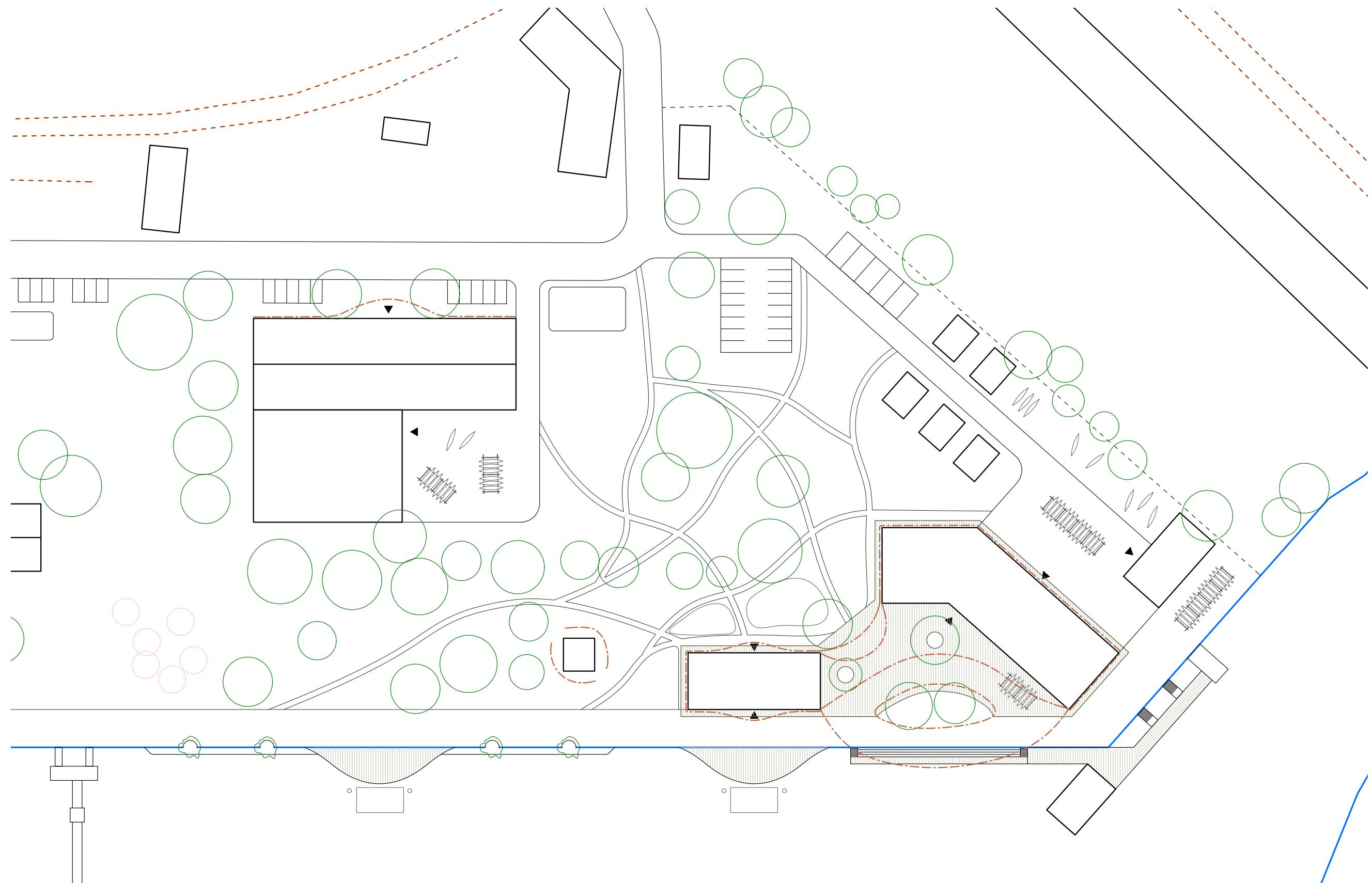
*You bring me a sense of novelty with the activities you come up with. And a sense of nostalgia with the ones that have barely changed since centuries ago. I hope that being here with me helps you to understand me better.*



# new human activities



# site plan



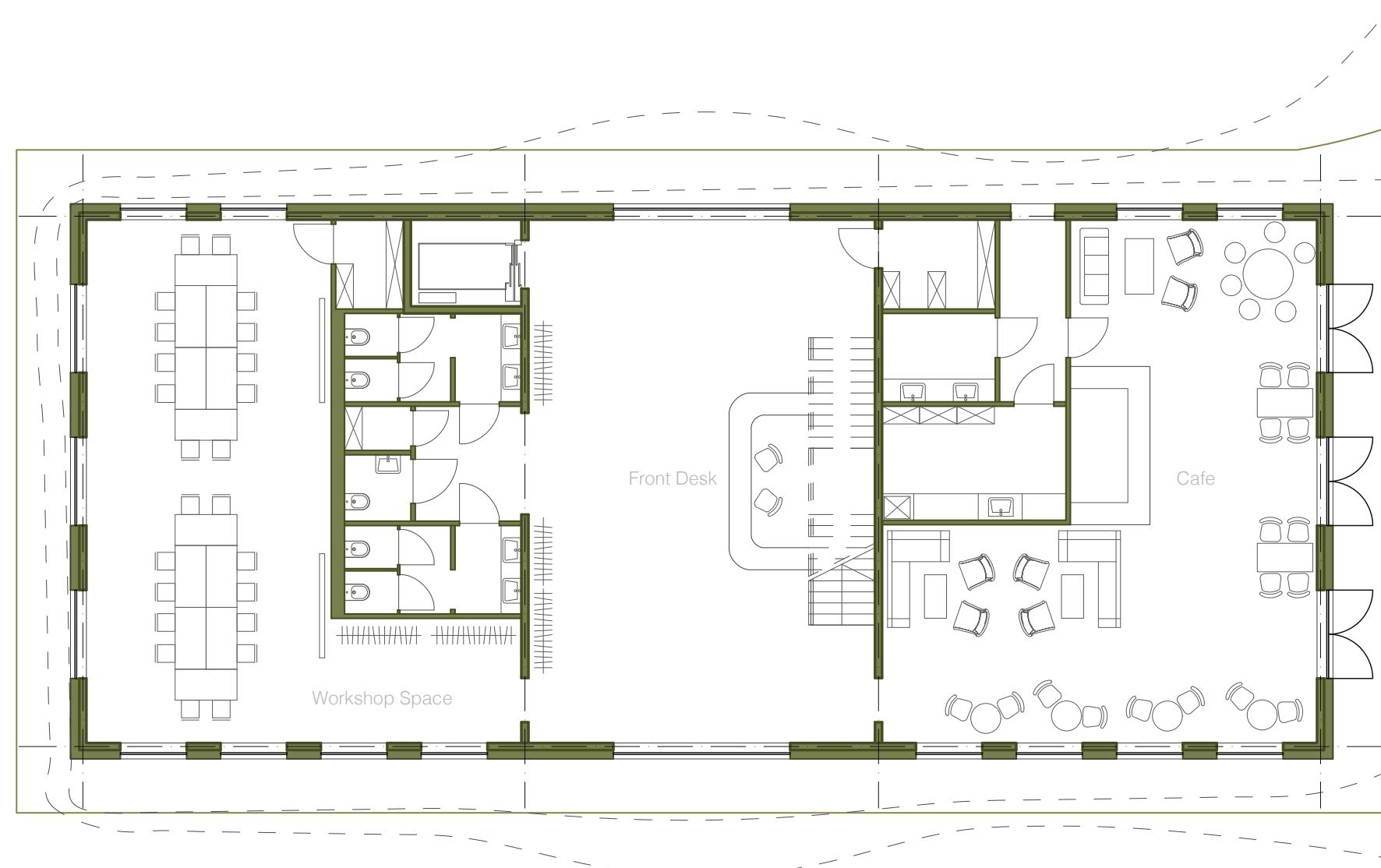
# sports building - ground floor



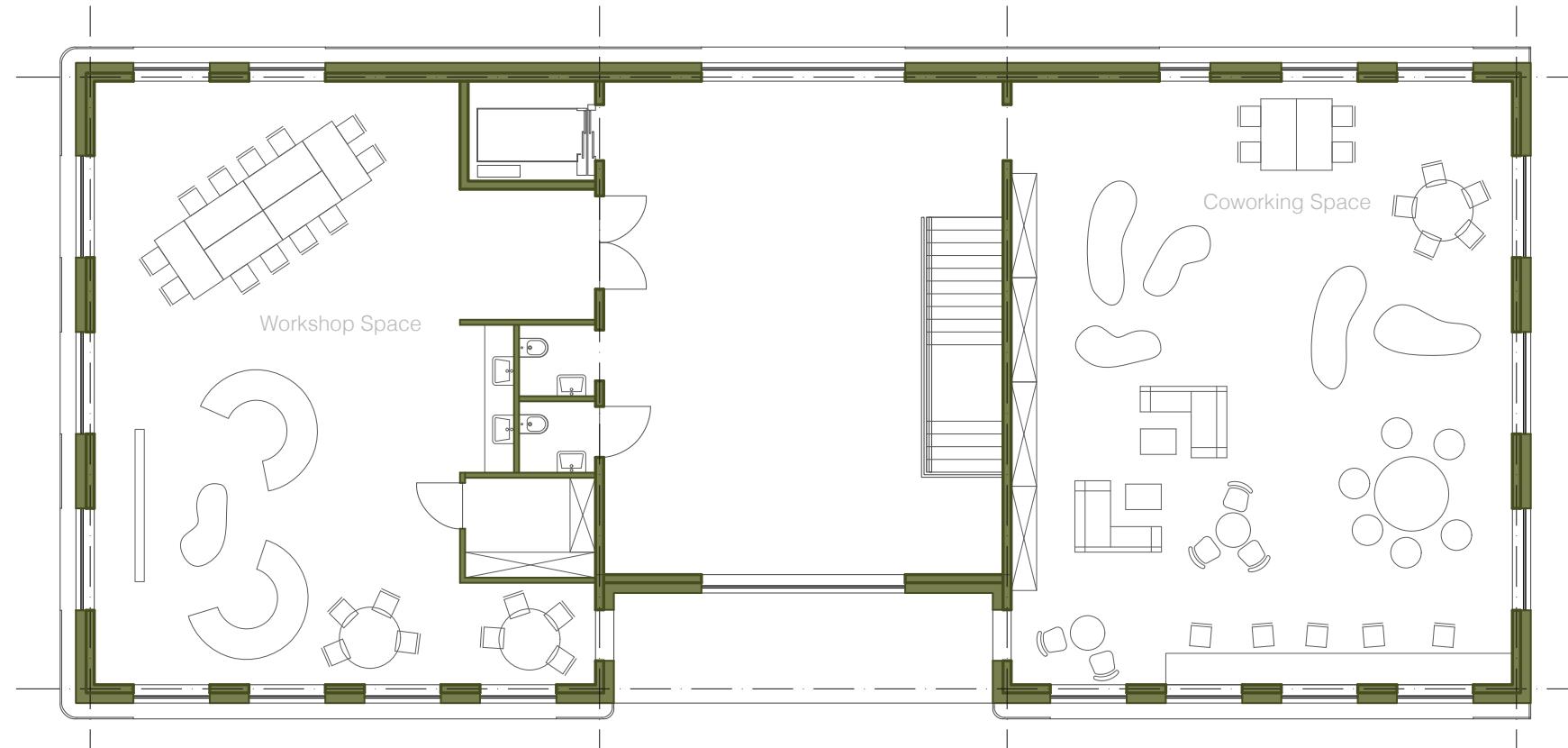
# sports building - first floor



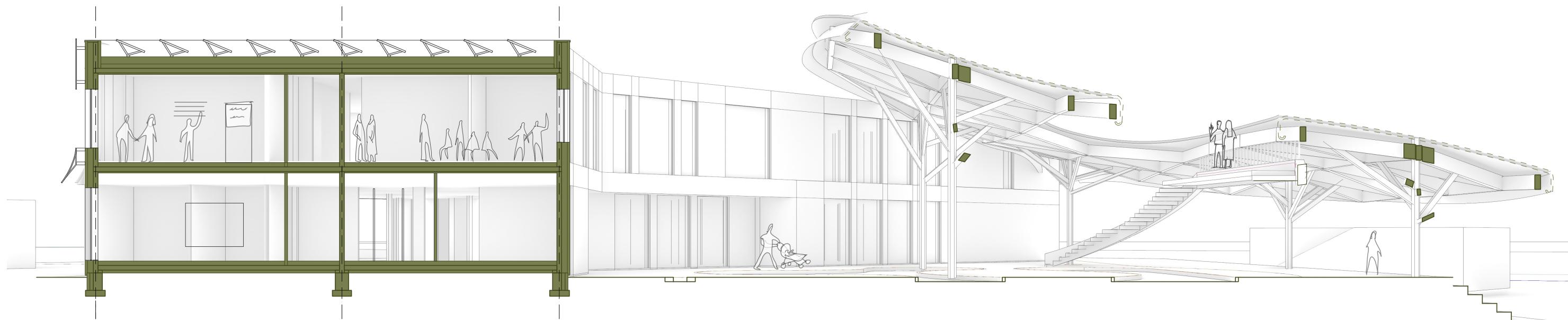
# education building - ground floor



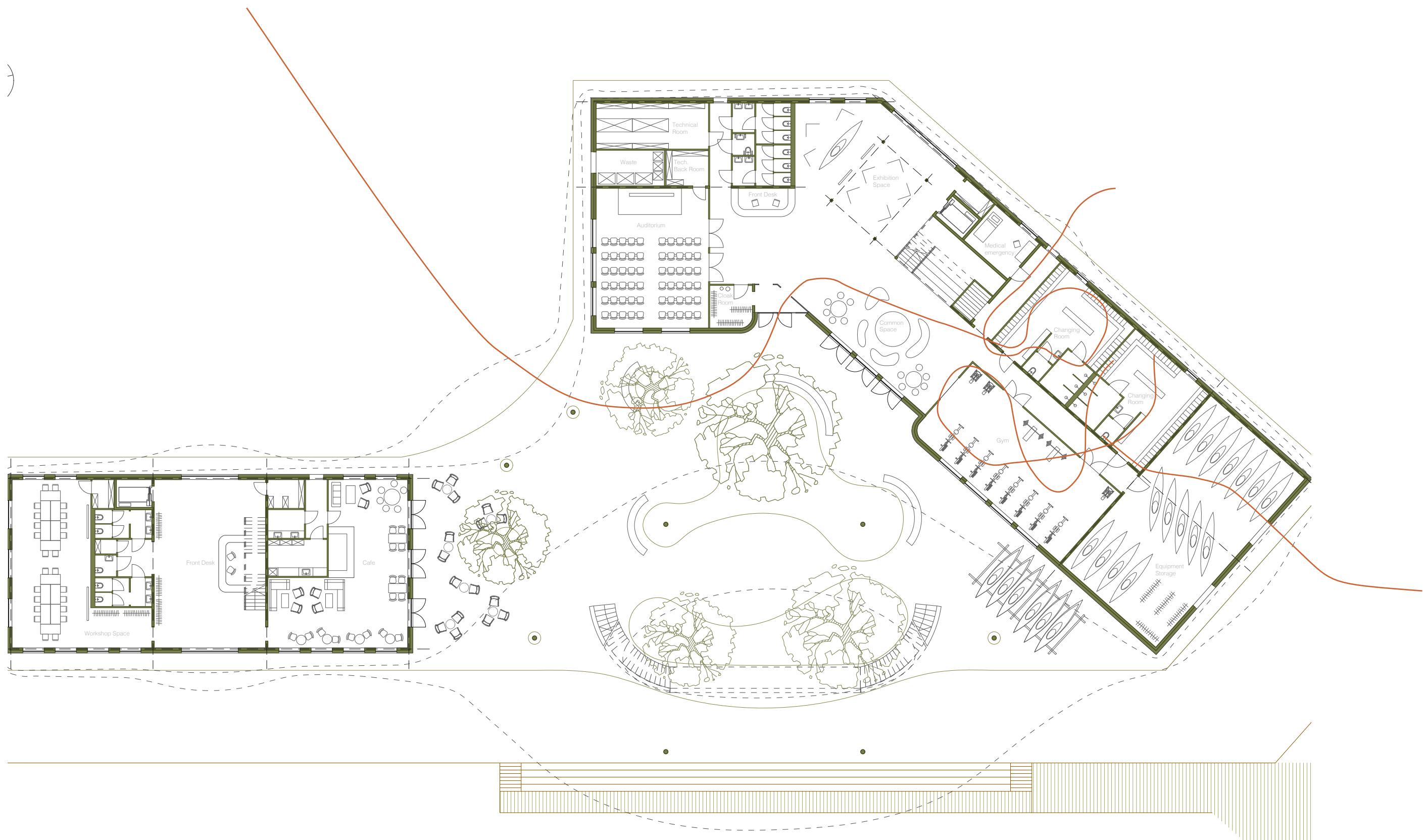
# education building - first floor



# section



# user flow - sportspeople



# user flow - other visitors





# outdoor common space



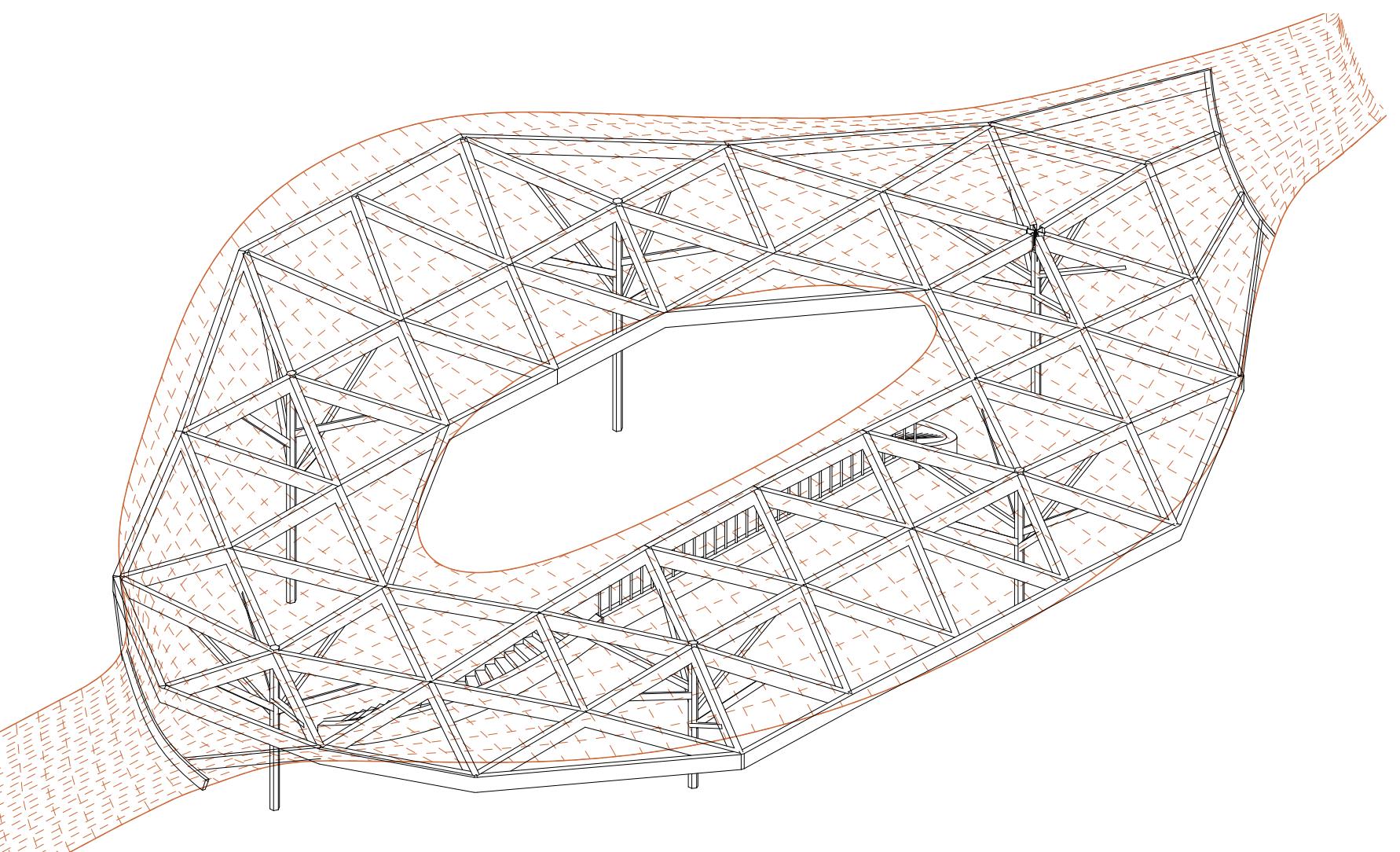
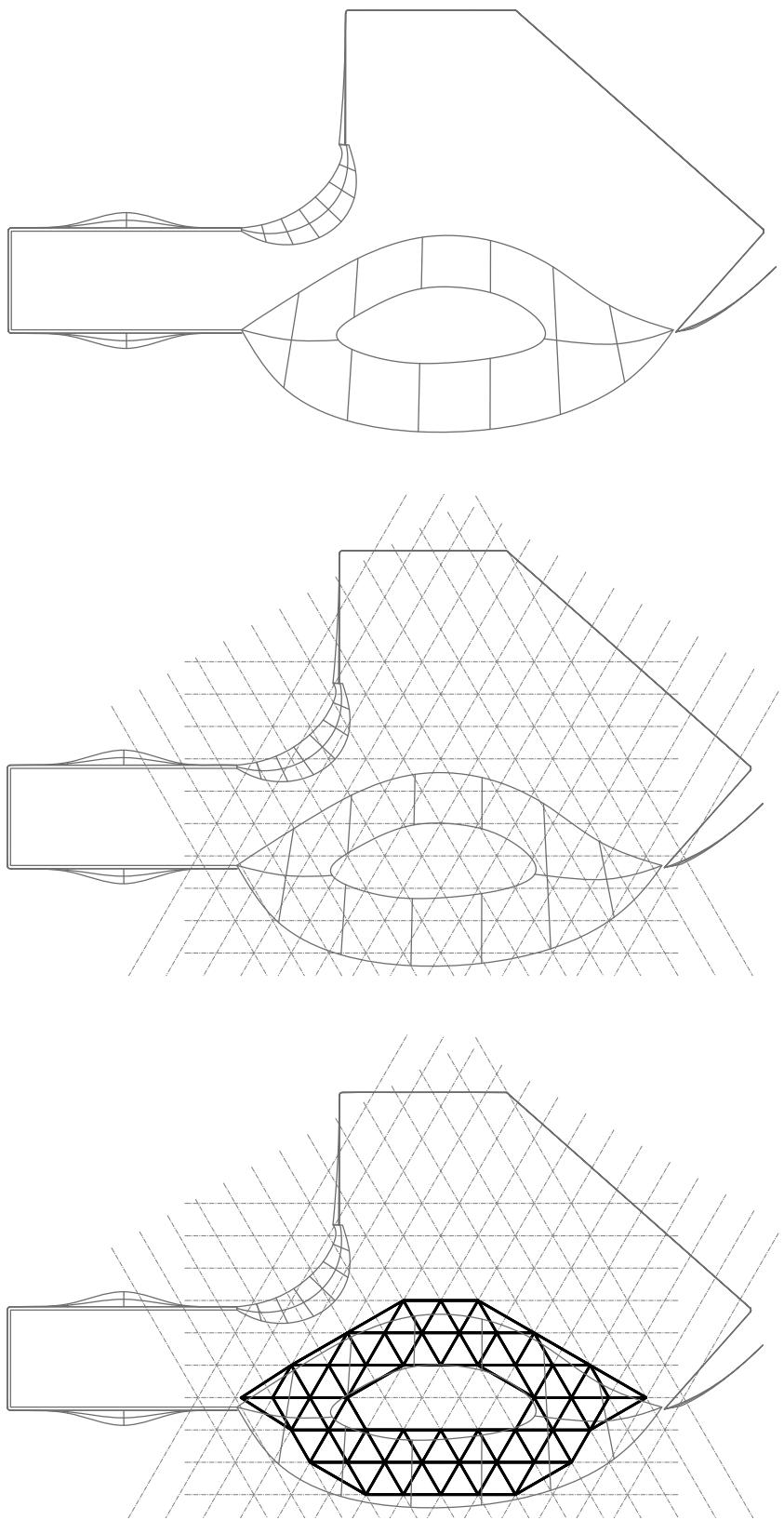
## outdoor common space

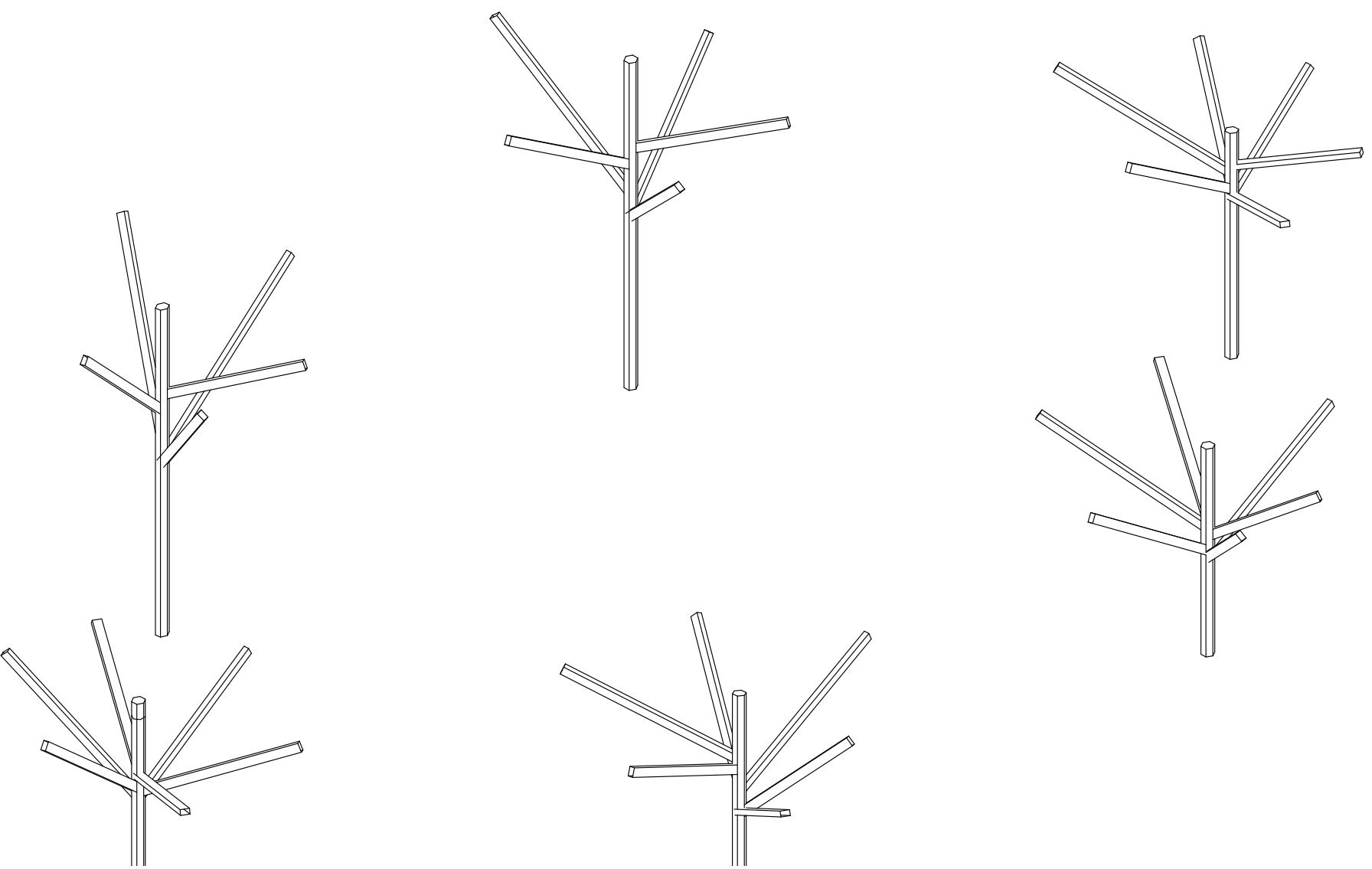


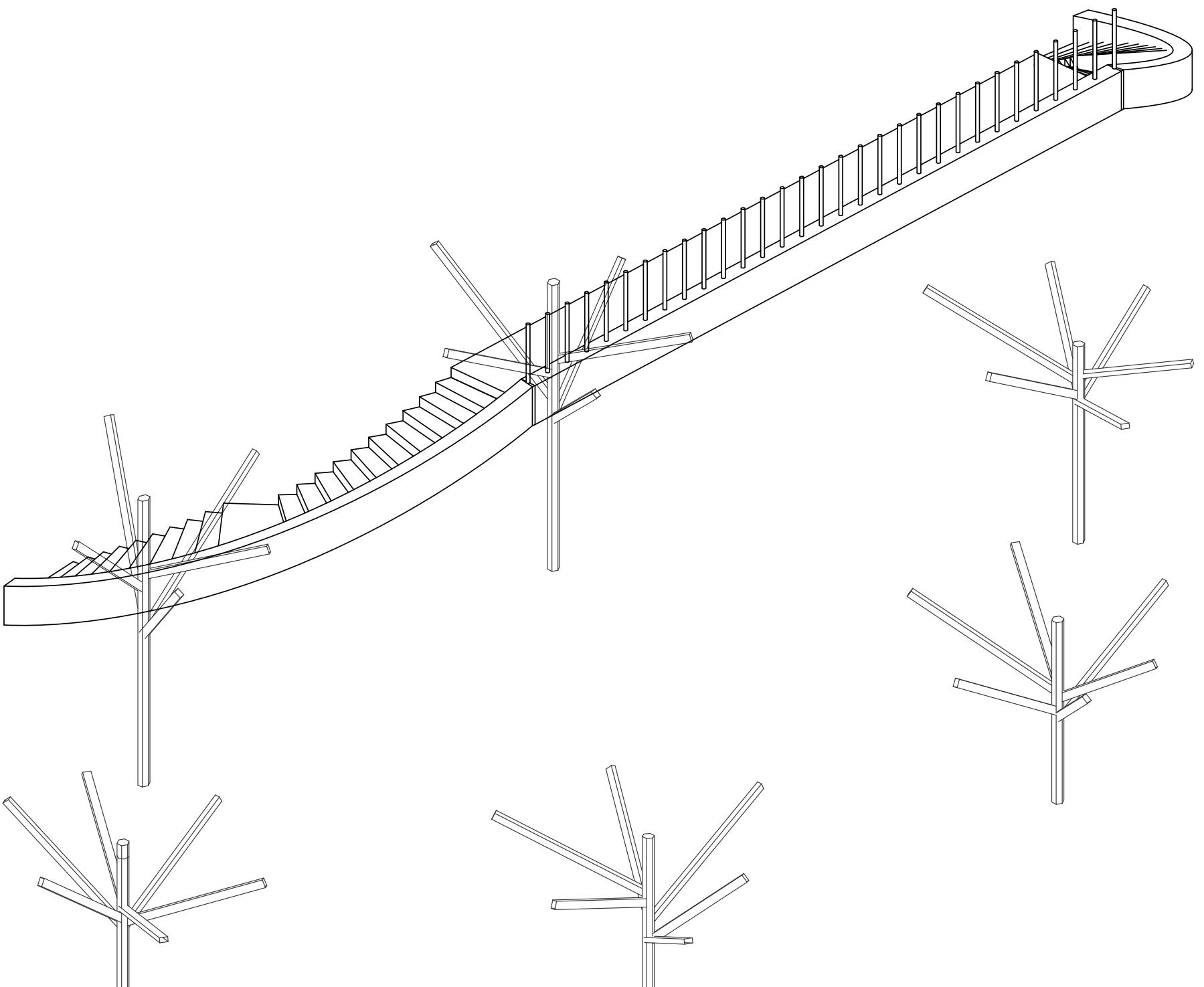
# outdoor common space

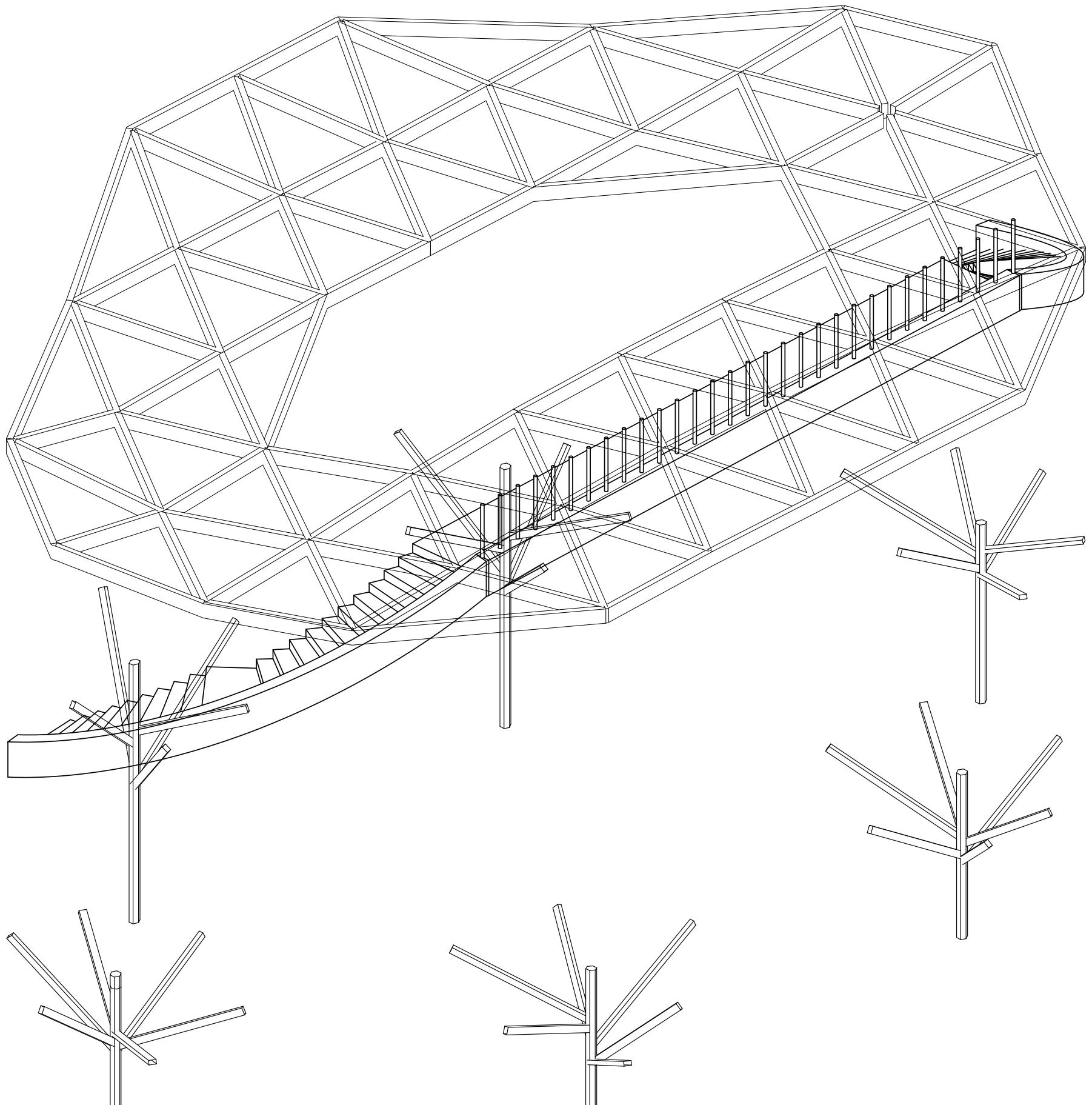


# canopy structure

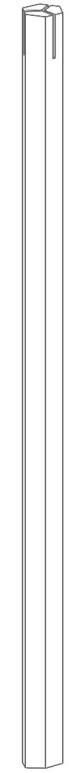
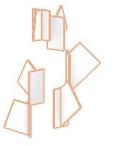


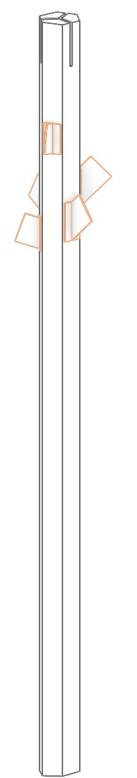


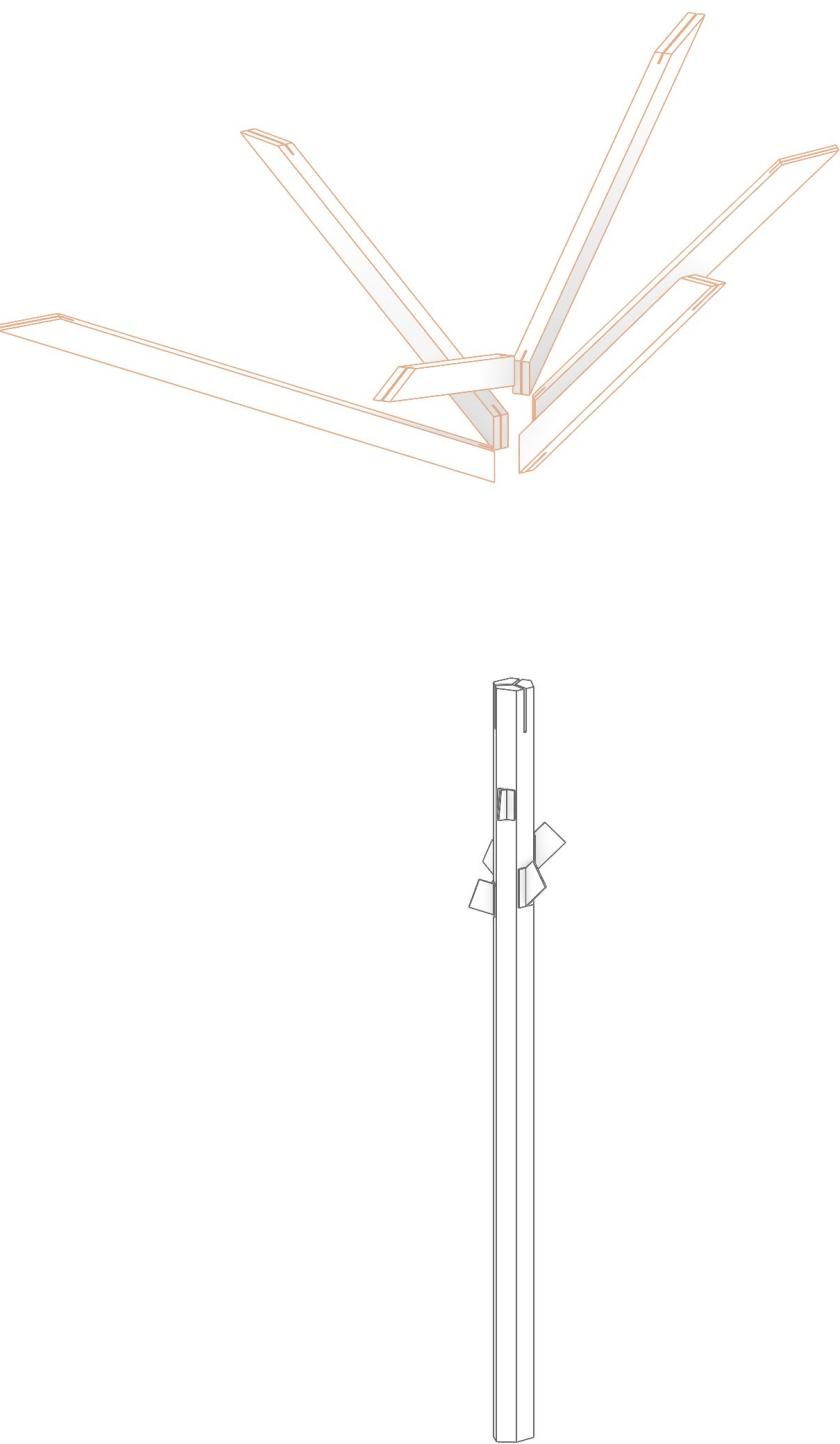


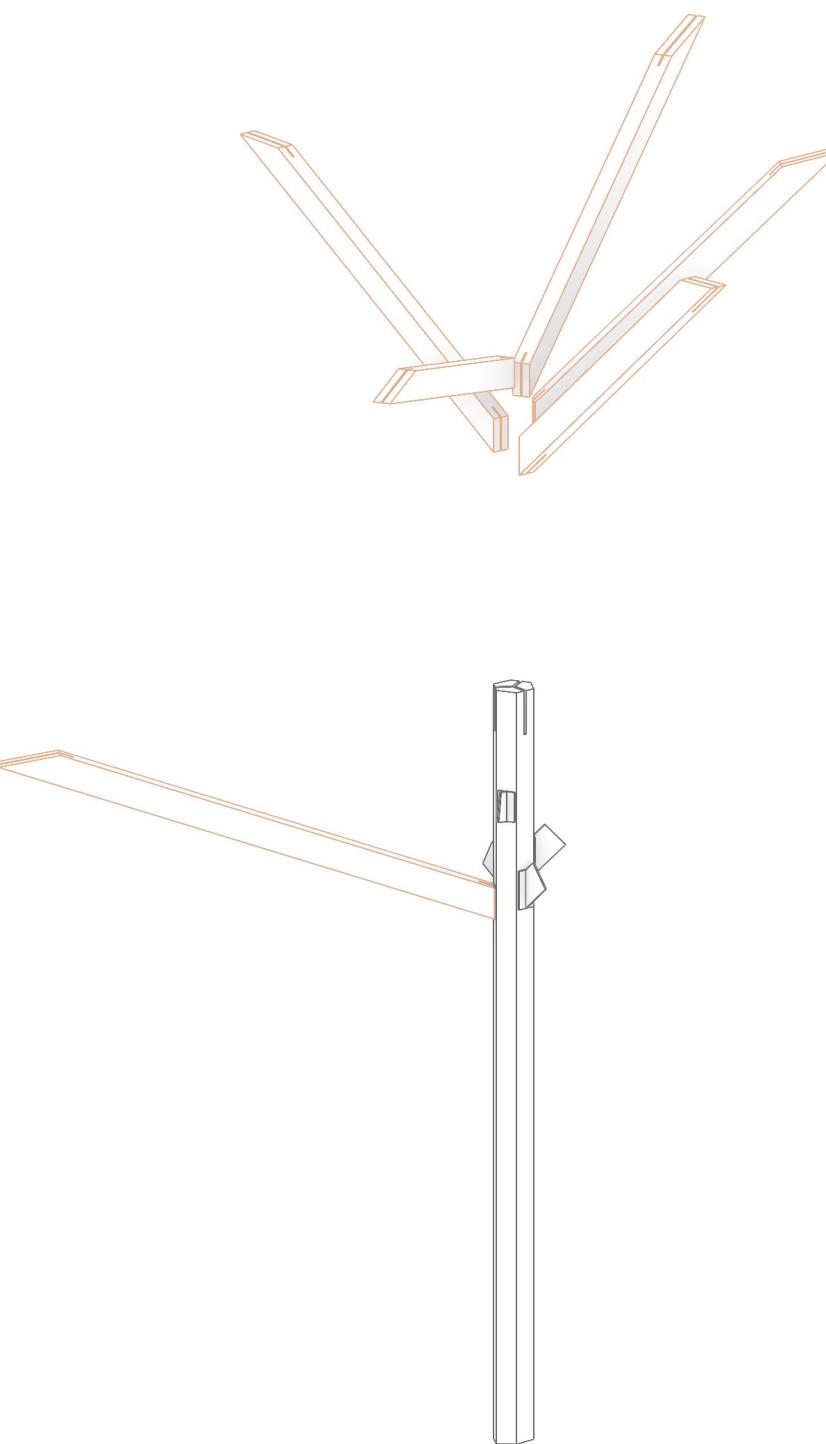


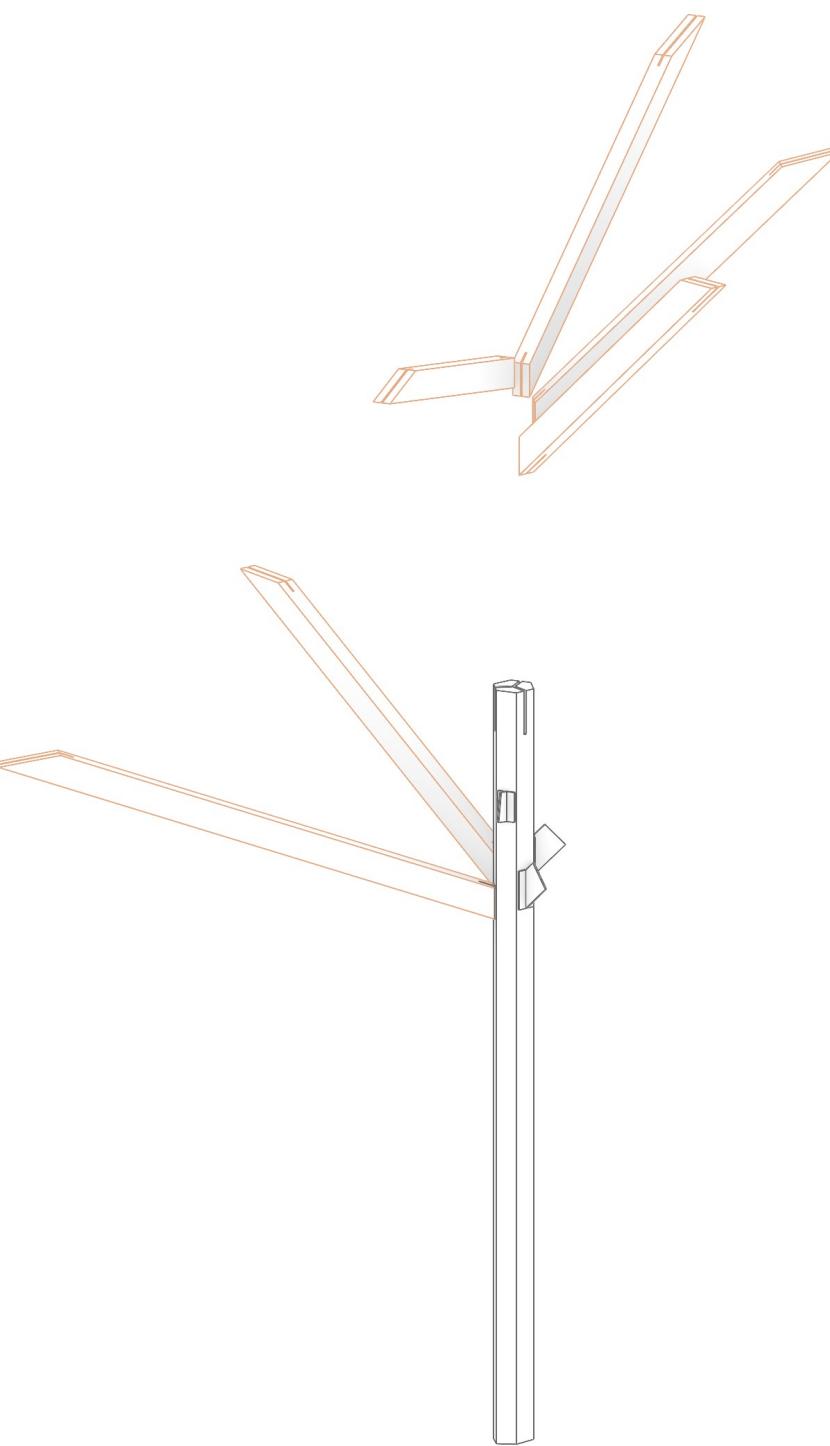


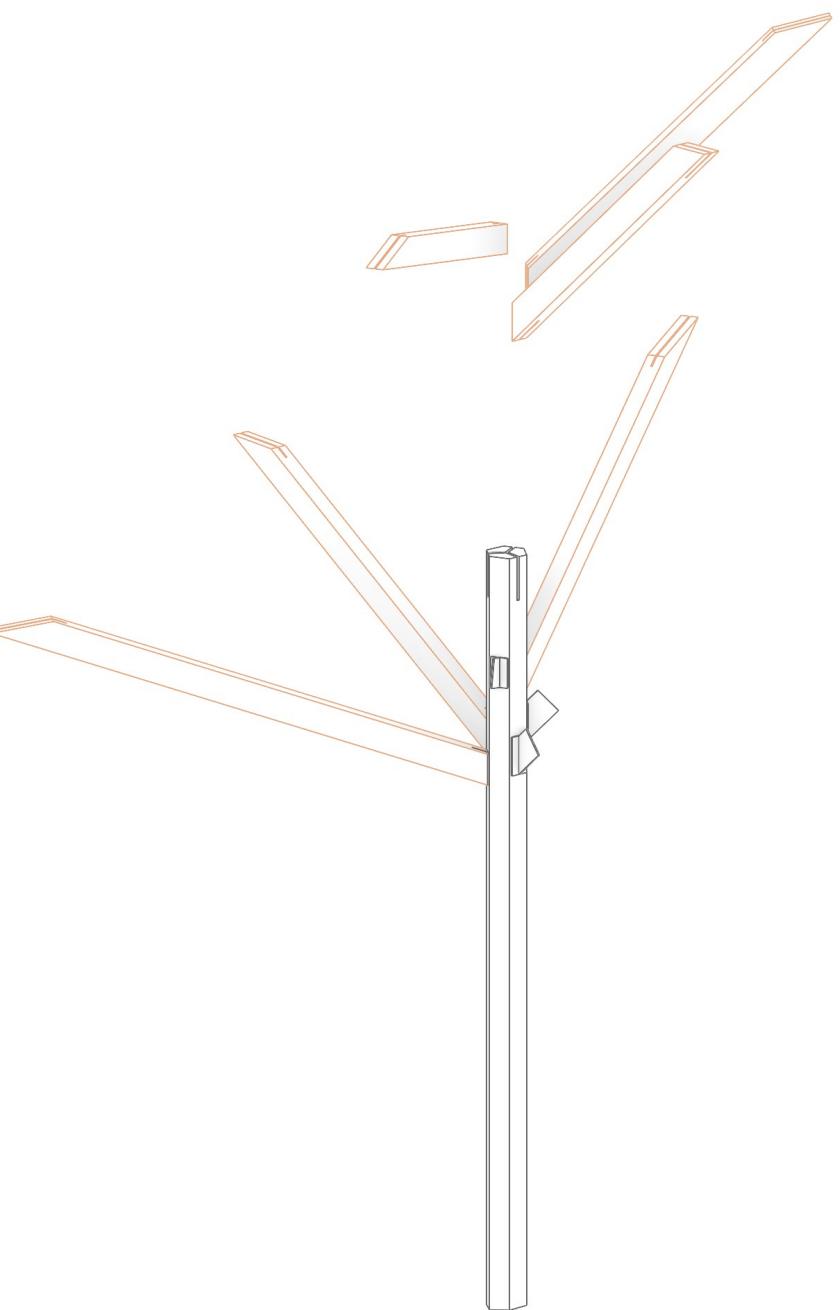


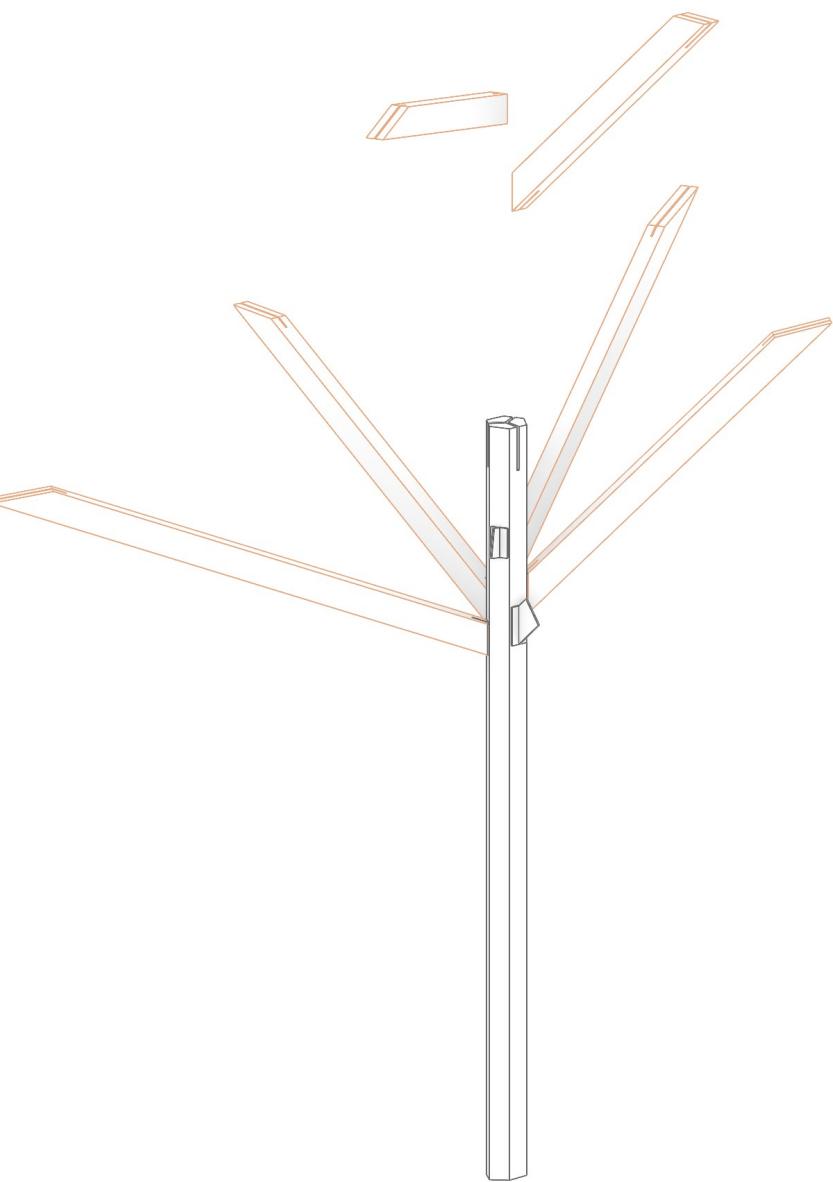


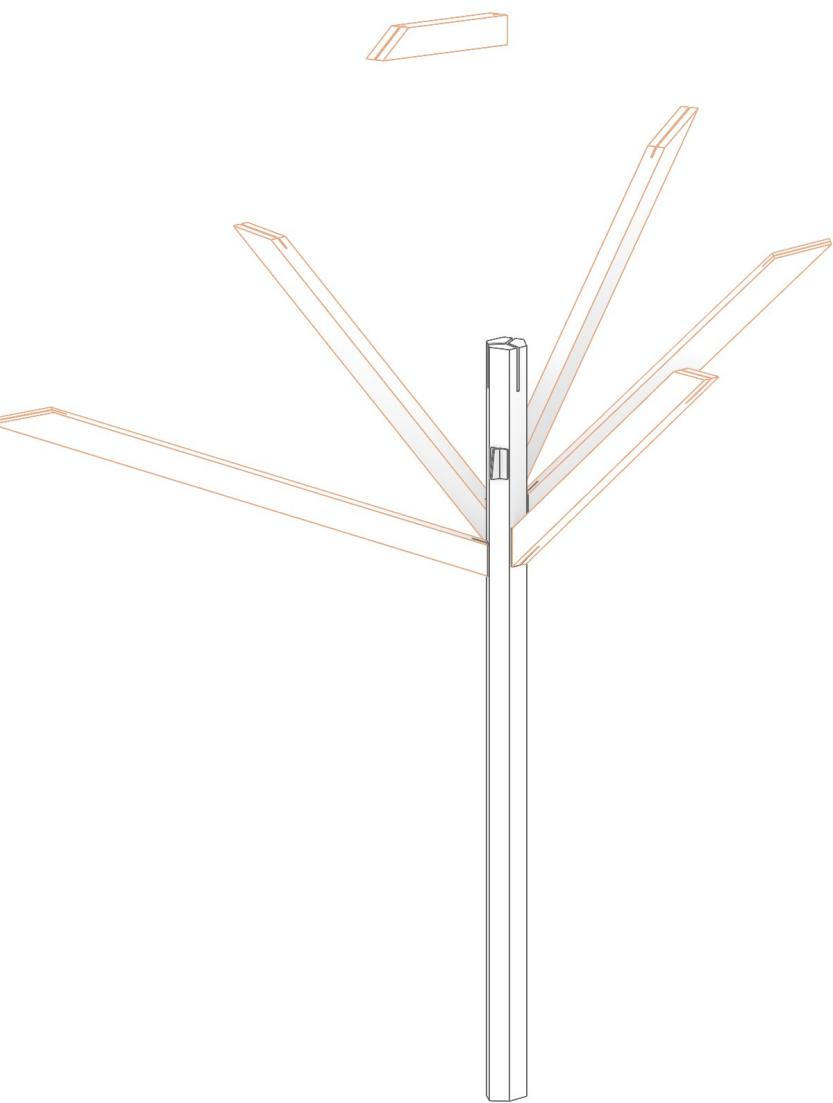


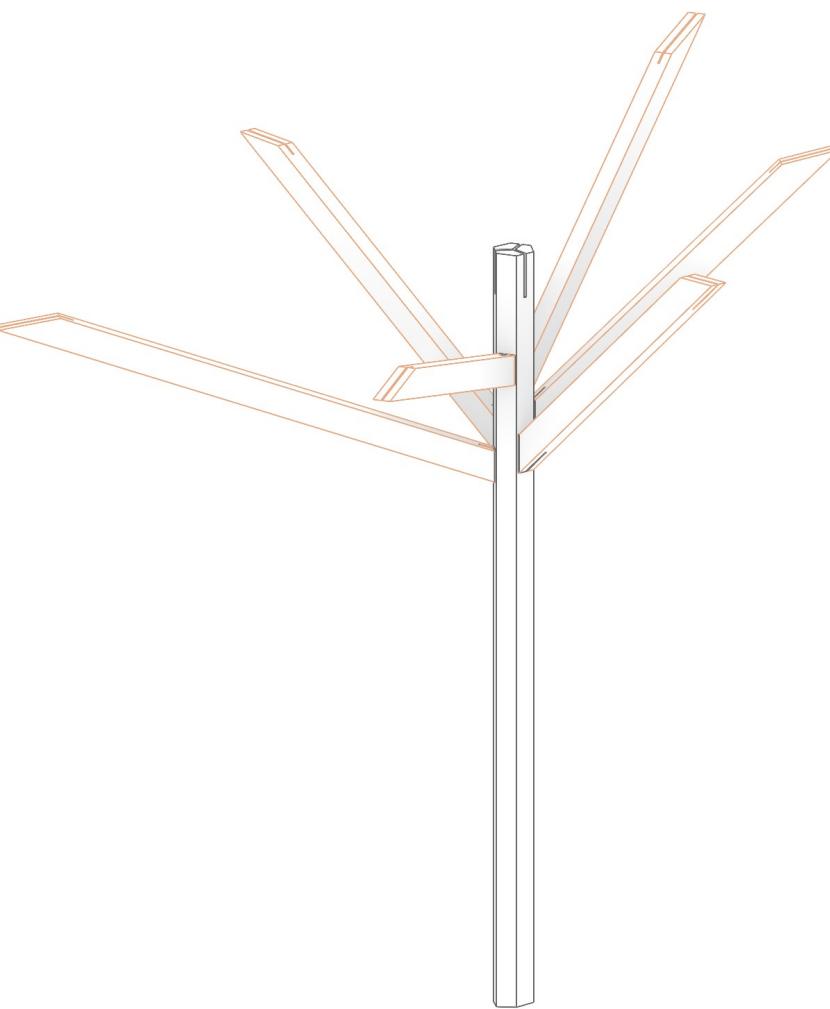


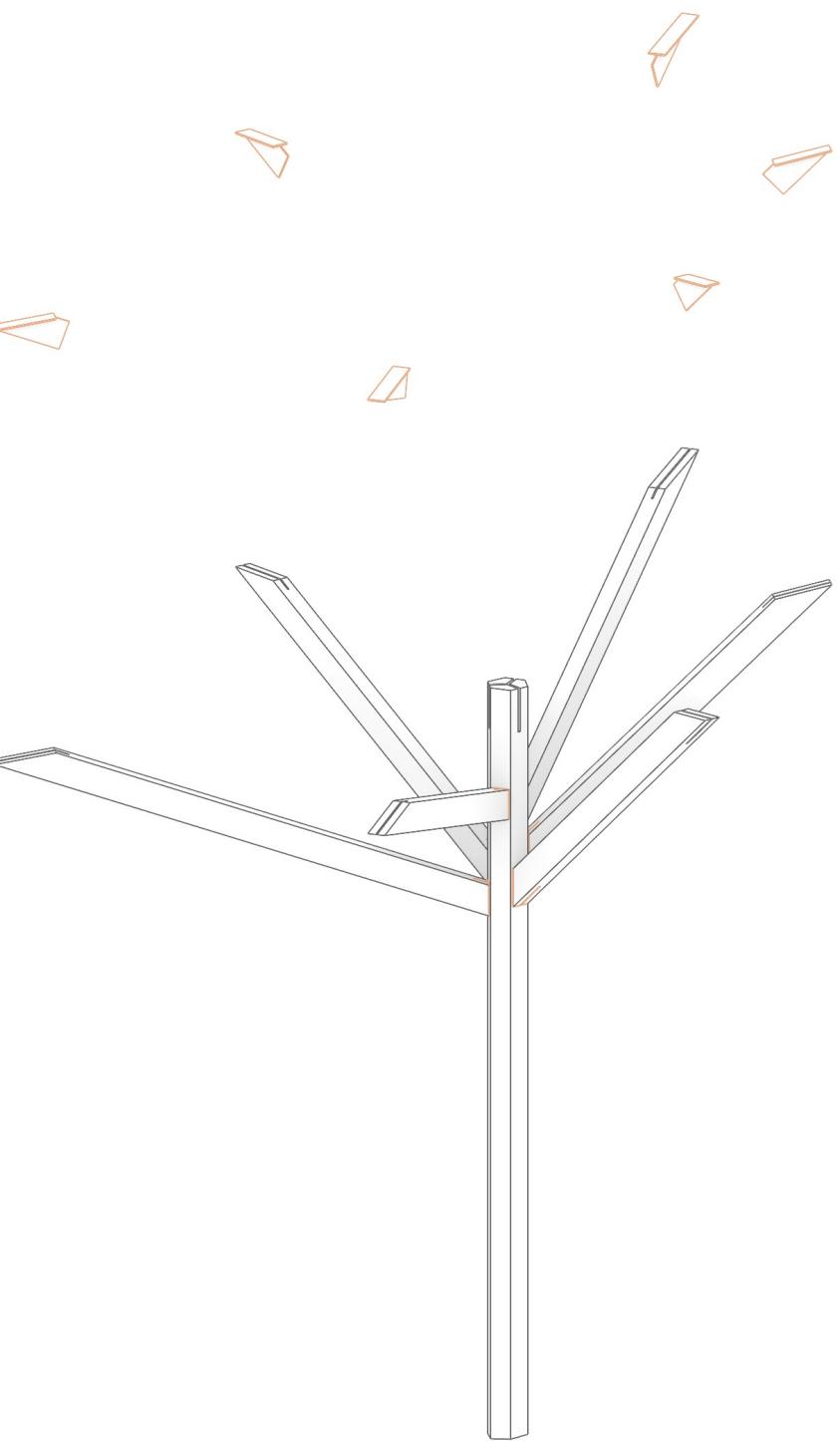


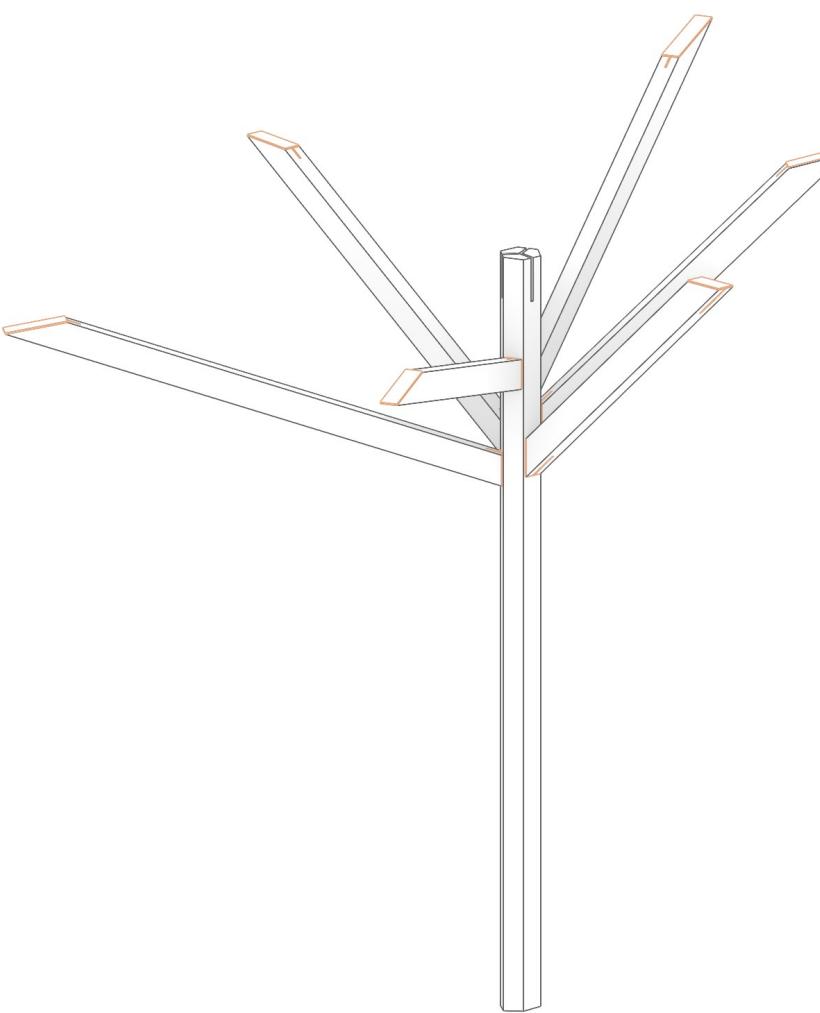


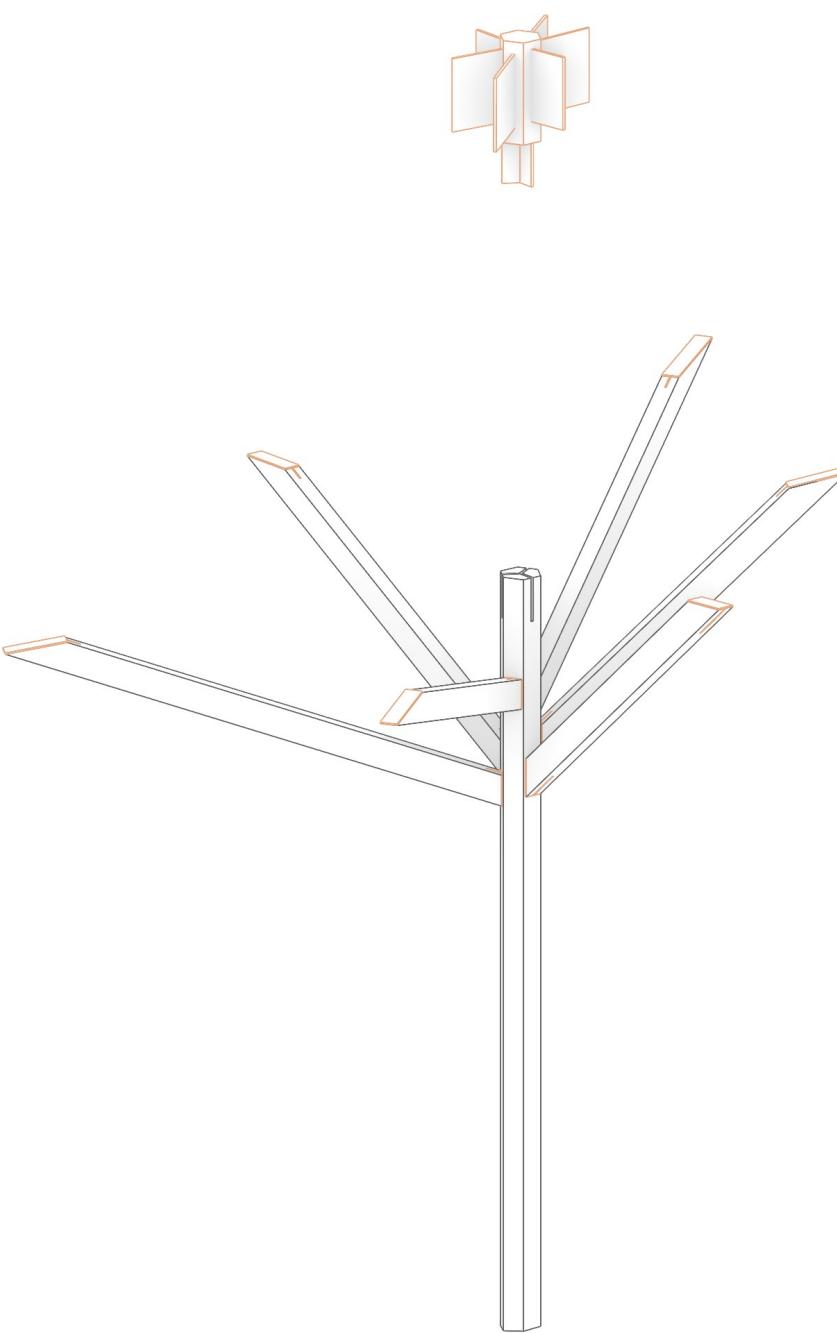


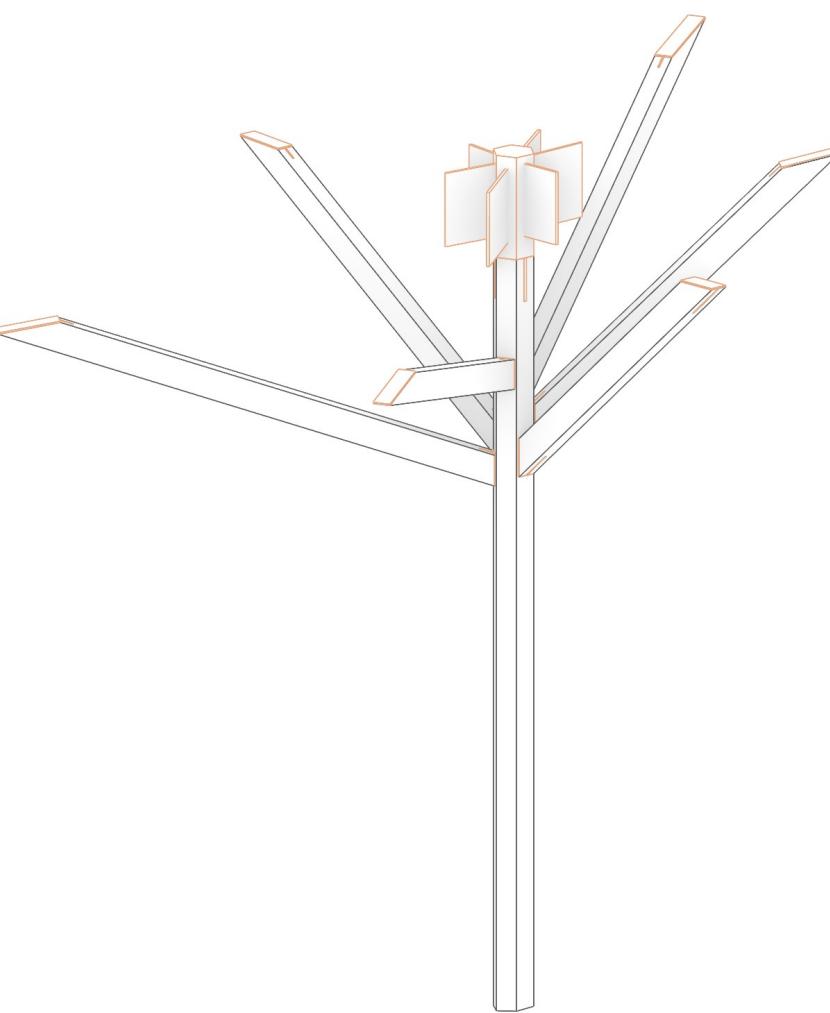


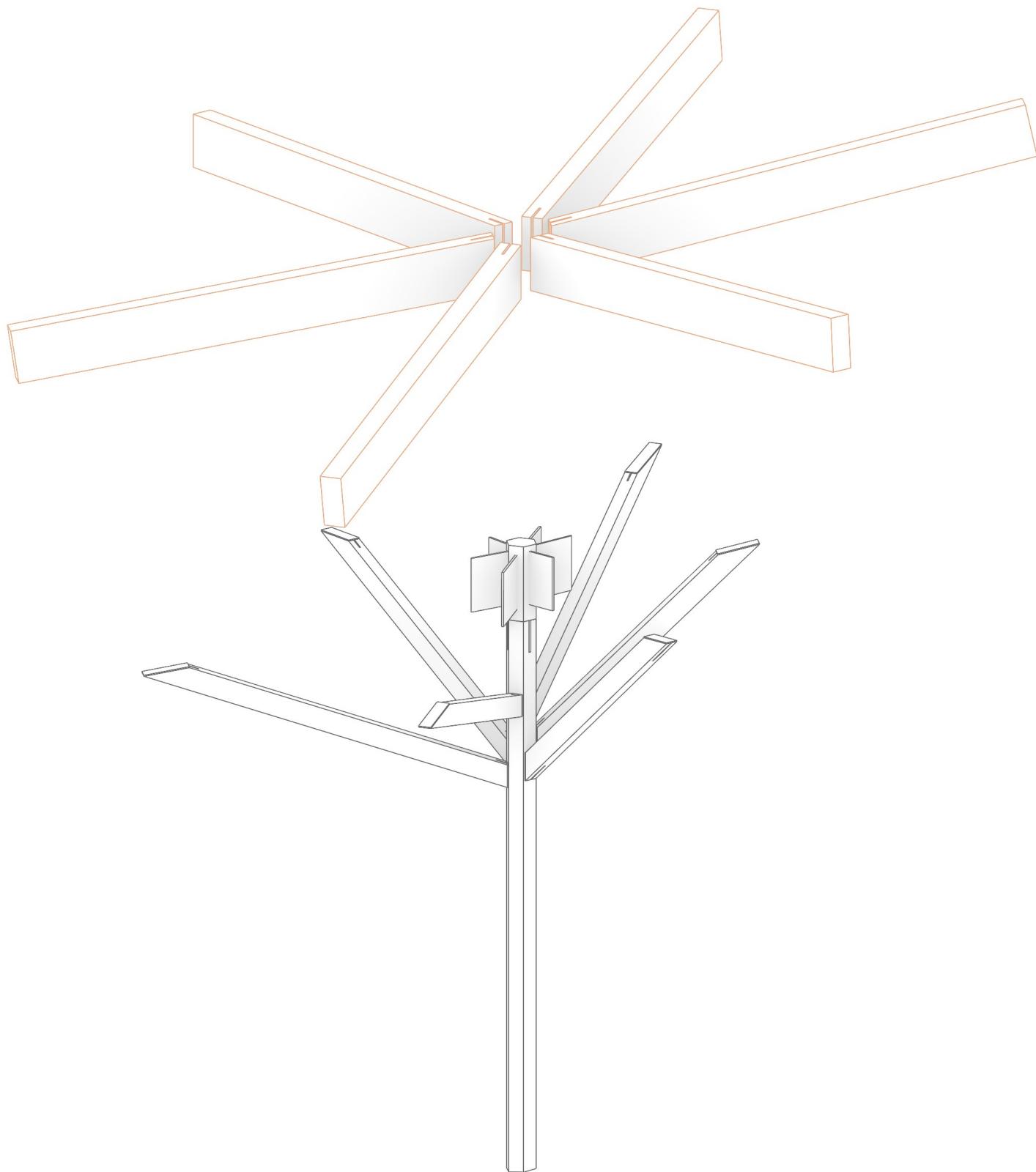


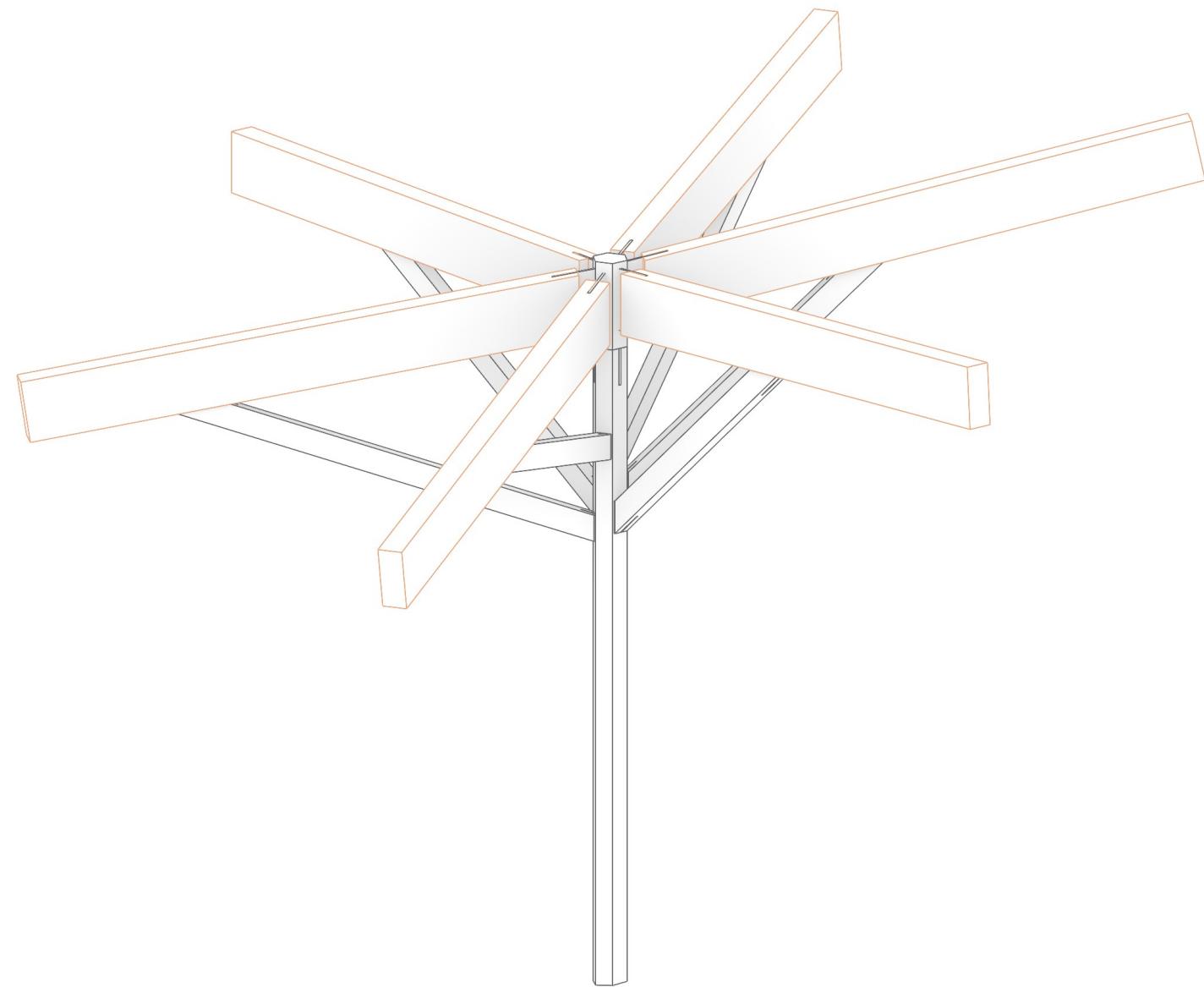






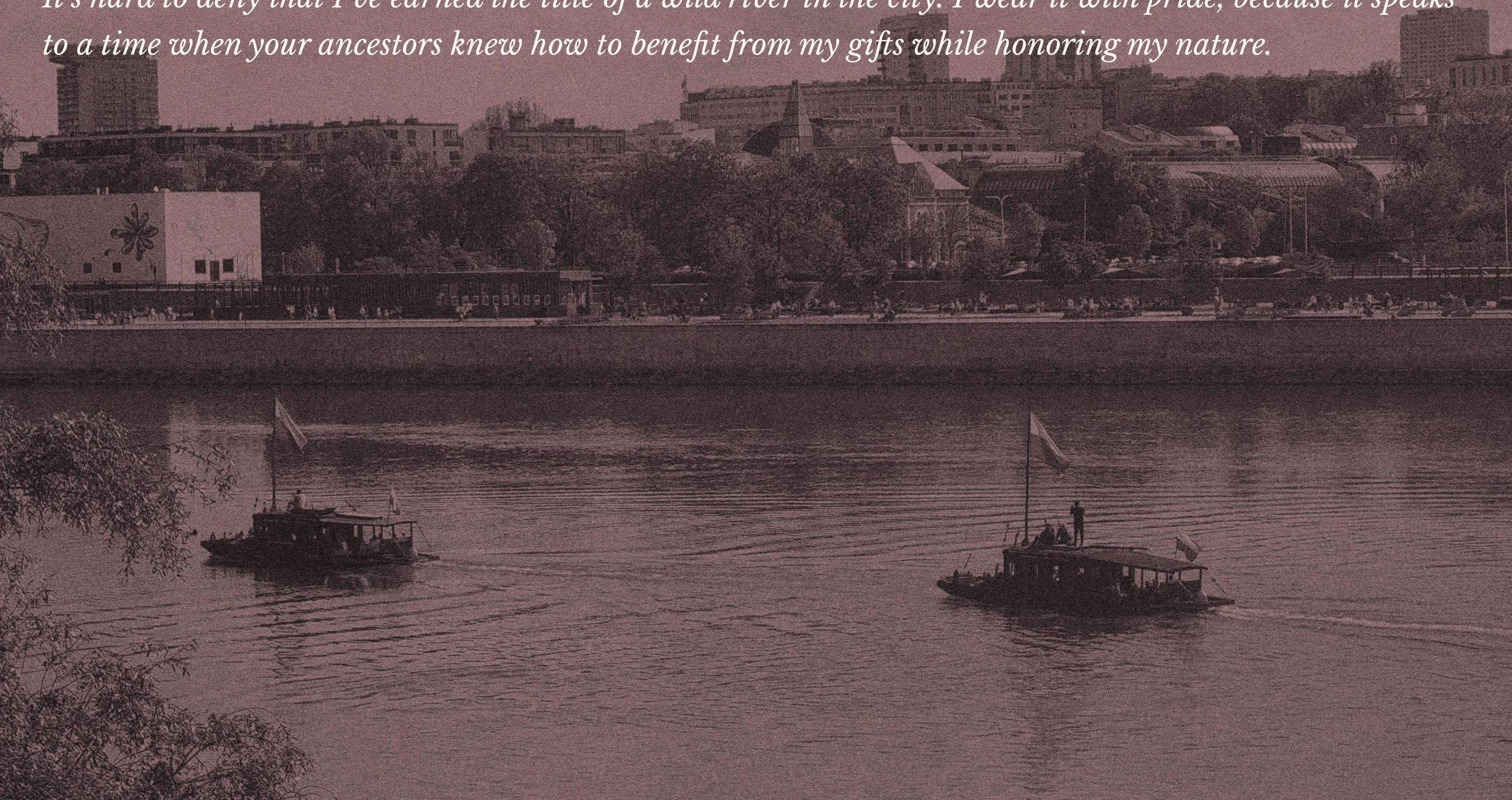




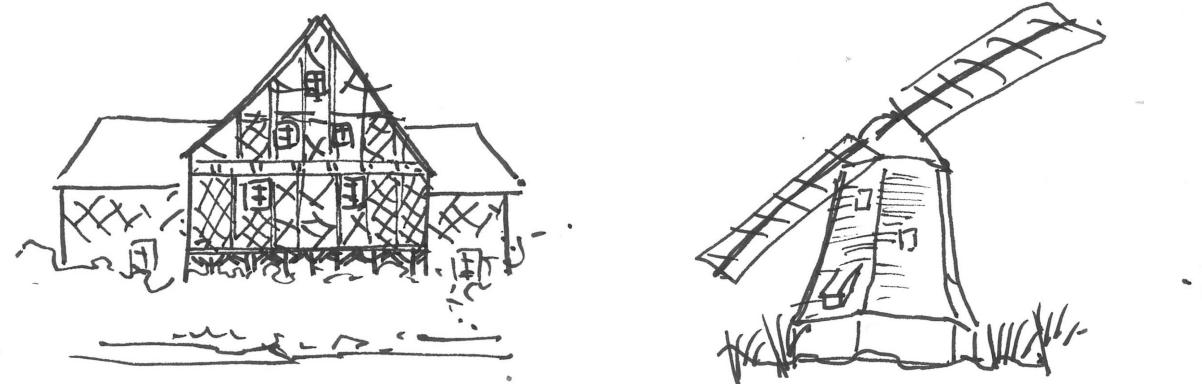


# follow the rhythm of tradition

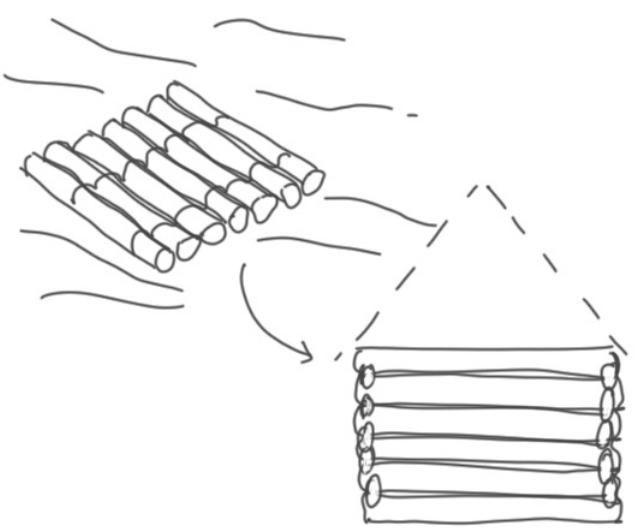
*It's hard to deny that I've earned the title of a wild river in the city. I wear it with pride, because it speaks to a time when your ancestors knew how to benefit from my gifts while honoring my nature.*



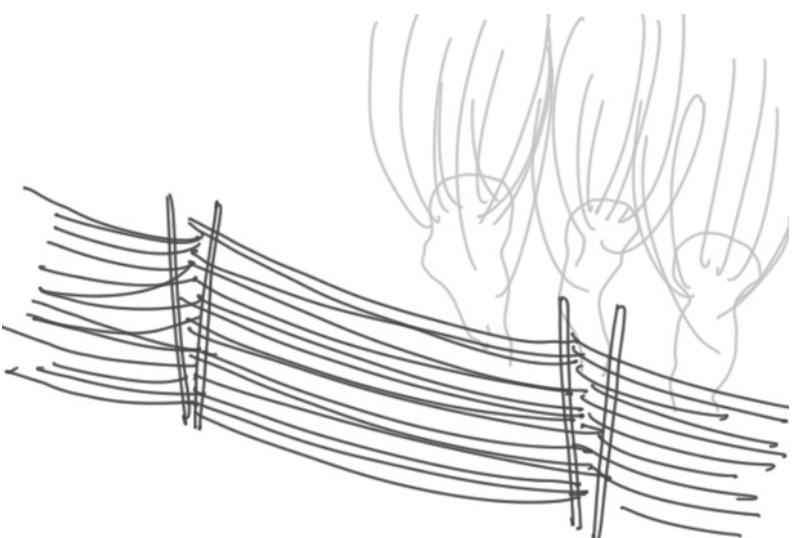
# Olęder heritage in the midstream Vistula region



## Vernacular building practices:



*floating construction wood as rafts  
down Vistula river*



*willow branches - abundant natural  
resource - used for building fences  
and strengthening hills*



Olęder settlement in Saska Kępa (currently a district of Warsaw)



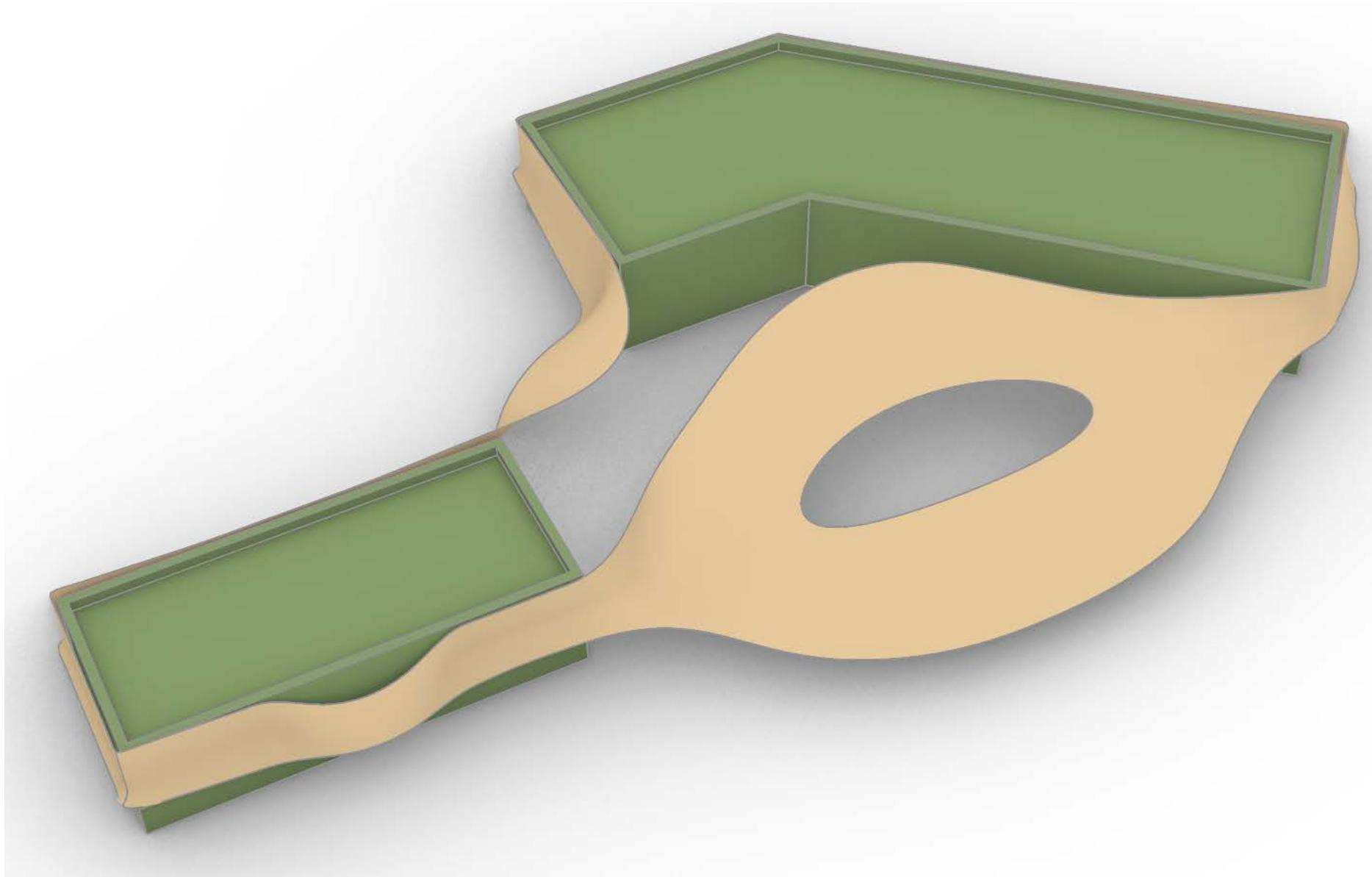
“Flood”, photograph from National Digital Archive, visible traditional Olęder willow fence

# willow's plasticity

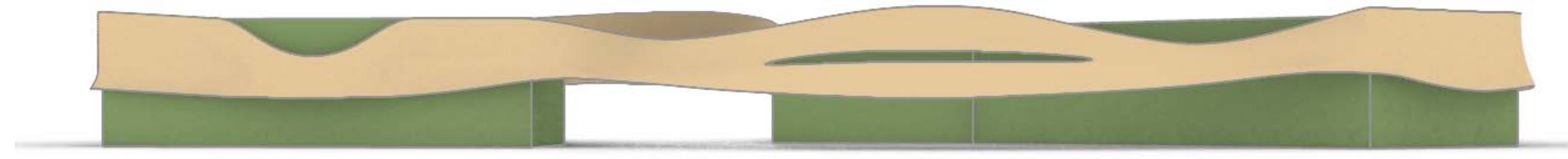


Poland's pavilion for EXPO 2005, Whitemad.pl

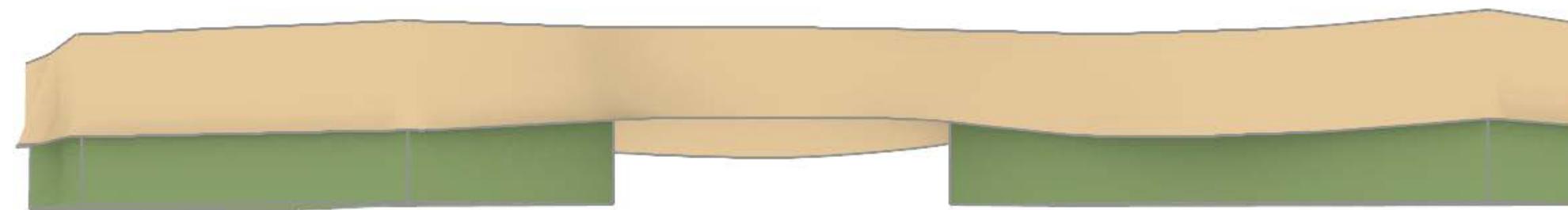
# wrapping around the building



# wrapping around the building



willow shape from the water

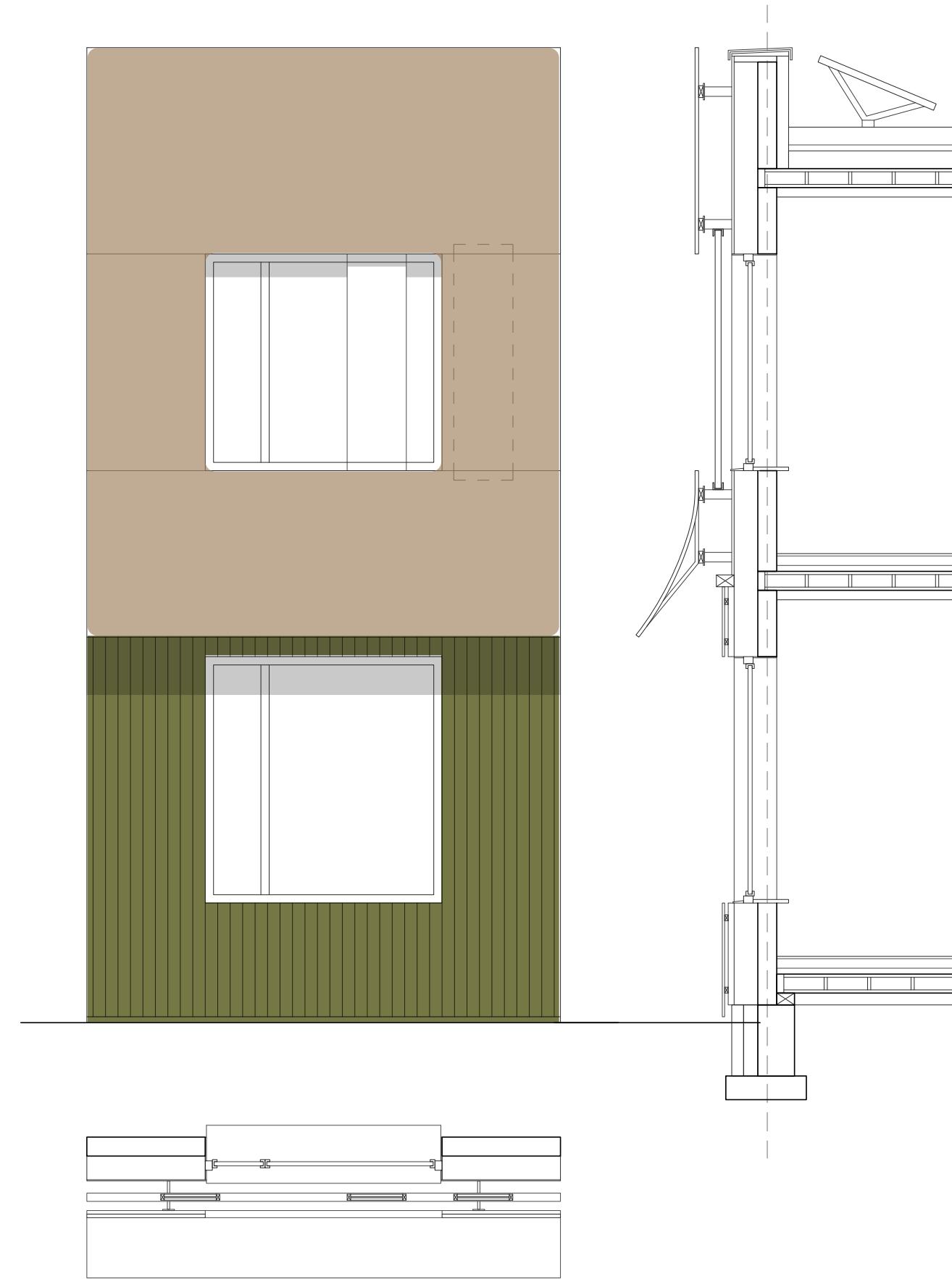


willow shape from the park

## elevation - view from the water



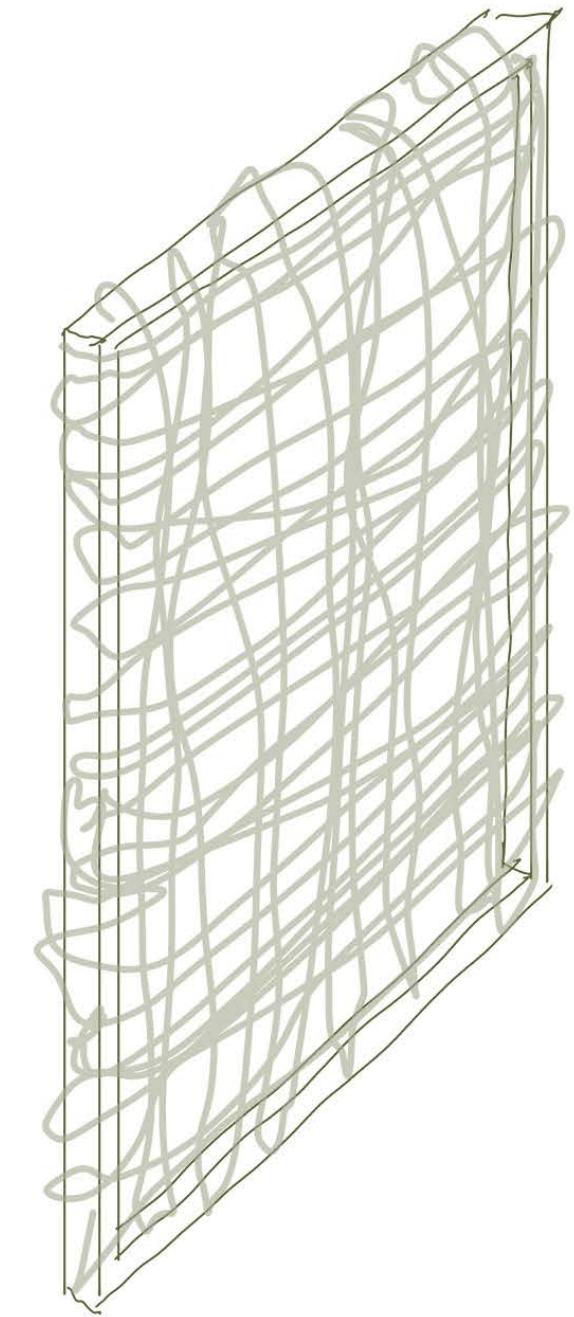
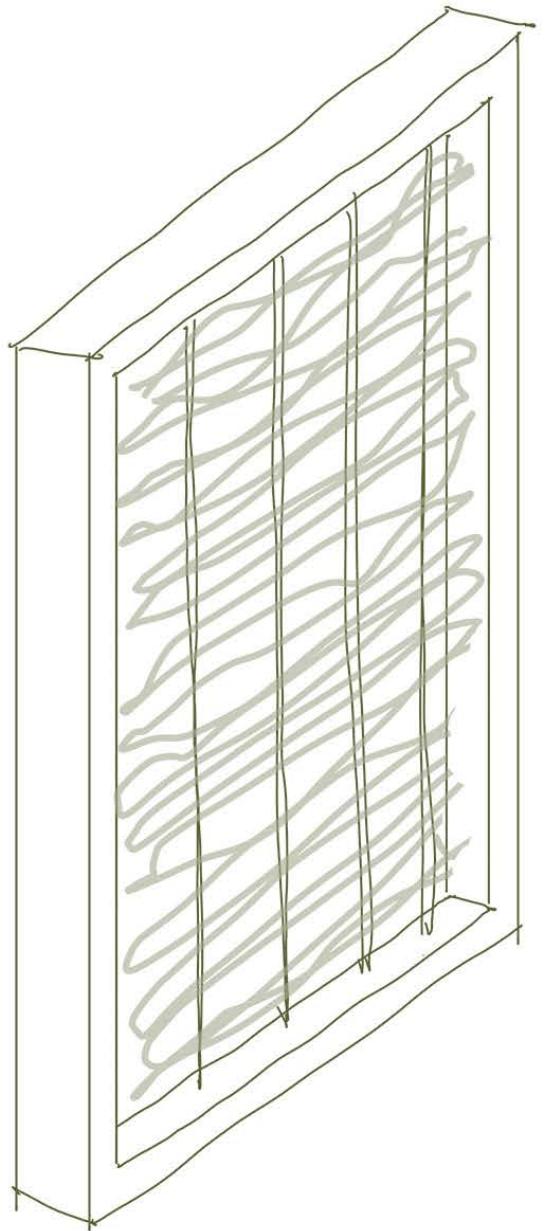
# facade design



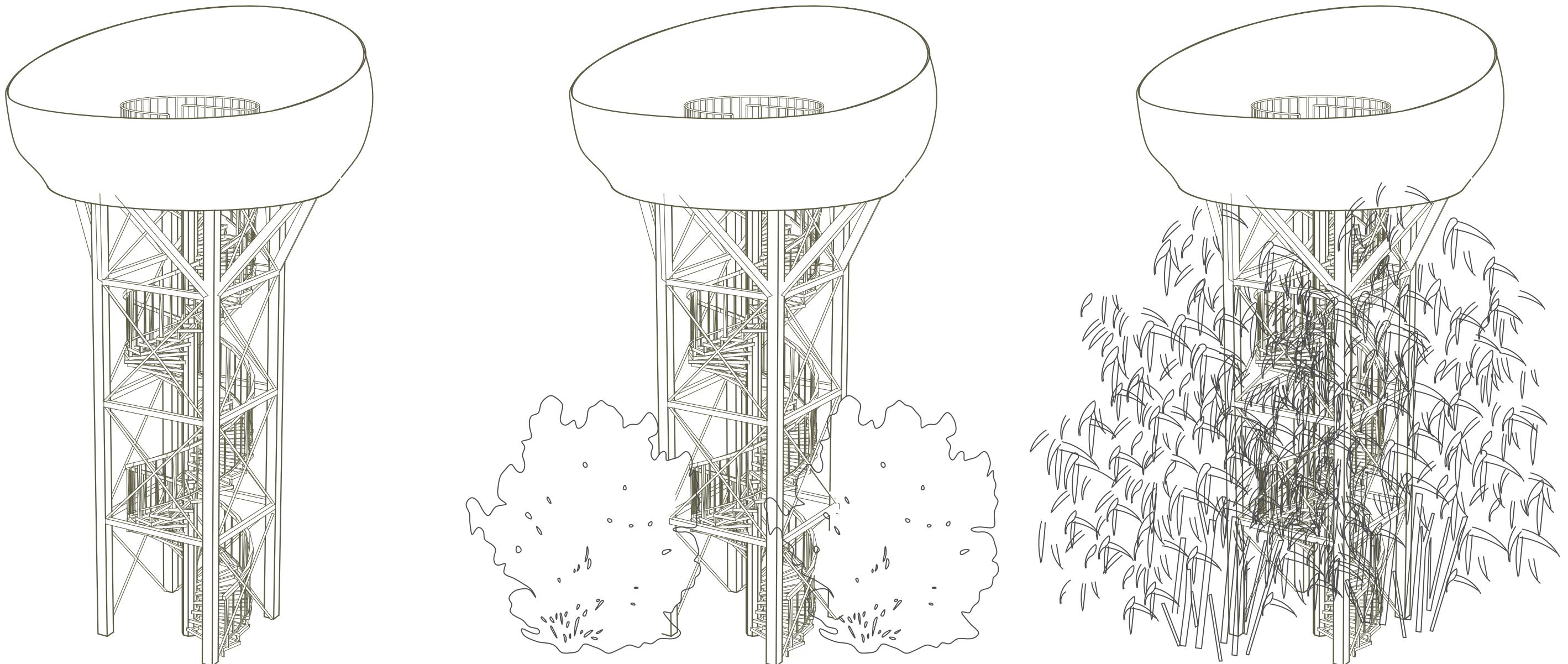
## facade design



## willow panels

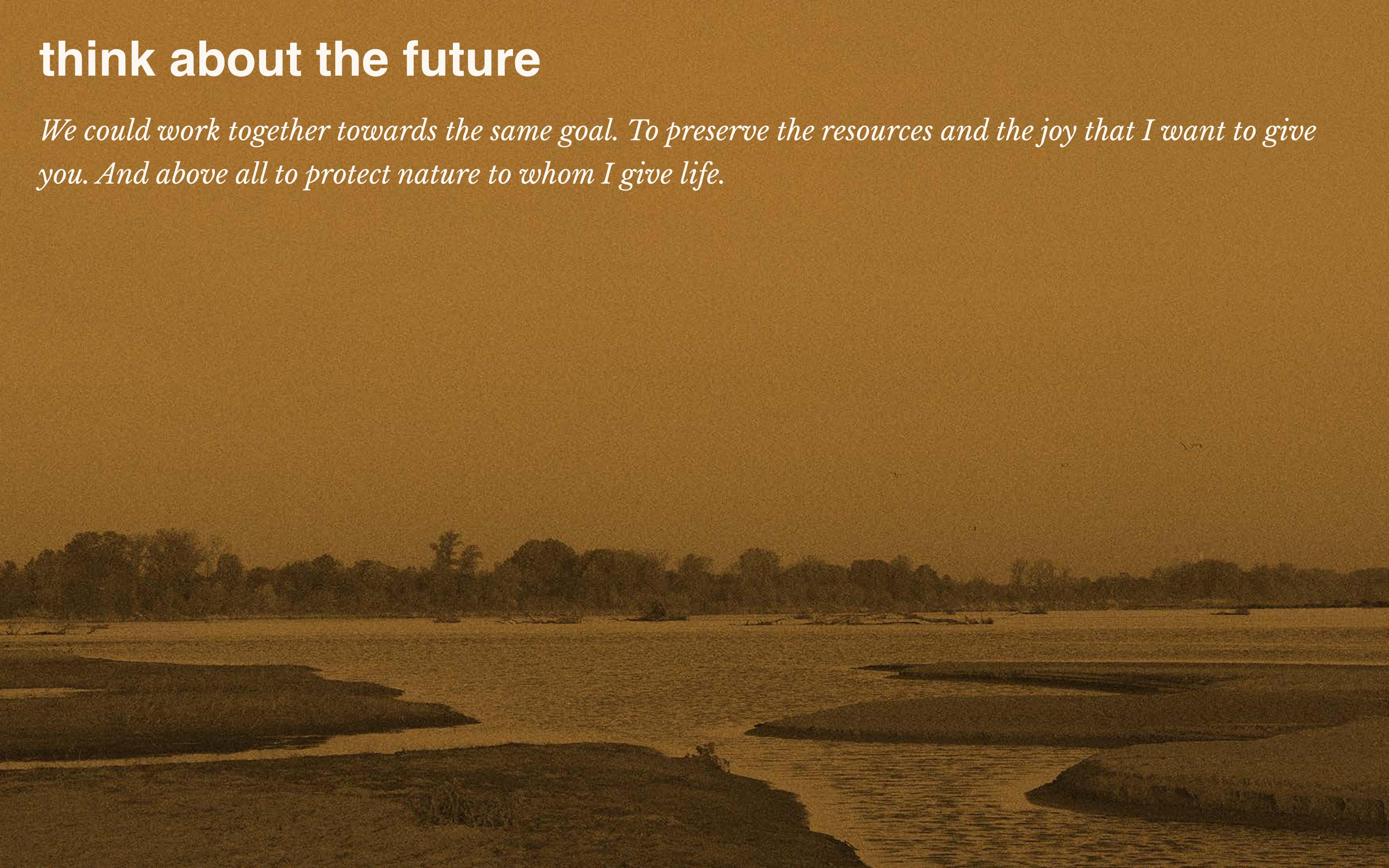


## living willow structures - viewing nest



# think about the future

*We could work together towards the same goal. To preserve the resources and the joy that I want to give you. And above all to protect nature to whom I give life.*



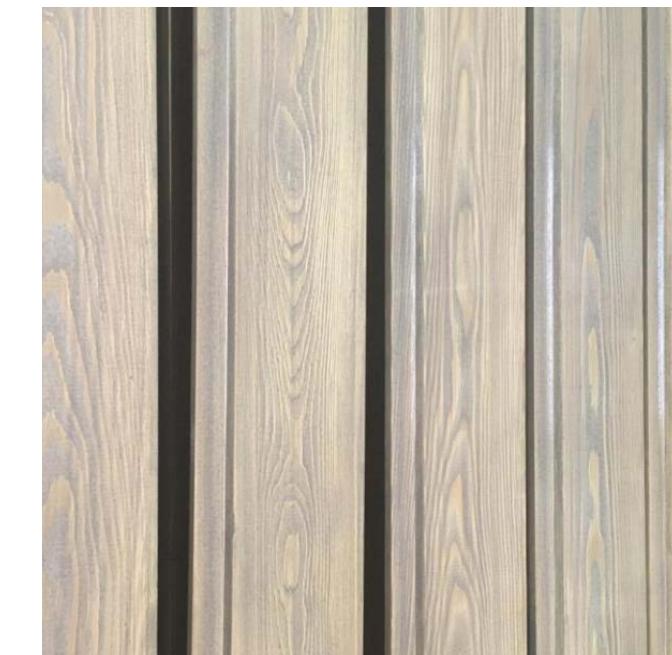
# materials



CLT



wood fiber insulation



timber cladding



NOVATOP

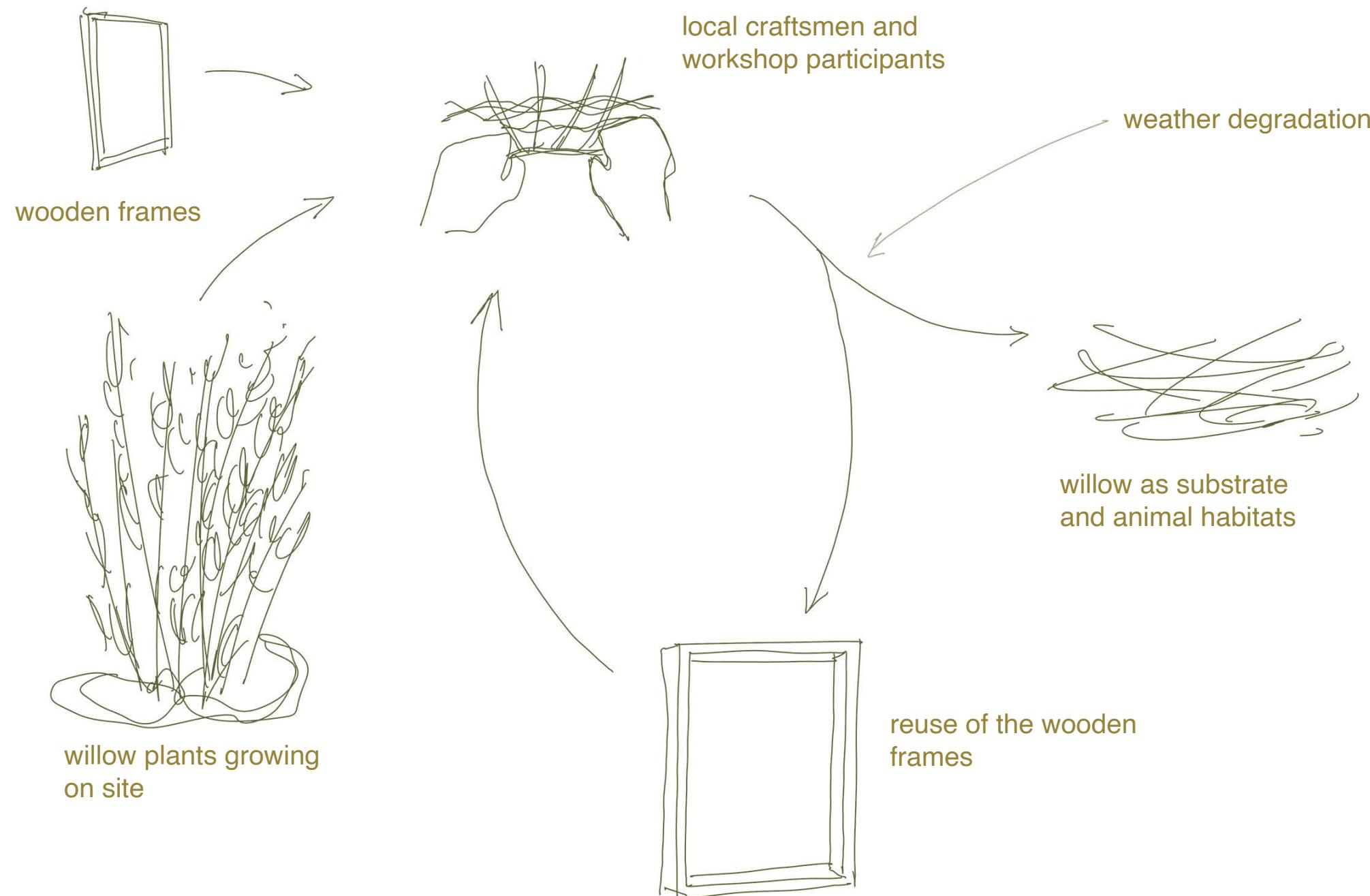


compressed wood fiber for  
floor heating panels

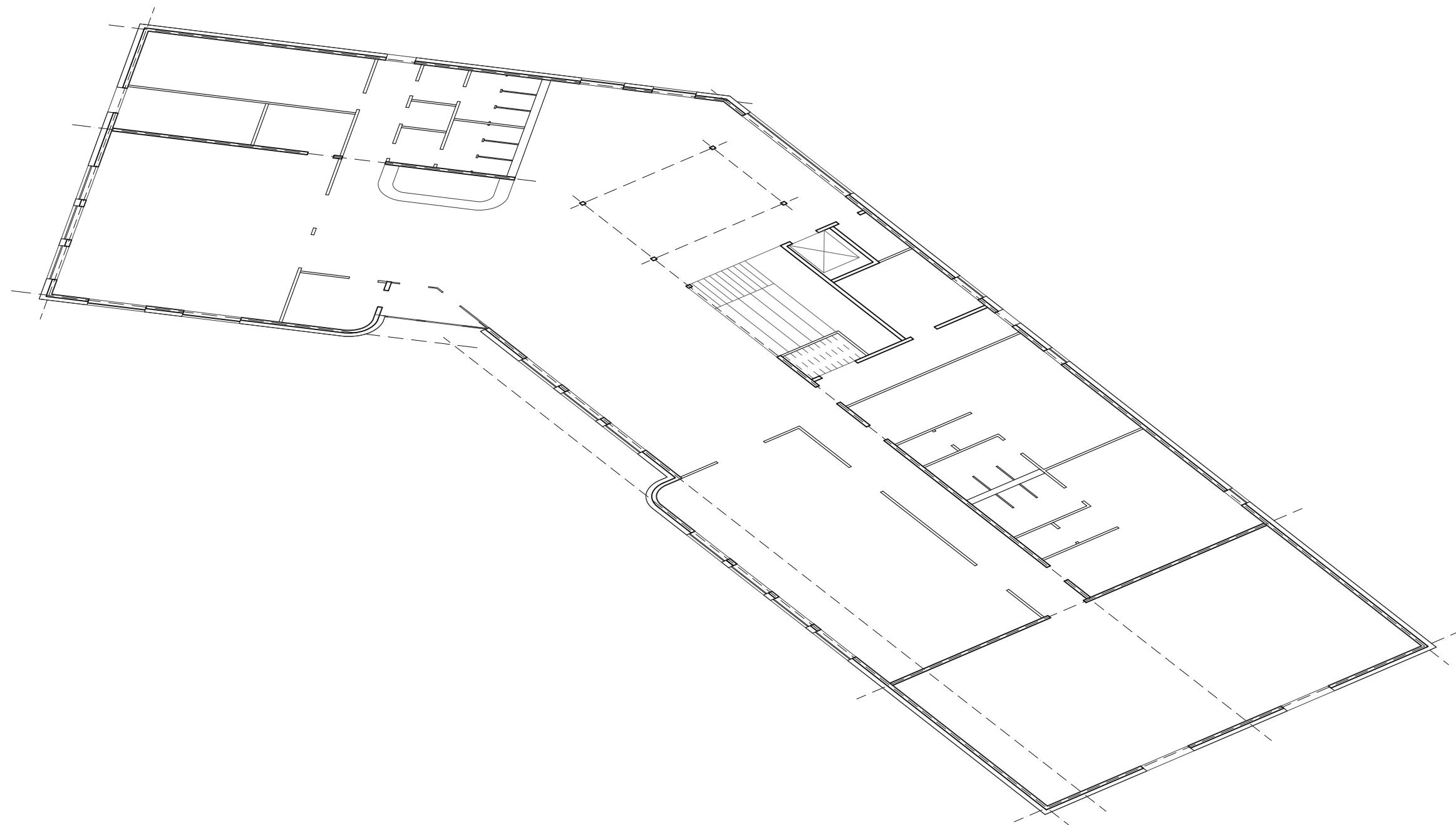


willow

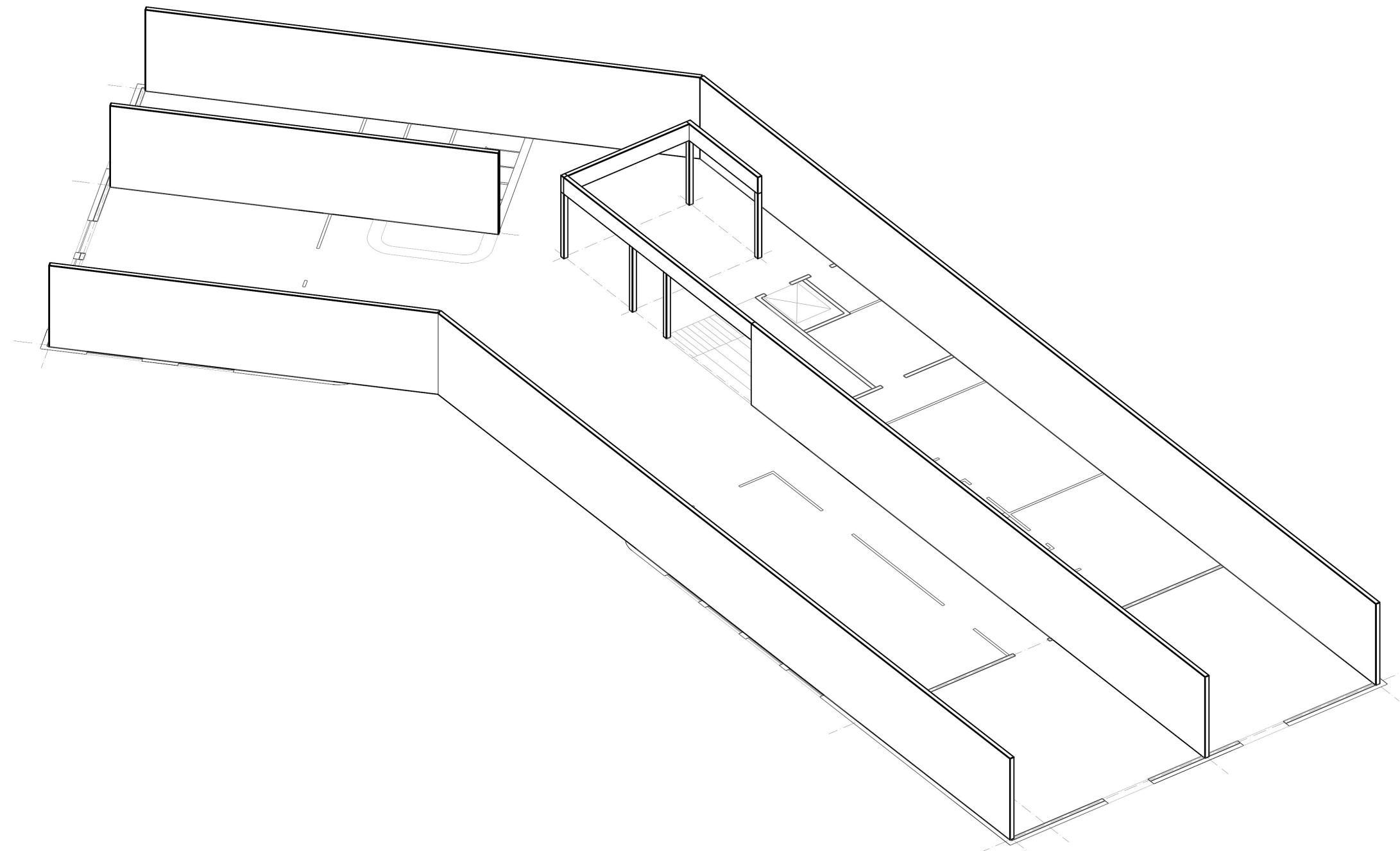
# willow cycle



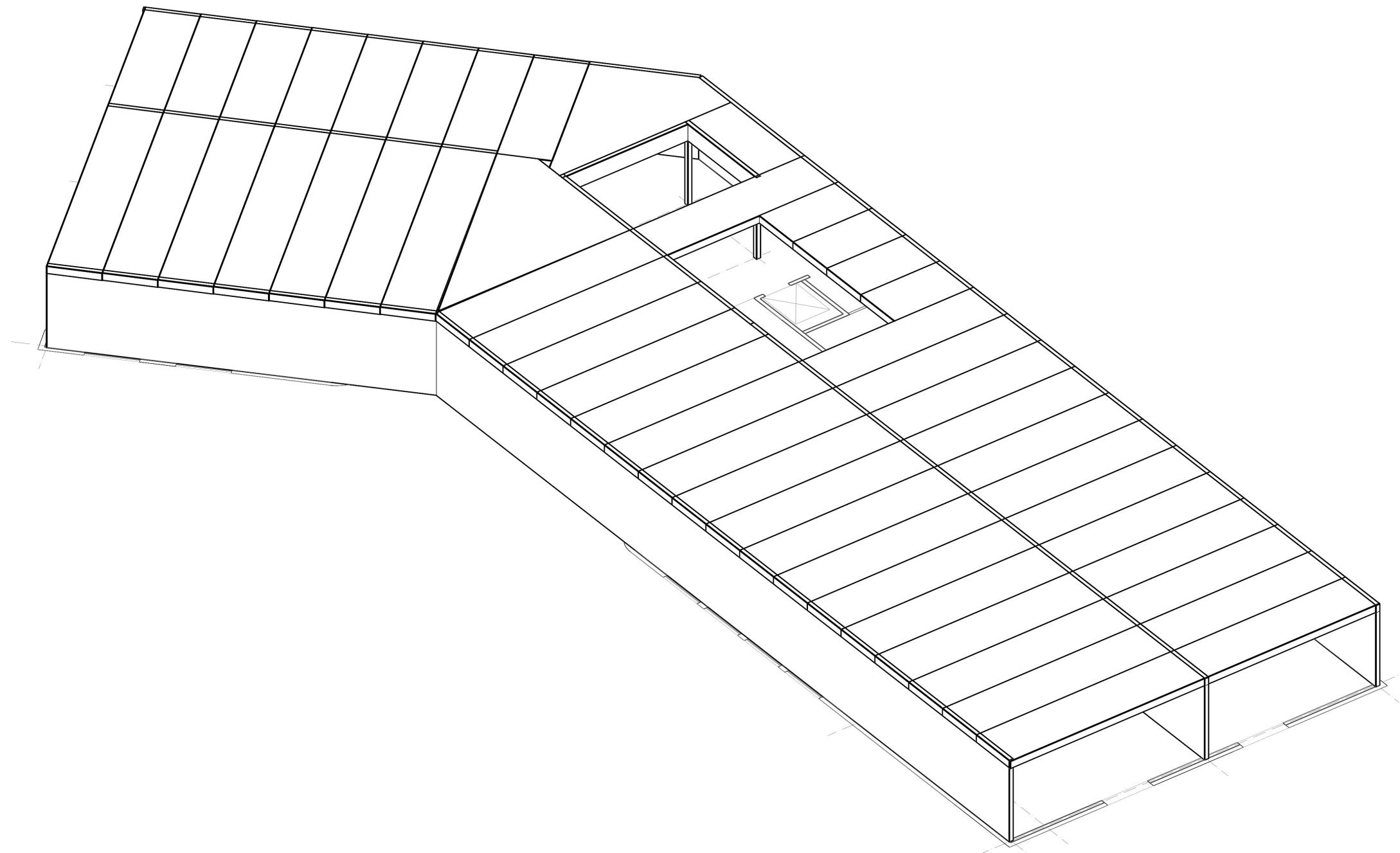
# structural system



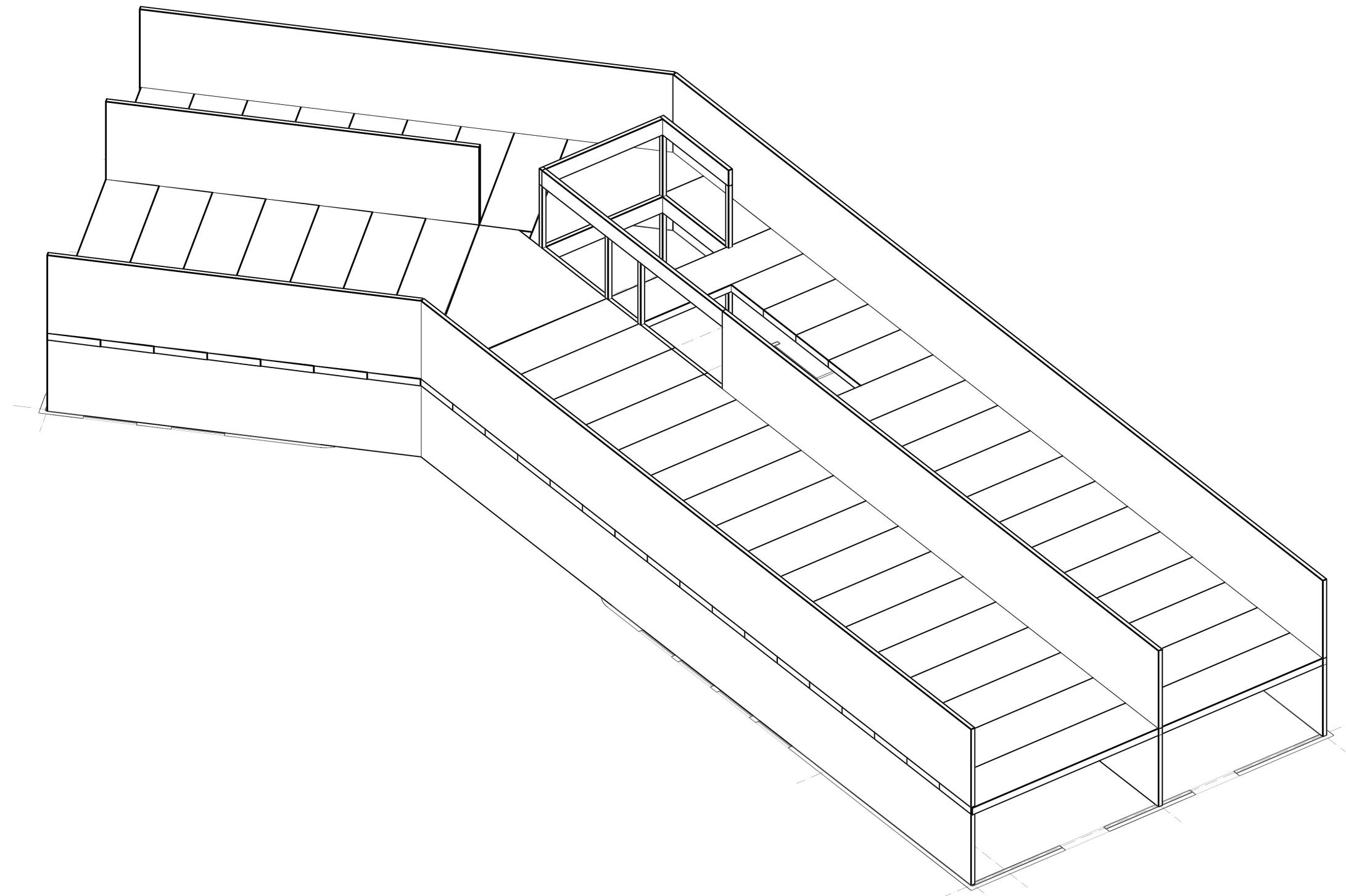
# structural system



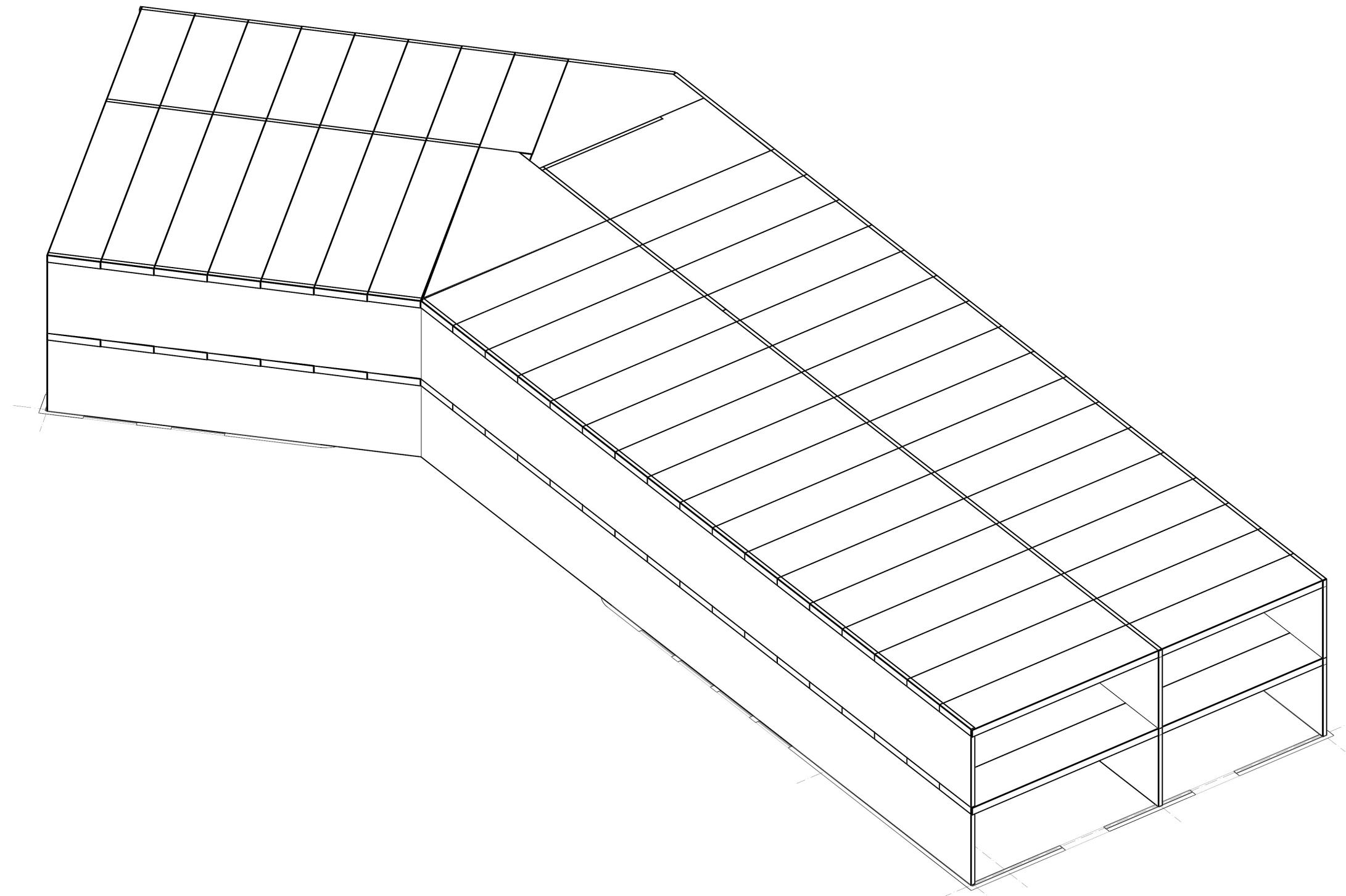
## structural system



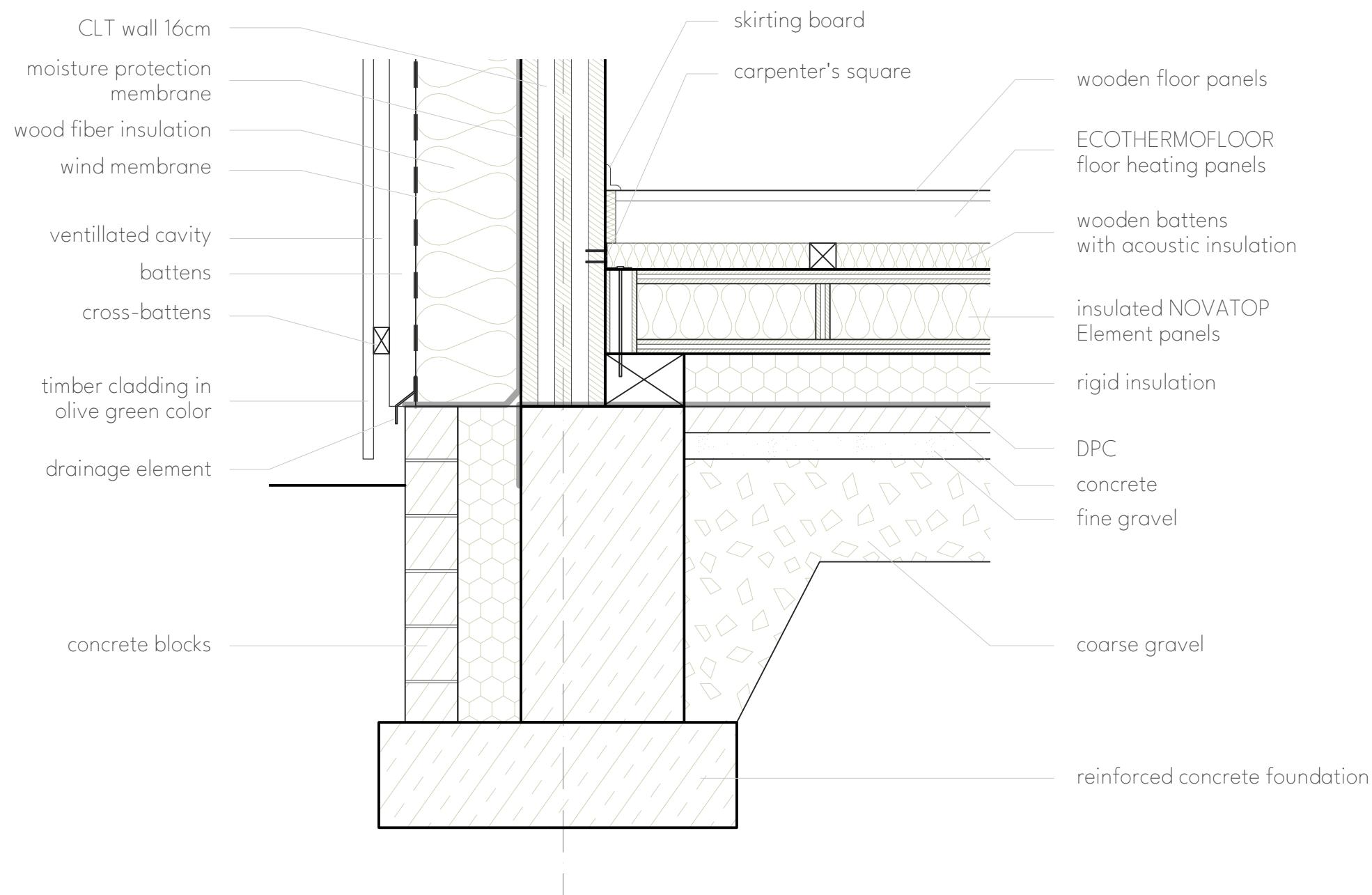
# structural system



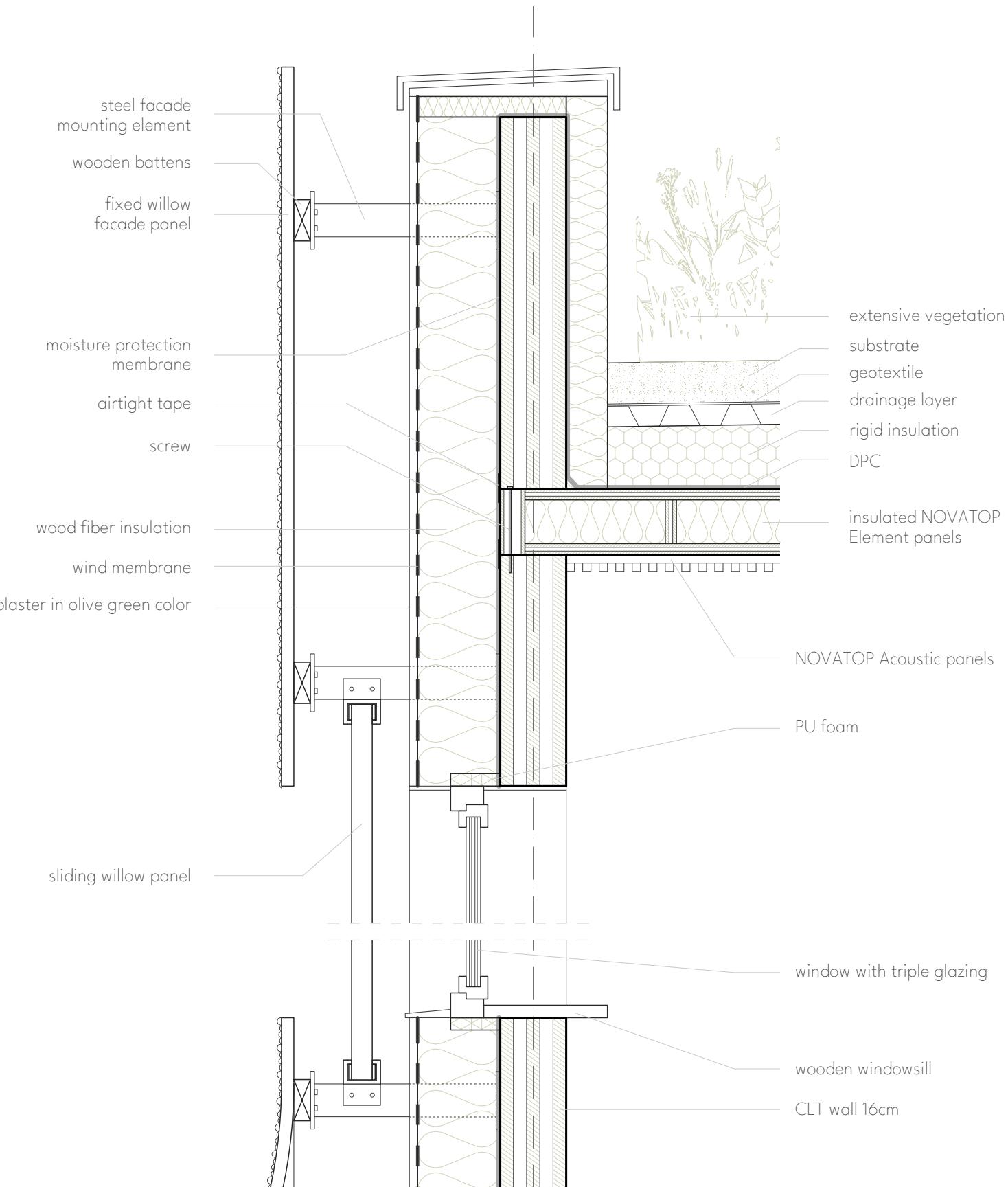
## structural system



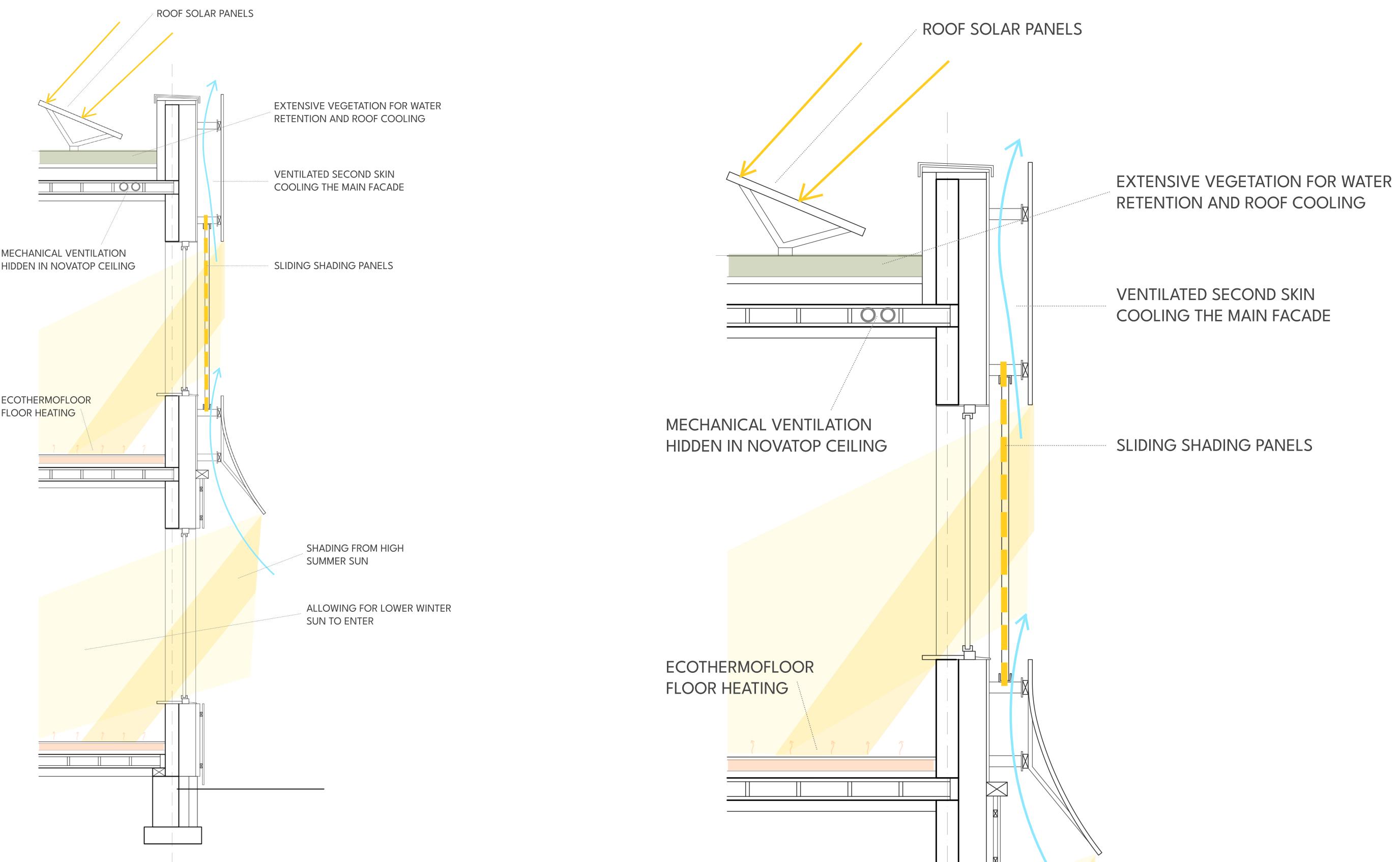
# wall to ground detail



# wall to roof and window detail



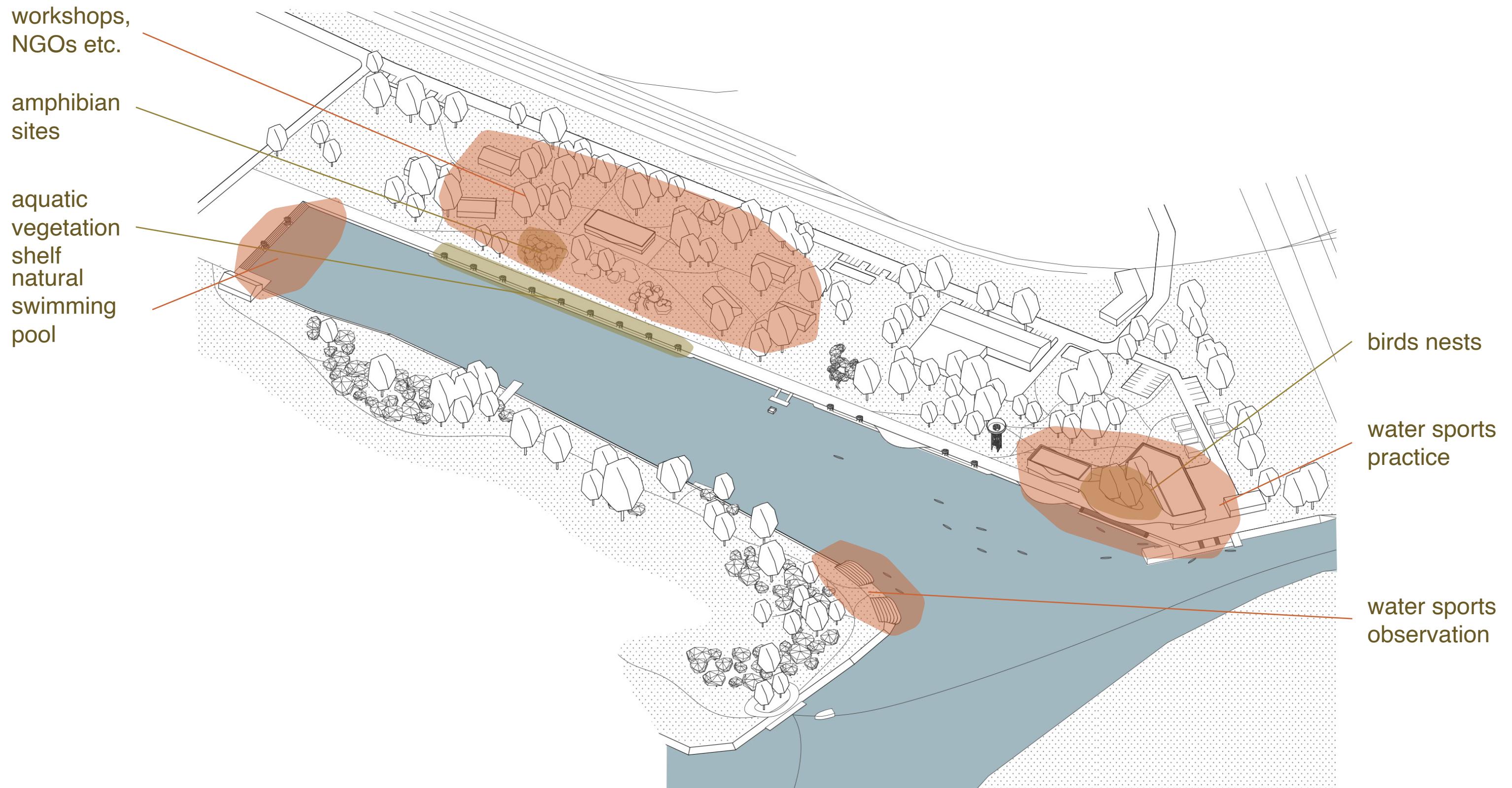
# healthy interiors

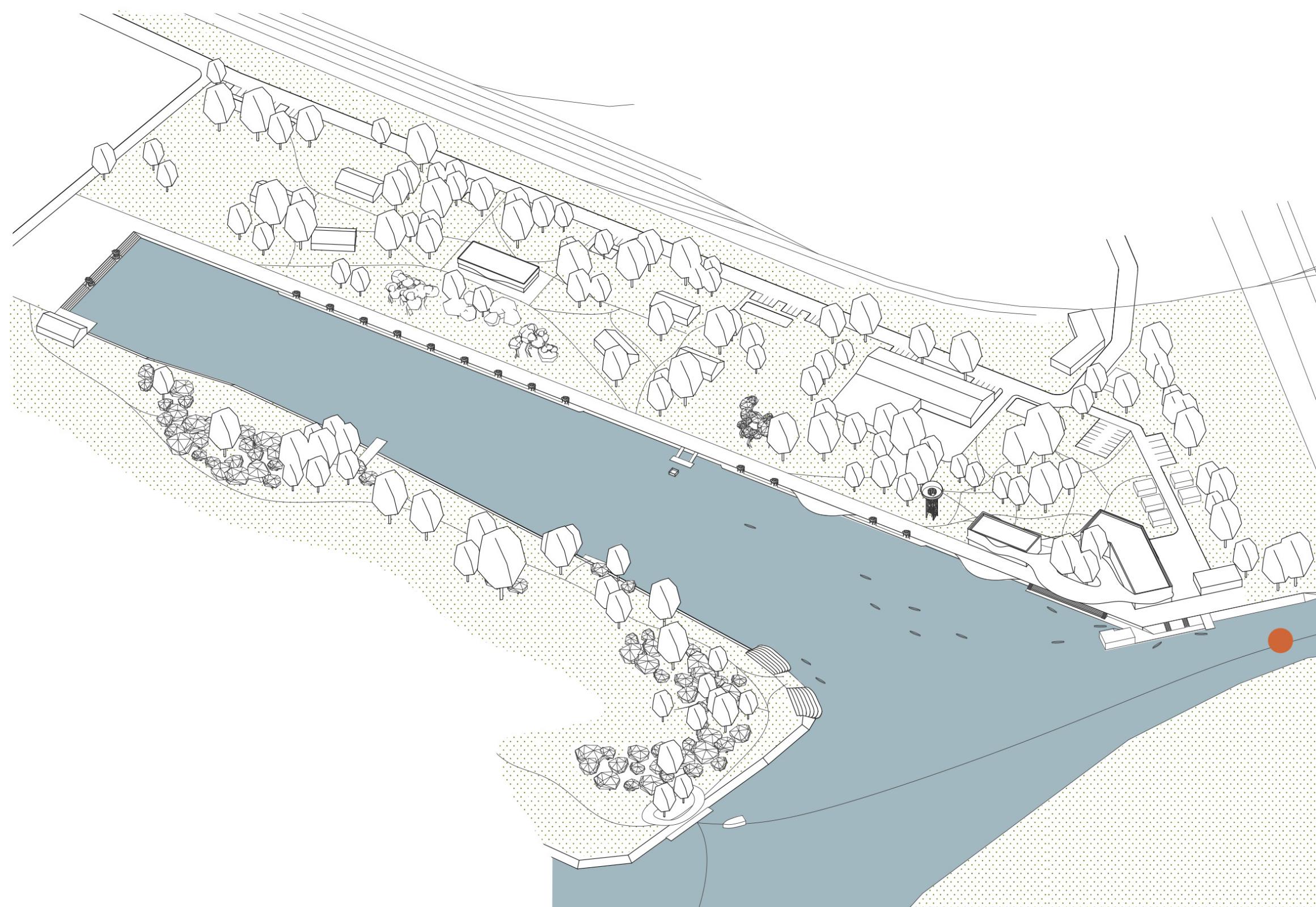


# learn to coexist

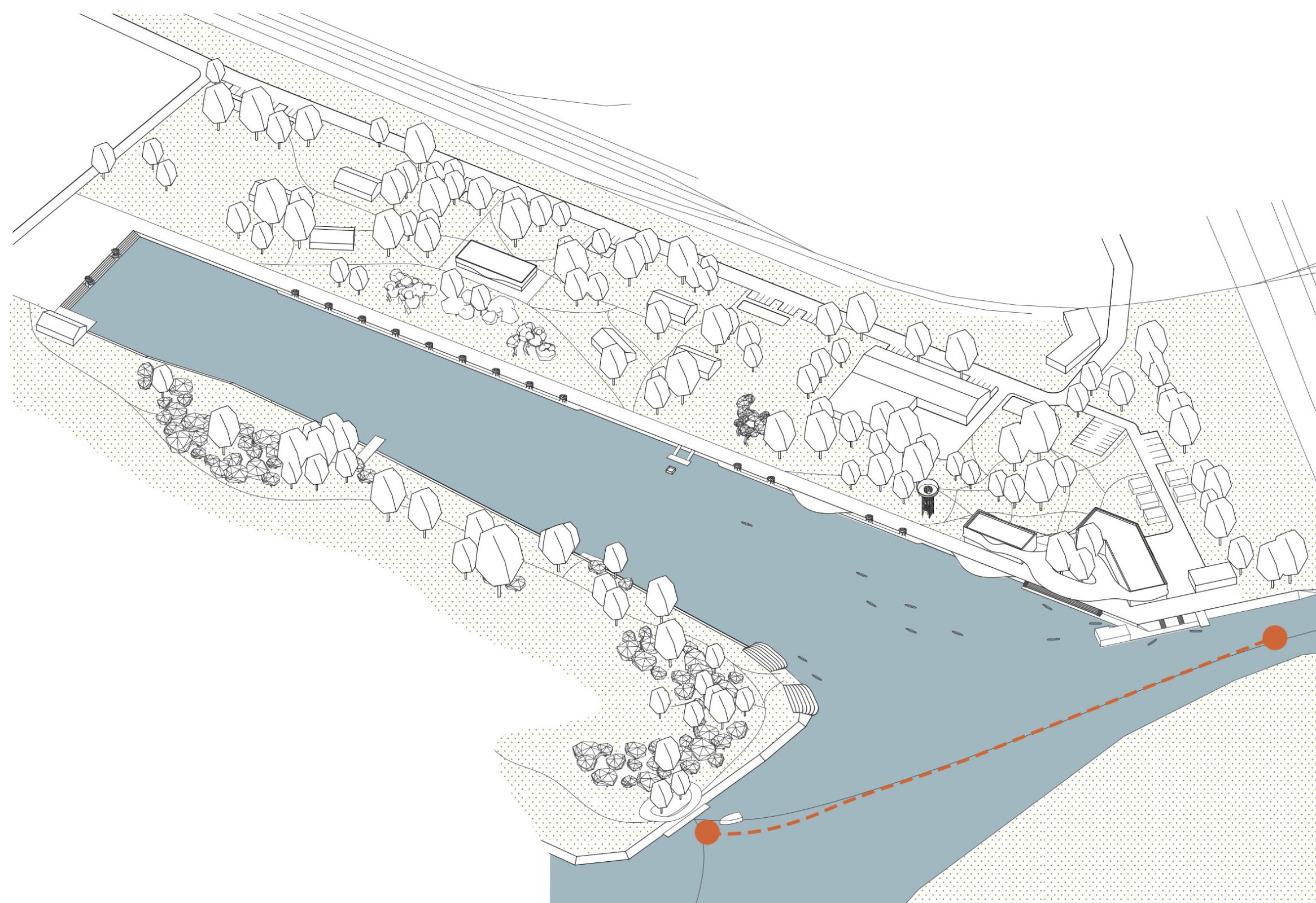
*I never divide - I always connect. I connect parts of Warsaw, its residents, and people with nature. For me, it's never “us and them,” but always just us - together.*

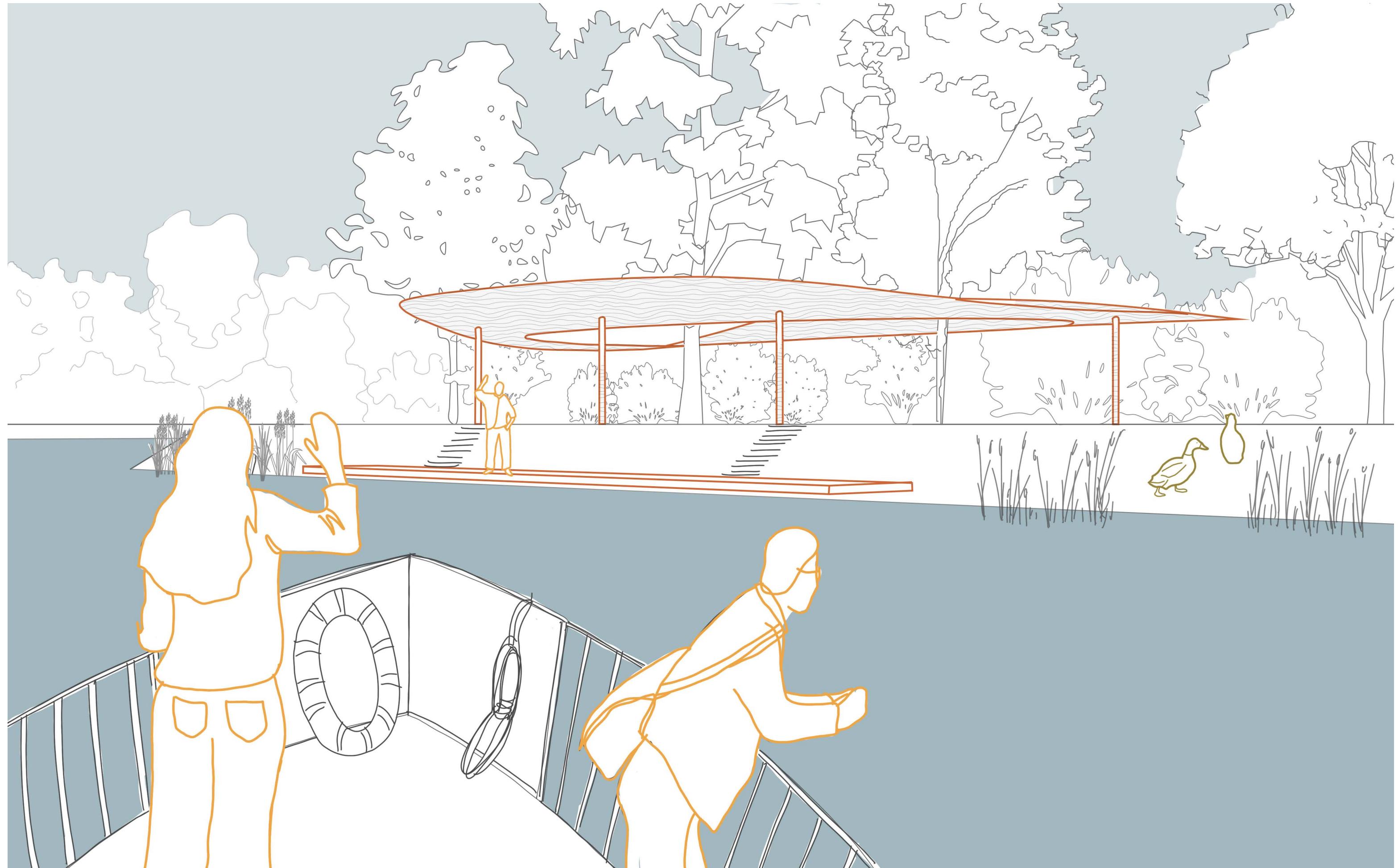


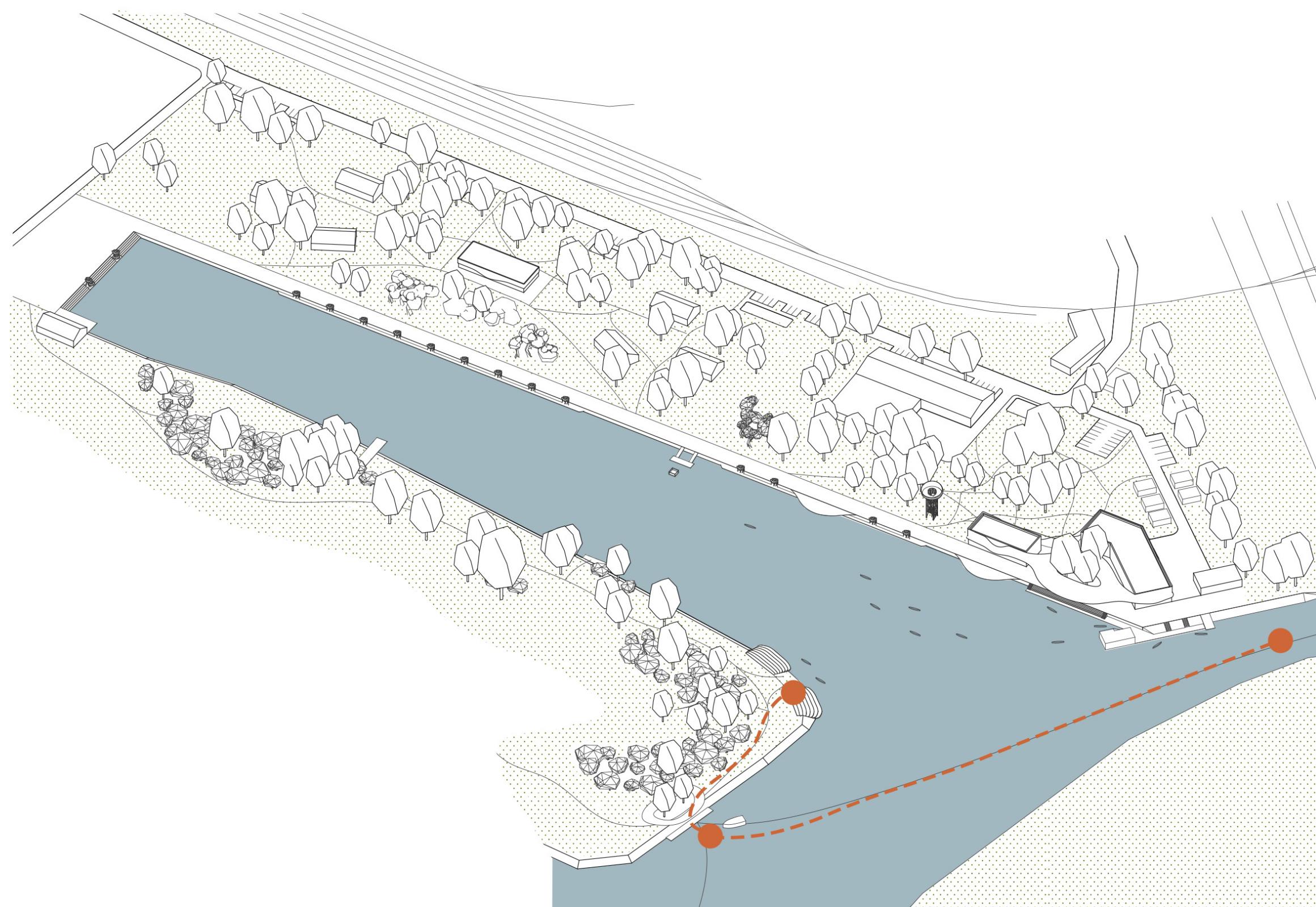


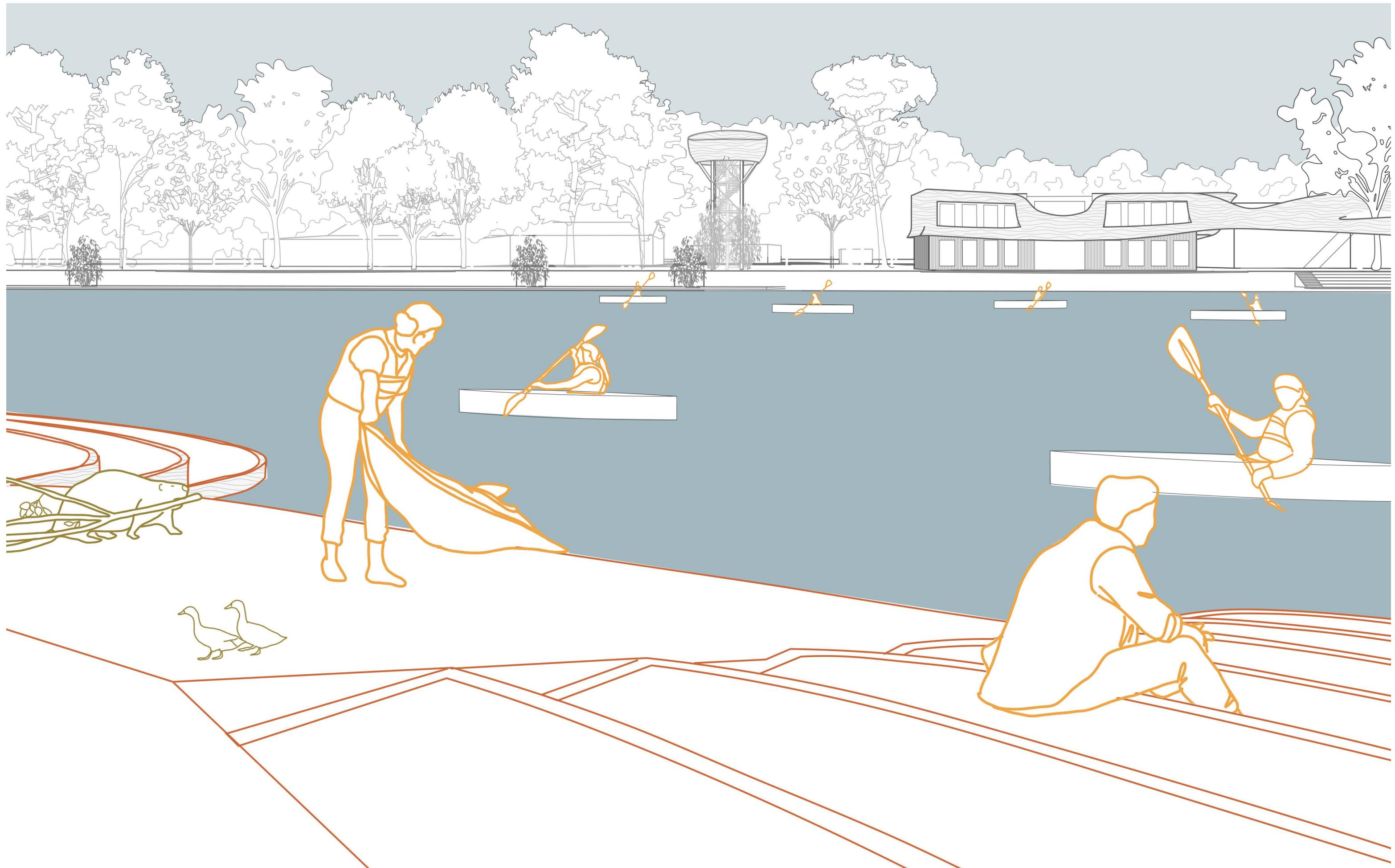


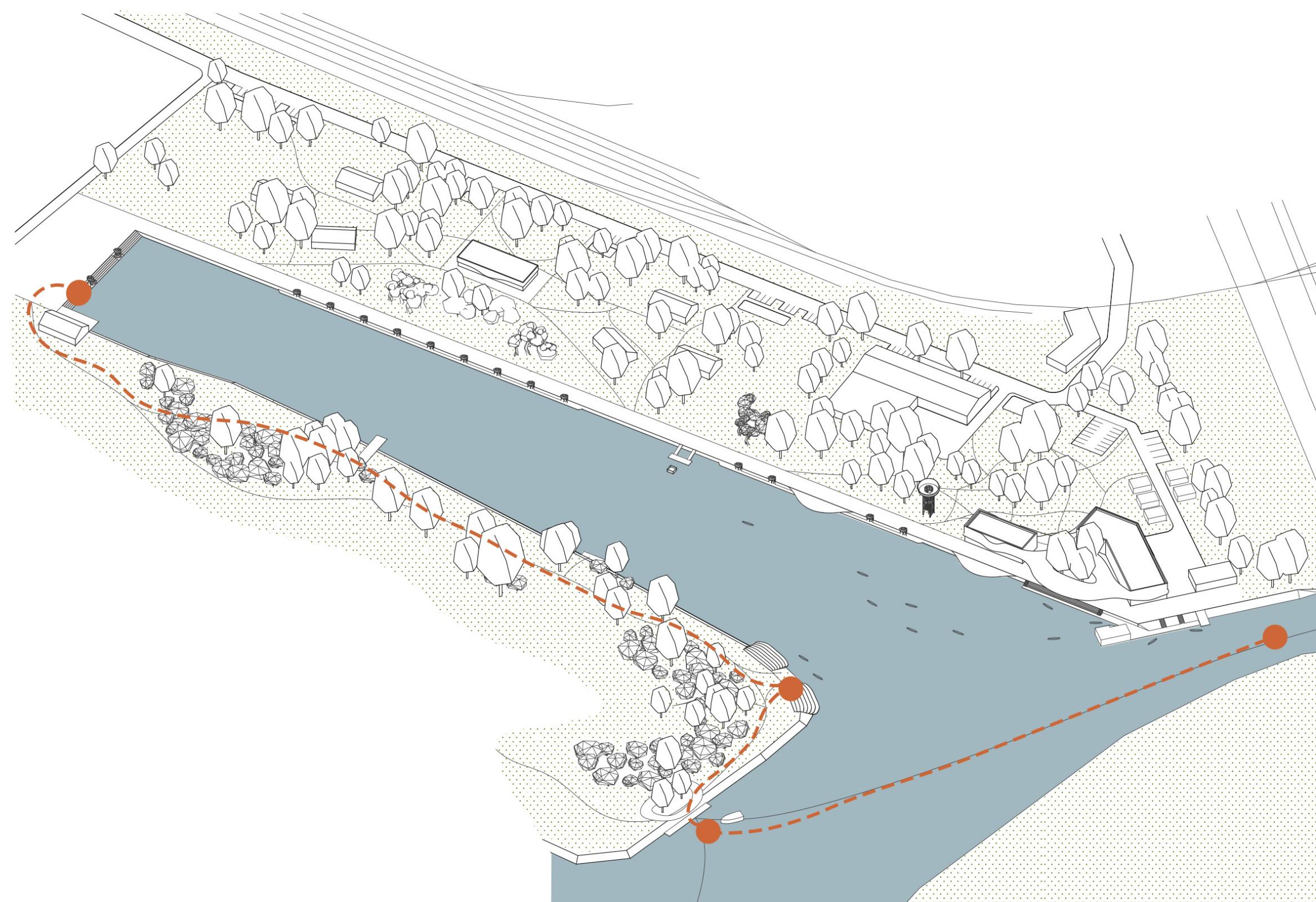


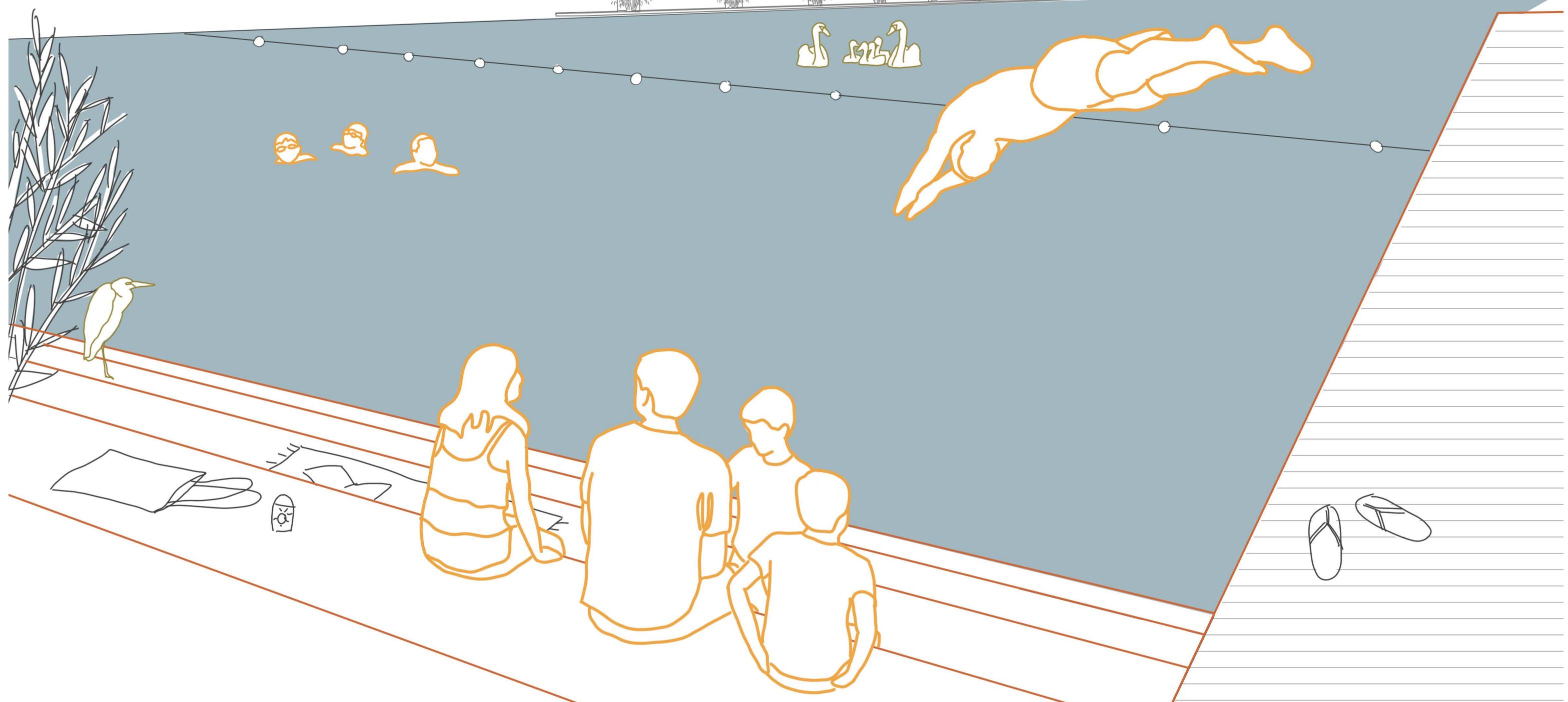


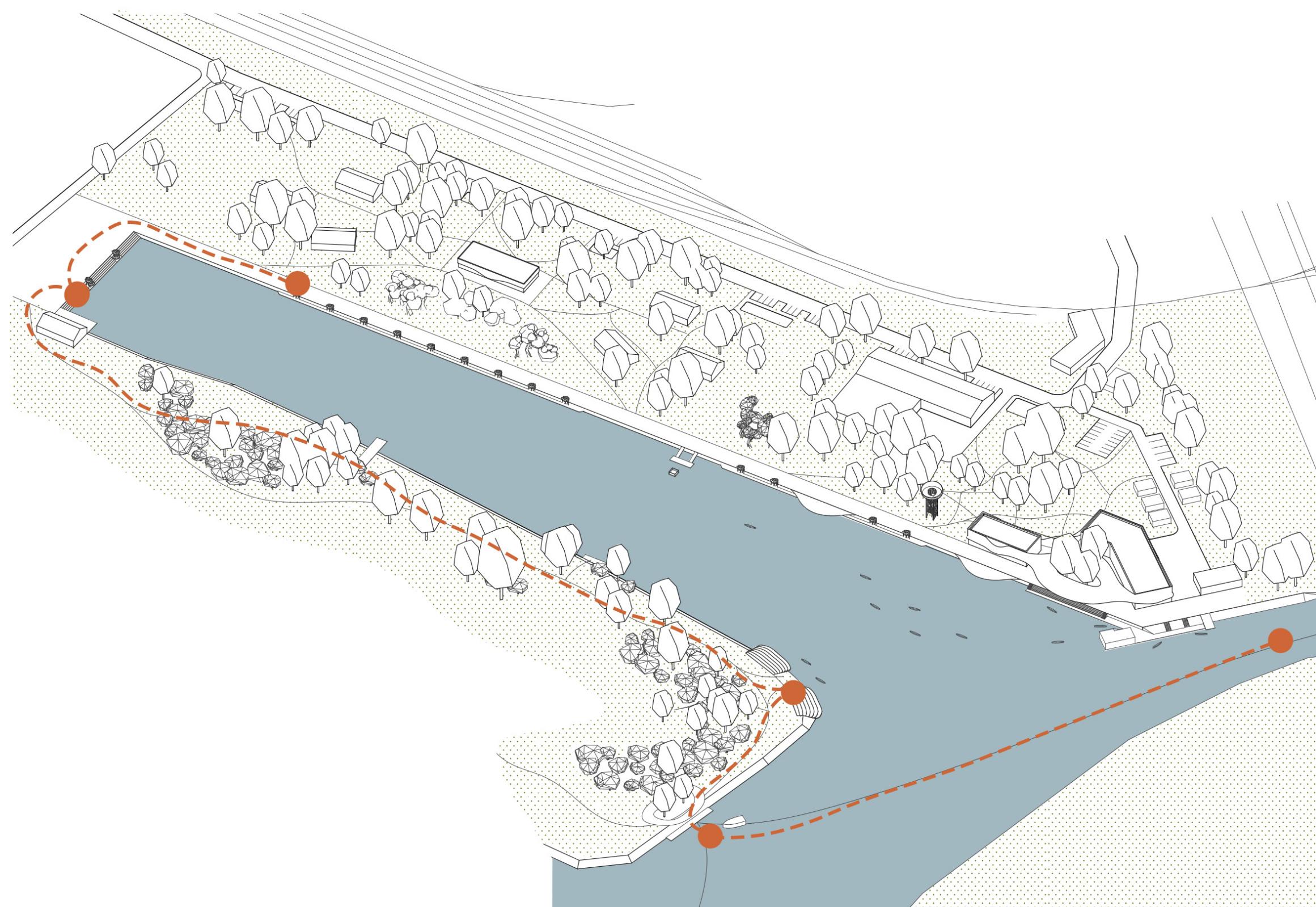




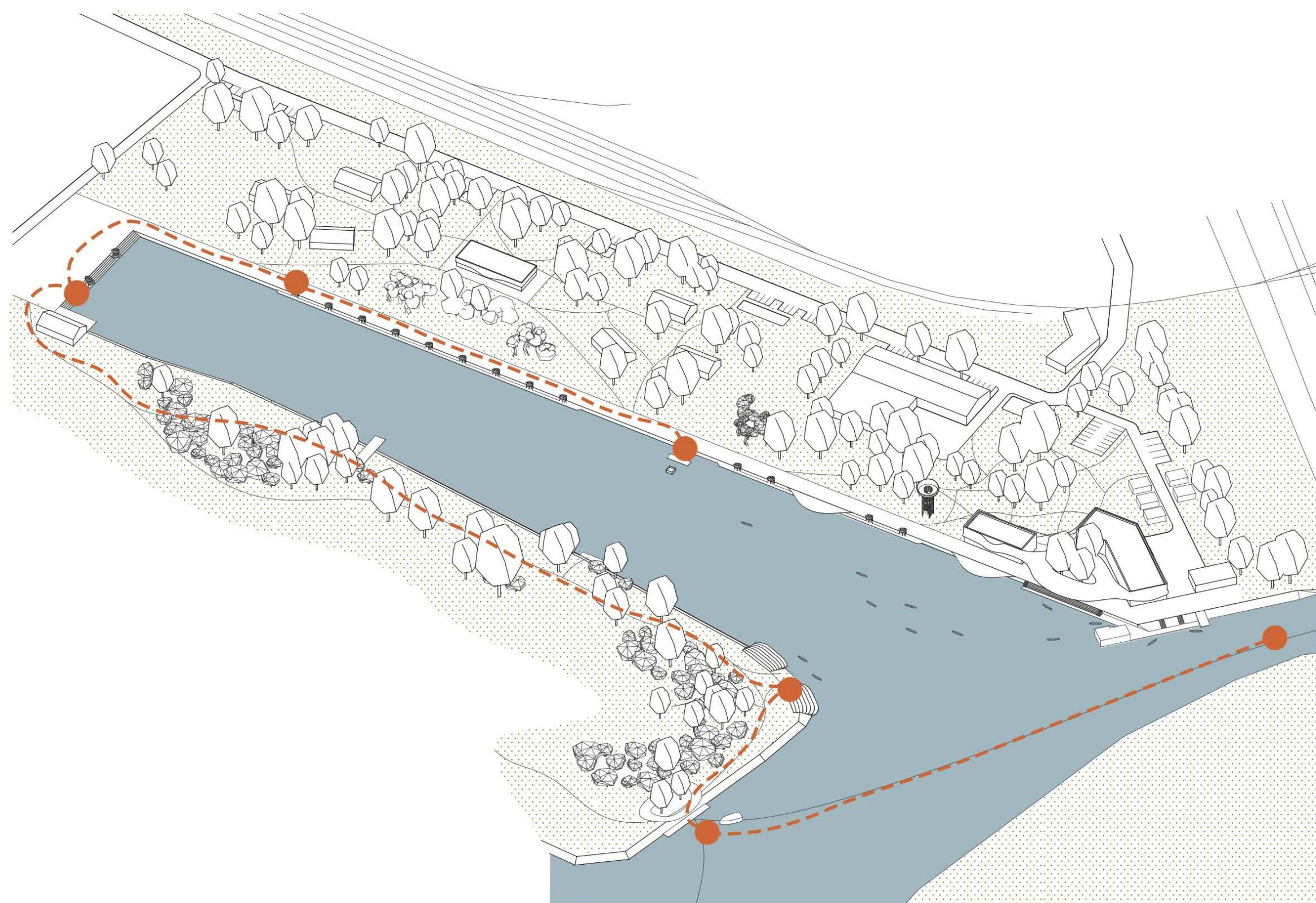


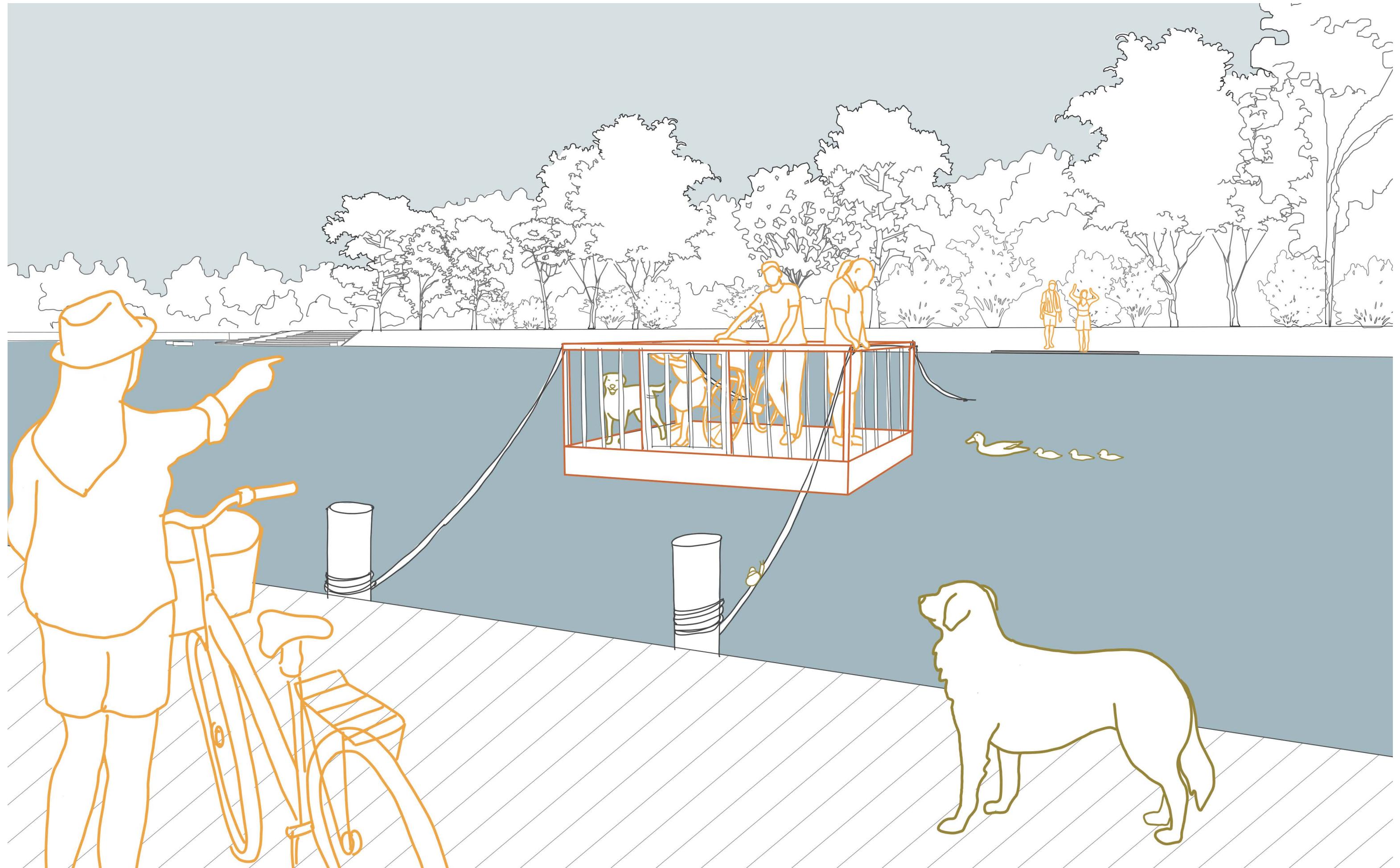


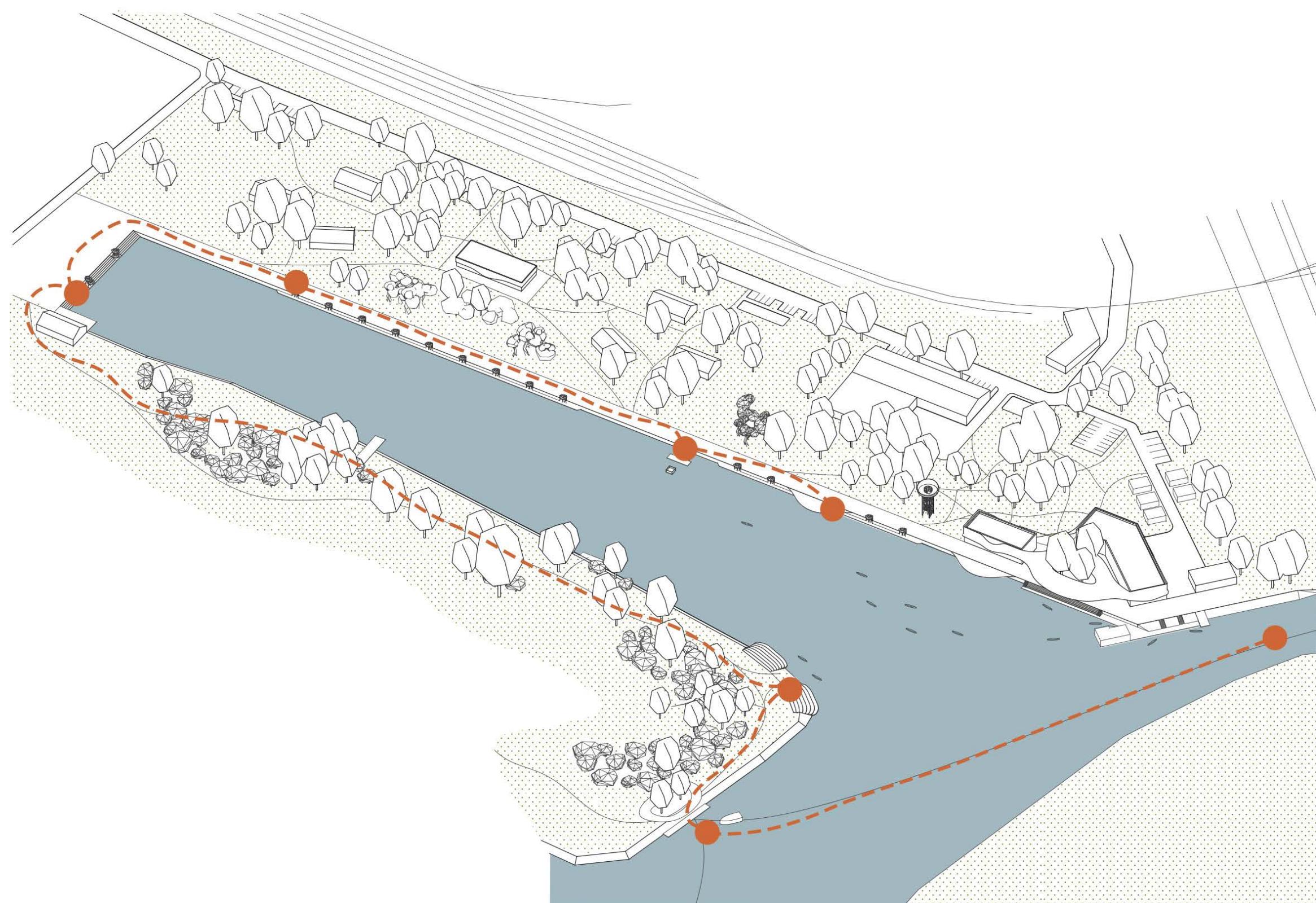


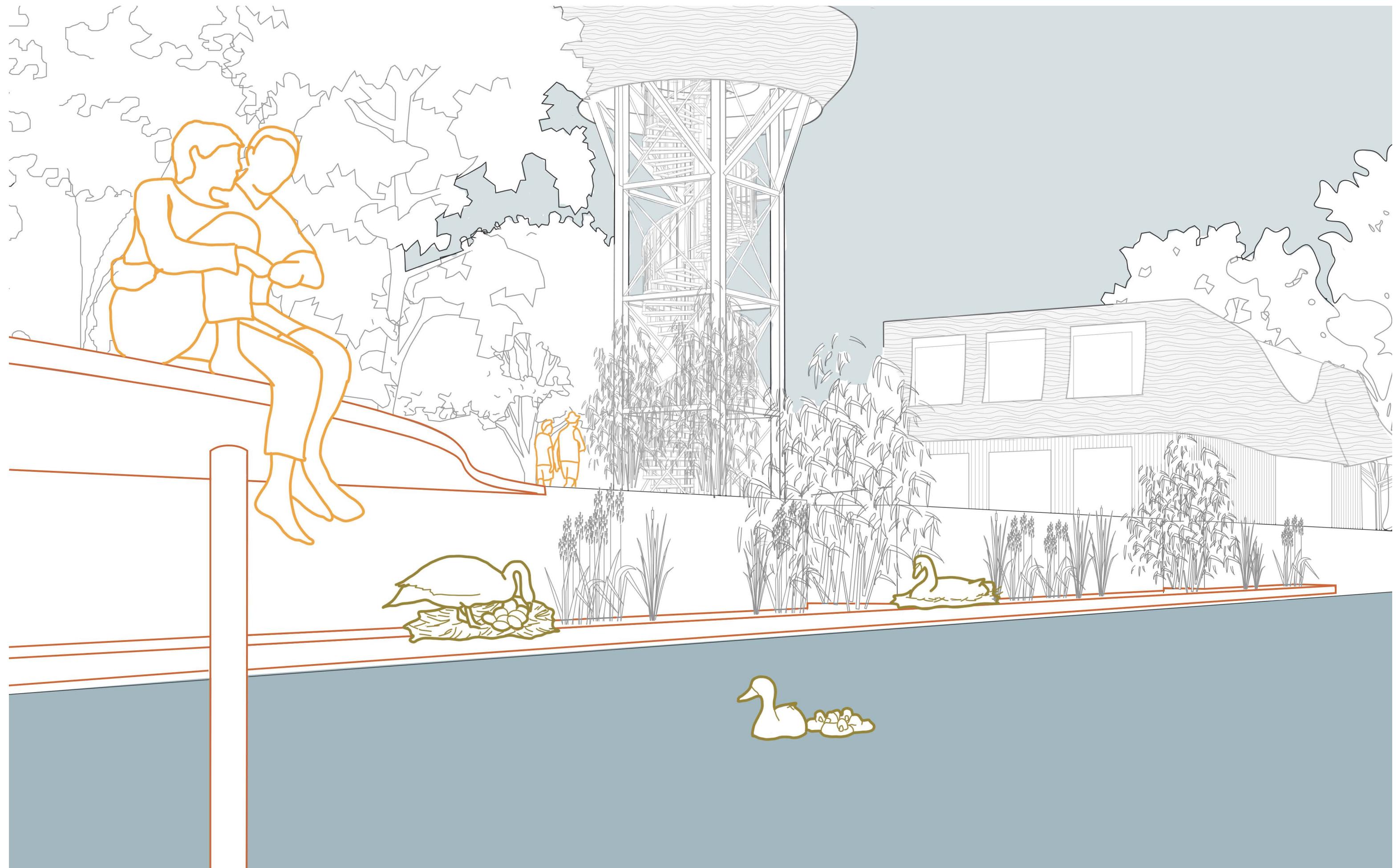




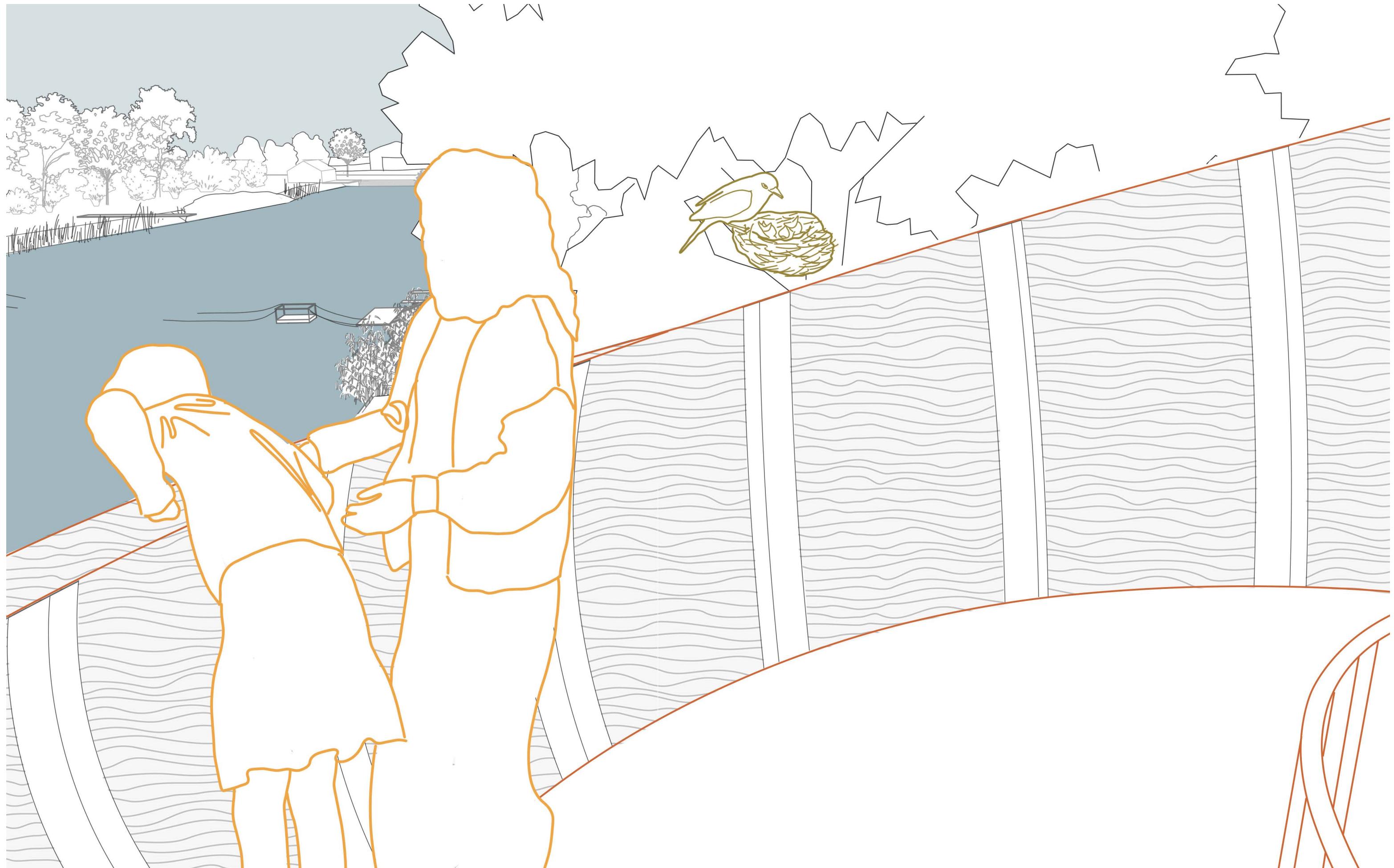


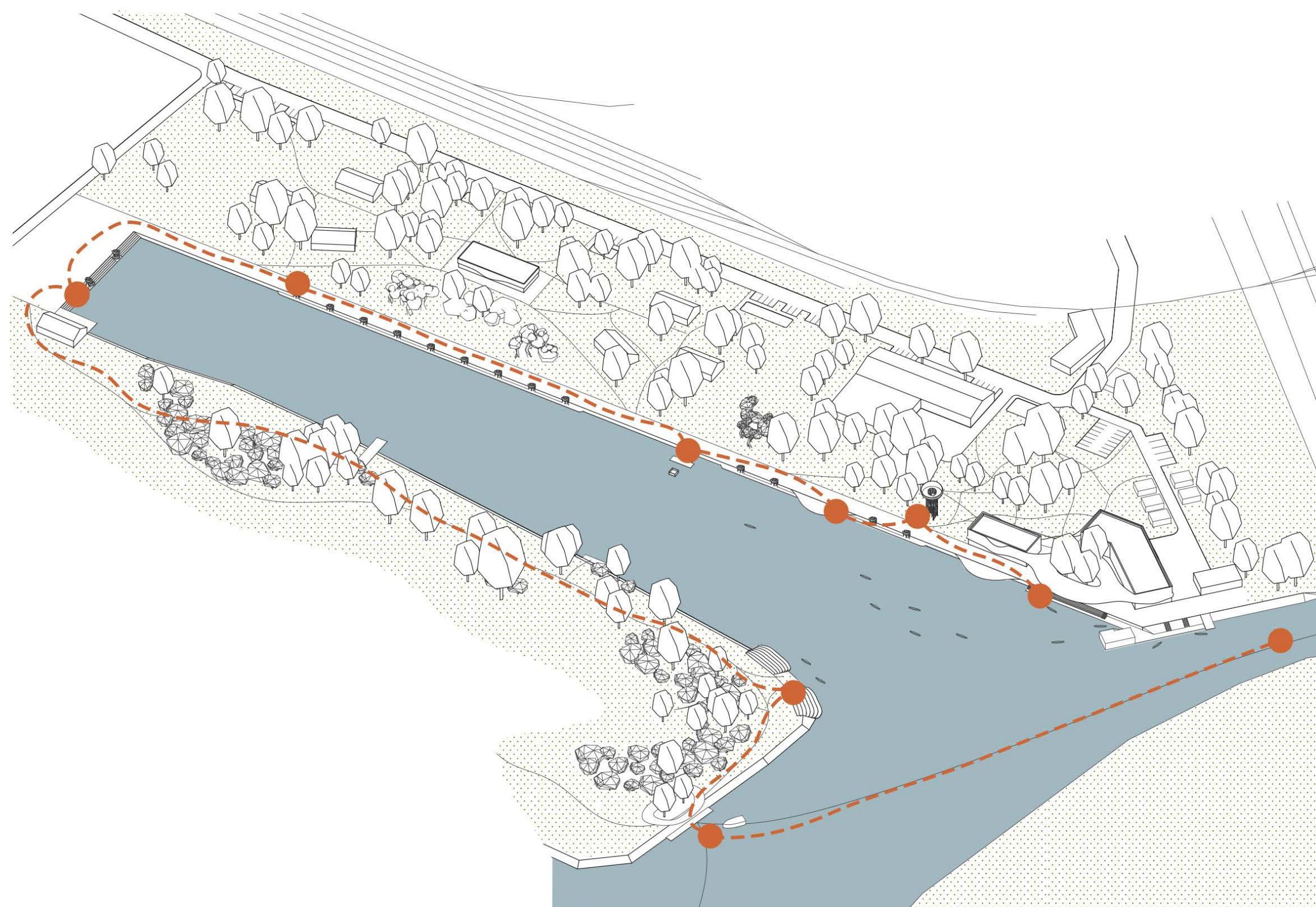


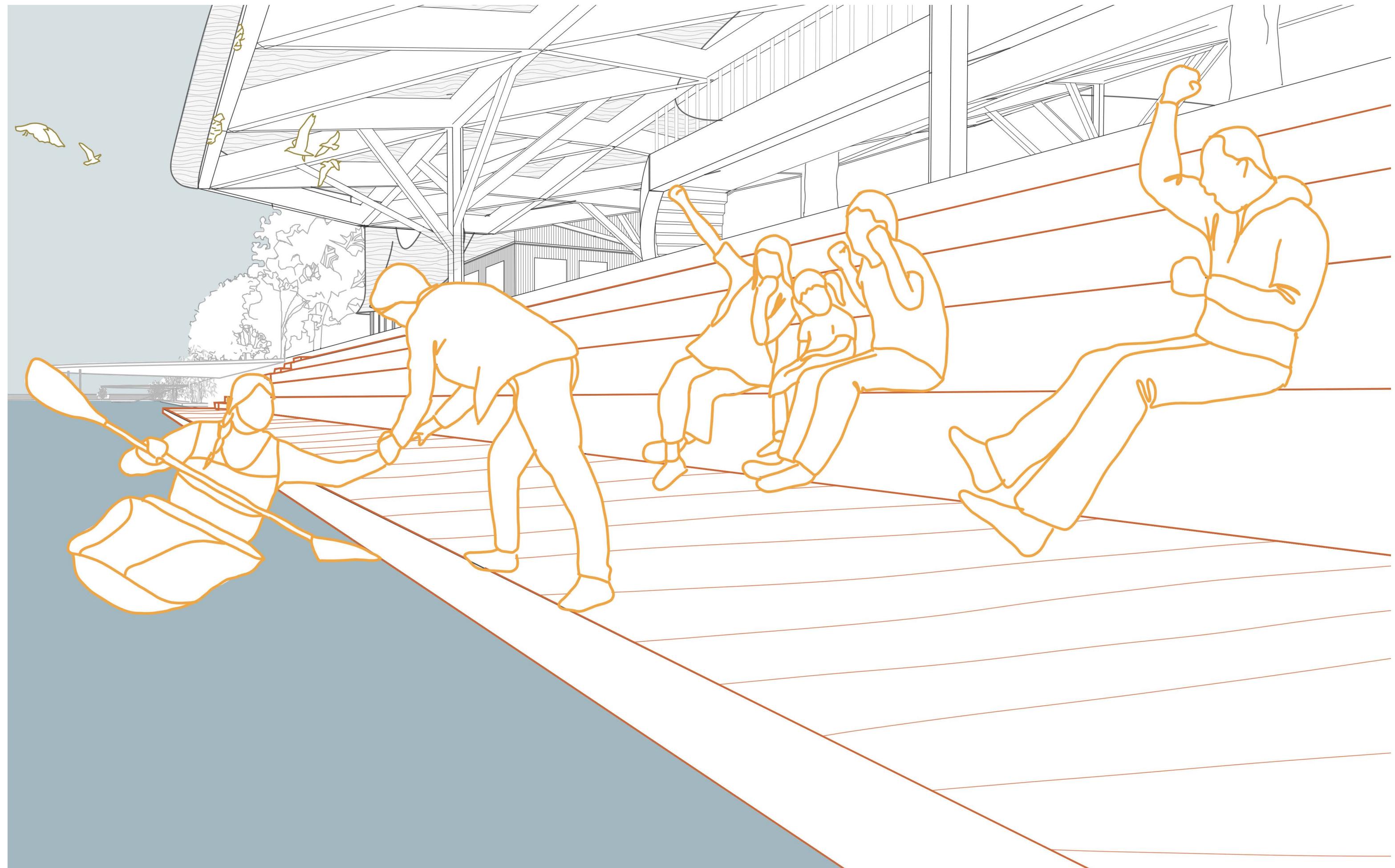


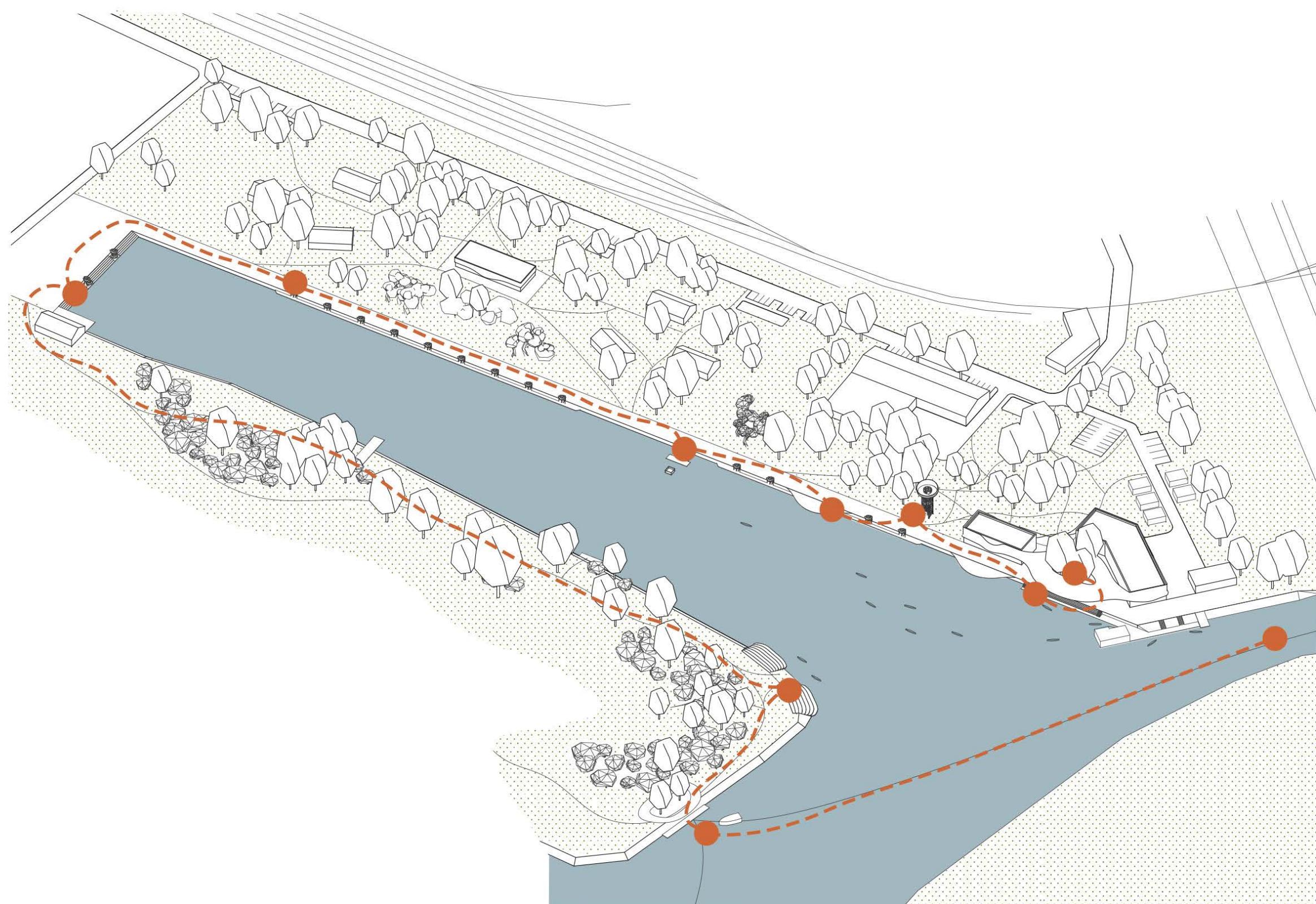








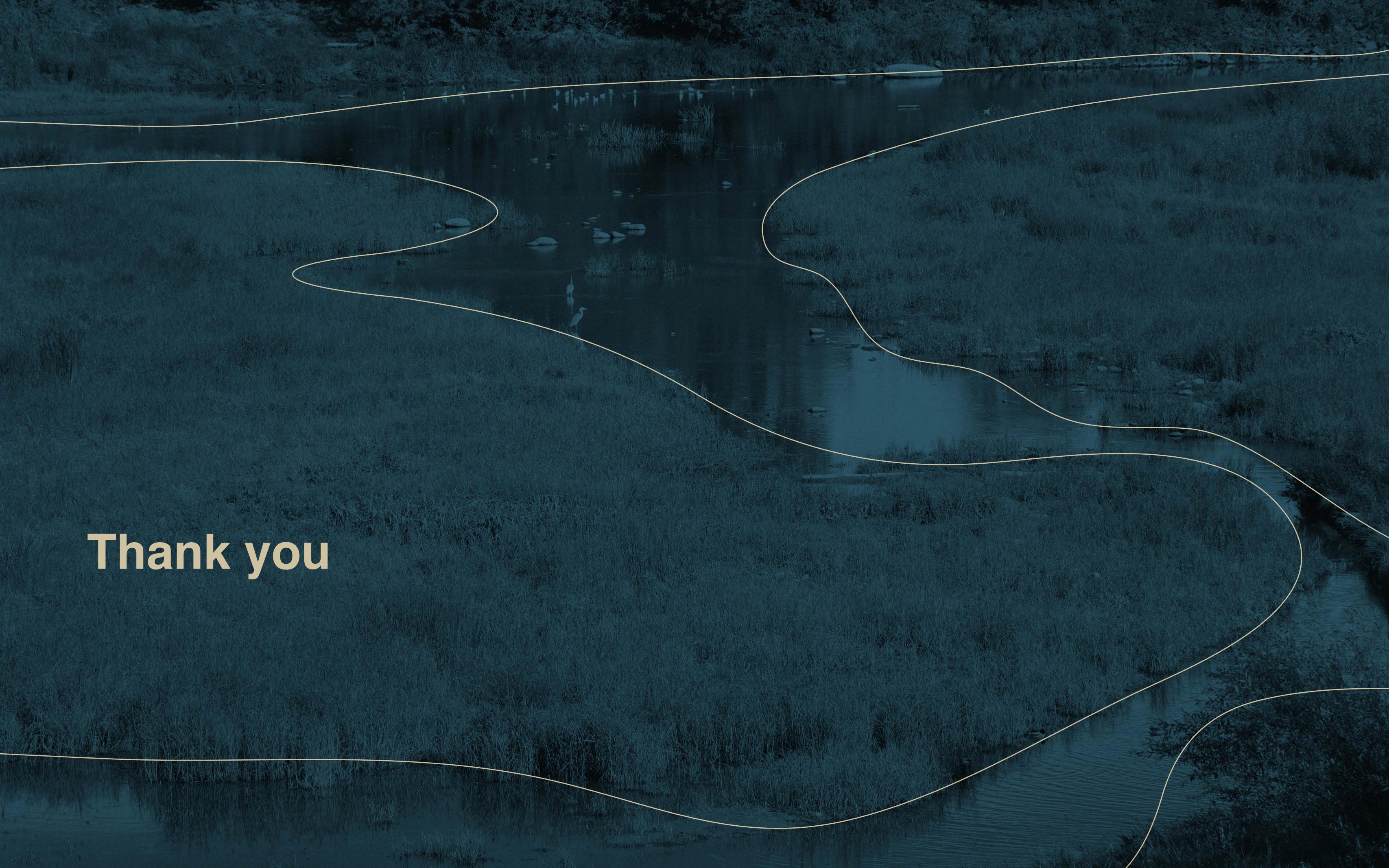






# reflection



A dark, moody landscape featuring a winding path or riverbed in the foreground. In the middle ground, a heron stands on the shore. The background is filled with dense, dark foliage and trees. The overall atmosphere is somber and contemplative.

Thank you