

BLOCK AS A SPACE OF NARRATIVES

ISSUE1:100

apr2026

Heyvaert
1070 Anderlecht Brussels

1070 Anderlecht Rue du Compas

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Editor's Note

The block operates as an intermediate scale between the individual and the city. It is both autonomous and deeply embedded in the larger urban fabric. By reading the block as a microcosm, it becomes possible to grasp the complexity of the city through the accumulation of everyday stories.

How to tell story of a block?



If the block can be understood as a microcosm of the city, then how to make its complexity visible becomes a challenge. Rather than looking for a single, linear narrative, it may be more exciting to assemble a collection of fragments that reveal different perspectives, rhythms, and moments of everyday life.

Building stories by Chris Ware, doesn't narrate in a familiar way. There is no beginning of a story nor the end of it. Instead, it is a book, well, a box full of different fragments. Newspapers, pamphlets, folded boards, books, strips of paper. Each of them unveils different moments of life inside the same building. Readers are offered to read the stories freely by piecing together though small ordinary scenes of life.

The building becomes more than just a backdrop for the city. Itself is a protagonist. It observes lives unfolding within it, and it holds memories of its inhabitants as time passes. People come, and people go, routines repeat, and emotions linger in rooms long after they've been left behind. Even though nothing dramatic happened in the story, readers feel connected through the glimpses of everyday life, waiting, walking, cooking, and ageing.

Time in *Building Stories* feels unstable and fragile. Moments overlap, return, or disappear altogether, much like memory itself. Everyday gestures become markers of change, and objects seem to absorb traces of the people who use them.

The book offers a useful reference for this project, suggesting a way to tell the story through multiple voices, materials, and temporalities. Focusing on fieldwork: site observations, photography, sketching, conversations, and the collection of objects, the project aims to construct a narrative composed of fragments. By composing different mediums, this project aims to attempt to narrate the story of the block, visible threads and hidden perspectives.

Conversations Around The Corner

Short stories collected around the Heyvaert neighbourhood with no clear order, it focuses on the editor's perspective.

Conversation with the floor manager of the Restaurant La Paix. Story collected on the Rue Ropsy Chaudron.

Stopped by the Michelin starred restaurant because the door was open and we could see people working inside. It was around 10 or 11 in the morning, they were already preparing for the evening service. We walked in and were greeted by the floor manager, who was very welcoming and happy to talk about the restaurant.

I asked whether the restaurant had any connection to the surrounding meat industry. Given its location near the Abattoir and within a neighbourhood shaped by food distribution and commerce, I wondered if the menu reflected this context. However, the manager explained that the restaurant's cuisine is primarily French with strong Japanese influences. He showed us the menu, which featured many Japanese ingredients and techniques.

The building itself, however, has a much stronger relationship to the neighbourhood's history. Dating from the late nineteenth century, it was originally one of the oldest brasseries in Brussels. The room where we were standing it hosted hundreds of customers and mainly served meat dishes. The current restaurant occupies the same space, but it has changed completely. The manager pointed out that today's tables are designed for two people and are generously spaced apart. In the past, the tables were much smaller, allowing many more customers to fit into the room at the same time.

The restaurant operates with a relatively small team. The kitchen consists of only a few staff members and the head chef, while a small front-of-house team manages the dining room. The scale feels very intimate.

I was also curious about their clients. According to the manager, most guests are international visitors rather than local residents. Some evenings, there might be tables from France, Thailand, Japan, or elsewhere. Many guests specifically travel to Brussels to dine at Michelin-starred restaurants, often planning entire trips around these experiences. The manager jokingly compared one-star and two-star Michelin restaurants by saying that people travel to one-star restaurants by train, but to two-star restaurants by plane.

This relationship between food and tourism also shapes the restaurant's connection to the neighbourhood. Since the restaurant only opens in the evening, guests usually arrive directly for dinner and leave afterwards without exploring the surrounding streets. A meal can last three or four hours, and by the time guests leave, it is often late enough for them to return straight to their hotels by taxi. As a result, there is very little interaction between the restaurant's clients and the neighbourhood itself.

The restaurant also appears somewhat disconnected from the local economy. It does not source much of its produce from nearby businesses and has limited interaction with the food distribution activities taking place around it. In many ways, it feels like a self-contained bubble within the larger urban fabric.

When discussing the neighbourhood, the manager described it as highly diverse but also divided into different communities. Around Heyvaertstraat, there is a strong presence of West and Central African communities, particularly from countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria. Nearby streets are associated with Lebanese and Syrian businesses, while areas across the canal are home to Romanian, Polish, Albanian, and other Eastern European communities. Although these groups share the same neighbourhood, they often occupy

separate social and commercial areas.

The manager, he has been working in this restaurant for about 10 or maybe 15 years. He is not from this neighborhood but he lives about 10 minutes from the restaurant. He enjoys working here, but doesn't really like the area. When I asked him for recommendations for nearby restaurants or cafés, he replied that there isn't much around worth going to. There's a café on the corner where you can get drinks, but he wouldn't eat in this area. We joked that he might be used to Michelin-level dining. He laughed and replied that even for him, Michelin restaurants are far too expensive. If he wanted to go out for a meal, he would usually head into the centre of Brussels rather than stay in the neighbourhood.

What struck me the most was the contrast between the restaurant and its surroundings. While Heyvaert is lively, diverse, and shaped by everyday commerce, the Michelin restaurant seems to operate according to a different rhythm. Its customers come from around the world rather than from the neighbourhood. Its cuisine references French and Japanese culinary traditions rather than the food cultures immediately outside its doors. Even many of the people working there simply travel in and out each day without engaging much with the local community.

This left me wondering why a two-star Michelin restaurant exists in this particular location.

Short stories collected around the Heyvaert neighbourhood with no clear order, it focuses on the editor's perspective.

Street vendor, women who sold Safou. Story collected on the Rue Ropsy Chaudron

Lebanese sweet shop owned by a Syrian Family. Story collected on the Chaussée de Mons.

After the first visit to the Heyvaert neighbourhood with the studio, I was intrigued by the diversity of produce and the liveliness of the area. I have always been interested in different food cultures, therefore it felt important for me to come back and try a little bit of everything that the Heyvaert shops had to offer.

By the street they were selling this purple looking fruit, it looked like a purple avocado. It was being sold in cardboard boxes decorated with banana prints. The boxes were stacked along the sidewalk, while an African woman sat beside them with a checkered shopping trolley. Plastic bags lay on top of the fruit, ready to be filled for customers.

"Bonjour! I would like to try this fruit. How do you sell it, and what is it called?"

The woman replied, "I sell them for five euros per basket. There are more or less 10 of them in each basket."

"Okay, I'll take one. But what is its name? I've never had it before."

"It's called Safou," she said. "You cook it. You don't eat it raw."

"How do you cook it?"

"You can boil it in water with some salt."

"Alright, I'll take them!"

Back at home, I did some research and turns out that in English it's called African butter pear. I cooked the fruit and ate together with my groupmates. Before preparing it, I had to look up the recipe again because I was afraid of getting it wrong. According to what I read, Safou is supposed to have a buttery texture and flavour. However, ours turned out quite stringy. None of us really liked the texture, although I might have been the one to blame. I probably overcooked them because I was not entirely sure how long they were supposed to boil.

Even though the experiment was not a complete success, it was still a memorable encounter. The fruit, the conversation with the vendor, and the curiosity of trying something completely unfamiliar.

Our visits to the site never seem to escape a stop at a Lebanese bakery. On one of the rainy and cold days, the bright interior of a sweet shop caught our eyes and our hungry stomachs. Through the shop window, mouth-watering sweets were neatly displayed along the counter. The golden, crispy layers of pastry looked exactly like what we were craving.

In the end, each of us ordered a piece of freshly made knafeh and a cup of coffee. It was the perfect combination for such a cold day.

After sitting down, we started to notice that many of the Arabic sweet shops we had visited shared a similar interior decoration. Bright lighting, polished marble walls with golden details, a large metal milk can placed above the entrance, and a large television screen playing either a soap opera or a sports programme seemed to be recurring elements. Each shop had its own atmosphere, yet these details appeared again and again.

In this particular shop, the owner had chosen to watch what looked like a theatre play. Curious, I asked the cashier what was playing on the TV. He explained that it was a comedy theatre piece from a famous Lebanese comedian who was performing as a female character. Although I could not understand the language, it was entertaining to watch the reactions of the people in the shop.

I also complimented the pastries and asked whether they were homemade. He explained to me that the shop was a family business and that he and his father bake the pastries fresh every day.

Towards the end of our conversation, I learned that the family was actually Syrian rather than Lebanese. He explained that Syrian and Lebanese share similar cultures, particularly in terms of language, food, and everyday customs. That was also why he enjoyed watching Lebanese television programmes.

Construction Plan

Rue du Compas

Location

Rue du Compas

Area

around 2000 m²

Program

Housing: Apartments and Family houses

Produce shops

Storage

Kiosk

Common Kitchen

Tailor shop

Laundry Café

The site is composed of commerce and housing. Multiple groups of people coexist here: immigrants, families, children, workers, relatives passing through or staying temporarily. Each of them leaves different traces.

Housing reveals itself through small, repeated signs. The volume of the buildings, the way entrances are marked, the letterboxes, the doorbells. Belongings by the doorsteps or window sills: plant pots, shoes, bags, furniture, objects placed on balconies or behind windows. Window openings, floor levels, materials, and colors suggest different patterns of living.

What sits behind the windows hints intimacy without fully revealing it. Waste, storage, and everyday disorder speak as much as carefully arranged façades. There are gestures often associated with care, maintenance, and domestic life, quiet, continuous, and visible only if observed closely.

Commerce tells another set of stories. Shops and warehouses are defined by space, volume, and spatial organization. Their relationship to the street is more direct, more exposed. Entrances, gates, and doors become key elements: always open, half-open, rolling, temporary. Signs, ads, posters, and displays extend the interior outward, occupying sidewalks and public space.

Here, objects move constantly, vans arriving, carts passing, goods waiting, waste accumulating and disappearing. Floor levels

drop or deepen, revealing hidden spaces behind the visible storefront. These spaces are often louder, heavier, more hidden, and predominantly shaped by work.

The transitions between public and private, domestic and productive, care and labor, shows the dynamic and the storytelling of the block. The block starts to speak. It becomes a layered collection of everyday stories, not fixed or unified, but lived, overlapping, and constantly changing.

Existing situation



1:100



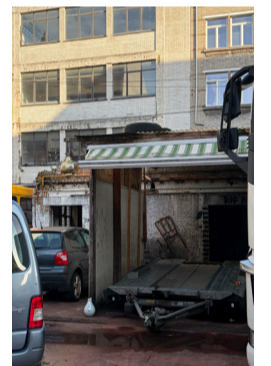
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Picture serie taken in the context of the site. From the entrance to the exit, only capturing the exterior space.



Picture serie taken in the context of the site. From the entrance to the exit, only capturing the exterior space.



Picture serie taken in the context of the site. From the entrance to the exit, only capturing the exterior space.



A Space of Narrative

Who are the neighbours?



Written notes of the Editor's visit on the 18th of Jan to Heyvaert and her interaction with the neighbours.

Most of the shop owners I spoke with spoke English well. I had the impression that many of them mastered several languages in order to attract customers. While not all of them appeared to be of African origin, the majority of the shops specialized in African food products, household goods, and beauty products. Across all the shops, people were remarkably friendly. Seeing me walk around with a camera and notebook, they often approached me directly and asked what I was looking for.

One shop owner asked whether I was completing an MBA because I mentioned that I was studying distribution and logistics. When I explained that I was actually studying architecture, he laughed. Another worker assumed I was a wholesaler interested in doing business with them. After I asked about their warehouse, he kindly gave me directions and explained that there was currently little stock arriving, but that new deliveries would come in within a few days. Unfortunately, I never managed to find the warehouse he was referring to, perhaps because I misunderstood the name.

Walking along the street, I noticed that many shops sold very similar products. Interestingly, the narrow and compact shops often felt busier and more crowded than the larger stores.

I also visited a packaging store that sold takeaway containers, boxes, and packaging materials in bulk quantities. The shop extended surprisingly deep into the building, although I could not see all the way to the back. I refrained from taking photographs because an employee was standing near the entrance, and I felt uncomfortable photographing the space without permission.

Initially, I assumed that the large corner building housed a single African grocery store. However, I later discovered that it actually contained three separate shops, each operated independently.

In the first shop, I bought some okra. I spent a few moments rehearsing my French before approaching the owner, as there were no other customers present. My intention was partly to purchase something in exchange for the opportunity to photograph the interior. The owner was extremely patient and kind, accommodating both my broken French and occasional English. One object caught my attention: several decorative water pots. At first, I thought they had been handmade and painted by the owner, but later I noticed identical versions in other shops and realized they were commercial products. The most interesting feature of this shop was a basement storage space accessed by a small lifting platform. Although I never saw it operating, I was fascinated by the mechanism.

The second shop was much narrower. Because of its limited width, it felt densely packed with products. While I was there, two workers repeatedly moved goods between the shop and the back room. Both wore earphones while working. I asked

about a package of tea leaves that had caught my attention, but unfortunately I forgot to ask its name. There were also dried shellfish and other products that I had not seen before. Unlike the first shop, where a radio played near the counter, the workers here listened to music through their earphones. The atmosphere felt noticeably different.

The third shop was the largest and most organized of the three. It felt spacious and carefully arranged. There were several employees but no customers. A woman was working there, the first female staff member I had encountered in the shops I visited. At the back of the shop, several men sat drinking tea and watching television. They seemed to occupy a semi-private area that may have connected to the storage spaces beyond.

This third shop stocked a large number of bottled liquids. From a distance, they resembled bottles of beer, although I never confirmed what they actually contained. Once again, I regretted not asking more questions. The woman spent most of the time talking on the phone while dusting shelves, while the cashier appeared to be watching videos on his phone before I entered.

I bought okra again and asked about the difference between the varieties sold in this shop and the previous one. The cashier explained that the smaller variety came from South America, while the larger variety originated from Africa. The African okra was more expensive: approximately €12 per kilogram compared to €9 per kilogram for the South American variety.

After leaving the shops, I photographed their storefronts. Outside, an elderly woman sat on a chair beside several shopping bags, talking with one of the employees. I could not tell whether she was a regular customer or simply a passerby resting for a moment. Above the shops were apartments. One first-floor window stood open, and I photographed several of the windows and entrances. On one doorbell panel I noticed several Portuguese-sounding surnames, which immediately caught my attention.

Across the street, I encountered an apparently abandoned property. The mailbox had been covered with a handwritten notice stating that nobody lived there. Next to it, were discarded cabinets, wooden boards, and other garbage, suggesting the building had been vacant for some time.

Nearby was a small tailoring shop that immediately attracted my attention. A bright sign indicated that it was open, yet the door remained locked and no one answered when I knocked. Through the window I could see a cozy interior with a refrigerator selling drinks and a television playing car racing. Behind the counter was another door, and I wondered whether it led to the tailor's home. Next to the shop stood a yellow garage door that I had never once seen open during my visits.

Further along the street stood a former meat-related business that was closed

Written notes of the Editor's visit on the 18th of Jan to Heyvaert and her interaction with the neighbours.

when I visited. Beside it, however, a large garage door stood open, revealing another space apparently linked to food distribution.

The monumental house on the site also surprised me. From the street I had assumed it contained three separate entrances, but in reality there was only one. The front façade is beautifully detailed with brickwork in different tones, while the rear elevation is much simpler: white plaster walls with small square openings. Behind this building sits Oriental Exotic, the food wholesaler that occupies much of the interior of the block.

The entire site felt dominated by vehicles. Parking areas occupied most of the open space, and deliveries appeared to happen daily. While exploring, I spoke with several employees of Oriental Exotic and repeatedly explained my research project in order to obtain permission to photograph the site.

One employee explained that the company mainly supplies African food products because there is strong demand for them. Depending on the size of the order, customers either collect goods themselves or receive deliveries through the company's own vans and trucks.

Eventually, after speaking with several staff members, I was invited into the office. Inside, one employee appeared responsible for logistics, surrounded by lists,

documents, and inventory records. Behind the office counter was a staircase leading to an upper floor. During my visit, another customer was loading boxes of produce into a vehicle.

The staff explained that Oriental Exotic operates as a cash-and-carry business. Unlike a conventional supermarket, a cash-and-carry wholesaler sells goods in bulk primarily to businesses, shop owners, restaurants, and market traders. Customers travel to the warehouse themselves, purchase products in large quantities, pay immediately ("cash"), and transport the goods away themselves ("carry"). The staff also mentioned that this location was only one part of the operation and that the company owns two other warehouses elsewhere.

What surprised me most was the size of the storage area. Compared to the large volume of products moving in and out, the warehouse itself appeared relatively compact, consisting mainly of shelves and a refrigerated storage room.

Before leaving, I explored the secondary entrance to the office, located along a narrow side passage behind the apartment building. The entrance felt surprisingly hidden and almost secretive. Nearby, two men stood inside a dark building watching the street, which made the space feel guarded and somewhat intimidating.

Voice transcript of the Editor on the 17th of Feb to Heyvaert and her interaction with the neighbours.

We arrived late at Brussels Midi due to a train delay. Since it was a cold morning, we stopped at a small café near the station for a takeaway coffee. Inside, I noticed two men wearing paint-stained construction pants speaking Portuguese. Curious, I started a conversation with them. They were construction workers working nearby and were surprised that I spoke Portuguese. After explaining that I had grown up partly in Lisbon and that I was studying the Heyvaert neighborhood as an architecture student, I asked how they felt about the area.

What struck me was that they compared Heyvaert to Bairro Alto in Lisbon. They described both places as *porreiro*, a Portuguese word for "cool". I think they didn't compare them based on architecture but on atmosphere: diversity, liveliness, restaurants, and the constant presence of people. Bairro Alto is known for its nightlife and social activity, while Heyvaert is busy in a different way, yet both seem to share a similar urban energy. It was interesting to hear Heyvaert described through the lens of another city.

On my way to the site, I passed by the tailor shop because I had brought a pair of trousers that I wanted to have altered. This was partly practical, but also an opportunity to start a conversation and learn more about the shop and the owner. However, when I arrived in the morning, the shutters were firmly closed. This surprised me because the sign on the door stated that the shop was open from Tuesday to Saturday, from 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. As far as I knew, it should have been open. Disappointed, I decided to continue to my site instead.

This time, I paid particular attention to the abandoned shed at the front of the plot. Walking inside, I found a surprisingly complex space. It was divided into numerous small rooms and contained several toilets and sinks. A few bicycles and scooters had been left behind. The interior was quite dark, with a small change in level marked by two steps leading down into part of the structure. Although the building appeared

to be deteriorating, its construction was still clearly visible: brick walls supported a roof structure of timber beams and smaller wooden battens. Above, corrugated roofing covered part of the building. Beneath this roof, additional partitions and lowered ceilings had been inserted, creating even more rooms. It was difficult to determine whether these spaces had once been rented out separately or whether they had been used as part of the business. The overall configuration felt unusual and somewhat improvised.

As we were leaving, I encountered several employees from Oriental Exotic. I immediately recognized some of them from my visit three weeks earlier, and, to my surprise, they recognized me as well. When I asked whether they remembered me, they laughed and said yes. Once again, they were very welcoming and allowed me to walk around the site.

I asked them about the shed and whether it belonged to the company. They explained that it had indeed been part of the business and had previously been used for storage. However, a fire had occurred there some years ago, and since then the building had been abandoned. It is no longer in use.

One of the workers asked whether I had sent an email to the owner, as I had mentioned during my previous visit that I hoped to ask some questions. I explained that the holiday period had delayed me, but that I had been hoping to meet the owner in person that day since it was a weekday. He suggested that I simply go to the office and ask whether the owner was present.

So I went inside. The office staff also remembered me from my earlier visit. I asked, mostly out of curiosity and a bit of luck, whether the owner happened to be there. Unfortunately, they told me that he had left earlier that morning for the Netherlands to purchase equipment for a new sport he had taken up. It was an amusing detail, and it seemed I had missed him by only a short amount of time.

The staff encouraged me to send an email and assured me that they would

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forward it directly to him. While standing in the office, I also noticed something I had overlooked during my previous visit. I had already seen the staircase, but this time I looked more carefully and spotted balustrades above. It revealed the presence of a mezzanine level overlooking the office space, adding another layer to my understanding of the building's internal organization.

One recurring theme throughout the day was how different the neighborhood feels once conversations begin. From the street, Heyvaert can appear intimidating. Many men stand outside garages and workshops, and the industrial environment can seem closed off. Yet whenever I approached people and explained my interest, they were welcoming and willing to share information. This happened again while visiting a nearby garage with Kei. A man standing outside kindly let us enter and walk through the building after hearing that we were architecture students interested in its structure. The contrast between first impressions and actual encounters continues to fascinate me.

In the afternoon, I visited the city archives. Although I could not find plans for the tailor's building, I consulted drawings from 1909 and 1959 for neighboring buildings. One interesting discovery was that a large corner building once had gardens and water cisterns at the rear, elements that have completely disappeared today. The archival drawings revealed how much and how little has changed over time: façades have been

modified, but many spatial structures remain surprisingly intact.

One of the highlights of the day was finally meeting the tailor whose shop I had been trying to visit.

Later in the afternoon, I returned to the tailor shop. The tailor was incredibly kind. We did not share a common language, he spoke French and Arabic, while I spoke neither, so our entire conversation relied on Google Translate, gestures, and patience. Despite the language barrier, communication somehow worked.

He has owned the shop for around ten years and seems to be a well-known figure among his customers. While I was there, two women passed by outside and greeted him warmly. They exchanged compliments and friendly remarks, suggesting a familiarity built up over many years. Another customer came in carrying some clothes for alteration. He barely needed to explain what he wanted; he simply handed them over and told the tailor to adjust them as usual. It was clear that he was a regular.

Curious, I asked this customer whether he lived in the neighborhood. He told me that he neither lived nor worked nearby and had come specifically because of the tailor's service. Interestingly, the tailor himself does not live in Heyvaert either. Every day he cycles to the shop, arriving in the morning and staying until the evening. His bicycle was parked outside when I arrived.

The shop itself was small but full

Voice transcript of the Editor on the 17th of Feb to Heyvaert and her interaction with the neighbours.

of character. A narrow counter separated customers from the tailor's workstation. Beside it stood a drinks fridge where customers could buy refreshments. Shoes, garments, and repaired clothing were stacked around the room, some waiting to be collected and others seemingly offered for sale. There was also a fitting room with a very tall mirror that looked as though it had been repurposed from somewhere else. Behind the workstation, a small door led to a storage area filled with fabrics and, further back, a toilet.

The whole place felt remarkably cozy and personal. I mentioned to him that most tailors or seamstresses I had encountered before had been women, so I found it interesting to meet a man who had dedicated a decade of his life to this profession. There was something very grounded and heartwarming about the way he had cared for this small shop for so many years. Even without a shared language, it was obvious that he knew his customers well and that they trusted him.

At one point I asked him about the mysterious yellow garage door next to the shop, which I had never seen open. I wanted to know whether it was connected to food distribution, storage, or perhaps some other activity. Somewhere in the translation process, however, there was a misunderstanding. Before I knew it, another customer had joined the conversation and was leading me out of the tailor shop toward a nearby car repair garage, convinced that this was what I wanted to see.

Although it was not exactly what I had been asking about, the detour proved useful. Outside, I asked again about the yellow door. The customer explained that the garage behind it was no longer active and that the space was now rented out for vehicle parking. I cannot fully verify this information, but for now I am treating it as a possible hypothesis: that behind the closed yellow door is a privately rented parking space used by local residents or merchants.

Of course, the practical reason for visiting the tailor was to alter a pair of trousers. Through a combination of measurements, gestures, and Google Translate, we discussed shortening the legs, reducing the waist size, and adjusting the cut to fit me better. In the end, I paid €20 and left the trousers with him. The tailor, whose name I believe was Savon, carefully measured my waist and leg length and assured me the trousers would be ready by Wednesday.

After leaving the shop, I spent some time observing the street corner nearby. A small traffic incident unfolded in front of me. One vehicle was parked awkwardly while waiting for someone to return from a shop, while a larger delivery truck attempted to pass through the narrow street. The result was a temporary standstill. Drivers beeped their horns, people shouted instructions, and several individuals stepped in to help direct traffic. The person who had parked the car eventually returned, only to realise they had forgotten something and run back into the shop again, prolonging the situation. Meanwhile, another worker stood beside a cargo vehicle unloading goods and informally directed the flow of vehicles around him. It was a small but vivid example of how the street organizes itself through negotiation and improvisation.

I then visited the grocery store again. Compared to my previous visit on a Sunday morning, the atmosphere was completely different. The shop was busy and lively, filled with customers carrying baskets loaded with rice, vegetables, and other groceries. Kei suggested that this

was because it was around 3 or 4 p.m., just before people began preparing their dinners.

I also noticed more staff working there than before. During my previous visit, only one person was behind the counter. This time there were at least two workers, as well as a woman whom I had not seen before. She appeared to be accompanied by a young child. Although I did not conduct any interviews, it was interesting simply to observe the rhythm of the shop and its role in the neighborhood. There was no obvious queueing system. Customers seemed to rely on eye contact and familiarity with the shopkeepers to know when it was their turn to pay.

Reflecting on the day, I realized that my attention is gradually shifting. Initially, I was interested in the logistics of food distribution and the relationship between warehouses, housing, and commerce. Yet I find myself increasingly drawn to the storefronts, workshops, and everyday interactions that animate the street. The architecture remains important, but the stories of the people occupying these spaces are becoming equally compelling.

One final image stayed with me as we walked back through the neighborhood. Across from my site, several garage doors stood open. Outside one of them stood a man in a white butcher's coat, smoking a cigarette. Behind him, workers were unloading fresh cuts of meat from a refrigerated truck. His white apron was stained from work, and the contrast between the bright clothing, the industrial setting, the truck full of meat, and the casual act of smoking created a striking scene. I wanted to photograph it but decided not to. Instead, it remains as a vivid mental image, one of those ordinary moments that reveals something about the atmosphere and character of the neighborhood.

Loose Collection

Everyday Urbanism

Walking around Heyvaert, you notice many informal gestures and encounters between people. Regardless of whether the outsiders perceive them as positive or negative, collectively, it creates an atmosphere where people call it home. It created a sense of belonging and attachment. It is a place that feels lived in, negotiated and constantly produced through everyday practices.

Heyvaert feels like a collection of fragments, a loose collection of pieces, coming from different layers of objects, uses, agents and time. Things overlap and coexist in a same environment. The atmosphere resembles a game of Tetris: each element has its own shape, character, and logic, yet together they form a dynamic and functioning whole. The neighborhood is not asking for uniformity or order; instead, it creates a living structure through diversity, adaptation, and continuous negotiation.

City is not just about spatial planning, but it is also a social product, and it maps a social geography. City is full of ambiguity. It consists of a constant dialogue between individuals, communities and the rest of the city. It is a site of multiple lenses coming together to a single location.

Because of this constant exchange fragmentation should not be viewed as a weakness. The neighborhood is not a finished product, and that is precisely what makes it interesting. Its identity comes from its incompleteness and from the many different responses to specific needs, moments, and circumstances. Rather than one coherent image, Heyvaert is made up of many realities existing side by side.

In Heyvaert, the boundaries between public and private is sometimes blurred. It is a fluid relationship. Streets, sidewalks, storefronts, and thresholds become spaces of negotiation where domestic, commercial, and social activities overlap. Heyvaert like the example of Los Angeles in *Everyday Urbanism* it is a collection of visible and invisible boundaries.

Street vendors are a clear example of this process. Informal vendors selling African pears, shoes, food, household goods, or recycled products temporarily reshape the sidewalk through their presence and material arrangements. Through rugs, tables, chairs, colors, textures, and displays, they introduce domestic qualities into the urban landscape, transforming fragments of public space into temporary urban living rooms. These interventions are not merely economic activities but spatial practices that redefine how public space is experienced and occupied.

At the same time, vendors and their goods bring broader social narratives. They reveal patterns of migration, cultural identity and economic necessity. How the objects are being sold, displayed and who are selling them can reflect neighborhood's story. Informal commerce becomes both a social and spatial practice that contributes to the production of urban life.

Vernacular character emerges through these performances and everyday practices. Memory is not only preserved through monuments, plaques, or restored buildings but also through repeated actions and embodied routines. The body itself becomes an archive, carrying memories through movement, occupation, and use. Urban memory has therefore continuously materialized through everyday interactions with space rather than solely through formal acts of preservation.

Like a Tetris board that is never complete, Heyvaert remains open, unfinished, and alive.

NOTICE BOARD

LOOKING FOR A JOB? ASK AT THE KIOSK!

A new kiosk has been opened on the Rue du Compas 48. If you need any help with orienting within the neighbourhood come for a coffee, Karina, the kiosk owner will help you find your way. However, if you just need a quick coffee or a quick read, getting some newspaper or magazine come shop at the kiosk. We accomodate everyone and all ages.

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SHOPS AVAILABLE FOR RENT AND BUY

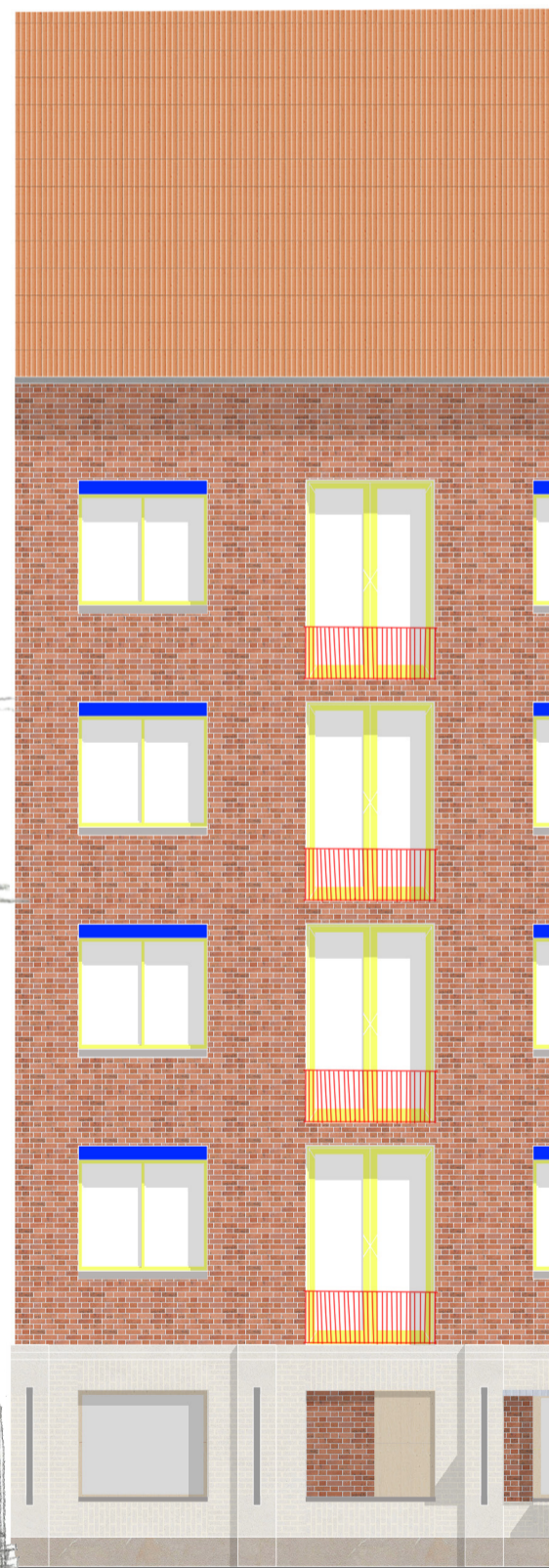
The new construction plan on Rue du Compas offers 4 commercial spaces available for rent. The prices vary depending on the shop. Feel free to come by the kiosk to ask for more information or arrange a visit. With the opening of these new shops, additional outdoor market space will also become available. If you are only interested in renting a market stall, you are also welcome to apply.

NOTICE BOARD

POSSIBLE FUTURE TOP UP OVER ORIENTAL EXOTIC

Besides the new construction plan ongoing over the Rue du Compas, a possible transformation is suggested in the masterplan for a top up volume over the storage of Oriental Exotic. The masterplan suggests a possible green roof terrace over the storage and another 3 story housing. The main reason for this intervention is to create a stronger connection with the neighbouring housing development.

1:100 streetfront



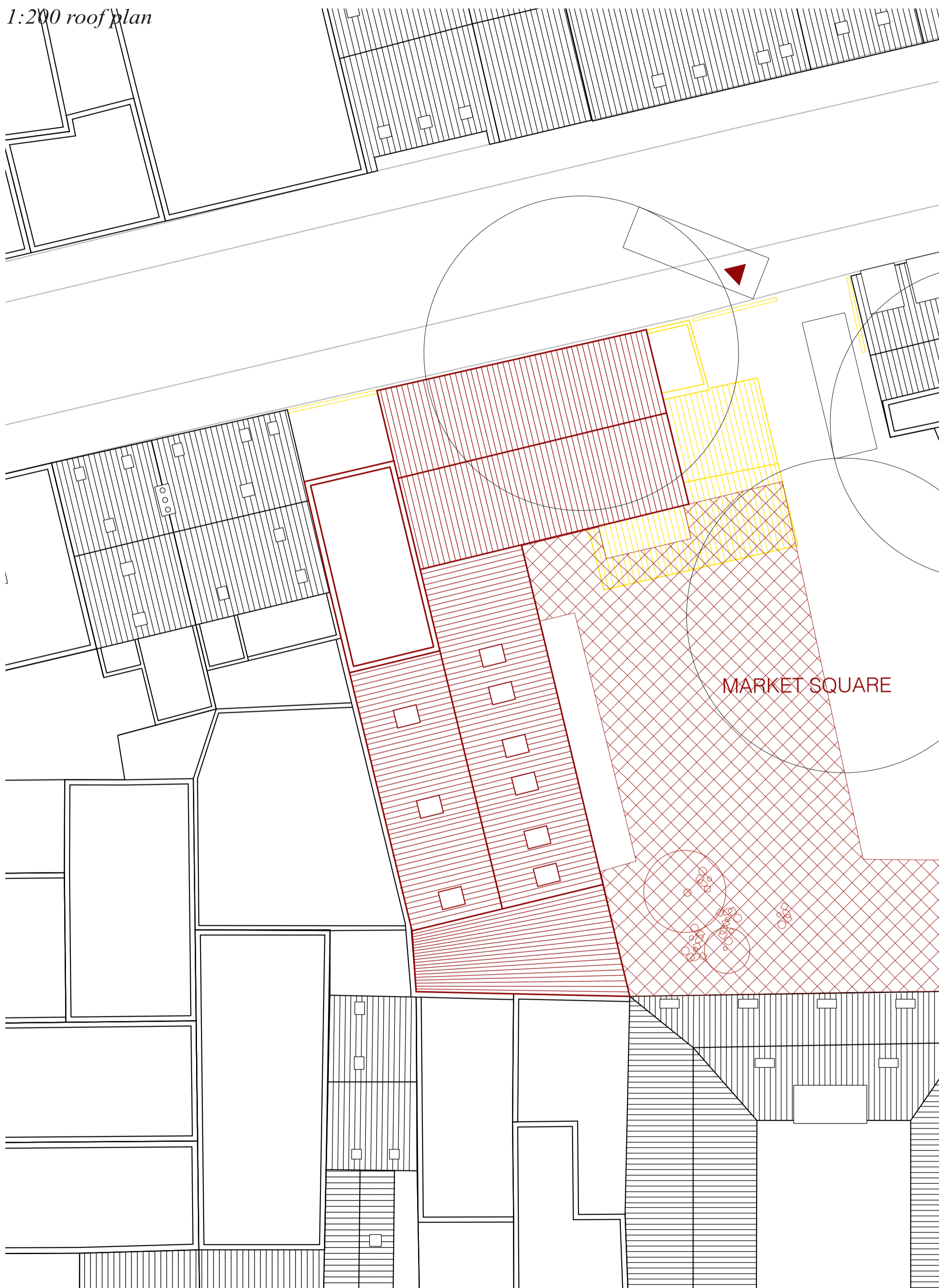


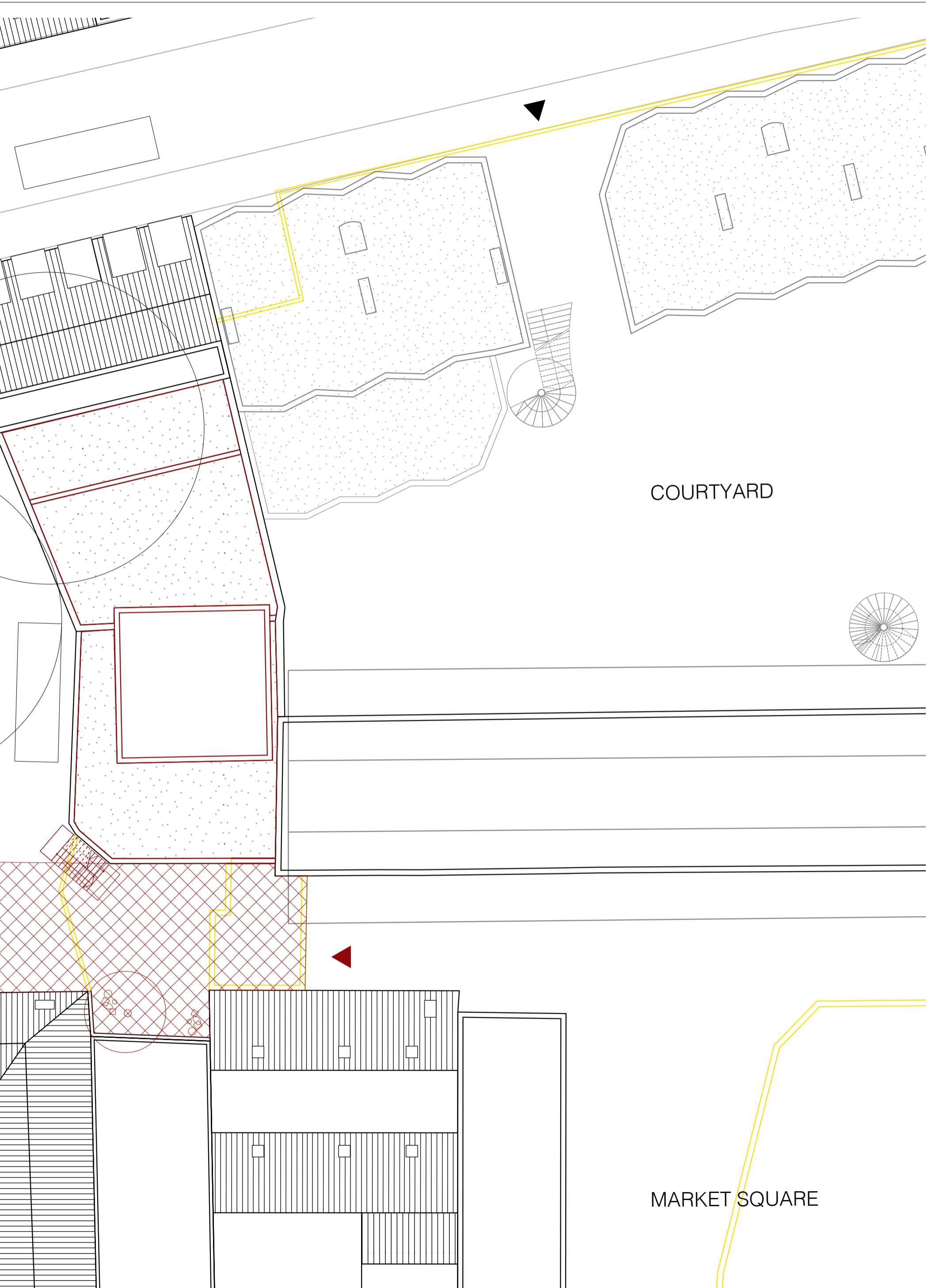


1070 Anderlecht Rue Heyvaert 150



1:200 roof plan

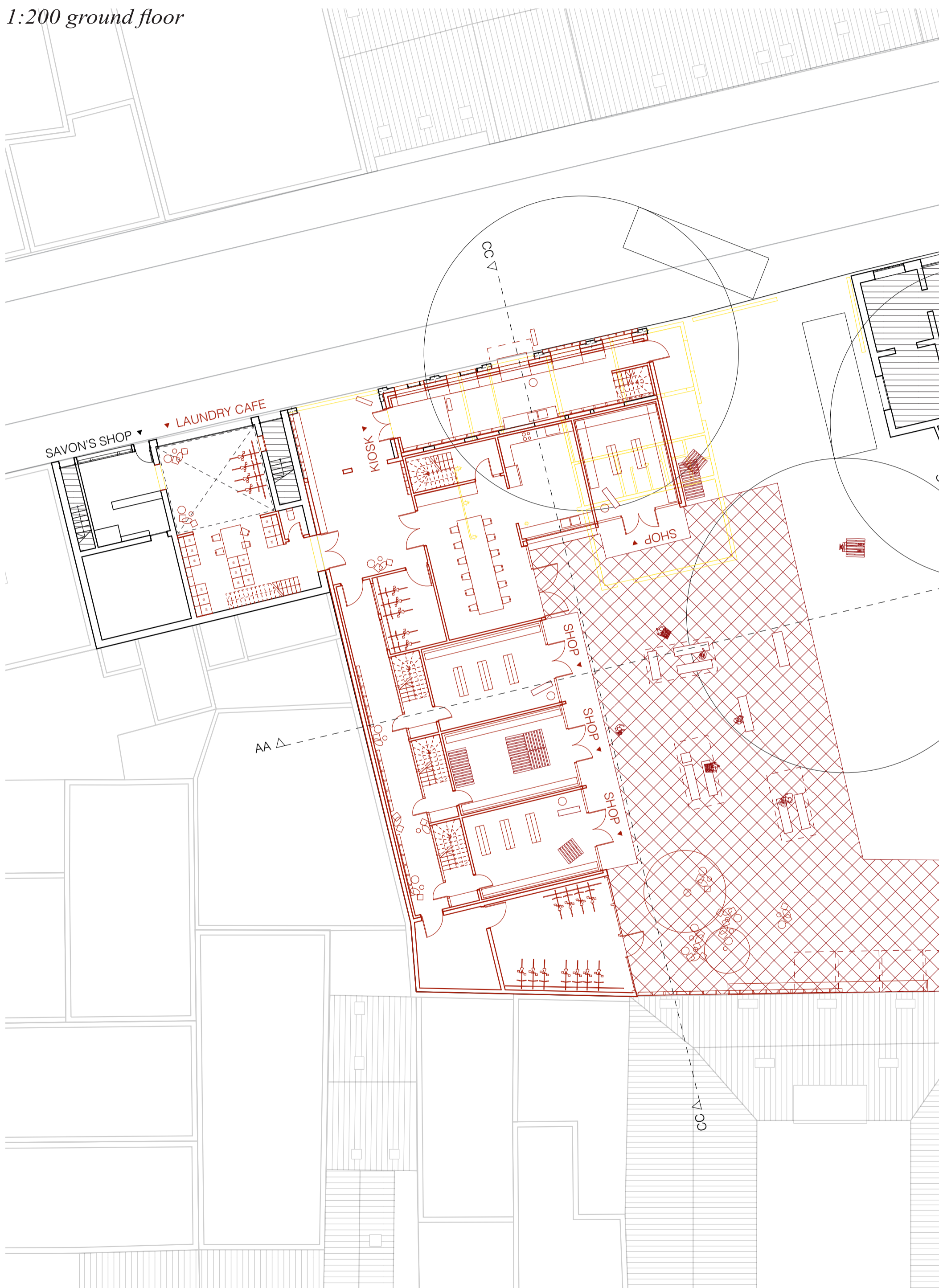




COURTYARD

MARKET SQUARE

1:200 ground floor





1:100 first floor



Arrival of Karina who just opened the new Kiosk on the 48 Rue du Compas. She welcomes the new customers to her new shop, and also informed us about the market square in the back of her shop. She lives just above the Kiosk, she has her own 1 bedroom apartment which overlooks the street but also the market square.

1:100 second floor



Savon opened a new laundry café right next to his tailor shop. Finally, the yellow garage will be opened and repurposed. The spacious interior will serve not only as a laundromat but also as a communal living space, where Savon can host workshops on how to repair and mend clothes.

1:100 third floor



At the rear of the building, there are 3 maisonettes. Each unit features a shop on the ground floor, a living space on the first floor, two bedrooms spread across the second and third floors, and an attic level. Together, these form three independent residential volumes, each suitable for a separate family. At the front of the building, there are 7 additional apartments. These are one-bedroom units with spacious living areas, featuring a loggia facing the street and balconies overlooking the market square. The apartments are designed to accommodate a wide range of residents, including couples, families, and individuals.

1:100 fourth floor



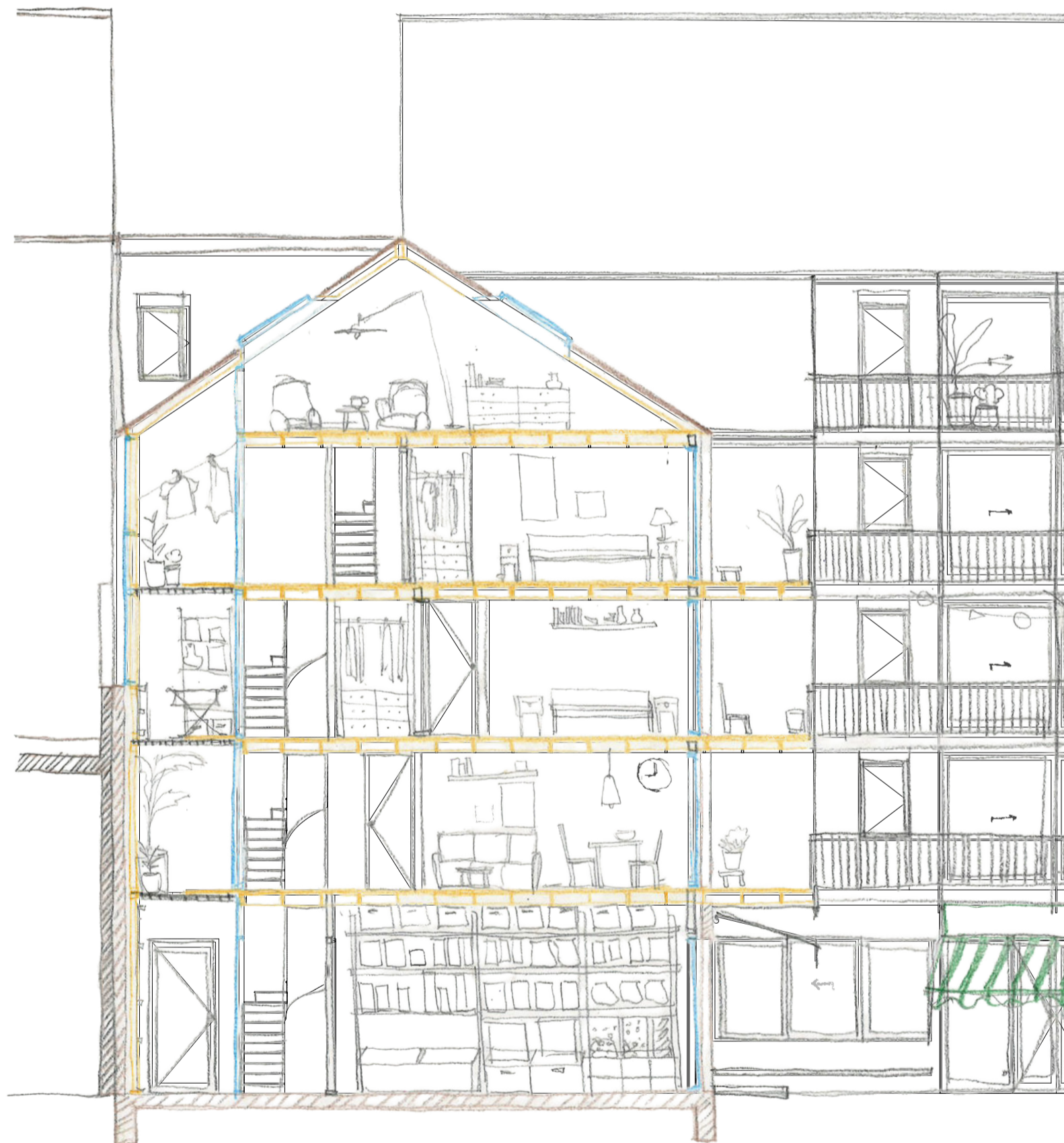
Talented chefs and food enthusiasts can find their stage on the ground floor of the building. The community kitchen functions as a shared living room both for its residents but also for the visitors during anytime of the day, especially during the market days.



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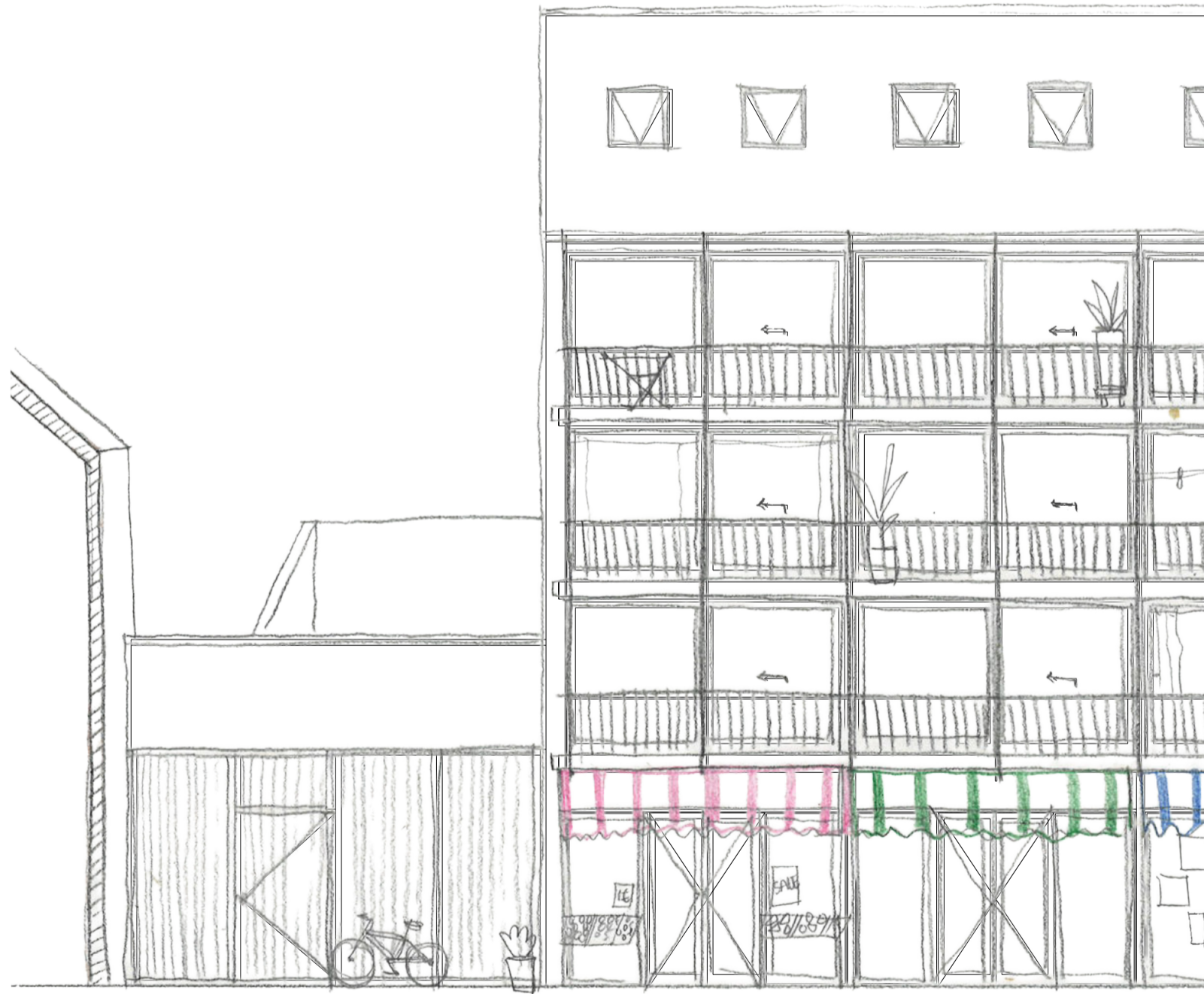


1:100 AA





1:100 CC





ORIENTAL EXOTIC
SRL

WHOLESALE AND RETAILER

SPECIALIST AFRICAN AND ASIAN FOODS & FROZEN

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Brussels-Belgium

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Ch de mons 620
1070 Anderlecht
Brussels-Belgium

Warehouse #2
Langstraat 21
1730 Asse
Brussels-Belgium

Un étalage sur l'espace public ?

Uw waren uitstallen in de openbare ruimte ?

↓

Demandez votre autorisation au DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE
horeca@anderlecht.brussels
02/436.65.38/45/46

↓

Vraag uw toelating bij de ECONOMISCHE ONTWIKKELING
horeca@anderlecht.brussels
02/436.65.38/45/46

Anderlecht

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Le placement d'un étalage sur l'espace public lié à un établissement est soumis à l'obtention préalable d'une autorisation du Collège des Bourgmestre et Échevins.

Een voorafgaande toelating van het college van burgemeester en schepenen is nodig vooraleer uw waren te mogen uitstallen in de openbare ruimte aan uw handelszaak.

À respecter une fois l'autorisation obtenue :

Na te leven zodra de toelating is verkregen:

- Seuls les étalages de fruits et légumes, fleurs et plantes naturelles sont admis
- Les étalages placés sur l'espace public sont en structures légères et démontables
- Les abords de votre commerce doivent rester propres
- Toute accumulation de déchets est interdite sur le trottoir en dehors des jours de ramassage des ordures ménagères
- N'empiétez pas sur les plantations existantes
- Rangez l'étalage, ainsi que le mobilier, en dehors des heures d'ouverture de l'établissement
- Les revêtements au sol, notamment les planchers et tapis, sont interdits
- Votre étalage ne peut pas dépasser chez votre voisin
- Un passage libre d'obstacles de 2 m doit être réservé aux piétons
- Aucun objet ne pourra masquer, même partiellement, les portes et fenêtres des façades jouxtant la voie publique
- Le pourtour d'un étalage est rendu physiquement détectable par la canne des personnes malvoyantes
- L'étalage ne peut être fixé à la façade, ni au sol, à moins qu'un permis d'urbanisme n'ait été obtenu à cet effet
- Alleen uitstalkramen met groenten en fruit, natuurlijke bloemen en planten zijn toegestaan
- Uitstalkramen in de openbare ruimte moeten van een lichte en demonteerbare constructie zijn
- De omgeving van uw handel moet proper worden gehouden.
- Het is verboden vuilnis op te hopen op de stoep behalve op de dagen dat het huisvuil wordt opgehaald
- Laat bestaande aanplantingen intact
- Berg het uitstalkraam en het meubilair op buiten de openingsuren van de zaak
- Vloerbedekkingen, met name plankenvloeren en tapijten, zijn verboden
- Uw uitstalkraam mag niet bij de burens uitsteken
- Een obstakelvrije doorgang van 2 m moet worden voorbehouden voor voetgangers
- Geen enkel voorwerp mag, zelfs niet gedeeltelijk, de deuren en ramen van gevels langs de openbare weg verbergen.
- Slechtziende personen moeten de randen van het uitstalkraam met hun stok kunnen detecteren
- Het uitstalkraam mag niet aan de gevel of op de grond worden bevestigd, tenzij daarvoor een stedenbouwkundige vergunning is verkregen

www.anderlecht.be

A l'initiative d'Elke Roex, Echevine du Développement économique. Avec le soutien de Fabrice Cumps, Bourgmestre, et des membres du Collège Échevinal d'Anderlecht.

Op initiatief van Elke Roex, schepen van Economische Ontwikkeling. Met de steun van Fabrice Cumps, burgemeester, en het schepencollege van Anderlecht.

E.R./V.U. MARCEL VERMEULEN - PLACE DU CONSEIL 1 RAADSPLEIN 1070 ANDERLECHT

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