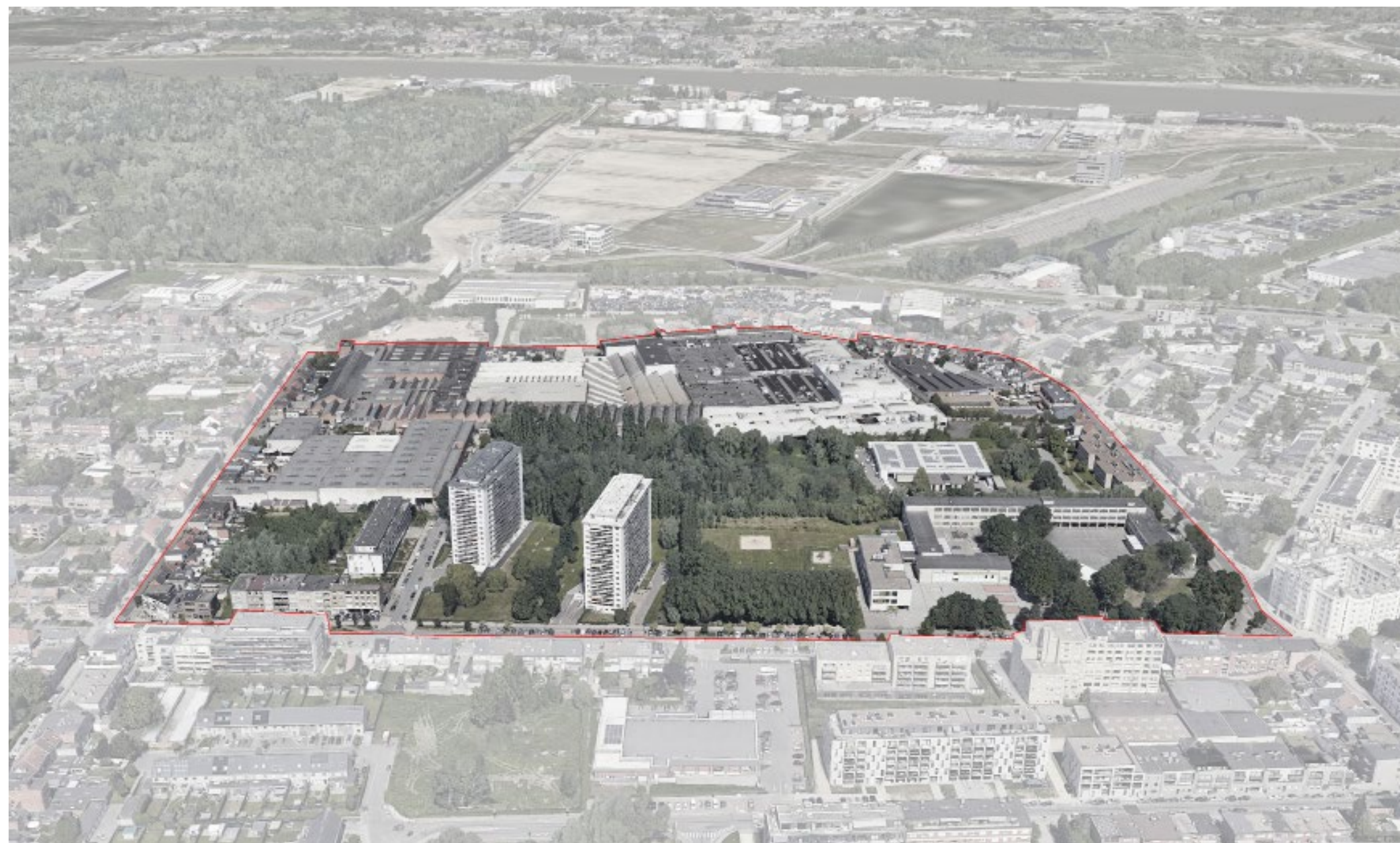
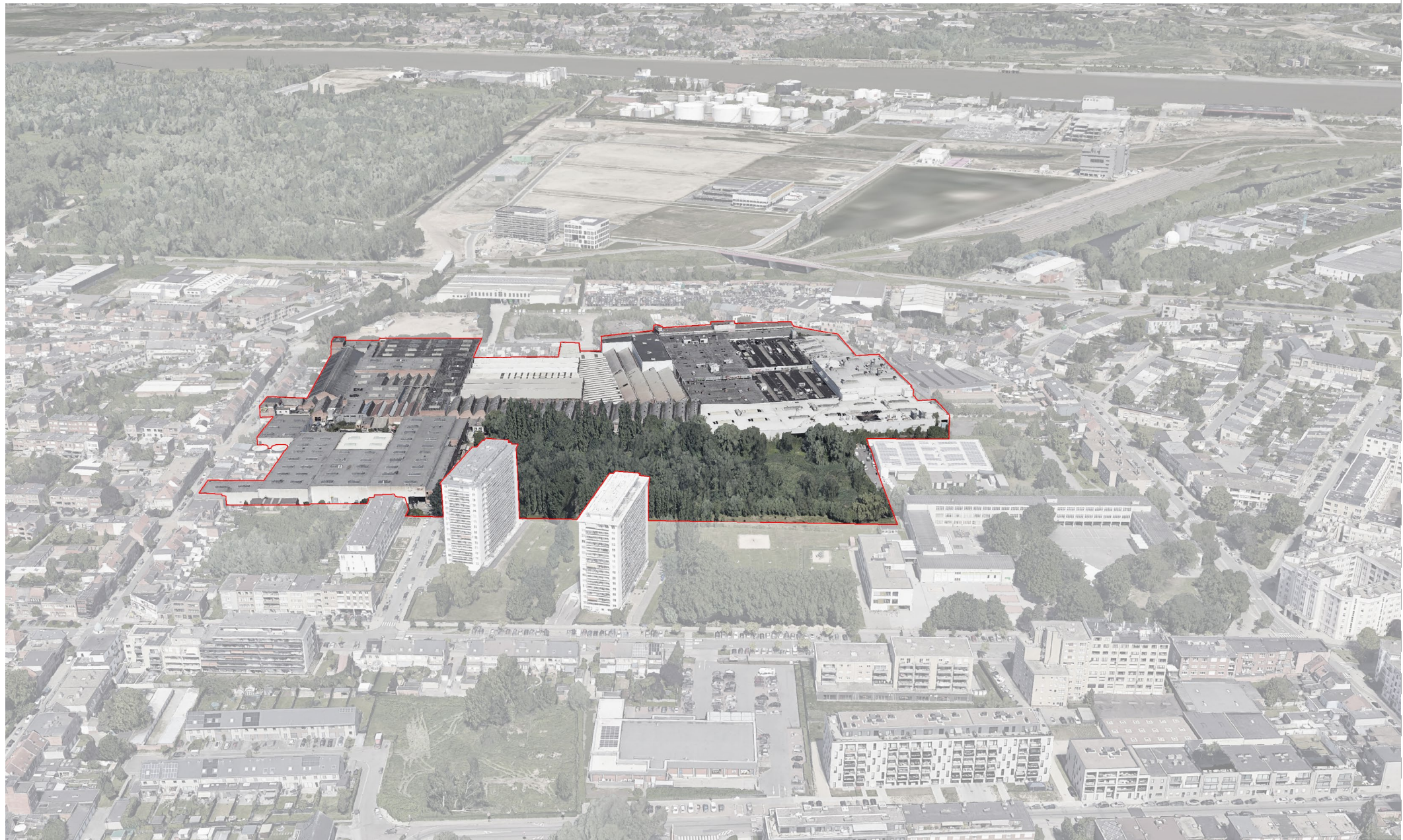


Everyday Public Spaces: Turning Strangers into Neighbours

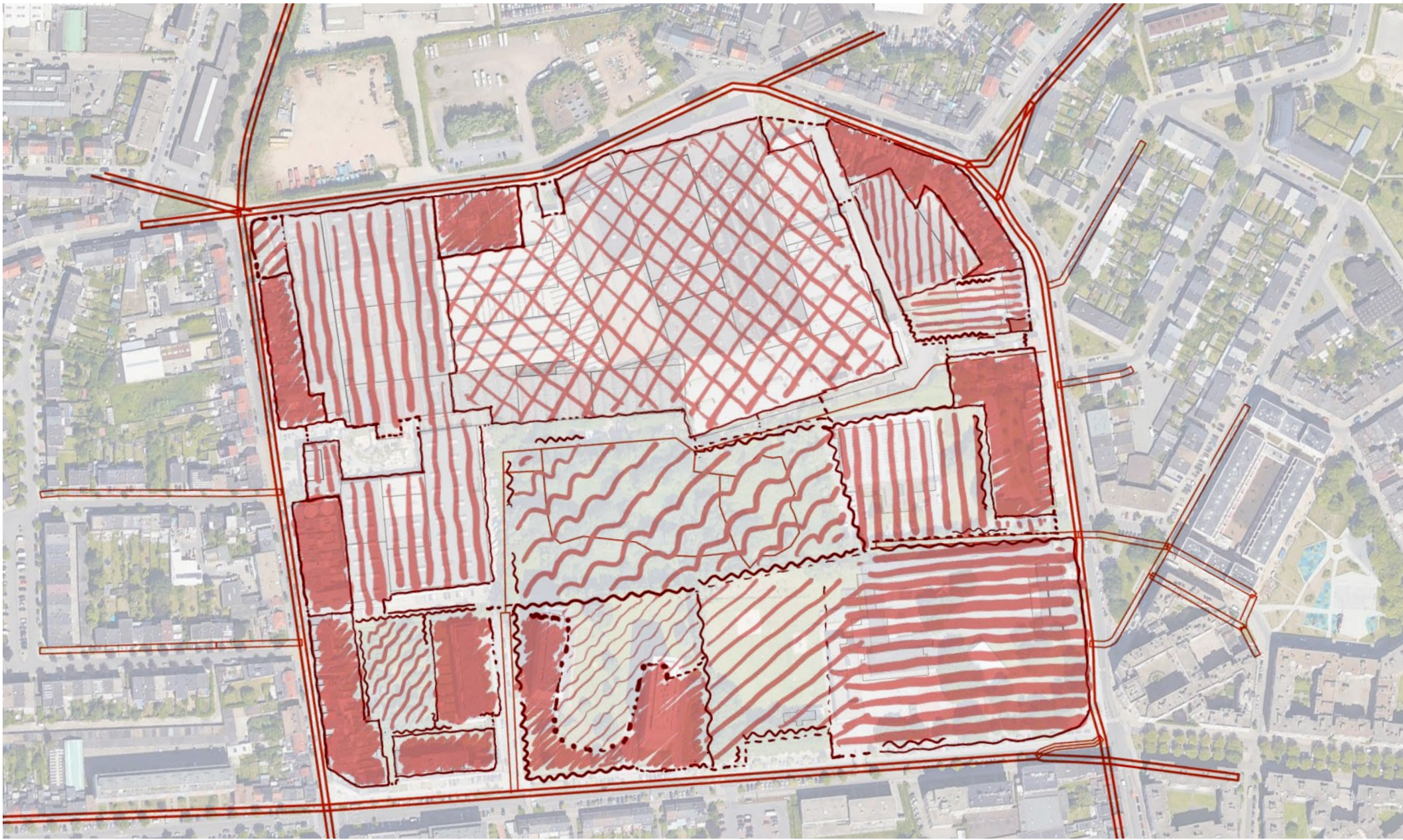
Urban Architecture Graduation Studio

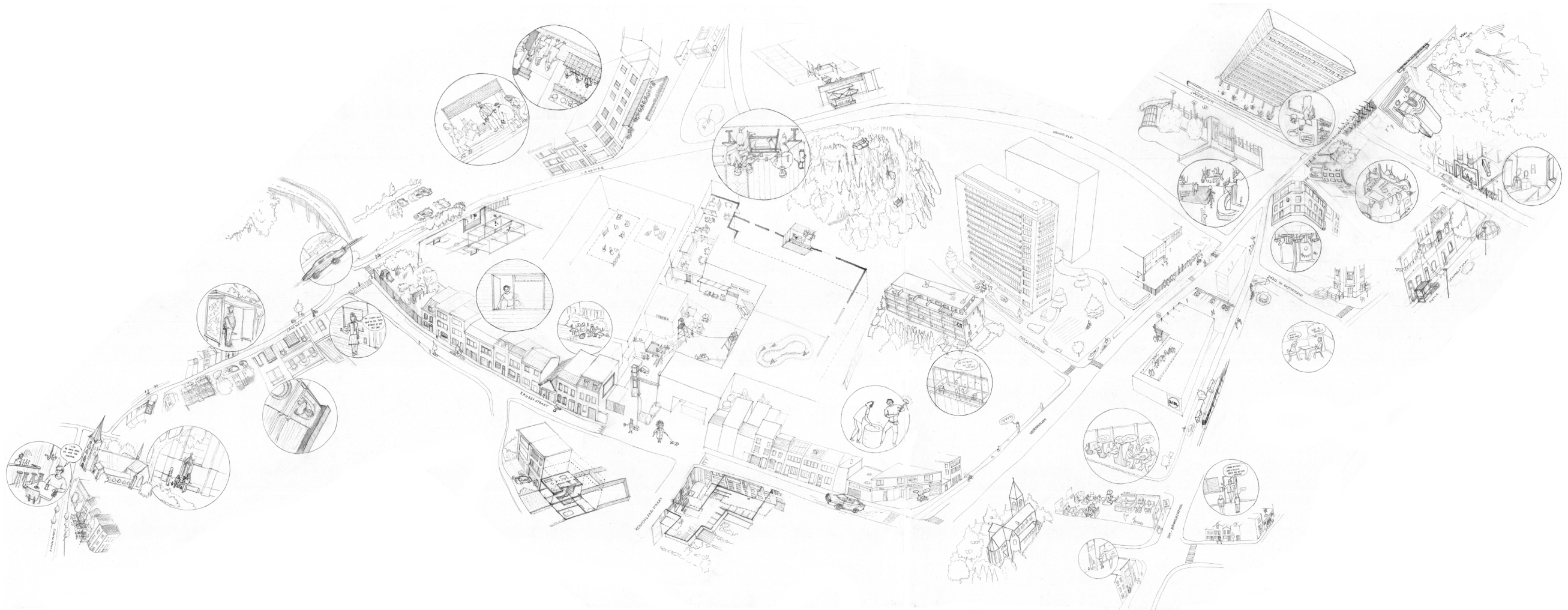


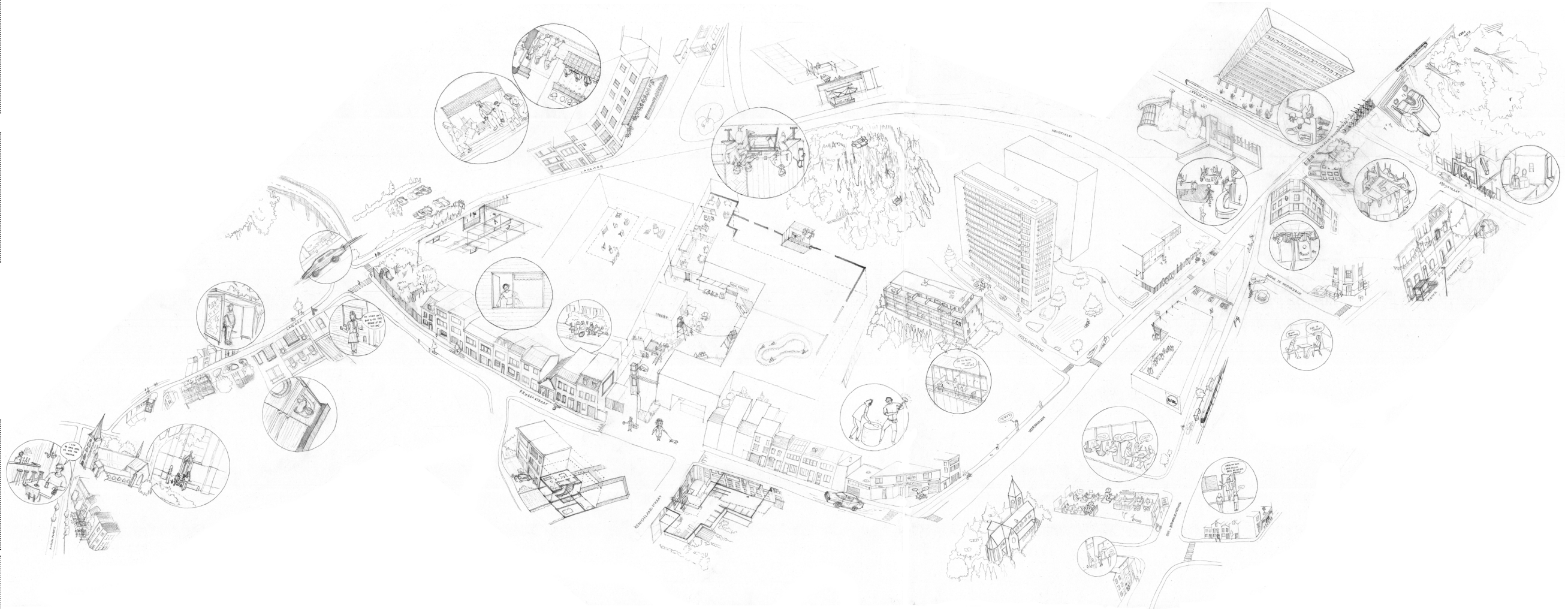
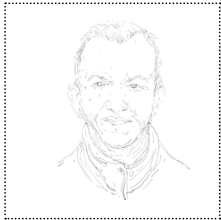
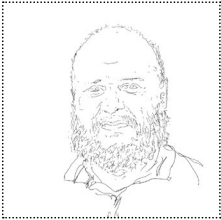
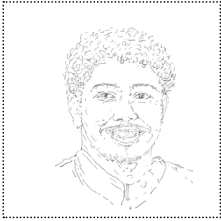
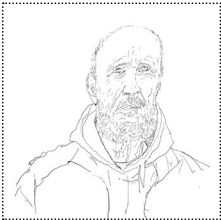


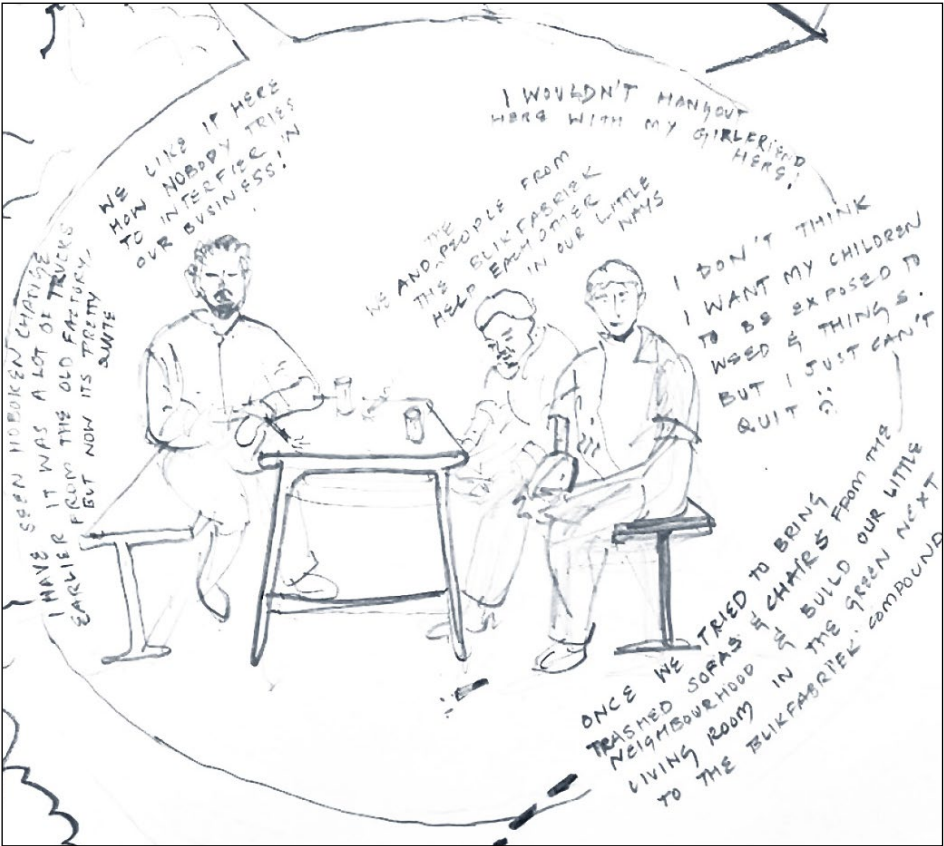


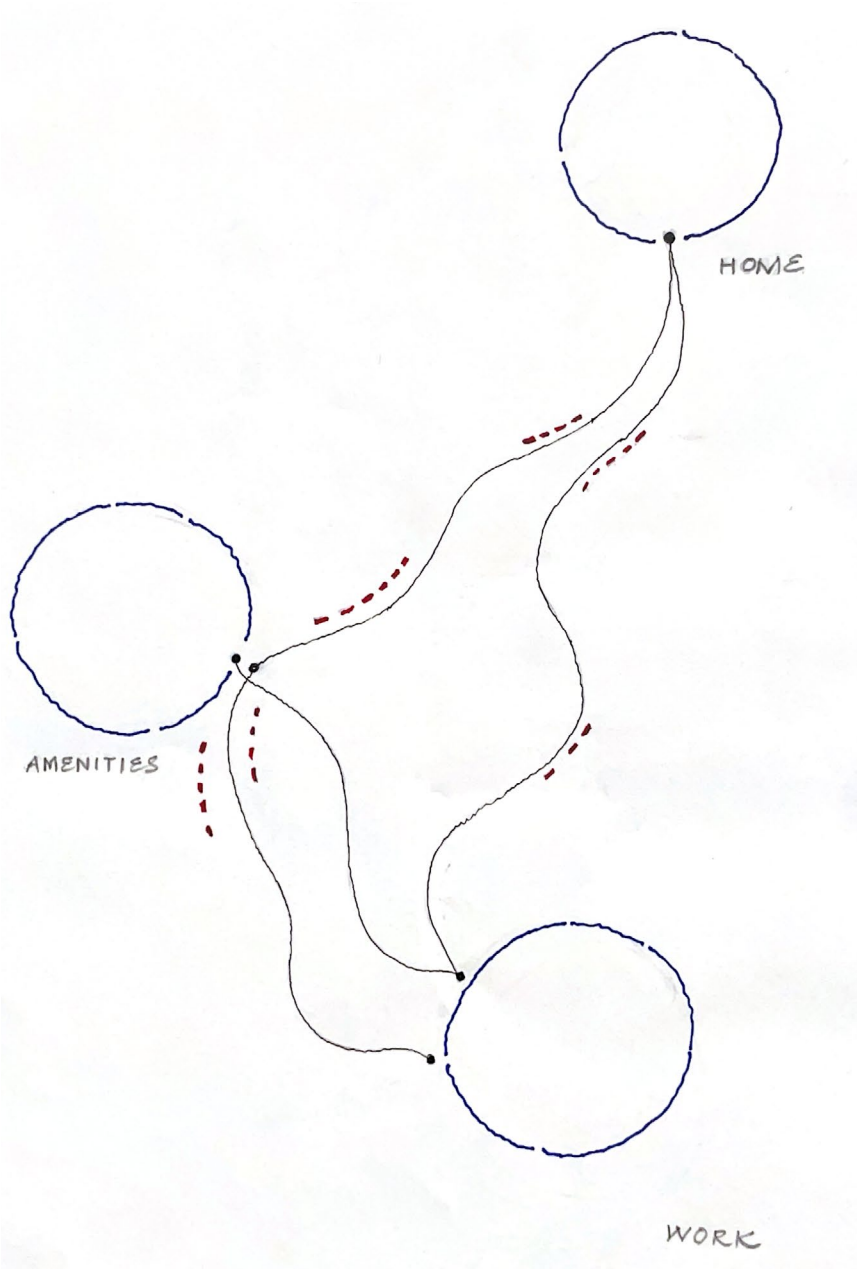
Existing boundaries

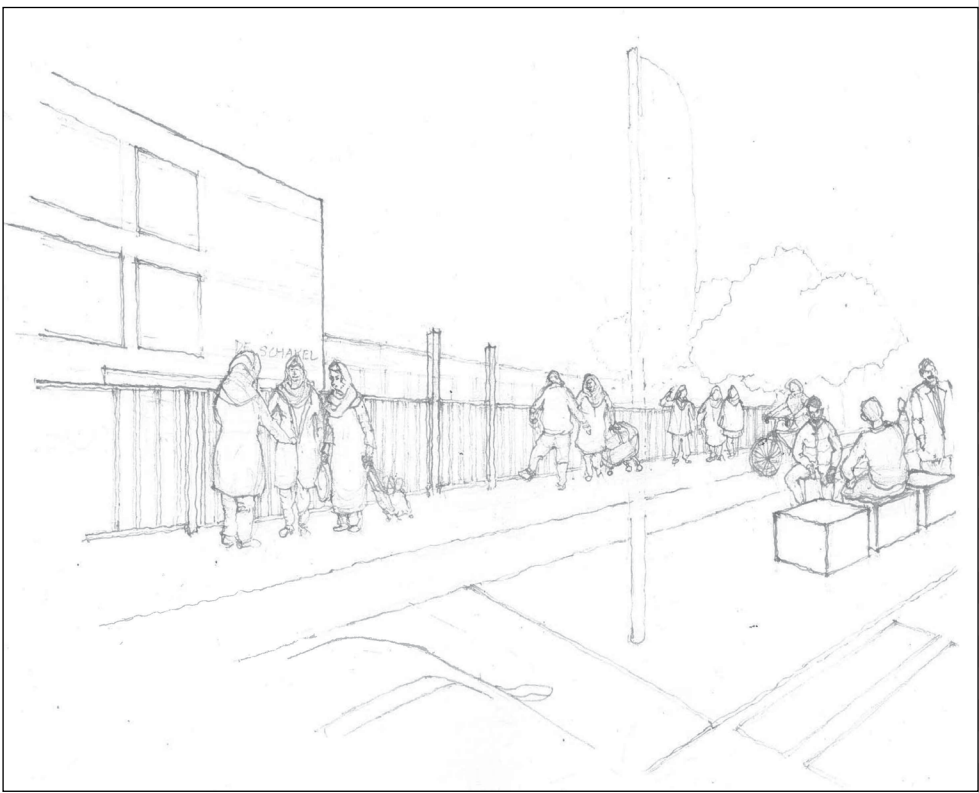
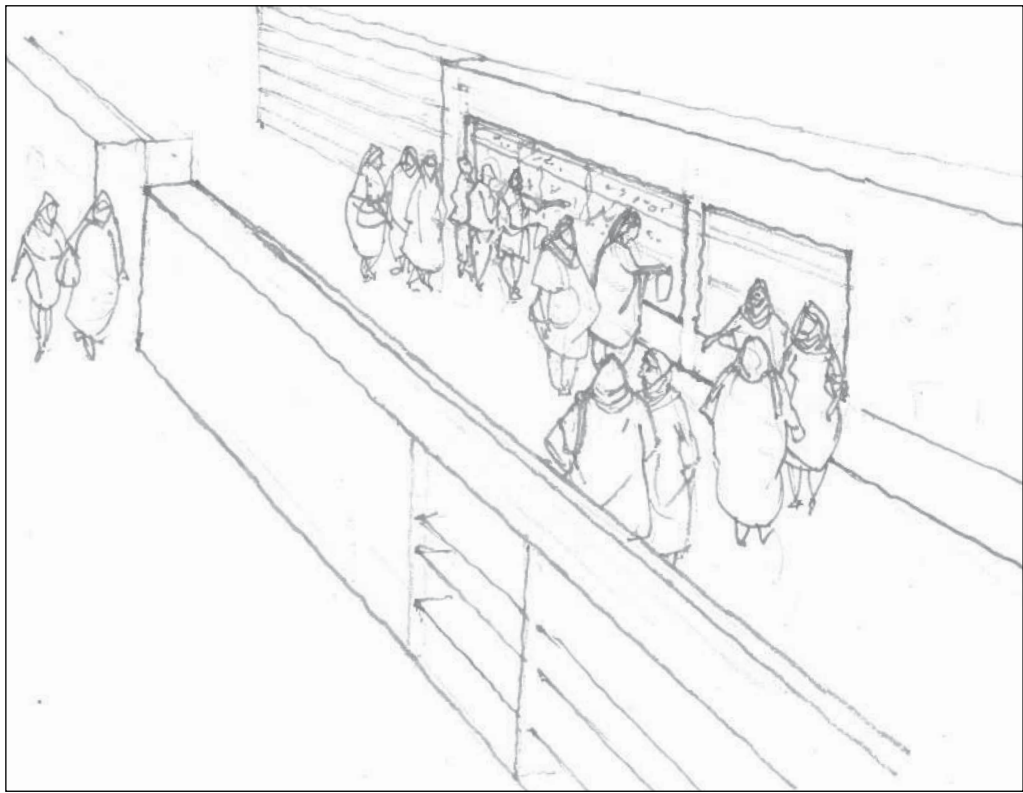






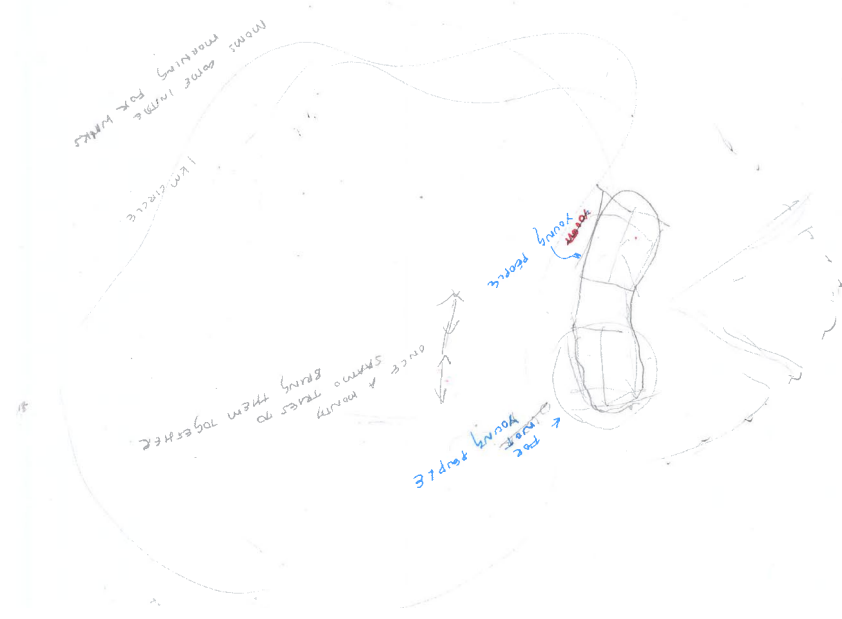
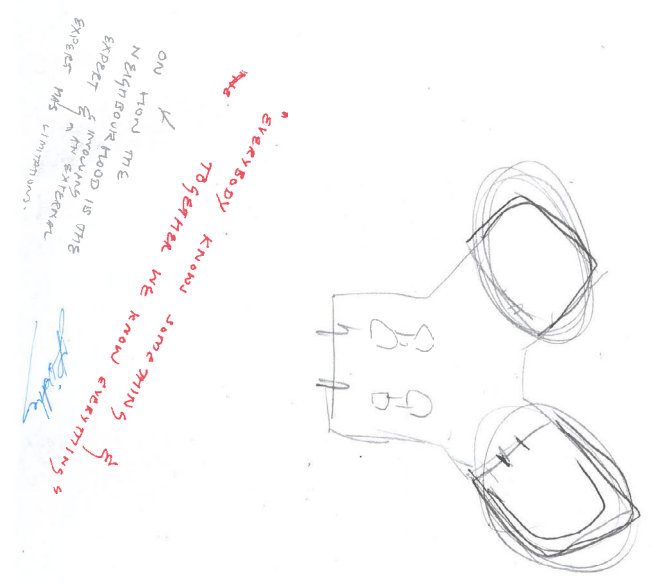
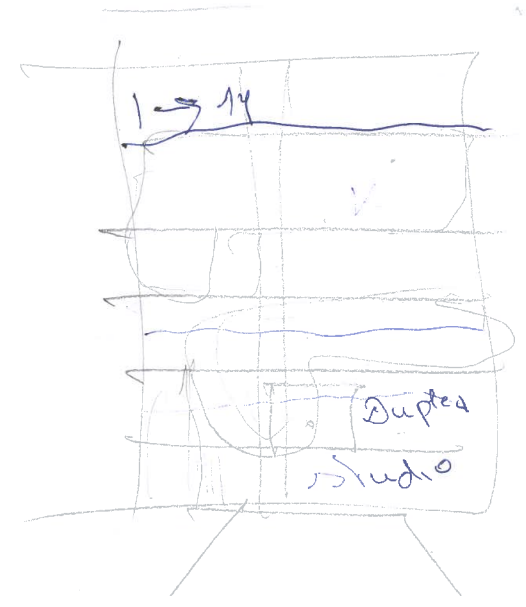
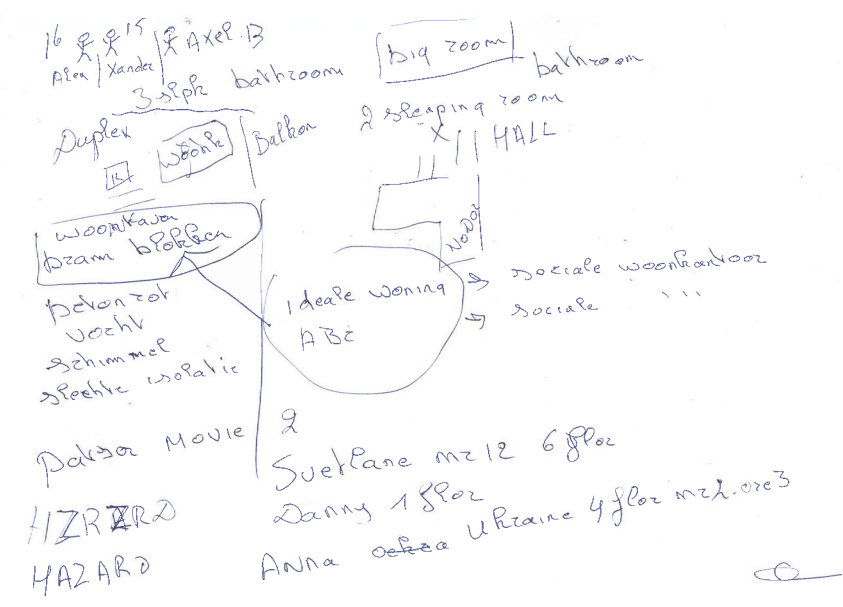


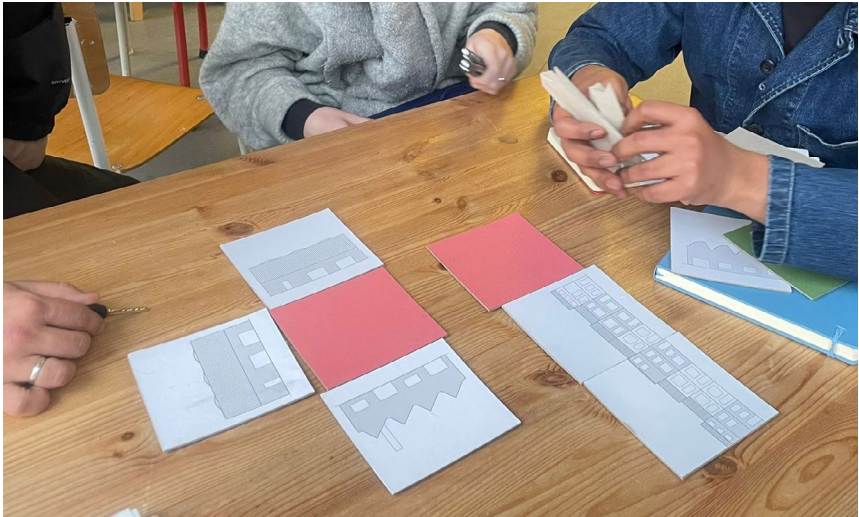




Weakened social health

How can voices, concerns and interests of the inhabitants
come together and take shape?











This is Zahra, an elderly woman who lives on the Krugerstraat, Hoboken. Since her husband's demise, she is been living by herself.



One morning she was at her door, looking for help!.....

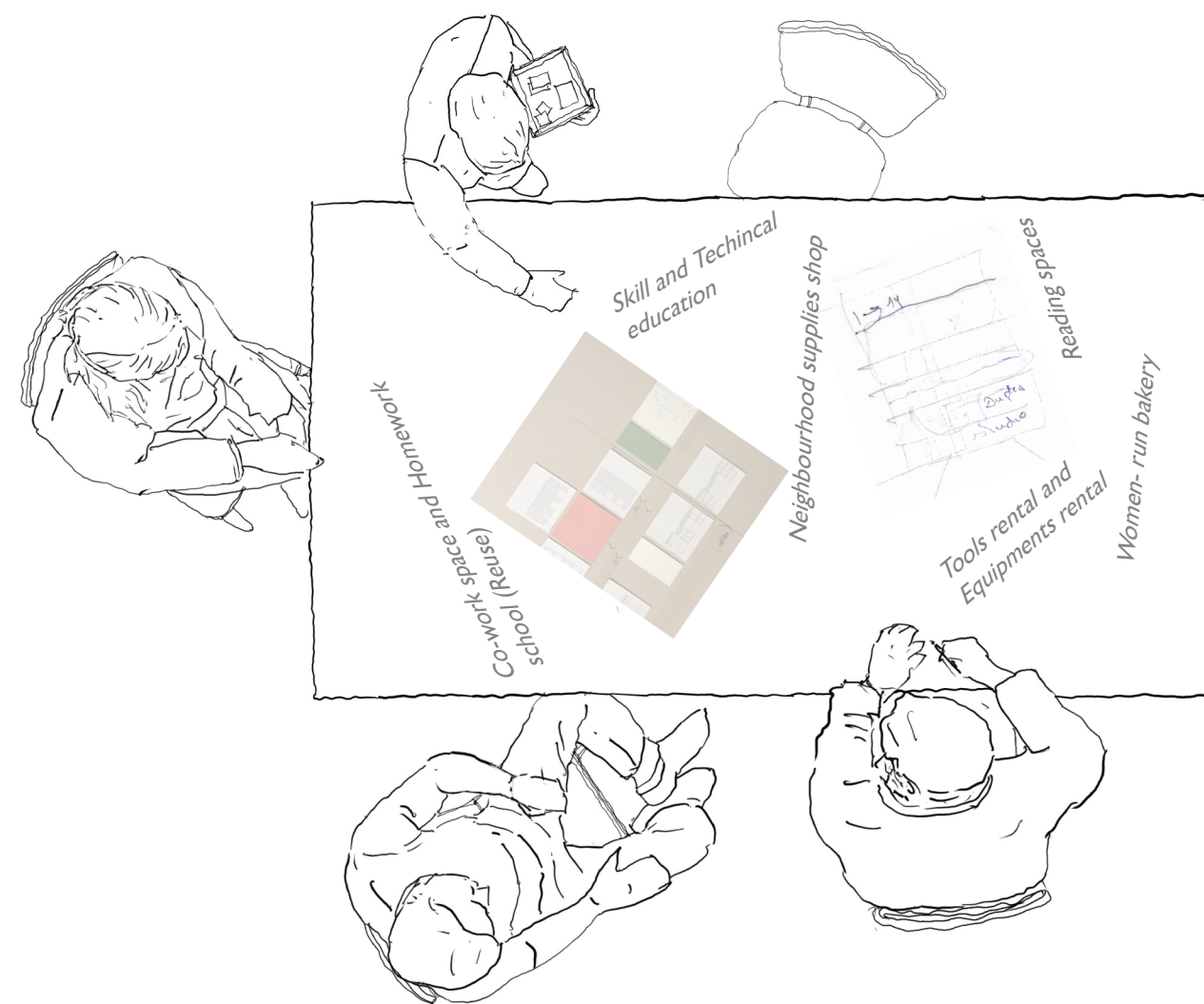
Could someone please lend me a hand in moving some boxes from the basement?
The stairs are a bit too steep and I am unable to lift them up all by myself!

Could someone please....



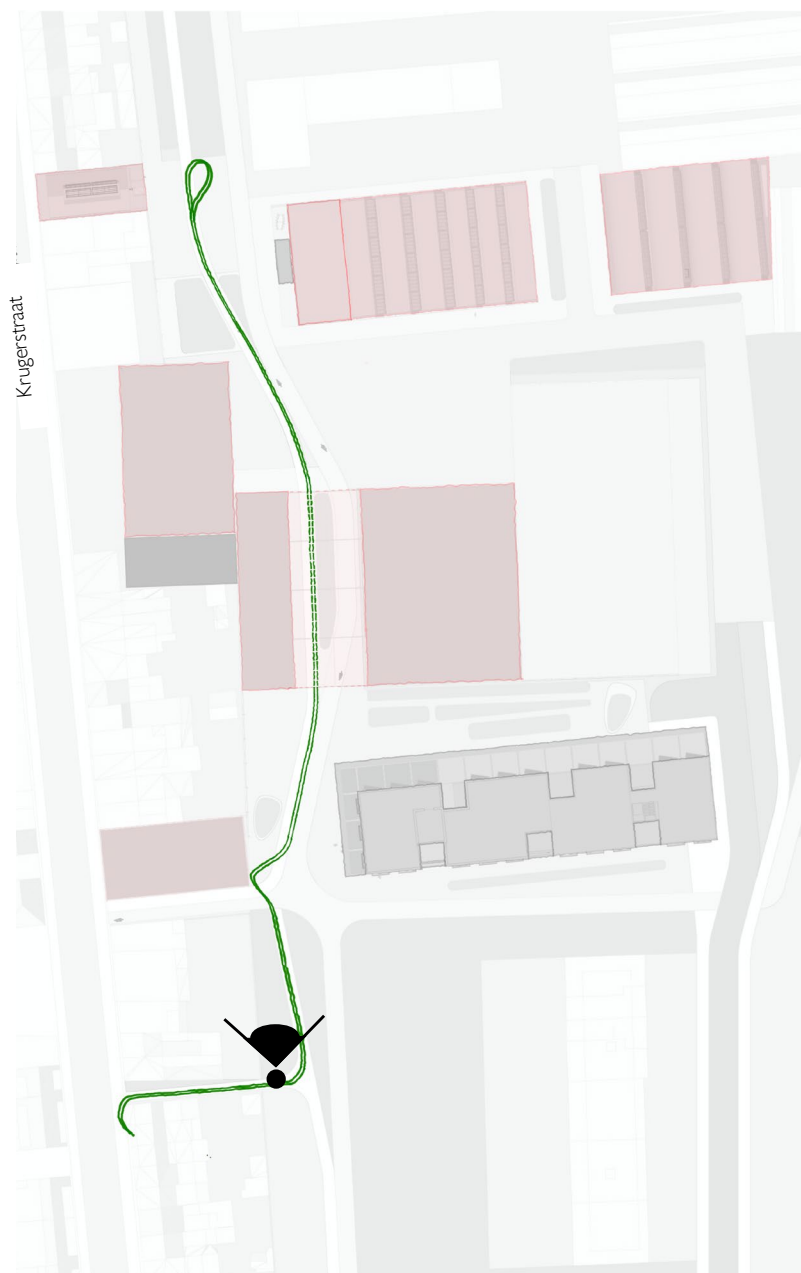
I have been living on this street for 15 years, and yet I dont know any of my neighbours!.....
I have been living on this street for 15 years, and yet I dont know any of my neighbours!.....

After hours, a few students appeared at the door and offered to help.



The students helped me with the boxes and later I sat them down and spoke about my concerns in the neighbourhood. The traffic, no interaction with the other residents here, little interest in Hoboken from Antwerp city administrators.....I kept going.

Then the students went around and asked us, the residents, to draw our visions for the future of the neighbourhood.



What you see today is the result of all the work the neighbours, along with the students did to transform our neighbourhood.

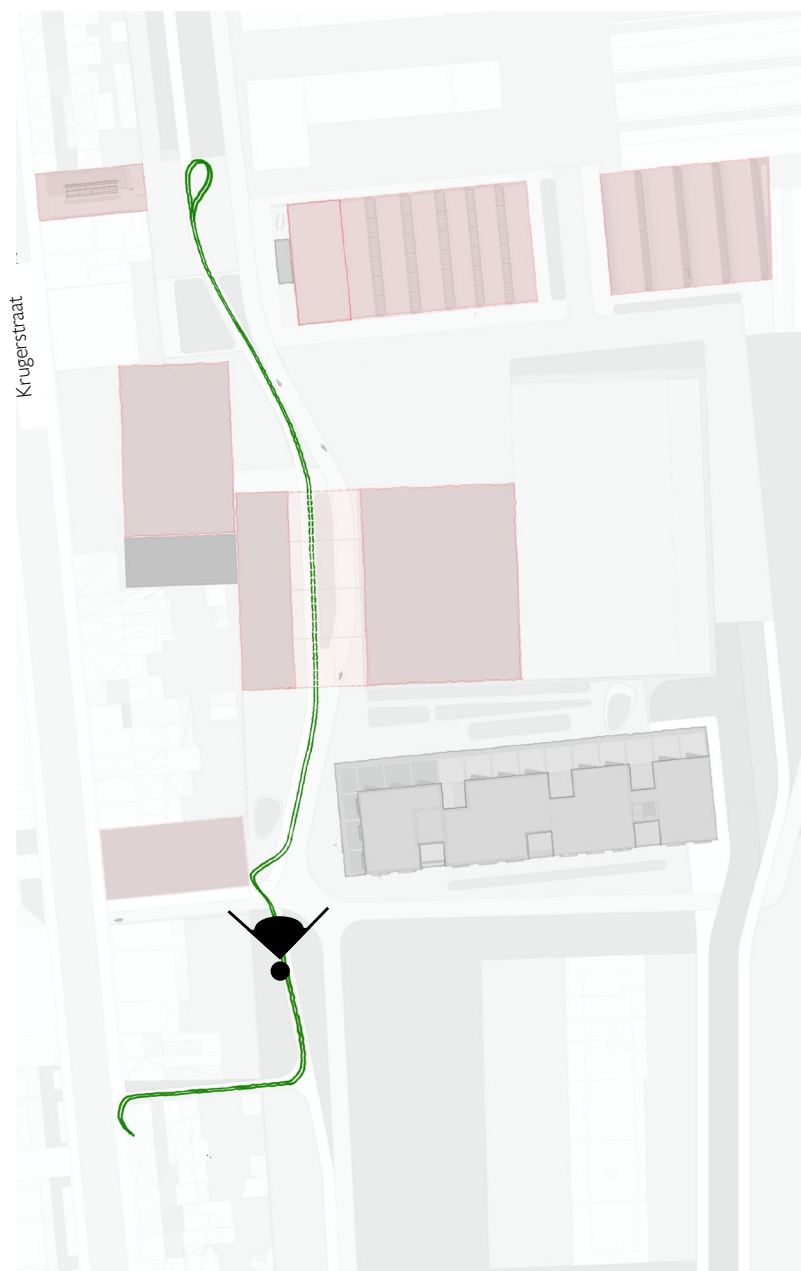
I am on my way from my home to the bakery where I work, and let me show you all around a bit.



This is a newly added inner street for pedestrians and bicycles. This helps me avoid the rash drivers on Krugerstraat and get to my workplace. They opened up some of the old factory walls and now some of us open our backyards to this street.

I don't even want to recollect how it used to be! In fact we couldn't even see what was there. It was all fenced off.





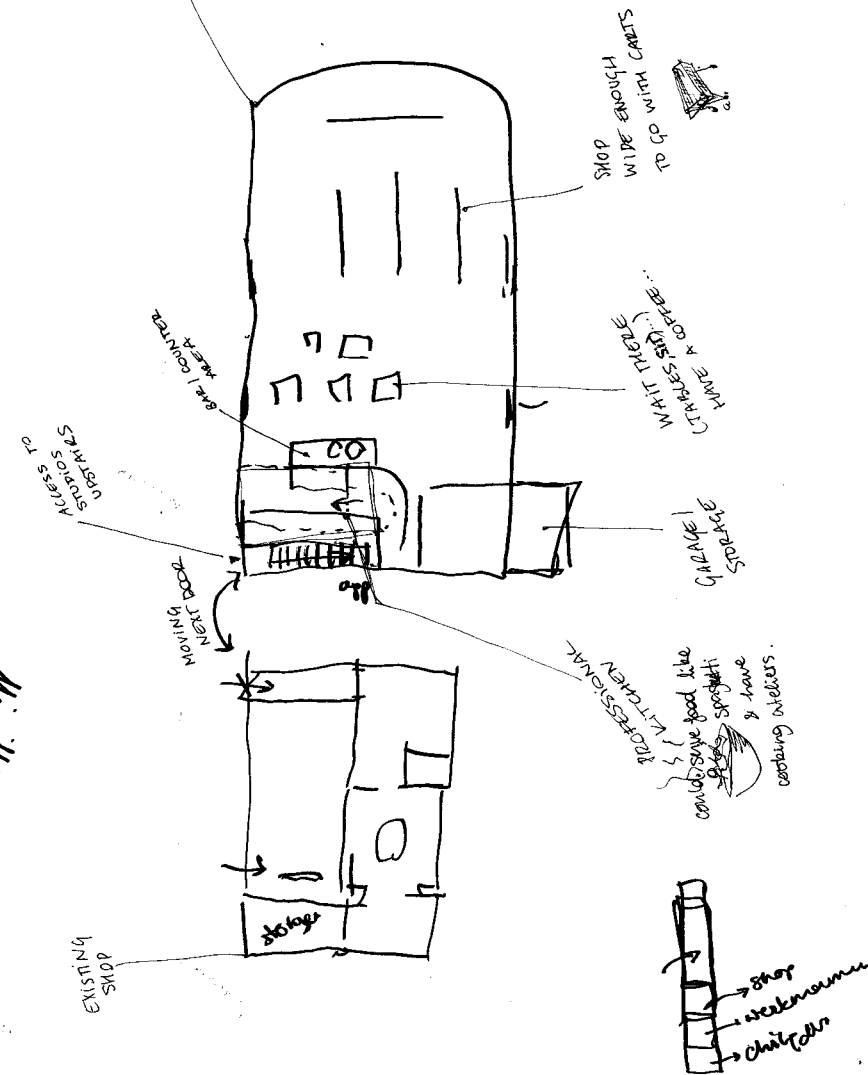
I thought of stopping at the neighbourhood supermarket on our left, but looks like it is yet to open for the day. Hilda and Mirelle who volunteer there would soon come to open the store I hope. They try and sell goods a bit subsidiced you see!

Most of us in Hoboken need that extra help.



By the way on the right is an under construction housing building. My friends are moving in there soon.

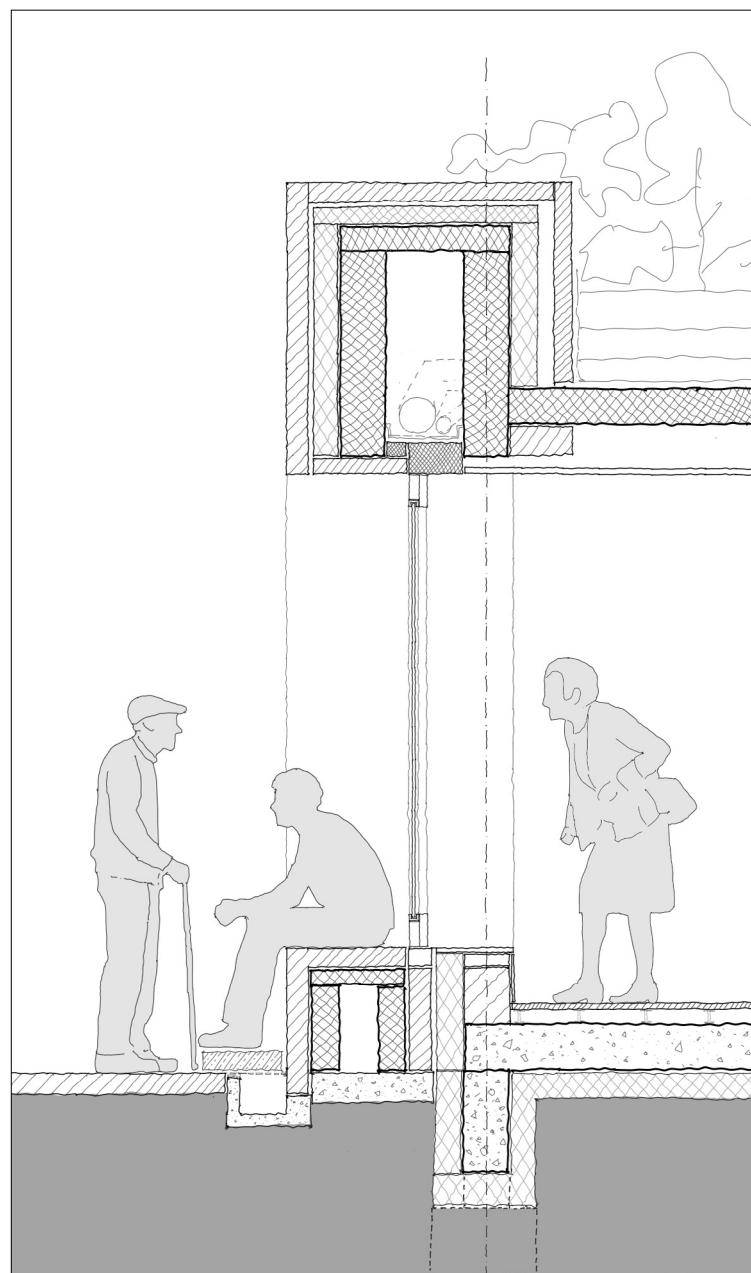
Mirelle



The customers and Mirelle along with the students together drew the scheme for this store. The old store in the neighbouring Kiel has a little kitchen and coffee table. They spent many days there trying out schemes. Finally they found a way to reuse a factory building for the store.

Its little front porch and well equipped kitchen are my favourite.

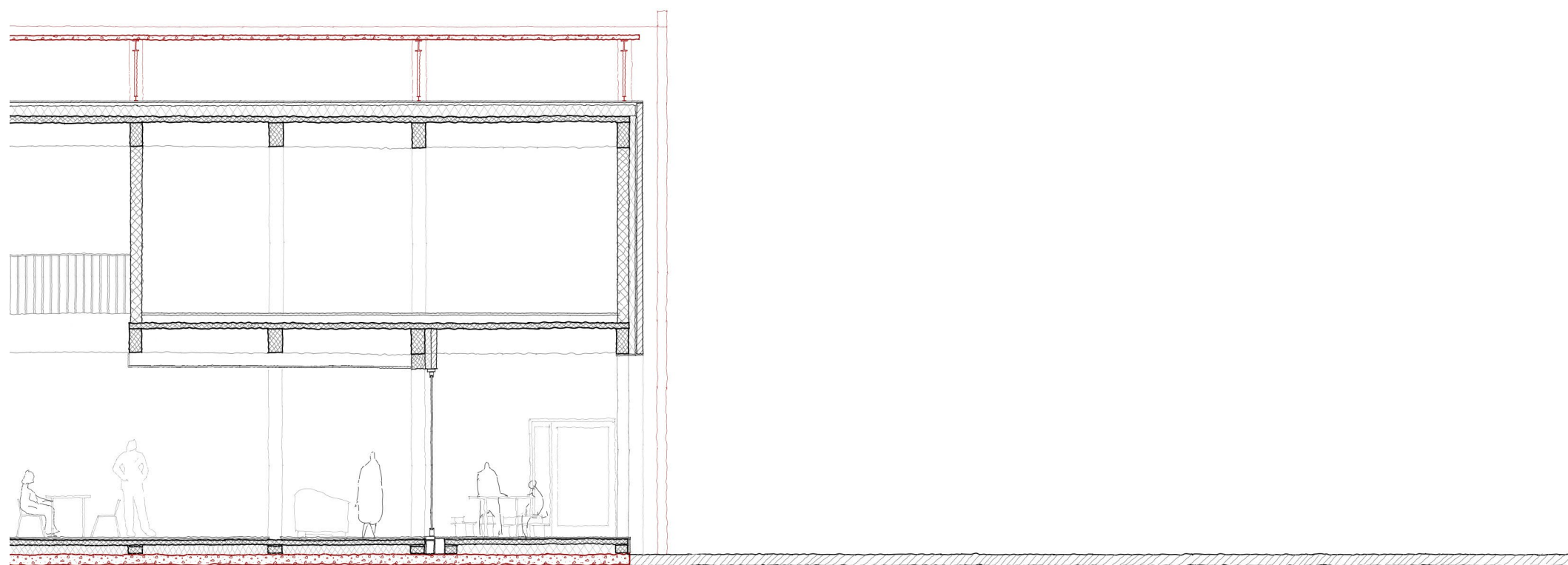


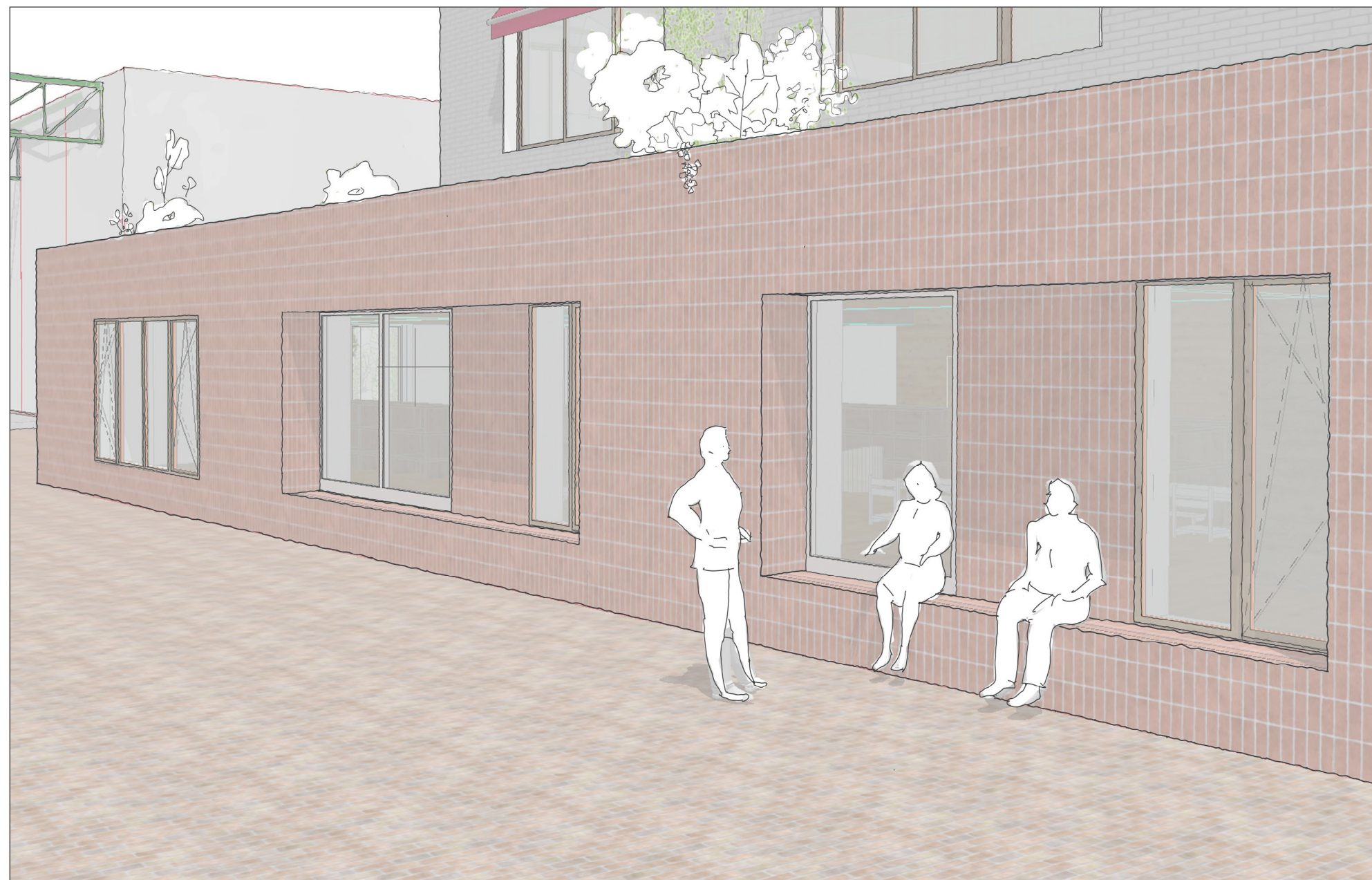
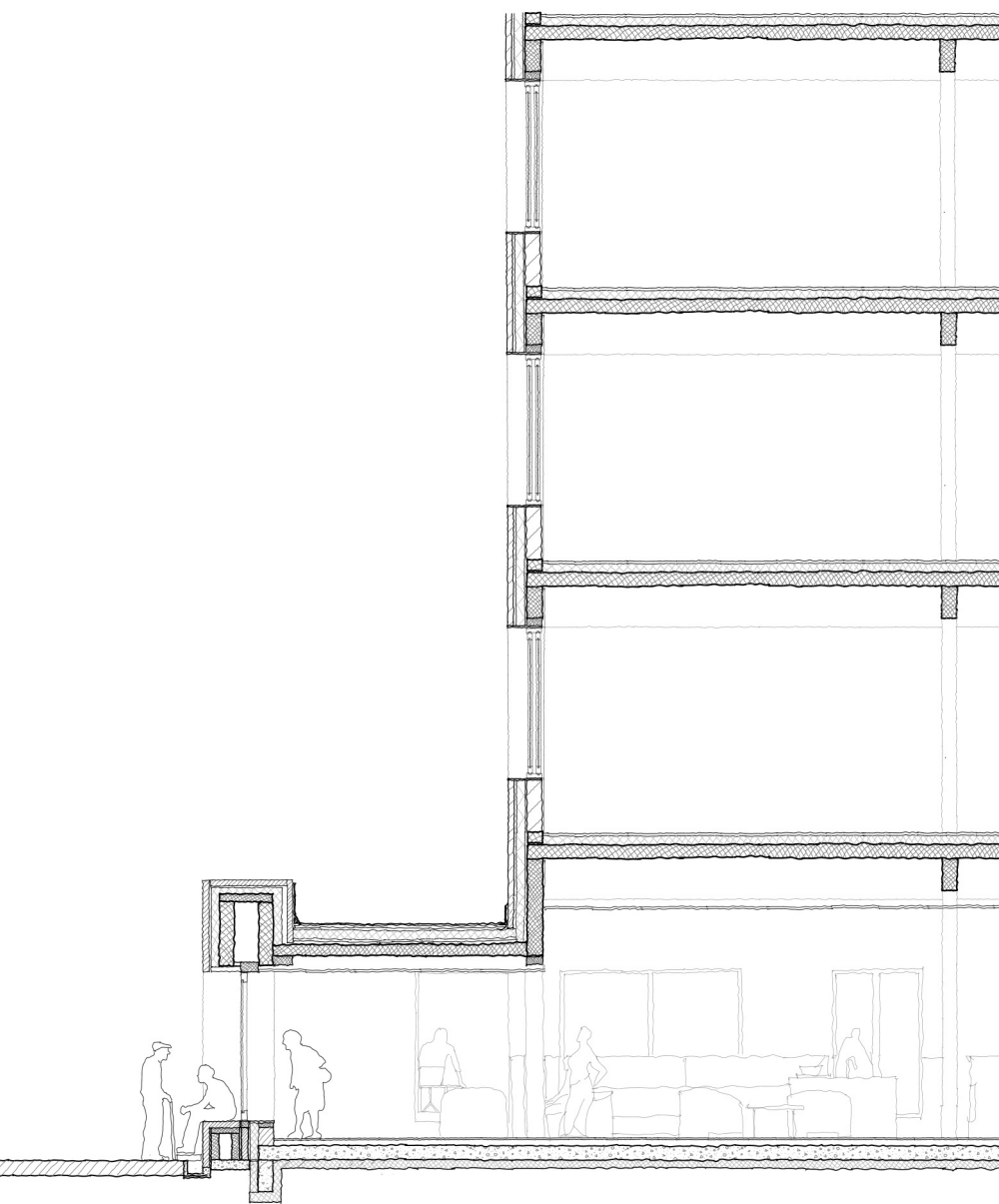


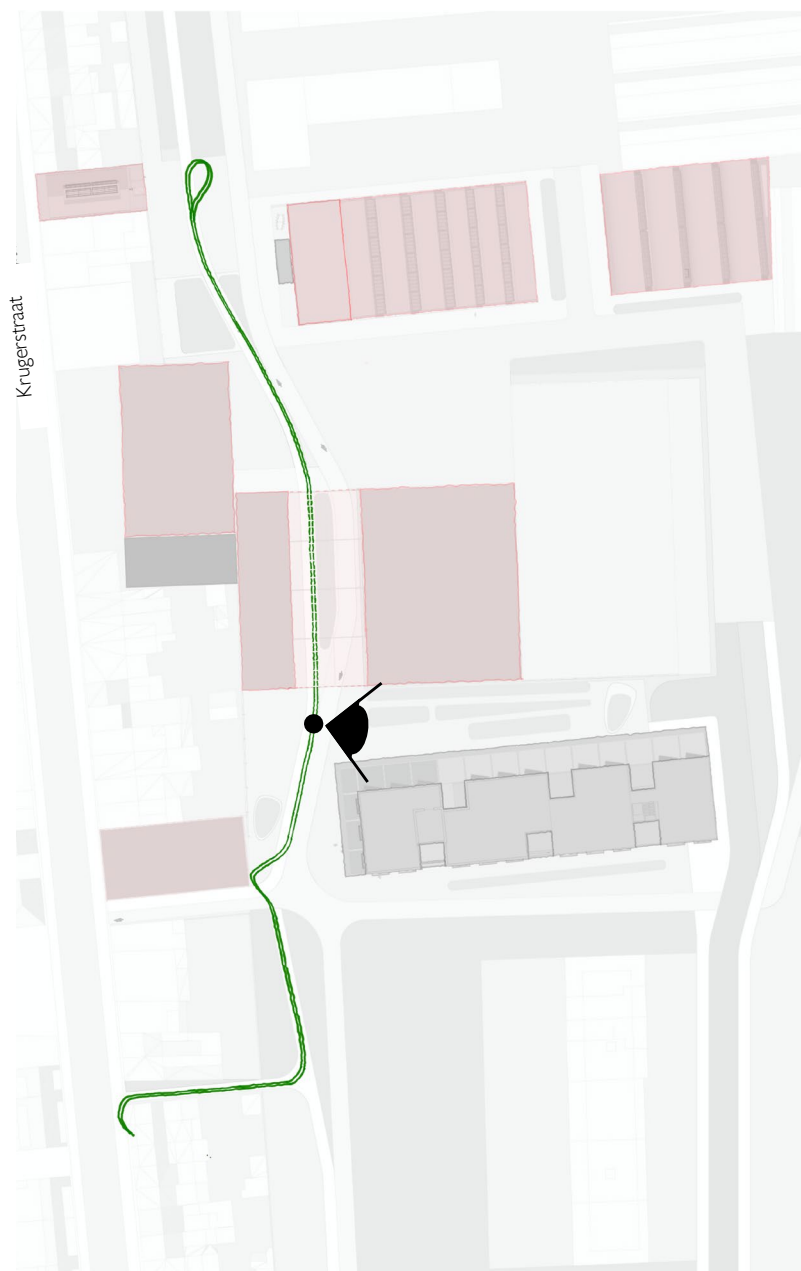
I see some of my gossip gang at the housing building's plinth. Lets avoid them for now.



I like how the spill-out of the store's front porch is facing the housing building's plinth. Even when the buildings are closed, people get to use them.







Hi Zahra, how are you doing?

Have you noticed, there are a few new blooms in our picking garden! Please come by sometime.

Thank you Kris!

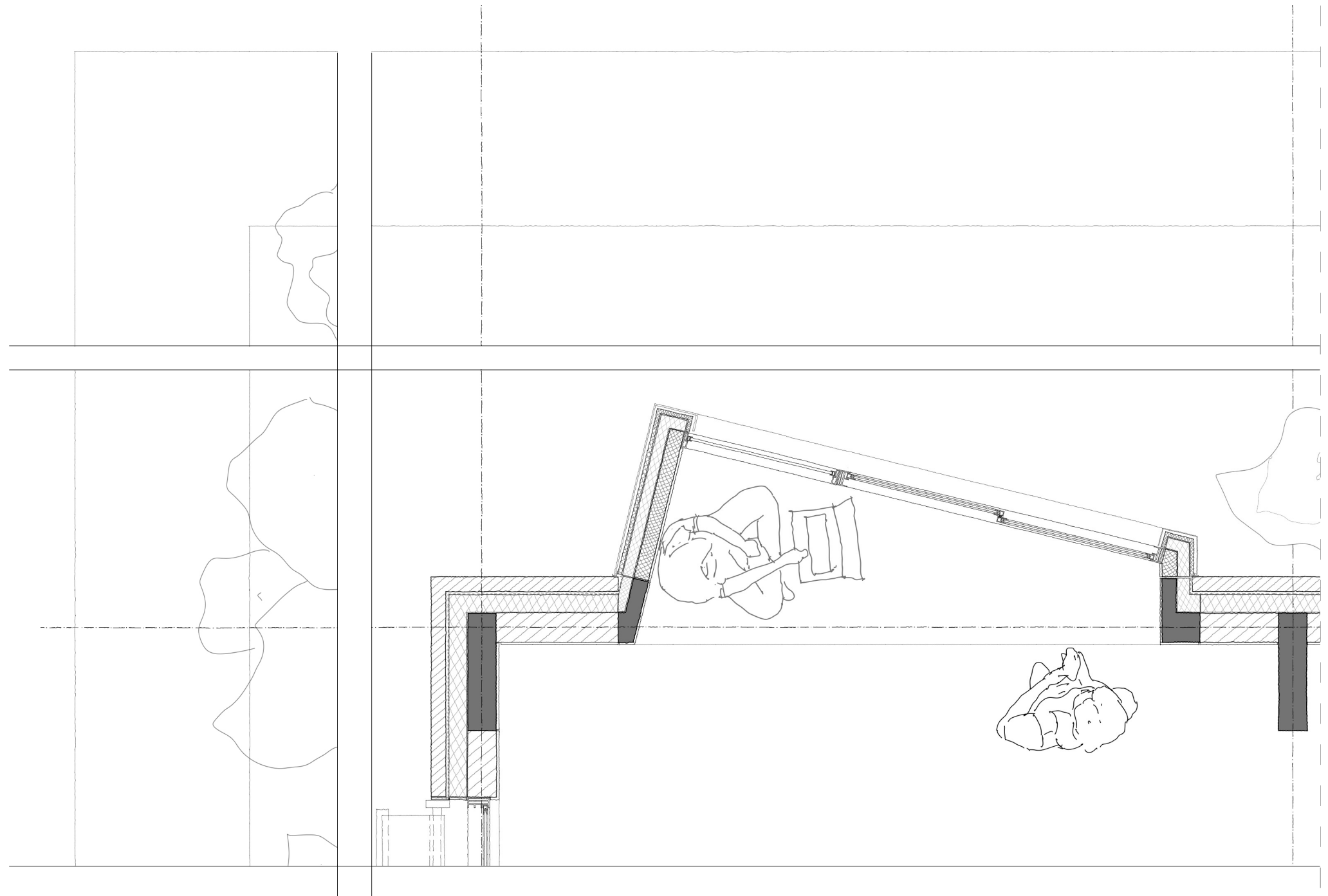
Kris is the caretaker at the housing building. Pro-active individuals like him are making things happen in this neighbourhood now. The seating at the plinth and the picking garden were his suggestions.

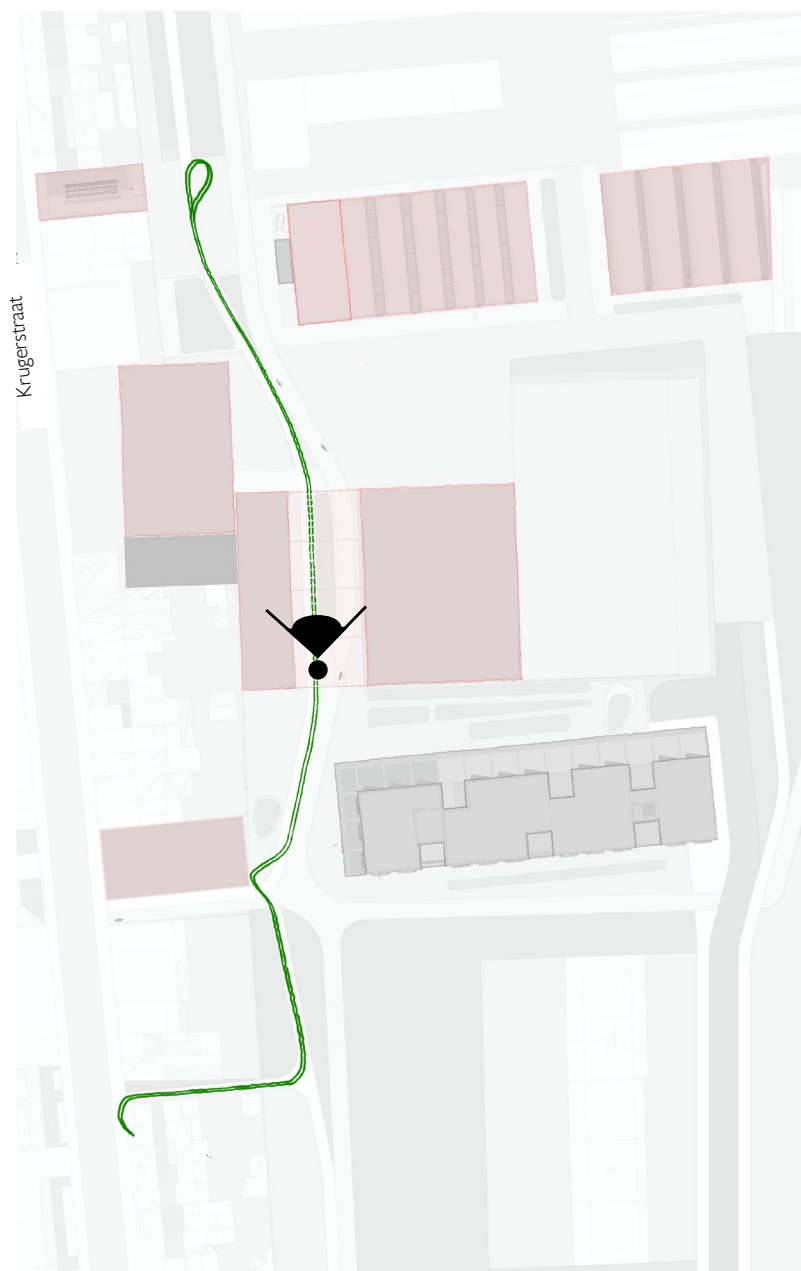




Thats my friend there at one of those projected windows. I would wish to have such a window in my bedroom looking into the garden.

Lucky Veerle!





Lets go further. Here is Saamo, a community center and they have a documentation services and language help-desk here.

That reminds me I have letter from the municipality lying on my table. Need some help with that!

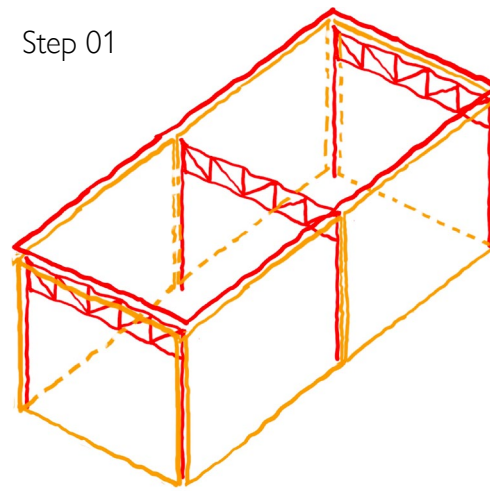


Diether here volunteers with the neighbours and maintains the picking garden all along the inner street.

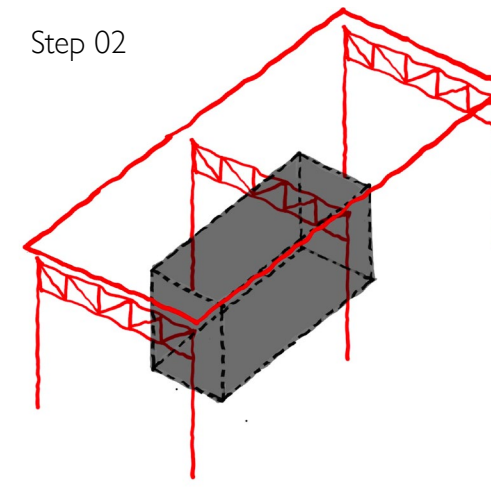


Hi, I was just discussing with Joris on how we pulled out parts of the factory building and fit in Saamo's cabin. Step 01 was to pull out a few wall to create a throughfare. Step 02 was to insert Saamo's cabin. That's when we realised that roof won't be able to stand the wind-load. Step 03 was to use tension cables to tie the roof down to the cabin. Done!

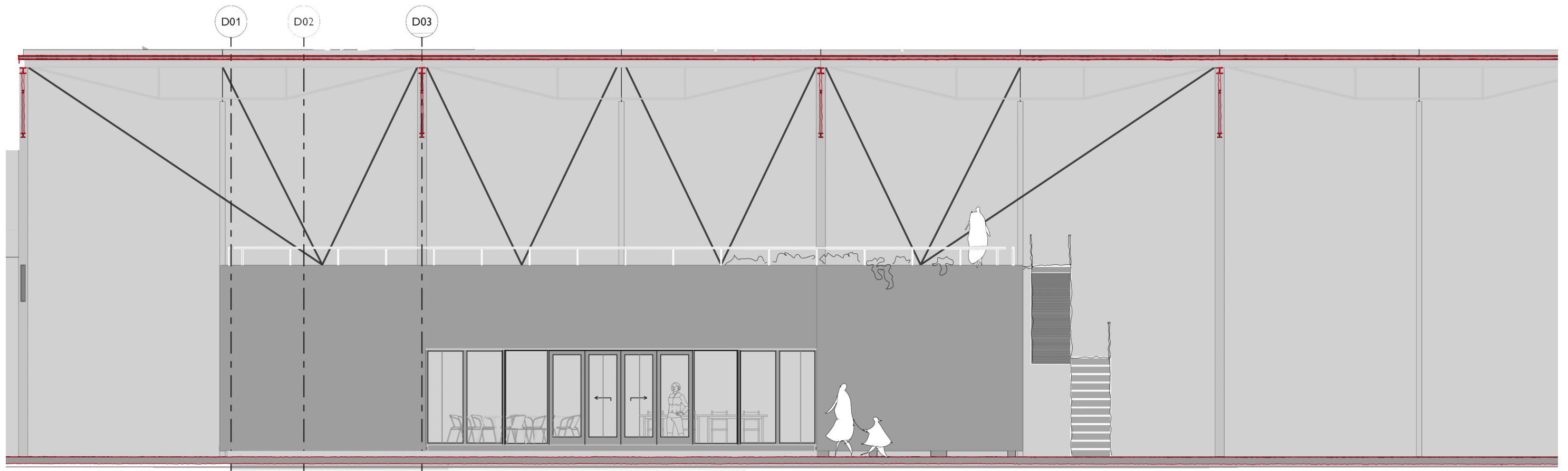
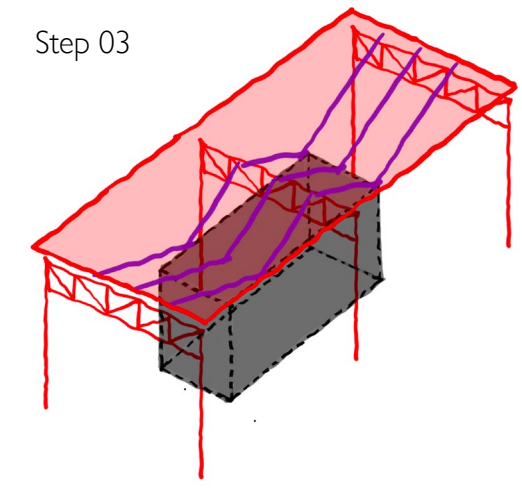
Step 01



Step 02



Step 03

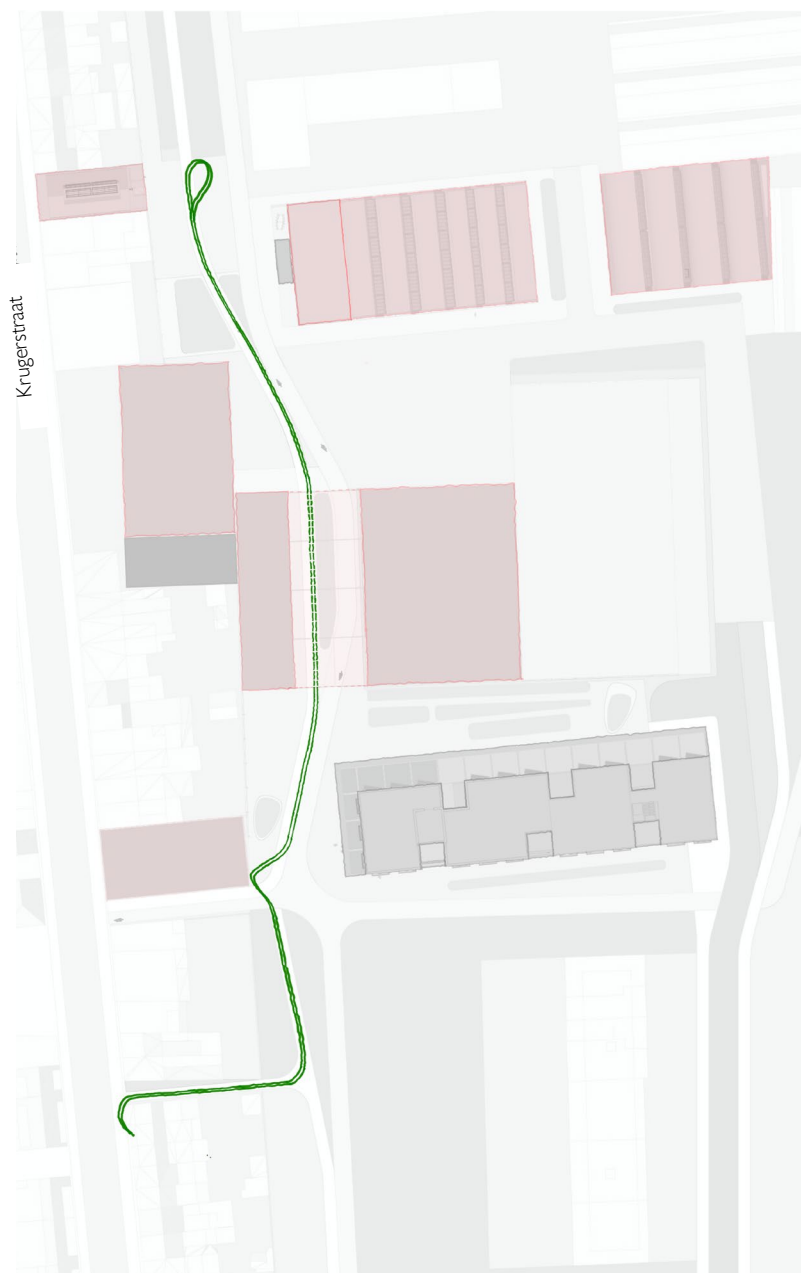


Hi Diether, what are you upto?

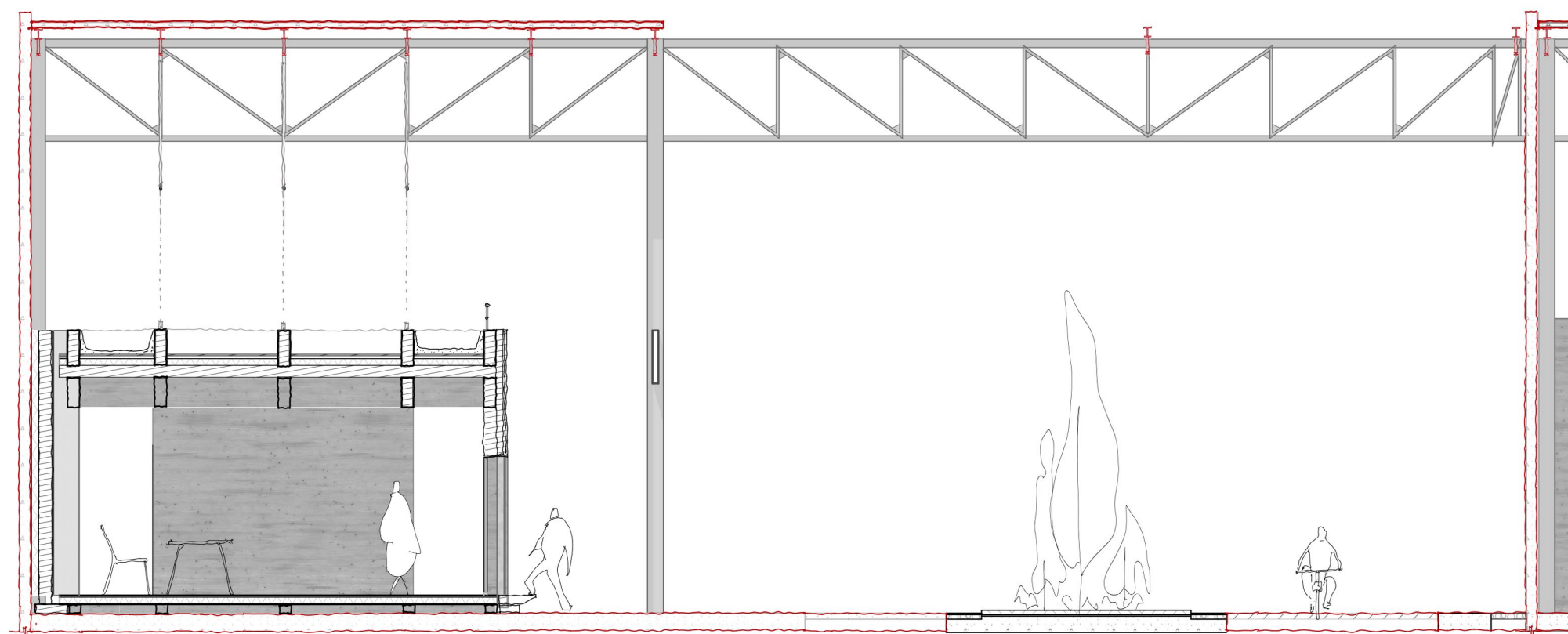
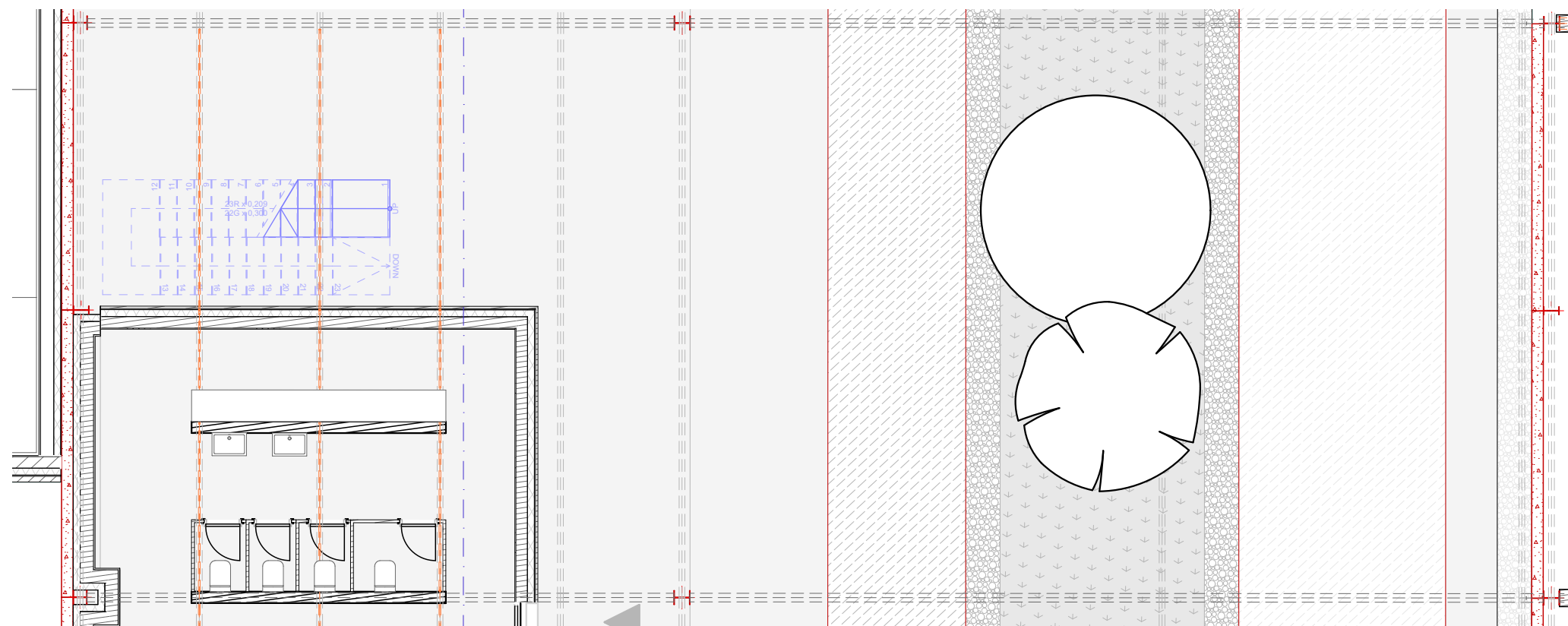
Lovely! See you later Diether, I would need some help with paperwork!

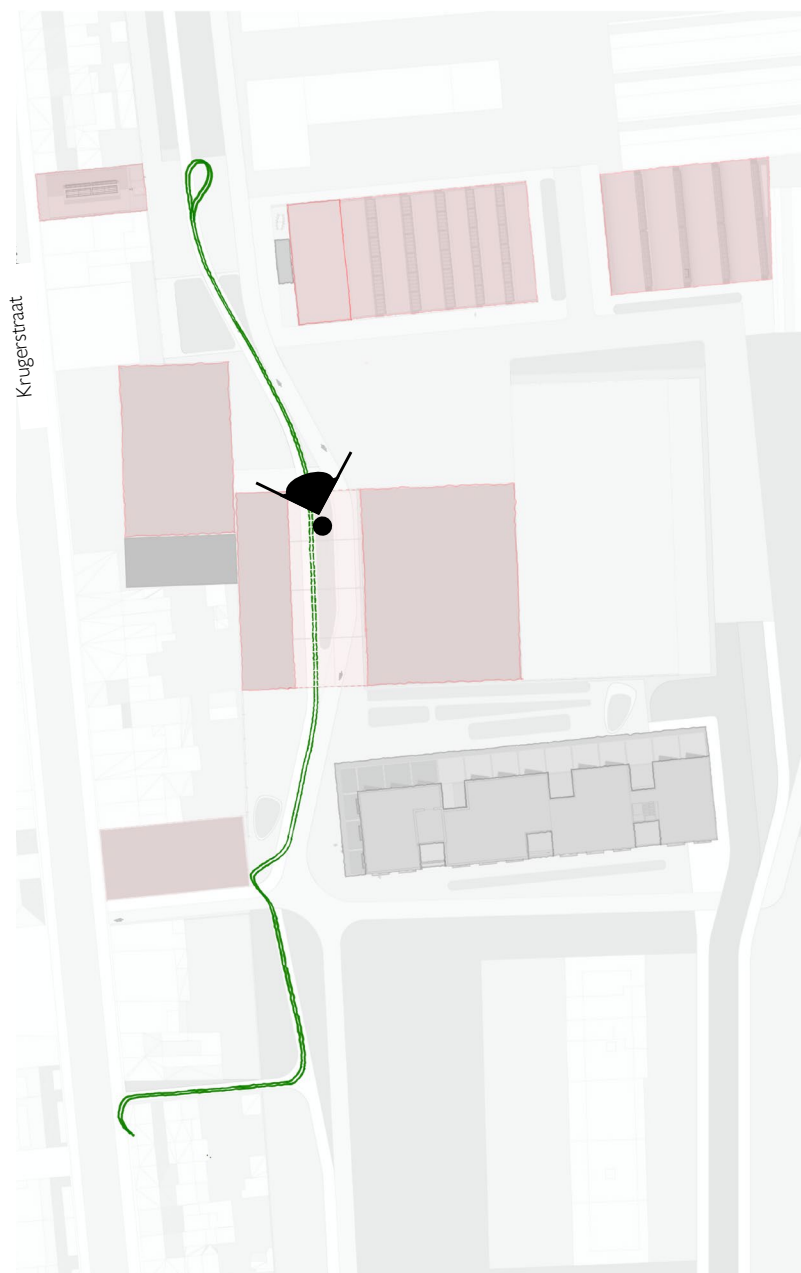
Well most of what he just said blew over my head.





But what I do remember is that they tried to retain most of the factory flooring and added minor resurfacing to accommodate the pedestrian ways and the bike lanes. Now that the roof is partially removed, its well lit too.





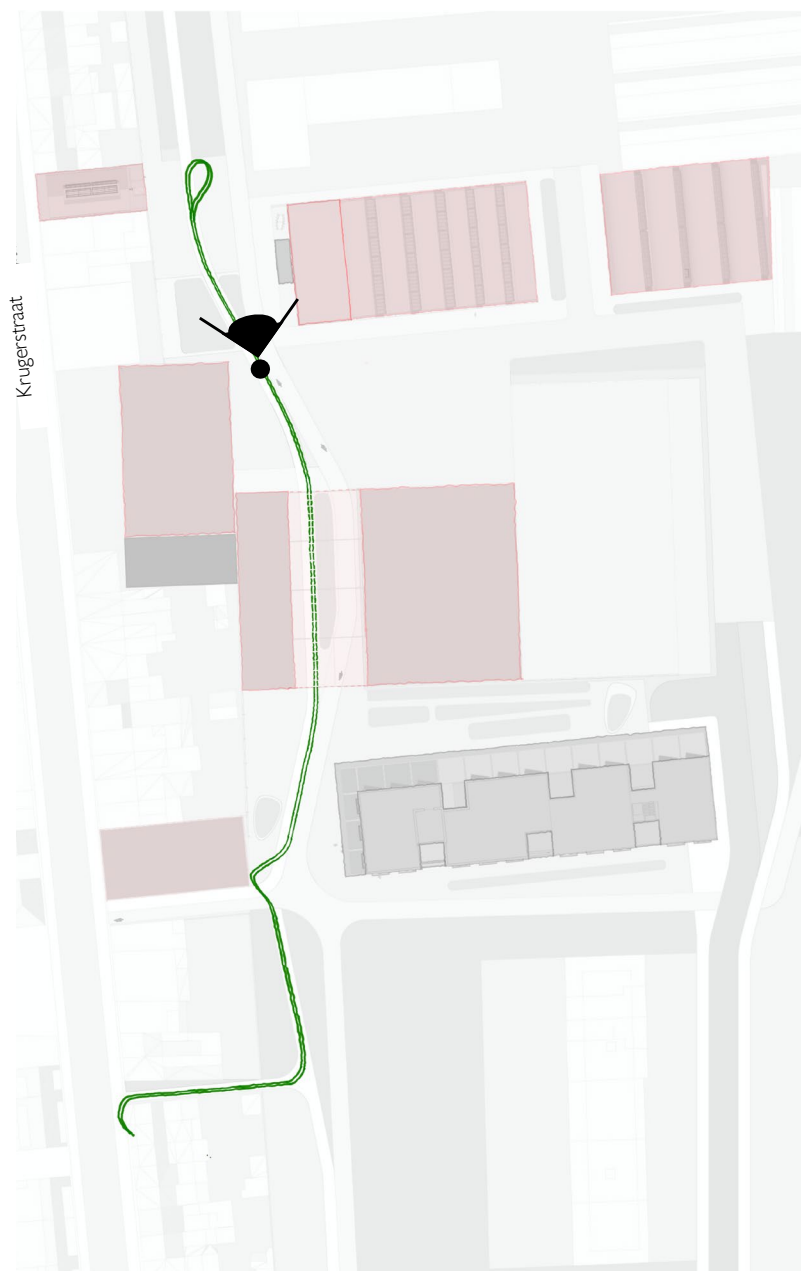
Hey, there is Hilde. She is just walking in from Krugerstraat through the pavillion. Looks like there is something put up in that banner which has distracted her.



Hilde is someone you should know about. She used to help her neighbours' children along with hers' with extra homework lessons. Later more and more children joined and they had to start 'Slim' - an after-school extra lessons establishment.

Lets go to her. I need to enquire if my neighbour's boy could also join the classes.



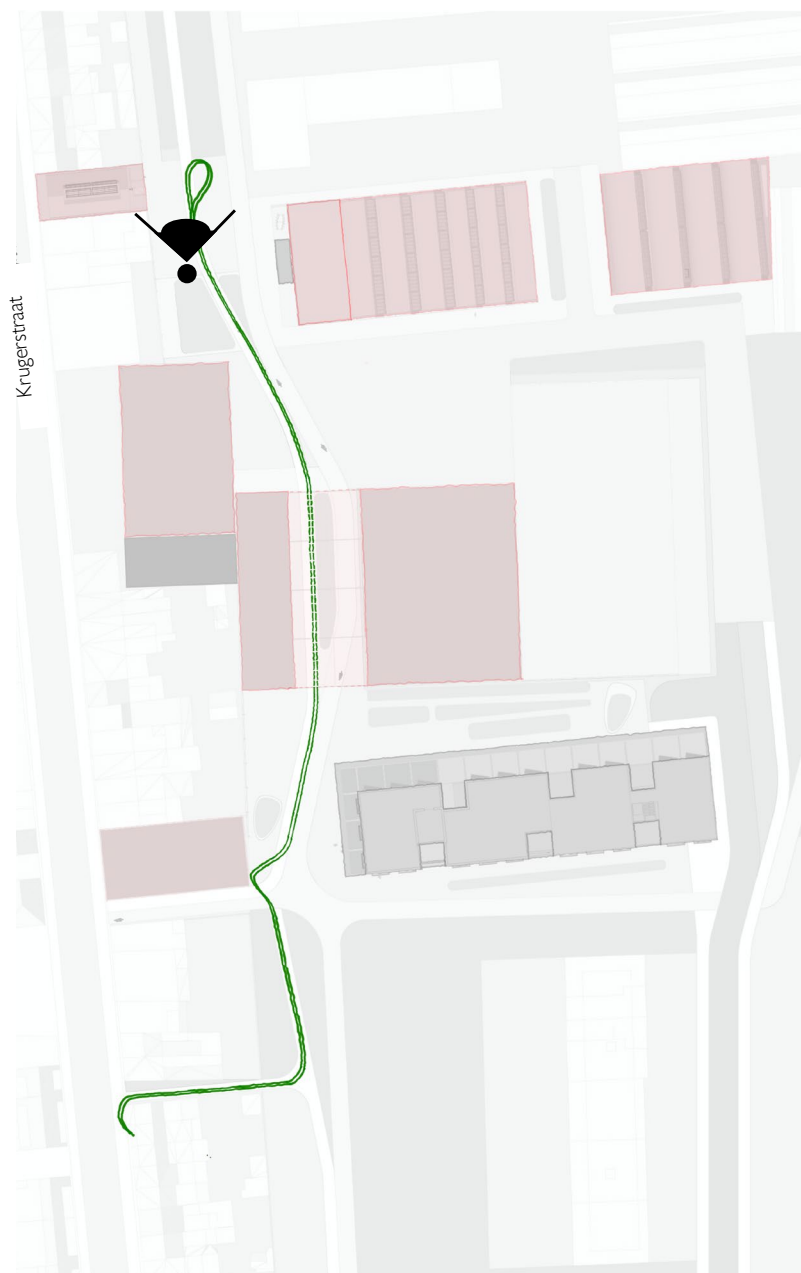


Hi Hilda, it looks like Slim's new entrance block is a hit amongst the students! I did notice a few kids use the front court even on the weekend!

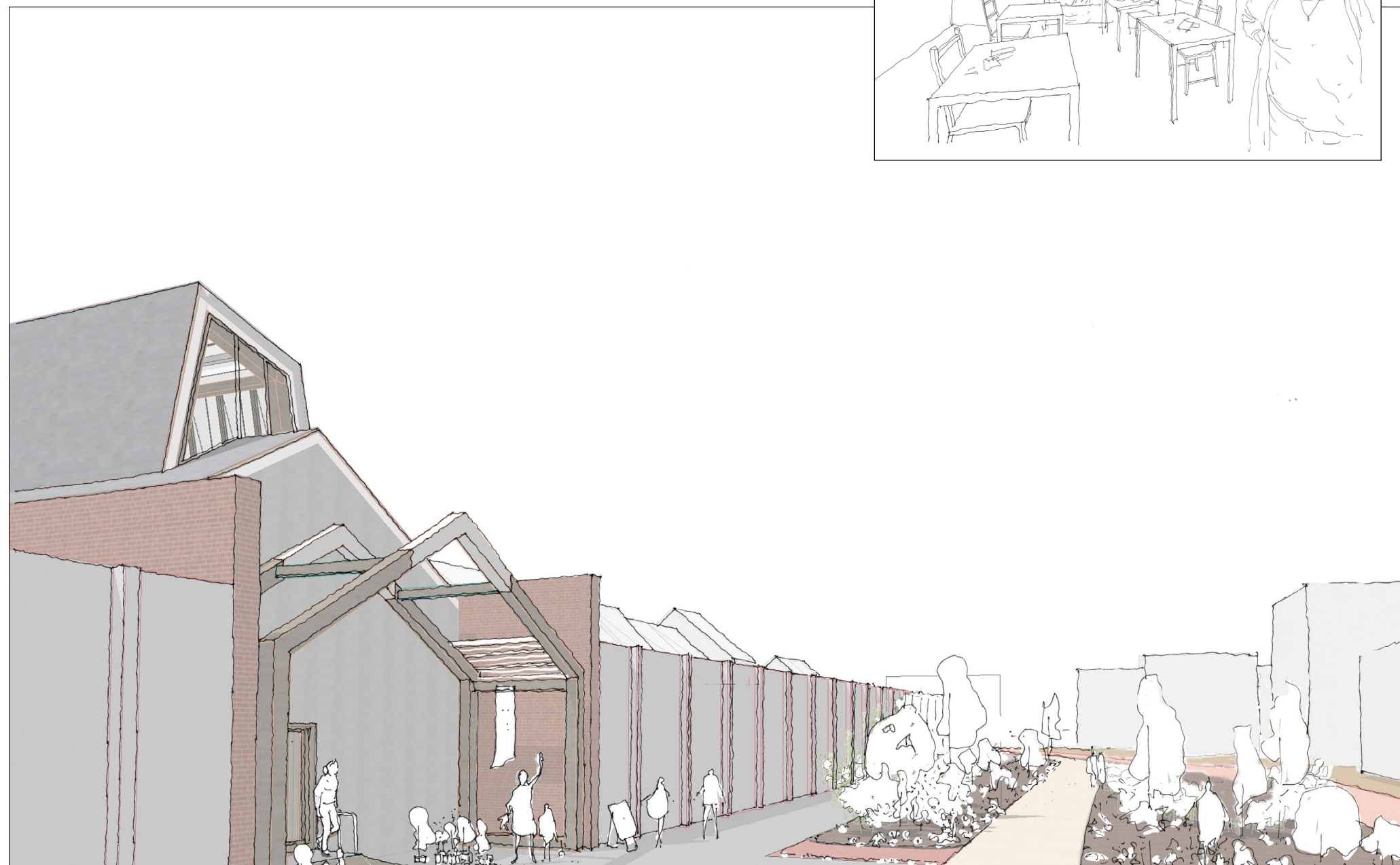
Oh ya, thats true! But it is also well used by the parents while they wait for their kids. There are a few coffee tables as well that they could share with the co-work space.

I have to go but see you later at the nursery sale.

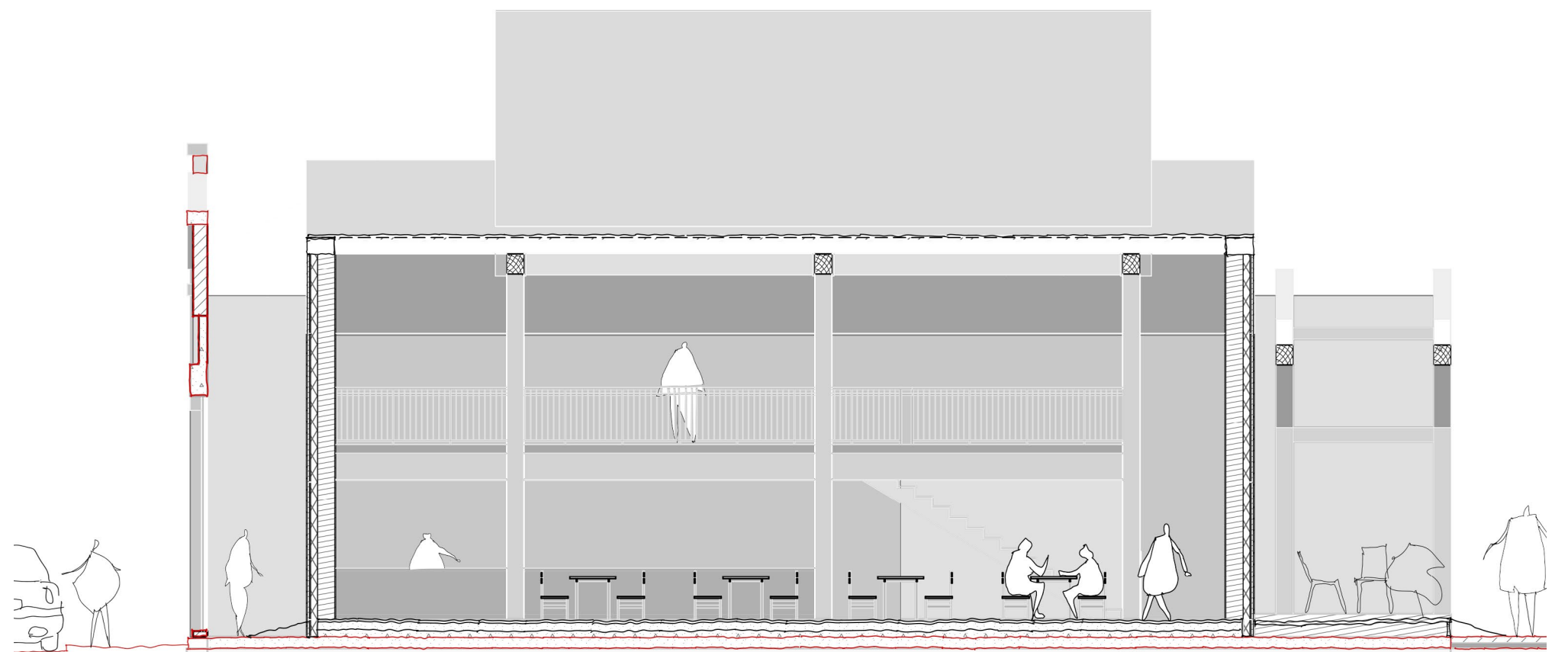
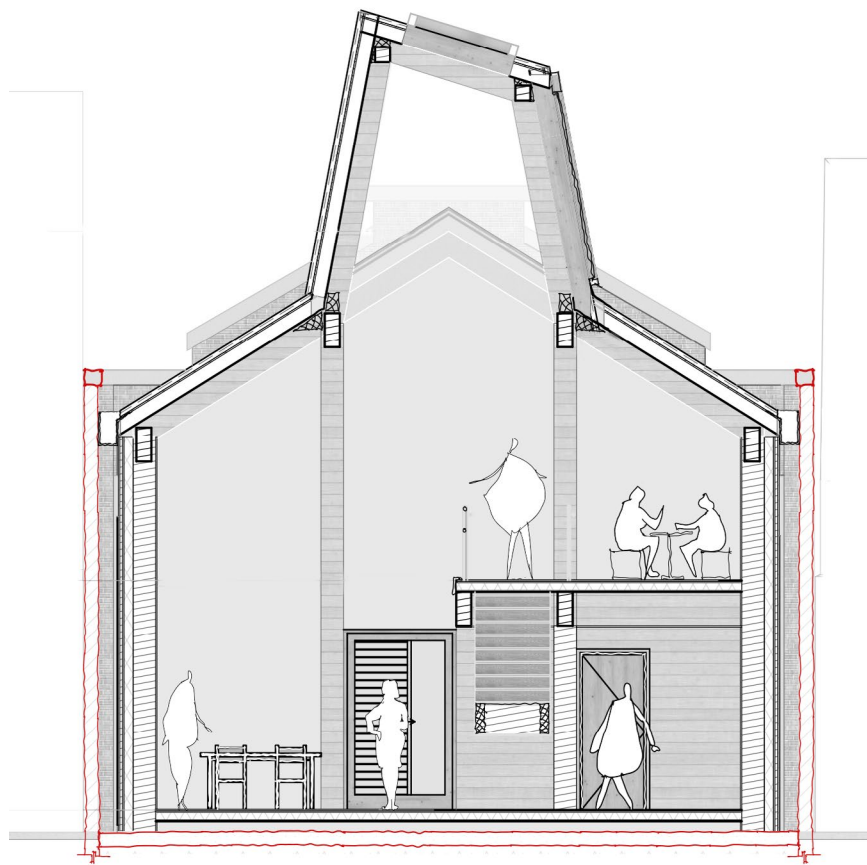




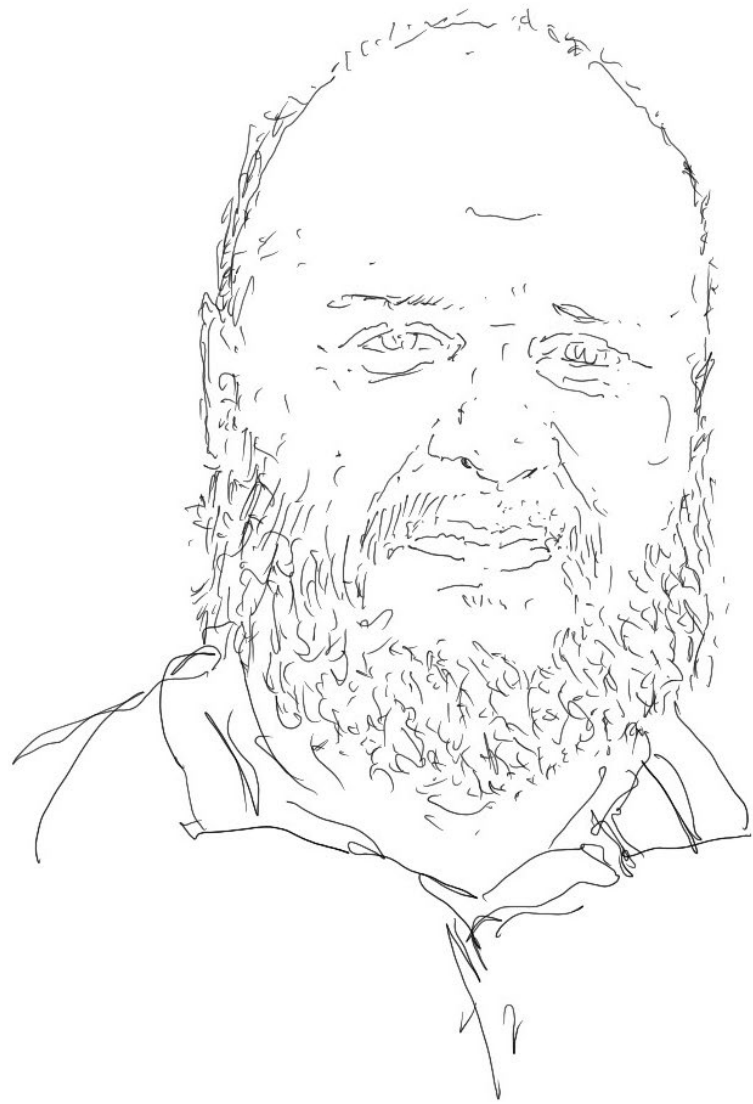
We are finally here at the bakery. This is its rear entrance. I usually enter it this way. The bakery was a dream of a few unemployed women in the neighbourhood. We tried to fit all our requirement into an old garage on Krugerstraat.



Looks like a few plants for the nursery sale is put up at the bakery's rear porch as Slim's interior is overflowing with plants. Hilda volunteers into maintaining picking garden along this stretch of the inner-street. She was talking about naming the street CultuurFabriekweg! The neighbours always find new ways to use this space. I guess it fits well.



Ok! Time to go, my workday is about to start. I already see a customer enter from Krugerstraat. Please do visit the bakery sometime. There is a mazzanine in case you want a quiet zone. See you later!

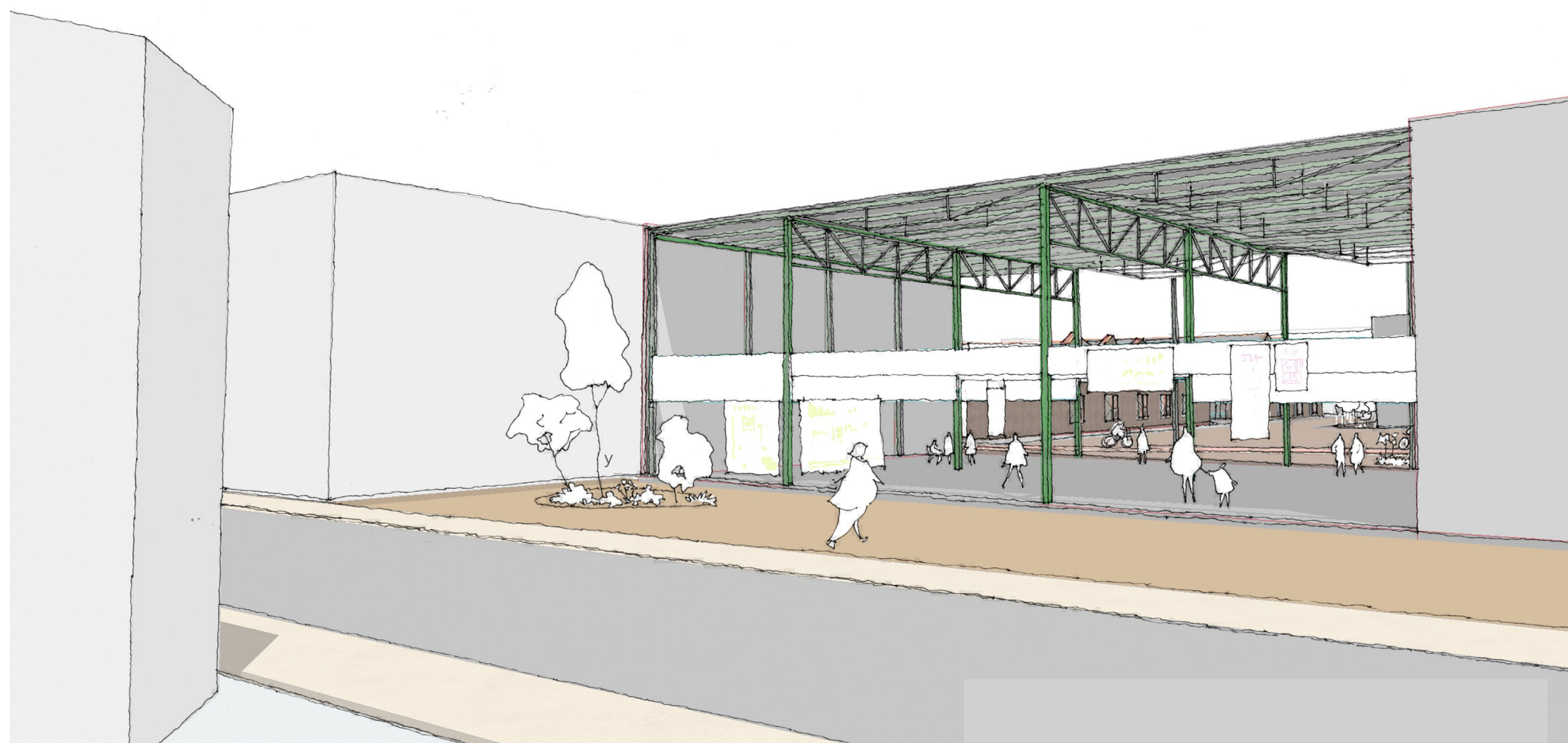
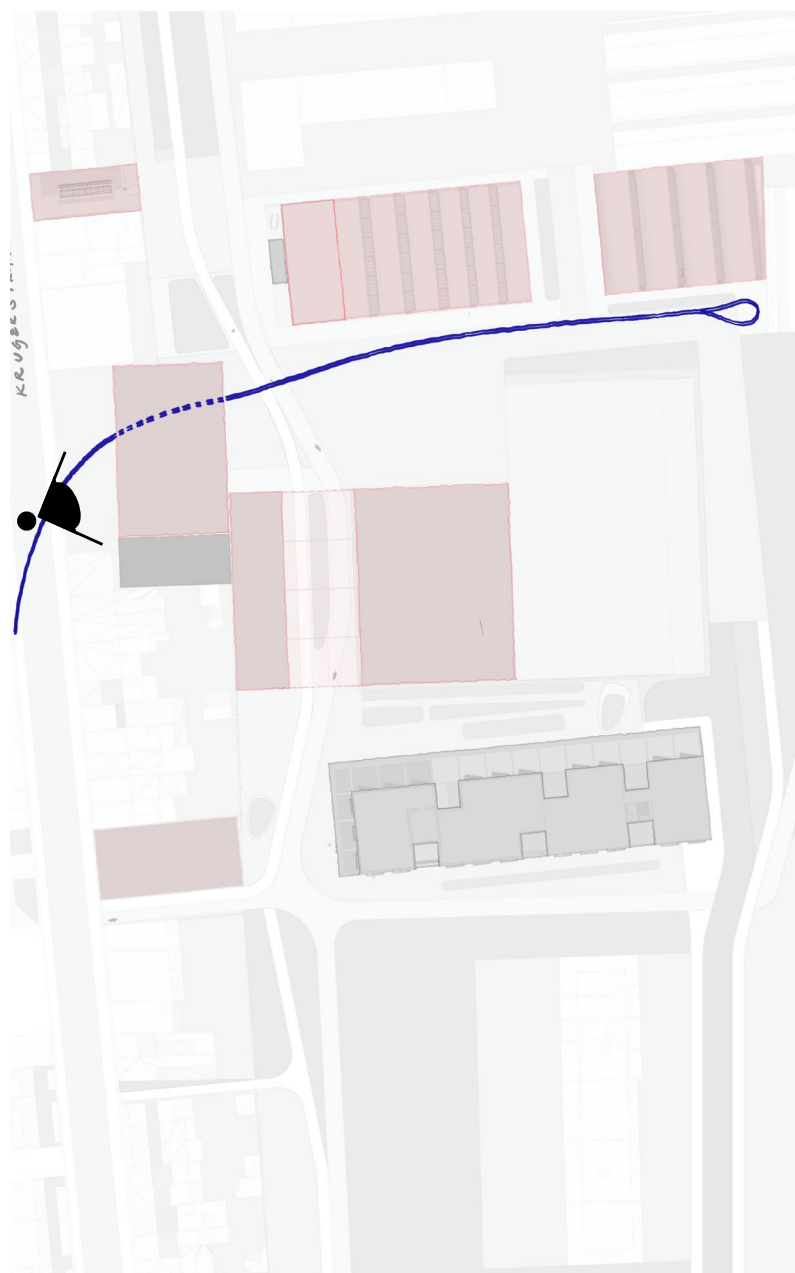


This is Sophian, who runs a building materials shop the Krugerstraat, Hoboken. His house is right above his shop, where he lives with his family.



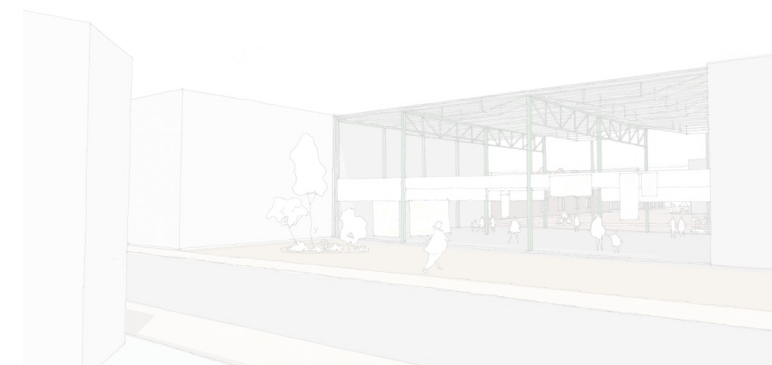
Careful when you cross the street! The traffic is quite fast as usual.

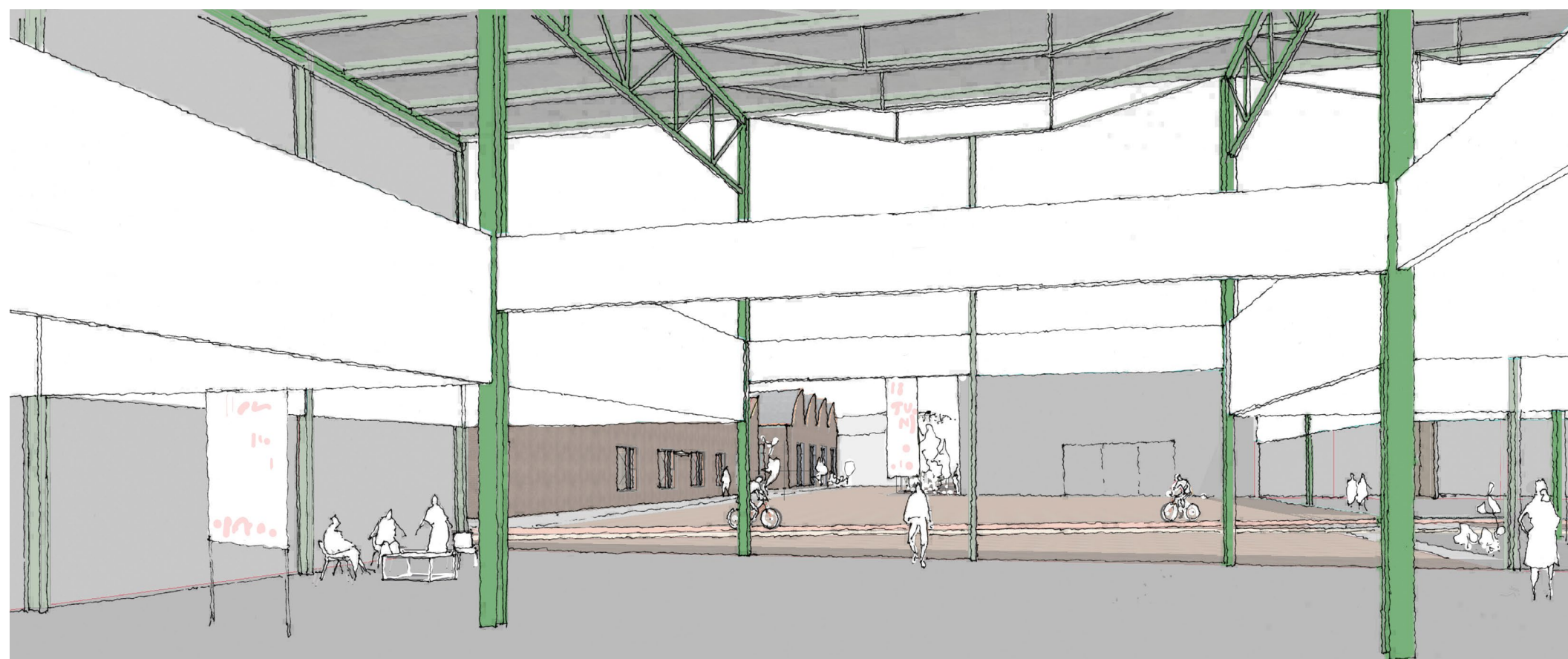
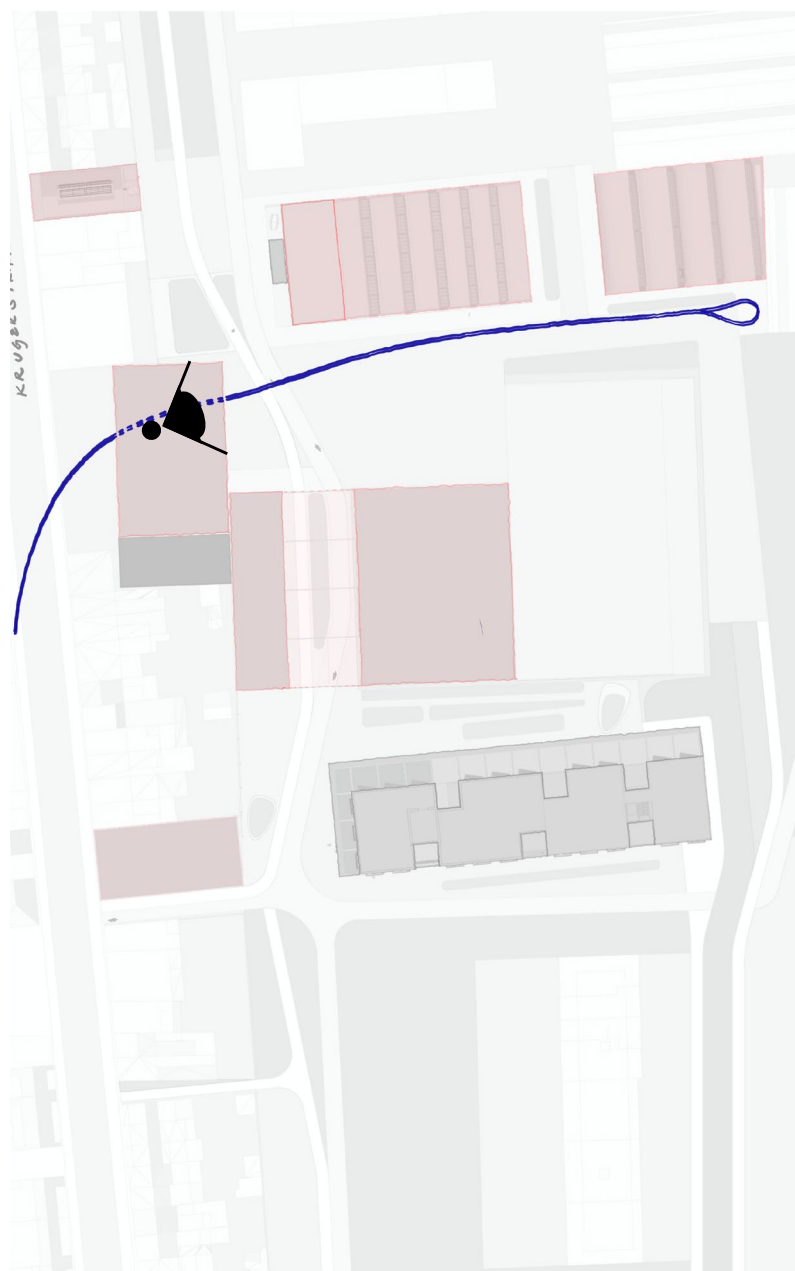
This evening he has to take his kids to the recently opened reading room in the BlikFabriek campus.



The entrance to the BlikFabriek campus has redefined with the recent changes. Now we can all get a glimpse of what goes on in the square right from the street.

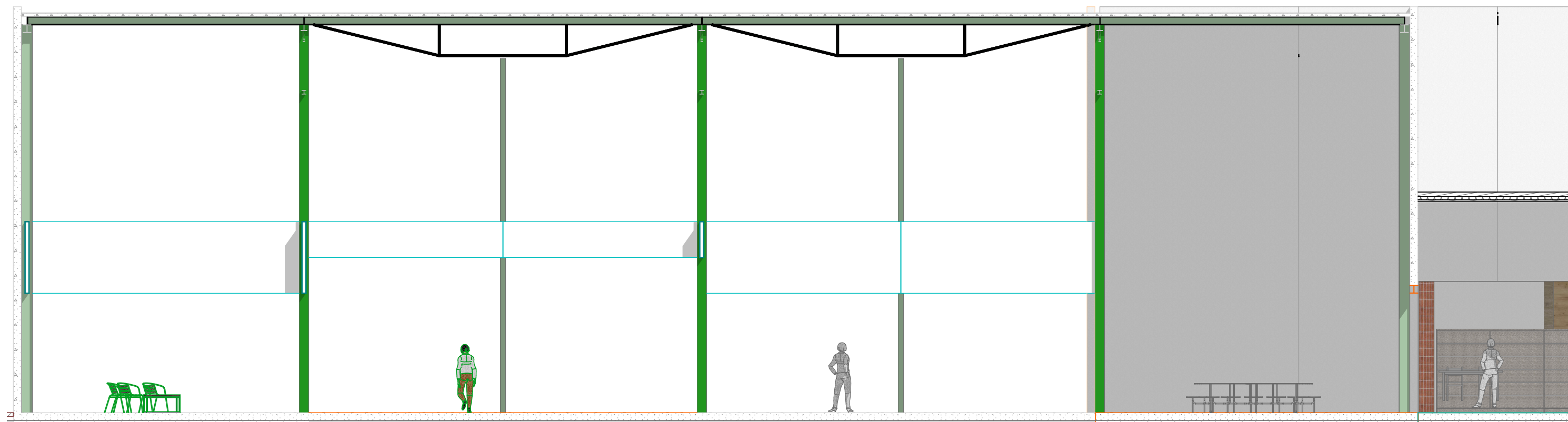
Earlier many of us avoided walking in as we weren't really sure what went on inside.





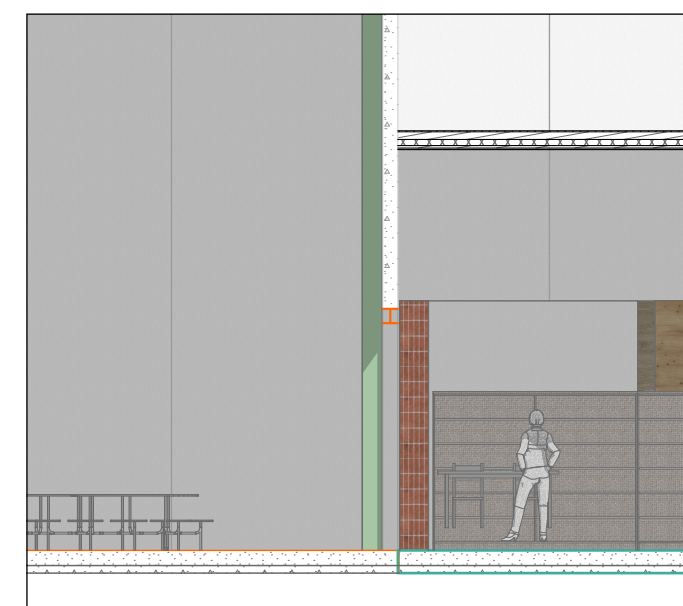
Looks like Marrek and our friends are setting up the chess board.
Listen son, you can come with your friends sometime in the afternoon when you are bored and join those fun chess games.

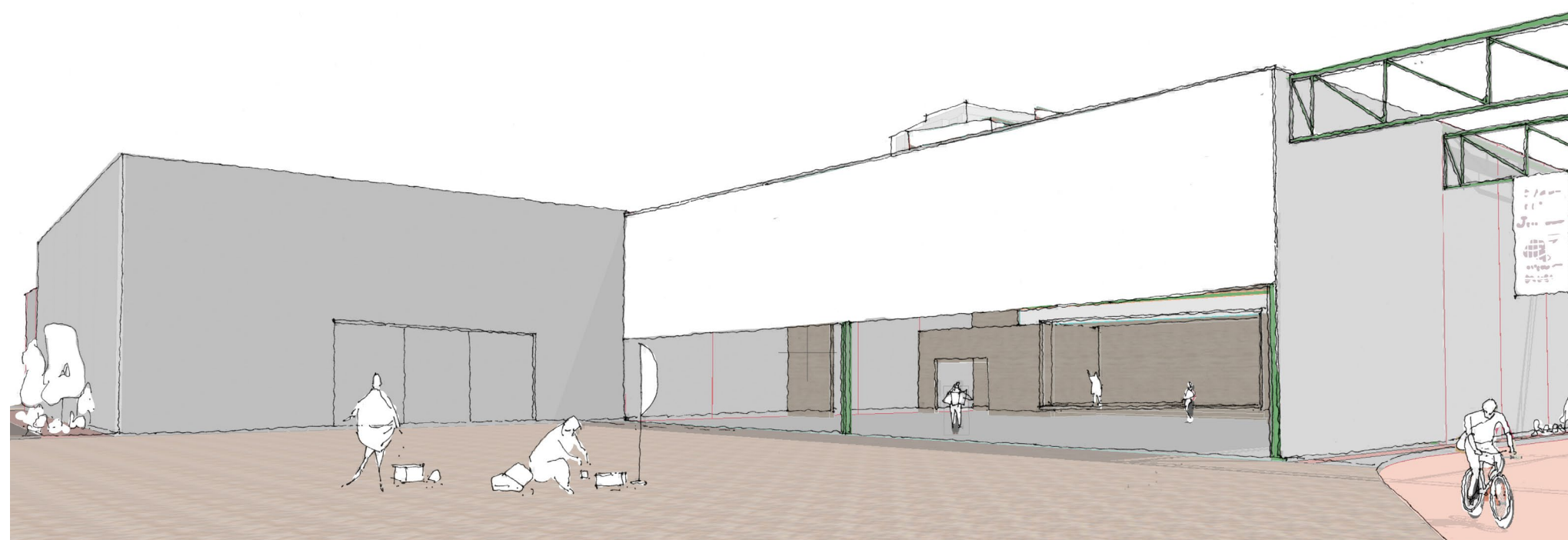
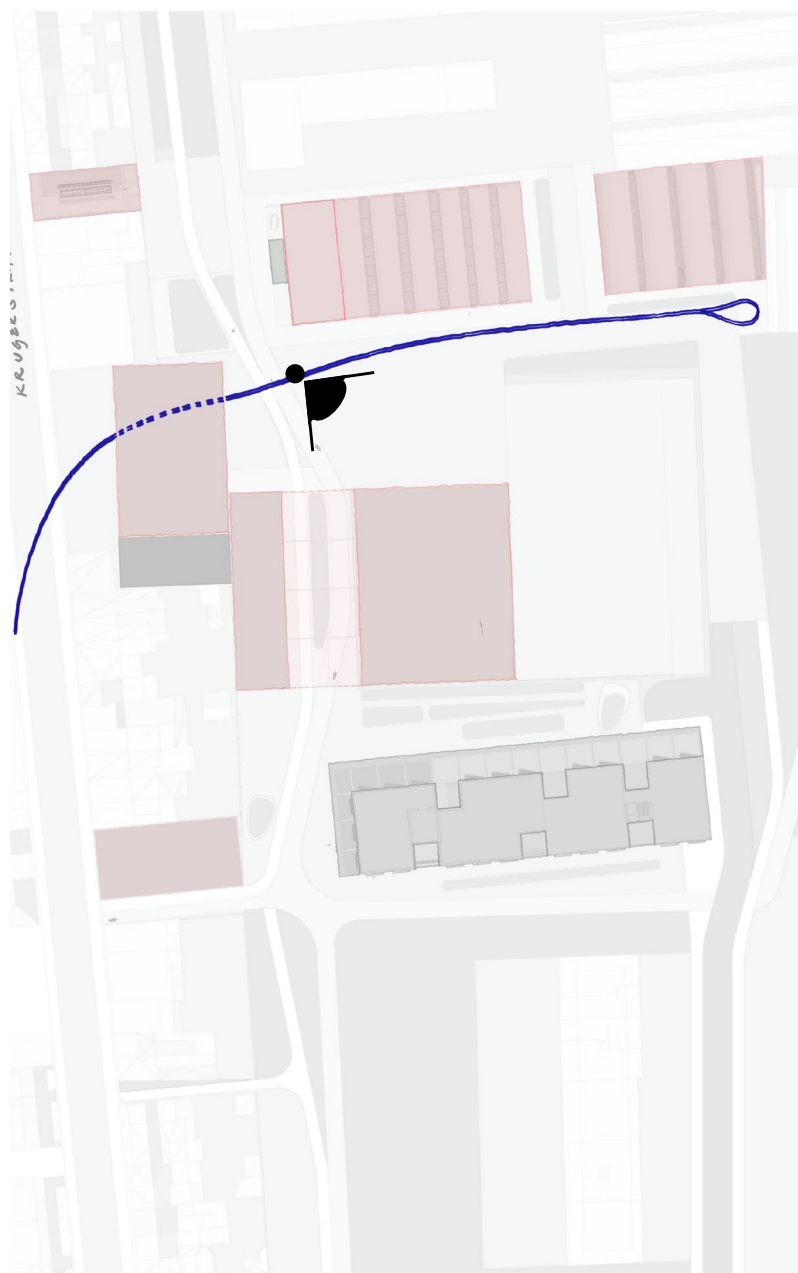
The neighbours have started making their own break away rooms for their daily socials here in the pavillion. They sometimes hang some curtains on the beams and claim some space for days even.



Hey! Are the equipments ready to be loaded? Joris would need some extra chairs for the weekend as well.

In the adjacent empty plot, a tools and equipments rental facility has been put up. It caters to the neighbours needs and is profiting from the frequent events that come live here in the square.





Looks like Joris and team are getting ready for the weekend's concert in the Expo hall.

Joris, I have few quick questions on the structural work carried out here. I am planning to make some changes in my shop building. Looks like they are from the same time period. Could you please spare sometime?



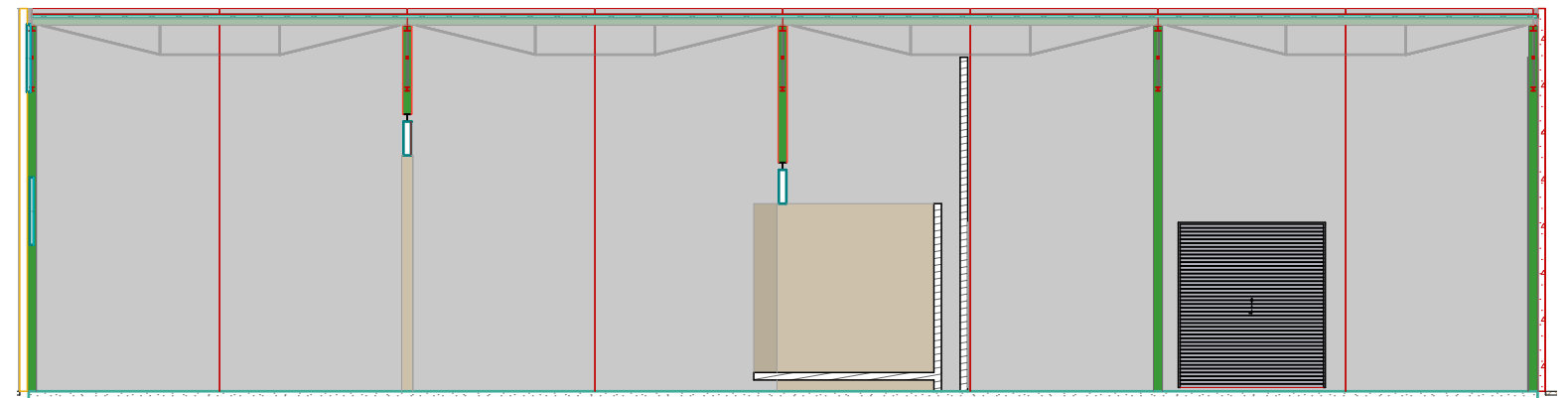
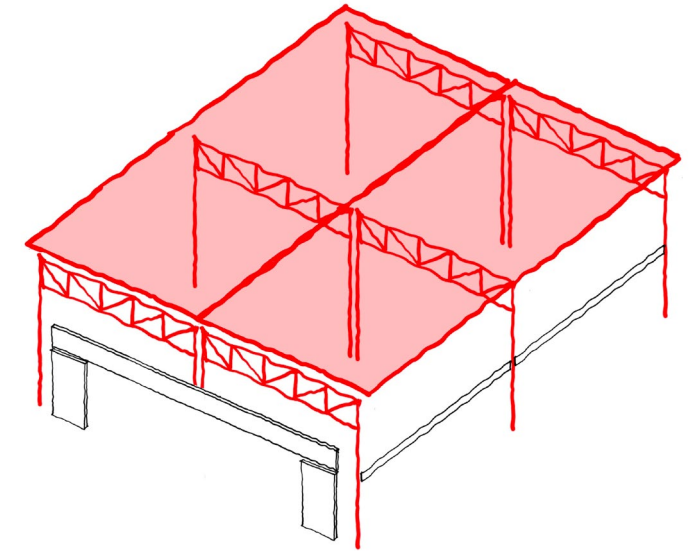
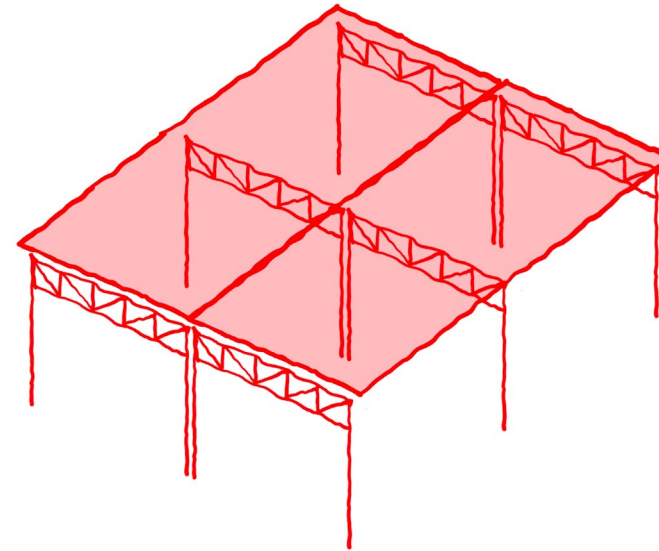
Sure, I will be there in a moment.



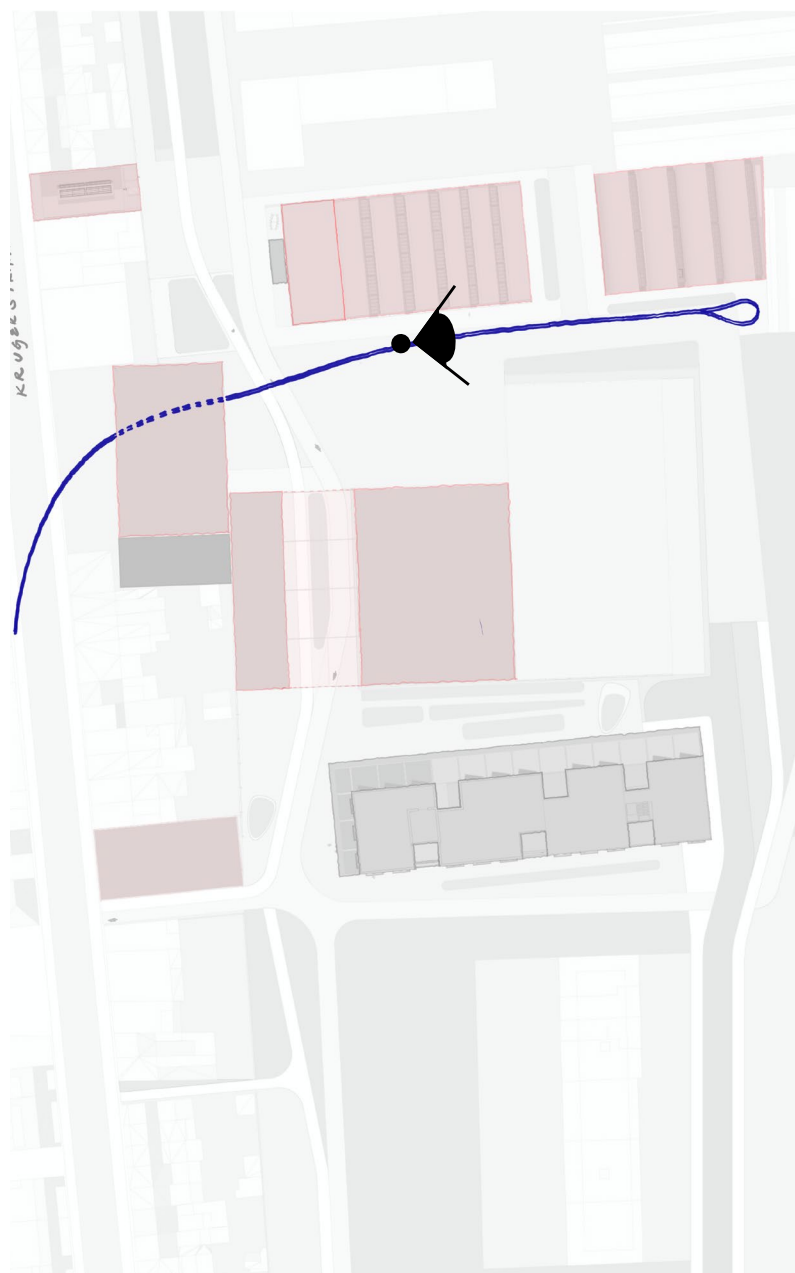
Sophian, I think you are more curious about the expo hall, no? So, to accommodate the events here, we needed bigger spans but the columns in the middle were hindering that. Thus we decided to use some transfer slabs and the only limitation is that we had to compromise on the clear height in some places. I hope that's not a big concern for you!

But remember, in case you are planning to take off the exterior walls and make the space more open, you might have to provide some bracing with an additional beam at an intermediate level.

I hope that was helpful! Got to go. Bye.



Thanks Joris. We will keep this in mind.



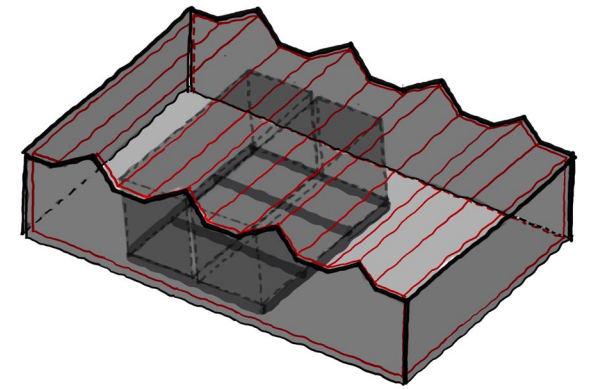
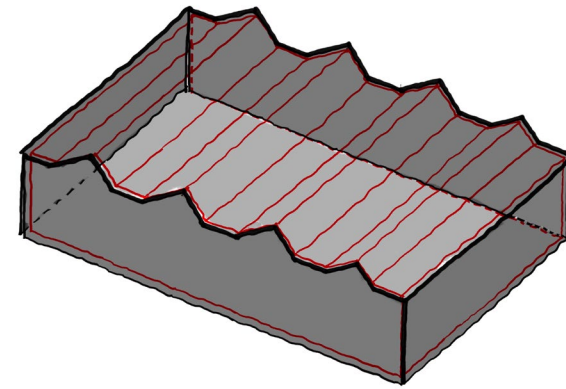
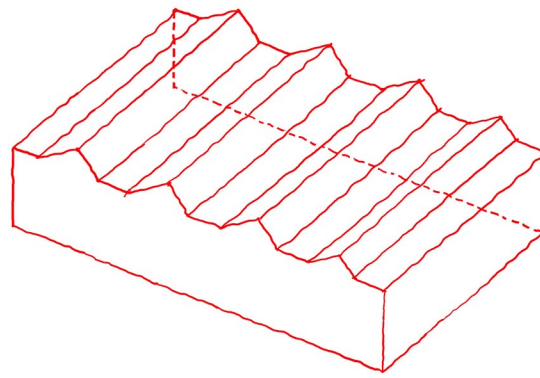
The central square is getting cleaned up after the book sale last evening. It was Hilda's initiative along. Along with Elke, they managed to get good resale book vendors from Anwerp. My son also managed to buy a few fairy tale books.

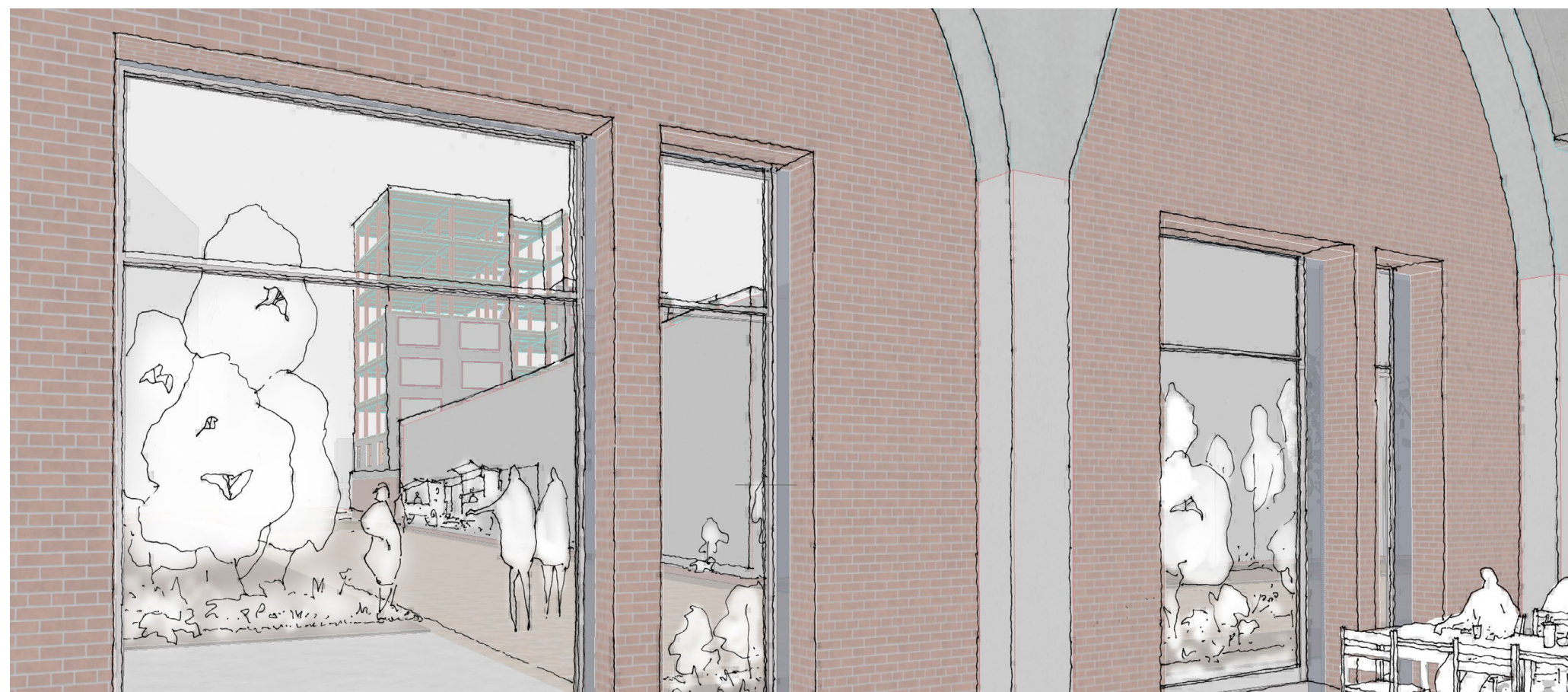
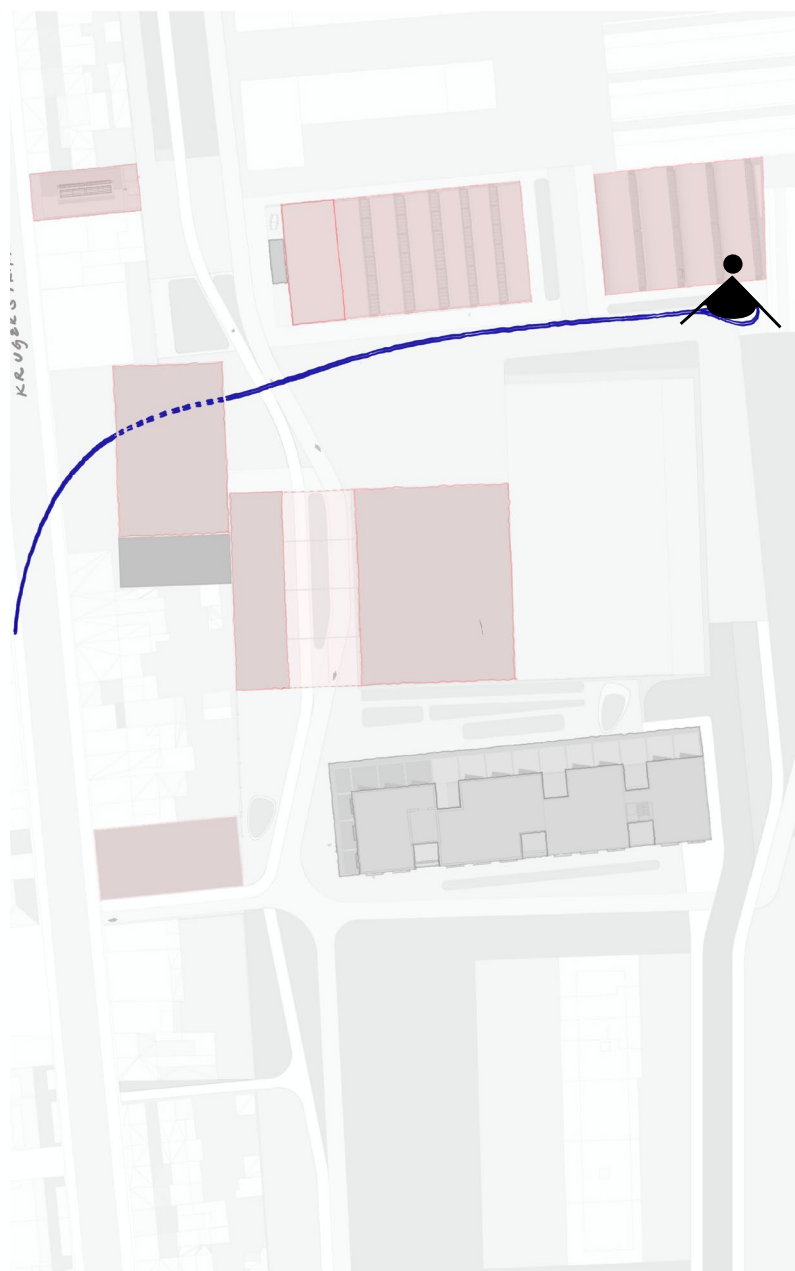




Kids, would you like to join some workshops during the summer here at the skill center? Your cousins are also planning to join I heard.

The building with those multiple sloped roofs is a skill training center. Mostly the carpenters and the metal fabricators of the BlikFabriek provide training there. This has helped the unemployed youth in the recent months.
I also remember Joris mentioning how they decided to insulate the building from the outside by wrapping it. Looks fresh to me!

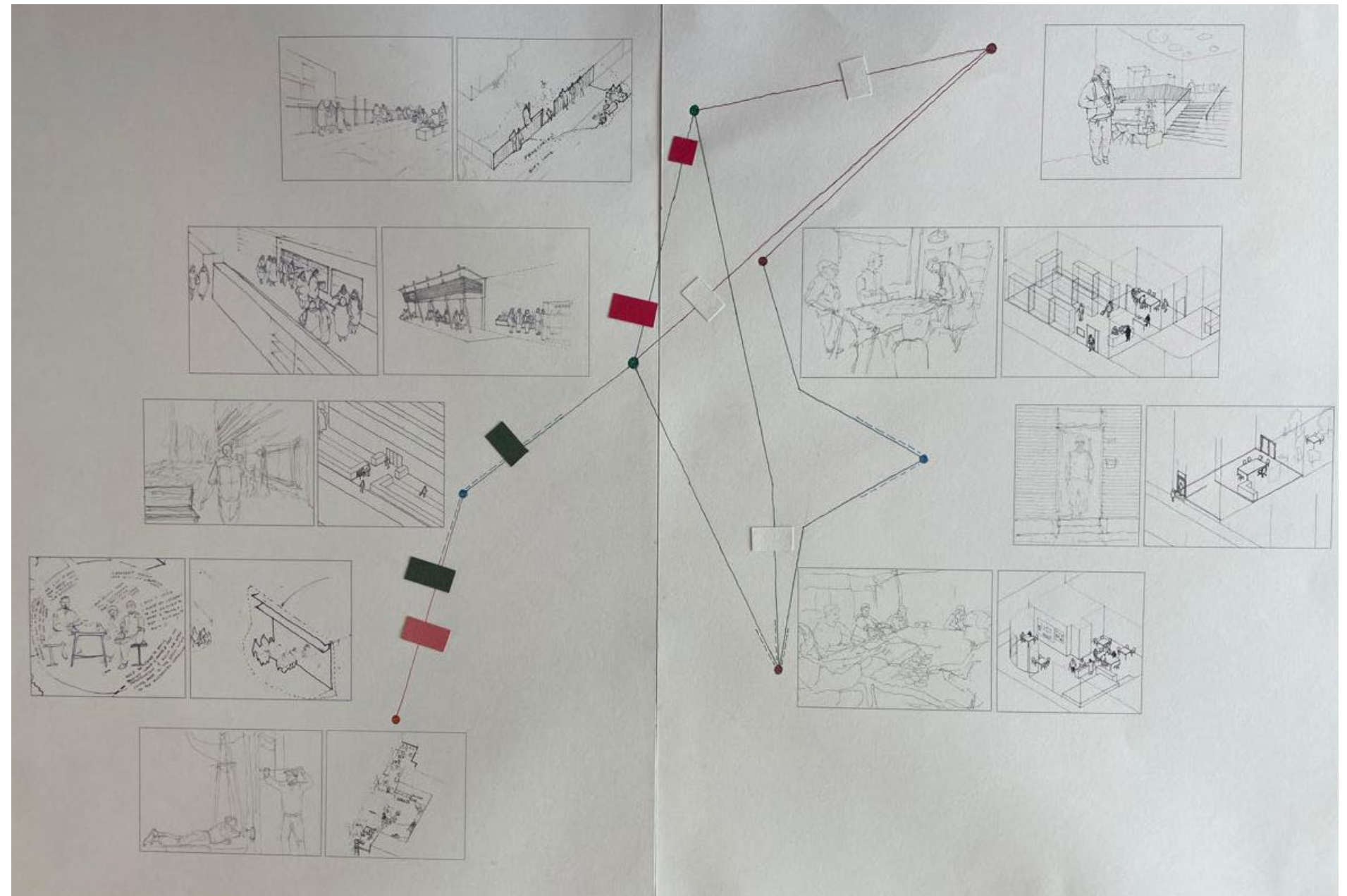


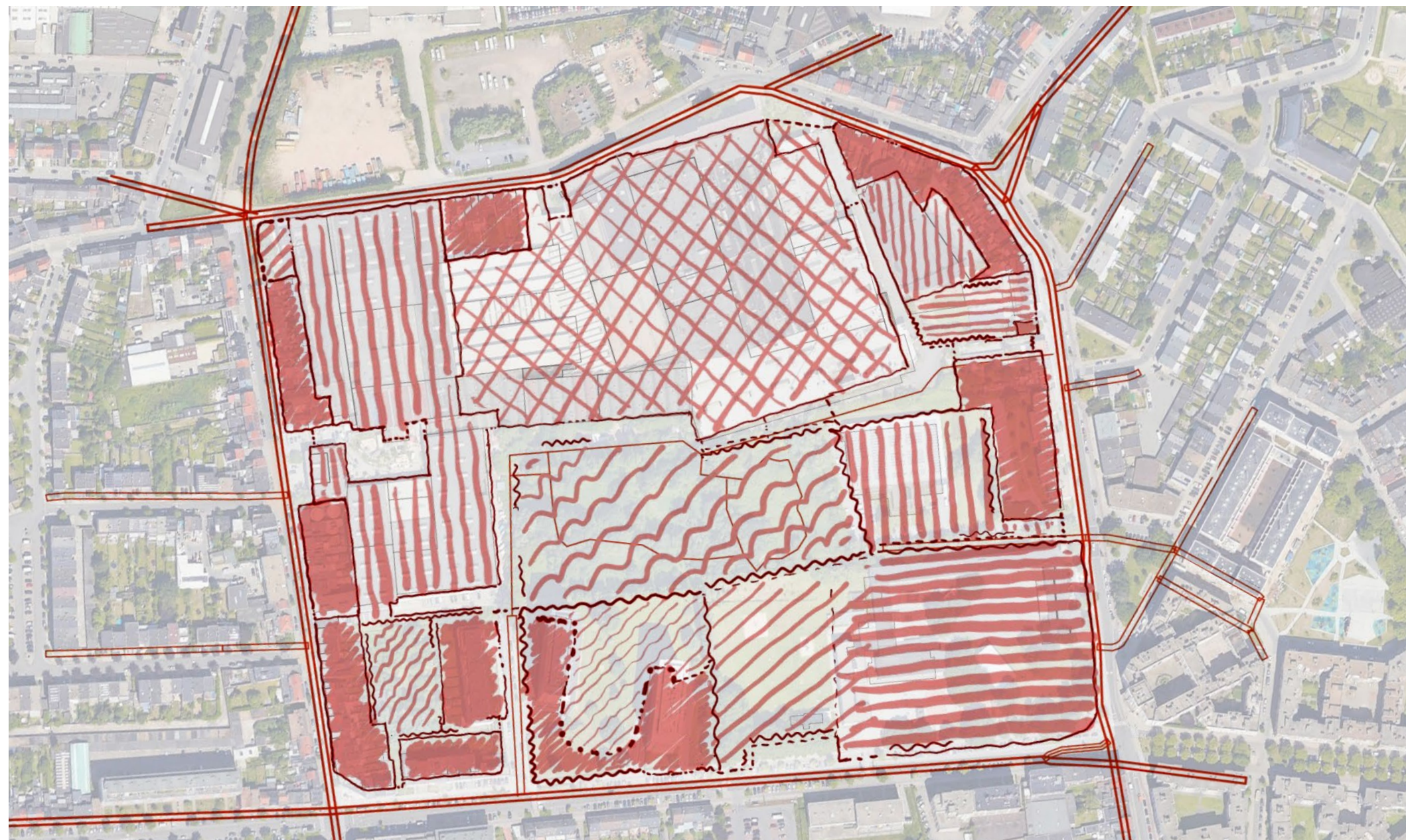


As Sophian walk past after dropping his kids at the reading room, Zahra and Marrek run into him. They decide to take a coffee break at the food stall behind the MaakFabriek.

Sophian's kids keenly watch them walk to Pierre's stall, hoping that he packs some snacks for them for later!

02. Blurring Boundaries





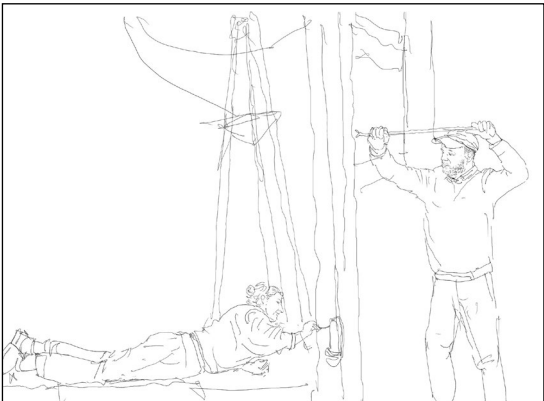
Scenario 01

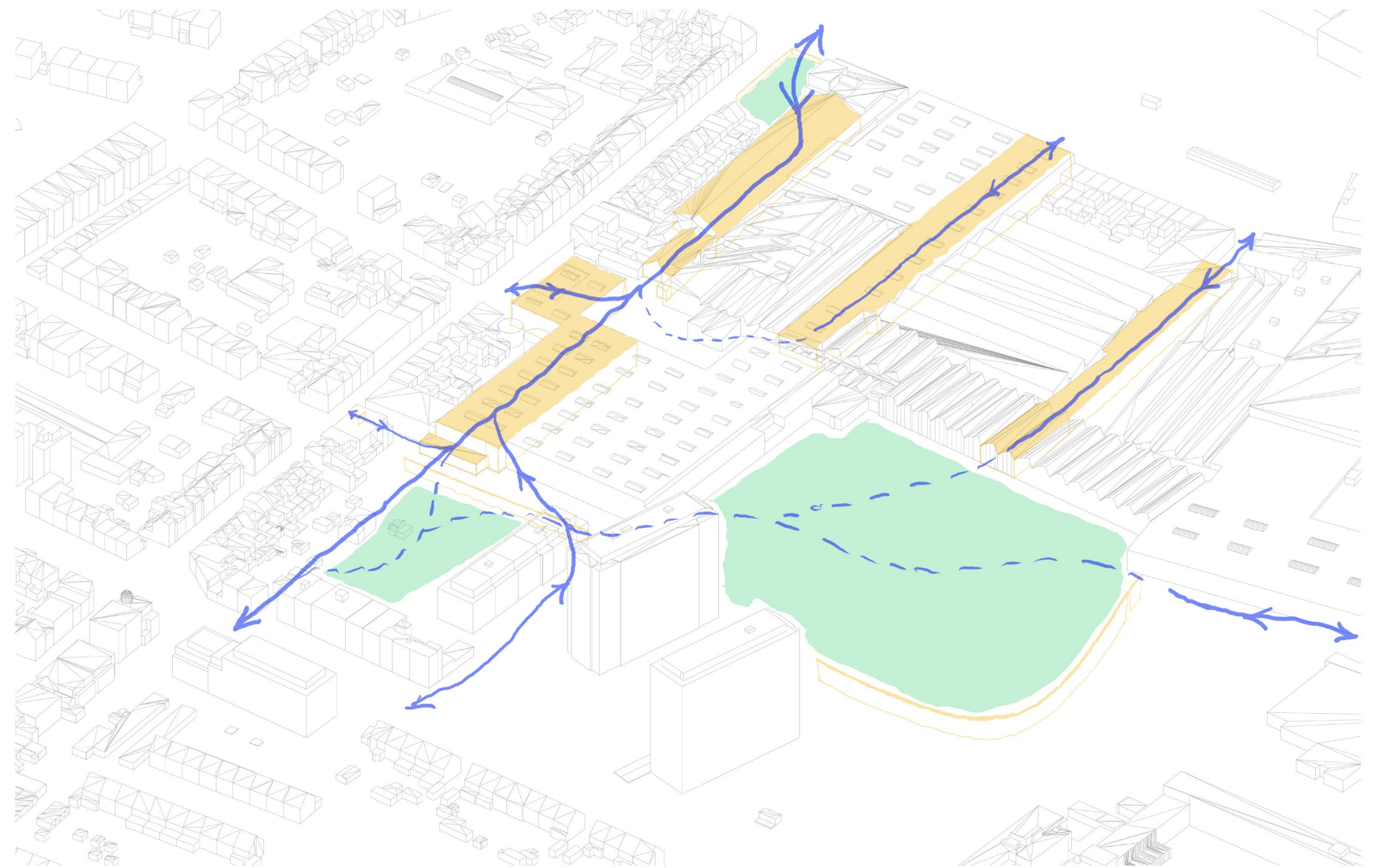
Existing



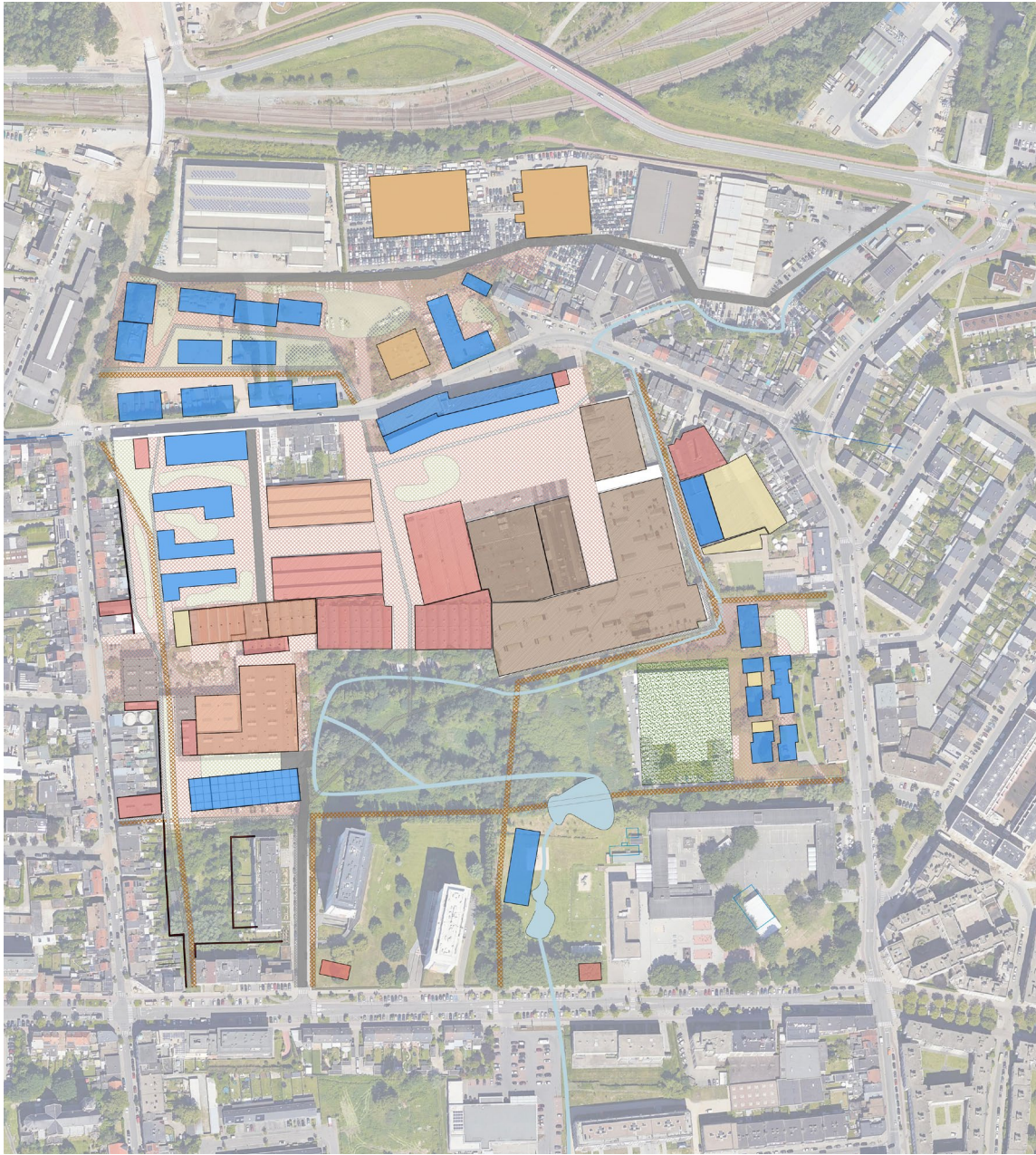
Proposed











- Housing
- Educational
- Shops and catering
- Offices and ateliers
- Industrial



How do people live and co-inhabit in the neighbourhood of Hoboken and use its public spaces?

Currently through informal public spaces, the inbetweens, closely tied to their everyday routine and path.

How can the various borders and boundaries present in the neighbourhood be treated?

Responding contextually/locally to the boundaries.
Encouraging internal routes and throughfares.

How can voices, concerns and interests of the inhabitants come together and take shape?

Engage with the inhabitants in the process of production of public spaces.

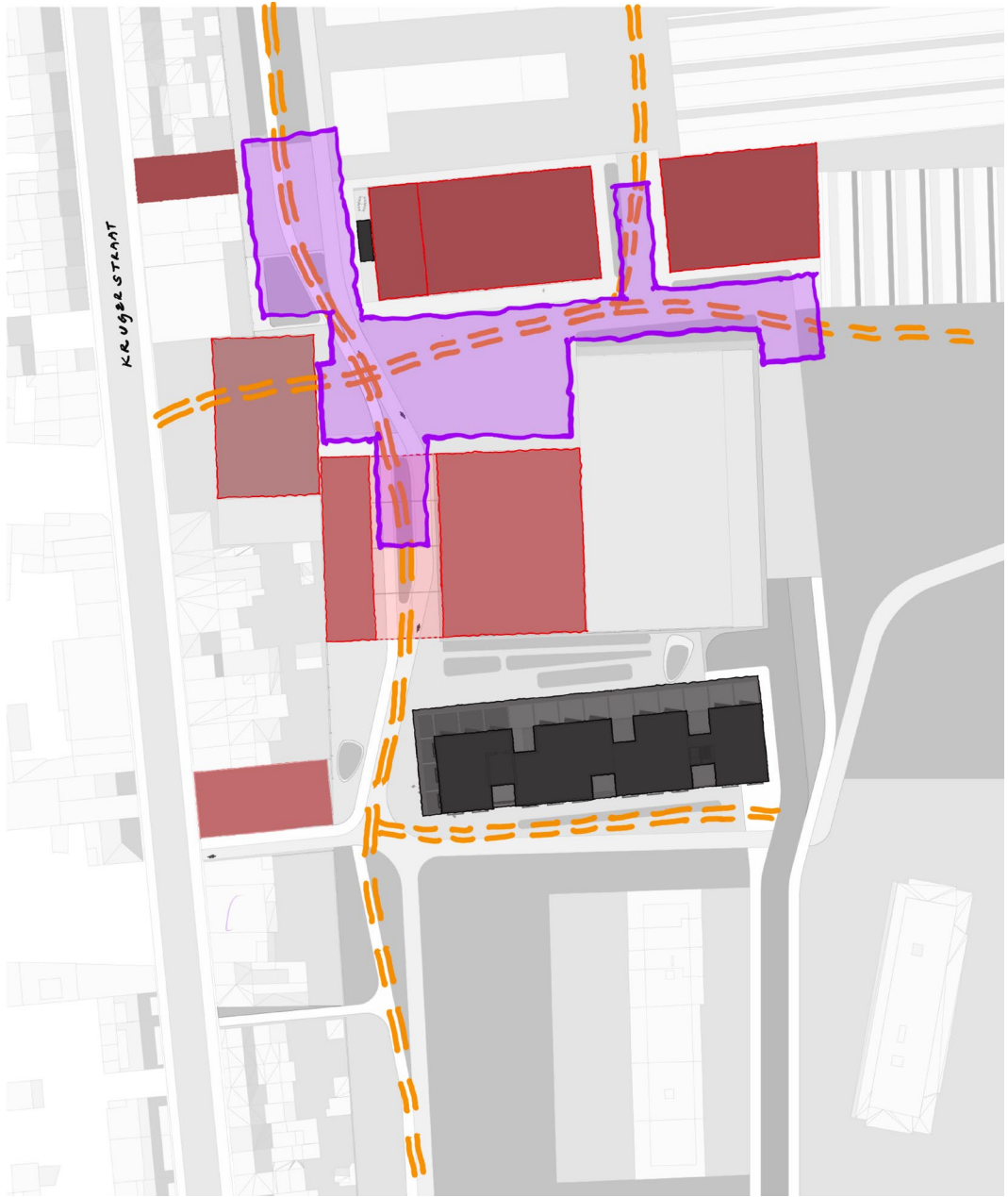
Encourage opportunities for various atmospheres, catering to the diverse user group present.

Encourage opportunities to bridge the gaps between inhabitants, pro-active inhabitants, and community institutions

How can chance interaction of the inhabitants be promoted in the neighbourhood's everyday public spaces?

Responding contextually/locally to the boundaries.
Encouraging internal routes and throughfares.

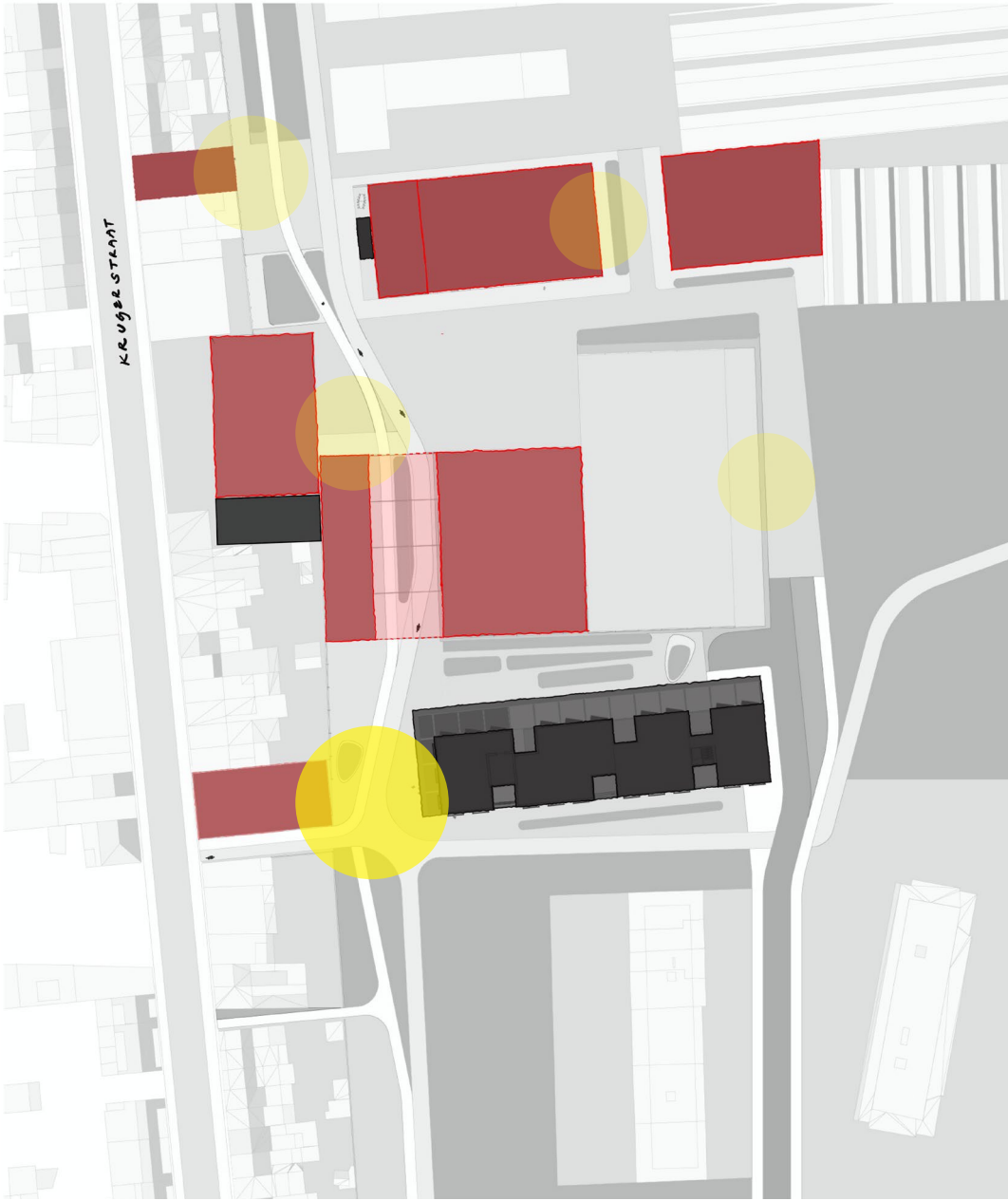
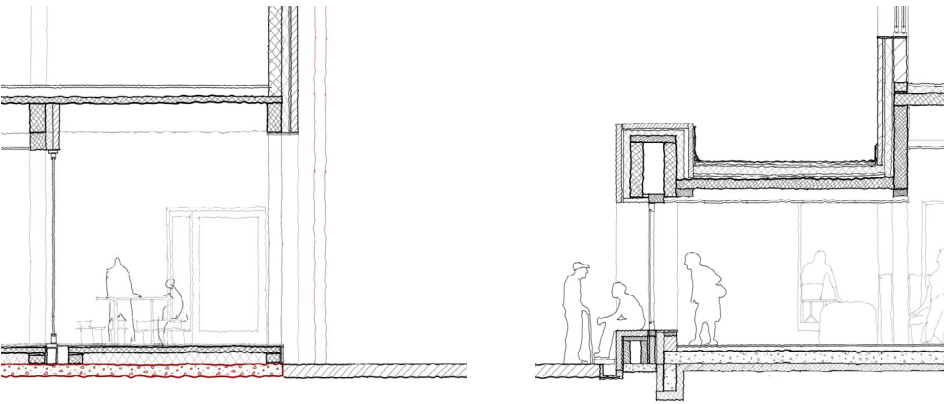
03. Ways of Building



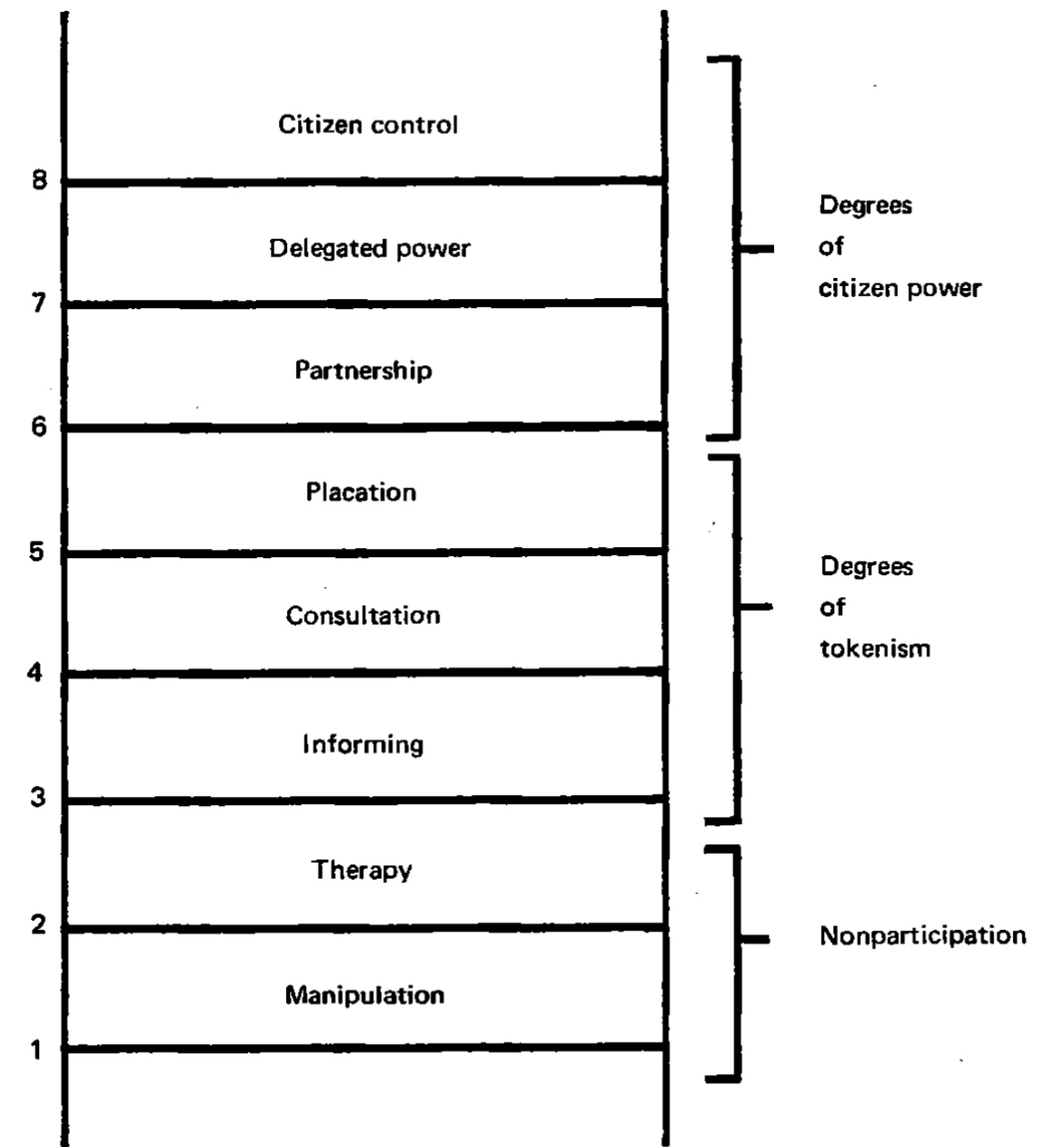
Programmatic mix

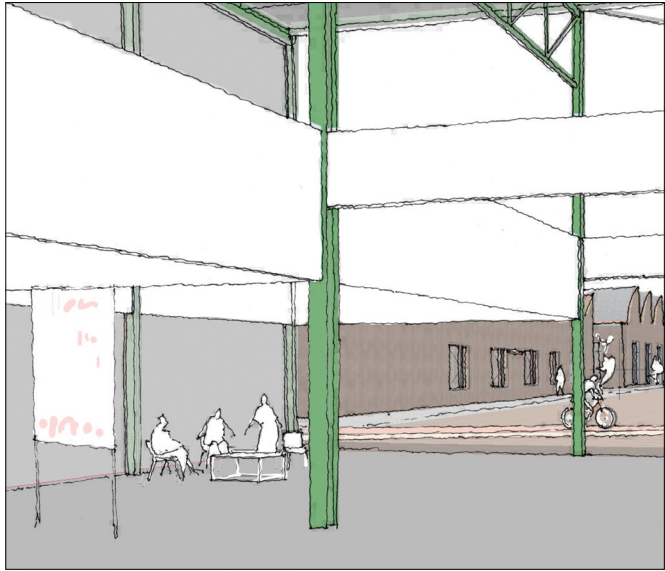
- 01 Women run bakery (Reuse)
- 02 Co-work space and Homework school (Reuse)
- 03 Skill and Techincal education (Reuse)
- 04 Reading room (Reuse)
- 05 Entry Pavillion (Reuse)
- 06 Tools rental and Equipments rental
- 07 Documentation and language services (Reuse)
- 08 Expo Hall (Reuse)
- 8a + Makers studios retained
- 8b Food stall docking (Reuse)
- 09 Neighbourhood supplies shop (Reuse)
- 10 Housing (Proposed block)





04. Ways of Reading





In the broader professional and societal context, the attempt was to **respond critically to prevailing top-down urban renewal strategies**. My own professional experience exposed me to rigid redevelopment frameworks that often fail to incorporate invisible community voices. This project was, in part, a reaction to that dissonance—**an attempt to mould more empathetic and responsive design practices that are informed locally**.

However, this also brings new questions to the surface. During the exhibition of the collective works of the students held on site, one local resident asked, **“So, will these ever be built?”**—a question that could not be answered with certainty. It revealed a deeper tension between intention and implementation. While the project responds to multiple contextual challenges through localized, co-created strategies, it also raises the question: will these align with the city’s broader development plans and its physical, bureaucratic, or economic constraints? **This uncertainty does not diminish the value of the approach, rather it reinforces its purpose.** **This project is not an endpoint, but a starting point**—an invitation to reimagine public space as something deeply personal, social, and shared. The **intent is also to continue this dialogue with the inhabitants for collective action.**

