



# The Mediator

Connecting polarities to frame a cultural ecosystem

Ferdinand Aull



<https://www.europosters.eu/marketplace/gray-watercolor-map-of-the-netherlands-v87974>

# Groningen

Location



geg.: 600.000 inhabitants in province of Groningen  
 900.000 overnight stays in 2023  
 ↑ 1.500.000 overnight stays in 2026

$$\frac{900.000 \text{ V}}{365 \text{ d}} = 2465 \frac{\text{V}}{\text{d}}$$

$$\frac{2465 \frac{\text{V}}{\text{d}}}{600.000} = 0,41 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{d}/100 \text{ Inhab}}$$

$$\frac{0,41}{0,9} \cdot 1,5 = 0,68 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{d}/100^{\text{th}}}$$

0,41 ↑ 0,68  $\frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{d}/100 \text{ Inhab.}}$

Winsum: 7500 inhabitants

$$\frac{900.000}{600.000} = 1,5 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{Inhab}}$$

$$\frac{x}{7500} = 1,5$$

$$1,5 \cdot 7500 = x$$

$$x = 11250 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{year}}$$


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$$30,8 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{d}}$$

$$\frac{1.500.000}{600.000} = 2,5$$

$$\frac{x}{7500} = 2,5$$

$$2,5 \cdot 7500 = x$$

$$x = 18.750 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{year}}$$

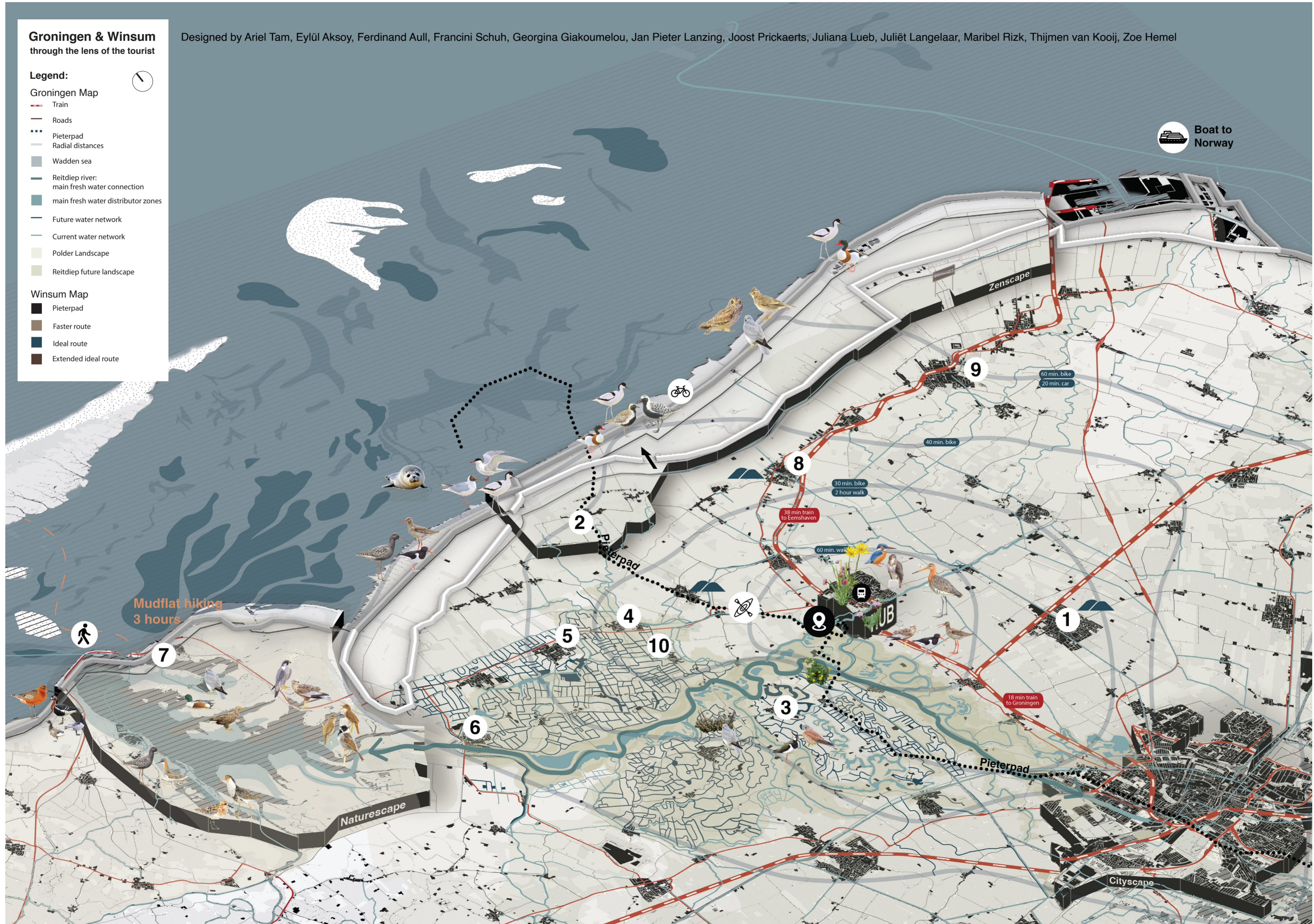

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$$51,4 \frac{\text{OVN}}{\text{d}}$$

↑ 66%

Increase of tourist numbers

# Tourism as a means of regeneration for the province of Groningen

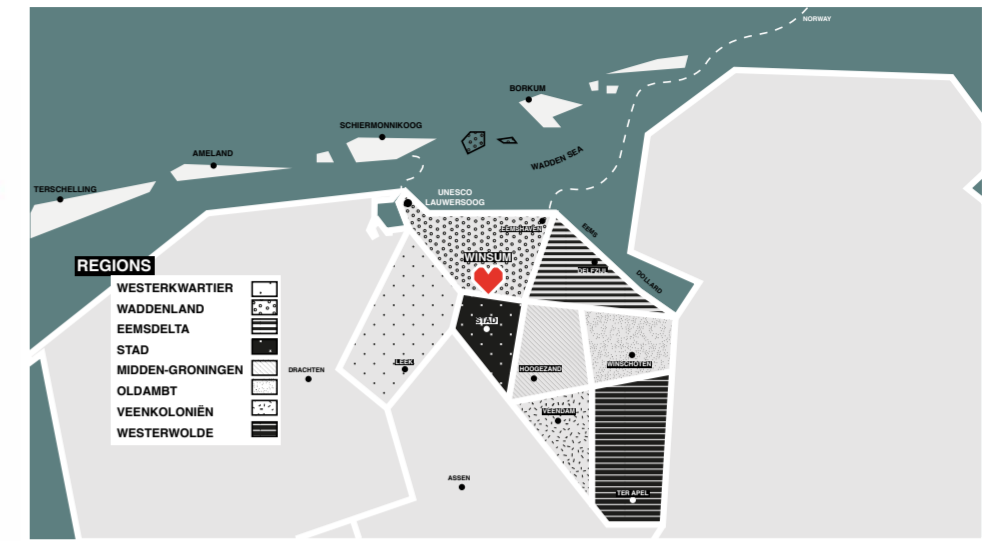
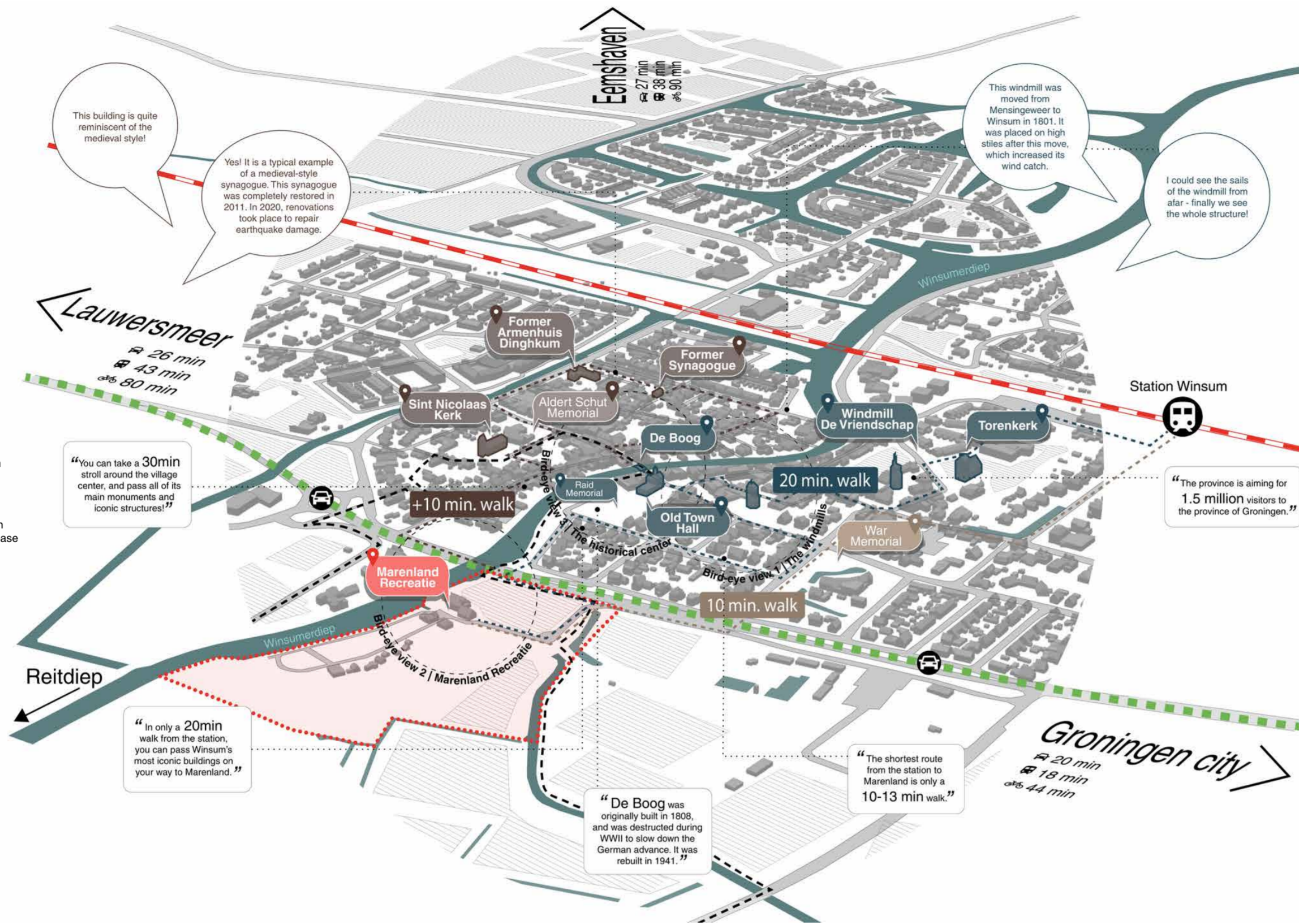


**The design explores how existing qualities can be revealed and activated as part of the visitors experience**

# Your Journey starts in Winsum!

Your journey starts in Winsum! Winsum is the place to discover Unesco Lauwersmeer, party city Groningen and its variety in heritage landscape in just a few days. It is just the place to be to discover the North!

- 1.8 days** The average length of stay in Winsum
- 7525 residents** The population of Winsum
- 11% growth** The Province of Groningen recorded the highest increase in overnight visitors in the Netherlands in 2024
- 1.5 million** The ambition to increase visitors annually



**1 Walfriduskerk, Bedum**  
This Romanesque-Gothic church from the 13th century is famous for its leaning tower, which is even more crooked than the Tower of Pisa. The church forms a historic centerpiece for the village of Bedum and offers an exceptional view of the Groningen wadden landscape.

**2 Petruskerk, Pieterburen**  
This characteristic 14th-century village church stands on a mound. It is known as the starting point of the Pieterpad walking route. The church also reflects the long history of settlement and religion in the northern coastal region.

**3 Museum Wierdenland, Ezinge**  
This museum shows life on mounds, which are artificial hills that offered protection from the sea. Ezinge is one of the best-researched mounds in the Netherlands. Archaeology, landscape, and cultural history come together here.

**4 Art centre 'De Ploeg', Wehe - Den Hoorn**  
This art centre is dedicated to the artists' collective 'De Ploeg', from the early 20th century. The artists were inspired by the Groningen landscape and everyday life. The centre also connects modern art with the unique landscape of North Groningen.

**5 Museum Verhildersum Estate, Leens**  
Historic landscape, with manor house, farm and museum. Provides an insight into aristocratic life and daily existence in the Groningen countryside through the centuries. The museum displays historic interiors, art and utensils.

**6 Fishing village, Zoutkamp**  
An authentic fishing village with a historic harbour on the Fieldiep. Zoutkamp tells the story of fishing, shipping and life on the water, where the sea and the inland meet. The characteristic warehouses are a reminder of this history.

**7 Wadden Sea World Heritage Centre (WEC), Lauwersoog**  
This interactive visitor centre is dedicated to the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the dynamics of the tides, birds, marine life and the relationship between humans and nature through interactive exhibitions about this dynamic and vulnerable nature reserve. The centre offers a unique opportunity to see a seal up close.

**8 Openluchtmuseum Het Hoogeland, Warffum**  
Museum village with historic buildings from Groningen. Provides an insight into how people lived and worked in the Hogeland region in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Shows how the landscape determined the way of life in the Hogeland by highlighting crafts, agriculture and social relations.

**9 Menkemaborg, Uithuizen**  
A beautiful 18th-century manor house with formal gardens. This manor house shows how the Groningen elite lived, surrounded by art, architecture and landscape. The manor house now functions as a museum and offers a glimpse into aristocratic life in North Groningen.

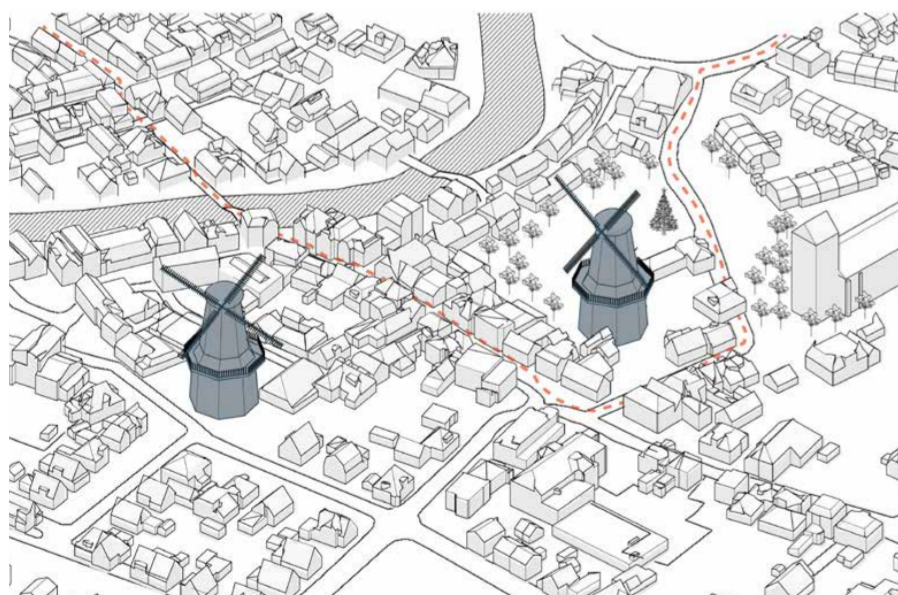
**10 Observationtower, Warhuizen**  
This observation tower offers a panoramic view of the open mound landscape. It is an ideal place to experience the spaciousness of North Groningen and the interplay of land, water and sky.

**FAUNA SPECIES**

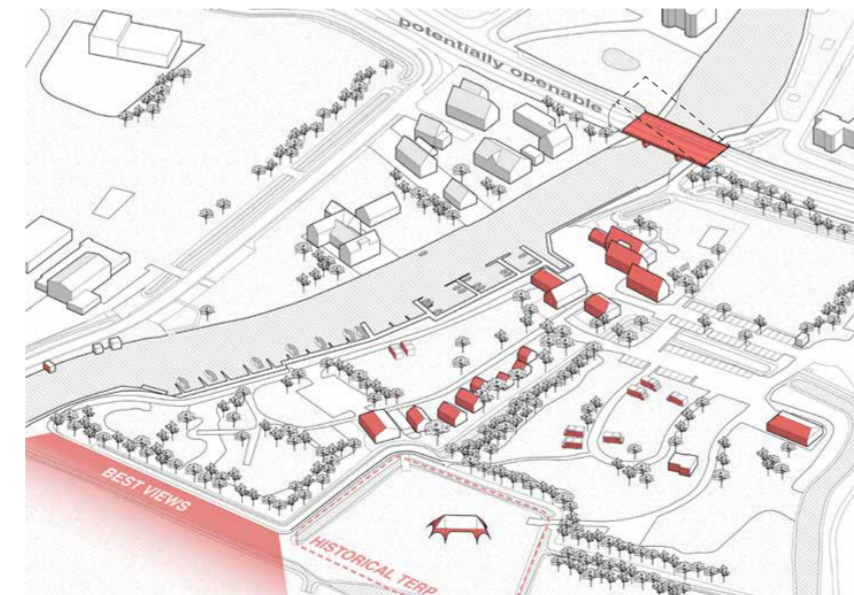
- Zeehond
- Slechtvalk
- Torenvalk
- Tureluur
- Velduil
- Veldeuwerik
- Visdief
- Zeearend
- Zilverplevier
- Zwarte ruit
- Kluut
- Rosso grutto
- Scholekster
- Kleine karekiet
- Kieviet
- Kokmeeuw
- Rietzanger
- Gestreepte strandloper
- Grauwe franjepoot
- Goudplevier
- Grutto
- Usvogel
- Kemphaan
- Kanoet
- Brandgans
- Roodhalsgans
- Bergeend
- Bonte strandloper
- Blauwe kiekendief
- Bruine kiekendief
- Buizerd
- Slobeend

**FAUNA**

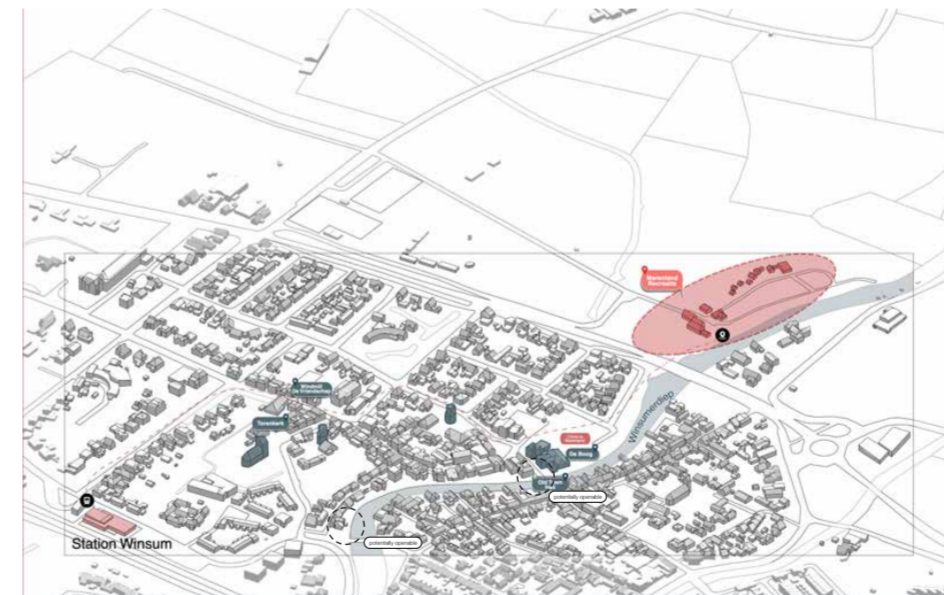
- Spindotterbloem
- Knoopkruid
- Kattendoorn
- Gele morgenster
- Paarse morgenster



Bird-eye view 1 | The Windmills



Bird-eye view 2 | Marenland Recreatie



Bird-eye view 3 | The historical center



# Spatial separation between Marenland and the cultural ecosystem

Isolation offers The Mediator the opportunity to establish a symbiotic relationship with the existing Marenland campsite



<https://media0.faz.net/image/w1200h900/20b325a34012/w2000h1500x500y250/202405/19744247/unter-dem-motto-sagen-wirwebp>



<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp8d87l6lpio>

## Tourist place pressure on social life and public spaces

Problem globally

Ferdinand Aull



# As 'overtourism' swamps Amsterdam, Dutch capital pushes back

Originally published December 11, 2017 at 5:26 am | Updated December 11, 2017 at 5:43 am



1 of 12 | In this May 11, 2016 photo, graffiti reading "Go Home" is sprayed on a map of bicycle paths at the entrance to Amsterdam's Vondelpark, a popular spot for tourists to ride their rental bicycles. "If the only... (AP Photo/Peter Dejong) More ▾

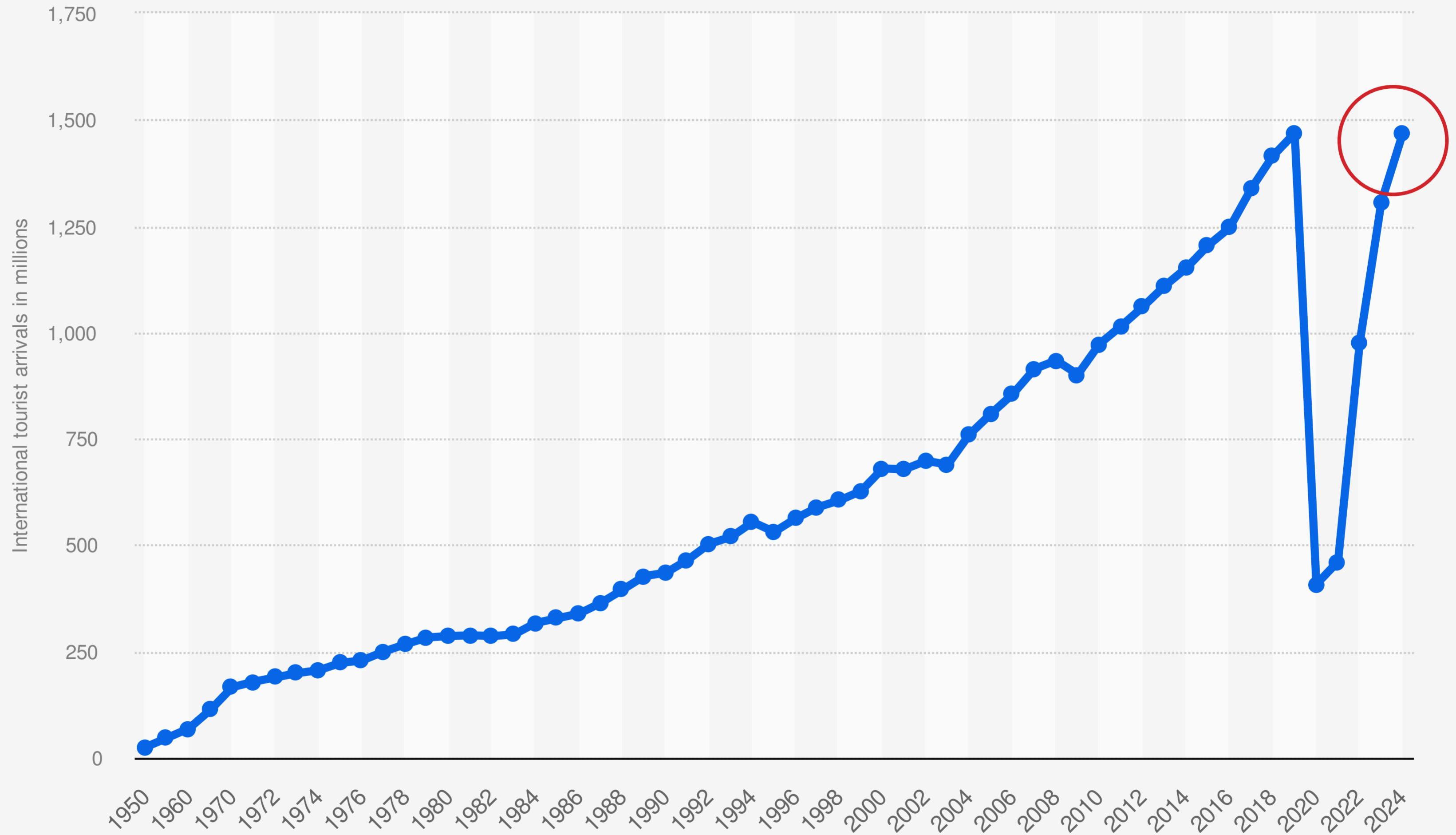
<https://apnews.com/general-news-travel-c95b74b3a2d54d5fac5f72256a21da06>

## Growing tensions between locals and tourists

Problem in the Netherlands

Ferdinand Aull

### Number of international tourist arrivals worldwide from 1950 to 2024 (in millions)



**Sources**

World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism);  
Worldwatch Institute  
© Statista 2026

**Additional Information:**

Worldwide; World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism); Worldwatch  
Institute; 1950 to 2024

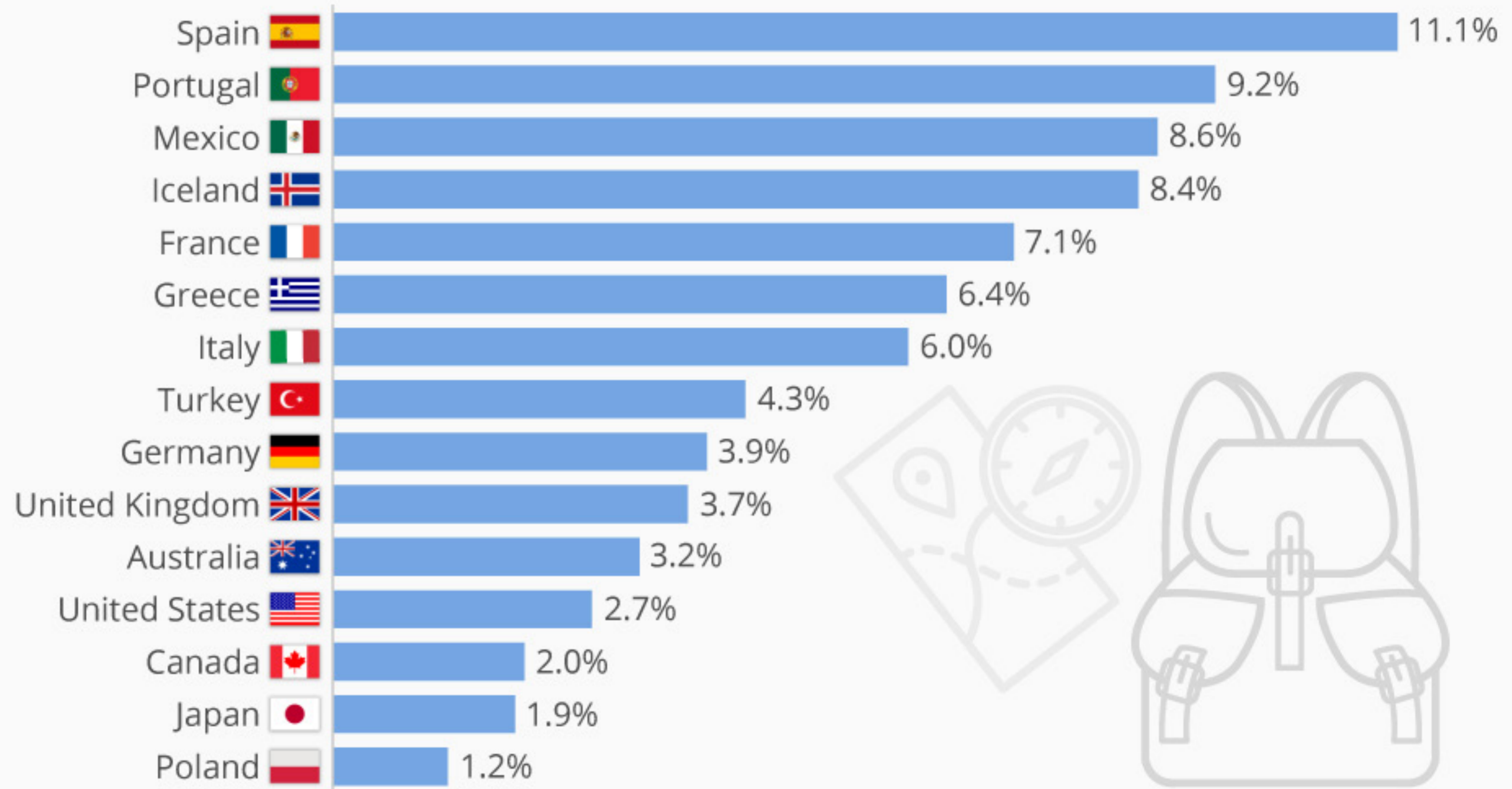
<https://www-statista-com.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/statistics/209334/total-number-of-international-tourist-arrivals/?srsltid=AfmBOooAdO2fnD-uGrE9wGLsc9pbvFNUB6mGiqJ7ooow6vWQaJkDGfBI>

## 1.47 billion tourist arrivals without benefits for the local community

Destinations are attracting so many tourists that the quality of life for locals is deteriorating

# Where Tourism Gives The Biggest Economic Boost

Tourism as a percentage of GDP in selected OECD countries (2016)\*



\* Data for Spain includes indirect impact, data for France refers to internal tourism consumption



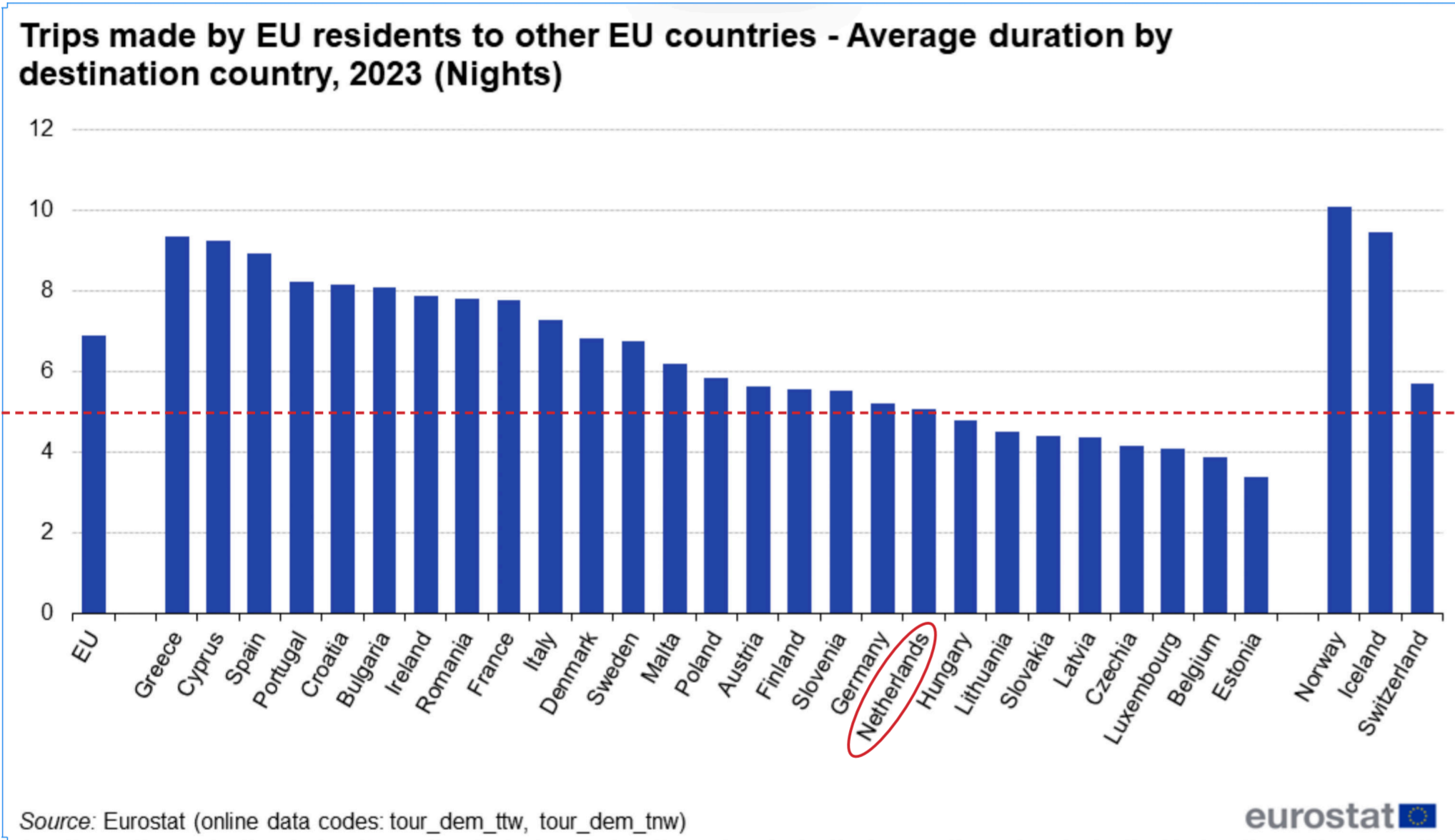
Source: OECD



<https://www-statista-com.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/chart/13829/where-tourism-gives-the-biggest-economic-boost/?srsltid=AfmBOopp5vq40A0U7BpG00xKF6MAMLweqD5flmTwID0-OtCjama-rFz>

**At the same time stays are becoming shorter, which limits the local economy to generate benefits**

Tourism infrastructure priorities efficiency and consumption over longer engagement



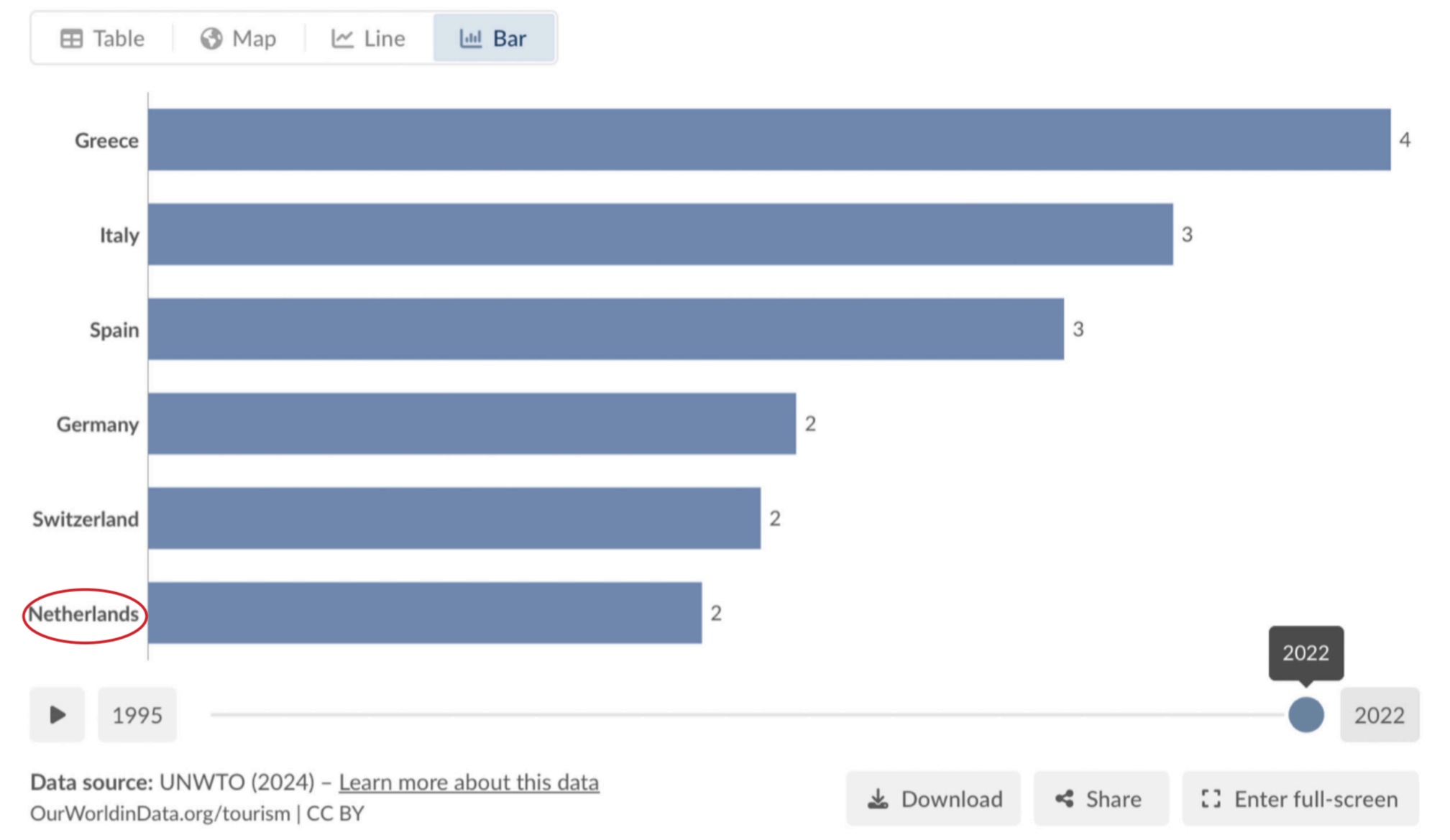
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tourism\\_statistics\\_-\\_intra-EU\\_tourism\\_flows](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tourism_statistics_-_intra-EU_tourism_flows)

Average length of stay of European visitors is **5 days**

### Average length of stay of international visitors, 2022

Our World in Data

Number of nights in both commercial and non-commercial accommodation services.



<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/average-length-of-stay?tab=discrete-bar&time=latest&country=NLD-ESP-ITA-GRC-DEU-CHE&mapSelect=NLD-ESP-ITA-GRC-DEU-CHE>

Average length of International visitors is **2 days**

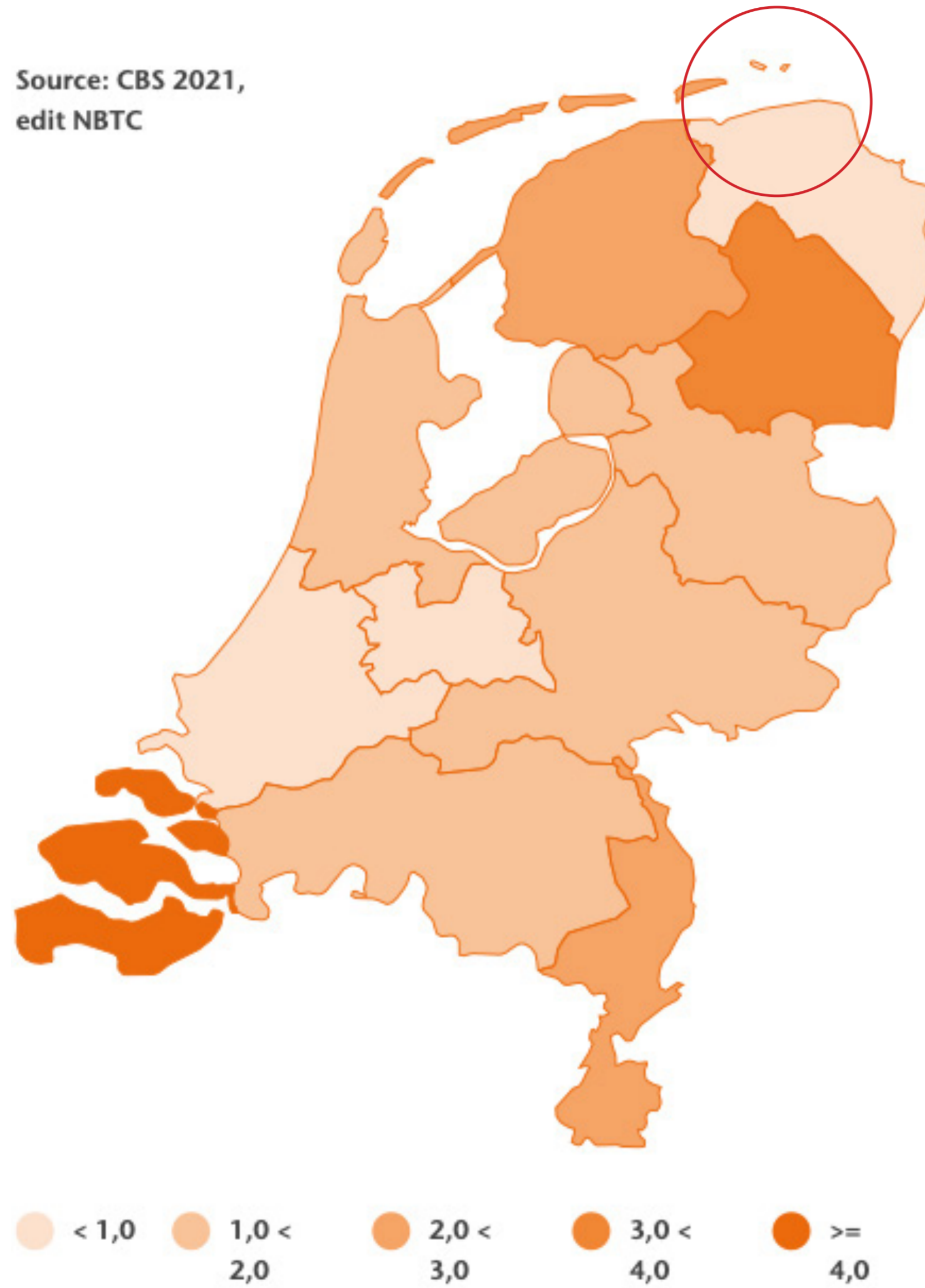
## No economic profit without longer stays

Netherlands | Mentioned by Nij begun

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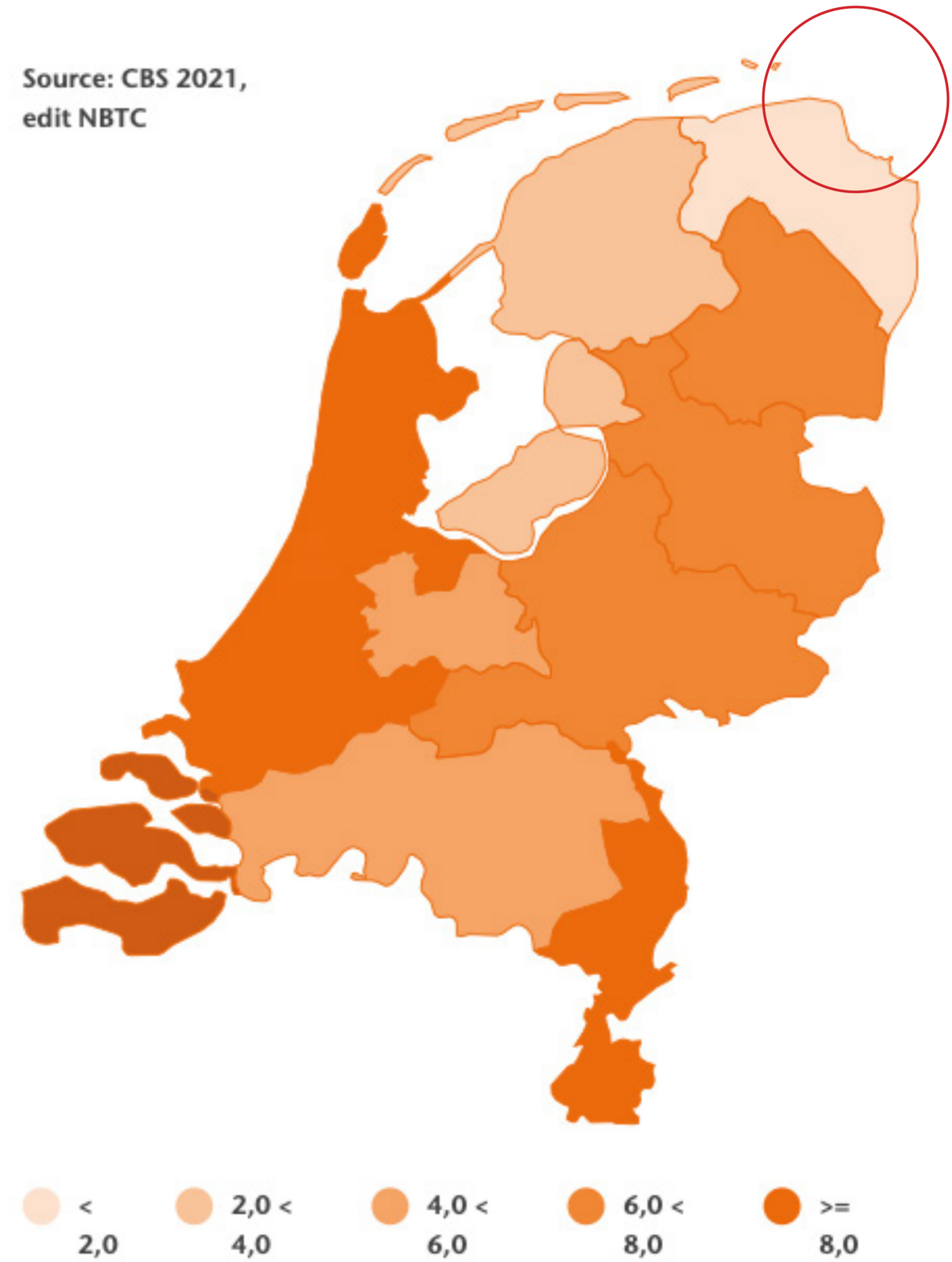
### Intensity - Regional differences Overnight stays per day per 100 inhabitants.

Source: CBS 2021,  
edit NBTC



### Density - Regional differences Number of overnight stays per day per km<sup>2</sup>

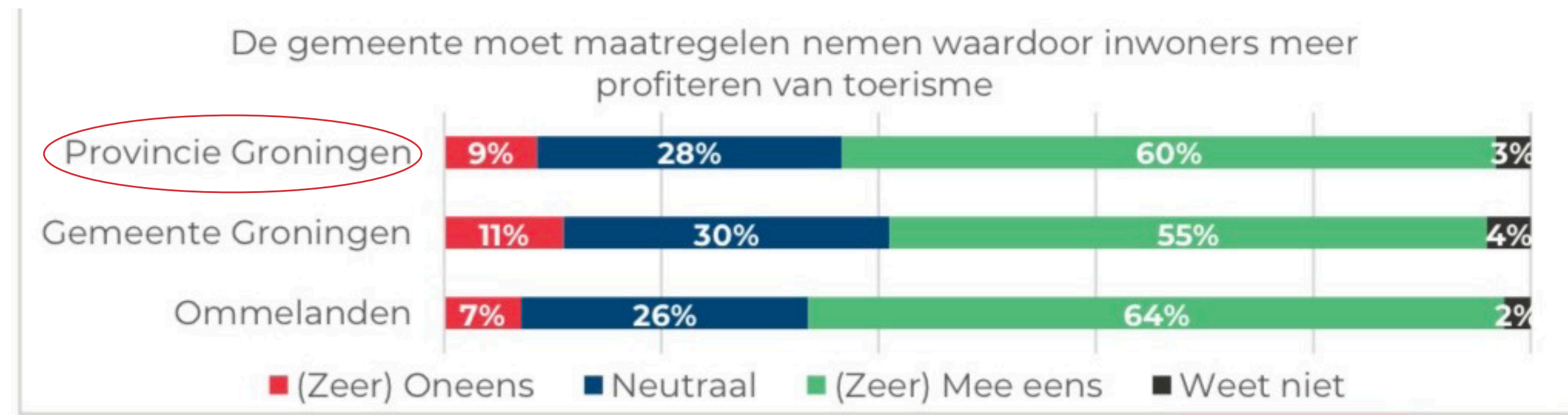
Source: CBS 2021,  
edit NBTC



[https://www.celth.nl/uploads/2024/6/valuable-tourism-is\\_43517.pdf?utm\\_source](https://www.celth.nl/uploads/2024/6/valuable-tourism-is_43517.pdf?utm_source)

## Average stay in Winsum is 1 day

Netherlands, Province of Groningen, Winsum | Mentioned by Nij begun



[https://www.provinciegroningen.nl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Documenten/Beleid\\_en\\_documenten/Documentenzoeker/Werken\\_en\\_ondernemen/Toerisme/Rapportage\\_Onderzoek\\_Vrijtijdseconomie\\_provincie\\_Groningen\\_februari\\_2025\\_WCAG.pdf?](https://www.provinciegroningen.nl/fileadmin/user_upload/Documenten/Beleid_en_documenten/Documentenzoeker/Werken_en_ondernemen/Toerisme/Rapportage_Onderzoek_Vrijtijdseconomie_provincie_Groningen_februari_2025_WCAG.pdf?)

60% of inhabitants want to profit from tourism

## Locals want to benefit without careful architectural design tourism risks becoming a form of exploitation

Rather than a source of long-term regional benefits



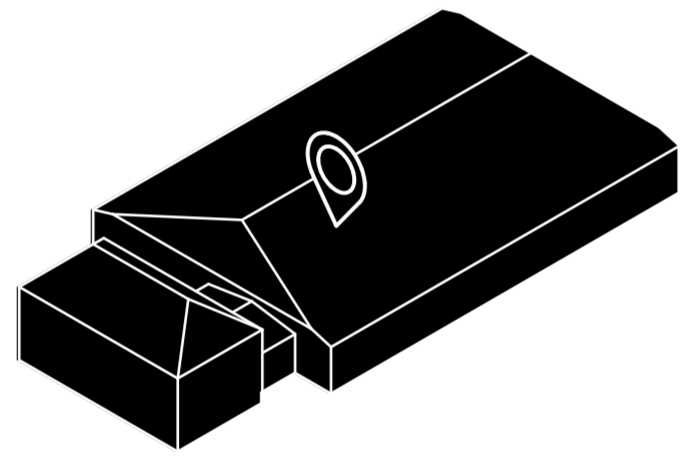
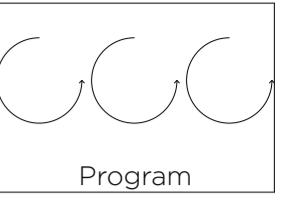
<https://marenland.nl/eten-drinken/barbecueen/>

## Temporary overload of tourists at the Marenland campsite | Conversation with Owner

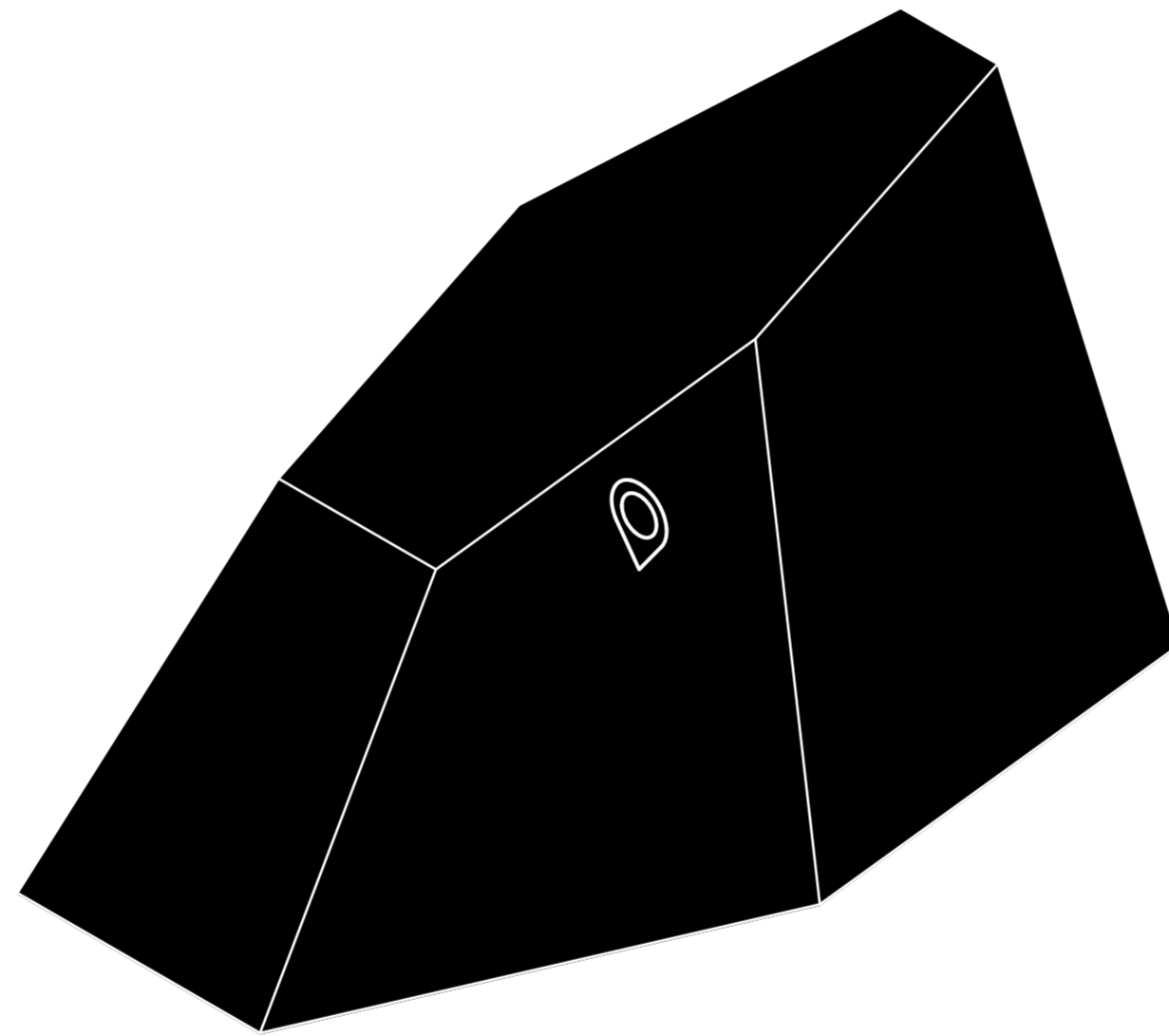
Winsum during Corona Pandemic

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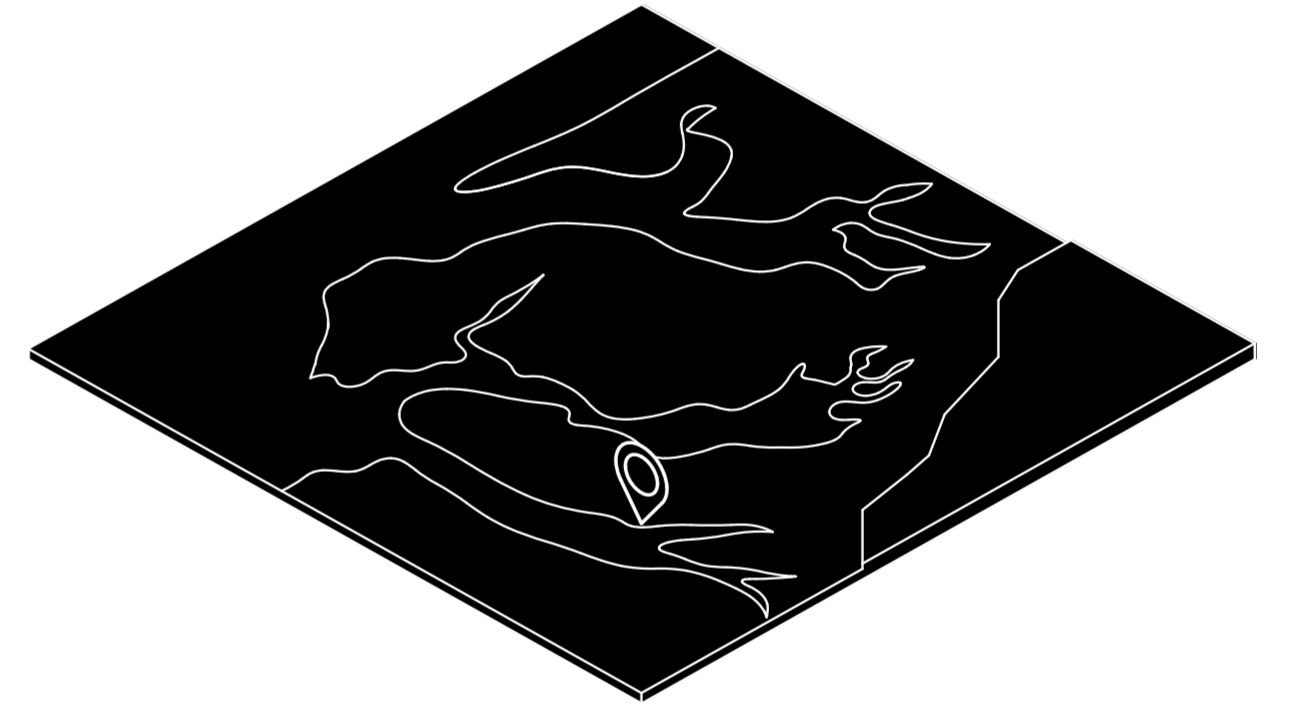




Educational Tourist



City|Cultural Tourist



Hiking Tourist

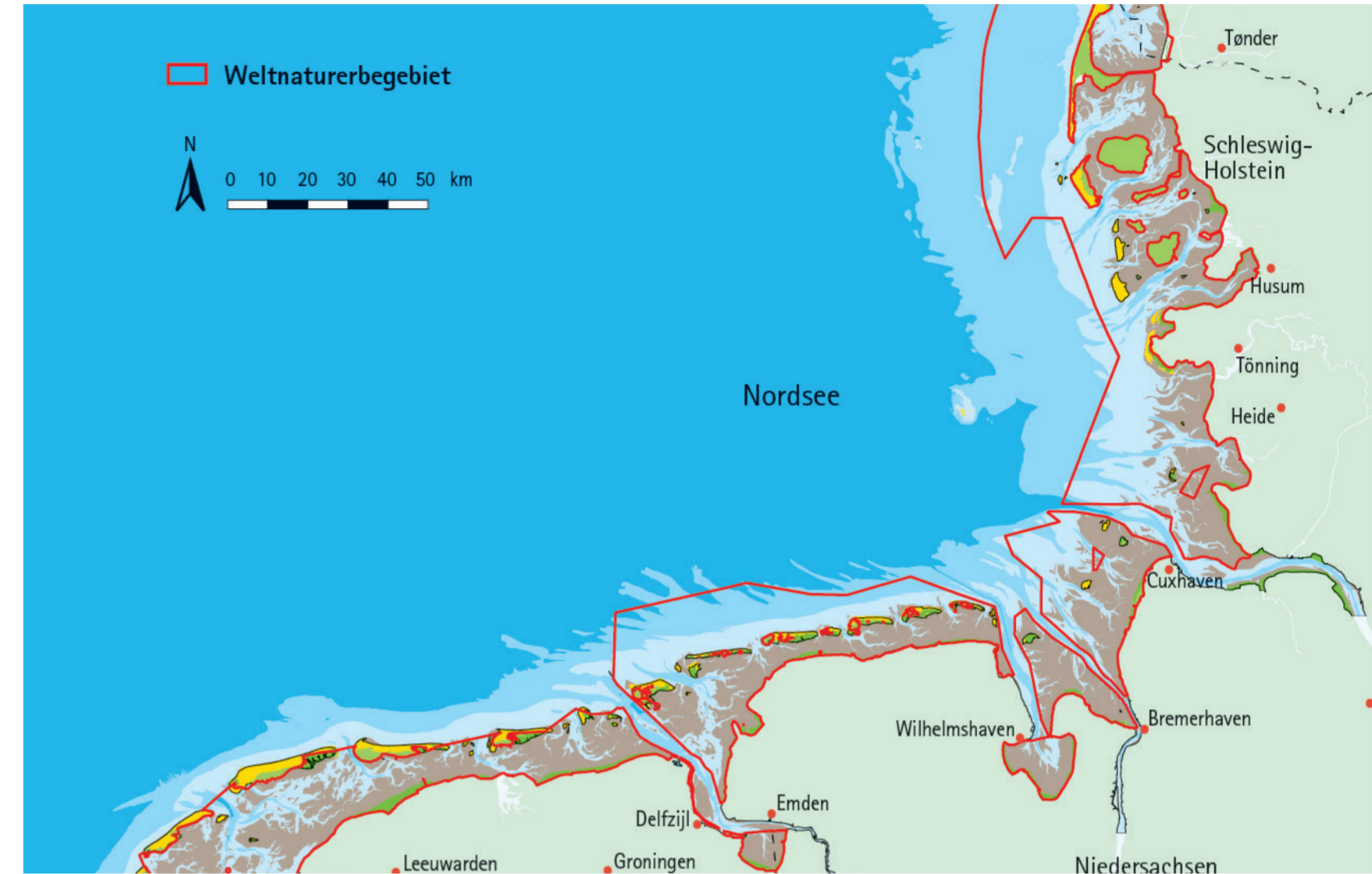


### 3 tourist types

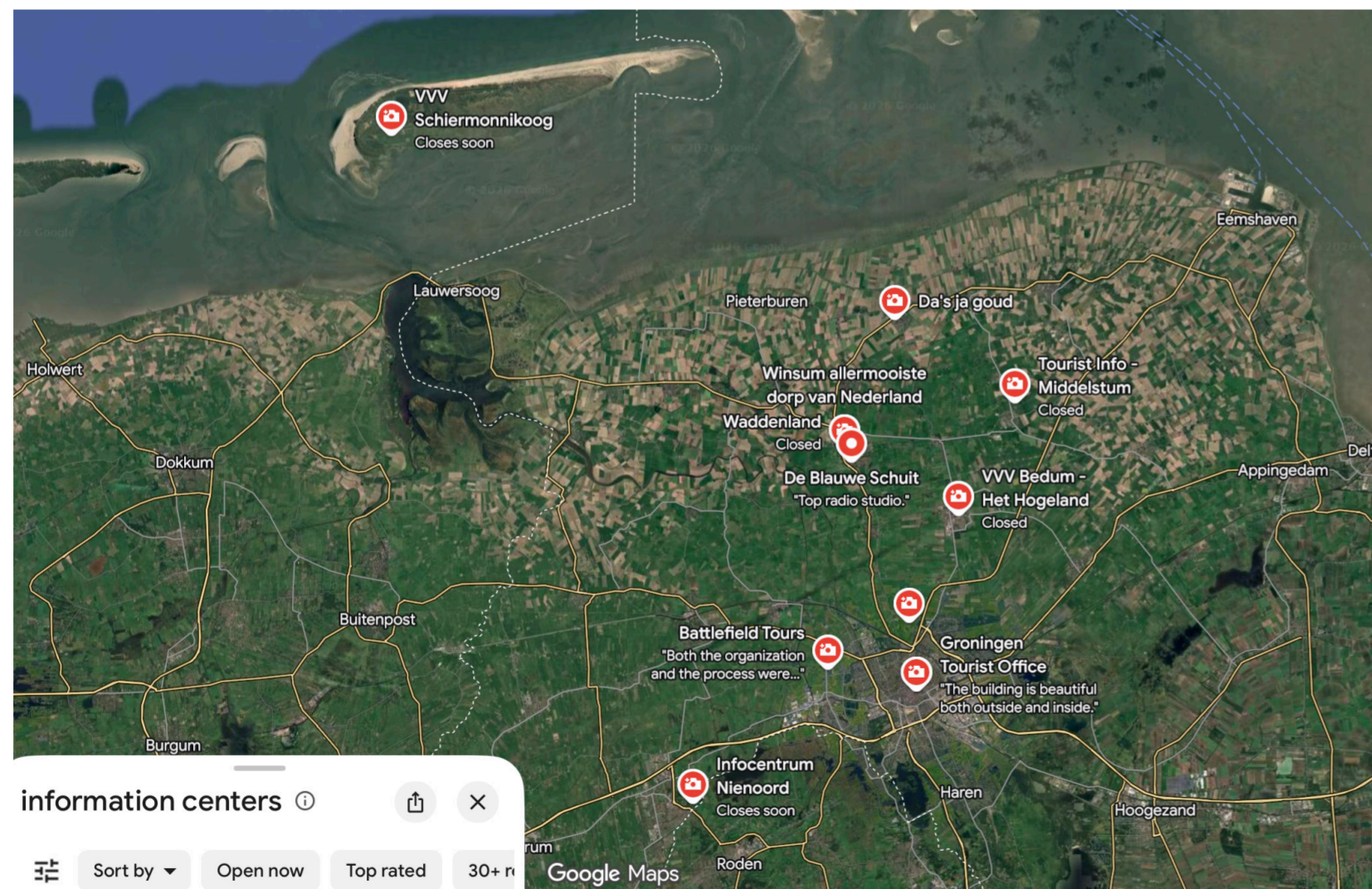
Who?



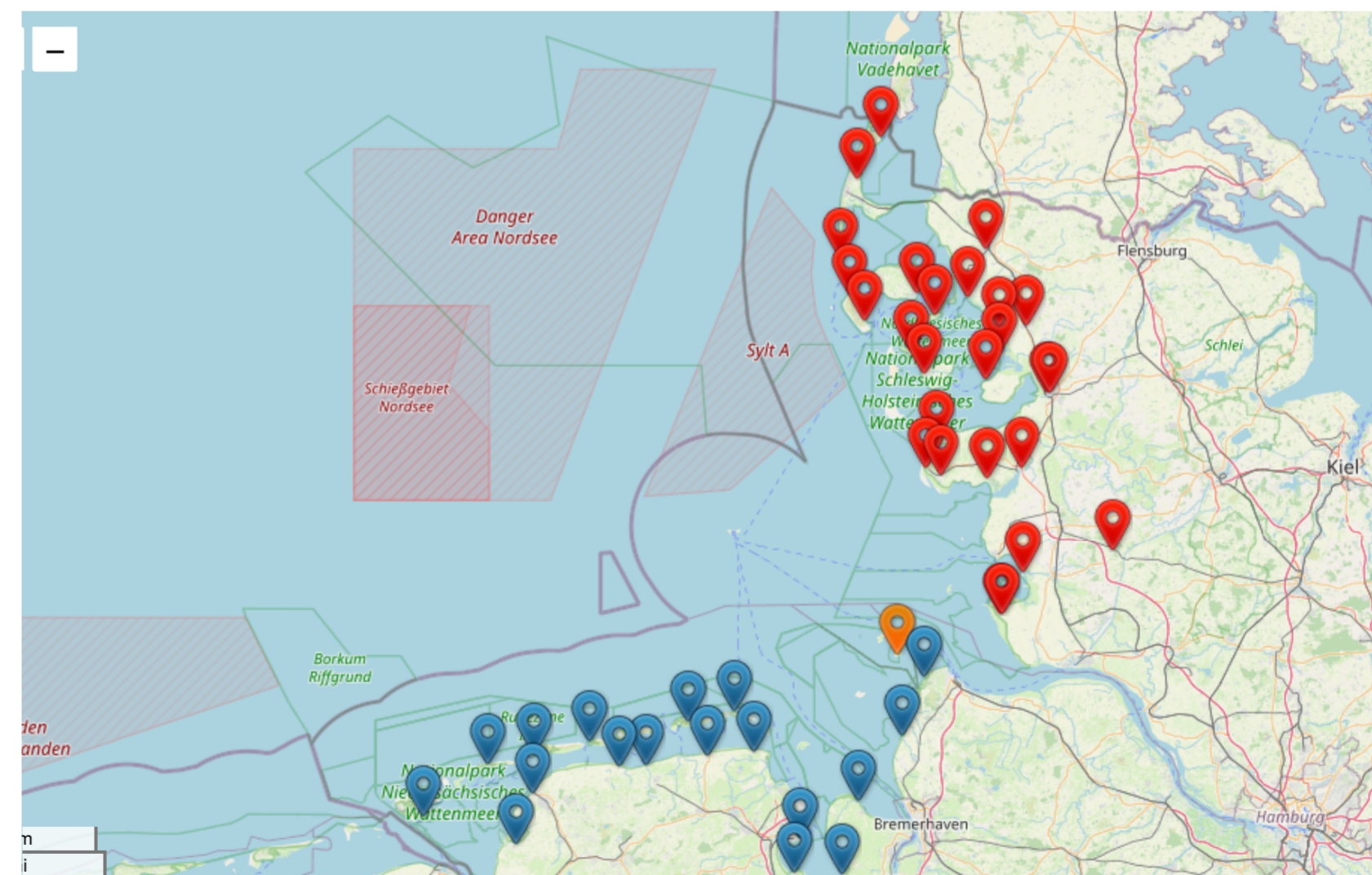
<https://itdreamlan.nl/omgeving-lauwersmeer/>



<https://www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/schuetzen/weltnaturerbe/steckbrief/>

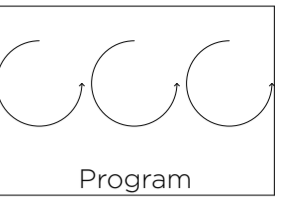


[https://www.google.com/maps/@52.8410551,4.8212132,9z/data=!4m2!1m1!2sJ85dQ57EQ461ZfwEAvAYjw?entry=ttu&g\\_ep=EgoyMDI2MDEy4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D](https://www.google.com/maps/@52.8410551,4.8212132,9z/data=!4m2!1m1!2sJ85dQ57EQ461ZfwEAvAYjw?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDEy4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D)

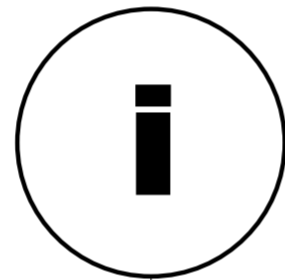


<https://www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/besuchen/infozentren/>

# Making the regional qualities visible

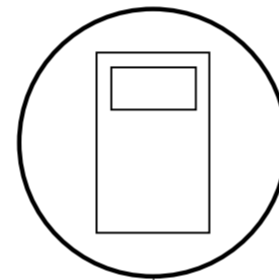


Information



ARRIVAL

Accommodation



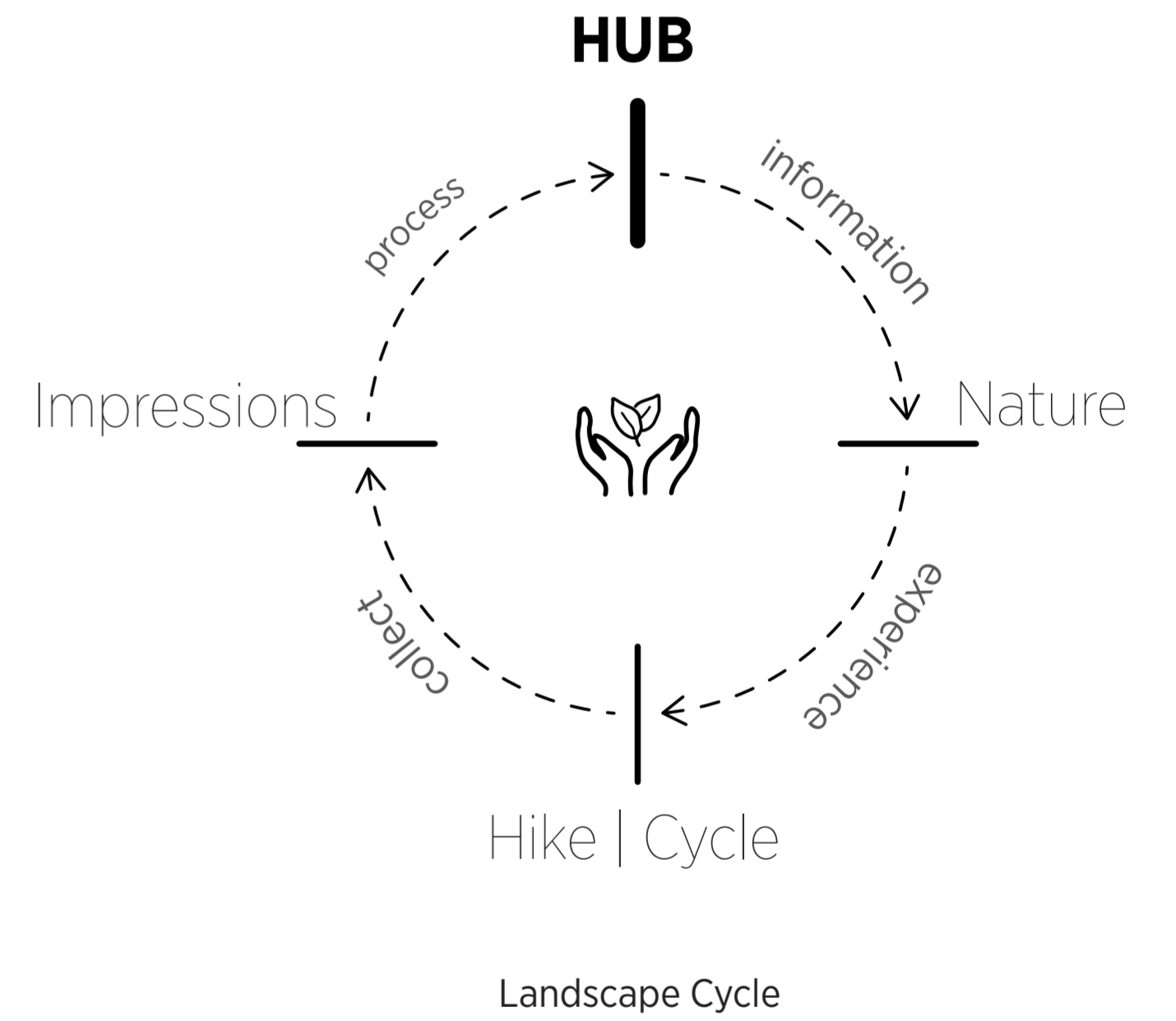
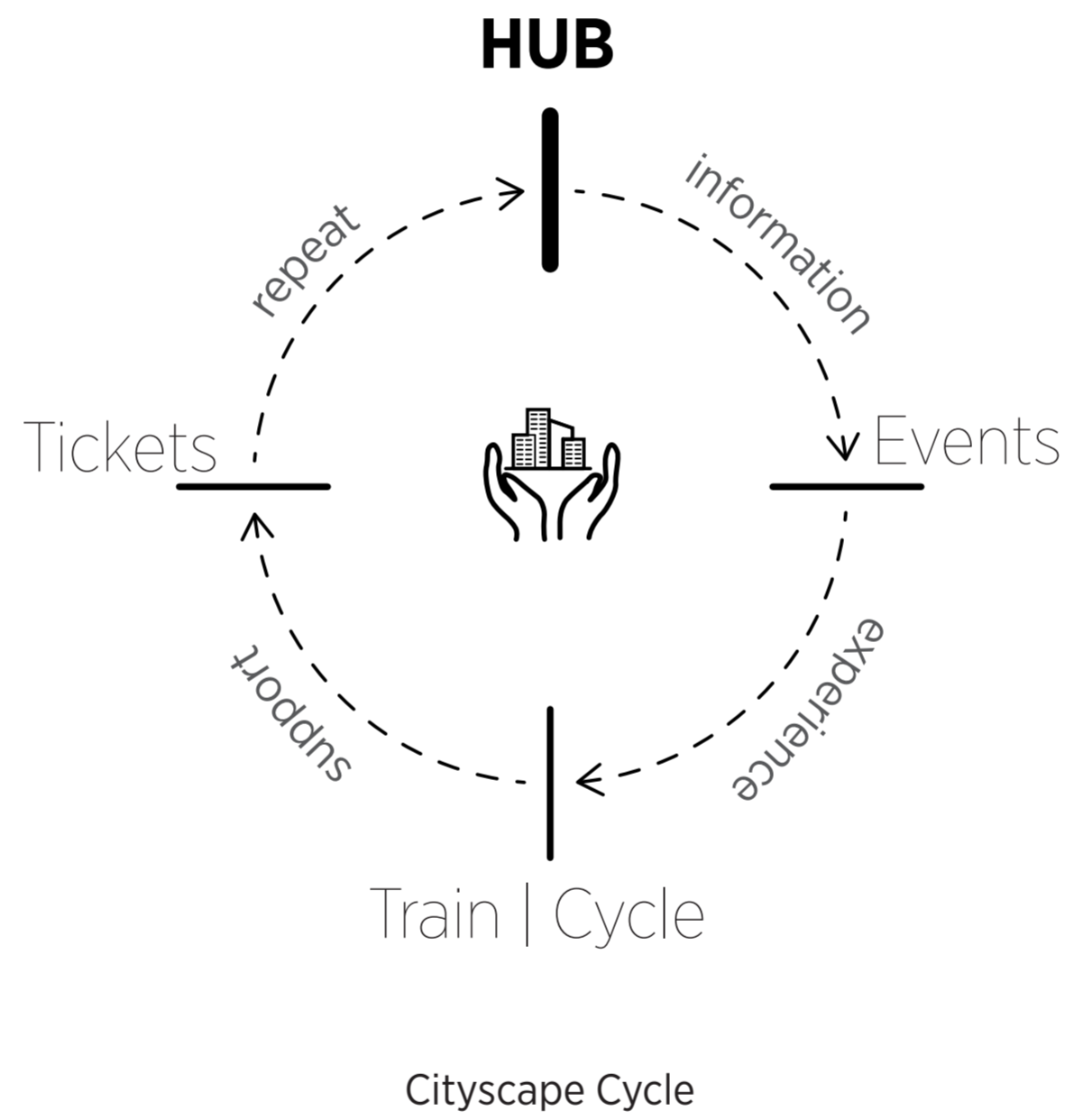
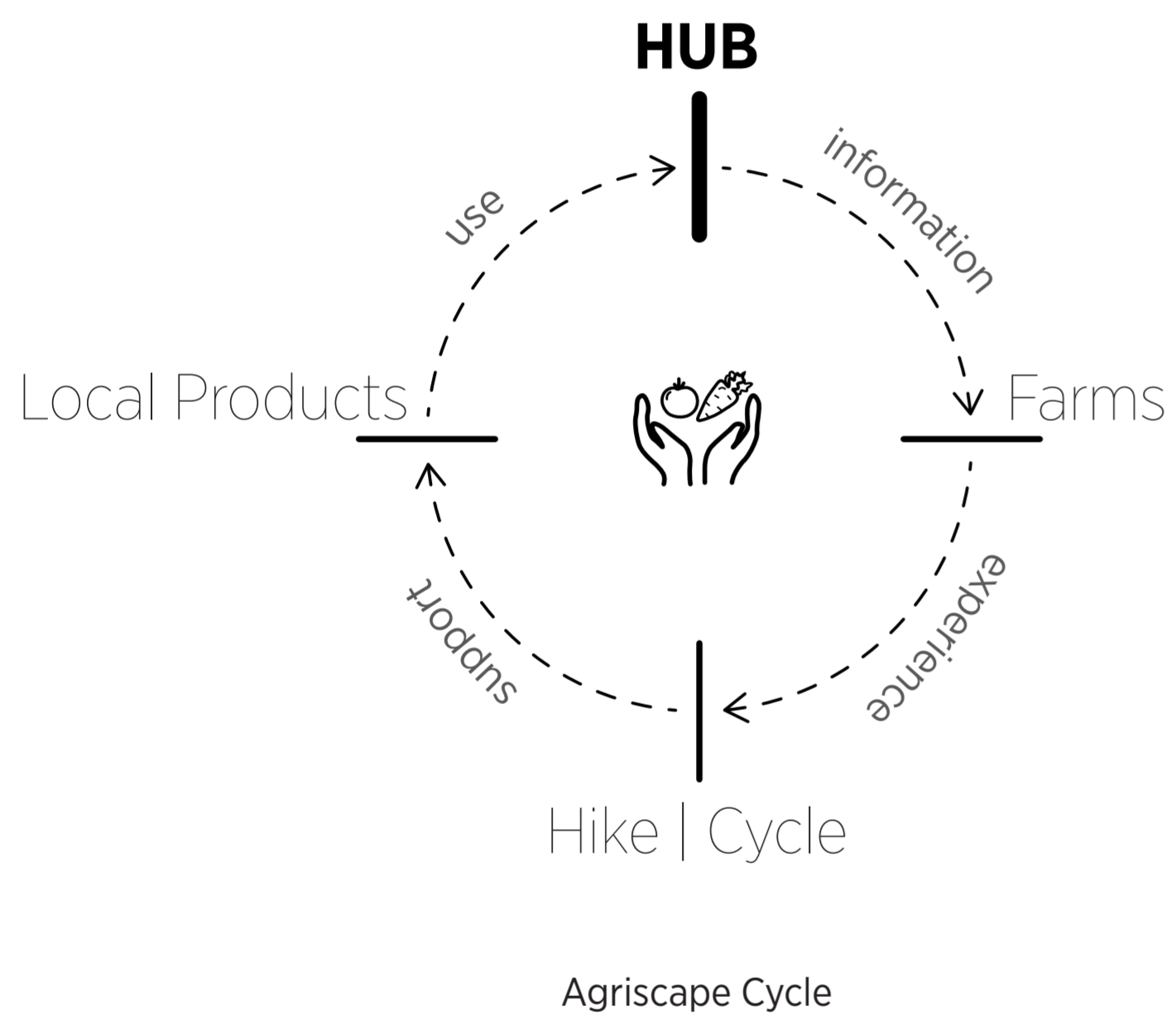
STAY

The Mediator



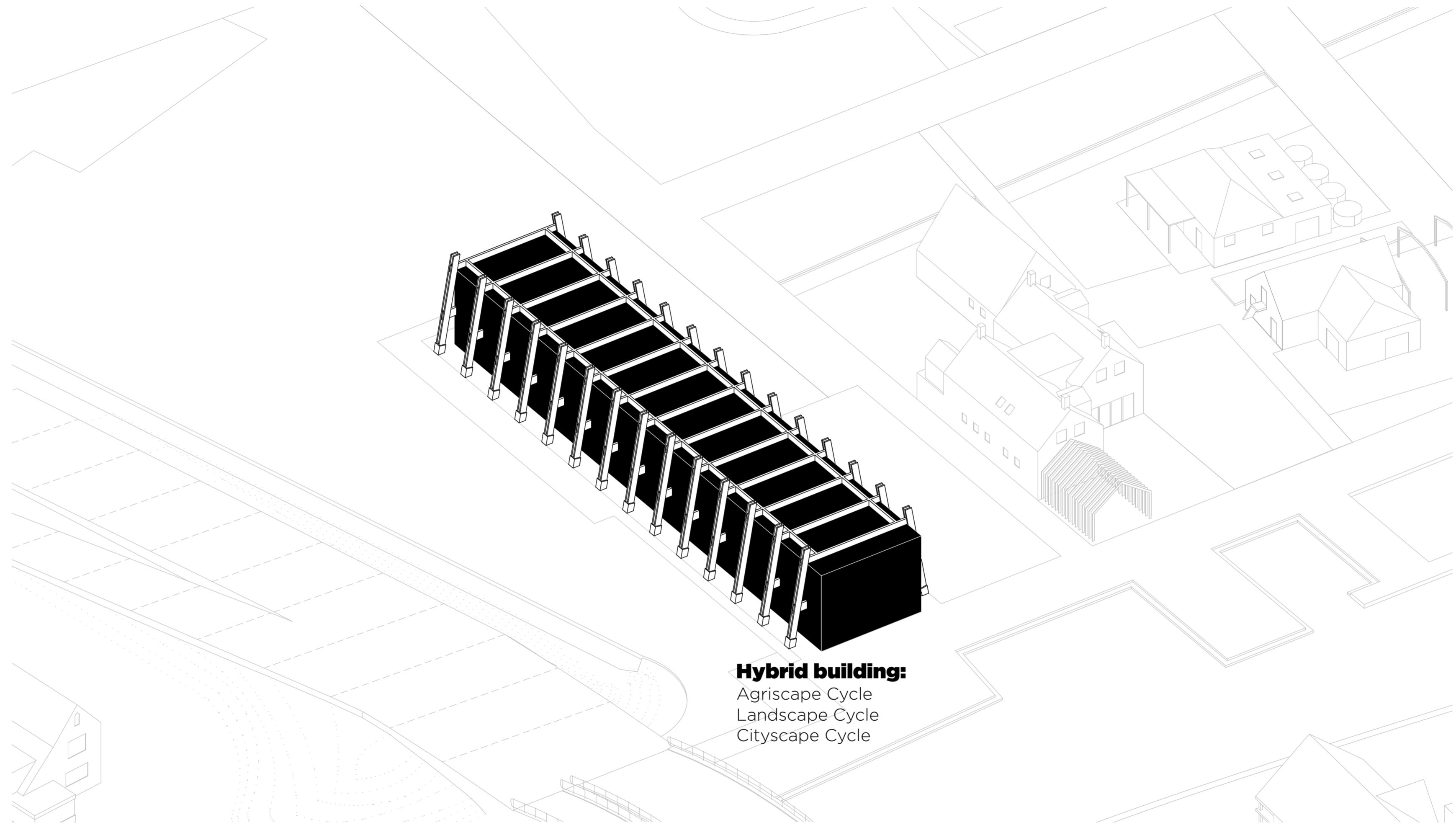
CONNECT

**Provide ongoing engagement with the region**



## The Mediator serves as a point of arrival, return and departure

Promote longer stays | Benefits for locals and the local economy



**Hybrid building:**  
Agriscapc Cycle  
Landscape Cycle  
Cityscape Cycle

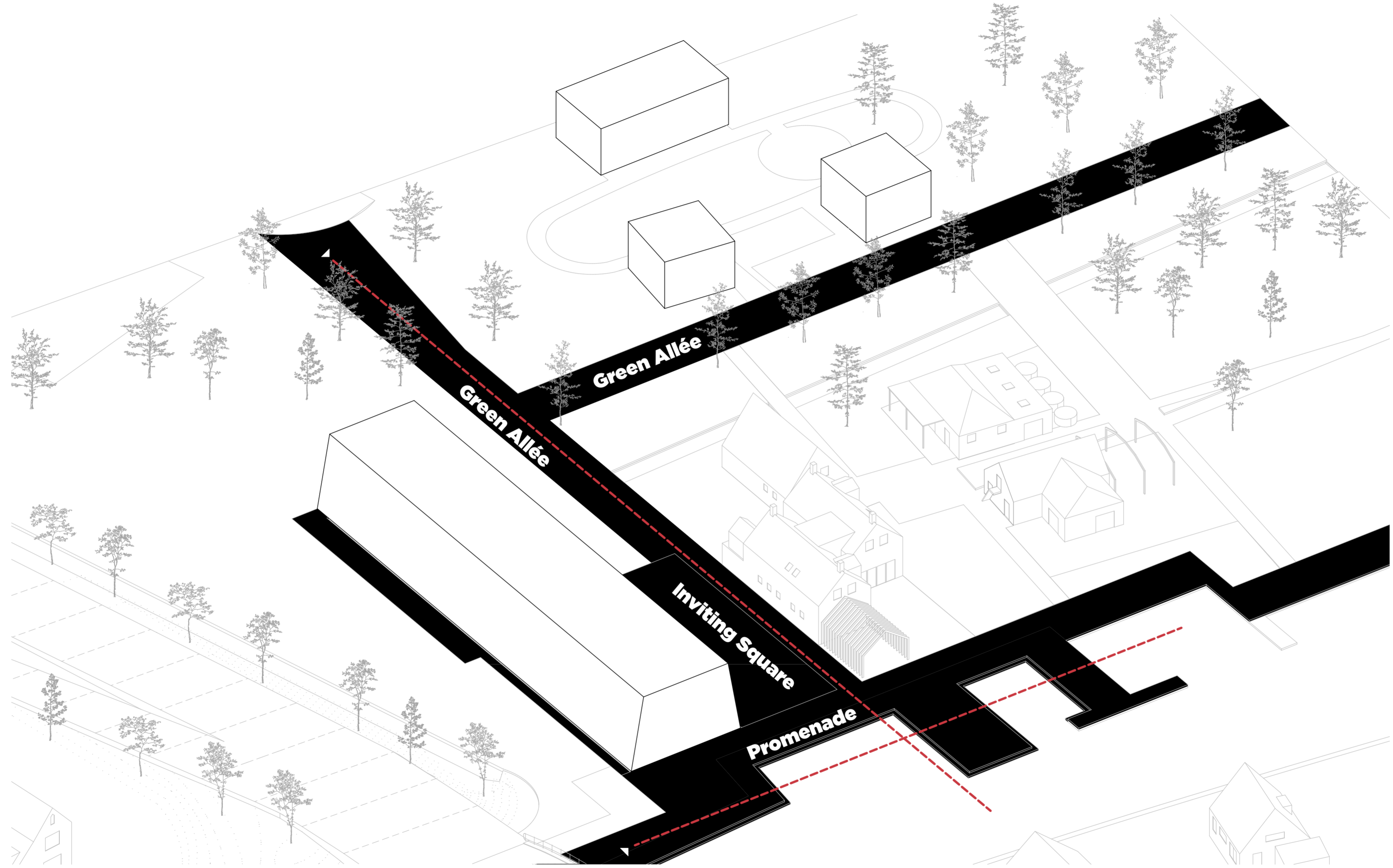
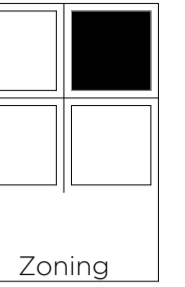
**Connect the three cycles without eliminating their differences = by connecting polarities**

Hybrid building offering multiple opportunities to explore the region



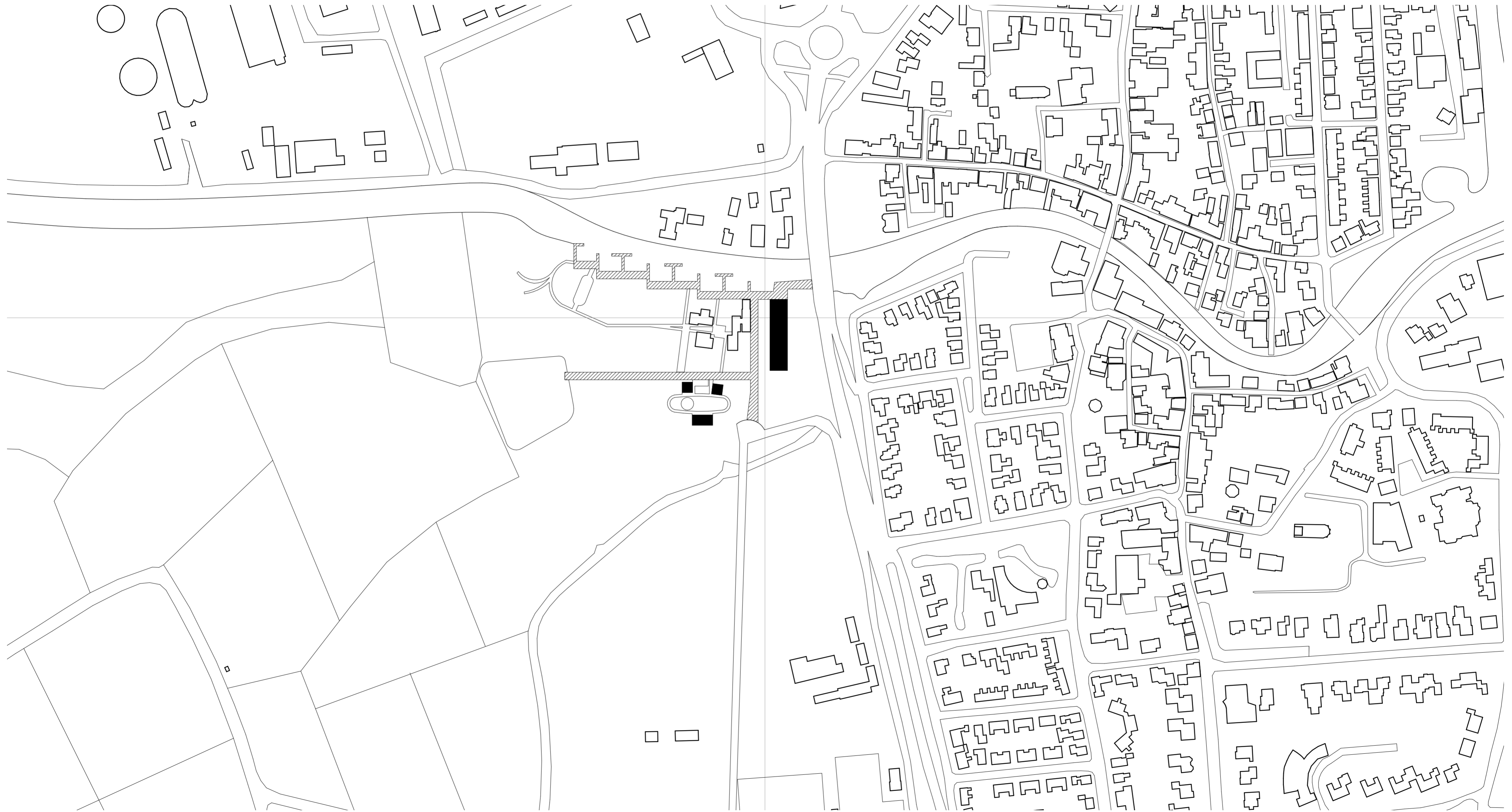
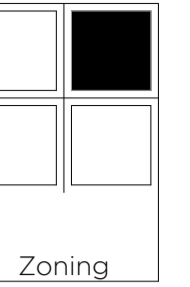
## Spatial separation between the Marenland campsite and the Groningen Region

Movement encourages movement through Winsum rather than engagement

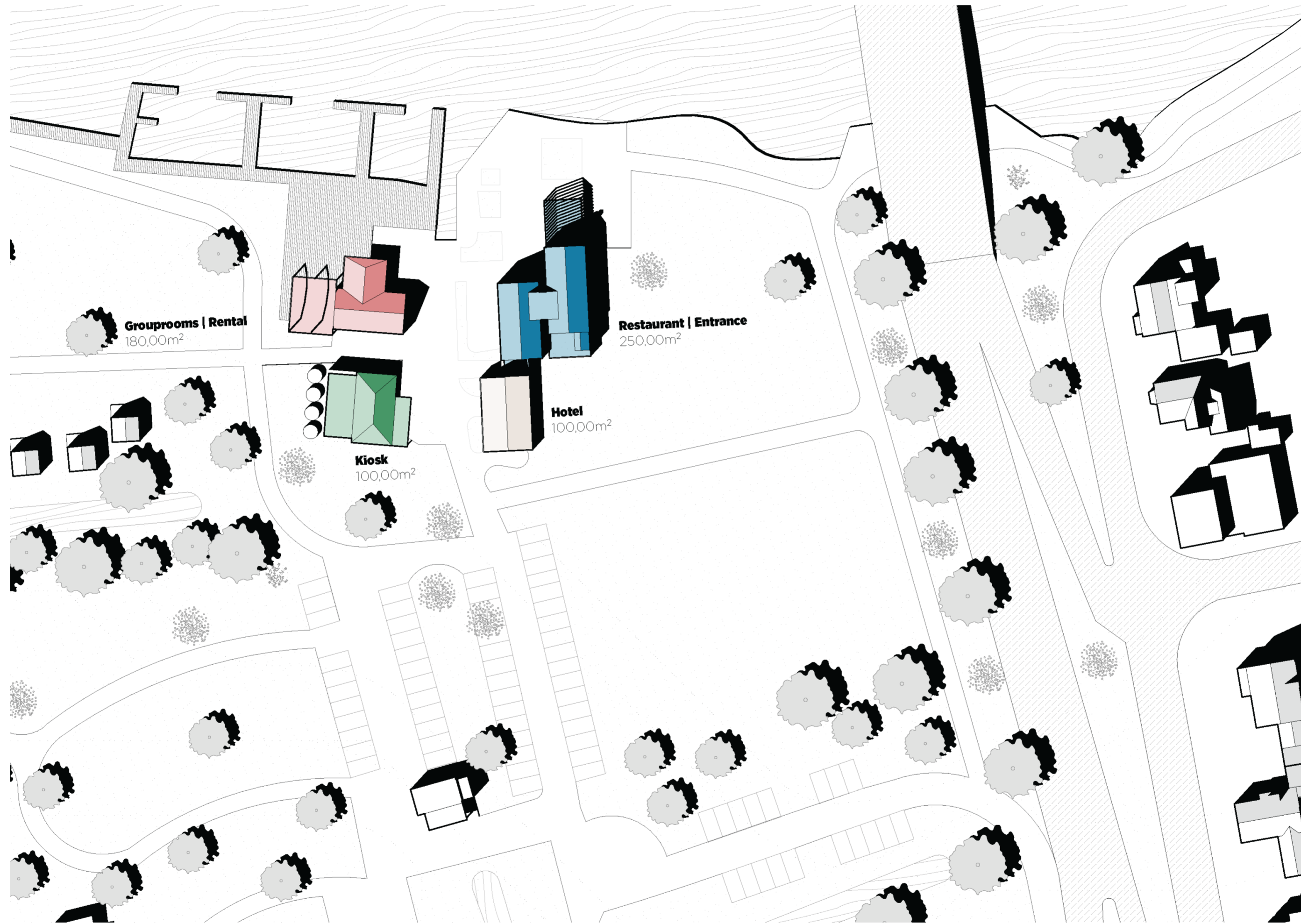


# Redesign of access and circulation for arriving departing and returning to Winsum

Organise and structure the overall composition

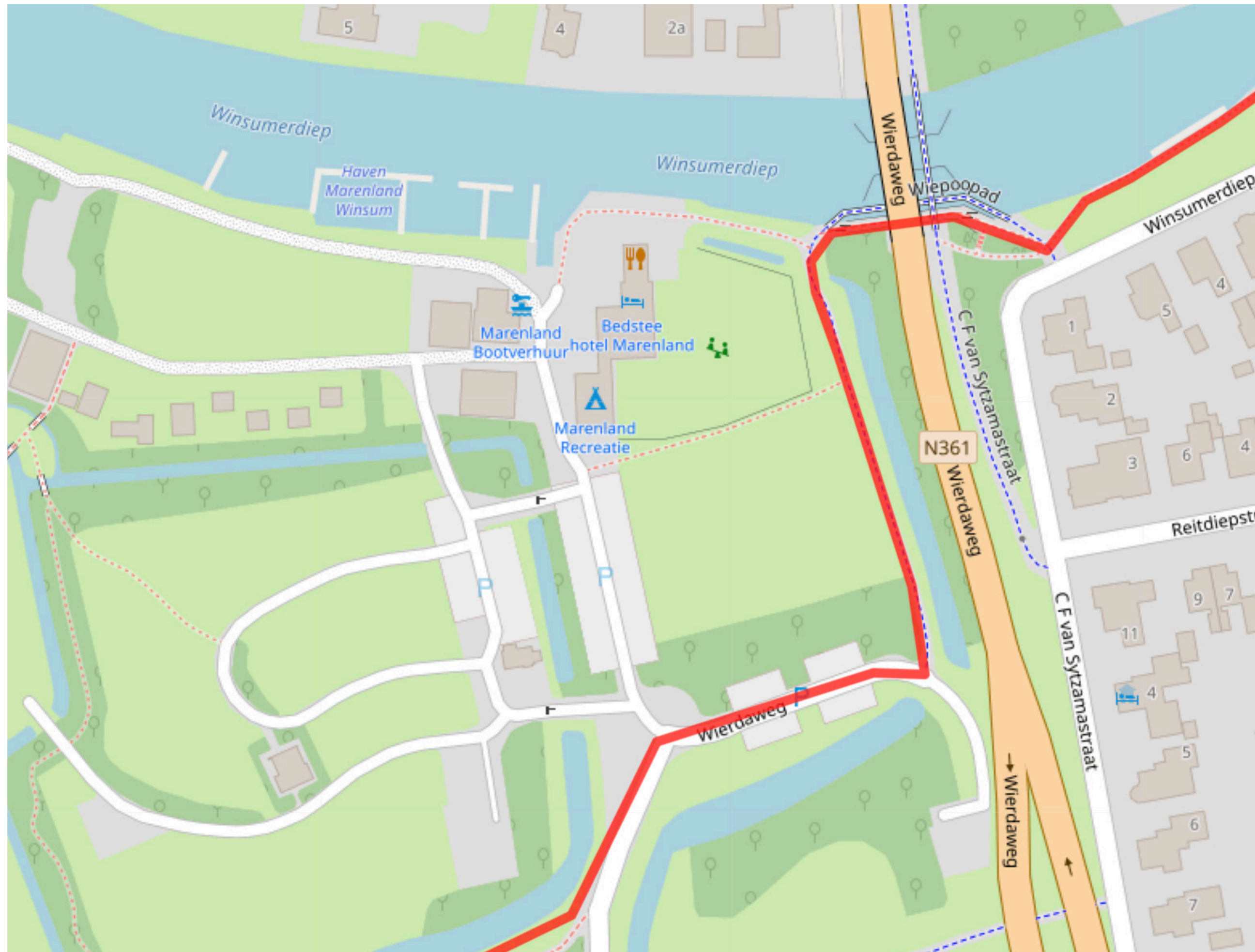


**Strategic position next to the Marenland campsite, and along the Pieterpad hiking route**



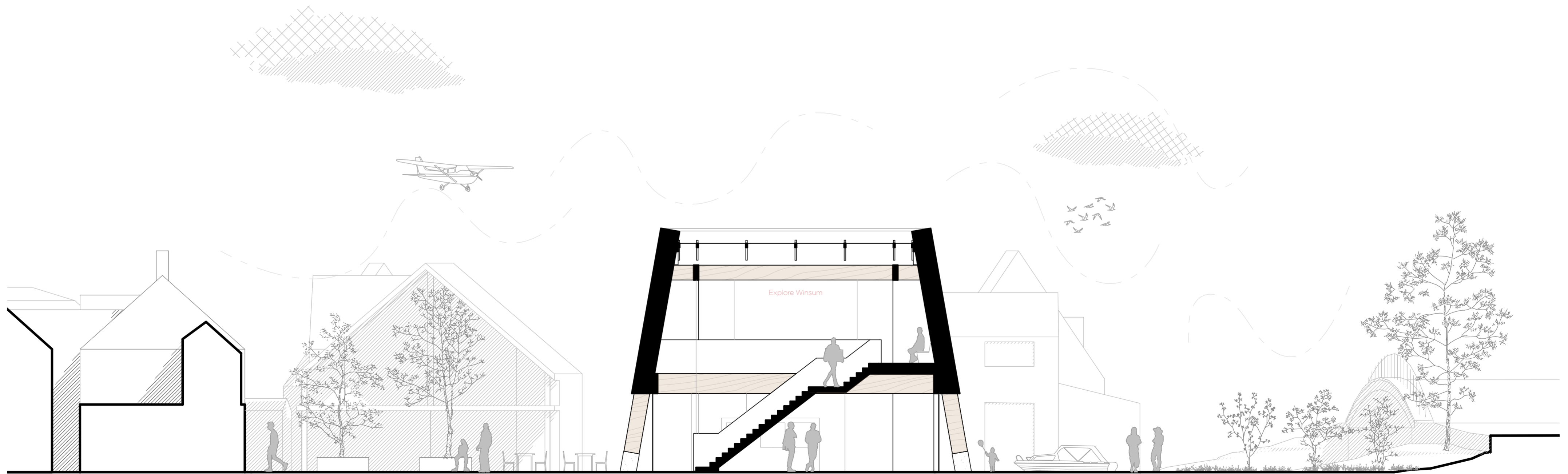
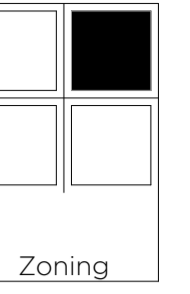
## Symbiosis with existing Marenland campsite

Material on Site

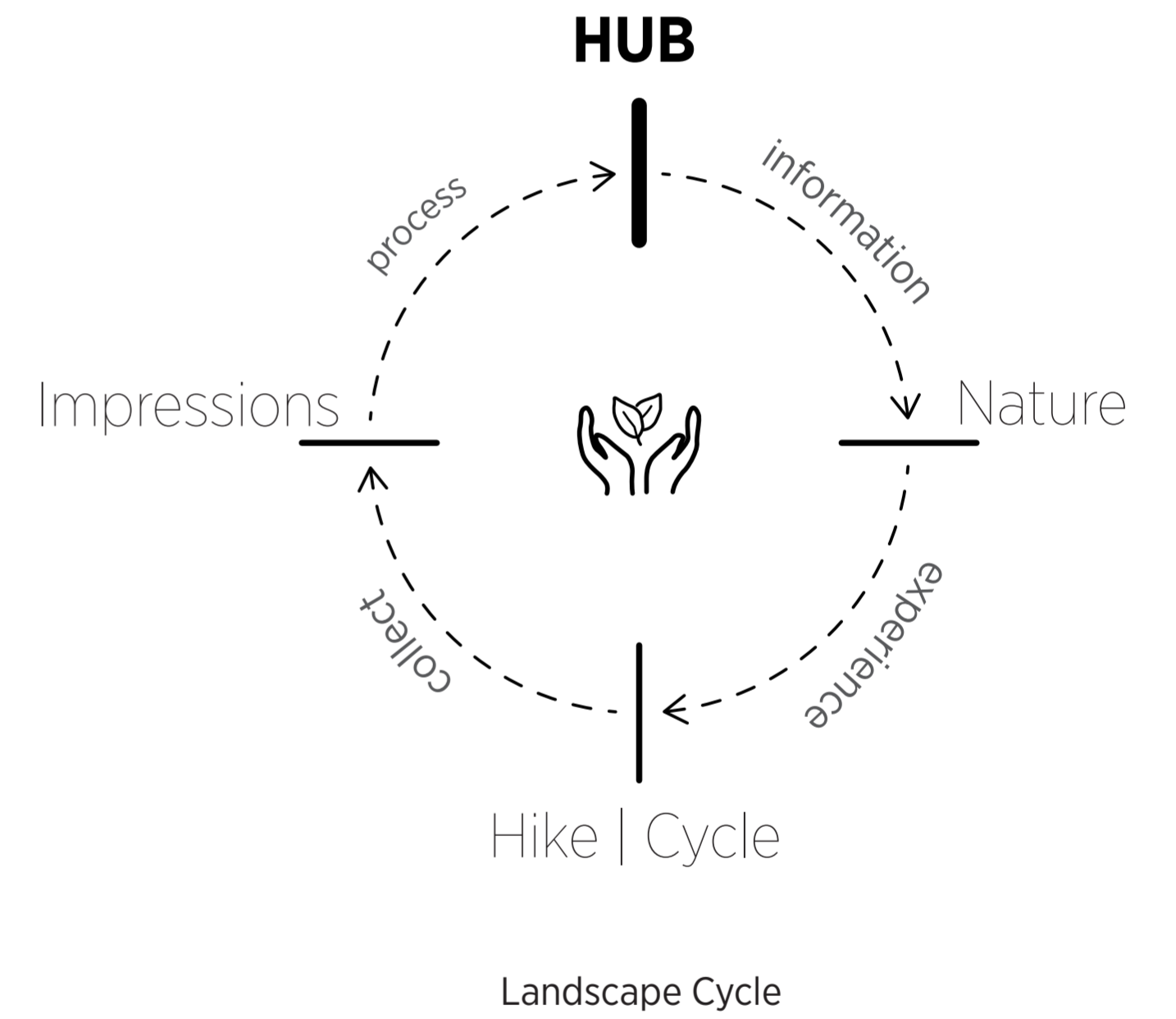
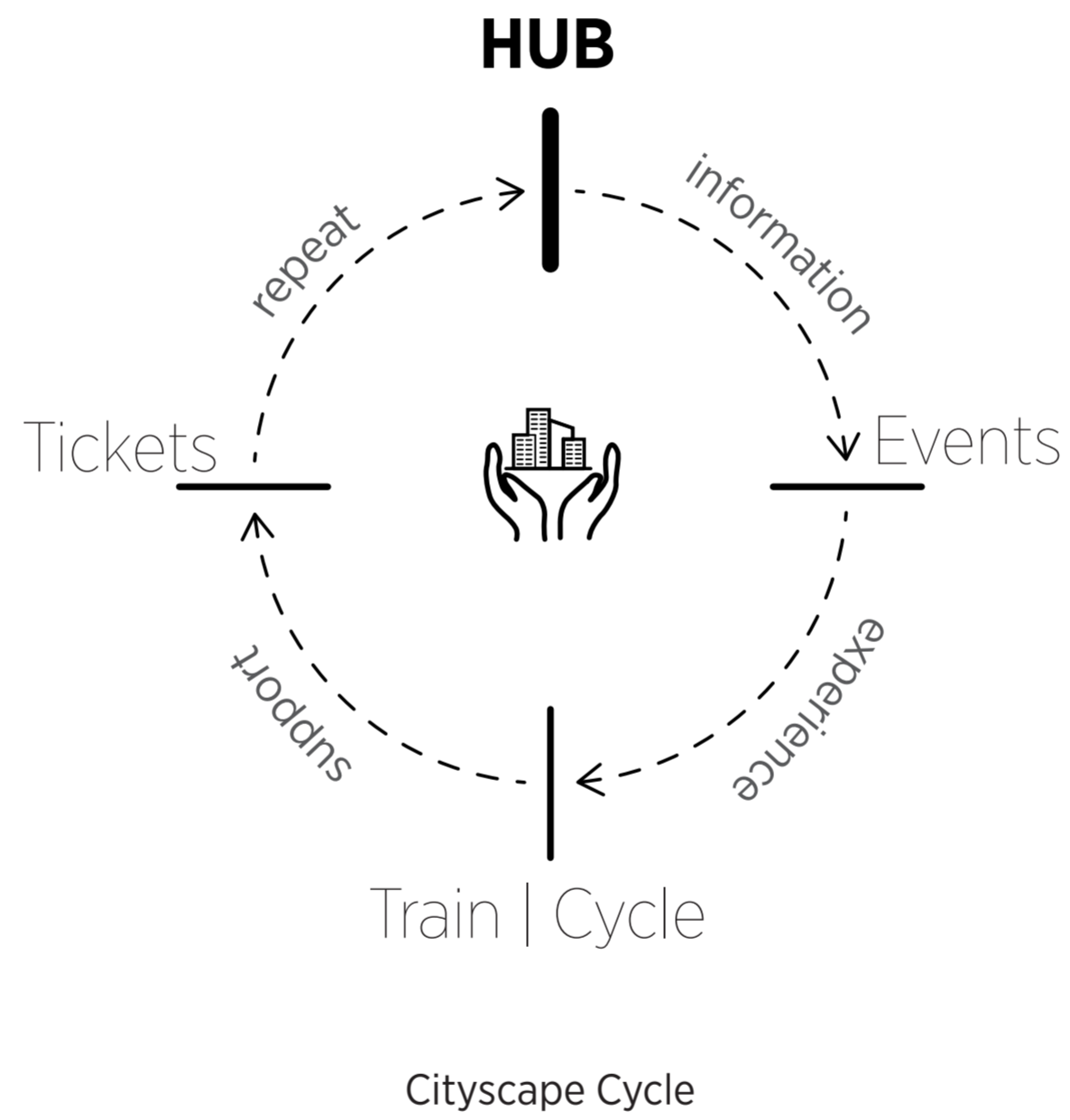
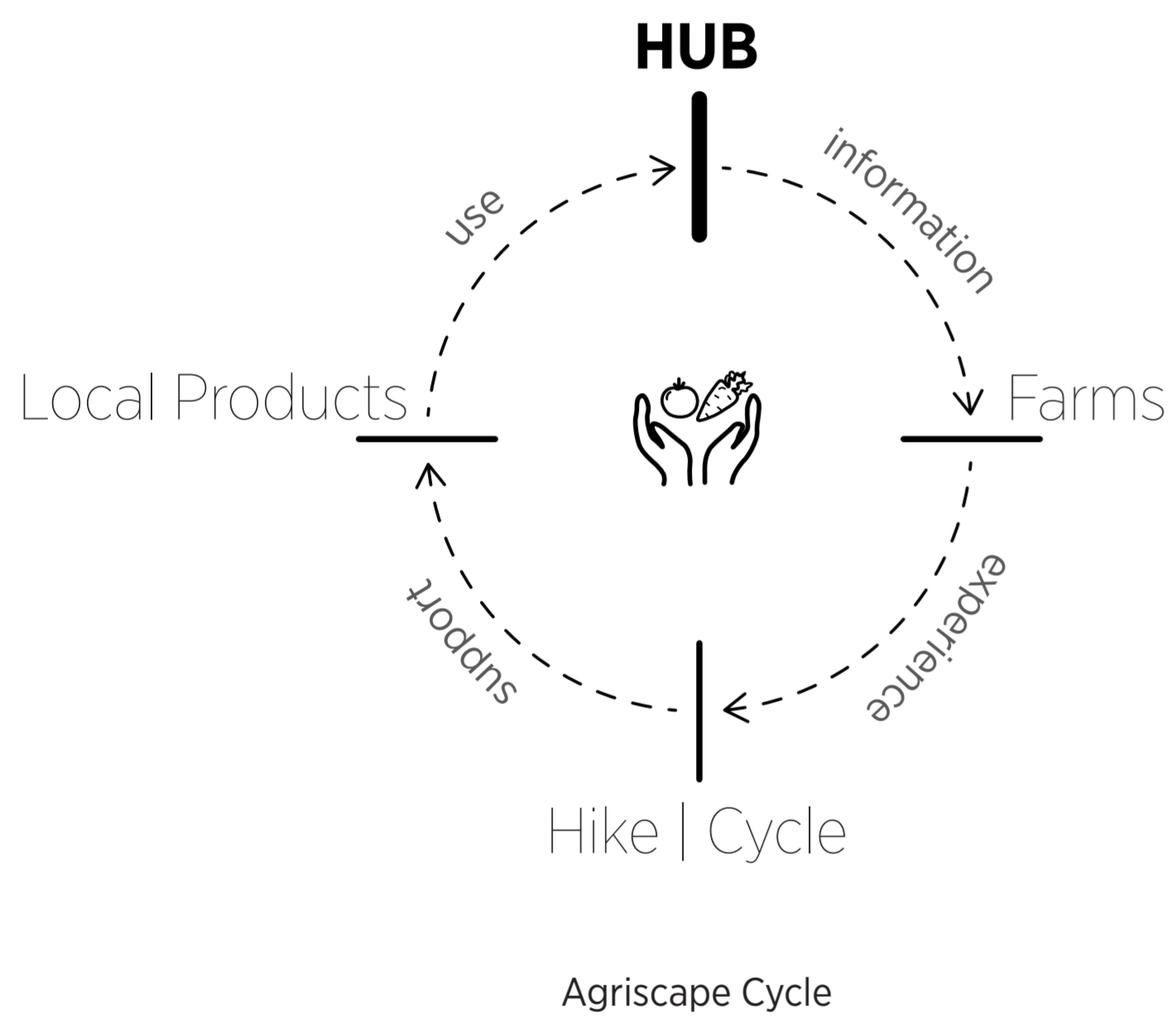


<https://pieterpad.nl/etappes>

## Pieterpad as physical access to the cultural ecosystem

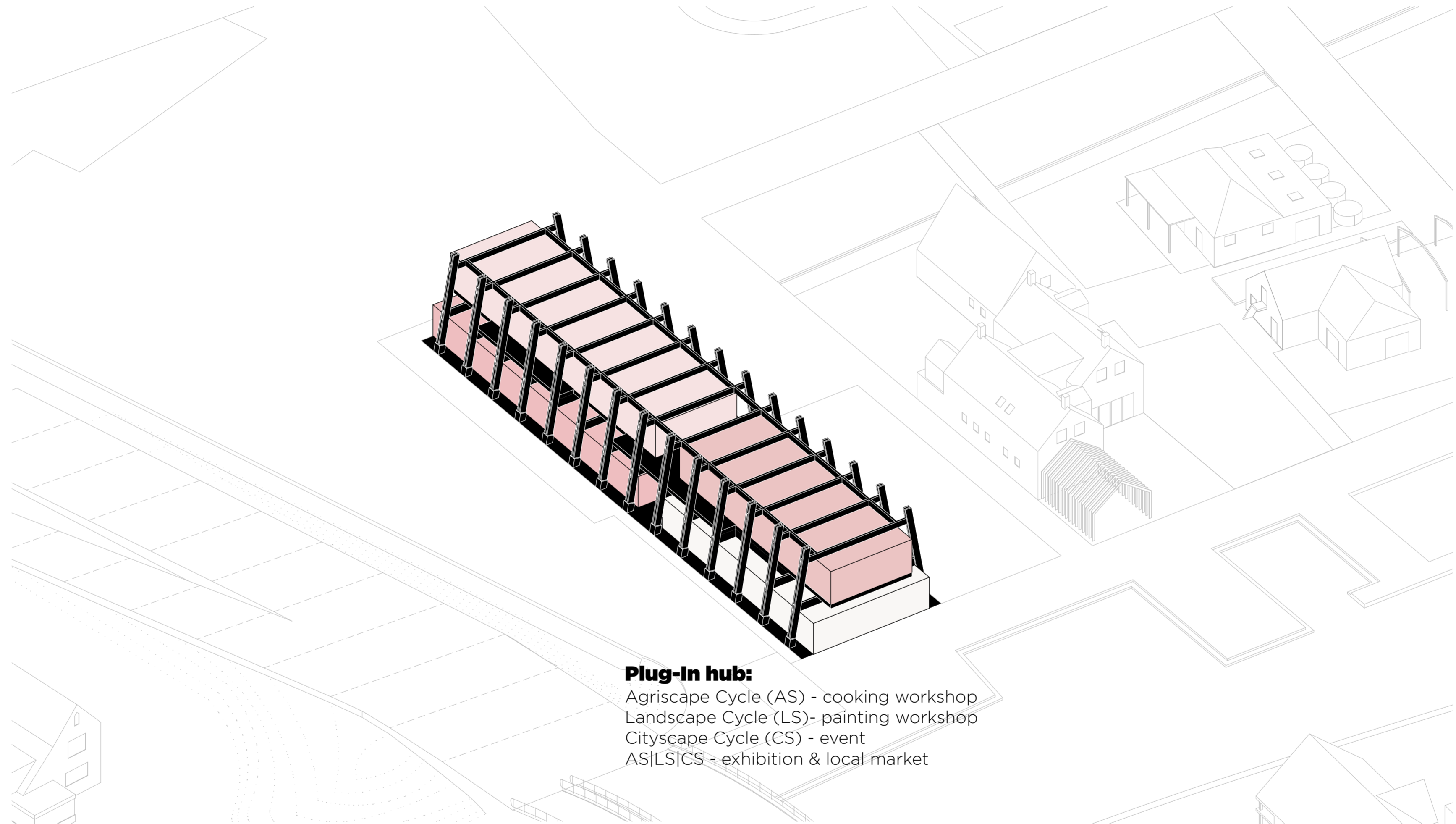


# Circulation as inviting gesture for visitors



## The Mediator serves as a point of arrival, return and departure

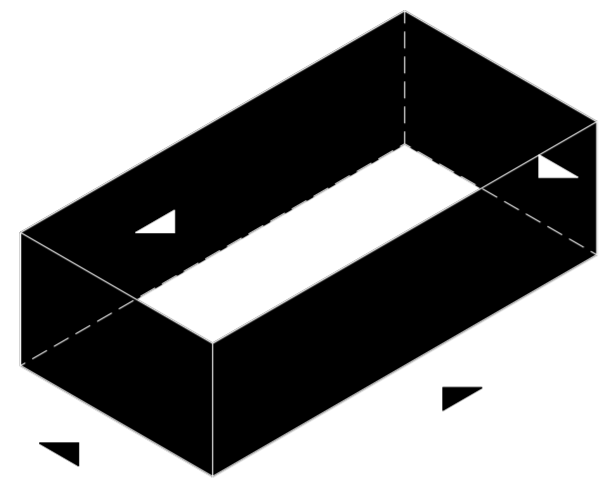
Promote longer stays | Benefits for locals and the local economy



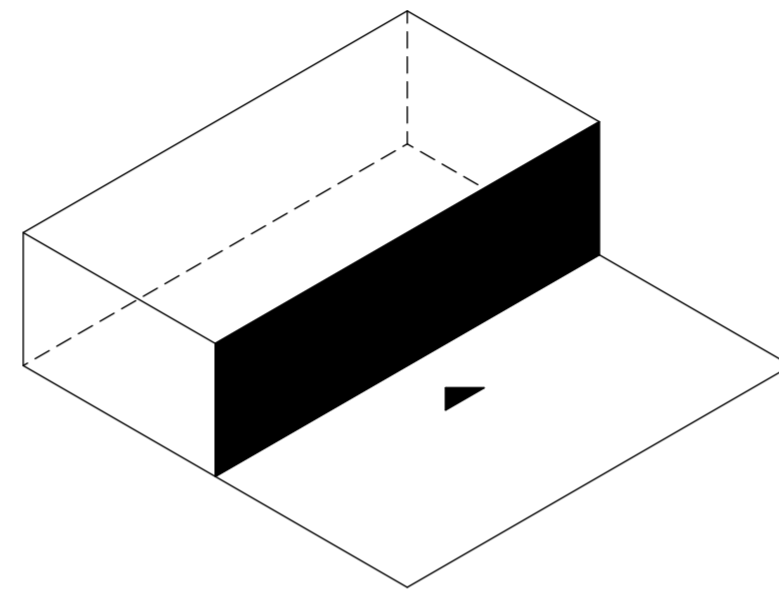
**Plug-In hub:**

- Agriscapc Cycle (AS) - cooking workshop
- Landscape Cycle (LS)- painting workshop
- Cityscape Cycle (CS) - event
- AS|LS|CS - exhibition & local market

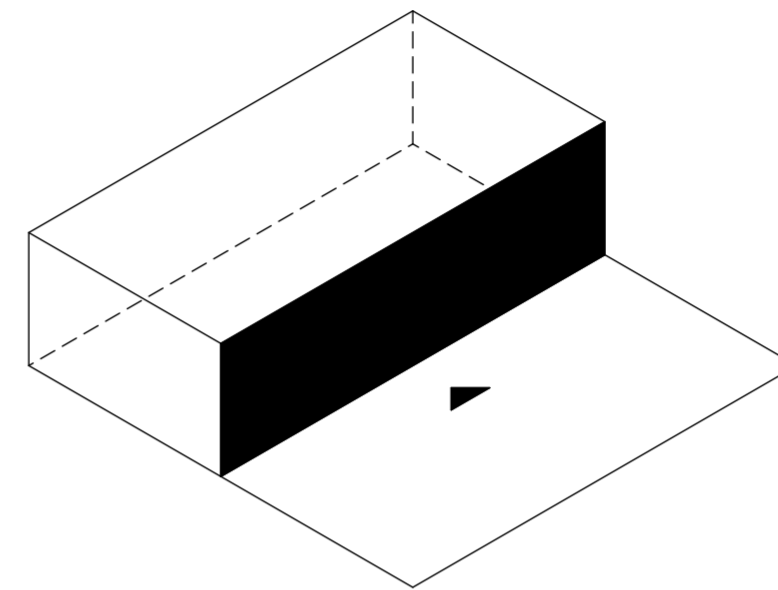
**Cycles translated into programme that structure the visitors engagement**



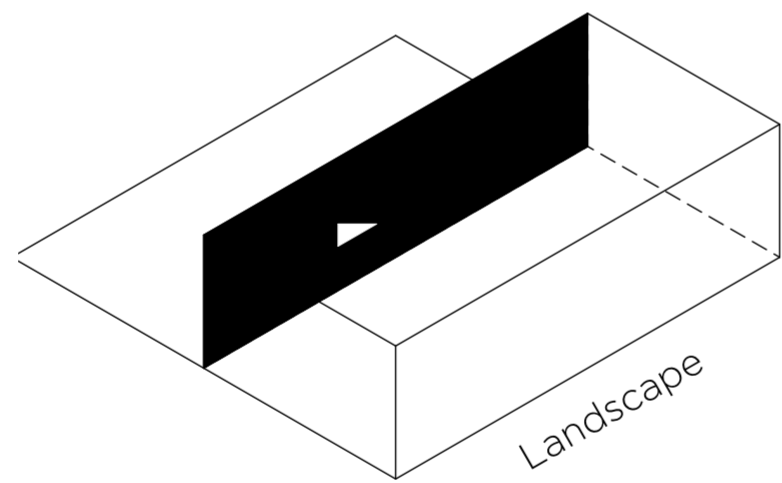
**Local Market**  
- Access from all sides



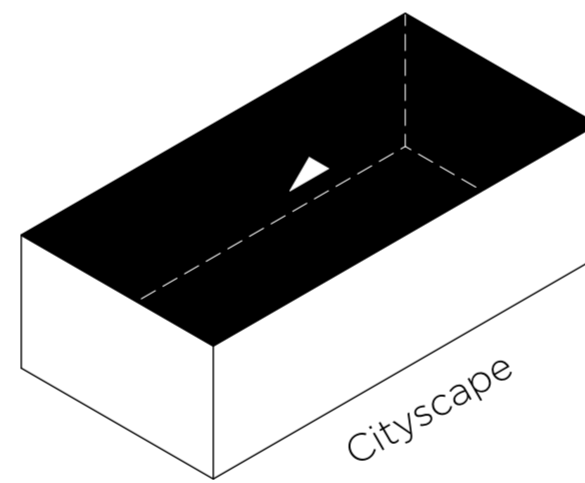
**Exhibition**  
- View from square



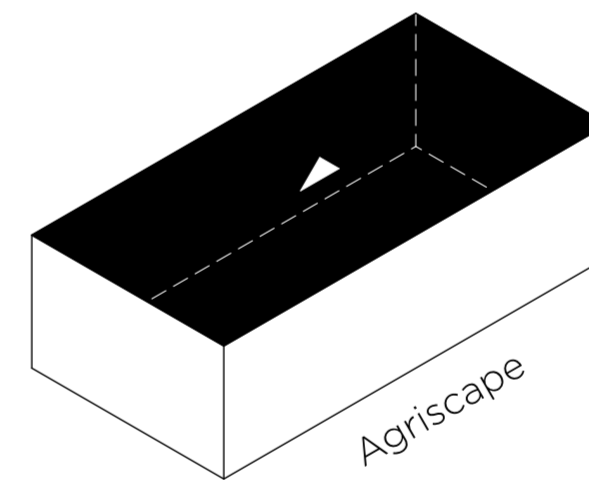
**Information**  
- Access from square



**Art workshop**  
- View towards park



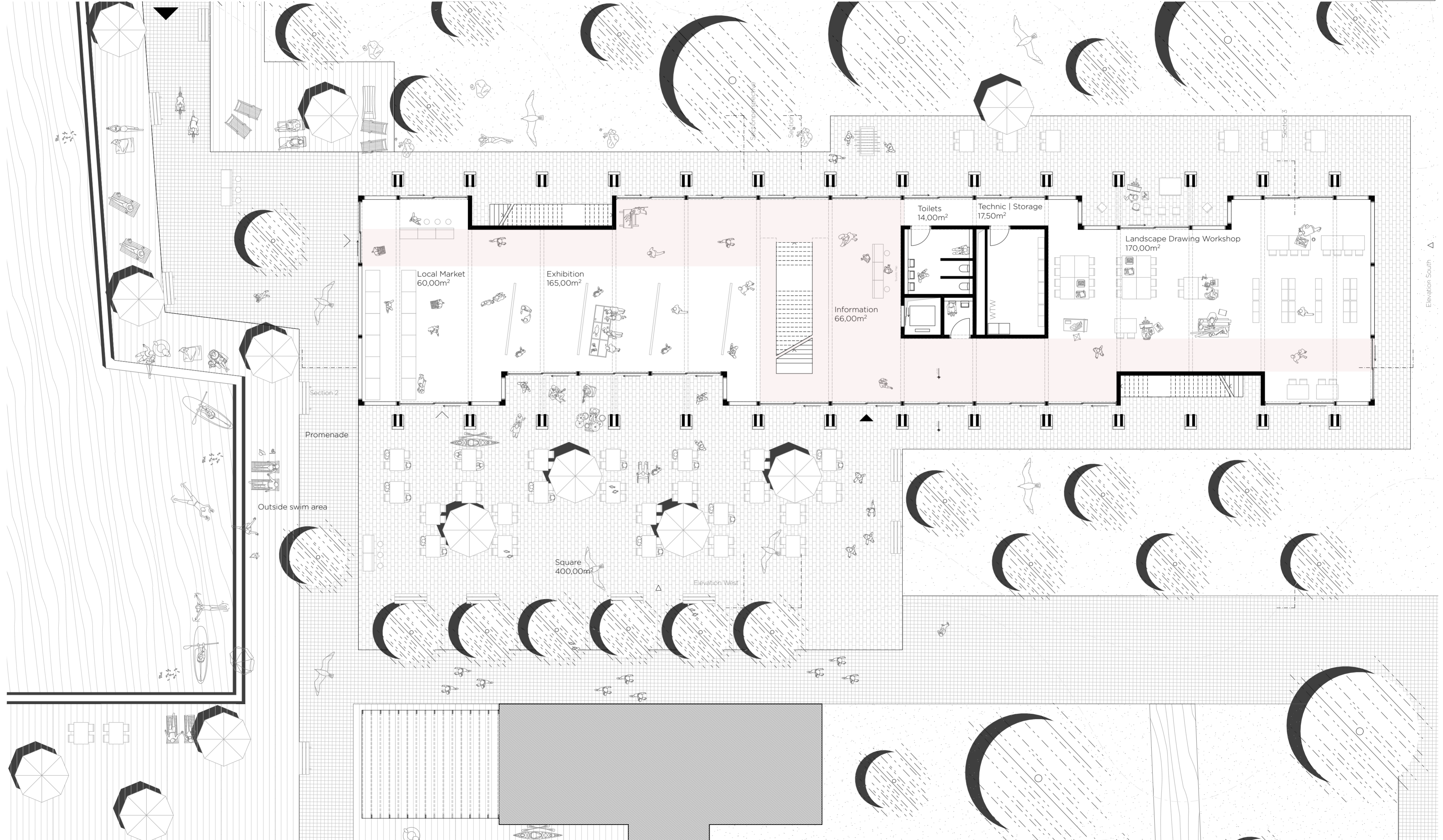
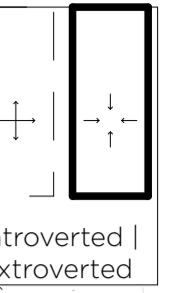
**Event**  
- Focus on the lecture



**Cooking workshop**  
- Focus on the Craft

## From Consumption to Engagement

Each programme possesses a distinct character while remaining part of a larger system



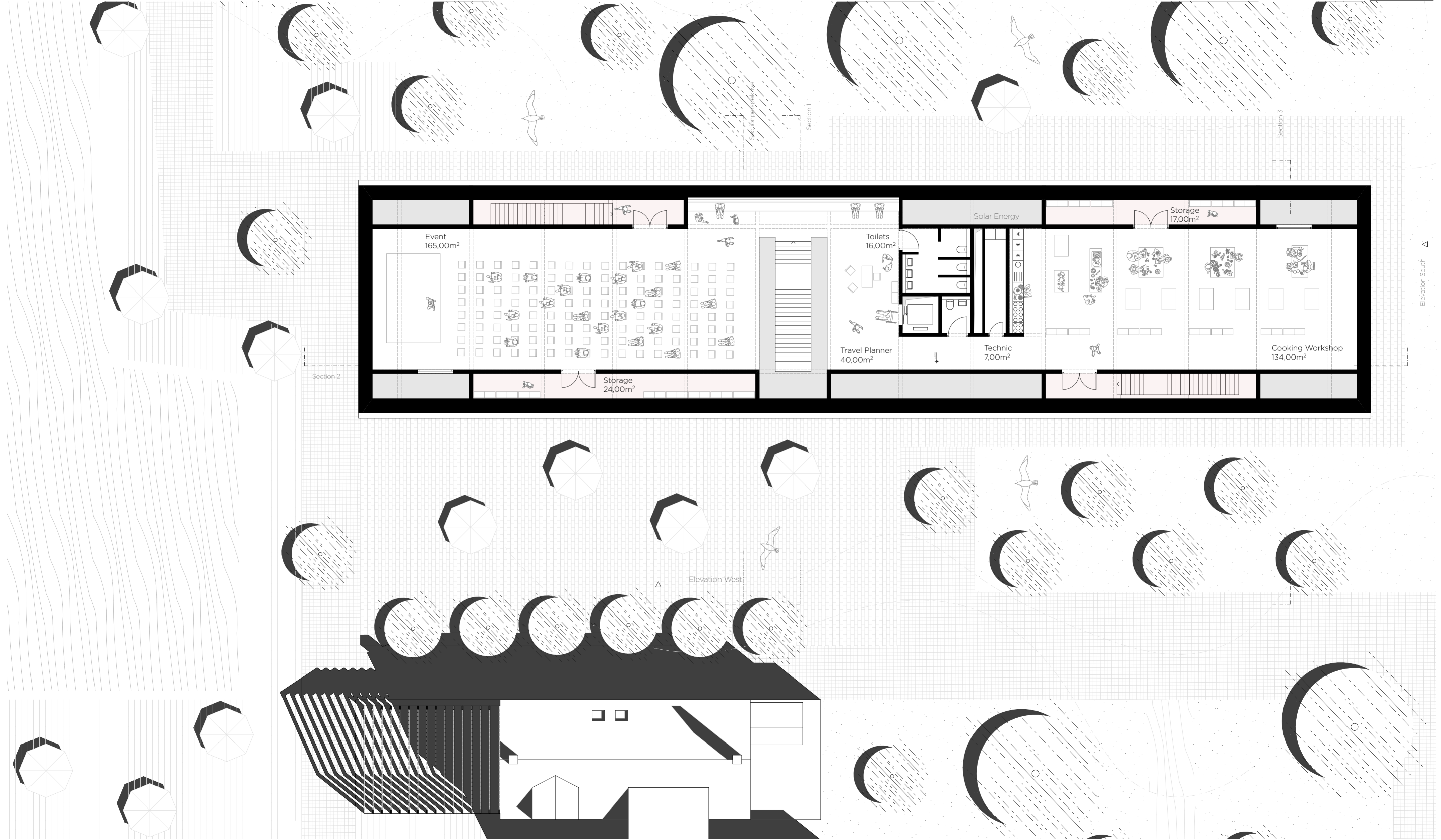
# Inviting programme for orientation



## Inviting character (extroverted)



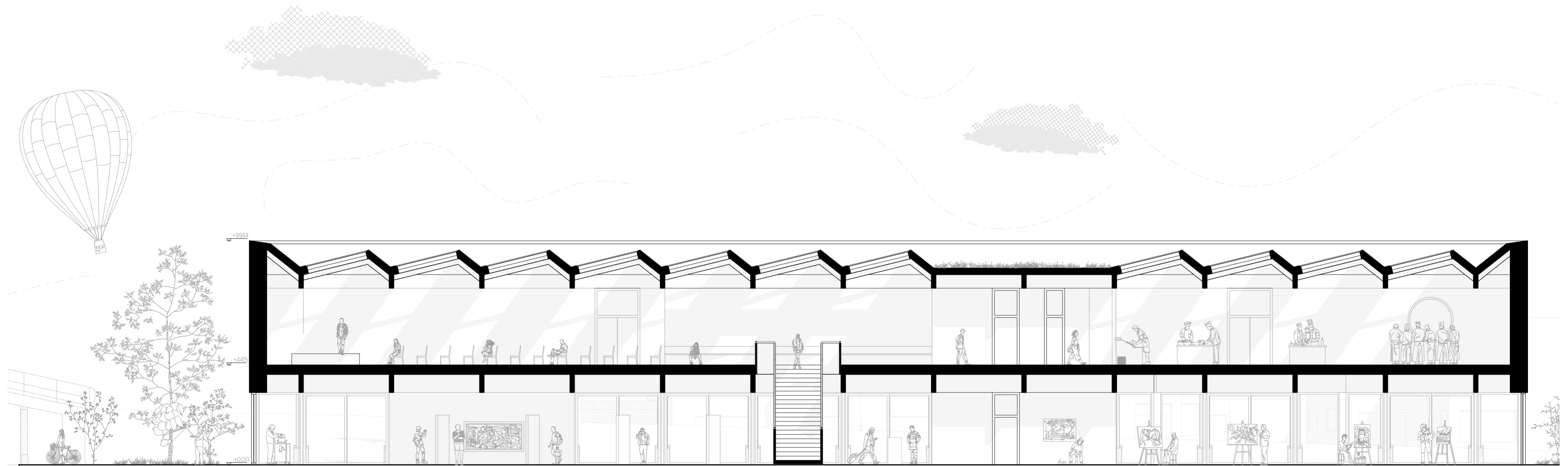
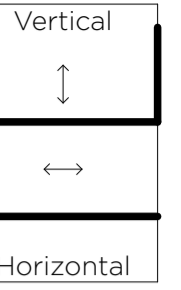
## Exploring character (introverted)



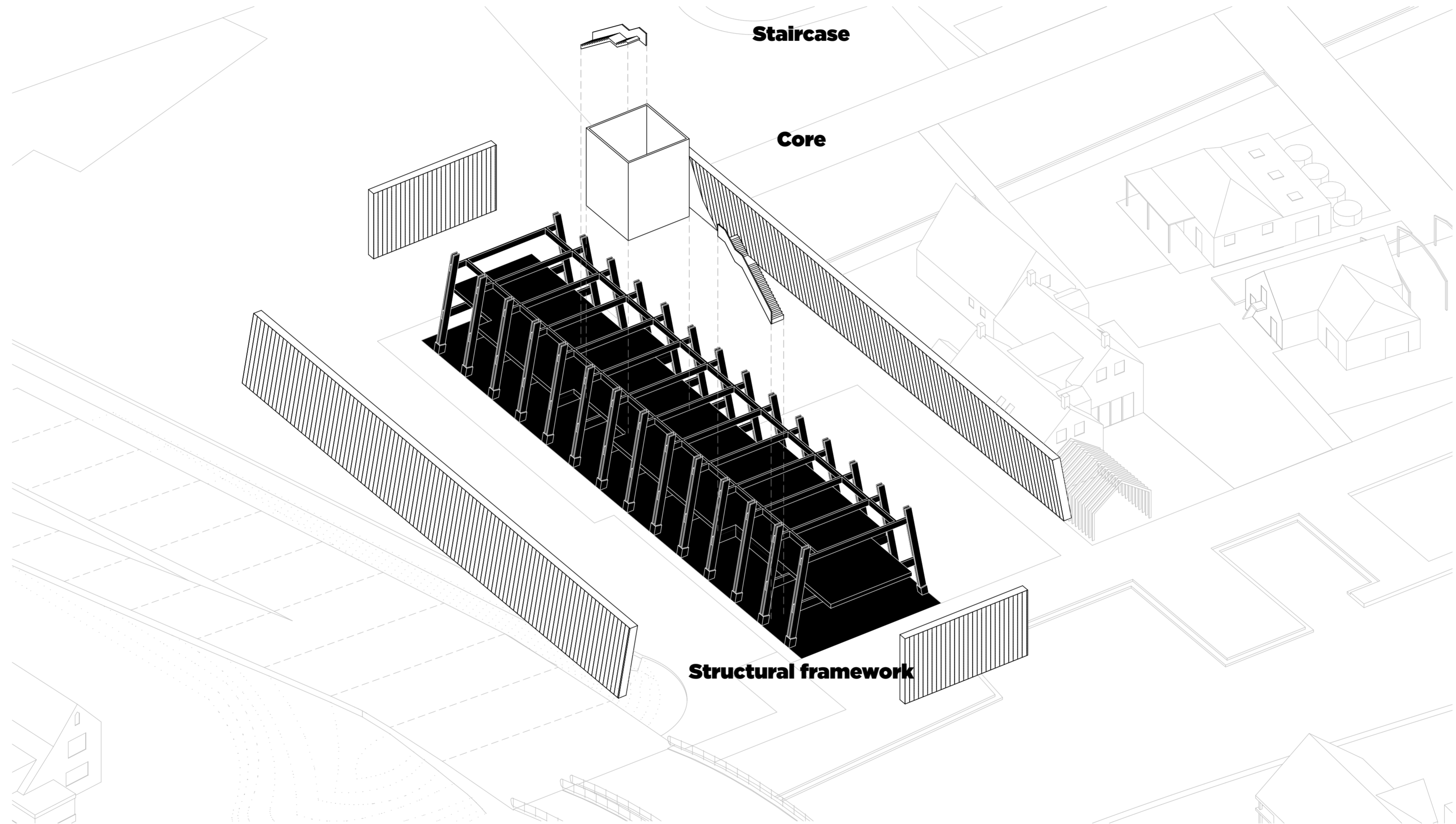
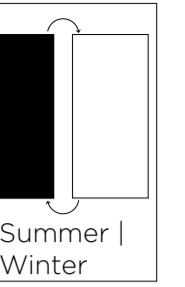
# Programmes for further reflecting | engaging with the cultural ecosystem



# Character of Programme



# Diversity of the cultural ecosystem

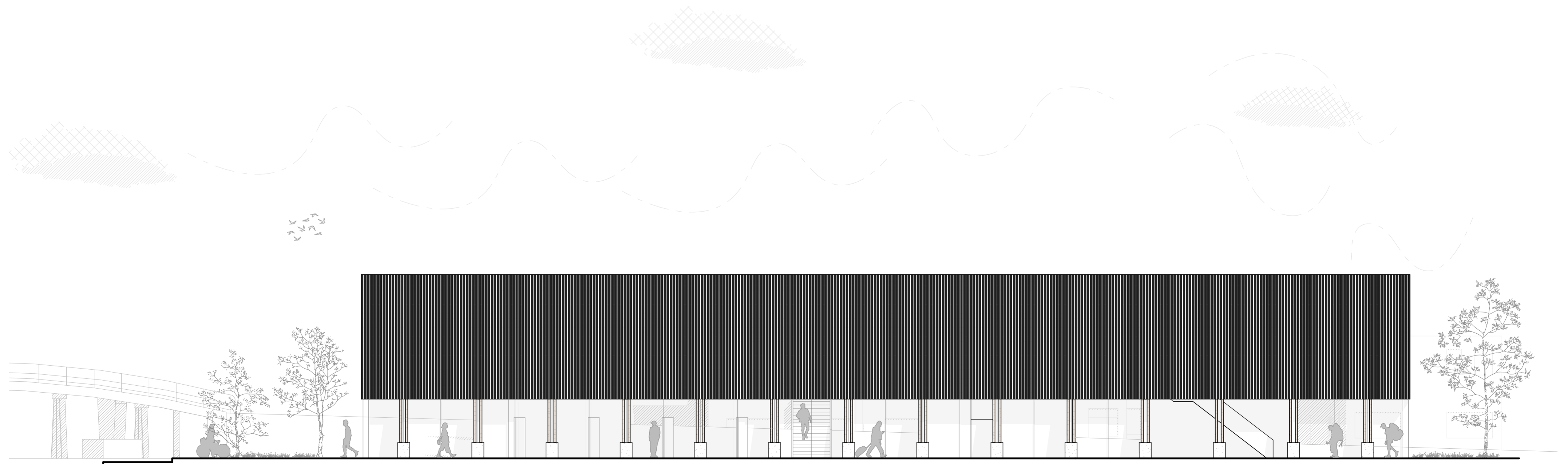


# Framework for adaption



## Creating a symbiotic relationship through visual connection

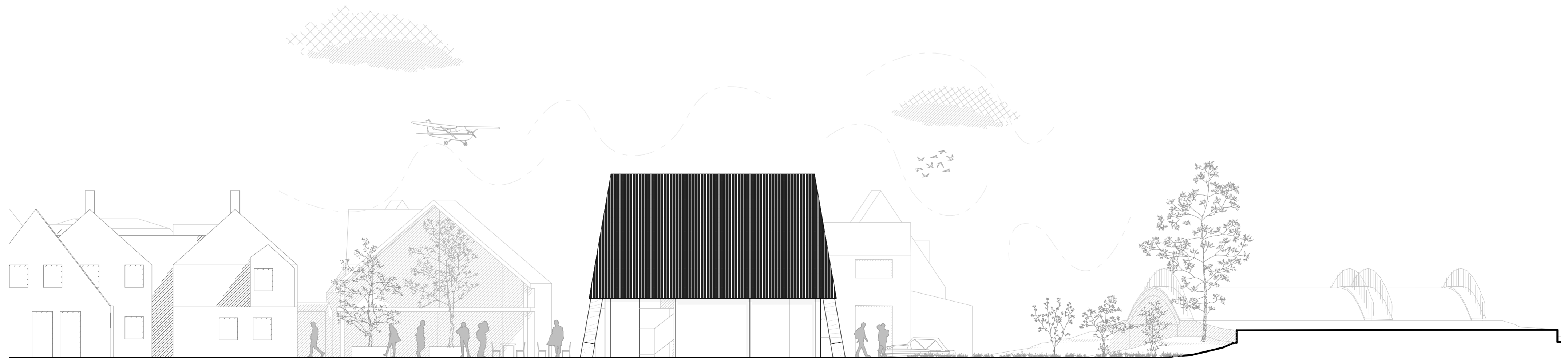
Material on Site



# Polarity to express the diversity of Groningens cultural ecosystem

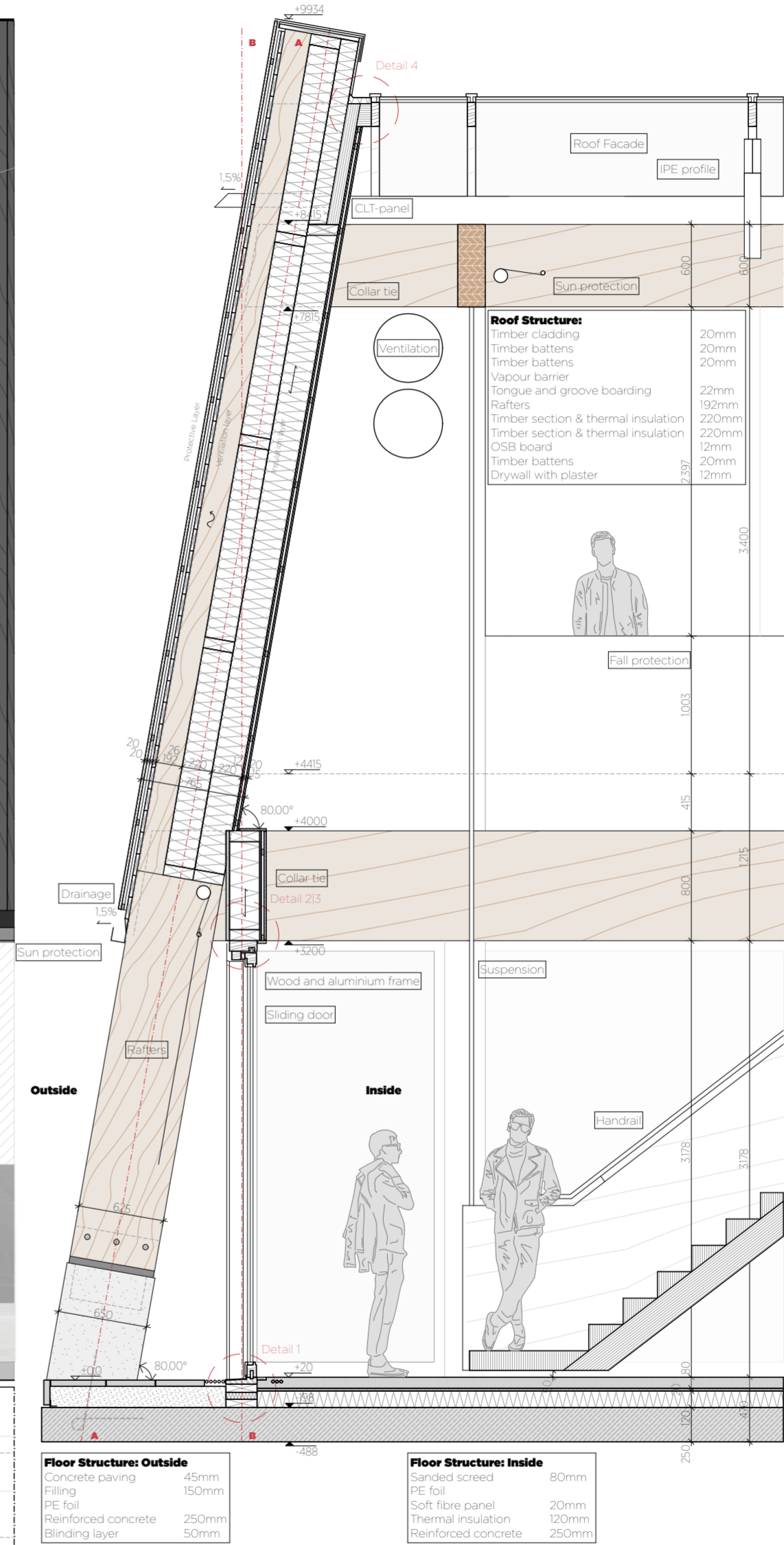
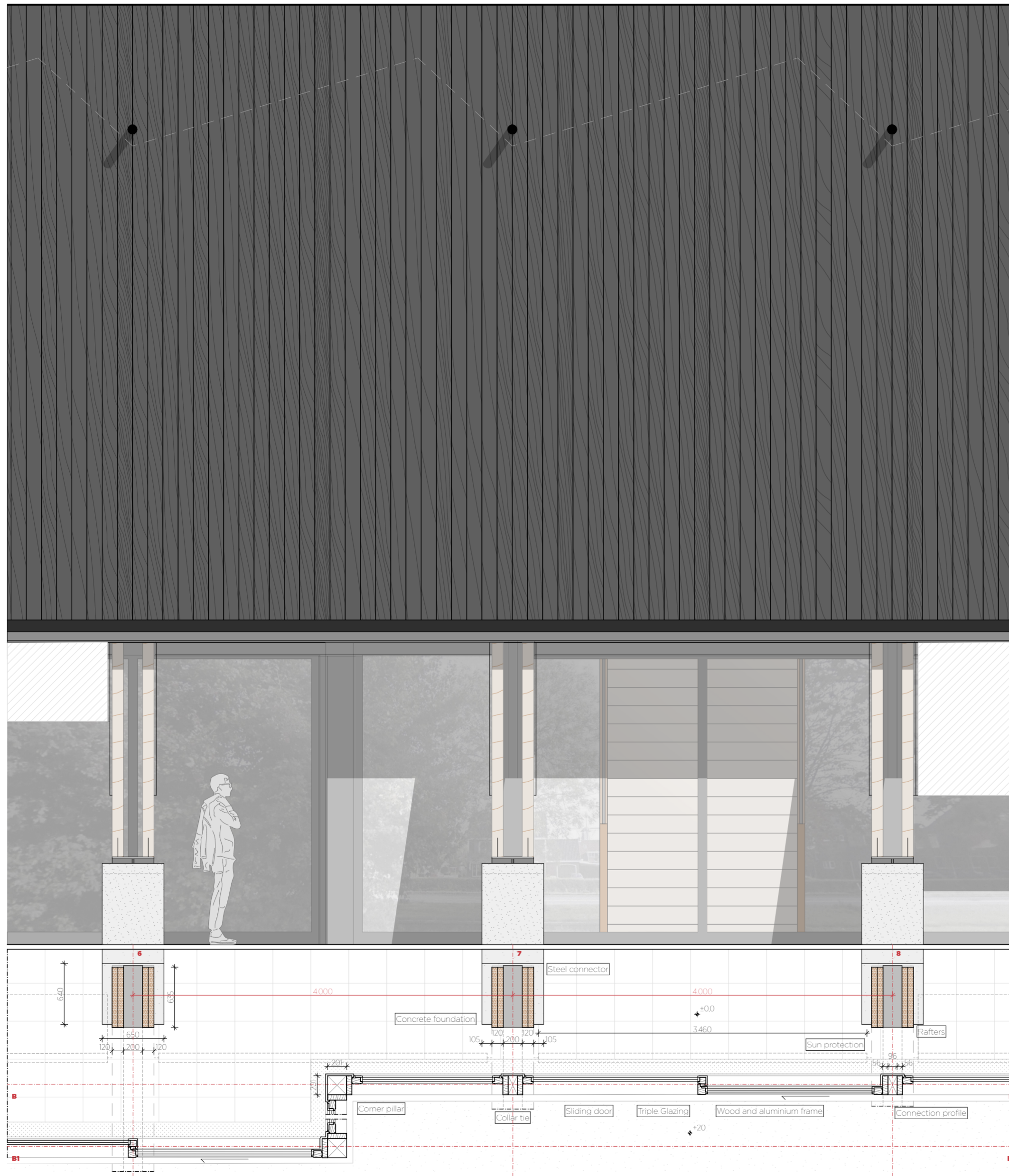
Oppositions are not resolved | Mediate

Ferdinand Aull



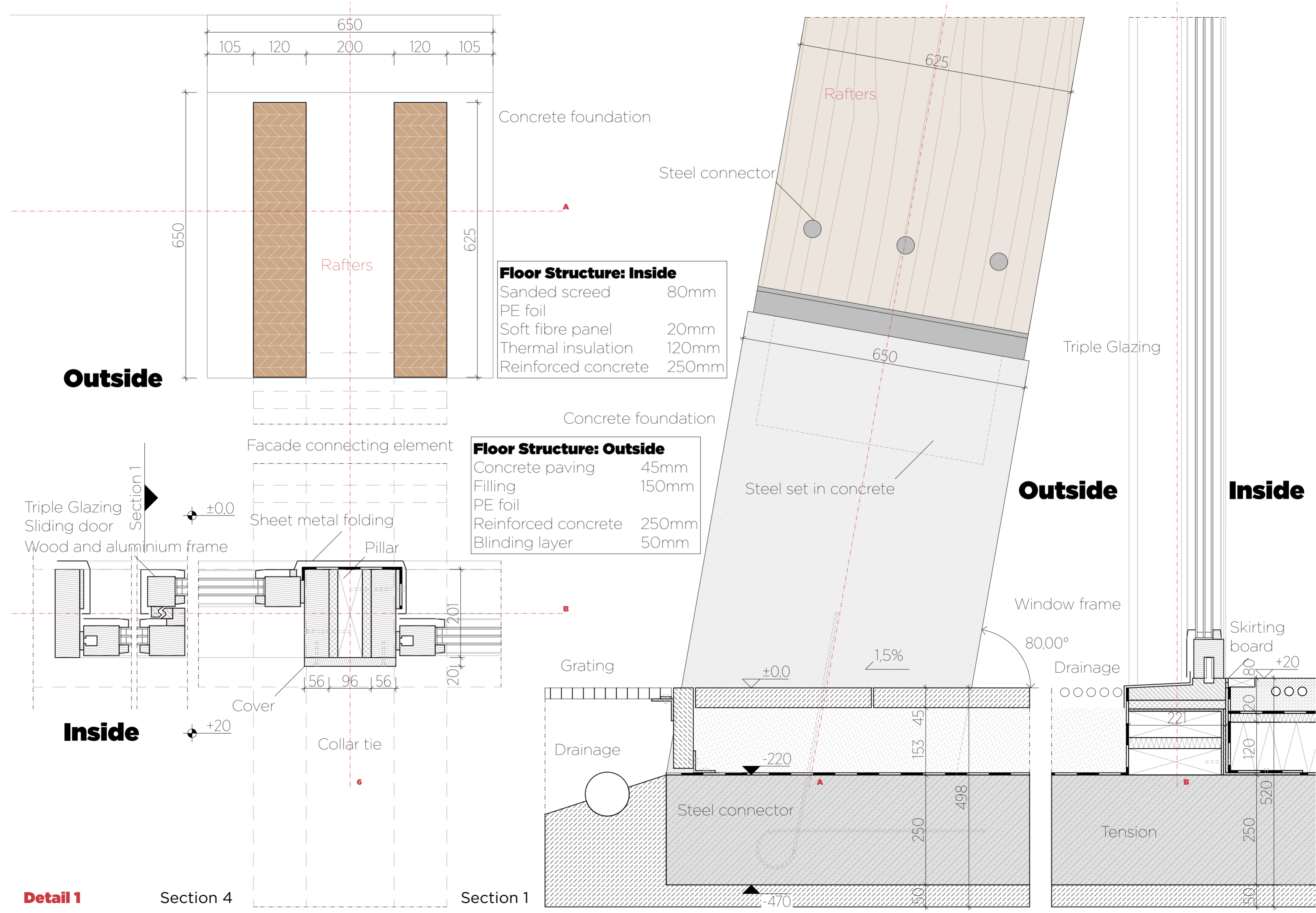
## Polarity to express the diversity of Groningens cultural ecosystem

Enrich the architectural experience and showcase the variety already present in the region

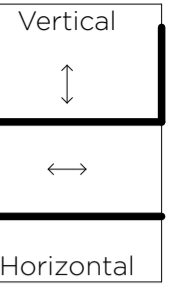


# Framework Zoom-In

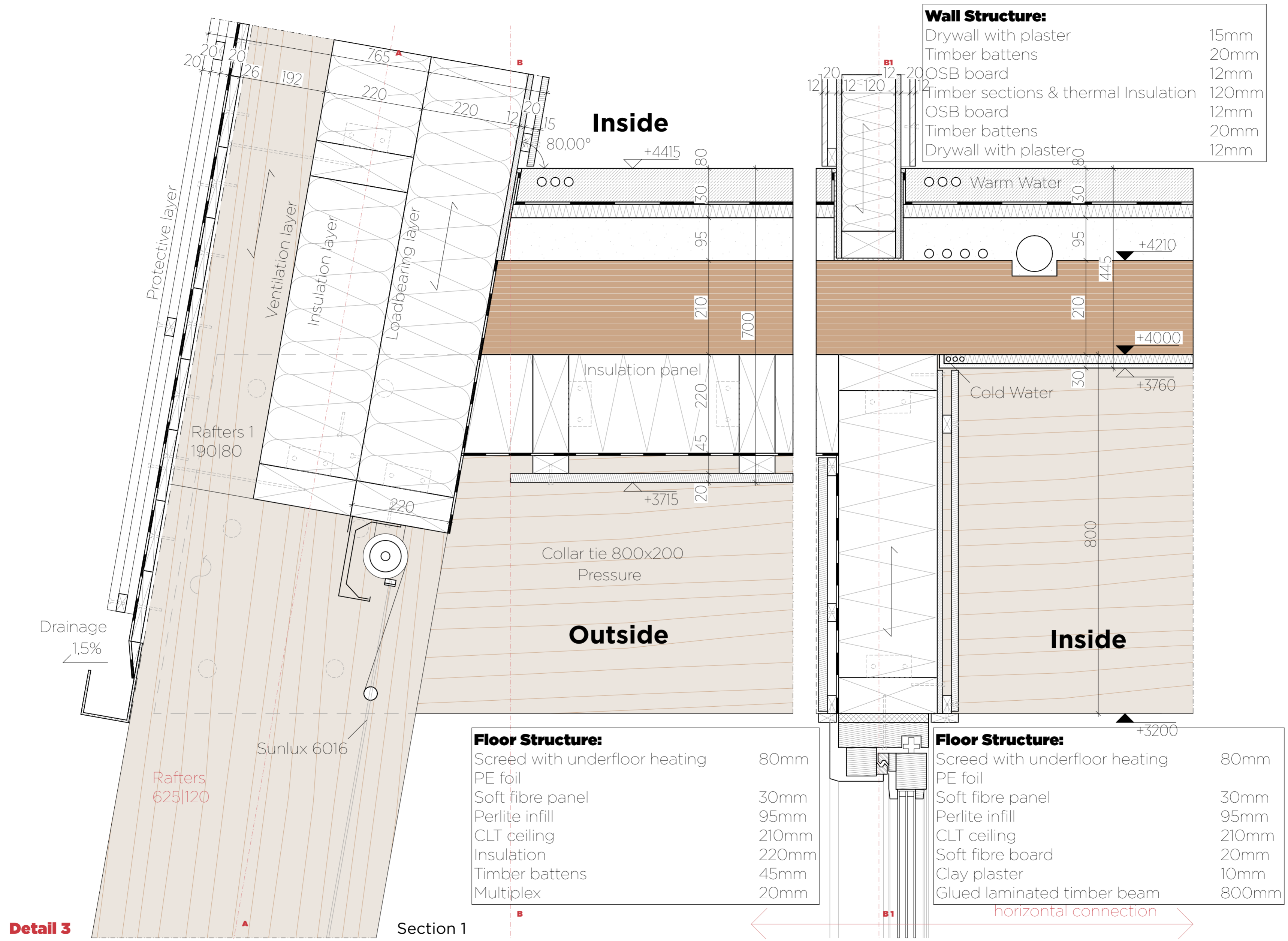
Open framework for future changes | Facade section 1|20



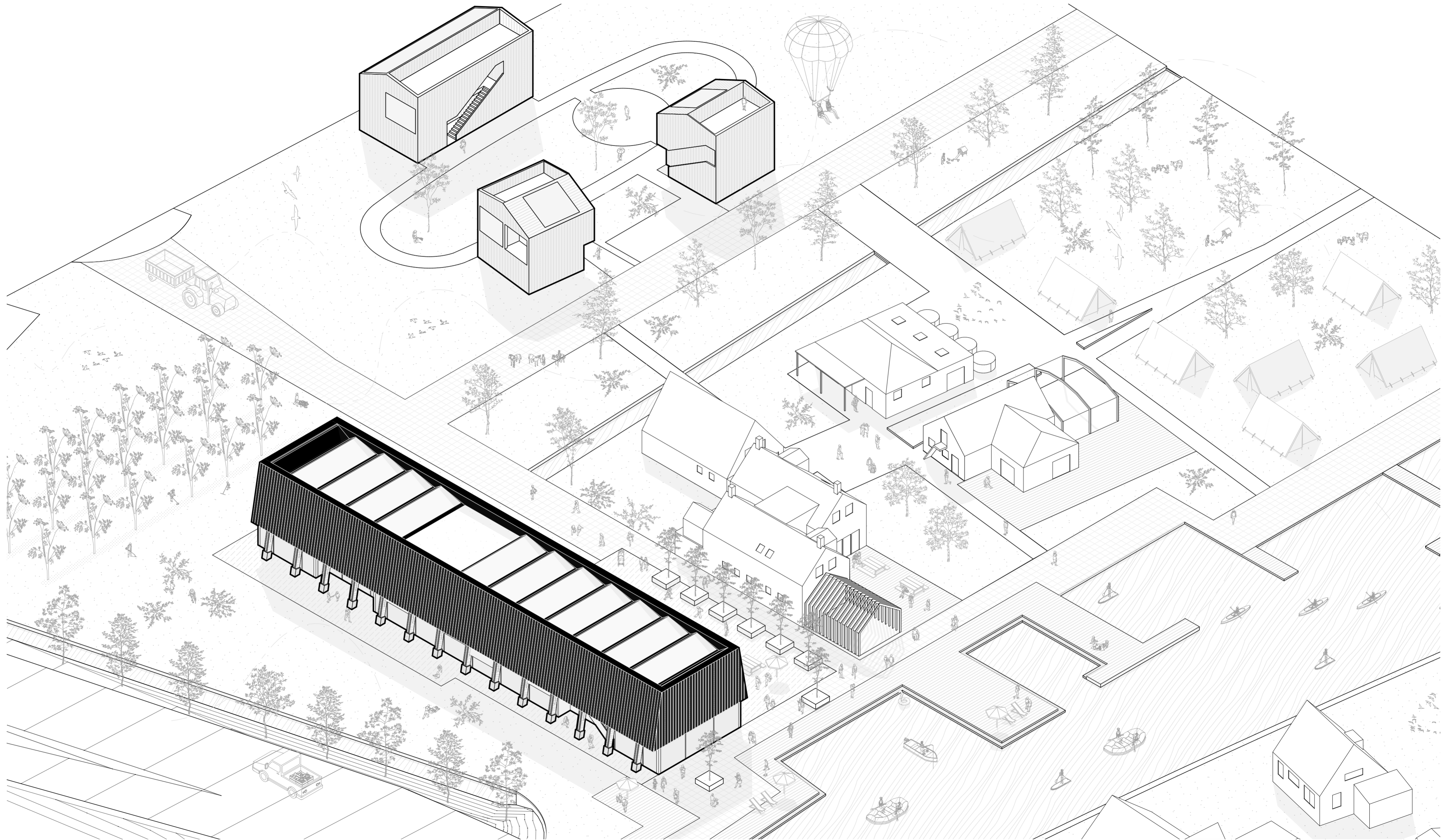
# Celebration of connecting



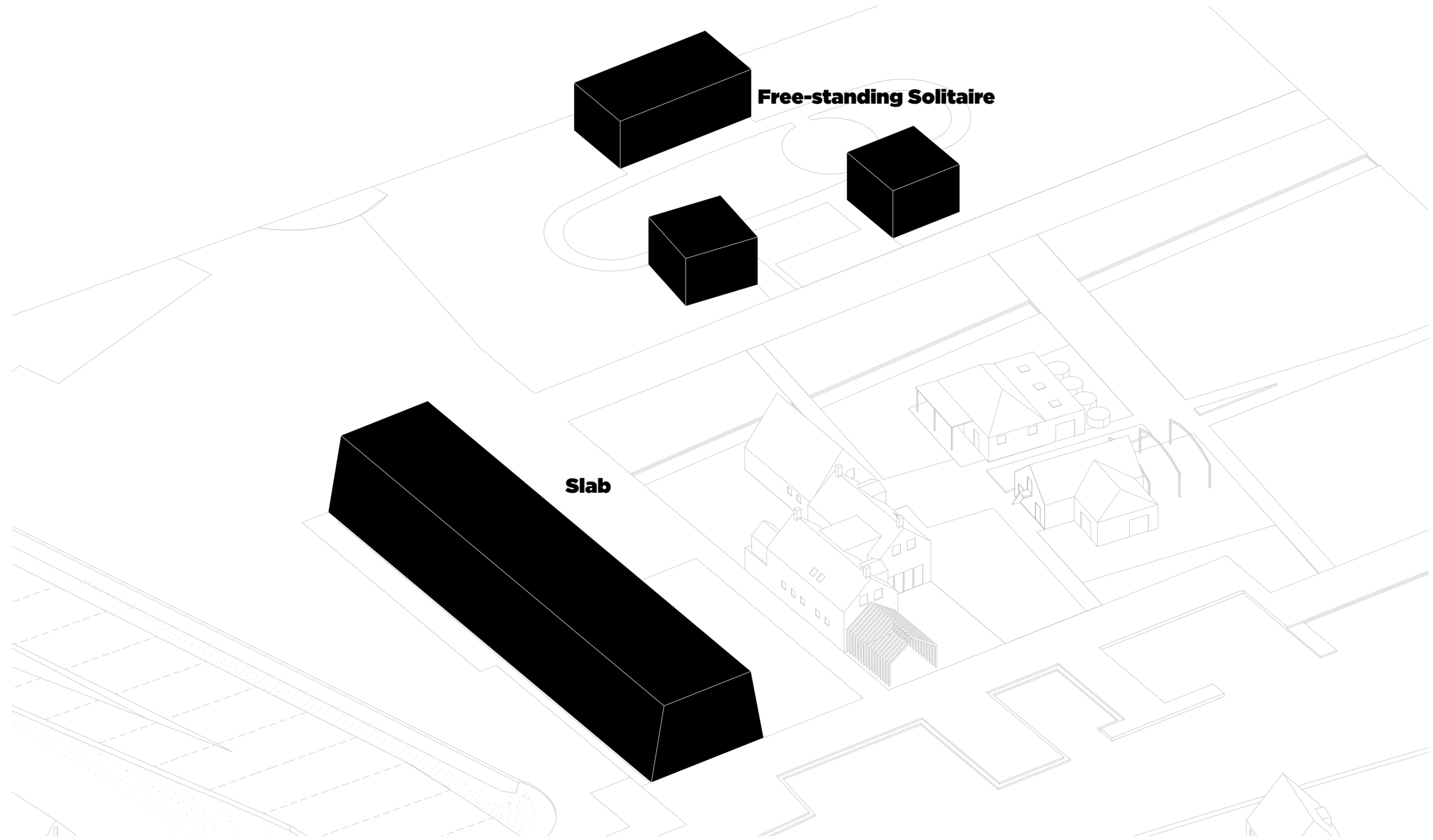
## Vertical connection | disconnection



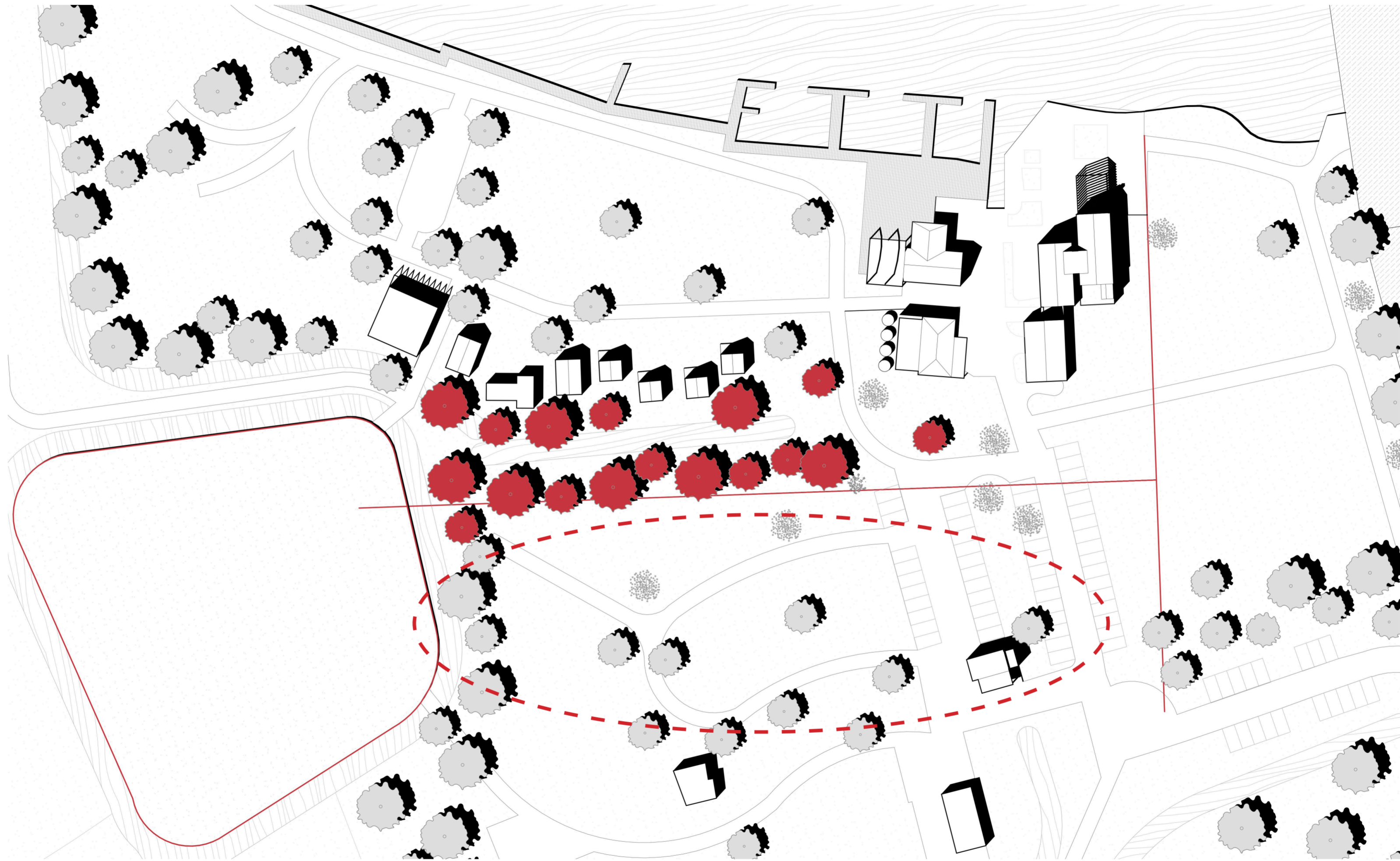
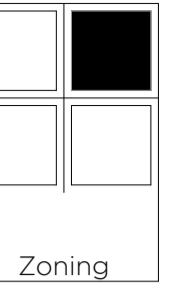
# Setback to look into the connection



# Accommodation to extend a stay of a tourist

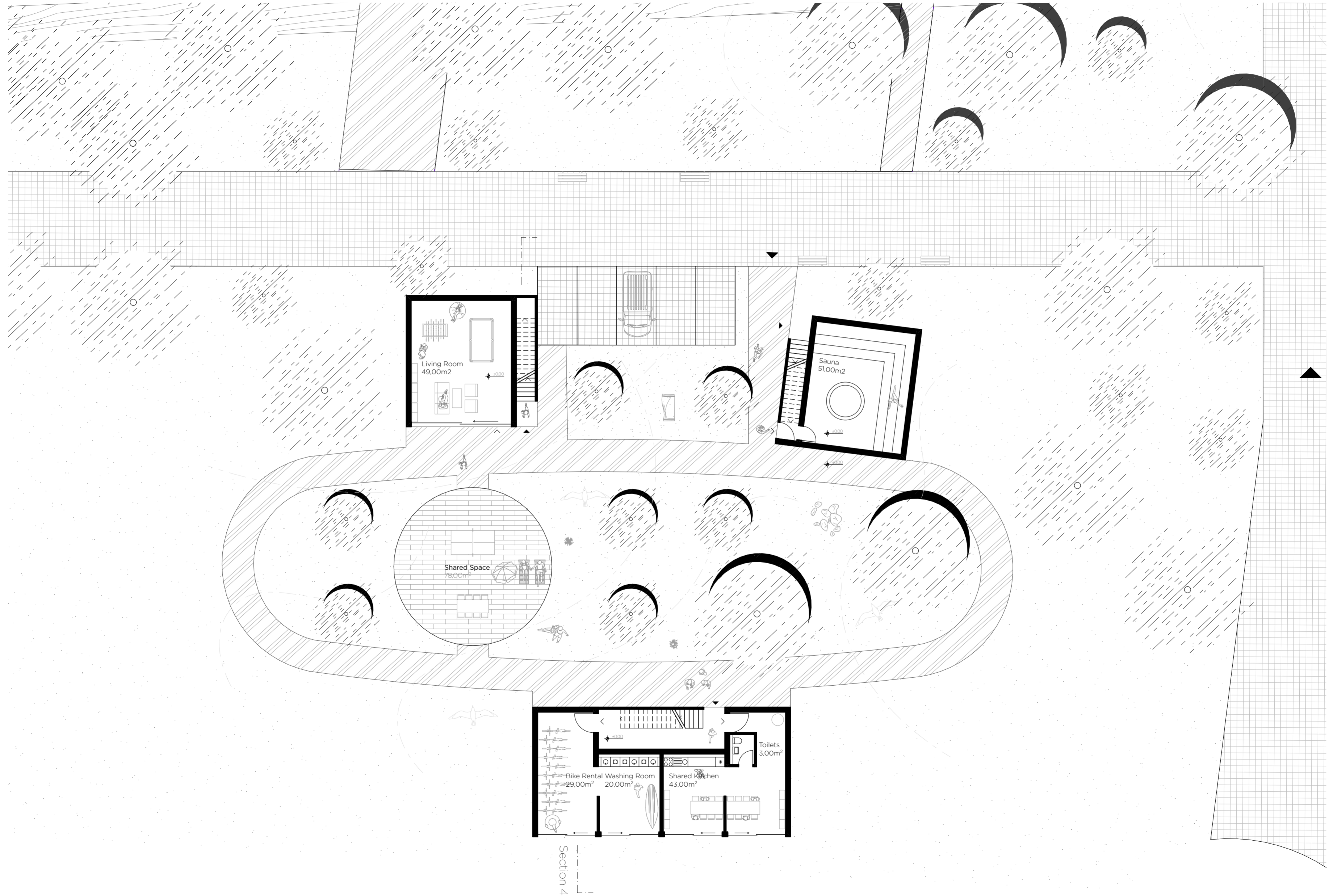


# Mediation between typologies



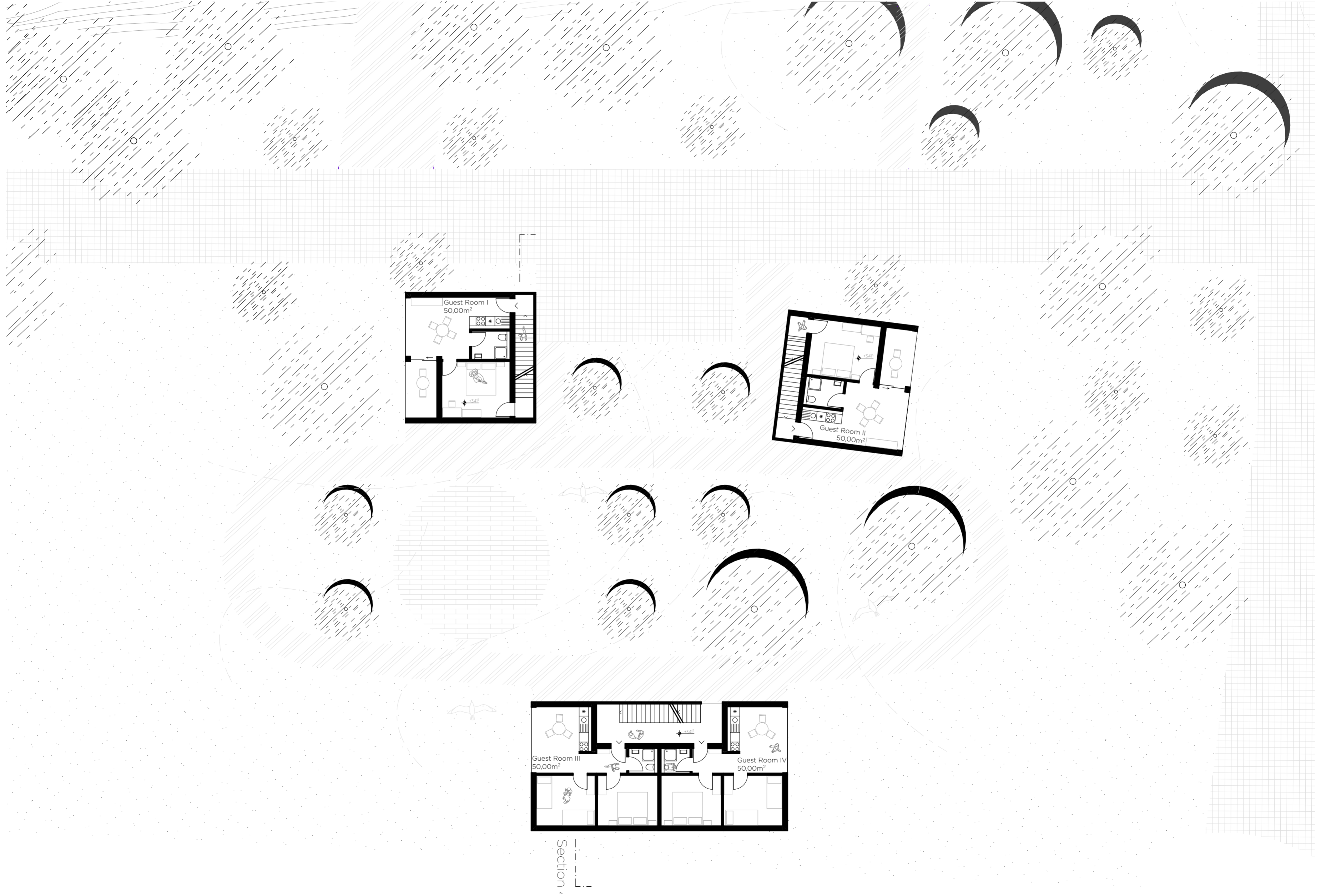
## Positioning of the accommodation

Organise and structure the overall composition



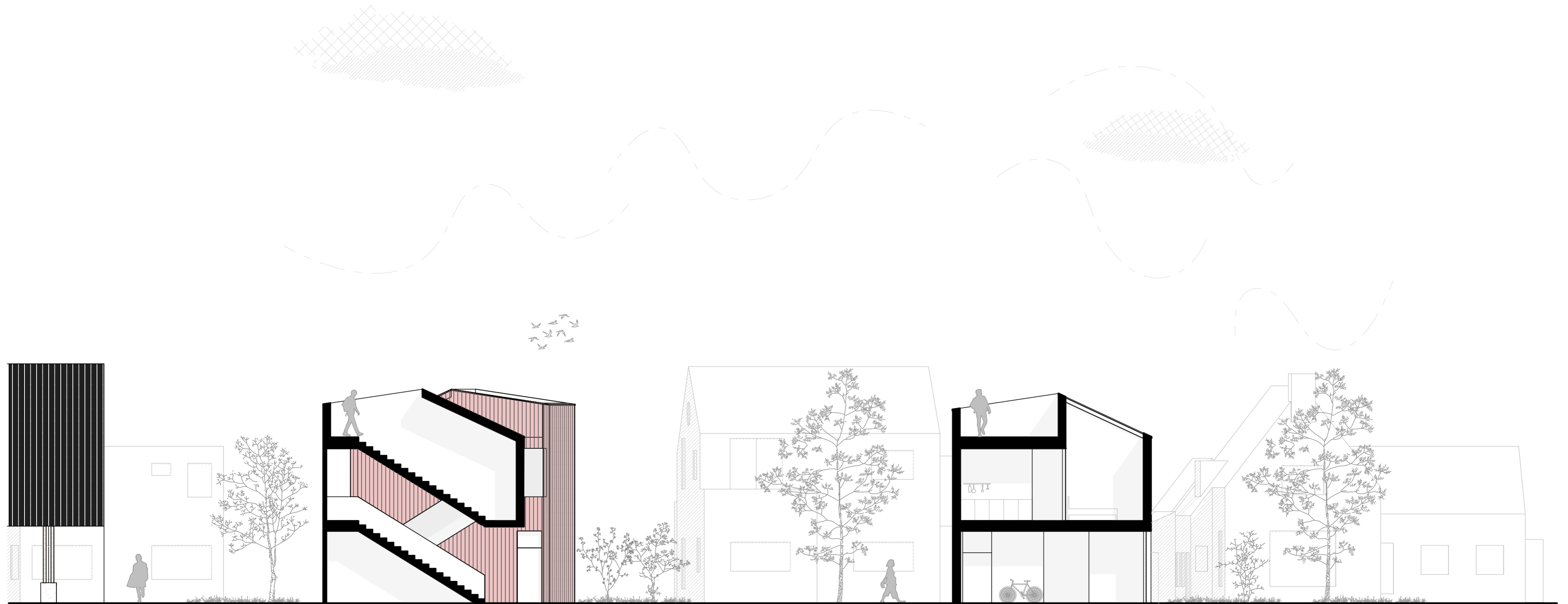
# Public - Private spaces

Groundfloor Scale 1|200



# Public - Private spaces

First Floor Scale 1:200

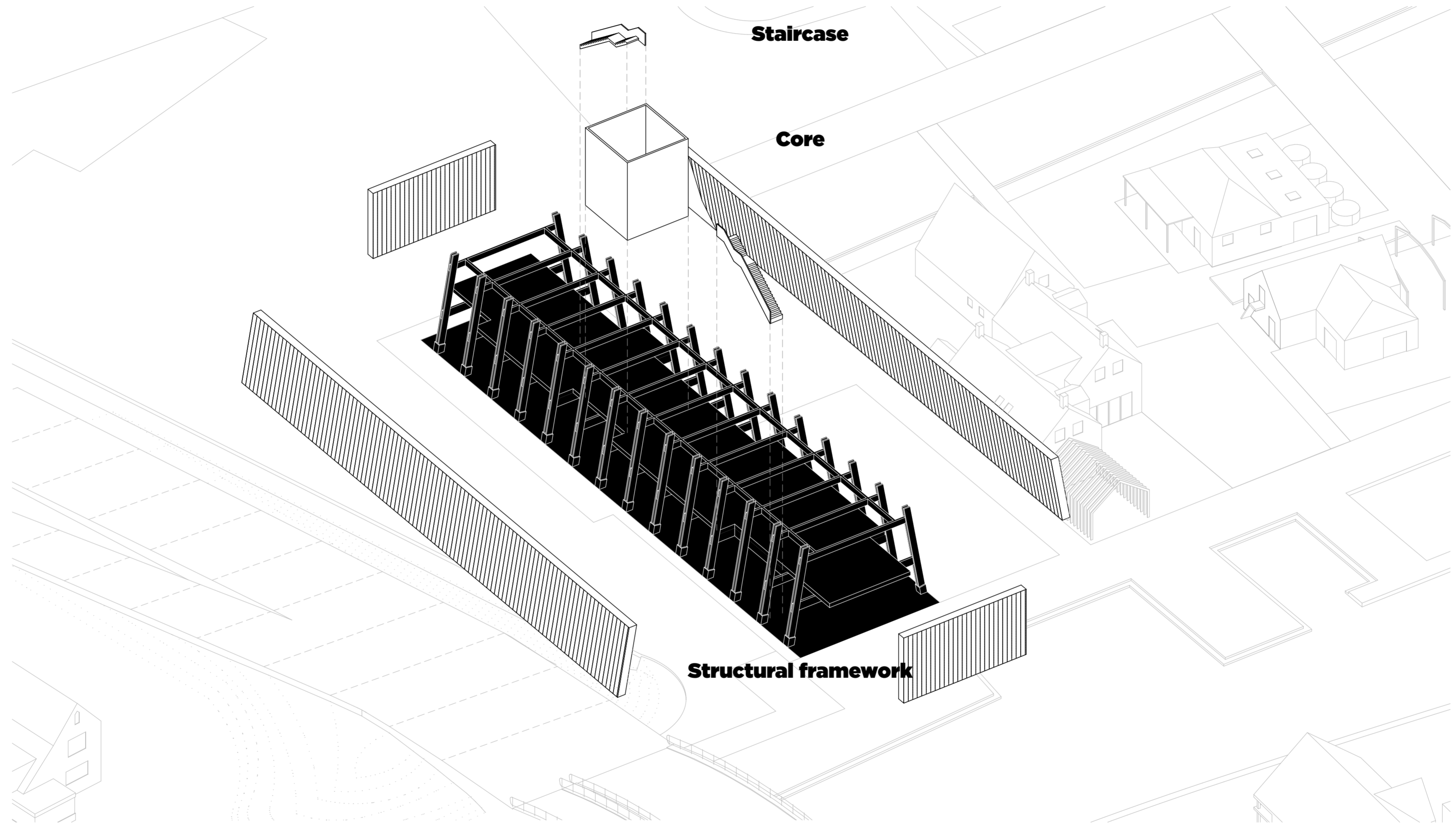
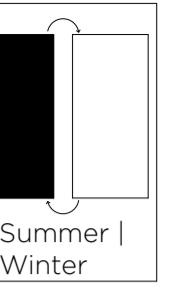


## Connection to cultural ecosystem

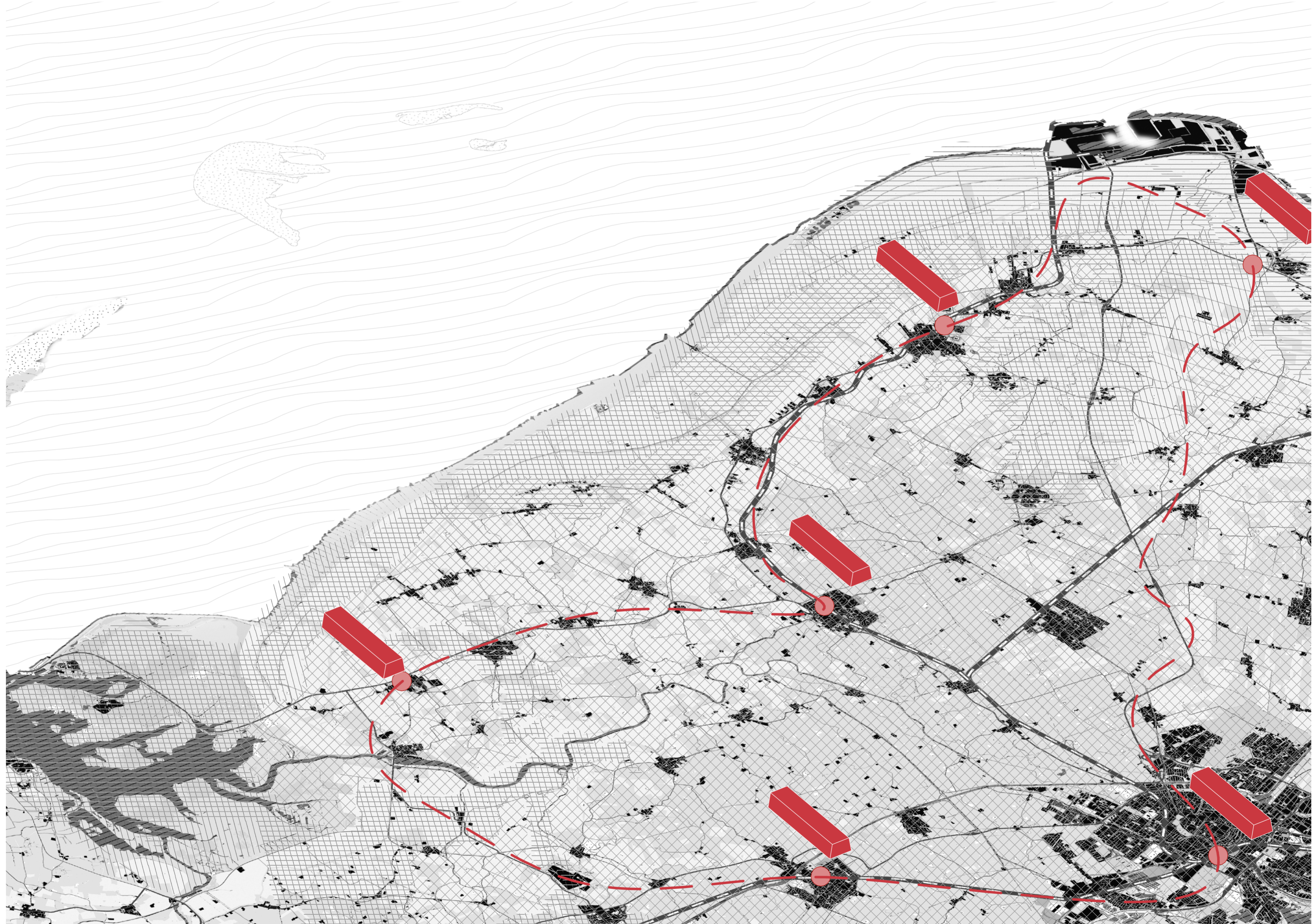
Section Scale 1/200



**Solitaire typology allows additional units to be added during seasonal peaks**



# Framework for adaption



# Adaptable Framework supporting different cultural ecosystems throughout Groningen

Prototype for the wider region

Ferdinand Aull



**Thank you for your attention**

Connecting polarities to frame a cultural ecosystem