

The Kinetic Agora: A Responsive Institution for Acculturation at Plato's Academy

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Graduation Report

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Part 1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Migration pressures have become a global issue in recent decades, driven by climate change, conflict, and political upheaval. In Greece, migration has taken form from voluntary movements, such as the mass emigration of the 1900s, to forced displacement during the recent refugee crisis. These patterns suggest that migration will remain an ongoing condition rather than a temporary phenomenon (Bailey-Morley and Lowe, 2023) (see Figure 1). However, the “Pragmatic Guest-Resident” paradigm adopted by governmental institutions in Athens reflects a prioritisation of temporary reception over long-term integration. Efforts to support acculturation remain largely fragmented and are primarily undertaken by local actors such as NGOs, resulting in significant challenges for the full participation of foreign communities in Greek society.

According to the European Union’s Common Basic Principles (CBPs) on Integration (2004), integration is defined as “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.” This aligns with the Model of Acculturation introduced by John Berry, in which integration allows for multicultural coexistence and gradual engagement with the majority society, in contrast to the US “melting pot” approach that emphasises assimilation (Berry, 2011). From this perspective, cross-cultural communication is essential, and architecture should provide a public realm that fosters direct dialogue between native and foreign communities, enabling more comprehensive

forms of integration. This raises a key question: how can architecture mediate between natives and foreigners to promote multiculturalism within Athenian context?

Apart from political barriers imposed by local authorities, another major issue within migration is the question of immigrant identity. Immigrants across different generations experience distinct struggles in negotiating their cultural identities (Medford, 2022). Differences in social and cultural environments can foster separation and disconnection from their “roots,” resulting in a sense of cultural ambiguity and the persistent question of “who am I?” This thesis therefore examines the role of architecture in shaping experiences of identity and belonging within a crisis-ridden multicultural city.

To promote inclusive communities, the preservation and integration of local cultural traditions and values remain critical. Surveys indicate widespread concerns among the Greek populations that their cultural identity is being threatened by the migrant “other” (Bailey-Morley and Lowe, 2023). In light of these tensions, this thesis explores the design of an integration centre that seeks to reconcile local and external cultures, with the aim of enhancing social integration throughout the acculturation process.

Fig. 1: Migrant Events in Greece

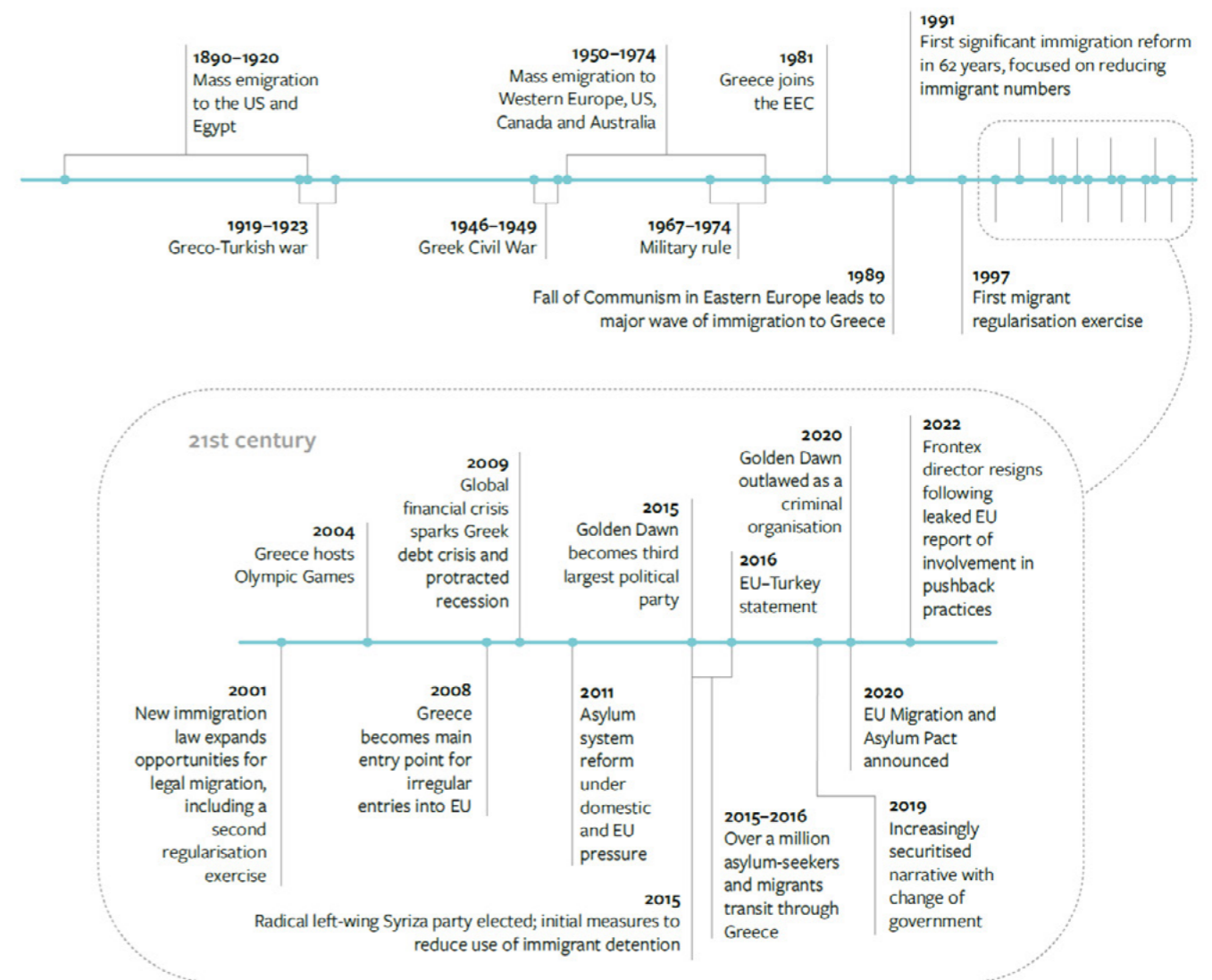


Fig. 2: Factors that Remain to be Improved for Successful Integration in Greece



Fig. 3: Jars of Fears: Greek Attitude Towards Immigration



WHERE DO THE FEAR COME FROM?

Exploring literature on public attitudes toward immigrants provides insight into the sources of xenophobia and racism. It also helps to understand the cultural practices and values that shape the construction of a “real” Greek identity, informing the objectives of the proposed institution.

Public Attitudes Matters

The Sources of Fear

Increase in Crime | Scarce Resources

*“Refugees are a burden for us because they take our **jobs** and **social benefits**, also increases the **crime rate!**”*



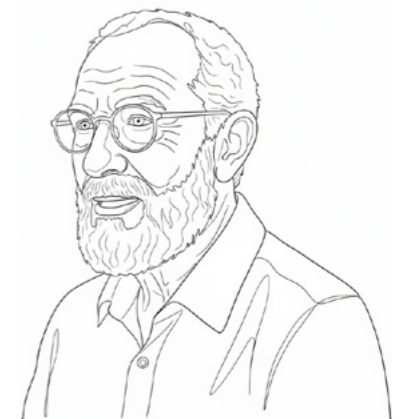
Culture Loss

*“We found that the Greek respondents were more likely than any other EU country to say that immigrants need to **share cultural traditions** and **speak the national language** in order to **successfully integrate.**”*



Religion Invasion

*“We cannot tolerate people not respecting the fact that the majority of people in this country are **Christians.**”*



Disinformation on Social Media

*“I only use **social media** to obtain information on migration matters, so do my friends. We have no **trust** in TV!”*



1.2 Relevance

Since the refugee crisis of the mid-2010s, Greece's role has progressively shifted from that of a transit country to that of a host nation (Dixon et al., 2019). This transformation highlights immigrant integration as an increasingly urgent issue that must remain central to the Greek government's political agenda. However, conventional institutions for immigrants such as immigration centres primarily focus on the provision of educational and legal assistance, thereby reinforcing an image of immigrants as passive recipients of support. This representation risks exacerbating negative attitudes among the Greek majority toward minority groups. To address such prejudice, Gordon Allport (1954) formulated the contact theory, which identifies four essential conditions for reducing intergroup bias: equal group status, cooperation, shared objectives, and support from social and institutional authorities. In response, this thesis proposes a reimagined integration centre conceived as a neutral territory, one that extends beyond the provision of shelter to enable immigrants to become active contributors to Athenian society, thereby enhancing the integration process.

In the context of fluctuating migratory conditions, architects have increasingly sought adaptable solutions to accommodate rising numbers of immigrants. Nevertheless, much of this exploration remains focused on the design of emergency shelters, rather than long-term integration infrastructures. To address the inherent variability and unpredictability of migration, this project engages with the concept of polyvalence, as introduced by Herman Hertzberger in the 1960s. For Hertzberger, flexibility constitutes a largely neutral strategy, permitting spatial adaptation to changing uses without necessarily yielding optimal outcomes. By contrast, polyvalence advocates for spatial configurations that are both minimal and enduring, enabling a range of uses while maintaining architectural coherence (Hertzberger, 1991, pp. 146–147). Accordingly, this project proposes an integration centre grounded in the principles of polyvalence, designed to accommodate evolving social and cultural demands associated with migration.

Lack of Institution Fostering Cross-Cultural Communication

This mapping reveals a lack of governmental institutions capable of promoting direct encounters and dialogue between native residents and newcomers, an element that is essential to social integration.

Existing Immigrants Service/Facilities

- Public Partners
- Governmental bodies





Fig. 4: Existing Facilities for Integration in Athens

Regional Asylum Office of Piraeus

Understanding of Local Support

This map illustrates the distribution of existing immigrant services provided by local initiatives, primarily NGOs. These services, which operate largely independently, are concentrated north of central Athens. Services include vocational training, language classes, and other support programs.

-  Public Partners
-  Governmental bodies

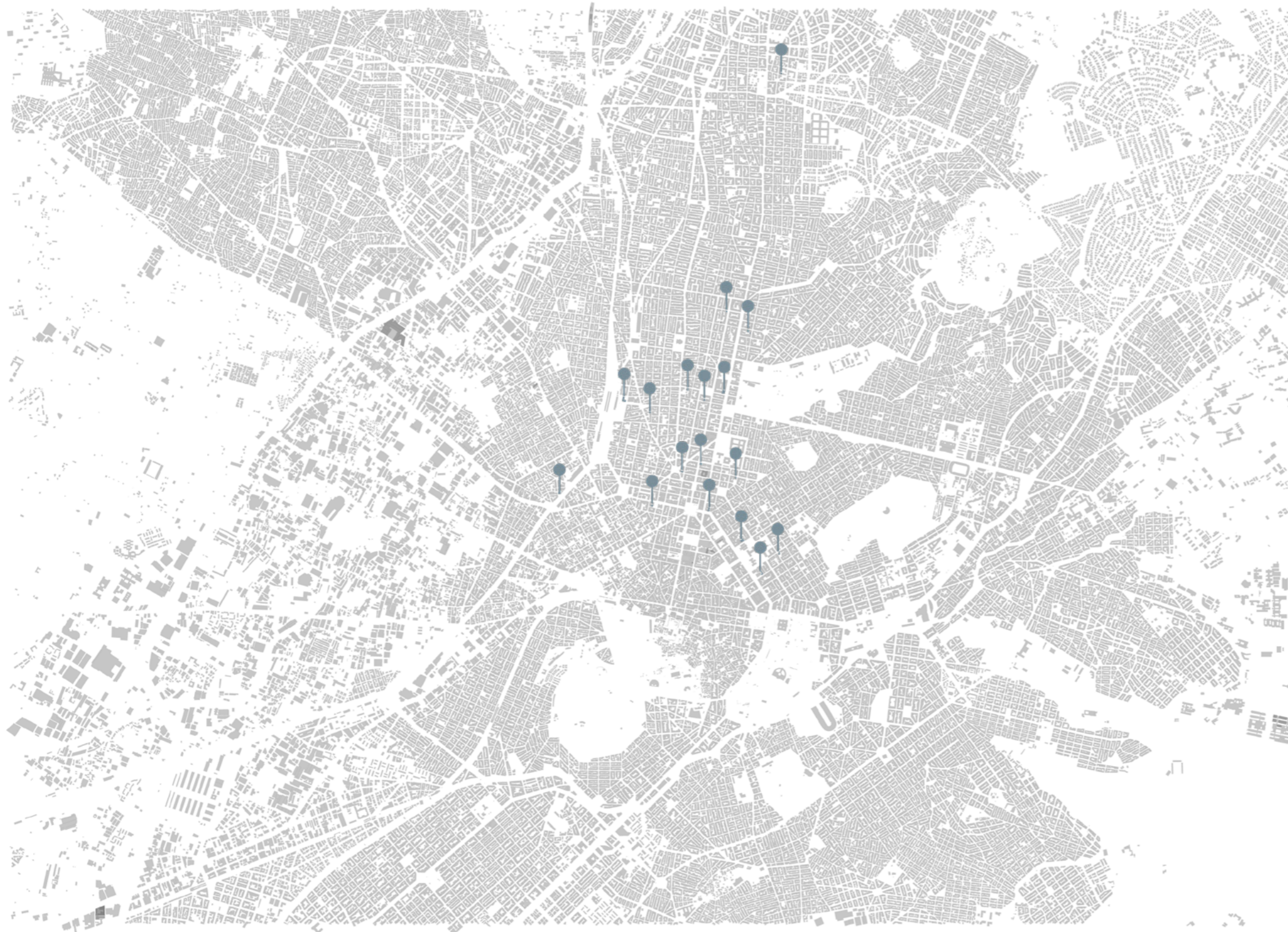


Fig. 5: Existing Immigrants Service/Facilities

1.3 Objective and Motivation

The primary objective of this thesis is to rethink the role of immigrant communities in the Greek society by shifting their perceived position from passive recipients of aid to active contributors during the acculturation process. This is pursued through the architectural integration of cultural and empowerment programs, which together fosters agency and participation. The proposed integration centre is conceived as a platform for sustained cultural exchange between the local Greek population and immigrant communities, establishing conditions for meaningful intergroup contact. Such engagement is intended to gradually reframe prevailing perceptions of immigrants—not as intruders disrupting social homogeneity, but as contributors to cultural diversity (Koulaxi, 2025, p. 135). In this regard, the project reimagines the integration centre as a marketplace of both formal and informal exchange, where cultural sharing, knowledge dialogue, and everyday social encounters collectively support the integration process while maintaining and respecting Athenian identity.

To accommodate this diverse and evolving program, the extent and application of spatial polyvalence constitute a central challenge of the project. The aim is to optimise spatial performance across varying programmatic needs while minimising physical transformation. Achieving this requires a

rigorous examination of architectural and technical precedents to identify strategies capable of supporting multiple scenarios. In particular, the project addresses the fluctuating nature of migration by considering how the building might operate under contrasting conditions, ranging from periods of significant influx to moments of relative absence. Such forward-looking considerations are essential to ensuring resilience and adaptability in the face of unpredictable migratory dynamics.

This investigation is informed by a personal engagement with the theme of integration, developed throughout my architectural education abroad. Experiencing life as a student in a foreign context revealed the subtle yet persistent social boundaries between myself and local peers. This prompted a critical inquiry into whether architecture can be conceived as an inclusive medium which enables diverse users to establish a sense of belonging and familiarity within shared spaces. It is this line of questioning that ultimately serves as the conceptual foundation for the project.

1.4 Research/Design Questions

Primary Question

How can a responsive architectural framework adapt to fluctuating migratory dynamics to mediate spatial integration and cultural exchange between native and migrant communities in Athens?

Secondary Questions

Concept (The Core & Exchange)

In what ways can a hyper-dense architectural core be deployed as a civic spine to sustain both structured institutional programs and fluid, informal cultural encounters?

Design (Site as Local Anchor)

How can an architectural intervention at Plato's Academy leverage the historic site context to preserve local cultural identity while establishing a welcoming framework for migrant integration?

Spatial Quality

How can a kinetic building envelope modulate indoor-outdoor thresholds to lower spatial barriers and create an inviting gesture for cross-cultural exchange?

1.5.1 Scope - Program

New Integration Centre

Programmatic Space	Social Idea / Urgency	New Spatial Requirements	New Spatial Qualities
Empowerment	Exchange of knowledge— educational services for enhancing self-agency	Auditorium, vocational workshops, language café, library, computer room, outdoor garden, family-run enterprises, study space	Engaging, skill-oriented, informative, academic, instructive, supportive
Culture	Exchange of culture— nurturing common ground with local communities	Performative hall, artist workshop, collective kitchen, prayer room	Approachable, inviting, communicative, participatory
Sustenance	Exchange of support— source of strength	Canteen, consultation room, office, meeting room, well-being room	Lively, transparent, respectful, trust-building, personal

Provisional Stakeholders Overview

Users	Numbers
Newly-Arrived Immigrants (Numbers staying in RIC*) (monthly)	250 (850)
Children (monthly)	20
Post-Application Immigrants (monthly)	300
Administrative Staff (daily)	10-15
Locals (weekly)	300+
Local Artists (daily)	10-20
Volunteers (daily)	20-30
Experts (daily)	10-15
Employees (daily)	20-30

Figures Reference: Application Numbers for International Protection in Directorate of Attica in 2025 (Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου. 2025. “Στατιστικά | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης Και Ασύλου.” August 18, 2025. <https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>.)

* RIC Malakasa is the only RIC in Attica Region in mainland Greece, all newly-arrived immigrants are required to stay in RIC within the initial registration period.

Stakeholders & Program

Fig. 6

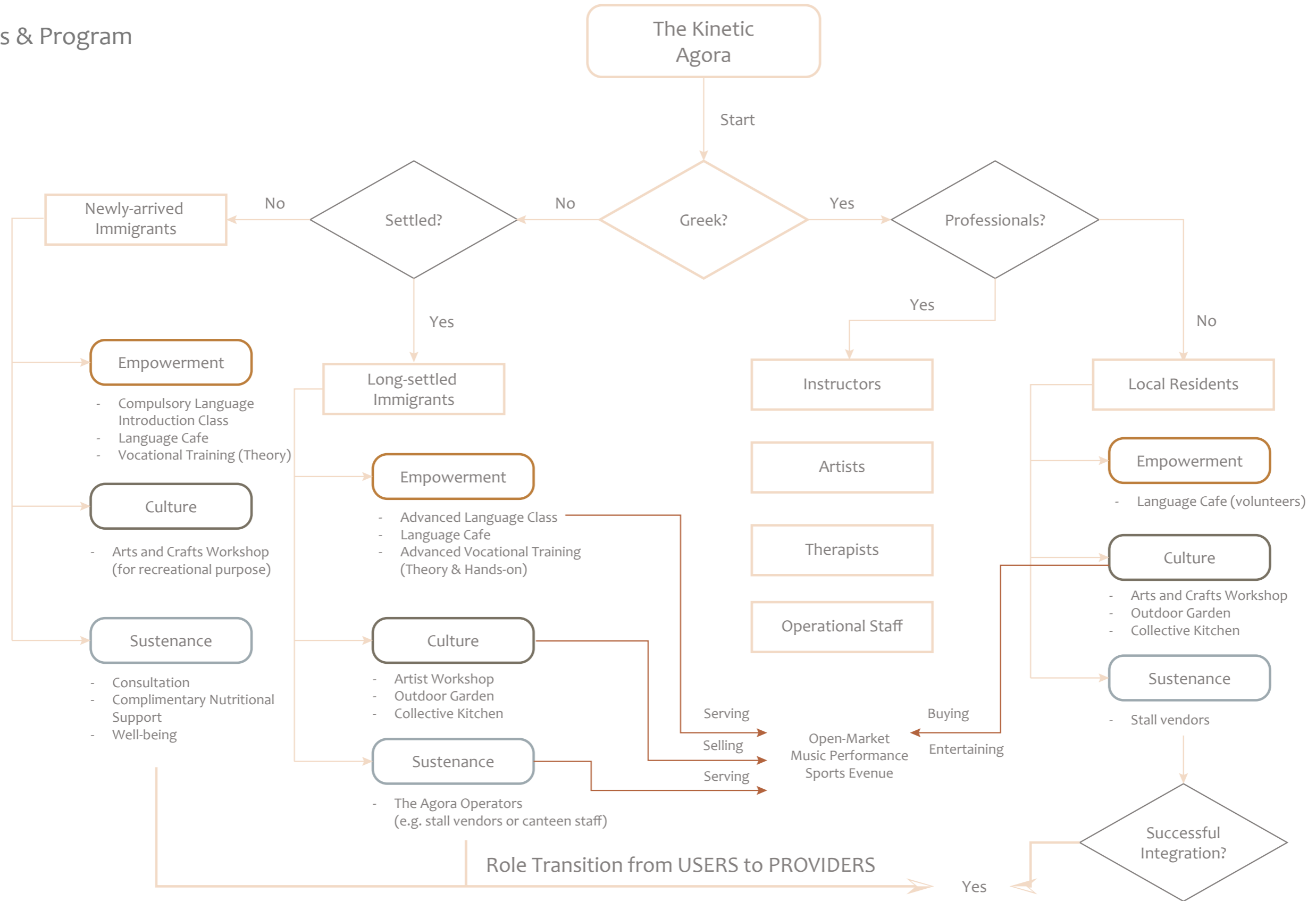
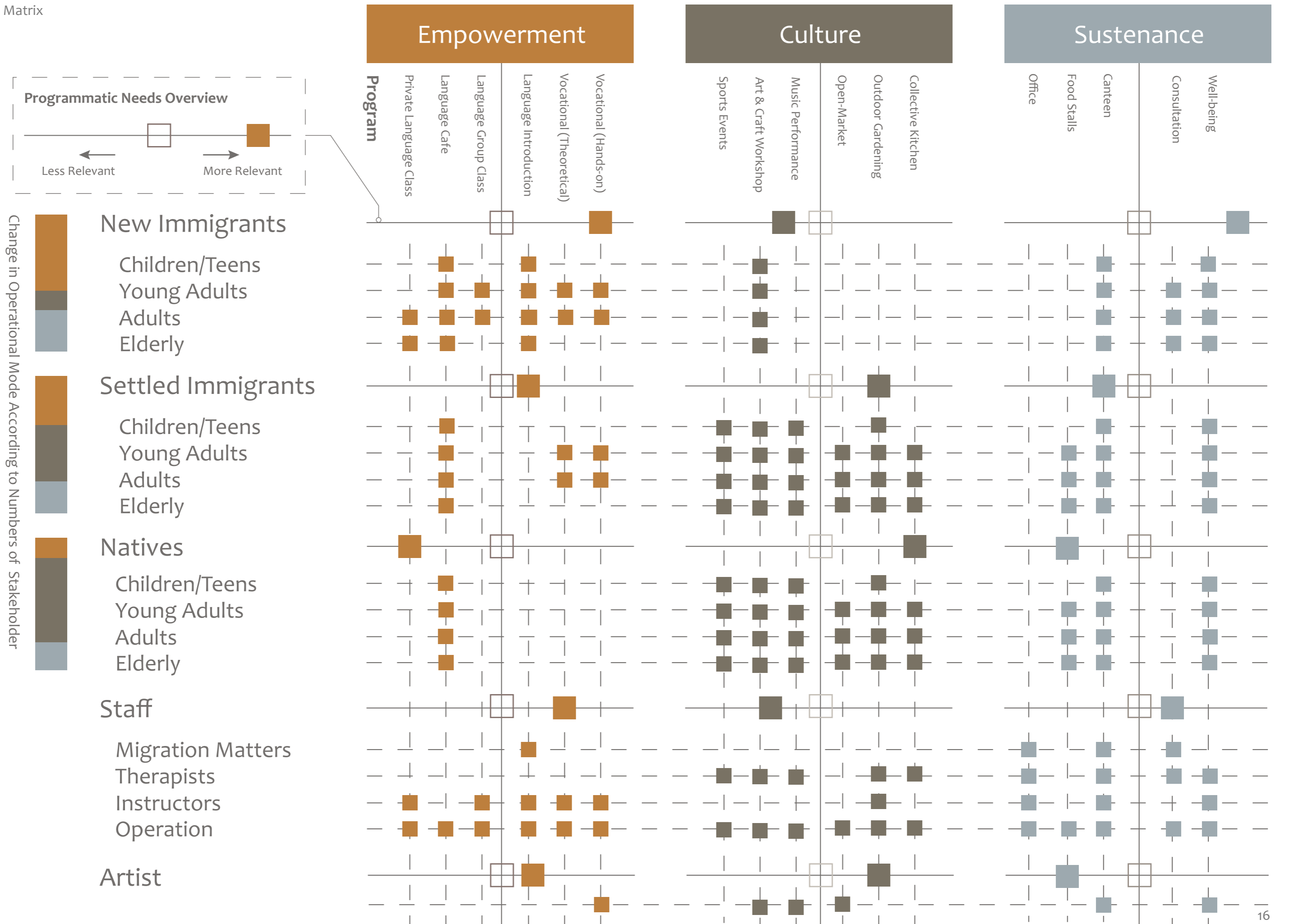


Fig. 8: Data Matrix



Spatial Requirements

Empowerment

Space	Quantity	Area (m ²)	Capacity of users
Vocational (Classroom)	3	100	30
Vocational (DIY)	1	216	50
Computer Room	1	200	50
Library	1	200	50
Outdoor Garden	1	200	20
Shop	3	108	45

Cultural

Space	Quantity	Area (m ²)	Capacity of users
Multi-purpose Hall	1	648	-
Artist Workshop	3	72	10-15
Collective Kitchen	2	72	25

Sustenance

Space	Quantity	Area (m ²)	Capacity of users
Canteen	1	320	160
Food stalls	3	36	5
Administrative Office	1	100	10-15
Consultation Room	2	36	10

Total Internal Footprint: 3,240 m² (with circulation & flexible area)

Total Exterior Footprint: 2,000 m²

1.5.2 Scope - Site (Plato's Academy)

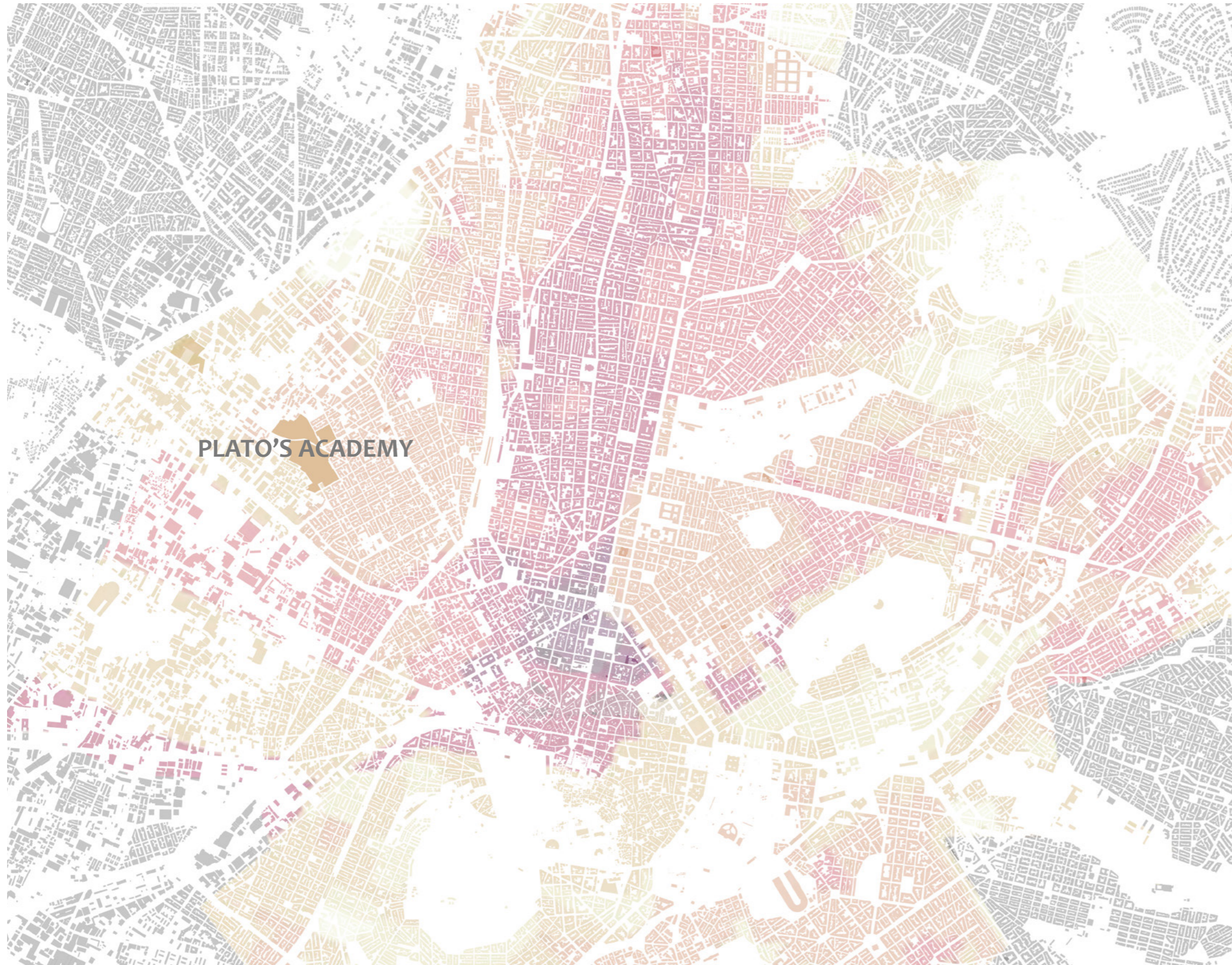


Fig. 9: 1:25000 Site Plan

Plato's Academy is selected as the site for the proposed integration centre due to its proximity to migrant neighbourhoods in Athens such as Kypseli, Victoria Square, Kato Patisia, and Metaxourgeio, while maintaining sufficient distance to ensure privacy and a sense of safety. Surrounded by residential buildings and abundant greenery, the area offers natural elements that can function as a "buffer zone".

**The darker colours represent a higher percentage

Fig. 10: Demographics around Site

Table 2.2 Basic indicators concerning Greece, the MRA and Akadimia Platonos, Sepolia, Kolonos, 2011

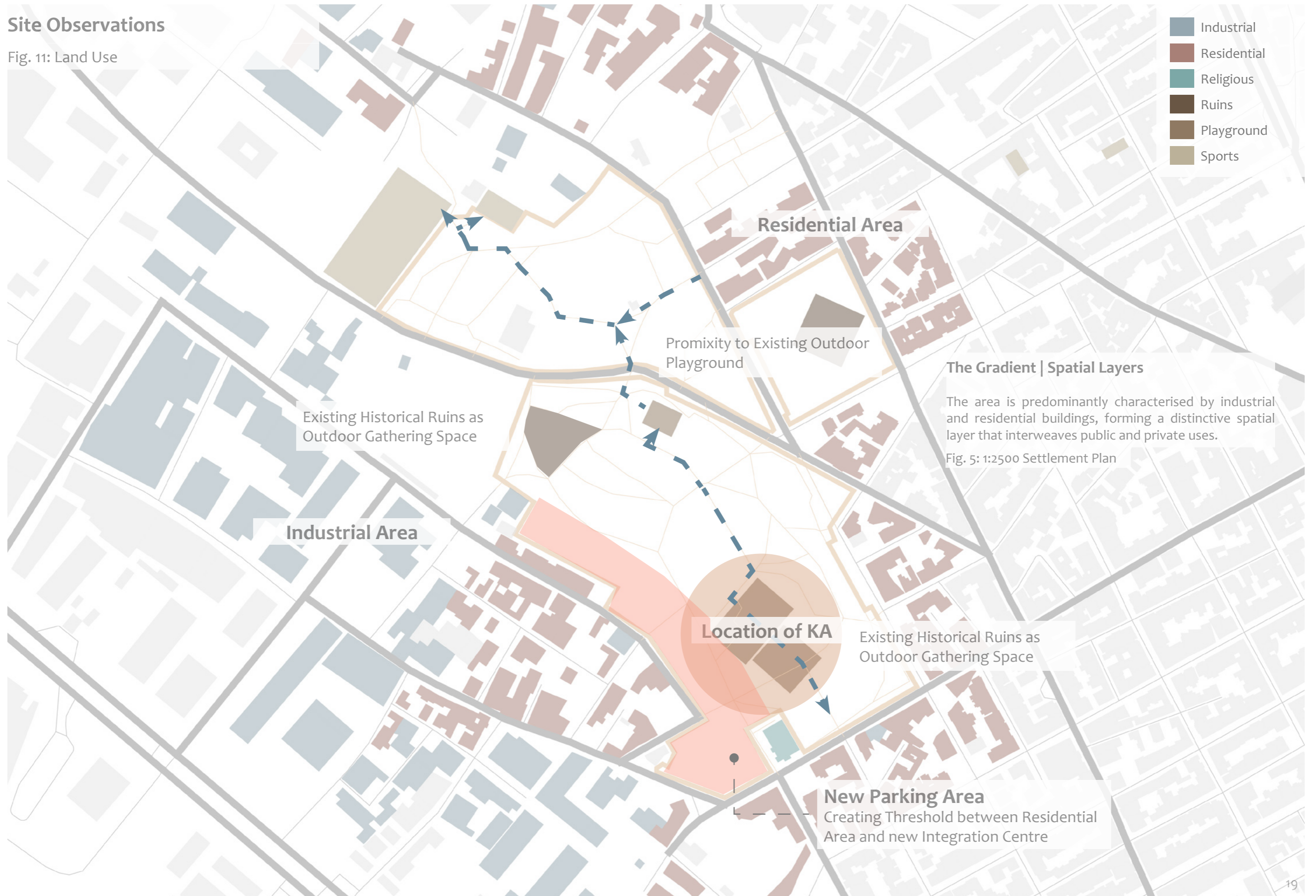
	Greece	MRA	Akadimia Platonos, Sepolia, Kolonos
Area (km ²)	131,960	3,025	3.62
Total population	10,816,286	3,793,066	61,297
Youth (5-19)	14.6%	13.8%	13.3%
Working age population (20-64)	60.9%	67.4%	66.0%
Seniors (>65)	19.5%	17.3%	16.0%
Non-Greek nationals	8.4%	10.6%	19.2%
Highest level of education attainment			
Primary education; lower secondary education (ISCED 0-2) ¹	33.8%	23.3%	39.7%
Middle vocational education; upper secondary education (ISCED 3-4) ¹	40.5%	44.5%	41.0%
Higher vocational education; tertiary education (ISCED 5-8) ¹	25.8%	32.2%	19.2%
Persons 25 or over without a school certificate, diploma or degree (ISCED 0)	8.5%	4.6%	5.3%
Unemployment rate ²	18.7%	18.0%	20.8%
Average household income (Euro per inhabitant, 2010)	13,100	16,000	N/A
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2014)	36.0%	31.6%	N/A

Data sources: EKKELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011 (<https://panorama.statistics.gov.gr/>), Eurostat database [ic_peps11] and [nama_10c_2hhinc] (Eurostat, 2015)
¹ Among the 25- to 64-year-old population.

The population of non-Greek residents in the site area is significantly higher than the national average in Greece, reflecting strong potential for spatial intervention addressing migration.

Site Observations

Fig. 11: Land Use



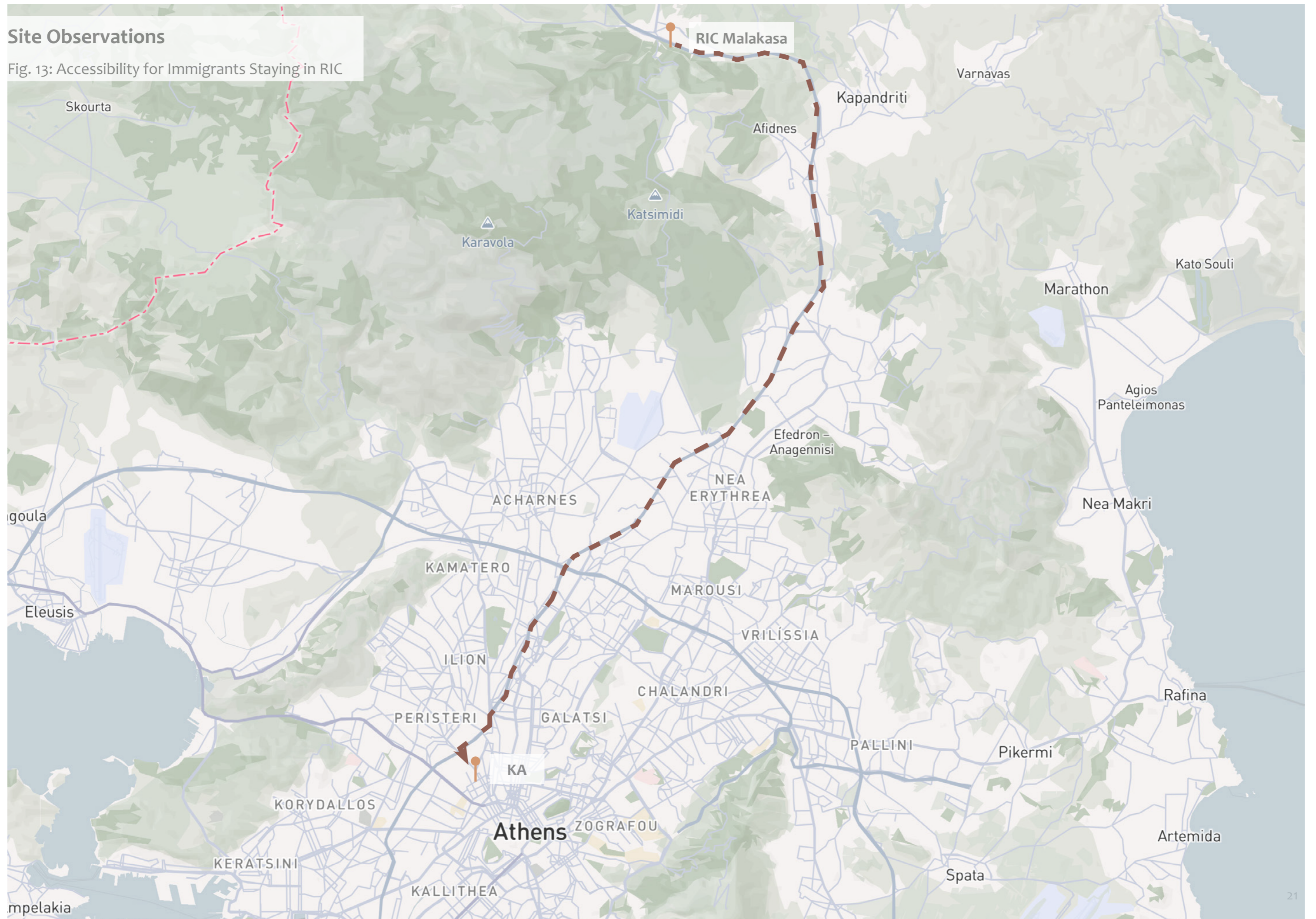
Site Observations

Fig. 12: Greenery



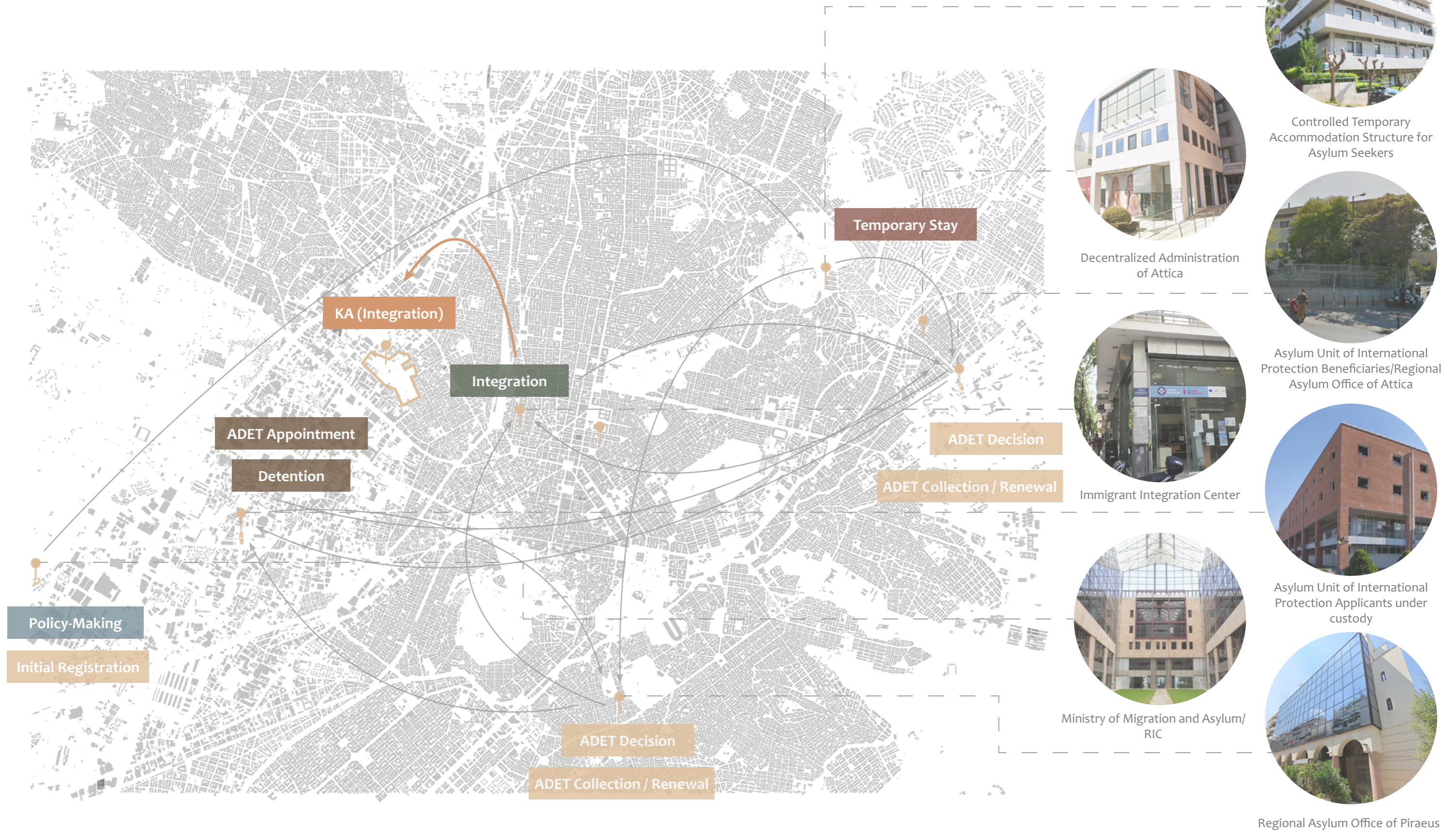
Site Observations

Fig. 13: Accessibility for Immigrants Staying in RIC



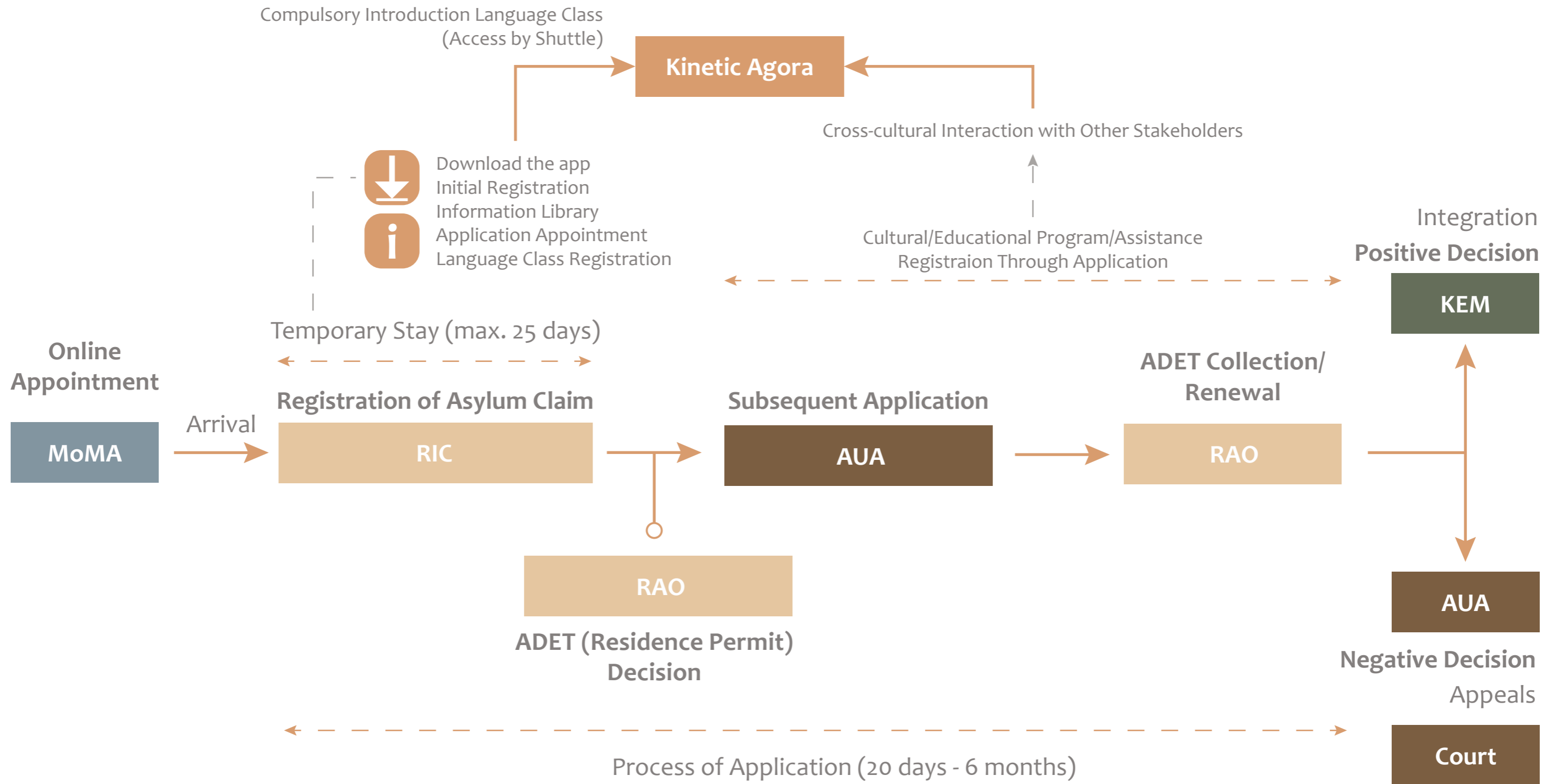
Relationship to Existing Institutions in Athens

Fig. 14: Final Step of Integration



Collaboration with Existing Institutions & Timeline

Fig. 15: Asylum Procedures Overview in Greece



Site Opportunities/Challenges

The historical ruins of the gymnasium in Plato's Academy Park are uniquely positioned yet remain underutilised due to their unwelcoming atmosphere (see Figure 10–14). During the site visit, only a limited number of visitors were observed lingering in the area. Nevertheless, the ruins are characterised by a distinctive sunken topography, presenting strong potential as the site for the proposed integration centre (see Figure 24).

Furthermore, although events such as open-air film screenings and philosophical discussions are occasionally held on site, their infrequency results in a largely inactive park for most of the time. The proposal therefore seeks to revitalise the area by encouraging more frequent and diverse events, transforming it into a more active and socially engaging environment.



Fig.16-20: Current Site Conditions

Current Site Usage

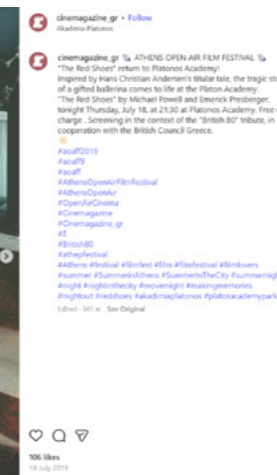
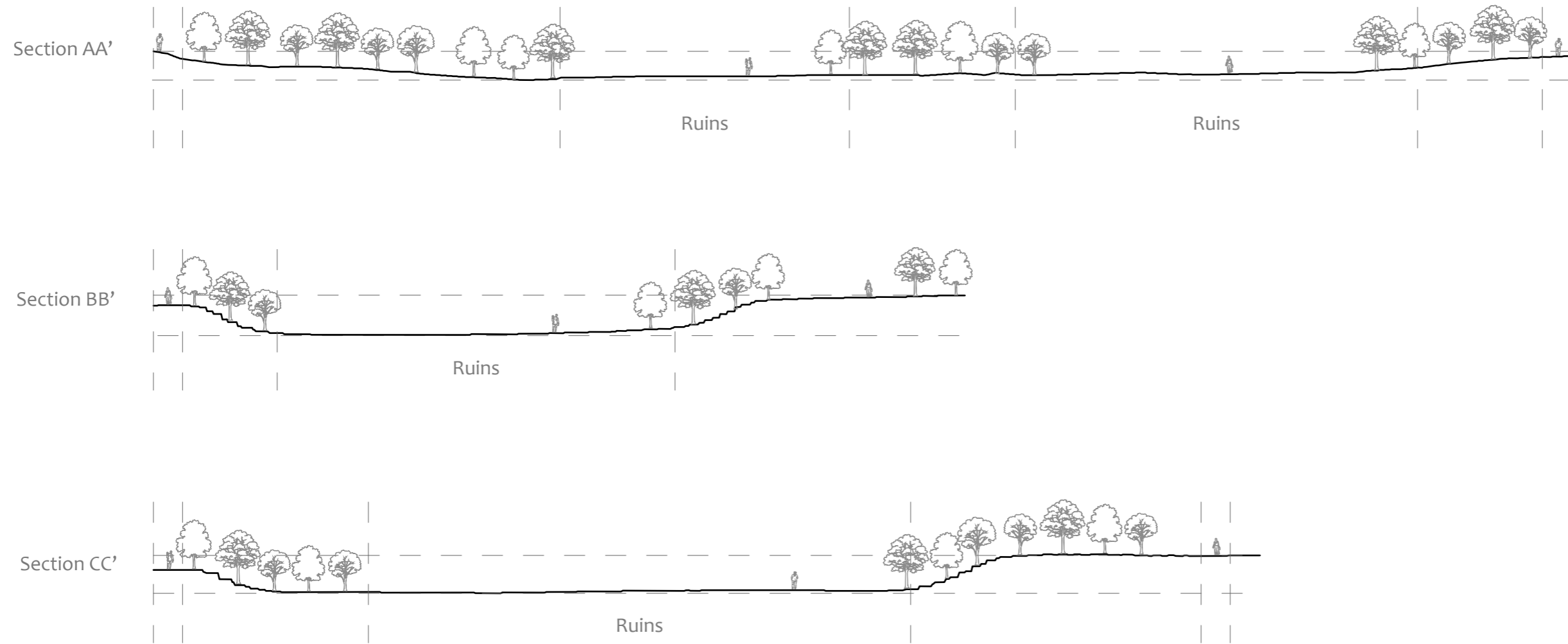


Fig.21-29: Events in Plato's Academy Park

1:500 Site Section

Fig. 30



Part 2. Approach

2.1 Theoretical Framework

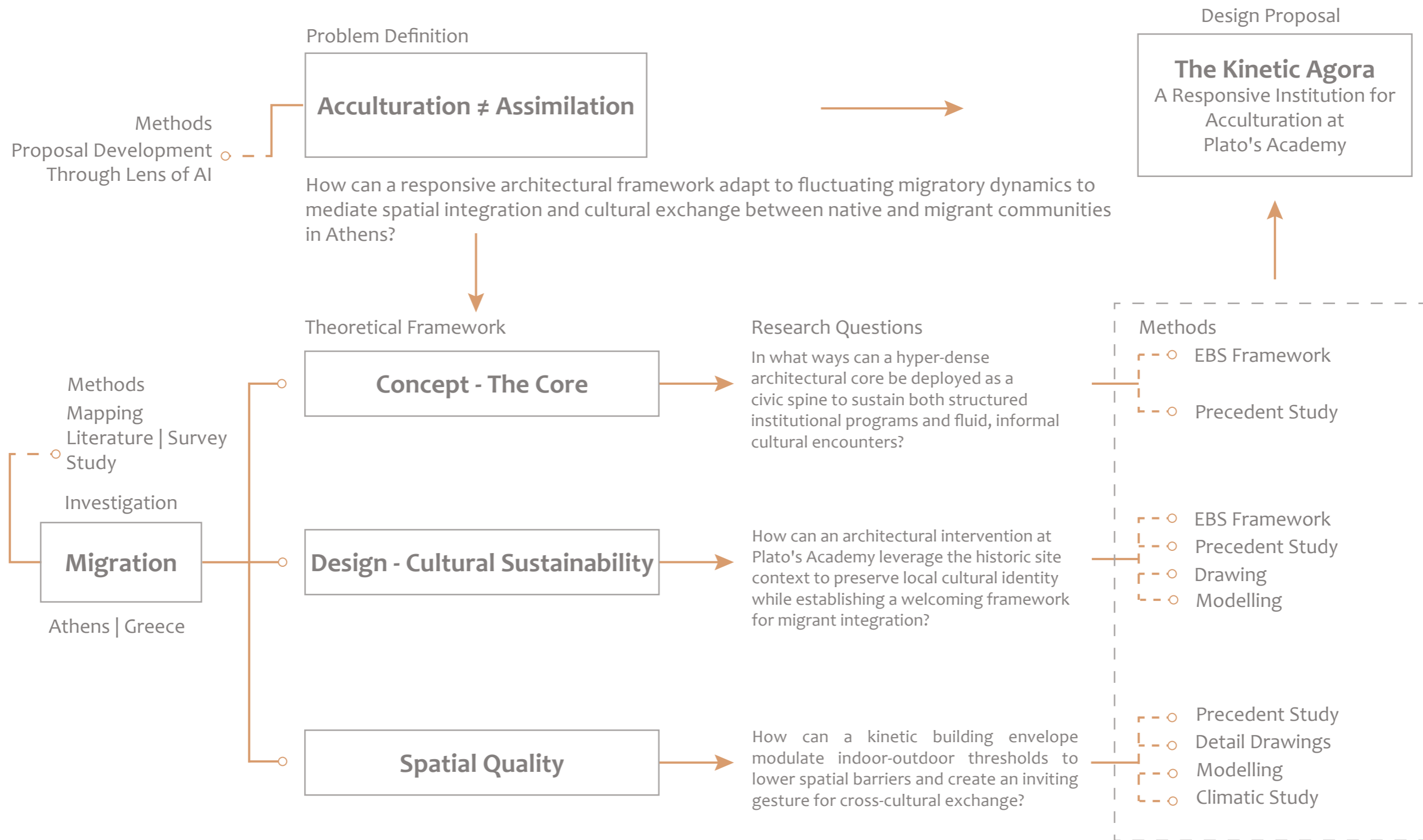


Fig. 31: Proposal Overview

Theories

Model of Acculturation (Primary Research Question)

John Berry identifies four primary strategies within the acculturation process: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation. Among these, integration is generally regarded as the most favourable, as it enables immigrants to preserve their cultural heritage while actively participating in the majority society (Berry, 2011). In contrast to assimilation, integration supports both cultural continuity and meaningful intercultural interaction. The proposal seeks to provide spaces for cultural expression for individuals from diverse backgrounds, thereby fostering successful integration in Athens.

Relevant Literature

- Berry, J. 2011. Integration and Multiculturalism: Ways towards Social Solidarity. Papers on Social Representations. 20.

Contact Theory (Secondary Research Question 1)

According to intergroup contact theory proposed by Gordon Allport (1954), contact between majority and minority groups can reduce prejudice, but only when four conditions are met: equal group status, cooperation, shared objectives, and support from social and institutional authorities. Therefore, the integration centre is reimagined as a new Agora—a neutral framework that facilitates diverse forms of exchange within the process of acculturation.

Relevant Literature

- Allport, Gordon W. 1954. The Nature of Prejudice. Cambridge Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Fig.32 : Acculturation Model

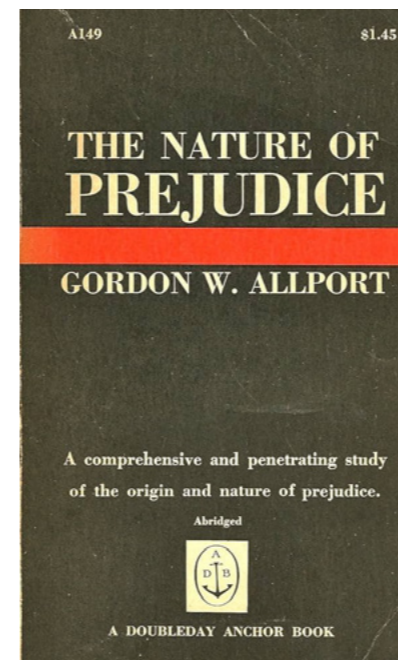
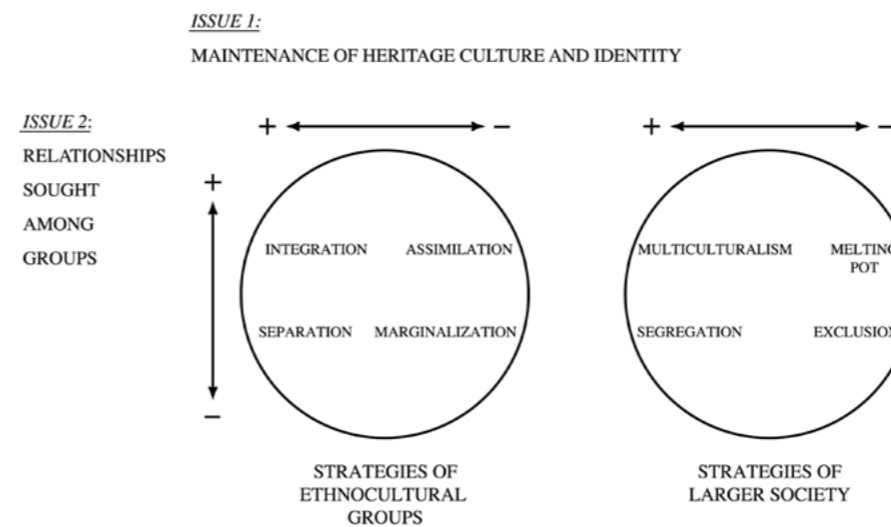


Fig. 33: The Nature of Prejudice by Gordon Allport

Cultural Sustainability (Secondary Research Question 2)

By definition, cultural sustainability entails both the preservation of local culture and its integration into design, thereby strengthening community values (Trajković et al., 2021). This dimension is particularly significant for acculturation, as inclusive communities depend on the continuous negotiation of cultural values—reinforcing local traditions while accommodating those newly introduced. Hence, the proposed integration centre seeks to promote cultural sustainability for both foreign and Greek populations through diverse forms of exchange, enabling users to (re)discover their cultural identities.

Relevant Literature

- Ristić Trajković, J. Milovanović, A. Nikezić, A. 2021. “Reprogramming Modernist Heritage: Enhancing Social Wellbeing by Value-Based Programming Approach in Architectural Design”. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 11111. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131911111>

Polyvalence (Secondary Research Question 3)

Considering the fluctuating migratory landscape in Athens, the new integration centre should remain adaptable to future conditions. The project therefore draws on the spatial concept of polyvalence, as introduced by Herman Hertzberger, to achieve an optimal solution through minimal yet effective flexibility, accommodating continuously evolving spatial requirements (Hertzberger, 1991).

Relevant Literature

- Hertzberger, H. (1991). *Lessons for Students in Architecture*. Rotterdam, 010 Publishers.

Environment–Behaviour Studies

To identify the spatial criteria for the architectural design of integration centre, it is essential to understand the reciprocal relationship between users, cultures, and the built environment (Krstić 2024). Thus, this thesis adopts Environment–Behaviour Studies (EBS) as a design framework, aiming to enhance spatial quality and identity in architecture. Developed by psychologist Irwin Altman, this framework comprises behavioural phenomena, users, and place, and emphasises the central role of users in processes of acculturation. This culturally responsive approach ensures that the integration centre, situated within a cross-cultural context, remains inclusive and fosters a sense of belonging for all users.

Relevant Literature

- Krstić, V. Filipović, I. Ristić Trajković, J. 2024. “Cultural Sensitivity and Social Well-Being in Embassy Architecture: Educational Approaches and Design Strategies.” *Sustainability* 2024, 16, 8880. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16208880>
- Dayaratne, R. 2002. “Environment- Behavior Research and the Practice of Architecture: Paradigms and Paradoxes.” *Built-Environment Sri Lanka* 3 (1): 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.4038/besl.v3i1.7640>.

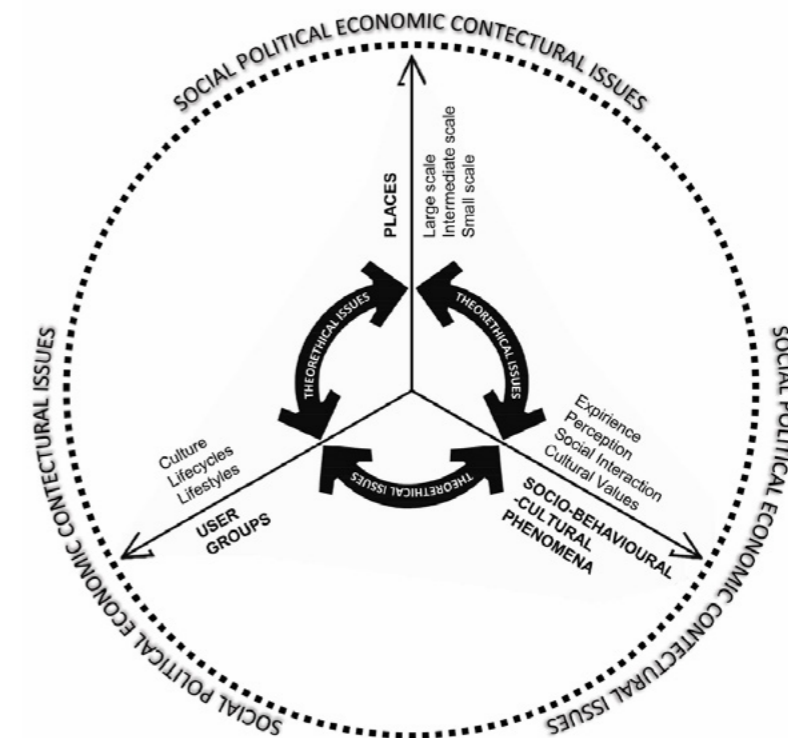
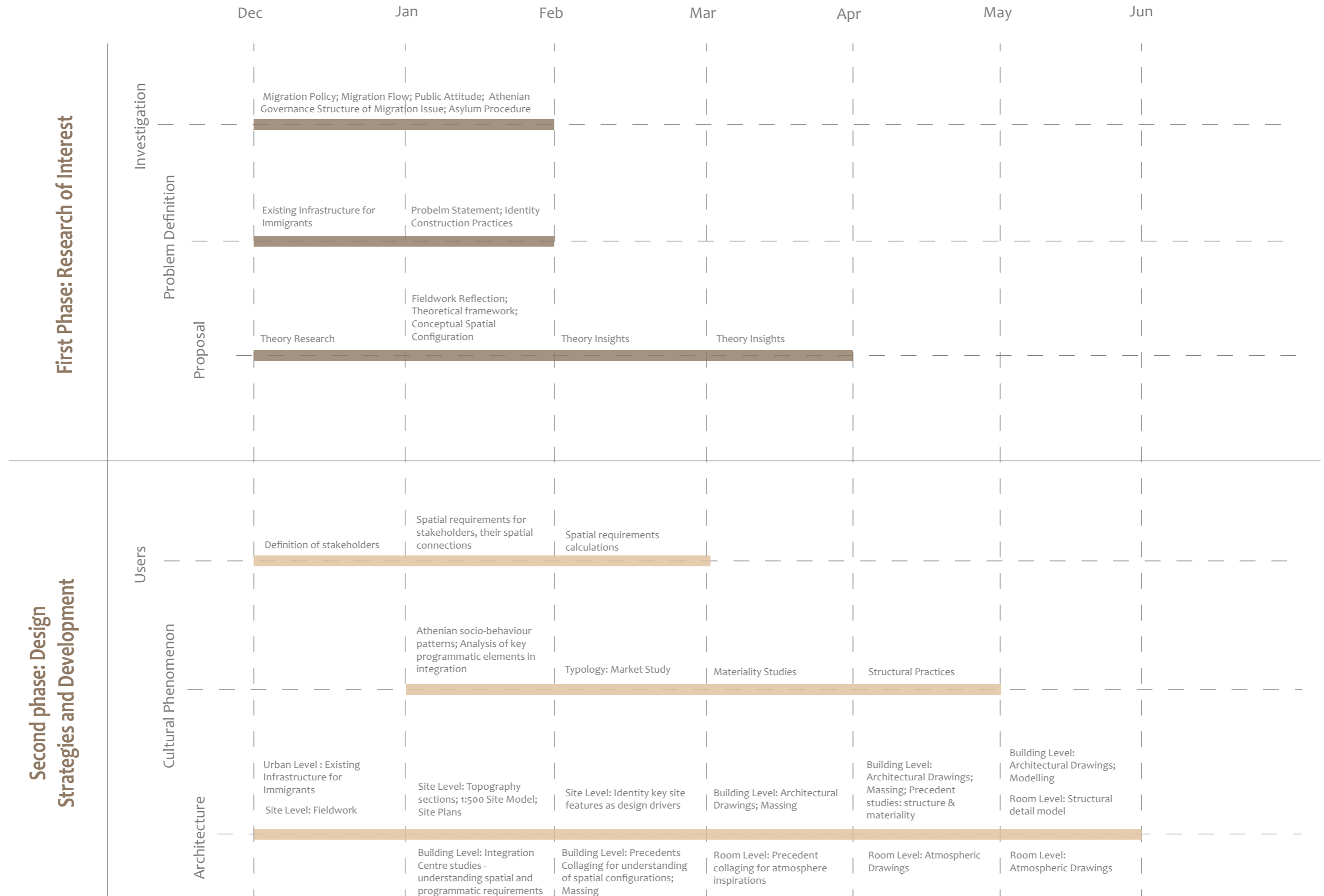


Fig. 34: EBS Framework

2.2 Methods/Planning

Fig. 35



First phase: Research of Interest

The first phase of thesis will follow the Research by Design introduced by Hauberg (2011) for a guide for research. It begins with analysis of philosophical, ethical and theoretical norms and values in a global perspective, the role of architecture and architecture itself. It functions as a clear framework for examining theoretical and practical problems by constructing spaces and structures. It consists of following elements:

Phase	Input	Methods	Output
Investigation (background of acculturation)	Analysis of migration policy in Greece, public attitudes towards migration, philosophical insights	Literature, mapping	Contextual analysis, understanding of pressing migration issues in social and cultural aspects
Problem Definition	Analysis of urban infrastructure for immigrants in Athens, ethical insights	Literature, mapping	Problem statement, conceptual framework
Proposals	Conceptual spatial inspiration, site analysis (local environmental conditions), theoretical insights	Literature, fieldwork, mapping	Objectives, conceptual spatial configuration

Reference: (Krstić 2024)

Relevant Literature

- Hauberg, J. 2011. "Research by Design - a Research Strategy." *Repositório Científico Lusófona (Grupo Lusófona)*, no. 5 (January): 46–56. <http://hdl.handle.net/10437/2043>.
- Krstić, V. Filipović, I. Ristić Trajković, J. 2024. "Cultural Sensitivity and Social Well-Being in Embassy Architecture: Educational Approaches and Design Strategies." *Sustainability* 2024, 16, 8880. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16208880>

Second phase: Design Strategies and Development

The second phase utilises the EBS framework to assess the reciprocal dynamics of users, culture, and architecture, providing design insights to support social integration and cultural sustainability in the Athenian context.

Perspective	Input	Methods	Output
Users	Definition of stakeholders (newly arrived immigrants, settled immigrants, Greeks, staff)	Precedent studies, literature	Spatial requirements for stakeholders, their spatial connections
Architecture	Design intervention at multiple scales (urban, site, building, room), precedent studies	Fieldwork, mapping, literature, collaging, modelling, drawing	Spatial configurations, site-building relations, understanding of "market" as an architectural typology
Cultural Phenomenon (Cultural Sustainability)	Cultural practices, traditions, values	Literature, precedent studies	Understanding of socio-behaviour patterns, aesthetic practices, materiality, adaptability, security requirements, identity construction approaches

Relevant Literature

- Brown, M. Arabindan-Kesson, A. Betsky, A. and Santa Barbara Museum of Art. 2022. *The Architecture of Collage: Marshall Brown*. Edited by Glisson, J. Zurich, Switzerland. Santa Barbara, CA: Park Books; Santa Barbara Museum of Art.
- Vassallo, J. and Herreros, J. 2016. *Seamless: Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture*. Zurich, Switzerland: Park Books.
- Fraser, I., & Henmi, R. 1994. *Envisioning architecture: An analysis of drawing*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Shields, Jennifer. 2014. *Collage and Architecture*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315883199>.

Methods Overview

Fieldwork

Collecting sensory, behavioural, and visual data during site visits to understand the atmosphere and neighbourhood usage for evaluating its design potential.

Mapping

Understanding existing governmental institutions relevant to migration issues in both global and Greek contexts, demonstrating the importance of integration centre in improving social integration, supported by digital tools such as GIS. Site conditions, including neighbouring building uses, greenery, and accessibility, are also mapped to provide a comprehensive understanding of the site.

Precedent Studies

Investigating immigration facilities across Europe—governmental, international, or non-profit bodies—to understand the spatial requirements for immigrant social integration.

Literature

This study explores the attitudes of different stakeholders in Greece toward immigration in order to identify potential sources of harmony or conflict within Greek society. Local surveys, academic literature, and interviews form the basis of this investigation. The literature review also contributes to the development of a theoretical framework that informs and strengthens the design proposal.

Modelling

Visualising site conditions, such as topography and spatial design qualities. Conceptual Models for developing radical design concepts. Massing models for evaluating spatial qualities and structural ideas.

Drawing

Architectural drawings remain the primary means of communicating design intent, including rough sketches, plans, sections, elevations, axonometric views, perspective drawings, and construction details. These representations enable readers to understand accessibility, spatial relationships, site–building conditions, and materiality.

Precedent Study

To examine the spatial and programmatic requirements of the integration centre, a range of precedents (including cultural centres) across Europe will be analysed as a starting point. This analysis will be conducted through plan and section drawings to better understand spatial organisation and connectivity.

To further develop the concept of polyvalence, the work of Herman Hertzberger will be reviewed in order to clarify the underlying principles of polyvalent architecture. Additional precedents that share similar approaches will also be examined to identify their key design strategies and structural frameworks.

Precedent List

Program:

- James Baldwin Media Library and Refugee House
- Kypseli Municipal Market
- Bergen Inclusion Centre
- Les Grands Voisins, Paris
- Het Anker Community Centre

Operation:

- Polyvalent Theater in Lille
- Polyvalent Model for The City, School Hall / Terrace House by Oliver Carter
- Works of Herman Hertzberger
- 242 State Street
- Chicken Point Cabin
- The Rakvere Centre for Work and Technology

Part 3. Results

The design stage employs architecture as a mediating tool to cultivate a diverse range of cultural exchanges between foreign communities and local Greek populations, using the concept of a new Agora as its point of departure. The final proposal manifests as a centralised structural core, driven by four distinct spatial and technical design principles that materialise the project's theoretical framework.

3.1 The Design Principles

3.1.1 Principle 1: The Structural Matrix (6x6m Grid)

Learning from the typological study of contemporary markets, an open structural grid plays a vital role in fostering diverse public interactions due to its inherent visual transparency and its capacity to host varied trading activities. In the final design, this is implemented via a consistent, interpretable structural framework based on a six-by-six-metre grid, which facilitates potential spatial reconfigurations in response to changing demographic and operational requirements. This modularity allows the building to host private, focused activities such as legal consultations or one-to-one language classes within a standalone structural bay. Conversely, by combining multiple modules, the grid seamlessly expands to accommodate larger group events, such as vocational workshops, collective culinary activities, or community-wide cultural events.

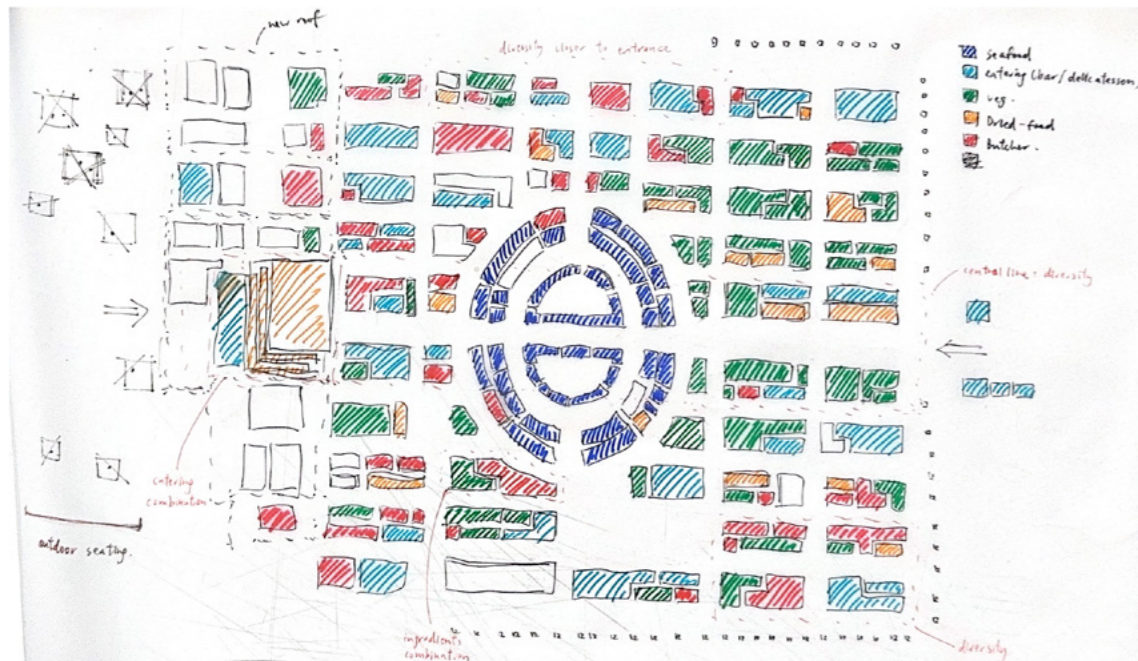


Fig. 36: La Boqueria Market (Layout)

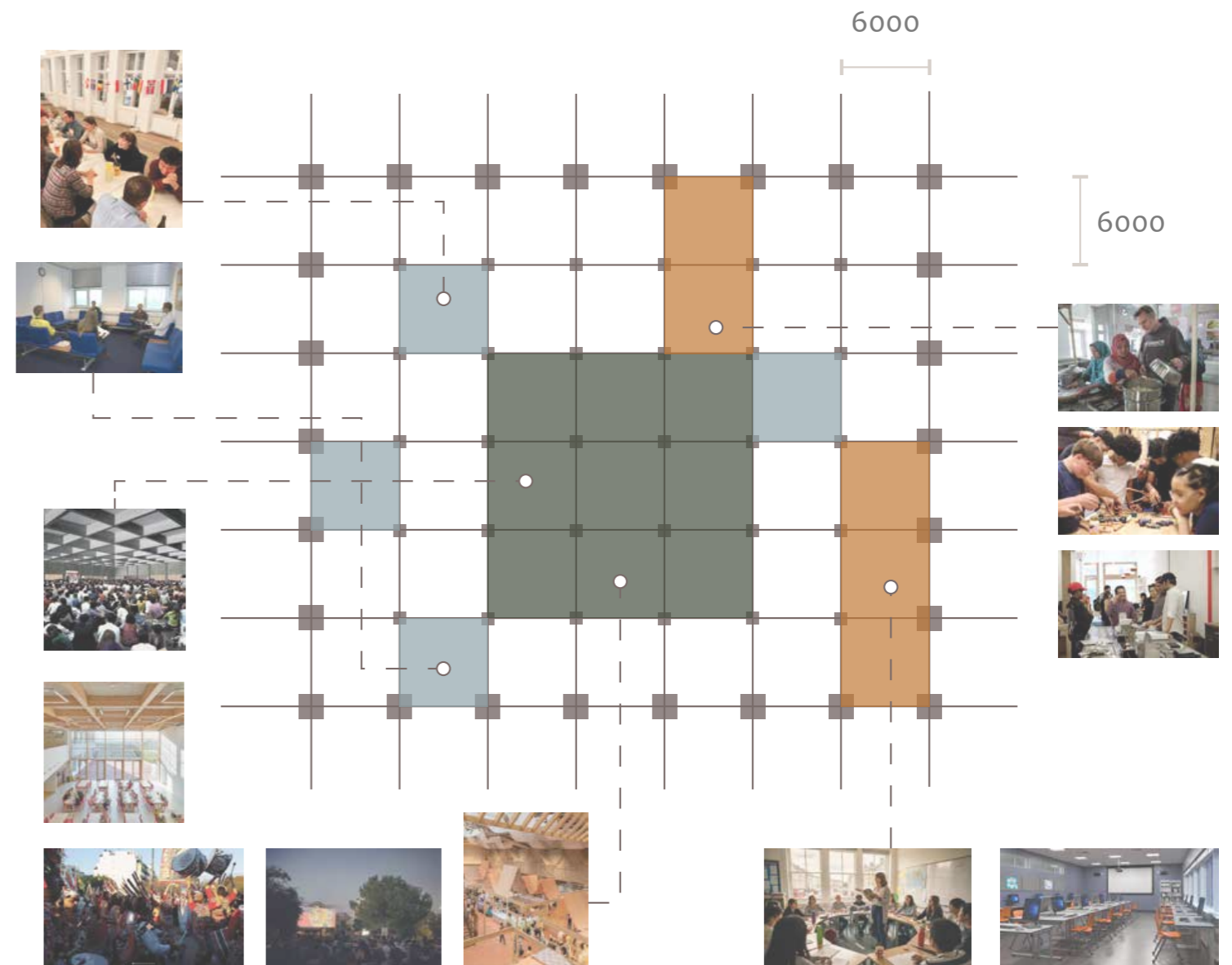


Fig. 37: Versatile Configuration on Structural Grid

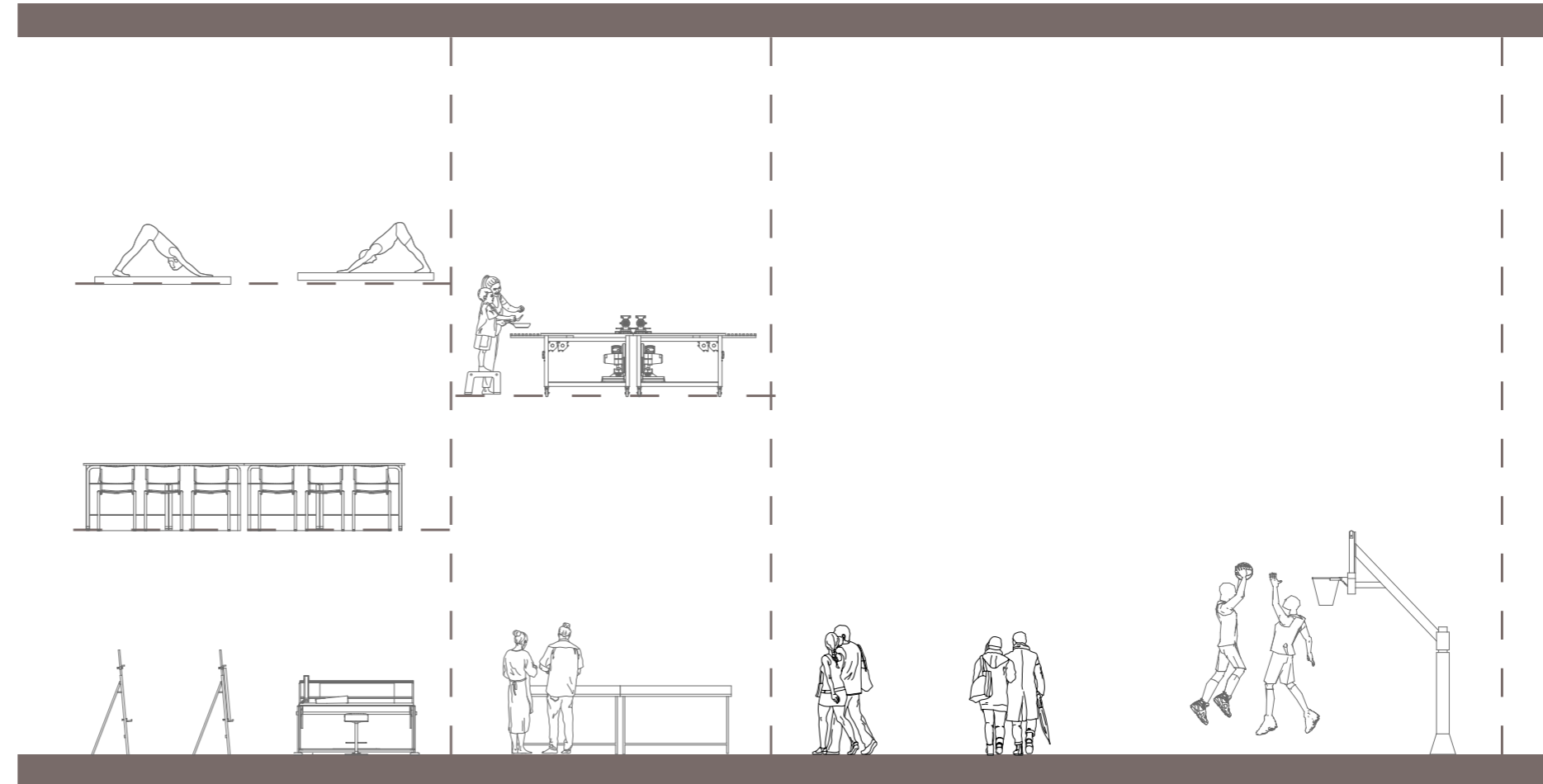
3.1.2 Principle 2: Volumetric Stratification (8m Sectional Zoning)

To accommodate a wide array of distinct programmatic requirements based on fluctuating social needs, the building utilises a deliberate vertical clearance of approximately 8 metres to implement a strategy of sectional stratification. This generous vertical volume is optimized to absorb large-volume, high-occupancy spaces such as the central auditorium, collective production kitchens, and heavy vocational workshops, utilizing the full spatial clearance to meet high-capacity ventilation, building services, and acoustic insulation requirements. Conversely, more intimate social functions, including counseling rooms, administrative offices, and private study spaces, benefit from the lower, more human-scaled ceilings achieved by dividing the volume into two or three distinct sectional zones.

Fig. 38: A Polyvalent Model for The City, School Hall / Terrace House by Oliver Carter



Fig. 39: Sectional Zoning



3.1.3 Principle 3: Open Plan and Kinetic Strategy

The open-plan freedom granted by the column matrix is paired with a multi-layered kinetic strategy directly inspired by Herman Hertzberger's (1991) theory of Polyvalence—defined as the delivery of minimal yet highly meaningful architectural flexibility that enables a single form to support diverse human behaviors.

Interior scale: Spatial adaptability is achieved through mobile acoustic partitions and heavy fabric curtains running on overhead rail systems. This enables versatile configurations across the floor plate, allowing spaces to smoothly transition from compact to expansive rooms through the simple relocation or removal of partitions.

Building scale: The perimeter envelope employs an operable kinetic facade that generates two contrasting spatial experiences along the building's edge. When closed, the panels form a solid, insulated envelope that secures private internal activities. When opened, the panels completely dissolve the physical boundaries facing the ruins.

CONFIGURATION 1 : □
SALLE DE SPECTACLE 600 PLACES ASSISES

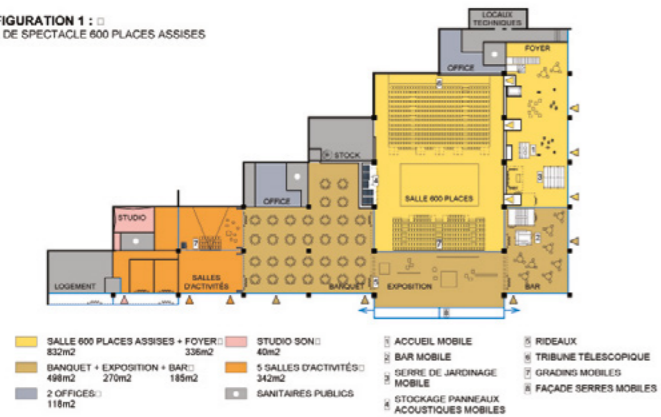
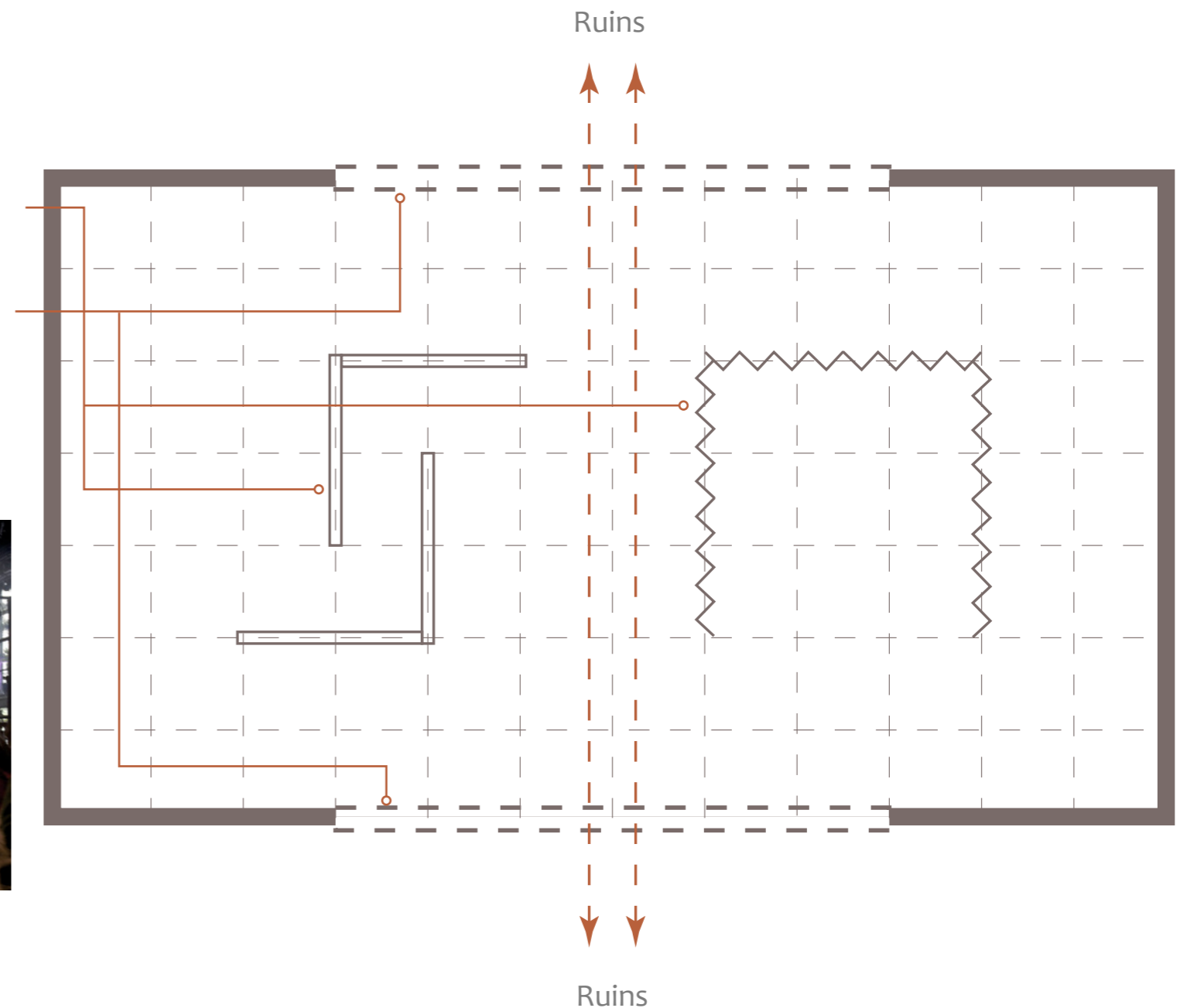


Fig. 40-41: Polyvalent Theater in Lille

Fig. 42: Kinetic Strategy



Understanding of Existing Ruins

Fig. 43: 1:500 Topography Model with Ruins



Supporting Buildings

Unknown Buildings

Palaestra
Main Wrestling Area

Courtyard
Social Area

3.1.4 Principle 4: Environmental Alternation and Climatic Graduation

Inspired by the indoor-outdoor spatial arrangement of traditional markets, the building's physical transition is coordinated through a deliberate sequence of environmental alternation: progressing from a fully conditioned indoor core, through a semi-enclosed kinetic buffer zone, and finally out into the open archaeological park. As demonstrated in the building diagrams, the footprint is strategically "sandwiched" parallel to the ancient remains of Plato's Academy gymnasium. The extension of the building footprint is calibrated directly in relation to the geometry of the ancient ruins, creating a progressive environmental gradient that gently interfaces with the historic site. And more essentially, transforms the passive historical landscape into an active asset for contemporary neighborhood life.

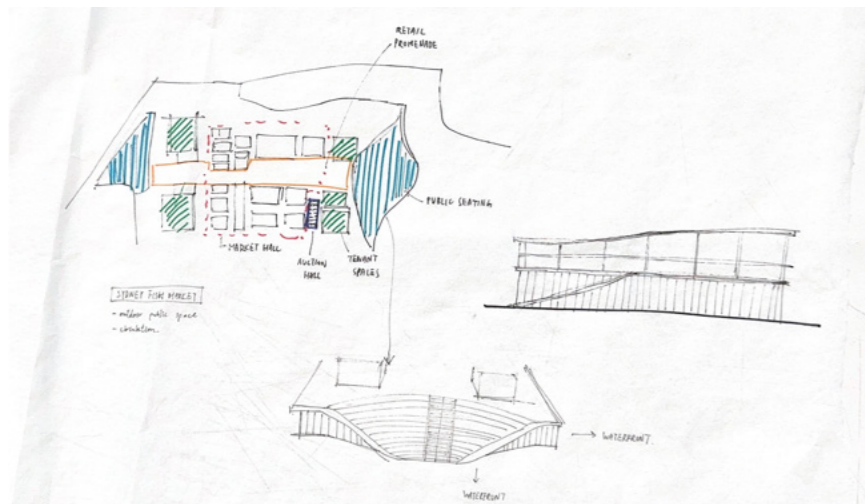


Fig. 44: Sydney Fish Market (Horizontal Sequence)

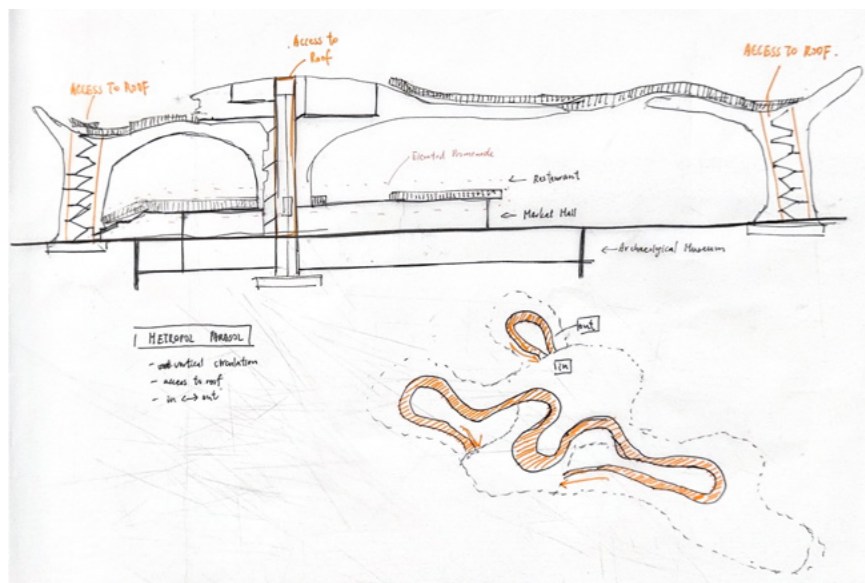


Fig. 45: Metropol Parasol (Vertical Sequence)

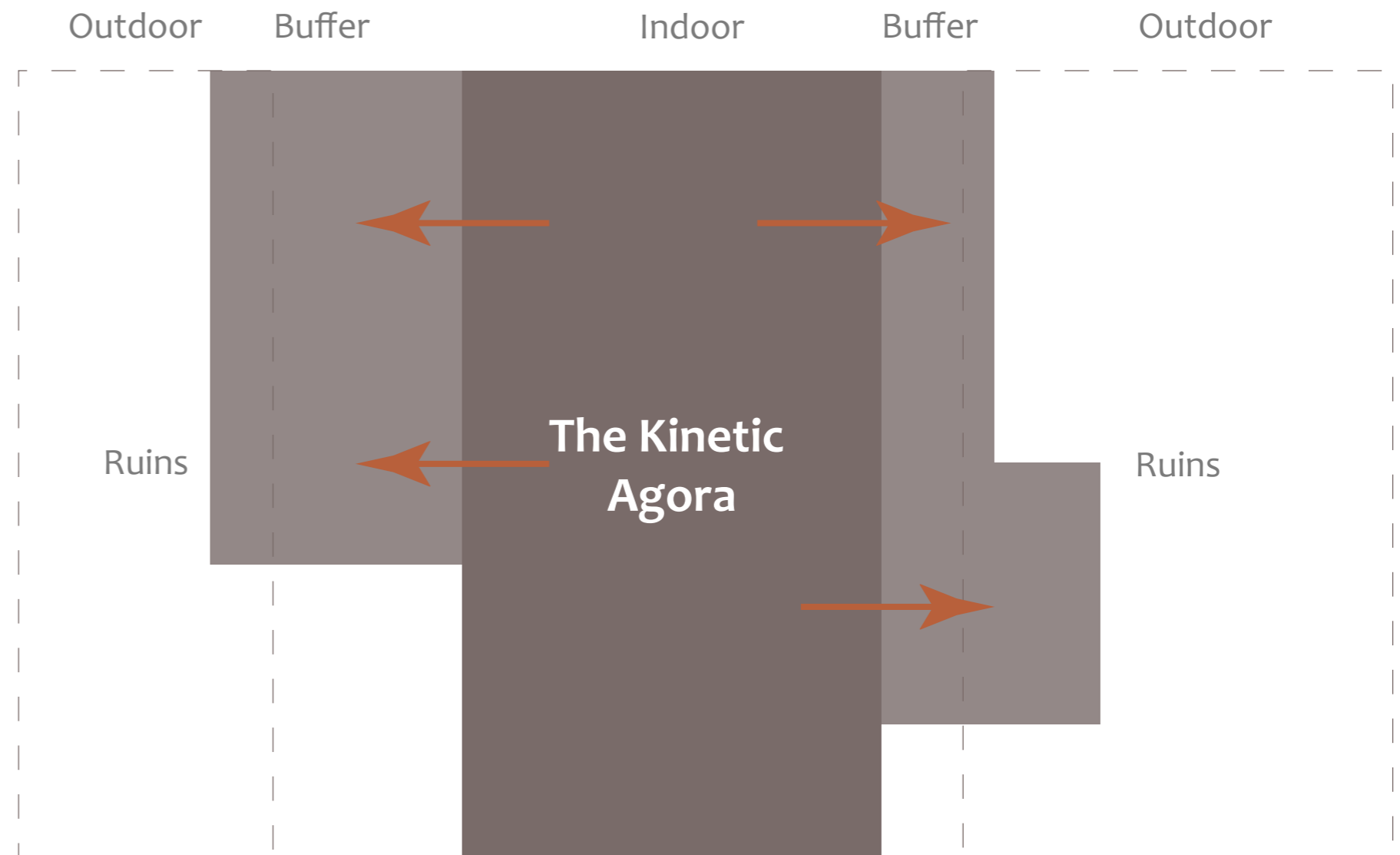


Fig. 46: Building Diagram

3.2 Programmatic Integration & Social Scenarios

To translate the principles of structural modularity and stratification into operational reality, the centralised spine is subdivided into three distinct spatial bands: a central, column-free hall flanked by two compact service zones. The central column-free, double-height volume functions as the "contribution zone," an active civic platform containing the canteen, micro-retail stalls for agricultural crops, and shops for arts, crafts, and DIY products.

Programmatically, this central zone is configured to transition the role of arriving migrants from passive service recipients to active civic contributors. Within this zone, settled migrants are employed as independent food vendors, artisans, and hospitality staff. When local Athenian residents enter the space to purchase goods or meals, this commercial interface creates a balanced, professional environment for everyday neighbourhood interaction. Furthermore, this contribution zone is intentionally oriented to interface directly with the historic ruins along the building's southern edge. This physical proximity allows the building footprint to expand outward, utilising the ancient archaeological landscape as a dramatic backdrop for cross-cultural performances, weekend markets, and outdoor catering spaces that integrate public life with the site's unique park context.

In contrast, the flanking compact bands serve as the "knowledge" and "practice" zones, housing structured educational and vocational infrastructure. As illustrated in the ground floor plan, ground-level spaces are allocated to programs with heavy machinery or specialised utility requirements, establishing a direct logistical connection with the site. On the southwest side, the collective kitchen and food stalls sit adjacent to the outdoor cultivation gardens, ensuring immediate access to on-site crops. On the northwest side, the DIY workshop is positioned next to the primary loading area to streamline material delivery. Rather than acting solely as a closed vocational venue, the workshop invites local Athenian residents to bring in their furniture for repair, framing the technical training of migrants as a tool for immediate, practical neighbourhood service.

Fig. 47: Program Breakdown

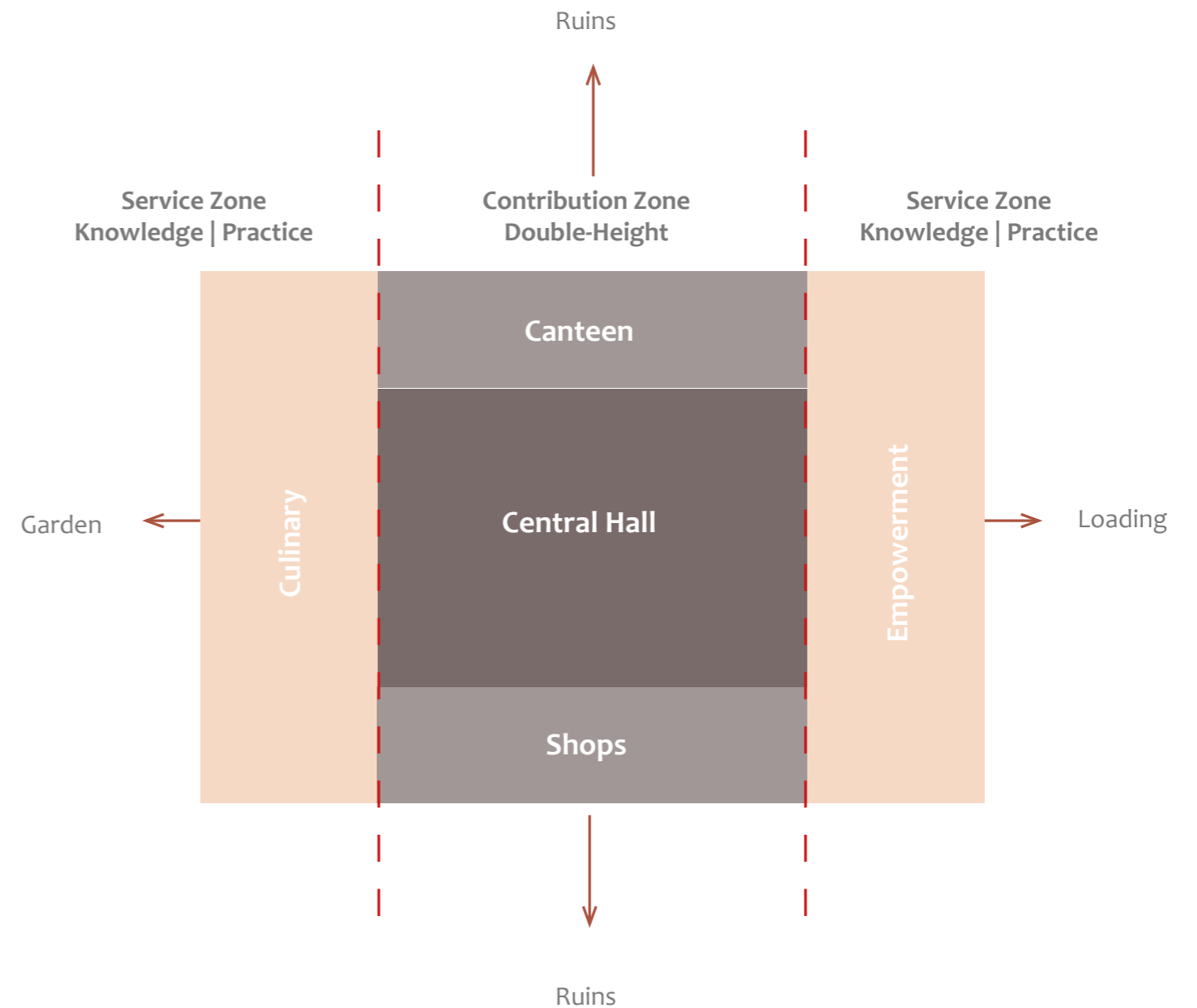


Fig. 48: Exchange Flow

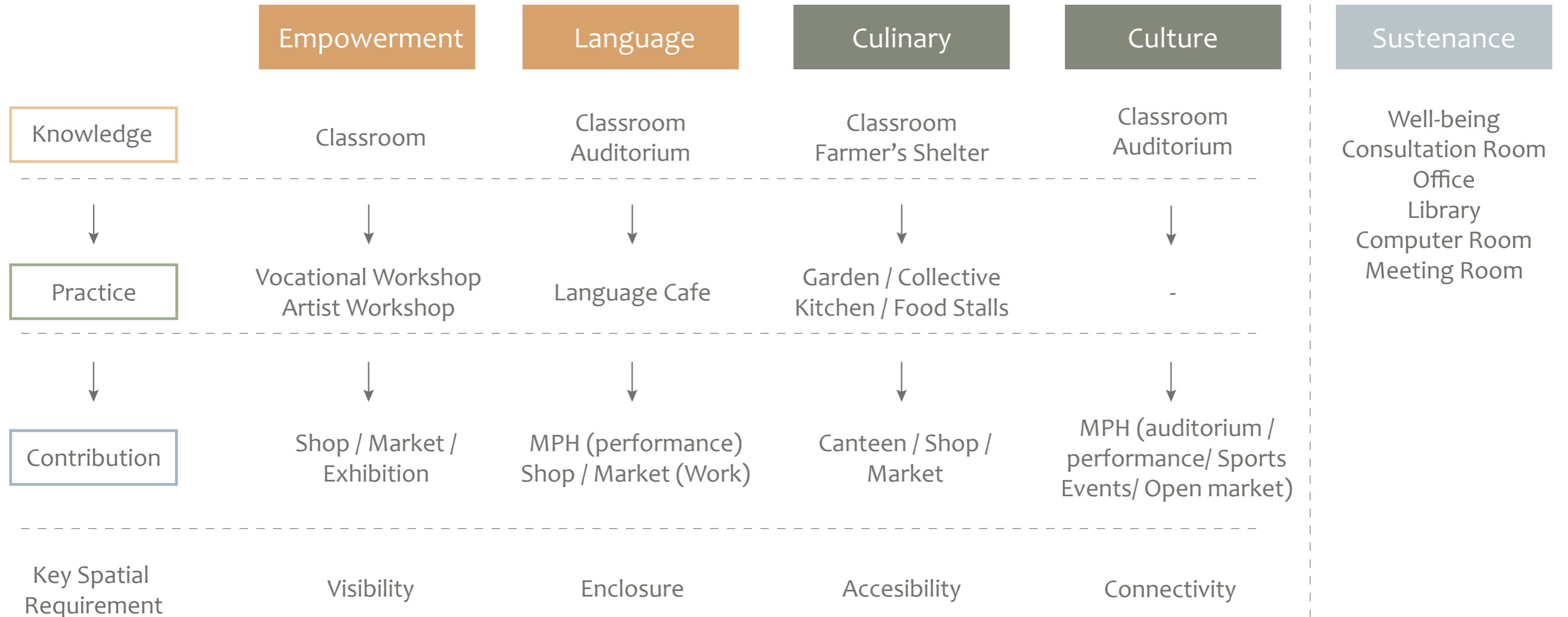


Fig. 49: Exchange Flow between Users

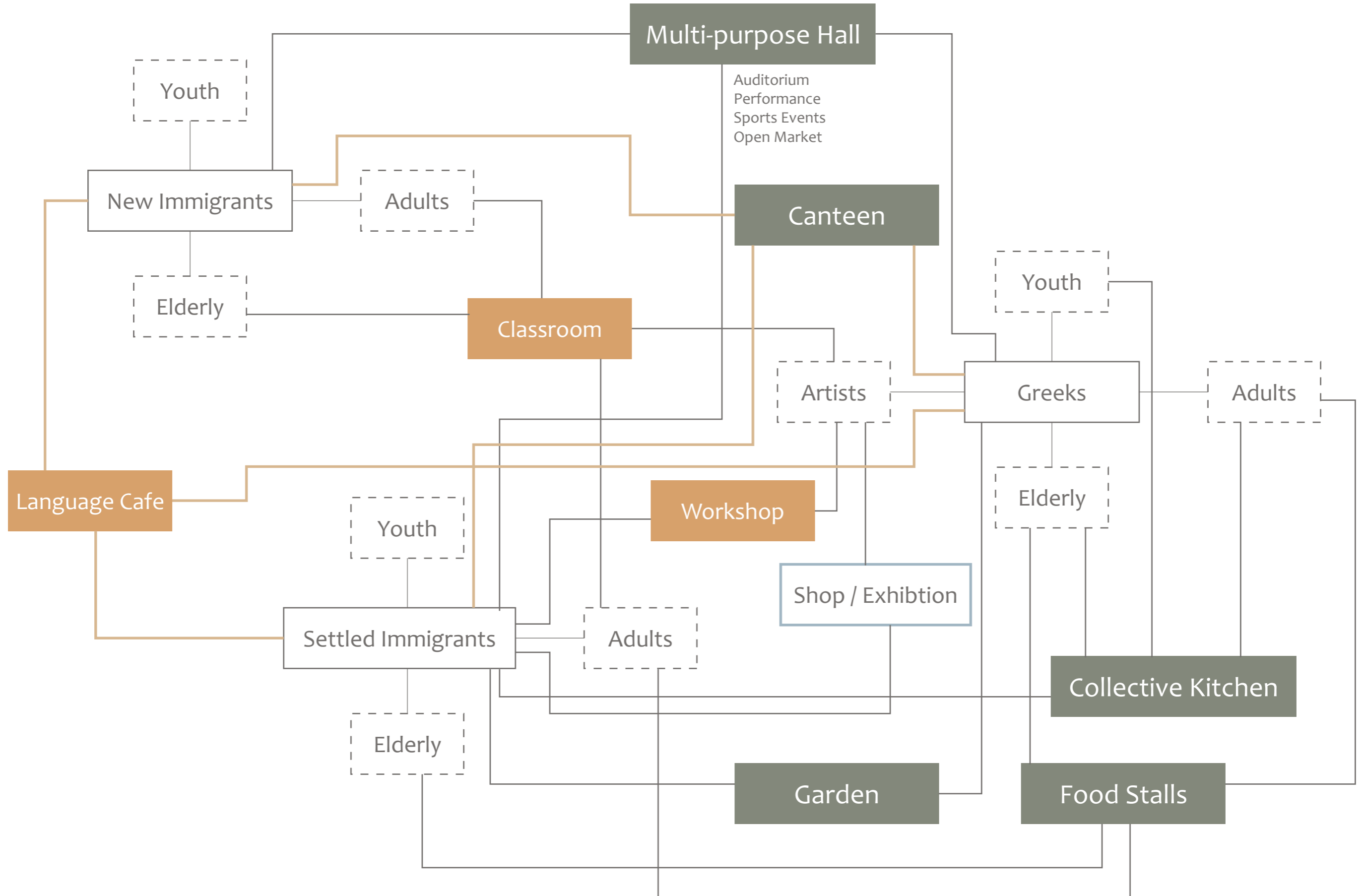


Fig. 50: Ground Floor Plan 1

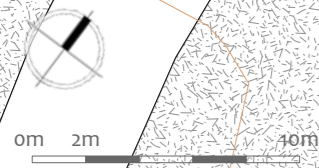
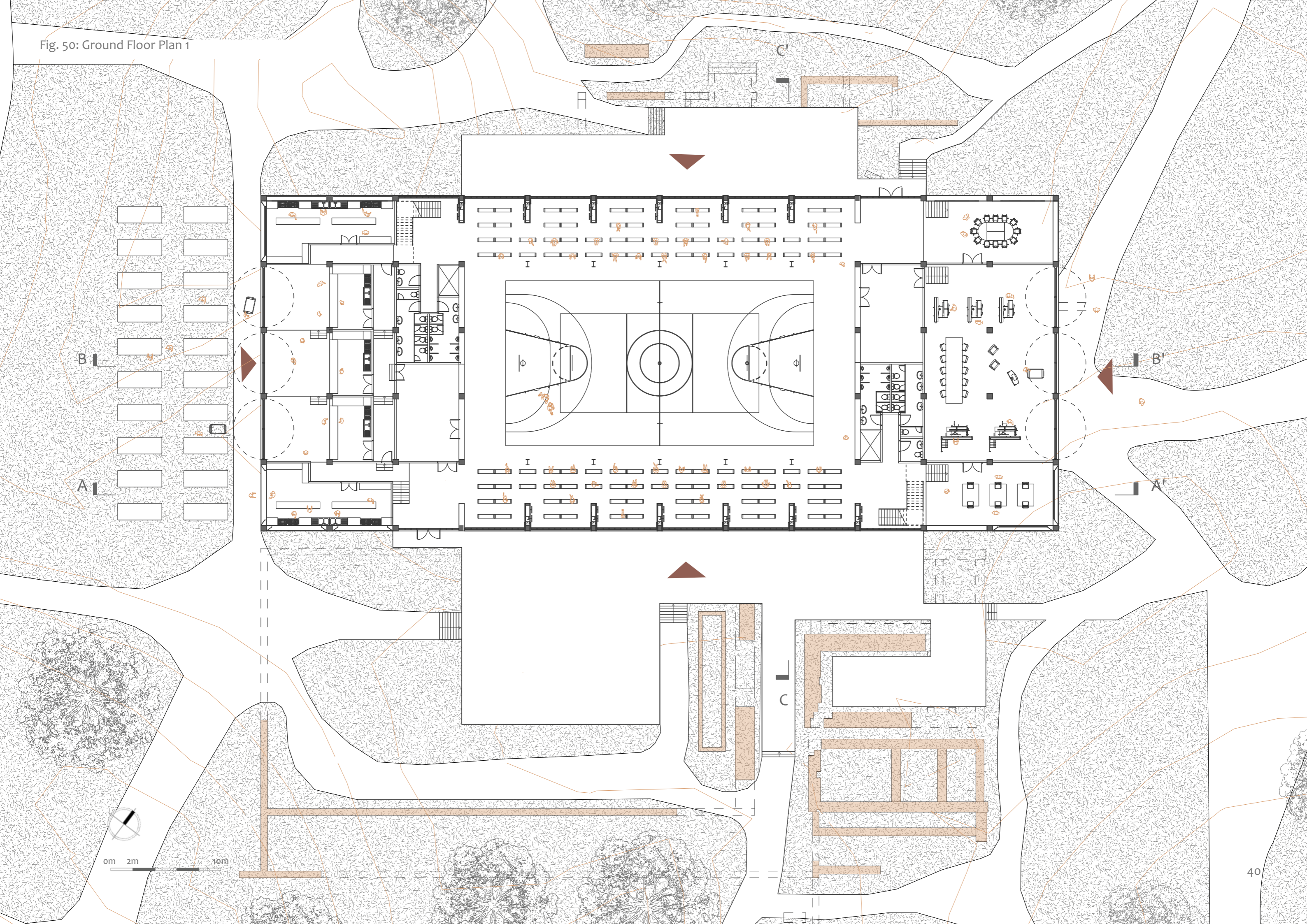
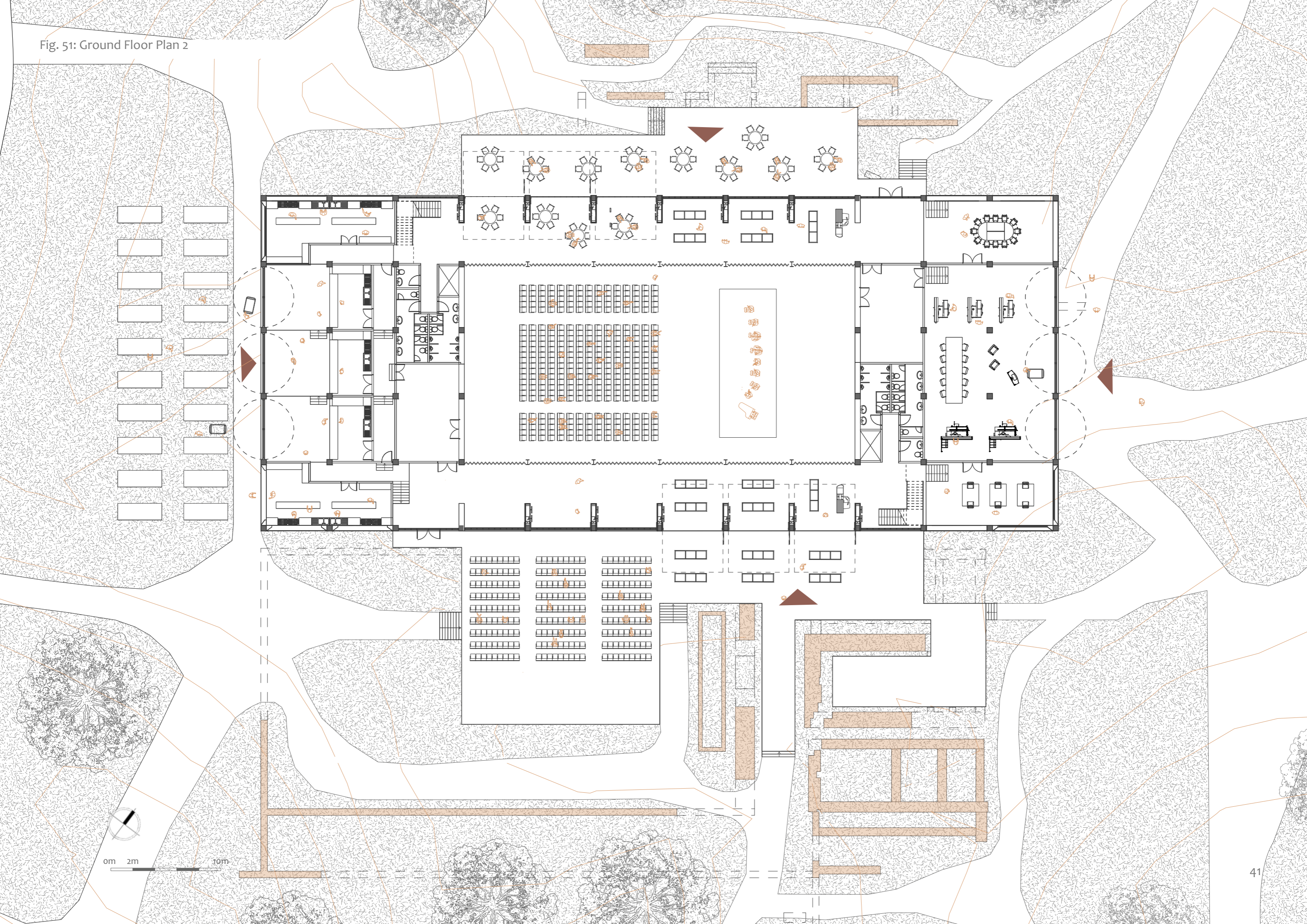


Fig. 51: Ground Floor Plan 2



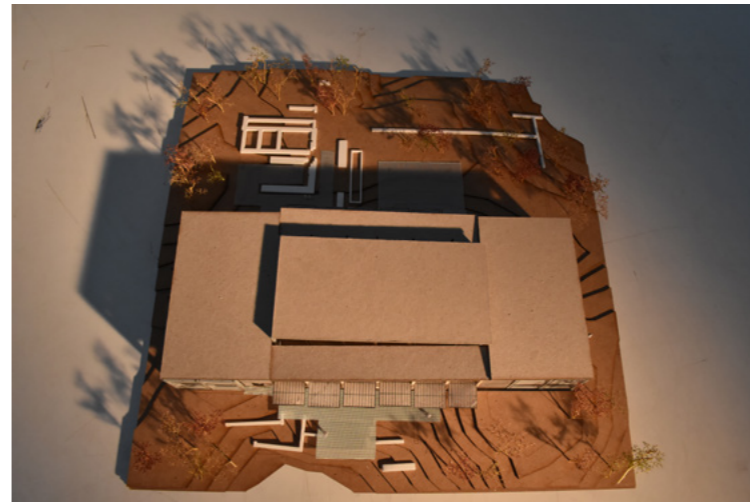
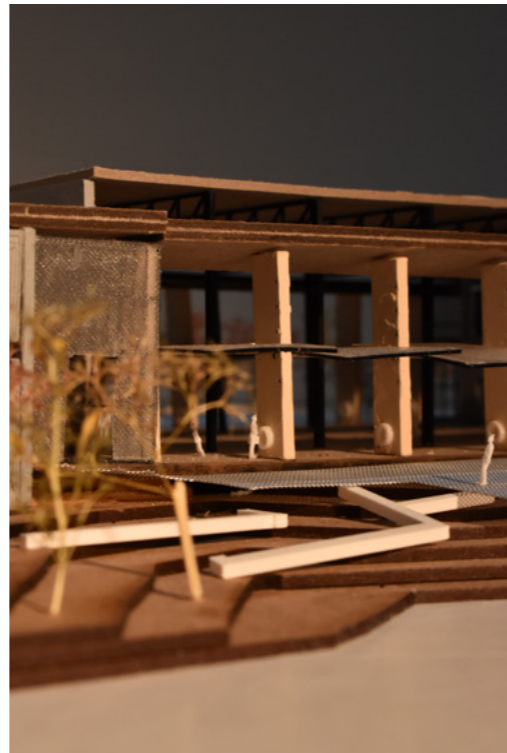


Fig. 52-58: 1:200 Building Model

On the first floor, this layout transitions into flexible, private modules including classrooms, well-being spaces, consultation rooms, and administrative offices. The fluid "market" configuration of the ground floor is replicated on this upper level, maintaining a highly consistent building layout that balances quiet support services with areas of high visibility and public encounter.

Crucially, architecture drives spontaneous social interaction at the intersection points of these program bands. The interstitial thresholds where the canteen encounters the classrooms naturally form an informal "language café," while the zone where the artist workshops meet the DIY workshops is connected by a shared social gallery space. By deliberately overlapping these boundaries, the architecture encourages a fluid spatial negotiation between different users during everyday routines.

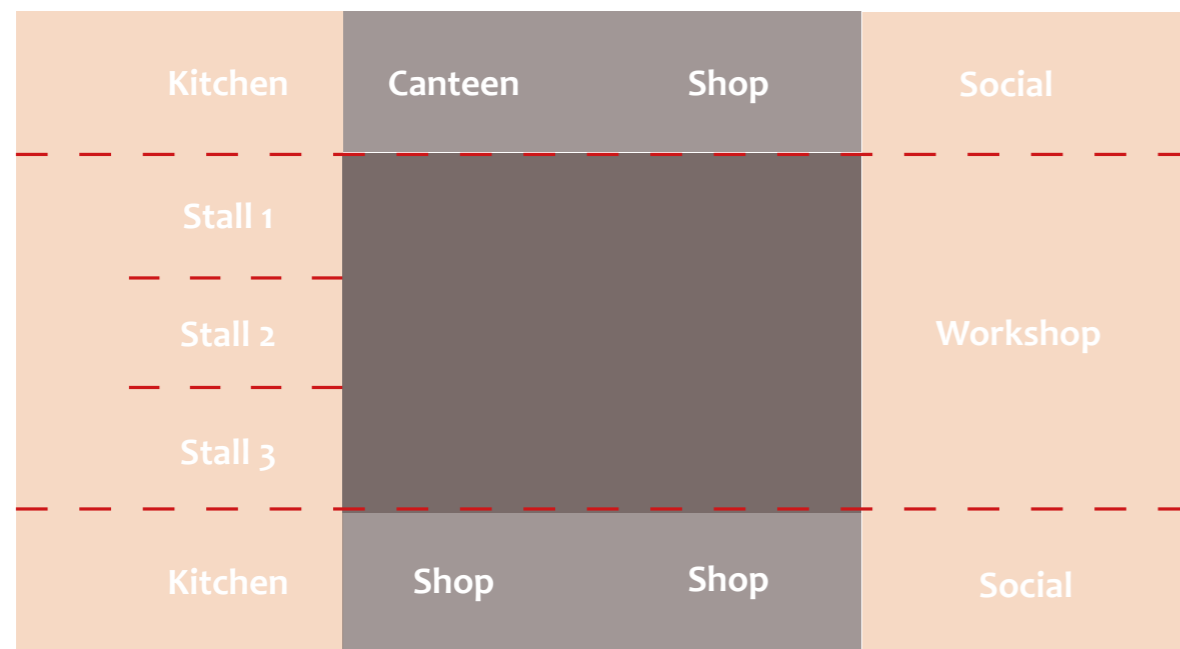


Fig. 59: Ground Floor Layout

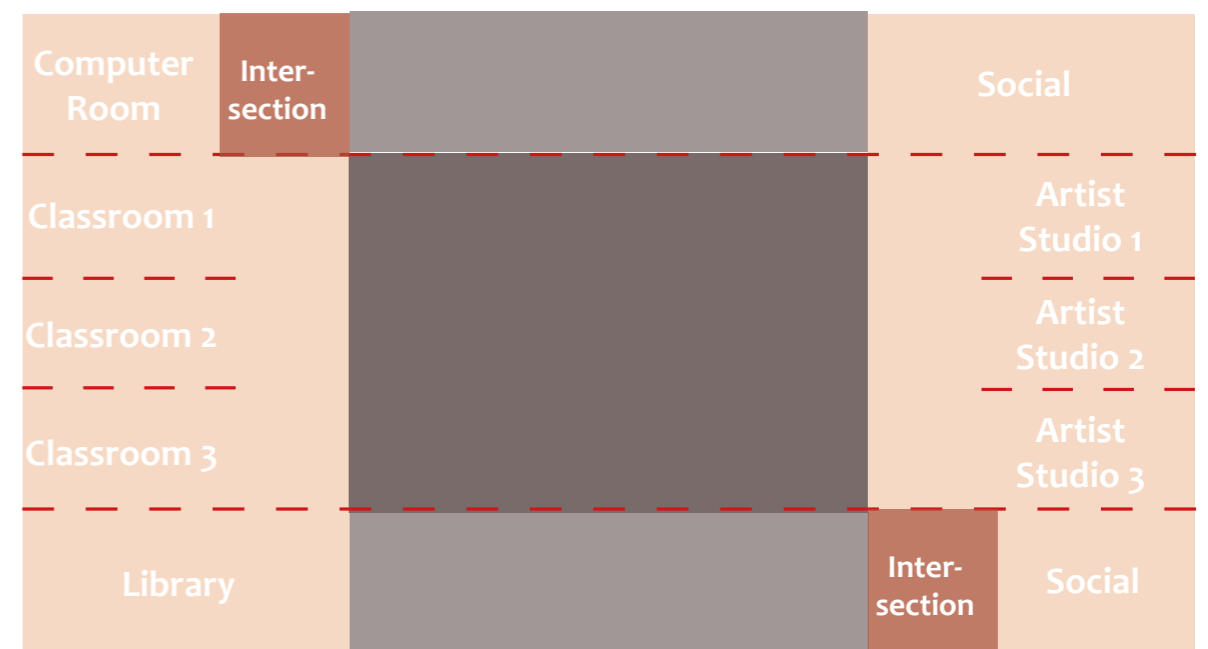


Fig. 60: First Floor Layout

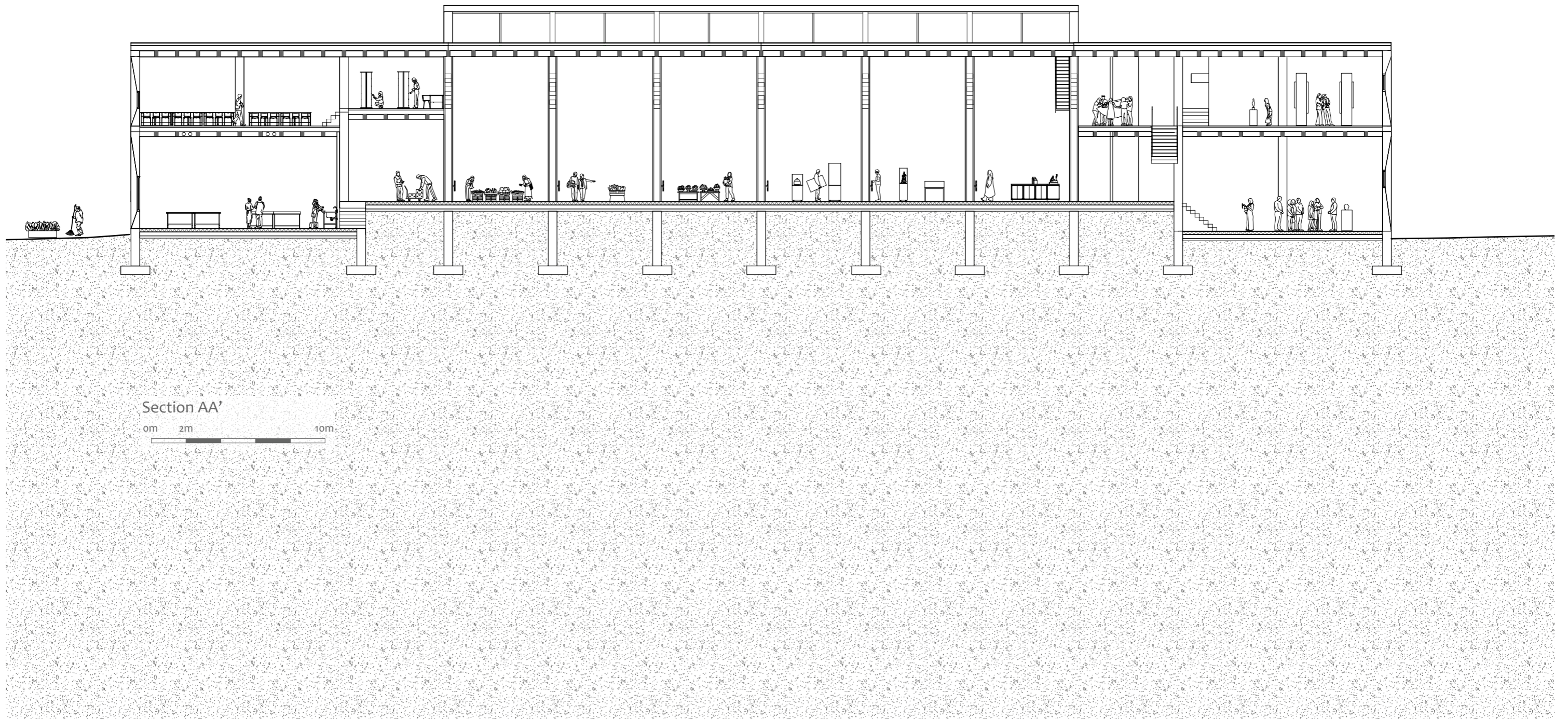


Fig. 61: Section AA'

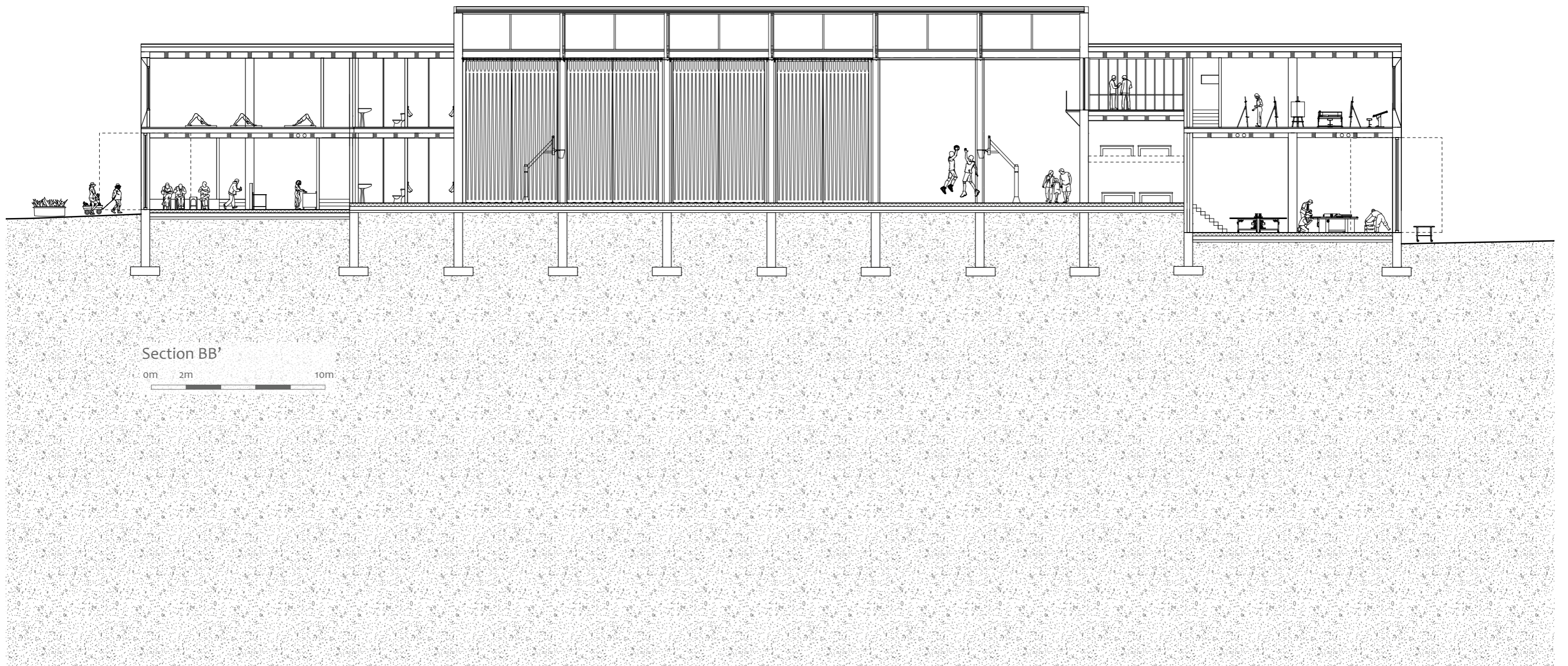


Fig. 62: Section BB'

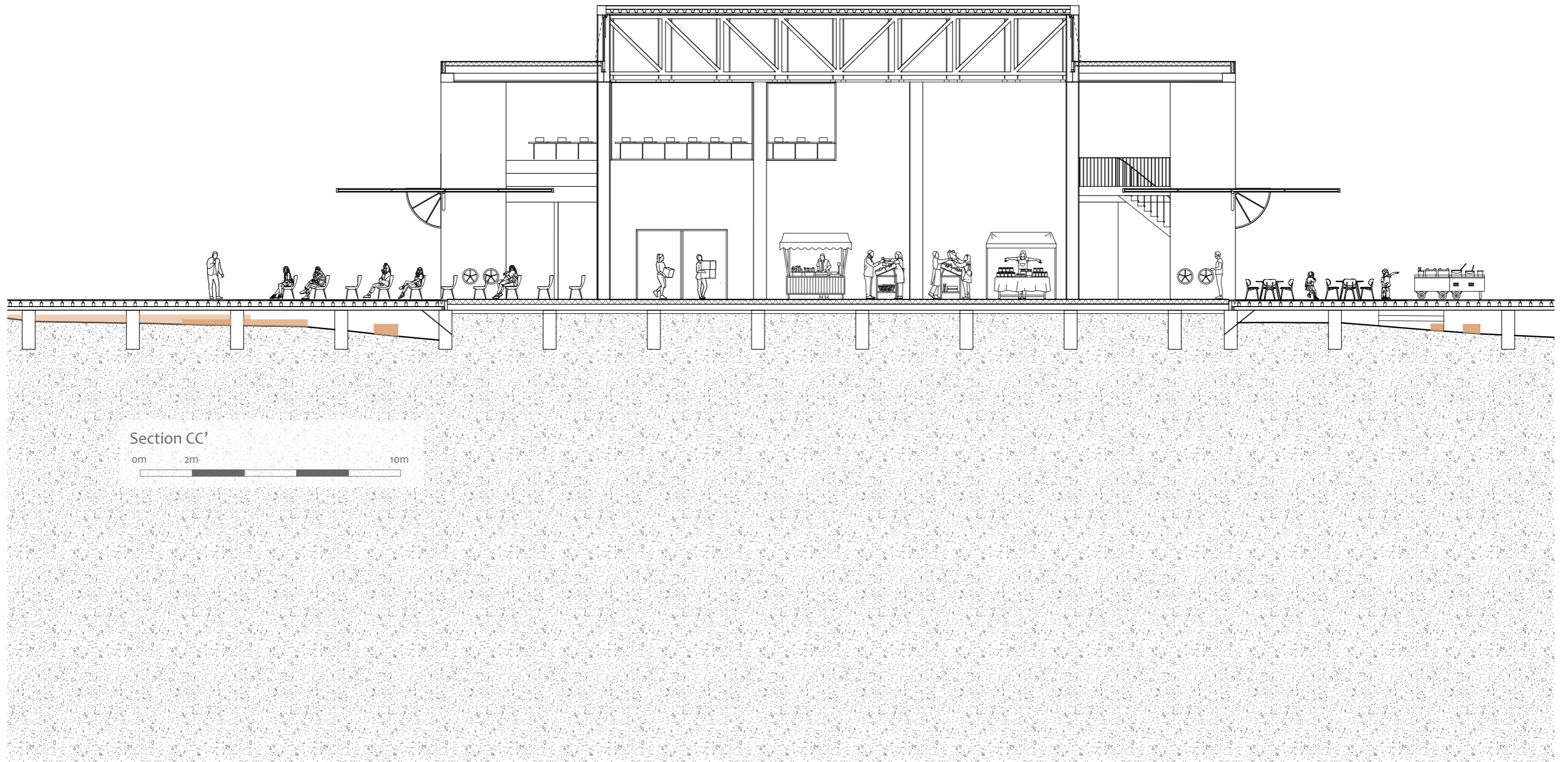
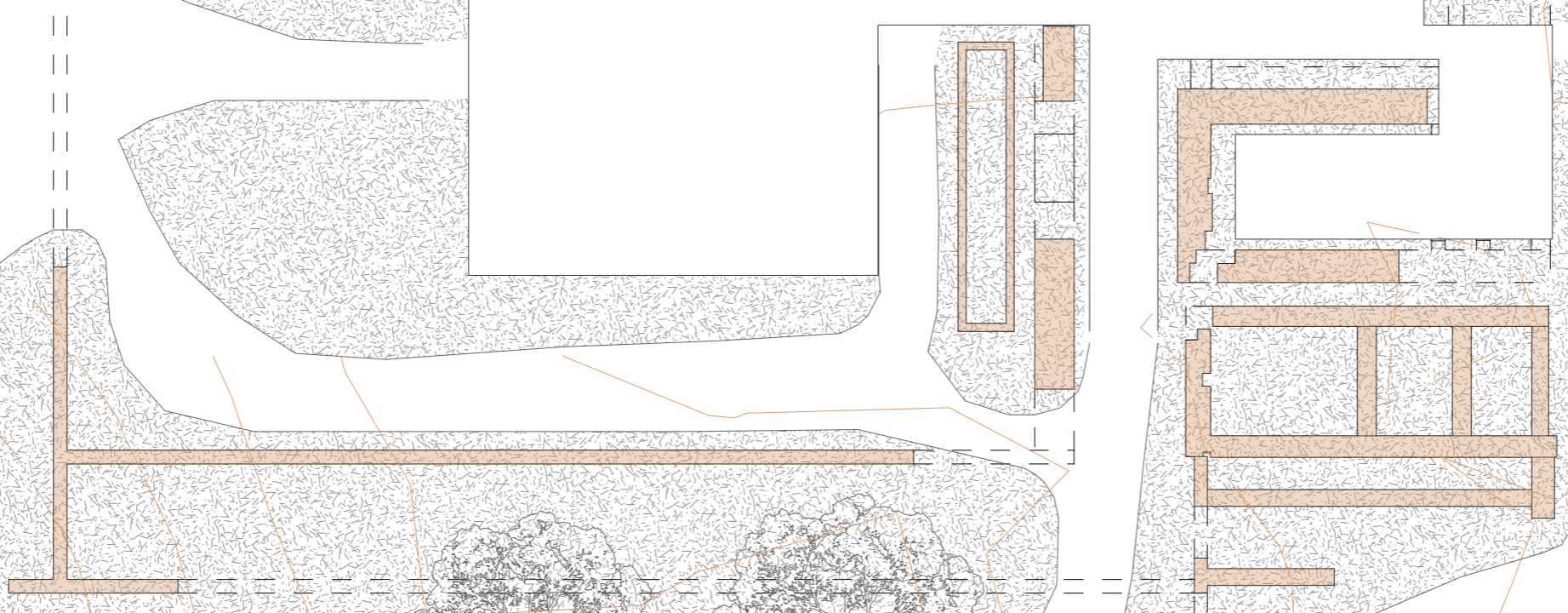
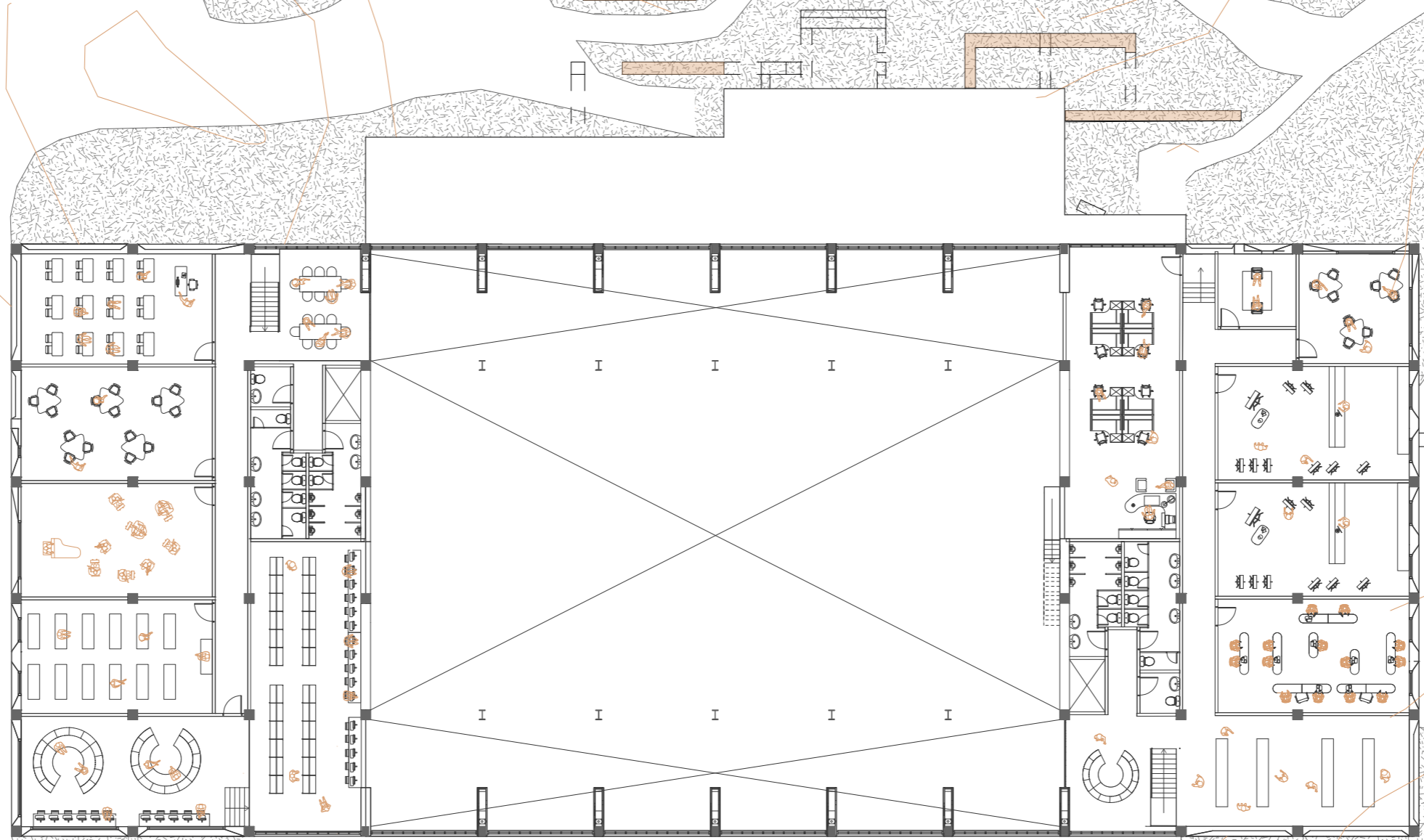


Fig. 63: Section CC'

Fig. 64: First Floor Plan



3.3 Tectonic Materiality & The Kinetic Threshold

Due to the contrasting programmatic requirements between the central open hall and the adjacent service cores, two distinct tectonic concepts were developed. For the central double-height zone, structural openness and site connectivity are paramount to highlighting the contribution programs. Consequently, this perimeter features twelve kinetic pivot-and-lift doors driven by a manual gear-and-wheel mechanism.

This envelope operates through two subsequent mechanical actions:

- 1) **Pivoting Action:** Activating the primary handwheel drives a connecting rod and roller chain, forcing the steel wheel connected to the panel—pivoting at a central axis 4 metres above the ground—to rotate vertically outward until perpendicular to the floor plate.
- 2) **Lifting Action:** Rotating the secondary handwheel engages a system of hydraulic tubes, counterweights, and pulleys via chains, allowing the panels to slide vertically between heights of 3 to 8 metres depending on real-time spatial needs.

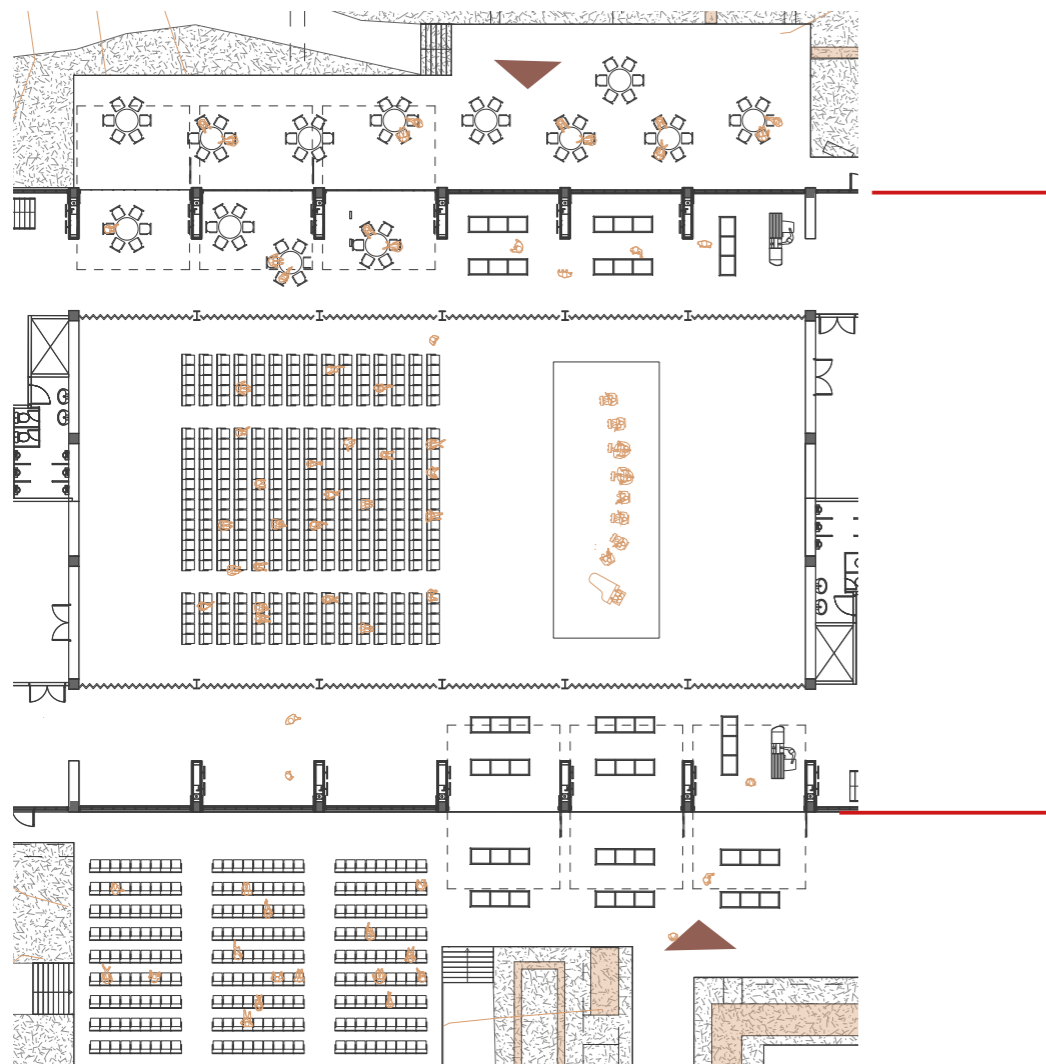


Fig. 65: Pivot-And-Lift Doors on Plan

Twelve Kinetic Pivot-And-Lift Doors



Fig. 66-67: Pivot Door at Chicken Point Cabin



Fig. 68: Pivot Door Detail

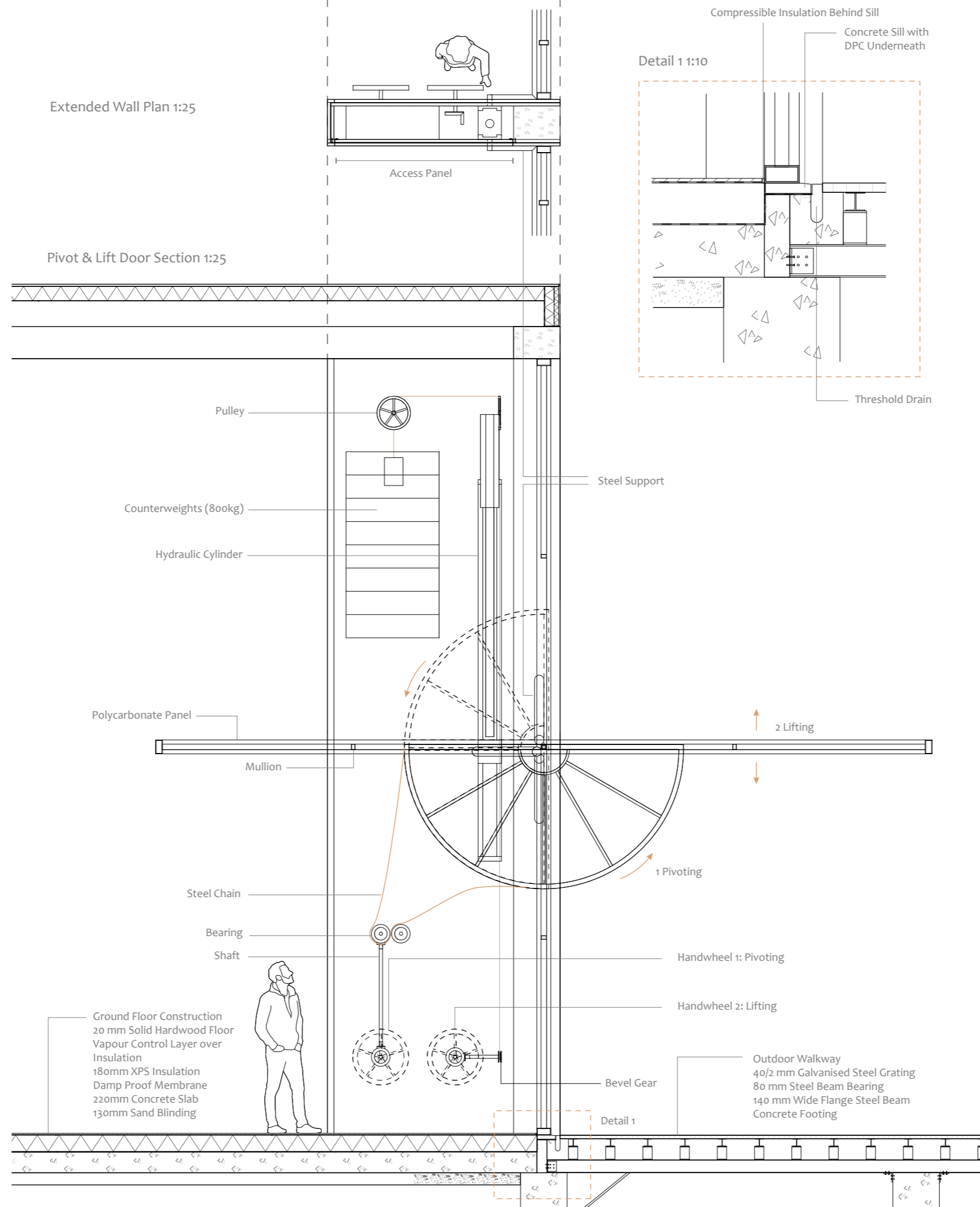




Fig. 69: 1:33 Pivot Door Assemblage

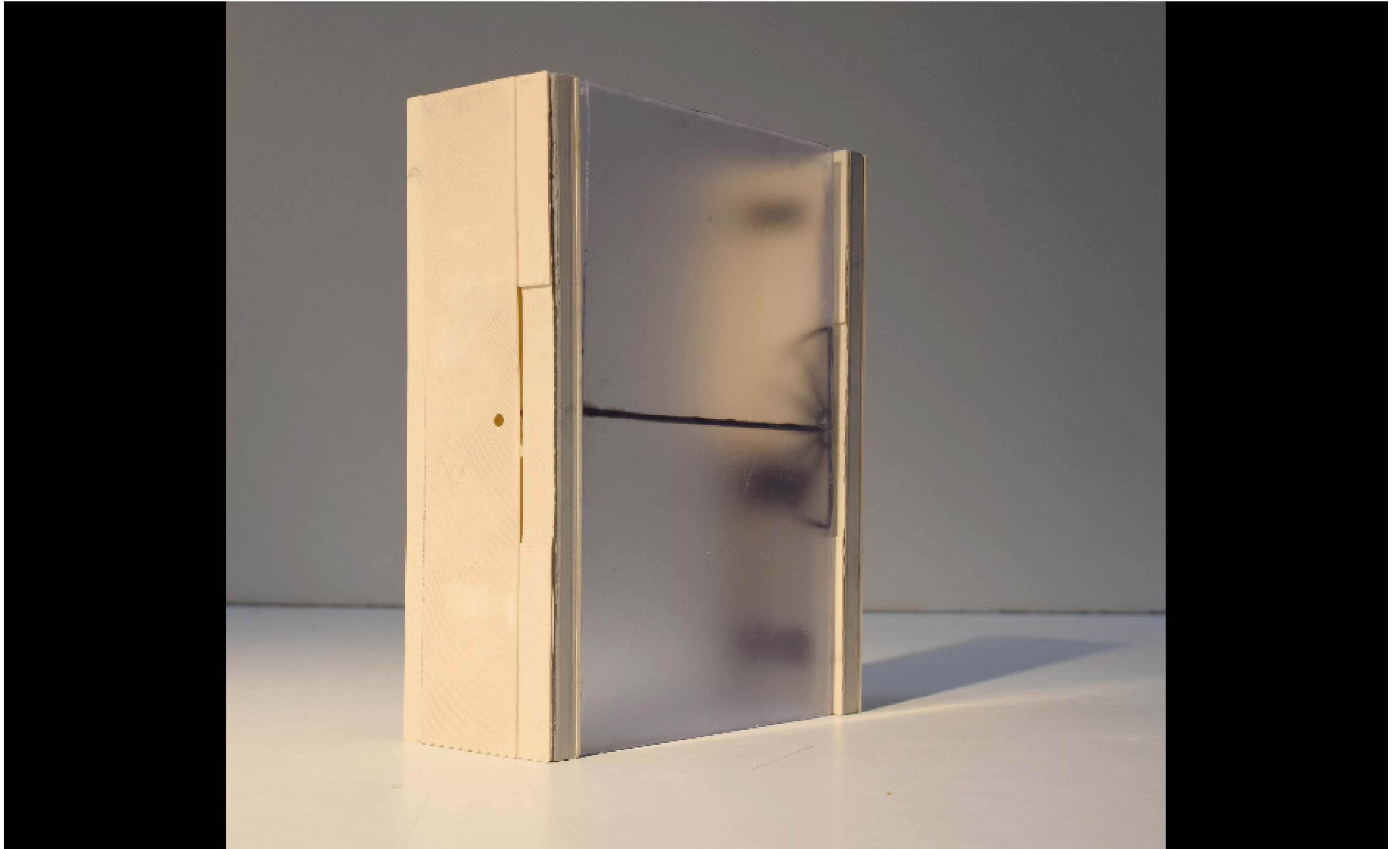


Fig. 70: 1:33 Pivot Door Mechanism



Fig. 71 Exterior of Pivot Door (Fully Opened)



Fig. 72 Interior of Multipurpose Hall (Pivot Door Fully Opened)



Fig. 73 Exterior of Translucent Pivot Door (Fully Closed)



Fig. 74 Interior of Temporary Immigrant Shelter (Pivot Door Fully Closed)



Fig. 75 Interior of Auditorium (with Heavy Fabric Curtains)

To balance public invitation with security, the panels utilise translucent polycarbonate instead of conventional glass. This material choice provides a protective visual blur that preserves privacy for internal users while casting shadows that foster curiosity among local park-goers. At night, internal illumination transforms the core into a glowing civic lantern within the park. Additionally, the top of the multi-purpose hall features flat Pratt trusses supporting double-glazed skylights. To accommodate light-sensitive cultural events, motor-operated horizontal louvers can rotate to block out sunlight completely.

In contrast, the flanking compact service zones require an intimate atmosphere to support private educational and vocational programs. These zones employ a permanent concrete structure to provide high thermal mass. On the ground floor, six rotating polycarbonate doors grant direct access to the cultivation gardens and loading zones. On the first floor, punched windows of varying sizes emphasize a sense of privacy, creating an optimised daylighting quality and an expressive shadow interplay along the exterior facade.

Overall, the heavy concrete masses on both ends ensure passive thermal comfort within the Athenian climate, while the operable perimeter panels dynamically regulate cross-ventilation and maximize physical integration with the historic site.

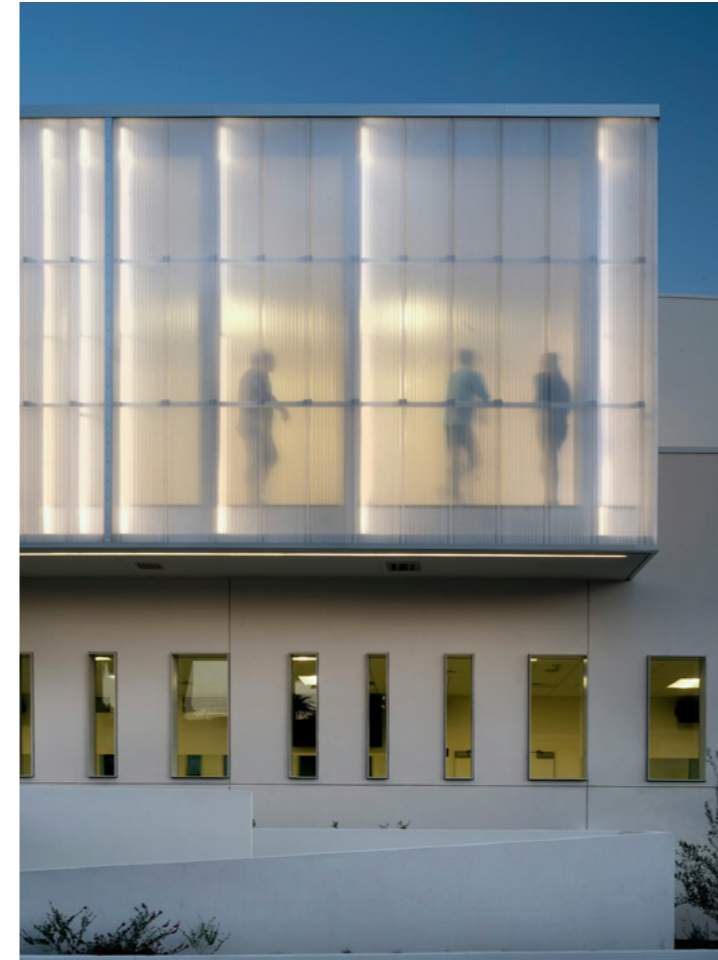


Fig. 76-77: Polycarbonate Panels



Fig. 78: Punched Window

Punched Window Sun Shading Study_SW

Fig. 79: Summer 9am

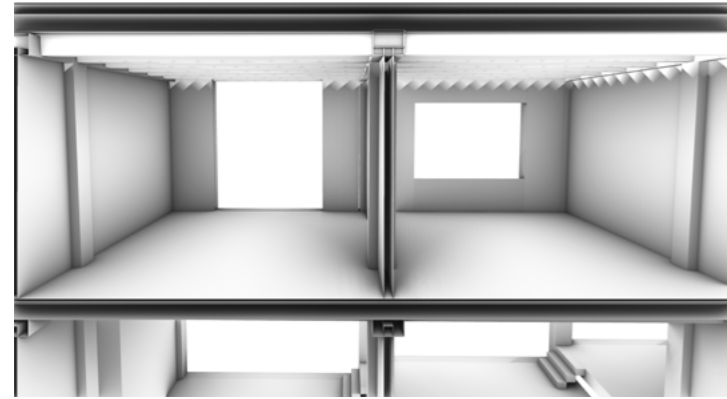


Fig. 80: Summer 12pm

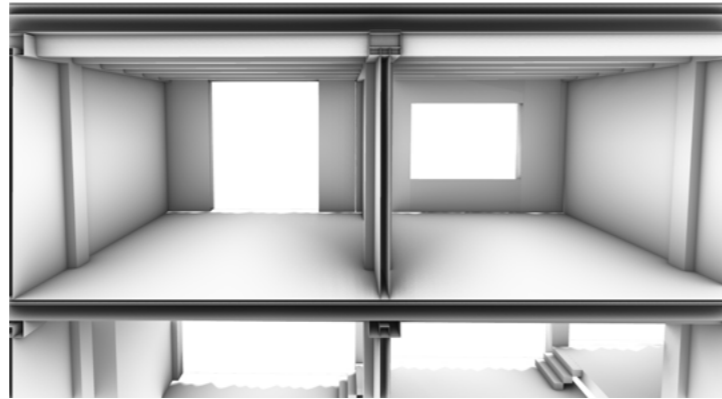


Fig. 81: Summer 3pm

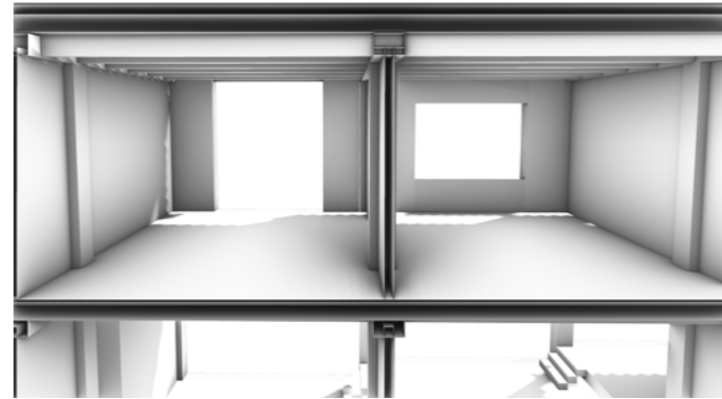


Fig. 82: Summer 6pm

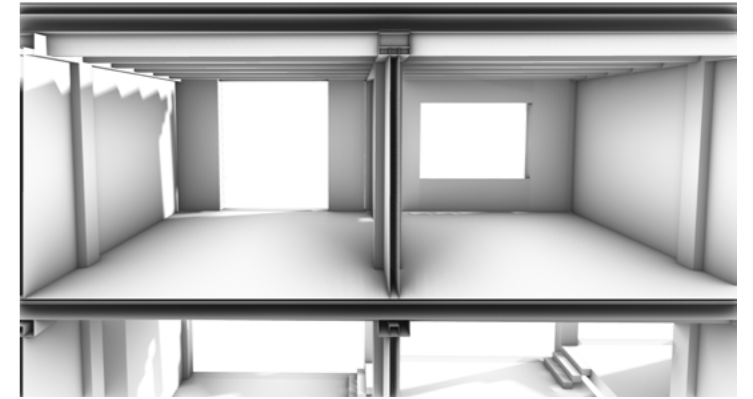


Fig. 83: Winter 9am

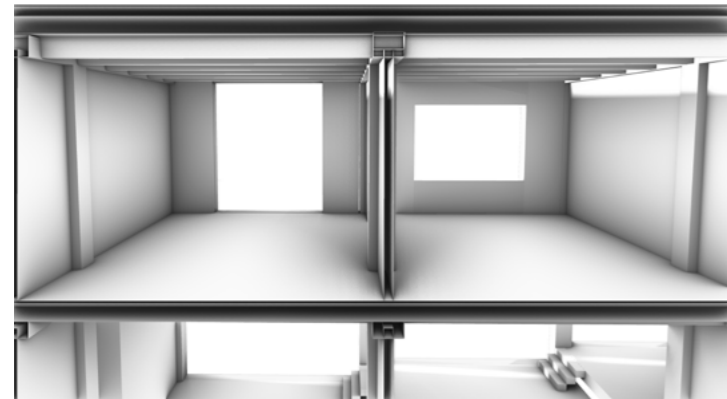


Fig. 84: Winter 12pm

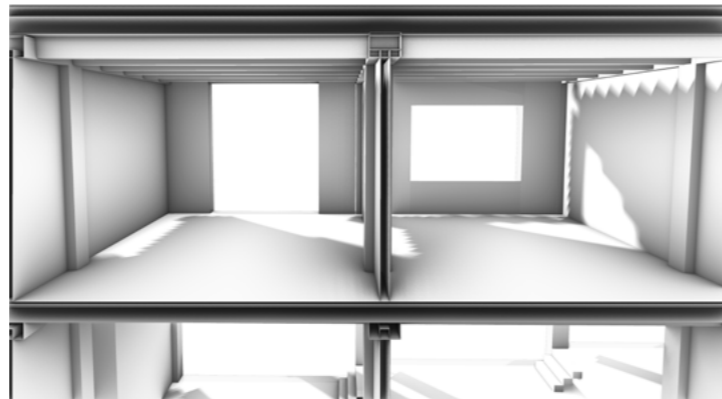


Fig. 85: Winter 3pm

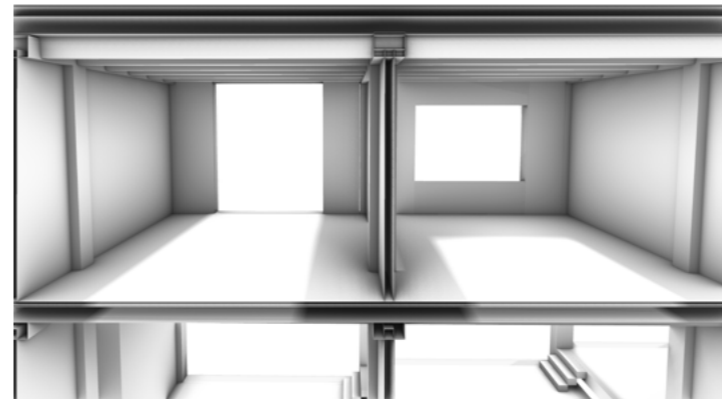
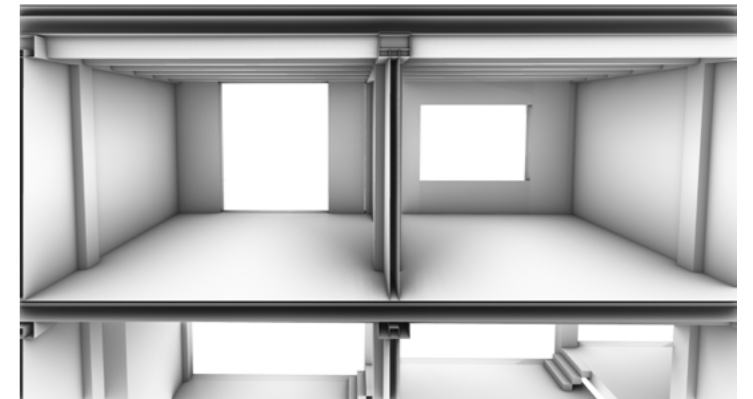


Fig. 86: Winter 6pm



Punched Window Sun Shading Study_NW

Fig. 87: Summer 9am

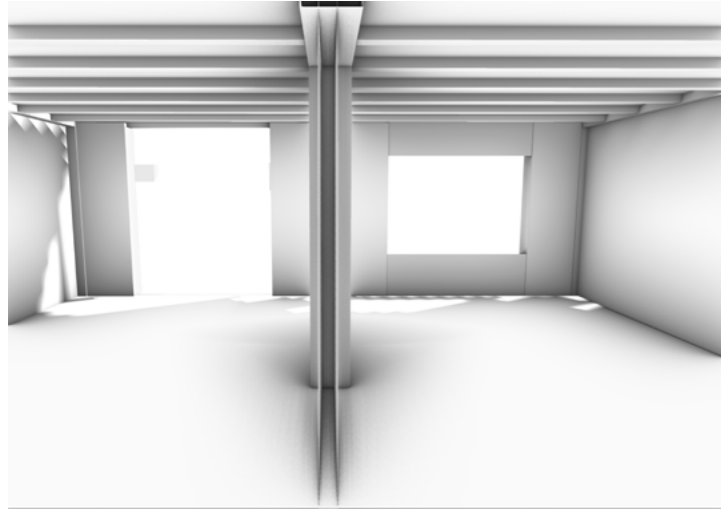


Fig. 88: Summer 12pm

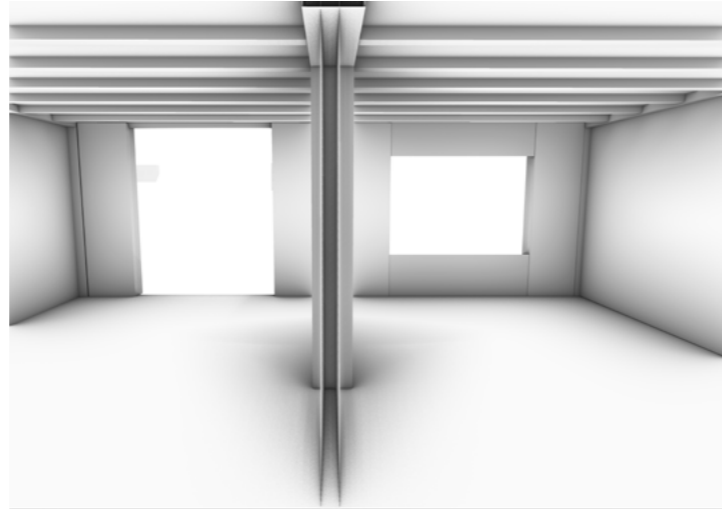


Fig. 89: Summer 3pm

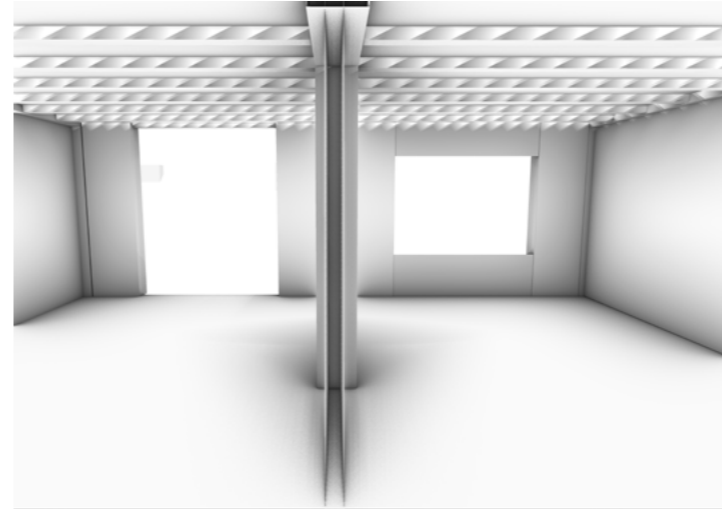


Fig. 90: Summer 6pm

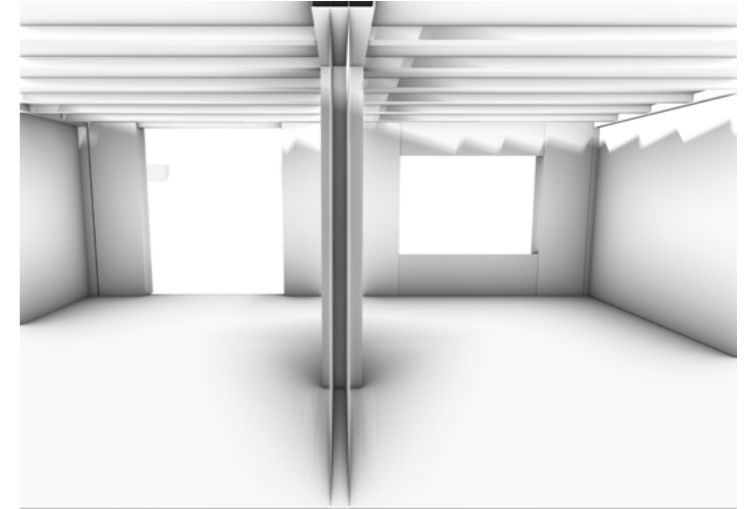


Fig. 91: Winter 9am

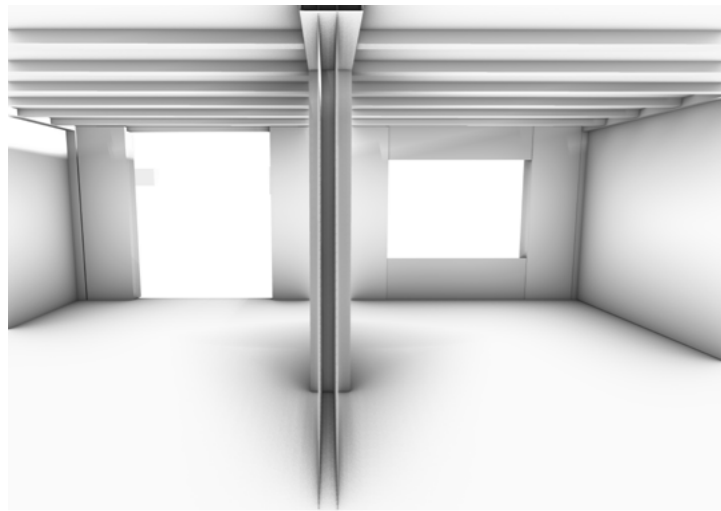


Fig. 92: Winter 12pm

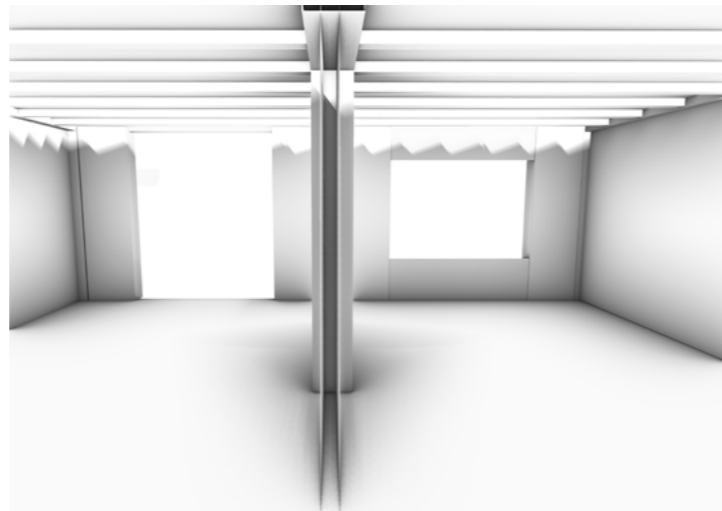


Fig. 93: Winter 3pm

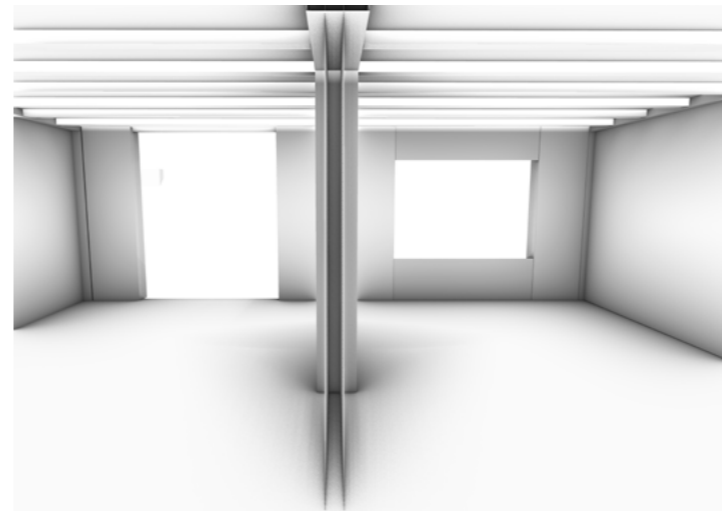
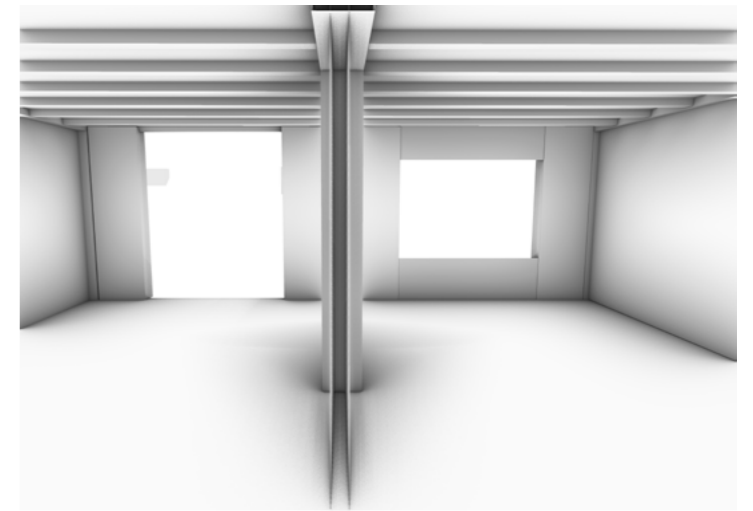
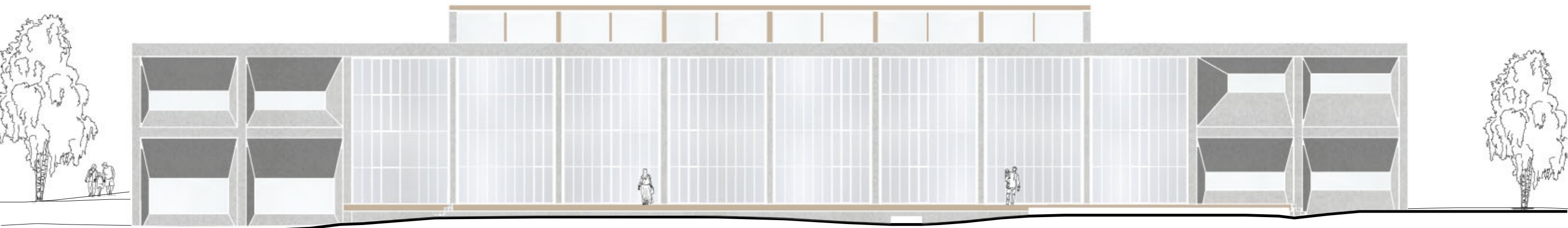


Fig. 94: Winter 6pm





0m 2m 10m

Fig. 95: 1:150 Elevation

Fig. 96: Cross-Ventilation Strategy

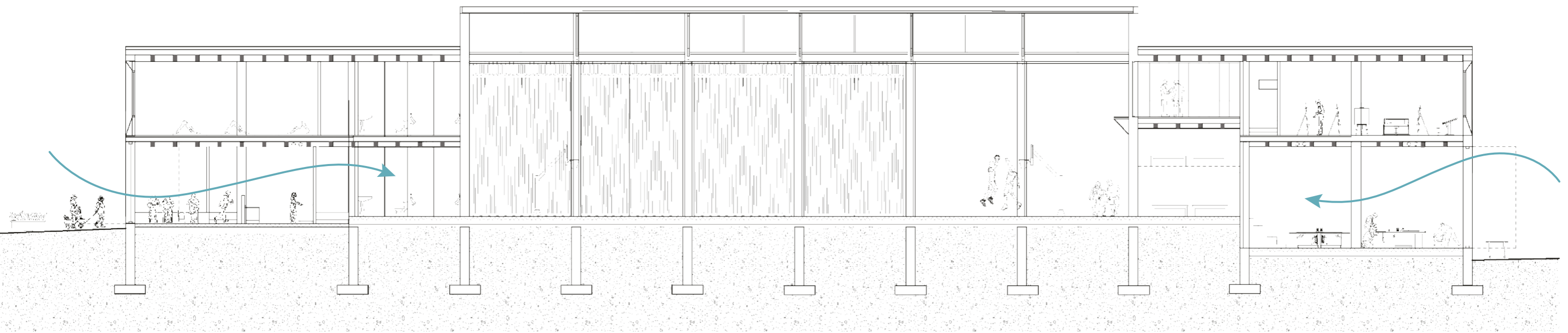
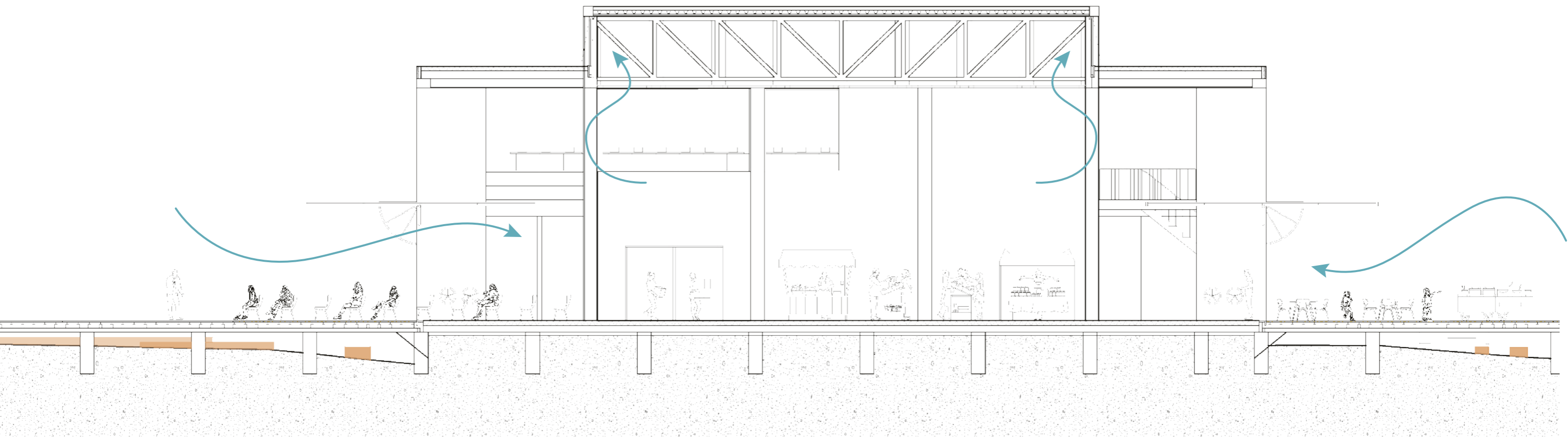
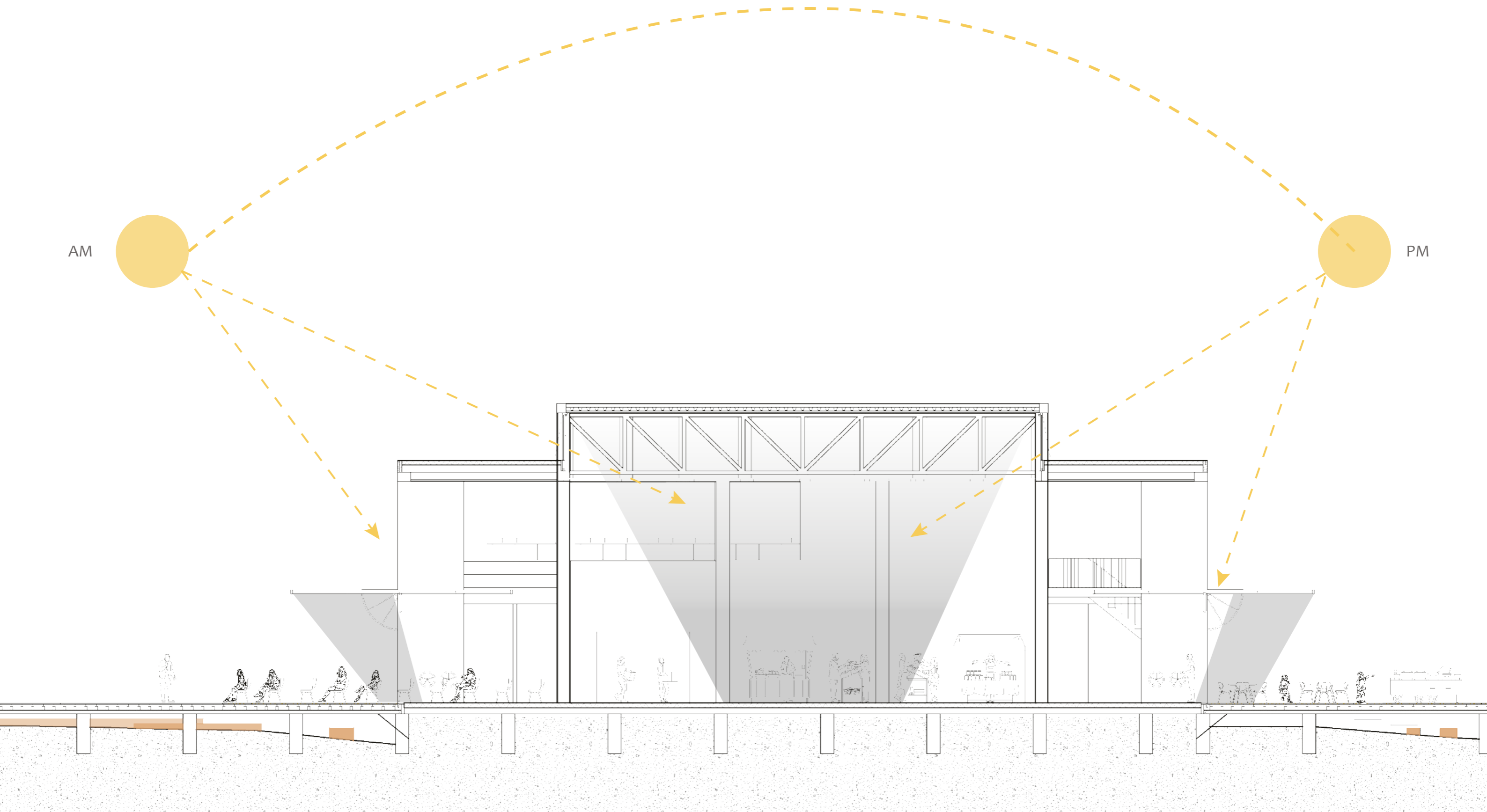


Fig. 97: Lighting Strategy



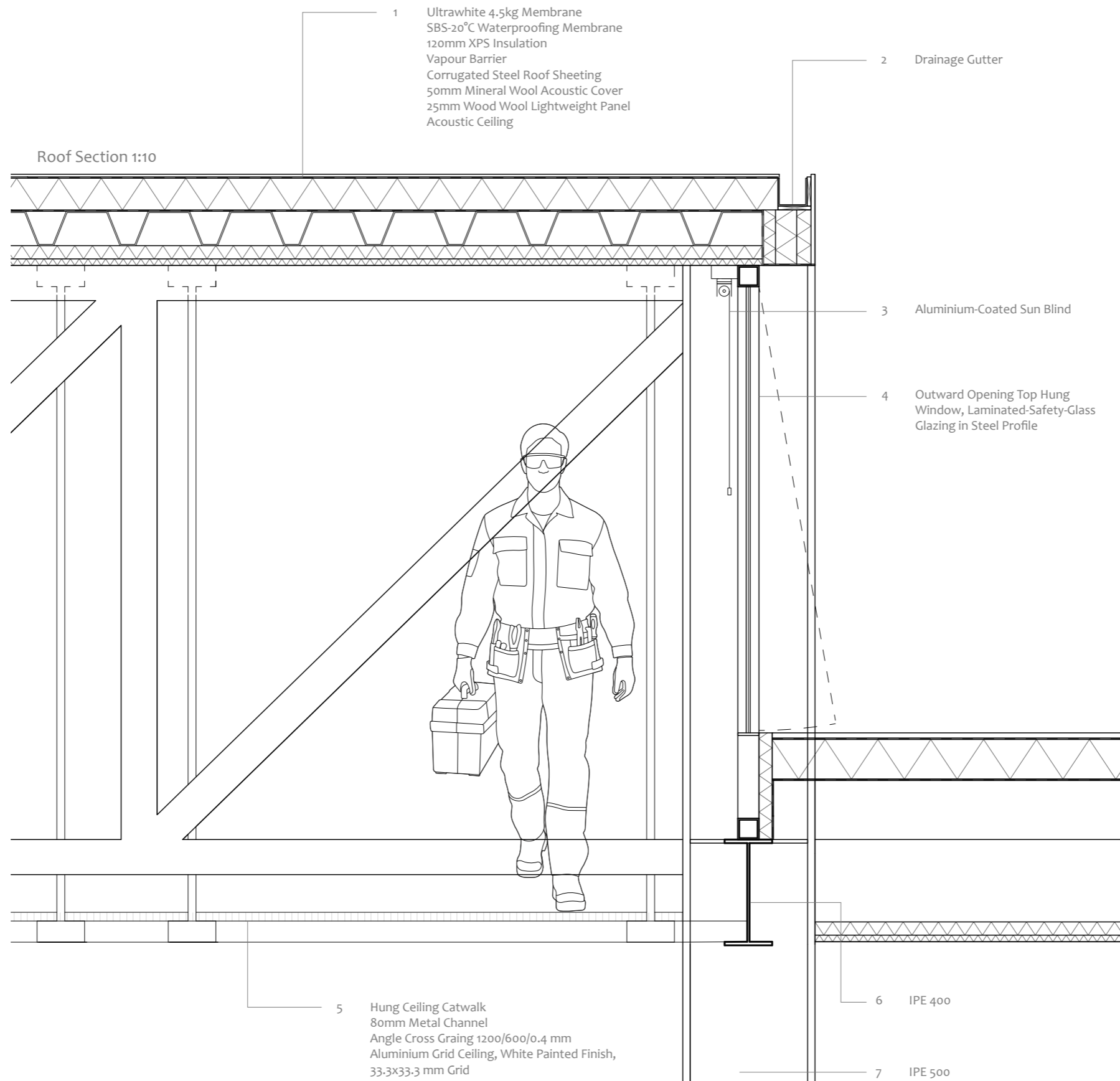


Fig. 98: Roof Details

3.4 Territorial Anchoring & Archaeological Interface

A critical design decision is the revitalisation of the existing park, which is currently uninviting and dominated by the scattered ancient remains of Plato's Academy gymnasium. To address this, the building footprint is strategically sandwiched parallel to the existing ruins and extended closer to the archaeological features, corresponding directly to three main historical zones:

- The Ancient Courtyard: This zone extends outward to serve as a prominent cultural stage for the primary public venues.
- The Supporting Buildings: This area functions as a flexible spatial extension for the arts and crafts shops and exhibition spaces.
- The Flanking Zone: Situated on the opposite side, this area accommodates the outdoor canteen seating and a market extension.

Moreover, a deliberate indoor–buffer–outdoor environmental gradient helps revitalise the park by introducing distinct, progressive spatial experiences across three territorial zones:

- The Conditioned Core: An enclosed, thermally stable volume supporting private educational, vocational, and administrative services.
- The Buffer Zone: A highly polyvalent threshold featuring the kinetic facade panels, creating an intermediate area that completely dissolves the building lines.
- The Park: An immediate outdoor extension of the building footprint that introduces new recreational, commercial, and gathering functions directly into the landscape.

Through this multi-layered spatial alignment, the territorial design transforms a passive, unwelcoming archaeological site into an accessible, vibrant asset for contemporary neighbourhood life.

Fig. 99: Environmental Gradient

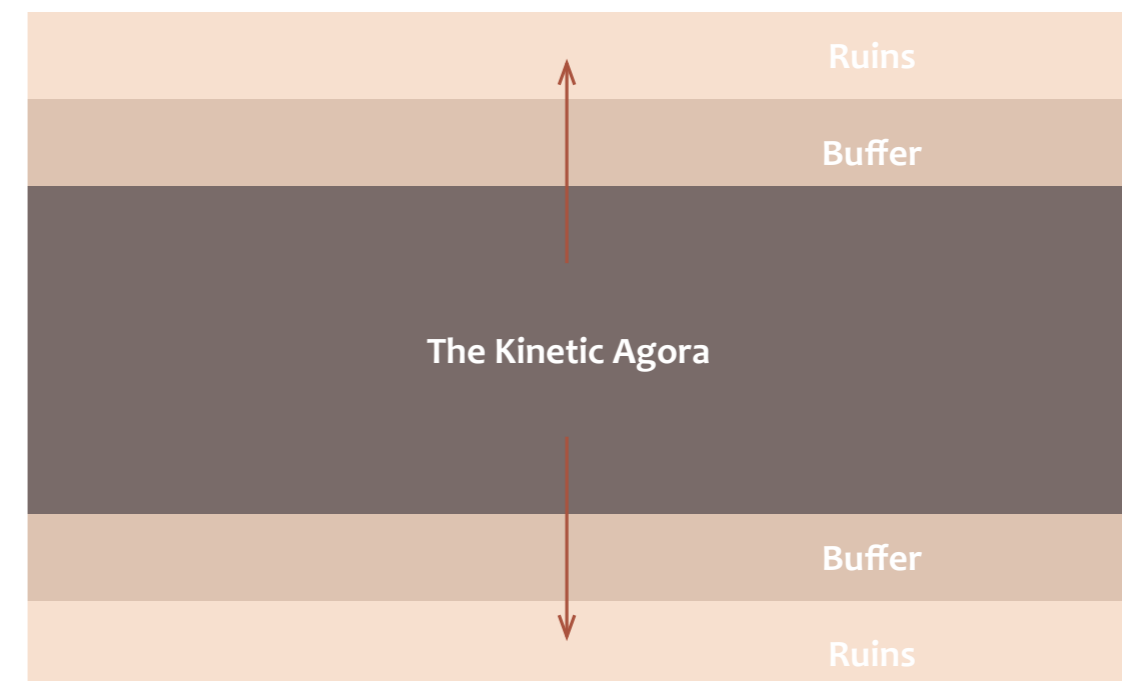


Fig. 100: Site Plan 1:500

0 10 20m



Fig. 101: Site Plan 1:500

0 10 20m

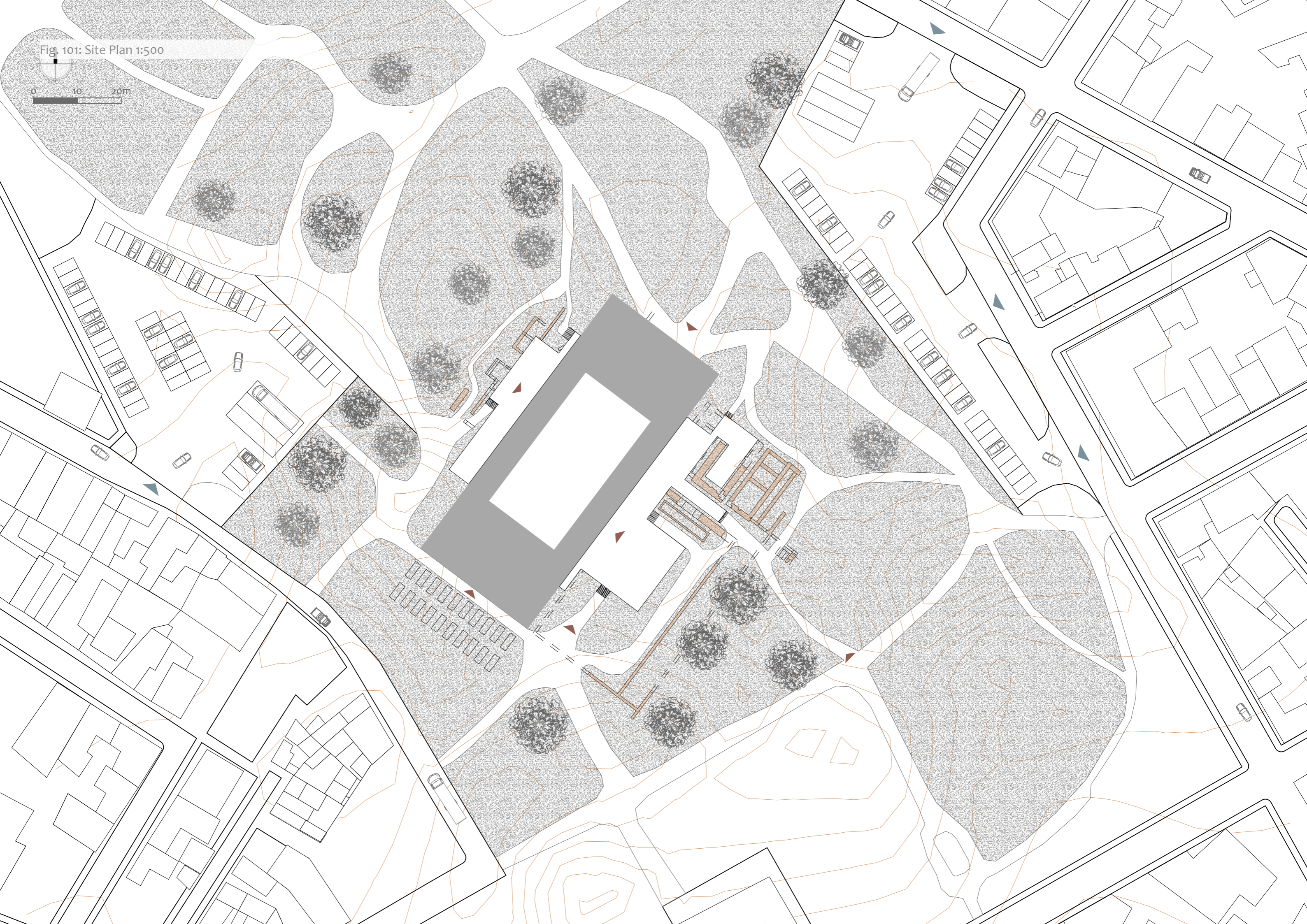


Fig. 102: Site Plan 1:1000



0 20 40m



Part 4. Conclusion and Discussion

4.1 Conclusion: Answering the Research Questions

The primary ambition of this graduation thesis was to investigate how architecture can operate as an active mediating tool to cultivate cross-cultural exchange and alleviate social friction between native Athenian populations and foreign migrant communities during the acculturation process. The newly proposed Agora at Plato's Academy explores programmatic, tectonic, and territorial aspects to improve the overall acculturation experience. The following conclusions evaluate how the physical design parameters answer the project's defining research questions accordingly while expanding upon their foundational theoretical frameworks.

4.1.1 Discussion of Research Question 1: The Civic Spine as an Architecture of Contact

The first research question investigated how a hyper-dense architectural core could be deployed as a 'Civic Spine' to sustain both structured institutional programming and informal cultural encounters. This spatial inquiry was addressed according to Gordon Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory, which posits that contact reduces prejudice only when supported by institutional backing, equal status, common goals, and active cooperation.

In contemporary Athens, a primary barrier to acculturation is the profound lack of interpersonal contact between native residents and newcomers. Currently, municipal infrastructure is severely deficient; only a single government-operated integration centre provides basic language, vocational, and legal aid. As successful integration requires mutual recognition, this project positions architecture as an active socio-spatial tool to alleviate this urban tension.

To systematically dismantle prejudice, the Civic Spine embeds Allport's four criteria directly into its spatial and programmatic organisation:

- **Equal Status:** Rather than restricting users to static roles, the project orchestrates a programmatic evolution where immigrants transition from passive beneficiaries to active contributors (e.g., from students to institutional staff), establishing equity between stakeholders.
- **Common Goals & Cooperation:** The facility rejects the segregated 'immigrant centre' typology, operating instead as shared public infrastructure for the broader Greek populace. A key manifestation is the DIY workshop, a space where newcomers use physical tools to solve practical, localised problems for neighbours (such as furniture repair). This fosters tangible intergroup cooperation, building mutual trust and responsibility (Luco, 2025).
- **Institutional Support:** The architecture reimagines the integration centre as a contemporary communal Agora, normalising cross-cultural interaction. When native residents cross the threshold to purchase food or crafts, contact is elevated to a dignified, commercial transaction on equal footing.

Ultimately, the architectural efficacy of the Civic Spine relies on the deliberate blurring of programmatic boundaries. By strategically overlapping zones, such as intersecting the canteen and classrooms to form an informal language café, the dense core demonstrates that architecture can simultaneously anchor structured institutional services while generating informal encounters during everyday routines.

4.1.2 Discussion of Research Question 2: Heritage Anchoring

The second research question explored how an architectural intervention at Plato's Academy could leverage the historic site context to preserve local cultural identity while establishing a welcoming framework for migrant integration. This investigation was framed through the theory of Cultural Sustainability (Trajković et al.), which argues that heritage landscapes enhance civic well-being when shifted away from static, museum-like preservation and reprogrammed to address contemporary social needs.

Reflecting on initial research regarding local public attitudes, a primary concern among native Greek residents is the potential dilution or erasure of local cultural identity due to migratory demographic shifts. To directly mitigate this anxiety, the project adopts a deliberate territorial strategy, localising the intervention adjacent to the historical remains of Plato's Academy gymnasium to visually and physically reassure the neighbourhood that their heritage is being actively protected and celebrated. By strategically "sandwiching" the building footprint parallel to the ancient ruins, the architecture establishes a respectful geometric and structural dialogue with the site's historical axis.

In addition to safeguarding local identity, the intervention addresses the fact that the current park landscape is uninviting and heavily underutilised. The design introduces a progressive indoor–buffer–outdoor environmental gradient that activates the park by layering new, meaningful social values directly over the archaeological matrix. By extending the building footprint towards the ruins, it creates three distinct spatial experiences: the conditioned core, the kinetic buffer, and the park. This territorial zoning transforms the park from a passive outdoor museum into an active premise for contemporary life. Ultimately, the project demonstrates that cultural sustainability is achieved by utilising historic prestige as a shared ground that weaves incoming communities into the continuous fabric of civic dialogue and local heritage.

4.1.3 Discussion of Research Question 3: The Breathing Edge

The final research question examined how a kinetic building envelope could modulate indoor–outdoor thresholds to lower spatial barriers and create an inviting gesture for cross-cultural exchange. This investigation reinterpreted Herman Hertzberger’s (1991) theory of Polyvalence, which advocates for minimal yet highly meaningful architectural adaptability enabling a single structural form to support diverse, evolving human behaviours.

A fundamental challenge throughout the design process is the extreme instability and unpredictability of the Athenian migratory landscape. Historical data reveals erratic, geopolitical fluctuations in immigrant numbers and demographic needs over time. Hence, the proposal rejects rigidly sized institutional typologies that risk operational obsolescence, implementing instead an adaptive framework rooted in polyvalent elasticity to absorb these shifting macro-dynamics.

By pairing an open-plan strategy with twelve polycarbonate kinetic facade panels driven by a manual gear-and-wheel mechanism, the architecture elevates Hertzberger’s structural polyvalence into a dynamic spatial regulator. Instead of offering a generic, neutralised layout, the kinetic envelope transforms the building's edge in response to real-time migratory scenarios:

- **Sanctuary Mode (Closed):** During periods of sudden demographic influxes, the panels form a solid, insulated perimeter. The interior is subdivided via acoustic partitions to maximise private, sensitive support infrastructure, including legal aid clinics, counselling suites, and secure shelters.
- **Agora Mode (Opened):** As integration succeeds and local demographic needs shift towards community interaction, the gear-and-wheel mechanism is engaged to dissolve the boundaries facing the park. The architecture transforms into an expansive open market and cultural platform.

This kinetic envelope demonstrates that a singular, fixed architectural footprint can effortlessly transition between a secure refuge and an open public realm. It serves as a literal "breathing edge" that lowers physical and psychological barriers, allowing diverse demographics to safely co-inhabit, mix, and negotiate shared space.

4.2 Implications and Recommendations

The proposal of this integration centre offers critical typological implications for how architecture responds to ongoing geopolitical crises and demographic shifts. Current architectural discourse often centres on providing urgent, short-term humanitarian shelters rather than focusing on the ultimate driver of permanent settlement: long-term integration. By neglecting long-term needs, traditional approaches inadvertently reinforce spatial segregation, reducing immigrants to passive, dependent subjects. To counter this, this project explores a new typological model that fuses educational and vocational services for immigrants with recreational programming designed to invite local residents into the space, directly fostering successful cross-cultural integration.

Consequently, this thesis establishes an alternative typological blueprint: the polyvalent civic infrastructure. By pairing a permanent, highly serviced structural core with a fluid, kinetic open-plan edge, the building provides a resilient framework capable of adapting to fluctuating social needs and extreme migratory scenarios. For instance, during a sudden influx of newcomers, the facility can pivot towards a protected immigrants' sanctuary. Conversely, if migratory pressures subside, the building smoothly shifts its operations to function as a standard local community centre. These adaptive frameworks ultimately transform immigrants from passive aid receivers into active civic contributors. While this proposal cannot resolve the complexities of global migration on its own, it delivers a vital public realm for everyday encounters—offering a dedicated spatial framework for breaking down cultural barriers and reducing societal prejudices.

4.3 Reflection: Critique of Methods and Tools

The primary methodological challenge of this project lay in translating abstract sociological frameworks into architectural reality. When spatialising Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory, evaluating how a fixed building system can successfully secure institutional support, equal status, common goals, and cooperation to dismantle prejudice remains inherently complex. The rigidity of the 6x6m structural matrix occasionally struggles to capture the fluid, informal nature of spontaneous public life. To bridge this gap, balancing rigid structural elements with "soft" architectural interventions, such as loose furniture and flexible partitions, is essential to successfully engineer human interaction. Future research focusing on human behaviour at a smaller, tactile scale would better evaluate the precise sociological impacts on cross-cultural contact.

Tectonically, exploring the kinetic envelope purely through digital two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional modelling created a gap in fully evaluating its physical feasibility. While the manual gear-and-wheel mechanism remains conceptually communicative, digital software cannot completely showcase real-life operational challenges, such as friction, weight, and manual labour. To make this design decision more convincing, fabricating a physical, large-scale fragment model would be highly relevant to testing the mechanical viability and human effort required to operate the facade.

Lastly, more thorough environmental simulations are required to optimise the building's performance under extreme climatic conditions. While the heavy concrete cores provide reliable thermal mass, they risk trapping heat and creating an oppressive indoor environment during peak Athenian summer months. Conversely, during winter rains, the kinetic panels must remain entirely closed, temporarily undermining the open public character of the building. Because this thesis relied primarily on solar shading studies, integrating advanced thermodynamic and cross-ventilation simulations in future developments would significantly enhance the user experience across all seasonal shifts.

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Figures

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Appendix

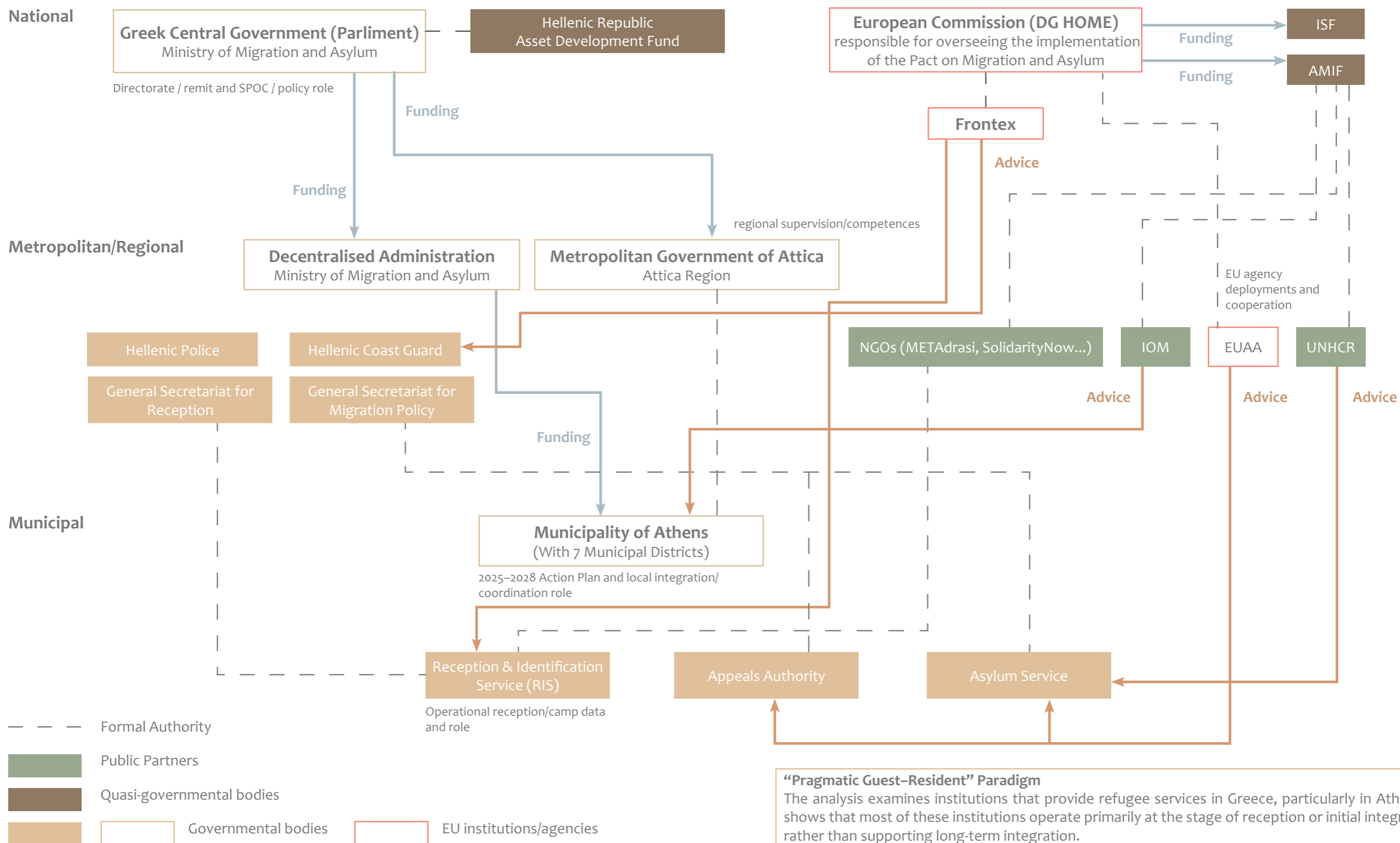
Migration Flows in Greece



An Ongoing Crisis

The map illustrates migration flows over time. The red lines represent Greeks leaving the country (primarily in the mid-20th century), while the green lines indicate populations entering Greece (mainly from the 1990s onward in the Balkans). It reflects the historical reality of Greece as a “migration country.”

Key Institutions & Governance Structure in Athens



Evolution of Greek Migration Policy

	Context/Incident	Immigration Policies			
Late 1980s	Massive migratory flows from Albania and Eastern Europe towards Greece	The Ministry of Public Order oversees the immigrant population, implementing restrictive policy measures	2010	Sovereign debt crisis and bailout agreement between Greece and the IMF-EC-ECB	Implementation of Immigrants' Integration Councils (Municipal Authorities) Ragkousis Law 3838 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants' Residence
1990s	Large-scale urban projects commenced in the mid-1990s. Immigrants became labour force	1991 (Law 1975) First regulatory framework -> shift towards 'guest worker' policy 1996 Law 2413 on Intercultural Education 1998 First regularisation process	2012-2013	Coalition government of ND-PASOKDIMAR The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party gets 6.92% in the national vote	2012-3 'Sweeping' police operations, intensification of border controls and construction of a wall at Greek-Turkish borders. -> return of measures focusing on urban order 2013 Rejection of Law 3838 by the Constitutional Court
2000s	Culmination of large-scale urban projects for the 2004 Olympic Games; Gradual formulation of an EU immigration policy; Enactment of Dublin II Regulation (2003): only one EU member state is responsible for examining an asylum application; Development of anti-racist movement (e.g. NGOs, immigrant communities and organisations)	2001 Second regularisation process 2001 Law 2910 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory 2001 Establishment of the Immigration Policy Directorate (Ministry of Interior) 2005 Law 3386 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory -> shift towards a social integration agenda 2005 Law 3304 on Equal Treatment 2005-2007 Third regularisation process	2015	Coalition government of SYRIZA-ANEL Refugee crisis: over one million people from Asian countries entered Europe by sea. Therefore, EU proposed an European Migration Agenda.	Law 4332/2015 on Modification of provisions of the Greek Citizenship Code Law 4356/2015 Civil Partnership, Exercise of Rights, Penal and Other Provisions May The agenda primarily focuses on illegality and deportability, while also introducing "hotspots" as key sites for identification and processing. The hotspot approach marks a new phase in migration management, embedding enhanced security practices at the core of reception and control mechanisms. Early urban accommodation efforts began in Athens through NGOs and solidarity groups . First refugee squats appeared in central Athens.

The Politics of Forgetting

The analysis examines Greek migration policy in the context of successive refugee crises since the late 1980s. It reveals a strong dependence on political will, which plays a key role in shaping public attitudes toward immigrants. Moreover, immigrant integration is largely supported by local initiatives, such as NGOs and solidarity groups, rather than by comprehensive state policy.

Context/Incident	Immigration Policies
2016	<p>The EU–Turkey Statement reshaped asylum procedures: faster processing, returns, containment</p> <p>Greece enacted new legislation introducing stricter asylum procedures and shifted toward a more structured management system centered on detention, deportation, and reinforced border control. Creation of the Ministry of Migration Policy out of the former Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reorganization.</p>
2020	<p>Turkey instrumentalised the refugee issue, causing a new refugee crisis in Evros.</p> <p>February The Greek government further securitised the asylum process through an emergency legislative act in response to pressure along the Turkish border. The country temporarily sealed its borders and deployed military forces to reinforce border protection. This event significantly shaped Greek migration policy, reinforcing a more restrictive and security-driven stance toward refugees.</p> <p>COVID-19</p> <p>The pandemic led to the suspension of asylum applications, accompanied by twelve emergency measures, including the 'Agnodiki' Plan, which imposed curfews within the Reception and Identification Centers on the Greek islands. The approach to vaccination for asylum seekers further reflected the government's stringent handling of refugees and signaled the adoption of an increasingly conservative policy framework.</p> <p>New government department Ministry of Migration and Asylum was created.</p>
2022	<p>Arrivals fell significantly compared to 2015–2016</p> <p>Signs of downsizing of urban housing through ESTIA in Athens. Policy focus moved toward border security, deterrence, and camp-based accommodation. Housing policy began shifting away from urban apartments.</p>
2023	<p>Government shut down ESTIA, ending apartment-based housing</p> <p>Thousands of refugees in Athens were relocated or faced eviction, leading to a greater dependence on informal housing arrangements. These developments disrupted access to stable schooling, employment pathways.</p>
	<p>Pylos shipwreck</p> <p>The shipwreck incident sparked significant national debate, yet it did not prompt a reversal of the prevailing restrictive policy trajectory.</p>
	<p>Surge of refugee arrivals in autumn</p> <p>The incident intensified doubts regarding the effectiveness of security-driven approaches in managing sudden surges in migration flows.</p>
	<p>Ministry of Migration and Asylum 2023 Action Plan</p> <p>The theme of immigrant social integration remains absent from the policy agenda. Following, the termination of the ESTIA housing scheme further undermines integration prospects, as asylum seekers are redirected to isolated camps, limiting their interaction with the urban fabric.</p>

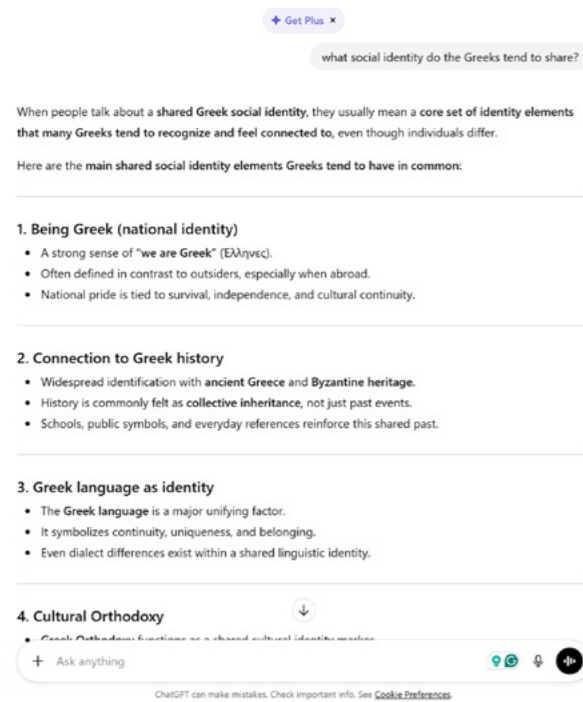
The Neglect of Social Integration

Despite substantial changes in migration policy since 2015, following the most recent refugee crisis, the issue of immigrant social integration has yet to be meaningfully included on the policy agenda.

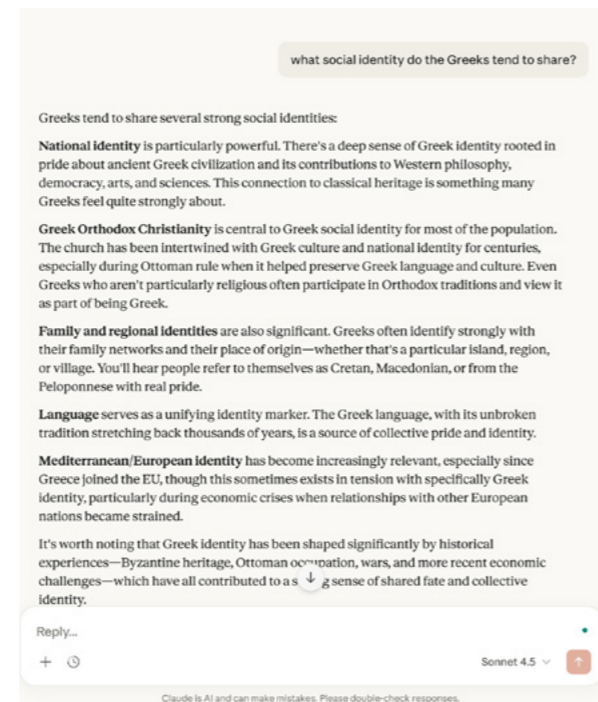
Understanding of Identity Through AI

What social identity do the Greeks tend to share?

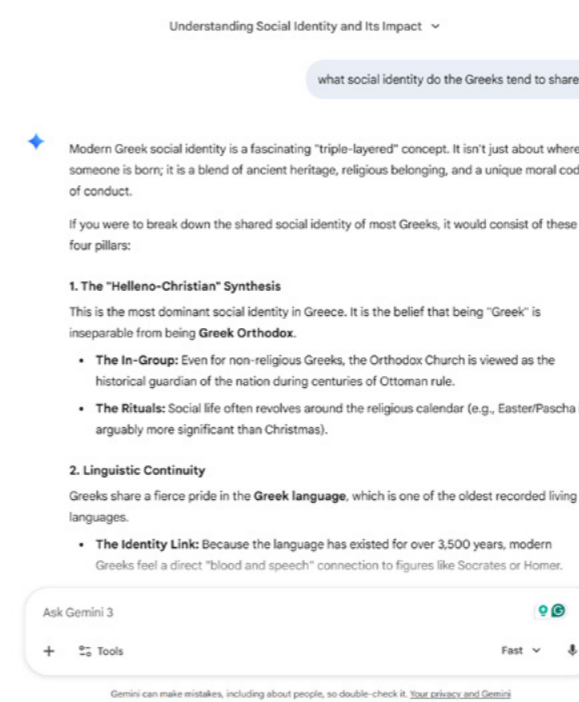
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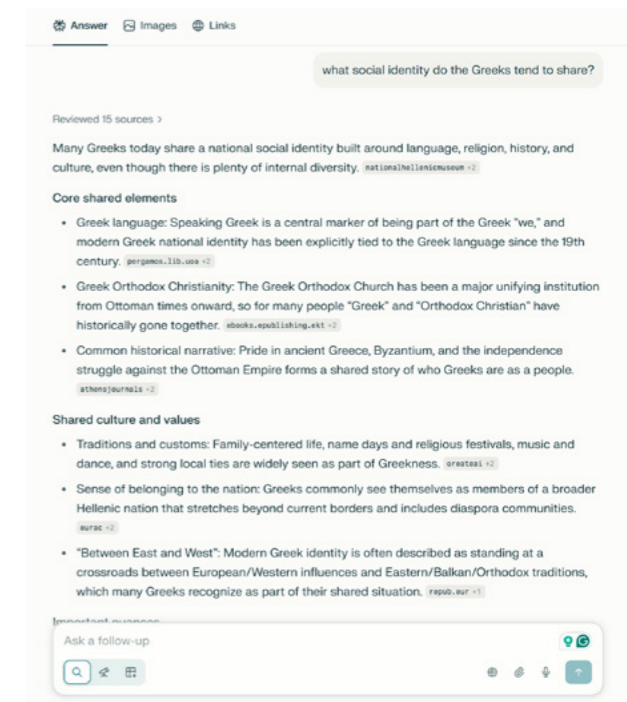
Claude Sonnet 4.5



Gemini 3



Perplexity



Key Findings / Responses

- 1. National identity:** closely tied to cultural continuity and collective pride rooted in the heritage of ancient Greek civilisation.
- 2. Language:** a key marker of cultural uniqueness and belonging. The ability to speak and write the Greek alphabet is considered central to expressing and maintaining national identity.
- 3. Orthodox religion:** a central role in social life, with communal rhythms structured around the religious calendar, including holidays, rituals, and traditions.
- 4. Moral identity:** concept of philoxenia—the love of strangers—represents a moral value that fosters hospitality and a sense of in-group solidarity.
- 5. Mediterranean social style:** a preference for face-to-face communication, emphasising physical presence and interpersonal exchange.

Valuable design insights

- ➔ Educational Program/Architectural References
- ➔ Essential Element in Integration Program
- ➔ Design Principle: Cultural Sustainability
- ➔ Interactive Workshop and Central Space

** Responses align with public attitudes in literature

Understanding of Identity Through AI

What social identity do the immigrants tend to share?

ChatGPT-5.2

what social identity do immigrants tend to share?

Immigrants do not share one single social identity, but across countries and contexts they often develop overlapping, recurring social identity patterns because of the shared experience of migration.

Here are the main social identities immigrants tend to share, regardless of origin:

- 1. Immigrant / migrant identity**
 - A shared sense of being "newcomers" or "outsiders" in the host society.
 - Awareness of difference in language, accent, customs, or legal status.
 - This identity often becomes stronger when immigrants are treated as a group rather than as individuals.
- 2. Dual or hyphenated identity**
 - Many immigrants develop a **dual identity**:
 - "From there" + "living here" (e.g., Moroccan-Dutch, Syrian-German).
 - Identity shifts by context: one identity may be stronger at home, another in public or institutional settings.
- 3. Shared experience of adaptation**
 - Common experiences of **learning a new language**, navigating unfamiliar systems, and decoding social norms.
 - Feelings of uncertainty, effort, and gradual adjustment often create solidarity with other immigrants.

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what social identity do immigrants tend to share?

This is a nuanced question because "immigrants" is an extremely diverse category—people who immigrate come from vastly different countries, cultures, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, there are some common elements of social identity that many immigrants share based on their experience of migration itself.

The immigrant experience can become its own form of social identity. Many immigrants identify with the shared challenges of adapting to a new country, navigating unfamiliar systems, learning new languages, and building lives from scratch. This can create bonds between people from very different backgrounds who recognize similar struggles in each other.

Dual or hyphenated identities are common, where people maintain strong connections to their country of origin while also developing ties to their new home. Someone might identify as Mexican-American, British-Pakistani, or Franco-Algerian, holding both identities simultaneously.

Diaspora communities often form strong social identities. Immigrants from the same country or region frequently build networks and communities in their new location, maintaining cultural practices, languages, and traditions together.

Generation matters significantly. First-generation immigrants often maintain stronger ties to their heritage culture, while second and third generations may navigate between cultures differently or primarily identify with their country of birth.

That said, it's important to recognize that immigrants don't share a single, unified social identity. A Syrian refugee, a British executive relocating for work, and a student from Brazil studying abroad are all technically immigrants, but their experiences and identities may have little in common. The specifics of why someone migrated, where they came from, and where they settled shape their social identity far more than the fact of migration itself.

Reply...

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Gemini 3

Understanding Social Identity and Its Impact

what social identity do immigrants tend to share?

When people move from one country to another, they often develop a "hybrid" social identity. They don't just lose their old identity and gain a new one; instead, they navigate a complex space between two cultures.

While every immigrant's experience is unique, they tend to share several distinct social identity markers:

- 1. The "Hyphenated" Identity**

Most immigrants adopt a dual-identity framework (e.g., Mexican-American, Turkish-German, or British-Indian).

 - Biculturalism:** They often switch between identities depending on the context—a process called **code-switching**. They might act "more traditional" at home with family and "more assimilated" at work or school.
 - The Bridge:** This identity serves as a bridge, allowing the individual to belong to two "in-groups" simultaneously, though it can sometimes lead to feeling like an outsider in both.
- 2. Acculturation Strategies**

Psychologist John Berry identified four ways immigrants manage their social identity when entering a new "host" culture:

Strategy	Relationship with Original Culture	Relationship with Host Culture
Ask Gemini 3		

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Perplexity

what social identity do immigrants tend to share?

Reviewed 15 sources

Immigrants do not share one single social identity, but many develop a shared sense of being "people who moved from one country to another and are navigating between cultures."

Common shared themes

- In-between or bicultural identity:** Many immigrants describe feeling partly from their country of origin and partly from the new country, creating a hybrid or bicultural identity rather than fully "one or the other."
- Ongoing identity negotiation:** Migration often triggers continuous reflection on "who I am" as people adjust to new norms, expectations, and power relations while trying to keep important parts of their heritage.
- Experience of being "different":** Immigrants are often seen and treated as outsiders (because of language, accent, race, name, or religion), which can become a shared basis for identity and solidarity with other immigrants.

Community and belonging

- Ethnic and immigrant communities:** Many immigrants join or create communities (cultural centers, religious groups, language-based networks) where they share traditions, symbols, and stories that support a sense of belonging in the new country.
- Dual belonging:** A lot of first- and second-generation immigrants report feeling they belong both to their heritage group and to the wider national or city identity (for example, "Moroccan and Portuguese," or "Pakistani and Londoner").
- Importance of support networks:** Rebuilding social support—through family, co-ethnic groups, or broader migrant networks—is a common strategy that shapes a shared "immigrant" identity.

Ask a follow-up

Key Findings / Responses

- 1. Dual identities:** Immigrants often develop a bicultural identity after relocating to a new country. Within diaspora communities, shared cultural or migratory backgrounds foster strong in-group bonds and a heightened sense of belonging.
- 2. Generational variation:** First-generation immigrants typically maintain a stronger social identification with their culture of origin, while later generations more frequently experience a sense of being "in-between," negotiating multiple cultural affiliations.

** Responses align with articles on immigrants' identity crisis

Valuable design insights

- ➔ **Mixed-use program:** increase immigrants' exposure to native residents and local culture, thereby reducing the risk of forming immigrant enclaves.
- ➔ **Graduated program:** responds to different user groups (e.g. adults vs children, or newly arrived vs long-settled immigrants), allowing for varying levels of engagement.

Proposal Development Through AI

How can integration centre promote acculturation through social identity (re)construction?

ChatGPT-5.2

Get Plus

how can integration centre promote acculturation through social identity (re)construction?

An **integration centre** can promote acculturation most effectively when it helps people **reconstruct social identity**—moving from “outsider” and “immigrant” identities toward **shared, inclusive identities** (neighbor, learner, parent, resident, citizen). Below is a **clear, structured framework** you can use conceptually, architecturally, and programmatically.

1. Reframe identity from “immigrant” to shared social roles

Acculturation works best when people interact as **equals in meaningful roles**, not as clients.

How an integration centre can do this

- Offer activities based on **shared roles**: parent workshops, job training, language exchange, sports, arts.
- Mix immigrants and locals as **participants, mentors, volunteers, and staff**.
- Avoid spatial or programmatic separation (“immigrant-only” floors or schedules).

Identity shifts from *recipient of help* → **member of a community**.

2. Design for contact, not just service delivery

Many integration centres fail because they are **transactional** (forms, offices, waiting rooms).

Acculturating centre design

- Central commons or café as the heart of the building
- Shared circulation (one entrance, visible stairs, open lobbies)
- Overlapping uses (language class next to art workshop)

Ask anything

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Claude Sonnet 4.5

how can integration centre promote acculturation through social identity (re)construction?

An Integration centre can be specifically designed and programmed to actively support social identity reconstruction during acculturation. Here's how:

Creating a “third space” for identity negotiation. The centre can function as neutral territory—neither fully “home culture” nor fully “host culture”—where immigrants have psychological permission to explore and experiment with new aspects of identity without feeling they're betraying their heritage. The physical environment should feel welcoming and non-institutional, allowing people to relax their guard and engage authentically.

Programming that validates multiple identities simultaneously. Rather than classes that simply teach “how to be Greek” (or whatever the host culture is), the centre can offer activities that explicitly honor hybrid identities. For example, cooking classes where participants share recipes from their heritage while learning about local ingredients and culinary traditions, or language exchanges where both languages are valued equally. This reinforces that acculturation doesn't require abandoning who you were.

Structured cross-cultural encounters. The centre can deliberately bring together immigrants from different backgrounds and locals from the host community. When designed well—perhaps around collaborative projects, shared learning experiences, or common goals—these interactions help break down in-group/out-group boundaries. People begin to form new social identities based on shared interests or experiences rather than just national origin.

Spaces for cultural expression and storytelling. Providing areas where immigrants can display art, perform music, share narratives, or celebrate traditions accomplishes several things: it validates their heritage identity, educates others, and allows immigrants to actively shape how they're perceived rather than being passively categorized. This agency in self-presentation is crucial for healthy identity reconstruction.

Reply...

Sonnet 4.5

Claude is AI and can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.

Gemini 3

Understanding Social Identity and Its Impact

how can integration centre promote acculturation through social identity (re)construction?

An **Integration Centre** acts as a physical laboratory for identity reconstruction. Unlike a typical government office, these centres are designed to facilitate the transition from “outsider” to “stakeholder.”

Through the lens of **Social Identity Theory**, these centres promote acculturation by strategically manipulating the environment and social programming.

1. Moving from “Them” to “Us” (Recategorization)

The primary goal of an integration centre is to foster a **Common In-group Identity**.

- The Mechanism:** Instead of seeing two separate groups (locals vs. immigrants), the centre uses architecture and activities to create a new category: “Neighbors” or “Citizens of [City].”
- The Design:** Open-plan “co-working” style lounges where locals and newcomers share the same desks or coffee machines. By removing physical barriers, the centre reduces the “Us vs. Them” mentality.

2. Validating the “Ascribed Identity”

Acculturation is most successful when an individual doesn't feel forced to “delete” their heritage. This is known as **Integration** (as opposed to **Assimilation**).

Ask Gemini 3

Tools

Fast

Gemini can make mistakes, including about people, so double-check it. [Your privacy and Gemini](#)

Perplexity

Answer Images Links

how can integration centre promote acculturation through social identity (re)construction?

Reviewed 15 sources

An integration centre can promote acculturation by helping migrants keep valued parts of who they were, while building new, shared identities linked to the host society and local community.

1. Make “belonging” a core goal

- Focus on identity, not just services: Go beyond paperwork and language classes to explicitly support feelings of “I am part of this society,” since identification with the host country is a key dimension of integration.
- Support continuity and gain: Research on forced migrants shows that keeping some pre-migration group ties and gaining new group memberships in the host country improves adjustment and well-being.

2. Create multiple, overlapping in-groups

- Design programs around shared roles: Offer activities that cut across origin groups—parent groups, sports teams, volunteering, professional clubs—so people can identify as “volunteers,” “students,” or “parents here,” not only as “immigrants.”
- Involve locals as participants, not just helpers: When residents, employers, and volunteers use the centre too (e.g., joint workshops, mentoring, events), it supports whole-of-community integration instead of “us serving them.”

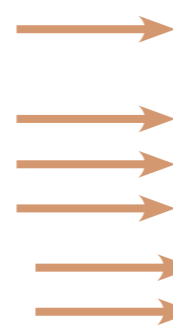
3. Combine cultural maintenance with host-society engagement

- Space and time for heritage cultures: Allow and encourage language groups, cultural celebrations, and community meetings so migrants can maintain a positive ethnic identity.

Ask a follow-up

Key Findings / Responses

1. “Third Place” as a neutral ground: provides an equal and neutral environment for active engagement between natives and immigrants
2. Facilitation of cross-cultural contact
3. Acculturation without assimilation
4. Identity transformation through participation: from recipients of support to community members and contributors
5. Inclusive physical design
6. Multi-stakeholder collaboration



Valuable design insights

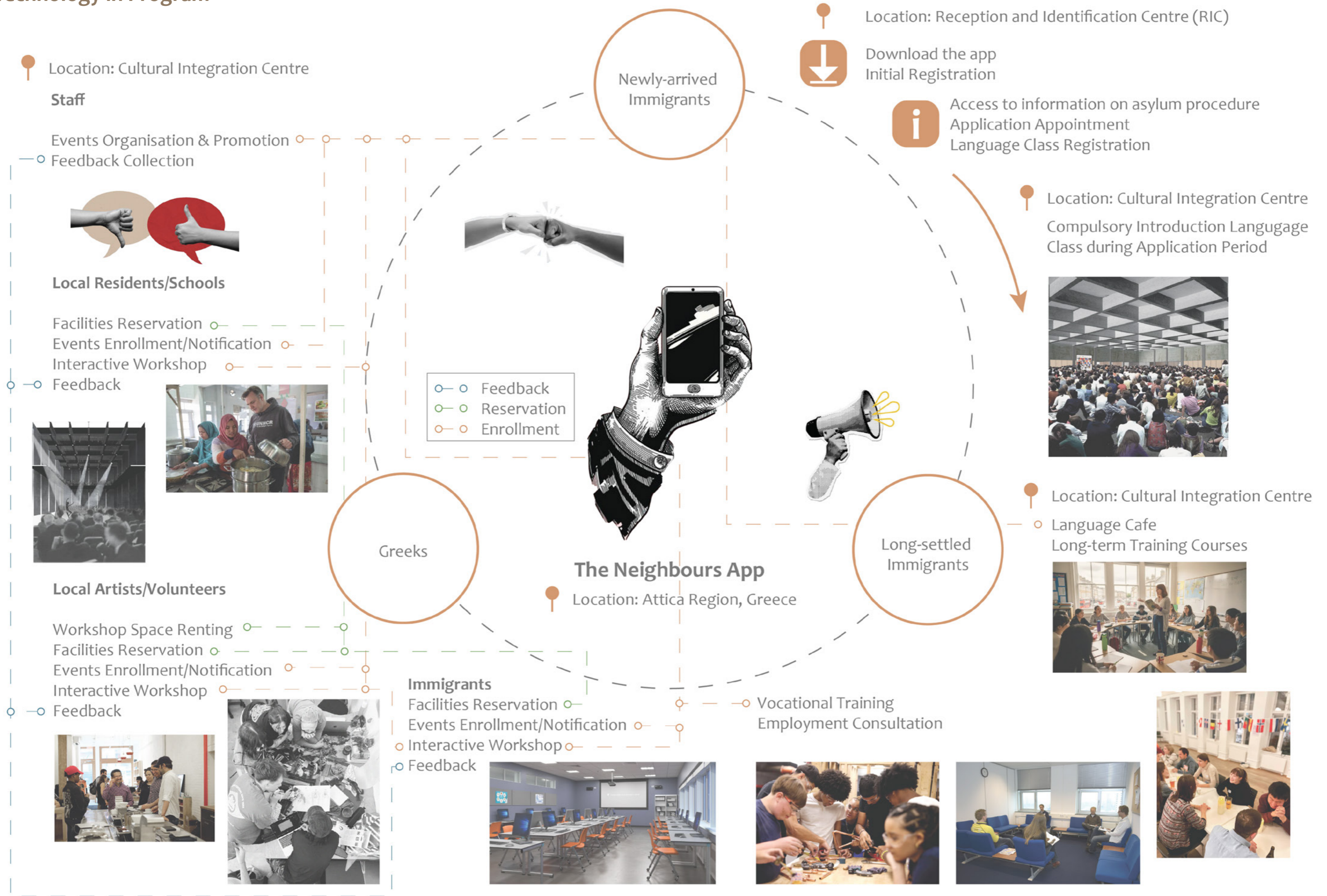
- Spatial qualities: a sense of safety, welcome, and inclusivity
- Intersectional spatial and programmatic strategies
- Space for cultural expression (adaptation with preservation)
- Graduated program structure
- Culturally diverse visual language, furniture, material choices
- Institutional and civic exposure: Program links to local municipalities, schools, NGOs, and refugee support networks

Applications for International Protection in Directorate of Attica -Regional Offices and Units in 2025

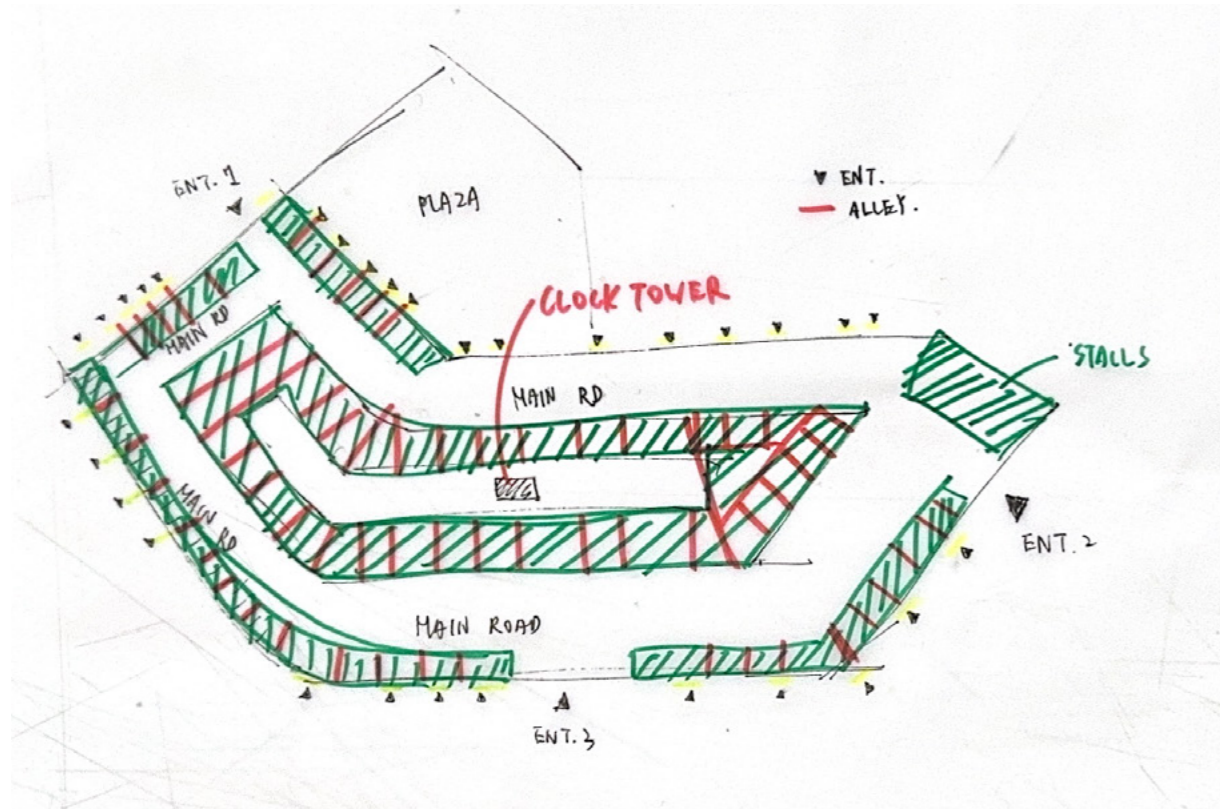
Month	First Time (Malakasa)	Subsequent	Total Applications for International Protection
January	313 (569)	380	1262
February	238 (622)	347	1207
March	225 (559)	302	1086
April	223 (601)	374	1198
May	204 (756)	301	1261
June	141 (892)	286	1319
July	188 (1107)	289	1584
August	144 (1625)	222	1991
September	190 (772)	267	1229
October	234 (1229)	214	1677
November	227 (421)	184	832
December	161 (631)	199	991
Average	207.33 (815.33)	280.42	1303.08

Reference: Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου. 2025. “Στατιστικά | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης Και Ασύλου.” August 18, 2025. <https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>.

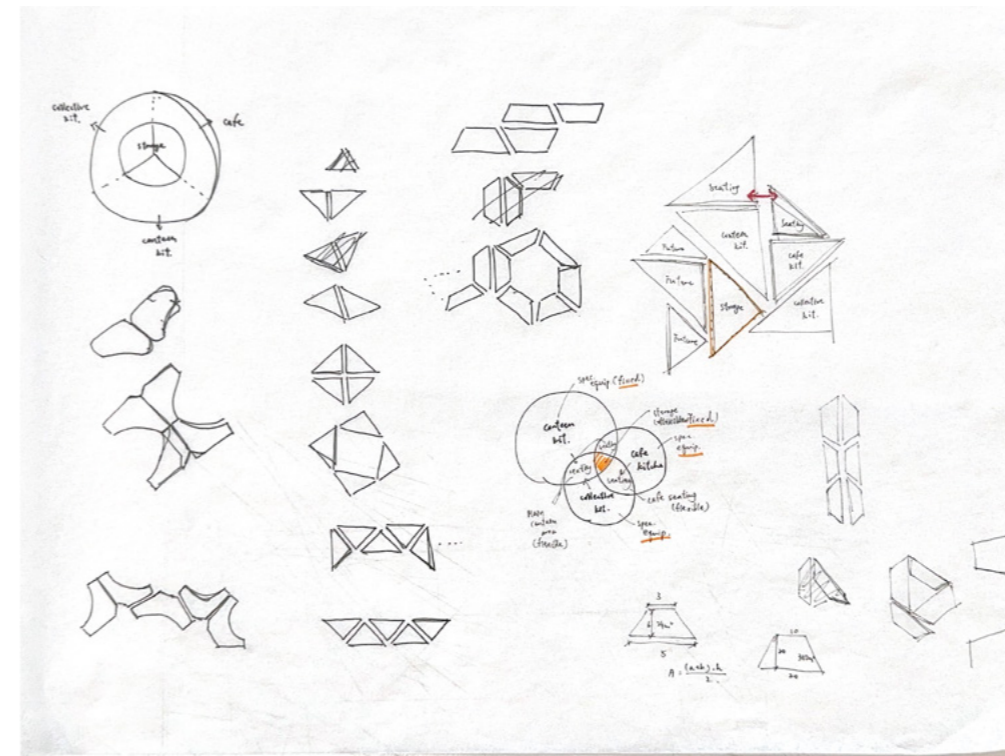
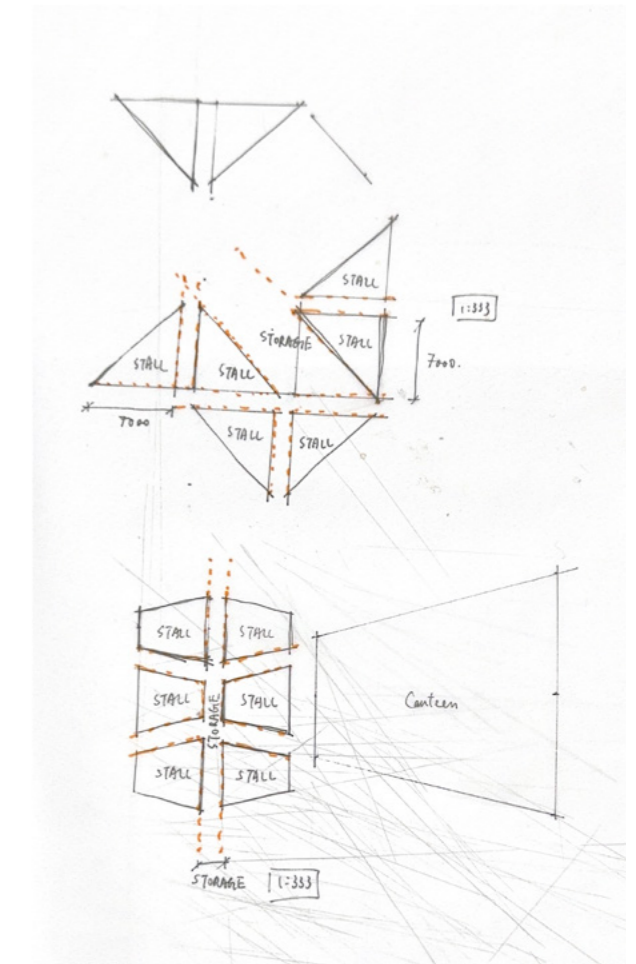
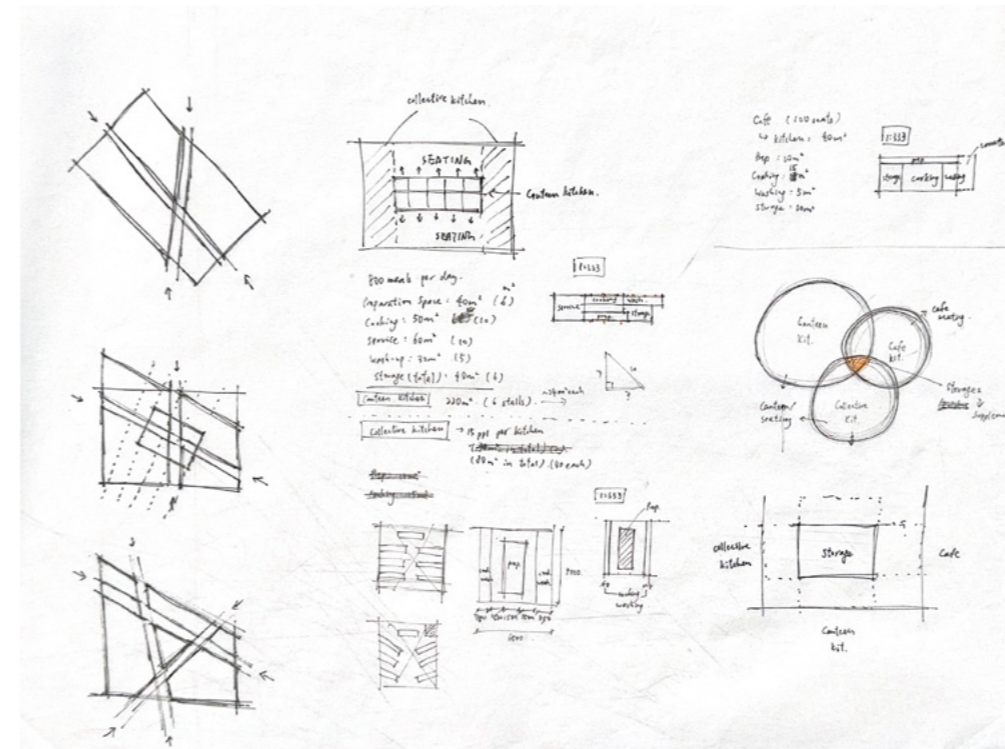
Technology in Program



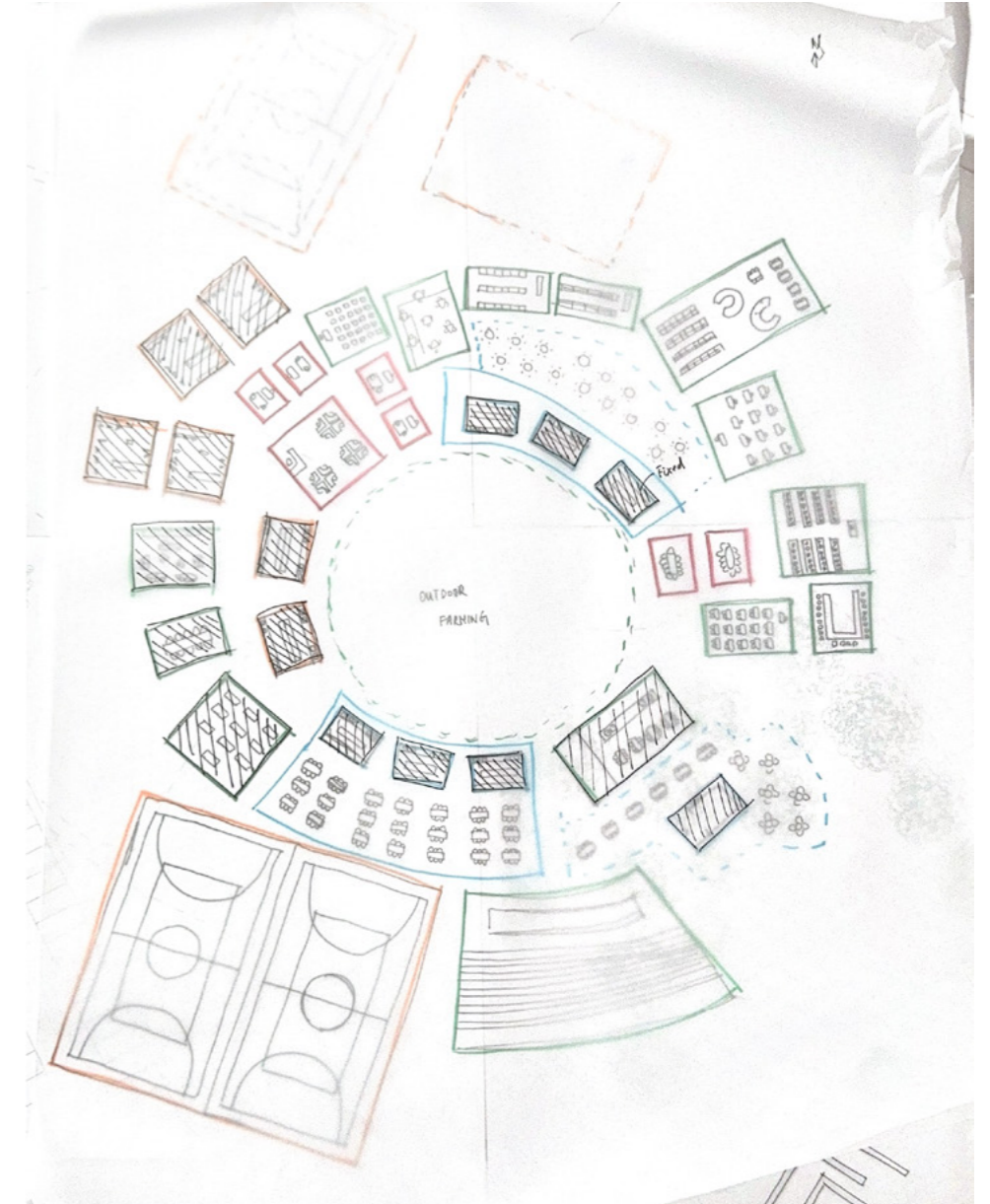
Market Analysis



Design Development



Design Development



Sun Shading System Exploration 1

Fig. x: East 9am

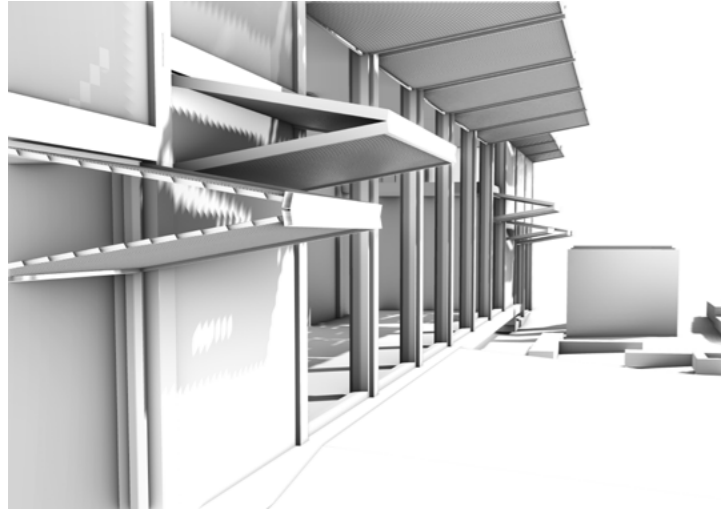


Fig. x: East 12pm

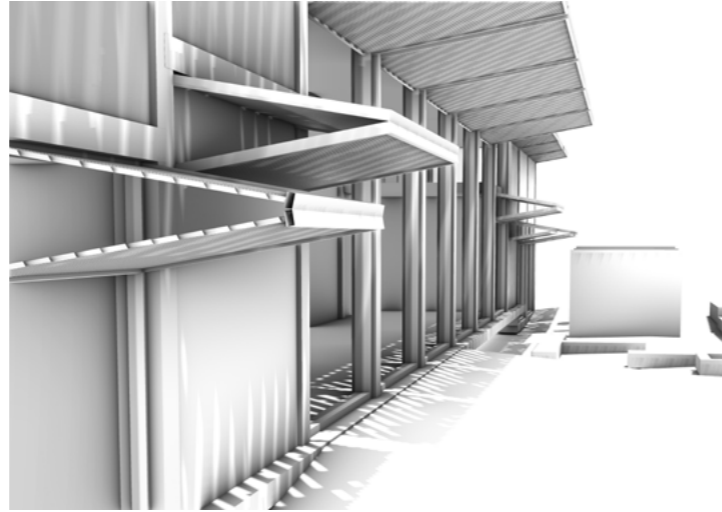


Fig. x: East 3pm

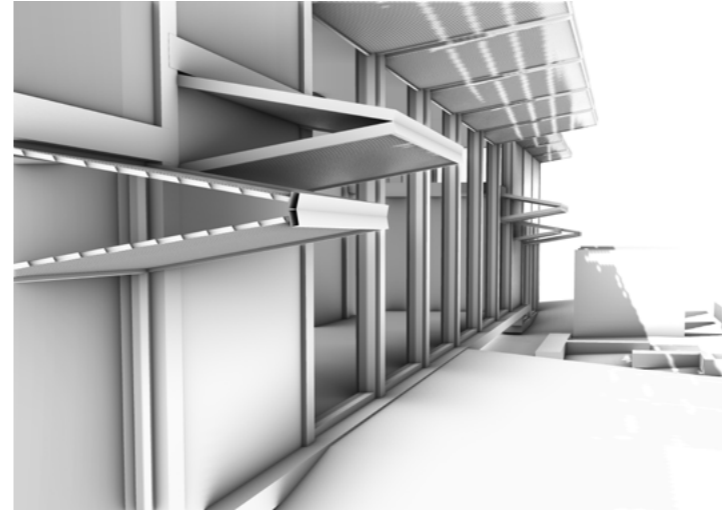


Fig. x: East 6pm

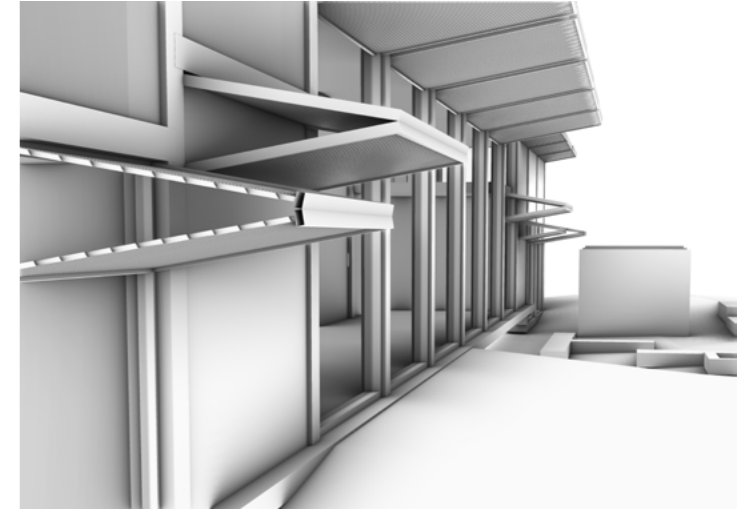


Fig. x: South 9am

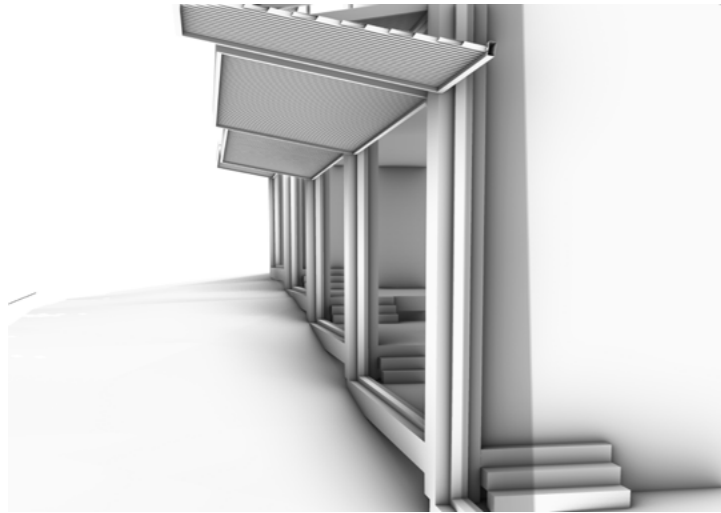


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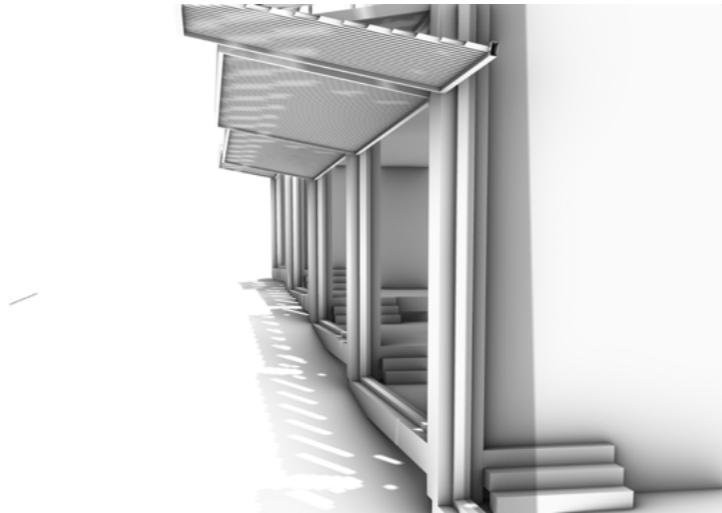


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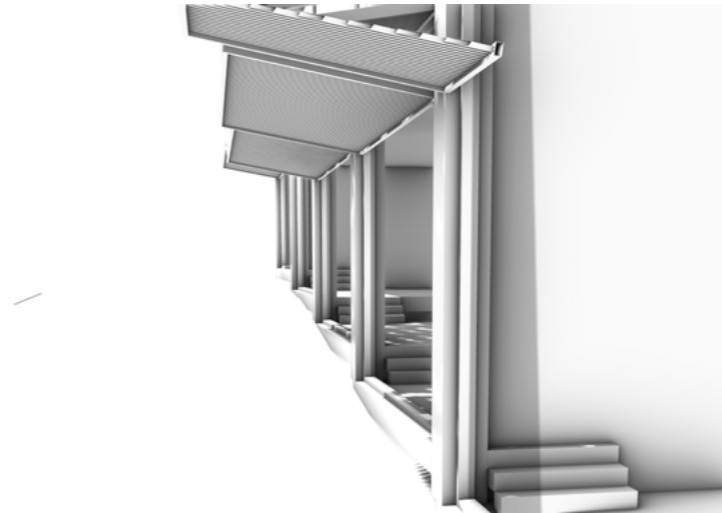


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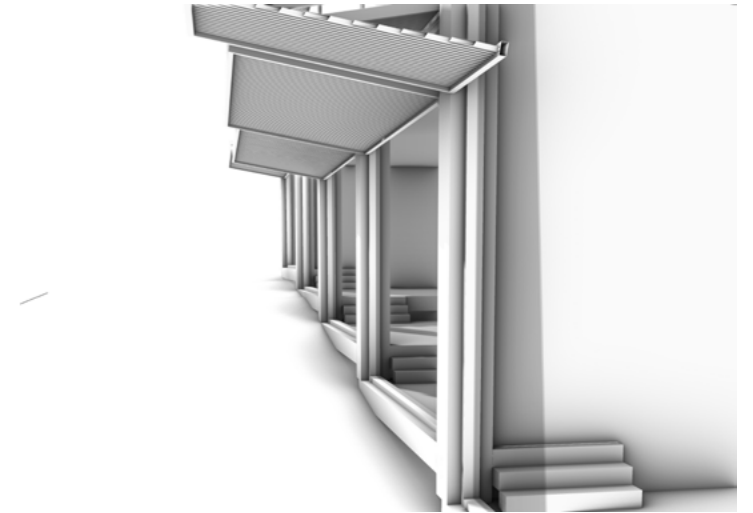


Fig. x: West 9am

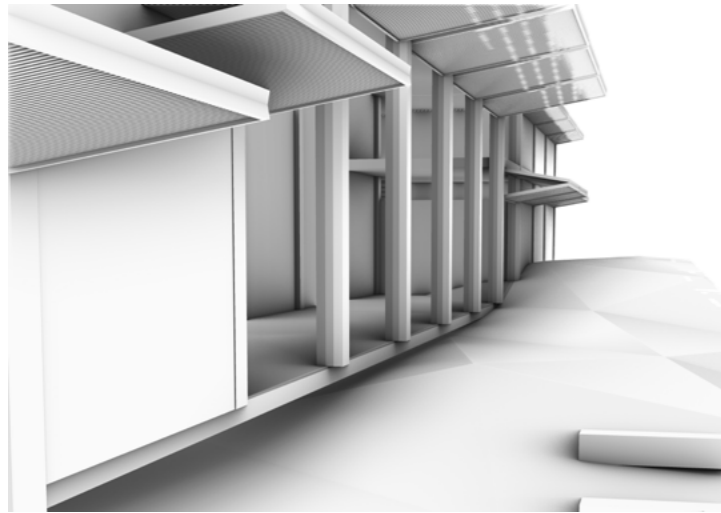


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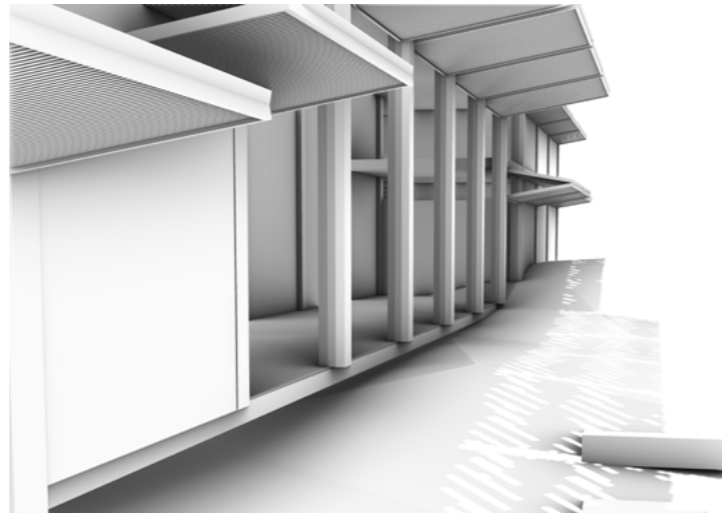


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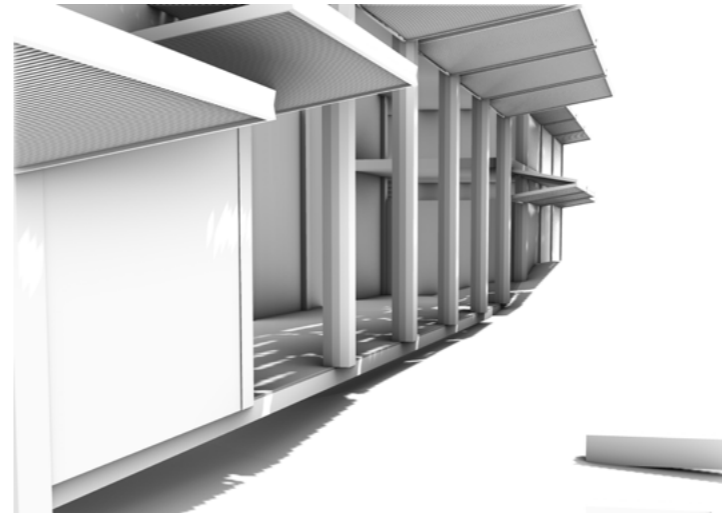
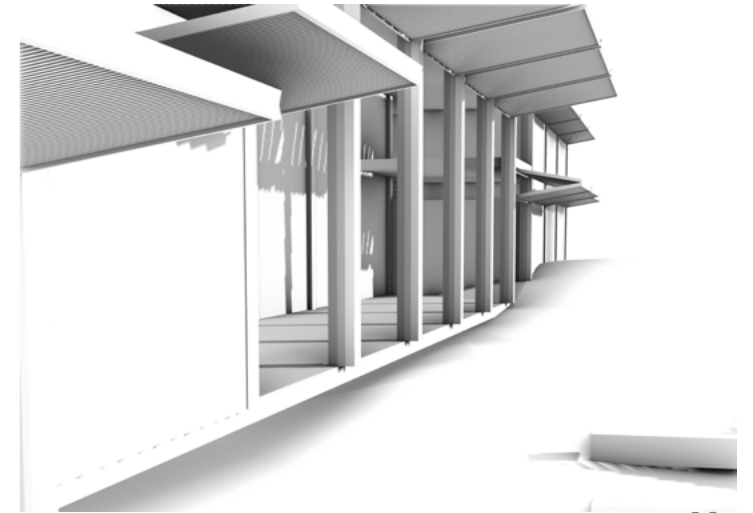


Fig. x: West 6pm



Sun Shading System Exploration 2

Fig. x: East 9am

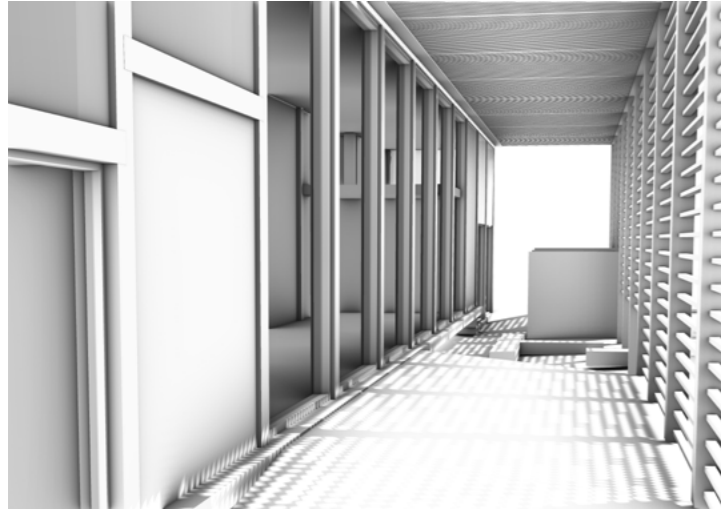


Fig. x: East 12pm

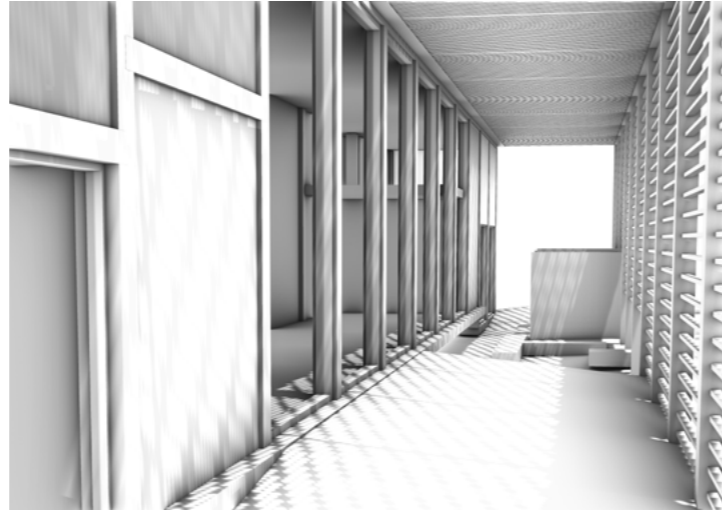


Fig. x: East 3pm



Fig. x: East 6pm

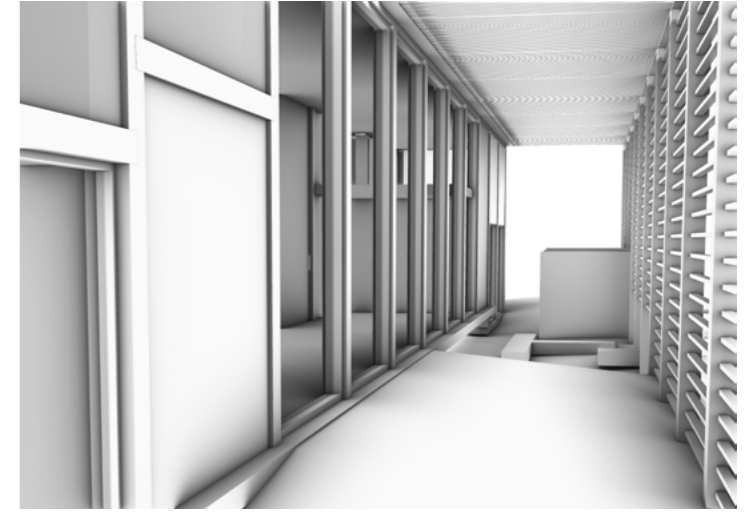


Fig. x: South 9am



Fig. x: South 12pm



Fig. x: South 3pm



Fig. x: South 6pm

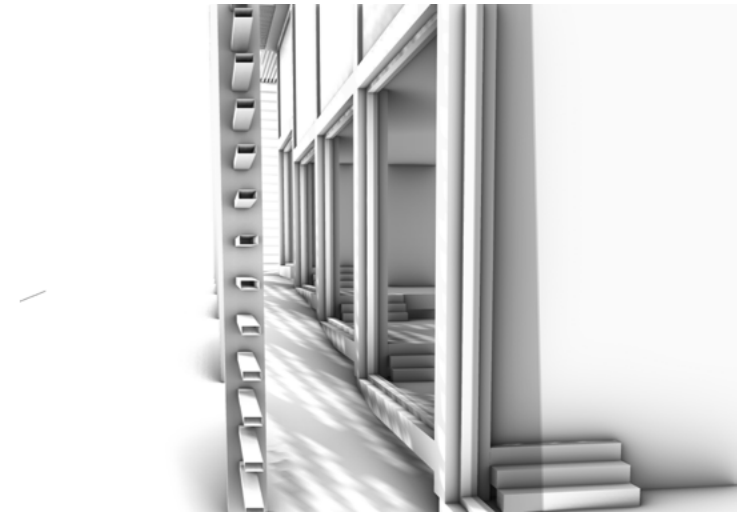


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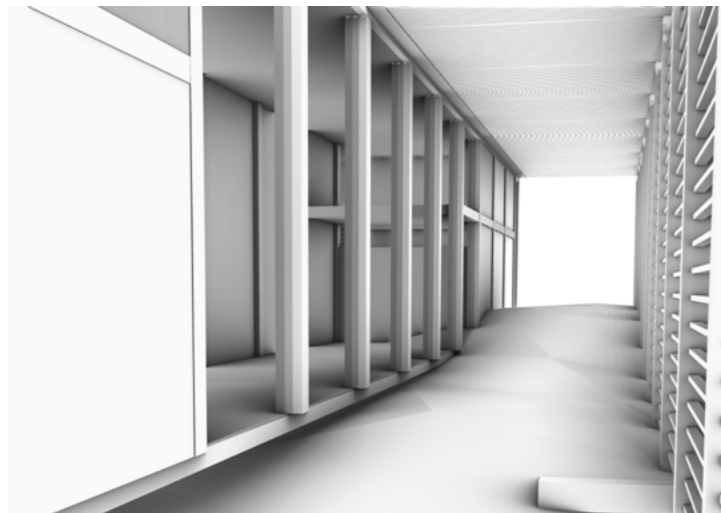


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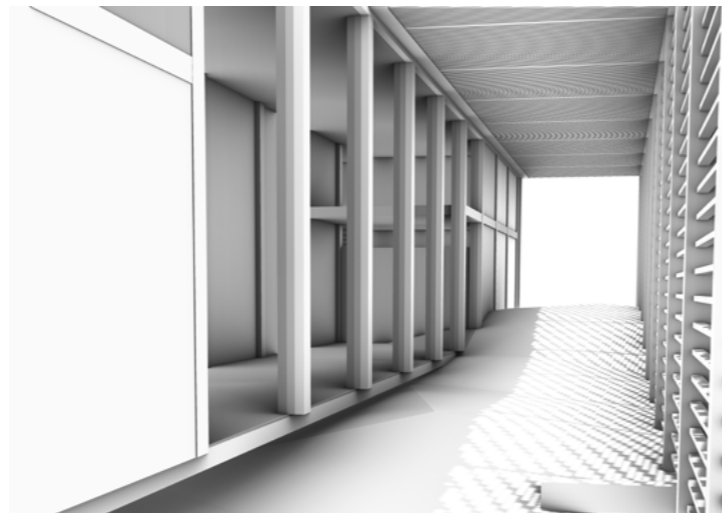


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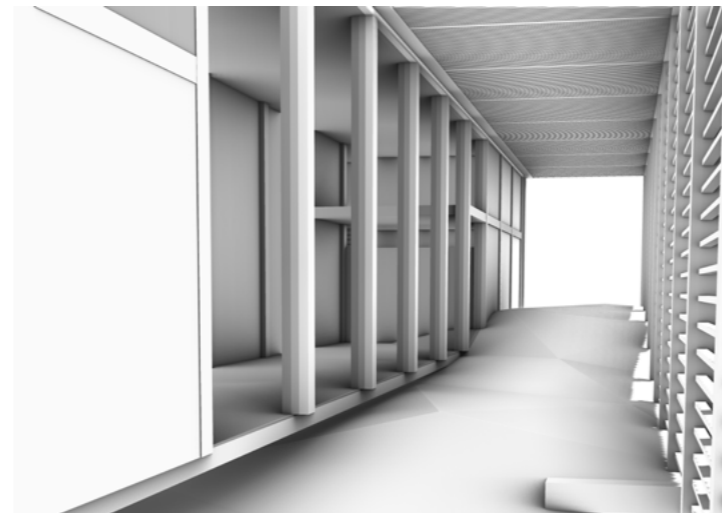
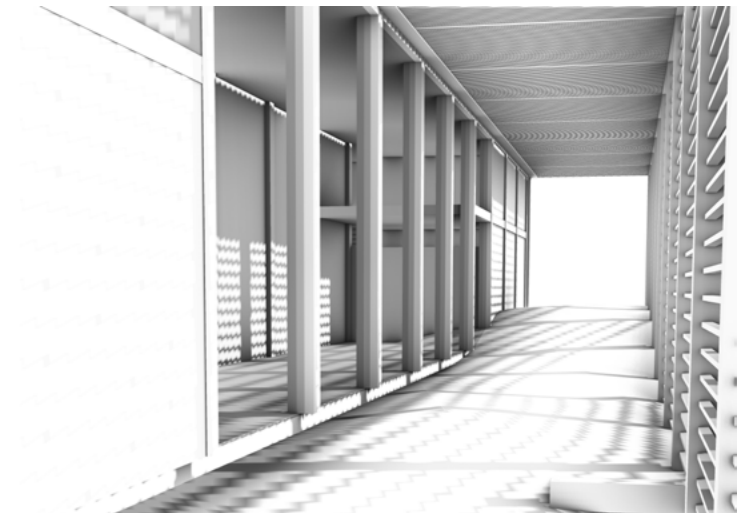


Fig. x: West 6pm



Sun Shading System Exploration 3

Fig. x: East 9am

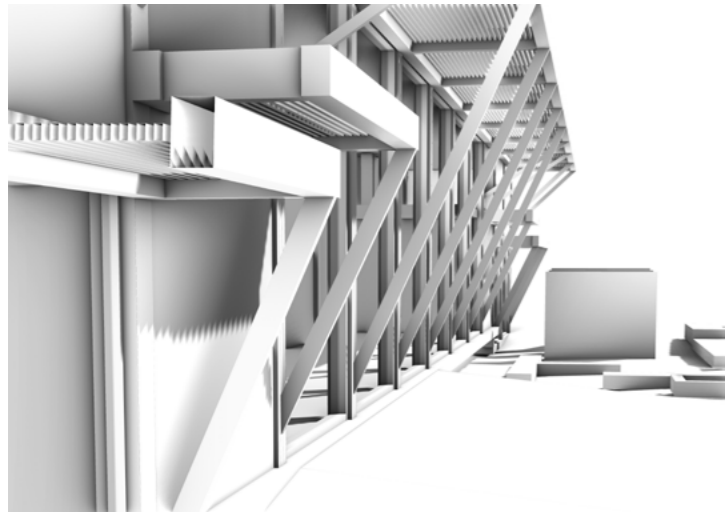


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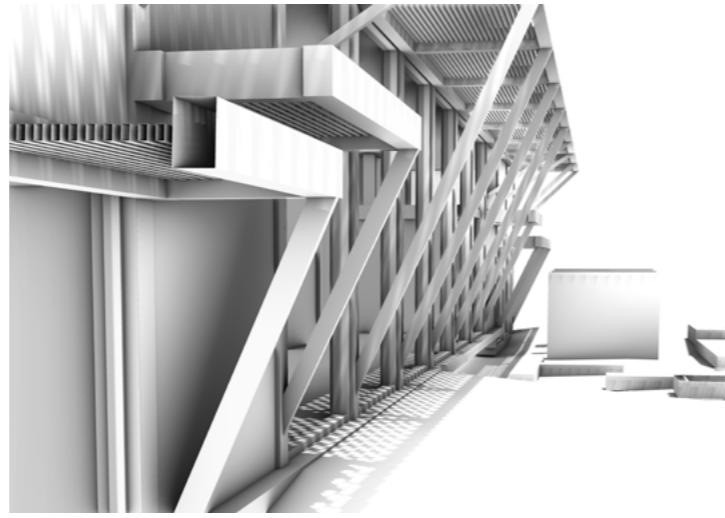


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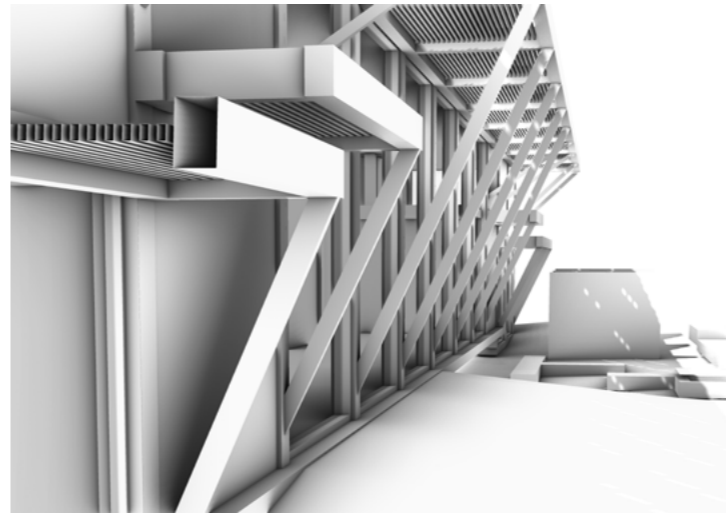


Fig. x: East 6pm

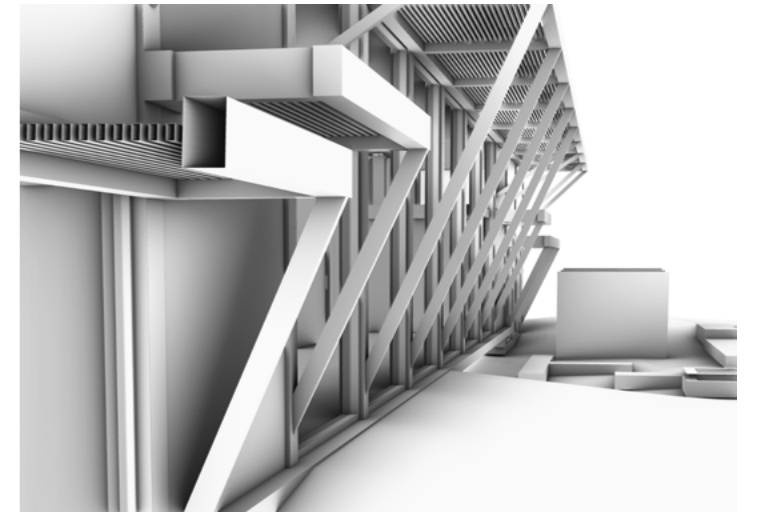


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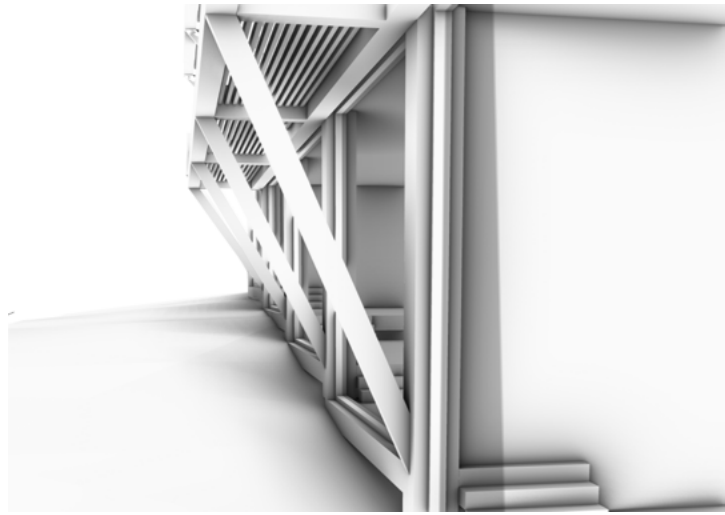


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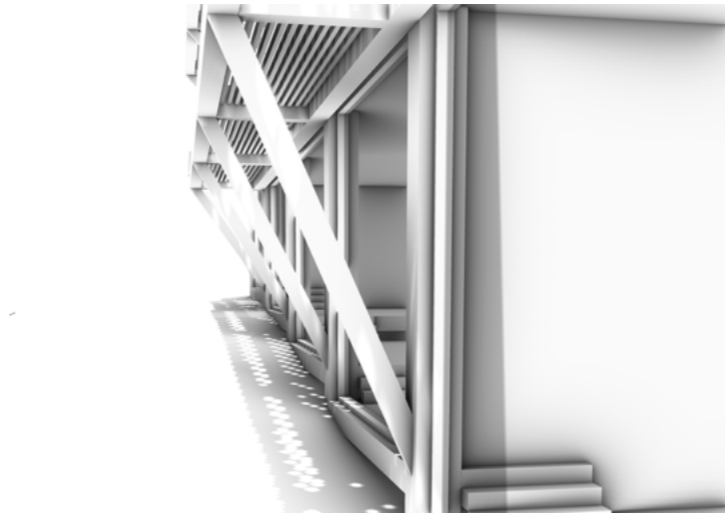


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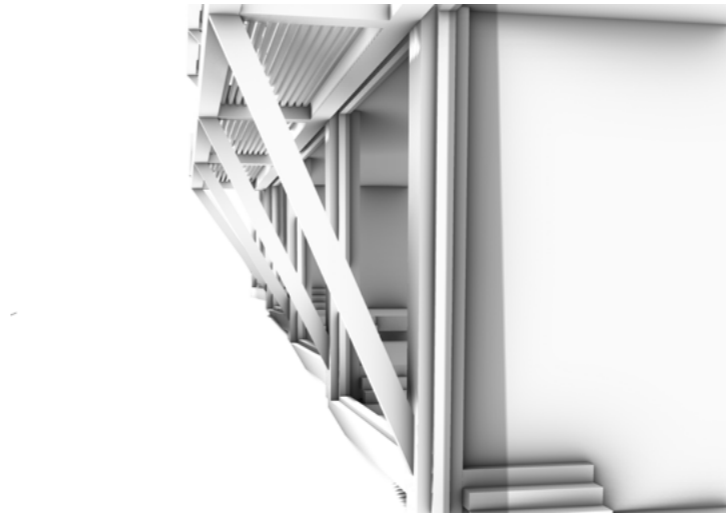


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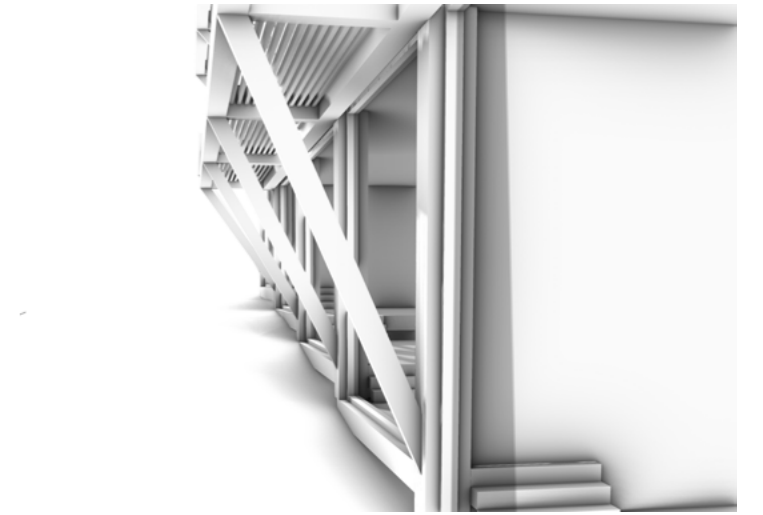


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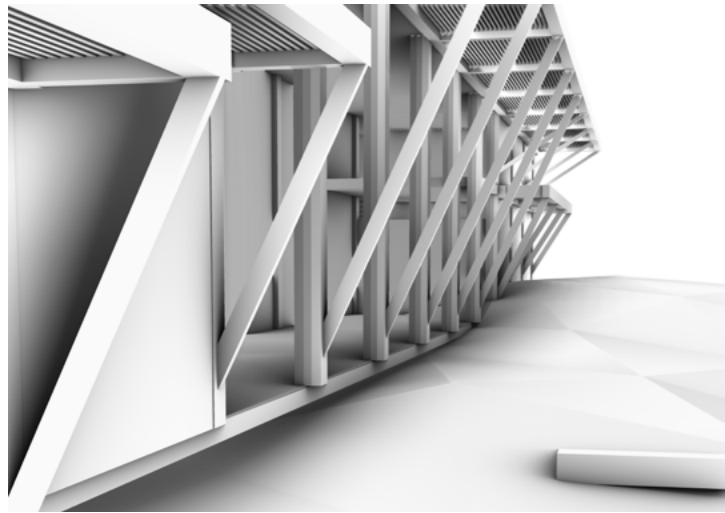


Fig. x: West 12pm



Fig. x: West 3pm



Fig. x: West 6pm



Sun Shading System Exploration 4

Fig. x: East 9am

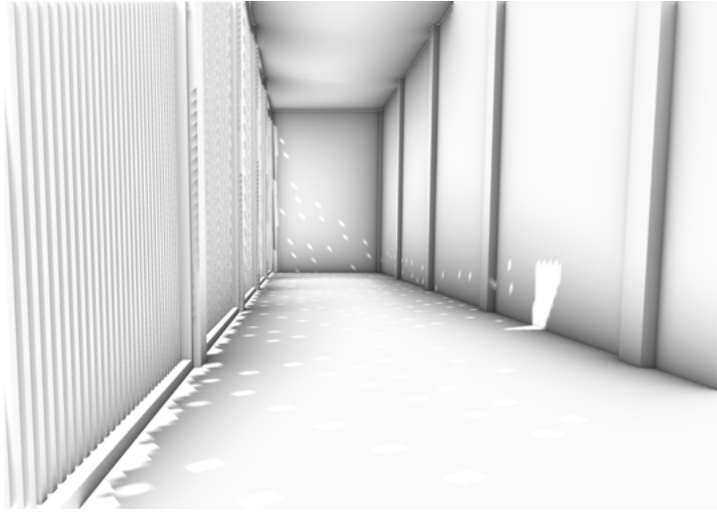


Fig. x: East 12pm

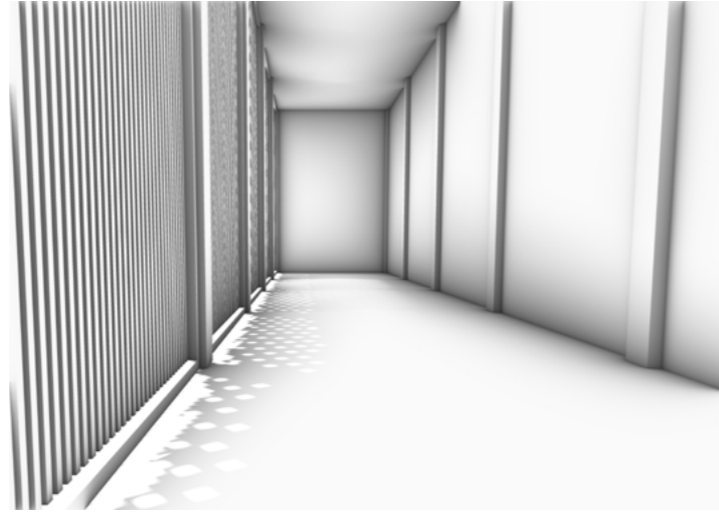


Fig. x: East 3pm

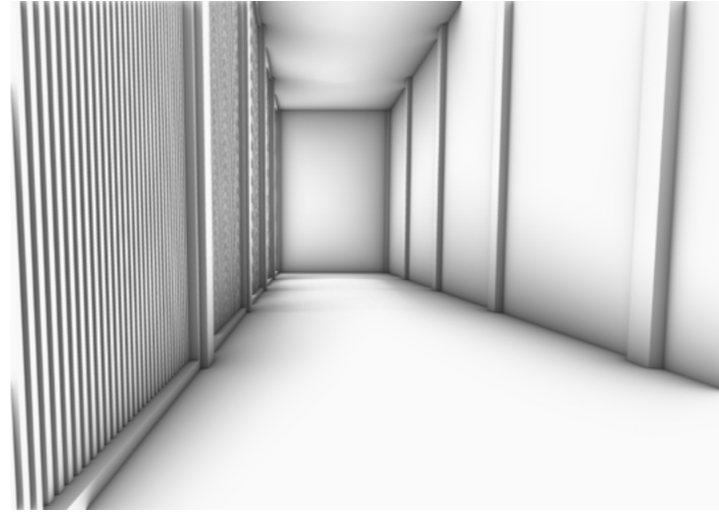


Fig. x: East 6pm

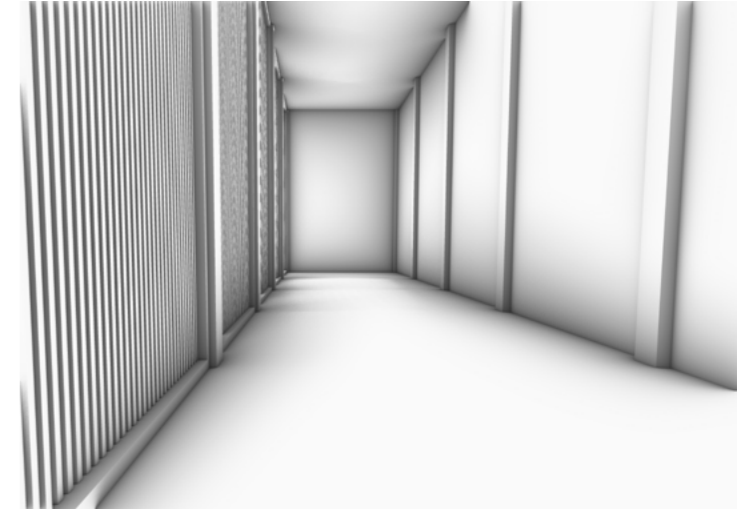


Fig. x: South 9am

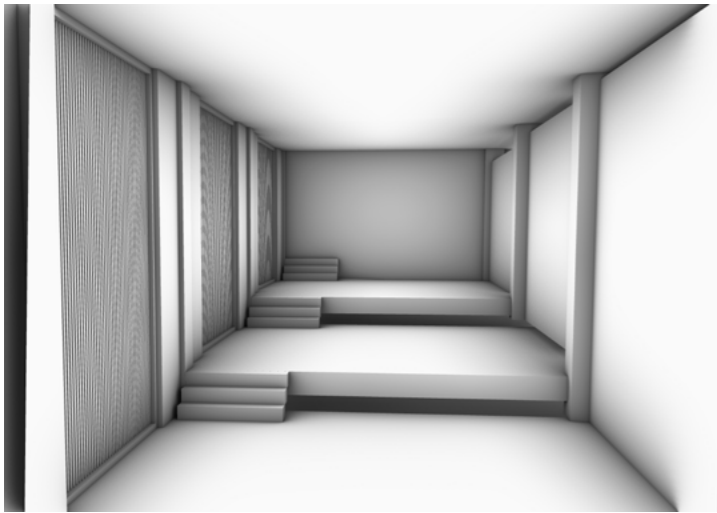


Fig. x: South 12pm

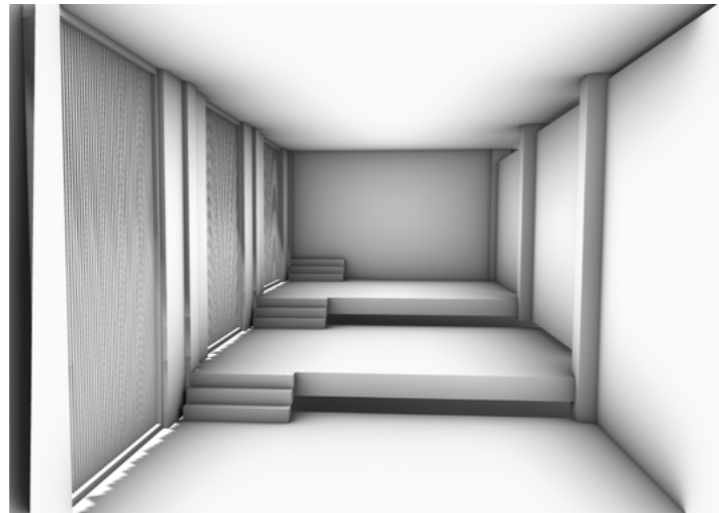


Fig. x: South 3pm

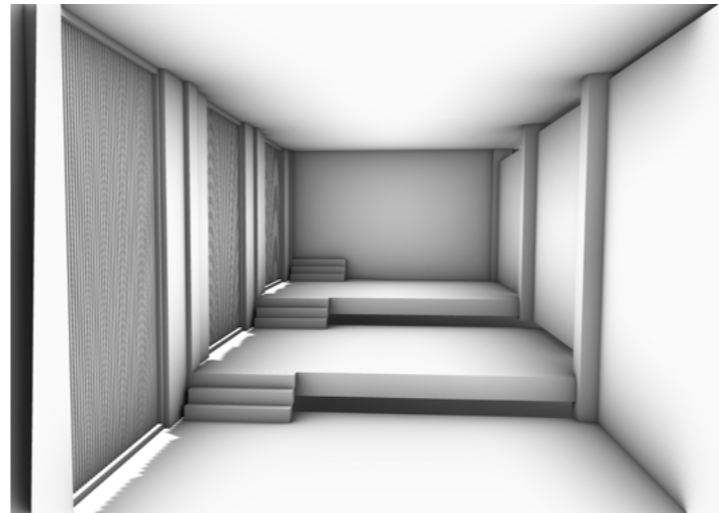


Fig. x: South 6pm

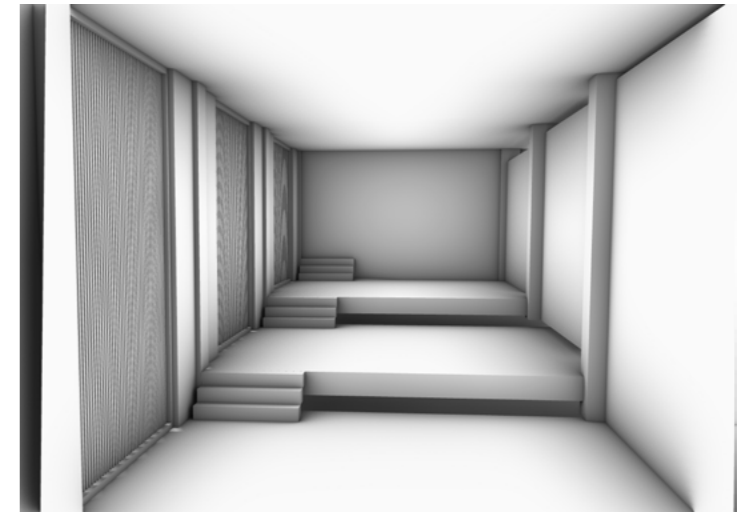


Fig. x: West 9am

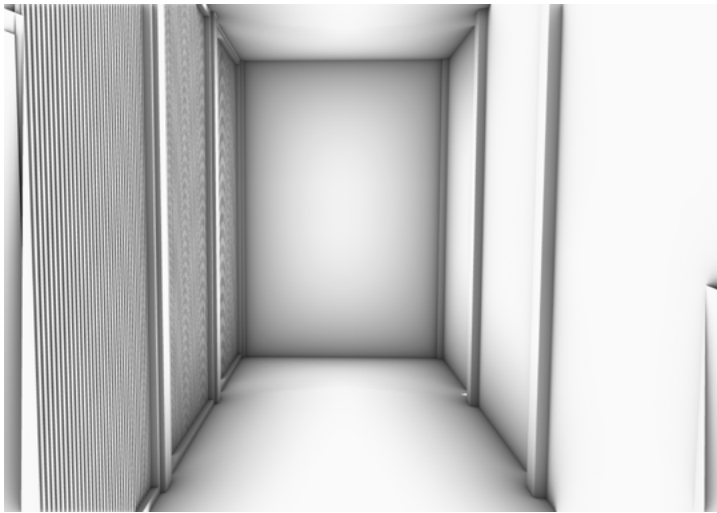


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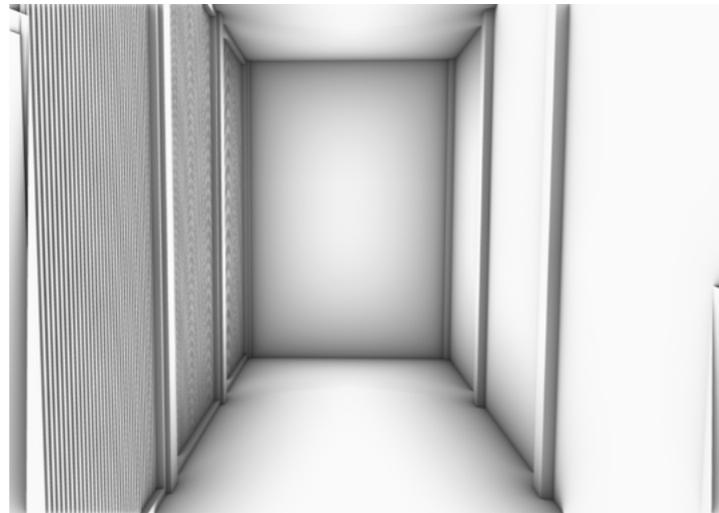


Fig. x: West 3pm

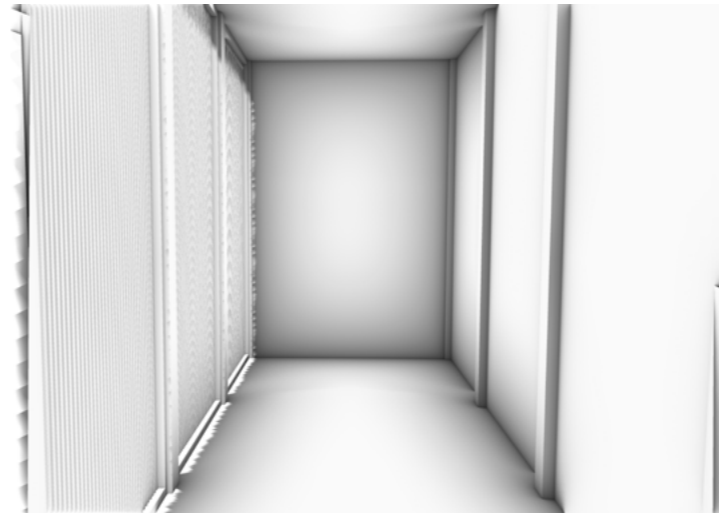
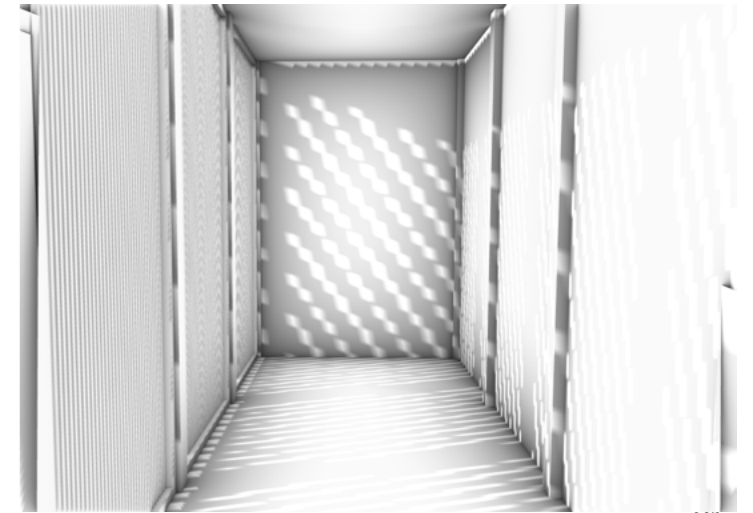


Fig. x: West 6pm



Sun Shading Exploration_South_Bottom

Fig. x: Summer 9am

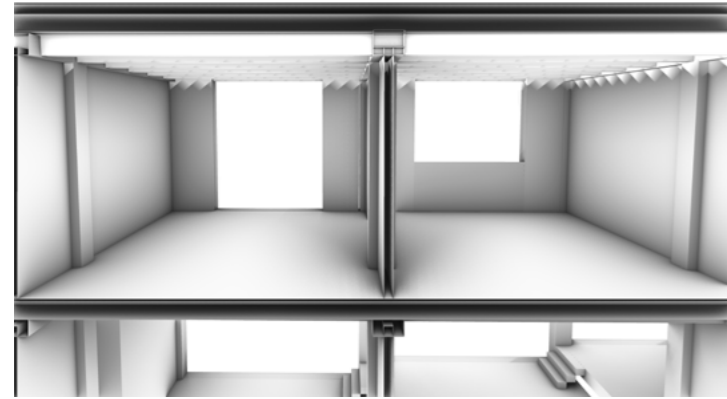


Fig. x: Summer 12pm

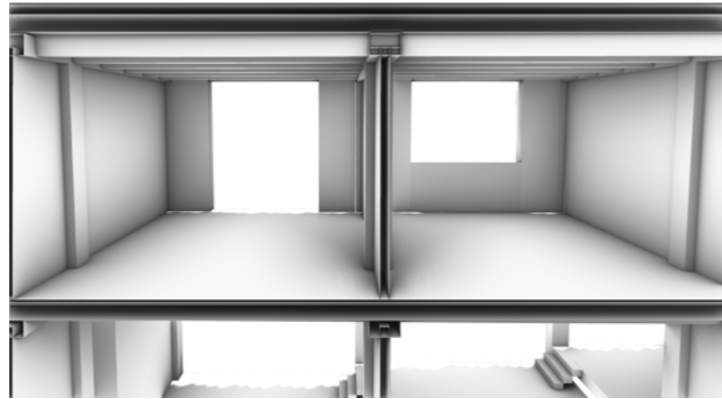


Fig. x: Summer 3pm

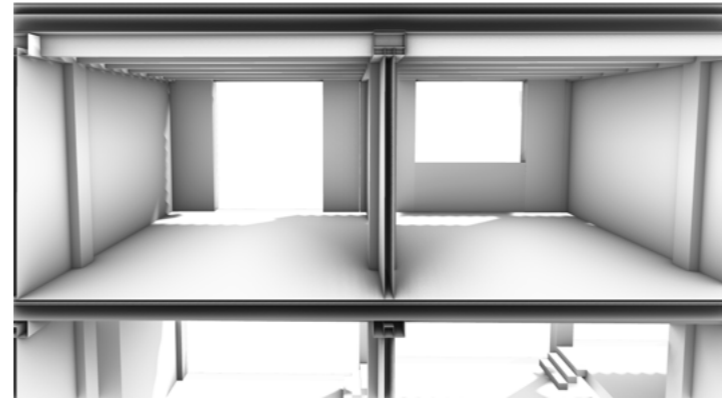


Fig. x: Summer 6pm

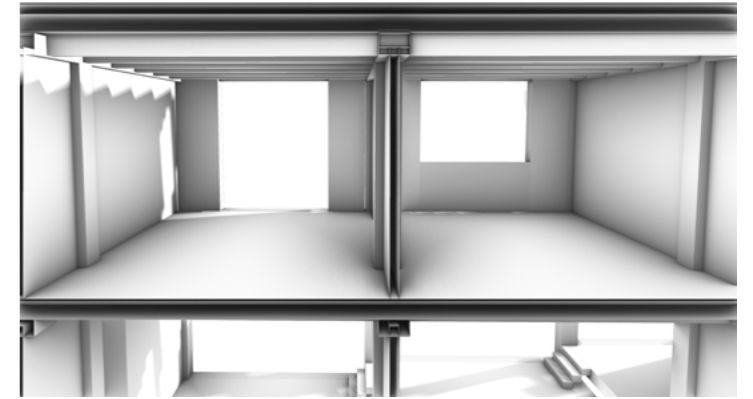


Fig. x: Winter 9am

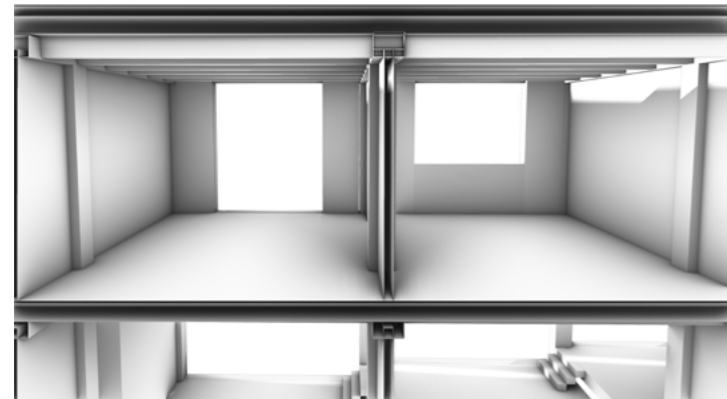


Fig. x: Winter 12pm

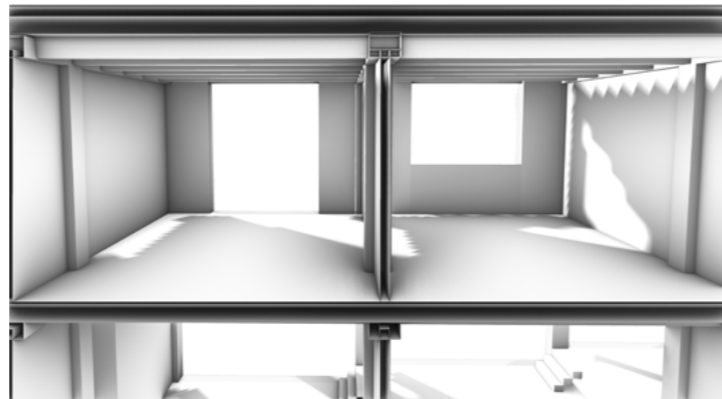


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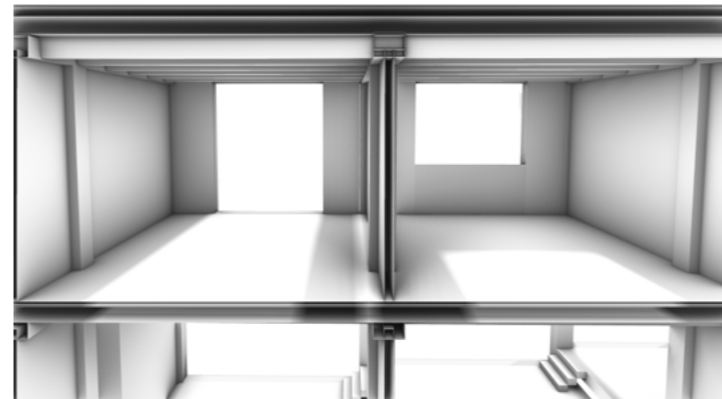
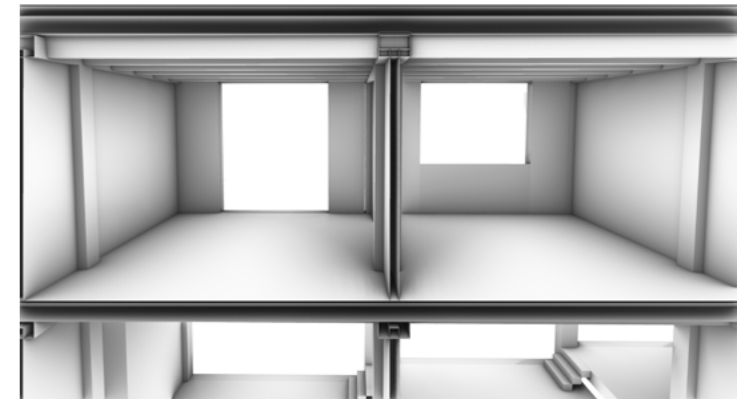


Fig. x: Winter 6pm



Sun Shading Exploration_South_Up

Fig. x: Summer 9am

Fig. x: Summer 12pm

Fig. x: Summer 3pm

Fig. x: Summer 6pm

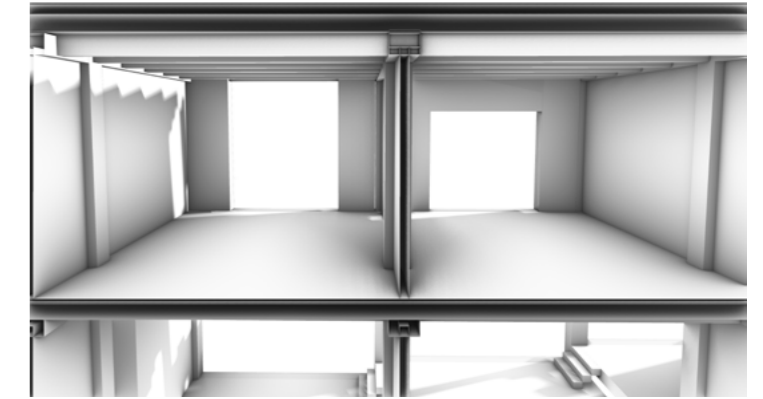
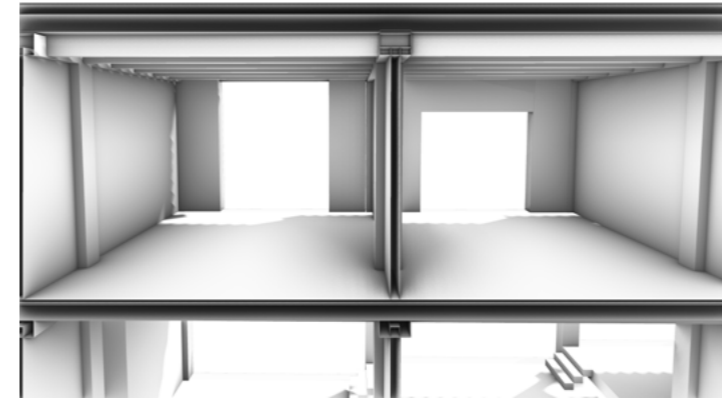
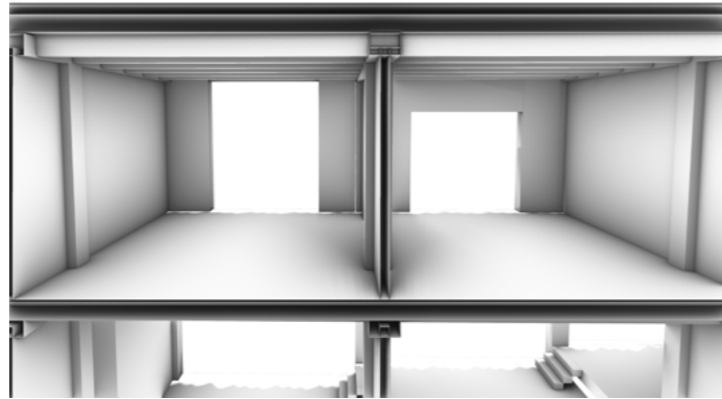
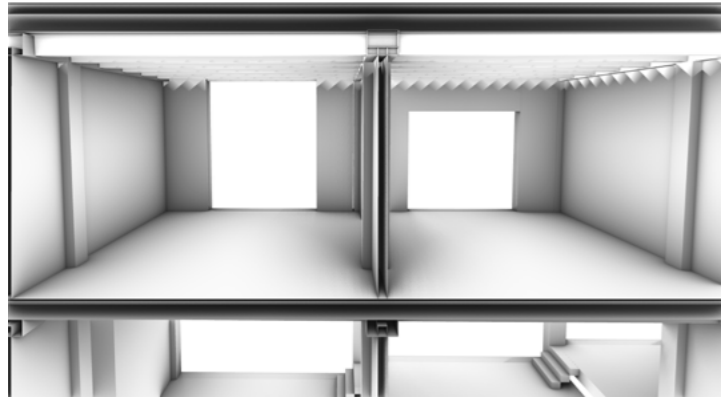
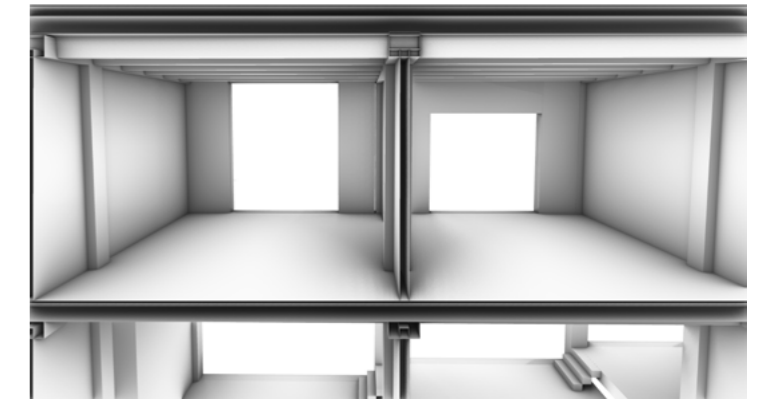
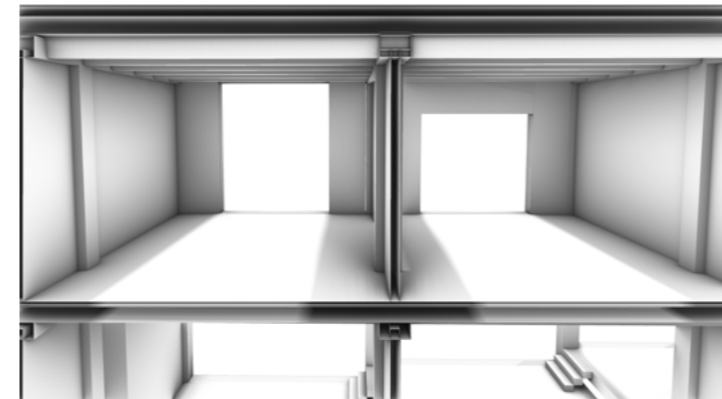
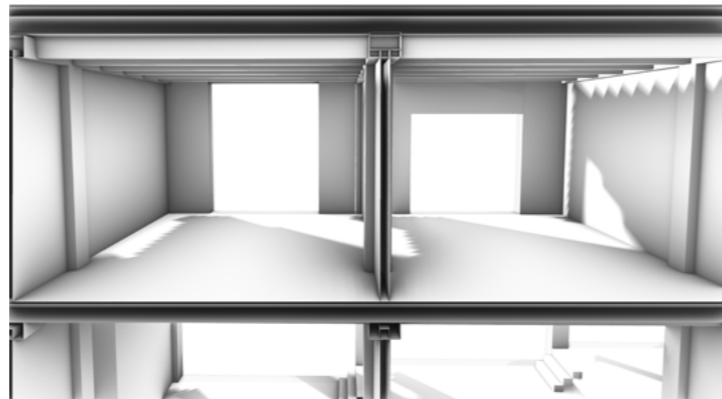
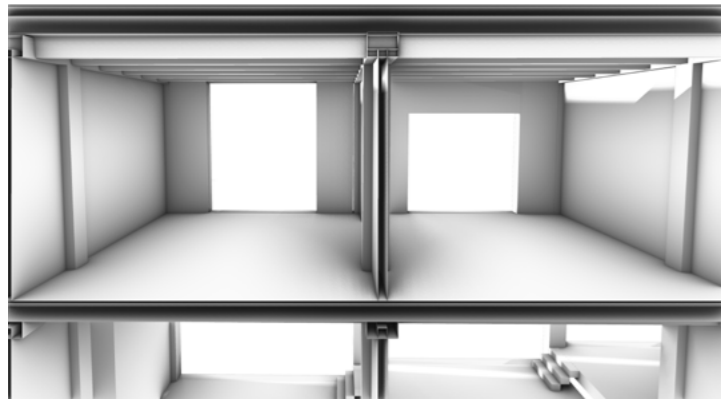


Fig. x: Winter 9am

Fig. x: Winter 12pm

Fig. x: Winter 3pm

Fig. x: Winter 6pm



Sun Shading Exploration_North_Bottom

Fig. x: Summer 9am

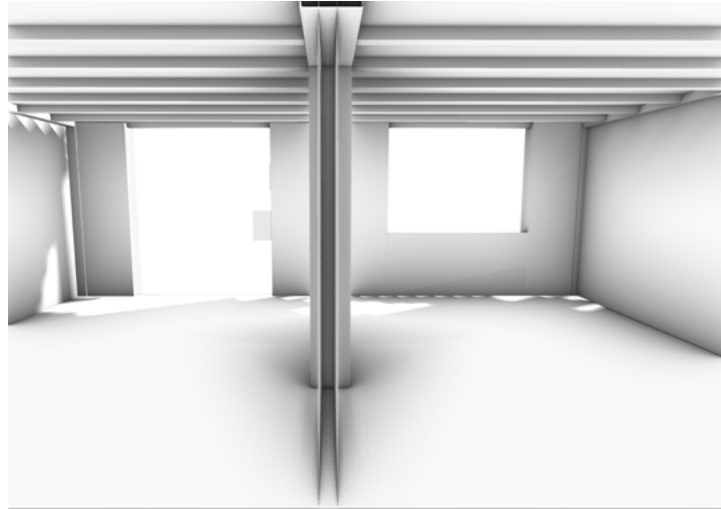


Fig. x: Summer 12pm

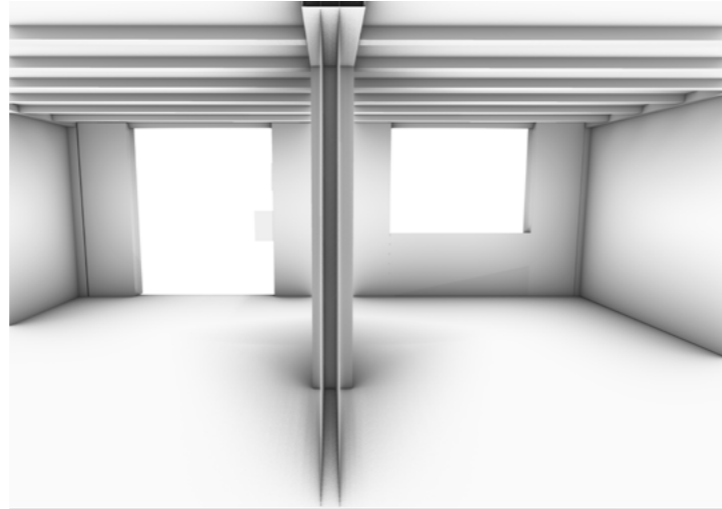


Fig. x: Summer 3pm

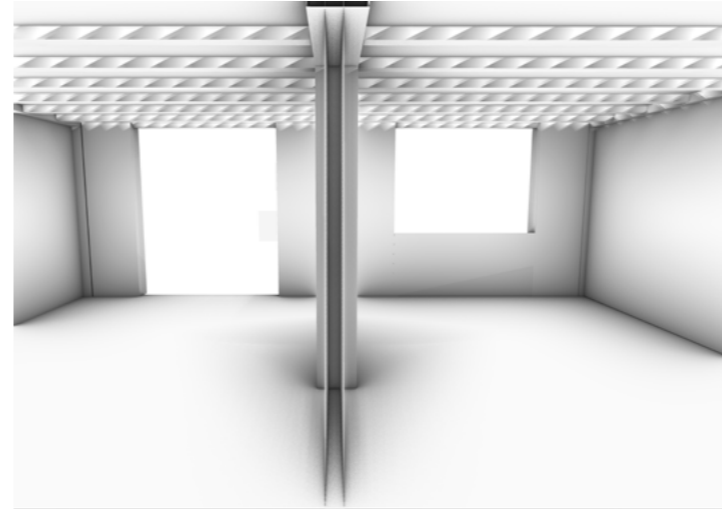


Fig. x: Summer 6pm

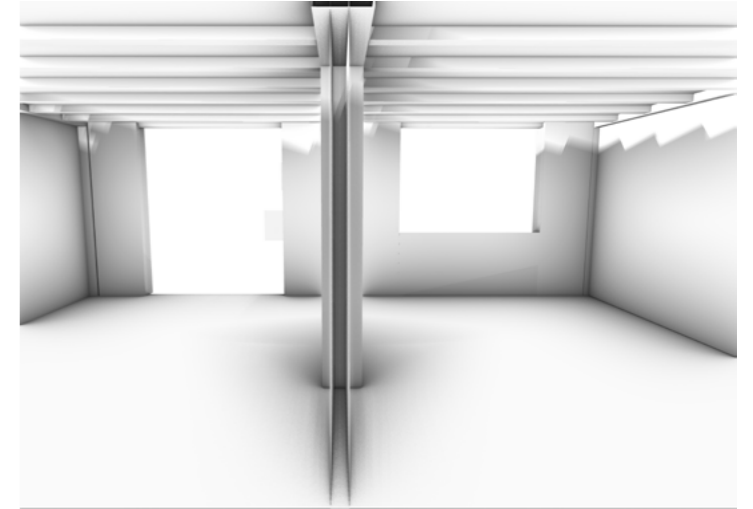


Fig. x: Winter 9am

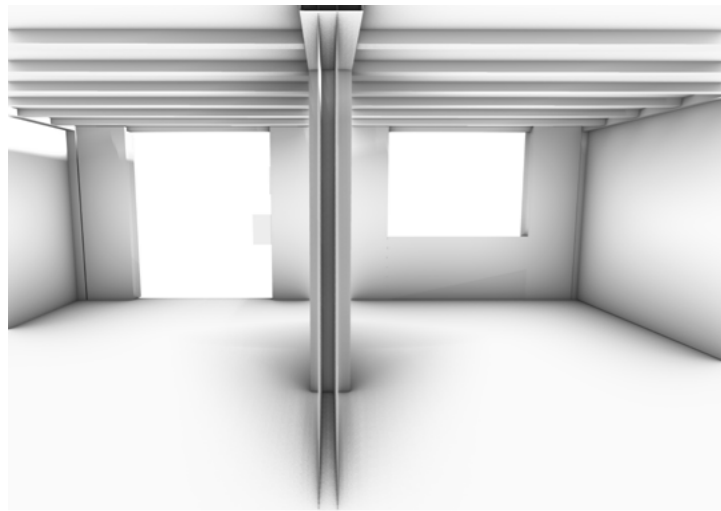


Fig. x: Winter 12pm

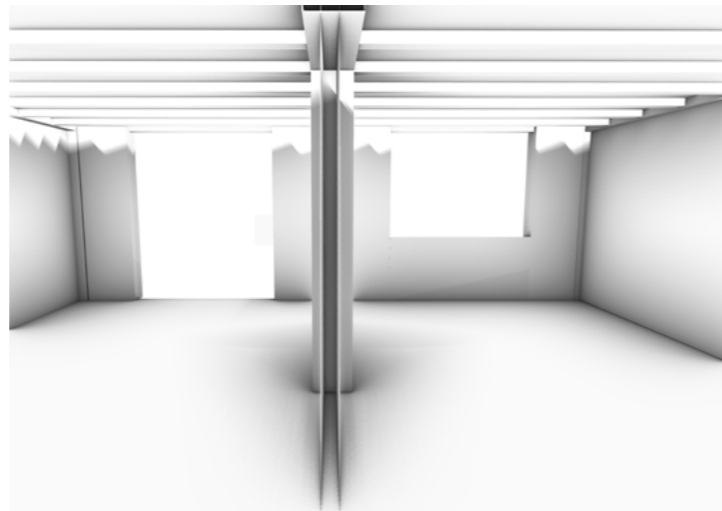


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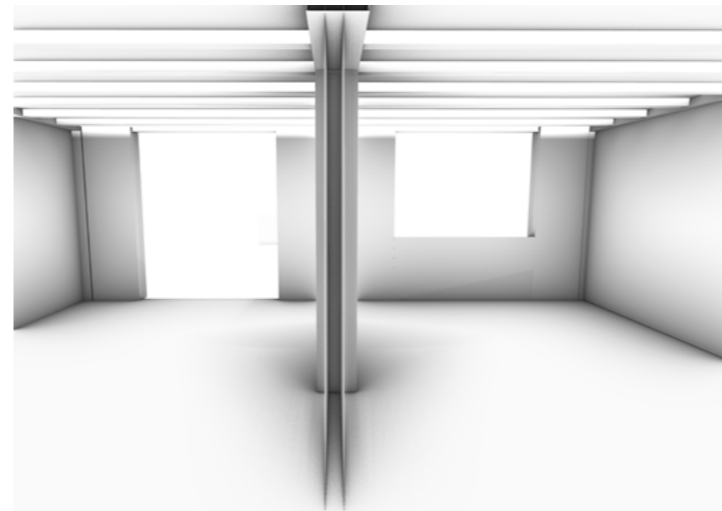
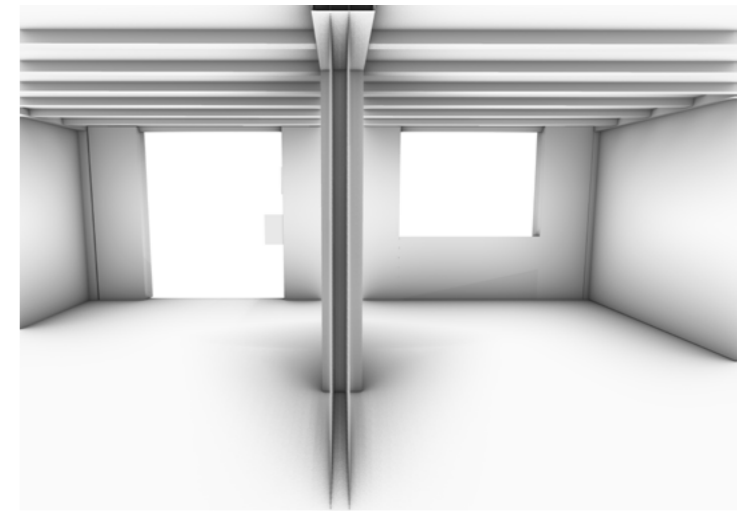


Fig. x: Winter 6pm



Sun Shading Exploration_North_Up

Fig. x: Summer 9am

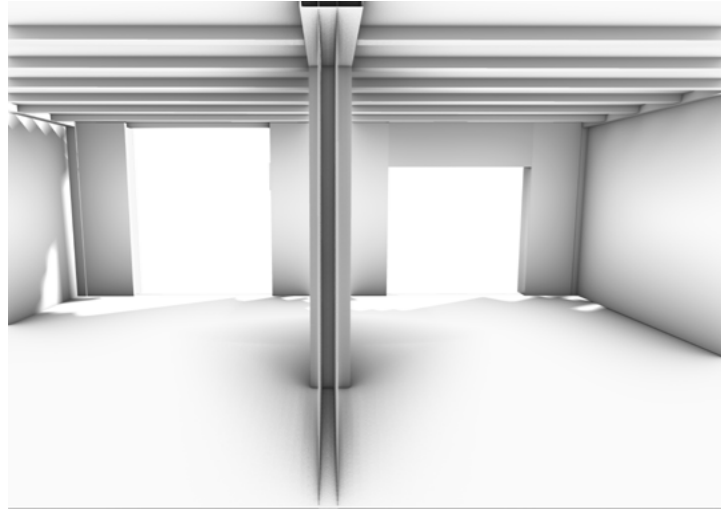


Fig. x: Summer 12pm

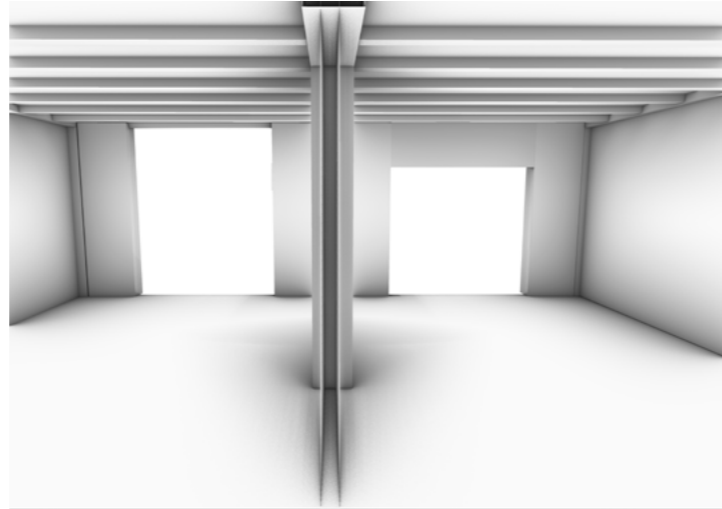


Fig. x: Summer 3pm

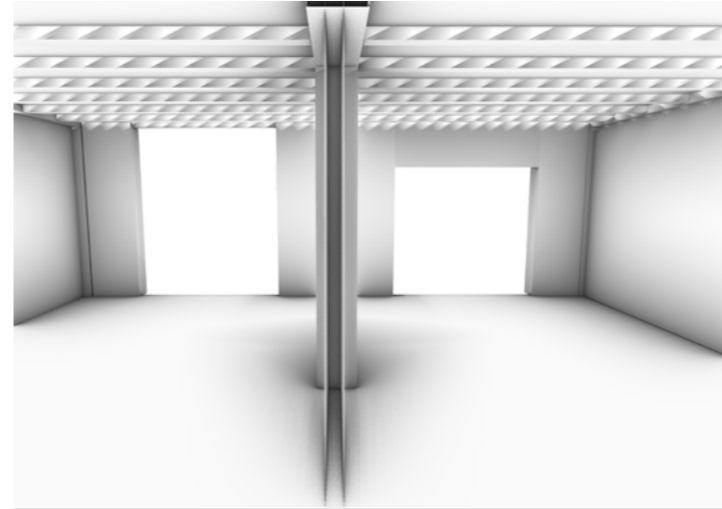


Fig. x: Summer 6pm

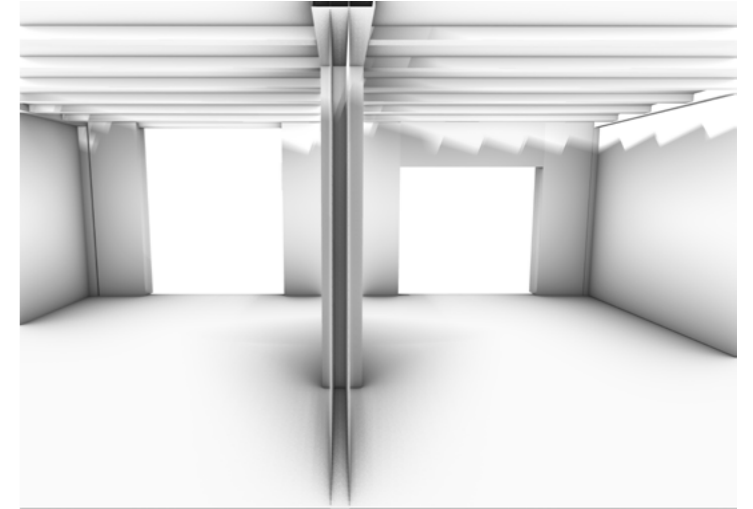


Fig. x: Winter 9am

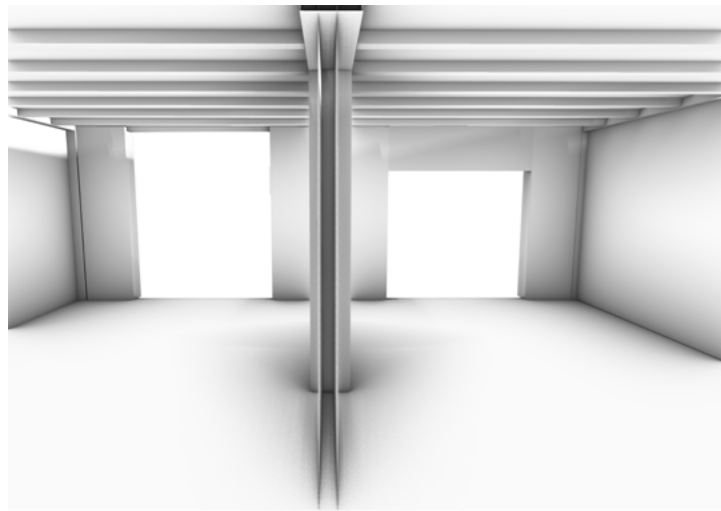


Fig. x: Winter 12pm

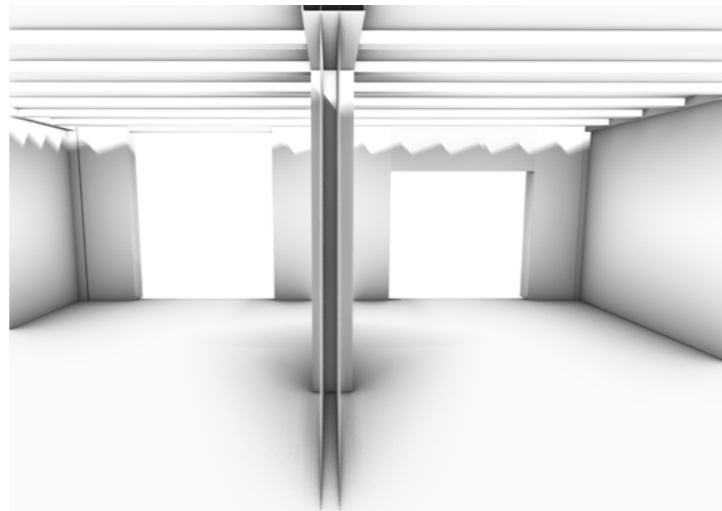


Fig. x: Winter 3pm

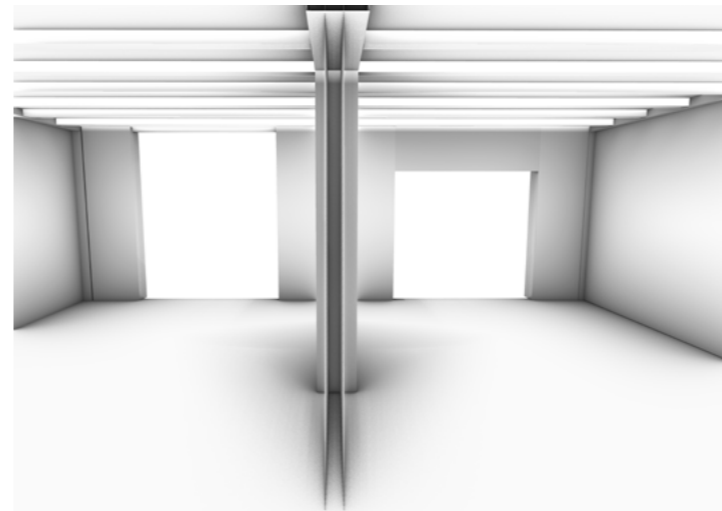


Fig. x: Winter 6pm

