Thesis Chapters
Bazaar Systems and Urban Recovery
Graduation Report

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro
By:
Ekin Sarıbaş
AR4EA010 EXTREME Graduation Studio

0.1 Introduction

Cities that have experienced conflict or large-scale destruction consistently face complex challenges during reconstruction and recovery. Whether resulting from prolonged warfare, as in the Syrian city of Homs, or from sudden catastrophic events such as the 2023 earthquake in Hatay, post destruction cities often display similar patterns of spatial fragmentation, social polarization, and economic decline. Across different regions and historical contexts, destruction affects not only buildings and infrastructure but also the everyday urban systems that sustain social interaction, economic exchange, and collective identity (UN Habitat, 2022).

In historic Middle Eastern cities, the impacts of destruction are particularly profound due to the dense and layered nature of their urban fabric. Prolonged conflict disrupts historic urban cores that traditionally function as socio-economic and cultural anchors, producing displacement, spatial segregation, and the erosion of local livelihoods (UN Habitat, 2022). Even after active violence subsides, cities frequently continue to face unemployment, inflation, unsafe mobility, weakened governance, and degraded historic fabric. These conditions limit the capacity of urban centers to reestablish their integrative role and revive everyday urban life. As highlighted by UN Habitat, the degradation of historic city centers that once operated as socio economic nodes contributes directly to the deterioration of social cohesion and trust among urban populations (UN Habitat, 2022).

Post destruction conditions are further intensified by the polarization of communities and the fragmentation of public and semipublic spaces. Neighborhoods that once supported everyday encounters and shared practices become socially and spatially divided, restricting access to services and opportunities. Displacement and barriers to return, particularly in heavily damaged and informal areas, disproportionately affect vulnerable groups and reinforce long term inequalities. These dynamics demonstrate that recovery is not solely a physical challenge but a socio spatial process that requires the restoration of everyday urban relations (UN Habitat, 2022).

Despite this, reconstruction efforts in post conflict and post disaster cities have often prioritized housing provision, infrastructure repair, and basic service delivery, while giving limited attention to the social cues and spatial environments that enable daily urban life. Urban development decisions are frequently made through centralized governance structures with minimal participation from residents, creating a clear gap between official recovery visions and the actual needs of local communities (Alraouf, A. A. 2018). This disconnection risks reproducing the underlying conditions that contributed to conflict, including exclusion, economic marginalization, and the absence of shared civic spaces, thereby undermining the sustainability of recovery processes.

Within this context, scholars have highlighted the emergence of adaptive everyday spaces often described as pockets of survival. These spaces include markets, streets, courtyards, and semipublic environments where economic activity and social interaction continue despite instability. Rather than being formally planned, such spaces evolve through necessity and local knowledge, allowing communities to maintain continuity in daily life when formal systems are weakened (Alraouf, 2018). Pockets of survival play a critical role in sustaining livelihoods, supporting social networks, and preserving a sense of normalcy in post destruction settings.

Historic bazaar systems can be understood as a structured and culturally embedded form of these survival spaces. Traditionally composed of interconnected markets, public squares, and main axes, bazaars function as complex urban systems operating across multiple scales. They host economic exchange, social interaction, religious practices, and political life, while also organizing movement and infrastructure within the city. In context of post destruction, informal markets and the conversion of ground floors into spaces for daily commerce often emerge as responses to spatial and economic

Sources: UN-Habitat (2022); Abdelal et al. (2025); Alraouf (2018).

Comparable patterns can also be observed in post war European contexts such as Berlin and cities of former Yugoslavia, where the re-establishment of market streets and fine-grained commercial networks played a key role in restoring everyday economic exchange and social life after destruction (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). Although differing in cultural form, these market-based systems performed functions similar to those of bazaars by reactivating public life and reconnecting fragmented urban fabrics.

This research focuses on the Syrian city of Homs, which suffered extensive physical, social, and economic damage during years of conflict. Despite these challenges, Homs demonstrates the capacity of historic urban systems and everyday practices to adapt to crisis conditions based on the knowledge, skills, and needs of its residents (UN Habitat, 2022). By examining the role of historic bazaar systems and urban pockets in Homs, this study seeks to contribute to a more socially grounded understanding of post destruction urban recovery that moves beyond physical reconstruction toward the restoration of everyday urban life, social cohesion, and economic continuity.

Sources: Calame and Charlesworth (2009); UN-Habitat (2022).

2. Literature Review

This literature review examines the bazaar as more than a commercial space, but as an urban system that connects movement, trade, social interaction, memory, and recovery (Gharipour, 2012; Hmood, 2017; Taghizadehvahed, 2015). In Homs, the historic souq was a central part of the old city, functioning as a socio-economic and cultural space where everyday life, craft, trade, and social encounters overlapped (Al-Sabouni, 2016; Mohammad, 2022; Salmo et al., 2021).

The review is organized through five themes: the historical urban development of Homs, bazaar morphology and spatial typologies, the social and economic role of bazaar spaces, heritage and cultural continuity, and post-conflict urban recovery. Together, these themes help explain how bazaar systems operate through corridors, nodes, khans, entrances, covered streets, and small urban pockets. Traditional markets were often shaped by goods specialization, climate, movement, and their relationship to the city center (Gharipour, 2012; Hakim, 1986; Hmood, 2017; Hmood & Goussous, 2022).

Sources: Mohammad (2022); UN-Habitat (2022); Hmood (2017); Hmood and Goussous (2022).

Literature Review

Historical Urban Development of Homs	Bazaar Morphology & Spatial Typologies	Social & Economic Dimensions of Bazaar Spaces	Heritage, Memory & Cultural Continuity	Post-Conflict Urban Recovery & Micro-Infrastructure
Understanding the historical formation and identity of the old city and its market areas.	*Understanding the spatial logic and architectural characteristics of bazaars in Syria and the Middle East.*	*Understanding how bazaars function as socio-economic engines and social infrastructure.*	*Understanding how heritage elements contribute to identity, recovery, and reconstruction strategies.*	*Understanding how small-scale urban systems support phased recovery and future urban planning.*
Evolution of Homs' urban form	*Origins of bazaar typology*	*Market economies, small businesses, crafts*	*Heritage theory (tangible + intangible)*	*Theories of post-conflict reconstruction*
Historical layers and spatial growth	*Corridor sequences, nodes, entrances*	*Social cohesion and everyday interactions*	*Memory in urban form*	*Fragmentation and re-stitching of urban fabric*
Pre-war urban functions and centrality	*Urban pockets and semi-public interiors*	*Community identity and routine-based life*	*Preservation vs reconstruction debates*	*Micro-infrastructure nodes (utilities, mobility, services)*
Cultural and demographic composition	*Organic growth and informal expansions*	*Public life in dense commercial fabrics*	*Adaptive reuse principles*	*Role of markets in re-establishing daily-life systems*
	Syrian examples (Aleppo, Damascus, Homs)	*Post-conflict marketplace resilience*	*Case studies of heritage-led recovery (Hatay, Beirut, Sarajevo)*	*Integration into long-term urban frameworks*
Urban History of Homs	Bazaar Spatial Systems	Socio-Economic and Social Dynamics	Urban History of Homs	Urban Recovery & Infrastructure

Building a comprehensive understanding of how historic bazaar systems and urban pockets contribute to socio-economic, social, and infrastructural recovery in post-destruction Homs.

Literature review framework linking Homs' urban history, bazaar morphology, socio-economic life, heritage continuity, and post-conflict recovery. The framework is synthesized from literature on Homs' urban identity, historic markets, bazaar typologies, everyday public life, and urban recovery in post-destruction contexts.

3. Methodology

This project follows a progressive methodology that moves from research to spatial analysis, and from spatial analysis to architectural design. The process does not treat post-war reconstruction as only a matter of physical repair. Instead, it understands recovery as a spatial, social, economic, and cultural issue, where urban form, everyday practices, heritage systems, and local economic structures are all connected. For this reason, the methodology combines theoretical research, bazaar morphology studies, post-conflict urban analysis, mapping, design experimentation, and a trial-based digital workflow.

The methodology is organised in three main parts. The first part focuses on the research methodology, where bazaar systems are studied through literature, direct observation, historical formation, governance, and case-study analysis. The second part focuses on the design methodology, where the research findings are translated into Homs through mapping, site analysis, problem definition, plot selection, programme development, and architectural design principles. The third part focuses on the AI methodology, where artificial intelligence tools were tested as an experimental bridge between architectural software environments. Together, these three parts form the basis of the project: understanding the bazaar as an urban recovery system, applying this logic to the damaged fabric of Homs Old Town, and testing new tools for architectural production.

3.1 Research Methodology: Bazaar Systems and Morphological Formation

The first part of the methodology focused on understanding bazaar systems as urban, architectural, economic, and social structures. This began by gathering resources on traditional bazaars, covered markets, souqs, khans, and their historical development. The aim was not only to understand bazaars as shopping spaces, but to understand them as public-economic systems that organise movement, exchange, social interaction, craft production, and urban growth.

As part of this research, the Grand Bazaar was visited to understand the atmosphere, spatial rhythm, and lived logic of a functioning bazaar. This visit was important because it showed that a bazaar is not experienced as one single building. Instead, it works as a collection of connected shopping villages, corridors, thresholds, courtyards, specialised streets, and inner pockets. The atmosphere of the bazaar is created through repetition, density, changing light, sound, smell, product display, and the constant overlap between movement and transaction. This direct observation helped translate bazaar research from an abstract typology into a lived spatial experience.

After the first spatial observations, the research moved into the governance and regulation of bazaars. This included studying how bazaars were historically organised through trade specialisation, ownership structures, guild systems, religious and civic institutions, waqf systems, jurisdiction, and local rules of maintenance and control. This part of the research was important because the bazaar is not only a physical morphology. It is also a regulated economic and social system. Different trades were often clustered in specific areas, certain goods required more protected or central locations, and public buildings such as mosques, baths, khans, and caravanserais helped structure the bazaar network. Through these systems, the bazaar became both a commercial infrastructure and a civic framework.

The research then compared bazaar systems with contemporary shopping malls. This comparison helped clarify that bazaars are not closed commercial objects designed from the top down. They are bottom-up urban systems that grow through movement, repetition, need, regulation, and adaptation. Shopping malls usually operate as controlled interiors with fixed ownership and programmed circulation. Bazaars, however, develop as part of the city itself. They connect streets, public buildings, small businesses, workshops, courtyards, and neighbourhood routes. This difference became important for the project because the aim was not to design a mall-like commercial centre, but to reactivate a bazaar logic that can grow, adapt, and connect to the old town over time.

Sources: Gharipour (2012); Hmood (2017); Hmood and Goussous (2022); Taghizadehvahed (2015); author's field observation, Istanbul Grand Bazaar.

To bring this research closer to the project context, Aleppo was selected as the main case study. Aleppo was chosen because it provides a regional and morphological reference that is closer to Homs than more distant examples. The Aleppo bazaar was analysed through its historical development, route structure, commercial organisation, khans, covered streets, entrances, urban connections, and additions over time. The analysis focused on how the bazaar changed through different historical periods, occupations, and urban transformations. Through this, the bazaar formation was classified into four main steps. These steps explained how a bazaar can begin from routes and trade activity, become structured through covered corridors and nodes, expand through khans and specialised functions, and later adapt through additions, damage, or new urban conditions.

The conclusion of the research methodology defined the bazaar as a flexible urban infrastructure rather than only a heritage object. It showed that bazaars can support public life, local economy, craft production, social interaction, and gradual urban transformation. This understanding became the basis for the design phase, where bazaar morphology was used as a tool to read the damaged condition of Homs and to generate new public-economic nodes.

Sources: Gharipour (2012); Hmood (2017); Hmood and Goussous (2022); Taghizadehvahed (2015).

3.2 Design Methodology: Homs, Urban Pockets, and Plot Selection

The second part of the methodology translated the research into a design process for Homs. This stage began with the analysis of the city and its post-conflict condition. UN-Habitat reports, Homs urban profiling documents, and post-war urban research were used to understand the physical destruction of the city, the fragmentation of public space, the collapse of local economic systems, and the weakening of everyday urban life. From this research, the problem statement was developed. The main problems identified were physical destruction of the urban fabric, spatial segregation, economic collapse of local systems, and social fragmentation.

The spatial analysis was carried out through multiple mapping layers. Livelier functions in the city were identified and mapped, while open spaces, greenery, pedestrian routes, commercial streets, abandoned areas, and damaged zones were studied together. Orange labels were used to explain the role and condition of open spaces, while green labels indicated existing greenery. Empty areas on the maps were interpreted as abandoned, inactive, or underused spaces. These maps helped translate the general post-war condition of Homs into a more precise spatial reading.

A second layer of analysis was based on the idea of "pockets of survival" and "alleys of livelihood" in Homs (Abdelal et al., 2025). This research helped explain how public life did not disappear completely during and after the conflict, but shifted into smaller, protected, and more introverted urban pockets. These streets and spaces are often visually blocked, inward-oriented, and mainly used by people living nearby. This condition creates safety and continuity at a local scale, but also contributes to the separation of groups within the city. From this, the project concluded that Homs needs open, safe, and shared public nodes that can reconnect these fragmented pockets.

After the city-scale analysis, the project moved toward plot selection. The covered bazaar of Homs Old Town, Souq al-Atiq, and its surroundings were selected because the area contains damaged bazaar morphology, broken connections, empty plots, and the possibility for public-economic reactivation. The site was analysed through movement, openings, endings, pedestrian routes, surrounding landmarks, urban pockets, and opportunities for extension. Using the bazaar morphology research, the gaps in the existing bazaar structure were read as design opportunities.

The selected plot was then treated as part of a larger urban plan. The aim was not to design an isolated building, but to create a node that could extend the bazaar, support local economic activity, and trigger future renovation around the Old Town. Based on the analysis, the design programme and design principles were formed. These principles focused on extending the bazaar morphology, creating breathing pockets, supporting public-economic activity, preserving existing ruins where possible, and using simple construction systems that could be feasible in the local context. Materiality and construction methodology were then developed according to the needs of the project, the condition of the existing fabric, and the possibility of gradual adaptation.

Sources: UN-Habitat (2022); Abdelal et al. (2025); Mohammad (2022).

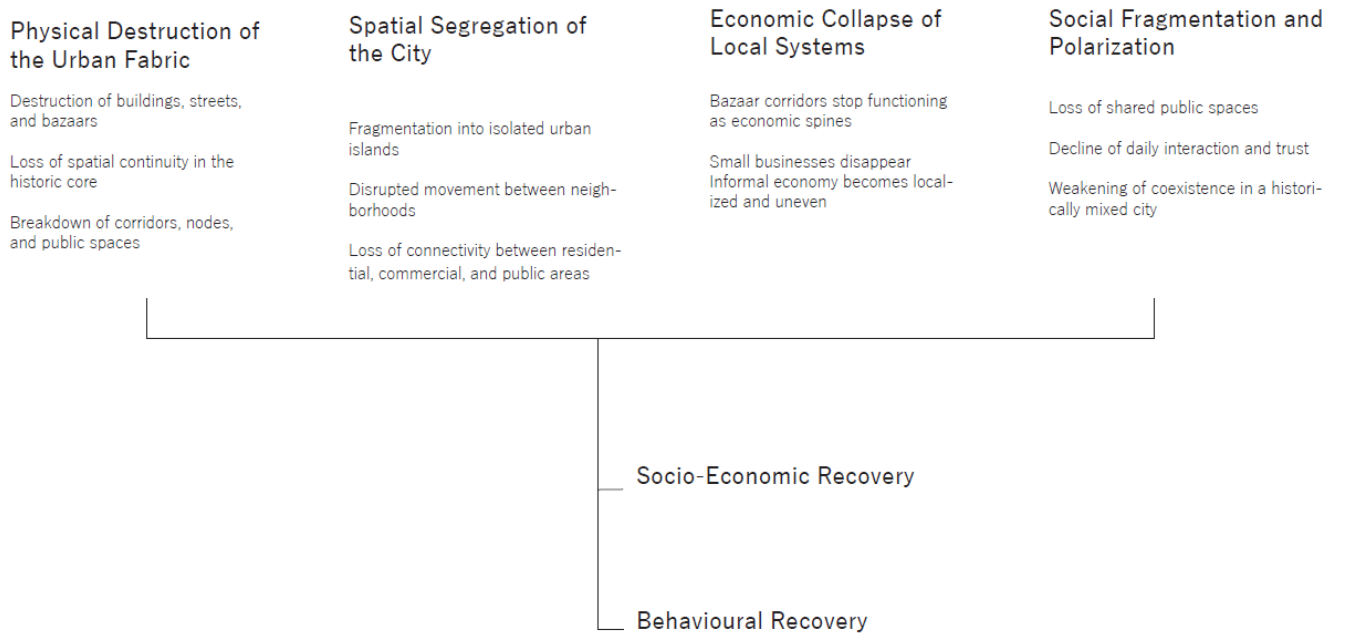
The historic core of Homs has undergone extensive destruction, resulting in the loss of population, the collapse of commercial activity, and the fragmentation of everyday urban life. Traditional bazaar corridors and the small urban pockets embedded within them once served as key structures for economic exchange, social interaction and localized infrastructure, yet their current role within the post-destruction city remains unclear. Although these spaces carry heritage value and embody a spatial logic that historically supported both community and commerce, they are not sufficiently understood or incorporated in contemporary reconstruction efforts. This lack of knowledge limits the ability to recognize how these bazaar systems and urban pockets might contribute to socioeconomic revival, social cohesion and the gradual re-establishment of infrastructural continuity. Addressing this gap is essential for understanding their potential significance in the broader recovery of post destruction Homs.

Research Question:

What is the role of historic bazaar systems and urban pockets in the urban recovery of post-destruction Homs?

Extensive research question :

How do the spatial logic, socio-cultural functions, and heritage components of historic bazaar systems and urban pockets contribute to processes of socio-economic revival and infrastructural reorganization in the post-destruction context of Homs?



Sources: UN-Habitat (2022); Abdelal et al. (2025); Mohammad (2022); Al-Sabouni (2016).

This project explores how key spatial triggers within the historically informed layout of Homs can be activated to generate new systems of infrastructure, public life, and economic activity in the context of post destruction reconstruction. The design identifies significant nodes and corridors that once shaped the city's spatial and social structure and reintroduces them as catalysts that guide movement, organize public space, and support the redevelopment of local economic patterns.
Through this trigger based approach, the proposal aims to reconnect past urban logic with a forward looking development strategy. It seeks to create a coherent and people centered urban environment that restores continuity, encourages community return, and establishes a resilient foundation for future growth in Homs.

Design Question

How can heritage preservation in post-destruction cities act as a trigger for new functional corridors and services

Extensive Design Question

How can the preservation and adaptive reuse of cultural elements and historic buildings in post-destruction cities act as spatial and infrastructural "triggers" that initiate functional reconstruction frameworks—such as primary corridors and branching service networks—and how can the specific conditions of Homs demonstrate this trigger effect in linking heritage, memory, and future urban growth?

Sub- Questions

Heritage Significance

What spatial characteristics allow heritage sites to initiate or support new infrastructural and commercial frameworks?

Bazaar Systems & Local Economy Revival

In what ways can extending or reorganizing the bazaar act as a catalyst for the return of population and local economic recovery?

Homs as a Demonstration Case

How can the A–B axis (your chosen corridor) become the primary reconstructed spine linking heritage buildings, new commercial bazaar strips, and public squares? cities?

Urban Pockets: Public & Semi-Public Spaces

What role do small-scale urban pockets (public squares, semi-public courts, neighborhood plazas) play in reactivating damaged urban fabrics?

How can the spatial sequence of pockets—introverted to extroverted—support community rebuilding and public life in post-war Homs?

Sources: UN-Habitat (2022); Mohammad (2022); Salmo et al. (2021); Abdelal et al. (2025).

3.3 AI Methodology: Testing Digital Bridges Between Architectural Software

The third part of the methodology was an experimental digital workflow using AI tools. The architectural design and modelling process itself was developed manually in Archicad, but the project also tested whether AI could connect different architectural software environments and improve the production workflow. This was explored because each software has different strengths: Rhino is strong for 3D modelling and visualisation, Revit is strong for technical modelling and drawing production, and Archicad works as an intermediate sketch-modelling and documentation tool.

Claude and ChatGPT were used as part of this experiment. Claude was first connected to Archicad through custom MCPs, allowing the AI to communicate with the software environment. Since Claude Code can also interact with Rhino and Revit through bridge systems, additional bridges were tested to connect these tools. ChatGPT was used to explain the project context, design logic, and spatial intentions in a way that could be translated into clearer instructions for Claude.

The main difficulty was that architectural software interfaces are designed for human users, not for AI systems. Therefore, the experiment required the creation of an interface logic that could translate human architectural intentions into AI-readable instructions. This led to the idea of a prompt-writing website or translation layer, where human design language could be converted into clearer commands for AI communication between different software.

After these bridges were created, Archicad, Rhino, and Revit could theoretically work alongside each other within the same project workflow. A building sketch developed in Archicad was redrawn by Claude in Rhino as a 3D object, and elements were better classified and prepared for possible Revit family organisation. In this sense, the experiment tested whether multiple architectural programmes could begin to operate as one connected system through AI assistance.

However, this AI workflow was not used as the main production method for the final project. It remained a trial setup and methodological experiment. Its value was in testing the future potential of AI-assisted architectural workflows, especially for connecting fragmented software environments and improving communication between design, modelling, and technical documentation.

Sources: ChatGPT (2026); Claude (2026); Anthropic (2026a, 2026b); author's AI-assisted design workflow experiment.

4. Results and Conclusions

This chapter presents the research outcomes that formed the basis of the design proposal. The research was not used as a separate theoretical layer, but as a tool to understand how damaged urban systems can be read, reorganised, and reactivated through design. The first part focuses on bazaar systems and their morphological development through time. This research helped define the bazaar not only as a commercial space, but as a public-economic urban system made of routes, nodes, thresholds, courtyards, khans, and specialised zones. The second part focuses on Homs and its post-conflict condition, especially the loss of spatial continuity, public life, and local economic systems. Together, these research results create the design framework of the project. They show that the bazaar can be understood as a recovery infrastructure: a spatial system that can reconnect movement, support small-scale economy, and provide shared public space in the fragmented old town.

4.1 Research Results

The research shows that bazaar systems developed gradually rather than appearing as complete planned structures. In their earliest form, bazaars began where movement and exchange were already concentrated: along busy roads, near city gates, around mosques, and close to important public buildings. As trade repeated in the same places, temporary exchange points became more permanent commercial streets. This produced the primary morphology of the bazaar: a linear commercial route structured by entrances, thresholds, religious buildings, and points of exchange (Hakim, 1986; Hmood, 2017; Hmood & Goussous, n.d.).

As the system grew, secondary morphologies started to appear. The main commercial line multiplied through branches, intersections, and side streets. These intersections became commercial nodes where movement overlapped and social recognition increased. The bazaar therefore became more than a shopping street. It started to work as an urban network that organised movement, trade, and social interaction through the city (Gharipour, 2012; Hmood, 2017).

The tertiary stage of bazaar formation shows a more complex system of trade-based segmentation, courtyards, khans, and semi-public pocket spaces. Crafts and goods were often grouped according to type, value, access, and regulation. This created internal order within the bazaar, where different streets and pockets had specific roles. Khans and courtyards added another layer by providing storage, workshop space, resting areas, and semi-public interiors connected to the commercial corridors. At this stage, the bazaar became both an economic and social infrastructure, rather than only a place of retail (Gharipour, 2012; Hmood, 2017; Taghizadehvahed, 2015).

The final stage shows the bazaar as a networked urban fabric. Climatic enclosure, partial roofing, covered corridors, adaptive edges, and informal extensions allowed the bazaar to respond to environmental needs and changing patterns of use. This proves that bazaars are not static heritage objects. They are adaptive urban systems that can absorb new functions, extend into surrounding areas, and change through time while keeping their spatial logic (Hmood, 2017; Taghizadehvahed, 2015).

The research also shows a clear difference between bazaars and contemporary shopping malls. Shopping malls are usually designed as controlled, finished, and privately managed commercial interiors. Bazaars, however, are embedded in the city. They connect streets, workshops, courtyards, public buildings, religious spaces, small businesses, and everyday movement. They are commercial spaces, but also public-economic spaces. This makes the bazaar relevant for Homs because the project does not aim to create a new isolated commercial centre, but to recover a public system where economic opportunity can be accessible to local residents without depending only on large-scale private investment (Gharipour, 2012; Taghizadehvahed, 2015).

Before the conflict, it functioned as a central part of daily life, connecting residential, religious, commercial, and public spaces. Its importance came from continuity: people moved through it, worked in it, exchanged goods, met others, and used it as

Sources: Hakim (1986); Hmood (2017); Hmood and Goussous (2022); Gharipour (2012); Taghizadehvahed (2015).

part of the everyday city. Mohammad describes the historic markets of Homs as a living heritage connected to urban history, social memory, economic activity, and cross-sectarian assembly (Mohammad, n.d.). Al-Sabouni also describes the Old Souk of Homs as a place of constant interaction, where trade produced not only economic exchange, but also social familiarity, shared conduct, and daily coexistence (Al-Sabouni, 2016).

The post-conflict research on Homs shows that destruction affected the city on multiple levels. Physical damage destroyed buildings, streets, bazaar corridors, and historic fabric. Spatially, the city became fragmented into separated urban pockets, where movement between neighbourhoods weakened. Economically, the damage to commercial corridors and the historic market disrupted local trade and pushed economic activity into smaller, uneven, and localised areas. Socially, the loss of shared public spaces weakened daily interaction, trust, and coexistence in a historically mixed city (Abdelal et al., 2025; Al-Sabouni, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2022).

The research on Homs' historic markets shows that the covered souq was not only a commercial area. Before the conflict, it functioned as a central part of daily life, connecting residential, religious, commercial, and public spaces. Its importance came from continuity: people moved through it, worked in it, exchanged goods, met others, and used it as part of the everyday city. Mohammad describes the historic markets of Homs as a living heritage connected to urban history, social memory, economic activity, and cross-sectarian assembly (Mohammad, n.d.). Al-Sabouni also describes the Old Souk of Homs as a place of constant interaction, where trade produced not only economic exchange, but also social familiarity, shared conduct, and daily coexistence (Al-Sabouni, 2016).

After destruction and abandonment, the market lost not only its physical continuity, but also its operational logic. Once movement, occupation, and routine exchange stopped, the bazaar could no longer function as a socio-economic spine, even where parts of the physical fabric remained standing. At the same time, research on Homs shows that public life did not fully disappear. During and after the conflict, residents created alternative vital zones in safer alleys, small streets, and semi-protected spaces. These "pockets of survival" and "alleys of livelihood" show that everyday urban life continued through small-scale, local, and adaptive spatial practices (Abdelal et al., 2025).

Therefore, the main research result is that the bazaar can be understood as a recovery infrastructure. It can support spatial reconnection, local economy, behavioural recovery, and public life at the same time. The bazaar is not treated only as a heritage object to be preserved, but as a living urban system that can be extended, reactivated, and adapted to the current needs of Homs. This research result directly informs the design proposal: instead of rebuilding the bazaar as a fixed image of the past, the project uses bazaar morphology as a tool to create new public-economic nodes, repair broken movement, and support gradual urban recovery.

Sources: Abdelal et al. (2025); Mohammad (2022); Al-Sabouni (2016); UN-Habitat (2022).

4.2 Design Results

The design results translate the research into an urban and architectural strategy for Homs Old Town. The main design outcome is the creation of a public-economic node at the edge of Souq al-Atiq, where the bazaar system is most broken and where movement currently risks stopping. Instead of placing the project inside the bazaar as a closed building, the selected location works as an extension point. The edge of the bazaar becomes a destination and a new beginning, allowing the corridor leading to it to become active again.

At the urban scale, the project proposes a network of breathing pockets, public nodes, and new functions around the bazaar. These spaces are designed to expand the public realm around the old market, while also giving calmer atmospheres in contrast to the intensity of the covered bazaar corridors. The design does not aim to reconstruct the past exactly. Instead, it uses bazaar morphology as a tool to repair movement, create new public spaces, and support future growth.

The selected plot is treated as part of a larger urban system. The analysis of movement, openings, ending points, empty plots, destroyed areas, and surrounding landmarks led to a programme that combines workshops, commercial spaces, a restaurant, a library, an auditorium, a courtyard, and water collection infrastructure. Each function has a specific role in the recovery logic of the project. The workshops extend the productive and craft-based character of the bazaar. The restaurant and café attract users from outside the bazaar and bring activity into the site. The library creates individual quiet and learning space. The auditorium creates collective quiet for lectures, performances, meetings, and screenings. The courtyard works as an unprogrammed public centre, allowing users to decide how to occupy it.

The design also creates a spatial gradient from public to quiet. The bazaar continuation and pavement allow the street to enter the building without a hard threshold. Transaction spaces manage transitions between different atmospheres: from commercial activity to the library, from the auditorium to the library, and from the bazaar edge into the courtyard. Privacy is not created only through doors, but through depth, wall thickness, changes in light, material, sound, and spatial compression.

A key design result is the distinction between permanent form and changeable interior. The project preserves the khan shape, footprint, block proportions, and relationship to the courtyard and street as the permanent identity of the place. At the same time, the interior functions, partitions, loft structures, seating, linings, and service layers are designed to be adaptable. This allows the building to change over time while still remaining recognisable as a khan in Homs.

Materiality and construction logic also follow this principle. Existing ruins and old town fragments are not treated as obstacles, but as part of the design. They can work as structural shells, boundary walls, façade references, or material memory. New interventions are inserted carefully, using simple and feasible construction methods that can be adapted in future stages. This supports the idea of incremental recovery rather than one-time reconstruction.

The water collection system is another design result. The semi-public khan block uses an inward-sloping roof to collect rainwater and direct it through columns into an underground cistern. This turns the roof and columns into both architectural and infrastructural elements. The system supports garden irrigation, washing, and non-potable uses, while also creating a potential neighbourhood reserve during water shortages. This means the building does not only consume infrastructure, but also becomes a small infrastructure node for its surroundings.

Overall, the design result is a building and urban node that extends the bazaar morphology, creates public-economic opportunities, supports shared use, and provides a flexible architectural framework for future adaptation.

Sources: Author's design proposal; UN-Habitat (2022); Salmo et al. (2021); Mohammad (2022).

4.2 Artificial Intelligance Experiment Results

The AI methodology was tested as an experimental workflow rather than as the main production method. The design itself was developed manually in Archicad, but AI tools were used to explore whether different architectural software environments could be connected into one workflow.

The experiment showed that AI can potentially help connect fragmented architectural tools. Claude was tested through custom MCP connections with Archicad, while bridge systems were explored for Rhino and Revit. ChatGPT was used to explain the design context, spatial intentions, and project logic in a clearer way, so that these ideas could be translated into instructions for Claude. Through this setup, a model sketched in Archicad could be interpreted and redrawn in Rhino, while model elements could also be classified more clearly for possible Revit family organisation.

The main result of this experiment is that AI can support communication between software, but only if there is a strong translation layer between human architectural intention and software commands. Architectural tools are designed for humans, not for AI systems. Therefore, AI needs an interface or prompt-writing layer that can translate design language into clear modelling actions. Without this, the AI can misunderstand scale, hierarchy, function, geometry, or drawing conventions.

The AI workflow proved useful as a future-oriented experiment, but it was not reliable enough to become the main production method for this project. Its value lies in testing how AI could assist future architectural workflows by connecting Archicad, Rhino, and Revit, improving classification, and reducing software separation. For this graduation project, it remained a trial setup and did not replace manual architectural decision-making.

4.3 Conclusion

This project concludes that post-destruction recovery in Homs cannot be addressed only through physical reconstruction. The main issue is not only the repair of damaged buildings, but the recovery of spatial continuity, local economy, daily behaviour, and shared public life. The destruction of the historic market and old town weakened the city's ability to connect people, movement, exchange, and memory. Therefore, recovery needs to work at the scale of everyday urban systems.

The research shows that bazaars offer a useful model for this type of recovery. Their value lies in their ability to combine commerce, movement, public space, craft, social interaction, and adaptability. Bazaars are not fixed objects, but incremental systems that can grow through nodes, corridors, courtyards, thresholds, and specialised pockets. This makes them relevant for a post-conflict context, where large-scale reconstruction may be difficult, but smaller public-economic triggers can begin to reactivate the city.

The design applies this logic to Souq al-Atiq and its surroundings. By placing the project at the end of the bazaar, the proposal turns a broken edge into an active node. The building extends the bazaar rather than replacing it. It creates a public-economic centre with workshops, restaurant, library, auditorium, courtyard, and infrastructure, while preserving the khan morphology as the permanent identity of the place. The project therefore works between old and new: it keeps the spatial memory of the ruin, but allows the interior and programme to change over time.

The main contribution of the project is the idea of the bazaar as a recovery tool. Instead of seeing heritage only as something to protect, the project treats heritage morphology as something that can generate new urban life. The proposal creates a framework for gradual recovery, where small nodes can support local economy, reconnect public spaces, and encourage future renovation around the Old Town. It does not solve the entire reconstruction of Homs, but it demonstrates how one strategic public-economic node can begin to reactivate a larger urban system.

Sources: Author's design proposal and AI-assisted workflow; ChatGPT (2026); Claude (2026); Anthropic (2026a, 2026b); UN-Habitat (2022); Abdelal et al. (2025); Mohammad (2022).

Bazaar Systems and Urban Recovery
Research Notes

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro
By:
Ekin Sarıbaş
AR4EA010 EXTREME Graduation Studio

Research

1 Research Results

1.1 Bazaar Sytems

Bazaar systems developed over time. In the beginning, they were informal formations created by merchants settling along the busiest roads, where movement was already concentrated. These early conditions slowly turned into the first market streets, simply because exchange kept happening there. As demand increased and more people used these routes, the streets widened, connections multiplied, and intersections between several streets started to appear. Over time, this process produced larger commercial structures, eventually forming complex, almost spider-web–like networks of shops and smaller or individual enterprises. The more vitality these areas gained, the more users they attracted, and with that growth came the need for some form of control and organization, which also developed gradually rather than all at once.

After the medieval period, under Arab governance, these areas became more clearly defined urban hubs. During this phase, the first internal hierarchies of the bazaar started to form. More valuable or sensitive goods were often located closer to mosques, partly for protection and partly because of the moral and social authority associated with these institutions. This period marks the beginning of internal governance within bazaar systems, where regulation emerged from inside the system itself rather than being imposed externally (AlSayyad, 1996).

Following this, the area and zone to be addressed were reviewed through spatial analysis. Situation maps were recreated to understand the existing condition, the effects of destruction, and the spatial structure of the area. This step translated the theoretical understanding of post-war conditions into a spatial reading of the city.

Afterward, the analysis for solutions began with a focus on bazaar systems. The main reference for this stage was the book Bazaar in the Islamic City The analysis was carried out through historical reading and case studies, studying bazaars over time and identifying their genres, typologies, and spatial morphologies. Through categorization and classification, bazaar layouts were abstracted into a system that can be understood as an urban puzzle, where different elements can be reorganized and adapted.

Based on this analysis, the project location was selected in the closed bazaars of Homs Old Town and the surrounding areas. This area was parcelled and treated as a gameboard for configuring bazaar functionalities and testing future modifications of urban space morphologies. The aim was to explore how a functioning and extensible urban plan could be created using bazaar logic. During the design phase, construction techniques and materiality were also researched.

Existing old town spaces and destroyed elements were considered as part of the design, either as structural shells or as casing and façade cladding for new formations. This approach keeps the old while creating space for the new and allows for further elaboration in future stages.

Overall, the methodology results in a set of spatial and architectural tools intended to support the revival of Homs through adaptable bazaar systems and incremental urban transformation.

Al-Sabouni, M. (2016). The battle for home: The vision of a young architect in Syria. Thames & Hudson.
Al-Sabouni, M. (2016). How Syrian architecture laid the foundations for war. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com
Awad, M. (n.d.). Islamic souqs (bazaars) in the urban context: The Souq of Nablus. Journal of Urban Design.

1.2 Bazaar Sytems Through Time

Bazaar systems developed over time. In the beginning, they were informal formations created by merchants settling along the busiest roads, where movement was already concentrated. These early conditions slowly turned into the first market streets, simply because exchange kept happening there. As demand increased and more people used

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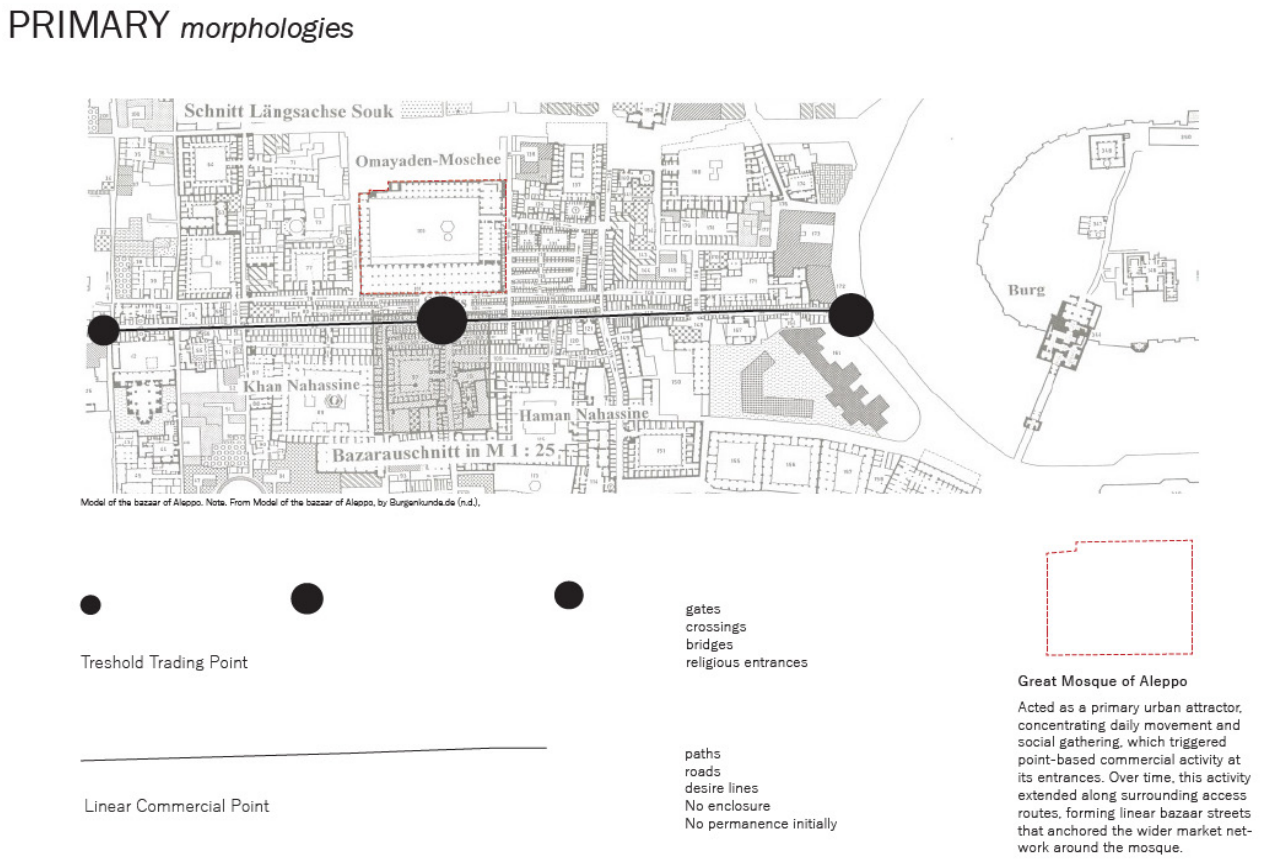

Figure 1: Primary Morphogly map and diagram made by the author.

Awad, M. (n.d.). Islamic souqs (bazaars) in the urban context: The Souq of Nablus. Journal of Urban Design.
Dorotéo. (n.d.). Marwa Al-Sabouni explains how Syrian architecture laid the foundations for war. Dorotéo Media.
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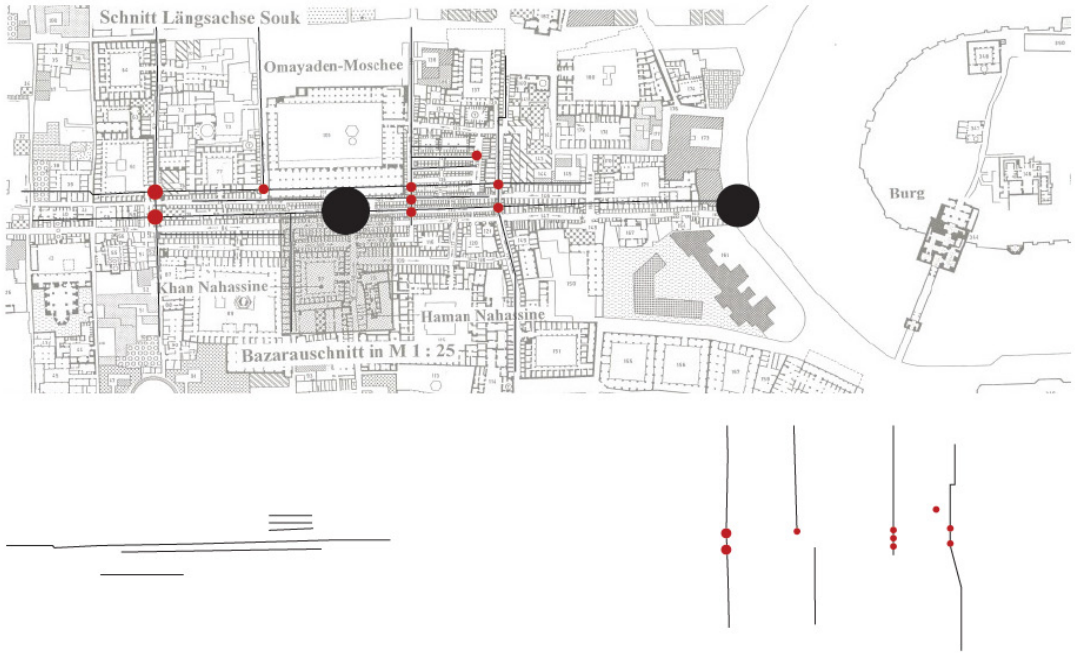
SECONDARY *morphologies*



Linear Multiplication

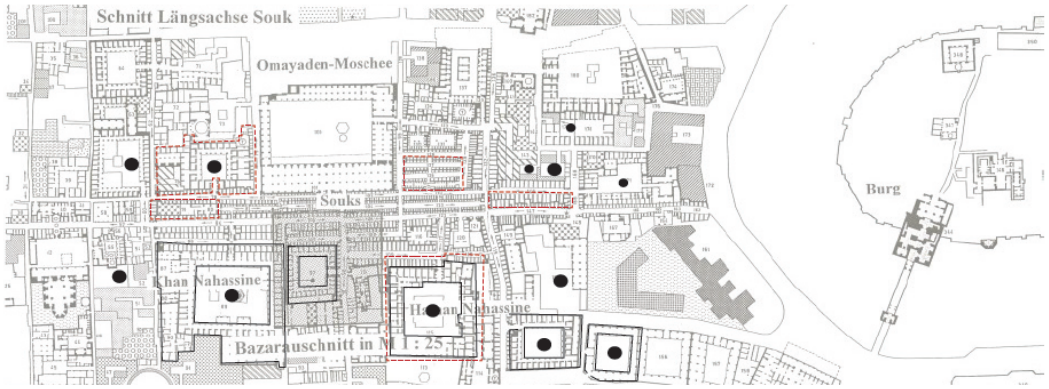
Spillover from successful primary paths
Indicates economic pressure and growth
Research shows that bazaar expansion is lateral before it is inward.

Commercial Intersection (Node)

Formed where movement lines overlap
Exchange density increases
Social recognition emerges

Bazaar systems developed over time. In the beginning, they were informal formations created by merchants settling along the busiest roads, where movement was already concentrated. These early con

TERTIARY *morphologies*



Trade-Based Segmentation

Crafts grouped by:
value
risk
noise
smell

This is governance without centralized authority.

Inward Commercial Courtyard

Kervansaray etc

Storage
Wholesale
Lodging
Protection

This form appears historically after long-distance trade stabilizes.

Semi-Public Pocket Spaces

Small recesses and widenings

Social, not purely commercial

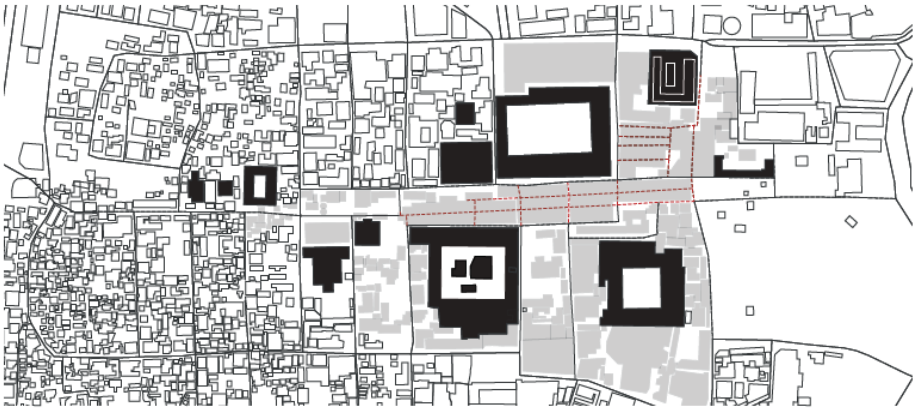
Research confirms these as behaviorally produced, not designed.

Khan al-Nahhassine

Secondary bazaar morphology formed as an enclosed courtyard khan inserted into Aleppo's pre-existing linear souq. It reinforces the primary market by concentrating specialized copper trade within an inward-focused, gated volume rather than generating new urban structure.

Hakim, B. (1986). Arabic-Islamic cities: Building and planning principles. Routledge.
Hmood, K. (n.d.). Traditional markets in Islamic architecture: Successful past experiences. Journal of Islamic Architecture.
Mohammad, S. (n.d.). Heritage for recovery: Case study of historical markets of Homs City. In Heritage management for recovery (pp. 68–102).

QUATERNARY *morphologies*



Climatic Enclosure

Roofing, vaults, and partial coverings are added to existing bazaar streets to stabilize environmental conditions and protect circulation. This represents a late-stage morphological shift where linear paths are transformed into permanent, controlled spatial volumes.

Networked Bazaar Fabric

Multiple paths, nodes, courtyards, and pockets interconnect to form a continuous commercial fabric with no single center. At this stage, the bazaar operates as urban infrastructure, embedded into the city's spatial and economic systems.

Informal Adaptive Edge

Temporary stalls and flexible extensions appear at the edges of the established bazaar, creating elastic and shifting boundaries. These forms respond to economic pressure and seasonal demand, allowing adaptability within an otherwise formalized system.

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1.3 Post Conflict Cities and Homs

The problems visible in post-destruction cities did not begin with the war. They were already present within the urban and social structure and continued to exist through time. The war outbreak intensified these conditions, and after the war ended, the problems became clearly visible in the city and in everyday life, making them observable and in need of intervention. These problems trigger each other and cannot be read separately.

One of the main problems is polarization, which started long before the war. Beginning with the French occupation, class segregation was introduced through architectural and housing systems that were unfamiliar to the local urban fabric. Modern housing layouts replaced traditional forms of dwelling, creating physical and social separation between groups. This architectural shift caused economic and lifestyle segregation, which gradually developed into social polarization. Over time, cohesion within the city was lost.

As cohesion weakened, behavioral patterns changed. Daily practices that supported cohabitation and shared use of space were replaced by inward-oriented and selective behaviors. Interaction between different groups decreased, and the city started to function as separated urban islands rather than a connected whole. At this stage, polarization reached an extreme level and became embedded in everyday life.

With the outbreak of the war, existing vulnerabilities intensified. Physical destruction of the urban fabric damaged buildings, streets, bazaars, and public spaces, especially within the historic core. Spatial continuity was lost, and corridors and nodes that once structured urban life stopped functioning. At the same time, infrastructure and basic facilities such as schools, hospitals, and economic services collapsed, increasing vulnerability among the population.

This led to an economic collapse of local systems. Bazaar corridors stopped functioning as economic spines, small businesses disappeared, and informal economic activity became localized and uneven. Economic vulnerability increased instability and aggression, reinforcing social division rather than reducing it.

As a result, social fragmentation became dominant. Shared public spaces were lost, daily interaction declined, and trust between groups weakened. In a city that was historically mixed, coexistence became fragile. These conditions continue after the war, making the problems visible, persistent, and unresolved.

Physical destruction, spatial segregation, economic collapse, and social fragmentation reinforce each other. Together, they shape post-destruction urban life and define the need for both behavioral recovery and socio-economic recovery.

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Pourjafar, M., et al. (n.d.). Role of bazaars as a unifying factor in traditional cities of Iran: The Isfahan bazaar. Journal of Urban Cultural Studies.
Salmo, A., et al. (n.d.). Architectural and urban identity of Homs city. Journal of Architectural Heritage.
Scherbina, E., et al. (n.d.). Historic centres of Syrian towns ruined by the war: Restoration through urban planning. Cities Journal.

2. Role of the Historic Markets Before and After Destruction

Before 2011, Homs' historic markets, locally known as the Covered Souq, functioned as the main trade artery linking the city with its surrounding countryside. They were not isolated commercial buildings but were embedded within the old-city fabric, operating as a continuous urban system. The markets were integrated with supporting functions such as religious buildings, public baths, and traditional workshops, which reinforced their everyday use and centrality. Through this integration, the bazaar became part of daily life rather than a destination-based commercial zone.

Spatially, the historic markets occupied a central position within the old city, covering approximately 10–20% of its area and located on the northwestern side of the historic core. This placement allowed the bazaar to function as a connector between neighbourhoods and key landmarks, concentrating daily movement, exchange, and routine encounters into one continuous corridor. The market system structured pedestrian flows and linked residential, religious, and commercial life.

Socially, pre-war Homs was widely described as a pluralistic and mixed city, with religious diversity embedded in its historic centre. Major religious monuments belonging to different communities existed in close proximity, reinforcing coexistence rather than separation. Within this context, the bazaar functioned as a shared civic space, used collectively by different social and religious groups. It acted as a neutral meeting ground where everyday interaction occurred naturally through routine activities rather than formal gathering.

During the conflict, this system was directly disrupted. The historic markets were subjected to siege conditions, looting, and near-daily bombardment, leading to severe physical damage and eventual abandonment by merchants and residents.

. The loss of continuity was critical, as the bazaar depends on constant occupation, movement, and routine exchange. Once abandoned, the market lost its operational logic even where parts of the physical fabric remained standing.

At the city scale, the destruction of the historic markets coincided with heavy damage to the historic heart of Homs, which functioned as the city's main socio-economic node. This degradation contributed to a decline in social cohesion and increased division between neighbourhoods. The destruction was therefore not only architectural but directly affected the shared spaces that enabled everyday interdependence across the city.

Economically, commercial activity that once concentrated in the historic centre became fragmented. Recovery of the central markets stalled, while new peripheral and informal markets emerged during the conflict to meet urgent needs. These markets continue to operate, indicating a displacement of economic activity away from the historic core. This shift weakened the integrative role of the old centre and reinforced spatial and social fragmentation.

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Sources: Gharipour (2012); Hmood (2017); Hmood and Goussous (2022); Taghizadehvahed (2015); author's field observation, Istanbul Grand Bazaar.

BOOKLET ONE | Introduction, Research and Planning

AR4E010
EXTREME
Graduation Studio
By| Ekin Sarıbaş

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro

Connecting
HOMS

Context Plan and explanations of the urban plan and design decision leading to the project conclusions.

Abstract

This project investigates how architectural intervention can support the recovery of Homs Old Town after years of conflict, destruction, displacement, and economic collapse. Rather than treating reconstruction as the replacement of damaged buildings, the project focuses on the reactivation of urban systems: streets, bazaars, nodes, courtyards, workshops, and shared public spaces. The historic bazaar is understood as a recovery infrastructure, capable of reconnecting fragmented urban areas while supporting local economies, social interaction, and everyday routines. Through mapping, historical research, UN-Habitat reports, spatial analysis, and comparative studies of bazaar formation, the project identifies strategic points where new public and semi-public nodes can trigger wider regeneration. The proposal aims to prevent the Old Town from being redeveloped without documentation, memory, or local understanding. Instead, it proposes a careful restoration and extension strategy, using architecture as a tool for economic uplift, infrastructural repair, social reconnection, and long-term urban resilience.

Introduction

This project is located in Homs, Syria, in the old town area that was heavily affected by the conflict. It focuses on the recovery of the historic centre, not only by rebuilding damaged buildings, but by reactivating the urban systems that made the old town work: streets, bazaars, nodes, workshops, courtyards, public spaces, infrastructure, and everyday routines.

Historically, Homs Old Town contained market systems that worked as important socio-economic and cultural spaces in the city. In this project, the bazaar is used as a spatial and economic morphology rather than only as a historic commercial function. The aim is to recover and redevelop the logic of the bazaar: connected corridors, public nodes, small-scale economic spaces, workshops, thresholds, courtyards, and shared routes. After the conflict, many of these urban connections were weakened through destruction, displacement, and the loss of everyday movement. The project therefore focuses on bazaar morphology as a tool to reconnect fragmented parts of the old town and to create new public-economic opportunities for Homs.

The project starts from four connected problems: physical destruction of the urban fabric, socio-economic collapse of local systems, spatial segregation of the city, and the behavioural loss of shared public life. When corridors, nodes, and public spaces disappear, movement becomes weaker, small businesses lose visibility, informal economies become uneven, and daily interaction and trust decline. In a historically mixed city like Homs, this also weakens coexistence.

The aim of the project is to use architecture as a trigger for recovery. It focuses on economic uplift, reactivating old nodes, creating new nodes, expanding infrastructure, and encouraging gradual renovation in the old town. It also responds to the risk that the historic centre could be redeveloped or monopolized without enough documentation, local understanding, or respect for the identity of the area. Homs' identity is connected to its historic layers, compact urban fabric, local materials, courtyard typologies, and collective memory, so reconstruction should recover both the image and the social-spatial logic of the city (Salmo et al., 2021).

The bazaar becomes the main starting point for this strategy. In this project, the bazaar is understood as a public-economic space. Unlike large commercial developments that depend on big investors or corporate funding, bazaars create smaller and more accessible economic opportunities for residents, craftspeople, merchants, and workshop owners. For Homs, this is important because recovery has to allow people to return, work, produce, sell, meet, and live in the old town again.

The project therefore extends the bazaar into a new public node. This node is not only a market extension, but also a cultural, civic, and infrastructural extension of the old town. It combines workshops, public functions, semi-public courtyards, water infrastructure, and gathering spaces. The goal is to bring use back to the bazaar corridor, trigger renovation around it, and turn the damaged historic centre into an active public-cultural space again.

The larger urban plan proposes several functional buildings across the old town, each placed in carefully selected areas to activate different nodes. These nodes support different forms of recovery: economic, cultural, infrastructural, social, and public. However, this project focuses on one specific node: a ruined khan structure at the end of the bazaar system. By restoring and reprogramming this building, the project tests how one node, one typology, and one set of architectural techniques can trigger wider regeneration.

The methodology follows a layered process. First, the history of Homs and the impact of the conflict are analysed through literature, UN-Habitat reports, mapping, and site research. Then, the problem statement is formed through the relationship between physical destruction, spatial segregation, socio-economic collapse, and behavioural recovery. After this, the old town is analysed through maps of roads, existing nodes, potential nodes, damaged areas, public spaces, historic routes, and possible future connections.

In parallel, the project studies bazaar formation through Aleppo and other Middle Eastern market systems. This research looks at how bazaars are formed through primary routes, secondary passages, specialised areas, courtyards, thresholds, khans, and public nodes. These findings are translated into design principles, an urban plan, and finally an architectural proposal.

This first booklet explains the context, problem statement, research process, site analysis, urban strategy, masterplan, and first design direction. The second booklet develops the architectural design and programme. The third booklet focuses on technical configuration, including structure, materials, climate response, water systems, construction logic, and details.

Table of Contents

Figure 1 | Satellite image of the Old City of Homs, Syria.

Homs and the Old Town Situation

Homs is located in central Syria and has historically worked as a connecting city between the north, south, and the coast. Because of this position, the city was not only important as a residential centre, but also as a place of movement, trade, and exchange between the city and its surrounding countryside. The old town was one of the main parts of this urban system. It contained dense streets, religious landmarks, traditional markets, workshops, public baths, and everyday public spaces that supported both social and economic life.

After 2011, Homs became one of the Syrian cities most affected by the conflict. According to UN-Habitat's assessment, the impact of the war was visible not only in the built environment, but also in the social fabric, economy, infrastructure, and services of the city (UN-Habitat, 2014). In the old town, this damage was especially critical because the urban fabric was already dense and interconnected. When buildings, streets, and commercial corridors were damaged, the whole system of movement and daily life was weakened.

The historical market area was heavily affected by siege, bombardment, looting, and abandonment. Residents and merchants left the area, and the old commercial centre lost much of its daily function (UN-Habitat Syria Office, 2014). This created a situation where the old town was not only physically damaged, but also socially and economically disconnected. Streets that once supported trade and encounter became empty or avoided. Public spaces lost their role, and commercial activity shifted away from the centre or survived in smaller, fragmented pockets.

For this reason, the project looks at Homs Old Town as a place that needs more than physical reconstruction. The main issue is not only to repair damaged buildings, but to reactivate the connections between movement, economy, infrastructure, public space, and everyday use. The project therefore uses the old town situation as the starting point for an urban strategy that can create new nodes, support local economic life, and trigger gradual renovation around the bazaar system.

Prolonged siege & militarization

Years of siege and fighting turned streets, squares, gates, and main axes into strategic spaces. Areas that once supported daily movement became spaces of risk, control, or closure. In the Old City, this affected the continuity of the historic fabric because movement through narrow streets, bazaar corridors, and public nodes became interrupted. Corridors that used to connect different parts of the city started to work as barriers or dead ends. This created long-term damage, not only to infrastructure, but also to how people understood and used the city.

Mass displacement & uneven return

The conflict changed the way people lived in and used the city. Many residents moved away from damaged or unsafe areas, while others adapted by creating new daily routes and activity zones in safer neighbourhoods. By 2014, Homs was described through separate urban islands and alternative links, while later recovery remained uneven between the original centre and secondary vital areas (Abdelal et al., 2025, pp. 95, 102). This disrupted demographic balance and weakened everyday urban life.

Governance & reconstruction uncertainty

The recovery of Homs is not only a question of rebuilding what was destroyed. It also depends on documentation, coordination, local needs, and understanding what should be preserved, repaired, reused, or transformed. Without this understanding, reconstruction can easily become visual replacement rather than real recovery. If the old town is rebuilt only as an image, without its spatial logic, material identity, public routes, and everyday functions, it risks losing the qualities that made it specific to Homs.

Collapse of integrated economy

The historical markets of Homs were part of the city's main commercial core and gathered artisans, craftsmen, merchants, workers, and different social classes (Mohammad, n.d., pp. 74–75). After the conflict, the market area remained weak and partly non-functional; Mohammad notes that even after physical reconstruction, recovery in the market did not reach 20% (Mohammad, n.d., pp. 86–89). This shows that economic recovery cannot depend on building repair alone. Access, users, public activity, infrastructure, and local participation are also needed.

Loss of public space use

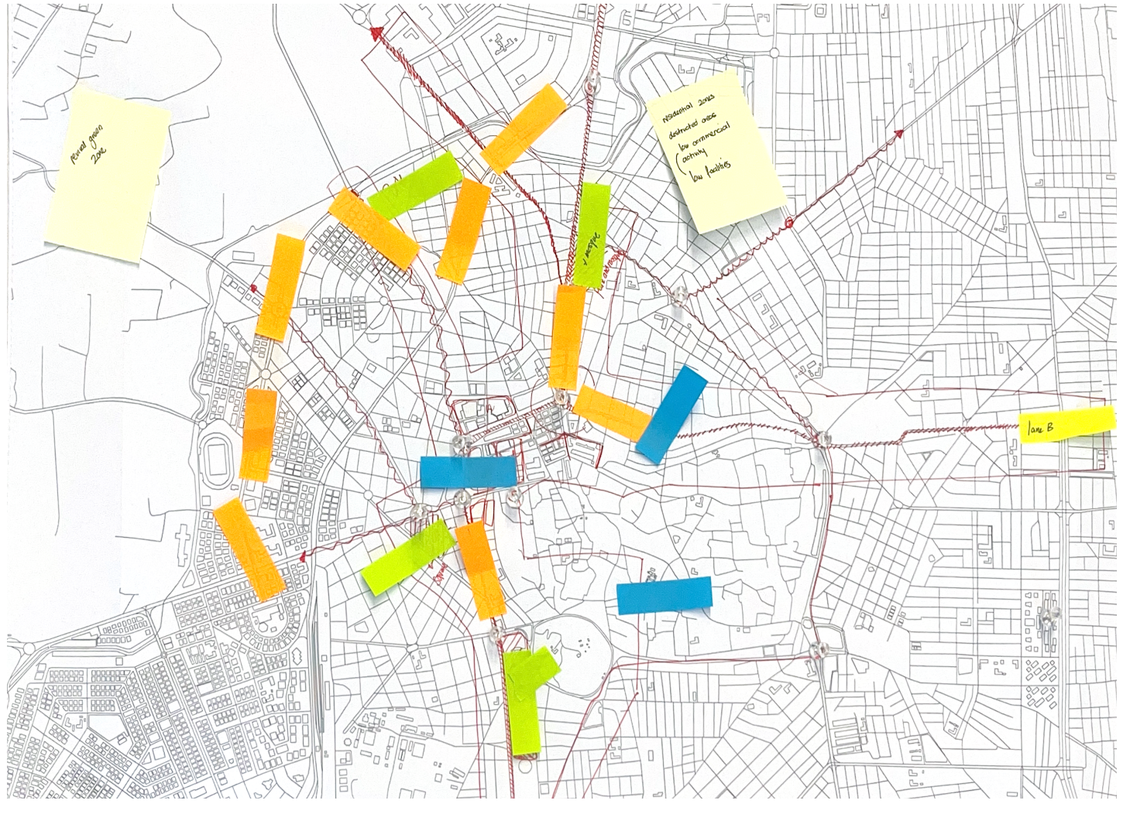
The conflict changed how public space was used. Main squares, central commercial zones, and exposed open spaces were abandoned or avoided, while residents created alternative safe routes, protected alleys, and new vital spaces in inhabited neighbourhoods (Abdelal et al., 2025, pp. 93–95). Later, these resident-led vital spaces continued to play social, economic, and service roles after the war (Abdelal et al., 2025, p. 102). This shows that public space recovery depends not only on design, but also on safety, movement, visibility, and everyday use.

Homs, Syria post-conflict condition of Homs and the Old Town as the starting point for the project's urban recovery strategy.

Phase two | Analysis

Figure 2 shows the main urban structure typologies and functional zones of Homs at the city scale. The map is interpreted from the UN-Habitat urban structure analysis and reorganised to match the visual language of this booklet. It identifies different building and urban fabric types, including the Old City, informal and planned residential areas, detached housing zones, high-rise buildings, mixed-use areas, and industrial zones. Reading these zones together helps to understand Homs as a city made of different urban fragments, each with its own density, function, accessibility, and relationship to the historic centre. For the project, this map is important because it places the Old Town and Souq al-Atiq within the wider city structure, showing how the selected area relates to surrounding residential, commercial, and infrastructural zones.

Figure 2 |Analysis Map | Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, *City Profile Homs: Multi-sector Assessment* (2014, p. 66).



This figure shows a large-scale reading of Homs, Syria, based on UN-Habitat mapping and project analysis. The map identifies the main commercial streets, pedestrian zones, vehicle-based routes, green spaces, and larger urban nodes of the city. Busy commercial streets are marked in yellow, green areas are marked in green, and major nodes are marked in blue. By mapping these layers together, the main urban axes and building clusters become visible. This helps to understand Homs not only as one continuous city, but as a series of connected and separated zones, each with different levels of activity, accessibility, and public life. The analysis forms the first step in identifying where urban recovery can be triggered through new public and economic nodes.

Figure 3 | First Area Analysis of Homs, Syria. | Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, *City Profile Homs: Multi-sector Assessment* (

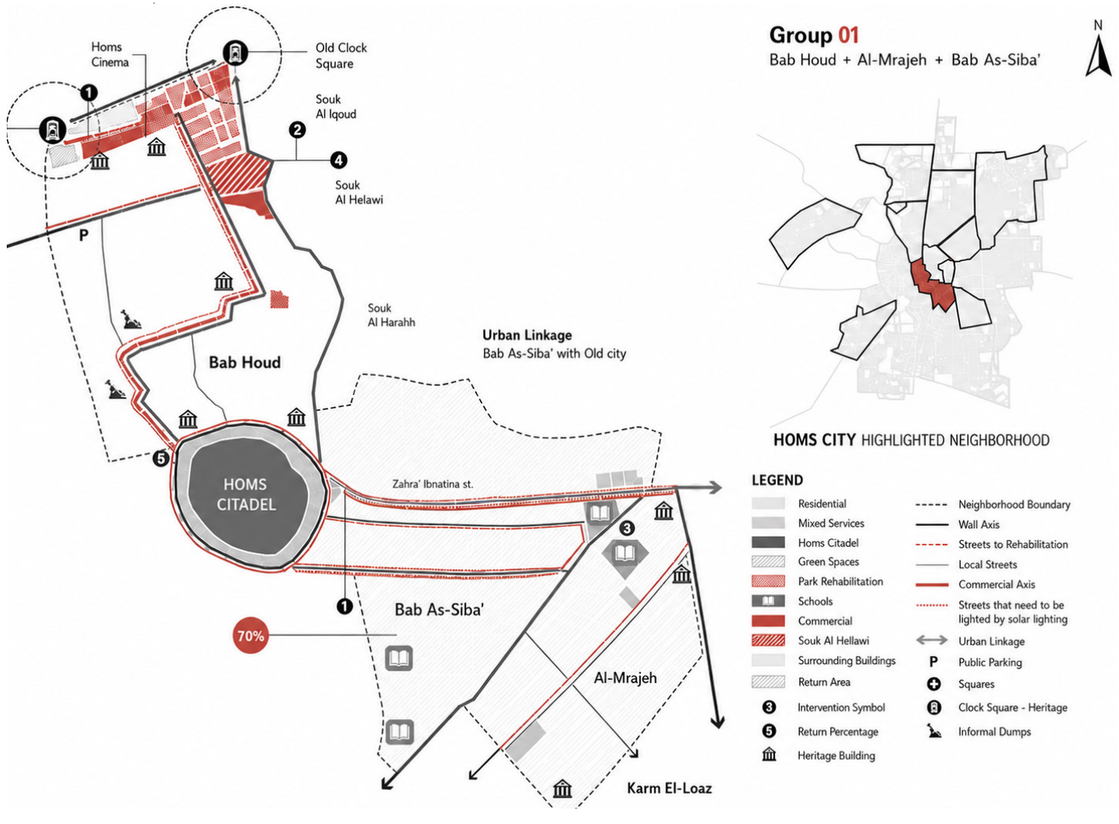


Figure 4 shows the recovery plan for Area A2, covering Bab Houd, Al-Mrejeh, and Bab As-Sibaa around Homs Old Town. Area A2 is one of the priority recovery areas defined in the UN-Habitat Homs Urban Profile. It represents a strategic zone between the Old City and surrounding neighbourhoods, where heritage, movement, local economy, and public space overlap. The map identifies movement routes, local roads, commercial axes, public spaces, water channels, and heritage buildings. It shows that recovery in the old town is not only about restoring monuments, but also about reconnecting access, infrastructure, public life, and local economy.

For this project, Area A2 supports the selection of Souq al-Atiq and its surroundings as the main intervention zone. The UN-Habitat priorities for this area focus on basic services, accessibility, public space, and the revival of traditional market activity. This directly supports the project's aim to create a public-economic node that can trigger gradual recovery around the bazaar.

Figure 4 | Analysis of Homs, Syria. | Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, *Homs Urban Profile* (pp. 107, 111).

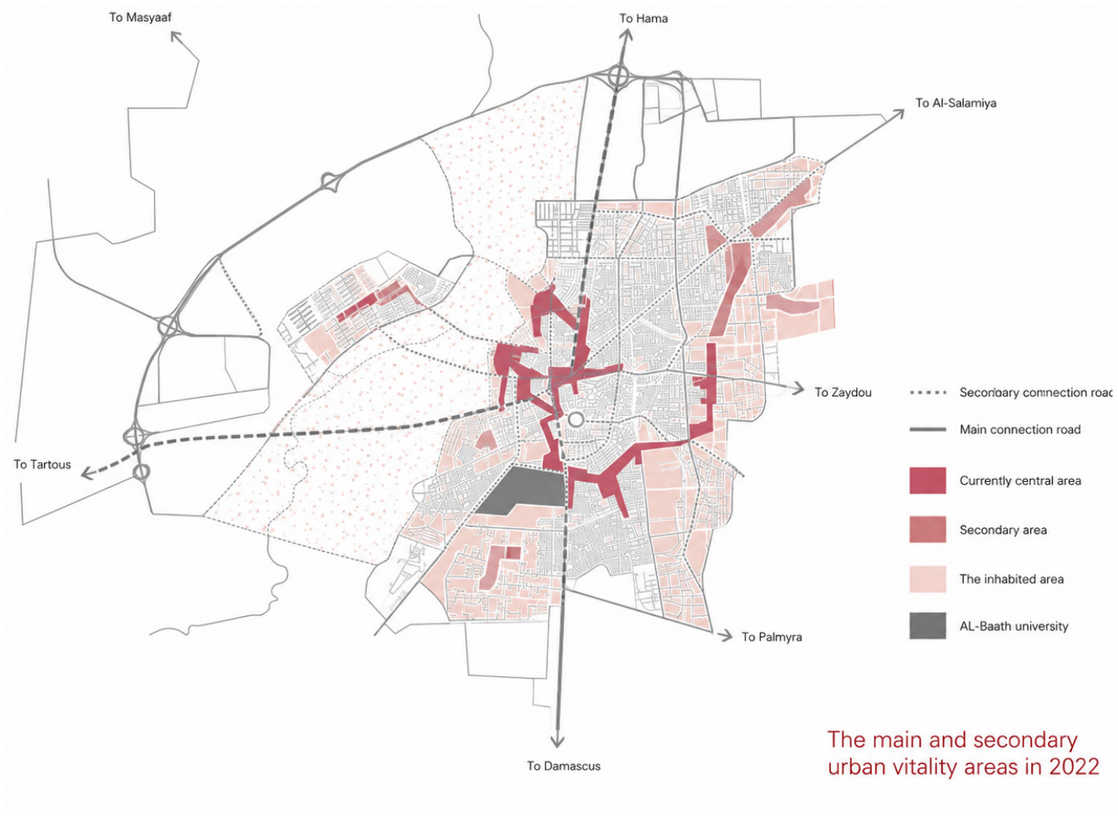


Figure 5 This map shows the distribution of main and secondary vital zones in Homs in 2022. It explains how the conflict changed the way public life was organised in the city. Because open streets, squares, and central public areas became exposed to danger, conflict, and sniper visibility, many former social and economic spaces were abandoned or avoided. Instead, everyday life moved into smaller and safer urban pockets, protected alleys, and spaces between neighbourhoods. Abdelal et al. (2025) describe these spaces as "pockets of survival" and "alleys of livelihood", where residents created alternative vital zones to continue social and economic life during and after the conflict. This created a more introverted urban condition. Public life did not disappear completely, but it became fragmented into separated neighbourhood-based zones. Social interaction, small-scale trade, and everyday transactions continued in smaller pockets instead of a connected public network. This caused separation between groups within the city and weakened the continuity of the urban fabric.

For the project, this map shows that recovery should not only repair buildings or streets. It also needs to create safe, open, and accessible public nodes where people can return, gather, work, and move through the city again. A breathing public pocket connected to the bazaar can therefore help reverse the introverted condition of post-conflict urban life and support the reconnection of fragmented areas.

Figure 5 | pockets of survival map | Source: Adapted from Abdelal, Teba, and Gharbi (2025, p. 99), based on Homs City Council mapping.

Phase three | Problem Statement

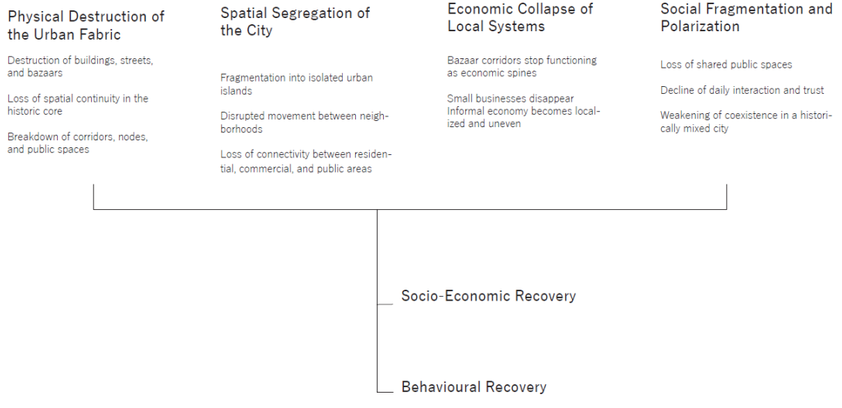


Figure 6 | Problem Statement Diagram

Phase one | Homs Situation

How can a damaged part of Homs Old Town be reactivated through bazaar morphology, using one public-economic node to reconnect fragmented urban fabric, support small-scale local economies, and restore everyday public life?

Socio-economic recovery and behavioural recovery become necessary because the conflict damaged not only the physical fabric, but also the way people move, work, meet, and trust the old town. The project therefore uses spatial intervention to support both local economic life and the return of everyday public use.

The project starts from the idea that the damage in Homs Old Town is not only a physical problem. The conflict destroyed buildings, streets, and parts of the bazaar fabric, but this physical damage also created other forms of damage. When corridors, nodes, and public spaces are broken, the city no longer works as a connected system. Movement becomes interrupted, commercial life becomes weaker, and public spaces lose their role in everyday life.

The first problem is the physical destruction of the urban fabric. In the Old Town, buildings, streets, and bazaar corridors are closely connected to each other. When one part is damaged, it affects the whole network. The loss of spatial continuity means that the historic core becomes harder to move through and harder to use.

This leads to the second problem: spatial segregation. Damaged streets and weakened connections create isolated urban pockets. Residential, commercial, and public areas stop supporting each other. Instead of one connected old town, the city starts to work as separate fragments.

The third problem is the collapse of local economic systems. When bazaar corridors stop functioning as economic spines, small businesses lose visibility, access, and daily users. The economy then becomes localized and uneven, depending on scattered informal activity rather than a connected public-commercial network.

The fourth problem is social fragmentation and polarization. When shared public spaces disappear, daily encounters also disappear. Streets, markets, and public nodes are important because they allow people to meet through normal routines. Without these spaces, trust, coexistence, and public life become weaker.

These four problems show that the damage in Homs Old Town is not only about destroyed buildings. Physical destruction, spatial segregation, economic collapse, and social fragmentation all affect each other. When streets and bazaar corridors are damaged, people cannot move through the old town in the same way. When movement becomes weaker, small businesses lose customers and visibility. When economic activity disappears, public spaces become empty. When public spaces are no longer used, daily interaction and trust between people also decline.

Because of this, physical reconstruction alone is not enough. Rebuilding a wall, a roof, or a façade does not automatically bring back the life of the city. The old town needs socio-economic recovery because residents need places to work, sell, produce, repair, and exchange. Small-scale economic opportunities are necessary for people to return and for the bazaar system to become active again.

At the same time, the old town also needs behavioural recovery. After conflict, people do not immediately use damaged or abandoned areas again. They need safe, visible, and meaningful routes and public spaces that give them a reason to return. Behavioural recovery is therefore about restoring daily habits: walking through the old town, meeting others, visiting workshops, using public spaces, and trusting the city again.

In this project, socio-economic recovery and behavioural recovery are not separate goals. They are connected byproducts of the same spatial strategy. By creating new public-economic nodes within the bazaar morphology, the project aims to reconnect movement, support local livelihoods, and slowly bring everyday public life back into Homs Old Town.

Phase four | Design Statement

Design statement defines the project as a trigger-based recovery strategy for Homs Old Town. Instead of proposing a large-scale reconstruction plan, the project works through small architectural and urban nodes connected to the historic bazaar morphology. By reusing a damaged khan structure, the proposal creates a public-economic node that combines workshops, cultural functions, semi-public spaces, water infrastructure, and local exchange. The aim is to reactivate movement, support small-scale economies, preserve heritage through use, and rebuild everyday behavioural patterns in a safe public environment. Through simple and adaptable construction methods, the project tests how one intervention can encourage gradual renovation and wider regeneration around the bazaar.

This project explores how small architectural and urban triggers can support the recovery of Homs Old Town without forcing a large-scale or invasive reconstruction process. Instead of proposing one complete masterplan that controls the whole area, the project works through carefully selected nodes around the historic bazaar system. These nodes are placed where movement, public space, economy, and infrastructure can be reactivated with simple architectural interventions.

The main idea is to use the bazaar morphology as a framework for recovery. Corridors, courtyards, thresholds, workshops, public pockets, and semi-public spaces are used to create a system that can slowly organize the old town again. The project does not only preserve heritage as a visual object, but uses heritage structures as active triggers for new functions, public life, and local economic exchange.

The proposal focuses on one selected khan structure as a test case. This building becomes a public-economic node that extends the bazaar into a cultural and civic space. It brings together workshops, gathering spaces, water infrastructure, small-scale commerce, and public functions. Through this, the bazaar area is redefined as more than a commercial route. It becomes a public space where residents can work, meet, produce, sell, and use the old town again.

The construction approach is intentionally simple and adaptable. The project uses understandable building methods, replaceable interior systems, and a clear distinction between permanent heritage form and changeable new functions. This allows the building to be installed, repaired, adapted, and reused without depending on large corporate development or heavy external funding.

The goal is to create a recovery system that can continue after the first intervention is built. Once the nodes are activated, they can trigger further renovation, movement, and economic activity around them. In this way, architecture becomes a quiet but strategic tool: it guides movement, supports public life, protects memory, creates economic opportunity, and helps residents rebuild behavioural patterns in a safe and shared urban environment.

Design Question

How can a small public-economic node within Homs Old Town reactivate bazaar morphology and trigger gradual recovery of movement, local economy, public life, and heritage structures?

Extended Design Question

How can the preservation and adaptive reuse of a damaged khan structure become an urban and architectural trigger that reconnects bazaar corridors, creates new public and semi-public functions, supports local economic exchange, and encourages behavioural recovery in post-conflict Homs?

Sub-Questions

Heritage and Adaptive Reuse

How can an existing heritage structure be preserved without freezing it, and how can its original spatial logic support new public functions?

Bazaar Morphology and Local Economy

How can bazaar corridors, thresholds, courtyards, and workshops be used to create small-scale economic opportunities for residents without depending on large corporate development?

Public and Semi-Public Nodes

How can one restored khan become part of a larger network of public nodes across the Old Town?

Behavioural Recovery

How can safe, visible, and active public spaces help people return to the Old Town, rebuild daily routines, and trust shared spaces again?

Construction and Replication

How can simple, adaptable, and low-intrusion building methods make the project easier to install, maintain, and repeat in other selected areas of Homs?

Context Plan and explanations of the urban plan and design decision leading to the project conclusions.

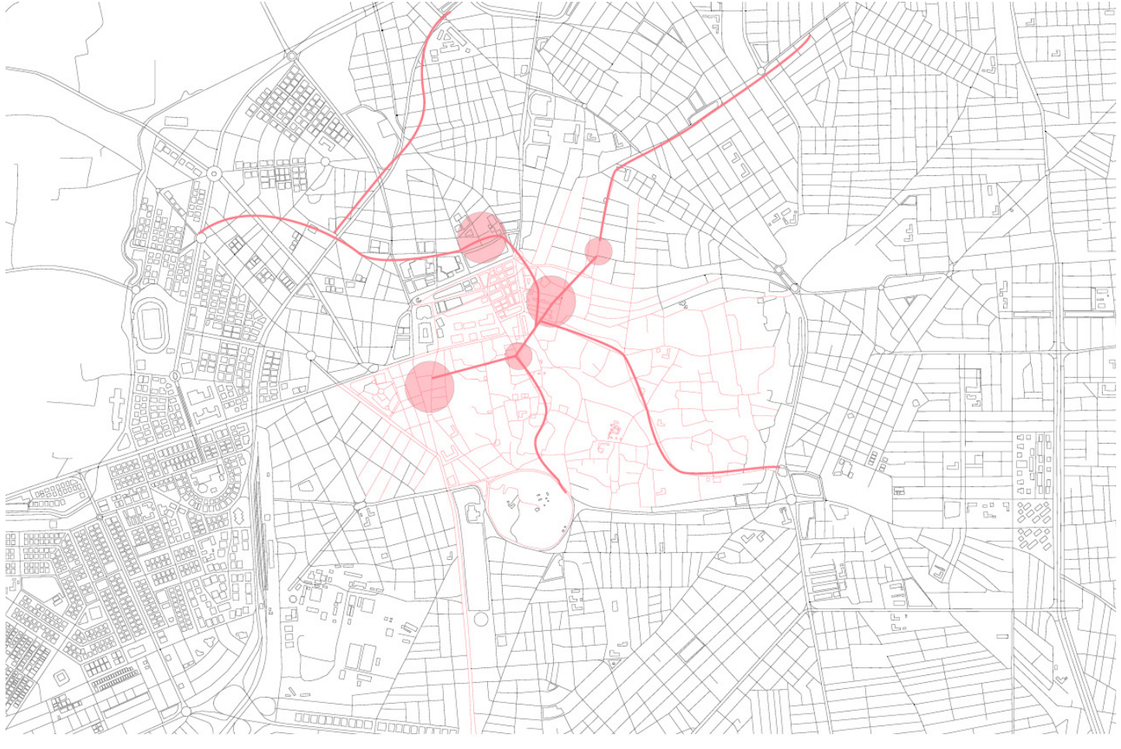


Figure 7 explores possible plot opportunities by identifying area-scale nodes within Homs. After defining the larger city-wide nodes, this map zooms in to study more localised nodes and their relationships. The clock tower and its surroundings are taken as the main central reference point, functioning as an important urban node, especially for vehicle movement and city-wide orientation. From this centre, surrounding functions and connected areas are mapped in order to understand how different parts of the city relate to one another. The larger circles indicate the main nodes, while the red lines show the connection routes between them. Through this, the map helps reveal how activity, access, and movement are distributed at the area scale, and supports the selection of strategic plots and future intervention points within the urban plan.

Figure 7 | Opoortunity Map.

Figure 8 | The selected location is Souq al-Atiq, the covered market of Homs, located within the Old Town and its immediate surroundings. After identifying the larger area-scale nodes, the analysis zooms further into the historic souq area to understand where the project can intervene more precisely. Within this closer study, potential plots are selected according to urban pockets, empty spaces, broken connections, and underused areas around the bazaar. These smaller locations help define where new public-economic nodes can be placed, how missing connections can be repaired, and how the bazaar morphology can extend into the surrounding old town fabric.

Figure 8 | Picked Location

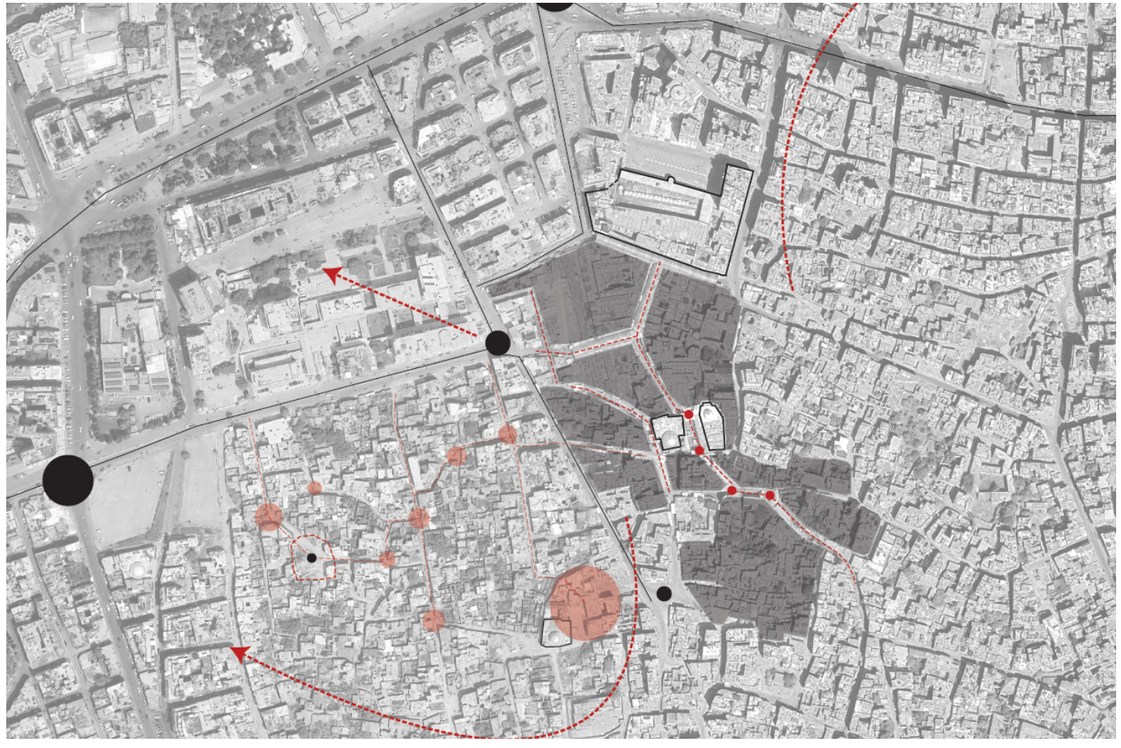


Figure 9 shows the opportunity map of the selected area around Souq al-Atiq. At this scale, the analysis is repeated in more detail to understand the limitations and potentials of the plot. Existing landmarks, including monumental churches and important public buildings, are marked to understand the surrounding identity of the area. The bazaar itself, its exits, pedestrian walking paths, and main movement routes are defined in relation to these landmarks. Through this movement analysis, possible new nodes and expansion points become visible. These opportunities help define where new public functions can be added, how the bazaar can connect to its surroundings, and how the selected plot can become part of a larger urban recovery strategy.

Figure 9 | Opportunity Map

Figure 10 presents the master plan developed from the conclusions of the previous analyses. It explains the larger urban strategy around the selected area by creating new landscapes, public functions, and breathing pockets that expand the public realm around the bazaar. The programme is organised through the logic of urban pockets, extending the existing bazaar fabric while introducing calmer spatial atmospheres in contrast to the dense and intense character of the bazaar halls. Following the rhythmic sequence of the bazaar lanes, specific locations are selected for future development. These points introduce new functions and quieter environments in the form of small urban squares and public nodes. Together, they act as catalysts for wider regeneration in the Old Town, forming a connected network of commercial and public zones that supports both continuity of the historic fabric and future urban growth.

Figure 10 | Context Plan made by the author.

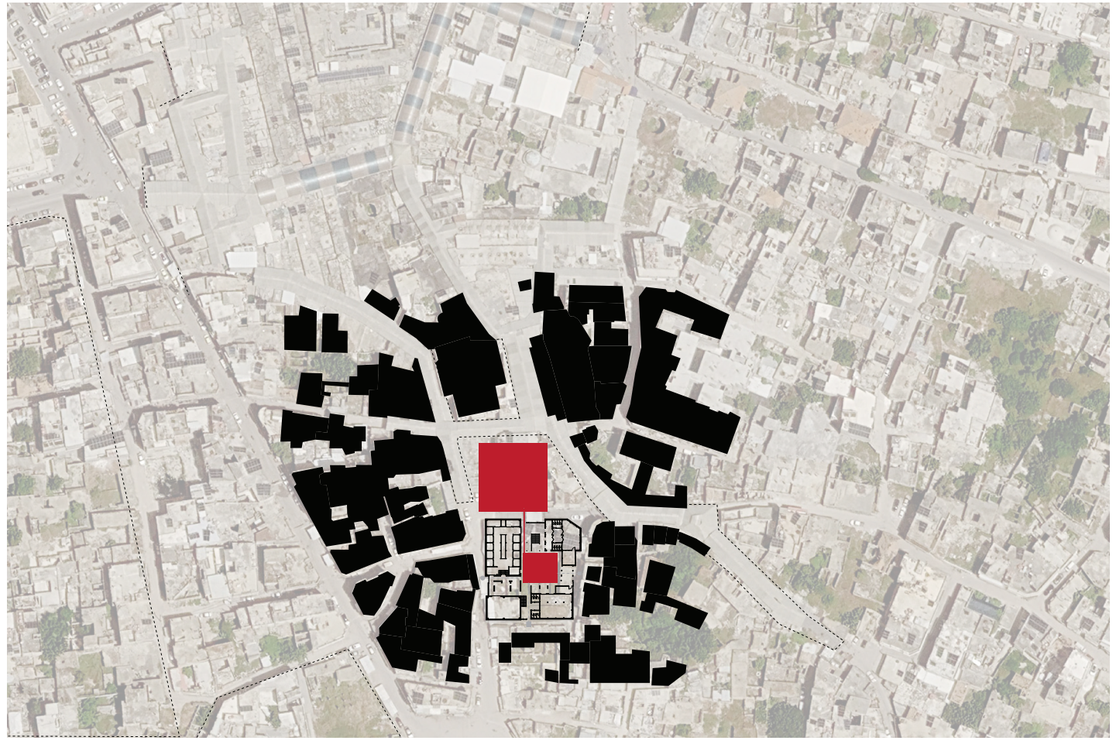


Figure 11 | Close-up interpretation of the selected building block within the zoomed-in urban plan. This drawing explains how the selected intervention area relates to the surrounding bazaar fabric, urban pockets, access routes, and nearby public spaces. At this scale, the masterplan strategy becomes more specific, showing how the building block can act as a public-economic node while connecting to the wider recovery plan of the Old Town.

Figure 11| Urban spaces map made by the author.

Phase six | Research Implementation

This section explains the bazaar as an urban system shaped by movement, trade, public life, and social exchange. It identifies four stages of bazaar formation: the main urban route, commercial corridors, specialised activities, and the expansion into nodes, courtyards, khans, and side pockets. These spatial principles are then applied to Homs Old Town to guide the selection of the historic souq area and transform the plot into a public-economic trigger connected to the wider city.

Bazaar Analysis | Research Summary

This part of the research studies the bazaar not only as a market, but as an urban system. In traditional Middle Eastern cities, bazaars were formed through movement, trade, public life, and the needs of the city. They were not only places for buying and selling. They also included workshops, khans, courtyards, small public spaces, religious buildings, service spaces, and shaded streets. Because of this, the bazaar can be understood as both an economic structure and a public spatial structure.

The research looks at how bazaars are formed through four main steps. First, the bazaar begins from a primary route or main urban axis, usually connected to important city gates, public buildings, or central spaces. Second, commercial activity starts to grow along this route and forms more defined corridors. Third, the corridor becomes more organised through specialization, where different crafts, products, or activities occupy different parts of the market. Fourth, the bazaar expands through nodes, intersections, courtyards, khans, and smaller side pockets, creating a wider network of public and semi-public spaces.

These four steps are used as a design tool for Homs. After analysing the wider city, the main axes, commercial streets, pedestrian areas, green spaces, and large urban nodes are identified. This shows where people already accumulate, where movement is stronger, and where the city has potential for new extensions. With this, the project can define where new public-economic nodes should be placed in relation to the rest of the city.

The main plot is then selected within Homs Old Town, around the historic souq area. This area becomes the heart of the project because it is connected to the damaged bazaar system and to the wider urban recovery strategy. The surrounding streets and neighbourhoods define the main directions of the proposal. By understanding how people move, gather, and use different parts of the city, the project can design new extensions and zones that do not stand alone, but relate back to Homs as a whole.

This step is crucial because it connects the urban plan to the design proposal. The bazaar research gives the project its tools: corridors, thresholds, public nodes, courtyards, khans, and economic pockets. These tools are then used to transform the selected plot into a public-economic trigger for the Old Town.

Figure 12 presents a more in-depth bazaar analysis of the central covered market of Homs. This map is based on observations from Google Earth, Apple satellite imagery, and on-site urban reading in order to understand the current movement structure of the bazaar. The analysis identifies the main routes, surrounding openings, ending points, and directional flows within and around the covered market. By mapping these elements, the figure shows how the bazaar functions today, where its continuity has been broken, which parts have been destroyed, and where spatial gaps have emerged. This helps to understand the current formation level of the bazaar and reveals possible opportunity areas for new public nodes, extensions, and recovery interventions connected to the wider old town fabric.

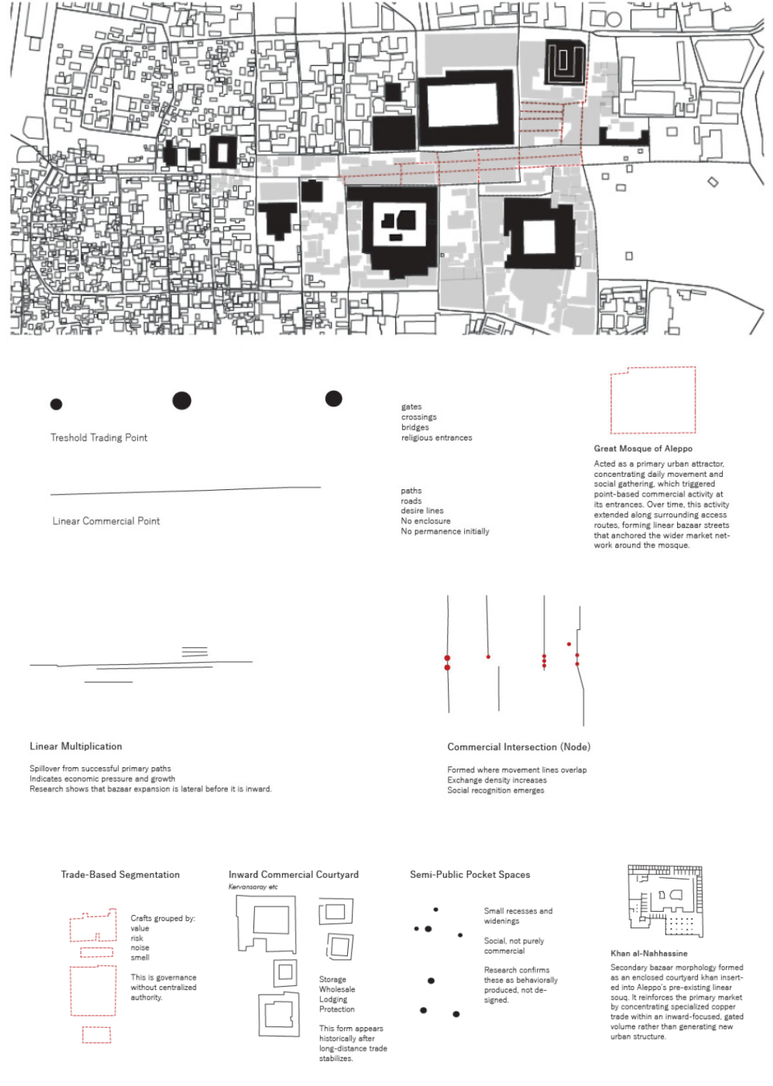
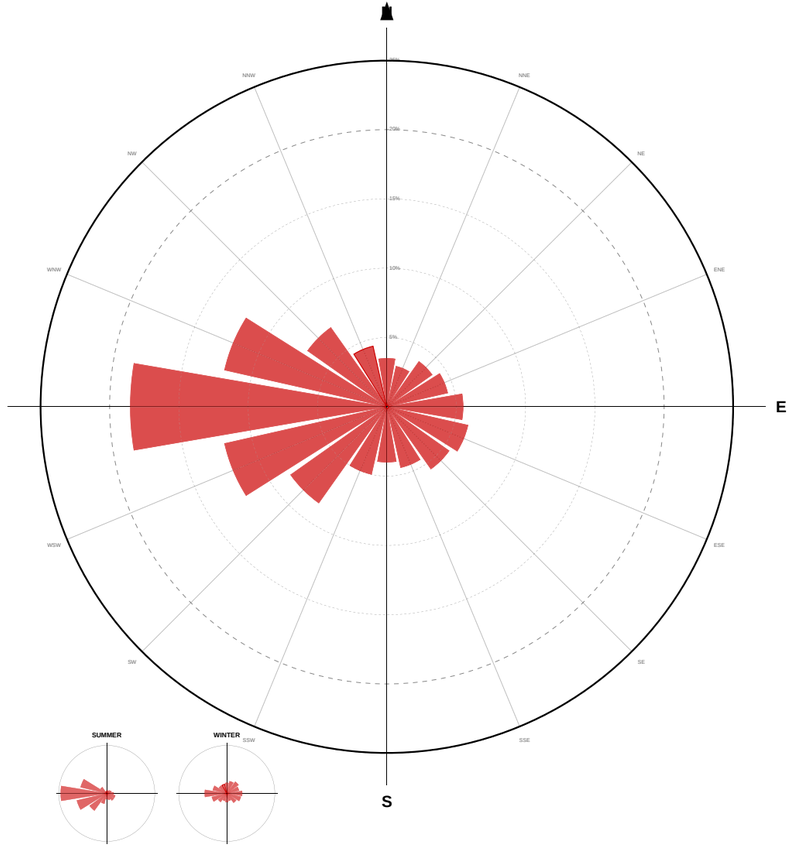


Figure 12 | Bazaar analysis of the covered market of Homs, made by the author. | Source: Author's interpretation based on Google Earth Pro and Apple Maps satellite imagery

Wind Diagram

Wind study afte rAntoni nRaymond—Karuizawa method·adapted for Homs, UmAlZennar(34.73° N)

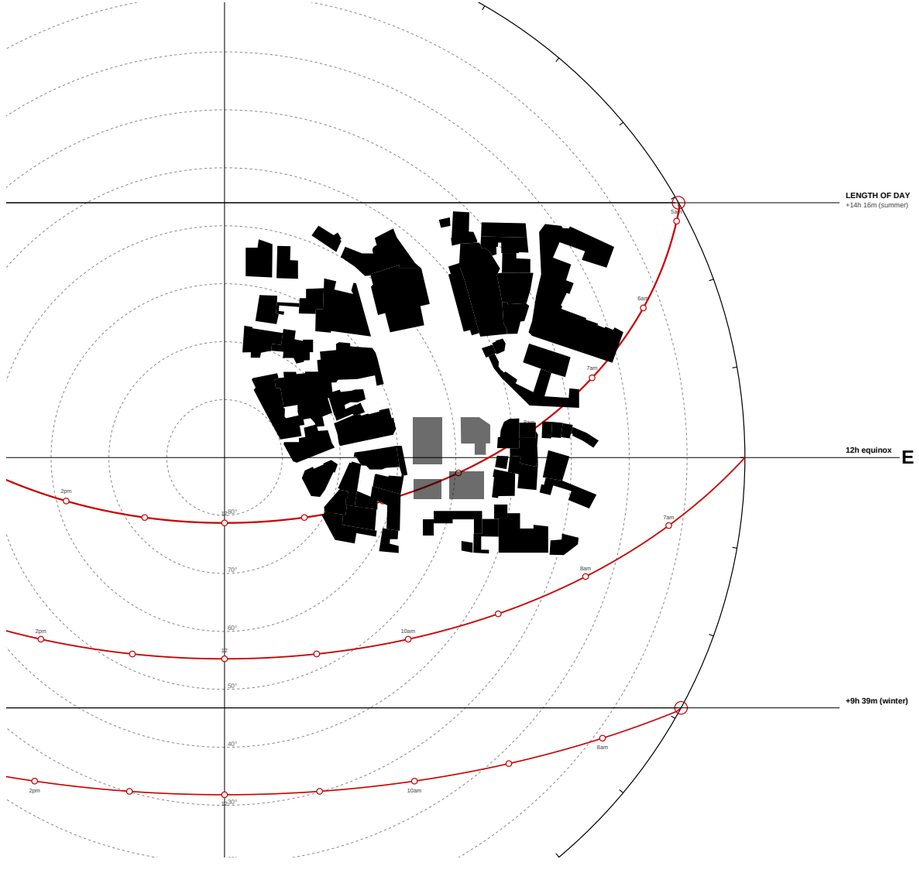


This diagram shows how wind moves through the selected plot and surrounding Old Town fabric. The analysis helps identify where airflow is blocked, where ventilation pockets can form, and how the new public node can support cooler and more comfortable semi-outdoor spaces.

Figure 13 | Wind path diagram | Source: Author's interpretation based on NOAA climate data, solar design principles by Duffie et al. (2020), and sun-path data from the University of Oregon Solar Radiation Monitoring Laboratory (n.d.).

Sun Path Diagram

Sun path study after Antonin Raymond, Karuizawa Summer House(36° N)—adapted for Homs, UmAlZennar(34.73° N).



This diagram shows the sun movement and solar exposure of the selected plot. It helps define shaded areas, roof orientation, solar panel placement, and the need for protected public spaces within the dense bazaar context.

Figure 14 | Sun path diagram | Source: Author's interpretation based on NOAA climate data, solar design principles by Duffie et al. (2020), and sun-path data from the University of Oregon Solar Radiation Monitoring Laboratory (n.d.).

Phase seven| Prep. For Design

Keywords: Homs Old Town, bazaar morphology, urban recovery, public economic nodes, movement routes, behavioural patterns, historic souq, local economy, public pockets, adaptive reuse, khan typology, post conflict reconstruction. This analysis connects the city scale reading of Homs with the bazaar research. By studying historical structure, damaged areas, movement routes, public spaces, and behavioural patterns, the project identifies where the old town is fragmented and where new public economic triggers are needed. The bazaar research provides the spatial tools for the design: corridors, nodes, thresholds, courtyards, khans, and economic pockets. Together, these analyses guide the urban plan, programme, atmosphere, movement strategy, and architectural design.

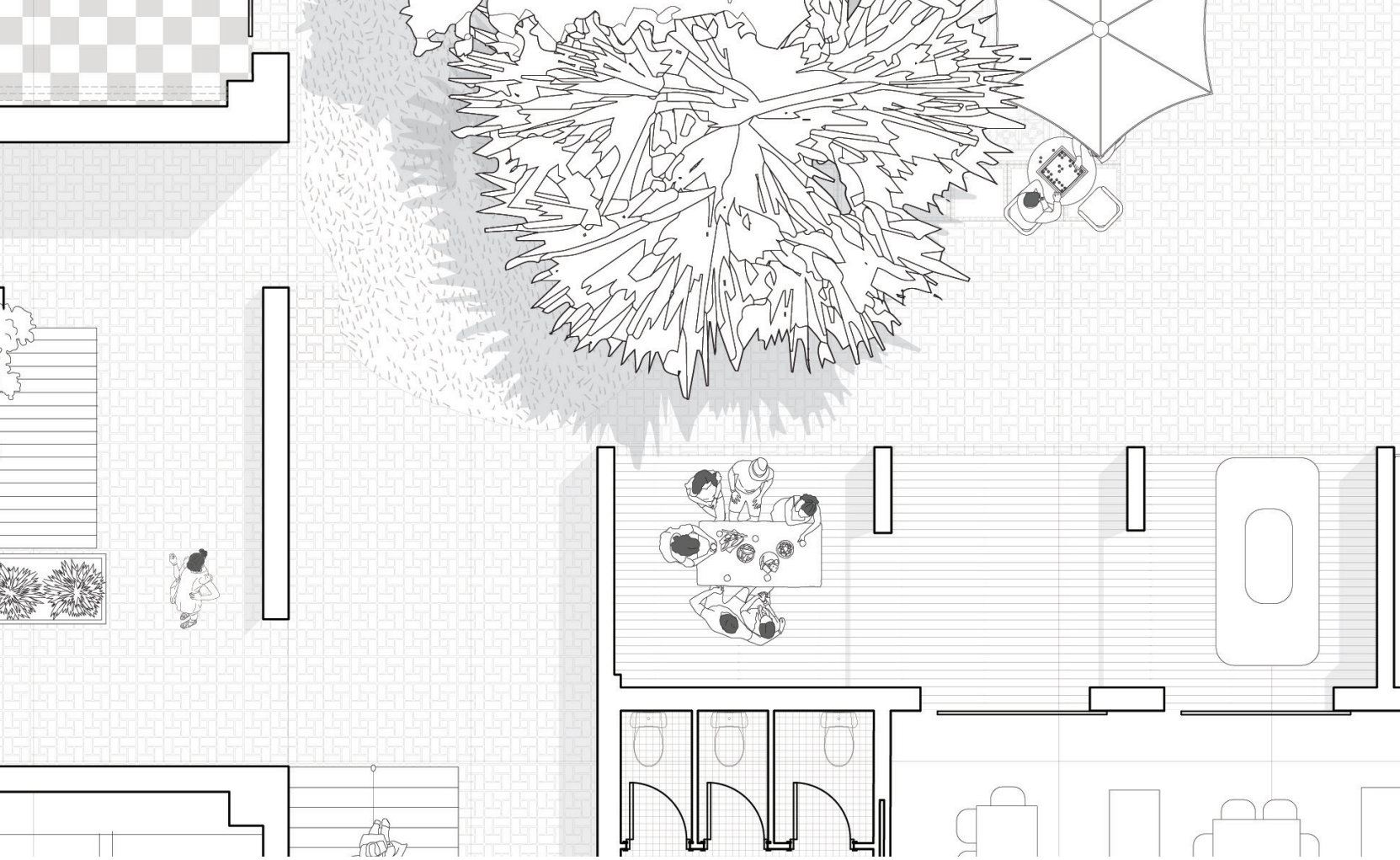
Conclusion

Through the pre-analysis of Homs and the bazaar research, the urban plan and programme of the project can be derived with clearer direction. The first layer of analysis looks at the city itself: its historical structure, damaged areas, movement routes, public spaces, behavioural patterns, and the way people currently use or avoid certain parts of the old town. This creates information about where the city is still active, where it is disconnected, and where new public-economic triggers are needed.

The bazaar analysis then gives the project a spatial method. By studying how bazaars are formed through routes, corridors, nodes, courtyards, thresholds, khans, and surrounding functions, the project gains a set of tools that can be applied to the urban plan. These tools help define how movement should be guided, where public pockets can appear, how economic activity can extend, and how the selected plot can relate to the rest of the old town.

Together, these two analyses create both limitations and opportunities. The limitations come from destruction, fragmented movement, damaged public spaces, and weakened economic systems. The opportunities come from existing routes, remaining heritage structures, possible gathering points, and the potential of the bazaar morphology to reconnect them.

Because of this, the design phase does not start from an isolated building idea. It starts from the relationship between the city, the old souq, the surrounding functions, and the behaviour of people. The programme of the complex, the position of the nodes, the atmosphere of the spaces, and the architectural design of the building are all developed from these observations. In this way, the project begins with a grounded urban logic rather than only a formal concept.



BOOKLET TWO | Project

AR4E010
EXTREME
Graduation Studio
By| Ekin Sarıbaş

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro

Connecting
HOMS

Context Plan and explanations of the urban plan and design decision leading to the project conclusions.

Abstract

Booklet Two presents the architectural proposal developed from the urban and bazaar analysis of Homs Old Town. The project focuses on the end condition of Souq al-Atiq, where the damaged bazaar system loses continuity and becomes a dead edge. Instead of treating this point as an ending, the design turns it into a new public-economic node that extends the bazaar into a cultural and infrastructural complex. The proposal is organised around the renovation and infill of an existing khan ruin, preserving its footprint, outer wall logic, and relationship to the courtyard while allowing the interior to remain flexible and changeable. Four main blocks are connected through transaction zones that mediate between public, semi-public, and quiet functions. Workshops, a restaurant, library, auditorium, courtyard, and water collection system work together to support local economy, public life, and future adaptation. The booklet explains the design logic, spatial organisation, programme, sections, atmosphere, and architectural decisions that shape the project.

Introduction

This booklet explains the architectural project that follows from the context and urban strategy developed in Booklet One. After analysing the post-conflict condition of Homs, the old town, and the damaged bazaar morphology, the project focuses on one specific intervention point: the end of Souq al-Atiq. This location is important because it sits where the bazaar system becomes weaken due to the conflict, where movement slows down, and where the historic commercial spine risks ending without a clear public continuation.

The project does not try to replace the bazaar with a new isolated building. Instead, it uses the logic of the bazaar to extend it. The proposal creates a new public-economic node that can support workshops, trade, gathering, learning, performance, and everyday use. In this way, the building becomes both an end and a beginning: the end of the existing bazaar corridor, but also the start of a new public sequence for the Old Town.

The design is based on the renovation and infill of an existing khan ruin. The existing walls, footprint, and courtyard logic are treated as permanent elements that preserve the identity of the place. At the same time, the interior structure, partitions, functions, and service layers are designed to remain flexible. This allows the building to adapt to future needs without losing its connection to the historic fabric of Homs.

The building is organised into four main blocks and four transaction zones. Each block has a different role: the workshop block continues the productive rhythm of the bazaar, the commercial and restaurant block attracts people from the city, the library creates a quiet space for individual focus, and the auditorium creates a collective space for meetings, lectures, screenings, and events. Between these blocks, the transaction zones act as thresholds, passages, buffers, and shared flexible spaces.

At the centre of the project, the courtyard works as an unprogrammed public heart. It connects the different functions while also creating a calmer breathing pocket inside the dense bazaar context. Environmental strategies, such as rainwater collection, shaded circulation, natural ventilation, and solar roof tiles, are integrated into the architectural form. Through these layers, the project becomes more than a renovated building. It becomes a small recovery infrastructure for public life, local economy, heritage continuity, and future adaptation in Homs Old Town.

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Context Plan and explanations of the urban plan and design decision leading to the project conclusions.

Figure 1 | Urban Plan big scale, 1:1000

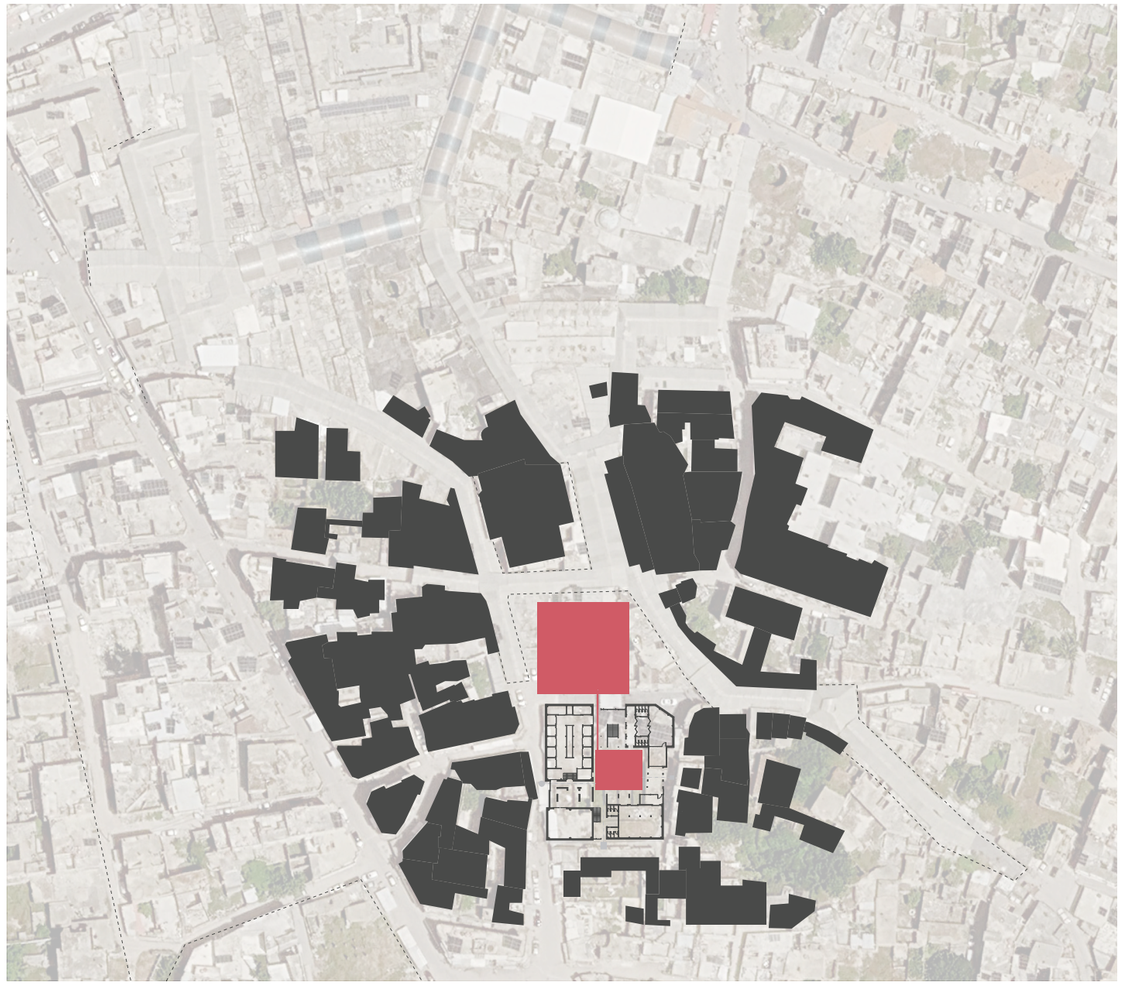


Figure 2 | Master Plan, 1:500

Phase one | Homs Situation

Figure 3 | Pre-Existing Structure before the development.

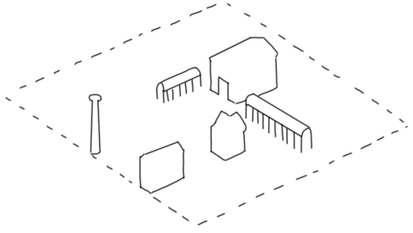
Phase one | Homs Situation

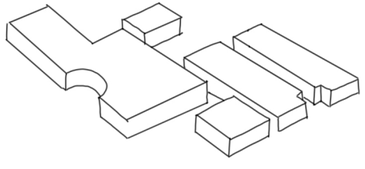
Why this location end of the bazaar

The bazaar of Homs Old Town historically operated as a connected network of corridors, nodes, and courtyards. War severed these connections and left the edge of the bazaar as a dead end, a place where movement stopped instead of continuing. This project does not sit inside the bazaar. It sits at the end of it, precisely because this is where the system is most broken and most in need of reactivation. By placing a public node here, the bazaar is not only repaired, but extended. The edge becomes a destination. People who would not have walked this far into the Old Town now have a reason to come, and by doing so, they also reactivate the corridor leading to this point. The building becomes the end of one system and the beginning of another.

The renovation approach preserving the historical shape

This is not a completely new building. It is the renovation and infill of an existing ruin. The original khan had a specific footprint, volume, and proportion between its blocks. This shape is the identity of the place; it is what makes it a khan and not something else. The design decision is therefore to preserve this shape as a permanent given. The outer boundary of each block, its height, and its relationship to the street and courtyard remain fixed. What happens inside is designed to be more flexible. The functions, partitions, loft structures, and insulation can change, be replaced, or adapted over time. This distinction between permanent form and changeable interior becomes the core of the architectural approach. It allows the building to serve different communities and future needs over the next hundred years, without losing its identity as this particular khan in this specific place in Homs.





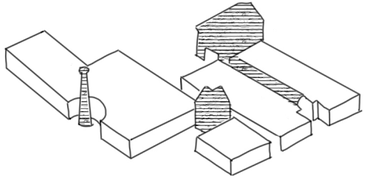


Figure 4 | Desgin Approach Diagram

Design Approach, Principle

The design is organised into four main blocks and four connection zones. These blocks are defined by the assumed limitations of the existing historical walls and the layout of the ruins. Between the four main indoor and outdoor blocks, grey areas are created and defined as transaction zones. Each transaction zone has its own spatial function, while also sharing functions with the two blocks it connects.

For example, Transaction Zone 1 is shaped as a maze-like passage using the existing ruin walls. This zone creates a route from the busy road toward the courtyard, while also slowing down the pace of movement. At the same time, it sits between the workshop block and the auditorium, allowing both functions to open toward it when needed. In this way, the transaction zone can become a flexible shared area for events, circulation, gathering, or temporary activities.

The main blocks are formed through the preserved historical walls, completed where necessary with masonry, and combined with a lightweight internal structure. The transaction zones are treated more flexibly. They are made through a mixture of historical masonry walls and demountable structures connected to the main blocks. This strategy allows the project to respond to future functional changes, while keeping the historical wall system and ruin layout as the main spatial framework.

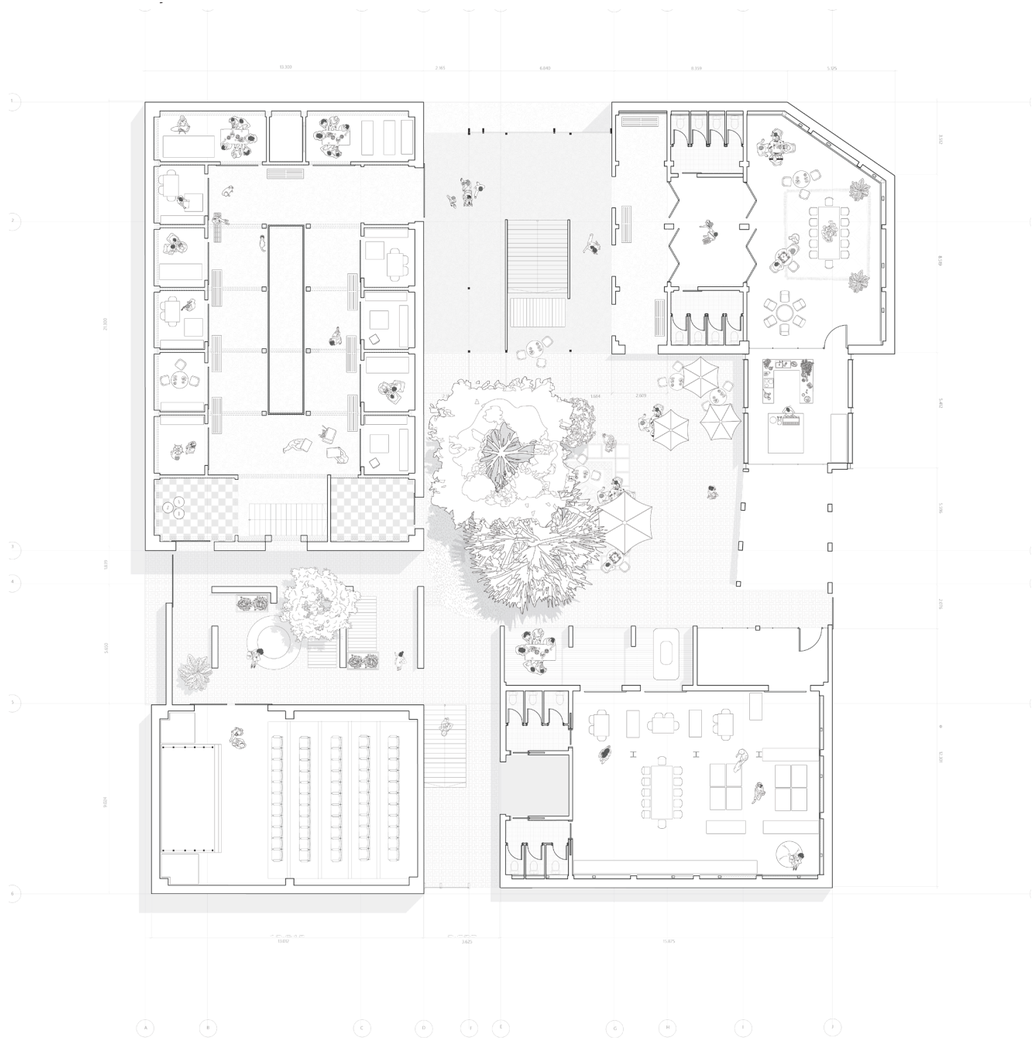


Figure 5 | Ground Floor Plan, 1:285.7

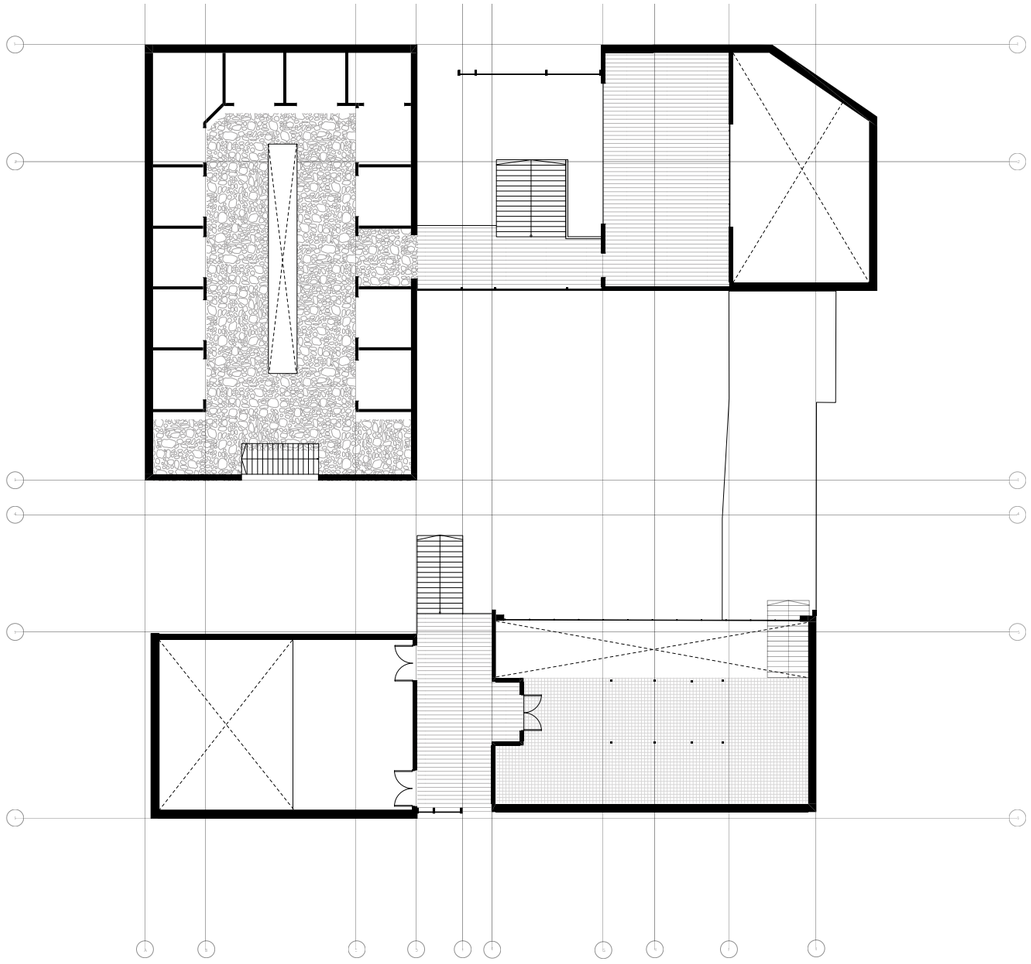


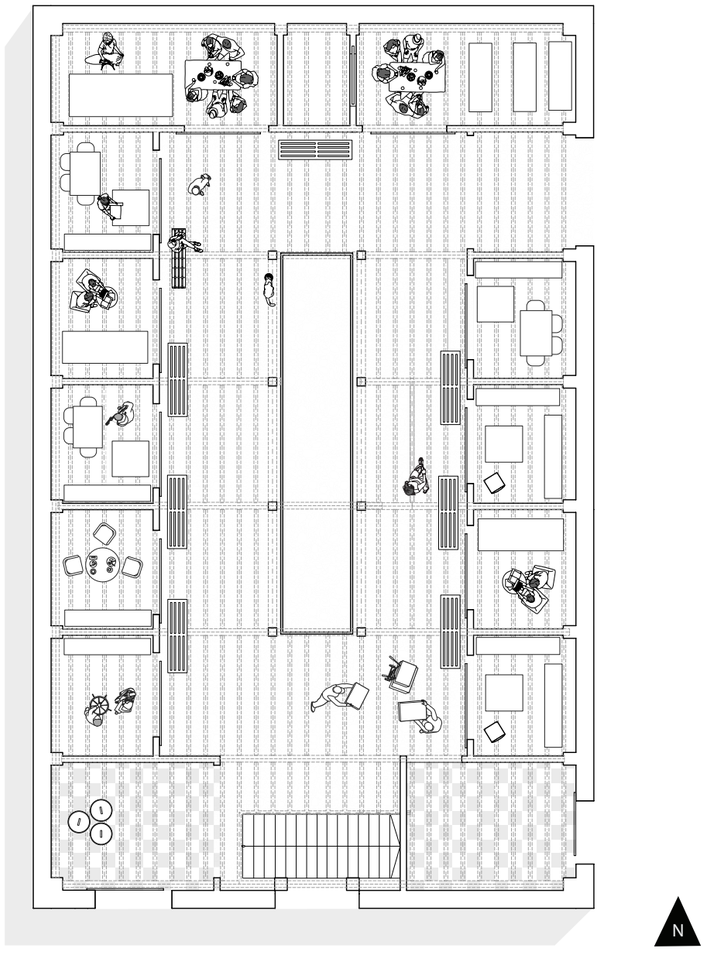
Figure 6 | First Floor Plan, 1: 285.7

The first block you encounter from the bazaar corridor has no door. There is no strong threshold or formal moment of entry; you walk from the street directly into the space. This is intentional. The workshops and craft spaces are designed as an extension of the bazaar, not as a separate building. Merchants can work with their doors open, goods can spill out, and activity remains visible from outside. This openness makes the block active, accessible, and connected to the public rhythm of the souq.

This semi-public character also makes the block the right place for the water collection system. The roof slopes inward on all four sides toward the centre, reversing the typical roof logic. Instead of shedding water away from the building, it collects it. When it rains, water runs down the sloped roof toward a central gutter and enters pipes embedded inside the structural columns. In this way, the columns are not only carrying the roof load, but also working as the drainage infrastructure of the building. Keeping the pipes inside the columns makes the system less visible from the interior and protects it from heat and physical damage.

Solar panels are placed on the upper surface of the slanted roof, so the roof performs two environmental functions at the same time: harvesting energy from above and collecting rainwater through its form. In Homs, where rainfall is seasonal and water is limited, collecting every drop becomes important. The building therefore turns its most exposed and active surface into a productive infrastructure.

The collected water travels down through the columns and arrives at the central pool garden on the ground floor, the 17 square metre planted area shown in the plan. This garden is not only decorative; it becomes the visible face of the water system, showing that the building is collecting, storing, and reusing water. Beneath this planted garden sits the rainwater depot, a sealed underground cistern that stores the collected water for later use.



Fiigure 7 | Bazaar Floor Plan

Semi-public Bazaar Extention | workshops and water collection

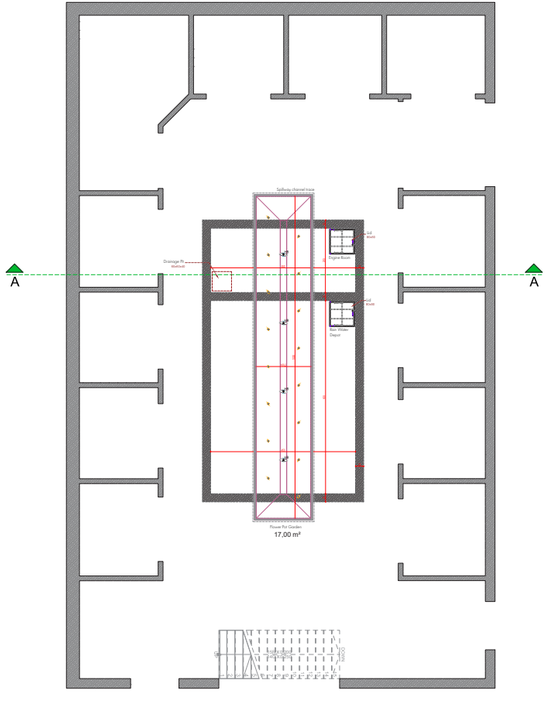


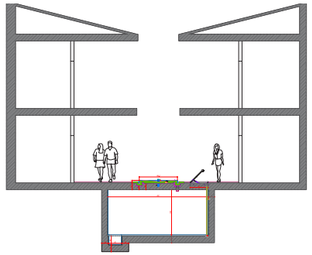
Figure 8 | Bazaar Rain catcher plan

Water collection system — full talking point

The rainwater depot has two modes. In normal conditions, the stored water feeds the garden and can be used for washing and other non-potable building functions. However, in times of water shortage, which in Homs is not a hypothetical situation but a recurring reality, the depot can also work as a reserve. With the correct filtration, preservation, and safety control, this water can be distributed to the surrounding community for appropriate non-potable use. In this way, the building does not only serve its own users. It also becomes a small water infrastructure node for the neighbourhood.

The spillway channel manages overflow during heavy rain. When the depot is full, excess water is redirected through the spillway instead of being wasted or damaging the building. The engine room supports the system by housing the pump and technical equipment needed when active water distribution is required.

The whole system is clearly readable in section. At the top, the slanted roof collects rainwater. The columns carry the water down. At ground level, the garden pool becomes the visible collection point. Below ground, the cistern stores the water. This makes the system both technical and architectural. Every visible element has a role in the cycle, turning infrastructure into part of the spatial experience of the building.



Commercial Restaurant Block

This block is the most visible part of the building from the city. The angled corner wall faces the street and cuts toward the approaching visitor, creating a gesture that pulls people into the project. It works as an urban invitation, especially for people arriving from outside the bazaar. Once inside, the space becomes deeper and more private through a sequence of layers.

The first layer is the most public one: the café counter facing the transaction zone. This part stays connected to the bazaar rhythm, allowing quick encounters, informal exchange, and visible daily activity. The second layer is the restaurant seating area. It is still public, but more sheltered and less exposed from the outside. Here, the intensity of the bazaar starts to soften. The third layer contains the kitchen and back rooms, which are fully enclosed and functional.

In this block, privacy is managed through depth rather than doors alone. As you move further inside, the sound of the bazaar fades, the ceiling becomes lower, and the space feels more protected and personal. The block therefore works as a transition between the city, the bazaar, and the inner atmosphere of the building. It attracts people from outside the bazaar and gradually feeds them into the rest of the project.

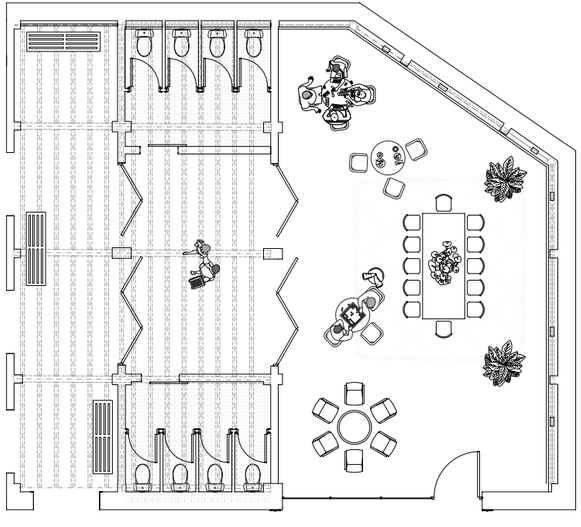


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Figure 9 | Restaurant Block

The Library

The library is designed as the quietest and most controlled block in the building. The dotted grid in the bottom-right block represents the reading table arrangement. Its regular and calm organisation creates a direct contrast to the more irregular, open, and active spaces in the rest of the plan.

The library can be accessed independently from Transaction 2 above and Transaction 3 on the left. This means it can be reached from both the commercial side and the auditorium side without needing to pass through the courtyard. Because of this, the library can operate on its own schedule, even when the rest of the building is closed or functioning differently.

Two sides of this block face away from the street, giving it the most protected external condition in the project. It is placed at the end of the spatial gradient: the furthest point from the sound and intensity of the bazaar, while still remaining inside the bazaar building. In this way, the library becomes a place for individual focus, reading, and quiet retreat within the larger public-economic system.

N

Figure 10 | Library Block

The Auditorium

The auditorium is the most enclosed and acoustically controlled space in the building. The seating rows face the stage at the top of the block, while the main entry happens from Transaction 4 on the right. Unlike the workshop, café, or restaurant areas, this space is not designed for constant visual openness. It needs separation, controlled light, and a stable interior atmosphere.

The auditorium sits furthest from the street. It is protected by the courtyard on one side and the narrow back street on the other, creating a double buffer from the noise and movement of the city. This position makes it suitable for collective events that need focus, such as lectures, performances, community meetings, and film screenings.

The concrete shell of the auditorium is fixed, forming the permanent architectural structure of the block. However, the interior lining, seating configuration, acoustic treatment, and stage arrangement belong to the changeable layer of the project. This allows the auditorium to adapt to different uses over time while keeping the main khan structure and spatial identity intact.

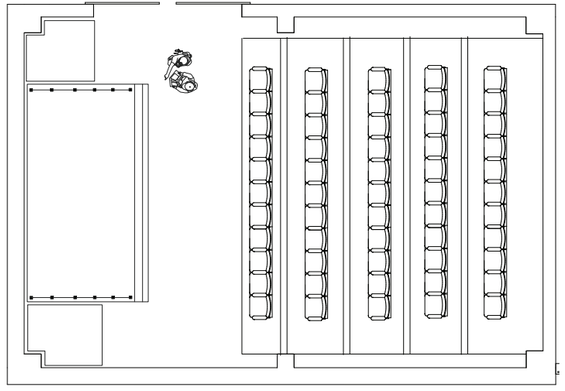

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Figure 11| Auditorium Block

Transaction 1

Transaction 1 does the hardest work of the four. It connects the most open space in the building, the doorless khan, to the most enclosed space, the auditorium. The spatial and atmospheric difference on either side is the greatest anywhere in the plan. To handle this, the threshold works in two steps: first, a compression as you leave the noise and openness of the khan, then a small intermediate buffer zone, and finally the auditorium entry.

A rubble wall fragment creates a natural narrow passage here, an irregular opening through the existing masonry that forces you to slow down before entering the quiet. This is the greatest contrast in the whole plan: from a doorless open space to a fully enclosed one. The threshold does the decompression work before you enter the quiet.

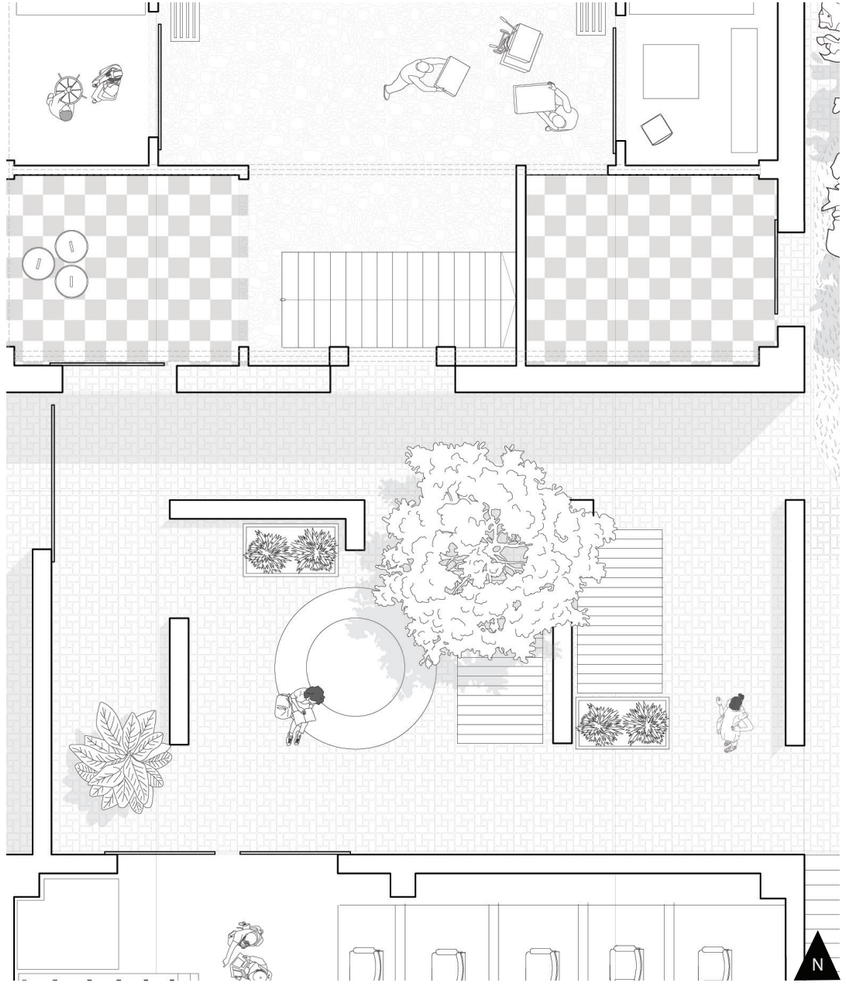

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Figure 12 | Transaction 1

Transcation 2

The bazaar continuation and pavement

The building does not begin at a door. It begins at the pavement. The existing bazaar corridor from the top left enters the plot as a continuation of its own paving, material, and rhythm. There is no clear moment where the user consciously crosses into the building. Instead, the street gradually becomes the building.

Transaction 1 works as this in-between zone. It is covered but open-sided, meaning it is neither fully street nor fully interior. It becomes the spatial negotiation between the city and the khan. Merchants from the bazaar, restaurant visitors, and workshop users all pass through the same entry zone without being separated.

This overlap is intentional. It keeps the economic energy of the bazaar alive at the entry point of the building and prevents the project from turning its back on the street it is meant to reactivate. The bazaar energy does not stop at the building edge; it enters, spreads, and distributes into the rest of the project.

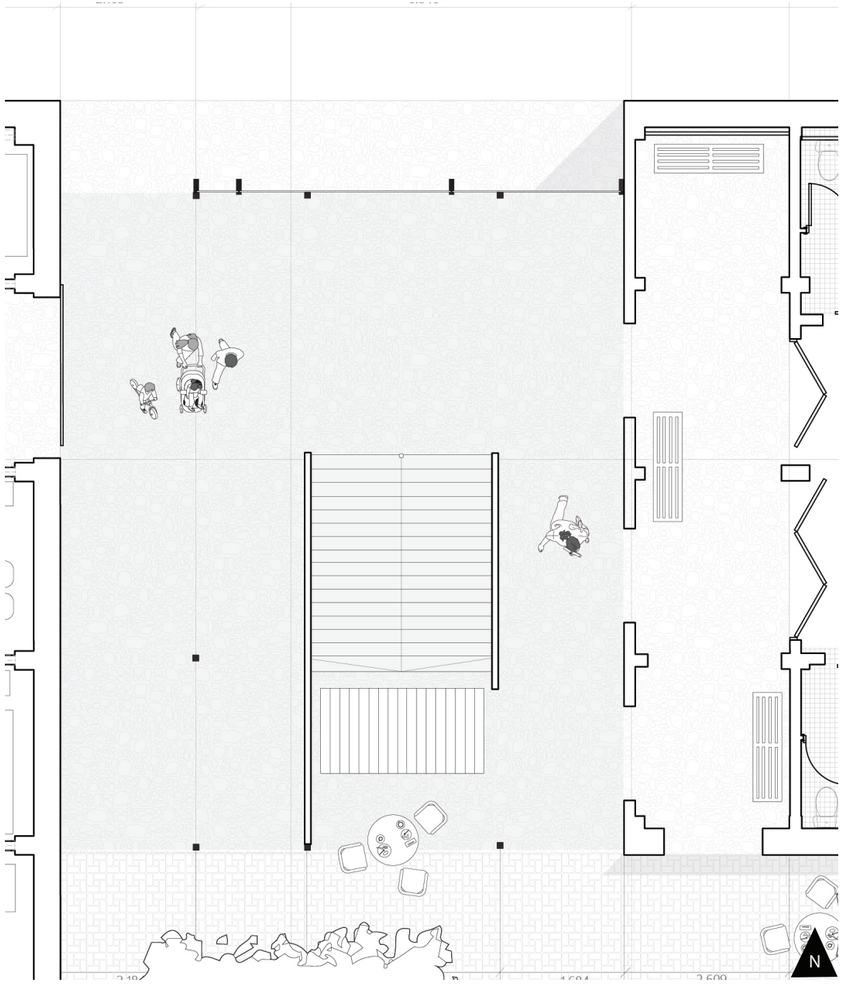


Figure 13 | Transaction 2

Transaction 3

Transaction 3 marks the transition between the commercial block and the library. The passage narrows slightly before opening into the library entrance, creating a moment of compression and release. This small spatial change prepares the body before the function fully changes.

As you move through the passage, the atmosphere shifts from the warm and active surfaces of the restaurant toward the cooler and more controlled light of the library. The change is felt through the thickness of the wall, the material underfoot, and the gradual drop in ambient noise. It is a short moment, but an important one, because it prepares the visitor to leave the public-commercial rhythm and enter a quieter space of focus.

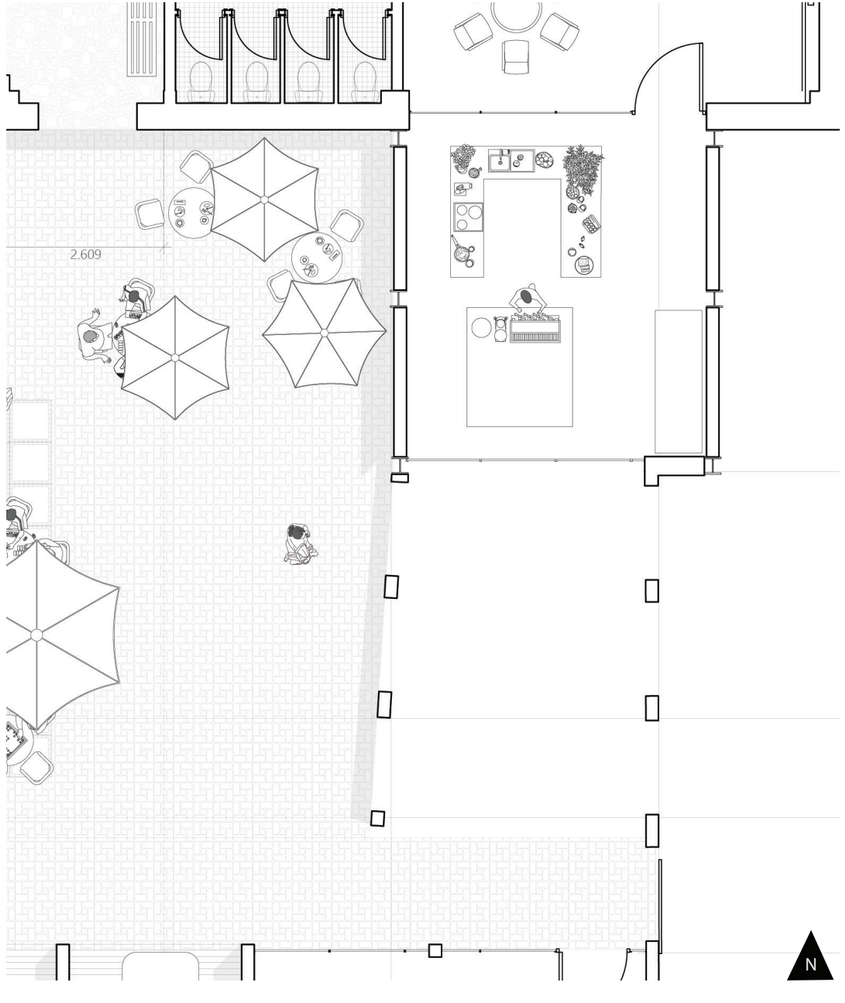


Figure 14 | Transaction 3

Transaction4

Transaction 4 is the most internal threshold in the building, positioned between the two quietest spaces: the auditorium and the library. It manages the shift between two different kinds of silence. The auditorium needs collective silence, where people listen together during lectures, performances, meetings, or screenings. The library needs individual silence, where people read, study, and focus alone.

When an event is taking place in the auditorium, this threshold must prevent sound from disturbing the library. The offset openings, wall thickness, and buffer space between the two rooms help absorb and slow down the movement of sound. This makes Transaction 3 more than a passage. It becomes an acoustic and spatial filter between collective concentration and individual retreat.

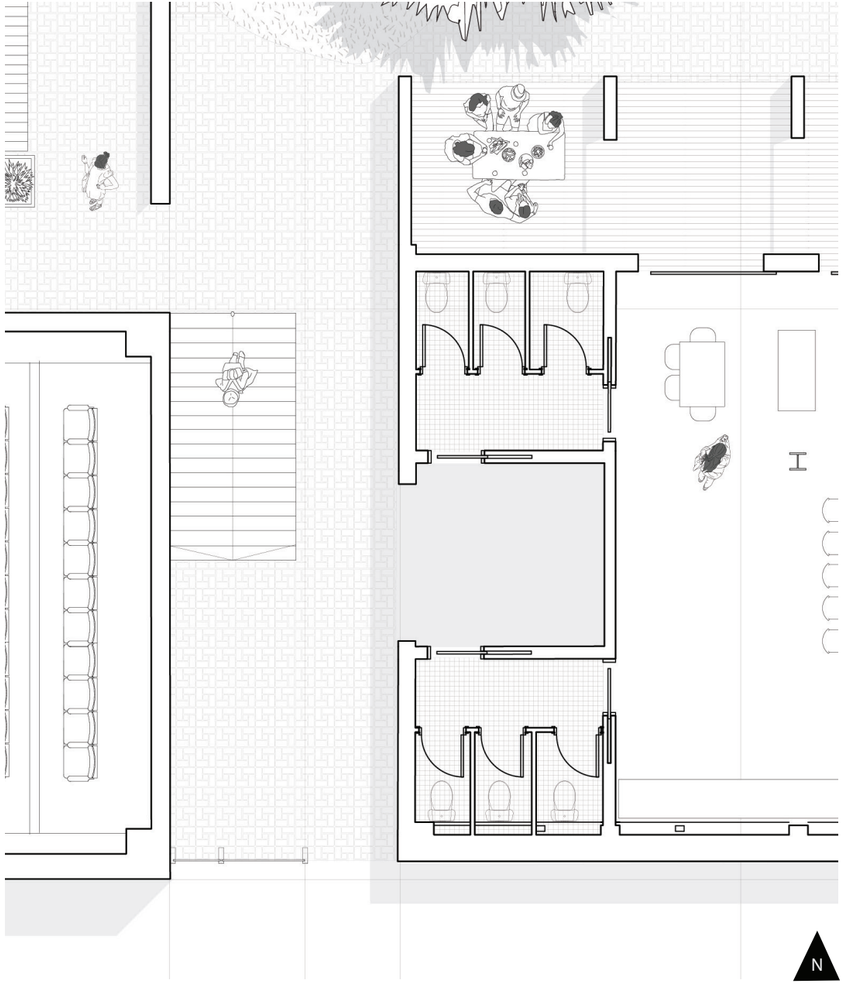


Figure 15 | Transaction 4

The courtyard — unprogrammed centre

The courtyard is the centre of gravity of the whole plan. Every block has either a visual or physical relationship to it, which makes it the shared heart of the building. It does not belong to one function only. Instead, it connects the workshops, restaurant, library, auditorium, and circulation spaces through a common open centre.

The tree marks the middle of the courtyard, giving the space shade, life, and orientation. There is no fixed furniture and no fixed programme. The courtyard offers a flat, open surface and allows users to decide how to occupy it. It can become a place for gathering, resting, waiting, informal events, or simply passing through.

The rubble wall edges and slightly irregular entries from different sides prevent the courtyard from feeling like an empty designed void. Instead, it feels found, as if it already belonged to the ruin and was reactivated by the project. Climatically, the courtyard also works as a thermal buffer. The surrounding building mass shades the ground during much of the day, helping the space remain cooler than the exposed street.

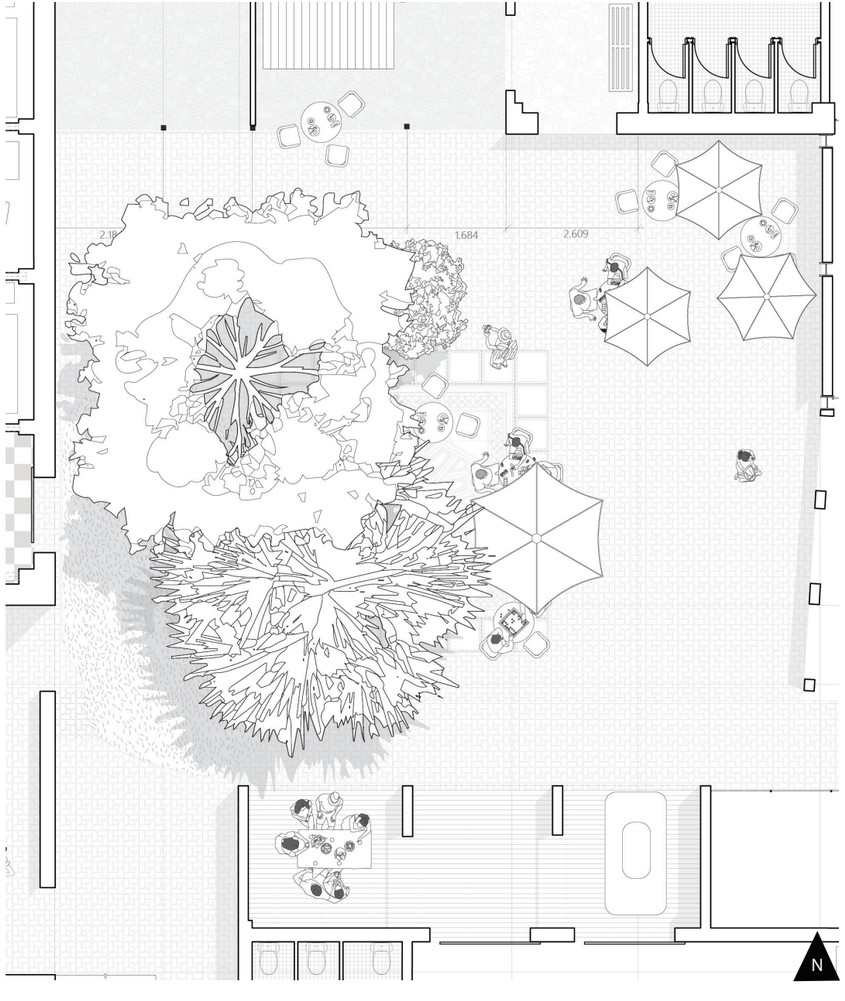


Figure 16 | Courtyard

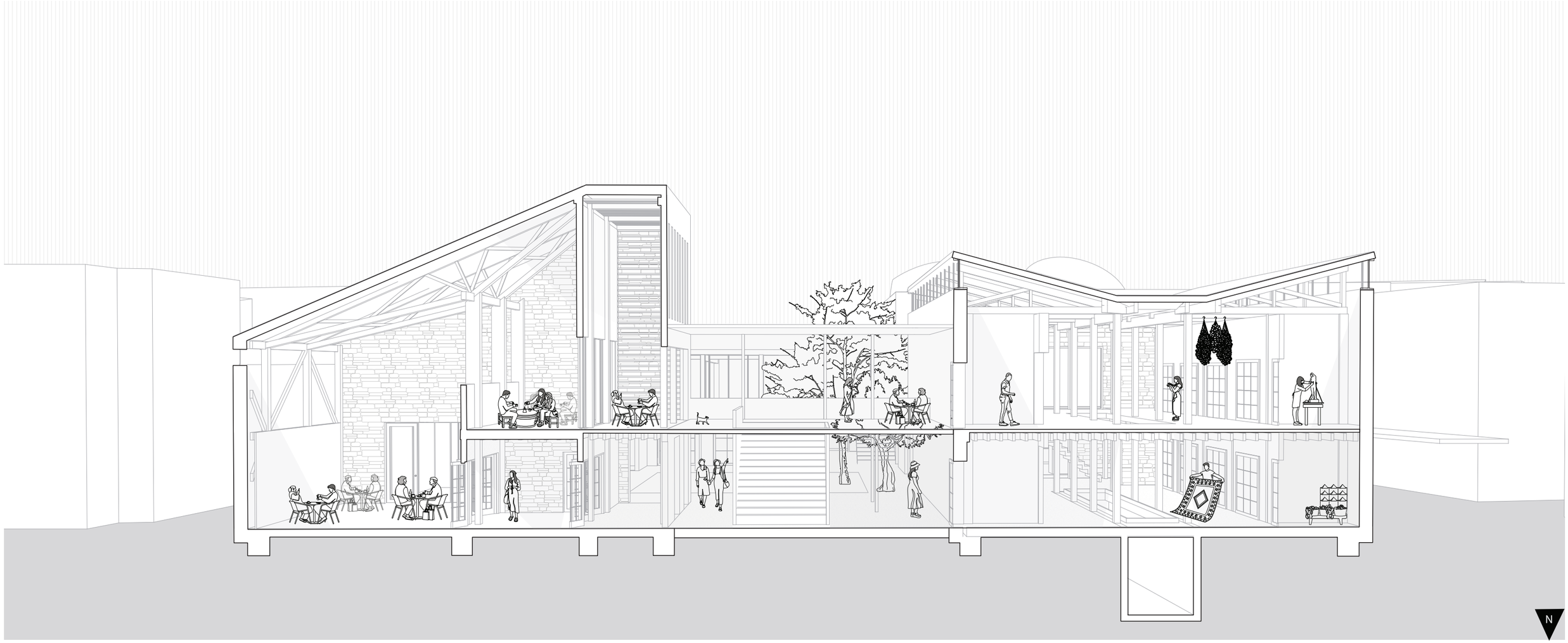


Figure 17 | Section Plan , 1:125

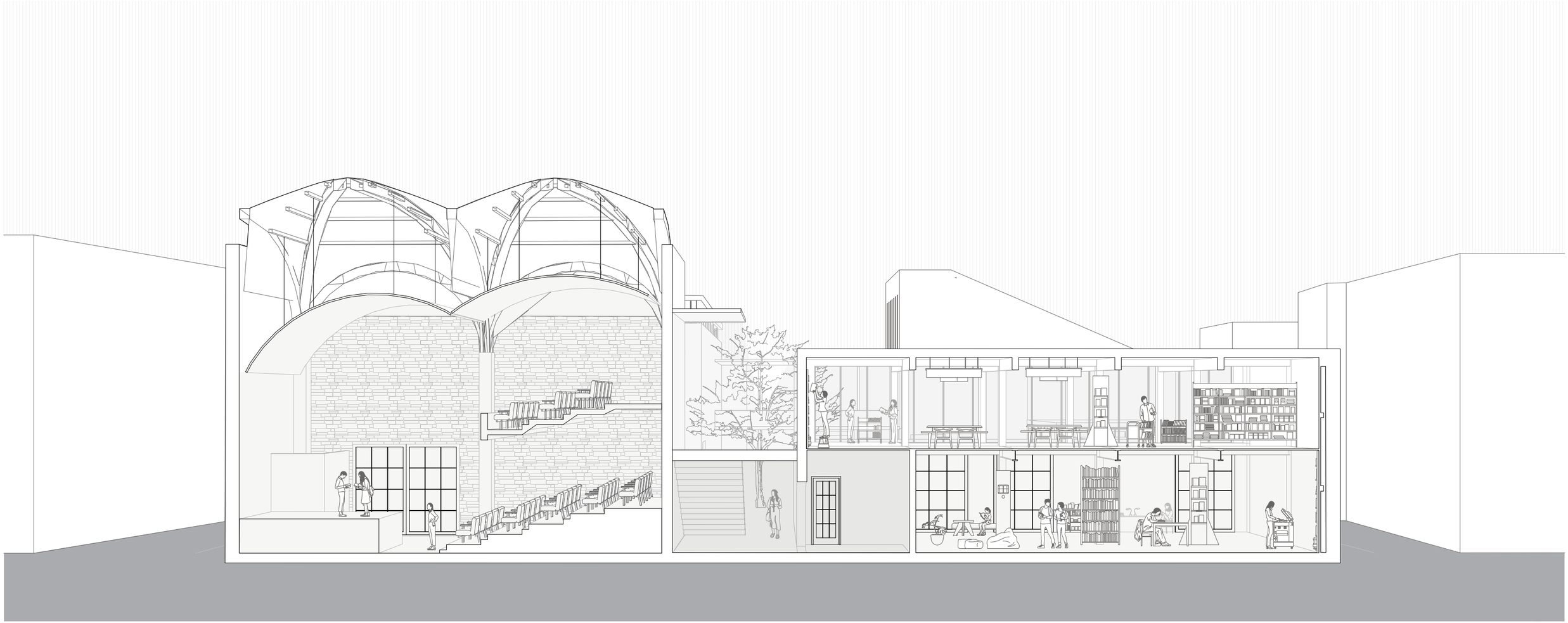


Figure 18 | Section Plan, 1:125

Semi-public Bazaar extention | workshops and water collection

The 1:20 section shows the functionality of the bazaar extension and workshop block. In this section, the relationship between light, water, structure, and movement becomes visible. Natural light enters through the roof gap and the water collection opening, while the curtain wall at the edge of the historical wall brings additional light into the interior. This creates a brighter and more open atmosphere inside the bazaar extension.

The main spatial element of this block is the water collection gap and atrium. The roof opening allows rainwater to drip down toward the reflection pool, turning the water system into a visible part of the space. On rainy days, this creates a cooling effect, both physically and atmospherically, while also giving the building a sense of openness. The centre of the block becomes a shared looking point, where users can pause, gather, and observe the movement of water and light.

This also changes the role of the circulation spaces. The hallways are not only used for walking between workshops. They become flexible spatial areas where people can slow down, look around, and use the space differently. The reflection pool and surrounding passages can also support temporary exhibitions, displays, or collective activities. In this way, the workshop block becomes more than a bazaar passage. It becomes a gallery-like public space that combines movement, production, preservation, and pause.

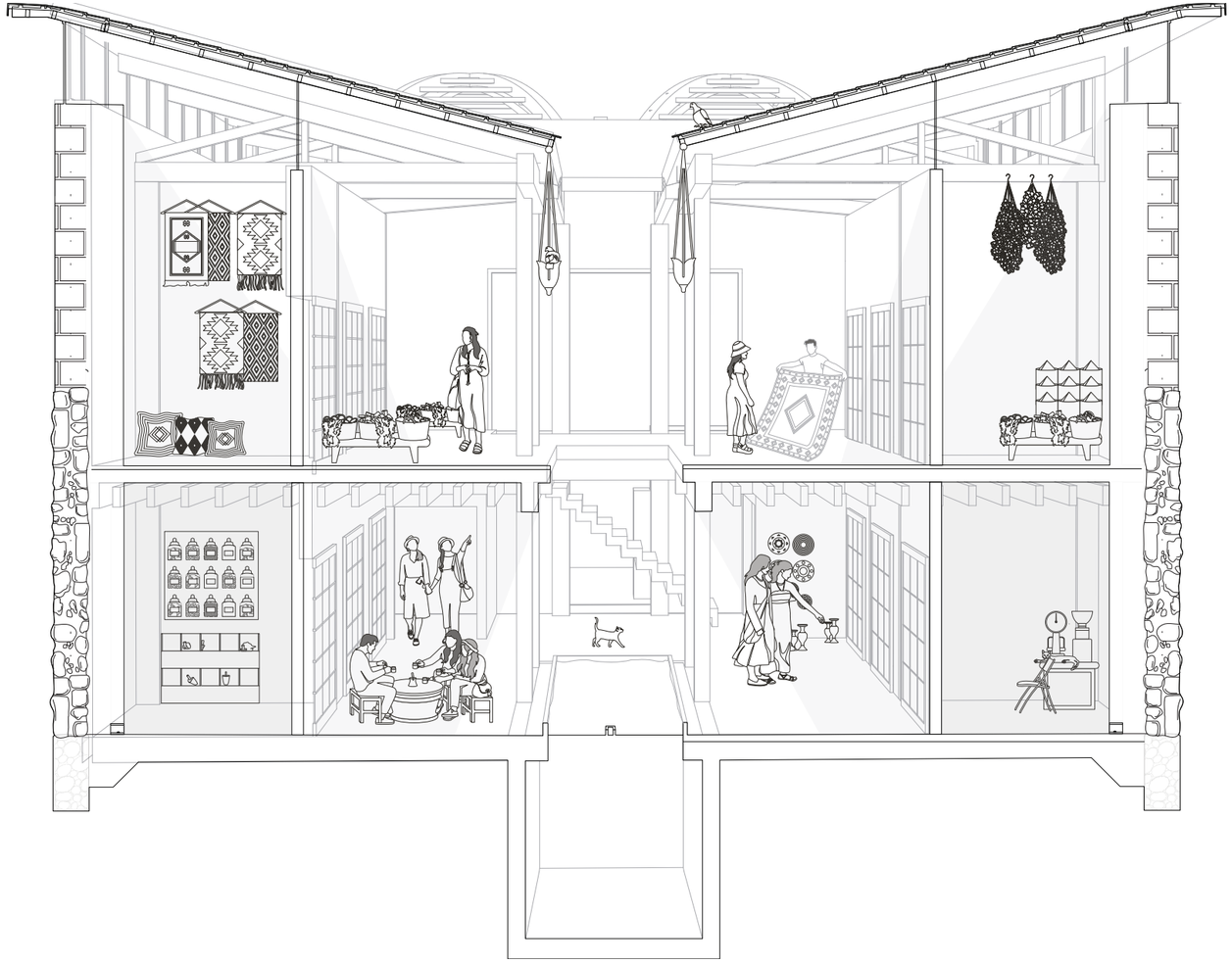
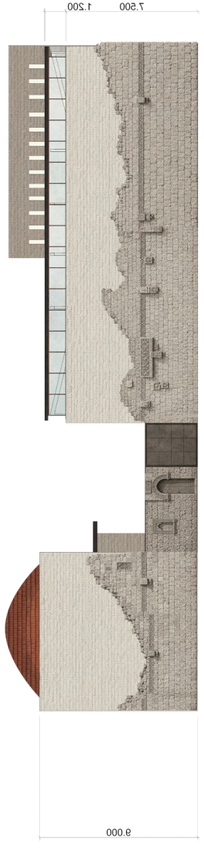
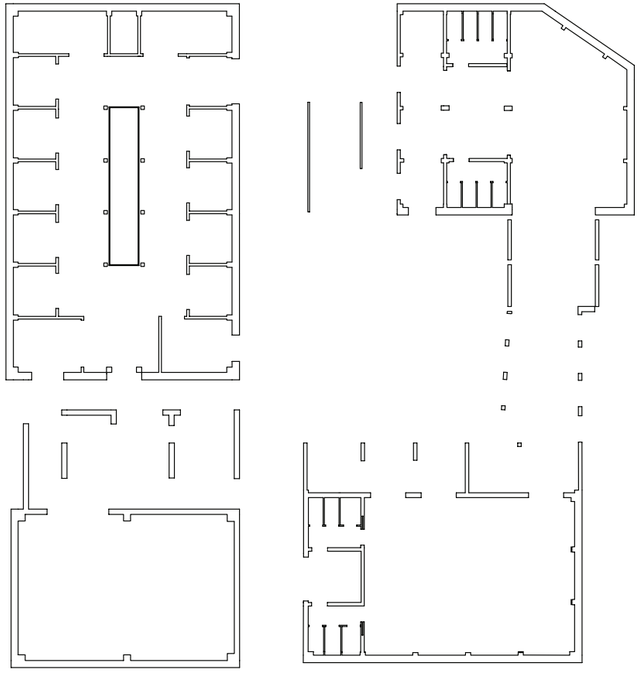


Figure 19 | Section





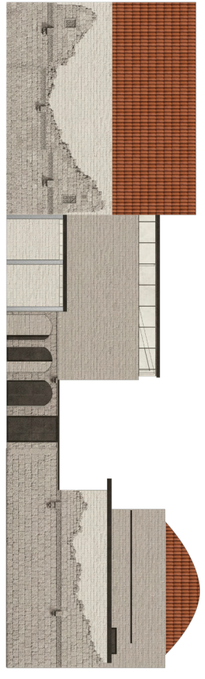
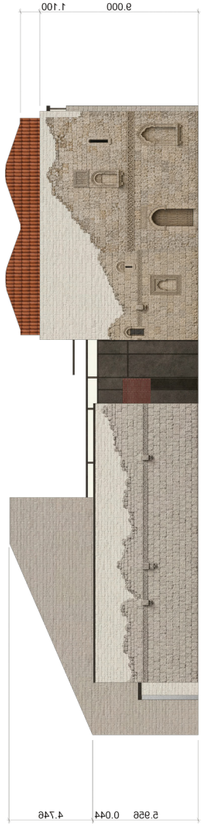


Figure 20 | Elevations



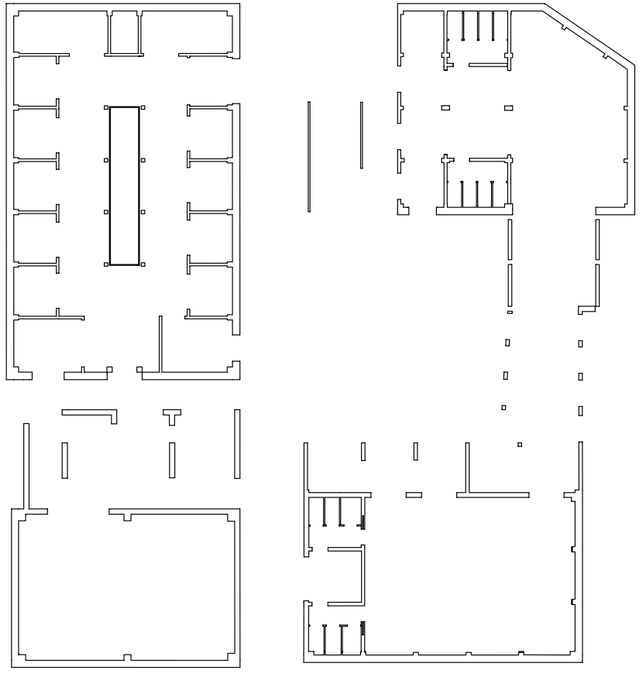


Figure 21 | Elevations

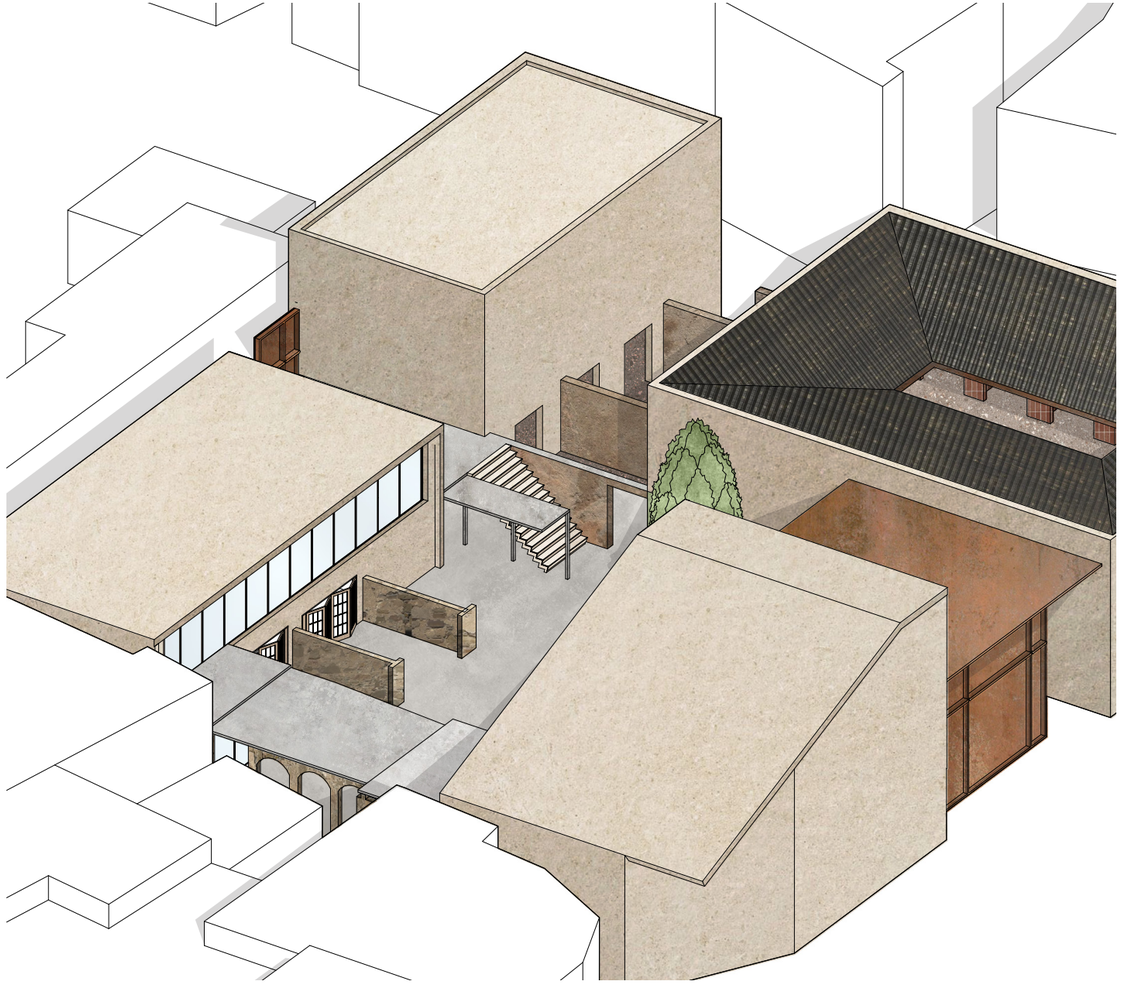
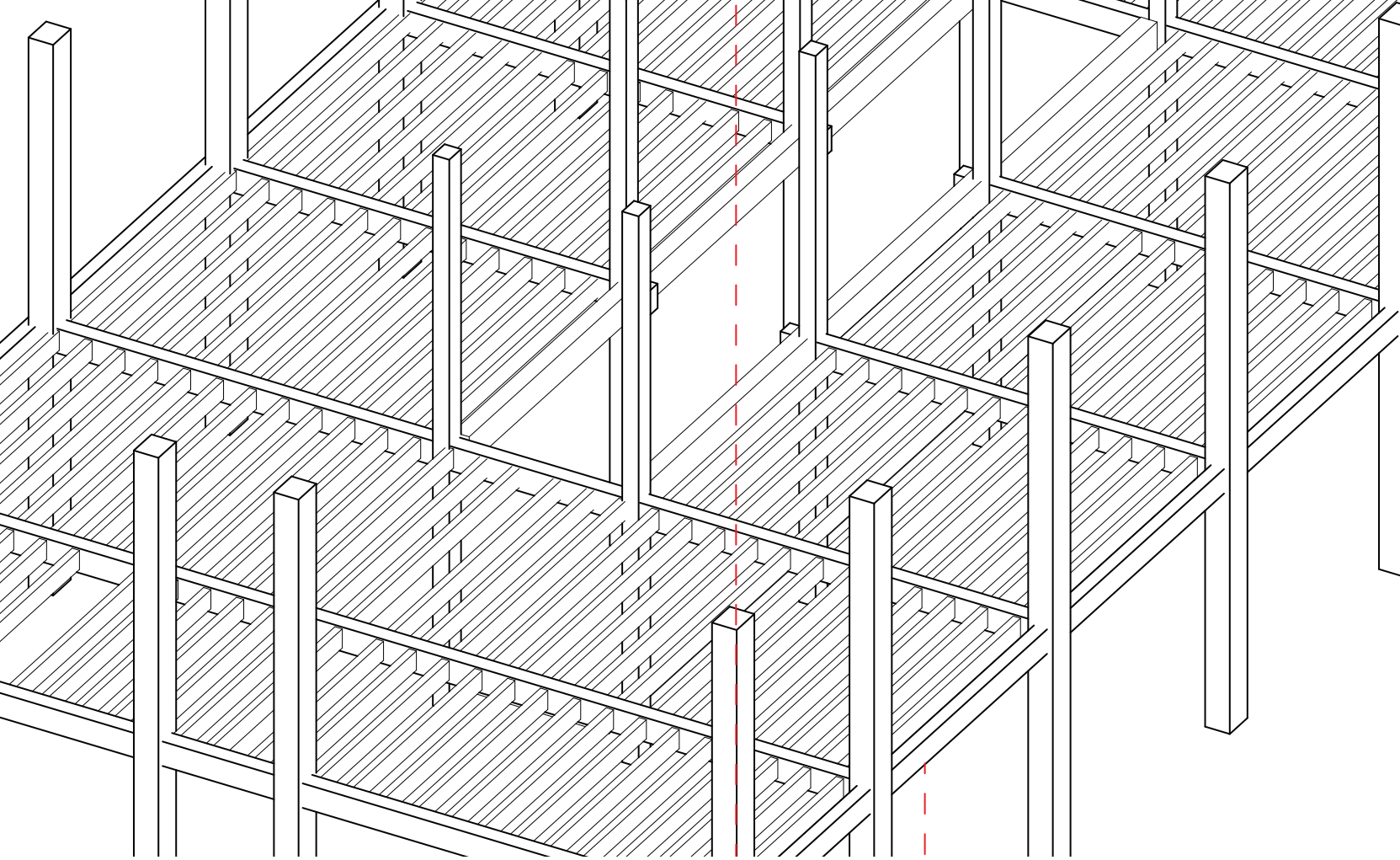


Figure 22 | Axonometry

Figure 23| Atmosphere Render - Bazaar First Floor

Figure 24 | Atmosphere Render - Transaction 2

Figure 25 | Atmosphere Render - Transaction 1



BOOKLET THREE | Techniques

AR4E010
EXTREME
Graduation Studio
By| Ekin Sarıbaş

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro

Connecting
HOMS

Technical Details and Elaborations of the structural components.

Abstract

Booklet Three explains the technical strategy of the project, focusing on structure, materiality, detailing, and environmental performance. The construction approach is based on minimal intervention, heritage preservation, flexibility, and future adaptability. Because the existing historical walls and their foundations are uncertain, the new intervention is designed as an independent structural system. The preserved ruin walls become a masonry cladding and memory layer, while the new timber structure carries the main loads and supports the interior functions. Floating raft foundations, lightweight timber columns, trusses, demountable floor systems, and replaceable interior layers allow the building to adapt over time. The booklet also documents a material and element library, which can be reused for future modules within the wider urban strategy. Detailed 1:5 drawings show the roof, floor, wall, and foundation connections, while the climate section explains wind, daylight, rainwater collection, solar roof tiles, and courtyard cooling as part of the architectural system.

Introduction

This booklet presents the technical development of the project. After Booklet One explains the context and urban strategy, and Booklet Two develops the architectural proposal, Booklet Three focuses on how the building is constructed, supported, adapted, and environmentally operated. The aim is not only to show technical details, but to explain how the construction logic supports the main design intentions: heritage preservation, flexible use, minimal intervention, and long-term adaptability.

The project is built around existing historical walls and ruin fragments. Since the structural condition, foundation depth, and construction technique of these walls are unknown, the new building does not depend on them as load-bearing elements. Instead, an independent internal structure is inserted inside the ruin. This allows the historical walls to remain visible as a preserved masonry layer, while the new structure provides safety, stability, and functional use. The old wall becomes a cladding, enclosure, and memory layer rather than the main structural system.

The structural system is based on locally sourced timber, lightweight roof structures, and floating raft foundations. The raft foundation distributes loads more evenly and avoids direct reliance on unknown historical foundations. The timber frame, columns, beams, joists, and trusses are designed to be clear, buildable, and partly demountable. This makes the building easier to repair, adapt, or change in the future.

A key part of the technical strategy is the separation between permanent and changeable layers. The main structure and preserved wall system create the long-term framework, while insulation, flooring, interior cladding, partitions, and service layers can be replaced or adjusted depending on future functions. This is important because the project contains both semi-outdoor and indoor spaces, each with different needs for ventilation, light, insulation, and enclosure.

The booklet also documents the material and element library used in the project. These elements are not only designed for this single building, but also as a repeatable construction language for future public-economic modules around Homs Old Town. Roof details, wall sections, foundation connections, and floor assemblies are therefore shown as part of a larger recovery strategy. The climate diagrams further explain how wind, sun, rainwater, courtyard cooling, restaurant exhaust, and BIPV solar roof tiles are integrated into the technical and architectural logic of the building.

Table of Contents

Context Plan and explanations of the urban plan and design decision leading to the project conclusions.

The structure is designed with the least intervention possible. The existing historical walls are preserved and completed where necessary with a new brick layer, turning them into a masonry cladding and enclosure system rather than the main load-bearing structure. A new independent internal structure is then inserted to carry both the new interior spaces and, where needed, support the completed masonry wall layer.

The base structure is kept as simple as possible and is primarily designed to carry the loads. After this structural frame is placed, the insulation packages, floor build-ups, and interior layers are added separately. This order is intentional. By placing the insulation and flooring between the columns and structural elements as replaceable layers, the building can be adjusted more easily in the future if the function of each block changes.

Timber trusses are used to form the slanted roof shapes, while thick locally sourced wooden columns are used for the main vertical structure. The columns are dimensioned not only for structural performance, but also for fire safety, allowing the timber to perform better through mass and charring resistance.

Because some blocks are semi-outdoor and others are fully indoor, the transition areas are designed with flexibility in mind. Ventilation, lighting, insulation, and enclosure requirements can be adjusted later according to how each block is used. In this way, the structural system supports both heritage preservation and long-term adaptability, while keeping the new intervention light, clear, and reversible.

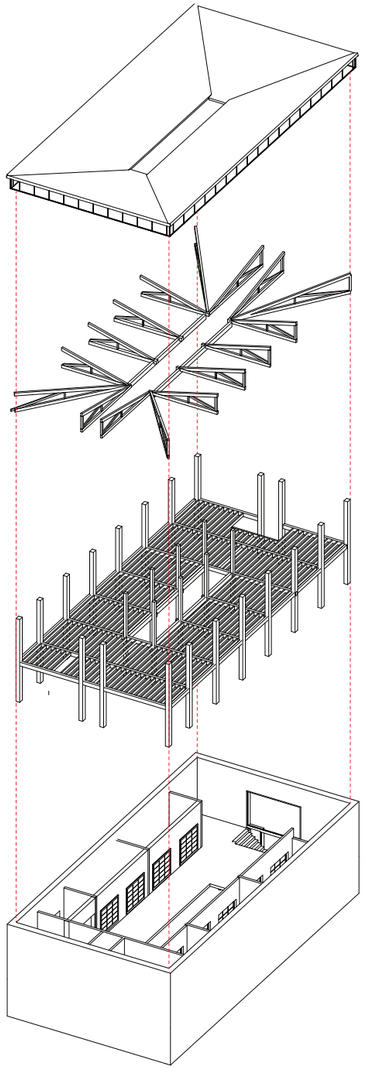


Figure 1 | Structural Diagram of Bazaar

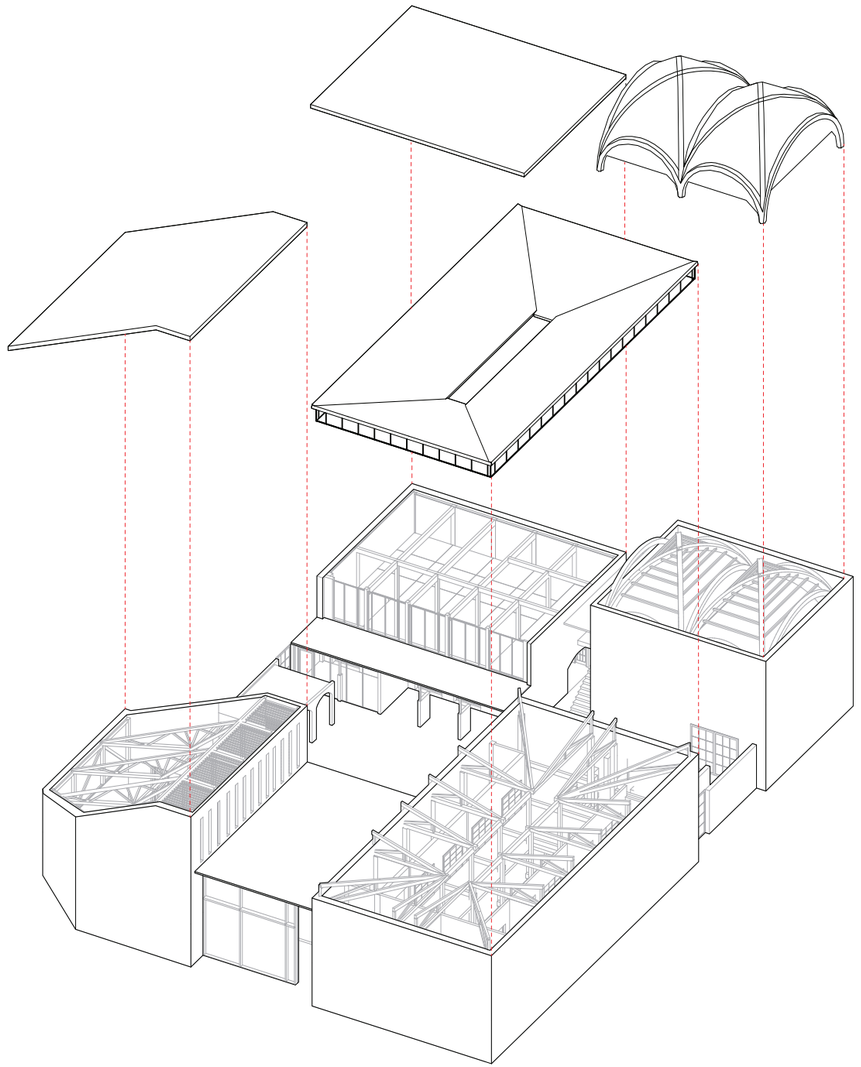
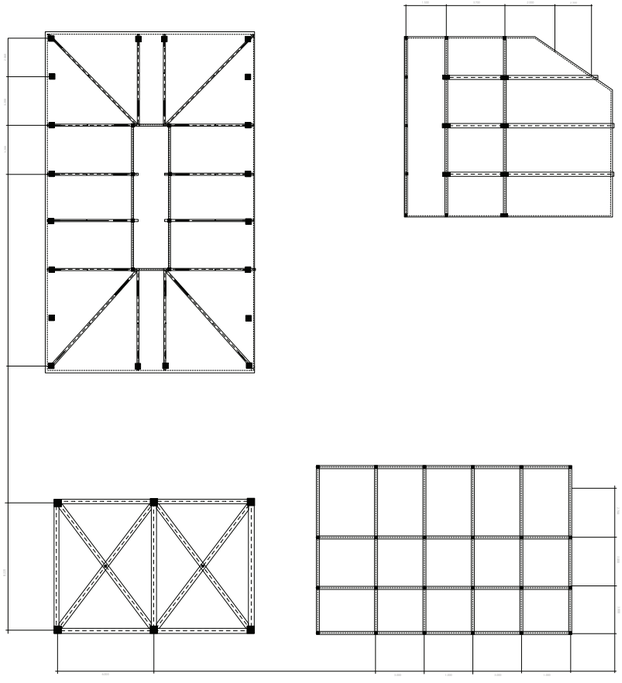


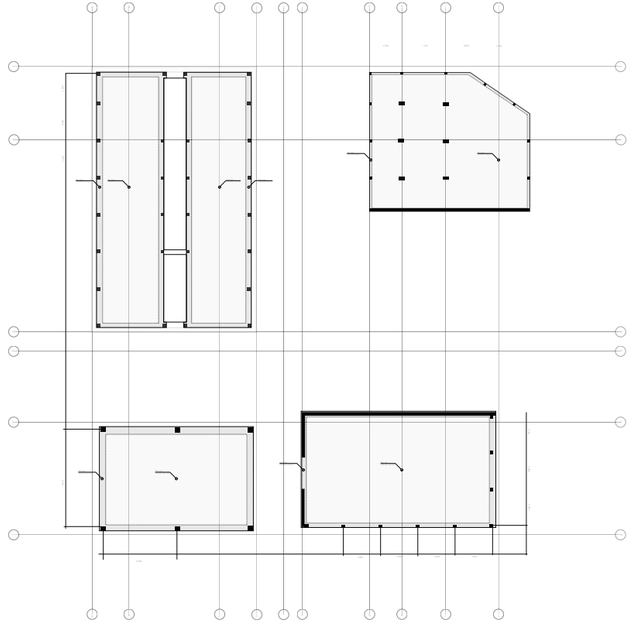
Figure 2 | Exploded Structural Diagram Full



The roof structure is designed with lightweight materials and adapted to the function of each block. The slanted roofs of the workshop and restaurant blocks are supported by timber trusses, which allow the angled roof form to remain light, buildable, and structurally efficient. These roofs also support environmental functions such as water collection, solar panel placement, and controlled daylight.

The auditorium roof is designed as a dome to create a stronger connection with the architectural context of Homs and the wider regional building language. The dome also supports the auditorium function by improving spatial focus, acoustic quality, and interior atmosphere. In this way, each roof system responds to its specific block while remaining part of the same overall lightweight structural strategy.

Figure 3 | Roof Structure Plan



Raft foundations are used because the exact soil condition and the existing foundation
system of the historical walls are unknown. Instead of relying on uncertain
local foundation points, the floating raft foundation distributes the building loads more evenly across the ground. This makes it a suitable foundation strategy for a site where the soil capacity, existing wall foundations, and buried remains cannot be fully confirmed.
The raft foundation also supports the future adaptability of the project. If the building function changes, or if heavier materials are introduced later, the foundation system can better respond to these load changes than smaller isolated footings. This is important because the project is designed for long-term flexibility and possible future expansion.
In relation to the historical walls, the raft foundation helps create an independent and stable base for the new structure, while reducing direct dependence on the unknown foundations of the existing masonry. The new structure can therefore support the interior programme and help stabilise the preserved wall fragments without forcing the historical walls to carry the new building loads.

Figure 4 | Roof Structure Plan

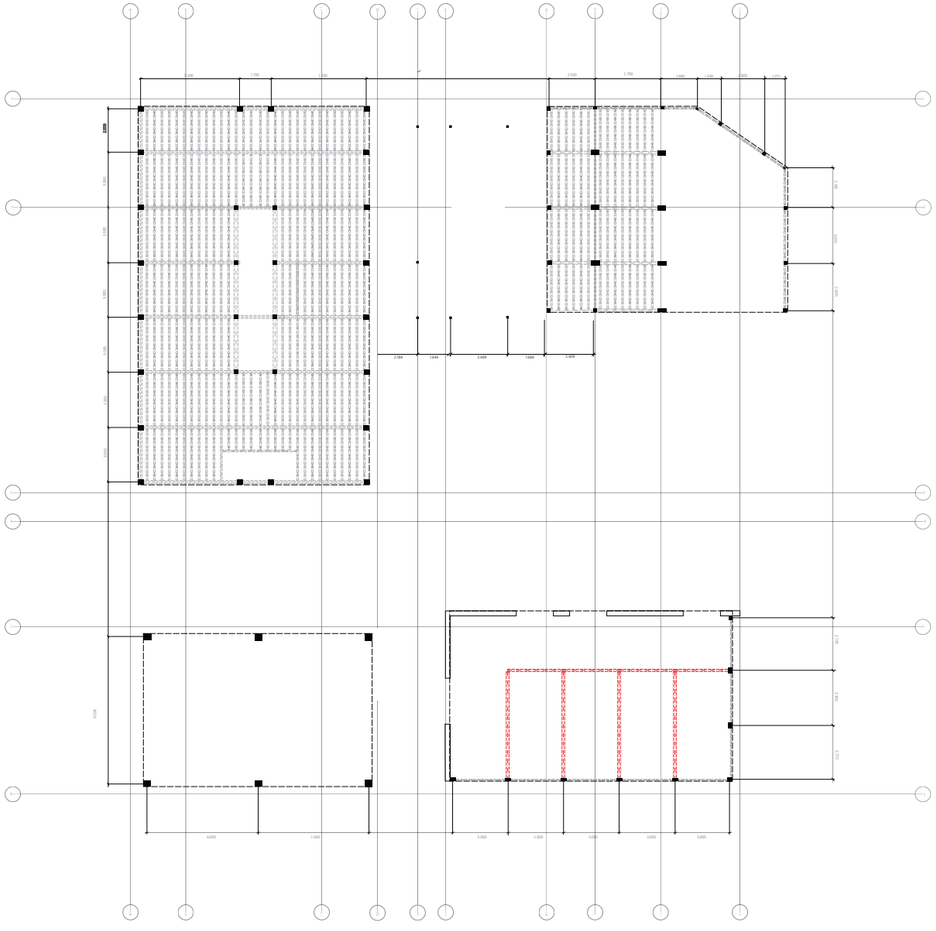


Figure 5 | Strucutre Plan

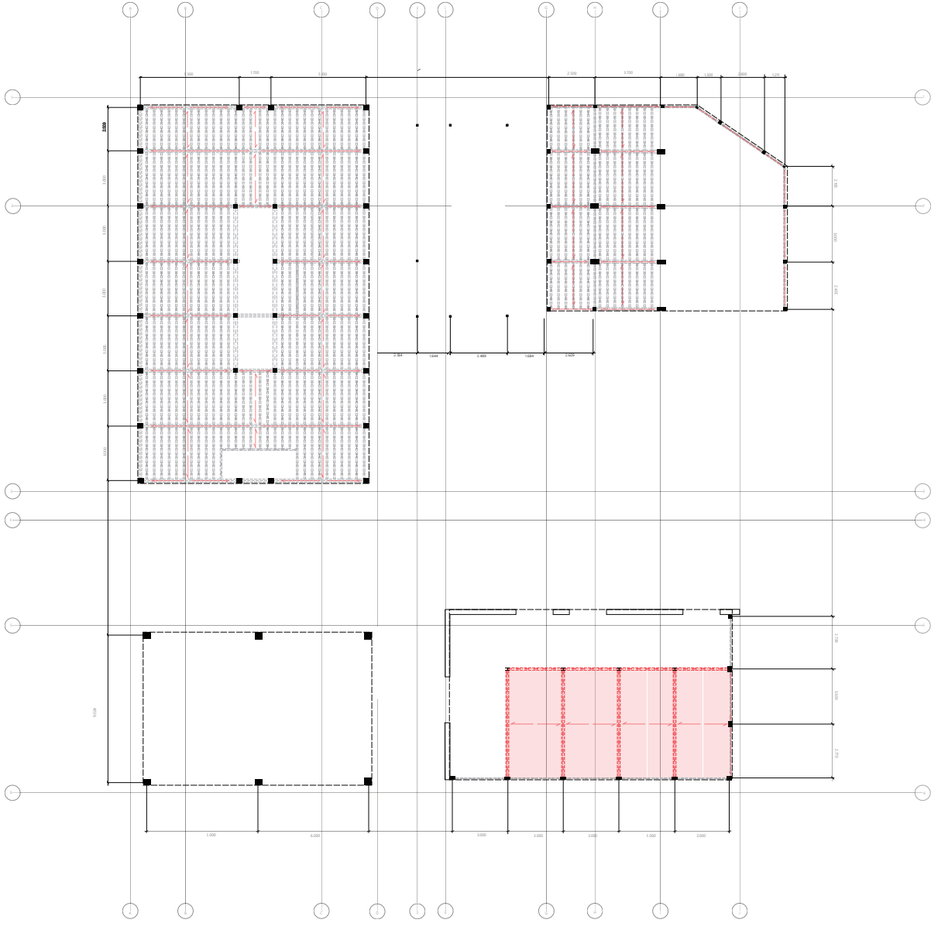


Figure 6 | Force Diagram

This segment of the workshop building is selected to show how the different construction layers work together. It explains the relationship between the flexible interior cladding, the new load-bearing structure, and the preserved historical wall layer. The historical wall is kept as the outer memory and enclosure of the building, while the new structure carries the main loads and supports the interior functions. The interior cladding is treated as a flexible and replaceable layer, allowing the space to adapt to future changes in use. Through this detail, the project shows how heritage preservation, structural stability, and adaptable interior design can work together within the same building system.

Figure 7 | Segment Elevation

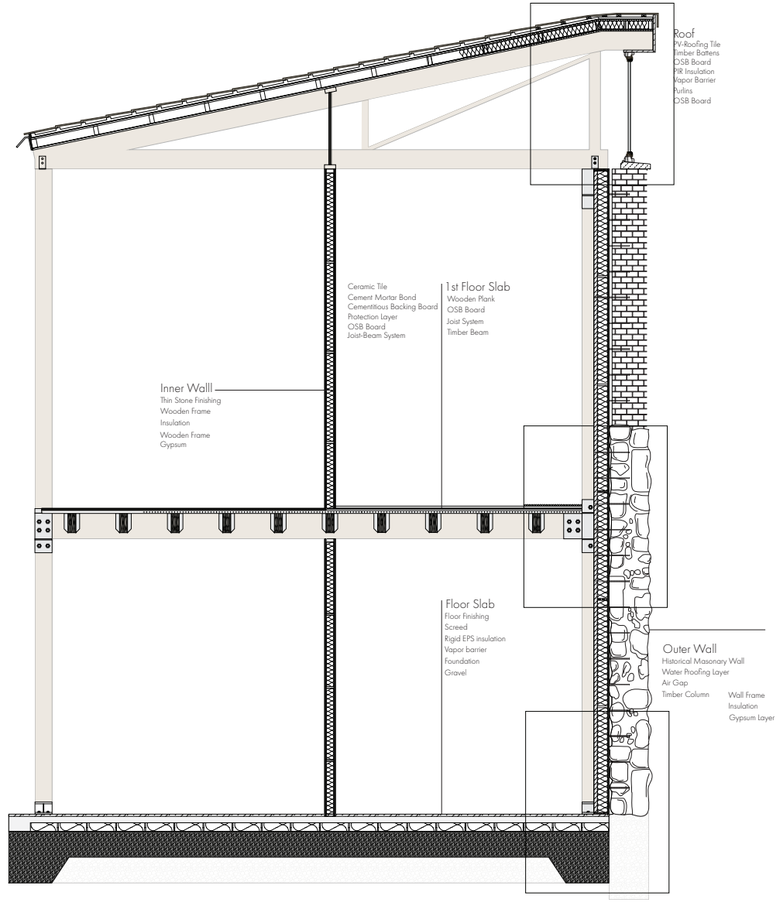
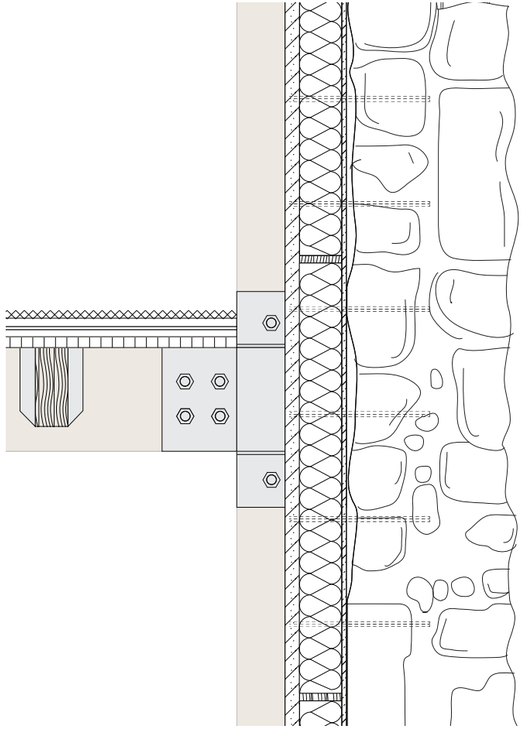


Figure 8 | Segment Section supposedly-1:20



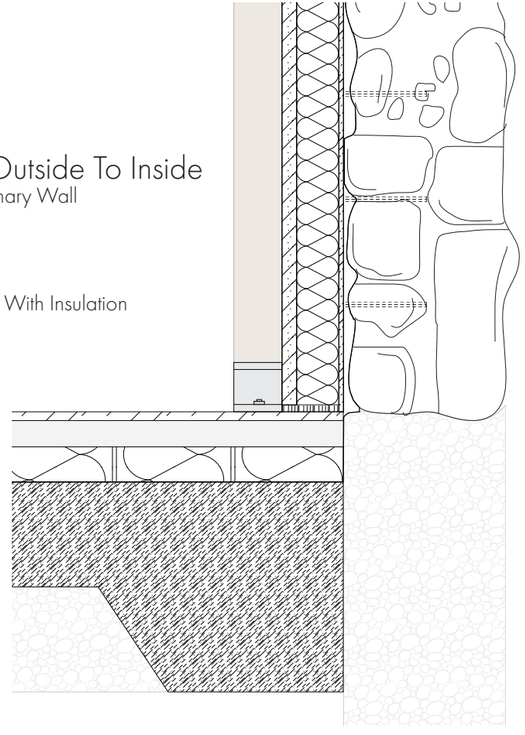
Intermediate Floor
- Ceramic Tile
- Cement Mortar Bond
- Cementitious Backing Board
- Protection Layer
- OSB Board
- Timber Joists
- Timber Primary Beam

The roof detail shows how the new lightweight roof connects to the preserved historical wall. The vapour control layer is placed on the interior side of the wall, while the waterproofing and weather barrier are resolved through a curtain wall strip at the roof edge. This makes the connection easier and avoids placing heavy structural loads directly onto the fragile existing wall. The curtain wall also brings natural light into the first floor of the workshop block without cutting new openings into the historical masonry. The roof is finished with building-integrated photovoltaic roof tiles, or BIPV solar roof tiles, which work as both roof cladding and solar energy collectors.

The detail also shows the timber truss and column connection. The truss supports the slanted roof, while the timber column transfers the load to the foundation, keeping the new roof structure independent from the historical wall.

Figure 9 | Detailing 1:12.5 Roof

Outer Wall I Outside To Inside
- Historical Masonary Wall
- Vapor Barrier
- Ventilation Gap
- OSB Board
- Timber Framing I With Insulation
- Gypsum Layer
- Glulam Column

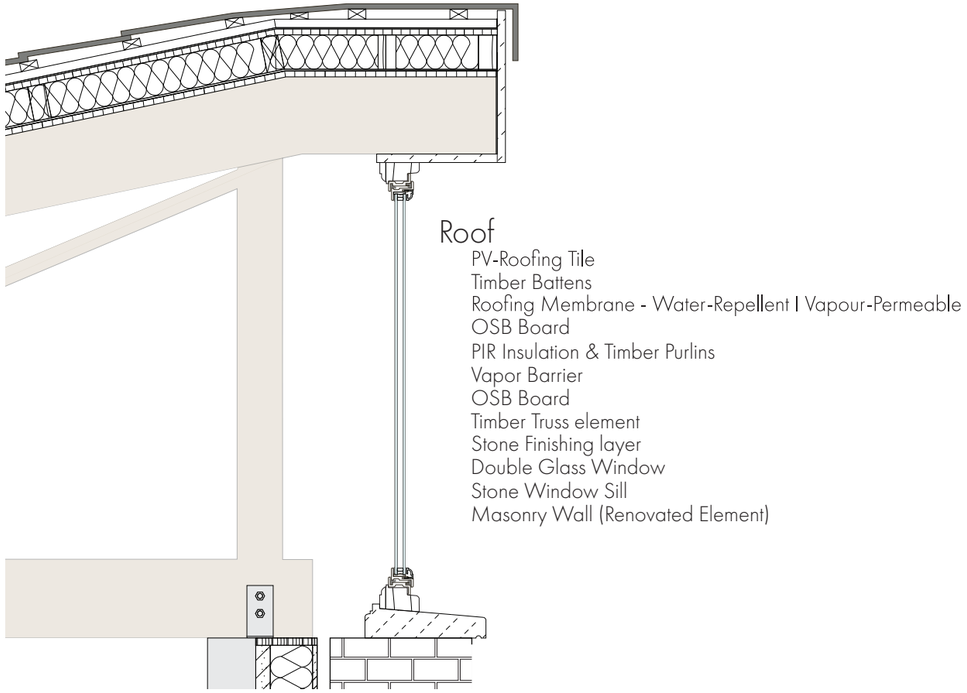


The first floor slab detail shows the timber beam and column connection, together with the floor build-up and its layered construction. The slab is designed as a layered system rather than a fixed solid element, so the flooring, insulation, service layers, or finishes can be replaced or adjusted if the function of the block changes.

The beams and joists are left exposed on the ground floor ceiling, similar to the exposed trusses visible on the first floor ceiling plan. This is done for both construction clarity and aesthetic reasons, showing the logic of the lightweight timber structure inside the building.

The main structural frame remains stable, while the floor system stays mountable, demountable, and adaptable over time. This detail therefore supports both flexibility and the architectural expression of the project.

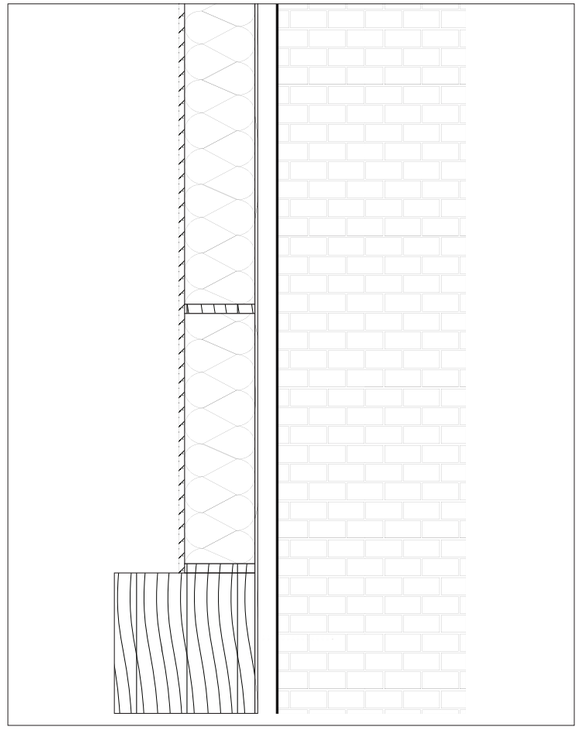
Figure 10 | Detailing 1:12.5 Floor , Wall Connection.



The foundation detail shows a clear separation between the existing historical wall foundation and the new structural foundation of the intervention. This disconnection is intentional, because the construction technique, depth, and stability of the historical wall foundation are unknown. The new structure therefore does not rely on the old foundation for load-bearing support.

By separating the two systems, the intervention creates its own stable foundation while protecting the existing ruin from additional structural stress. The historical wall becomes an independent preserved layer, working as masonry cladding, enclosure, and spatial memory rather than as the main structural system. This allows the new building to be structurally safe while keeping the historical fabric visible and protected.

Figure 11 | Detail 1:12.5 Foundation



The wall cut-out shows in more detail how the masonry wall connects to the timber structure and functions as an external cladding layer. It reveals the build-up of the wall, including the vapour-permeable water barrier, timber connections, fixing elements, and the relationship between the masonry skin and the structural frame.

Figure 12 | Detail 1:12.5 Wall Cut Out

Legend

The climate diagram shows how environmental strategies are integrated into the project. A wind catcher is intentionally placed to guide airflow into the courtyard, supporting natural ventilation and improving air circulation within the building complex. The courtyard then works as a central cooling space where air can circulate more freely between the surrounding blocks.

The restaurant exhaust is positioned on the opposite side of the courtyard so that kitchen air and food smells do not mix with the central public space. The diagram also shows the rainwater collection system and the energy collection system through building-integrated solar roof tiles. In addition, the sun path is used to plan the outdoor lighting and shading conditions, helping define where open spaces can remain more comfortable throughout the day.

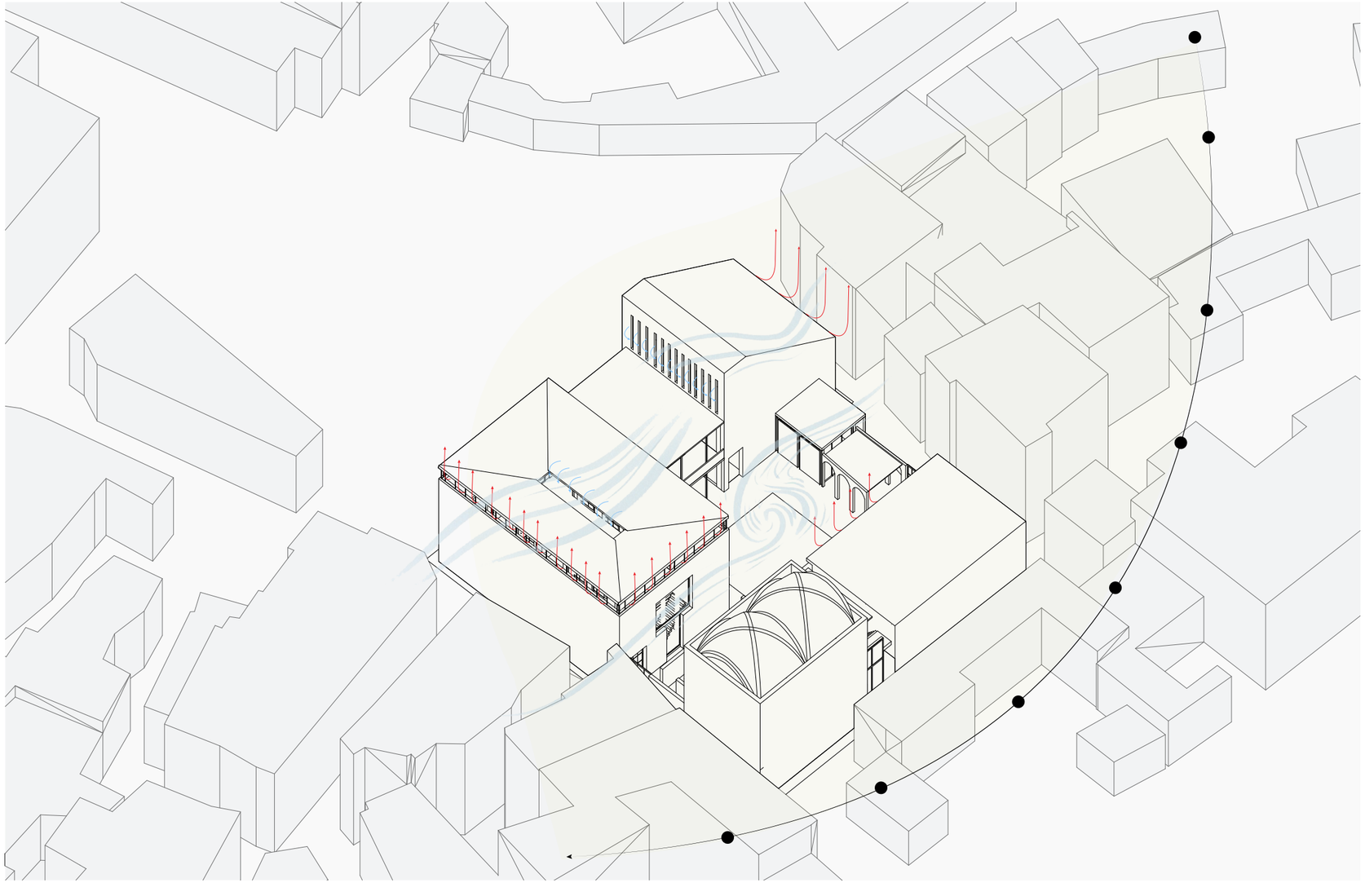


Figure 13 | Climate Diagram.

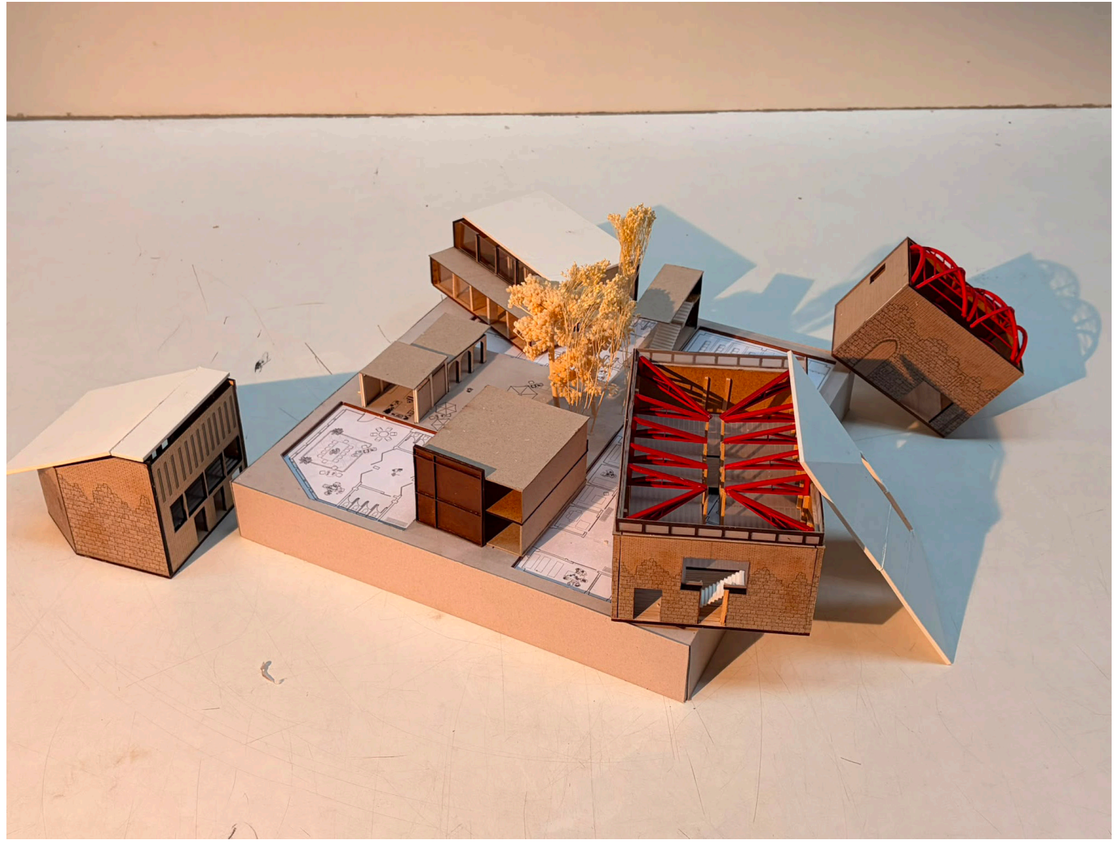


Figure 14 | Physical model 1:100

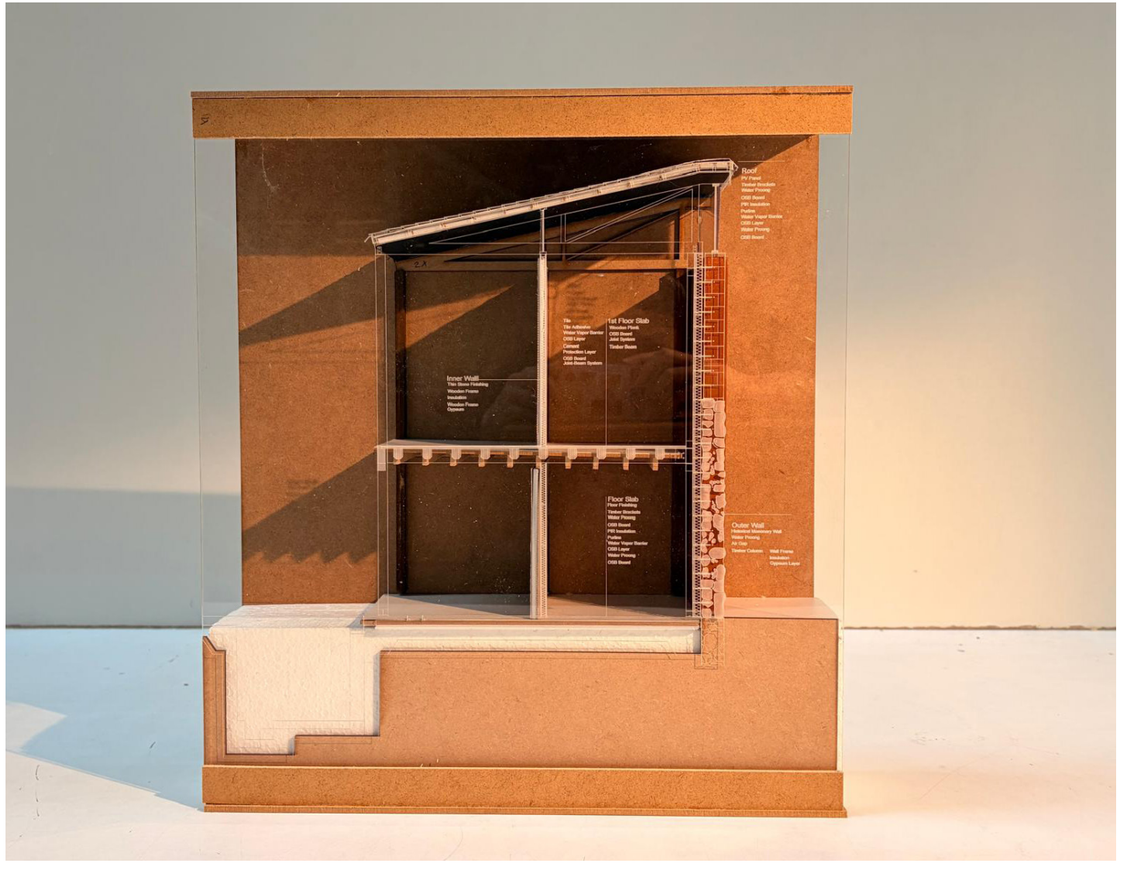


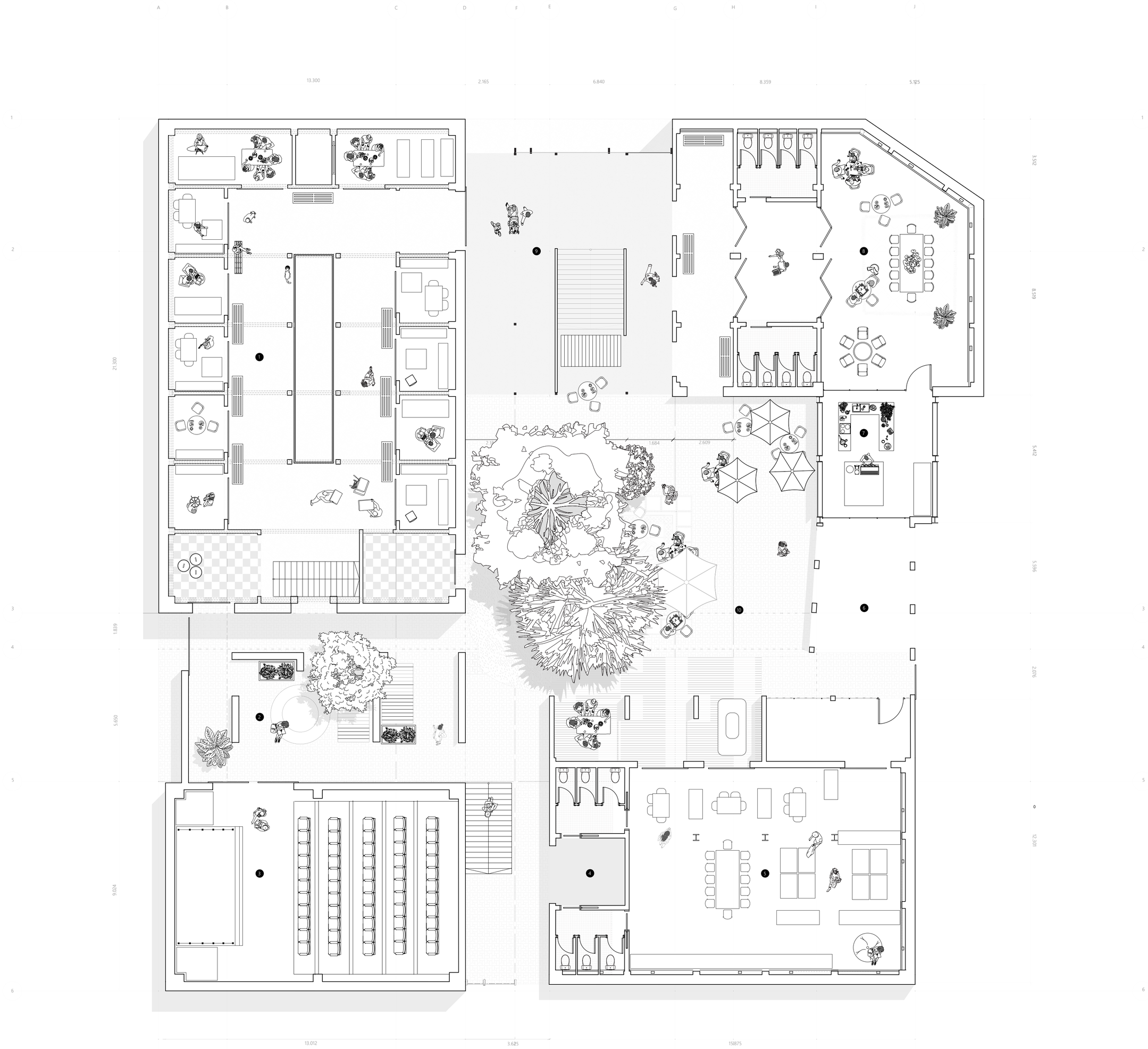
Figure 15 | Physical Model 1:33

Connecting HOMS | Ground Floor Plan

AR4E010
EXTREME
Graduation Studio
By| Ekin Sarıbaş

Tutors:
Job Schroën
Alessandra Navarro

Connecting
HOMS



1:100

0 1 5 10 20 50

Zones

1 Bazaar Extention

The first block you encounter from the bazaar corridor has no door. There is no strong threshold or formal moment of entry; you walk from the street directly into the space. This is intentional. The workshops and craft spaces are designed as an extension of the bazaar, not as a separate building. Merchants can work with their doors open, goods can spill out, and activity remains visible from outside. This openness makes the block active, accessible, and connected to the public rhythm of the souq.

1.1 Bazaar Hallway
1.2 Surrounding Workshops, Shops
1.3 Enterence Hallways
1.4 First Floor Workshops

2 Transaction Zone 1

Transaction 1 does the hardest work of the four. It connects the most open space in the building, the doorless khan, to the most enclosed space, the auditorium. The spatial and atmospheric difference on either side is the greatest anywhere in the plan. To handle this, the threshold works in two steps: first, a compression as you leave the noise and openness of the khan, then a small intermediate buffer zone, and finally the auditorium entry.

2.1 Enterence Maze
2.2 Auditorium Enterence
2.3 Bazaar Extention Enterence
2.4 In Between Space Shops

3 Auditorium

The auditorium is the most enclosed and acoustically controlled space in the building. The seating rows face the stage at the top of the block, while the main entry happens from Transaction 4 on the right. Unlike the workshop, café, or restaurant areas, this space is not designed for constant visual openness. It needs separation, controlled light, and a stable interior atmosphere.

3.1 Auditorium Big Enterence
3.2 Flexible Space
3.3 Stage
3.4 Sitting Areas

4 Transaction Zone 2

Transaction 3 is the most internal threshold in the building, positioned between the two quietest spaces: the auditorium and the library. It manages the shift between two different kinds of silence. The auditorium needs collective silence, where people listen together during lectures, performances, meetings, or screenings. The library needs individual silence, where people read, study, and focus alone.

4.1 Passage to Outside
4.2 Toilets
4.3 Staircase to First Floor Auditorium

5 Library

The library is designed as the quietest and most controlled block in the building. The dotted grid in the bottom-right block represents the reading table arrangement. Its regular and calm organisation creates a direct contrast to the more irregular, open, and active spaces in the rest of the plan.

5.1 Library Outside Workshop
5.2 Library shared study Place
5.3 First Floor Platfrom

6 Transaction Zone 3

Transaction 3 marks the transition between the commercial block and the library. The passage narrows slightly before opening into the library entrance, creating a moment of compression and release. This small spatial change prepares the body before the function fully changes.

6.1 Kitchen
6.2 Historical Wall Passage
6.3 Library Passage

7 Kitchen

The separate kitchen is placed between the restaurant and Transaction Zone 3, creating a more open and interactive spatial condition. Instead of working only as a closed back-of-house space, the kitchen becomes part of the transition between the restaurant and the circulation area. This allows people entering the restaurant to visually connect with the preparation process and makes the space feel more active and transparent.

8 Restaurant

This block is the most visible part of the building from the city. The angled corner wall faces the street and cuts toward the approaching visitor, creating a gesture that pulls people into the project. It works as an urban invitation, especially for people arriving from outside the bazaar. Once inside, the space becomes deeper and more private through a sequence of layers.

8.1 Restaurant Hall
8.2 Buffer Passage
8.3 First Floor Cafe Area
8.4 Toilets

9 Transaction Zone 4

Transaction 4 works as this in-between zone. It is covered but open-sided, meaning it is neither fully street nor fully interior. It becomes the spatial negotiation between the city and the khan. Merchants from the bazaar, restaurant visitors, and workshop users all pass through the same entry zone without being separated.

9.1 Bazaar Extention Enterence
9.2 Restaurant Enterence
9.3 Sitting Platfrom

10 Courtyard

The courtyard is the centre of gravity of the whole plan. Every block has either a visual or physical relationship to it, which makes it the shared heart of the building. It does not belong to one function only. Instead, it connects the workshops, restaurant, library, auditorium, and circulation spaces through a common open centre.

10.1 Main Tile Square
10.2 Surrounding Buffer Areas Between Blocks

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