

SCULPTING TIME

VILLA PRADA

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Bodies & Building

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COMPLEX PROJECTS
Bodies & Building Milan
AR4CP020

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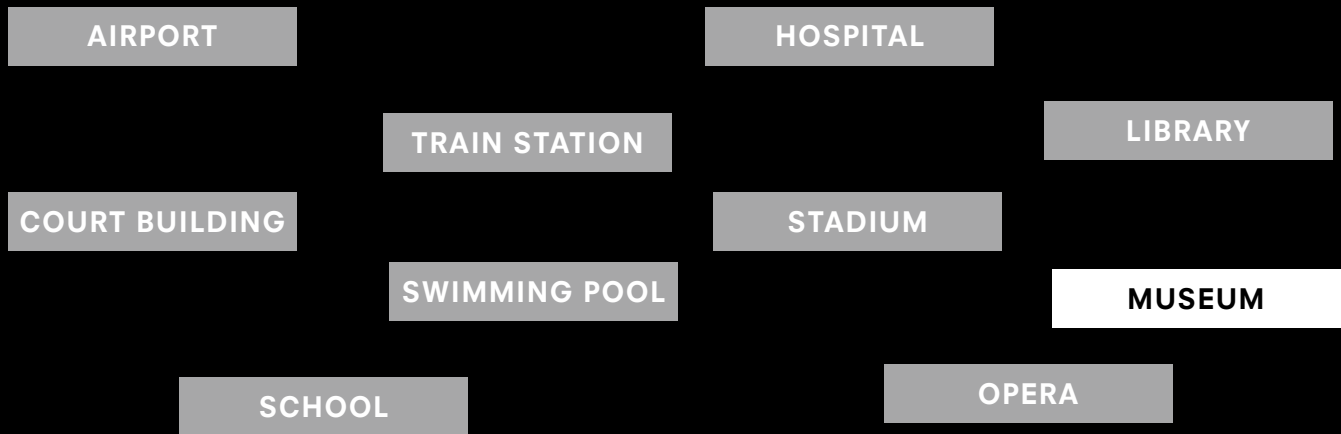
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BODIES & BUILDING MILAN

BODIES & BUILDING STUDIO

GROUP LENS: FLOWS



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This booklet presents a comprehensive exploration of my research, design proposal and design, for a new museum in Milan, located on the site of the existing Fondazione Prada commissioned by Prada. The document begins with an in-depth research plan, which frames the main question of how museum architecture for the Fondazione in Milan can provide the opportunity to establish visitors a non-linear narrative of classical and contemporary sculpture. Key themes such as narrative, continuity between classical and contemporary, spatial experience and expression are thoroughly explored.

The research also examines different museum typologies and the ways in which they organise circulation, exhibition spaces, and collections. These studies informed the development of the design brief and helped establish the spatial principles used throughout the project. Particular attention was given to museums that combine classical and contemporary works within the same setting.

The design translates these findings into a sculpture museum where classical and contemporary works are displayed together. Through the organisation of galleries and circulation routes, visitors can move through the collection in different ways and encounter sculptures from different periods within a shared architectural framework.

RESEARCH PLAN

01



Figure 1.1 Fondazione prada



**FONDAZIONE
PRADA**

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Museums were traditionally designed as neutral spaces for collecting and exhibiting art pieces, prioritizing clarity and objectivity. Although effective for conservation, this approach is increasingly questioned, as contemporary museums are expected to create meaningful spatial experiences that engage visitors emotionally and communicate cultural narratives.

Research in museums and architectural framework show that spatial design strongly shapes how visitors experience and interpret exhibitions. Spatial qualities such as circulation, light features, materiality and scale can turn architecture into a narrative medium. While many museums still rely on linear lay-outs that predetermine routes to guide visitors through a fixed sequence of spaces, contemporary museums explored more open and non-linear routes. These allow visitors the opportunity to explore on their own and create their own interpretation of the collection. However, many museums still rely on generic typologies that limit this potential.

This limitation is especially visible in sculpture museums. Sculptures are not meant to be viewed from a single position; they are experienced through movement, changing perspectives, and their relationship with the surrounding space. Yet sculptures are often displayed in neutral galleries that hinder its spatial and experiential qualities, leaving visitors interacting largely observational rather actively exploring them.

Furthermore museums often separate classical and contemporary sculpture. Classical works occupy historical or monumental architectural contexts, while contemporary pieces are shown in abstract and minimal spaces. This emphasizes a temporal and conceptual divide, blurring the continuity between past and present practices despite shared concerns with proportion, material, form and spatial presence.

In a city like Milan, where classical architecture, historical sculpture, contemporary design and experimental fashion coexist, the potential for museums to create a dialogue across time remains largely underdeveloped. While the city houses significant sculpture collections, not much museum typologies positions architecture as an active mediator between classical and contemporary sculptures/works, limiting the ability to foster immersive and embodied experiences

For a cultural client such as Prada, whose identity is rooted in their experimental identity, critical reflection and the reinterpretation of tradition in a innovative way, this absence is particularly notable. Even within innovative institutions, the architectural integration of historical references and contemporary expression is rarely explored, leaving the spatial and narrative potential of sculpture unrealized.

This project seeks to address this gap by rethinking architecture as a narrative framework that shapes spatial experience. Through a non-linear museum environment, visitors are given the opportunity to establish their own narrative while engaging with classical and contemporary sculptures. The museum visit is therefore transformed from a predetermined sequence into an immersive journey of discovery, where architecture actively mediates between artworks, visitors, and time.

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE AND MOTIVATION

The objective of this project is to design a sculpture museum for Fondazione Prada in Milan that explores how architecture can shape the experience of sculpture through movement, exploration and personal interpretation. Rather than functioning only as a space for exhibitions, the museum is envisioned as an active participant in the visitor experience, using spatial organization, circulation, materiality, and architectural form to create meaningful relationships between visitors, sculptures and architecture.

Within the Complex Projects studio, students were first asked to select a building typology before being assigned a specific site in Milan. After choosing the museum typology, the Fondazione Prada site was allocated to this project. At this stage, the exact museum programme had not yet been defined. The programme gradually emerged through research into the site, the city of Milan, and Prada as a cultural institution.

During a visit to Milan, it became apparent that the city is characterized by the coexistence of historical and contemporary architecture. Classical monuments, sculptures, and public spaces exist alongside contemporary interventions such as Bosco Verticale and the rapidly transforming Porta Romana district. Rather than existing separately, these architectural worlds continuously interact and together form the unique identity of the city.

This observation resonated strongly with Prada as a client. Throughout its history, Prada has explored the relationship between tradition and innovation, often reinterpreting historical references through contemporary approaches. This shared interest in the coexistence of past and present became the foundation of the project.

As a result, sculpture was selected as the primary exhibition medium. Sculpture naturally exists within both classical and contemporary culture and therefore provided an opportunity to investigate how architecture could establish a dialogue across time. By bringing classical and contemporary sculptures together within the same museum, visitors are encouraged to discover relationships between different artistic periods and construct their own interpretations.

A key ambition of the project is to challenge the traditional linear museum experience. Museums often guide visitors through predetermined routes that communicate a fixed narrative. This project investigates how a non-linear spatial organization can provide visitors with greater freedom to explore, discover, and establish their own connections between artworks. Through multiple routes, moments of choice, and visual relationships between spaces, visitors are encouraged to actively construct their own narrative rather than follow one imposed by the institution.

The project therefore explores how museum architecture can facilitate a non-linear visitor experience while creating a dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture. Through the reinterpretation of classical architectural principles within a contemporary architectural language, the museum aims to create continuity across time and transform architecture into a narrative medium that supports exploration, discovery, and personal interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

The project centres on the design of a sculpture museum in Milan. It examines how the arrangement of spaces, circulation routes, materials, and architectural form influence the way sculpture is presented and encountered within the museum.

Part of the research involved studying museum precedents, exhibition layouts, and different approaches to circulation. Particular interest was given to museums that combine multiple routes through the building and to projects in which classical and contemporary works are displayed together.

The scope of the project is limited to architectural design. It focuses on the museum building, its connection to the site, and the organisation of the exhibition spaces. Curatorial, operational, and technical aspects of museum management are not addressed.

RESEARCH QUESTION

“How can museum architecture provide visitors the opportunity to establish their own non-linear narrative of sculpture?”

SUB-QUESTIONS

Non linear narrative

“How can the spatial design of a museum support the creation of non-linear narratives?”

Classical and contemporary

“How can the design of a sculpture museum create a dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture through architecture?”



Figure 1.2 Dialogue between contemporary and classical sculptures

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Museum architecture can actively shape how visitors experience, interpret and connect with exhibitions. Traditionally many museums often rely on linear layouts and chronological sequencing of spaces, which can limit how visitors move through the space and interact with the art, in this case sculptures. Spatial design such as circulation, light, materiality and scale can transform a museum into a narrative medium. Which allows visitors the freedom to explore and create their own opinions about the objects. As Choi (2023) notes, "The spatial configuration of a museum directly influences how visitors interpret and engage with exhibitions, shaping both their movement and understanding of the objects".

Spatial narrative theory expands on this relationship between architecture and experience by examining how movement through space contributes to meaning. Whereas linear layouts control movement along fixed paths, non-linear layouts allow multiple routes, giving visitors the opportunity to construct personal patterns of exploration. Tzortzi (2015) argues that "a balance between structured sequences and freedom of movement is essential to allow visitors to construct their own meaning rather than just follow a pre-determined story". This approach shifts the museum experience from passive observation towards active exploration and discovery.

Beyond organising movement, architecture can also mediate between different historical periods. In sculpture museums, classical and contemporary works are often separated, reinforcing distinctions between past and present. However integrating classical principles such as proportion and rhythm within a contemporary design allows the building itself to mediate between past and present.

This idea is reflected in projects such as the Kolumba Museum, where historical and contemporary elements are brought together within a single spatial narrative. As Han (2026, p. 3) observes, "the interplay of historical and modern elements creates a continuous spatial narrative, allowing visitors to experience artworks across time as part of a single journey". Rather than presenting classical sculpture as a historical artefact and contemporary sculpture as a separate category, this approach encourages visitors to discover relationships between them.

Besides spatial configuration and narrative design, the dialogue between classical and contemporary works is a central concern in museum architecture. Recent studies in museology show that placing objects from different periods together does more than create visual contrast; it can foster a dialogue that encourages visitors to explore connections between past and present. As Stevenson (2024) explains that ancient and modern perspectives can be brought into conversation, revealing continuities and tensions in artistic practice. This approach highlights that classical sculptures are not just historical objects, but active reference points in a contemporary context, where contemporary works help viewers reinterpret the old art pieces, and vice versa.

Architecturally, this can be expressed through strategies that reinterpret classical proportions, materials, or sequences within a contemporary museum, allowing visitors to physically and conceptually experience the relationship between sculptures from different eras. Exhibitions designed in this way present the past and present not as separate categories but as simultaneous layers within an ongoing cultural practice (Stevenson, 2024).

METHODS

This project is developed through a combination of theoretical research, case study analysis, and design based research. Together, these methods aim to explore how museum architecture can support non-linear narratives and create dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture.

This research starts with a literature review focused on non-linear narratives in architecture to understand how visitors perceive spaces and artworks. This theoretical framework is complemented by research into classical and contemporary sculpture, examining their spatial qualities and the ways in which visitors experience them within museum environments.

Based on the theoretical framework, a series of case studies will be analysed to identify spatial strategies that support non-linear visitor experience. Selected museums that focus on non-linear or linear storytelling to analyse the comparison, museums that focus on contemporary works and classic sculptures. Particular attention is given to circulation patterns as experience space and the influence of spatial sequencing to understand how museums support narrative through space. Floor plans, sections and diagrams are used to study spatial flows, routing and the size of different functions within the user experience of the museums.

The insights from the literature review and case studies are translated into a design research. Instead of copying existing solutions, spatial qualities are abstracted and tested through models, spatial studies and diagrams. The sub questions: How can the spatial design of a museum support the creation of non-linear narratives? And How can the design of a sculpture museum create a dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture through architecture? Are central in this phase.

Research on group work regarding the Flow lens will be integrated into the methodology, aiming to understand how the flow/routing through the initial building types are perceived.

Finally, research into the cultural context and the client informs the design approach. Milan is studied as a city shaped with historical layers, contemporary design and innovation. In parallel Fondazione Prada's vision and architectural

proposal aligns with the ambitions of the client while introducing a new framework for a non-linear museum experience.

RELEVANCE



Cultural Relevance

Milan is characterised by the presence of both historic and contemporary architecture. This condition can also be observed at Fondazione Prada, where existing industrial buildings are combined with new architectural interventions. The project builds on this context by bringing together classical and contemporary sculpture within the same museum.



Architectural Relevance

Museums are not only places for displaying collections but also shape how visitors move through and experience a building. This project examines how spatial organisation, circulation, and the arrangement of exhibition spaces can influence the way sculptures are encountered. Particular attention is given to the relationship between classical and contemporary works within a shared setting.



Studio Relevance

The project relates to the Bodies & Building studio and the Flows lens through its focus on movement and circulation. Different routes through the museum, visual connections between spaces, and changing viewpoints all contribute to the organisation of the building. Rather than relying on a single sequence, the layout allows several possible paths through the collection.

RESEARCH DIAGRAM

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Museums often display classical and contemporary sculpture in separate spaces limiting spatial experience and dialogue. Architecture is therefore underused as a narrative tool to connect

RESEARCH GOAL

This project aims to explore how museum architecture can create a non-linear spatial narrative that connects classical and contemporary sculpture by focussing on spatial experience and visitor movement.

PRINCIPLES

Architecture as Narrative: Architecture guides movement and creates meaning through space.

Dialogue between Classical and Contemporary
Classical principles are reinterpreted within a contemporary architectural language.

Spatial Experience & Embodiment:
Sculpture is experienced through bodily movement, scale, and spatial interaction.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can museum architecture provide visitors the opportunity to establish their own non-linear narrative of sculptures?

SUB QUESTIONS

How can the spatial design of a museum support the creation of non-linear narratives?

How can the design of a sculpture museum create a dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture through architecture?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Lu, 2017: Museum architecture as spatial storytelling of historical time
- Junhao en Zhilong (2024) Research on the design strategy of natural museum exhibition space based on spatial narrative theory
- Medakovi et al. , 2024 The Interplay between Spatial Layout and Visitor Paths in Modern Museum Architecture
- Januszewski, W. S. , 2024 Logic, Perception, and Beauty—An Outline of the Modern Proportion-Based Approach in Architecture

RESEARCH METHODS

Literature review on spatial narrative, visitor experience, classical and contemporary sculptures and combining classical and contemporary design approaches

Case Studies on relevant museums that investigates in visitor experience through spatial qualities, flows, relation of spaces and routing.

Design research which spatial qualities can be translated in a design for the sculpture museum.

RESEARCH

02



Figure 2.1 Entrance Fondazione Prada

LOCATION

The locations of the building for this year's Complex projects is Italie, Milan.



Figure 2.2 Outline Italie

LOCATION

The 8 Projects are based in Milan. The Fondazione Prada is located at L.go Isarco, 2, 20139 Milano MI, Italië.



Figure 2.3 Location projects Milan

LOCATIONS FONDAZIONE PRADA

Museum Fondazione Prada Venice



Figure 2.4 Fondazione Prada Venice

2011

Venetian headquarters which is located in an 18th-century historic palace on the Grand Canal used as exhibition space.

Functions:

- Temporary exhibitions, often linked with Venice art and the Biennale.

Museum Fondazione Prada Milan



Figure 2.5 Fondazione Prada Milan

2015

The main venue of Fondazione Prada, located in a former industrial distillery transformed by OMA / Rem Koolhaas into a museum and cultural complex.

Functions:

- Temporary exhibitions
- Permanent exhibitions
- Cinema
- Educational spaces
- Café
- Restaurant
- Offices

Exhibition space Osservatorio Fondazione Prada Milan



Figure 2.6 Osservatorio Fondazione Prada Milan

2016

Osservatorio is a special exhibition space run by Fondazione Prada, located on the fifth and sixth floors of a building in the historic Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in central Milan.

Functions:

- Temporary exhibitions focused on photography and visual language



Figure 2.7 Logo Prada

PRADA GROUP: CORE VALUES

Prada Group mainly focuses on changing constantly and innovation, while still holding onto tradition. Instead of copying trends, the brand uses experimentation and creativity to respond to developments in culture, architecture and social engagement.

Several themes that are important within Prada's work are also relevant to architecture. The use of materials, attention to detail, and consideration of how something ages over time are examples of this. These ideas can be applied not only to fashion, but also to the design of buildings and spaces.

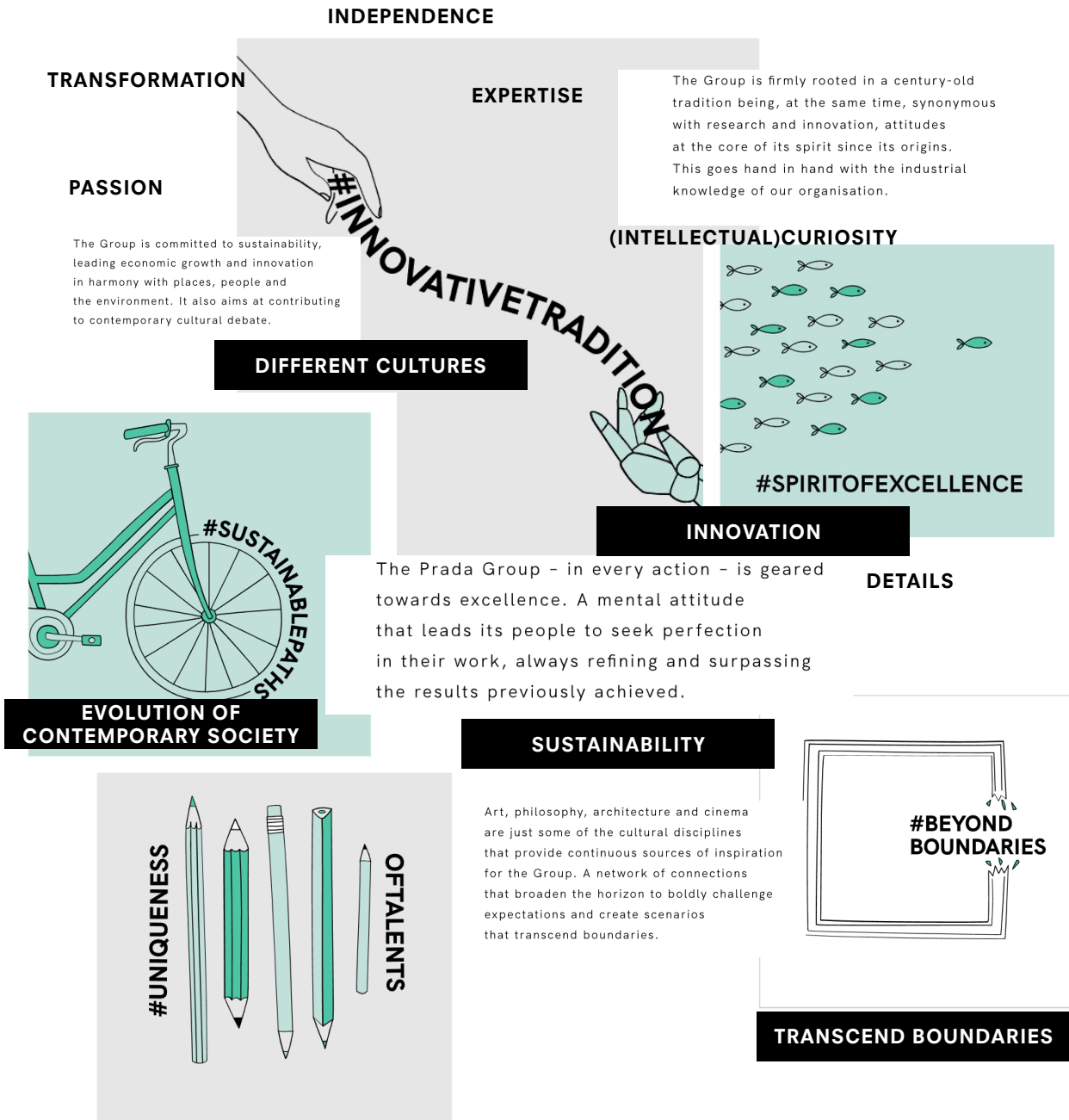


Figure 2.8 Core values Prada Group

PRADA GROUP: CORE VALUES

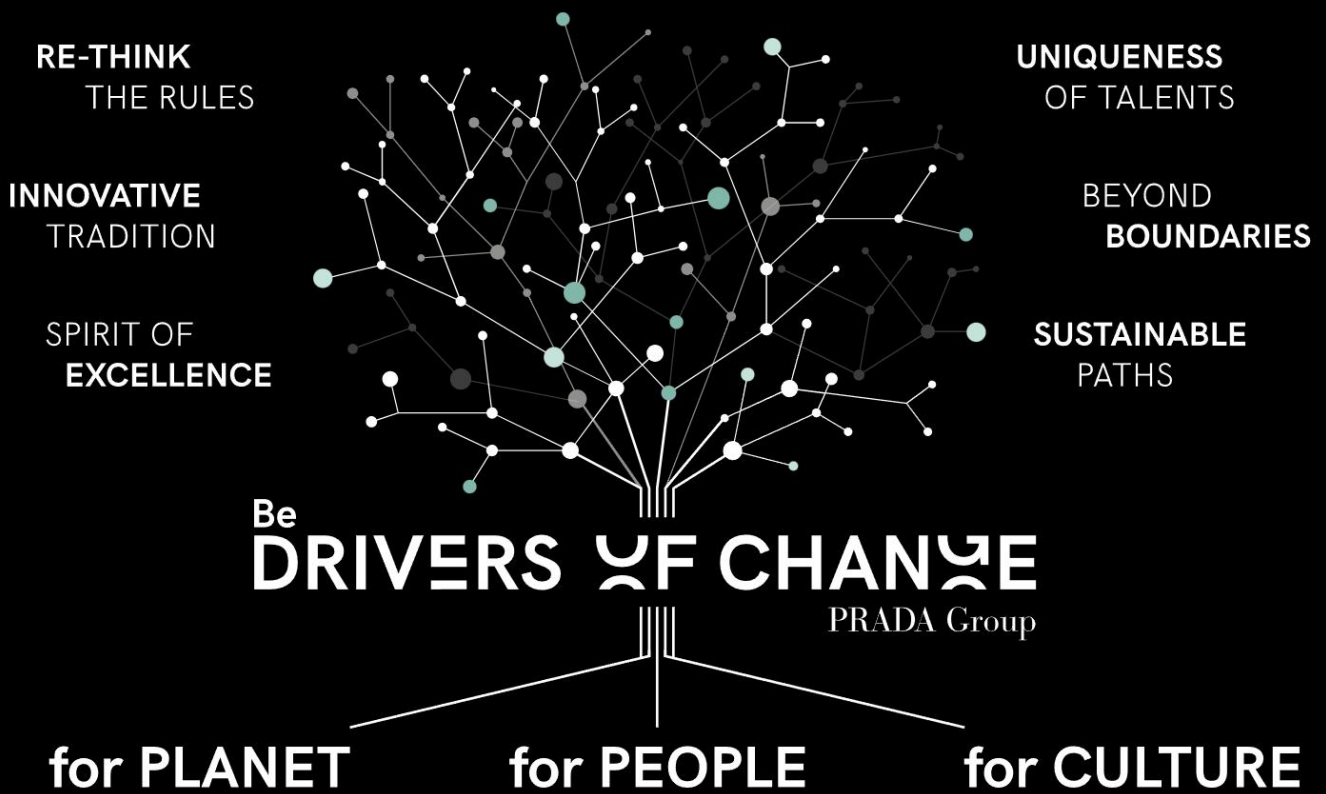


Figure 2.9 Core values Prada Group

FOUNDERS

The founders of Prada are Miuccia Prada and patricizio Bertilli. Prada was Established in 1913 in Milan.

Prada Group operate in the belief that art and study are useful and necessary to understand the changes unfolding in the world through new and engaging perspectives.



Figure 2.10 Founders Prada

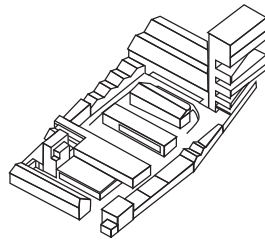
PRADA

MIUCCIA PRADA AND PATRICIZIO BERTILLI

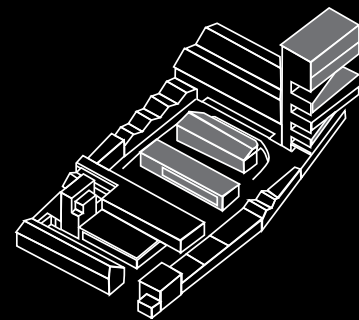
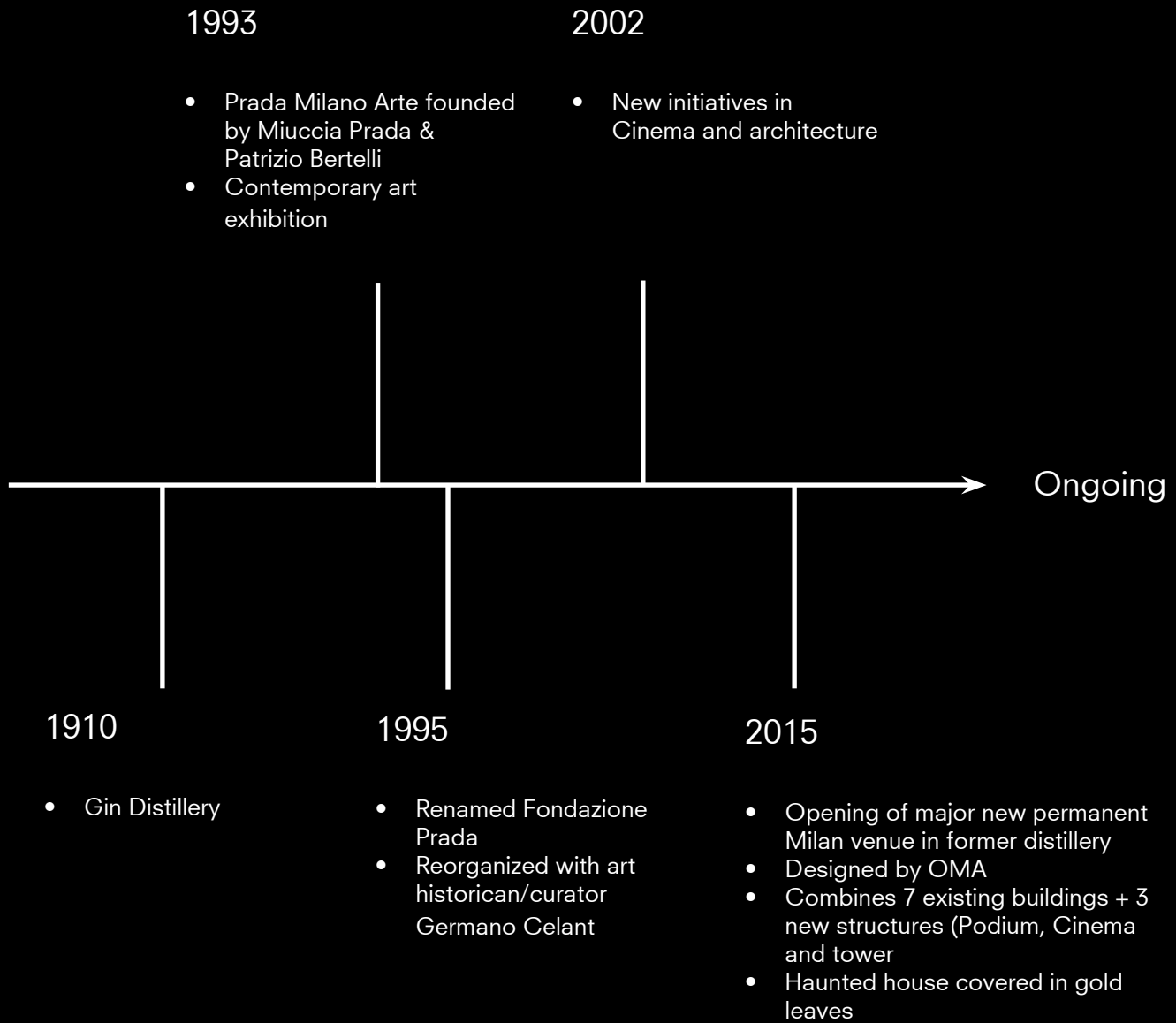
“Architecture has always been a source of inspiration for Prada. The analysis of practical, commercial and historic implications of buildings has always had a crucial role in the development of Prada's activity, through a profound commitment to contemporary architectural experimentation projects and rigorous historic preservation” (Prada Group, n.d.).

FONDAZIONE PRADA

ART ——— ARCHITECTURE ——— CULTURE



HISTORY OF FONDAZIONE PRADA



FONDAZIONE PRADA

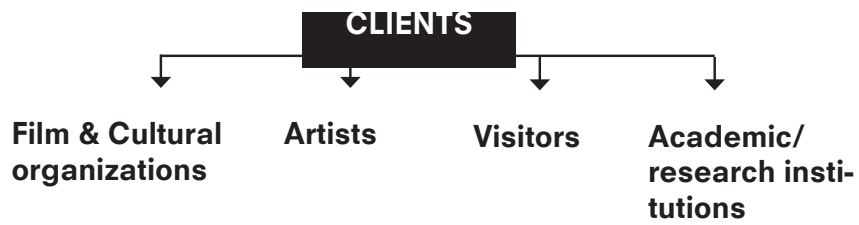
The Fondazione Prada is a cultural institution in Italy, Milan. It is established by Prada and Miuccia Prada. The Fondazione is focussed on contemporary art, architecture, and film and is used as a platform for experimental, interdisciplinary research by musicians, architects, filmmakers and artists

There is a combination of permanent and temporary exhibitions to create a dynamic cultural experience. Its permanent collection offers visitors a constant access to key works, establishing the foundation's identity and supporting education and research. At the same time, temporary exhibitions showcase international artists and experimental projects, bringing new ideas, innovation, and other perspectives. This mix allows Fondazione Prada to balance tradition with creativity, inviting audiences to explore, participate, and engage with art in diverse ways.

Fondazione Prada promotes participation and inclusivity by embracing diverse identities and perspectives, with a focus on youth through projects for children and students, as well as educational and exhibition activities in collaboration with schools, universities, and research centres.

The Site of the Fondazione used to be a distillery and with OMA there were 3 buildings newly constructed. Old warehouses are combined with new extraordinary volumes, as the Gold Haunted house. The mix of old and new makes Fondazione Prada an important example of contemporary architecture and adaptive reuse.

CLIENT



PARTNERSHIPS

OMA

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



Comune di
Milano

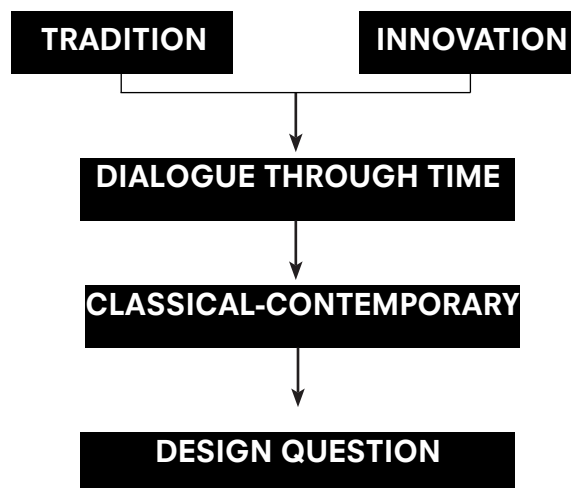
USERS

Visitors (art and culture or generic)
Artists and curators
Students
Researchers
Academics
Filmmakers

CLIENT CONCLUSIONS

During the analysis of Prada, it became clear that the relationship between past and present plays an important role within the brand. Whether in fashion, art, or architecture, existing ideas are often revisited and given a new interpretation rather than being copied directly. As a result, tradition and innovation are not treated as separate worlds, but are brought together in different ways.

This stood out as an interesting starting point for the project. It raises the question of how different periods can coexist within the same museum and how visitors can experience these relationships for themselves. The combination of classical and contemporary sculpture therefore offers the opportunity to explore this dialogue further through architecture and spatial experience.



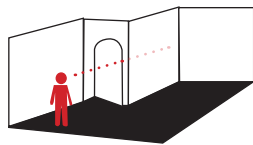
NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE

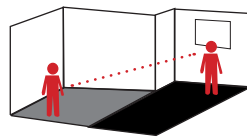
traditional museum layouts, galleries are often arranged in a fixed sequence. Visitors follow a route determined by the layout of the building, moving from one space to the next. This makes navigation relatively straightforward, but there is usually little variation in how the collection is encountered.

Non-linear layouts offer a different approach. Instead of following a predefined route, visitors can move between galleries through a range of possible paths. The order in which spaces are visited is therefore not fixed and may differ from one person to another. Junhao and Zhilong (2024) note that this type of circulation gives visitors a greater role in determining how they move through an exhibition.

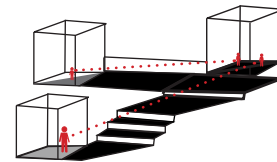
In many museums, circulation is closely connected to the exhibition spaces themselves. Openings between galleries, visual connections, and changes in level influence movement through the building. For this reason, many contemporary museums combine linear and non-linear forms of circulation. Certain exhibitions may follow a clear sequence, while the wider museum allows more freedom in movement.



Visual connections



Overlapping sight



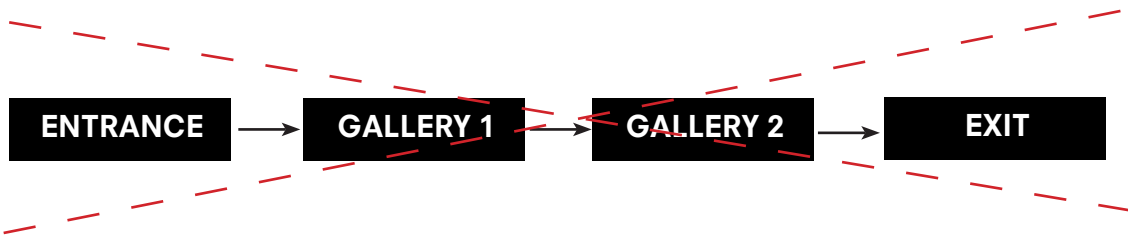
Changes in levels

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

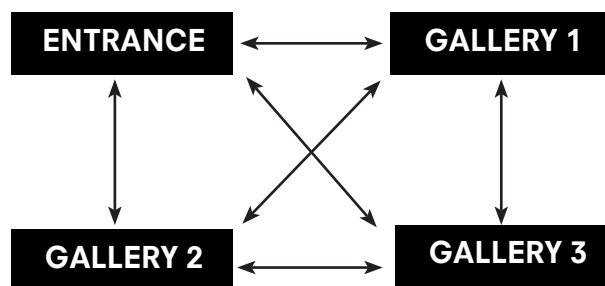
WHY?

This approach aligns with the context of a sculpture museum at Fondazione Prada. Visitors can move through the galleries, courtyards, and exhibition spaces without following a fixed route. As a result, classical and contemporary sculptures may be encountered in different sequences throughout the museum. This allows relationships between works from different periods to emerge through the visitor's own movement through the building. The architecture and the collection are therefore experienced together rather than as separate elements.

Linear Narrative

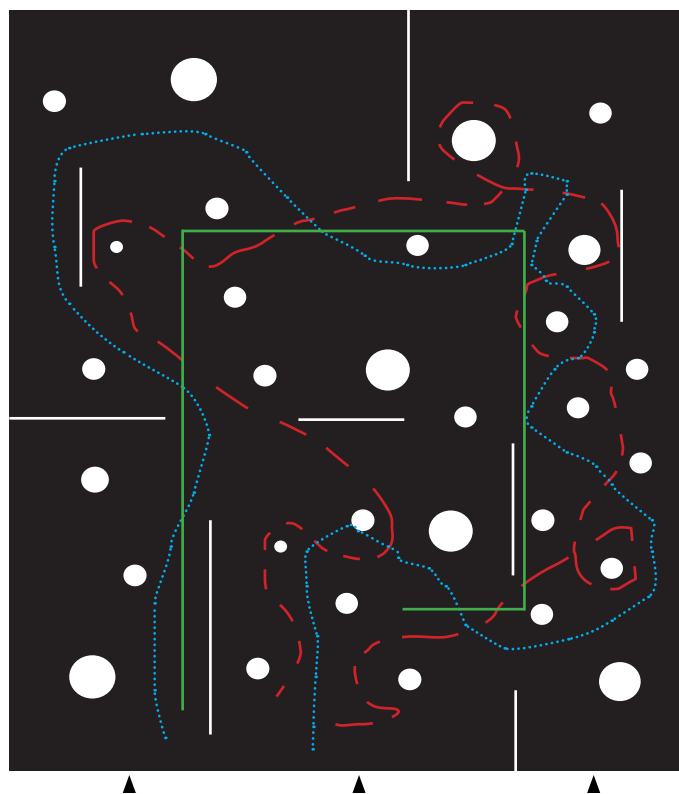


Non-Linear Narrative



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE



ENTRANCE

..... Non-linear route

- - - Non-linear route

— Linear route

This is an example of a floor plan with the focus on a non-linear narrative, but also with a possibility to navigate through the spaces in a linear way.

CLASSICAL SCULPTURES

Classical sculpture originated in ancient Greece and is often associated with the study of anatomy, proportion, and balance. Sculptors paid close attention to the human body, resulting in figures that appear natural and carefully composed.

Many sculptures depicted gods, athletes, heroes, and other important figures. Marble and bronze were the materials most commonly used. These works were not only objects to be viewed from the front. They were intended to be experienced from different angles, requiring movement around the sculpture and establishing a relationship between the artwork and its surroundings.

Myron's Discobolus is a well-known example of a sculpture that captures the body in motion, while Polykleitos developed a system of proportions that informed works such as the Doryphoros (Boardman, 1985). Classical sculptures were often placed in temples, sanctuaries, and public spaces, where they formed part of a wider architectural setting. Their position within these environments influenced how they were seen and experienced (Palagia, 2019).

Movement



Figure 2.11 Myron, Discobolus

Proportion



Figure 2.12 Polykleitos, Doryphoros

CLASSICAL SCULPTURES

Relation to Architecture

Classical sculptures are one of the first art forms where the human body, material, and space come together in a very direct way. The sculptures are not meant to be seen from one fixed viewpoint, rather experienced by moving around them. Scale, proportion, and material play a big role, making the viewer constantly aware of their own body in relation to the object. In that sense, classical sculpture is already spatial, which makes it highly relevant for architectural thinking.

Relation to (Fondazione) Prada

Classical sculpture aligns closely with Prada's core values for culture and history. The foundation is known for re-reading cultural references rather than simply preserving them. Prada often looks at history, not as something fixed, but as something that can be questioned and reinterpreted. Classical sculpture carries strong historical meaning, but at the same time is open enough to be experienced without explanation, through form and presence alone.

There is also a clear connection to Prada's interest in the body and proportion. In fashion, Prada continuously explores how the body is shaped, framed, or distorted through design. Classical sculpture addresses similar themes through the representation of the human figure.

Relation to Milan

Milan is a city where historical and contemporary influences coexist. From Roman and Renaissance roots, to a deeply connected contemporary design and fashion culture. Classical references are part of Milan's urban fabric, yet they are never static. They are continuously reinterpreted. In this context, classical sculpture is not something from the past, but a living reference that can be experienced in a new way.

Relation to Project

In the proposed museum, classical sculpture is therefore not treated as a historical collection, but as spatial matter. Through a non-linear layout, visitors can move freely, encounter works from different angles, and create their own connections. This approach supports the project ambition to create a dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture while allowing visitors to construct their own narrative through space.



Figure 2.13 Classical sculptures

CLASSICAL SCULPTURES

Spatial Requirements for Classical Sculptures:

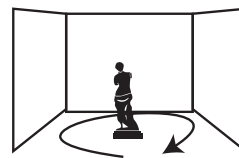
Classical sculptures are often displayed in clear and open spaces where they can be viewed from multiple viewpoints. Simple geometries and sufficient space around each object help to distinguish individual works within the exhibition. Soft and even lighting makes details and surface qualities visible without creating strong contrasts. Materials and colours are generally kept simple so that attention remains on the sculptures. Visitors can move around the works freely, allowing them to observe the sculptures from different viewpoints and at their own pace.



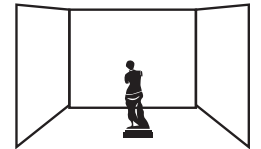
Centrality



Symmetry



Free Circulation



Empty space

CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURES

Contemporary sculpture emerged in the 20th century and really changed the way people think about art and space. Unlike classical sculpture, which focused on idealized human figures and perfect proportions, contemporary works experiment with different materials, forms, and scales. You'll see pieces made of metal, plastic, fabric, even light or sound. The meaning of the work often comes from how you move around it, how it interacts with the space, and how it relates to other pieces. In a way, you become part of the sculpture just by being there (Guggenheim Museum, n.d.).

Contemporary artists like Harley Valentine, Dorit Levinstein, and Arlene Shechet really push the idea of what sculpture can be. They play around with different materials and textures, experimenting to see how things move, bend, or interact with the space by twisting metal into organic, almost alive shapes, letting the sculpture evolve. Contemporary artists think about the movement and interaction with people around their work, how light plays a roll, and how the space changes the way it feels. The result is art that feel alive, playful, and immersive, and that invite each visitor to have a slightly different experience.



Figure 2.14 Contemporary sculpture of Arlene Shechet

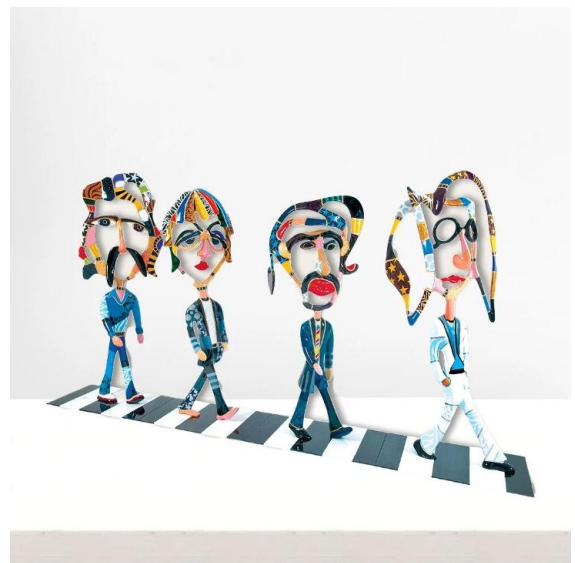


Figure 2.15 Dorit Levinstein -The Beatles Sculpture

CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURES

Relation to Architecture

Contemporary sculpture often work with different materials than classical sculpture, using metal, wood, plastic, fabric and light. Unlike classical sculpture, there are no rules of proportion, balance or hierarchy. The way a piece is experienced can change depending on the visitors position, movement and the interaction with the surrounding space. This makes contemporary sculpture dynamic and relational, where moving through the museum becomes part of the experience itself.

Relation to Fondazione Prada

Within Fondazione Prada, contemporary sculpture fits naturally. The foundation is known for experimenting and questioning norms and contemporary works do exactly that. In ways that Prada pushes boundaries in fashion, contemporary sculptures invites visitors to reconsider what a sculpture is and how it occupies space. They don't rely on historical narratives; their meaning emerges through direct encounter, spatial context, and personal interpretation, which aligns perfectly with a museum designed for non-linear exploration.

Relation to Milan

Milan strengthens this connection. The city is not just historical, but it's a place for design, fashion and innovation. Contemporary sculpture reflects this by interacting with architecture and sometimes with classical works in surprising ways. Variations in scale, material and form create dialogues across time, allowing visitors to experience both old and new in a fresh and personal way. Milan's combination of tradition and innovative creativity makes it the ideal place for a museum that combines exploration, experimentation and layered cultural references.

Relation to project

In the proposed museum, contemporary sculptures are treated as active spatial elements, just like classical works, but with a focus on unpredictability, interaction, and material experimentation. They don't dictate a fixed route; visitors can pause, return, or create their own paths. Together with classical sculptures, contemporary works create a dialogue, where meaning emerges through movement, spatial experience, and personal engagement, reflecting both Fondazione Prada's core values and Milan's layered, experimental character.

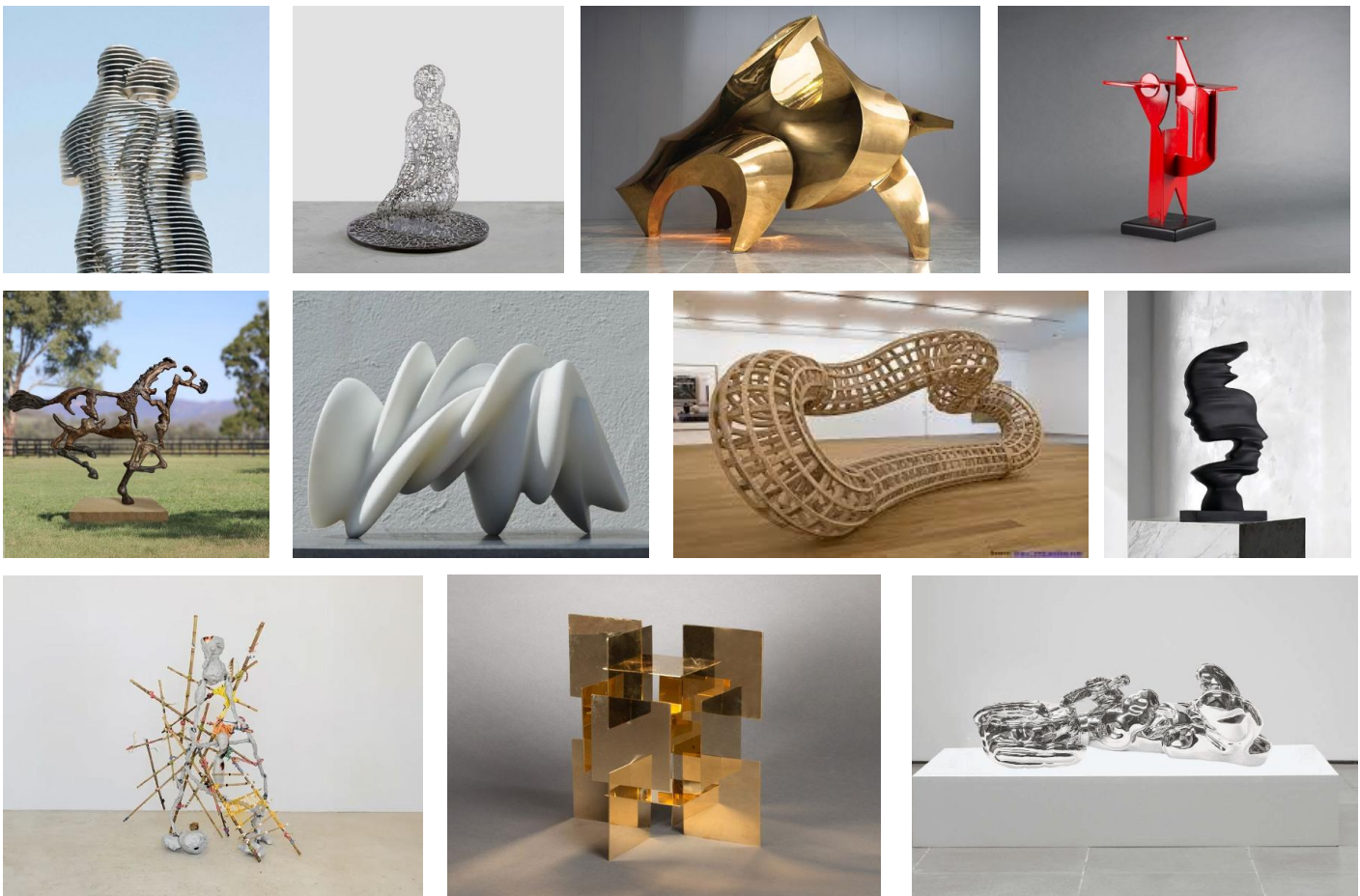


Figure 2.16 Contemporary sculptures

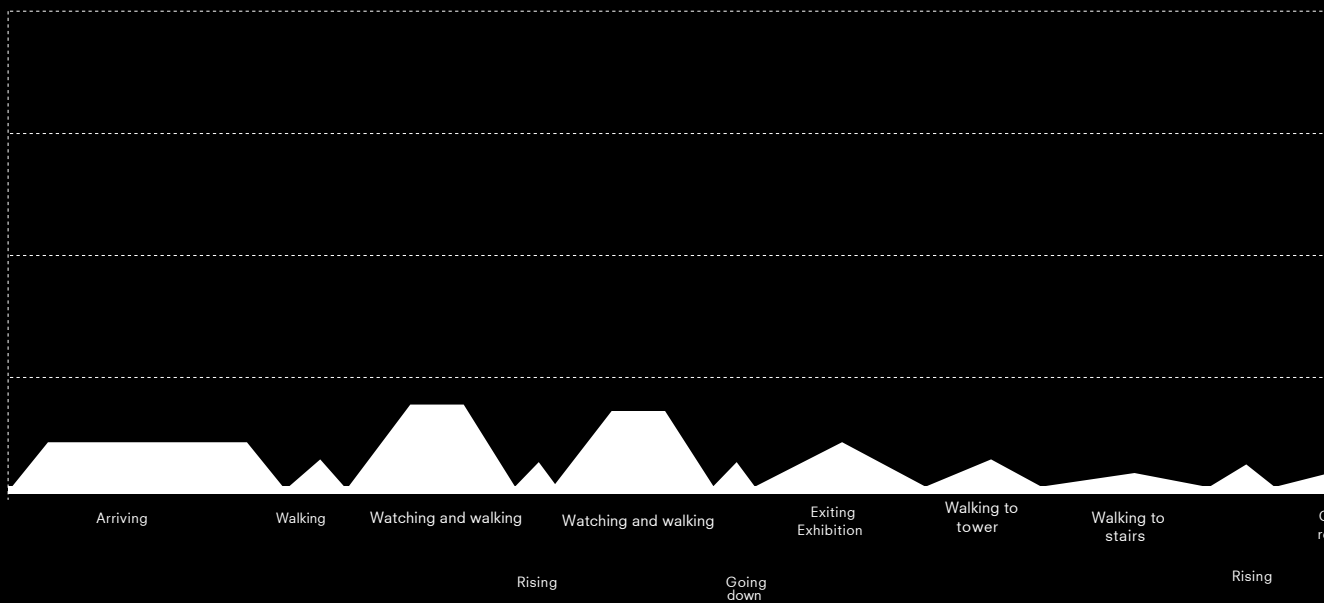
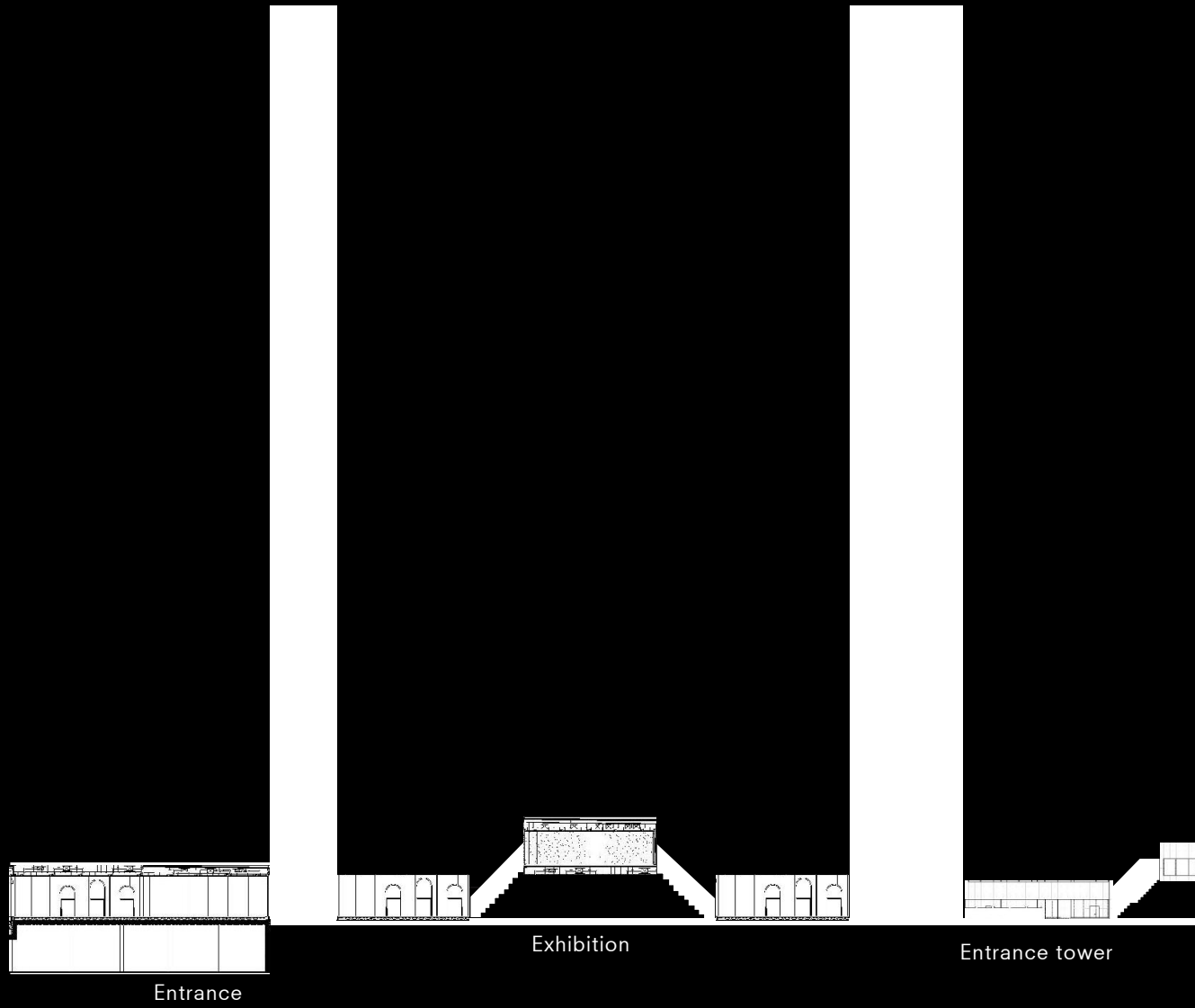


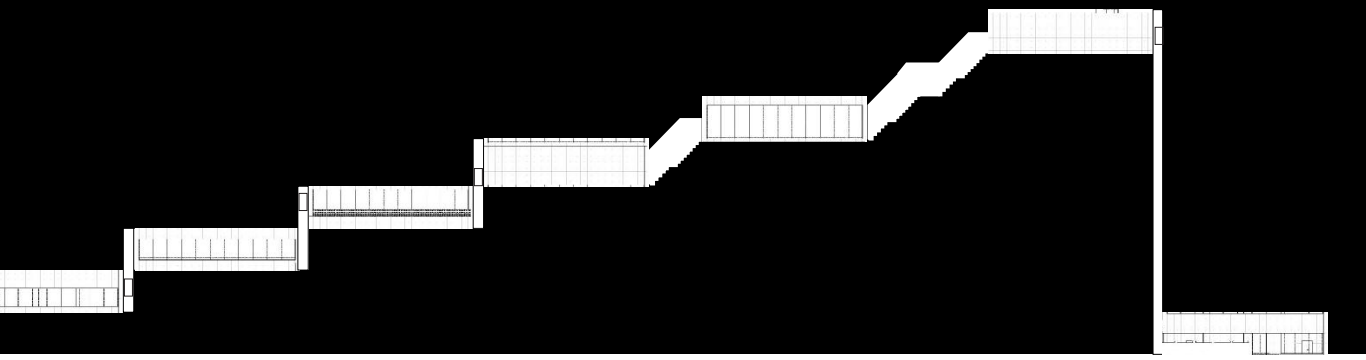


DESIGN BRIEF

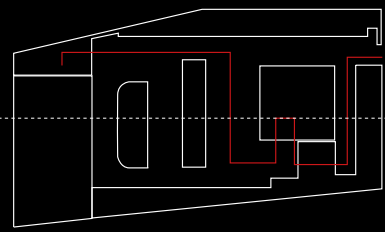
03

GROUP WORK





Toilets Exhibition Exhibition Exhibition Exhibition Restaurant Entrance Tower



Going to
bathroom Watching and
walking Watching and
walking Watching and
walking Getting a coffee
at the restaurant Watching and
walking Walking to exit

Rising Rising Rising Rising Rising Going down

GROUP WORK

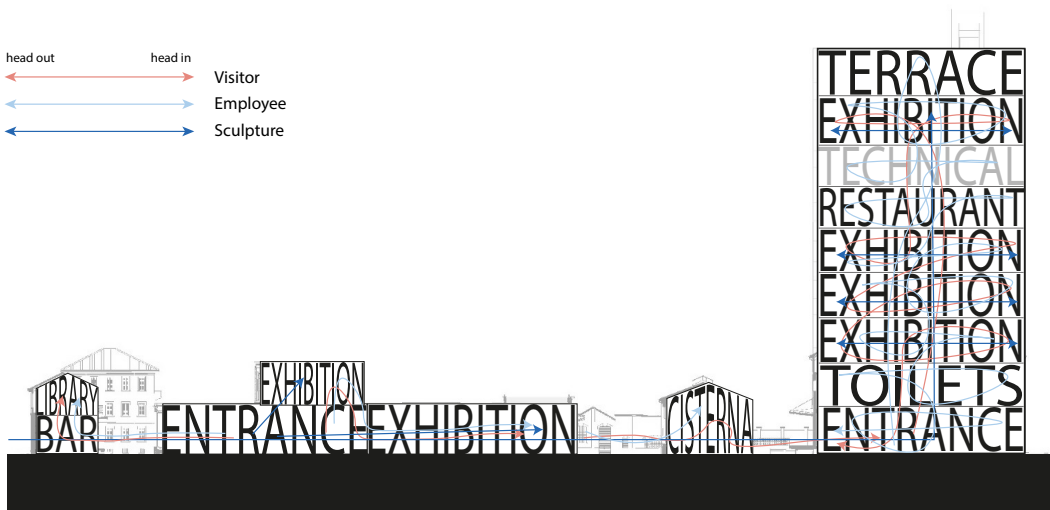
For the group work, flows were analysed by first defining their role and how they could be incorporated into each project. An approach was developed in which a flow through the building represents the visitor as a user, comparable to a section combined with a route. This was integrated with the time spent in each space and the amount of movement, resulting in an abstract section.

A focus on program in relation to flows was also established to gain insight into the buildings function and to compare the flow section with the actual architectural section. This method proved effective, leading to a clear understanding of how the building operates and how spaces are experienced by visitors. This knowledge is carried forward when investigating the flows of other users later in the project.

- Front of house
- Back of house

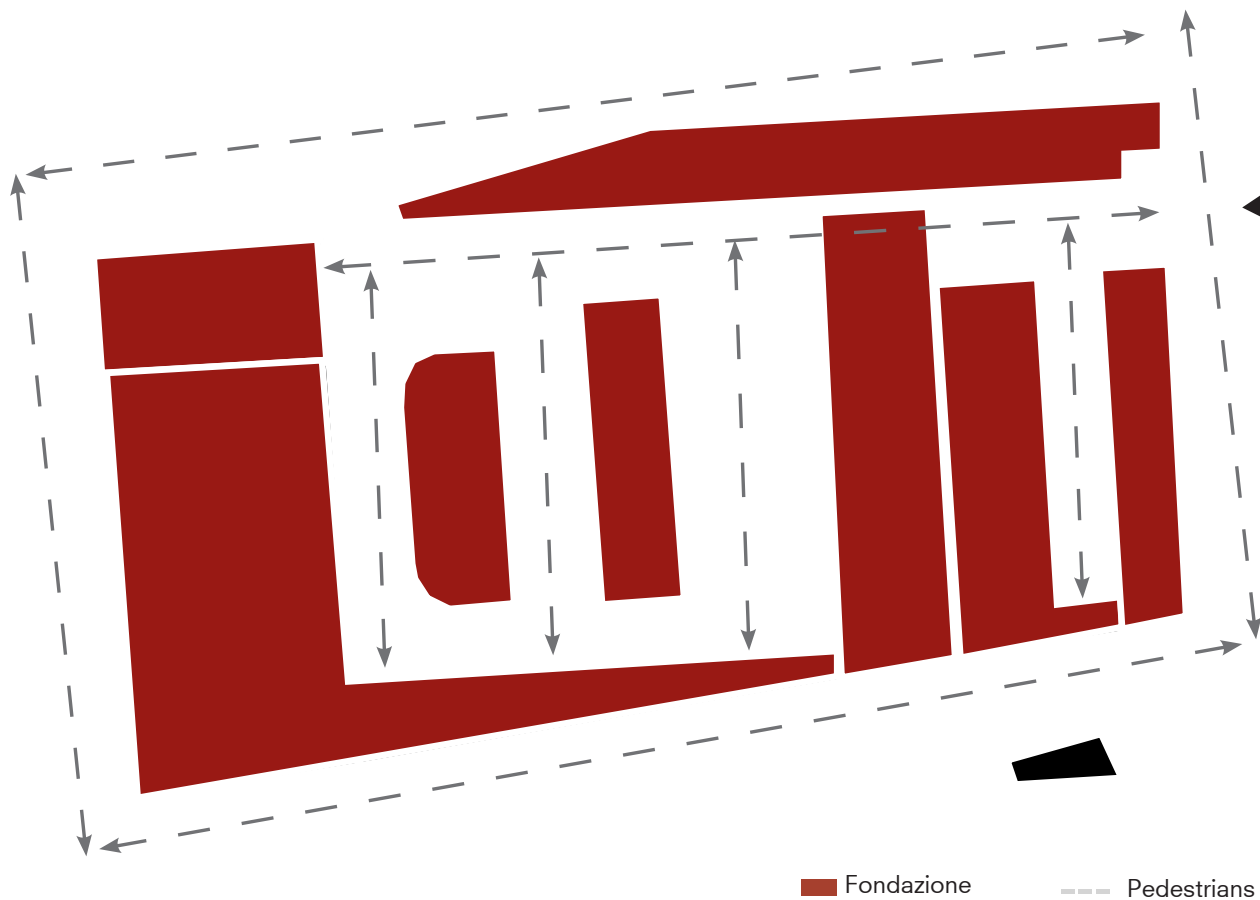


- head out
- head in
- Visitor
- Employee
- Sculpture



FLAWS FONDAZIONE PRADA

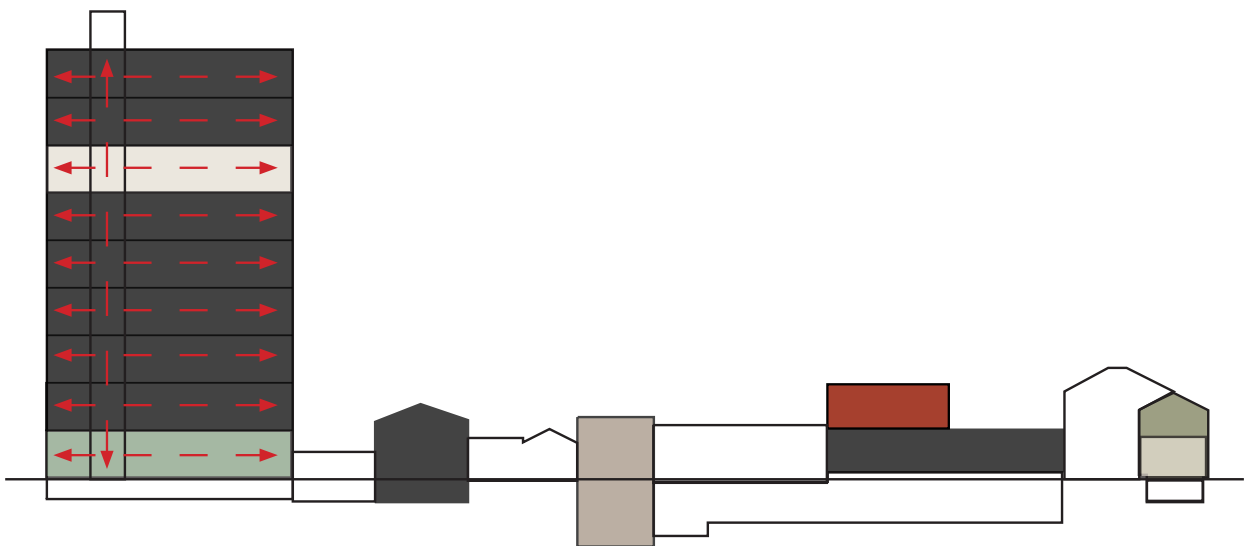
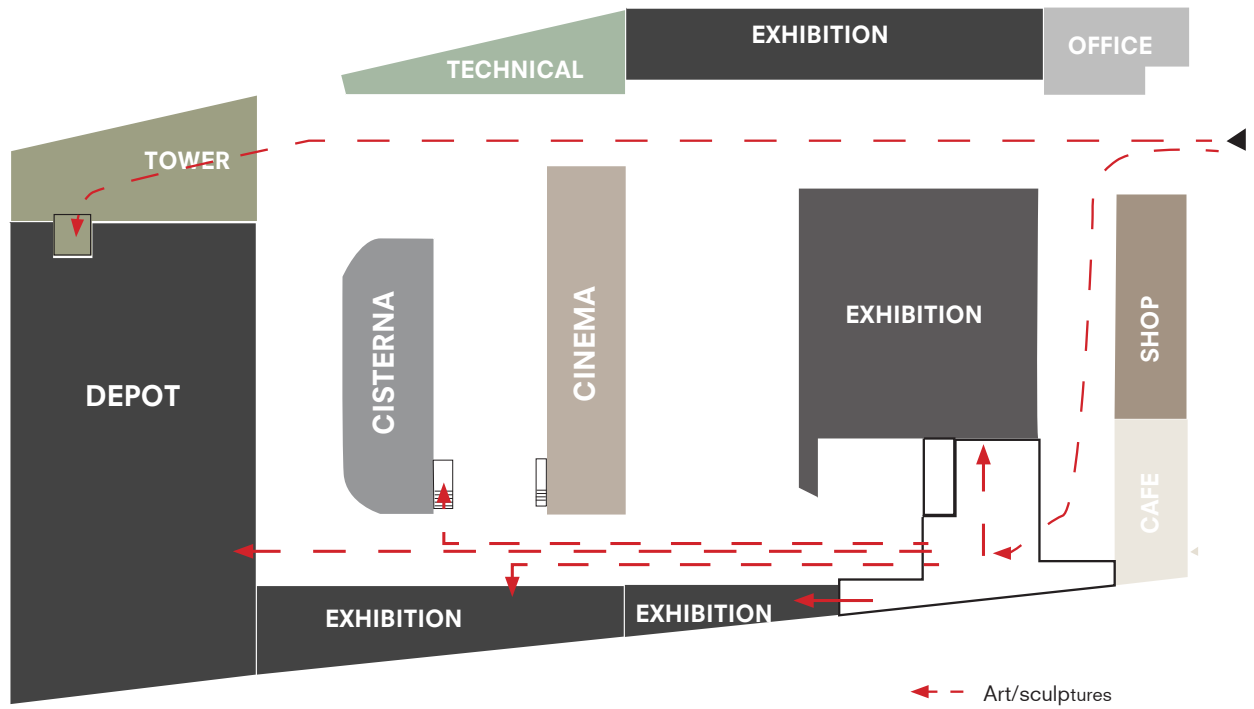
Accessibility pedestrians



The Fondazione is organised around a clear main entrance, providing visitors with a straightforward point of arrival. The building features clear circulation both inside and outside, facilitating easy navigation throughout the complex. All exhibition areas and public facilities are designed to be accessible also for target groups with mobility issues, due to ramps, wide corridors, and elevators.

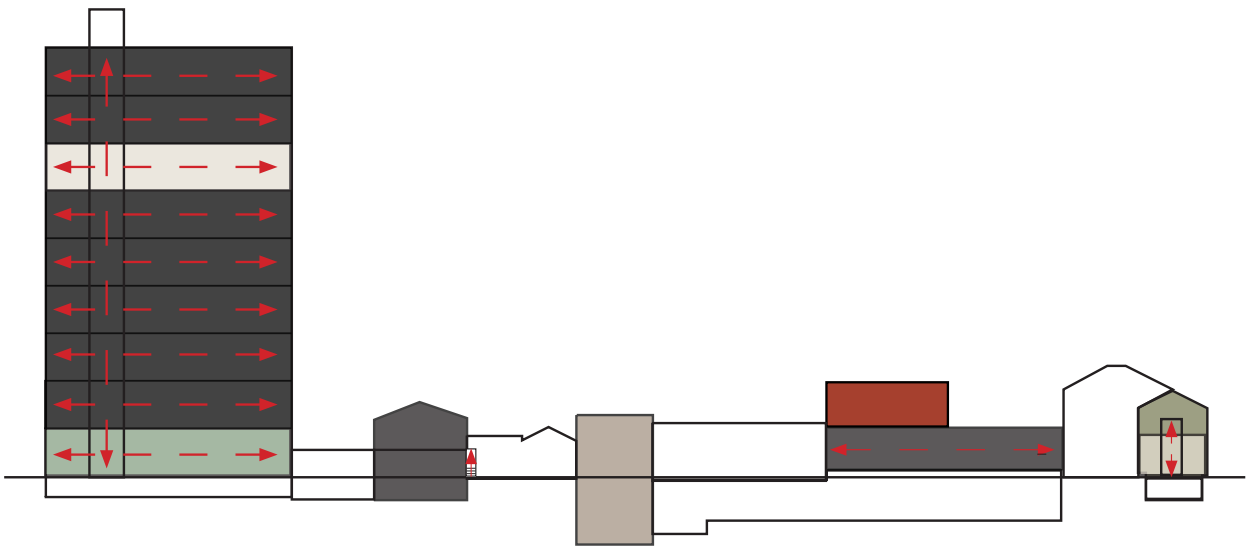
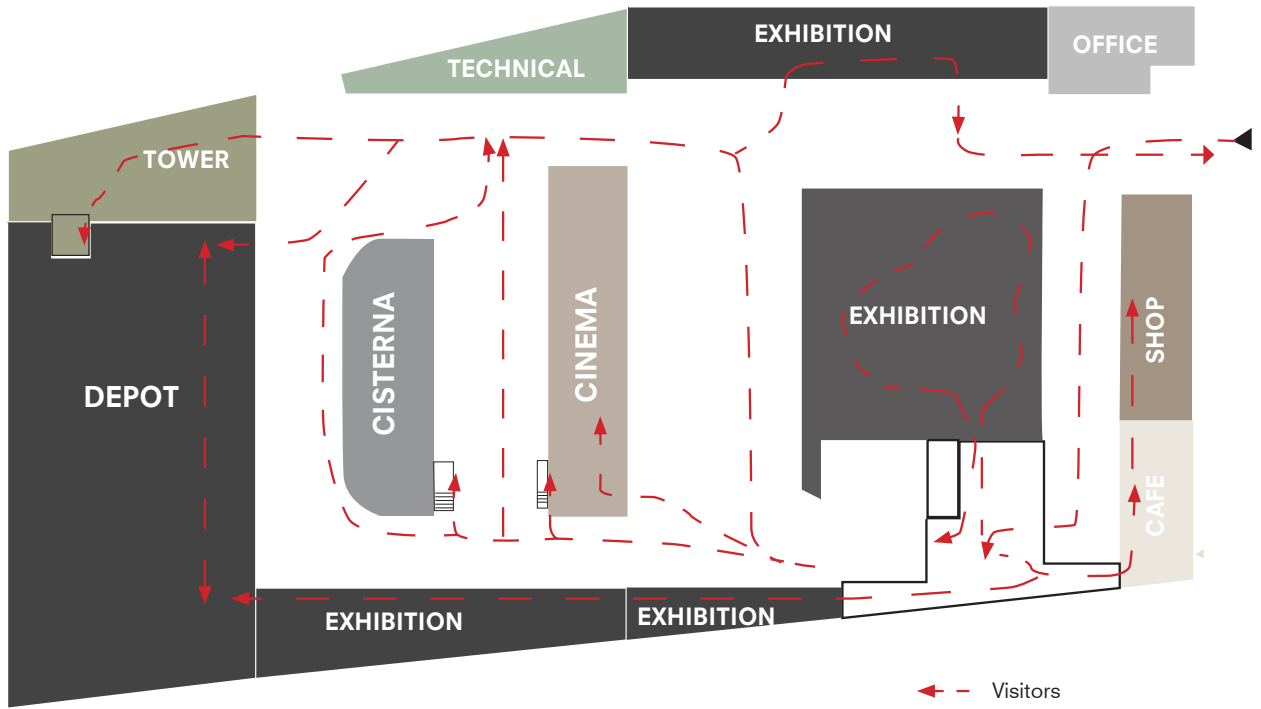
FLAWS FONDAZIONE PRADA

Sculpture route



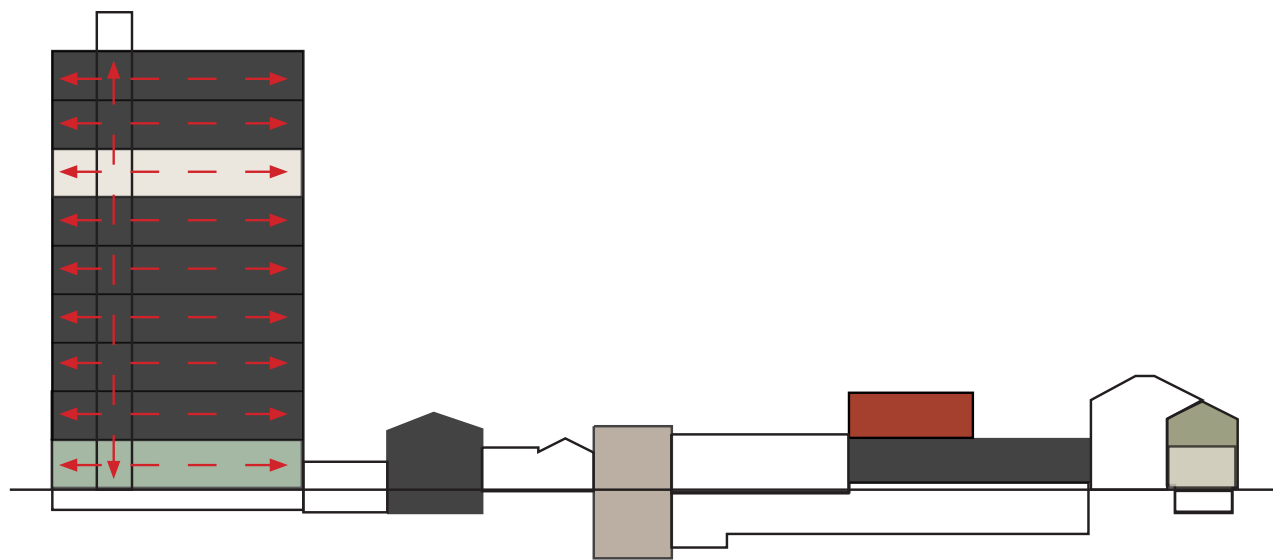
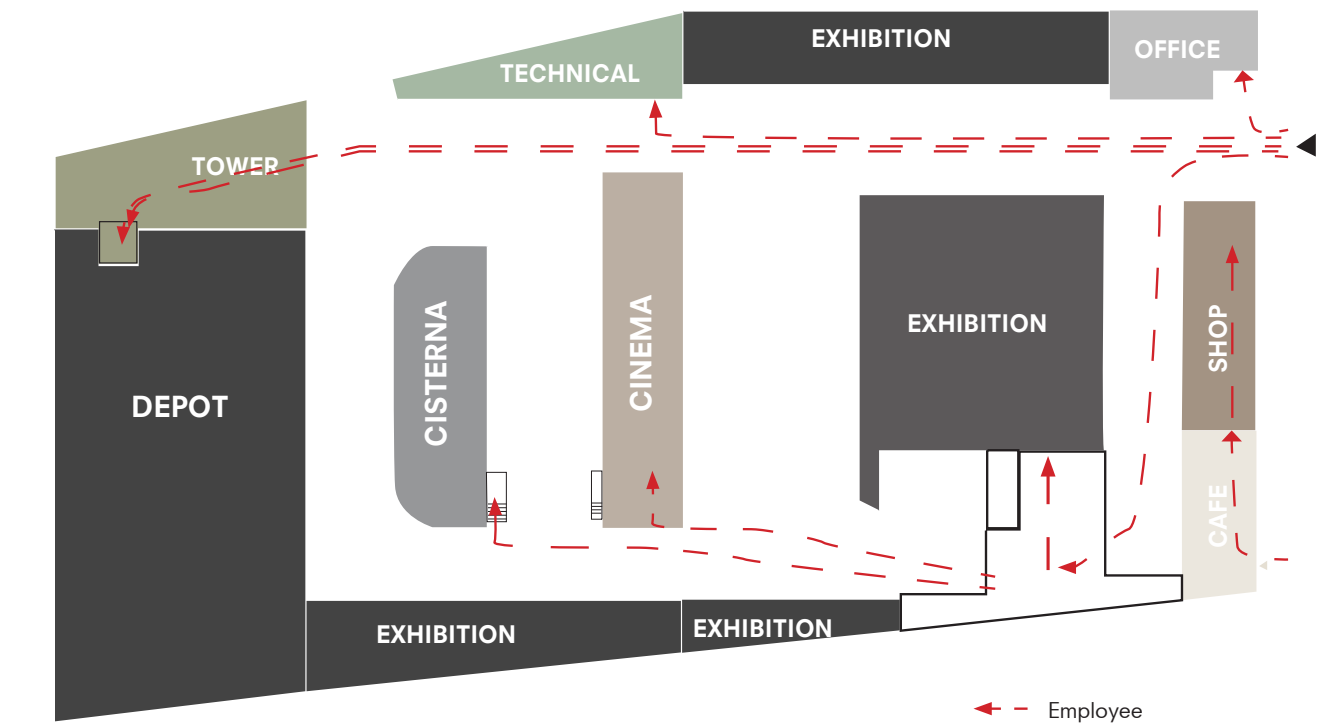
FLAWS FONDAZIONE PRADA

Visitors route



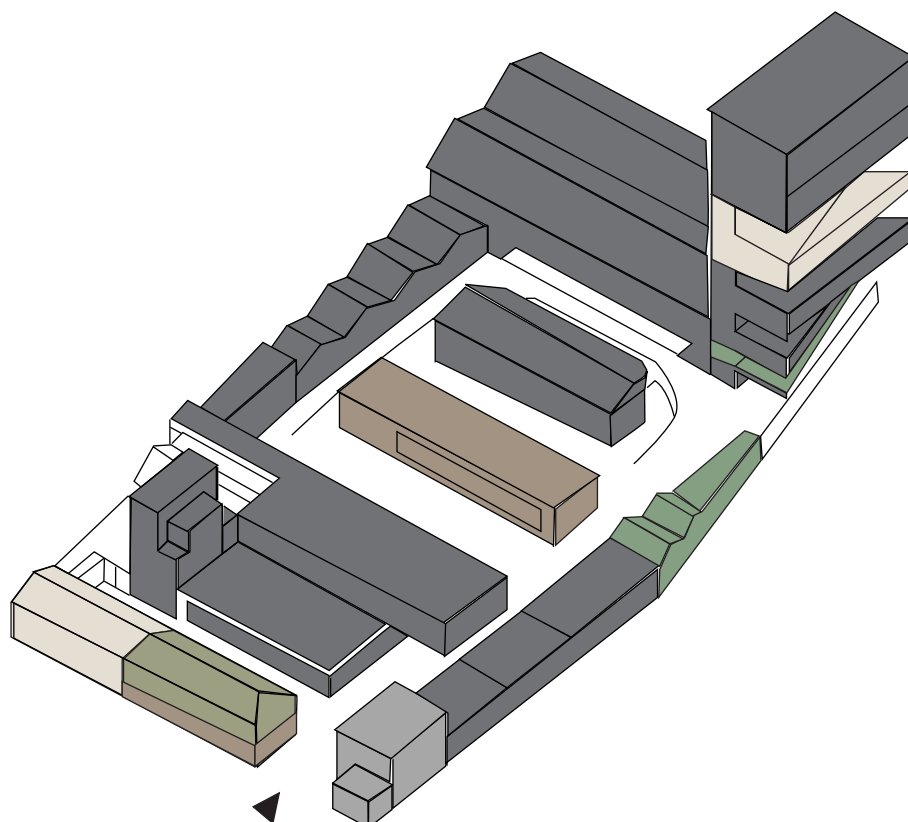
FLAWS FONDAZIONE PRADA

Employee route



PROGRAM FONDAZIONE PRADA

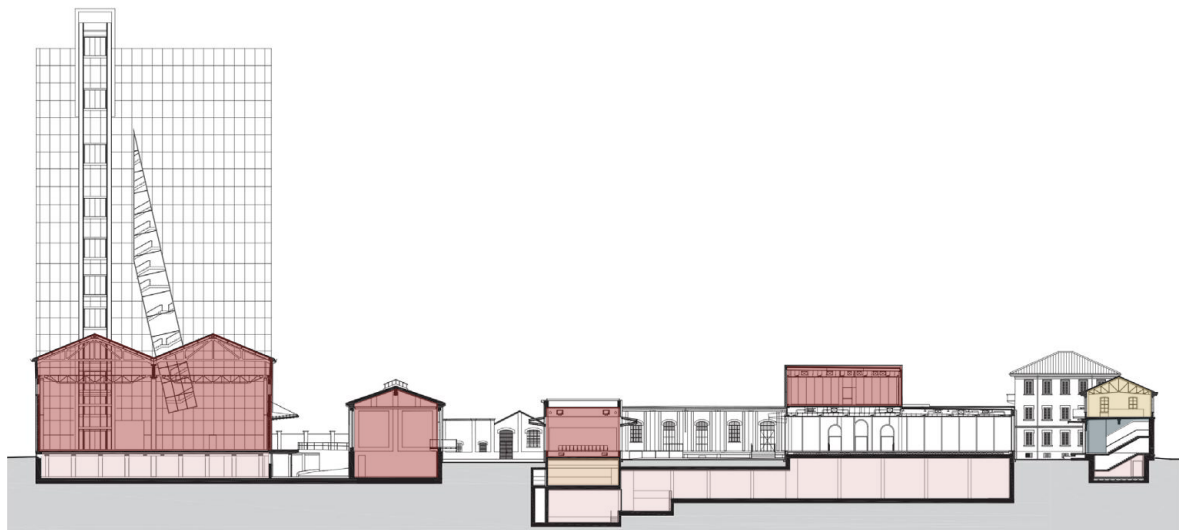
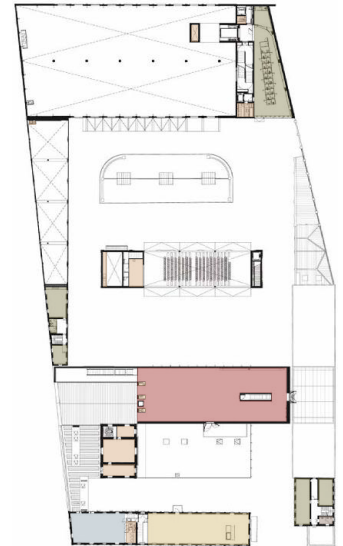
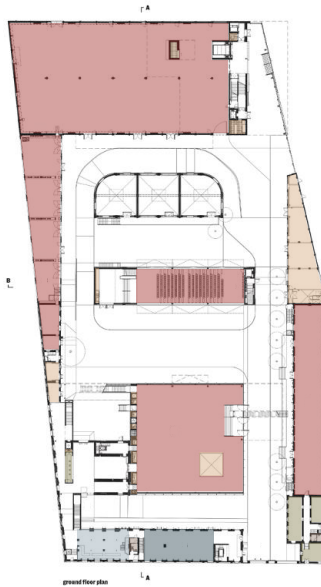
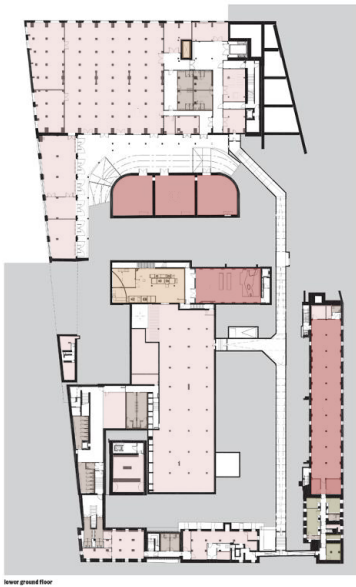
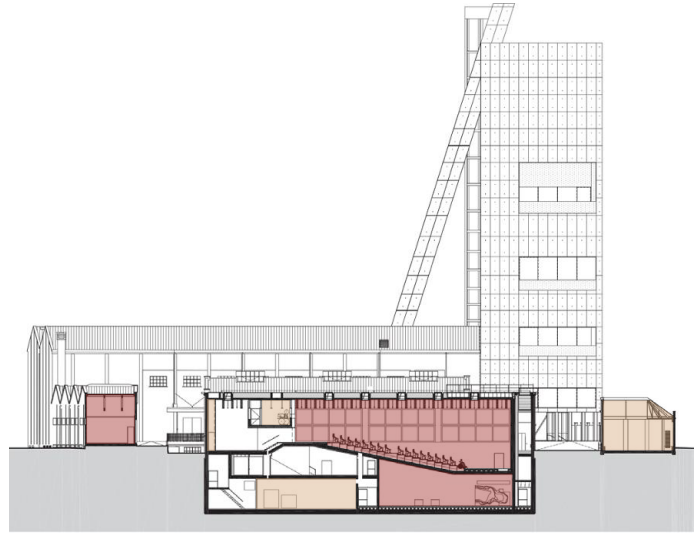
Restaurant, café
Shop
Library
Exhibition Space
Offices & Staff
Technical
Cinema



It is noticeable that almost all of the buildings include an exhibition space. Near the entrance, several additional facilities are located, such as a library, shop, museum, and offices. Within the tower, the exhibition spaces are complemented by other functions, including a restaurant, sanitary facilities, and technical installations.

PROGRAM OMA

- storage
- exhibition
- restroom
- offices
- restaurant
- shop
- technical



DATABASE

DATABASE



Fondazione Prada 19.000 m²
Milan, IT, 2015
OMA



Guggenheim Museum 11.605 m²
New York, US, 1959
Frank Lloyd Wright



Pinakothek der Moderne 33.285m²
Munich, DU, 2002
Stephan Braunfels



Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, US, 1967
Josef Paul Kleihues



Glyptothek 11.000m²
Munich, DU, 1830
Leo von Klenze



Beelden aan Zee 4200 m²
Scheveningen, NL, 1990
Wim Quist

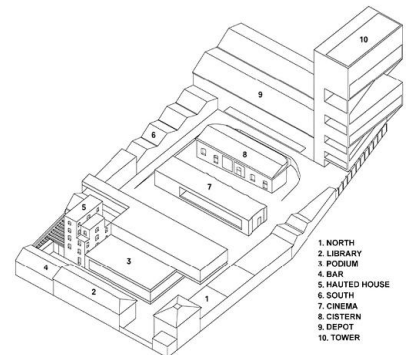
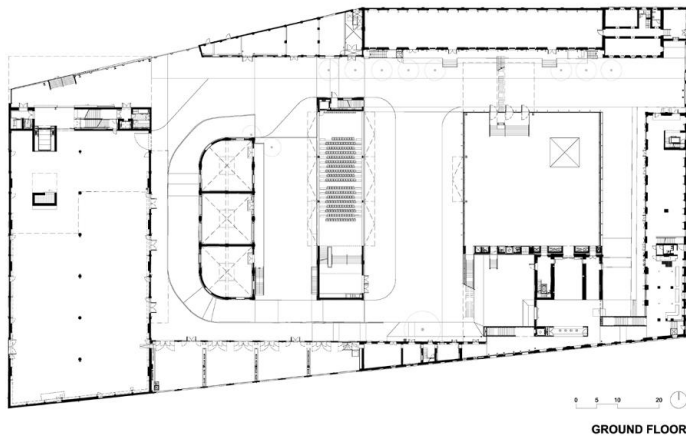
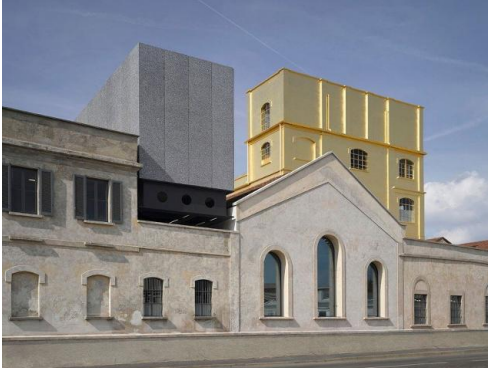


Louvre 72.735 m²
Paris, FR, 1793
OMA

FONDAZIONE PRADA

Project Details

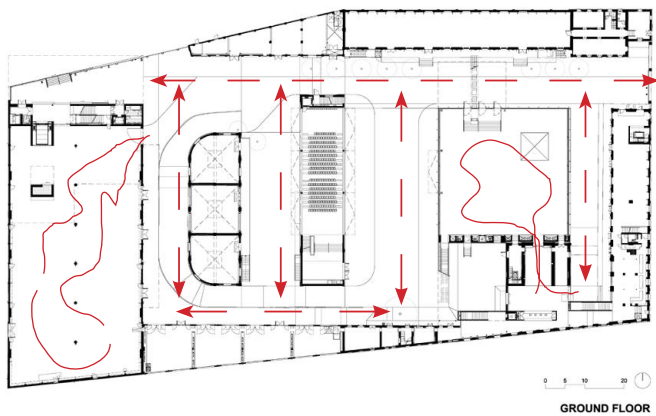
Location: Milan, IT
Architect: OMA
Year: 2015
GFA: 19.000 m²



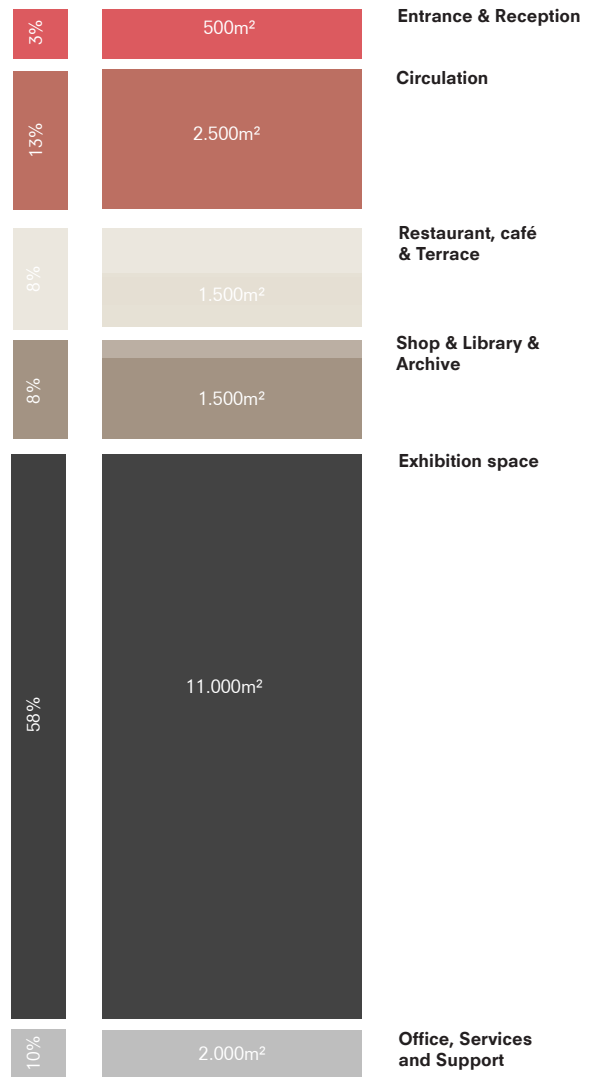
1. NORTH
2. LIBRARY
3. PODIUM
4. BAR
5. HAUTED HOUSE
6. SOUTH
7. CINEMA
8. CISTERN
9. DEPOT
10. TOWER

CIRCULATION

FONDAZIONE PRADA



PROGRAM BAR



HYBRID NARRATIVE

Fondazione Prada is made up of several existing industrial buildings together with new additions. These volumes are distributed across the site and connected by a network of courtyards and outdoor spaces. Visitors can move between the buildings using different routes, making the overall circulation relatively open.

Inside the exhibition buildings, circulation is often more organised. Galleries in the Podium and Torre are usually arranged as a sequence of spaces linked to a particular exhibition. While movement across the site is flexible, movement within individual exhibitions is often more controlled. The project therefore combines both open and structured forms of circulation.

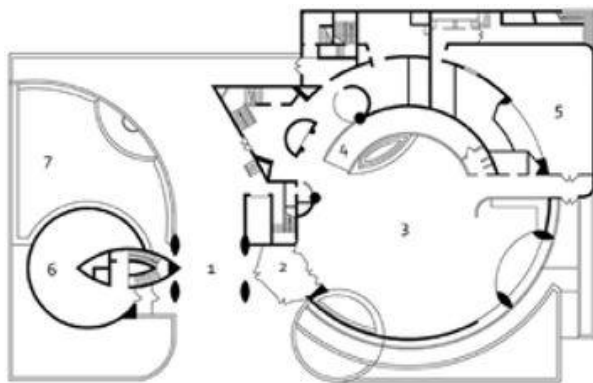
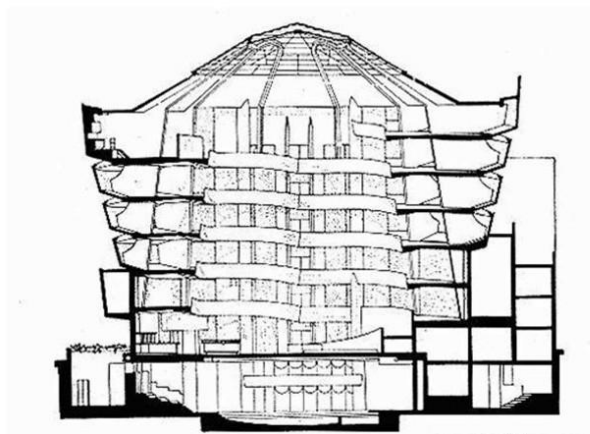
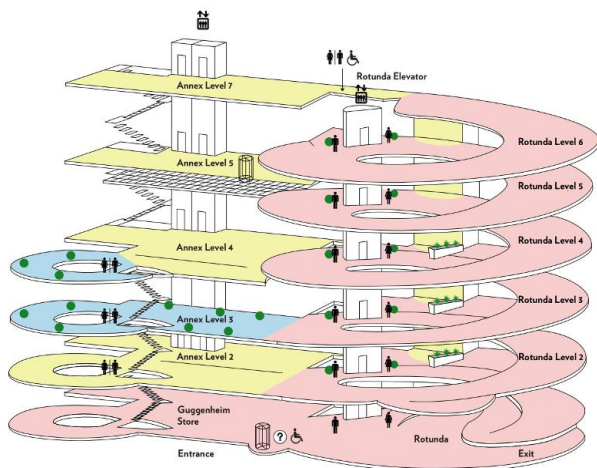


Total: 19.000m²

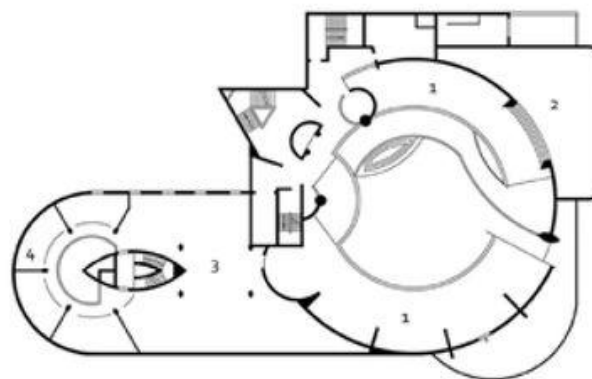
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Project Details

Location: New York, US
 Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright
 Year: 1959
 GFA: 11.605 m²



- GROUND FLOOR (1959)**
- 1 ACCESS
 - 2 ENTRY VESTIBULE
 - 3 MAIN GALLERY / ATRIUM
 - 4 RAMP
 - 5 GALLERY
 - 6 OFFICES
 - 7 SCULPTURE GARDEN

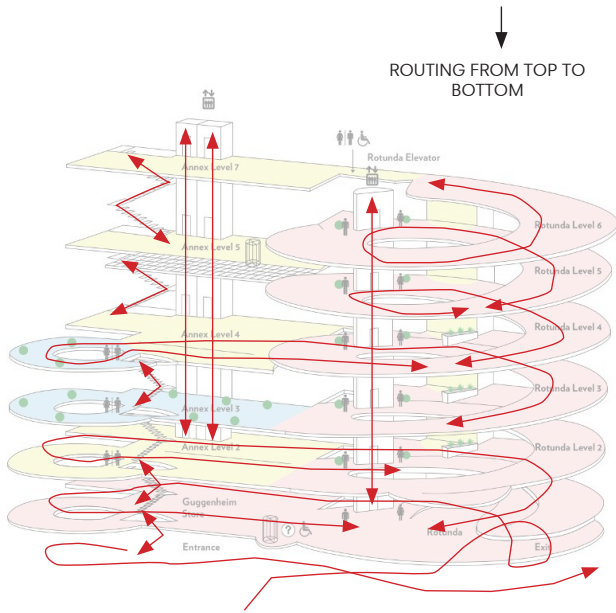


- MAIN FLOOR (1959)**
- 1 RAMP / EXHIBITION
 - 2 HIGH GALLERY
 - 3 LIBRARY
 - 4 OFFICES

CIRCULATION

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

PROGRAM BAR



ROUTING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

5%	550m ²	Entrance
16%	1.700m ²	Circulation
	575m ²	Restaurant, café & Terrace
4%	480m ²	Shop & Library
60%	6.900m ²	Exhibition space
10%	1.400m ²	Office, Services and Support

Total: 11.605 m²

LINEAR NARRATIVE

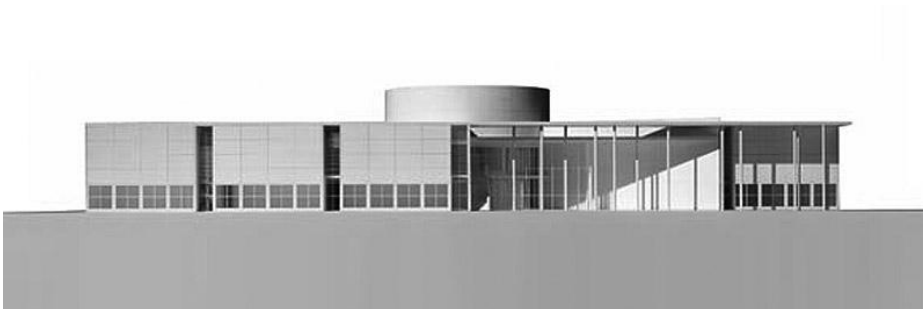
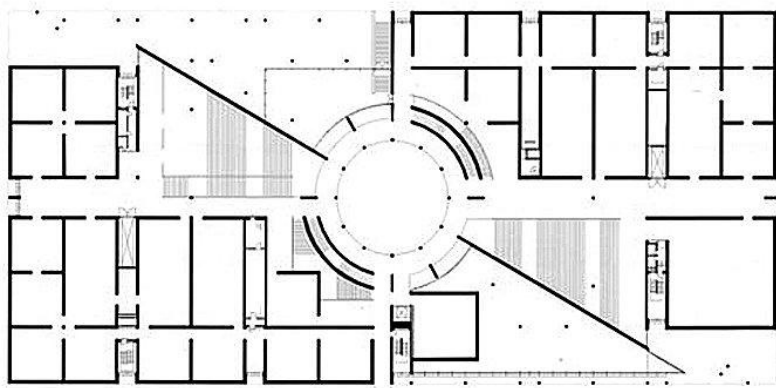
The circulation of the Guggenheim Museum is linear, guiding visitors along one continuous path. You enter at street level, but the usual experience is to take the elevator up to the top. From there, you slowly descend along the large spiral ramp, which doubles as the main exhibition space. There are some small side galleries and terraces if you want to explore, but the main path keeps the experience flowing. Overall, the design creates a clear linear narrative, with the artworks experienced in sequence as you move down the ramp.



PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE

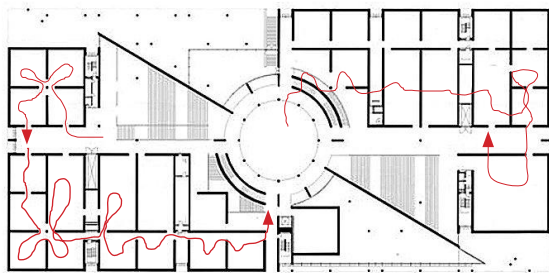
Project Details

Location: Munich, DU
Architect: Stephan Braunfels
Year: 2002
GFA: 20.000 m²



CIRCULATION

PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE

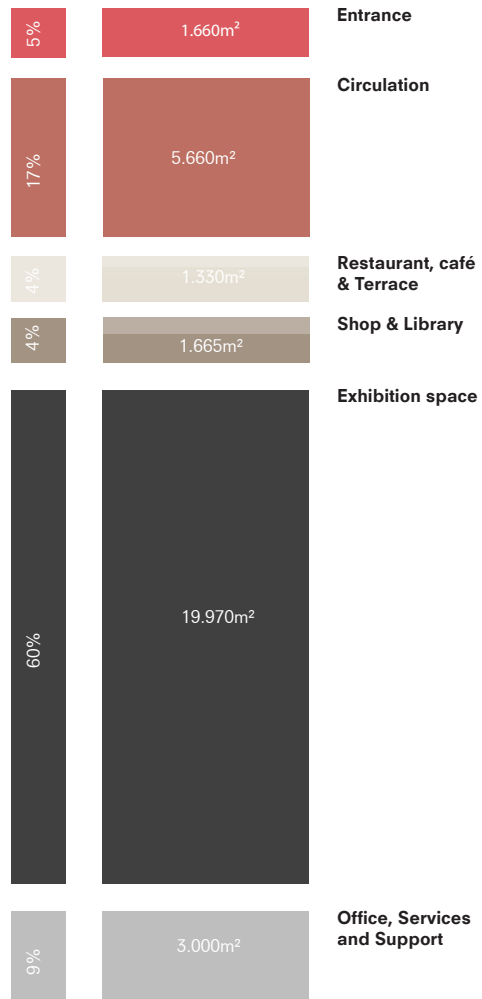


LINEAR NARRATIVE

The Pinakothek der Moderne is organised around a central rotunda that connects the different exhibition areas. From this space, visitors can access the surrounding galleries. Although there is some freedom in how the museum is explored, the rooms are clearly defined and connected in a structured way. Movement through the building generally follows a sequence from one gallery to the next. Openings between rooms and views into neighbouring spaces provide indications of where the route continues.



PROGRAM BAR



Total: 33.285 m²

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

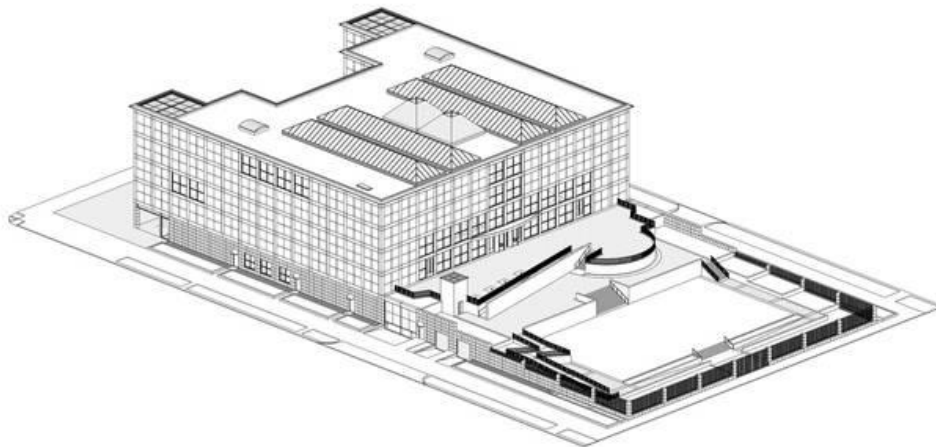
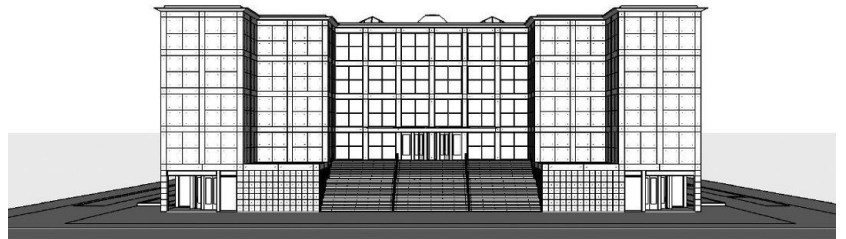
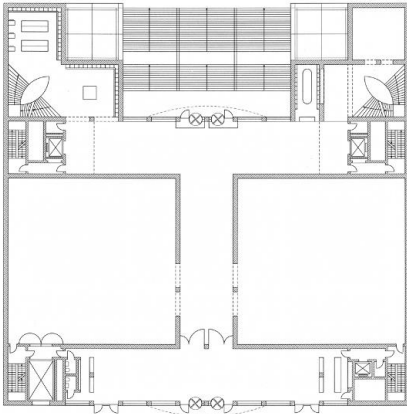
Project Details

Location: Chicago, US
Architect: Josef Paul Kleihues
Year: 1967
GFA: 9.300 m²

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the MCA, is a building dedicated to contemporary art from the mid 20th century to today. There is a broad collection of art, including paintings, sculpture, photography installation and multimedia. With focus is on experimental and innovative pieces.

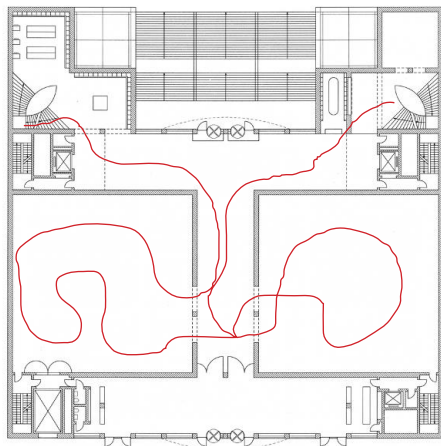
Beside the galleries, there is also educational programs, a theatre and an sculpture garden, making it a multifunctional art building.

The layout is clear with open circulation, making it easy to navigate through the building



CIRCULATION

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

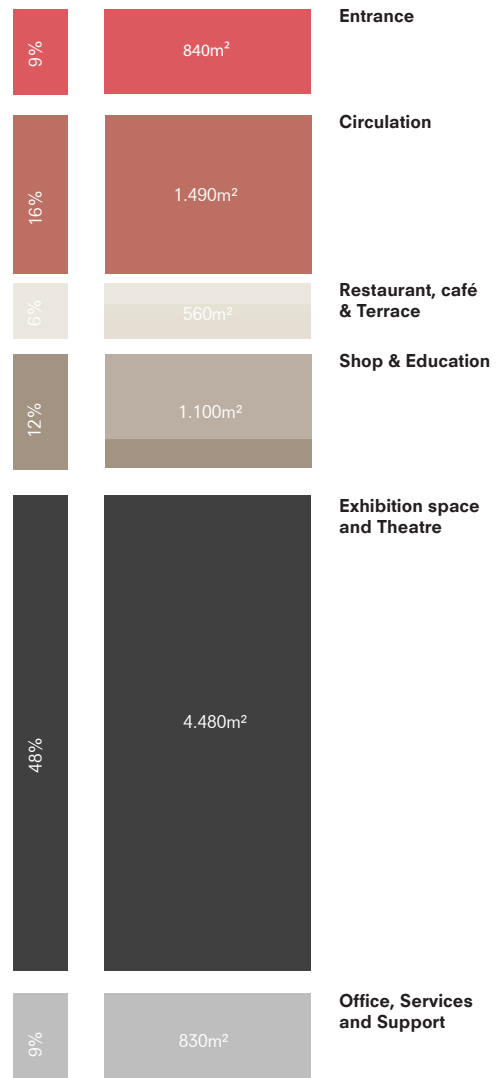


NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is organized through a sequence of flexible gallery spaces. You enter via main stairs into the lobby area, where multiple staircases connect to the levels and galleries on either side. The circulation is more about moving along a spine and through a series of rooms. The galleries are arranged in a way that lets you choose your own path, sometimes jumping between levels using discreet stairs. This creates a non-linear experience: the sequence of spaces is structured, but visitors can explore in multiple ways, making each visit feel personal and dynamic.



PROGRAM BAR



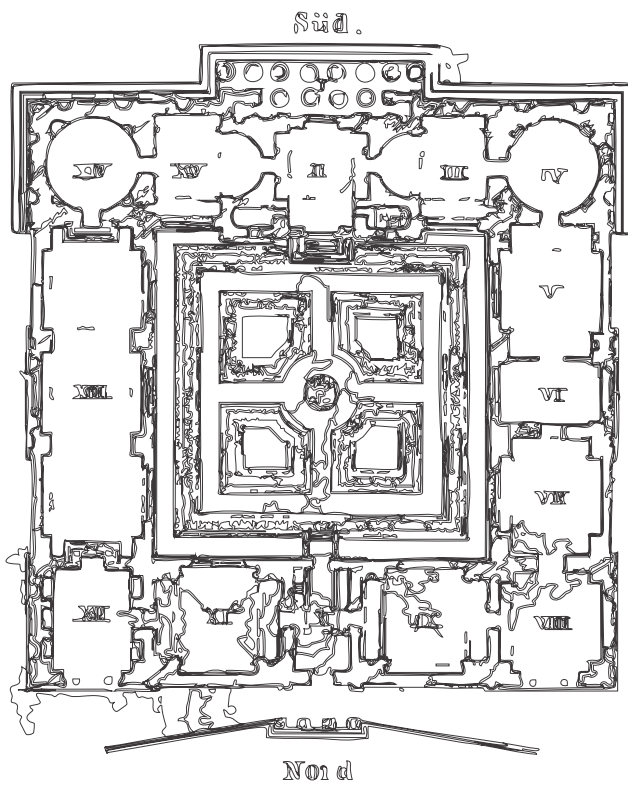
Total: 9.300 m²

GLYPTOTHEK

Project Details

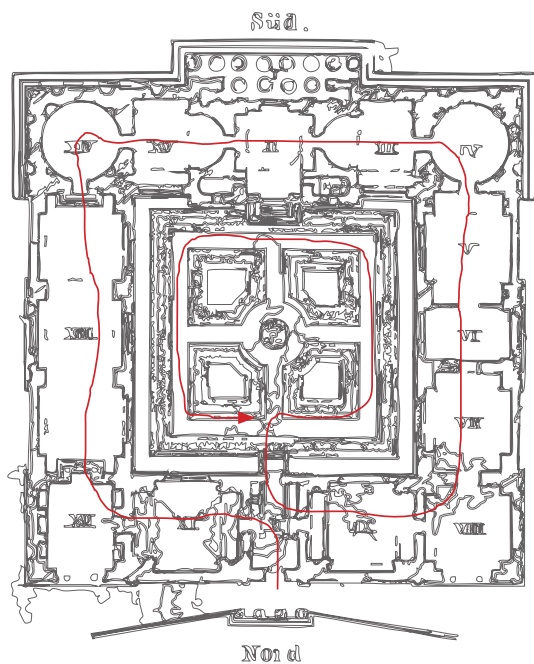
Location: Munich, DU
Architect: Leo von Klenze
Year: 1830
GFA: 11.000 m²

The Glyptothek in Munich is a museum for ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. The collection consists of statues, busts, reliefs, and sarcophagi. These works are displayed in a series of galleries arranged around a central courtyard. The building has a symmetrical plan and follows many characteristics associated with neoclassical architecture. Besides the exhibition spaces, the museum also includes several rooms for educational purposes and visitor facilities.



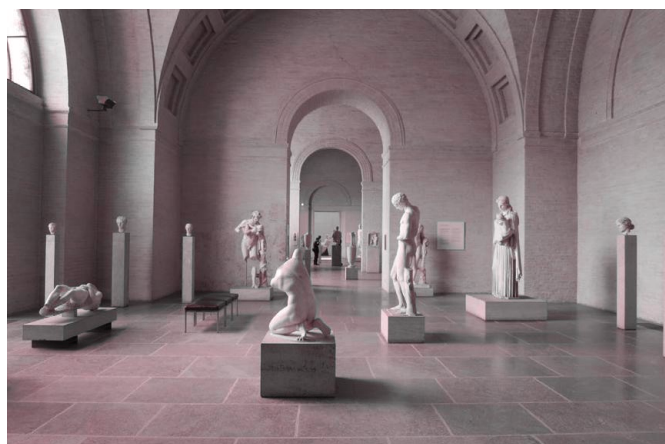
CIRCULATION

GLYPTOTHEK

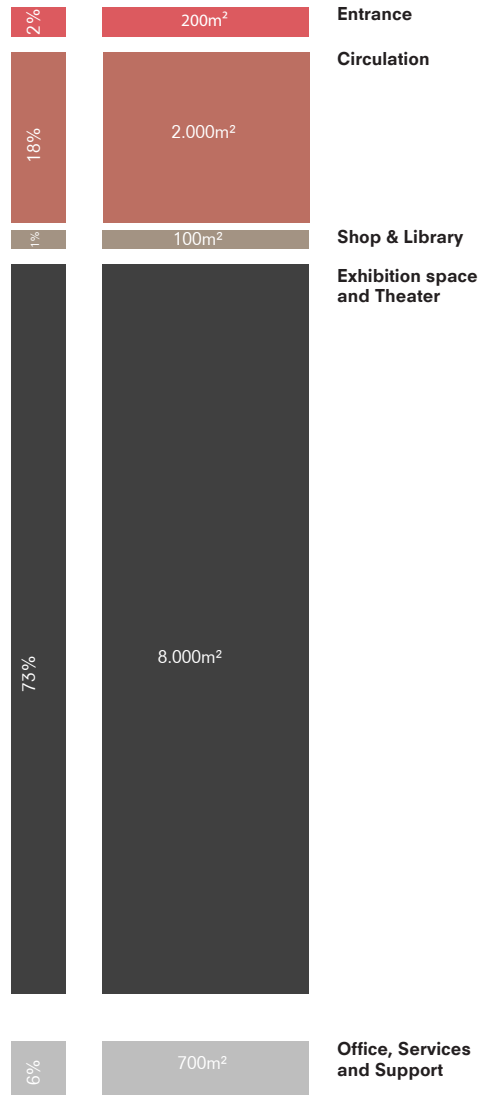


LINEAR NARRATIVE

The plan of the Glyptothek is centred around a courtyard. The galleries are arranged in a continuous series of rooms around this space. Visitors move from one gallery to the next along a clearly organised route. Because the collection is displayed in a specific order, the sequence of spaces plays an important role in how the museum is experienced.



PROGRAM BAR



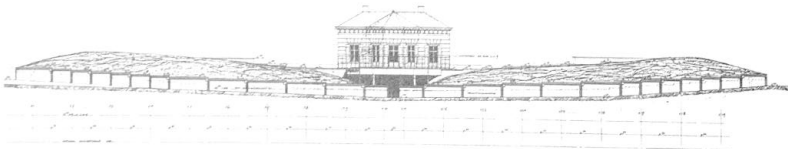
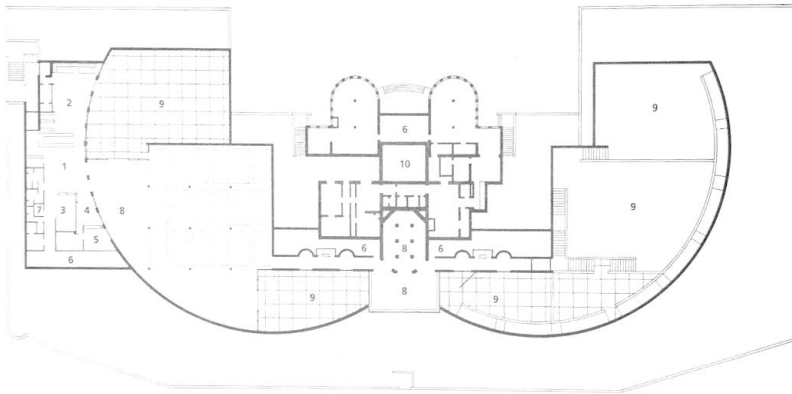
Total: 11.000 m²

BEELDEN AAN ZEE

Project Details

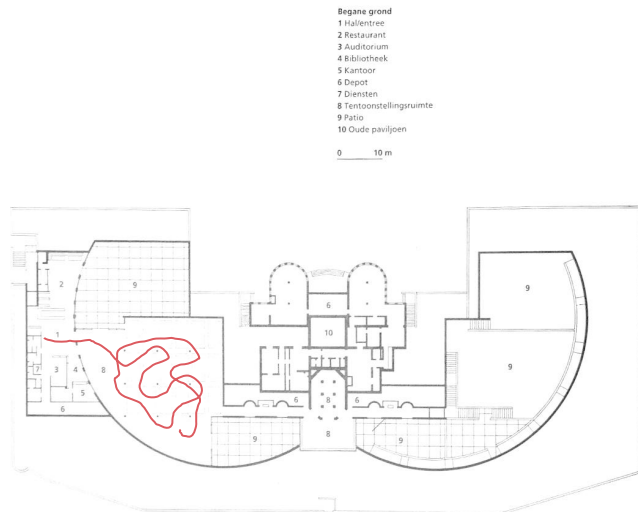
Location: Scheveningen, NL
Architect: Wim Quist
Year: 1990
GFA: 4200 m²

- Begane grond
- 1 Hal/entree
 - 2 Restaurant
 - 3 Auditorium
 - 4 Bibliotheek
 - 5 Kantoor
 - 6 Depot
 - 7 Diensten
 - 8 Tentoonstellingsruimte
 - 9 Patio
 - 10 Oude paviljoen
- 0 10 m



CIRCULATION

BEELDEN AAN ZEE

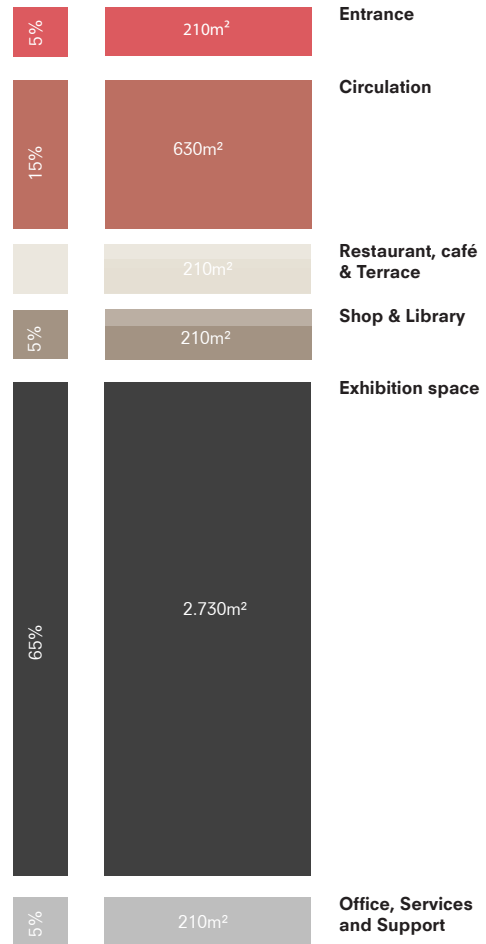


NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE

Beelden aan Zee is organised as a large open exhibition space. Columns are distributed throughout the hall, but there are no walls separating the sculptures into individual galleries. Visitors can move freely through the space and choose their own route. As a result, different visitors may encounter the collection in a different order.



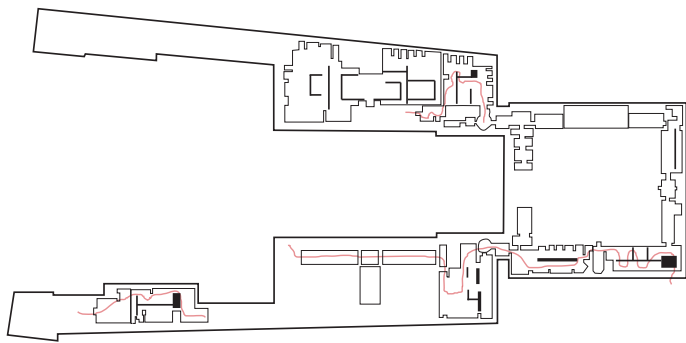
PROGRAM BAR



Total: 4.200 m²

CIRCULATION

LOUVRE

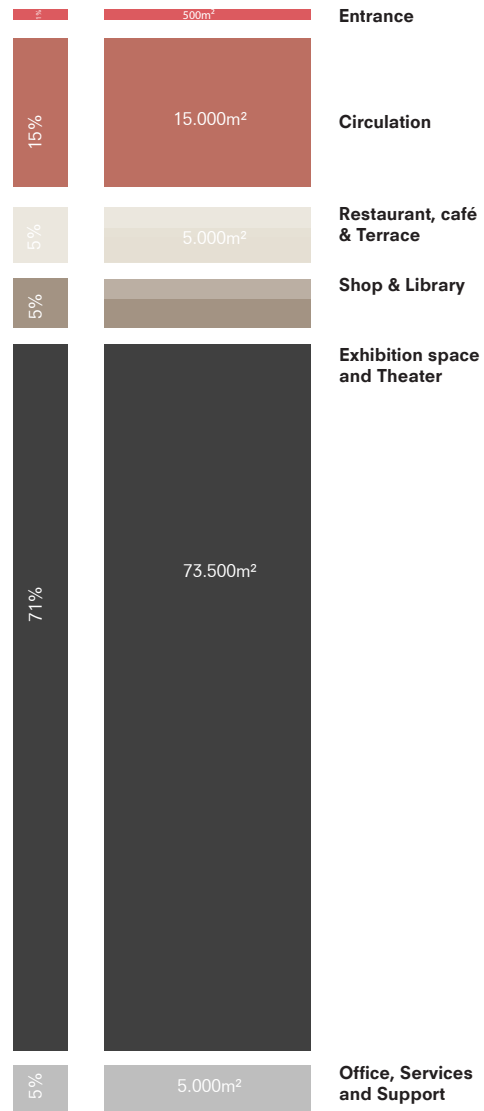


HYBRID NARRATIVE

Visitors can explore the Louvre in Paris in a variety of ways due to its enormous size and several wings and floors. Although there isn't a single, rigid path, the museum's structure promotes a roughly chronological approach from ancient civilizations to Renaissance and current European art. Moving through magnificent halls, connecting hallways, and staircases, you can either follow the recommended order or jump around to your preferred collections. Because of this, the Louvre experience is both linear and non-linear; while there is a chronological trend, each visitor can customize their own path through the museum.



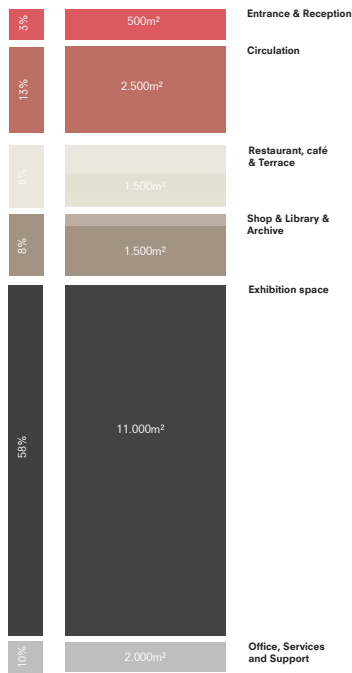
PROGRAM BAR



Total: 103.500 m²

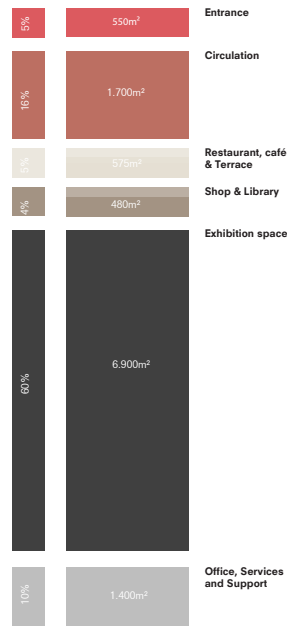
COMPARING PROGRAM BARS

FONDAZIONE PRADA



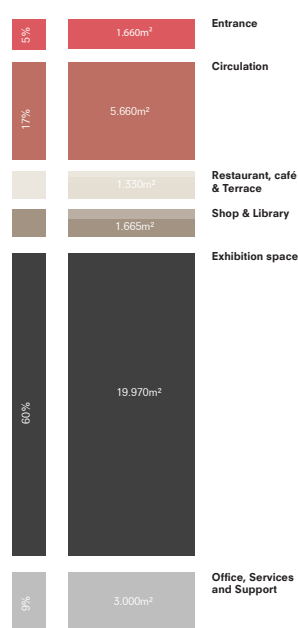
Total: 19.000m²

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM



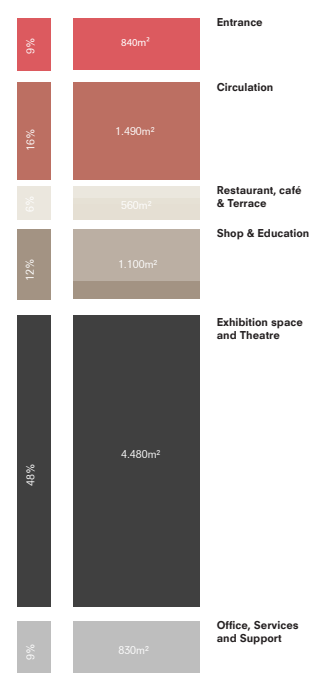
Total: 11.605 m²

PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE



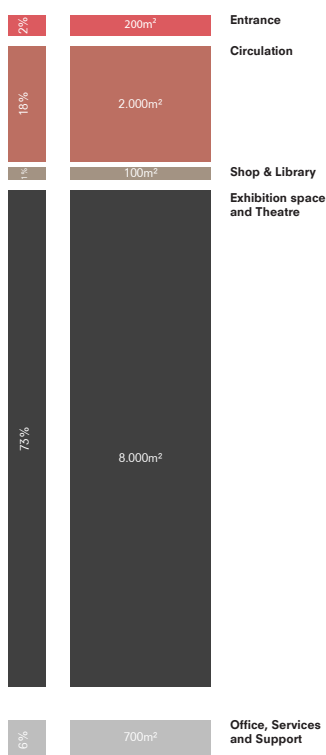
Total: 33.285 m²

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART



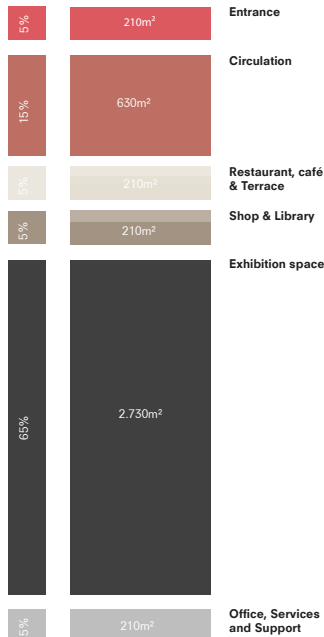
Total: 9.300 m²

GLYPOTHEK



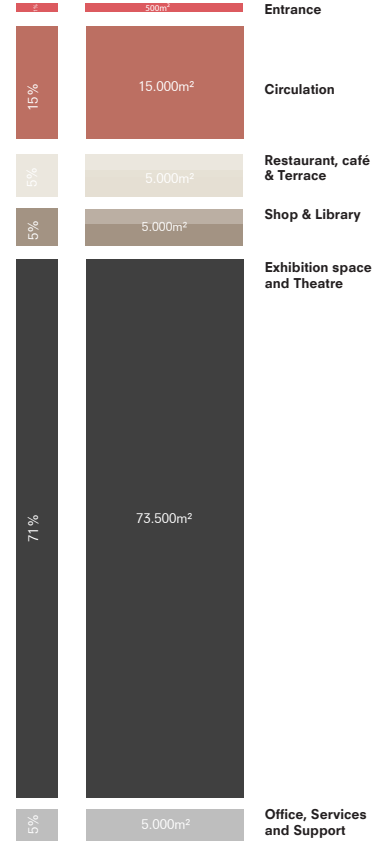
Total: 11.000 m²

BEELDEN AAN ZEE



Total: 4.200 m²

LOUVRE



Total: 103.500 m²

CONCLUSION CASE STUDIES

SUMMARY

This research compared circulation strategies and program distributions of seven museums: the Guggenheim Museum (New York), Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Glyptothek (Munich), Beelden aan Zee (Scheveningen), the Louvre (Paris), and the Fondazione Prada (Milan). The analysis focused on how circulation types (linear, non-linear, hybrid) relate to spatial hierarchy and the allocations of square meters across exhibition, circulation, and supporting programs.

Across the case studies, a clear pattern emerges: circulation is not only functional, but a key spatial and narrative device. Museums with a strong architectural identity often use circulation to guide perception, structure experience, and reinforce the curatorial concept. At the same time, contemporary museums increasingly balance this control with spatial freedom and adaptability.

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION (M² ANALYSIS)

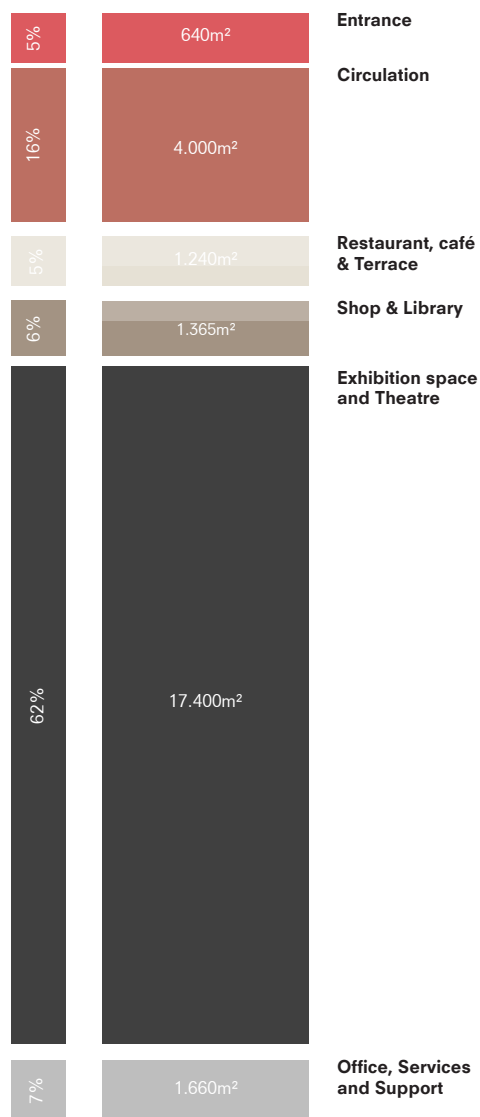
Despite large differences in total size, the program bars show notable similarities. Most museums allocate approximately 55–70% of their gross floor area to exhibition space. Circulation consistently occupies 14–18%, confirming its importance as a spatial organizer rather than leftover space. Public amenities such as cafés, shops, and libraries generally range between 5–15%, increasing in larger institutions where the museum functions as an urban destination rather than a purely exhibition-driven space. Fondazione Prada sits in the middle of this spectrum: its exhibition percentage is comparable to other contemporary museums, while its circulation and public programs are relatively generous. This supports its role as a cultural campus rather than a single-building museum.

Fondazione Prada sits in the middle of this spectrum: its exhibition percentage is comparable to other contemporary museums, while its circulation and public programs are relatively generous. This supports its role as a cultural campus rather than a single building museum.

HIERARCHY VS. NON-HIERARCHY

Historical and more classical museums (Glyptothek, Louvre) tend to be hierarchical, with clear axes, and predetermined routes. Contemporary museums increasingly adopt non-hierarchical spatial systems, where multiple paths and equal spaces coexist. Fondazione Prada is a key example of a controlled non-hierarchy: while the overall complex allows free movement, individual buildings and exhibitions reintroduce hierarchy when needed.

ALL COMBINED



Total: 26.305 m²

CIRCULATION TYPOLOGIES

The Guggenheim Museum and the Glyptothek are examples of museums with a mostly linear circulation system. Visitors move through the building along a predefined route. The galleries are arranged in a clear sequence, guiding people from one space to the next. The organisation of the building determines the order in which the collection is viewed. There are few opportunities to choose an alternative route, resulting in a relatively controlled experience.

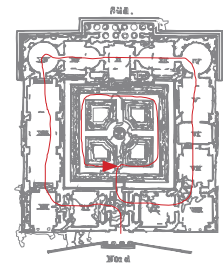
A different approach can be seen in Beelden aan Zee and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. In these museums, circulation is less fixed. Visitors can choose between different paths

and move through the building in various ways. The galleries are connected through multiple routes, making it possible to approach spaces from different directions. Because of this, the sequence of the visit can vary from person to person.

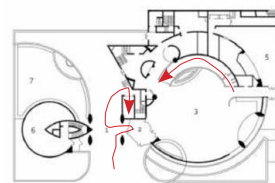
The Louvre and Fondazione Prada combine characteristics of both systems. Some parts of these museums follow a clear sequence of rooms, while other areas allow more freedom of movement. Visitors can move between different sections according to their own interests. At the same time, certain galleries are organised in a more linear way. This results in a combination of structured and open circulation within the same building. Such an approach is often found in museums that contain multiple collections, exhibitions, or programs

Linear Narrative

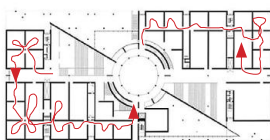
Glyptothek



Guggenheim Museum

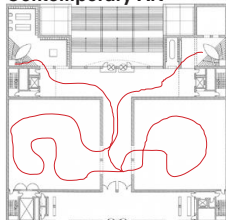


Pinakothek der Moderne

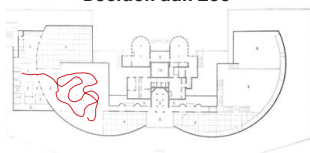


Non-Hierarchical

Museum of Contemporary Art

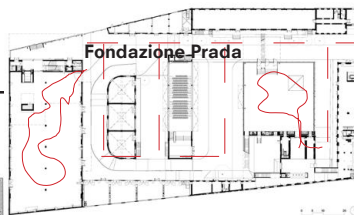


Beelden aan Zee

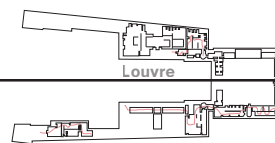


New Fondazione Prada

Fondazione Prada



Louvre

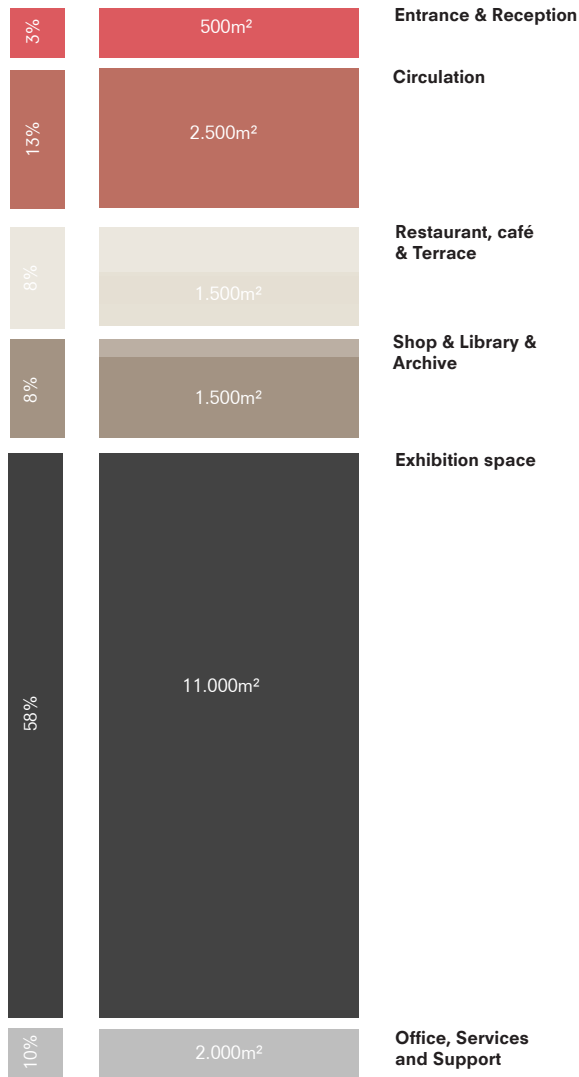


Hierarchical

Non-Linear Narrative

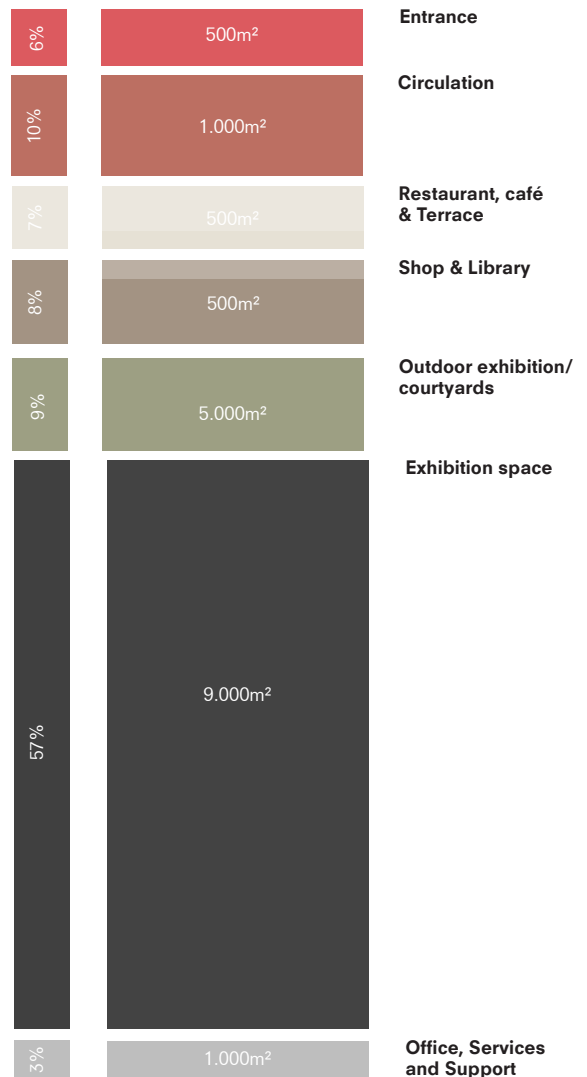
PROGRAM BARS EXISTING VS. PROPOSAL

EXISTING



Total: 19.000m²

PROPOSAL



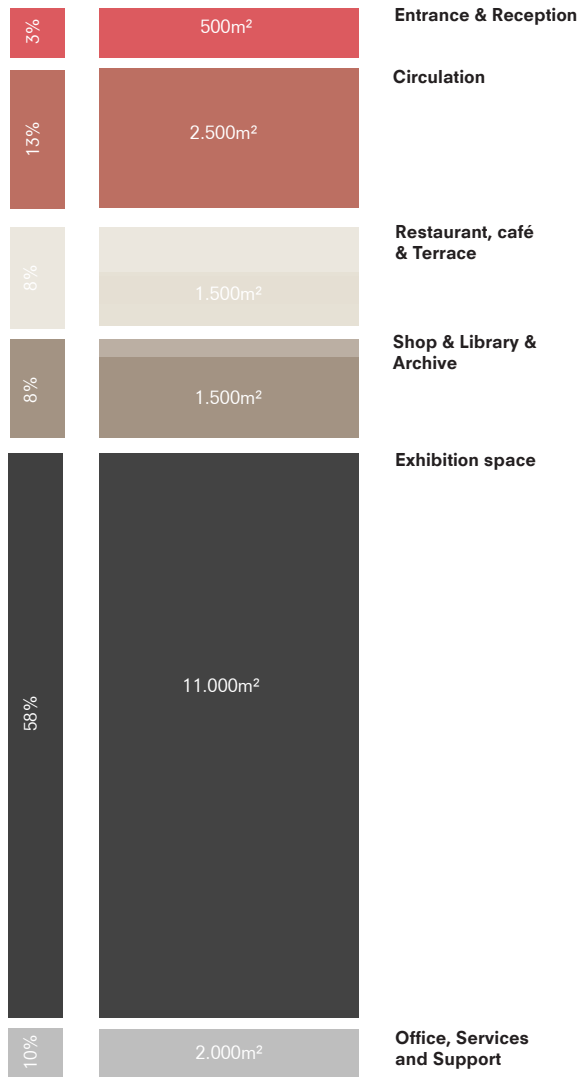
Total: 19.700m²

The proposal of the program distribution supports a sculpture museum focused on a non-linear narrative. Exhibition spaces are the core but organized as clusters, rather than a single route, allowing classical and contemporary sculptures to coexist without hierarchy.

Circulation is an important part of the exhibition, encouraging movement and personal interpretation. But this is mostly organized in the exhibition space itself. Outdoor exhibition spaces extend the spatial organization, enabling a free route and visual connections between in/outside. This also really suits the idea of intertwining classical and contemporary. Entrance spaces act as a threshold rather than determined start positions. Support spaces remain compact, keeping the main focus on the non-linear spatial experience and sculptures.

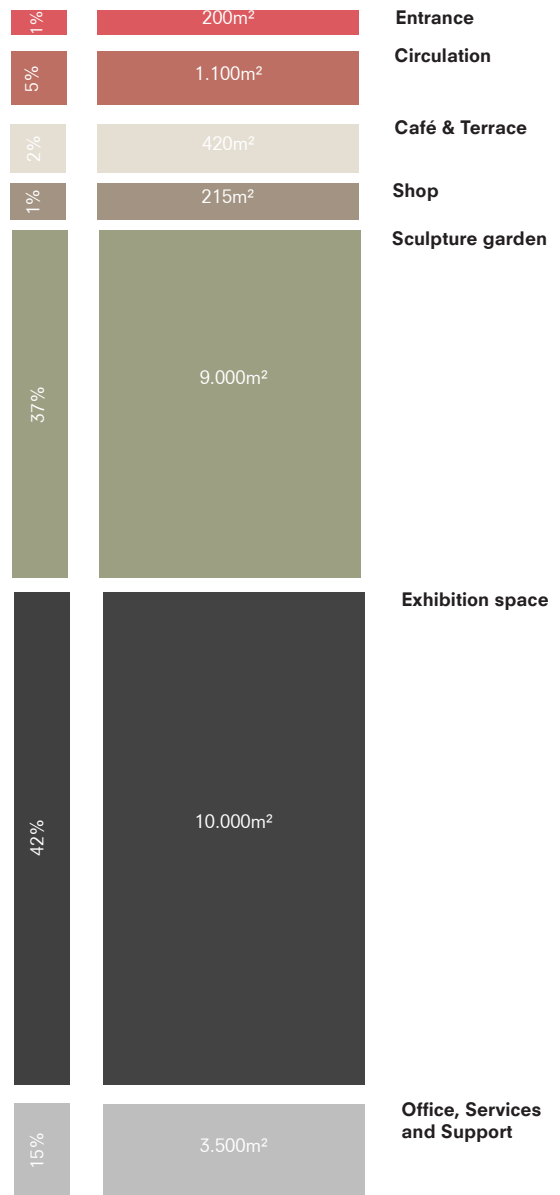
PROGRAM BARS EXISTING VS. FINAL

EXISTING



Total: 19.000m²

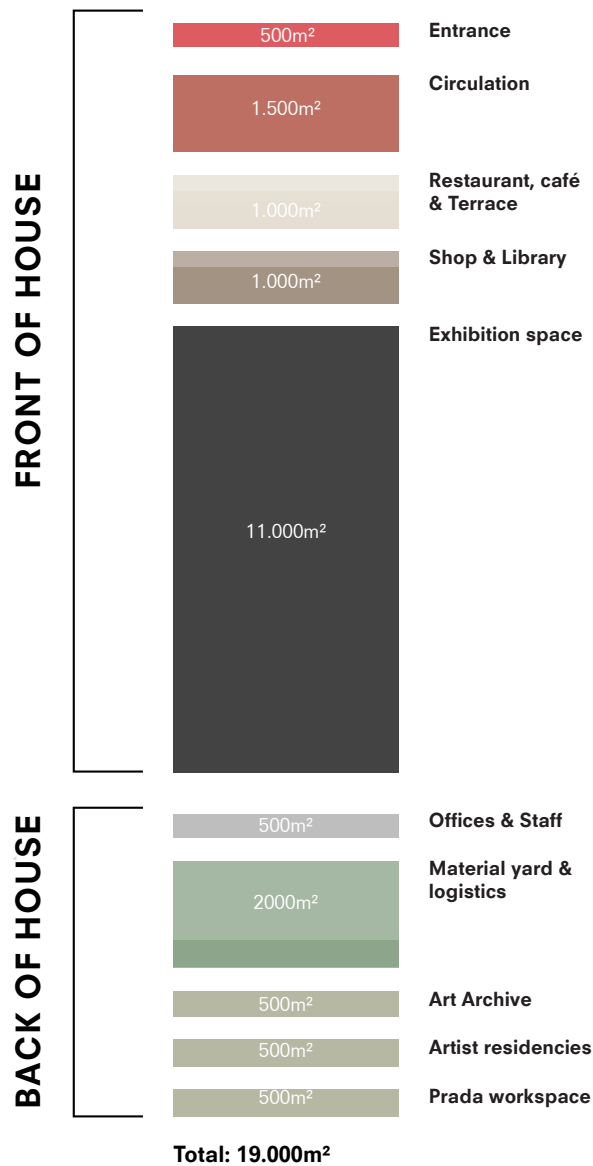
FINAL



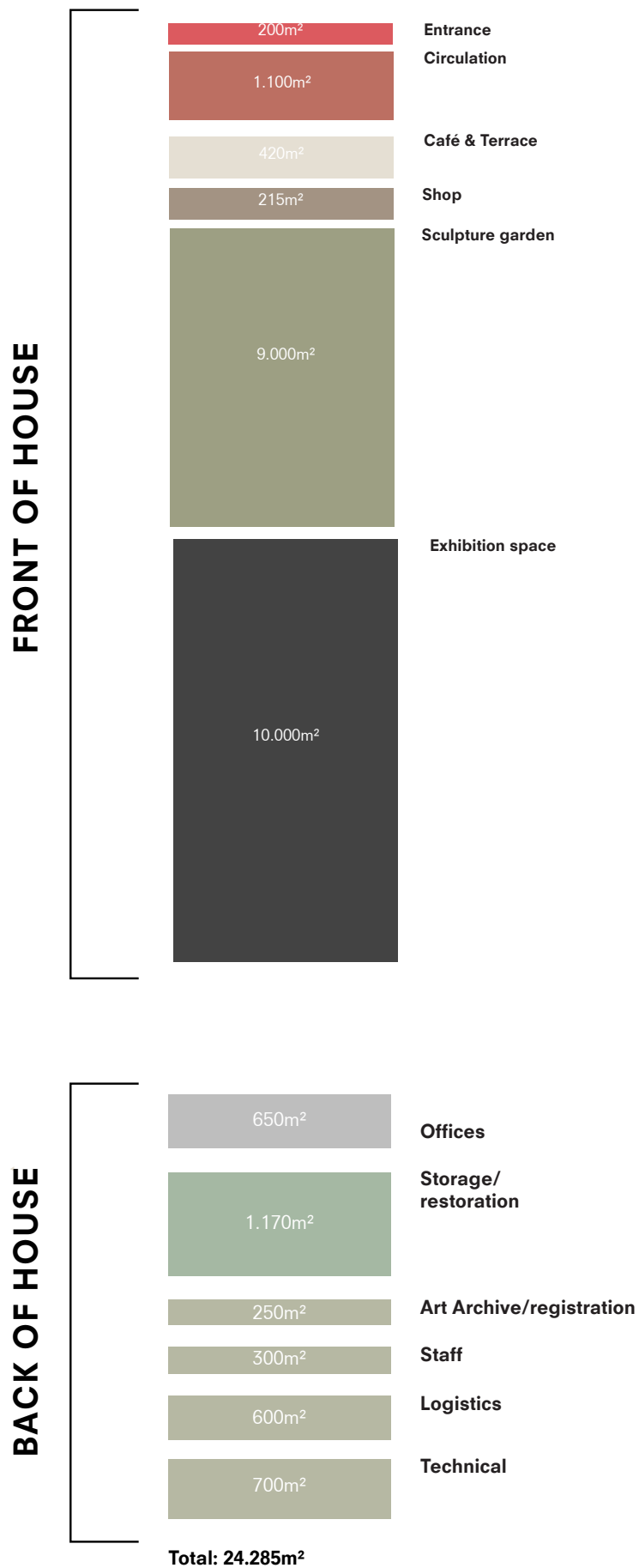
Total: 24.285m²

The main difference between the existing and the final program bar is the sculpture garden which becomes part of the non-linear exhibition story. Rather than functioning only as an outdoor space. This strengthens the project's ambition to establish a non-linear narrative, where exploration and personal interpretation become the central point of the visitor experience.

EXISTING PROGRAM BAR

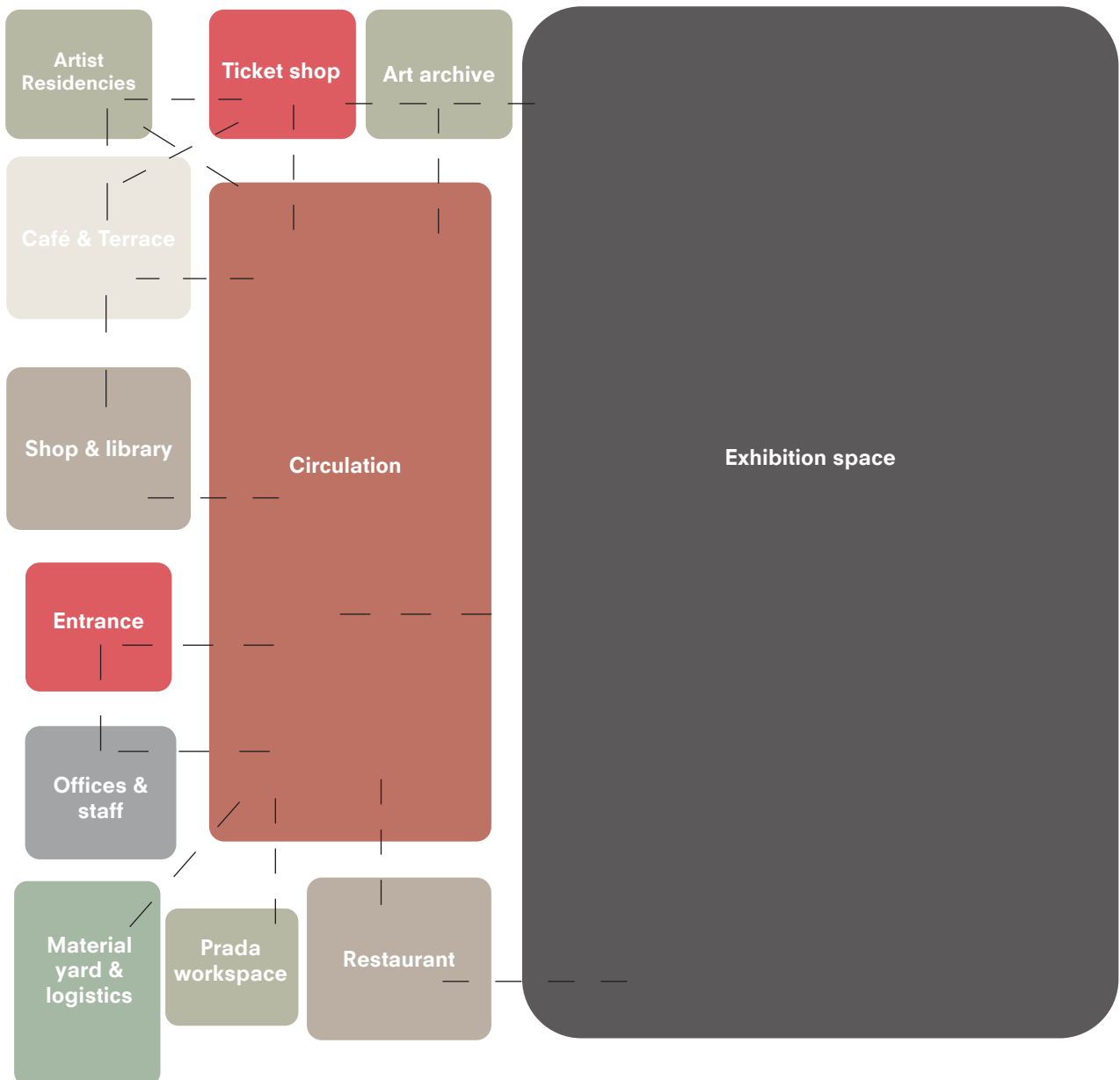


FINAL PROGRAM BAR



EXISTING RELATION PROGRAM

Functions



DETAILED PROGRAM

Entrance

- Main entrance hall
- Ticketing & Information
- Cloakroom/lockers
- Waiting space
- Security
- Toilets

Circulation

- Open circulation zones
- Different levels
- Ramps
- Stairs
- Elevators
- Transitional spaces

Restaurant, café & Terrace

- Café with seating
- Toilets
- Kitchen
- Storage
- Delivery zone

Shop

- Museum shop
- Storage

Sculpture garden

- Sculpture courtyards
- Transitional outdoor rooms
- Outdoor seating

Exhibition space

- Medium scale galleries
- Large scale galleries
- Double height galleries
- Buffer zone between galleries
- Installations

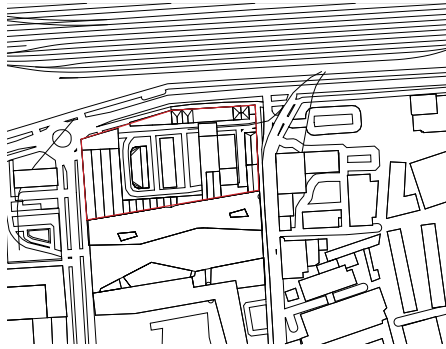
Office, Services and Support

- Offices
- Archive
- Restoration space
- Technical space
- Loading dock
- Sculptures
- Changing rooms/toilets/canteen staff
- Control room

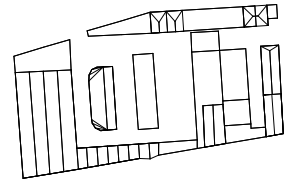
SCALES



CITY SCALE



SITE SCALE



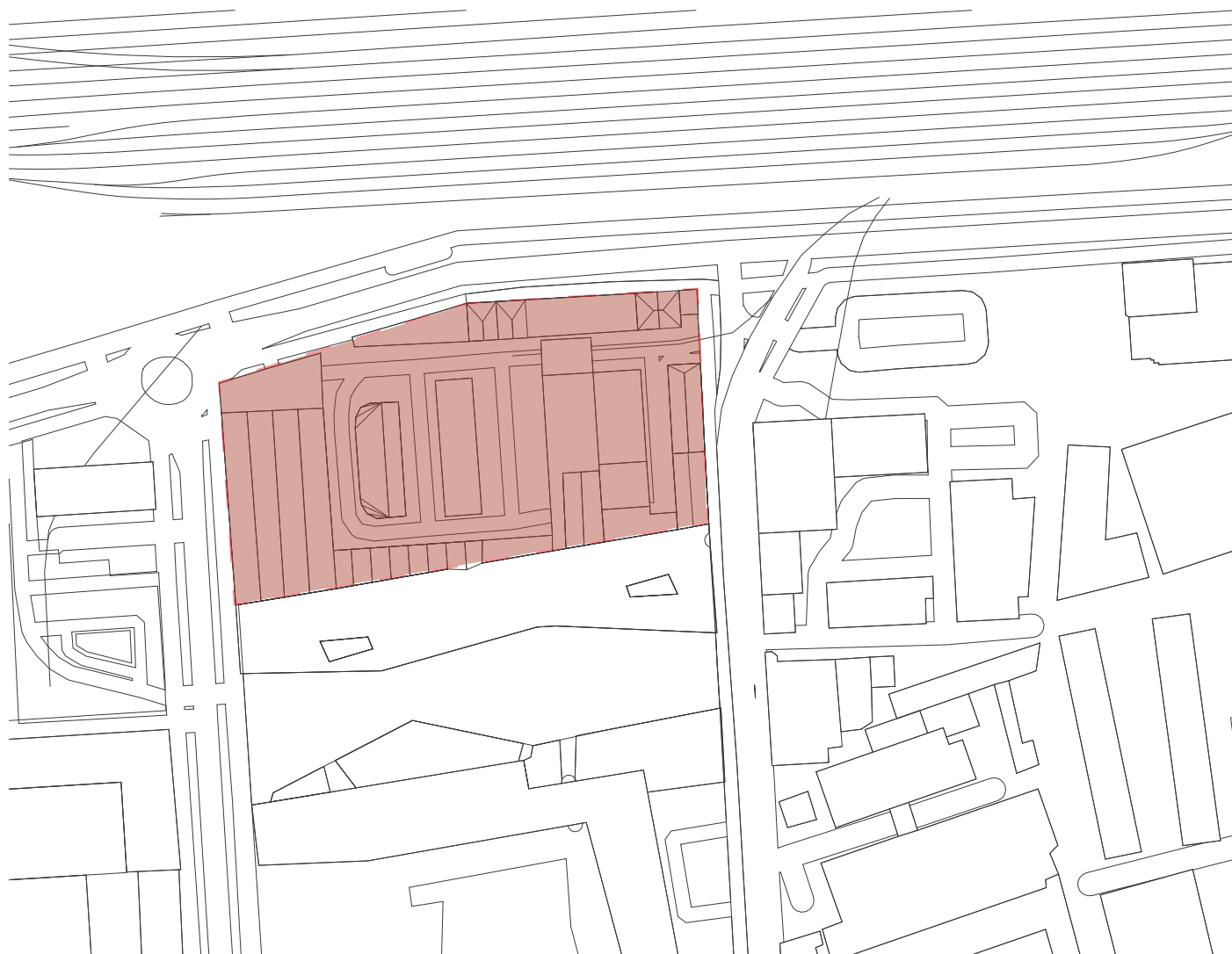
BUILDING SCALE

CITY SCALE

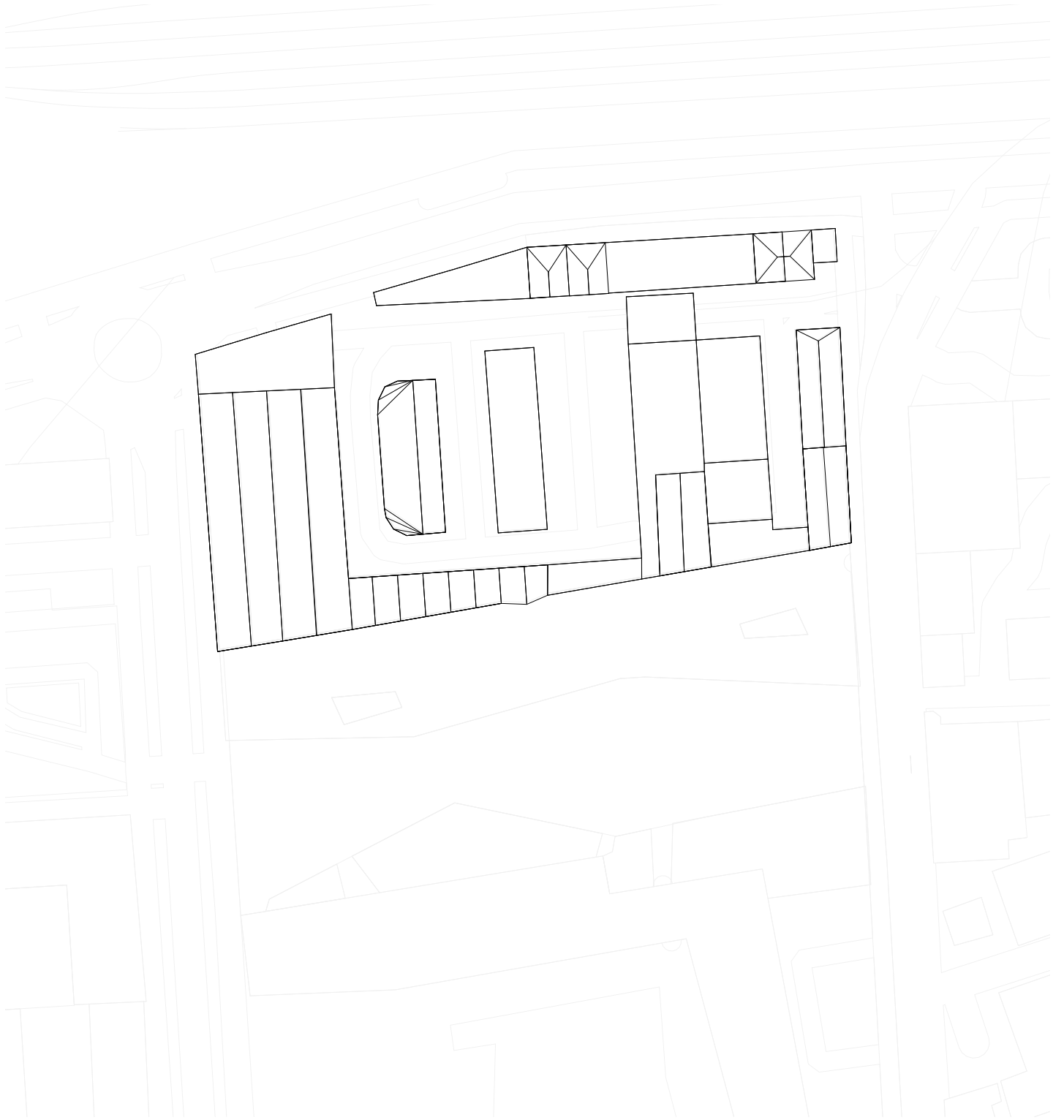


SITE SCALE

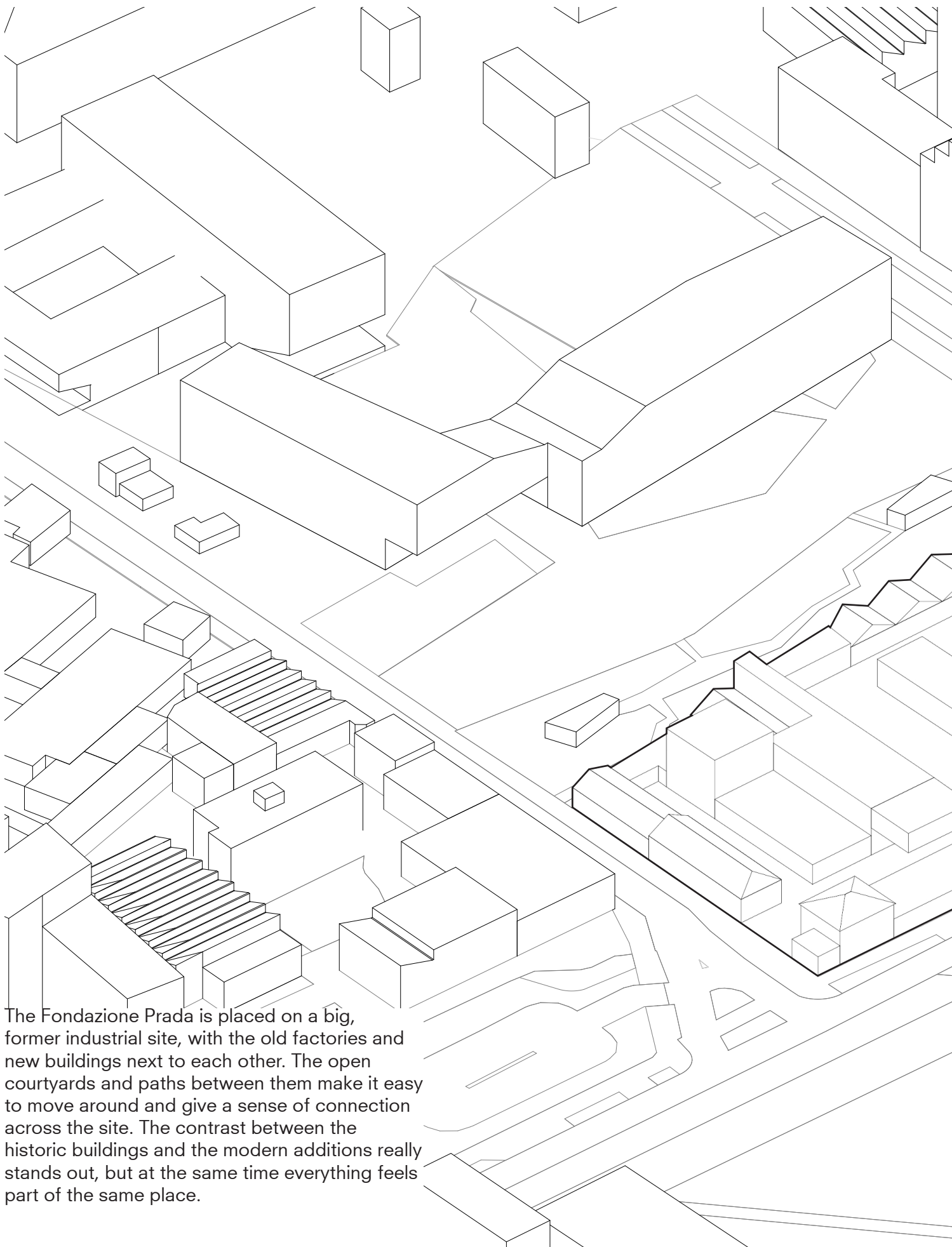
Address: L.go Isarco, 2, 20139 Milano MI, Italie
Site: 13.550m²



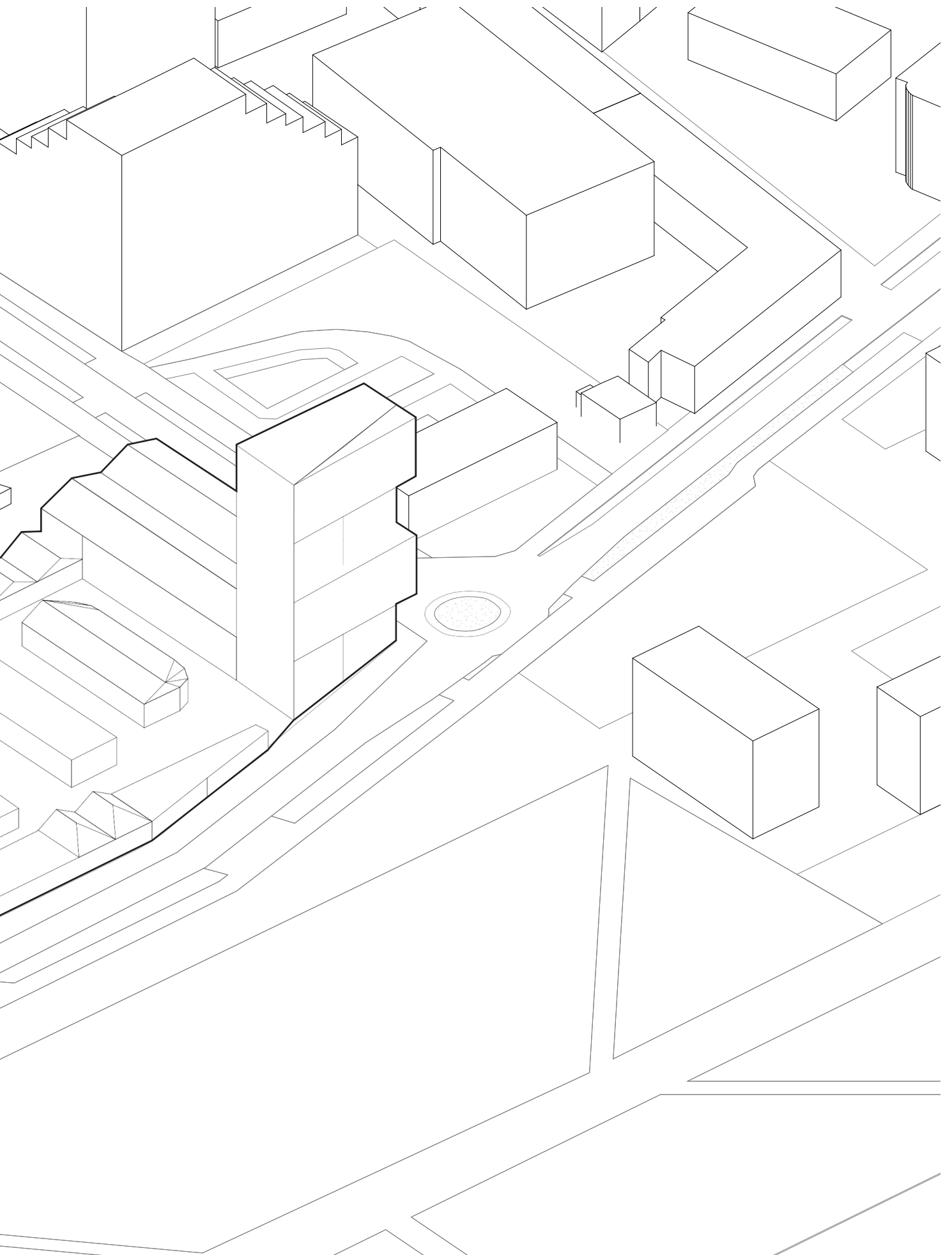
BUILDING SCALE



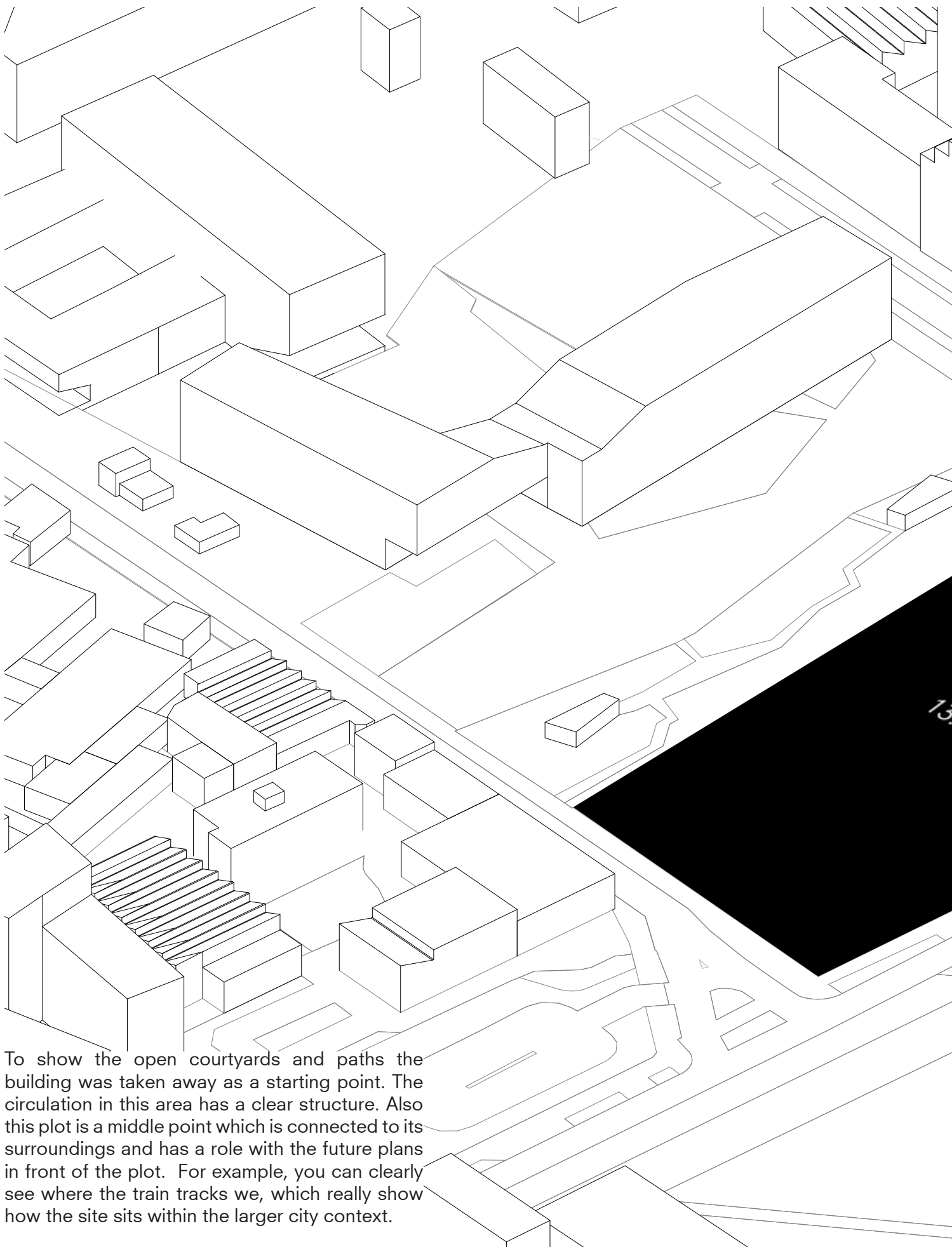
SITE



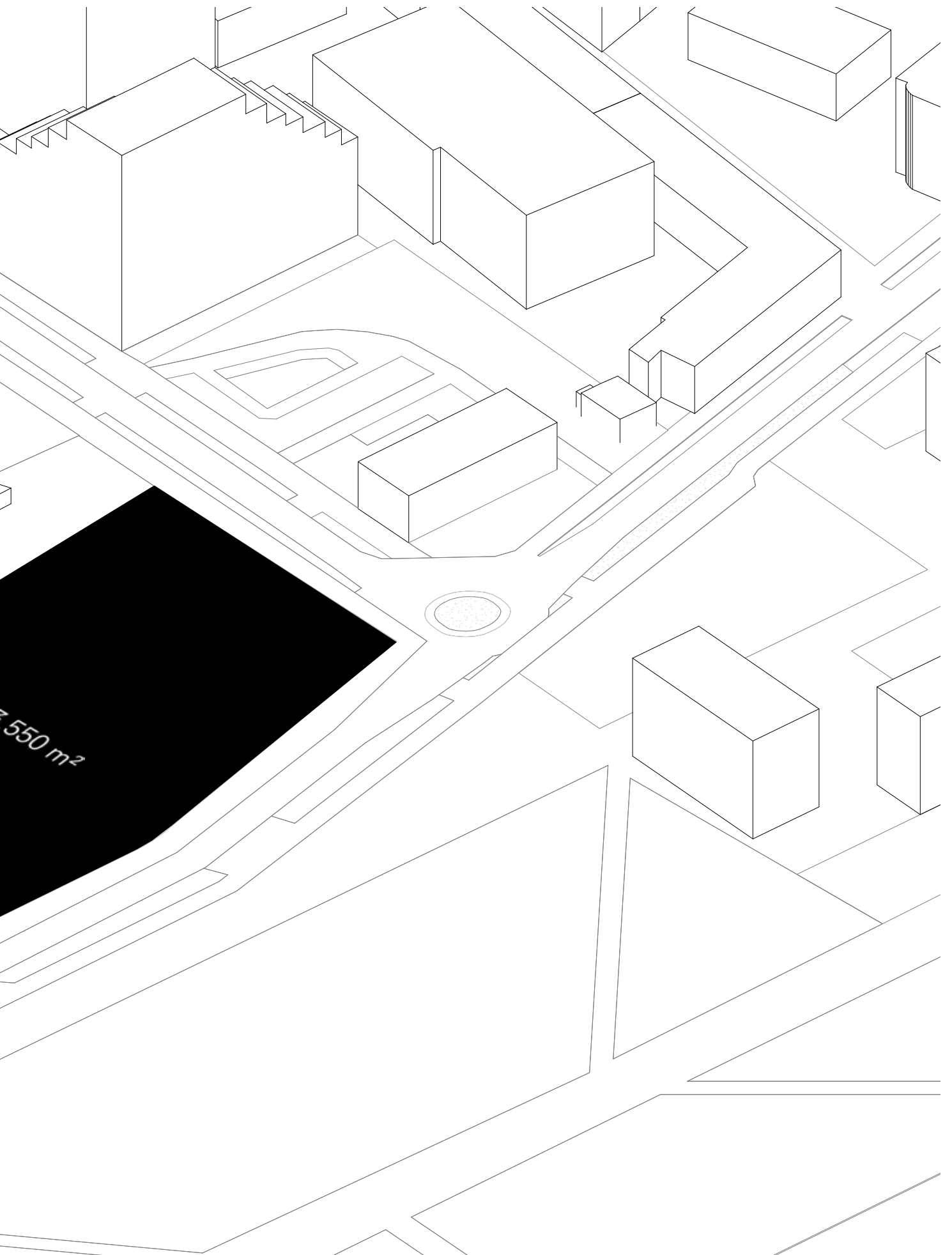
The Fondazione Prada is placed on a big, former industrial site, with the old factories and new buildings next to each other. The open courtyards and paths between them make it easy to move around and give a sense of connection across the site. The contrast between the historic buildings and the modern additions really stands out, but at the same time everything feels part of the same place.



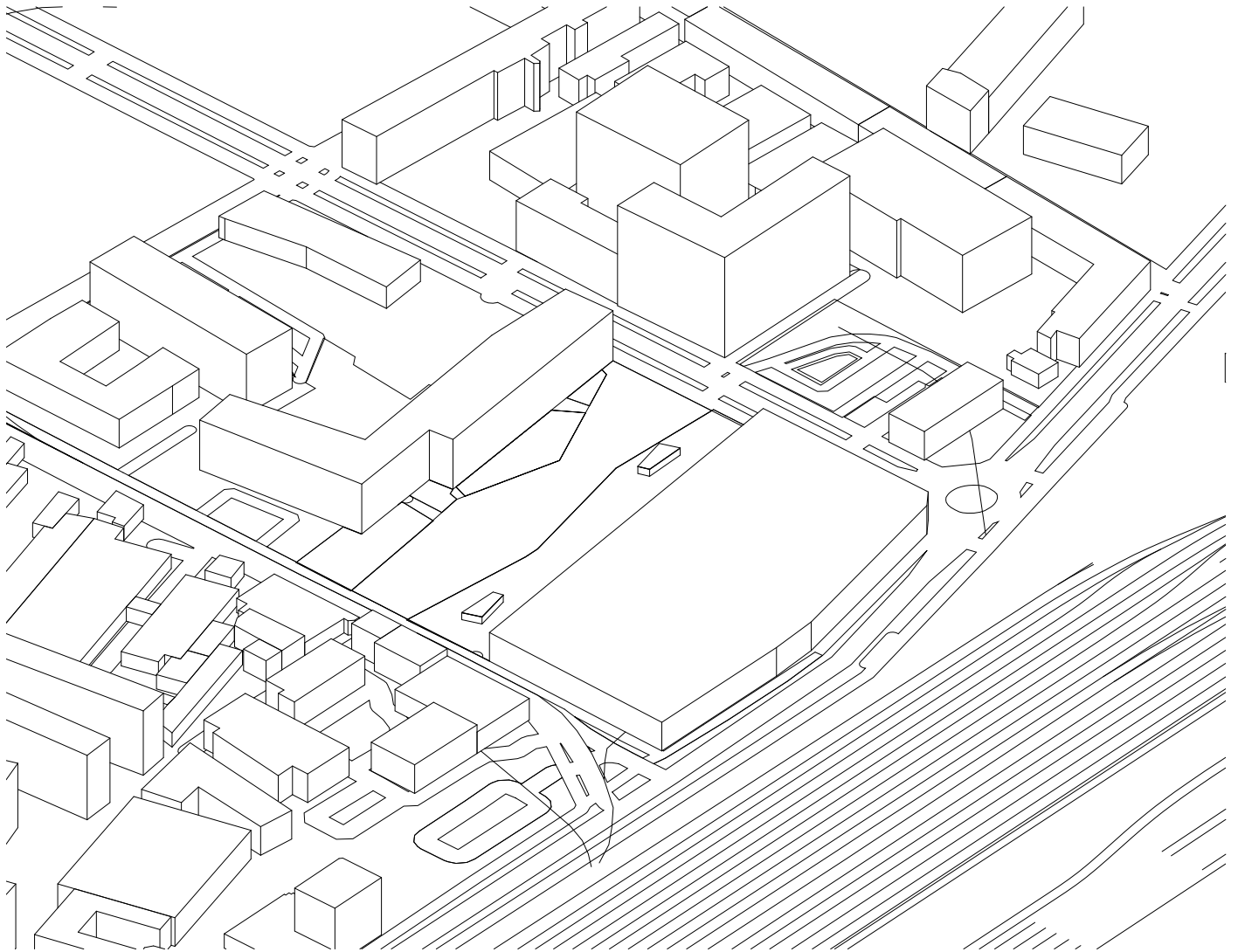
EMPTY SITE



To show the open courtyards and paths the building was taken away as a starting point. The circulation in this area has a clear structure. Also this plot is a middle point which is connected to its surroundings and has a role with the future plans in front of the plot. For example, you can clearly see where the train tracks we, which really show how the site sits within the larger city context.

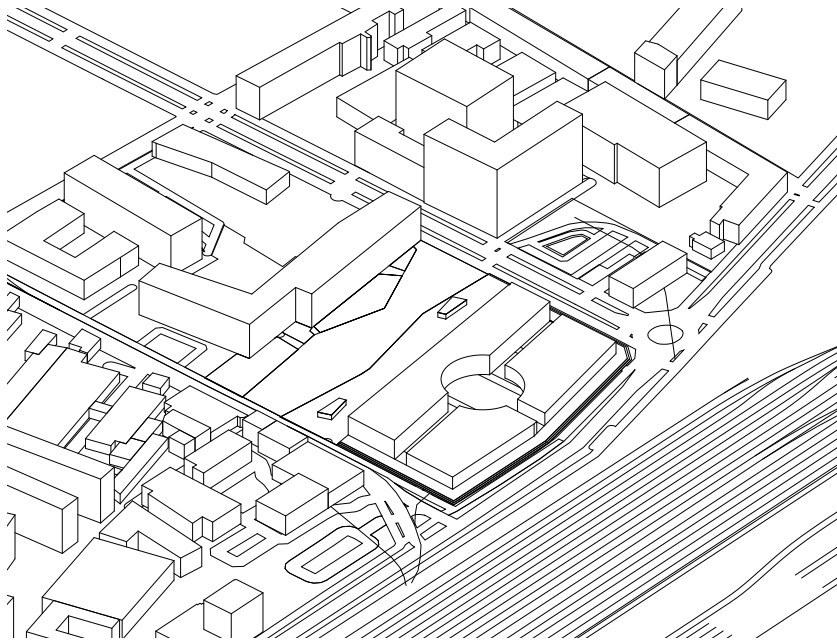


SITE WITH VOLUME

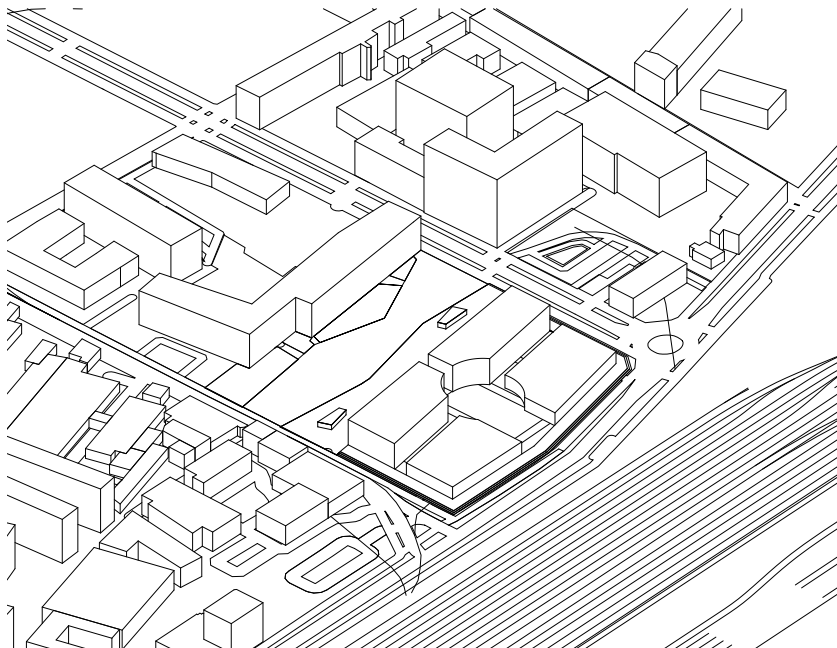


The plot with just one volume on the site, to get an understanding about the size of the site.

CONCEPT IDEA



First idea is to make a large courtyard/sculpture yard in the middle of the building with big accessed from 3 sides of the site to respond to the research question about a non-linear narrative. The volumes have different heights to make the building a bit playful and play along with the contemporary character while the appearance of the volume has a more classical character. Also the building becomes more open to the public this way.



This idea takes a step further in a way to make it more open and accessible, with even more different in heights.

FUNCTIONS

- cultural
- dwelling
- office
- parking



hotel/b&b

religion

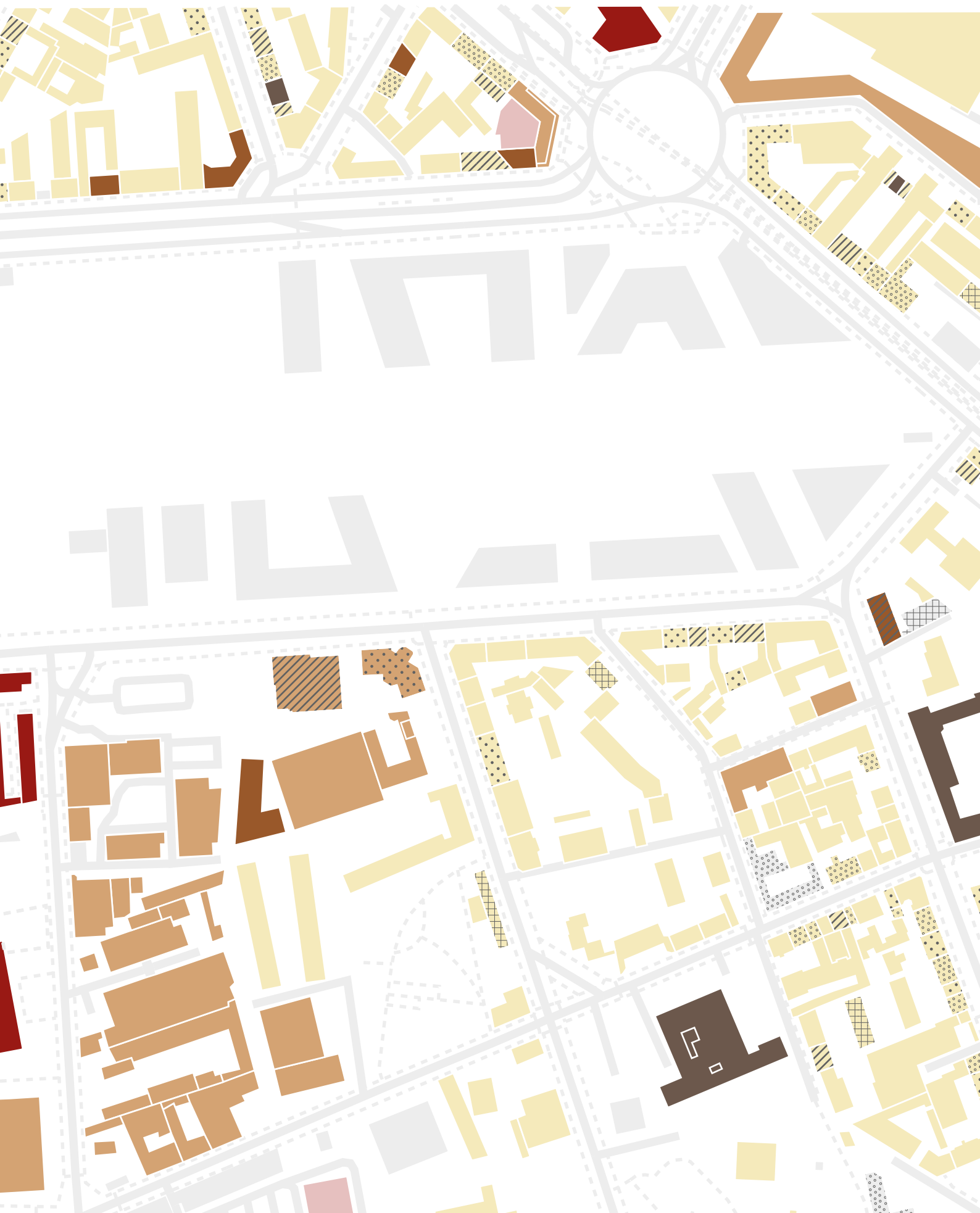
services

restaurant/café

education

retail








sports



TRANSPORTATION

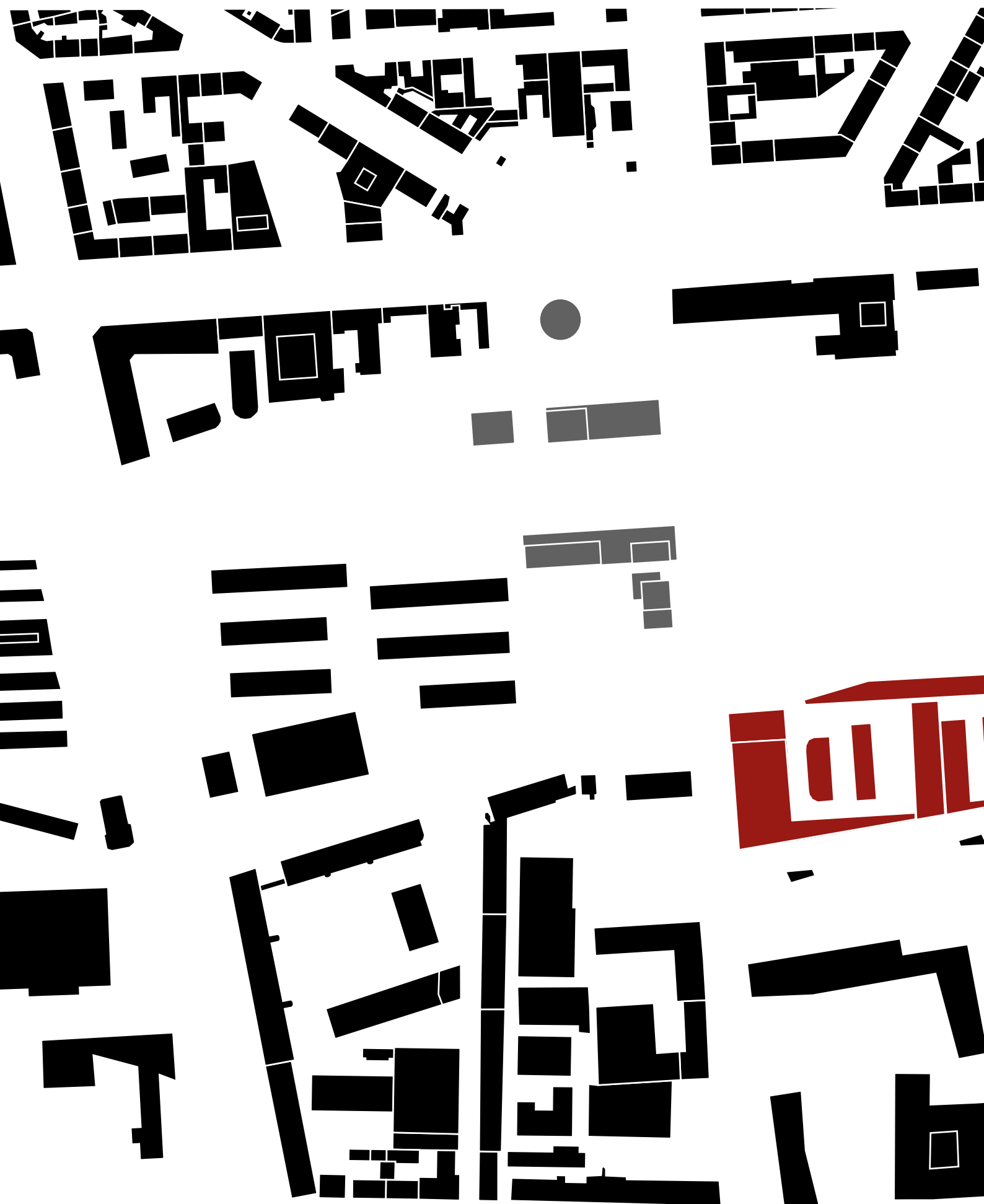
- road
- bus line
- - - sidewalk
- - - - tram line



-  railway
-  e-bike parking
-  metro station
-  parking lot
-  bus stop
-  tram stop
-  train station



GRAIN SIZE



Fondazione Build Not build



DISTRICTS



Vigentino

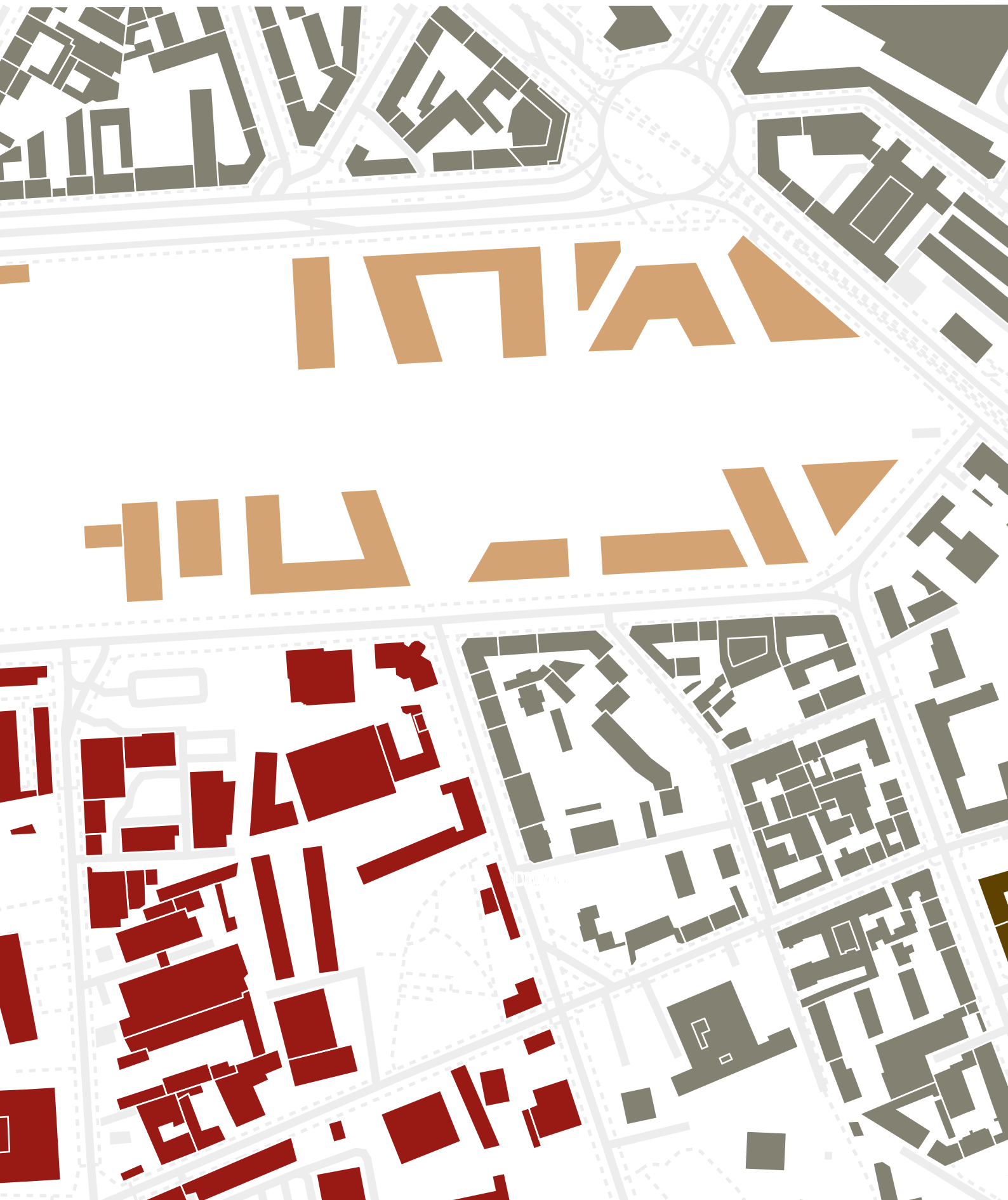
Morivione

Corvetto

Scalo Romana

Porta Romana

Porta Lodovica



SITE CONCLUSIONS

The site analysis showed that the location offers several opportunities for the project. Its position within the rapidly developing Porta Romana district, the good accessibility by both public transport and car, and the freedom provided by the relatively detached plot all influenced the design process. In addition, the contrast between the area's industrial past and its contemporary developments reflects themes that later became important within the project. Based on these observations, five key design ambitions were established to guide the design of the museum.

Future development

The museum should respond to the ongoing transformation of Porta Romana and position itself as a cultural anchor within the future development of the district.

Landmark

Due to its prominent visibility from multiple directions, the building should establish a strong identity and contribute to the character of the surrounding urban landscape.

Accessibility

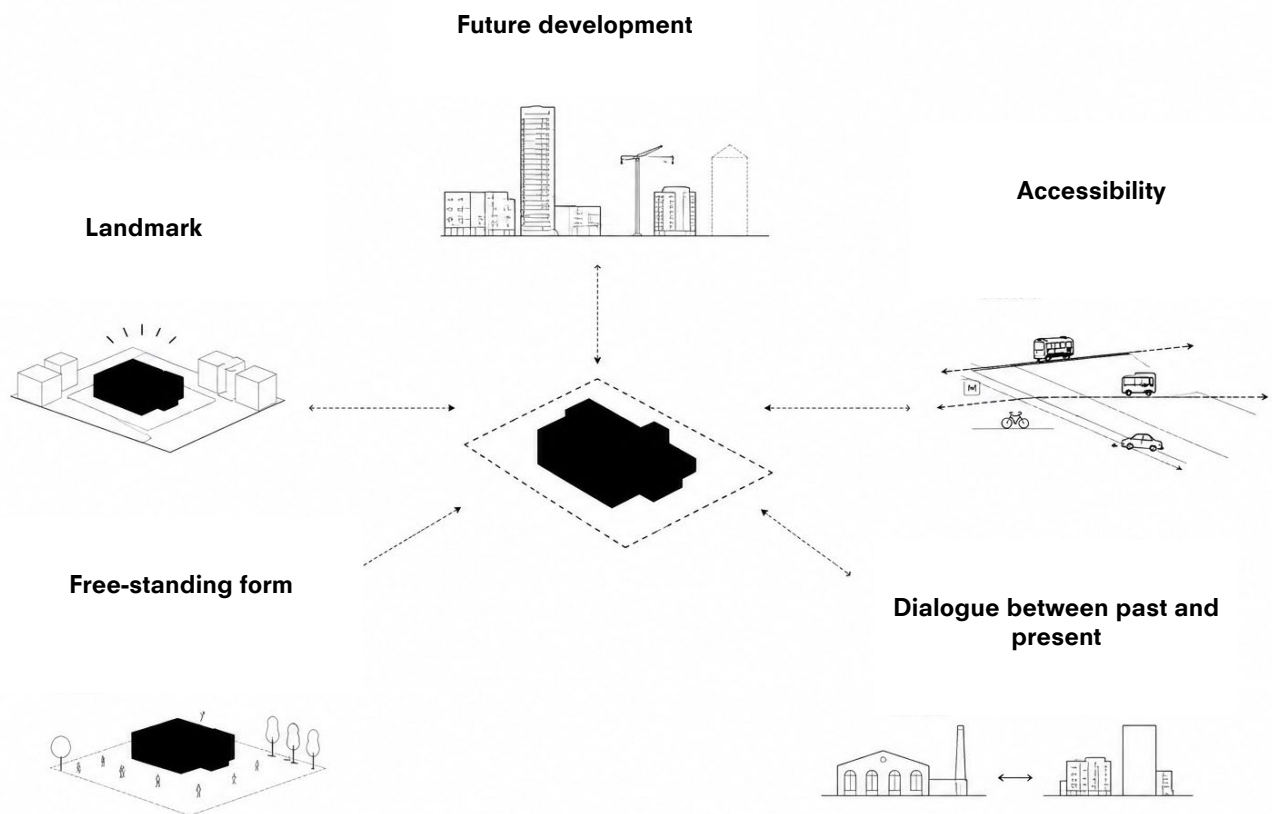
The site benefits from excellent public transport connections, road infrastructure, and nearby parking facilities. The museum should capitalize on these connections and provide clear access from all directions.

Free-standing form

Unlike many sites within the dense urban fabric of Milan, the plot is relatively detached from the surrounding buildings. This creates the opportunity to design a free-standing architectural form that can be experienced from all sides.

Dialogue between past and present

The coexistence of industrial heritage and contemporary urban development within the surrounding context reinforces the ambition to create a dialogue between past and present through both the architecture and the museum collection.



DESIGN AMBITION

The architecture combines references from both classical and contemporary traditions. Classical elements are used throughout the building but are adapted to fit a contemporary architectural language. This reflects the combination of classical and contemporary sculptures within the museum.

The organisation of the museum does not rely on a single circulation route. Visitors can move through the building in different ways, creating a variety of relationships between the exhibition spaces and the artworks on display.



CONCEPT DESIGN

04



DESIGN BRIEF AMBITIONS

CLIENT



Visual and spatial continuity between spaces (in/outside)



Educational component



Circulation as narrative



Temporal & transformable spaces



Museum as statement piece

PROGRAM



Compression and decompression of space



Scattered program focused on non-linearity



Atrium as central orientation space



Back of house functions underground



Showcase different exhibition spaces in the facade

SITE



Main entrance on the east



Museum experience starts at entrance site



Sculpture garden in front of museum



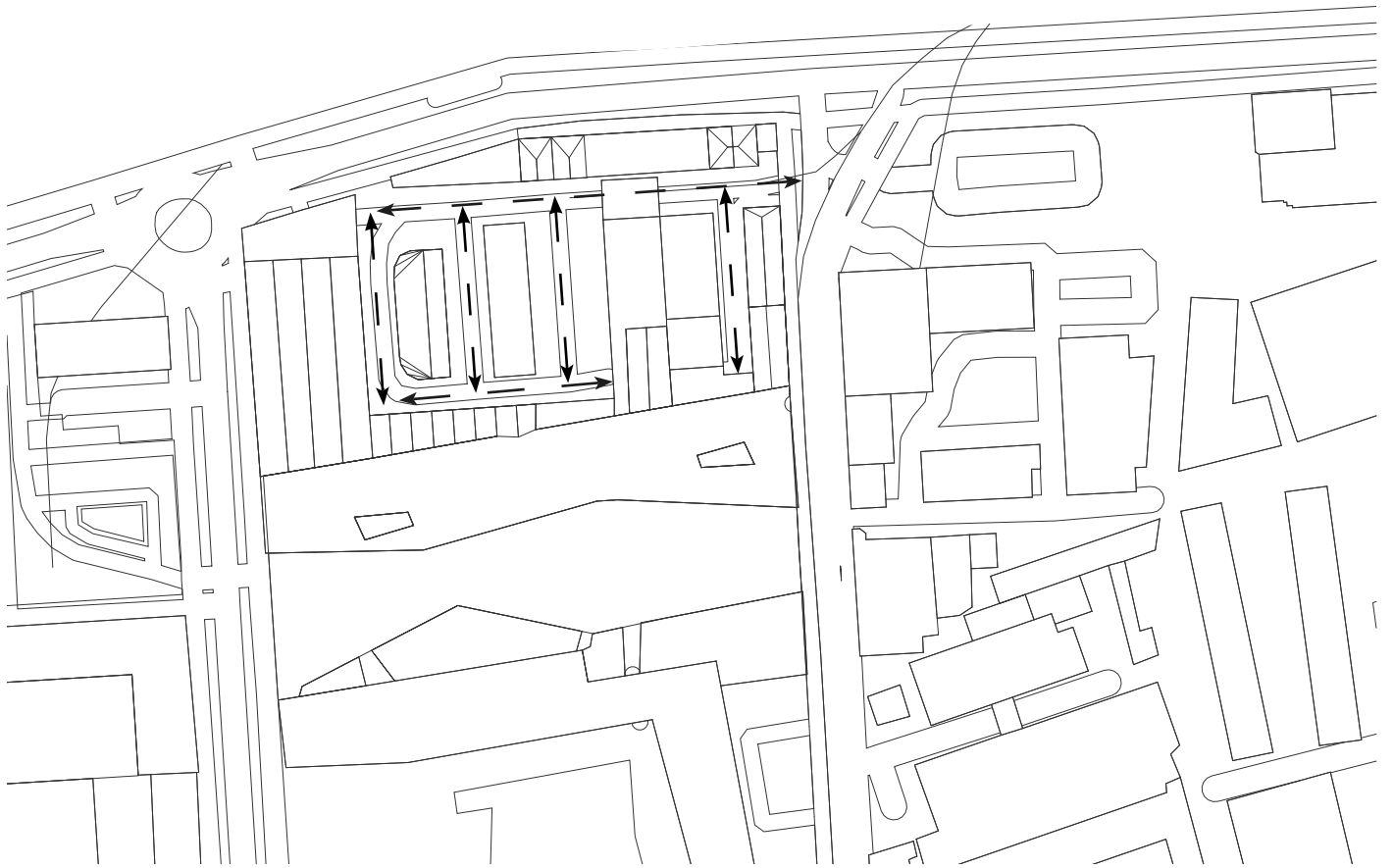
Museum on the west side of the plot

CURRENT DESIGN PROBLEMS

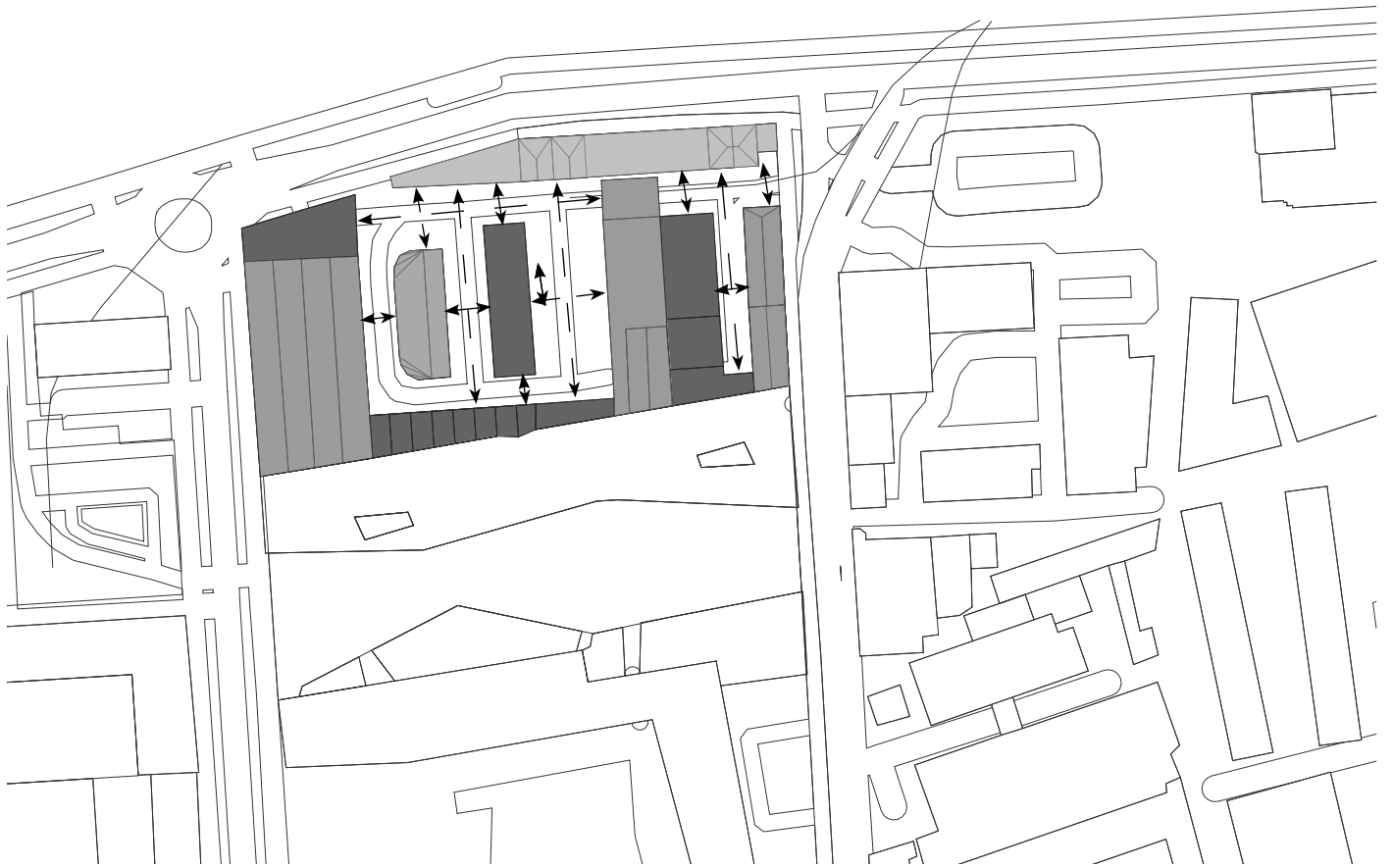
Almost no connection with surrounding context
(Closed Architecture)



No clear orientation on the site

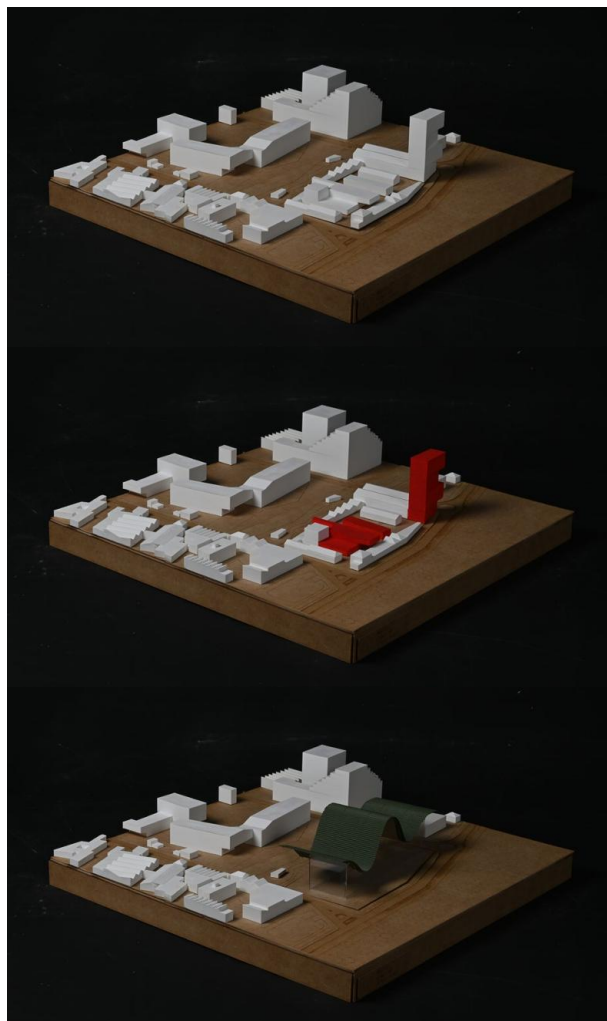


Fragmentation instead of cohesion

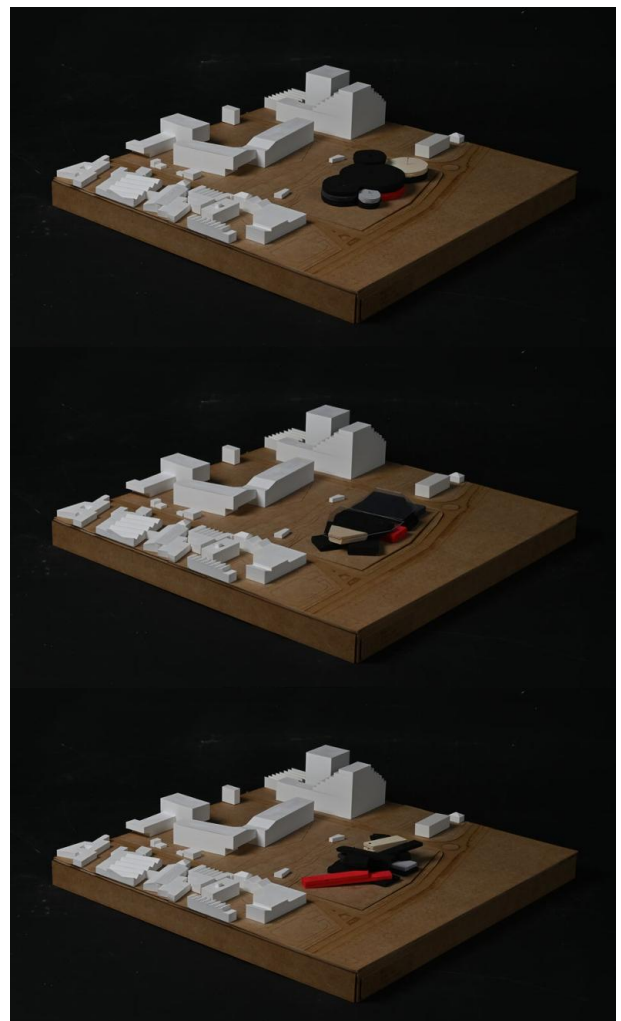


FORM STUDIES

Existing



Program



Conclusion

The Fondazione Prada precedents combine existing structures with new architectural interventions. Transitions between old and new play an important role in the organisation of the site. At the same time, the large number of separate volumes can lead to longer circulation routes and a less direct spatial organisation.

Conclusion

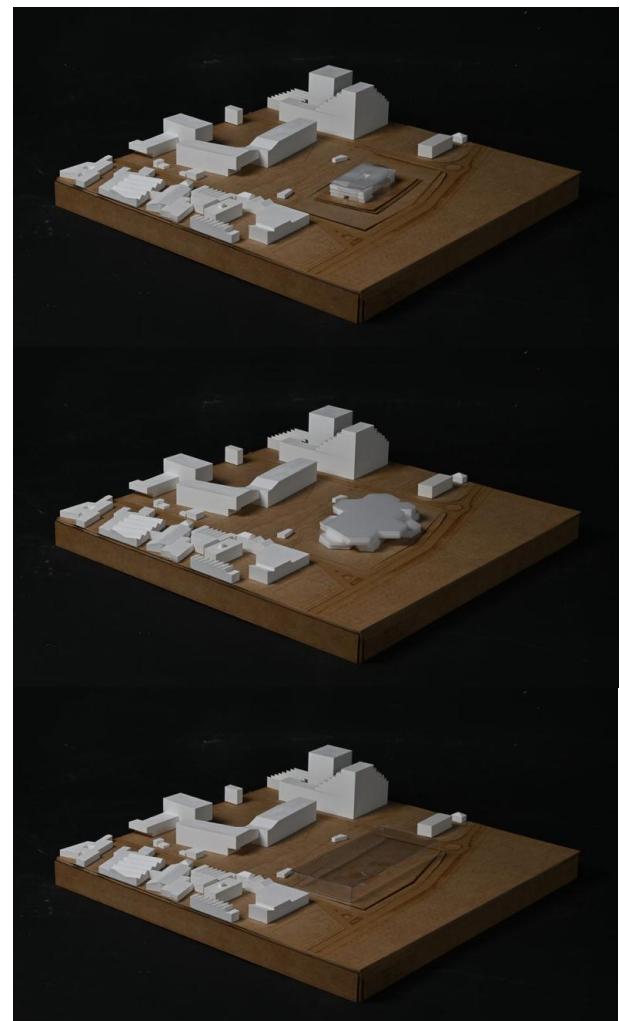
These concepts are organised around open floor plans and a range of circulation paths. As a result, some areas of the building become more difficult to navigate and certain spaces remain harder to use effectively.

FORM STUDIES

Site/Shape



Concept/Ambition



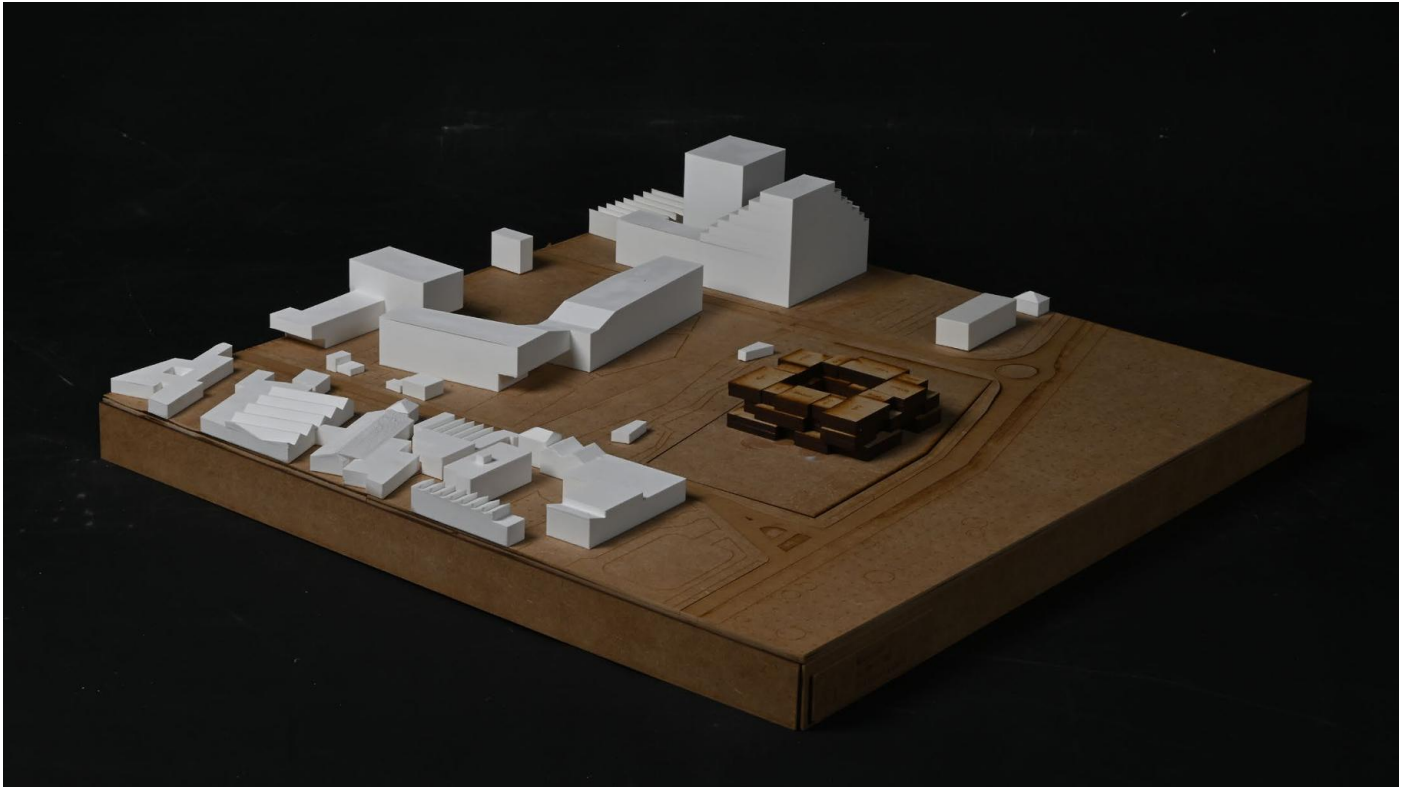
Conclusion

The concepts are closely linked to the site and its surroundings. They combine elements of classical and contemporary architecture while addressing access to the museum and its position within the wider context. Daylight access and the visibility of the entrance remain points that require further attention.

Conclusion

These 3 proposals are based on open layouts and flexible exhibition spaces. Further development is needed to address the impact of the extensive glazing, particularly in relation to solar gain and daylight conditions within the galleries.

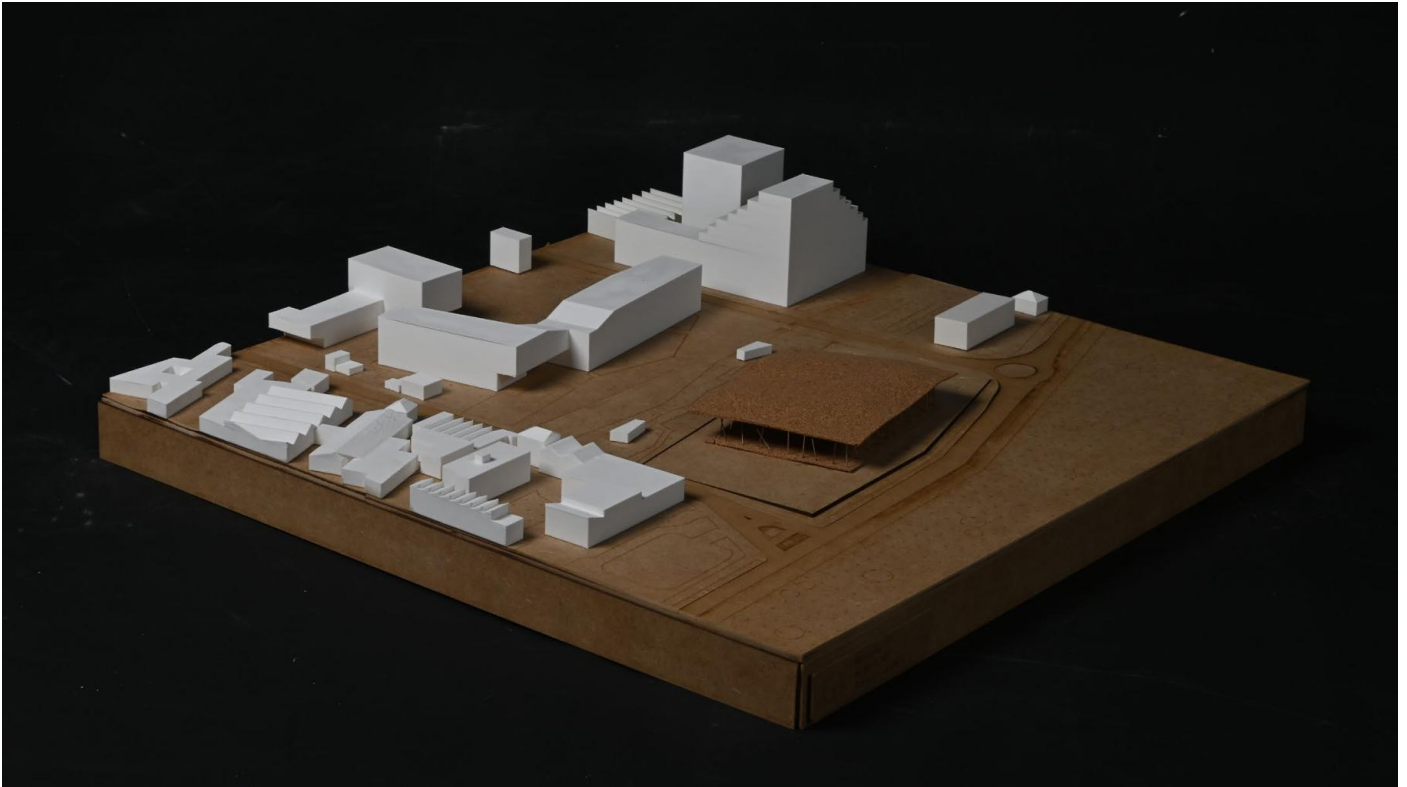
Conclusive model 1



Conclusion

The model is composed of stacked floor plates that shift in relation to one another. This arrangement creates different connections between the exhibition spaces and produces varying views throughout the building. Movement is not organised around a single route, allowing multiple ways of passing through the museum.

Conclusive model 2



Conclusion

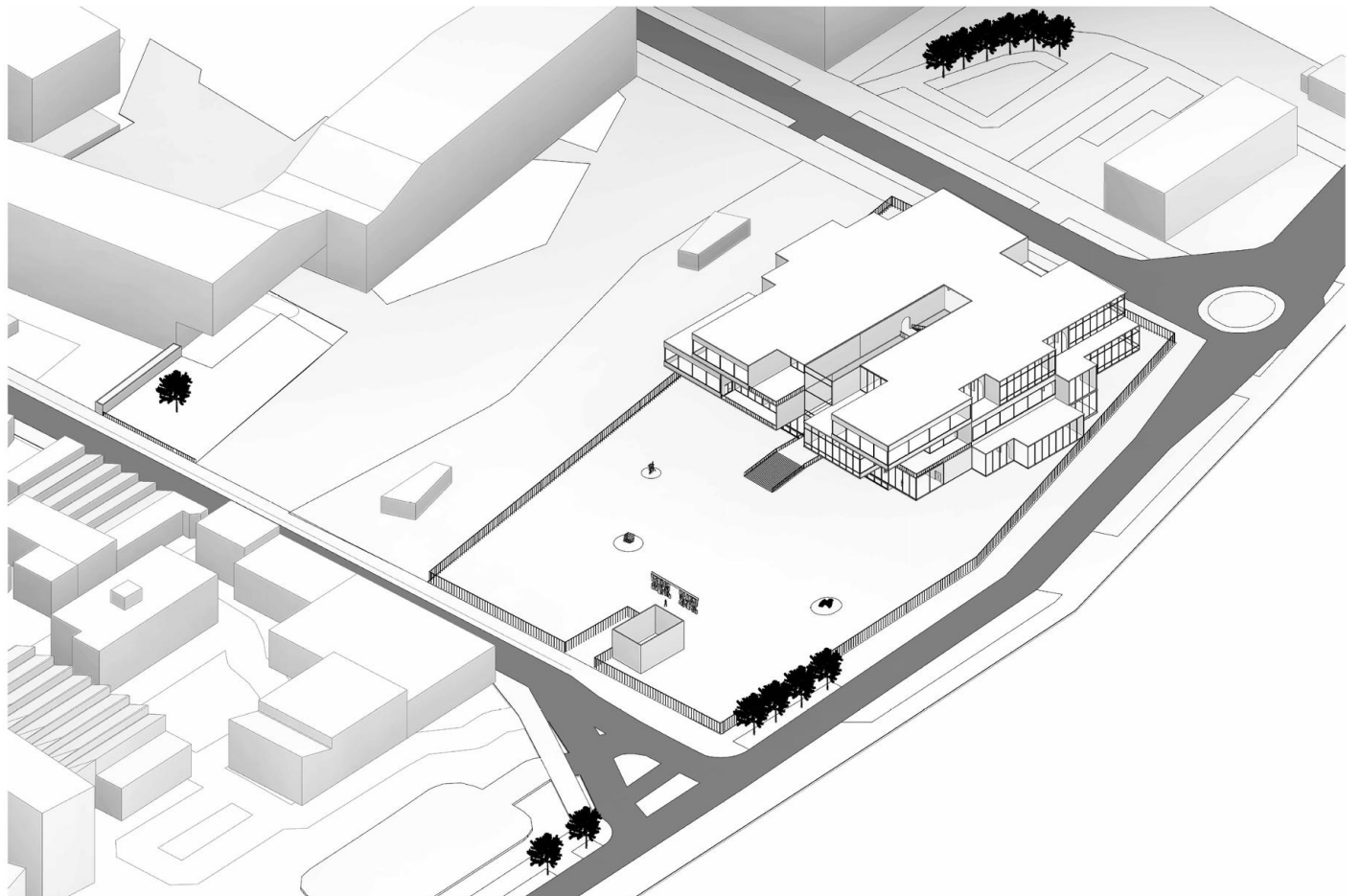
The model is organised around a large central hall covered by a continuous roof. A series of columns structure the space and reference elements commonly found in classical architecture. In contrast, the roof has a more contemporary form. The openness of the hall creates visual connections between different areas of the museum and allows visitors to move through the building in different ways.

Reflection

Both models investigated non-linearity, but conclusive model 1 was taken forward into the next design phase. The arrangement of the floors, the vertical organisation, and the sequence of spaces provided a clearer basis for further development of the museum.

CONCEPT STEPS

Concept on site



First impressions

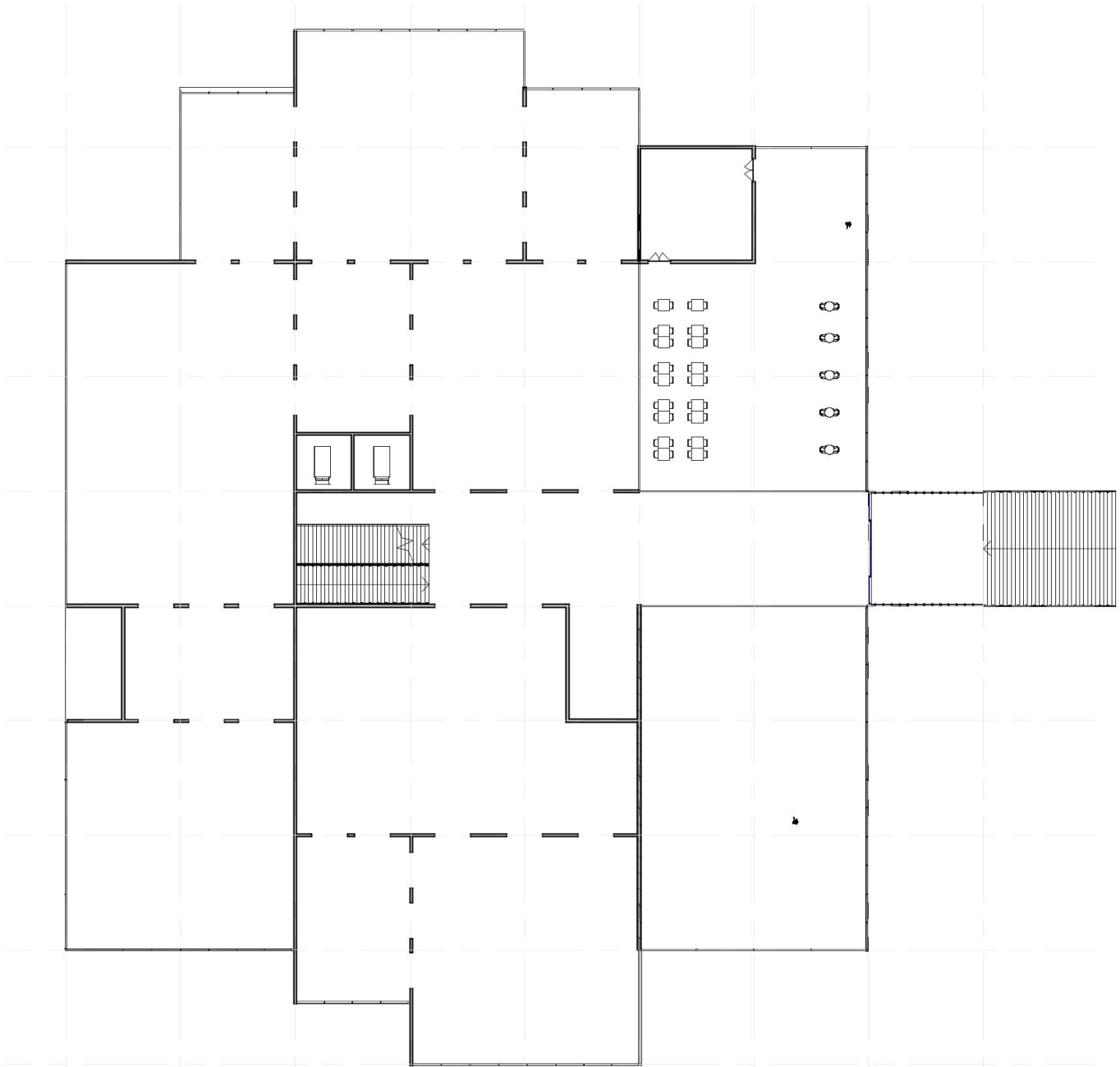


AI generated with specific prompts and my own 3D view from revit as a first impression

Ground floor

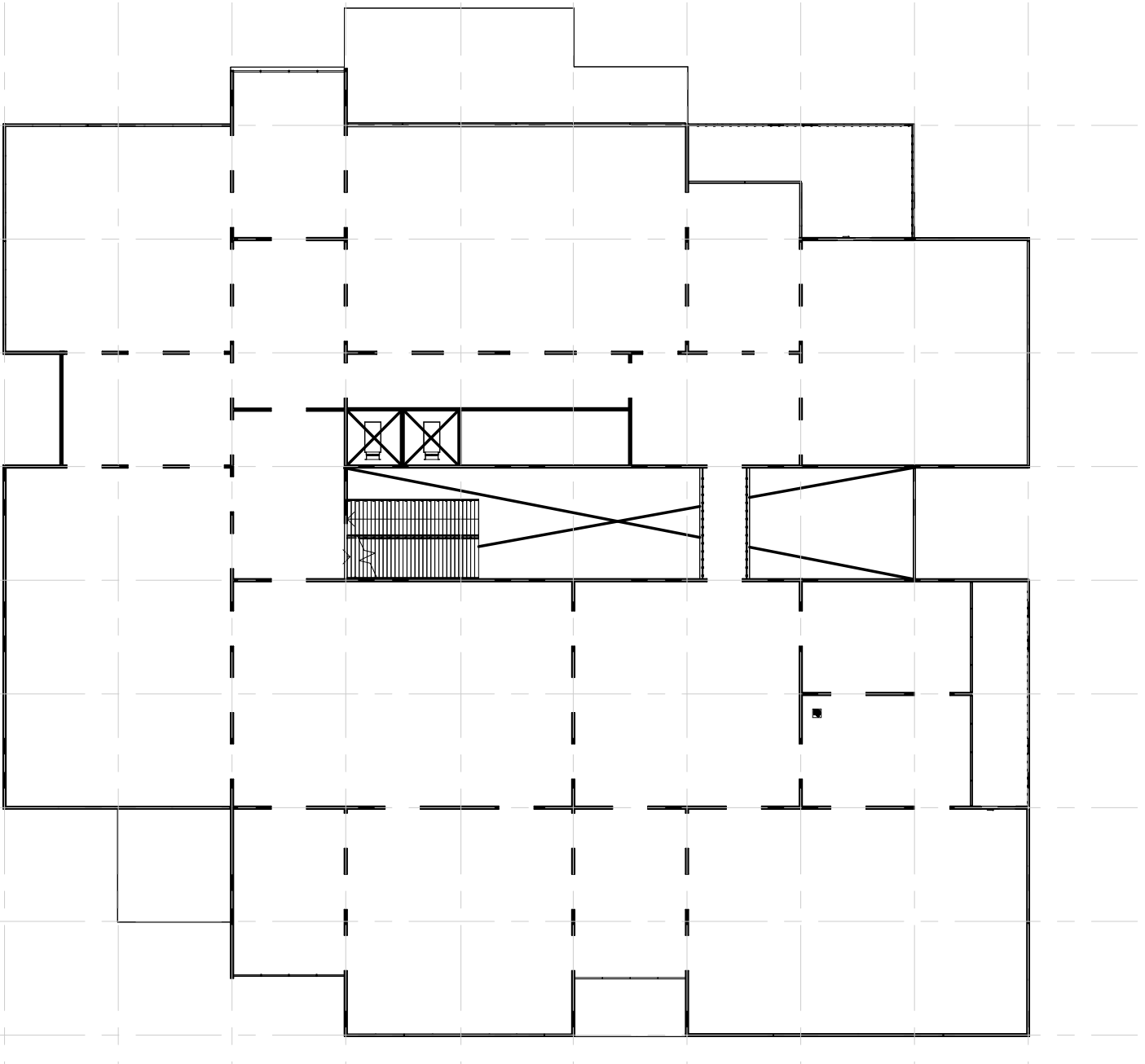
In the first concept phase, the building was organised around one main entrance and a central atrium. The atrium acted as the heart of the building, providing orientation and connecting the different spaces. On the right side of the floor plan, the café is located in the upper corner and the shop in the lower corner.

Both functions are directly connected to the atrium, making it the main gathering and circulation space.



First floor

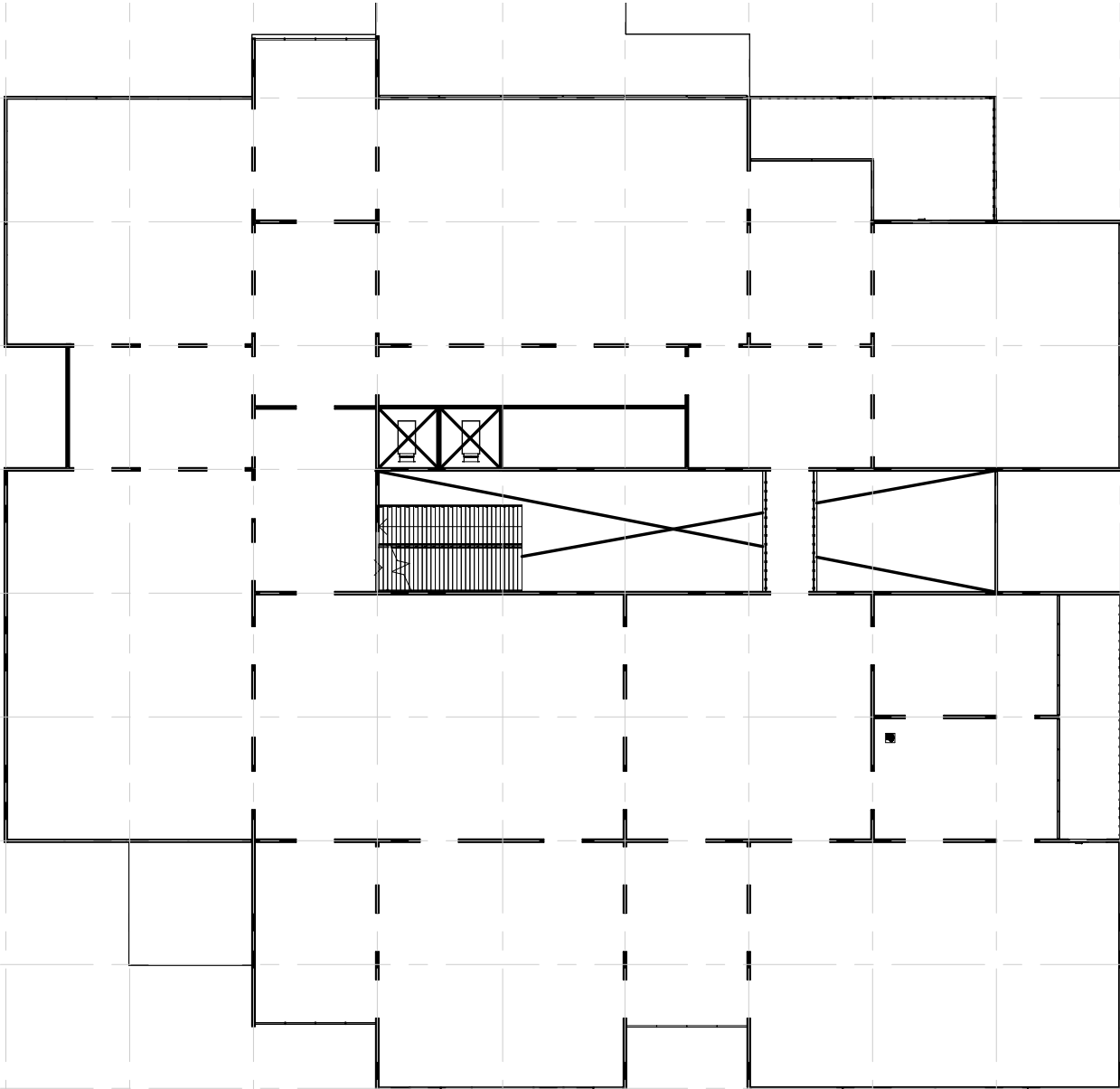
On the first floor, the atrium remains the central element of the plan. The surrounding rooms open onto the void, allowing views between different parts of the building. This creates a stronger connection between the spaces and makes the atrium a clear point of reference within the layout.



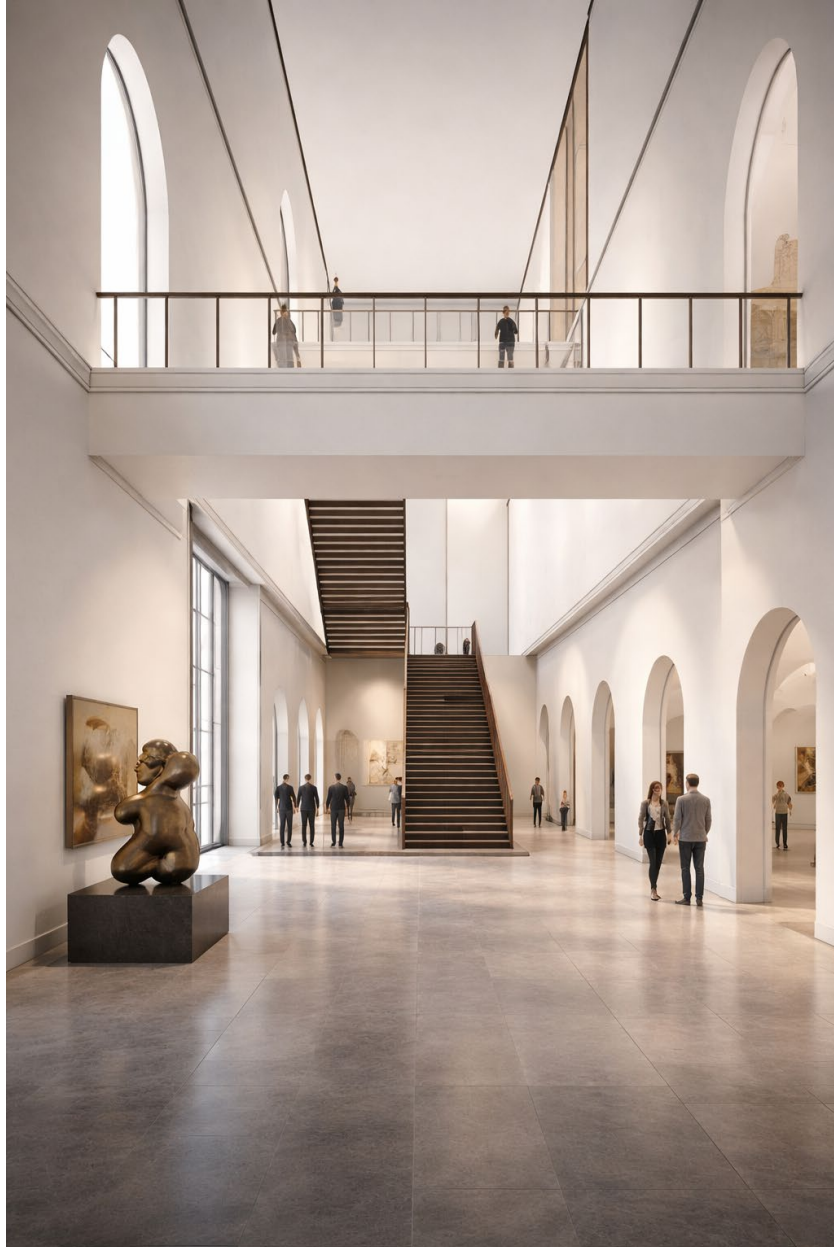
Second floor

A bridge across the atrium created a continuous route around the central space. Although this provided a clear circulation system, movement through the building remained largely centred on the atrium. As a result, there was limited variation in how visitors could move through and experience the museum.

This led to a further exploration of non-linearity in the following design phase.



First impression atrium



AI generated with specific prompts and my own 3D view from Revit as a first impression

First impression exhibition space

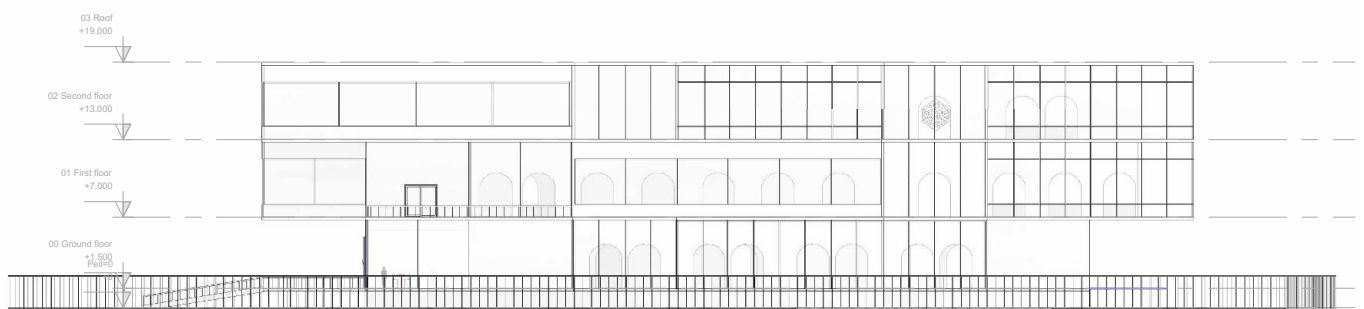


D5 Render

Front/east facade



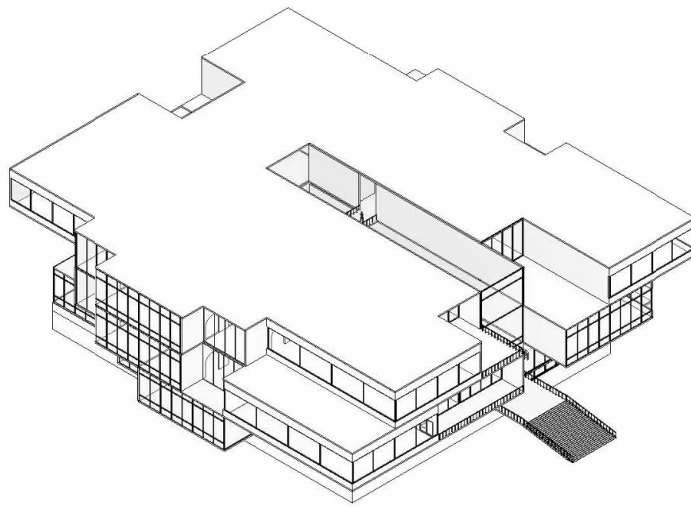
North facade



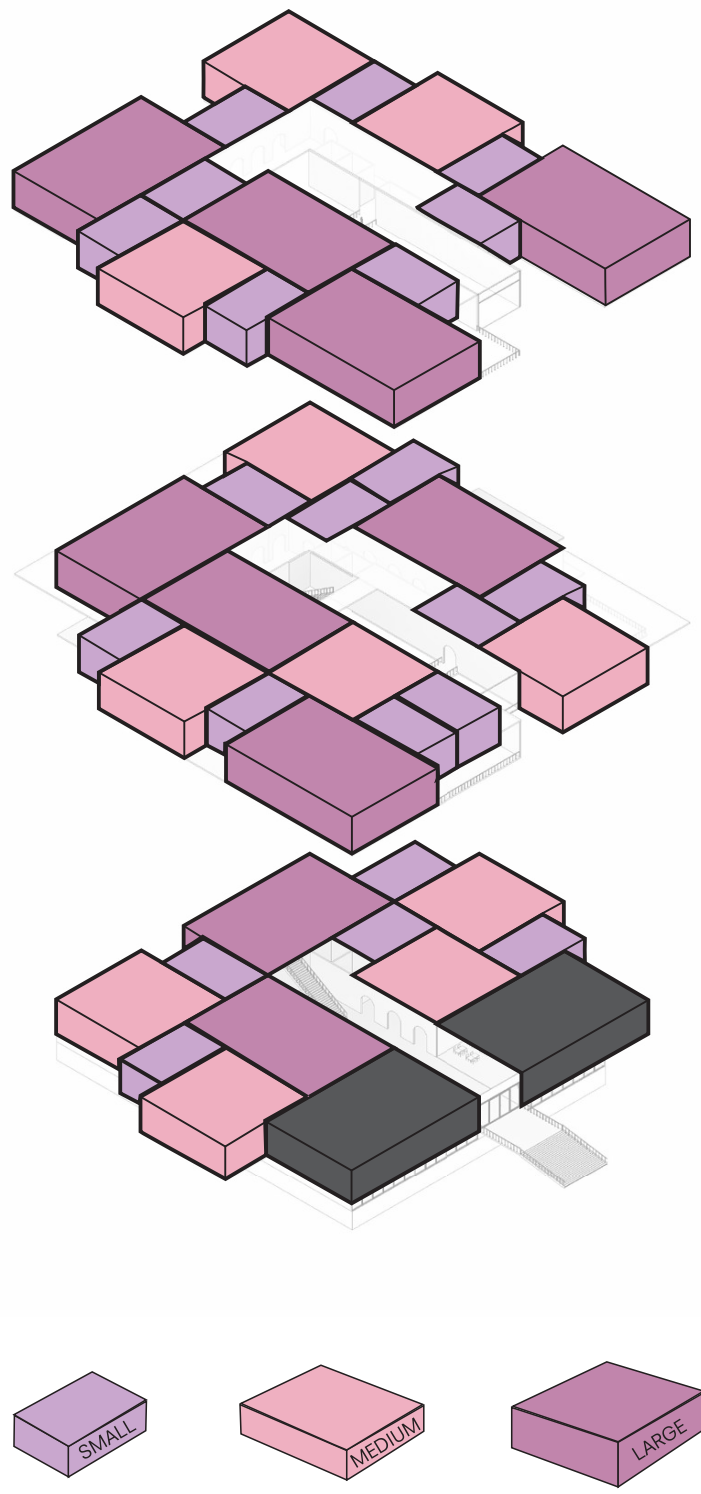
CONCEPT CONCLUSIONS

CLIENT

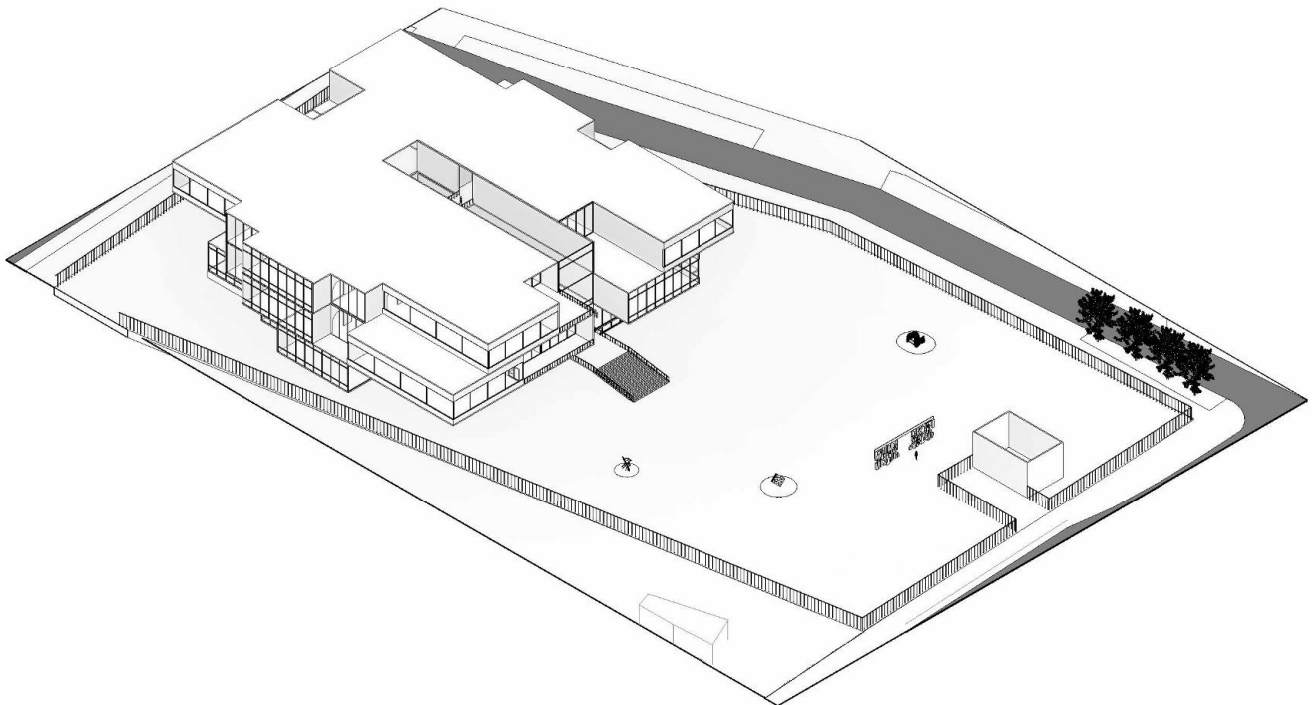
**Visual and spatial continuity
between spaces (in/outside)**



PROGRAM
Scattered program focused on non-linearity



SITE
Museum experience starts at
entrance site



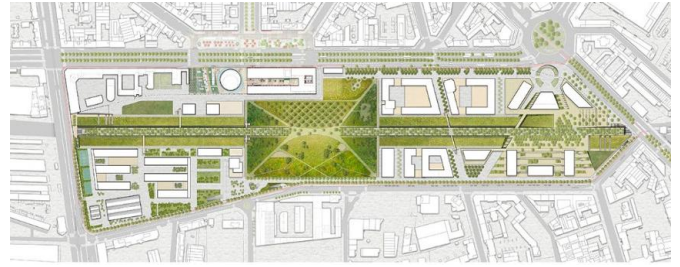
RESEARCH BY DESIGN

05

FUTURE PLAN

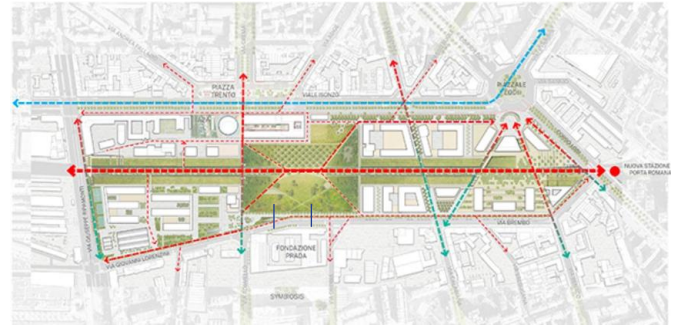
Relation to Urban context

The future development of Porta Romana transforms Fondazione Prada from a cultural destination at the edge of the district into an integrated part of a larger urban network. New pedestrian and cycling routes increase accessibility and create multiple points of arrival. Rather than approaching the museum from a single direction, visitors will increasingly encounter the site from different parts of the district, strengthening its relationship with the surrounding urban fabric.



Relation to the Project

The proposed museum responds to these future developments by positioning its two main entrances along the emerging urban connections identified in the master plan. This strengthens the relationship between the museum and the surrounding neighbourhood while supporting the project's ambition of creating a non-linear visitor experience. Just as the future master plan introduces multiple urban routes through the district, the museum allows visitors to establish their own paths through the building and sculpture garden.



Relation to Visibility

The future urban development also increases the visibility of the museum within the district. New public spaces and pedestrian routes create opportunities for the museum to function not only as a destination, but also as a cultural landmark embedded within everyday urban life. As a result, the museum becomes more connected to the city and accessible to a wider range of visitors.

URBAN SCALE

Multiple arrival routes →

New urban connections →

Public landscape →

Urban exploration →

BUILDING SCALE

Multiple visitor routes

Two entrances

Sculpture garden

Non-linear experience



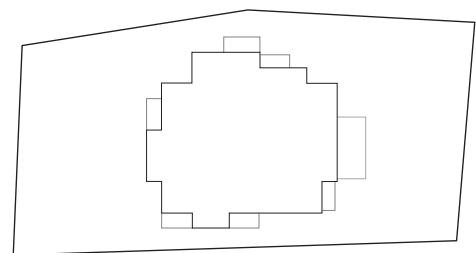
Figure 5.1,2,3 Future plan Porta Romana (Staff, 2020b)

DESIGN APPROACHES

- 2 ENTRANCES AT SITE ○
- 2 CIRCULATION POINTS WITH TOILETS ○
- 2 ENTRANCES TO BUILDING ○

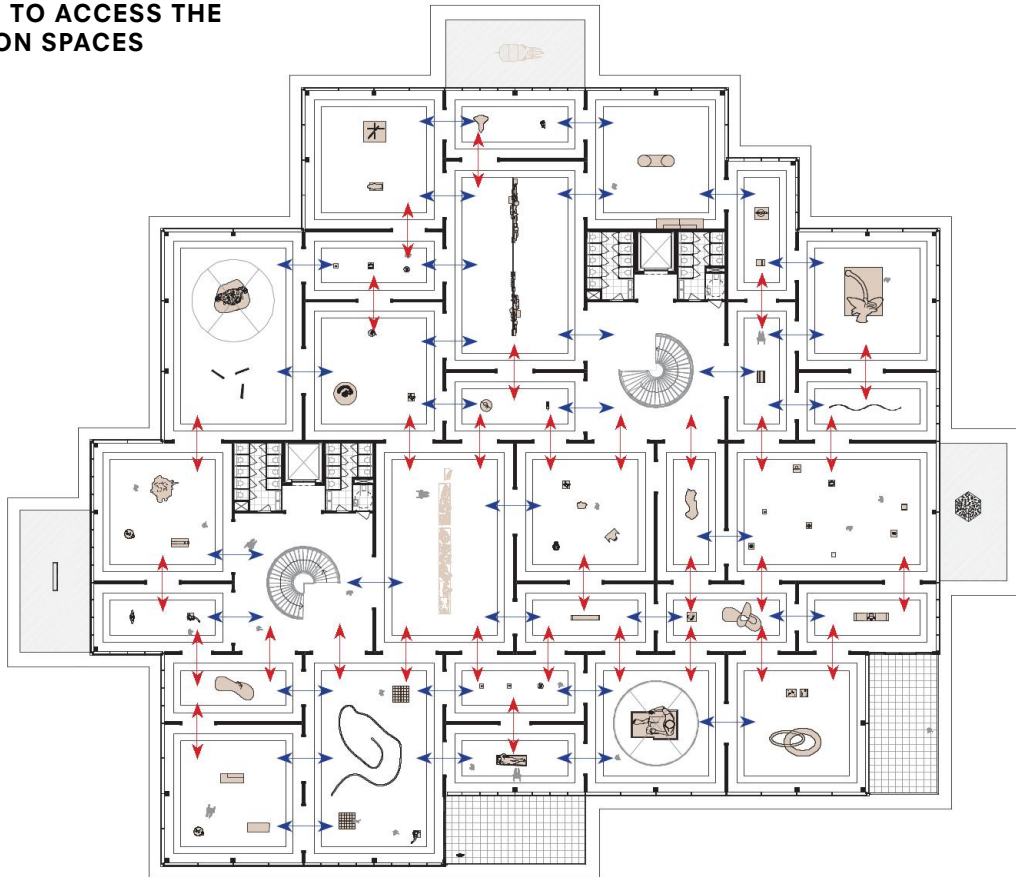


The circulation strategy is based on providing choice while keeping the layout easy to understand. Two entrances give access to the site, allowing visitors to start their journey through the sculpture garden from different points. The building itself can be entered through two separate entrances, creating multiple ways to move through the project. Two circulation cores containing the staircases and toilets act as clear reference points within the building. By limiting these key elements to two locations, visitors can choose their own route while maintaining a clear overview of the space.

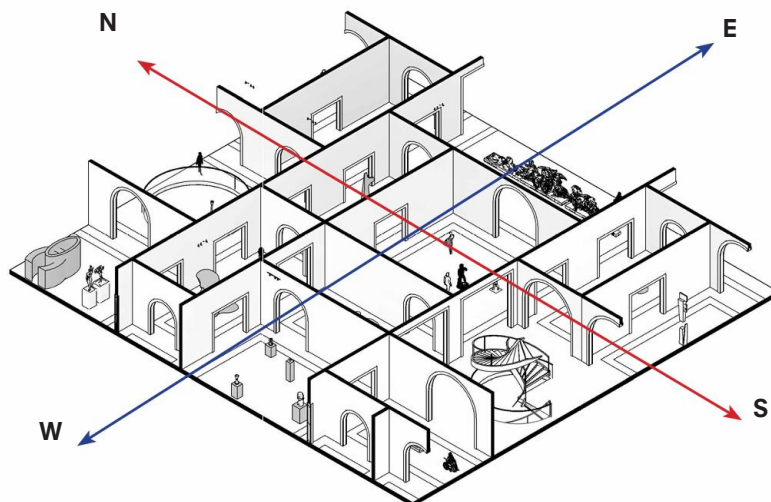


BUILDING OUTLINE

**MINIMAL 2 ENTRANCES TO
CHOOSE FROM TO ACCESS THE
NEXT EXHIBITION SPACES**

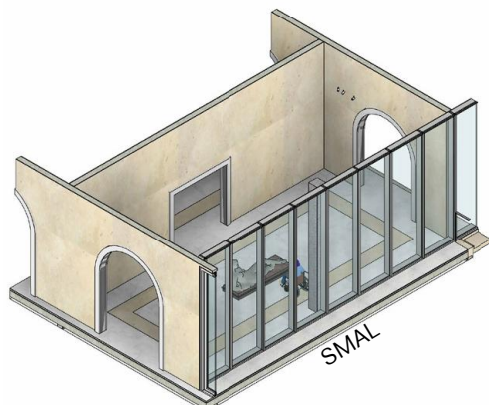
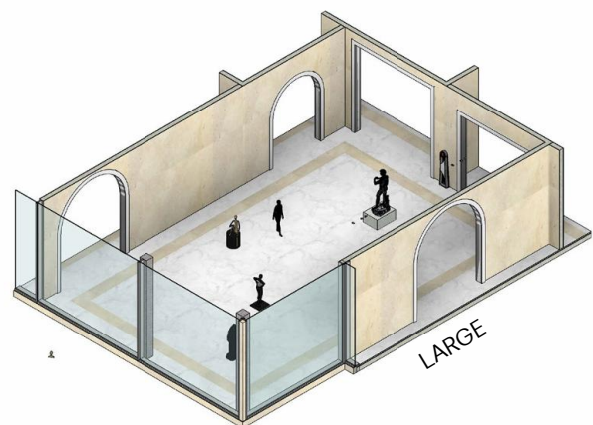
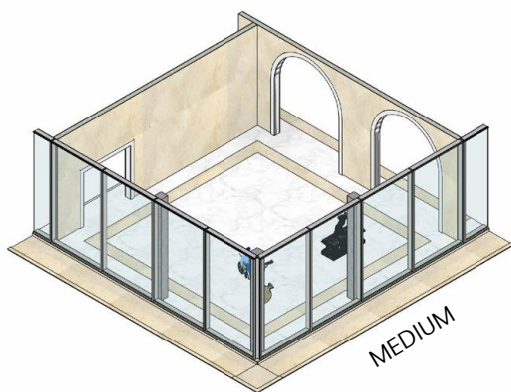
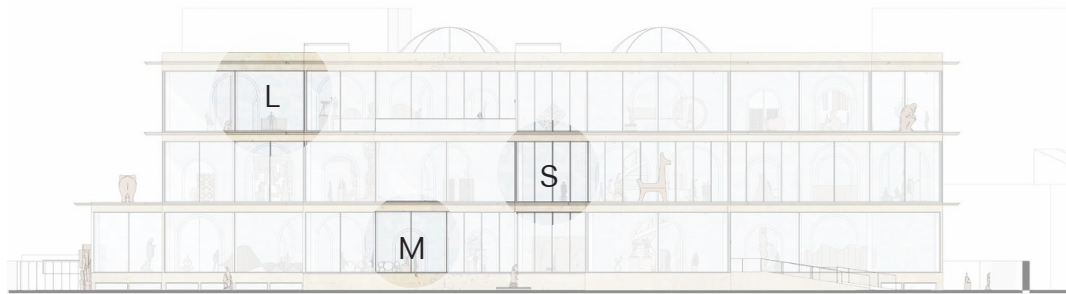


The museum contains two types of openings. Arched openings are placed along the east-west axis and rectangular openings along the north-south axis. These elements are repeated throughout the building and form part of the spatial organisation of the museum.

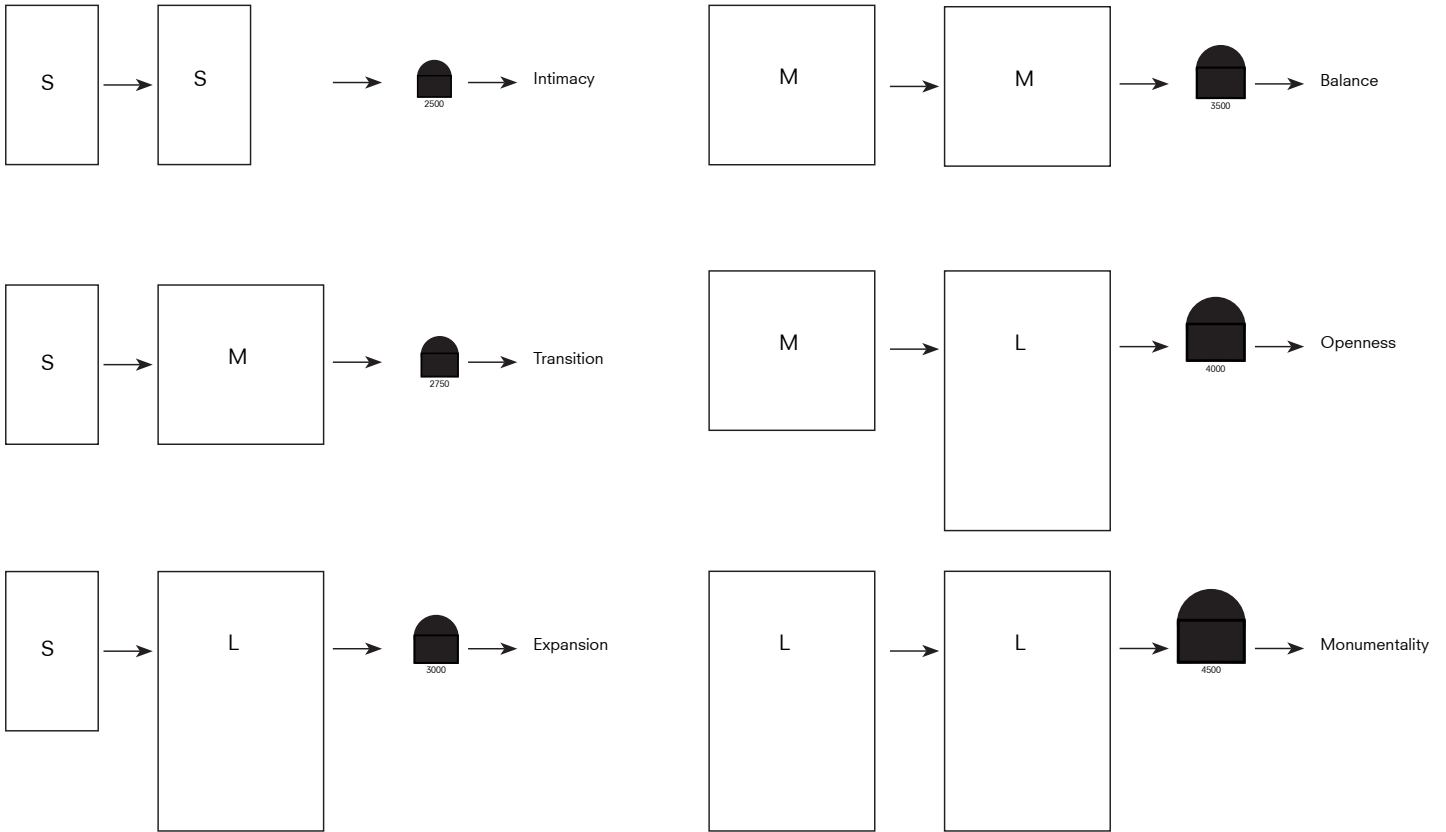


SPACES

The facade reveals the different exhibition typologies through the grid spacing. A 6 m grid marks the **large** exhibition spaces, a 3 m grid the **medium** spaces, and a 1.5 m grid the **smaller**, more intimate galleries. This creates a clear relationship between interior and exterior, allowing visitors to recognize the scale and character of the spaces from the outside while also providing an additional layer of orientation.



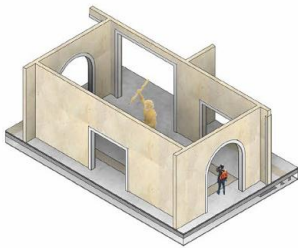
ARCHES



Small

67,5 m²

On grid 6x12

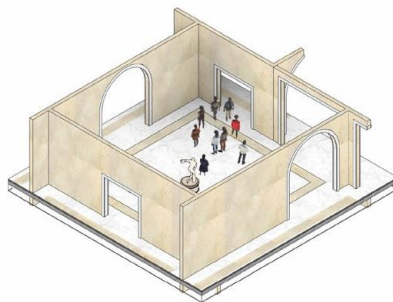


Intimate | Enclosed | Focused

Medium

138 m²

On grid 12x12m

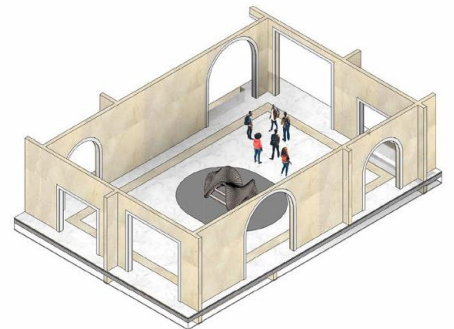


Transitional | Balanced | Flexible

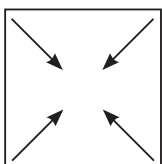
Large

212,5 m²

On grid 12x18m

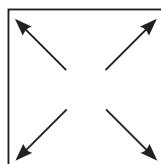


Open | Public | Monumental



Compression

Arch lowers to create a sense of threshold and focus



Expansion

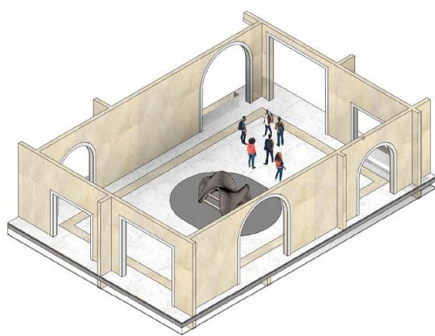
Arch opens up to release and connect spaces

MATERIALIZATION

The material palette is based on materials that are widely used in Italian architecture. This relates the project to its location in Milan and to the existing buildings of Fondazione Prada. The exterior is largely defined by a curtain wall facade. Yellow marble is used for the horizontal facade bands, introducing a stronger sense of solidity and referencing materials that can be found in many Italian civic and cultural buildings. Marble is used extensively throughout the interior, appearing on floors, walls, and within the exhibition spaces.

Different colours and finishes mark the transition between galleries and help organise the large open floor plates. While the spaces remain visually connected, each gallery is given its own identity through subtle material variations. Terracotta is applied to the terraces and exterior circulation areas.

Together with the glass and marble, it forms a material palette that reflects both the contemporary character of the museum and its Italian context.



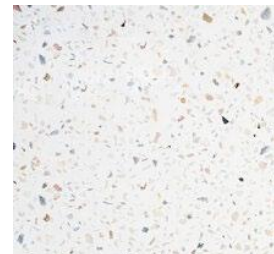
Yellow Marble

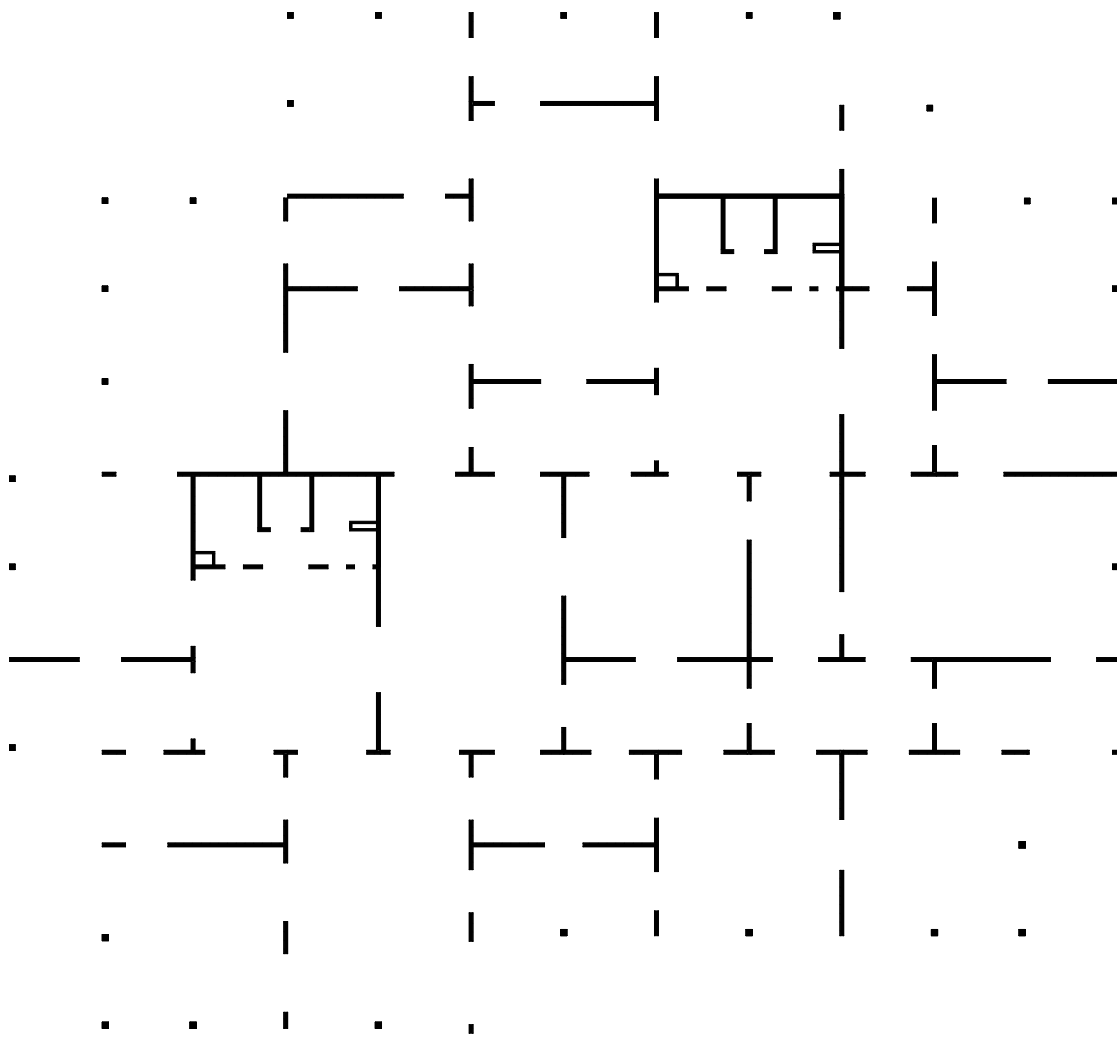


White Marble



Terracotta terrace tiles 600x600





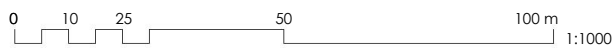
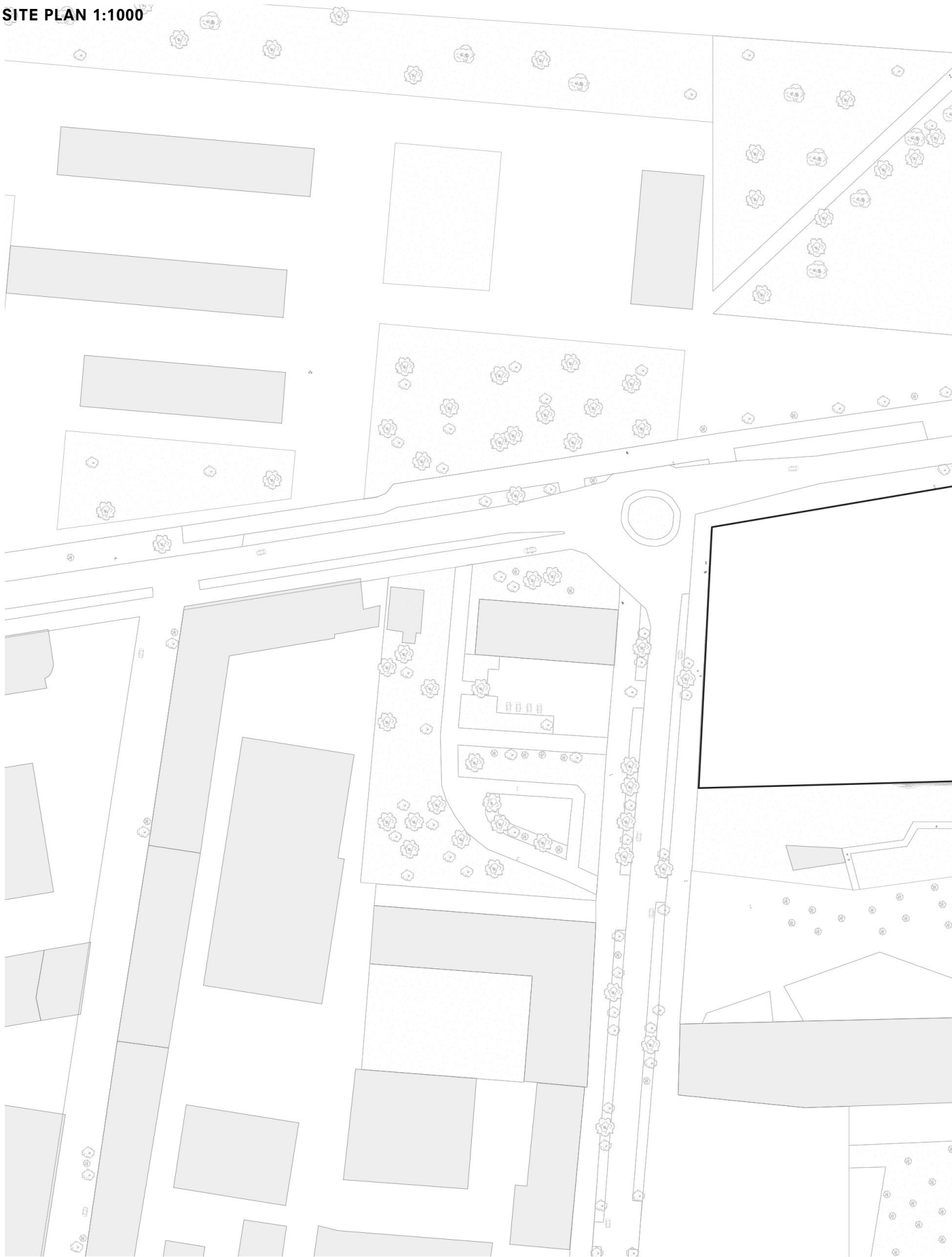
Concrete shear walls form the main structure of the museum. They are placed throughout the building and help organise the galleries, circulation spaces, and connections between different parts of the museum. At the perimeter, columns support the floors and roof behind the glass facades. This allows the facades to remain largely transparent while maintaining a simple structural system. The combination of walls and columns provides the required support and works together with the spatial organisation of the building.

BUILDING DESIGN

06

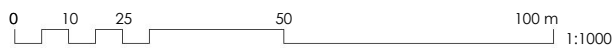
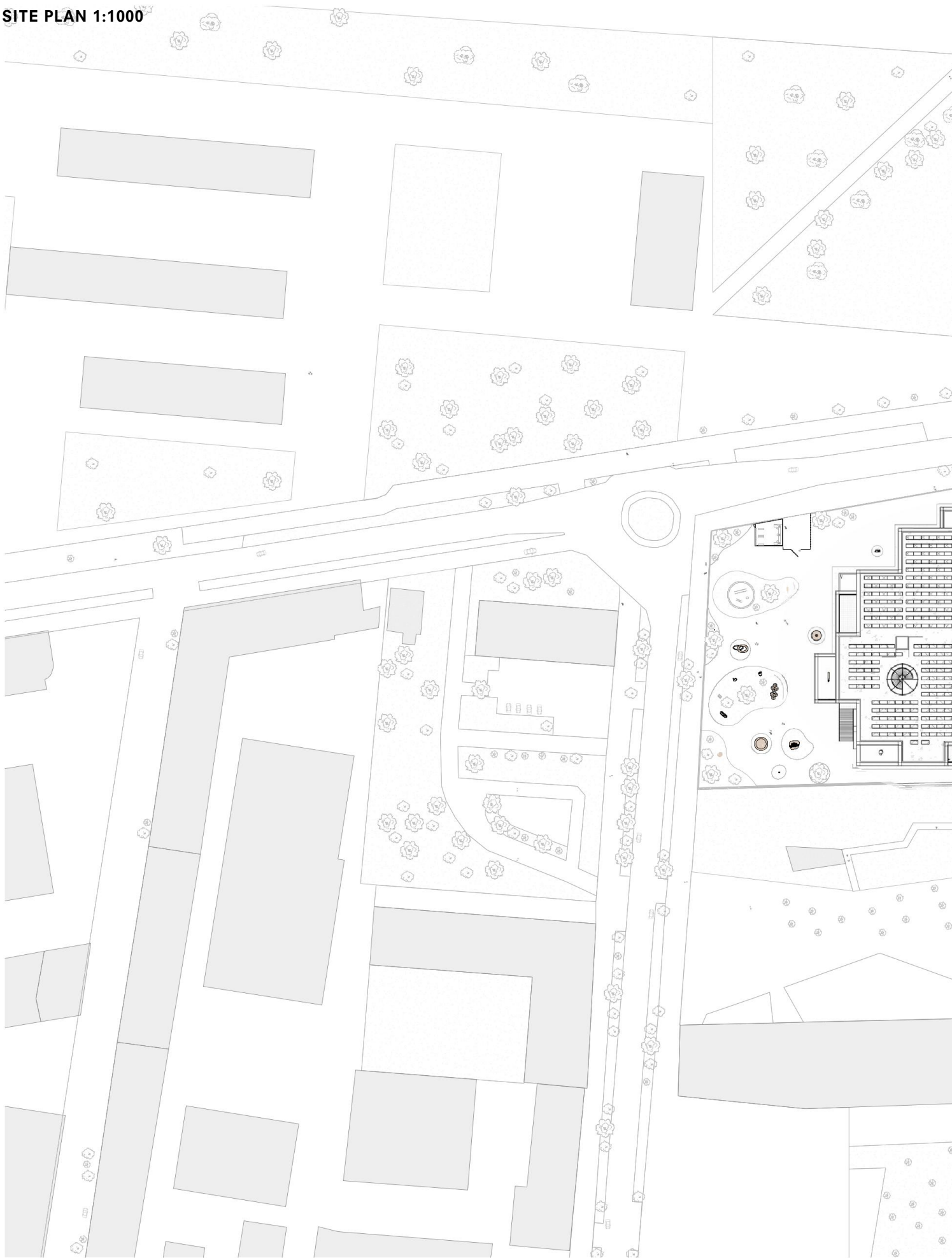
VILLA PRADA

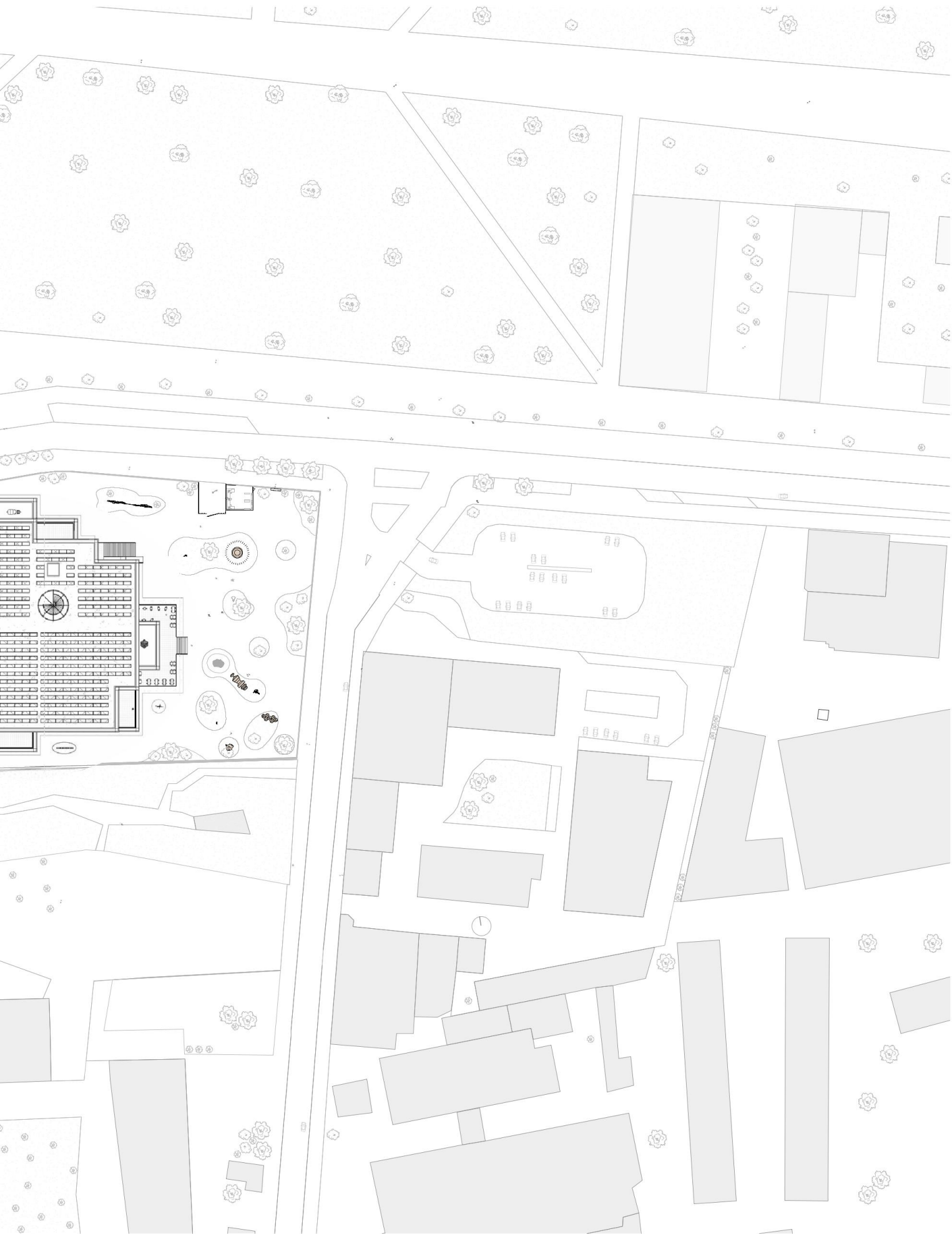
SITE PLAN 1:1000





SITE PLAN 1:1000





SITE ENTRANCE 1

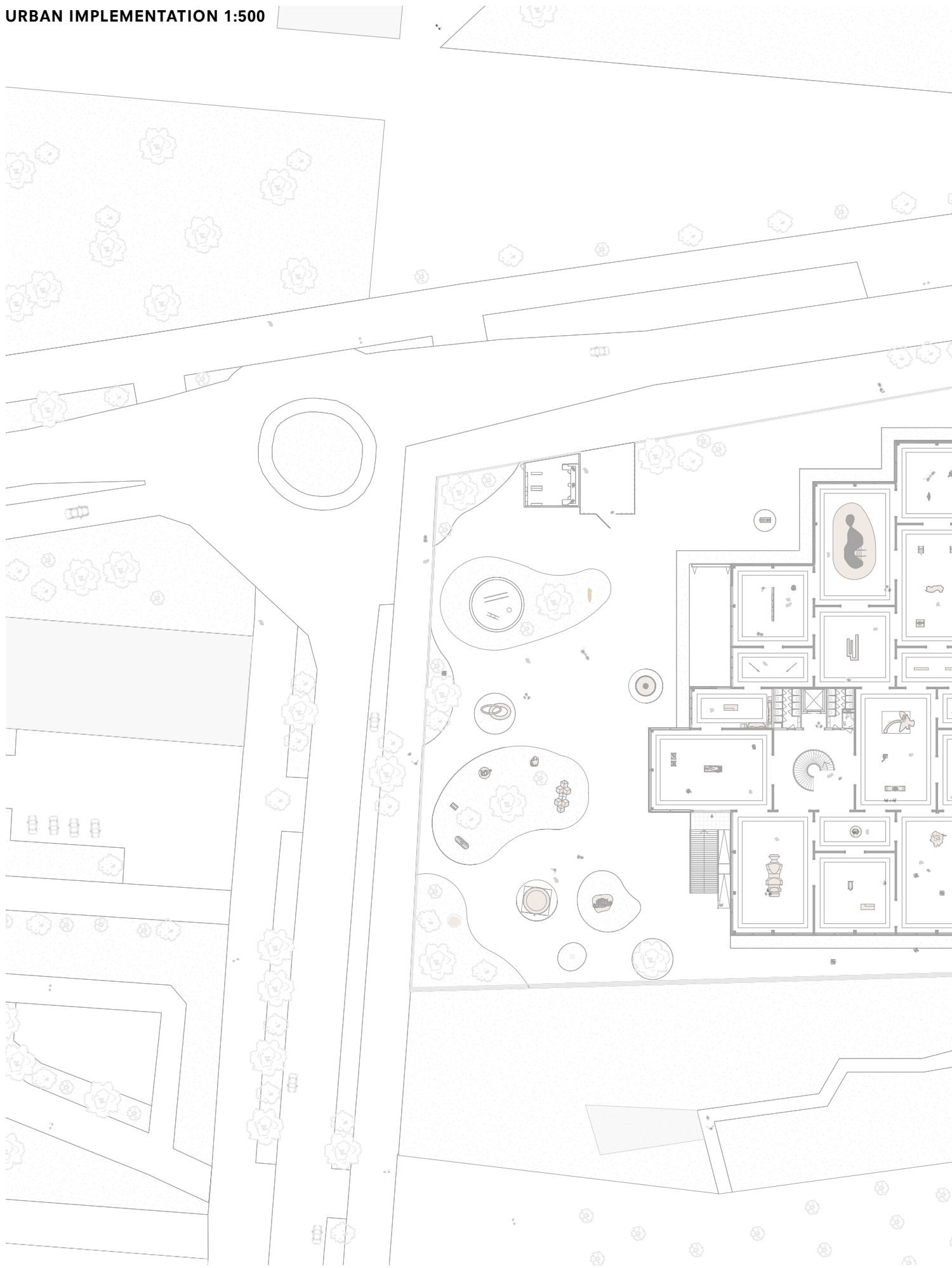




SITE ENTRANCE 2







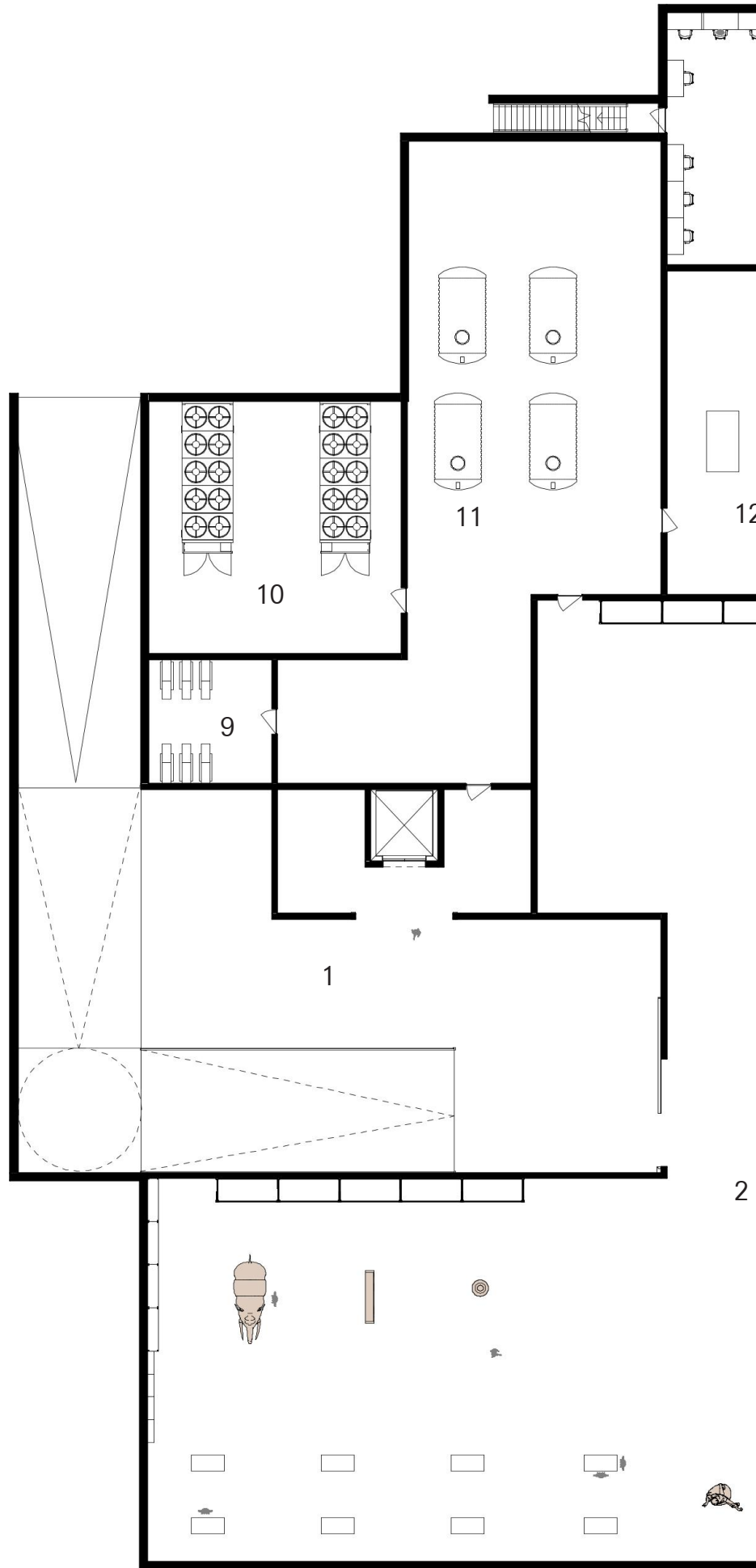


SCULPTURE GARDEN

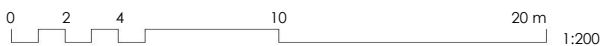


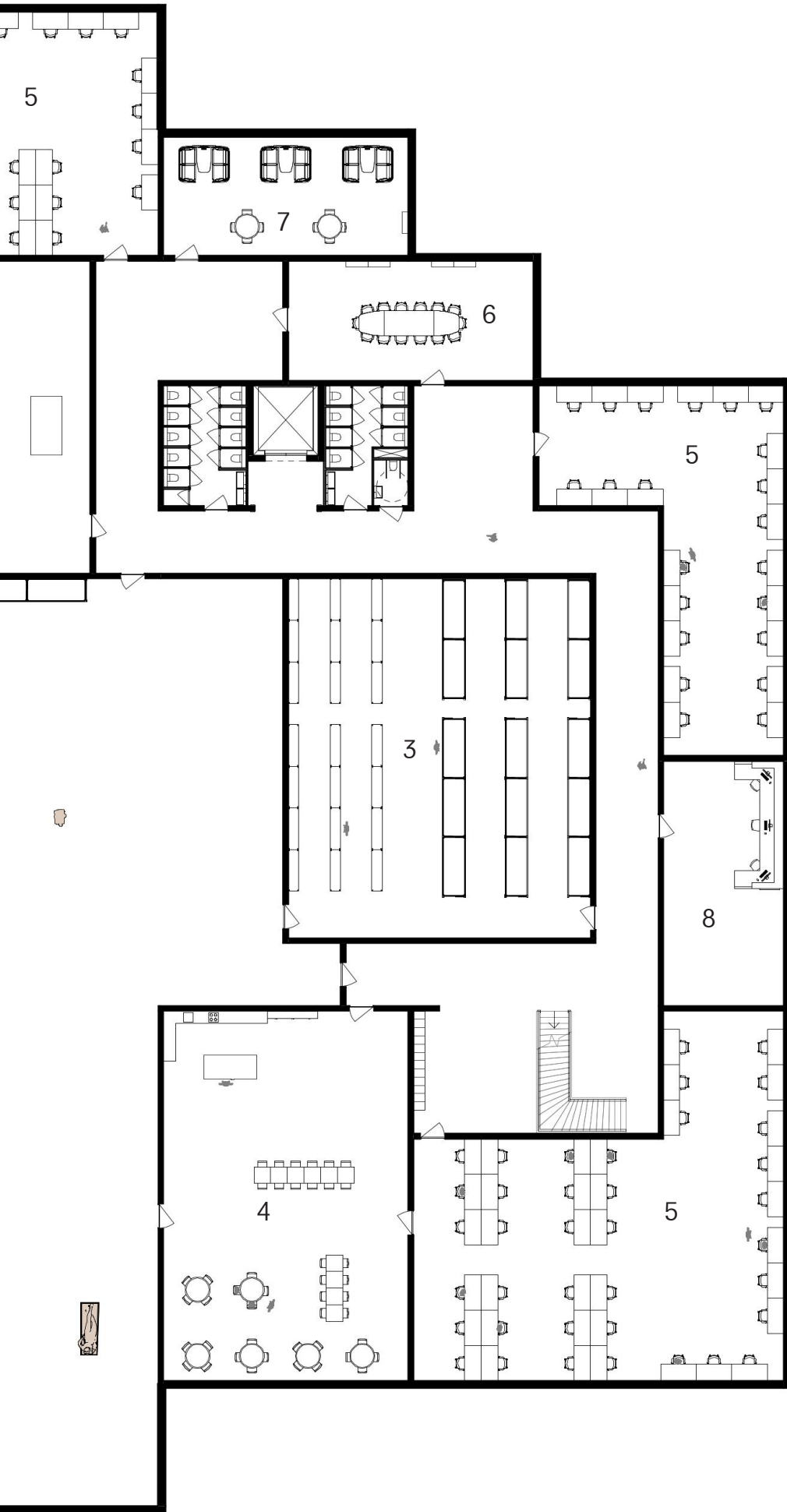


FLOOR PLAN BASEMENT -1



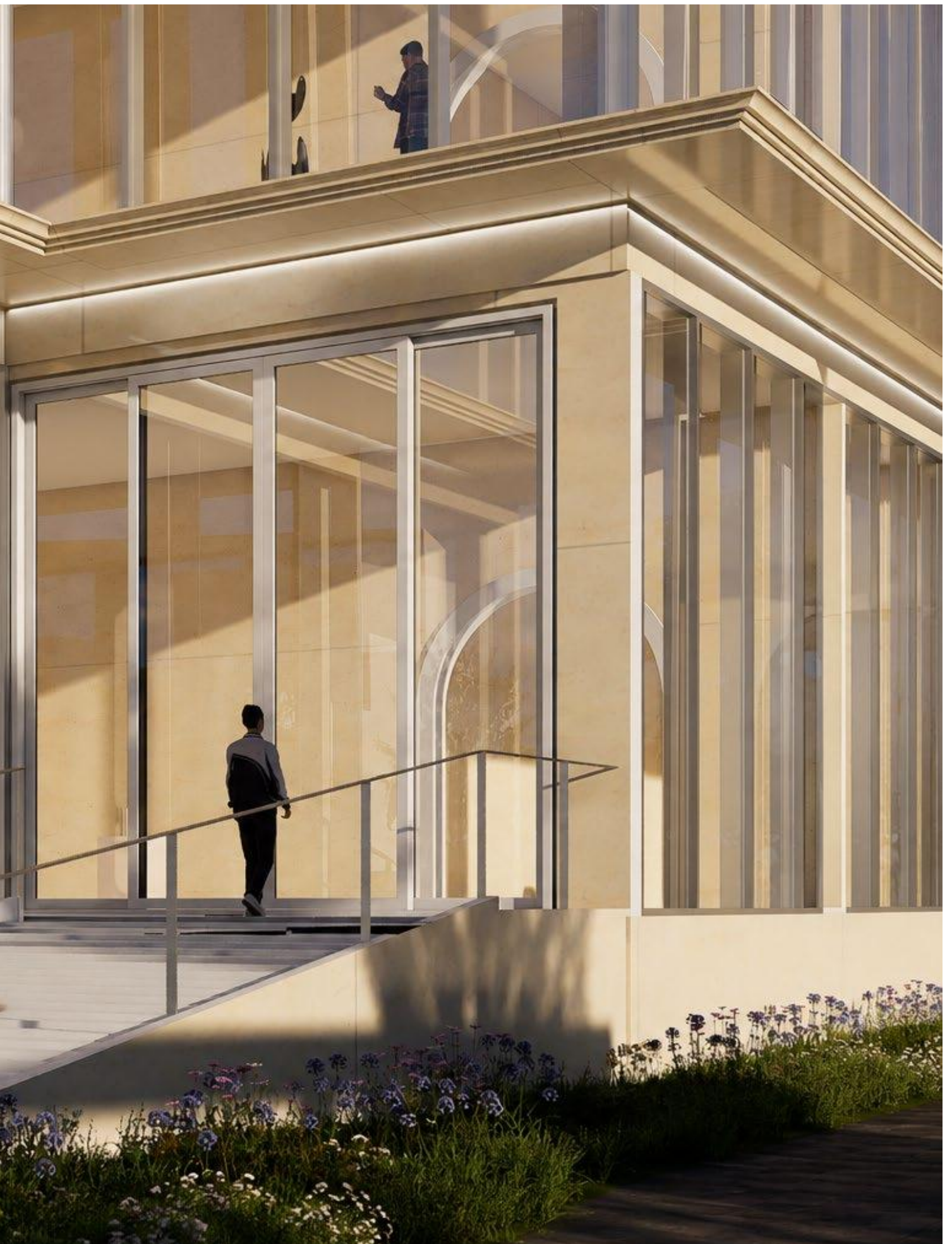
- 1. Loading dock
- 2. Storage/restoration
- 3. Archive/digital collection
- 4. Canteen
- 5. Office
- 6. Meeting room
- 7. Seperate work spaces
- 8. Control room
- 9. Electrical room
- 10. HVAC
- 11. Rainwater collector
- 12. AHU





BUILDING ENTRANCE 1

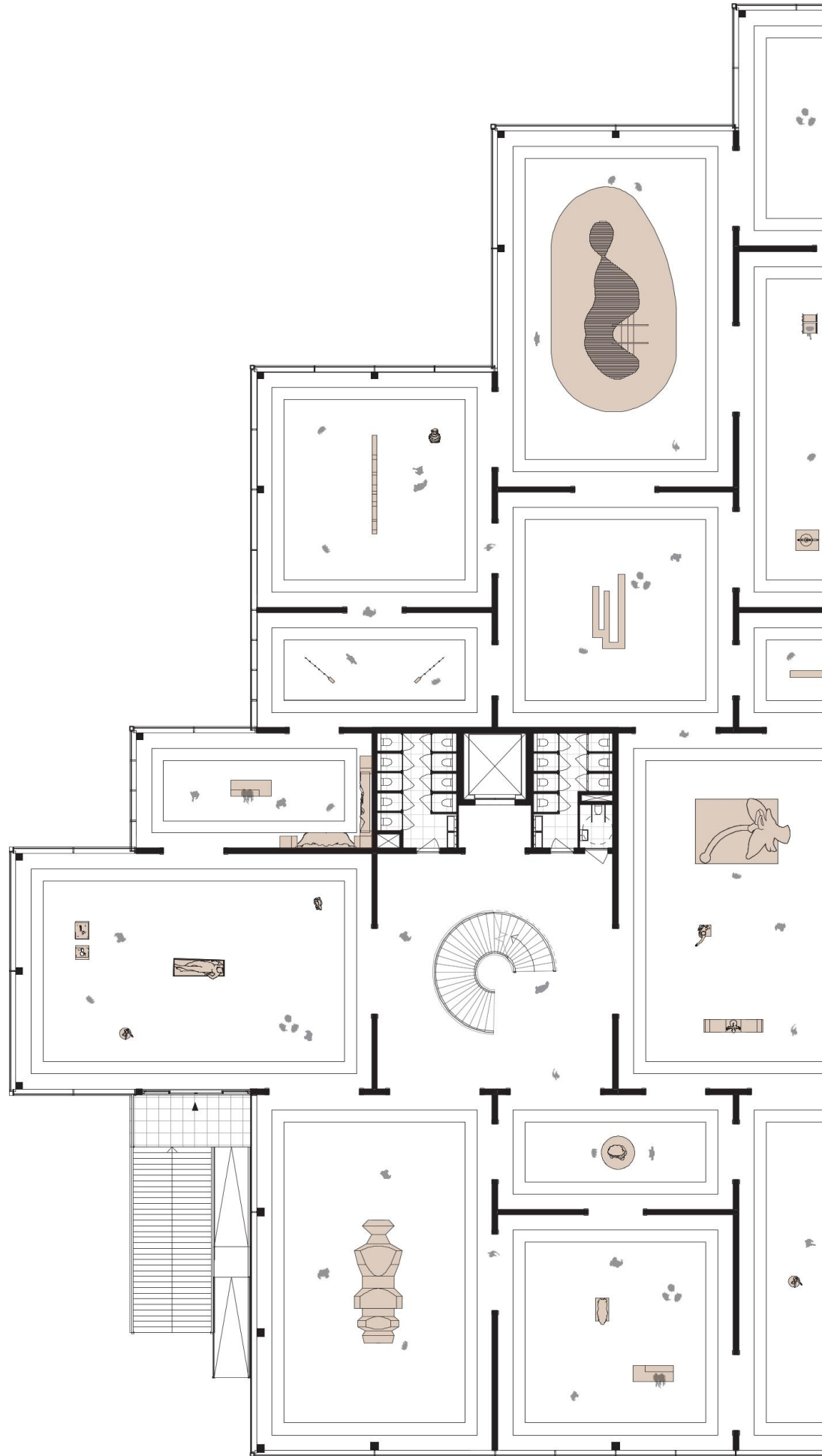






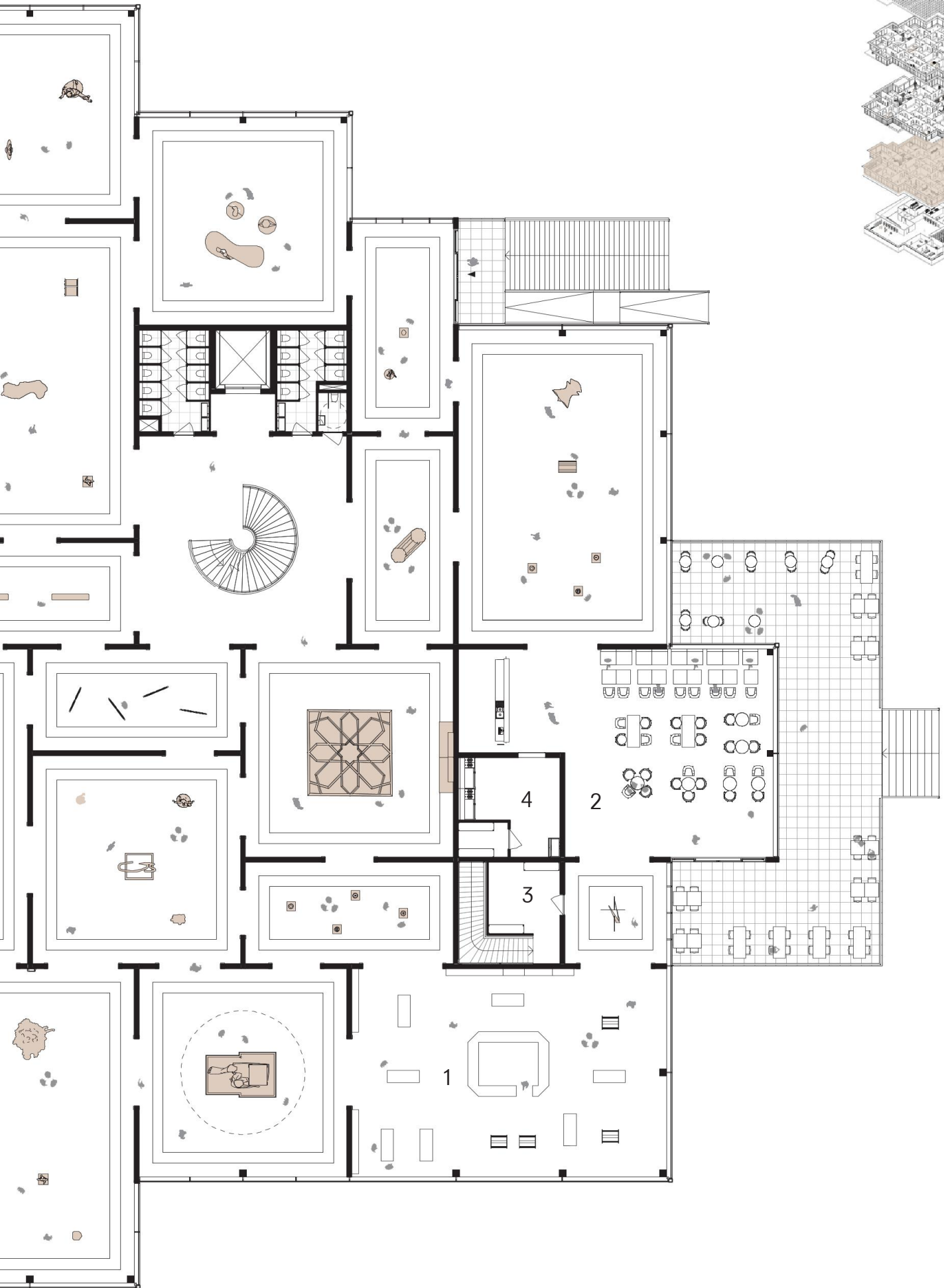
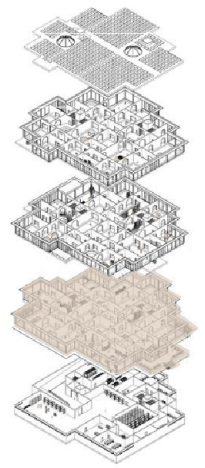


FLOOR PLAN GROUND FLOOR

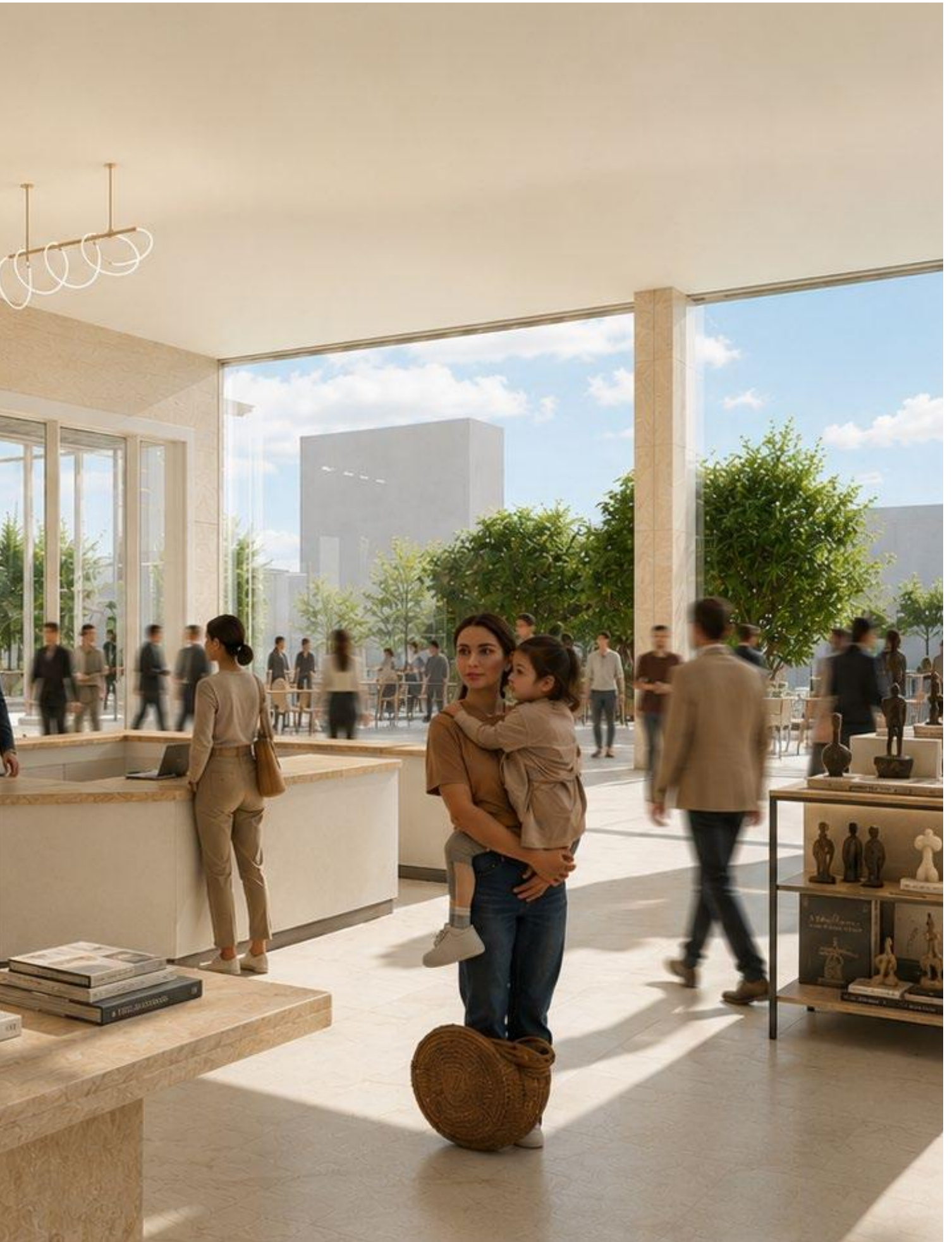


- 1. Shop
- 2. Café
- 3. Staff storage
- 4. Kitchen





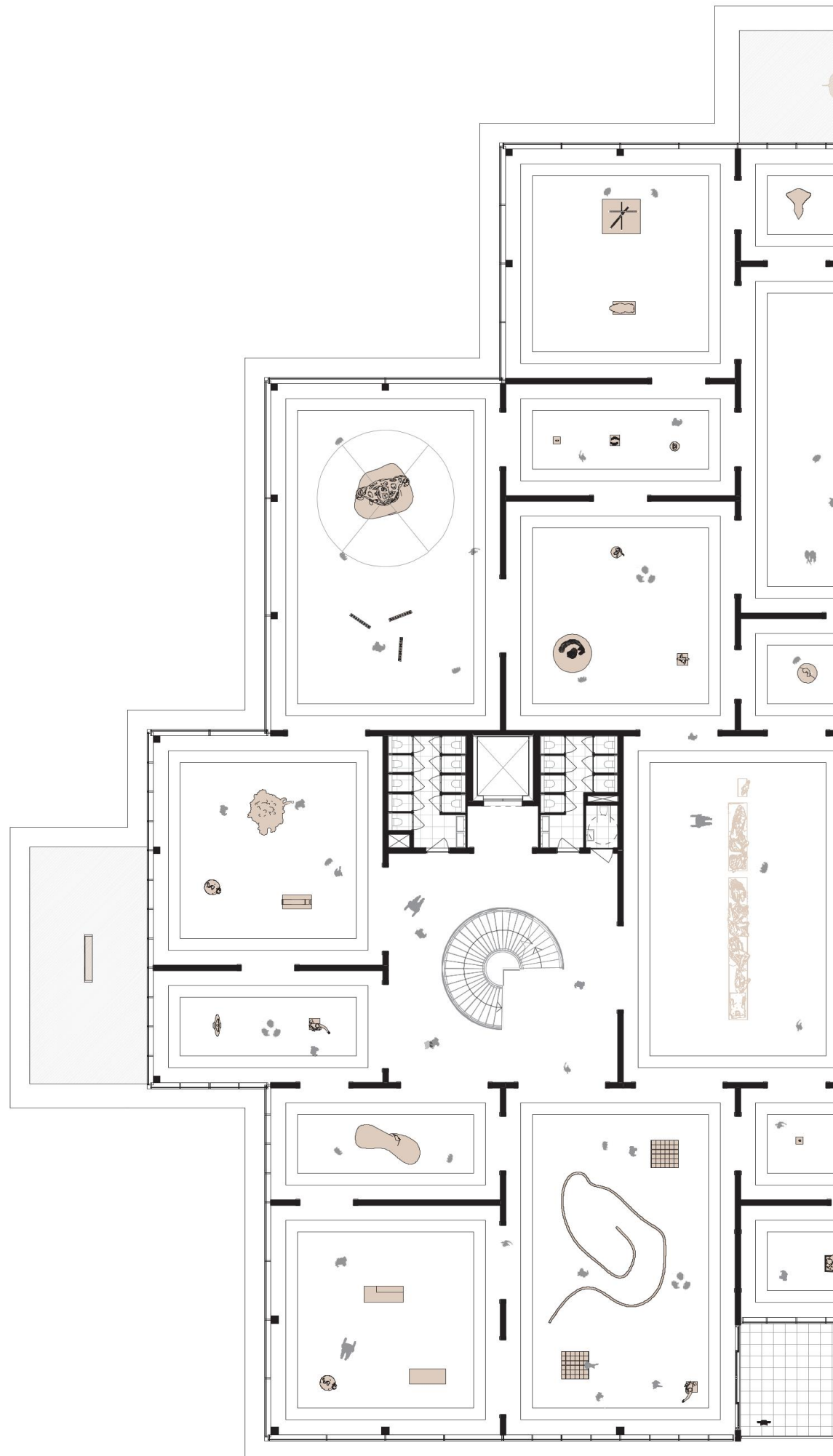


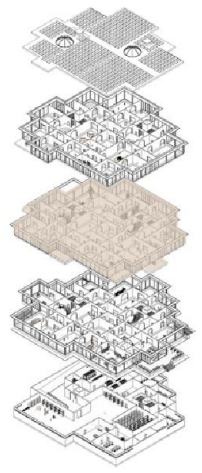


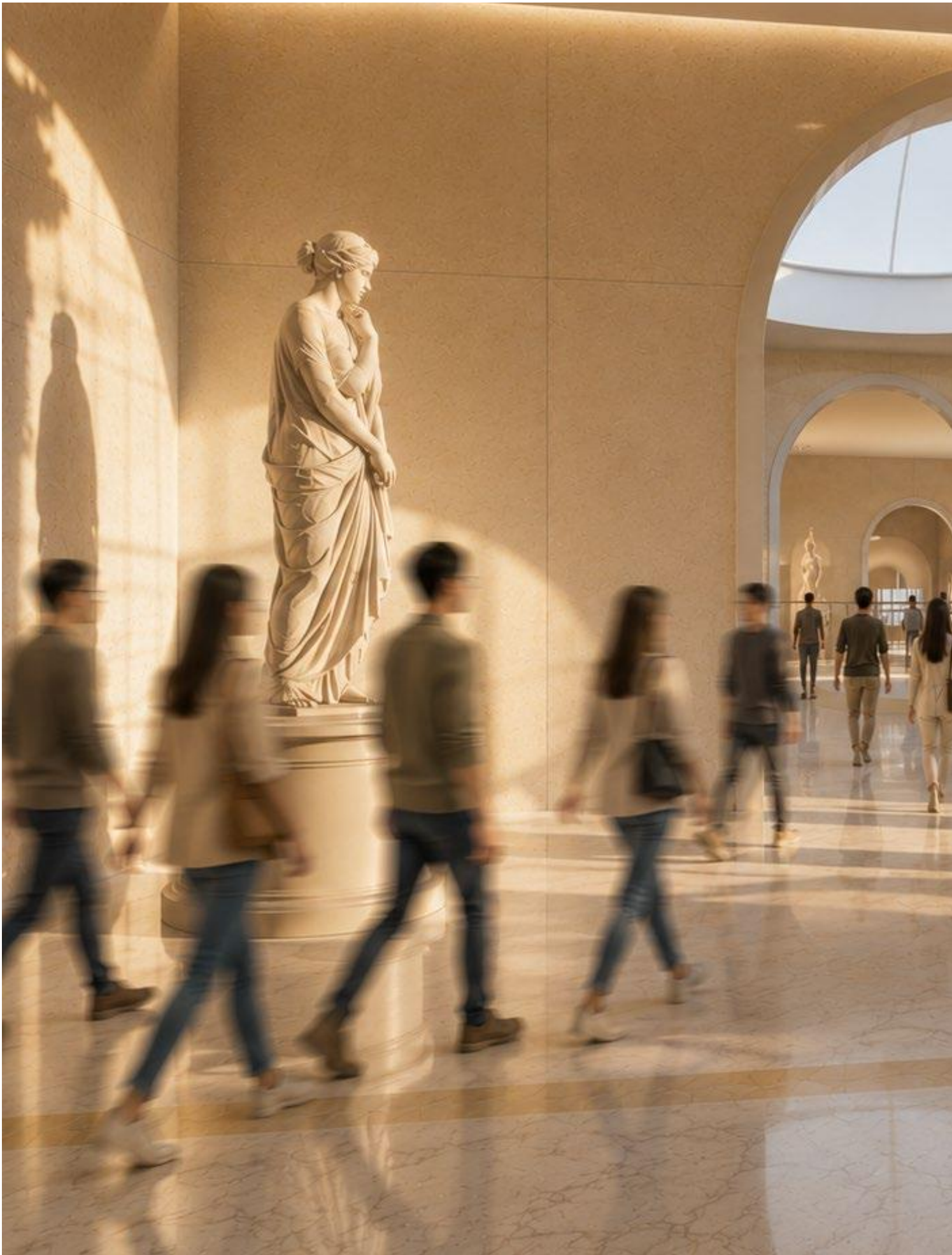


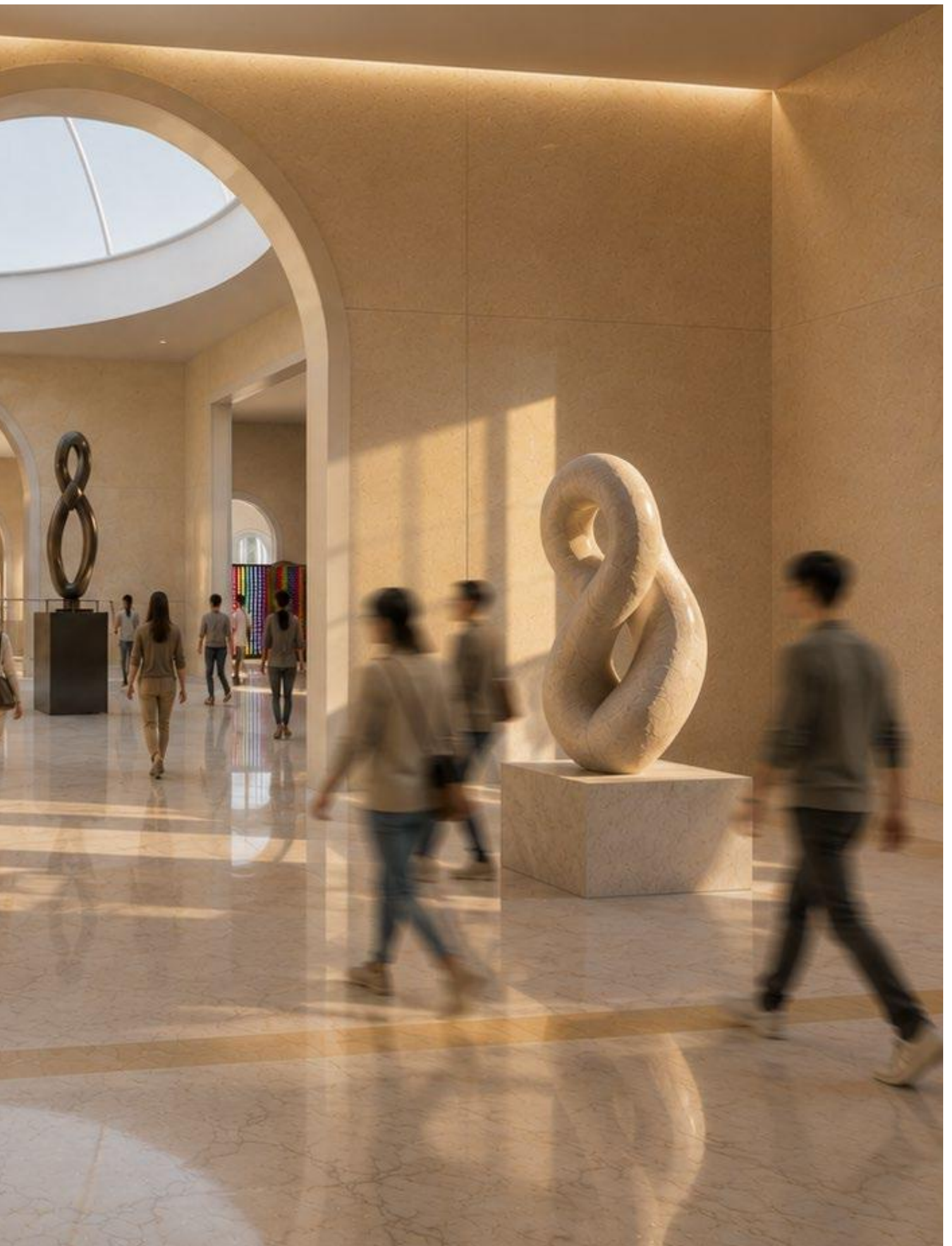


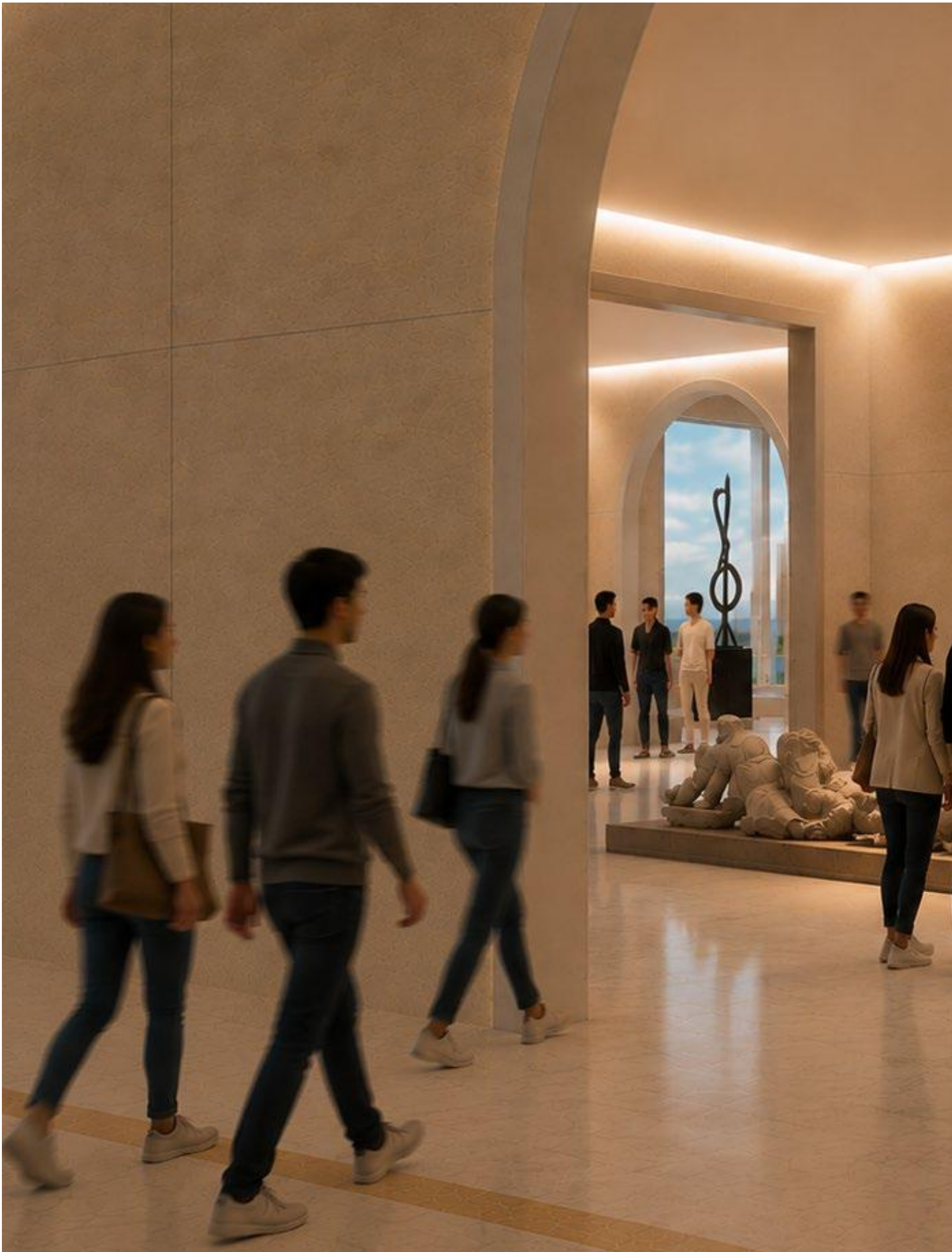
FLOOR PLAN FIRST FLOOR









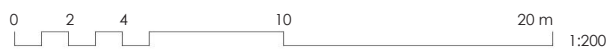


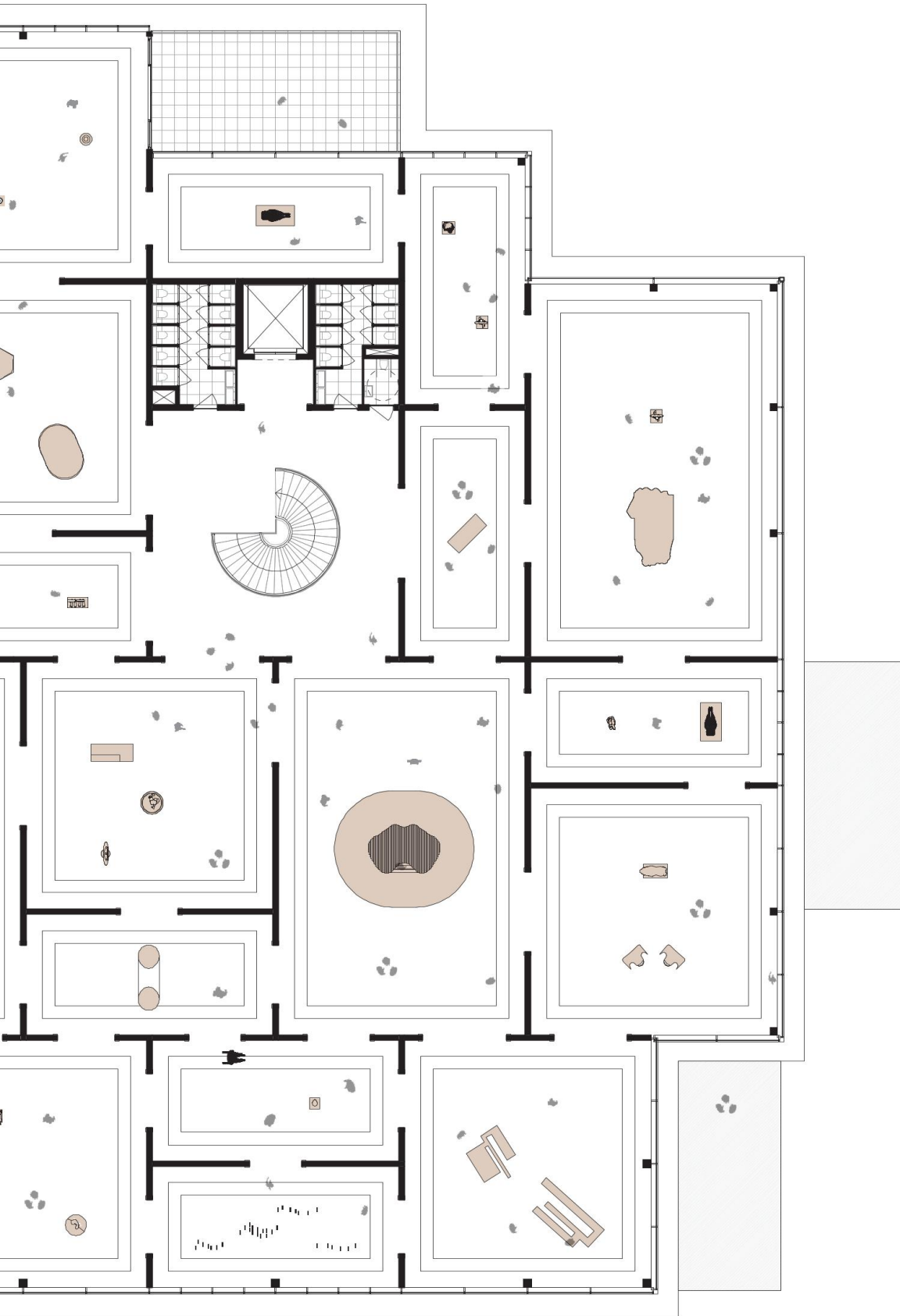
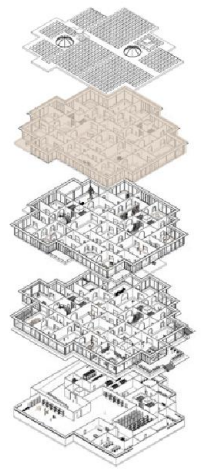






FLOOR PLAN SECOND FLOOR









URBAN SECTION

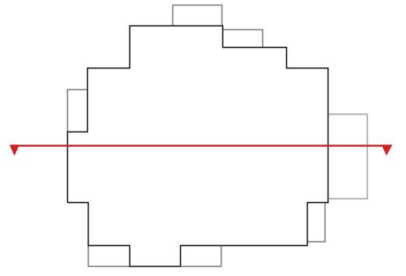




SECTION A-A



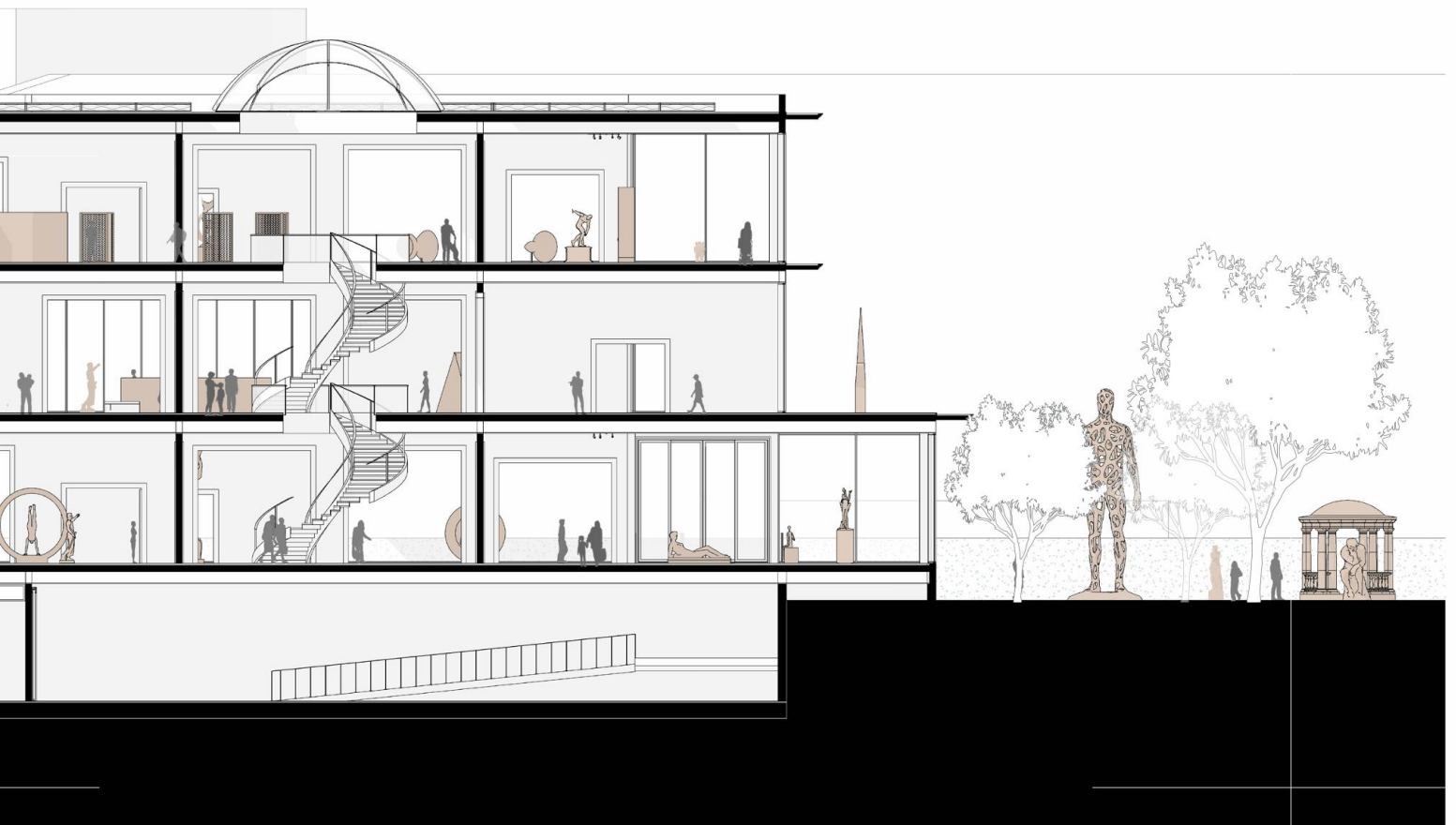
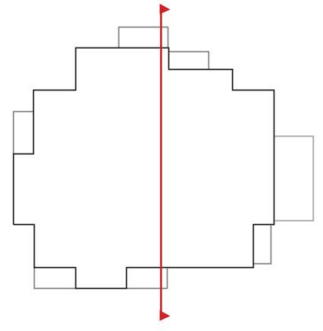
0 2 4 10 20m 1:200



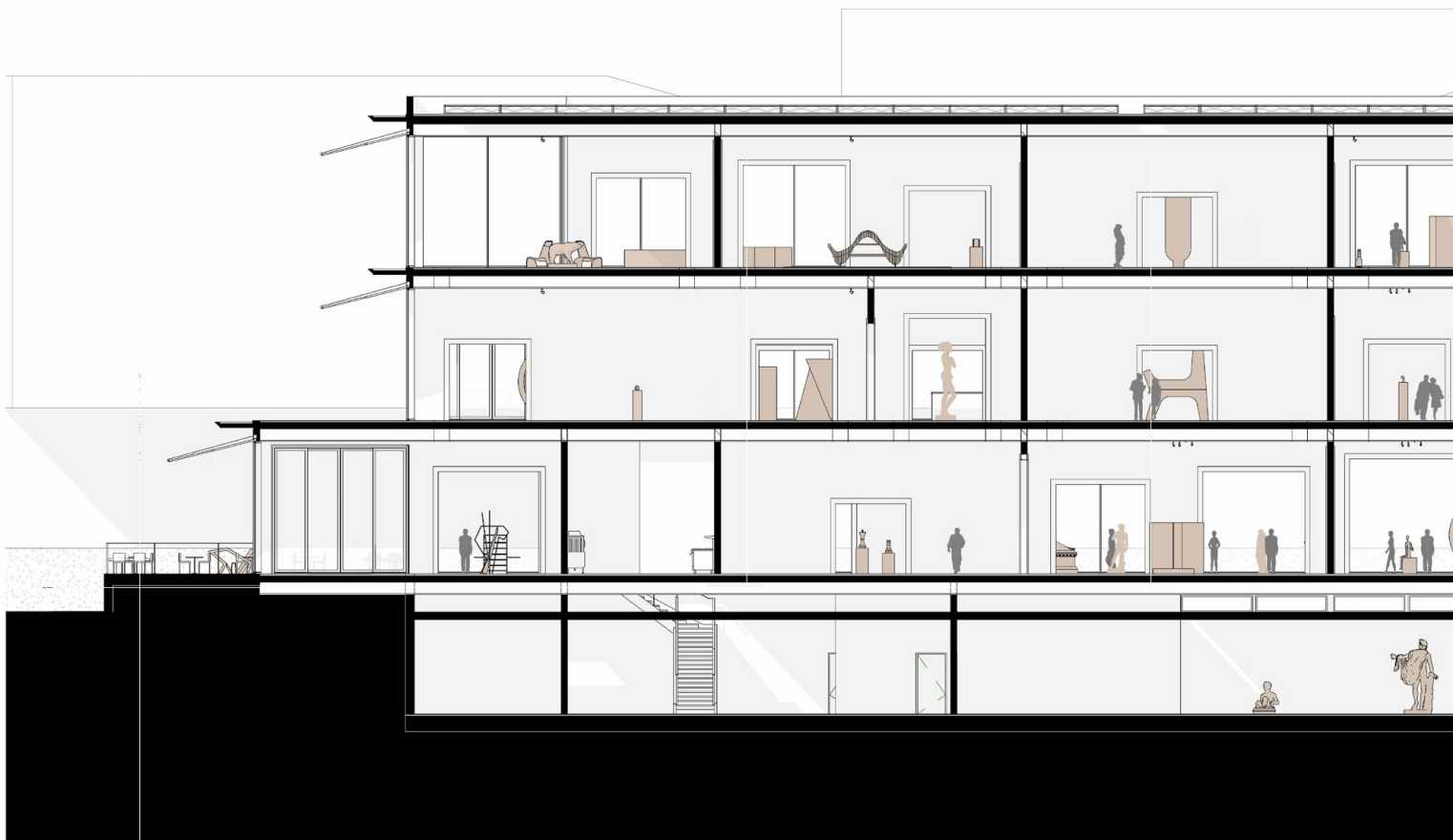
SECTION B-B

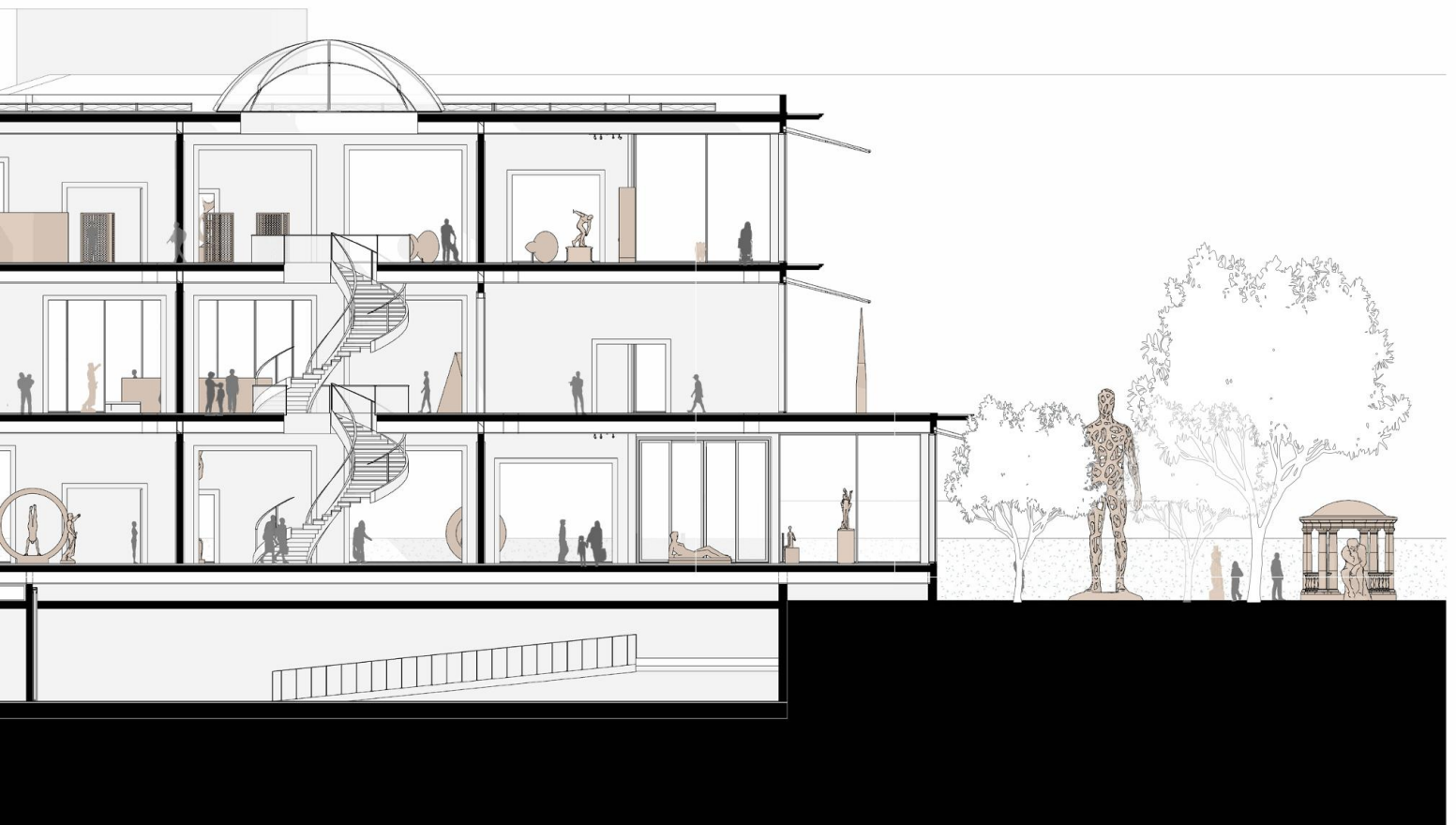
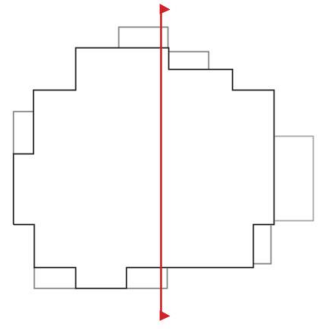


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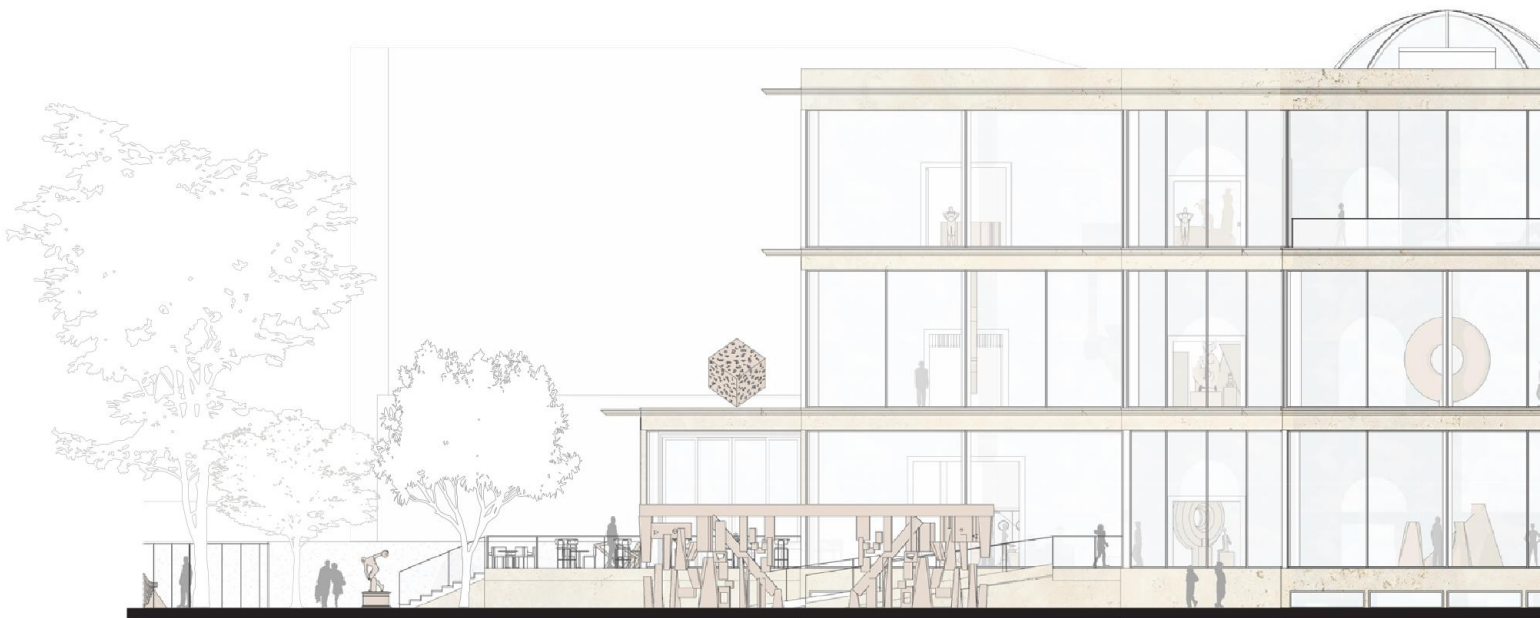


SECTION B-B WITH SHADING

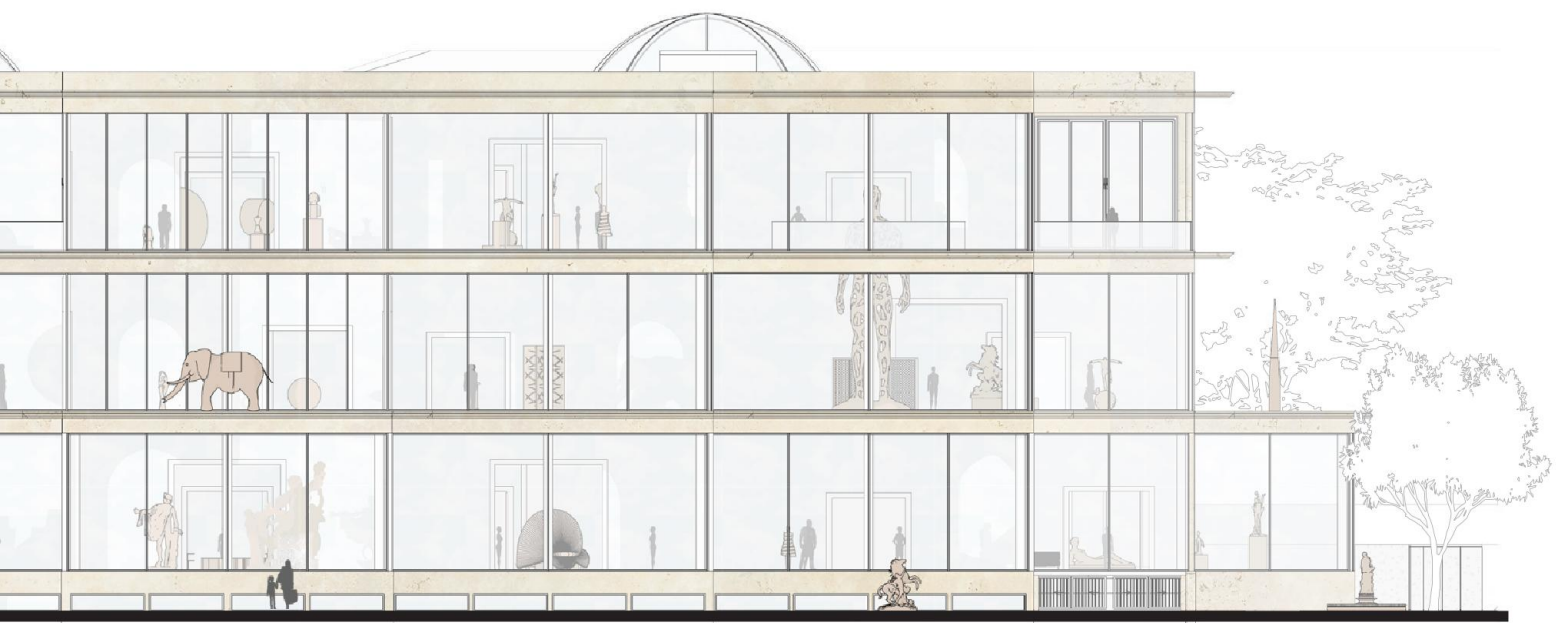




NORTH FACADE



0 2 4 10 20 m 1:200

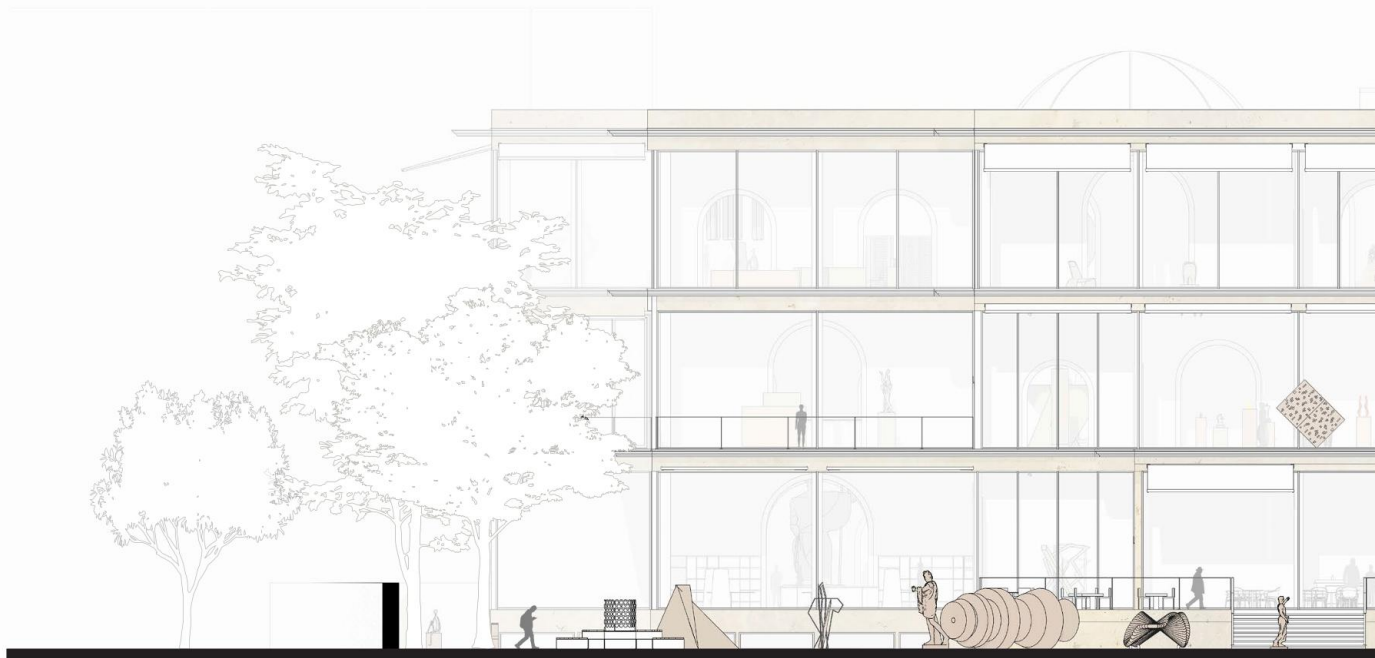


EAST FACADE





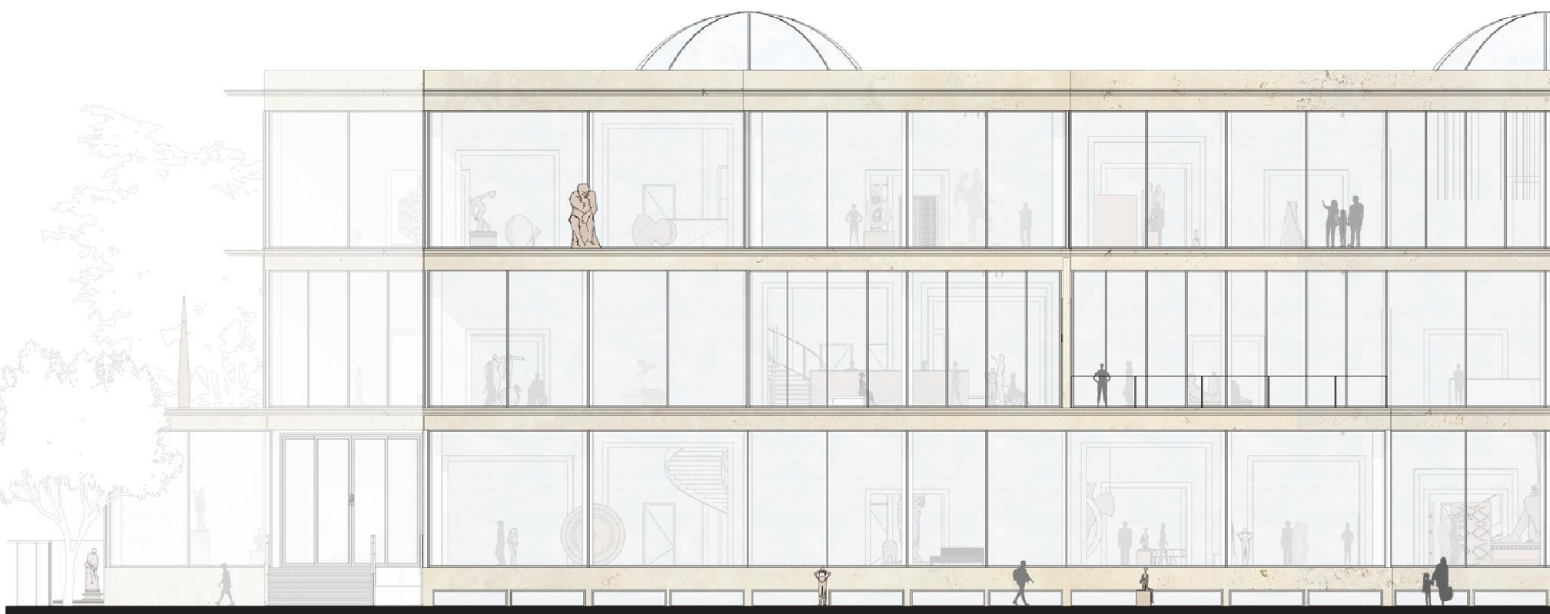
EAST FACADE WITH SOLAR SHADING



0 2 4 10 20 m 1:200



SOUTH FACADE



0 2 4 10 20 m 1:200



WEST FACADE





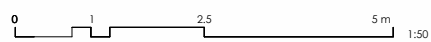
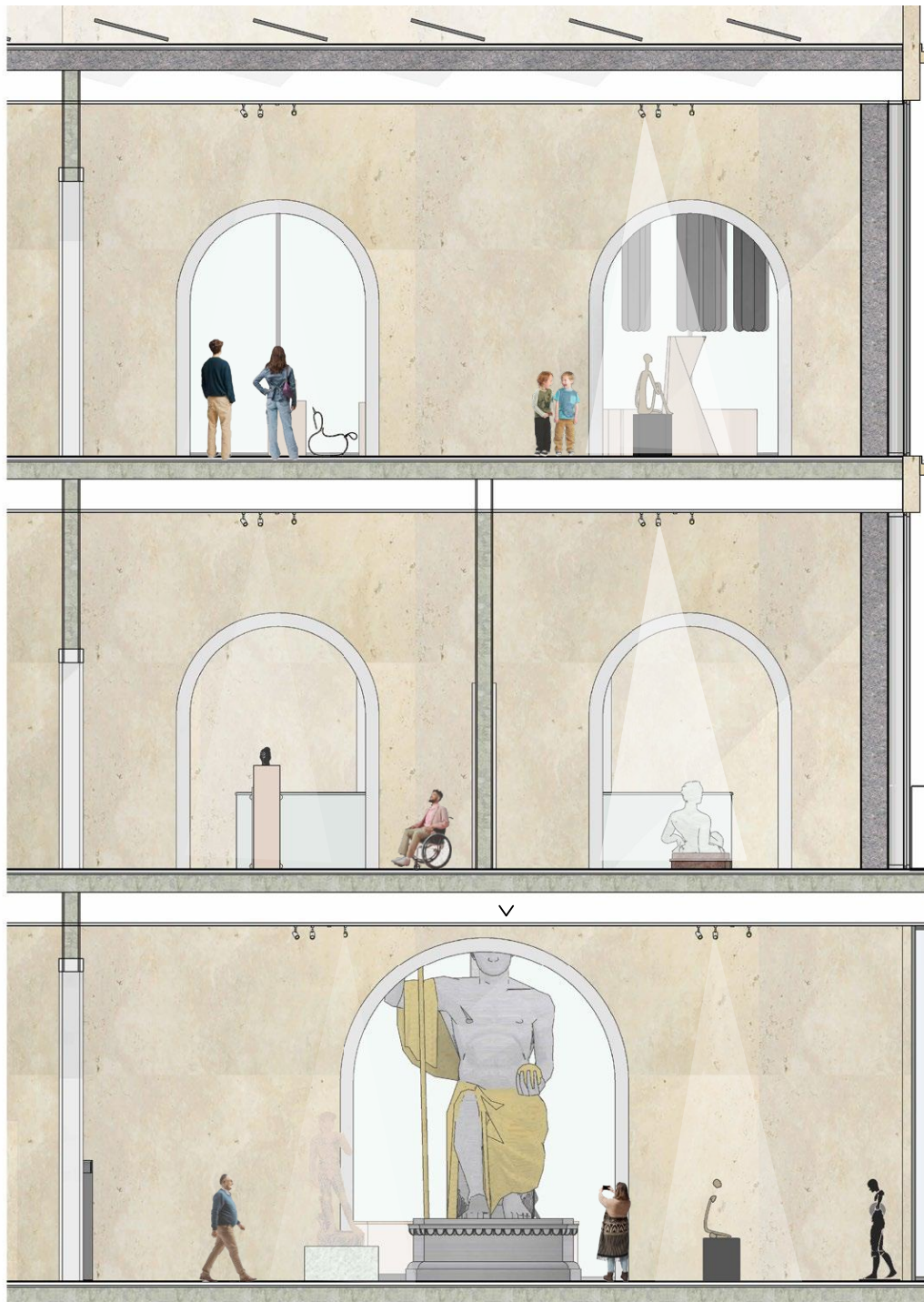
WEST FACADE

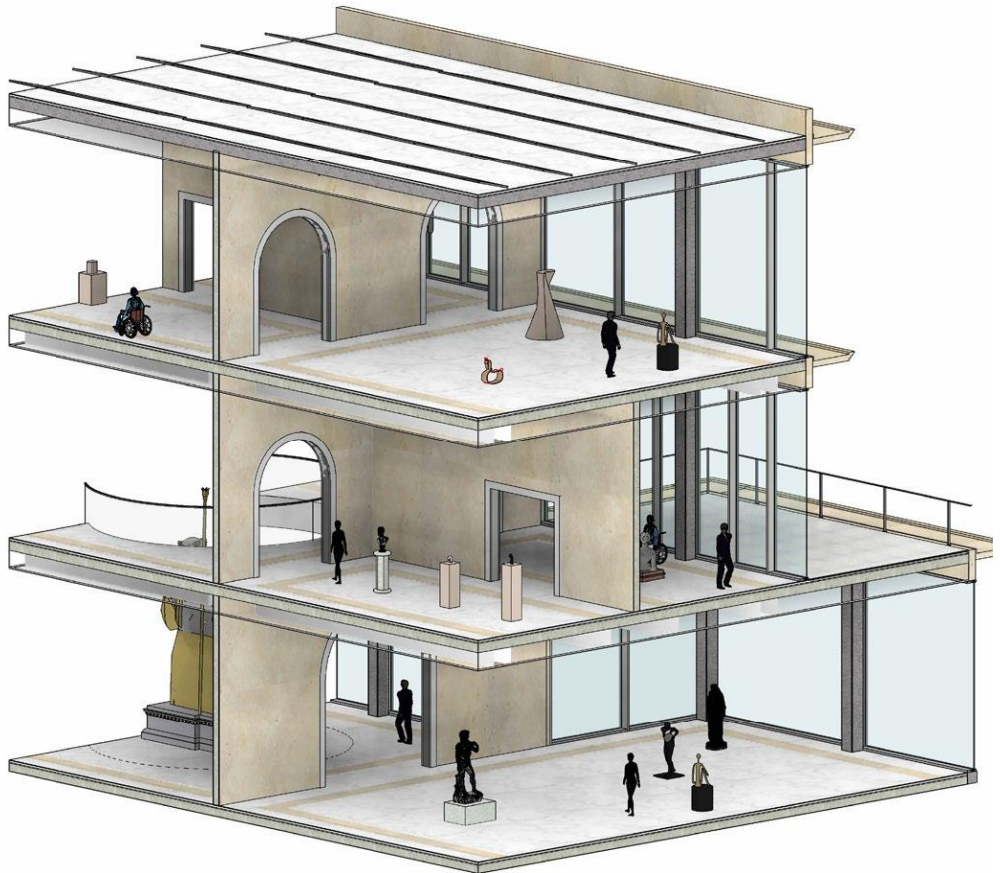
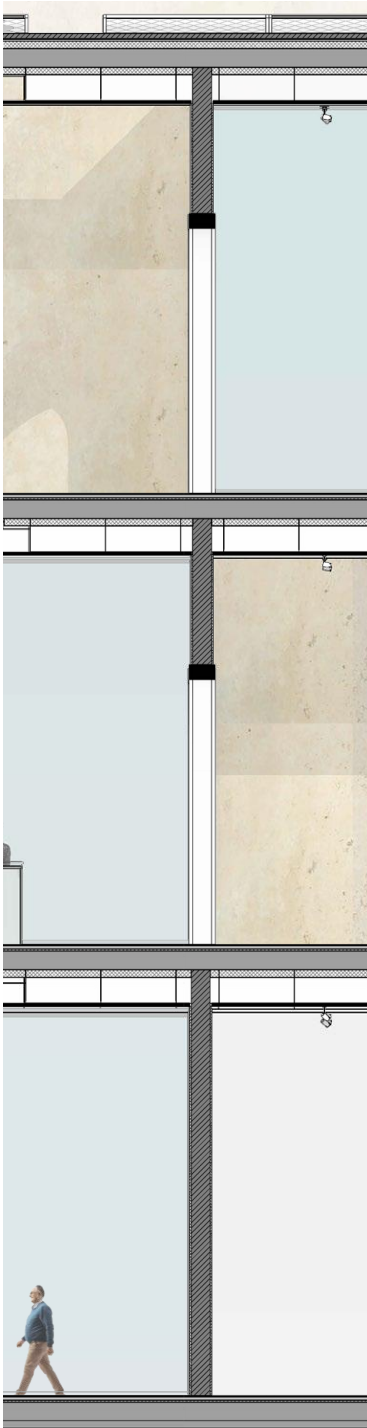




FACADE FRAGMENT INTERIOR

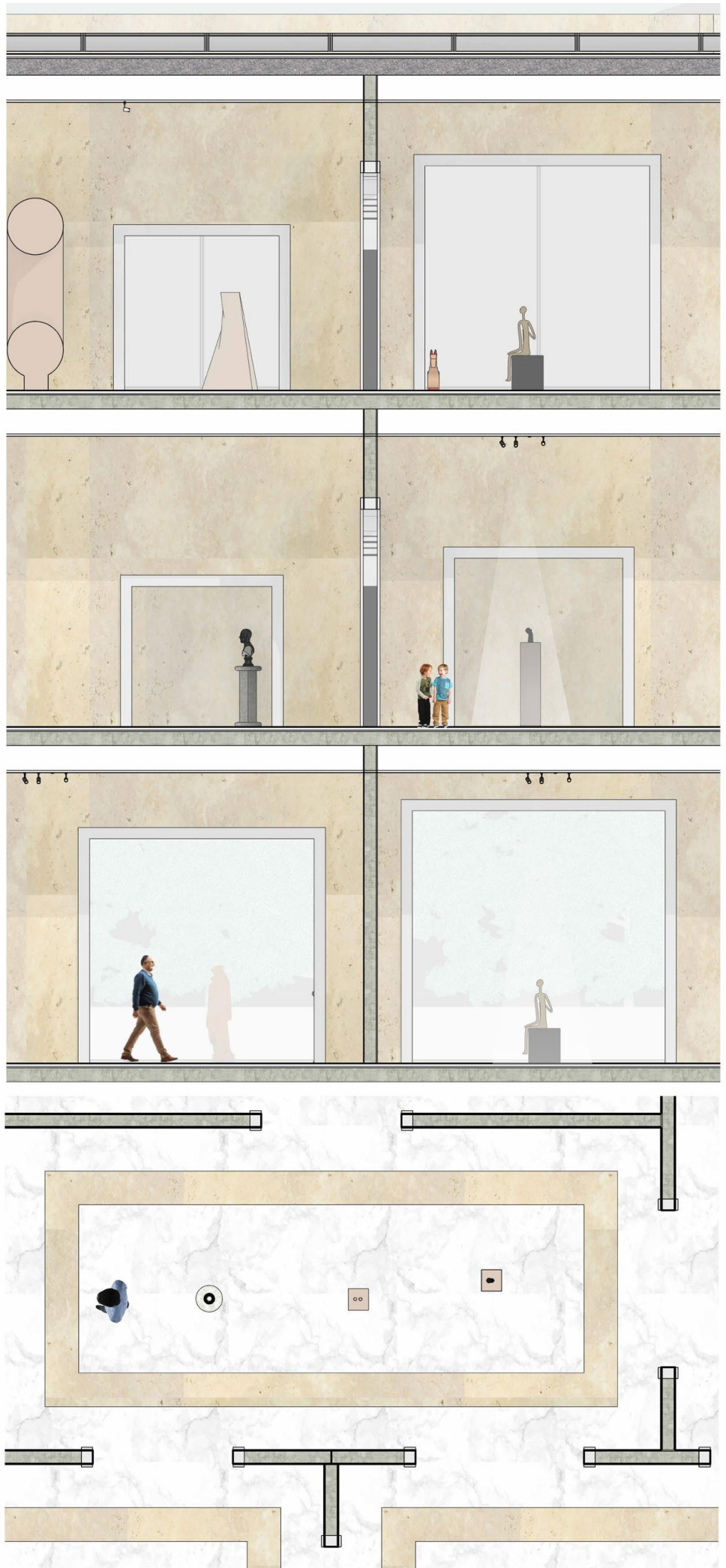
Arched doorways

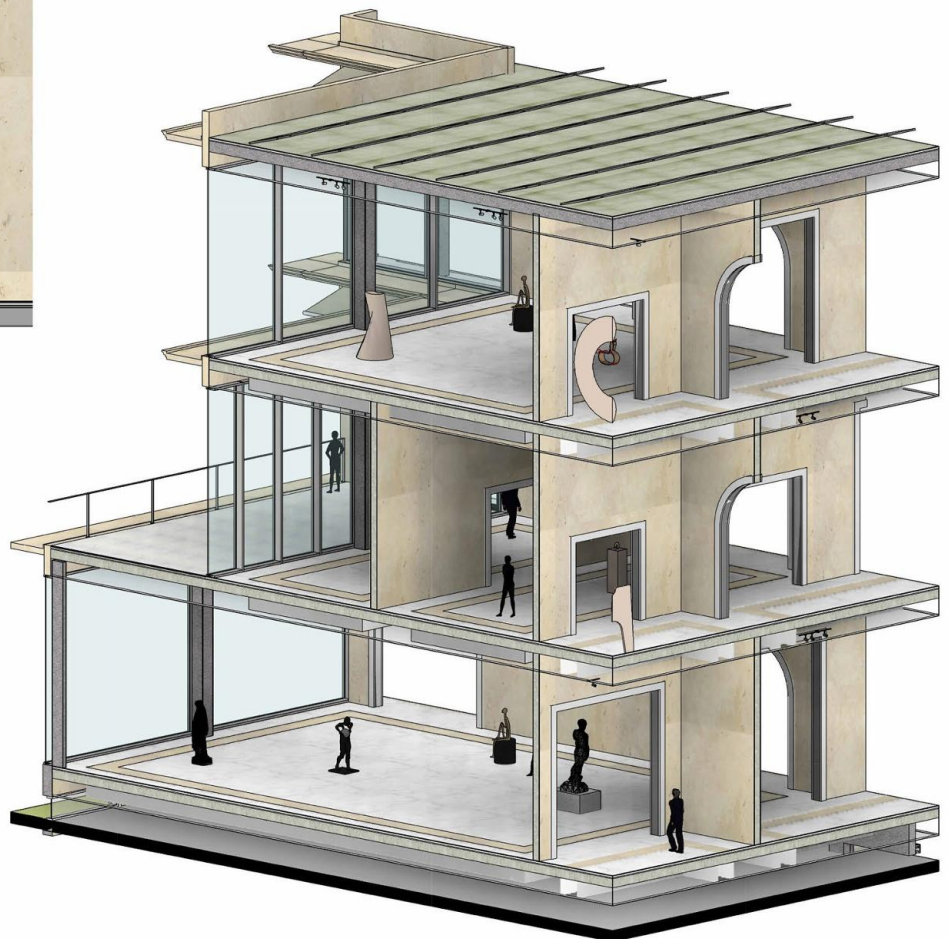




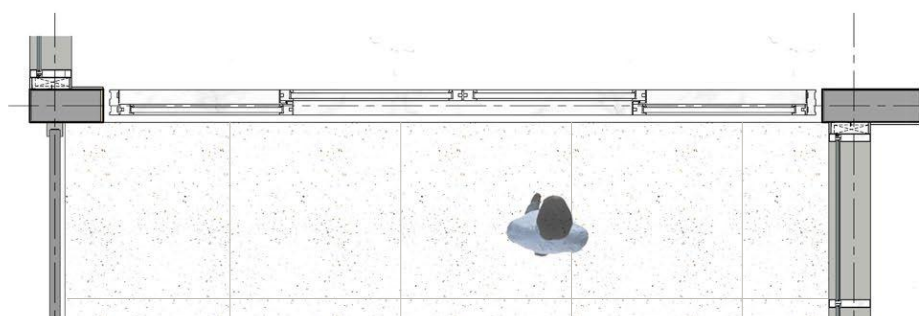
FACADE FRAGMENT INTERIOR

Squared doorways





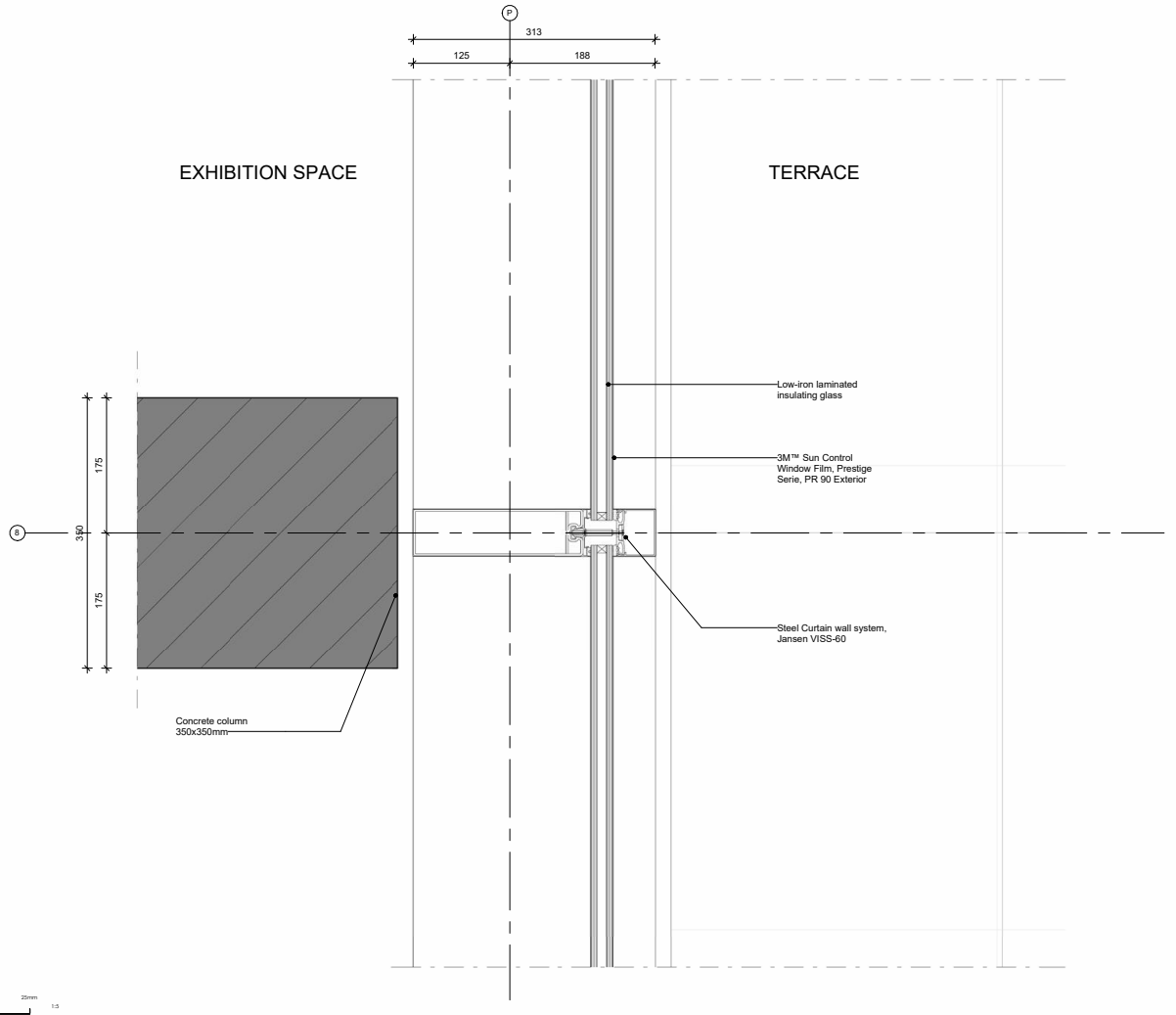
FACADE FRAGMENT EXTERIOR



0 1 2.5 5 m 1:50



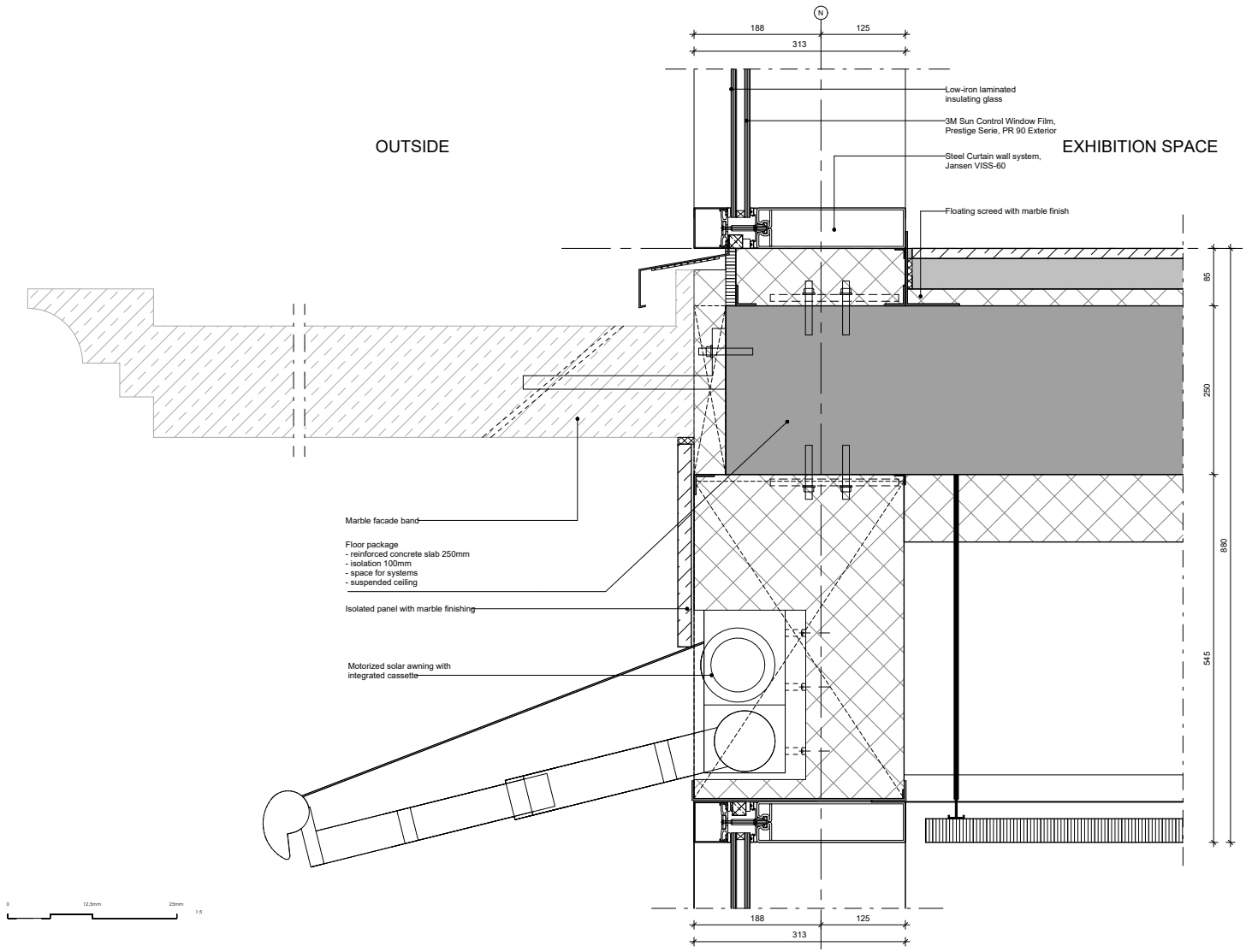
DETAIL H01



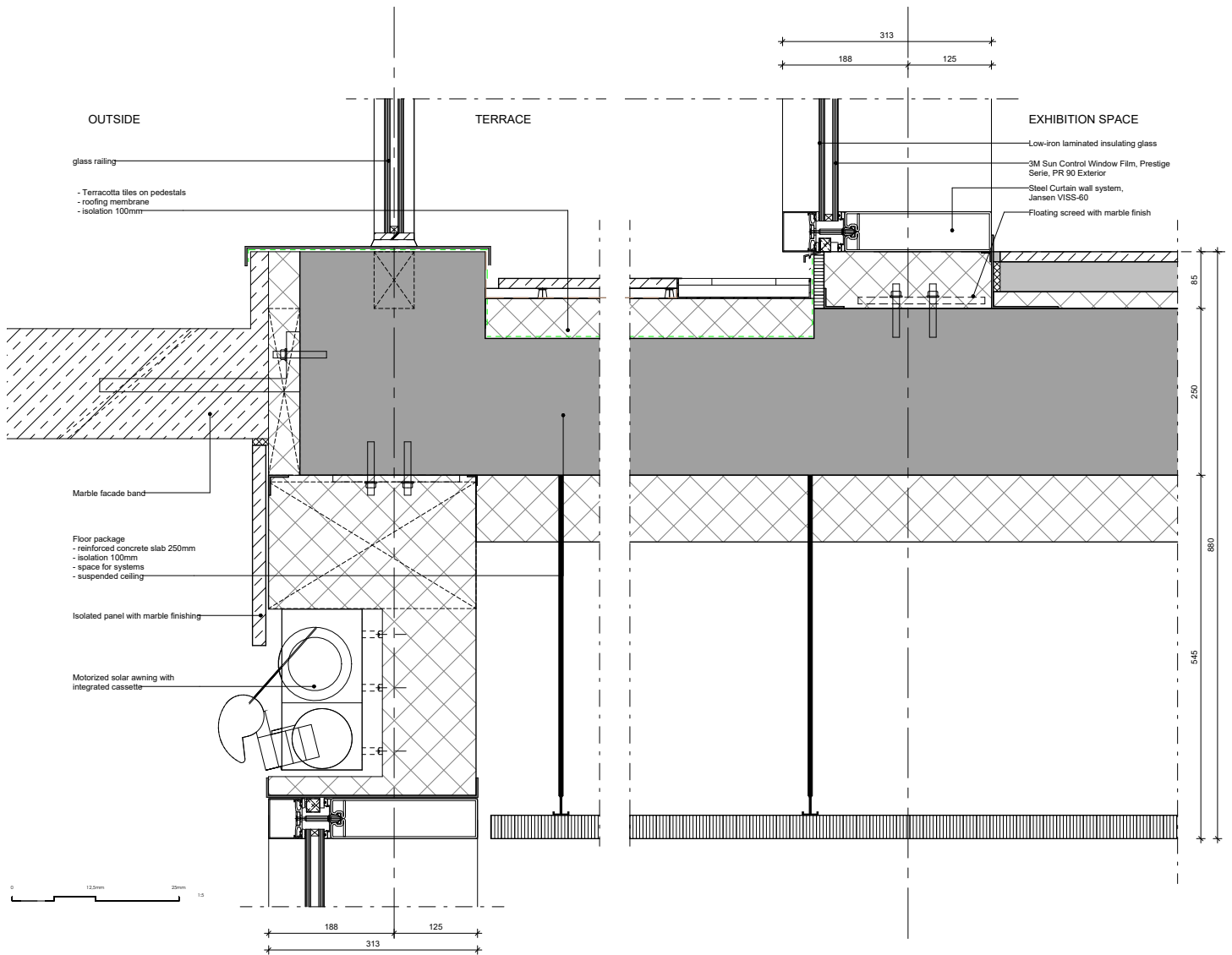
DETAIL V01

OUTSIDE

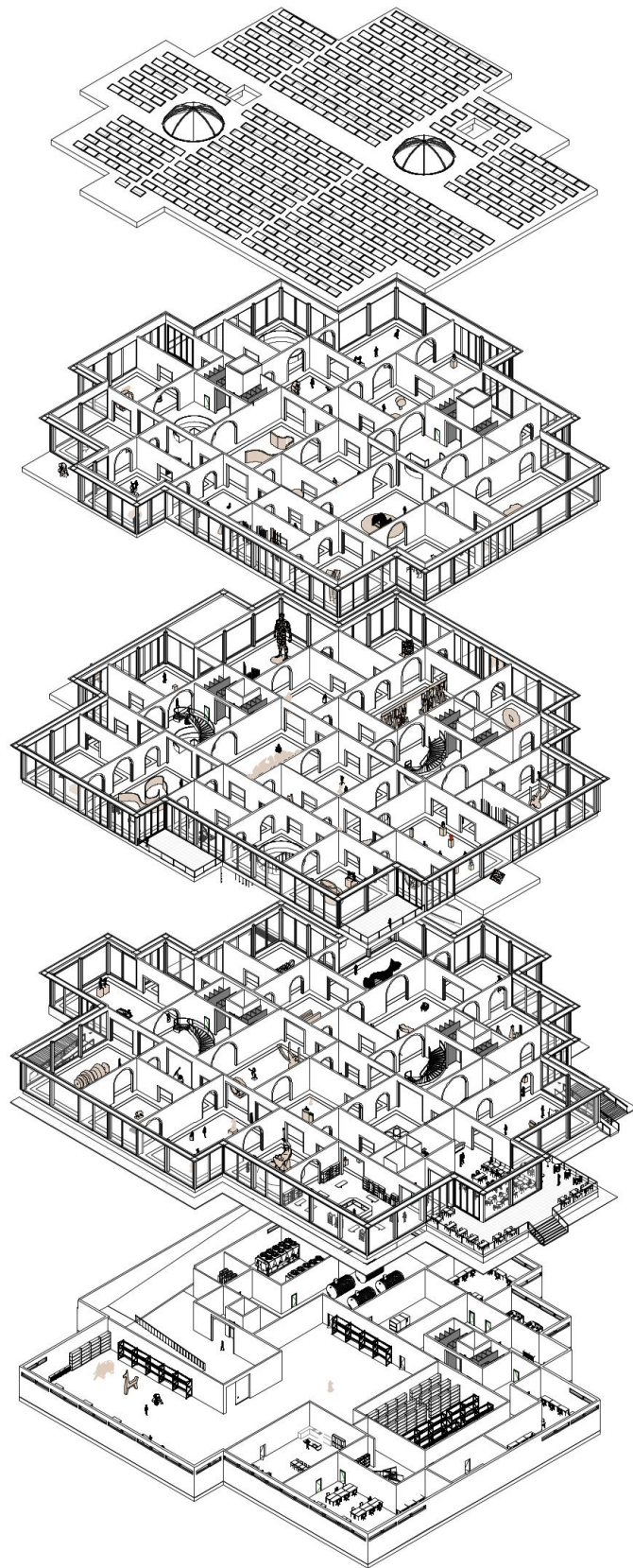
EXHIBITION SPACE



DETAIL V02



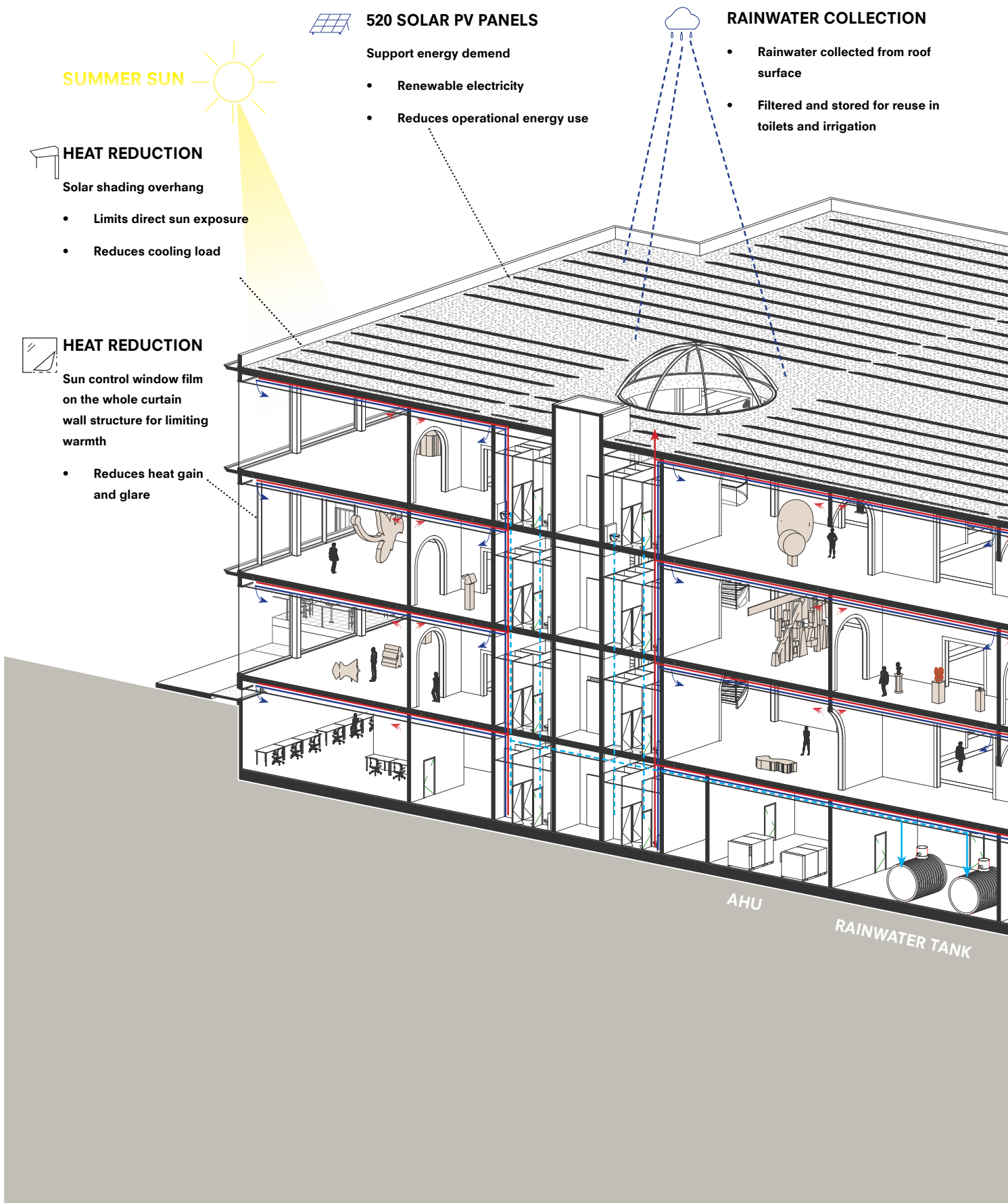
EXPLODED VIEW



EXPLODED VIEW ON SITE







SUMMER SUN



HEAT REDUCTION

Solar shading overhang

- Limits direct sun exposure
- Reduces cooling load

HEAT REDUCTION

Sun control window film on the whole curtain wall structure for limiting warmth

- Reduces heat gain and glare



520 SOLAR PV PANELS

Support energy demand

- Renewable electricity
- Reduces operational energy use



RAINWATER COLLECTION

- Rainwater collected from roof surface
- Filtered and stored for reuse in toilets and irrigation

AHU

RAINWATER TANK

 **GREEN ROOF**

- Passive roof cooling
- Retains and filters rainwater
- Supports biodiversity

DAYLIGHT STRATEGY

Controlled natural roof lightning



ACTIVE SUN SHADING

Retractable fabric screens

- Active sun shading for curtain wall

WINTER SUN



THERMAL MASS

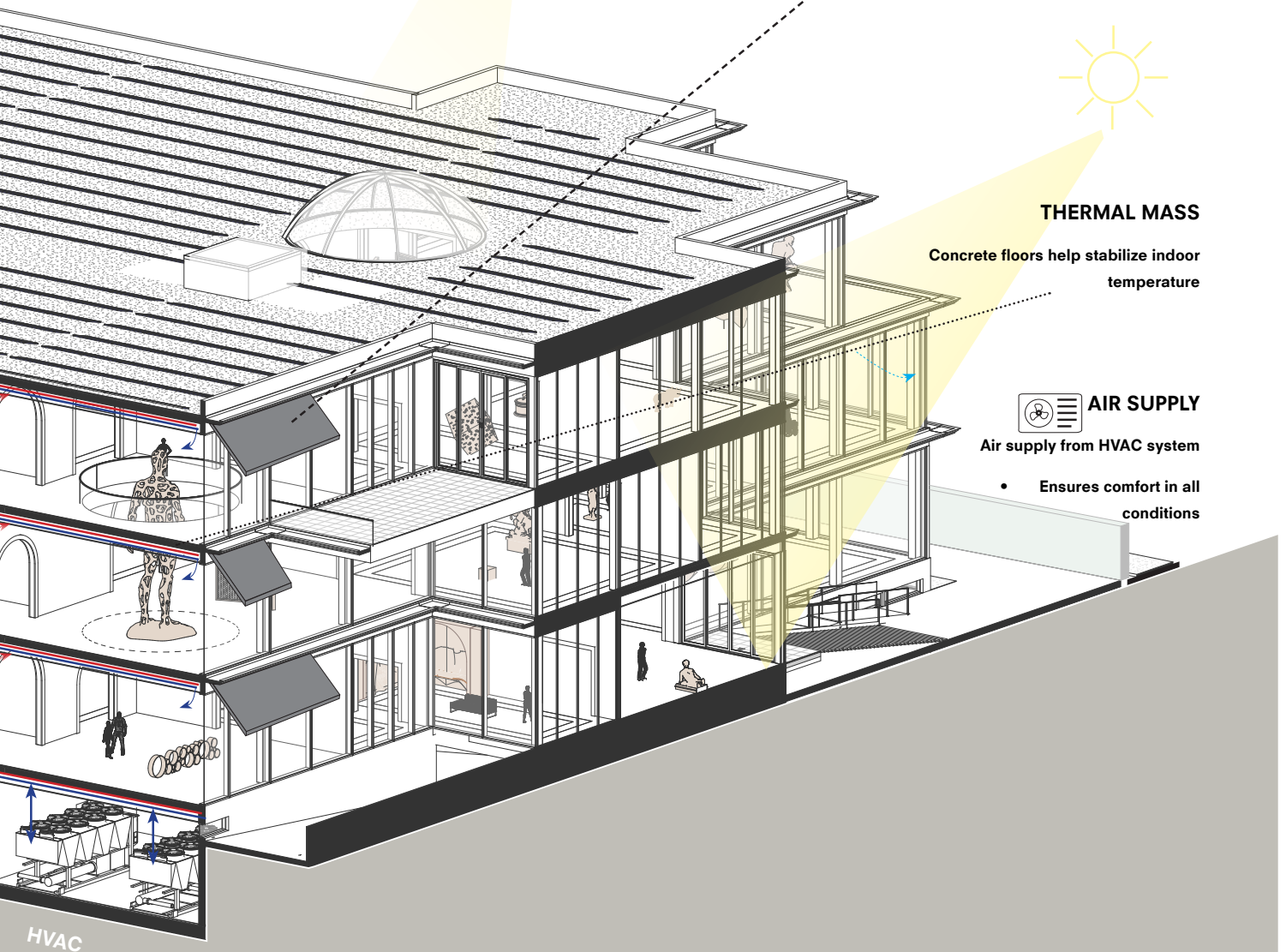
Concrete floors help stabilize indoor temperature



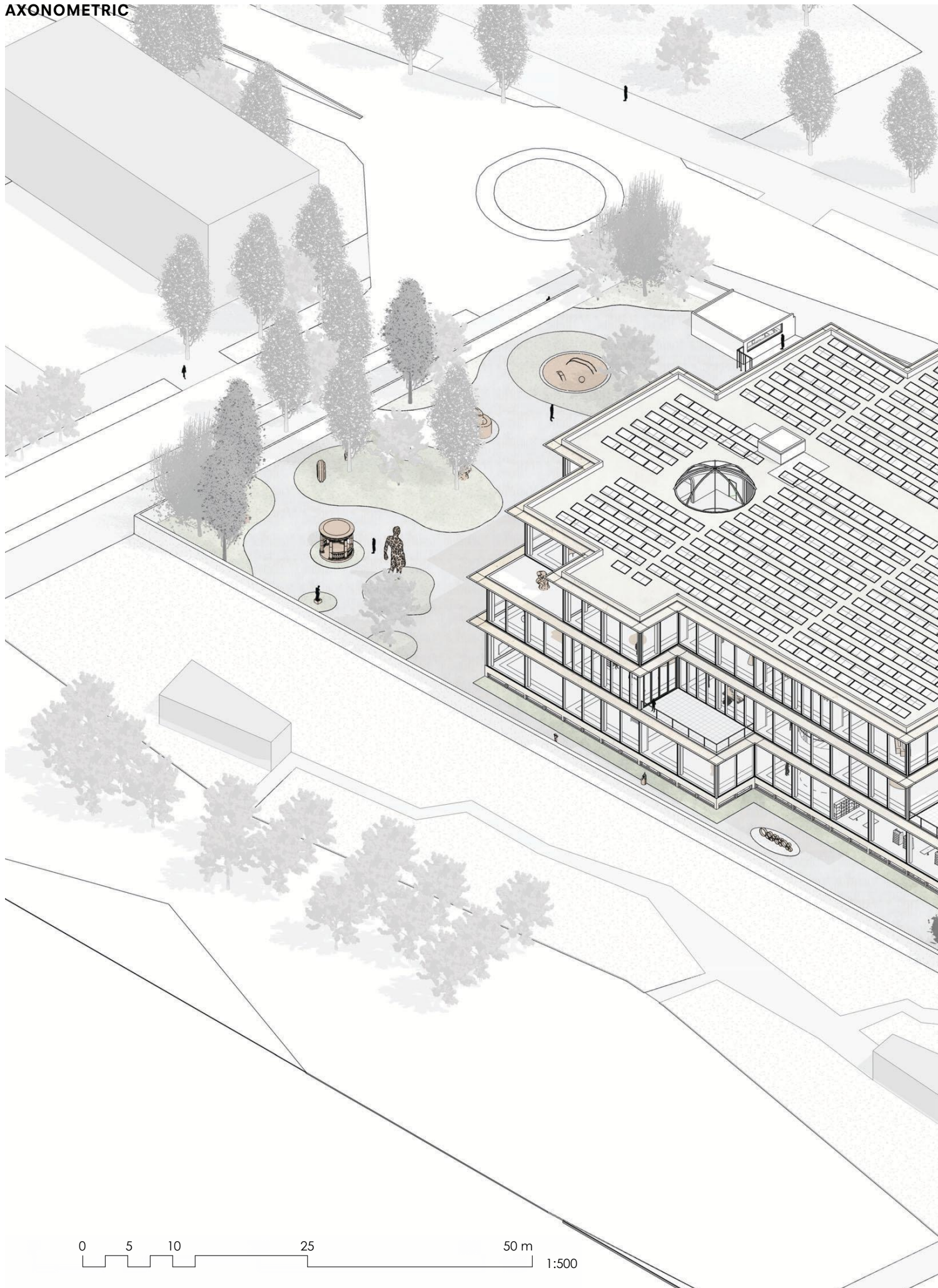
AIR SUPPLY

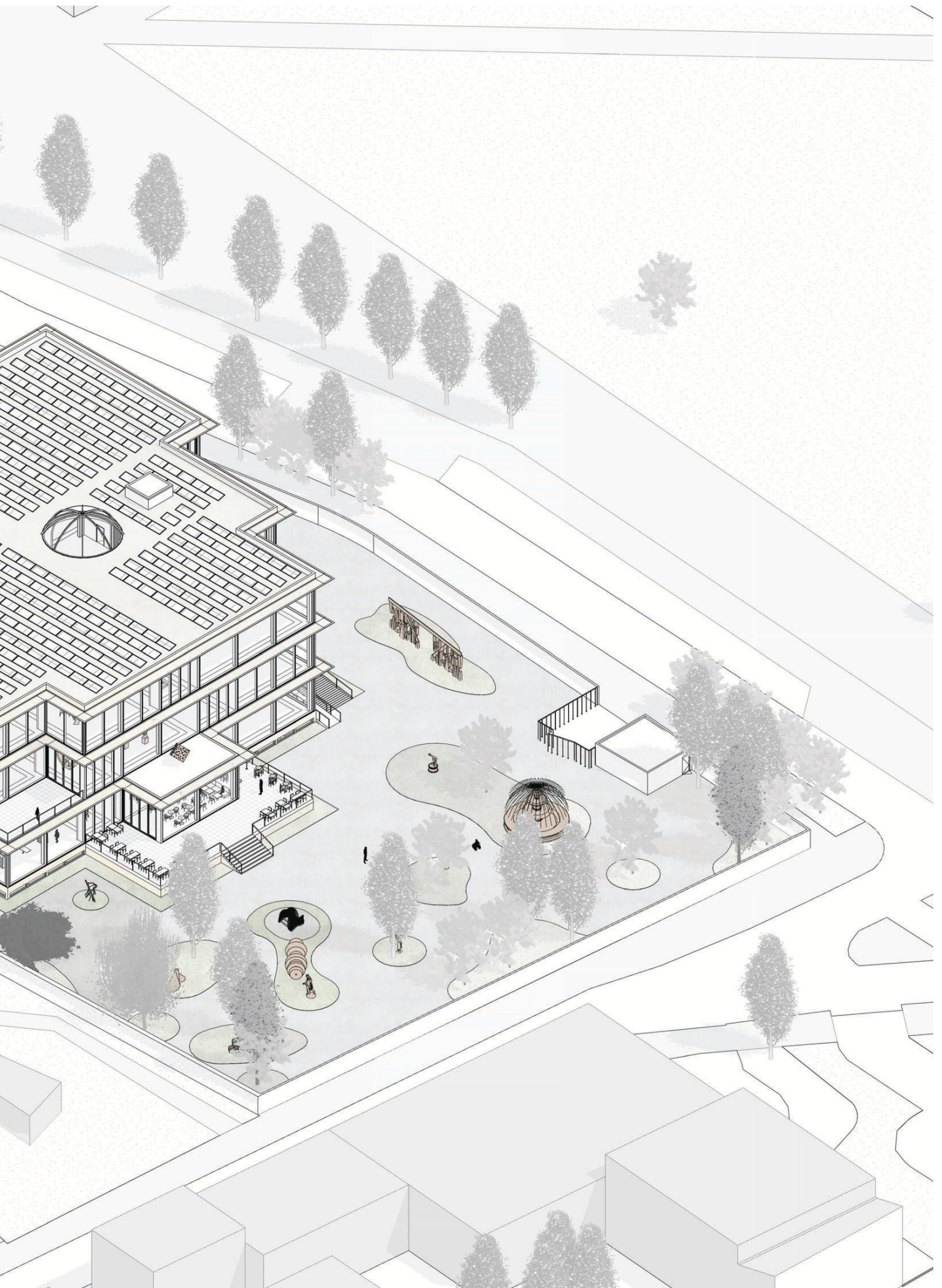
Air supply from HVAC system

- Ensures comfort in all conditions



AXONOMETRIC





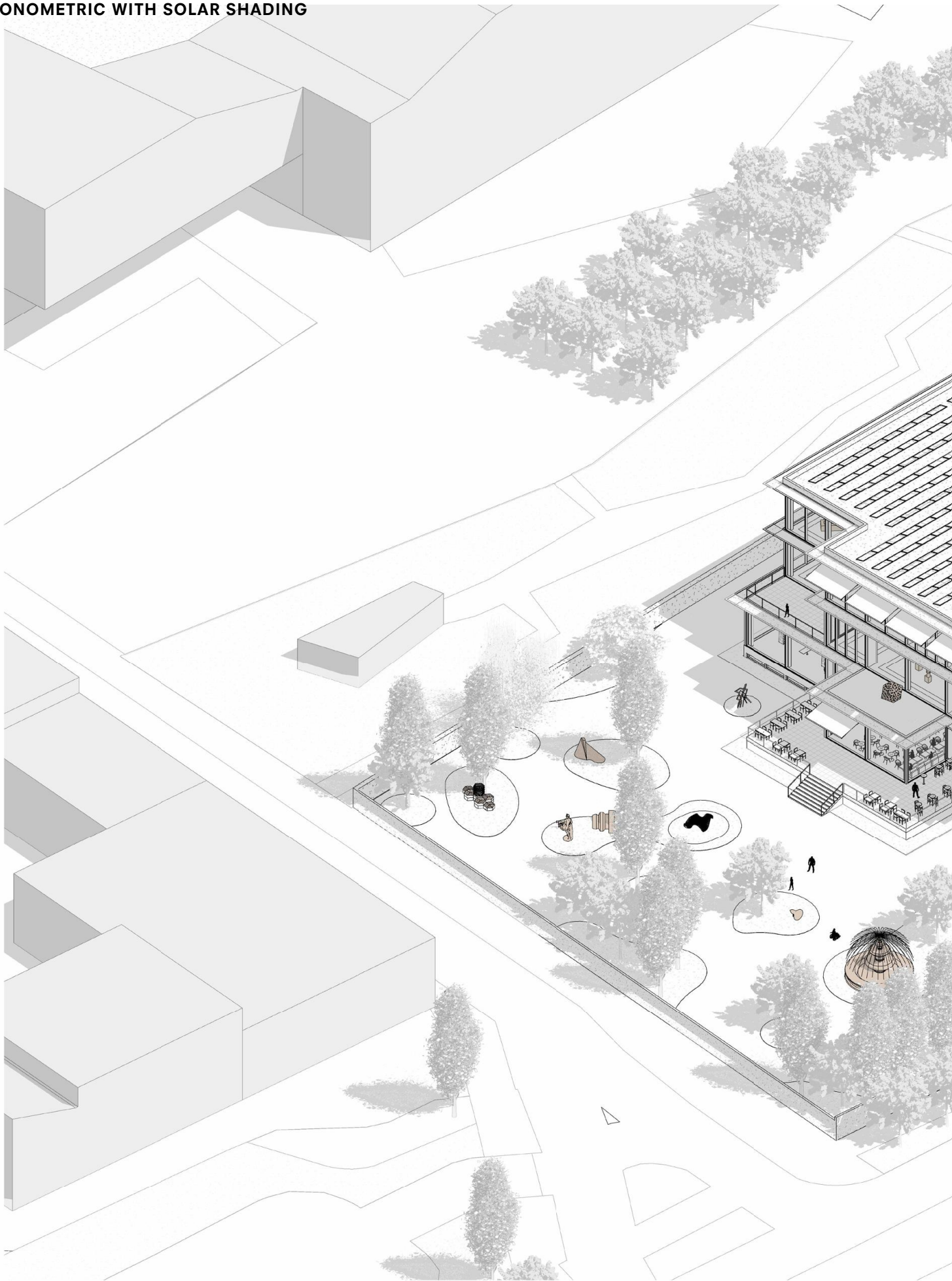
AXONOMETRIC



0 5 10 25 50 m 1:500

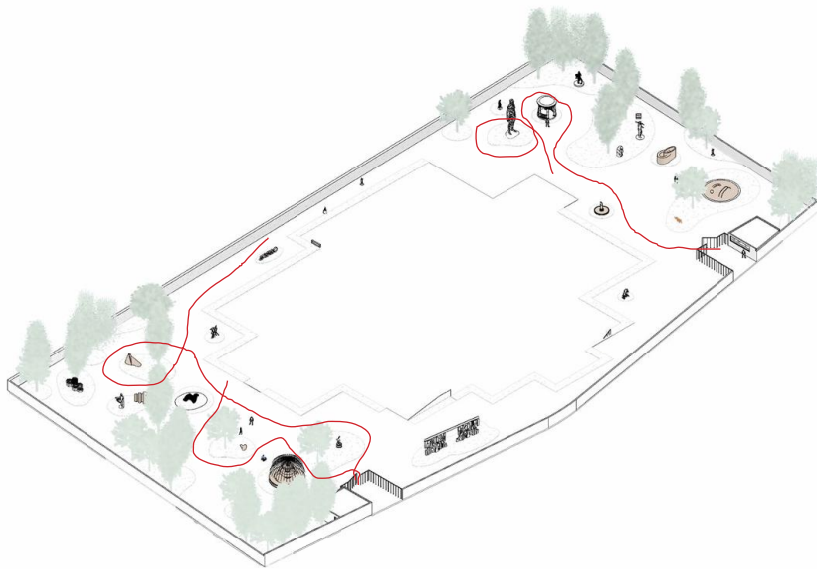


AXONOMETRIC WITH SOLAR SHADING



0 5 10 25 50 m 1:500





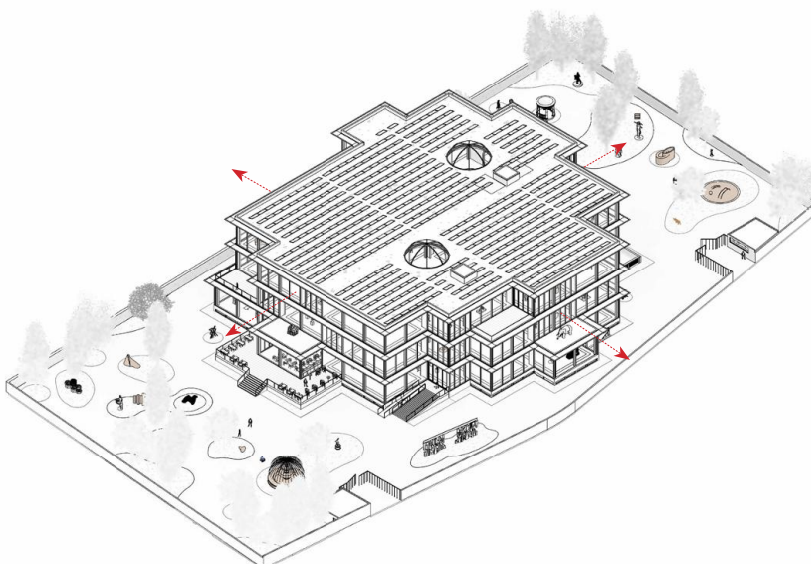
SCULPTURAL PRESENCE IN THE LANDSCAPE

A sculpture garden activates the site. Sculptures, nature and movement come together to begin the experience before entering the museum.



A NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE

A network of interconnected exhibition spaces allow multiple routes and the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover their own sequence of experiences.



TRANSPARENCY REVEALS CULTURE

The transparent facade opens the museum to the city. Behind the facade is visible what kind of exhibition space is behind it, creating a strong connection between exterior and interior.

CONCLUSION

07

CONCLUSION

This project investigates how museum architecture can provide visitors with the opportunity to establish their own non-linear narrative through the experience of classical and contemporary sculpture. Rather than treating architecture as a neutral space for exhibitions, the project explored how spatial organization, circulation, materiality, and architectural form can actively shape the way visitors perceive, interpret, and engage with art.

The research demonstrated that museum architecture communicates narratives through a variety of circulation strategies. While many museums continue to rely on linear routes and clearly defined sequences of spaces, others apply hybrid or non-linear organizational circulation that provide visitors with greater freedom of movement and exploration. However, classical and contemporary sculpture are often still displayed separately through curatorial and spatial strategies. As a result, opportunities for visitors to establish their own relationships between works from different artistic periods can remain limited. This project therefore investigated how a non-linear spatial organization, combined with the integration of classical and contemporary sculpture within a shared architectural framework, could encourage visitors to construct their own interpretations and narratives through movement, exploration, and choice.

The resulting proposal, *Sculpting Time*, is based on the principle that visitors should not be guided through a single prescribed route, but should instead be given the freedom to construct their own journey through the museum. Non-linearity became the primary design driver of the project and informed decisions across multiple scales, from the organization of the site to the sequencing of spaces and the relationship between galleries.

A fundamental aspect of the design is that the museum experience begins before entering the building itself. The sculpture garden functions as the first chapter of the visitor journey and extends the exhibition into the landscape. Upon arrival, visitors are immediately presented with different possibilities. They may choose where to enter and to move through the sculpture garden before entering the museum, proceed directly into the building, or explore the site in their own way. This initial moment of choice establishes the

central ambition of the project: allowing visitors to actively shape their own experience from the very beginning. The sculpture garden therefore acts not only as an outdoor exhibition space, but also as a spatial introduction to the non-linear narrative that continues throughout the museum.

Within the building, circulation becomes the primary architectural tool through which non-linearity is expressed. Rather than organizing the museum as a sequence of galleries connected by a single route, the building operates as a network of interconnected spaces that continuously offer alternative paths and perspectives. Visitors are encouraged to explore, revisit spaces, and establish their own relationships between artworks. The experience therefore unfolds through movement, curiosity, and personal choice rather than through a predetermined sequence.

The exhibition areas are purposely constructed to follow a uniform spatial framework. Because classical and contemporary sculptures are displayed throughout the museum, adaptability became an important design principle. Instead of separating artistic periods into different zones or assigning specific gallery types to specific collections, the project allows sculptures from different periods to coexist within the same spatial environment. This creates opportunities for unexpected encounters and encourages visitors to discover connections between works that might otherwise remain separated. By integrating both collections throughout the building, the museum transforms the relationship between classical and contemporary sculpture from a curated comparison into a personal process of discovery.

The galleries are designed using a consistent architectural language, while the connecting spaces vary in dimension and form. Some are narrower and more enclosed, while others open up and provide longer views through the building. These differences create variation along the route through the museum and help organise the sequence of spaces. Movement between galleries therefore becomes an important part of the overall spatial experience.

The dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture is further reflected in the architecture of the building itself. Contemporary qualities are expressed through the transparency of the curtain wall facade and the openness of the overall building. At the same time, classical architectural principles are reinterpreted through the use of marble flooring, marble detailing, facade bands, and arch openings. Rather than reproducing historical architecture, these elements are translated into a contemporary architectural language. The variation in the arches, both in scale and form, introduces a degree of playfulness and unpredictability that complements the project's ambition of creating a non-linear experience while maintaining a connection to classical architectural traditions.

Sculpting Time demonstrates that museum architecture can actively contribute to the interpretation of art. By combining non-linear circulation, visitor choice, spatial exploration and a dialogue between classical and contemporary architecture, the project transforms the museum visit into an individual journey of discovery. The museum becomes more than a place for displaying sculpture, it becomes a framework through which visitors can create their own narrative and establish personal relationships between artworks, architecture and time.

The project addresses the research question through the use of a non-linear spatial organisation. By providing multiple routes through the museum and presenting classical and contemporary sculptures within the same architectural setting, visitors are able to encounter artworks in different sequences. As a result, the relationships between works are not fixed but depend on the path taken through the building. The museum therefore offers multiple ways of moving through and understanding the collection rather than presenting a single predetermined route.

IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This project showed that non-linearity is not only related to circulation. At first, the focus was mainly on creating different routes through the museum. During the design process, it became apparent that these choices also influence the way visitors engage with the collection. Instead of following a predetermined sequence, visitors can move through the building in different ways and form their own connections between artworks, spaces, and historical periods.

The project also examines how classical and contemporary sculpture can coexist within the same museum environment. These types of collections are often displayed separately, either by period or by curatorial concept. In this proposal, they are brought together throughout the building. As visitors move through the museum, comparisons between works from different periods emerge naturally, allowing multiple interpretations to develop.

An important consideration for the future of the museum is the relationship between the permanent collection and contemporary artistic production. While the classical sculptures provide a stable foundation, contemporary works could change over time through temporary exhibitions, commissions, or site-specific installations. This would introduce new perspectives and keep the collection in dialogue with current artistic developments.

The sculpture garden offers particular opportunities in this regard. Positioned at the beginning of the visitor journey, it could accommodate temporary works that change regularly. As a result, returning visitors would encounter a different experience before entering the museum itself.

The introduction of new contemporary works would also support the central concept of the project. The classical collection provides continuity, while contemporary additions create new relationships between artworks and spaces. Rather than presenting a fixed interpretation of sculpture, the museum would remain open to change and ongoing reinterpretation.

REFLECTION

Looking back on the graduation process, the final project differs quite significantly from where it started. At the beginning of the Complex Projects studio, the initial preference was actually to design an airport. Looking back, choosing the museum typology proved to be the right decision, as it challenged architectural thinking in a completely different way. Instead of focusing primarily on efficiency and logistics, the project required consideration of experience, interpretation, and how people move through and engage with space.

When the Fondazione Prada site was assigned, the museum typology had already been chosen, but the exact direction of the project had not yet been determined. During the trip to Milan, an increasing interest emerged in the relationship between historical and contemporary architecture throughout the city. Walking through Milan, it was striking to see how buildings from completely different periods coexist within the same urban environment. Combined with Prada's interest in continuously reinterpreting tradition through innovation, this observation became one of the key starting points for the project.

Initially, the project focused on the dialogue between classical and contemporary culture. This eventually led to the decision to design a sculpture museum, as sculpture naturally exists within both traditions. However, as the project progressed, it became difficult to translate this idea into architecture. Although the dialogue between classical and contemporary sculpture remained an important ambition, it did not provide enough direction for the spatial organization of the building.

A major turning point came after the A2 phase. Through discussions with tutors and further design research, it became clear that the strongest aspect of the project was not the dialogue itself, but the way visitors could experience that dialogue. This shifted the focus towards non-linearity. From that moment onwards, non-linearity became the primary design driver of the project, while the relationship between classical and contemporary sculpture became one of the themes explored within that framework.

One of the biggest challenges was figuring out how to translate non-linearity into an actual spatial experience. Early in the design process,

the idea of a large central atrium was explored because it seemed like a logical way to connect different spaces and routes. However, the more these proposals were developed, the more apparent it became that the atrium was doing the opposite of what was intended. Because visitors could immediately see and understand a large part of the building, the experience became more predictable and less exploratory. It took quite a few iterations before it became clear how non-linearity could be created through the sequencing of spaces rather than through a single organizing element.

As a result, a large part of the design process involved testing different spatial organizations, circulation systems, entrances, and sequences of spaces. A significant amount of time was spent drawing, modelling, and reworking plans in an attempt to understand how non-linearity could be experienced rather than simply represented. Looking back, this became one of the most valuable lessons of the project.

Another challenge was translating the concept into drawings. The idea behind the project was often easier to explain during discussions than through plans, sections, or diagrams. While the drawings could show circulation routes and spatial relationships, they did not always communicate the intended qualities of the spaces. This remained a recurring issue throughout the design process and required several revisions before the drawings and the concept became more closely aligned.

The project changed considerably during the year. Some ideas that seemed important in the early stages gradually disappeared, while others became central to the final proposal. The design developed through a process of testing, feedback, and revision rather than following a fixed direction from the outset. The project also strengthened an interest in museum design and cultural architecture, particularly in relation to circulation, exhibition spaces, and the display of sculpture.

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Throughout the year, I explored different research methods, design strategies, and ways of thinking about architecture. The process involved a lot of testing, revisiting decisions, and refining ideas. Although this was sometimes challenging, it taught me a great deal and helped me grow as a designer.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow students for the many discussions, sparring sessions, and moments of feedback throughout the year. These conversations often helped me look at the project from a different perspective and further develop my ideas.

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