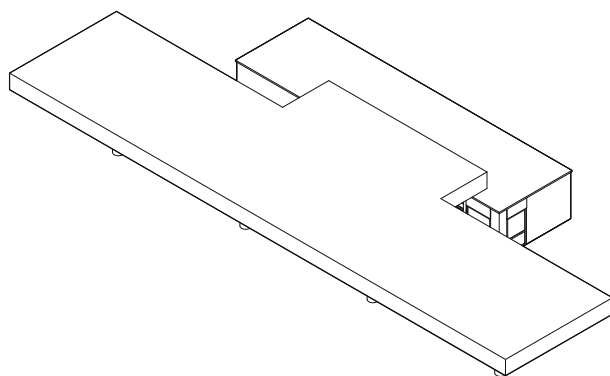


DESIGNING
A HERITAGE & ARCHITECTURE
CENTRE TRANSITIONAL IDENTITIES
FOR THE
VULNERABLE
YOUTH OF
AMSTERDAM
NORTH

MSC GRADUATION
RESEARCH REPORT

LUUK VERBAAL
15 - 1 - 2025



DESIGNING
A YOUTH
CENTRE
FOR THE
VULNERABLE
YOUTH OF
AMSTERDAM
NORTH

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INTRODUCTION

The youth of Amsterdam North is facing serious challenges. Many live in poverty and economic uncertainty. They find themselves in stressful home environments and have limited access to education, sports and recreation (Meester, 2022). Along with a lack of meeting places and social exclusion, these issues create loneliness among many young people in Amsterdam North. External oppressions make the situation of these young people even more difficult. Gentrification threatens their stability and connection to their local community (Hutak, 2021). Furthermore, they often bear the brunt of social exclusion and stigmatization, and they are restrained to hang out in public spaces (Martineau, 2006). If the vulnerable youth of North continues to be driven out of their home environment, and are constrained of having social engagement in public spaces, where will they find a safe space for crucial social interactions?

This research will investigate the contribution to the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North, through a youth centre. This not only implies the coping with stress and loneliness, but also in developing empowerment among oppressed youth, to improve group bonding and mental health (Bemak et al., 2005). Especially for at-risk youth with a less capacity for self-improvement and empowerment, assisted development is crucial (Lott & Rogers, 2005). How can a youth centre contribute to this empowerment of at-risk youth? What is the role of architecture in designing a youth centre? To answer these questions, this research addresses

the complex debate about the architectural role of designing a communal space for young people. To understand the complexities of this topic, the debate will be divided into three categories. (1) The societal dimension connects the centre with larger societal ideas, such as education and the participation in the public realm. (2) The social dimension focuses on the notion of interaction, community building, and social engineering. (3) The spatial dimension examines the physical environment, and spatial strategies when it comes to flexibility, multifunctionality and appropriation. These categories create a clear framework for the analyzing of a wide spectrum of perspective about the architecture of youth centres.

Subsequently, a set of architectural parameters will be introduced to establish a more tangible framework for the assessment of case studies. These parameters belong to one or more categories of the youth centre dimensions, thus linking the debate about design strategies to the specific case studies. The parameters used for assessing the projects are: (1) Transparency, (2) invitingness, (3) multifunctionality & flexibility, (4) concatenation, (5) appropriation, (6) activation, (7) contemporaneity, (8) attractiveness. With this framework of criteria, a variety of case studies will be conducted. Findings of these studies will be fed back to the debate about the role of architecture, in designing a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Youth in Amsterdam North face a range of challenges that hinder their development and well-being. A significant amount of young people live in poverty, coupled with low levels of educational attainment and restricted economic opportunities (Meester, 2022). Furthermore, a majority of youth experiences feelings of loneliness, an issue that can have profound consequences during adolescence. Loneliness and social detachment at this stage can result in chronic isolation, mental health struggles such as depression and anxiety, and even suicidal ideation (Loades et al., 2020). Furthermore, when combined with economic instability, loneliness can fuel the formation of marginalized groups, potentially leading to criminal behavior (Krijnen, 2017).

To address these challenges, creating a space that fosters community and empowerment is crucial. Youth centres offer a promising solution by providing environments where young people can build social relations, have access to facilities, and develop a sense of belonging. According to Bemak, such spaces are crucial in tackling social inequalities and promoting mental well-being through programs of youth empowerment (2005). Additionally, youth centres that actively engage young people in initiatives for social change contribute to broader advocacy efforts and community development (Jennings et al., 2006).

However, external pressures further complicate the situation for vulnerable youth in Amsterdam North. Gentrification displaces low-income families, disturbing community networks and young people's ties to their neighborhoods (Hutak, 2021). Simultaneously, societal stigmas label youth who gather in public as problematic, associating them with delinquency and disorder. These perceptions often clash with increasing demands for orderly and quiet residential areas, resulting in exclusion (Martineau, 2006). To counter these challenges, the design of youth centres must provide inclusive and empowering spaces that resist such marginalization. Primarily, it should offer a public space where young people in Amsterdam North feel invited and free.

The role of architecture in creating these spaces is central to this thesis. This research explores how a youth centre's design can shape its users' experiences, fostering inclusion and empowerment. It focuses on three core dimensions - societal, social, and spatial - to examine how architecture can respond to the needs of Amsterdam North's youth. Historically, youth centres have served various societal roles, from spaces for formal education during the Social Constructivist movement to more democratic environments fostering informal learning and creativity (Müller et al., 2015; di Nallo, 2014). This thesis will explore how contemporary youth centres navigate the balance between collective

participation and individuality, situating themselves within broader societal frameworks such as education and public life (Avermaete, 2018).

Social engineering has been a recurring theme in youth centre design, balancing control and freedom. Swedish youth centres of the mid-20th century illustrate this duality, offering recreational activities while subtly guiding youth behavior (Mack, 2015). In contrast, participatory approaches, such as Peter Hübner's self-built centres, emphasize community engagement and ownership (Jones, 2015). How can such strategies empower youth through participation and spatial appropriation?

The physical design of youth centres has evolved significantly, from rigidly defined layouts to adaptable, multifunctional spaces. Historical examples, such as the Withywood Youth Centre and Frank van Klingerens projects, showcase the value of flexible design in fostering creativity, spontaneity, and inclusivity (Robertson, 2009; Bergen et al., 2003). How can spatial strategies enhance the functionality and inclusiveness of youth centres for diverse activities and needs? By analyzing these dimensions and relating them to design criteria and principles, this research aims to develop a framework for designing a youth centre that empowers vulnerable youth in Amsterdam North.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can a youth centre and its architectural design approach contribute to the support of vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North?

- 1** *What is the importance of a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North?*
- 2** *What is the role of architecture in designing a youth centre, within the societal, social, and spatial dimension?*
- 3** *What parameters should be taken into consideration when assessing the design of a youth centre?*
- 4** *What are different design strategies for a youth centre concerning the design parameters?*
- 5** *How can the established design principles be applied to the design of a youth centre in Amsterdam North?*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand what design strategies are applicable for a new youth centre in Amsterdam North, the problems and needs of these young people will be examined. The municipality of Amsterdam (Meester, 2022) and the GGD (2023) published a factsheet and map about the socio-economic, physical and mental situation of these youth. Hang and Jost (2023) explain the cause and effect of loneliness among youth. Martineau talks about the problems concerning 'hangjongeren' in Amsterdam North, and how they are inflected by wider social (2006). Massih Hutak talks about the circumstances in Amsterdam North when it comes to gentrification and urban identity (2021). To respond to these oppressions, the theory of youth empowerment is introduced. Pearrow defined this as "a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power, to take action and improve their life situations" (2009). She presents a Teen Empowerment (TE) Program to prove youth have the capacity to make meaningful change in their community. Such an empowerment programme could be included in the design of a new youth centre.

In their book, Pietsch and Müller set up the stage for a versatile debate about the role of the architect in designing a youth centre (2015). They introduce topics as pedagogy, flexibility, appropriation and identification. Subsequently, various essays and

articles present their perspective in this debate. Mack examines the Swedish youth centre as a space of both social control and personal freedom, serving as a tool for social reforming, while providing a site for the social live of disadvantaged youth (2015). Jones introduces a different way of social engineering, referring to the self-built youth clubs of Peter Hüber. They show the community building by actively involving the users in the design and building process (2015). Di Nallo touches upon this idea of 'democratic architecture', advocating for a unfinished building: "Not the architecture, but the programme and the life of the youth will determine its atmosphere." (2014). Frank van Klingeren sees this idea of 'imperfect architecture' as a means for the 'ontklontering' of Dutch society, creating spaces for the spontaneous and unexpected (Bergen et al., 2003). Equally, Robertson recognizes the flexible use of the Withywood Youth centre, by creating an uninterrupted space (2009). Furthermore, Avermaete introduces the notions of collectivity and individuality, stating that the youth centre could either participate in the public realm, or actively stand out (2018). Reid explains how participation in a contemporary trend, can make the youth "feel contemporaneity and learn to live as people of the future" (2002).

To link these theories and positions to concrete design approaches, various articles will be used to create a

set of design criteria. This framework of parameters will than be used to assess the architecture of existing youth centres. In the early 20th century, Russel already pointed out the importance of a transparent and inviting building for a boys' club: "The passer-by should always be able to see at a glance what is happening inside." (1908). Robertson elaborates on the topic of invitingness by means of a bustling and cheerful character: "The entrance should look like a busy hotel: bright, accessible, attractive and at all times visible from the road." (2009) Furthermore she accentuate the importance of a multifunctional, uninterrupted series of linked spaces, to "capture young people's interest whilst simultaneously enabling discrete supervision." The self-built youth centres of Peter Hübner demonstrate

the value of activation, involvement in the design and building process (Jones, 2015). Hoebink emphasis the activities and programme of the centre, advocating for the activation of space around the building to facilitate play and sports (1966). Both Di Nallo (2014) and Bergen (2003) elaborate on the topic of appropriation and flexibility, by creating an unfinished building that provides the unexpected and spontaneous. Reid (2002) and Robertson (2009) address a contemporary architectural style, "to create a honest and functional environment, where the youth feels respected." Pietsch and Müller notice an increase in iconic architecture of contemporary youth centres, through expressive forms, materials, or colours. This idea of attractiveness and uniqueness is also seen as key points by 'Joined



Students lay the first bricks of the Youth Centre North by Frank van Klinger. Meeuwenlaan, Amsterdam Noord, 1962. Source: Nationaal Archief

DESIGNING A YOUTH CENTRE FOR THE VULNERABLE YOUTH OF AMSTERDAM NORTH

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Problems concerning vulnerable youth
in Amsterdam North and lack in meeting places



ARCHITECTURAL CONTRIBUTION

Introducing the youth centre
as a possible solution for youth empowerment



THEORETICAL RESEARCH

The role of architecture
in designing a youth centre



MAKING TANGIBLE

Introducing design parameters
for designing a youth centre



MEASURING

Conducting case studies
using the design parameters



COMPARE & CONCLUDE

Establishing design principles
by comparing the case studies



IMPLEMENT

Applying the design principles
to a specific case in Amsterdam North



DESIGN

Designing a youth centre
for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North

METHODS

Two research methods will be used to answer the research questions. Both research method will work hand in hand to gain a strong body of knowledge about the youth of Amsterdam North, the role of architecture in designing a youth centre, and understanding different design approaches to a youth centre.

LITERATURE STUDY

Firstly, existing studies and theories provide the framework of knowledge for the specific problems and challenges (e.g. loneliness, gentrification, and stigmatization) among the youth of Amsterdam North, and how they relate to the youth of Amsterdam North. Next, the concept of youth empowerment will be proposed as a possible solution of these problems. Secondly, a variety of essays and articles will be used, to examine the role of architecture in designing a youth centre. As shown in the theoretical framework, these theories and perspectives will be divided into three comprehensive categories (societal, social, and spatial). As such, a systematic framework will be constructed, to structure the complex debate about the architecture of a youth centre. By organizing the existing theories and perspectives, this research eventually aims to position itself in this ongoing debate, to understand the societal, social and spatial demands of a centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. To fully comprehend the design approach for such a youth centre, existing projects will be analyzed. Various articles and essays will help establish a framework of parameters to assess existing youth centres. These obtained parameters will then function as a assessment framework for the individual case studies.

CASE STUDIES

Several case studies will be done to understand the design approaches for a youth centre. The set of parameters will be used to assess different aspects of the design. The aim of the case studies is to understand the different ways in which a design can approach these parameters. The findings of the case studies will be linked back to the role of architecture in the societal, social and spatial realm of the youth centre. The case studies are:

- 1 ECAM Youth Centre - AgwA
- 2 Dynamo - Diederendirrix
- 3 Vias Cultural Centre - Estudio SIC
- 4 Waterloo Youth Centre - Collins and Turner
- 5 Rabot youth centre - Beel & Achtergael

By comparing each design parameter through these case studies, a set of design principles will be established. These principles will then be applied on a specific case in Amsterdam North, to see how they can contribute to the design of a new youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North.

RELEVANCE

There is an adequate amount of knowledge about the architecture of the youth centre. The found literature reveals a complex debate about the role of the architect in designing a youth centre. What is missing is a clear structure to grasp the different perspectives and a tool to assess the architecture of the youth centre. This research aims to create a framework for understanding the complexities that the design of a youth centre brings with it. Subsequently it will construct a framework of parameters to assess the architecture of existing youth centres. These parameters will help to comprehend different design approaches. By comparing various case studies through these parameters, a thorough comprehension of the different design approaches to a youth centre will be obtained. Finally, the relevance of these frameworks and comparison will be proved, by utilizing them in the understanding of the needs of a specific target group, in this case the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. The goal of this research is to construct a potential design approach for the centre for this target group. In this development, the knowledge gained will be used to help solving the problems concerning the youth of Amsterdam North, and assist in the empowerment they need by means of a new youth centre.



*What is the importance of a youth centre
for the vulnerable youth
of Amsterdam North?*

CHAPTER I

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH A YOUTH
CENTER

This chapter will answer the first subquestion: *What is the importance of a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North?* To answer this question, the challenges and issues that place young people in vulnerable positions will be outlined. Next, the concept of youth empowerment will be introduced to suggest a solution to these problems. Finally, it will describe how a youth center can help face challenges and oppression, and the application of youth empowerment.

1.1 Problems and oppressions among vulnerable youth in Amsterdam North

The youth in Amsterdam North face significant struggles. Almost a quarter lives in poverty, the level of education is remarkably low, and they have limited economic opportunities. (Meester, 2022). Additionally, 63% of young people in Amsterdam North experiences loneliness occasionally, and 25% frequently (GGD, 2023). In the developmental stage that youth are in, alienation could lead to chronic loneliness, social isolation, depression, anxieties and suicidal ideation (Loades et al., 2020). Hang and Jost state that loneliness is more prevalent during adolescence due to an increase in biological stress reactivity, which can alter social behavior and either elicit conflict and social withdrawal (fight-or-flight) or increase prosocial response (tend-and-befriend) (2023). Moreover, together with economic uncertainty, loneliness could encourage group formation and engagement in criminal activities (Krijnen, 2017).

Besides the socio-economic struggles the youth of Amsterdam North are dealing with, they also face other external oppressions. One of them is the current gentrification that is taking place. Families that live in poverty are being forced to move elsewhere. Housing prices are inflating, social housing is going on sale, and public community centers are being transformed into closed breeding grounds (Hutak, 2021). These effects

are putting more pressure on the youth and threaten their connection to local community.

Another issue the youth of North face is social exclusion and stigmatization. While the concept of hang-around youth is nothing new, they are more and more associated with violence and aggression. Martineau spend a substantial amount of time on studying the hang-around youth of Amsterdam North. He talks about the problems concerning hangjongeren, and how they are inflected by wider issues. He states that anger- and fear-based reactions to hangjongeren arise out of three ideological developments since 1960: (1) A highly individualized notion of personal freedom, (2) A desire for the social welfare state to solve social problems, and (3) The spread of an idealizes suburban aesthetic into other residential environments (2006). The result is a decrease in tolerance: Individualization shapes the way people conceive their personal freedom, frustrated reliance on the social welfare state to intervene and solve individual problems is increasing, and there is a growing expectation that residential environments be orderly, quiet and clean. Consequently, public spaces are becoming arenas where societal values, power and control are negotiated. These efforts to manage public spaces contradict the ideals of tolerance, inclusivity and freedom (Martineau, 2006).

1.2 Youth empowerment

To address the issues of social injustice, empowerment of the youth is critical: “Programs that support the development of empowerment, or take action to facilitate the ability to act in the face of oppression, have shown great promise in dimensions such as group bonding and improved mental health” (Bemak et al., 2005). Pearrow defines this empowerment as a process of increasing personal and political power so that individuals and communities can take action in improving their life situations (Pearrow, 2009). She presents a Teen Empowerment (TE) Program to prove youth have the capacity to make meaningful change in their community. The TE program facilitates a training process for young participants to build group relations, identifying key issues in the community, and developing strategic steps to address these issues. Such a critical empowerment program could potentially help the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam-North overcome their challenges and oppression, since it engages youth in actions that advocate change in organizational, institutional, and social policies and values (Jennings et al., 2006).

“Empowerment is associated with a number of positive outcomes, such as enhanced self-awareness and social achievement, improved mental health and academic performance.”

- Bemak et al., 2005

1.3 The benefits of a youth centre

To support the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam-North in facing their challenges and fostering empowerment, a youth center could provide crucial benefits. First of all it could play an important role in the fight against loneliness. Cacioppo describes loneliness as “a discrepancy between a person’s desired and achieved levels of social relations” (2015). These social relations are of even greater importance for youth, since they show more sensitivity to environmental stimuli and social information. A youth center can provide a safe environment to gather and build social relationships. By participating in a community, young people develop communication skills and reduce loneliness and social isolation (Millard, 2015).

In addition, a youth center can provide support and accessible facilities for disadvantaged youth. This can include financial or educational assistance, as well as offering affordable sports facilities or workshops. Essentially, it could offer stability and a safe space for vulnerable youth. In this safe and inclusive environment, at-risk youth can be encouraged to express their struggles concerning poverty, loneliness and anxieties. Subsequently, interaction with other members of the youth community can alleviate their problems and strengthen their sense of belonging (Millard, 2015). Lastly, a youth center could provide a low-threshold public space, designated as a meeting place for young people in Amsterdam-North, who are otherwise experiencing restrictions from having social interactions in public spaces. This can contribute to the fights against social exclusion and stigmatization, associated with the restraints of hang-around youth and the controlling of public space (Martineau, 2006).

When designing a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North, an empowerment programs can be taken into account to help them gain a voice against their challenges and oppressions. As such it could become a place where they together face loneliness, stigmatization and anxieties that come with poverty and social exclusion. Such an empowerment programme could function as a premise for design strategies of a new youth center in Amsterdam North. How can a youth center contribute to this empowerment of at-risk youth? What is the role of architecture in designing a communal space for youth? What can we learn from existing youth centers and their design approach? These are all questions that come to mind when designing a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. The following chapters will seek to answer these questions.



*What is the role of architecture
in designing a youth centre,
within the societal, social,
and spatial dimension?*

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE
IN DESIGNING A YOUTH
CENTRE

To understand how a youth centre could contribute to the empowerment of at-risk youth, the role of architecture in designing a youth centre must be considered. For the task of designing a youth centre entails the design of a communal space, a social condenser, and possibly even a school for culture. Moreover it should be a place where the youth feels safe, inclusive and engaged (Müller et al., 2015). The different design approaches to fulfilling this complex task, have constructed an intricate debate about the role of the architect in designing a youth centre. To understand the complexities of this topic and provide a clear, systematic framework, the discussions from existing literature will be divided in three categories: 1) The societal, 2) The social, and 3) The spatial. This research aims to lay out the different approaches, strategies and theories within these domains, to then take a position for the design of a centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. This chapter will answer the second subquestion: *What is the role of architecture in designing a youth centre, within the societal, social, and spatial dimension?*

2.1 The societal dimension

The societal dimension of the youth centre seeks the intersection with larger societal systems. Together with societal developments, this has shifted throughout the years. In the late 20th century, it was mainly seen as pedagogic architecture. During the Social Constructivism of the Russian Revolution, the youth centre was mainly utilized as a radical education tool (Müller et al., 2015). On the contrary, Marco di Nallo advocates a more democratic type of architecture, encouraging creativity and a informal education of youth. According to Di Nallo, free time should be interpreted with the idea of leisure, to “shape and mould one’s personality.” (2014). The idea of education through architecture still persist in contemporary youth centres, but the educational goals have changed.

Furthermore, the youth centre could be a means of supporting youth from economically marginalised families. An example is the association ‘Ons Huis’, that aimed to “give the working class an opportunity to develop in a general sense, something they would

not be able to do on the basis of their own resources.” (Broekhuizen, 2015). Similarly, for many civic-minded architects the youth centre offered a chance to guide the futures of young members of society and contribute to the political focus on this group. This resulted in the support of ‘organization-free youth’, to prevent them from falling into juvenile delinquency.

Another discussion in the societal domain is the positioning between notions of collectivity and individuality, between participation in the broader public realm and the desire to stand out. In The Mille Clubs Programme of 1960s France, this resulted in prototypes that were either autonomous in relation to its urban context, or entangled within the wider public domain of the town (Avermaete, 2018). Subsequently, a new youth centre in Amsterdam North will have to position itself within the wider society. What could be design strategies for such a centre when it comes to education, support and participation?

2.2 The social dimension

The social side of the youth centre mainly focuses on social engineering. In her essay, Jennifer Mack examines the Swedish youth centre as a space of both social control and personal freedom. Mainly being designed for problem youth, Swedish youth centres of the mid 20th century served as a key tool for social reforming. At the same time, young people could participate in a social life detached from school, to meet others around hobbies and leisure without explicitly perceiving its 'citizen nurturing'. (2015). Within youth work and the organization of youth centres, a similar contradiction is perceived between the notions of liberation and control. In contemporary developments, this process seems to shift to the latter (Müller et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the self-built Youth Clubs of Peter Hübner demonstrate the social engineering through participation and involvement: "the continuing social success of his centres shows that the process of rooting them in the neighbourhood and society has a permanent value." (Jones, 2015).

Frank van Klingeren approaches architecture as a social tool. He advocates for open flexible spaces, referring to the Greek agora as the ideal public space. In his youth centres he shows his aversion to the compartmentalization in Dutch society, which translates into the division of spaces as a social issue. His approach to the social domain of the youth centre, is by emphasizing on accessibility and encounter. This can be achieved by pursuing an imperfect architecture that offers opportunities for the youth to be appropriated (Bergen, 2003). What can we learn from existing youth centres when it comes to social control or personal freedom? How can appropriation and participation contribute to social-engineering?

"The youth centres often serve as a key site for the social lives of young Swedes, in particular those who have few other options."

- J. Mack, 2015

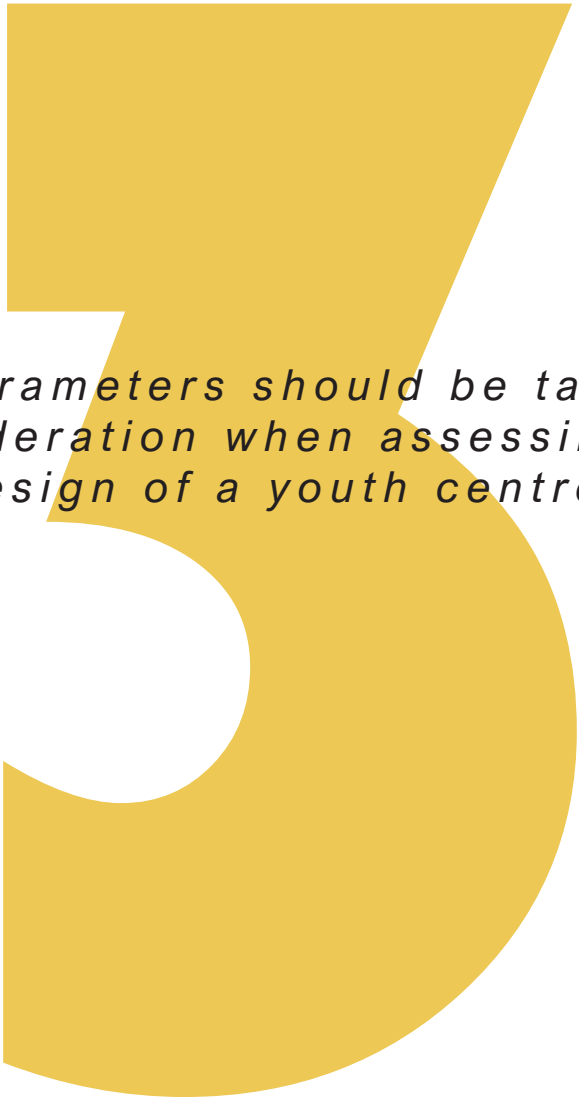
2.3 The spatial dimension

Many discussions regarding the youth centre are of spatial concern. In the early 20th century, there were very rigid ideas of how a youth centre had to be designed. An example is the manual for the design of boys' clubs, including a precise format of spaces, materials and even furniture to affect the behavior of youth (Russel, 1908). Shortly thereafter, early examples of a more flexible youth centre arose. The Sint-Antonius parish house in Utrecht of 1927, did not only have flexible designed spaces with folding partitions, but also a multifunctional roof that could be turned into a skating rink in winter (Müller et al., 2015). The Withywood Youth Centre of 1961 further builds upon the concept of flexibility and multifunctionality: "An uninterrupted series of linked spaces is created, within which social, practical, physical and cultural activities can be pursued in proximity and harmony." Withywood was able to accommodate seventy-two discrete activities (Robertson, 2009).

In his youth buildings, Frank van Klingeren pursued an imperfect and unfinished building to create space for the unexpected and spontaneous. In his architecture he aspired the 'ontklontering' of both architecture and society (Bergen et al., 2003). Equally, Hertzberger understood that the building (of a school) itself is not the action; "it stimulates actions and relates to the body. The building is not the game, but rather a means to make the game possible." Cuyvers' school on the other hand, deliberately focusses on a play of sight, instead of action (Driessche, 2003).



Withywood Youth Centre (1961). An uninterrupted space allows different activities to be pursued in proximity. Müller A. & Pietsch S. (2015)

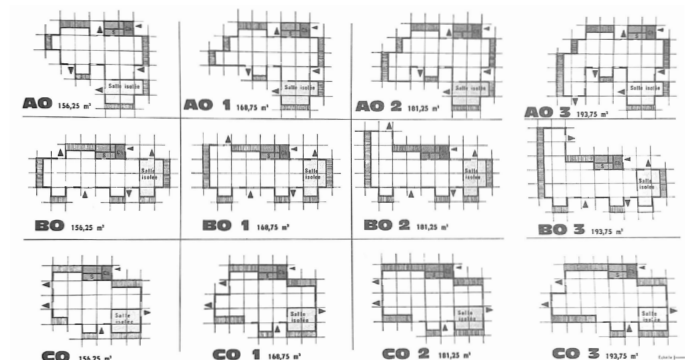
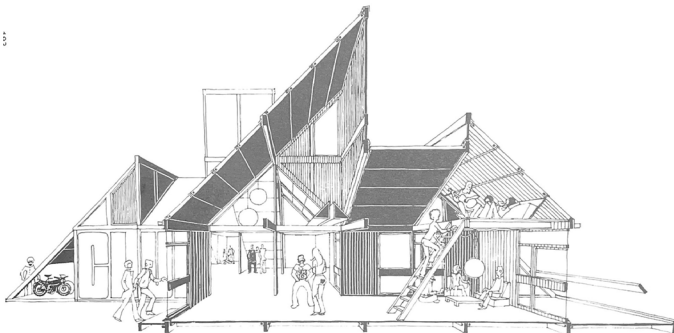


What parameters should be taken into consideration when assessing the design of a youth centre?

CHAPTER 3

YOUTH CENTRE DESIGN
PARAMETERS

To link the theories and positions from chapter 2 to concrete design criteria and approaches, this chapter will introduce several design parameters to create a framework for the assessment of youth centre projects and its design decisions. This framework will function as a tangible intermediate between the theory about the role of architecture in designing a youth centre, and the physical architecture of existing youth centres. The chosen design parameters are based on specific design criteria that are frequently being discussed in the theoretical debate about the architecture of the youth centre. This chapter will answer the third question: **What parameters should be taken into consideration when assessing the design of a youth centre?**



Club des Jeunes ED/Kit (1972). A self-build system, that allowed a large number of combinations and the youth could assembly themselves. Müller A. & Pietsch S. (2015)

1 APPROPRIATION

After the shock of the war, many Western European welfare states in the 1960s aimed break new ground in constructing new youth centres. These 'educational spaces' changed from a place of disciplined instruction to one that activated young people and strived for them to be free. (Müller, 2015). They were encouraged to appropriate their environments and express their character through autonomous activities. In the Netherlands, architects and artists specified the child as 'agents of creative appropriation of spaces'. Frank van Klinger used this idea to approach architecture as a social tool, with flexible appropriable spaces (Bergen, 2003).

2 ACTIVATION

Hoebink emphasis the activities and programme of the centre, and advocates the activation of the space around the building to facilitate play and sports (1966). Furthermore, having the main spaces on the ground floor helps activation and engagement, by creating an extension of the street. Peter Hübner's self-built youth centres demonstrate the potential for activation through engagement in the design and construction process. (Jones, 2015). Involvement in the design and building process of the centre creates identification with the building. The ED-Kit of the French Mille Clubs adopt a similar approach. Involving them in the architecture and construction process would activate them to work together and create a sense of collectivity and community (Avermaete, 2018).

3 MULTIFUNCTIONAL 4 CONCATENATION

To enable a youth centre to be used in large variety of ways, multifunctional spaces are desired. By adapting spaces to various interests and age groups, inclusivity can be established. Di Nallo elaborates on the topic of flexibility, by creating an unfinished building that provides the unexpected and spontaneous (2014). Keeping the building open and adaptable means more room for flexible programming and for youth to define the environment. A versatile program promotes the engagement with a wider audience.

Robertson accentuate the importance of a multifunctional, uninterrupted series of linked spaces: “This would solve the problem of capturing young people’s interest whilst simultaneously enabling discrete supervision of the centre.” (2009). She explains how young people make less use of the spaces that cannot be seen or heard from the main parts of a centre because they feel isolated from the centre’s main activities. However, connecting

5 TRANSPARENCY 6 INVITINGNESS

In the early 20th century, Russel already pointed out the importance of a transparent and inviting building for a boys’ club: “The passer-by should always be able to see at a glance what is happening inside.” (1908). This helps young people understand the center’s program and encourages involvement and participation. Also transparency inside the building helps breaking barriers between different spaces and activities. Moreover, transparency allows better supervision, discouraging inappropriate behavior and hidden activities, thus promoting the safety of the centre. The communication of openness and inclusiveness helps enhancing the safety (Müller, 2015).

A youth should not present any barriers or gloomy areas that may deter newcomers. Instead, it should create a welcoming environment that attracts young people and makes it easier for them to explore and engage with the centre. Ways to achieve this are an accessible entrance, aesthetic appeal, and an inclusive representation. Robertson elaborates on the topic of invitingness by means of bustling and cheerful character: “leading to an entrance calculated to look like a busy hotel: bright, accessible, attractive and at all times visible from the road.” (2009).

7 CONTEMPORANEITY 8 ATTRACTIVENESS

Reid (2002) and Robertson (2009) address a contemporary architectural style, “to create a honest and functional environment, where the youth feels respected.” Pietsch and Müller (2015) notice a contemporary development of the youth centre as form of communication. The Sorrell Foundation elaborates on the quality of a modern building, to create an open and inclusive building where young people feel respected, proud and valued (2010). Additionally, this contemporaneity should not turn out to be institutional, but rather cheerful.

Iconic architecture is becoming more dominant, realised through the use of expressive forms, materials, or colours. By taking on iconic forms and functions, the centres become easily identifiable and recognizable, making it easier to attract youngsters (Müller, 2015). This idea of attractiveness is also seen in the key point for designing a youth centre of ‘joined up design’. They advocate a distinctive architecture, that makes the centre stand out and thus identifiable (The Sorrell Foundation, 2010). Attractiveness of a youth center is closely related to invitingness, but focuses more on visual and aesthetic appeal, rather than creating an inviting and comfortable environment.



*What are different design strategies
for a youth centre concerning
the design parameters?*

CHAPTER 4

CONDUCTING
CASE STUDIES

This chapter will utilize the parameters that were analysed in the last chapter, and measure them through a set of **case studies**. For these studies, five contemporary youth centre projects are chosen. To obtain a diverse comparative framework, centers are chosen with relatively unique design approaches. Although these cases are located in different regions (The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Australia), they share cultural commonalities and Western values. This ensures shared universal challenges and needs when it comes to youth empowerment, tying the cases together in a global dialogue on social, developmental and personal challenges. Through these different cases studies, this chapter aims to answer the forth subquestion: *What are different design strategies for a youth centre concerning the design parameters?*

CASE STUDIES

- 1 **ECAM YOUTH CENTER /
AGWA**
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
- 2 **DYNAMO /
DIEDERENDIRRIX**
EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS
- 3 **VIAS CULTURAL CENTER /
ESTUDIO SIC**
LEÓN, SPAIN
- 4 **WATERLOO YOUTH CENTER /
COLLINS AND TURNER**
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
- 5 **YOUTH CENTRE RABOT /
BEEL & ACHTERGAEL ARCHITECTS**
GENT, BELGIUM



ECAM YOUTH CENTER / AGWA

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



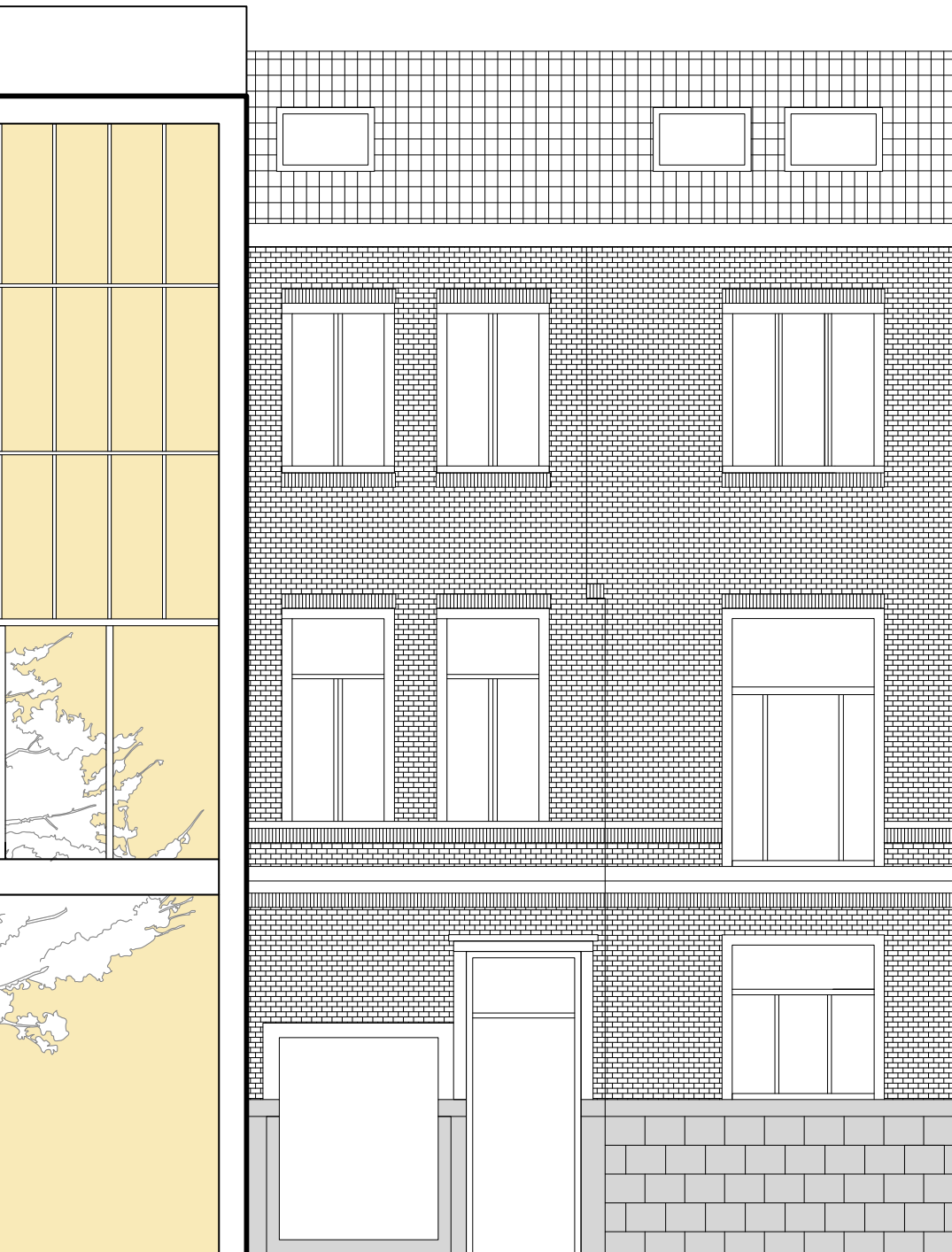
The ECAM transformed an old housing block in Brussels into a diversified youth centre. It created an opening in the block to enable residents to cross the inner courtyard. This public passageway connects the surrounding streets with the playground and site's activities of the youth centre. The project makes use of existing buildings and new additions. Together they create a multifaceted urban identity (Archdaily, 2023).



TRANSPARENCY & ATTRACTIVENESS

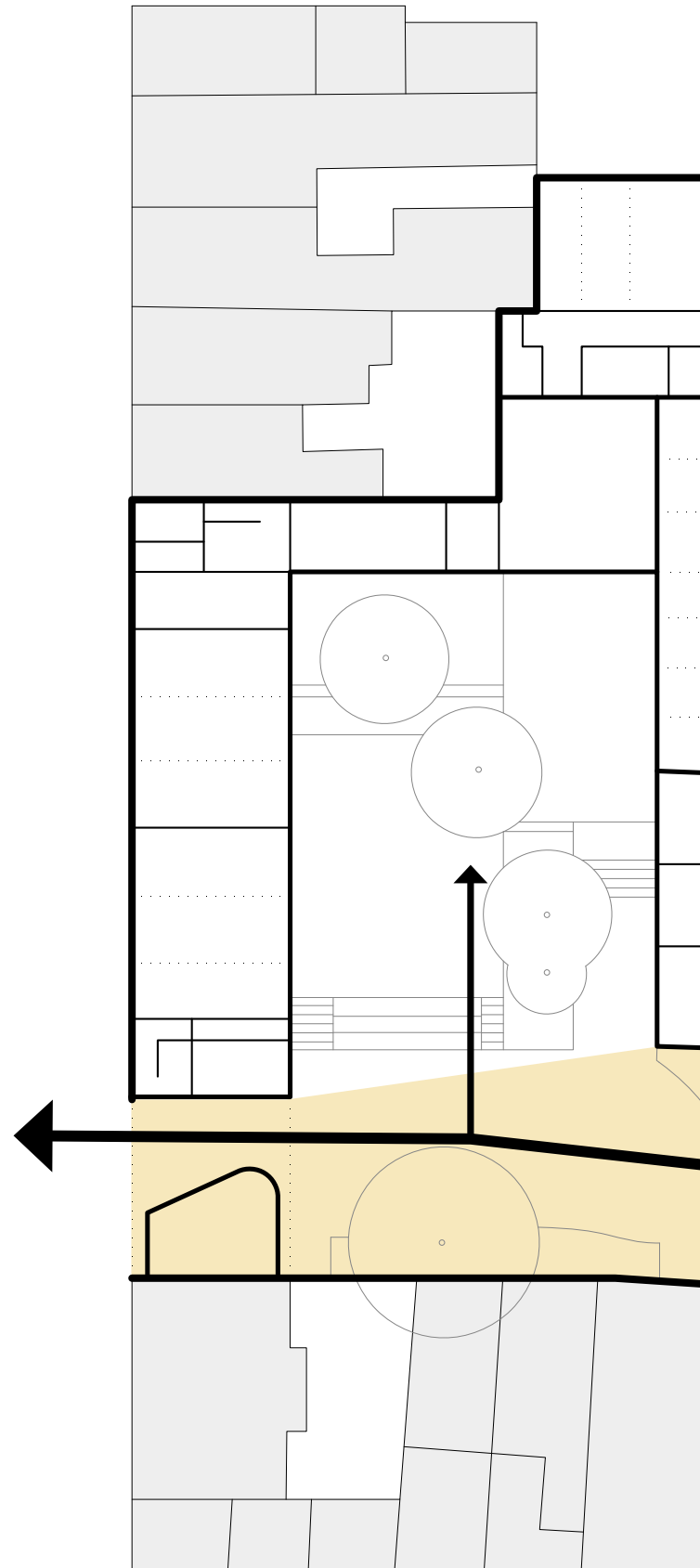


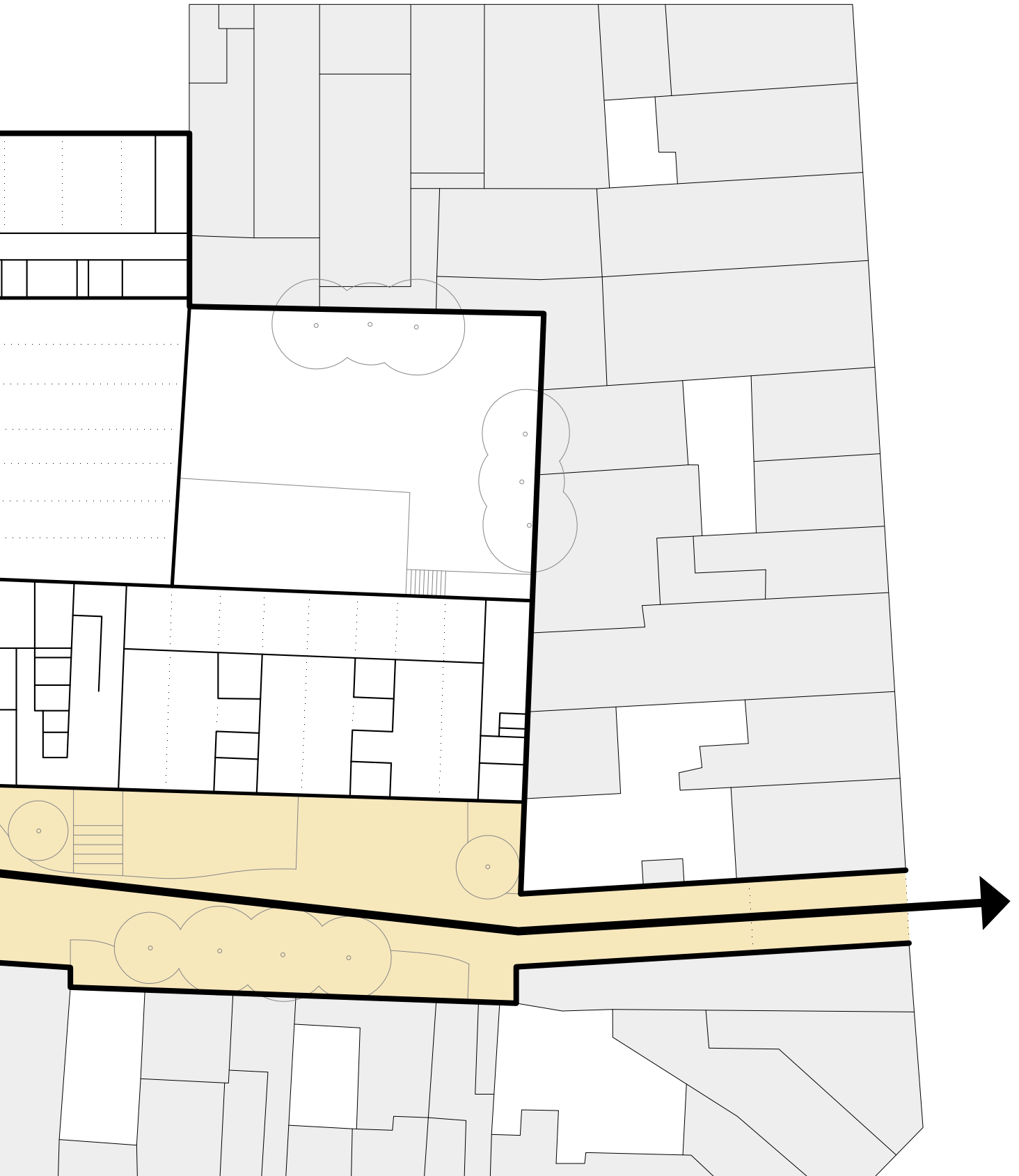
To open up the block, an old dilapidated terrace house was demolished and replaced by a transparent structure. A gate solely closes off the entrance to the courtyard at night. The open character of this new incision juxtaposes with the surrounding buildings, drawing attention to the opening. This creates a visual connection between indoor and outdoor, improving the accessibility. The transparency persuades curiosity and encourages the passerby to enter the courtyard and engage with the centre.



INVITINGNESS & ACTIVATION

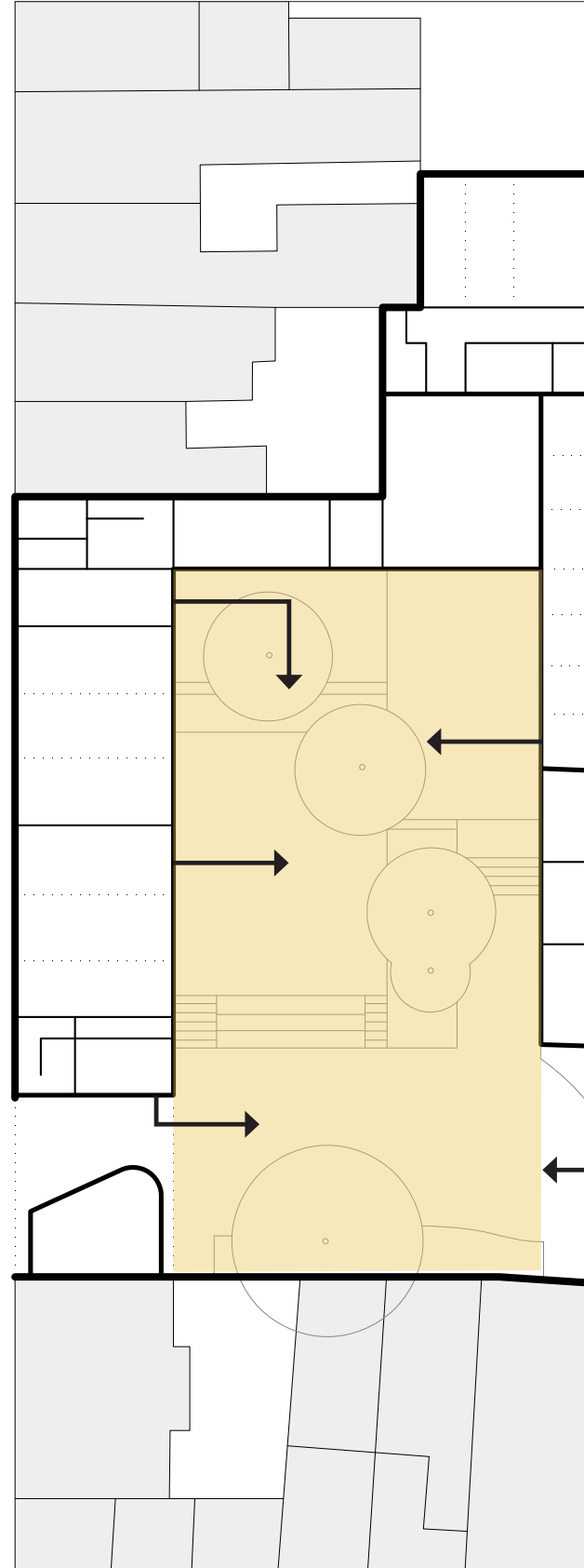
After entering the inner courtyard through one of the clear entrances, the visitor is both invited and activated by the buildings. The passageway leads to a public playground and serves as an extension of the street, activating the neighborhood and encouraging interaction. Large windows show the activities inside the centre, inviting youth to participate and engage with each other.





CONCATENATION

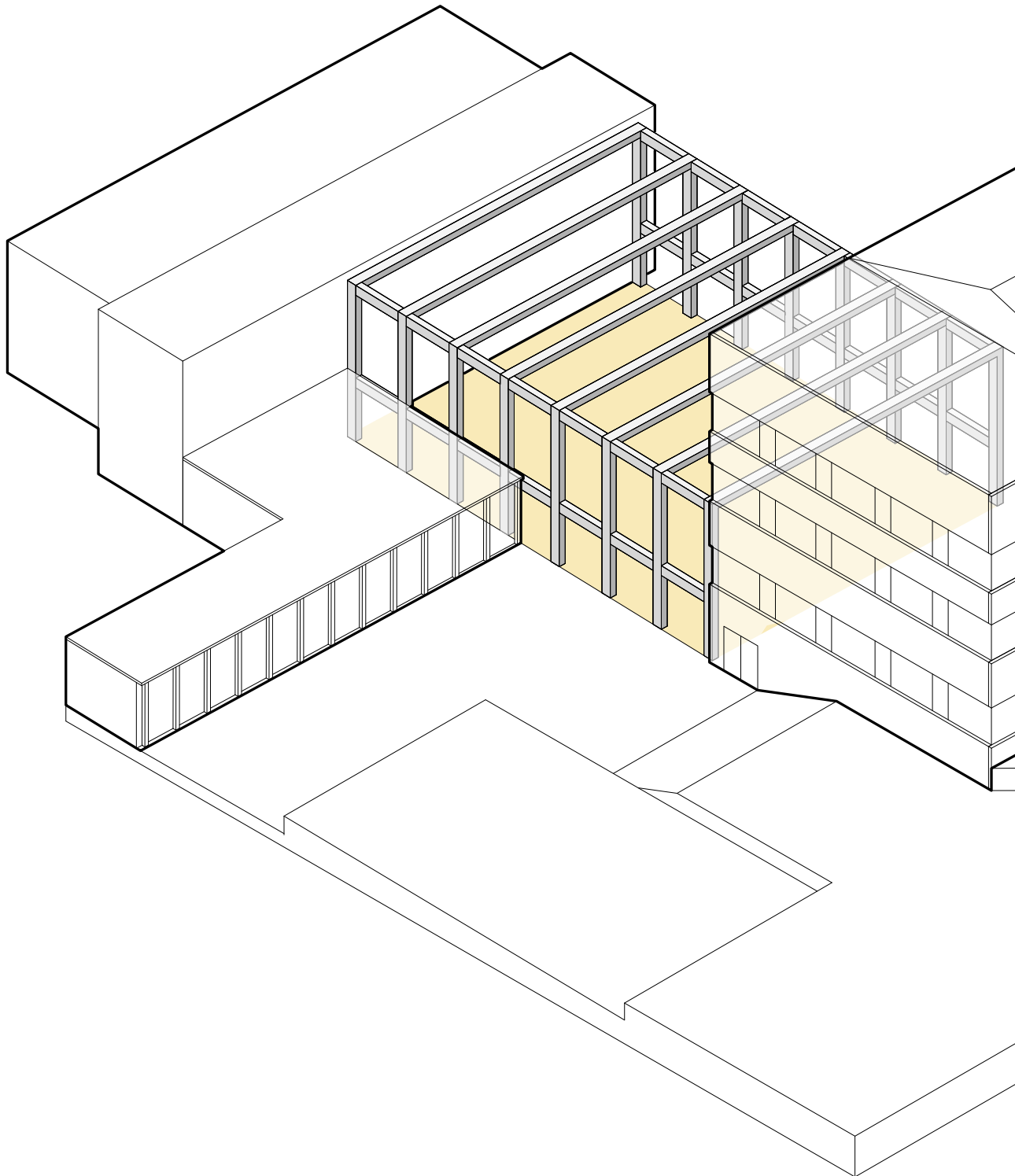
The playground not only helps activating the area and invite residents, but also functions as the focal point of the youth centre. From this central space, other spaces and activities are accessible. This not only reassures the activation of the playground, but also creates a gathering point at the heart of the site. Having the playground connected to the passageway and streets helps create a welcoming environment for young people.

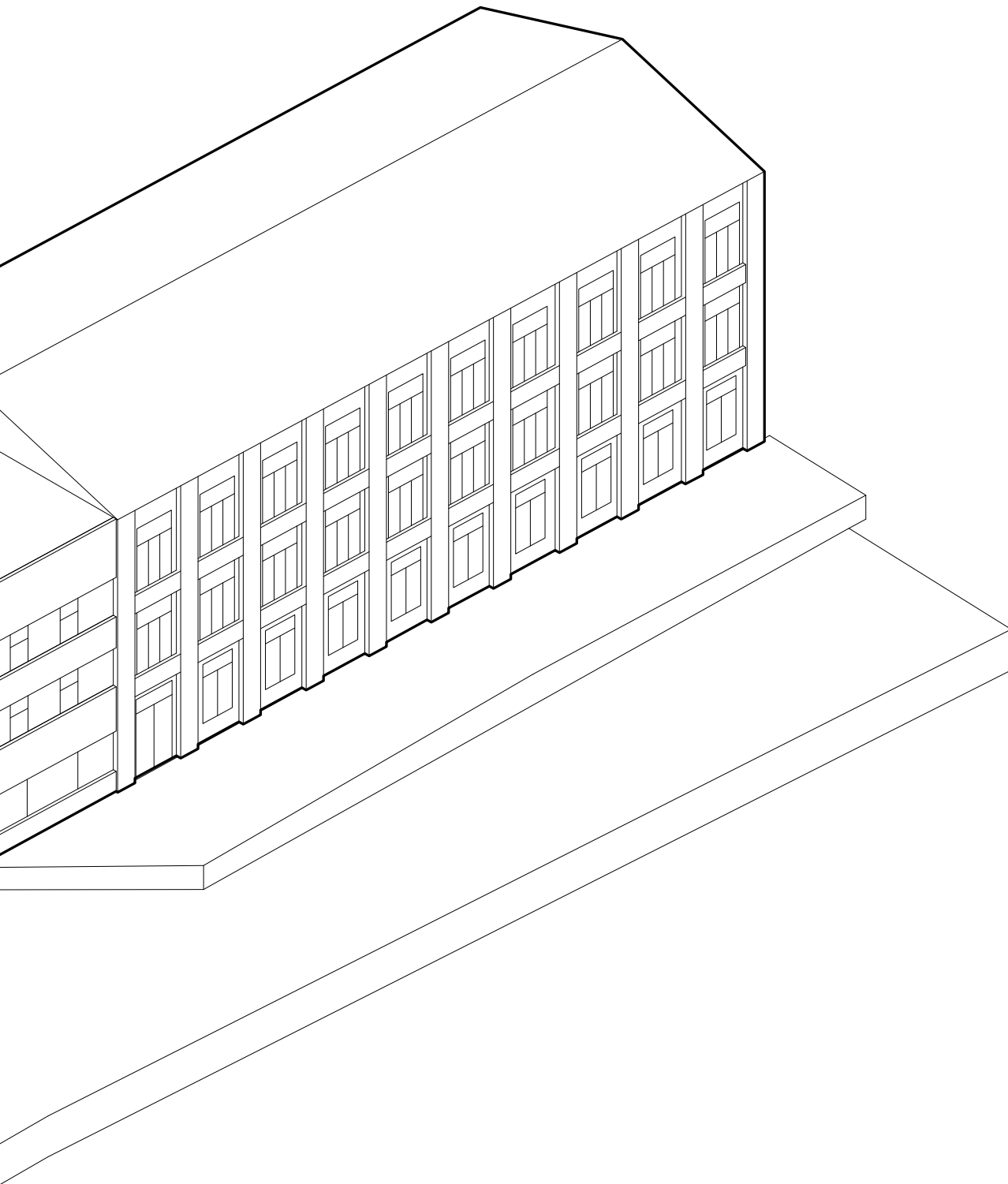




MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

ECAM layers wide range of functions in one complex, making the centre not only cross-functional, but also cross-generational. An important feature that helps the centre obtain a large variety of activities is the newly added sports hall. The open floorplan of this hall enables the accommodation of a wide range of sports, as well as cultural events and group gatherings. Together with the central placement and connection with other parts of the centre, the hall can be utilized throughout the day and house different groups and activities.





DYNAMO / DIEDERENDIRRIX

EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Dynamo - Diederendirrix / Eindhoven, The Netherlands / 2005

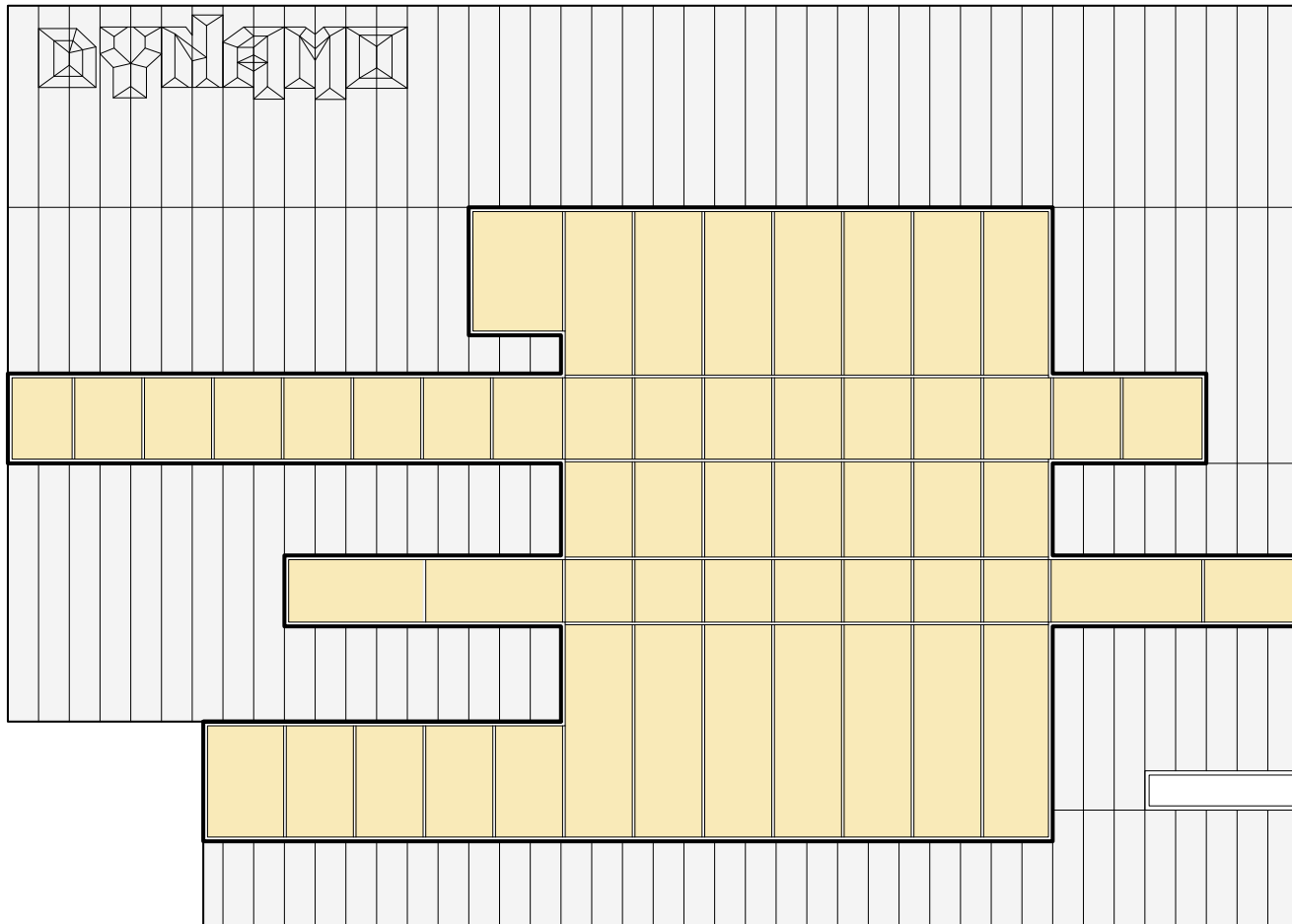


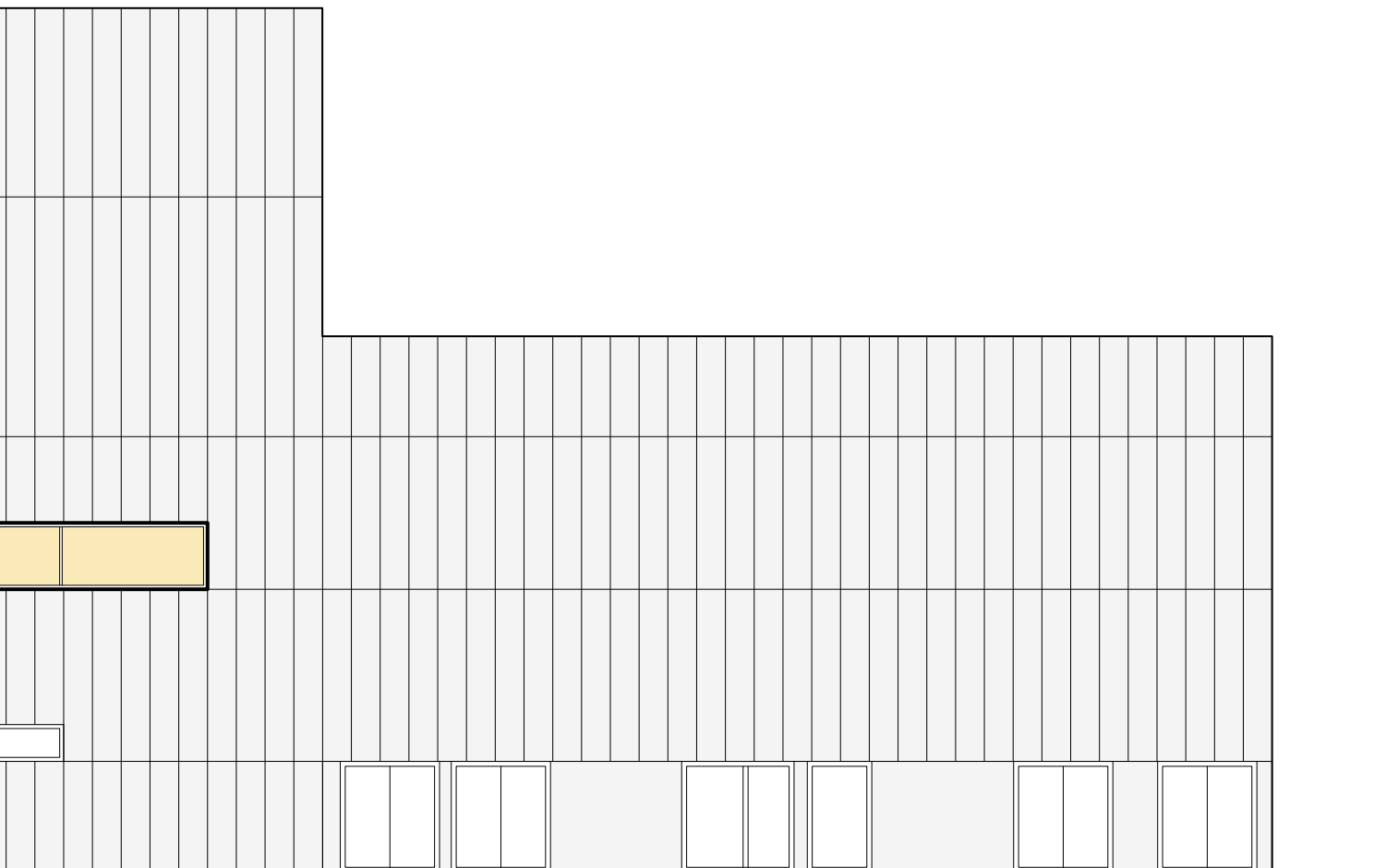
Dynamo is a cultural youth centre in the city centre of Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Its social service organization provides practical support to youngsters when it comes to schooling, housing and financial aid. By offering sports facilities and a concert hall, it aims to keep loitering young people off the streets (Archdaily, 2012).



TRANSPARENCY

The building has a large open facade, that emphasizes openness and connectivity with the surroundings. Through this window, the central atrium showcases internal activities, creating a link between inside and outside. This connection simultaneously keeps the youngsters inside the building in touch with the outside street life. During daytime, this window reflects the opposite Catharina Church, counteracting its transparency. Also, the central atrium is elevated in relation to the street, creating a sense of privacy on the inside and further counteracting the transparency.

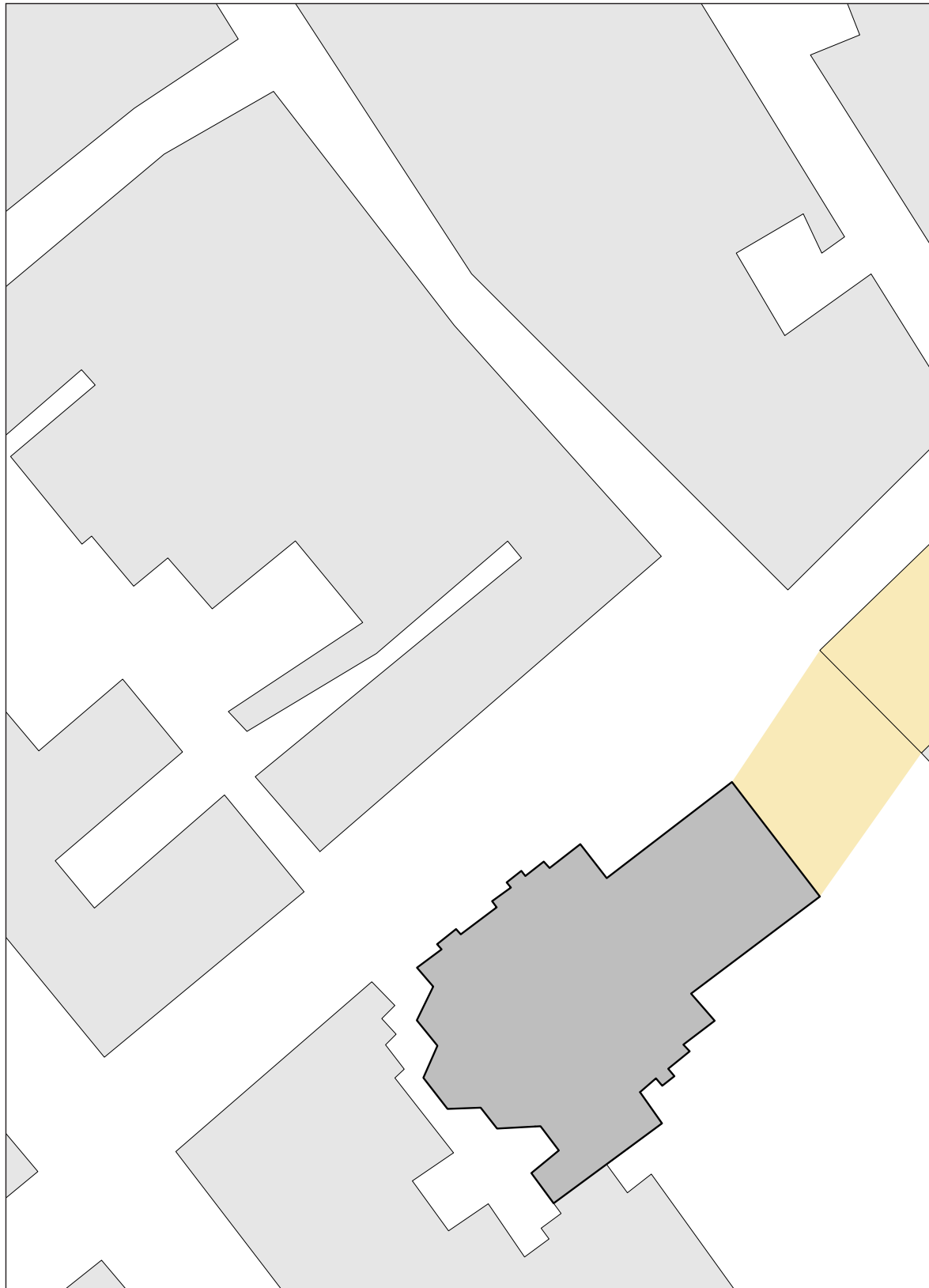


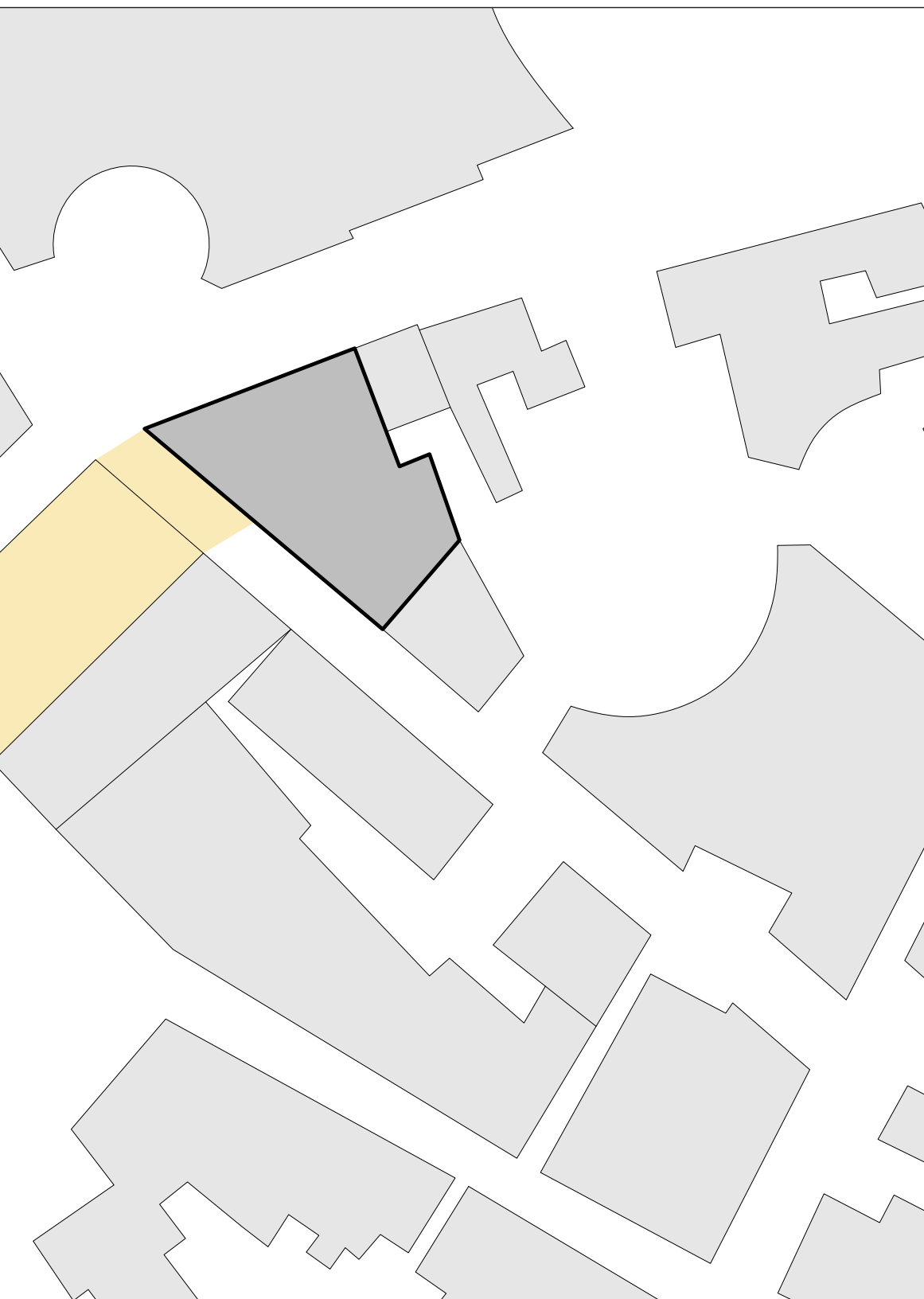


ATTRACTIVENESS & INVITINGNESS

Through the openness and placement of the building, a intuitive and physical connection is created with the Catharina Square. Acting as an extension of this square, the central atrium functions as a continuation of public space, inviting young people to enter the building. Furthermore, Dynamo stands out as a bold modern building, that both contrasts with and complements the Catharina Church. Its distinctive and reflective character attracts attention.

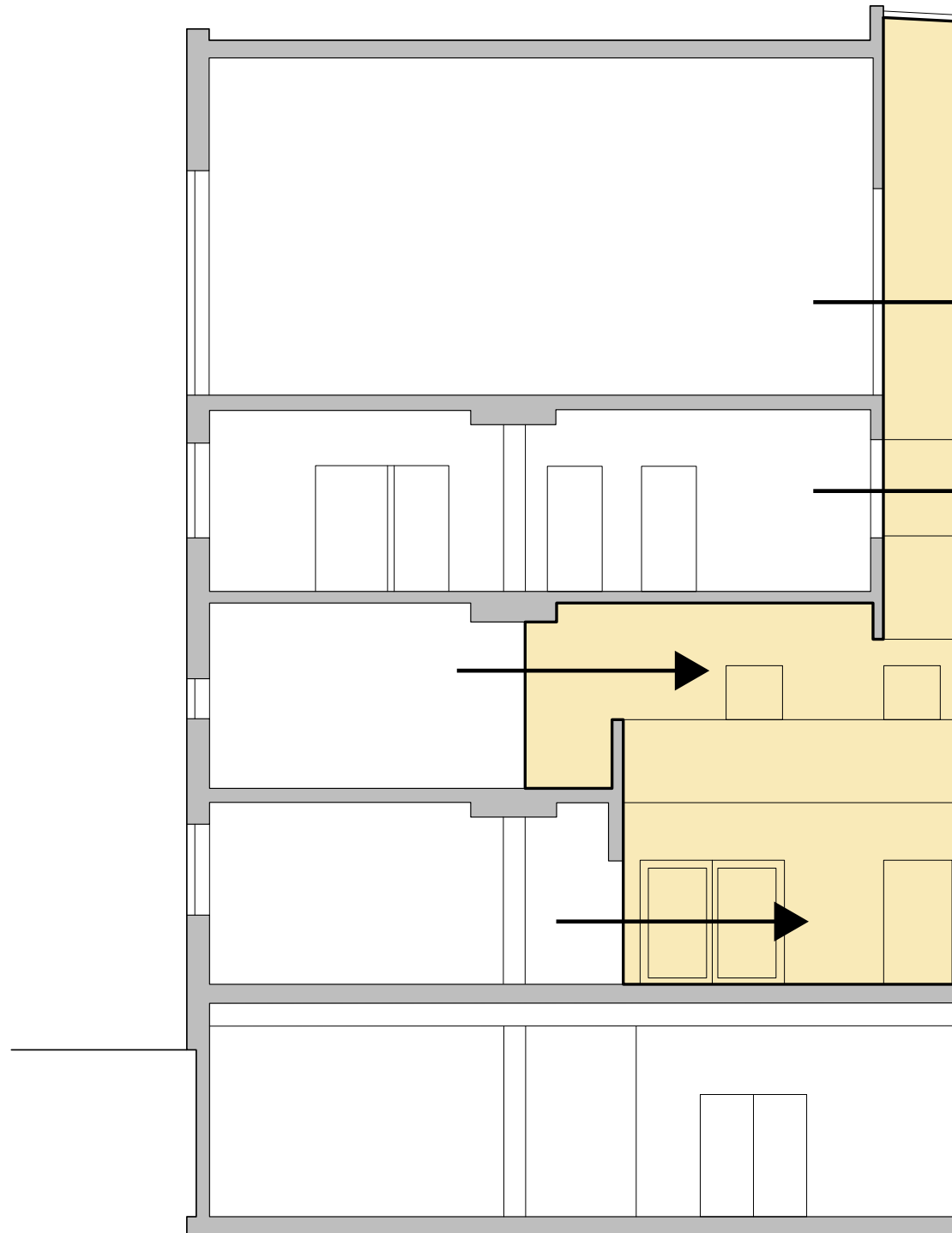
Dynamo - Diederendirix / Eindhoven, The Netherlands / 2005

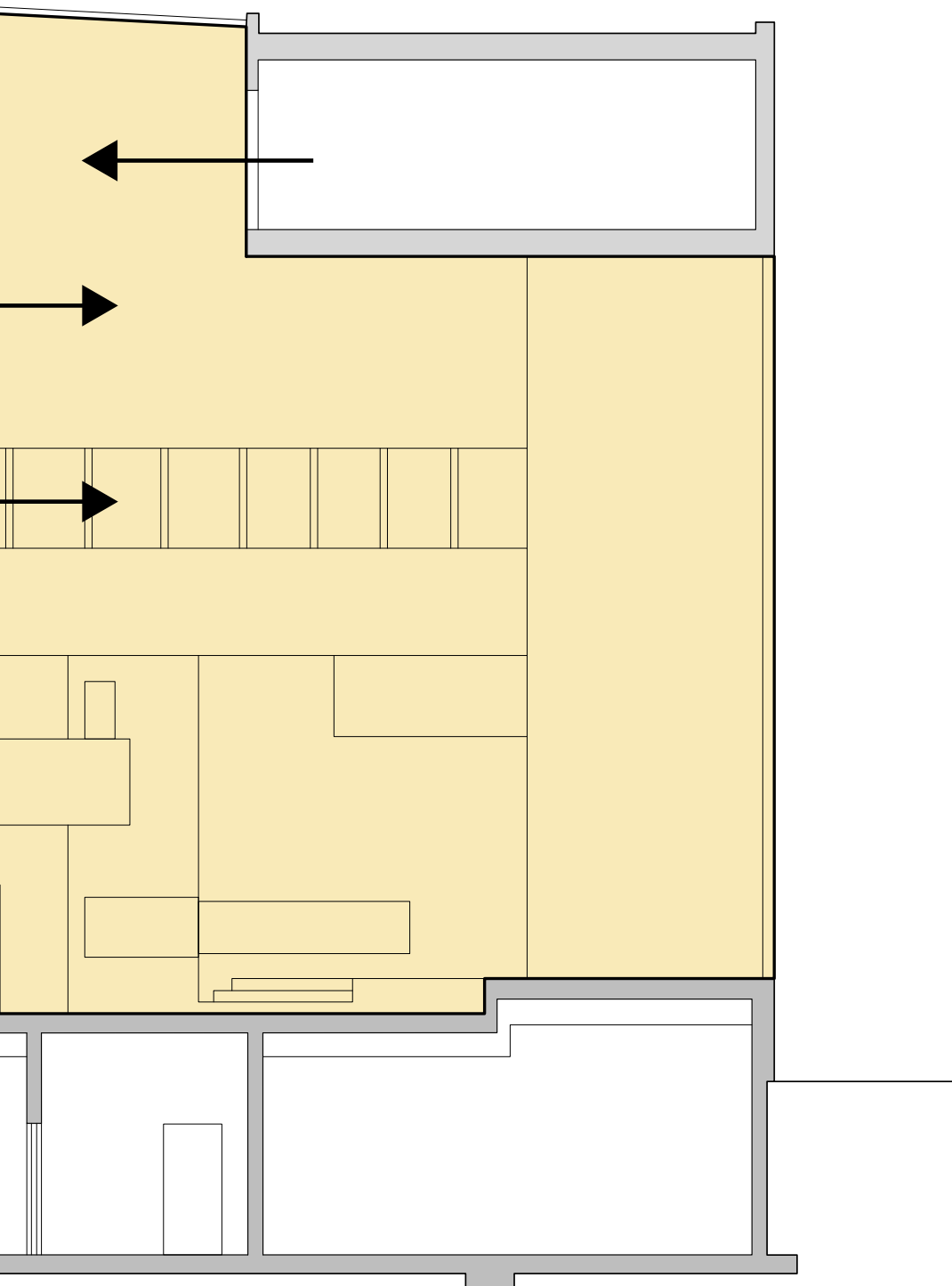




CONCATENATION & ACTIVATION

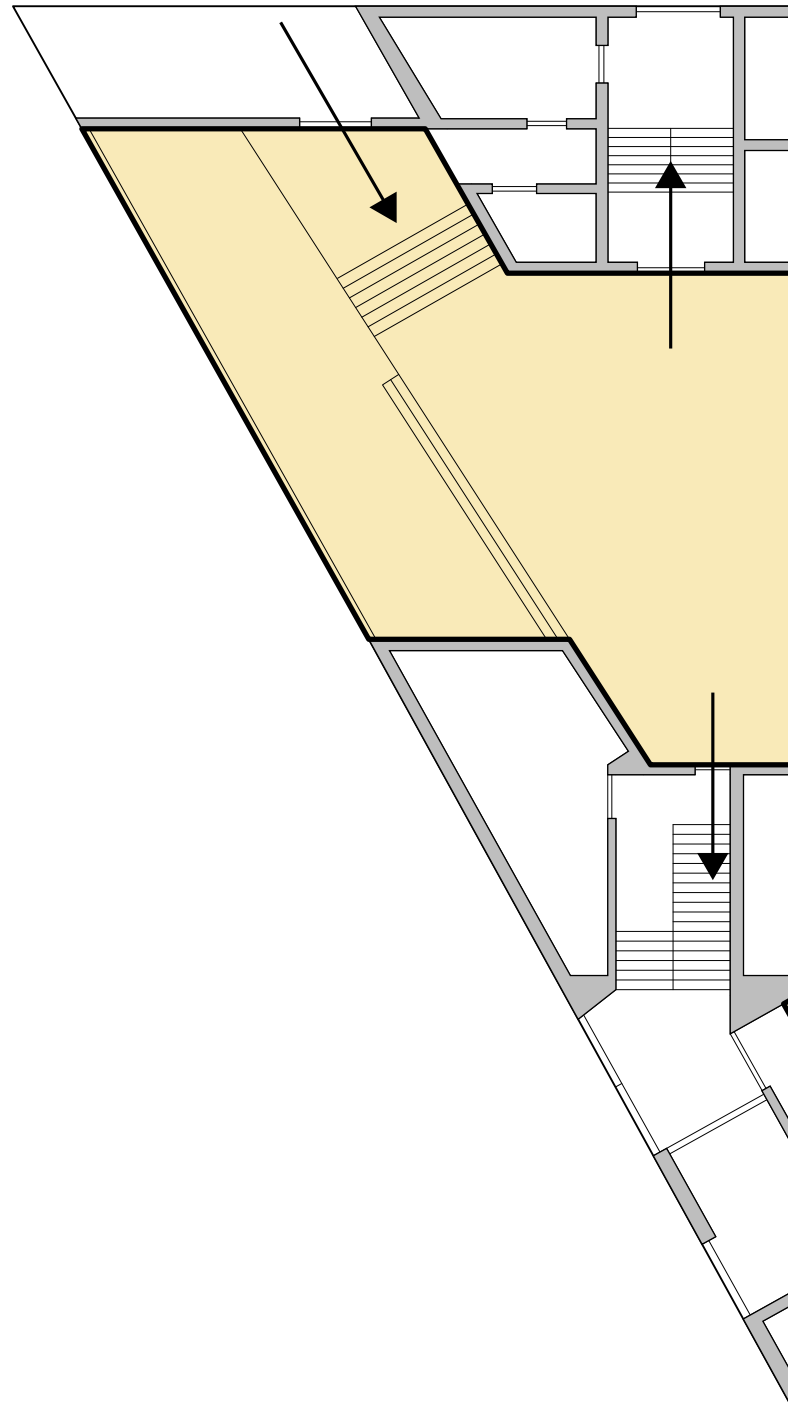
The central plaza is surrounded by various functional areas, with publicly accessible spaces to ensure activity throughout the building. It creates a sense of spatial continuity and promotes curiosity and exploration. Moreover, the plaza itself enhances social activation, by encouraging youth to meet and interact with each other.

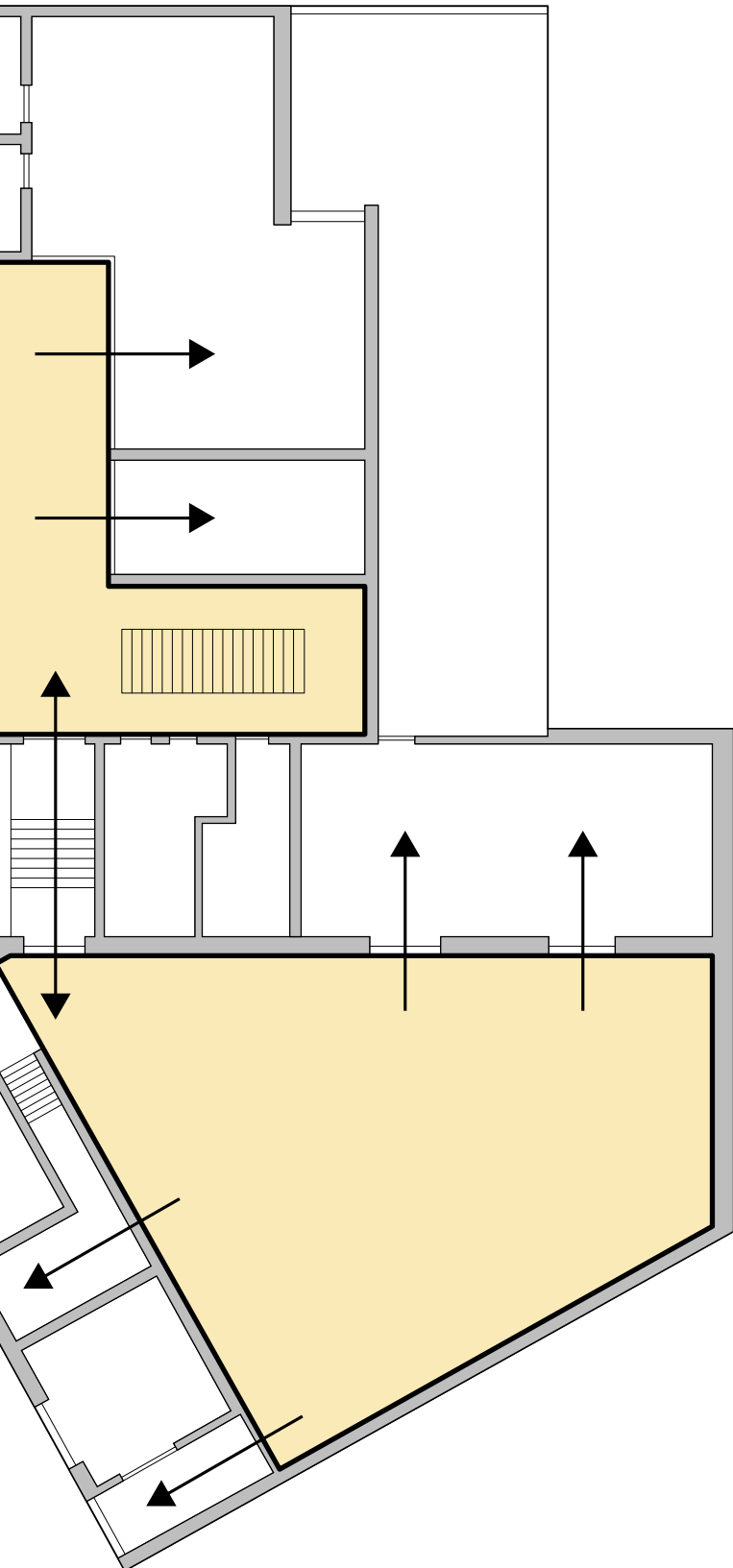




CONCATENATION & ACTIVATION

The concatenation of spaces not only works in a vertically manner through the atrium and different floors, but also creates a horizontal flow of spaces. Together with the event hall, the atrium connects all the different programmatic zones, and ensures an easy transitioning between spaces





VIAS CULTURAL CENTER / ESTUDIO SIC LEÓN, SPAIN

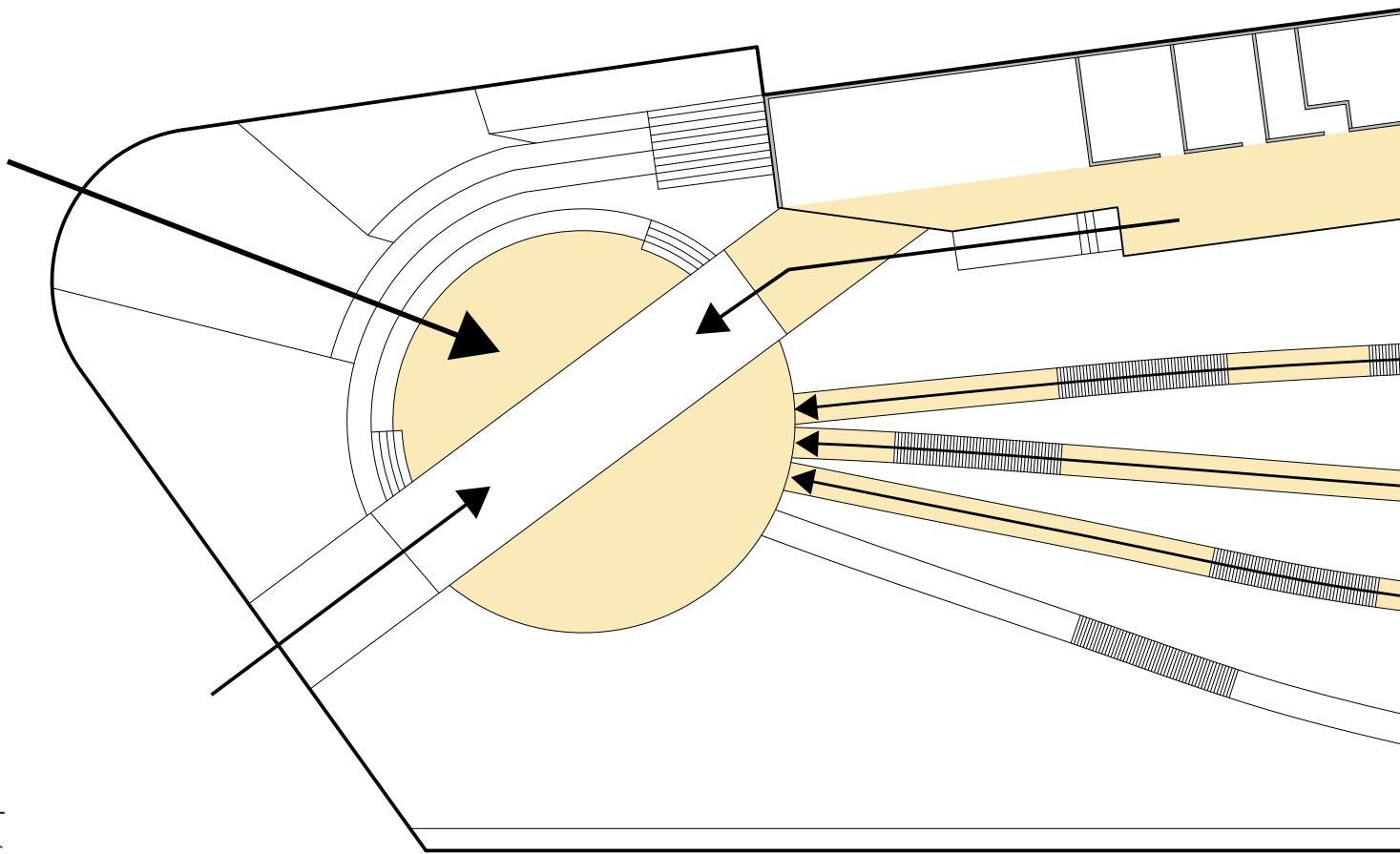


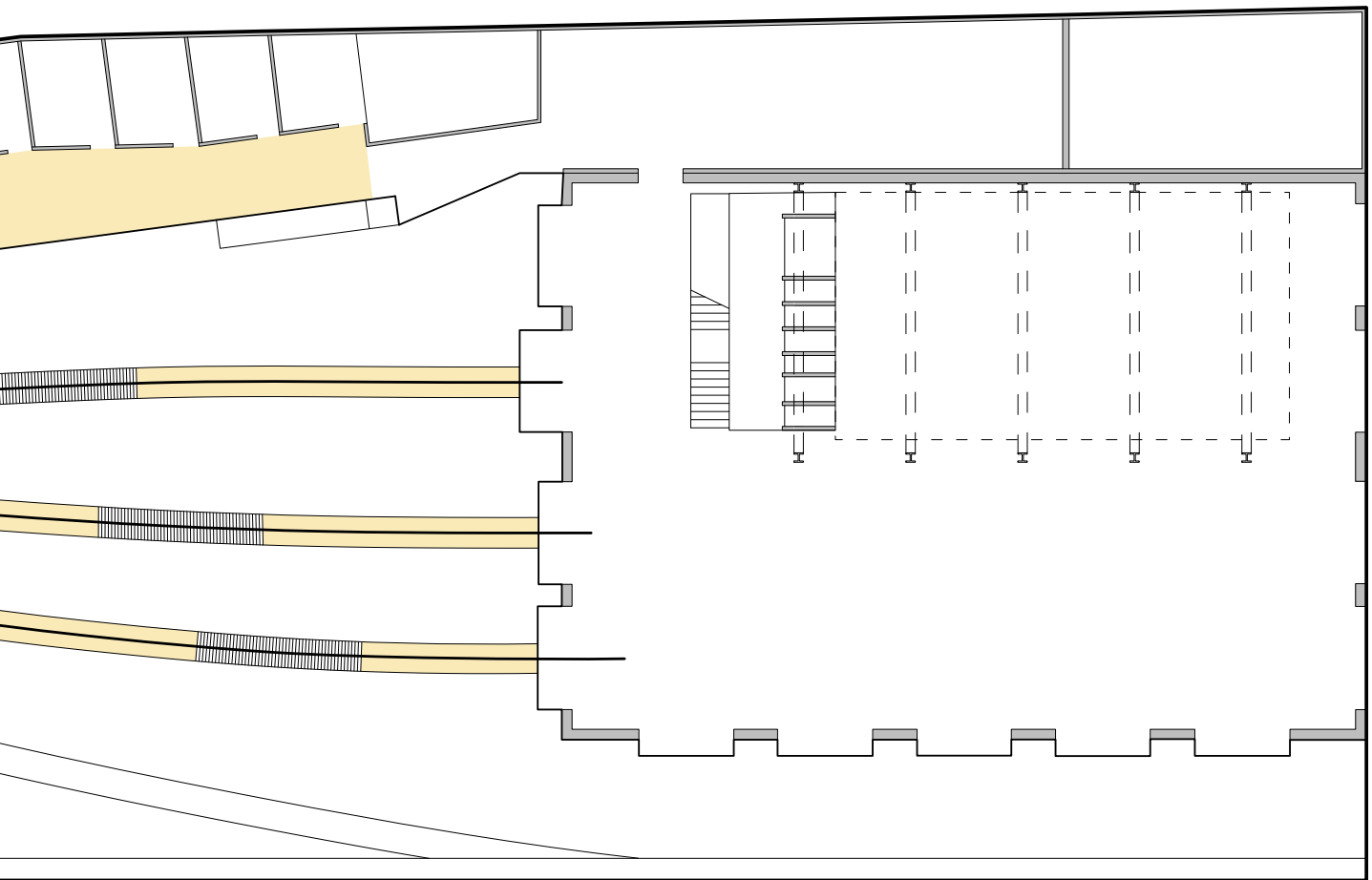
Estudio SIC rehabilitated an old railway yard in León into a creative studio for youth and cultural initiatives. Part of the project is the outdoor area of the railroad, which has been transformed into a public space. The interior of the railway yard is open to the public and can accommodate a wide range of public activities due to its flexible layout (Archdaily, 2013).



CONCATENATION & INVITINGNESS

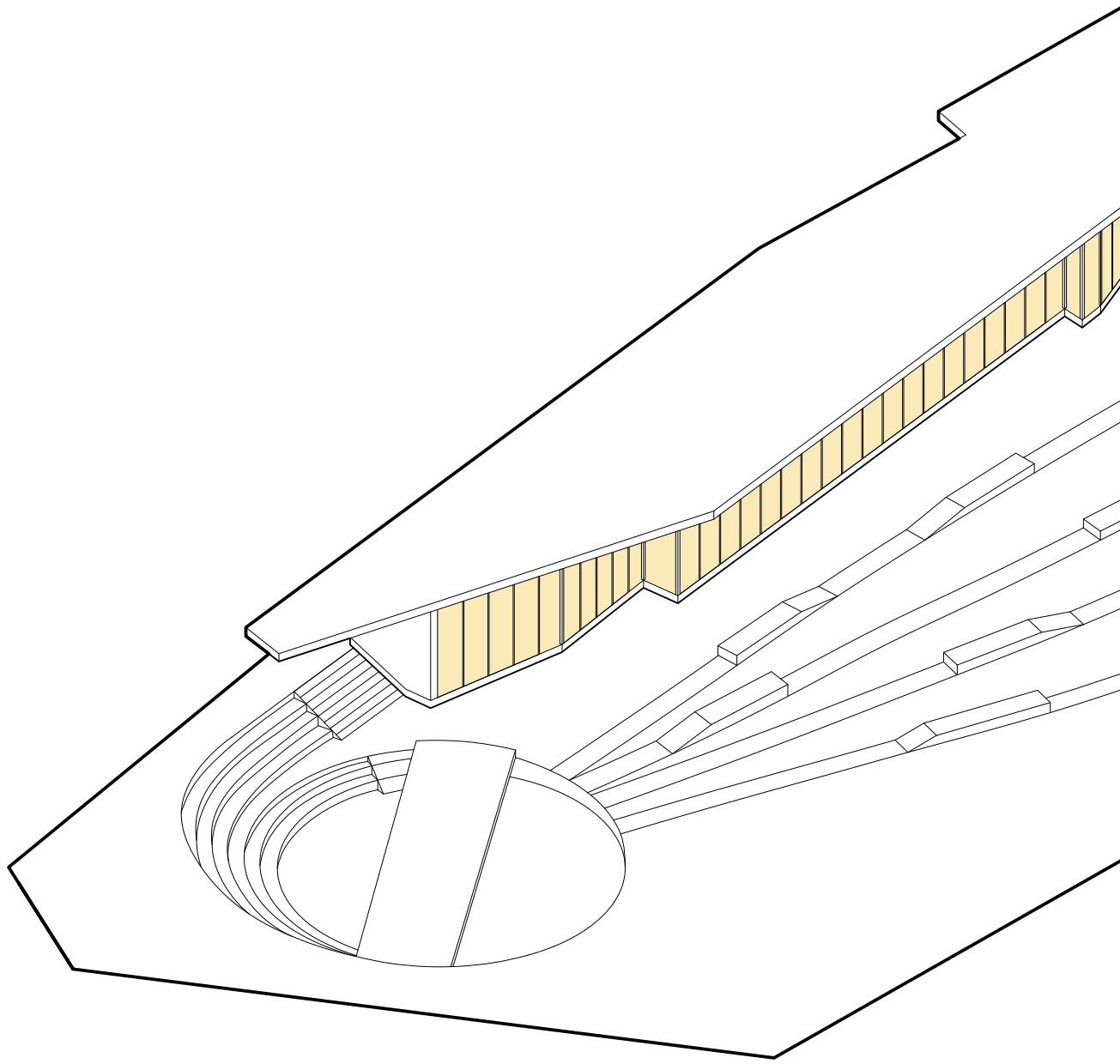
The outdoor theater invites passersby to enter the public square. Here they can join a public event or gathering without having to enter the building. Moreover, the bridge provides a passageway through this outdoor theater, encouraging pedestrians to enter the plaza. Meanwhile, this theater functions as the focal point of the entire site. From here, passersby are invited to enter the cultural centre. The old train tracks amplify this invitingness by leading people inside.

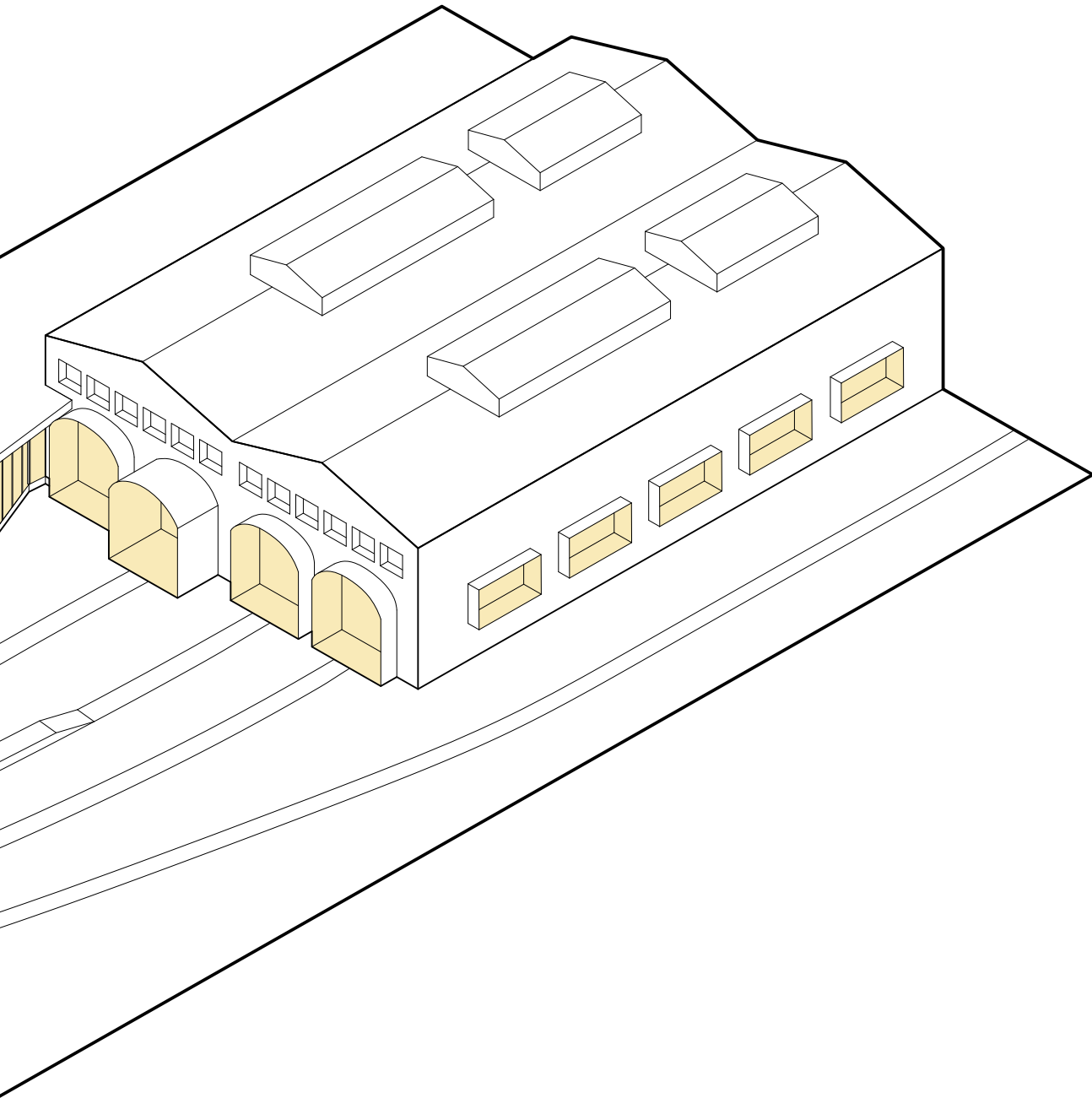




TRANSPARENCY & ATTRACTIVENESS

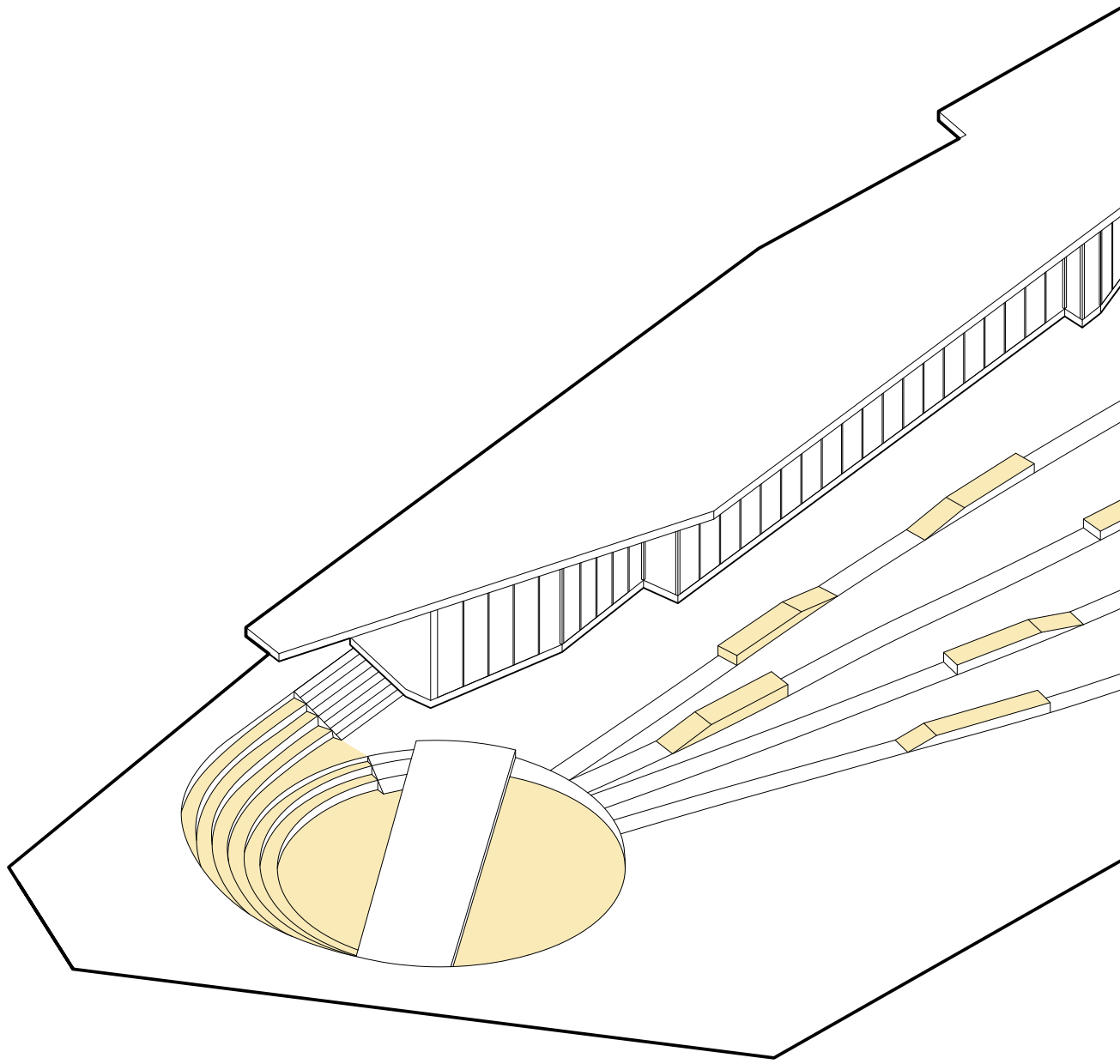
The front facade of the building is opened up with large windows, creating a visual connection between the square and the inside space. This attracts curious passersby and makes the present young people feel connected to the surrounding public space. The new added structure is fully opened to the square by a large glass facade, attracting young people into the interstitial space between the public square and the various programmatic spaces. Together, the public square and the open nature of the building attract young people to enter the cultural centre.

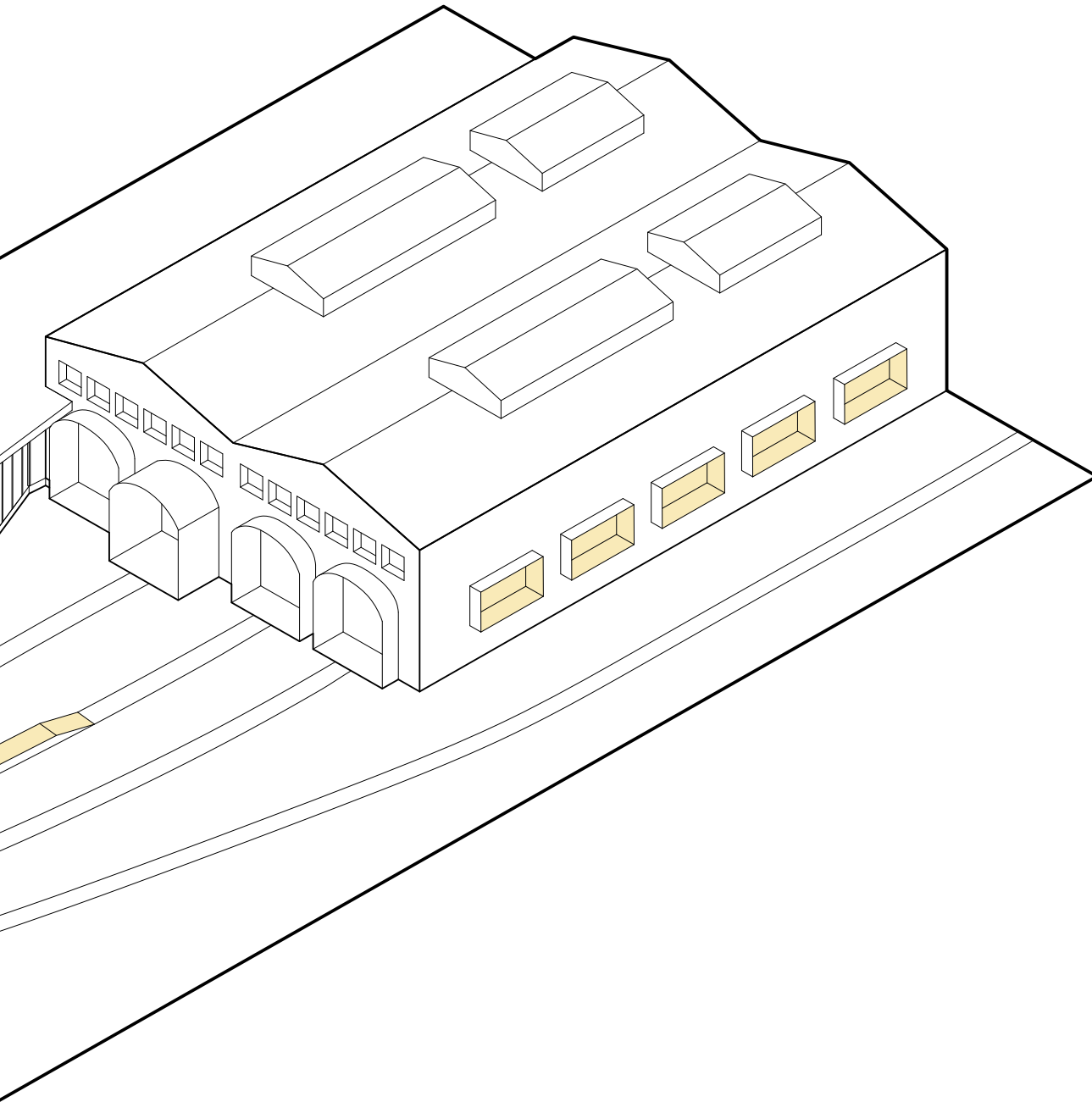




ACTIVATION

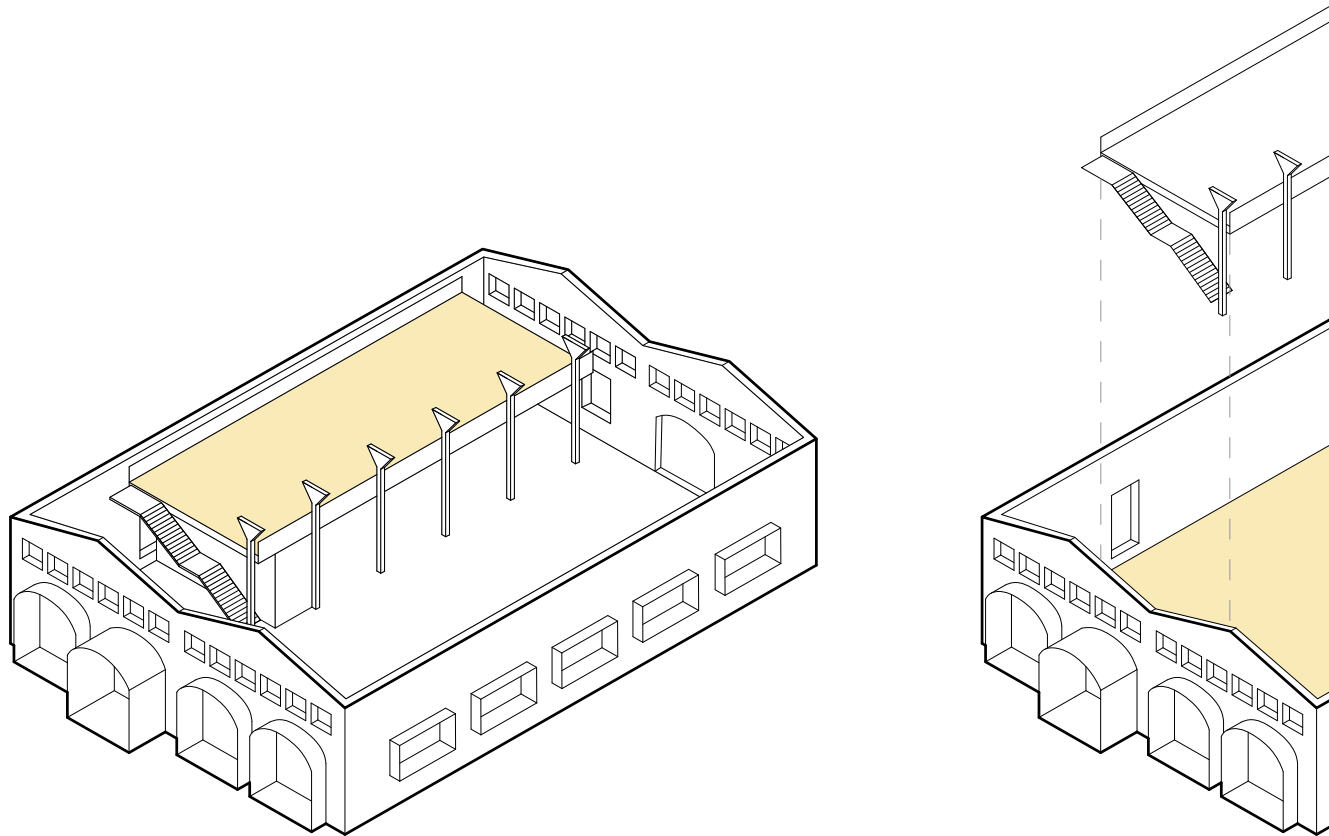
The building works closely with the public space around it. By adding a public square in front of the building, a intermediary is created between the city and the cultural centre. Various additions help activating this public space around the building. An outdoor theatre in front of the square can be used for events, performances and gatherings. Benches have been placed on the original train tracks leading from the theater to the rail yard, drawing people inside. On the side of the centre, large windows show the exhibit inside to people waiting on the opposite train platform.

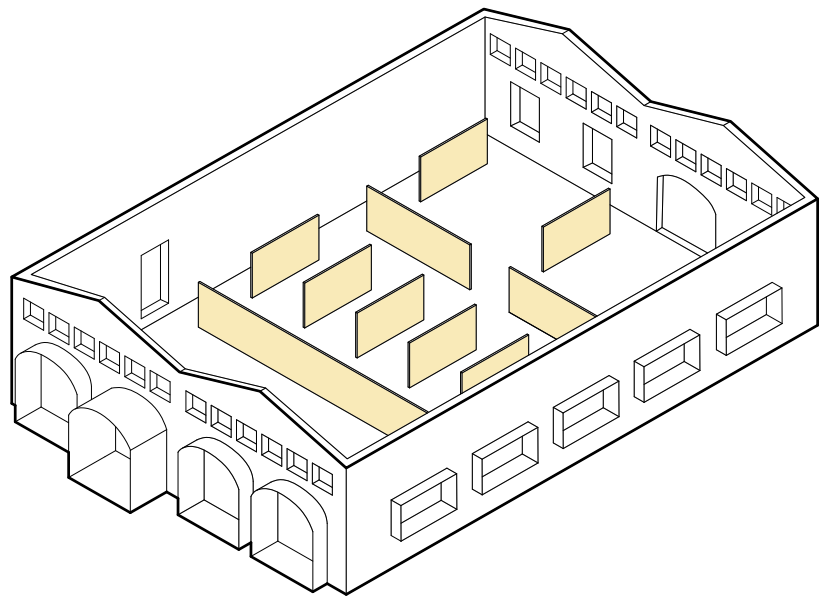
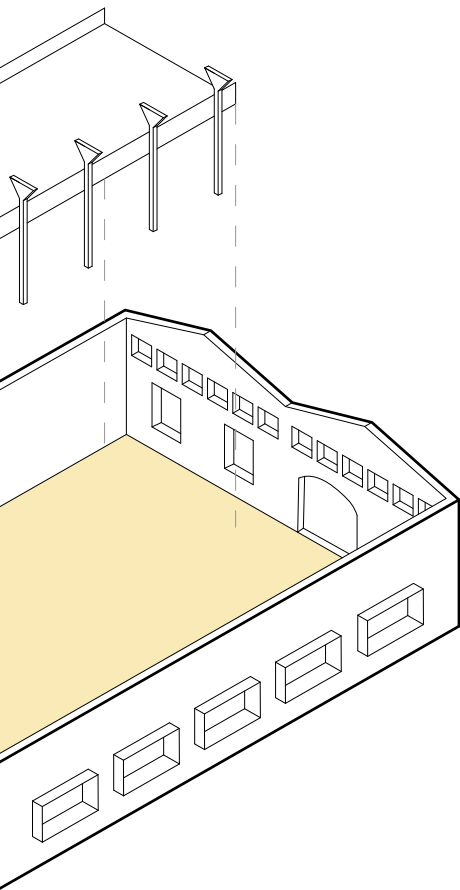




FLEXIBILITY & MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

The building works closely with the public space around it. By adding a public square in front of the building, a intermediary is created between the city and the cultural centre. Various additions help activating this public space around the building. An outdoor theatre in front of the square can be used for events, performances and gatherings. Benches have been placed on the original train tracks leading from the theater to the rail yard, drawing people inside. On the side of the centre, large windows show the exhibit inside to people waiting on the opposite train platform.



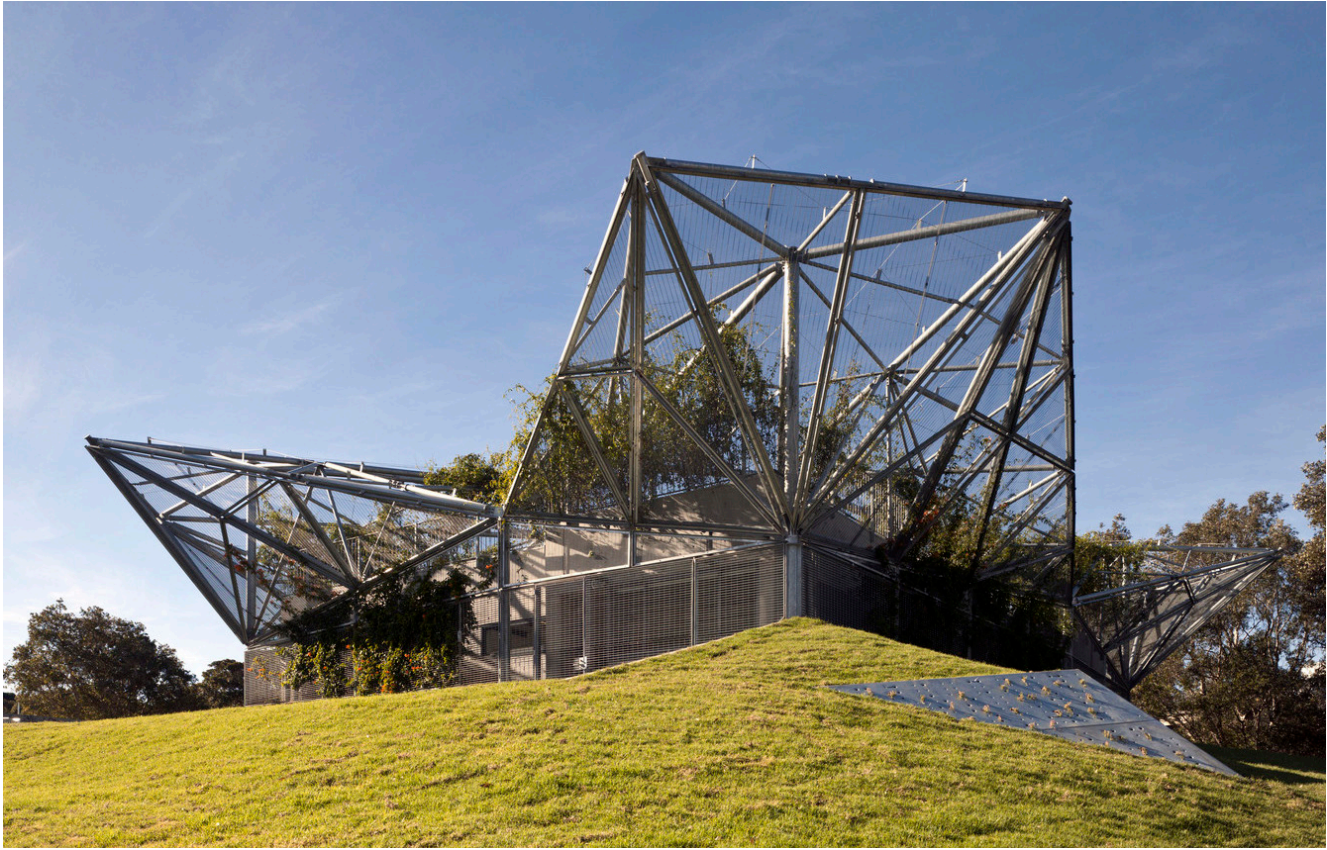


WATERLOO YOUTH CENTER / COLLINS AND TURNER SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Waterloo Youth Center - Collins and Turner / Sydney, Australia / 2013

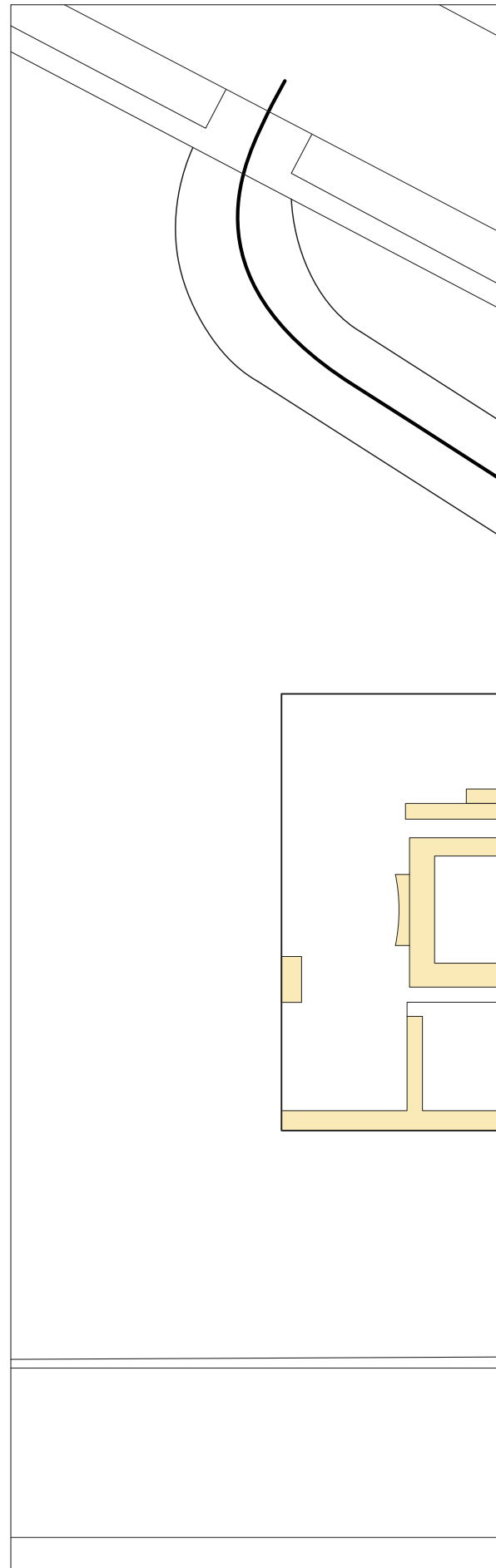


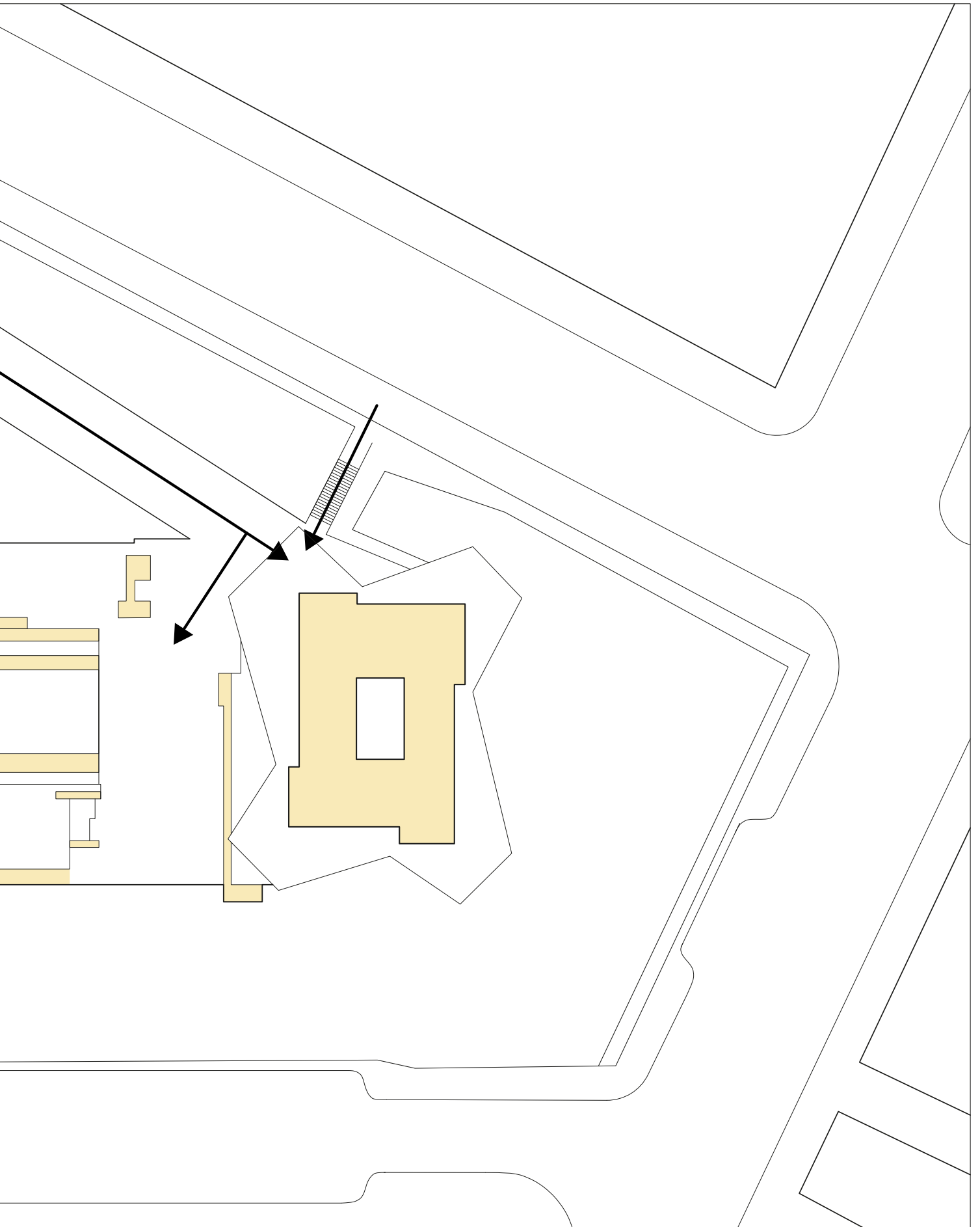
Collins and Turner refurbished an old amenity block into a youth centre and communal workspace. The building is integrated within the landscape of the park. An imposing steel roof structure supports native plants to grow onto the canopy. A central courtyard opens up to the roof and allows youth to experience the structure and plans from up close. A skatepark has been integrated with the building and merges with the sculptural form of the centre (Archdaily, 2014).



ATTRACTIVENESS & ACTIVATION

The skatepark adjacent to the centre runs up against the building, creating a strong connection between the park and the youth centre. The skatepark works as a magnet, that draws people to the site. Before entering the skatepark they are forced to pass by the youth centre and interact with the building. Together they create a lively atmosphere and a vibrant hub for the local youth.

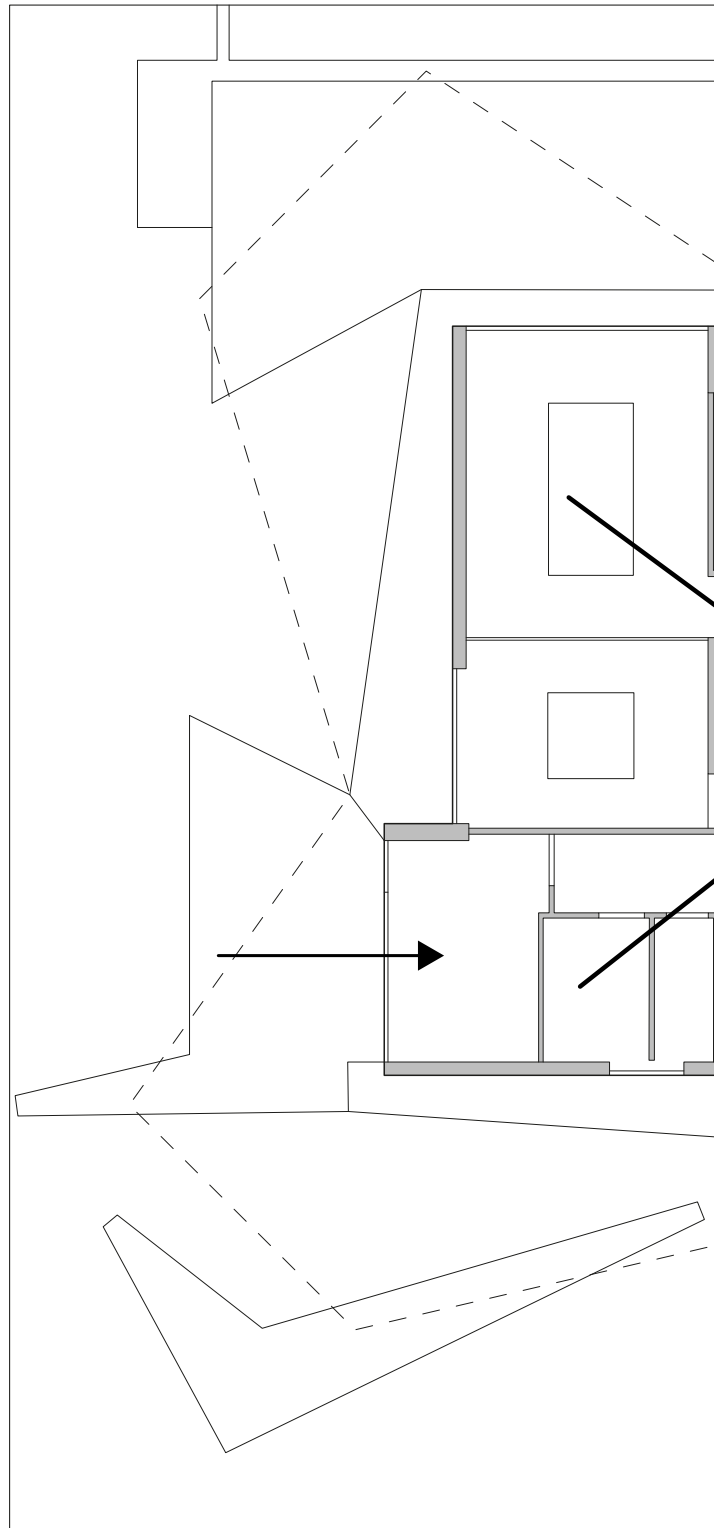


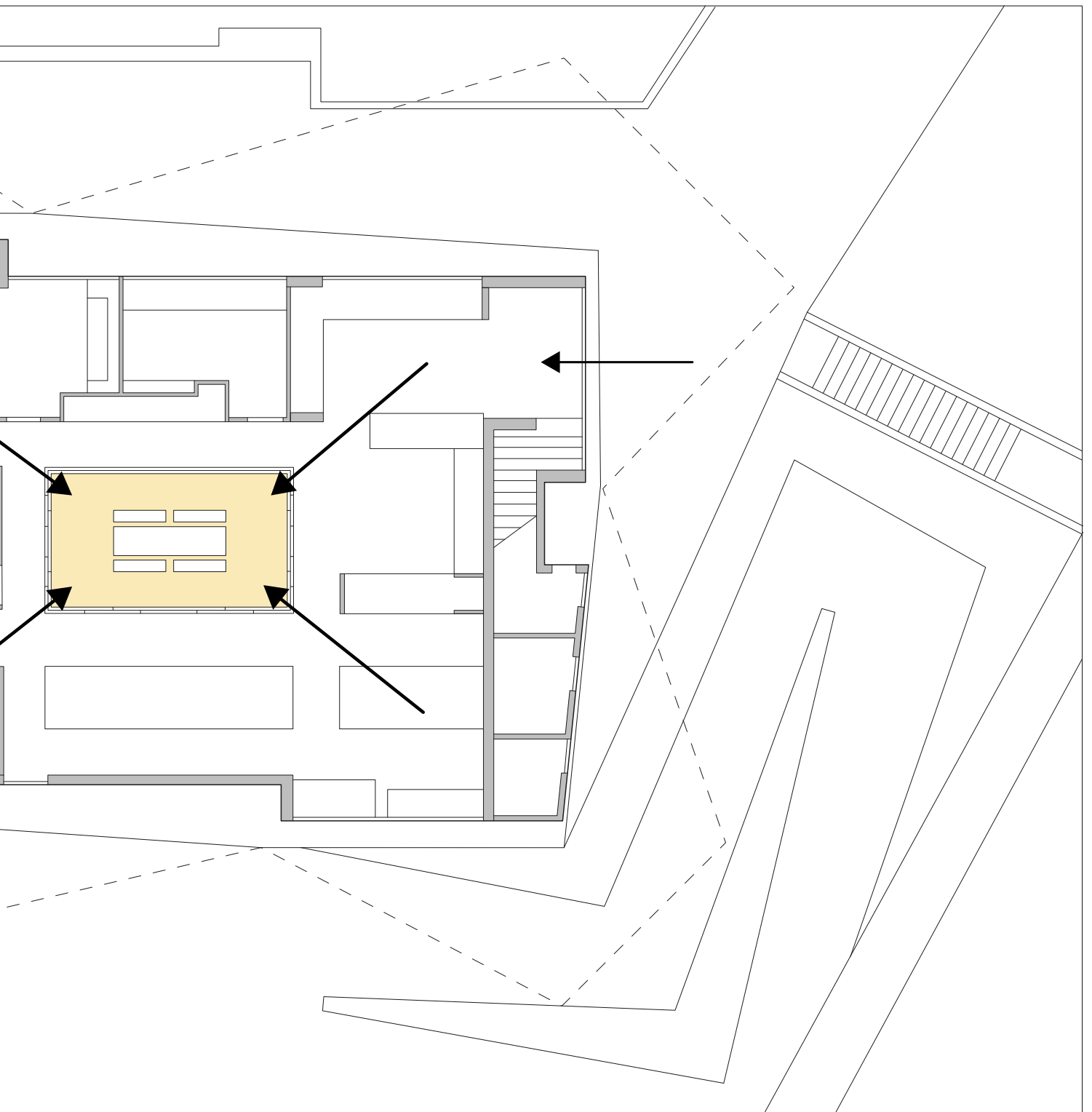


CONCATENATION

The inner courtyard functions as the heart of the building. All other spaces as consulting rooms, communal areas and workspaces are places around this central node. This improves the dynamics and interaction, by creating a visual and physical relationship between the various spaces of the centre. The courtyard is opened up to the accessible rooftop, and provided naturig lighting into the surrounding spaces. Simultaneously, it connects the indoor spaces with the outdoor landscape, enhancing the sense of openness.

Waterloo Youth Center - Collins and Turner / Sydney, Australia / 2013

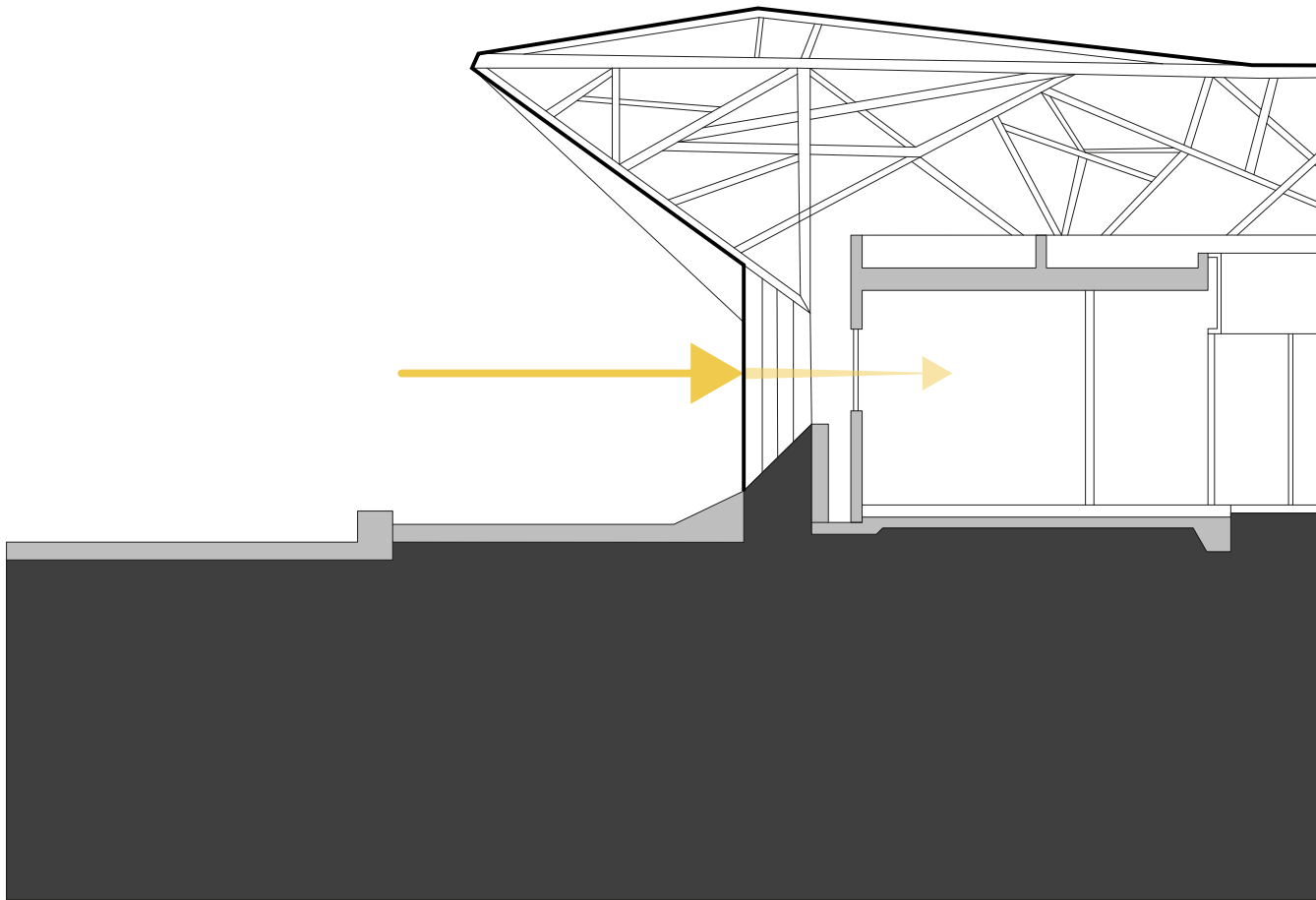


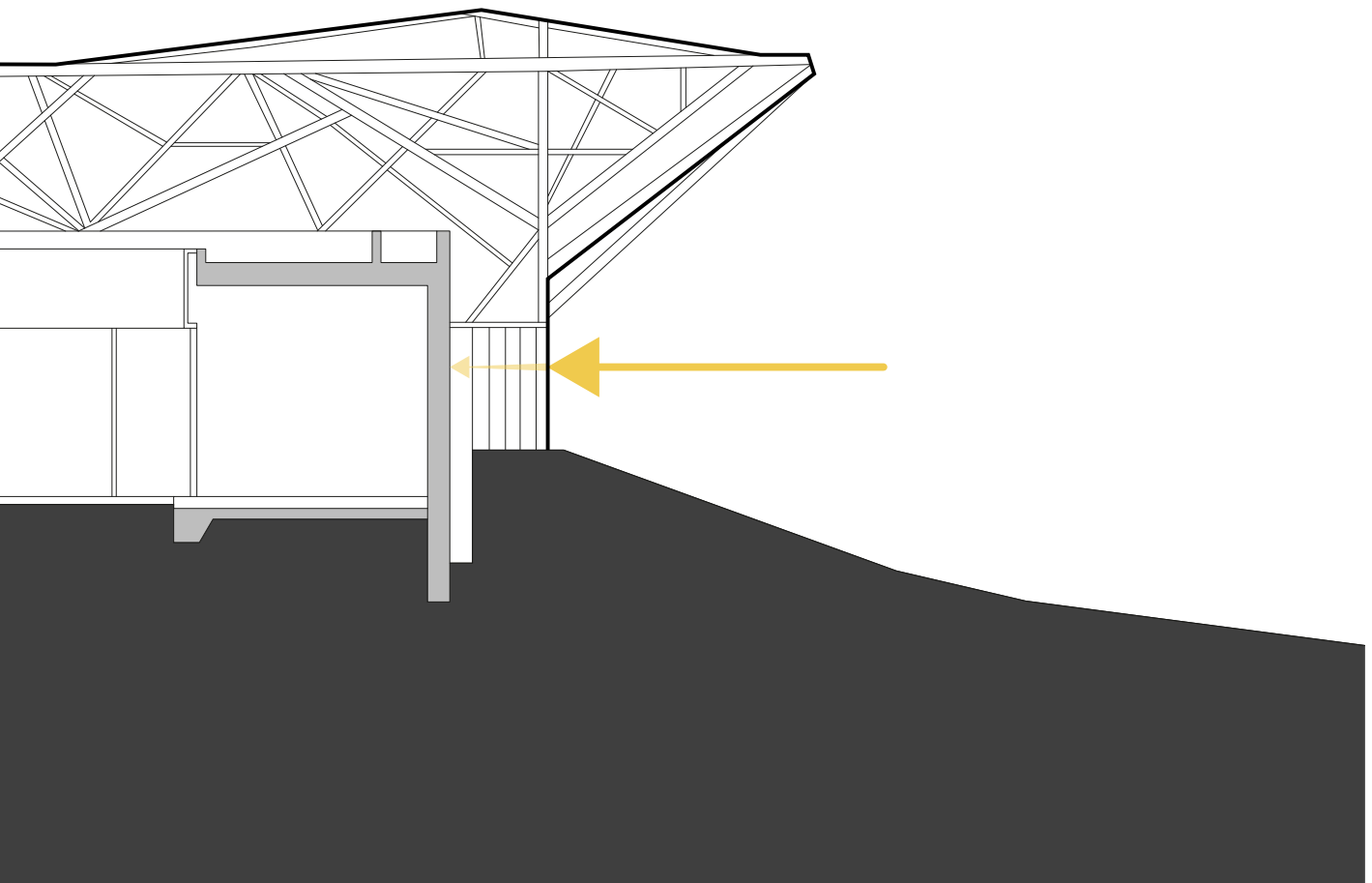


TRANSPARENCY & INVITINGNESS

The robust facade and limited openings create a rather closed of outer facade. This ensures the privacy and security of the centre, which helps the vulnerable youth to feel safe and protected. Thoughtfully places windows allow modest glimpses into the building. The openness and transparency is prioritised on the interior. The courtyard plays a crucial role in this, by acting a focal point of natural light. The striking steel canopy with climbing plants softens the closed facade, and creates an inviting impression.

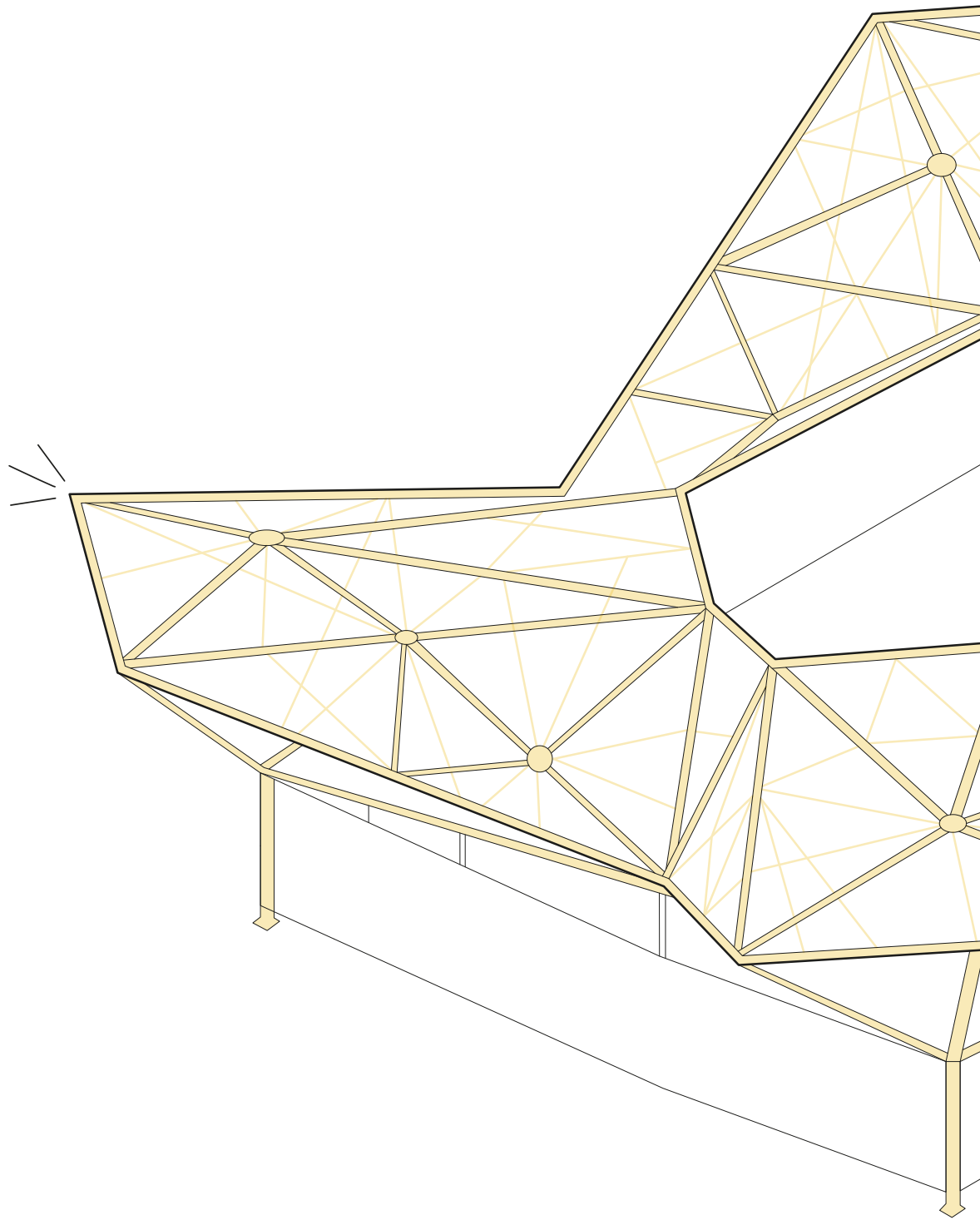
Waterloo Youth Center - Collins and Turner / Sydney, Australia / 2013

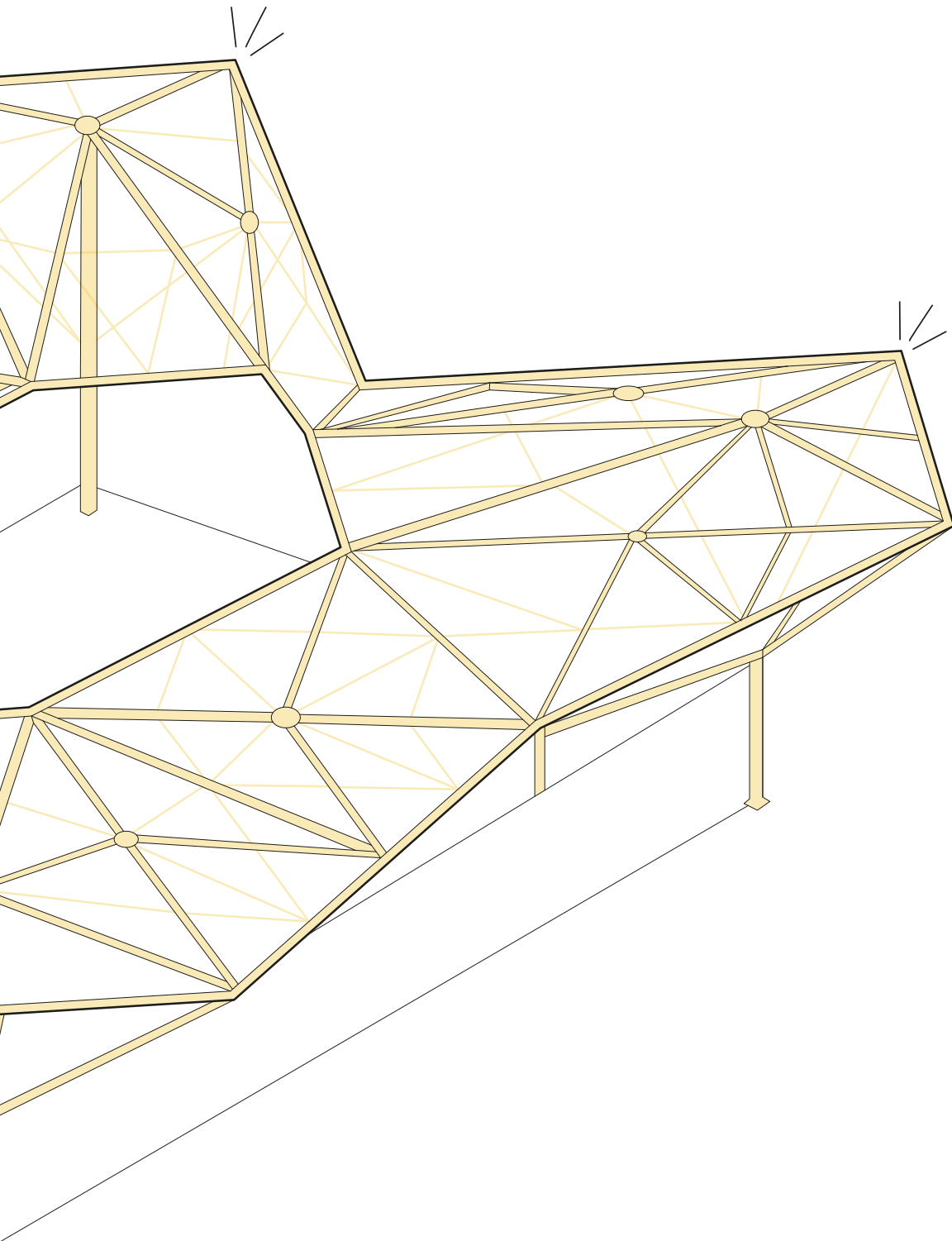




ATTRACTIVENESS

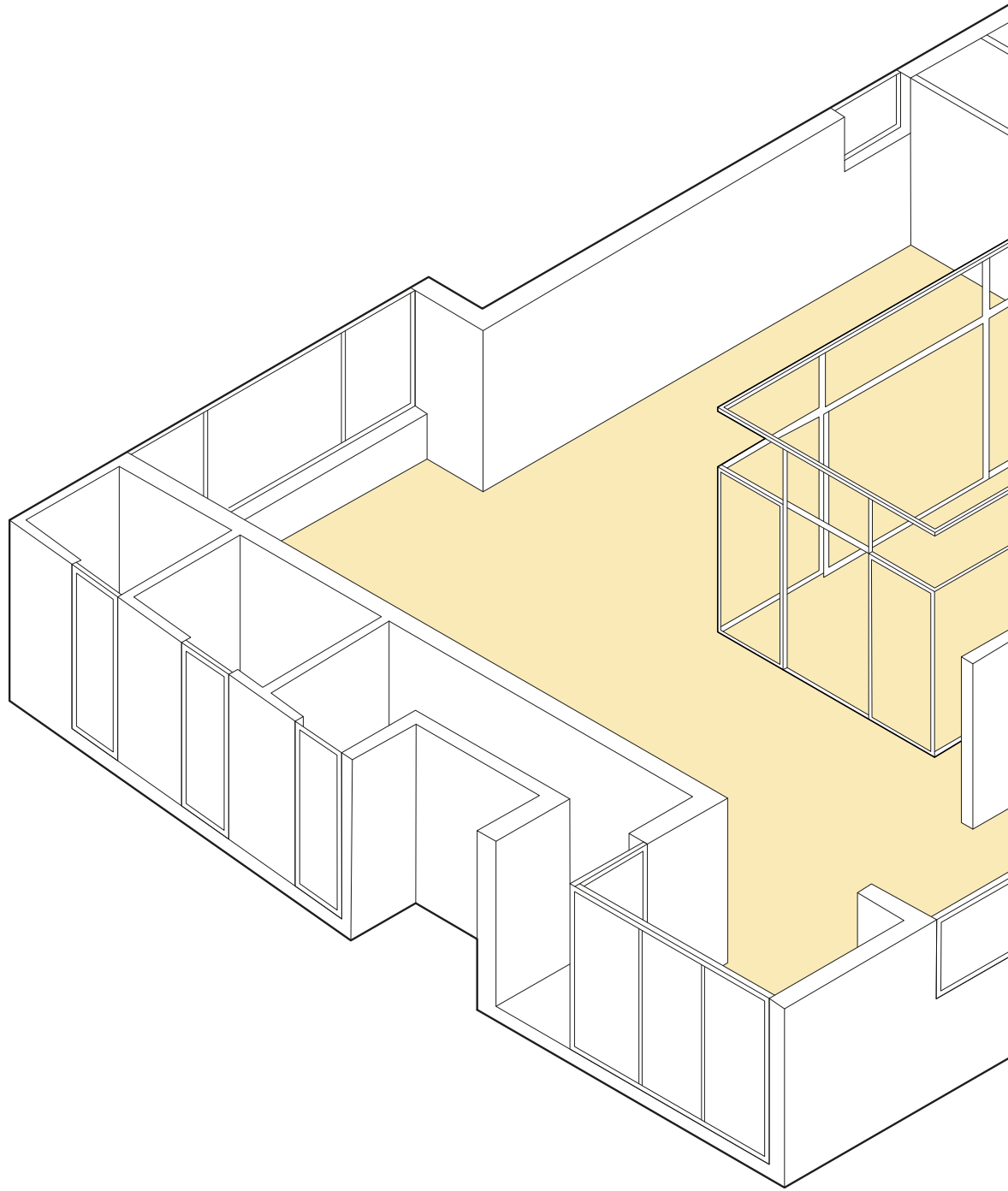
The steel canopy on the roof of the building defines its unique identity, by adding a dramatic component to the architecture. Its dynamic design with angular protrusions draws attention to visitors and passersby. Together with the plants climbing the steel structure, the canopy becomes an evolving green element that brings the center into harmony with the surrounding park. Thus, the steel canopy is not only an attractive feature, but also provides increasing integration into the environment.

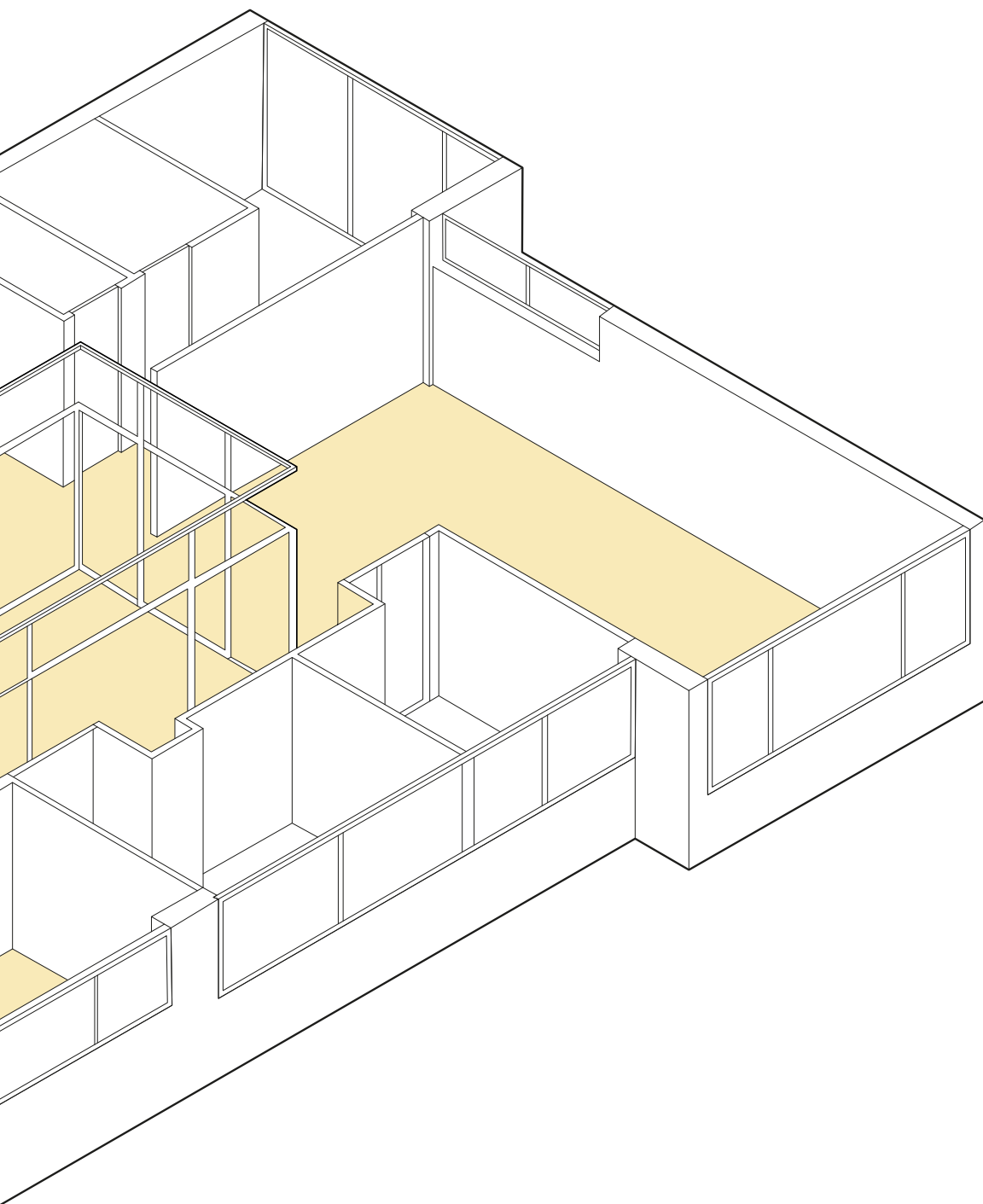




MULTIFUNCTIONALITY & FLEXIBILITY

Most of the building's interior is designed as an open floor plan, creating a flexible space that is reconfigurable and adaptable. This allows the program to be modified over time as the community needs a different layout or as the building's users adapt. Additionally, the central courtyard serves as a multifunctional outdoor space, that can be used for gatherings, recreational activities and small events.





YOUTH CENTRE RABOT / BEEL & ACHTERGAEL ARCHITECTS GENT, BELGIUM

Youth centre Rabot - Beel & Achtergael Architects / Gent, Belgium / 2007

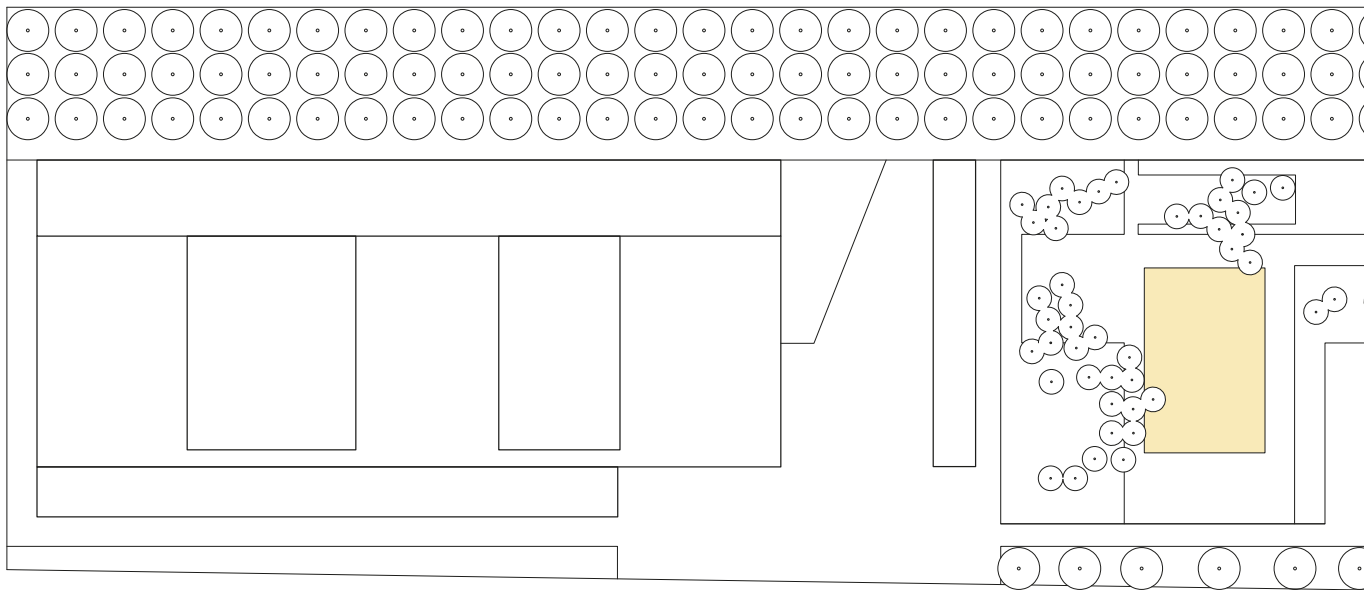


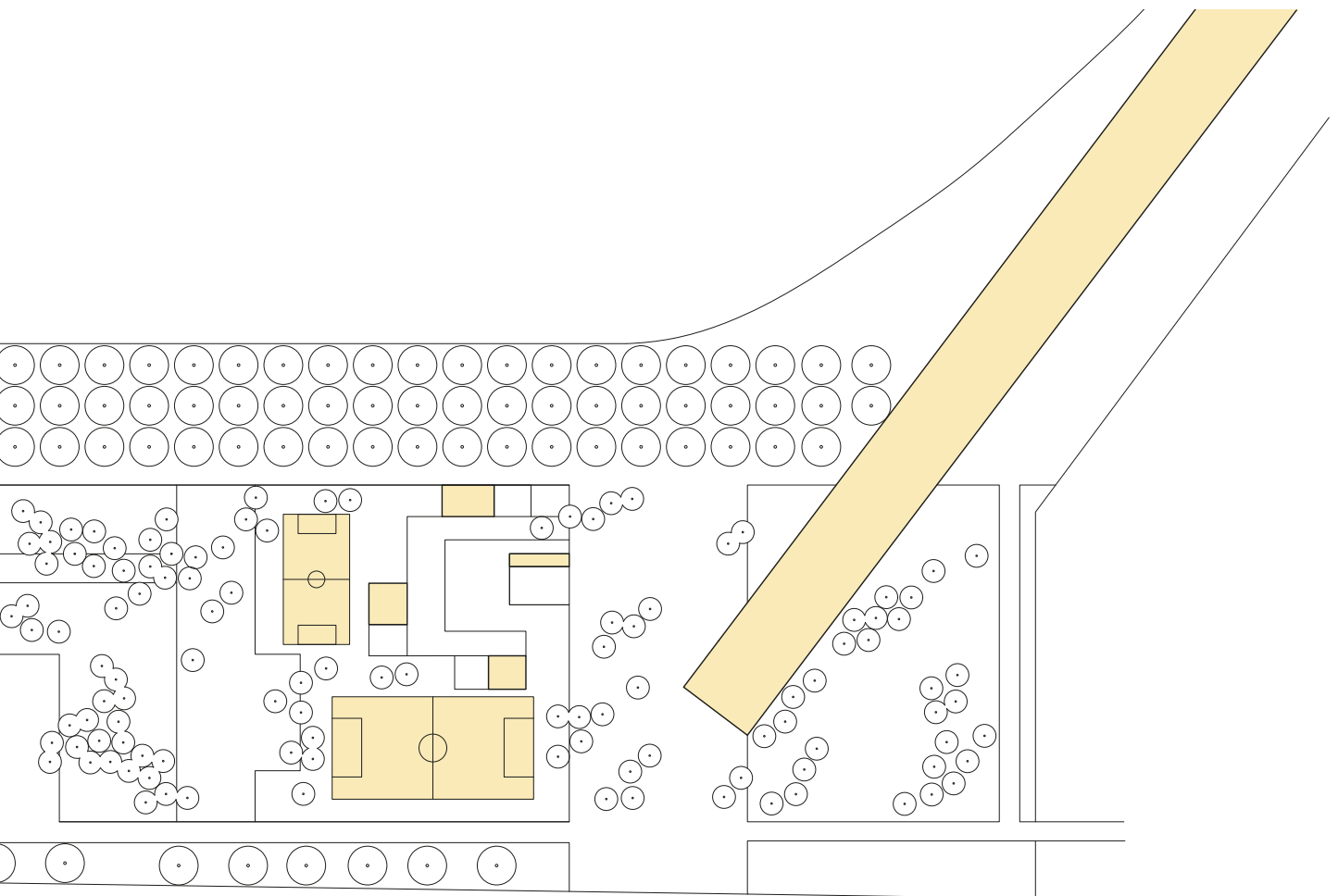
The Rabot youth centre and park is part of a European investment programme to support disadvantaged neighborhoods. The centre consists of three local youth clubs and a shared multifunctional hall. Each club operates as a autonomous part with their own spaces and entrance. The central hall is shared by all clubs and has an additional main entrance. Most of the centre is hidden underground, with the park extended on top. A patio provides each club with natural lighting (ArchitectenAchtergael, 2007).



INVITINGNESS & ATTRACTIVENESS

The Integration with the Rabot park creates an inviting and dynamic environment for youth. The adjacent sports field helps engagement in recreational activities, creating an attractive hub for young people. The bridge for trams and bikes connects the youth centre with the surrounding area and the city. The youth centre can be seen from this bridge, enhancing the visual appeal and attracting more people. Altogether, it creates an open, engaging, natural surrounding.

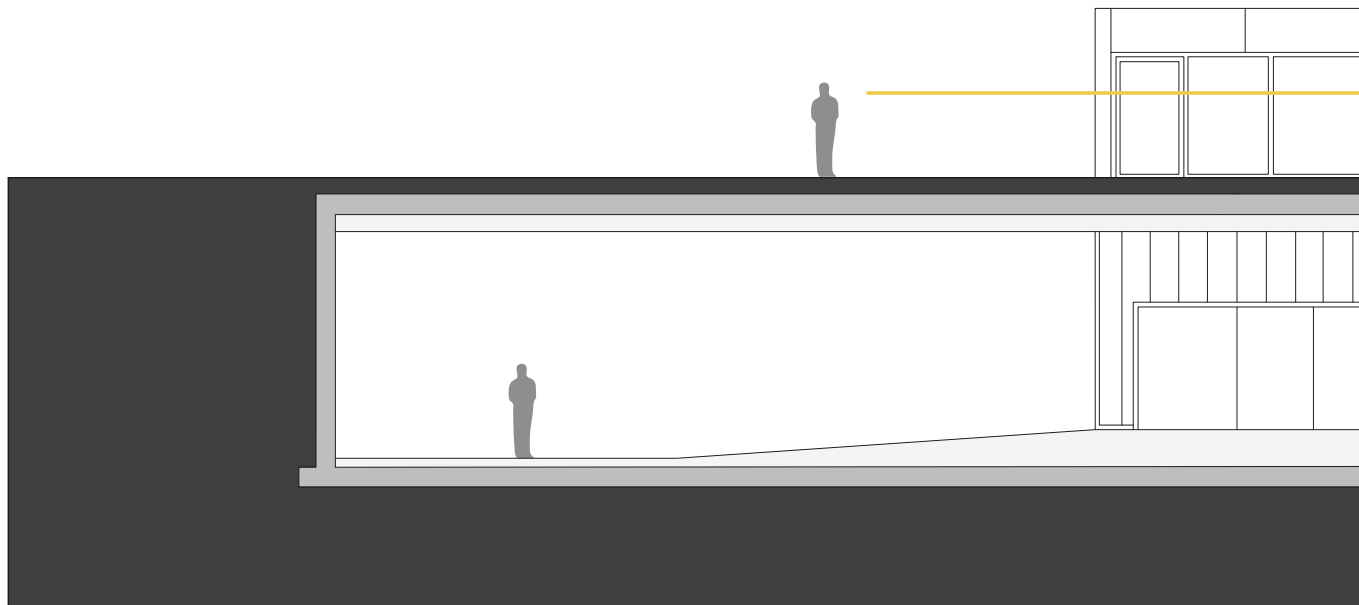


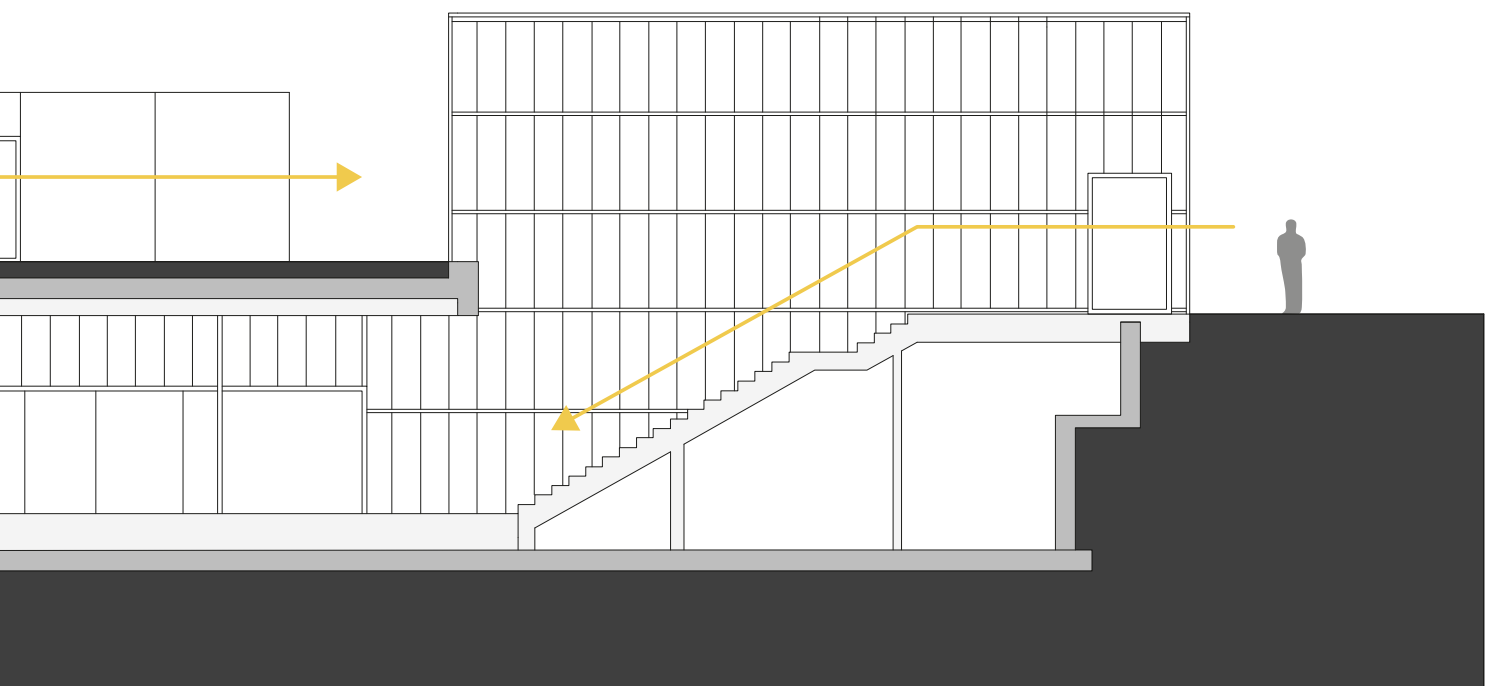


TRANSPARENCY

Because most of the building is underground, the center takes on a hidden, non-transparent character. This ensures the integration with the landscape and blends the centre seamlessly with the park. The modest above-ground pavilions have a subtle presence, drawing the attention of visitors. The visibility of these pavilions and the patios connecting above and below ground create a sense of transparency while encouraging curiosity and anonymity. The highest above-ground structure accentuates the open entrance to the main hall.

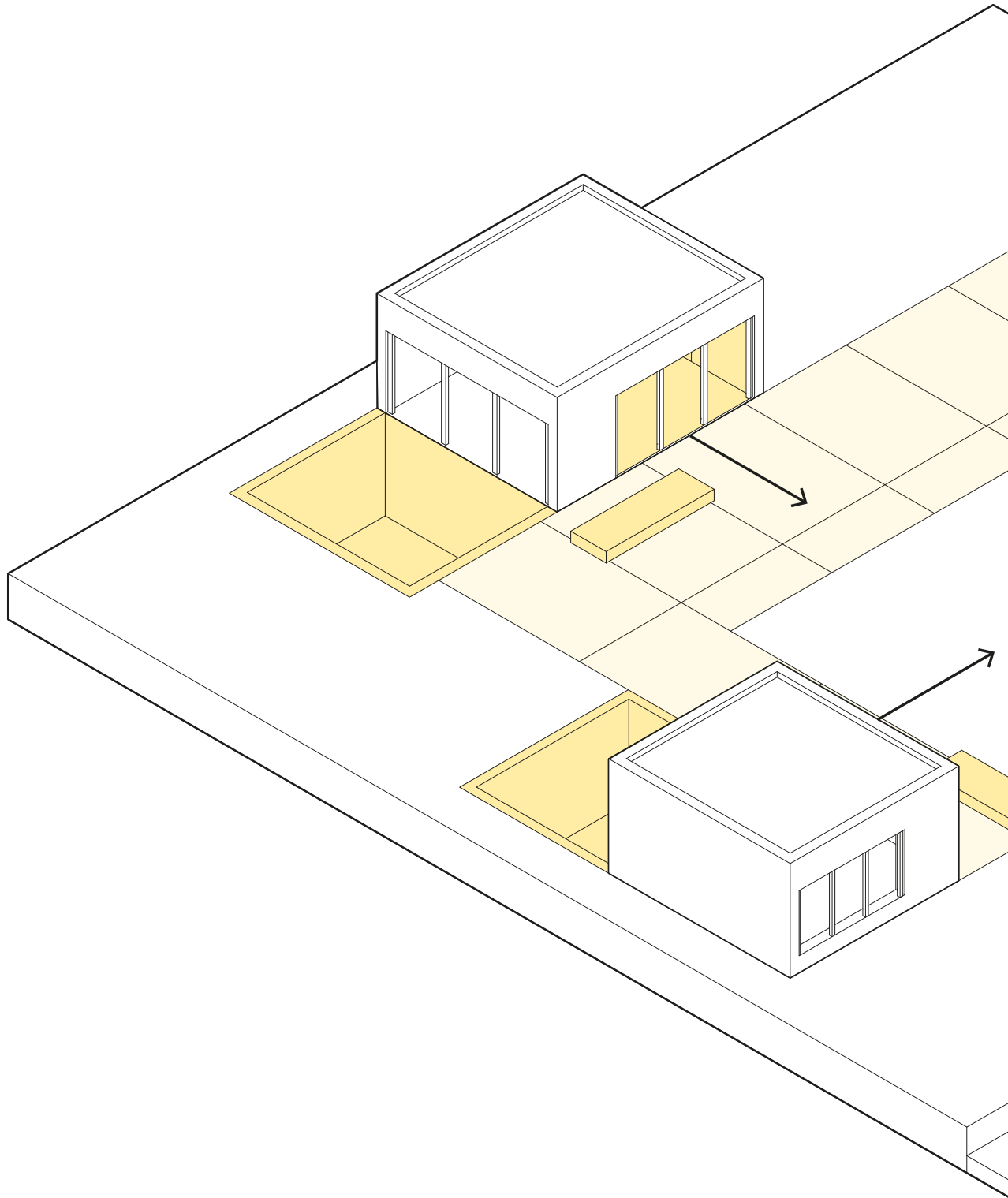
Youth centre Rabot - Beel & Achtergael Architects / Gent, Belgium / 2007

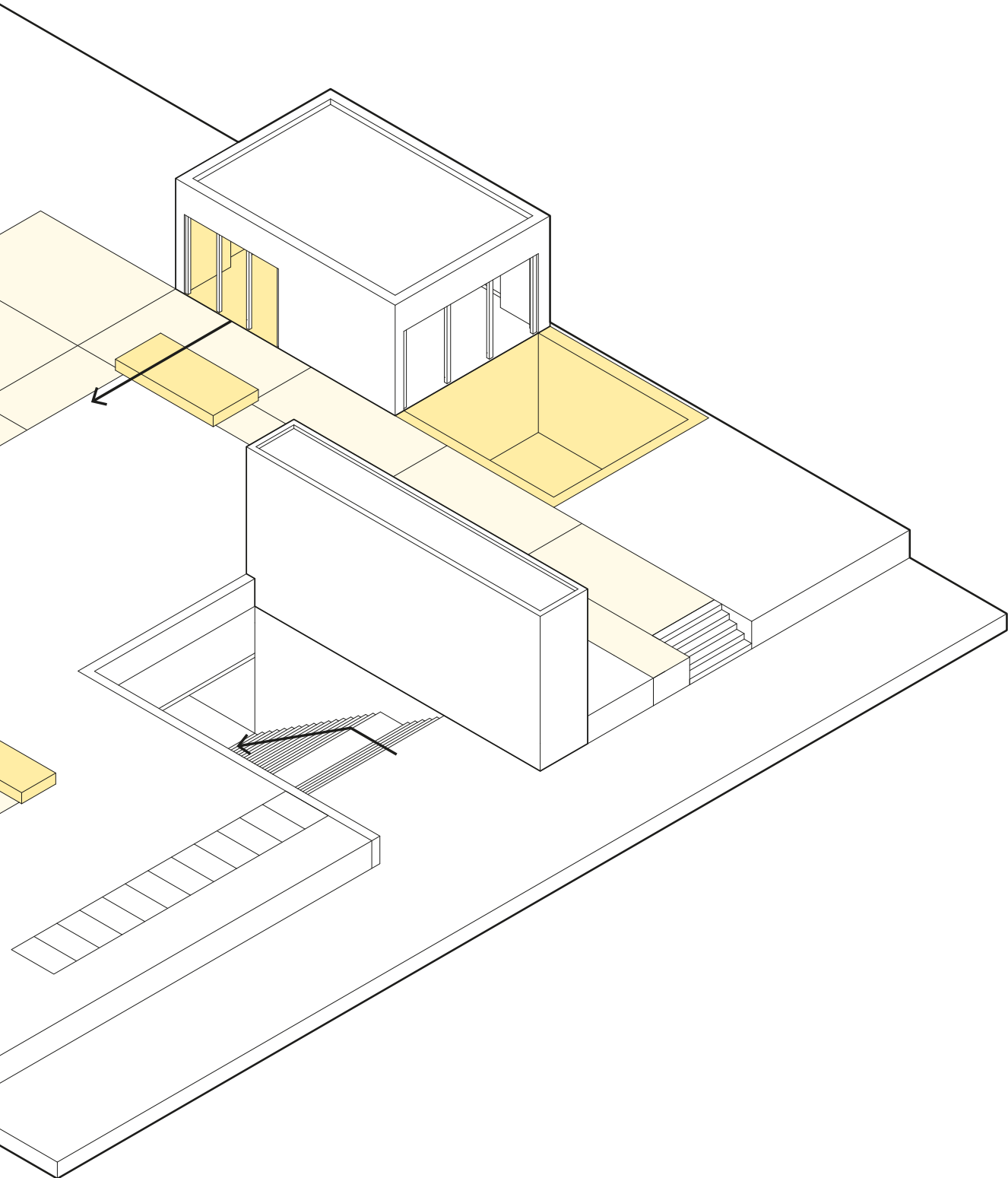




ACTIVATION

The integration of indoor and outdoor spaces ensures the activation of the shared outdoor space between the pavilions. This central space functions as a gathering area, and encourages interaction and recreation. The patios that connect the underground with this shared outdoor space ensures the relationship between inside and outside. Besides, the multifunctional hall draws people to the outdoor space and into the centre. The shared spaces of the otherwise individual youth clubs thus plays a crucial role in activating the area.

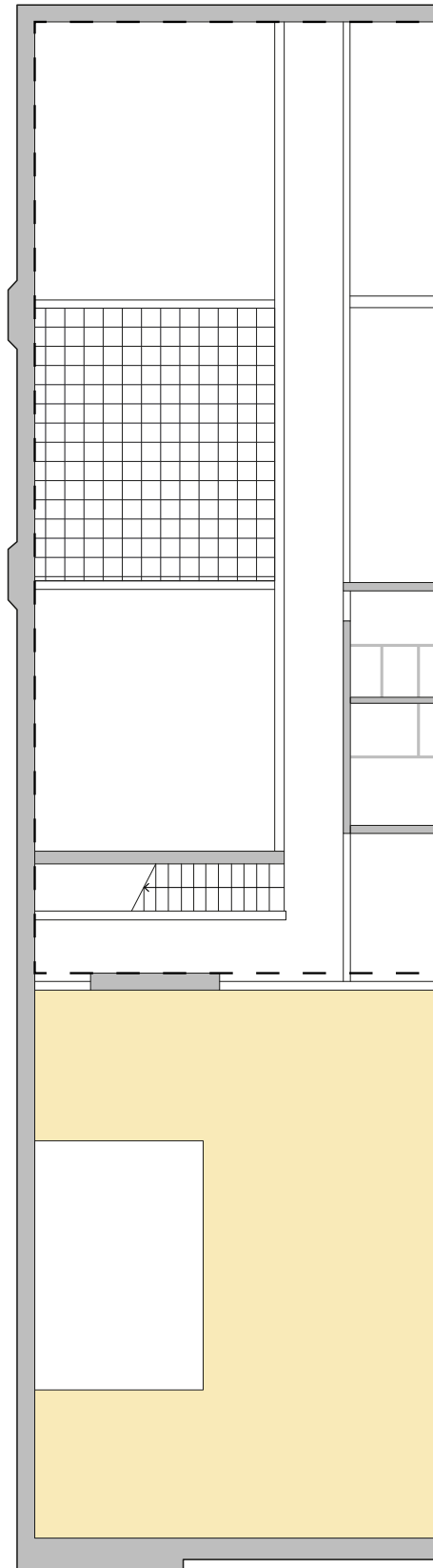


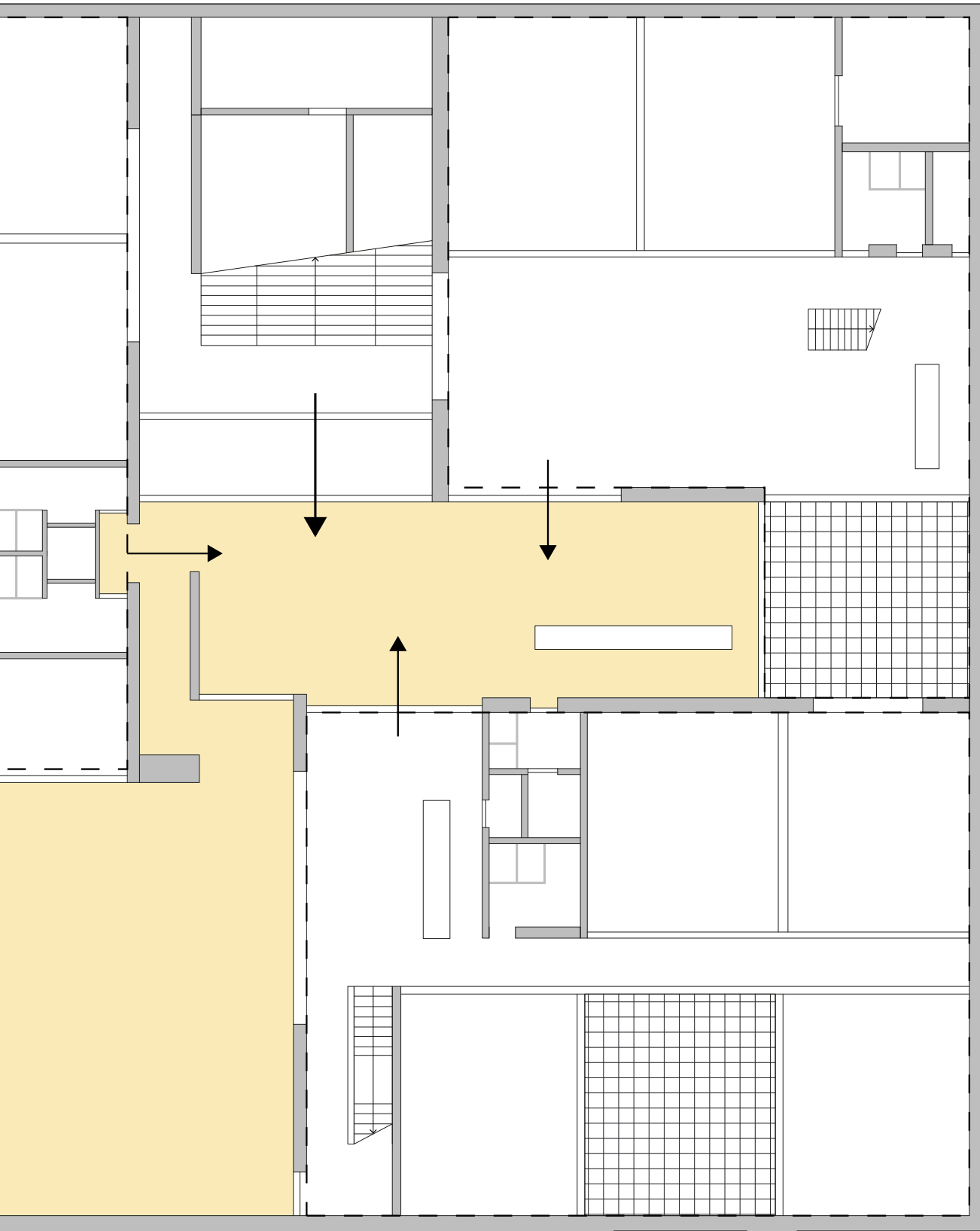


CONCATENATION & MULTIFUNCTION

The three separate youth clubs are each organized around their own patio, which connects the underground club with the shared outdoor space above-ground. Additionally, the independent clubs are concatenated to a shared space. This central interior space serves as the foyer of the multipurpose hall and is accessed through the prominent main entrance. The multifunctional hall can be used by the public and the three youth clubs. Thanks to the exceptional sound insulation provided by the earth layer, the common room is well suited for a concert hall.

Youth centre Rabot - Beel & Achtergael Architects / Gent, Belgium / 2007





COMPARE & CONCLUDE

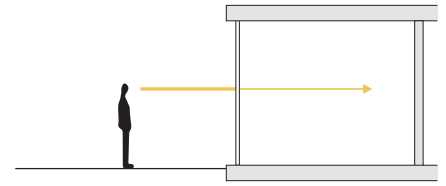
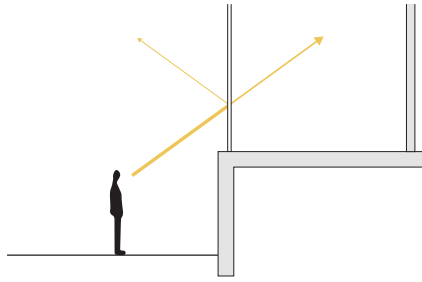
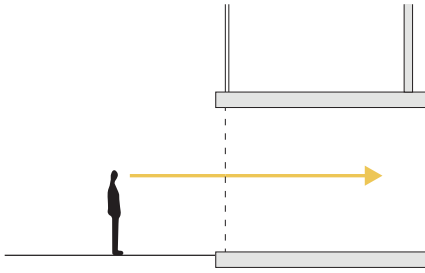
The insights from the youth center case studies are systematically compared and analyzed. In doing so, different design strategies are identified based on design parameters. By examining how each case study deals with these parameters, patterns and differences in design approaches are revealed. The result of this analysis is the formulation of a coherent framework of design principles. These principles are intended to construct a framework of design strategies. This framework serves as a bridge between theoretical analysis and practical application and provides a solid foundation for the design of new youth centers. It allows learned insights to be translated into design solutions based on specific design strategies.

ECAM YOUTH CENTER / AGWA
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

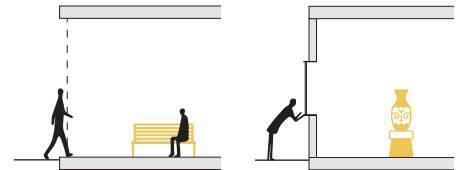
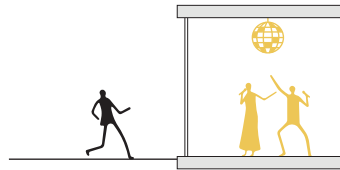
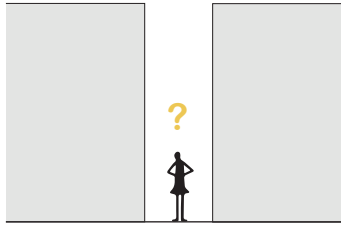
DYNAMO / DIEDERENDIRRIX
EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS

VIAS CULTURAL CENTER / ESTUDIO SIC
LEÓN, SPAIN

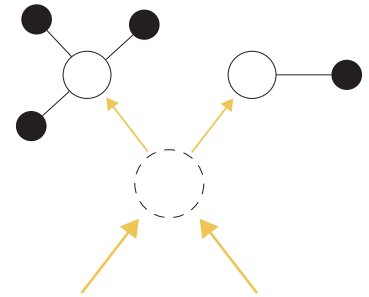
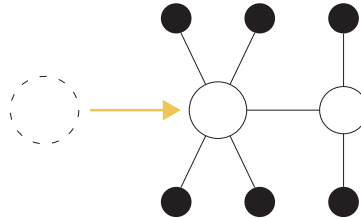
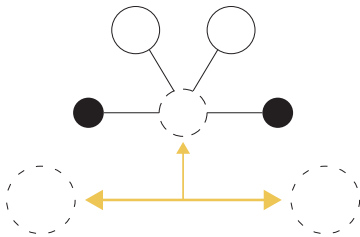
TRANSPARENCY



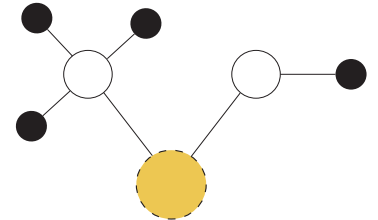
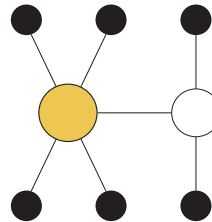
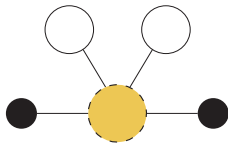
ATTRACTIVENESS



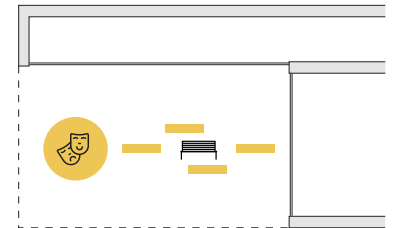
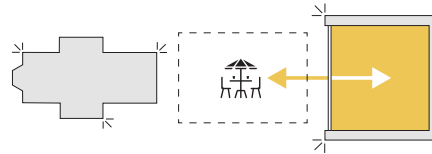
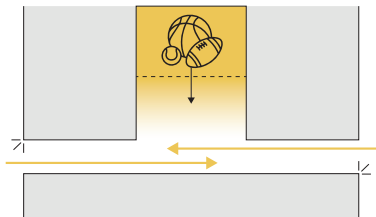
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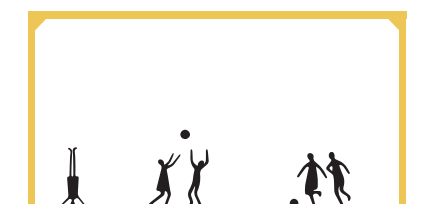
CONCATENATION



ACTIVATION

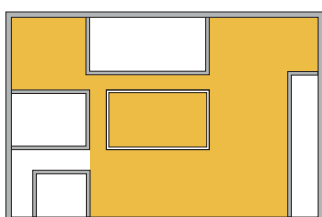
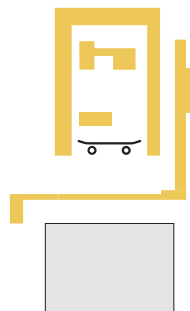
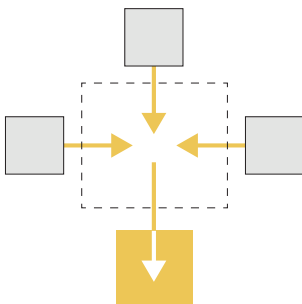
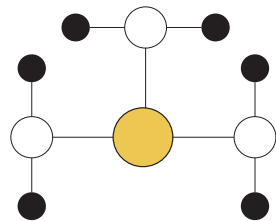
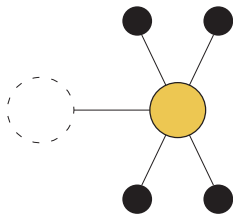
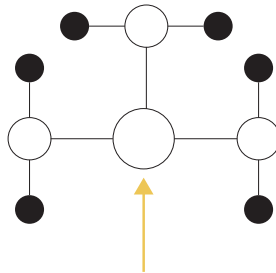
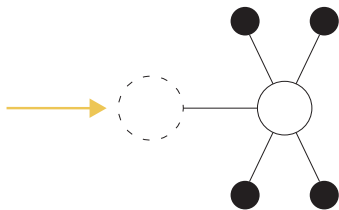
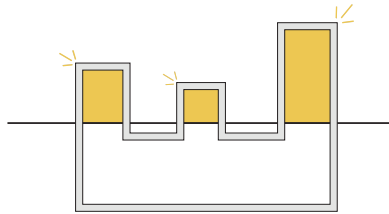
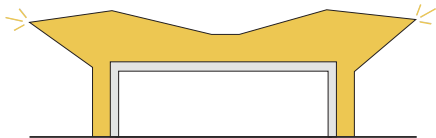
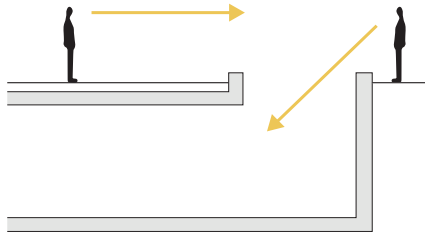
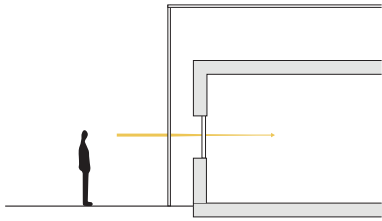


MULTIFUNCTIONALITY



**WATERLOO YOUTH CENTRE /
COLLINS AND TURNER**
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

YOUTH CENTRE RABOT
GHENT, BELGIUM



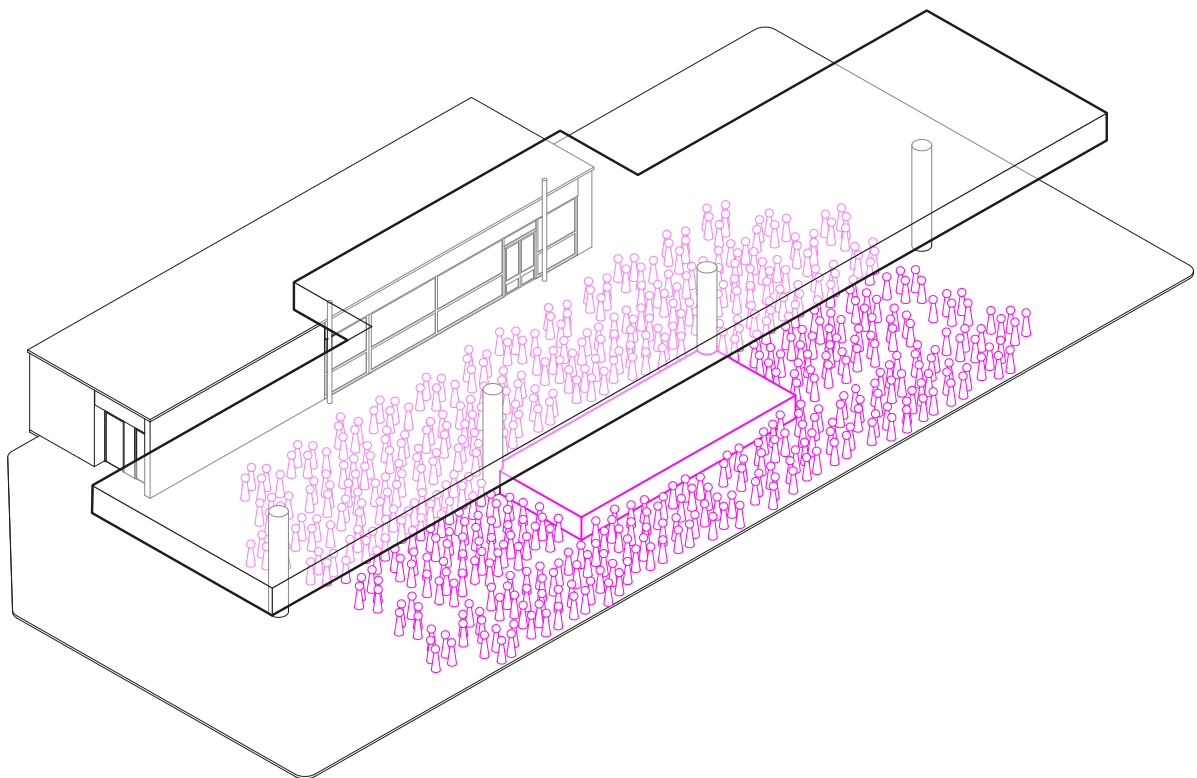
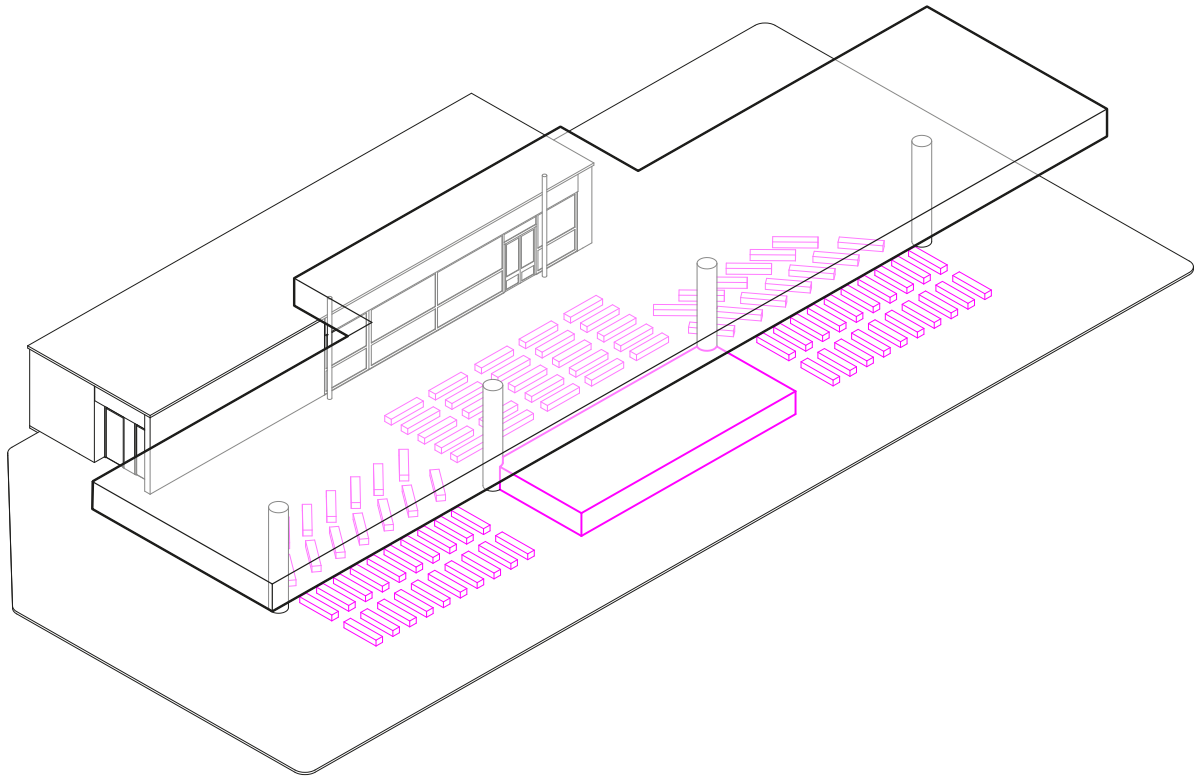


*How can the established design principles
be applied to the design of a youth centre
in Amsterdam North?*

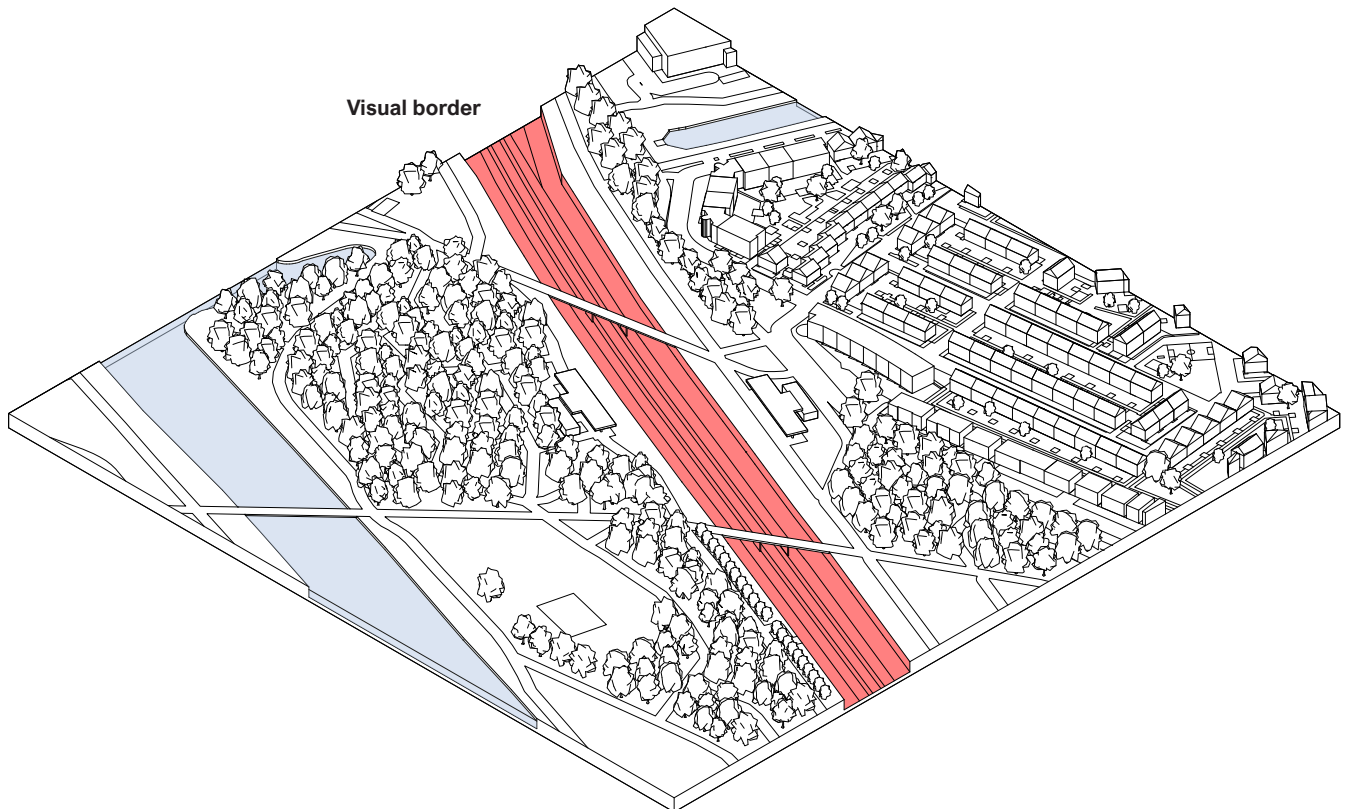
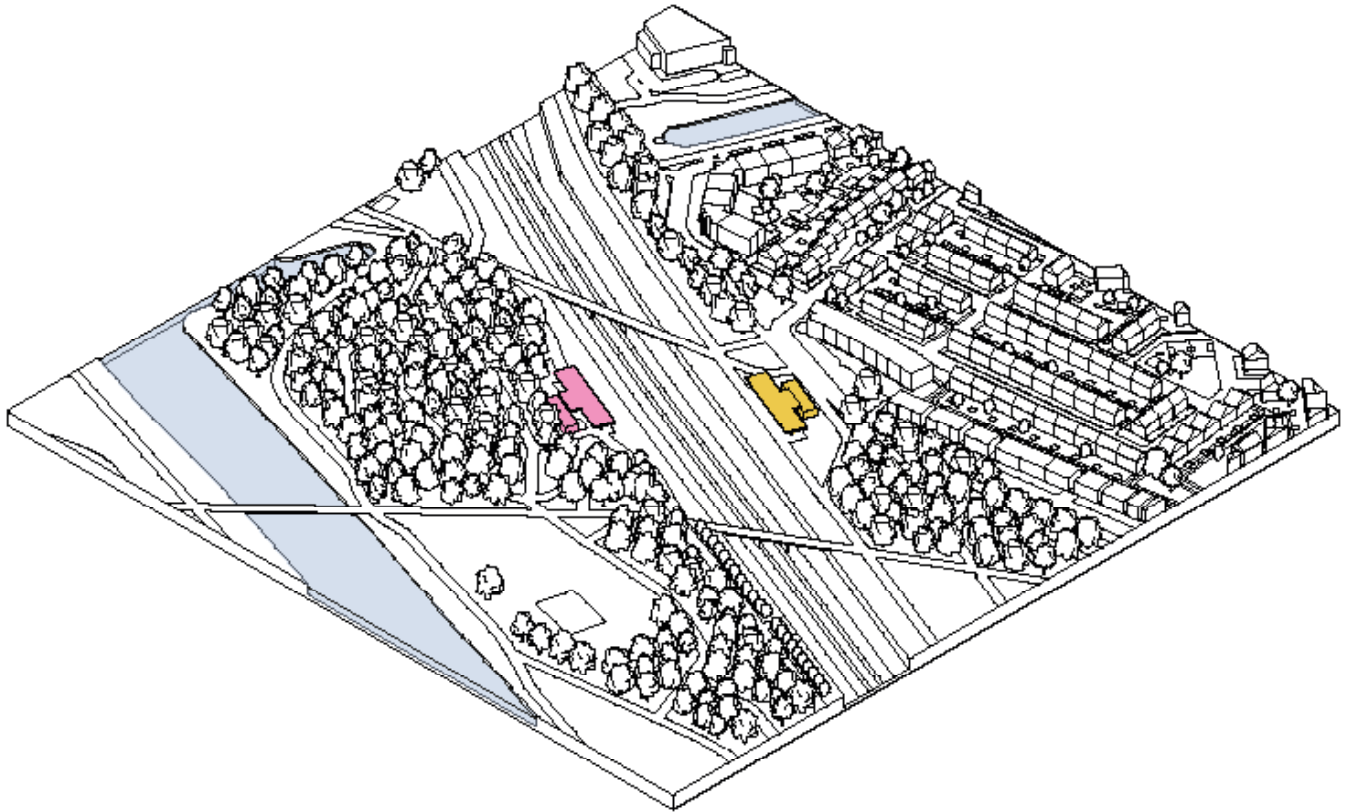
CHAPTER 5

APPLYING
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

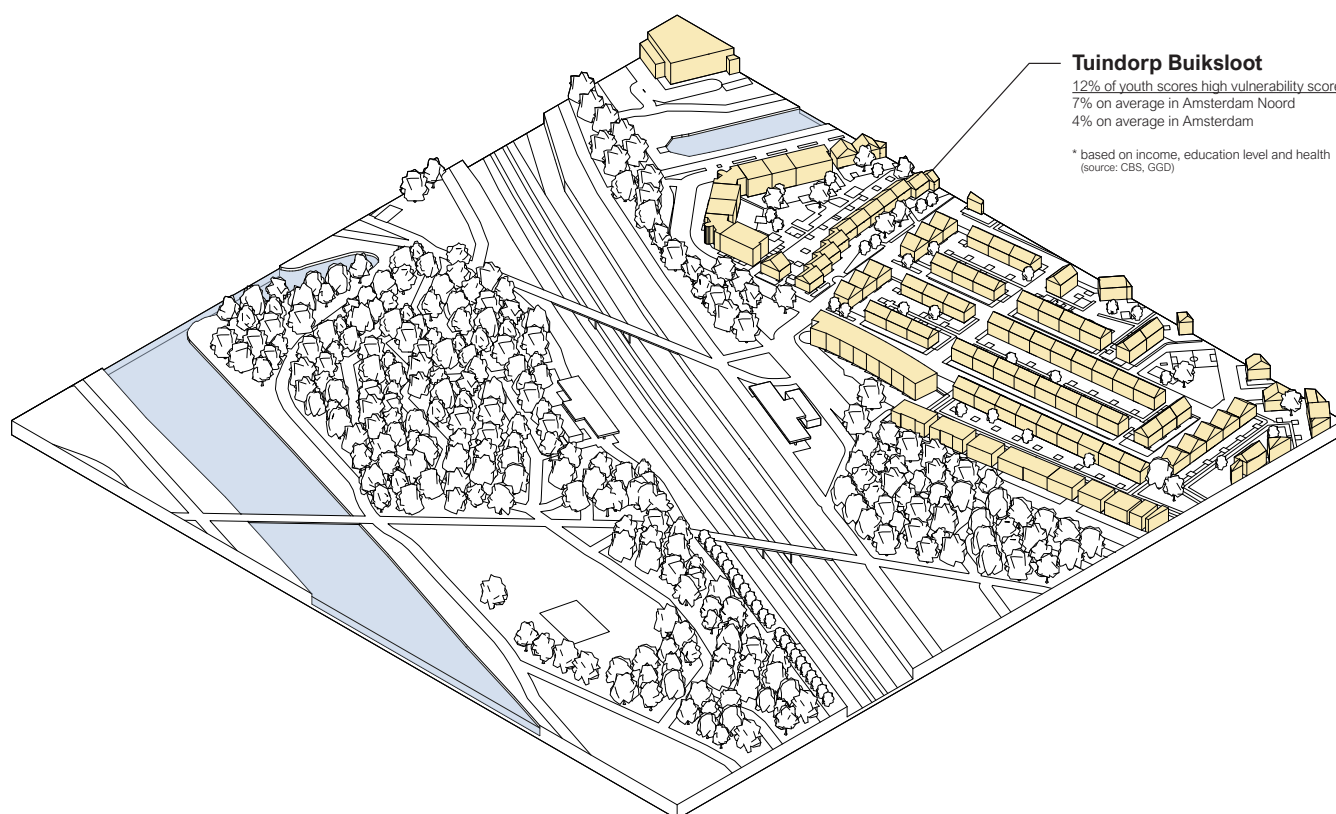
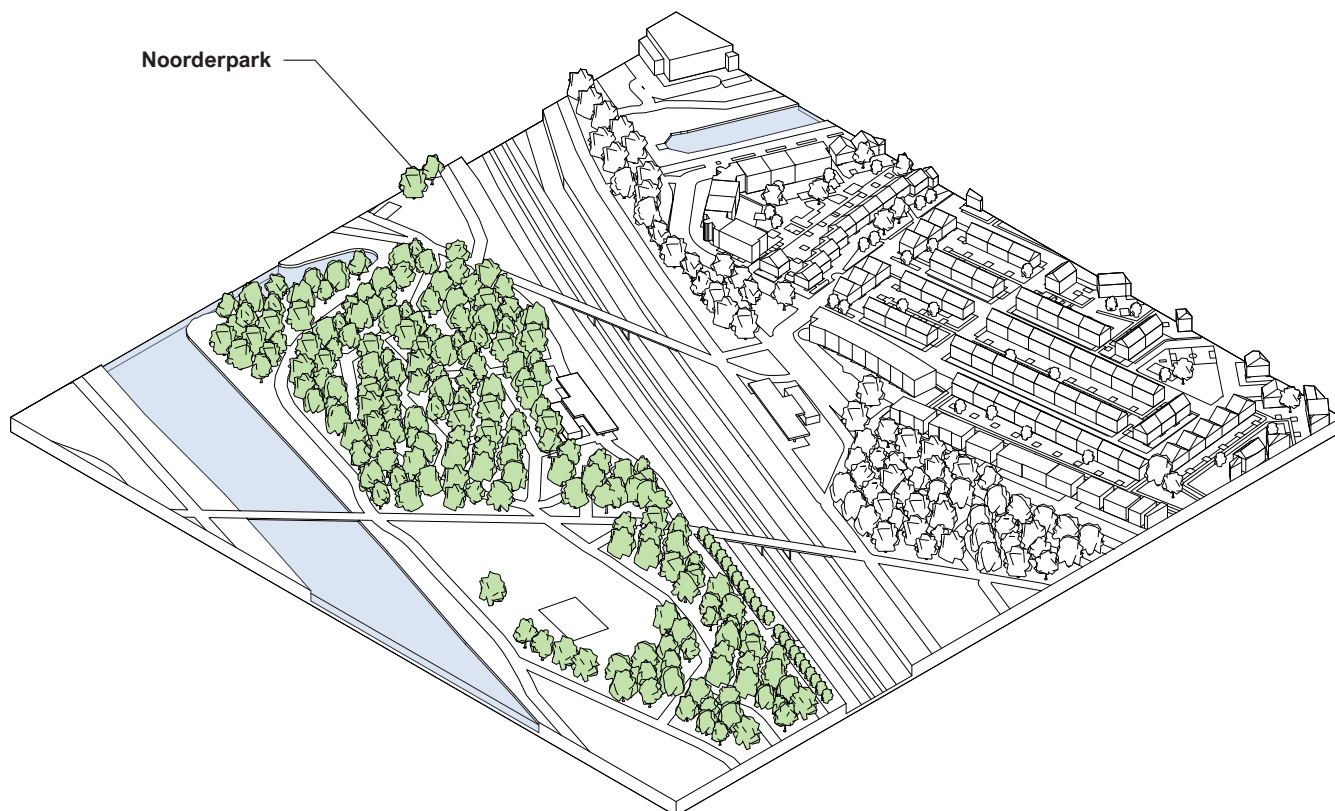
The design framework developed is applied to a specific case, translating theoretical principles into a practical solution. This process adapts the identified design parameters to the unique conditions of the site. By iteratively testing and refining these principles within the constraints of the site, it becomes clear how the design principles can be deployed. This approach shows how structured insights can lead to actual solutions that serve the needs of a youth center in Amsterdam North. This chapter will seek an answer on the fifth sub question: *How can the established design principles be applied to the design of a youth centre in Amsterdam North?* It will do so by applying the obtained design parameters to the **Gele Pomp and Roze Tanker** in Amsterdam Noord. This chapter will start with a site and building analysis of these two old gas stations. Next it will apply the obtained design parameters, to understand them in the context of the gas stations. Lastly, selections of design parameters will be used to develop possible design variants. Two of those are worked out as draft designs.



SITE ANALYSIS



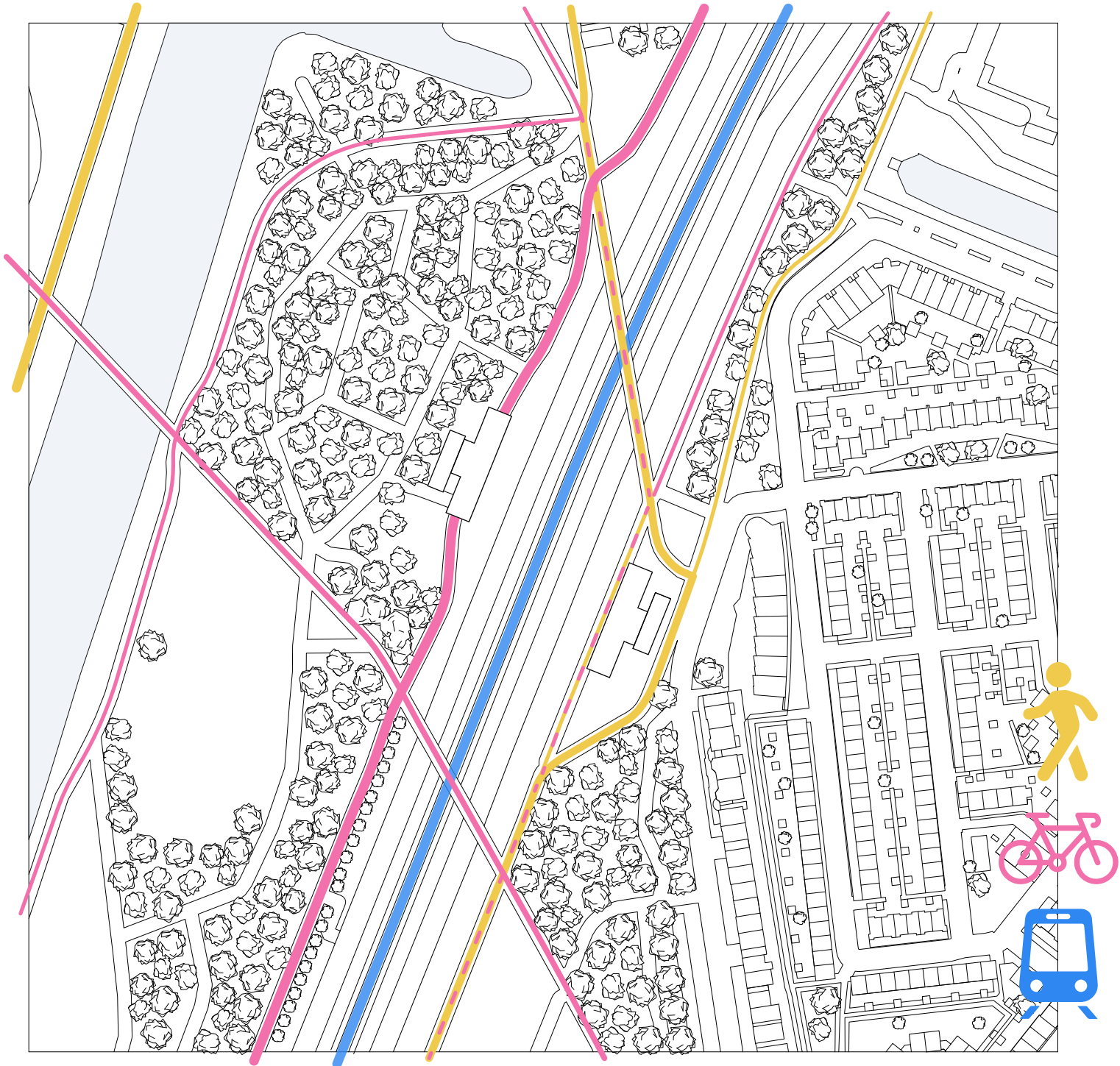
Noorderpark

**Tuindorp Buiksloot**

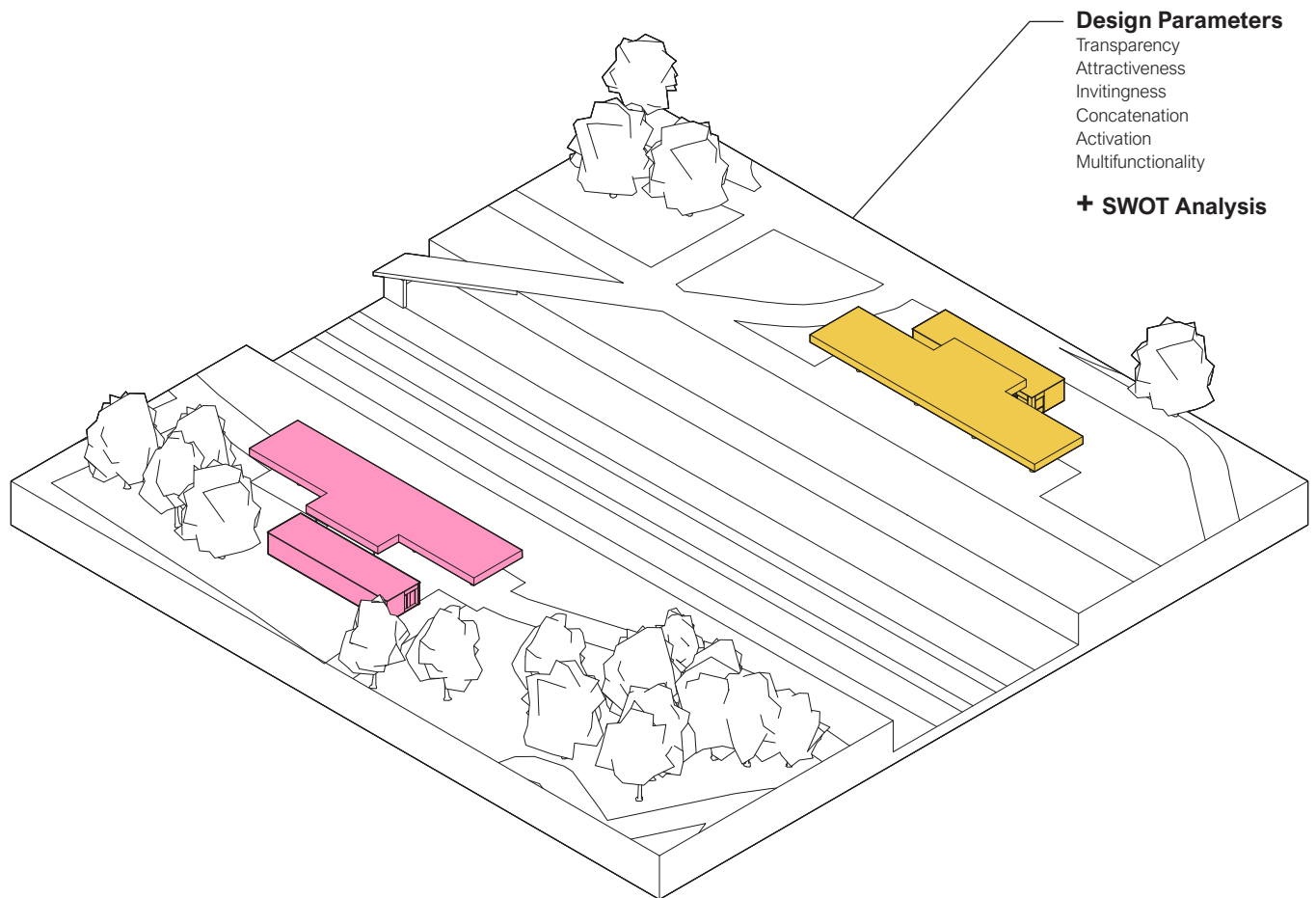
12% of youth scores high vulnerability score*
 7% on average in Amsterdam Noord
 4% on average in Amsterdam

* based on income, education level and health
 (source: CBS, GGD)

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE

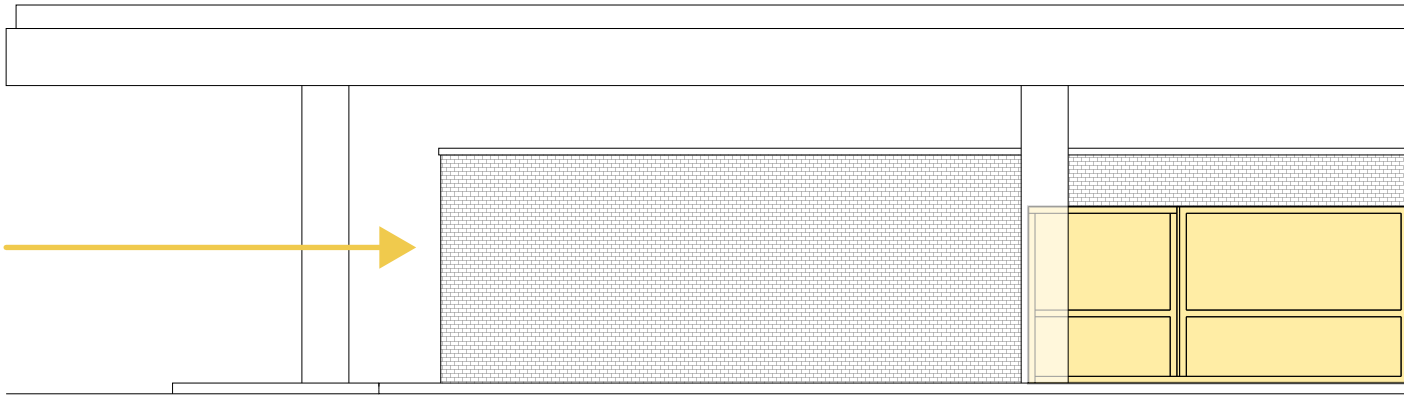


BUILDING ANALYSIS

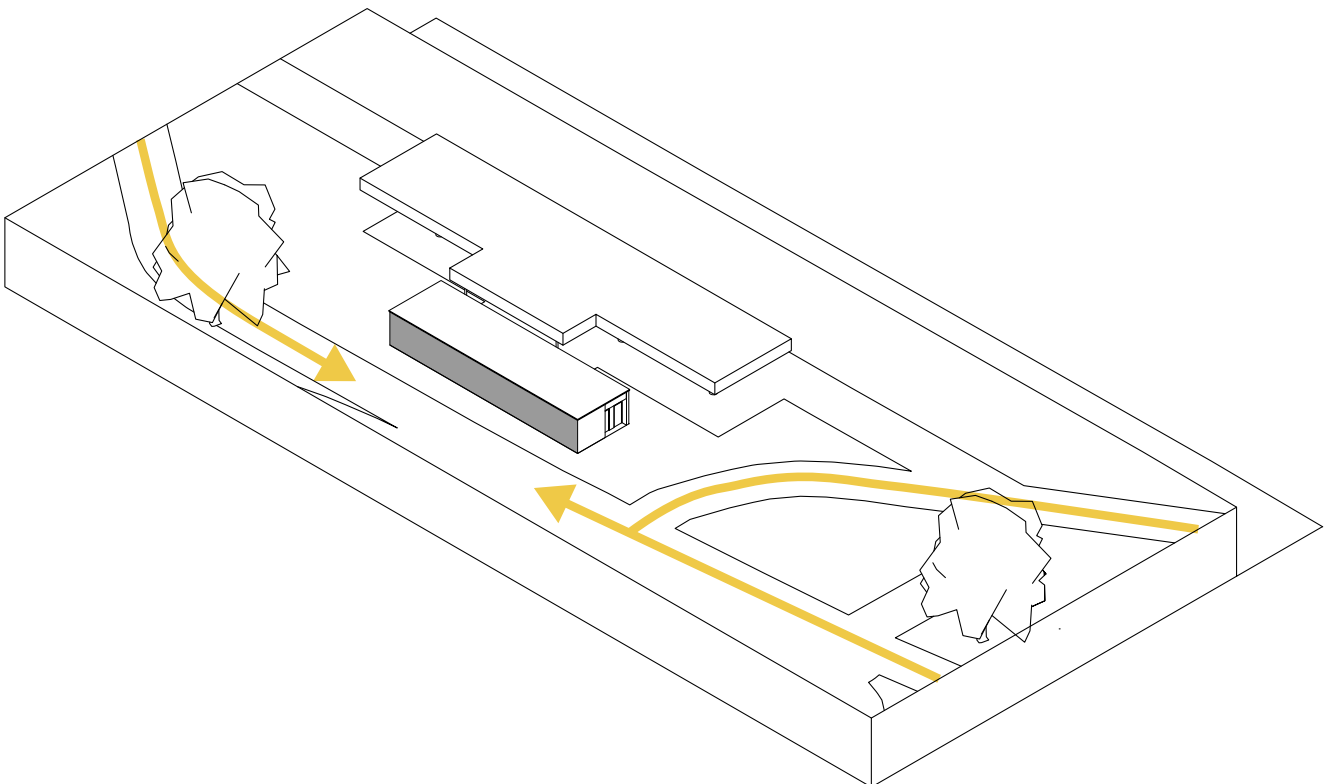


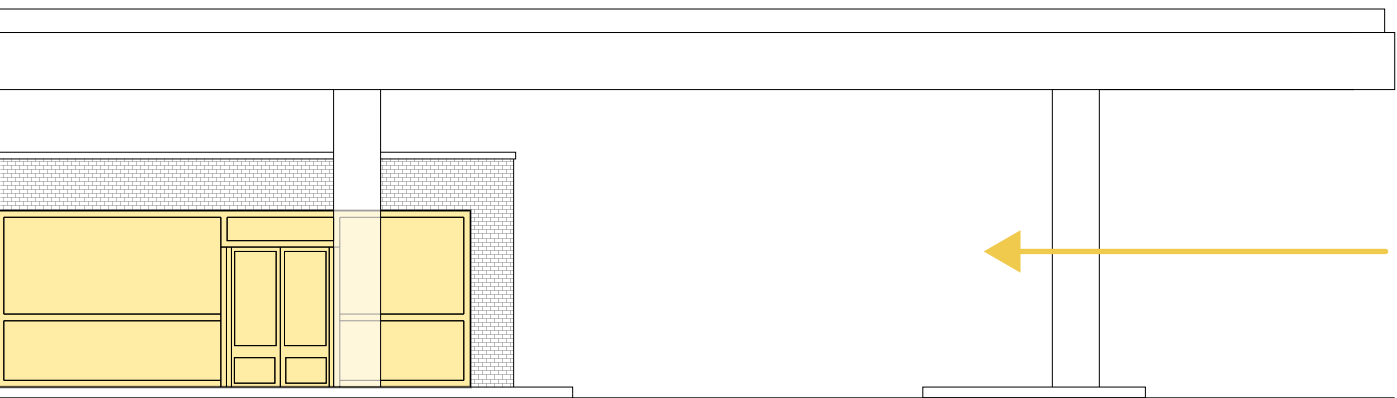
TRANSPARENCY

STRENGTH

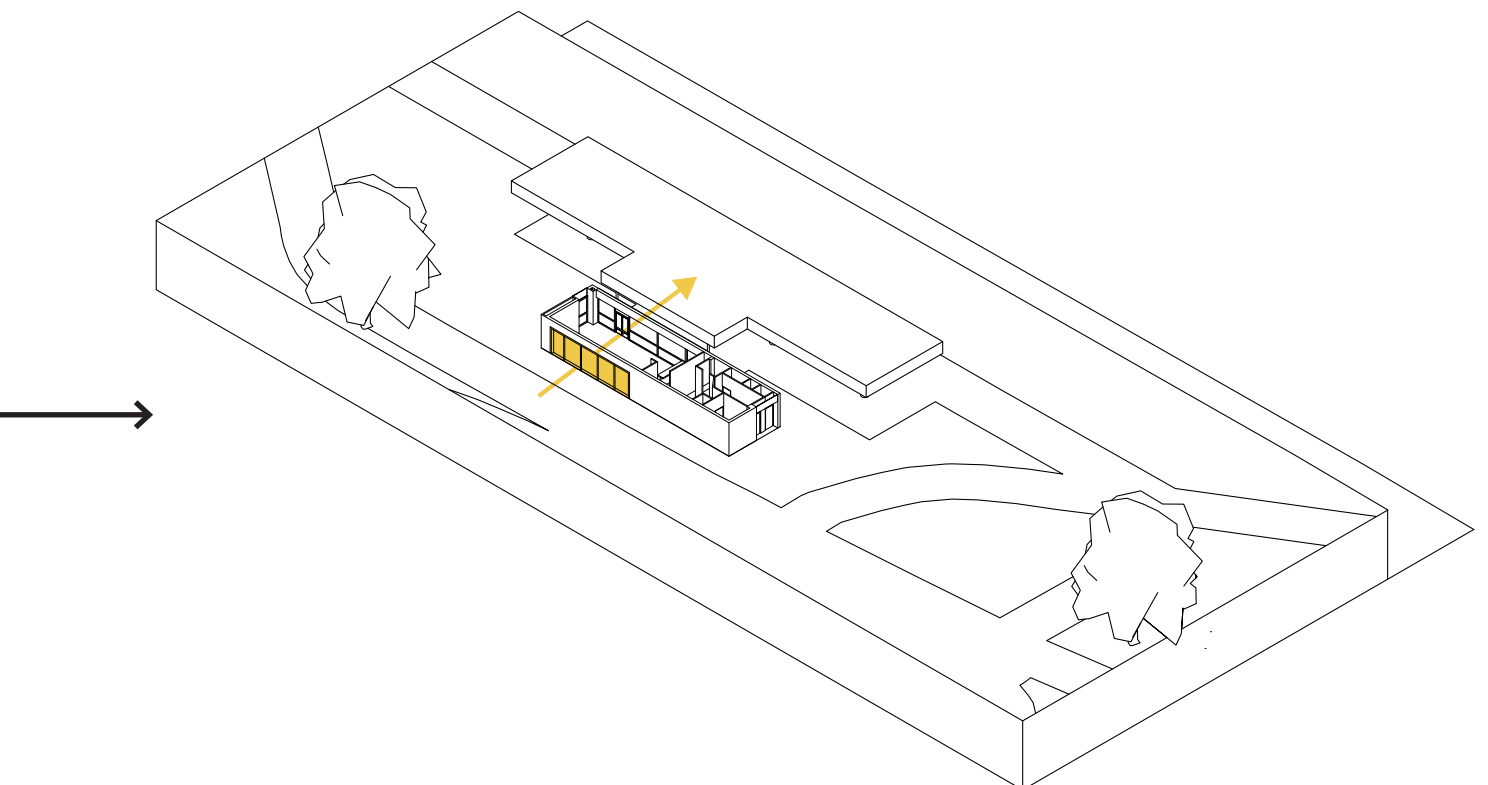


WEAKNESS



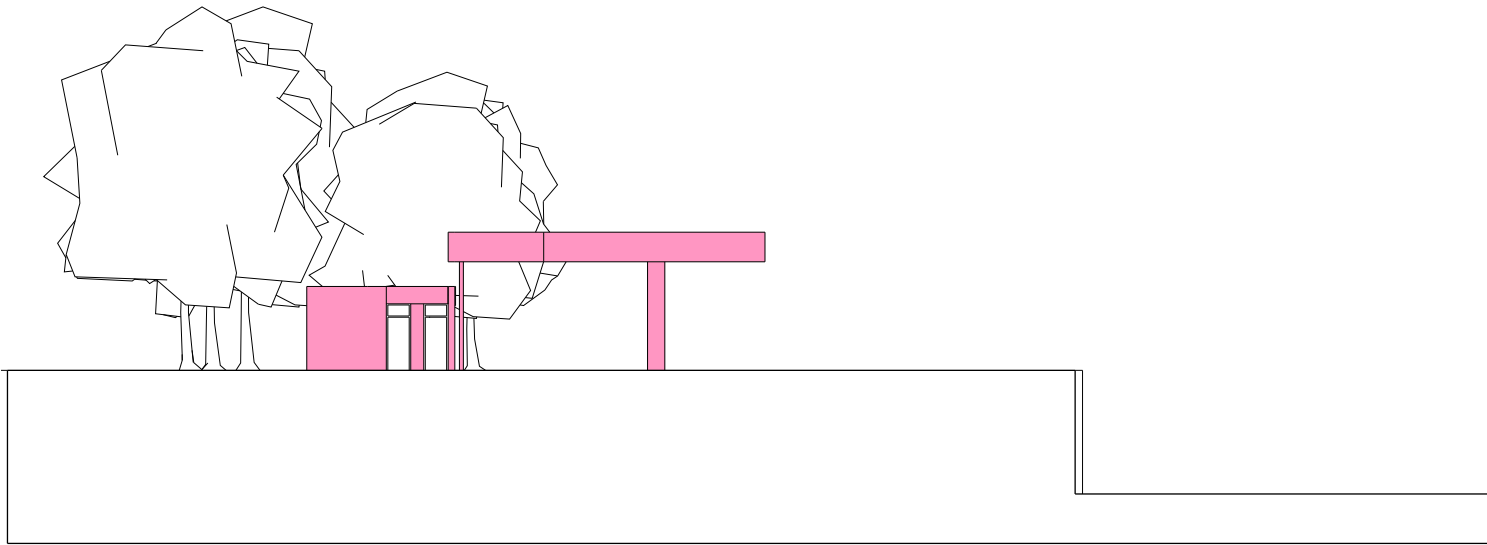
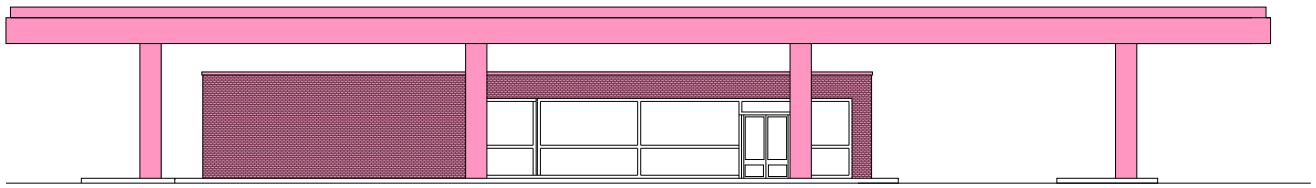


OPPORTUNITY

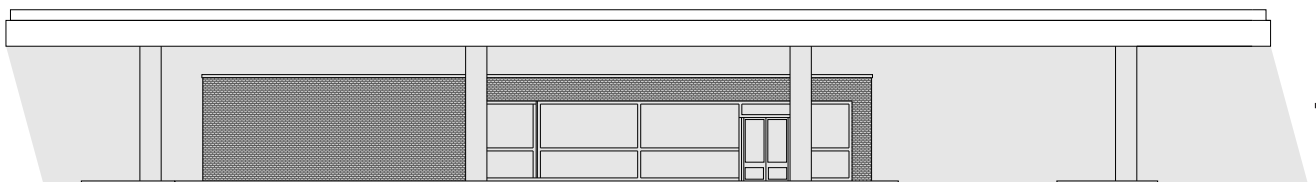


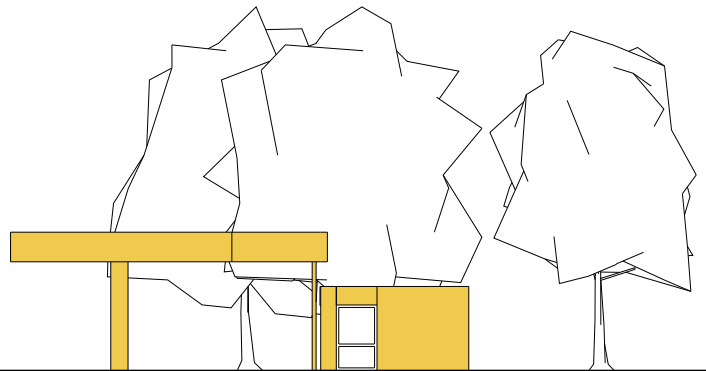
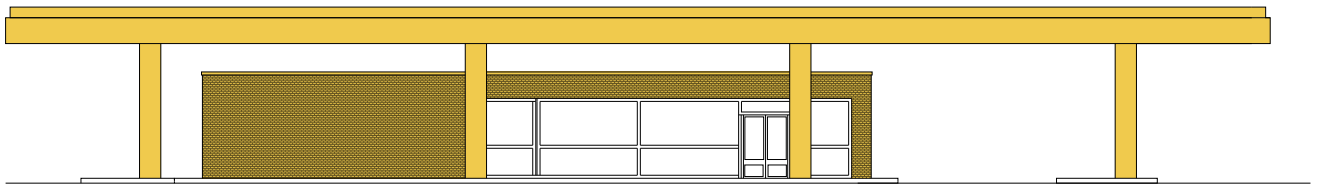
ATTRACTIVENESS

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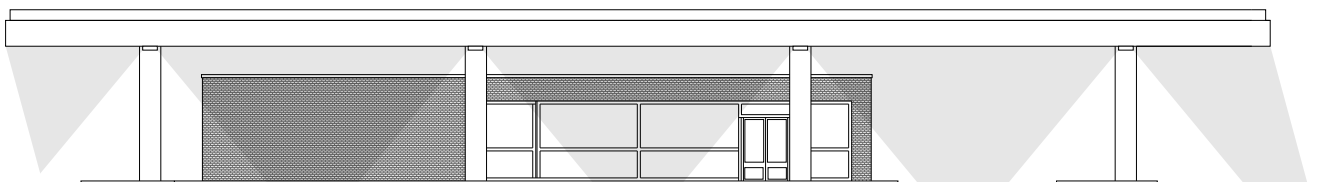


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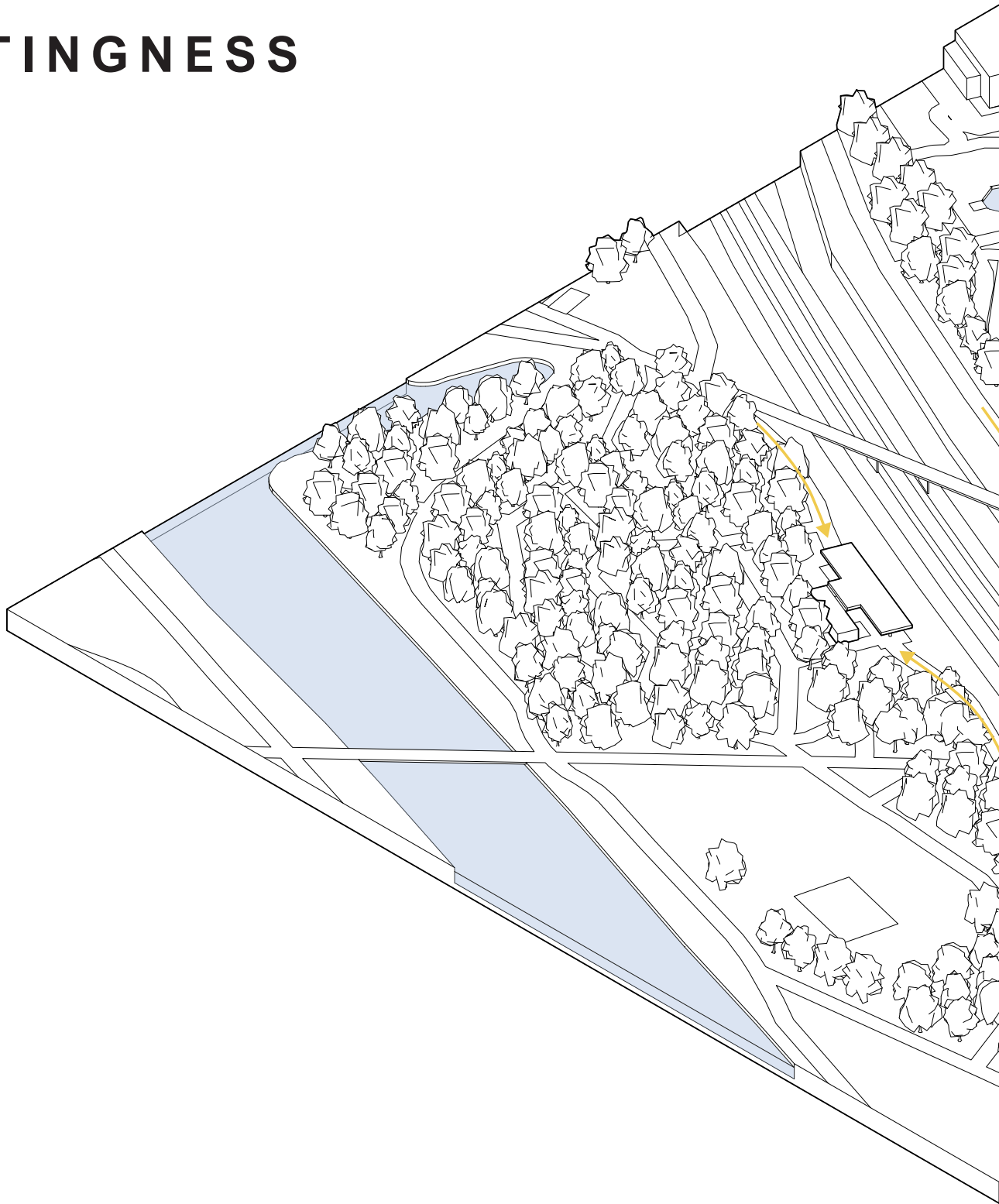




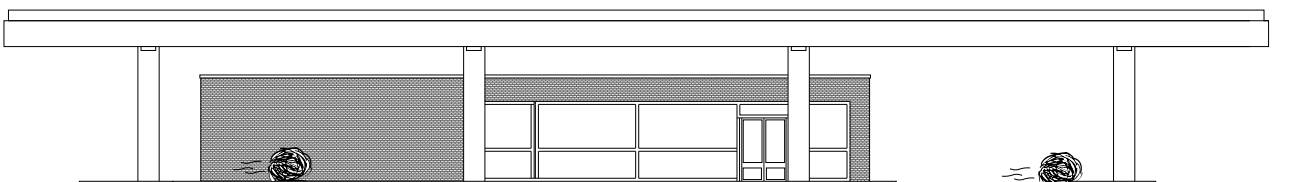
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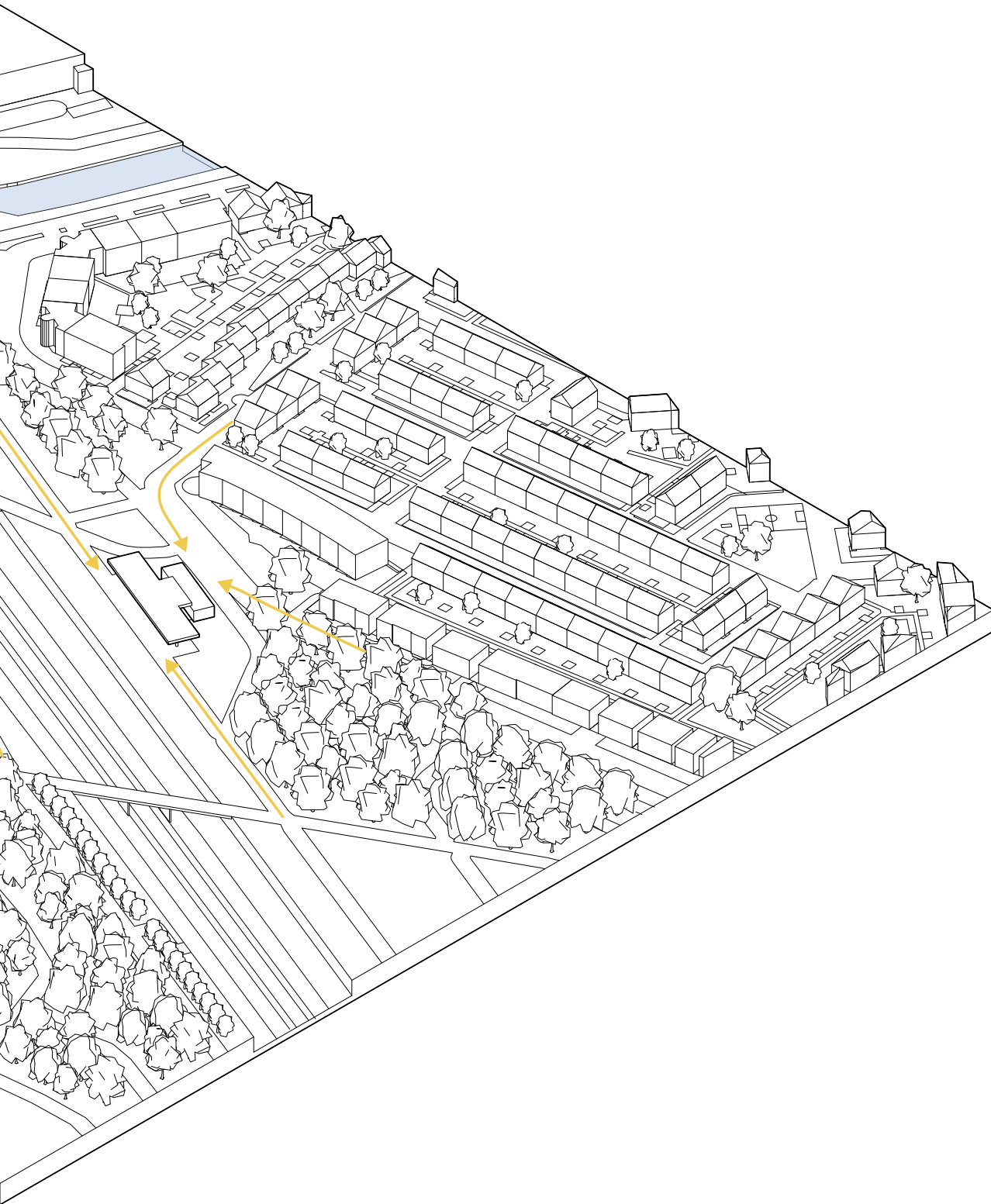


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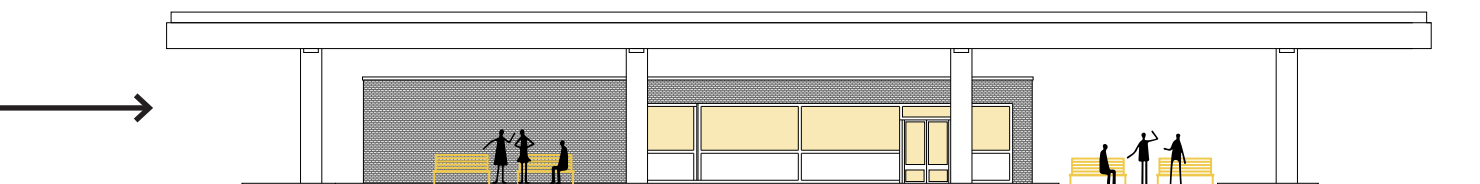


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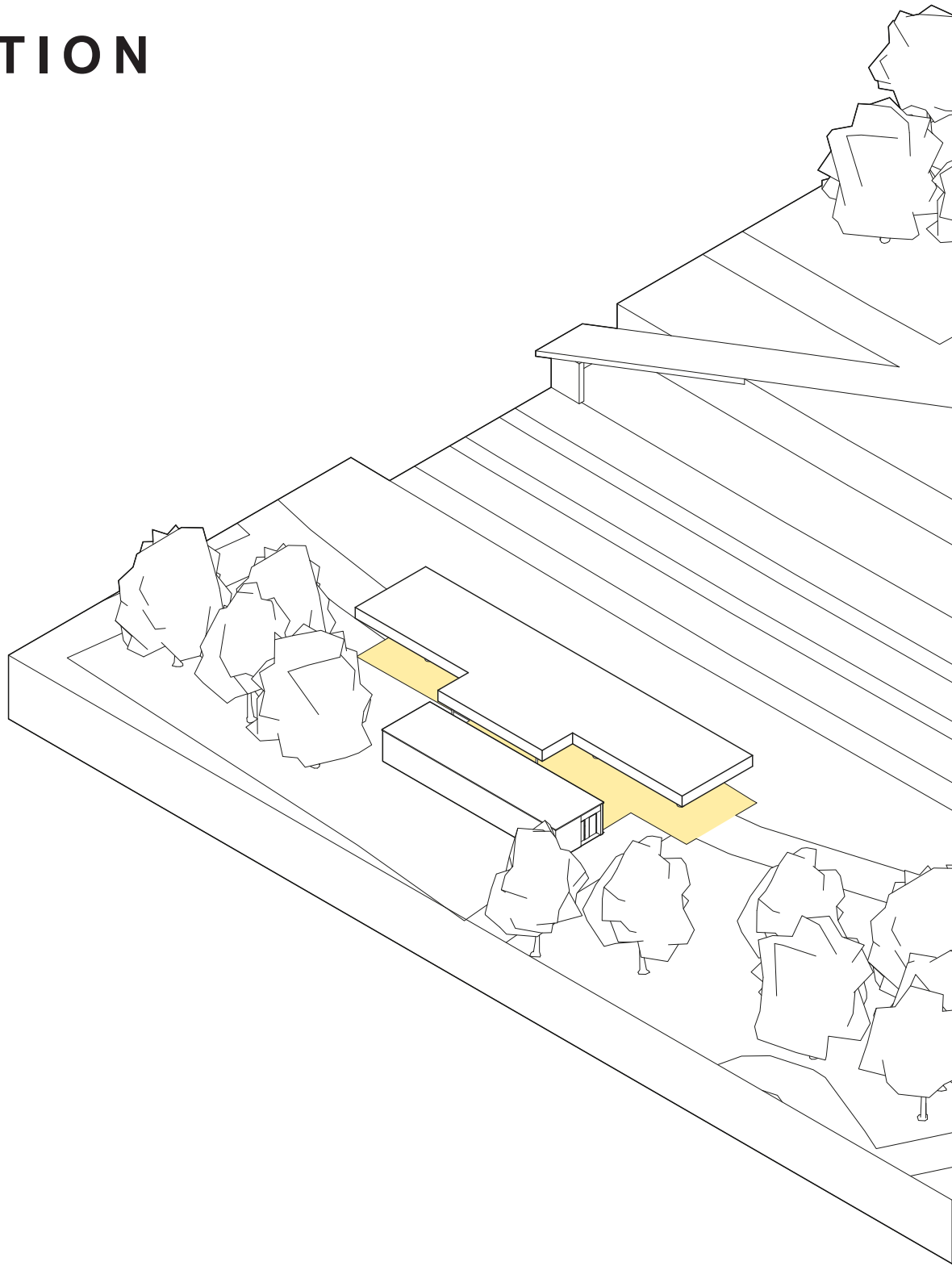




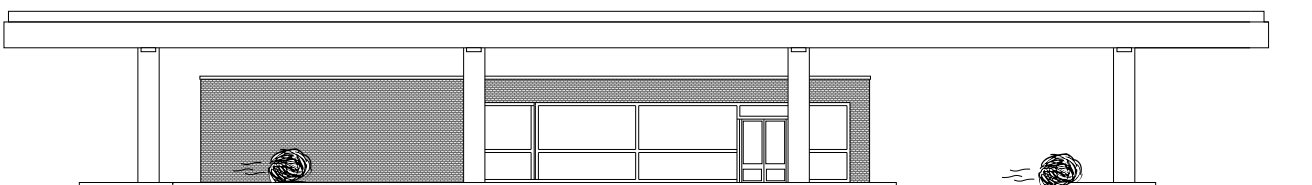
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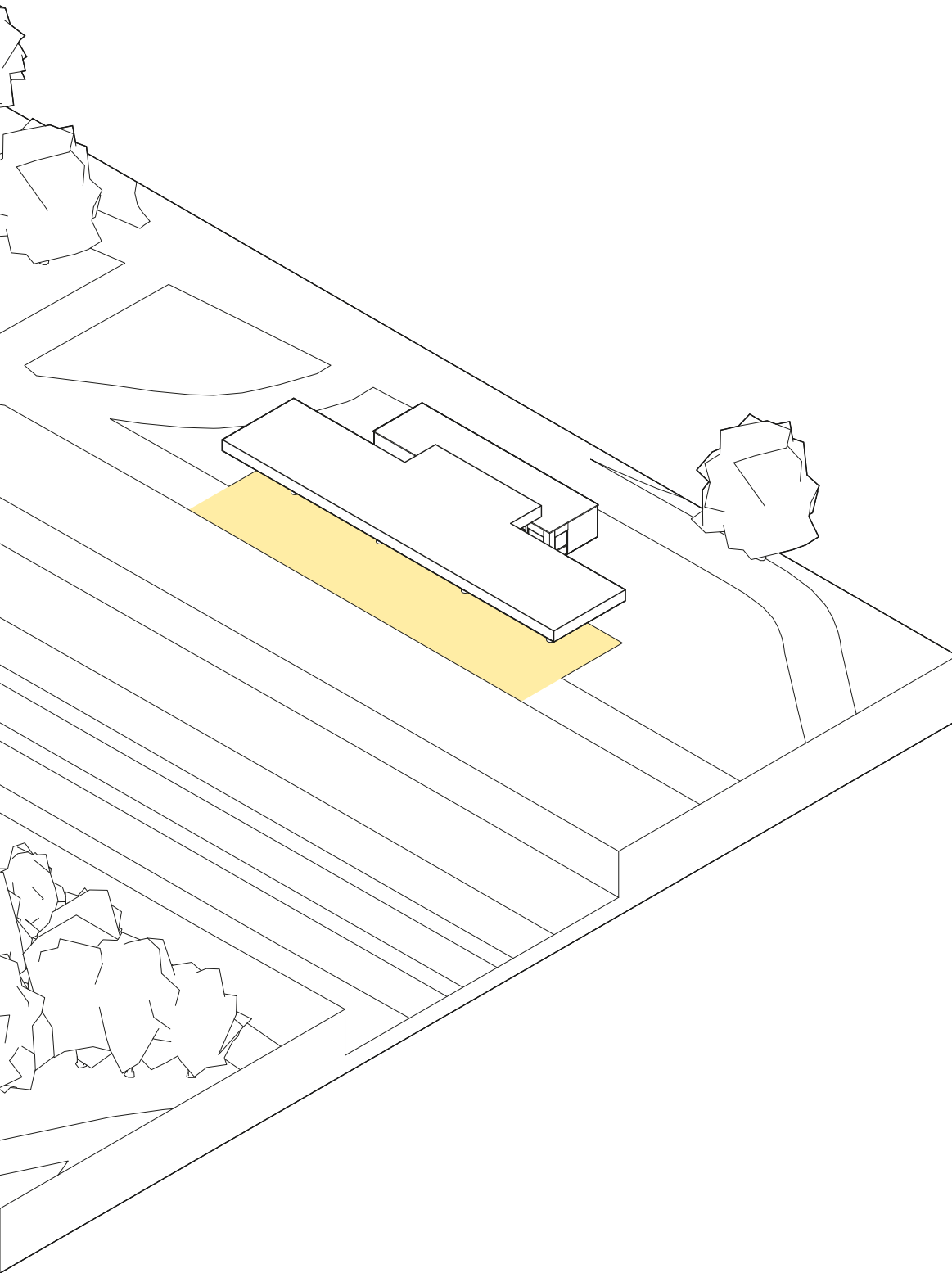


ACTIVATION

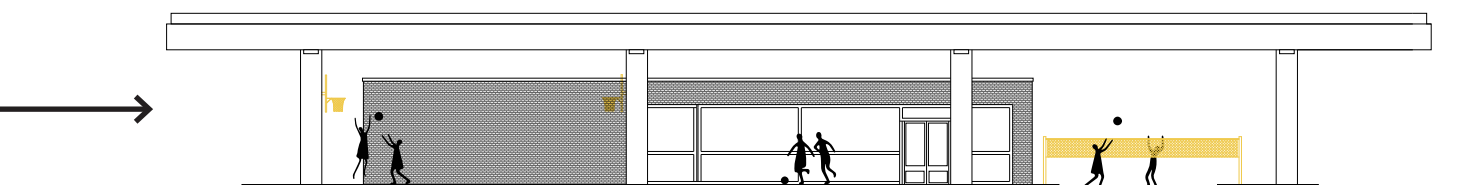


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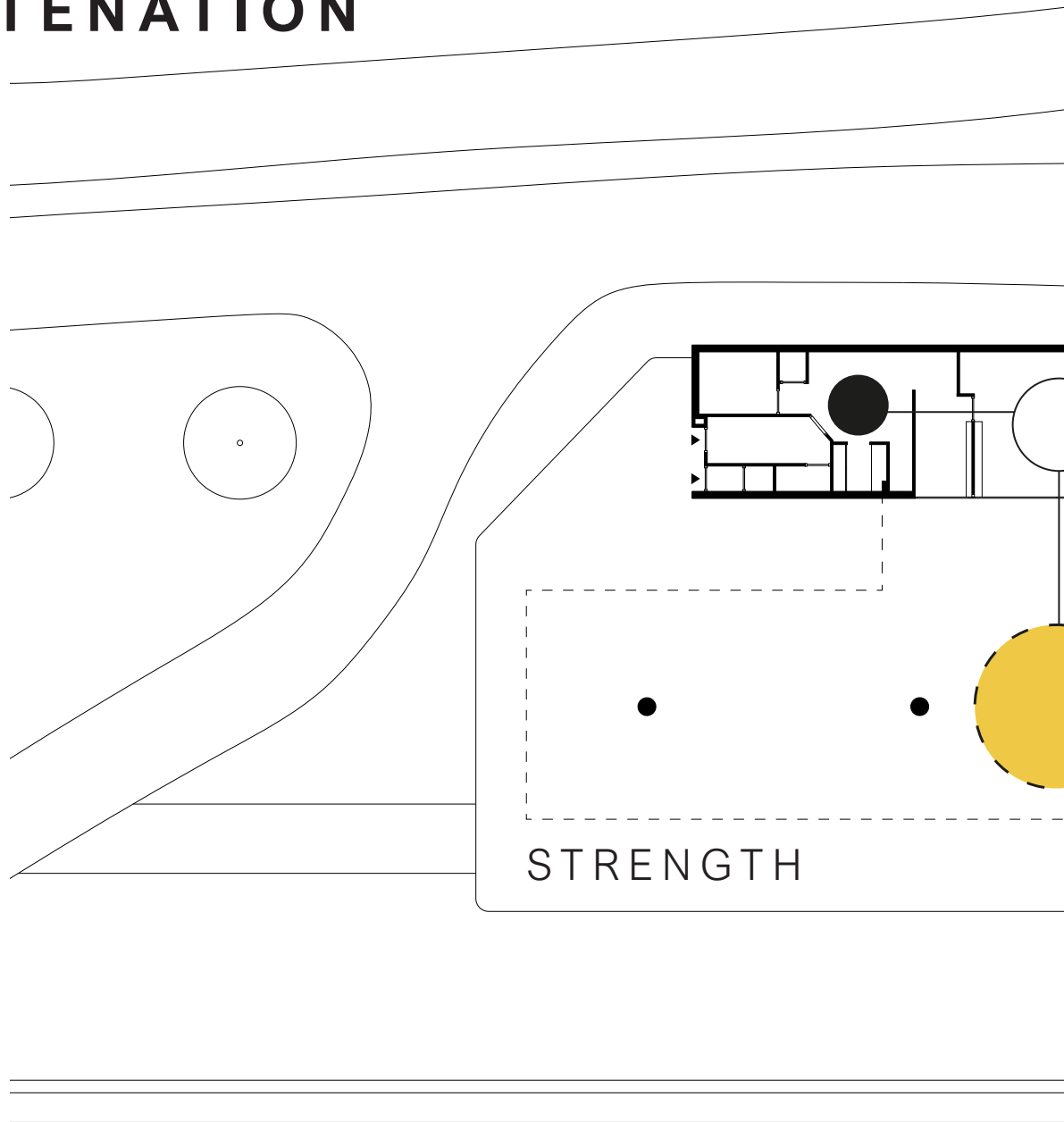




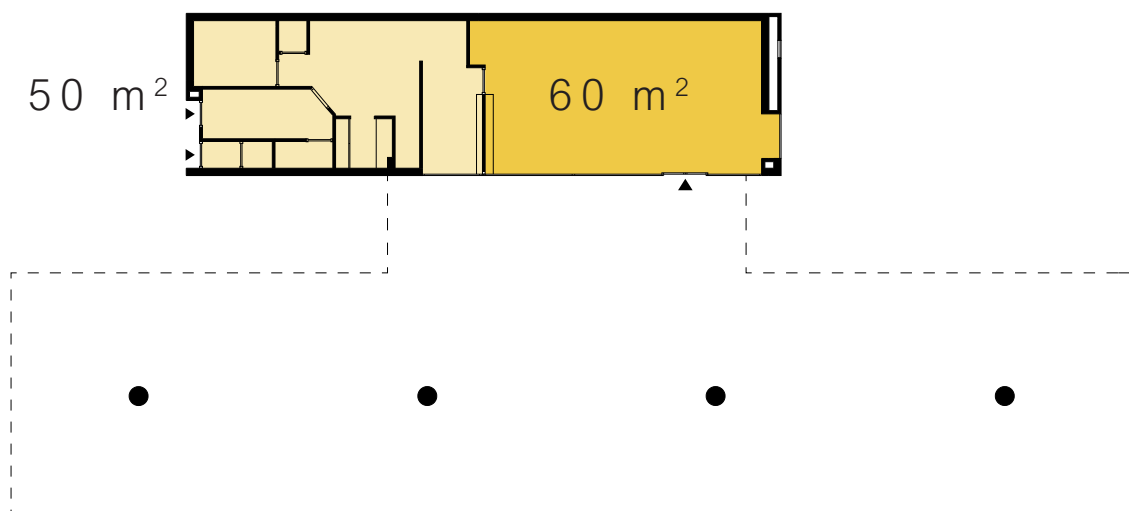
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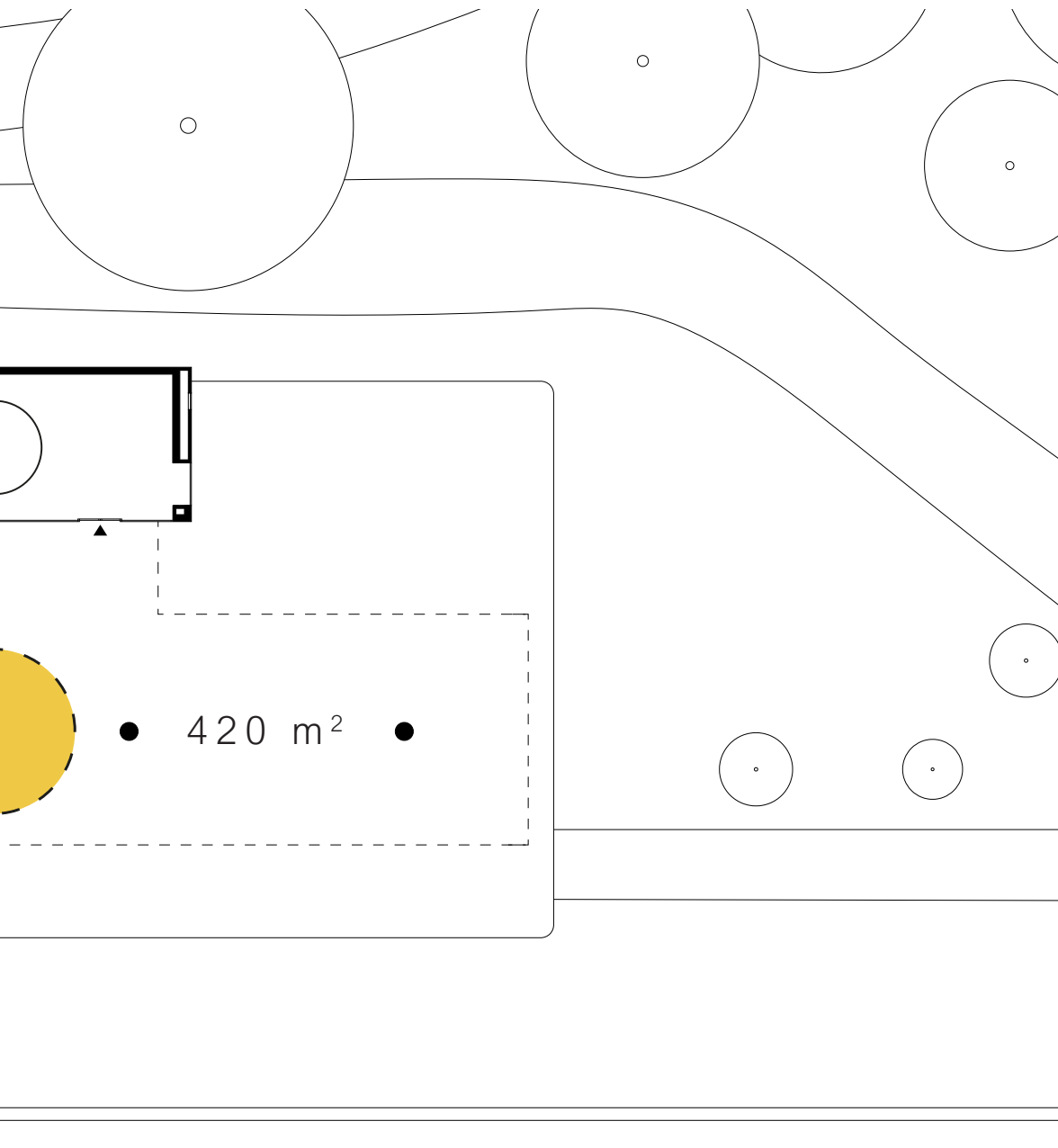


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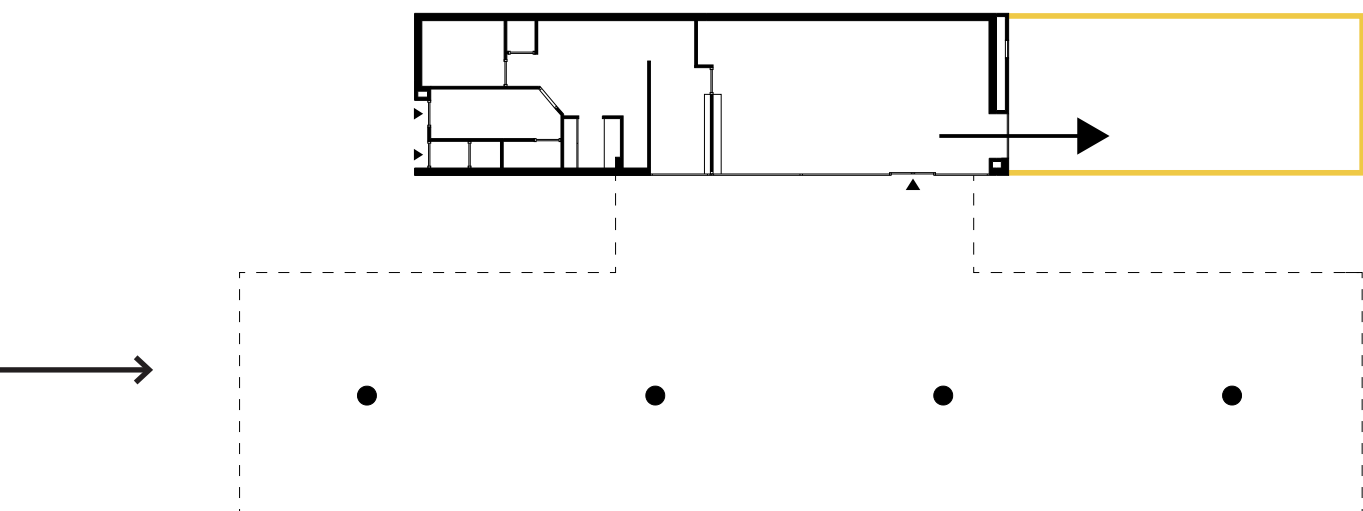


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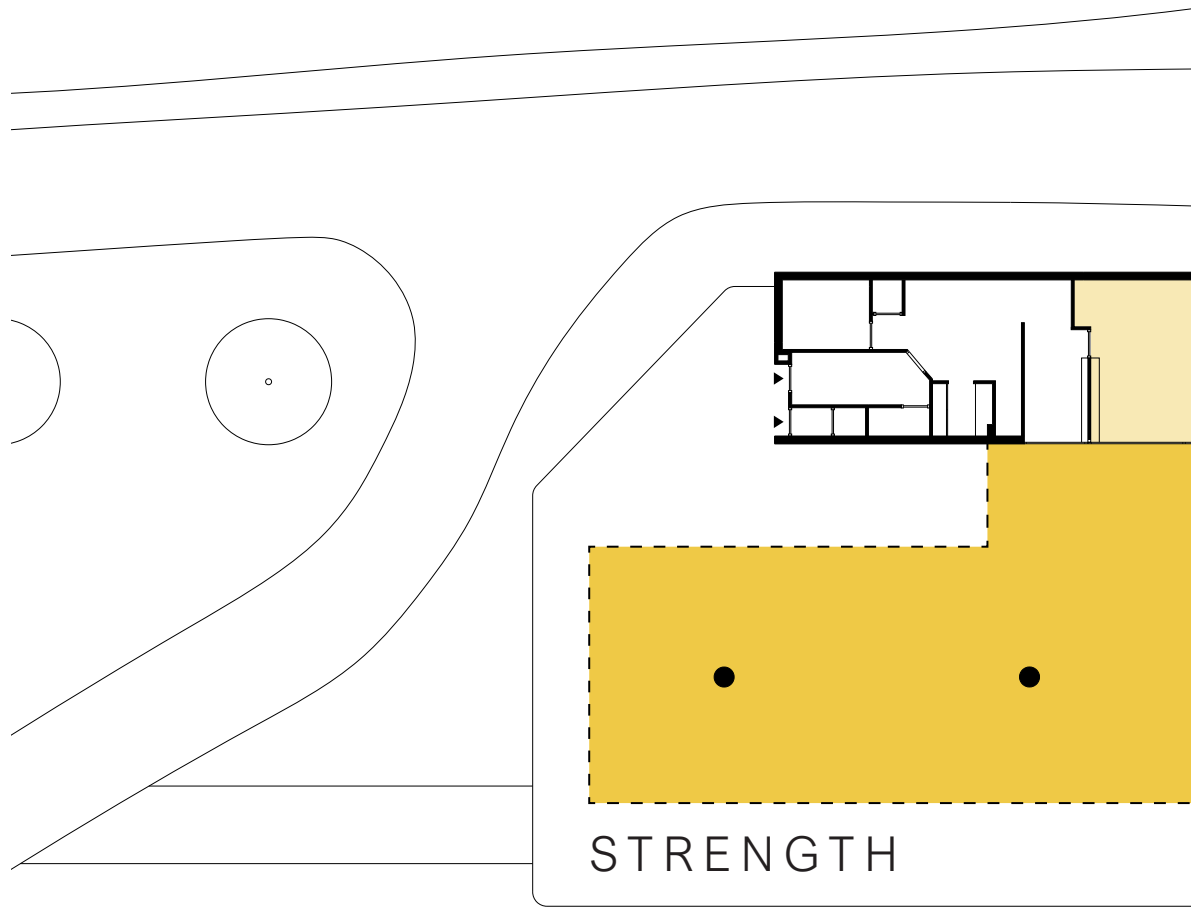




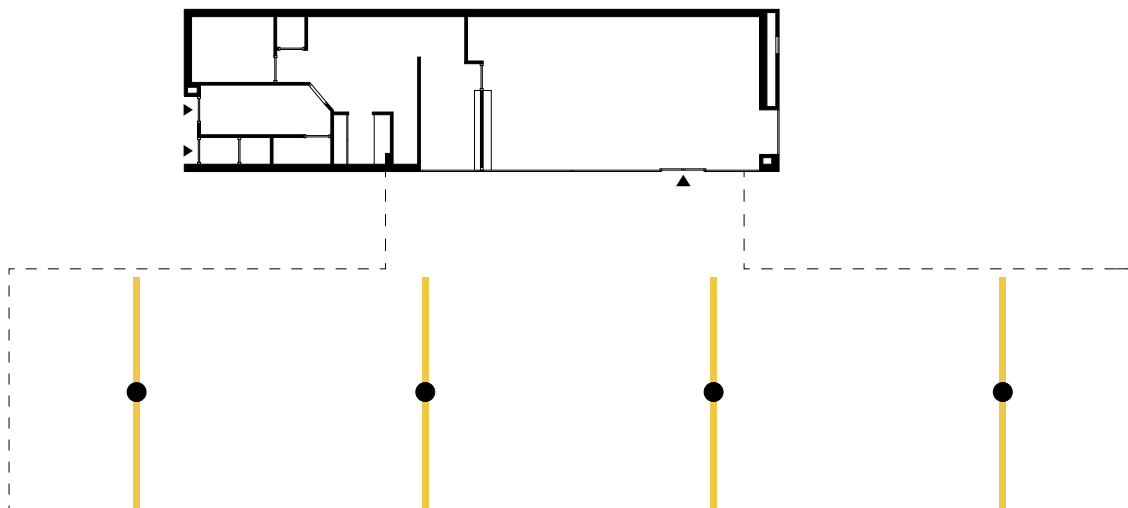
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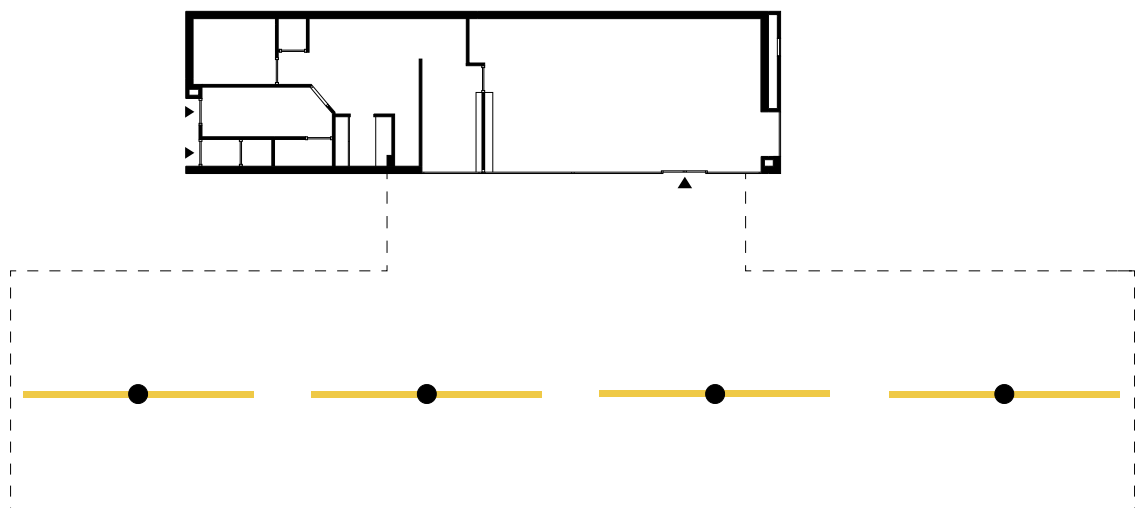
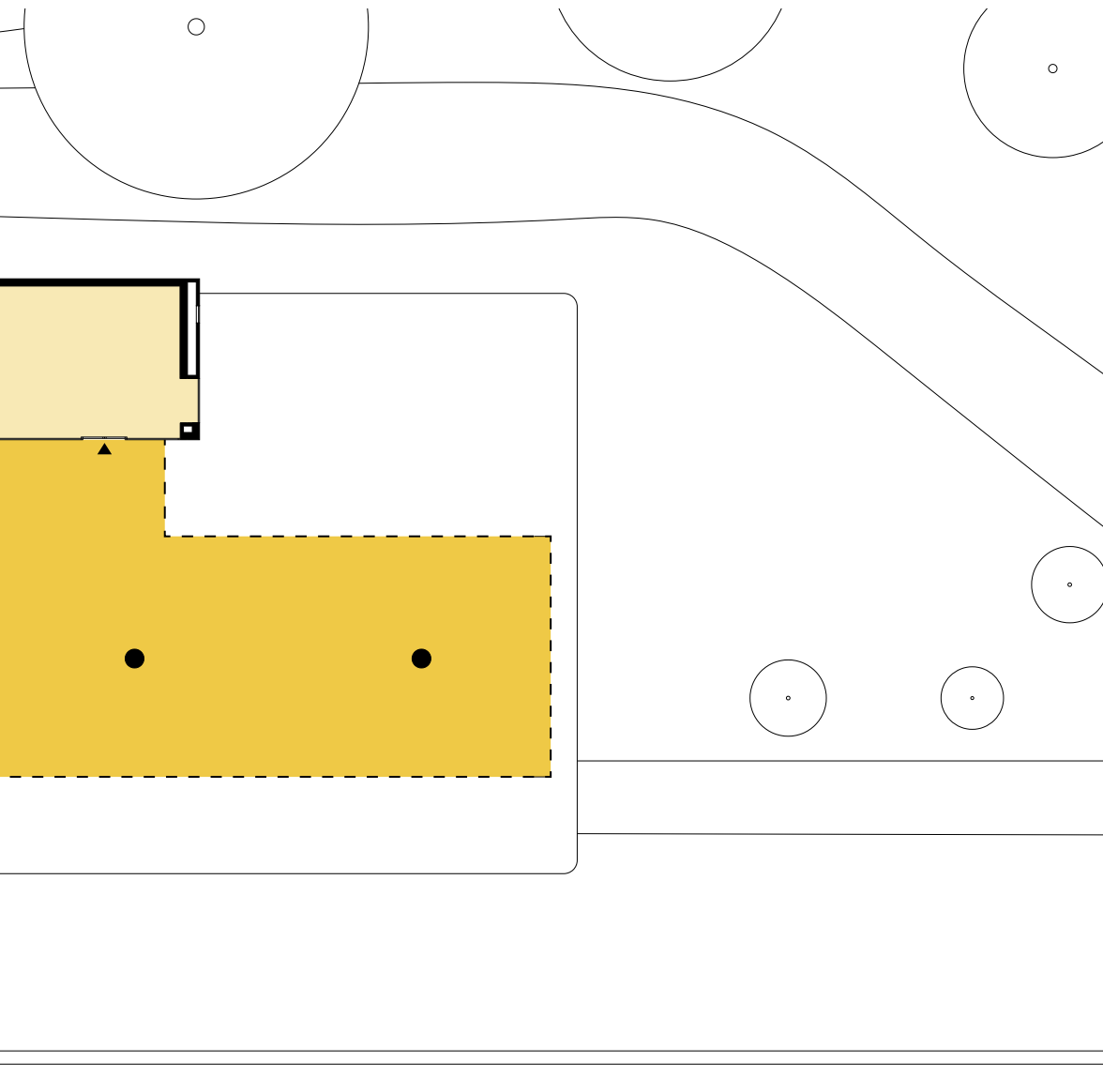


MULTIFUNCTIONALITY



OPPORTUNITY





APPLYING

ECAM YOUTH CENTER / AGWA

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

APPLYING

DYNAMO / DIEDERENDIRRIX

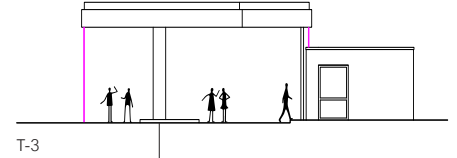
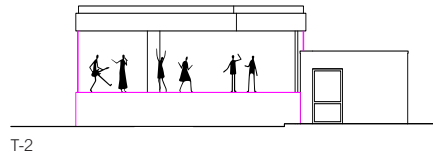
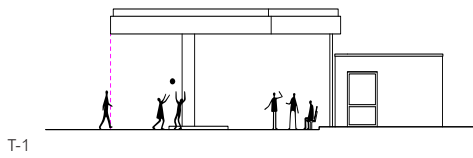
EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS

APPLYING

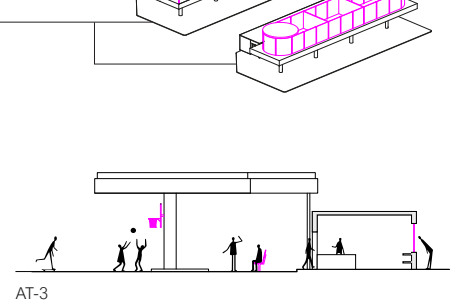
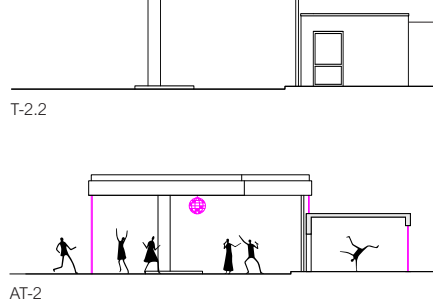
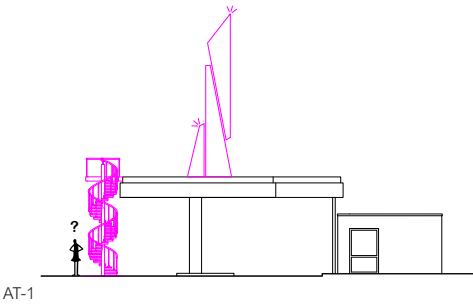
VIAS CULTURAL CENTER / ESTUDIO SIC

LEÓN, SPAIN

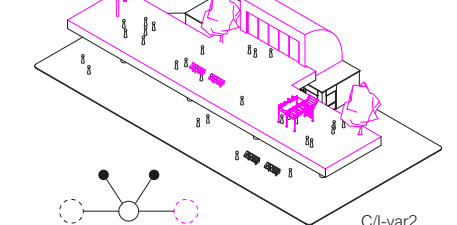
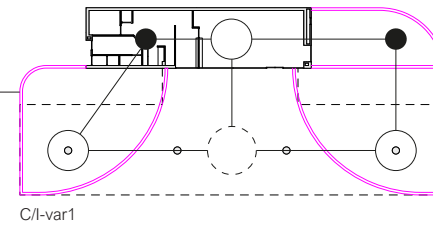
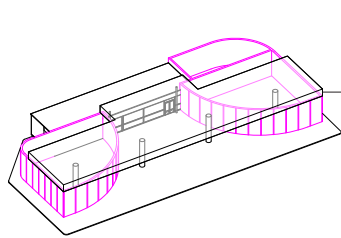
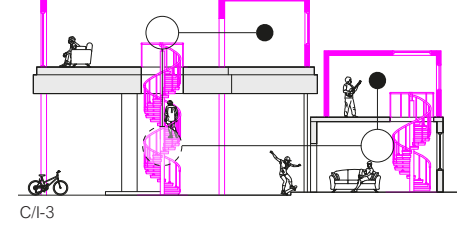
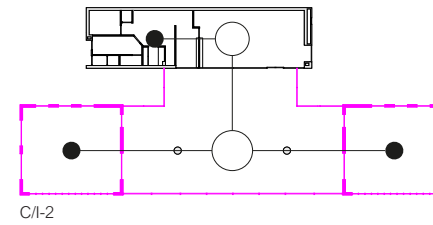
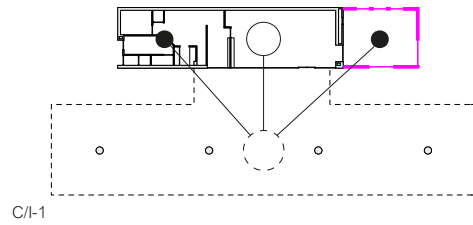
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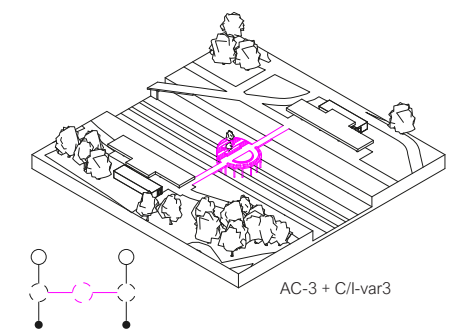
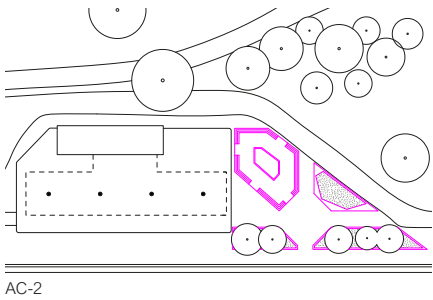
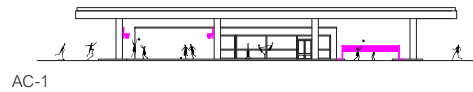
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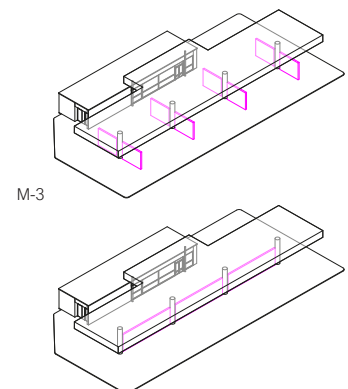
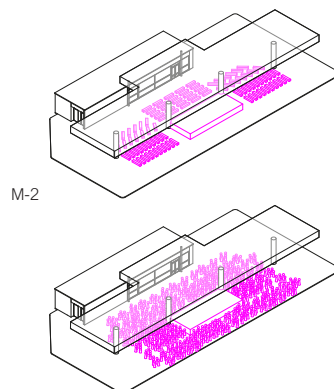
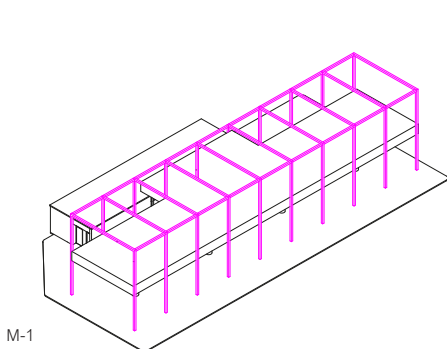
CONCATENATION & INVITINGNESS



ACTIVATION

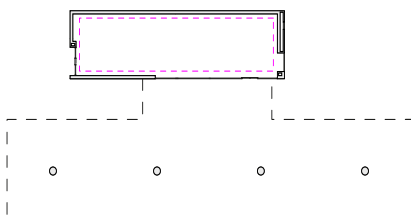
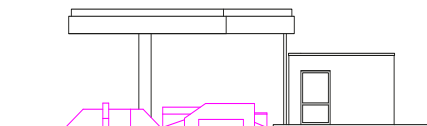
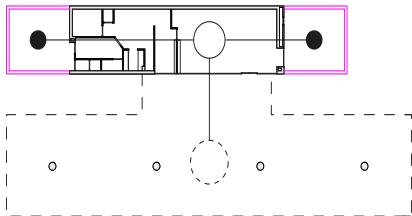
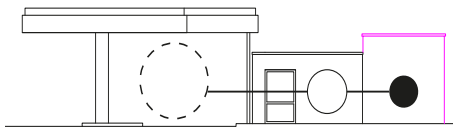
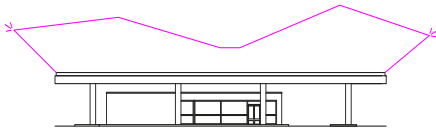
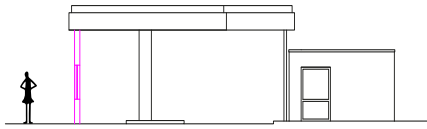


MULTIFUNCTIONALITY



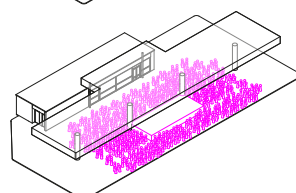
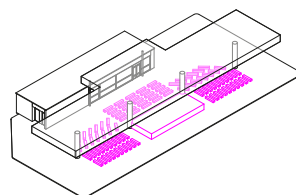
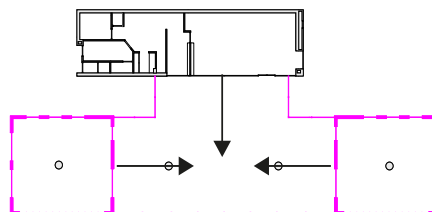
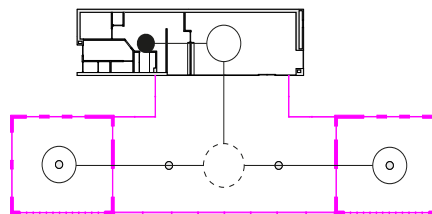
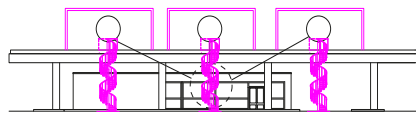
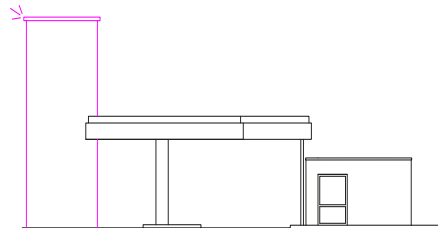
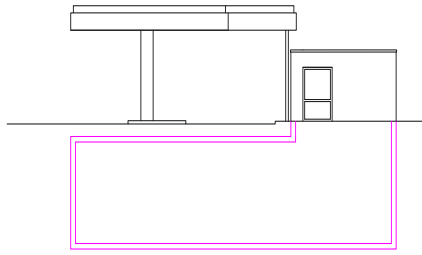
APPLYING

WATERLOO YOUTH CENTRE /
COLLINS AND TURNER
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

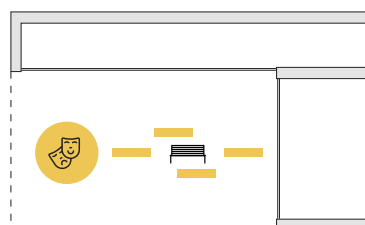
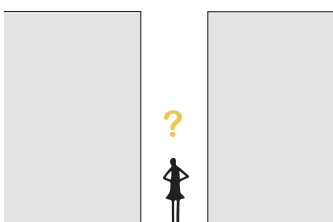
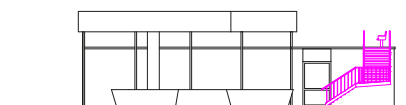
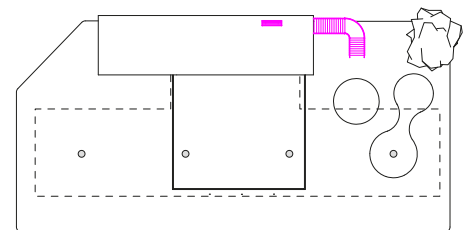
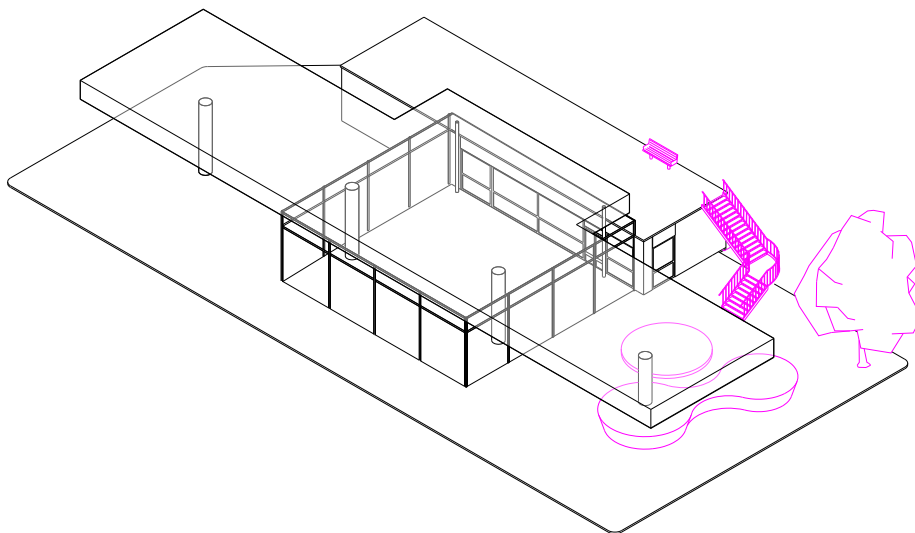
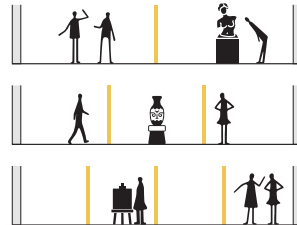
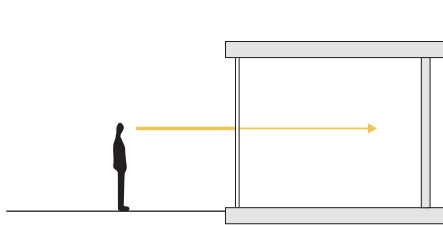
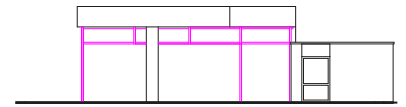
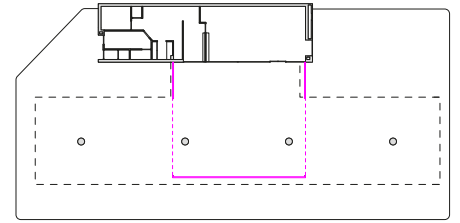
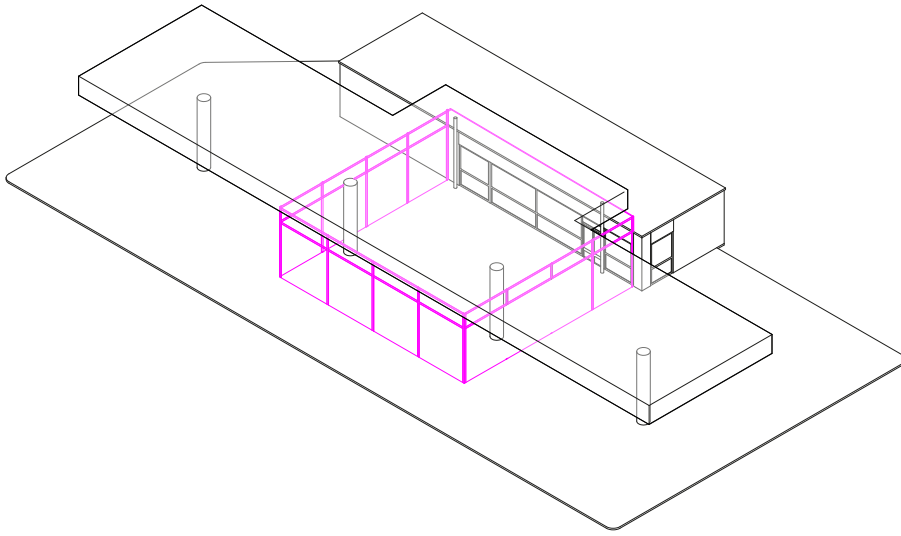


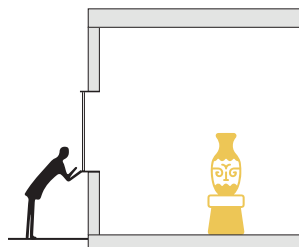
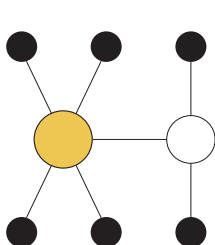
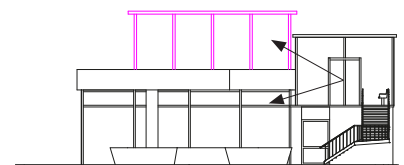
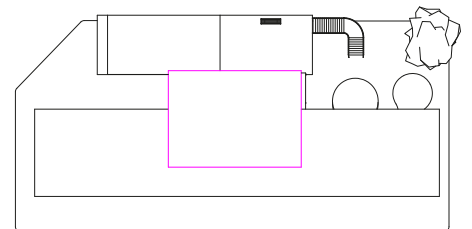
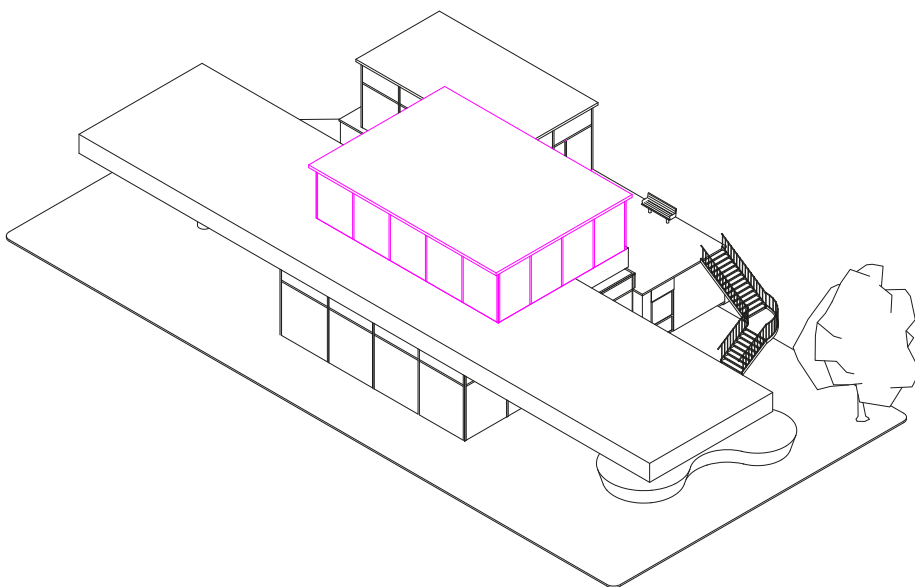
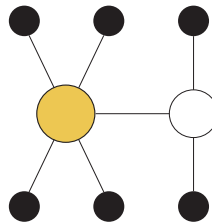
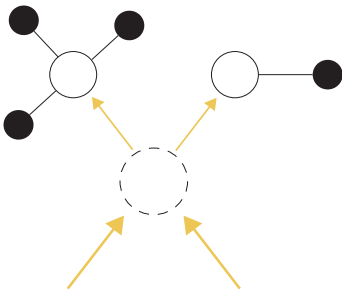
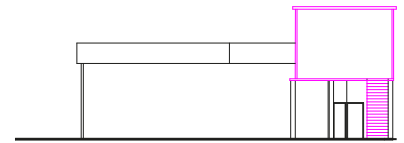
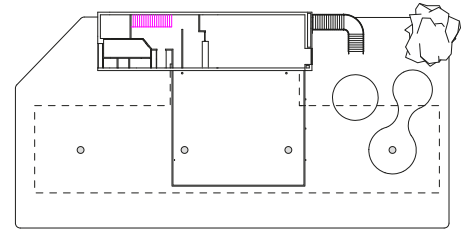
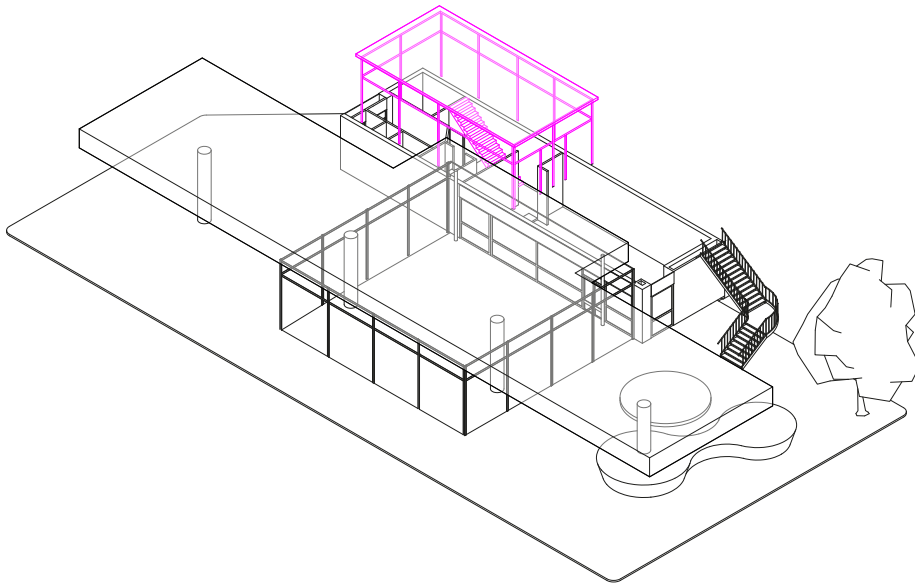
APPLYING

YOUTH CENTRE RABOT /
BEEL & ACHTERGAEL
GHENT, BELGIUM

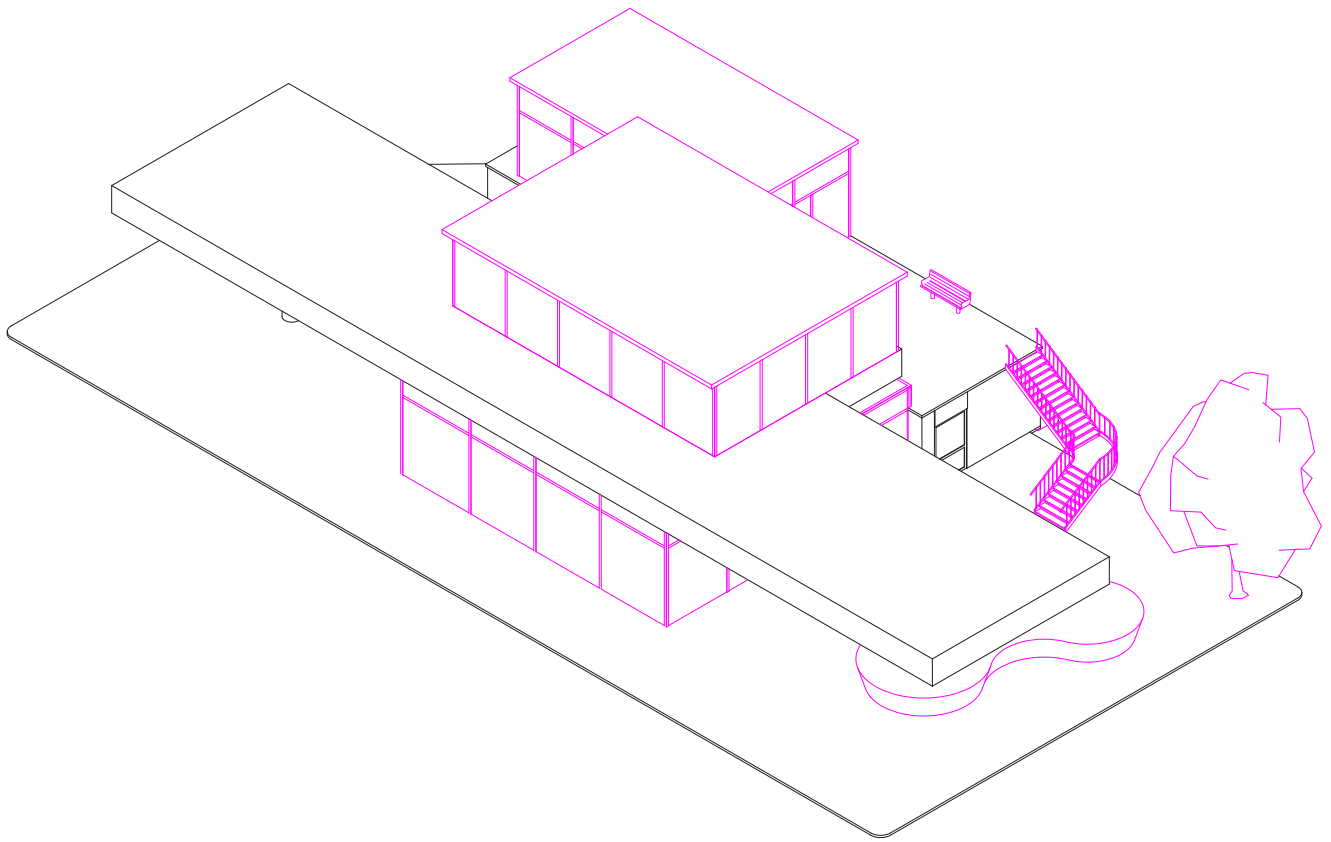


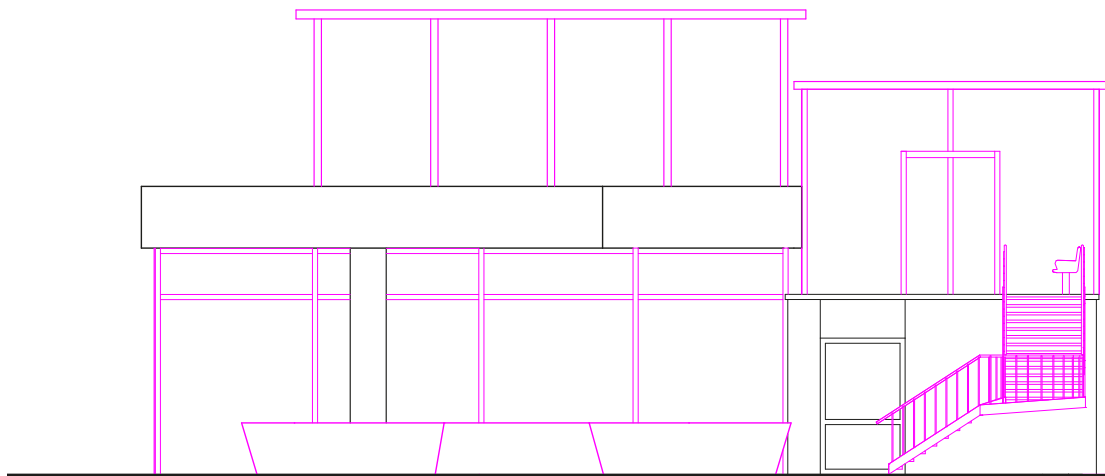
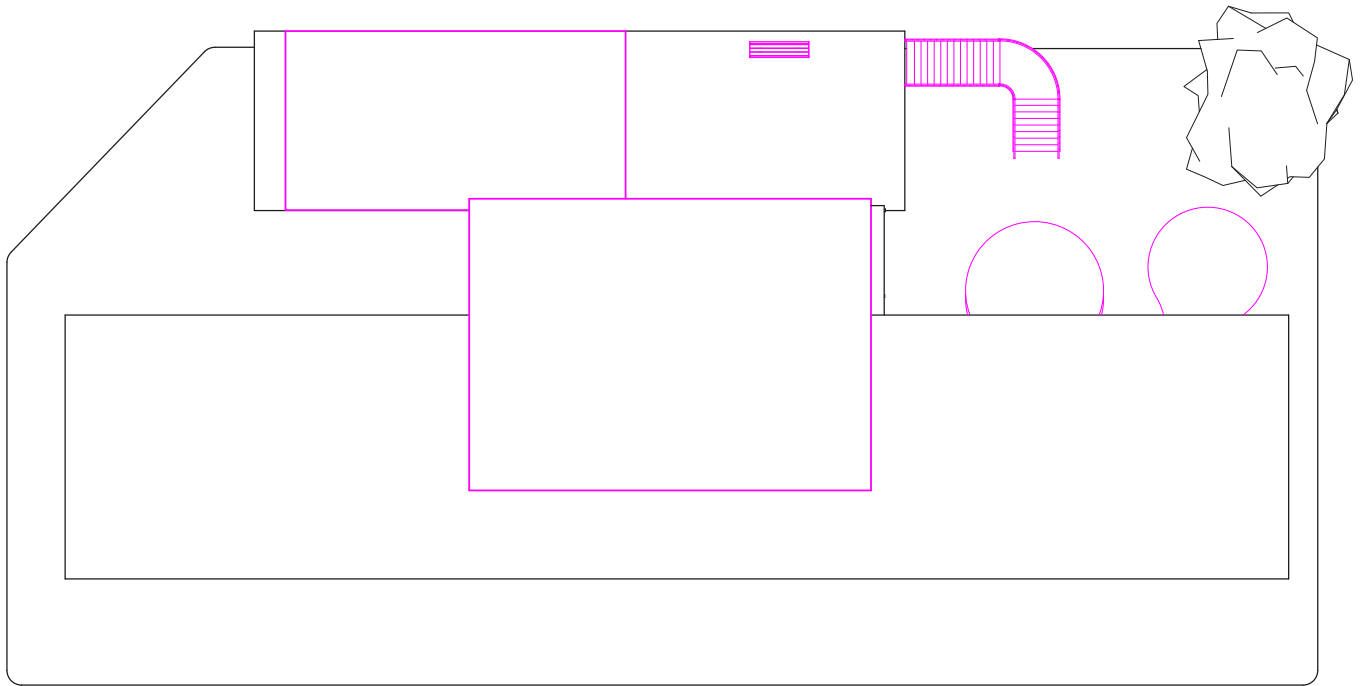
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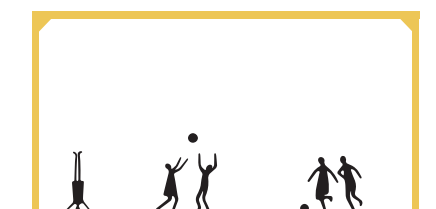
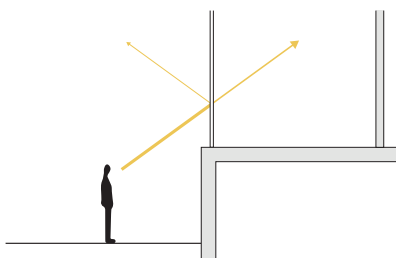
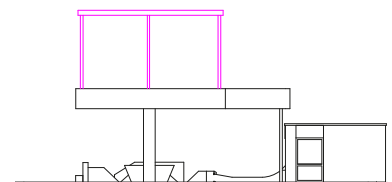
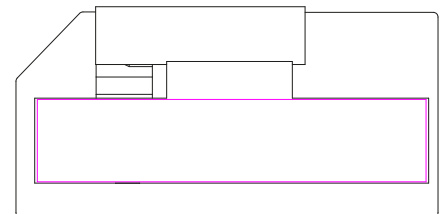
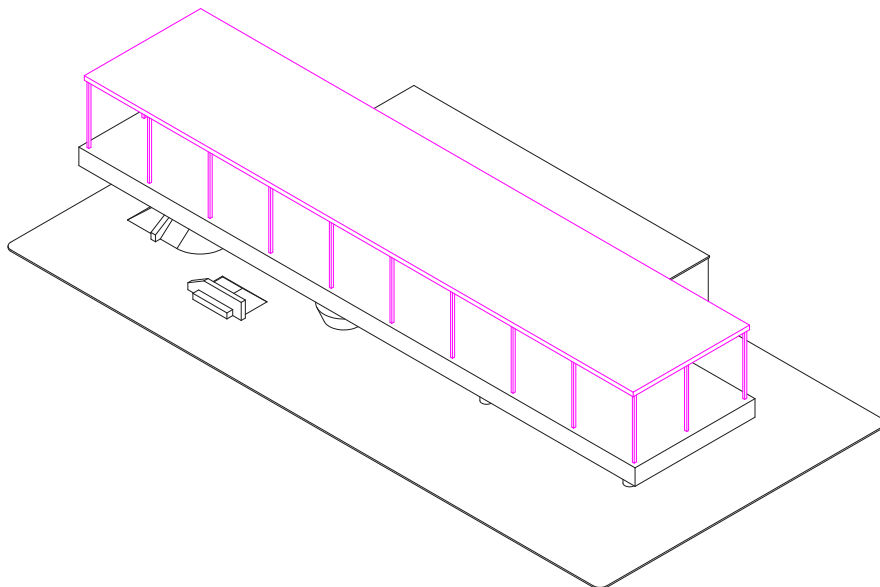
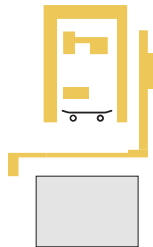
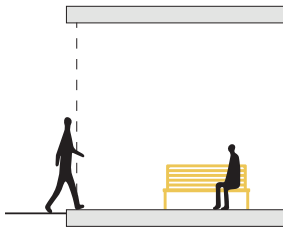
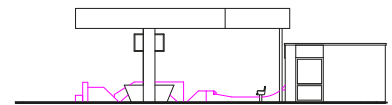
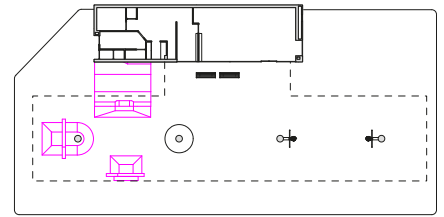
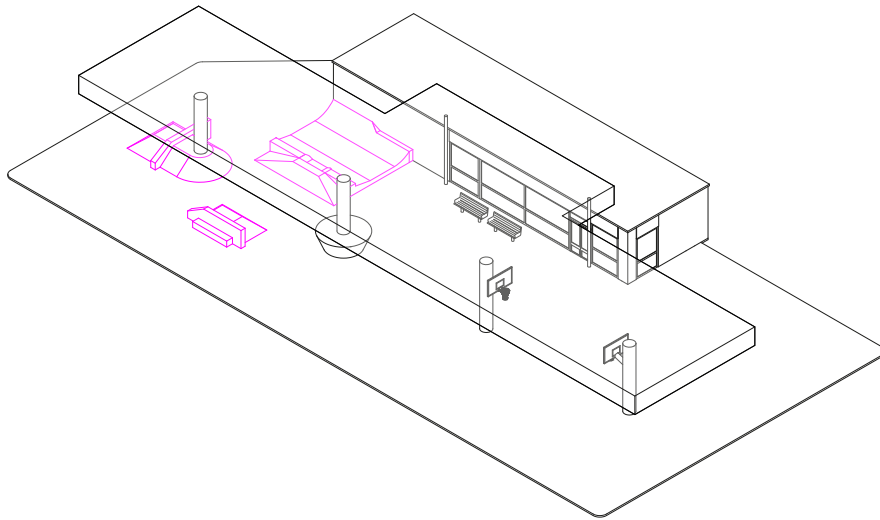


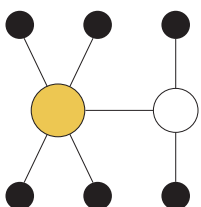
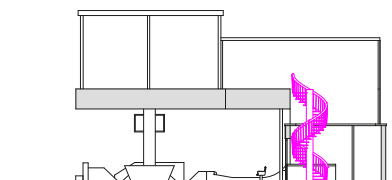
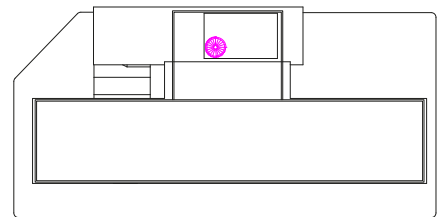
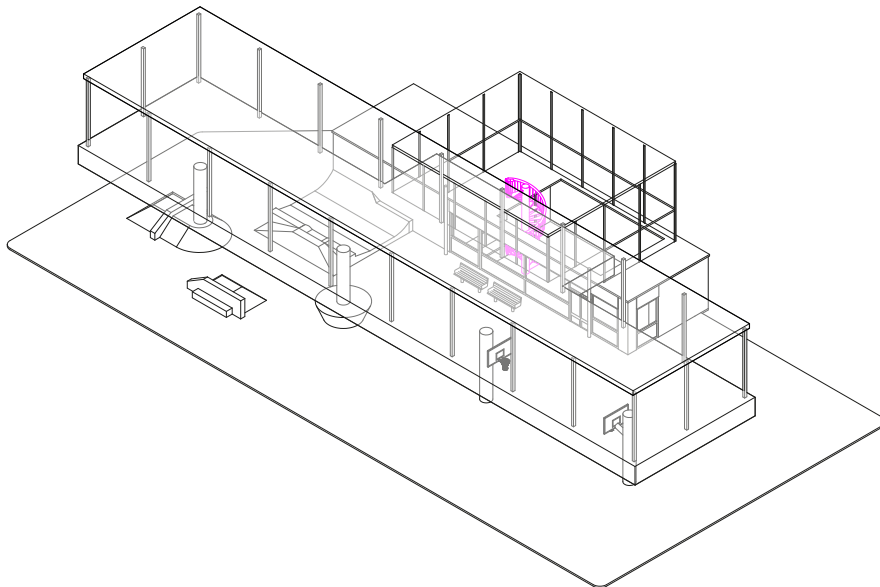
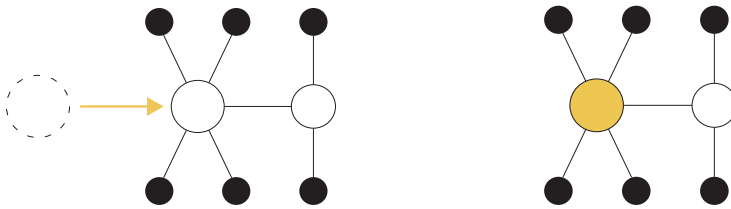
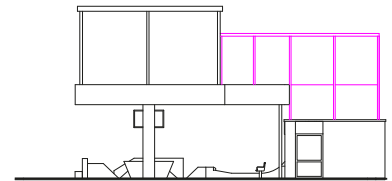
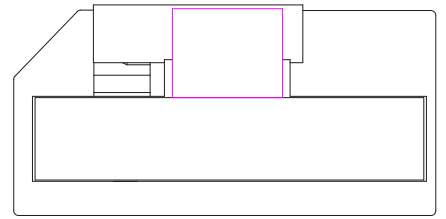
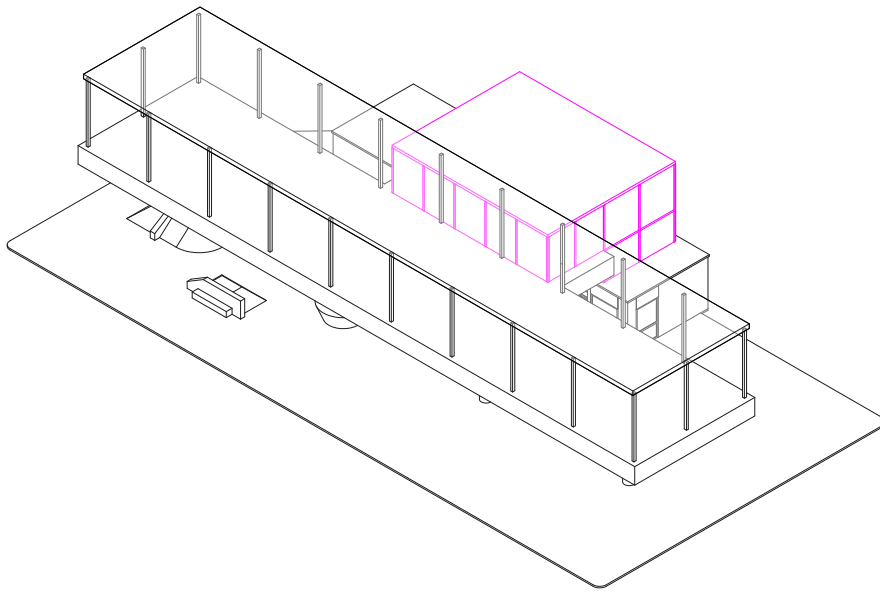
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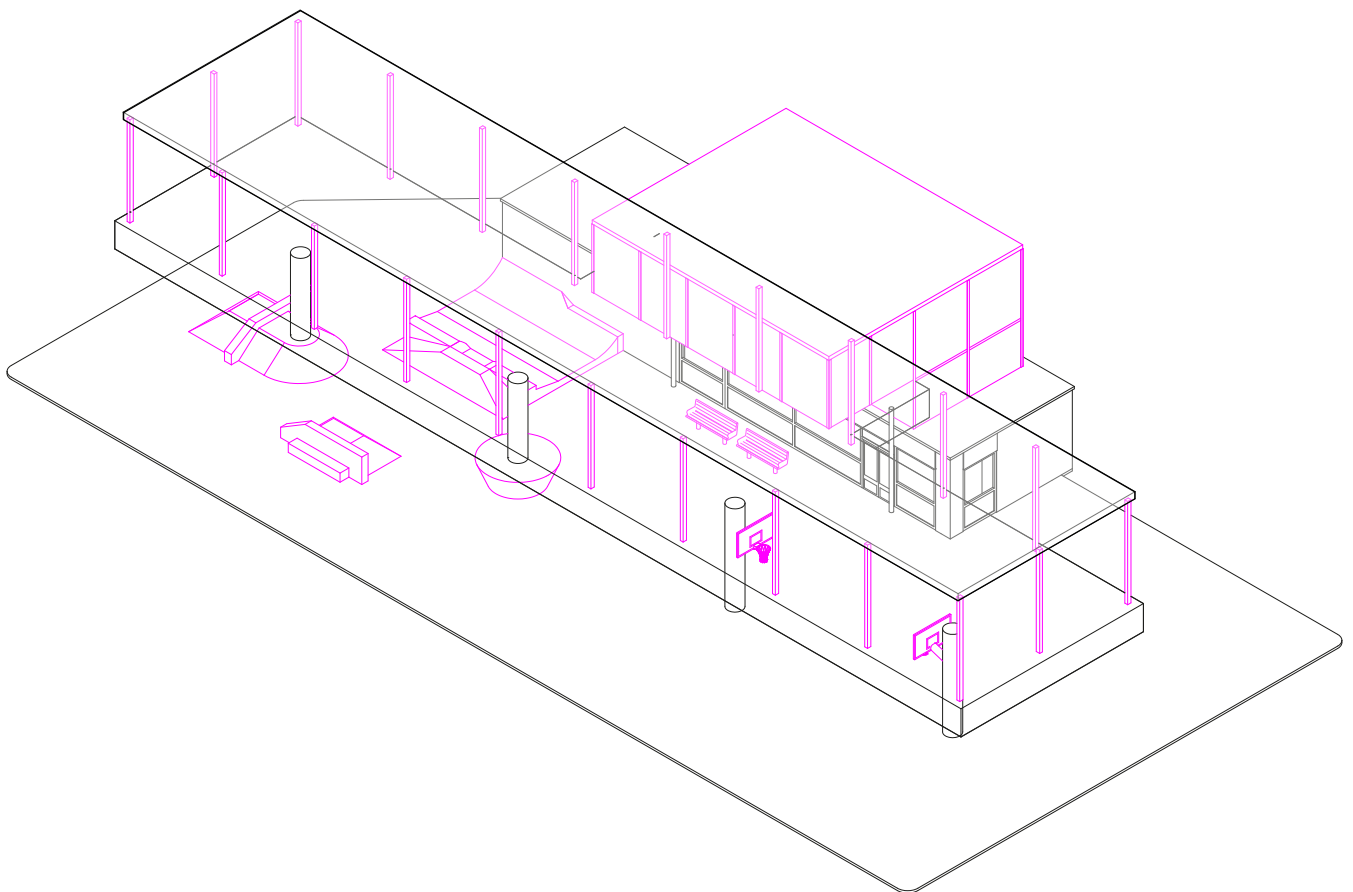
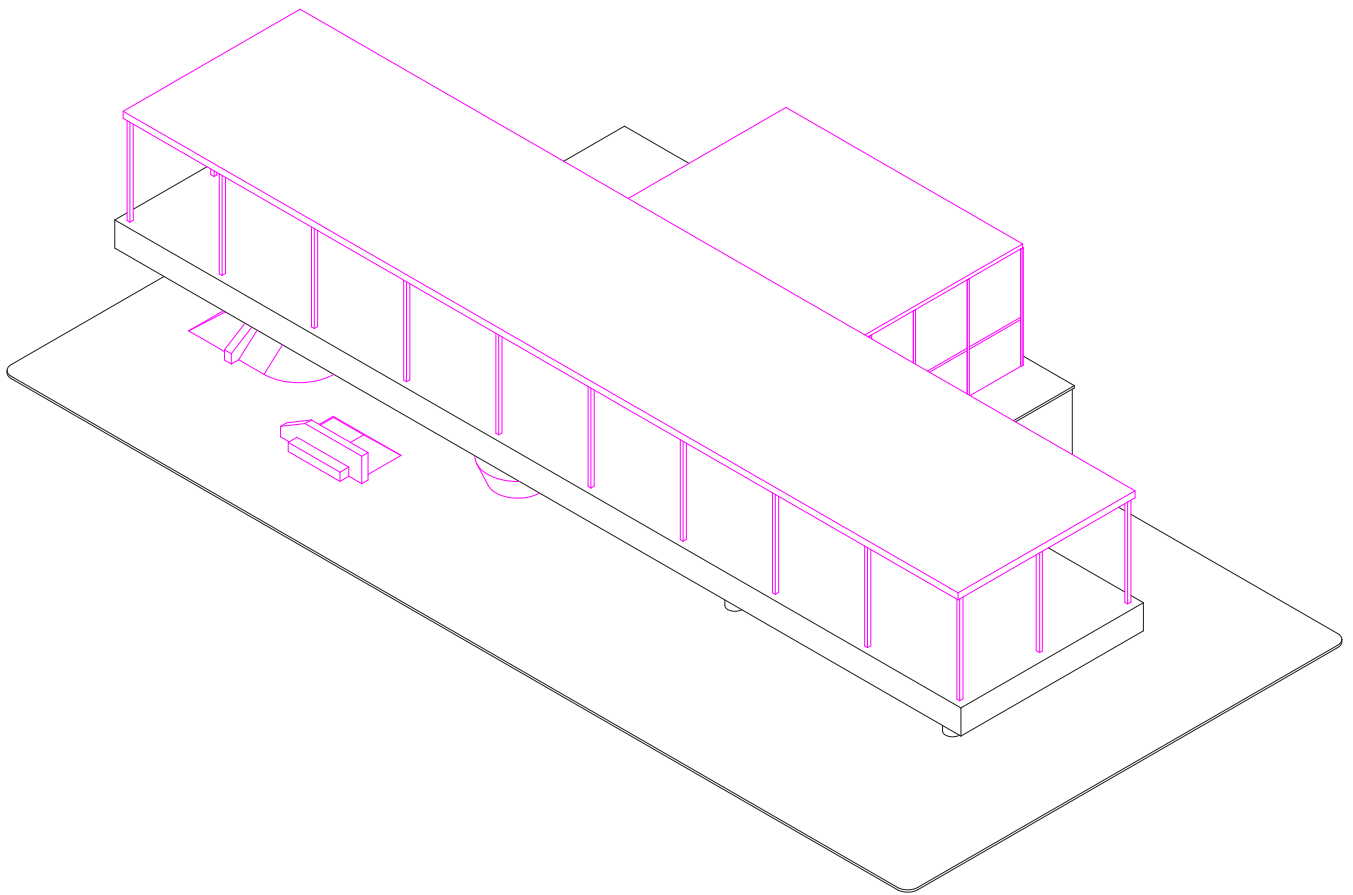


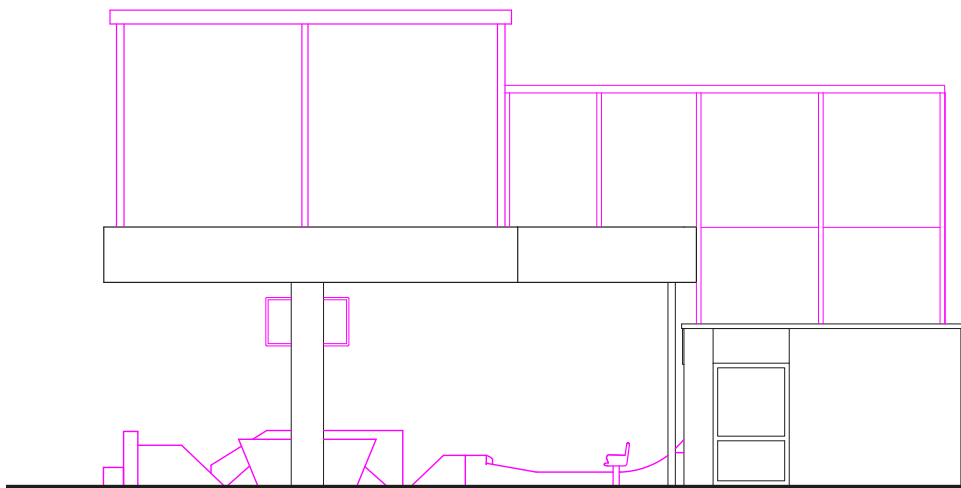
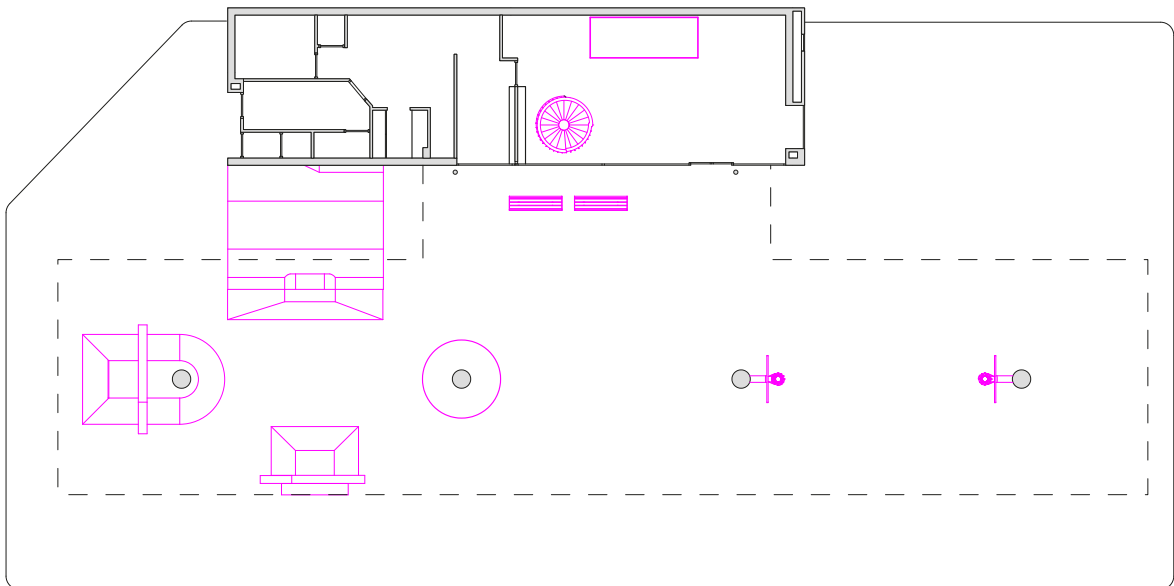
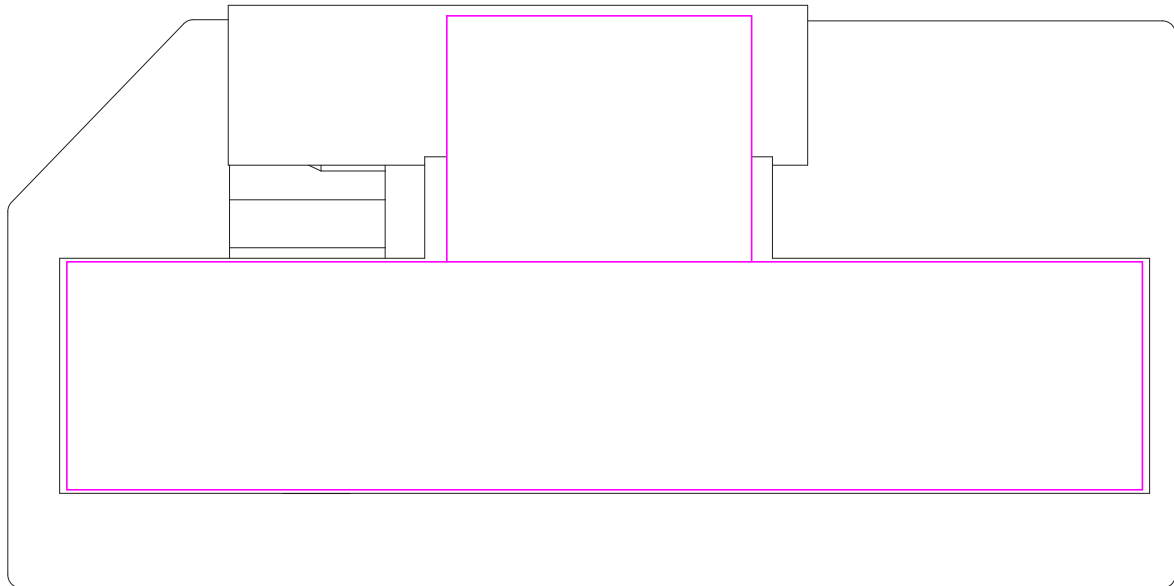
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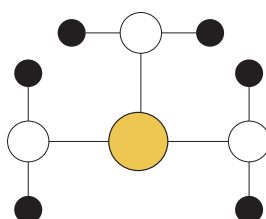
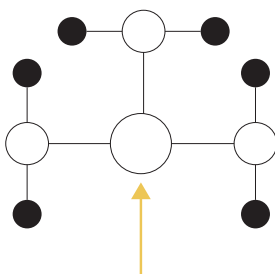
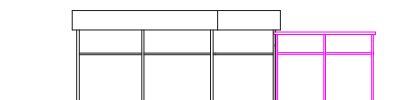
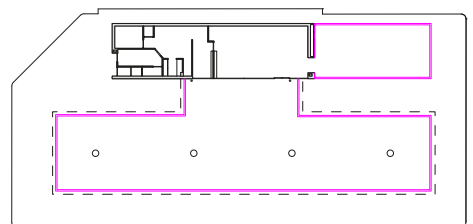
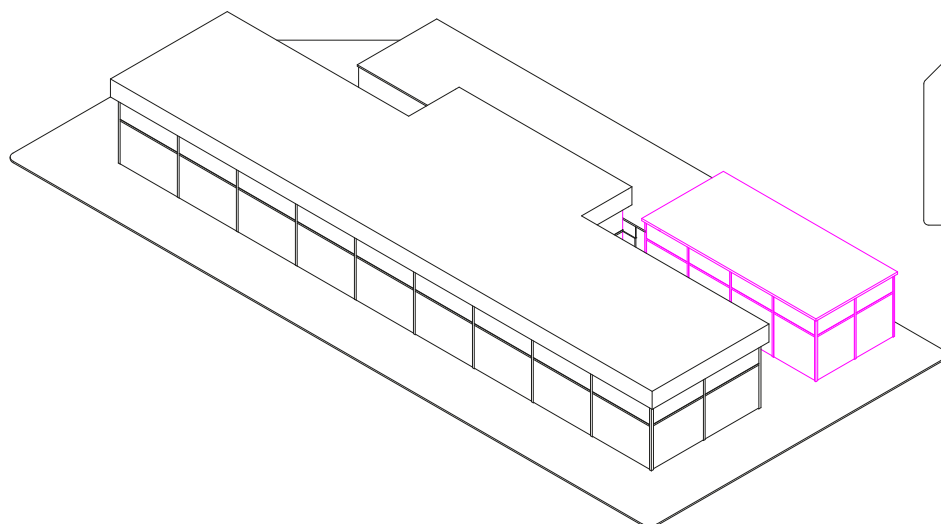
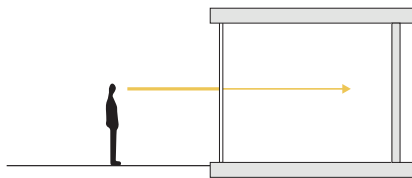
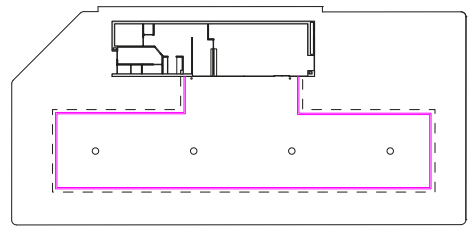
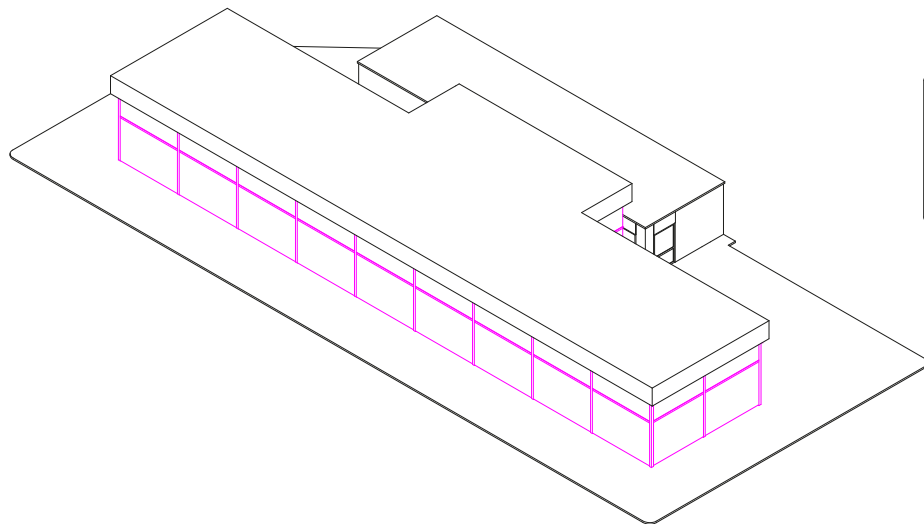


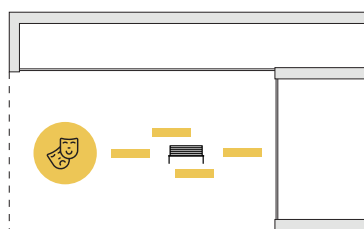
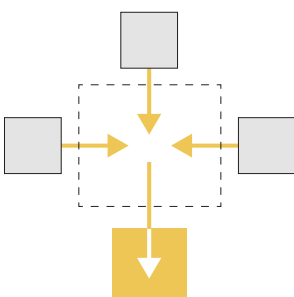
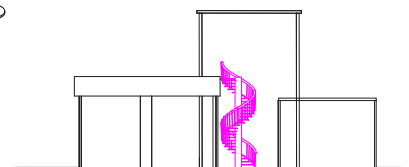
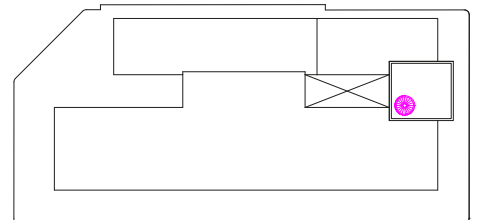
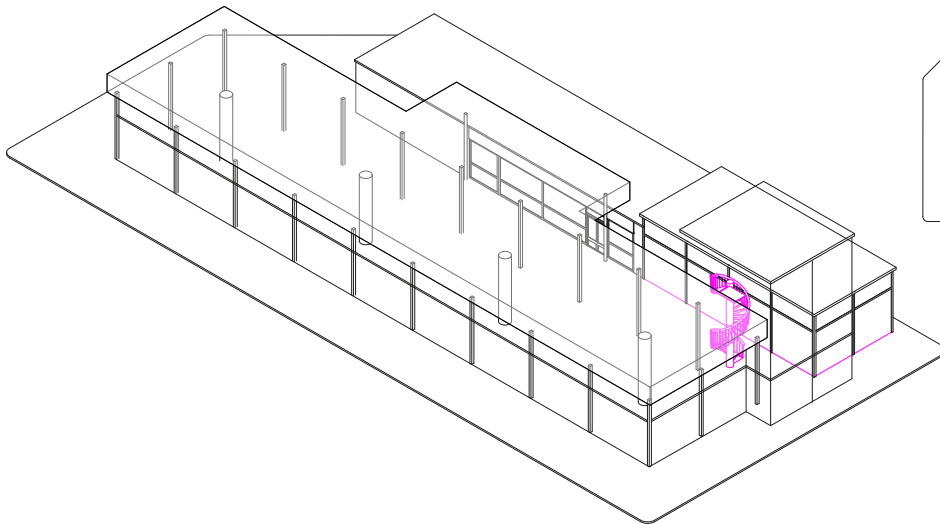
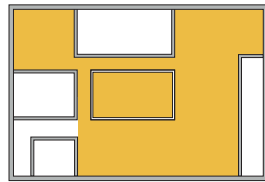
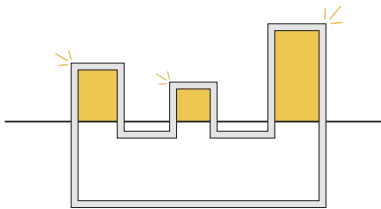
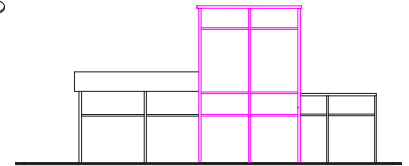
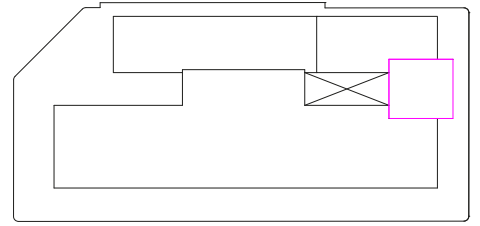
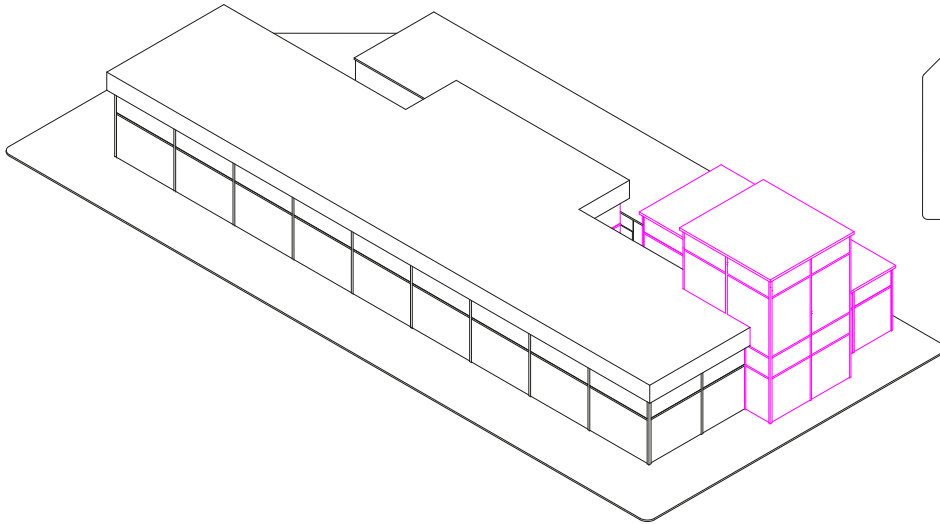
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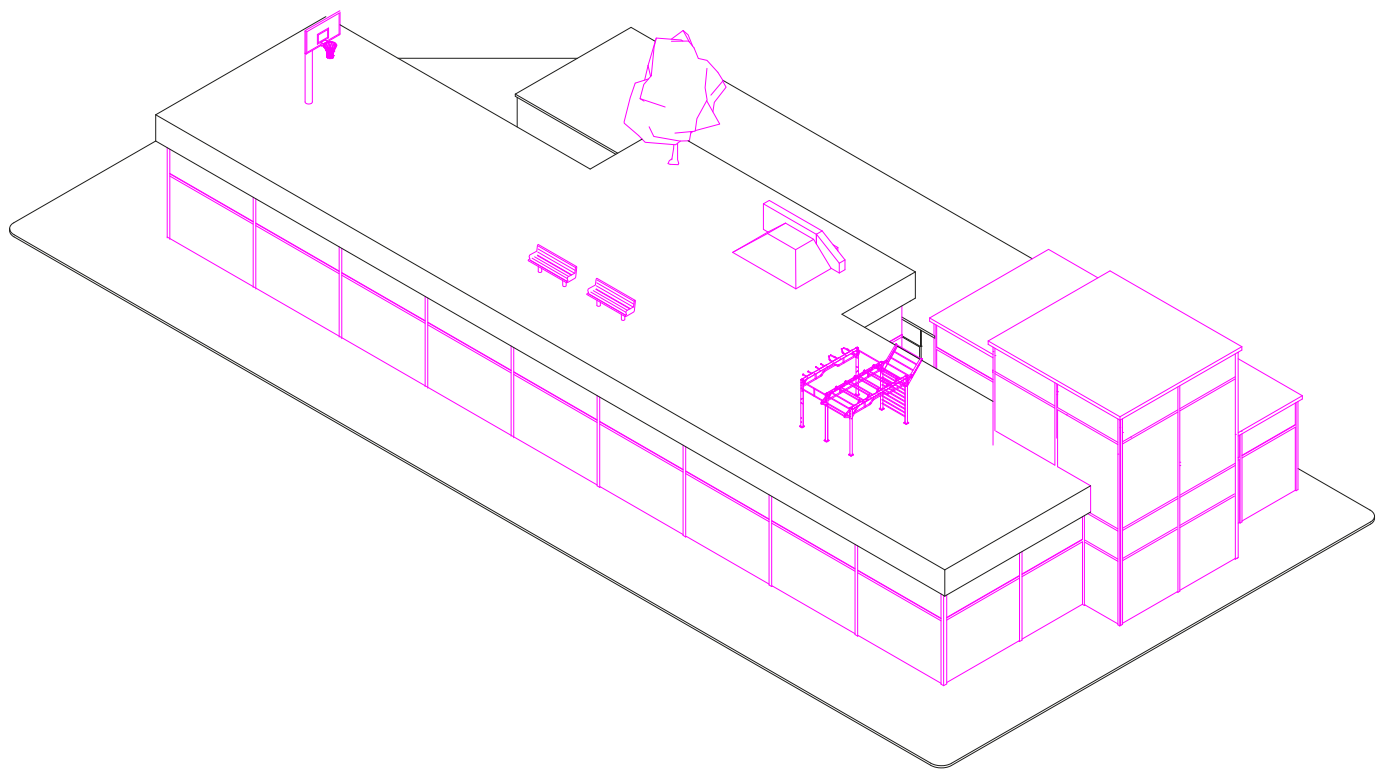


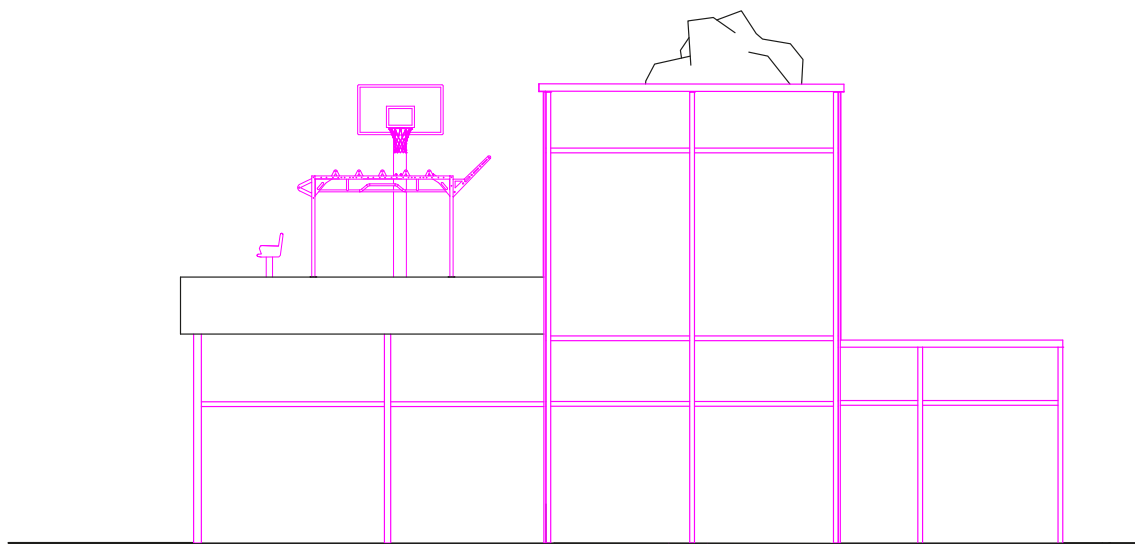
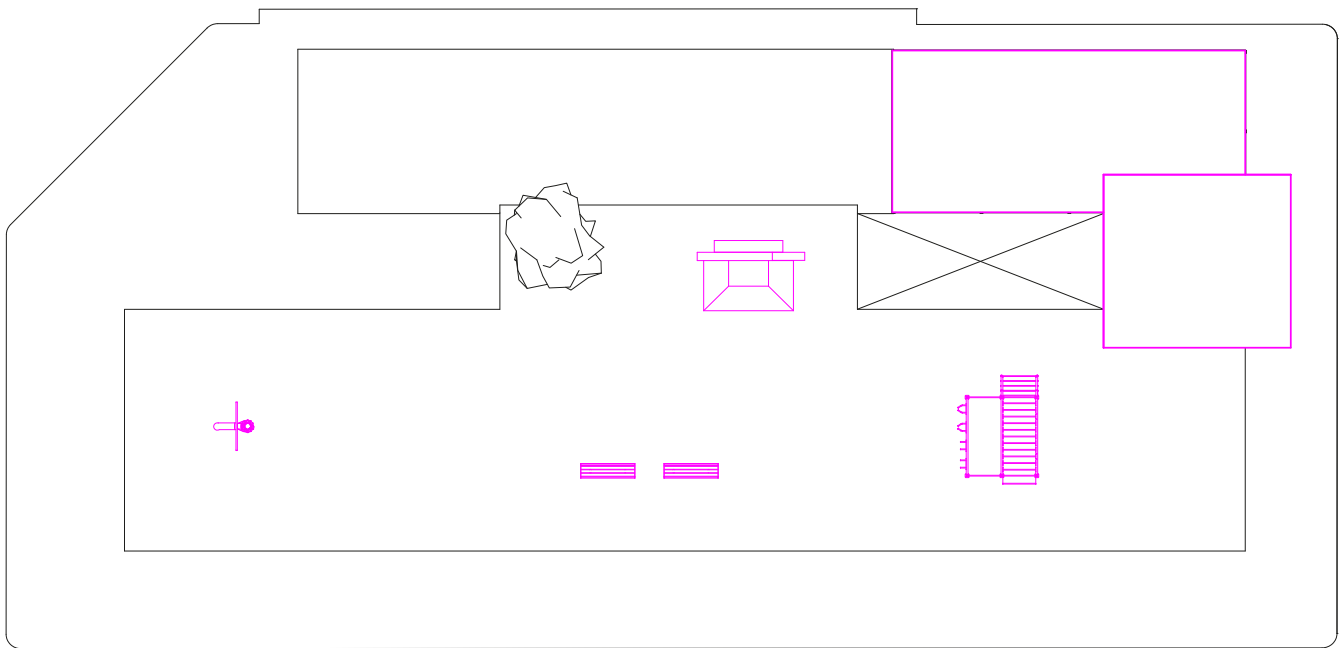
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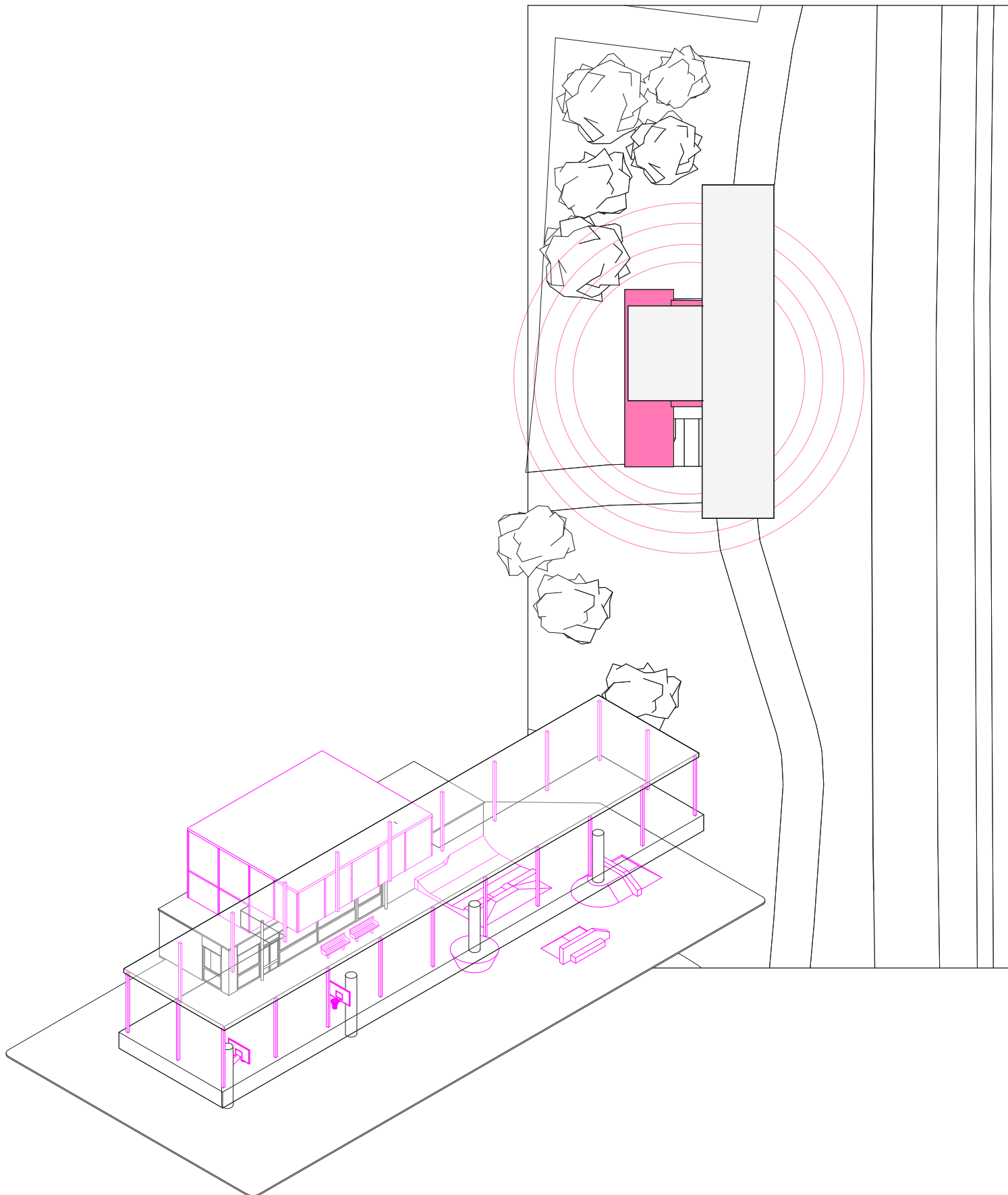


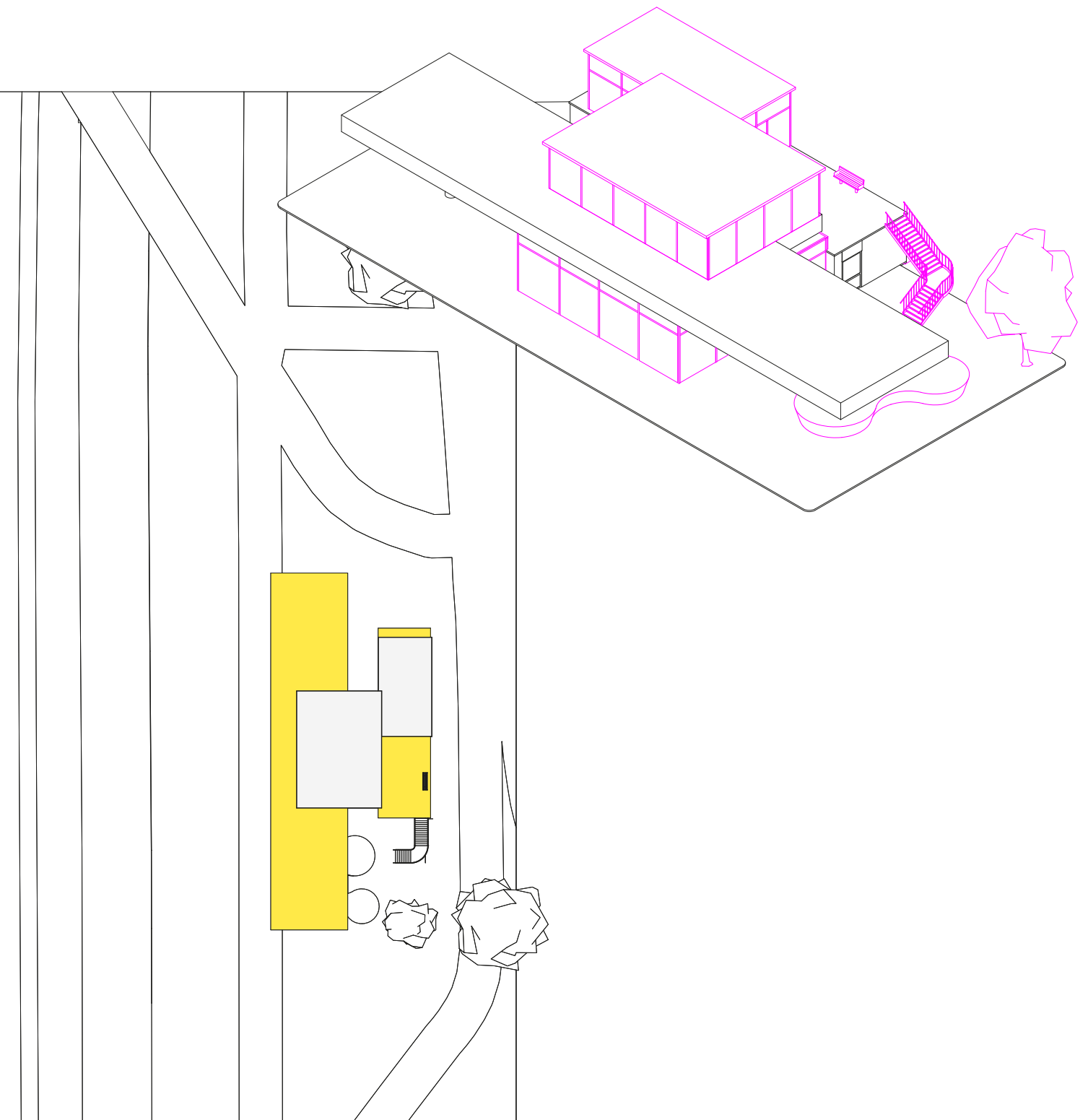
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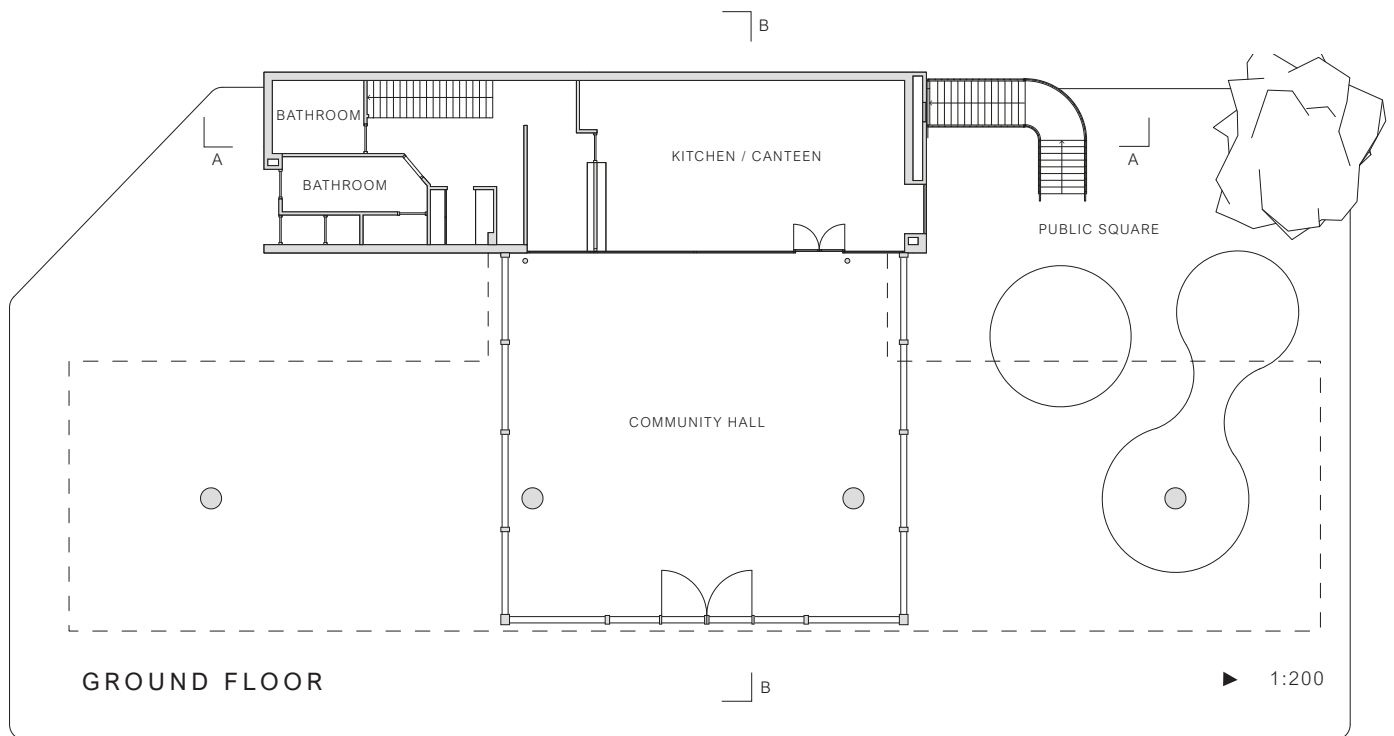
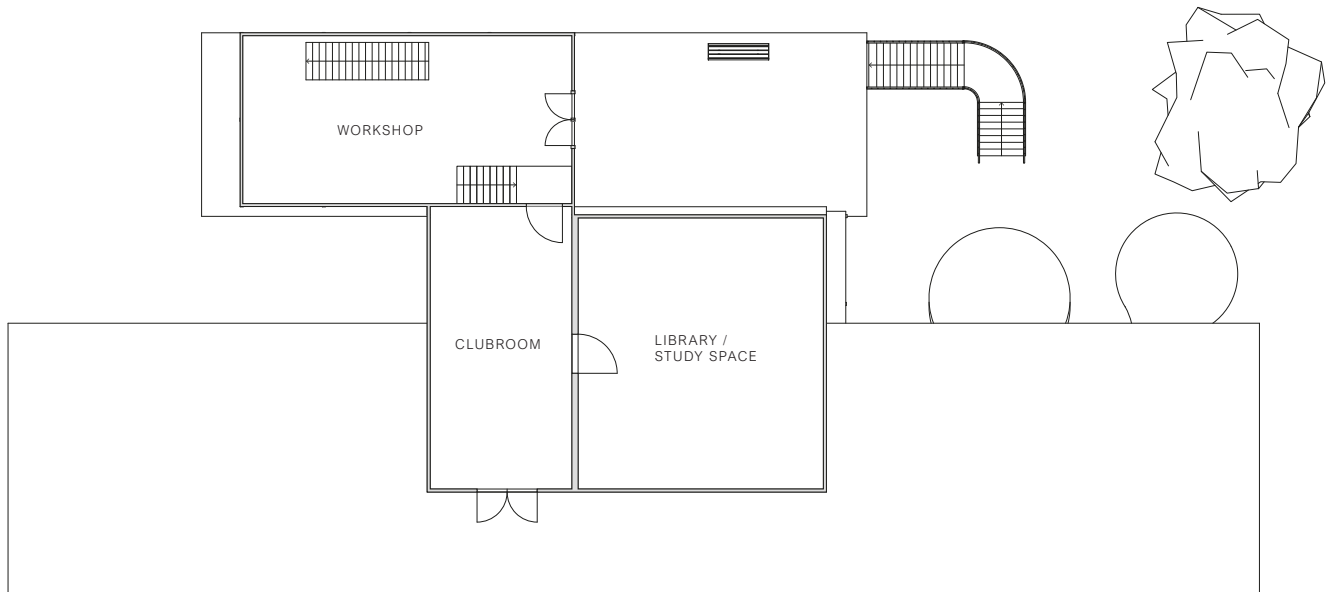


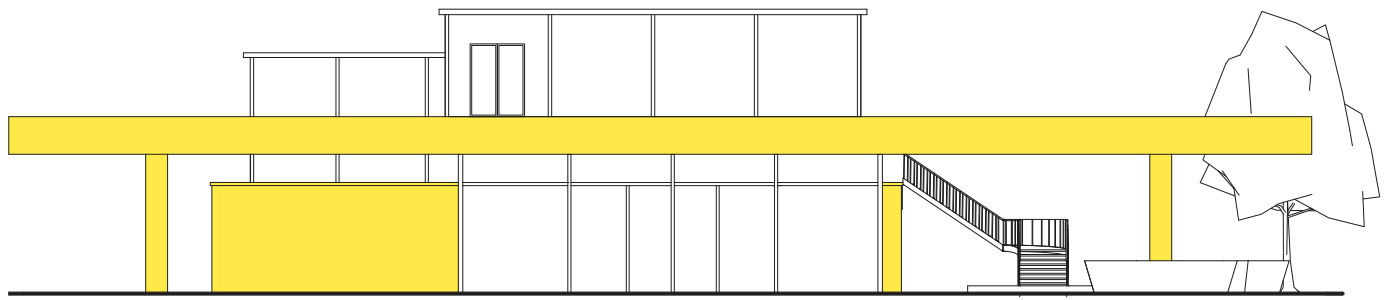
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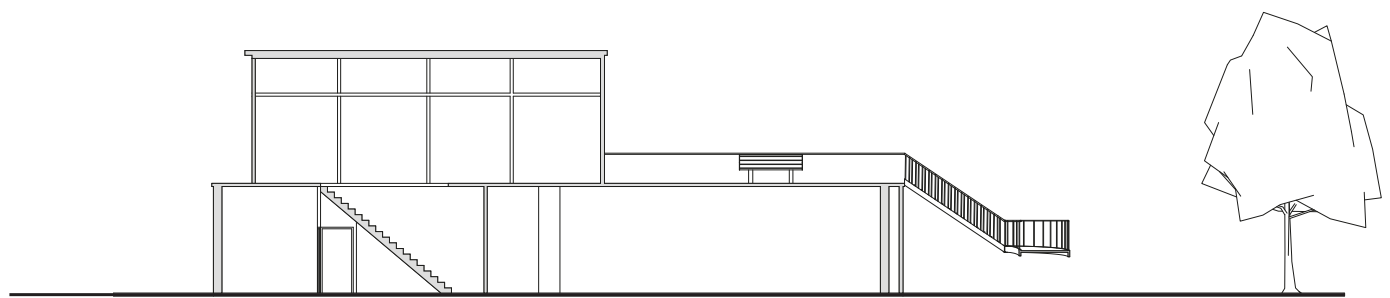
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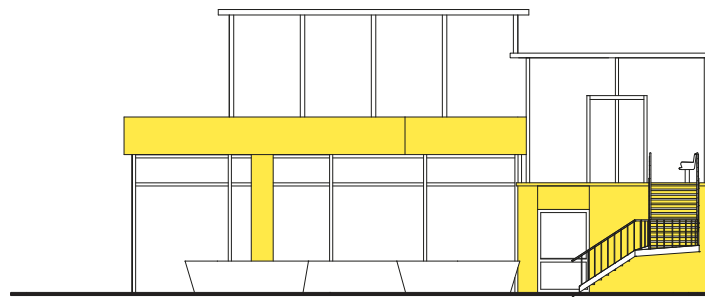
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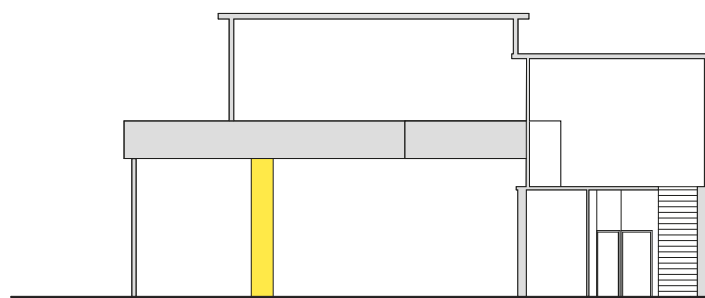
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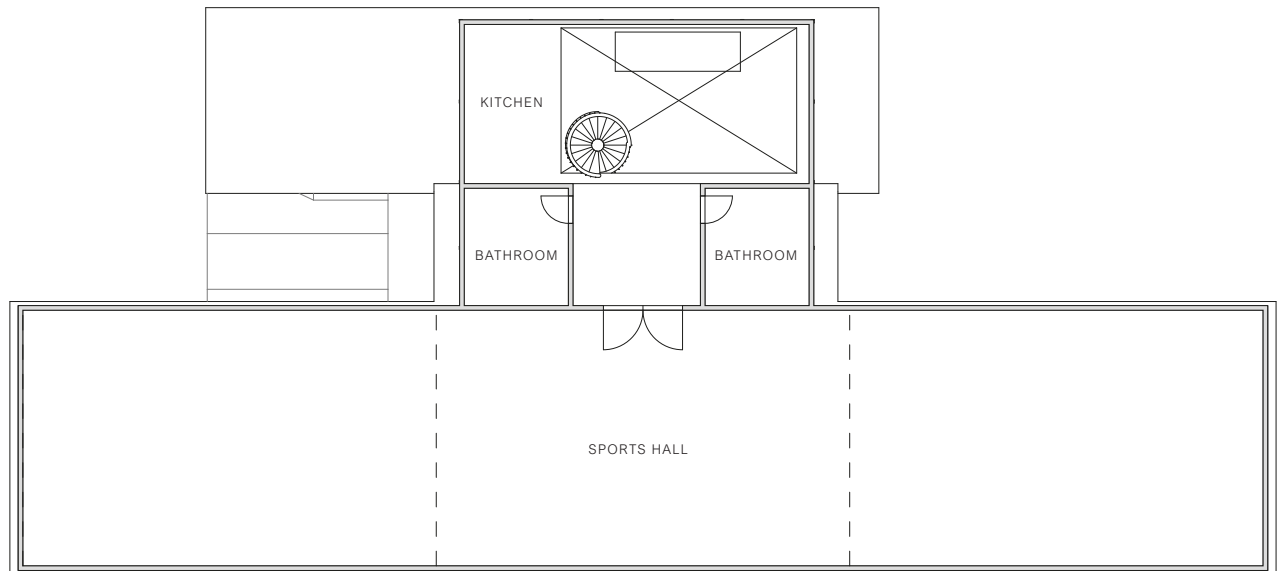
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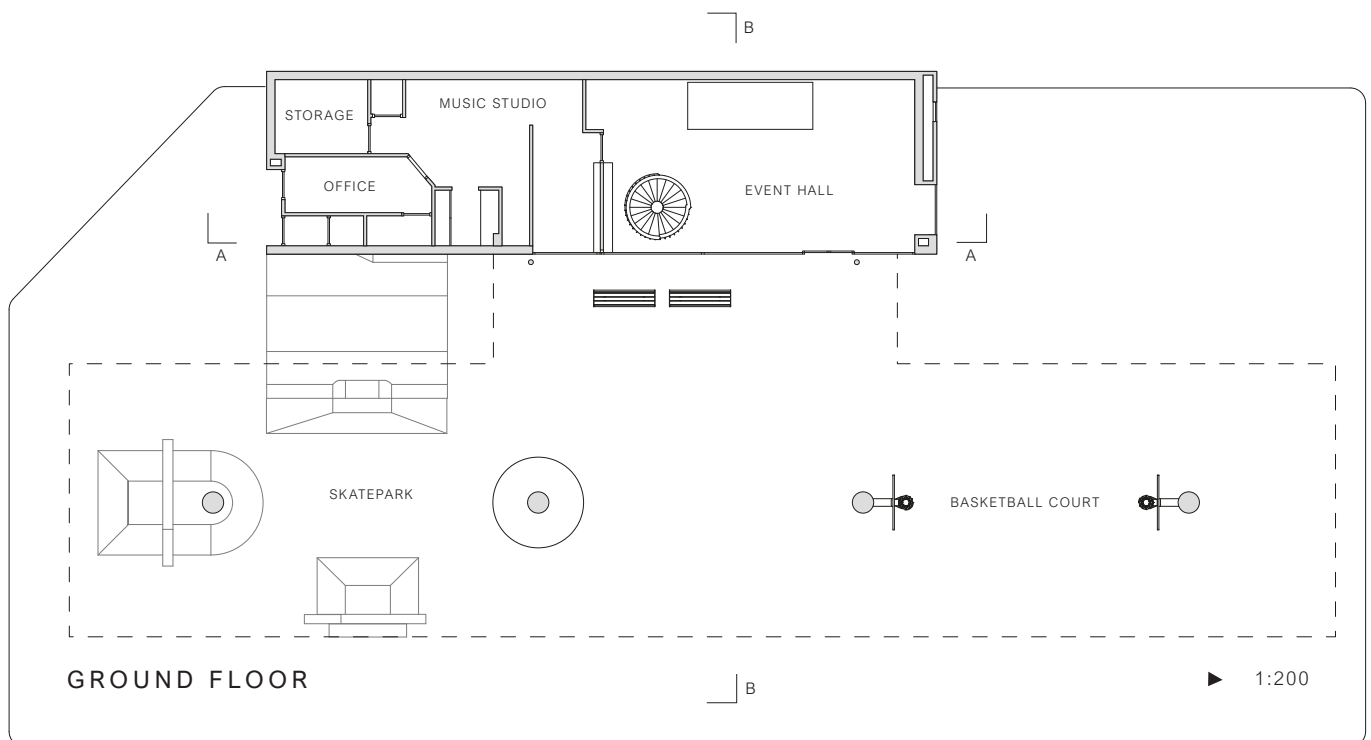
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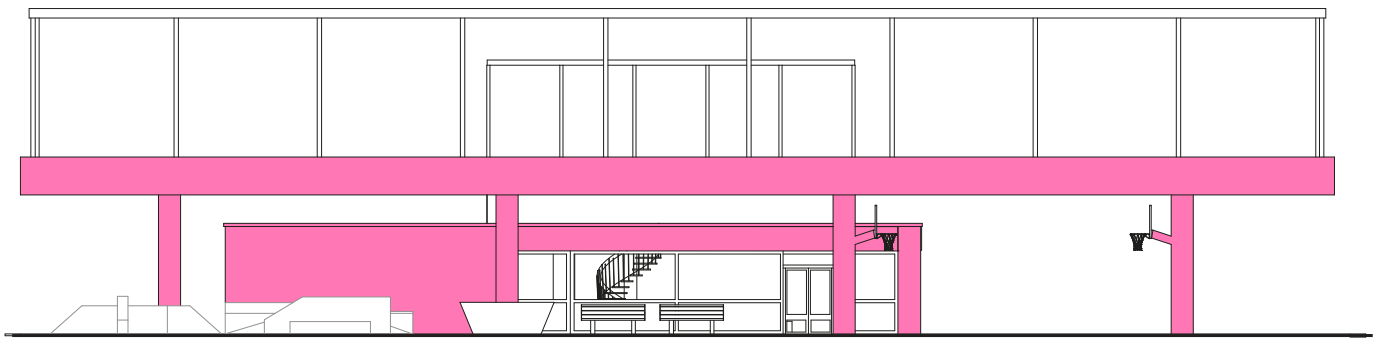
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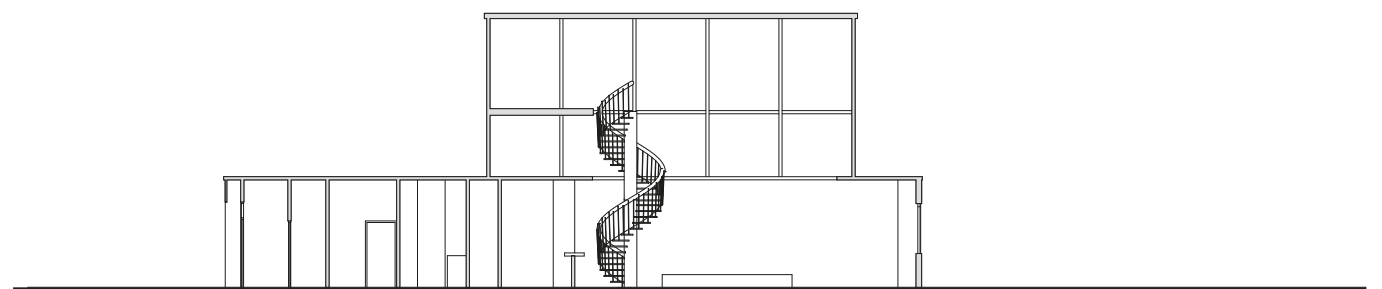
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► 1:200



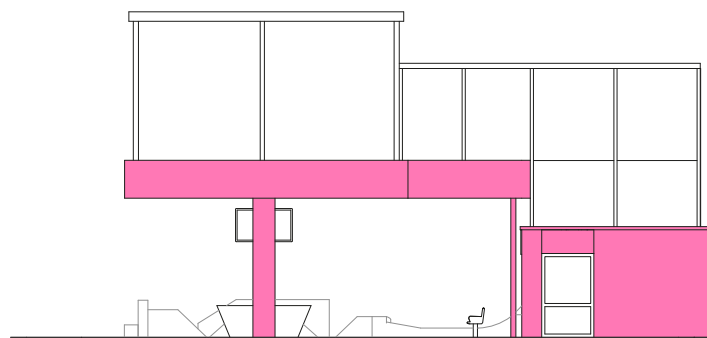
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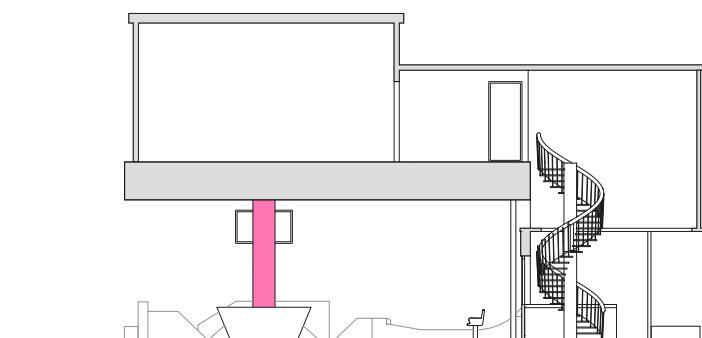
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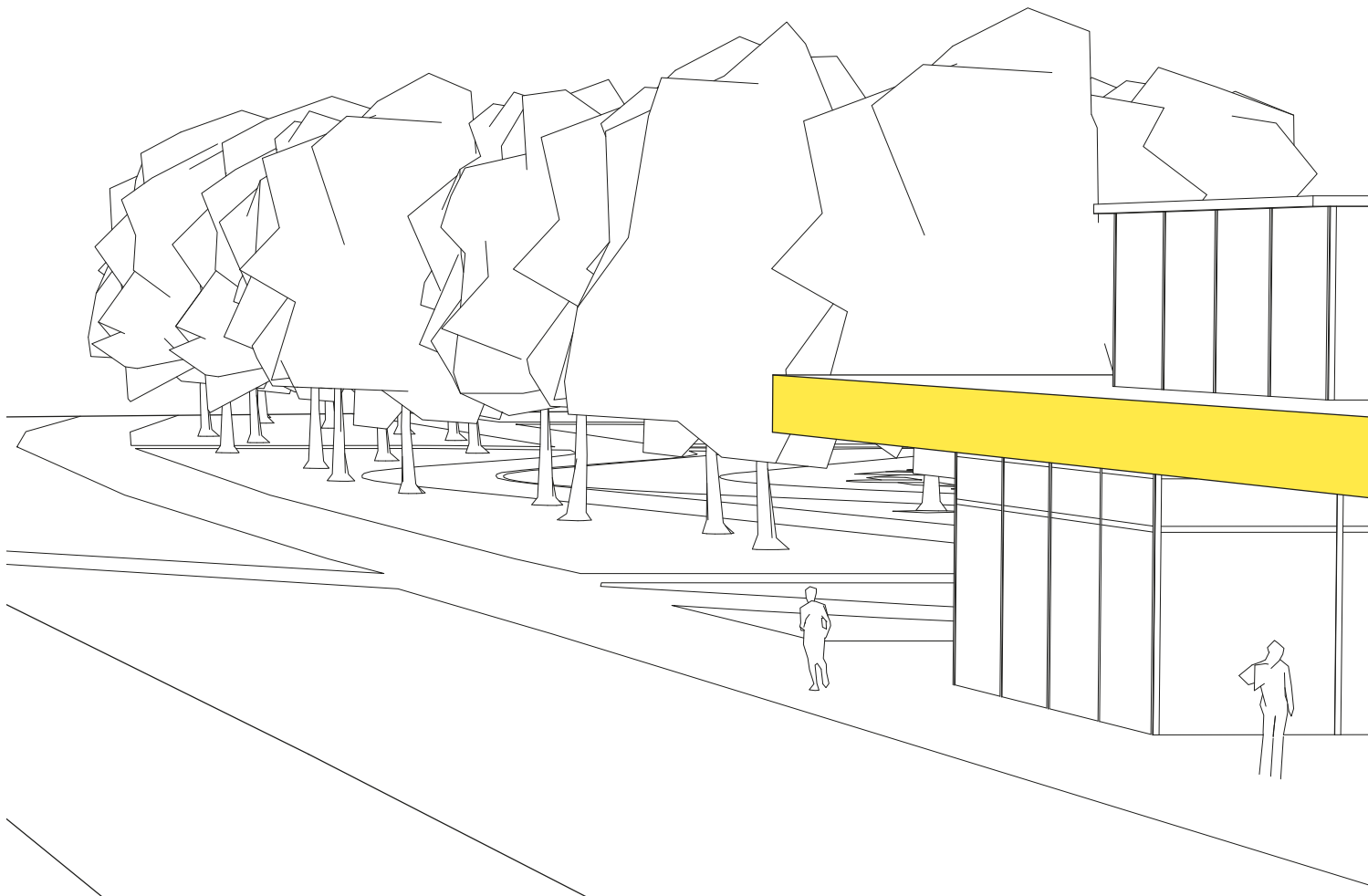
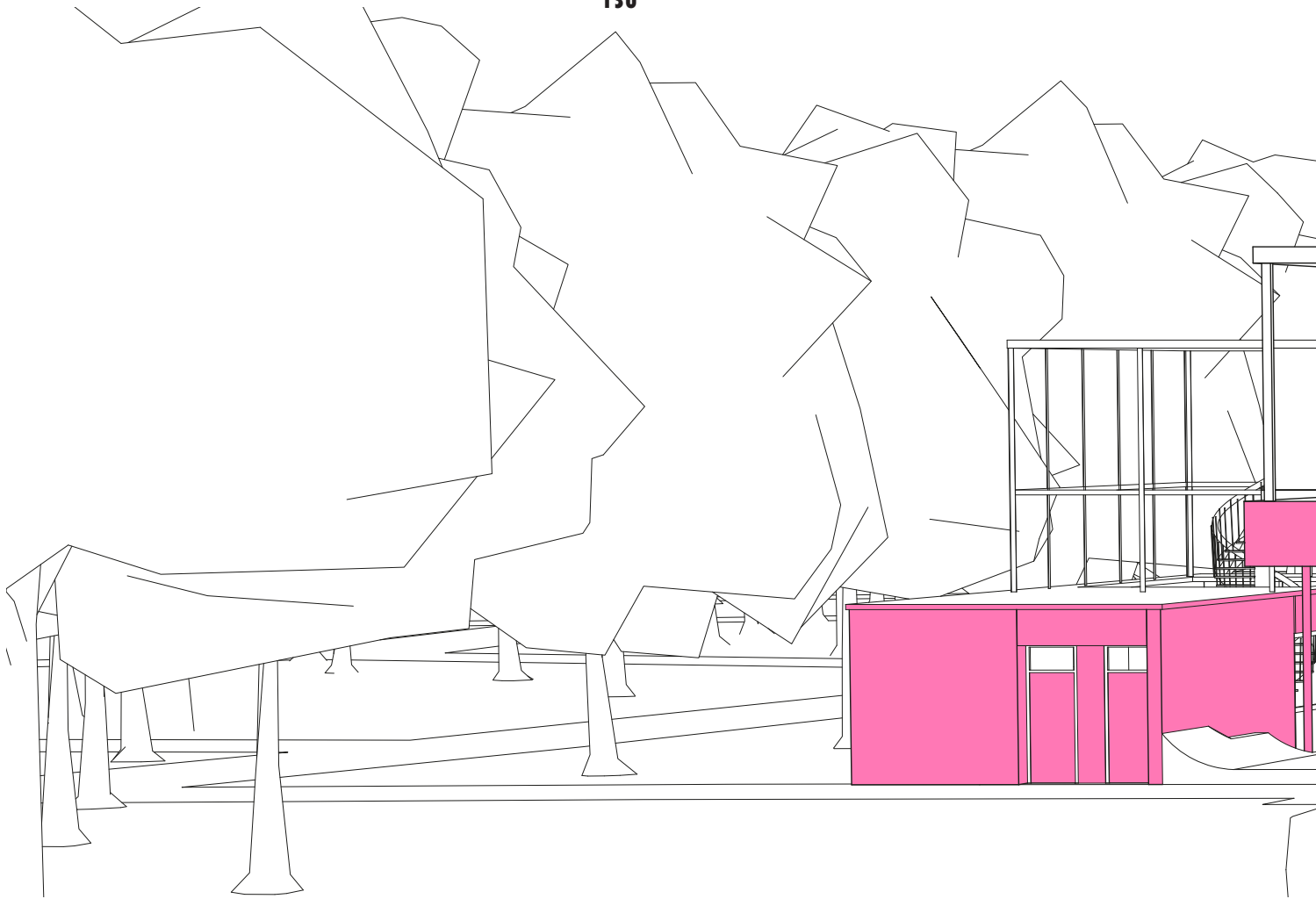
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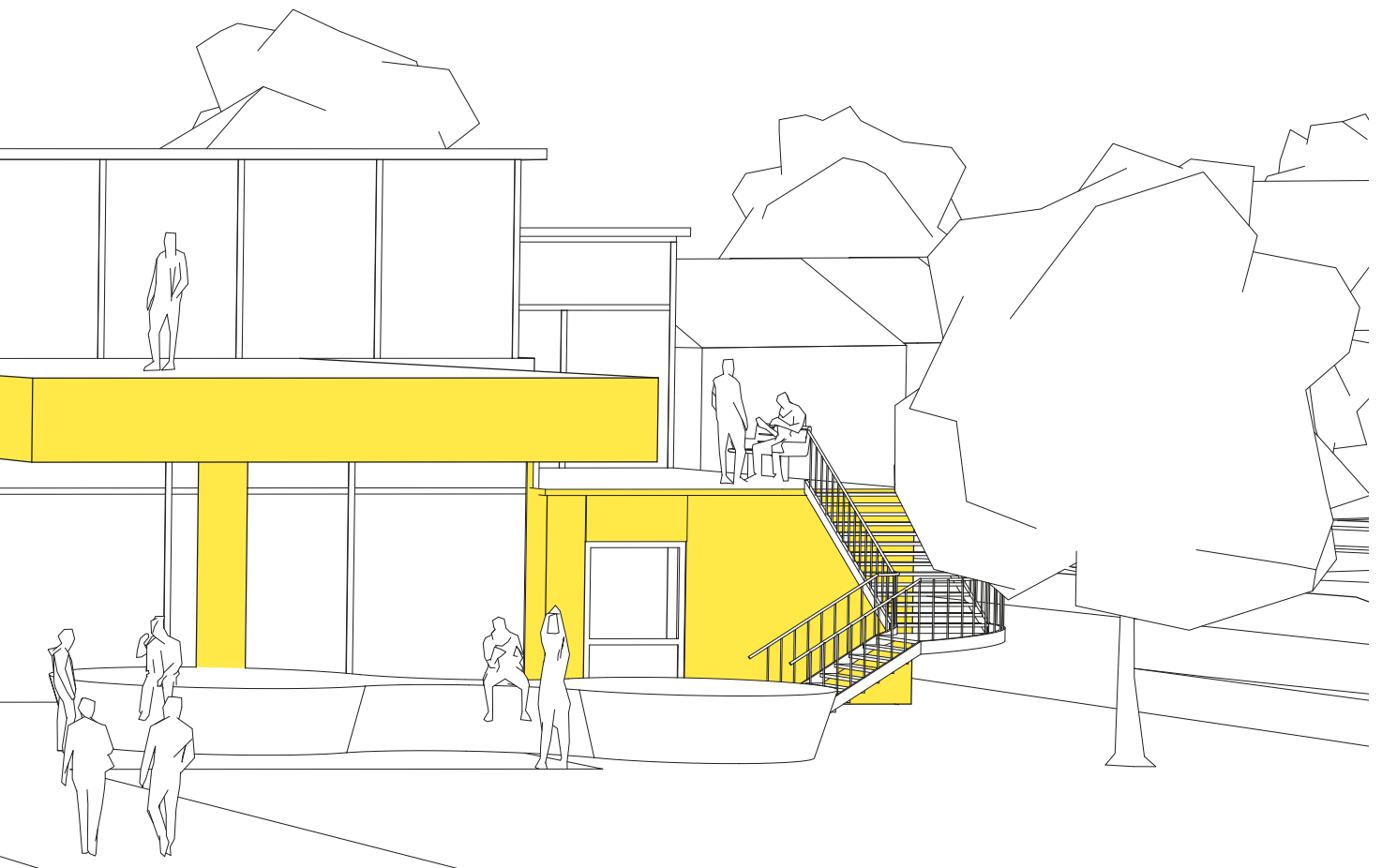
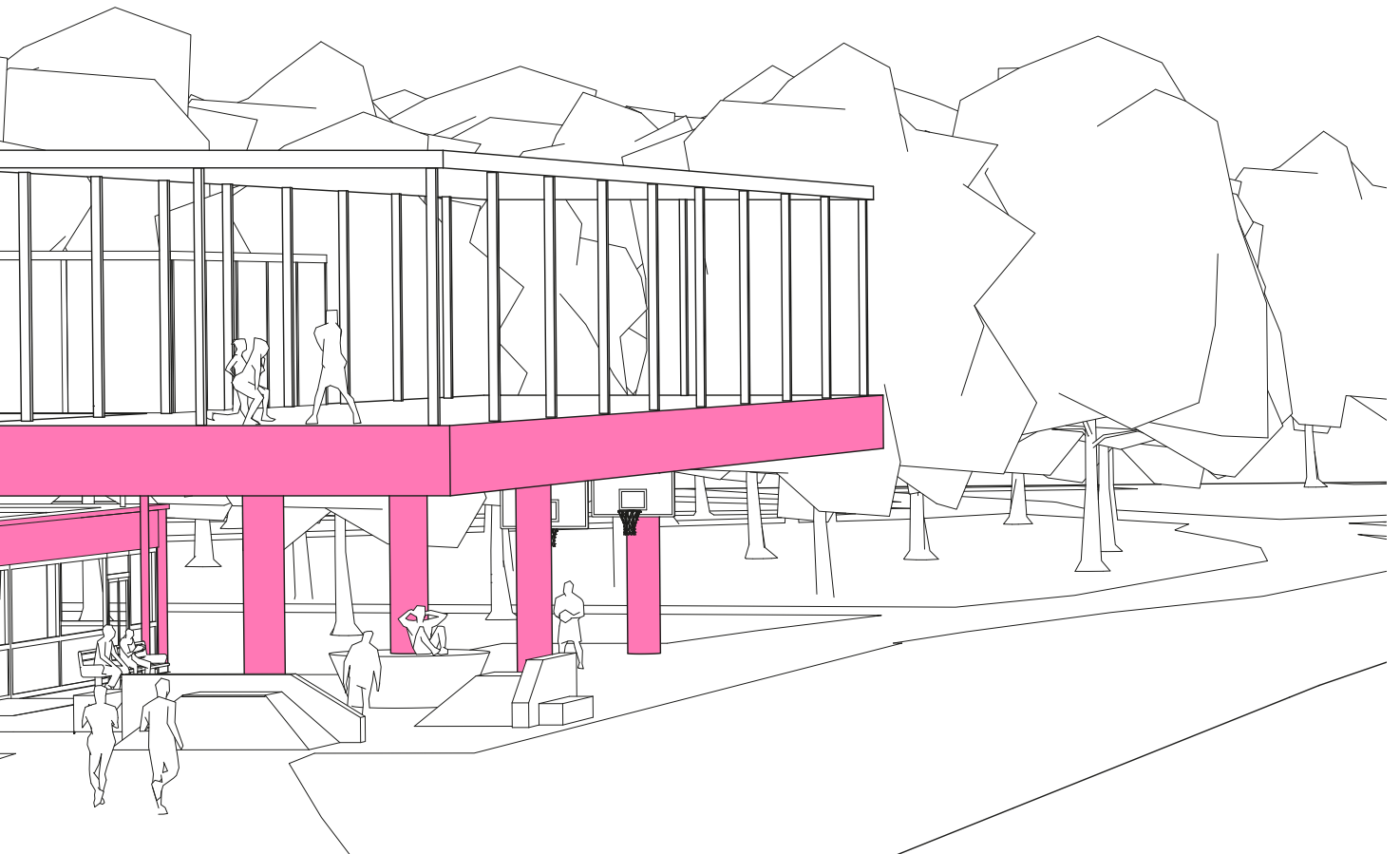
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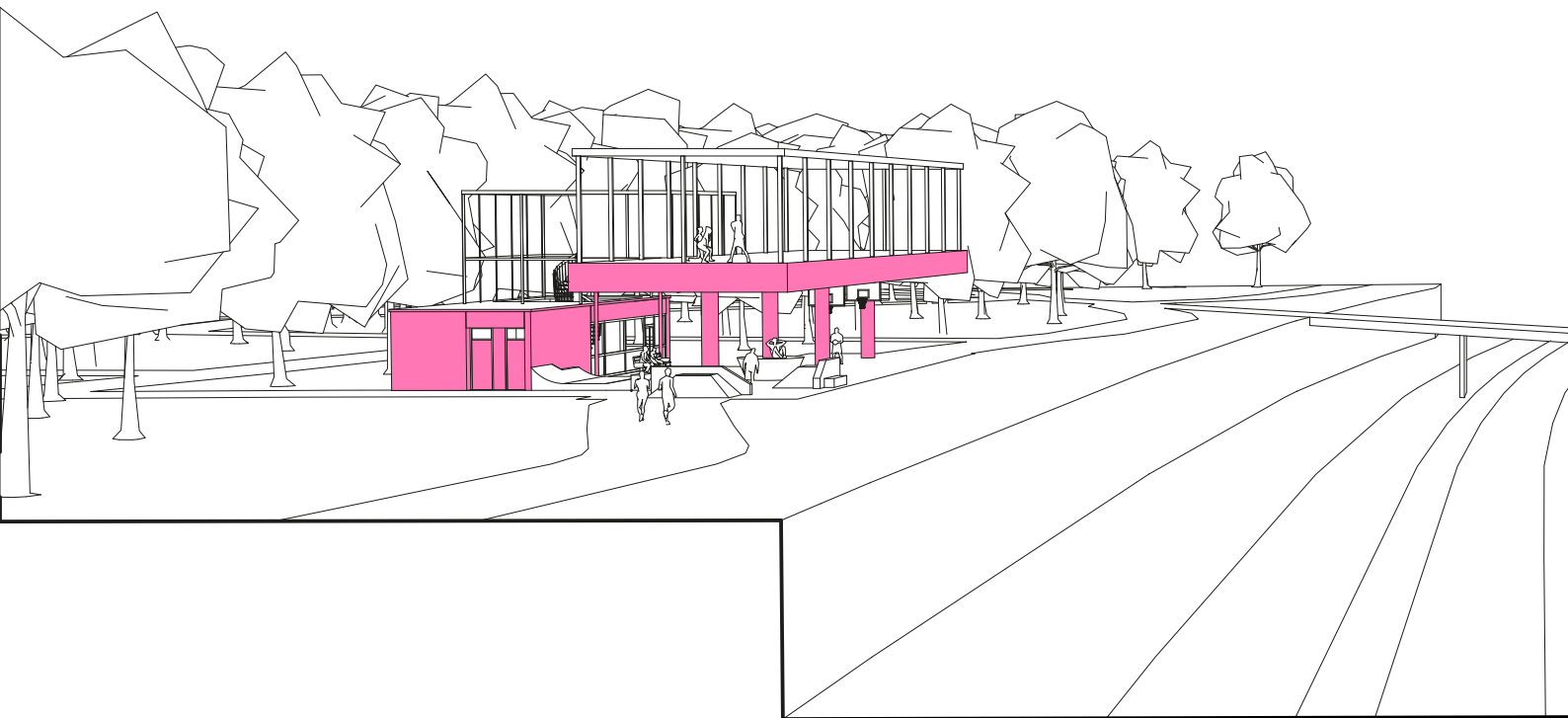


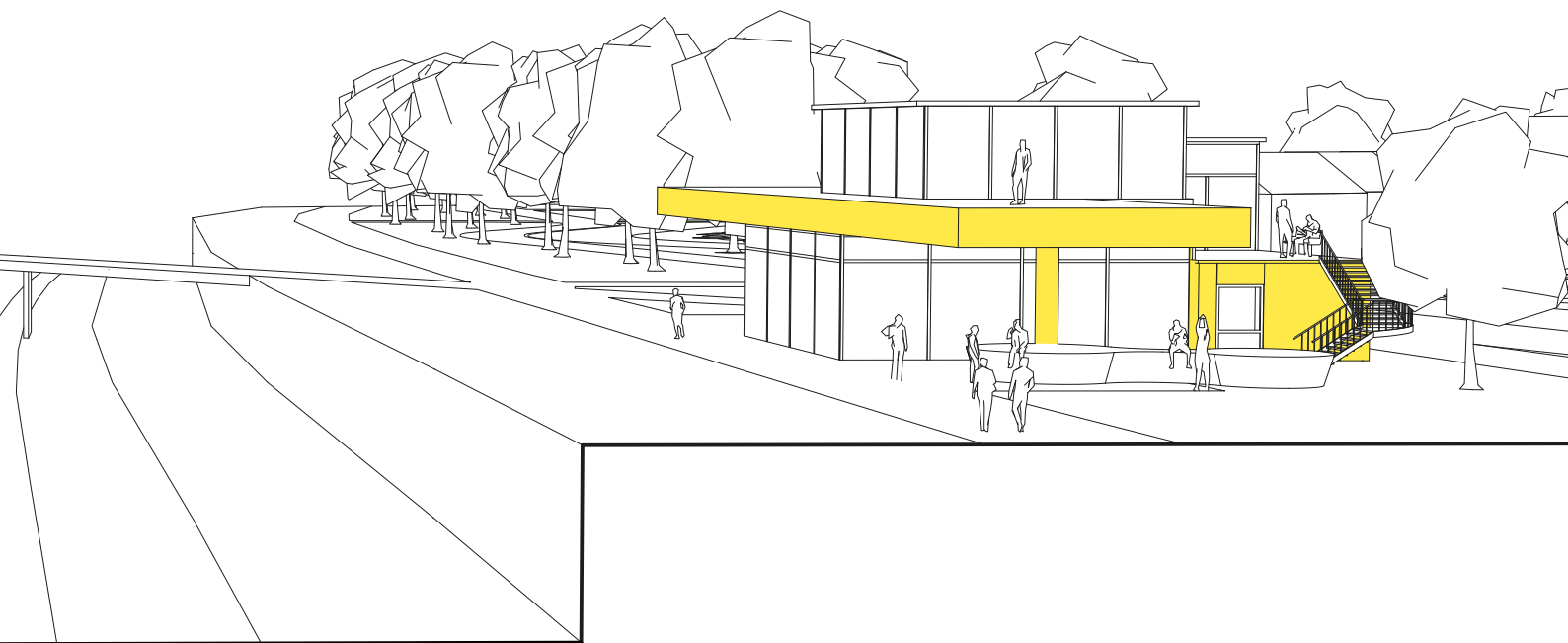
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1:200











CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION
DISCUSSION
REFLECTION

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the possible architectural contribution of youth centre to the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. The literature specific to the circumstances of the youth in Amsterdam North clarified the struggles and oppressions that these youngsters are currently facing, such loneliness, socio-economic struggles, social exclusion, and the ongoing gentrification that forces poor families to move elsewhere. The youth centre is introduced as a possible contribution to these problems, answering the first subquestion: What is the importance of a youth centre for the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North?

Further literature research on the youth centre as an architectural typology revealed the complexities of its design approach, and helped creating a systematic framework of its role within the societal, social, and spatial dimension (subquestion 2). This then led to the introduction of several design parameters that formed a tangible framework for assessing the design of existing youth centres (subquestion 3). This framework essentially offers a general understanding of the important factors of the design of a youth centre. In gaining more knowledge about the specific translation of these design parameters in actual youth centre designs, a set of case studies is conducted that measure the parameters (subquestion 4).

By looking at different contemporary youth centres through the lens of the specific parameters, different design strategies emerge that correlate with the design parameters. These design strategies were then compared and analysed to construct a framework of design principles, forming a bridge between the theoretical research and practical application. Chapter 5 aims to answer the last subquestion: How can the established design principles be applied to the design of a youth centre in Amsterdam North? It will do so by translating the research-based principles into three possible practical solutions for a specific site in Amsterdam North (Gele Pomp and Roze Tanker). These design variants seek an answer to the main research question: How can a youth centre and its architectural design approach contribute to the support of vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North? Moreover, it's a first step into the design phase of this graduation project, through the gained framework of design principles. In the further design process, work continues to refine the answer to the main research question.

DISCUSSION

Although this research offers a comprehensive set of frameworks for understanding the youth centre as architectural typology, and the essential parameters and strategies when it comes to designing a youth centre, there remain a few gaps and limitations.

First of all this research aims to find a contribution to the support of vulnerable youth through a youth centre. While research points out that a youth centre could play a vital role in the social and personal life of youngsters, the discussed challenges that the youth of Amsterdam North is facing are part of complex social and societal problems. Especially gentrification and stigmatization remain difficult topics when it comes to finding a solution through architecture. It should therefore be emphasized that the outcome of this research is a hypothetical solution to the complex challenges discussed. Despite this potential limitation, chapter 2 shows the scale at which the youth center can operate and serve not only the spatial, but also the social and societal domain.

Secondly, the framework of design parameters introduced in chapter 3 does not cover all grounds. Although these parameters were carefully chosen from a wide variety of literature, there are undoubtedly more design parameters not covered in this study. Notwithstanding, the appointed design parameters prove to be essential in the design of a youth centre. The conducted case studies in chapter 4 confirm

the presence of the parameters in existing youth centre designs and its impact. Furthermore, this exercise establishes not only a design specific, but also a prioritizing understanding of the parameters. Subsequently, some parameters occurred more frequently than other. Of course, it should also be noted here that limitations remain, as (only) five case studies were conducted. While the case studies were chosen by their various design approaches. A different or more extensive set of case studies might arrive at a different conclusion.

The main limitation is found in Chapter 5. Where the framework of design principles offer a better comprehension of the design parameters, when directly applied to a specific design assignment they turn out to be a restrictive design tool. When the principles from the case studies are directly put into practise, the outcomeing design variants remain framed within the projects studied, rather than leaving room for creative experimentation. Despite this recognition of inoperability, the exercise of conducting case studies and concluding this in design principles, helped gaining a comprehensive understanding in the design parameters. These general parameters then prove to be a more useful and versatile design tool than the design principles, and are included in the design phase of the thesis project.

REFLECTION

Graduation topic and project description

The graduation studio Transitional Identities of the Heritage track of Architecture focuses on the transformation of civic centres in Amsterdam North. Most of the community centres are in a poor state and deserve social and physical improvement. How can the civic centre play a more significant role in the social and cultural realm of Amsterdam North, through adaptive reuse?

In my research and design project I chose to focus on a specific target group; the vulnerable youth of Amsterdam North. In my opinion, youth is the most neglected group that are most in need of a qualitative communal space. As they are facing various challenges, such as loneliness, limited economic opportunities, social exclusion and gentrification. In my research and design I introduce the youth centre as a possible architectural contribution to these problems. In this newly designed youth centre, the youth should feel seen, heard and respected by its iconic and inviting character. In creating this new hub for the youth I decided to choose two structures that already obtain a certain iconicness (see image 1; message house). The Gele Pomp and Roze Tanker are two abandoned gas stations, that stand proudly above the Nieuwe Leeuwarderweg in the vibrant colors to which they owe their names.

In transforming these gas station into a new youth centre, I am extending and amplifying the existing values that these structures already hold, and adding new values that come from the research. The cantilevered roof and recognizable character of the buildings is extended by means of an extensive steel structure that (visually) sits on the existing cantilevered roof. Thanks to the height of this new structure, the youth center becomes visible from a great distance and literally and figuratively lifts young people to a point where they look out over the city. The overhangs of this new structure amplify the cantilevered effect of the existing roof and create a constructive acrobatics, expressing the youthful urge of taking risks (see image 2). Within this steel structure various spaces 'float' that house a wide variety of functions and facilities that these youth currently do not have access to. In between these functional spaces I left several undefined spaces that can be filled in and appropriated by the youth (see image 3).

Relation between research & design and the value of my approach

In the research I firstly analysed the problems and challenges that the youth of Amsterdam North are facing. These then became starting points that I aimed to solve in the design. Subsequently I analysed the youth centre as an architectural typology. An extensive literature review resulted in a set of design parameters that are essential in designing a youth centre. This framework of parameters served as a measurement tool in conducting several case studies of youth centers. Although the concluding design principles from this exercise appeared to be less useful as a design tool as I envisioned, it helped me gain a comprehensive understanding of the design parameters (see image 4). I then consciously and unconsciously applied these parameters in the design process.

Vise versa, the design process introduced new strategies to these parameters. I for instance started to see transparency as something that could function from the inside to inside, instead of only the other way around. Furthermore, color and structural acrobatics became a new way of gaining the attractiveness that a youth centre needs.

The value of my design approach was to get a clear understanding of the important design parameters by using them as glasses through which I looked at different case studies. By then letting go of the specific principles and strategies of these existing projects, I took a step back to the general design principles. This allowed me to let curiosity and creative experimentation guide the design, while keeping an eye on the essential design parameters.

Academic & societal value and scope of implication & transferability

By taking this project to the extreme, I tried to create a response and a statement in relation to the existing youth centers in Amsterdam-North (see image 6). This project shows what a youth centre in Amsterdam North, and elsewhere, could look like if we consider its possibilities to be endless. At the same time, this project shows how even a simple, unlisted building like a gas station can serve as a suitable base for a comprehensive transformation project. Through these ambitions I hope to open a discussion about the value and potential of communal spaces for our youth, and the possibilities within adaptive reuse project.

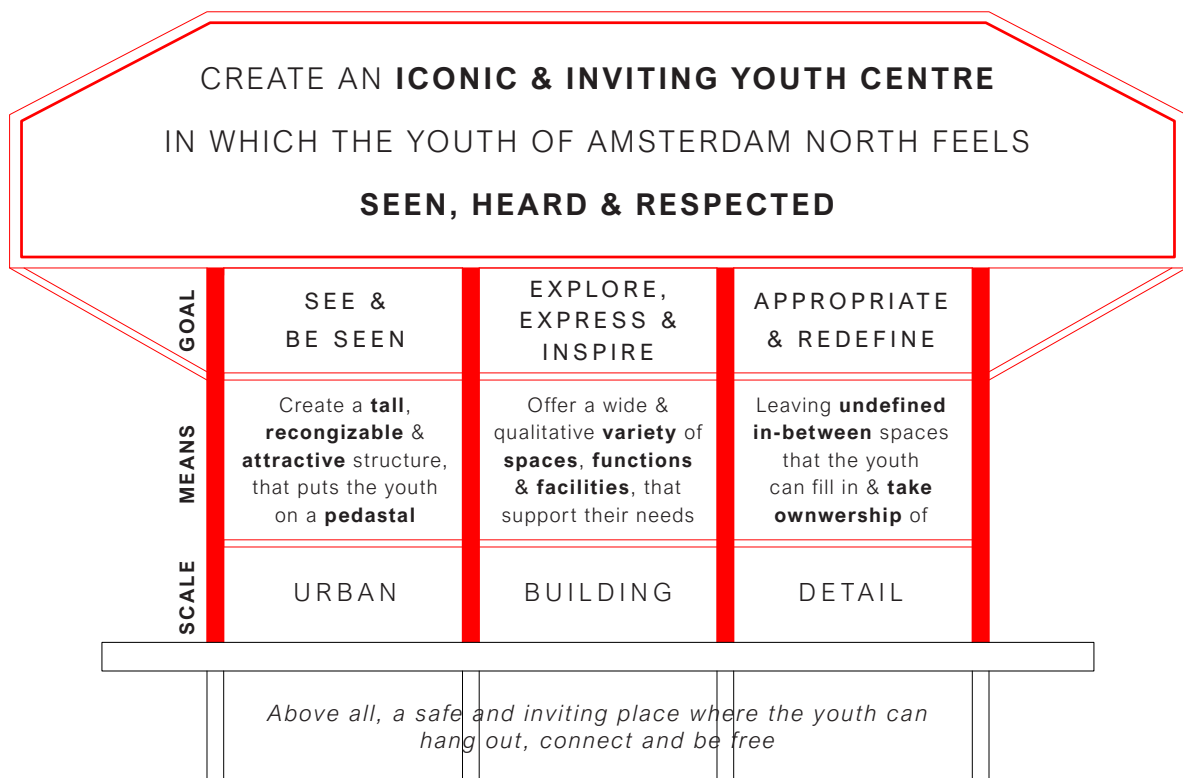


Image 1, Message House

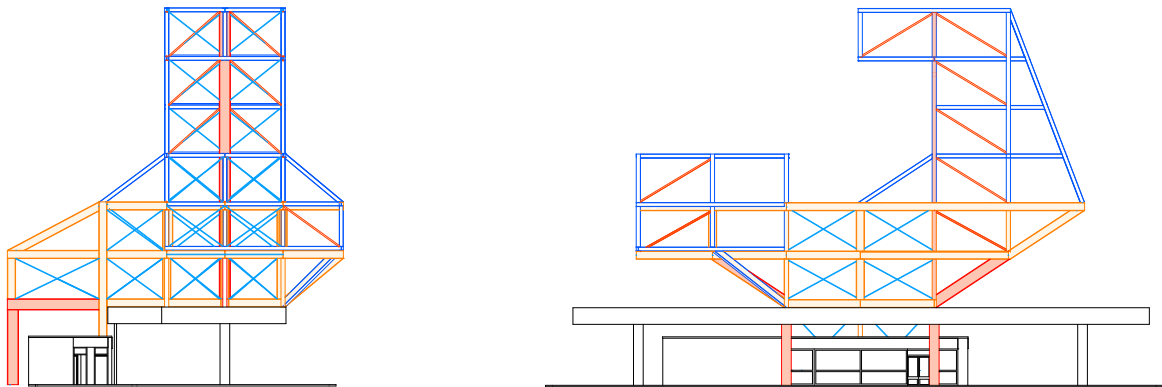


Image 2, Construction diagrams showing overhangs

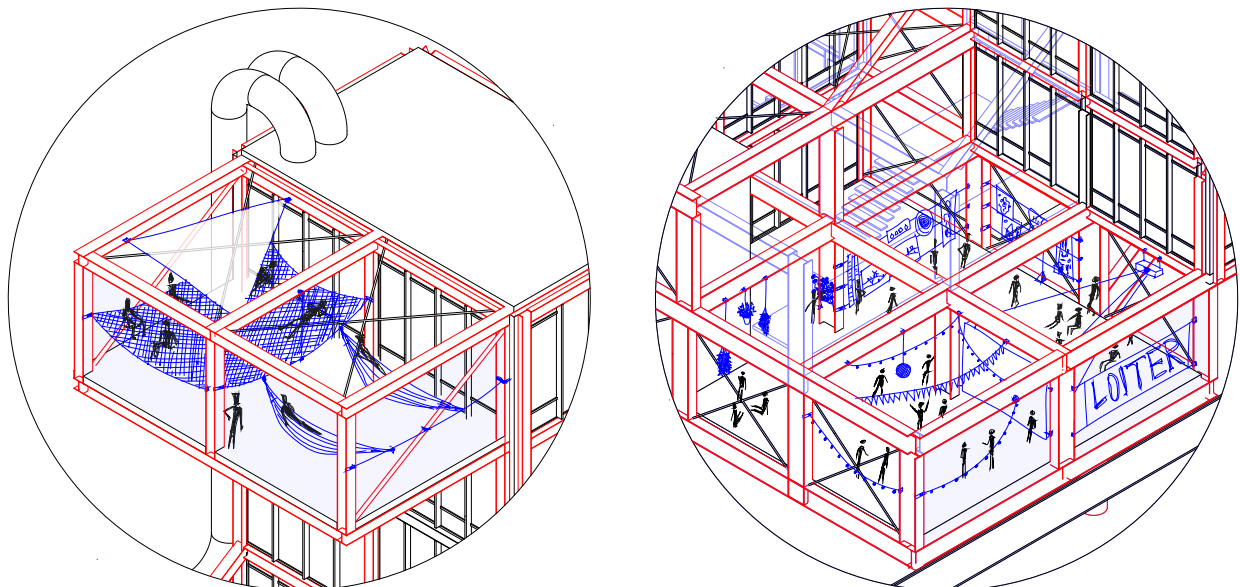


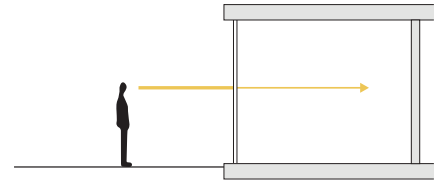
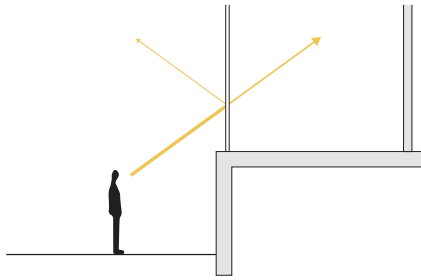
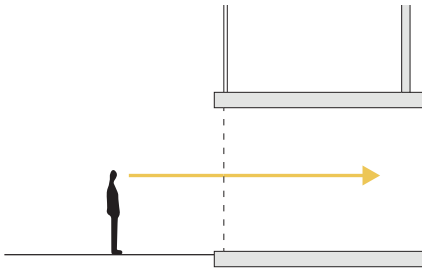
Image 3, Possible infills of appropriate in-between spaces

ECAM YOUTH CENTER / AGWA
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

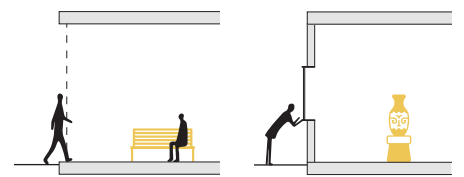
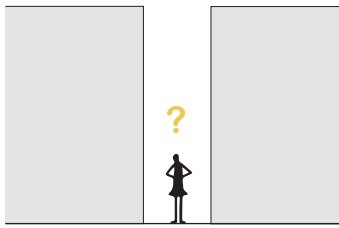
DYNAMO / DIEDERENDIRRIX
EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS

VIAS CULTURAL CENTER / ESTUDIO SIC
LEÓN, SPAIN

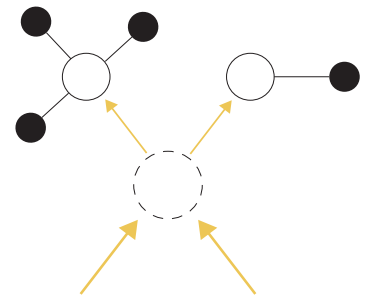
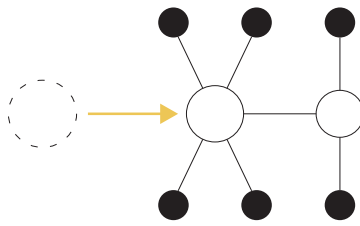
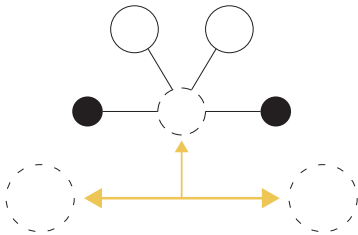
TRANSPARENCY



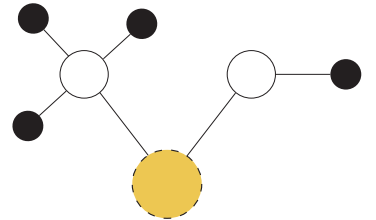
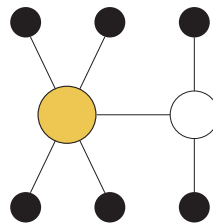
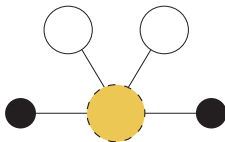
ATTRACTIVENESS



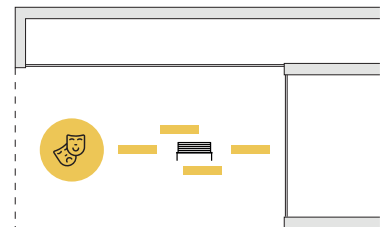
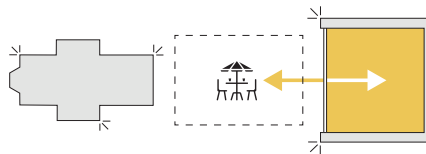
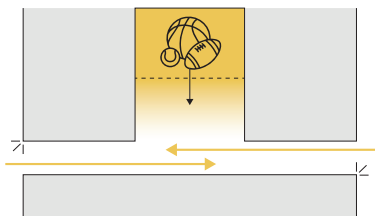
INVITINGNESS



CONCATENATION



ACTIVATION



MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

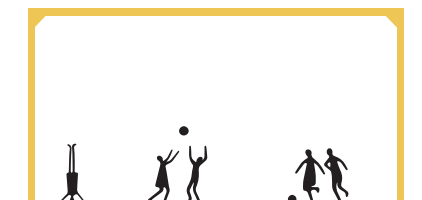
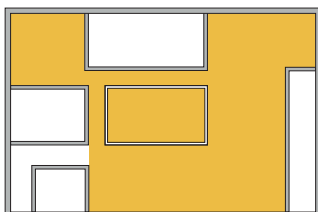
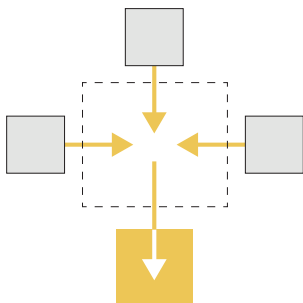
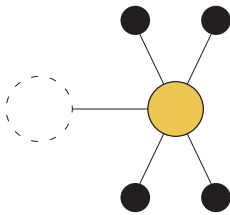
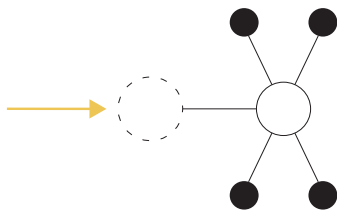
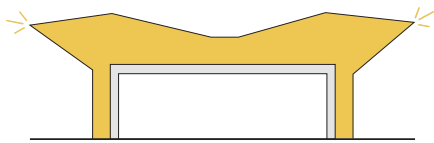
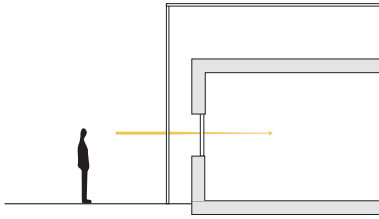
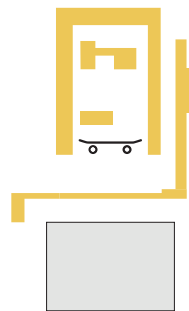
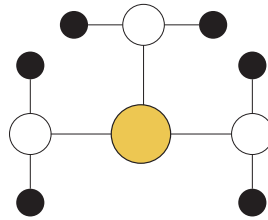
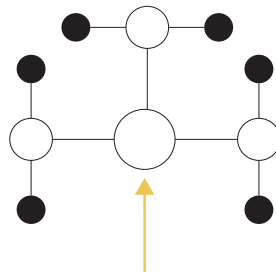
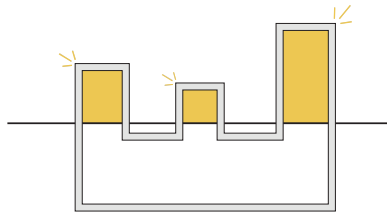
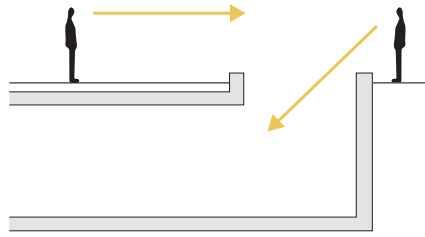


Image 4, Design principles from conducted case studies

**WATERLOO YOUTH CENTRE /
COLLINS AND TURNER**
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



YOUTH CENTRE RABOT
GHENT, BELGIUM



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