

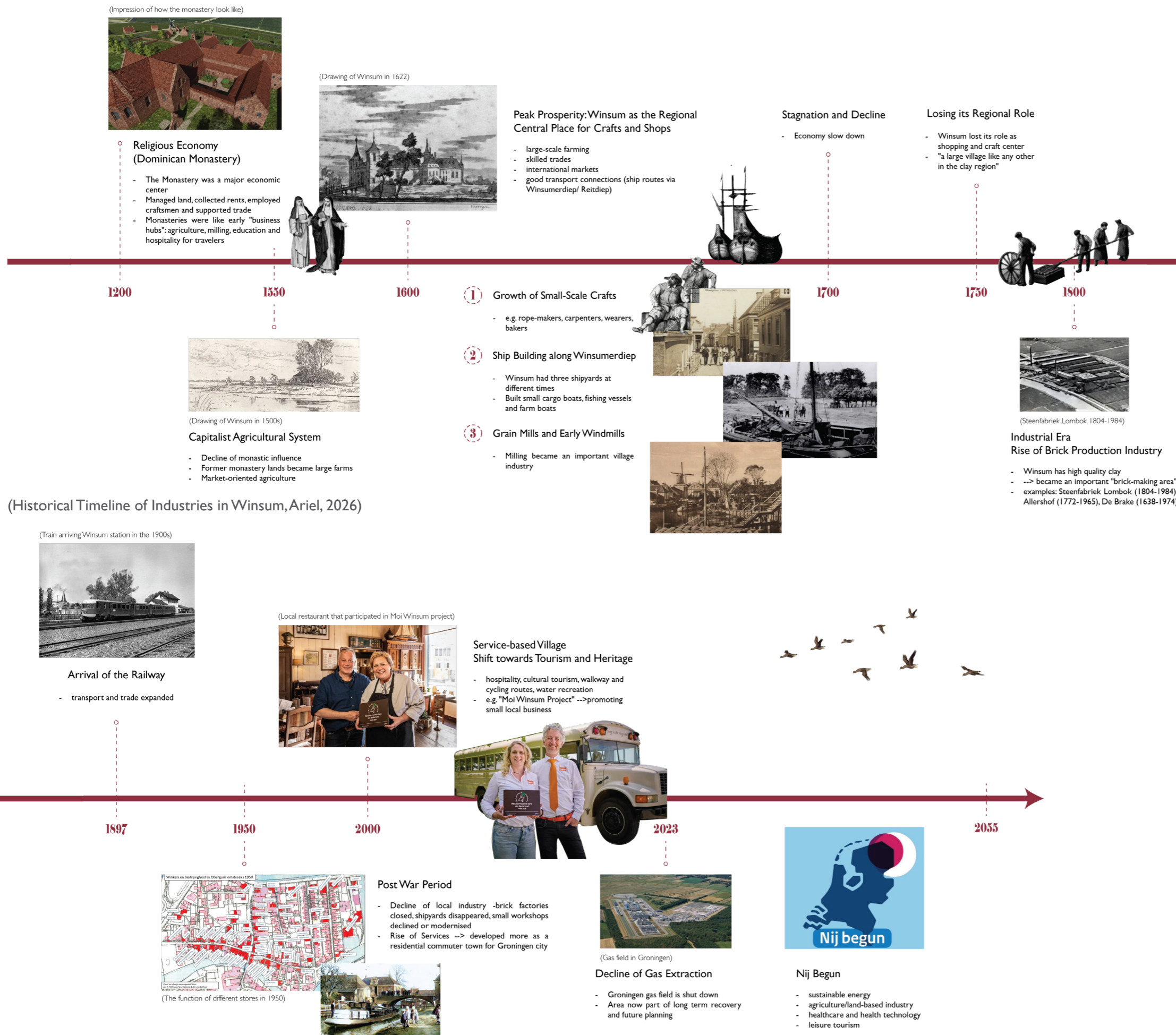
Public Building Graduation Studio 2025-26 (AR4API20)  
Leisure and revitalization of post-gas Groningen  
Re-Start the North (NY BEGUN)

**WHERE WATER CONNECTS**  
**Architecture as a Catalyst for**  
**Year-Round Activation**

Tam Sze Ching, Ariel (6220436)  
ir. Henk Bultstra (main mentor)  
ir. Sien van Dam (second mentor)

## TABLE OF CONTENT

FOREWORD	1
PART 1	3
PART 2	15
PART 3	21
PART 4	53
REFERENCE	67



## FOREWORD

The Studio positions itself within the framework of Nij Begun—a 30-year plan recently implemented by the Dutch Government to build a better future for the regions of Groningen and North Drenthe. Nij Begun targets areas that have been affected for decades by practices of gas extraction and, as a consequence, also by several earthquakes, causing serious damage to buildings as well as economic and mental damage to its inhabitants. This project investigates how architecture can contribute to the regeneration of economically and socially marginalised areas by strengthening cultural identity, fostering a sense of belonging, and simultaneously generating economic vitality. It explores how sustainable tourism – one that celebrates nature, ecology, and multispecies coexistence – can trigger positive models of economic development and social cohesion.

Through a Research-by-Design approach, the project proposes a tourism- and community-oriented public building that combines wellness, short-stay accommodation, and cultural programmes to extend tourism across the year. To balance attracting visitors while preserving the village's character, the project explores how small-scale architectural interventions, landscape design, and wellness-oriented programmes can be woven into the existing context, forming a connected and inclusive system.

## KEYWORDS

Nij Begun, Public Building, Tourism, Hybridity, Year-Round Tourism,

PART I: INTRODUCTION



(Touristic map of Waddenland, Public Building group collaboration, modified by Ariel, 2026)

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

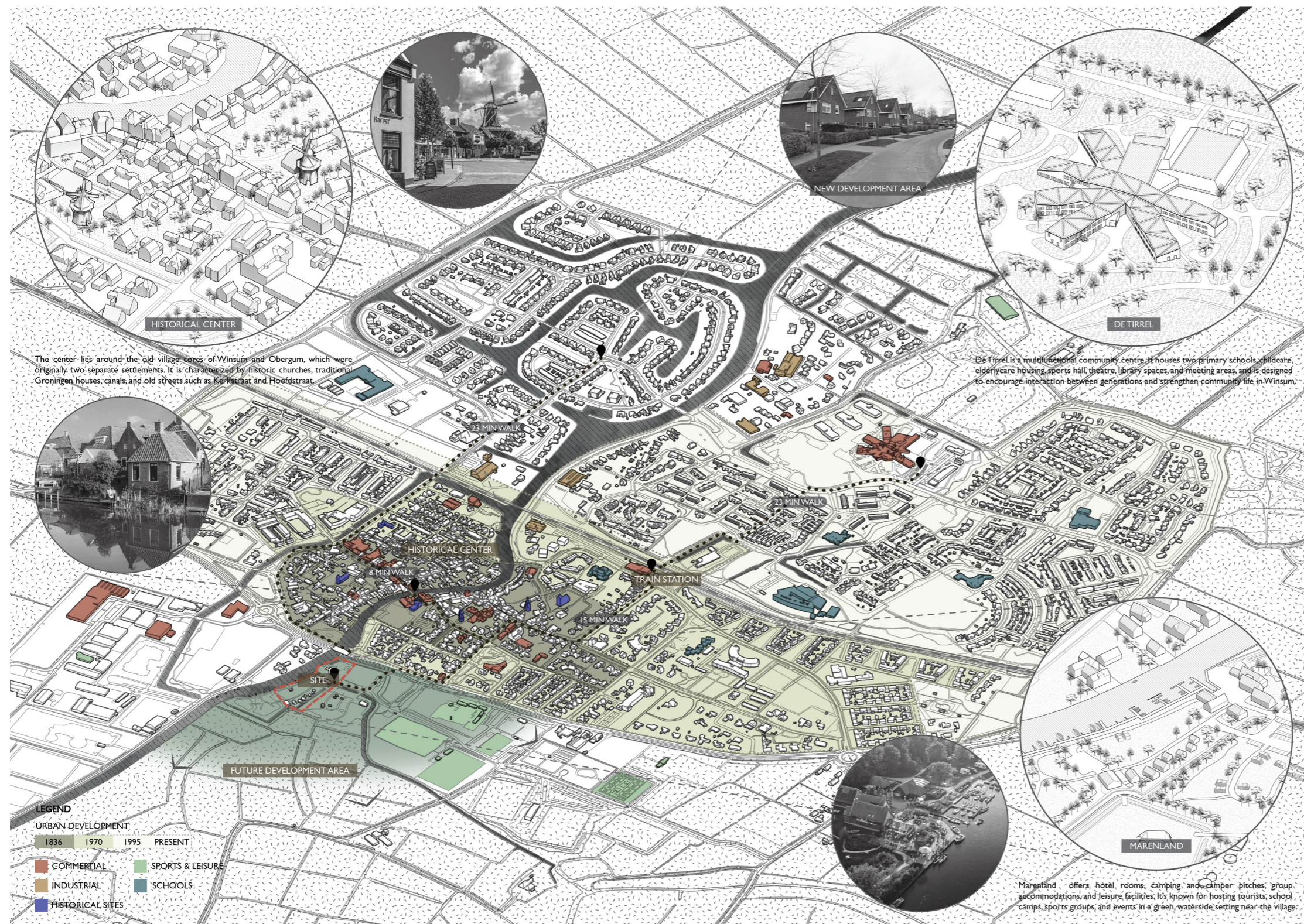
*How can public buildings, through typological innovation and programmatic experimentation, positively affect everyday life in local communities by promoting social cohesion and participation?*

Having the gas production as an economic driver, Groningen, for a long time, undervalued other fields of interest, like leisure and tourism. Now, the province is looking to the neighbouring Friesland and Drenthe, which have invested the past 40 years in their tourism infrastructure and identity. Tourism, as identified by the Nij Begun agenda, will therefore constitute one of the vehicles to imagine a future for Groningen. Under the Nij Begun agenda, Groningen Province aims to attract an additional 1.5 million visitors annually.

The site of this project is located in Winsum, Groningen. The assignment is to design an activity hub that strengthens local identity while fulfilling the economic goals of Nij Begun.

Currently, Winsum attracts approximately 15,600 overnight visitors per year, which is roughly 1.7–2.0% of all overnight stays in Groningen Province (≈900,000 annually, according to CBS). If Groningen were to reach its Nij Begun target of +1.5 million visitors per year, a proportional share would be around 30,000 additional visitors to Winsum annually, doubling its tourism volume.

If tourism numbers are to increase sustainably, mere infrastructural upgrades or reliance on surrounding attractions will not be enough. Winsum must position itself as a bigger magnet, without compromising local life.



(Analysis of Winsum, showing the building types, attractions and urban development, Ariel, 2026)

The site Marenland is within a walkable distance from the train station and other public transport. There are also sufficient stores for people's daily living.

## SCOPE: ABOUT WINSUM

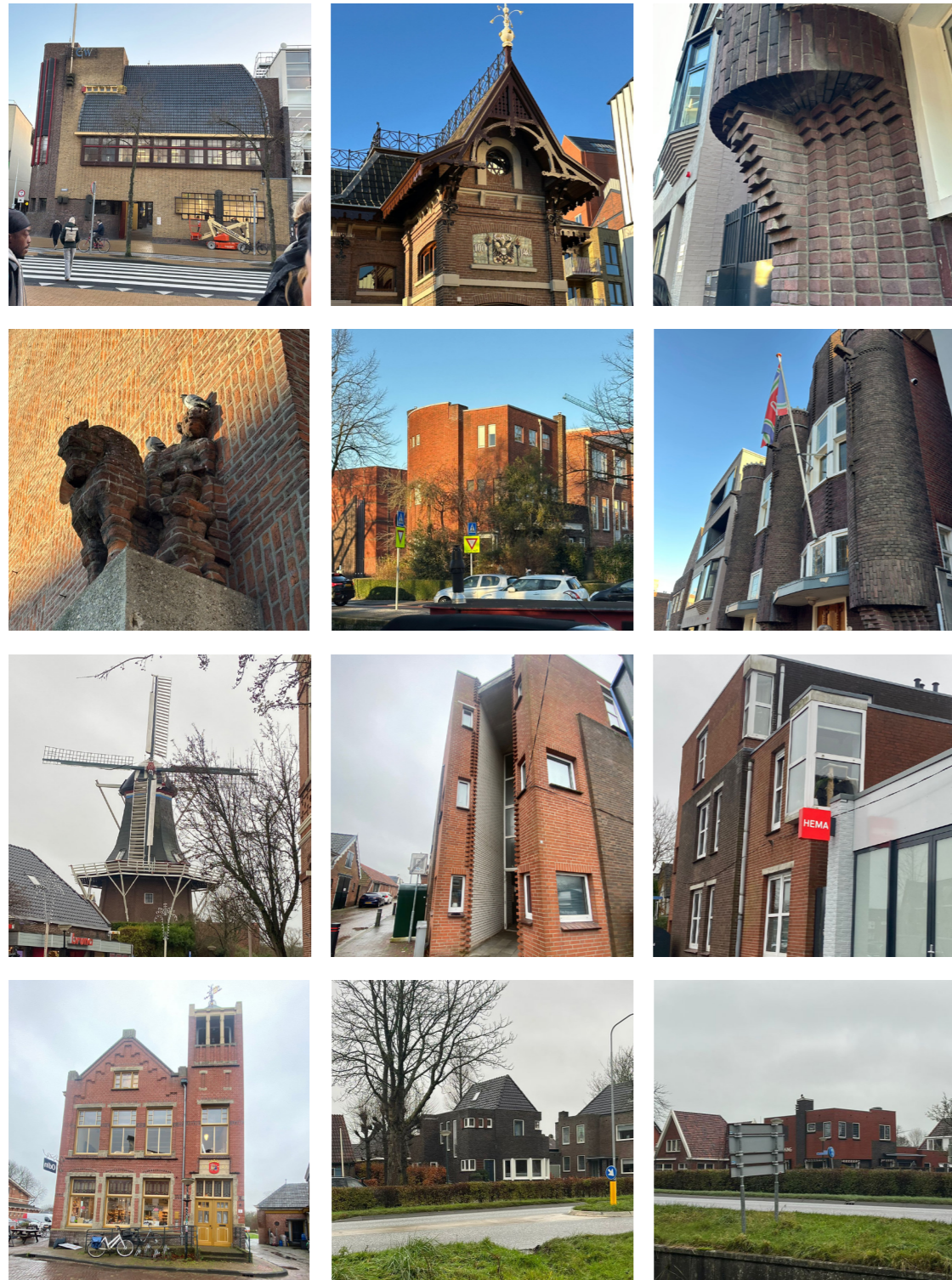
This sentence is a bit weird. "Winsum is a village in the Groningen Province. It has 59 national monuments. It was also named the "Most Beautiful Village in the Netherlands" by ANWB (Royal Dutch Touring Club) in 2020, praising the architecture and the standout scenery.

Winsum's location works in its favour, sitting between several major tourist "magnets":

- The Pieterpad, the Netherlands' most famous long-distance hiking trail
- Lauwersoog and the Lauwersmeer National Park, adjacent to the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site
- Groningen city, reachable in 18 minutes by train

Thanks to its convenient location, Winsum already functions informally as a gateway and base for exploring the surrounding region. Its rich architectural history and scenic qualities reinforce this role. However, despite these advantages, tourism remains highly seasonal, with stays being short, with only 1.8 days annually. Accommodation options are limited: the Marenland recreational centre is the village's only hotel, and its campsite operates only from April to October.

The COVID-19 period also revealed the village's vulnerability. With the title of the "Most Beautiful Village in the Netherlands" and with international travel largely unavailable, many people chose to explore nearby destinations instead. This led to an unexpected surge in domestic visitors. The sudden overcrowding strained the infrastructure and challenged local acceptance, threatening the serenity that defines Winsum's appeal. The experience revealed that there is a mismatch between Nij Begun's tourism ambitions and Winsum's existing capacity.



Site Photos: Brick Architecture in Groningen and Winsum



Site Photos: Marenland

**Table – Annual visitors (overnight + day), adjusted for seasonality**

Visitor type	Assumptions	Calculation	Result
Overnight – Airbnb	40 listings × 2 guests × 35% occupancy × 210 active days	$40 \times 2 \times 0.35 \times 210$	<b>5,880 guest-nights</b>
Overnight – Booking / hotels	12 properties × 10 rooms × 1.6 guests × 55% occupancy × 210 active days	$12 \times 10 \times 1.6 \times 0.55 \times 210$	<b>22,176 guest-nights</b>
<b>Total overnight guest-nights</b>	Airbnb + hotels	$5,880 + 22,176$	<b>28,056</b>
<b>Estimated overnight visitors</b>	Avg stay = 1.8 nights	$28,056 \div 1.8$	<b>≈ 15,600 visitors</b>
Day – Pieterpad walkers	15,000 guides × 65% walk ≥1 stage × 30% stage 1–2 × 60% day visitors × 90% seasonal factor	$15,000 \times 0.65 \times 0.3 \times 0.6 \times 0.9$	<b>≈ 1,530</b>
Day – Lauwersoog / Wadden spillover	250,000 visitors × 3–5% stop rate × 70% seasonal factor	$250,000 \times 0.03\text{--}0.05 \times 0.7$	<b>≈ 4,200–8,750</b>
Day – “Most beautiful village” visits	Comparable villages × 75% seasonal factor	—	<b>≈ 3,000–6,000</b>
Day – train-based leisure visits	25 visitors/day × weekends × 52 weeks × 75% seasonal factor	$25 \times 2 \times 52 \times 0.75$	<b>≈ 1,950</b>
<b>Total day visitors</b>	Sum of day visitor streams	—	<b>≈ 10,700–17,200</b>
<b>Total annual visitors</b>	Overnight + day	$15,600 + 10,700\text{--}17,200$	<b>≈ 26,000–33,000</b>

Due to the absence of official tourism statistics at the village level, visitor numbers were estimated using a bottom-up methodology. Overnight visitors were calculated based on accommodation data from Airbnb and Booking.com, applying conservative rural occupancy benchmarks and an average length of stay of 1.8 nights (provided in the interview with the Marenland recreational centre’s owner). Day visitors were estimated based on multiple visitor streams listed above. Seasonal tourism is also considered. Chat GPT -assisted scenario modelling was used to aggregate these data.

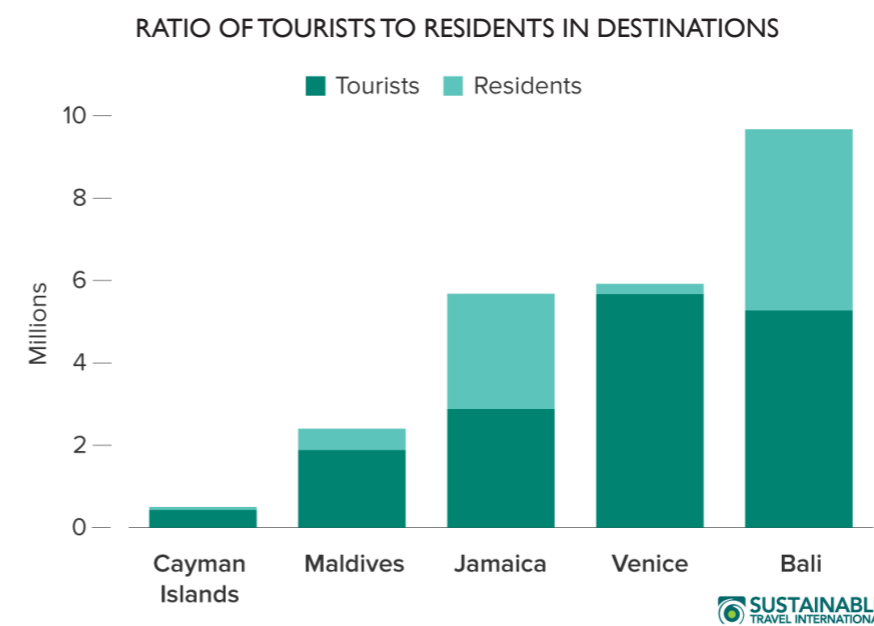
**RELEVANCE**

In today’s post-industrial era, where people crave real experiences, tourism has become significantly more important. Unique local features, whether from heritage or the land itself, turn into work opportunities, spotlight, and real cash flow. In fact, in the Netherlands, tourism already plays a significant economic role, accounting for approximately 4% of national GDP, according to the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS).

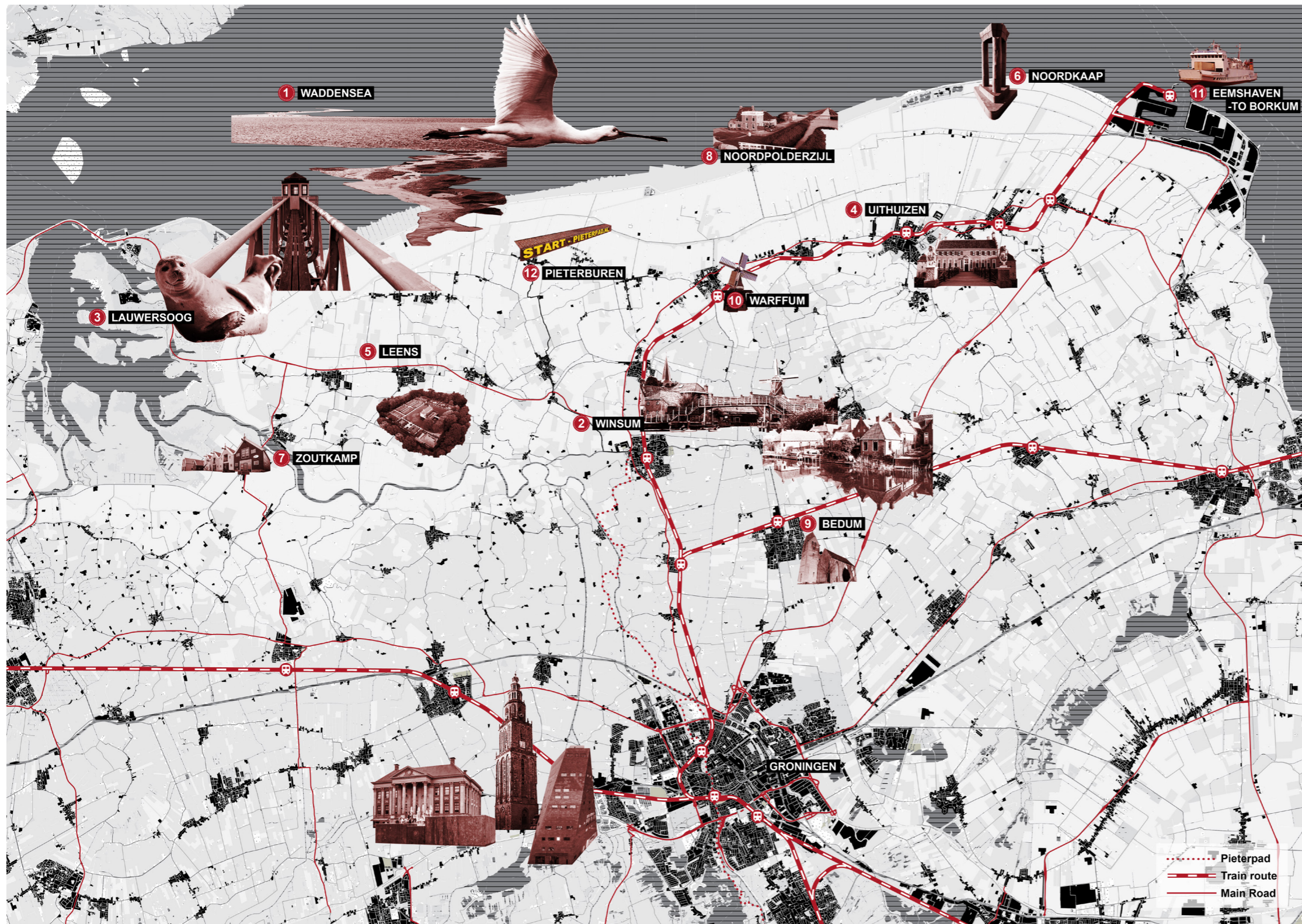
However, we also must not overlook the risk of overtourism. When too many visitors converge on the same destination, it can lead to severe overcrowding, which degrades the experiences of visitors and residents. While crowding and physical damage may be the most obvious symptoms of overtourism, they are not the only harmful consequences. Although tourism has great potential to improve the local quality of life and drive economic advancement, unmonitored growth can have the reverse effect. Tourist invasion can drive up the cost of living, making it difficult to find affordable housing and displacing residents. Despite the sizable revenue brought by tourism, many locals feel left out of the booming visitor economy. Working-class employees sustain essential low-paying

jobs, generating wealth that primarily flows to distant shareholders and corporate entities. This disparity creates resentment among residents, escalating social tensions as they feel tourism degrades their quality of life. In many tourist hotspots, tourists far outnumber residents, making residents feel marginalised and as though their community is losing its identity and being transformed into a tourist attraction rather than a place to live. (Sustainable Travel International, 2024)

Architecture has long been used as a catalyst for tourism and urban regeneration. This raises questions that are directly relevant to everyday life. Architecture is not only experienced by tourists but, more importantly, also by the people who live alongside it. Large-scale interventions can reshape public space, influence social interactions, and affect how communities relate to their environment. In the age when travelling becomes more and more accessible and frequent, the topic of fostering a healthy relationship between locals and tourists is worth studying. This project hopes to provide a possibility of how architecture can enhance daily life, support local communities, and still attract visitors in a more balanced and sustainable way.



The figure demonstrates how overtourism overwhelms locals in tourist hot spots, and transforms the place into an attraction rather than a place to live. (diagram by Sustainable Travel International, 2024)



(Waddenland Top 12 Touristic Locations, Ariel, 2026)

## RESEARCH/ DESIGN QUESTION

Currently, tourism in Winsum is highly seasonal, concentrated almost entirely in the warmer months. Activities such as canoeing and camping operate only from spring to early autumn (April to October), resulting in short average stays and limited economic impact. To achieve the financial goal of Nij Begun, undoubtedly, **more tourists are needed, but not too many.**

However, doubling the annual impact of tourism actually does not require doubling visitor numbers. Extending tourism across the entire year would already lead to a significant increase in overnight stays—achieving a similar economic effect while avoiding peak-season overcrowding. How much change can a single architectural intervention bring? The central design challenge, therefore, becomes:

*How can architecture support sustainable all-season tourism?*

## OBJECTIVE & MOTIVATION

Architecture is not merely an artistic or urban spectacle; it takes part in a broader economic and social power structure, unconsciously shaping people's values. The motivation of this project is to re-centre architecture in the everyday lives of people. From a bottom-up perspective, explore a slower, more meaningful and careful form of architecture: one that remains relevant over time, supports well-being, and contributes positively to how people live, rather than how they consume.

PART 2: APPROACH

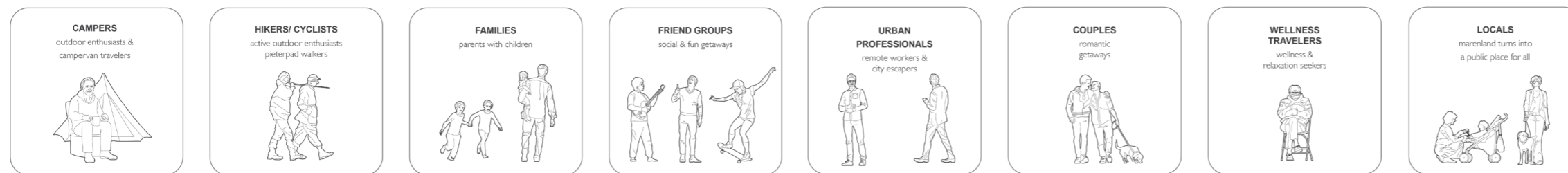
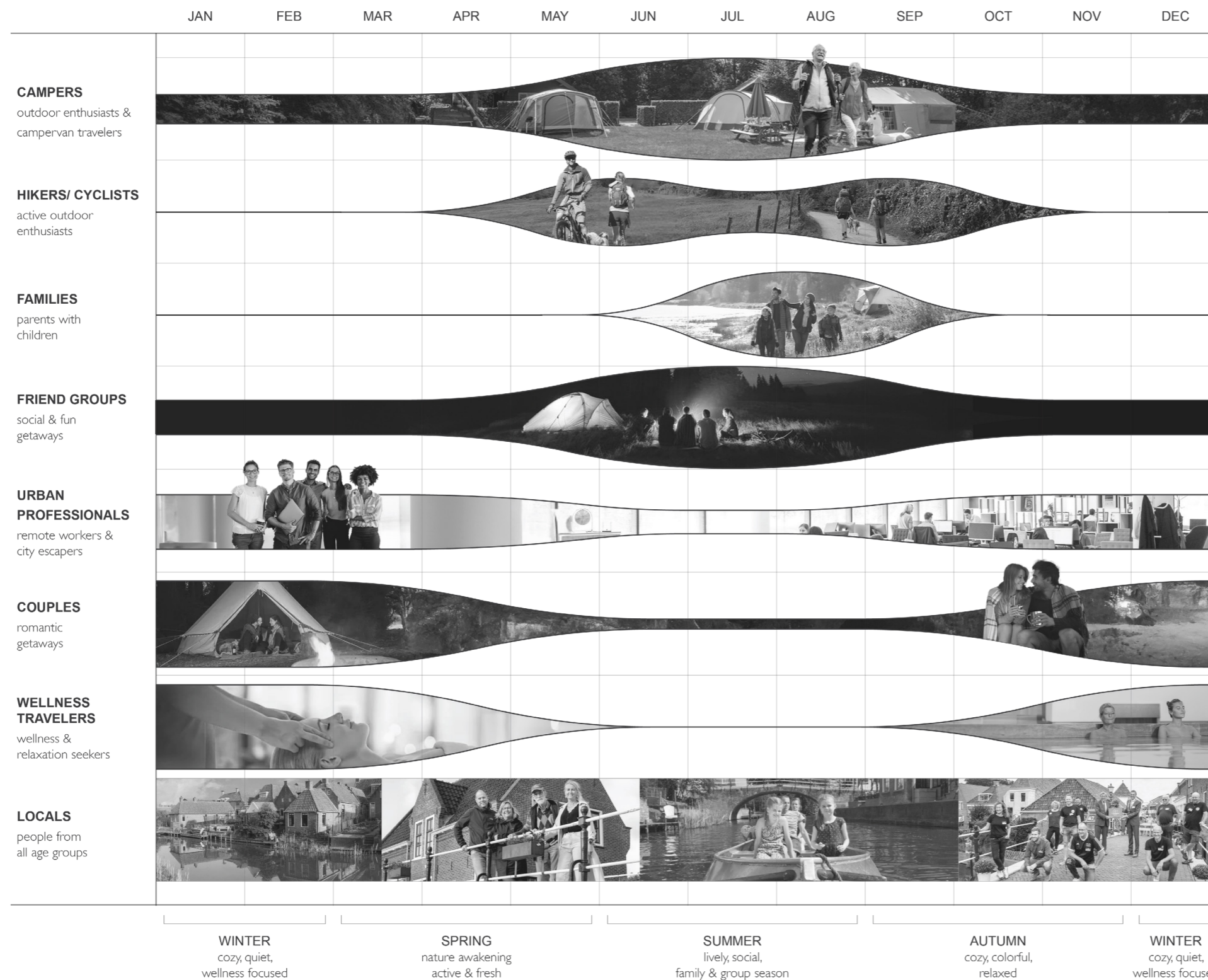
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Tourism is a Tool but not the Goal.*

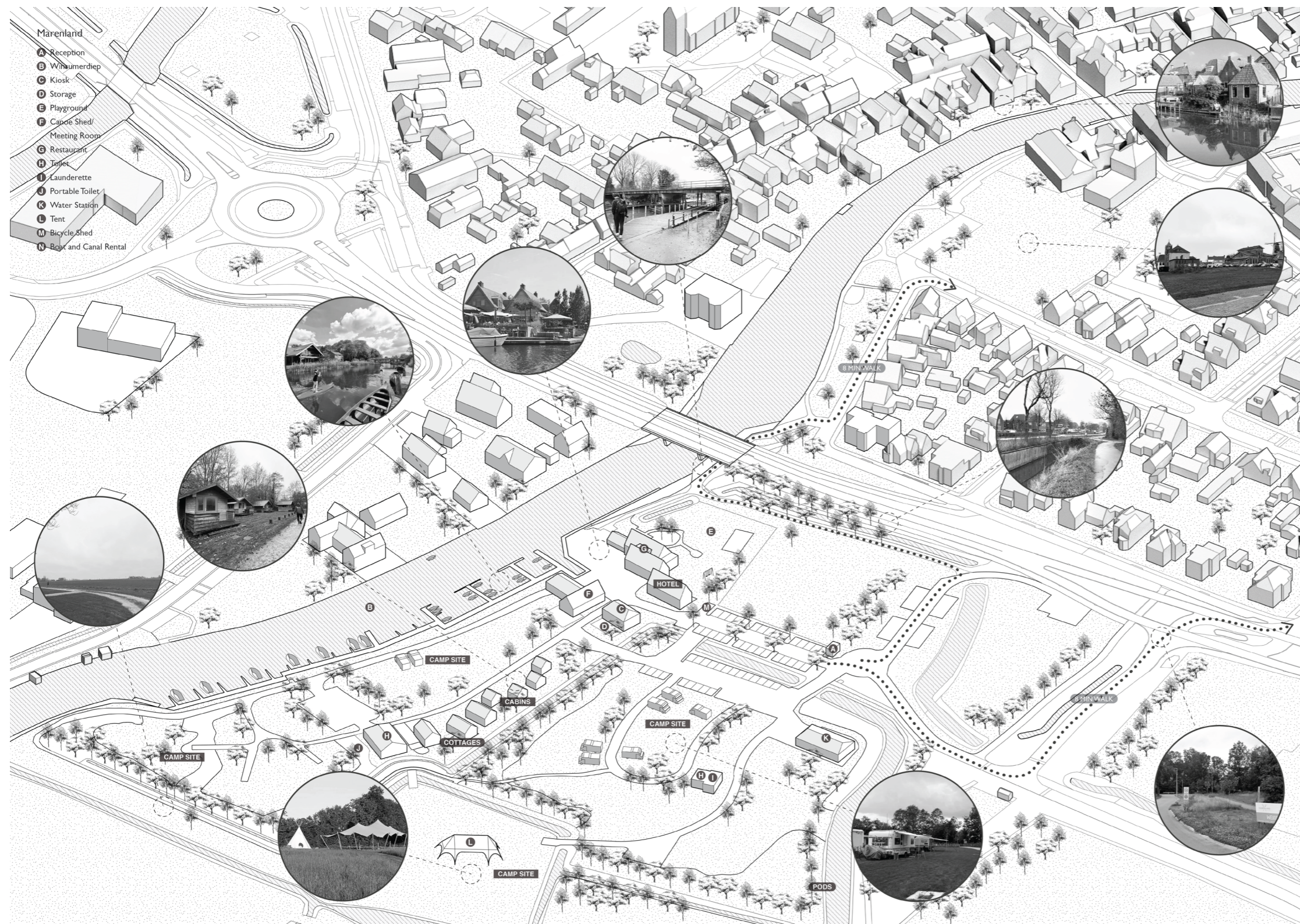
The graduation project, titled “Where Water Connects”, proposes a strategy of integrated activation. Rather than relying on a single iconic intervention or pursuing high-volume tourism, it focuses on strengthening existing qualities, extending seasonal use, and enriching everyday experiences. The aim is to amplify Winsum’s existing qualities—its calmness, landscape, and architectural heritage—while carefully introducing a new winter value to facilitate sustainable year-round tourism. The project takes the form of a public building, incorporating accommodation and wellness-related programmes. The hub will be in addition to the existing Marenland, which consists of a small-scale campsite and marina. The hub will serve both the community of Winsum and the visiting tourists. Access to the private programmes will be intentionally restricted to facilitate seasonal balance and respectful engagement. While the public area, such as the promenade and the paddling pool, is open to everyone every day to encourage social interactions.

To reconcile the paradox of attracting visitors while preserving serenity, the project explores how small-scale interventions, landscape design, and programmes can be woven into the existing context, forming a connected system that works throughout the entire year. Unlike outdoor leisure activities, wellness and restorative programmes are all-season and often most attractive during colder months. It also aligns naturally with the Waddeland’s calm, nature-based atmosphere of retreat and escape. Potential programmes such as mineral baths using regional resources, sensory wellness spaces, and craft workshops utilising local clay—linking physical well-being, cultural identity, and material context, are studied in this project. Different spatial designs are experimented with to offer unique healing experiences that draw people in.

Architecture, therefore, becomes a tool to extend stays and redistribute tourism across the year. Where Water Connects thus enables Winsum to transform from a seasonal destination into a year-round retreat, increasing economic resilience while preserving the village’s serenity.



(stakeholders at the site throughout the year, Ariel, 2026)



(Marenland Site Axonometric, Ariel, 2026)

According to Google reviews, Marenland is one of the most popular destinations for tourists in Winsum. People are satisfied with the services there in general. The most attractive spot is the area next to the water. Several things can be improved such as hidden and isolated entrances, restricted views caused by the campers, and less attractive scenery in some of the camping spots.

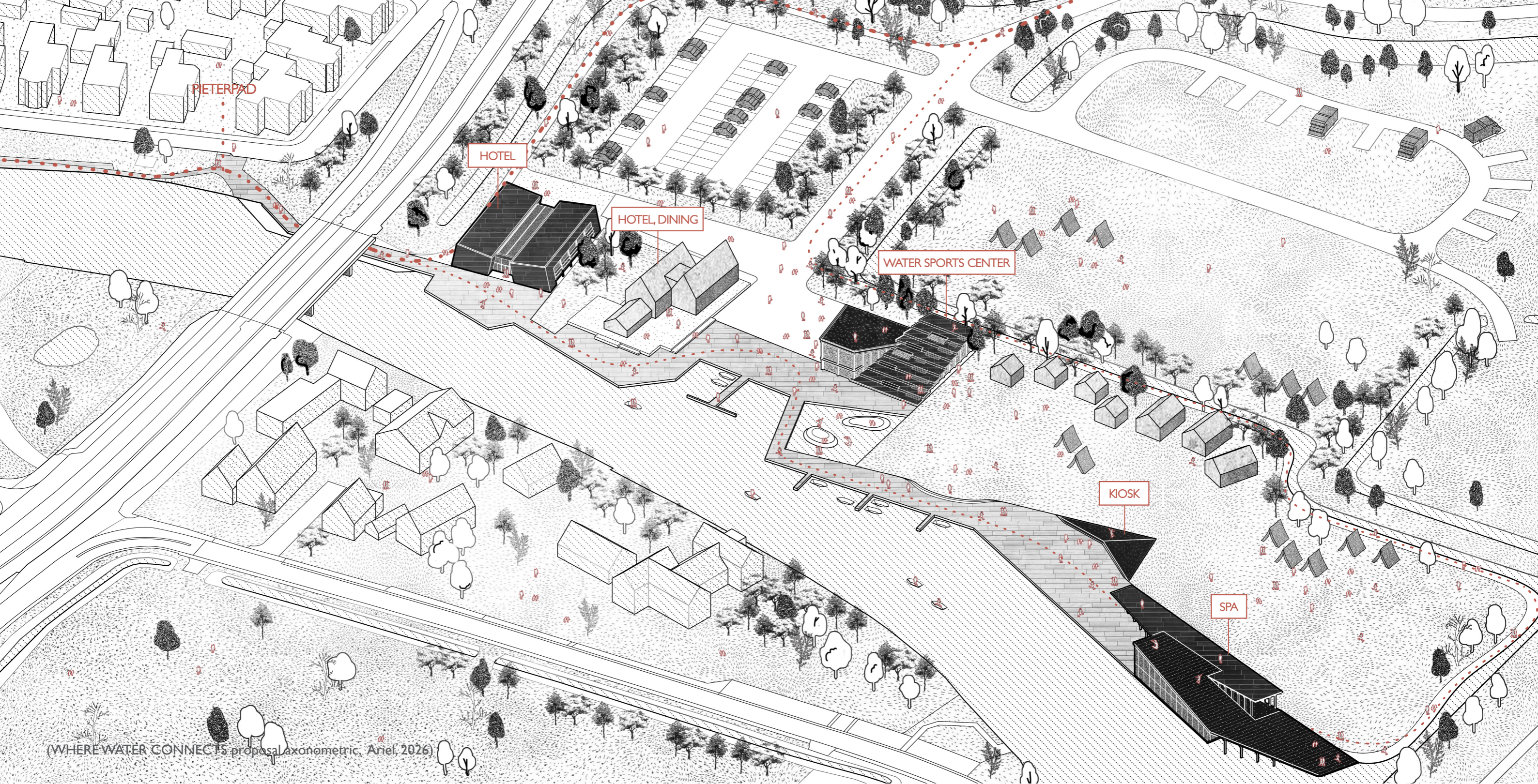
## METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH BY DESIGN

Hybridity and multiplicity become the keywords to envision such ambitions. On the one hand, the concept of hybridity will allow students to rethink programmatically and formally the traditional idea of public building; by merging different activities and design strategies into one composite architectural ensemble. On the other hand, the concept of multiplicity will guarantee that the architectural proposals presented by students will consider aesthetic, programmatic, construction, and technological aspects as interconnected elements of the same process.

Research by Design focuses on design work as a special form of research. It considers theory and praxis, analysis and imagination as inseparable and as a medium to conceive and develop architectural ideation. Research is not only about preparation, description, and explanation, but also, more importantly, about projection and speculation. Research is therefore a form of design and design is a form of research. In contrast with traditional research, centred on learning what has been done before to do what has never been done, this Graduation Studio will intend research as a tool to explore the unknown and to implement unexpected design directions. The Studio will place the design work itself at the centre of and as a special form of research so as to properly tackle the entanglement of form, materiality, program, composition, construction, and representation characterising contemporary architecture.

A theoretical and operative approach at the same time, Research-by-Design will consist of interviews, typological reinterpretations, comparative studies, formal readings, explorations on hybrids, and advanced mapping. Students will engage in both individual and collective assignments, involving loops, variants, reiterations, intersections, and impressions, which all contribute to a continuous progression. Emphasis on either analogue and advanced digital techniques will be placed; their combination will help clarify the ultimate goal of the Studio, which is to allow the students to define what a contemporary public building is – to crystallise, in other words, the infinite forms of interaction between space and program, image and materials, people and the environment.

PART 3: RESULT



(WHERE WATER CONNECTS proposal axonometric, Ariel, 2026)

When thinking about attracting more visitors, the first instinct is often to create a new landmark. While a new icon can be a straightforward and effective strategy, it overlooks the existing values of Winsum. The village already holds the title of the most beautiful village in the Netherlands and lies along the well-known Pieterpad hiking route. It therefore already appeals to a clear target group: Nature Lovers. What is needed instead is a more delicate approach that doubles visitor numbers by preserving what is already there while making the area less dependent on seasonal fluctuations.

Across the Netherlands, there are successful winter campsites such as Winterwoods in Drenthe and Terra Wolde near Zeewolde. What distinguishes them from Marenland is their provision of amenities like saunas and fireplaces. These examples demonstrate clear interest in winter camping, provided the right infrastructure and facilities are in place. Dutch campers in winter especially enjoy camping for the cosiness (“gezelligheid”), the fewer crowds, and nature. These people usually prefer a more curated experience. The audience in winter shifts from the broad public in summer who loves

nature (Families, students, festivalgoers, cyclists, caravan travellers) to more urban professionals, couples, wellness/outdoor people, and people looking for a unique weekend escape. By leveraging its strategic location and extending its functionality into the winter season, Marenland could significantly increase visitor numbers and contribute to achieving the economic goals of Nij Begun.

The project introduces a winter programme and integrates new elements within existing functions. Marenland, known for its proximity to nature, al-

ready offers outdoor activities and kayak rentals, making it popular among nearby residents and passing tourists. While the site currently makes good use of its natural setting, the upgraded proposal enhances this by introducing a water sports centre that includes an indoor activity space, changing rooms and kayak rental facilities, a paddling pool, a swimming pool, and a kiosk. In addition, a new winter attraction, which is an indoor hot bath, is blended into the overall system.



(WHERE WATER CONNECTS Concept Collage, Ariel, 2026)

**Water has always held a special place in Dutch life.** It is not simply a landscape feature, but something deeply embedded in Dutch culture and everyday life. Living in a country where much of the land lies below sea level has shaped a long history of negotiating with water rather than resisting it. Through canals, waterways, dikes, and other water-management systems, Dutch people have learned how to coexist with water, turning a constant threat into an essential part of their environment. This relationship is also reflected in daily life. From a young age, children are taught to swim and

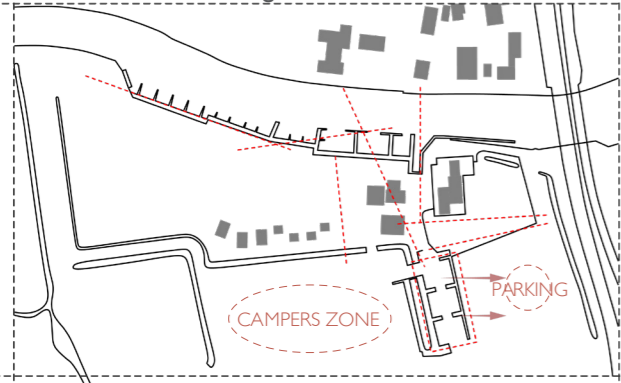
earn swimming diplomas, making water a familiar presence rather than something to fear. Whether it is kayaking through city canals, sailing, or taking part in the annual New Year's Dive, water often becomes a setting for leisure, social interaction, and collective identity.

Winsum is also deeply connected to water. Located in the Wadden region, it is linked to the Wadden Sea through waterways such as the Winsumerdiep and the Reitdiep. Historically, these waterways were crucial to the village's development. During the seventeenth century, waterborne trade helped

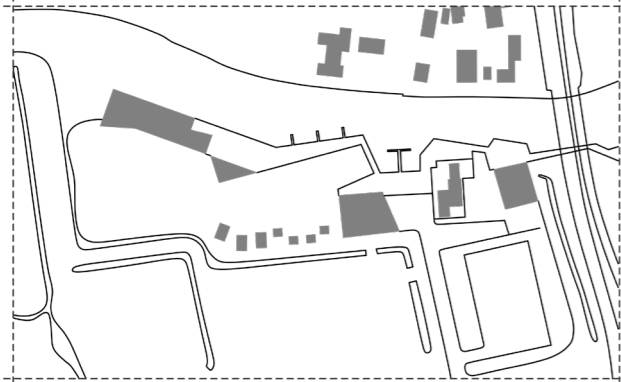
establish Winsum as a regional centre for crafts and commerce. Although its economic importance declined with the rise of the railway network, water has continued to shape the village's identity by creating new opportunities through tourism. Today, it attracts visitors drawn to the UNESCO-listed Wadden Sea and the distinctive landscape of the northern Netherlands.

Water in Winsum is not only a historical or economic asset. It is part of the village's atmosphere and identity. The calm waterways, green edges, and historic houses together create the character that

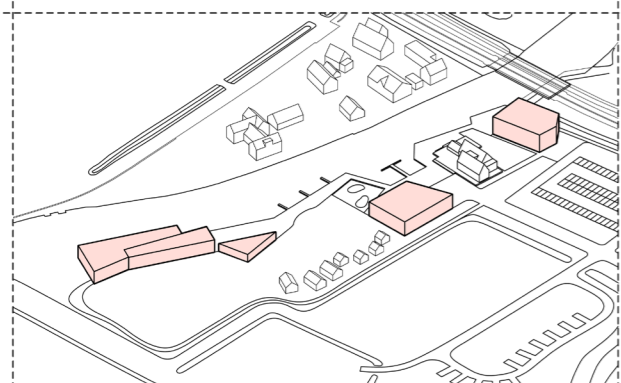
makes Winsum special. Reflecting on this, water becomes the medium through which both visitors and residents can connect with the village. The proposed system takes the form of a promenade that connects the village, the Pieterpad route, and Marenland, inviting people to walk along and explore the waterfront. Along the way, visitors pass a series of smaller "pocket spaces" that encourage social interaction. The open areas are also accessible to residents, with large staircases and platforms providing gathering spaces that address Winsum's current lack of communal areas.



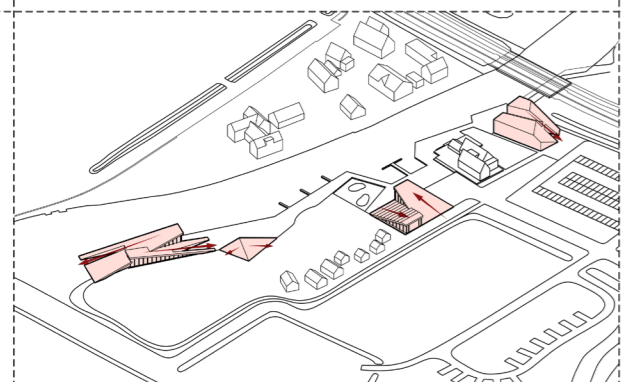
1. Relocating and Centralising Vehicle Zones



2. Curated Circulation



3. Encounters in the Journey



4. Dissolving the Volumes

**THE WATERSPORTS CENTRE**

Marenland already offers kayak and boat rentals, which are among the main tourist activities. The new water sports centre provides a sheltered space for changing, resting, and gathering.



A place to gather and play.

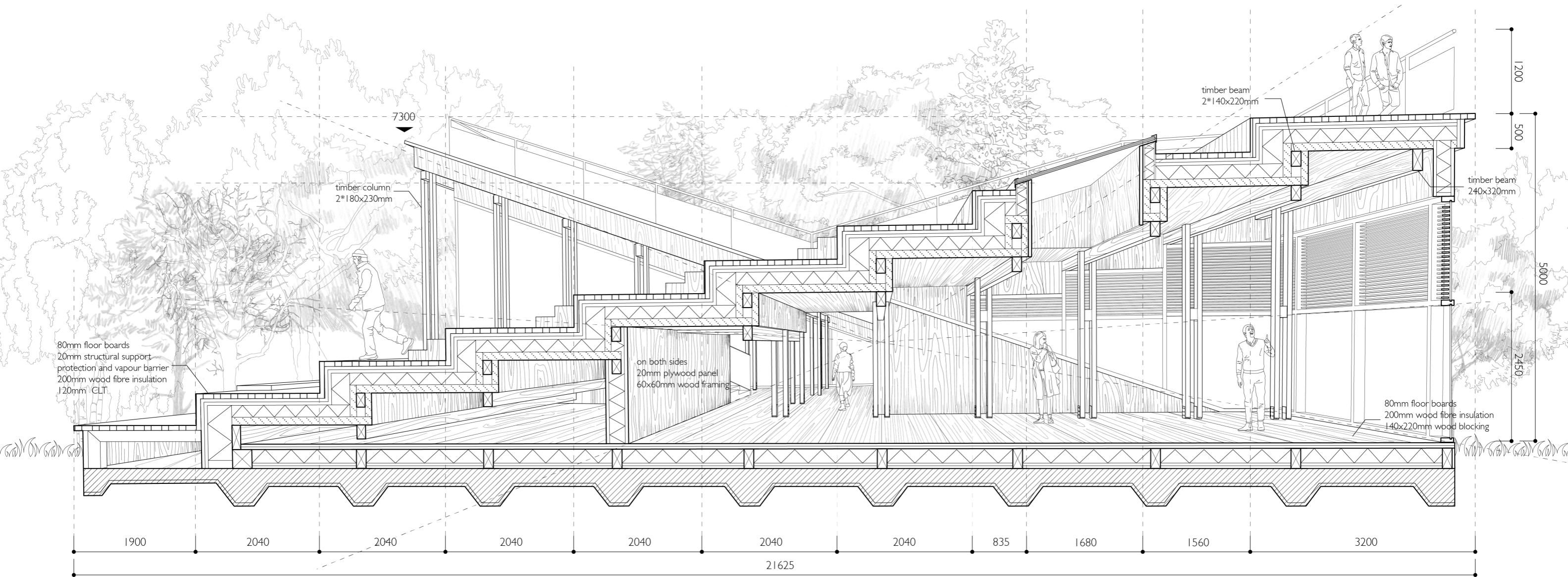
(Watersports Centre Render, Ariel, 2026)



(Watersports Centre Section, Ariel, 2026)



(Watersports Centre Render, Ariel, 2026)

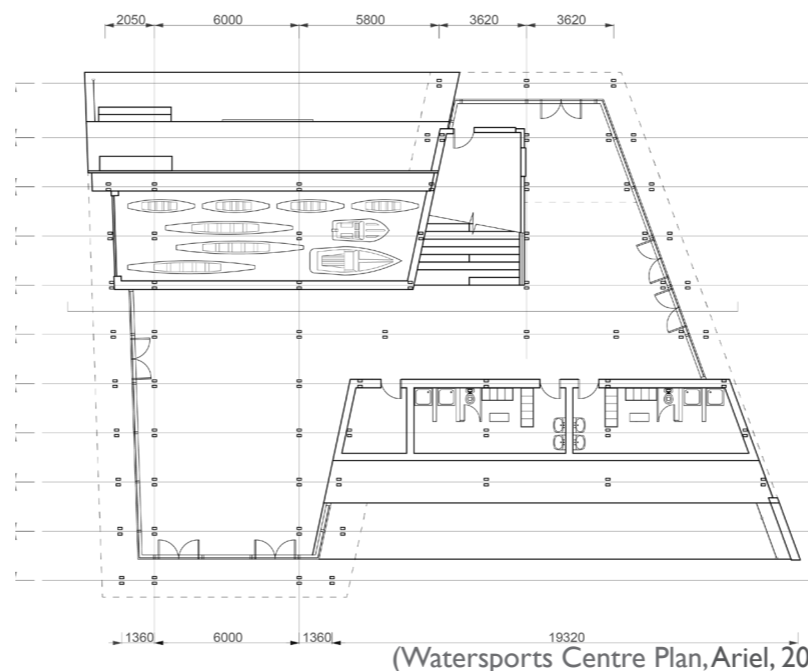


(Watersports Centre Sectional Perspective, Ariel, 2026)

## THE WATERSPORTS CENTRE

The roof extends from the promenade and the surrounding green, becoming part of the public landscape. The structure itself is expressed as a key spatial feature. A timber system is used, with two slimmer columns instead of one, giving a lighter appearance and allowing for easier manufacturing, assembly, and disassembly.

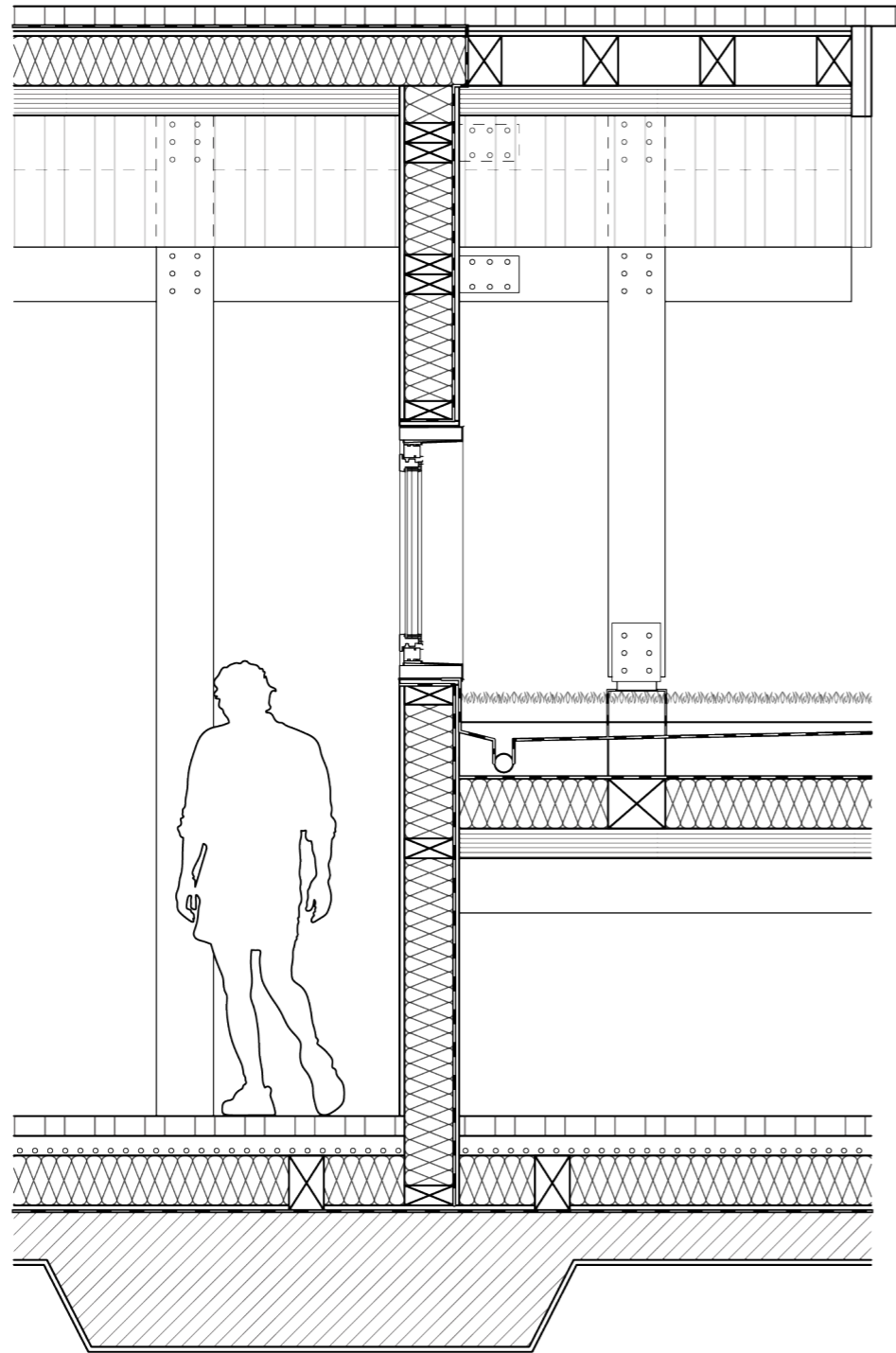
The left side of the building offers a 6m span which allows more flexible use such as yoga workshops and sharing talks. The skylight not only makes it more spacious, but divides the rooftop into smaller pocket spaces that encourages interactions.



(Watersports Centre Plan, Ariel, 2026)



(Watersports Centre Render, Ariel, 2026)



**ROOF**

80mm Floor boards  
 20mm Structural support  
 Protection and Vapour barrier  
 200mm Wood fibre insulation  
 120mm CLT

**STRUCTURE**

Timber Beam 2\*140x220mm  
 Timber Column 2\*180x230mm  
 Steel Post Base

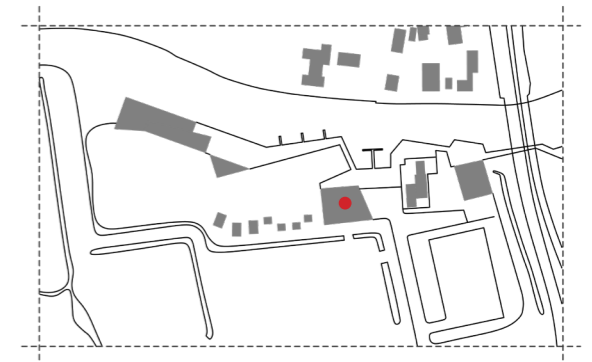
**GREEN ROOF**

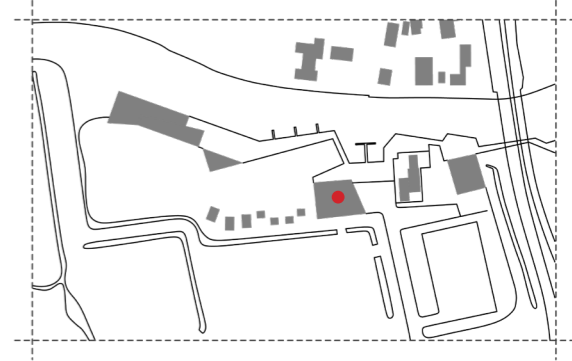
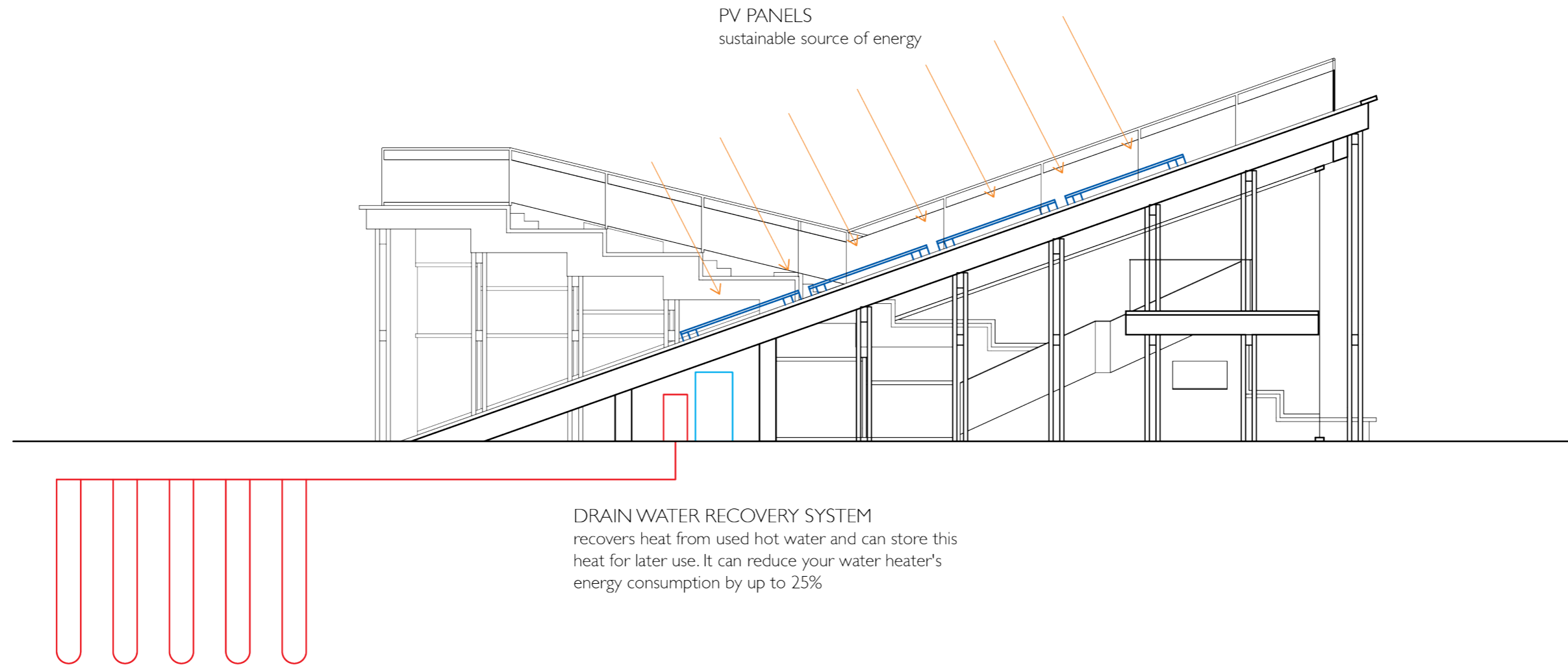
Vegetation Layer  
 Clay  
 Water Proof Membrane  
 Filtration Membrane  
 Gravel  
 Cement Mortar

20mm structural support  
 Protection and vapour barrier  
 200mm wood fibre insulation  
 120mm CLT

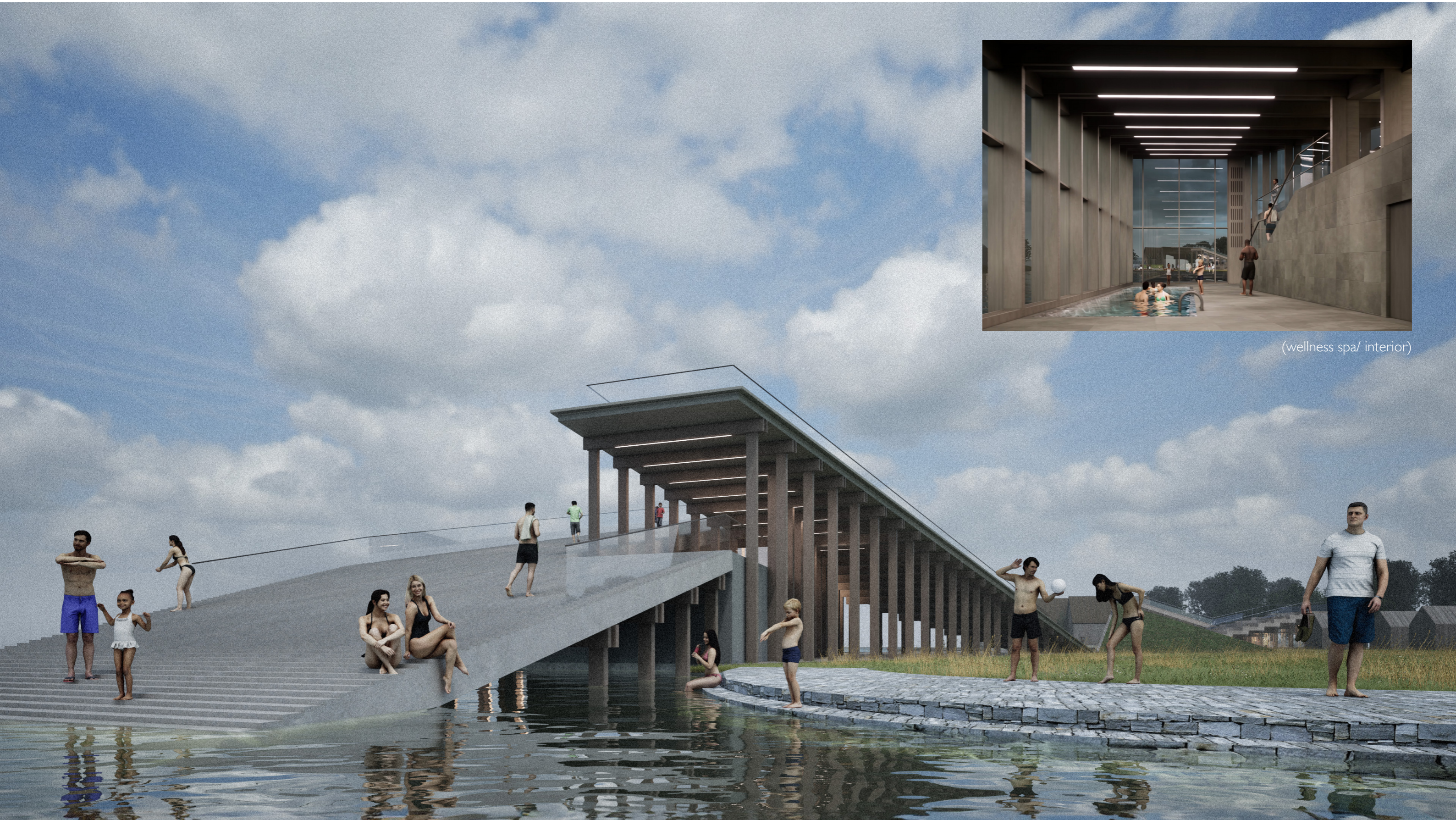
**FLOOR**

80mm Floor Boards  
 Underfloor Heating  
 200mm Wood Fibre Insulation  
 140x220mm Wood Blocking  
 Protection and Vapour barrier  
 Reinforced Concrete

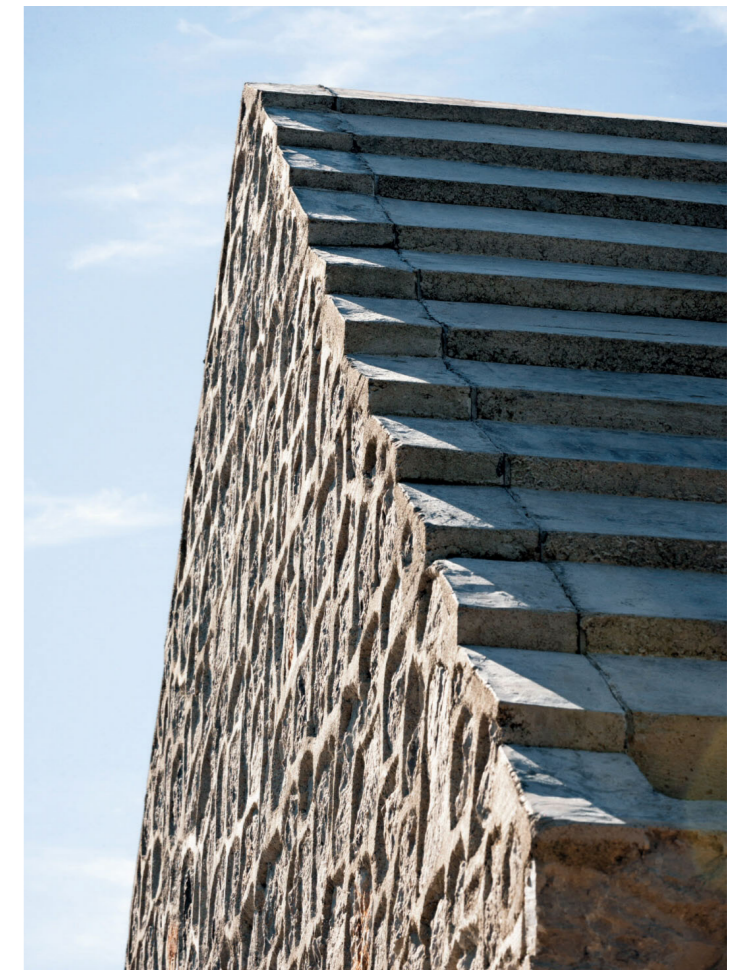
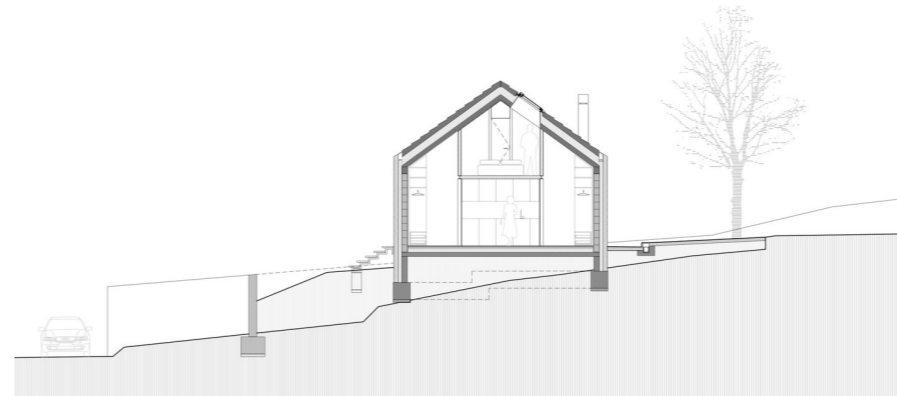
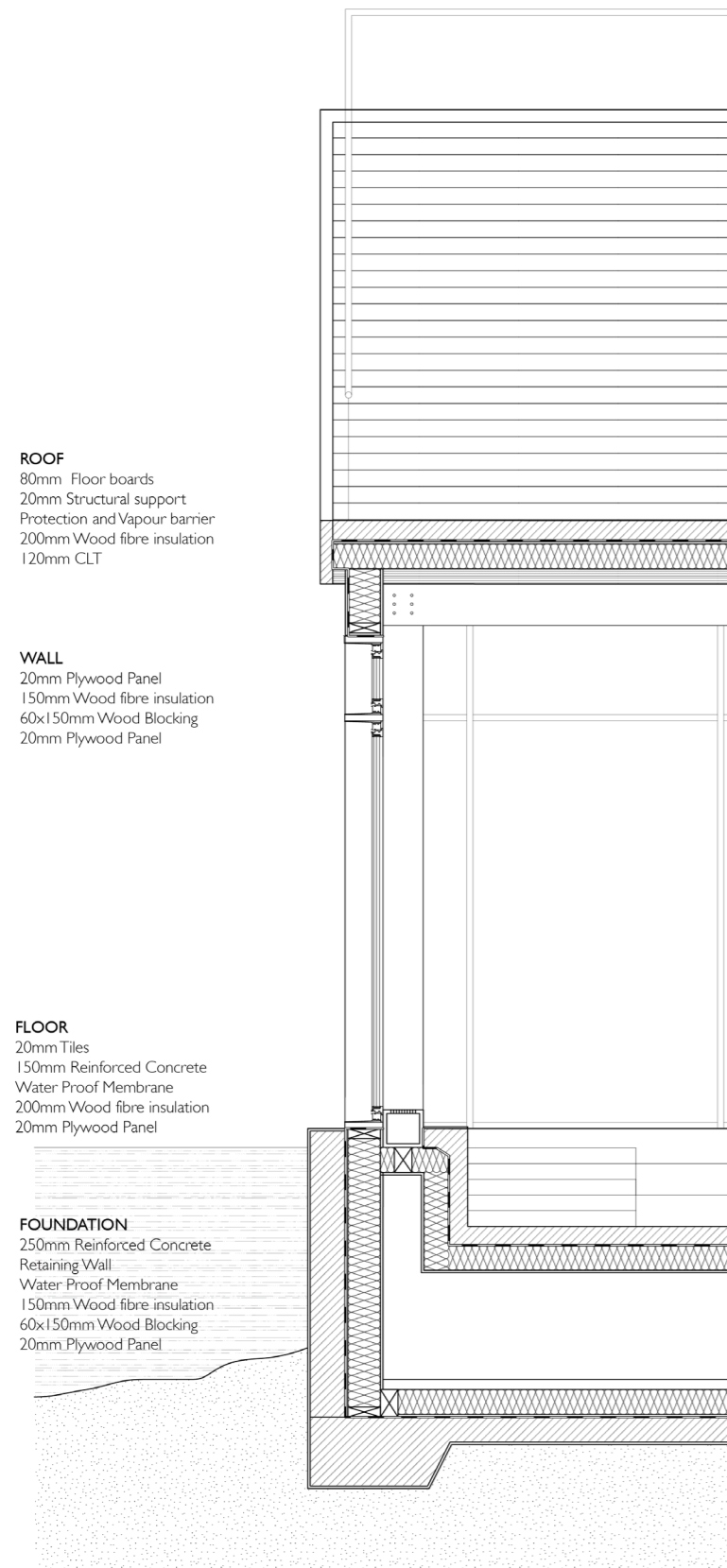




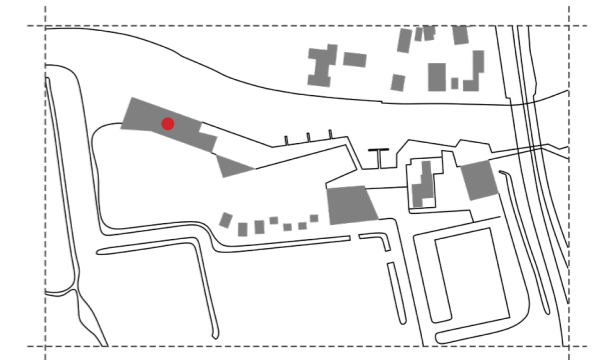


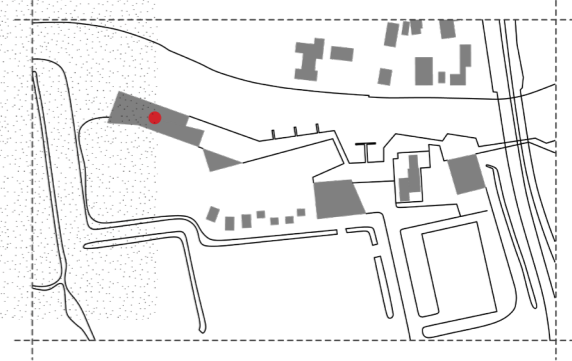
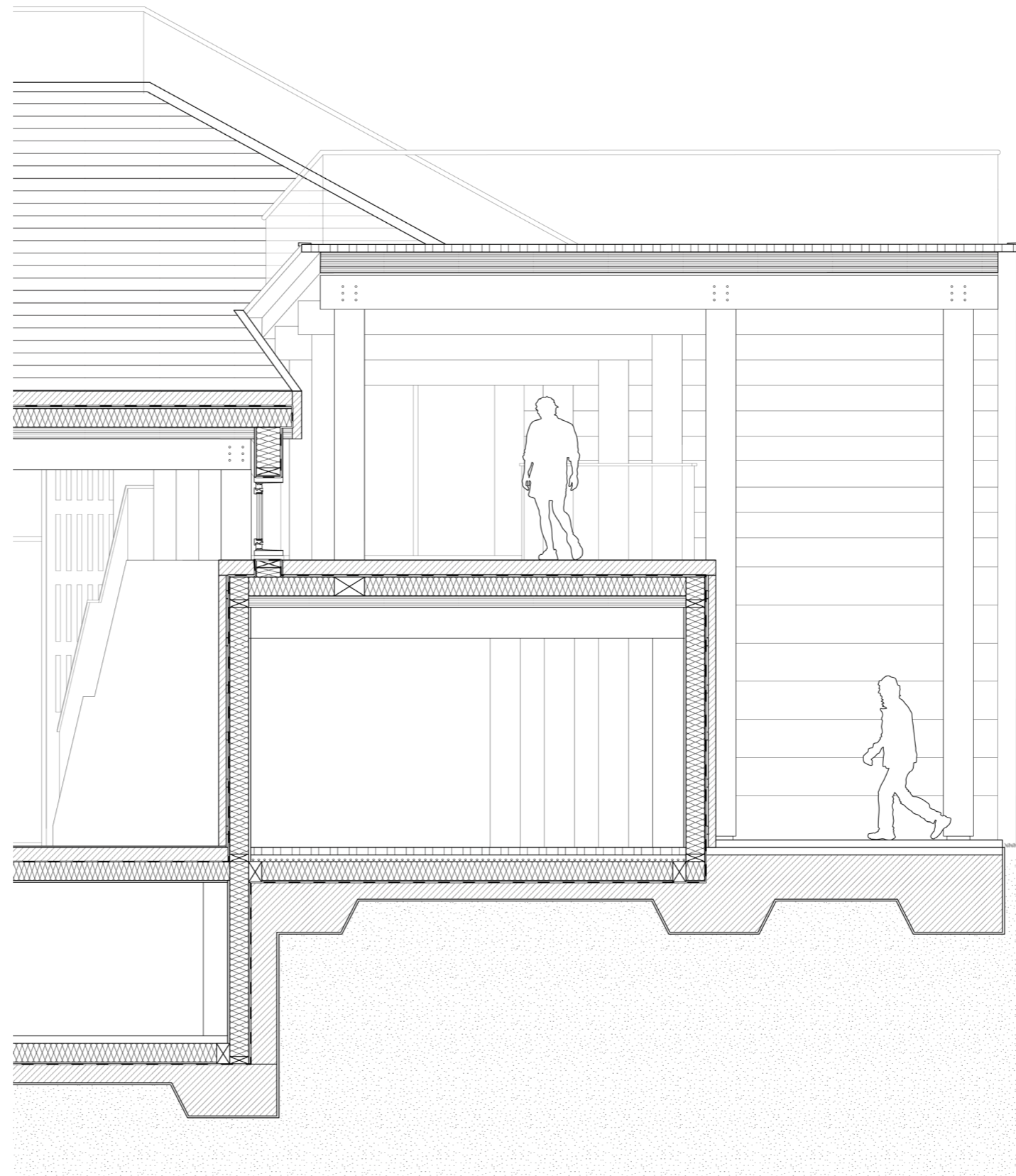
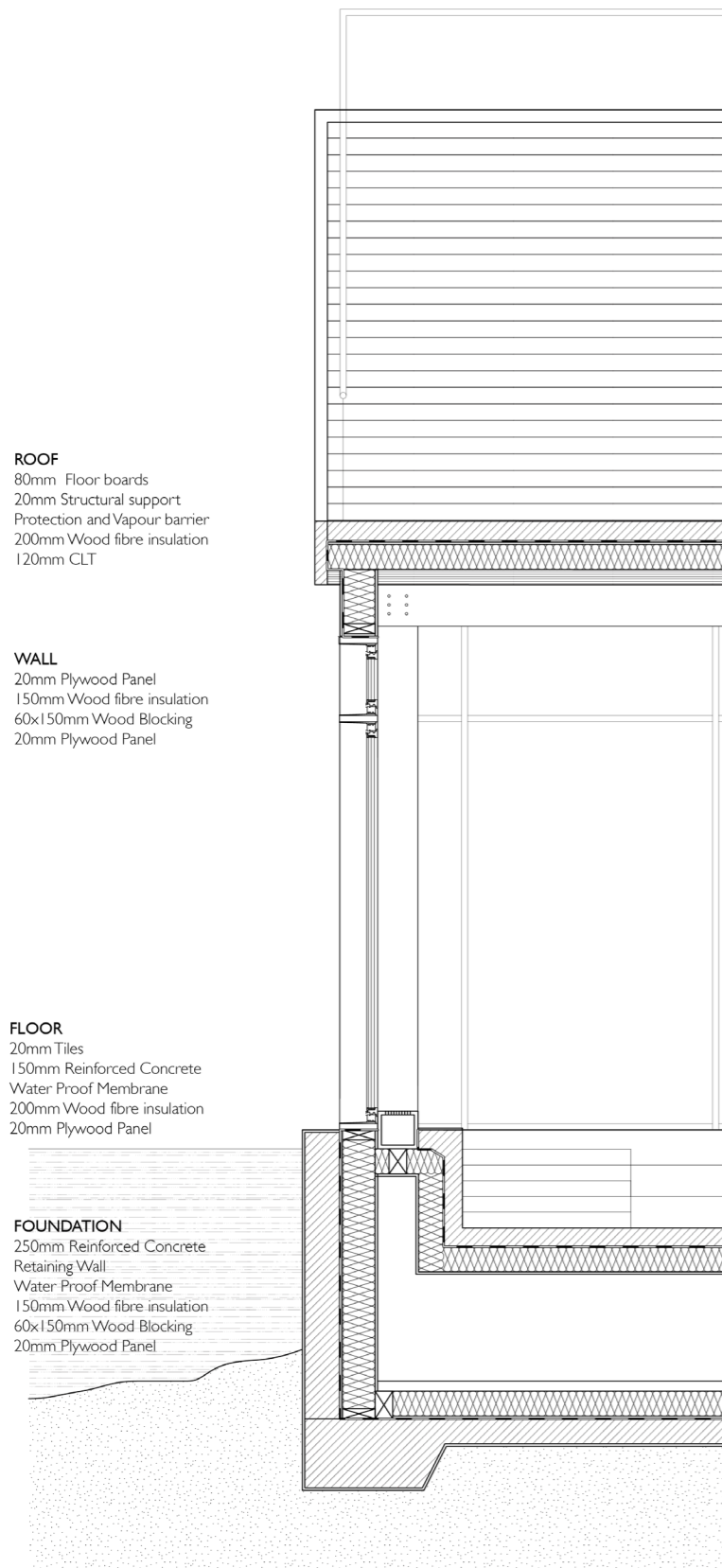


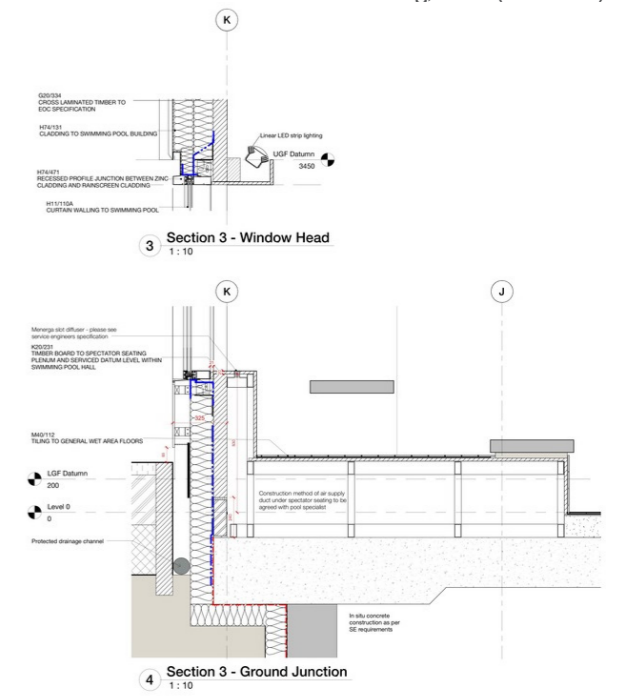
(wellness spa/ interior)



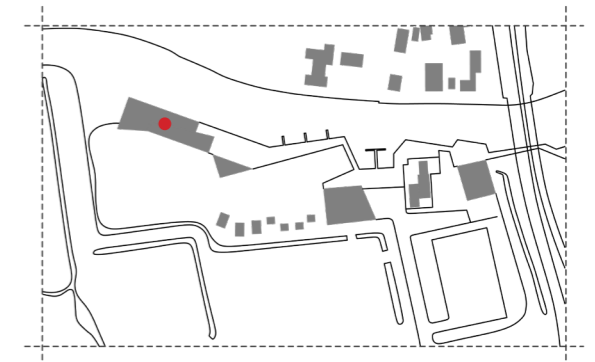
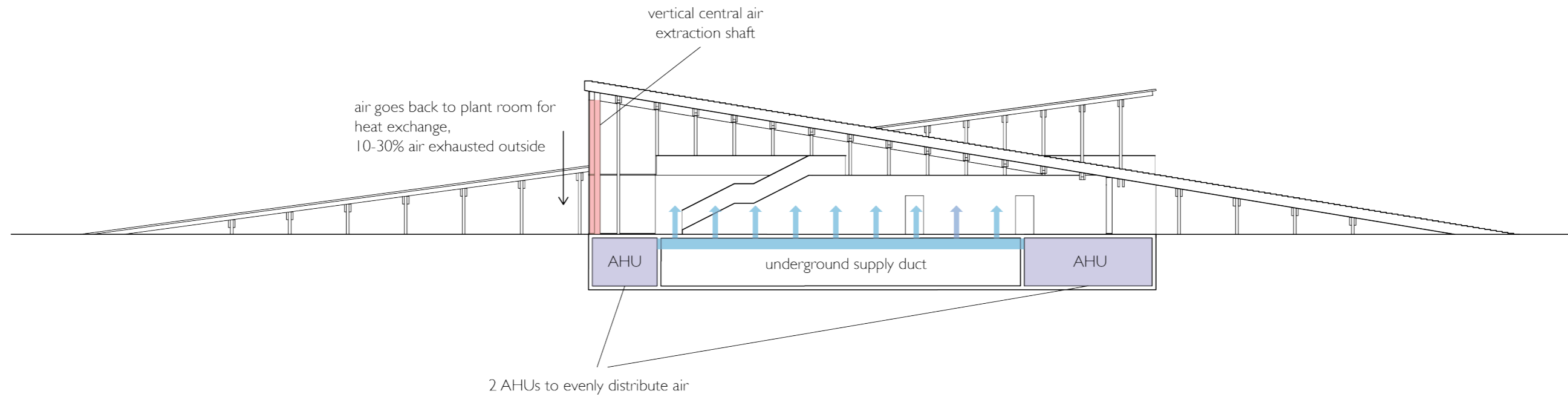
Ref: Compact Karst House / dekleva gregoric architects







Ref: School Swimming Pool, London / Hawkins Brown

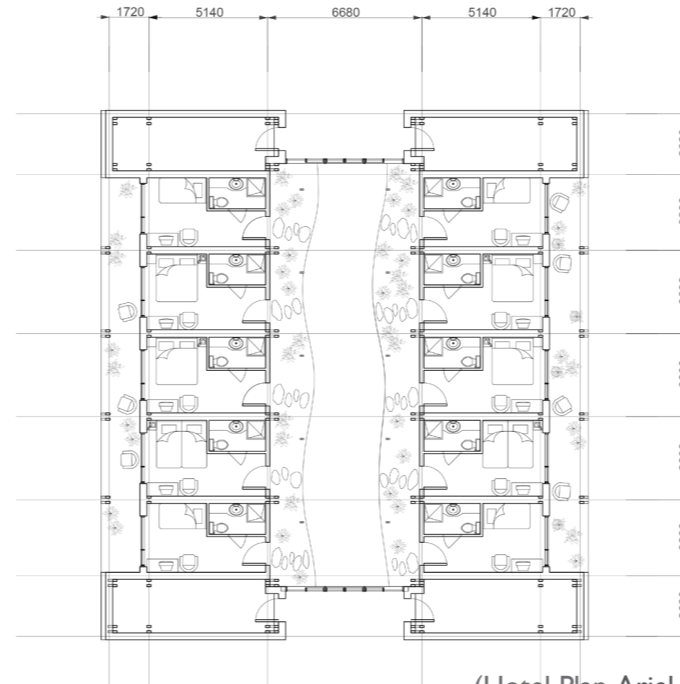




(Hotel Render,Ariel, 2026)

**THE HOTEL**

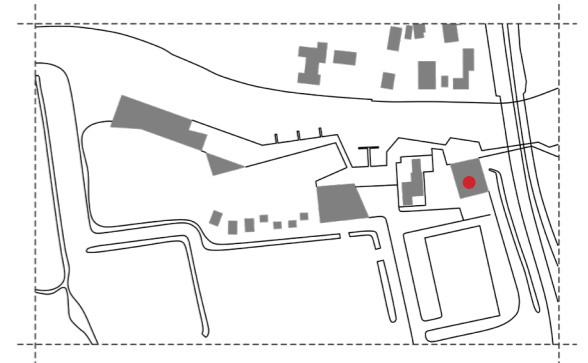
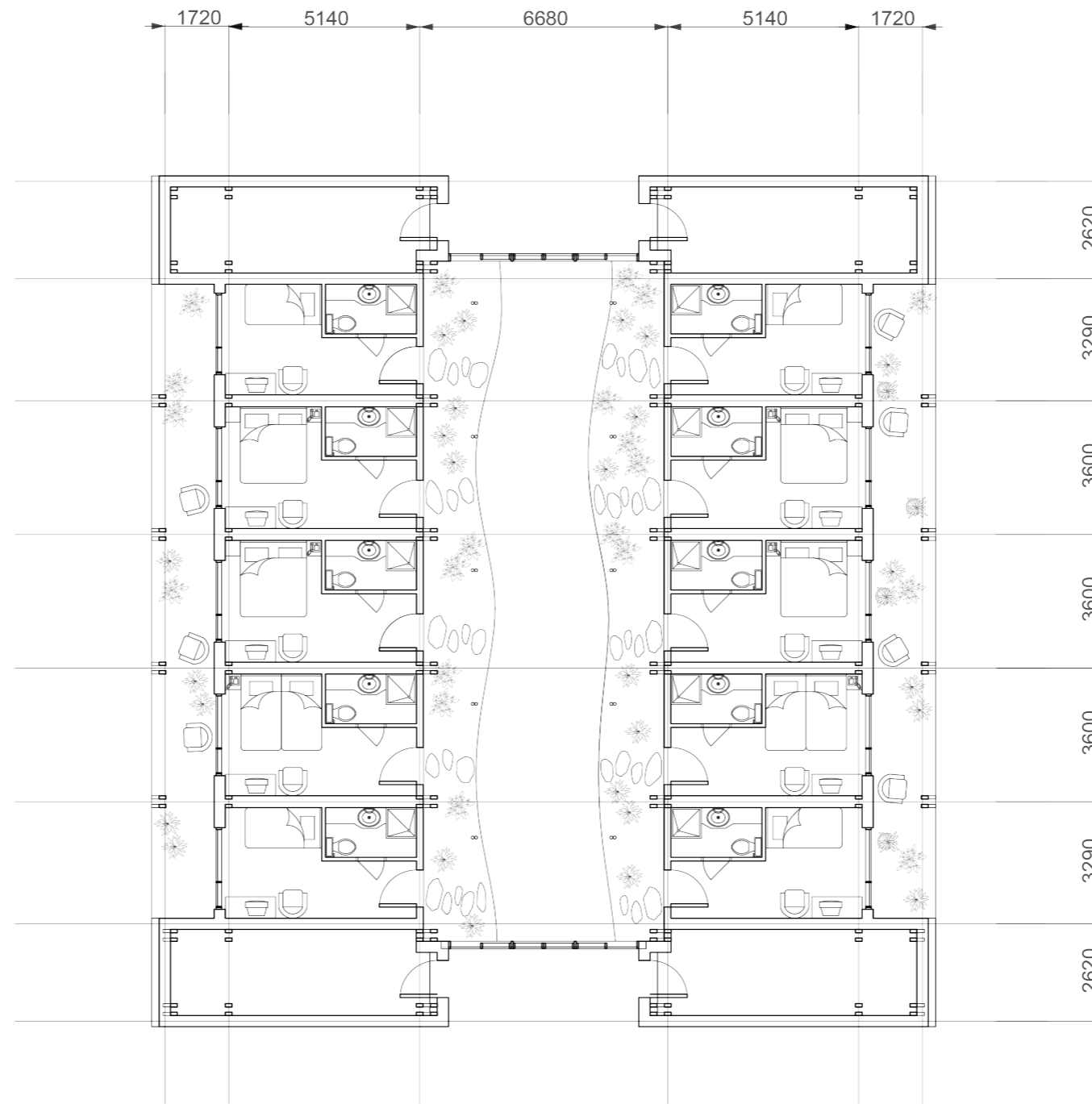
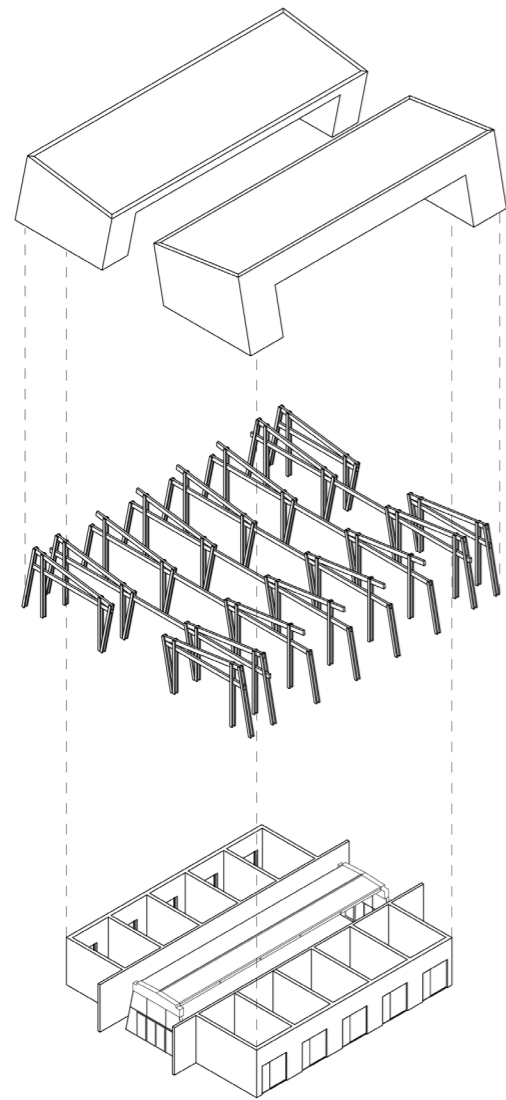
The hotel acts as a support to the existing Marenland accommodation service, to provide more indoor rooms for people who prefer a more curated and cosy experience. The structural system is similar to that of the Water Sports Centre, which is a timber construction. It features a symmetrical form with a glass corridor with a series of portal frames that connect visitors to the back of the site.

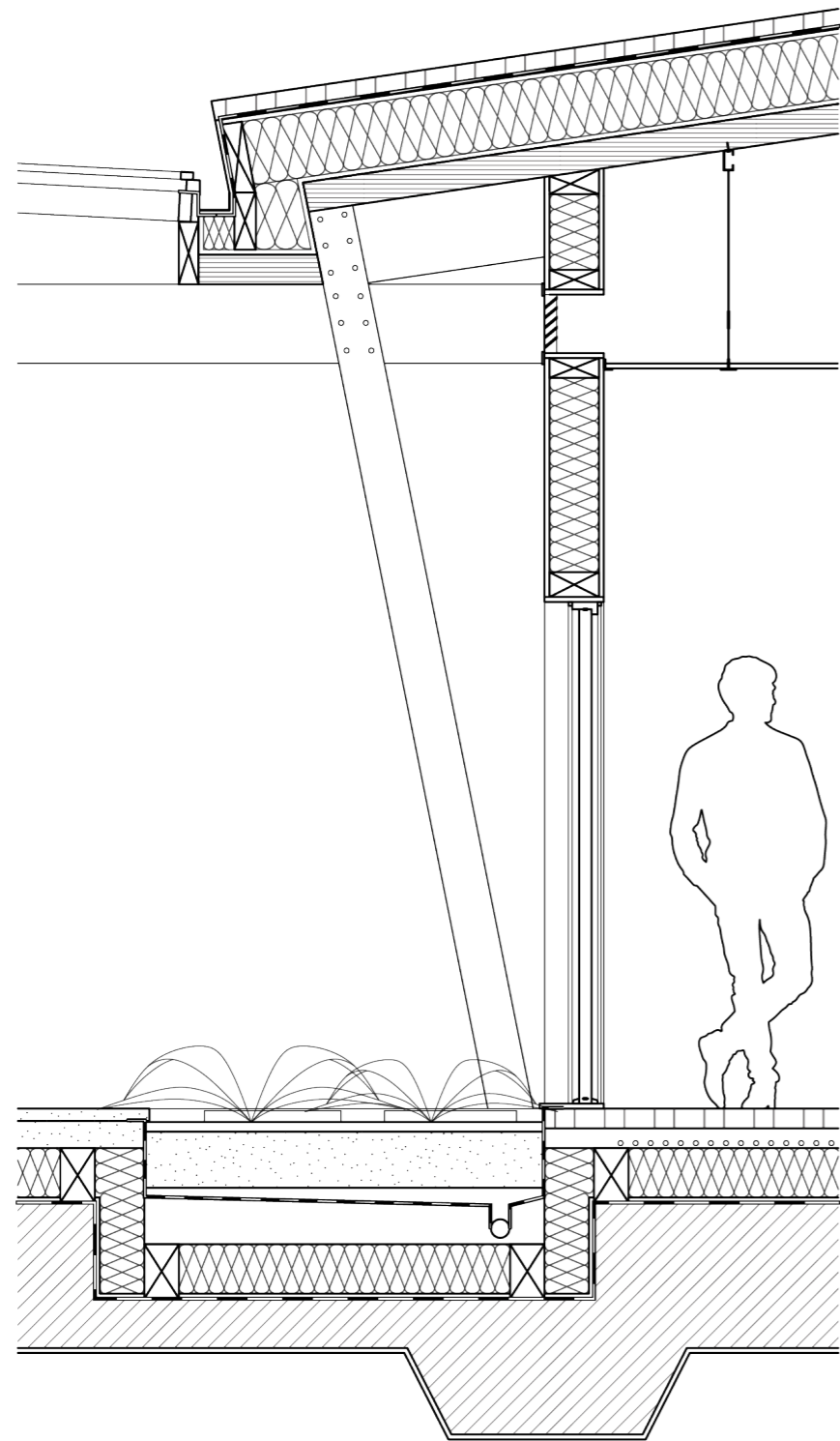


(Hotel Plan,Ariel, 2026)



(Hotel Render,Ariel, 2026)





**ROOF**

VISS Roof Glazing  
 80mm Floor boards  
 20mm Structural support  
 Protection and Vapour barrier  
 200mm Wood fibre insulation  
 120mm CLT

**STRUCTURE**

Timber Beam 240x320mm  
 Timber Column 2\*180x230mm

**WALL**

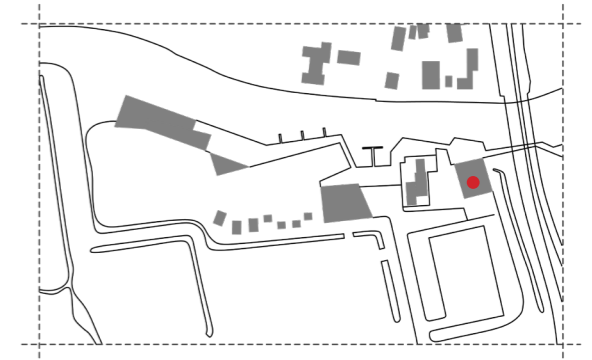
Ventilation Grille 200x3000mm  
 Drop Ceiling

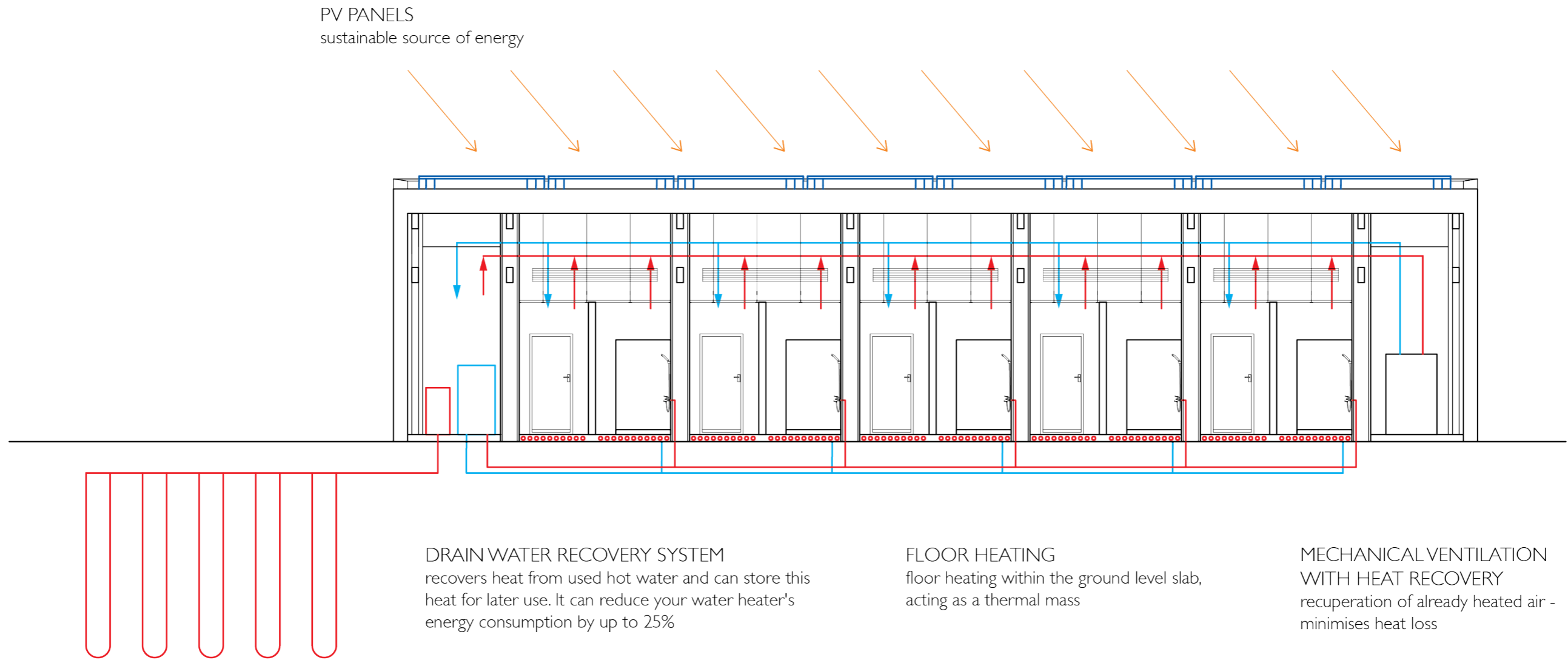
20mm Plywood Panel  
 150mm Wood fibre insulation  
 60x150mm Wood Blocking  
 20mm Plywood Panel

**PLANTER**

Vegetation Layer  
 Clay  
 Water Proof Membrane  
 Filtration Membrane  
 Gravel  
 Cement Mortar

20mm structural support  
 Protection and vapour barrier  
 200mm Wood Fibre Insulation  
 140x220mm Wood Blocking  
 Protection and Vapour barrier  
 Reinforced Concrete





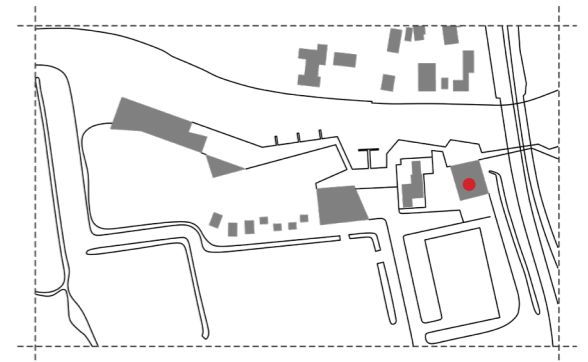
PV PANELS  
sustainable source of energy

DRAIN WATER RECOVERY SYSTEM  
recovers heat from used hot water and can store this heat for later use. It can reduce your water heater's energy consumption by up to 25%

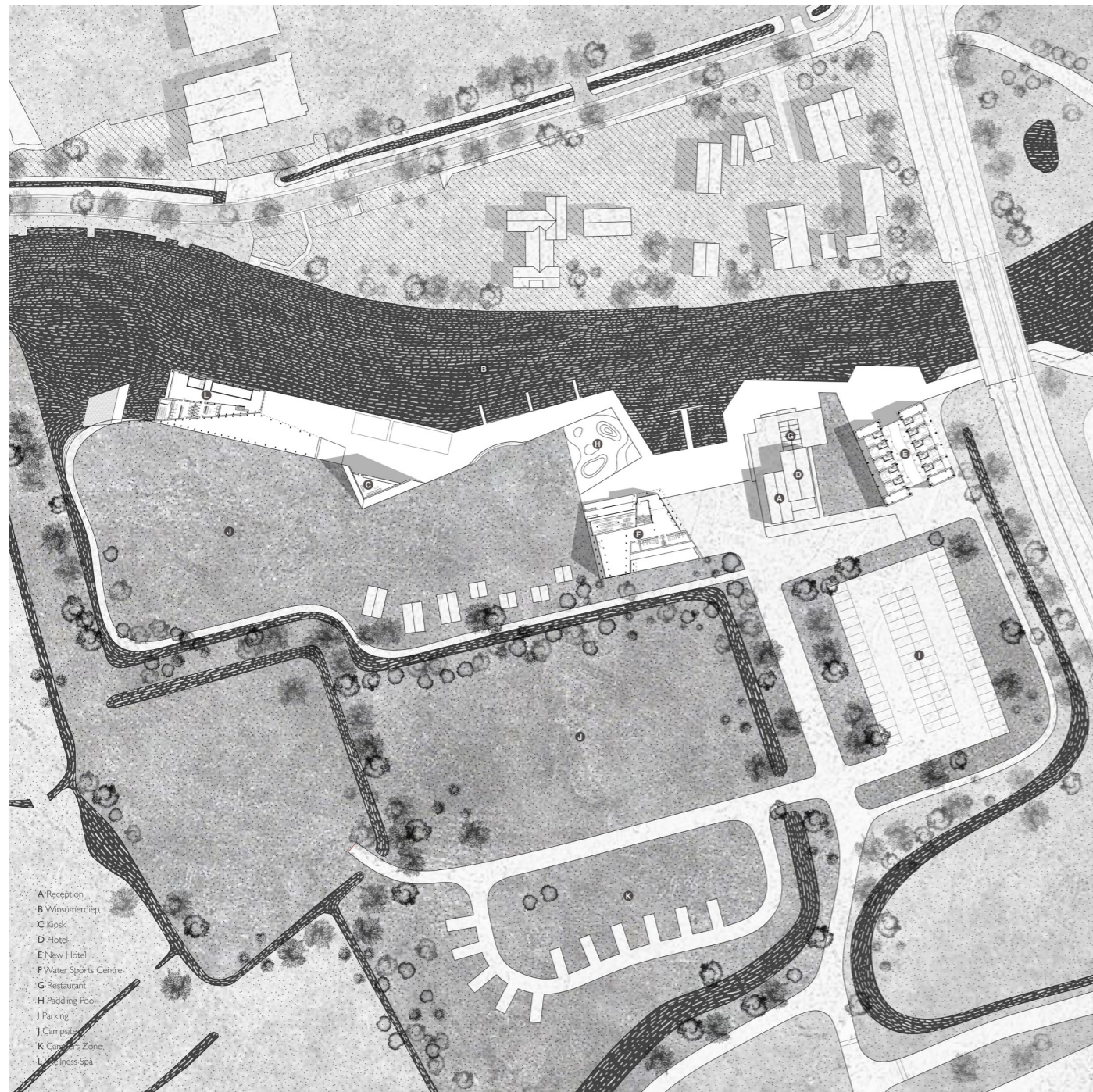
FLOOR HEATING  
floor heating within the ground level slab, acting as a thermal mass

MECHANICAL VENTILATION WITH HEAT RECOVERY  
recuperation of already heated air - minimises heat loss

GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMP  
take advantage of the constant temperature of shallow earth (40°-70°F/4.5°-21°C) to efficiently exchange temperatures, heating homes in the winter and cooling homes in the summer.



PART 4: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION



(WHERE WATER CONNECTS Site Plan, Ariel, 2026)

## CONCLUSION

Through a Research-by-Design methodology, this project investigates the potential of architecture as a mediator between tourism development, local communities, and the existing landscape. Situated within a context increasingly shaped by seasonal tourism, the proposal explores how architectural intervention can contribute to a more sustainable model of tourism without compromising the everyday life of local villagers.

The project proposes a public building that combines wellness facilities, short-stay accommodation, and cultural programmes, creating a hybrid typology that serves both visitors and residents. Rather than separating these user groups, the design seeks to establish conditions for encounters and coexistence. **Architecture acts as a medium to dissolve boundaries between tourists and locals, public and private realms, and the natural and built environment**—through spatial continuity, overlapping programmes, and carefully calibrated transitions.

The architectural language is informed by landform architecture, where the building emerges from and responds to the existing topography rather than being imposed upon it. The project aims to blur the distinction between landscape and architecture, allowing the built form to become an extension of the terrain and a framework for inhabiting it. In this way, the landscape is not treated as a backdrop to development, but as an active generator of spatial organization, experience, and identity.

Sustainability is approached as a long-term design strategy. The project explores timber construction as a renewable structural system while considering material lifecycles, adaptability, and the potential afterlife of building components. Existing vegetation, site conditions, and functional structures are preserved wherever possible and incorporated into the design, minimising consumption and maintaining continuity with the site's existing character.

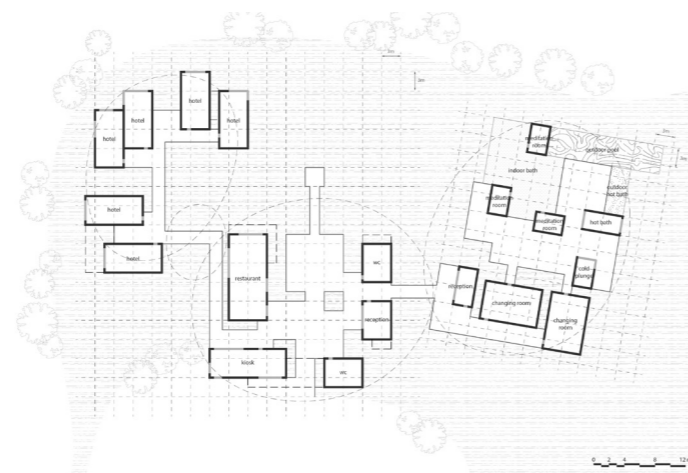
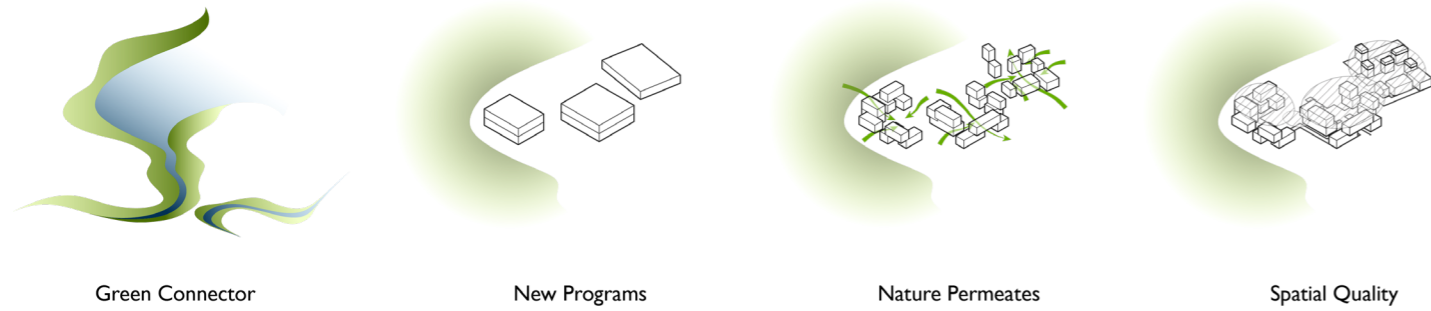
Ultimately, the project explores how architecture can act as an interface between environmental preservation, community life, and tourism, fostering a more meaningful relationship. Rather than accommodating tourism as an isolated economic activity, the proposal positions architecture as a catalyst for shared use, collective experience, and long-term territorial resilience.

## IMPLICATIONS

Tourism, consumer culture, and increasingly rapid patterns of consumption have become more accessible and widespread. It is important for architects, developers, and policymakers to study on how to design and curate tourism in a more responsible way.

Rather than supporting a model of tourism driven by constant expansion and short-term consumption, this project explores how architecture can encourage a slower and more meaningful engagement with place. It investigates how tourism and local identity can coexist in a mutually beneficial relationship, where visitors are invited to experience and participate in the character of a place rather than simply consume it.

By positioning architecture as a mediator between visitors, residents, and the landscape, the project advocates for a more responsible approach to development—one that prioritises long-term resilience, local identity, and collective well-being over short-term consumption and growth.



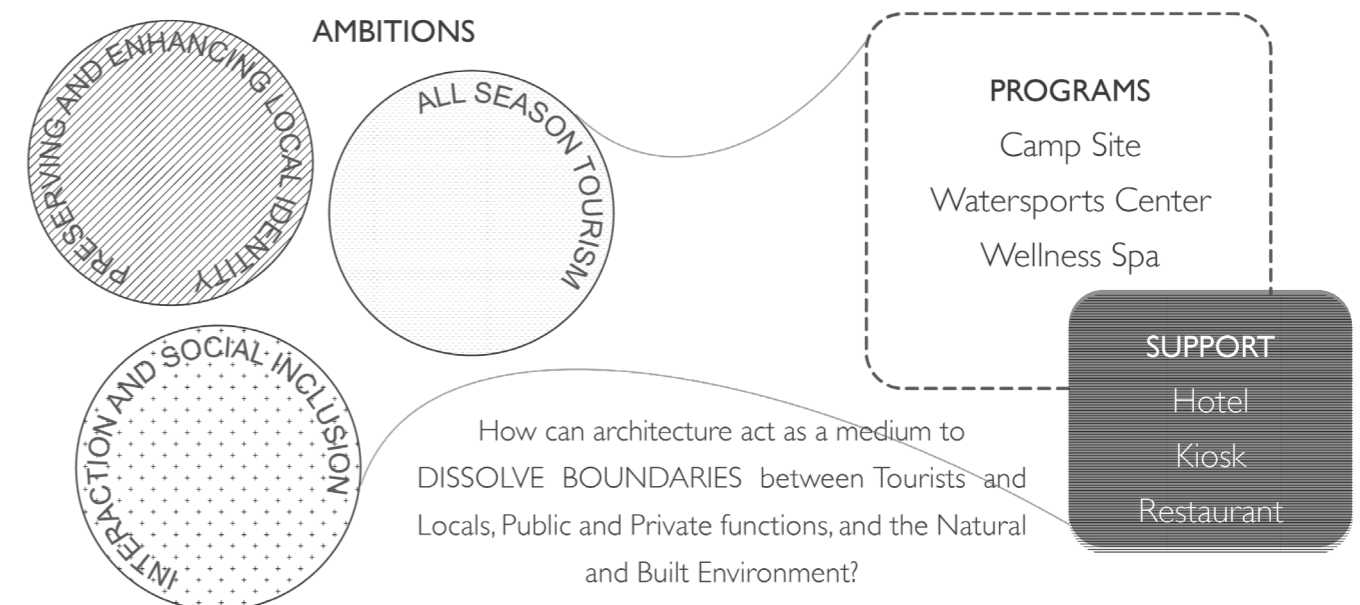
(AI proposal ICONIC SERENITY, Ariel, 2026)

## REFLECTION

My graduation project is linked to the theme of the Public Building studio. The Public Building Group investigates the future of public buildings and their role in the built environment by envisioning new spatial formulas, programmatic articulations, and structural and material expressions. Multiplicity is investigated and pursued through a methodological approach called Research-By-Design. This focuses on design work as a special form of research. It considers theory and praxis, analysis and imagination as inseparable and as a medium to help conceive and develop architectural ideation. Research is not only about preparation, description, and explanation, but also, more importantly about projection and speculation. Research is a form of design, and design is a form of research. When developing this thesis project, the research and design process were also carried out in parallel manner, and the design evolved as the research deepened.

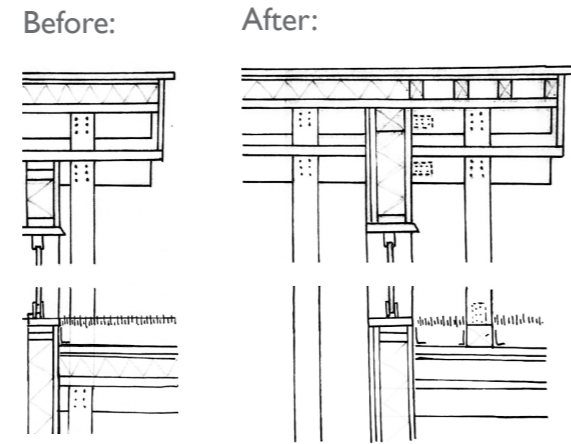
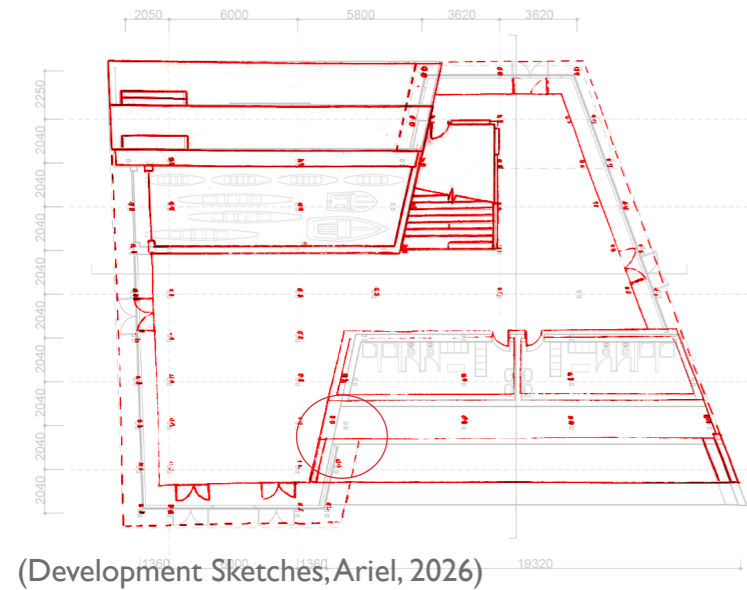
When thinking about attracting more visitors, my first instinct was to create a new landmark. While iconic architecture can be a straightforward and effective strategy, it overlooks the existing values of Winsum. The first proposal in AI was to design an urban spectacle that draws people in at a specific time, by distributing tourism across the year to avoid over-tourism. This approach overlooked the most important stakeholders: the locals. The building itself was isolated from the rest of the village. When the tutor asked me in AI why it had to be in Winsum, when it could just as easily be placed anywhere in Groningen, I did not know how to answer. This question gave me a lot to reflect on during the term break. While the first proposal might be a successful strategy for meeting tourism targets while minimising the negative effects brought by tourism, it lost its significance as a project situated in Winsum. It became a cold tool that generates money but lacks a sense of connection to the site and the people who live there.

After AI, I spent a lot of time reflecting on how to better balance the needs of tourists and locals, and how to make this place meaningful and special for the people living there as well. Through a series of explorations, the project evolved from introducing an isolated spa programme to integrating new interventions within existing functions and structures. This approach minimises the impact on the site while preserving what is already working and valuing the qualities that are already present. Rather than creating something entirely new and disconnected, the proposal seeks to build upon and strengthen existing conditions, allowing the site to evolve through careful adaptation rather than replacement.



(WHERE WATER CONNECTS conceptual diagram, Ariel, 2026)

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

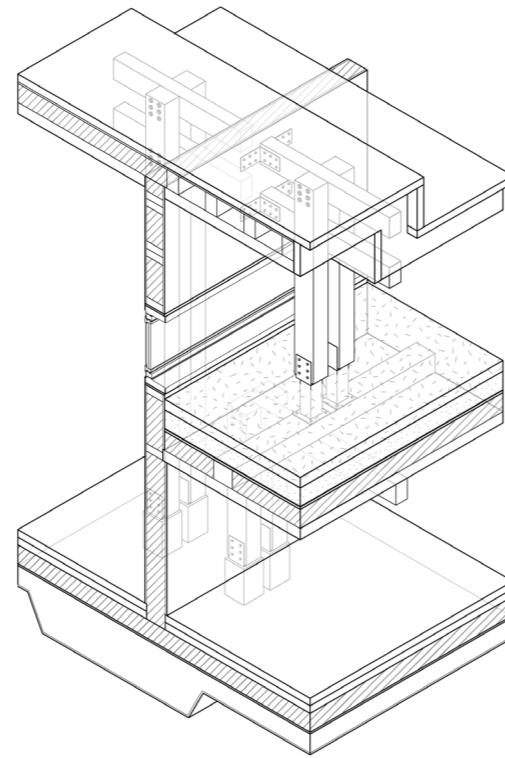


After the modification, the window wall was also pushed back to create a semi outdoor corridor space.

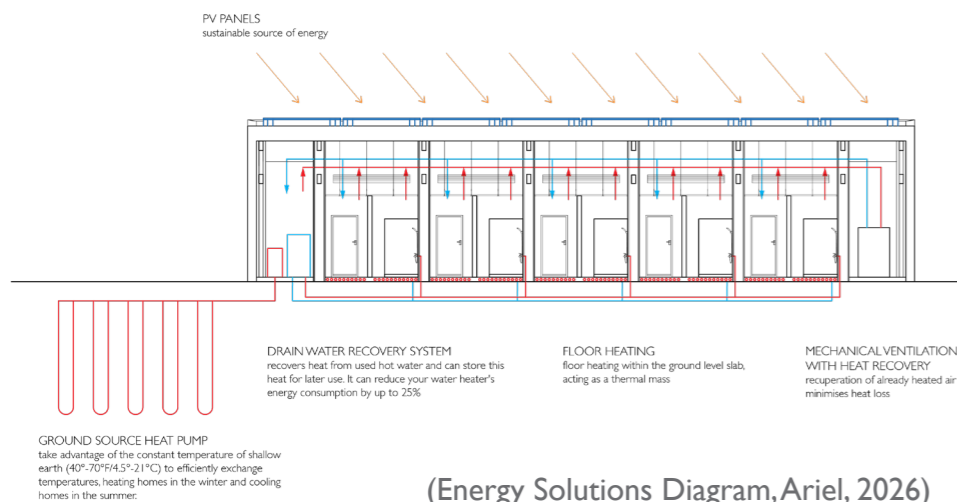
STRUCTURE

A double-column and double-beam structural system was selected for this project and is applied consistently across all buildings. This system was chosen to facilitate assembly and disassembly while reducing the visual heaviness of the structure. Rather than concealing the structural elements, the design intentionally expresses and celebrates them as part of the architectural language.

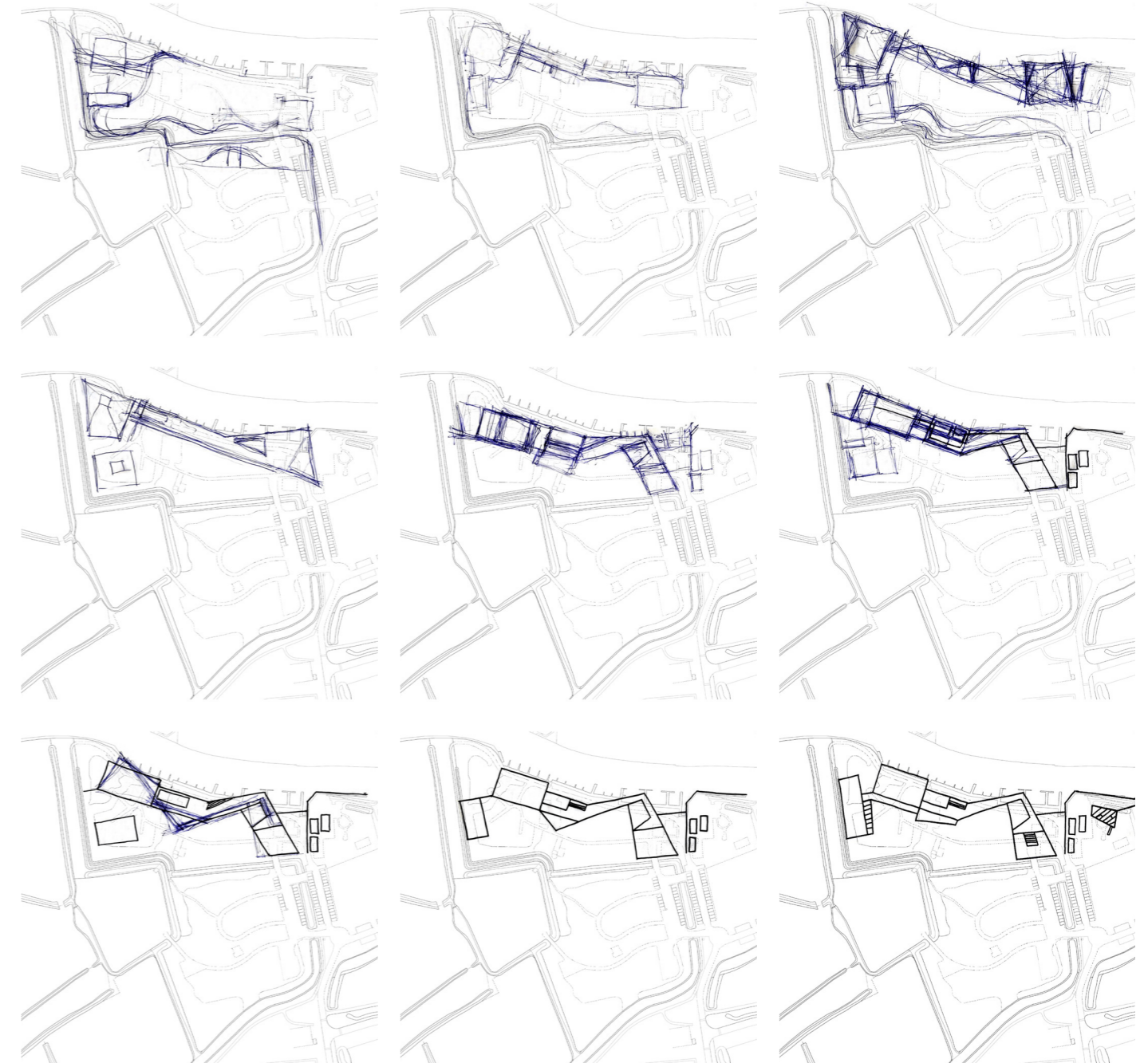
After series of research and trials, the interior and exterior beams were separated to eliminate thermal bridging. While precedents exist in Europe, such as the Daycare Centre Palais de l'Alma in Paris, where timber structural members extend through the insulation layer, these solutions typically require substantially larger structural members to mitigate heat transfer. In this project, such an approach was considered impractical, as the increased beam depth would significantly reduce the available floor-to-floor height, which is a critical design constraint.



(Structural Diagram, Ariel, 2026)

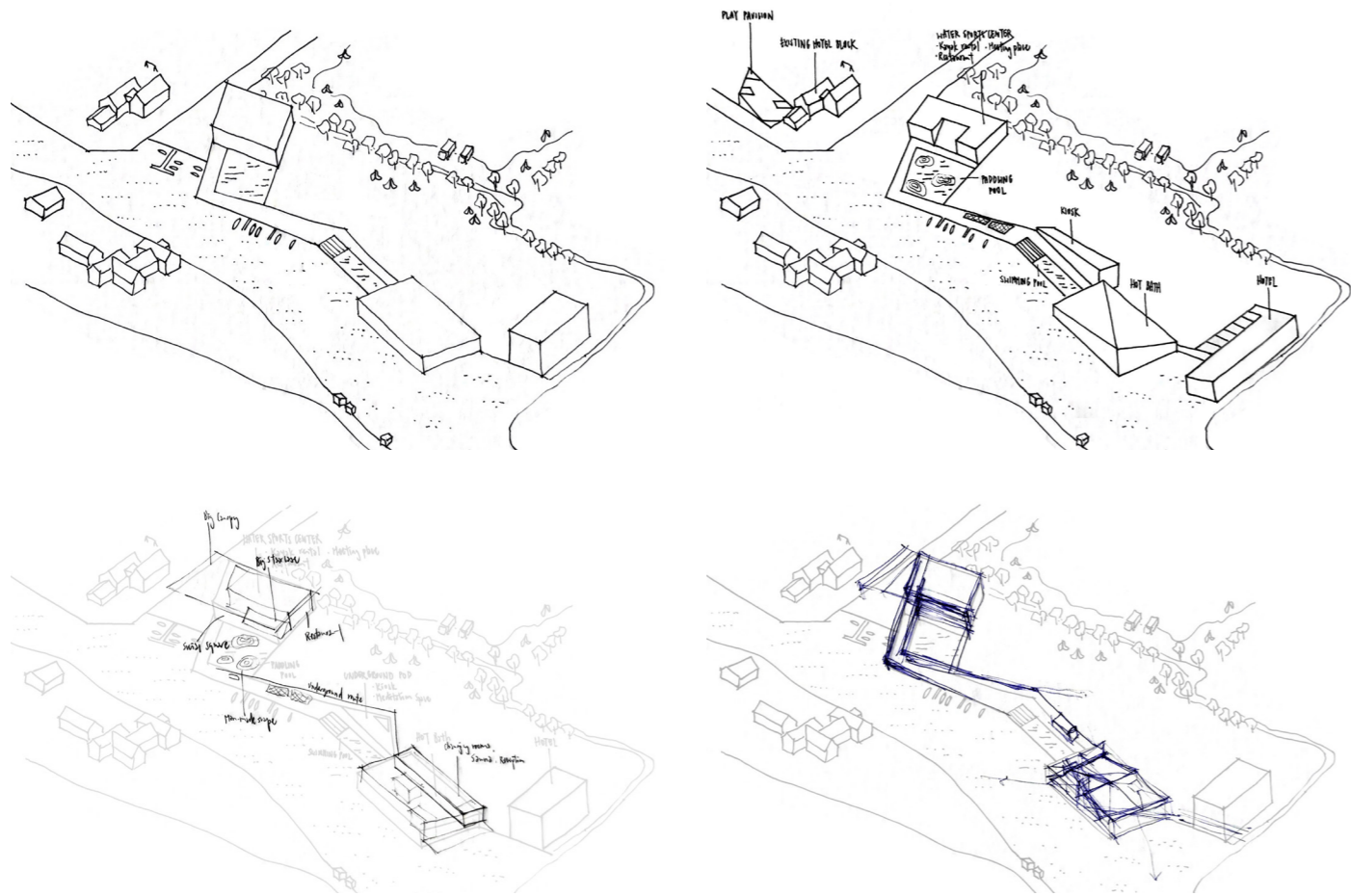


(Energy Solutions Diagram, Ariel, 2026)

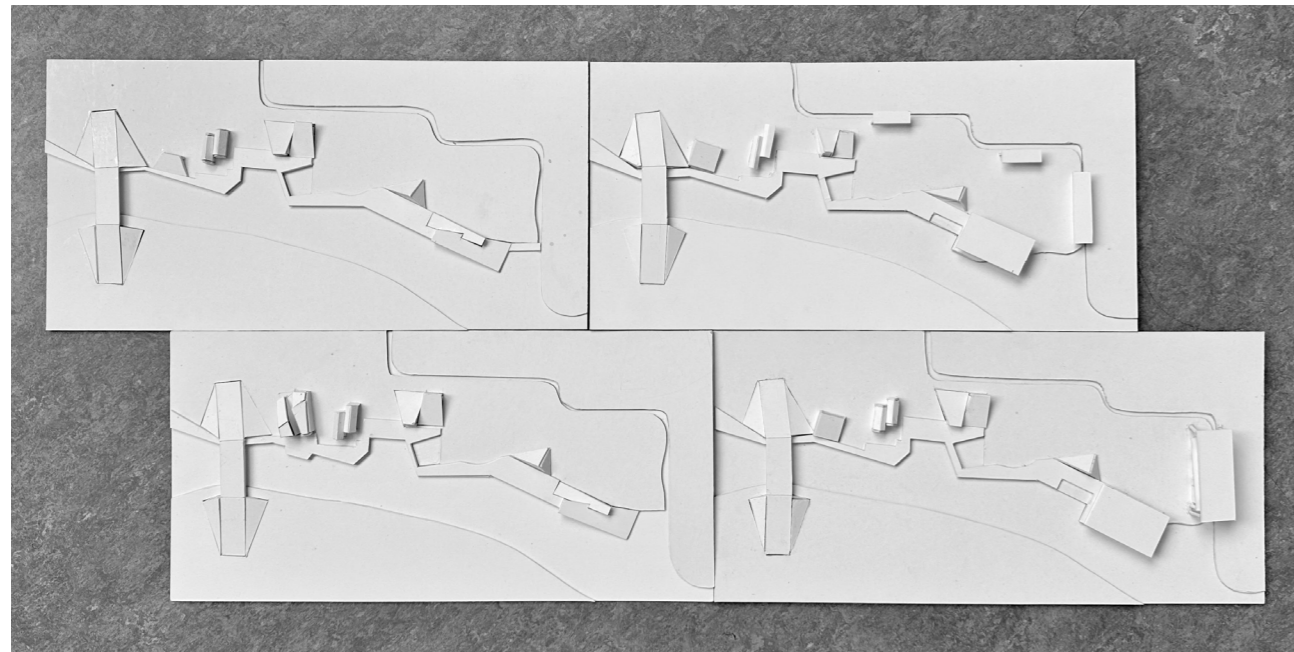


(Development Sketches, Ariel, 2026)

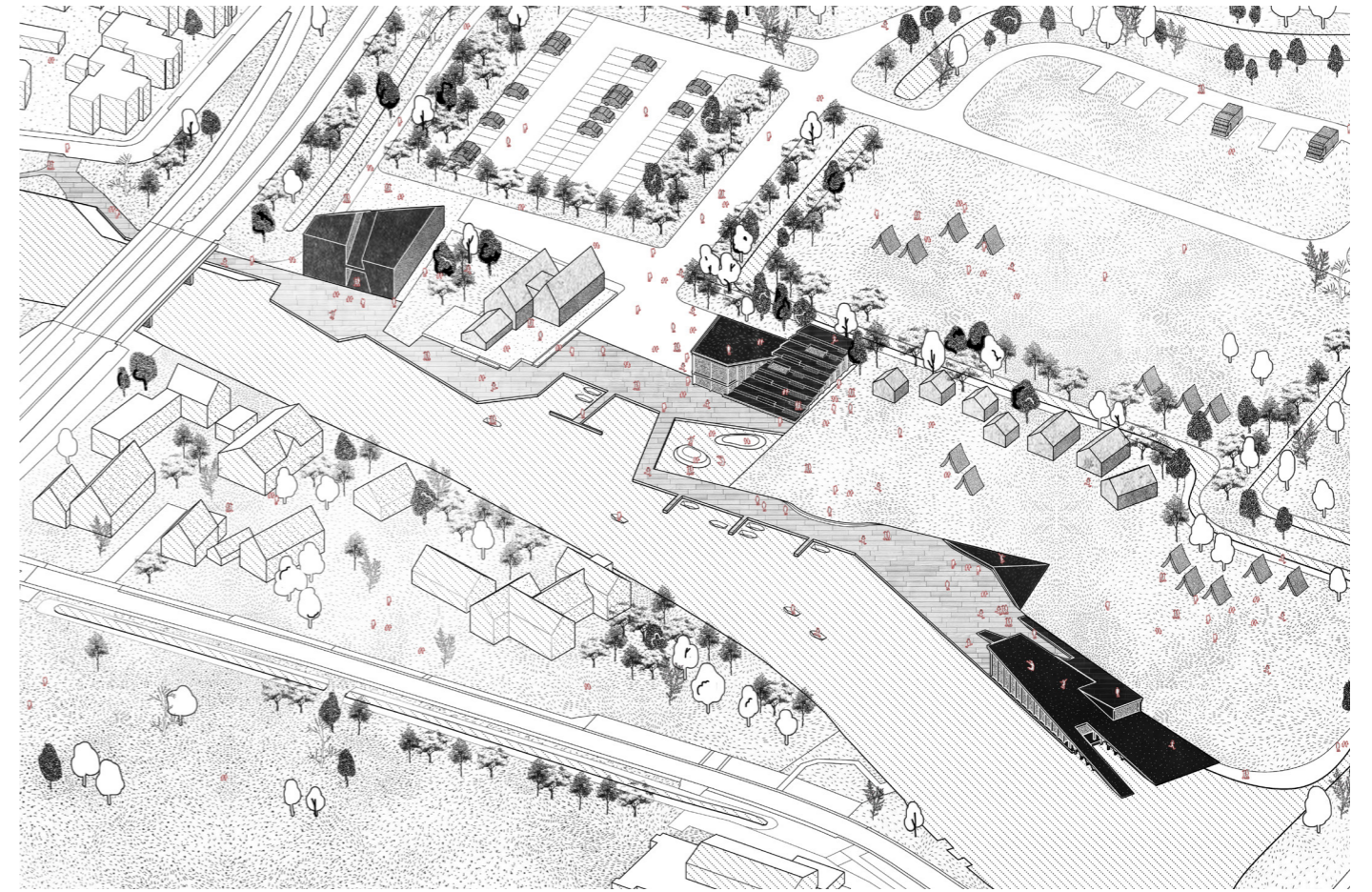
The sketches showcase the development process of the design. It started from prioritising the logistics and programme functions, to balancing different needs, and finally utilising water as the anchor of the project. The volumes transform from generic spaces into an integrated system throughout the exploration.



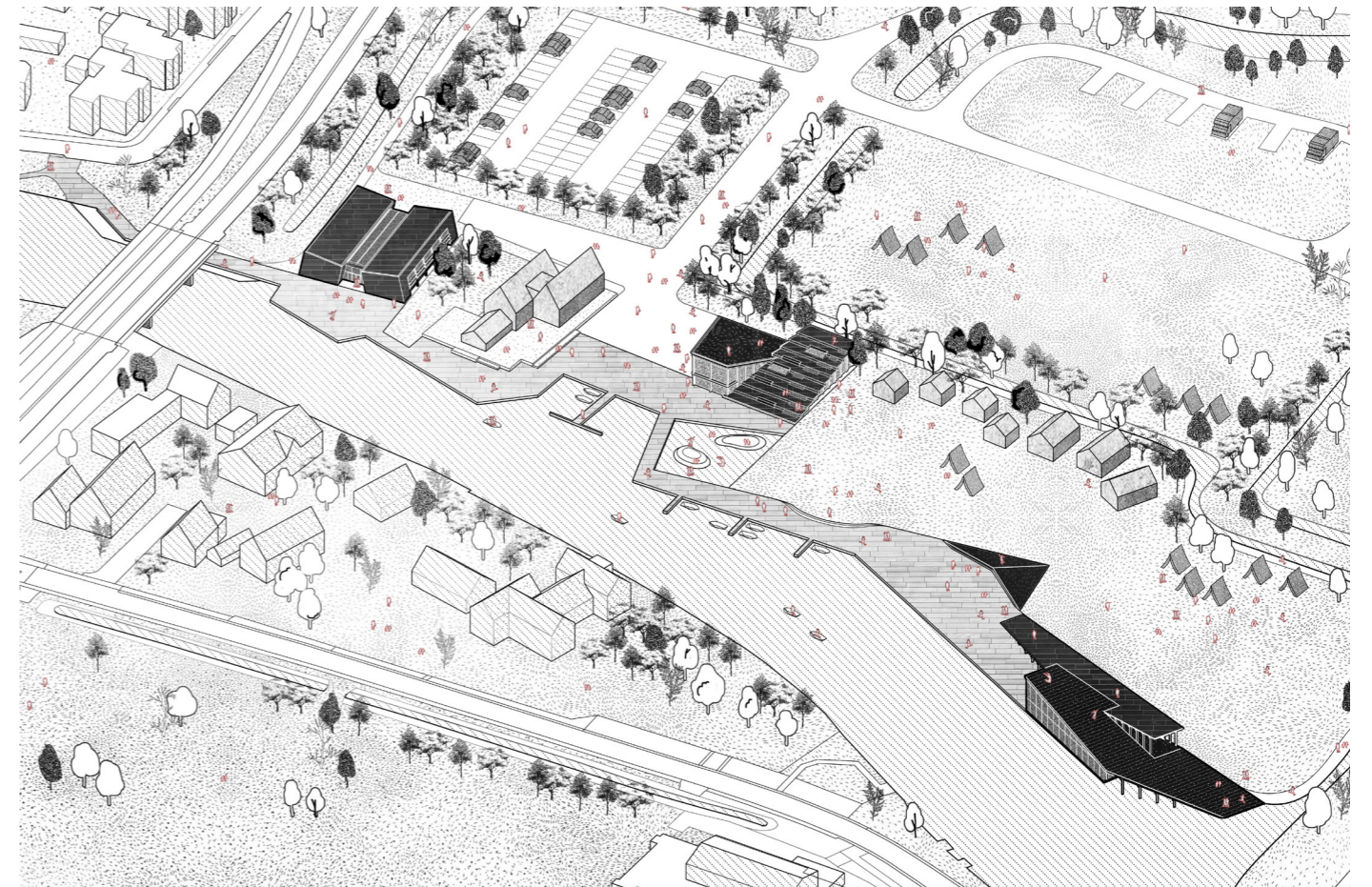
Sketching in axonometric view to study how boundaries can be dissolved. The design features simple geometries that contrasts the nature, creating distinct layers of the forest, man-made structure and the water.



(Sketch Models, Ariel, 2026)



Site Axon A2

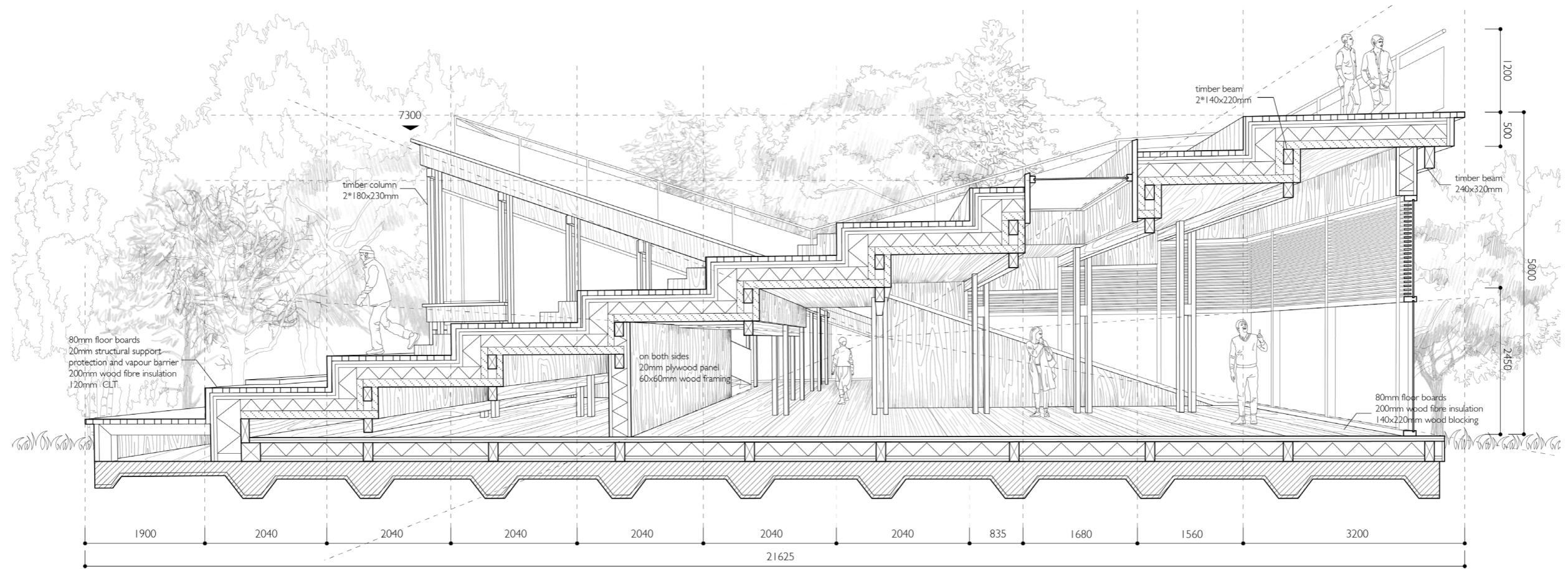


Site Axon A3

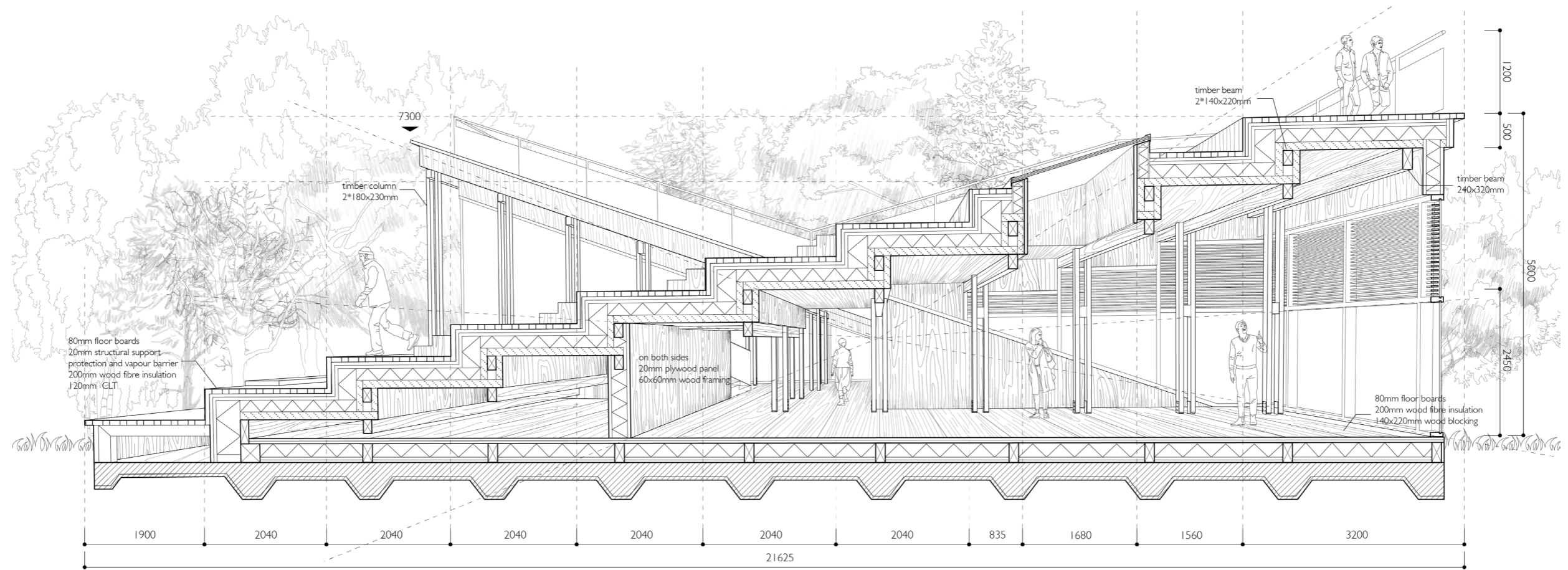


Spa and Watersports Centre Design Development

Hotel Design Development



Watersports Centre Detail A2



Watersports Centre Detail A3

## REFERENCE LIST

Brajcich, Kaitlyn. "What Is Overtourism and Why Is It a Problem?" Sustainable Travel International, August 15, 2024, updated April 30, 2025  
<https://sustainabletravel.org/what-is-overtourism/>

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1994.  
 (Originally published 1967.)

Koolhaas, Rem. "The Generic City." In *S, M, L, XL*, edited by Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, 1238–1264. New York: Monacelli Press, 1995.

Koolhaas, Rem. "The Spectacle." In *Content*. Cologne: Taschen, 2004.

Nij Begun Agenda. Government of the Netherlands. Accessed January 2026.  
<https://www.nijbegun.nl>

Sklair, Leslie. *The Icon Project: Architecture, Cities, and Capitalist Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek). Statistics Netherlands. Accessed January 2026.  
<https://www.cbs.nl>

Visit Groningen. "Waddenland." Accessed January 2026.  
<https://www.visit groningen.nl/en/locations/waddenland>

Marenland. Marenland Regional Platform. Accessed January 2026.  
<https://marenland.nl>

## PRACTICAL REFERENCES

Atelier Régis Roudil. 2012. Daycare Centre Palais de l'Alma. Paris, France.

Atelier Régis Roudil Architectes. 2014. Subsidised Housing. Marseille, France.

Blue Architects. 2018. Sports Centre. Sargans, Switzerland.

BIG. 2018. Aarhus Harbor Bath. Aarhus, Denmark.

BIG. 2003. Copenhagen Harbor Bath. Copenhagen, Denmark.

Dekleva Gregorič Arhitekti. 2014. Compact Karst House. Vrhovlje, Slovenia.

Hawkins\Brown. 2017. City of London Freeman's School Swimming Pool. Ashted, United Kingdom.

MARS Architectes. 2016. Residential Building. Paris, France.

RS+ Robert Skitek. 2020. Canoeing Training Center MOSM. Tychy, Poland.

Peter Zumthor. 1996. Therme Vals. Vals, Switzerland.

Seiler Linhart Architekten. 2013. Office Block. Alpnach, Switzerland.

Shota Nakanishi Architects. 2017. House with Shed Roof. Kanazawa, Japan.