



systems of **care**

by

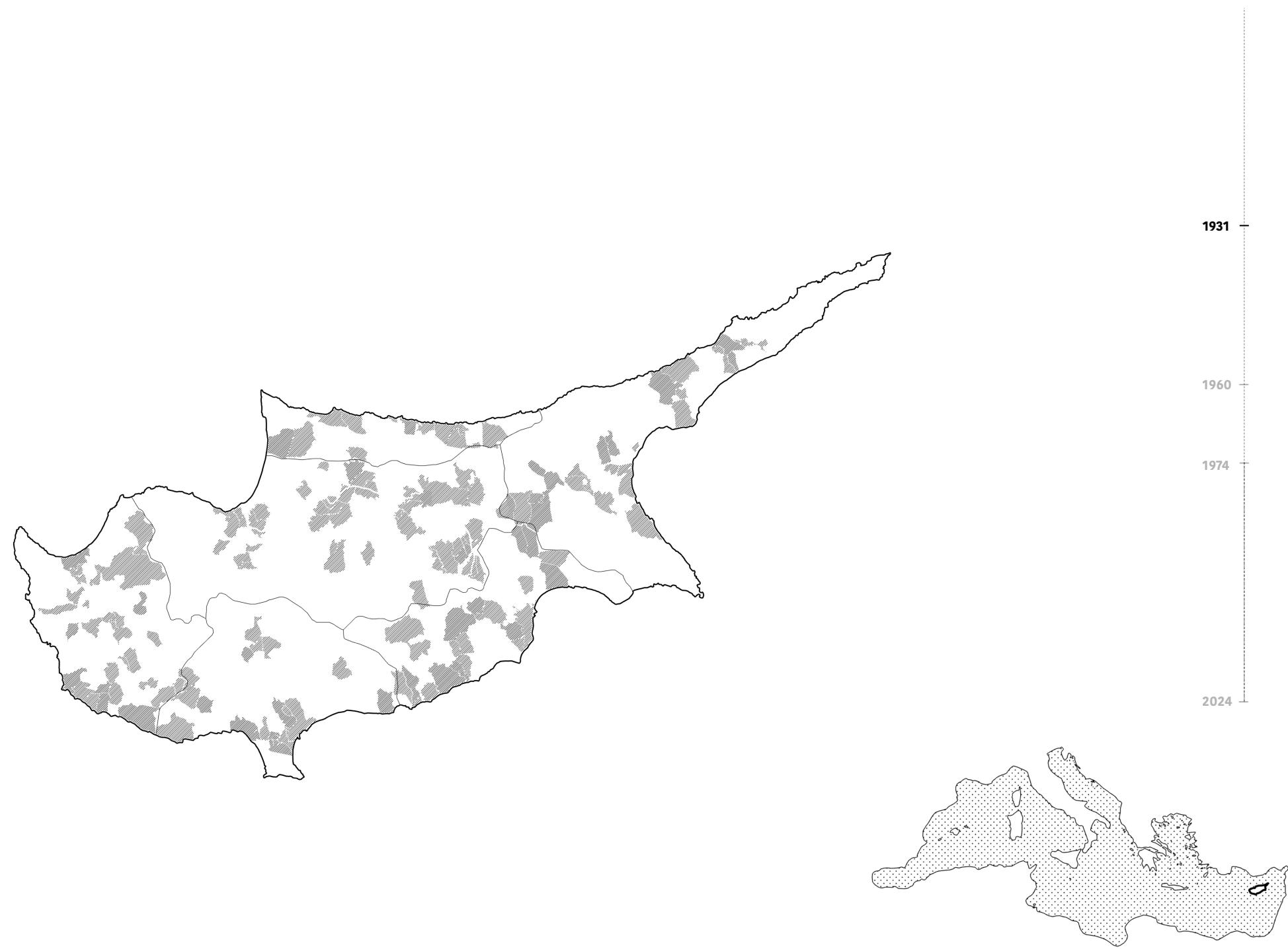
Marina Kathidjiotis

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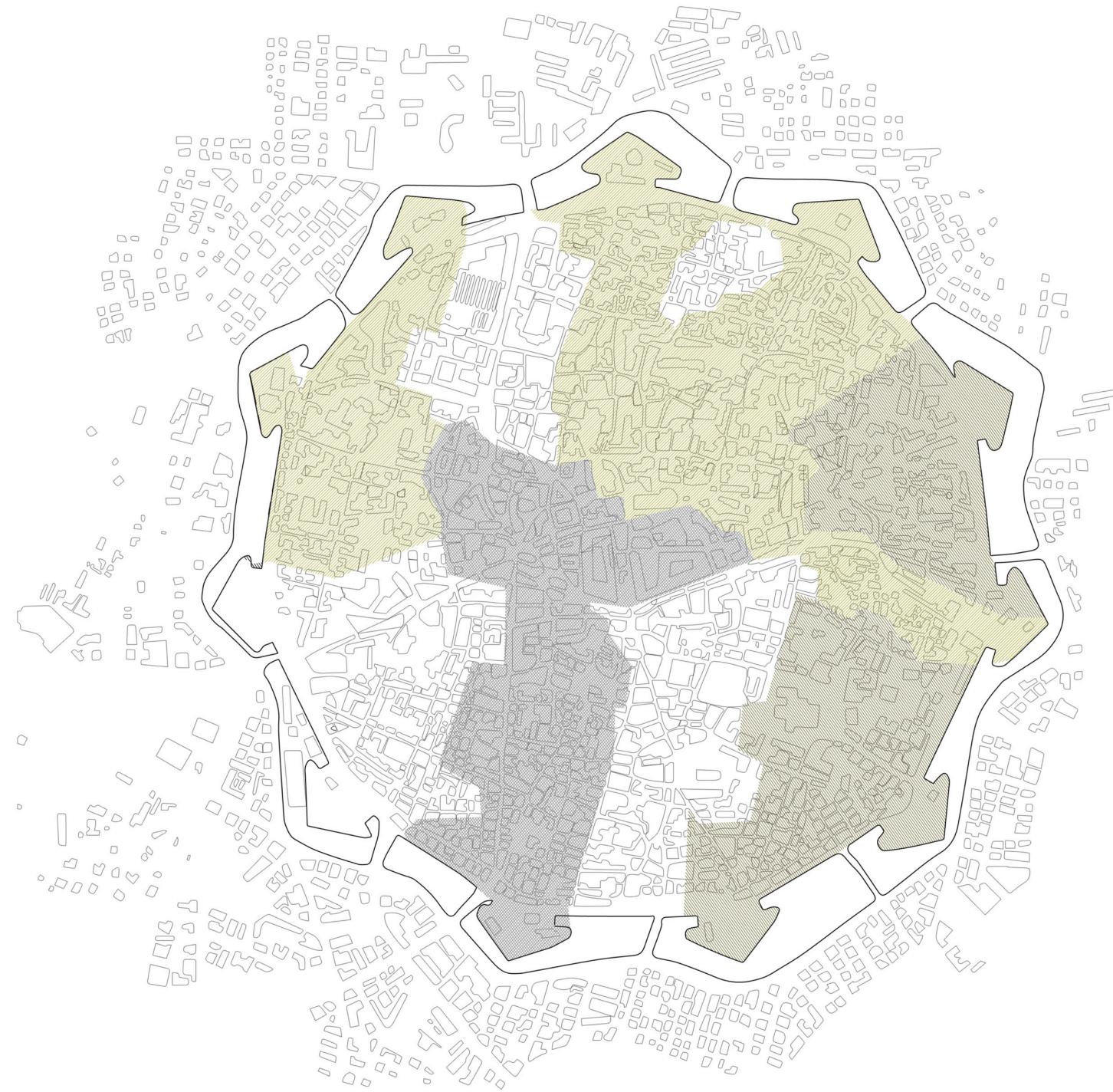


Gester, Dr Georg. "Aerial View of Nicosia," Λευκωσία – Η Πρωτεύουσα της Κύπρου Άλλοτε και Τώρα, 1989.









1931

1960

1974

2024



THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. "Ledra Street Lends an Air to Modernity to the Capital", 1928.



Kolotas, Titos. Παιδικές αναμνήσεις, 2 Mar. 2010, limassolinhistory.blogspot.com/2010/03/.



THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. "More famous than silk of Cyprus is its lace and needlework, 1928.







A Wall No More

I'm sitting at the step of the garden, looking at the back wall. Its shadow stretches long across the brittle grass and earth as the sun sets. I know around the point where the shadow touches the wall, it's barely a whisper, but I know it's him. His voice rises just enough to cut through the evening hush. The sound stirs something in me, a mix of relief and determination.

I grab the weaved chair from the side of the house, its frame wobbling a little as I drag it to the wall. It's been here as long as I can remember, its once-bright paint now flaked off in dull patches. I place it just below the chipped part of the wall where we always climb. The wall is covered in something, I don't know what it's called, but it's rough and grainy, the kind that scrapes your hands if you aren't careful.

I climb onto the chair. My fingers find the chipped spot, where the smoother stone beneath has been exposed. My feet settle into familiar grooves in the wall, the same ones we've used over and over. Breath one: my right foot pushes up as I grab the edge of a stone just above me. It's cold, gritty, and solid beneath my hand.

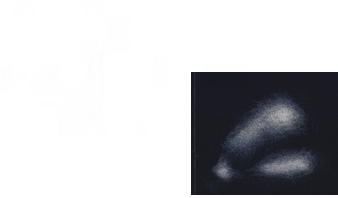
I glance up to where the roof tiles line the top of the wall. We moved some of them weeks ago, just enough to make space for us to pass without breaking more. Even so, I always think we should've moved more of them, there's never quite enough room.



[21:02] my right foot pushes up as I grab the edge of a stone just above me. It's cold, gritty, and solid beneath my hand. I glance up to where the roof tiles line the top of the wall. We moved some of them weeks ago, just enough to make space for us to pass without breaking more.

Breath 1 [21:02] I pull myself higher. My left foot slips for a second before finding the groove again. My fingers reach the top edge, where the tiles meet the stone, and I can feel the uneven join of clay and rock beneath my grip.

Breath 2 [21:04] My right leg pushes up, and I hoist myself onto the wall. The top is thick, wide enough for me to sit, but not without a little fear. I swing my leg up first, then the rest of me follows, my chest scraping against the rough stone as I pull myself forward. The tiles shift slightly under my weight, and my heart skips.

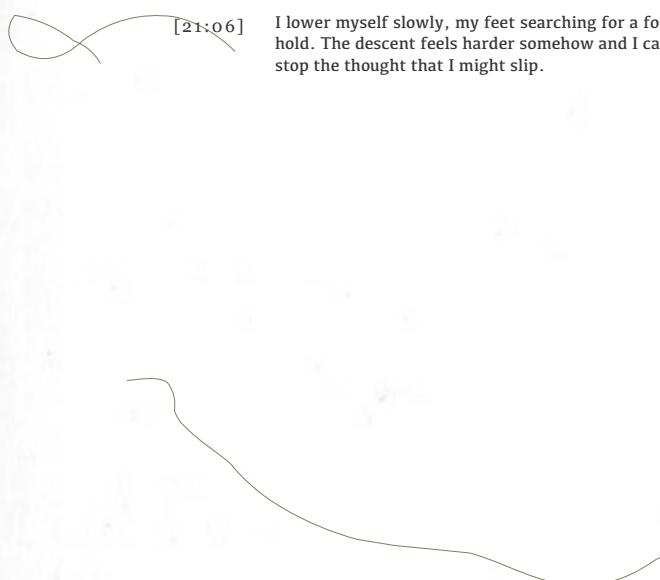


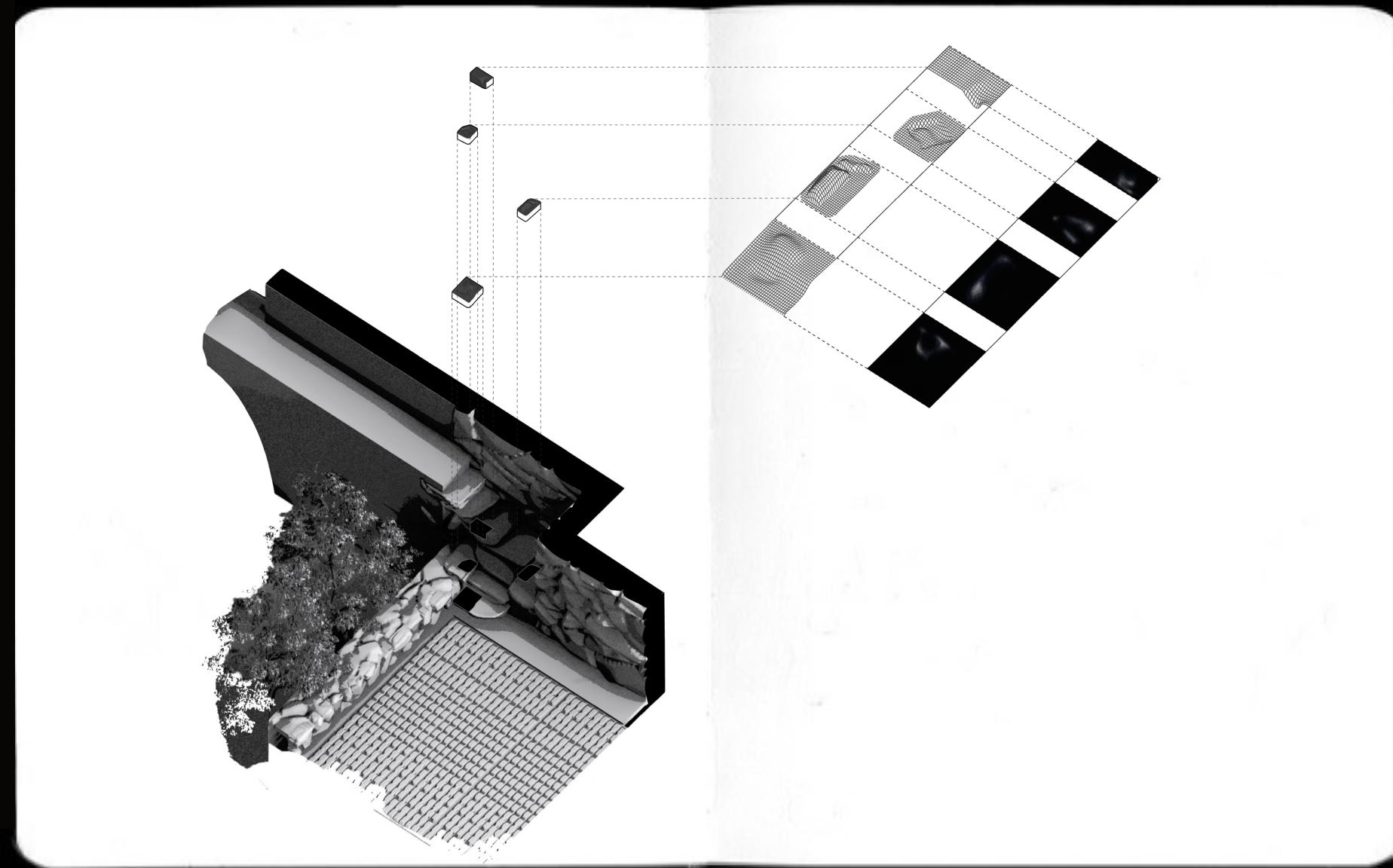
[21:06] I turn carefully to begin climbing down. My hands find the edge of the wall again, my fingers curling over the cool, jagged surface. The stool he set out for me is below, just within reach, but I can't see it from this angle.

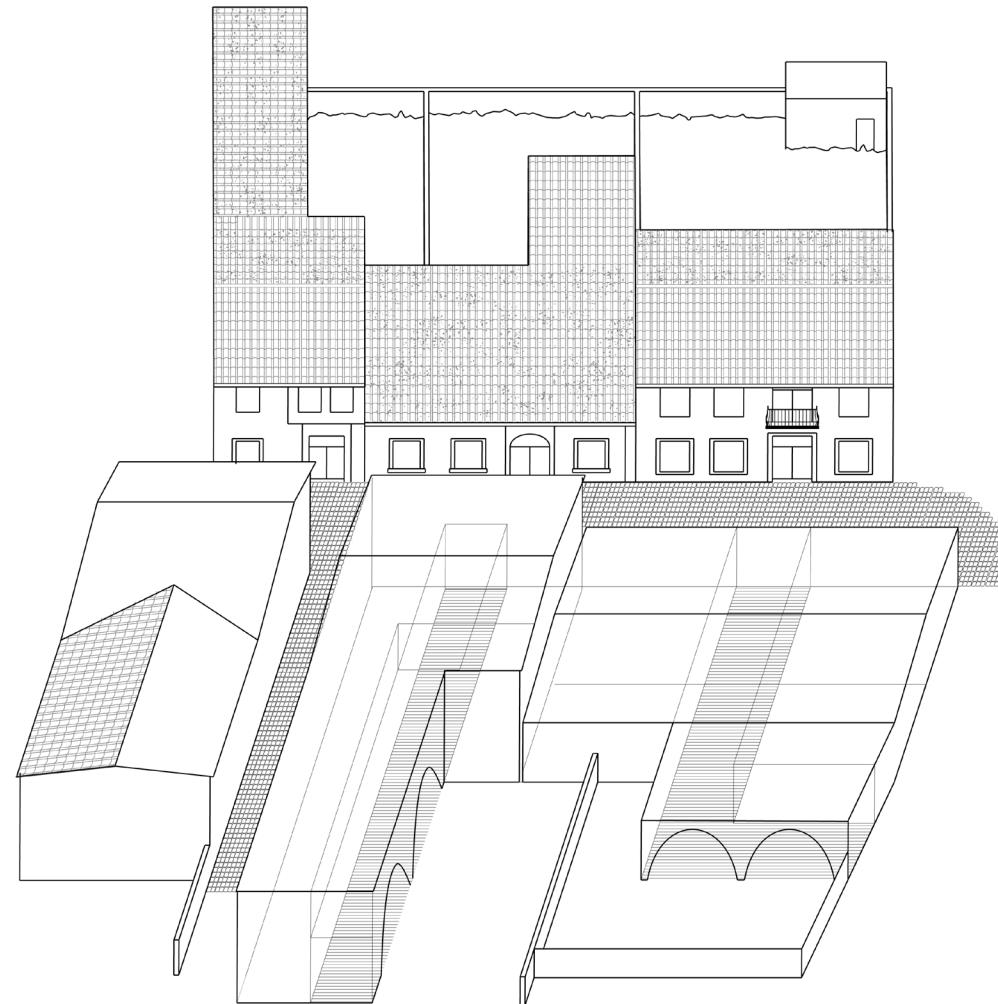
[21:06]

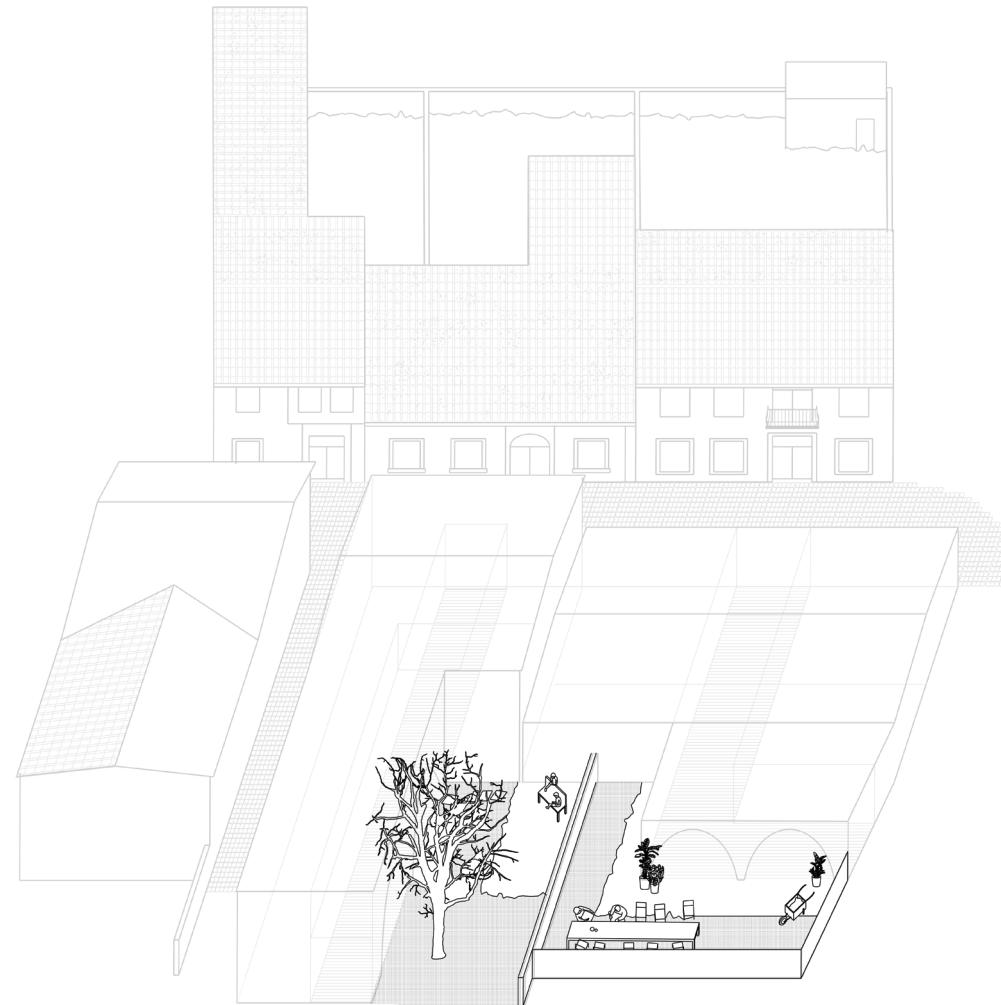
I lower myself slowly, my feet searching for a foothold. The descent feels harder somehow and I can't stop the thought that I might slip.

[21:10] My feet find the stool, and I land with a dull thud. The moment I feel the solid wood beneath me, relief washes over me. He grins, reaching out to steady me, and I step down onto the ground.

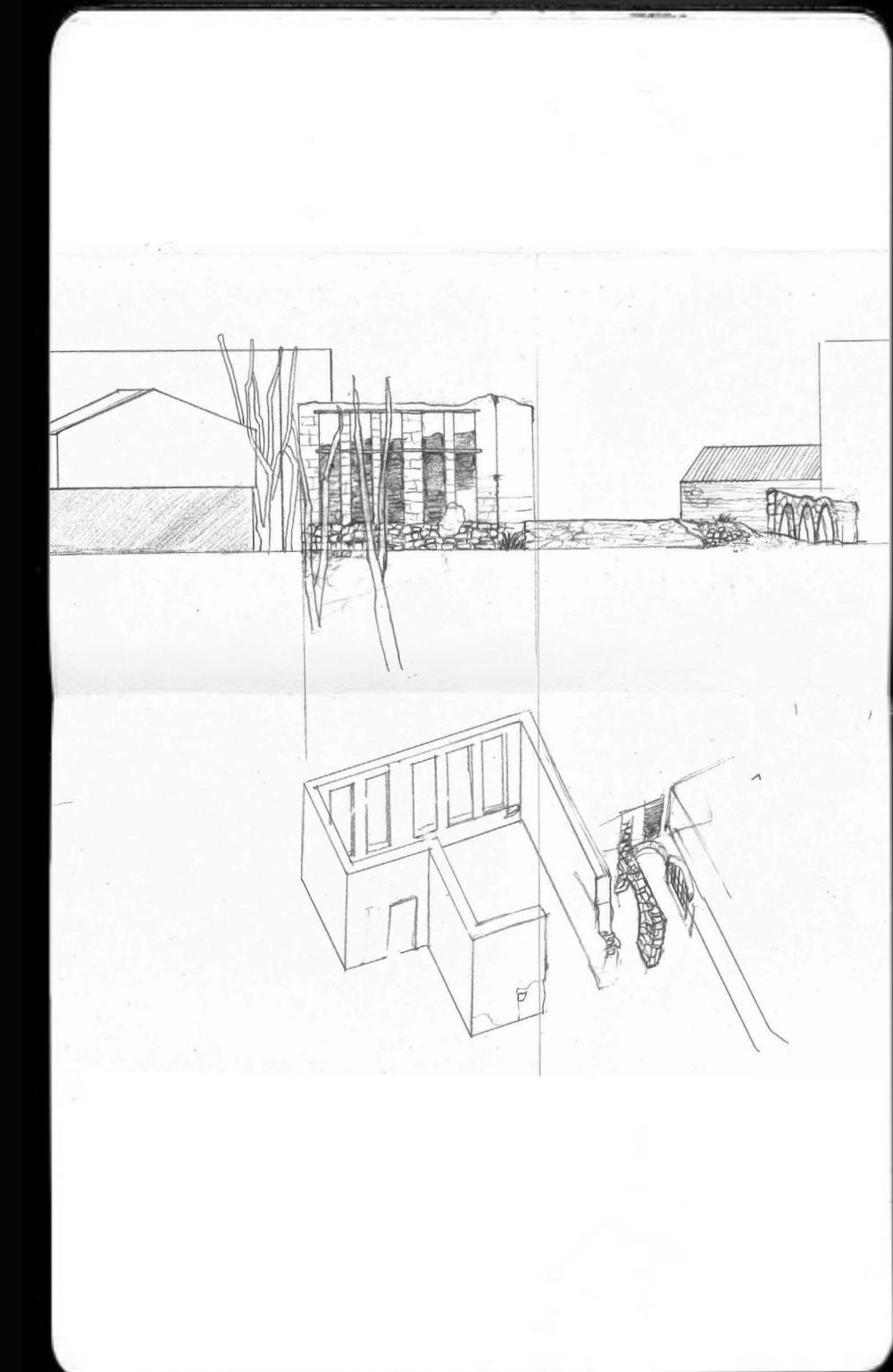














coexistence

disused sites



ruin

coexistence

disused sites



How can the reuse of materials from
damaged sites and ruins act as a catalyst
for cooperation between the two
communities?

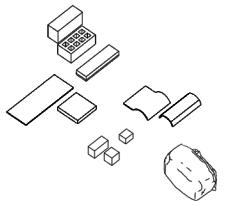


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How can the reuse of materials from
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for cooperation between the two
communities?

How can courtyards help reconnect
disused plots in Nicosia to the
surrounding urban fabric?



1 reclaimed material warehouse



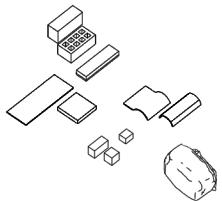
2 reclaimed material workshops



3 city library



4 city archive



1 productive
courtyard



reclaimed material warehouse



2 social
courtyard



reclaimed material workshops



3 intimate
courtyard



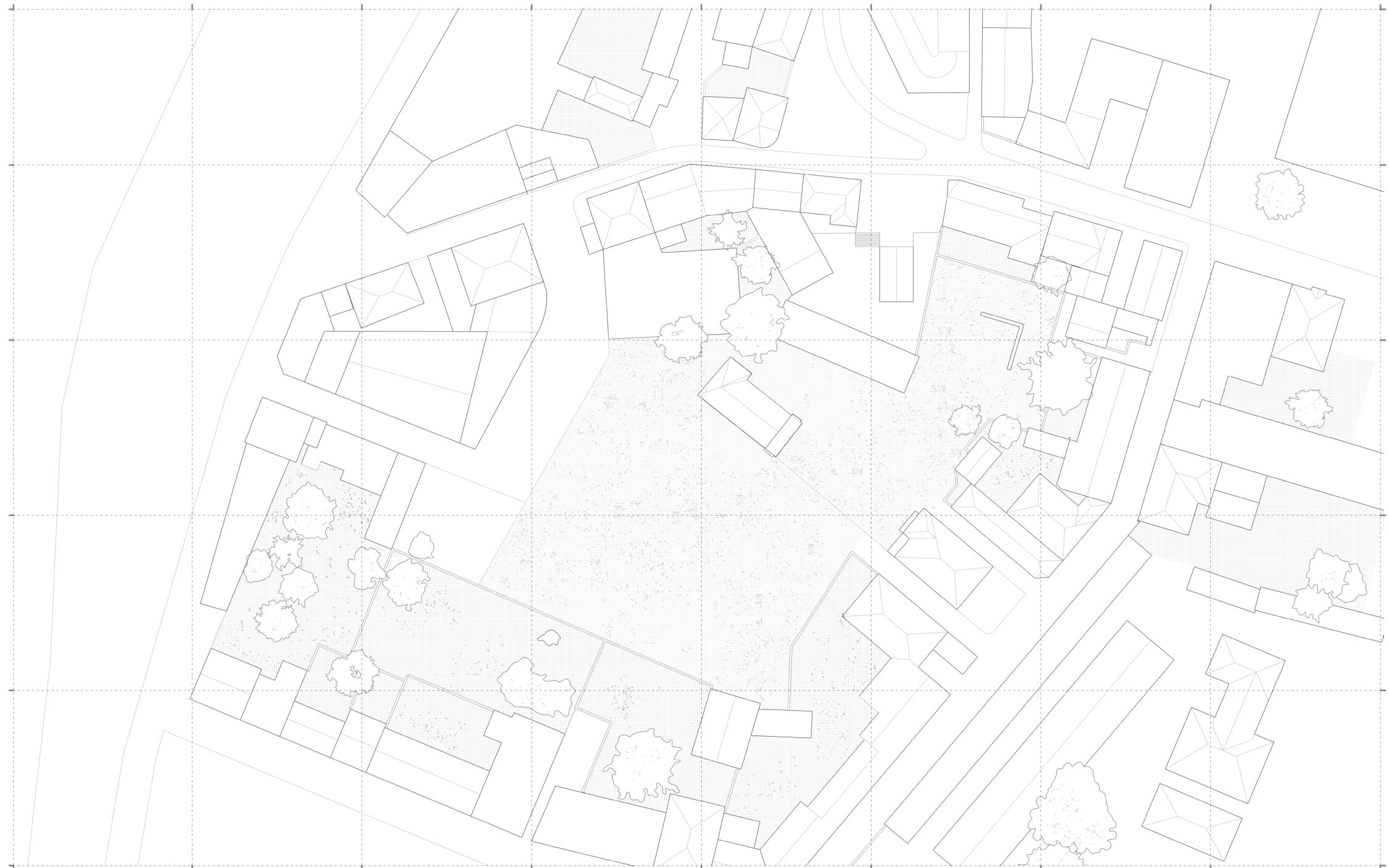
city library



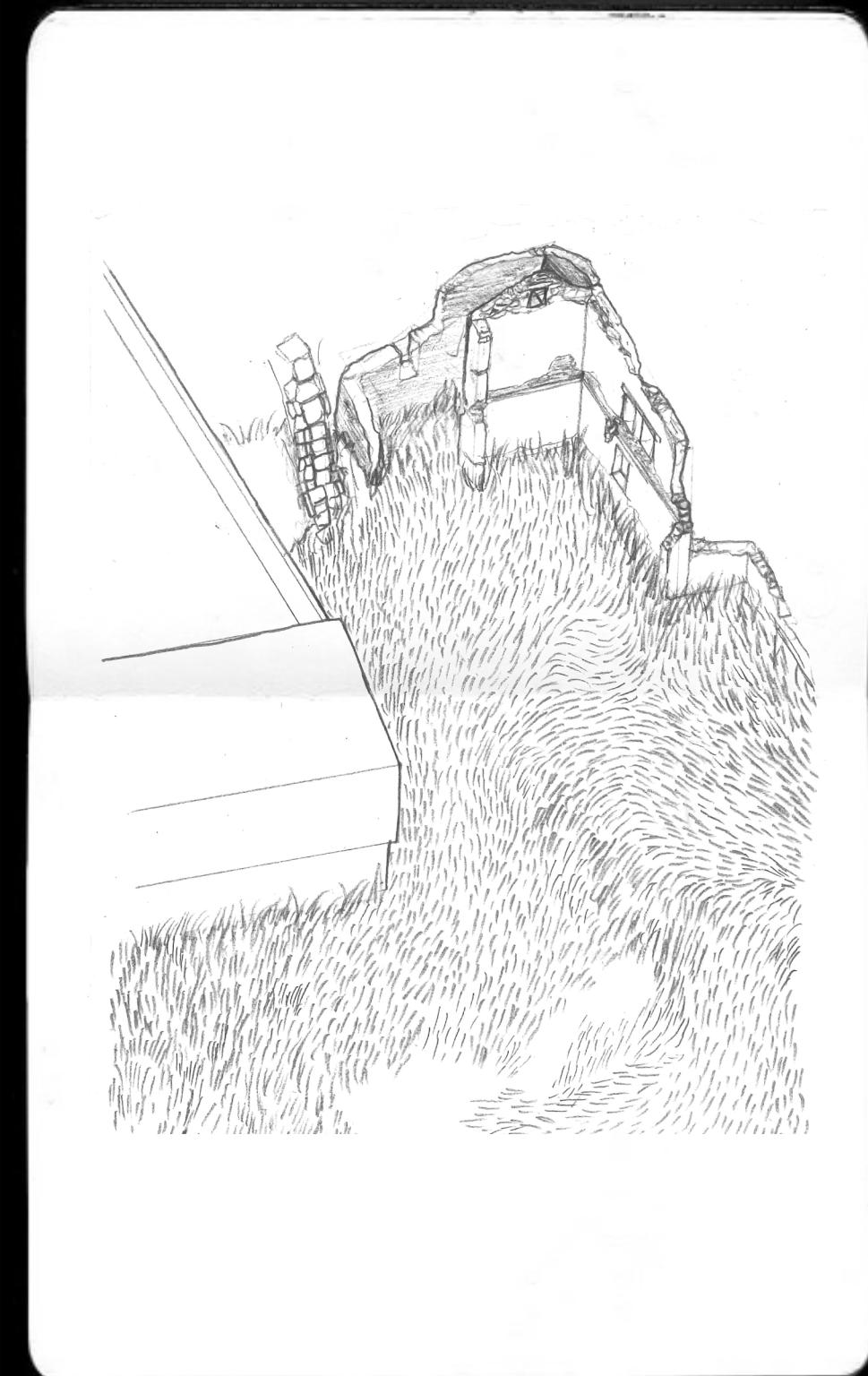
4 memory courtyard



city archive

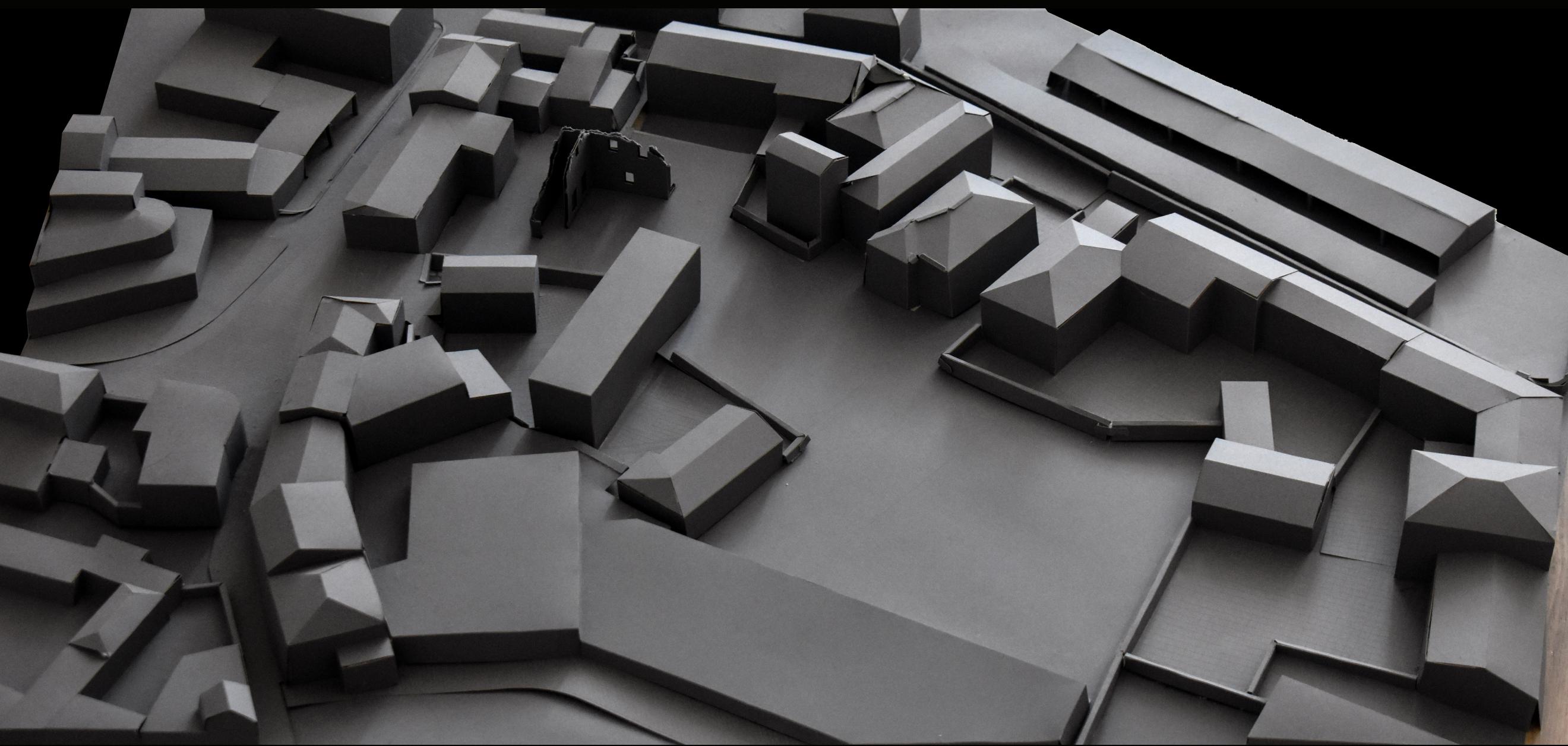


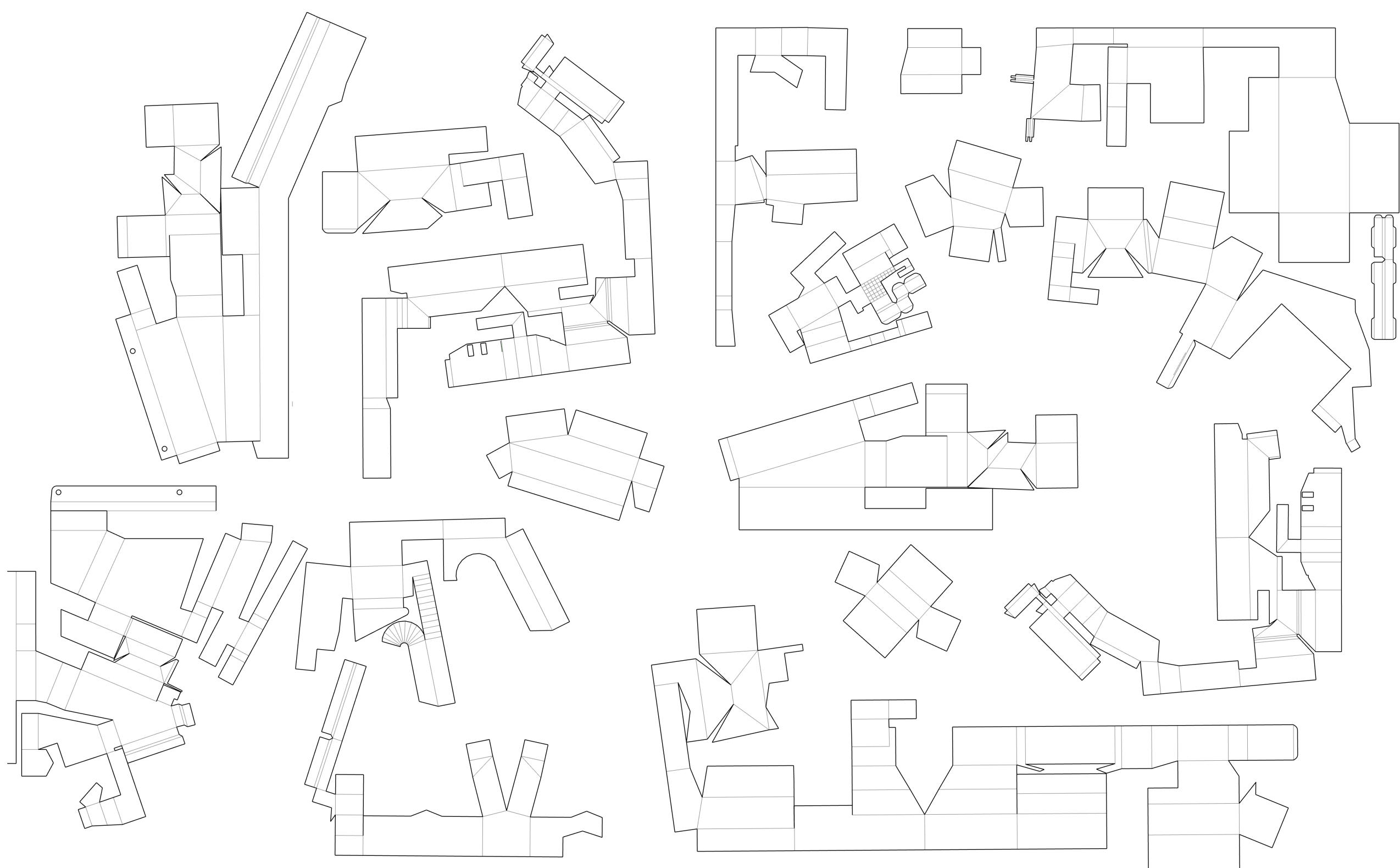


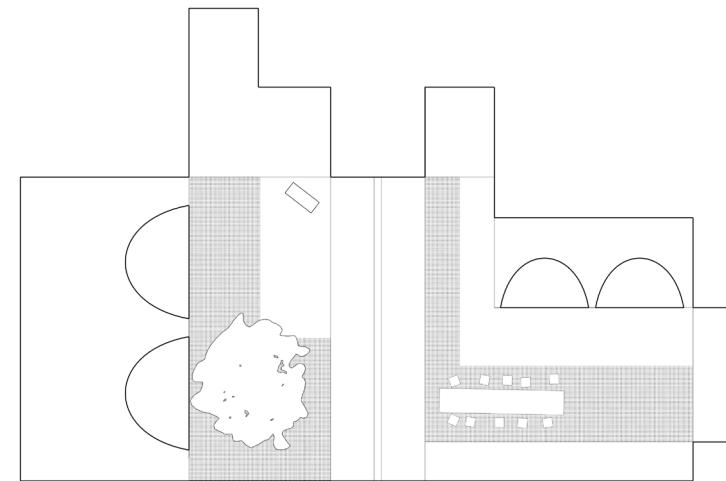
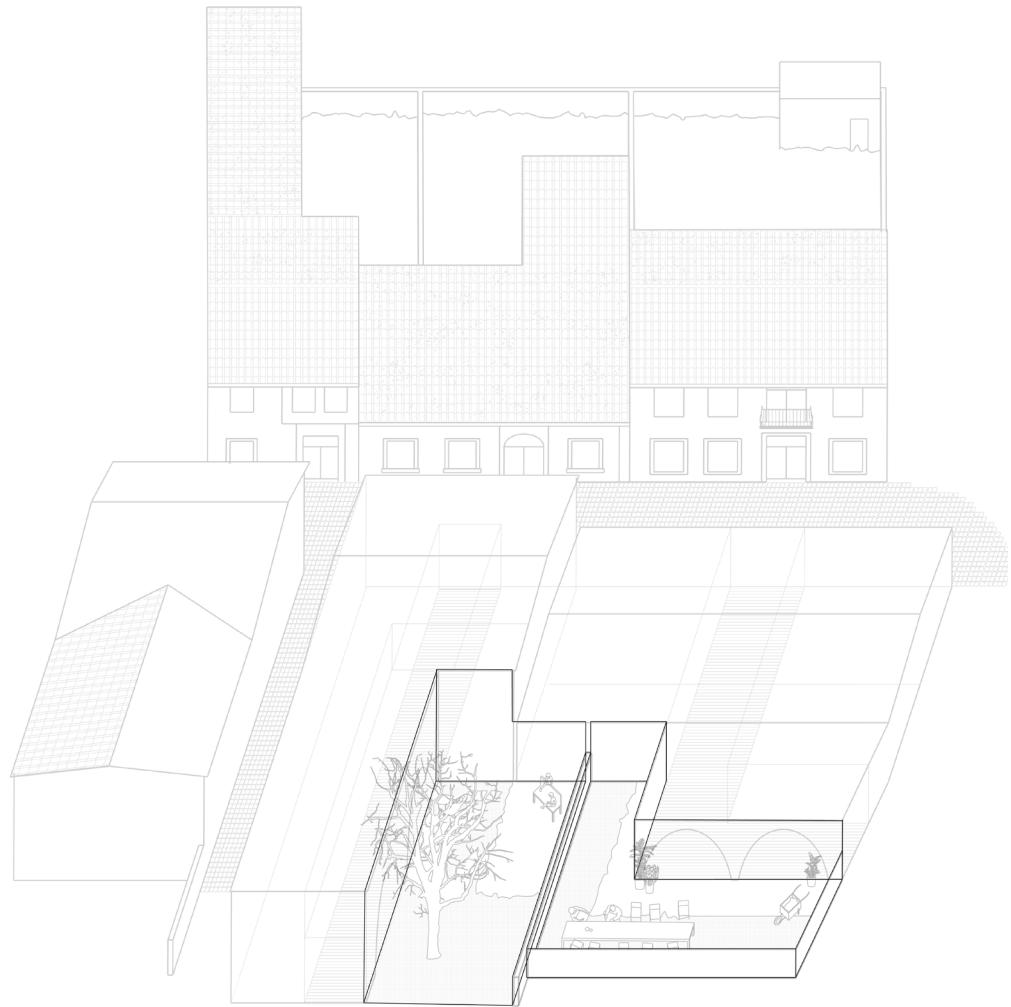






















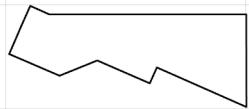




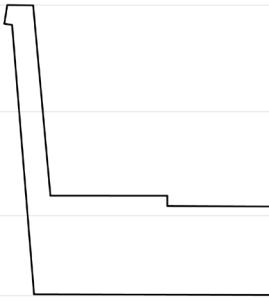




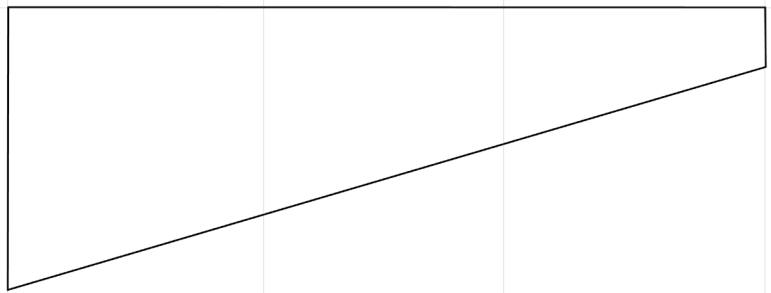
[a] collective garden



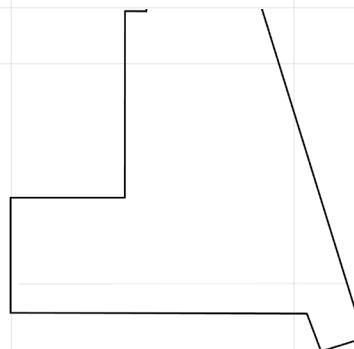
[a] jasmine garden

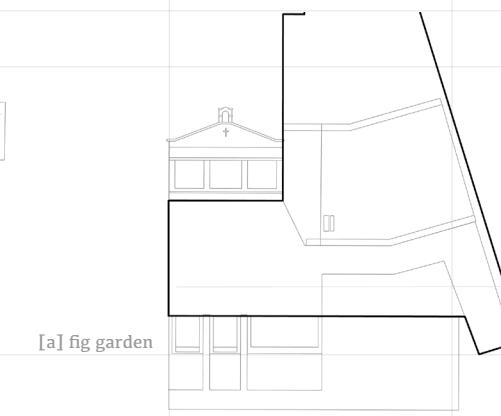
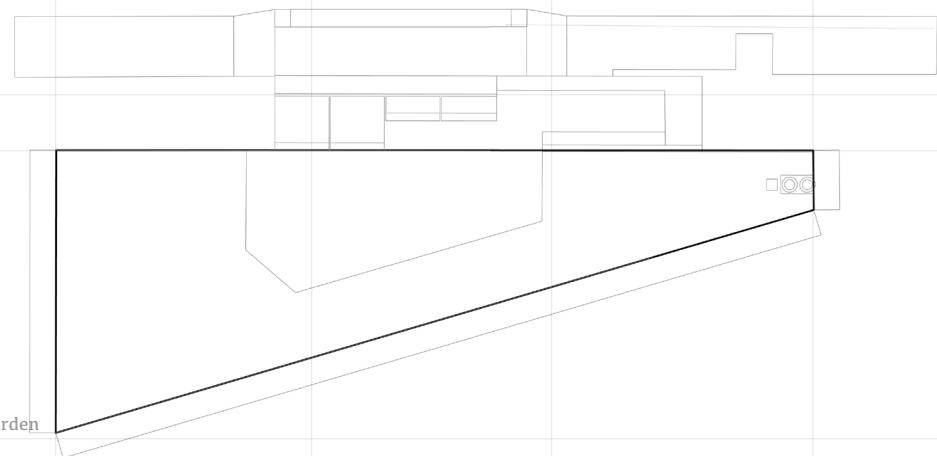
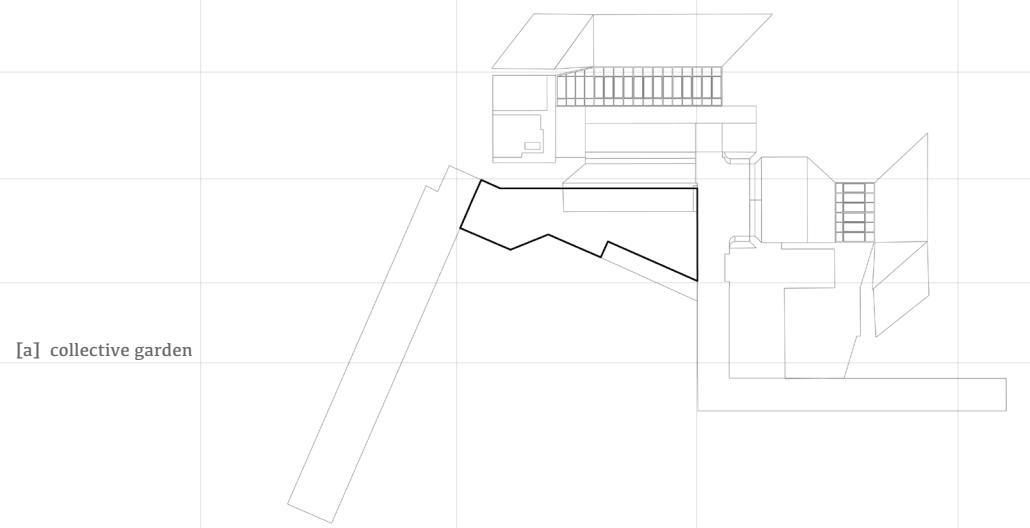


[a] reed garden

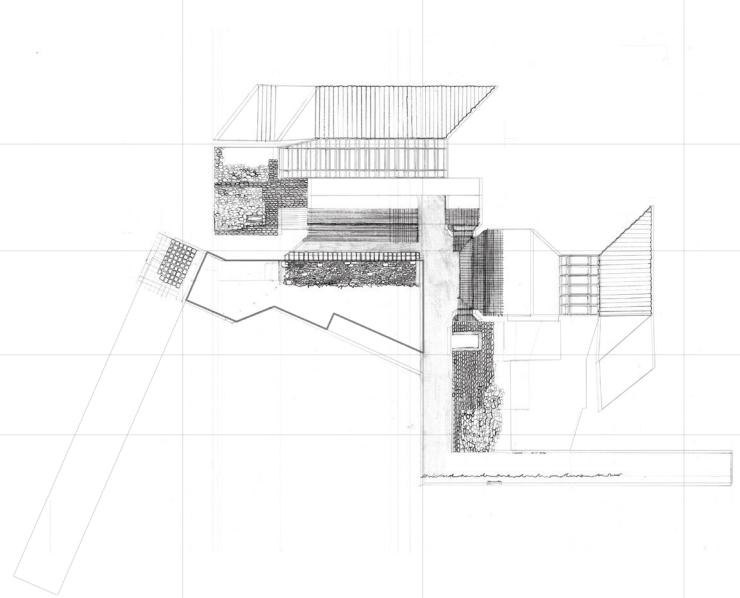


[a] fig garden

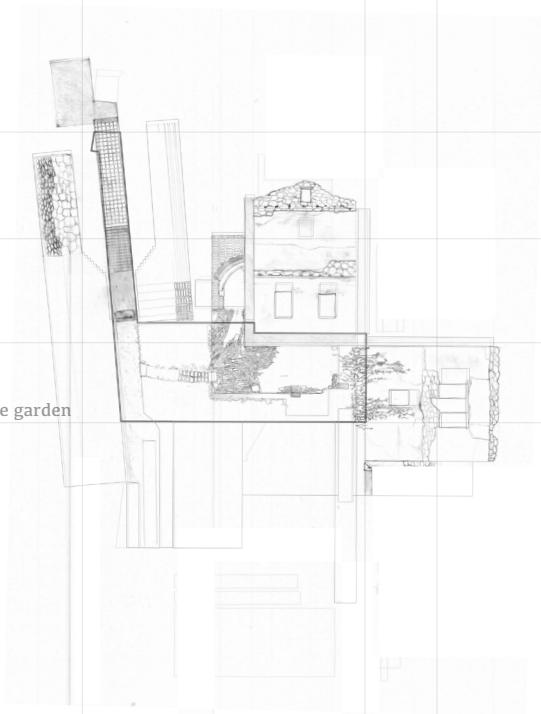




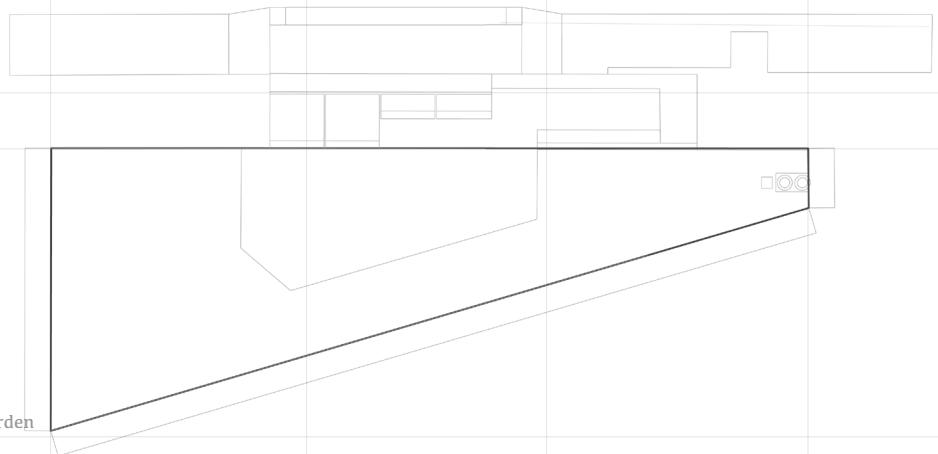
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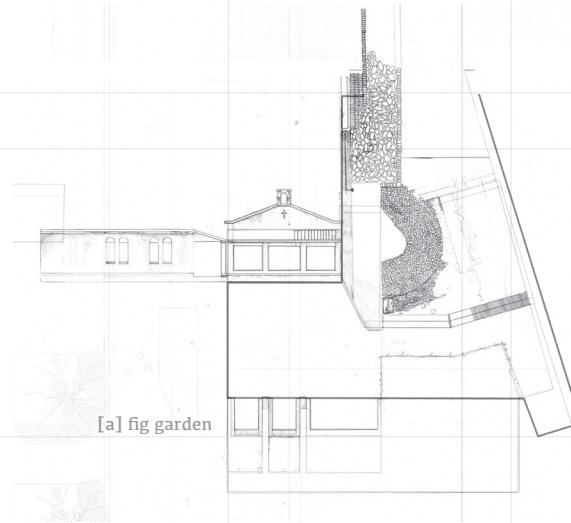
[a] jasmine garden



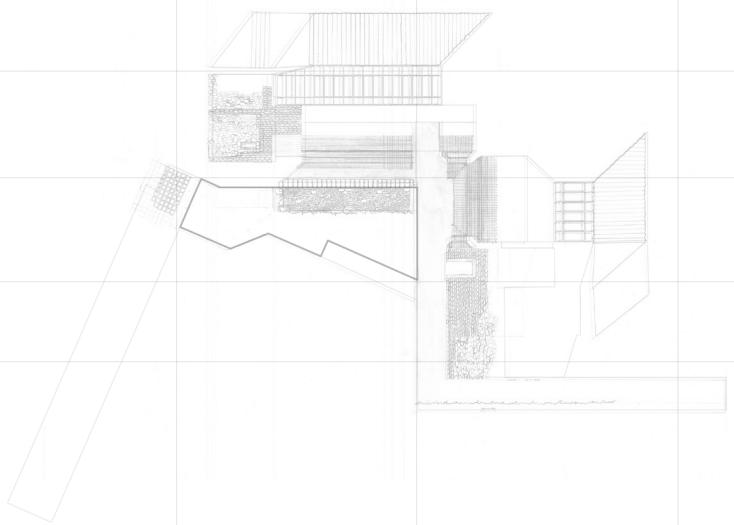
[a] reed garden



[a] fig garden



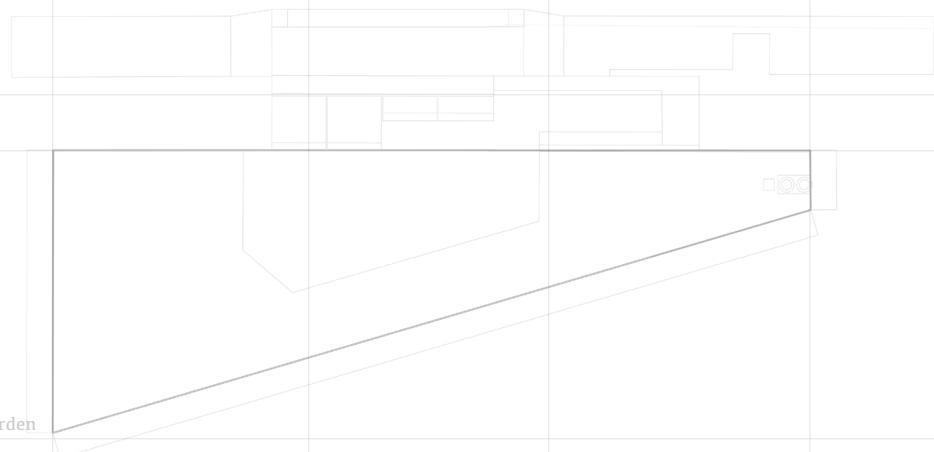
[a] collective garden



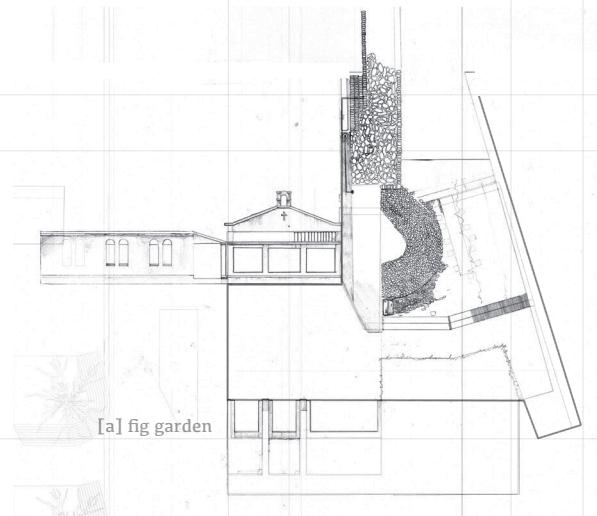
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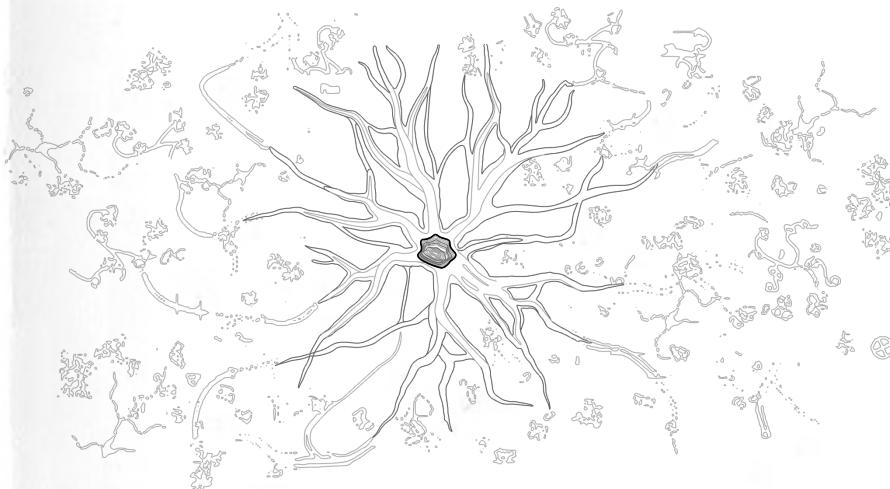
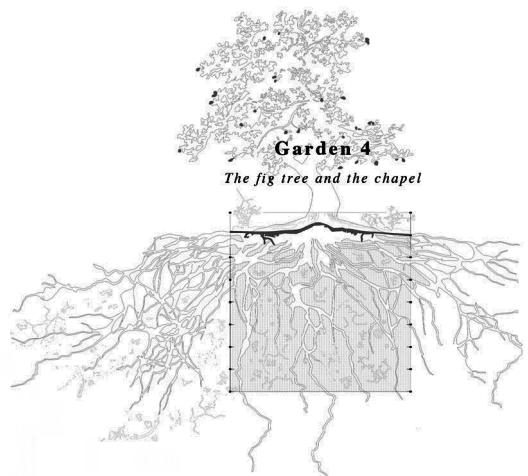


[a] reed garden



[a] fig garden





The Last Garden approaches nature through the lens of symbolism, the meanings carried by religion, myth, and poetry. At its heart stands the fig tree, a species of particular resonance in Cyprus. Its importance is written into the very map, with villages named after figs in both Greek and Turkish, a testament to how deeply the fruit has shaped cultural and social life across time.

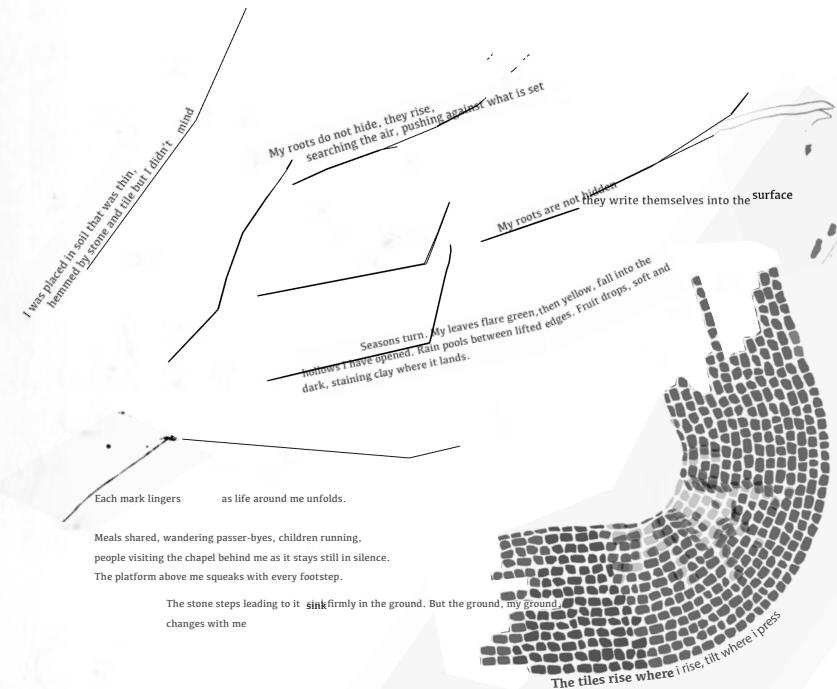
Across the Eastern Mediterranean, the fig has long stood for life, fertility, and continuity. In Cyprus, these associations are reinforced by religion. The Quran opens Surah al-Tin with the words, "By the fig and the olive," invoking them as emblems of creation and divine order. In the Gospels, the fig appears again with layered meaning: in Luke, its budding signals summer's nearness and the passage of time; in Mark, the barren tree is cursed for its fruitlessness. Fertile yet fragile, the fig holds a symbolism of the intricacies of life itself.

But most importantly, the fig tree reveals its relation to time in ways few other trees do. Its growth is written openly with vertical roots rising above the soil and inscribing their own chronology. The urgent ripening of the fruits, turning sweet and then falling into decay almost as fast. To harvest a fig is to capture this short-lived moment before it eludes you. The leaves, dropping with the seasons, announcing transitions. In this way, the fig makes visible the cycles it overlaps with the cycles of growth and decline it undergoes.



Here, a small garden is already formed on site. The space between a small chapel and a new metallic prefab construction. The existing garden remains untamed, and unassuming, showing only the marks of the old path to the chapel, and dry vegetation. Once a centre for the Armenian community, later remade into a music school, it is now silent. Preserved yet obsolete, it inhabits another kind of time. It lacks the urgency of ruins that decay and crumble that act as reminders of a passing of the old ways of being. If the fig tree embraces time's advance, the chapel seems to withhold it.

Between these two conditions, the garden takes shape. The planting of the fig here is not merely horticultural but an act to begin a new cycle. As its roots will spread wide across the shallow soil, its fruits will ripen and fall, its leaves will signal each season as it passes. Around it, the tiled flooring will spread across the ground in porous clay, close to the place of planting. Their dislocation, and the marks left through cycles of fruition and shedding, become further inscriptions of the fig's temporal rhythms, while all else remains suspended. The garden, framed by the fig and the chapel, will hold these two temporalities in contrast and contradistinction, as life around it continues to unfold.

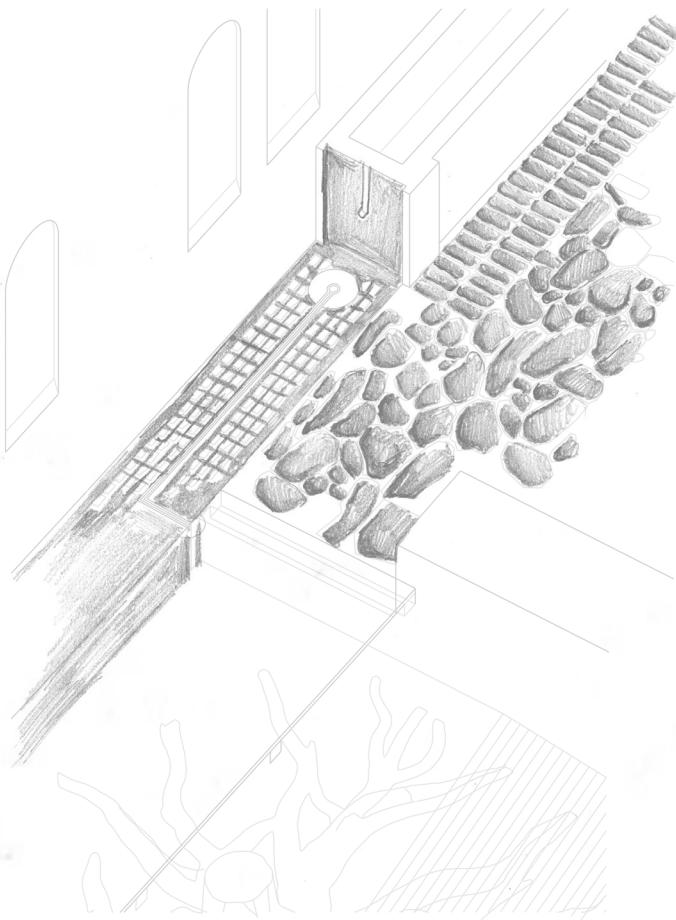


The water begins on the chapel's roof
it slides along the tiles — gathers at the lip
an falls

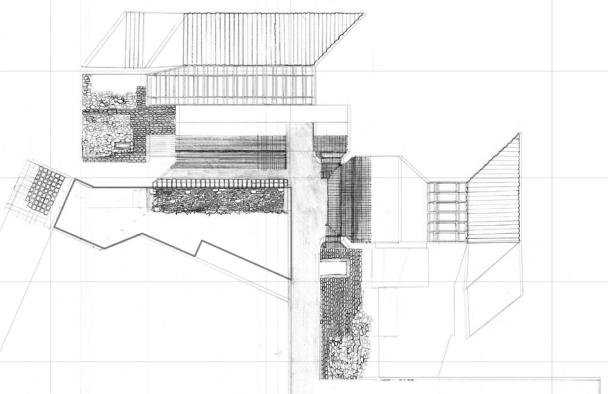
cold, metal runs along the yellow limestone wall. A thin stream
traces the slope. A stream glistening amidst the rough concrete.
A turning sound creaks at the edge. A breath. Water is let out,
collects below, circles for a moment. And moves on. Moves on to
disappear into a narrow passage, down into the roots that swallow
it whole. The smell of the earth releases with every drop, and the
moisture trapped between platform and root takes root.

Each mark lingers
unfolds

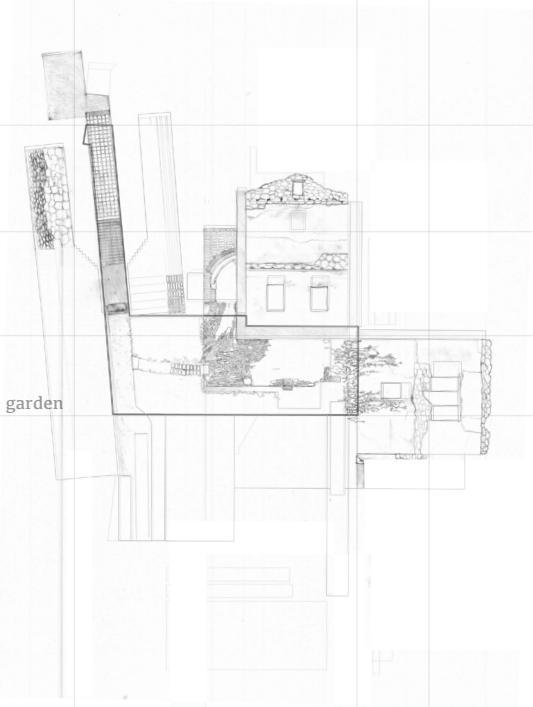
as life around



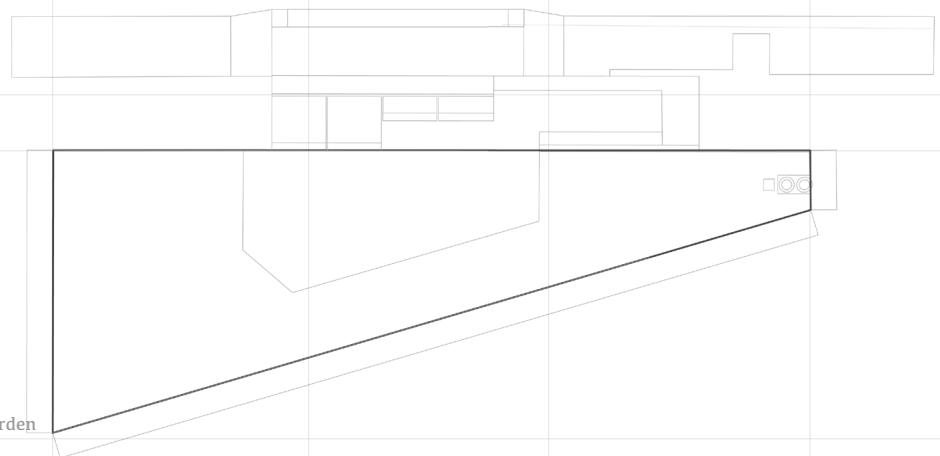
[a] collective garden



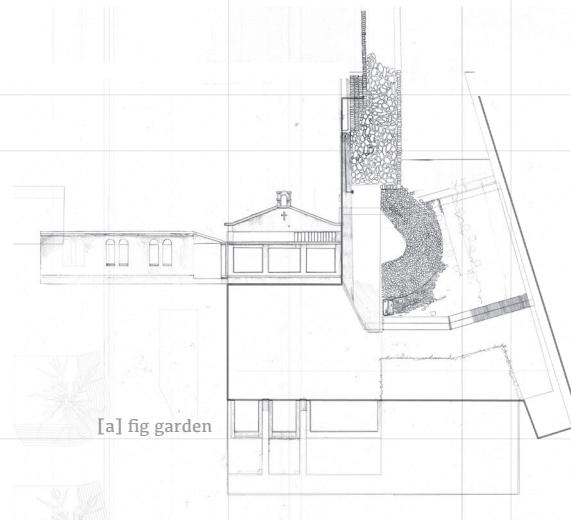
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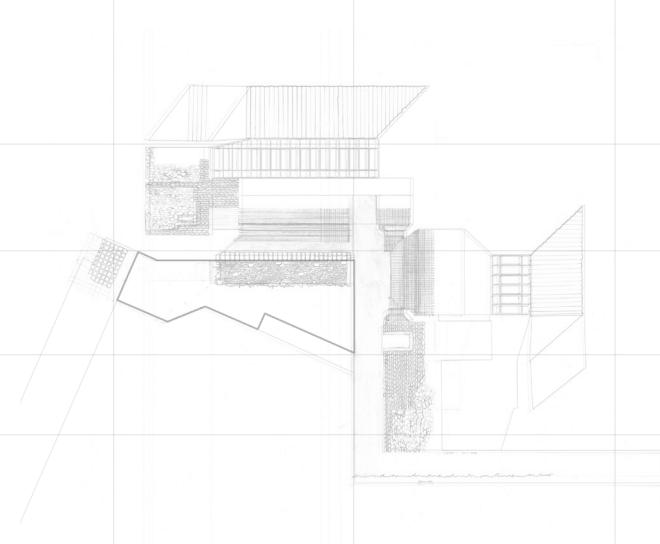
[a] reed garden



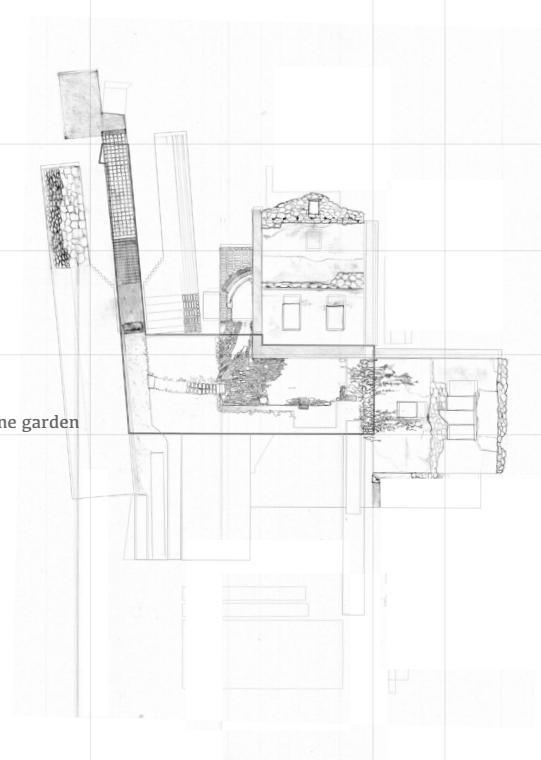
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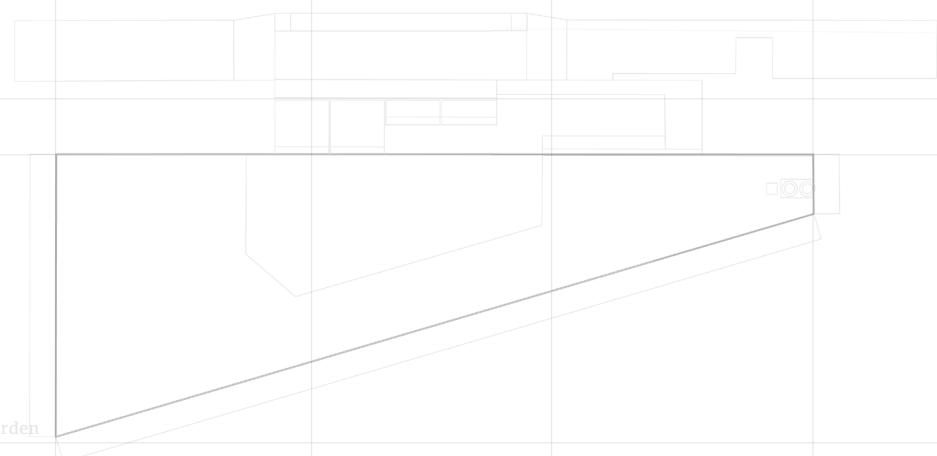
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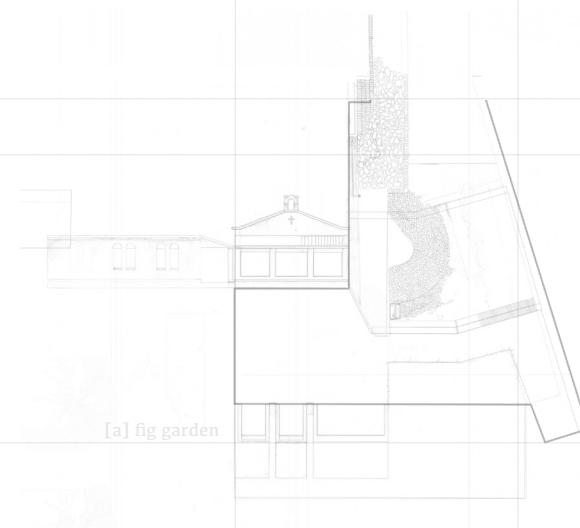
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[a] reed garden

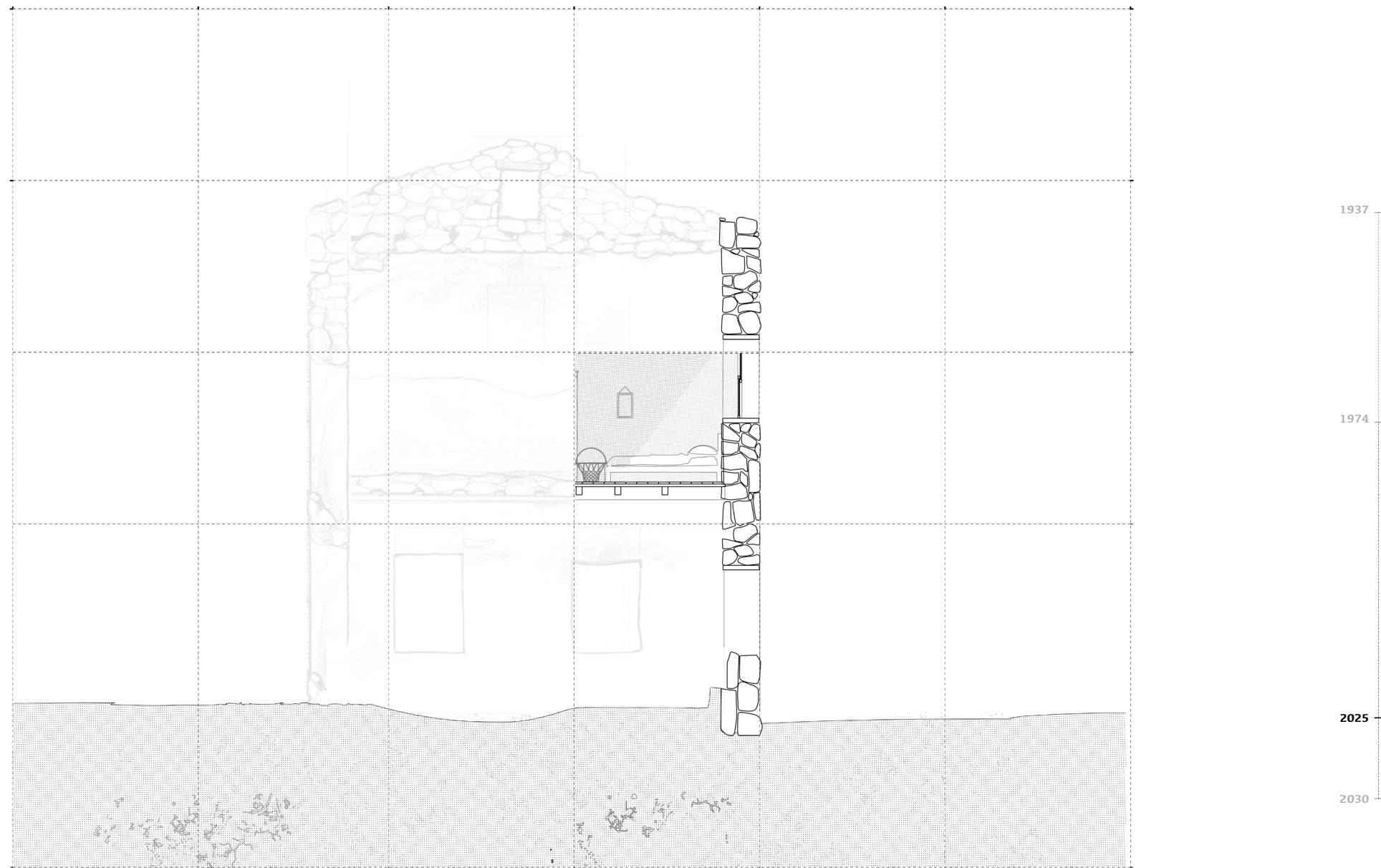


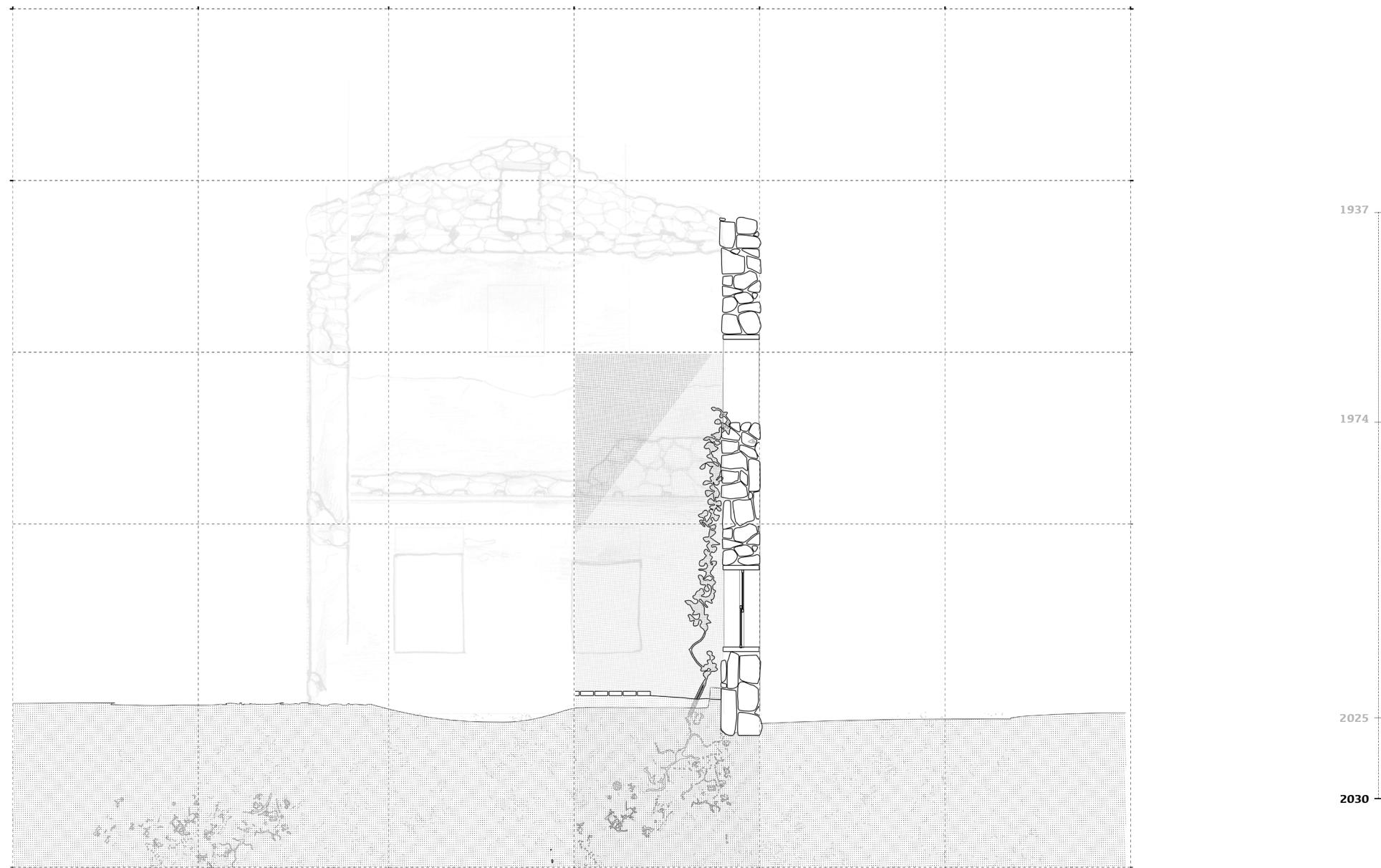
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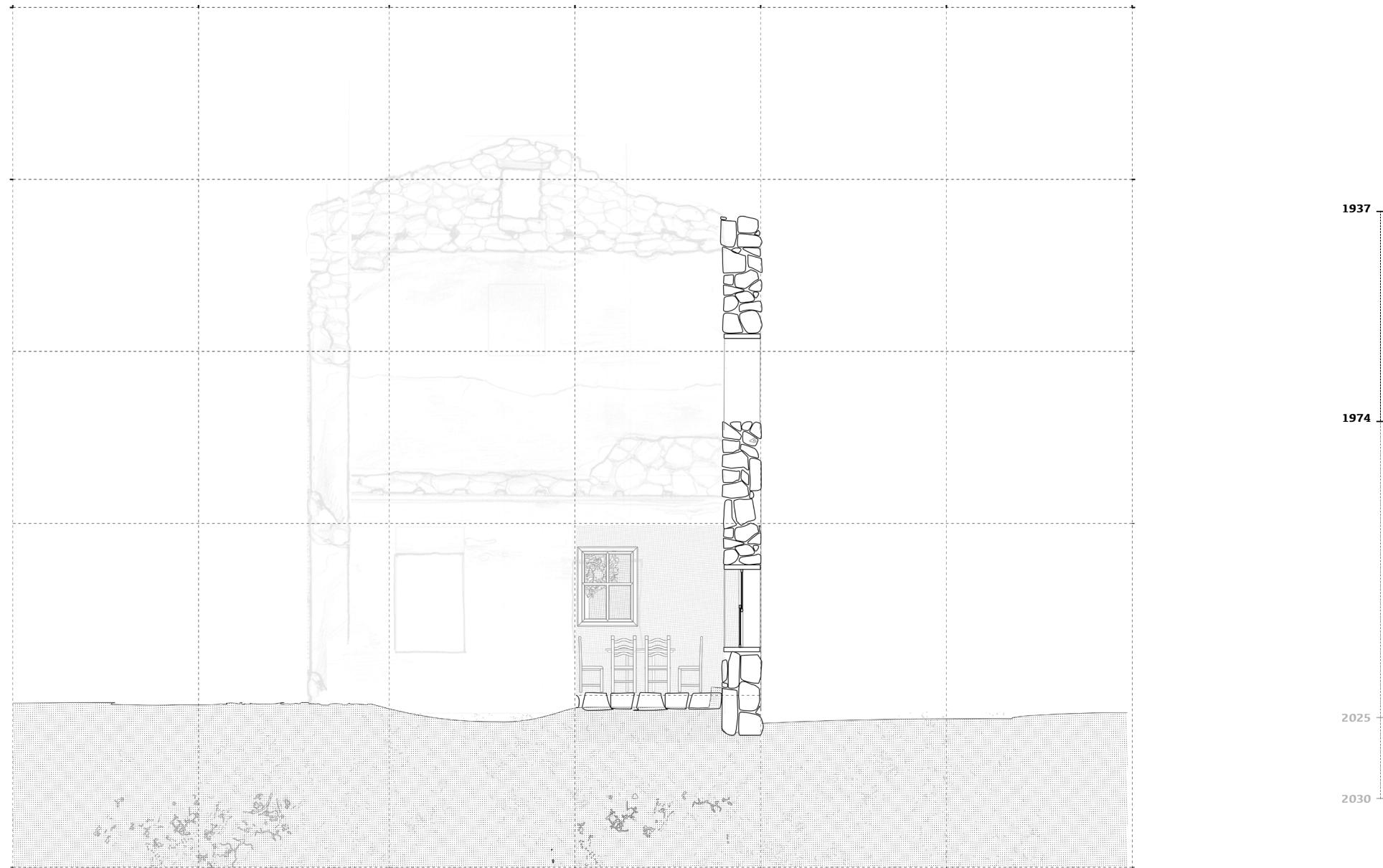




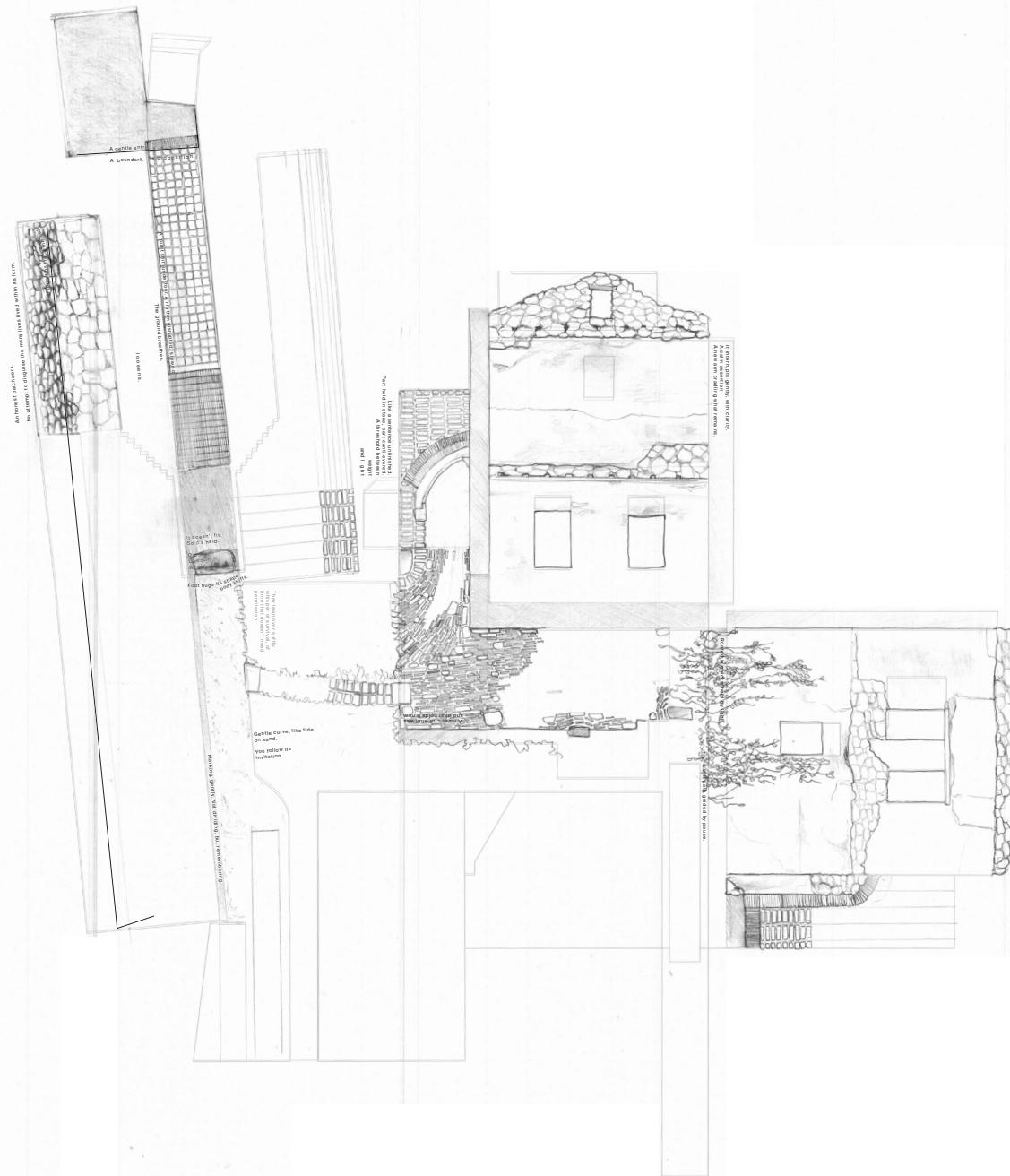


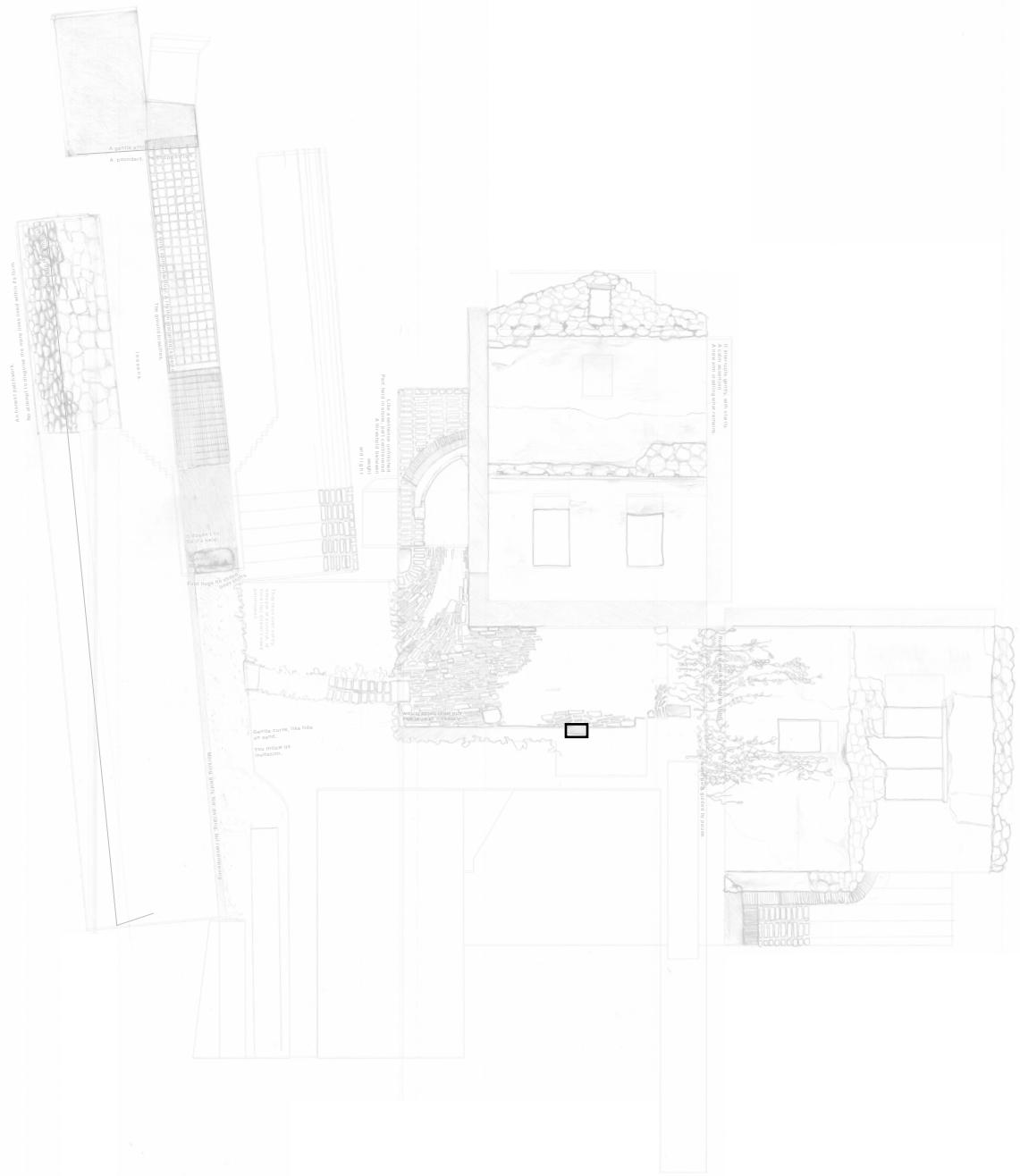




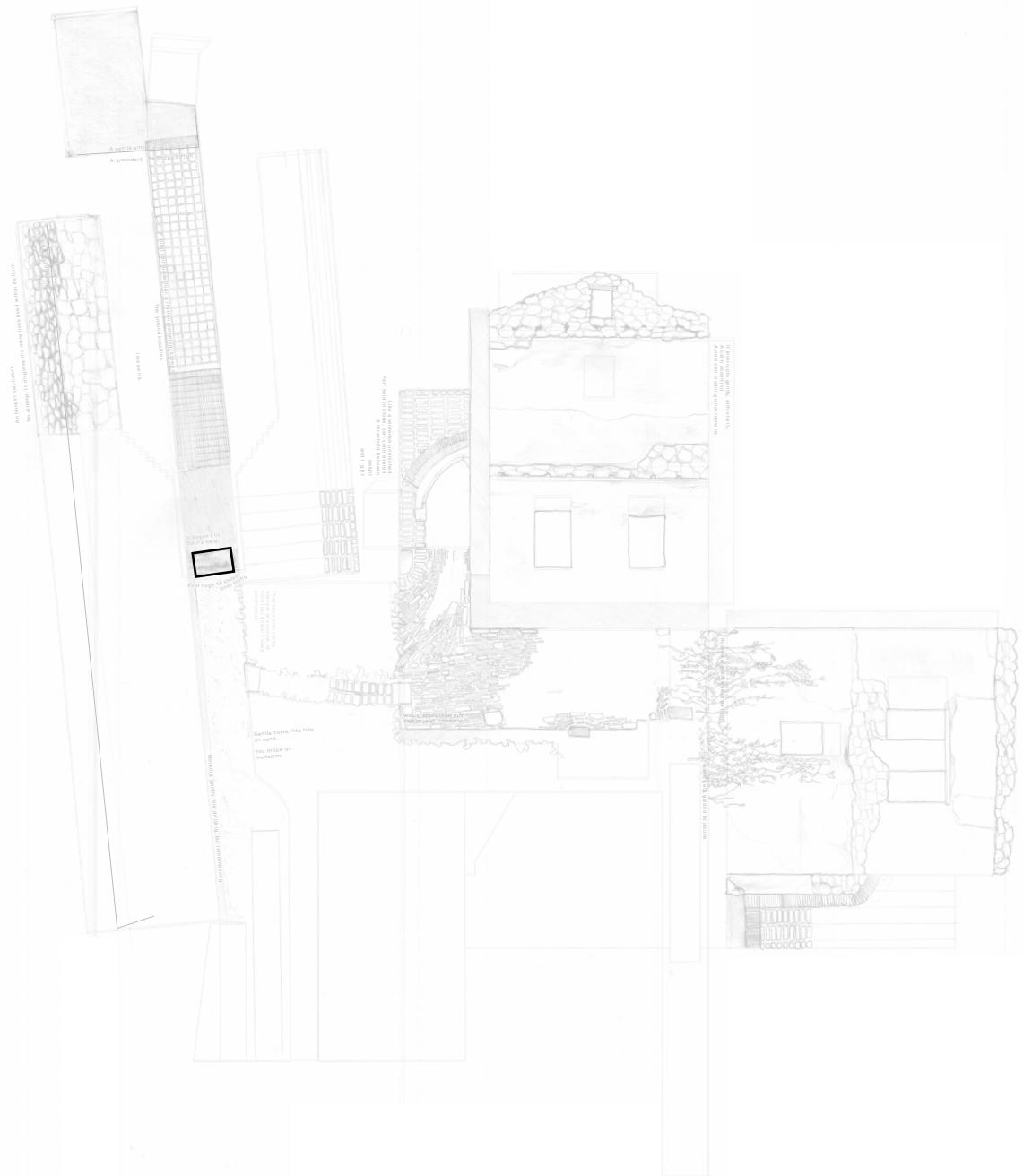


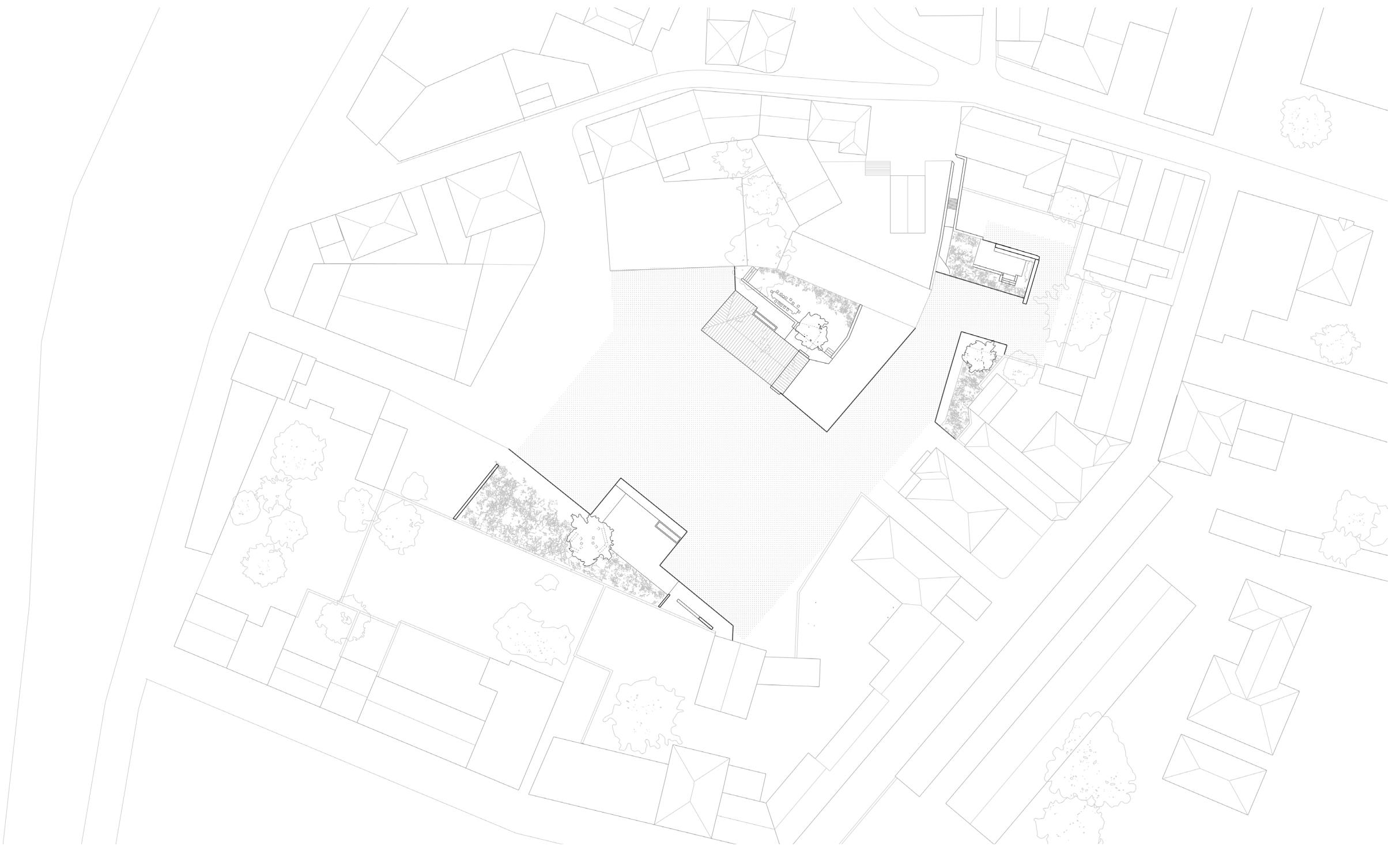


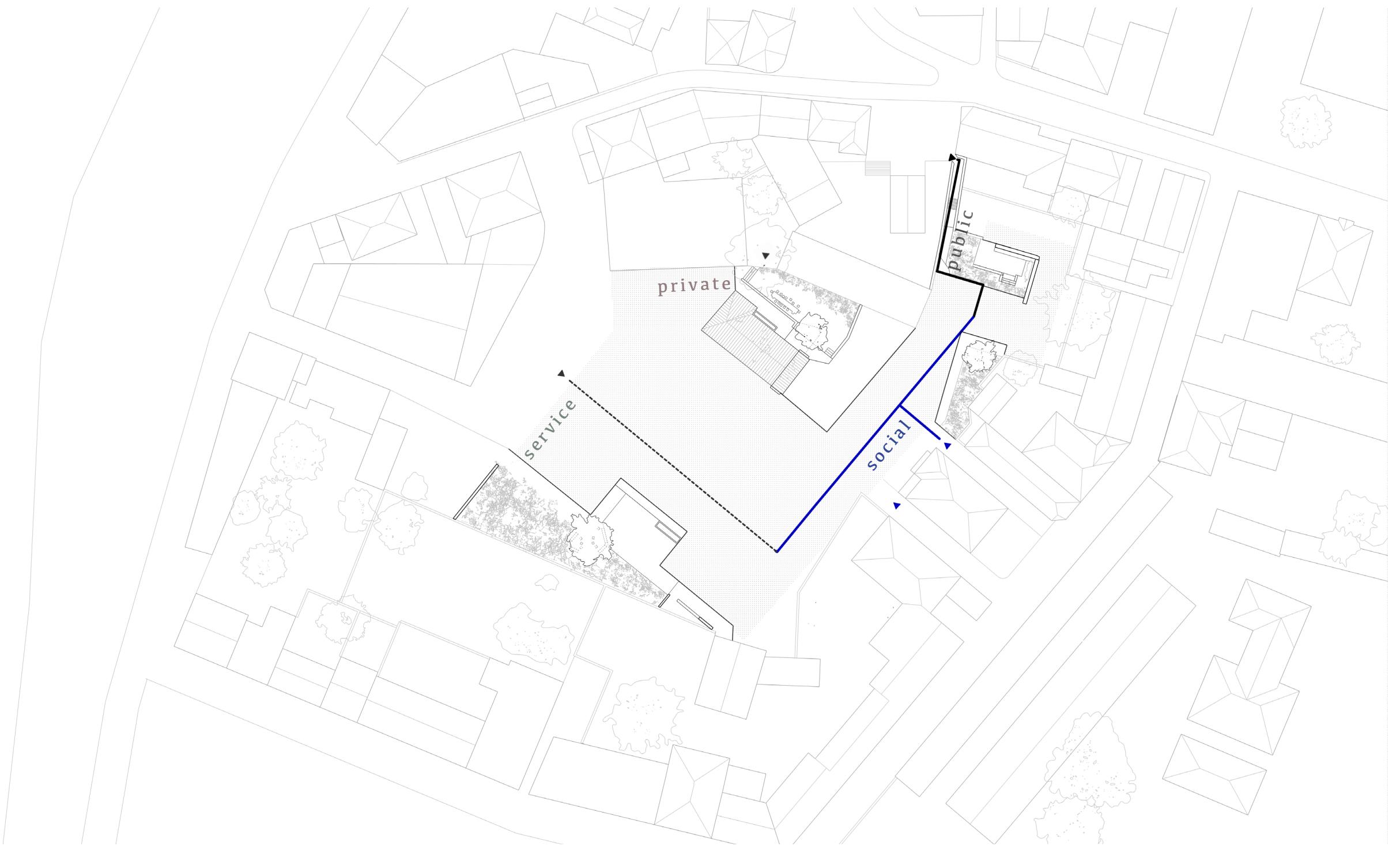




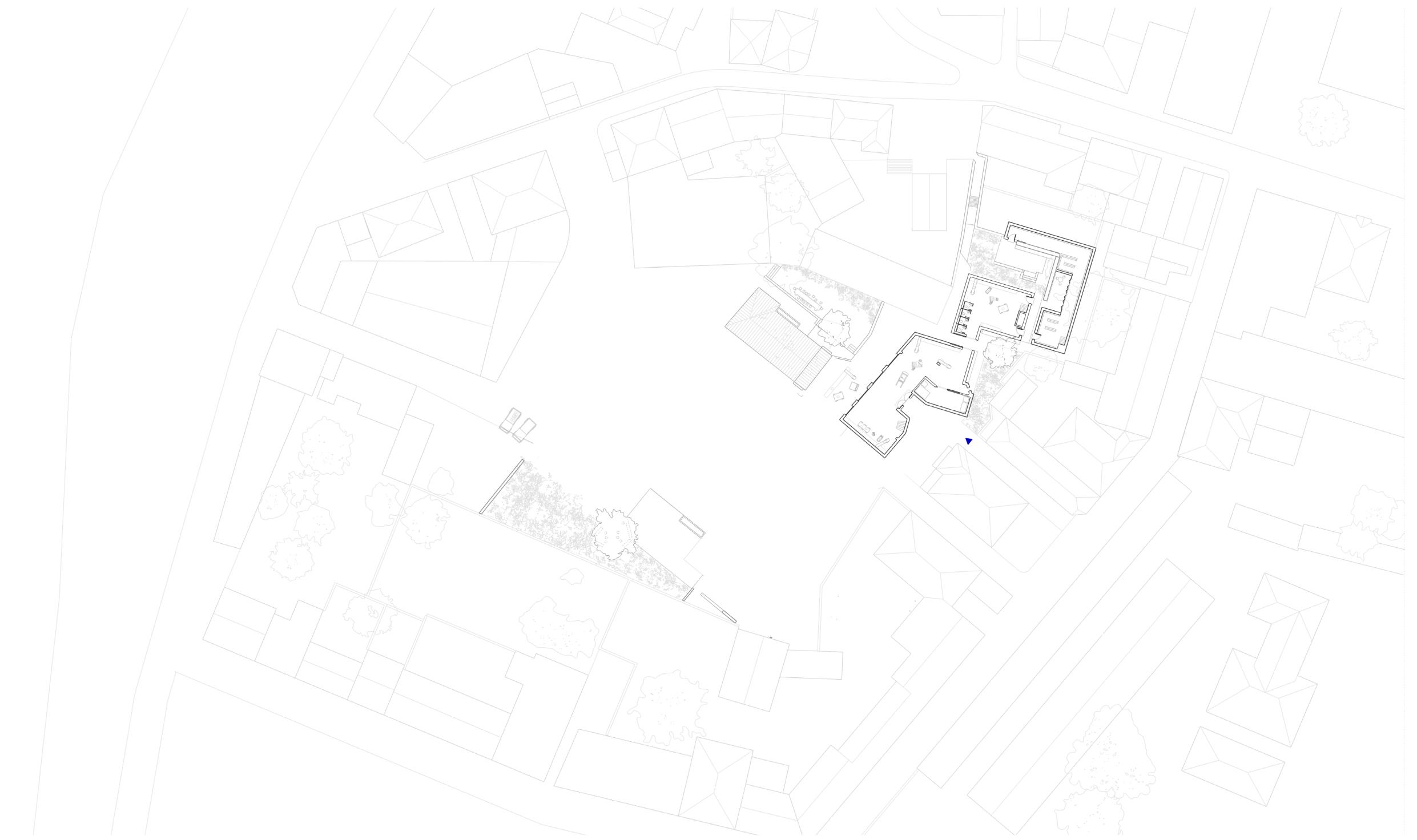








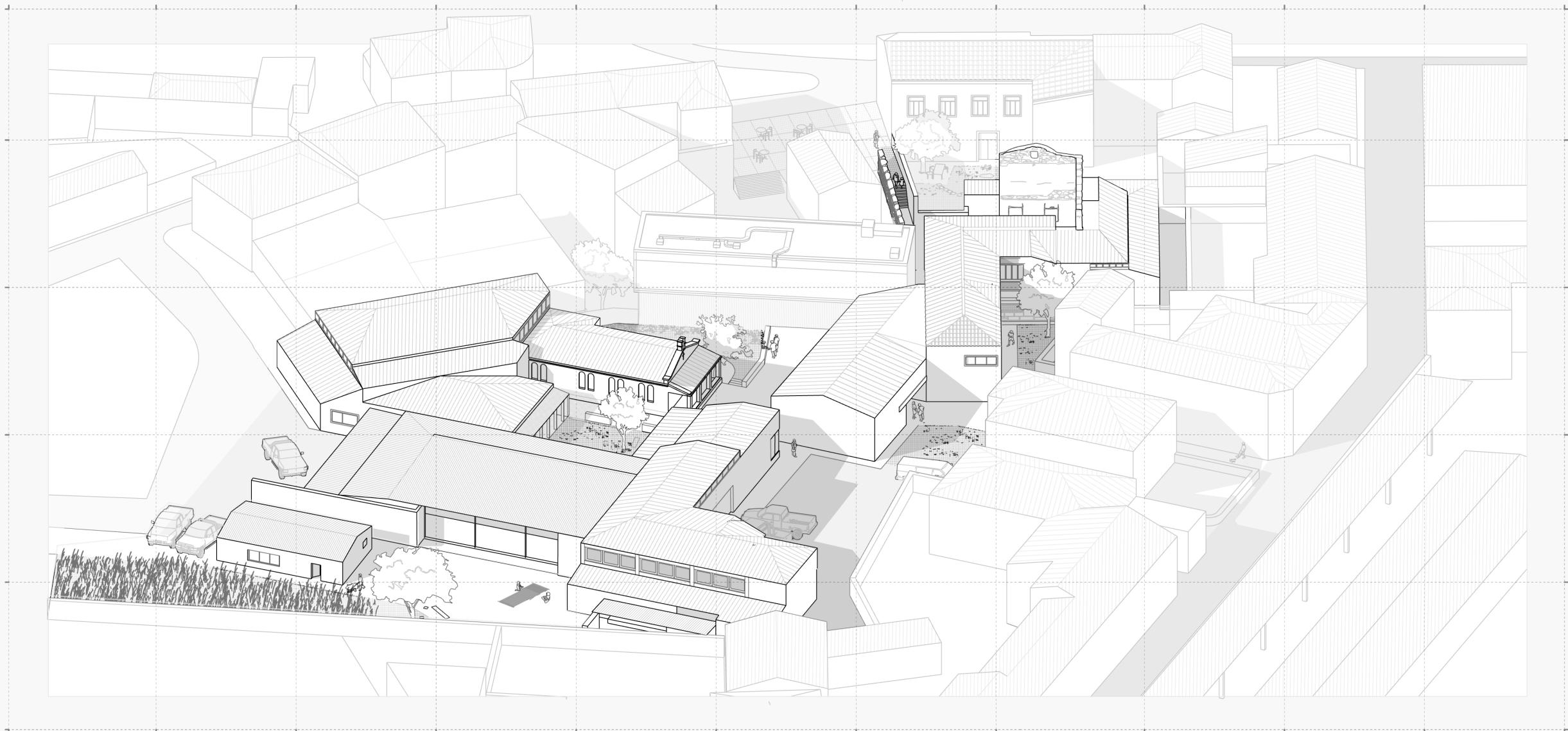












[a] reed garden

reed garden starts to produce reed for the woven structures of the building

[b] material intake

Material from the city is dropped off, logged

[b1] material assessment and evaluation

Pieces are evaluated: condition, history, potential importance

[b2] redistribute / sell

Pieces are evaluated: condition, history, potential meaning, symbolic/emotional weight

[b4] archive

important material accumulated is slowly stored to

[b3] rework

enough material slowly accumulates to build workshops

[c1] rework

workshops use material from the warehouse to experiment and design / consult its reclamation

[d1] library

all the information gained from the process of the building, is made publicly available in both native languages

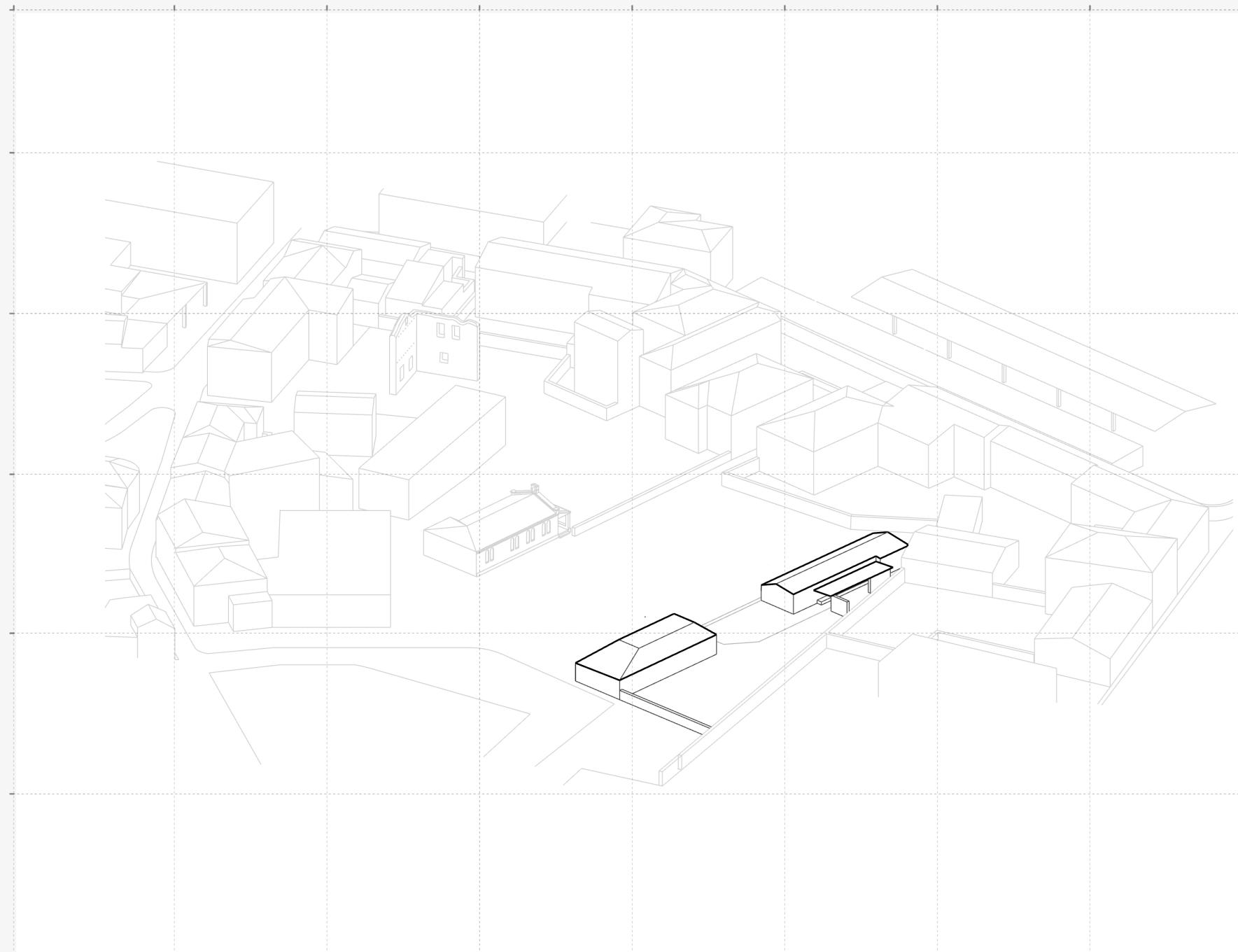
2025

2027

2035

2040

2042



2025 [a] **reed garden**
reed garden starts, to produce reed for the woven structures of the building

2027 [b] **material intake**
Material from the city is dropped off, logged

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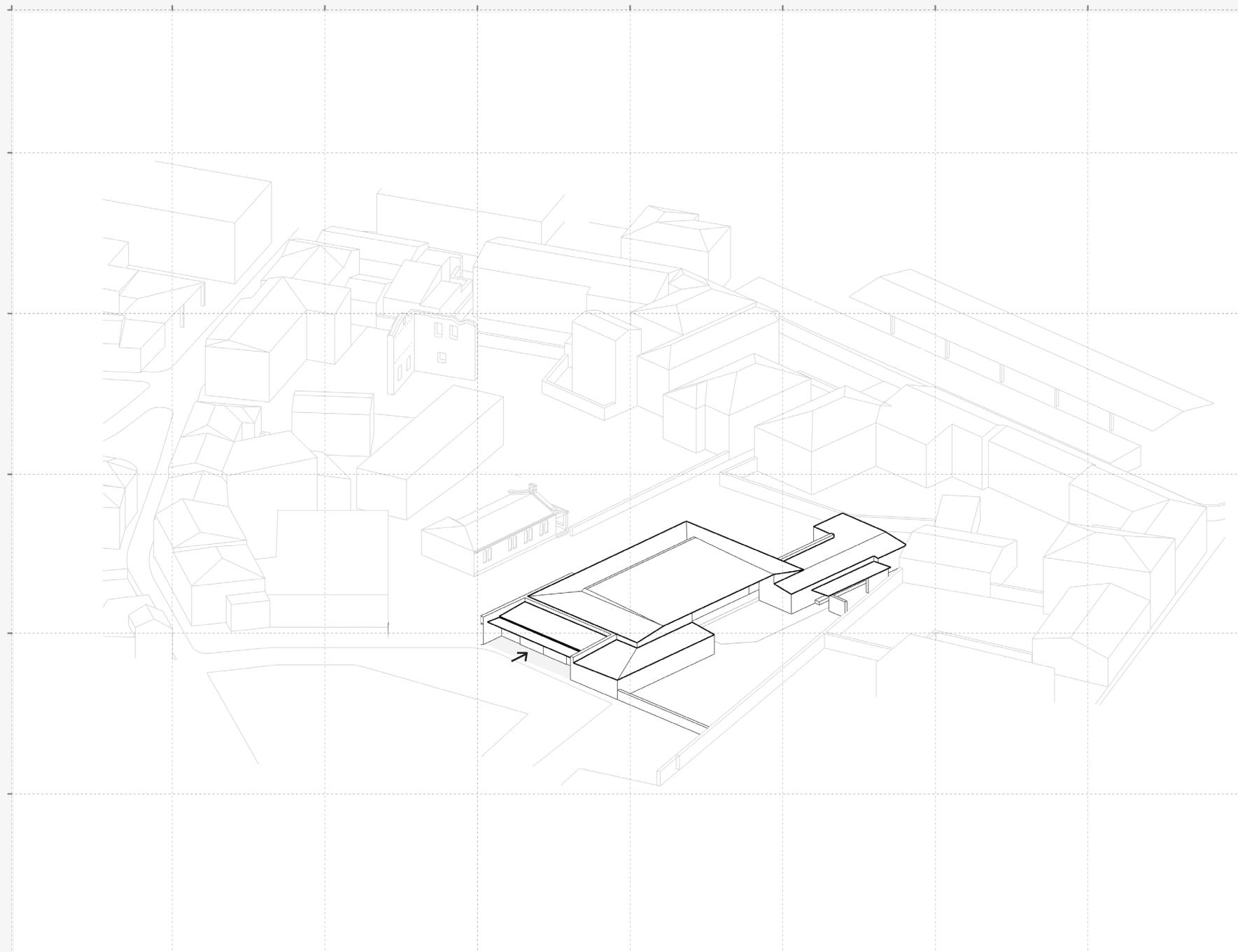
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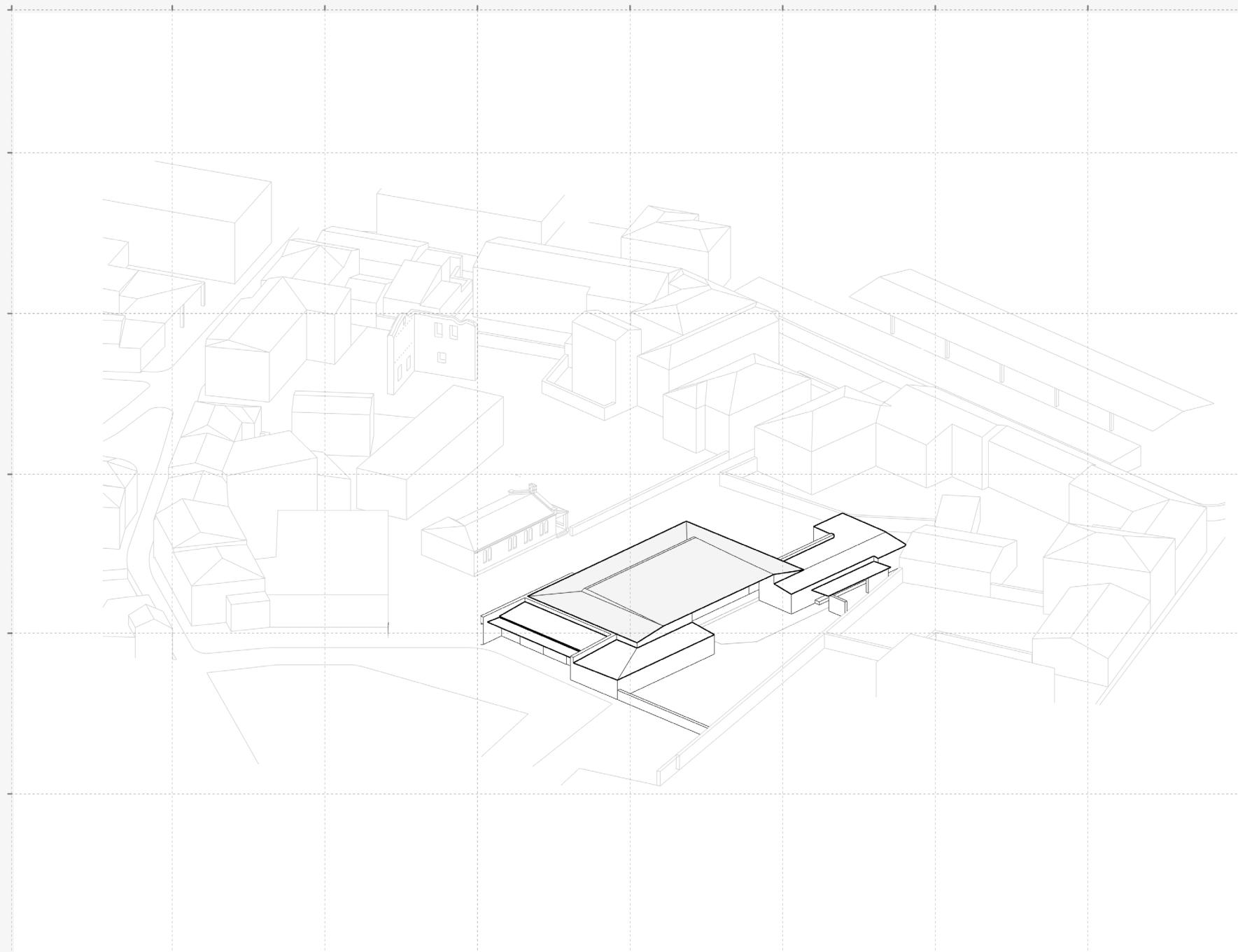
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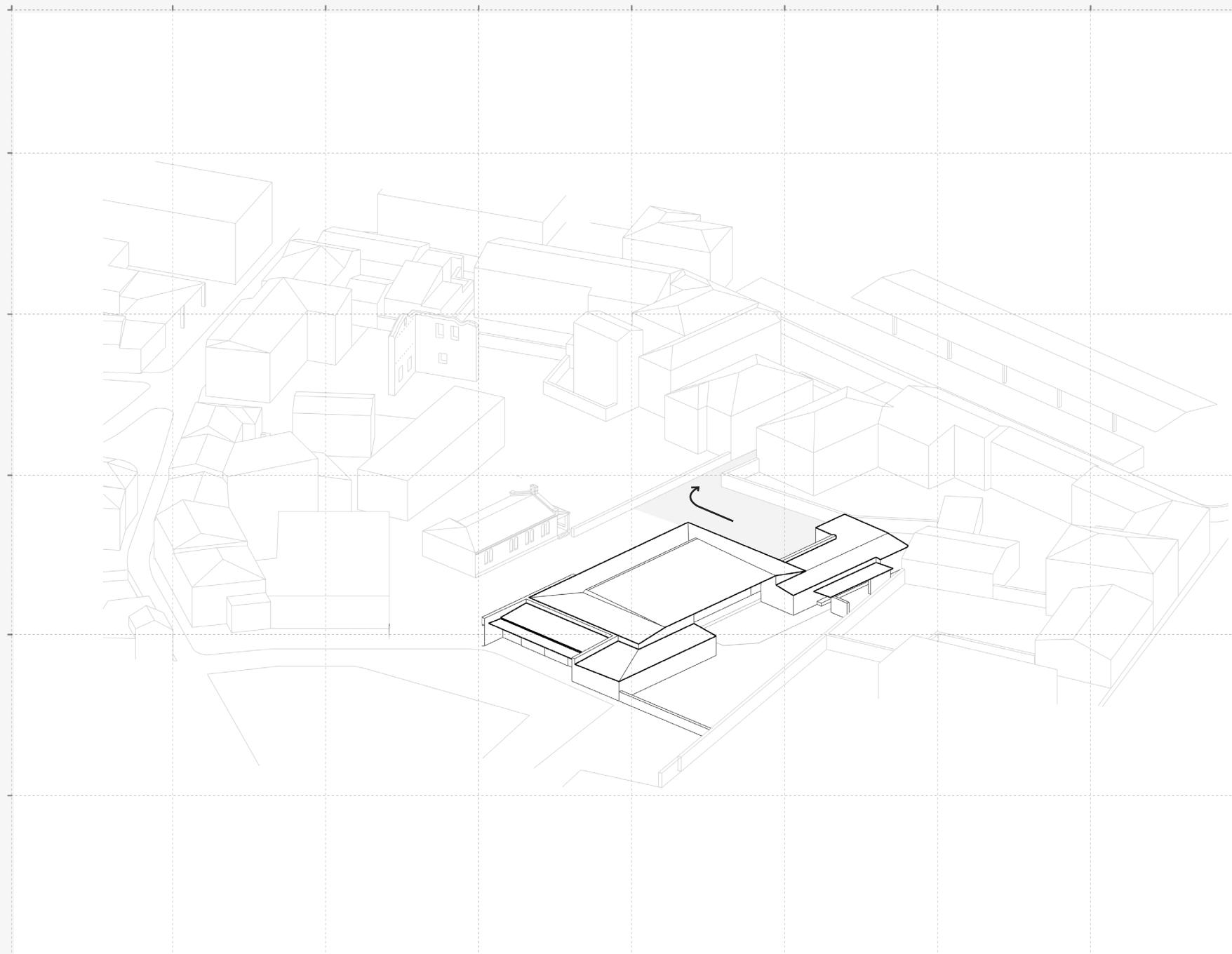
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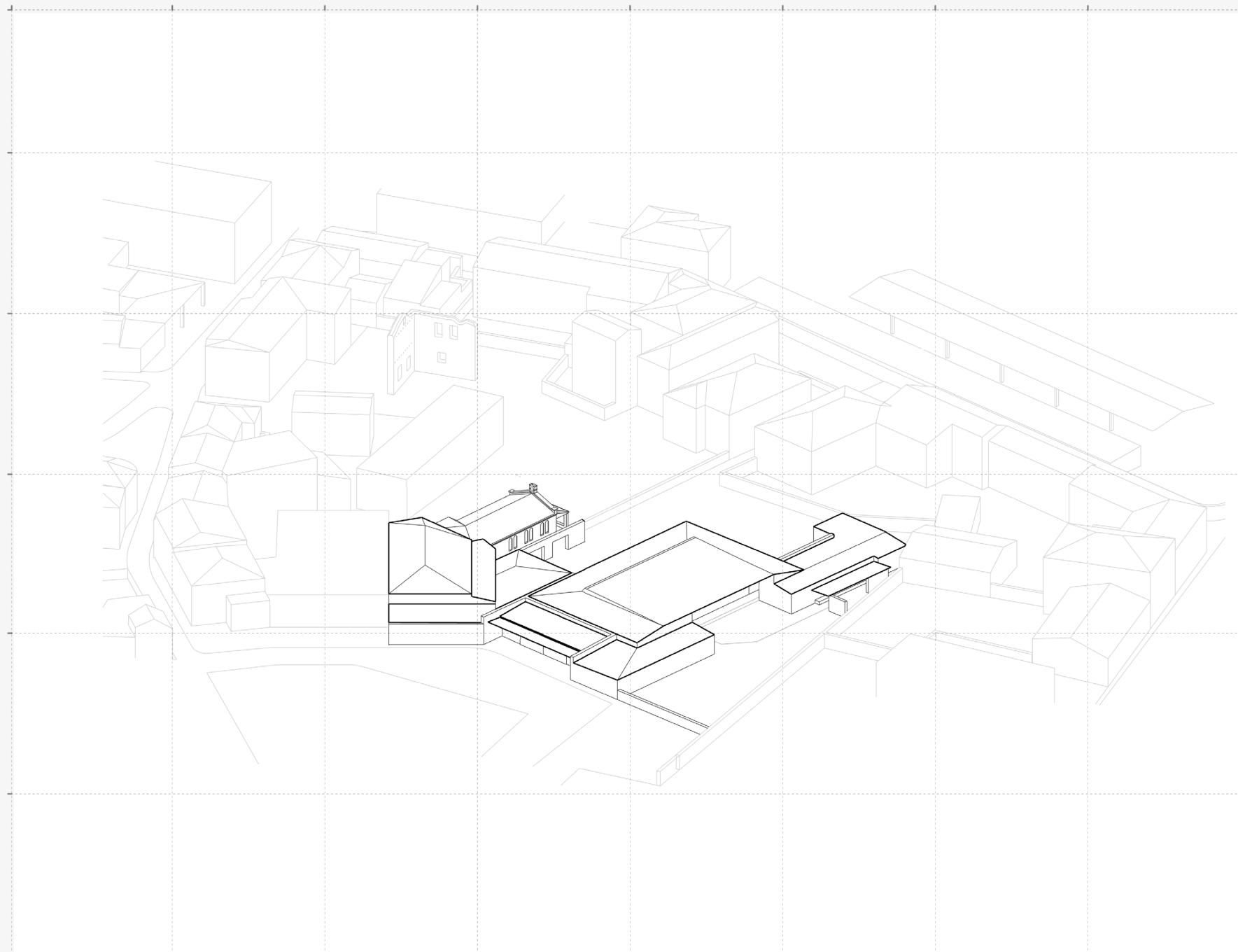
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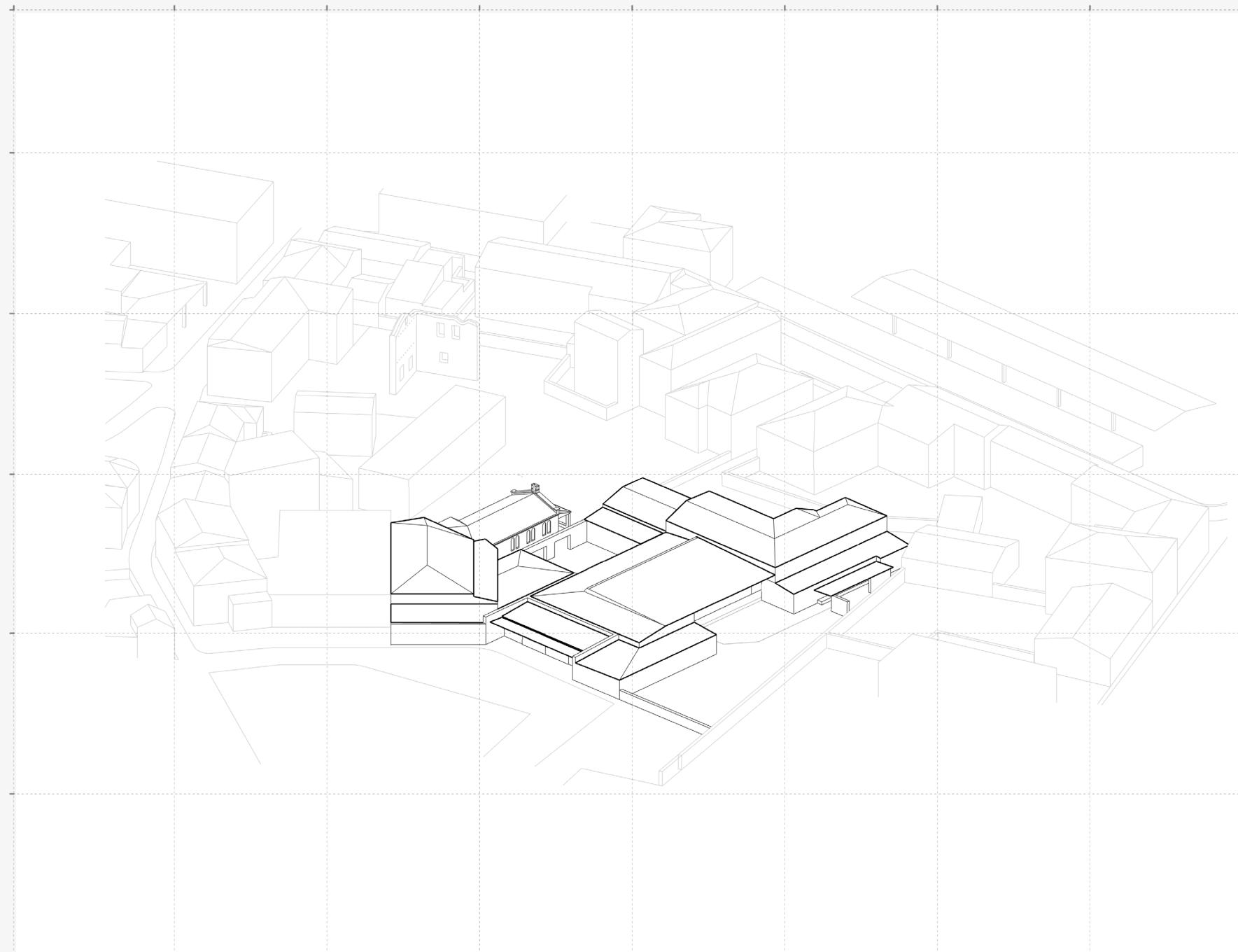
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important material accumulated is slowly stored to

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enough material slowly accumulates to build workshops

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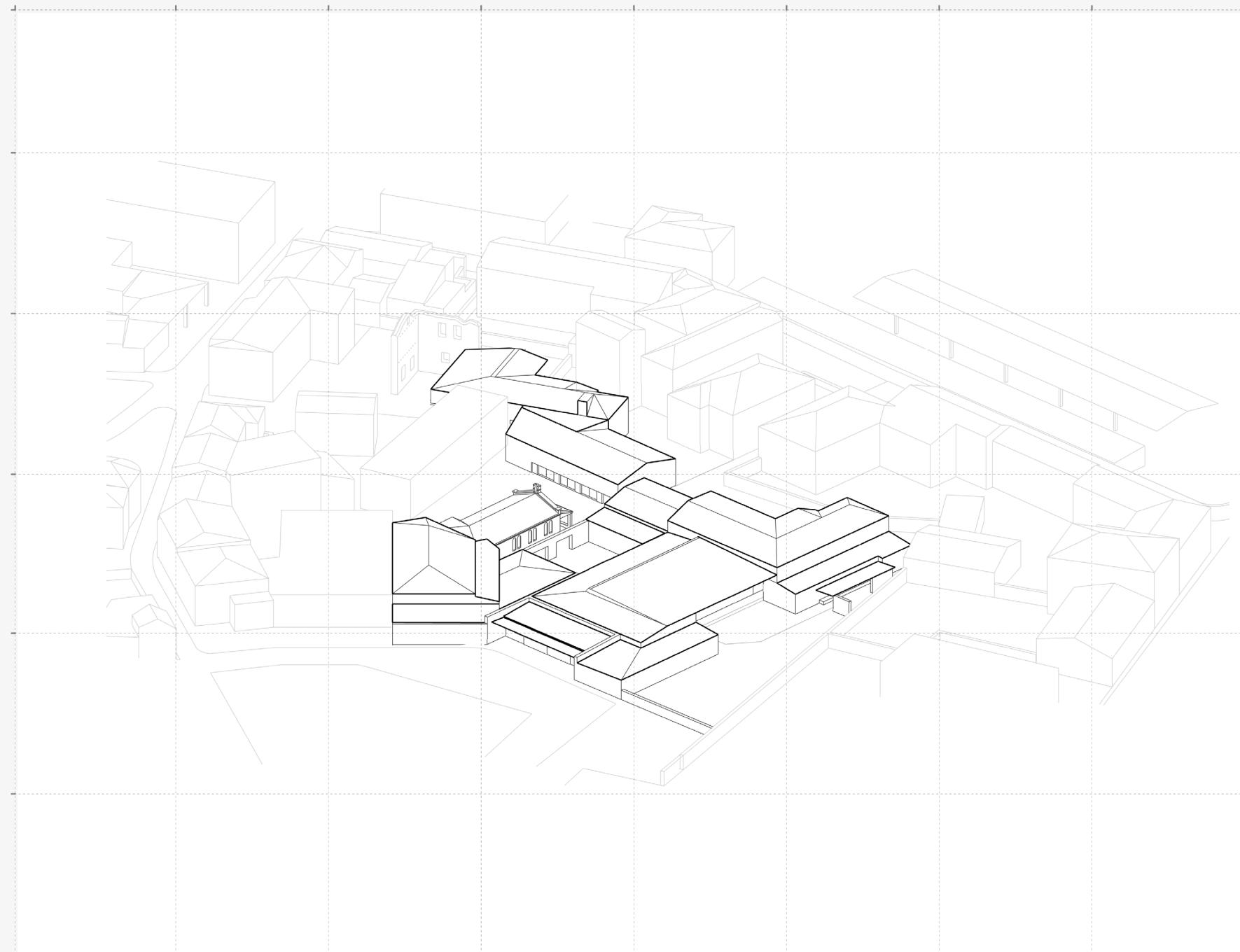
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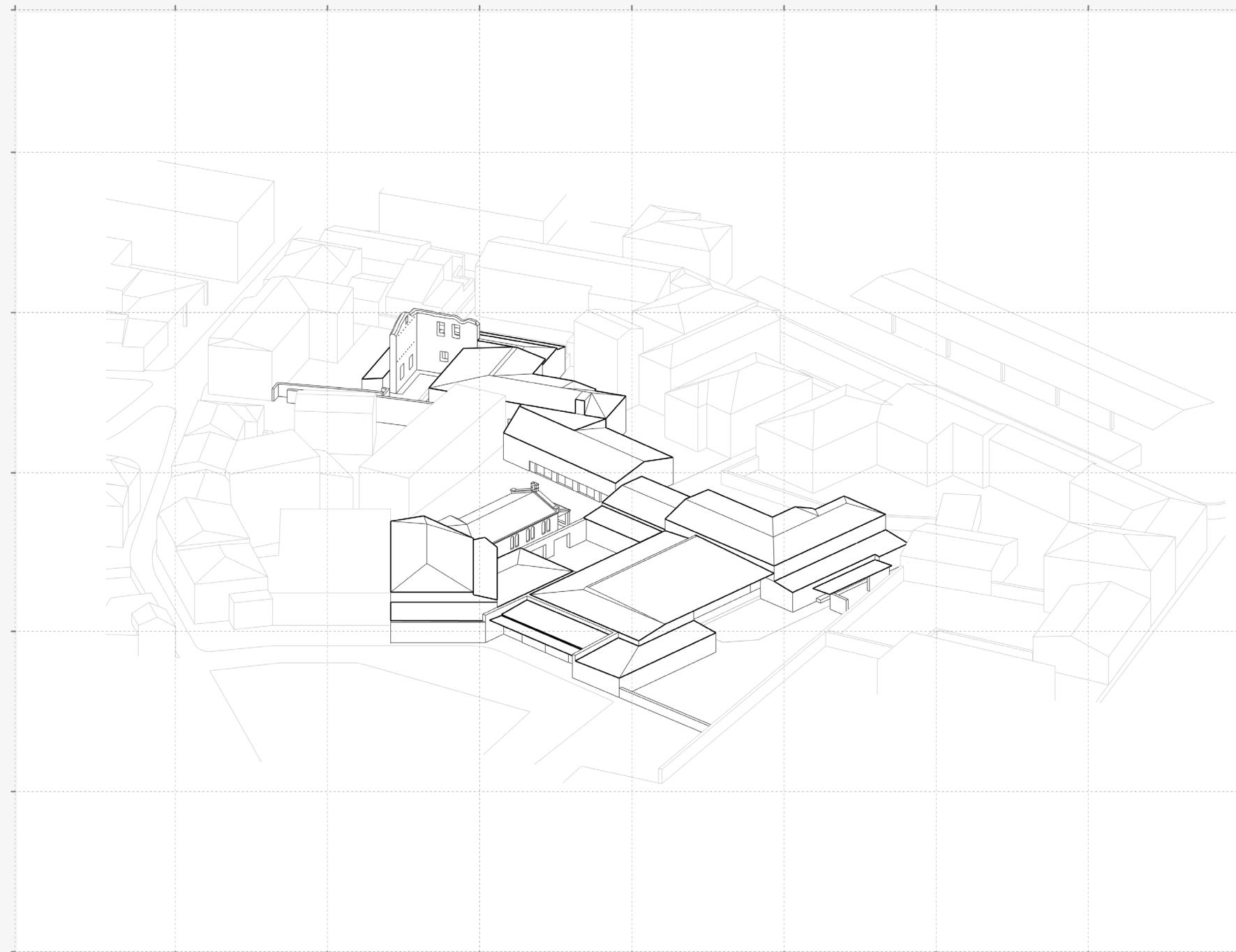
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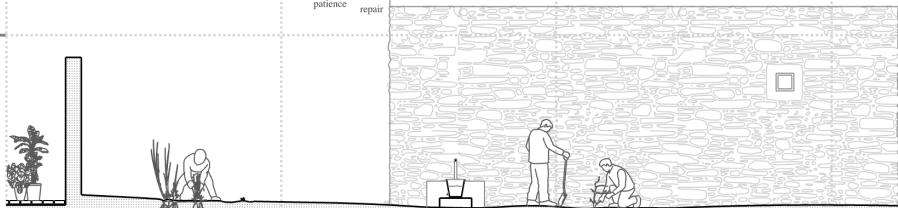
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and it begins, with the first shed

bare stone, gravel underfoot
whatever could be found from the city's remains
easy material, already shaped by time
each piece cut by hand
each placed with
patience, repair



Around it, reed placed
its roots catch fast in the loose soil;

the stalks already reaching for light

we set the drainage
the handle moves stiffly

it comes slow, then

the first foot pump
pulling water from below
steadily, slowly

hours pass

it only gives what you draw
no rush, just the weight of a foot
the lift of water
effort made visible

The carob tree is planted
a sapling, thin, uncertain
when we dig, the soil breaks in dry chunks
pale and heavy with lime

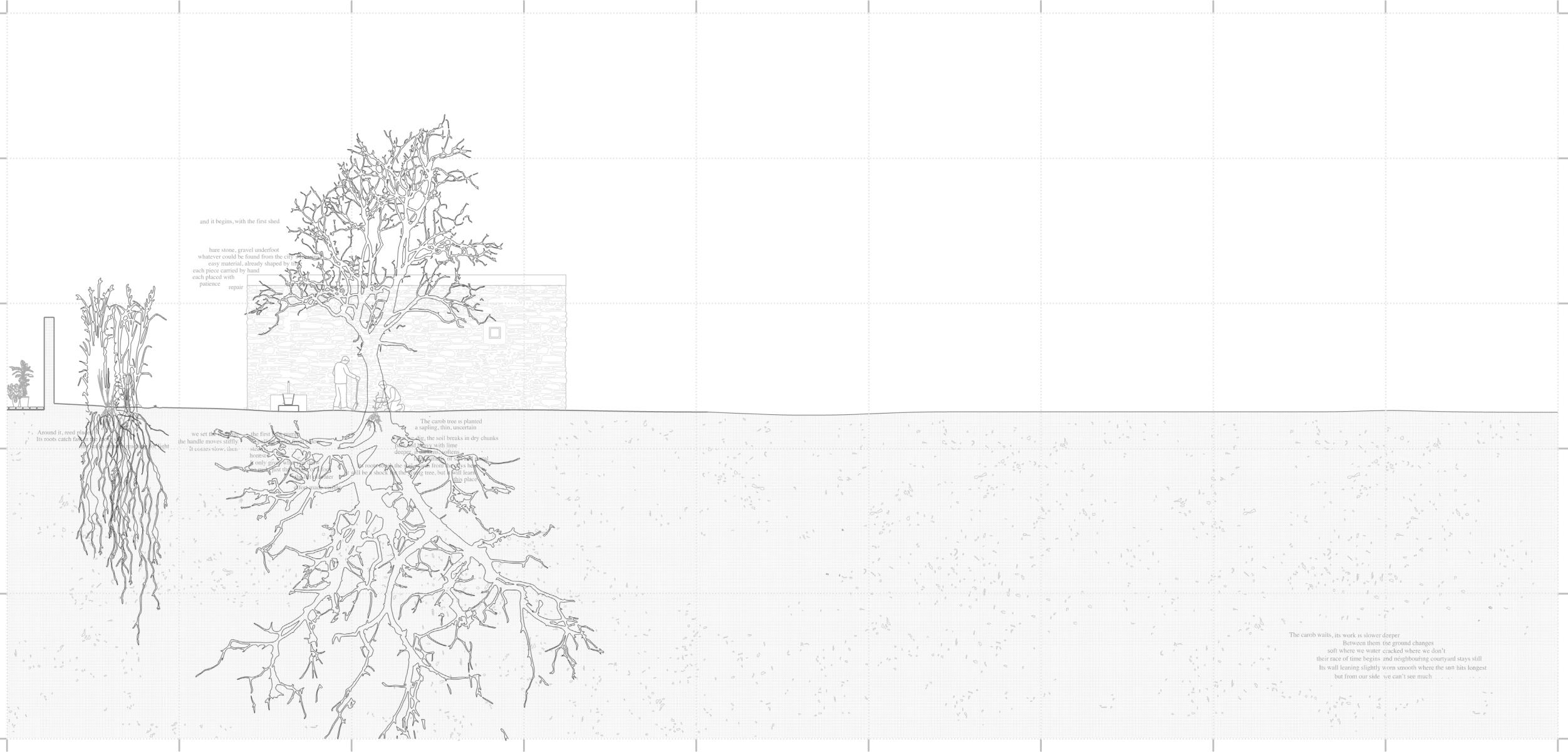
deeper, it darkens, softens

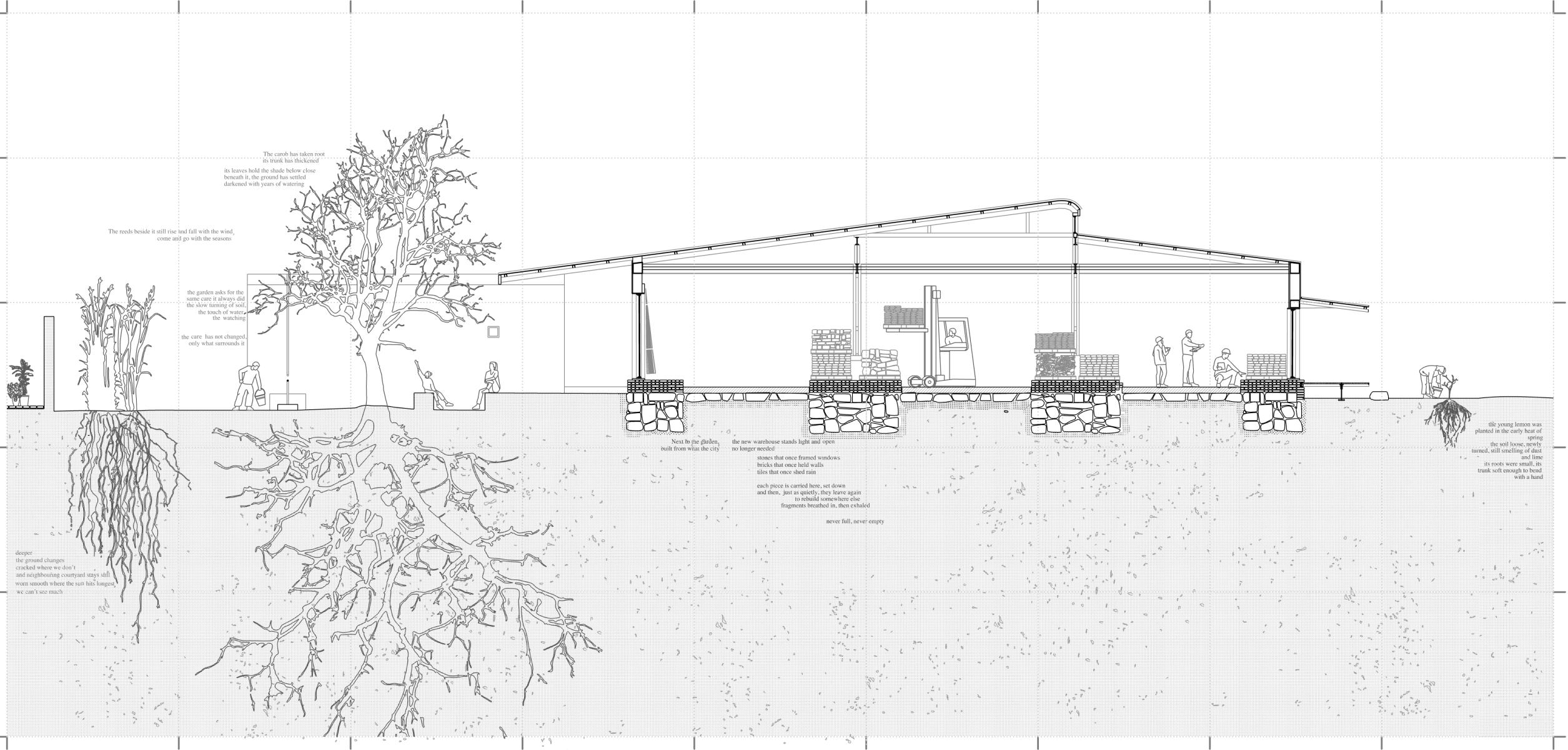
faint smells of salt and metal

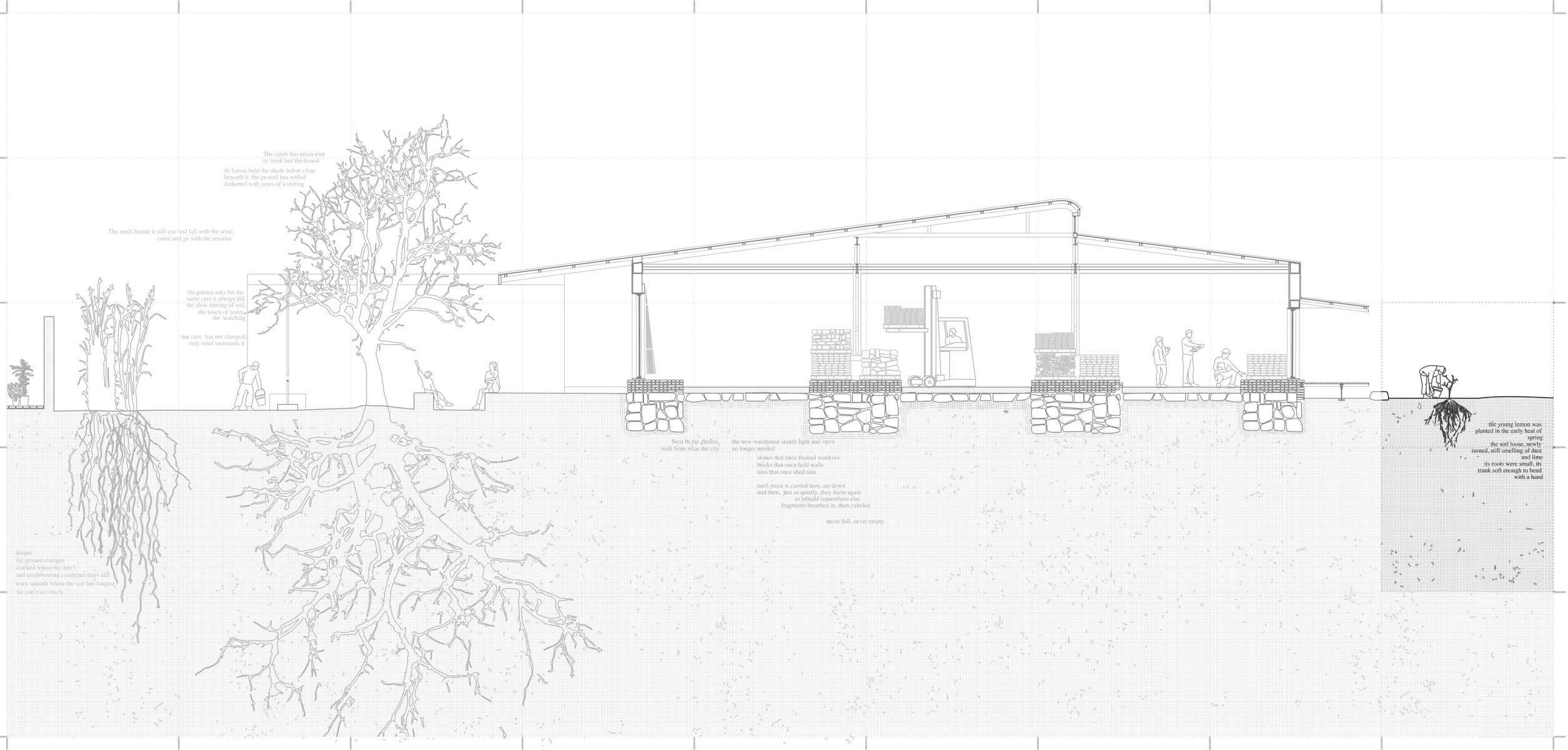
its roots touch the soil, warm from the dry heat

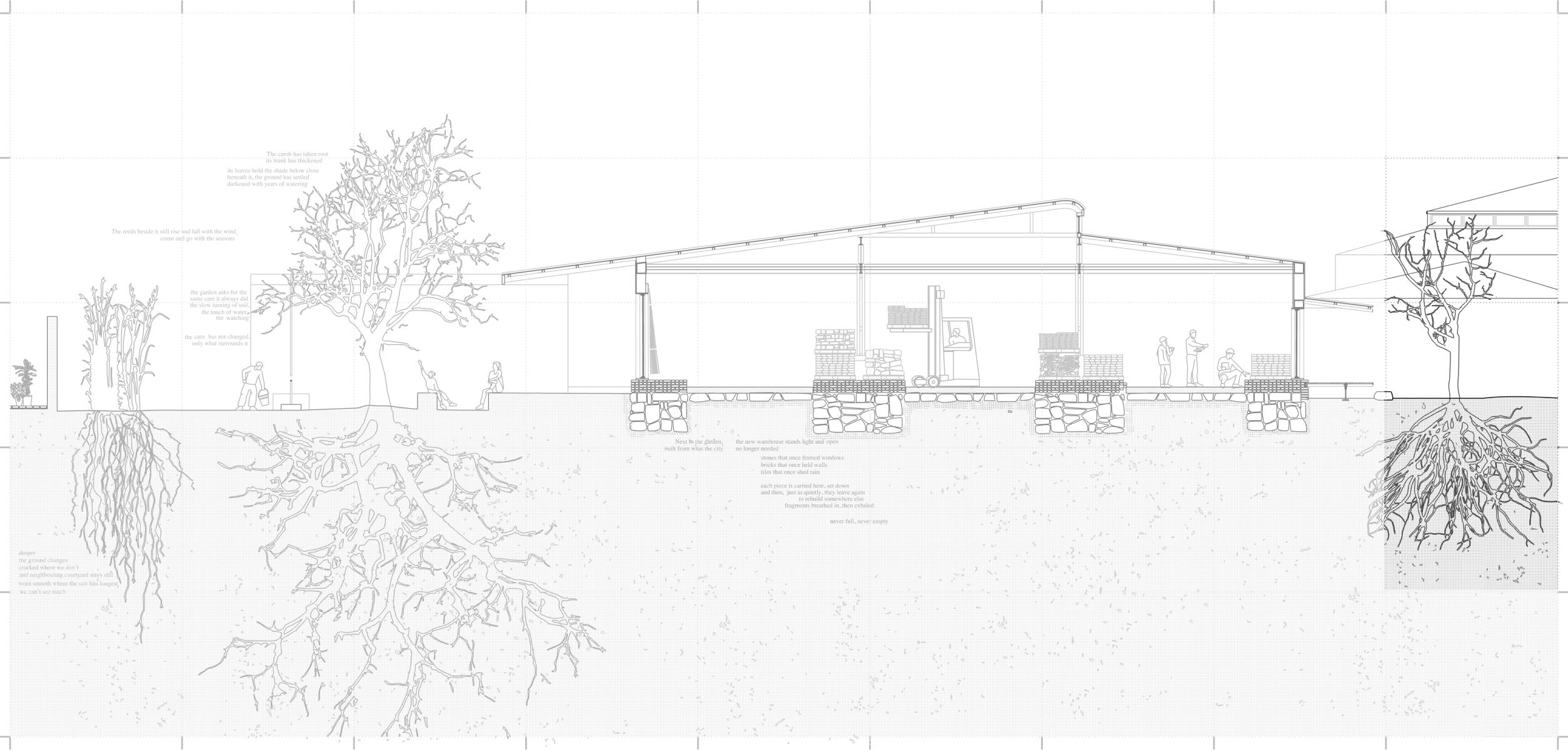
it will be a shock for the young tree, but it will learn
this place

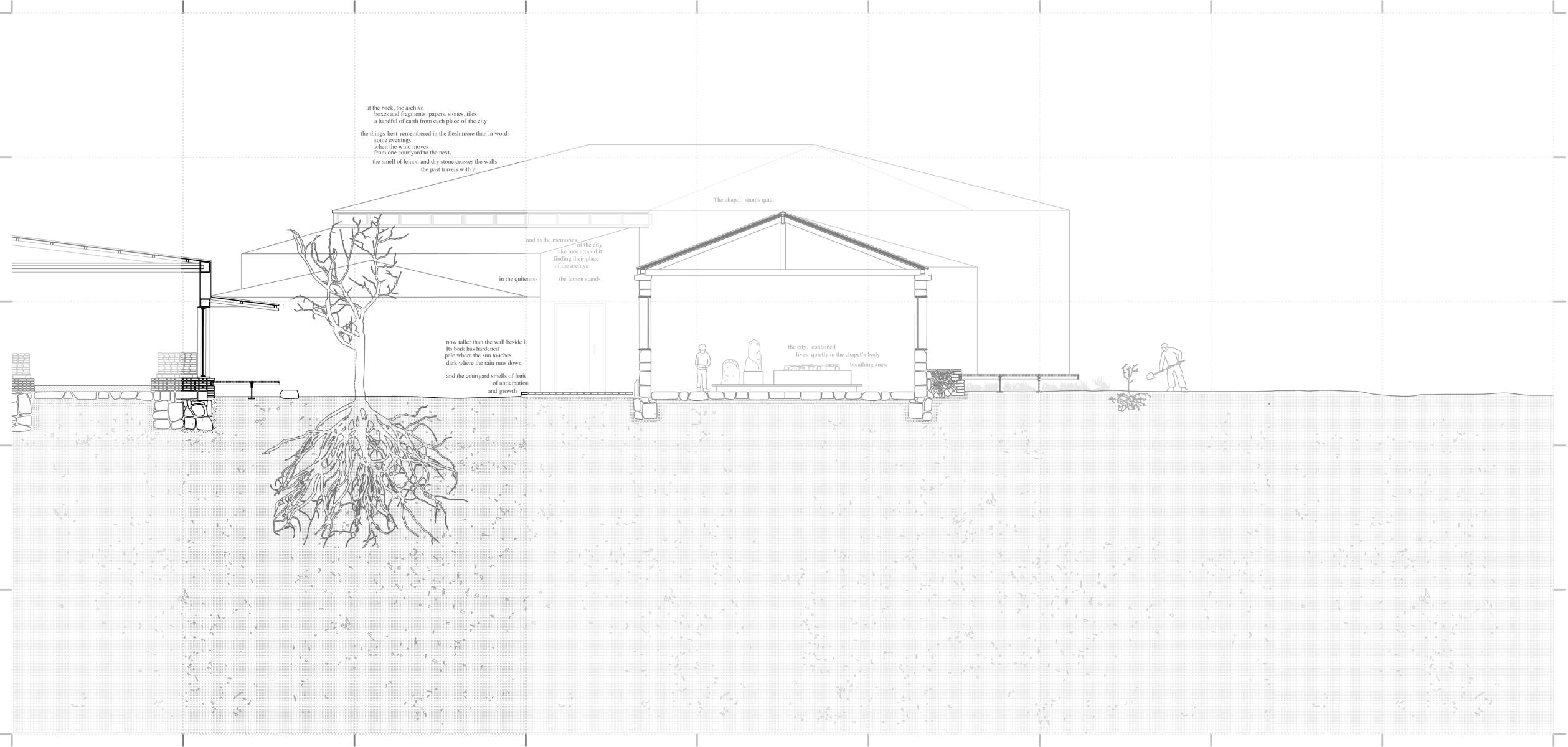
The carob waits, its work is slower deeper.
Between them the ground changes
soft where we water cracked where we don't
their race of time begins and neighbouring courtyard stays still
its wall leaning slightly worn smooth where the sun hits longest
but from our side we can't see much

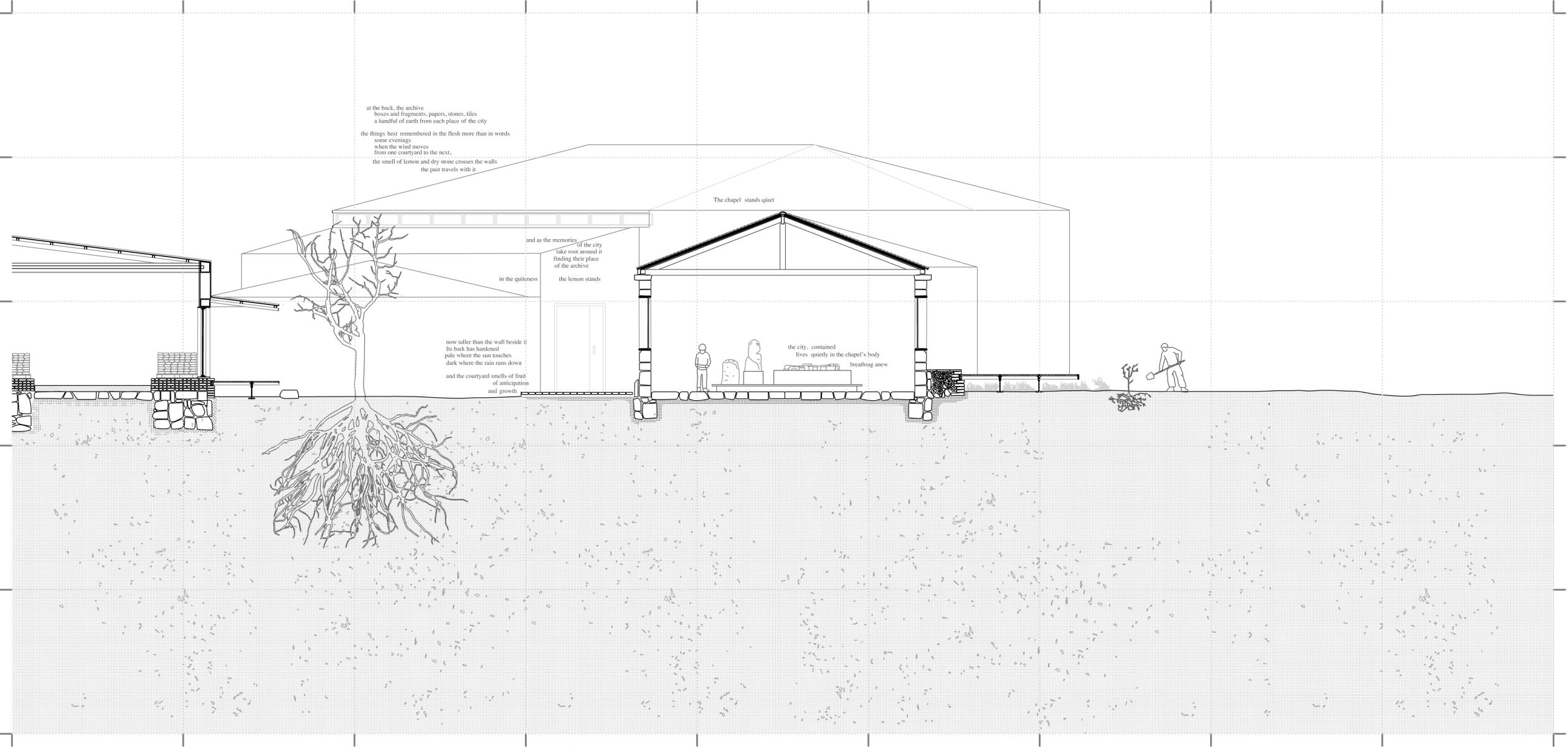


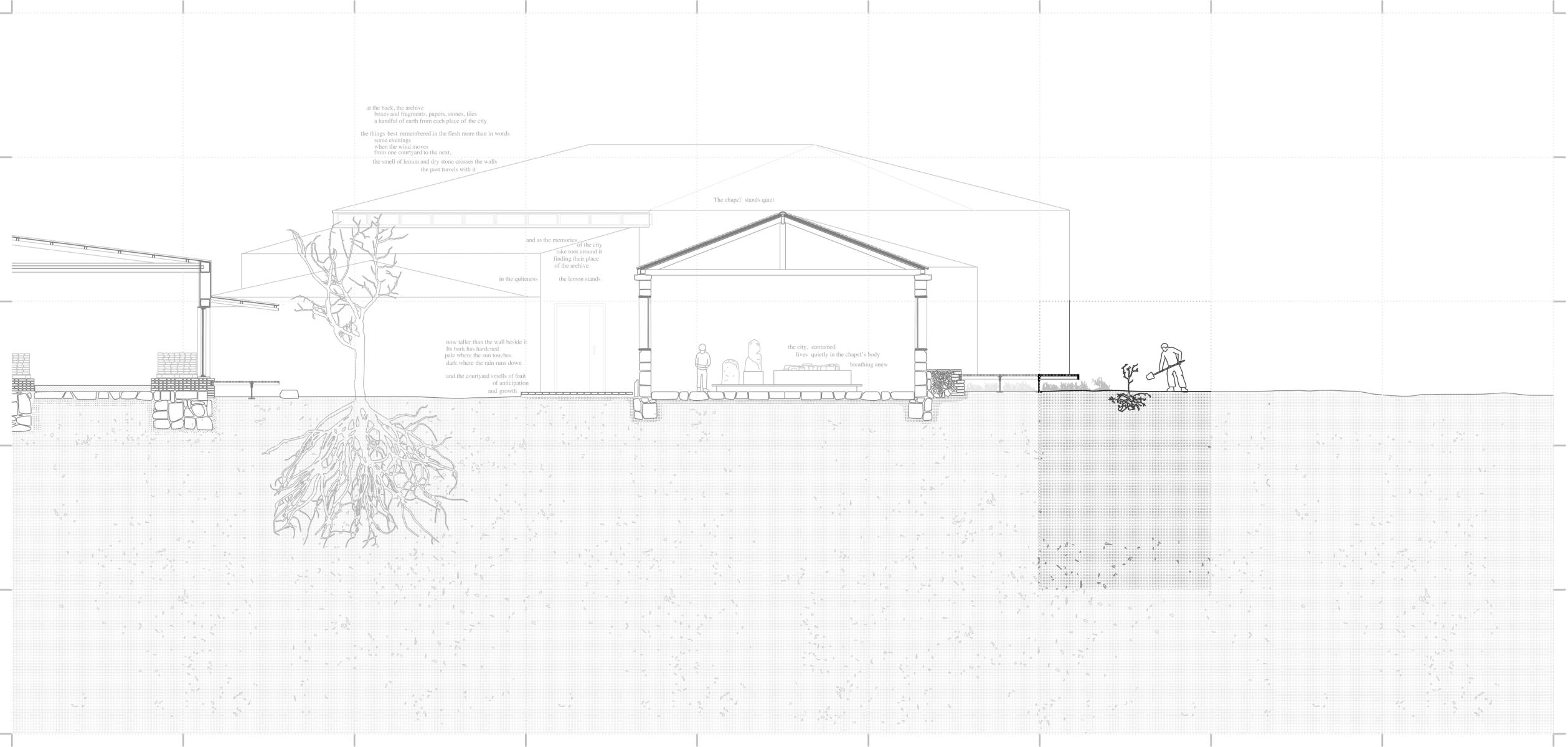


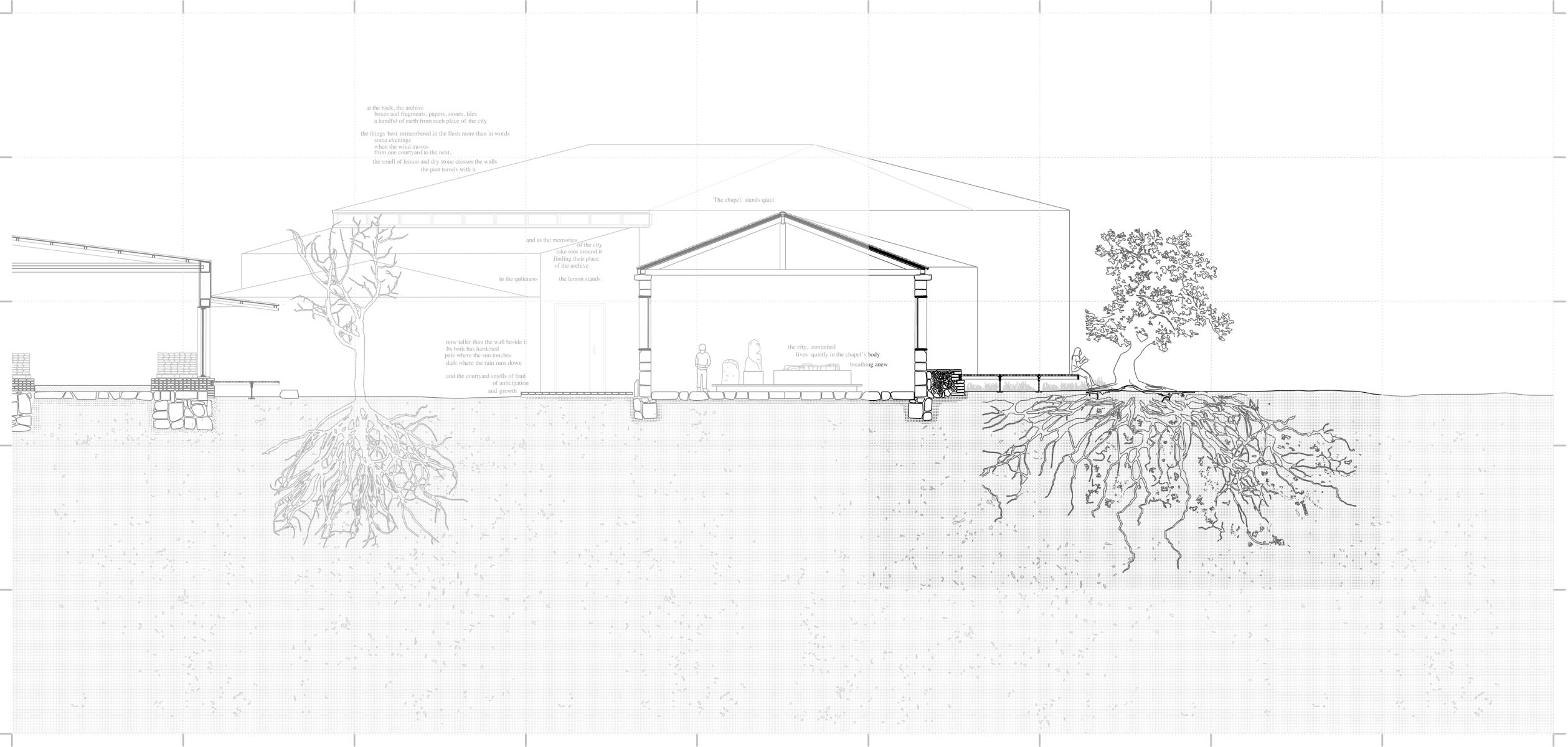


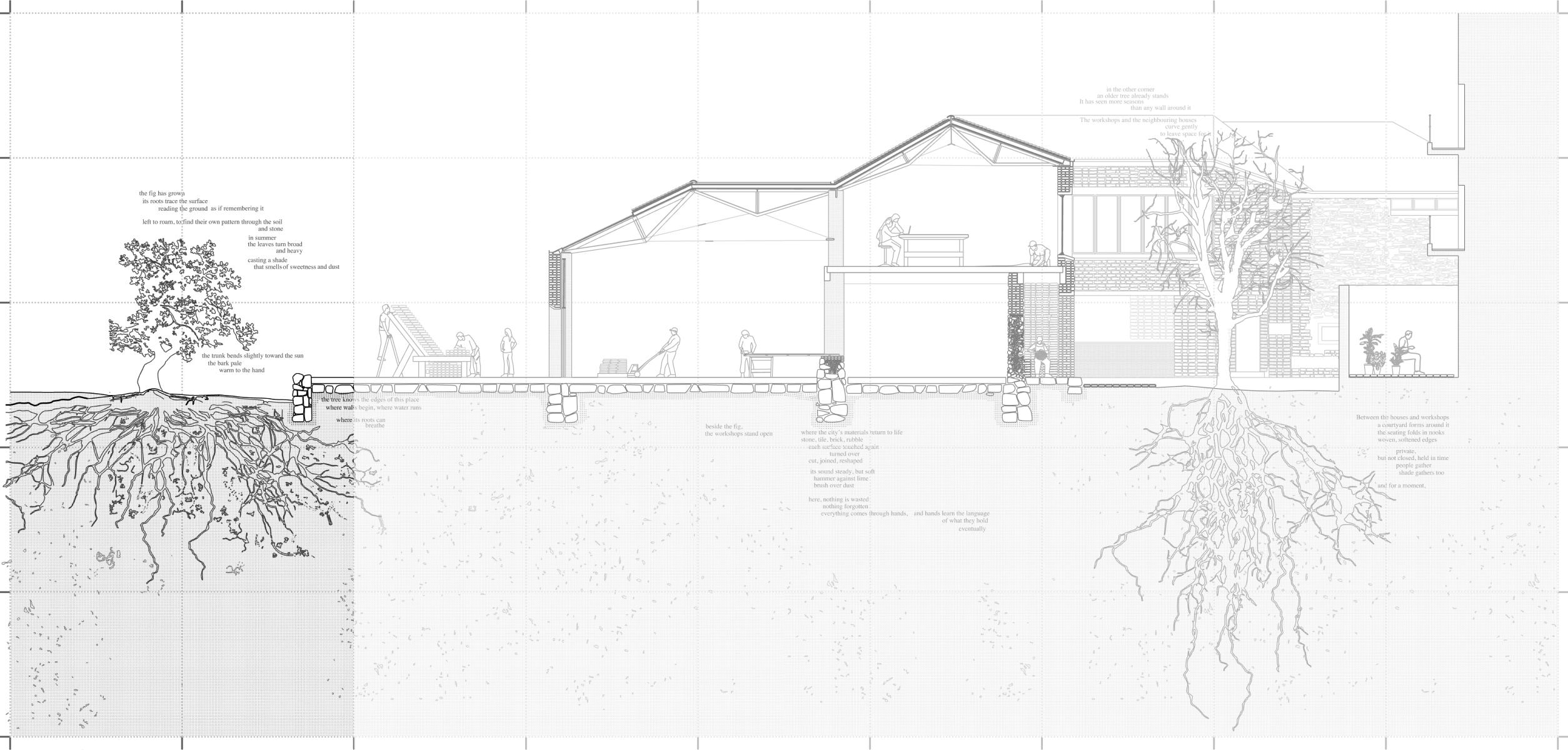


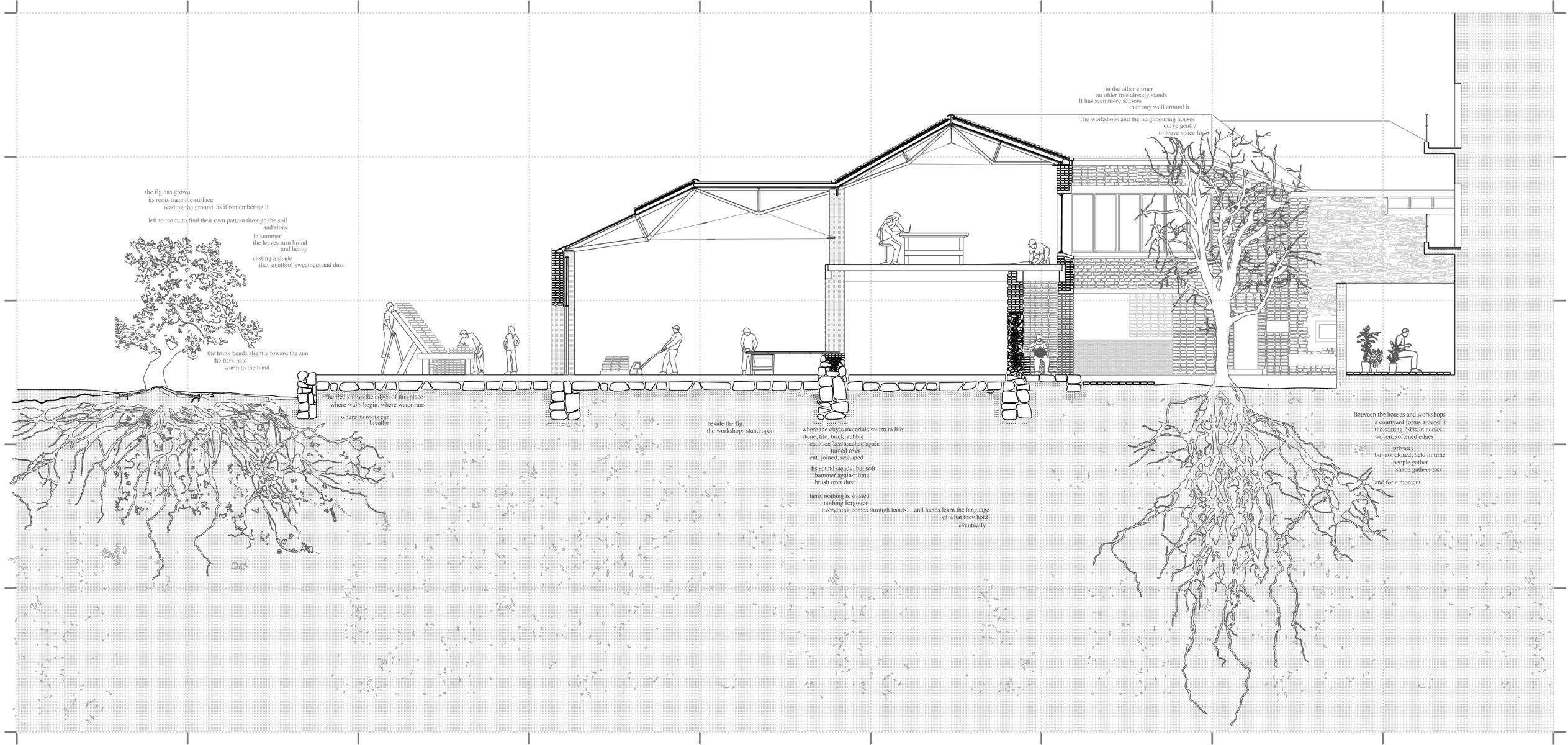


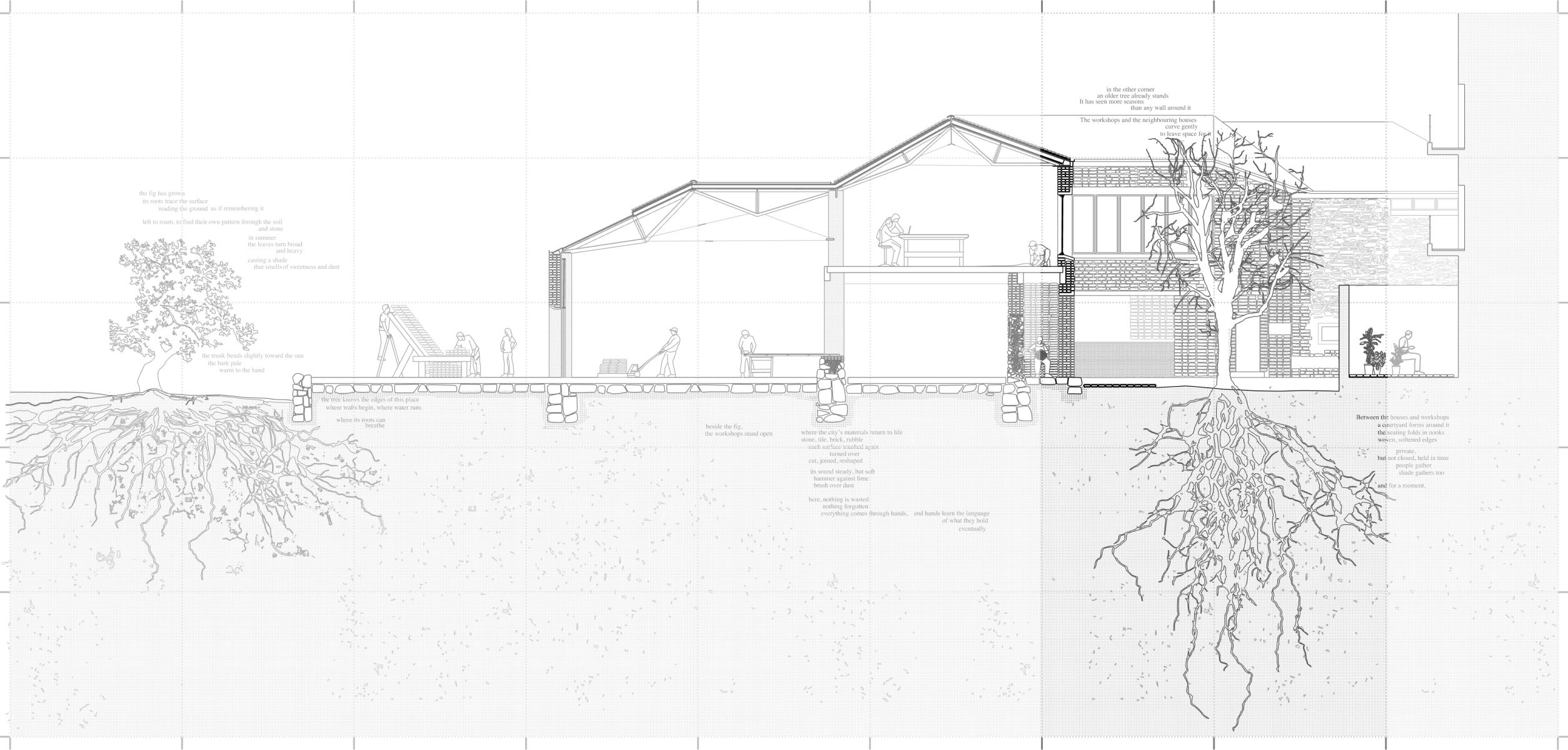


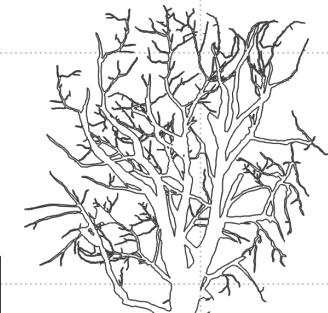




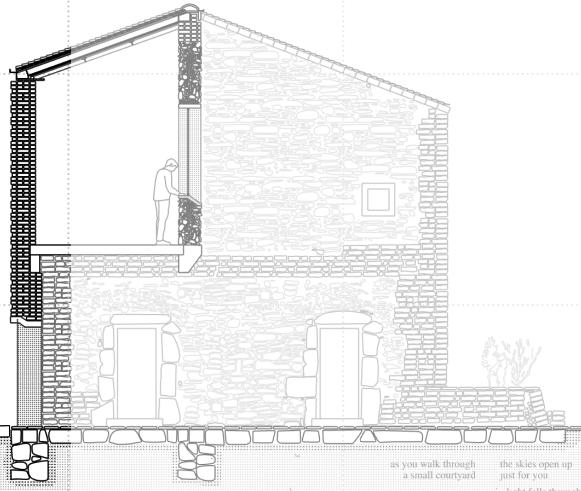








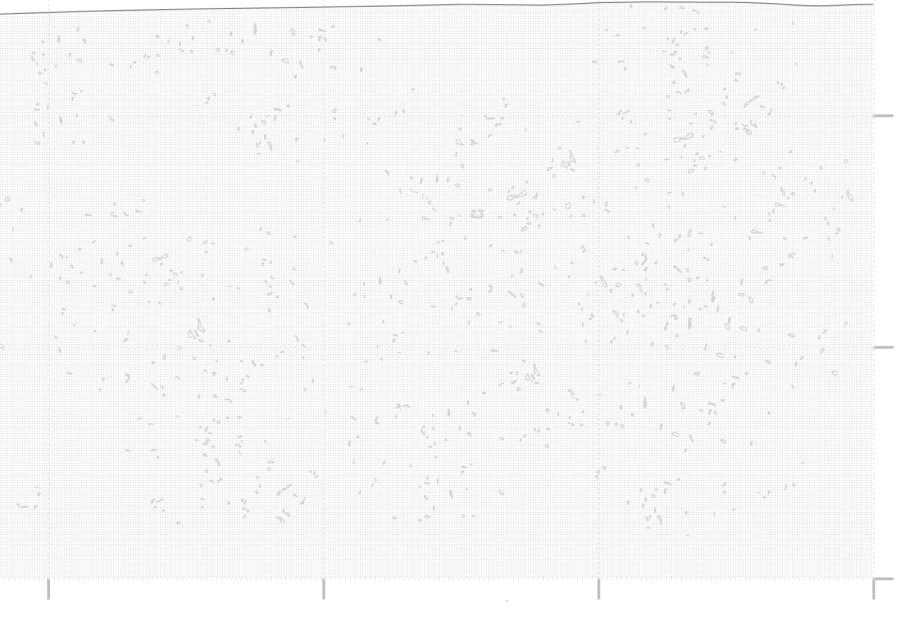
a narrow walkway
connects
the newer walls with the
ruins
a passage between times

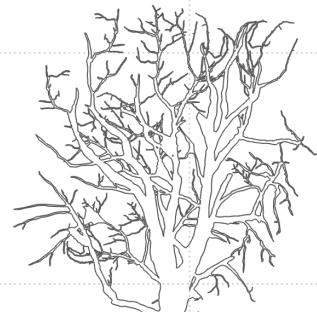


as you walk through
a small courtyard
the skies open up
just for you
light falls through the opening
washing the stones
feeding the jasmine
that climbs
patiently

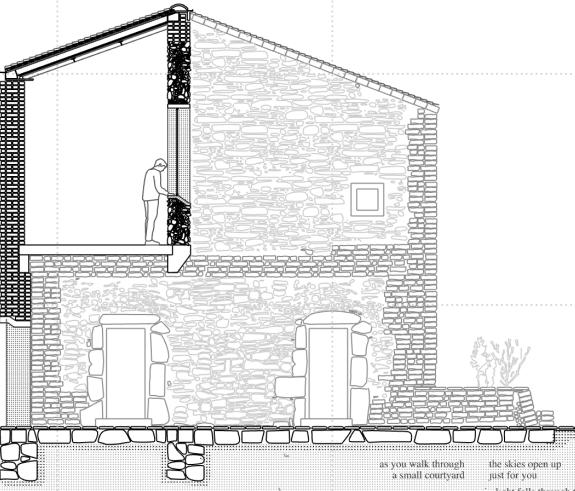
the jasmine has taken hold of the ruin
climbing the old masonry,
reaching toward the once
bedroom window

its stems find cracks,
small places to root
an insistence,
a constant search

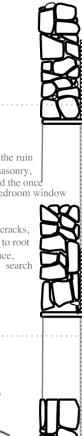




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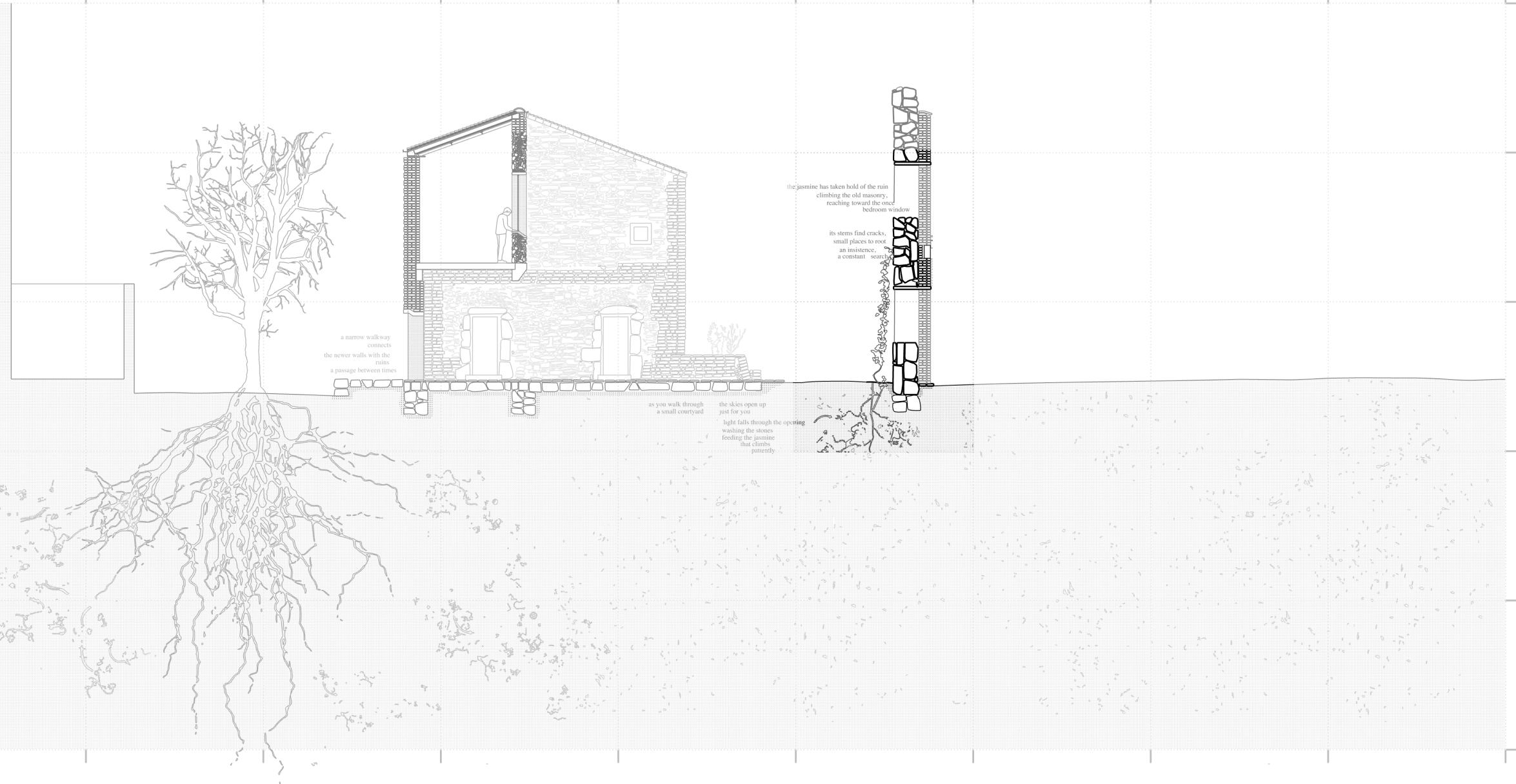


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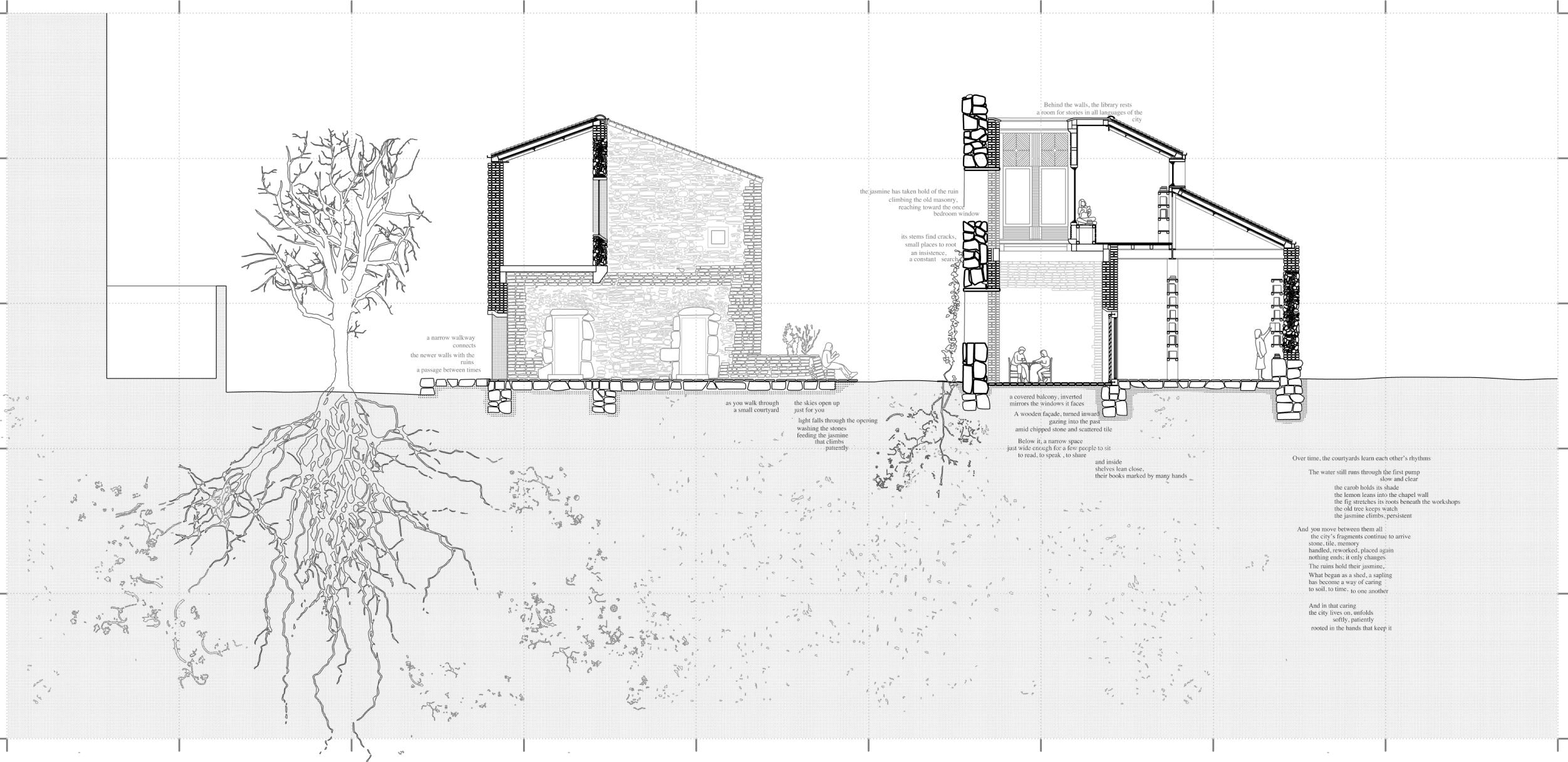


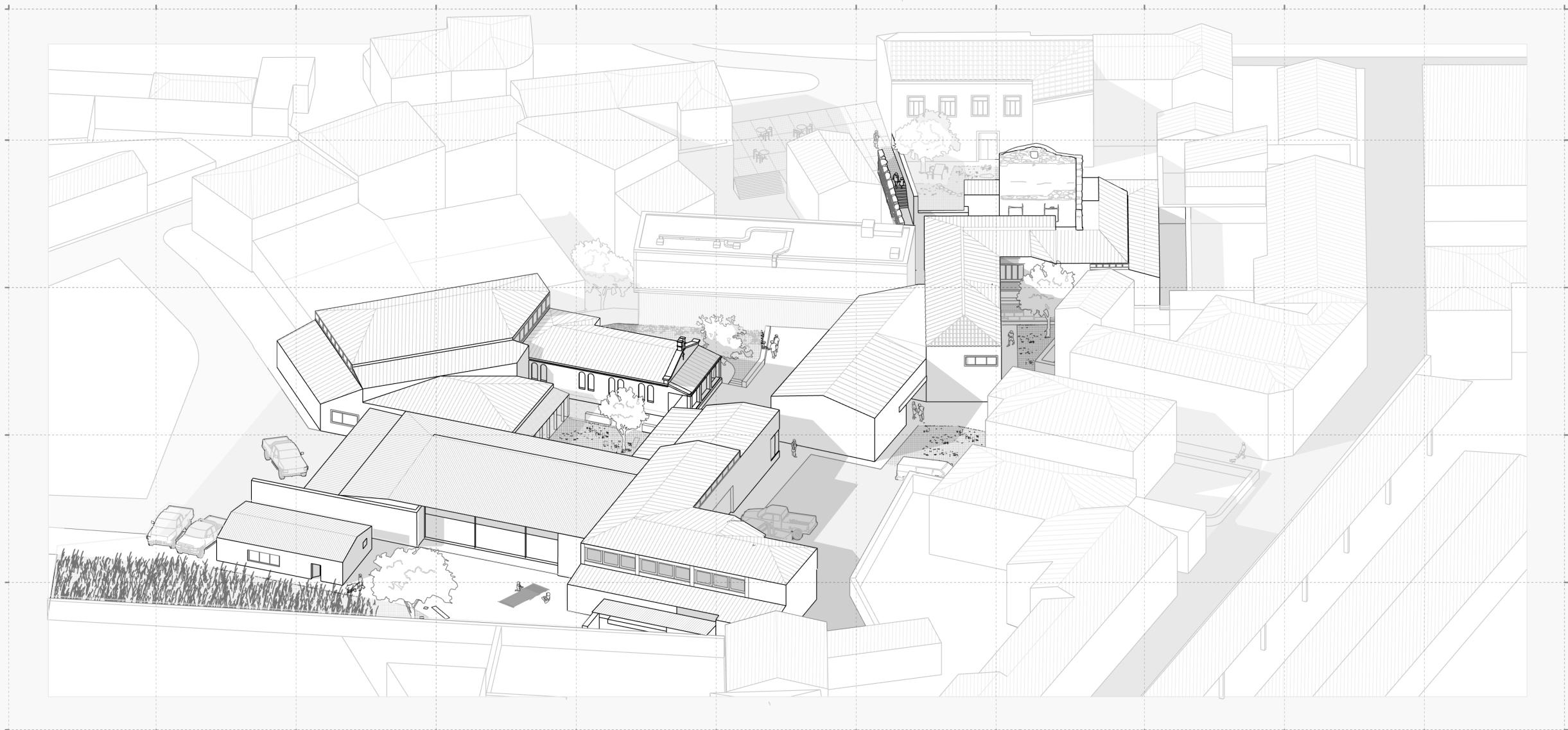
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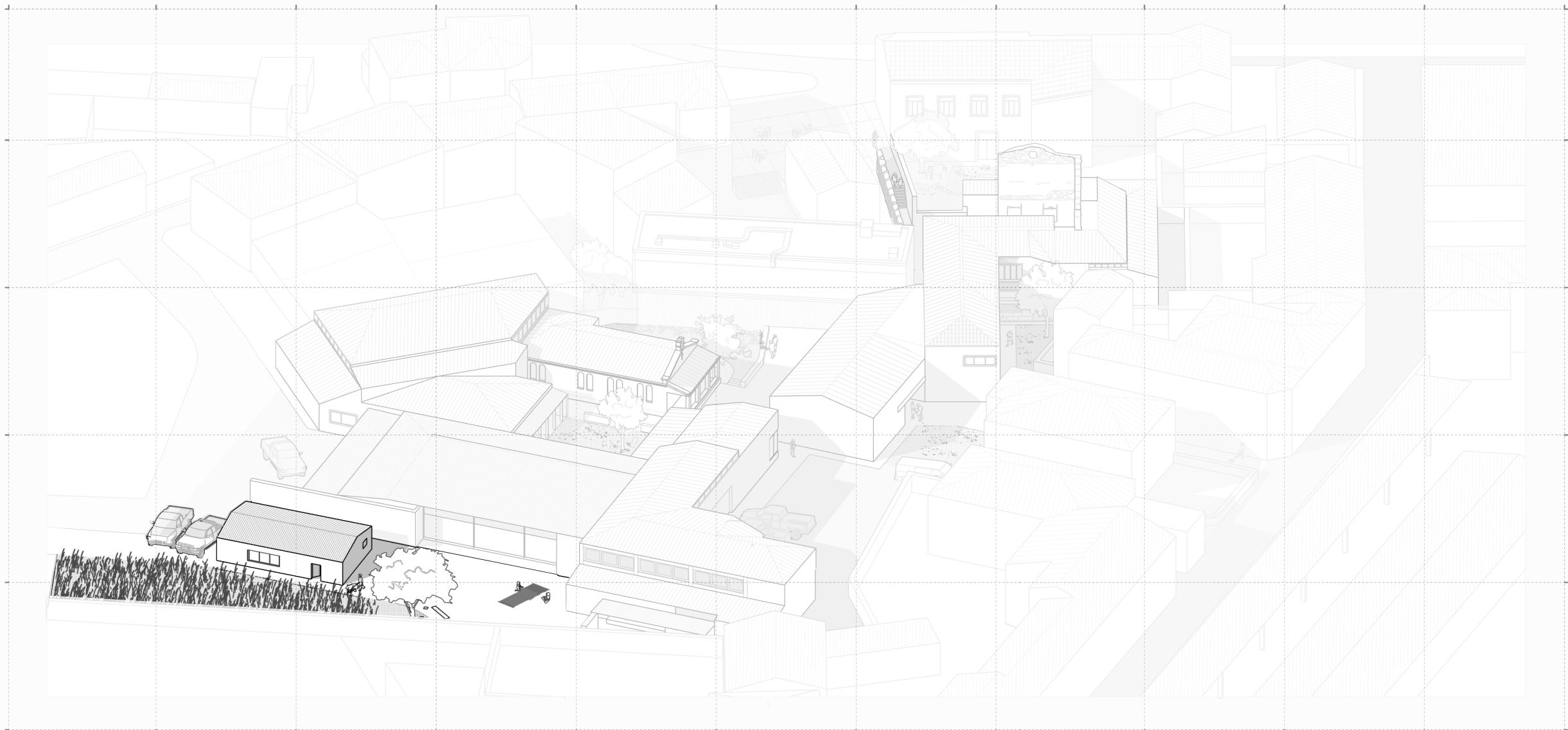
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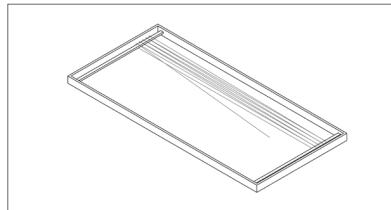
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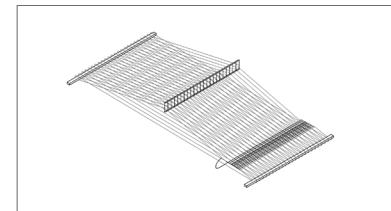
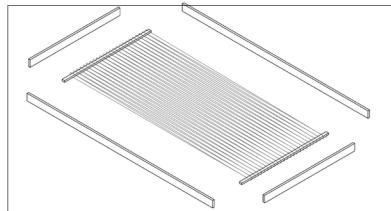
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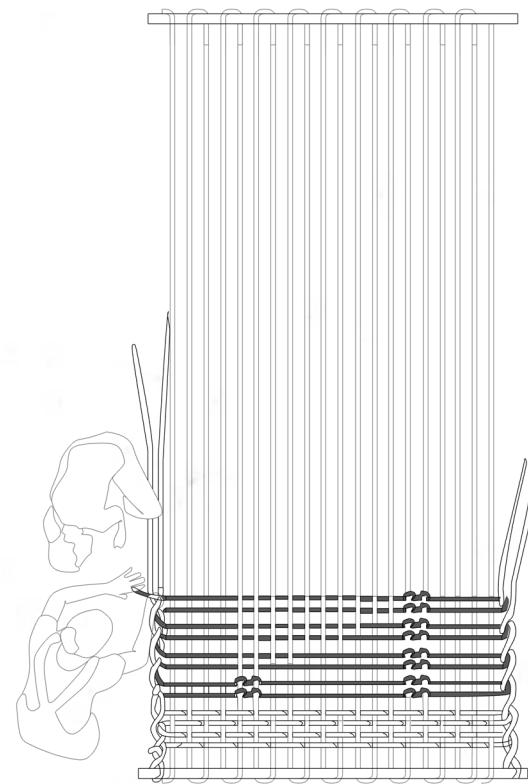
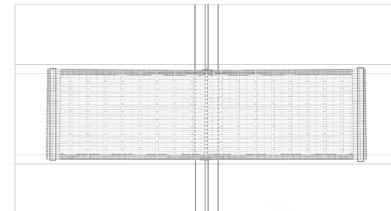
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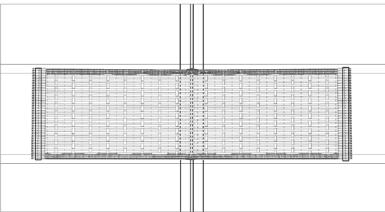


This reed is woven into panels within a temporary wooden frame.
Turn after turn, it bends and twists, guided by patient hands.
All of this can be read on its surface, every knot, every crease, every hour spent
in its making.
The material holds the memory of touch, the rhythm of labour, the quiet persistence
of care.

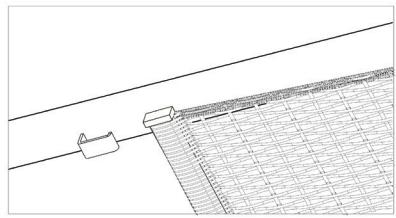
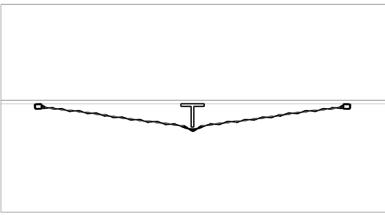


The act repeats: weaving, unweaving, weaving again. It becomes a ritual that
mirrors the life of the building itself. Through this, the panels become more than
shelter. They are witnesses to time, to labour, and to the fragile coexistence
between nature and the built world.





Panels of woven reed hug the steel roof, reclaiming it and softening its cold, hard edges. The metal, once sharp and unyielding, finds a quiet companion in the reeds' warmth and irregular texture. Each panel is held within a temporary wooden frame, its fibres bending and turning under careful hands. Every knot and twist carries the trace of time, a record of hours spent weaving, gestures repeated until rhythm becomes form.



They stand above the workshops, filtering light strand by strand. The sun passes through their weave, scattering shifting patterns across the floor, light that moves with the day and reminds the space of its own transience.

Suspended overhead, the panels begin to age. Slowly, they loosen, their fibres silverying and fraying at the edges. The change is not decay but renewal, a quiet reminder that everything here is alive and demands care. When their strength fades, the reeds are gathered again and rewoven from the start.

