

nijmegen

Heterotopia: the re-use of
alterity and authenticity
in Molenpoort.





FOREWORD

This work has been a search, an investigation with no need for a valid conclusion. It can be called a collection, but not listed in a specific order of classification, it is a series of ideas, hopes, and emotions about architecture and the city. Everything is open to interpretation, to change through a loose structure.

The study developed naturally in three scales of the approach of the city of Nijmegen:

City Scale

Urban scale

Building scale

Material scale

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INTRODUCTION

I. CITY SCALE

Signs and symbols

Community

Impressions

Script

II. URBAN SCALE

Expectations

Context

Typologies

Valuing alterity

Demolition process

Program impact

III. BUILDING SCALE

Paths

Hortus, Horti

Courtyard

Entrance

Family housing
Social housing
Student co-living
Elderly co-living
Social alterity and authenticity

IV. MATERIAL SCALE

Building honestly
Relevance of the construction process
Atmosphere

Appendix. ARCHITECTURE

Bricolage of the unknown

INTRODUCTION

Talking buildings

If we think about buildings like people, breathing and waking up every day, having feelings and failures then we should be able to respect them for who they are, who wanted them to be located in a certain place, and who they will become as influencing being in the social panorama.

Every building has a character, but how is this character built over time? Buildings learn how to talk and become influential, like people, aiming to leave traces of their existence to improve people's life. The built environment is composed of nature, people, and architecture, so if we have to build a character to explain it to everyone, to make it understandable, inclusive, and honest, we have to build up a lexicon. A lexicon established by the architect can define a character, but it is a structured categorization of meanings, that can give infinite combinations and interpretations like it happens with people. Everyone is seen with different eyes and becomes part of a sensitive singular interpretation. The lexicon allows that everyone can read their own story and build their own process of development.

Lexicon

The following collection is a Lexicon of definitions aiming to delineate (but not limit) relevant components of a specific design process. The collection is loose, open to new additions and interpretations, because, like a new language it is open to elaboration and new cultural modifications, to unpredictable proceedings and transformation.

The assemblage follows a scale development of my graduation project located in Nijmegen but can be read in many ways, some parts are allowed to be removed, some parts can be added, blank space is left to draw or take notes.

The lexicon is experimentation, a communication channel popping up in times where the control of communication is not evidence itself. Can a yarn(story) be understood by its definitions? How can images be both forms and content?

The architect should know how to apprehend uncommunicative stories and make them explicit.

Architect

Architects, scholars find themselves in a place they have never seen before. They look around and the first thing they find is something familiar, something they recognize from their memories. Indeed, architects cannot be defined only as professional or rational, thinkers, but beings assembled by their background. They are the invisible inside them, what they did not select from their experience but that indirectly speaks to them.

Personal experiences, fears, and tales are extremely important for their fieldwork.

Many people think architects create for seeking of their taste and for fashion. I believe that is incorrect. Architects are creatives trying to learn the semantic of a place, from which they have to be proficient in hearing, looking, collecting, and selecting with three-dimensional perception and memory.

But an assortment can be made of infinite objects. How is it possible that one architect makes design choices differently than another? If a place speaks a clear language, then all the architects should have the same thoughts..

A place is not fluent in one only language, it is not frozen to one way of communication. Places are composed of overlapping pieces of

knowledge, cultures, traces, fragments, symbols, etc., that belong to them at many different scales. The ability of the architect is to find a connection, a composition of found objects that together respond to the context where they are in, and the needs of the time.

Replying is the hard part. Responding is meant as a composition of the existing language with additions, with irony that emphasizes and celebrates functionality and possible upcoming events. But remember, the architects do not shape a place completely, but they acknowledge a complex set of dialectic relationships between form and social content, and they will leave before the unpredictable will happen.

Heterotopia

How architects can build the unpredictable, the undefined?

Creating the unpredictable is impossible. But the awareness that it will happen, makes the architect investigate and compose possible solutions. The solutions after the process are heterotopias. According to M. Foucault, Heterotopias are places where the reality is perceived differently, where places do not look to be connected to the context but they have several hidden layers of interconnections. Heterotopia is different than Utopia or Dystopia, it is a disclosure where

difference is the vision. For instance, a garden can be a heterotopia because plants are part of it, but they are coming from different places. Together they are able to re-create a microclimate, different from their previous, different to the one that was there before their arrival, but a place that finds stability on its own. Some plants will die, some plants will take advantage of the new florae at their side, some plants will disappear for a time and re-emerge in the future. A garden is an example of green space, unbuilt space, a heterotopian microcosm. It is a compact form, readable as one whole image, but also open to interpretations, analogies or metaphors, but a composition of broad morphology and typology.

Alterity & Authenticity

The Heterotopia is something that can happen but normally is inspired by the introduction of alterity. Research of the heterotopia as a space in history happens when there is the need for a time change, a break with traditional time. For instance, cemeteries are places where the relationship with time is different: life and time loss are in contradiction, emotions are different, social behaviour becomes different. When the perception of time is altered, alterity in a place can be produced by a cultural modification, a will of separation from

the standardization or the imposition. The research of the alterity, the variance, the modification, or a given situation raise from a social necessity, then displays authenticities. In the social panorama, alterity was researched by marginal groups, so when they were able to create their own heterotopia they could be authentic. A place can be transformed by beating social conformity, a traditionalism established outside the self.

Authenticity is an aspect of freedom in the mode of living that is determined by people's choices. In fact, the authenticity that cannot be defined, but only what is not authentic can give a clear definition of it. After the architects have completed the process, they leave, letting the authenticity of the space be. They could only remain if that place was part of their daily life, of their tradition, then they would take part in the heterotopia and their authenticity would prevail.

“The difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past’s awareness of itself cannot show.”

T.S. Eliot, Tradition and the Individual talent: an essay

The value of the past as the inheritance of what it is, as a ready-made knowledge that was not aware of the progress that would have followed it. The bricoleur recomposes the value that is at hand proposing a new communicative object: direct, immediate, miscellaneous, unexpected.

Design as

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Design as

diversity.

CITY SCALE

CITY SCALE

Signs and symbols

A sign is an indicator, a drawing very specific but with ambiguous meaning. A symbol, differently than a sign, can acquire a more complex meaning that is related to its context, culture, tradition, experience.

Walking through the city many signs are visible, symbols are more hidden. For instance the shopping is very present, sometimes churches, few sitting spaces, but open air-view to the river. Many signs at first sight, many imputes and indication for the eyes. But looking closely, finding a place to sit and observe, bicycles are also a symbol, stairs, slopes, crooners, roofs, passages, lights, alleys, paving, green, animals. Every element, after an thorough observation, take its position becoming an harmonious and functioning chaos.



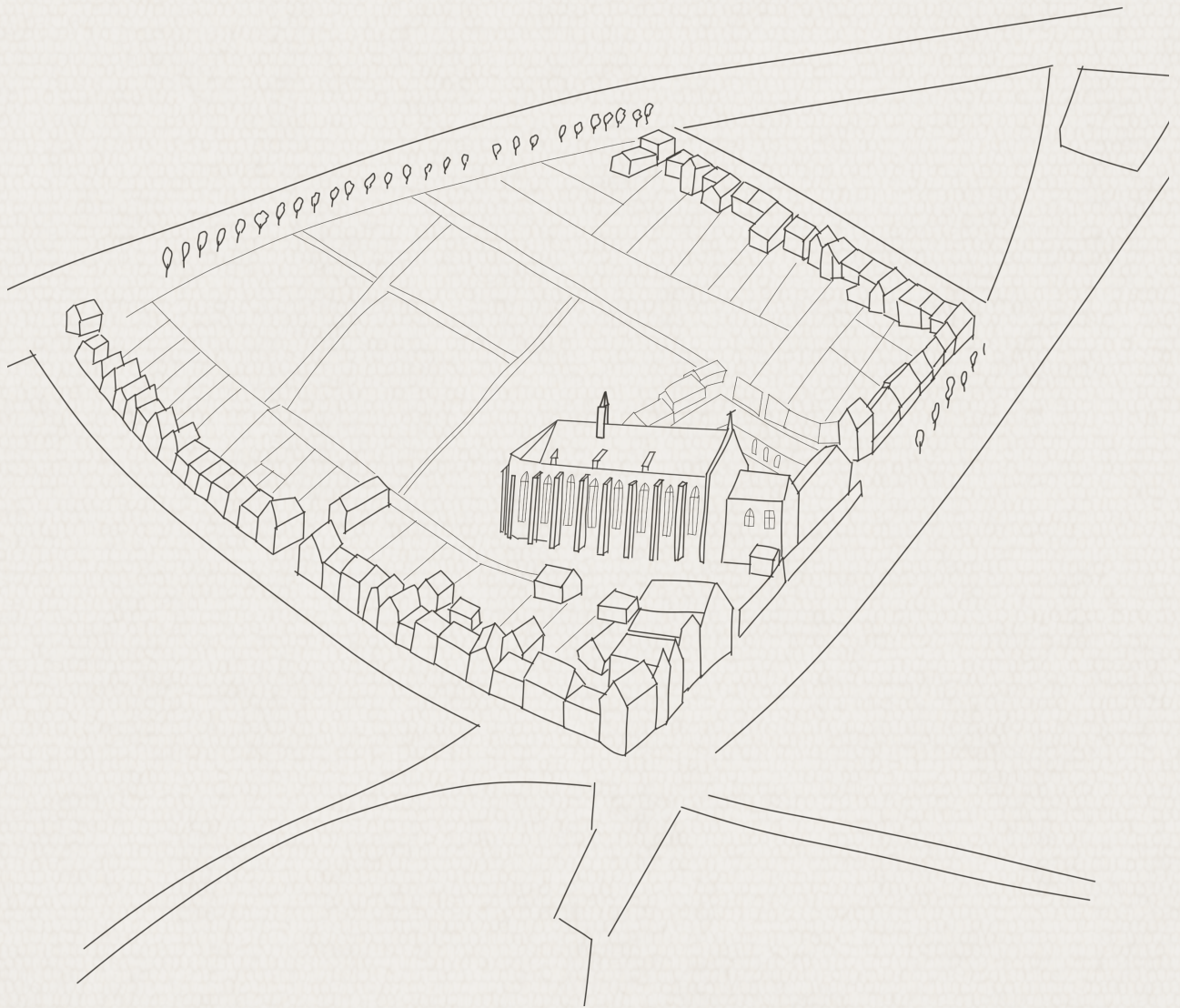
CITY SCALE

Community

A community is an undefined a group of individuals that share a specific context or a characteristic or an attitude. The sense of community is the abstract feeling of commitment that this process generate. Boundaries, safety, identity, personality, equality are attributes of a community.

Understanding Nijmegen's local community is not a strategy but a re-discovering of what was already there, the uniqueness of the place, the site and the surrounding context.

Trying to understand the past emotional dimension of architecture and the relation with the slow construction process. Reconstruct today with honesty and reality of the place. What was there, what will be there. Re-shaping the character that cannot be defined because we know a portion of it, but it is part of the place and it should create an emotional relation, not strictly rational with the past story of the characters of the place.



CITY SCALE

Fragments

Fragments are pieces that belonged to a whole that is not composable anymore. They act dialectic objects that tell a story of which we cannot be completely aware, but that connects us with a meaningful past. If one fragment is isolated from its context becomes meaningless, so fragments have a strong relation among them in which different parts contribute to a legible larger whole. Fragments relation can be accidental, disconnected but being city objects they establish dialogues at different scales that determine the urban, architectural and social features of a place.

“[...] it’s as if the painting, absolutely still, soundless,

becomes a corridor,

connecting the moment it represents with the moment at which you are looking at it. And something travels down that corridor

at a speed greater than light,

throwing into question our way of measuring time itself.”

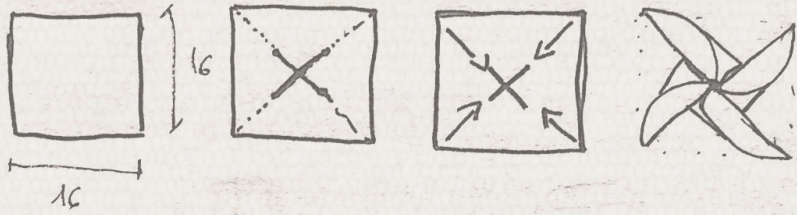
John Berger, *Ways of seeing*, 1972 episode 1, min 13:00



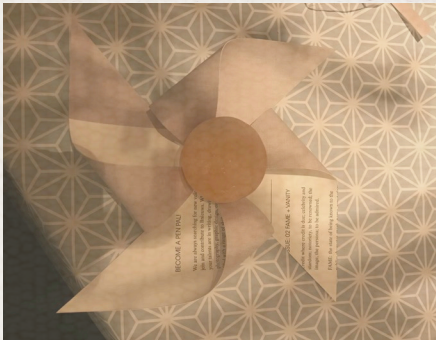
CITY SCALE

Impressions

Impressions are instinctive ideas, feelings or creative acts generated by stimuli that we cannot control. The effect of the impression can be beneficial for understanding our mind, especially whether it is lying or not to our true self.



The pinwheel is a bricolage object I created the day after my trip in Nijmegen. Its process of poly becoming further in time, depending on the wind, made me think about the strong relation of Nijmegen and its landscape. The present value is not 100% obvious but it is full of qualities and layers that deserve to be brought to light.



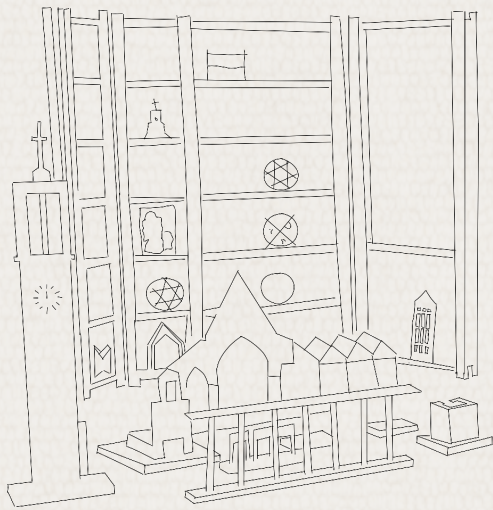
CITY SCALE

Script

A script is a composition of images and text that tell a short story or events. A script can be composed for analysing a city such as Nijmegen not only collecting primary and secondary sources, but also fieldwork, necessary to understand personal impressions and people behaviour on the site. A script can be composed by different people and perspectives, in a undefined time. A script can be a collage of valuable objects to further investigate like drawings, models, collages, images, to help retracing the history of the buildings and the culture related to them. A script can help to identify the relationships among them and let emerge object personalities, from and social relevance, along with their development in the urban panorama.

“What time is this place?” became a script, a composition of written and drawn inquiry of the architectural language of the place, of the interchanging patterns of Nijmegen, a dialogue among objects that shaped one to another.

From three stories of three characters, the story became one dialogue of three different anthropomorphized buildings, with three different idioms that the short movie allowed to transform in one, with a specific urban position, making it comprehensible for everyone.



URBAN SCALE

URBAN SCALE

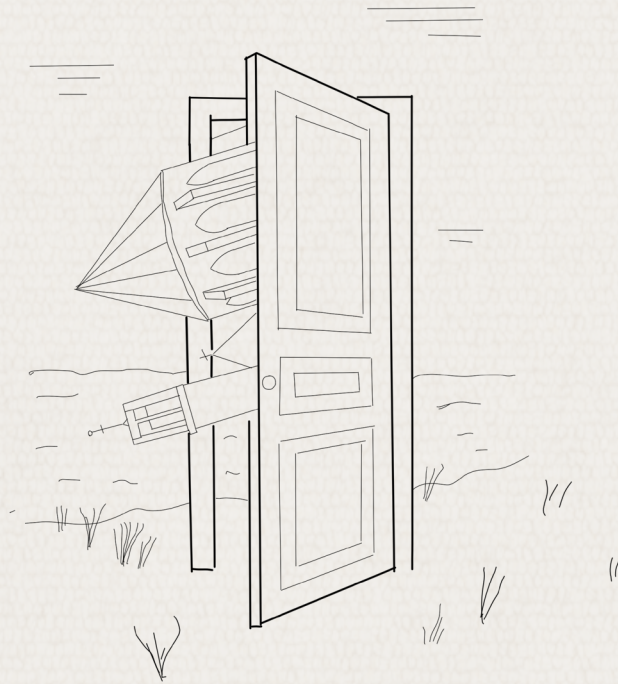
Expectations

Expectations are feelings or human beliefs that something will happen. They are the projections of a desire or a thought to the future and when an expectation is referred to a place or to a city is the will of the user to seek a change from an uncomfortable or uncommunicative circumstance. But a new urban chapter for a city is a potentially unknown condition, a limit but also as an openable boundary establishing a polar interpretation, two authentic domains of infinite and borderline.

It is a door because this object always establishes a new open dialogue, it is a place of openness, freedom and but also safety and privacy, behavior, and a sense of belonging. It can be comparable to tapestry because the built fabric is readable as one whole complex: wire interchange and connection are not evident anymore.

The traces of the long time work are always left in the back, sometimes they are shown, sometimes they are hidden. The difference is that the built fabric of the city is a tapestry shaped by social behavior.

Built fabric can be approached by redefining the connections over time, unifying them by program and paths, only then expectation can be accomplished. Like the Asian corridor, which is built along with a series of courtyards, it followed the principles of cosmology creating order and harmony through the different shadows along the day. A series of enclosed spaces created different architectural languages and social atmospheres for everyone.



Doggwoldo palace, Royal painters, 1830

URBAN SCALE

Context

Context is an interconnection of layers that existed, still exist, or happens in an environment that shapes the culture of a place.

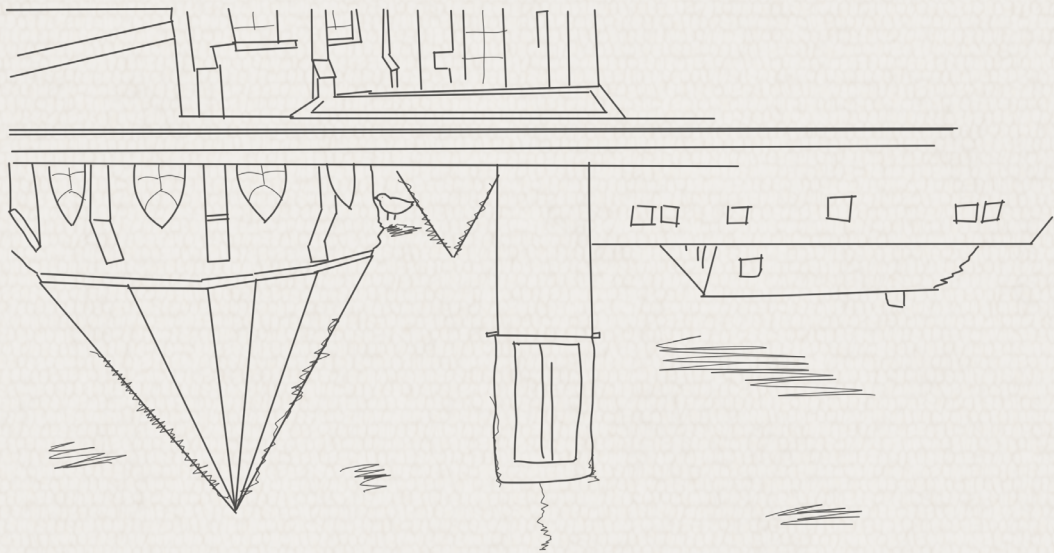
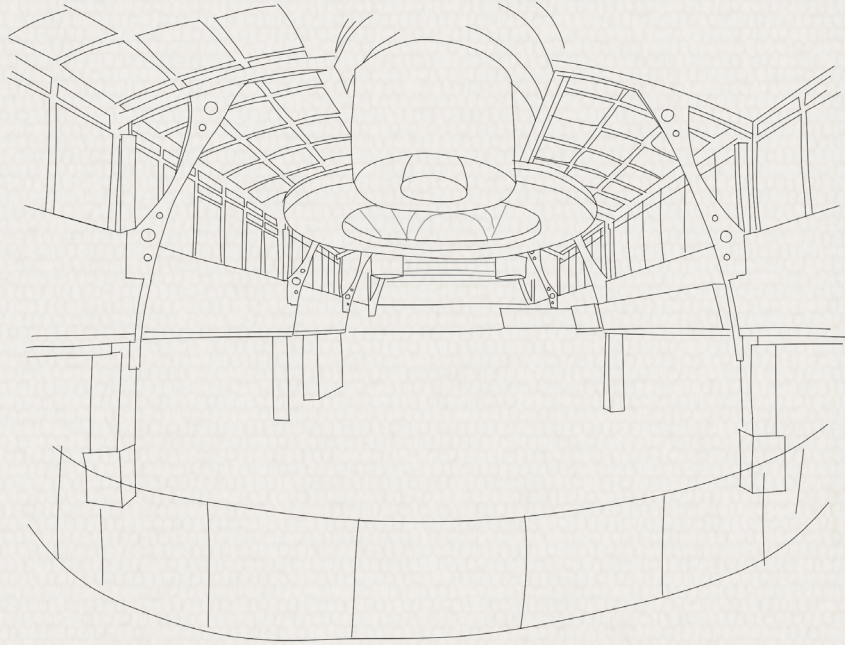
Context is an assembly of spread parts embedded in the readable structure, it is something to be preserved but also interpreted and enhanced. Context is the surrounding of an object and is capable of defining its meaning as typological factors, socio-cultural aspects, but also natural influences. Contextual architecture tries to find a dialogue with the context, without imposing its own characteristics but starting from what is there to progress and mediate between local needs and time needs.

Sometimes architects find a context that is a layer of existing elements that happen to be in a place but they seem to not fit with the context, but just ignore it. This attitude brings to static uniformization and conformity in the urban panorama that is not improving itself. The context becomes complex to perceive, but it is still there, at different scales and it needs to become the starting point again, also if it is not easy to perceive and decipher it has its own unique language that is worth letting remerge and value for letting it evolve again.



“Each project is a unique opportunity in the context and time in which it happens. So it is testimony. We know that architecture, or construction, is attached to the ground and immovable [...]

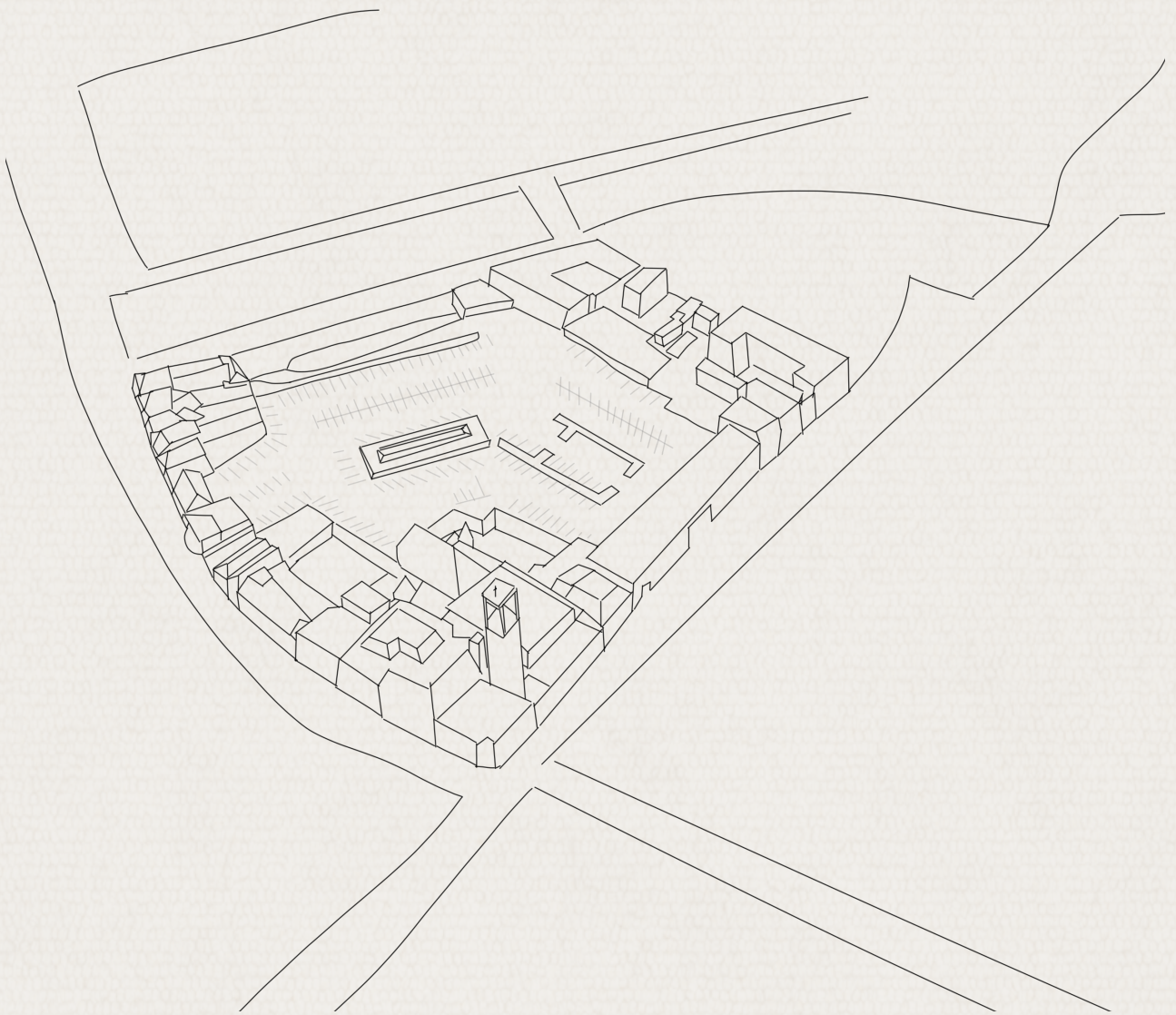
**It is not the design,
it is not the train
or the car
or the other [...]**



the context is always there. But it is always a context in motion, a context that lives over time. The city is a living organism. The city transforms itself and whatever is created transforms it in turn.

Architecture cannot exist out of context, and this is its unique quality.”

Gino Valle, cit. in V. Corvino, Abitazioni alla Giudecca di Gino Valle: riflessioni su un metodo, in “Progettazione Urbana”, 1994, n. 2



URBAN SCALE

Typologies

A typology is a classification of elements with similar characteristics that can be grouped together to be distinguished from others. A type is a model, a form that visually represents that typology and makes it recognizable. A typology is not a fixed characteristic, but it can evolve, change meaning so it is more an analogy than a practical characteristic of an object. “type’ as ‘... the very idea of architecture, that which is closest to its essence. In spite of changes, it has always imposed itself on the “feelings and reason” as the principle of architecture and of the city.” (Rossi, 7)

For instance, comparing the typologies belonging to an urban artifact, they are entities that have survived over time and tell the historical richness but also the historical fails. Typologies organized in a row can be the representation of the scale of an ensemble, images of memories, events, changes, and experiences, but they can also display the incoherence of some measures that have been added and do not signify a previously existing shape or scale.



URBAN SCALE

Valuing alterity

Alterity is the otherness of an object, as the difference or the willingness of being an alteration. Alterity is whatever does not fit in a systematized environment, it is the announcement of pluralism. It can find its meaning in different fields: cultural alterity, gender alterity, etc. However, it is not something to be fetishized, but to preserve as the essence of every object, or of creation, or something to be experienced that can evoke change or something we avoid.

Alterity can represent the founding element of architectural form and the quality of the surrounding. Alterity can be the generating inserting object with a familiar physiognomy but also different because leaves room for variations.

How this architectural feature brings consequences in social science?

In spatial organizations. For instance, beguinages were medieval hybrid types but also a city within a city of its own right. They emerged from the need for a new situation where laywoman wanted to propose a new way of living. According to Elena Martínez-Millana (2020), women were effective in adapting a found urban form and reshaping it to the needs with a gendered perspective. They were influential in the multiple uses that beguinages offered and the actual spatial characteristics of the spaces they lived in.

Beguinage represents a complex genealogy of domesticity, para-



digmatic places of transformation, and adaptation to the city context it belonged to. Martínez-Millana (2020) differentiates different typologies of beguinage: the one organized around a central square or garden surrounded by traditional housing, houses along the streets separated by a walled area, or smaller scale beguinage that followed more the morphology of the city in their development.

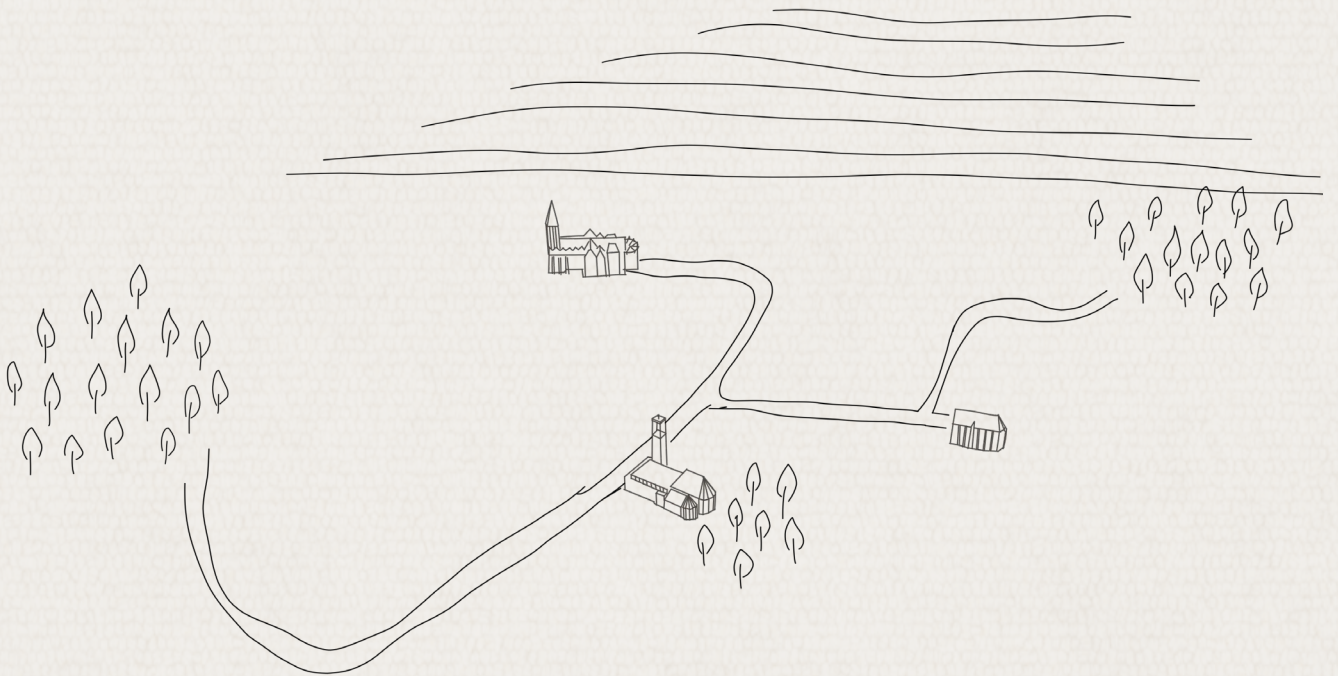
The different classifications demonstrate the variety of the typology and their relation with the inherited urban fabric, “It is, therefore, possible to identify them as a particular form of ‘type’, and its various combinations to form multiple kinds of developments form topological considerations, hence its particular heterogeneity and mutability.” (Martínez-Millana, 2020, 135)

Beguinages also represent the fragments of an ideal city, so the authors suggest a collage of utopias for the contemporary city (Van der Gamen, van de Putt, 2011, 2)

Heterotopia of the past, type of exclusion, the possibility of change and new in the interior, when the exterior stays the same.

This type is a form of alterity that is capable of different development, a new dialectic showing the continuity of history and the changes of contemporary time needs.

In the case of Nijmegen, of the project proposed the type is reduced to the image, as Venturi would say “the image is reduced to



the type” because today images are the most relevant language of communication. The project values the research of alterity as something that was present in Nijmegen and was lost. Fragments of the alterity are reintroduced as a typology that becomes visible on urban and architectural expression but comes from an adaptation from the contemporary city and a present urge for change.

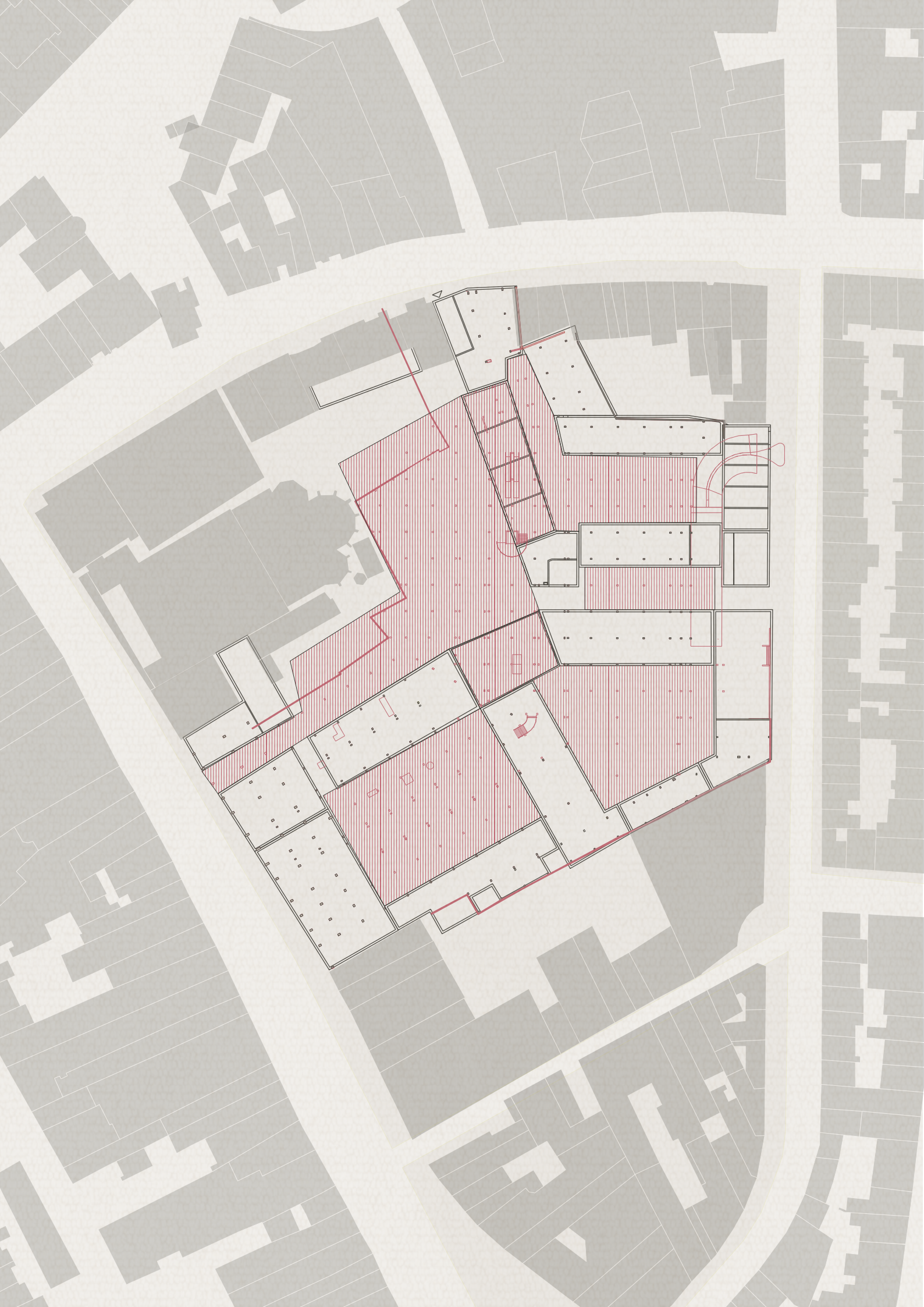


Mechelen's beguines at work, anonymus, 17th century, Busleyden museum.

URBAN SCALE

Demolition process

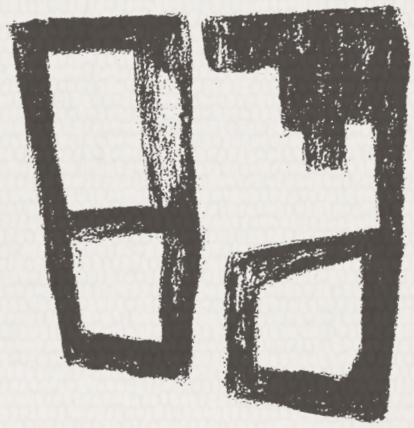
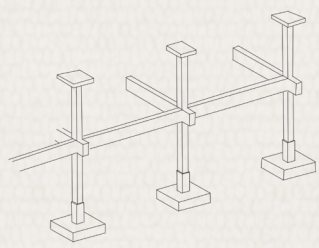
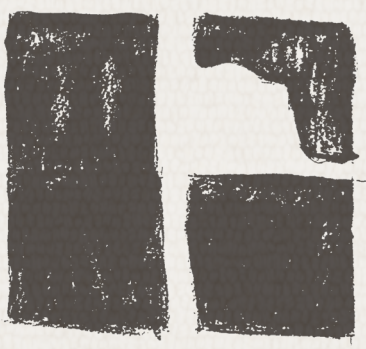
Demolition in architecture is a process that implies the removal of buildings or parts of it to change the urban shape. Demolition is meant as a process because it needs careful attention on the reasons for doing it but also it is something that takes time practically for considering the material waste disposal and or dismantling for future reuse. Demolition implies the production of Co₂ and waste, so it is not suggested if there is a social or environmental reason to apply it. Especially inside the city, demolition can be a long-term process, because it implies reinforcement of the surrounding buildings, accessibility for big-size machinery, noise pollution, dust pollution, etc. However, a sensitive demolition can also be an incentive for improving a low-quality space that is not functioning as it could become if it would be partly demolished. In fact, if a demolition takes place, high-quality new construction and urban spaces should be included in the preexisting space, to avoid a possible future demolition but to enhance the resilience of the urban area depending on future needs. The awareness that between the architectural project, its realization, and the use of it many years pass, means also that when a project is realized can already be considered old. It is the moral responsibility of the architect to assure that a project responds to any societal needs, not strictly relating to the present times. So demolition has not necessarily a negative impact on the city, but sensible reasoning for it assures the generation of resilien-



ce in a place where resilience was not present before.

A shopping Mall looking for extreme densification in the city center elude connection, open-air spaces, dialogue, and fluidity in the city center. It suffocates the backside of a Neogothic Church, one of the remaining pieces after the Second World War bombing, it creates junk spaces that belong to anyone and backsides that are not maintained.

A demolition allows for open-air spaces for the city, the restoration of the Neogothic Molenstraat Church, the enlightenment of the small-scale housing typologies belonging to the site, and the re-establishment of an old slow-pace connection to the city, but also the introduction of a new image for the city, a resilient shape that is able to adapt to upcoming needs due to its shape and its program. The demolition is a balance between what is there and what should be there, between the Molenpoort structure and the new heterotopia.



URBAN SCALE

Program impact

A program is similar to a *script* but only related to the possible activities that will take place in a project. A program is the framing of spaces' functions that can change along the day. It is also the willingness of the architect to create a connection, interaction with the existing program and the new, but also propose new possibilities of spaces that are not present in the city. The program is strictly related to the *context* and the *typologies*. So for program impact are meant the possible resilient outcomes and a new network that after a *demolition* take place due to the change of function of a space.



BUILDING SCALE

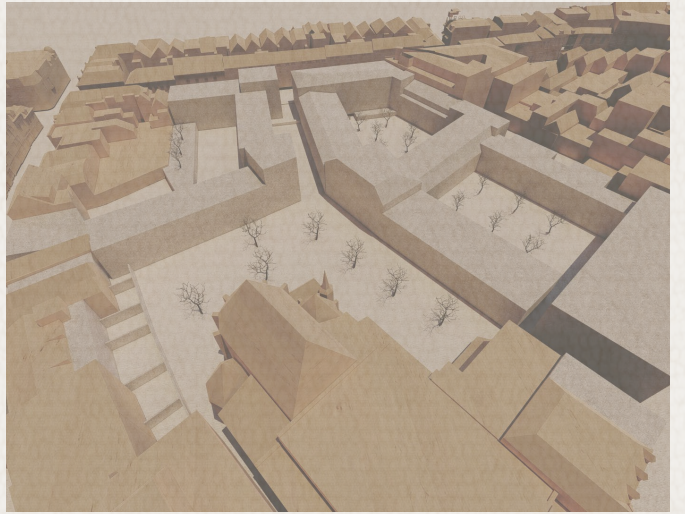
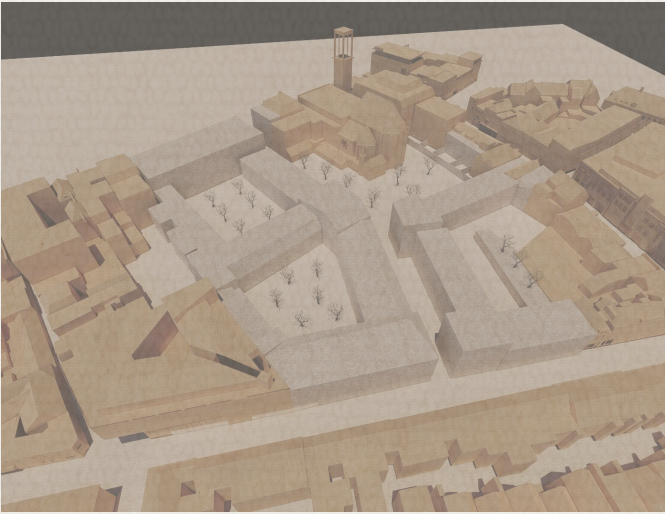
BUILDING SCALE

Paths

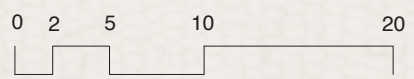
Path belongs to one of the basic elements of urban design, according to K.Lynch (1960) a path is the experience people have with movement through walkways, streets, transit lines, railroads, and canals. Paths are a channel of movement within the city, the empty spaces shaped among the buildings, the direction that always leads to a node, a landmark, an edge, or a district.

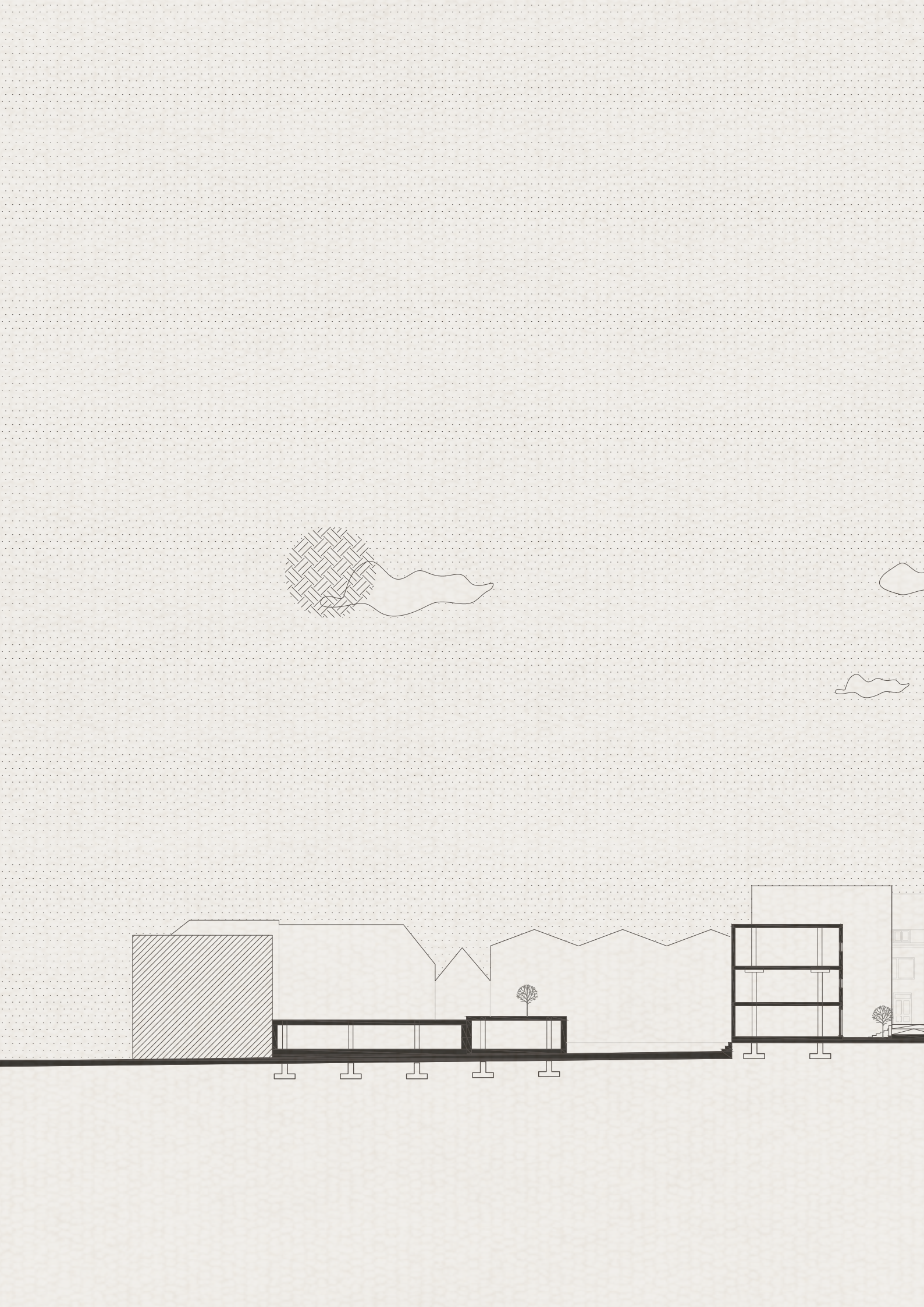
The urban shape proposed for Molenpoort is a new path, a new connection composed of one edge for direction change, but the path follows and from nodes where direction goes through new paths. The need to create a new path through the ensemble was the awareness of the importance of the existing church as a landmark, but also as a place of movement.

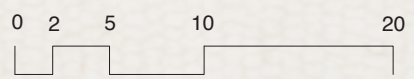
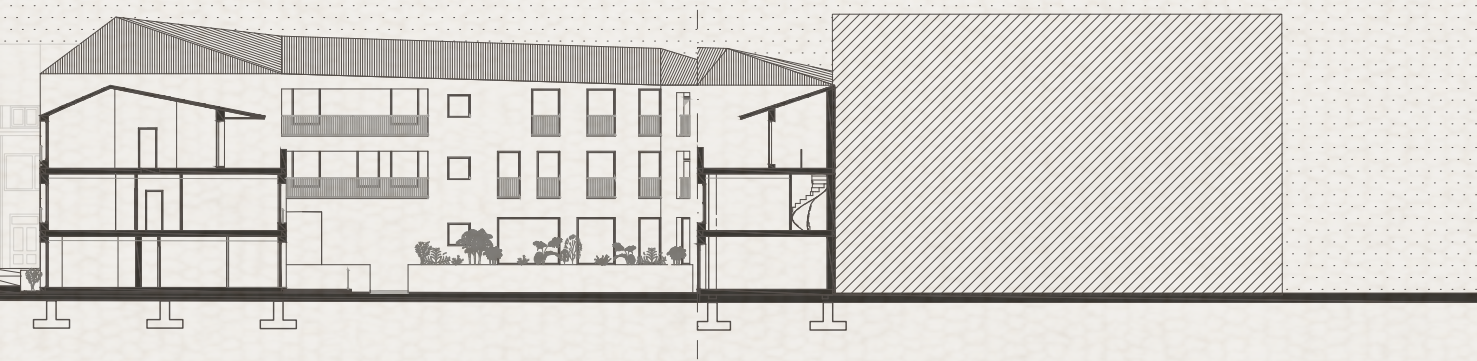
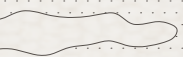
The relation between buildings and paths is extremely important: the buildings and their mass are what establish whether a path or an edge is functioning both for the walkway and the building.











BUILDING SCALE

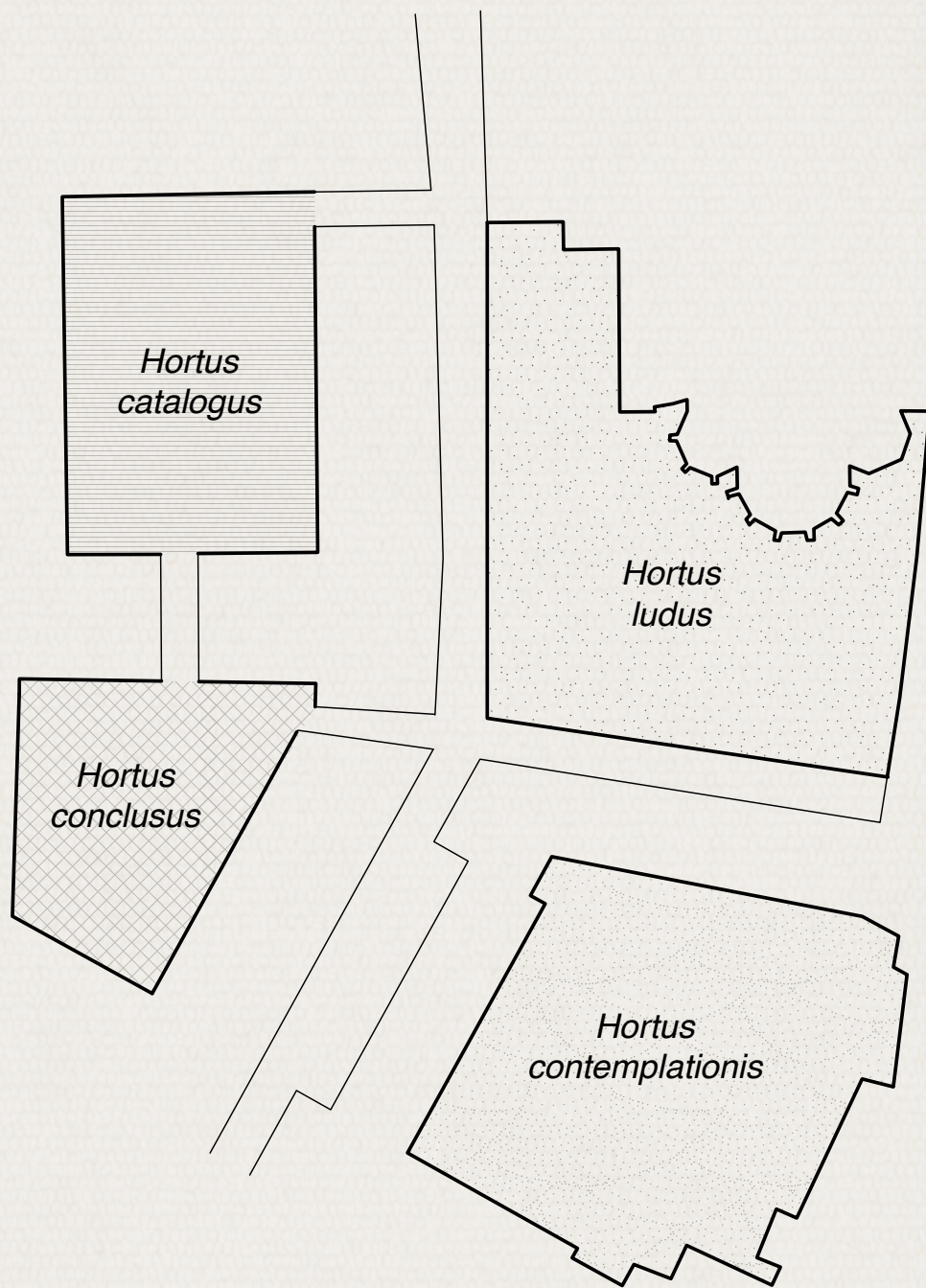
Hortus, Horti

Horti are enclosed gardens with a spiritual meaning, functioning as specific outdoor spaces, most of the time related to a religious purpose. Abe and De Witt (1999) define different variations of the beguinages gardens with a symbolic meaning of the Hortus spatial typology. The authors also argue the strength of this typology and their capability of being a possibility of reactivation of the contemporary urban landscape.

The new shape of Molenpoort proposes four empty spaces with different functions reminding the spatial typology belonging to the beguinages of Horti, enclosed gardens.

The proposed variation of gardens differ in shape, connection and symbolic meaning, giving to spaces a variation in function reflecting the activities happening during the day, recalling the old atmosphere of the berguinages. The new connection created between Molenstraat and Tweede Walstraat function as a threshold for the city: an Hortus ludus where collective activities take place as a public garden for the city: the ruins of the neogothic church, the private gardens in front of the existing houses and other two facades shape the edges of the area. The hortus ludus offers punctual vegetation, generating an informal atmosphere to be filled in with many types of activities for children or youngsters, or just silence.

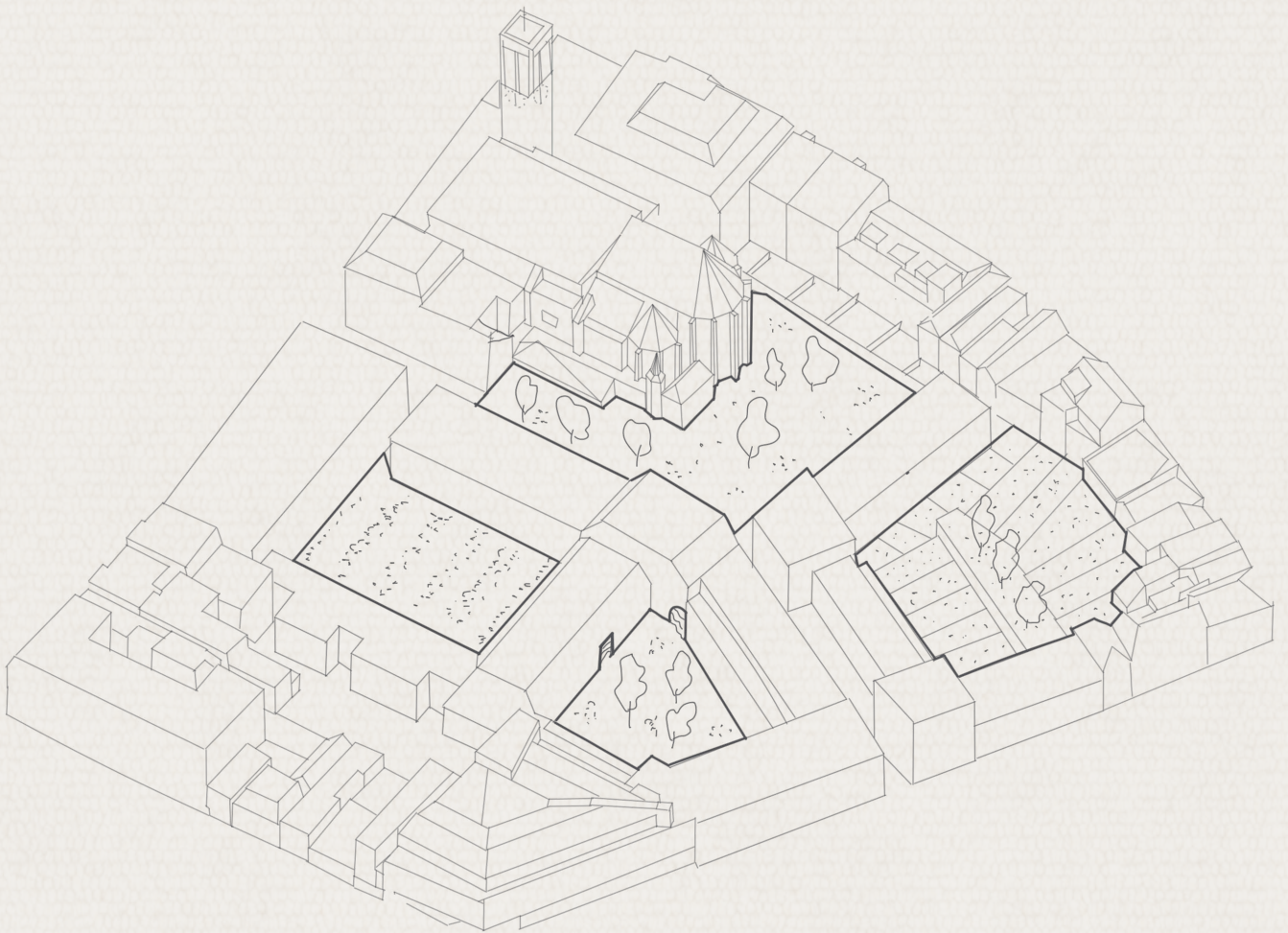
On the side of the Molenstraat church, the Hortus catalogus is



connected with a passage to the Hortus ludus. The enclosed garden surrounded by housing, offices and a library offers a selection of herbs and flowers that symbolise the knowledge and awareness of the place.

The Hortus contemplationis is secretly connected to an hortus conclusus. This hortus has the uniqueness to have two different types of entrances that buffers the transition between the city and the enclosed area. This hortus is a general conclusus because the future resident will establish the collective function: it will serve as a visual element for the inhabitants and the mental Health centre, a passage for the visitors, a spiritual garden for the artists. Open during the day and closed at night it will represent the new appearance of the beguine research of alterity, an enclosed semi-public space, an intimately private and collective Hortus conclusus.

The remaining enclosed space is the Hortus contemplationis: the vegetation is visible from the outside but not accessible to the public, serve as a place of reflection and care both for who can access it and who can just appreciate it from the outside walking around it.

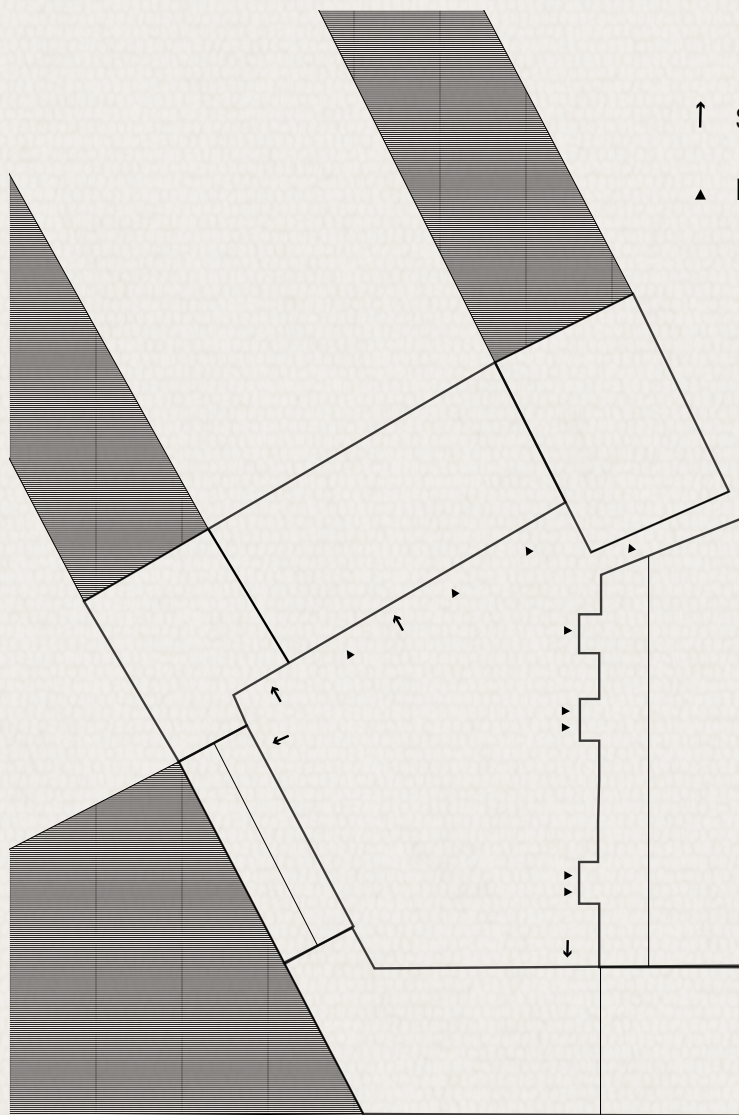


BUILDING SCALE

Courtyard

A courtyard is a space circumscription established by buildings around it. The courtyard's uniqueness is to be an enclosed space but open-air with a view to the sky, a rare feature in the city. In this way, the space perception is different because of the light control and the natural microcosm that is created in the courtyard and outside interiority. From a social point of view, this enclosed space becomes an intimate place for meeting. The courtyard housing typology functions as a transition space between the street and the individual units in which the entrance is located inside.

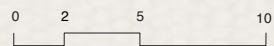
The courtyard in Nijmegen is designed by five building types forming an irregular polygonal shape that is composed of a square modular grid belonging to the Molenpoort shopping Mall. The courtyard acts as a formal control element from the main street, to the church Hortus ludus to the hortus conclusus at different scales: main entrance, collective space, distribution spaces, private entrances, private spaces.

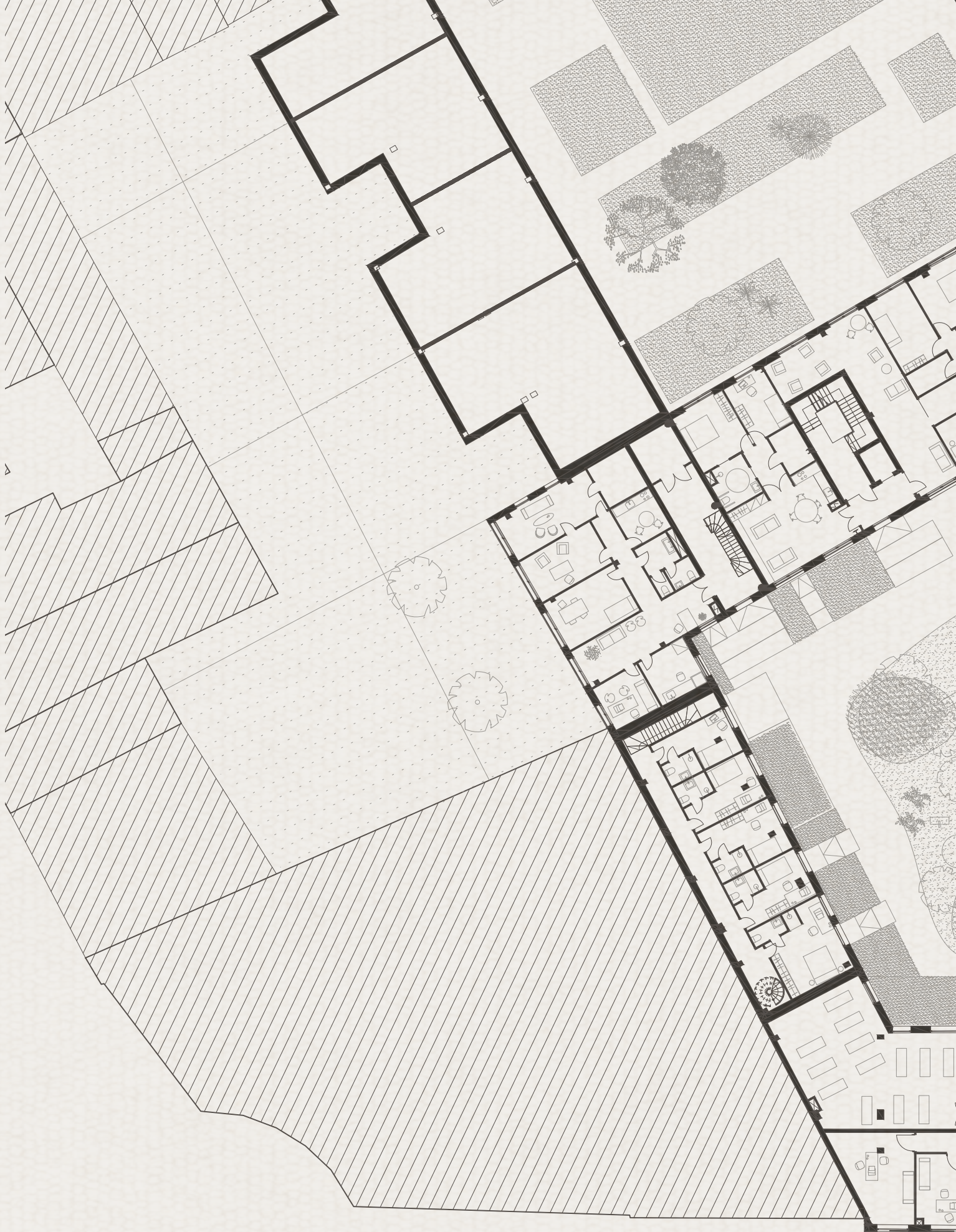


↑ Shared entrance

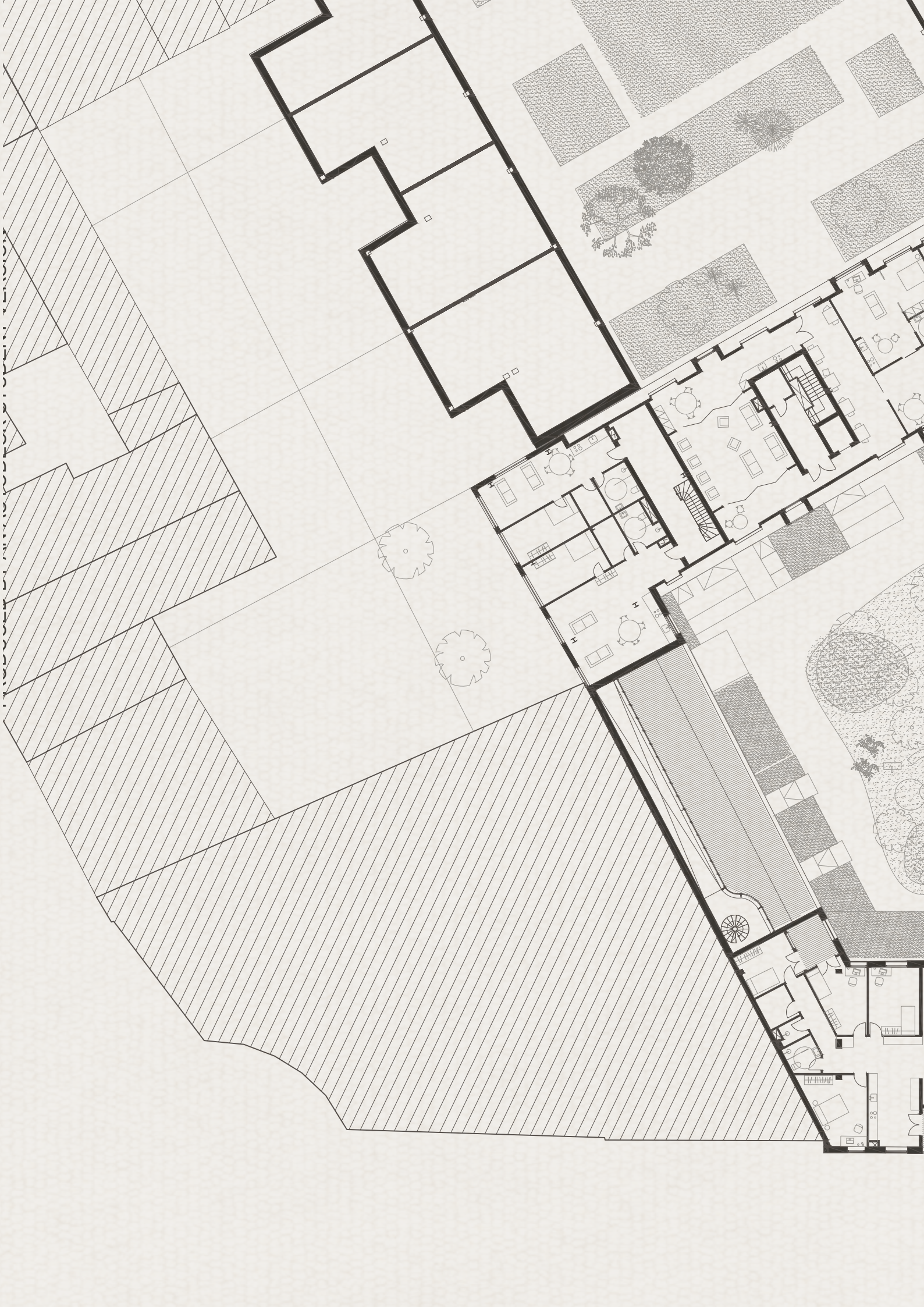
▲ Private entrance

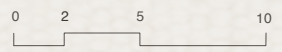


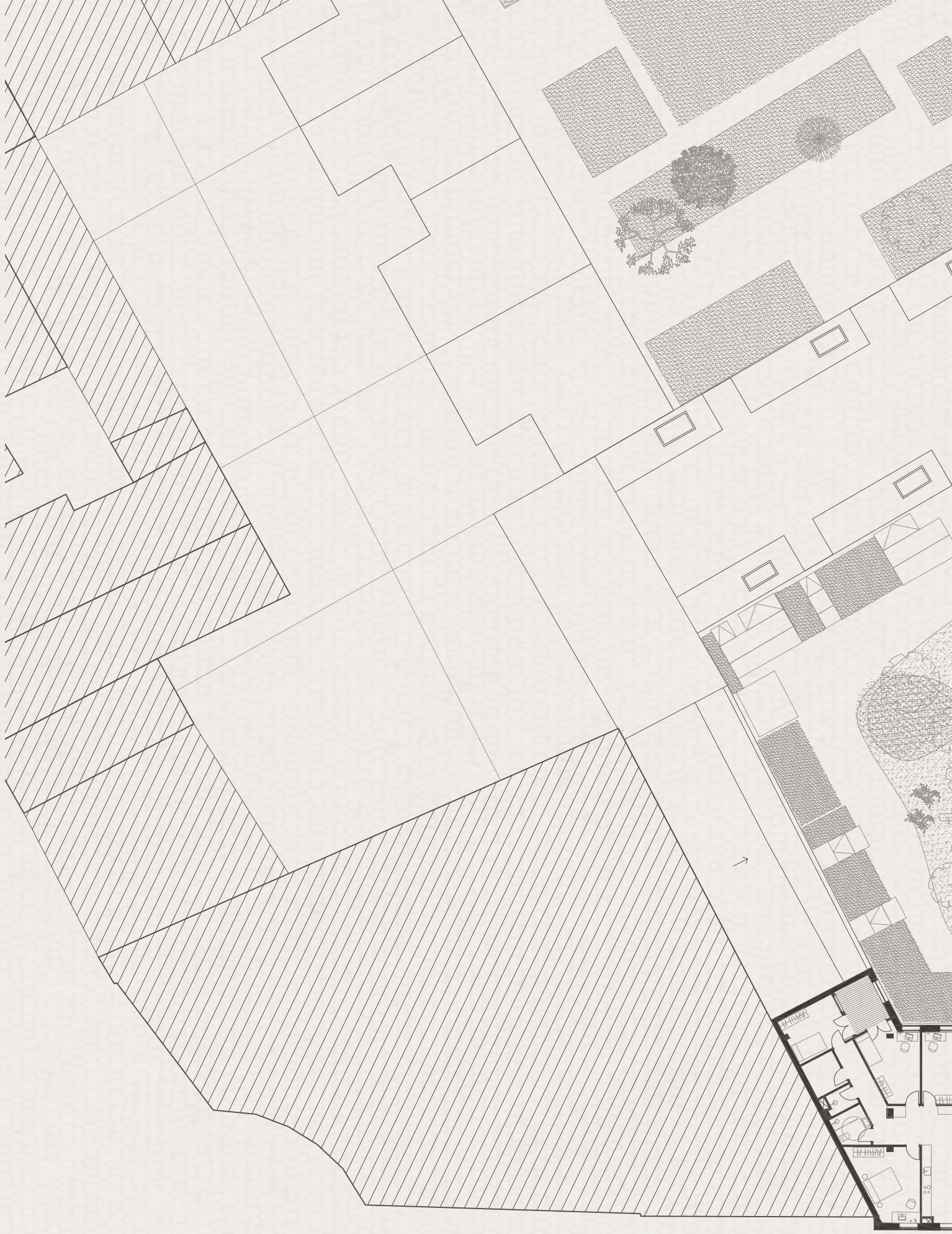














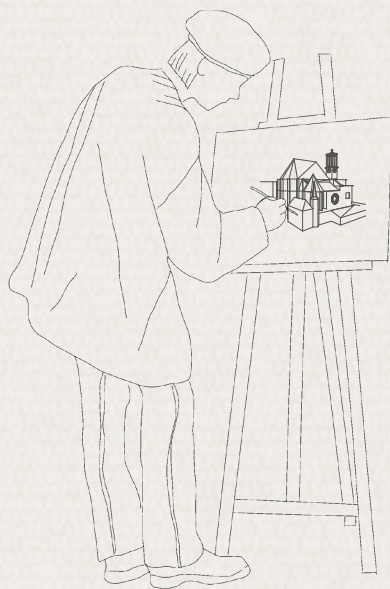
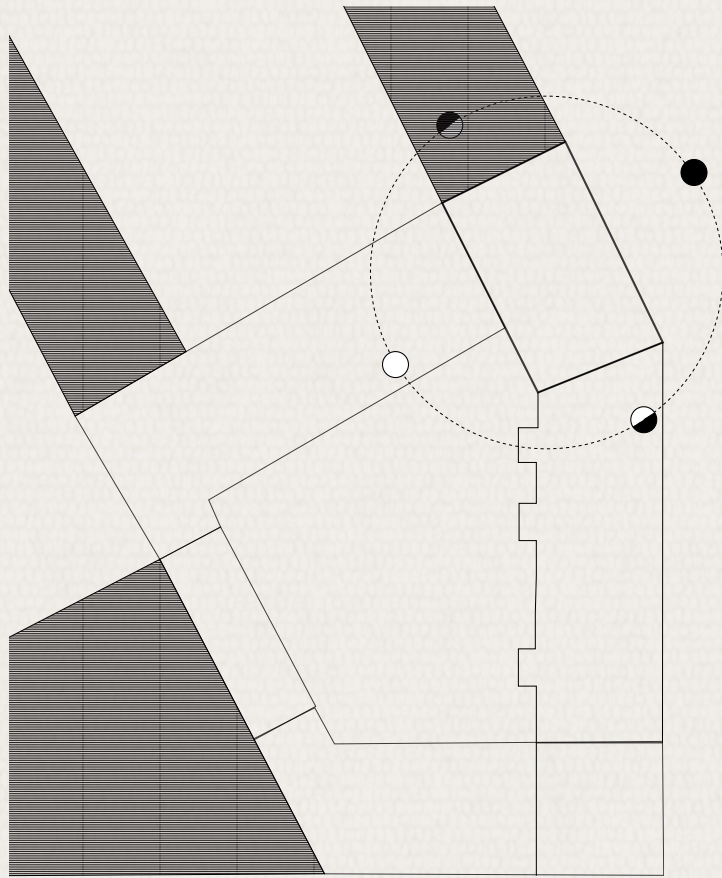
BUILDING SCALE

Entrance building

An entrance is an opening, a passage normally covered that allows access to a certain place. Entrance also means admission to a place, a gate that establishes who and when will enter the place, both if it is indoor or outdoor. The entrance of a building is extremely important for the role it establishes on a streetscape: it shapes the identity of the building. Moreover, the entrance should be identified and distinguished from any other, it should not be confused with any other place, because it is a functional place but also a good shelter for those who inhabit it.

The entrance to the courtyard is in scale and easily identifiable by the shape of the buildings it belongs to. The courtyard can be accessed by three different entrances: one main entrance and two sides entrances. The main entrance creates a covered passage where other activities happen underneath: shop windows and working spaces are visible from the inside and access to the same building can be found in the passage.

The same building faces both the church and the courtyard corners, so becomes the urban identity of the outside and inside space. The orientation of the building is mostly north-sided, however, beautiful and unique views of the church and the courtyard are offered from the building. The characteristics suggest both public and private functions: a pop-up shop and a café on the plinth, artists ateliers on both the first and second floor, and an exposition area



accessible from all the city on the top floor. The entrance building is shaped becoming formal on the north side and attractive from the interior of the courtyard, making the place identifiable but also resilient and open, thanks to the artist's activities.



Tweede Waal Straat

Molenpoort Alley

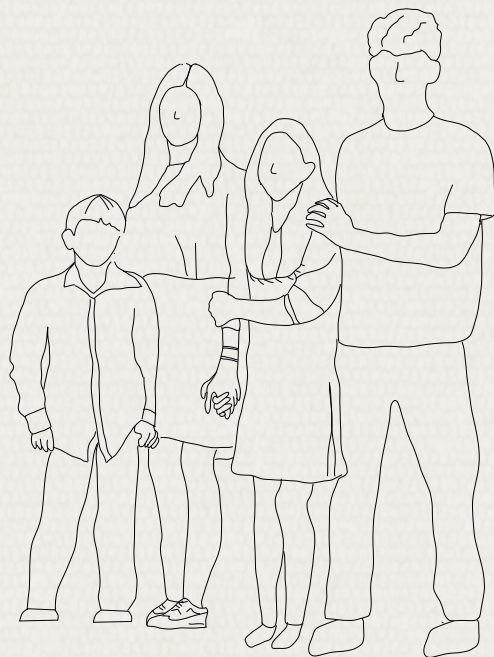
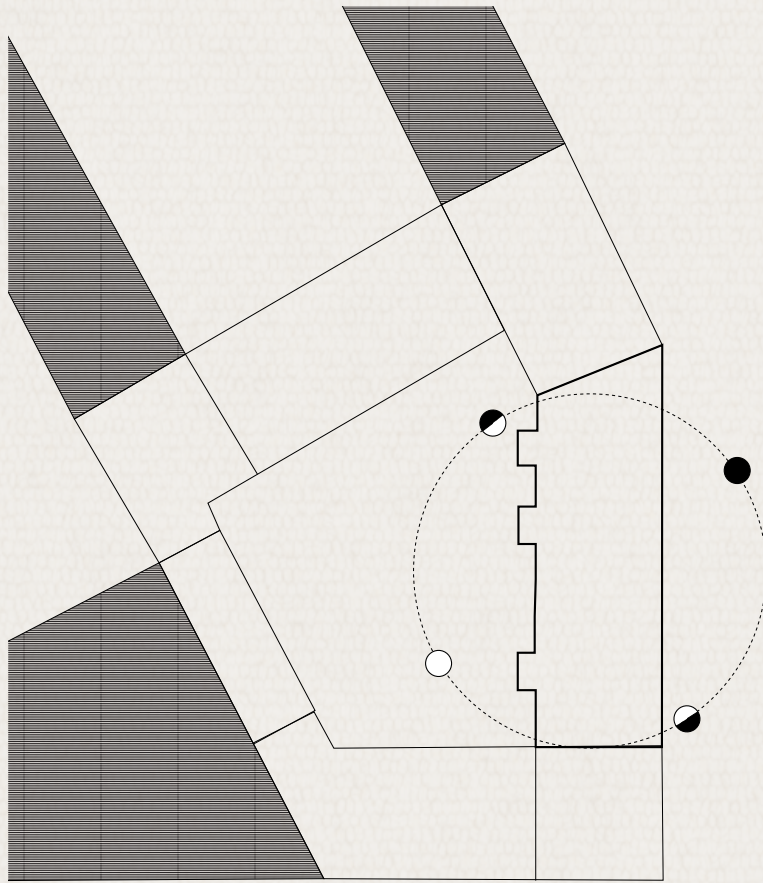
Courtyard entrance

BUILDING SCALE

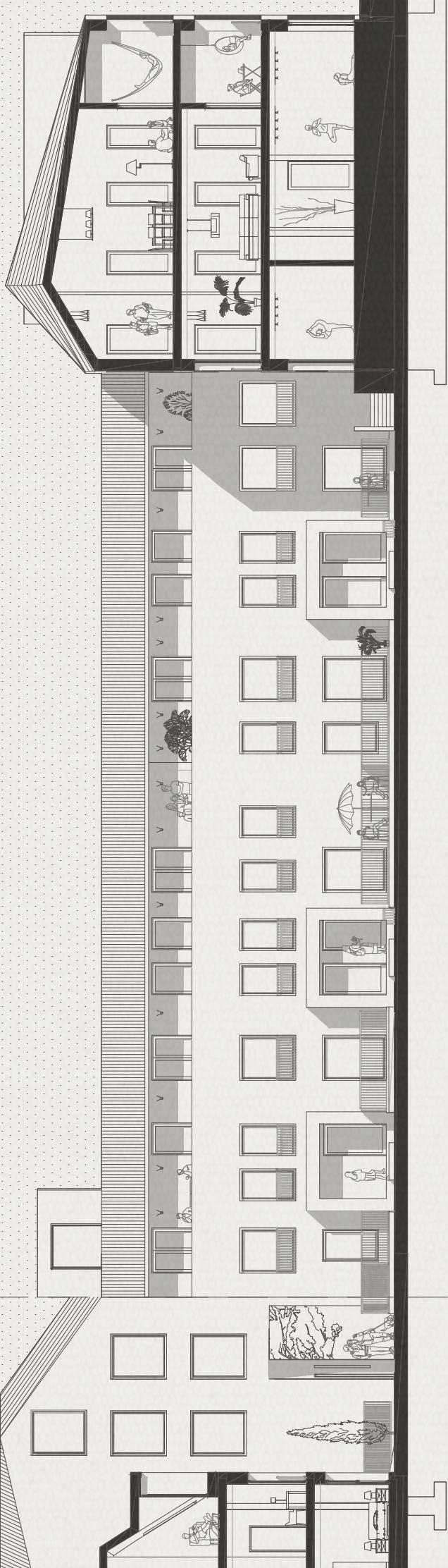
Family housing

For families, housing is meant a collection of dwellings that offer enough space to host a family, something rare to find today in the contemporary city. Families are meant as groups of people or a single person with or without children but that has certain necessity to establish their daily life with a variety of activities. Family housing should be flexible, spacious, relaxing, comfortable to be adapted to every need that can change over time. Family housing should have the possibility to offer space for different activities happening at the same time by a different range of people. For instance, children should be able to play safely while their parents are working or cooking, or doing any other activity in the house.

In Nijmegen, the family housing is placed on the left side of the main entrance of the courtyard. The long and low building offers a series of entrances with little private gardens facing the courtyard and the student housing building. The entrances, one close to another make the building inviting among neighbors but also a safe space for children to play and meet when controlled by their parents. The different dwellings develop along with three floors: ground floor with kitchen and living, first floor with three bedrooms, and second floor for a studio space, but also a terrace facing south that offer a different outdoor space than the garden on the ground floor. The functions of the housing allow for flexibility and changes:



re-using the Molenpoort structure as a base and introducing new functions and flexibility the building function as a streetscape on the north side and as an interior façade for the courtyard, always creating an intimate relationship with the surrounding.



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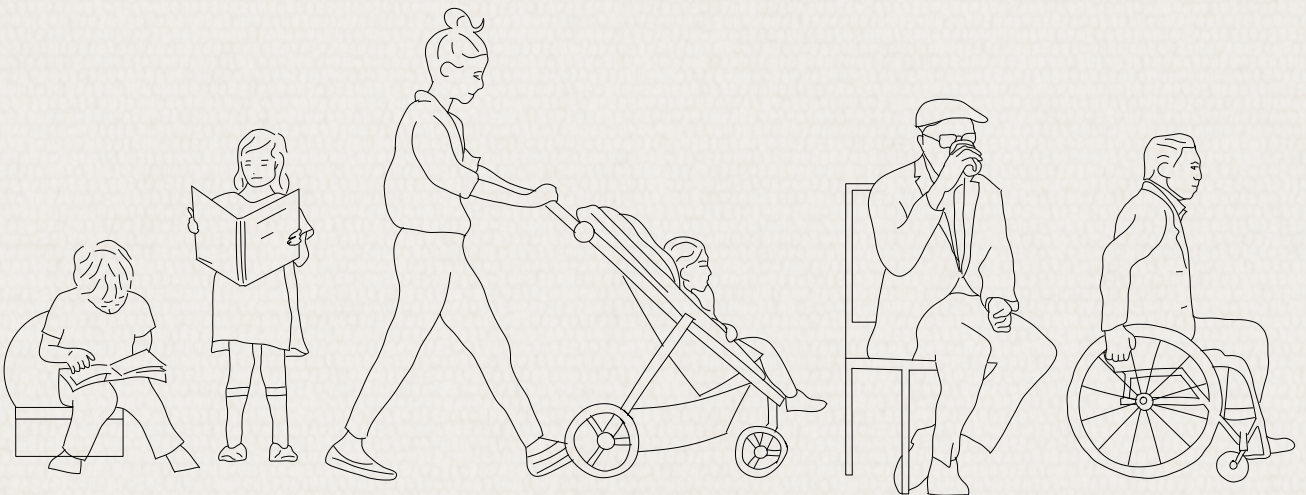
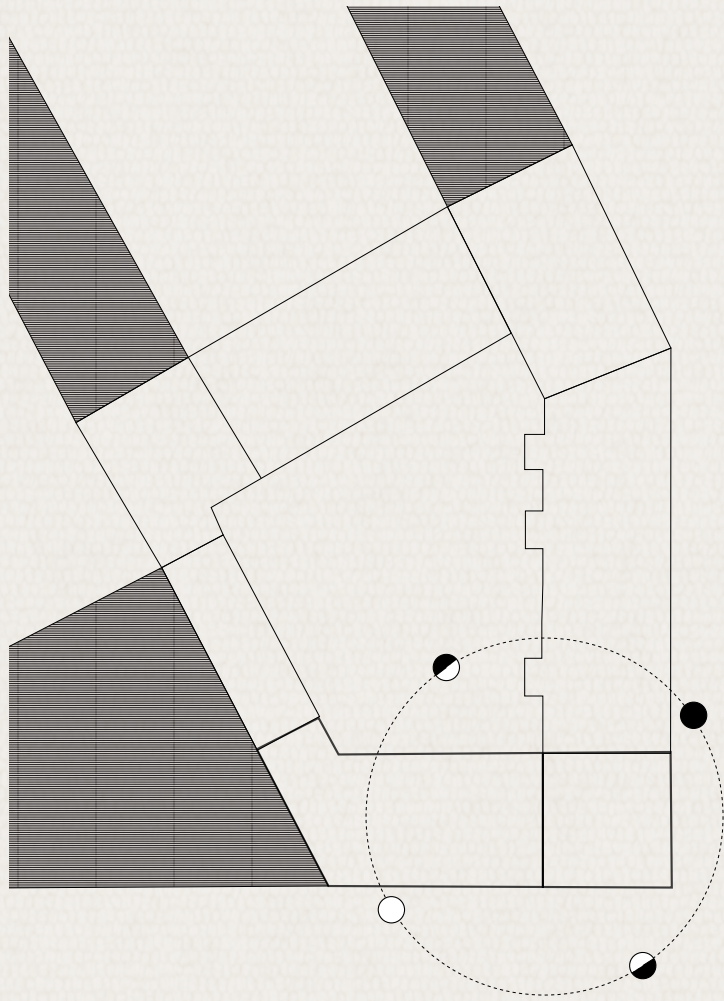


BUILDING SCALE

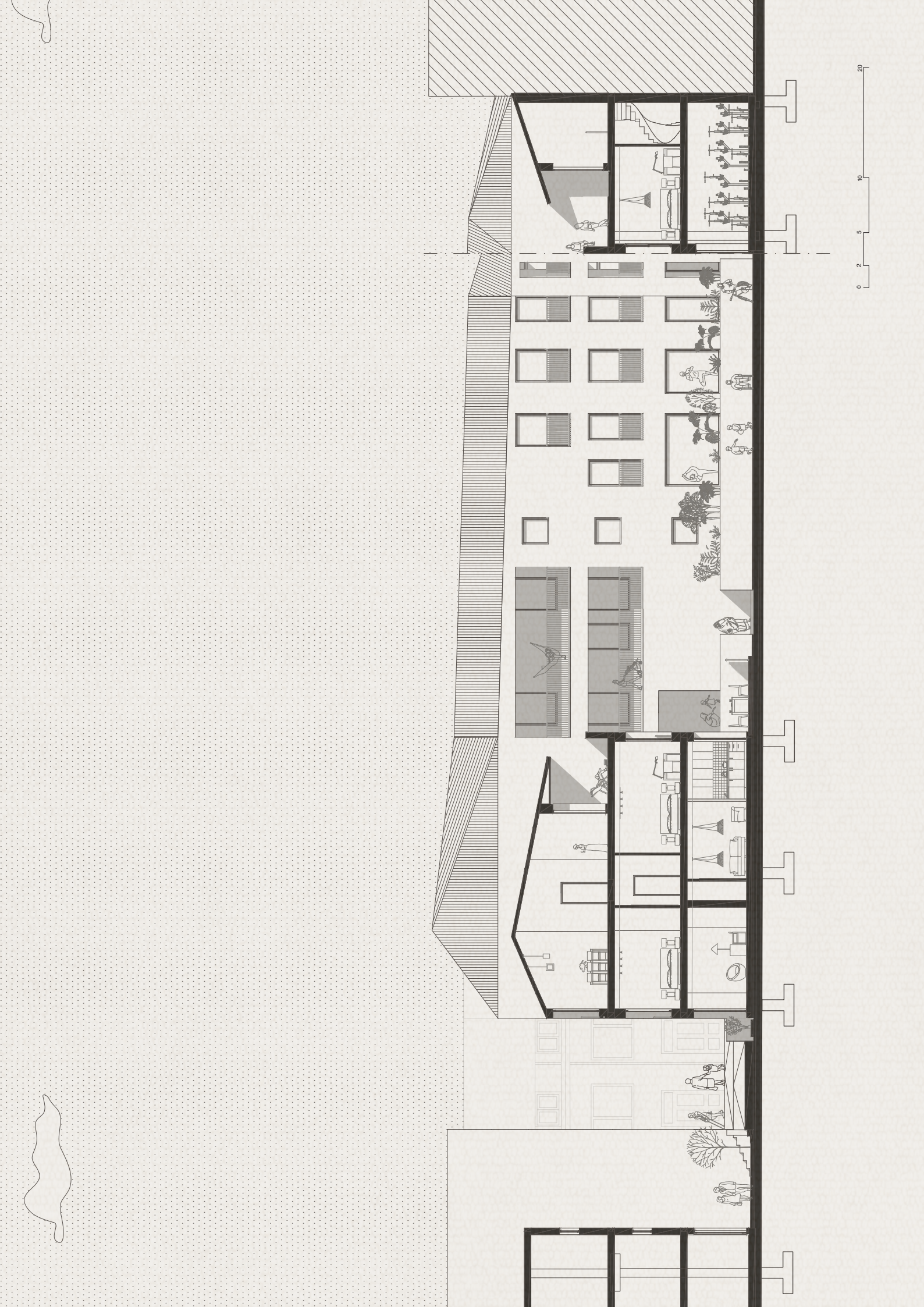
Social housing

Social Housing is housing provided by the government to groups of people that have certain needs or low income which benefit from affordable homes with sufficient services, making other expenses possible such as studying. Social housing is a fundamental feature of the contemporary democratic city to avoid social exclusion and safety. A social housing structure that is connected to services and the city center allows for improvement and ethical behavior of the inhabitants that feel part of a community and not excluded for their social status.

In Nijmegen, the social housing is located in the courtyard on the left side of the main entrance. The building is accessible from both the courtyard and the street, being the building the new streetscape of Tweede Waal straat, but also the interior façade of the east side of the courtyard. This building offers a secondary entrance, a passage that is not clearly visible from the street but allows more permeability and connection to the city and the Mental Health Centre on the ground floor. In fact, the building develops on three floors: the ground floor with Mental Health centre and social housing access, first and the second floor with two apartments per floor for numerous family. Many families find hard to find a place to stay in the city because a few social housing offer enough space to host a numerous family of many generations. The apartments are two per



floor, to allow the gallery to become not only a horizontal circulation element but an equivalent of the garden spaces on the ground floor of the courtyard. The front door can be personalized and lived as a collective space that connects to the courtyard in height. The apartments are long, two sided offering a double-exposed kitchen and living and a variety of rooms (up to five) for hosting up to 9 people per apartment. The circulation position, the gallery, and the development in the length of the apartments allow for changes and new functions to take place in an unpredictable future.

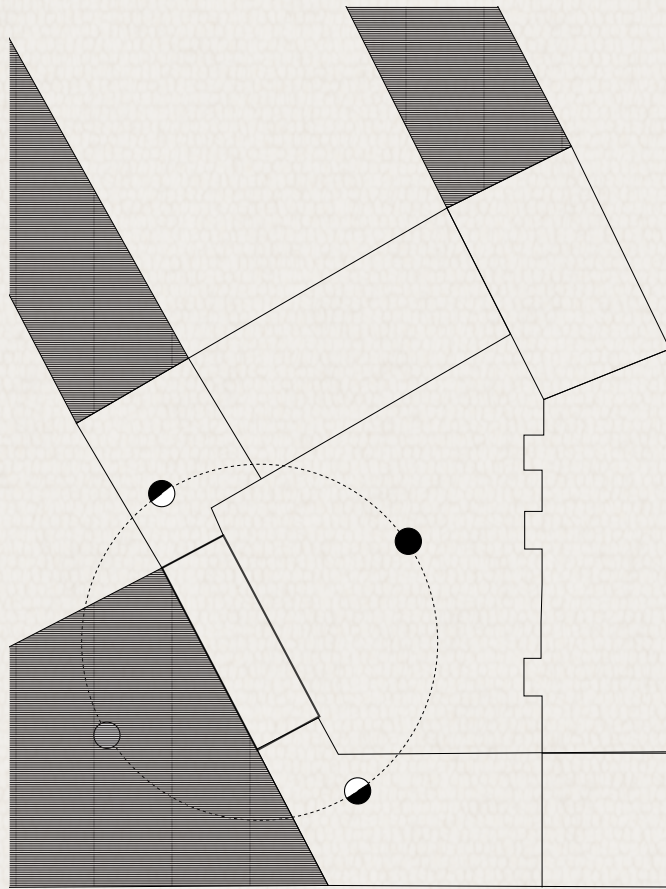


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BUILDING SCALE

Student co-living

Students are people of any age that are studying to acquire certain knowledge to learn and get inspired. Students are offered a variety of materials to become specialists in a specific subject they are interested in but did not have the chance to study formally. Students are young and creative beings dedicating their full time to humanity and science, to creativity and dedication, to individuality and sociality. Students' well-being is extremely important because it assures qualified and motivated future professionals, but also social citizens able always to share and gain knowledge. Their way of living is variable depending on the field of study and their interest, but for sure they need places to live where many activities can take place, but also where an extremely intimate and social life can be experienced. Nijmegen is a student city, where many activities for students take place. In the courtyard, the north-sided building hosts student co-living, the smaller building of the courtyard because it is adjacent to the existing building of the fitness center, and follows the shape of the Molenpoort structure. The building has three floors: on the ground floor, the living area offers open space with a little garden facing the courtyard, on the first floor individual rooms with services are placed along a corridor that leads to a staircase where a covered terrace leaves space for activities. The building faces the family housing with a similar shape and allows for interaction, but also privacy is given by the green of the courtyard as a screen. The students building hosts the courtyard bike parking, letting the building be also a stop-by place, with a really open and interactive ground floor.

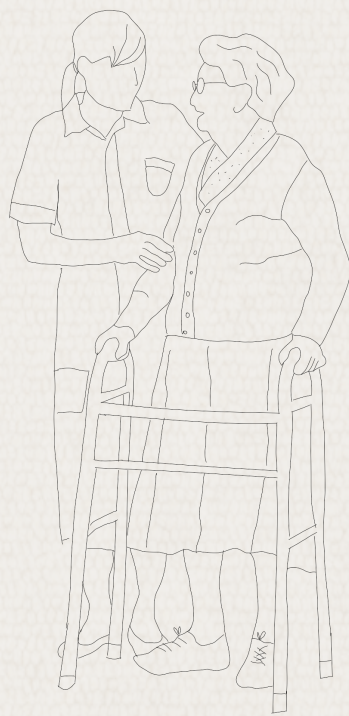
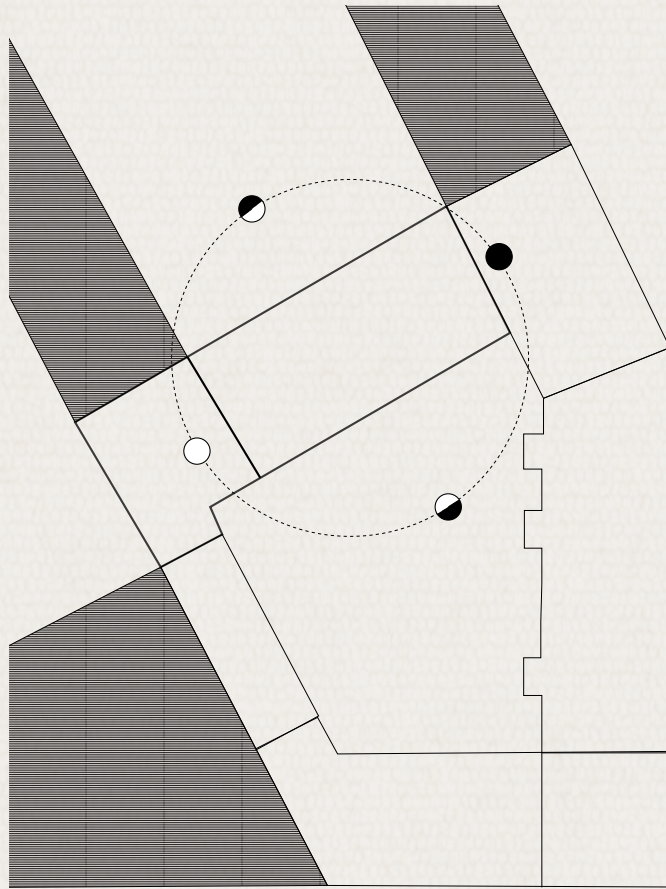


BUILDING SCALE

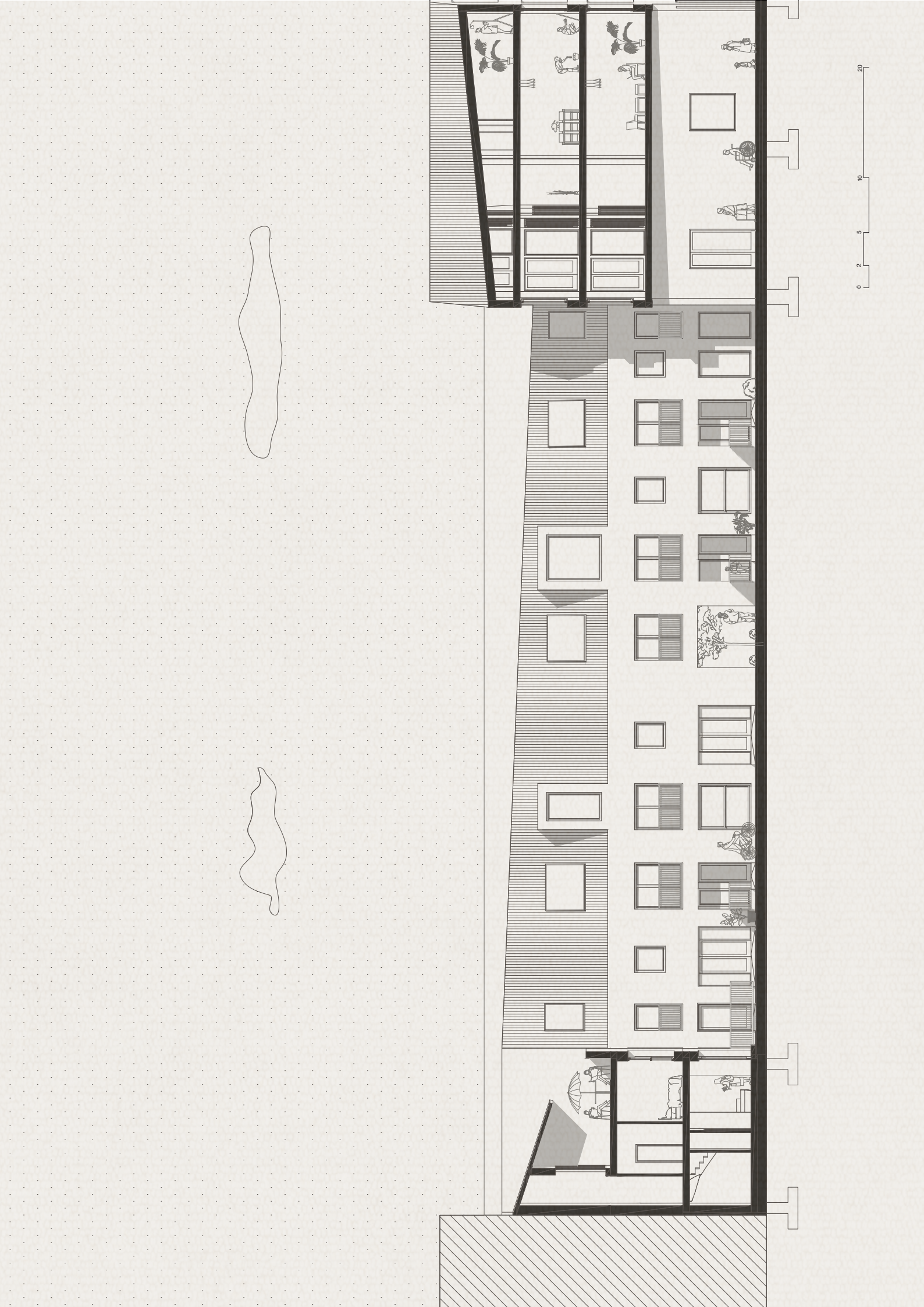
Elderly co-living

The elderly are people in their old age, older adults that in the moment of their life cycle when necessities become different. The Elderly often have limited regenerative abilities and are more vulnerable physically and mentally to unpredictable changes due to their aging. The elderly, as the social housing inhabitants, can face social issues like exclusion and loneliness due to their different conditions in our fast speed society that always prioritizes the new to the old age, especially because the elderly can become frail and require a high level of care.

But we always forget that senior citizens have also a long-term life experience, and they are the last remain traces of a previous society that was extremely different from ours. Especially lately the old age population has increased and keeps increasing, we have to consider the elderly as a resource to include and not as a problem to solve. The elderly have the time and the patience to dedicate to certain activities that youngsters are not able to, they have the possibility to still learn new ways of living and contrast the exclusion with society becoming a social resource. The elderly can become the gluing element of a community because they have many necessities but each of them is shared with at least one social group. Contrasting social exclusion to inclusivity, collectiveness, and sharing keep the elderly in physical and mental wellbeing delaying their need for care.



In Nijmegen, the elderly building is located on the right side of the main entrance, and it also offers a secondary entrance to the adjacent courtyard. On the ground floor, there are three entrances for private apartments for those who want to be more independent, a daycare for the neighbors, emphasizing interaction among generations, and the co-living main entrance that leads to the upper floors. The co-living, developed on the first and second floor, offers a variety of spaces that can be accessed also by the inhabitants of the ground floor. On the first floor single private rooms with services or double rooms with services are offered and an apartment for rental also for guests. On the side a woman shelter, as a commemoration to beguines, is offered to support the local women that suffer social discrimination, to emphasize the role of diversity in the courtyard and acceptance of minority groups. On the second floor, the common spaces such as a kitchen and flexible living are offered, with also more independent rooms with a little kitchen. The variety of activities happening in the building allow the elderly to find their space and status of privacy: the courtyard is a place for meeting and chatting with different generations, the first floor is more private while the second floor is a place for movement, sharing and interaction among co-inhabitants where many activities can take place.



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BUILDING SCALE

Social alterity and authenticity

Alterity and authenticity are celebrated by drawing an inclusive space in Molenpoort, abolishing the filling in the shape of the shopping centre, and creating a variety of spaces, corners, lights, impressions and memories. The spaces with different scales are a new bridge with the past configuration, the existing Molenpoort and the overcoming.

The program on the plinth restores the old idea of the Guesthouse mixing it with the beguinage urban principle including a Mental Health center accessible to all the citizens with daily activities and rental rooms for therapy. The therapeutic living environment allows citizens and residents to enter the site and find a calm environment. Then, in the inner façade of the courtyard a day-care, a woman shelter, and different typologies of housing are proposed to allow interaction among the residents, building everything on the existing Molenpoort structure. The architecture is light and calm, materials from the past are reused, and all the buildings are lower than the church. In this way, the visual connections among the neighbours are always present, offering two-sided views of which at least one is on green open space. From the outside, the façade is always active and the visual control always presents making it a safe environment for everyone, from the inside Molenpoort structure and materials are exposed, creating almost a brutal interior space where time is always physically present thanks to material tex-



tures that also establish a different relation between the indoor and outdoor space.

While the housing is all grouped with a communal entrance to the courtyard on the Northside, the different housing accesses are located around the green central space for inhabitants to meet. The courtyard acquires recreational, therapeutic, and social meaning, but also guarantees a strong sense of privacy.

In fact, every building offers a vertical connection to the first floor, views on double sides, and private outdoor space. The dwellings belonging to each block are diverse: student co-living face the family houses, while elderly are connected to the social housing and both courtyards. The residences offer outdoor spaces, terraces, or French balconies making the buildings with a friendly and homely character.

The courtyard becomes an inner space of appropriation and slow pace, for social alterity and authenticity. The green spaces, the different materials introduce a new identity for Molenpoort composed of different elements that together create the sense of openness and identity that Molenpoort always meant in history.



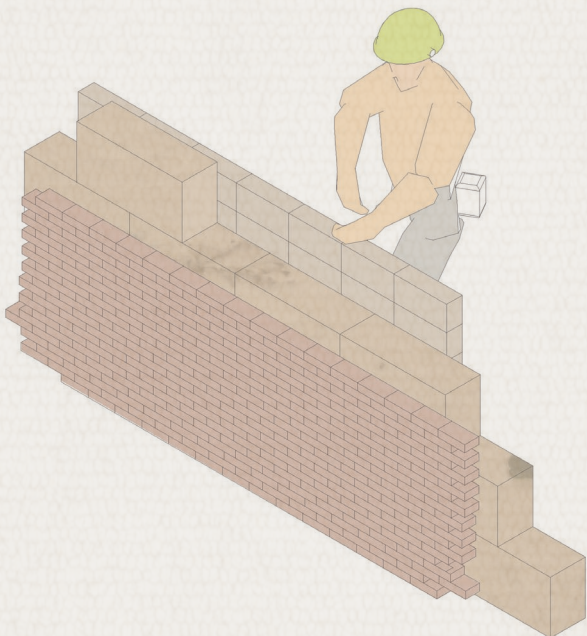
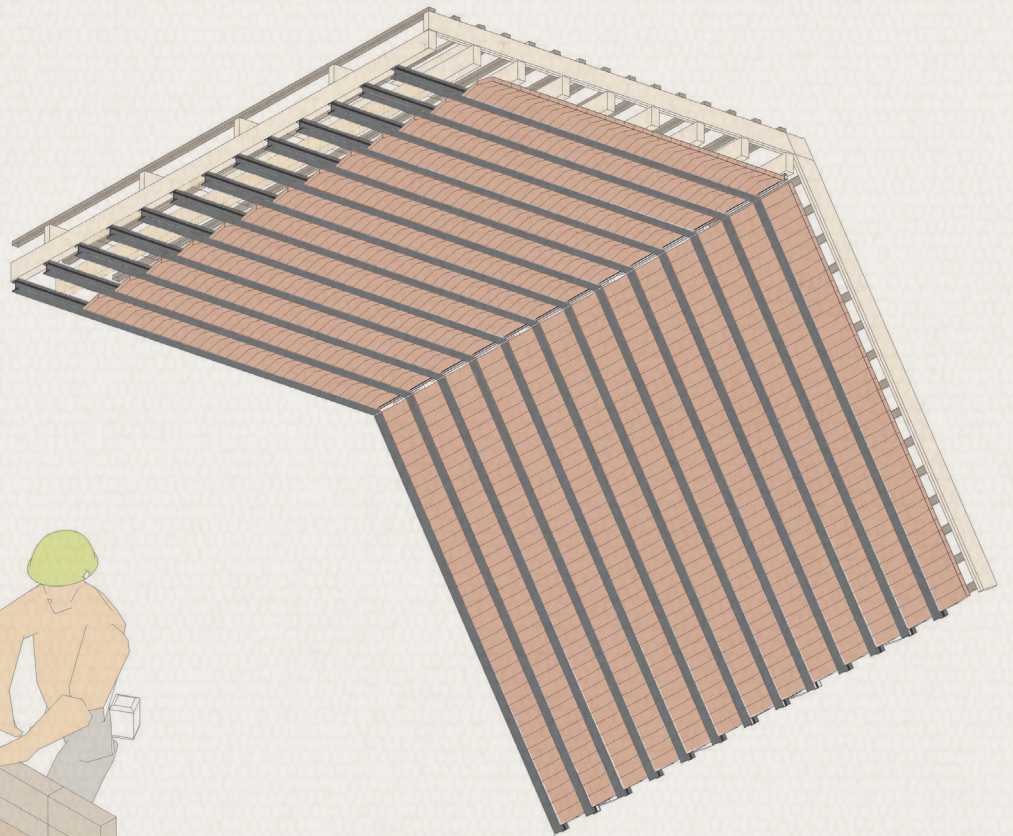
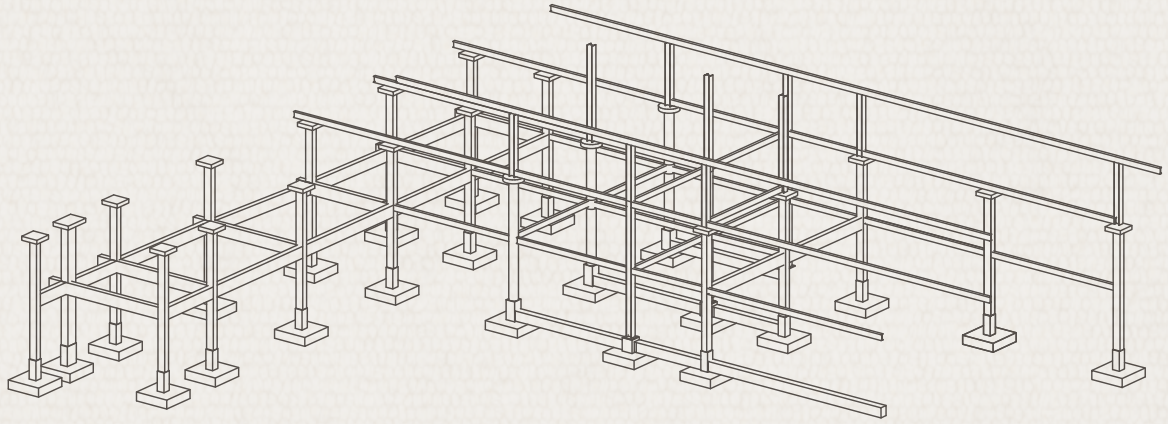
MATERIAL SCALE

MATERIAL SCALE

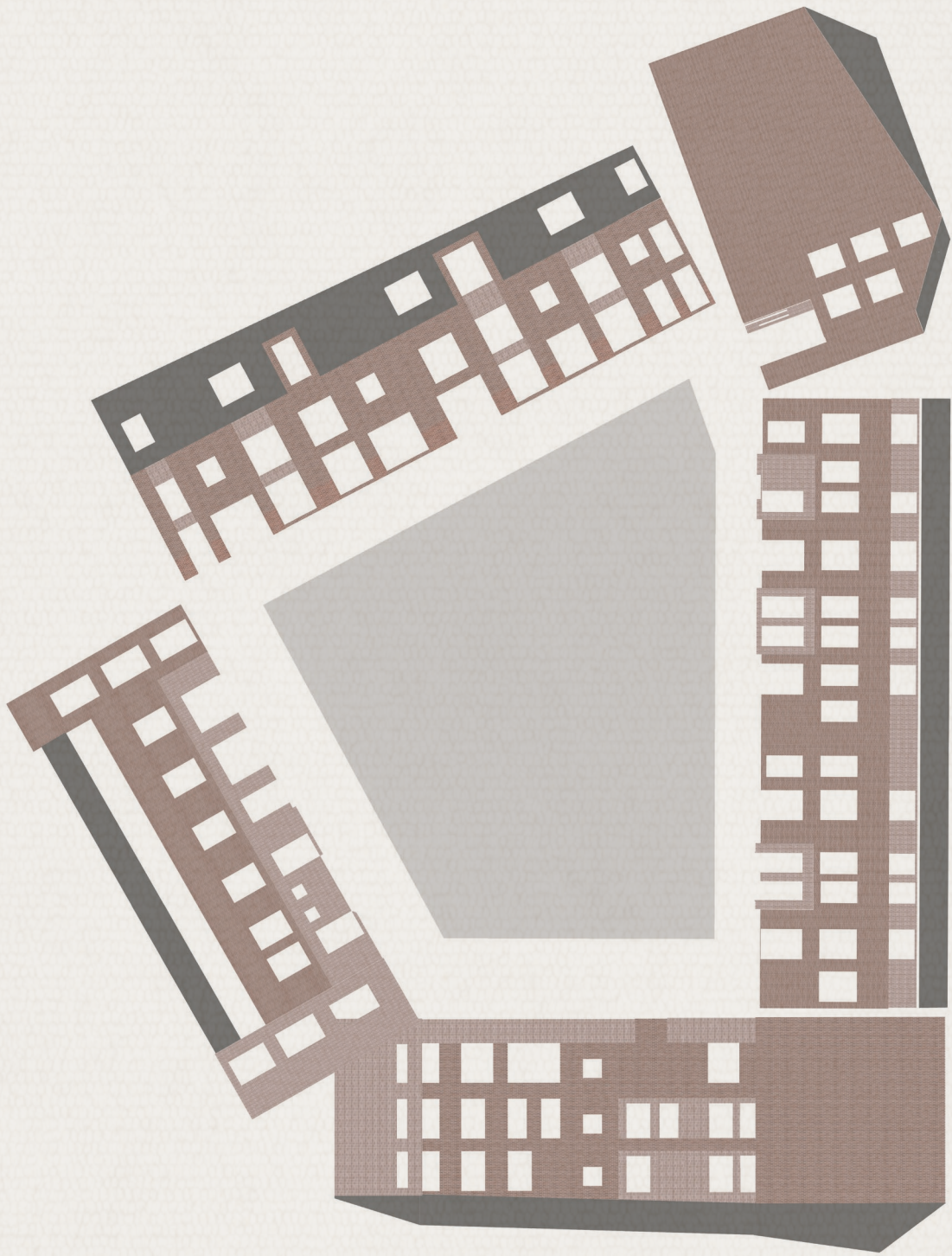
Building honestly

Building honestly means giving value to the construction as a process, as a condition of honesty in material expression and behavior, as a treatment of the true material self and its function. Every material possesses an aesthetic and a functional expression, the role of the architect is to choose the right expression for a specific place, performing the best comfort, aesthetics, and budget. Traditional materials such as bricks have the capacity to express the passing of time on their surface, but the capability to be flexible materials, adaptable to many usages. If materials have to signify different atmospheres, different stages of publicity and interiority, of privacy and collectiveness then we really have to look closer at the vernacular approach to building, because old buildings were capable to create all these atmospheres with the materials they had ready at hand.

In Nijmegen the exteriority of the alley and the interiority of the courtyard have to transmit different types of emotions: entering the courtyard should give a sense of collectiveness, interiority, an organic landscape with a background. Bricks are chosen as cladding in different configurations depending on the building and the emphasis that is suggested by the openings and the relation between inside and outside. The existing structure of the Molenpoort is the main load-bearing grid that is completed with a steel reused structure



to assure stability after the demolitions but also implements new structural elements where are not present. The total new structural element is the façade, which material expression should not represent a totally new time because it encloses a pre-existence. The traditional composition of the wall is proposed to value the slow and precise construction process, but also introduce to the site another time span, something that already suffered a weathering process, that represents the new structure with a contemporary expression but that does not look like new.

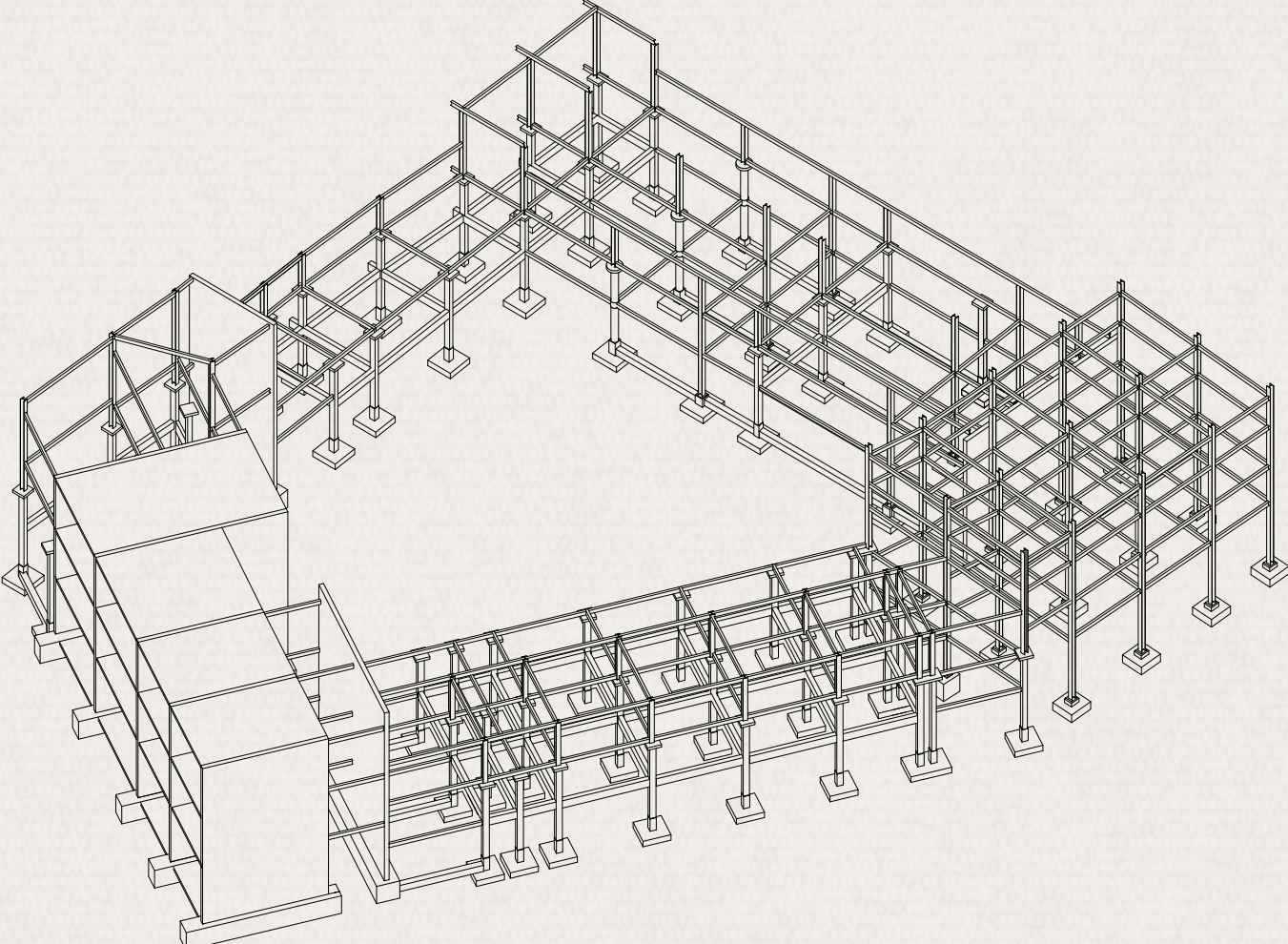


MATERIAL SCALE

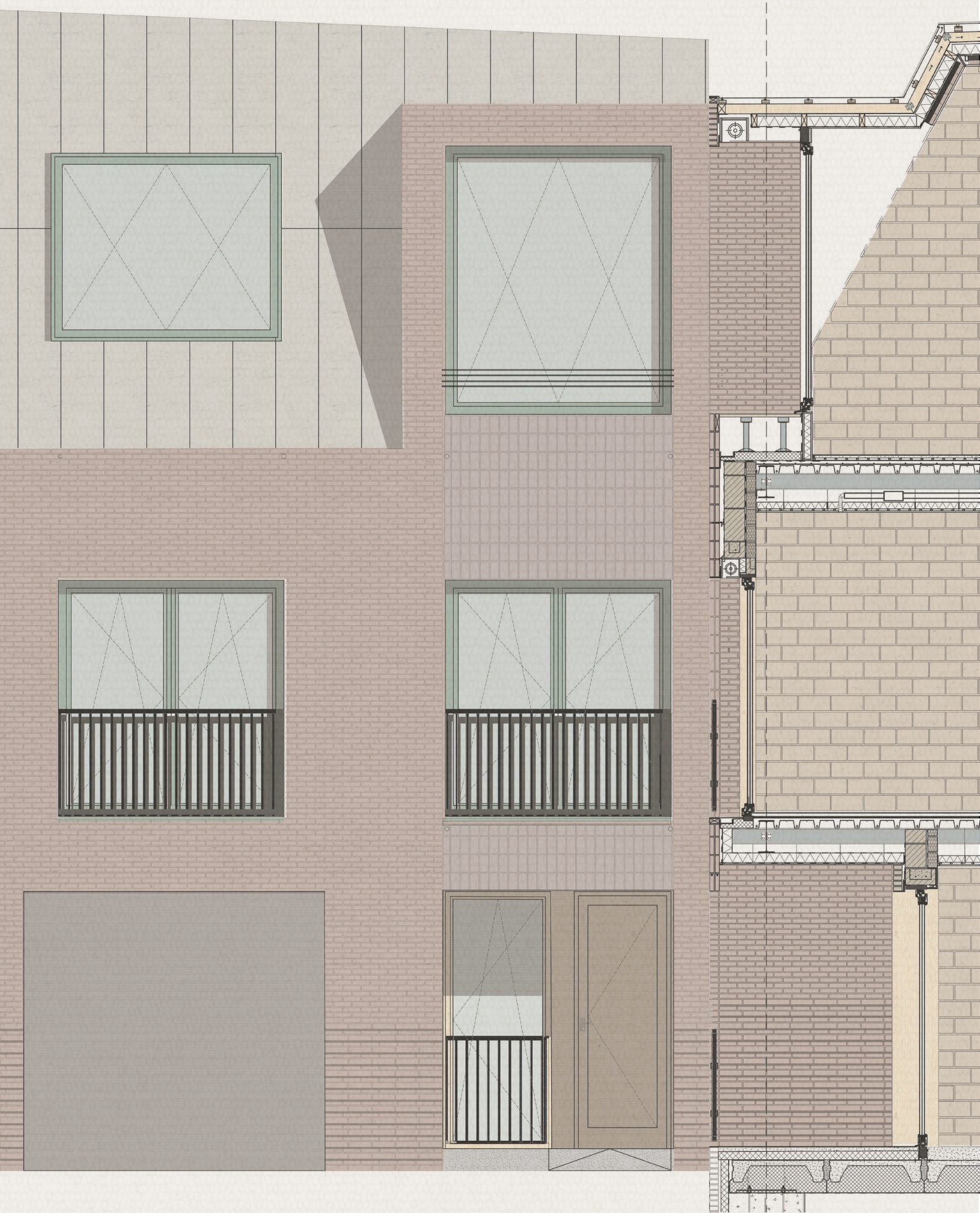
Construction process

The construction process is the physical moment of construction when demolition, disposal, administration, authorization, and the act of building takes place. The construction process is an emotional moment when everyone wants to obtain the best from the planned work, but also when many unforeseen events happen. As already explained in the demolition, the construction process has a huge impact on the neighbors, so if integration and the old social circumstances want to be assured it is important to make the neighbors part of the process.

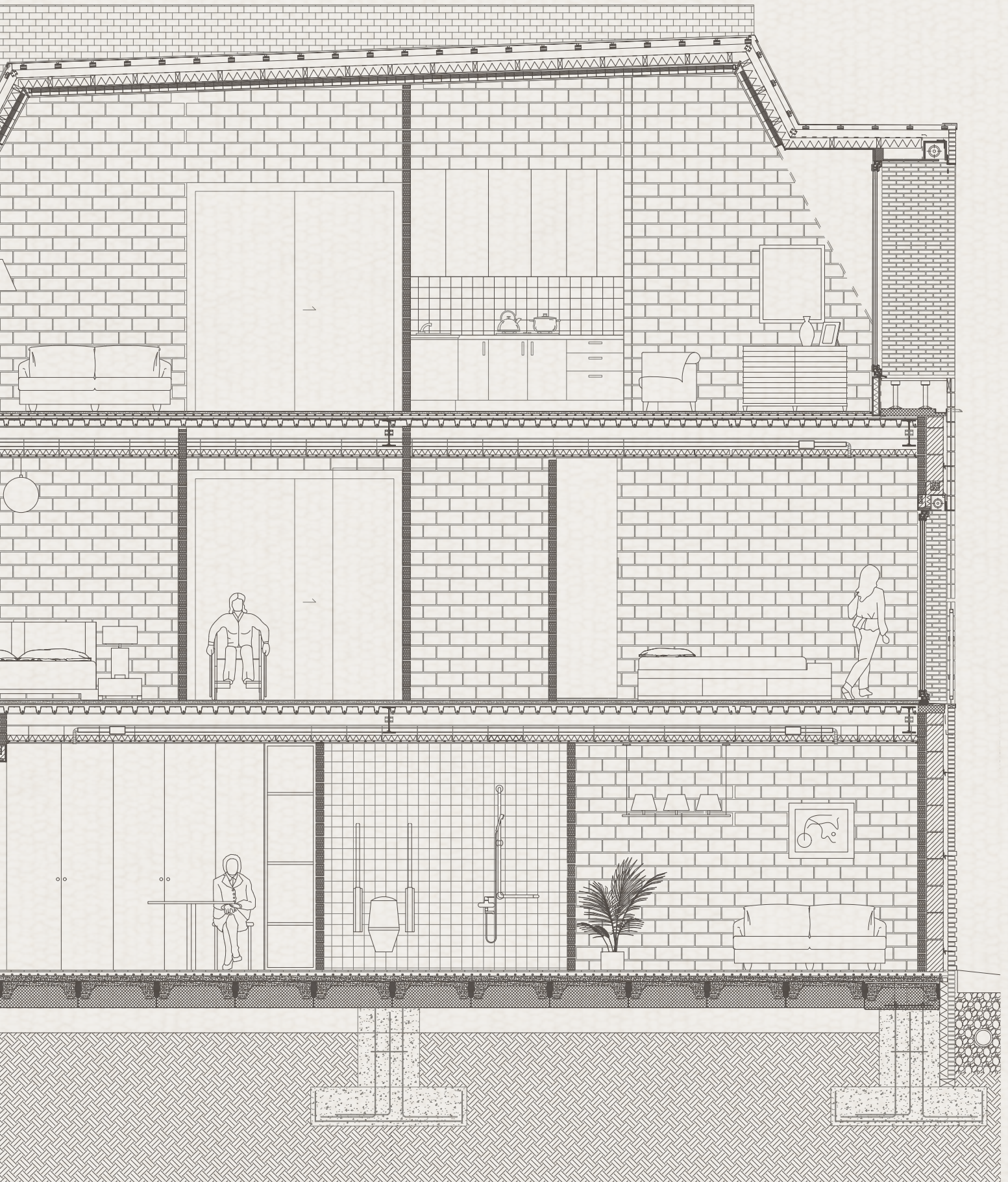
In the case of Nijmegen load-bearing walls made of traditional materials were chosen as new materials because of their sustainable behavior, but also their capacity of being built by anyone. As the program suggests an art and craft school on-site, the reused bricks, the hemp blocks, and the compressed clay blocks could be prepared and laid on-site by the same inhabitants. The slow process of building gothic cathedrals made become the most monumental architecture of the middle age, because the involvement, the awareness of the changes that were happening on-site made people feel part of it. The slow process of building with traditional materials brings on-site creativity but also values the architecture made of people, which can be imperfect, but part of a process whe-



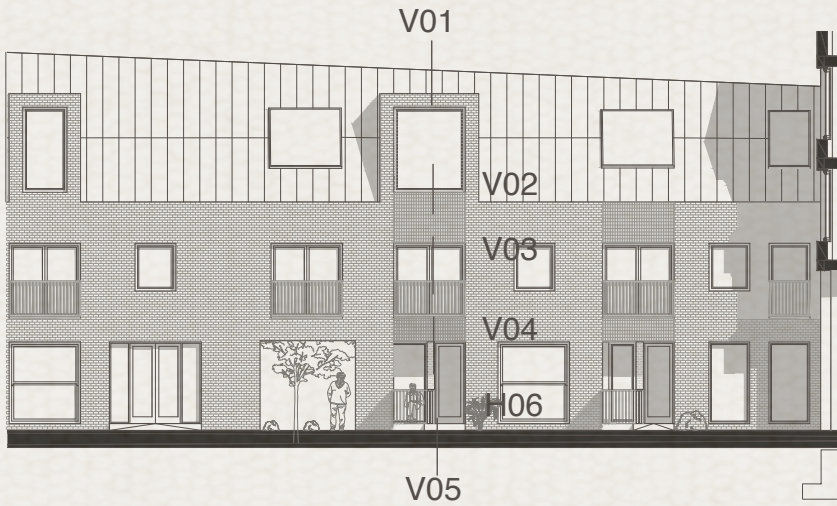
re everyone can participate. As villages would have done a long time ago, the act of building would use the traditional techniques and experiment and improve every time, making the building act a communal knowledge. The rawness of the materials and the honesty of valuing them for what they are proposes a new way of doing architecture, not only as of the industrial and prefabricated process but also a traditional procedure belonging to a place, depending on its culture and materials making it more authentic, sustainable and inclusive.





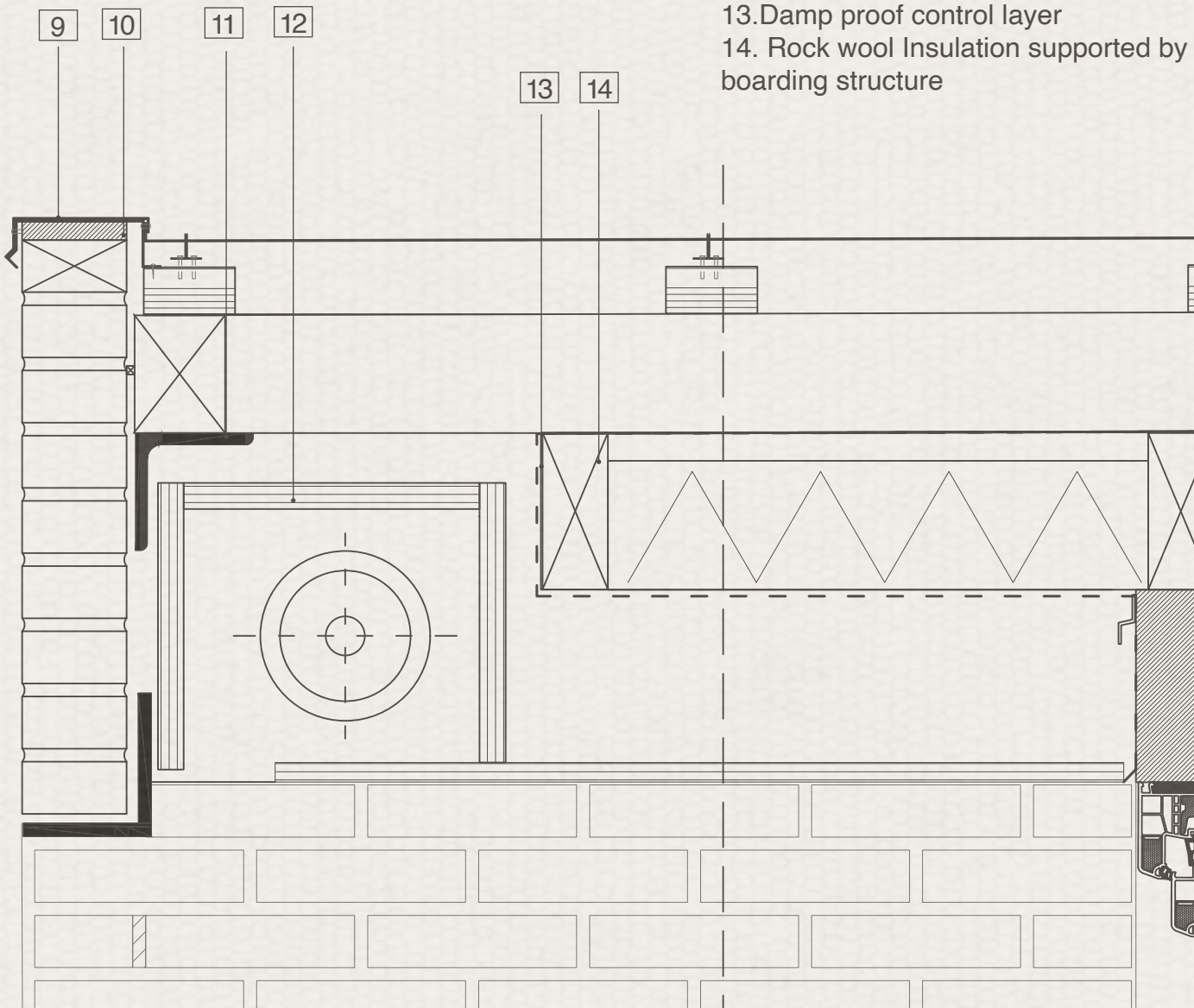


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V01

1. Quartz zinc panels (400x 1900 mm)
2. Zinc panels timber support
3. Timber boarding structure (90 x 40)
4. Damp proof sarking membrane
5. Thermal and acoustic rock wool insulation
6. Vapour barrier
7. Klampsteen bricks laid in couples with tar(160x80x40)
8. Reused (resistance verified) steel beams H100 every two bricks
9. Closure Flashing clapping
10. Support for flashing
11. Steel anchoring for opening
12. Prefab Plywood structure for venetian sun screening
13. Damp proof control layer
14. Rock wool Insulation supported by boarding structure



Insulation (100 mm)

with cement mor-

teams

timber

1

2

3

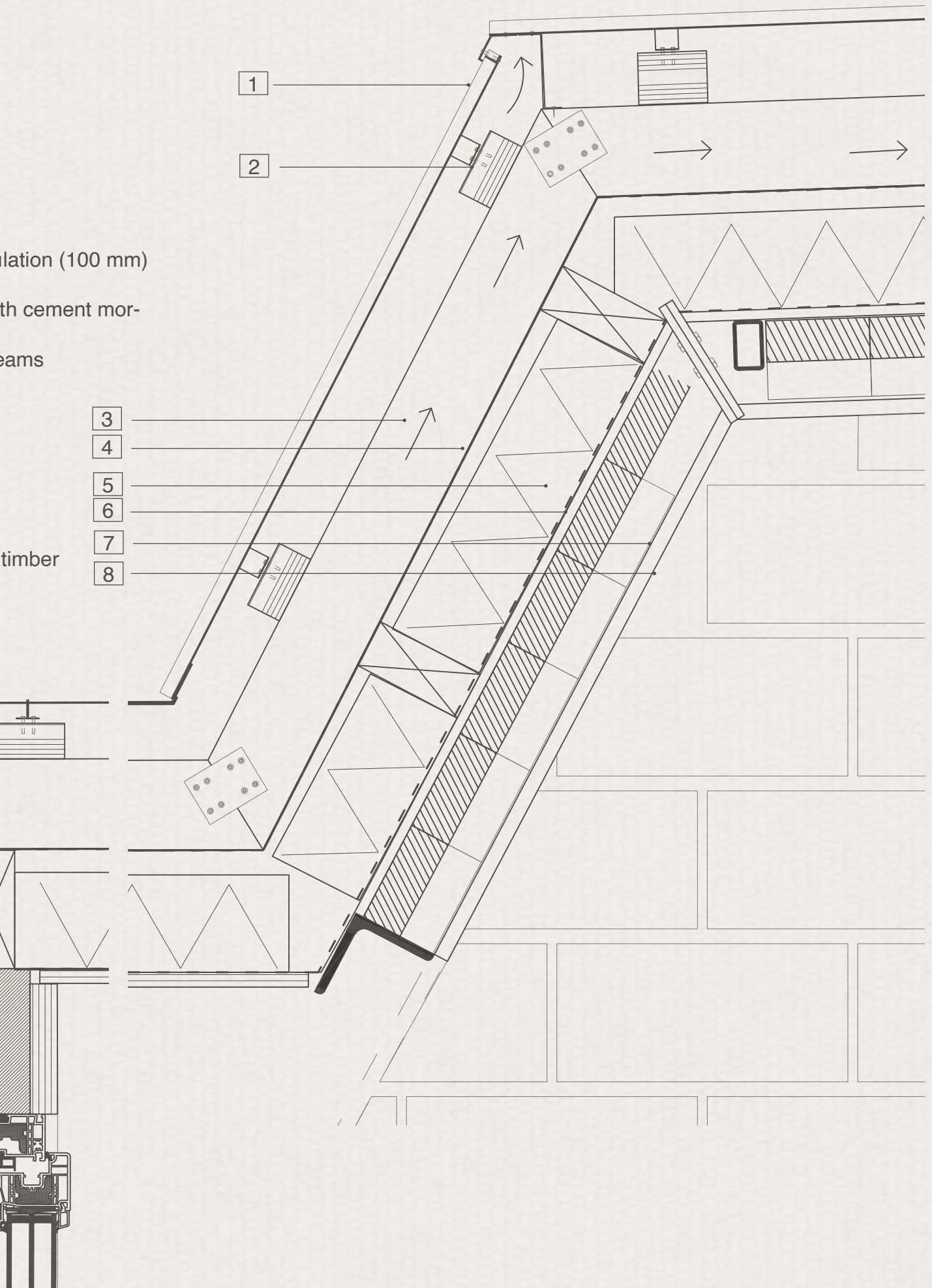
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MATERIAL SCALE

Atmosphere

The atmosphere of a place is the mood of a place, the harmony, the emotions that a place emphasizes or stimulates due to a situation or a particular outlook. The atmosphere of a place is given and created by many features including light, air, sounds, materials, objects, and proportions that have an influence on the sensorial qualities perceived by the emotional sensibility. All the features of a place atmosphere interact with the body of the users influencing their behaviour and emotional status. The role of the architect is to balance all these aspects to create a unique atmosphere of a place that is positive and unreproducible because it is linked to the context it belongs to.



ARCHITECTURE

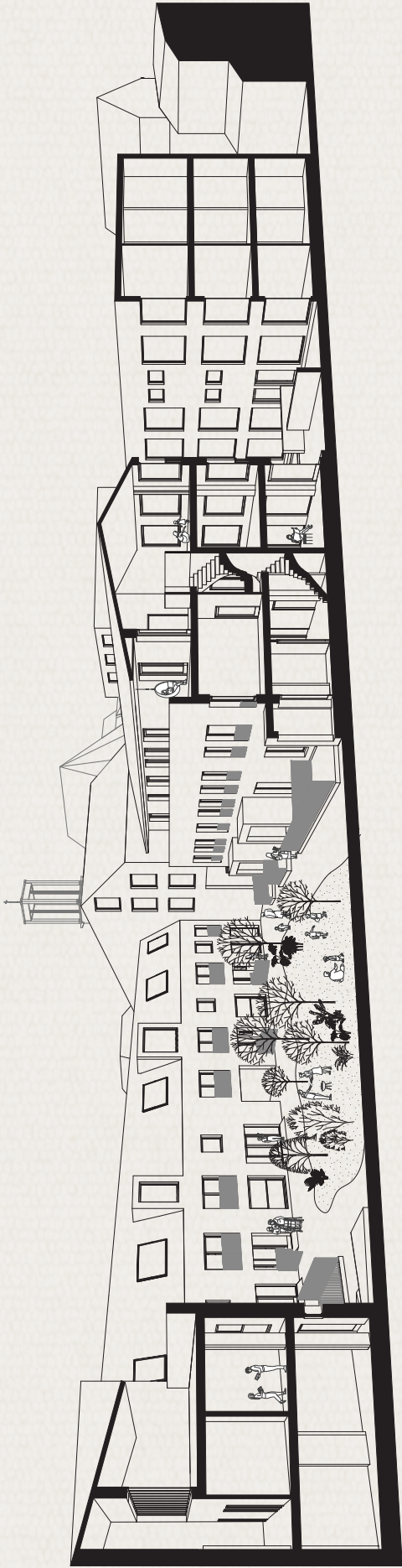
Bricolage of the unknown

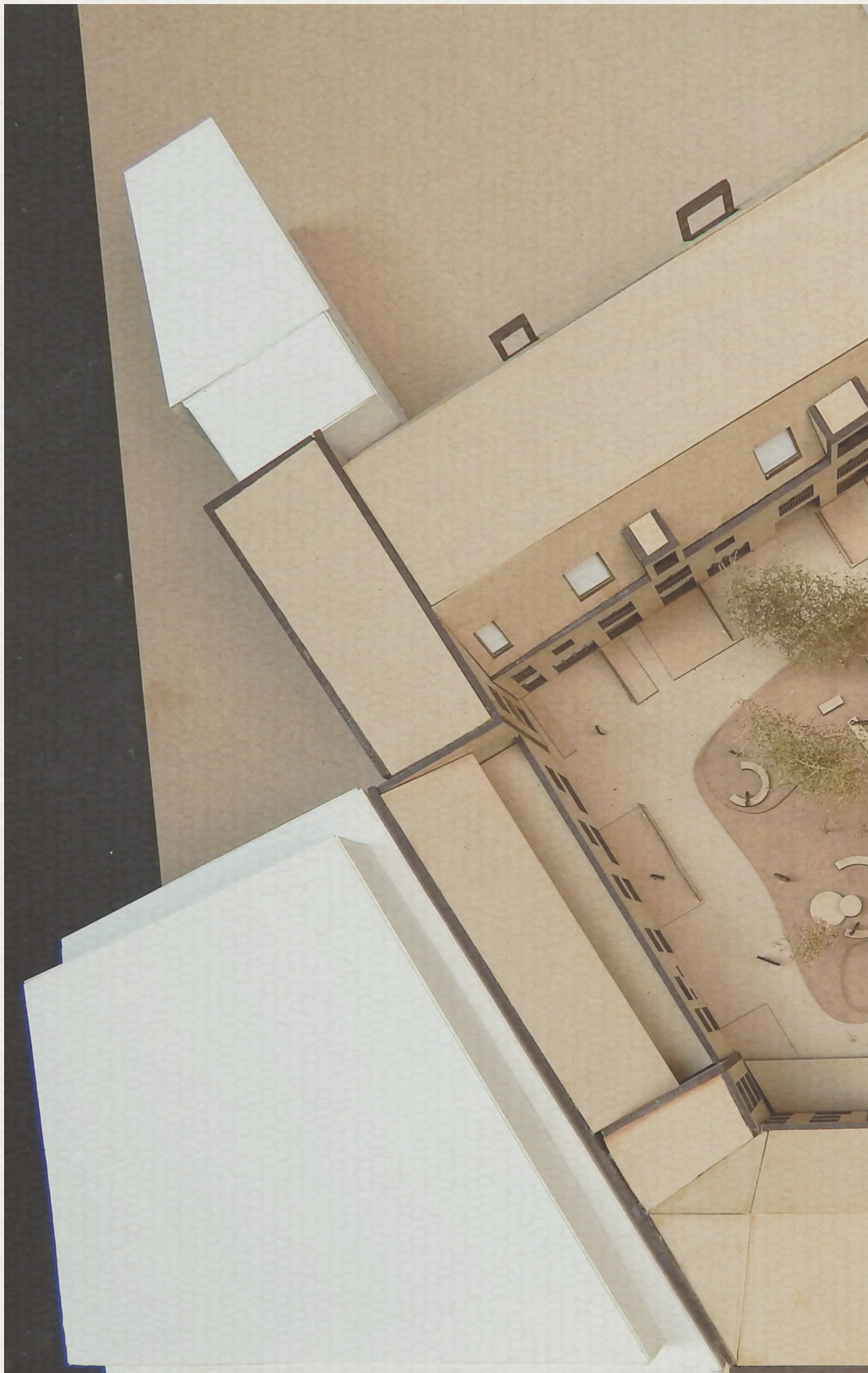
“The project thus offers a small
taxonomy of different housing types.

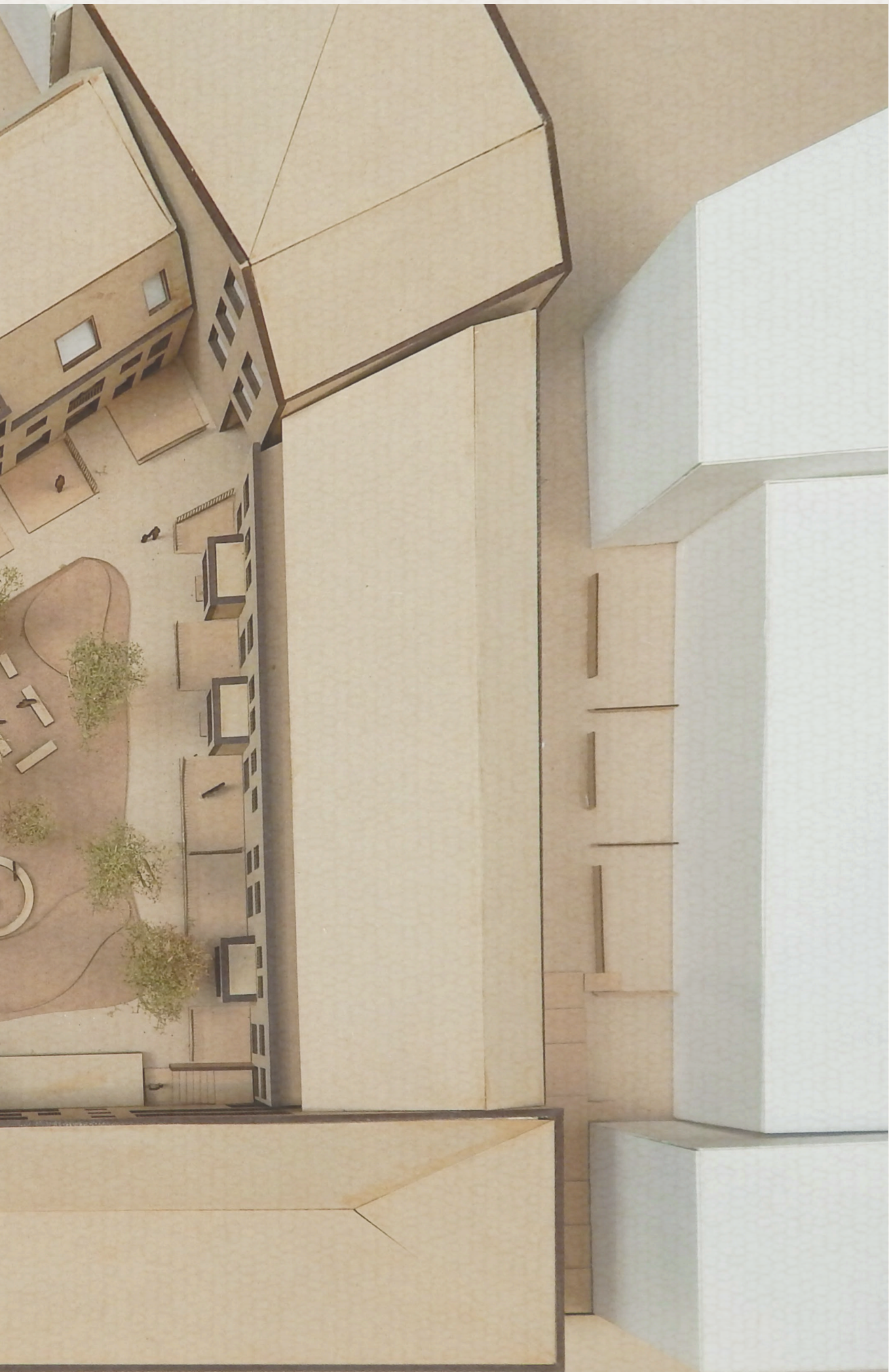
Viewed in retrospective chronology, *Grossform* appears to be the first formulation in which this desire for order in a disorderly world is given a specific form. *Grossform* does not presume a singular aesthetic to be applied throughout the world, but it does presume an internal coherence, which helps
to control the uncontrollable.

Instead of presupposing a causal relation between form and behavior, it constrains
the unpredictable within the comprehensible form.”

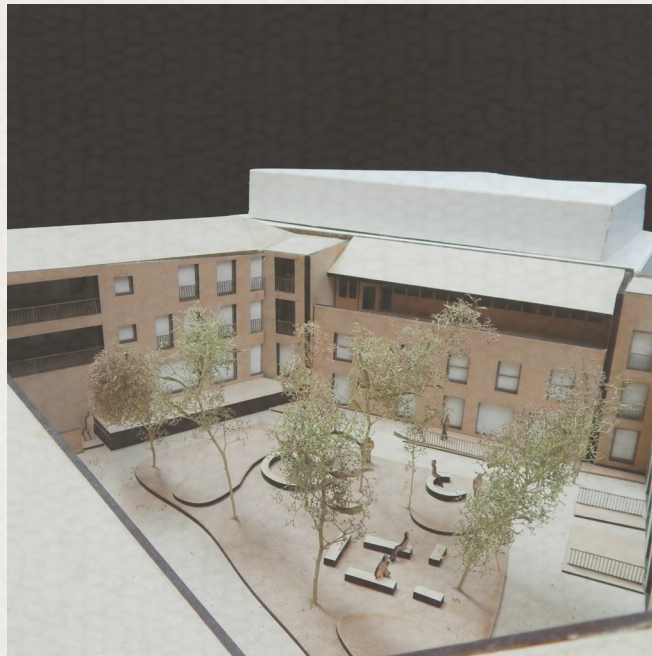
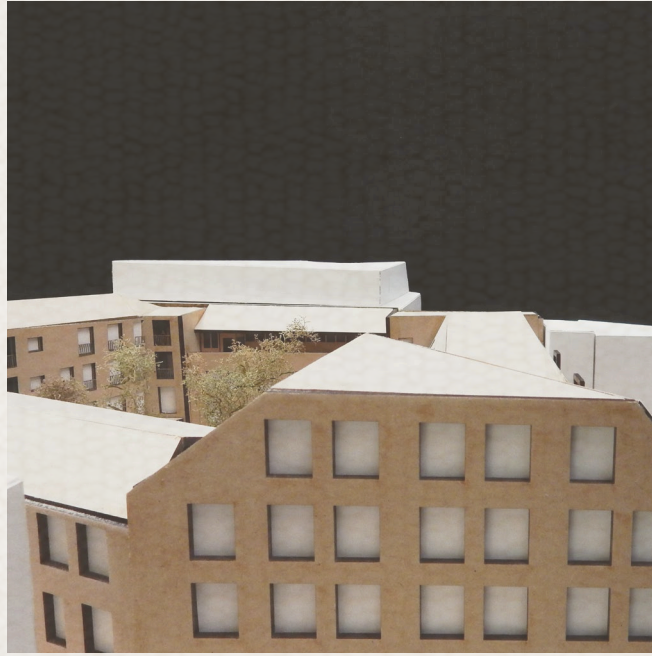
Grossform, A Perspective on the Large-Scale Urban Project , Lara Schrijver,
DASH n.05 - The Urban Enclave, 2011.











The project functions as a catalyst of urban renewal: from an enclosed shopping center the site is transformed into an idyllic space for the city. The new alley inspired by the previous configuration, the religious inventiveness of the beguinage urban layout, with its sobriety and sense of community, the modern city in dialogue with the medieval. The passages as transition spaces, like the old Molenpoort gate protecting from the bustle of the city. The shape proposed to reintroduce a new cultural configuration, bricolage mix of people, container for the inhabitants to live the unpredictable. The architecture is composed of small buildings, a sum of parts readable as one whole which forms have an effect and generate a behavioral response. The morphological impact of the form, being a composition of lower scale parts can generate diversity, but also influence a long-term transformation in the city center of Nijmegen and outside. The form, the morphology, is a response to the existing city but also a dialogue with the surrounding, researching an impact on a bigger scale, on all Nijmegen's society, thanks to the comprehensible form. Just order, without diversity, does not bring change, it is meaningless. But the addition of multiplicity of life and diversity in one ordered disposition make the place alive and communicative. The project is an urban enclave that connects and composes three



periods of time leaving space for the forthcoming. It is an image that remembers its past but also looks at the future, including all types of people, allowing them to have a shared space for the community. Today minorities are put in a condition of unprivileged, excluded and their existence is put on a side, avoided. Only by including a sum of diverse groups in one whole recognizable community that is identifiable with the architectural shape, equality can be achieved. Inclusion is what helps various community members to build a general morality, highlighting diversity as a starting point, and not a limit. Like materials, people can be put aside because they are not interesting for society, but by only deconstructing a dogmatic mindset we can see the quality of the materials and reuse them because they had something to offer that we did not consider. People have always many skills, stories, experiences to offer, we should just give them chance.

Today in city planning is one of the urban dilemmas because needs the agreement of a lot of parts bringing to block development losing the identity due to repetition. A Bricolage of the unknown is the opposite approach to repetition: it embraces the difference, focuses on an intervention that is accurate and linked to a place, an exemplary image for larger developments but never reproducible. The bricolage of the unknown creates a formal presence, defines its boundary through its diversity, and becomes a container, a city



within the city. The shape will be identified, maybe not named, but will bring an impact, will stimulate thinking, interaction, questioning, a new way of thinking about people, about materials, about what we do not know, like every bricolage object.







