

Unfinishing spaces

A theater for the curious

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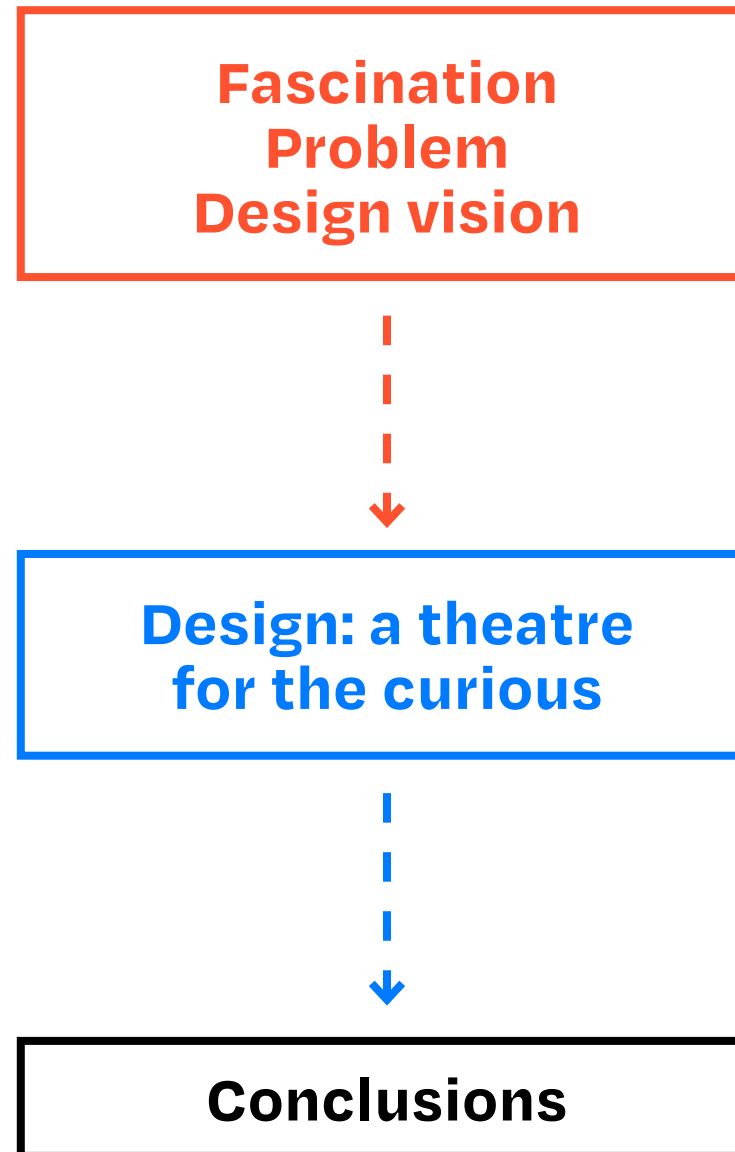
AR3MET105
A Matter Of Scale

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Freek Speksnijder
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AR3MET105 - Anthony Sabo, 21.06.2024



Contents



Fascination

isolation

layering

juxtaposition

boring

stimulating

overwhelming



Socio-urban context

- Promotion of liberal market capitalism
- Consumption spaces to attract tourism
- Shrinking cities, fleeing populations, and dwindling resources
- How can Estonia ensure vibrant urban development?



Rotermann District

- Exemplifies the concept of layering as well as consumption spaces
- Located between the town center, harbour, and high-rise district
- Former industrial site transformed into finished commercial cluster

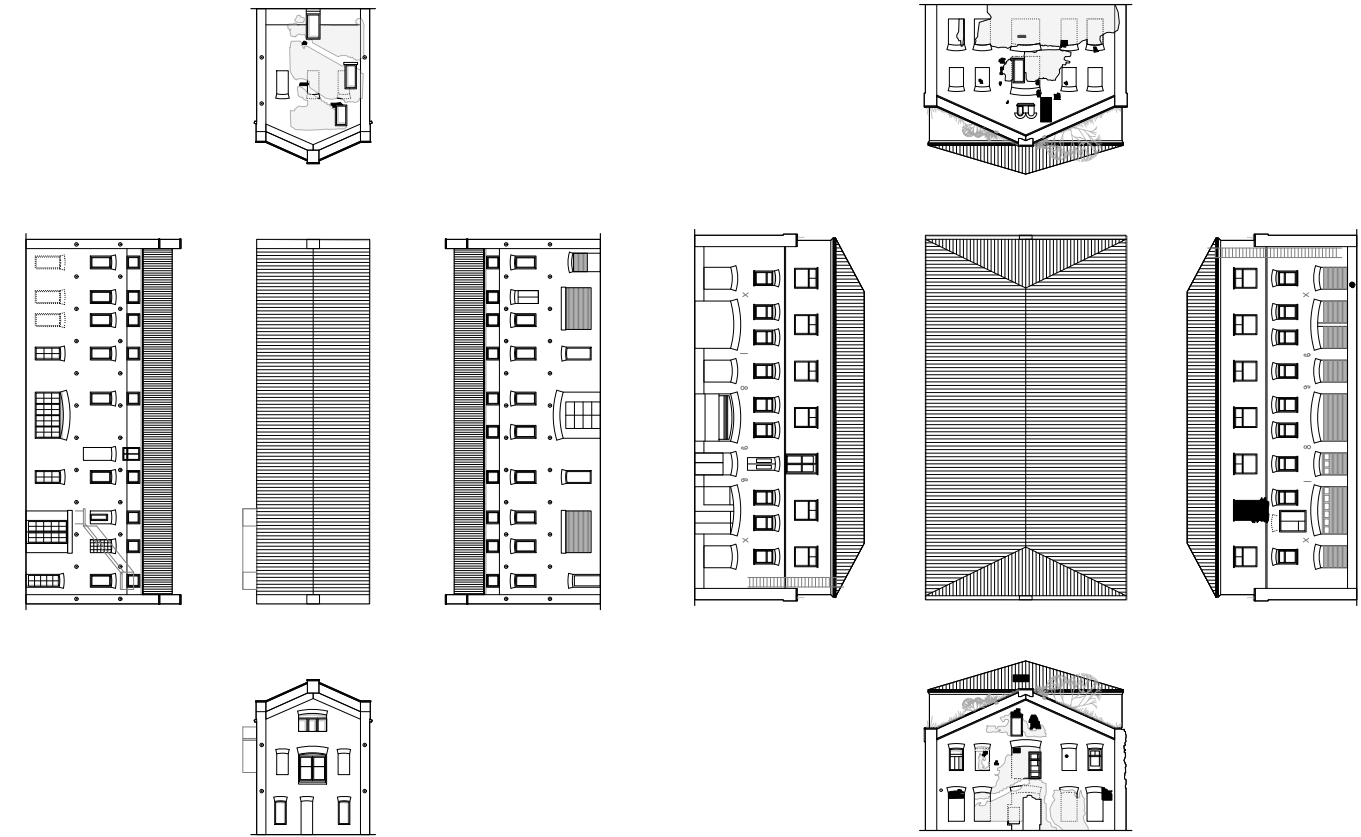
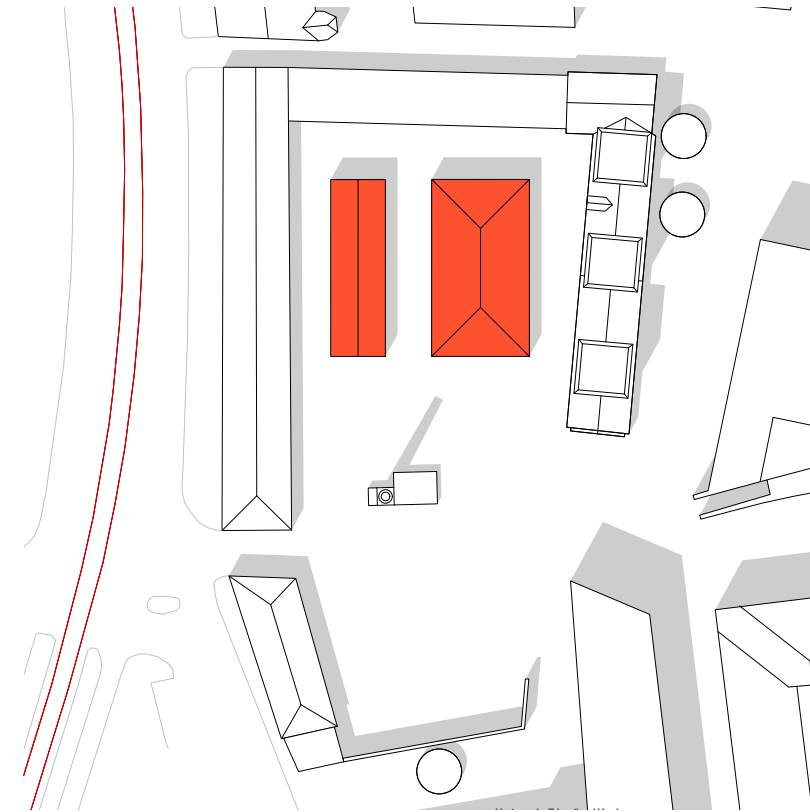


Rotermann District

- Superimposition of Old and New
- Successful layering or crass juxtaposition?
- Erased traces of decay



The Ruins



- The last rough, broken remnants of wool industry buildings
- Patchwork of additions and demolitions over the decades
- desolate condition



Problematising Disconnection

→ **Intuitive Methods:** Interviews, museum tour, on-site sketching, and literature research

Three key issues:

- 1. Interruptions in spatial flow**
- 2. Failure to harmoniously integrate building and street space**
- 3. Inadequate programming for dynamic local engagement**



Interruptions in spatial flow

- Lack of cohesive urban planning leads to spatial flow interruptions to other city areas and the seafront
- Physical Barriers: Navigation challenges due to ruined walls and “No Trespassing” signs
- Main axes lined with imposing, smooth curtain walls



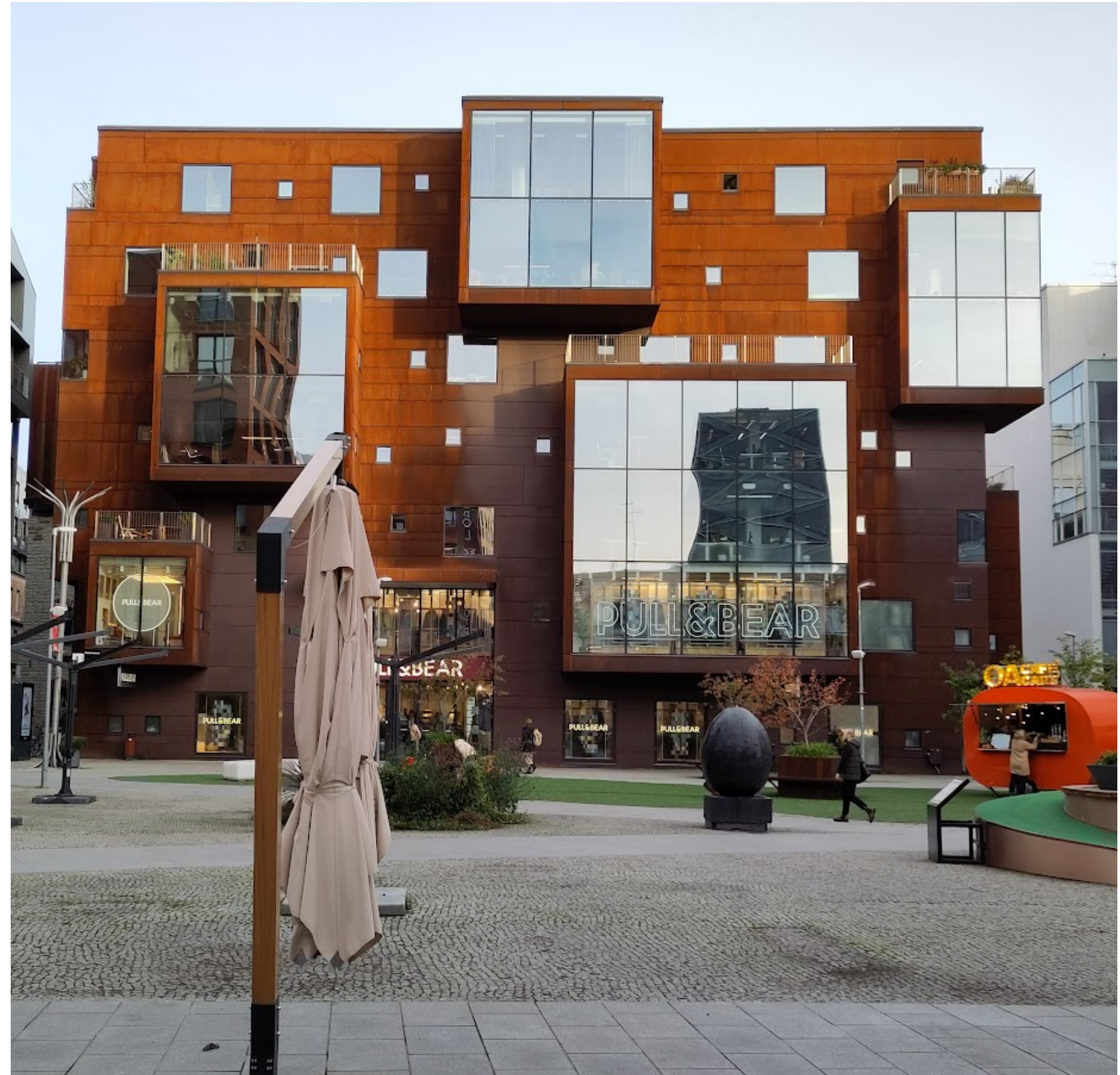
Failure to integrate building space and street space

- Closed-off Environment: inaccessible buildings disconnected from public areas
- The public spaces are bleak and overly dictated
- Strict thresholds between interior and exterior spaces hinder free use and connectivity within the district



Lack of dynamic local engagement

- Programming focuses on consumption and commerce
- Absence of authentic cultural exchange space diminishes community responsibility and engagement
- Is a neighbourhood like an outdoor mall desirable?



Problematising Disconnection

Research
question

**“How can the disconnection of the
Rotermann District be effectively
addressed and rectified, considering
the need for
improved spatial flow,
the integration of building and street
space development,
and dynamic local engagement?”**

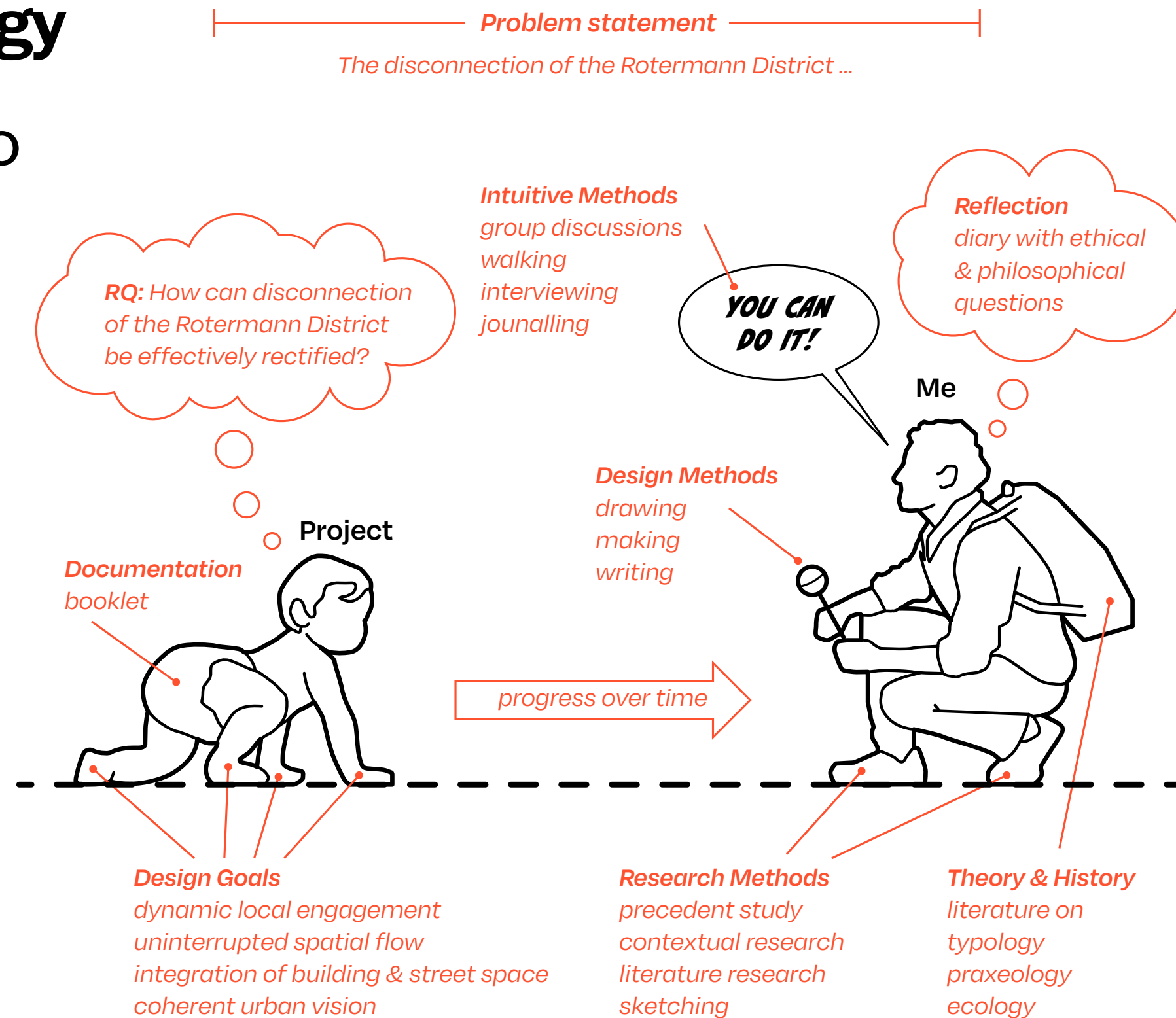
Program: Theatre

- Selection of an alternative theatre as the focal program
- Addresses the larger and local issues and aligns with personal fascinations
- Inspired by discussions with stakeholders in the local music store about community issues and cultural stimulation in Tallinn
- To fill the gap left by a recently lost venue due to temporary licences

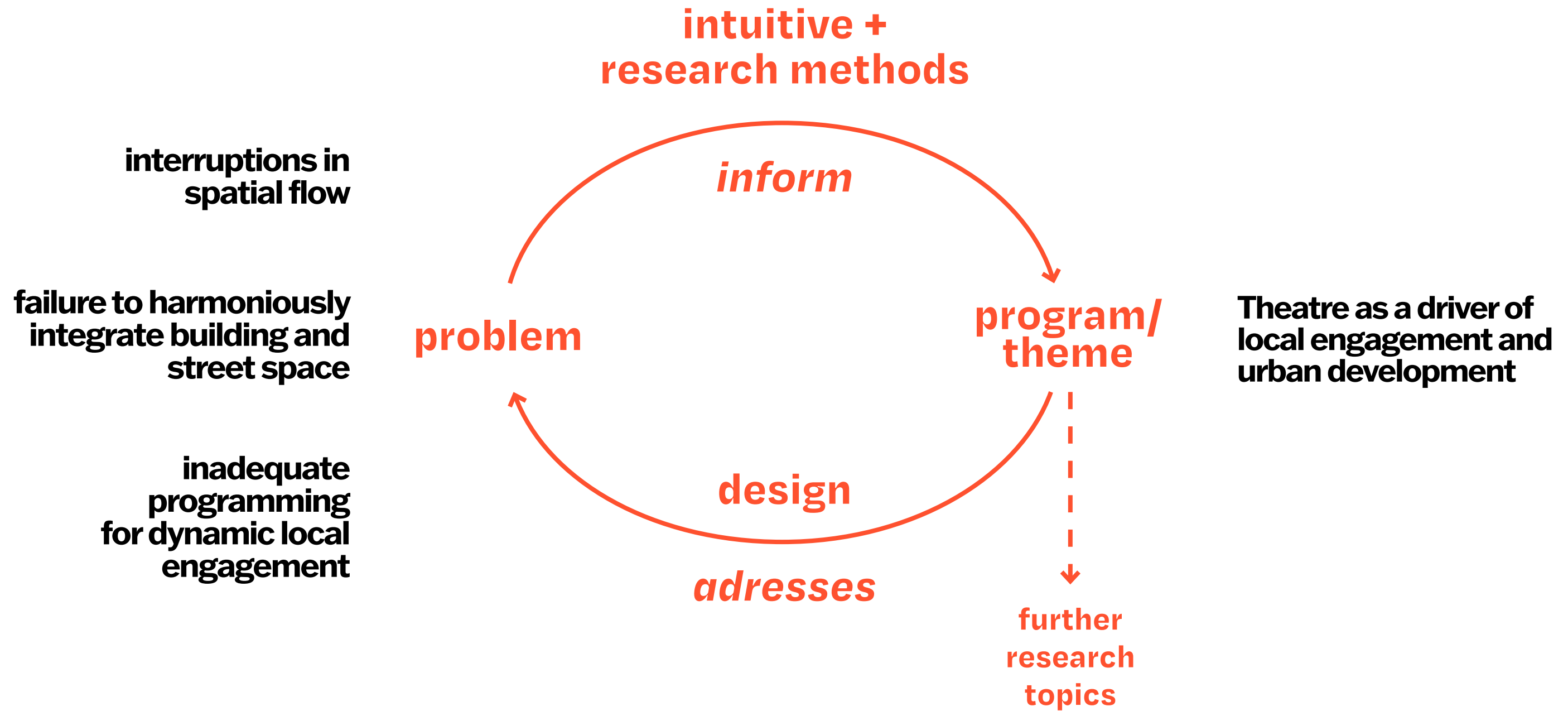


Methodology

Learning to walk



Recursive process

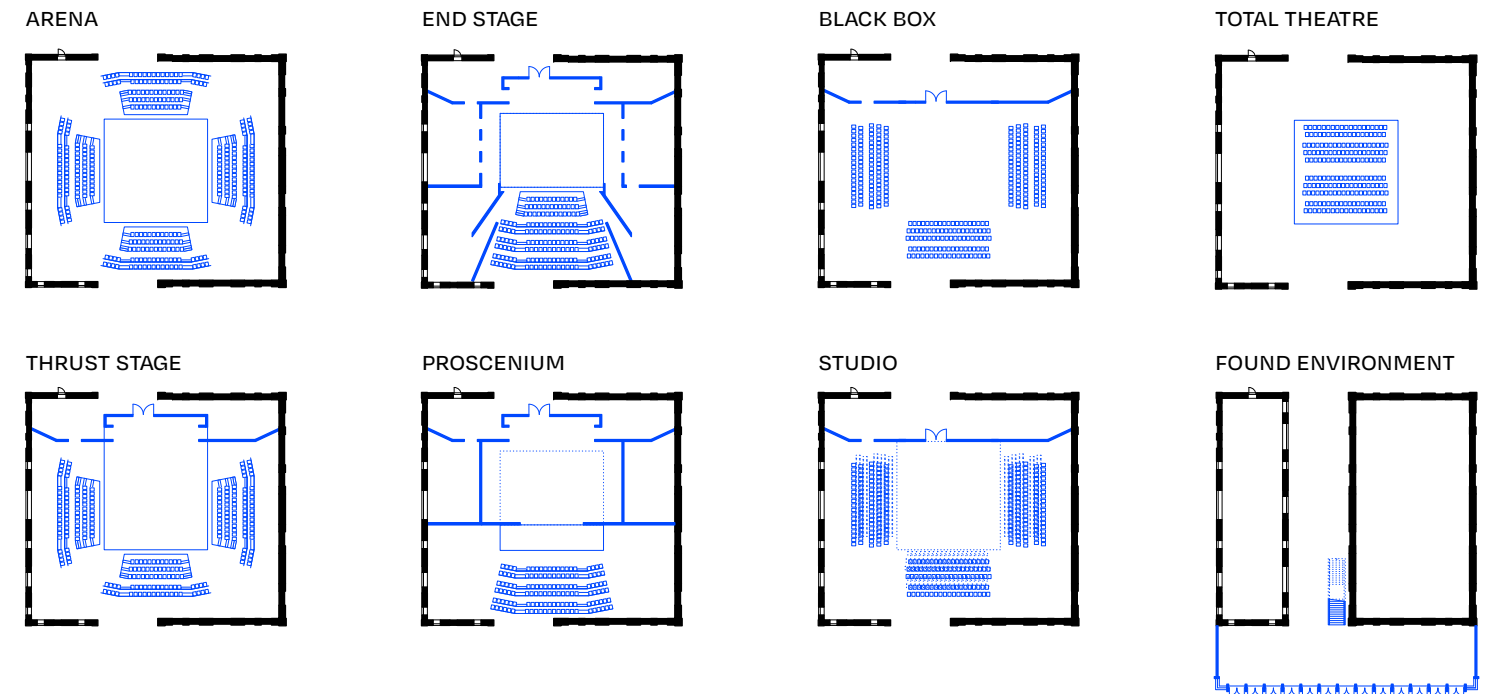


Design

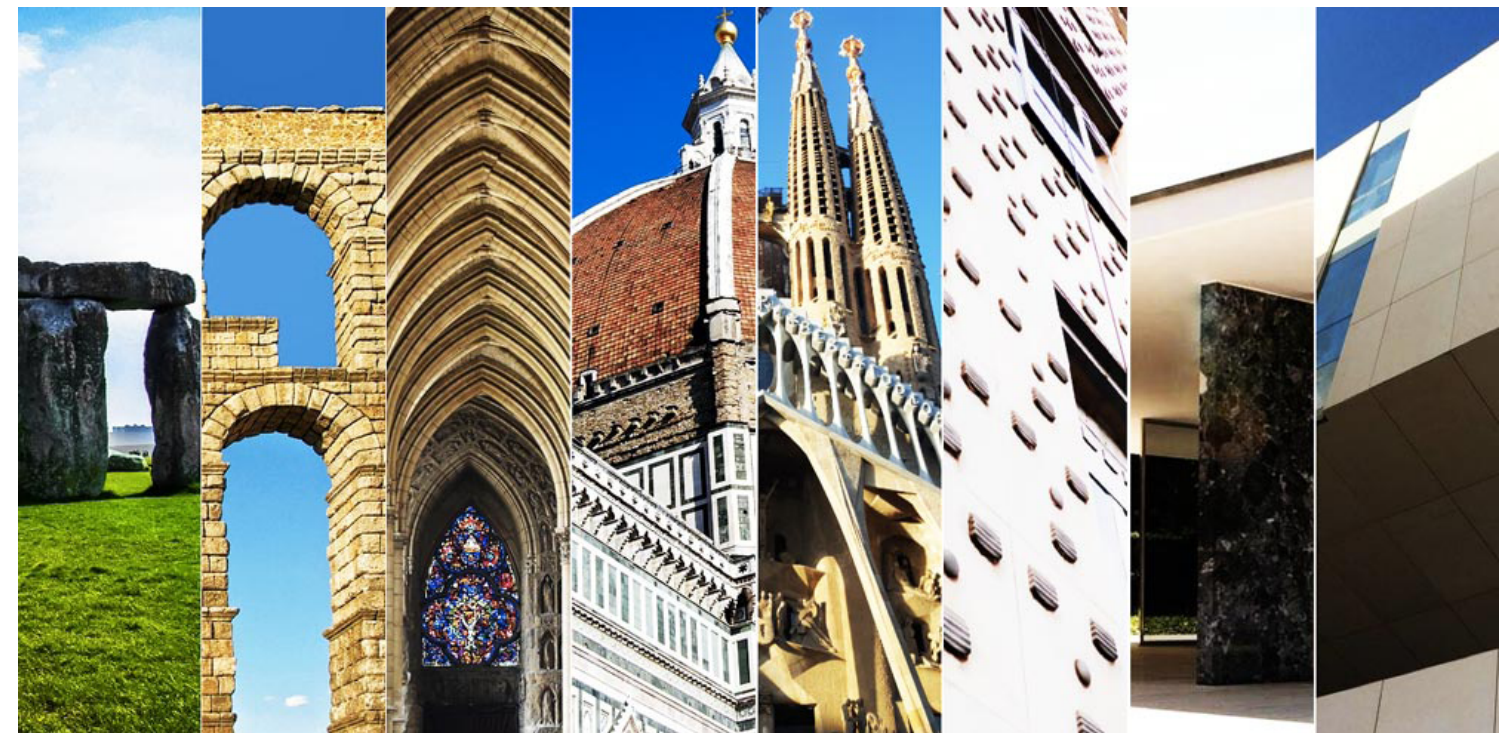
Type + Style = Identity

- Style connects architecture to socio-temporal coordinates, whereas type expresses its most essential traits
- Integrating overlapping styles into the design creates a multifaceted, synthesized identity reflecting our time
- Adaptability to cultural drift through clear and resilient type
- Good design positions itself confidently in time and is of a type that manifests its most essential traits

type



style



Leitmotifs

→ Manifest defines essential traits of the design, clarifies type at all scales

1. Urban scale / Implantation

Allied, yet confidently odd

2. Architectural scale / Form

Beguiling and adventurous

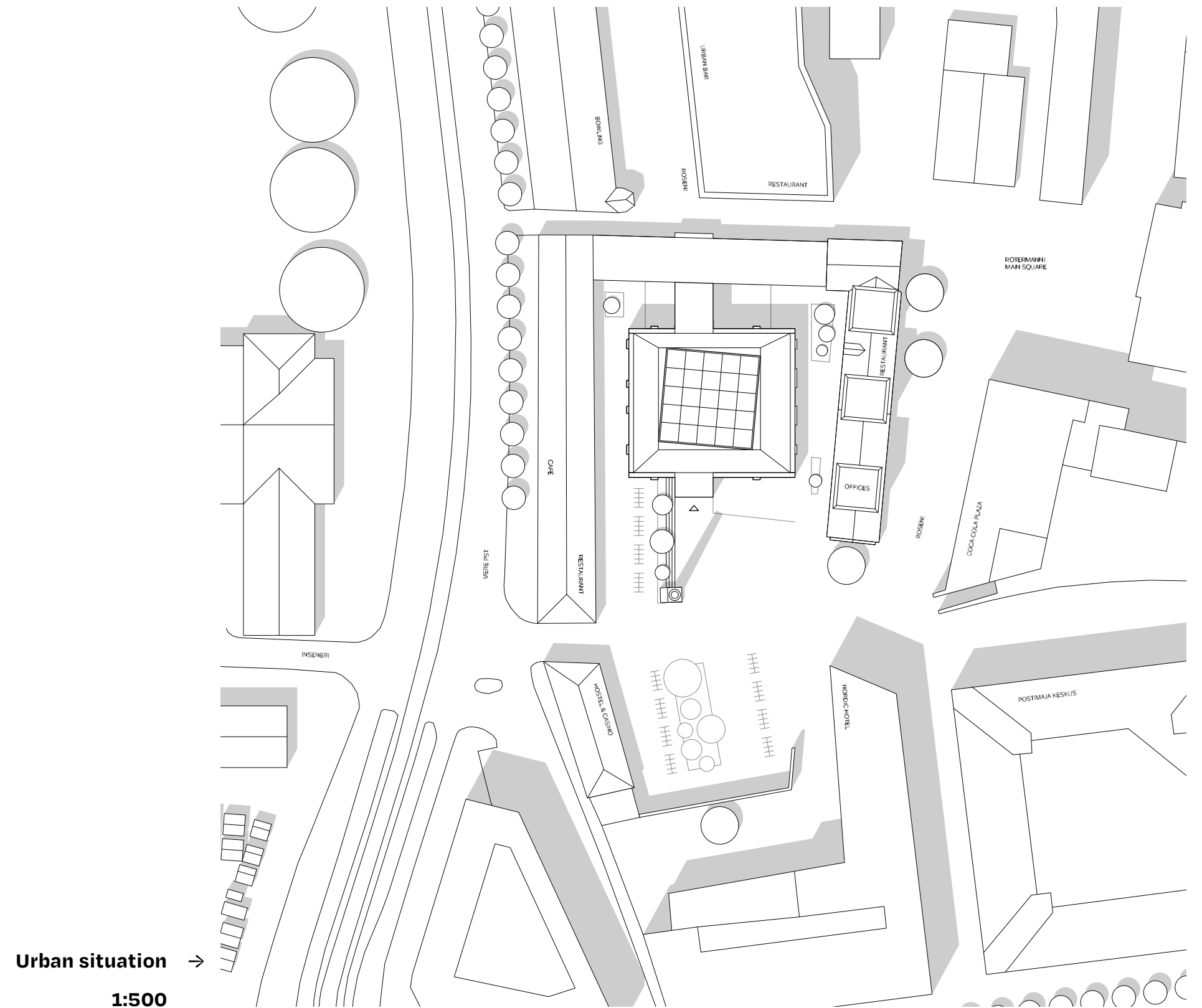
3. Human scale / Technique

As dramatic as necessary, as pragmatic as possible



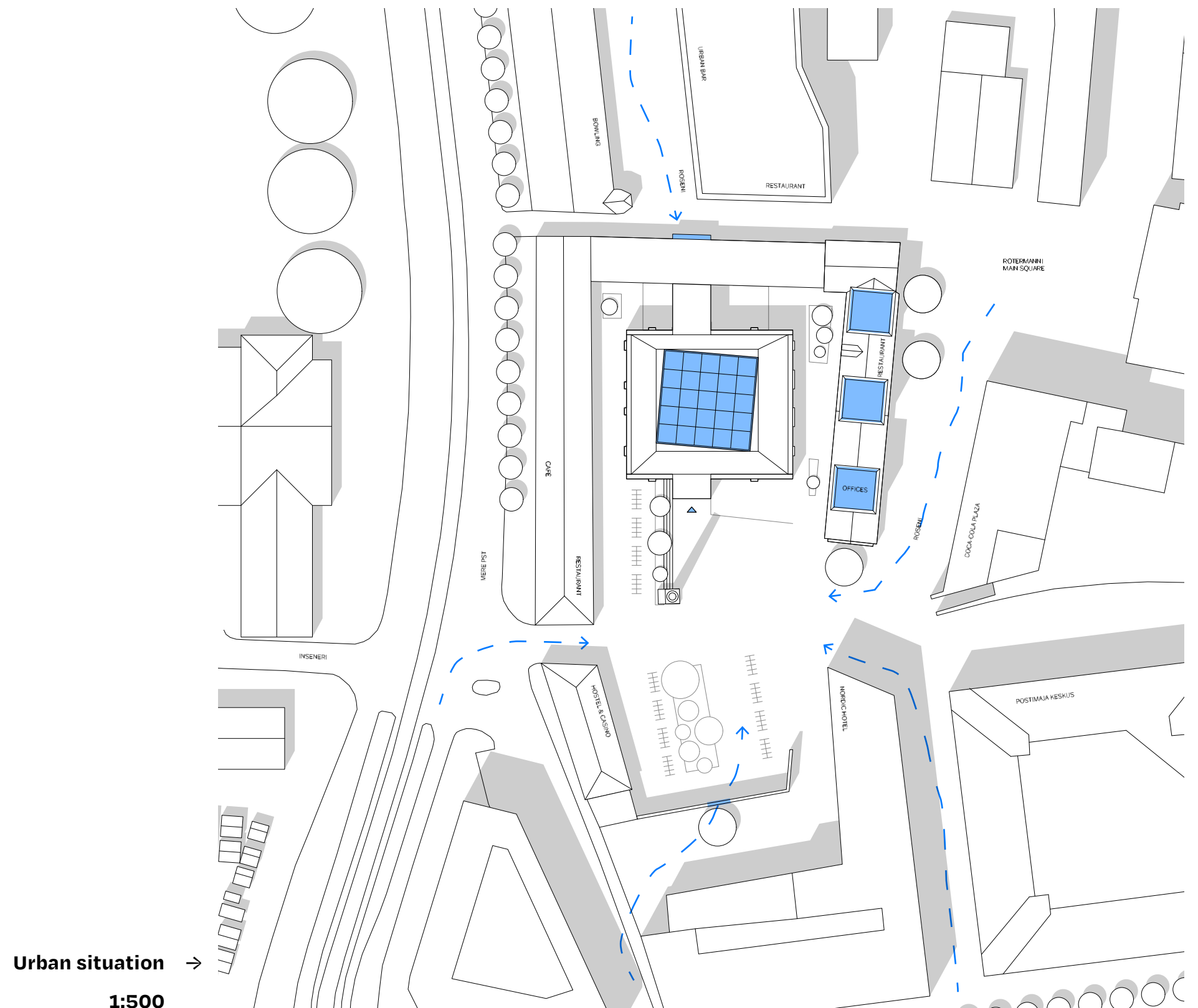
Implantation

Allied, yet
confidently odd



Implantation

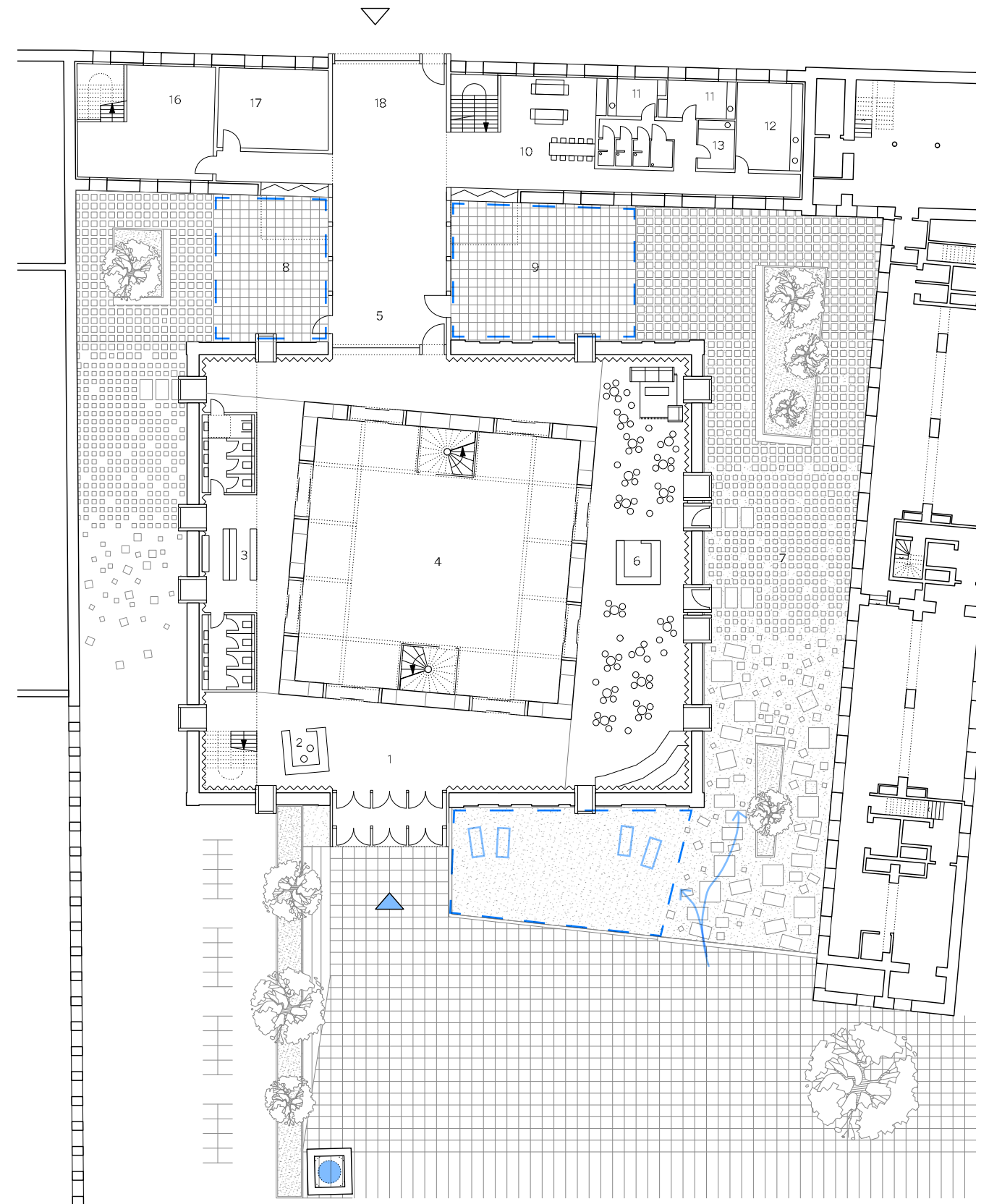
- Combined footprint as landing space for the towering volume
- Engages in a visual dialogue with neighboring carpenter's workshop additions
- Enhances a "forbidden portal" for safe passage and improved bike parking to the south of the plaza
- Back-of-house, logistics, staff, and performers' entrance pierces through the existing northern building



Exterior

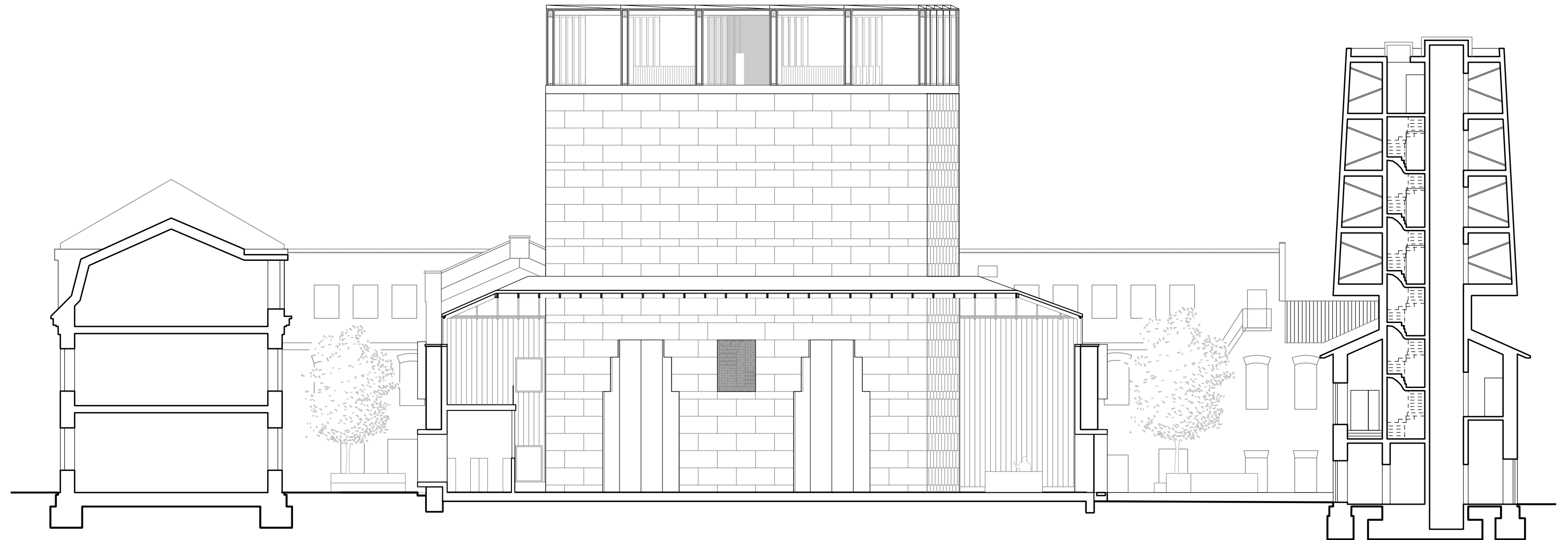
- Mirrors accessibility gradient: more green in public spaces, paved in secluded areas
- Lawn with beach chairs plays with the “to see and be seen” dynamic of theatre-going society
- Paved entrance patio guides visitors, marked by the existing brick chimney

Ground floor →
1:200



Form

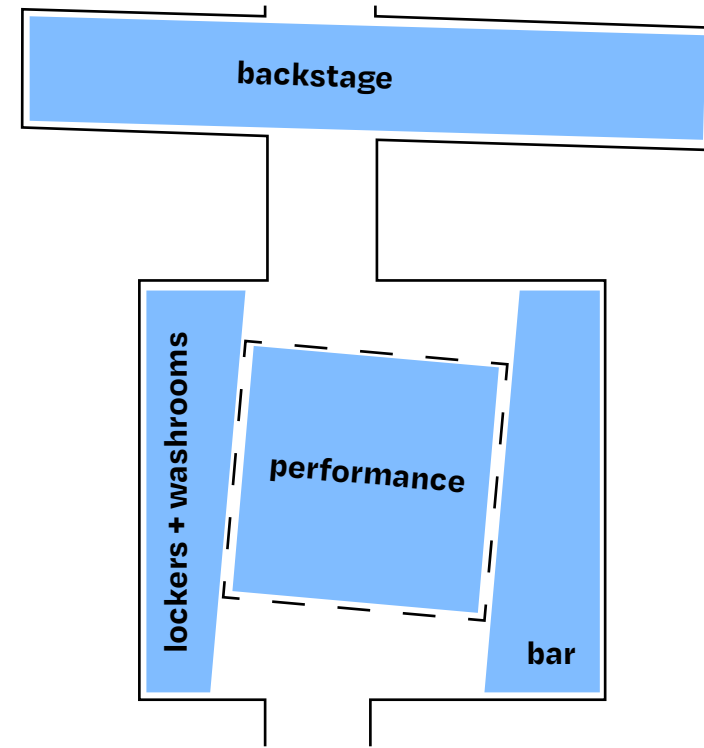
Beguiling and
adventurous



section aa ↑

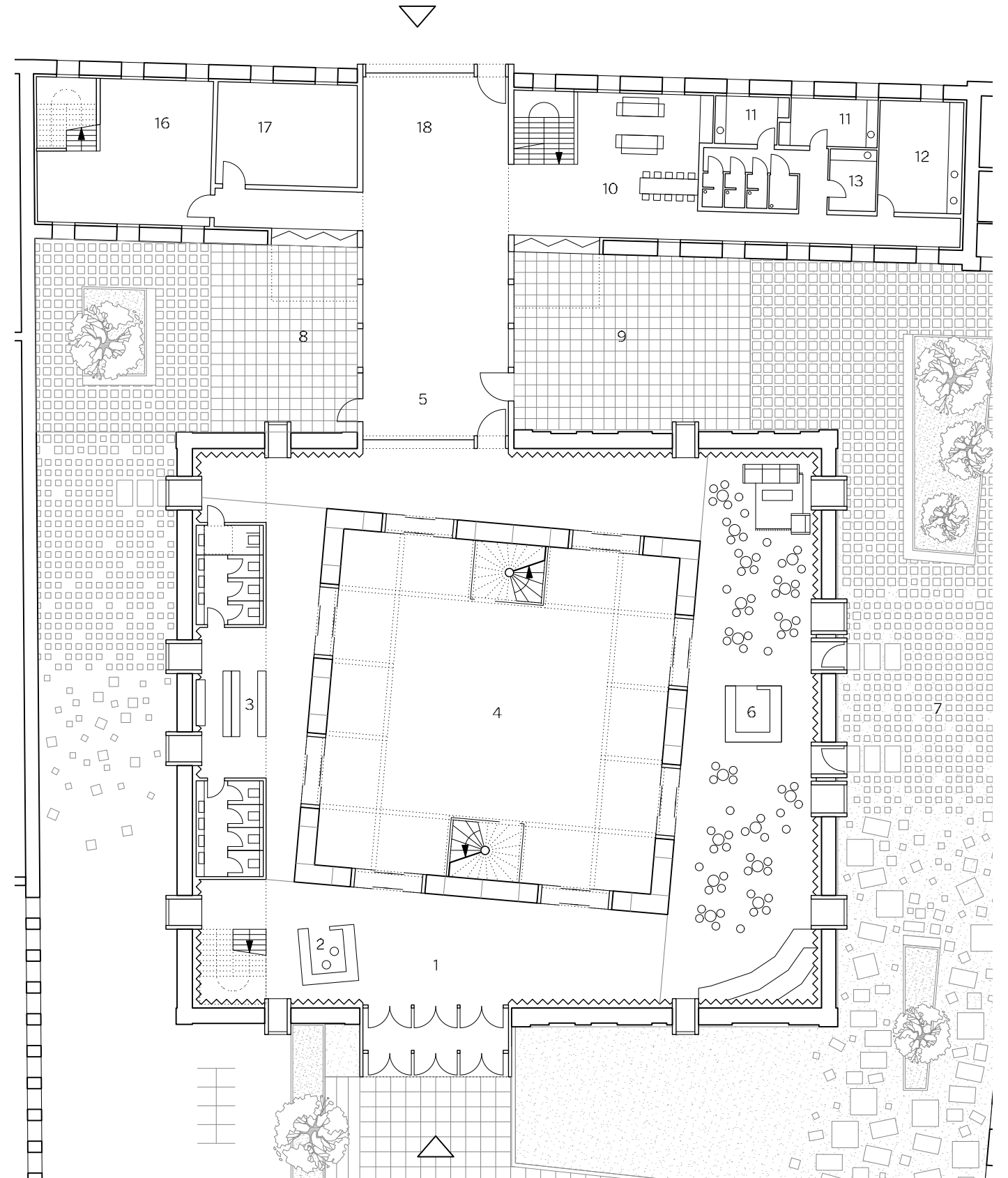
1:200

Zoning



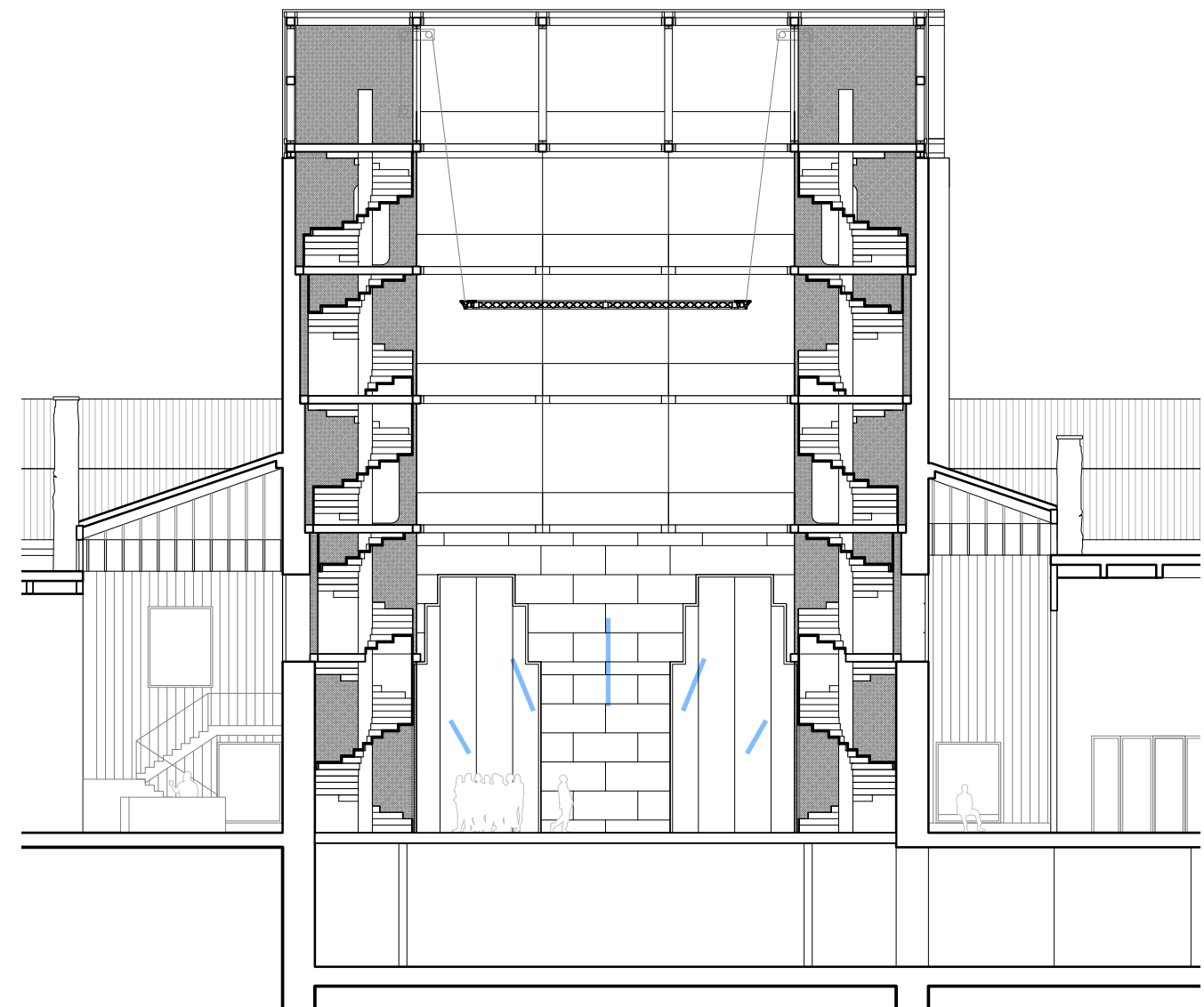
- Proportion according to function
- Designed to open and available at all times

Ground floor →
1:200



Performance space

- Symmetrical, vertical arena stage
- Galleries suspended from a timber truss, to be used for audience and as stage extension
- Spiral staircases in steel cable stockings
- Restlessness induced in the audience, for a dynamic, participatory theatre experience



section bb →
1:200

Transparency and technical reality

- Pellucid cornice reveals the technical workings behind the scenes
- Motorised interior awnings enable dramatic atmosphere changes
- Generous light through window strips and perimeter skylights

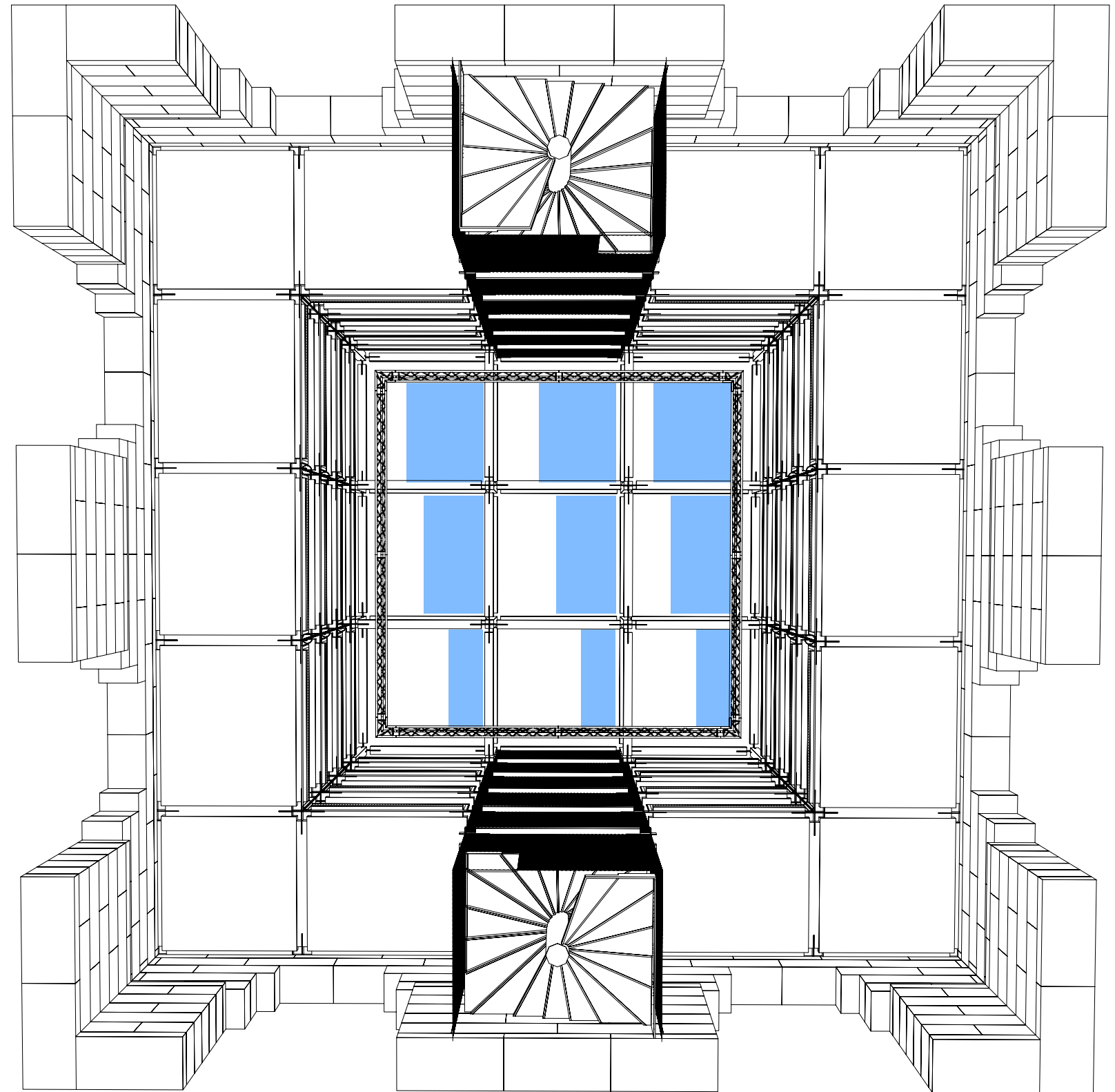


south elevation ↑
1:200

Transparency and technical reality

- Motorised interior awnings enable dramatic atmosphere changes
- Generous light through window strips and perimeter skylights

view towards →
the sky



Materials

- Durable, familiar materials encourage maintenance by the community
- By not relying on the charm of the expensive people are compelled to look past superficial differences, to focus on communication with each other
- Natural material palette is continued throughout and complimented by tarnished blue sheet metal

view into
the bar →



Materials

- Clay plaster holds wall heating
- Acoustic paneling timber door
- Bare limestone below

gallery view →



Facade



east elevation ↑

1:200

Facade

- Existing facades act as props with superimposed window axes and extruded window boxes
- Boxes used as passages, seating niches, artwork exhibits, and advertising
- Smooth limestone vs. rough limestone
- Black backdrop visible through porous ruins, with sculpted white concrete soffits

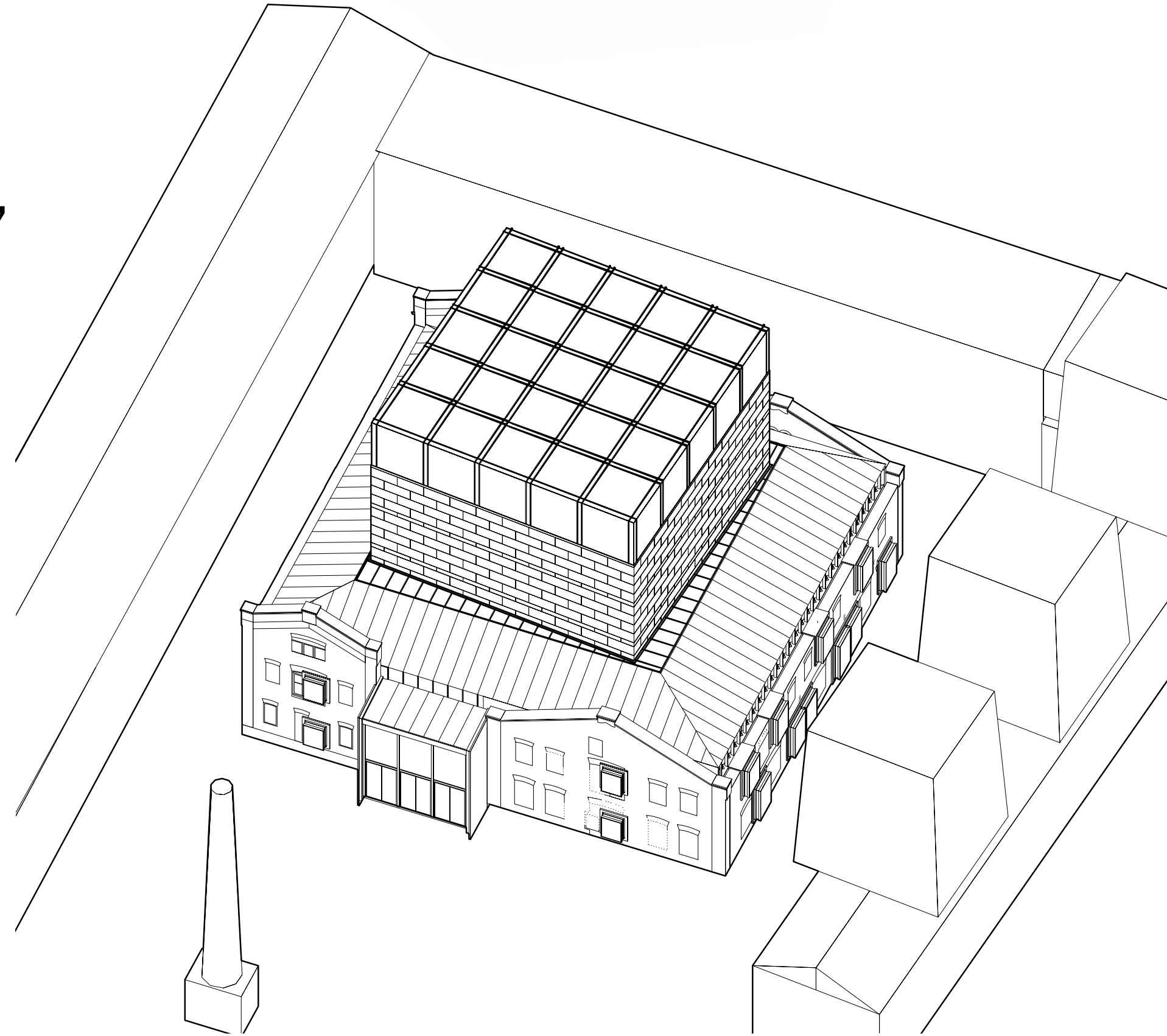


east elevation
material collage



Technique

As dramatic as necessary,
as pragmatic as possible



Technique

dramatic

durable

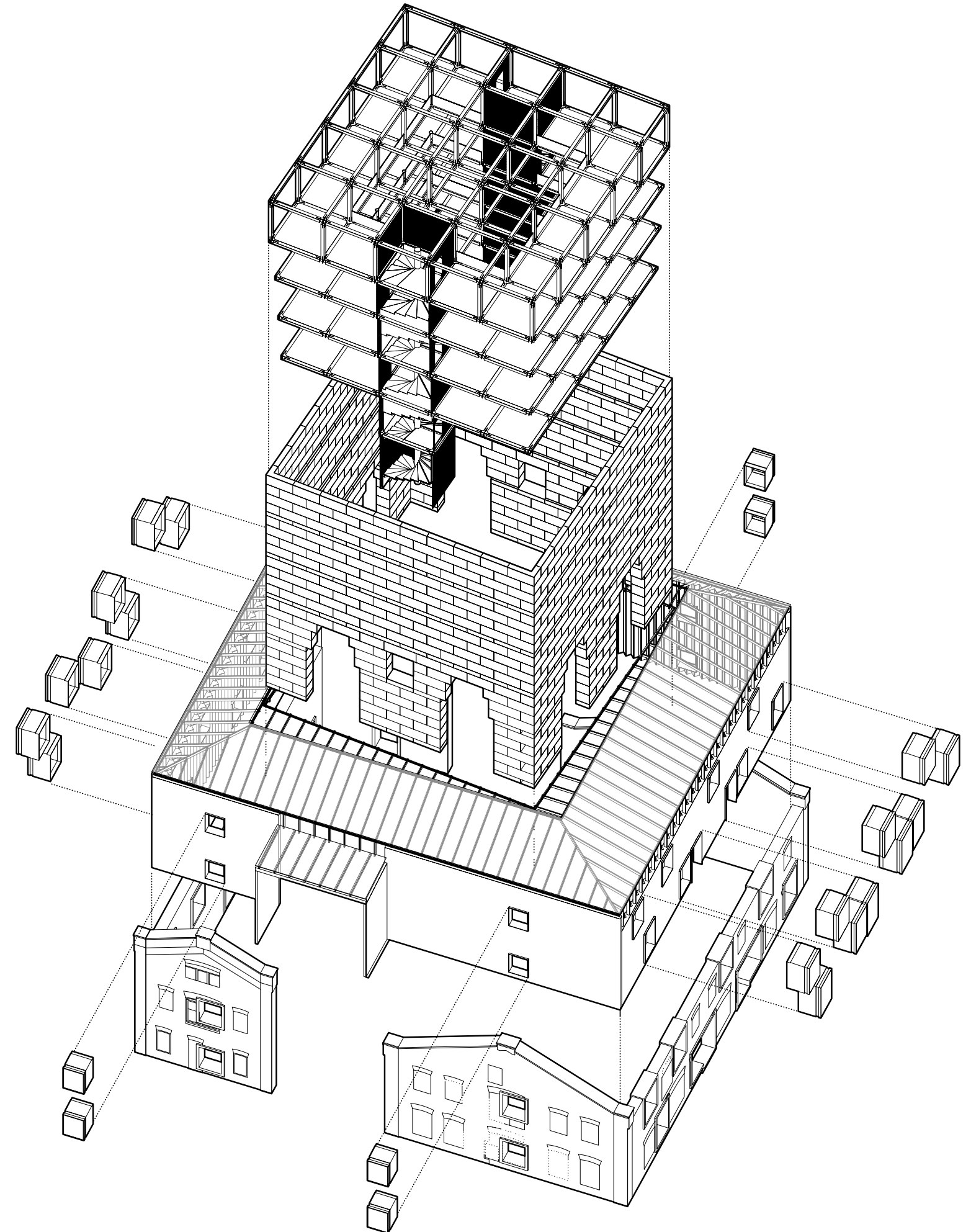
massive

pragmatic

adaptable

lightweight

→ Concentric layering of construction methods



Technique

dramatic

durable

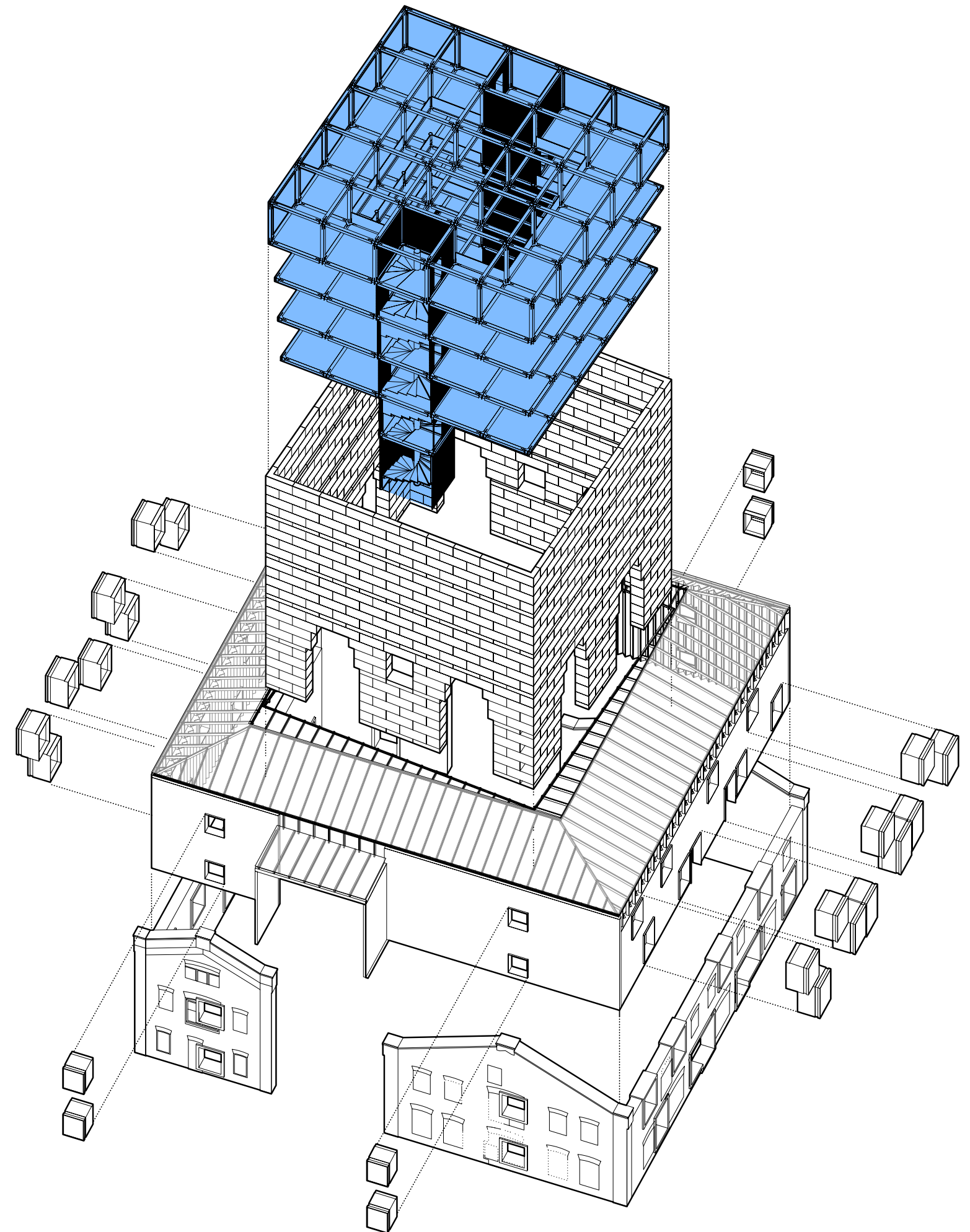
massive

pragmatic

adaptable

lightweight

→ Adaptability of the gallery and truss structure through engineered timber and steel joints



Technique

dramatic

durable

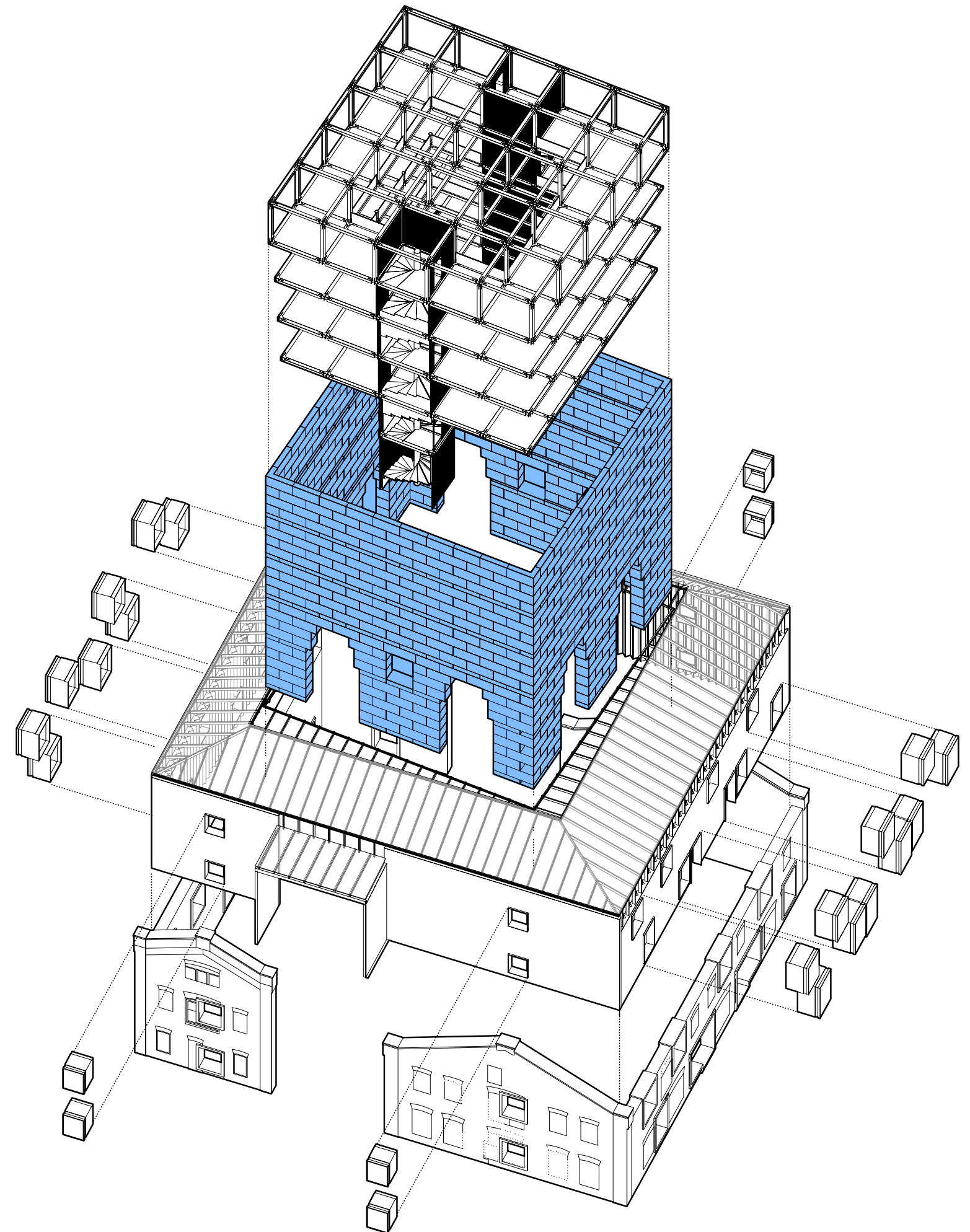
massive

pragmatic

adaptable

lightweight

→ Typological clarity and symbolic confidence relies on the true weight of natural stone



Technique

dramatic

durable

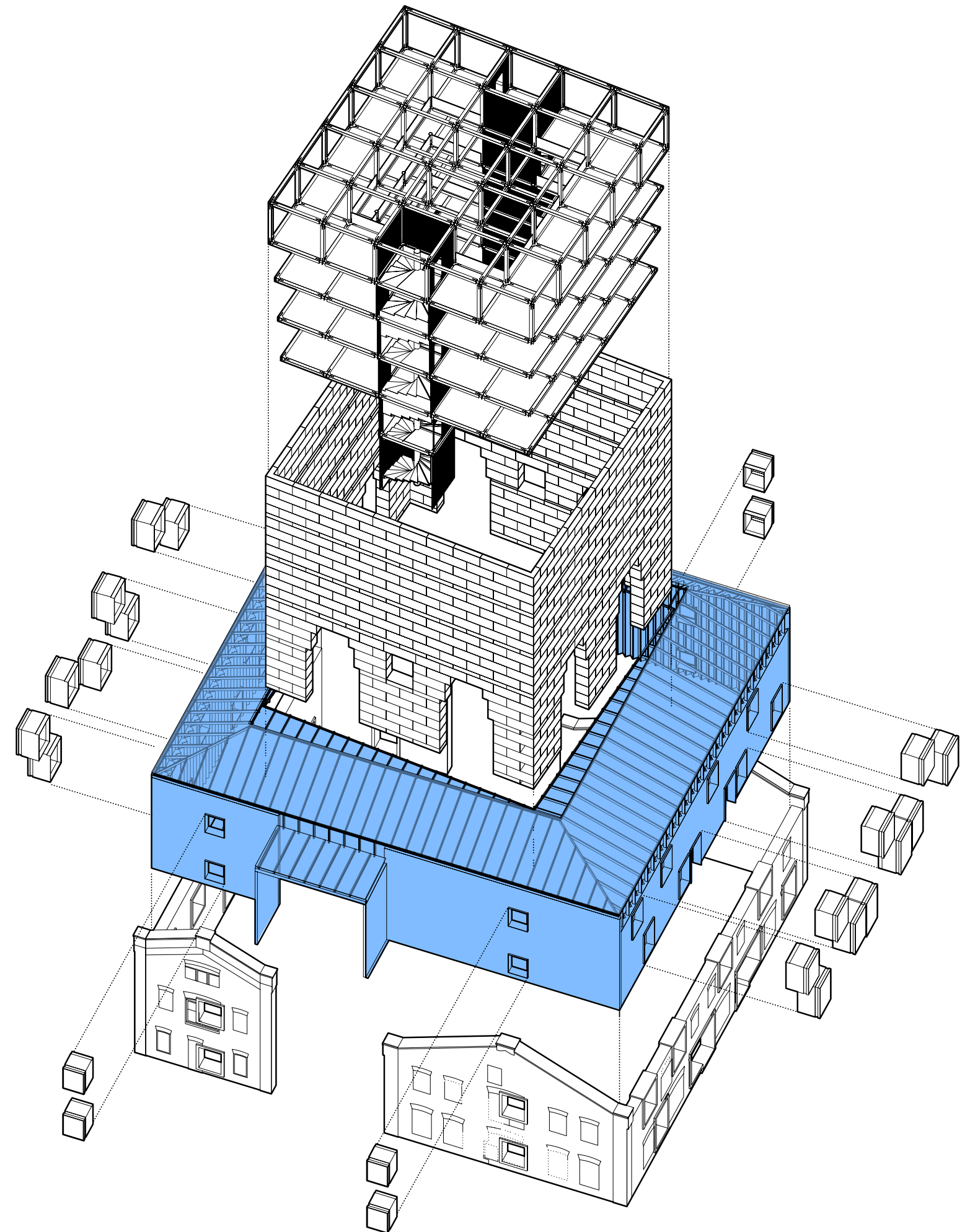
massive

pragmatic

adaptable

lightweight

→ Sustainability, constructive sequence, climate control, and integration of functional features



Technique

dramatic

durable

massive

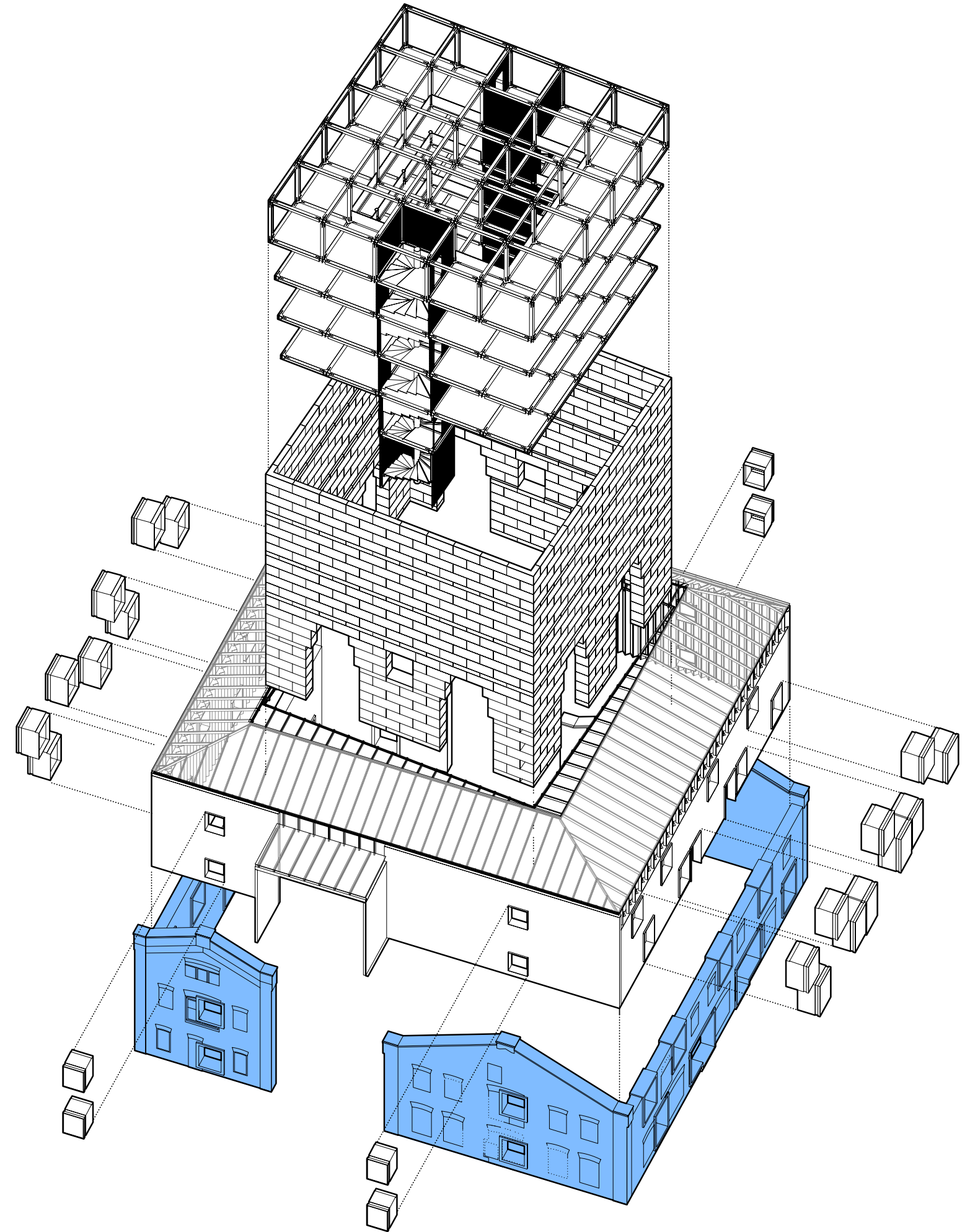
pragmatic

adaptable

lightweight

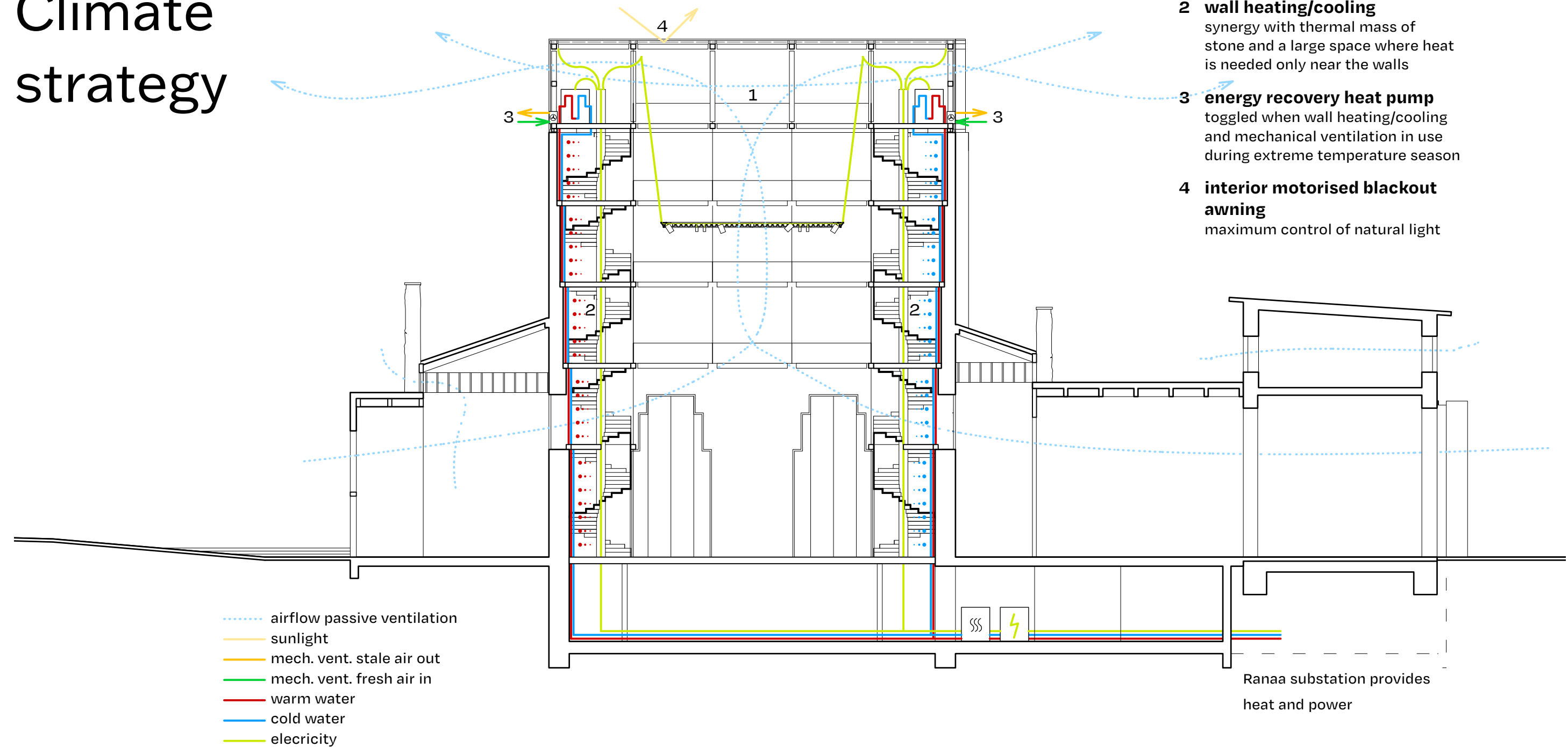
→ The further decay of the ruins is embraced

→ Durability vs. permanence



Technique

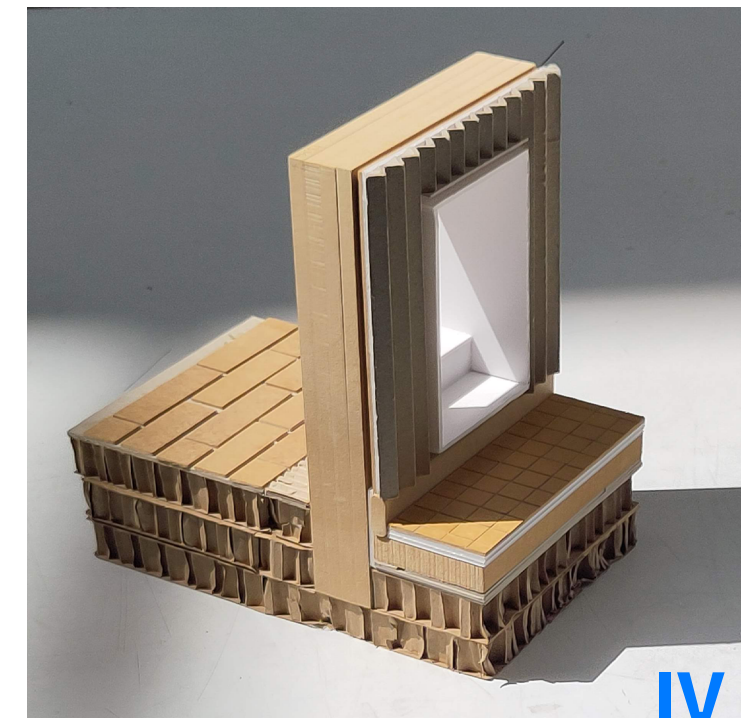
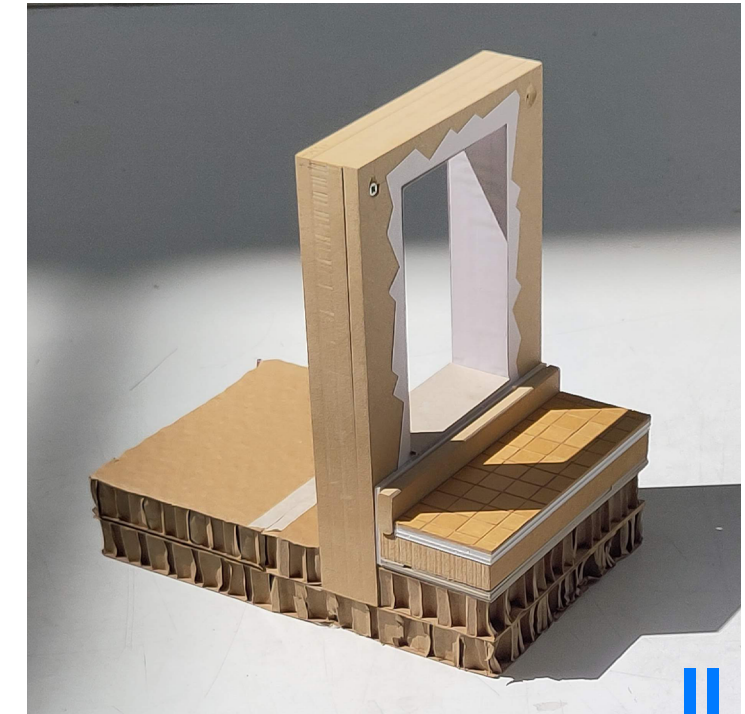
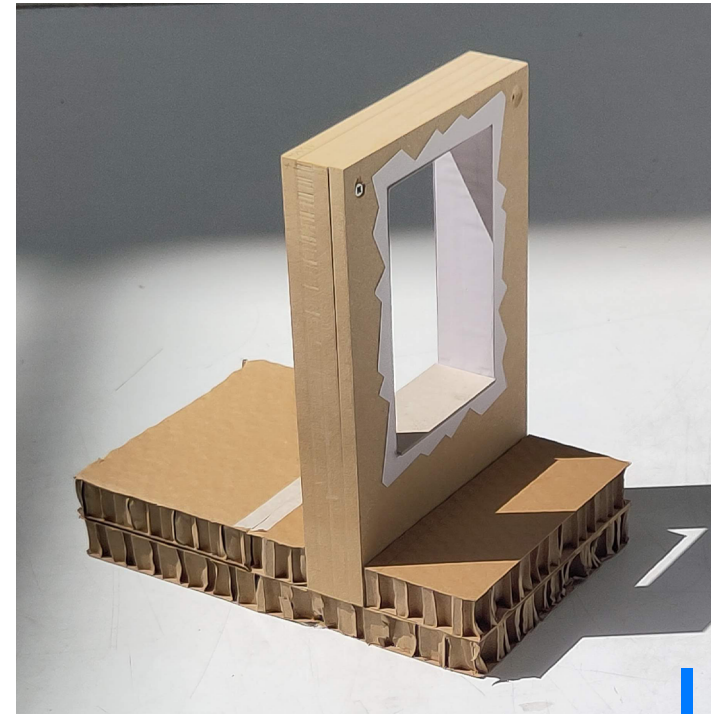
Climate strategy



Technique

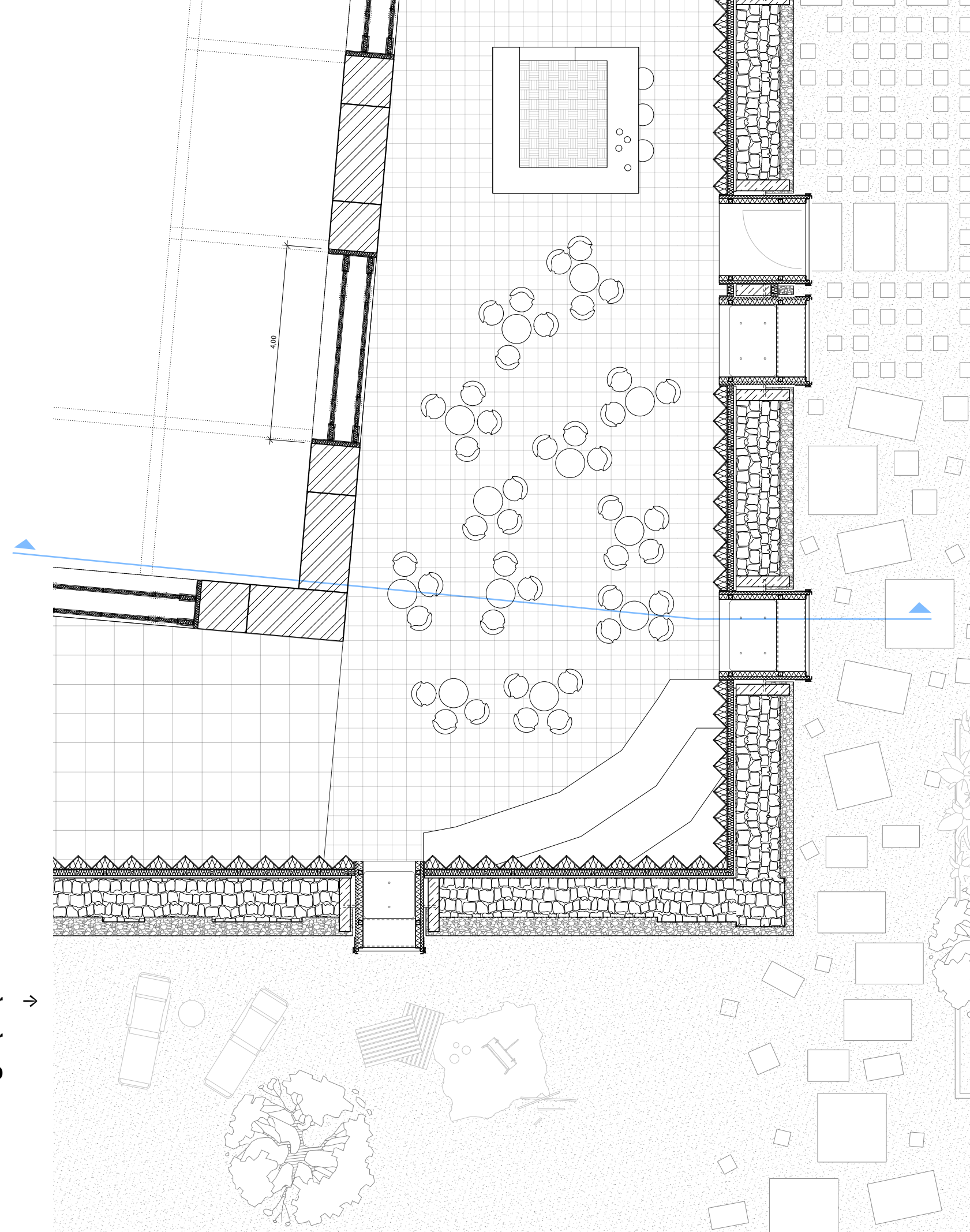
Sketch model

- Thresholds between the existing and the addition
- Construction sequence
- Steel frame boxes act as anchors for the timber walls and the ruin facades



Technique Construction

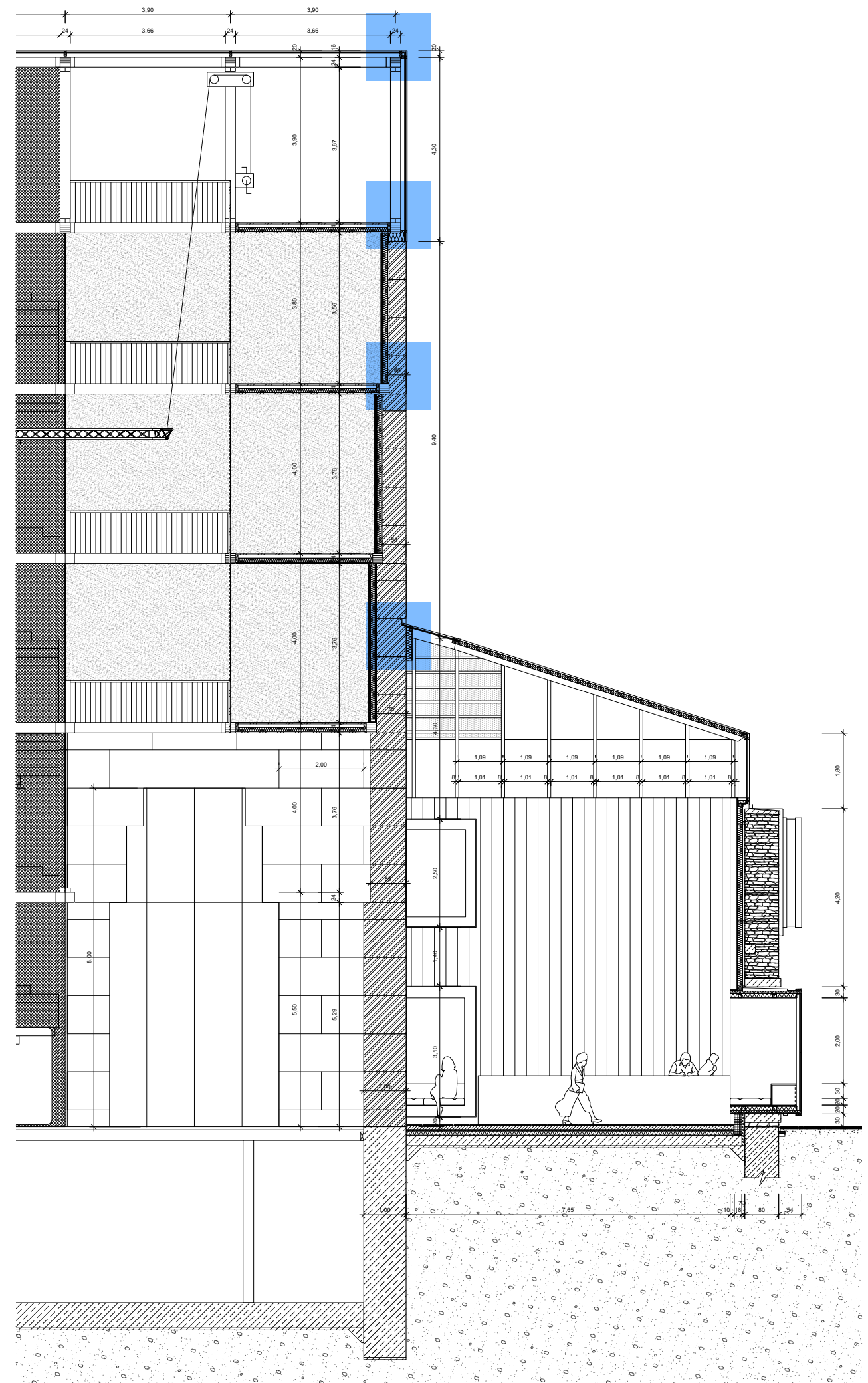
- Thresholds between areas defined by change in flooring
- Acoustic comfort through double doors
- Sound absorptive lightweight panels complement reflective properties of massive stone



ground floor →
south-east corner
1:50

Technique Construction

section →
south-east corner
1:50

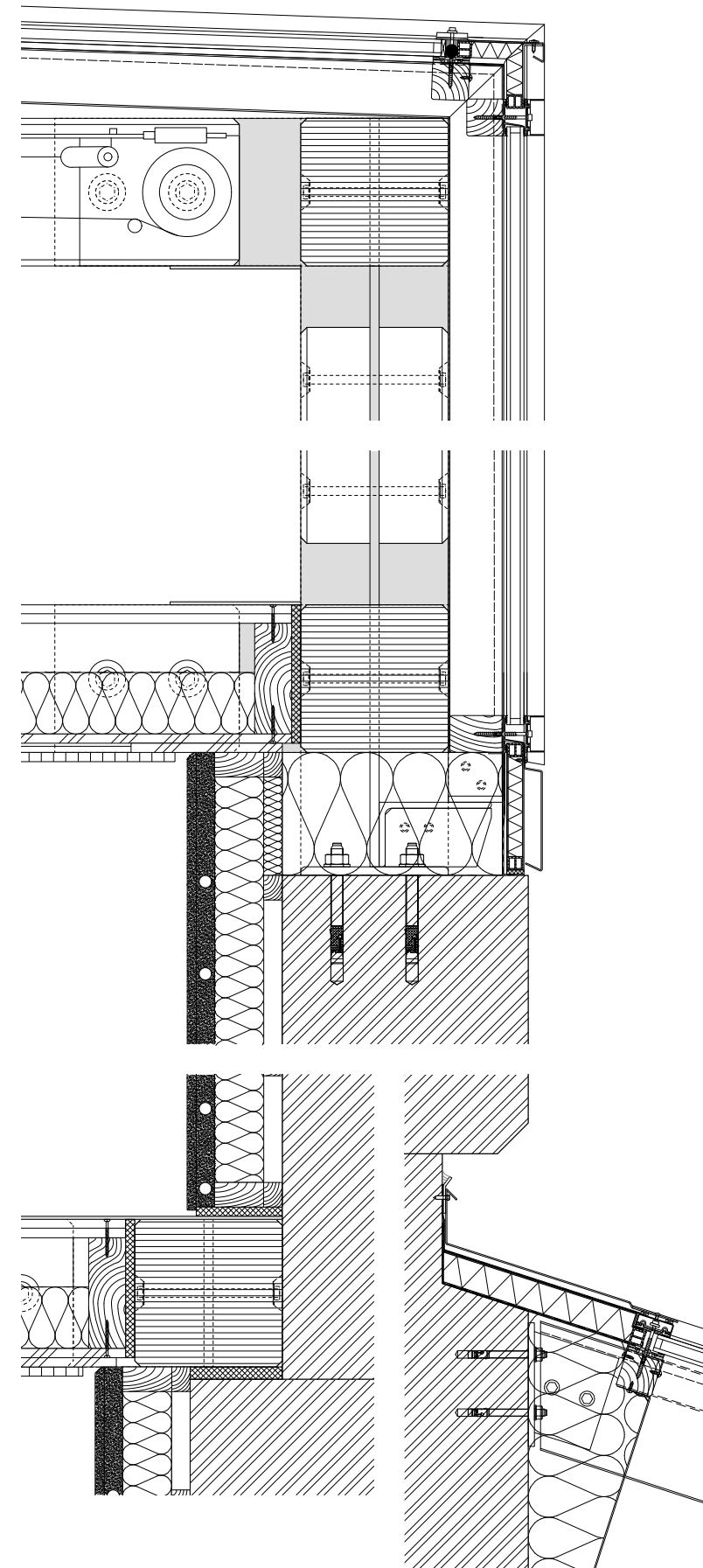


Technique

Construction

- Stabalux timber mullion and transom system for glazed roof, curtain walls, vertical and horizontal lights
- Engineered timber (LVL) for truss and gallery structure
- Limestone sourced in local quarry

vertical details →
facade
1:5



← Stabalux system:
glazed roof, mullion
and transom facade

motorised awning

timber truss
substructure

← triple point:
glazing, timber truss
substructure, gallery slabs
stone wall, ventilation
duct, installations layer

←← prefab gallery slabs
and interior panels
on monolithic
construction

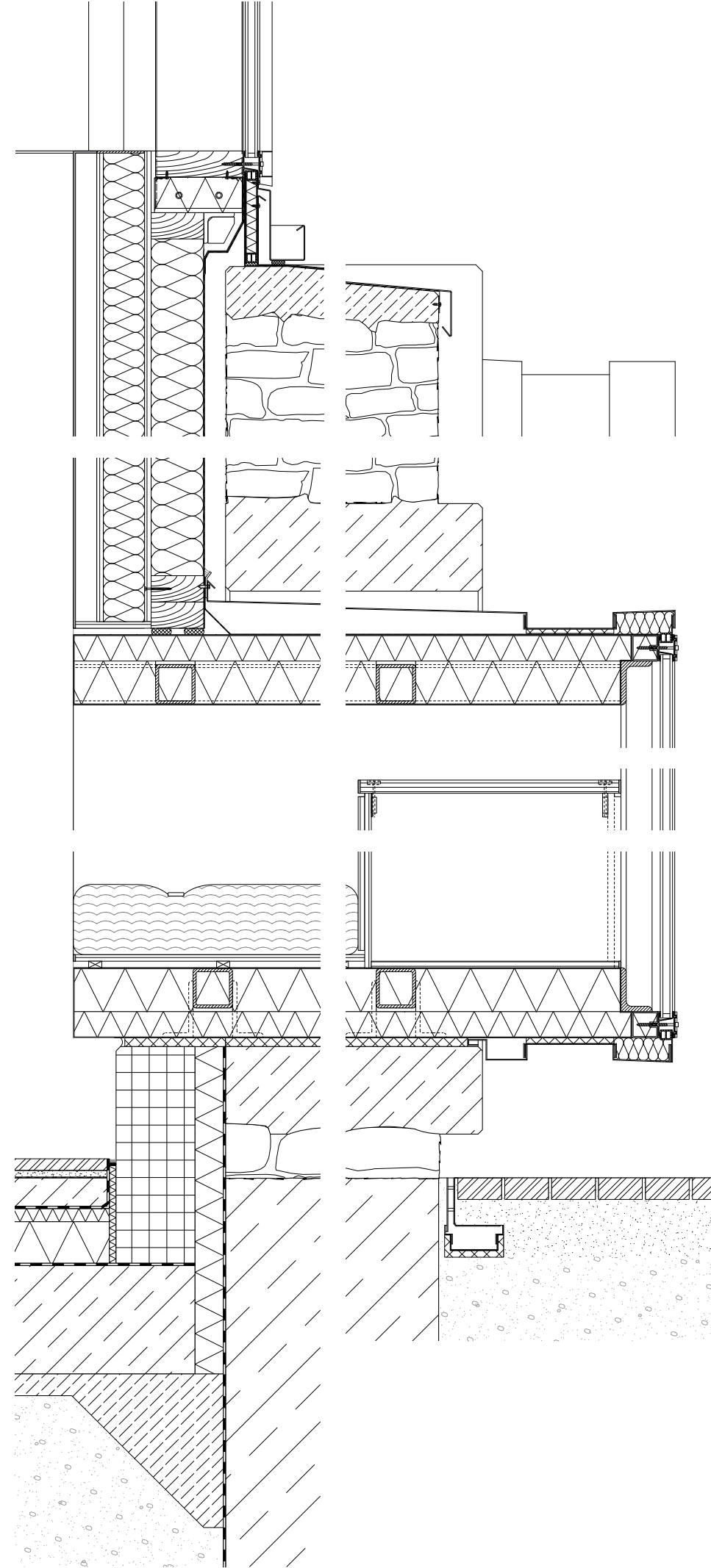
← connection of
perimeter lights
to natural stone

Technique

Construction

- Zig-zag prefab timber panels with brass edge protection
- Steel frame boxes anchored with a gap to the concrete soffit to allow ventilation of the ruin facades
- Blue sheet darkens over time
- Boxes differ in function and size but are constructed identically

vertical details
seating / exhibition box →
1:5



Conclusion

- Success of the Rotermann District in re-using of existing built mass to create recognizable architecture of a coherent style
- Enhanced by the project based on the understanding of what is necessary to balance out the dominant paradigm of economic growth
- Spaces for cultural stimulation that spark curiosity, foster a sense of shared responsibility, and engage locals
- Complementary to the effects of mallification, Unfinishing Spaces is neither a utopia nor an obsolete fashion trend, but helps to bind the fragments of space which have fallen out of time (or use) back into the fabric of contemporary architecture.
- And if it succeeds, that fabric appears at the same time familiar, yet striking, providing a new definition of a vibrant Tallinn.

Thank you

