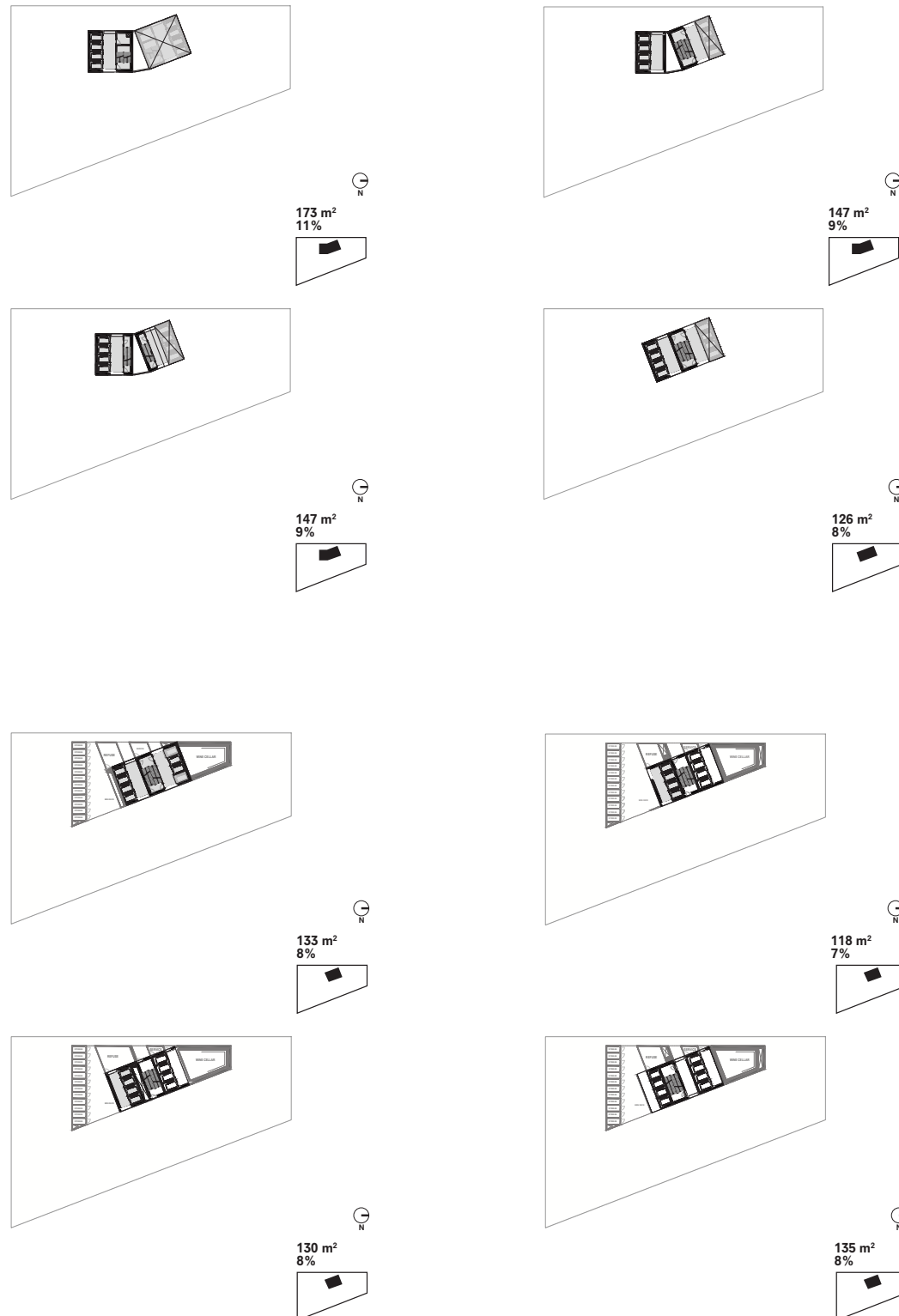


# MIXED-HOUSING MIDTOWN REFLECTION

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REFLECTION  
COMPLEX PROJECTS  
1227 BROADWAY  
NY -MIDTOWN



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

New York Midtown graduation project 2019/2020 is focusing on the current changes happening in Midtown New York. These changes are not only urban changes, but the cause of this by political, economic and environmental changes. The graduation topic aims to answer new demands responding to these changes.

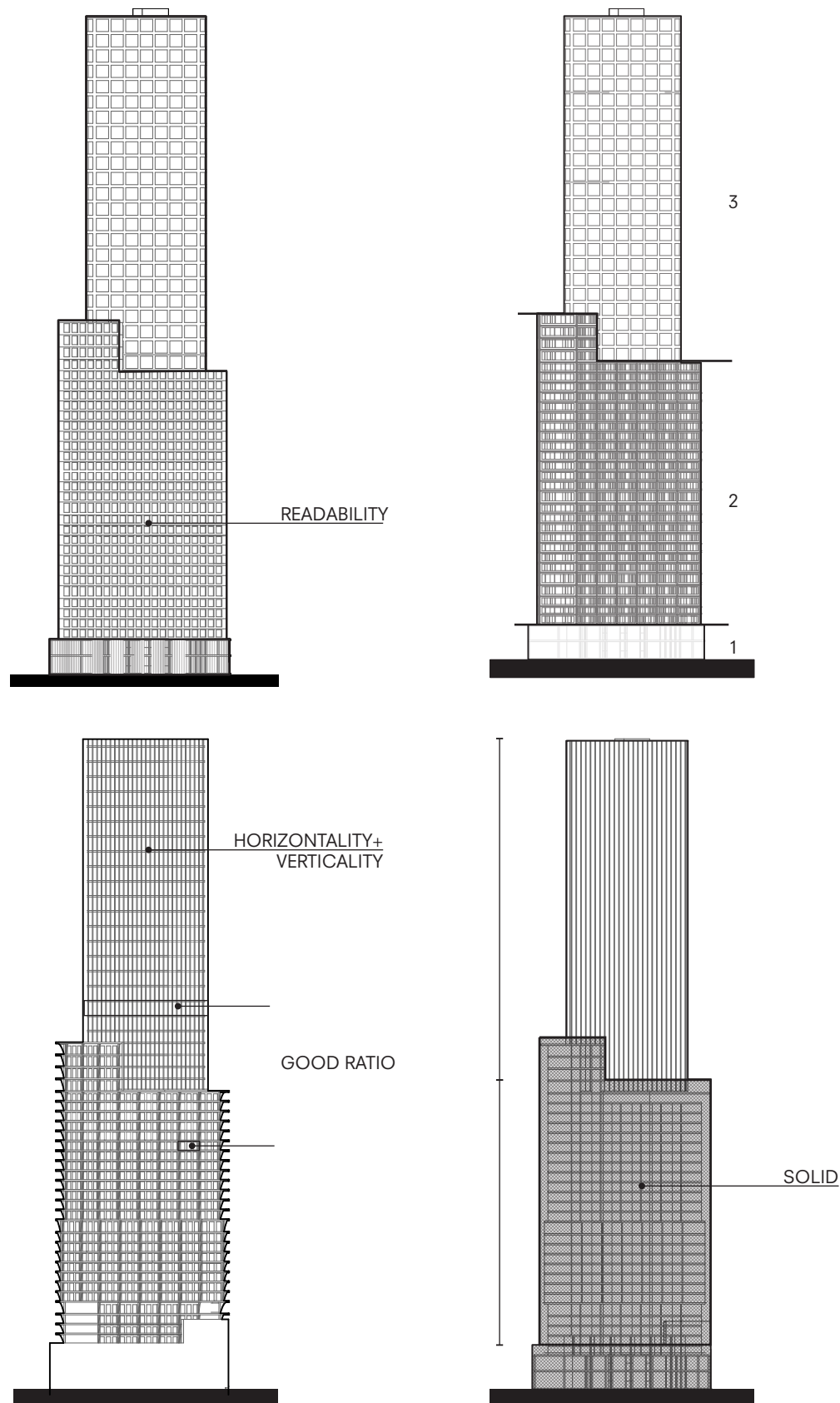
Midtown is dominated by businesses. As of the day of today (2019) it is the biggest business district in the world. It houses the most iconic buildings of New York like the Chrysler building, The Empire State Building, and some more familiar the Trump Tower. A big player in change happening in Midtown is Hudson Yards. By introducing a new offer of office space (phase 1), and later residential space (phase 2), this urban development changes the character of Midtown. Offices originally settled in Midtown now move to Hudson Yards. Due to Midtown's high land values, and outdated buildings, there are many empty storefronts and offices. This causes the offices and retails value to decline.

Apart from the commercial sector, New York is the second to the world leader in the Ultra-prime market. This means that New York has second to the most amount of sales of housing pricing more than \$25 million. With already undergoing a big growth, this market seems to grow over

the coming years. Another change in the housing market is the big discounts on housing. These discounts are on relatively expensive apartments, which were built during a time of recession, whereas the building costs were low.

With all this change in mind, one can state that Midtown is an area merely for the wealthy. But what about the average New Yorker. The cab-driver in the Midtown district? The train-driver on the E-line? And the doorman of Seagram building?

Mixed-Housing Midtown is located on 1227 Broadway. Together with a plinth of retail, it contains a mixed-housing of high-end and affordable housing. On the plot, an existing design for a 145m high hotel is suggested. Although during the construction a new rule for FAR regulations got introduced. This new rule increases the existing FAR on a plot with +8 if half of the original FAR is planned for affordable housing. The extra FAR can only be utilized for affordable housing. For the LAM group (the current developer) a more interesting business case is to be constructed. This is a building of approximately 220 meters (53 floors) housing program for affordable housing from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor and program for High-end housing from the 29<sup>th</sup> floor to the 53<sup>rd</sup> floor.

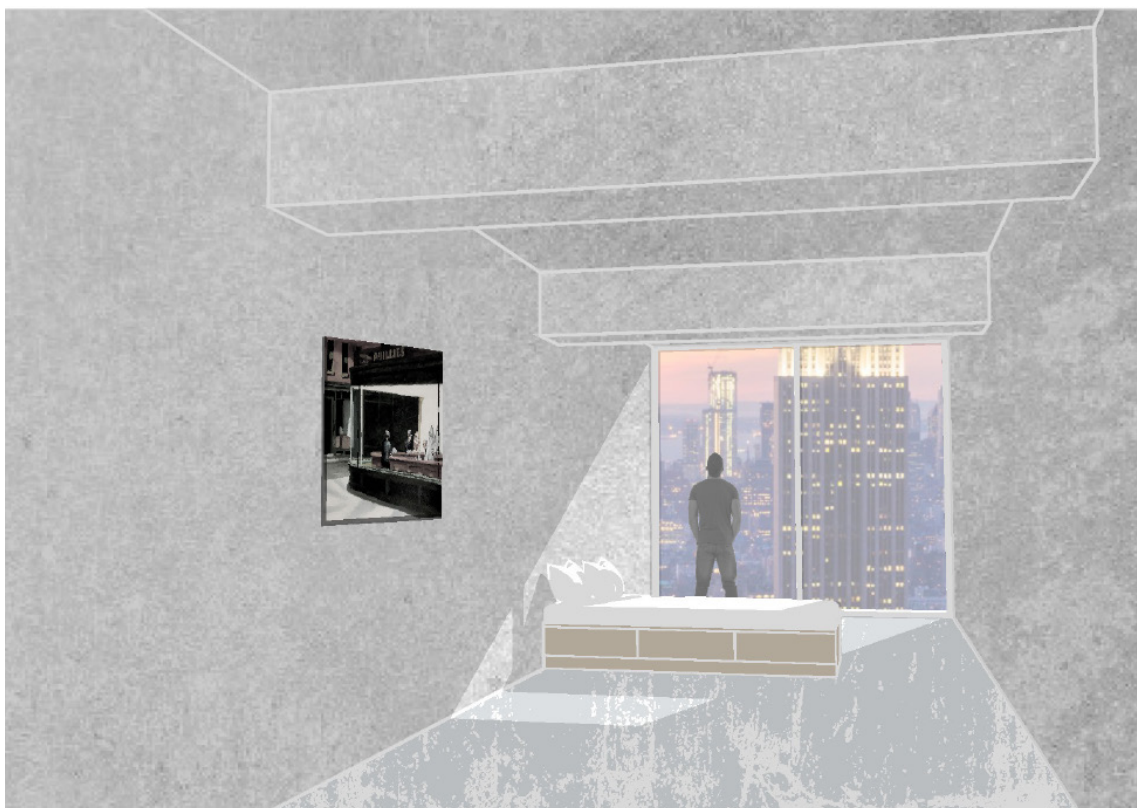
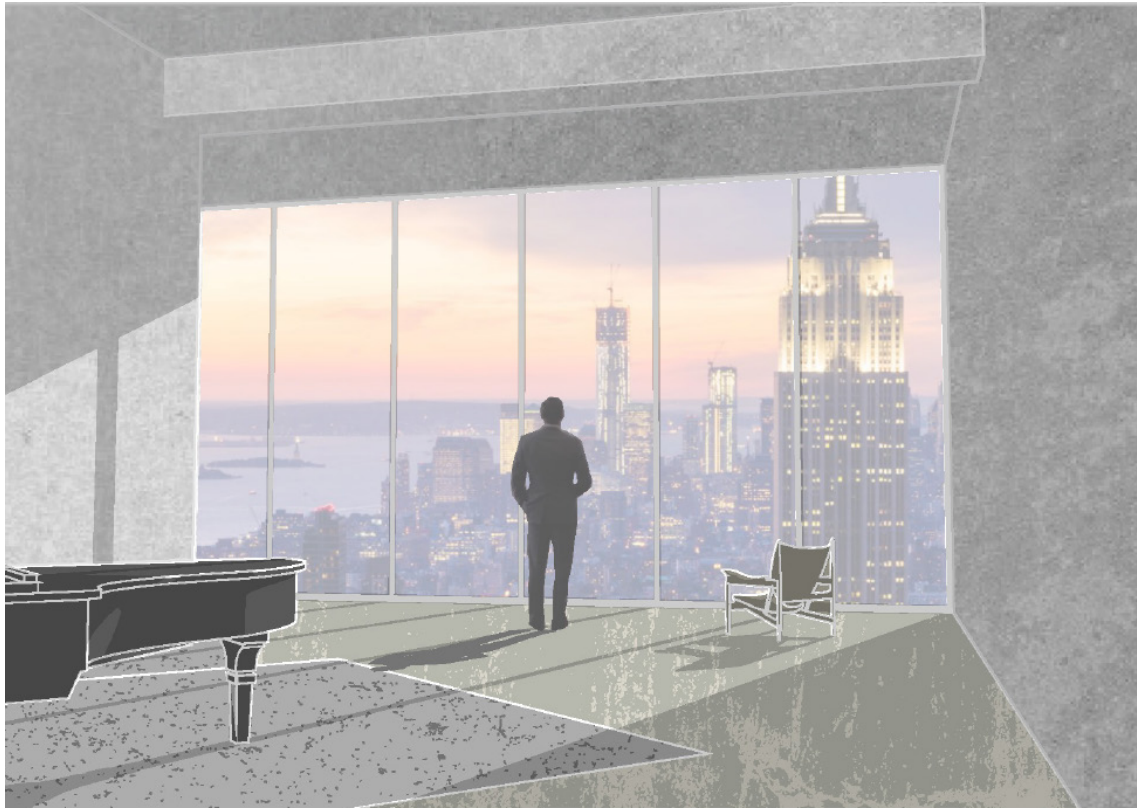


## DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The design method of Complex Project graduation consists of individual and group work. The chair claims to “eliminate the traditional and perhaps linear processes of planning, urban design, and architecture”. The chair aims to do this by, focusing as a group and as individual testing research topics on the same site. Apart from the quality derived from different perspectives on the same site by research setting and purpose, a group effort can also benefit the amount of information gathered. Although for one this might seem like a hassle working with other individuals with different ambitions and opinions, working on a good term of agreements should prevent a lot of frustrations. Apart from the emotional side, working and producing according to a group strategy, allows working faster by its efficiency.

The graduation project starts with group work. This to get a better understanding of what Midtown is, what it consists of, what scale it is, and eventually what to design in it. In a group setting, Midtown has been researched according to as many topics as possible. Since this was the first time New York Midtown graduation project took place, the research and projects are introduced as a pilot. Without any work done on New York Midtown in TU Delft, research was done, covering hard and soft data. Before starting to research the hard data, research to a fascination is done. In a short article, the first steps to the initial project topic are developed, by describing a personal fascination on Midtown New York. For Mixed-Housing Midtown on 1227 Broadway, a short article is written about the housing in Midtown. This especially focused on the luxurious extreme high-end living, the Ultra-prime market. The article acted as a Kickstarter for the choice of the project topic. And thus for hard data, the focus lies on the economic value of Midtown. Continuing the research process towards P2 this focus on economic value has shifted towards, housing, high-end housing, affordable housing, social housing and eventually leading to the design brief for 1227 Broadway, consisting of High-end housing, affordable housing and derived from its environmental embedding an added program of retail.

One can argue the only way research is beneficial is when it is captured in a product to show and communicate. Apart from communicating trains of thoughts and findings, in this way, research gains value, by its ability to reproduce. With this purpose, the research that has been developed is captured into a book format. This book consists of group work and individual work. Apart from the book another physical product of group effort is the models. A 1:2000 and a 1:1000 model of Midtown Manhattan and crops decorate the studio of Complex projects. To make a good looking “mascot” as a team the group made this in the first couple of weeks of graduation. Apart from the strive of the group of making a “mascot” the process of making, and especially the closely needed attention to reproduce Midtown on a different scale, help create a way of awareness of the scale. These models and the book are a good example of the chairs’ methodology of *thinking through making*. In this way, Complex Projects strives a kinesthetic and autodidactic way of learning for its graduate students.



## RELEVANCE

### ASPECT 1: RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH AND DESIGN

Both research and design have had a great influence on the process towards 1227 Broadway. Arguably both have been as important as each other. In the process, design can't be named without naming research. Research has encouraged design and design has encouraged research. At first, research started the design process, but along the way, research has always been of importance to getting to better design solutions. One can state that the relationship between the two is complimentary.

Arguably the relationship between research and design is most visible in the process of making alternatives. In that case, research is performed by designing. A matter of reflecting and judging certain design solutions create design guidelines. These design guidelines create values for the final design. The input of researching by designing creates a comprehensive method for the product. Within the chair of Complex Projects there strives the method of doing product-based research. This is described in the next paragraph.

Concluding the relationship between research and design, one can state that designing is research. The only difference is that this is in a pseudoscientific way. By creating alternatives and specifying their qualities, there is a search for the best solution. But in fact, the relevance of certain researches lies by the subjective judgment of its researcher. The designer decides what to research and what path to go to. One can state that the research for designs is an outcome of the preference, subjectivity, and "taste" or "feeling" of its researcher.

### ASPECT 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 1227 BROADWAY AND COMPLEX PROJECT AND ARCHITECTURE

As mentioned before the chair of Complex Projects encourages the method creating by learning, thinking by making. As mentioned before, 1227 Broadway mainly is designed by researching with research by designing. As known to Complex Project graduation students there is a relatively large building to be designed in a tight schedule. In short, a lot of work has to be done. The chair of Complex Projects strives towards a presentation based design process. In this way, the designer is pushed to create design decisions in products with presentation quality. With this approach 1227 Broadway, benefits from a comprehensive design where the design progress is integrated with the final products.

### ASPECT 3: RESEARCH METHOD AND APPROACH IN RELATION TO THE STUDIO METHODOLOGIES

The first half a year of graduation started with MSc3. In this period mainly the focus was gathering hard and soft data. With this research, a better understanding of Midtown aimed to be developed. This aims to put the current and past changes of Midtown in perspective. The conclusion of this research results in a framework in which a topic is developed. This topic answers to one or more changes happening in Midtown. The graduation project will then derive out of this topic. For the graduation project, the following research is for the location. Taking the project situation into consideration, a good location

can become a strategic tool to answer the change but can also be embedded in the immediate context. In this way, the strategic position can be strengthened by the site's conditions, but the other way around, the graduation project can be of greater value by reacting and become a tribute to the context. From this research, the project for 1227 Broadway got defined. From this point forward arguably a shift in perspective is happening from the designers' point of view. Whereas the hard data and soft data were more of a top-down approach, from this point forward more bottom-up approach is applied.

For the P2 presentation, a program for the project had to be defined. By looking into references and typical spaces, one can get a better understanding of what is possible and what the equation of different parts should be. Apart from that, some parts of the program need a more elaborate explanation and argumentation. To get better insights into this, and for communication, space data research became beneficial. By looking into the needs of one specific function of the program, a bottom-up approach creates more awareness and more grip for the whole of the project.

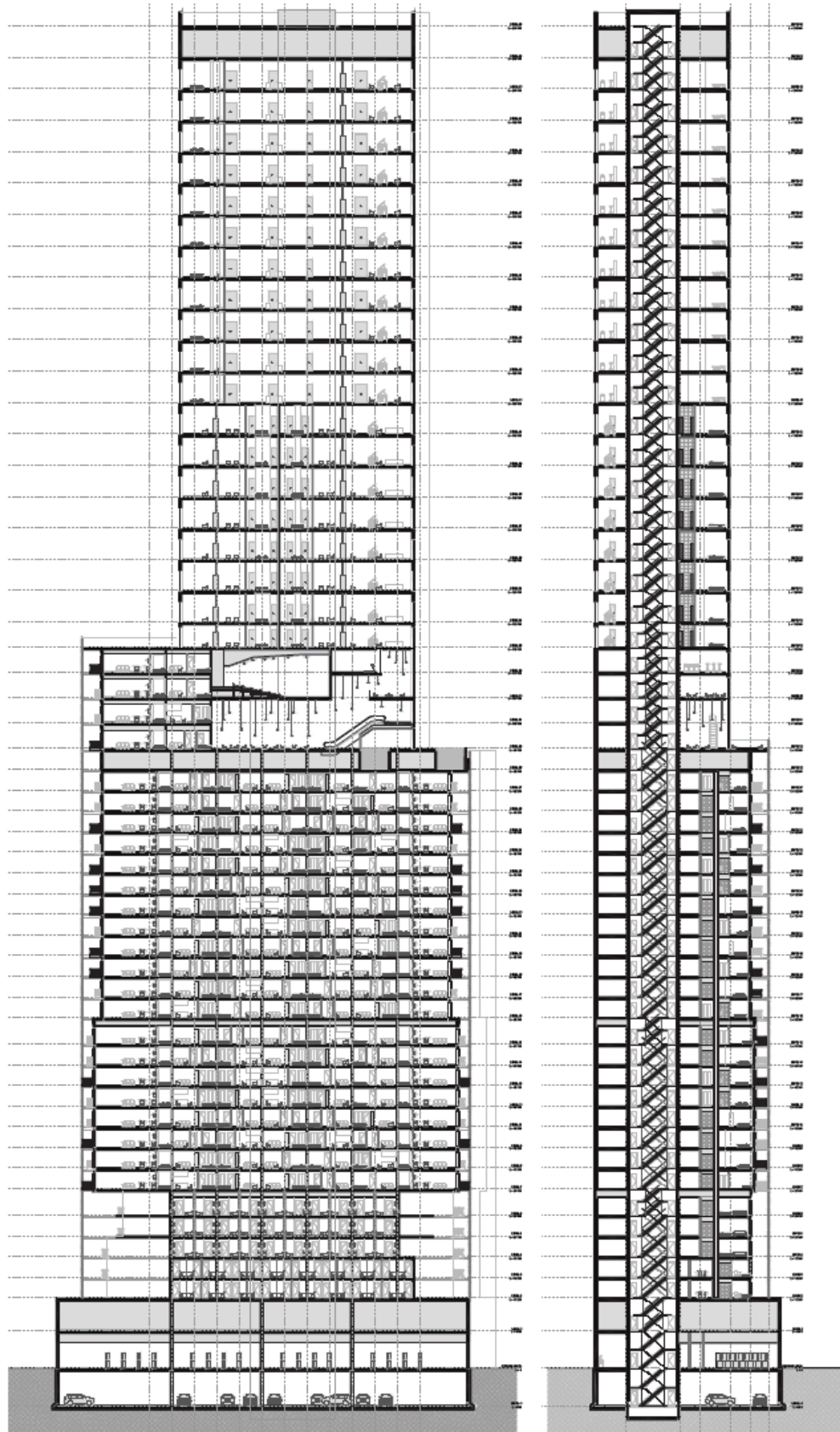
As mentioned before the chair of Complex Projects strives to a kinesthetic and autodidactic approach of researching. In the process of 1227 Broadway, this shows in considered design decisions. These decisions mainly consist of the research and production of alternatives. By first doing a program study, the start of the first proposal can be designed. While making alternatives, progress can be made towards more comprehensive design guidelines. By making these alternatives and combining the products like drawings, models, and renders, the thoughts of design decisions can be communicated, compared, and reflected on. By comprehensively showing alternatives systematically and clearly, one can methodically improve a design towards a thoughtful and comprehensive design proposal. In this way, a proposal can be argued accordingly.

### ASPECT 4: RELATIONSHIP WITH A WIDER SOCIAL/ PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK

Apart from high-end housing for the rich, the main focus of the project is housing for the affordable. Designing in an extremely crowded and especially expensive context, an architect's role may shift from its traditional task to a more comprehensive modern one. This by taking into account, a more expansive role. This is shown in the focus of the architecture of today. Nowadays architecture is not merely designing a building, but more focused on the design of what happens inside, the social framework. As the chair claims: *"The contemporary architect today must learn to see the world through many lenses: as a planner, organizer, politician, economist, philosopher, strategist, humanitarian, and visionary."*

As this role shifts, one can state that to be successful, an architect should extend his service and think out of the box.





1227 Broadway utilizes this approach by implementing high-end housing and retail to create affordable housing. The combination of this program creates a more feasible business case for affordable housing on expensive land. Merely affordable housing would likely be impossible in Midtown.

#### ASPECT 5: ETHICAL ISSUES AND DILEMMAS

As mentioned before, creating merely affordable housing would hardly be a successful challenge. But by the introduction of a mixed housing building, there is a possibility. However, this isn't as straight forward of creating bigger and smaller apartments since the main costs go per housing size (considering comparable luxe). So how can this mixed housing principle be designed creating values for both target groups? Ethical dilemmas of living above a lower-income target group and having a combined entrance, have risen multiple times. The ethical goal of 1227 Broadway is to create two separate buildings on top of each other, where they benefit from each other's specifications.

An example of these benefits for the high-end is an alternation of the zoning law. By an introduced rule, more floor areas can be built if a building consists of at least fifty percent out of affordable housing. When this is the case the plot gets assigned a determined amount of extra buildable floor area, only for affordable housing. In this way, affordable housing benefits in the amount of area, and the high-end housing benefits for having more body, lifting the high-end higher for a greater view over Midtown. This newly introduced zoning rule benefits the living quality of both target groups.

1227 Broadway strives to deal with the main ethical issue on how to create one urban settlement for contrasting layers of society, without compromising both qualities of living.