

Project Title: Henry Moore Gallery, Kingston, Kent Downs

Academic Level: M.Arch Part II – Year V Thesis Project

Programme: SYN City – Cultural Landscapes: Art and Architecture in the Countryside

Project Brief: The studio explores how heritage, culture, art, and architecture can enrich the Kent Downs; an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and protected National Landscape stretching from the London/Surrey borders to the White Cliffs of Dover. Aligned with the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, which calls for the preservation and celebration of the region's historic and cultural heritage, the studio promotes contemporary architectural and artistic engagement with the landscape. Through research into local history, traditions, and artists past and present, we propose new site-specific museums, galleries, and cultural institutions. The designs aim to support rural communities, foster public engagement, and reimagine the Kent Downs as a vibrant, contemporary cultural landscape.

Studio Tutor: Prof. Gabor Stark (Dipl.-Ing. Arch., SFHEA)

Design Statement: This thesis celebrates the work of English sculptor Henry Moore, focusing on the transformative decade between 1930 and 1940, during which he lived and worked in the Kent Downs. These years were pivotal in the evolution of Moore's sculptural language, particularly his time in Kingston, where the surrounding landscape of rolling hills and rugged terrain profoundly influenced his approach to form, material, and spatial composition. The organic contours, hollowed masses, and sculptural voids that define his later work can be traced directly to this immersive engagement with the natural environment.

Rooted in this context, the thesis proposes a gallery that accommodates both indoor and outdoor sculptural displays, inviting visitors to experience Moore's work in varied spatial and environmental conditions. The architectural intent is to foster a contemplative, sensory-rich journey that deepens the viewer's relationship with both Moore's sculptures and the landscape that shaped them.

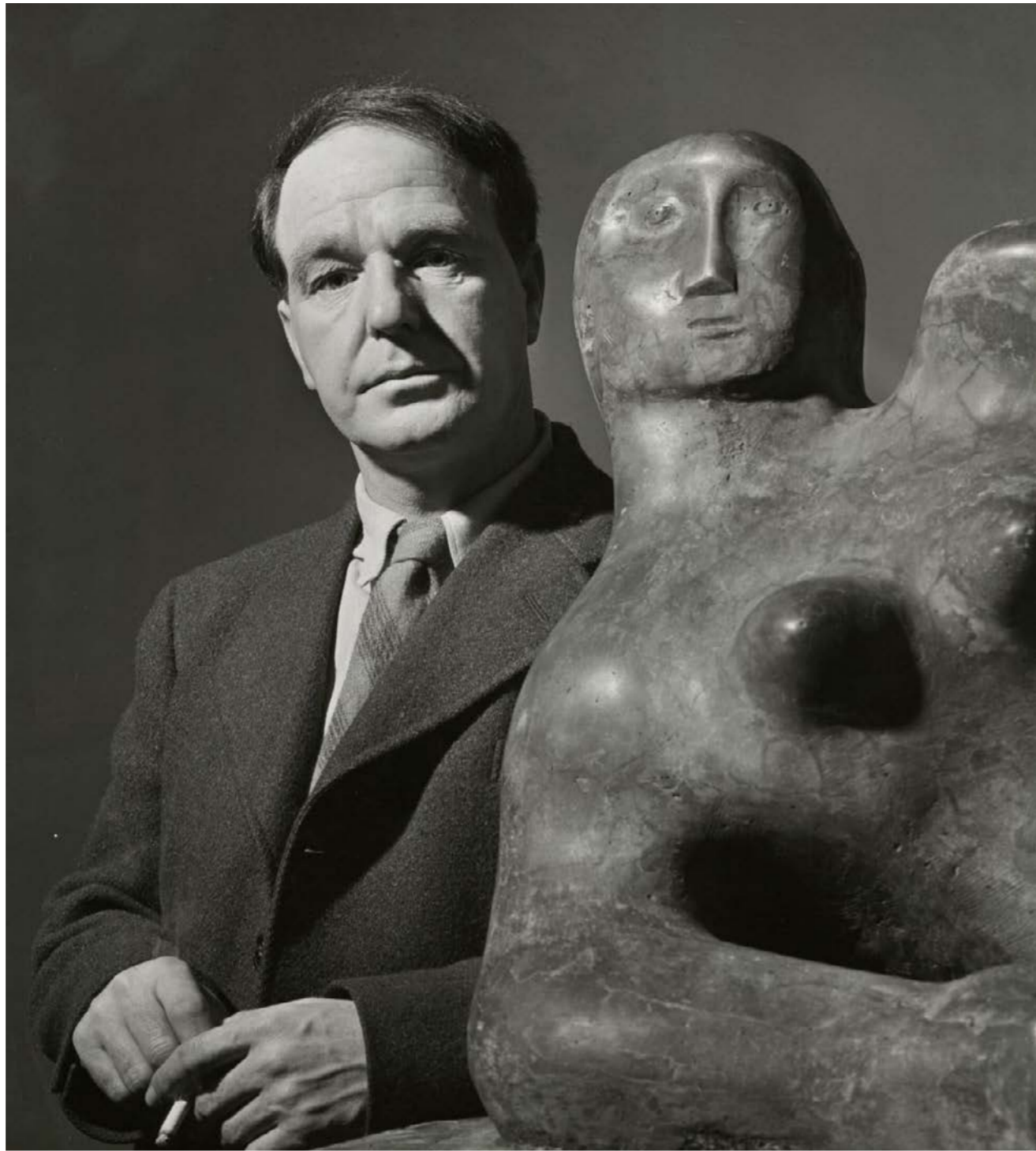
At the heart of the design is the idea of walls not merely as enclosures, but as sculptural and spatial instruments. These earthen walls guide movement, frame axial views of the Kent Downs, and modulate light to create a shifting dialogue of shadow, surface, and void, echoing the phenomenological qualities of Moore's forms. Their grounded presence provides both spatial clarity and poetic resonance.

Rammed earth is employed as the primary building material for its tactile richness, thermal mass, and deep connection to place. Serving as both structure and surface, it allows the building to emerge from the land itself, an extension of the terrain it inhabits. Full-scale studies and material explorations examine rammed earth as a sculptural medium in its own right, reinforcing the project's spatial and topographical sensitivity.

A timber roof structure and large timber-framed apertures introduce warmth, rhythm, and a sense of craft, mediating between interior and exterior. These elements bring in filtered natural light and frame dynamic views of the surrounding woodland, allowing the trees to become an ever-changing, living backdrop. The architectural edges dissolve into the landscape, cultivating a quiet harmony between building and site.

Through these material and spatial strategies, the project envisions a cultural institution that not only honours Moore's legacy but contributes to the Kent Downs as a contemporary cultural landscape, echoing the studio's wider ambition. It is an architecture where art, nature, and place converge in a grounded, enduring dialogue.





Henry Moore (30 July 1898 – 31 August 1986) was a pioneering English sculptor best known for his abstract representations of the human form, often reclining figures or mother-and-child compositions. Characterised by hollowed forms and punctured surfaces, his sculptures explore the interplay between mass and void, body and landscape.

In the early 1930s, Moore resigned from his position as a professor at the Royal College of Art following a hostile media campaign - one that was disturbingly supported by some of his own colleagues. In the aftermath, he temporarily left London and relocated to Jasmine Cottage in Dover, Kent, seeking space and creative freedom. The cottage became a retreat for weekends and holidays with his family.

In a letter to fellow artist Paul Nash dated September 15, 1933, Moore expressed a desire to establish a workspace embedded in the landscape, envisioning a monolithic form at its centre, reminiscent of the standing stones at Stonehenge. After selling Jasmine Cottage in 1935, Moore purchased Burcroft, a more modern cottage in Kingston, Kent, with five acres of wild meadow. He and his family lived there until 1940. During this time, Moore stated that the landscape directly inspired his desire to create sculptures for natural settings. With the help of his carving assistant Bernard Meadows, Moore began installing his own version of a "Stonehenge" across the land, a site for experimenting with scale, material, and setting.

The Henry Moore Foundation: Spaces of Making and Legacy - Established in 1977, the Henry Moore Foundation supports artists, art historians, and institutions through exhibitions, fellowships, and research grants. Operating from the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds and Henry Moore Studios & Gardens in Perry Green, Hertfordshire, the Foundation reflects Moore's lifelong dedication to material, landscape, and the sculptural process.

The Perry Green site, Moore's former home Hoglands, remains a vibrant centre for exploring his life and work. Visitors can step inside his original studios; preserved with tools, maquettes, and personal objects, and view a vast collection of sculptures and drawings that offer deep insight into his creative practice.

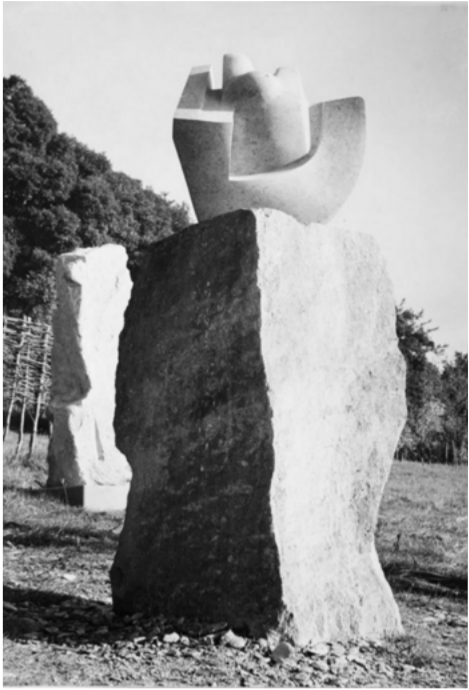
The landscaped gardens display over 20 monumental outdoor works, thoughtfully integrated into the environment. Moore's interest in placing sculpture within nature is further echoed in the Aisled Barn, a restored 16th-century structure that now houses tapestries based on his drawings.

More than a historical site, the Foundation actively supports contemporary sculpture through research, exhibitions, and new commissions. It embodies Moore's vision of art as a bridge between humanity and the natural world.

The Foundation's archive and library hold an extensive collection of publications, letters, photographs, and exhibition material, one of the most comprehensive resources on Moore's legacy. Its architectural design enhances the experience of space and light, using natural materials to reflect Moore's deep respect for craft, setting, and structure.

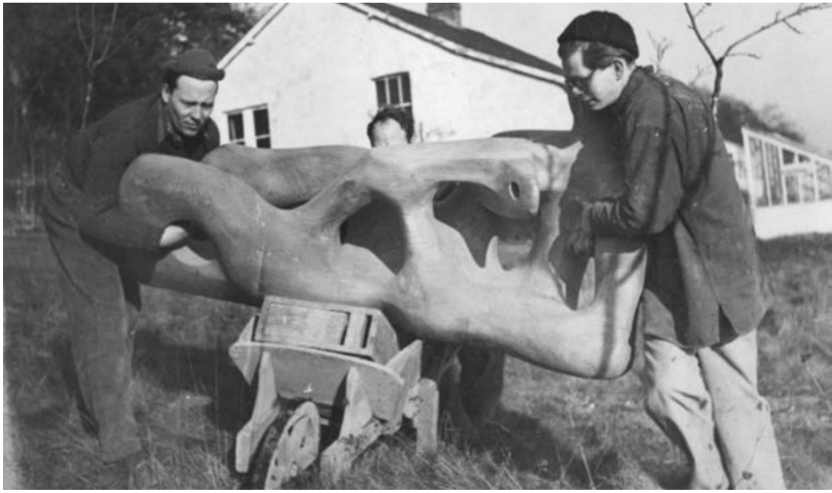


HENRY MOORE: MASTER OF FORMS

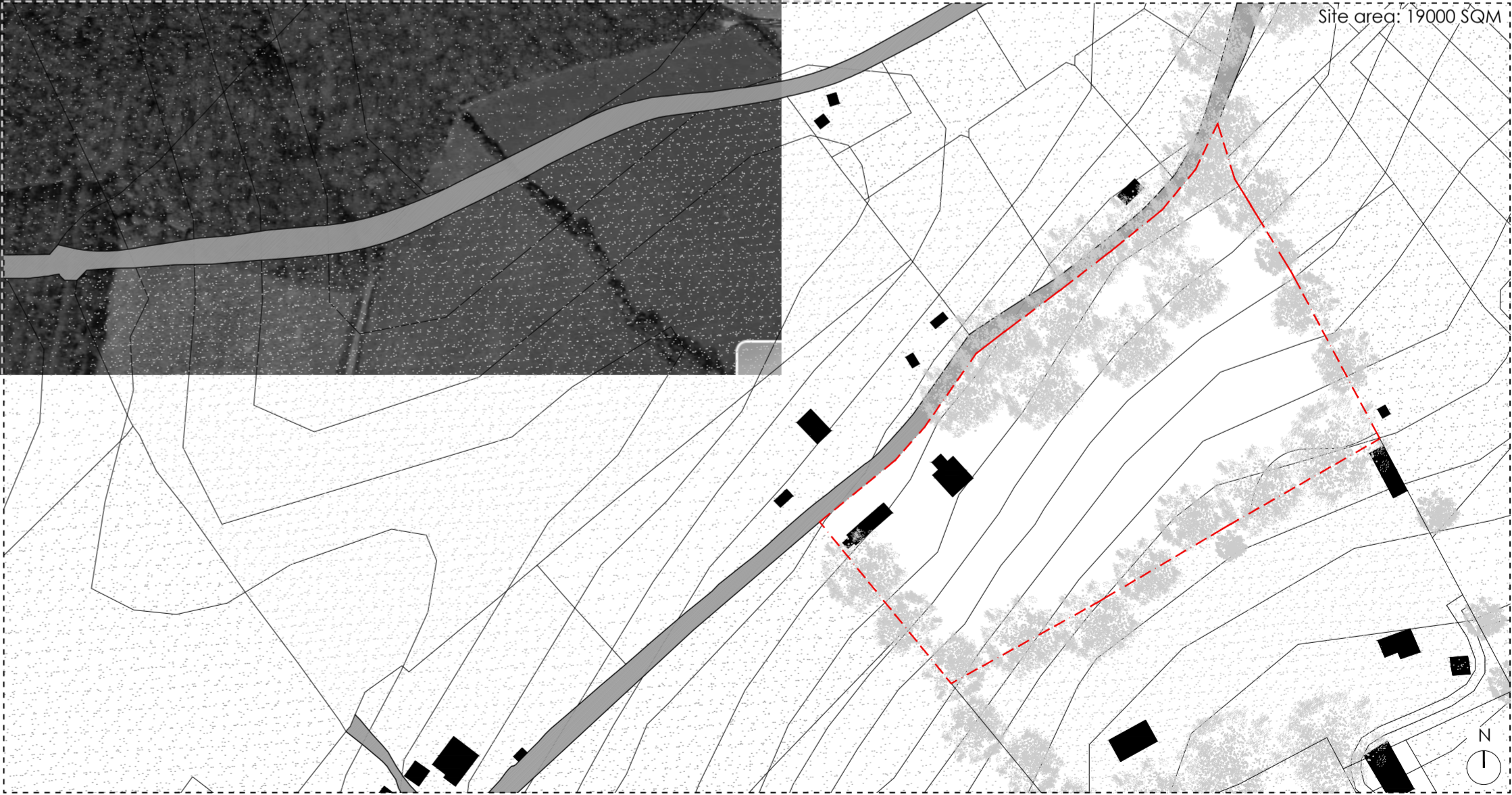


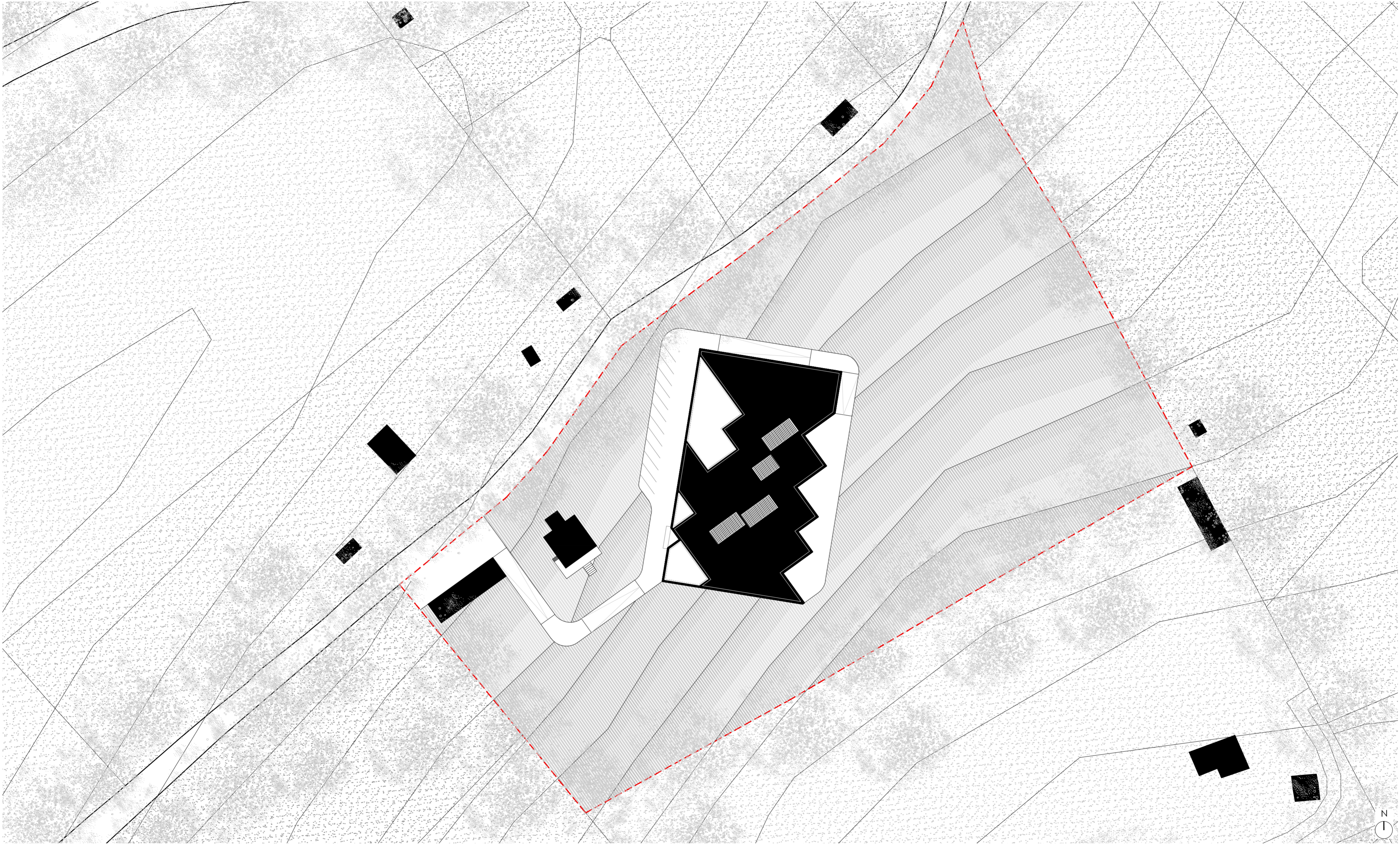
The proposed site holds historical significance as the former home of Henry Moore from 1934 to 1940. Located just outside the village of Kingston, it sits along Marley Lane, a quiet, tree-lined path that offers a serene and uplifting approach. The natural beauty of the lane sets a tranquil tone, immersing visitors in the landscape from the outset.

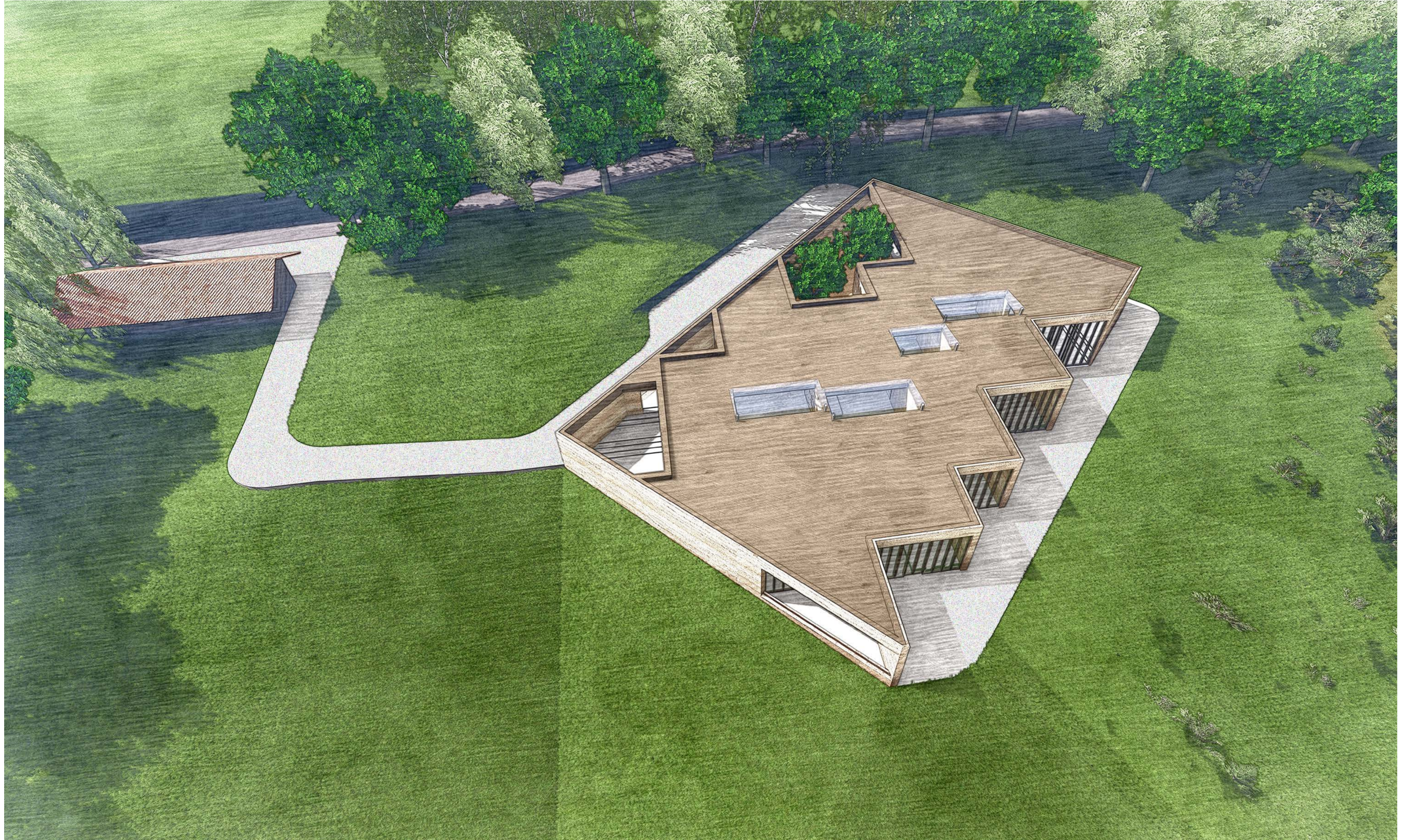
The land itself features gentle contours and shifting elevations, enhancing its spatial richness and visual appeal. Existing structures on the site include a cottage and a shed, with the cottage extending naturally into the open southern landscape. This gradual transition into the meadow-like terrain evokes a strong sense of openness and calm. Currently, site access is limited to a narrow lane running along the northern boundary.



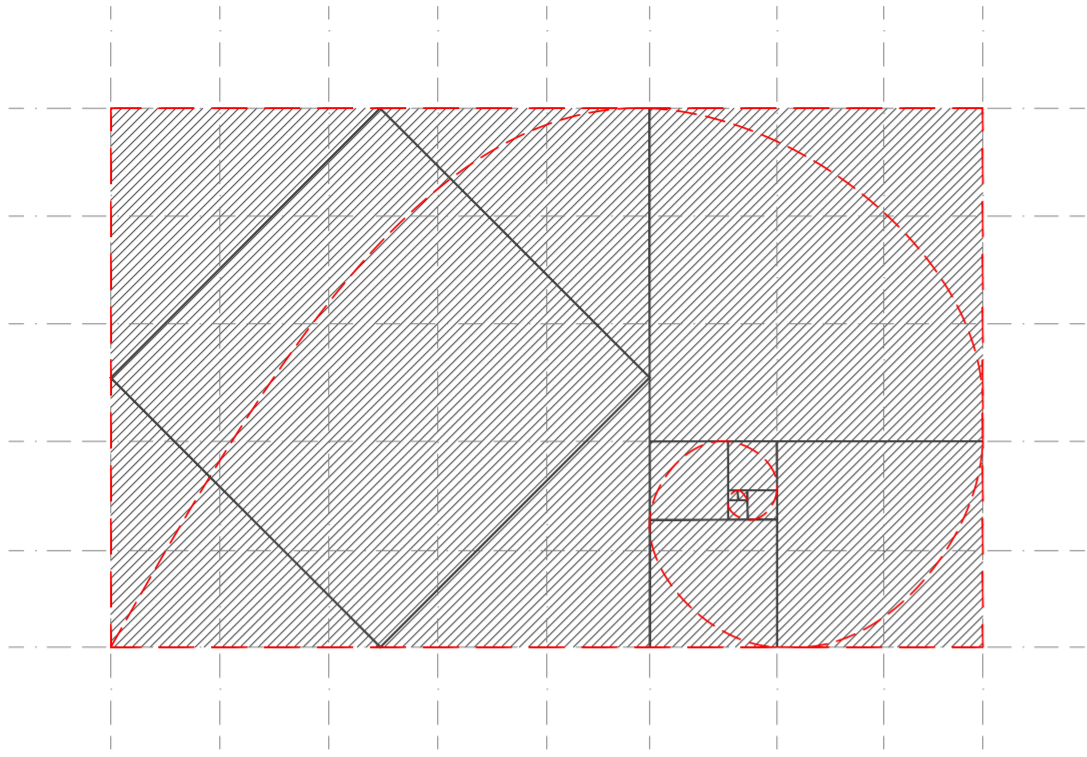
Photographs of Henry Moore working & posing with his sculptures outside his Kingston cottage, captured between 1935 - early 1940s.



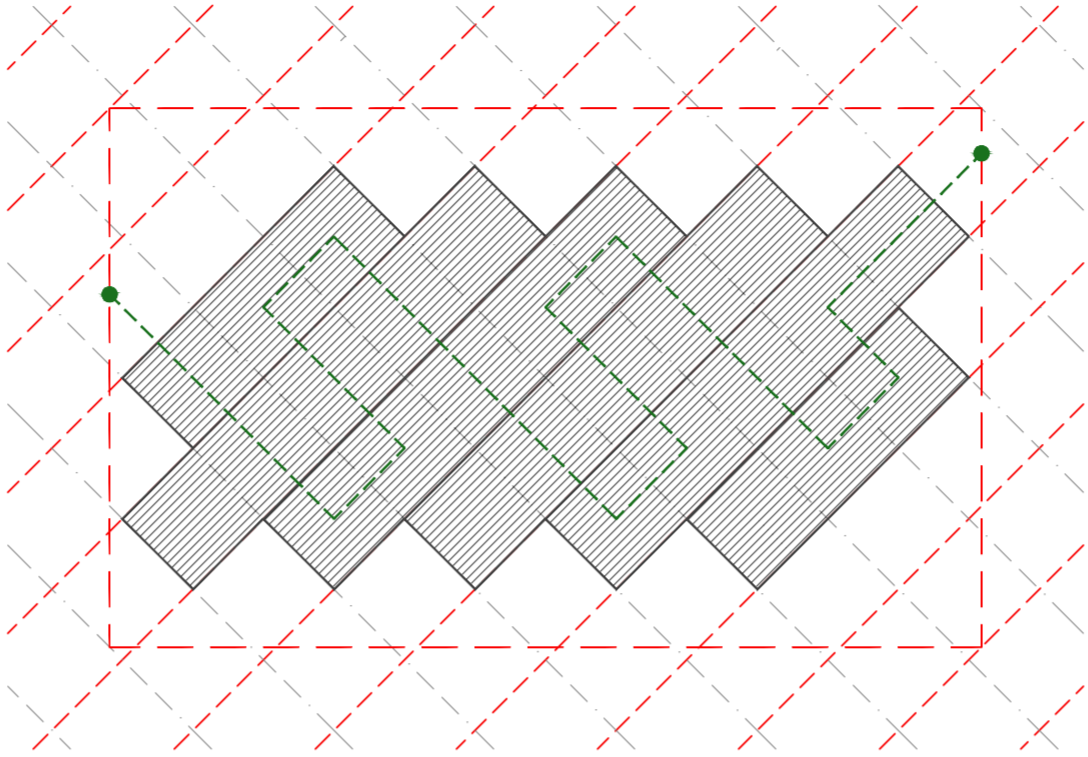




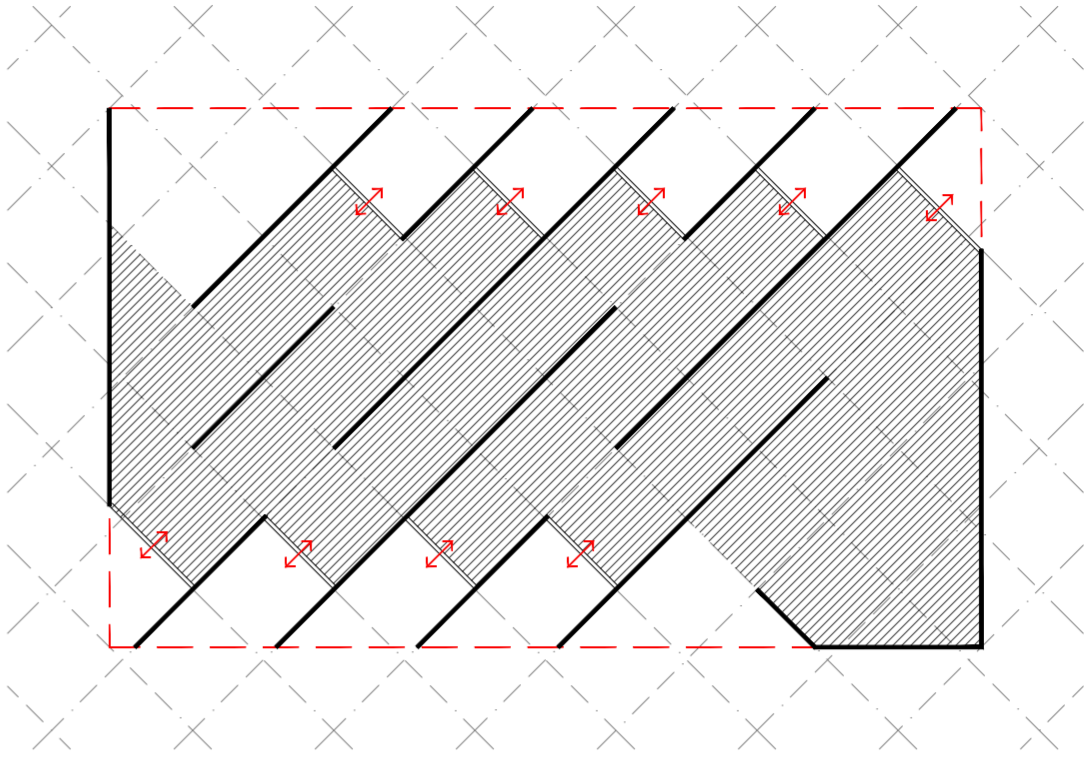
AERIAL PERSPECTIVE: THE GALLERY IN CONTEXT



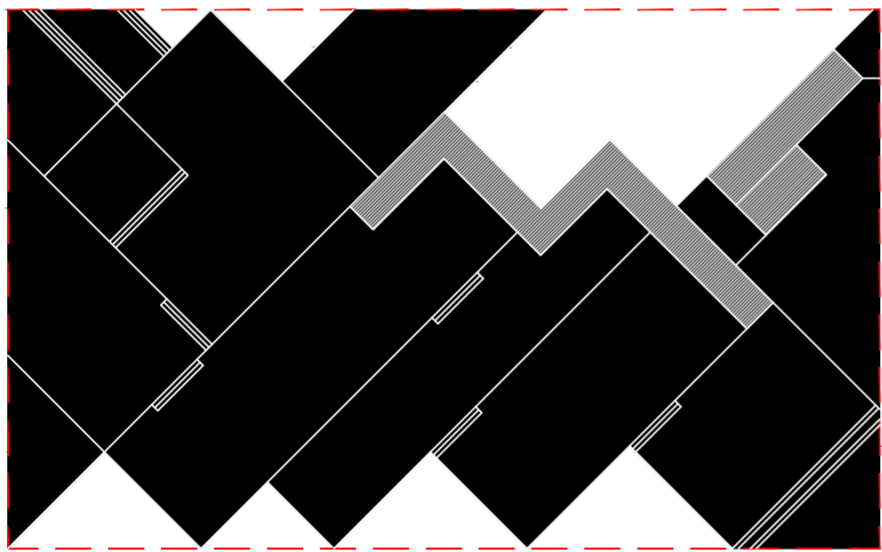
Proportioned by the Golden Ratio, shifted 45° to frame light and embrace the terrain.



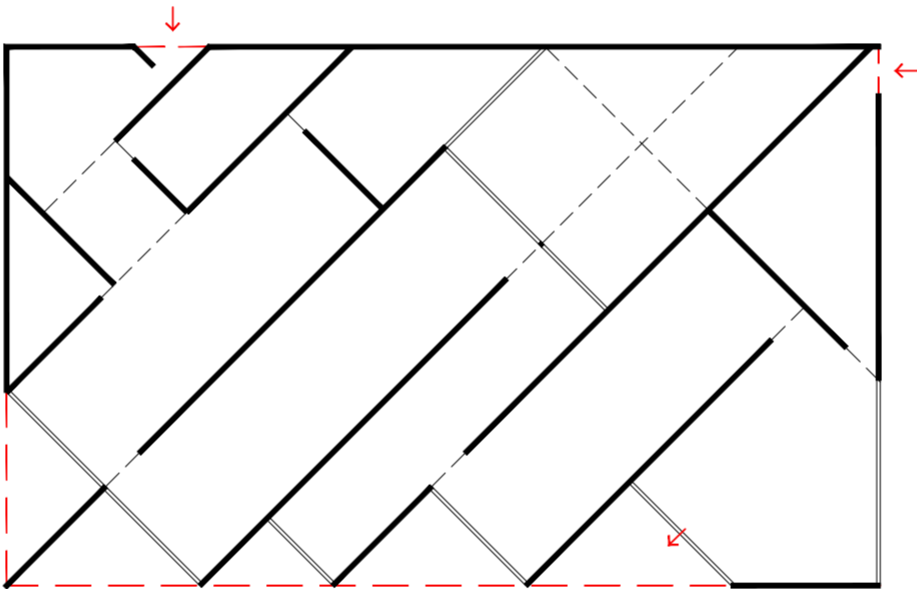
Elongated gallery arms open up views and amplify the sense of space.



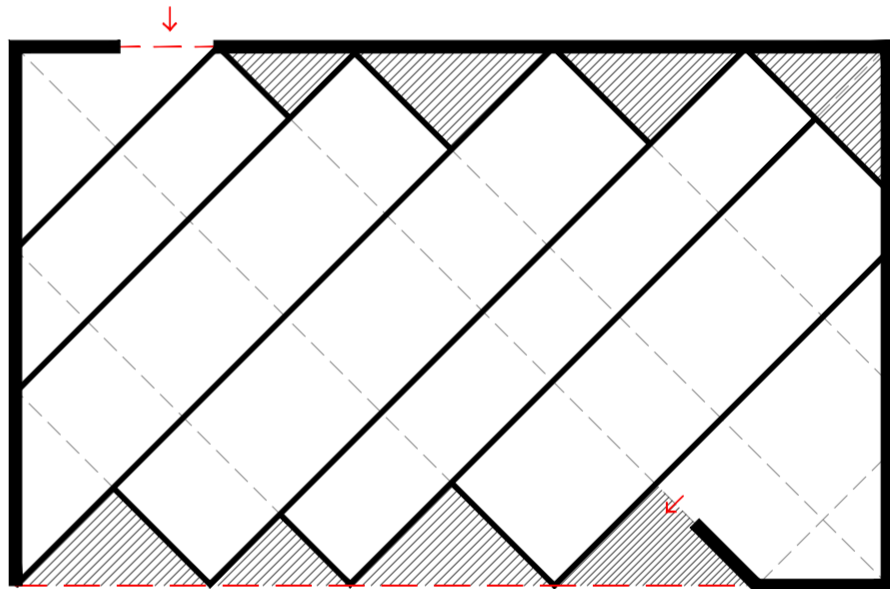
Dual-end openings frame outward views and anchor the gallery within its context.



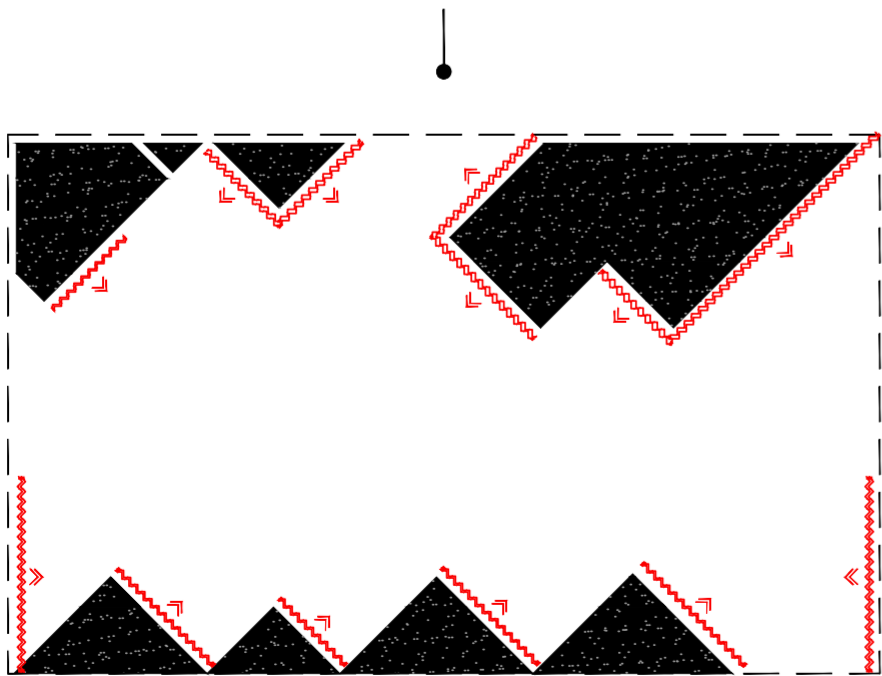
Adjusting levels to follow the natural slope of the site, anchoring the building in the landscape.



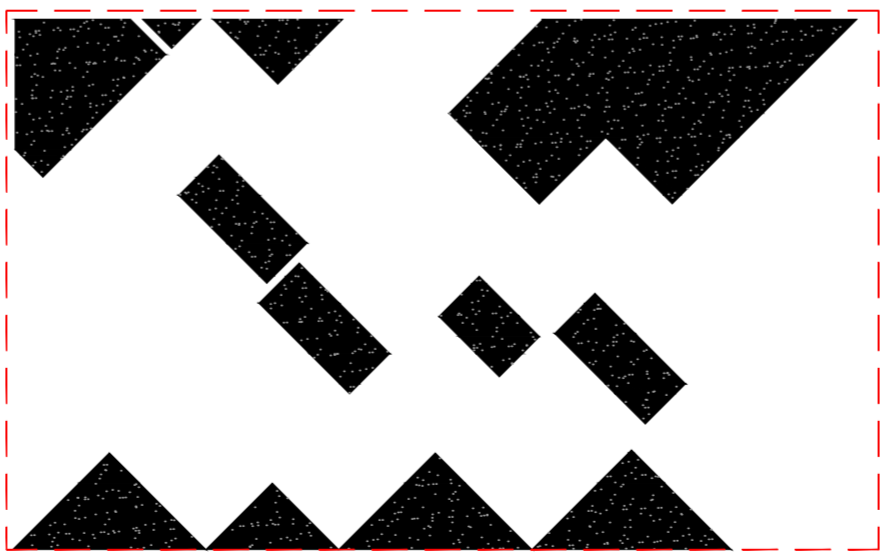
The defined facade allowed for better planning of access, services, and spatial hierarchy.



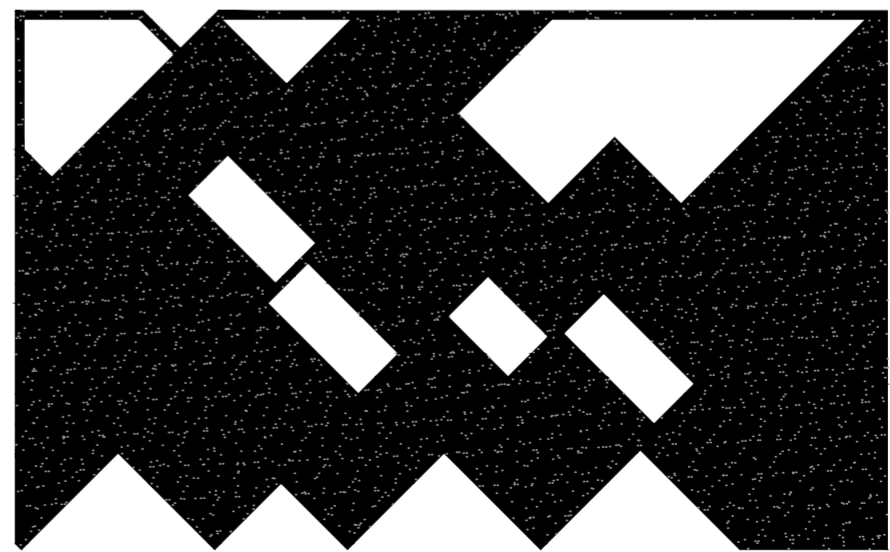
The facade is treated as a solid sculptural element; bold, and directional.



Light study to design the Skylights



The skylight openings evolves with rafter structure to match patterns.



The Roof layout brings together structure, light, and material in a cohesive form.



A curated material palette echoing the diverse materiality of Moore's sculptures



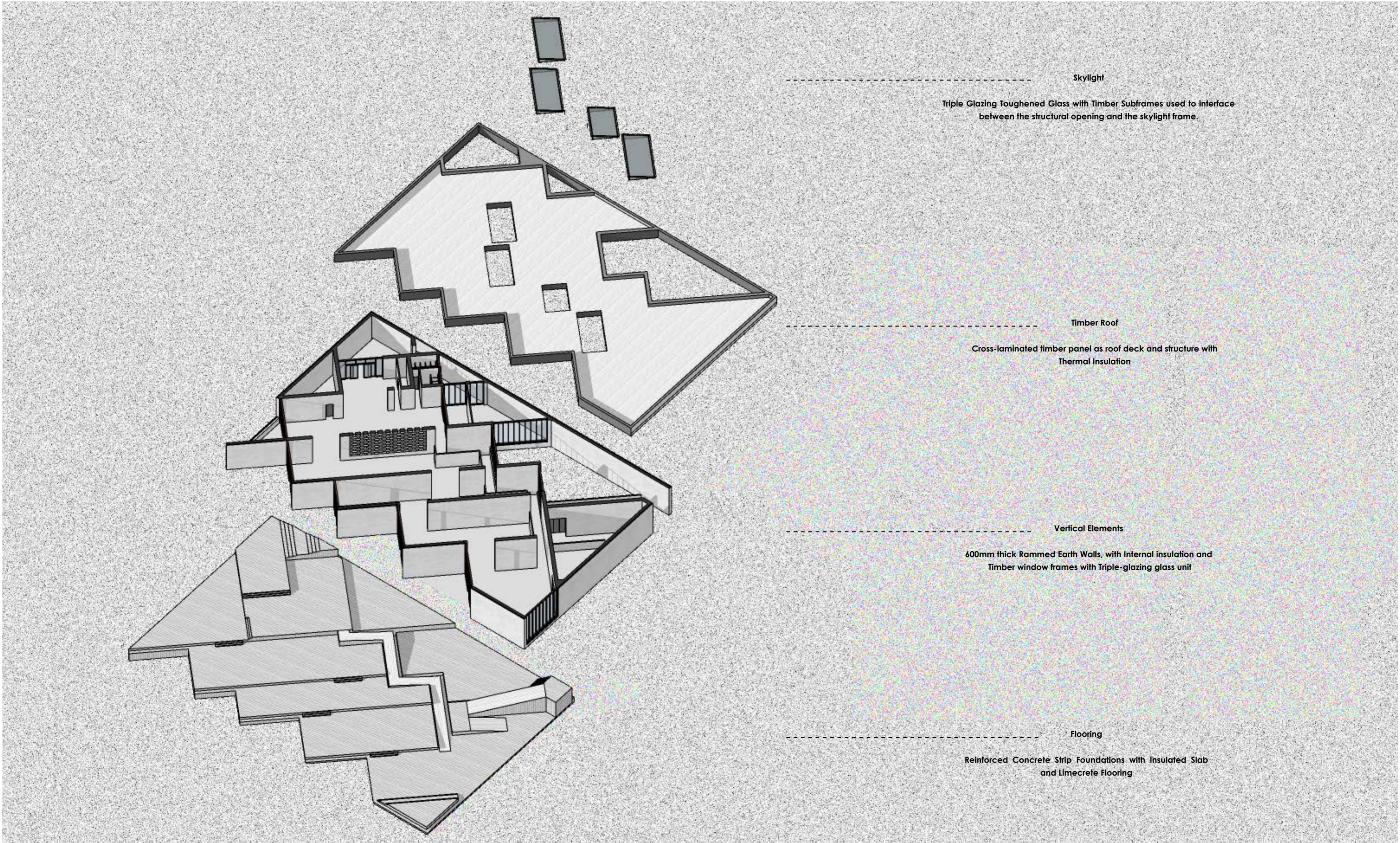
The gentle gradation of yellow in rammed earth enhances the sculptural presence of Moore's forms, allowing their rich materiality to emerge in sharp relief



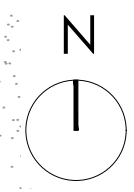
Light grey limecrete flooring subtly grounds the gallery, balancing the earthy walls, bright timber ceiling, and the commanding presence of Moore's sculptures.



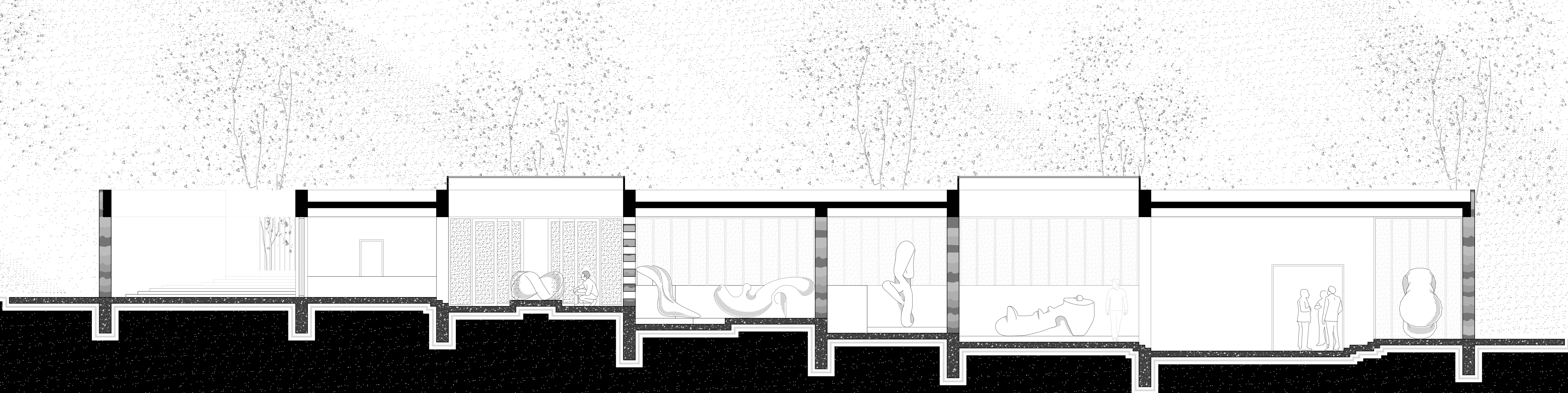
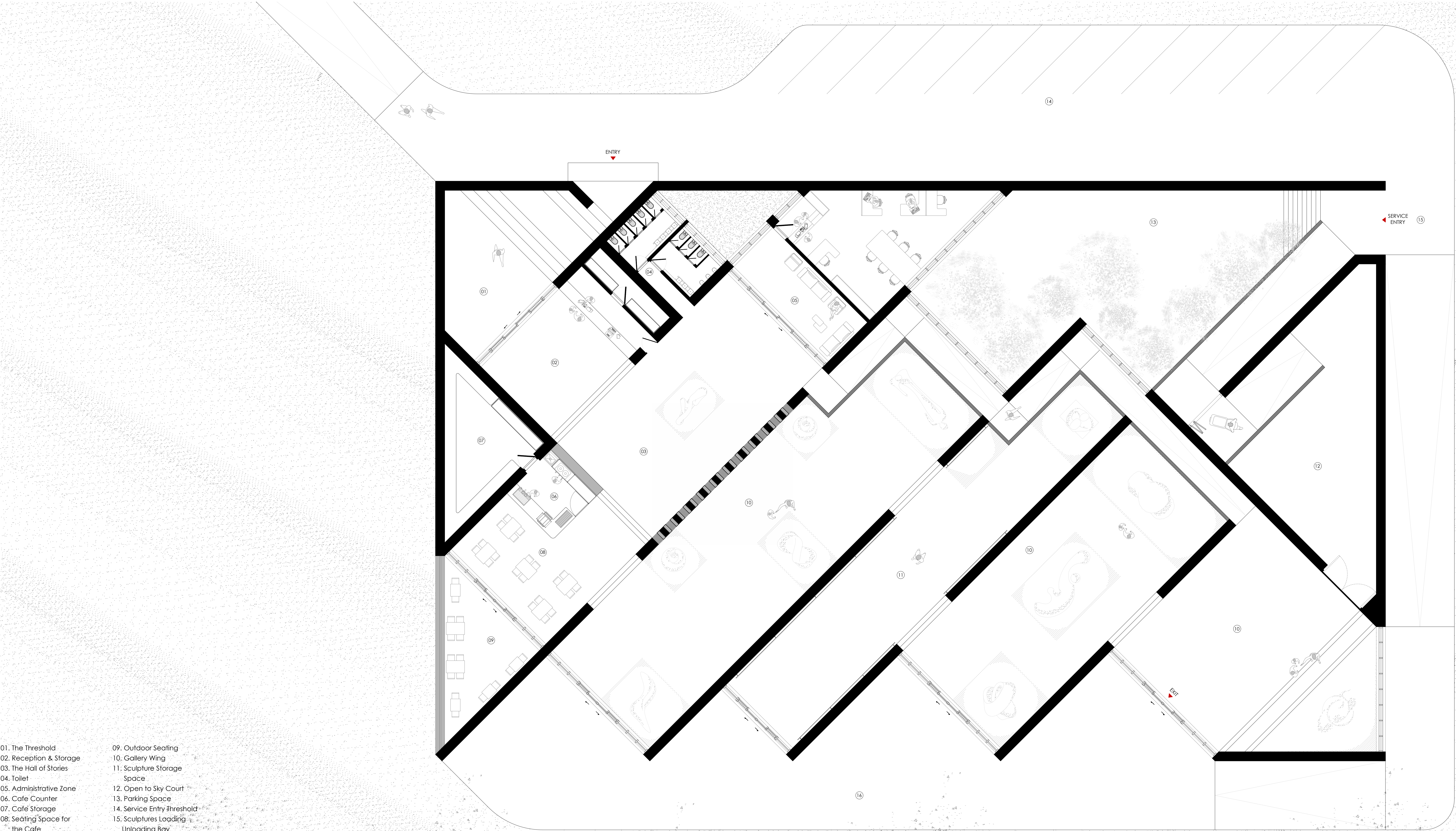
A bright timber roof structure boldly crowns the rammed earth walls, creating a striking visual contradiction between lightness and mass.

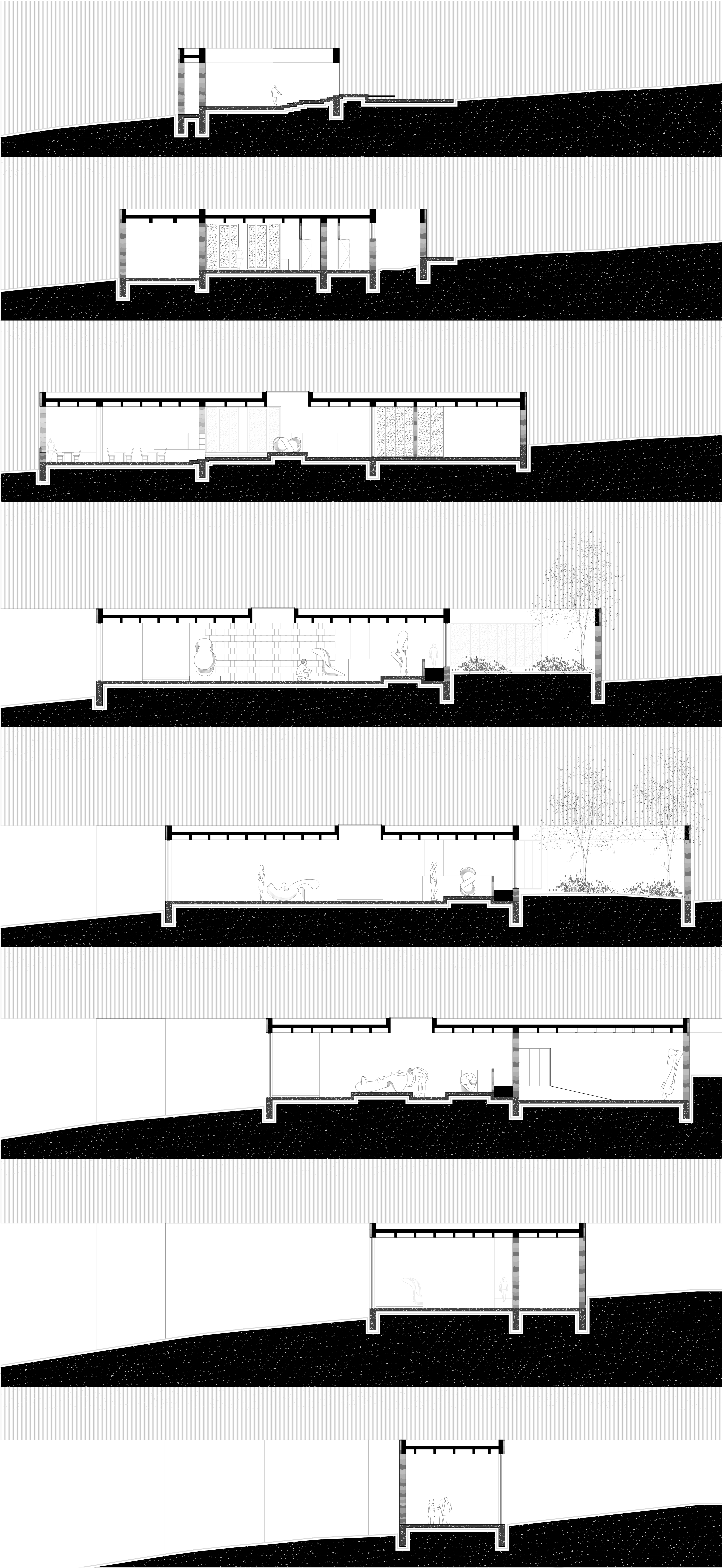


LAYERED VOLUMES: AXONOMETRIC EXPLORATION OF SPACE

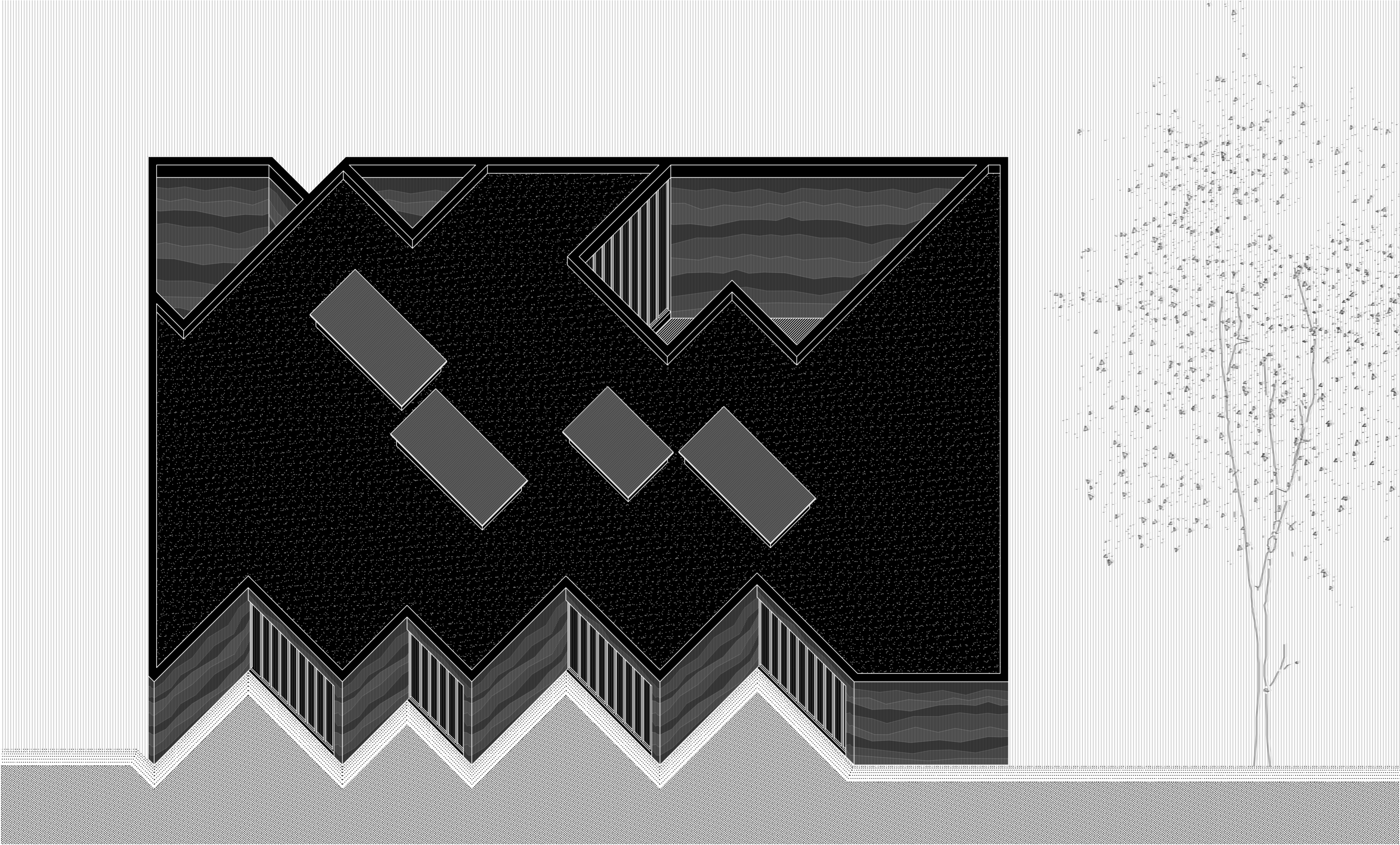


- 01. The Threshold
- 02. Reception & Storage
- 03. The Hall of Stories
- 04. Toilet
- 05. Administrative Zone
- 06. Cafe Counter
- 07. Cafe Storage
- 08. Seating Space for the Cafe
- 09. Outdoor Seating
- 10. Gallery Wing
- 11. Sculpture Storage Space
- 12. Open to Sky Court
- 13. Parking Space
- 14. Service Entry Threshold
- 15. Sculptures Loading Unloading Bay





SECTIONAL STUDIES THROUGH EACH WING OF THE GALLERY



CUTAWAY AXONOMETRIC – REAR ELEVATION

















