



THE ROAMING CUO PROJECT

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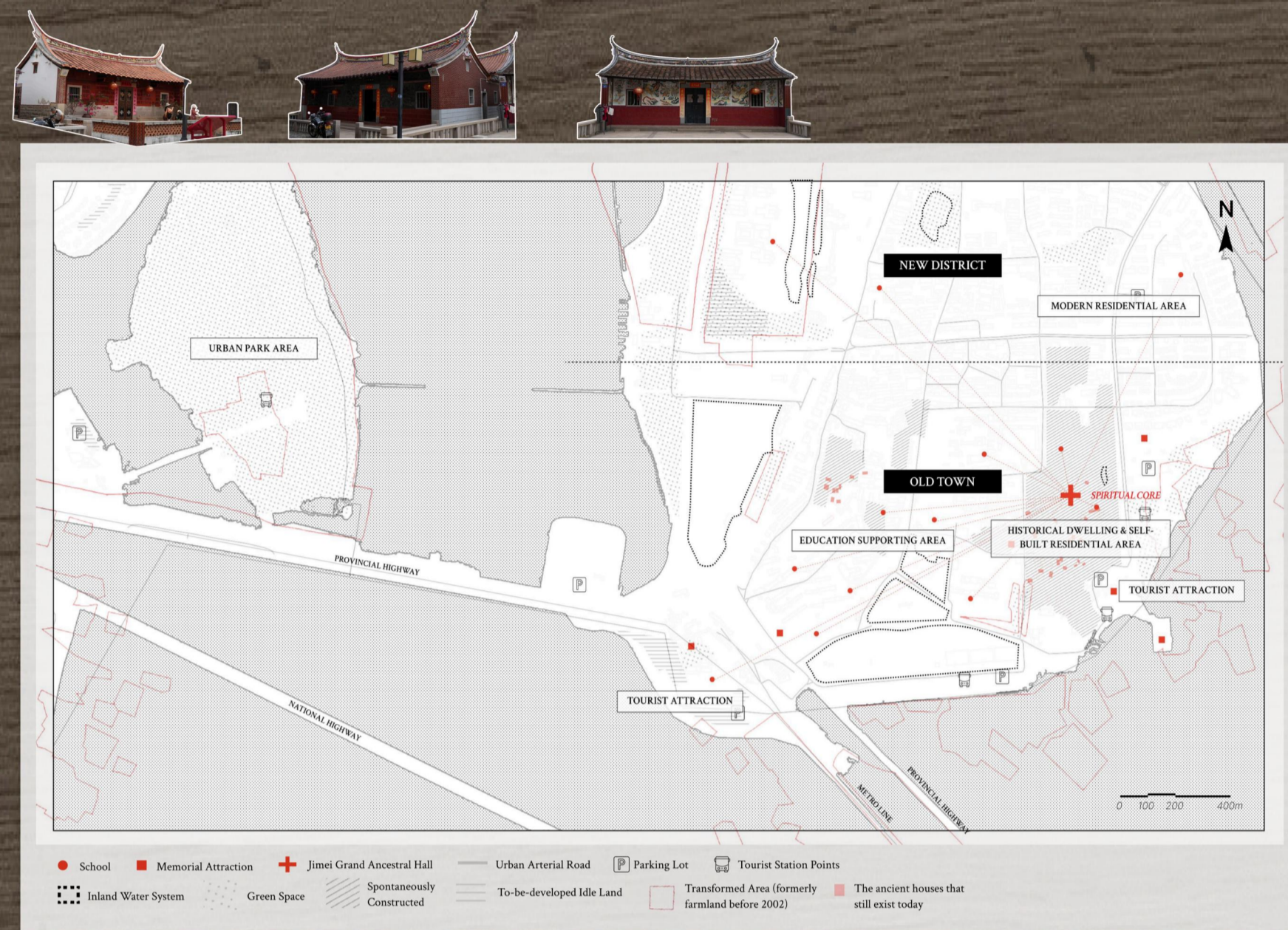
As urbanization transforms Jimei Dashe, traditional gucuo have retreated from daily dwelling into ancestral worship or abandonment, while building crafts face transmission rupture. Heritage is withdrawing from everyday life into historical memory.

This project explores pathways for **heritage to return to contemporary use** while addressing the shortage of public space in high-density communities. The design establishes a **dual system**. An idle gucuo is converted into a hybrid **workshop base and urban living room**. Mobile workshop unit serve as **fluid connectors linking scattered gucuo nodes** across the village. Together they create infrastructure for **site activation and collaborative learning among residents**, visitors, designers, craftspeople, and organizers. Through this framework, participants reinterpret gucuo components using traditional techniques, transforming them into everyday furniture that re-enters community use.

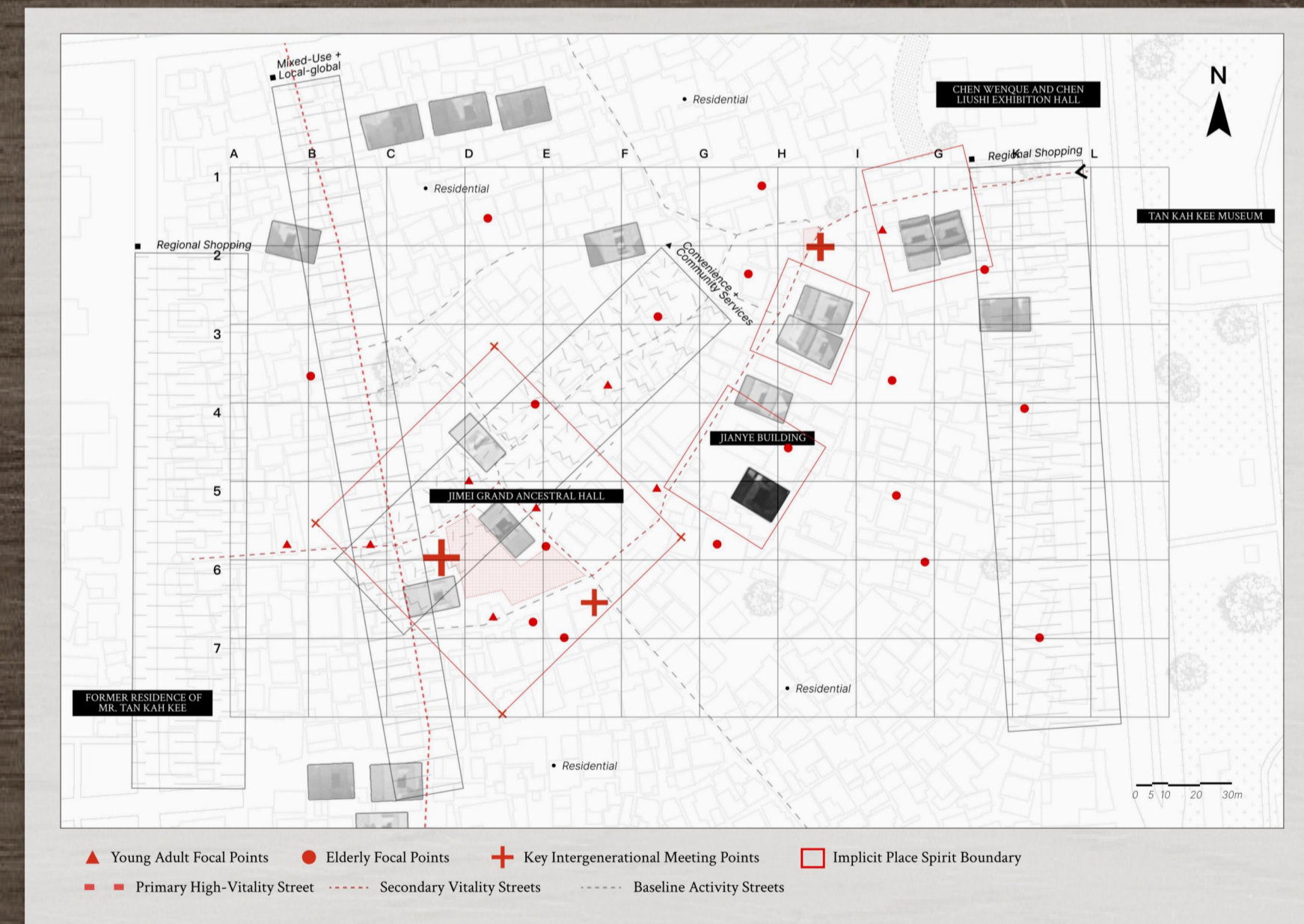
The design constructs not a singular space but a replicable network for heritage activation. This mechanism shifts heritage from **passive protection toward active use and living transmission**, enabling gucuo and their crafts to gain renewed vitality by responding to contemporary needs and transforming from **historical memory into everyday life**.

/DESIGN CONTEXT

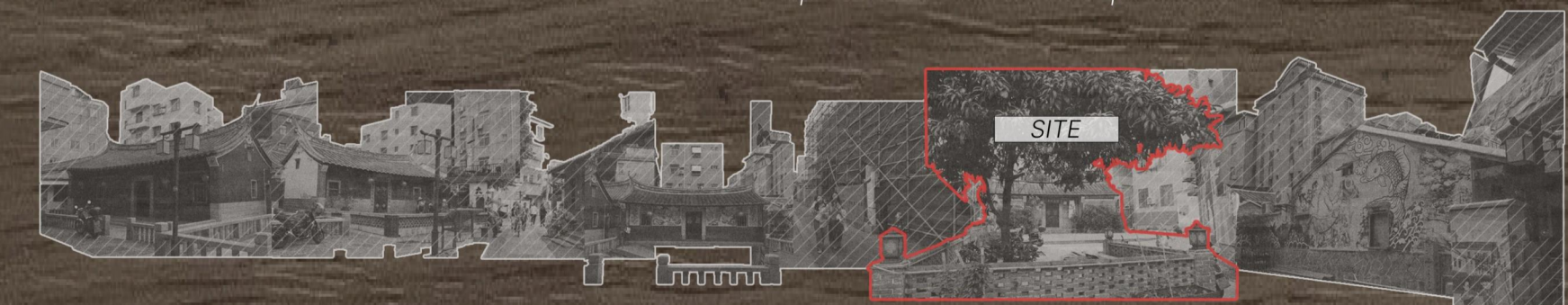
SITE ANALYSIS



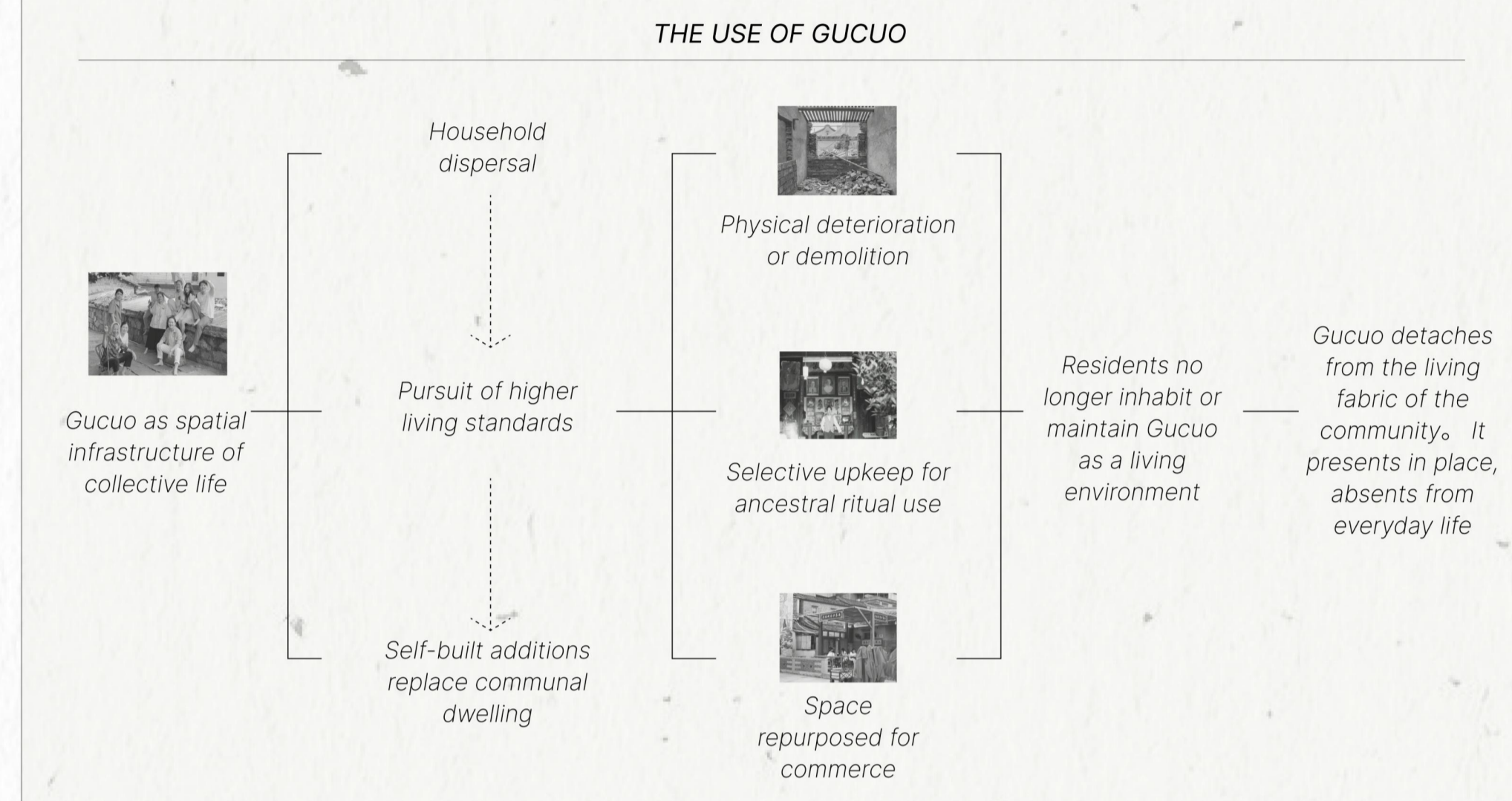
Jimei Dashe, a typical Minnan overseas Chinese settlement in Xiamen, has undergone **dramatic urban transformation** over the past two decades. With the influx of migrant population and intensified land development pressure, numerous self-built houses have rapidly proliferated within the interstices of heritage courtyards, creating a unique urban fabric where high-density urban villages coexist with traditional red-brick heritage houses known as Gucuo. This process has led to a sharp decline in Gucuo numbers, most of which remain vacant or semi-abandoned.



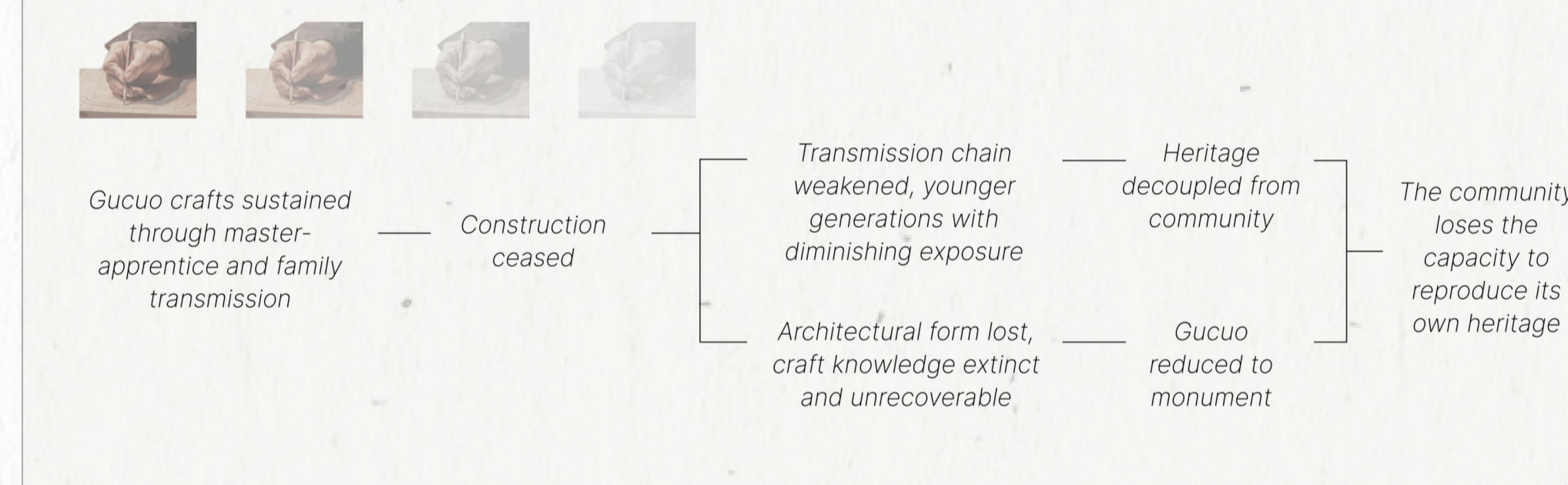
The site is located within the densely preserved area of ancient houses in Dashe Village, adjacent to the high-traffic cluster of ancestral halls. It unfolds along a key alleyway connecting several well-preserved historic residences. The surrounding spatial conditions exemplify the typical challenges of high-density urban villages: alleyways approximately 1.5 meters wide, inadequate infrastructure, and a scarcity of public recreational spaces.



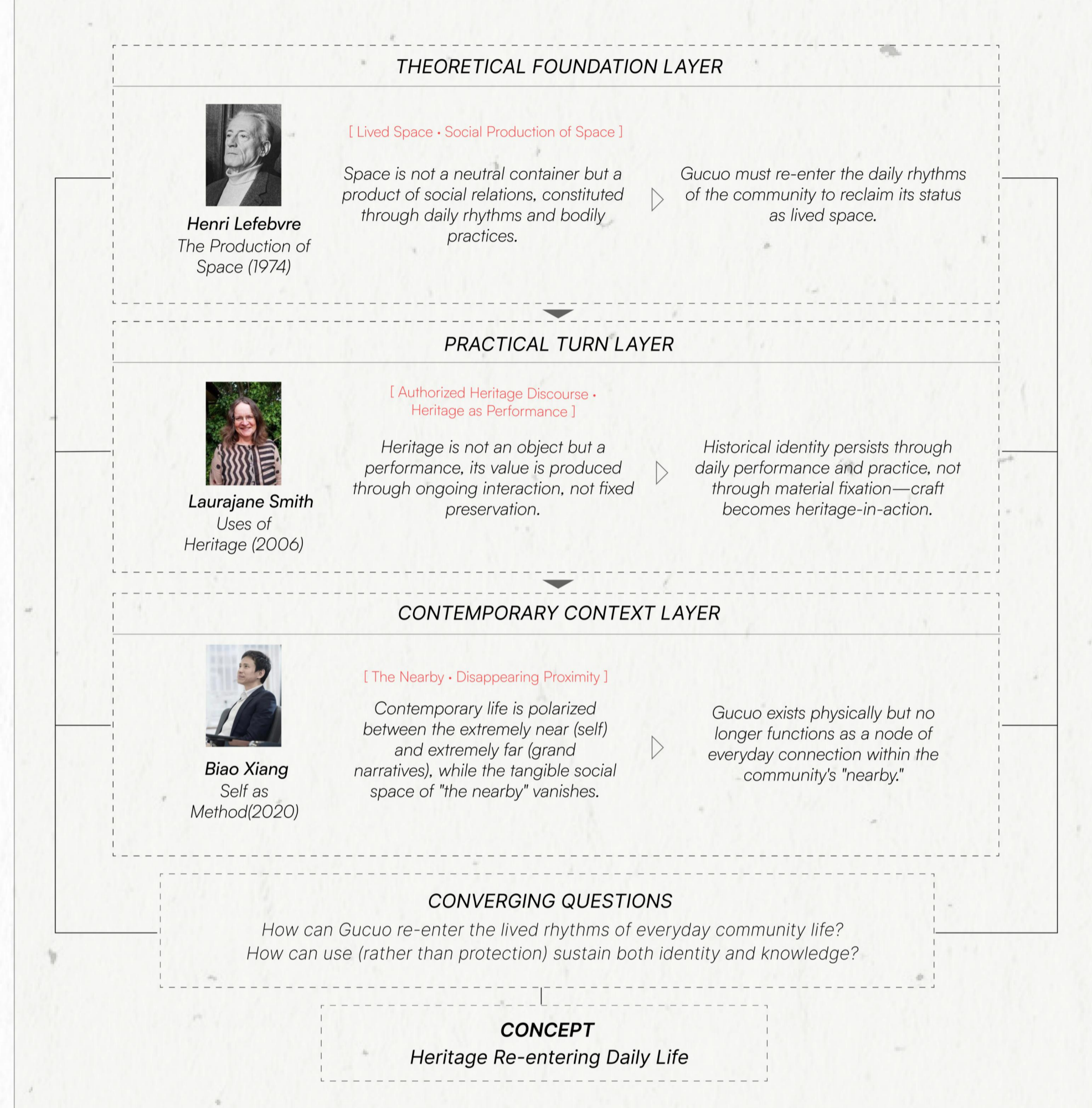
PROBLEMS OF GUCUO



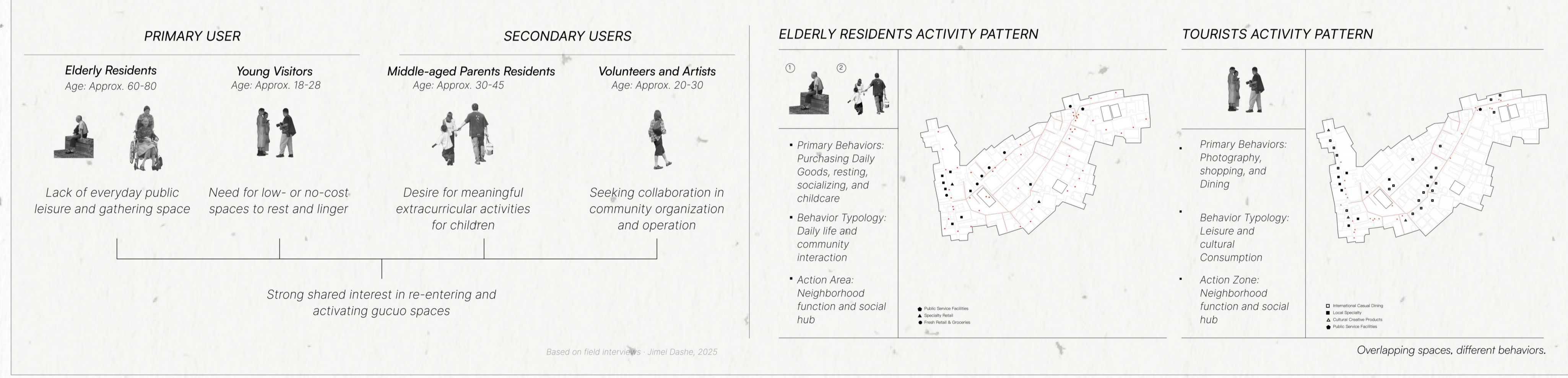
CHALLENGES IN CRAFT



THEORETICAL SUPPORT



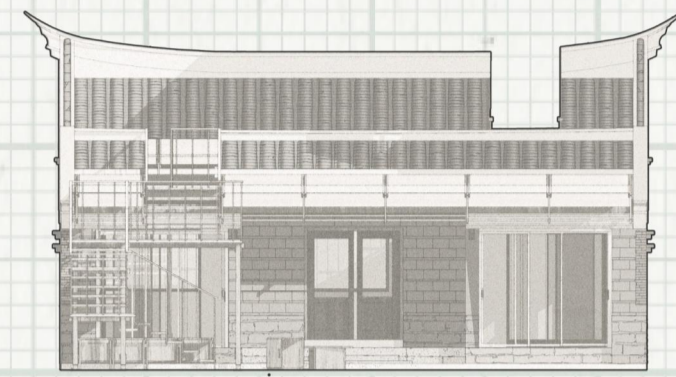
USER ANALYSIS



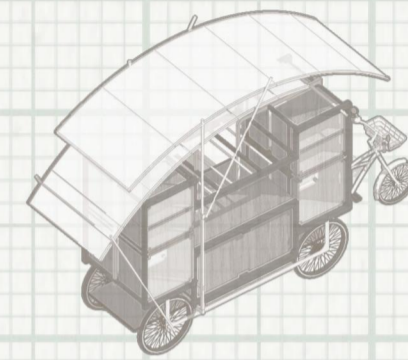
HERITAGE RE-ENTERING DAILY LIFE

SPACE RE-ENTERING DAILY LIFE

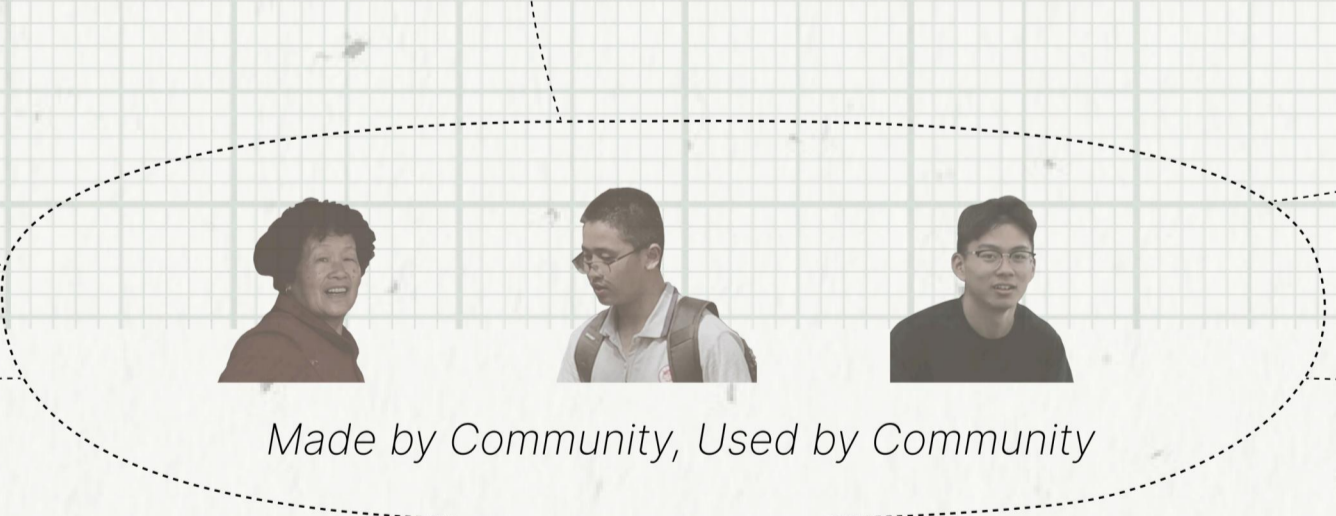
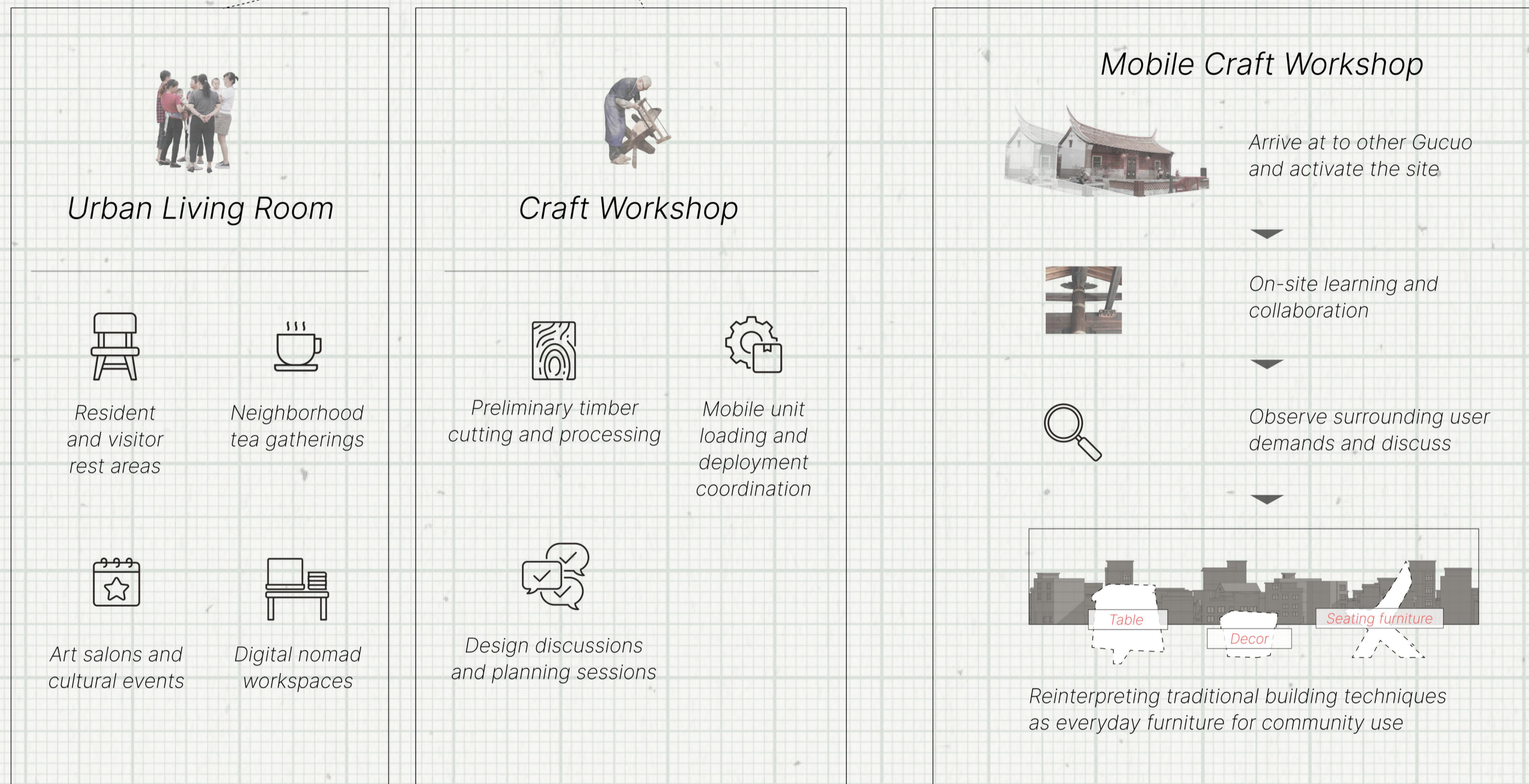
CRAFT RE-ENTERING DAILY LIFE



[Design Focus 01]



[Design Focus 02]



- Traditional architecture techniques
- Elderly craftsmanship
- Vacant spaces
- Broken relationships

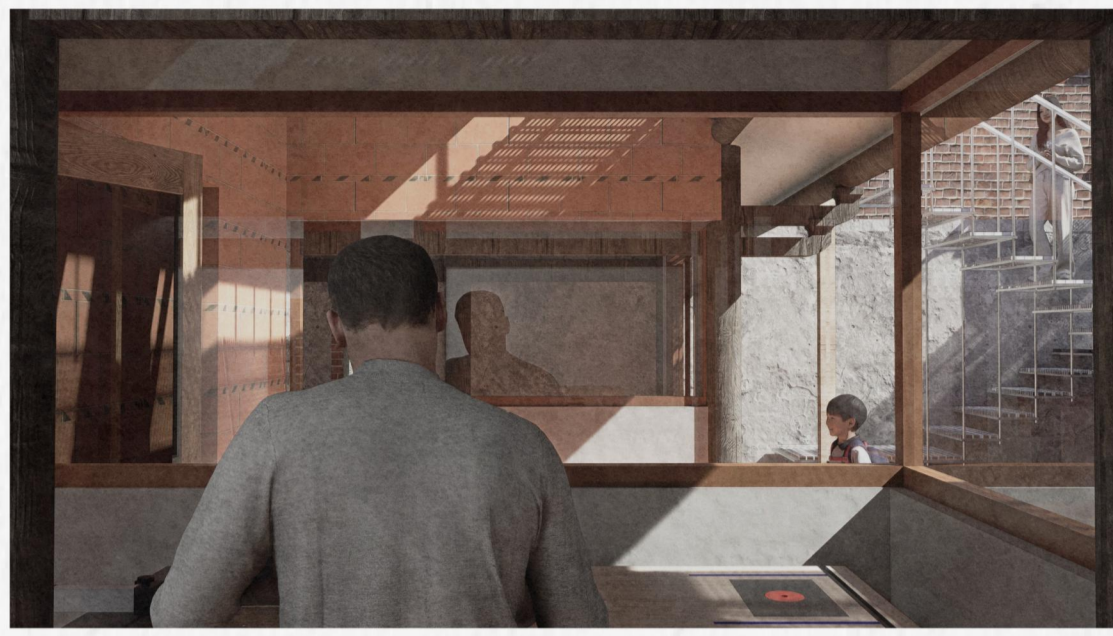


- Everyday furniture
- Collective memory
- Vibrant spaces
- Co-presence relationships

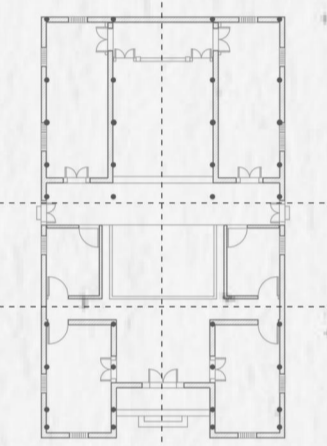
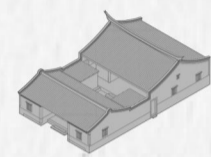


/DESIGN FOCUS 01

Adaptive Reuse of Gucuo



SITE CONDITIONS



The site before the renovation faces significant constraints: it is encircled by 4-6-story self-built houses, resulting in inadequate natural light, while the building's own enclosed layout further limits spatial permeability. The traditional axial symmetry and dark color palette create a solemn atmosphere, and the scale, typical of ordinary vernacular dwellings, feels somewhat confined.

DESIGN STRATEGY

INTRODUCING LIGHT

Partially remove the roof and add glass doors, windows, and translucent roofing.

VERTICAL EXPLORATION

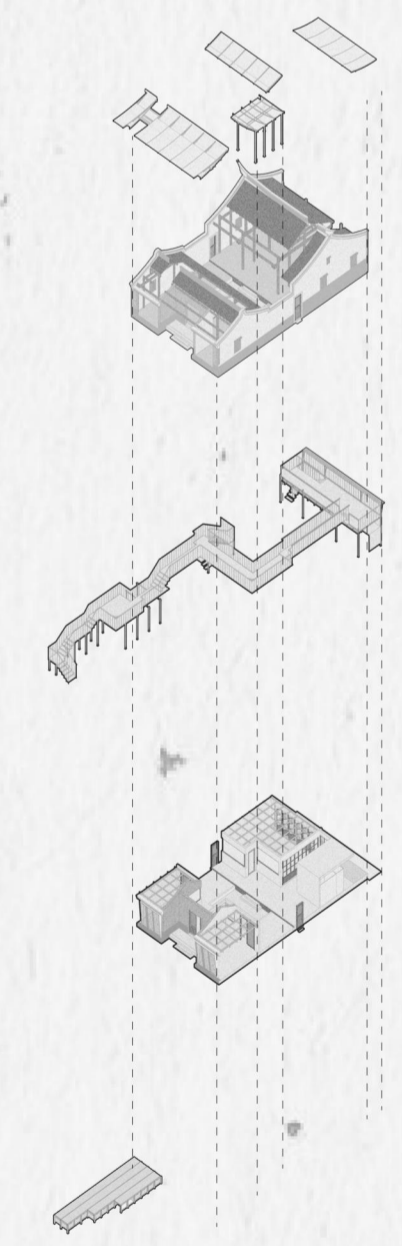
Construct a lightweight staircase connecting to the second floor, transforming historical building components from inaccessible features into learning opportunities for close-up observation.

FLEXIBLE USE

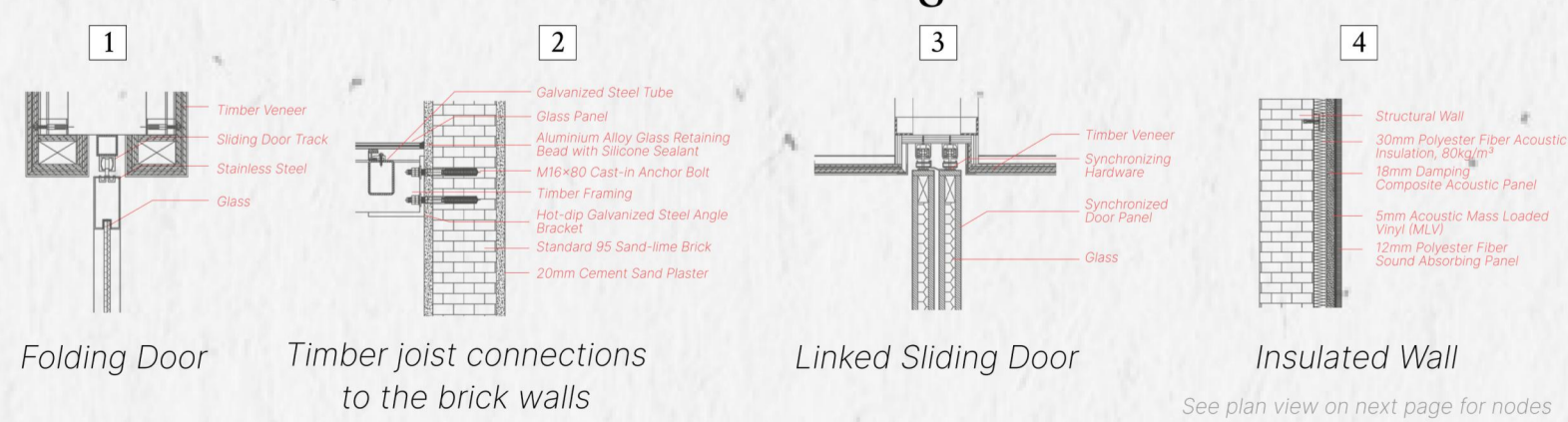
Designate several rooms as multi-functional spaces to support switching between workshop teaching and community activities.

INTEGRATED FUNCTIONALITY

Install modular wooden crates in the front courtyard, serving dual purposes as storage and seating.



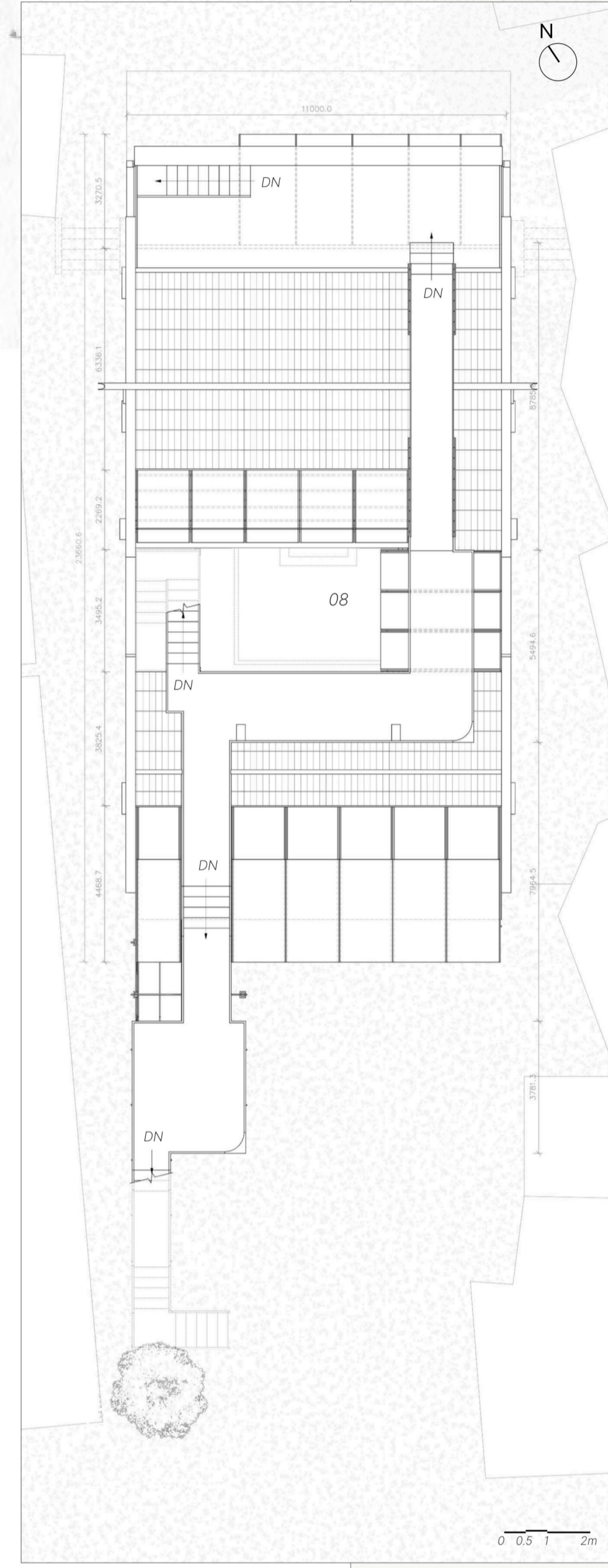
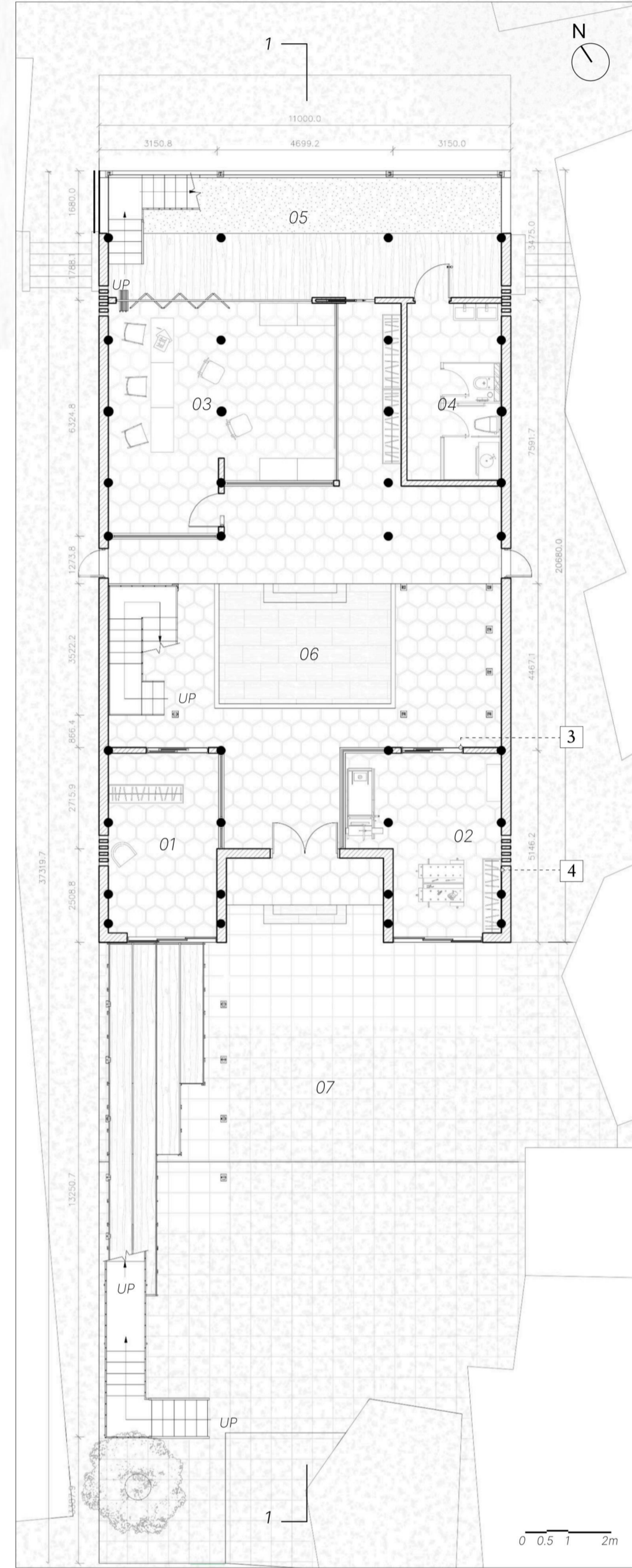
Detail Drawings



/DESIGN FOCUS 01

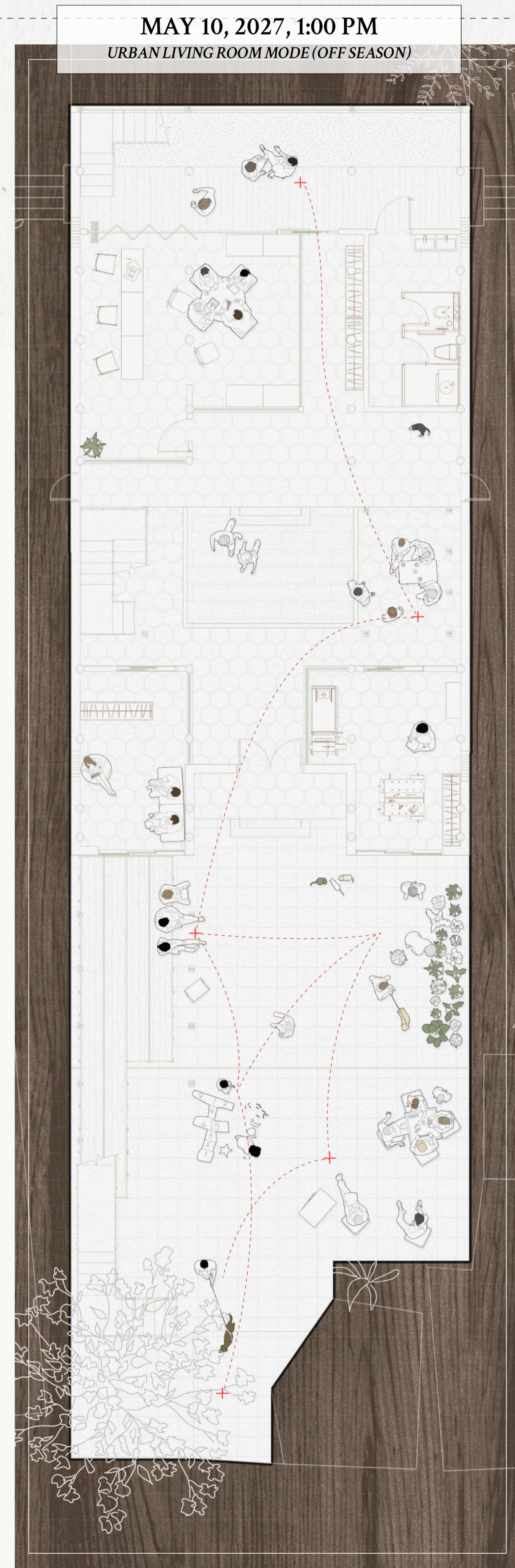
Spatial Scenarios

• Plan Drawing •



- 01 Flexible Lounge
(Reading / Casual Seating / Discussion)
- 02 Workshop Studio
- 03 Multi-functional Room
(Self-study & Workstation / Art Salon)
- 04 Public Restroom
- 05 Semi-enclosed Quiet Court
- 06 Central Courtyard
- 07 Front Courtyard
(Workshop Extension / Event Space / Social Gathering)

08 Elevated Leisure Corridor



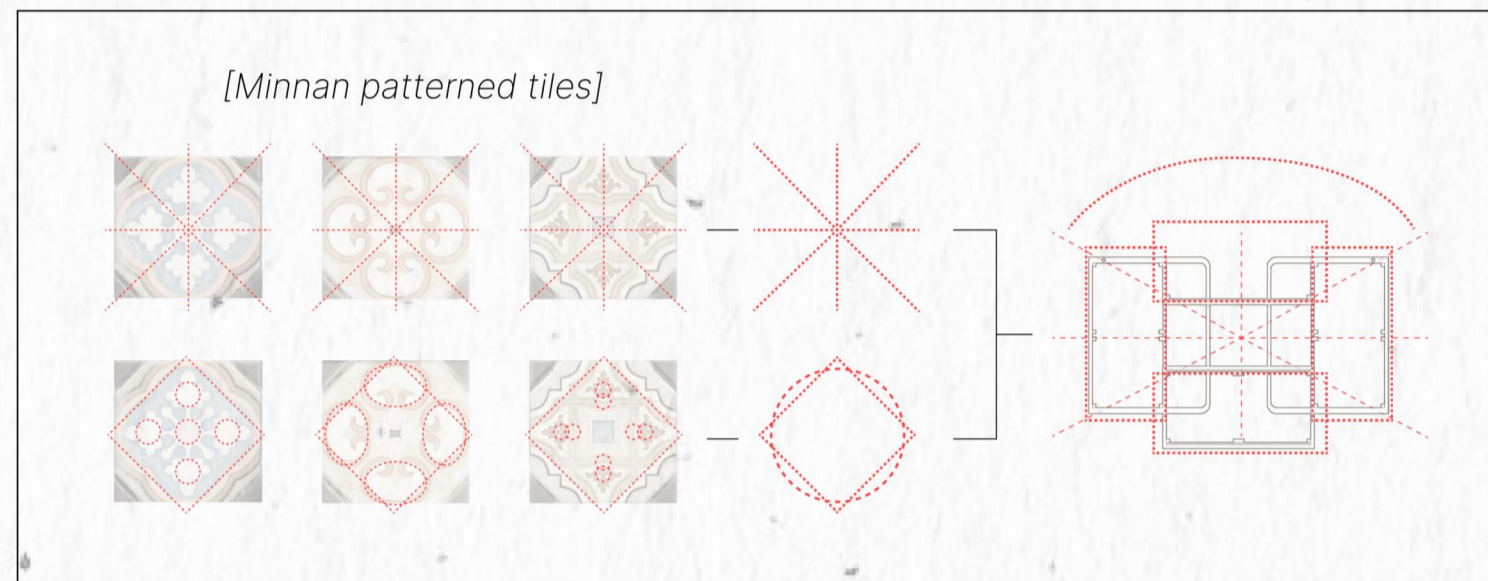
/DESIGN FOCUS 02

Mobile Workshop System

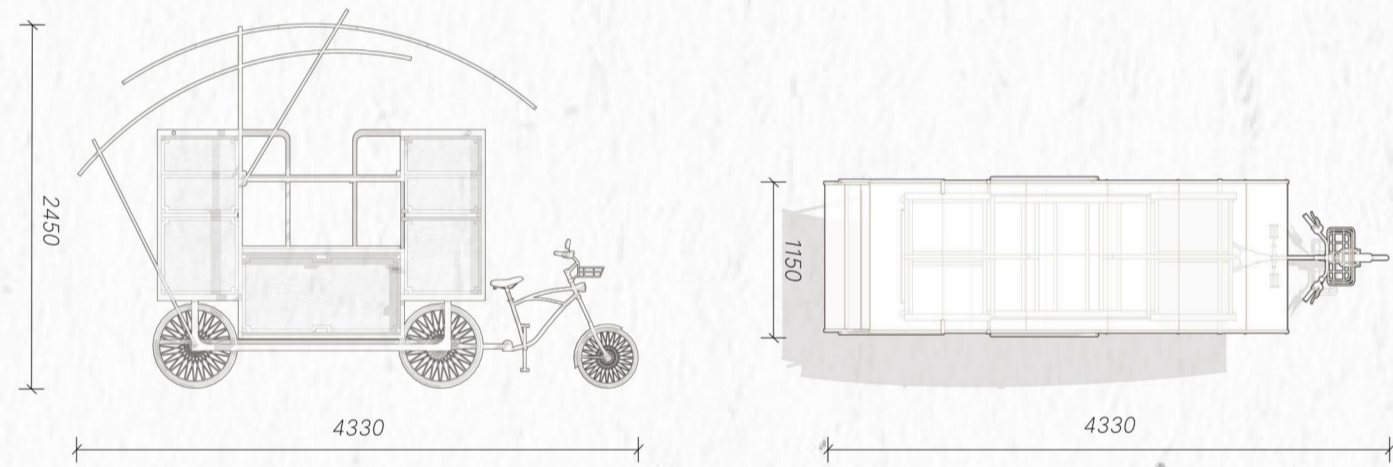
The cargo bike workshop navigates 1.5-meter-wide alleys while carrying tools, materials, seating, and work surfaces. The design meets three requirements: compact dimensions for narrow passages, flexible structure for diverse scenarios, and reconfigurable functionality for on-demand setup.

This modular system transforms spatial constraints into design opportunities: the bike functions as both transport and mobile work unit, extending the workshop beyond building boundaries into alleys and plazas. Once instructional tasks conclude, the cargo bike converts to everyday community uses (market stalls, street seating, or storage....) extending its lifecycle as public infrastructure and preventing underutilization.

FORM DESIGN



DIMENSION



OTHER USE SCENARIOS

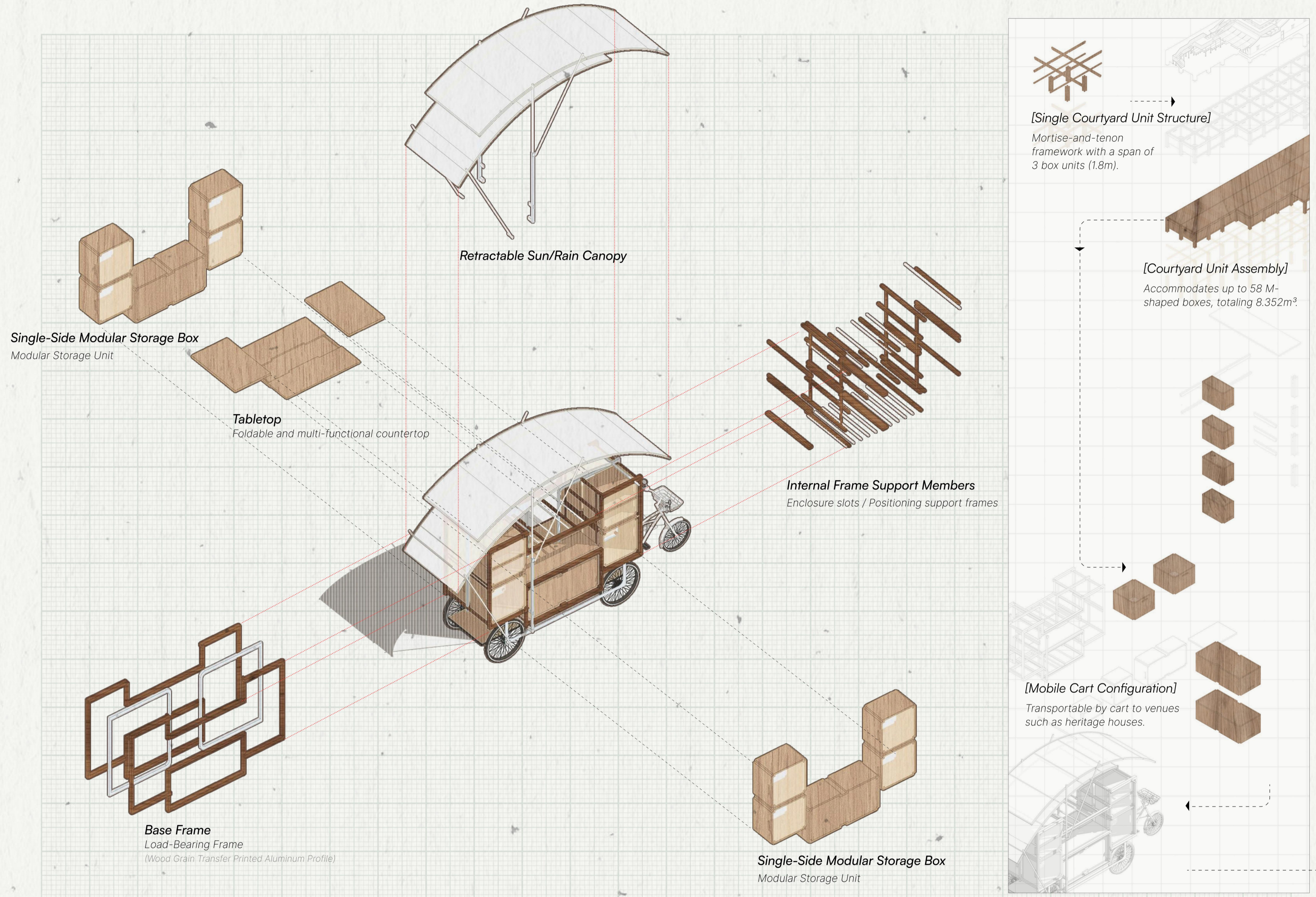
STORAGE BOX FUNCTIONS



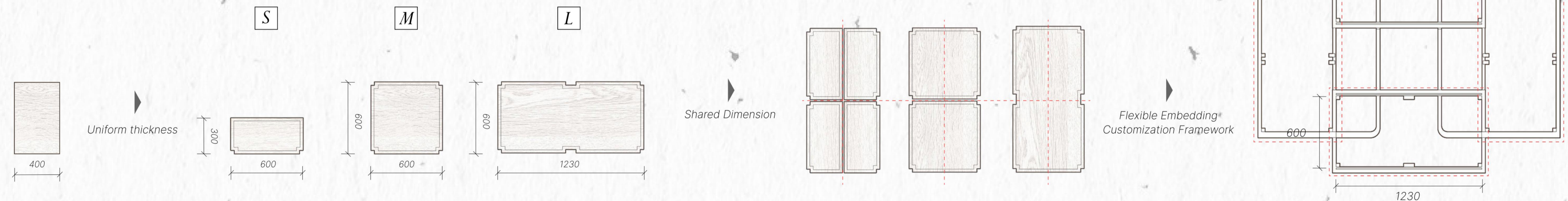
MOBILE CART FUNCTIONS



ASSEMBLY LOGIC



DIMENSIONAL SYSTEM



Maximum capacity volume
0.864 m³

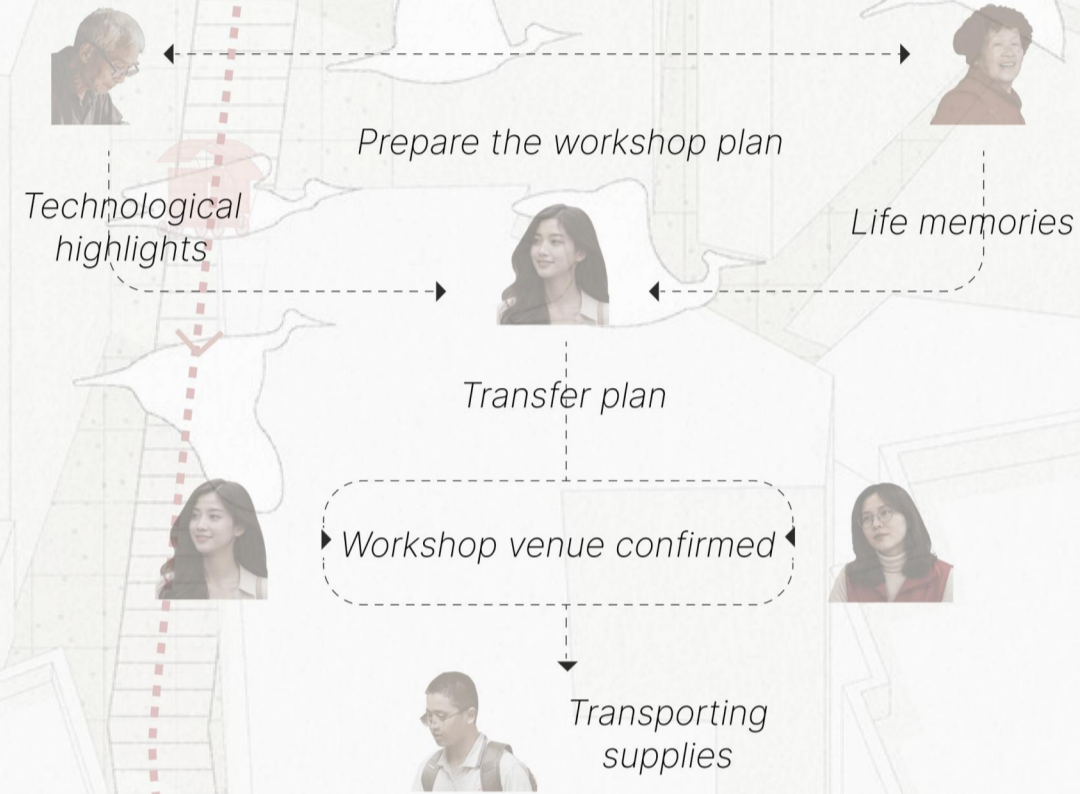
This can support a small-scale experiential workshop for 5-8 participants.

/ WORKSHOP NETWORK

PUBLIC COLLABORATION METHODS



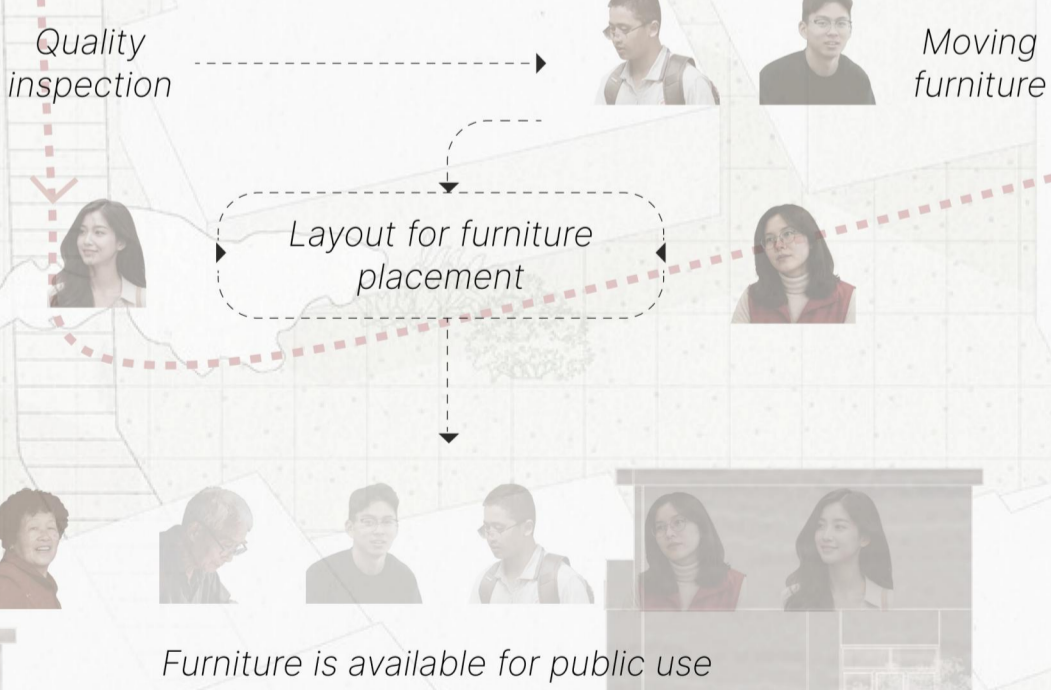
PREPARATION PHASE



WORKSHOP PHASE



RESULTS PHASE

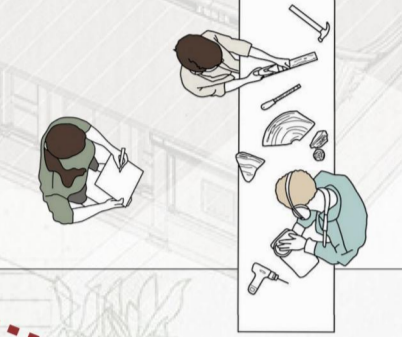


02/ POP-UP WORKSHOP

Destination Gucuo

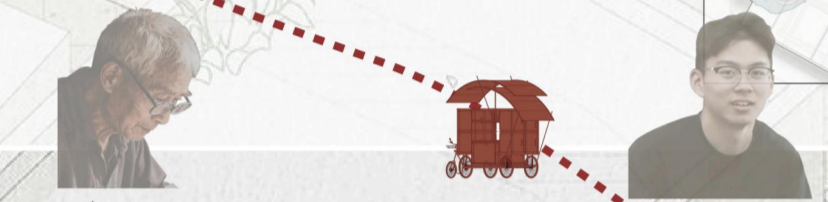
INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

Residents and visitors co-learning, discussing and making



MOBILE INTERVENTION 02

Navigating narrow alleys to courtyard sites



The mortise must be chiseled to two-thirds the length of the tenon to ensure a secure fit.

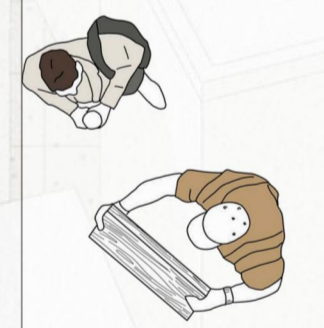
Thanks to the workshop, I was able to learn about these...

03/ COMMUNITY ANCHORS

Alley Depths

OUTCOME INTEGRATION

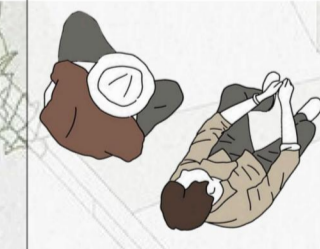
Furniture returned to neighborhood nodes for daily use



Sitting here chatting feels just like being back home in our old house when we were kids.

OUTCOME INTEGRATION

Furniture returned to neighborhood nodes



I remember seeing them hold a workshop here last time I came. I'll come too next time.

01/ WORKSHOP BASE

Reused Gucuo

There will be approximately 4 participants in the workshop, but please prepare a few extra sets of tools, as passersby are also welcome to join.



They just said this time they'll need about six short poles.

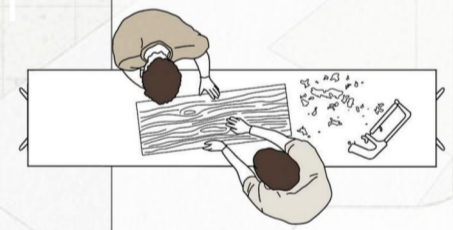
MATERIAL PROCESSING 02

Sorting, categorizing and packing.



MATERIAL PROCESSING 01

Reclaim timber from dismantled furniture or Gucuo renovation



MOBILE INTERVENTION 01

Cart transporting materials and tools





*Stools line the alley.
Laughter fills the air.
The cuo stays warm.*

