

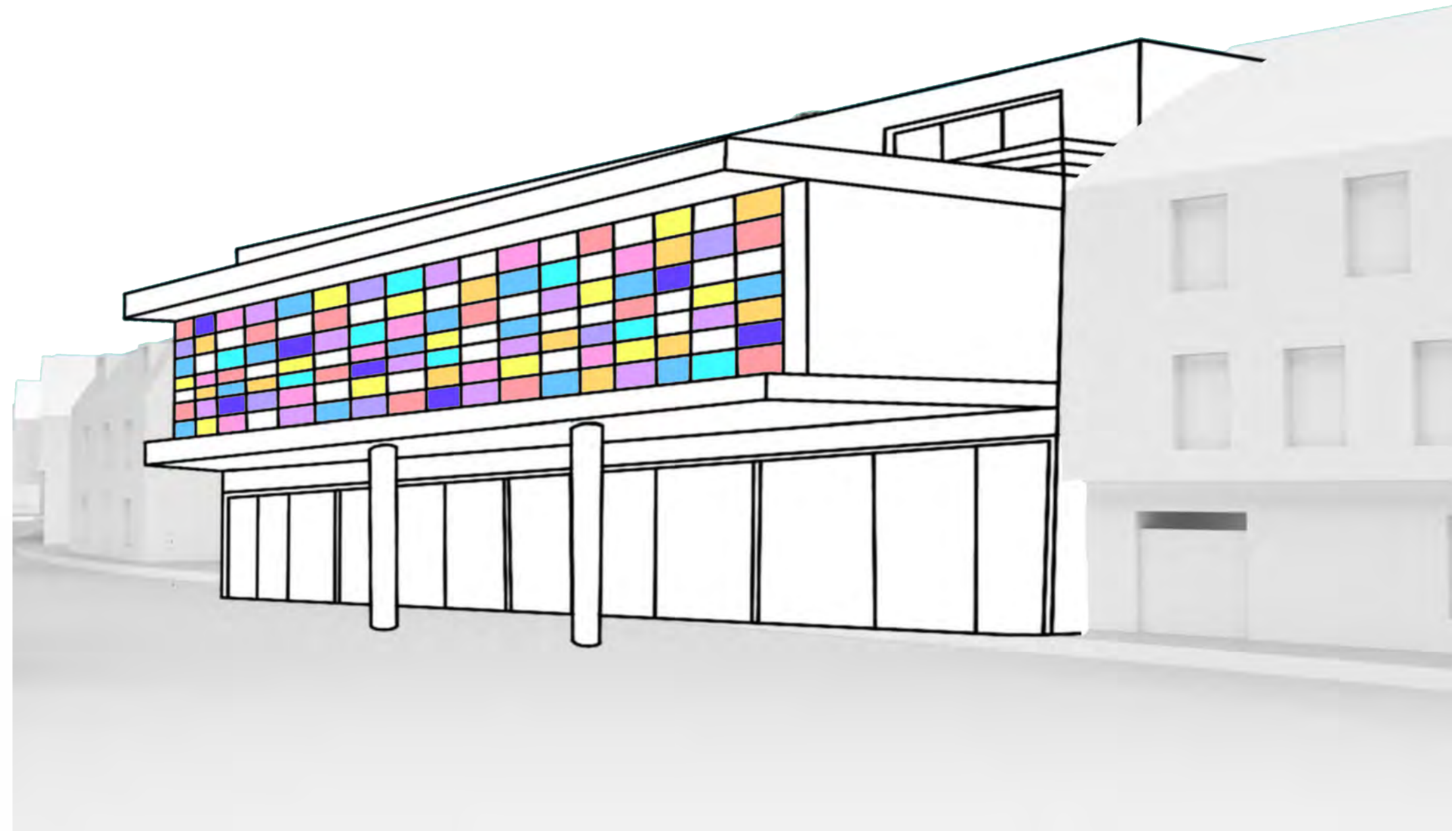
Living Heritage

Canterbury is defined by its historic architecture, but much of its heritage remains passive, preserved, and untouchable. Many listed buildings are experienced visually, restricted to tourism, school visits, or occasional events, limiting public engagement.

This project challenges that condition by proposing a civic learning space that transforms heritage from something that is observed into something that is actively experienced.

Located adjacent to the Franciscan Gardens, the project draws inspiration from the daily life of Franciscan monks. Rather than reconstructing the past, the building teaches the monks routines through workshops, communal spaces, and crafts.

The aim is to create a space where history is not preserved behind barriers, but re-lived through making, learning, and participation.



Historic Houses is a UK non-profit collective with many privately owned historical houses, gardens and castles. They discuss how historic buildings and heritage sites can become active parts of community life rather than remaining unused, preserved, or demolished.

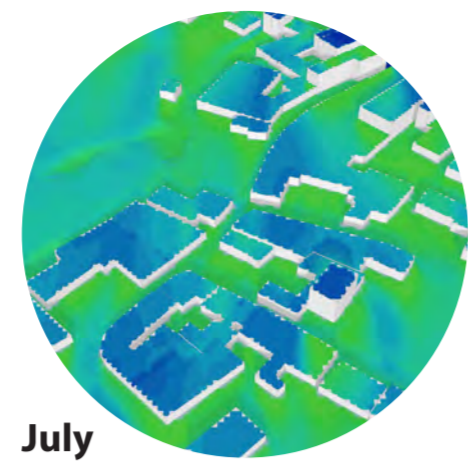
They argue that restoring and adapting existing buildings can support local economies by creating spaces for businesses, housing, workshops, community groups, and leisure. They also highlight the environmental value of reuse, explaining that retrofitting existing buildings produces far less carbon than building from scratch.

Overall, the article presents heritage as something with social, economic, and environmental potential, not just as something to protect visually.

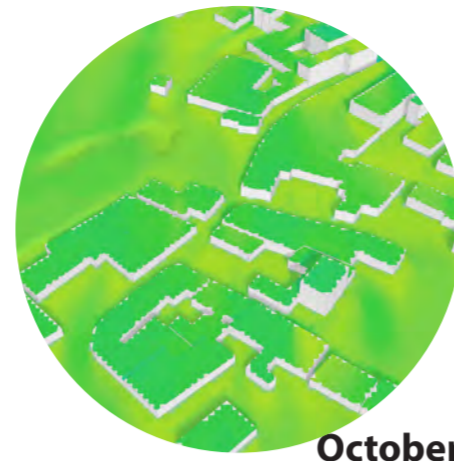
Instead of designing a building that sits beside historic architecture, my project uses the idea of reuse and active heritage to create a civic learning space inspired by Franciscan monastery routines. Through workshops, crafts, communal spaces, and learning, the project allows people to experience heritage through making and participation. In this way, the monastery becomes a living model for community, sustainability, repair, and shared knowledge, connecting the history of Canterbury with public use.

Site Research

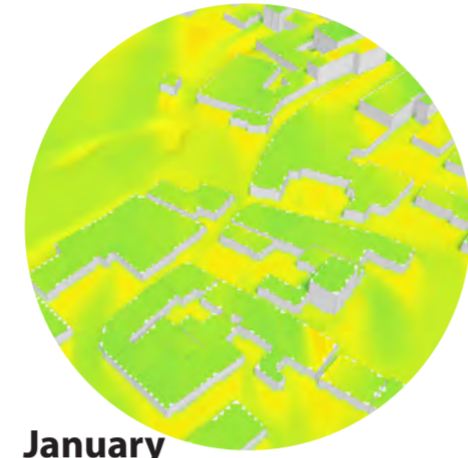
The majority of these materials found on site are medieval remains. Some other materials found in and around the Canterbury site includes: Roman Pottery and alluvium which suggests a prior flood episode. On the Bridge over Stour River, some materials found are ragstone fragments, mortared flint and chalk.



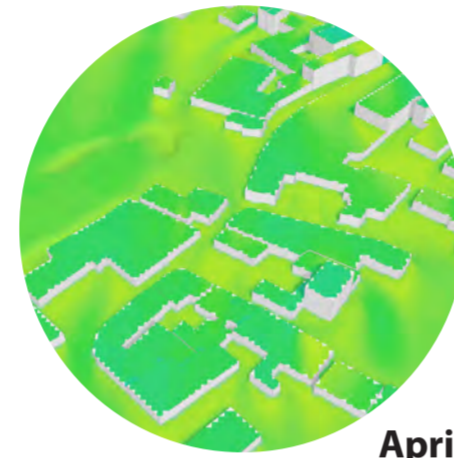
July
Avg. Temp 17.6 °C
Humidity - 74%
Rainfall - 61mm (9 days)
Avg. Sun Hours - 9.6 hrs



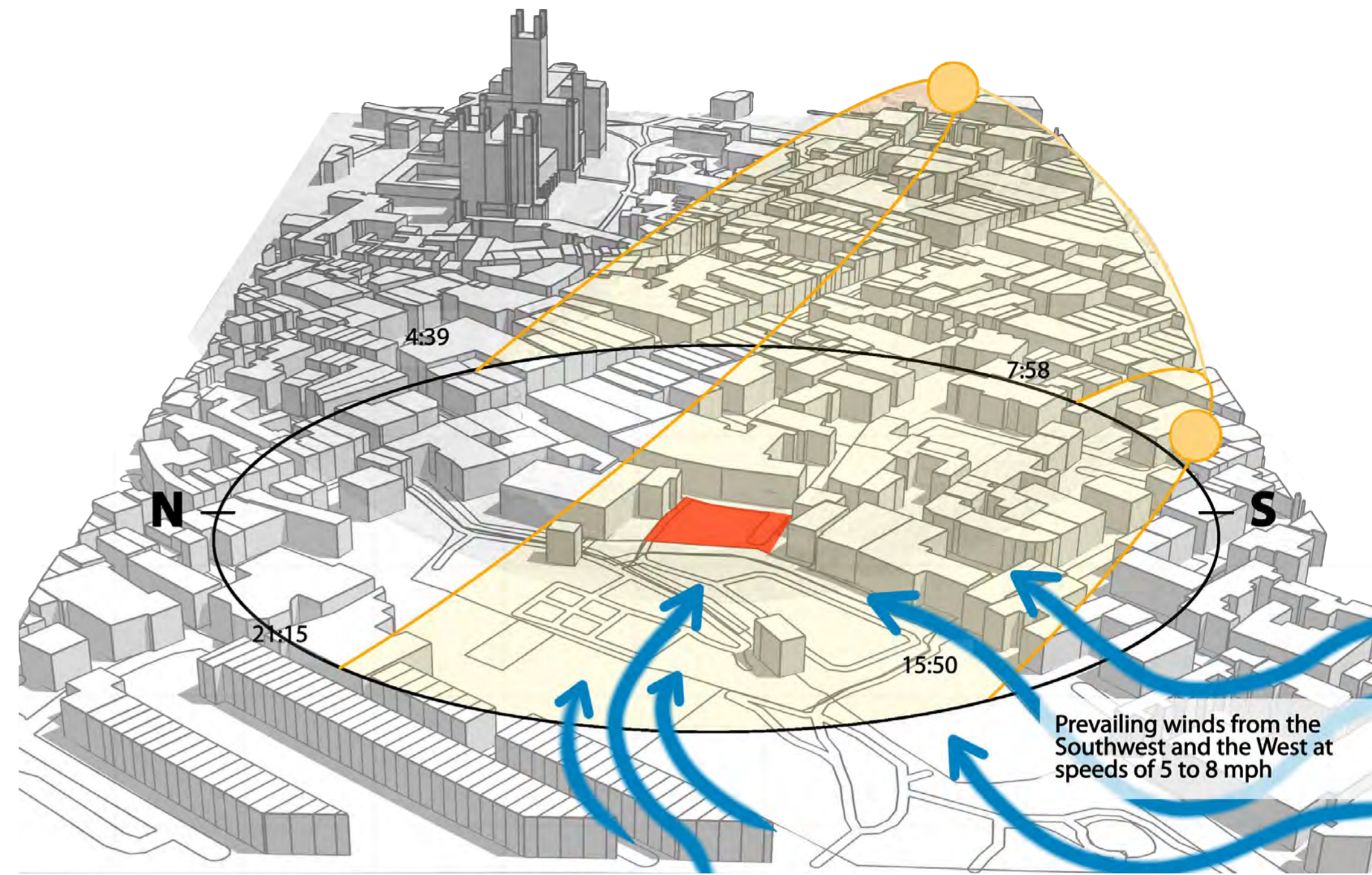
October
Avg. Temp 12.5 °C
Humidity - 81%
Rainfall - 69mm (9 days)
Avg. Sun Hours - 5.3 hrs



January
Avg. Temp - 5.3 °C
Humidity - 84%
Rainfall - 64mm (9 days)
Avg. Sun Hours - 3.6 hrs



April
Avg. Temp - 9.4 °C
Humidity - 77%
Rainfall - 52mm (8 days)
Avg. Sun Hours - 7.7 hrs



Movement of people and vehicles

This image shows patterns of movement around Canterbury, following the concentration of people and vehicle activity along routes, crossings, and connections through the city. The densest and brightest lines follow major roads and bridges, showing how movement is channeled through historic streets and across the River Stour, while finer lines branch into secondary streets and paths



The Greyfriars Lodge

A Grade II listed building in Canterbury with strong historical ties to the former Franciscan friary. Dating back from the late 18th and early 19th centuries and uses fabric from the convent within the lodge.



The County Hotel

The County Hotel is a historic inn located in the centre of Canterbury, with origins dating back to the 19th century. It has served many visiting the city and remains part of Canterbury's heritage.



17 Stour Street

A Grade II listed building sat close to the site, forming part of Canterbury's historic streets. Currently an office building and reflects the city's medieval development.



75 Stour Street

A Grade II listed building sat close to the site, from the post-medieval period, it contributes to the architectural character of Canterbury's streets. Currently an office building and reflects the city's medieval development.

Although plum, mulberry, and apple trees are not native to the site, they are regularly planted within Franciscan Garden.

- Plum
- Mulberry
- Apple
- Oak
- Beech
- Ash



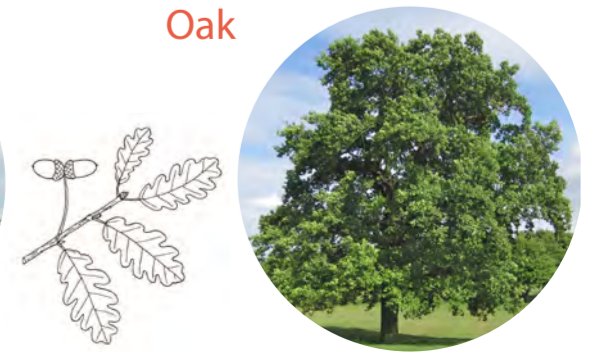
Common Ash



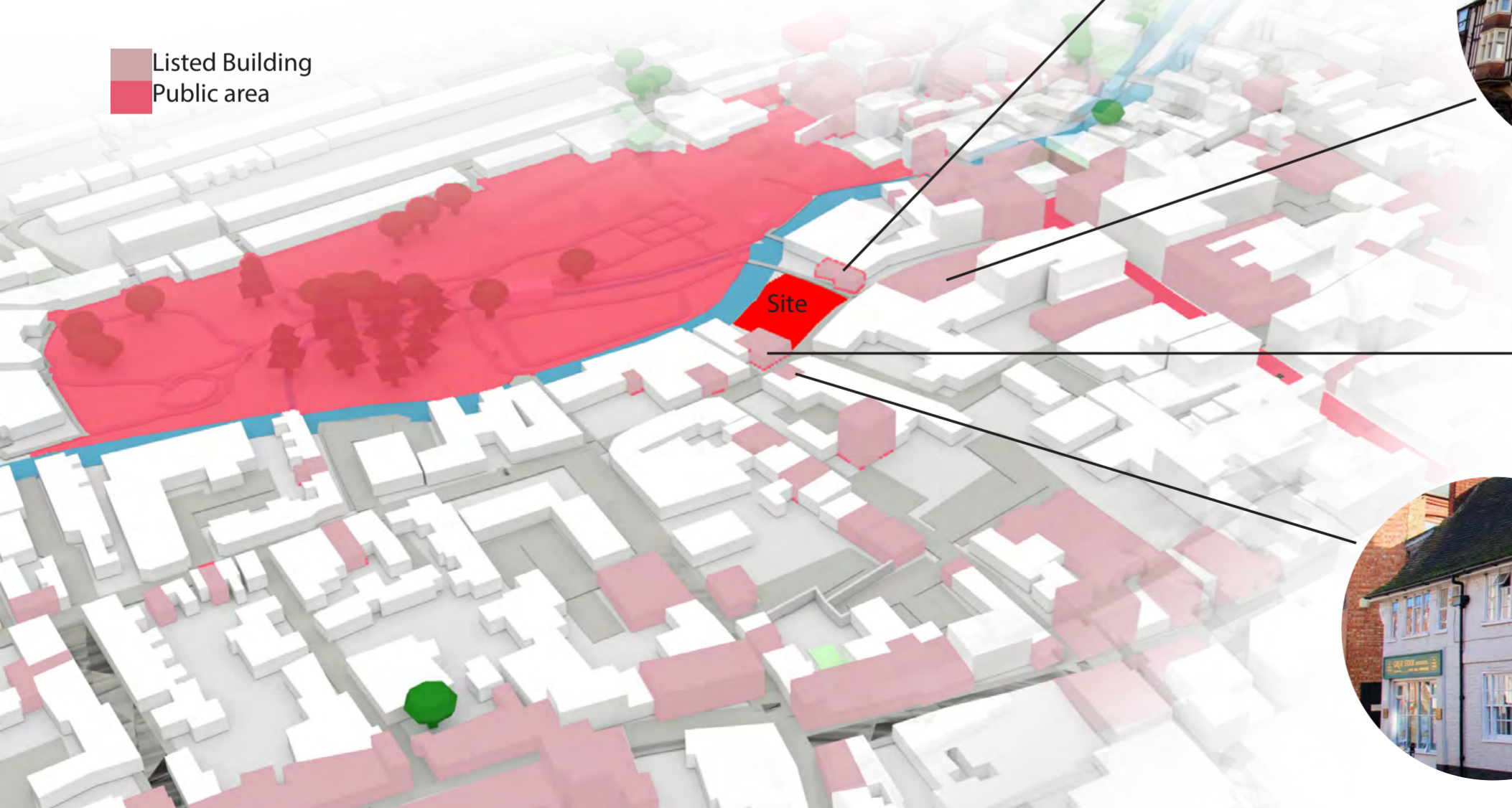
Common Beech



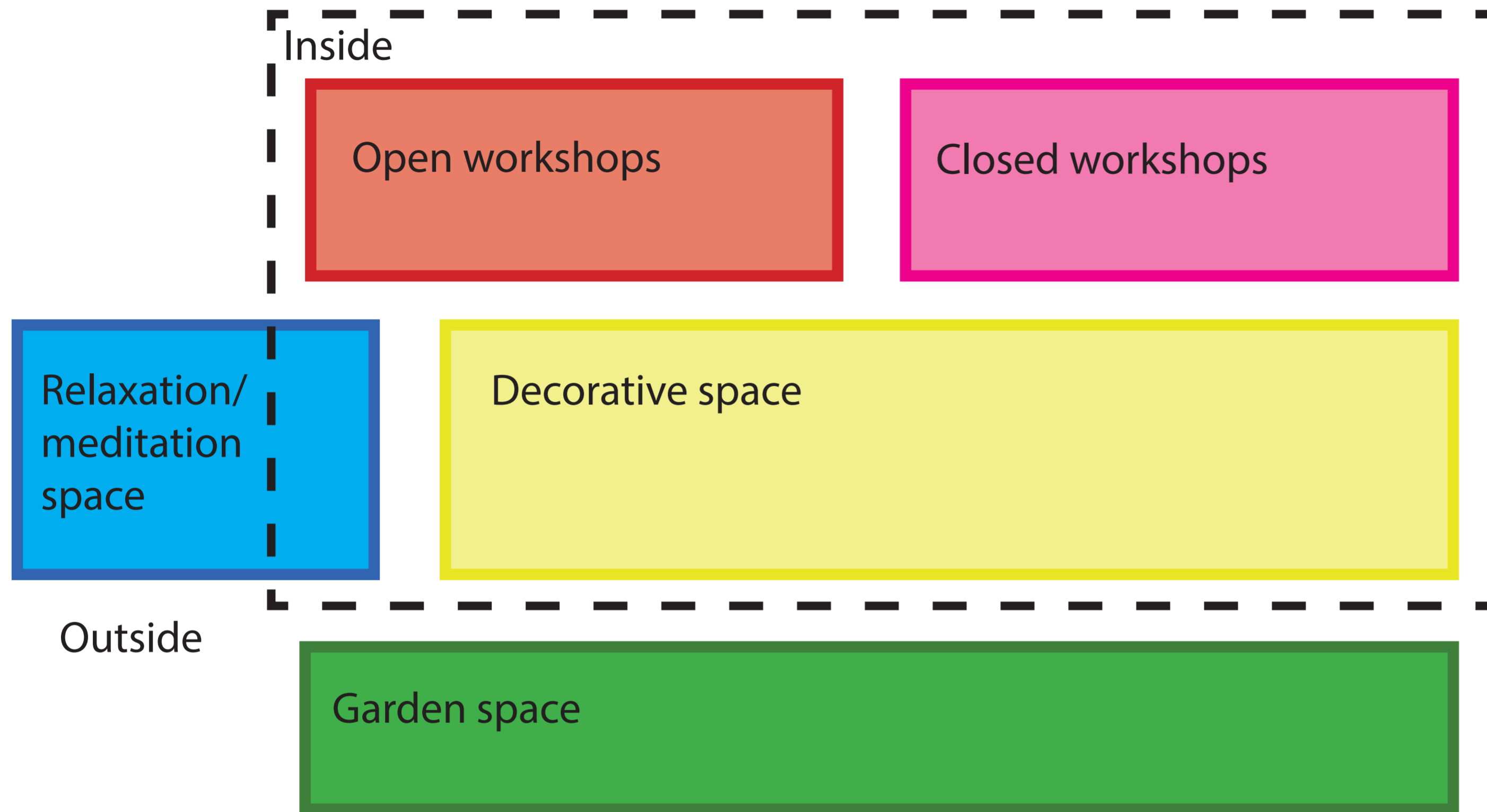
Oak



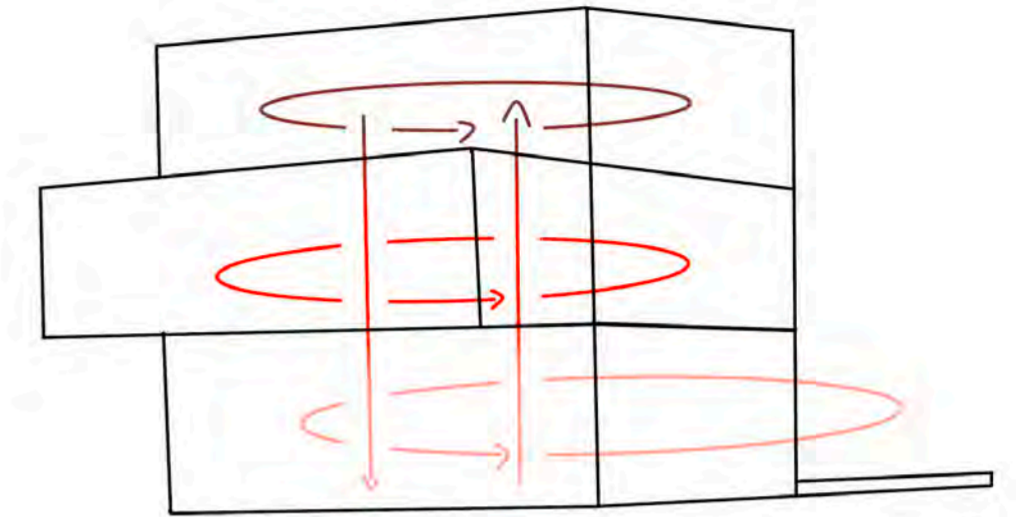
- Listed Building
- Public area



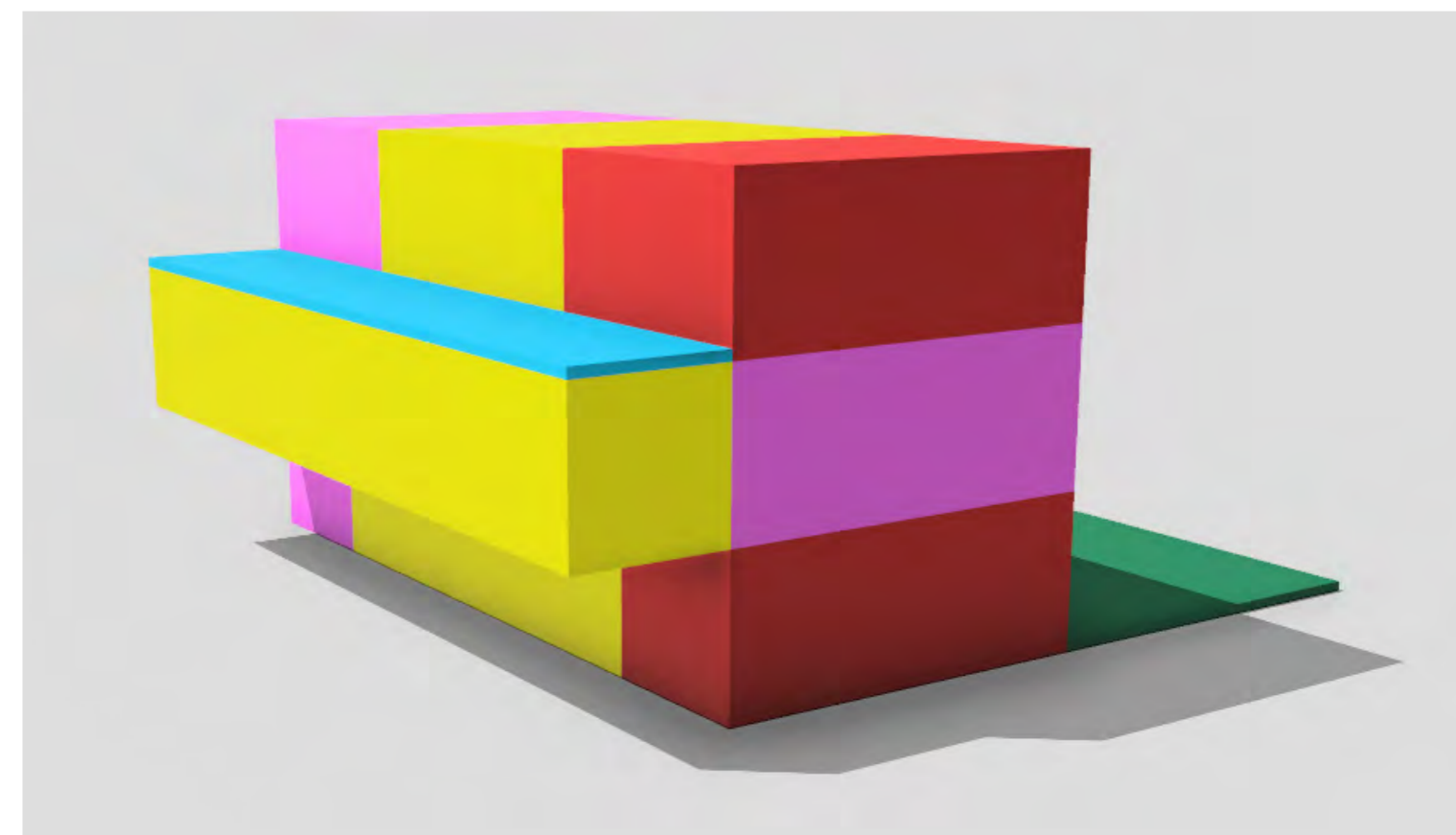
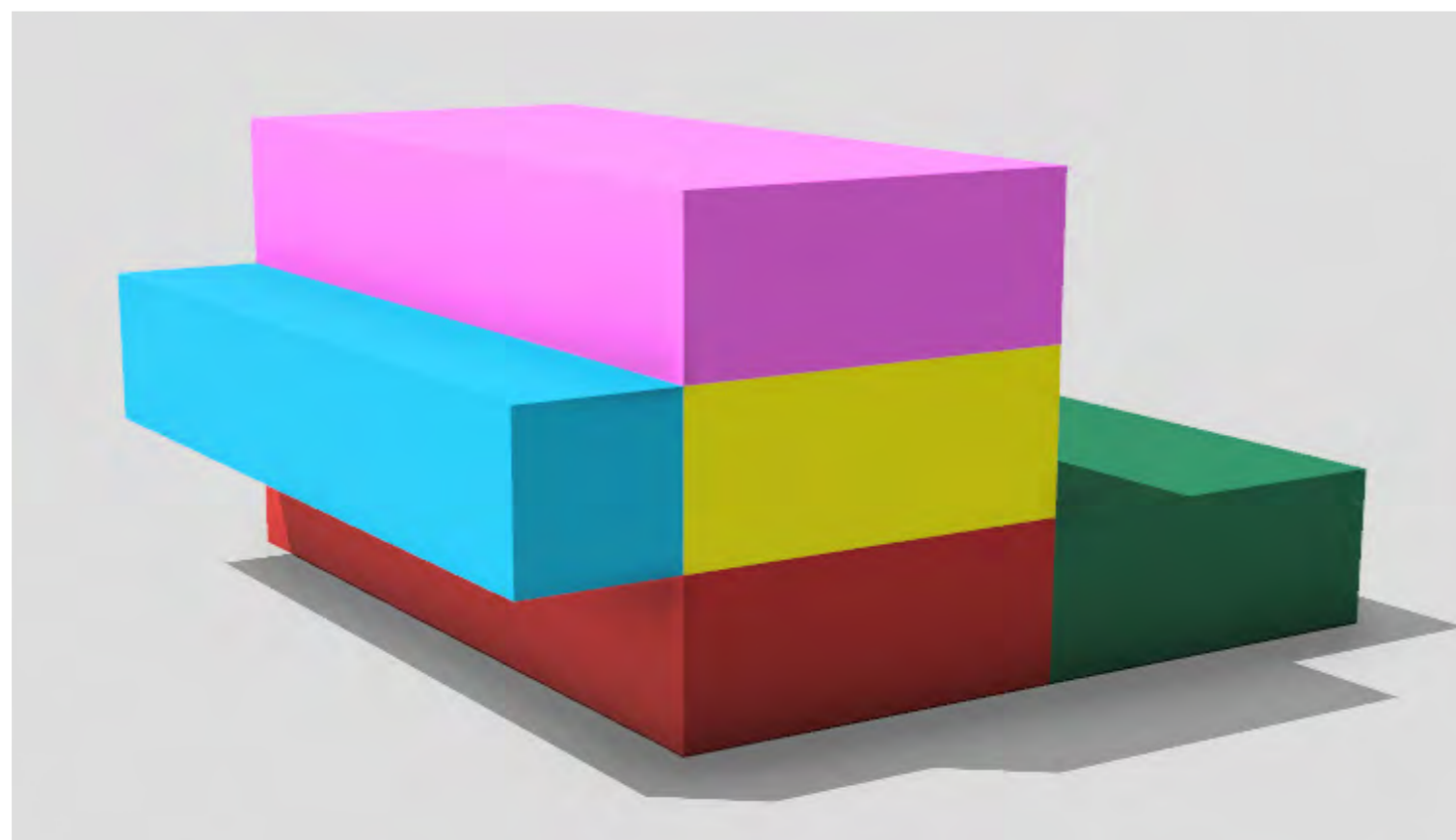
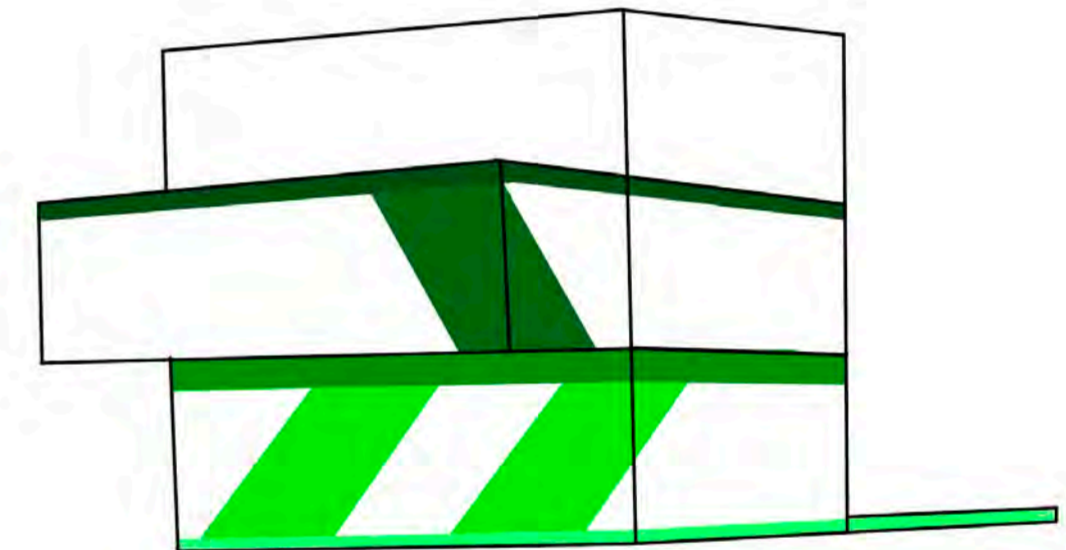
Design Development

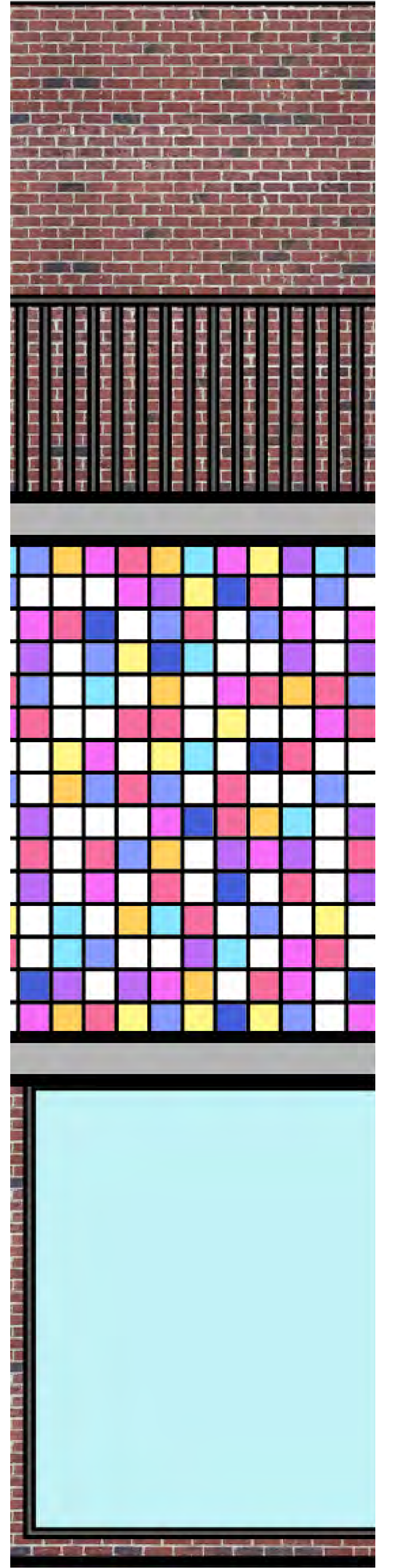
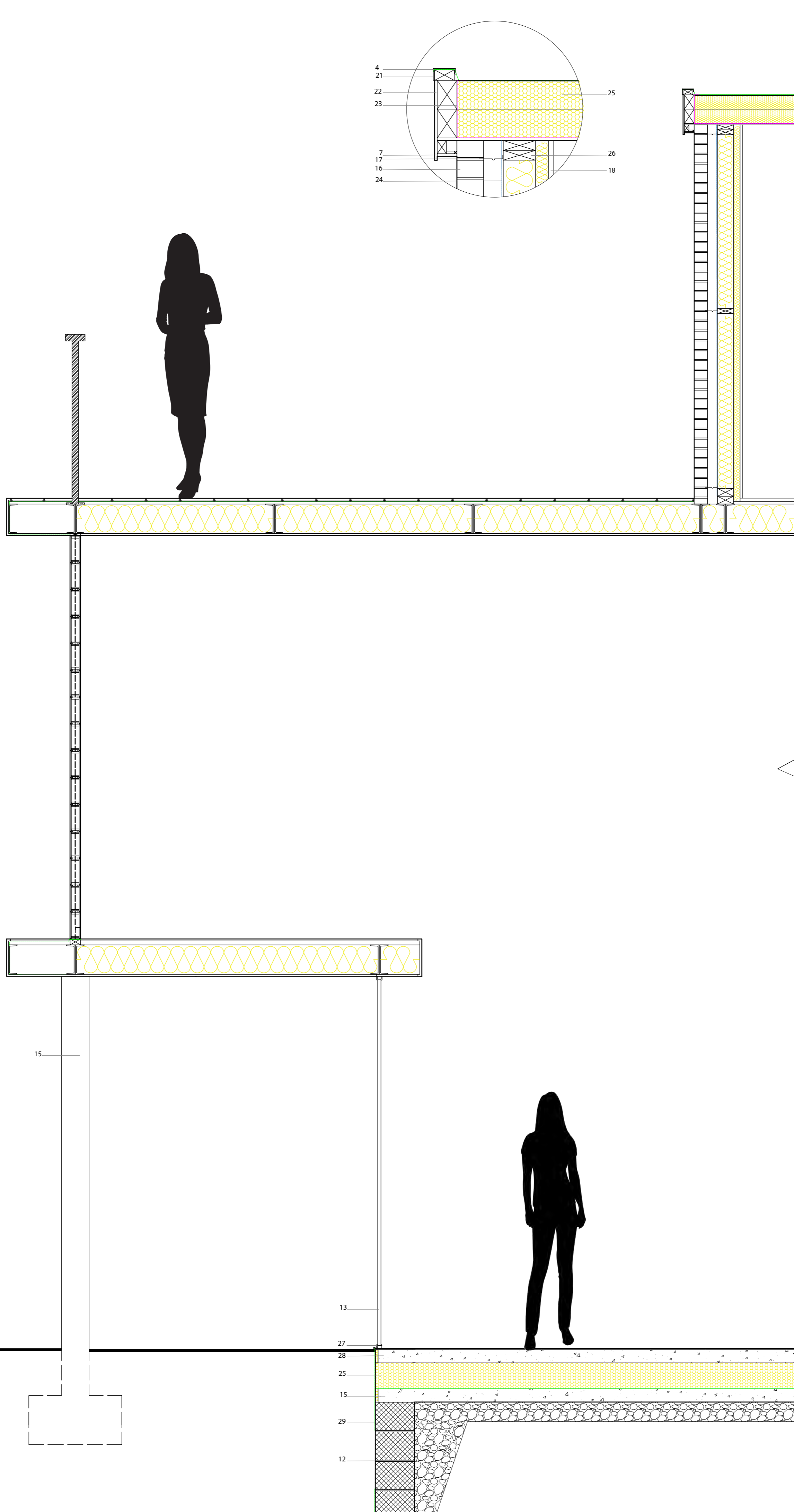
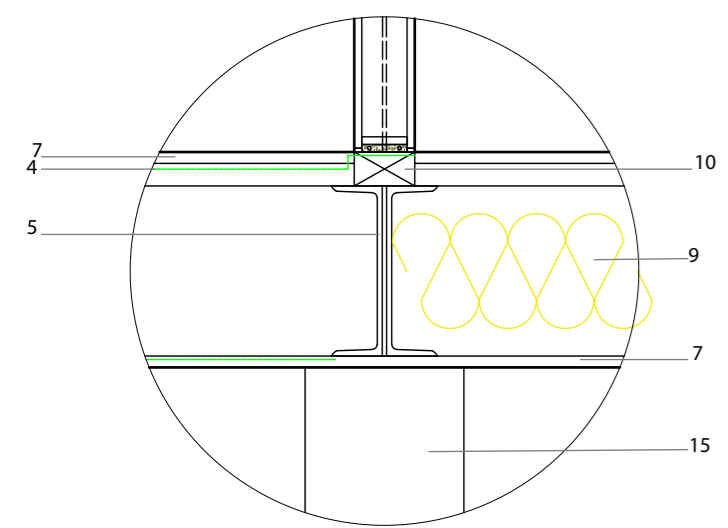
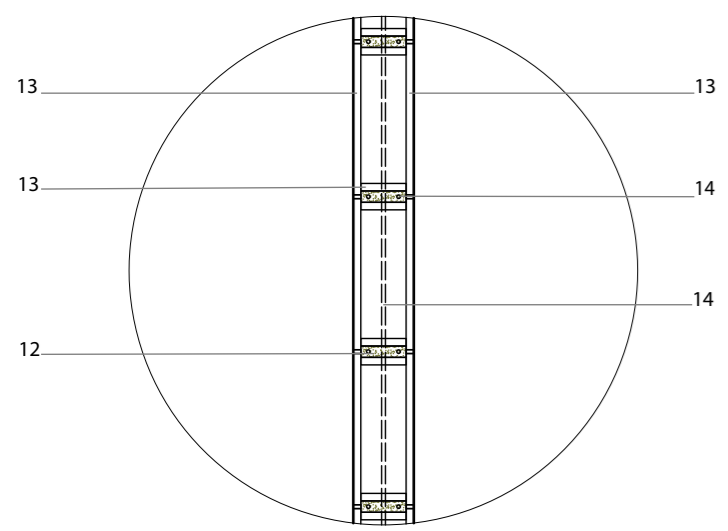
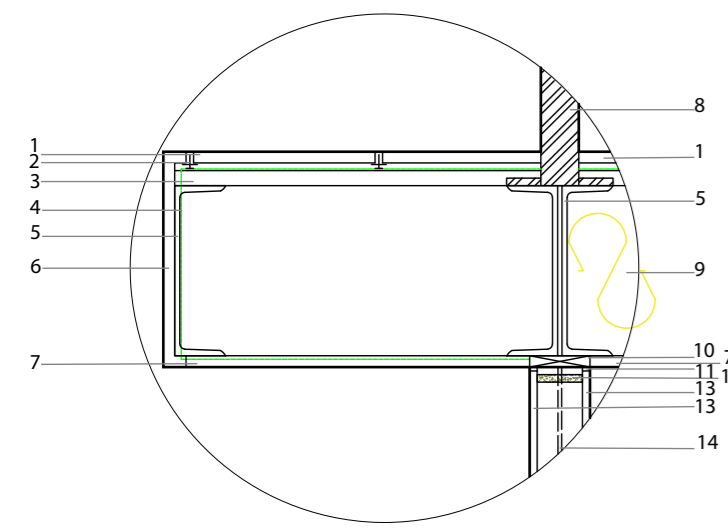
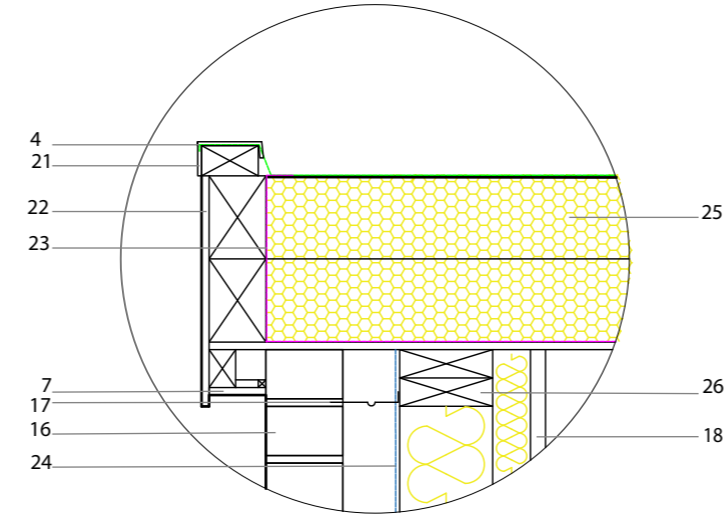
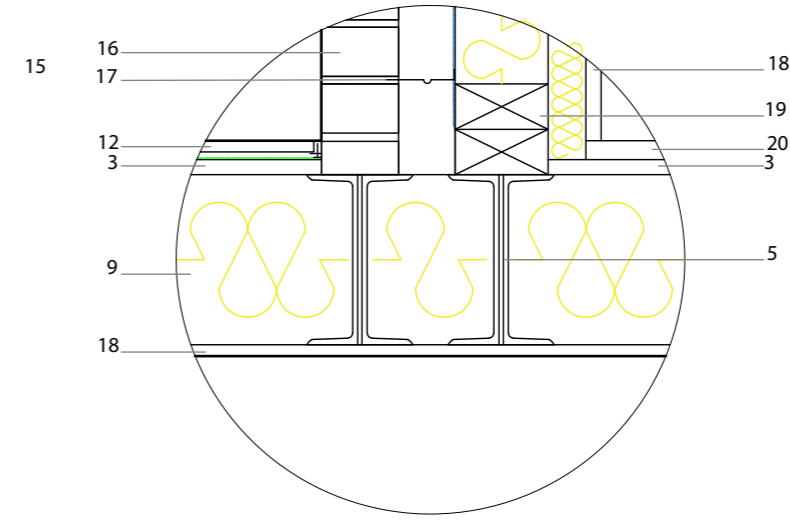


Circulation



Stair circulation





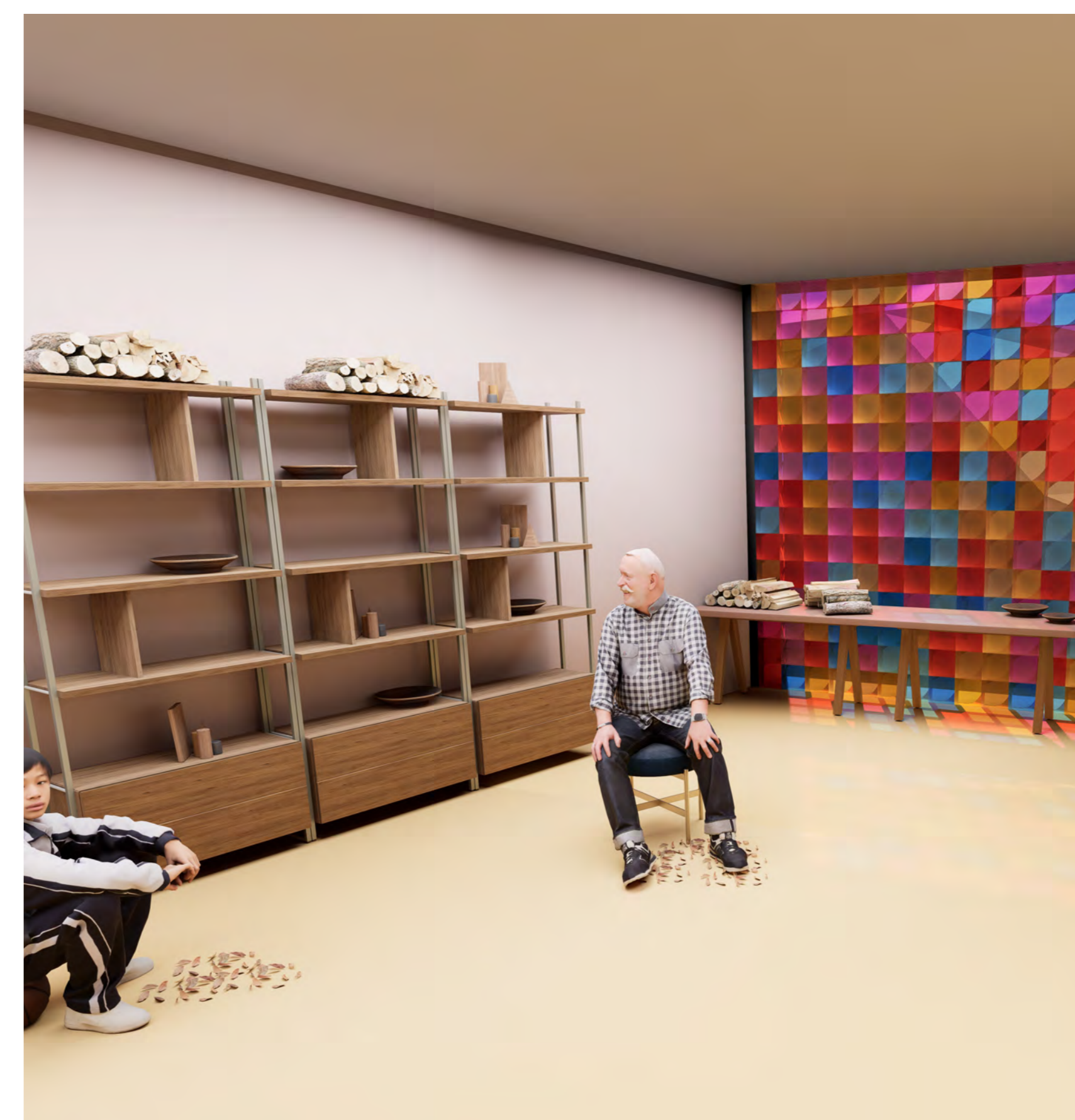
Materials:

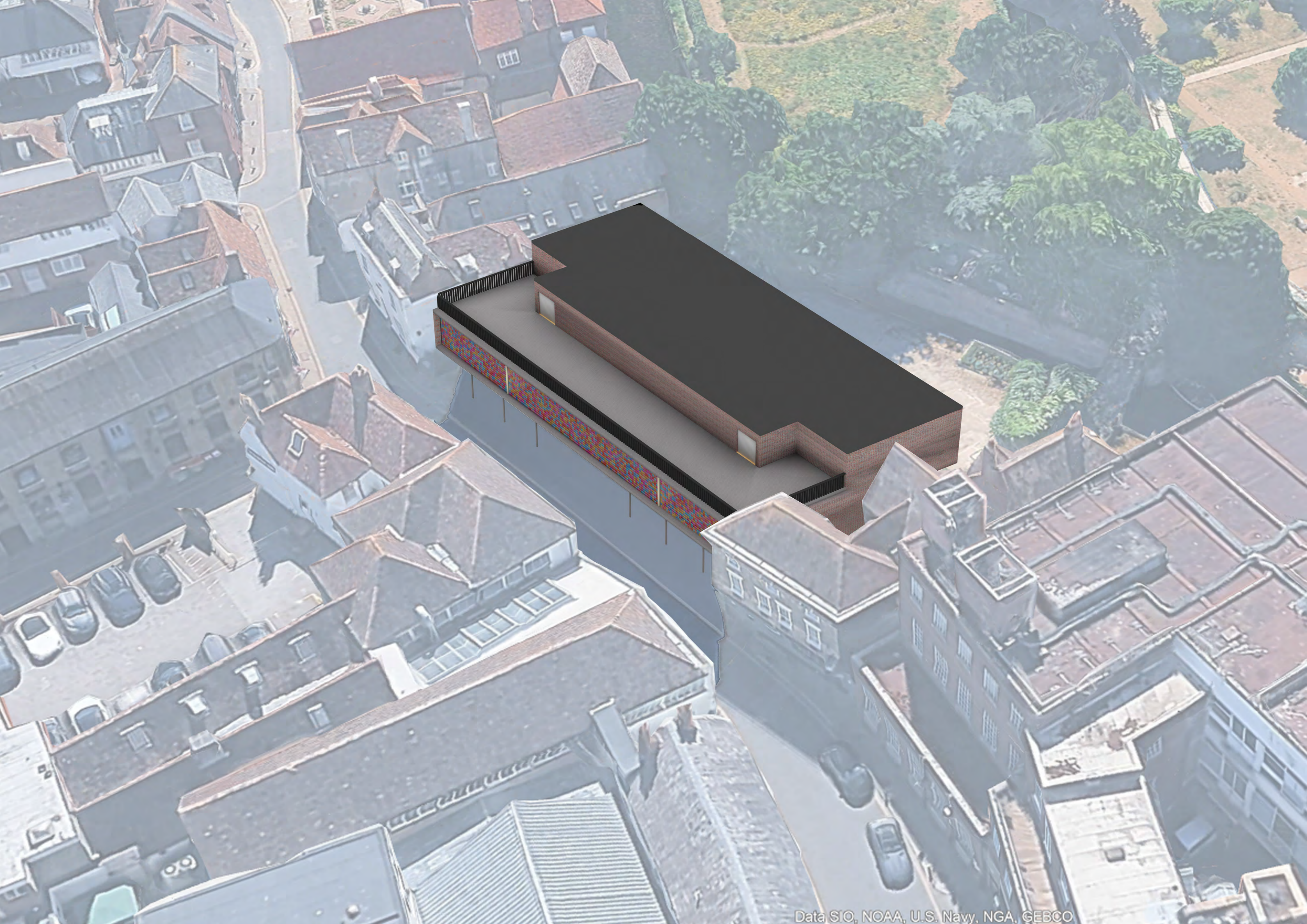
- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Porcelain Balcony Tiles | 16. Brick |
| 2. Tile Spacer | 17. Brick Tie |
| 3. Plywood Floorboards | 18. Plaster Board |
| 4. Weather-proof Membrane | 19. Timber Bottom Plate |
| 5. Steel C Channel | 20. Oak Wooden Flooring |
| 6. Aluminium Trim Capping | 21. Aluminium Flashing |
| 7. Aluminium Soffit | 22. Aluminium Fascia |
| 8. Aluminium Railing | 23. Vapor Control Membrane |
| 9. Mineral Wool Insulation | 24. Damp-proof Membrane |
| 10. Solid Blocking | 25. Rigid Phenolic Foam Insulation |
| 11. Silicone Sealant | 26. Timber Top Plate |
| 12. Mortar | 27. uPVC Sill |
| 13. Glass | 28. Screed |
| 14. Steel Reinforcing | 29. Aerated Trench Blocks |
| 15. Concrete | |

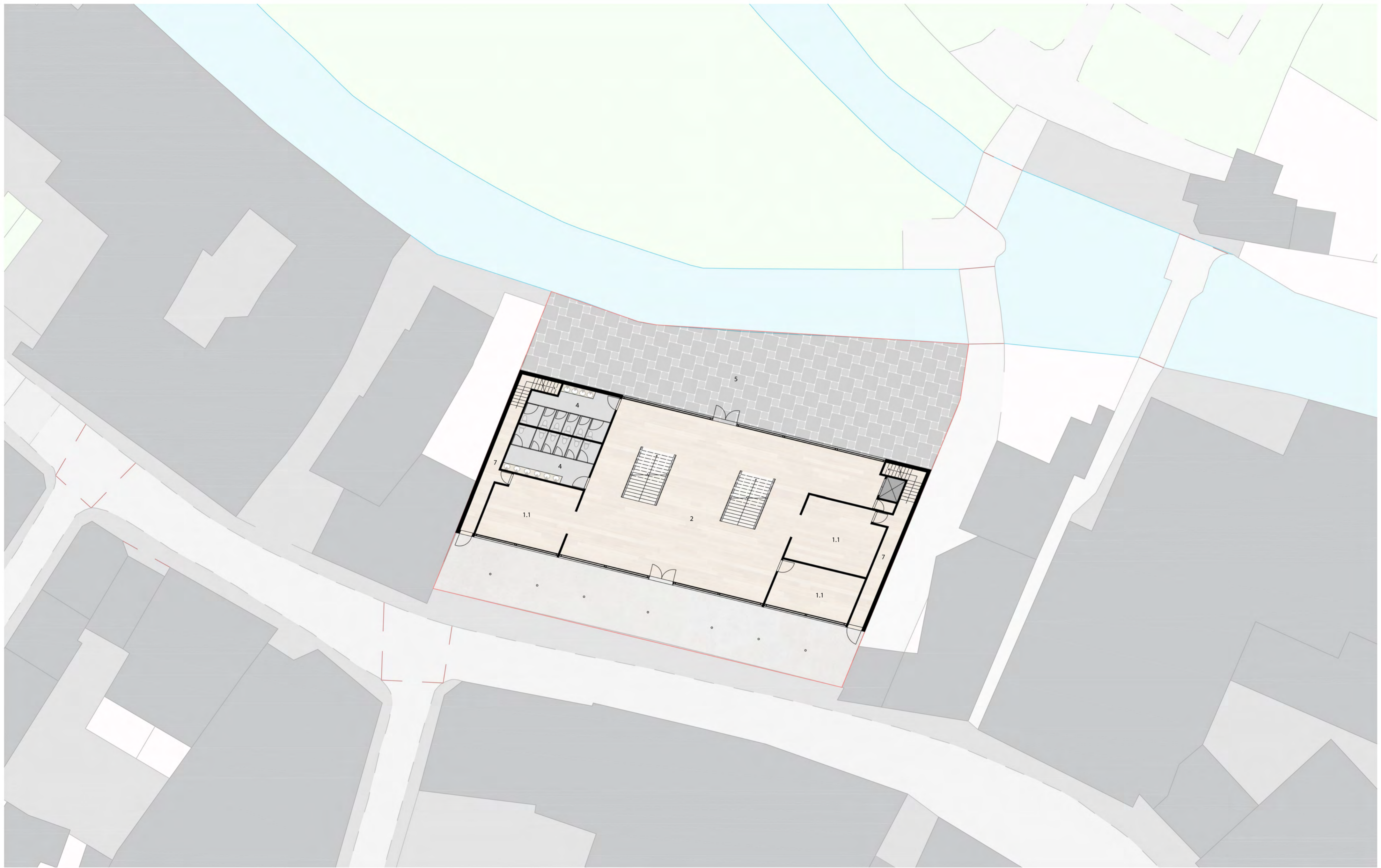
Bay study 1:20

Details 1:10

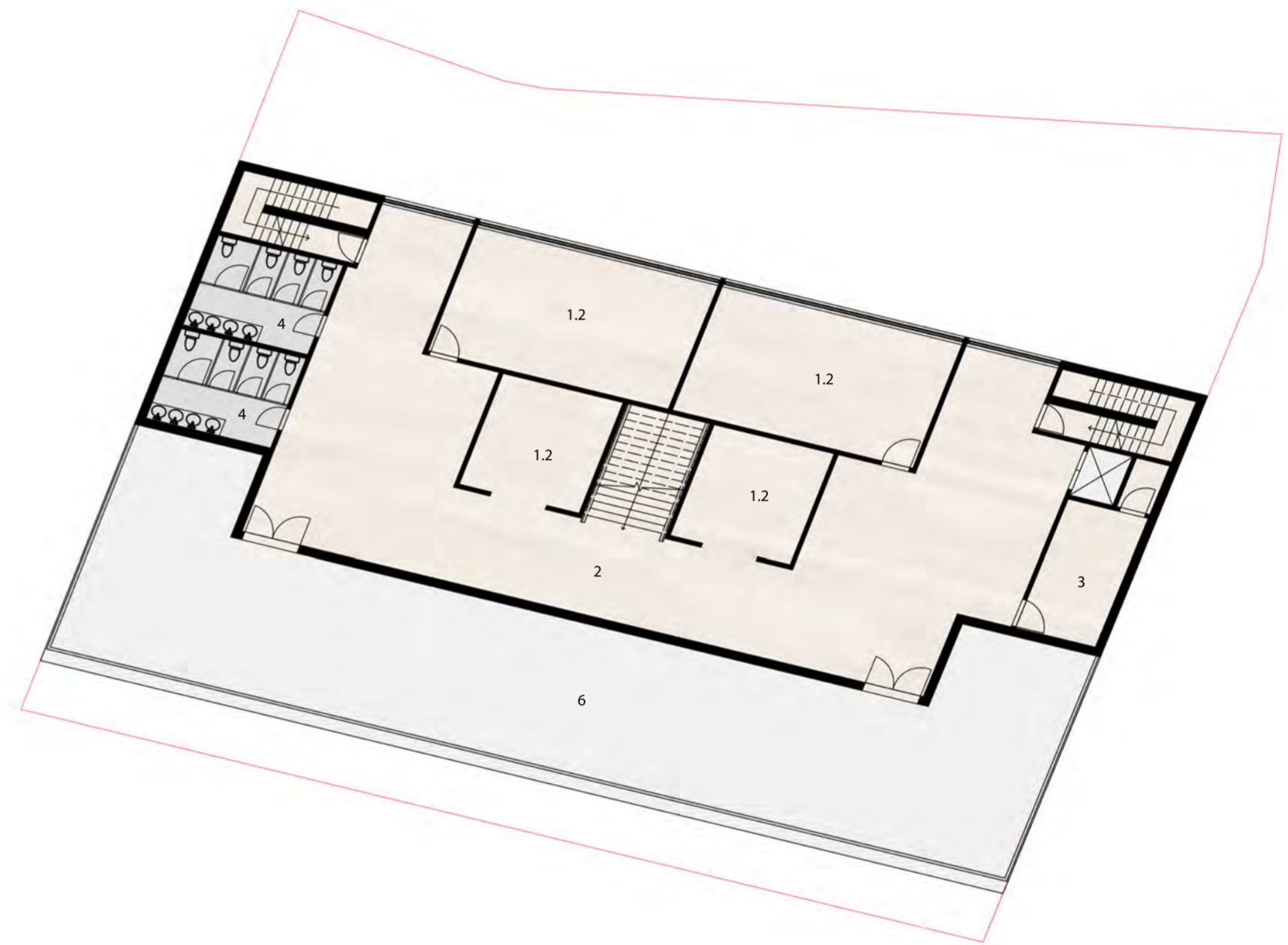
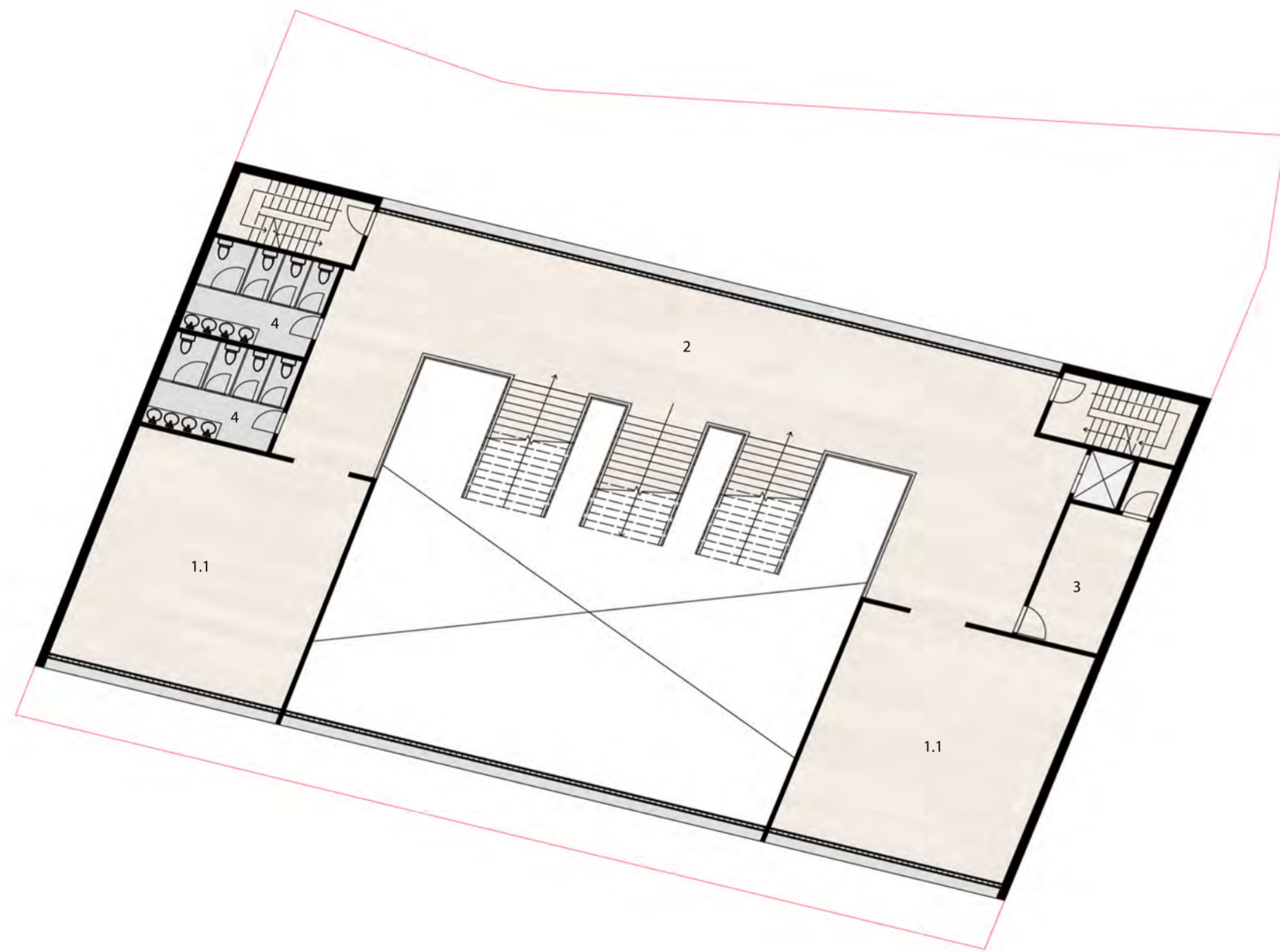








- Workshops
- 1.1 Loud workshops
 - 1.2 Quiet workshops
2. Display space
3. Storage
4. Toilets
5. Garden/ planting workshop
6. Relaxation/ meditation space
7. Fire escape



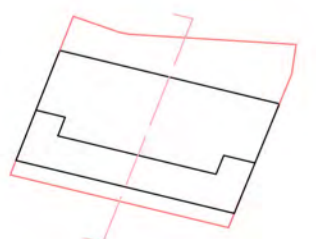
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First floor 1:200 

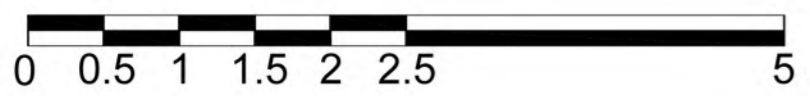


Second floor 1:200 





Short Section 1:50







Front elevation 1:100



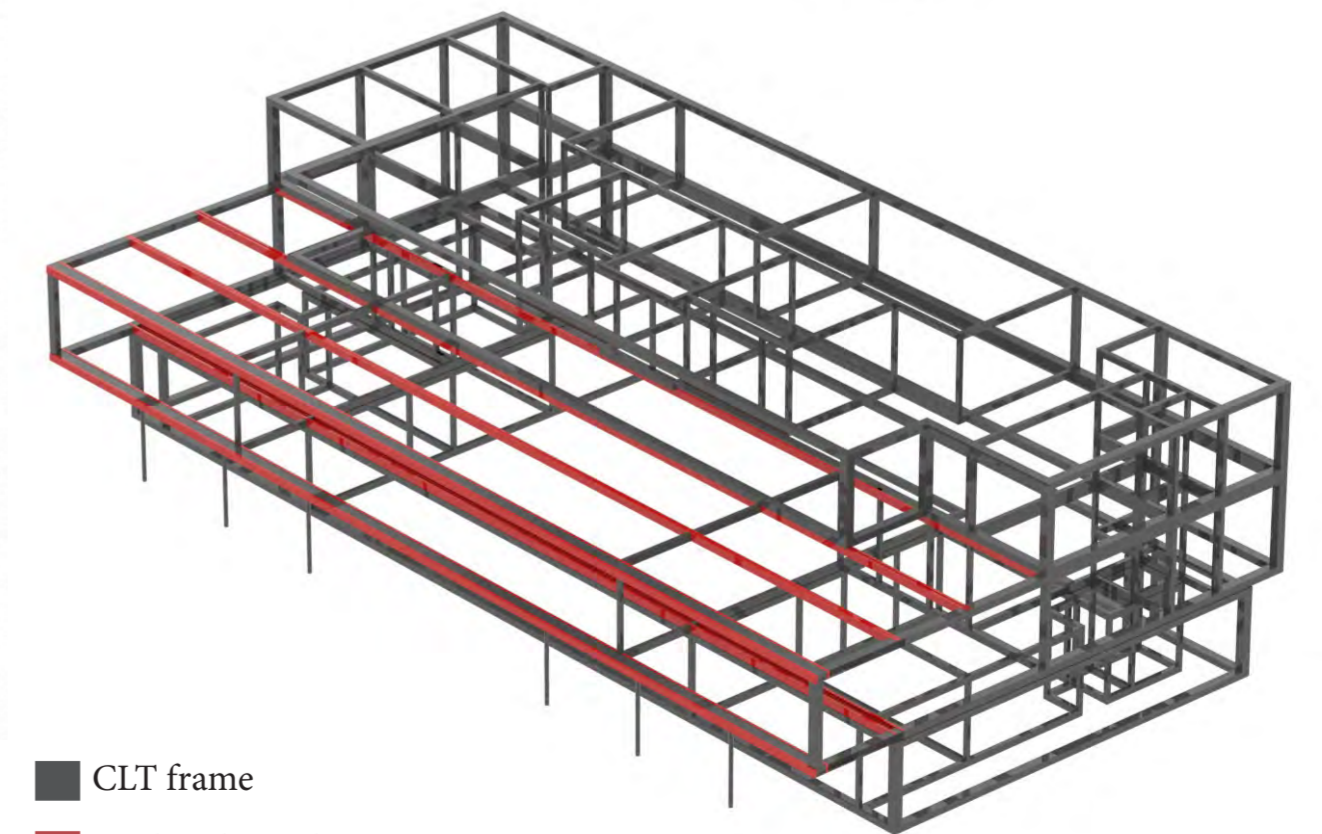
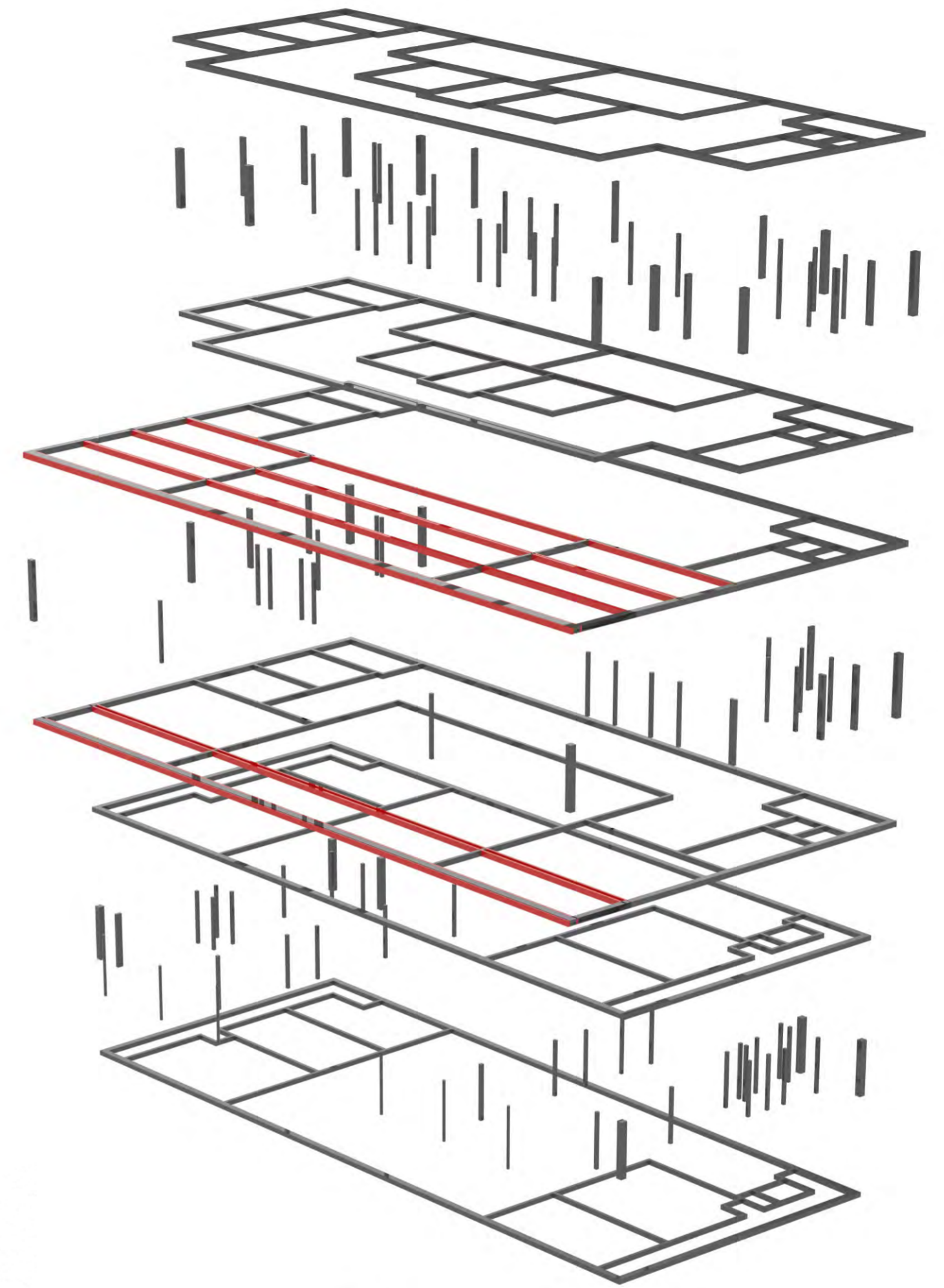
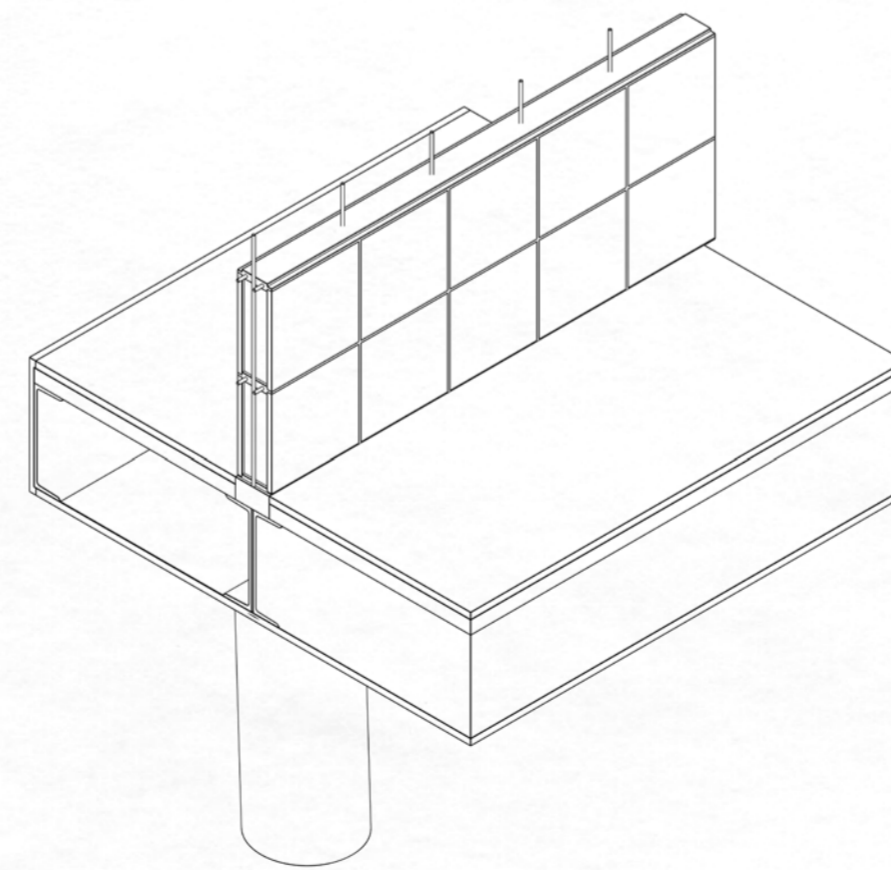
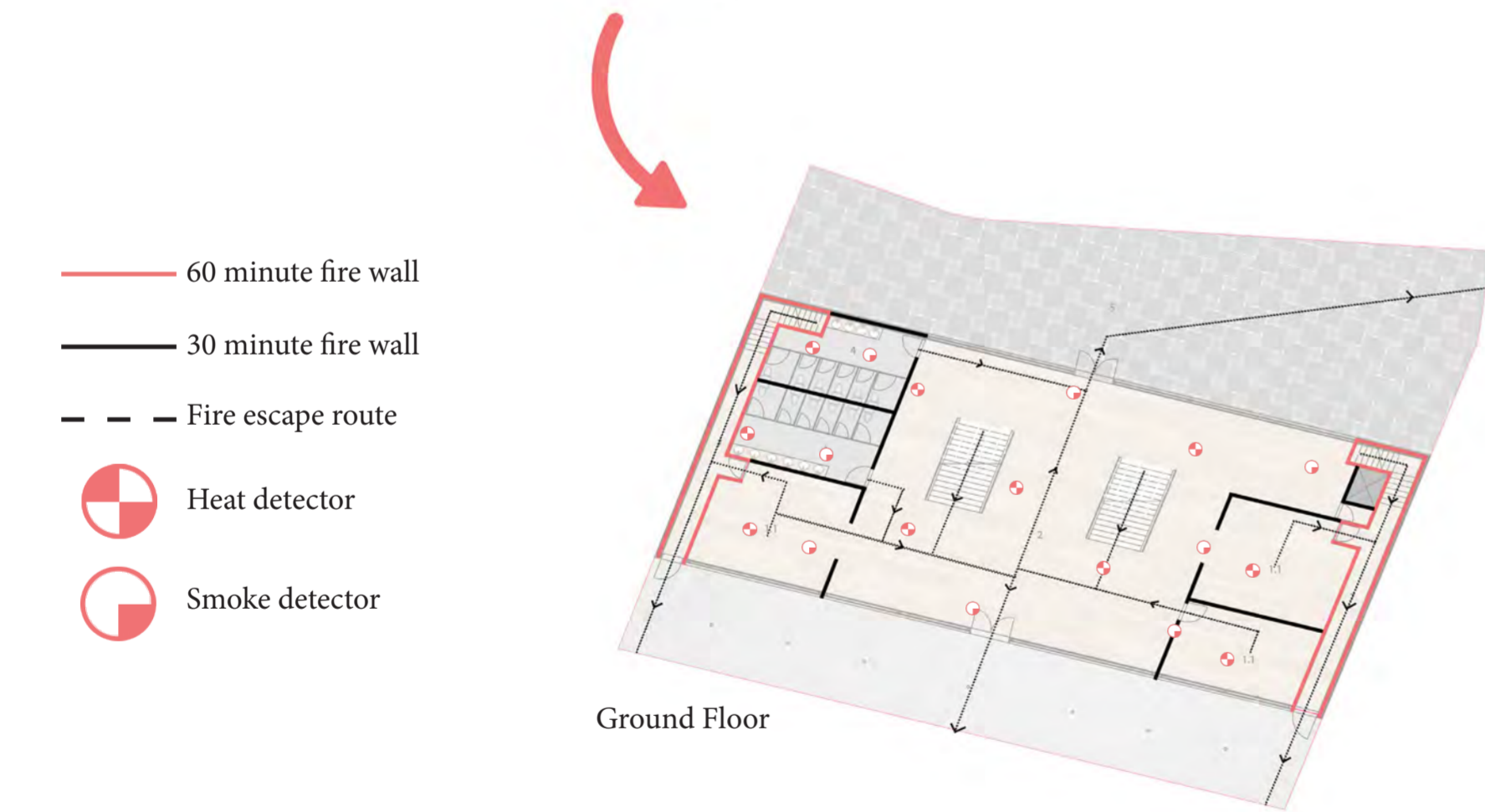
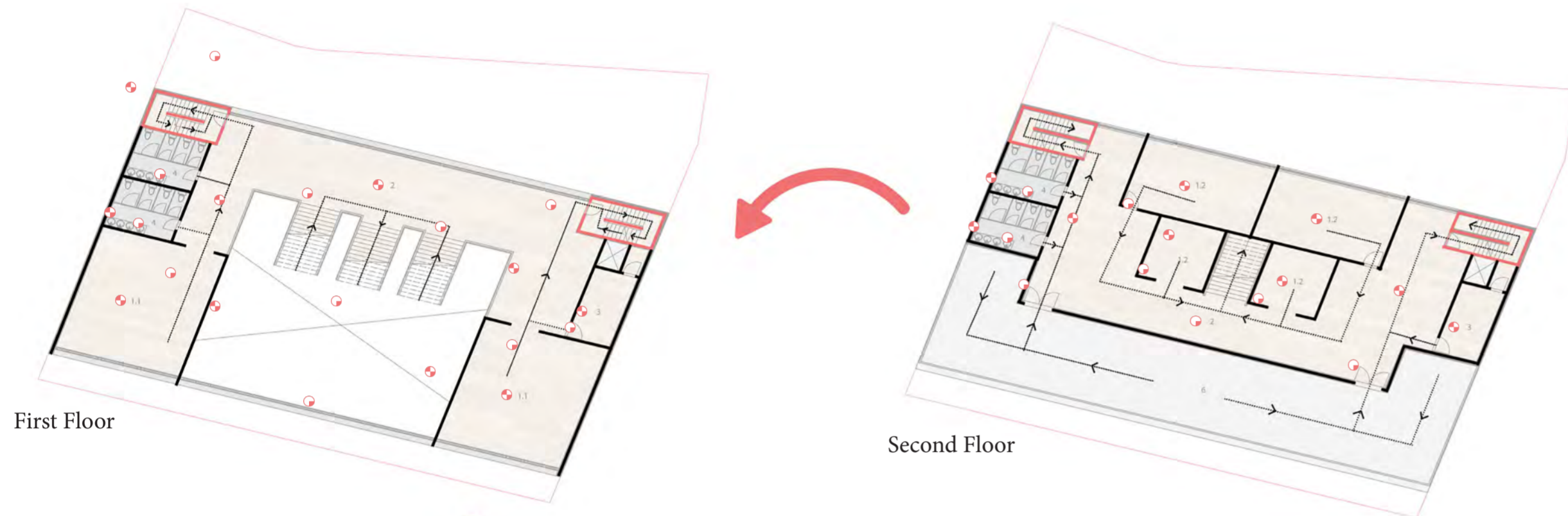


Back elevation 1:100



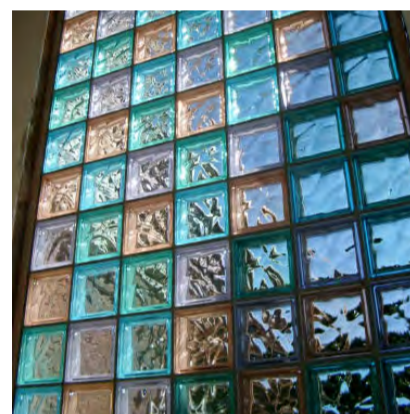
Fire Strategy and Structural makeup

I have placed smoke detectors at the doors to each room so that any early signs of smoke can be quickly identified as people enter or leave the spaces. Heat detectors are positioned deeper within the rooms, where they can respond to rising temperatures without being triggered as easily by minor smoke or dust near circulation areas. This creates a balanced fire detection strategy that helps identify both smoke spread and heat build-up across the building. The fire escape routes are arranged so that occupants can move safely towards either the dedicated fire stairs or the main front and back entrances, providing clear options for evacuation.



Embodied Carbon and Material Strategy

The material strategy reduces embodied carbon by using durable, efficient, and contextually appropriate materials. Brick is suitable for Canterbury because it reflects the historic character of the city, lasts for a very long time, and avoids higher-carbon alternatives such as concrete, aluminium panels, steel cladding, or imported façade systems. The CLT frame reduces the amount of concrete and steel needed, while still storing carbon within the timber structure. Steel C-channel supports are only used where extra strength or connections are required, making the steel use more efficient. Glass blocks also reduce complexity compared with stained glass, as they provide daylight, privacy, and durability with fewer components. Overall, this creates a lower-carbon building fabric that is long-lasting, practical, and appropriate for its setting.



Glass Blocks

Application: Alternative to stained glass window
 Quantity: 4230 blocks
 Weight: 4230 blocks * 2.4kg = 10,152kg
 Cost: £4.10 per block * 4230 = £17,343
 Embodied Carbon 2.14 kgCO₂e per kilogram



Brick

Application: Facade - Main building material
 Quantity: 560m² = ~30,602 bricks
 Weight: ~30,602 bricks * 2.2kg = 67,324kg
 Cost: £0.85 per brick * ~30,602 bricks = £26,011
 Embodied Carbon 287 kgCO₂e per tonne



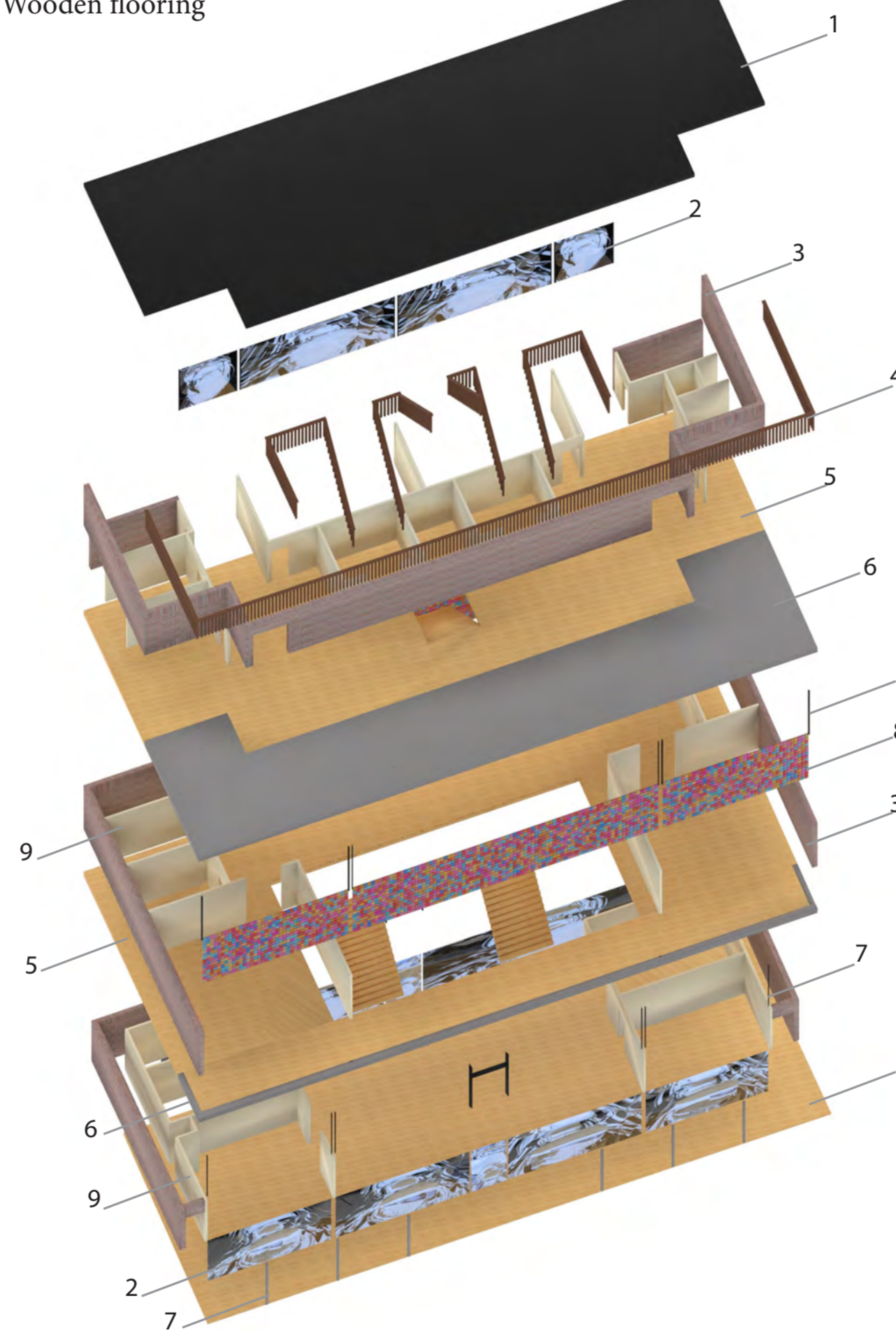
Steel C Channels

Application: supporting frame
 Quantity: 6m (max length) * 64
 Weight: 156kg * 64 = 9,984kg
 Cost: £40,630.12
 Embodied Carbon 287 kgCO₂e per tonne

Materials with non specific numbers for calculations

Concrete	-	250 to 500 kgCO ₂ e per cubic meter
Glass	-	1.2 to 1.5 kgCO ₂ e per kilogram
CLT	-	0.25 to 0.437 kgCO ₂ e per kilogram

1. Weather-proof rubber roofing
2. Glass
3. Brick
4. Steel railing
5. Wooden flooring
6. Paving tiles
7. Steel framing
8. Glass blocks
9. Plasterboard walls



Steel C channels

Using a CLT frame with steel C-channel supports to form the main building structure and support the glass block areas. The CLT provides a strong, lightweight, and lower-carbon structural frame, reducing the need for large amounts of concrete or steel. Steel C-channels are used where extra strength is needed, especially around the glass blocks, helping to hold them securely in place and provide a structural edge. They also help support the third-floor meditation space, where additional stability is needed for the upper level.

Brick

Bricks are the best option for my building in Canterbury because they suit the city's historic character while also providing a durable and practical facade. Canterbury has many traditional brick and masonry buildings, so using brick helps the design feel connected to its surrounding context rather than looking out of place. Although bricks have embodied carbon from the firing process, they are long-lasting, low maintenance, and can be repaired or reused, which means their environmental impact is spread across a much longer lifespan. They are also a better choice than materials such as aluminium cladding, steel panels, or large amounts of concrete, which can have higher embodied carbon and may need more complex fixing systems.

Steel

Steel is used for the external framing and railings because it provides strength, safety, and durability in exposed outdoor areas. Its slim profile allows the structure to remain visually light while still giving the railings enough rigidity to protect users around balconies, walkways, and edges. Steel is also suitable for outdoor use because it can be galvanised or powder coated to resist rust, weathering, and long term wear. Although steel has a higher embodied carbon than timber, it is used only where its strength and durability are most needed, making the design more efficient.

Paved tiles

I have chosen paved tiles for the outside meditation space because they create a calm, stable, and practical surface for people to sit, walk, and reflect. Their clean grid and simple finish support the minimalist character of the monastery inspired design, helping the space feel ordered and peaceful. Paved tiles are also durable and weather resistant, making them suitable for an external area exposed to rain, sun, and regular use. Compared with softer surfaces like grass or gravel, tiles are easier to maintain, more accessible, and provide a safer, level surface.

Glass blocks

Often a better choice than traditional stained glass because they are simpler to manufacture and install, making them a more practical and cost-effective option. Unlike stained glass, which requires many individually cut pieces joined with lead, solder, and support framing, glass blocks use a more straightforward system with fewer components, which generally results in lower embodied carbon. They are also highly durable and require less maintenance over time, helping to reduce long-term repair and replacement costs. In addition, glass blocks provide better thermal insulation than single-pane stained glass, helping to improve energy efficiency and maintain a more comfortable indoor environment. Overall, glass blocks offer a strong balance of affordability, durability, privacy, daylight, and lower environmental impact.

Plasterboard walls

I am using plasterboard wall finishes to reflect the simple, minimalism found in the monastery interior. The smooth, plain surfaces create a quiet background that avoids unnecessary decoration and allows the focus to remain on light, space, and atmosphere. This helps support the peaceful character of the building, especially in areas such as the display space, where a clean and plain environment will highlight the items on display. Plasterboard is also practical because it is cost-effective, easy to install, and can create crisp, controlled internal finishes.

Environmental Strategy

The glass block façades are positioned to work with the movement of the sun throughout the day, creating changing coloured shadows across the building. At sunrise, the front facade catches the morning light, allowing it to pass through the glass blocks and cast colourful shadows into the front spaces. In the evening, the rear facade catches the setting sun, projecting colourful shadows towards the back of the building.

Natural lighting at 7am



Natural lighting at 5pm



The landscaping strategy is kept minimal to support the calm and reflective character of the building, while still giving the outdoor spaces a practical purpose. Instead of using dense planting or decorative landscaping, the design includes simple planters where people can learn how to garden, grow plants, and produce small amounts of food. The planters also make the space flexible and easy to maintain, as they can be moved, replanted, or adapted for different seasons.

