

## A ROOF OVER THE HEAD

*Housing solutions for homeless people in Ghent*





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# A ROOF OVER THE HEAD

*Housing solutions for homeless people in Ghent*



**RELATORE:**  
Roberto Dini

**RELATORE AZIENDALE:**  
Jan Baes

**CANDIDATA:**  
Irene Musso

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This project derives from my Erasmus experience during the last year of university in Belgium.

The Erasmus programme EU gave me the opportunity to spend time and be in touch with a different reality from the one I was used to: Belgium and in particular the city of Ghent.

In this city, I spent the first semester in KU Leuven university of architecture and I worked in an Atelier where I met Jan Baes, the architect of the studio AE Architecten with whom I started, during the first lockdown in Belgium, this work. I had the opportunity to work for a competition: design 12 units for homeless people in the north part of Ghent city.

The works of my thesis aim to be an effort to study the situation of homeless people and how to find a possible integration through the architecture. To start learning who decided to be an homeless people, where they usually live and how the organisations work with them I decide to explain these questions on the first part of this work.

The first part "homelessness" explains the work of the European scenario together with the "European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless" (Feantsa) where I was able to find what I needed and to understand how the European scenario surrounding us is going in particular the Belgium situation.

Even if there are various definitions of homelessness there isn't a single one that is able to provide a precise and accurate meaning. This work shows how the phenomenon of homelessness is still a debate across Europe.

# ABSTRACT\_\_EN

The second part concerned the studies to define an entire view of the complex of the project.

The concept of a house was analysed to find a common definition to explain the idea of 'a roof over the head'.

A house is defined as the home of our memory and childhood, the fundamental pillar of our identity, the place from which we left but also the place where we should be able to return.

For homeless people, this concept, is more important than others. They need a safe place to be but not only in a physical way but also in a mental way: it should be a place where they can find themselves, a point of security and also a part of them where they can be free to live.

For these reasons the project includes different aspects: the importance of privacy for each units, the quality of living through the light and air but also a common and green space to stay with other people.

The goal of my work is to find a solution through the architecture to combine the problem of homeless people in a little reality as the city of Ghent.





Questo progetto nasce dalla mia esperienza Erasmus durante l'ultimo anno di università in Belgio.

Grazie al programma Erasmus UE, ho avuto la possibilità di trascorrere ed essere in contatto con una realtà diversa da quella a cui ero abituata: il Belgio e in particolare la città di Ghent.

In questa città ho trascorso il primo semestre presso l'università di architettura KU Leuven e ho seguito il corso di progettazione dove ho conosciuto Jan Baes, l'architetto dello studio AE Architecten che mi ha permesso di svolgere questo lavoro.

Ho avuto l'opportunità, così, di lavorare per un concorso: progettare 12 unità per persone senza fissa dimora nella parte nord della città di Ghent.

Il lavoro di tesi si pone come una guida per studiare la situazione delle persone senza dimora e come sia possibile un' integrazione attraverso l'architettura. Per iniziare a capire chi è una persona senza fissa dimora, dove abitualmente vive e come le organizzazioni lavorano con loro, ho deciso di rispondere a queste domande nella prima parte di questo lavoro.

La prima parte "homelessness" esprime come lo scenario europeo insieme alla "European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless" (Feantsa) siano stati fondamentali nella ricerca di informazioni che avevo bisogno e studiare così in che situazione lo scenario europeo fosse costituito, in particolare la posizione del Belgio.

Anche se esistono varie definizioni di 'senzatetto,' non esiste ancora una sola che sia in grado di fornire un significato preciso e accurato.

Questo lavoro mostra come il fenomeno dei senzatetto sia ancora un dibattito in tutta Europa.

# ABSTRACT

La seconda parte ha riguardato gli studi nella definizione di una visione completa del progetto. Il concetto di casa è stato analizzato per trovare una definizione comune che spieghi l'idea di "un tetto sopra la testa".

Una casa è definita come il rifugio della nostra memoria e della nostra infanzia, il pilastro fondamentale della nostra identità, il luogo da cui siamo partiti ma anche il luogo in cui dovremmo poter tornare.

Per le persone senza fissa dimora, questo concetto è più importante di altri. Hanno bisogno di un luogo sicuro dove stare non solo fisicamente ma anche mentalmente: dovrebbe essere un luogo dove ritrovarsi, un punto di sicurezza e anche una parte di loro dove potersi sentire liberi di vivere.

Per questi motivi il progetto prevede diversi aspetti: l'importanza della privacy per ogni unità, la qualità dell'abitare attraverso fenomeni naturali come la luce e l'aria ma anche uno spazio comune e verde di condivisione con le altre persone.

L'obiettivo del mio lavoro è trovare una soluzione attraverso l'architettura per coniugare il problema delle persone senza fissa dimora in una piccola realtà come la città di Ghent.

## NOTE FOR THE READER

*The work analyzes the issue of homeless people, which is still discussed in the European scenario, and studies through the design of new spaces how this problem can be solved within a small reality.*

*The possibility of being abroad, working in a Belgian studio and following a project for a competition was a stimulating experience for me: I had the opportunity to interact with municipal entities, organizations for homeless people, landscape architects and engineers.*

*It was also an opportunity for me to get in touch with a different reality from the one I am used to and above all it was a stimulus to change my point of view and discover a new design method.*

*During this work I encountered some difficulties that I had to respond to: the interaction of municipal and private entities through a language that is not my mother tongue; design choices that I did not agree with or that I had never encountered in my university career; study a case for people with mental and physical problems and find the solution for them to live in a safe place. For example, I struggled to understand the absence of the public space that I used to think and project as a space of sharing with other people but in this case that space is only a zone of conflict and discussion.*

*In the second part there are different plans which explain the same meaning: this choice derives from the desire to affirm how the variety of each plans can explain the same concept and therefore testify to the dynamism of each module that is not bound in itself.*

*This note is fundamental for me so every reader can go deeply into the merits of the work I have done and thus allow everyone to understand the steps that I followed to reach this reality to which we all belong.*





# FIRST PART | HOMELESSNESS

## 01 DEFINING AND MEASURING HOMELESSNESS

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the first part of this thesis gives interpretations of the 'homelessness' issue through the studies and research of the European organizations.

It's a complex phenomenon which is clarified in this section to understand when it was born, how it developed in Europe until we get to the case study of the country Belgium.

## 1.1 THE DEFINITIONS OF “HOMELESS” GIVEN BY DICTIONARIES

«Homeless (noun): people who do not have a home, usually because they are poor.» <sup>1</sup>

«Homeless (adjective): (of a person) without a home, and therefore typically living on the streets.» <sup>2</sup>

«Homeless (noun): Who, not owning an accommodation, lives on the street.» <sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 WHO IS AN HOMELESS PERSON?

Defining homelessness is a topic of debate which it has not yet taken on an international agreement but most of the various definitions of homelessness have not been able to provide a single and accurate meaning.

Despite the ability and precision of dictionaries, each country is still using its own term.

The United Nations used some definitions during these years:

"A household has been defined in the latest United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses<sup>10</sup> from 1998 in paragraph 2.61 as either:

- a one-person household, defined as an arrangement in which one person makes provision for his or her food or other essentials for living without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household or
- a multi-person household, defined as a group of two or more persons living together who make common provision for food or other essentials for living."<sup>4</sup>

In 2009, at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Conference of European Statisticians defined homelessness as:

"In its Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing, the CES identifies homeless people under two broad groups:

- Primary homelessness (or rooflessness). This category includes persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters;

- Secondary homelessness. This category may include persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodations (including dwellings, shelters and institutions for the homeless or other living quarters). This category includes persons living in private dwellings but reporting 'no usual address' on their census form."<sup>5</sup>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, contains on Article 25 this text about the housing and quality of living:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."<sup>6</sup>

The analysis written by Kate Amore, Michael Baker and Philippa Howden-Chapman for the ETHOS Definition and Classification of Homelessness defined and classified the meaning of homelessness.

"In most nations, measurement of homelessness is limited or non-existent, and the lack of an international, standard definition of homelessness means that there is no credible benchmark for governments to be held to. Like poverty and unemployment, homelessness is a relative concept, which acquires meaning in relation of the housing conventions of a particular culture. [...]"

Developed by FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) and the European Observatory on Homelessness, ETHOS is both a definition and a typology (or classification) of homelessness; that is, it proposes how the homeless population should be identified and divides the population into discrete subgroups.”<sup>7</sup>

4\_ United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Sales No. E.98.XVII.8 New York, 1998

5\_ United Nations, "Enumeration of Homeless People", United Nations Economic and Social Council, 18 August 2009; Economic Commission for Europe Conference of European Statisticians, Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses, Twelfth Meeting, Geneva, 28-30 October 2009

6\_ "Article 25". Retrieved 17 September 2014.

7\_ The ETHOS Definition and Classification of Homelessness: An Analysis, Kate Amore, Michael Baker and Philippa Howden-Chapman - Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

## 1.3 WHAT IS FEANTSA

“**FEANTSA** is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless.

Established in 1989, FEANTSA brings together non-profit services that support homeless people in Europe.

FEANTSA works towards ending homelessness by:

1. Engaging in constant dialogue with the European institutions, national and regional governments to promote the development and implementation of effective measures to end homelessness.
2. Conducting and disseminating research and data collection to promote a better understanding of the nature, extent, causes of, and solutions to, homelessness.
3. Promoting and facilitating the exchange of information, experience and good practice between FEANTSA's member organisations and relevant stakeholders with a view to improve policies and practices addressing homelessness.
4. Raising public awareness about the complexity of homelessness and the multidimensional nature of the problems faced by homeless people.

FEANTSA's decision-making bodies are:

- The General Assembly
- The Administrative Council
- The Executive Committee”<sup>8</sup>

## AND ETHOS?

“FEANTSA has developed a European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion (**ETHOS**) as a means of improving understanding and measurement of homelessness in Europe, and to provide a common language for transnational exchanges on homelessness. This typology was launched in 2005 and is used for different purposes - as a framework for debate, for data collection purposes, for policy purposes, monitoring purposes, and in the media. It is important to note that this typology is an open exercise which makes abstraction of existing legal definitions in the EU members states.

In 2017, the English version of ETHOS and ETHOS Light were re-designed to reflect FEANTSA's new visual identity. Whilst ETHOS remains a comprehensive framework for experts and academics, ETHOS Light is intended as a harmonised definition of homelessness for statistical purposes.

Homelessness is perceived and tackled differently according to the country. ETHOS was developed through a review of existing definitions of homelessness and the realities of homelessness which service providers are faced with on a daily basis. ETHOS categories therefore attempt to cover all living situations which amount to forms of homelessness across Europe:

01\_rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough)

02\_houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter)

03\_living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence)

04\_living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Feantsa, About us\_ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/about-us/what-is-feantsa>

<sup>9</sup> ETHOS Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion\_ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>



## 1.4 WHICH CRITERIA ARE USED TO CATEGORIZED THEM?

"ETHOS identifies 4 main categories of living situation:

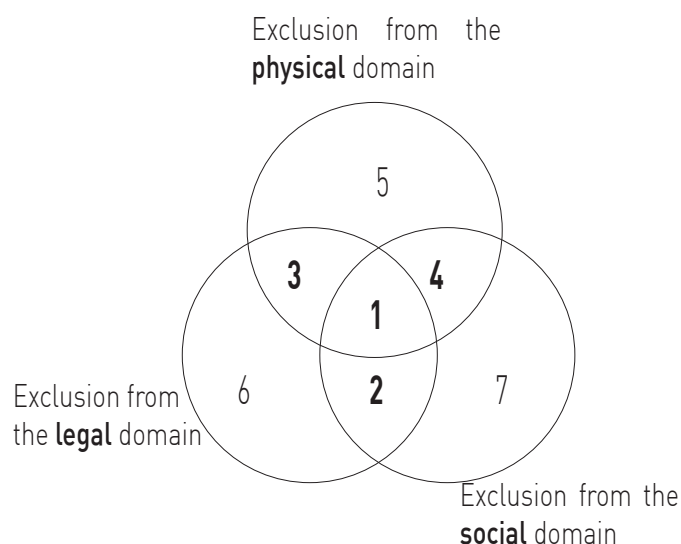
1. rooflessness
2. houselessness
3. living in insecure housing
4. living in inadequate housing"<sup>10</sup>

"In their first review of statistics on homelessness in Europe by Edgar et al., 2002, mention four broad categories: rooflessness, houselessness, living in insecure accommodation and living in inadequate accommodation. In the second review introduced the 'three domains which constitute a home' and from which homeless people are excluded to different degrees as the conceptional framework (Edgar et al., 2003, p.4). These were further refined in the third review, which was also the first to seek to collect data for the different subgroups of the new typology: *'Having a home can be understood as: Having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain) and having a legal title to occupation (legal domain)'* (Edgar et al., 2004, p.5) ".<sup>11</sup>

The table 01 shows three other categories (number 5,6,7) which are respectively identified as:

5. Inadequate housing (secure tenure)
6. Insecure housing (adequate housing)
7. Social isolation within a secure and adequate context

### 01\_ THE DOMAINS OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION<sup>12</sup>



10\_ ETHOS Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion\_ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>

11\_ Defining and Measuring Homelessness, Volker Busch-Geertsema GISS, Germany

12\_ Source: Edgar et al., 2004

“As shown, seven theoretical categories of homelessness and housing exclusion have been identified. While ‘rooflessness’ usually involves exclusion of all three domains (physical, legal and social), ‘houselessness’ is characterised by exclusion from the legal domain and the social domain. Both situations are clearly defined as homelessness, while people living in insecure and/or inadequate housing and/or in social isolation might also be affected by exclusion from one or two domains, but their situation is classified under ‘housing exclusion’ rather than ‘homelessness’.

On the basis of this conceptional understanding and to try to grasp the varying practices in different EU countries, the ETHOS typology was developed, which relates, in its most recent version, thirteen different operational categories and twenty-four different living situations to the four conceptional categories: roofless, houseless, insecure housing and inadequate housing”<sup>13</sup>

## 02\_SEVEN THEORETICAL CATEGORIES OF HOMELESSNESS<sup>14</sup>

	OPERATIONAL CATEGORY	Physical domain	Legal domain	Social domain
Homelessness	1 Rooflessness	No dwelling (roof)	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
	2 Houselessness	Has a place to live, fit for habitation	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
Housing exclusion	3 Insecure and inadequate housing	Has a place to live (not secure and unfit for habitation)	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	4 Inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling	Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations
	5 Inadequate housing (secure tenure)	Inadequate dwelling (dwelling unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	6 Insecure housing (adequate housing)	Has a place to live	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	7 Social isolation within a secure and adequate context	Has a place to live	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations

<sup>13</sup> Defining and Measuring Homelessness, Volker Busch-Geertsema GISS, Germany

<sup>14</sup> Table adapted from Edgar et al., 2004.

## ETHOS – EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION<sup>15</sup>

	OPERATIONAL CATEGORY	LIVING SITUATION	GENERIC DEFINITION
ROOFLESS	People Living Rough	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
	People in emergency accommodation	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
HOUSELESS	People in accommodation for the homeless	Homeless hostel Temporary accommodation Transitional supported accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
	People in Women's Shelter	Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term
	People in accommodation for immigrants	Temporary accommodation/reception centres Migrant workers accommodation	Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status
	People due to be released from institutions	Penal institutions Medical institutions Children's institutions/homes	No housing available prior to release Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing identified (e.g. by 18th birthday)
	People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	Residential care for older homeless people Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people	Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
INSECURE	People living in insecure accommodation	Temporarily with family/friends No legal (sub)tenancy Illegal occupation of land	Living in conventional housing but not the usual place of residence due to lack of housing Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling Occupation of land with no legal rights
	People living under threat of eviction	Legal orders enforced (rented) Re-possession orders (owned)	Where orders for eviction are operative Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess
	People living under threat of violence	Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
INADEQUATE	People living in temporary/ non-conventional structures	Mobile homes Non-conventional building Temporary structure	Not intended as place of usual residence Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin
	People living in unfit housing	Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
	People living in extreme over-crowding	Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms

## 1.5 THE PHENOMENON IN EUROPE

The Forth overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2019 published by FEANTSA, opens with this short editorial written by Freek Spinnewijn FEANTSA Director and Christophe Robert, Foundation Abbé Pierre Managing Director:

“This year we are exploring the state of access to emergency accommodation in Europe, so that all decision-making bodies in Europe can see the indignity and inhumanity of our shelter systems. EU institutions, Member States and local authorities, as legislators and guarantors of the implementation of public policies, must accept their responsibility for this situation, which is worsening every year in most European countries. The increasingly severe saturation of emergency accommodation facilities, the inadequacy of services to increasingly diverse homeless populations and the shortage of sustainable and affordable housing solutions after leaving these facilities render the fundamental right to an emergency shelter meaningless. The perpetuation of emergency accommodation and the chronic problem of homelessness are nowadays characteristic of how we routinely assist the most deprived.”

The introduction for the definition of emergency accommodation and statistics describes the situation as:

“Access to shelter, i.e. accommodation in the event of an emergency, is a fundamental right. Homelessness is a counterpart to extreme poverty and a consequence of periods of economic recession. Until the middle century,

vagrancy legislation was very common in Europe: a homeless person was often considered destitute and to be on the margins of society, accused of having an ‘anti-social lifestyle’, criminalised and sometimes put into the army or forced into labour. As part of their charitable work, religious institutions took in the homeless – at that time called ‘paupers’ or ‘vagabonds’ – up to the middle of the 20th century.. [...] Since the 2000s, more and more people have been questioning the validity of this system. ‘De-institutionalisation’, the gradual closing of public institutions in favour of local reception centres for particular demographics (child welfare services, disability services for people with physical or mental problems, services for the elderly) has become a European Union objective and has led some to question the institutional nature of certain services for homeless people. Consequently, the first public policies based on the principles of Housing First have since been implemented. In 2008, Finland was the first EU Member State to establish a National Programme to reduce long- term homelessness (PAAVO I) based on the following Housing First principle from Y Foundation (2018), op. cit., p.19.: *Resolving social and health problems is not a pre-requisite to gaining a home, rather housing is a pre-requisite that will enable the many problems faced by a homeless person to be resolved.*

Emergency accommodation services, in the sense of temporary accommodation infrastructure taking in people who need emergency shelter covers a multitude of realities in Europe.

The emergency accommodation service providers vary widely: non-governmental organisations, not-for-profit organisations, private enterprises, charitable organisations, religious organisations, and public services are all stakeholders that provide emergency accommodation services. Religious organisations are particularly active in the fight against homelessness in Eastern and Southern European countries. In France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal, while the majority of services for homeless people are provided by NGOs under the coordination of local and/or regional authorities, these authorities can also directly provide emergency accommodation services.

There is no shared definition for emergency accommodation in Europe. The definitions that exist vary significantly; a shared understanding is absolutely vital in this sector to get beyond the obvious complexities of the support systems and to establish adapted, pragmatic and effective solutions. Defining emergency accommodation requires a definition of homelessness, because the greater the understanding of the homeless population, the broader the spectrum of services will be.

The European ETHOS typology differentiates between emergency accommodation as night shelters where users are considered 'roofless', from temporary and transitional short-term accommodation where users are considered 'houseless'. The street, the specialised accommodation facilities, insecure housing

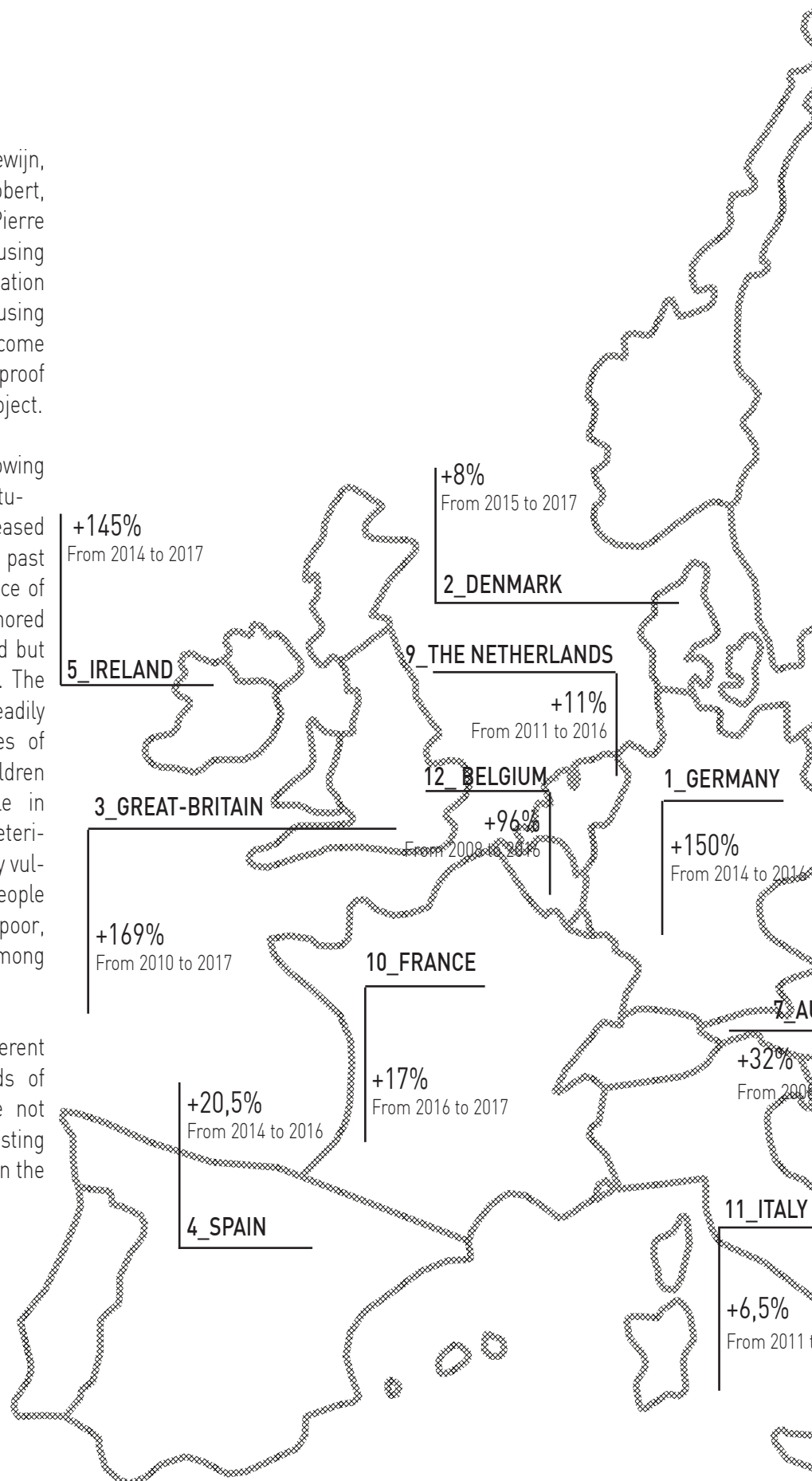
housing, and inadequate housing, in which inhabitants are considered homeless do not count as emergency accommodation.

For these purposes of this report, the emergency accommodation is considered as a reception centre addressing urgent needs for shelter, with or without support, for a limited period of time."<sup>16</sup>

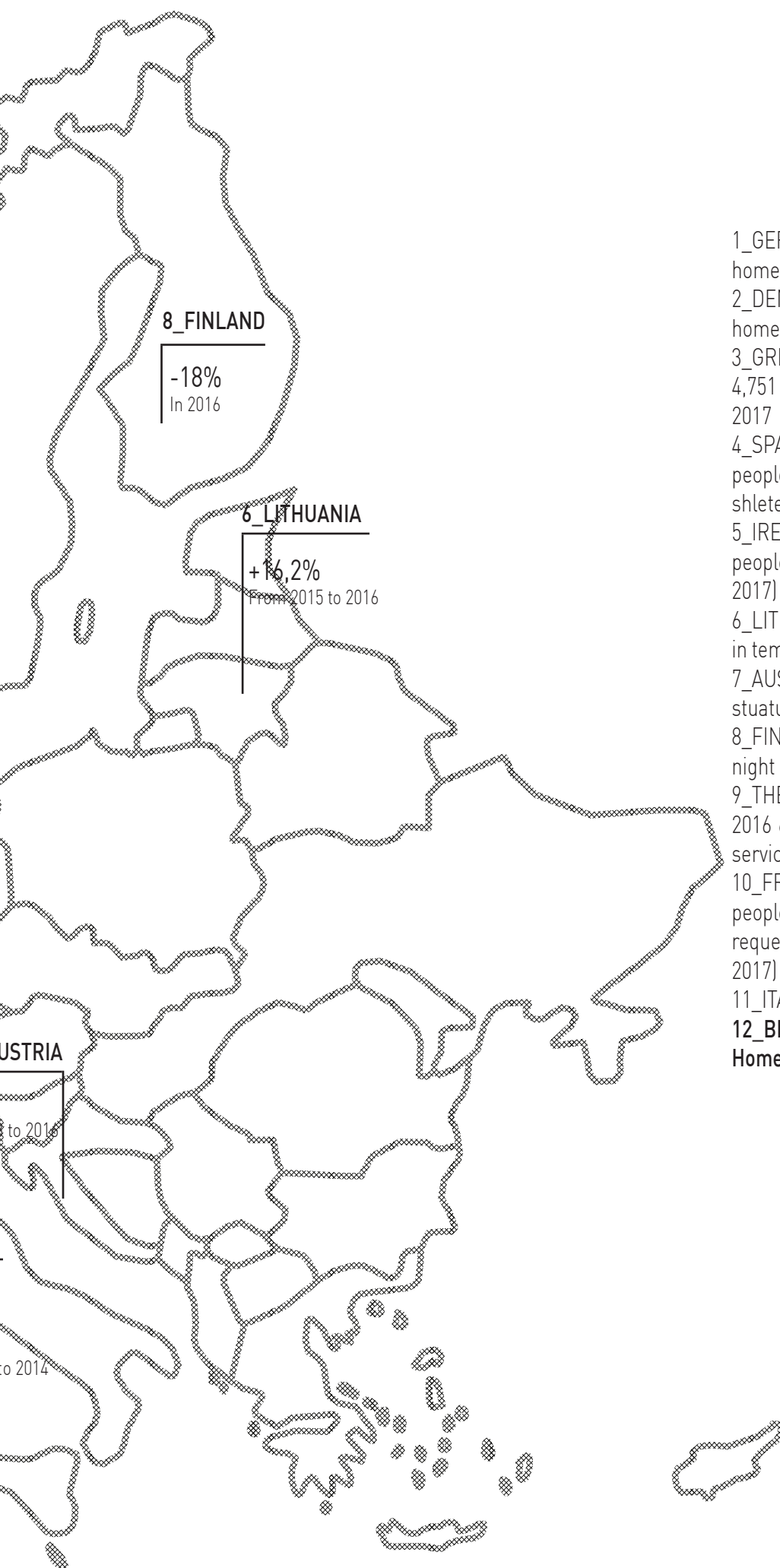
The editorial written by Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director and Christophe Robert, Managing Director of the Foundation Abbé Pierre describes on the Third overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2018 how the eradication of homelessness and the fight against housing exclusion cease to be out of reach and become imperatives of human dignity as well as proof of the credibility of the European social project.

"Housing exclusion is still a fast-growing problem, leading to increasingly severe saturation of support systems and increased pressure on emergency services. This past year has resolutely confirmed the existence of another Europe: a Europe not merely ignored but also misunderstood, not just despised but also forgotten a Europe of the homeless. The homeless population has increased steadily in almost all EU countries. The profiles of homeless people are changing, with children becoming the largest group of people in emergency shelters as a result of a deterioration in the living conditions of extremely vulnerable families. Women, young people, people with a migration background, the working poor, are becoming increasingly numerous among the homeless population."<sup>17</sup>

The situation described, used different approaches as the sources, the periods of time and the methodologies which are not comparable one to another but it's interesting to have an overview of what is happening in the EU scenario.







1\_GERMANY: +150% From 2014 to 2016 860,000 homeless in 2016

2\_DENMARK: +8% From 2015 to 2017 6,635 homeless one week in 2017

3\_GREAT BRITAIN: +169% From 2010 to 2017 4,751 homeless sleeping rough on one night in 2017

4\_SPAIN: +20,5% From 2014 to 2016 16,437 people per day on average in emergency shelters in 2016

5\_IRELAND: +145% From 2014 to 2017 8,857 people in emergency accommodation (november 2017)

6\_LITHUANIA +16,2% From 2015 to 2016 4,569 in temporary accommodation (one night in 2016)<sup>16</sup>

7\_AUSTRIA: +32% From 2008 to 2016 15,090 statutory homeless people 2016

8\_FINLAND: -18% 6,644 homeless people (one night in november 2016)

9\_THE NETHERLANDS: +11% From 2011 to 2016 60,120 people in homeless accommodation services in 2016

10\_FRANCE: +17% From 2016 to 2017 20,845 people called the 115 homeless helpline requesting accommodation (one month June 2017)

11\_ITALY: +6,5% From 2011 to 2014

**12\_BELGIUM: +96% From 2008 to 2016 3,386 Homeless on one night in november 2016**

## 1.6 THE SITUATION IN BELGIUM

In Belgium the total number of people counted as homeless, inadequately housed or living in inadequate housing is continuously increasing. In ten years, it has more than doubled (+142.2%) from 1729 to 4187.<sup>18</sup>

Dénombrement des personnes sans-abri et mal logées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale is the fifth edition written in french by Benoît Quittelier and François Bertrand.

They explain how over the last ten years, all the living situations of the ETHOS typology have seen their respective numbers increase in this country.

After peaking between 2014 and 2016, the increase in the number of people spending the night in public space continued to rise between 2016 and 2018, but at a slower pace. This slower increase than between 2014 and 2016 is mainly due to the increase in the number of places available in emergency and crisis centres.

This can also be seen in table A since the number of people counted in emergency and crisis accommodation has more than tripled over the last ten years (+202.1%); it should be noted that almost half of this increase has taken place over the last two years.

Finally, the emergence of the Citizens' Platform has obviously had a considerable impact on the number of people registered in the public space.

An unclassifiable operator, articulating several forms of accommodation (private homes, collective housing) the Citizens' Platform has revolutionised the management of emergency and crisis accommodation in the Brussels-Capital Region. If the advent of the platform raises questions of substance and form, it is undeniable that it has found a public since it has accommodated or had accommodated 685 people on the night of the count, almost as many as all the recognised emergency and crisis accommodation structures.

Indeed, the number of places available in shelters has remained virtually unchanged over the last ten years, despite their constant saturation.

ETHOS	2008		2010		2014		2016		2018		2008-2018
People living rough	269	15,6%	329	16,9%	412	15,8%	707	20,9%	759	18,2%	182,1%
People in emergency accommodation	234	13,5%	282	14,5%	367	14,1%	474	14%	707	17%	202,1%
Citizen platform	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	685	16,4%	/
People in accommodation for homeless	785	45,4%	772	39,7%	813	31,2%	854	25,2%	910	21,3%	15,9%
Temporary accommodation	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	20	0,5%	/
Non-conventional building	165	9,5%	189	9,7%	316	12,1%	288	8,5%	210	5%	27,3%
Religious communities	/	/	/	/	44	1,7%	189	5,6%	265	6,4%	/
Negotiated Occupations	216	12,5%	275	14,1%	193	7,4%	275	8,1%	333	8%	54,2%
People living in unfit housing	60	3,5%	100	5,1%	422	16,2%	587	17,3%	236	5,7%	293%
Hospitals	/	/	/	/	36	1,4%	12	0,4%	62	1,5%	/
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1729</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2603</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3386</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4187</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>142,2%</b>

**Table A**

Source: Répartition par catégorie des personnes dénombrées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale et évolution entre 2008 et 2018 [La Strada, 2019].

ETHOS	MEN	%	WOMEN	%	UNK	%	TRANSGENDER	%	18 yo	%
People living rough	504	66,4%	84	11,1%	151	19,9%	/	/	20	2,6%
People in emergency accomodation	260	36,8%	220	31,1%	54	5,1%	/	/	227	32,1%
Citizen platform	651	95%	16	2,3	/	/	/	/	18	2,6%
People in accomodation for homeless	401	44,1%	253	27,8%	/	/	/	/	256	28,1%
Temporary accomodation	10	50%	6	30%	/	/	/	/	4	20%
Non-conventional building	176	83,8%	34	16,2%	/	/	/	/	/	/
Religious communities	106	40%	155	58,5%	/	/	/	/	4	1,5%
Negotiated Occupations	152	45,6%	108	32,4%	/	/	1	0,3%	72	21,6%
People living in unfit housing	160	67,8%	55	23,3%	10	4,2%	/	/	11	4,7%
Hospitals	54	87,1%	8	12,9%	/	/	/	/	/	/
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2420</b>	<b>59,1%</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>22,4%</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>5,9%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0,3%</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>14,6%</b>

**Table B**

Source: Répartition par sexe et par situation de vie des personnes dénombrées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale la nuit du 5 novembre 2018 (La Strada, 2019).

Table B shows the distribution by sex and living situation of the persons counted on the night of 5 November 2018 in the Brussels-Capital Region. As in previous editions, men are largely over-represented in the panel as a whole. This over-representation of men, shown in table B and aerogram C, has even increased compared to 2016 (57.8% compared to 52.7%).<sup>18</sup> This increase in the share of men is mainly due to the reception of migrants by the Citizens' Platform, whose audience is almost exclusively male (95%).

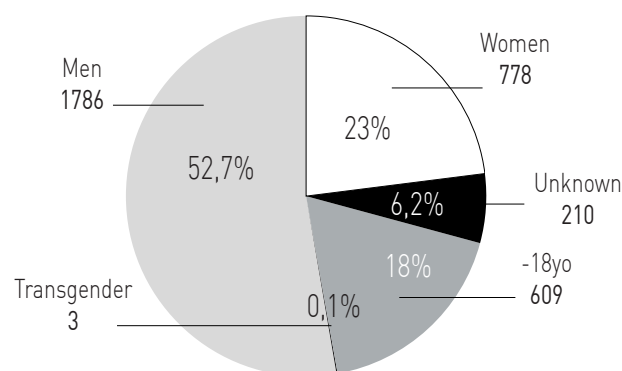
The share of women is similar to what was observed in 2016 (22.4% compared to 23%).

The number of women counted has increased for quite all living situations. The largest increase is found in religious communities, where the number of women housed has more than doubled, 155 compared to 75 in 2016, as it is represented in table B and E.

The same tables shown the 68% increase in the number of women counted in the public space is also quite alarming when one considers the increased difficulties encountered by women on the streets (84 as against 50 in 2016).

The number of minors counted remained relatively stable, rising from 609 to 612. There was a slight decrease this time, there were still 20 minors who spent the night of the count in public spaces.

The category "indeterminate" includes persons counted in the public space for whom we were unable to establish with certainty whether they were men or women.

**Graphic C**

Source: Répartition des personnes dénombrées pendant la nuit du 7 novembre 2016 (La Strada, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Benoît Quittelier, François Bertrand Dénombrement des personnes sans-abri et mal logées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, Brussels, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Nicole Mondelaers, Dénombrement des personnes sans abri et mal logées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, Brussels, 7 novembre 2016 - 6 mars 2017

	Free space	Men	Women	-18yo	Total	Occupancy rate
For men	361	339	/	/	339	93,9%
For women	33	/	30	/	30	90,9%
For children and women	392	5	140	177	322	82,1%
For everyone	172	46	50	59	155	90,1%
Transit housing dependent on a foster home	51	1	29	11	41	80,4%
For asylum seekers	26	10	4	9	23	88,5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>87,9%</b>

**Table D**

Source: Répartition par sexe des personnes recensées la nuit du 5 novembre 2018 selon le type de maison d'accueil où elles étaient hébergées (La Strada, 2019).

Table D shown the total number of homeless people who were counted in the shelters on the night of November 5, 2018: 910 people grouped into 401 men, 253 women, 256 minors.

In 2008 this rate was more than 45% as it is represented in table A and it means that it was still one person in four in 2016 (25.2%). This is the consequence of an asymmetrical evolution. While the number of people counted has more than doubled over ten years, rising from 1729 to 4187 (+142.2%), the capacity of shelters has increased very little over the same period, rising from 785 to 910 and it counts an increase of +15.9% in table A.

On the night of the count, the occupancy rate of the shelters was close to 90%.

Knowing that some rooms are not used because of renovations, that some beds are sometimes not allocated to respect the privacy of families (a mother and a child).

A capacity greater than the number of places for which they are approved, such an occupancy rate illustrates the high saturation of the reception houses in the Brussels Region. This is

all the more true since several structures for women and children have informed us that they are in the maintenance phase to accommodate new residents; this explains the slightly lower occupancy rate in this category.

In terms of gender, there has been no significant change in the number of shelters. The priority given to women and minors continues to be reflected in the male-female ratio of the sheltered population. Looking at the table B it is noticeable that while they account for 59.1% of the homeless and underhoused population counted in 2018, men represent only 44.1% of the population housed in shelter. On the other hand, women (27.8% compared to 22.4% of the total population) and especially minors (28.1% compared to 14.6%) are clearly over-represented. This very high priority given to women and minors has not, however, made it possible to stem the increase in the number of homeless women and minors.

The number of women increased by 68% on the streets (84 against 50 in 2016).

ETHOS	MEN	WOMEN	UNKNOWN	TRANSGENRE	18 yo
People living rough	423	50	210	/	24
People in emergency accomodation	148	177	/	/	149
People in accomodation for homeless	380	229	/	/	245
Non-conventional building	235	50	/	/	3
Religious communities	80	75	/	/	34
Negotiated Occupations	126	82	/	3	64
People living in unfit housing	385	385	/	/	90
Hospitals	9	3	/	/	/

**Table E**

Source: Répartition des personnes dénombrées pendant la nuit du 7 novembre 2016 (La Strada, 2017).

This ETHOS conceptual category refers, on the one hand, to people living in temporary or non-conventional dwellings and, on the other hand, to people living in dwellings considered uninhabitable.

In the Brussels-Capital Region, a distinction is made between persons living in non-approved accommodation structures, persons living in religious communities and persons staying in negotiated occupations or squats.

More and more people are unable to access approved structures because of their residence status, their gender or the multiple issues they articulate. Consequently, they resort to alternative solutions by force of circumstance or because they do not wish to have recourse to approved structures. In 2018, 1044 people (24.9%) were registered in one of these alternative living situations. This represents a decrease compared to 2016 when we counted 1339 people representing 39.5% of the total number of people counted. (table F).

This decrease is partly due to our choice to classify the Citizens' Platform in emergency and crisis accommodation. For a while, the Platform was the largest SHNA in the Brussels Region. Its recognition by the authorities, however, led us to classify it as an emergency shelter. The fact remains that one person out of four always finds solutions outside of any approved support structure.

	TOTAL					DETAILS 2018			
	2008	2010	2014	2016	2018	Men	Women	Transg	-18yo
Non-conventional building	165	189	316	288	210	176	34	/	/
Religious communities	/	/	44	189	265	106	155	/	4
Negotiated Occupations	216	275	193	275	333	152	108	1	72
People living in unfit housing	60	100	422	587	236	160	55	10	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table F**

Source: Evolution du nombre de personnes recensées en logement inadéquat en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (La Strada, 2019).



## SECOND PART | A GARDEN WITH A ROOF

the second part of this work studies the complex of the project where the concept of a house was analysed to find a common definition to explain the idea of 'a roof over the head'.

A house, defined as the home of our memory and childhood, the fundamental pillar of our identity, doesn't assume the same concept for homeless people.



## A ROOF OVER THE HEAD

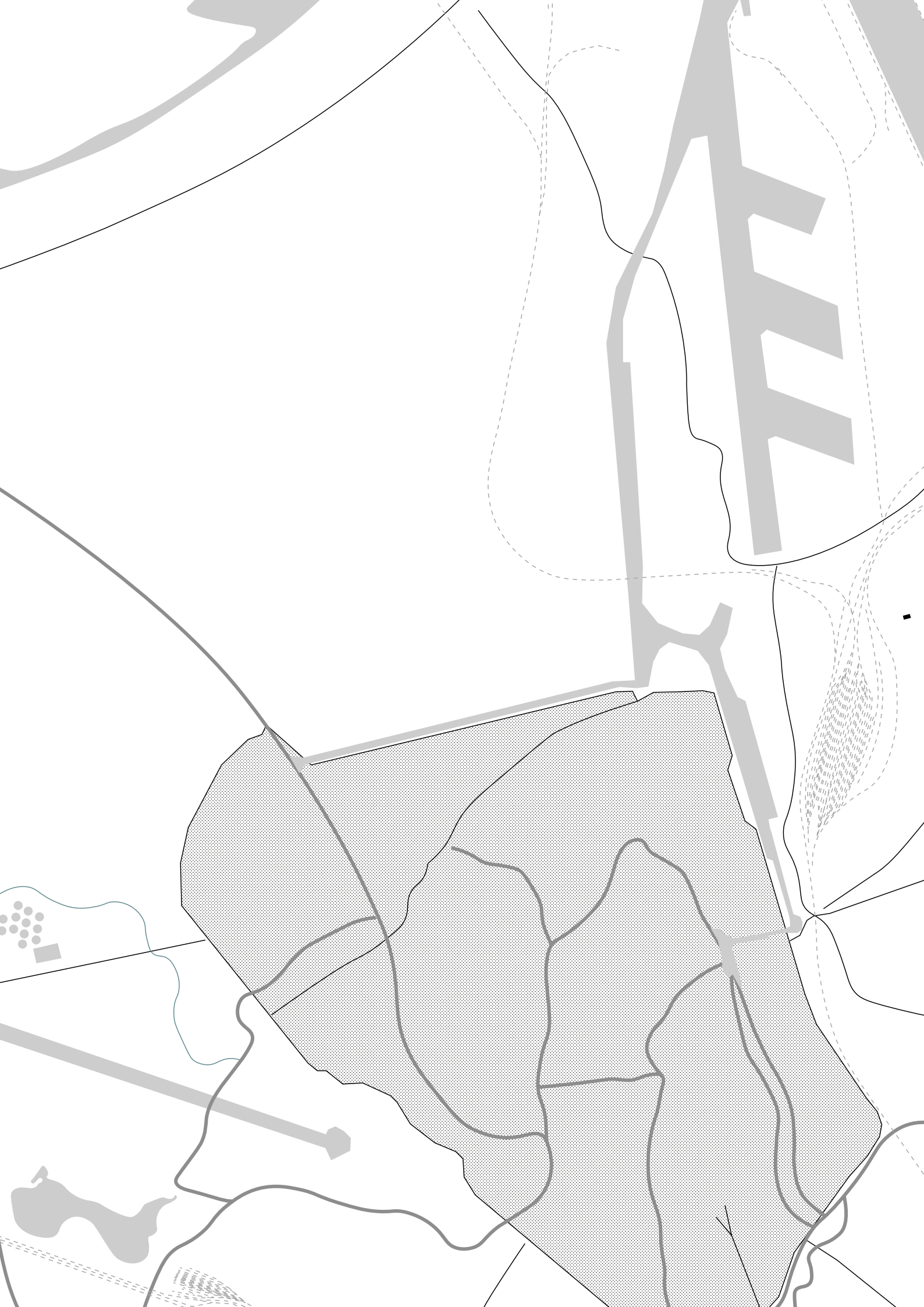
The idea of 'a roof over the head' comes from the need to give to homeless people the concept of safety, protection and a place where they can find their own home as new chapter of their life.

The roof could represent the concept of community.

The single unit is the fundamental pillar to create the community.

Each person represents the heart of the community.

Each single component can't stay without the others: it's like a circle in which one depends on the other.



# 1. A ROOF OVER THE HEAD

## 1.1 THE CITY OF GHENT THE HISTORY OF GHENT

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## 1.2 SPATIAL CONTEXT: THE STUDY AREA

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## 1.3 PROJECT DEFINITION

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## 1.4 SITE ANALYSIS

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FROM THE STORM  
STEPPING STONES  
Y:CUBE

## 1.1 THE CITY OF GHENT

Ghent, the capital of the East Flanders, is situated at the confluence of the River Leie and the River Scheldt. It's a city of all times and it's still constantly in action.

### THE HISTORY OF GHENT

Around 650 St. Amadeus, the founder of the two **abbeys in Ghent: St. Bavo's and St. Peter's abbeys**, plays an important role in Ghent's history.

The first abbey, St. Bavo's, evolved from a church located at the confluence of the River Lys and the Scheldt while the second one, St. Peter's, Abbey is situated on a hill called Blandijnberg.

The first settlements was determined by the relief and hydrography and later centuries watercourses it have been channelled and filled up to solve the problems of that time where military security was usually given priority.

Territories were annexed to the city during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and consequently surrounded by canals but the majority of these territories were in agricultural use.

Between the 11th and the 13th centuries **Ghent become one of the most important cities in the North-West Europe**. Ghent become **one of the largest cities** in the Low Countries: its area covered around 644 hectares and the circumference counted around 12 kilometers; the city counted about 47,000 inhabitants in 1550.

*"From 1577 to 1584, Ghent became temporarily a Calvinist stronghold, that managed to tear itself from the Catholic Spanish rule by means of the construction of a city wall."*<sup>20</sup>

One of the most suggestive aspects of any medieval city was the walls: these not only

determinate the city's appearance and safety but it also gave visibility.

The walls had the rule not only as a defense structure but also it worked as a place to collect the income of the citizens.

In 1584, the Spanish regime reconquered the city and this event was followed by different recessions.

In 1752 The Empress Maria Theresa of Austria decide to use **the Bruges-Ostend canal** which gave to Ghent the importance as a port during the Industrial Revolution: the Coupure canal, between the River Lys and the Bruges Canal, was used by large ships which could navigate into the city centre.

During the 1800, **Ghent play a crucial role of an industrial city:** *"Ghent's Industrial*

*Revolution was not based on coal, steel and glass, it was textile production that put the city again on the map."*<sup>20</sup>

The production of cloths in Ghent was very productive and it had to required the collaboration of specialized groups of craftsmen.

In this situation Ghent's population increased again: about 51,000 inhabitants.

Because of the extremely high density workers' districts the city was transformed and developed in courtyards between existing buildings.

*"Scarcity of space caused the emergence of narrow dead-end alleys with small terraced houses composed of one single room per floor, sharing three walls with the neighbours, and no private sanitary facilities: the number of these so-called "beluiken" increased rapidly."*<sup>20</sup>

The city of Ghent, after the construction of the first rail station, adopted some changes: the surroundings of the railway terminus were redesigned with new boulevards and squares which gave more light and air.

In 1827, the **Commercial Dock** was built and became the new Ghent seaport.

In 1913 the World Exhibition gave to the city the opportunity to be renovated and Ghent had the strength to attract the Expo and to start with some cultural and social renovations of the historical city.

The twentieth century was dominated by a working class emerged who was a socialist labour movement in Flanders. This cooperative society, called “**Vooruit**” developed into a conglomerate which included bank, bakery, a sugar factory, pharmacists.

This movement was so strong to erected two buildings in eclectic style in the city: the first one at the Friday market square and the second building in same style, was built in 1913 which got the name Vooruit and became an important place of meeting.

After 36 years, the architect Henry Van de Velde built one of the landmark building also known as the **Book Tower**, which is the tower of the university's central library.

In 1955 was constructed a high-rise district of the Water Sport Strip, called “**Watersportbaan**”, which is a big water sports infrastructure, surrounded by apartment blocks in a parkland.

The city of Ghent has a **strategic location** which allow the access to the sea, the potential of the port area and a great university which tried to be one of the growth pole of the city.

*“Patershol district had become the prototype of a gentrified neighbourhood, with streets dominated by picturesque facades and quality restaurants.”<sup>20</sup>*

In 1974 the commercial function of the city centre had an importance for the city who recognized them and started pedestrianizing some important shopping streets.

The population of the city had become increasingly heterogeneous: Ghent was populated by natives from the city, immigrants, students and newcomers from other parts of Flanders.

During the same period, the city introduced a **traffic circulation plan**, to prohibit traffic in the centre and to expand the pedestrian zone and to introduce a **bicycle network**.

In the 90s, the city decided to revitalize the field of social housing and a large number of brownfields were redeveloped which some of these into public and green parks.

*“In the densely built-up areas of the 19th century neighbourhoods, innovative revitalization projects were set up, in which homes were demolished only if they could be replaced by the same number of contemporary dwellings combined with a piece of public green space.*

*In the most southern part of the harbour, a new residential area is being developed under the project name “Old Docks”, where innovative architecture and high density aims at middle-class families who want to live in an urban atmosphere. But expanding housing supply also fits a sustainability discourse, since more housing in the city is hoped to discourage uncontrolled urban sprawl in the fringe while promoting ecological lifestyles. The relatively small ecological footprint of the urban population also plays a role in the goal to make the city of Ghent climate neutral by 2050.”<sup>20</sup>*

The city of Ghent is continuously looking for new cultural, social and urban improvements during these years according to the growth of population.

*“Urban developments are focused on finding a balance between tourism and habitation, on the architecture of the central squares, on bicycle facilities, on low quality housing in the nineteenth-century neighbourhoods and on the lack of greenery in the city. Since 2000, Ghent encounters population growth again, which is due to immigration and a slowdown of urban flight. Since the suburbs become more and more integrated in the urban agglomeration, it is clear that one of the challenges of the next decades is the intensification of supra-municipal cooperation, targeted on countering policy discrepancies and attuning urban service provision.”<sup>20</sup>*









**The Saint Bavo Cathedral**, photo taken from Belfry of Ghent











Belfry of Ghent





The **Coupure** canal









Watersportbaan



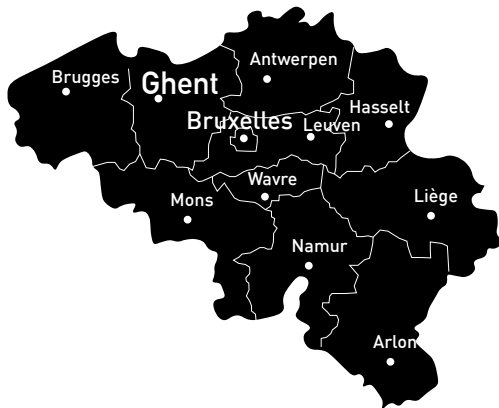






Patershol District

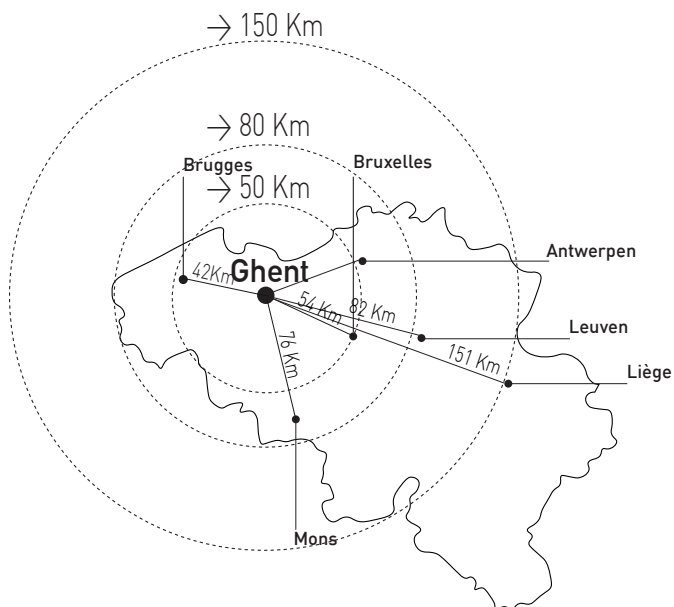
## 1.2 SPATIAL CONTEXT: THE STUDY AREA



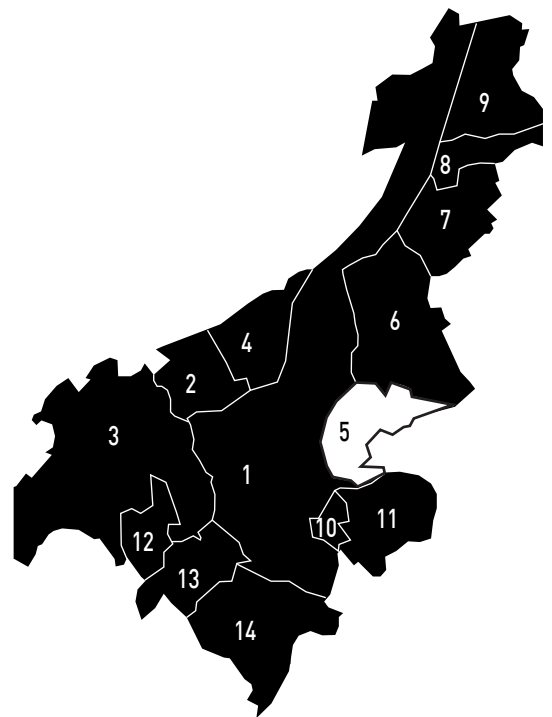
Ghent (in Dutch: Gent and in French: Gand) is a city and a municipality in the Flemish Region of Belgium.

It is the capital and largest city of the East Flanders, and the third largest in Belgium, exceeded in size only by Brussels and Antwerp.

Ghent is located in a strategic position: the distances between each cities are quite close.



The municipality comprises the city of Ghent (1) proper and the surrounding suburbs of Mariakerke (2), Drongen (3), Wondelgem (4), Sint-Amandsberg (5), Oostakker (6), Desteldonk (7), Mendonk (8), Sint-Kruis-Winkel (9), Ledeberg (10), Gentbrugge (11), Afsnee (12), Sint-Denijs-Westrem (13) and Zwijnaarde (14). In 2019 the city had 262,219 inhabitants and it is the Belgium's second largest municipality by number of inhabitants. The metropolitan area, counts an area of 1,205 km<sup>2</sup> with a total population of 560,522 that allows Ghent to be the fourth most populous city in Belgium. The area involved into my studes is the North part of the city of Ghent. The zone called Sint-Amandsberg is a quartier of the city. The municipality was formed in 1872 after splitting from Oostakker.



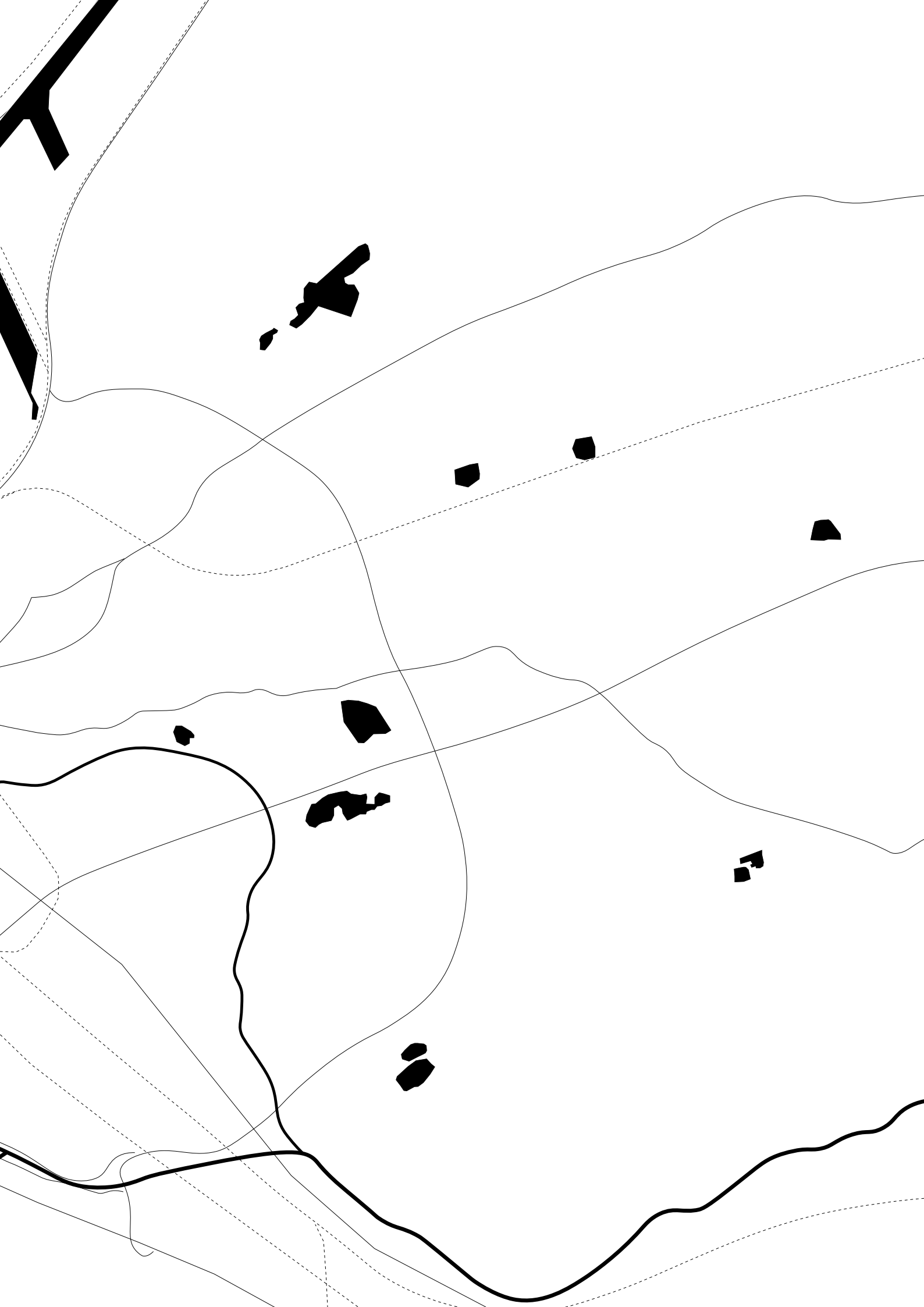




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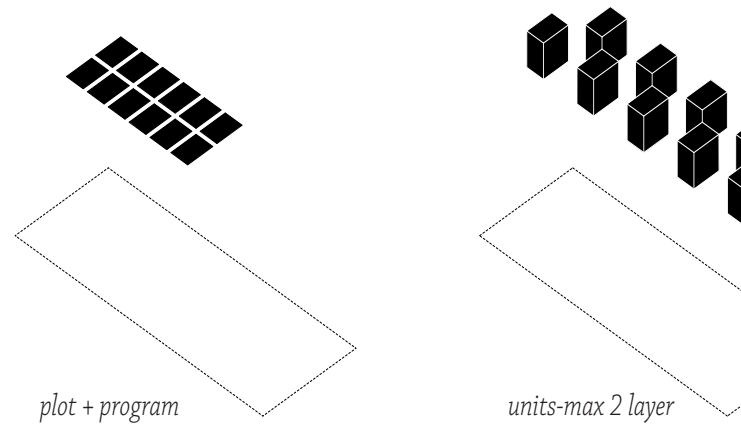
Project neighborhood  
Sint-Amansberg





## 1.3 COMPETITION GUIDELINE

*Study assignment of the competition for Robust houses from Facility Management Department in Gentbrugge*



The city of Ghent wants to appoint a designer for the total design (buildings + environment) of **11 robust homes + 1 management unit**, on a plot located in Hogeweg 96 in 9040 Sint-Amandsberg - Ghent.

The plot is composed by a post office on the left and to the right and behind the plot are allotment gardens. There is an outdoor sports field on the other side of the street.

The city of Ghent is currently working on a framework for the realization of sustainable (permanent) housing solutions for long-term homeless people.

An important part of this is the accelerated housing of homeless people in homes of the Ghent social housing companies and in SVK homes. However, such housing is not an (direct) option for some of the long-term homeless. **These are people (mainly single people) who, because of their complex problems (psychiatry, addiction and/or social), have difficulty in functioning in regular homes.**

The direct contact with neighbors - because of proximity and joint entrances, elevators, intermediate walls - leads to conflict, nuisance and unacceptable behavior.

In general, this concerns people who, because of their medical and social problems, need some **form of independent care living in a low-stimulus environment.**

In order to be able to accommodate this target group in a sustainable manner, the City of Ghent wants to focus on the construction of 11 robust residential units on 1 site of 1,300 m<sup>2</sup>.

These **residential units are small (min 40m<sup>2</sup>), as simple and clear as possible, and solidly designed so that demolition or destruction is minimal.**

The residential units are built and situated on the site in such a way that they offer maximum peace and seclusion for every resident. There are **no communal areas, entrances or corridors, so that the residents live completely independently** and do not need to have mutual contact. Each resident has their **own personal outdoor space.**

After completion, the homes will be managed from the Ghent Social Rental Office (SVK) and rented out under a regular lease.

It effectively concerns 11 individual residential entities that can be rented out separately. The houses are intended for permanent sustainable residence.

The residents will be offered multidisciplinary guidance so that they remain able to maintain the home, pay the rent, and possibly take steps in the field of daytime activities, work, personal network, integration in the neighborhood, and so on.

Residents may eventually be able to move on to a regular home, but there is no timing or obligation.

11 houses or units are planned on the site.

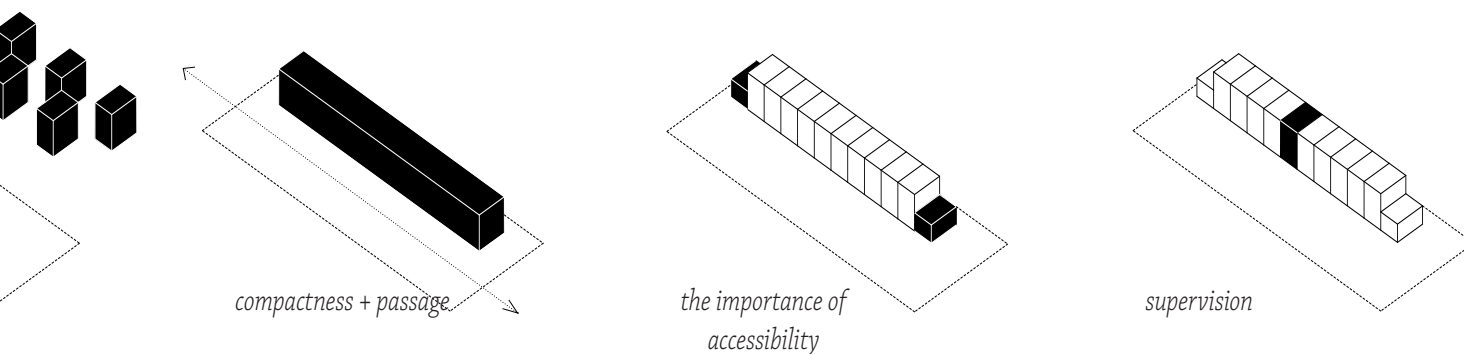
In addition, a management unit is also required, where there is work and consultation space for the counselor of the residents and a common technical room. In total there are 12 units or modules.

The houses will be positioned on the site in such a way that nuisance and social interaction between the residents is kept to a minimum, partly through separate entrances and maximum sound insulation.

The aim is **social peace and space per unit.**

In principle, separate units as well as coupled and - in extremis - stacked units (**max 2 layers**) can be built, whereby the above must be guaranteed as much as possible.





Within the financial and spatial boundaries, the designer looks for an architectural solution that can offer residents the necessary space and tranquility.

Each home has an individual outdoor space. Here, the social buffer needed between the different units is also taken into account.

The houses are accessible by accessible paths.

The designer examines to what extent the project can fit into the environment of the vegetable garden landscape.

Consultation with the relevant services is necessary for this. People who are housed in robust homes may experience moments of unusual behavior due to addiction or psychological problems. This can result in aggression towards the home itself. To anticipate this, the houses are designed in such a way that they leave minimal room for demolition. This translates into:

- No protruding, hanging, standing elements that can be pulled out or destroyed
- Maximum commitment to the incorporation of functional elements into the wall, floor or ceiling
- No shelves on the wall, but integrated niches, integrated shower (instead of separate shower tray)
- Smart development of necessary storage or other spaces
- Anchoring furniture
- No hanging toilet
- Use of robust materials: durable and very sturdy
- Simple and clear design without unnecessary details

Since the project is considered a community facility, not all housing requirements apply.

The designer must take into account the predetermined budget.

Costs can be reduced by designing the houses very smartly, compactly and clearly, as well as by working with repeated and / or mirrored typologies.

The city of Ghent attaches great **importance to accessibility**. The houses are accessible via accessible paths.

The designer is considering whether 1 or 2 housing units can be designed in such a way that they are **accessible for wheelchair users**. The budgetary impact needs to be assessed here. This option may or may not be further elaborated in consultation with the client.

This assignment also interfaces with the policy areas of other city services or external initiatives in the public domain. During the design process, the design choices are at least tested with the following stakeholders:

The licensing authorities (Urban Development and Spatial Planning Department, Fire Department, Green Department) will be asked to provide pre-advice in good time, in order to detect and remedy any bottlenecks in the permit application sufficiently early.

- The IVA Mobility Company is being consulted about the provision of bicycle and car parking places.
- The accessibility officer (Welfare and Equal Opportunities Service) will be consulted regarding accessibility and Universal Design.
- The relationship with the public domain is fed back with the Urban Planning and Spatial Planning.
- For utility lines and connections, consultations are held with the relevant network operators (Eandis, Farys, Aquafin, ...).
- Technical specifications are drawn up in consultation with the technical services of the Department of Facility Management and Digipolis, so that new technical systems to be installed can be easily integrated into the existing technical structures, within the framework of aftercare and management.
- The Service Company Social Economy (DBSE): already in the design phase.

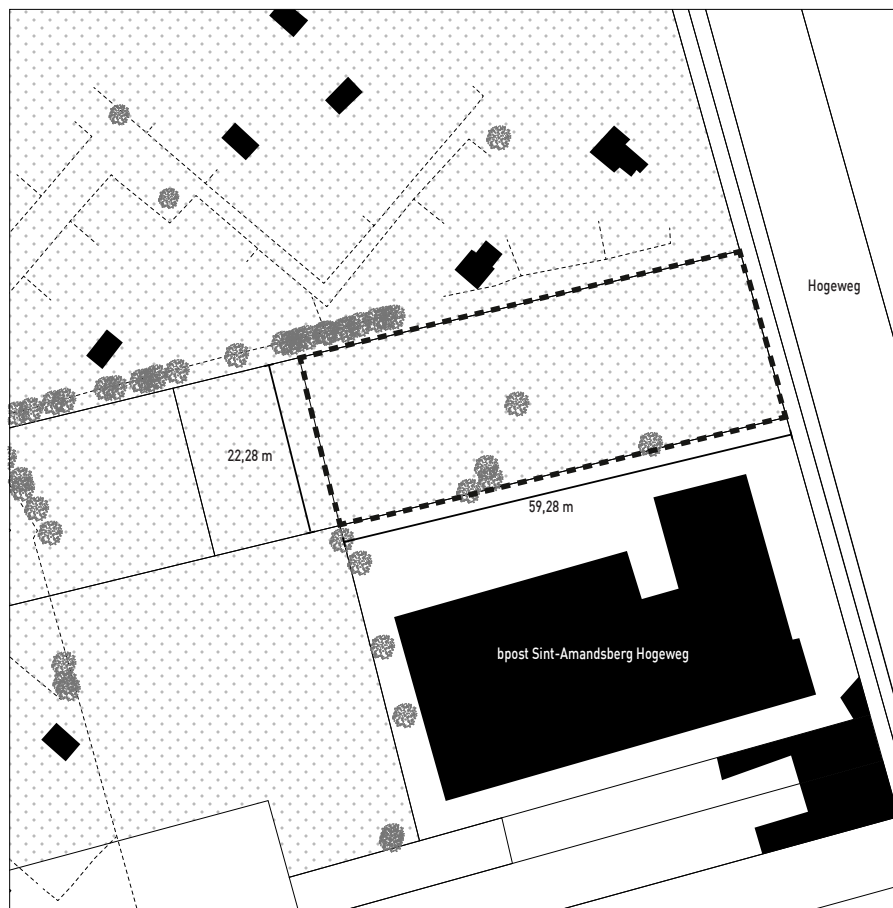
## 1.4 SITE ANALYSIS



0 20 40 100 m





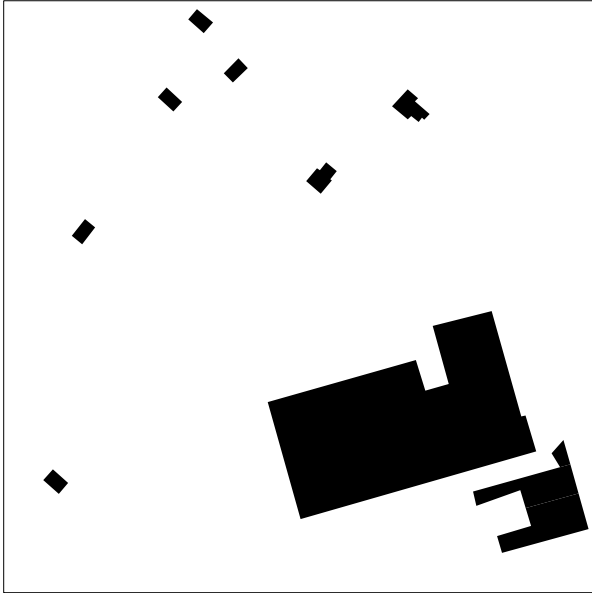


The project area has:

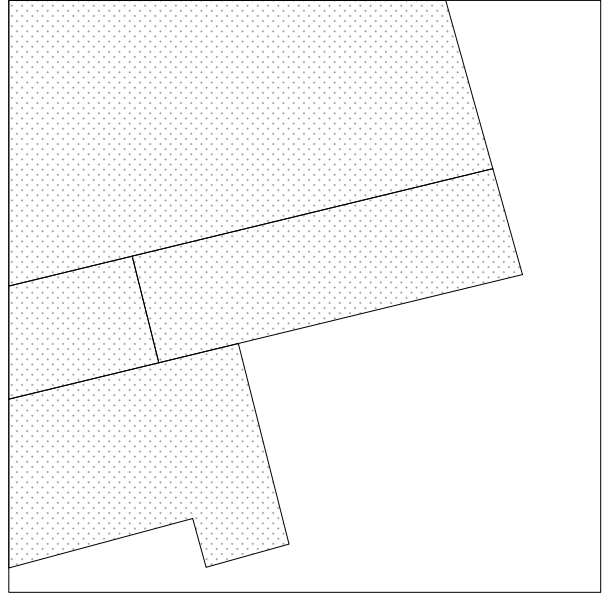
**AREA:** 1312,07 m<sup>2</sup>

**PERIMETER:** 162,35 mt

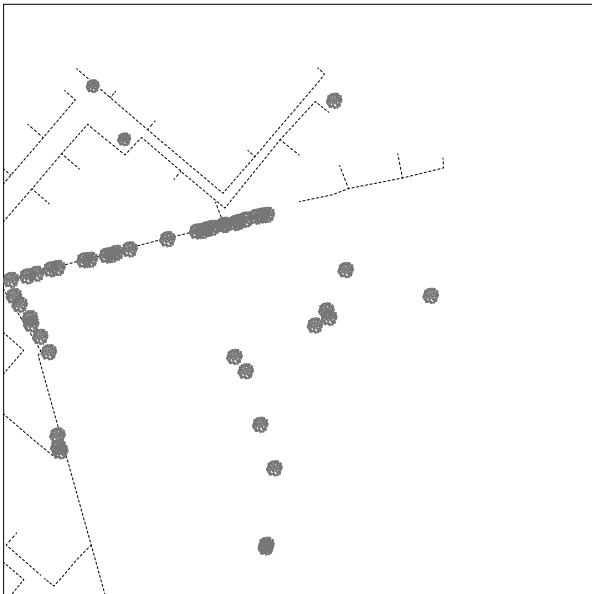
The measurements for the long side is 59,28 mt while the short side is 22,28 mt.



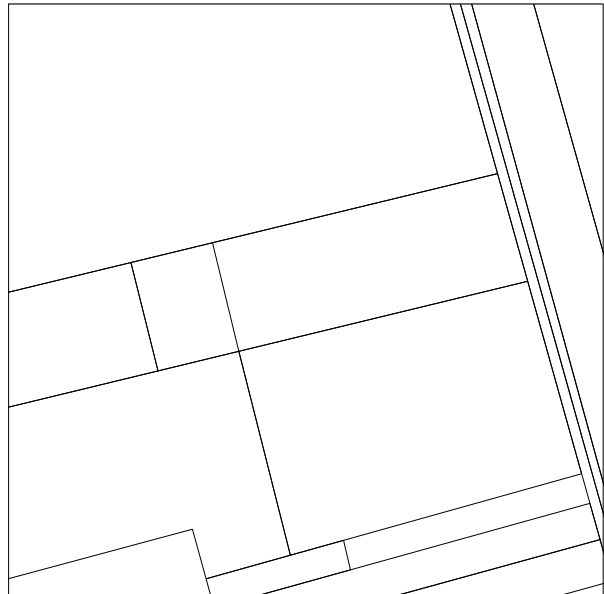
Existing building



Green area



Vegetation and paths



Administrative borders

## 1.5 REFERENCES

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

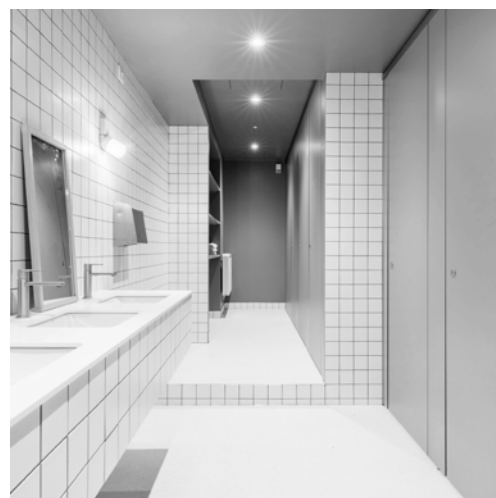
STEPPING STONES

Y:CUBE

“The hidden homeless will no longer  
be hidden but be staying within the  
center of a vibrant community rich with  
opportunity.”

Morris + Company

## SHELTER FROM THE STORM



**HOLLAND HARVEY ARCHITECTS**

LONDON- UK  
2019



*“Holland Harvey Architects transforms disused London supermarket into homeless shelter”<sup>21</sup>*

The shelter project, designed by Holland Harvey Architects, takes over a disused supermarket.

This project, called “Shelter from the Storm”, is located in Islington, north London.

This homeless shelter offers 42 beds.

*“The homeless sector was uncharted territory for us, so we worked closely with the charity to understand the sensitivities of the guests and intricacies of the charity’s operational requirements. We were shocked to learn that at any one time, up to a third of the guests are in full-time employment – the guests are ordinary people who want to feel welcome and safe.*

*Every design decision aimed to make the shelter welcoming and familiar whilst allowing for privacy and a sense of ownership wherever possible.”<sup>21</sup>* the practice said to Dezeen.

During the day the room on the groundfloor is transformed into a cafe for local residents: it is a motivation to have discussions between the general public and society’s vulnerable.

The idea of transparency is demonstrated through a series of expansive windows in the front facade of the building which allows people to look at the cafe area.

The interiors with the tactile materials used, evoke feelings of domesticity and warmth: the fixture in the bedrooms and the bathrooms are painted by a sea-green colour.

*“It was important that the shelter didn’t feel institutional so we carefully selected materials that were domestic yet robust”<sup>21</sup>* said the practice.

The walls, the prep counters in the shelter’s kitchen and dining room are coated of terracotta-coloured tiles.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/08/26/shelter-from-the-storm-london-homeless-holland-harvey-architects/>

## STEPPING STONES



ARCHITECTURE STUDIO MORRIS + COMPANY

LONDON-UK  
2014



A competition run by New Horizon Youth Centre and the London mayor's office had the proposal to reimagine the disused York Road tube station as housing for the city's homeless.

This competition has been won by Architecture studio Morris + Company who proposes a project, named Stepping Stones, which transformed a London tube station into a co-living and co-working space for young people and hostel for homeless people.

*"It supports homeless young residents temporarily whilst also catering for a transient community of young professionals finding their bearings in London,"* said Morris + Company, which is led by architect Joe Morris.

*"Each resident is treated with equal dignity, and all living spaces have been designed to follow the same 'ingredients for living.'"*<sup>22</sup>

# Y:CUBE



**ROGERS STIRK HARBOUR + PARTNERS**

LONDON-UK  
2015

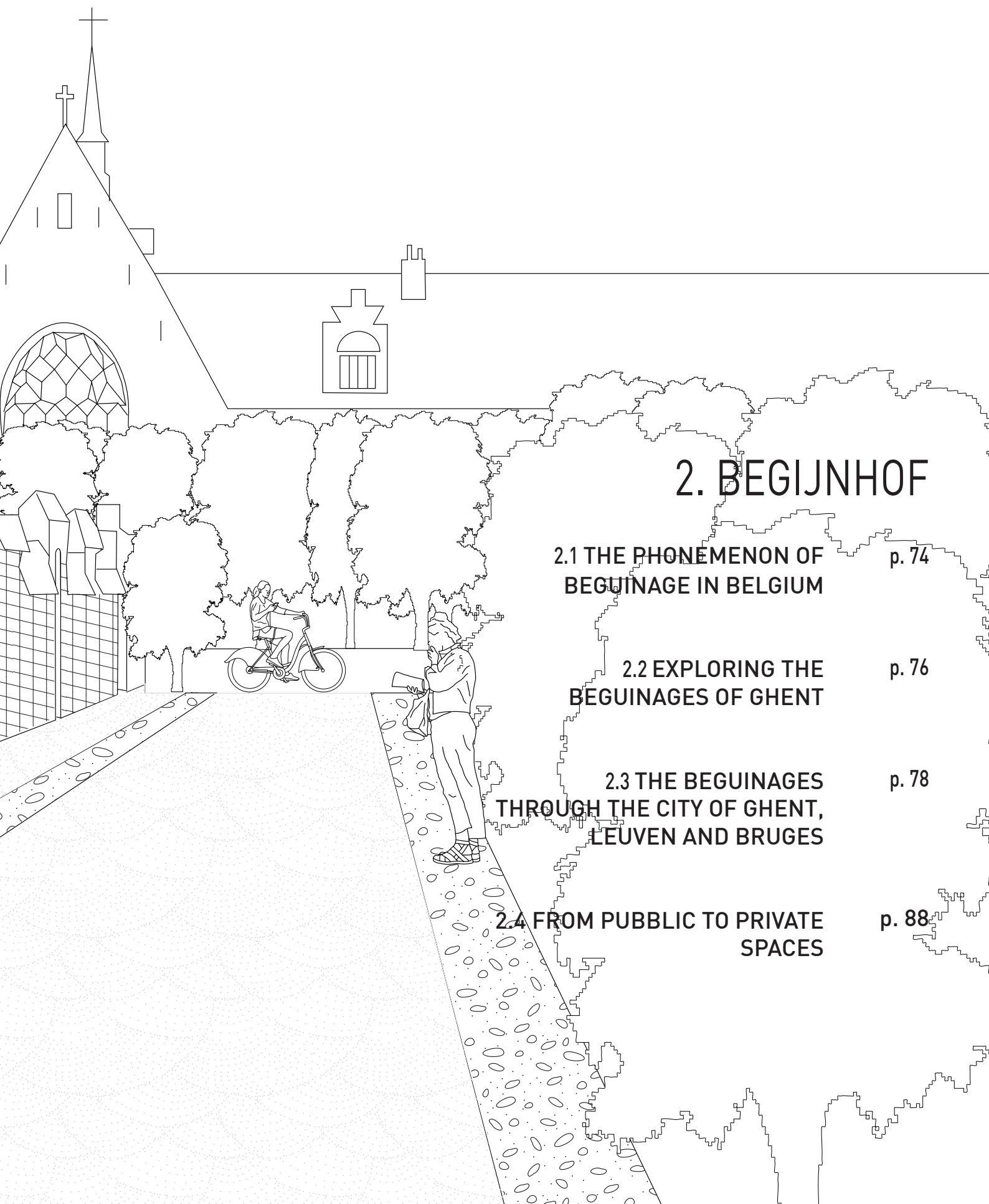
Y:Cube project designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners and promoted by YMCA, the world's oldest and largest youth charity, provides 36 apartments.

Each unit has a surface of 26sqm with 2.5m ceiling heights and full height glazing. They are built with high quality, eco-efficient materials to guarantee insulated accommodation.

The typology used is a pre-constructed modular system which it is completely flexible to the size and space available, also for tight urban areas.

The flexibility of the project is shown by the 'plug and play' approach: this method allows the connection of water, heating and electricity of one unit to the existing facilities or to other apartments on the site.





## 2. BEGIJNHOF

### 2.1 THE PHENOMENON OF BEGUINAGE IN BELGIUM

p. 74

### 2.2 EXPLORING THE BEGUINAGES OF GHENT

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### 2.3 THE BEGUINAGES THROUGH THE CITY OF GHENT, LEUVEN AND BRUGES

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### 2.4 FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE SPACES

p. 88



## 2.1 THE PHONEMENON OF BEGUINAGE IN BELGIUM

The term **Beguinage** - in Dutch "Begijnhof" - refers to an architectural complex which was built for lay religious women who lived in northern part of Europe without taking vows or retiring from the world.

During the 13th century the béguinages were founded as an architectural ensembles composed of a courtyard encircled by small houses which were surrounded by a wall and isolated from the city by one or two doors; in some of these cases there was a church in the middle of the courtyard or integrated with the houses.

According to the Belgian historian Henri Pyrénées, this women movement was born from the disproportion in the number of women compared to the number of men caused by the death of a huge number of men during the wars, military operations or other events.

For this reason a large number of women decided to unite and spend their life in a religious way.

The Flemish béguinages demonstrate a precise criteria in urban planning through the traditional architecture and religious style that reflects the culture of the time.

These complexes give the tourist or an external person the feeling of peace and tranquility but also a sense of community and respect for individuality even if they are located a few kilometers from the historic center.

This architecture, which exists in each béguinages complex, is very precise and dictated by strict rules.

Each house is surrounded by a continuous wall with few openings, the enclosed nature of the site reflects its original function to exclude the city.

This wall has the function of hiding the house from the outside thanks to its height which is

around 1,80-2,50 mt.

The Flemish béguinages are situated in 13 sites in the Flanders Region of Belgium and they have been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The 13 world heritage béguinages are in Ghent, Leuven, Kortrijk, Mechelen, Brugge, Dendermonde, Turnhout, Sint-Amandsberg, Sint-Truiden, Lier, Diest, Tongeren and Hoogstraten.

There are different sites of beguinages also in Europe but Belgium is the country which has a large number of beguinages which the most famous of them are situated in Antwerp, Bruges, Leuven and Ghent.

### The beguinage of Antwerp

In 1554 was built the Béguinage of Saint Catherine which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

This Béguinage is the second complex in the city because Antwerp had a previous complex in the southern part of the town, outside the city walls, which was remembered as the Beguinage The Hof van Sion (1240-1542).

The last beguine living in the complex of Saint Catherine was Virginia Laeremans, who died in 1986 but today the ensemble is inhabited by the lay inhabitants of Antwerp.

Crossing the late Baroque entrance of the complex, the visitor is attracted by a rectangular courtyard surrounded by 40 low brick houses and streets covered with paving stones.

The church of Saint Catherine, which is part of the Beguinage, was rebuilt in 1827 after its demolition in 1799.



### **The beguinage of Bruges**

The 'Princely Beguinage Ten Wijngaarde' was founded in 1245 in the city of Bruges and it is part of the Flemish beguinages registered since 1998 in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It's one of the most famous site in Belgium for its 30 white-colored house fronts, the church and the peaceful garden; it was founded in 1245 by Margaret of Constantinople, Countess of Flanders, and until 1928 it was the refuge of the beguines. Today it is inhabited by nuns of the Order of St. Benedict and a large number of Bruges women who have decided to remain unmarried.

on the ground floor to keep their privacy or sometimes large windows used to be hidden by an additional wall.

This community for unmarried and semi-religious women was used until the last Beguine who died in 1988 but today it is used as a campus or for housing academics.

### **The beguinage of Leuven**

The Groot Begijnhof of Leuven, which is located in the south part of the city, is presumably built around 1200 even if a Latin inscription on the church mentions 1234 as founding date. In 1998, it was officially registered by Unesco as a World Heritage Site.

The Catholic University of Leuven restored the small town between 1964 and 1989 through two phases: the streets were restored between 1960s and 1970; the church and some other street were restored in 1980s.

The Béguinage of Leuven, composed by 100 houses and connected through three bridges, seems to be a little town with houses planned along a network of narrow streets and squares. This case is in contrast to the Béguinage of Bruges where all houses face a central courtyard.

It is noticeable the presence of some architectural elements: few and small windows

## 2.2 EXPLORING THE BEGUINAGES OF GHENT

Ghent has three beguinages spread in the city:

1. the Old St. Elizabeth Beguinage
2. the Great Beguinage of St. Elizabeth.
3. the Small Beguinage Our Lady of Ter Hoyen

**1. The Old St. Elizabeth Beguinage** is a protected urban heritage site which is located in the northeast of Ghent, closed to the Coupure and Rabot.

The Béguinage was built in 1234 and it was founded in 1242 by Jeanne, the Countess of Flanders. During the Industrial revolution the city needed cheap houses for its increasing working force so this complex was used for the workers as their accommodations.

The Béguinage became a social housing area which had an image of urban decay but in the 20th century the town of Ghent and the residents started to renovate the area.

This urban neighborhood is commonly known as "Holy Corner" because of the location of four churches of four different nominations: the Roman Catholic Saint Elisabeth Church, which was originally the beguinage church, the Orthodox Church of Saint Andrew, the Protestant Rabot Church and the Saint John's Anglican Church.

**2. The Great Beguinage of St. Elizabeth** is located in the Sint-Amandsberg suburb, outside the centre of the city of Ghent. It was classed as a monument in 1994 and listed as part of the Flanders Beguinages World Heritage Site in 1998.

It was built between 1873 and 1874 on the abandonment of the Old Saint Elisabeth Beguinage in the city centre.

In fact, this complex were on site needed for

urban expansion but Engelbert, 8th Duke of Arenberg decided to built the Béguinage adopted the Neo-Gothic style of the traditional Beguinages of Belgium: each house is enclosed by walls, with niches holding saints above.

This community worked until the last Beguine who died in January and August 2003 and later the complex were converted to other functions, particularly for charities.

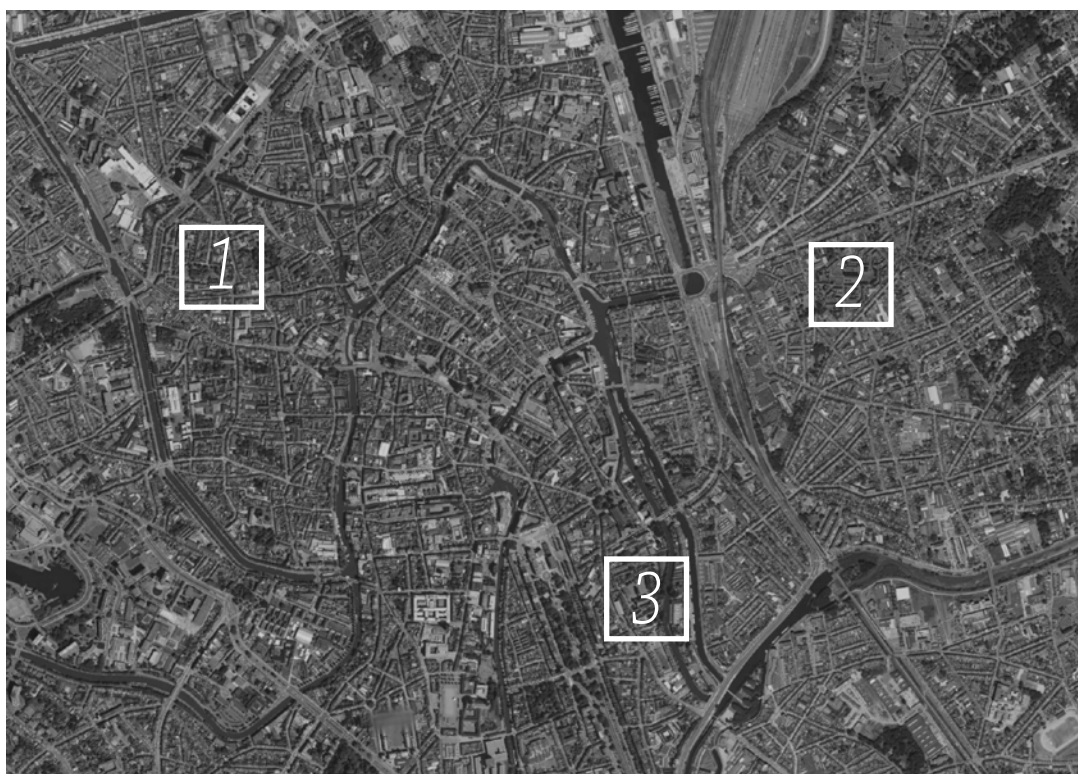
**3. The Small Beguinage Our Lady of Ter Hoyen** is located closed to Ghent Zuid and it is one of the two Ghent Béguinages listed as Unesco World Heritage. It was founded in 1235 by the Countesses Johanna and Margaretha of Flanders and was rebuilt in the 17th century. This complex is composed by a chapel, church, ninety houses, and other buildings.

The Béguinage was active until 2004 when the last beguine had to transfered to the monastery and leave the complex because of health problems. Today, some parts of the convent are used as art workshops and some houses are rented as private accomodation.

The city of Ghent has three important beguinage sites that are different from each other but where typical features of the architecture of the time can be found.

It is noticeable the presence of several architectural elements: the walls surrounding the houses, the church as a reference point and the importance of privacy that comes from the size of the windows. These three examples demonstrate how an architecture can take on different shades dictated by the culture of the time.

1. *Begijnhofdries, 9000 Ghent*
2. *Groot Begijnhof 67, 9040 Ghent*
3. *Lange Violettestraat 235, 9000 Ghent*



## 2.3 THE BEGUINAGES THOUGH THE

01\_ *Ghent* the Small Beguinage Our Lady of Ter Hoyen



02\_ *Ghent* the Great Beguinage of St. Elizabeth

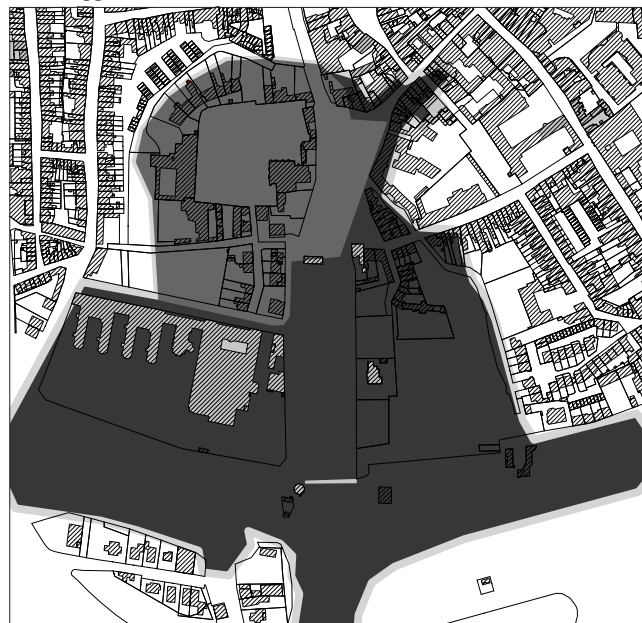


# CITY OF GHENT, LEUVEN AND BRUGES

03\_Leuven The Groot Begijnhof



04\_Brugges Princely Beguinage Ten Wijngaarde



- Boundaries of the World Heritage property
- Monument
- Urban site serving as a buffer zone







Ghent, The Old St. Elizabeth Beguinage









The Great Beguinage of St. Elizabeth  
photo: <https://visit.gent.be/en/see-do/great-st-elizabeth-beguinage-ghent>







The Small Beguinage Our Lady of Ter Hoyen





## 2.4 FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE SPACES

This architectural complex created for the beguines is the reference that we used for the project: there are a series of invisible boundaries and barriers between public and private spaces.

The idea is to start from the public street, enter into a collective garden, in various degrees, then in a walled private front garden, and only after these transitions through the front door to the living space.

This series of soft transitions ensures that there is a gradation and shade of external stimuli.

Each person can control the number of encounters at their own place depending on the zone they are in: this is the living modality in beguinages.

Privacy is very important: it is an opportunity to break with old habits, vicious circles and an opportunity to avoid stigmas.

The theme of the conflict is very discussed in this case: the conflict avoidance is already included in the social depth, but also in practical matters such as giving each resident their own front door on the ground floor.

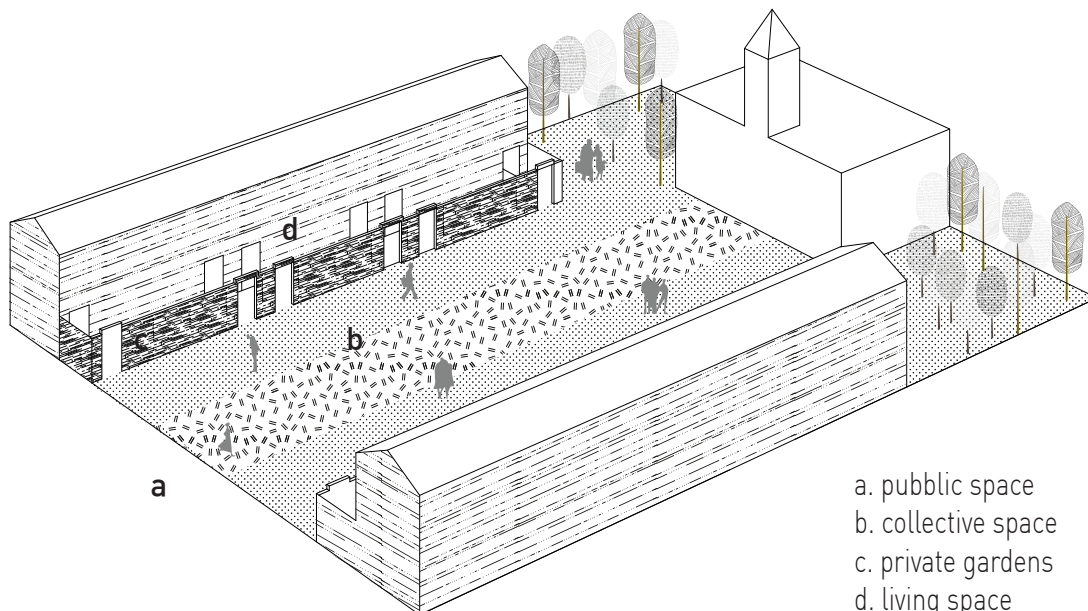
The invisible boundaries and barriers between public and private spaces are represented in this diagram to show the main idea of these borders.

The project wants to express a imaginary path that starts from the public street (a), goes into a collective garden (b), then in a walled private front garden (c), and only then through the front door to the living space (d).

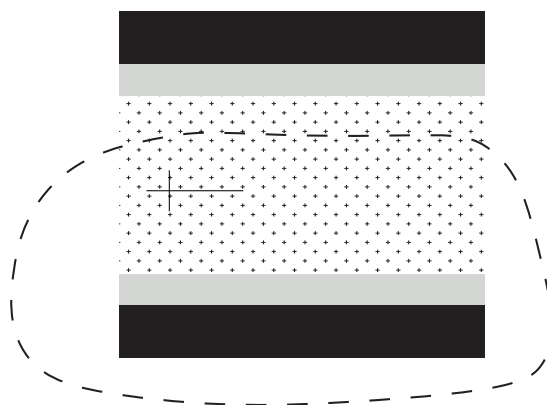
From this reference the main idea is to create a space of privacy for these people who are going to live in a quite area.

The privacy is an important element for them because each person could feel safe in their house.

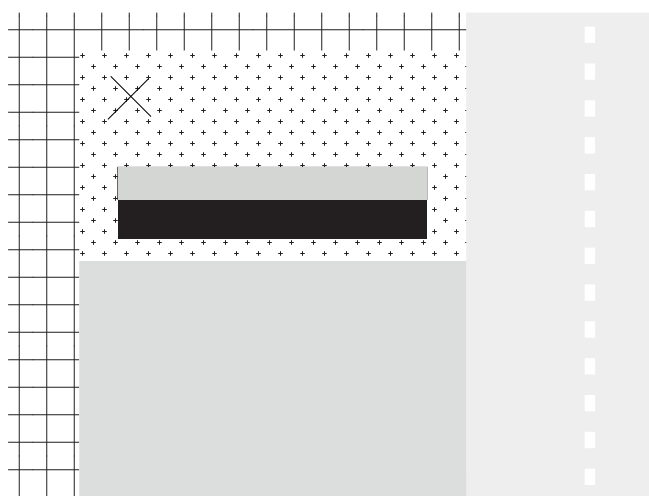
Go through a public space into a private zone makes people secure: living in a private units offer them a condition to do what they really feel.



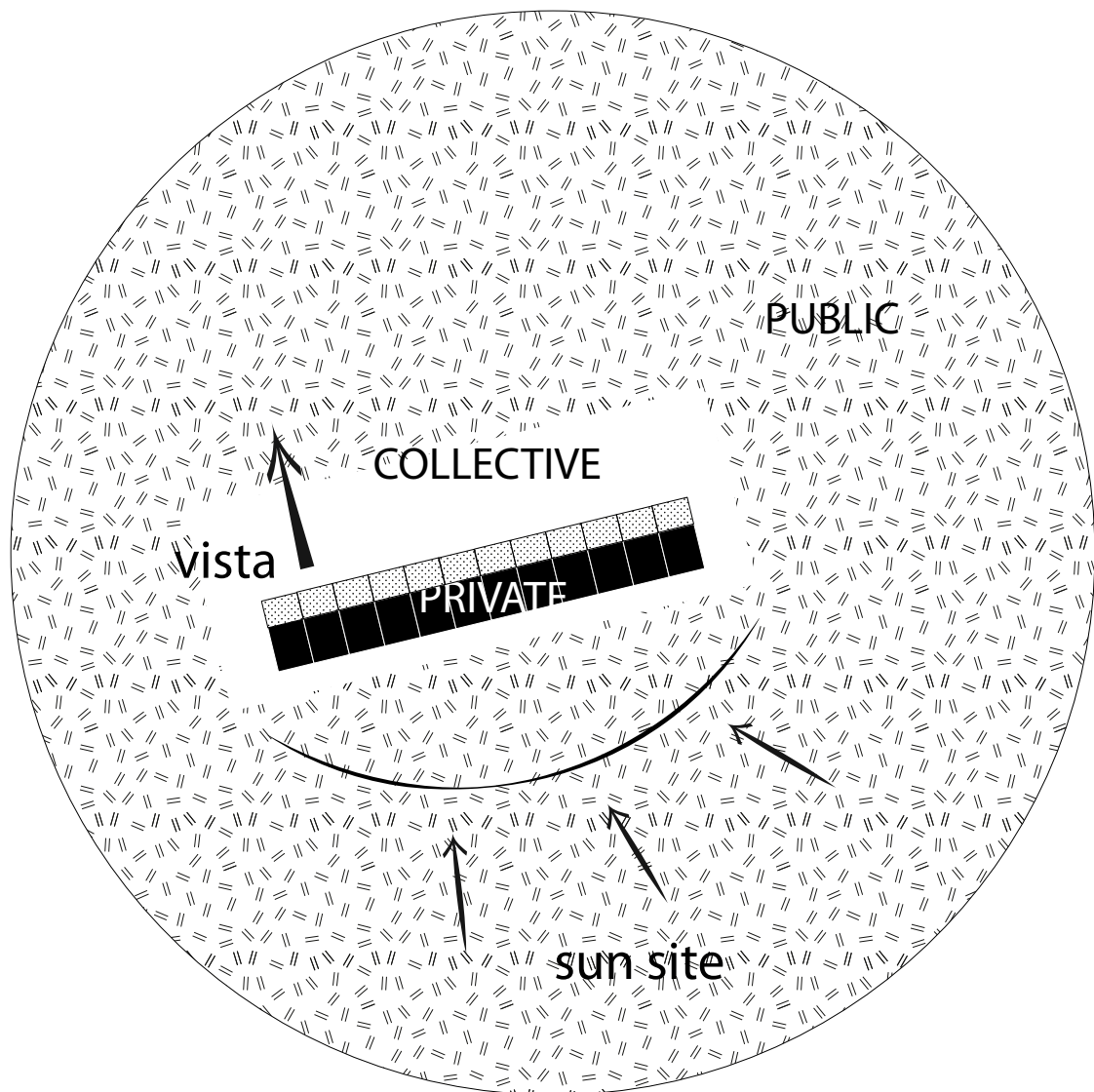
The beguinage typology provides a church in the middle surrounded by a green area and the houses with their private gardens.



The idea of the project, if it could be allowed by the competition, provides a pavillion/common space surrounded by a green area with the houses and their private gardens on one side.







car  
**PUBLIC**

open  
path

reunion collaboration  
sharing help assemble  
join group unit  
**COLLECTIVE**  
non cooperative corporate

common

**COLE**  
cooperative

house quiet  
**PRIVATE**  
ident pr

sure  
privacy unit resident  
secure personal

residency district

native

row houses

resident

house

area  
walling

citizen

quartier

# NEIGHBORHOOD

district

urban

loca

A word cloud featuring the phrase "GREEN AREA" in large, bold, black capital letters. Surrounding this central text are several other words in various sizes and orientations: "trees" (top left), "space" (top left, below trees), "roots" (middle right), "grass" (bottom right), "flowers" (bottom center), and "herb" (bottom left). The background is a light gray with faint, thin black lines forming a grid-like pattern.

trees

space

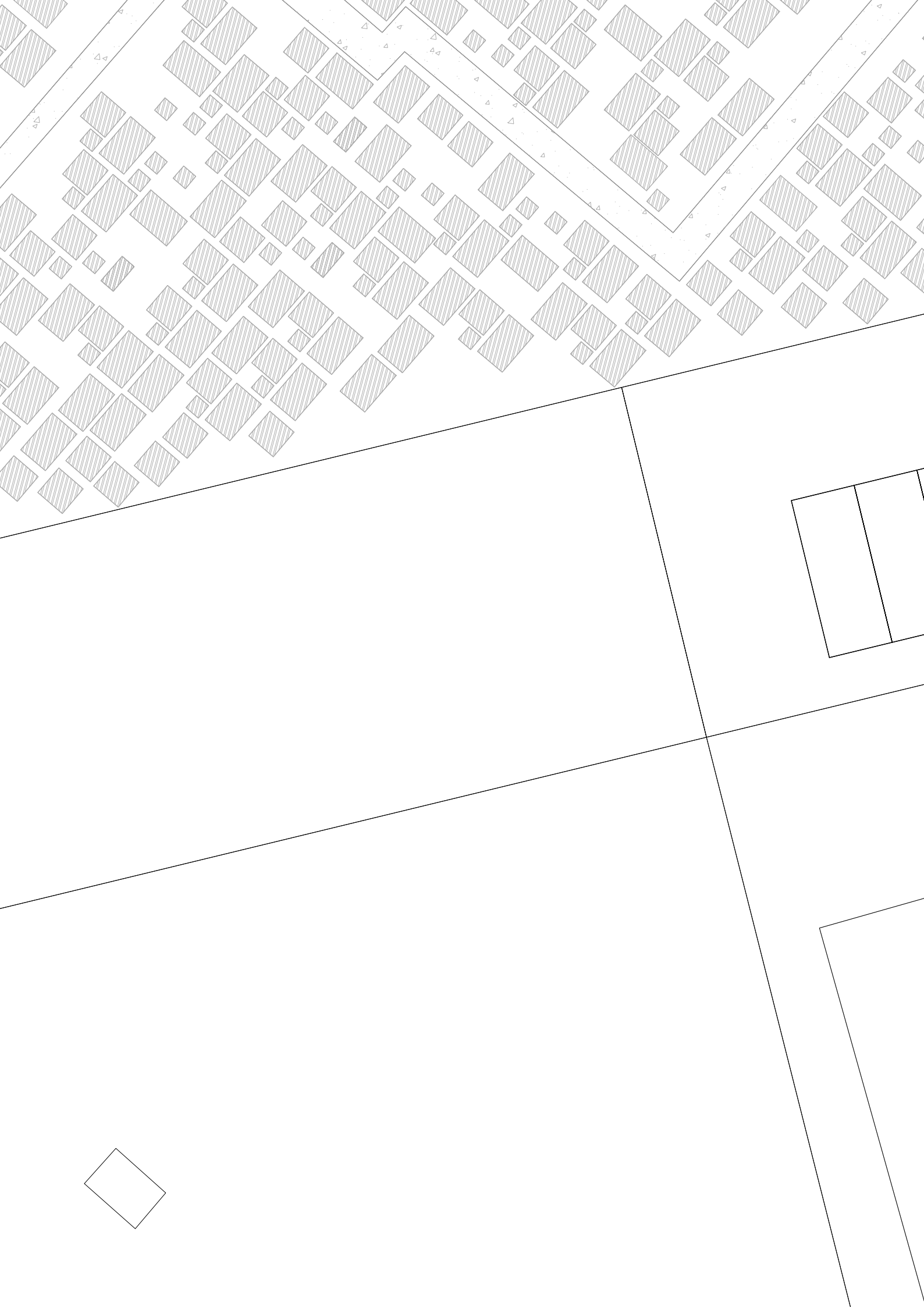
roots

greenery

flowers

grass

herb



The background of the page features an abstract architectural diagram. It includes a grid of small, hatched rectangular blocks in the top-left corner, a series of larger, empty rectangular blocks arranged in a row below them, and various intersecting diagonal and horizontal lines that create a sense of depth and structure.

## 3. THROUGH THE MODEL

### 3.1 THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT THROUGH THE MODEL

p. 94

MODEL A  
MODEL B  
DUPLEX MODEL

### 3.2 THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

p.102

### 3.3 DUPLEX OR NOT

p.103

WHY TO LIVE IN A DUPLEX  
HOW TO LIVE IN A DUPLEX

### 3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACES

P. 116

According to the idea of the beguinage complex, the project developed by using a model to find the final result.

The model was made to explore the power of the plot and to have the benefits from it but also to solve the problems that could be appeared.

The idea is to create different proofs in the area using 2 models of different size of blocks:

Model A. 10m x 4m

Model B. 8m x 5m

The main limit that we had to respect was the fire measurements: it was 4 metres from the borders of the plot to the walls of each units. It was a challenge in some cases because the plot is not so big and the single units occupied a large space in it.

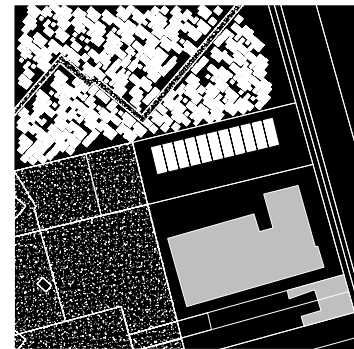
The first step was to using a scheme and to see what happened using the 2 model:

The scheme chosen was

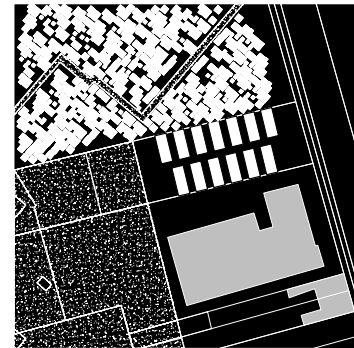
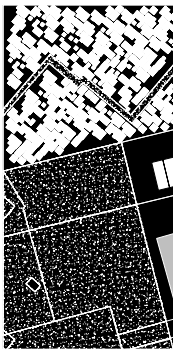
1. the north orientation
2. the south orientation
3. the split way
4. the 'U' model
5. the alternated units
6. the split units
7. the 2 blocks
8. the 2 floors on the long side
9. the 2 floors on the short side
10. the 2 floors split block

### 3.1 THE EVOLUTION OF TH

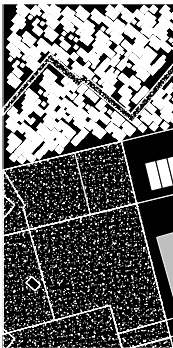
MODEL A  
10 x 4



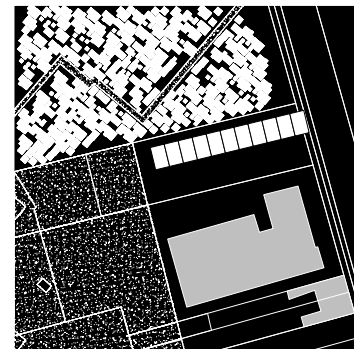
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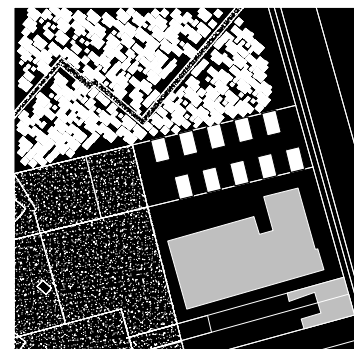
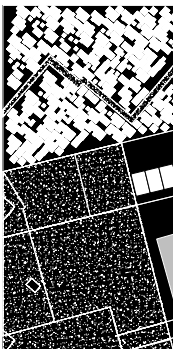
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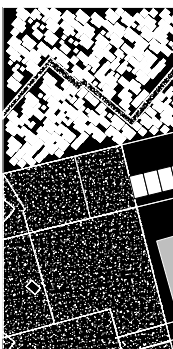
MODEL B  
8 x 5



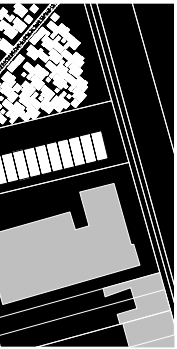
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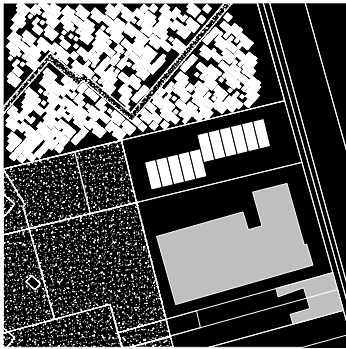
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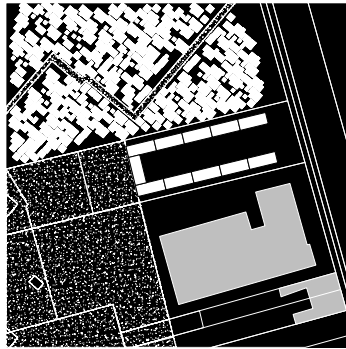
# E PROJECT THROUGH THE MODEL



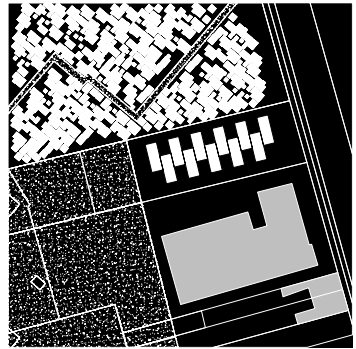
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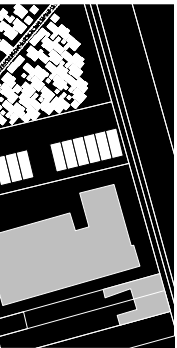
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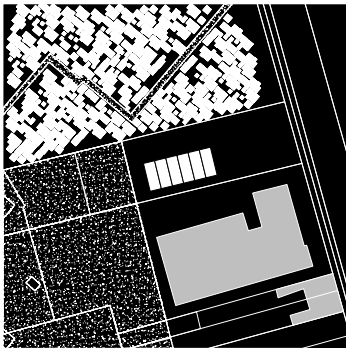
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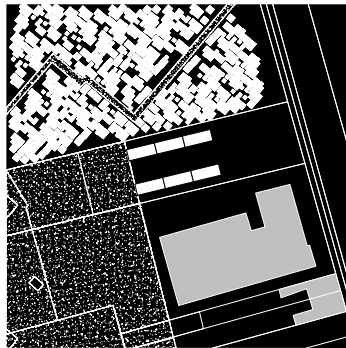
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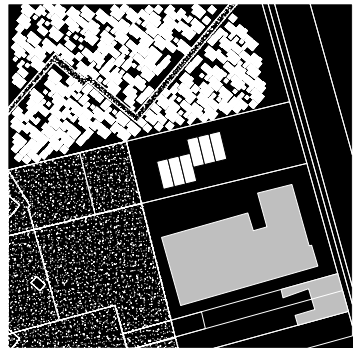
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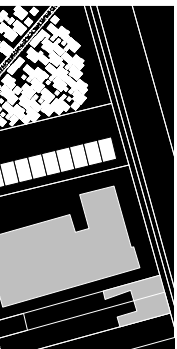
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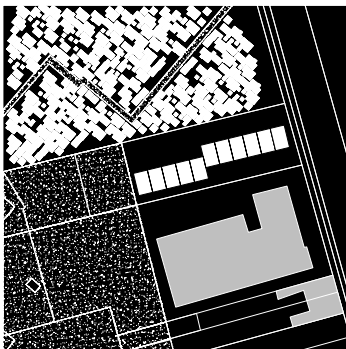
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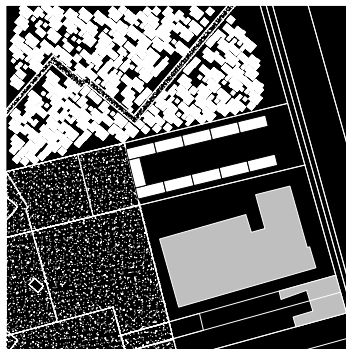
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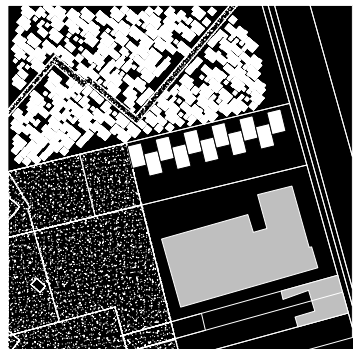
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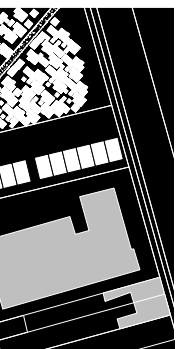
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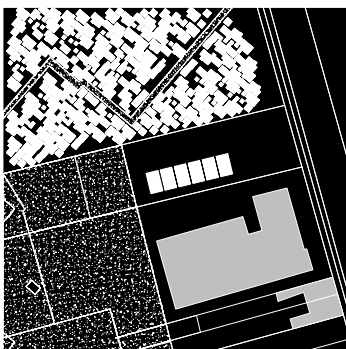
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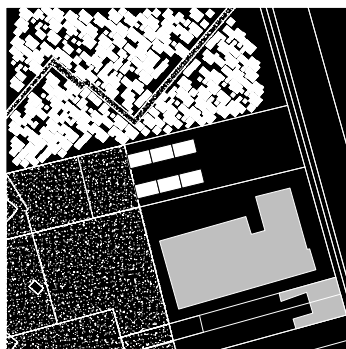
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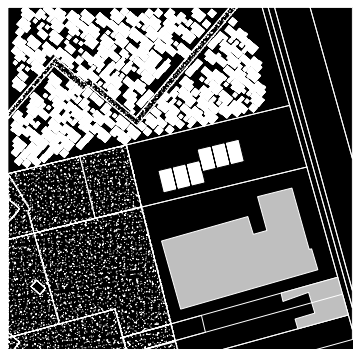
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8



9



10



# MODEL A

10 x 4

MODEL A. The first model is composed by 10 meters length and 4 meters wide. At the beginning the units were designed of 1 level and the last 3 proofs tried to create a view using 2 floors.

1. Compact model situated in the north side: this vision comes from the idea to have a relationship between the units and the vegetable gardens. This view was not chosen because it didn't respect the minimum distance from the north border for the fire measurements. (4 meters minimum from the border)
2. Compact model situated in the south side: the units located in the opposite side of the previous model was generated to have more green space in front of each house. The problem of the fire measurements from the south border was the same.
3. The idea to continue using the compact model created the idea to have two split blocks with two units close to each other but it didn't give any benefits to the new owners.
4. The 'U' model was a proof to demonstrate that it was not able to respect any fire measurements and it generates only a conflict area in the courtyard created.
5. The idea to split each units without separating

them was not approved because it generated a space where the owner of a unit could see what was happening to his/her's neighbour house.

6. This view used the same feeling of the previous model with a space of separation between each units. The space created was too small for a private garden and too big for an extension of the house.

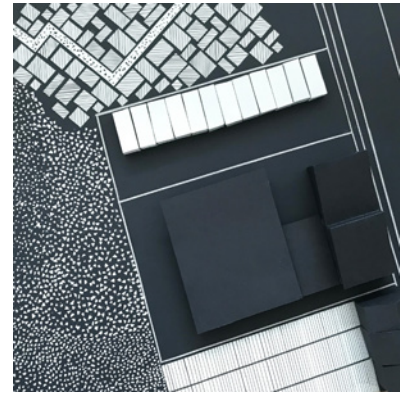
7. The separated blocks came from the idea to have a space in the middle. It didn't respect the fire measurements.

The decision to have 2 floors was born from the curiosity to have more green space surrounding. The model gave the feeling to have more green spaces than the previous proofs but the position of the units generated spaces between public and private that were not useful to be used.

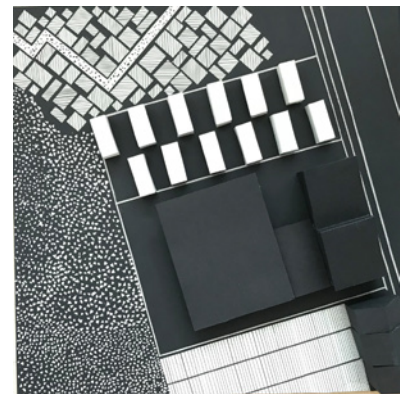
8. The model designed in the long side

9. The view projected in the short side

10. The split units



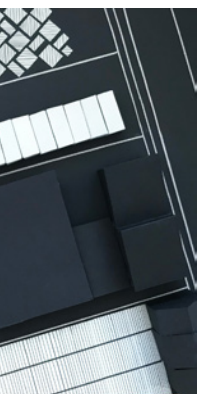
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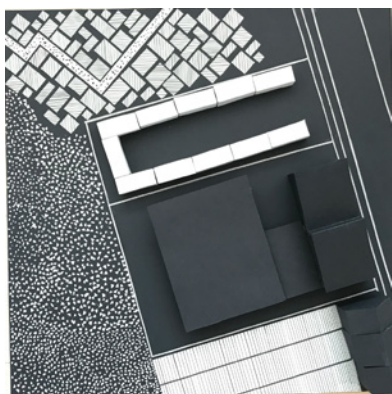




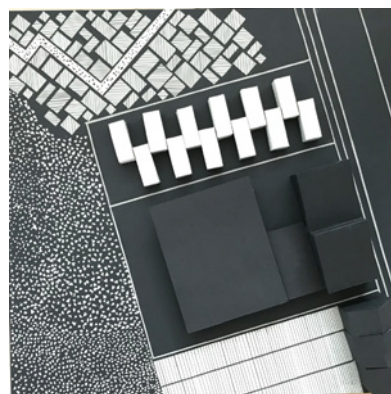
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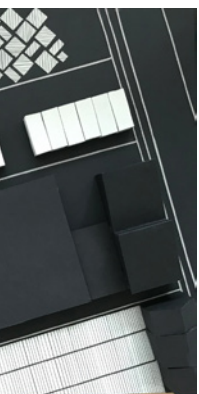
3



4



5



7



8



9



10

# MODEL B

8 x 5

MODEL B. The second model had 8 meters length and 5 meters wide. The strategy used was the same of the previous model but this view showed how the wide of the units changed the impacts of them in the plot.

Using the same method of the location of the units, we can notice a problem of space. Respecting the  $40\text{m}^2$  for each units we can use only the model with 2 floors:

The cases (1,2,3,4,5,6) had a unit missed because of the space: this model occupied more space than the previous one. The measurments 8x4mt are not correct to use in this plot.

The last 3 proofs (7,8,9) could be used to solve the problem of space but they were not enough for the final result.



1



6





2



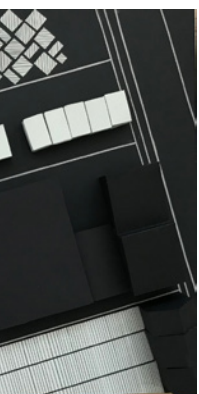
3



4



5



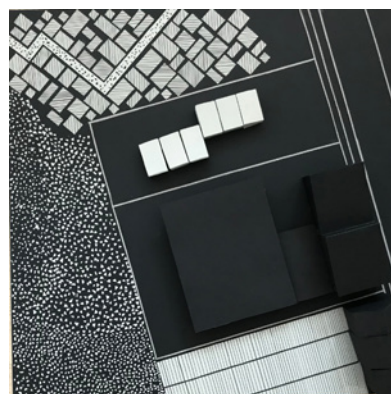
7



8



9



10

# D U P L E X

6 x 4

DUPLEX MODEL . Beacuse of the limted space in the plot, the project turns to the duplex model: the physical model was used to demostate how this kind of housing had more benefits than the previous models.

Each single duplex: is sourrounded by more green space and has its own privacy: The private gardens are thought as a private space where each person could stay in peace with him/herself.

The main idea is to create a compact block where each unit could stay together under the same roof but, at the same time, it could have a private situation to live alone.

The research through the model was used to find the right plans. It is guided by the concept of being in a space, sourrounded bu green area to feel the quality of living. A quality that is born and derives from the relationship between architecture, design and landscape to create a vision from the residential to the urban scale.

The study concerned the footprint of the units and the impact of these on the area.

The main goals were the vista, the light and a very positive feeling of the green zone of the project.



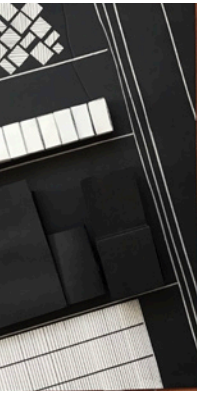
1



6







2



3



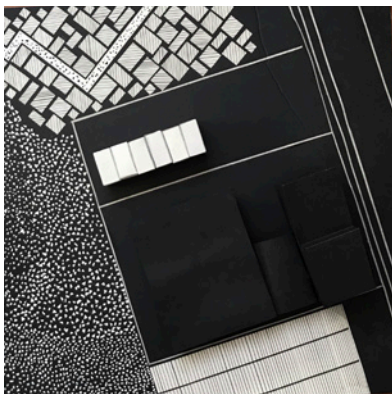
4



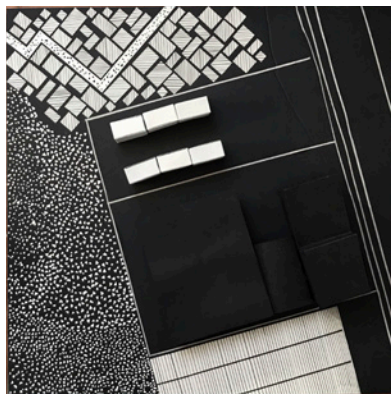
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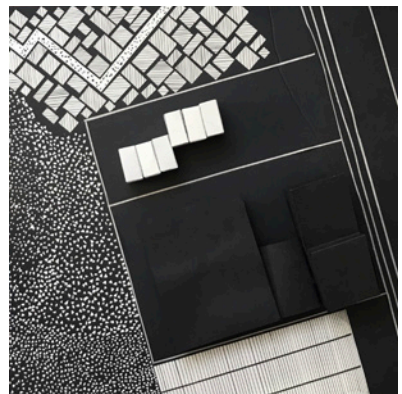
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8

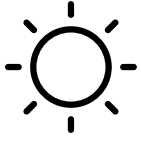


9



10

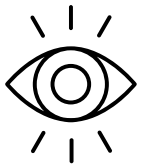
## 3.2 THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT



The **light** is one of the most important elements of the project: the idea is to have as much light as possible inside of each unit catching the sun light from the top level and bringing it down to the groundfloor.



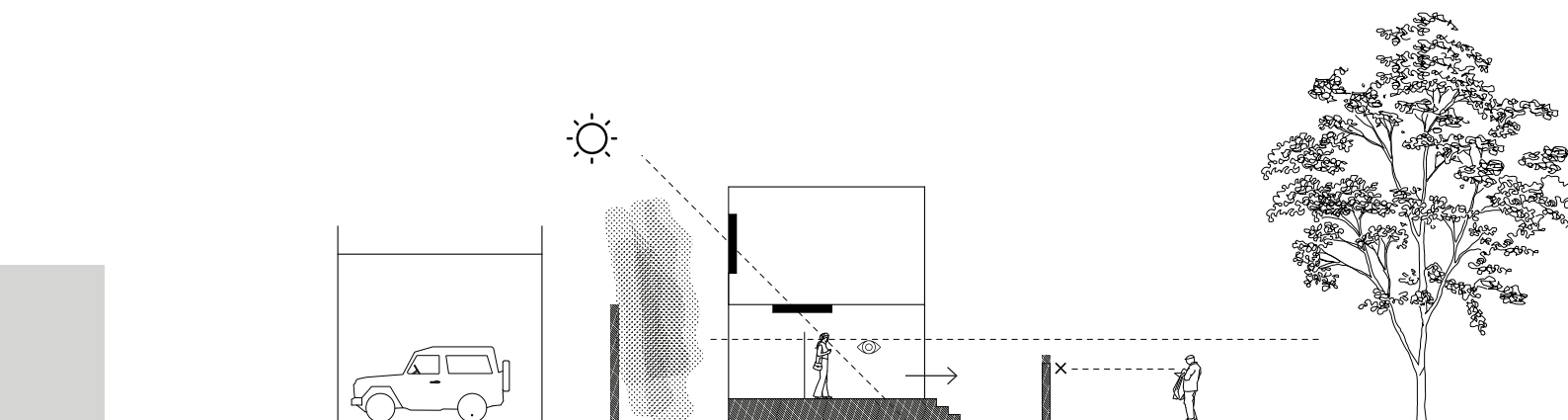
The **wall** in front of each units makes the feeling of being secure and safe for people who live inside of their houses but at the same time the 'barrier' prevents people outside from seeing them.



The **vista** offered by the landscape is important to make people feel free and green. This benefit is provided by the greenery on the south side and the vegetables garden in front of each units. This element is made by the 3 steps at the entrance that allows people to see outside.



The relationship between each unit and the **private garden** seems to be an ecotherapy as being associated with the relationship between a healthy environment and the person.

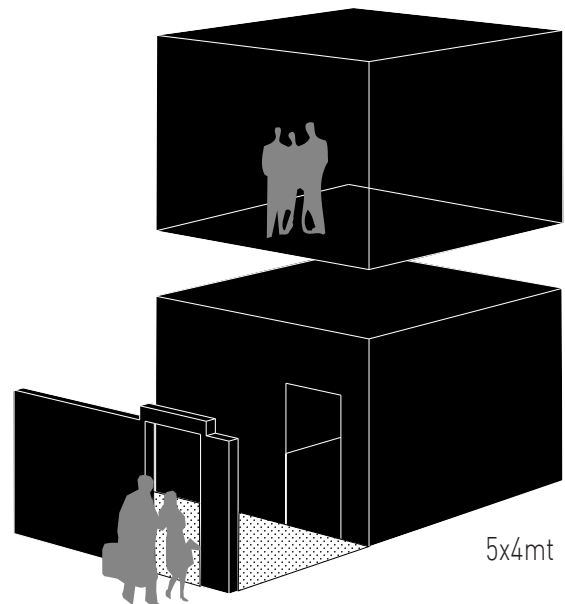


### 3.3 DUPLEX OR NOT?

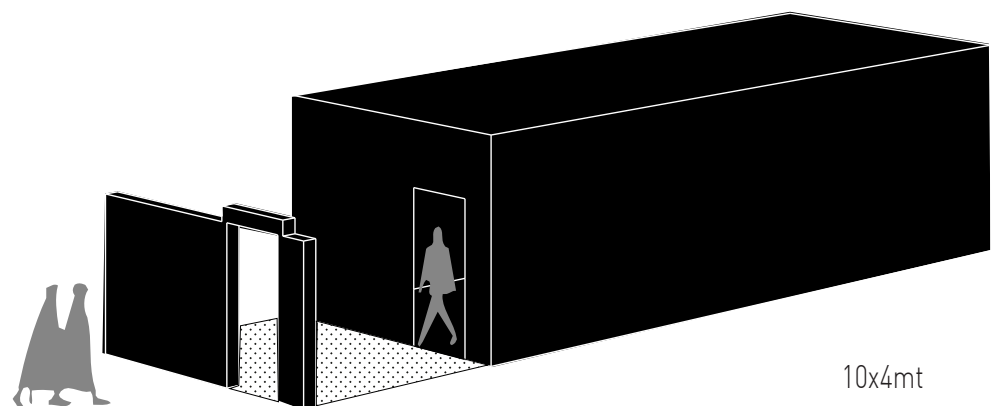
The study between using the duplex or not was very hard and the final result was influenced by the footprint and the impact of the them to the area: the **duplex** was more useful for having more green space while having units of 1 floor involved a bigger spaces that sometimes it was not enough to have all the units.

The reason why it was selected a duplex typology for the houses was not only for a problem of space but also for having more light from the top to the groundfloor and more privacy for the people: this benefit is very important for those people because they could have a collective space on the level 0 and a private space on the top.

## DUPLEX



## OR not







# WHY TO LIVE IN A DUPLEX

Each units are composed by two floors which create an imaginary and very important division between the public-collective and collective-private spaces.

The main idea is to create different spaces in each house where the resident could feel secure and safe.

All units have a private garden, a living room with the kitchen, the bedroom and the bathroom.

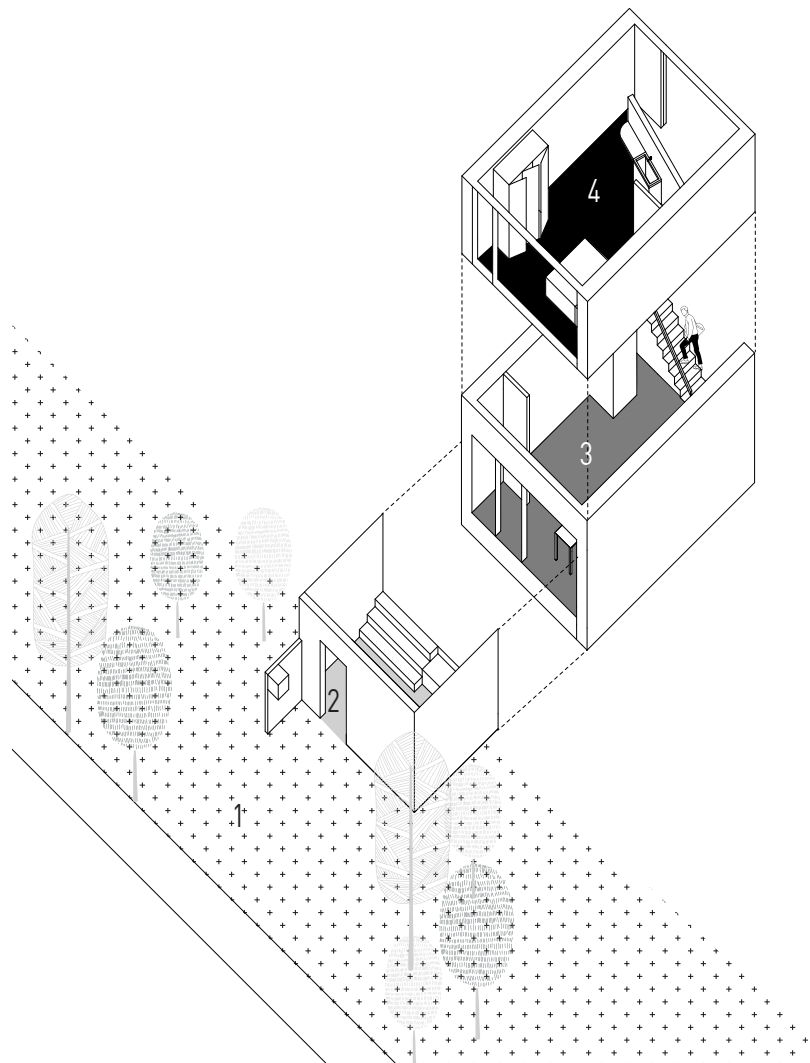
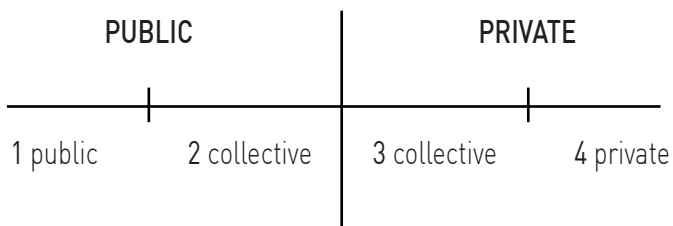
The staircase divides two spaces : the ground to the first floor.

The groundfloor is conceived to be the public space, where the owner could invite his/her friend without staying in the private area.

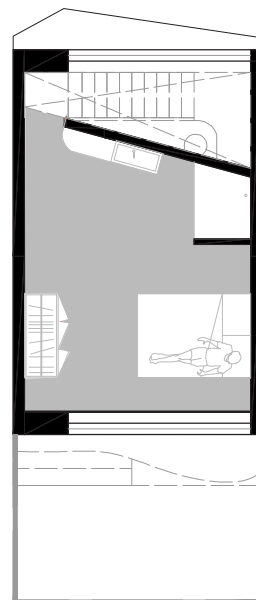
The first floor is conceived to be used only for the owner as his/her safe zone.

The competition aims for every home to have the following functions:

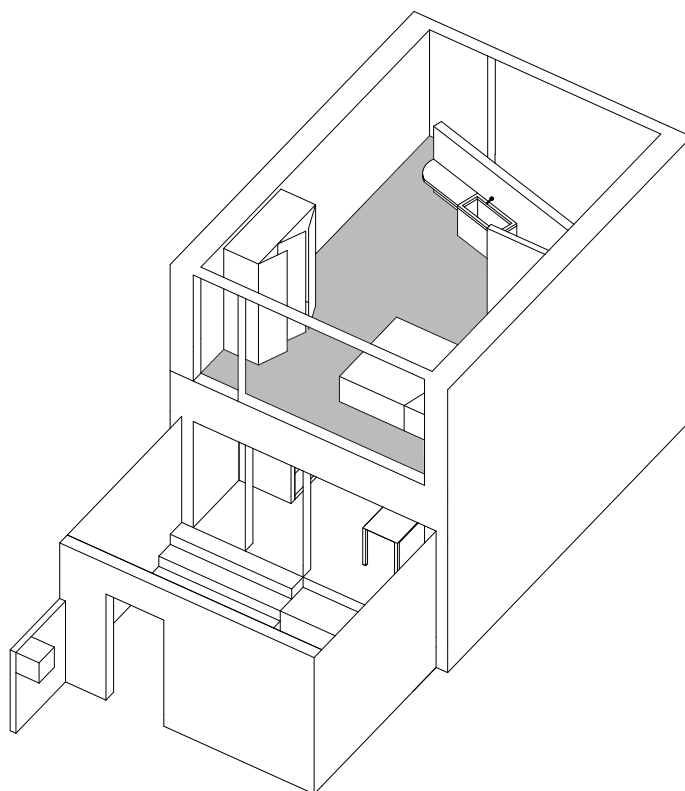
- Access
- Living space
- Kitchen with at least a cooking stove, sink, refrigerator and (microwave) oven
- Bedroom or space for 1 bed
- Bathroom with sink, shower and toilet
- Limited storage space (e.g. cupboard space)
- Limited space for techniques(possibly centralized from the management unit)



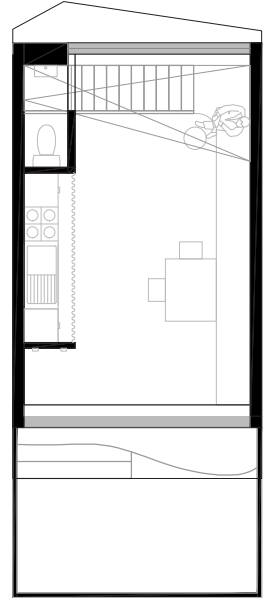
# P R I V A C Y



Privacy, in architecture, refers to design choices that give people a sense of security and privacy in a physical space. Particularly when designing residential dwellings, it's important to bear in mind that despite the importance of the materials used, level of eco-friendliness, availability of different amenities and luxuries and so on, a home at the end of the day is a place where one should feel safe in a private space.



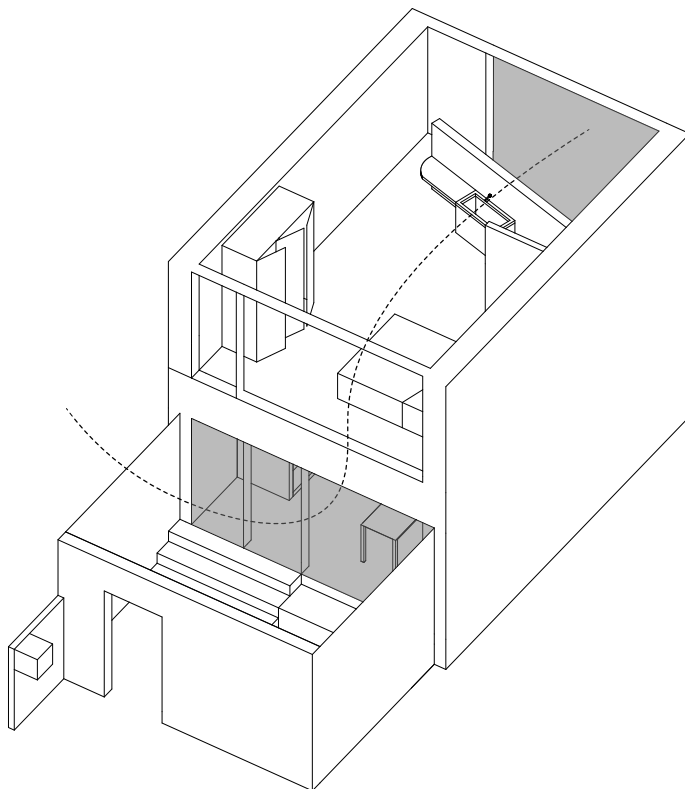
# L I G H T



The final result between duplex or not concerned a long study of how the footprint had an impact in the area.

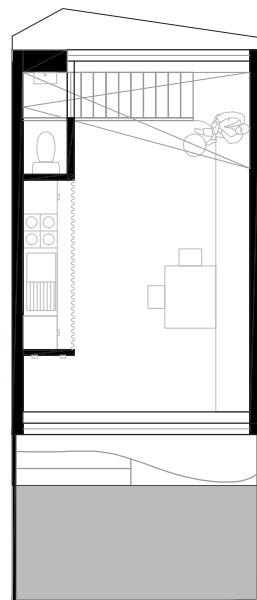
The distance had to be 3 mt from the surrounding borders and this was not allowing to have all the 12 units.

Some known aspects play a fundamental role on the psychology of the inhabitants: first of all, the presence of natural light is fundamental, also because an open window on the outside world is the expansion of space and induces the person not to feel oppressed by too small an environment.



G  
R  
E  
E  
N

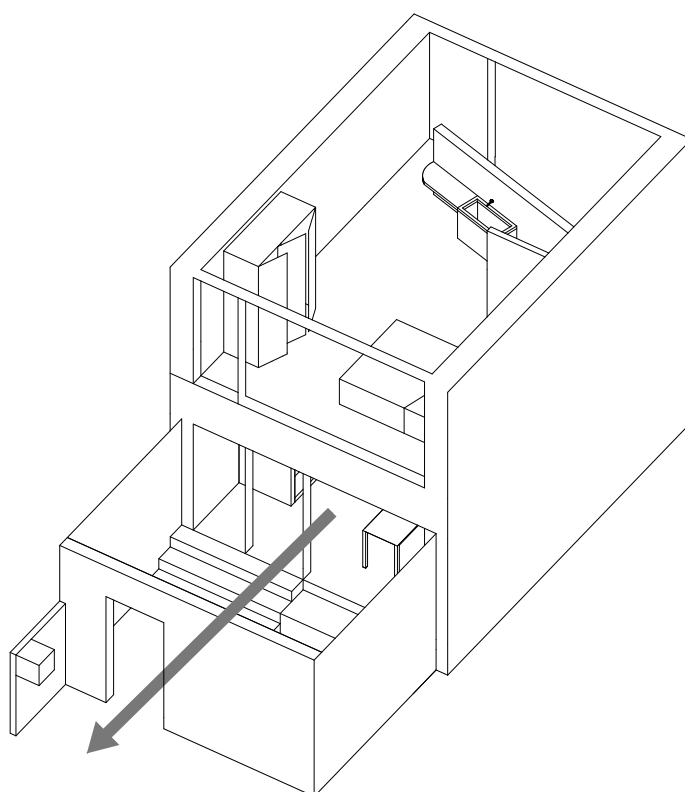
A  
R  
E  
A



The presence of green area is a benefit that each owner has.  
The green space is very important: it's a place where the comfort of the residents plays such a crucial role.

The presence of openings in each units allow the intake of natural light and air: windows are in the front facade to allow the perception of the green from the vegetables garden but they are also in the back side so residents could look at the greenery.

The main idea to be surrounded by green area is to give people the feelings of freedom and security.



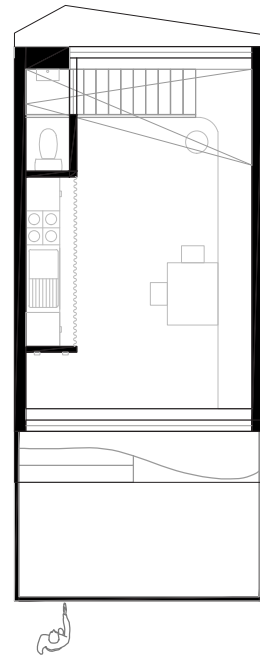




# HOW TO LIVE IN A DUPLEX

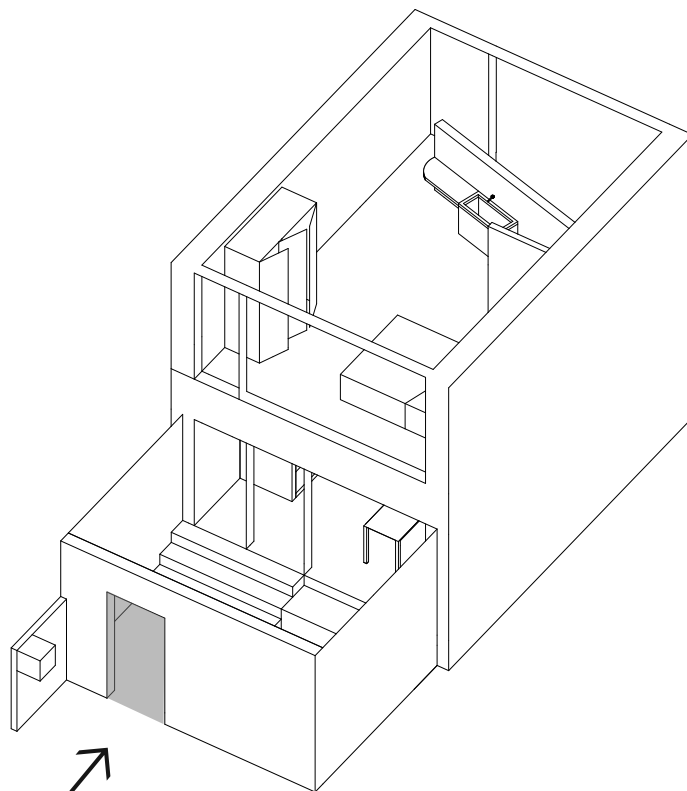
the house explains the domestic spaces in its basic elements. the goal is to create more space through the elimination of partitions, the use of curtains and the presence of staircase to divide the habitat.

# ENTRANCE

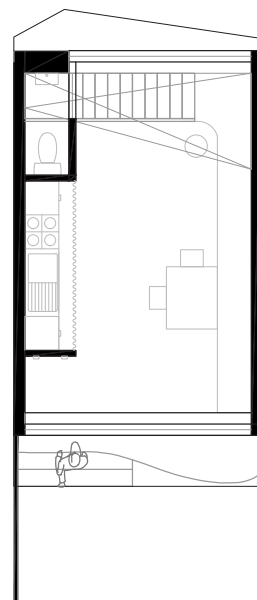


Each units are provided with two entrances: the first one from the 'wall' at the front side -refers from the begijnhof model- and the second one is the door to enter into the house.

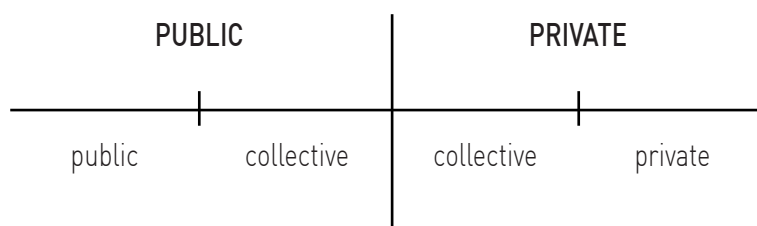
This double entrance gives dwellers the feeling to be more secure and in a safe zone. It also gives the idea to stay in a private house although they are in a unique building.



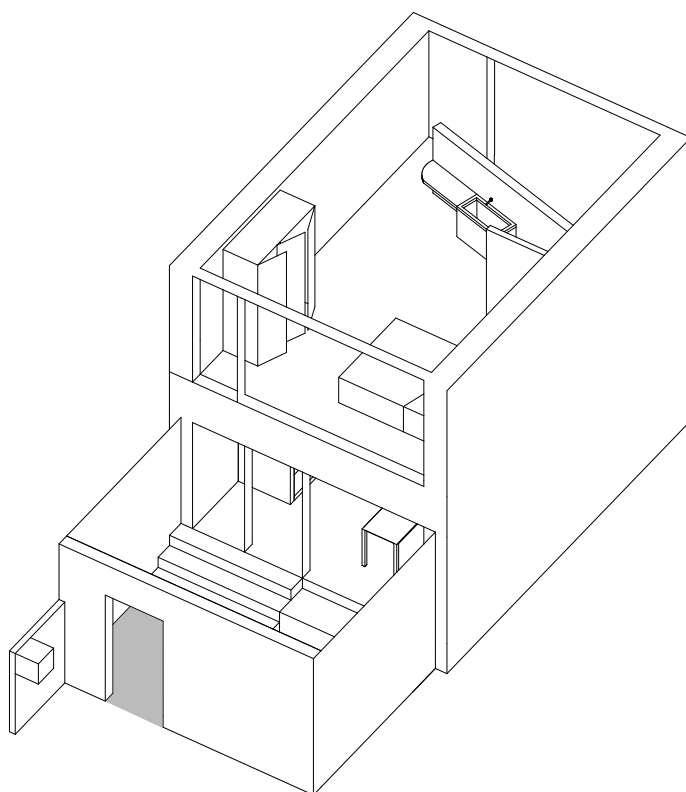
# P R I V A T E G A R D E N

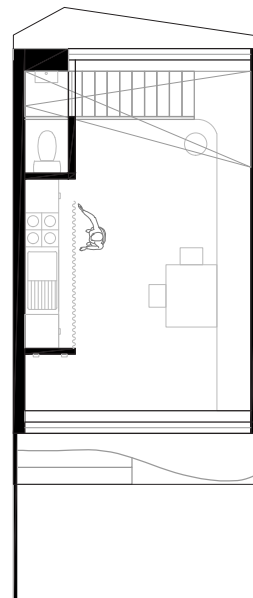


The private garden in front of the house is conceived to have a private but open space where the owner can benefit of this green space. It's a space used to stay outside, having lunch or just spending free time. The private gardens are created according to the scheme below:



They are located in the public group into the collective space.



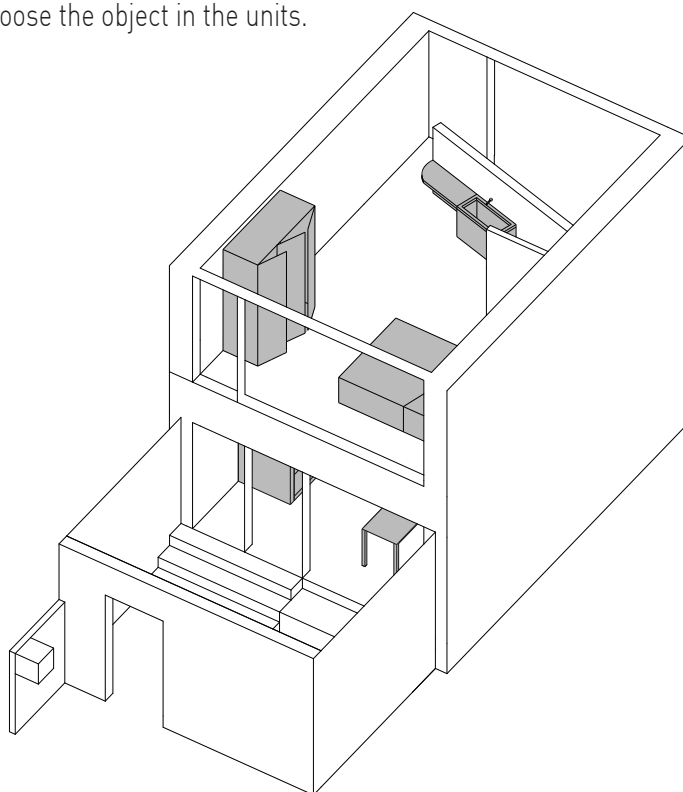


The idea of changing furniture for each unit makes people more free: it's a gesture of freedom that allows each owner to choose the furniture according to their own personality.

It's a simple concept because it involves only the different measurements of the tables and beds but it's enough for people to express their feelings.

The freedom to manage private space guaranteed to the homeless has a fundamental role in the recovery process: here the user will be able to rediscover his individuality and reconstruct his habits and his aesthetic sense.

The idea is to allow the homeless person to make full use of the equipment and furnishings provided in the room and specially to choose the object in the units.





### 3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACES

Each unit is composed by:

living room+kitchen

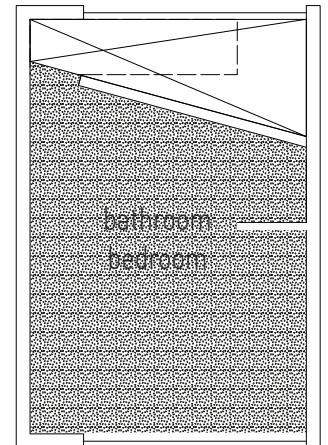
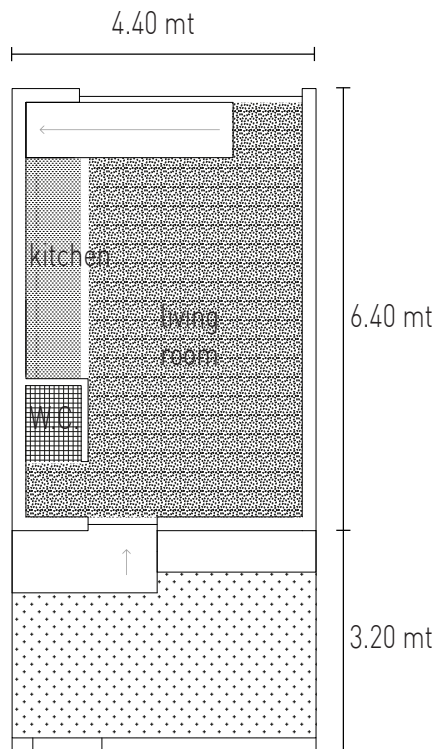
WC

bathroom+bedroom

The absence of walls or the minimum presence of them gives more space and light to each house:

The curtain which divides the living room and the kitchen is an object that gives the feeling of being in a bigger space.

The staircase is being used as a mediation element: a structural object which divides 2 floors.

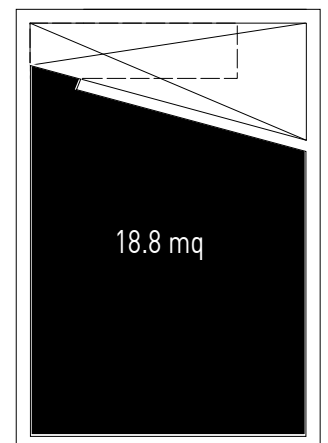
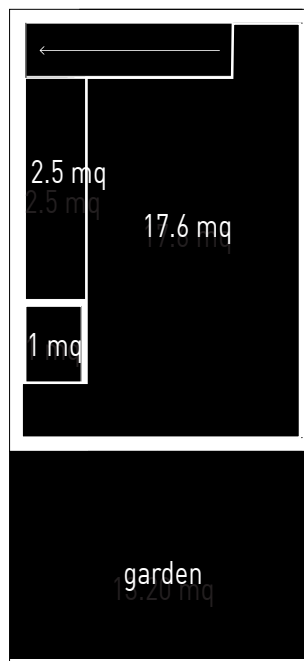


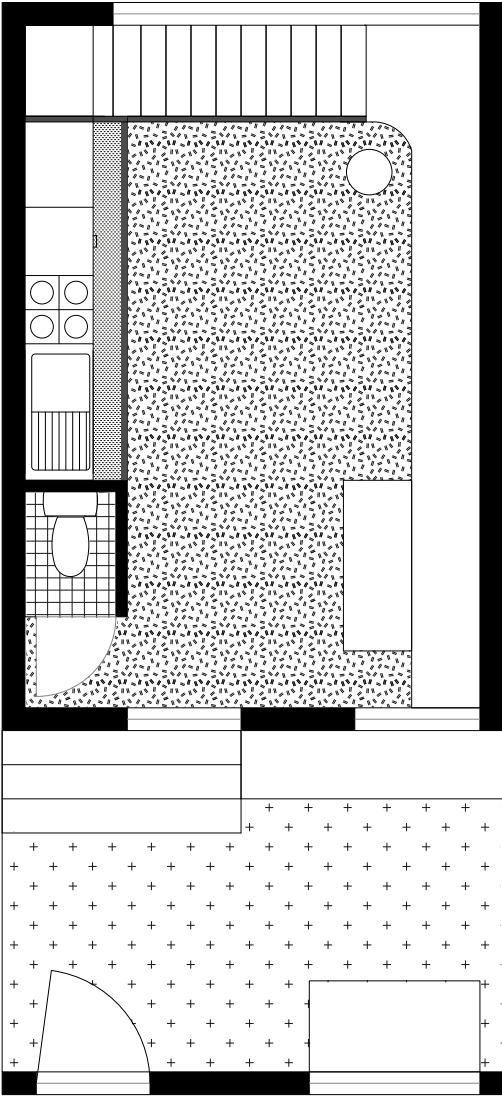
The house measures around 40m<sup>2</sup>:

The groundfloor counts 21,2m<sup>2</sup>

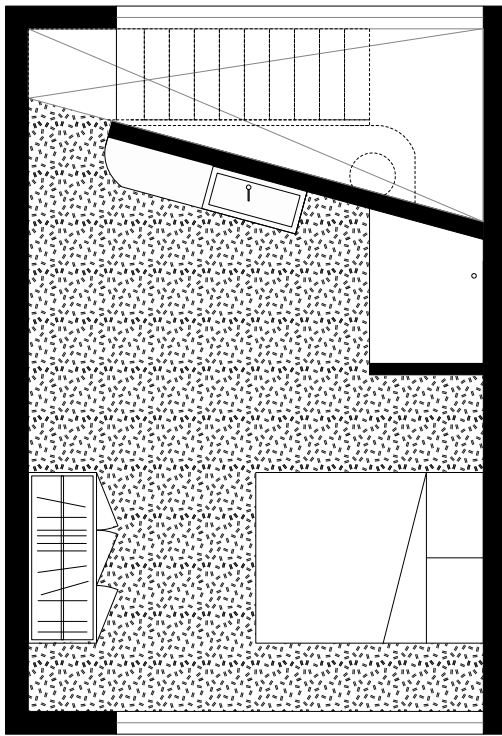
The second floor counts 18,8m<sup>2</sup>

The total area is 39,9m<sup>2</sup>

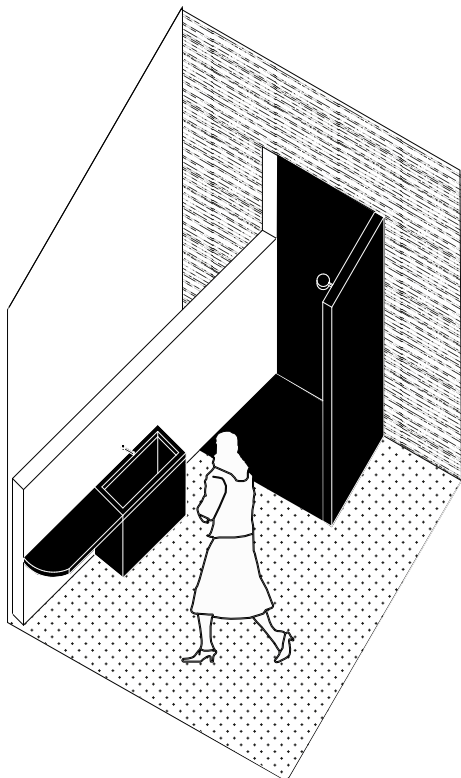




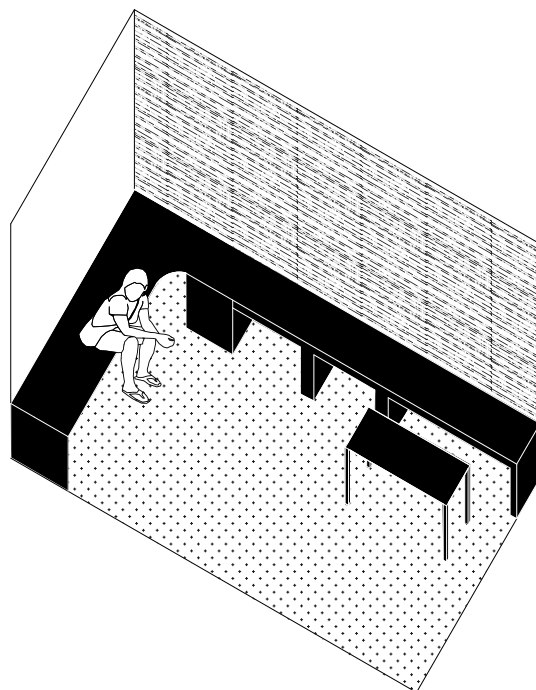
Ground floor



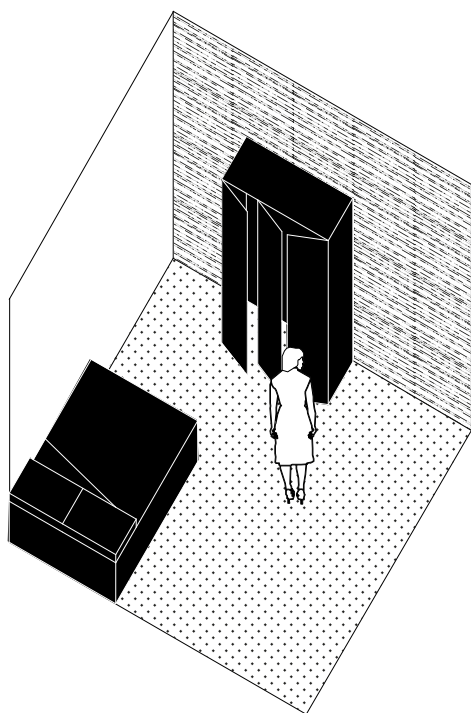
First floor



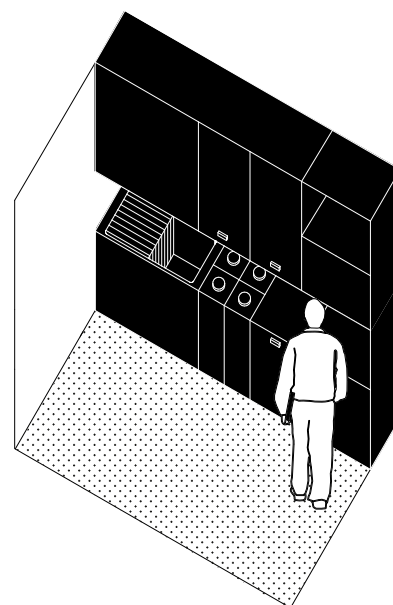
Bathroom



Living room



Bedroom

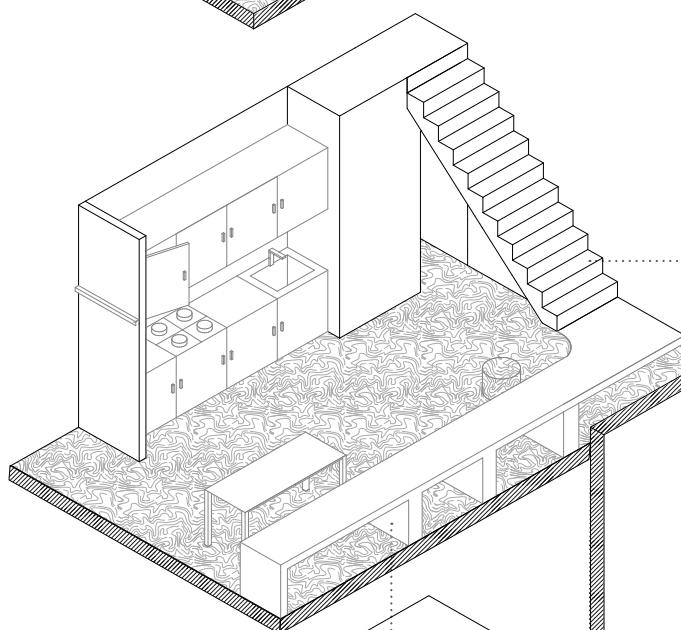
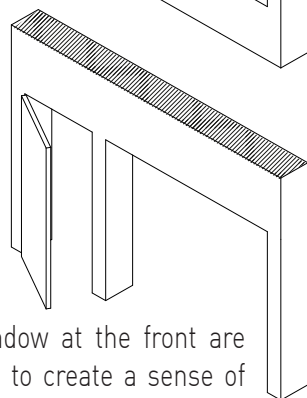
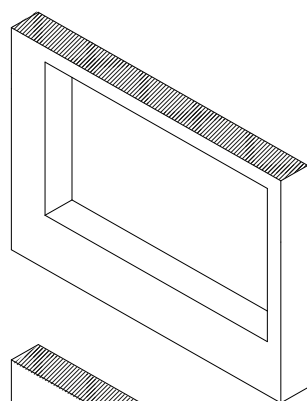
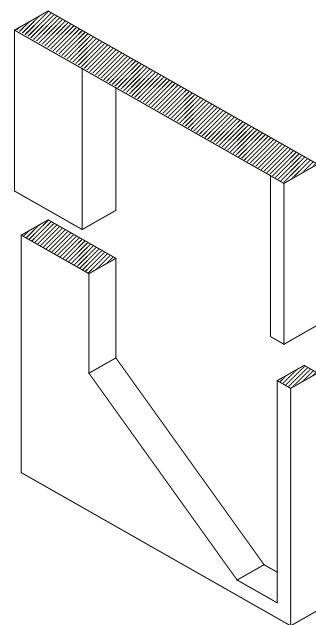
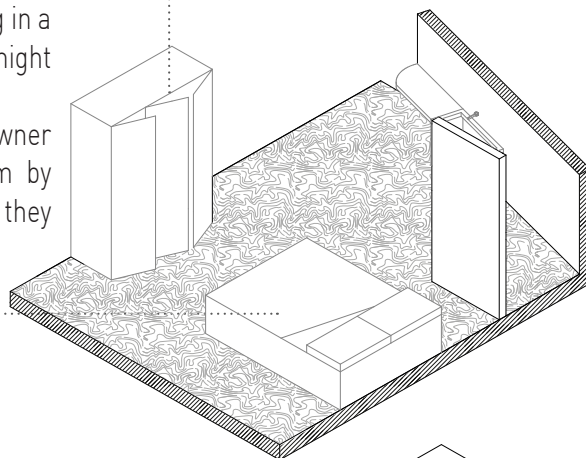


Kitchen

The bed is considered the first solution to the problem of homeless people: thanks to the possibility of sleeping in a bed, he/she no longer spends the night on the street.

Each bed is designed for each owner to give them a sense of freedom by choosing the kind of bed that they prefer.

The wardrobe is the symbol of privacy, of the control of one's personal objects in an environment.



The staircase are the object that divides the house in two spaces: the groundfloor as a collective space and the first floor as a private space.

The window at the front are very big to create a sense of connection with the vegetable gardens from the bedroom.

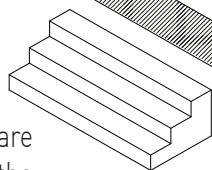
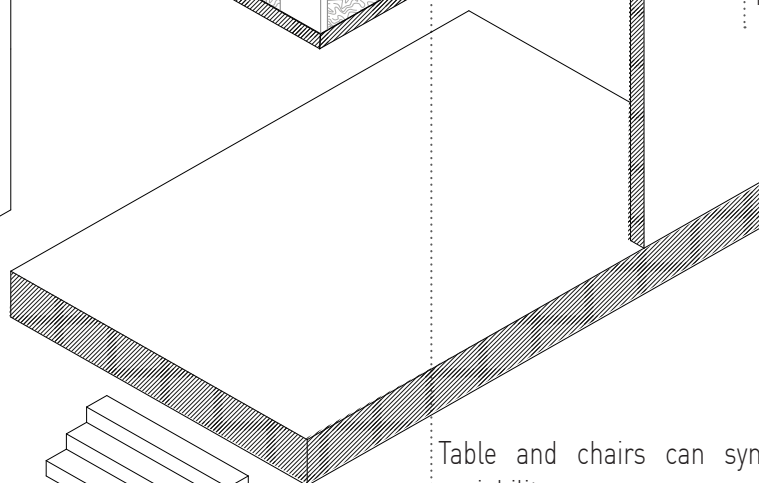
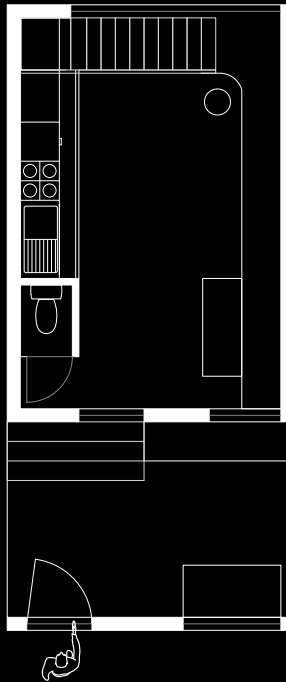


Table and chairs can symbolize the community and sociability.

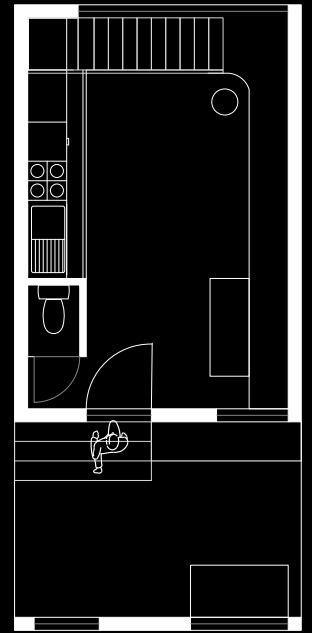
The bench is conceived to be one big piece as a place to stay for eating, chill or just reading a book: it is the place for sharing.

The 3 steps to enter to the house are one of the main important themes of the project: their height is of 60cm to give to the owner the possibility to look outside without being observed from the other people.

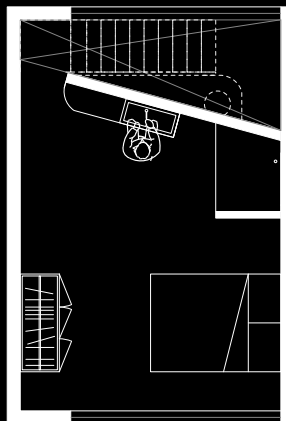
# THROUGH THE DOMESTIC SPACES



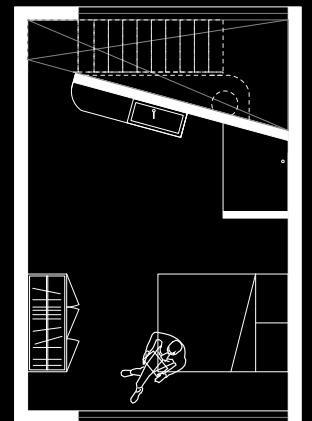
The first entrance, through the wall, gets into the private garden



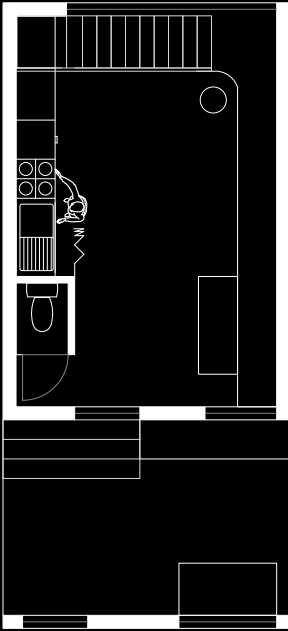
Three steps give the opportunity to enter to the unit



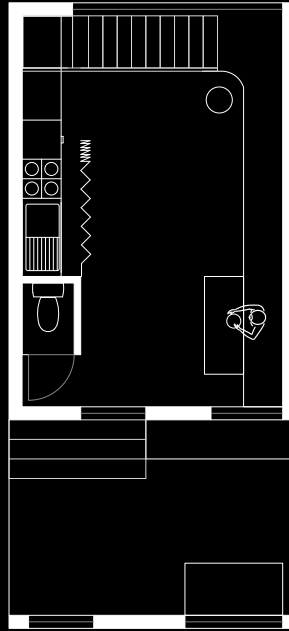
The bathroom is in front of the back side to have the relationship between the inside and the outside



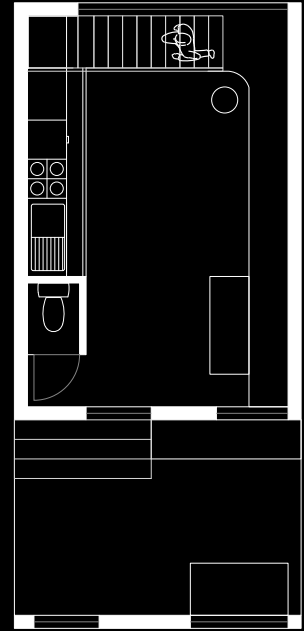
Through the window, it is possible to look at the vegetable gardens in the opposite side



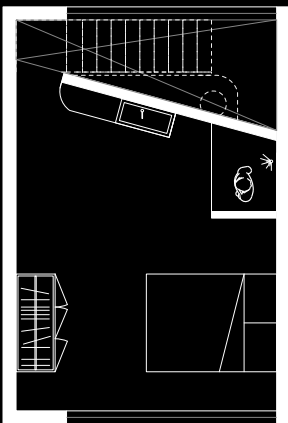
The kitchen has the possibility to be hidden by a curtain while it's not being used



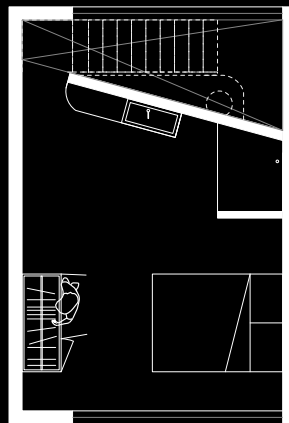
The table is located next to the private garden to get the benefits from the view of the landscape



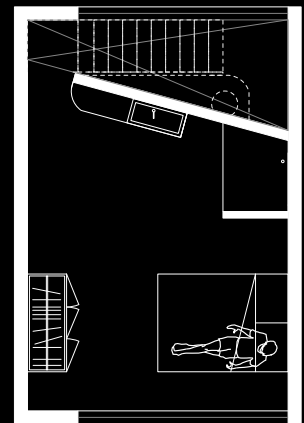
The staircase divides the collective space from the private room



The shower is between two walls, one of which is low to allow a view from there too

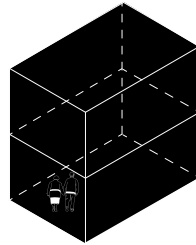
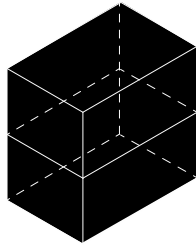
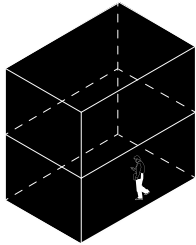


The unit provides a wardrobe where each owner is able to keep his/her clothes



The position of the bed allows the person to get the benefits of the view of the green area outside

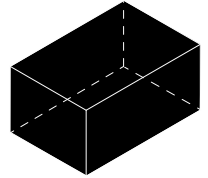
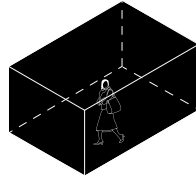




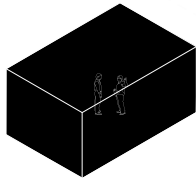
ACCESSIBILITY

30 M<sup>2</sup>

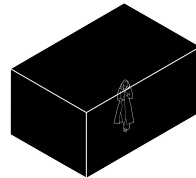
duplex



AD

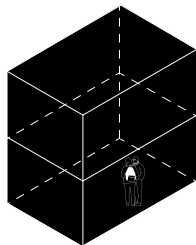


privacy

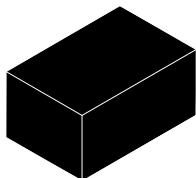
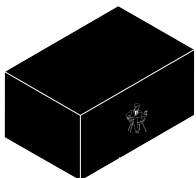
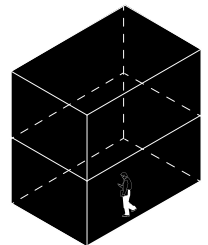


**WALL**

more garden

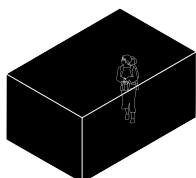


40 m<sup>2</sup>

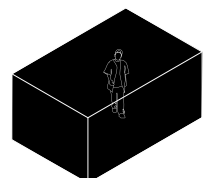
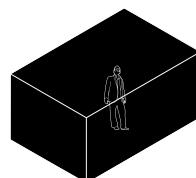


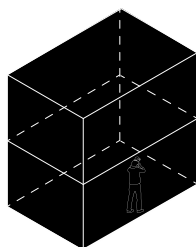
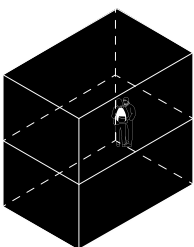
vegetable  
garden

**DOMESTIC  
SPACE**



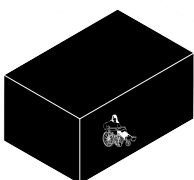
**nature**





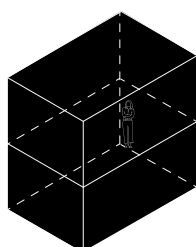
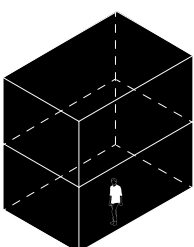
ADMINISTRATION

## PRIVATE GARDEN



6x4

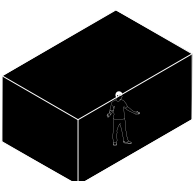
## 4. THROUGH THE PROJECT



4.1 STEP 1- A WALL AS A CONTAINER OF PLACES p. 129

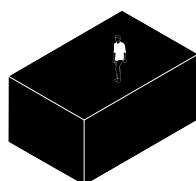
4.2 STEP 2- NATURE IN A DOMESTIC SITUATION p. 135

4.2 STEP 3 - MORE HOME, MORE GARDEN p. 149



## STEP 1

home



The study executed in the last section -part 4- was very intense and constantly changing. These changes that have occurred are due to the needs of the clients but also to the different aspects that we had to share with the landscape architect, the structural engineer and the homeless people organization.

The measures for fire standards required a very long study phase for the location of the units.

An aspect that has been studied, even if partially, regards the units intended for people in wheelchairs: initially the work concerned only one unit but following the high presence of people in wheelchairs in the city of Ghent, the number of houses turned to 2 units.

The presence of the administrative unit has been the subject of discussion: initially it was regarded essential but due to the small budget some doubts were raised.

The private gardens which are an important element for the project had a various phases of study: the inclination of them was used to create the privacy between each unit. In addition to it the entrance through the wall was studied to avoid the crossing between the hosts. These points of meeting could create a space of discussion.

The budget had a considerable weight in the design: we started with a project of 12 units of 40 m<sup>2</sup>, we turned to 11 units and returned to 12 units of 30 m<sup>2</sup>.

### **The part 4 is explained by 3 steps:**

#### **Step 1.**

The first approach involved a study of a total of 12 units: 11 houses and 1 administrative unit.

The main idea is to create a compact model with a rectangular unit where all of them have a surface on the groundfloor of 24sq.mt. (6x4mt).

The scheme of the complex appears as a big rectangle under the same roof with the private garden in the same place.

The private garden in front of each house follows the strict line of the units to be at the same level to each other.

#### **Step 2.**

According to the idea to follow the inclination of the vegetable gardens and the hosts' privacy, the project turns into 4 different schemes. This step was useful to understand which direction was better to follow: the inclination of the vegetables garden for each unit or only for the private gardens.

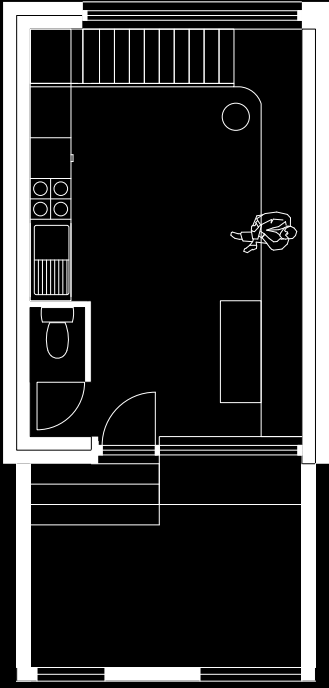
#### **Step 3.**

The last step gave the opportunity to study the inclination of the walls which are in the opposite direction of the previous model because of the better privacy feeling.

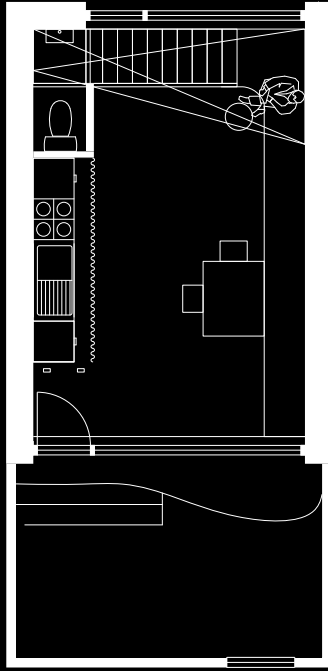
The surface for each units change into 30 m<sup>2</sup> because of a problem of budget and the number of accessible units changes from 1 to 2 units.

The work, accompanied by the functions, flows, access and green area schemes gave more benefit and positive views to the final result.

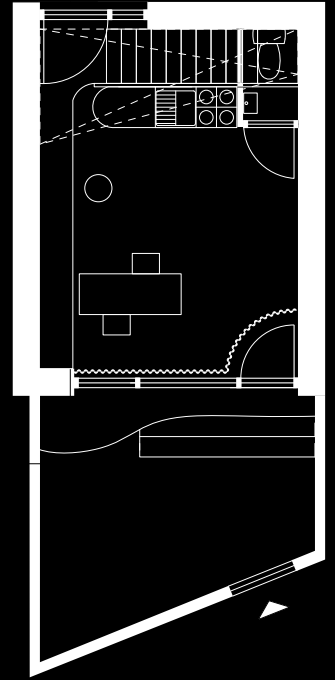




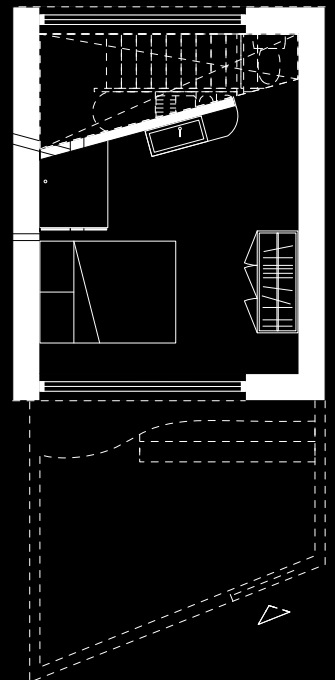
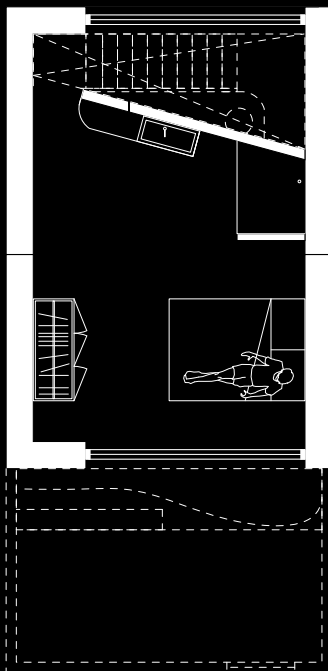
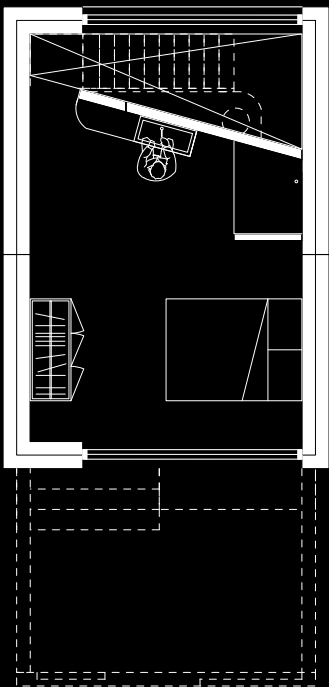
STEP 1



STEP 2



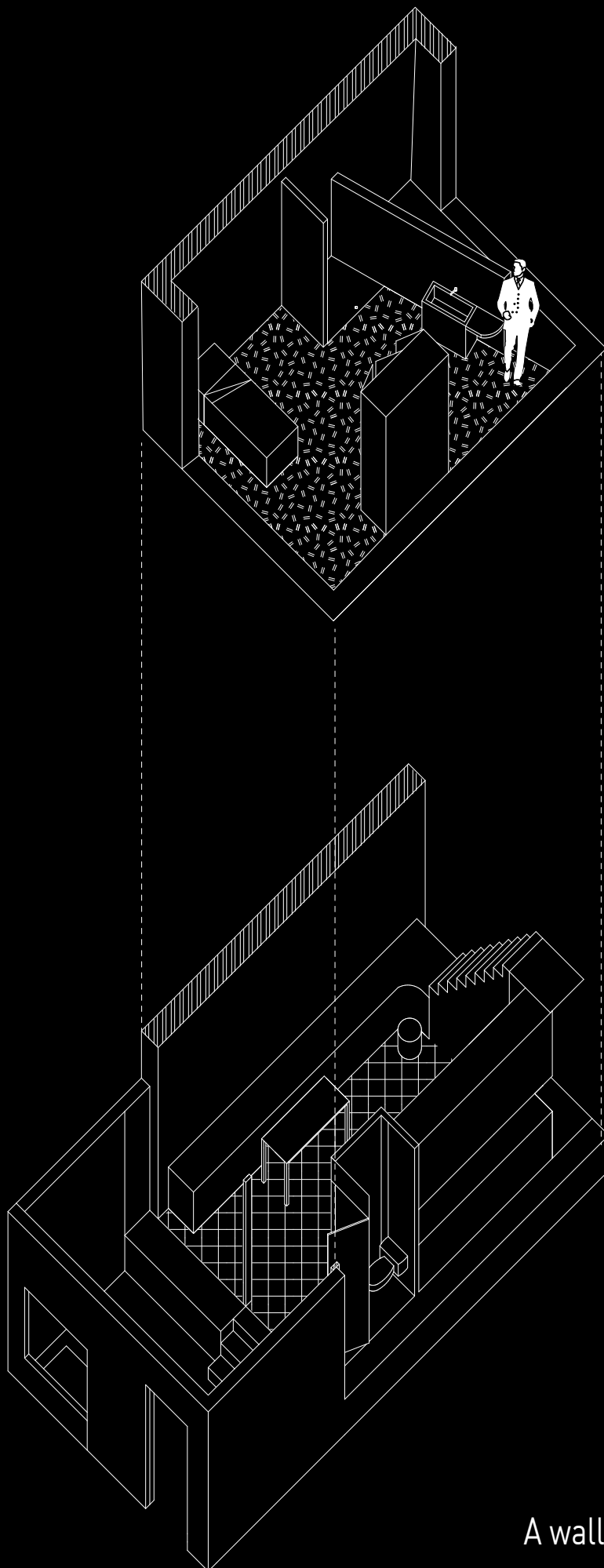
STEP 3





“The Scottish castle. Very high, very thick walls. Few openings for the enemy. Open inside to its occupants. A place to read, a place for sewing, places for the bed, for the ladder. Sunlight. A fairy tale.”

Louis I. Kahn -1973



# STEP 1

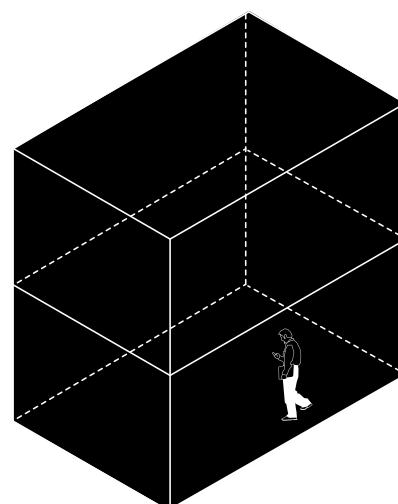
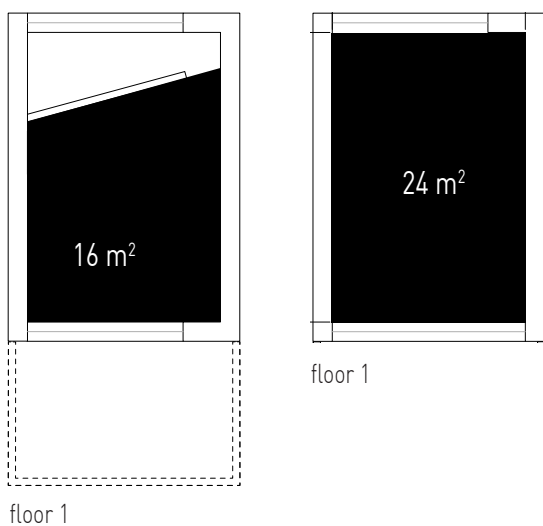
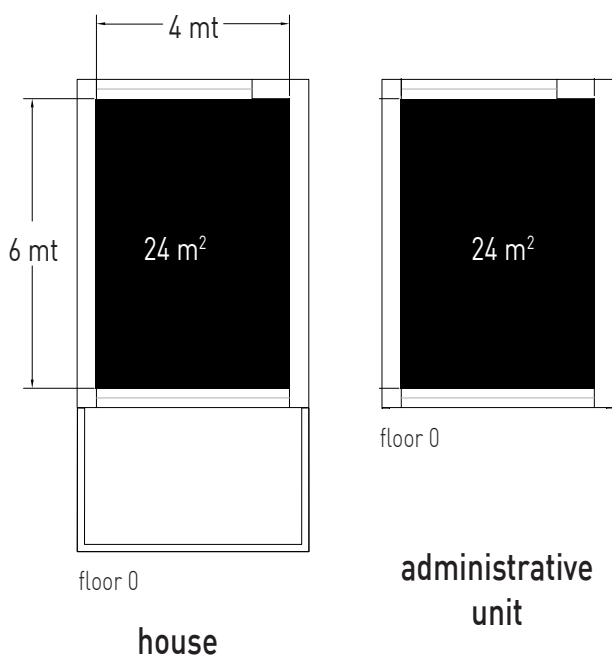
A wall as a container of places

# MODEL INFO

12 units

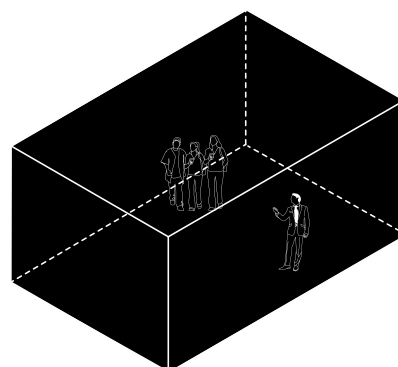
11 houses of 40 m<sup>2</sup>

1 administrative unit of 44 m<sup>2</sup>

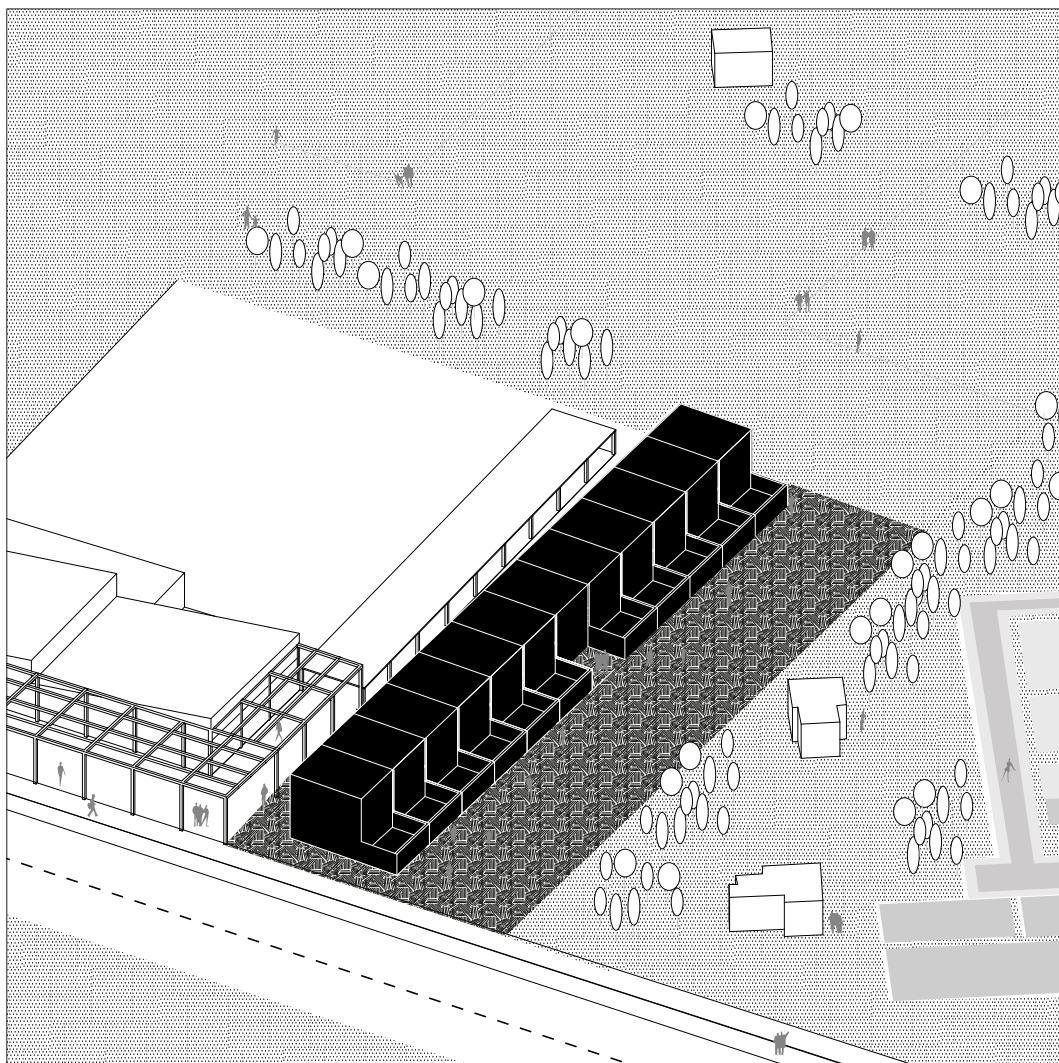


11 houses

+



1 administrative unit



The project studied in the first step involved the design of a total of 12 units: 11 houses and 1 administrative unit.

The idea is to create a compact model with a rectangular units where all of them have a surface of the groundfloor of  $24\text{m}^2$  (6x4mt). The private garden in front of each house follows the strict line of the units to be on the same line to each other.

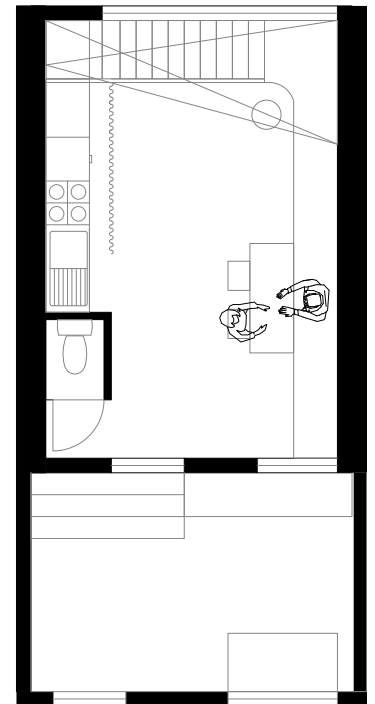
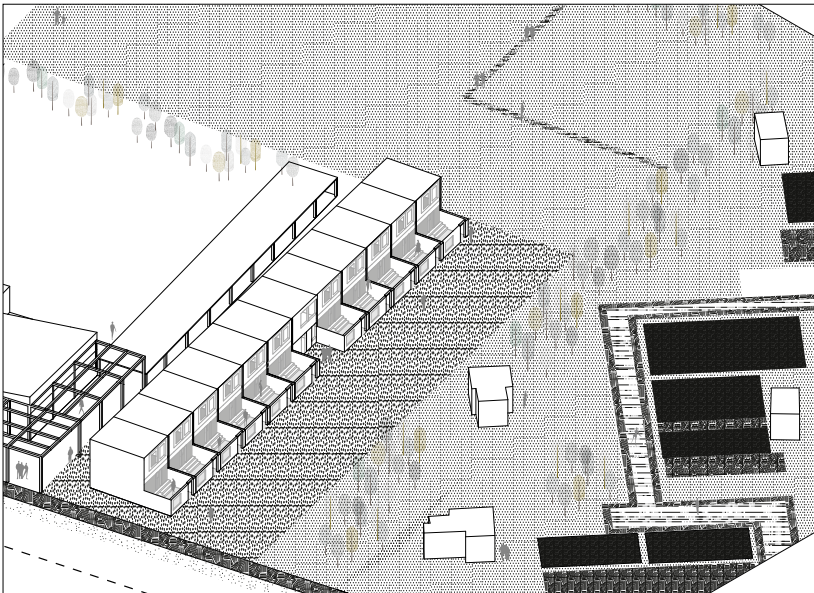
**DATA:**

12 units

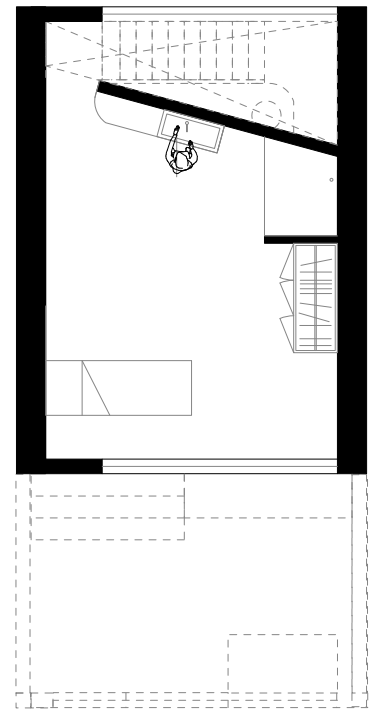
■ 1 administrative unit

■ 11 units

This scenario shows the possibility to have the same footprint for each single unit and the administrative unit which is located in the middle of the complex to have more control on each host.



groundfloor

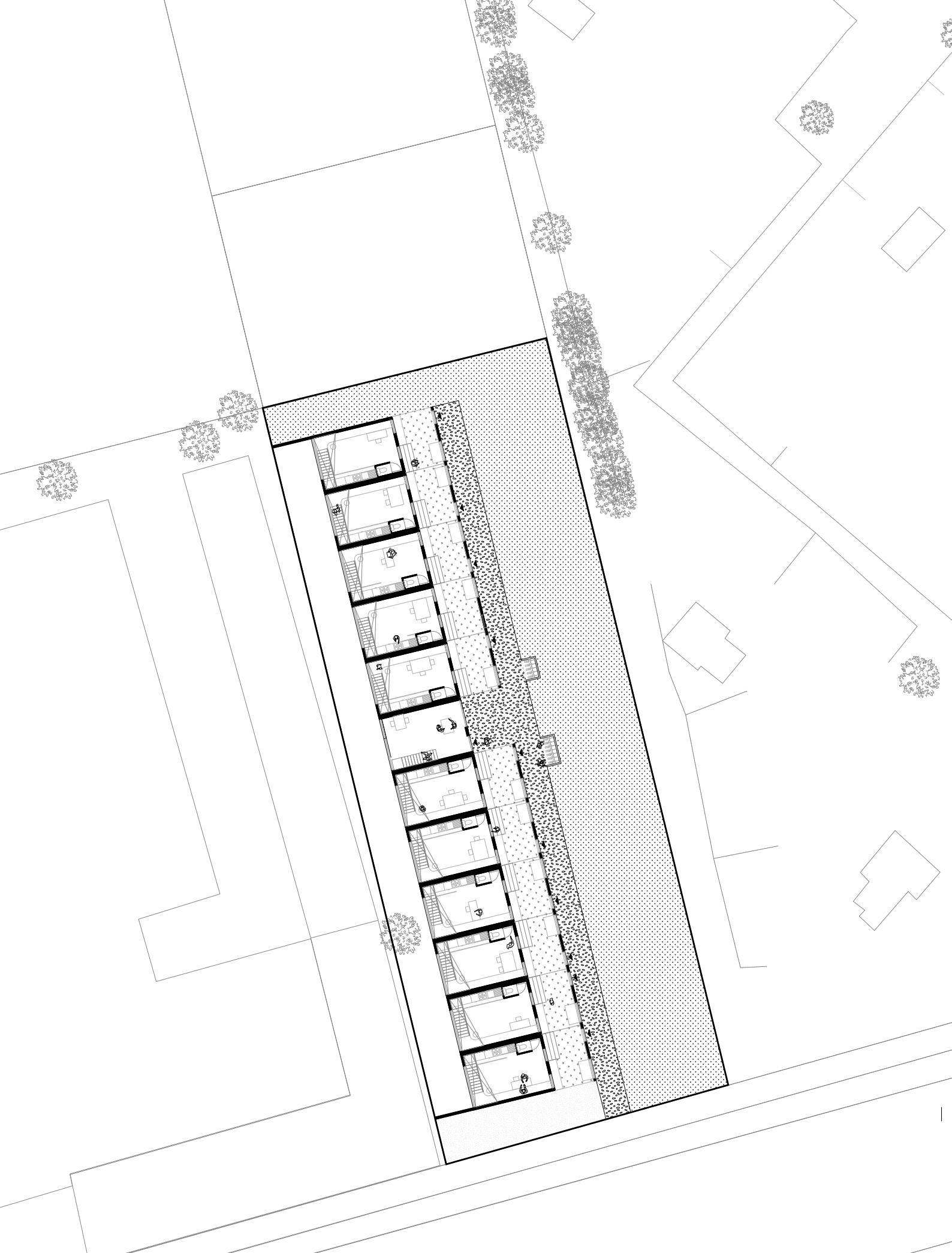


first floor

Each unit has the elements of the project described in the third part: the light, the privacy and the connection with the outside which are very important for the project.

The entrance to the house is signed by 3 steps which allow to go inside on the groundfloor: here the kitchen is positioned on the long side while the bench is on the opposite side. W.C. is situated between the entrance and the kitchen. The staircase, on the short side, is used as an element which divides the groundfloor from the first floor.

The private garden is characterized by having a door and also a window to look outside at the vegetables gardens: the idea is to be in touch with the nature and the surrounding green area.



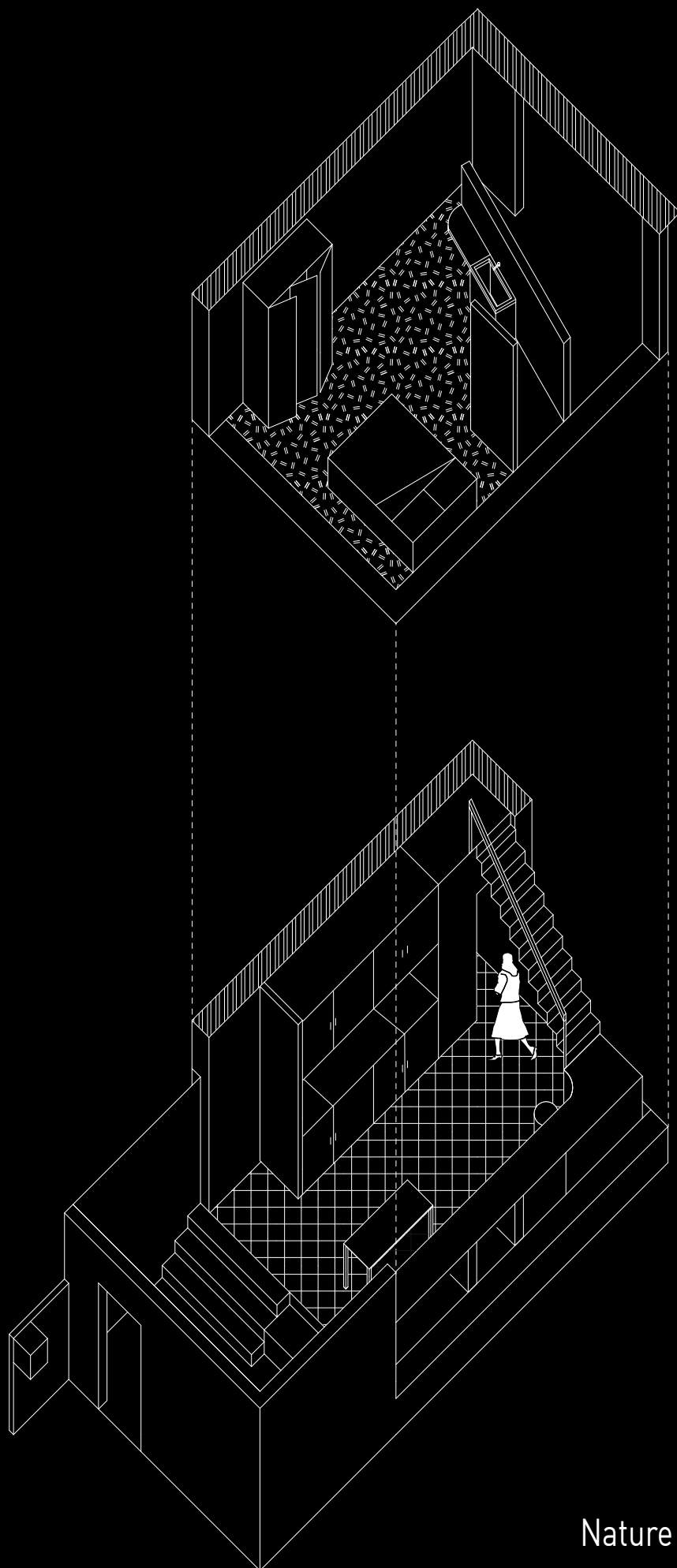
Groundfloor



“It is a house and simultaneously a garden. A  
garden with a roof.  
It is an externalised architecture.  
Garden and architecture are superimposed. ”

Sou Fujimoto, Futuroerspective Architecture





# STEP 2

Nature in a domestic situation

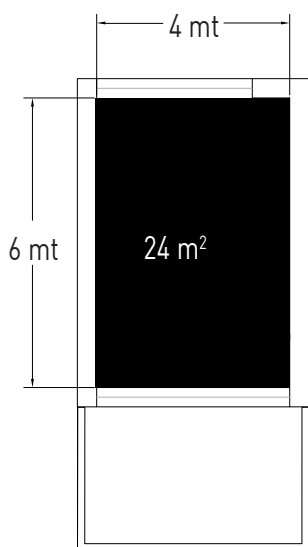
# MODEL INFO

## 11 units

9 houses of 40 m<sup>2</sup>

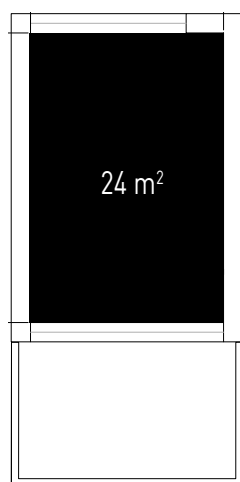
1 administrative unit of 44 m<sup>2</sup>

1 accessible unit of 36 m<sup>2</sup>



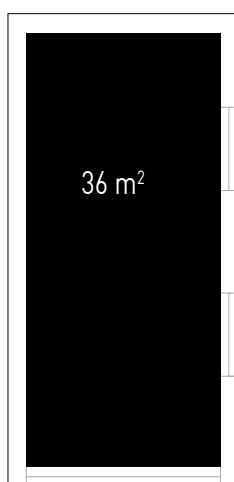
floor 0

house



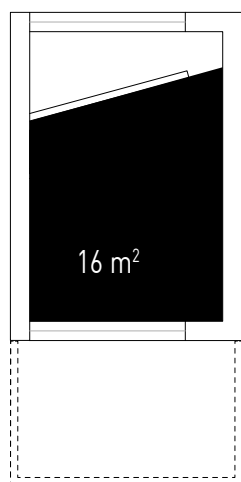
floor 0

administrative  
unit

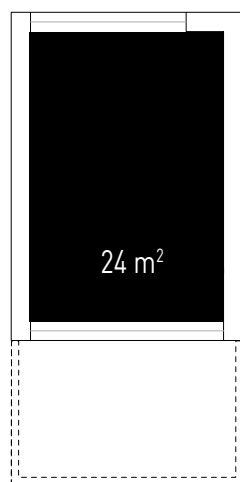


floor 0

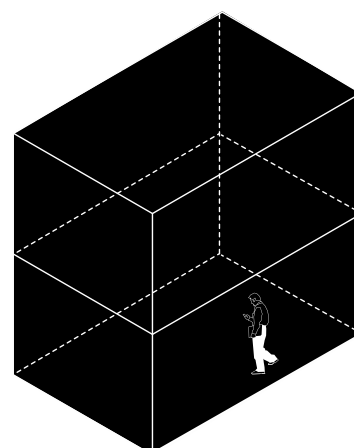
accessible  
unit



floor 1

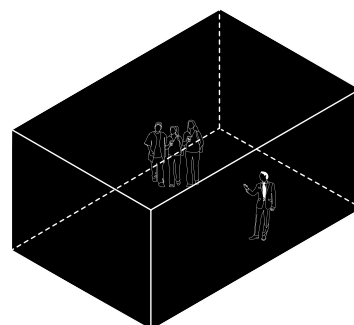


floor 1



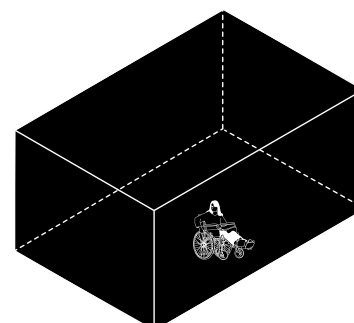
9 houses

+

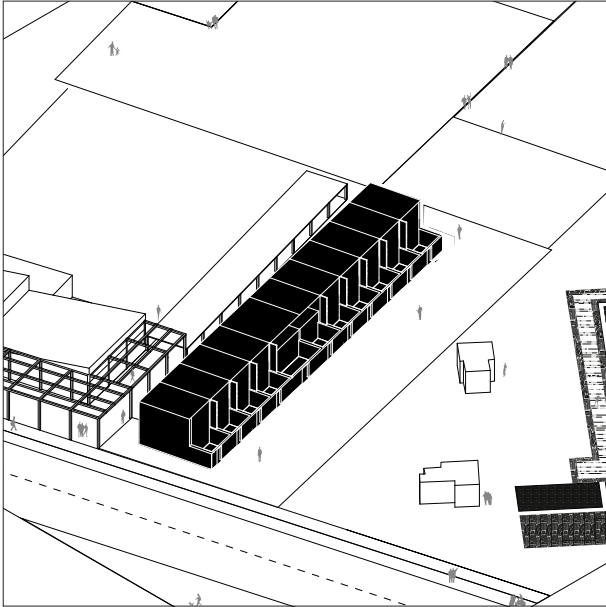


1 administrative unit

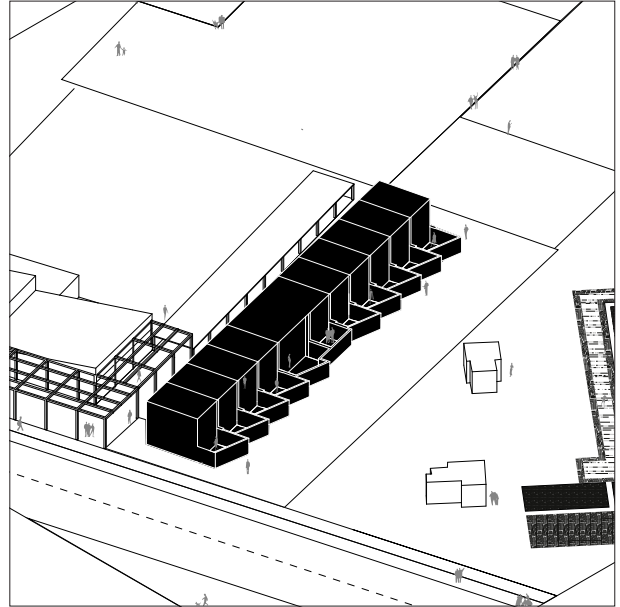
+



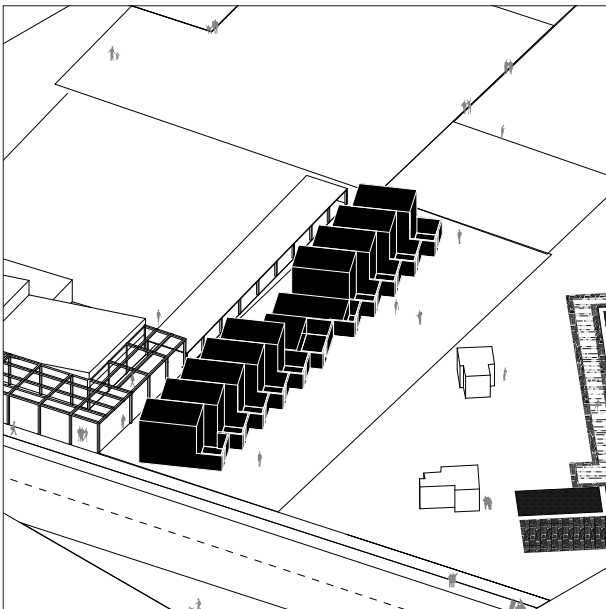
1 accessible unit



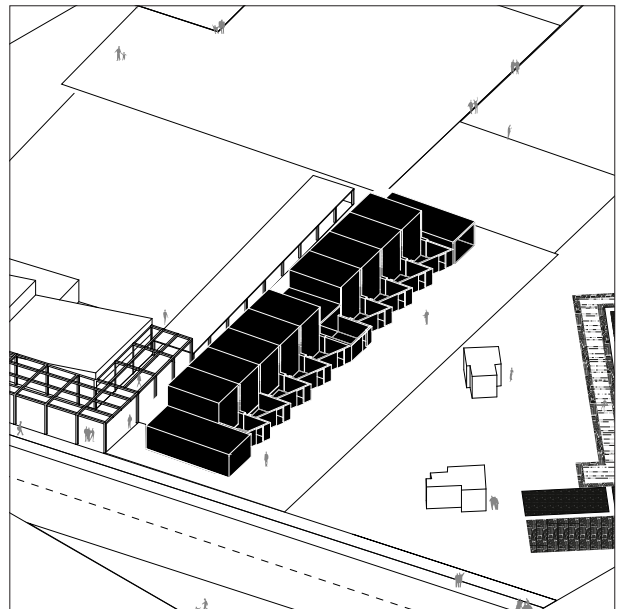
Typology A



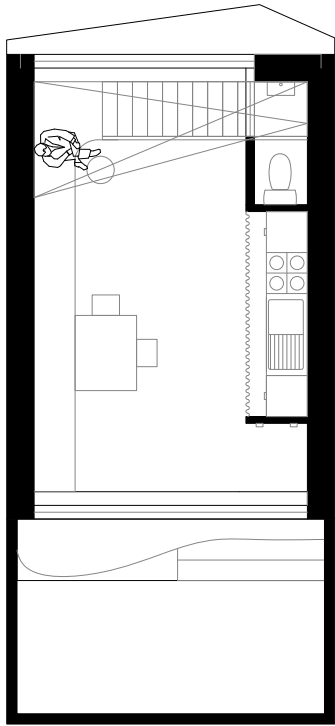
Typology B



Typology C

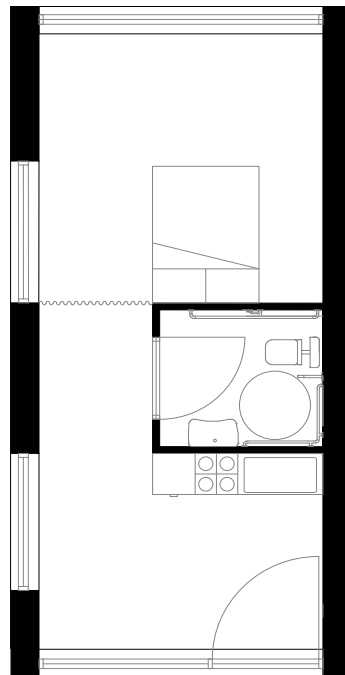


Typology D

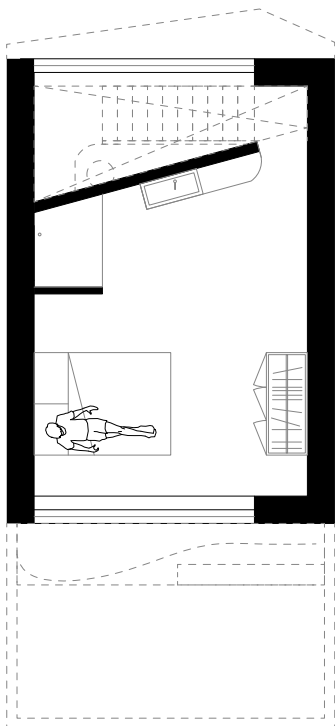


groundfloor

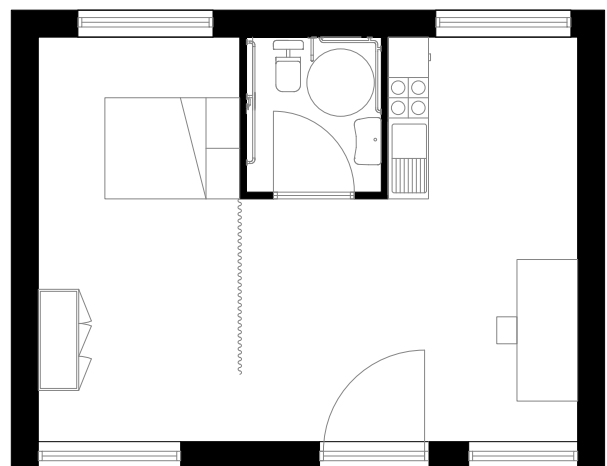
house



accessible  
unit\_A



first floor

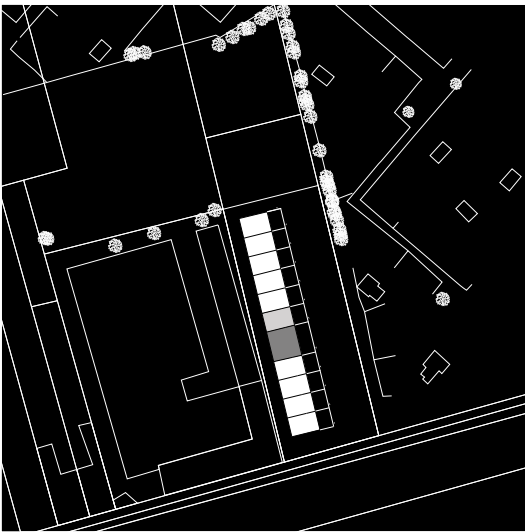


accessible  
unit\_B

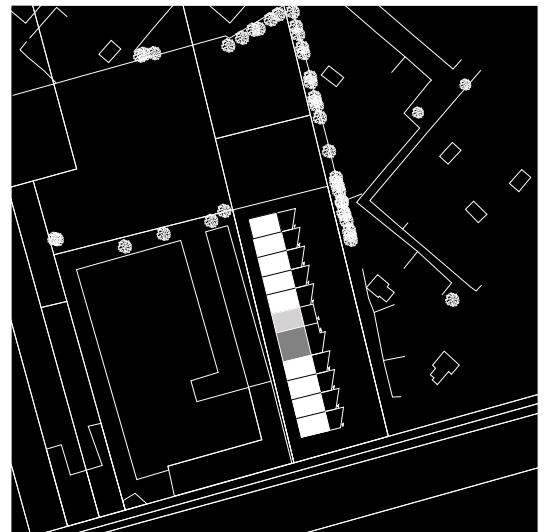
Step2 analysed 4 typologies: A, B, C and D.

The Typologies A, B and C have a total of 11 units with 1 administrative unit, 1 accessible unit and 9 houses while the typology D tried to have an other accessible unit instead of a house.

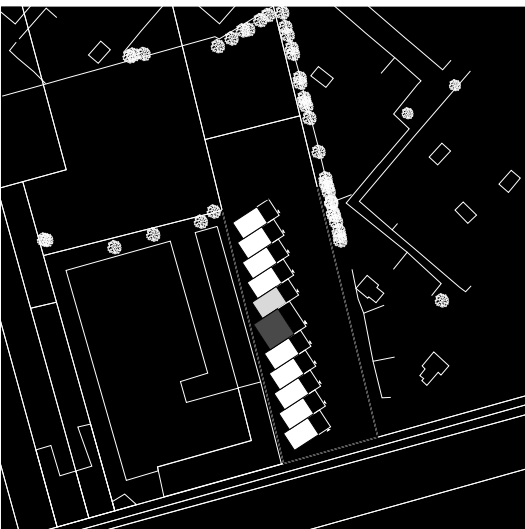
The result demonstrated the possibility to have a project with 11 units: 8 houses, 1 administrative unit and 2 accessible units.



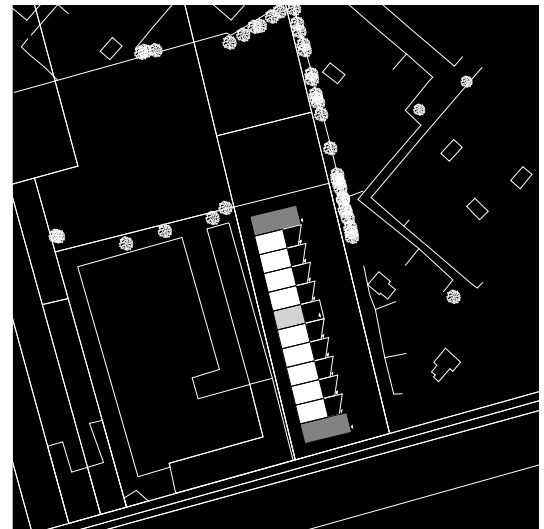
Typology A



Typology B

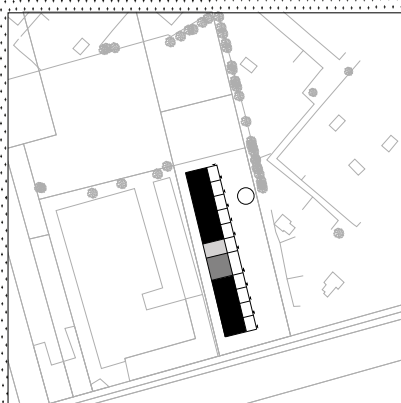


Typology C



Typology D

# TYPOLGY A



## DATA:

11 units

■ 1 accessible unit

■ 1 administrative unit

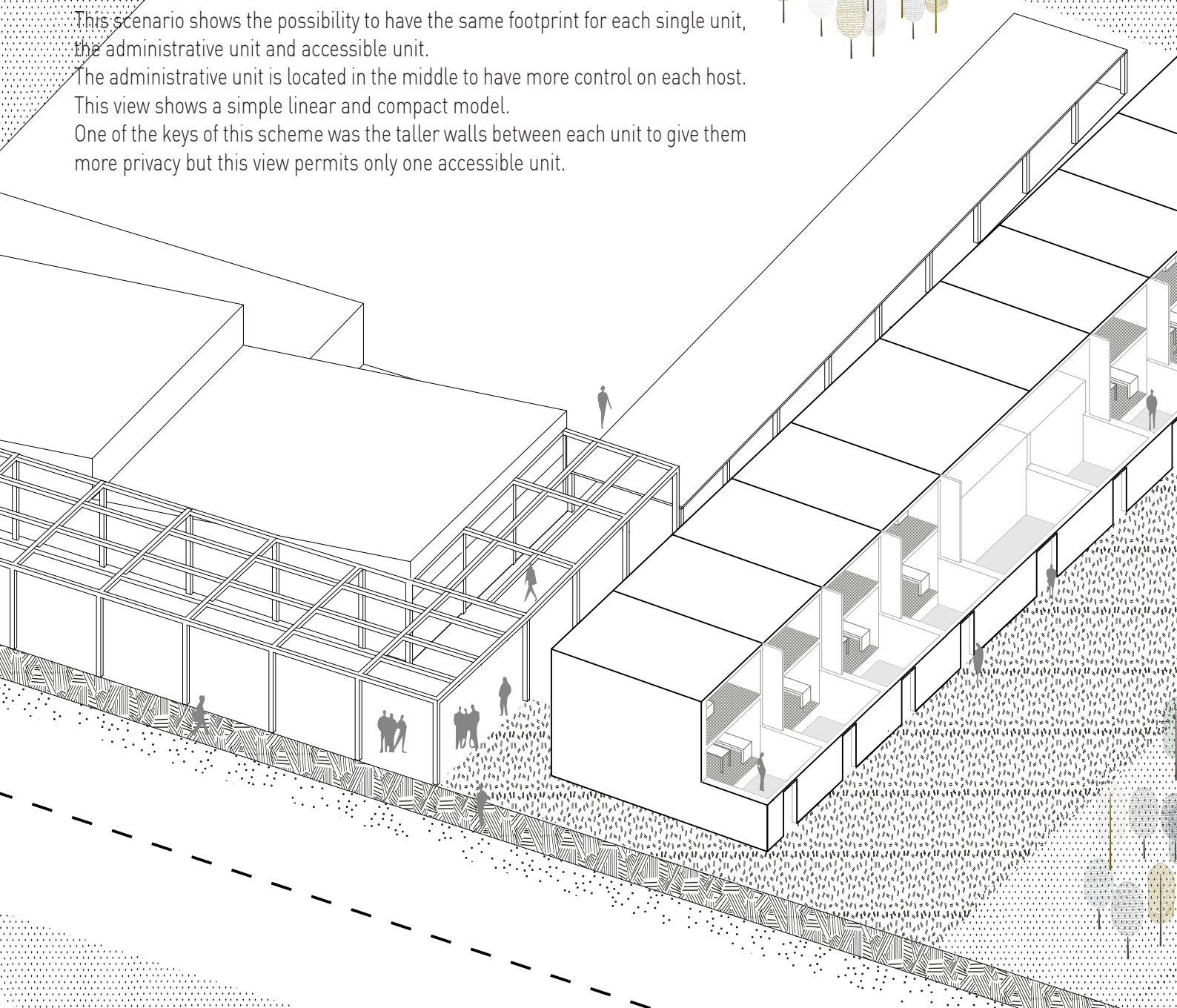
■ 9 units

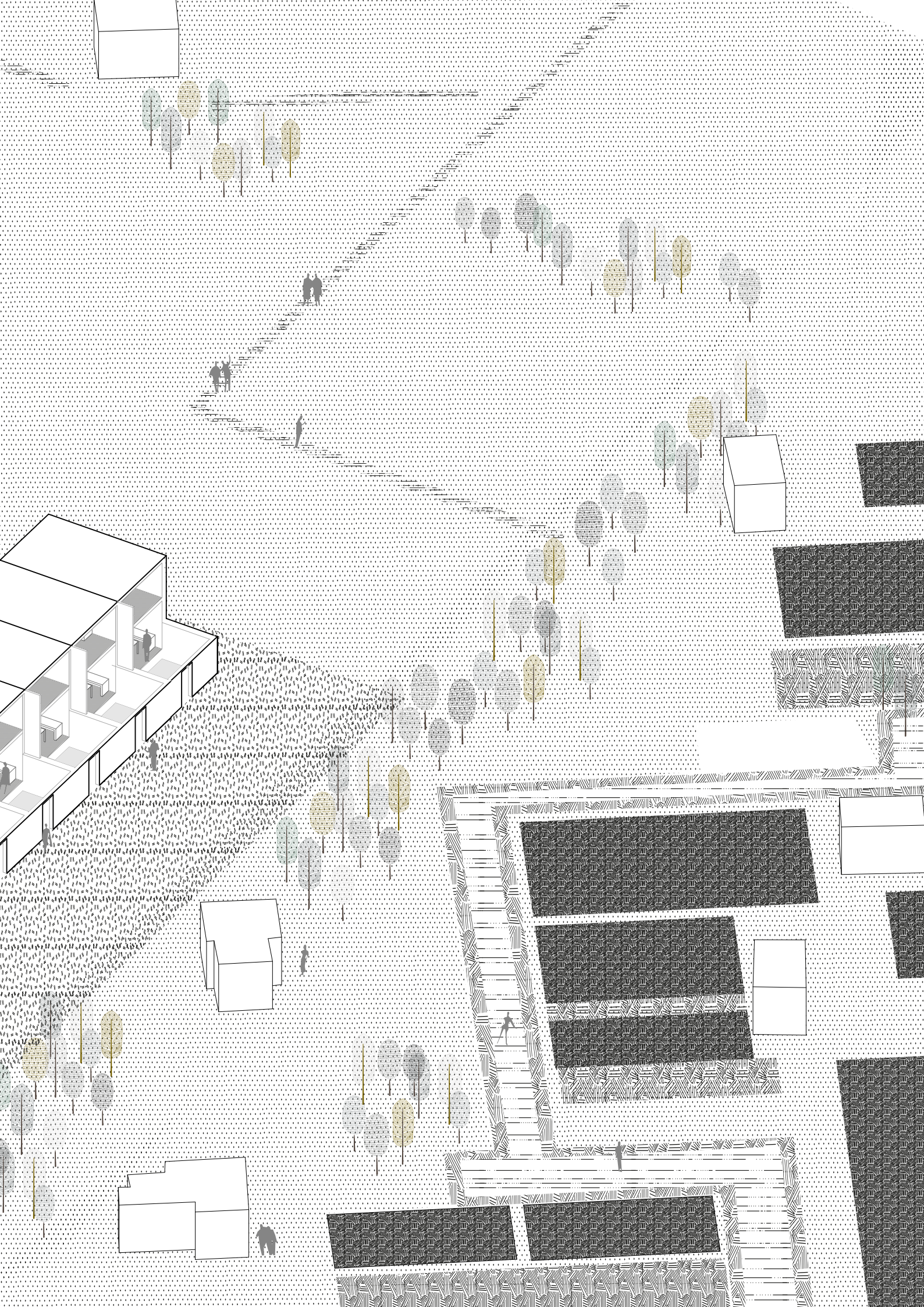
This scenario shows the possibility to have the same footprint for each single unit, the administrative unit and accessible unit.

The administrative unit is located in the middle to have more control on each host.

This view shows a simple linear and compact model.

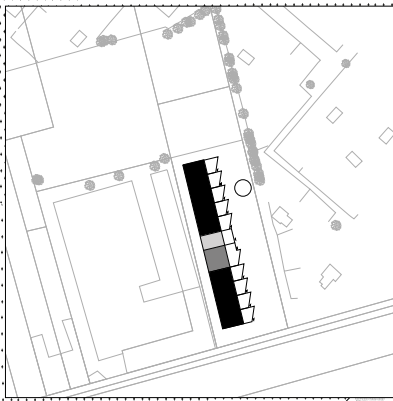
One of the keys of this scheme was the taller walls between each unit to give them more privacy but this view permits only one accessible unit.







# TPOLOGY B



## DATA

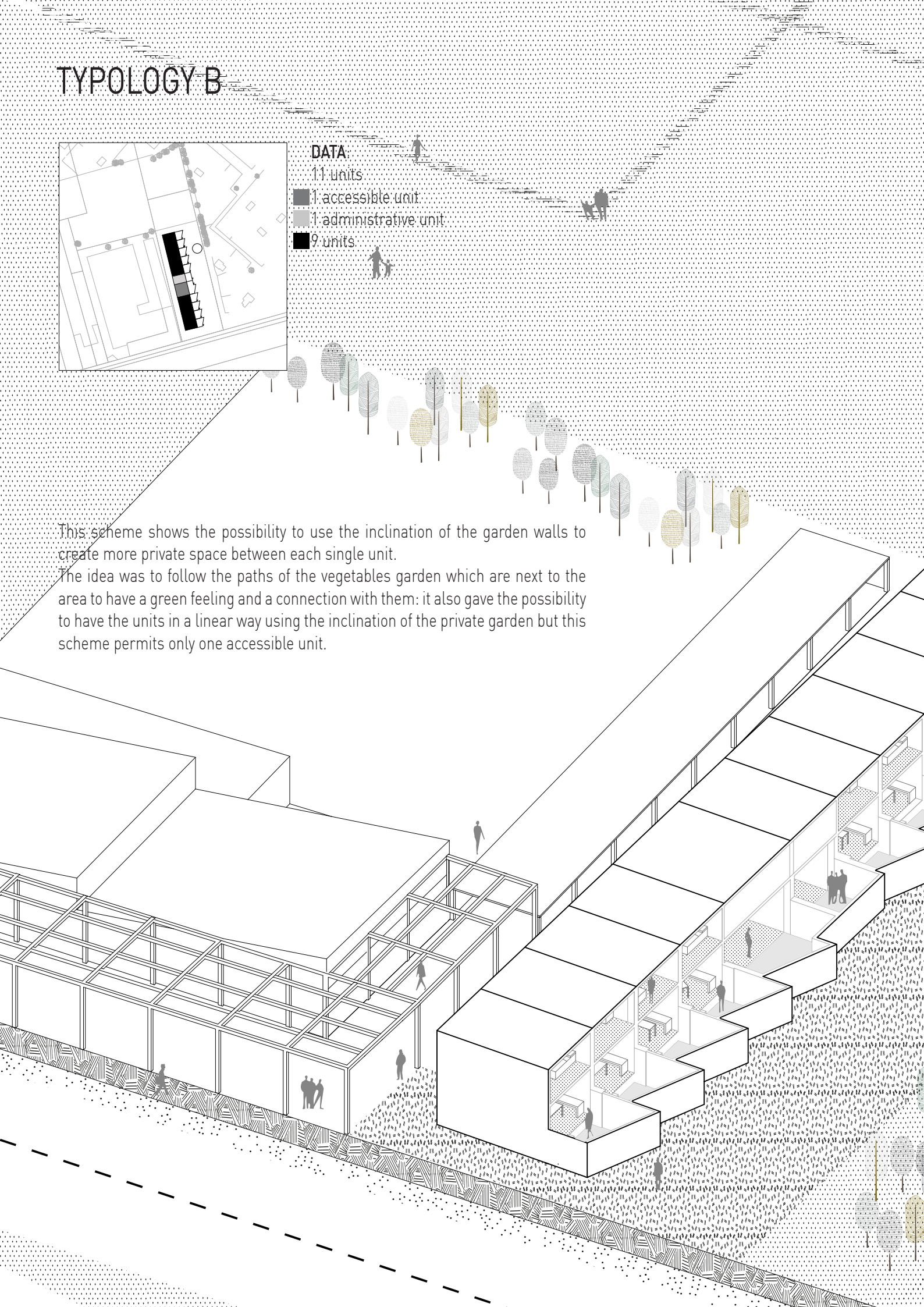
11 units

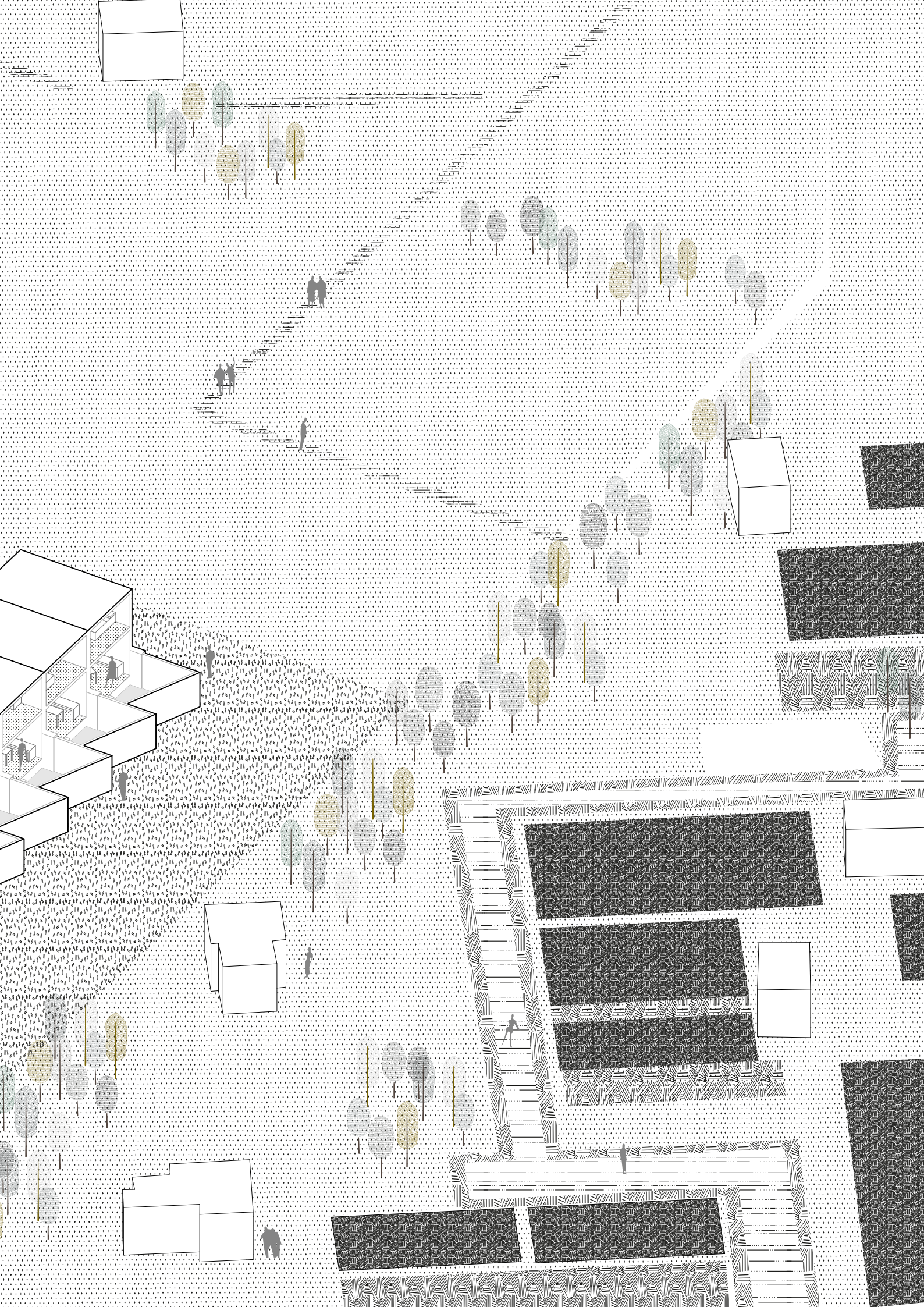
1 accessible unit

1 administrative unit

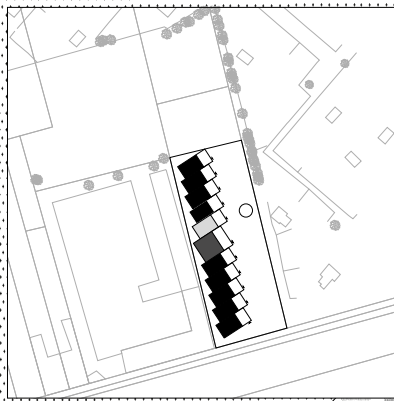
9 units

This scheme shows the possibility to use the inclination of the garden walls to create more private space between each single unit. The idea was to follow the paths of the vegetables garden which are next to the area to have a green feeling and a connection with them: it also gave the possibility to have the units in a linear way using the inclination of the private garden but this scheme permits only one accessible unit.





# TPOLOGY C



## DATA

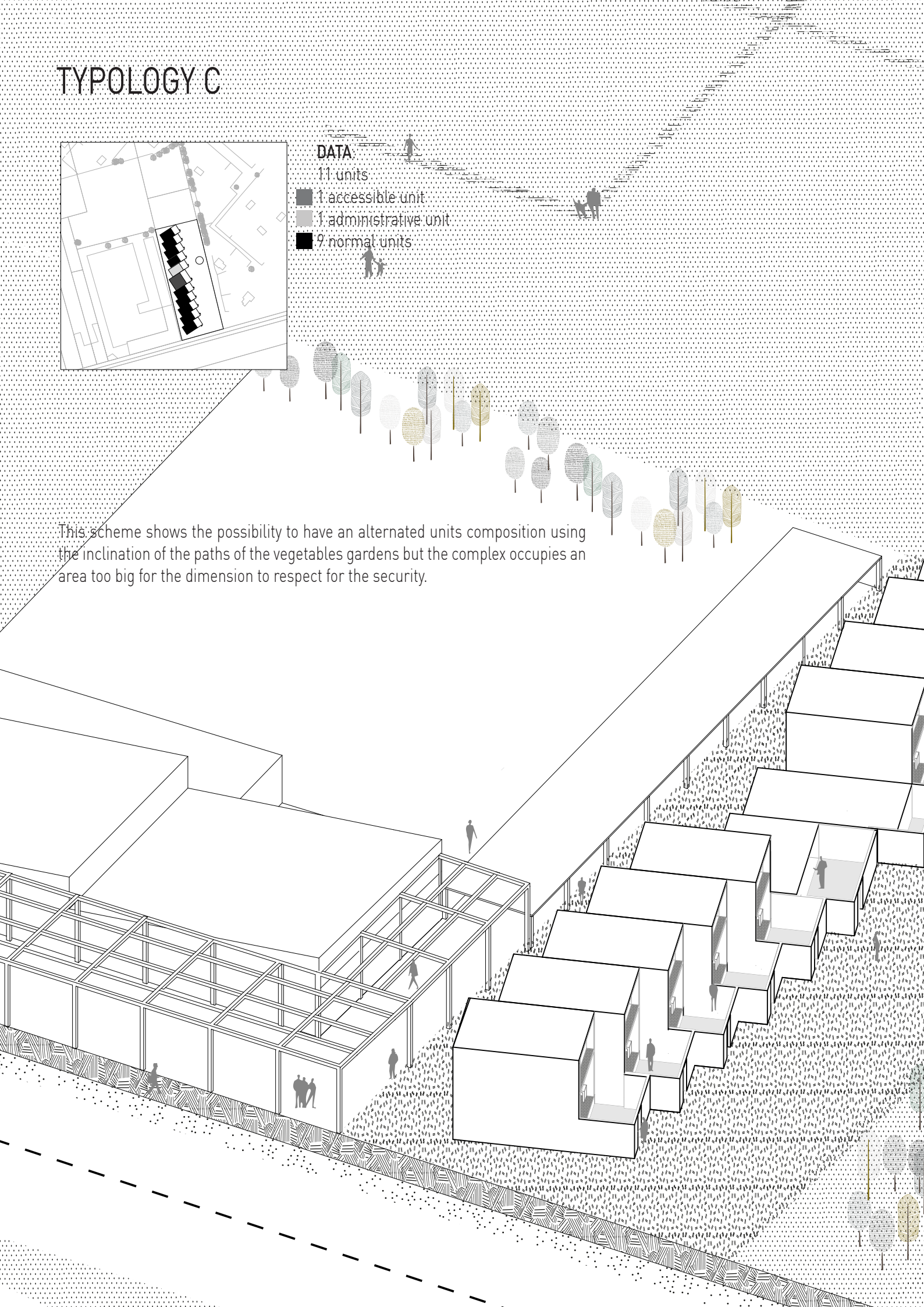
11 units

■ 1 accessible unit

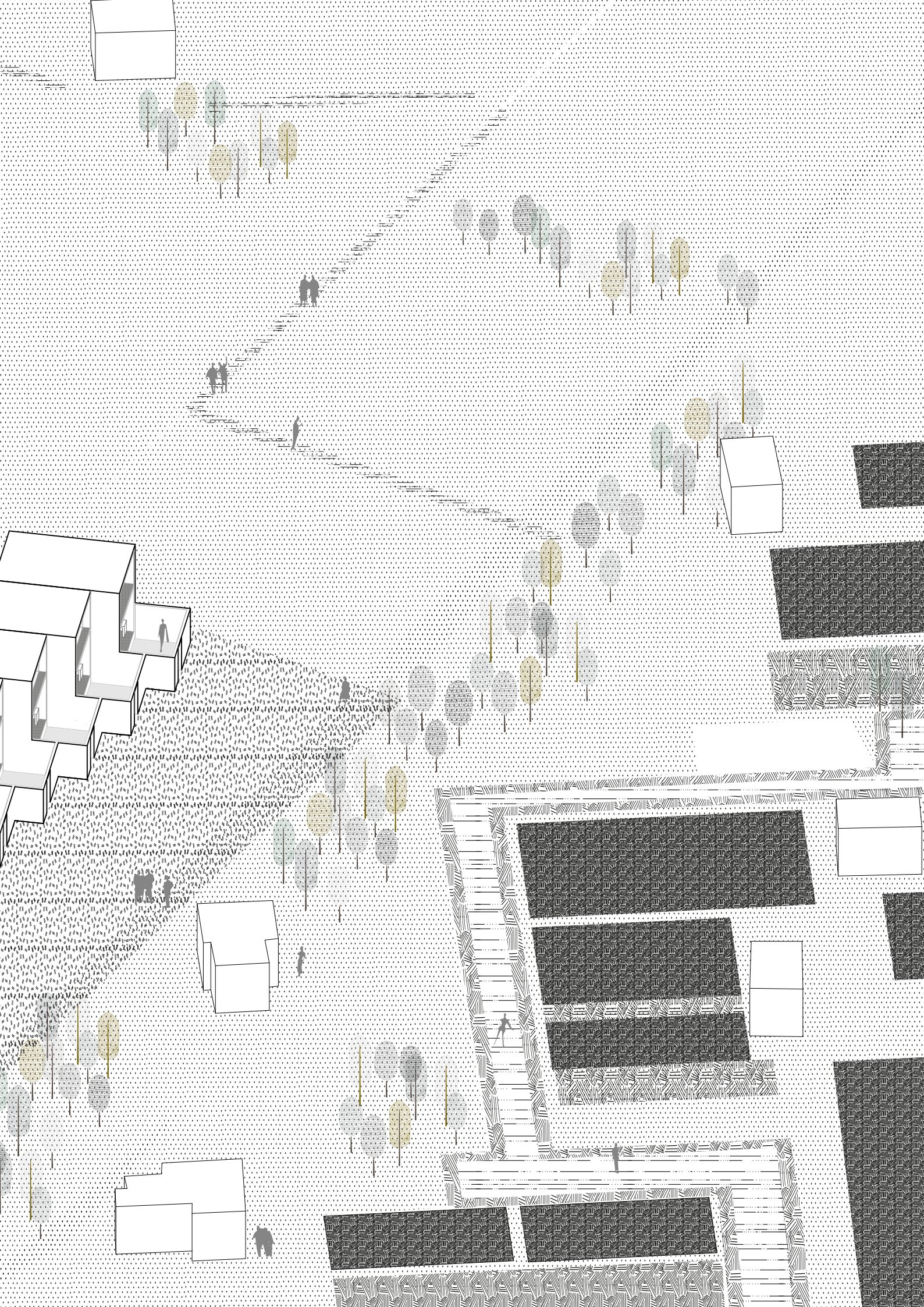
■ 1 administrative unit

■ 9 normal units

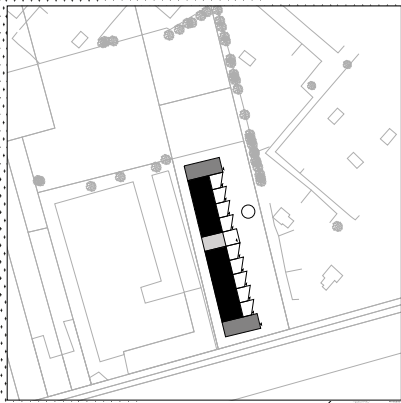
This scheme shows the possibility to have an alternated units composition using the inclination of the paths of the vegetables gardens but the complex occupies an area too big for the dimension to respect for the security.







# TPOLOGY D



## DATA

11 units

2 accessible units

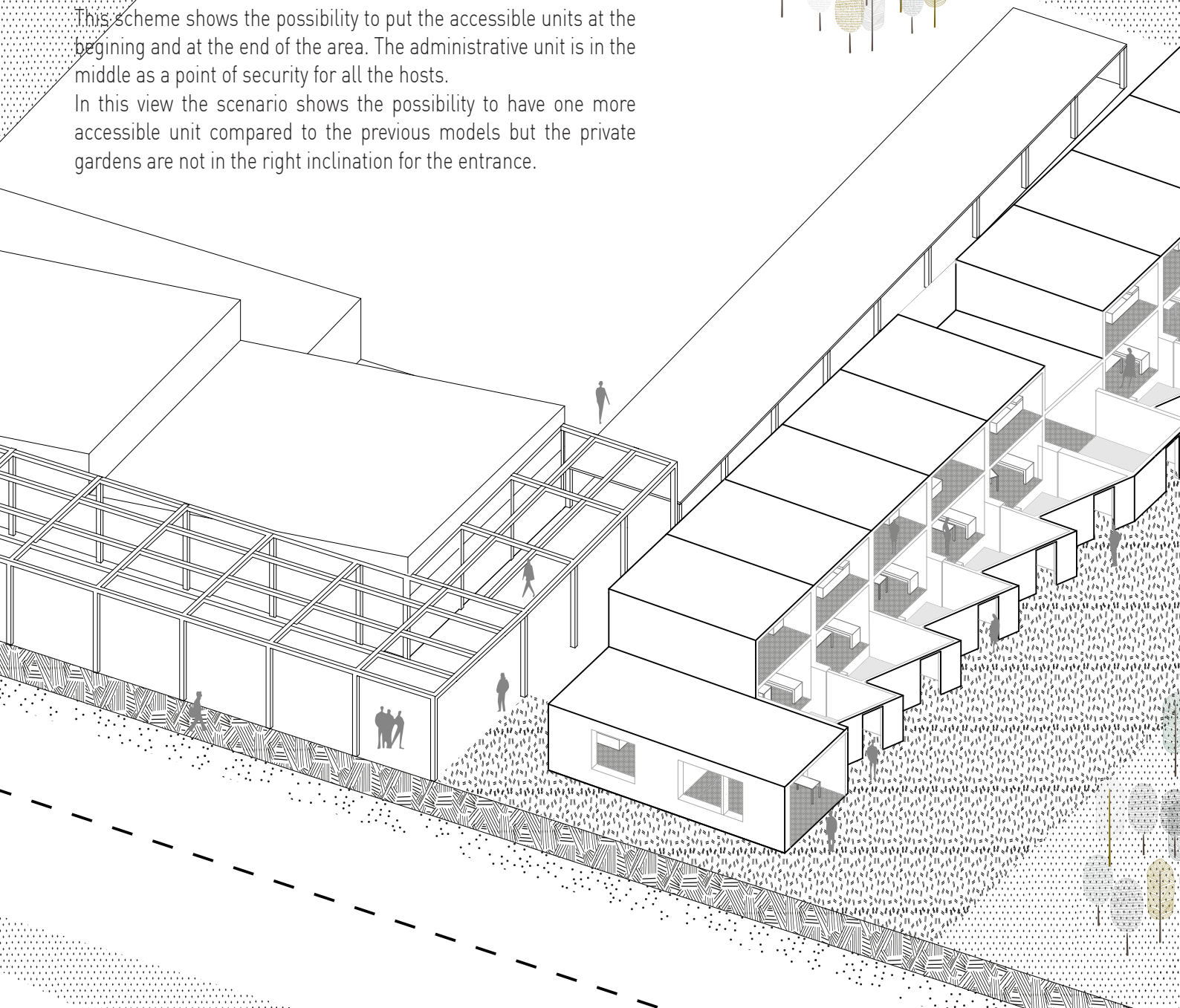
1 administrative unit

8 normal units

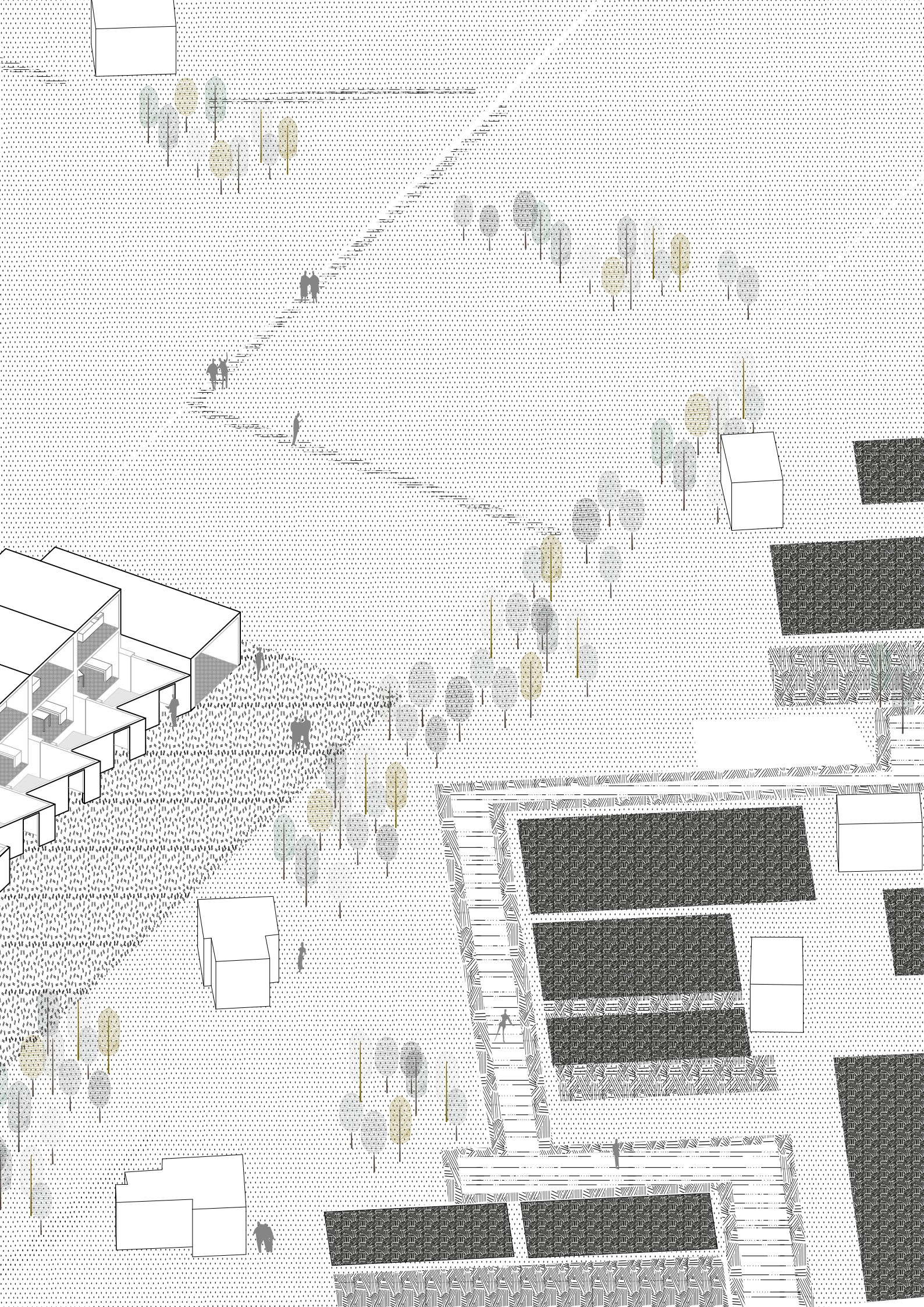
This scheme shows the possibility to put the accessible units at the beginning and at the end of the area. The administrative unit is in the middle as a point of security for all the hosts.

This scheme shows the possibility to put the accessible units at the beginning and at the end of the area. The administrative unit is in the middle as a point of security for all the hosts.

In this view the scenario shows the possibility to have one more accessible unit compared to the previous models but the private gardens are not in the right inclination for the entrance.



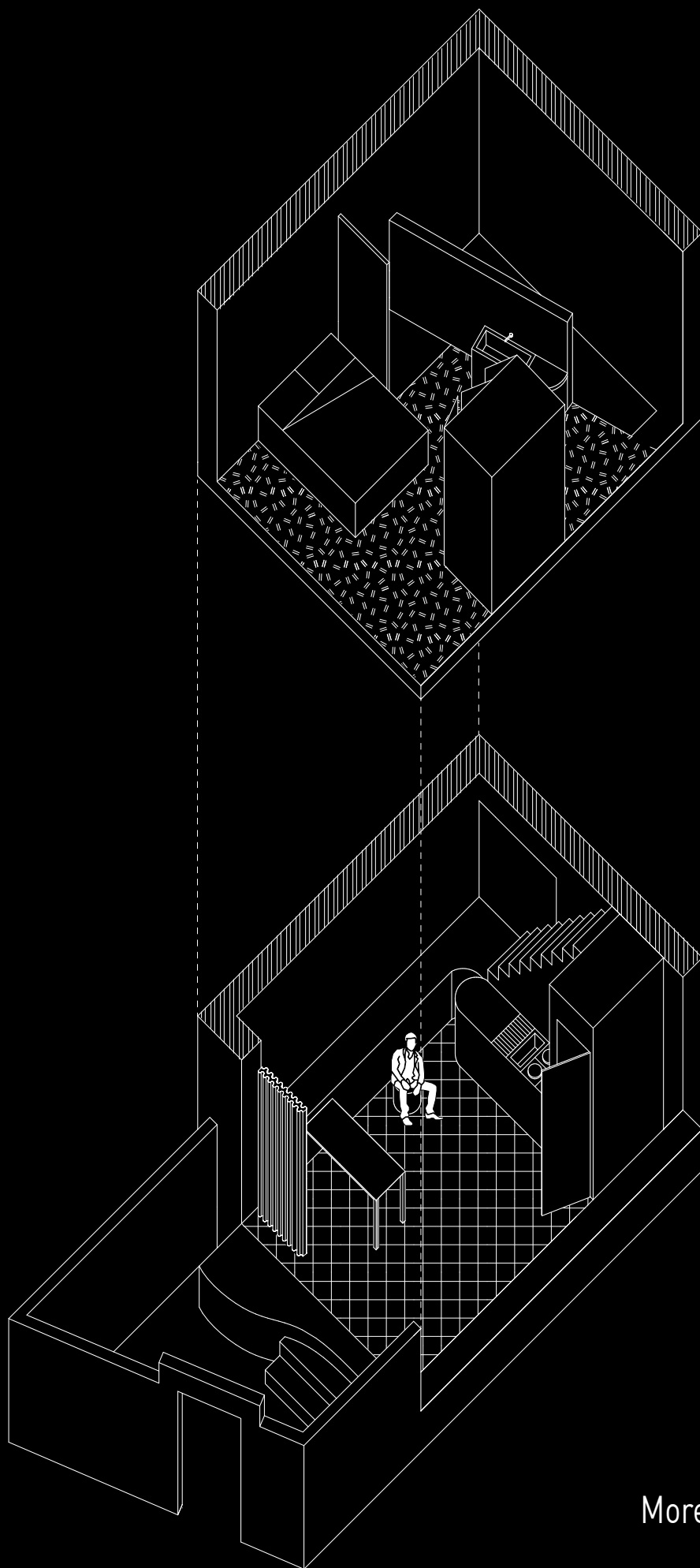




“There is an exterior garden  
within the house, and on that  
garden the house sits”

Sou Fujimoto, Futuroerspective Architecture





# STEP 3

More Home, More Garden

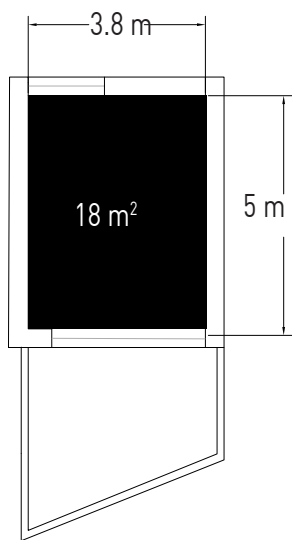
# MODEL INFO

## 12 units

9 houses of 30 m<sup>2</sup>

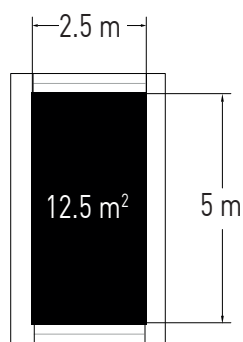
1 administrative unit of 25 m<sup>2</sup>

2 accessible units of 30 m<sup>2</sup>



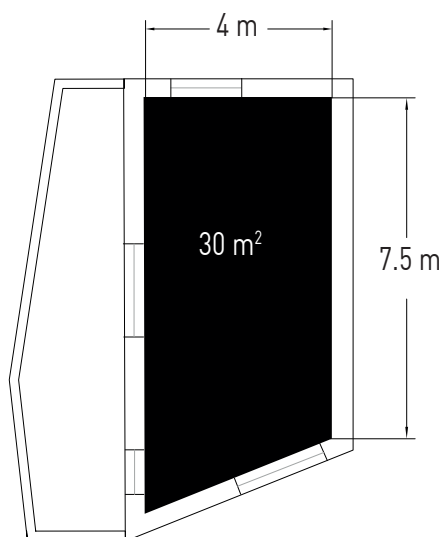
floor 0

house



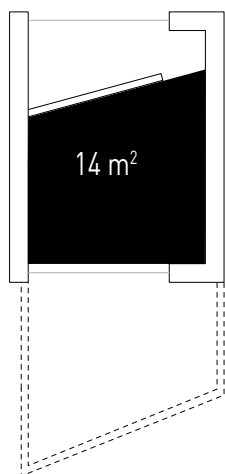
floor 0

administrative  
unit

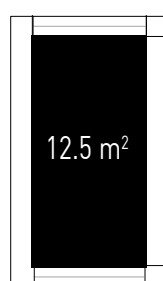


floor 0

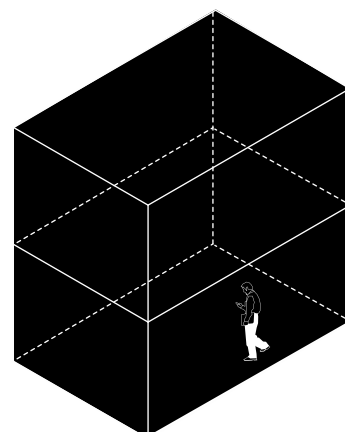
accessible  
unit



floor 1

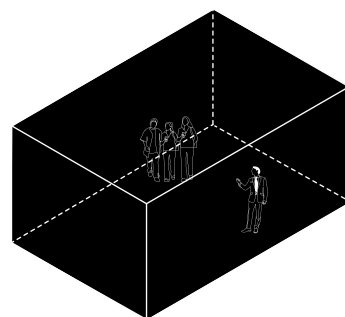


floor 1



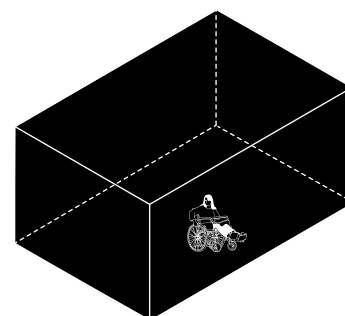
8 houses

+



1 administrative unit

+



2 accessible units

Each unit is composed by:

Groundfloor:

living room+kitchen

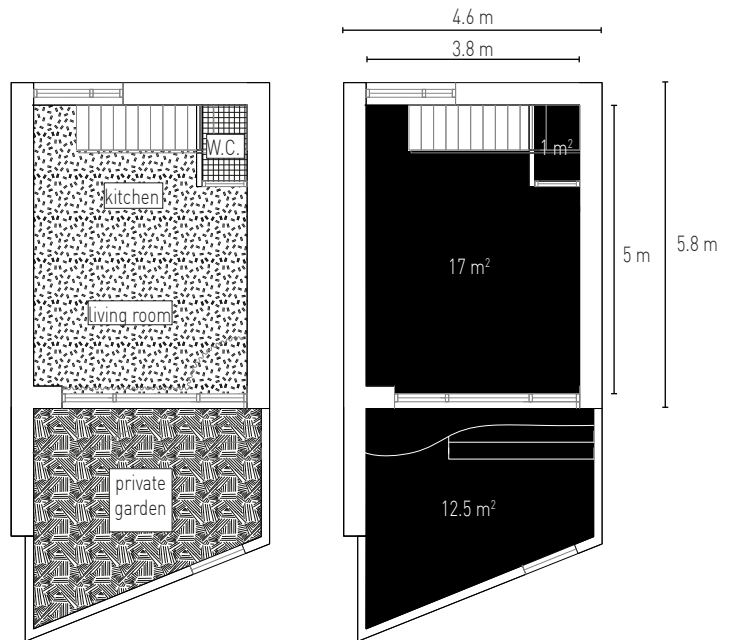
WC

First floor:

bathroom+bedroom

Space and light are granted by the absence of walls between the spaces.

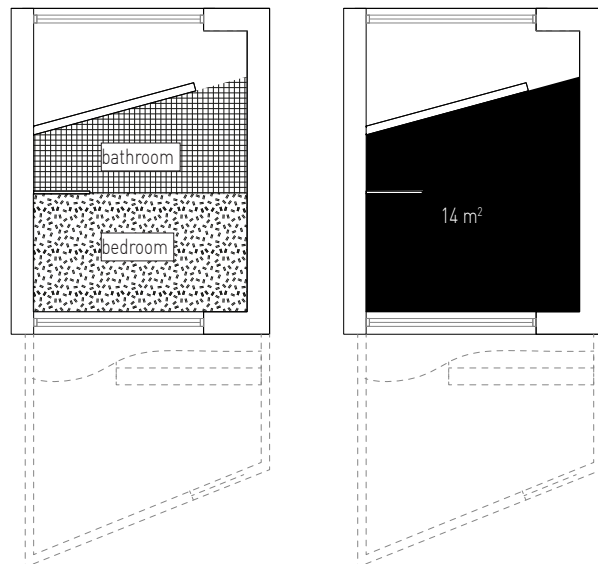
The staircase divides the house into 2 floors to have more benefits from the collective space on the groundfloor and more privacy on the first floor.

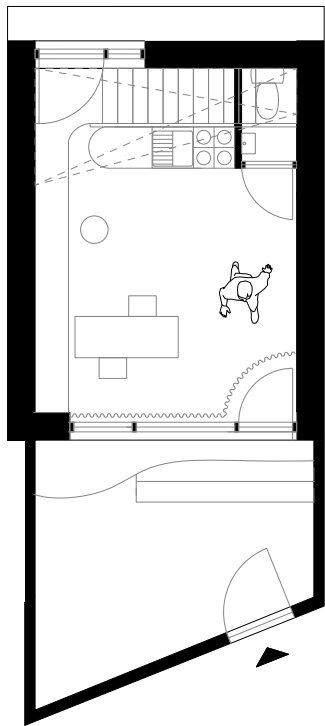


The dimensions of each unit changes (from the previous models which had a surface of 40m²) into 30 m².

The unit is 4.6 meters wide and 5.8 meters long.

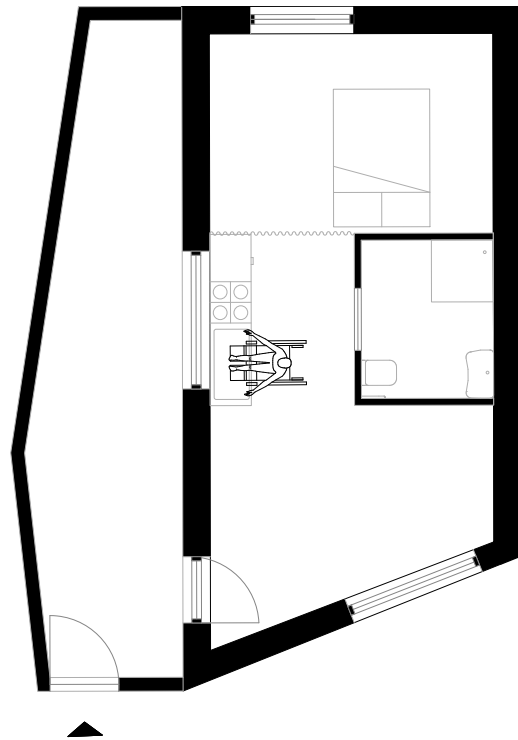
The ground floor has a surface of 19 m² while the first floor counts 14 m².



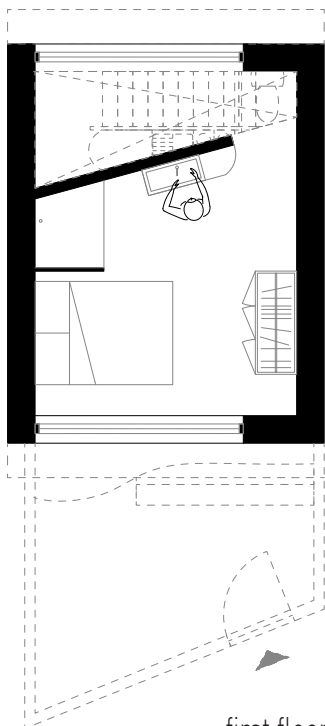


groundfloor

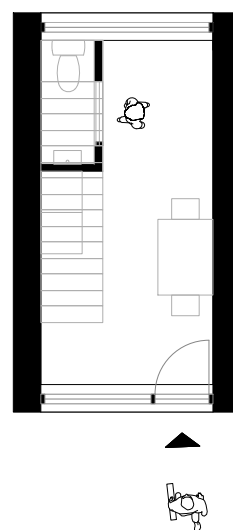
house



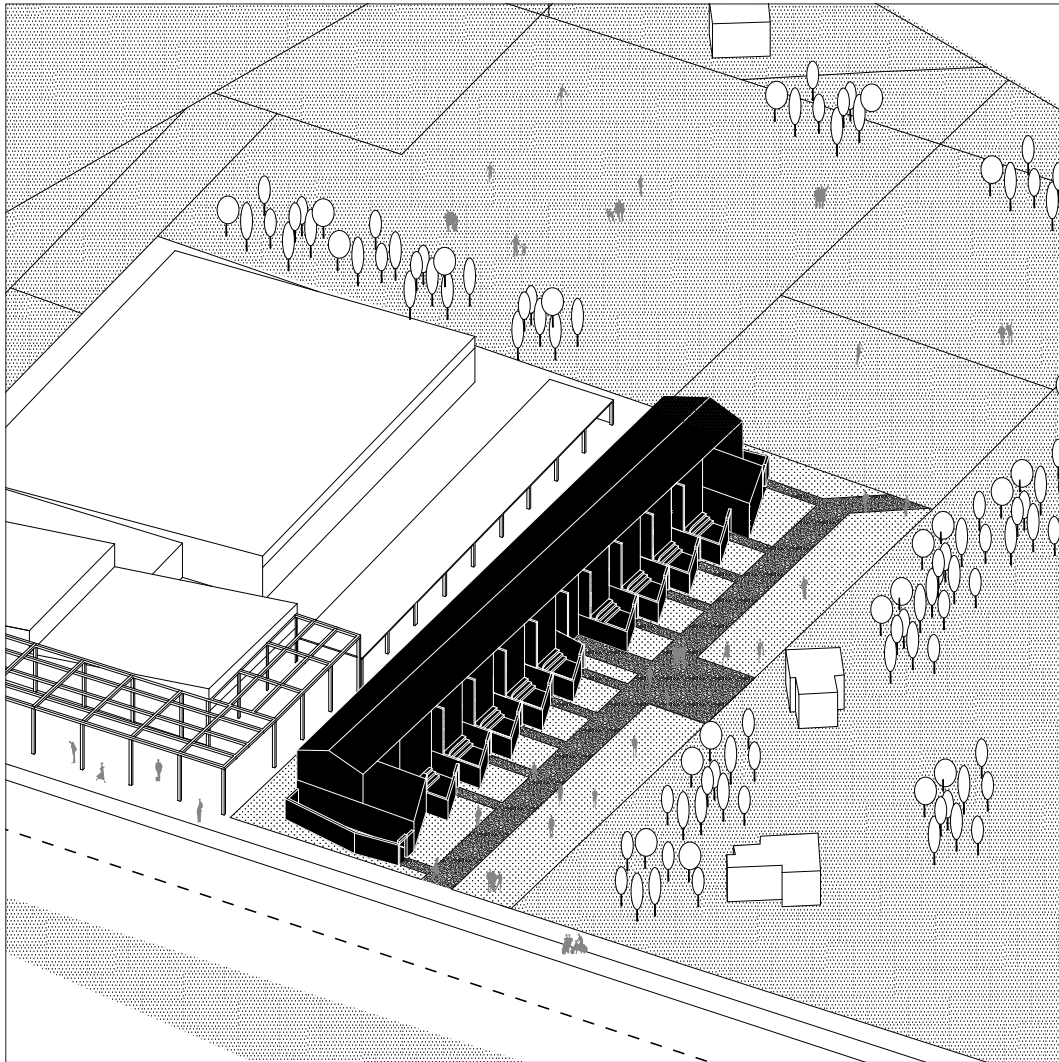
accessible  
unit



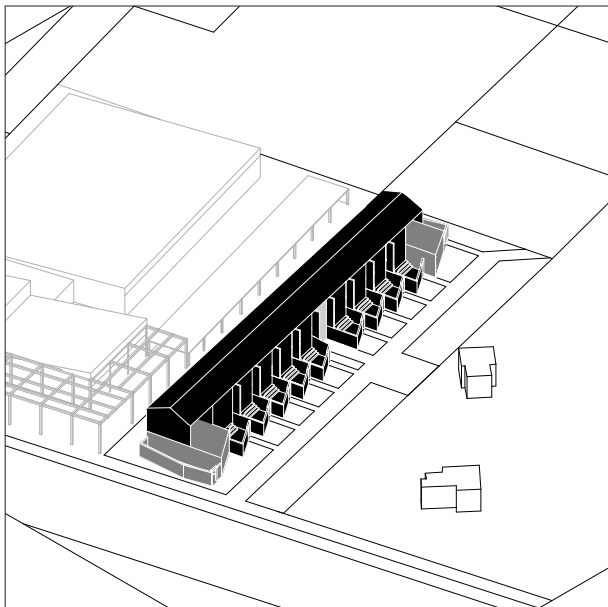
first floor



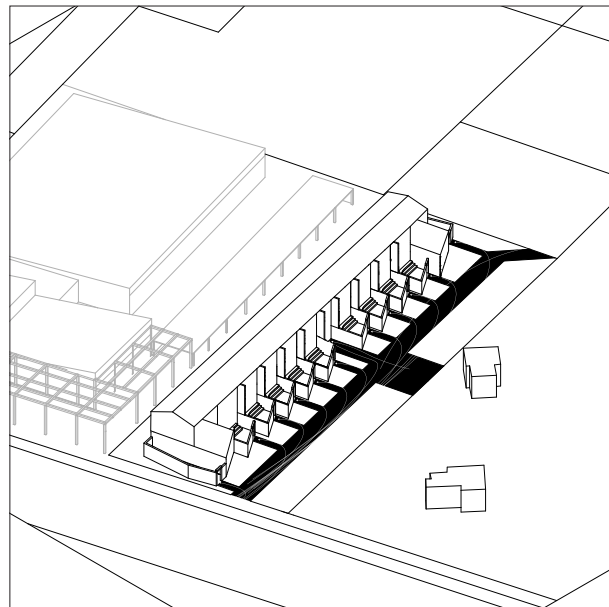
administrative unit



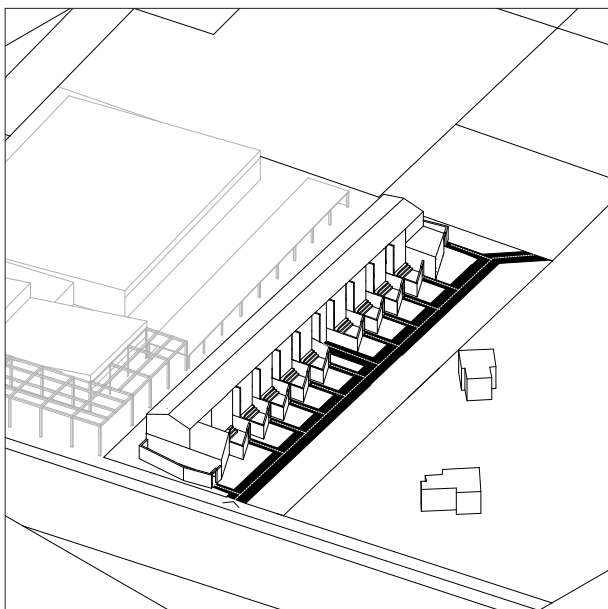
The surface for each units changes into  $30\text{ m}^2$  because the Company prefers to have the highest number of units but the plot is not bigger enough to have 12 units of  $40\text{ m}^2$ . The Company decided to add on the project one more accessible unit: the final masterplan is composed by 9 units, 1 administrative unit and 2 accessible units. The addition of the accessible unit would grant enough space for the administrative unit. This choice was chosen by the Company who decided to add one more house for the homeless people.



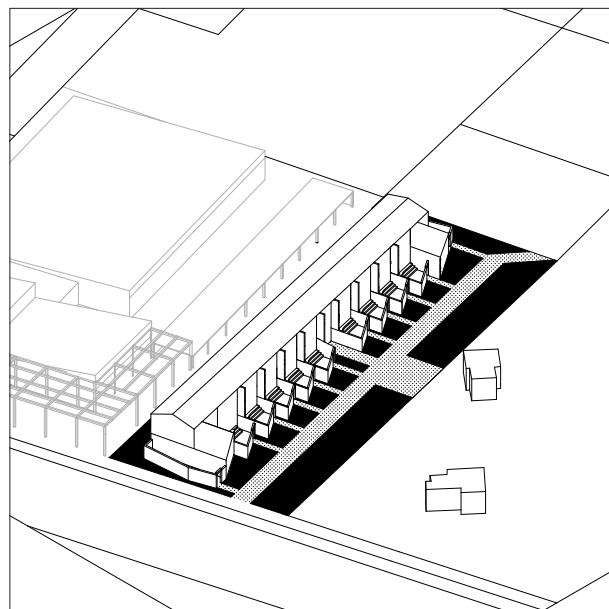
**functions**



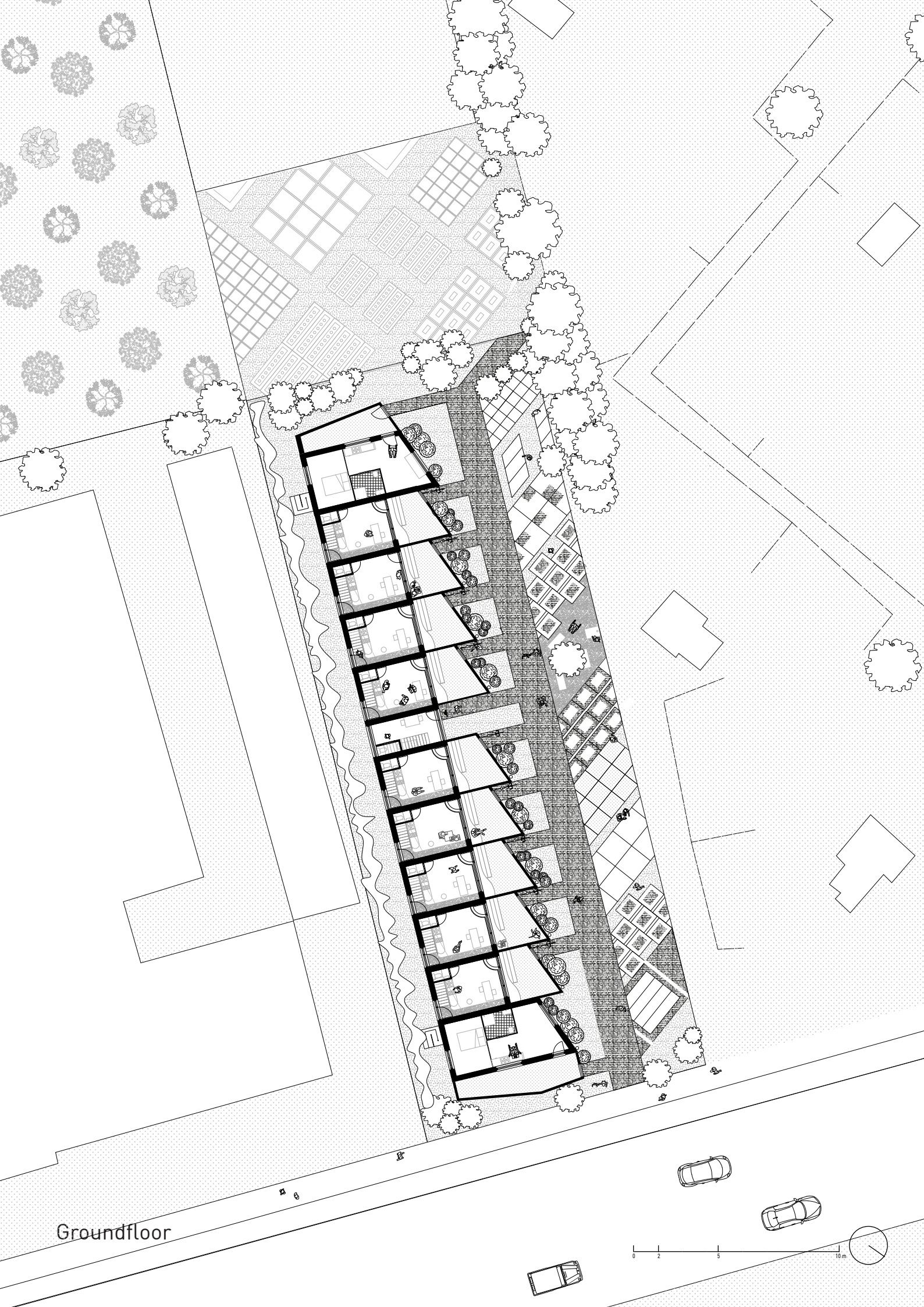
**flows**



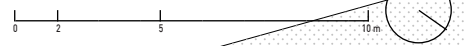
**access**



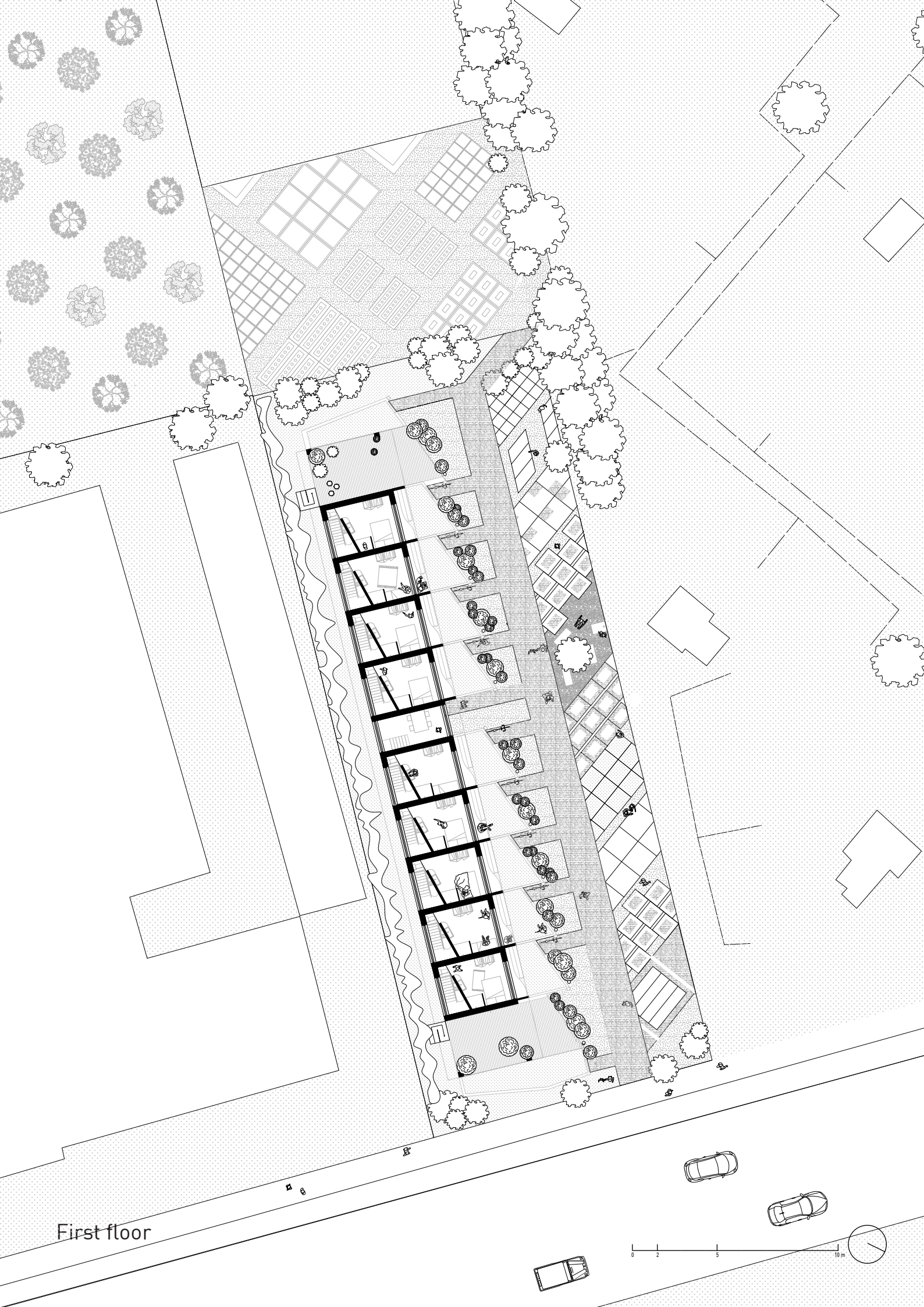
**green area**



Groundfloor

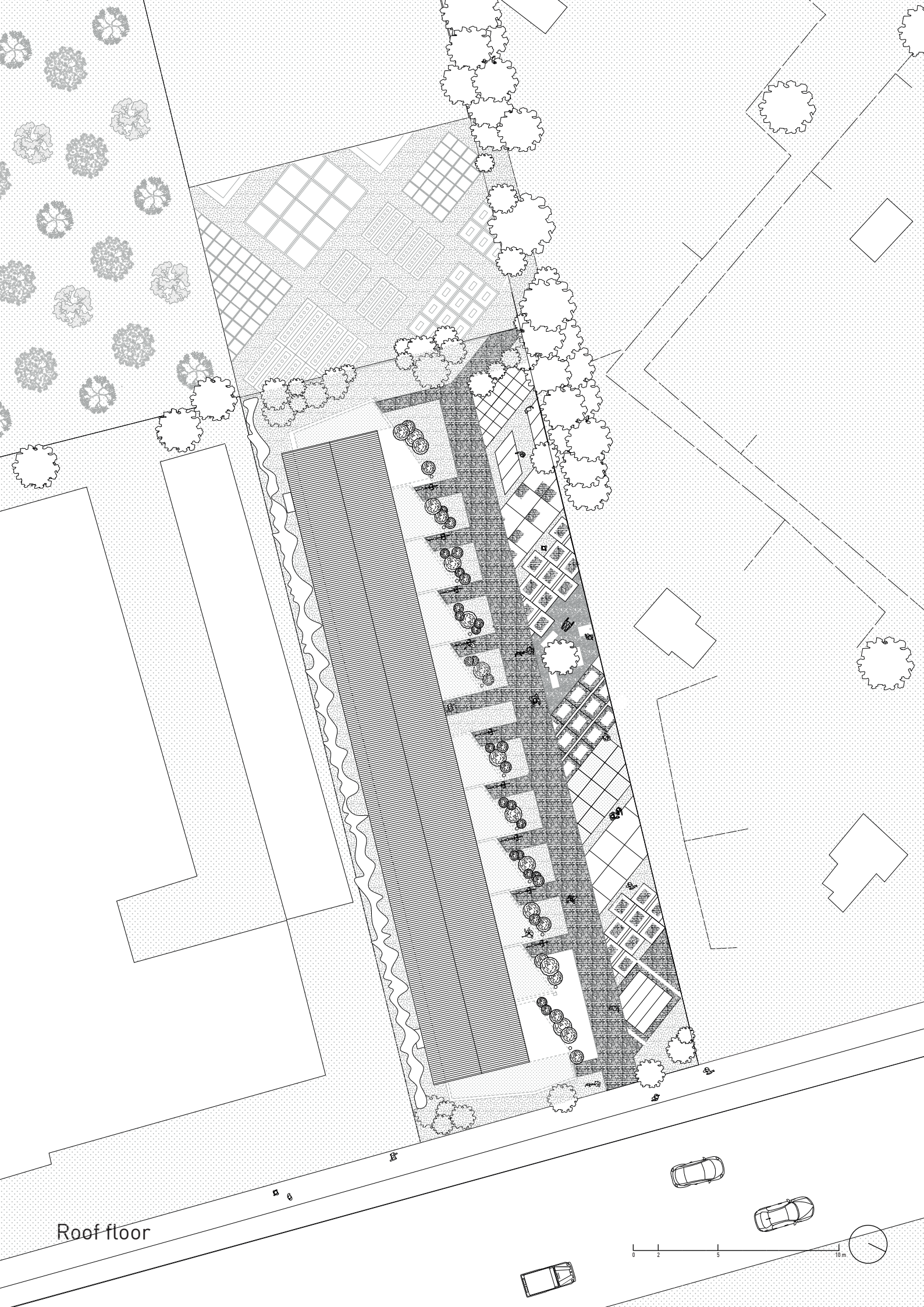






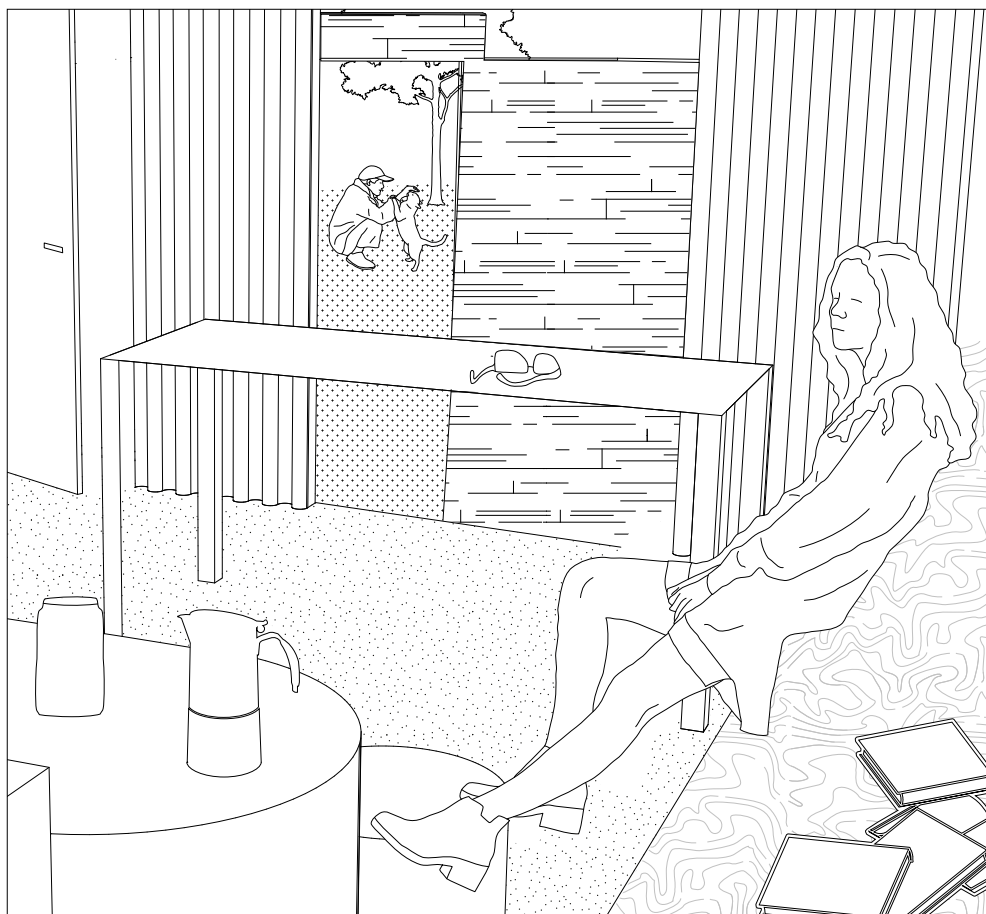
First floor

0 2 5 10 m



Roof floor

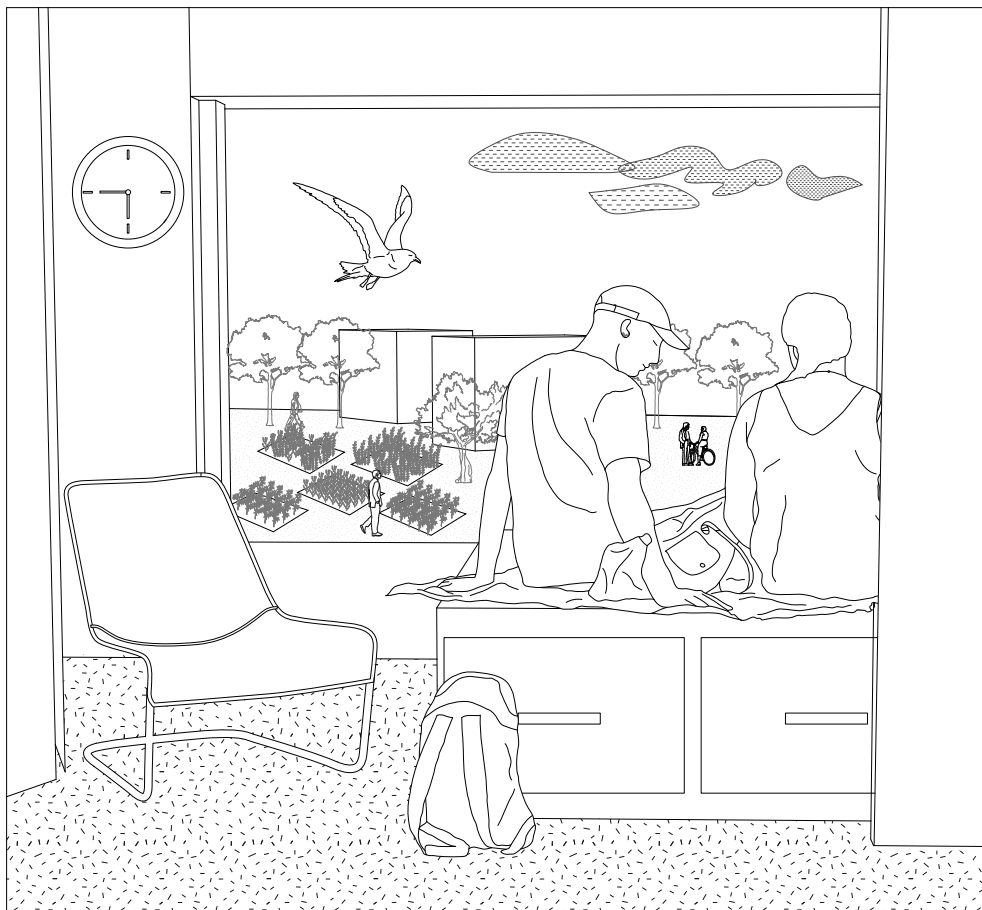
0 2 5 10m



*inside - outside*

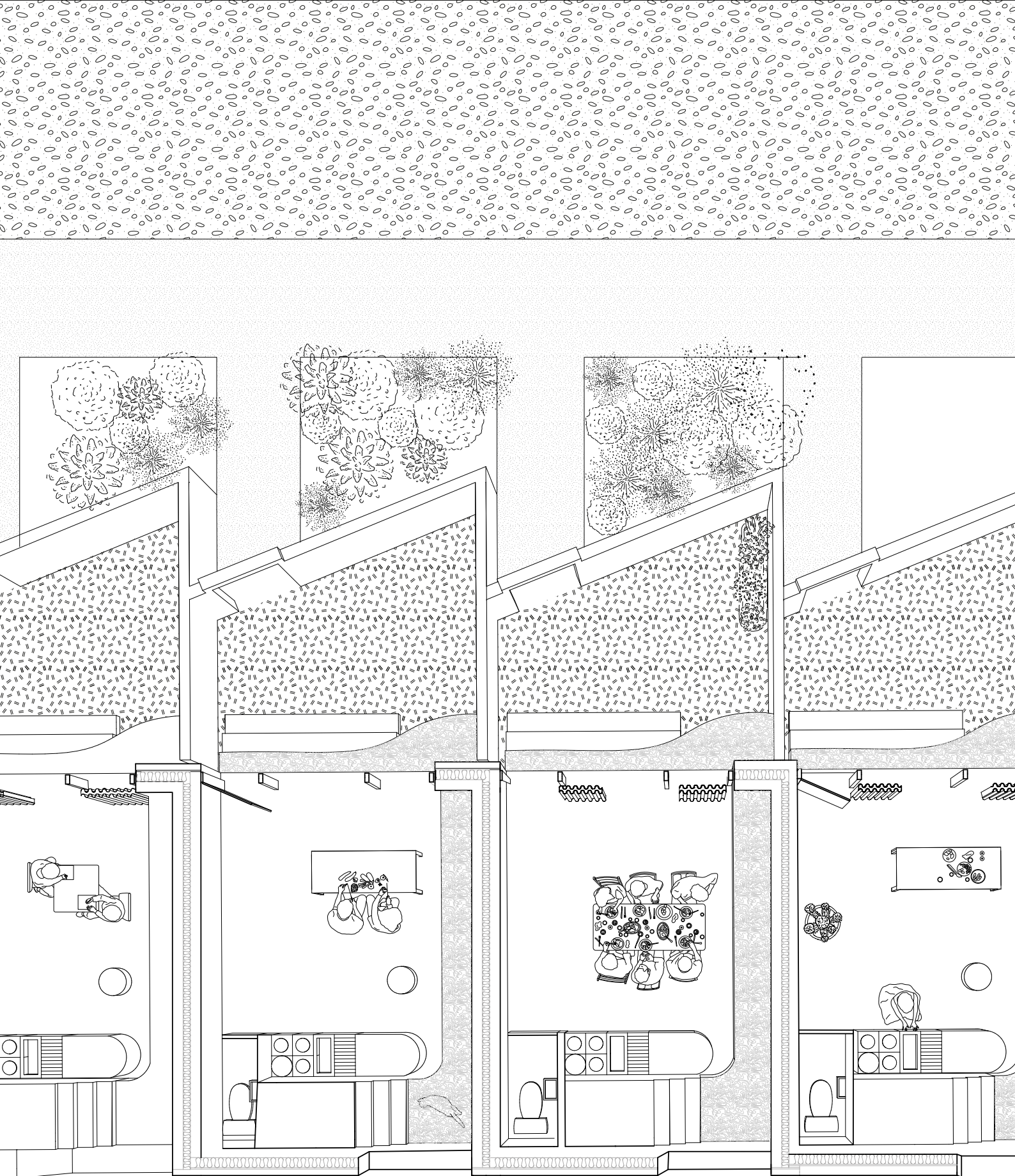


*a wall as a container of domestic space*



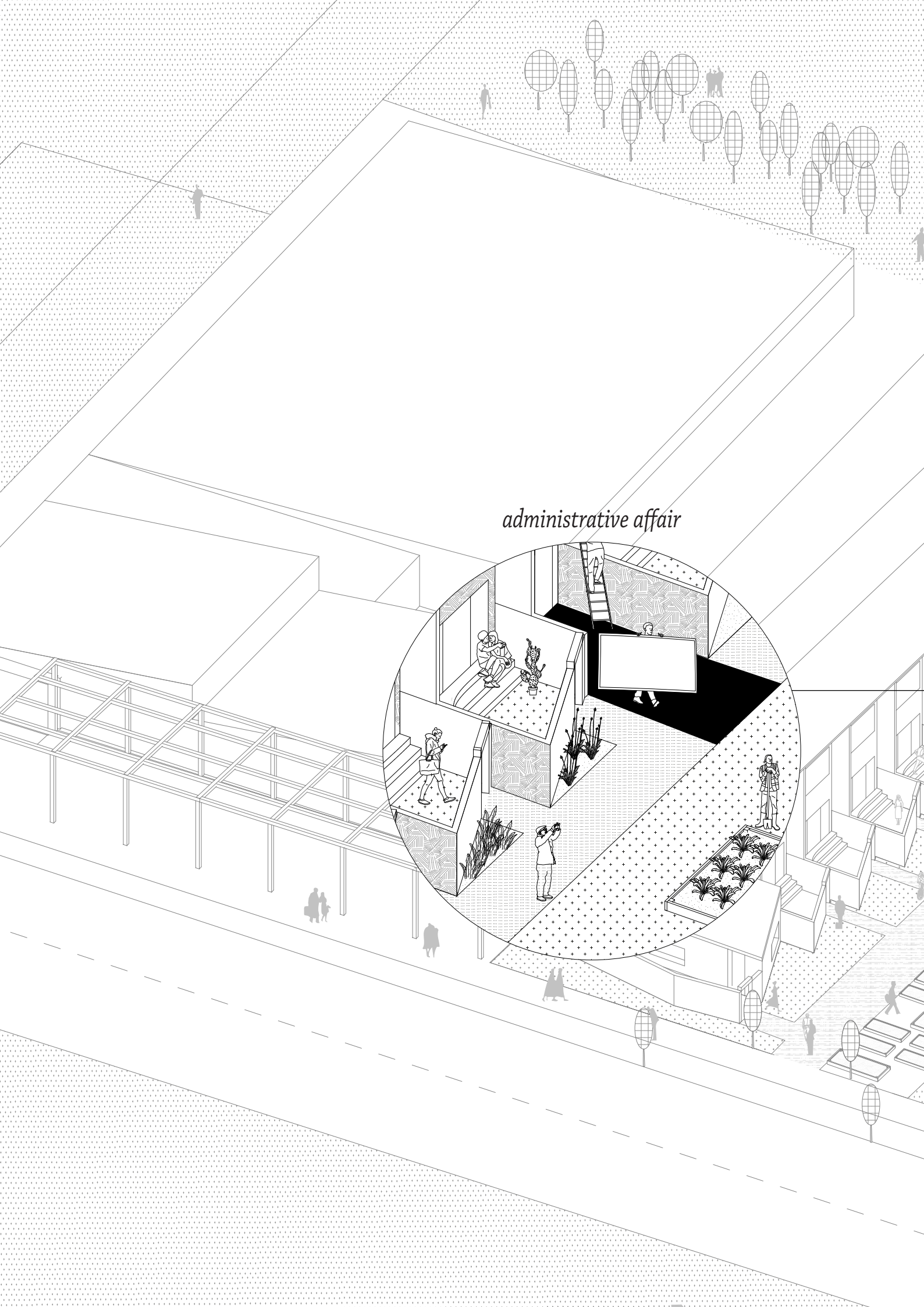
*a transition between private and collective space*





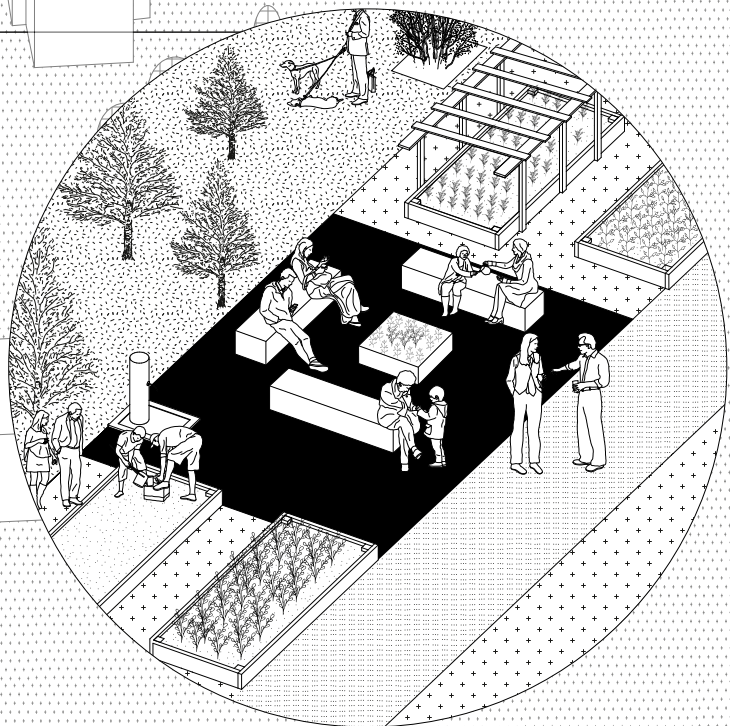
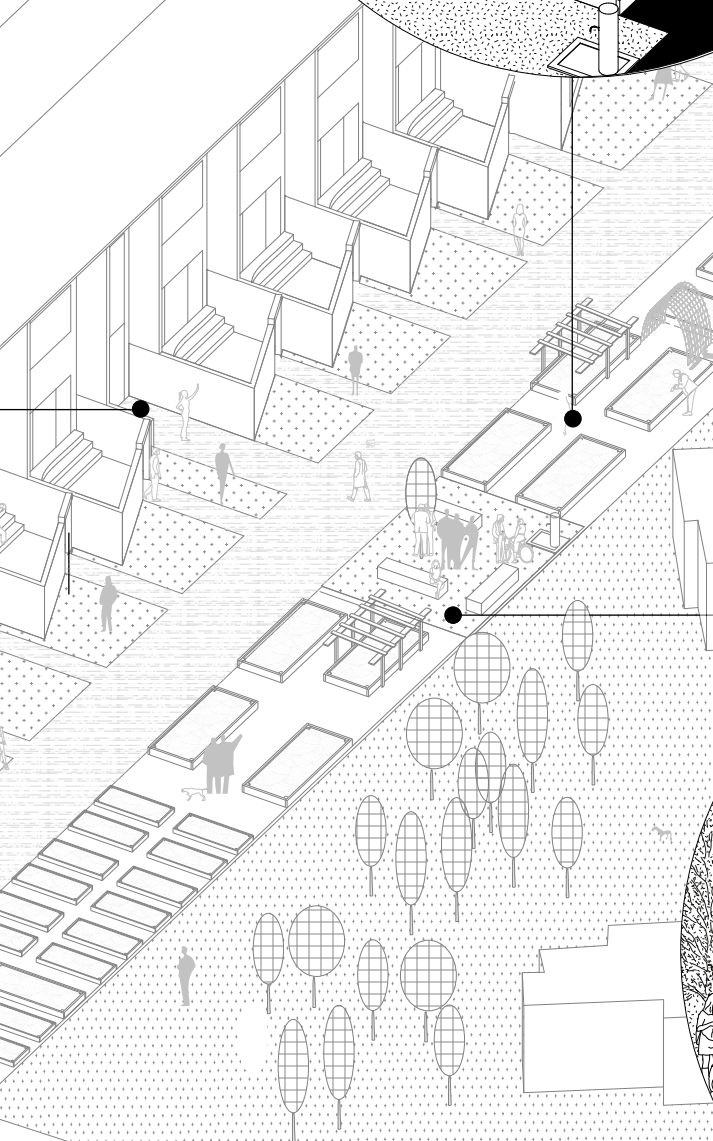
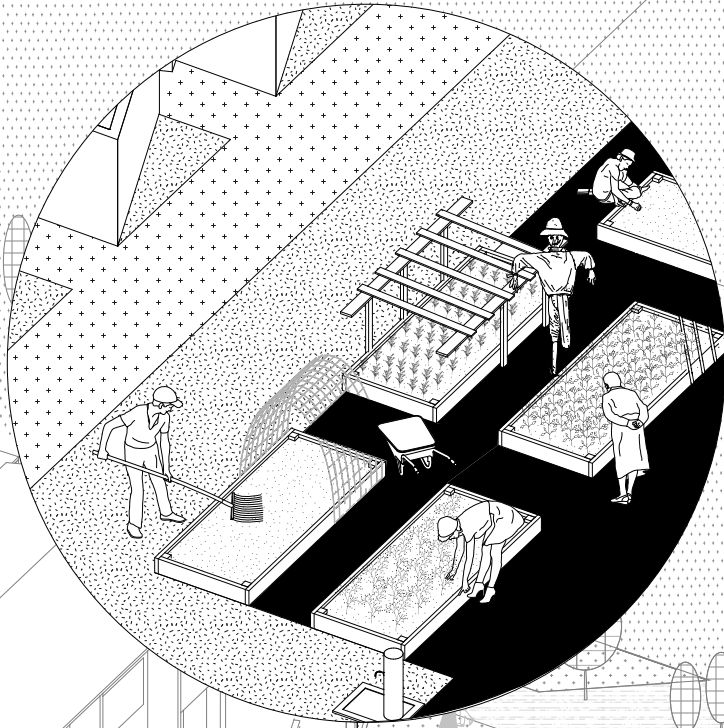
*domestic situations inside of each unit*

*administrative affair*





*vegetable gardens*



*talkative*

42

43

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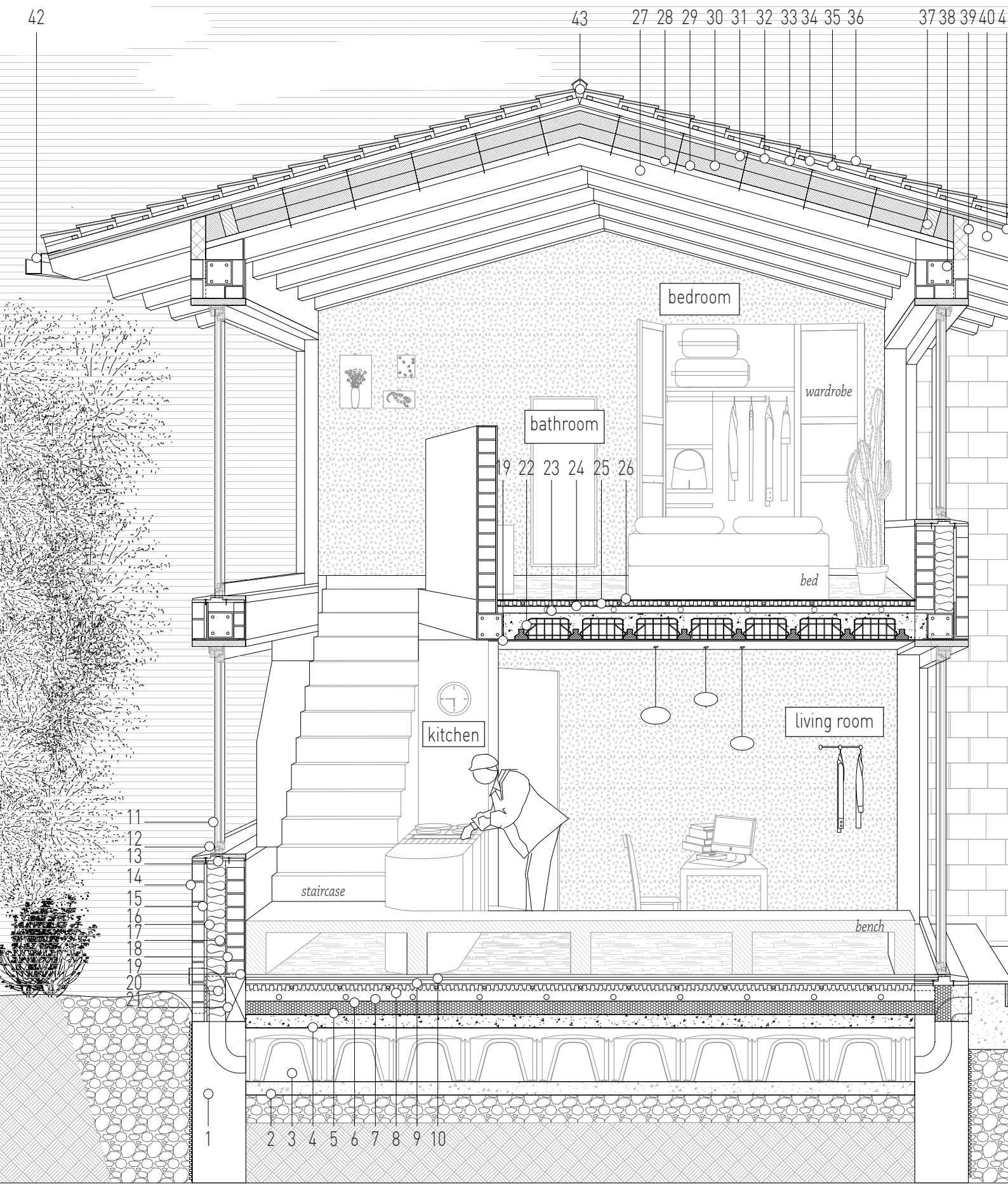
36

37

38

39

40



## FUNDATION FLOOR

- 1 Concrete beam
- 2 Concrete screed
- 3 Ventilated crawl space
- 4 Polished concrete 10 cm
- 5 Insulating 10 cm
- 6 Vapor barrier 1 cm
- 7 Screed system 8 cm
- 8 Heating screed systems 5 cm
- 9 Glue 2 cm
- 10 Paving 2 cm

## WALLS

- 11 Wooden window
- 12 External concrete sill
- 13 EPS rigid foam fittings for window sills
- 14 Cellular concrete insulating belgian bricks 9 cm

- 15 Cavity space 2cm

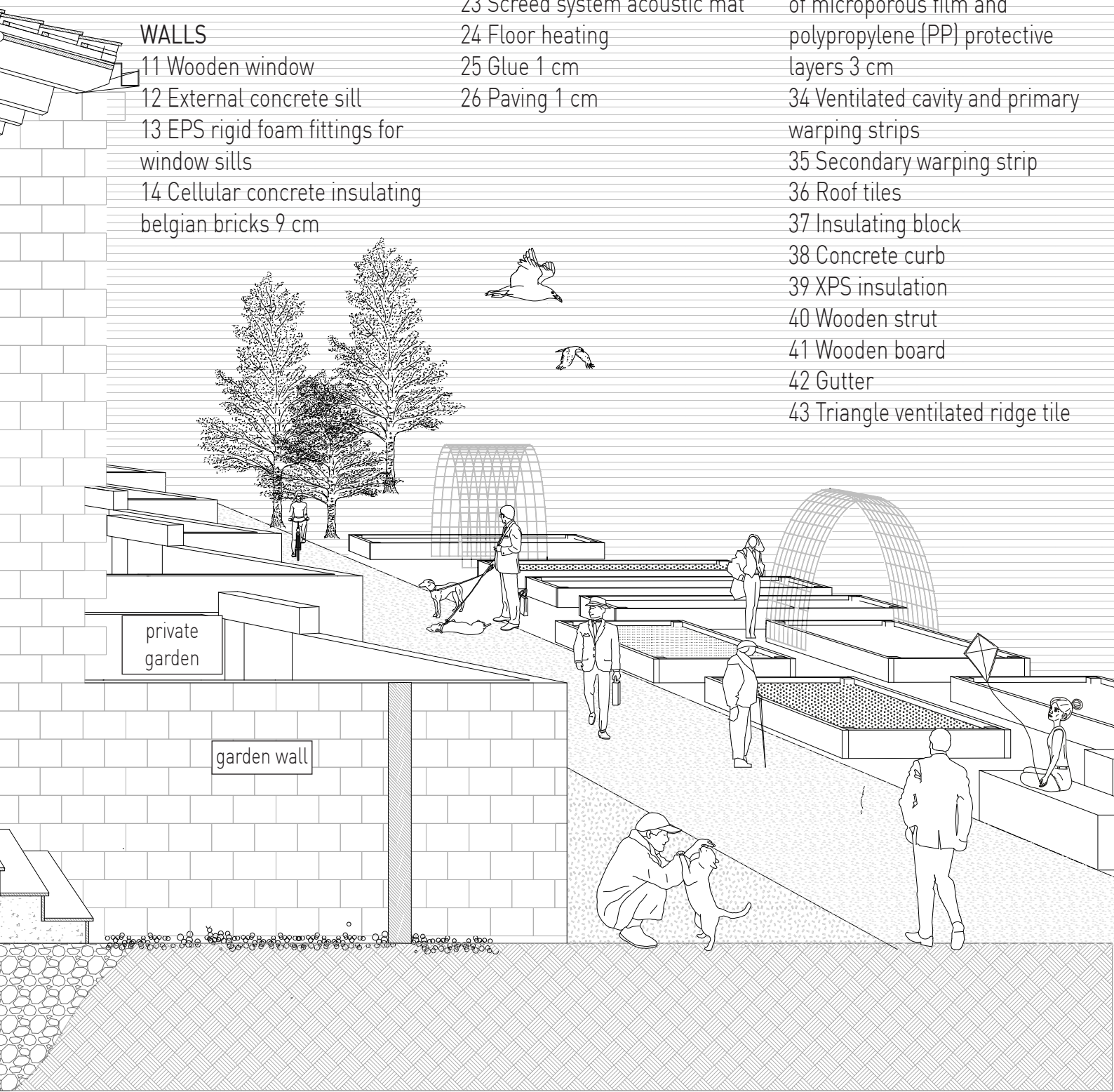
- 16 Expanded polystyrene thermal insulation 14 cm (0,04 W/mK)
- 17 Waterproof foil 1 cm
- 18 Belgian concrete bricks 14 cm
- 19 Plasterboard 1 cm
- 20 Air pipe
- 21 Ytong Block

## INTER-FLOOR

- 22 Concrete Floor
- 23 Screed system acoustic mat
- 24 Floor heating
- 25 Glue 1 cm
- 26 Paving 1 cm

## ROOF

- 27 Wooden strut
- 28 Wooden board
- 29 Vapor barrier
- 30 Wood fiber panel laying horizontally 10cm
- 31 Wood fiber panel laying vertically 10 cm
- 32 Impact resistant wood fiber panels
- 33 Highly breathable membrane of microporous film and polypropylene (PP) protective layers 3 cm
- 34 Ventilated cavity and primary warping strips
- 35 Secondary warping strip
- 36 Roof tiles
- 37 Insulating block
- 38 Concrete curb
- 39 XPS insulation
- 40 Wooden strut
- 41 Wooden board
- 42 Gutter
- 43 Triangle ventilated ridge tile







PROJECT REFERENCE FOR THE FUTURE VISIONARY



HOUSE L&D

**ALT - THIERRY LAGRANGE**

GHENT - BE  
2019

# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



*Working for a competition in a foreign country was an experience which gave me the opportunity to be in touch with a new reality and study Belgium, in particular the city of Ghent, on a local scale.*

*During the work I practiced different approaches to the project than the one I used to know.*

*For example, according to the Company of homeless people, the presence of public areas in the project was not being considered because of these places would have been recognized as stressed and conflict zone, meeting spot and spaces of collision but also because of the limited area of the plot.*

*For these approaches I would say that it could be better to solve these problems and not to escape from them.*

*According to the idea that the homeless people have difficulties for their past events, for their mental and or physical diseases I would like to say that it could be better to deal with them as common people.*

*My personal idea is to find a solution to have public and sharing space for their free time under a supervision of the administrative unit without denying them this opportunity to meet and spend time with other people.*

*The final plan of the project shows a common space in the middle, in front of the administrative unit, as a stimulus to be more open with people with problems.*

*My work is still in progress and it's not the final solution for what it'll be in reality but it could be an input or an idea for the future area of Ghent.*

*Designing a project for homeless people was, in my own experience, an intense and continuous research between the relationship of the social and architectural sphere.*

*This work stimulates me to find the solution for each problems, to be accurate and precise on every details and to get involved in realities that we are not used to deal with.*

## CONCLUSIONS

*The thesis work aims to study two different but connected issues, the phenomenon of national poverty and the future design through an architectural solution. It has been seen that an approach on a national scale is important for both phenomena as well as the action of innovators on a local scale and how, through the reception of homeless people, some realities today can return to hope. The criticalities of these initiatives, which mainly reside in the relationships and contacts between homeless people and inhabitants, must be taken into consideration. Another factor of decisive importance is the work that, in order to guarantee inclusion, must be carried out by the resident population and homeless people side by side and towards a common goal: live together. The project area is located within a residential area and public activities. The proposal for the insertion of homeless people will not be easy to accept by the inhabitant and the surroundings will have changes.*

*Exploring the project, the approach was continuously changing and is still in progress: the first test through the physical model was the key to start designing the units. The process of the decision of having units of one or two floors was very intense and it determined the final view for the new area: duplex units for homeless people, administrative unit and accessible units.*

*The second step concentrated on finding the solution of the footprint of the units including the inclination of the private gardens: initially the idea was to follow the same line for the houses and the gardens creating a rectangular scheme; after that the study of the units turned into four typologies and it ended with the final solution of a compact block of 12 units (9 units, 1 administrative unit and 2 accessible units) and sloping private gardens.*

*Because of the low budget the duplex units have a surface of 30 m<sup>2</sup> creating a complex block under the same roof where each person could find themselves through the privacy, the surrounding green area and the feeling to be integrated with the community.*

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# T A B L E S

## **Table A**

Répartition par sexe et par situation de vie des personnes dénombrées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale la nuit du 5 novembre 2018 (La Strada, 2019)

## **Table B**

Répartition par sexe et par situation de vie des personnes dénombrées en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale la nuit du 5 novembre 2018 (La Strada, 2019)

## **Table C**

Répartition des personnes dénombrées pendant la nuit du 7 novembre 2016 (La Strada, 2016)

## **Table D**

Répartition par sexe des personnes recensées la nuit du 5 novembre 2018 selon le type de maison d'accueil où elles étaient hébergées (La Strada, 2019)

## **Table E**

Répartition des personnes dénombrées pendant la nuit du 7 novembre 2016 (La Strada, 2017)

## **TABLE F**

Evolution du nombre de personnes recensées en logement inadéquat en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (La Strada, 2019)

# V I S U A L M A T E R I A L S

## **Inside a London homeless shelter**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RJzqqNmIac>

## **Homeless outside Habitat and Heal's – Dezeen speaks to two rough sleepers**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqtbyf\\_L21U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqtbyf_L21U)





# Thank you Grazie Merci

I would like to offer my thanks first of all to **Jan**, professor and guide who accompanied me on this journey, who gave me the opportunity to continue researching and thinking about every simple detail. Thank you for believing in me by giving me the opportunity to follow my every thought; you have been a friend, a point of reference and help in this difficult period.

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