RECLAIMING WHITE ELEPHANTS

how architecture becomes a power strategy for a social, political & revolutionary movement

a master's thesis by
Ana María Soto Chávez

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
Dipartimento di Architettura e Design
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RECLAIMING WHITE ELEPHANTS:
how architecture becomes a power strategy for a social, political and revolutionary movement

Supervisor
Prof. Elena Vigliocco

Candidate
Ana María Soto Chávez

Gracias a mi familia,
a mi papá por ayudarme a dirigir (la tesis y la vida),
a mi mamá por darme el apoyo incondicional y la motivación,
a mi hermana porque también me inspiras a trabajar para poder verte,
a mi abuela por siempre estar ahí.

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01 abstract

This project aims to explore the potential of architecture as a catalyst for social and political change. By examining the relationship between the built environment and the community, I will investigate how the design and construction of space can be used to initiate and support a revolutionary movement. The goal is to demonstrate how architecture can play a critical role in shaping a more just and equitable society.

In order to develop it, this thesis is composed by the following chapters: firstly, we will address the problematic and its context within the first chapter, ***Conceptual framework***, where we discuss how architecture is a product of society and its political context, acknowledging how it cannot be unattached from the concepts of politics, power, corruption and revolution. This is broadly explored on the positive aspect of it, where architecture works as a medium of social expression; and on the negative aspect, where architecture appears in the corruptive contexts in the form of public abandoned megastructures known as White Elephants. Its causes are further explored and developed in order to move on to a contextual analysis.

In the second chapter, ***Contextual analysis***, this problematic of White Elephants and corruption finds itself in the grounds of Colombia, and more specifically, Bogotá. A profile of the city is done to identify its historic political correlation with architecture so far and how the incidence of White Elephants has been in it. After, we categorise Bogota's White Elephants and prioritise them to obtain the most feasible one to bring upon the aim of this experimental project.

Further analysis, resulting from a prioritisation process, leads us to the district of Teusaquillo, where we also study its political history with architecture and characterise the zone and profile, including the population that lives in it and the eventually prioritised White Elephants that resulted in that district. In opposite to the negative projects undeveloped, we expose architectonic repurposing projects that have been a successful example on how to handle abandoned buildings.

Following to the third chapter, ***Strategy***, we scale down to the chosen White Elephant to work on, assessing its current damage and developing the strategies that, in the aim of this project, will be replicable to further White Elephants if desired, along with the interventions that will be specifically made to the chosen building, which will work as an experimental case study working hand in hand with the community at place.

Finally, in the last section, ***Conclusions***, we will summarise the main findings of the project and conclude about the potential of architecture as a strategy for social and political change. Through an analysis of the design strategies and interventions, we ***will demonstrate how the manipulation and construction of space can be used to initiate and support a revolutionary movement.*** Additionally, we will discuss the limitations and challenges faced during the project and suggest possible areas for future research.

introduction

Architecture is a political expression. It is not possible to separate these two concepts, since they have been simultaneously influenced by each other, whether it is from the context they are developed or the objective they want to achieve. Two sociologists who have explored the relationship between architecture and politics are Max Weber and Georg Simmel. According to Weber, ***the design and layout of buildings and cities can reflect and influence the power dynamics within a society*** (1921), while Simmel affirms that ***architecture, as art, can be an expression of the social and cultural dynamics of its time*** (Borsari, 2018).

From the earliest cities, several factors including the available resources and technology, cultural and religious beliefs of the society and needs of the people in the territory, where shaped by the connection of architecture and politics. Several ancient examples, such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, reflect how the layout of cities was often dictated by the needs of the ruling class and the functions of the city.

In recent times, architecture has been utilized as a medium through which political power can be expressed, but not solely by those who hold traditional forms of power such as economic or political dominance. Instead, it has been utilized as a means of resistance by those who are disadvantaged by such dominance and is often created by local communities to address social needs that have been neglected by the dominant power. As such, architecture becomes both the expression of living and interacting with space by its users and the expression of their ideals.

Architecture has the unique ability to express social and political ideas and to serve the public through the design of common spaces such as parks and plazas. Bernard Tschumi, an architect, and theorist, exemplifies this by considering the context and connections of a space and transforming it into an "event", altering the meaning and experience of the space (2005). This demonstrates how architecture can be used to empower and benefit the public.

However, there is a dark side to this ability, and the influence of politics on architecture is not always positive. Instead, political considerations or agendas can often limit the creative or innovative potential of architectural designs and may result in buildings or cities that are less functional, aesthetically pleasing, or responsive to the needs and preferences of the public. Politicians or other stakeholders may prioritize a personal agenda over the needs of the people who would need to interact with the buildings. Moreover, the influence of politics on architecture is not limited to the design of individual buildings or cities. Political considerations may also shape the planning and development of entire regions or countries, leading to the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects or urban development initiatives that prioritize the interests of certain groups over the needs of the broader population. This can result in the creation of social, economic, or spatial inequalities. Overall, the influence of politics on architecture has often been negative and limiting, especially when personal interests rise from those who hold the power.

One major issue in the intersection of politics and architecture is corruption, which can have significant impacts on the design, construction, maintenance, and development of buildings and cities. This can take various forms, such as embezzlement of funds intended for infrastructure projects, corrupt officials approving subpar or unsafe buildings, and the abandonment of construction projects due to poor management or political propaganda. A specific type of corruption that is especially concerning is the creation of "White Elephant" projects, which are large-scale infrastructure projects that are costly to maintain and do not generate sufficient returns on investment. These projects, which may include bridges, tunnels, or stadiums, are often seen as extravagant or unnecessary and can lead to resource misallocation, social inequality and unrest, and environmental harm.

White Elephants are a global issue that have altered the development of cities throughout time. Moreover, there are some factors that may increase the likelihood of these projects occurring in a given country: the lack of transparency and accountability in the planning and development process, the influence of special interests or political considerations and higher levels of corruption, leaving corrupt individuals and organisations able to gain control over the process, making them be more likely to pursue projects that benefit themselves or their interests rather than the broader public (Robinson & Torvik, 2005). Even though, any country is propense to fall into these projects – given the recent years, projects such as the Olympic venues in Montreal and Rio de Janeiro[1], Eisenman's City of Culture in Santiago de Compostela[2] and the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest[3] have received media attention due to their expensive and sober destiny of becoming monuments of megalomania–, a corruption index can showcase which ones are more propense to it. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) measures the perceived level of corruption in the public sector of countries around the world, with a score of zero being highly corrupt and a score of 100 being very clean. According to the most recent CPI, two-thirds of countries scored below 50, and 131 countries made no improvements in their scores. 27 countries scored their lowest ever (Transparency International, 2021). On one hand, countries in Western Europe and the European Union are facing transparency and accountability challenges in their response to COVID-19, which could damage their reputation for clean governance. While in other regions, such as Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europe, increasing restrictions on civil freedoms are letting corruption to go unchecked. Some high-performing countries are also showing signs of decline. Lastly, in the Middle East and North Africa, the interests of a few powerful individuals continue to dominate politics and business,

1
Todd, J. (2016). The 40-year hangover: how the 1976 Olympics nearly broke Montreal. The Guardian. Retrieved 01 03, 2023, from https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jul/06/40-year-hangover-1976-olympic-games-broke-montreal-canada

2
Hawthorne, C. (2014). Coda to a Career: Eisenman's City of Culture. Architect Magazine. Retrieved 01 03, 2023, from https://www.

and restrictions on civil and political freedoms are hindering progress.

For example, Italy, a country that is part of the European region, whose index rises to 66 points, but belongs to the countries with the lowest index in the region with 56 points. This relates to the high tendency it has on creating White Elephants, with six hundred forty-seven unfinished public works, costing 4 billion euros to finish them (Bortolamai, 2021), the main issue usually is that these projects happen in the most vulnerable zones and would have been a social impulse for deteriorated areas. Meanwhile, the other interesting region worth highlighting are the Americas, that continuously faces challenges with transparency and accountability, allowing corruption to go unchecked. It has a CPI of 43 points (23 less than Europe) and half of the countries being below average. This issue enhances the social and economic inequality, and undermines the functionality and sustainability of cities, and the trust of the public in their institutions. The first country that appears below the average is Colombia, marking 39 points, with a systematic corruption history.

In Colombia, White Elephant projects have been linked to corruption, including actions of clientelism (the exchange of favours or privileges for support or loyalty) and misappropriation (the unauthorized use of funds or resources for personal gain). These practices have resulted in the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects that have been abandoned or underutilized due to a lack of proper planning or oversight. Examples of White Elephants in Colombia include the Magdalena River Navigation Project, which was intended to improve transportation and commerce in the region but has been plagued by cost overruns and mismanagement, and the Interoceanic Highway, which has faced delays and controversy due to issues with land acquisition and the displacement of local communities (Contraloría General de la República de Colombia, 2018). Internally, its capital city Bogotá has been one of the most affected by this phenomenon, given its urban, social and economic concentration, being an attraction to major investments and head of the financial and political wings with concentration issues.

This project aims to turn White Elephant projects into opportunities for development. By reclaiming and repurposing a White Elephant in Teusaquillo, a historically significant district in Bogotá, ***this project seeks to empower disadvantaged individuals and communities through an architectural intervention and its replications. It will involve the maximum number of people in the decision-making process*** in order to invert power roles and enhance citizens' rights, while minimizing expenditure in order to create a sustainable and revolutionary solution that gives back to the community.

architectmagazine.com/design/coda-to-a-career-eisenmans-city-of-culture_o

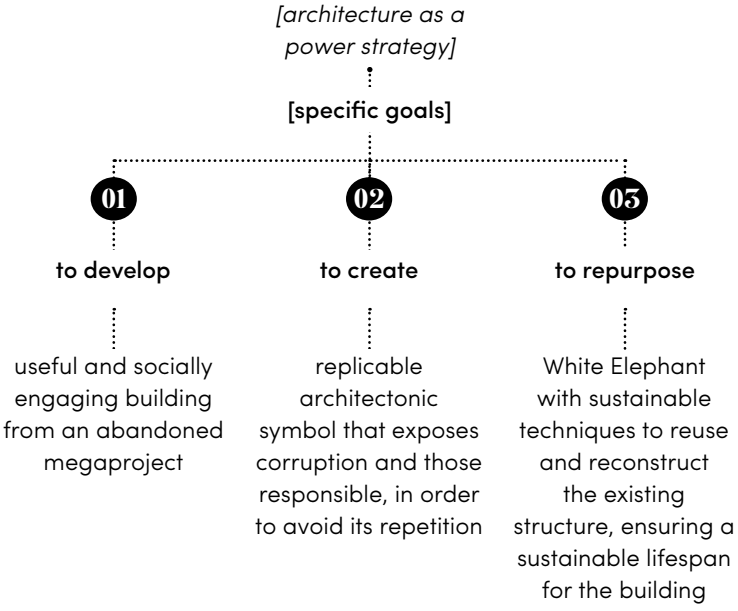
3
Lam, S. (2016). White Elephants: Over-Budget, Unsuccessful, and Embarrassing Architecture Projects From Around the World. ArchDaily. Retrieved 01 03, 2023, from https://www.archdaily.com/795913/white-elephants-over-budget-unsuccessful-and-embarrassing-architecture-projects-from-around-the-world)

ambition/goals

The ambition of the thesis is ***to invert the storytelling of the White Elephants***. The thesis develops the idea that White Elephants can become regenerative projects if participative strategies able to involve people are activated. The notion that politics influences architecture needs to be turned around into positive and communal grounds, rather than searching for individualistic and megalomaniac needs influenced by economic and power factors.

This includes the members of society who do not want to be governed by actual power standards. To overcome this, ***we need to design cities and architecture that represents the needs, lifestyles, and expressions of the diverse social groups***. By incorporating a conceptual framework on the power dynamics and considering socio-cultural context, ***we can create architecture that not only serves a function, but also expresses a purpose in society and the environment, critiques the power position it is under***. This approach moves away from conformism and addresses urban and building deficits, leading through a feedback cycle with its community and consistent changing needs.

Therefore, starting from the analysis of the present and future needs, ***it is possible to develop a project that can produce design strategies to renew spaces full of meaning and utility, which can be more coherent with the community's current needs***. This goal is achieved through the White Elephant in Bogotá, which serves as a proof of concept that ***architecture can be used to transform a corrupt act into something sustainable, beautiful and useful***, while also serving as a reminder of the initial cause to prevent future corruption and involving an active community from the beginning.



hypothesis

Our approach to this issue is to reuse an existing abandoned mega construction (White Elephant) as a sustainable and revolutionary statement that gives back to the community what has been taken away from them. ***We believe that renovating this structure in the heart of the city will empower the residents and address the lack of social services in the area.*** Transforming an abandoned megaproject into a useful and socially engaged building that serves as a symbol of corruption in the construction industry can expose those responsible for the economic and social losses caused by these "White Elephants" and ***serve as a model for addressing corruption in the industry***.

If a White Elephant is transformed from something useless and aesthetically unpleasing to something useful and beautiful, then social benefits and services will arrive to the community.

If an existent structure is readapted, reused, and reopened to the benefits of a community, then social and environmental impacts will be reduced around.

If the readapted ex White Elephant states as a symbol of anticorruption, reminding everyone who did it and how much did it make the city lose, then this issue will start to disseminate.

If the readaptation strategy is successful in one White Elephant, then it can replicate among others and eventually they will cease to exist.

keywords

architecture *//* ***political expression*** *//* ***power dynamics*** *// culture // art //* ***resistance*** *// local communities // social needs // event // meaning // experience // creative potential // urban development // inequalities // corruption // subpar buildings // abandonment // "****White Elephant****" projects // extravagant // cost maintenance // returns on investment // resource allocation //* ***sustainability*** *// social impact //* ***spatial justice*** *// cultural significance // preservation // gentrification // cultural identity // power relations // spatial segregation // social inequality //* ***reclaiming space*** *//* ***repurposing structures***

"architecture is a **creative** *process, it also falls into the category of* **art**, *not just construction."*

—B. Tschumi

02 architecture as a social process

Architecture is more than just the structures and buildings that we see in our daily lives. As a form of art, it has the power to shape and influence various aspects of society, including having a political and revolutionary impact. Its role comes from modifying space through a creative process that addresses transversally form, function and context. Within context, it has the ability of questioning surrounding social and political values to further propel social causes.

An architect and theorist that studies this relationship is Bernard Tschumi, who firstly defines architecture as an art, but not an illustrative one, rather one that evokes a sense of interpretation and provocation (1996). In this way, he links architecture with a concept and a context, and gives them the function of multiplying the formal perception of a space, making it critical and interpretative. For this, he articulates three additional concepts that create architecture: space, movement, and event (1988). Each one of them can be conceived individually, but they need to be together to constitute architecture per se. Space is the visual representation; movement is the perception of said space; and event is the experimentation in the space. They can interact reciprocally or in conflict, generating diverse ways in which the built environment can be perceived.

From the above, we can affirm the conception of architecture exists not only in spatial terms, but also in its dynamics with society and its changing relationships with its context. As Tschumi confirms, "architectural space is not only physical and constructed but also mental and social" (1988). Hence, it becomes a form of expression, fulfilling not only a programmatic function but also generating ideas and interpretations for those who relate to the space. Tschumi goes even beyond this relationship, affirming that there is no architecture without a concept nor a context:

> Concept, not form, is what distinguishes architecture from mere construction. However, there is no architecture without context (except for utopia). A work of architecture is always situated or "in situation", located on a site. The context may be historical, geographical, cultural, political, or economic [...]. Within architecture, concept and context are inseparable. Often, too, they are in conflict. The concept may deny or ignore the circumstances surrounding it, while the context may obscure or blur the precision of an architectural idea (2005).

architecture as a social & political product

Architecture and its context cannot exist separately, as well as the relation between architecture and politics. Since there was a shift in society to go from dispersed to nucleated settlements, resulting in the creation of the first cities, there was a role for architecture in translating the social, cultural, religious and territorial factors of a civilisation. As classical philologist Hansen affirms, "urbanisation is closely connected with the growth of states, and so the two processes often occur in a timeframe that indicates the close relationship of the phenomena" (Hansen, 2006). Historically it begun as a city-state culture (*polis*), when in the same region, people shared a language, religion, culture and traditions, but each immediate territory had its 'internal' sovereignty. This type of settlement was highly characterised by urbanisation and the sum of three elements: ***territory, people and government*** (Hansen, 2006). This definition of polis stated the relationship between city formation and state formation, involving simultaneously a settlement and a community.

More precisely, translations from politics into architecture can be read from the layout of ancient civilisations. For instance, in Mesopotamia, the central parts of the city were often reserved for the palace, temples, and other important public buildings, while the outer areas were used for housing and other purposes (Ur, Oates, McMahon, Karsgaard, & Al Quntar, 2007). In other ancient cities such as Egypt, Teotihuacan, Tenochtitlán and Cuzco, the layout of cities was also influenced by religion, and the placement of temples and other religious buildings was often a key factor in the design of the city (Ur et al., 2007). While, in non-theocratic ancient cities, spaces like the agora (marketplace in ancient Greece) or the forum (public square in ancient Rome) were often the centre of political and social life, and the layout of the cities were designed to reflect the city's political and religious hierarchies (Hansen, 2006).

As the role of architecture in shaping political life has continued to evolve, it has become clear that politics is not just about the formal processes of governance and decision-making, but also about the way that power is exercised, and relationships are negotiated in society. Political theorist David Easton (1965) defines it as "everything that refers to an authoritarian distribution of values", suggesting the complex interplay between power, authority and social relationships at its core. In order for a political structure to function it needs to have an environment (intra and extra-societal) where inputs (social demands) and outputs (authorities' decisions) feedback each other. This definition of politics states that the system always seeks an equilibrium, and if it finds any perturbation, it will move towards finding a new balance (Easton, 1965).

Understanding what can disturb and rebalance a social environment, helps understand the role of architecture in a political system. For instance, power is one of the main factors that creates

such disturbances. As philosopher Michel Foucault widely defined it, power is a pervasive and multifaceted force that operates throughout society, it not possessed but exercised, it doesn't come only from the state but appears in any given relationship and it operates through various mechanisms such as laws, norms and cultural practices (Foucault, 1976 (2000)).

On the other hand, a factor that seeks the equilibrium in the system lies within revolution and social movements. Alain Touraine, French sociologist, defines them as an "organised collective behaviour [...] against [their] adversary for the social direction of historicity" (2006). This affirms that under an imposed domination, the people will follow its norms until their physical and cultural existence is threatened. These manifestations also come from following an ideology that goes in line with their conception of social values (Touraine, 2006) and have three principles in order to function: an identity (who), an opposition (against whom), and a totality (territory). These concepts link with the ***function of architecture and urban design to express and represent social structures and conceptions in a specific territory***, whether for a power-seeking strategy or for a revolutionary outcome.

Modern examples of the influence of politics in architecture (and vice versa) appear in artistic and intellectual movements such as Constructivism and Futurism since the historical context heavily shaped them and they sought to use art and architecture as a means of promoting specific political ideologies. As American art historian Donald Egbert (1973) confirms:

> Constructivism, as a materialist school of artistic endeavour, as a creative technique, emerged, developed, and pursued its social and productive course under the banner of dialectical materialism. The methodology of constructivism is inextricably linked with the proletarian revolution and the socialist construction of the Soviet system. (...) It has succeeded in playing a role in building the material and cultural foundations of a young society, in introducing into modern forms of artistic activity a genuine realism and enthusiasm for utilitarianism and intelligent proletarian rationalism, and in giving artistic expression to the social and collective aims of the (working) class.

Consequently, Spanish architects Xavier Sust and Josep María Muntaner and Argentinian architect Zaida Muxí, confirm this intrinsic conception with their "new politics, new architecture" paradigm (Sust, 1975), and the content of architecture being non only images and forms following a function, but also acts as a means of propaganda considering the collective implications (Montaner & Muxí, 2011).

It is clear that architecture and politics are closely intertwined. From the grand palaces and temples of ancient empires to the functional and expressive buildings of the modern age, architecture has always been shaped by the social and political needs of societies. Whether serving as a symbol of power and authority or providing functional and expressive spaces for everyday life, architecture has always played a crucial role in shaping the way that people live and interact with one another.

the bright side of political architecture: expression

On a more positive note, there have been numerous examples of architects using their work to bring about social and political change. Bernard Tschumi, for instance, used architecture as a means of ***challenging traditional norms and empowering marginalised communities***. His most known project, *Parc de la Villette*, is known for its innovative and expressive design and its reflection of the social and political context in which it was created. Scholar architect Louis Martin analyses his range of works after the May 1968 student protests, which had a significant impact on French politics and culture. He affirms that Tschumi attempted to transgress the dichotomy between city and nature (1988), but beyond the creation of a spatial expression of mind and matter, "the project is a map of architecture and its possibilities by means of oppositions that are materialized on the site by the creation of virtual axes that are permeable. That enables each territory to be contaminated by the concepts developed in the others" (Martin, 1988). The design of the park can be seen as a response to the social and political changes of the time, and as an attempt to create a new, open, and expressive public space that would reflect the values of the contemporary age.

"architecture, much more than painting or sculpture, is necessarily a social art"

—Egbert, 1973

In other regions, the influence of politics in architecture has also lead to a vision that adapts the reality of a territory into strategies to overcome it. There is a term coined for this use within the Latin American region: ***revolutionary architecture***. It prioritises strategy over style. As the critical writer Justin McGuirk states (2015):

> Nowhere else in the world have there been such examples of collective effort and imagination as in Latin America in tackling the chronic symptoms of rapid and unplanned urbanisation. Whether we are talking about problems of housing, crime, transport, segregation or lack of political participation, the continent

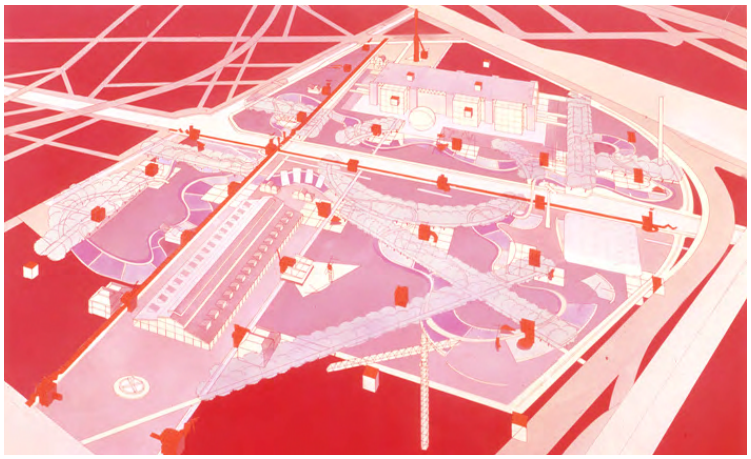
has set precedents that could have a transformative effect on other parts of the world.

From many architectural intakes in Latin American cities, we can extract strategies that are useful in these specific contexts. "*Urban acupuncture*", which stimulates a zone of coverage in the city with punctual interventions, is an example that summarises those intentions (McGuirk, 2015), it emphasises revolutionary initiatives with community participation and sets new paradigms to integrate communities with their own architecture, as the architect cannot create social relationships out of nothing, but it can create channels for those relationships to occur naturally.

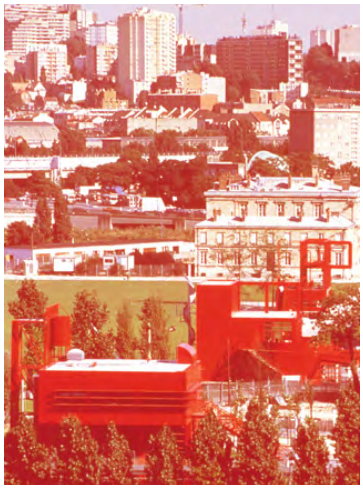
Another "revolutionary architecture" was born in the *Torre de David* (Caracas, Venezuela). The third tallest skyscraper of Venezuela, initially built in 1990 as the Confinanzas Financial Centre, turned into a failed project after the bank entered into the national banking crisis. Twenty years after, the building was "squatted by 3.000 people and transformed into a housing project (...) serving as a shelter and dwelling for 750 families (...) [being] their own model of a socialist microcosm in their vertical city" (Lenz, 2014). It was known as a "marginal vertical neighbourhood" (U-TT, 2012) that responded to a lack of municipal and governmental aid.

The tower highlights the bottom-up strategies and the fusion of formal structure with informal use to answer a dwelling problem, a variety of not only private spaces but common ones to bring a community closer (open-air gym, productive spaces, recreation, etc.). It gained enough recognition, which led to several documentaries and media exposure to open conversations about how to handle these types of constructions.

Overall, a positive relationship between politics and architecture can lead to the creation of functional, expressive, and innovative spaces that enhance the quality of life and well-being of individuals and communities and reflect the spirit and values of a particular time and place.

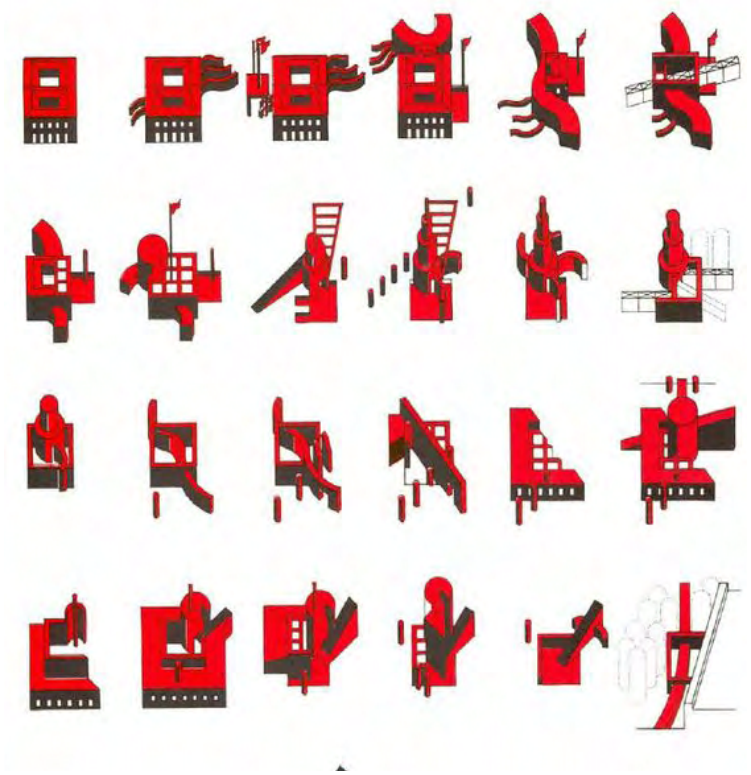


Parc de la Villette Masterplan by B. Tschumi



Parc de la Villette insertion in the city

Parc de la Villette hosting events



Architectural follies as event activators

Parc de la Villette 01

city
Paris, France

started
1987

finished
1991

surface area
55,5 ha

built area
35 architectural follies

current state
restored

building stage
finished

use
cultural, recreational

typology
multiple blocks

capacity
10.000+ people

architect
Bernard Tschumi

02 Torre de David

city
Caracas, Venezuela

started
1990

abandoned
1994

built area
121.741 m²

height
171 m (45 floors)

current state
abandoned

building stage
structure with some finishes

use
office, hotel, aparthotel

typology
skyscraper - open ground floor

capacity
3.000 people

architect
Enrique Gómez and Associates

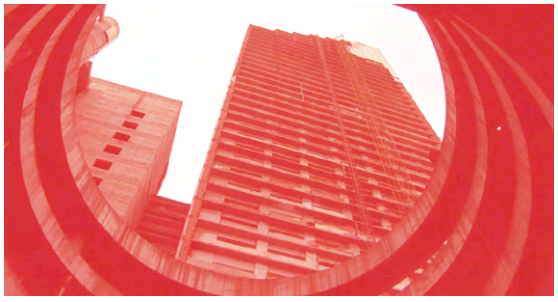
developer
J. David Brillembourg

white elephant in Venezuela

courtyard occupied by children

documentary "Ruina" (2014)

appropriation of spaces as workshops



abandoned structure

the dark side of political architecture i: corruption

Unfortunately, the relationship between architecture and politics has not always been so dignified. Deviated interests in money and power have taken the wheel in urban and architectonic projects, leading to the creation of unnecessary constructions that represent holes in the cities and lack any given influence on the society it wants to represent. Behind this, the most pervasive issues that have long tainted the field lie in sorely financial interests, power abuse and corruption.

First off, architecture gets to a point where power is governed by financial interests, building to meet the needs from the market, appealing to it only as a good. It determines the demand for what the system needs but leaves the social sphere out of said demands (Montenegro-Miranda, 2018). Simultaneously, architecture tends to be misinterpreted as a strategy for power abuse since the balance on the political equation tends to lean on the authority side.

Architecture has been strongly influenced by its physical and non-physical context, emerging to as a tool designed to demonstrate a social, political, and economic status, especially when it comes from the authority side of the equation. Architect and theorist in Sovereignty and Politics Daniel Grinceri (2016) affirms:

> However, architecture is constructed within the same rules and practices whereby people and communities self-govern and regulate themselves to think and act in certain ways (...) space can be utilised as a resource for power, whereby buildings are co-opted to produce national identity by including certain people at the expense of the excluded 'other'.

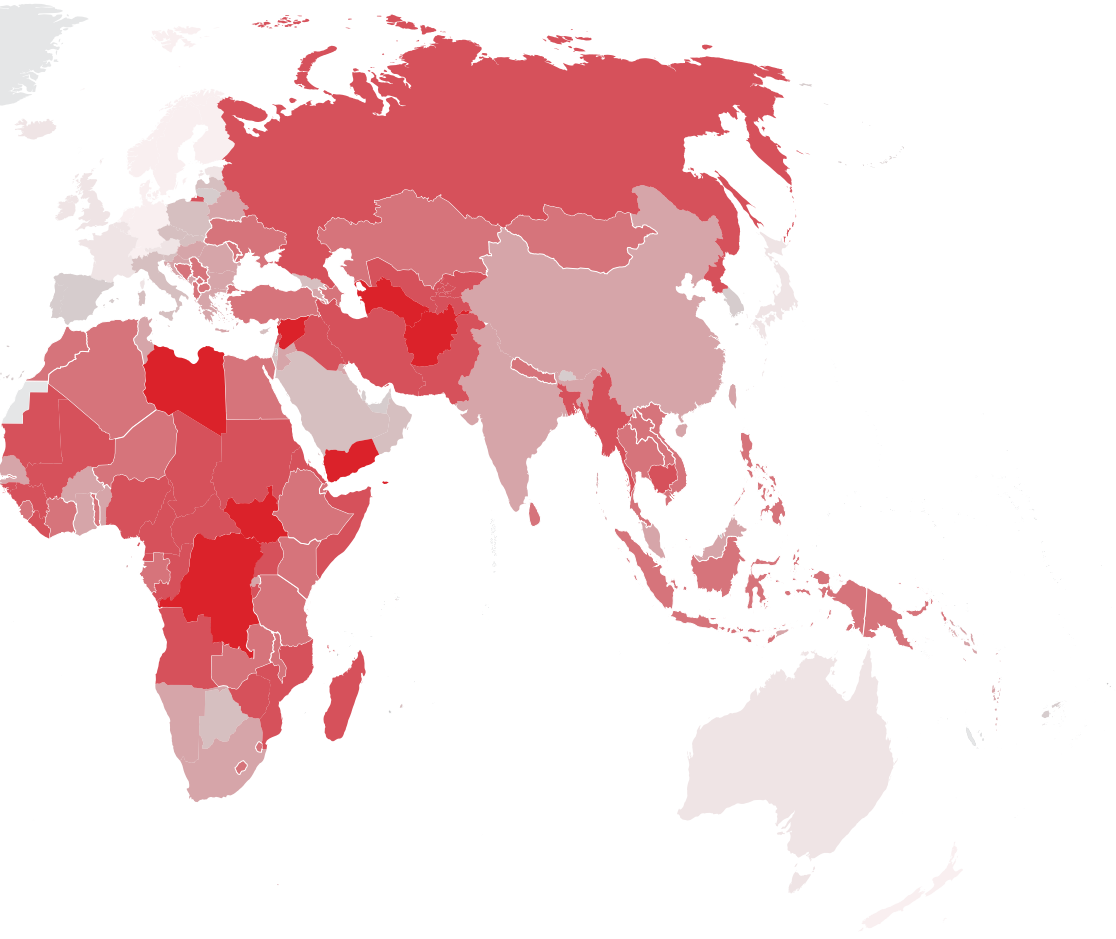
At it has been argued, its influence on politics and society goes beyond the configuration of its spaces or the functions it serves, but as Foucault (1977) analysed in his study of Bentham's Panopticon, the architecture itself can serve as a conscious and permanent visibility that guarantees the automatic functioning of power. However, it is not the form of the architecture that is significant, but rather the behaviour that takes place within it. In this way, architecture, along with the discourse surrounding it, can become a political or cultural statement exercising power over the society it surrounds.

As historian Paul B. Jaskot (2000) points out, buildings can acquire the multifaceted characteristic of generating the power and knowledge

Corruption Perceptions Index 2021. Transparency International.

4 Allen, D. (2014, oct 09). Bucharest: The People's House. National Geographic Retrieved from https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel/2014/09/bucharest-peoples-house)

that authorities desire. This can be seen in authoritarian governments, such as the Third Reich, where both the programmatic (e.g. concentration camps and forced labour operations) and aesthetic aspects of architecture (e.g. National Socialist monumental architecture) were used to express and reinforce the power of the government. These architectural elements, including space delimitation, construction techniques, and building scales, were designed to serve the aims of exclusion and economic maximization.



CPI Score

Highly corrupt — *Very clean*

0-9 10-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89 90-100

Other examples like the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest (rebuilt dictator Nicolae Ceausescu during the 1980s after demolishing 9,000 houses for the cause)[4] and the Casa del Fascio in Como (used as headquarters of the Partito Nazionale Fascista until 1945)[5] show architecture as a power tool that reigns for authoritarian rulers through abused labour and an excruciating expenditure of money, with the objective of showcasing wealth, control, and influence. However, these buildings nowadays have evolved with the meaning society wants to give them, retaking the question of whether these buildings are inherently connected to their political roots or better they "become

5 MAARC. (2020, feb 13). Casa del Fascio. Retrieved 01 06, 2023, from Museo virtuale Astrattismo e Architettura Razionalista Como: http://www.maarc.it/opera/casa-del-fascio

representative of particular values because of how they are described and talked about, to which the physical features of architecture may lend various meanings representative form" (Grinceri, 2016).

Today, many of the methods that governments once used to create monumental political constructions, such as forced labour and the allocation of public resources for private gain, are considered illegal and unethical. As a result, new methodologies have emerged to "allow" governments to continue making power statements and exerting control over society through space. While these new approaches may not be as overtly authoritarian as in the past, they can still be used to shape society in ways that serve the interests of those in power.

Hence, enters corruption as the next major issue in the intersection of politics and architecture, leaving significant impacts on the design, construction, maintenance and development of buildings and cities. This problematic affects the economic, political, social, and environmental spheres all at once. And is one of the reasons that inversions and development put a break in a country (Ayala-García, Bonet-Morón, Pérez-Valbuena, Heilbron-Fernández, & Suret-Leguizamón, 2022)

The use of corruption as a tool can also be traced back to the origins of cities. The creation of the polis, or city-state, was accompanied by the development of architectural strategies for shaping society and expressing the power of those in control. As Italian journalist Carlo Alberto Brioschi affirms, the politician's craft is commonly known as one of the world's oldest professions, apparently largely due to the darker aspect of political trade, corruption (2017). In this case, corruption is understood as "fraudulent behaviour or actions of a public official willing to take money or gifts from vested interests or any other benefits in exchange for favours performed for or granted to the benefactor in question" (Brioschi, 2017). He sustains that, as it has evolved, the response of society around it has mostly remained the same. Corruption can appear as an accepted standard since it has always been practiced in the environment we know. In Ancient Greece it translated as political buying and selling, even with the "invention" of democracy, jurors were willing to sell their votes, surrounded by a rich cultural and philosophical environment that still fought between luxury and decadence. Similarly, in Ancient Rome, it mean dealing with violences and bribes to achieve high political roles, best depicted in the case of Julius Ceasar (Brioschi, 2017). Nowadays it means looking for alternatives to exercise and obtain economic and political power, and most countries are continuously fighting to get them, seen in the latest Corruption Perception Index (CPI), over two thirds of the countries worldwide have an index under 50 (in a scale from zero to 100) and 131 countries have not made any significant difference in the last decade (Transparency International, 2021). This leads to believe that, unless people create a disturbance in the system, these acts of corruption will continue evolving as society does too.

Casa del Fascio, Como, Italy, military architecture

The People's House, Bucharest, Romania, example of power abuse in architecture

the dark side of political architecture ii: White Elephants

As previously disclosed, corruption around architecture can take the forms of embezzlement in infrastructure and buildings projects, the approval of subpar buildings and the abandonment of large-scale projects due to poor management or political propaganda. These projects, known as "White Elephants", continue to be a systemic constructive issue that lies in the inconclusion or abandonment of them.

It has been argued that the "location of public investment projects has been determined by political not economic factors" (Robinson & Torvik, 2005), creating a relationship between politicians and voters supported by the credibility each politician sells rather than focusing on whether these projects are affordable or not (which generally they're not), turning this relationship into clientelism and eventually arguing that White Elephants "should be seen as redistribution aimed at influencing the outcomes of elections" (Robinson & Torvik, 2005), being this redistribution in the form of socially inefficient projects for the highlight of specific credible politicians.

This programmed negligence is power abuse, bringing systemic issues not only in the perimeter of the unfinished space but also its surroundings.
The problematic with an excessive required scale on resources, time, and management needs to be counter addressed from a more punctual and accessible methodology, adapted to the place of work and its community.

More broadly, is important to understand exactly and objectively what a White Elephant is. On one hand, it is defined as a project with a negative social surplus (Robinson & Torvik, 2005) that involves a megaproject (hence Elephant), characterized by large investment commitment, vast complexity, and long-lasting impact in the economy, with an interdependence within its context. The complexity of these megaprojects also comes from the fact that it sells unjustifiable and inefficient goals in a populist and yet approachable manner (hence the unexplainable characteristic of a White elephant), advertising the project more for the almost-unreachable benefits to society rather than rationalizing on how much is it going to cost (Locatelli, Mariani, Sainati, & Greco, 2017). While a closer definition in the national context states that are those "whose execution was carried out with public resources and which, despite having been completed or not, and even if they had been received to satisfaction, do not provide the service, or do not fulfil the function for which they were built" (Portafolio, 2021).

Consequently, the main characteristics to identify a White Elephant consist of 1) a project with an investment significantly larger than what it can be managed in a one-turn government, 2) brings negative impacts to its surrounding context (socially and economically), 3) an extremely large-scale built dimension (taking years to develop and build), 4) vast complexity (especially in organisational terms) and 5) an unfinished construction with money management issues (Abdo, 2021).

Considering architecture as the articulated and evolving social art it was previously defined as and considering a successful project as one that brings benefits to its community, it is evident that the creation of extravagant and unnecessary "White Elephant" projects that serve as symbols of greed and abuse of power are neither architecture nor do they generate profits, being this the main issue to address when dealing with them in a corrupted environment.

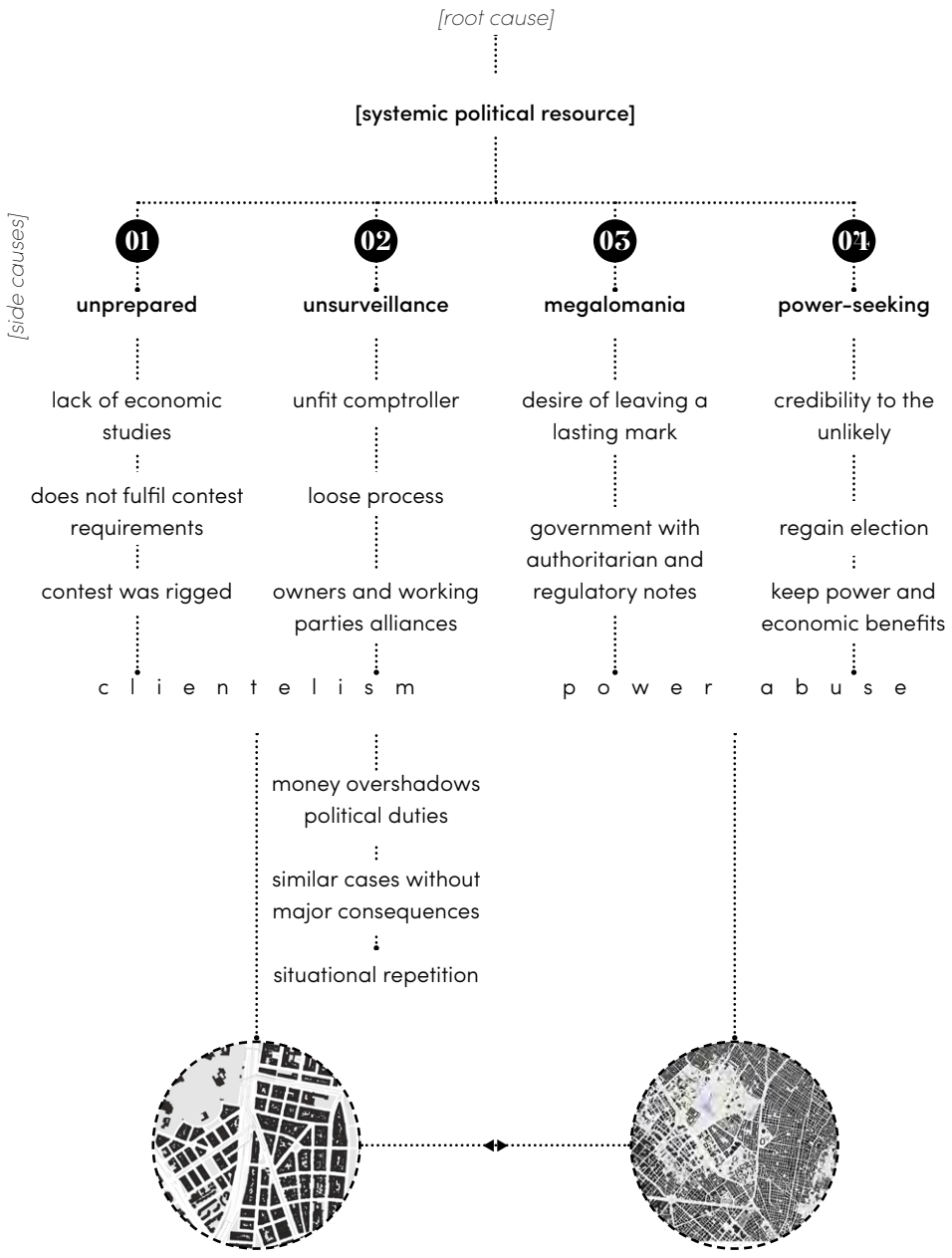
causes of White Elephants in the urban environment

These projects have multiple causes, but according to economist Abdo (2021), they're are usually addressed to: 1) a lack of economic studies for the development of the upcoming works, 2) the unsurveillance of their developers, leaving them to manage the investment money into their personal benefits and 3) a megalomania of rulers, parting from the desire of leaving a megaproject into their name (like Political Architecture usually associated with dictatorships and their power infrastructures). However, this does not answer why they let them fall into abandonment (in the case of no. 3) or how is this still happening after so many economical trials (in the case of no. 1 and 2). Therefore, comes the theory that this is a systemic political resource of politicians to stay in a power position, or as Robinson & Torvik (2005) better explain:

> It is the very inefficiency of such projects that makes them politically appealing. This is so because it allows only some politicians to credibly promise to build them and thus enter credible redistribution. The fact that not all politicians can credibly undertake such projects gives those who can a strategic advantage. Socially efficient projects do not have this feature since all politicians can commit to build them and they thus have a symmetric effect on political outcomes.

It is not incompetence the main issue in terms of developing seemingly impossible projects as White Elephants, but the political motivation behind it and the fact of using them as tools influencing the outcomes of elections. Ironically, they also assure that "there is a trade-off between efficient projects, which generate revenues, and inefficient ones, which influence political outcomes. In this trade-off inefficient projects can be more attractive, particularly when the value of being in power is large" (Robinson & Torvik, 2005).

This overstates the fact that architecture has been systematically used as a power-abuse strategy, not only to remain in a self-claimed socioeconomical status, but to endure the political power and corruption of it, being able to maintain it over generations.


[root cause]
[systemic political resource]
[side causes]
01
02
03
04
unprepared
unsurveillance
megalomania
power-seeking
lack of economic studies
does not fulfil contest requirements
contest was rigged
unfit comptroller
loose process
owners and working parties alliances
desire of leaving a lasting mark
government with authoritarian and regulatory notes
credibility to the unlikely
regain election
keep power and economic benefits
c l i e n t e l i s m
p o w e r a b u s e
money overshadows political duties
similar cases without major consequences
situational repetition

967

corruption acts

identified in the last 4 years in Colombia

1527

critical projects among unconcluded works & **White Elephants**

currently in Colombia

03 corruption as a spatial issue in Colombia

Colombia is a country known for its systemic historical corruption. Currently, it ranks at 87 over 180 countries studied for the CPI with a score below average of 39 over 100 (where 0 means highly corrupt and 100 means very clean). The corporation Transparencia por Colombia, a national chapter of the international independent entity Transparency International created in 1998 to fight corruption in public institutions and the weakening of democracy, has stressed that corruption "is a systematic and structural phenomenon, so that its origin and reproduction is related to different economic, social, political, institutional, and cultural conditions" (2021) affecting directly the PIB development, production, growth, investment, inflation and diminution of quality of goods and services (Ayala-García, Bonet-Morón, Pérez-Valbuena, Heilbron-Fernández, & Suret-Leguizamón, 2022, p. 30). Through the years 2016-2020 it identified, systematised, categorised and analysed ***nine hundred and sixty-seven (967)*** reported corruption acts in the country (meaning one act every two days) that directly affected fifteen million people and lost $14 billion COP (€228 million EUR). It also defines a corruption act as the "abuse of positions of power or trust to the particular benefit of legal or illegal actors to the detriment of collective interest by offering or soliciting, delivering, or receiving goods or money in kind, in services, benefits and/or favours. In exchange for actions, making or influencing decisions or omissions" (Monitor Ciudadano de la Corrupción, 2021). These abuses are categorised in four types and have the following incidence: Administrative 44%, Political 27%, Private 19%, and Judicial 10%, even though some cases concur in diverse interesses and actors.

For terms of this analysis, we will focus on the Administrative and Private Corruption, from which 40% of its implications are seen in cities and the urban environment, translated in construction works that were left unfinished even though public money was delivered, according to Transparencia por Colombia (2021). This type of corruption enters also in the definition of organizational corruption, that implies a particular entity, complex, involving agents from the public and/ or private sector (Ayala-García, Bonet-Morón, Pérez-Valbuena, Heilbron-Fernández, & Suret-Leguizamón, 2022, p. 10). Some of these works are catalogued as White Elephants: "acts of corruption when there is an appropriation of resources or unjustified expenditure at public expense, for the benefit of a private individual" (Monitor Ciudadano de la Corrupción, 2021). For Colombia, the relationship between low provision of services and high corruption risk is evaluated by the indicator Golden-Picci (Gamarra-Vergara, 2006), usually demonstrating that corrupt actors invest in unproductive projects of easy manipulation to extract higher rent.

In this case, applied corruption in the Colombian Architecture and Construction sector, including extreme resource misallocation, turns into a phenomenon that keeps repeating without major intel or potential long-term solutions.

White Elephants as power tools in Colombia

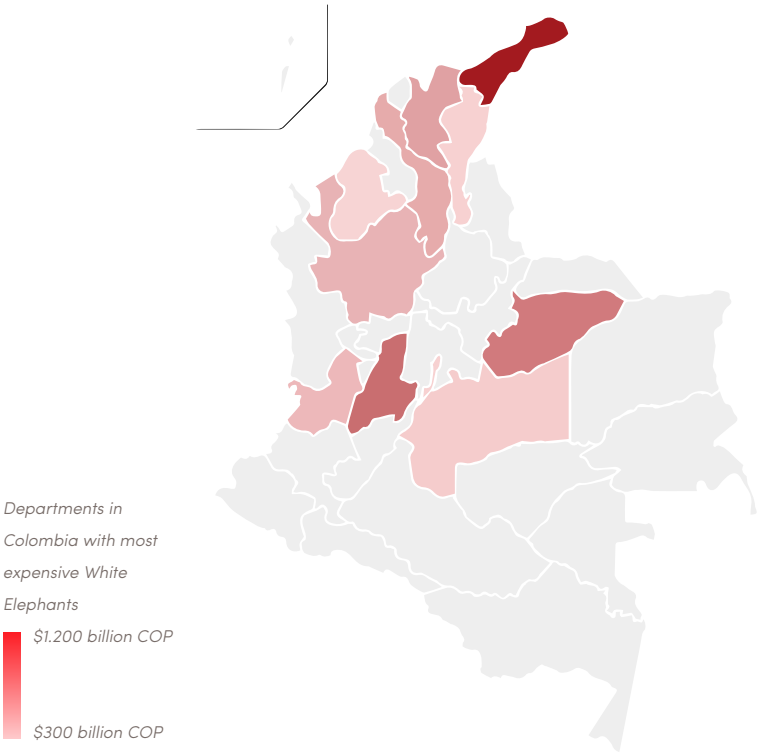
White Elephants in Colombia have been linked to corruption and have entered in the society undisturbed, imposing its economic consequences in a systemic way. This problematic has taken over $23,3 trillion COP (or $5,3 billion USD) from public resources —the equivalent of almost two tax reforms— and has left over one thousand and five hundred (1500) unconcluded and abandoned megaprojects around the country (Portafolio, 2021), it is also critical to focus on the social and physical consequences they have let in their respective territories, affecting multiple actors in a long-time period that involve different stages of the project (planning, design, construction, maintenance, etc.).

Since 2016, corruption related to White Elephants has affected economic, social, and cultural rights on the standard of living, housing and food manners, wealth and natural resources, and health, child protection and environment (Monitor Ciudadano de la Corrupción, 2021). For example, in Buenaventura, the water and sewerage supply project, which was supposed to be completed in 1999, has cost the country 200 billion COP and has resulted in a majority of the city lacking access to potable water, due to inefficient management and a system that dumps sewage into the sea. The construction of a municipal palace in Atlántico has cost 544 million COP and has taken away space for other necessary services in the town. Additionally, a tunnel project intended to clean the Bogotá river has been abandoned, resulting in the loss of 243 billion COP and leaving the river contaminated. There have also been reports of corruption and bribery in these projects (Contraloría General de la República de Colombia, 2018).

Furthermore, the sectors most affected by corruption in infrastructure projects are those that provide basic services to society, such as education, water management, and health. This not only has economic consequences, but also social and cultural impacts, as it can lead to the violation of social rights. For instance, the failure to complete hospitals can infringe on the right to health, and incomplete social housing developments can violate the right to adequate housing. In addition, incomplete infrastructure projects can leave populations disconnected and unable to access necessary services, hindering their development. (Pérez Peña & Higuera Cepeda, 2022).

Likewise, the failure to complete sports and public events facilities as a result of corruption can also violate cultural rights, including the constitutional right to recreation. This can prevent the development of diverse sporting, artistic, and cultural activities, particularly for children and young people in vulnerable situations. In this way, corruption is also impacting social and cultural rights, hindering the ability of individuals and communities to fully participate in and enjoy these activities (Pérez Peña & Higuera Cepeda, 2022).

This has a direct effect on the country's Human Development Index (HDI), which measures factors such as a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Despite having a high HDI of 0.767 on a scale of 0 to 1, Colombia still ranks 83rd among other countries, and has dropped four places



Departments in Colombia with most expensive White Elephants

$1.200 billion COP

$300 billion COP

from the previous year (Forbes Staff, 2021). The failure to adequately address corruption in infrastructure projects can therefore have significant consequences for the well-being and development of the country and its people.

According to the investigation conducted by the General Controllership of the Nation (2018), the phenomenon of White Elephants used to be attributed to oil-producing and mining-related towns, where an elevated level of political and economic interests was being traded. However, the General System of Royalties reform (new system for a fair distribution of resources to promote regional interest projects) spread the phenomenon throughout the country, meaning the earnings for exploiting petroleum had to be distributed across the country, but this misleads to a more strategic clientelism in diverse municipalities. The main departments with greater number of White Elephants were Meta and Casanare (main oil productors), where 40% of the $840 billion COP on fiscal incidence found responded to uncompleted works between 2012 and 2017 (Contraloría General de la República de Colombia, 2018). But lately, rather than finishing the figure, it has shifted it to the central zone of the country, where the main national and international economy is moving.

There are one thousand five hundred and twenty-seven (1527) projects among White Elephants, unconcluded works and in critical state around the country. From these, ***two hundred and thirty-seven (237)*** are properly identified as White Elephants, some of them being abandoned for nearly twenty years. As stated before, the concentration of these works no longer resides only in the oil-producer departments, with Cundinamarca the most affected one (where the capital is located) with one hundred and eighty-seven (187) of them, followed by Tolima with ninety-five (95), Antioquia and Bolivar with ninety (90) each and Valle with eighty-five (85) (Portafolio, 2021).

As a result, this analysis will focus on the region of Cundinamarca, specifically Bogotá, in order to examine the impacts of recent trends on the capital city in terms of infrastructure abandonment and the use of political power strategies.

Bogotá as a capital city of concentrations

Bogotá, as capital city of Colombia, has lived through the most important socio-political events in the country, evolving with its rapid changes and adapting from a constant urban violence that has been evidenced for decades (Moncada, 2016). Its importance and pertinence for this case study, dates to the first half of the 1800s, when Colombia entered its revolutionary period in search for independence from the Spanish regime. According to historian Gutiérrez Ardila (2022), it was the period that gave access to independence and established the social and institutional order that still nowadays reins, especially around its urban sites. While economically, it entered the first wave of industrialisation with commercial goods (Moncada, 2016). This period is recently acknowledged from its political side as a "social phenomenon", rooted not in a spontaneous movement from a popular ailment (like it is usually given to "popular revolutions") but in a craved strategy coming from an external (and often professionally educated) minority that could spread the word in urban centres thanks to the existing technologies (counted printing houses) and organised societies.

Having stablished the social and political environment of the time, Bogotá was left as the strategical centre for the administration of the new Republic, following the new organisation of the city, starting with the foundational centre, its great colonial plaza changed use to adapt for the new government and "passed from being a place of multiple uses and confluence of the high classes to a centrality of power" (Beuf, 2016) and the population density started to arise. During the first decades of the XX century, the urban expansion begun accelerating after the second wave of industrialisation, with a maturing industrial sector and vibrant commercial one, emerged into a financial stability (Moncada, 2016). The city expansion was unplanned and discontinued, with growing neighbourhoods that rose from land estates divisions until the point it conurbated the village of Chapinero (becoming a linear city) (Saldarriaga Roa, 2000). This begins Bogotá's tendency of creating concentrations, whether they are morphological or socioeconomical.

Entering modernity, in 1917, as a "first attempt to plan a modern city under the international parameters of city planning and the conceptual contributions from the municipality of Paris" (Alba Castro, 2013). This was a key step in the urban history of the city, since it was the first time to purposely determine how it should evolve according to worldwide premises from a modern, scientific, hygienist and aesthetic perspective in the city planning sector. Thus, "having French, Anglo-Saxon and Spanish influences, the plan proposed a beautiful, monumental, and compact city, while Bogotá was characterised as a city of land plots and slums" (Alba Castro, 2013). This included studies for efficient energy sources, sanitation infrastructure, modern marketplaces, efficient public transport, green widening of avenues, better public services distribution, and vision planning of fifty years for cities above 10.000 inhabitants, among others (Alba Castro, 2013). All the above let to the first official city planning design: Bogotá Futuro (1923-1925), a scientific

projection of 5.300 hectares (added to the existing 700), envisioning a city 7.5 times bigger than its current area for a projection of 800.000 inhabitants in around 125 years. This plan was in consequence a "public widening plan" of the current avenues and an urban renovation for the city centre. However, the plan was not implemented but set the bases for its regulator plan designed by Brunner.

Between 1934 and 1939, the Director of the Department of Urbanism of Bogotá, architect Karl Brunner, introduced the city into a new concept of culturalist urbanism, giving importance to green and public space, studying the Andean topography of the site, and seeking the improvement of working-class neighbourhoods for a more inclusive integration of the city (Archivo de Bogotá, 2020). This includes expansions towards the north and west side of the city and giving rise to centralities that appeared from previous land estates (Teusaquillo among others), also creating an overwhelmed state with rapid urban growth (at a 5% rate) and waves of informal urbanisation (Beuf, 2016).

In 1948, Bogotá lived a series of chaotic days and riots after the murder of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán (Liberal leader and presidential candidate). This event left the city with a sea of urban violence, a popular disturb that had been building in the previous years, irreparable damages in public infrastructure and a destroyed city centre (Alape, 1983).

In addition to the political and social unrest experienced in the city, there was a need to address and repair the city's infrastructure. This led to the introduction of international influences and the proposal of new regulatory plans by renowned architects Le Corbusier (1950) and Wiener and Sert (1953), which were based on modern principles that overrode the existing layout of the city. However, these plans were ultimately not implemented, leading the city to enter a period of unplanned urban growth that lasted for several decades (until the 1980s). This was characterized by informal development and a rapid population growth rate of 7%.

Bogota's growth through the years

- *1900*
- *1935*
- *1945*
- *1960*
- *1970*
- *1980*
- *1990*
- *2020*

It is important to note that at the

beginning of this period, the country was under a dictatorship (1953-1957), which resulted in the construction of modern governmental and infrastructure projects, such as the new international airport and the National Administrative Centre (CAN), as a way of showcasing and reinforcing the imposed power. These projects were meant to demonstrate the strength and dominance of the regime (Beuf, 2016). Additionally, in order to accommodate the city's expansion, six municipalities surrounding Bogotá (Bosa, Engativá, Fontibón, Suba, Usaquén, and Usme) were absorbed into the city. (Gilbert, 1996).

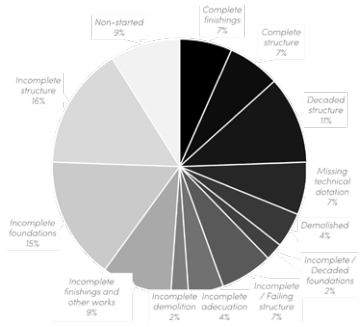
However, in the 1980s, Bogotá experienced an economic and commercial boom, and more importantly, a financial stability compared to other cities in Latin America, which were affected by the 1980 economic crisis (Gilbert, 1996). This phenomenon can be attributed to two factors. First, the population structure changed, resulting in a different age distribution and an increase in the working-age population (from 2.4 million to 4.8 in less than 20 years). This was due to an increase in life expectancy by five years and migration, which contributed to almost half of the city's population growth. Second, Bogotá gained privileged access to government and political decision-making, transforming from a regionalised economy to a more centralised one (Gilbert, 1996).

By 1990, Bogotá had grown to over 30.000 hectares and had developed into a multi-centred city with seven first-level centres. However, these centres were all located relatively close to each other along one axis, which did not alleviate congestion in the central areas but rather exacerbated it (Molina, 1992). This zone, known as the "expanded centre", concentrated most of the city's urban resources and over half of the jobs at the time, leading to ongoing problems such as traffic congestion and inadequate public transportation. In 1991, a new Constitution was implemented, which among other things, aimed to promote decentralization and redistribute wealth. In the new millennium, the "Strategic Plan Bogotá 2000: Pact for a competitive city with equity" was the first strategic plan developed within government guidelines and inspired by the Barcelona plan.

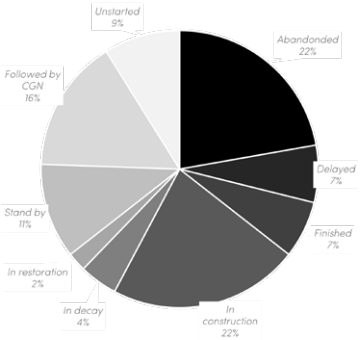
Before the new legislation was enacted, the Territorial Management Plan (POT) proposed a "polycentric territorial model", which was intended to provide a strong framework for the functional spatial organization of the metropolitan area. (Beuf, 2016). The POT projected a growth in population of 1,8 million inhabitants by 2010 and 500.000 new dwellings (with 80% of them intended for medium-low class). The plan aimed to follow a model in which, using the existing expanded centres, the city would develop a "city within a city" model in the residential areas surrounding them in order to prevent further congestion and ensure equal distances. The plan underwent various revisions and alternatives from the local government to adapt to the changing situations of the city.

In the end, "throughout the 20th century in Bogotá, the category of centrality —in different forms and with different names, influenced by various foreign models— was invoked as an answer to the problems of underdevelopment, but the urban discourses, poorly adapted to the local context, have constantly met with opposition from society and the impotence of the state" (Beuf, 2016).

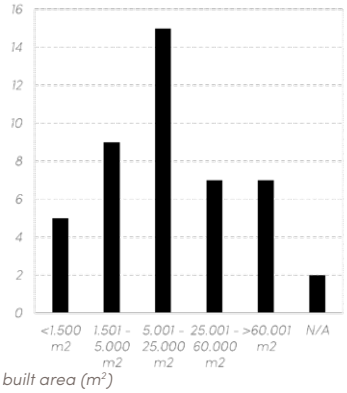
Nowadays, Bogotá is the capital city of 7.847.199 inhabitants (rounding up to 10 million when including the floating population) (DANE, 2018) in 162.000 hectares (including 60% of rural land) and a city model of current concentrations, from the economical, morphological, and cultural point of view, that keeps growing and handling conglomerates.



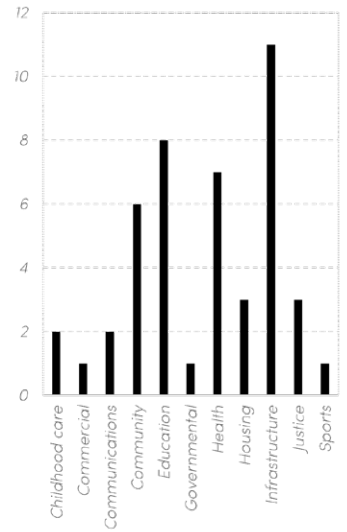
stage of construction



current state



built area (m^2)



destined use

White Elephants in Bogotá

From the city characteristic and systemic relationship between power abuse and architecture, we can also affirm that Bogota is home to a number of abandoned megaprojects, known as White Elephants, which have had a significant impact on the surrounding community and urban fabric. Hereby, we aim to delve deeper into the specific consequences of the concentration of these abandoned projects in certain urban zones and which of these abandoned structures can be potential zones of interventions to rebuild the urban tissue through empowering the space.

According to the latest report from the Contraloría General de la República, there were fifty-three (53) abandoned megaprojects —White Elephants— in Bogotá in 2022 that cost the city approximately $18 trillion COP (4 billion USD) in compromised and lost funds (Redacción Bogotá, 2022). Of these, we took the main forty-five (45) under observation and classified them based on their state of construction, years of development, percentage of advancement, budget involved so far, current state, use, sector, capacity, area, and influence area. We created a taxonomy of these buildings to prioritise the most critical ones and those whose benefit value would bring the greatest advantages to the city, and therefore are causing the most disruptions in the surrounding communities.

According to various sources, half of the White Elephants in Bogotá (53%) have no current plans for resuming work, and the majority (77%) have left an open, incomplete structure that makes the land unusable, unfixable, and potentially risky for residents in the surrounding area. These abandoned projects have a particularly strong impact on infrastructure, education, health, and community services (such as nursery schools, happiness centres and daycare centres), indicating a direct effect on social and cultural rights in the city, particularly in vulnerable areas. Also, most of the White Elephants comprehend a construction area between 5.000 and 25.000 square metres, a significant cipher considering the number of users these projects could have sustained, ranging from 500 and 5.000 in these dimensions and affecting a minimum district-level influence area (above neighbourhood level).

From the above, further analysis is needed to identify specific cases that require a new political and design approach that prioritises the needs of potential users.

White Elephants' taxonomy

n.	PROJECT	DISTRICT	STARTING YEAR	%	ABANDONMENT YEAR	CONSTRUCTION STAGE	CURRENT STATE	USE	TYPOL
01	Nueva torre Hospital de Kennedy III nivel	Kennedy	2007 (2010)	73%	2011-2013	decaded structure	Taken up by Contraloría	Health	
02	Torre II Hospital Meissen	Ciudad Bolívar	2008 (2020)	90%	2012	incomplete finishings and other works	Taken up by Contraloría	Health	
03	Comando Metropolitano de Policía	Teusaquillo	2010	83%	2012-2016	incomplete / failing structure	Abandonded	Justice	
04	*Ampliación Troncal Caracas*	*Usme*	*2019*	*7%*	*On going*	*incomplete foundations*	*Delayed*	*Infrastructure*	
05	Data Center Alma ETB	Puente Aranda	2013	10%	2016	incomplete structure	Abandonded	Communications	
06	Nueva sede Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo	Teusaquillo	2017	82%	2021	decaded structure	Stand by	Governmental	
07	Colegio Distrital Guillermo León Valencia	Antonio Nariño	2018	86%	2020	complete structure	Finished	Education	
08	Edificio en el Parque de los Niños	Teusaquillo	2019	0%	2020	demolished	Unstarted	Community	
09	*Estación de Bombeo de Aguas Residuales Britalia*	*Kennedy*	*2018*	*63%*	*2019*	*unstarted*	-	*Infrastructure*	
10	Colegio San José de Maryland (Bicentenario de la Independencia)	Bosa	2007	99%	2019	complete finishings	Finished	Education	
11	Hospital San Juan de Dios	Antonio Nariño	2007-2015	0%	2019	decaded structure	Abandonded	Health	
12	Predio La Estación	Barrios Unidos	2015	0%	2017	demolished	Unstarted	Housing	
13	Centro Día Campo Verde	Bosa	-	17%	2020	incomplete foundations	Abandonded	Community	
14	Jardín Infantil Campo Verde	Bosa	2019	99%	2020	complete finishings	Finished	Childhood care	
15	Centro Integral de Justicia y de Atención para menores Campo Verde	Bosa	2018	86%	2020	complete structure	Stand by	Justice	
16	Colegio Encenillos (Laura Herrera de Valera)	Bosa	2019	87%	2020	incomplete structure	In construction	Education	
17	*Planta Elevadora Canoas*	*Soacha*	*2018*	*50%*	*2019*	*incomplete foundations*	*Delayed*	*Infrastructure*	
18	Colegio La Palestina	Bosa	2019	94%	2021	incomplete structure	In construction	Education	
19	*Troncal Cali - Grupo 1 Tramo 1*	*Kennedy*	*2020*	*0%*	*2022*	*unstarted*	*Delayed*	*Infrastructure*	
20	*Patio Taller El Corzo*	*Bosa*	*2018*	*4%*	*2021*	*incomplete adecuation*	*Taken up by Contraloría*	*Infrastructure*	
21	CEFE Chapinero	Chapinero	2020	10%	2021	incomplete structure	In construction	Community	
22	Casa Ecológica de Animales	Engativá	2017	70%	2019	incomplete / failing structure	Abandonded	Community	

LOGY	MATERIALITY	AREA (mq)	PLOT AREA (mq)	PREDISPOSED INFLUENCE	HEIGHT (FLOORS)	CAPACITY	INITIAL COST (COP)	FINAL COST (COP)
	Concrete	**12.000**	3.140	city	4 + 2 underground	102 beds	$ 24.000.000.000,00	$ 121.814.000.000,00
	Concrete / Brick	**6.913**	3.815	city	6	122 beds	$ 84.399.000.000,00	$ 101.446.632.177,00
	Concrete	**39.000**	1.600	district	6 + 1 underground	4000 workers	$ 43.794.000.000,00	$ 225.794.000.000,00
	*Asphalt*	***45.733***	*66.400*	*city*	*1*	*4 lanes*	*$ 407.000.000.000,00*	*$ 663.554.412.806,00*
	Concrete / Brick	**1.660**	6.870	neighborhood	2	-	$ 60.000.000.000,00	$ 118.000.000.000,00
	Concrete	**4.632**	675	district	12 + 3 underground	-	$ 22.298.450.616,00	$ 31.298.450.616,00
	Concrete / Brick	**4.110**	6.418	district	3	720 students	$ 12.982.661.125,00	$ 16.000.000.000,00
	Concrete / Brick	**4.293**	17.860	district	3	-	$ 13.000.000.000,00	$ 16.000.000.000,00
	-	-	-	*city*	*1*	*22 wells*	*$ 13.221.361.820,00*	*$ 23.986.852.023,00*
	Concrete / Brick	**13.992**	16.399	district	3	1980 students	-	$ 43.664.176.953,00
	Concrete	**84.000**	130.000	city	*varies*	312 beds - 24 buildings	$ 506.652.000.000,00	$ 976.000.000.000,00
	Concrete	**7.500**	6.371	neighborhood	-	150 housings VIP	$ 2.468.260.039,00	-
	Concrete	**1.396**	-	neighborhood	1	600 elderly	$ 3.237.837.047,00	$ 6.175.000.000,00
	Concrete	**2.622**	-	neighborhood	3	300 children	$ 6.934.000.000,00	$ 8.100.000.000,00
	Concrete	**12.624**	22.518	city	3 to 4	220 users	$ 74.018.942.382,00	-
	Brick	**8.482**	-	district	4	1040 children	$ 20.008.000.000,00	$ 38.800.000.000,00
	*Concrete*	-	-	*city*	*1*	-	*$ 351.957.844.748,00*	-
	Concrete	**11.500**	-	district	5	1560 children	$ 27.361.000.000,00	$ 42.944.000.000,00
	*Asphalt*	***7,2 km***	-	*city*	*1*	*6400 passengers per hour*	*$ 903.000.000.000,00*	-
	*Concrete - Steel*	***32.000***	*32.000*	*neighborhood*	*4*	-	*$ 13.800.000.000,00*	-
	Casted concrete	**10.639**	2.600	district	10	-	-	-
	Concrete	**28.333**	85.000	neighborhood	2	800 animals	$ 25.067.000.000,00	$ 32.000.000.000,00

23	**Unidad Deportiva El Salitre**	Teusaquillo	2017	39%	2018	incomplete / failing structure	Abandonded	Sports	
24	*Puente de Hayuelos*	*Fontibón*	*2018*	*1%*	*2019*	*unstarted*	*Unstarted*	*Infrastructure*	
25	*Av. Alsacia - Tintal*	*Bosa - Kennedy*	*2017*	*71%*	*2020*	*incomplete adecuation*	*Taken up by Contraloría*	*Infrastructure*	
26	**CAPS Diana Turbay**	Usme	2020	55%	2005	incomplete finishings and other works	In construction	Health	
27	**Colegio Emma Villegas de Gaitán**	Fontibón	2014	60%	2018	complete structure	In construction	Education	
28	**Sede A Colegio República del Ecuador**	San Cristóbal	2018	95%	2020	incomplete finishings and other works	Taken up by Contraloría	Education	
29	**Conjunto Residencial Arboleda Santa Teresita**	San Cristóbal	2015	50%	2018	decaded structure	In construction	Housing	
30	**Plaza de Mercado Barrio Santander**	Antonio Nariño	2019	80%	2020	incomplete finishings and other works	Taken up by Contraloría	Commercial	
31	*Av. Rincón con Av. Boyacá*	*Suba*	*2019*	*36%*	*2021*	*incomplete foundations*	*In construction*	*Infrastructure*	
32	**Unidad Prioritaria de Atención en Salud Barrio Santander**	Antonio Nariño	1996	10%	1997	decaded structure	Abandonded	Health	
33	*Conexión Humedal Juan Amarillo*	*Engativá*	*2018*	*77%*	*2019*	*incomplete structure*	*Stand by*	*Infrastructure*	
34	*CEFE Cometas*	*Suba*	*2020*	*60%*	*2021*	*incomplete structure*	*In construction*	*Community*	
35	**Colegio Lombardia**	Suba	2020	44%	2022	incomplete foundations	Abandonded	Education	
36	**Centro Zonal ICBF Rafael Uribe**	Rafael Uribe Uribe	2012	95%	2016	complete finishings	Stand by	Childhood care	
37	**Colegio Bolonia**	Usme	2018	45%	2019	incomplete / Decaded foundations	Taken up by Contraloría	Education	
38	**Proyecto VIP Usme II IDIPRON**	Usme	2013	0%	2013	unstarted	Abandonded	Housing	
39	**Nuevo Hospital Usme**	Usme	2018	18%	2020	incomplete structure	In construction	Health	
40	**Estación de Policía Usaquén**	Usaquén	2014	90%	2020	decading structure / missing technical dotation	In restoration	Justice	
41	**CAPS Verbenal**	Usaquén	2021	6%	2022	incomplete demolition	Stand by	Health	
42	*Avenida 9a Laureano Gómez (Cl. 170 - 193)*	*Usaquén*	*2017*	*5%*	*2021*	*incomplete foundations*	*In construction*	*Infrastructure*	
43	*Planta Wiesner*	*La Calera*	*2017*	*40%*	*2021*	*incomplete foundations*	*Abandonded*	*Infrastructure*	
44	**UPI La Rioja**	Mártires	2019	80%	2022	decading structure / missing technical dotation	In decay	Community	
45	**Centro de Comando, Control, Comunicaciones y Cómputo (C4)**	Fontibón	2016	90%	2017	decading structure / missing technical dotation	In decay	Communications	

Concrete	**26.538**	49.500	district	5	7000 people	$	12.000.000.000,00	$ 17.000.000.000,00
Reinforced concrete	***10.600***	*10.600*	*district*	*1*	-	*$*	*78.000.000.000,00*	*$ 100.000.000.000,00*
Asphalt	***12 km***	*164.000*	*city*	*1*	-		*###############*	-
Concrete / Brick	**3.975**	-	neighborhood	3	-	$	12.036.415.438,00	-
Concrete / Brick	**1.292**	2.700	district	2	620 students	$	5.200.000.000,00	$ 9.400.000.000,00
Concrete and brick	**12.300**	8.220	district	3	1105 students	$	27.347.000.000,00	$ 30.000.000.000,00
Concrete	**36.000**	26.500	neighborhood	6	1302 families	$	45.000.000.000,00	$ 76.000.000.000,00
Steel	**3.487**	-	neighborhood	1	-	$	1.100.000.000,00	$ 1.500.000.000,00
Reinforced concrete	***2,35 km***	*54.708*	*district*	*1*	-	*$*	*150.843.832.994,00*	*$ 213.905.000.000,00*
Concrete / Brick	**1.058**	779	UPZ	2	-		-	-
Prefabricated concrete	***1,2 km***	*5,6 km*	*district*	*1*	-	*$*	*13.402.801.838,00*	*$ 49.853.801.838,00*
Concrete / Steel	***12.000***	*20.800*	*district*	*3 to 4*	-	*$*	*67.504.460.996,00*	*$ 90.504.460.996,00*
Concrete	**10.800**	13.300	district	2	520 students	$	16.784.417.440,00	$ 18.765.753.687,00
Concrete	**925**	353	UPZ	5	-		-	-
Reinforced concrete	**5.321**	5.600	neighborhood	2	560 students	$	12.812.000.000,00	$ 16.660.000.000,00
Concrete	**143.028**	22.054	neighborhood	12	350 housings	$	6.500.000.000,00	-
Concrete	**33.354**	32.252	district	5	220 beds	$	292.000.000.000,00	-
Concrete	**2.200**	2.000	neighborhood	3	300 officers	$	1.800.000.000,00	$ 7.400.000.000,00
Concrete	**1.596**	626	district	4	-	$	10.409.000.000,00	$ 12.100.000.000,00
Asphalt	***2,3 km***	*23.020*	*district*	*1*	-		-	*$ 76.000.000.000,00*
Concrete	***6.600***	*12.400*	*district*	-	*plus 8 treatment panels*	*$*	*93.000.000.000,00*	*$ 113.000.000.000,00*
Concrete / Brick	**1.284**	990	UPZ	3	2292 people	$	3.000.000.000,00	$ 4.000.000.000,00
Concrete	**8.118**	6.246	neighborhood	3	500 workers	$	130.000.000.000,00	-

expectations



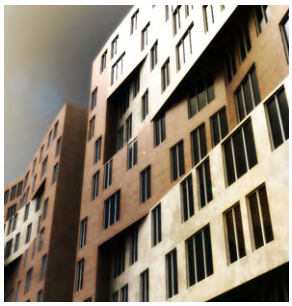


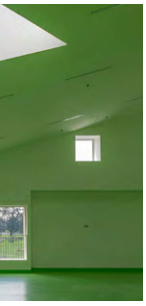


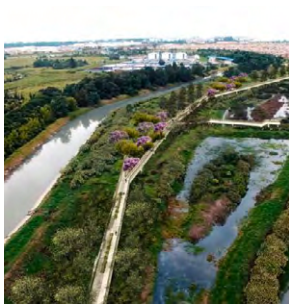


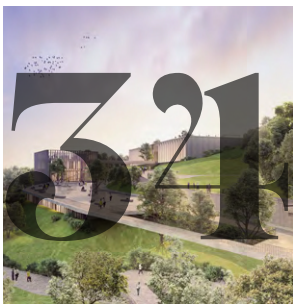


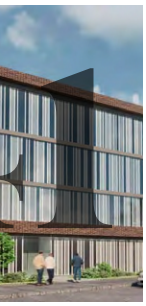


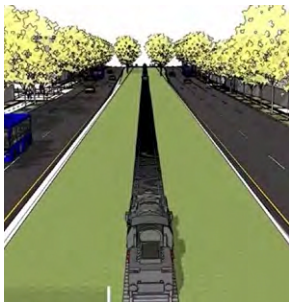












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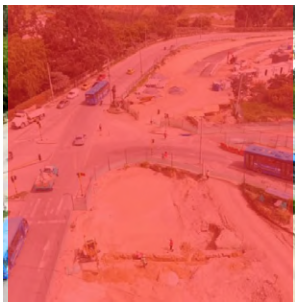


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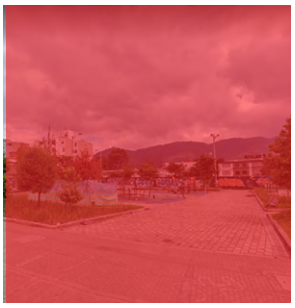

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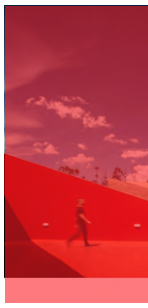
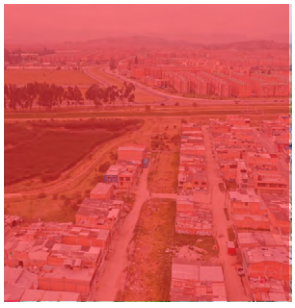

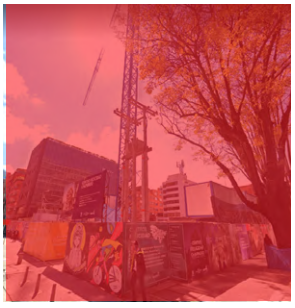

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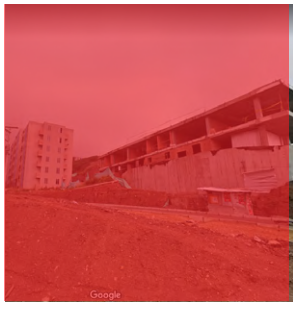
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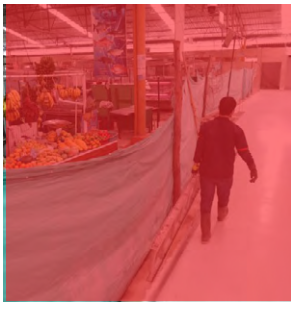
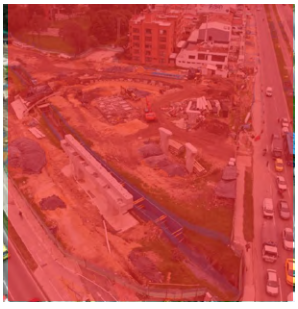
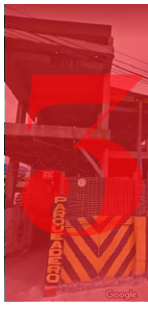
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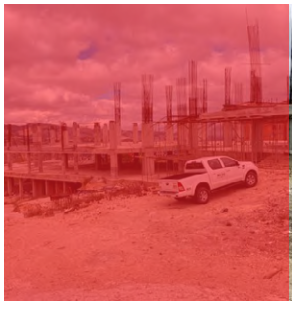




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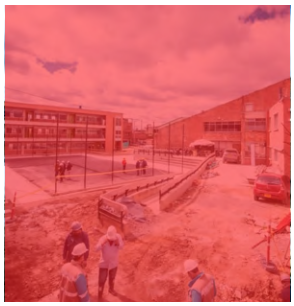

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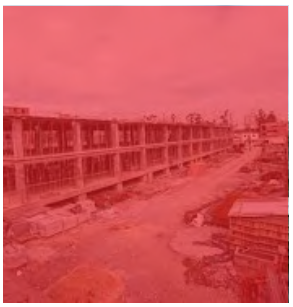

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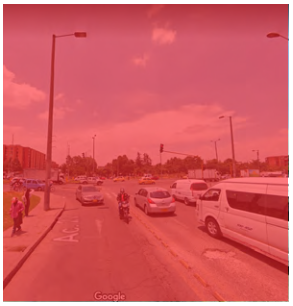



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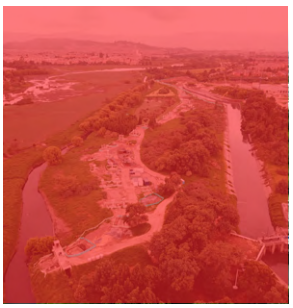
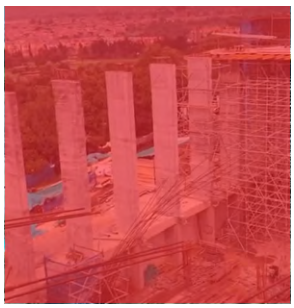

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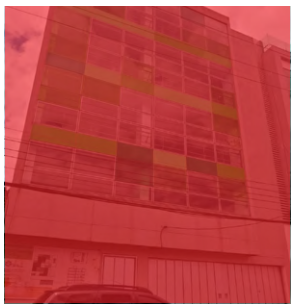

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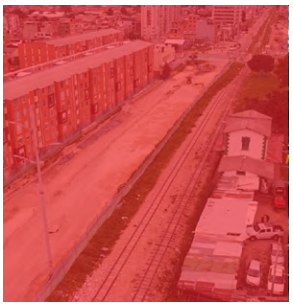
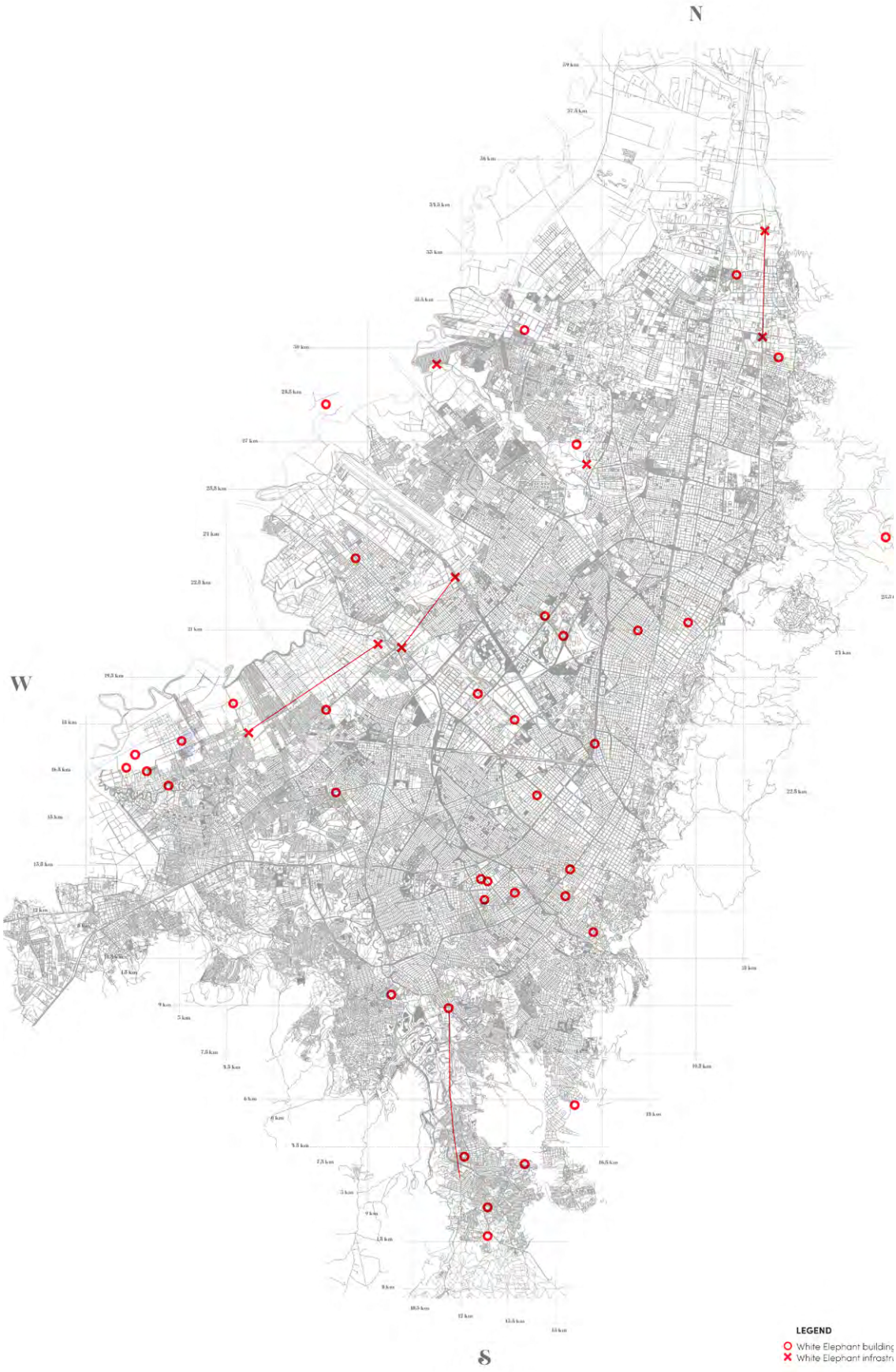
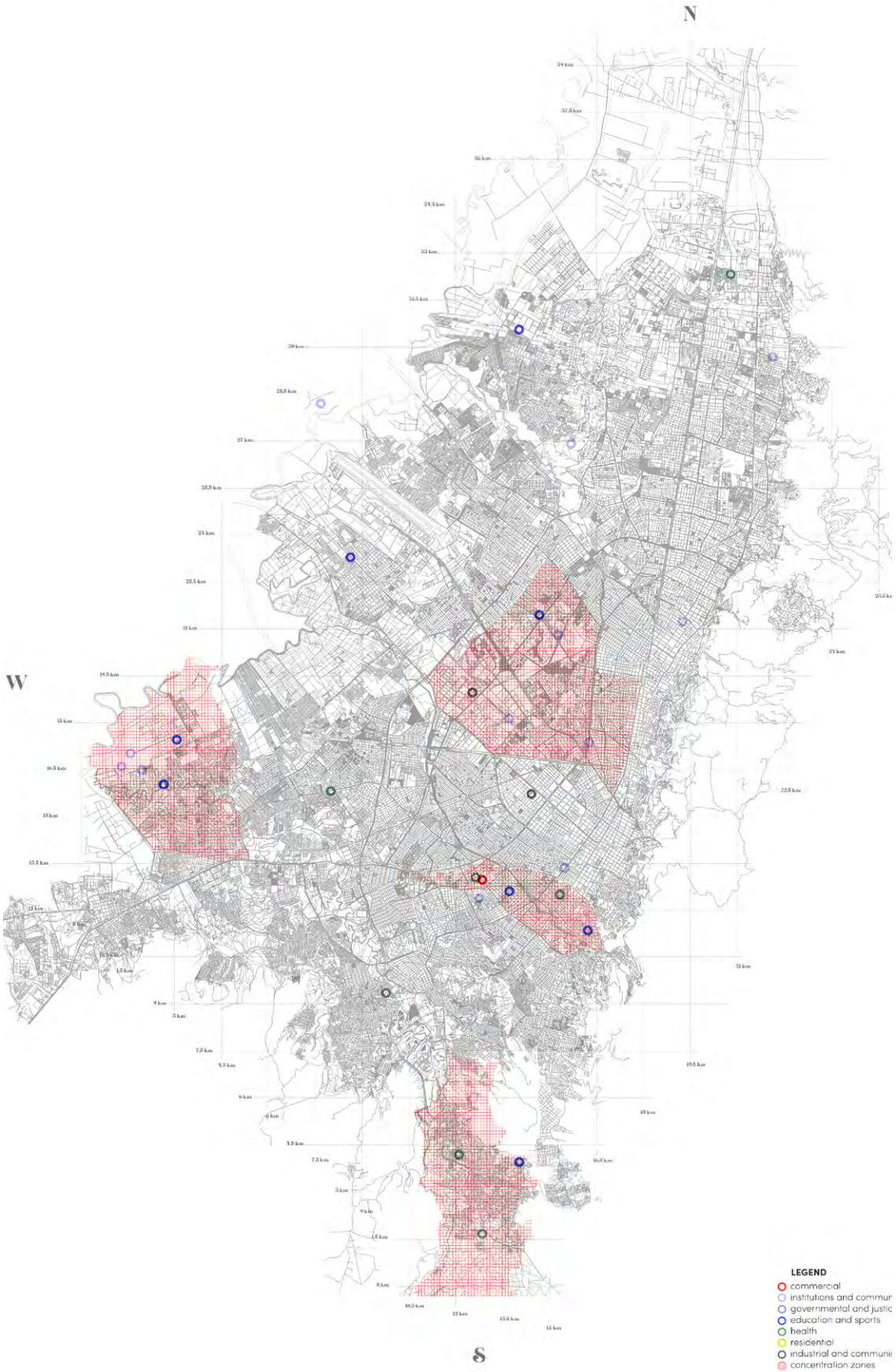


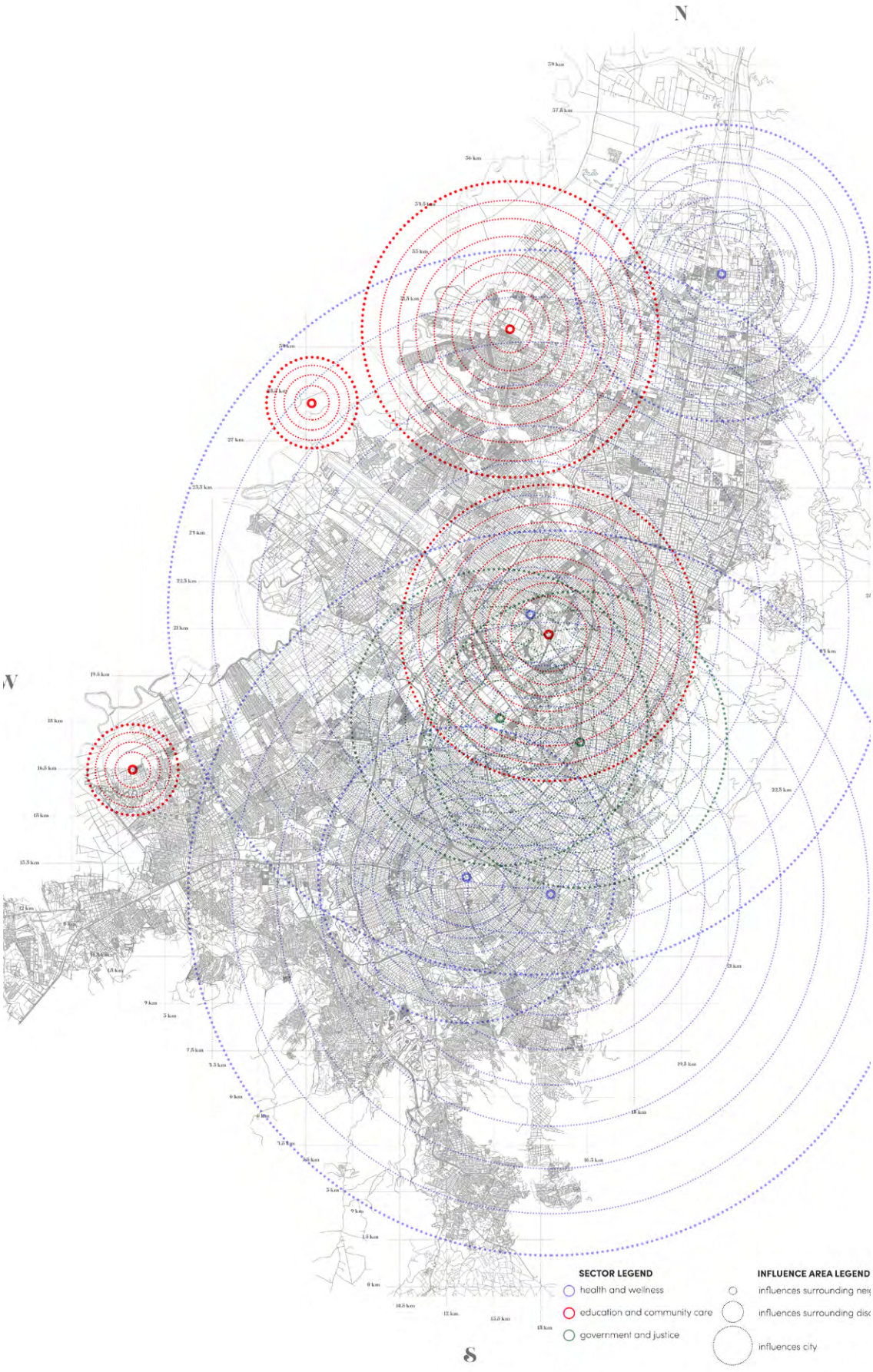
reality



location of White Elephants in Bogotá



uses of White Elephants in Bogotá



prioritisation of White Elephants in Bogotá

prioritising White Elephants

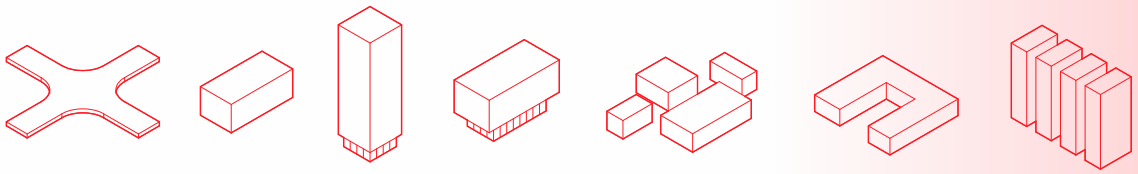
In order to narrow down the focus of this analysis and select specific White Elephants for further study, we used a decision matrix to prioritise a group of alternatives based on weighable and assessable criteria. This tool allows for the estimation of a prioritization index for each evaluated project based on its social and cultural impact (Besterfield, Besterfield-Michna, Besterfield, & Mary, 1998).

Beforehand, in order to be eligible for evaluation, we decided on the White Elephants to meet the following criteria: 1) they are currently in abandoned or stand by state, with no future plans for intervention; 2) their development percentage is 85% or below; 3) their construction stage is not beyond an uncomplete structure, allowing more flexibility and urgency in future design and strategy decisions; 4) they have an influence area at the district level or above, indicating a large potential user base and the need to consider the needs of a wider community; and 5) they do not belong to the Infrastructure or Housing sectors, as the focus on this analysis is on the public sector (contrary for housing) and projects beyond the scope of architectural design (infrastructure).

This lead to ten (10) candidates for the 'decision matrix' analysis. From them, the selected project will be one that has the greatest probability of success with the lowest level of effort. These ten projects have incurred a total loss approximately $600 billion COP (€154 million EUR). All of them still need 25% or more of the construction process to be completed.

Then, the decision criteria are chosen and levered according to their importance level. It is recommended that the sum of these leverages equals one hundred (100), that they are independent parameters from each other and that they are either directly or inversely proportional to the prioritisation index (Camisón, Cruz, & González, 2007).

The five (5) selected criteria are: 1) ***competence***, referencing the knowledge, abilities and experience in regards of the evaluated project, and is directly proportional to the index; 2) ***development percentage***, corresponds to the advance level of the construction before it was abandoned, is also directly proportional to the index; 3) ***involved area***, corresponding to the area in square meters (m^2), and is considered to be inversely proportional to the index given that the greater the area, the greater the effort for its redesign and further consolidation; 4) ***projection time***, as to the time it would take to redesign and reconstruct the evaluated abandoned project, it is inversely proportional to the index since it would require in addition greater economic costs and greater vulnerability around it; and 5) ***population impact***, corresponds to the benefits that the new redesign would bring to



engineer work | *block - closed* | *skyscraper - open ground floor* | *block - open ground floor* | *multiple blocks* | *around a courtyard* | *tower blocks*

typologies of White Elephants in Bogotá

decision matrix tool

alternatives to evaluate

Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo (n. 06)

Centro día Campo Verde (n. 13)

CAPS Verbenal (n. 41)

Colegio Lombardía (n. 35)

CAPS Barrio Santander (n. 32)

Unidad Deportiva El Salitre (n. 23)

Parque de los Niños (n. 08)

Comando Metropolitano de Policía (n. 03)

Casa Ecológica de Animales (n. 22)

Hospital San Juan de Dios (n. 11)

selected criteria	importance	proportion
competence	15	direct
development %	25	direct
involved area	20	inverse
projection time	10	inverse
population impact	30	direct
total	*100*	

prioritisation index IPE

$$IPE = \frac{\text{competence} \times \text{development \%}}{\text{involved area} \times \text{projection time}} \times \text{population impact}$$

the community surrounding said White Elephant, hence is directly proportional to the index.

With these variables, the Prioritisation Index (IPE) is calculated, and two parameters derive from it: the ***success probability***, referencing the criteria that can help reach the objectives proposed of the project and the ***effort level***, referencing the criteria that is a barrier for the development of the project.

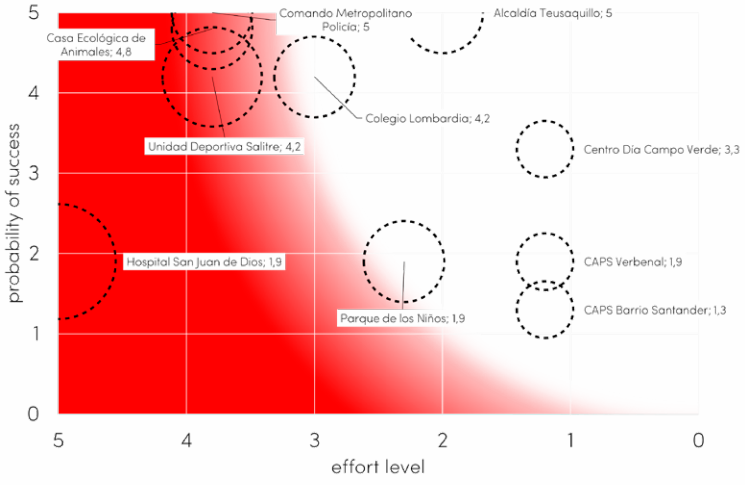
The value for each criterion comes from a metric from one (1) to five (5) and is obtained from a level of questions that help mitigate the level of subjectivity at this stage of the project. For the first criteria, the questions that rise for each criterion, in order, are: 'which is the competence level and accessibility of information?' (from unknown = 1 to fully known = 5), 'which is the development percentage of the abandoned construction?' (from 10% = 1 to 100% = 5), 'which is the total built area of the construction?' (from up to 1.500 m^2 = 1 to over 60.000 m^2 = 5), 'how much time would it take to project and rebuild an alternative to the construction?' (from two months = 1 to over six months = 5), and 'what is the size of the population to be benefited?' (from adjacent area = 1 to national level = 5).

Afterwards, the parameters are weighted in the decision matrix tool, which uses the equation described above and presents the three (3) main ratings in the decision map: ***Probability of Success*** on the y axis, ***Level of Effort*** on the x axis and Prioritisation Index on the dimension of the bubble.

As it can be seen in the decision matrix map, the projects Centro Día Campo Verde, CAPS Verbenal, CAPS Barrio Santander and Alcaldía Teusaquillo, reflect the lowest level of effort, between one (1) and two (2). As previously mentioned, this level of effort is related to the area involved and the projection time. The other alternatives evaluated reflect a higher level of effort, including Colegio Lombardía, Unidad Deportiva Salitre, Casa Ecológica de Animales and Hospital San Juan de Dios.

It can also be seen that among the options with the lowest level of effort, the one with the highest probability of success, corresponds to the Alcaldía Local Teusaquillo. The alternatives Colegio Lombardía, Comando Metropolitano, Casa Ecológica de Animales and Unidad Deportiva also reflect a probability of success greater than or equal to four (4), however, their level of difficulty is higher than that of the Alcaldía Local Teusaquillo, as mentioned in this analysis. On the other hand, the benefits generated between these alternatives are equivalent.

According to this analysis, we can conclude that the Alcaldía Local Teusaquillo is the best feasible alternative to intervene. In addition, it will be studied with the alternatives in the proximity, Comando Metropolitano de Policía and Unidad Deportiva El Salitre, emphasising on how it affects the dynamics of the district, Teusaquillo, and its direct impact on their influence ratio.



decision matrix

Teusaquillo as a district enhancing concentrations

Teusaquillo, one of Bogotá's twenty districts, has a unique history and development that has made it a culturally rich and historically significant area with alternative recreational options. However, it is also a highly concentrated zone in the city where economic and governmental power are concentrated, leading to a disbalance of dynamics within the district itself, where decaying heritage coexists with metropolitan-level recreation. This study will delve into the history and current state of Teusaquillo, examining the cultural and political influences that have shaped the district and the conflicting dynamics at play within its borders.

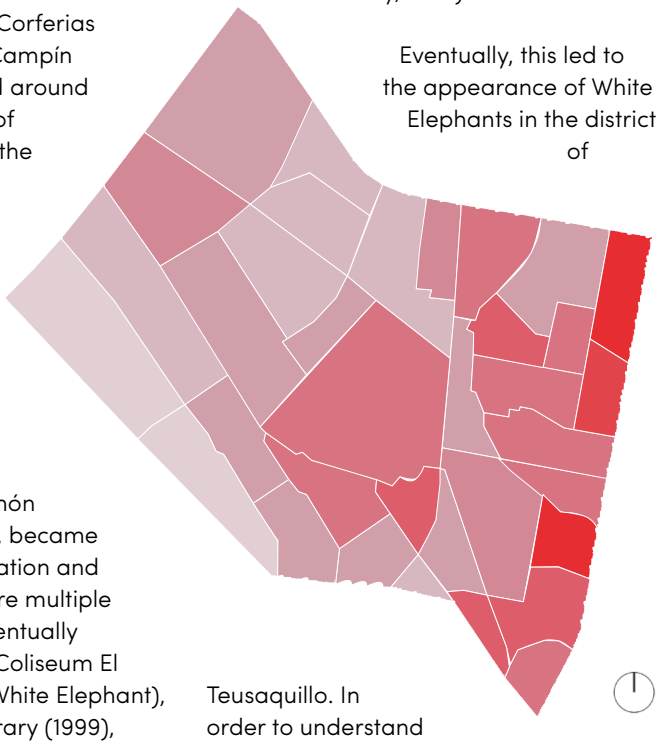
Its beginning dates to the start of the 20th century when urbanization in the zone began due to the rapid population growth in Bogotá (Carbonell & Vélez, 2010). Before, the land on which Teusaquillo is now located was distributed as a high state farm. Its layout and housing typologies were primarily designed by international architects such as Karl Brunner, Leopoldo Rother, Erich Lange, and Bruno Violi, who introduced foreign styles such as Victorian, English, Tudor, and Swiss, which differed from the normalised colonial style. These architects merged these styles into an organic and structured street system, inspired by the "Practical City," the "Beautiful City," and the "Garden City" concepts. The goal of these designs was to attract the high elite to the periphery and away from the city centre, which was primarily used for services. Teusaquillo is one of the most homogenous neighbourhoods of the city, directly following modernization concepts. However, it is surrounded by a diverse range of architectural styles, creating an unbalanced distribution (Zambrano, Carreira, & Rivera, 2000).

In the 1920s, national developers worked with the aforementioned architects to introduce a modern approach to urbanization in Teusaquillo, heavily influenced by new city planning paradigms from other parts of the continent (Gutiérrez Aristizábal, 2013). This marked the first time that systems such as aqueducts, sewage, and public lighting were introduced in the district (Barbosa, 2011). As the neighbourhood developed, it became a residence for high-ranking political figures such as Mariano Ospina Pérez and Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who left an architectural legacy. In the 1930s, with a growing economy and international political stability, President Enrique Olaya Herrera initiated a modernization period in Teusaquillo with the construction of national-level infrastructure projects such as the University City (current the National University campus), the Hippodrome, the Stadium, the Headquarters for the Bolivarian Games, and Caracas Avenue, which was intended to connect the entire city (Barbosa, 2011). This transformation of the district from a residential area to a multi-use one earned it recognition as one of the city's extended centres at the

time, as the city was growing linearly in a north-south direction and allowed for the development of nearby lands.

In the second half of the century, Teusaquillo continued to attract attention from developers and government alike, with the development of projects such as the Urban Centre Antonio Nariño CUAN, an experimental residential centre with modern and CIAM ideals (1953); the Events Centre Corferias (1954); the San Luis and Campín neighbourhood, designed around the Stadium as a means of urban integration (1946); the National Administrative Centre CAN (1957) which served as a modern hub for state entities and was followed by the District Administrative Centre (1968), aimed at providing efficient services for citizens; and the Metropolitan Park Simón Bolívar, built around 1960, became the largest area for recreation and gathering in the city, where multiple leisure facilities where eventually integrated, including the Coliseum El Salitre (1973, currently a White Elephant), and the Virgilio Barco Library (1999), which provided cultural and sporting services for the entire metropolitan area (Zambrano, Carreira, & Rivera, 2000).

In 1980, the city administration of Bogotá officially established the district of Teusaquillo and changed the political organization of the city, granting more autonomy to districts for their development and appointing district majors for their supervision (Zambrano, Carreira, & Rivera, 2000). The district became a cluster of neighbourhoods in a "city within a city" manner, organised by sector (governmental, hotel, sporting, educational, selective commercial, cultural) and surrounded by residential buildings of currently patrimonial architecture that encapsules a wide range of styles (morphologically and typologically) within a single zone in the city (Colón Llamas & Mejía Pavony, 2019).



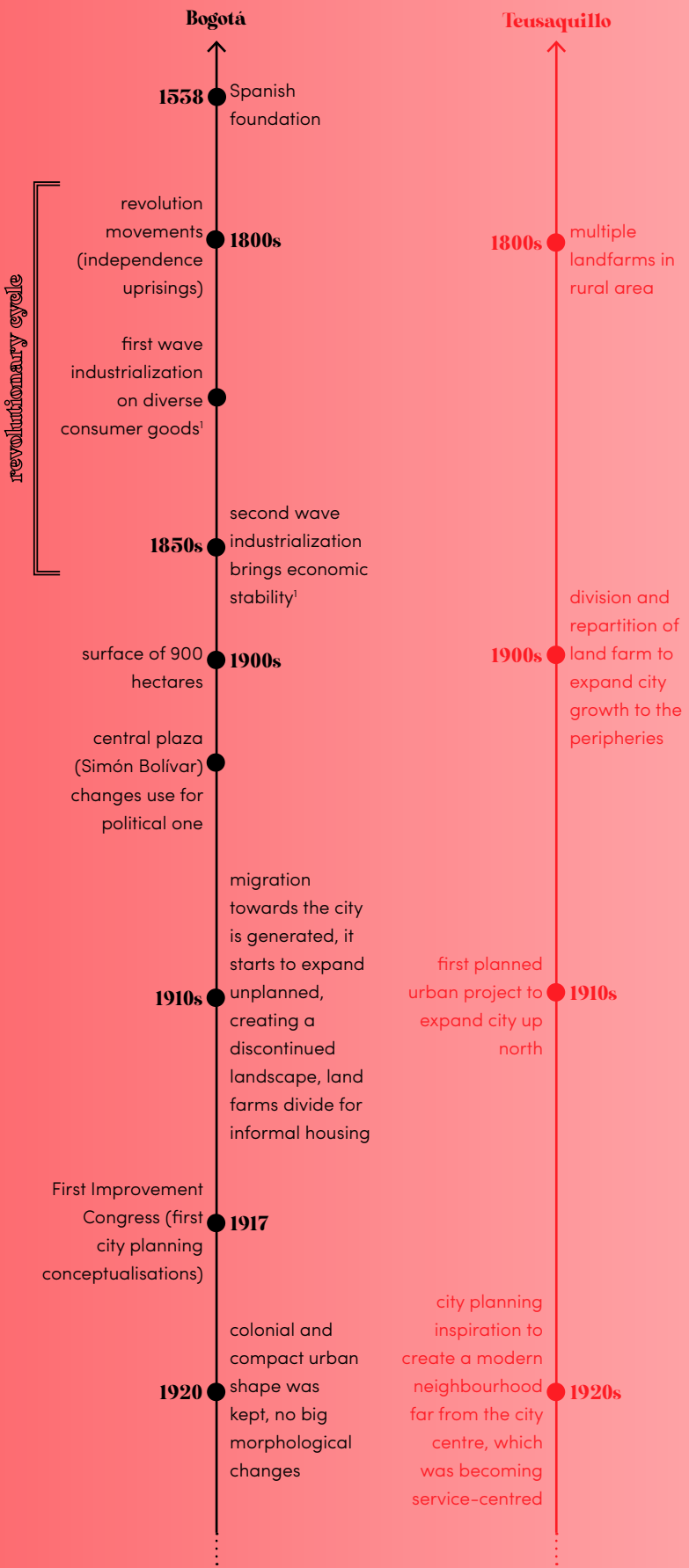
Teusaquillo's growth through the years

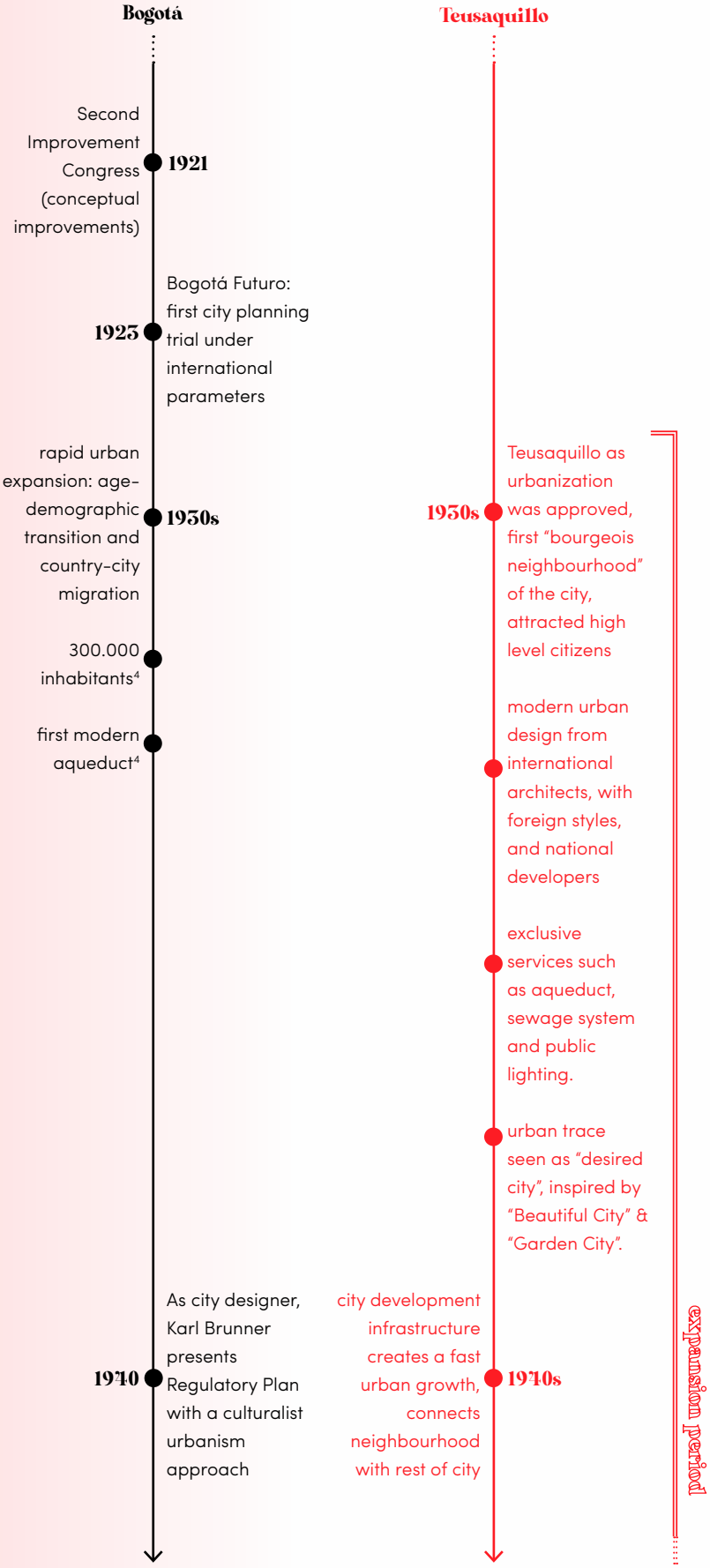
1900

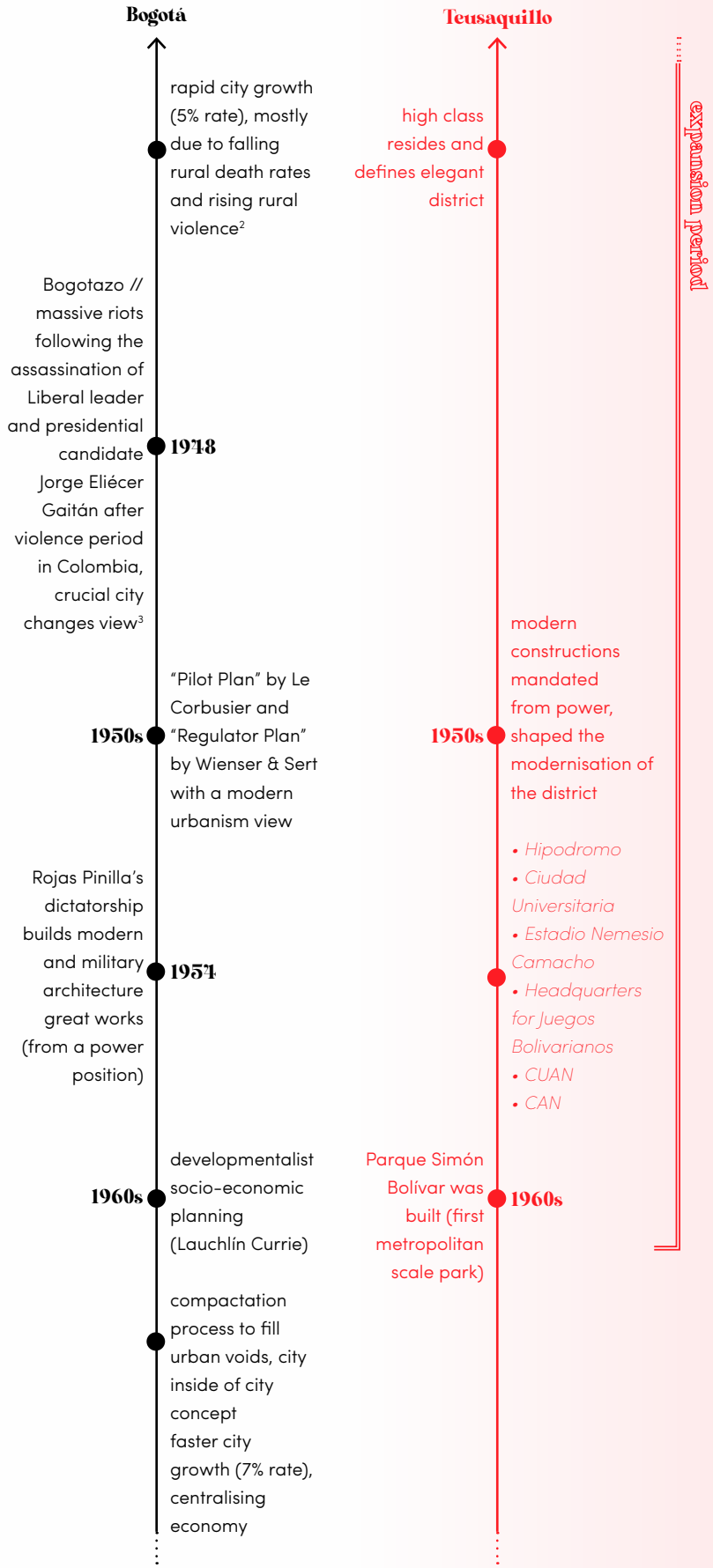
2000

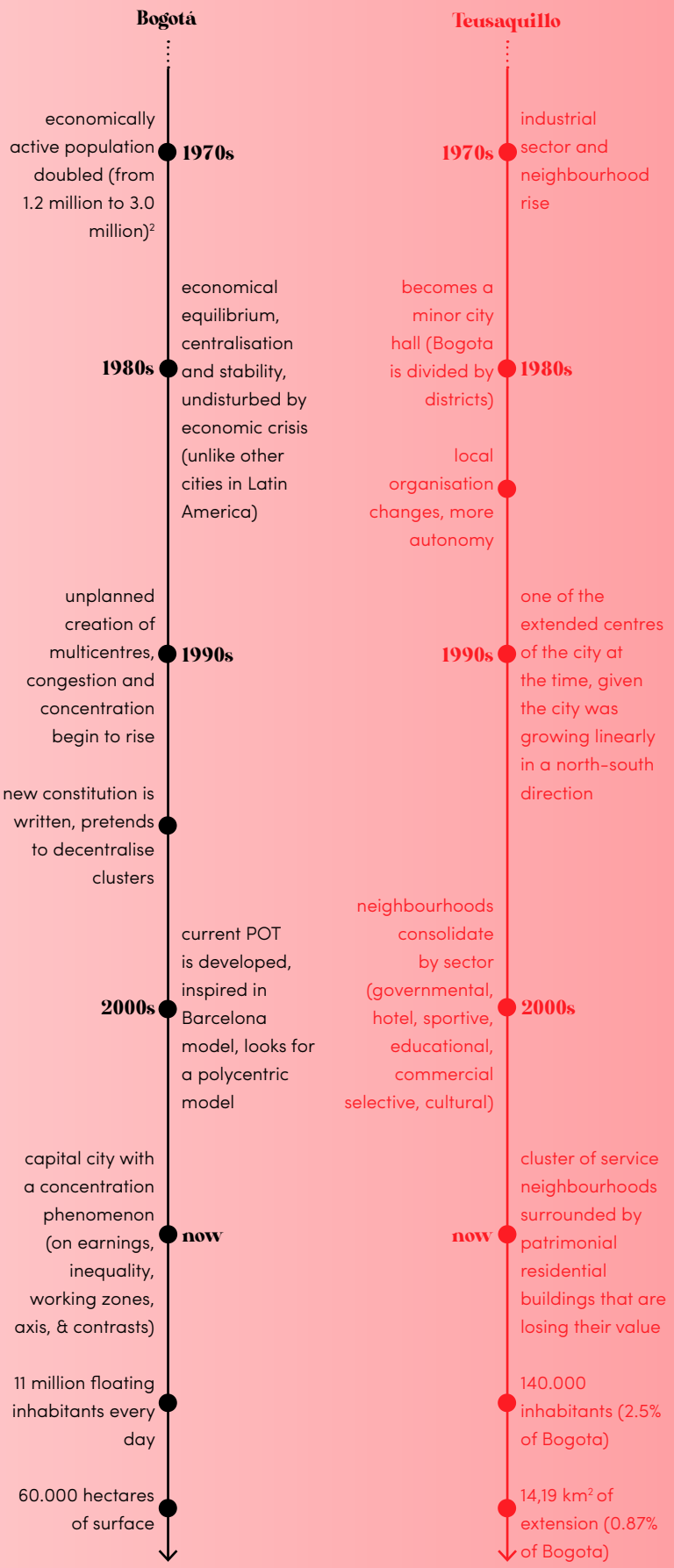
Eventually, this led to the appearance of White Elephants in the district of Teusaquillo. In order to understand the multi-dimensional nature of this problem, we have examined the district's background, including its political and cultural significance for the city and the urban and architectural influences that have shaped its development over the 20th century, where we can gain a sense of the formal and functional dynamics at play in the area.

historical recount




Bogotá
Teusaquillo
Second Improvement Congress (conceptual improvements)
1921
Bogotá Futuro: first city planning trial under international parameters
1923
rapid urban expansion: age-demographic transition and country-city migration
1930s
300.000 inhabitants[4]
first modern aqueduct[4]
Teusaquillo as urbanization was approved, first "bourgeois neighbourhood" of the city, attracted high level citizens
1930s
modern urban design from international architects, with foreign styles, and national developers
exclusive services such as aqueduct, sewage system and public lighting.
urban trace seen as "desired city", inspired by "Beautiful City" & "Garden City".
As city designer, Karl Brunner presents Regulatory Plan with a culturalist urbanism approach
1940
city development infrastructure creates a fast urban growth, connects neighbourhood with rest of city
1970s
expansion period

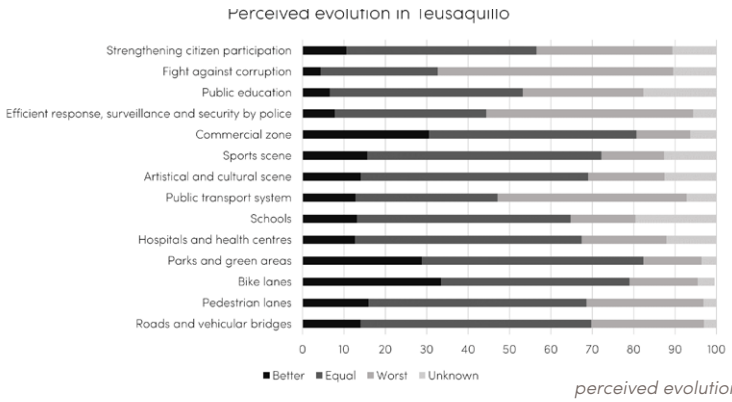

Bogotá
Teusaquillo
rapid city growth (5% rate), mostly due to falling rural death rates and rising rural violence[2]
high class resides and defines elegant district
expansion period
Bogotazo // massive riots following the assassination of Liberal leader and presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán after violence period in Colombia, crucial city changes view[3]
1948
"Pilot Plan" by Le Corbusier and "Regulator Plan" by Wienser & Sert with a modern urbanism view
1950s
1950s
modern constructions mandated from power, shaped the modernisation of the district
• Hipodromo
• Ciudad Universitaria
• Estadio Nemesio Camacho
• Headquarters for Juegos Bolivarianos
• CUAN
• CAN
Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship builds modern and military architecture great works (from a power position)
1957
developmentalist socio-economic planning (Lauchlín Currie)
1960s
Parque Simón Bolívar was built (first metropolitan scale park)
1960s
compactation process to fill urban voids, city inside of city concept
faster city growth (7% rate), centralising economy



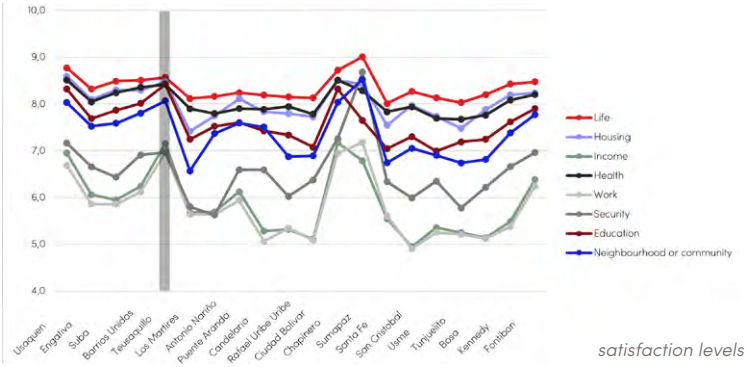
[1] *Moncada 2016*
[2] *Gilbert 1996*
[3] *Alape 2016*
[4] *Barbosa 2011*

Teusaquillo's profile

Teusaquillo has a rich history and cultural significance for the city. However, it has also developed contrasts in its morphological growth, with a protected patrimonial zone for residential, cultural, and leisure activities coexisting with abandoned buildings (at least four White Elephants) and a high demand for transformation versus preservation. The presence of these abandoned buildings in a high opportunity zone raises questions about who would benefit from their recovery and how they fit in with the rest of the district. This has led to the creation of profiles to identify the major needs of Teusaquillo in terms of social conditions.



perceived evolution



satisfaction levels

157.138
inhabitants (2022)

64.909
families (2022)
(2,1% of Bogota)

2,4
persons by home (2017)

1.421 Ha
extension

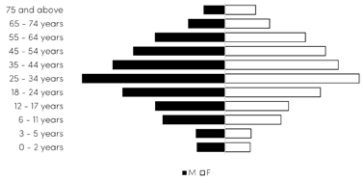
11.102,85/km²
population density
(vs 4.835,47 in Bogota)

25,7 m²/hab
green area
(vs 10 m2/hab in Bogota)

12,8 m²/hab
effective public space
(vs 4,4 m2/hab in Bogota)

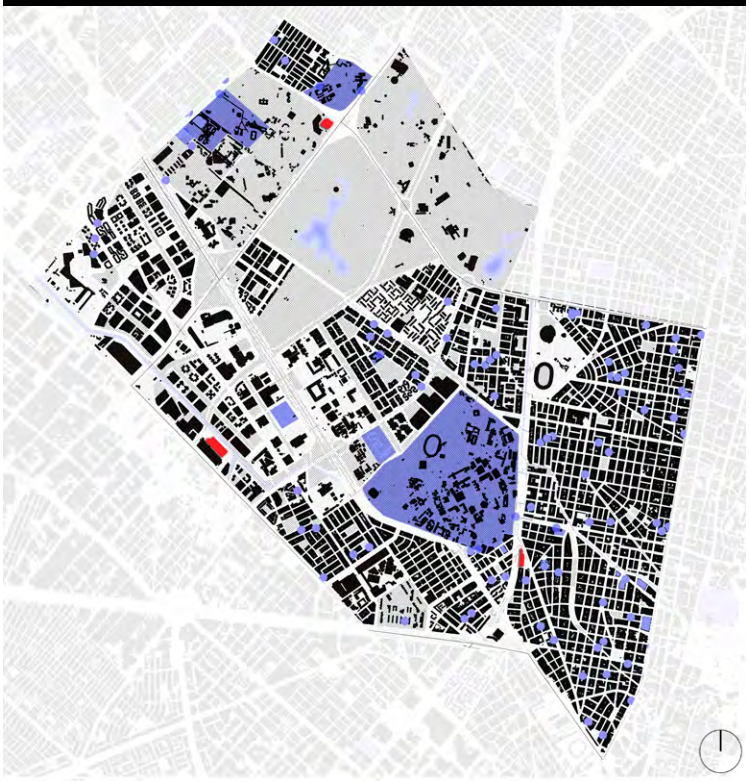
613.000
daily trips
(11° district on the move)

400.000
floating population



age pyramid

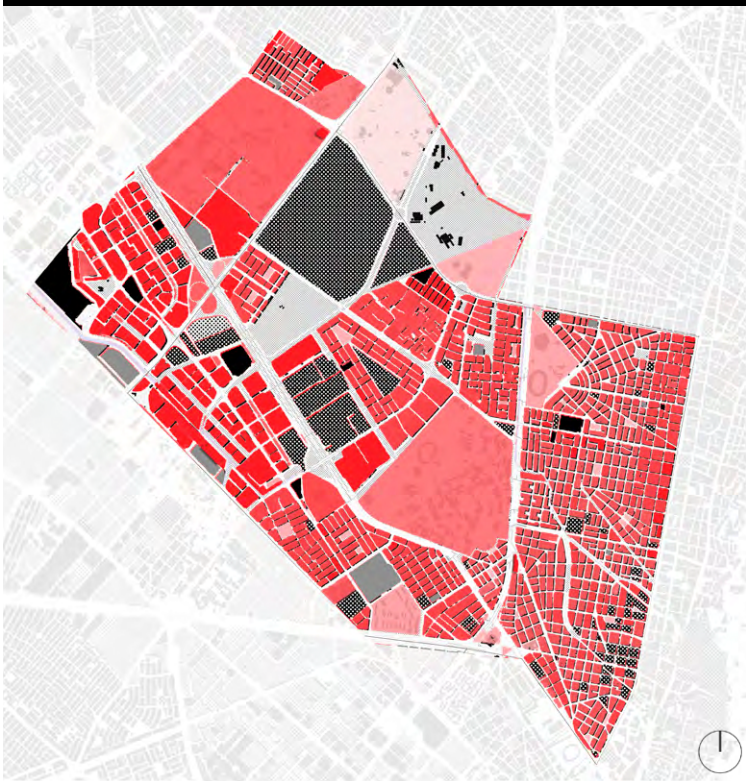
01 STUDENT
UNIVERSITY OR SCHOOL



The student profile is a significant one in Teusaquillo due to the presence of a university cluster and the district's high education levels. The three major educational institutions are within walking distance of a White Elephant, creating potential for interaction between the campus and the abandoned structure. Approximately 40% of Teusaquillo's population has a university degree, with an additional 20% currently enrolled in higher education. These statistics suggest that the capacity for high education spaces should be a consideration when determining the future use of abandoned structures in the district.

- *20 official schools*
- *3 universities campuses*
- *white elephants*

02 FREELANCER
MICRO & SMALL BUSINESS

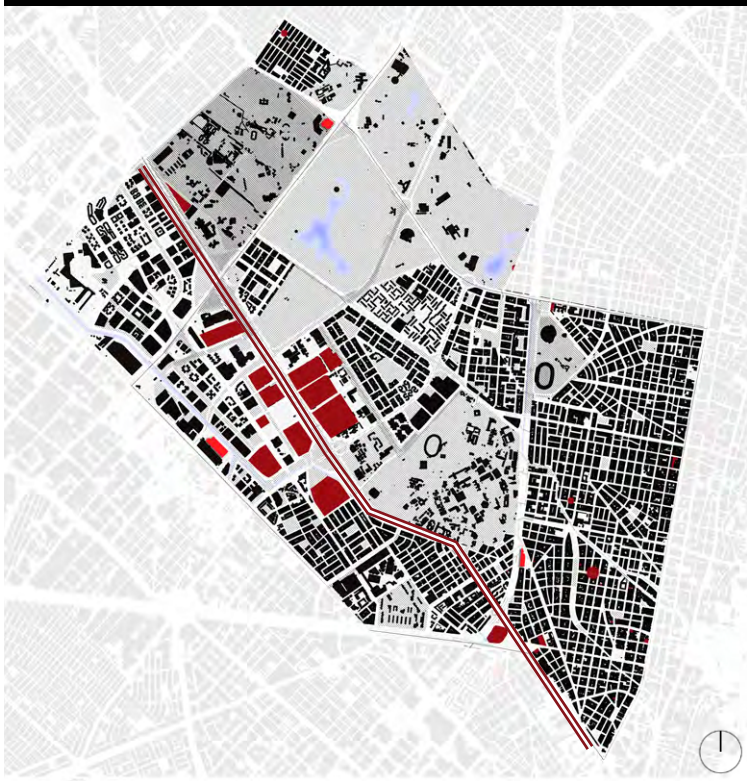


The freelancer or small business employee profile is prevalent in the district of Teusaquillo, comprising half of the working population. These individuals often operate within high-cost areas, such as the business cluster near the international district or the patrimonial cluster where older buildings are being modernized. This financial imbalance can be addressed through regulatory measures to promote opportunities in areas outside of these central blocks. In addition, given the high number of business and entrepreneurial initiatives in the district, there is a high demand for exhibition and event spaces that could be fulfilled by the recovering of abandoned megaprojects.

- *m2 value ($4mill - $200mil)*
- *10 commerce hubs*
- *offices*
- *warehouses*
- *industrial*
- *white elephants*

03 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

DISTRICT OR NATIONAL

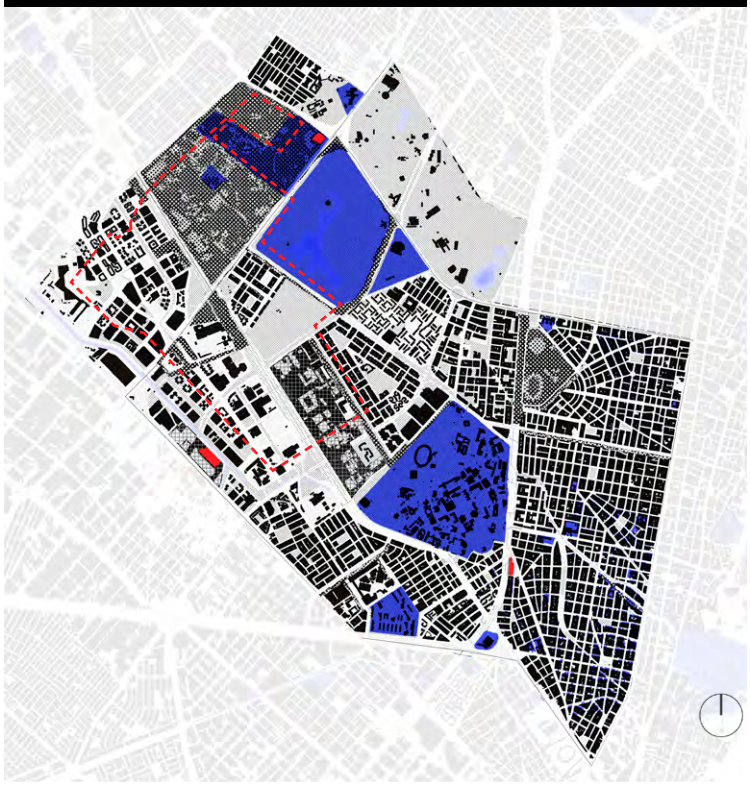


Public employees who travel to Teusaquillo to work in the governmental and international cluster may find themselves in a district with a high concentration of buildings in the form of super-blocks. While these structures are efficient for internal use, they can be inefficient for local life. The presence of a nearby White Elephant, which was originally intended to join the cluster but ultimately became an obstacle to urban sprawl, further complicates the area's development. These individuals require services that promote interpersonal development and relationships beyond their functional and strategic interactions with the environment.

governmental entities // political middle
of the city
white elephants

01 ONG

HERITAGE, CULTURE, SOCIAL

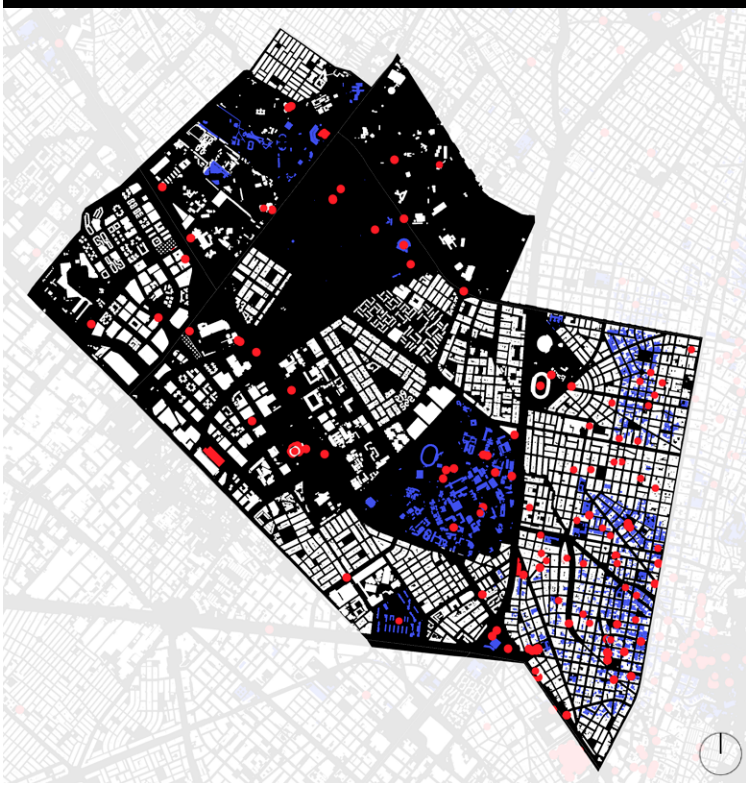


NGOs, while fewer in number, have a significant impact on the district. They work to restore and develop buildings and special zones into community services, particularly in the east side of the district where there is a zone for urban protection and preservation. The city has also targeted specific areas in Teusaquillo for investment and heritage preservation, providing potential opportunities for NGOs to attach to these efforts and potentially benefit from the recovery of abandoned megaprojects.

heritage interest area
special zone
urban renovation
for protection and preservation
rapid fluid change
white elephants

05 ARTIST

WRITING, THEATER, PLASTIC

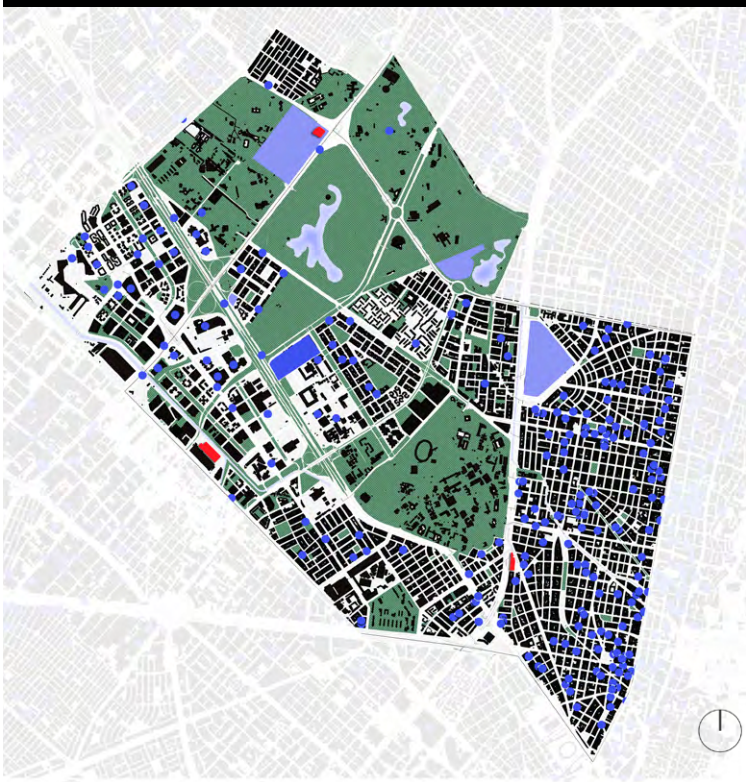


A key profile in Teusaquillo is the artist, as the district has a rich history in the performing arts. Many cultural and artistic centres, such as theatres and houses, have emerged in the patrimonial neighbourhoods of the district. However, these facilities are at risk of abandonment and deterioration, requiring a more proactive strategy to preserve them. There is also an opportunity to use open spaces near cultural centres as a way to promote the concentration of artistic and cultural activities in the eastern part of the district.

cultural houses and centres
heritage interest area
open space
white elephants

06 ATHLETE

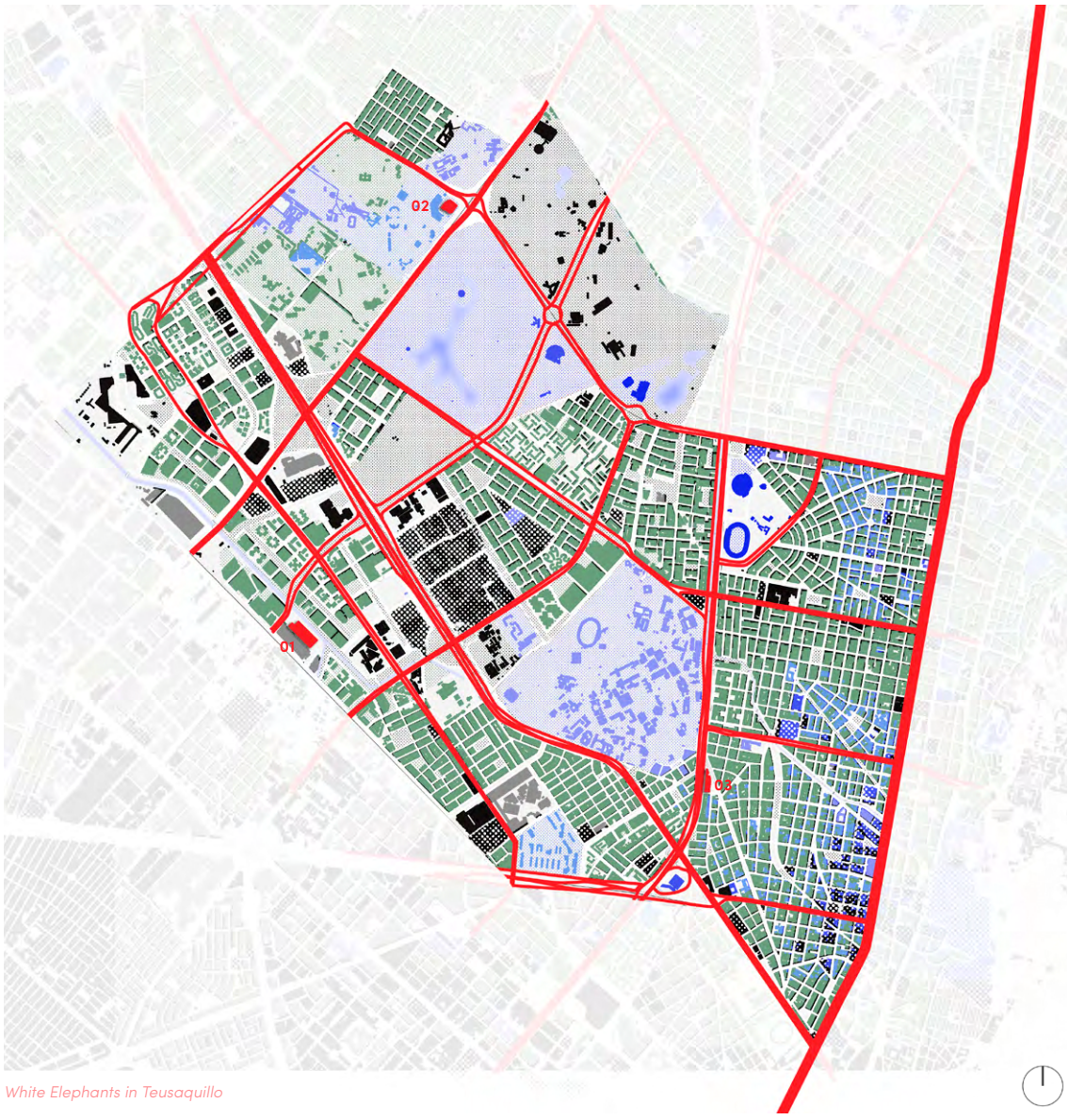
PROFESSIONAL // AMATEUR



The final profile identified is that of athletes, who come to the district of Teusaquillo from around the city and country to train at the main metropolitan facility in the area. The district also offers a variety of health services, creating a connection between wellness and professional training. The Simón Bolívar Park, a well-connected green area with high-performance facilities, also serves the needs of high-end athletes. However, the different typologies of spaces needed for athletes may not be fully understood or appreciated.

green area
high performance sport facilities
health services
hospital
white elephants

appearance of the prioritised White Elephants in Teusaquillo



White Elephants in Teusaquillo

After prioritising the space and users, we realise a deeper analysis on the three White Elephants that have tainted Teusaquillo district. Their histories represent the repetitive flaws inside the corruption system of the country. By understanding their histories and patterns, we aim to develop strategies through architecture and urban design to prevent similar failures in the future. This also requires a shift in architectural theory towards a more practical and socially conscious approach.

- white elephants
- residential use
- cultural//social services
- business developments
- metropolitan services
- green space
- main road network
- future metro line

01 Comando Metropolitano Policía

address
Cra. 56 # 22 - 96

neighbourhood
La Luisita

started
2010

abandoned
2016

advanced percentage
83%

built area
39.000 m²

plot area
1.600 m²

current state
taken up by Contralorship

building stage
incomplete + failing structure

use
governmental & justice

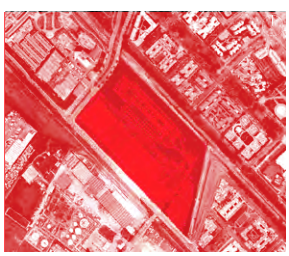
typology
block - open ground floor

capacity
4.000 workers

architect
Edificadora Urbe S.A.S.

developer
Consorcio de Seguridad Urbana Distrito Capital

context

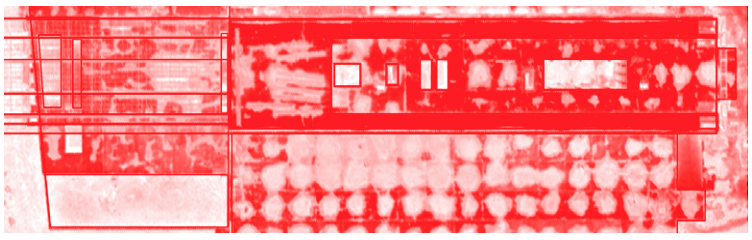


The National General Fiscal entity cataloged this project as a White Elephant with a detriment of over $28.000 million COP (Monitor Ciudadano de la Corrupción 2021). It all begun in 2010, when the Vigilance and Security Fund (FVS) created a tender for the repair of the Police Command of Bogota. Among its many breaches, it's highlighted the fact that it was given to a firm that at the time did not fulfill the requirements for an execution of $3.000 million COP; it showed anomalies only 6 months later the assignation; the works did not stop even after the Fiscal intervened, adding to the over-costs and the over-spending (Alcaldía de Bogotá 2022). After two years, the works were finally suspended, just at the time it was supposed to be finished, and in a lapse of four years, it had around twenty episodes of other suspensions and extensions that left a 39.000 m2 mole unconcluded (Alcaldía de Bogotá 2022).

This work, located in the La Luisita neighbourhood in Teusaquillo, one of the last developments of the district, and mainly residential one, with concentrated building towers, has left a social and physical hole around the zone, leaving a constant perception of insecurity, lack of belonging and a restrained advance in the field of vigilance, security, and intelligence development at an urban level.

The construction has an open block typology; this typology expresses a physical language of inviting people and passers in, allowing to develop public or common activities on the ground floor without compromising the private uses of the top floors, and even so, contributing to a trusting neighbourhood. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the unfinished work, the current scenario is quite the opposite, and it's affecting a zone that is still growing, strengthening in commercial, business and international topics. Its ironic enough to have this White Elephant directly in front of the National General Fiscal entity headquarters.*

**Latest announcement up to date refers to this project being finished (on October 2022) and expecting to be in complete functioning on February 2023. This would make it the first attempted "finished" White Elephant of the taxonomy list, after four administrations and a quadruplication of the initial costs (Redacción El Tiempo 2022).*



general plan - aerophoto

west view

east view

02 Unidad Deportiva Distrital El Salitre

address
Cra. 68 # 63

neighbour
Parque Simón Bolívar

started
2017

abandoned
2018

advanced percentage
39%

built area:
26.538 m²

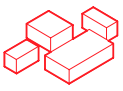
plot area:
49.500 m²

current state
stand by

building stage
failing structure + seismically unreinforced

use
sports & recreation

typology
blocks - closed



capacity
7.000 spectators

architect
Camacho y Guerrero

developer
San Antonio IDRD (restoration)

context

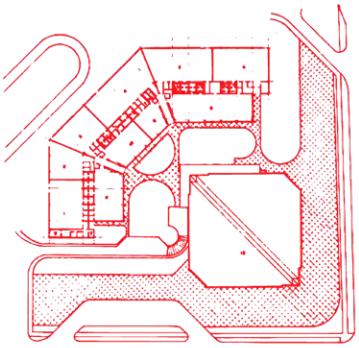
By the year 2017, it was adjudicated the new contract for structural reinforcement for the beknown construction of the District Sportive Unit El Salitre (coliseum and gyms), a work of architecture done by the recognized architect firm Camacho y Guerrero, which got a Special Mention in the National Architecture Award known by their sensible insertion in the landscape of the city, with high influences from modernism and Alvar Aalto conceptualisations (Téllez Castañeda 2018).

It was firstly built in 1970, done as an open contest for the developing a multi-use sportive centre for the entire city leagues. It created a new culture of good sports, important events and recreational life. Its capacity allowed to reunite the citizens in a central key point of the territory, it gained a social quality beyond sports (Téllez Castañeda 2018).

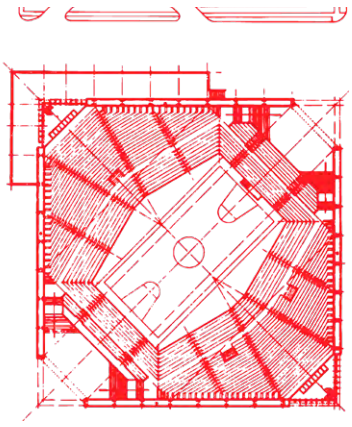
Eventually, it needed a structural restoration, given that the metal structure did not comply with the seismic normative done later on, which let to its abandonment on 2018 by the temporal union who was given the contract San Antonio IDRD (Acosta Villada 2022). According to Newsletter CM&:

All the control bodies —the Prosecutor's Office, the District Comptroller's Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Ombudsman's Office and the Ombudsman's Office— visited the ruins of what used to be the sports arena where more than two hundred and forty-seven thousand athletes and eleven leagues used to train. What they found was devastating: a coliseum in ruins, stripped, without roofs, without doors and tons of useless materials (CM& 2021).

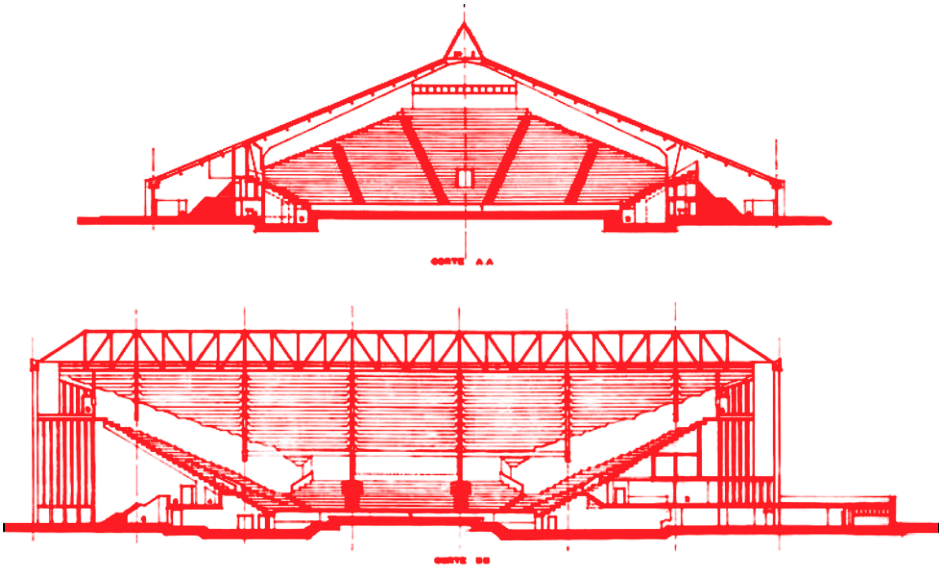
From the beginning, there were constant delays from the contractor's side, a bad administration of the budget and a poor auditing process even after the corruption inside was detected (VIDJCB 2022). The physical consequences of this detriment not only caused and urban void in an affluent corner of the city, also affecting the heritage landscape of the Metropolitan Park, but also has restricted opportunities for athletes and leagues in development who were left without a meeting centre.



general plan



ground floor plan



sections

east view - original design

bird-eye view

interior view

03 Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo

address
Av. 30 # 40A - 15

neighbourhood
Las Americas

started
2017

abandoned
2021

advanced percentage
82%

built area
4.632 m²

plot area
675 m²

current state
abandoned

building stage
decayed + failing structure with facade

use
governmental

typology
skyscraper - open ground floor

capacity
500 workers & consultants

architect
Carlos García Benítez , Gabriel Romero Villota , Eduardo Mejía

developer
Consorcio JR Sede

context

The design contest, from the City Hall (Alcaldía de Bogotá 2013), for the new headquarters for the Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo were announced in 2013 (with an initial budget of 6.050 million COP and an agreement of additional 144 million COP for the contest bases). It became a constant promotion along three Mayor periods (Moreno, Petro and Peñalosa), until in 2016 it signed contract for its construction for 22.298 million COP. Since then, there have been periodical additions to said budget, a constant uncertainty about the misuse of these public resources and, last but not least, variations in the structural elements of the project without reporting them in the construction license (Semana 2021). After that, there have not been any payments since April 2020, and even if the project was supposed to be ready in May 2021, the contractor had asked for a suspension of contract for four months (Gómez 2021).

Regarding its physical consequences, the building being built over one of the most important avenues of the city (av. NQS) has left a negative impact in an urban level. Firstly, as the work progressed, the designs were modified, leading to a structural risk, evident in a shown inclination and the possibility of collapse in case of an earthquake. This also created problems with the foundation, presenting unprevailed concrete volume expansion and sliding during the excavation of the basements, which in addition were over an unstable soil for the dimension of this intervention (no quality certificates or testing of the materials used in the building were provided) (Semana 2021).

The most serious consequence of this White Elephant yet, is the damage it has caused to its neighbouring properties. With an unaligned structure, unexpected deformations, racks in the walls, broken glass and raised floors appear. This has led to the evacuation of said properties, leaving uninhabitable dwellings around. Of the six adjoining properties, two were directly affected and seven complaints were made for allegedly affecting the neighbour's property.

The importance of this building extends to the initial objective of solving the difficulties in providing services to the community due to the dispersion problems it currently faces, as there are seven facilities, scattered throughout the district, through which citizens must travel to attend to their needs. The completion of it would return life to a now abandoned urban block, give a new urban landmark for the district and give back the sense of physical security and perceived safety it has been denied so far.

north view - urban context

front view (west) - current situation

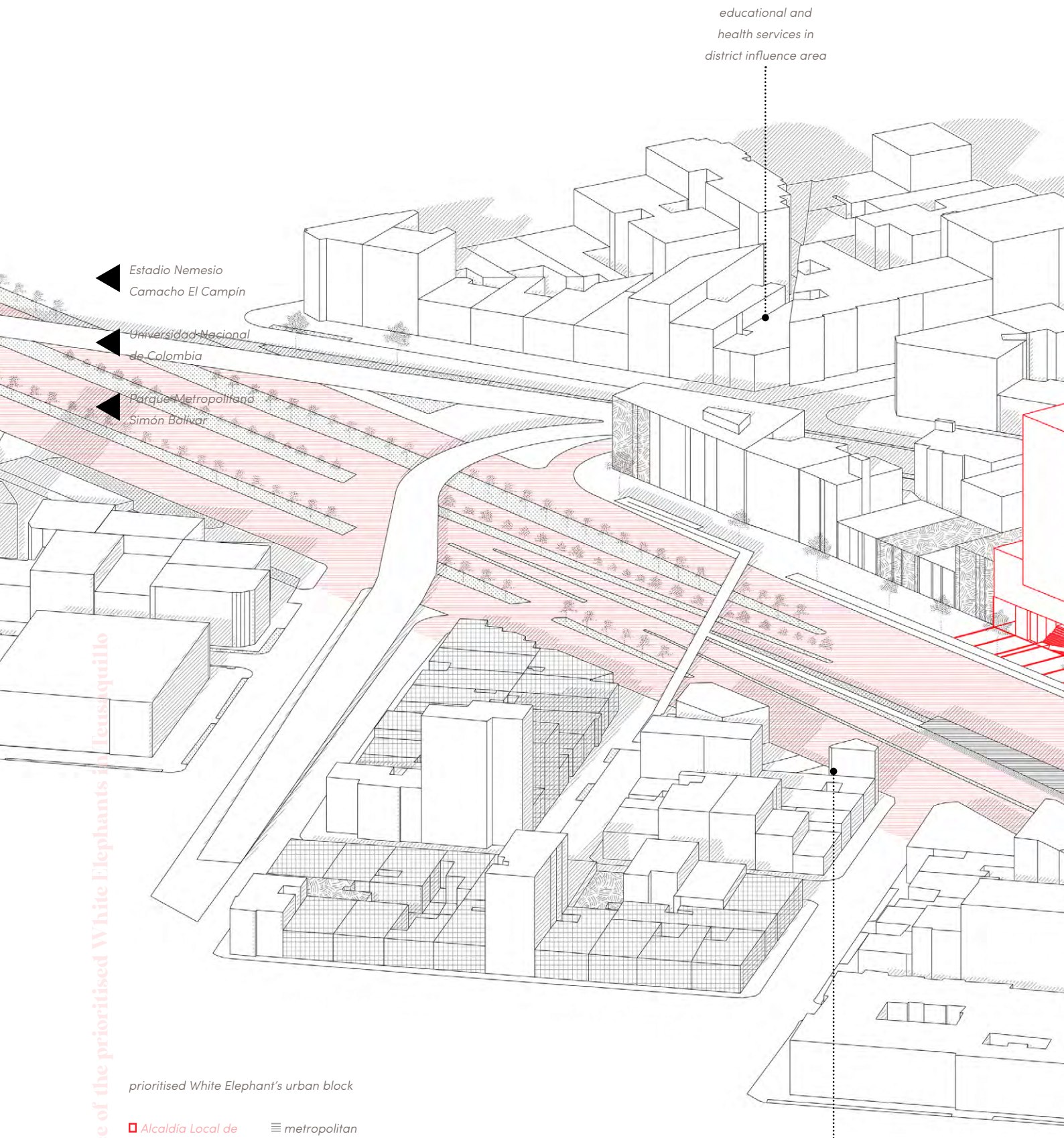
property behind

adjacent properties - in abandonment

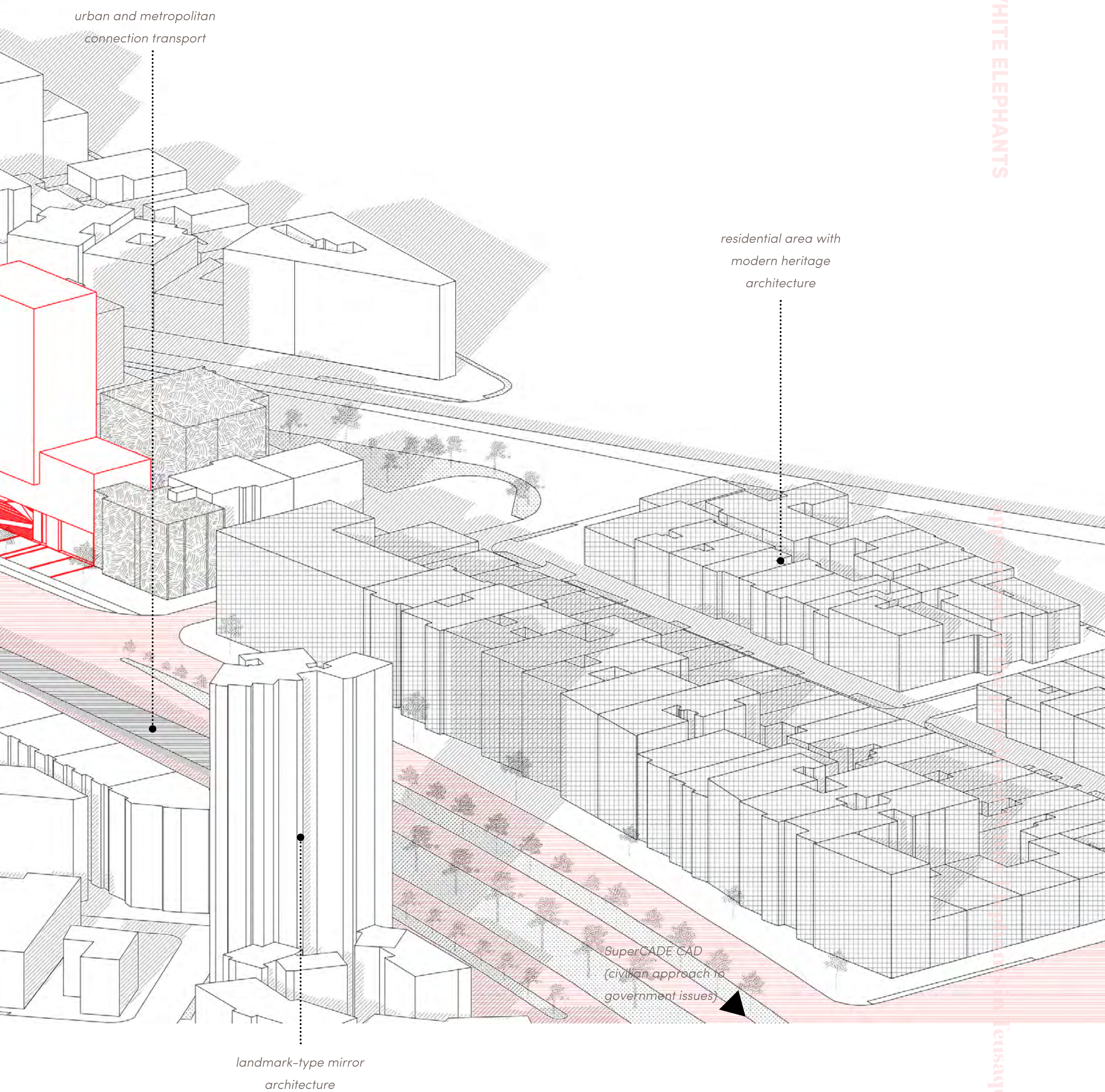
back view (east) - current situation

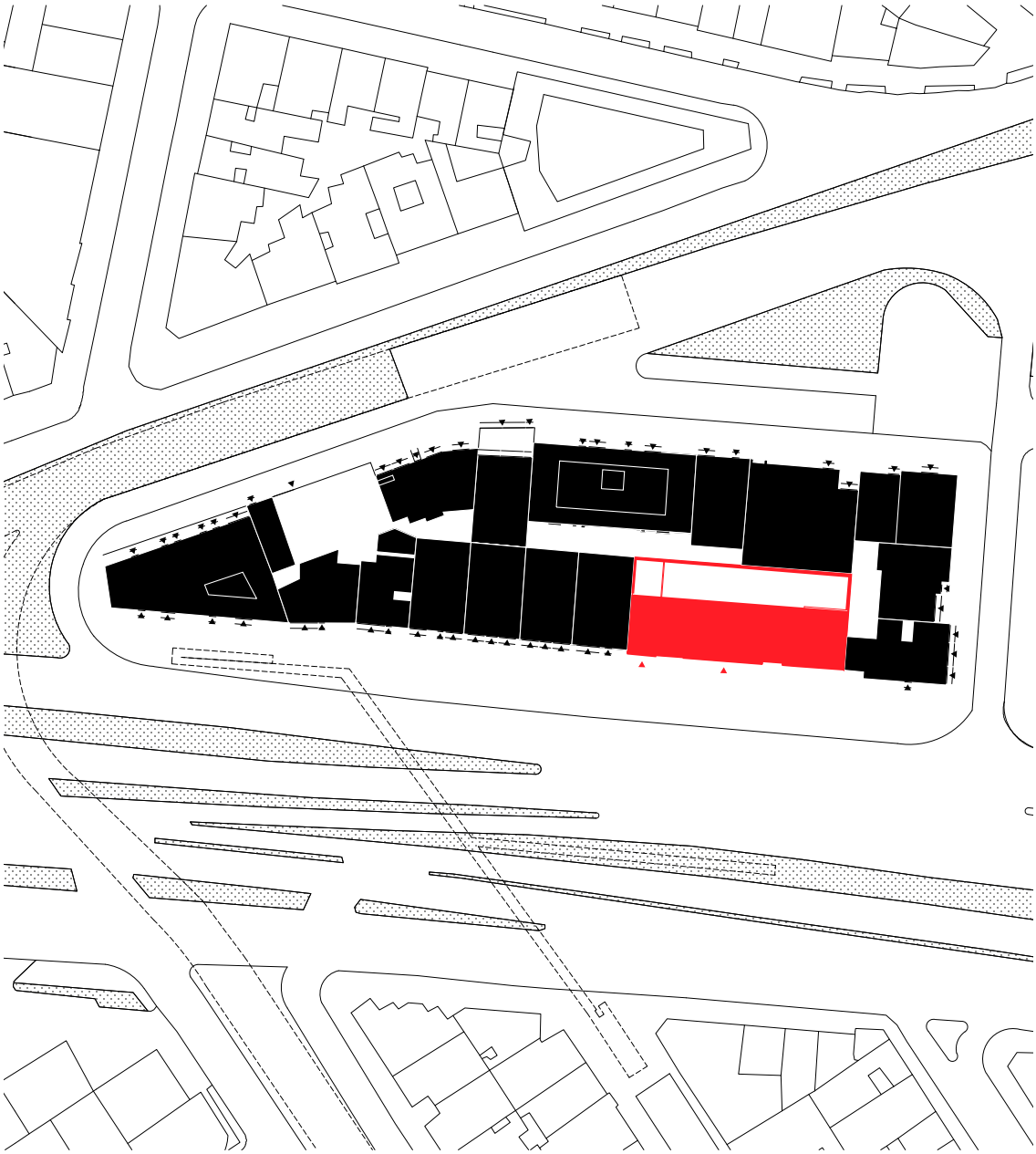
adjacent property - with cracks

property behind - in sale



appearance of the prioritised White Elephants in Teusaquillo


urban and metropolitan connection transport
residential area with modern heritage architecture
SuperCADE CAD (civilian approach to government issues)
landmark-type mirror architecture

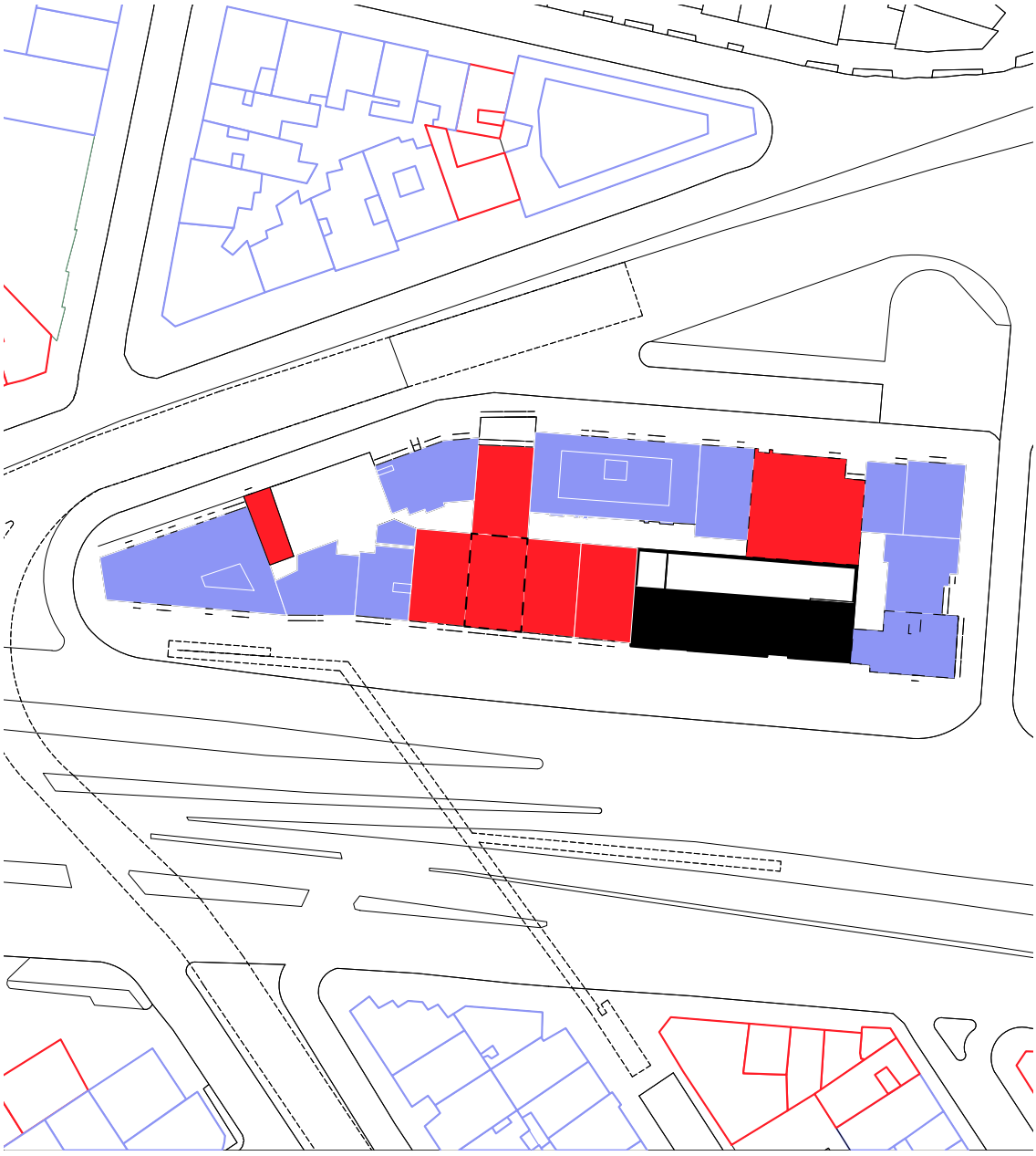


block's accessibility

white elephant surrounding

entrances

white elephant entrances



block's uses

- *residential*
- *commerce*
- *educational*
- *health*
- *abandoned*

how to repurpose and revive abandoned projects

This project is fundamentally focused on making the best use of a community's investment, encouraging practicality and sustainable practices. We believe that renovating a large building has fewer environmental and financial consequences than demolishing and rebuilding it from scratch. This includes considering the building's life cycle and the emissions produced during construction, as research from organizations like the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)[6] and studies in Italy[7] have shown that, while 35% of the carbon emissions of a building are produced before its opened, renovation can save up to 80% of a building's energy compared to starting from scratch.

The refurbishment of a building can bring environmental, financial and social benefits to the community and its wider influence area. The case studies discussed serve as references on how to approach the task of revitalising an existing space to meet public needs. An old metal barrel factory in a working-class district turned into a sports and culture centre by modern architect Lina Bo Bardi. It looked to preserve the essence of the neighbours inhabiting the old structure, this lead to a radical solution of stacking two concrete towers the sport spaces and dressing rooms, while connecting them with footbridges of twenty-five meters. Lastly, there is a third cylindrical tower seventy meters high as a landmark inviting citizens to become part of this 'little joy in a sad city' (Arquitectura Viva 2022).

The project was brought to its clean materials, becoming a tectonic building with a "socially utopic vision" (ArchEyes 2022). There is a contrast of colour and reinforced concrete that creates a variation of scale, depending on where it is looked at (Fracalossi 2013).

It is able to maintain the district's lifestyle while providing lacking services that were not envisioned before. The industrial character of the buildings harmonize with the cultural, and more flexible, character of the activities. The openness of the space lets it be inhabitable and breathable, as well as productive and usable in its multiple heights.

6
Adjei, S., Ndekugri, I., & Ankrah, N. (2013). Review of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Legislation in the UK. 2013 RICS Cobra (pp. 8-16). New Delhi: University of Wolverhampton.

7
Pittau, F., Amato, C., Cuffari, S., Iannaccone, G., & Malighetti, L. E. (2019). Environmental consequences of refurbishment vs. demolition and reconstruction: a comparative life cycle assessment of an Italian case study. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science(296), 2-12.)

01 SESC Pompéia Factory

city
São Paulo, Brazil

started
1977

finished
1986

built area
23.000 m²

height
12 floors

current state
restored

building stage
finished

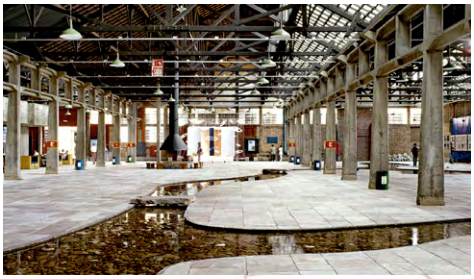
use
sport, culture, leisure

typology
multiple blocks

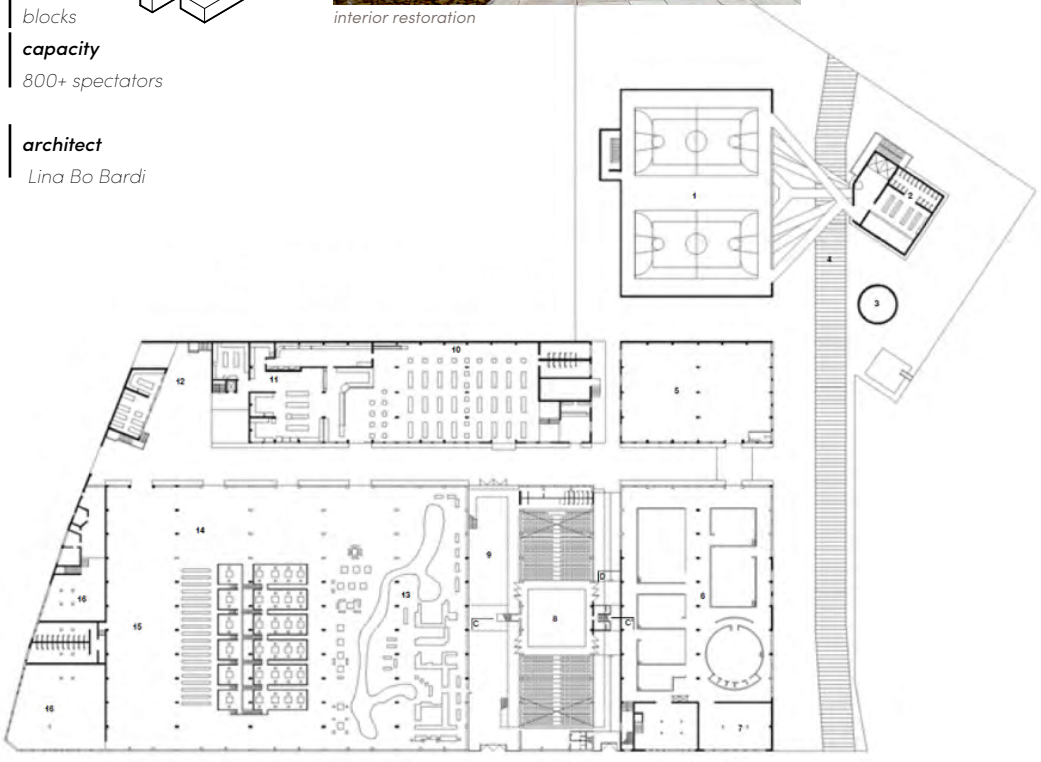
capacity
800+ spectators

architect
Lina Bo Bardi

restored complex with public space appropriation



interior restoration



ground floor plan

02 The Mill

city
Bratislava, Slovakia

started
1977

finished
2017

built area
857 m²

height
6 floors

current state
restored

building stage
finished

use
sport, culture, leisure

typology
block - open ground floor

capacity
800+ spectators

architect
GutGut

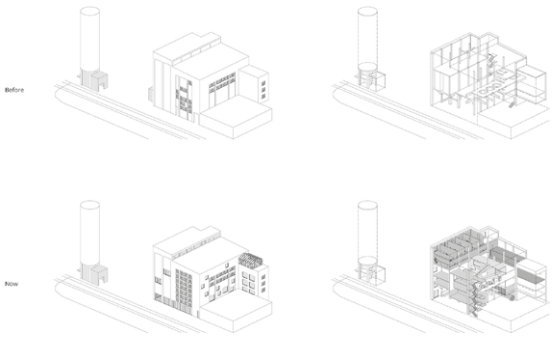
Part of a large post-industrial area of Light Building Materials in Bratislava, became abandoned in the 1990s after it was privatized. It was repurposed to insert both private and common uses –event space, administrative premises, and flats– with a connection on the central hall (ArchDaily, 2018).

north east elevation

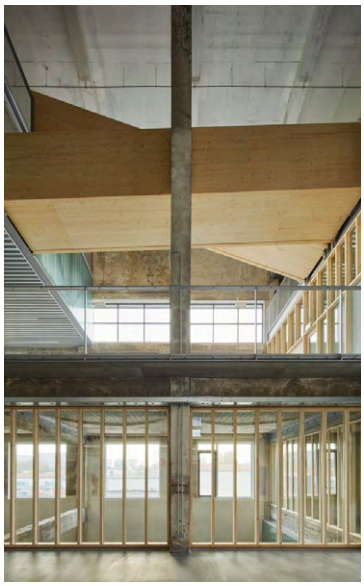
The building works as a container holding the diverse uses in single inserted structures, respecting the existing layout and the load-bearing capacity, in the inside and in the facades (Minaya, 2018). The project aimed to retire the industrial configuration and turn it into a living space with new light materials. The use of natural light also influences in the distribution of spaces, with transparencies of clear and translucent materials, the technical language changes into a modern mixed-use open plan for living, keeping it minimal and reducing redundances.

ceiling restoration

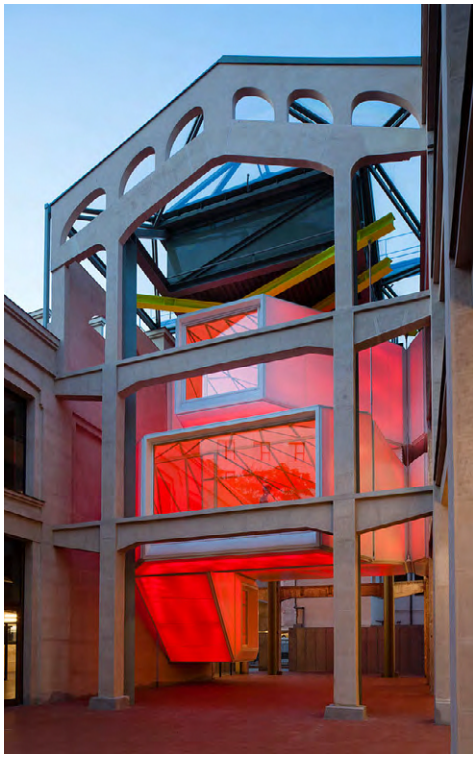
It highlights the dialogue between the void as a connector, the existing as a supporter, the new as an activator, the light as the temporary and the tectonic as its industrial modern origins, everything simplified into the purest forms for functionality and practicality.



adaptation process



new materials over existing structure

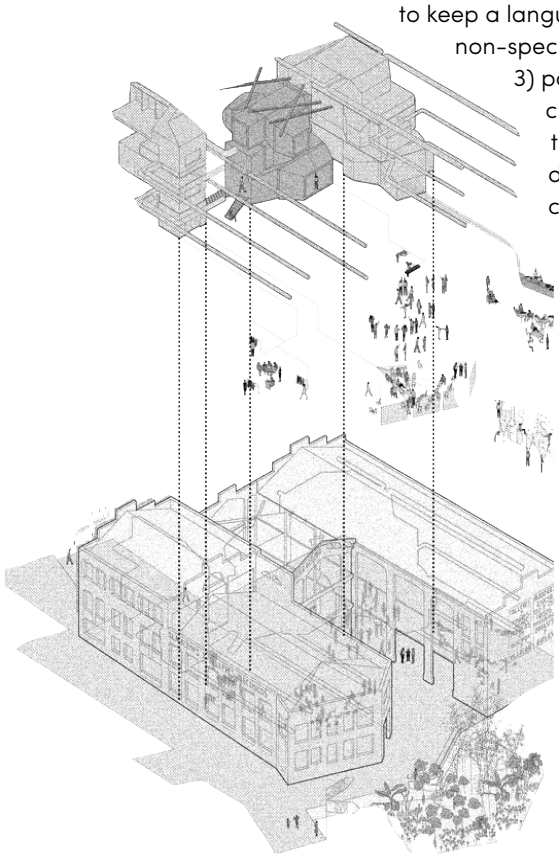


"La Cosa", additional structure that joins

An adaptation project that defines itself as "a space for the production, research and dissemination of digital culture and the confluence between art, science, technology, and society" (Medialab Matadero, 2022), making it co-exist between the existing (La Serrería) and the new (La Cosa) with certain contrasts and irony, an untraditional concept of restoration (ArchDaily, 2014).

Some strategies can be rescued from this adaptation: 1) avoiding duplication of existing elements to respect both new and old energies, 2) homogeneous approach for materials and installations to keep a language through non-specific spaces, 3) possibility of change through time with easily disassembled construction systems and 4) incorporate more than one function to each intervention, making flexible and creative spaces (ArchDaily, 2014).

This ends in a harmony of space with a disrupting yet respectful intervention.



integration scheme

03 Medialab-Prado

city
Madrid, Spain

started
2008

finished
2013

built area
4.000 m²

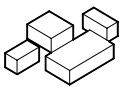
height
171 m (45 floors)

current state
restored

building stage
finished

use
cultural, citizen lab, fab lab

typology
multiple blocks



capacity
500 people

architect
Langarita Navarro Arquitectos

budget
2,5 M $

021 Tour Bois le Prêtre

city
Paris, France

started
2010

finished
2011

built area
8.900 m² (existing) + 3.560 m2 extensions

height
50 m (16 floors)

current state
extended // restored

building stage
finished

use
housing

typology
skyscraper - open ground floor

capacity
100 families

architect
Lacaton & Vassal

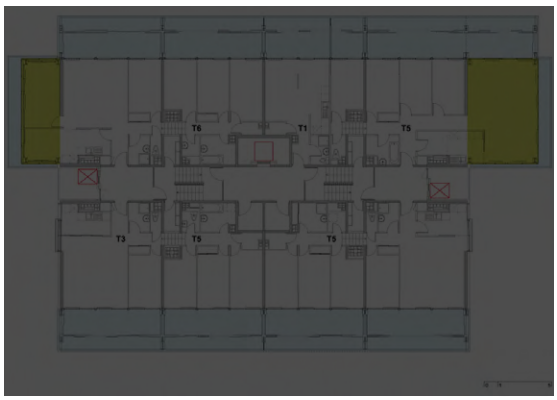
budget
11,25 M €

transformed social housing

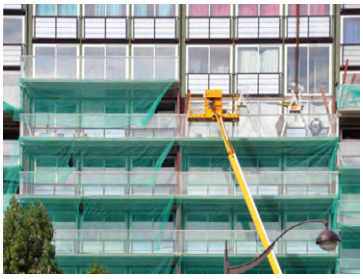
"The metamorphosis project consists of the radical transformation of conditions of comfort and habitability of the 100 dwellings of the occupied building" (Lacaton & Vassal 2011). It consists of the improvement of a residential tower from 1962. Additional 3.560 m² are integrated as heated extensions, winter gardens and balconies, to improve the daily lifestyle of the residents, without compromising their location or affordability (Lacaton & Vassal 2011). These changes also allowed an accessible unit, reduced energy consumption and gain protected private space.

This is one of the referent projects of Lacaton & Vassal and its design philosophy, which sees architecture as a familiar, useful and beautiful ability to enhance the life surrounding us (The Hyatt Foundation 2021). As announced in their Pritzker Prize statement: "they re-examine sustainability in their reverence for pre-existing structures, conceiving projects by first taking inventory of what already exists. By prioritizing the enrichment of human life through a lens of generosity and freedom of use, they are able to benefit the individual socially, ecologically and economically, aiding the evolution of a city" (2021).

balconies extension



type plan



restoration process

restored four Gasometer blocks, Vienna, Austria

Two additional restoration projects are worth highlighting, but more from the community empowerment point of view. On one hand, we have the Gasometers in Vienna as a successful restoration with objectives towards the community as a priority, while on the other hand we have the renewal of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, which is commonly associated to an unsuccessful project in terms of community and space appropriation.

The redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin has been considered by some as not entirely successful, for a few reasons. Developed as the rehabilitation of the previous cultural and commercial centre in the 1930s, and political target after World War II, it was imagined as a complex of eighteen buildings surrounding a pedestrian area that was to become the project's nerve centre (Piano, 2001). However, one of the main criticisms is that the development was focused more on creating a commercial and tourism destination, rather than creating a vibrant and liveable neighbourhood for the local residents (Dixon, 2009). The area was heavily marketed as a destination for shopping and entertainment, but it lacked the necessary infrastructure and amenities to support a resident population.

Additionally, the development was criticized for its lack of attention to the area's historical context and the surrounding neighbourhoods. The new buildings and public spaces were seen as being out of scale and out of character with the surrounding area. This lack of continuity with the surrounding urban fabric led to a sense of disconnection and lack of integration with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

restored Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany

In contrast, the redevelopment of the Gasometers in Vienna, done around the same time (2001) has been widely seen as a success. The project transformed four large industrial gasometers into mixed-use residential and commercial spaces. The development was sensitive to the existing historical context, and the new buildings were designed to complement and enhance the existing urban fabric (Atlas Obscura, 2010). The project also incorporated a wide range of community amenities and open spaces, making it a desirable place for local residents to live and work, and. The development was also successful in attracting a diverse range of residents and businesses, creating a vibrant and liveable community.

The main difference between these two examples is the approach in the community engagement and urban planning, Vienna's gasometer focused in creating a community and a sense of belonging, while Berlin's Potsdamer Platz focused on commercial and tourism-oriented development. This also exalts the importance and power the people have when it comes to giving life to a space, and how if the connection process with the developed project arrives from the beginning and is oriented towards the social issues, it is disposed to have a significantly more successful response among residents and community around it.

"the role of the architect is to make **revolution** *before there is one"*

—Denise Scott Brown

04 assessing current damage of 'Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo' building

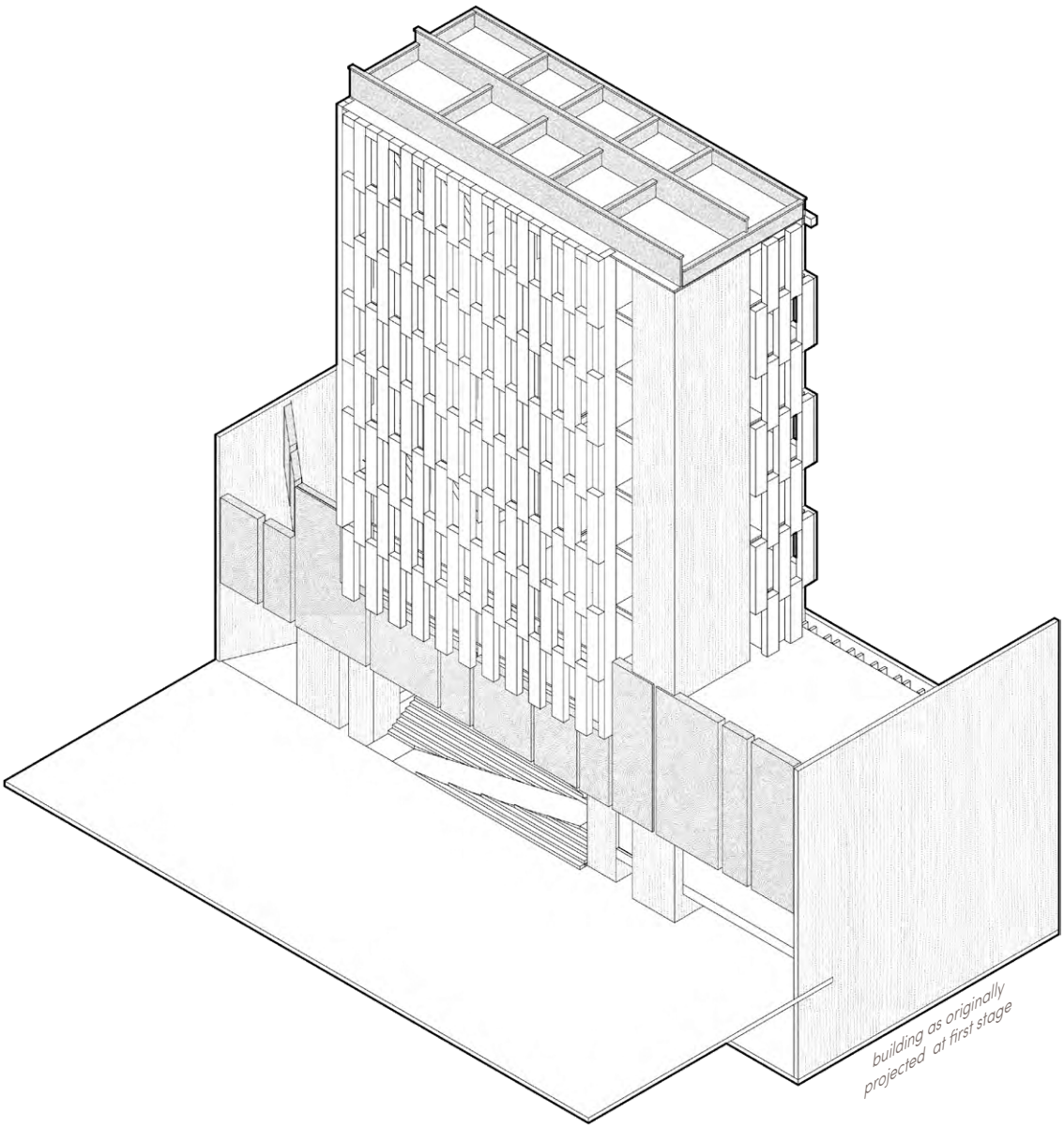
The selected White Elephant for analysis and restoration is a 12-story concrete building, standing at 46 meters tall, located in Teusaquillo's district in Bogotá. This unfinished block was originally intended to serve as a new and modern city hall, replacing the outdated Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo. In order to revitalize this building, it is essential to understand its current state and the affectations it has directly given to the surrounding environment. A comprehensive examination of the building's structure will provide insights into the most effective strategy for its restoration and repurposing, with a focus on community engagement and involvement.

The original design of the White Elephant building was based on contest guidelines that aimed to create a harmonious structure while also meeting construction objectives. The design consisted of several key elements, including an open ground floor elevated 2.00 meters, a two-story horizontal block floating above it, a partially underground public floor, an underground parking floor, and a central tower that housed the remaining seven floors of the building. In total, the building was to feature 10 above-ground floors and two below-ground floors (Valencia, 2014).

The design followed several principles, including ***creating an urban landmark, optimizing natural light and ventilation, differentiating public spaces along the building***, utilizing a suspended structure to open internal organization, and providing multiple access points with a balance on external factors while maintaining a relationship with the surrounding urban context. The design aimed to maintain normative limits while also concentrating a specific function within a single form. These parameters while well-thought, were poorly developed and resulted in an unstable high-risk structure.

As mentioned, the abandoned building's structural concept was designed to maximize internal space utilization through the use of a suspended structure. It consisted of load-bearing party walls, two fixed structural points with one reaching up to the third floor, PRATT beams located at the midpoint and end of the building, I-shaped beams serving as support for suspended tensors, and suspended floor slabs supported by the tensors. The exterior of the building was finished with a modular concrete façade that featured the unique colours of the distinctive modern Teusaquillo's architecture and was carefully designed to control the location of the glazing system.

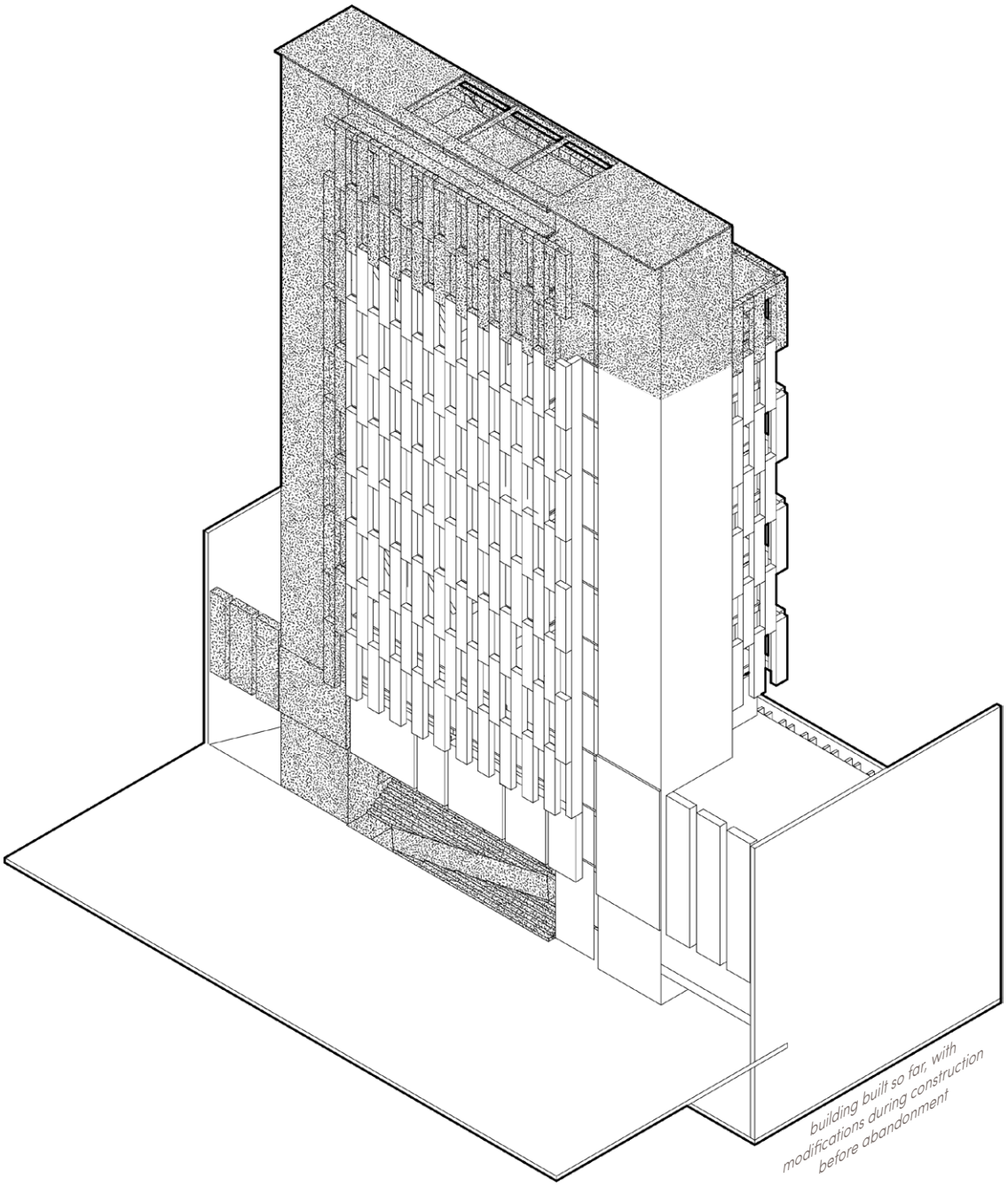
The functional concept consisted of creating a landmark while also adhering to urban regulations without compromising lighting and ventilation nor public activities. The ground floor was intended to be a completely public plaza with a semi-public entrance, while the second floor and above it would have consisted of administrative offices for the local government. The building was intended to serve as a hub for the local administration, while also serving



building as originally projected at first stage

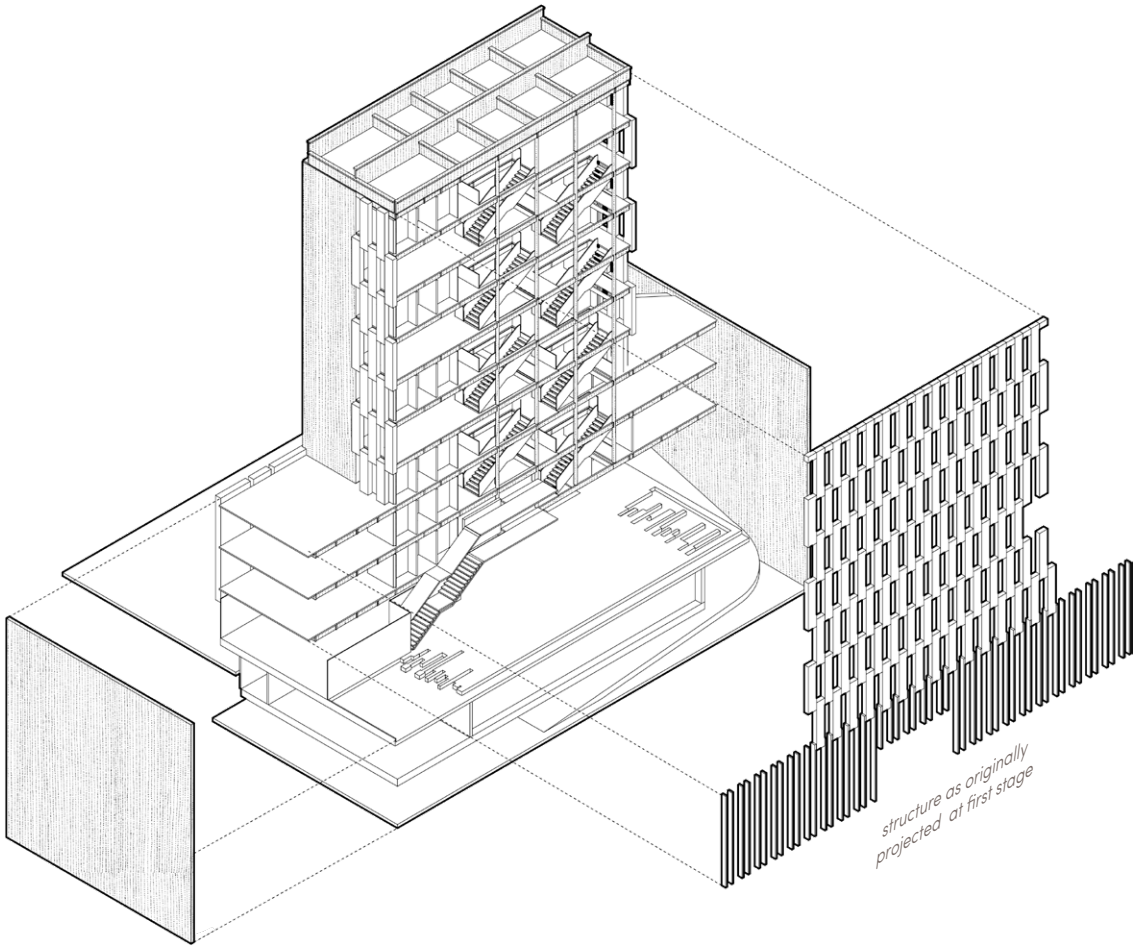
as a symbol of the city's distinctive architecture.

Unfortunately, the White Elephant building never reached its full potential. Despite having ambitious designs and plans, the construction was never completed, highly altered, and the building was scandalously abandoned. Over the years, the concrete structure has deteriorated, and the elements have taken a toll on the once grand vision. The design of the building was being modified simultaneously with its construction, bearing elements presented variations unreported and



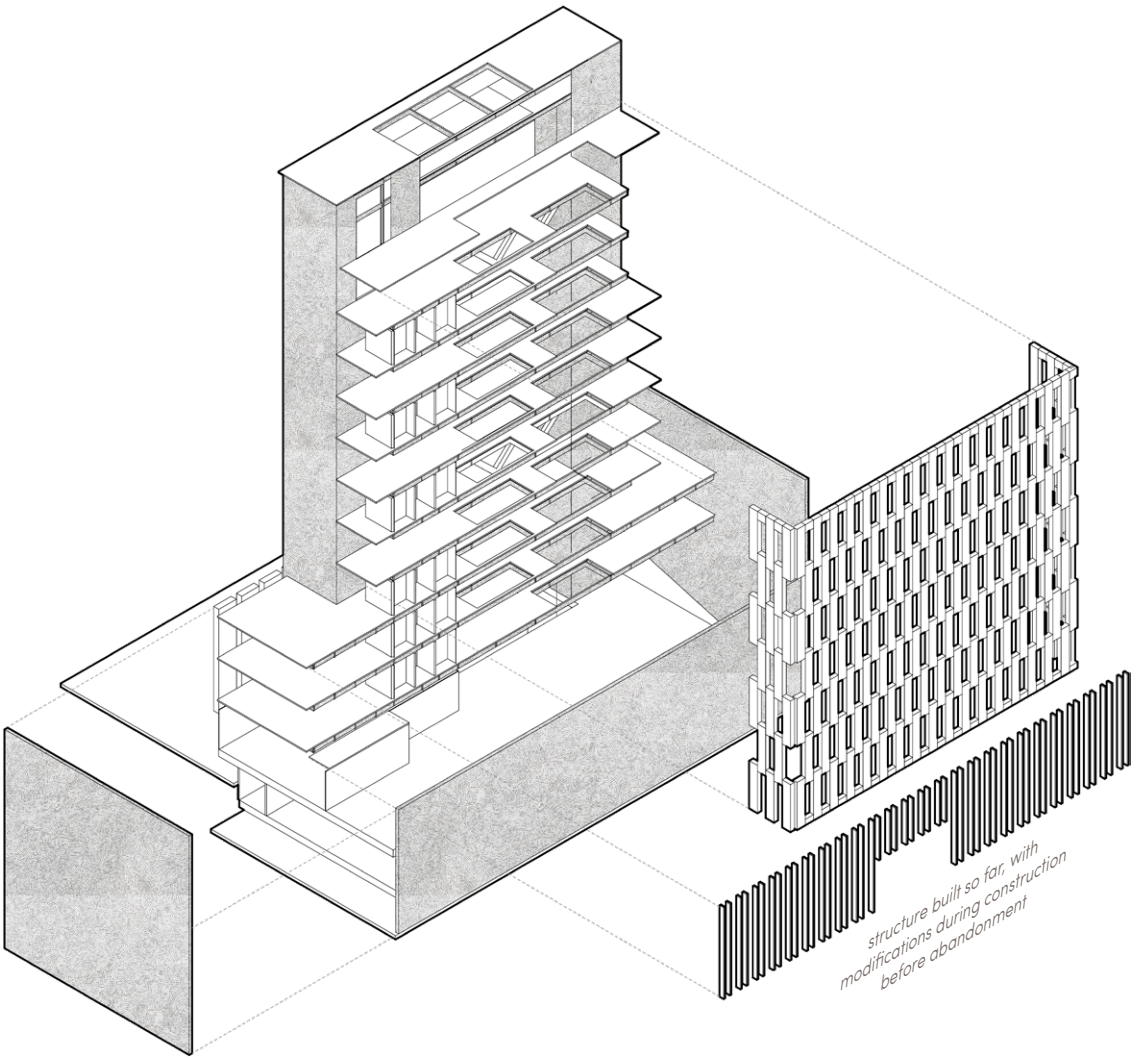
building built so far, with modifications during construction before abandonment

non-contemplated in the licenses, far less in the designs. Additionally, the initial slim tower increased its wide dimensions as one of the fixed points had to reach the end of the tower, probably due to security and normative reasons that were not taken into account. It also increased in height as three (3) additional floors appeared out of the blue. Additionally, the horizontal block of the first floors was not finished on the north side, leaving it uneven and unfixed to the party wall, while important structural elements such as the PRATT beams seem to never have been integrated. It can be concluded that part of the structural affectations



lies among these alterations, especially additions that give weight, height, and uncalculated forces to the equation.

Another crucial factor that has been discussed is the foundation, needing additional soil studies to determine the reach of stability of the ground it was built on. This process needs to be further studied, given it has been one of the main reasons that its neighbours are also affected. Bringing a building of these dimensions into an understudied ground affected not only the site in question but everyone around it. Thus, its reinforcement and new modifications come along with bringing the surrounding buildings a certainty too.



In conclusion, the abandoned building that was once envisioned as a new urban landmark in the Teusaquillo district now stands as a bleak example of unfinished potential. Through careful analysis of its structure and environment, it is clear that the building is in a state of disrepair, with signs of neglect and deterioration evident throughout. The task of repurposing this White Elephant for the social, economic, and environmental benefits of the community surrounding it, will be a significant undertaking, requiring a comprehensive strategy that addresses the current state of its physical condition, and a commitment to ensuring that the building will eventually play a vital role in the community it was intended to serve.

architecture as a strategy for a social movement

From a technically abandoned project, we must study a ***political architecture that through experimentation expresses its social context and looks for revolutionary strategies that fulfil the paradigms of its community***. It is the obligation of architects as intellectuals to fight injustice, privileges, exclusions, and the degradation of the world:

> To develop a permanent critique of perverse urban dynamics through studies, publications, or projects; secondly, to use their knowledge to understand and explain the mechanisms and contradictions that generate these dynamics and to participate in the social reactions of those who oppose them; and finally, to contribute to the elaboration of reform proposals and thus generate alternative cultures. (Montaner & Muxí, 2011)

Architecture is developed as a strategy to demonstrate that a social movement is to be achieved. The goal of the project is to provide an alternative approach to architecture that prioritises the needs and well-being of the community over the interests of a selected few, to promote social and economic equity, and to challenge the status quo of traditional development practices. At the same time, the concept of community engagement and empowerment is central to the project. Encouraging active participation from the local community in the design process and ongoing management of the space will ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of those who will use it.

We can consider this project as a case study to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, looking for results that can be shared and discussed with other professionals and communities interested in similar projects, in the hope of promoting replication and scaling. It should be made clear that in the context of this project, the use of the term "revolutionary" does not mean "never done before" but means disrupting a system that has been systematically installed and in need of a rebalance of the situation in social benefits of a wider community.

The design strategies for this project were organized into six conceptual categories, each with their own specific interventions. This approach allows for the ***replication of the project's overall goals and strategies, while also allowing for flexibility in the implementation of the specific interventions.***

This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the project, where every team member can understand how the different parts of the project contribute to the overall conceptual idea and how they all work together.

[architecture as a revolution strategy]

to generate a replicable model empowering its living community

to adopt personalised interventions with an involved community in a controversial building

[objectives] [strategies] [interventions]

01 memory & symbolism
to create an emblem against corruption

resignify the space

- *unprecedented space to memorize the corruption that took away the project*
- *memoriam plaza of what never would be*
- *external signature created from start with community in hand*

02 community & accessibility
to reconnect with neighbours

diversify the structure

- *intercalate communal floors with private spaces*
- *no physical barriers and free expression spaces from the beginning*
- *flexible communal and service spaces*
- *openings to allow specialised and adaptable exhibitions/explorations*
- *public spaces up to the roof*
- *recall a connection with gone neighbours*

03 adaptive reuse & sustainability
to activate an abandoned building

readopt abandonment

- *adapting main entrance for open access active plaza and carcase to include mixture of uses*
- *different, light, and reversible materials for the new interventions*
- *reinforcing structure and foundation with newfound foundation soil and surroundings*
- *closing holes that were left incomplete and unsafe*

07 programming & participatory process
to achieve financial sovereignty

engage in incremental architecture

- *agree on communal spaces and its flexibility through time*
- *call investors from the cultural sector to promote ongoing participative processes*
- *open building site through time programming, not closing when other reforms need to be made to ensure always an active and engaging space and prioritise construction actions*
- *encourage opening commercial floors first and opening residential spaces on phases to improve upon feedback*

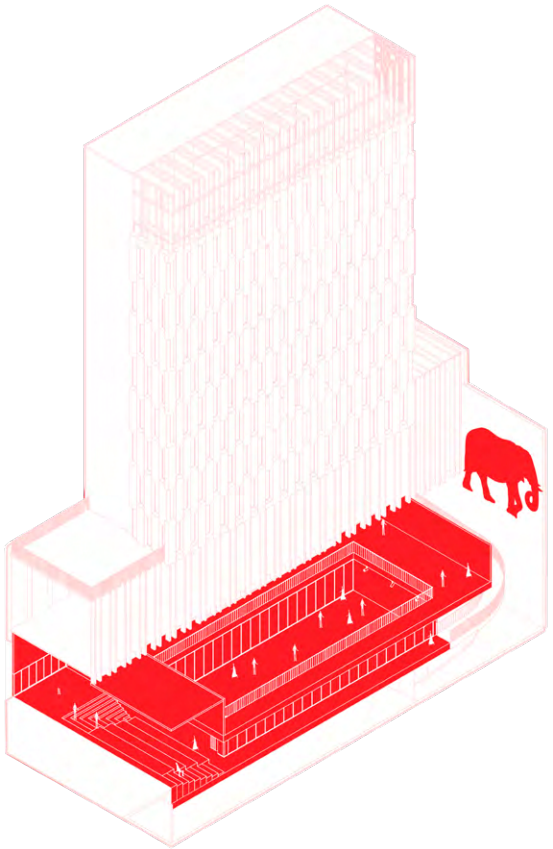
05 spatial experience & perception
to resignify a replicable model

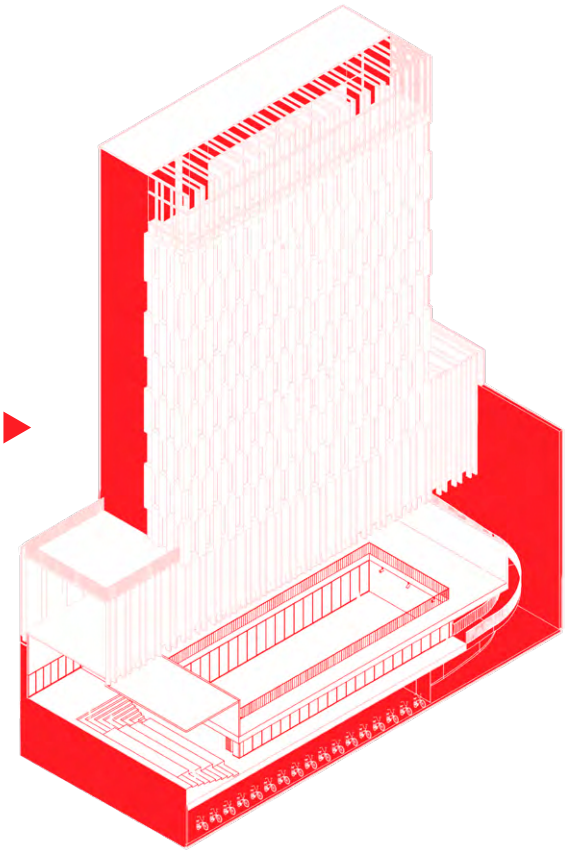
verticalise public space

- *generate voids and double heights to host personalized events, spatial perceptions*
- *modify light and vegetation from the carcase to evidence diversity of living inside*

building stages: participatory timetable

To ensure the success of this project it is crucial to establish a strong connection and trust with the community from the outset. This involves engaging the community in the design process and ensuring that their needs and desires are at the forefront of the planning. This also means involving time as a





01

participative ground floor

a void is opened in the middle of the plaza in memoriam of the abandonment taken place

open space disposed for self-construction and participative auditorium (building's owners/renters)

street is painted by community to mark the start of a turn over for a White Elephant

02

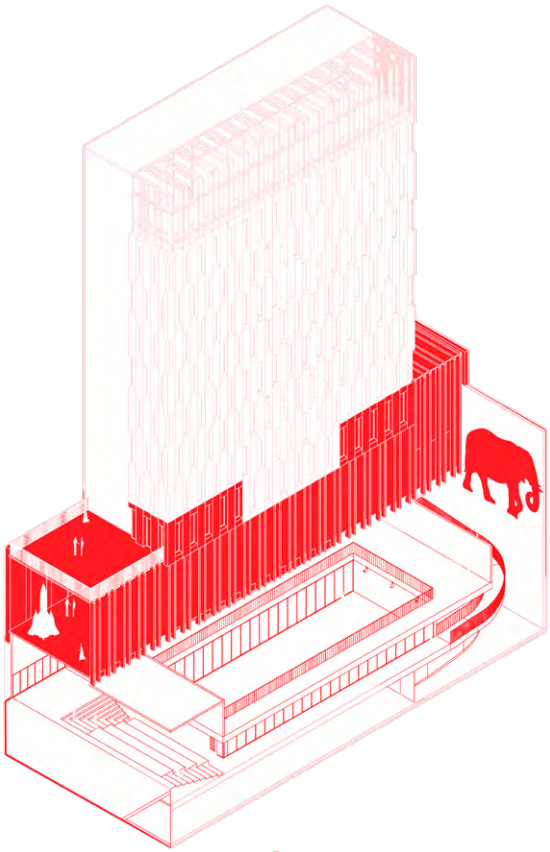
structural reinforcement

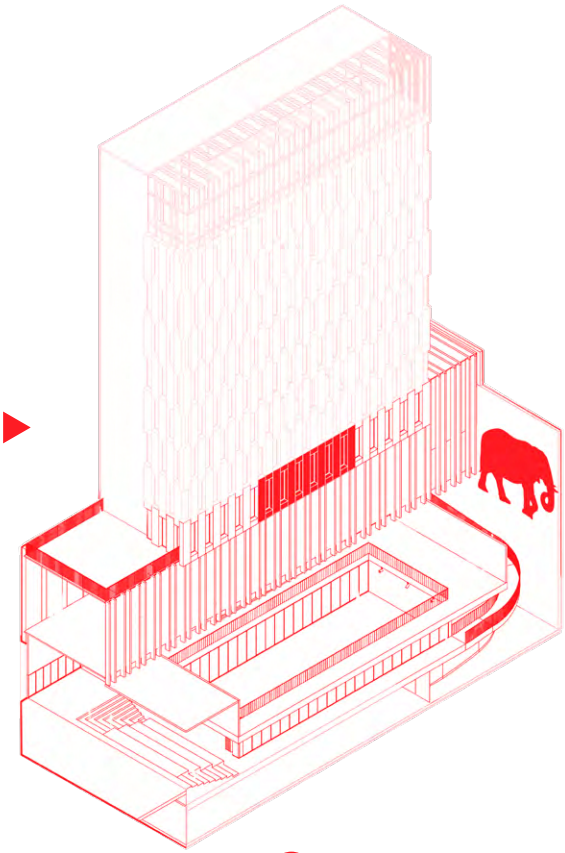
fixed points are reinforced and foundation is corrected, while maintaining the ground floor in use

underground floors are completed to seal off foundation and new structure

new ramps and vertical distribution is added to give permanent access to lower floors

design factor, designating the priorities that will be built on the go and hand in hand with the community, which also results in a better allocation of money and ensures a financial stability through phases. By creating a collaborative environment, where the community is empowered to participate and make decisions, we aim to foster a sense of ownership and personalization of the space. This approach will result in a truly community-driven revitalization of the abandoned building, which will not only provide social and economic benefits to the surrounding area, but also serve as a symbol of the community's future aspirations and a replication to symbolise the future meaning of inhabiting White Elephants. In this order of ideas, the proposed timetable follows:





03

communal block

horizontal block is adapted for the public and communal uses

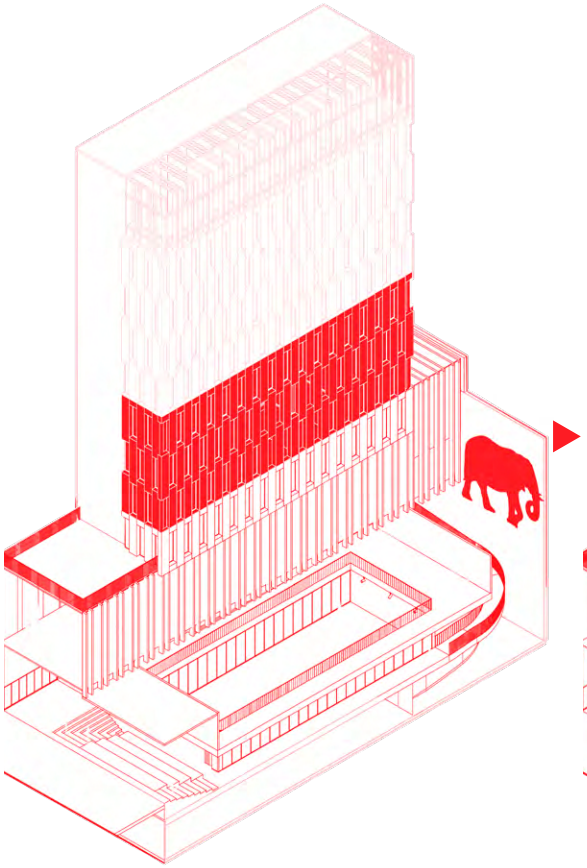
the side areas are opened, and new structures are placed to create activities that benefit from double-heights

04

pilot apartments

first floor of apartments is displayed and planned with the residents of the building

typologies are laid out in a 1:1 scale and chosen for the next stages

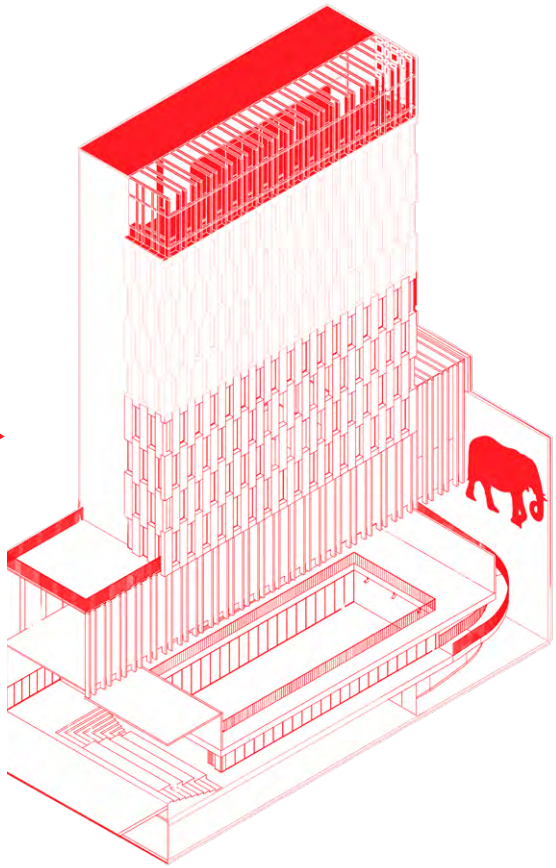


05

apartments
phase i

chosen typologies are built in the next three (3) floors
with updated service blocks for the remaining floors

apartments are personalised and
cover private and communal space

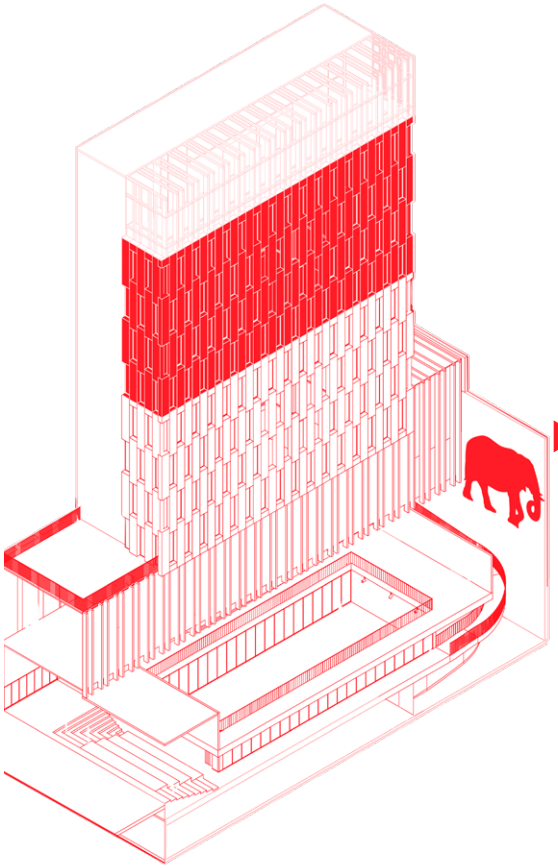


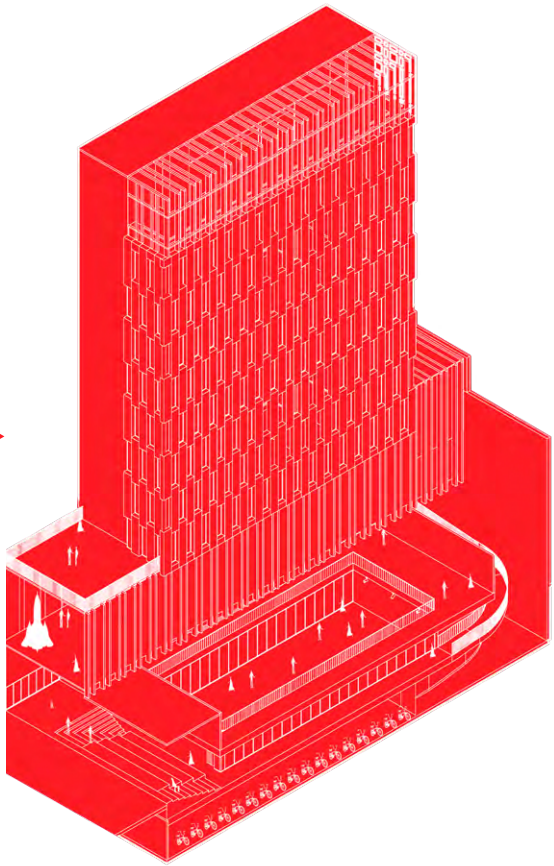
06

rooftop and
communal areas

communal rooftop is designed in
participation with original guidelines

prefabricated structures allow a fast
and secure low-cost process





07

apartments phase ii

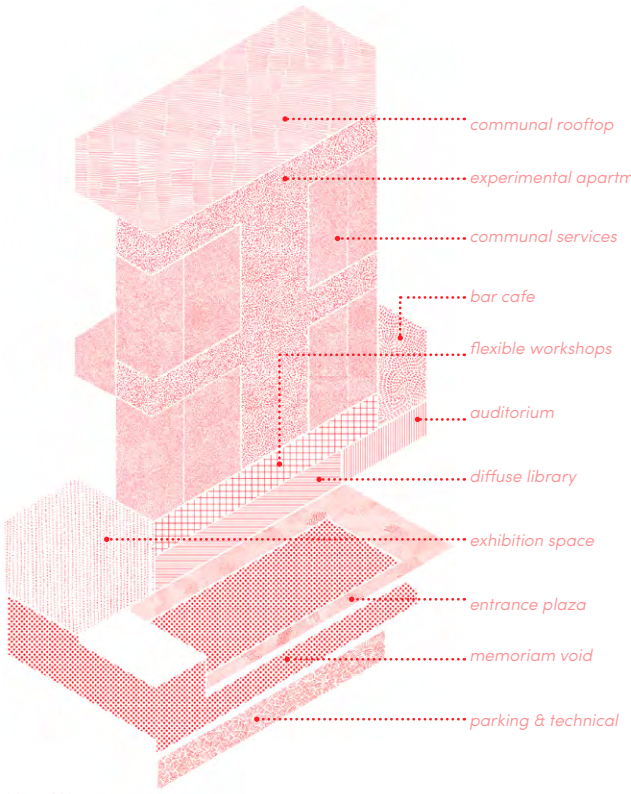
chosen typologies are built in the last four (4) floors with functioning service blocks

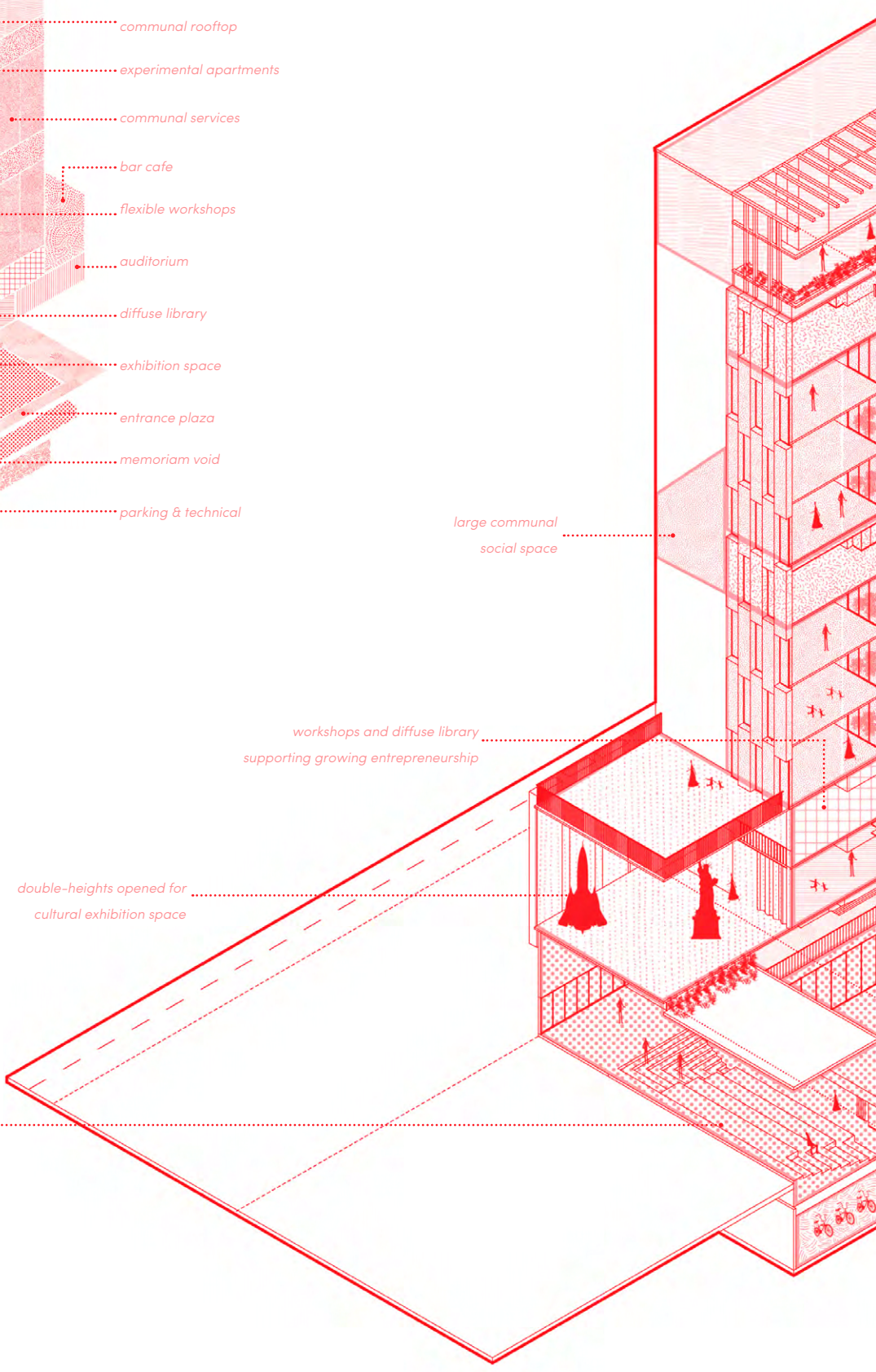
08

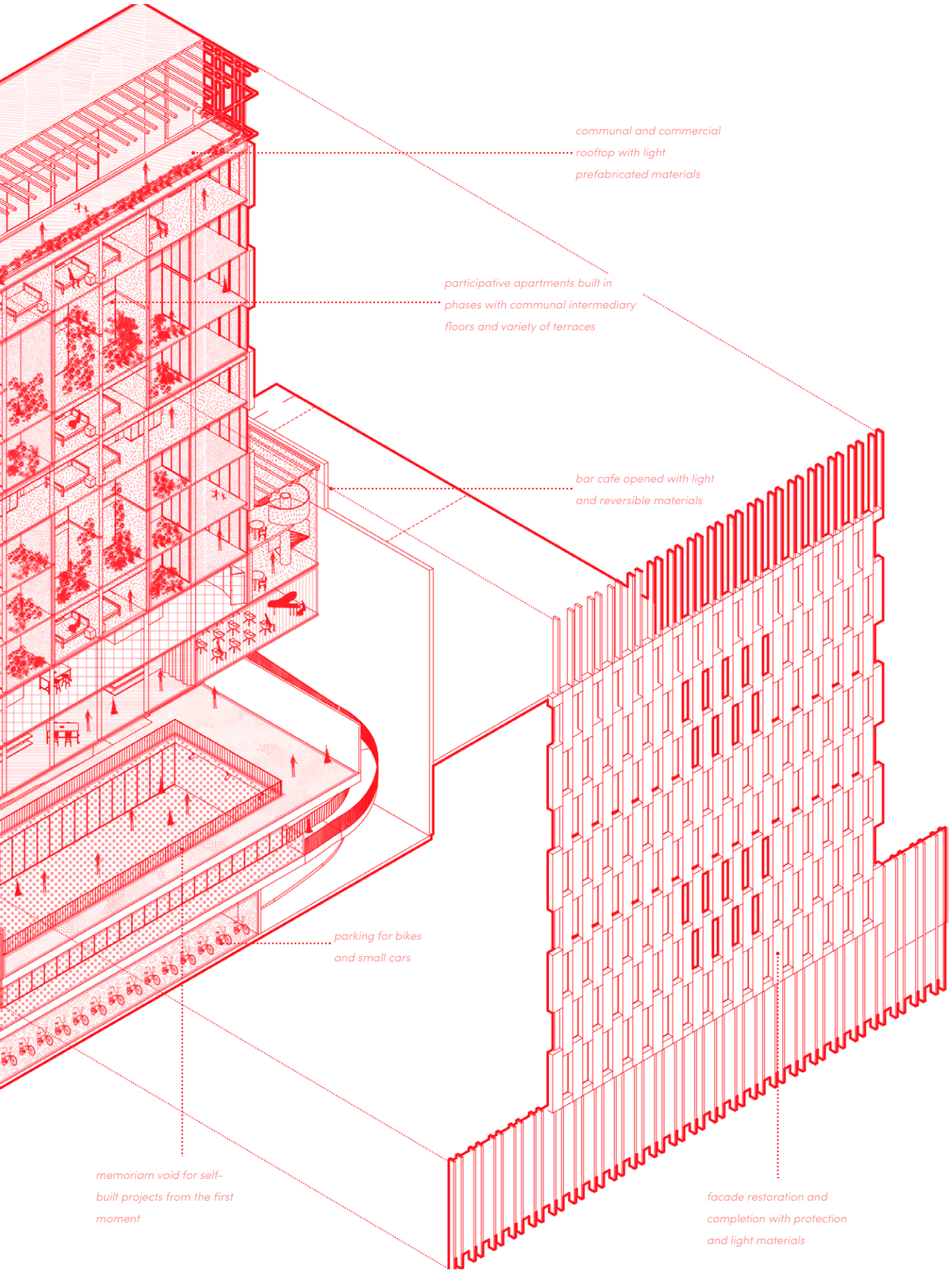
feedback

continuous feedback allows the building to not fall back in its old habits and ensure a community that will endure the structure

replicability strategies are recovered for following White Elephants


communal rooftop
experimental apartments
communal services
bar cafe
flexible workshops
auditorium
diffuse library
exhibition space
entrance plaza
memoriam void
parking & technical
new uses


large communal
social space
workshops and diffuse library
supporting growing entrepreneurship
double-heights opened for
cultural exhibition space
entrance grandstands
for spatial perception
and self-made spaces


communal and commercial
rooftop with light
prefabricated materials
participative apartments built in
phases with communal intermediary
floors and variety of terraces
bar cafe opened with light
and reversible materials
parking for bikes
and small cars
memoriam void for self-
built projects from the first
moment
facade restoration and
completion with protection
and light materials

sustainability of a new megaproject

Behind the inclusive refurbishing strategy, also lies the importance of its viability. Beyond the appropriation strategies, this also means relying on an inversion that is not compromised to other future altercates and that stays within the reachable, financially speaking. Therefore, a financial analysis was run to address the needed inversion in the project, compared to what has already been spent and lost in the underdevelopment of this White Elephant.

The analysis hypothesised a completely new construction (without including the costs of demolition) with the latest found report of cost data in Bogotá and compared it to the inversion that it has been made so far of our abandoned White Elephant, this resulted in a needed future inversion of one quarter of what has been done until now and dealing with numbers that can be manageable under the timetable and stakeholders vision. It's worth highlighting that the actual needed inversion would be even minor giving the comparison of demolished and reconstructed versus refurbished.

The manageability of this project involving several participants and the fact that it will be continually on the lookout not to fall into its old mistakes, especially by involving the maximum number of people in the decision-making process to invert power roles, managed from the lowest level and not vice versa, gives additional points to ensure its acceptance and success as an experimental strategy.

financial sustainability

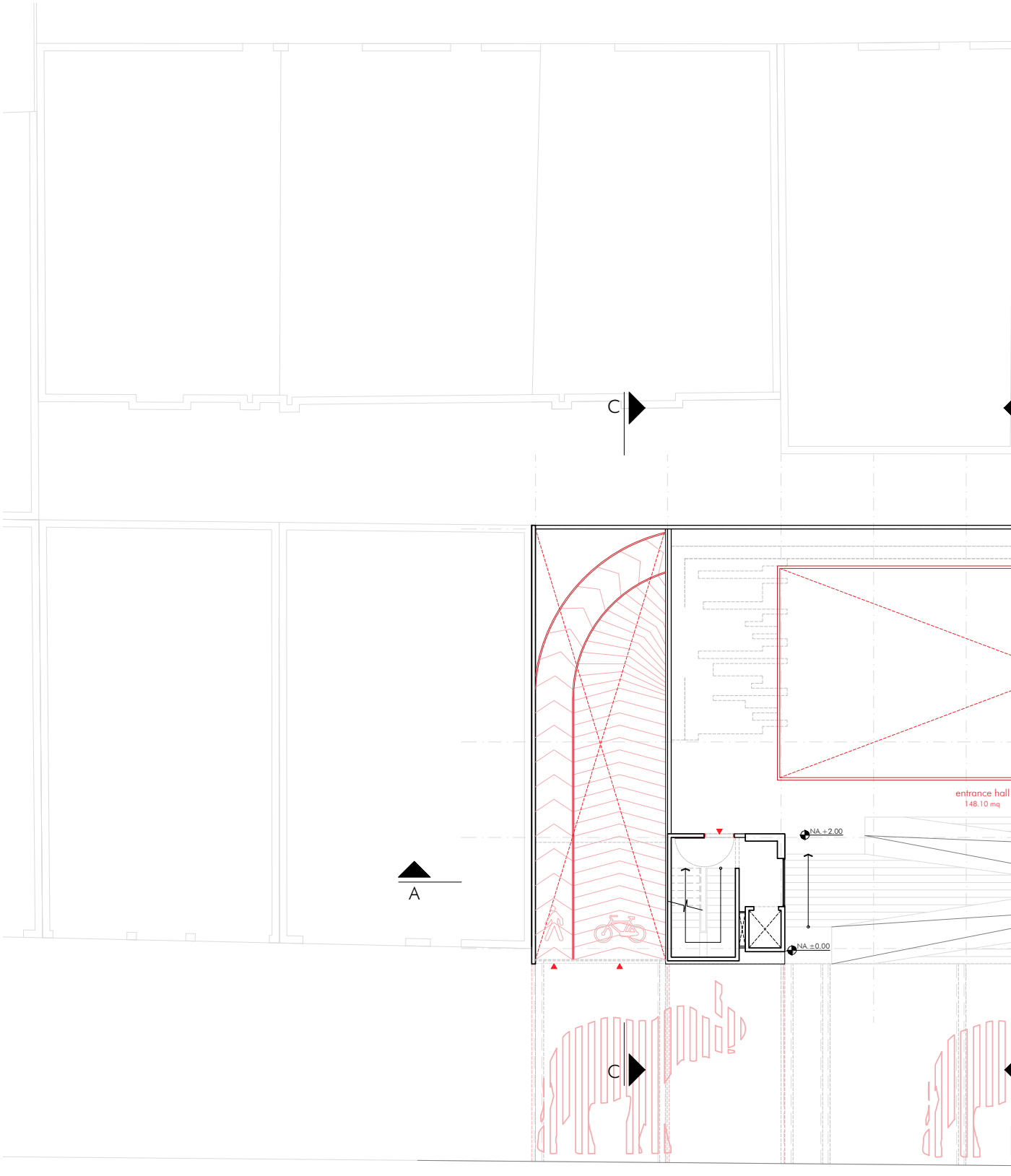
floors	area (mq)	num. floors	total area (mq)	cost/mq*	total cost (COP)
public ground floor	459,20	1	459,20	$ 604.977	$ 277.805.438
semi-underground floor	484,90	1	484,90	$ 2.018.059	$ 978.556.809
underground floor	711,20	1	711,20	$ 604.977	$ 430.259.642
commercial floors (1-2)	289,10	2	578,20	$ 1.635.628	$ 945.720.110
mixed residential/communal floors (3-10)	204,60	8	1636,80	$ 3.055.437	$ 5.001.139.282
commercial rooftop (11-12)	194,60	1	194,60	$ 1.875.760	$ 365.022.896
total		*14*	*4064,90*		*$ 7.998.504.177*

**Values from Construdata July 2022*

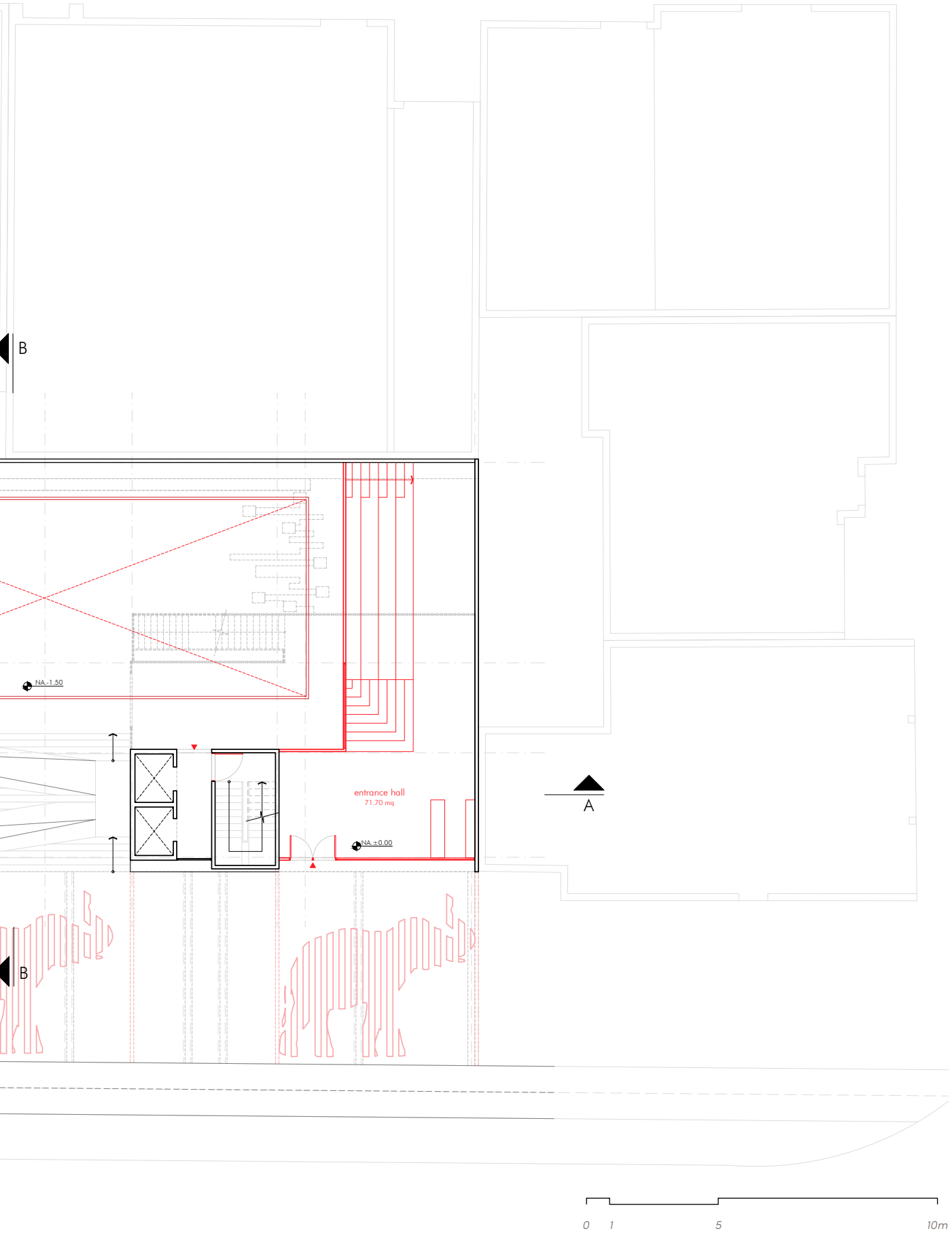
WE original budget	inversion (COP)	area (mq)	resulting cost/ mq
initial cost	$ 22.298.450.616	5.300,00	$ 4.207.255
final cost**	*$ 31.298.450.616*	5.300,00	$ 5.905.368

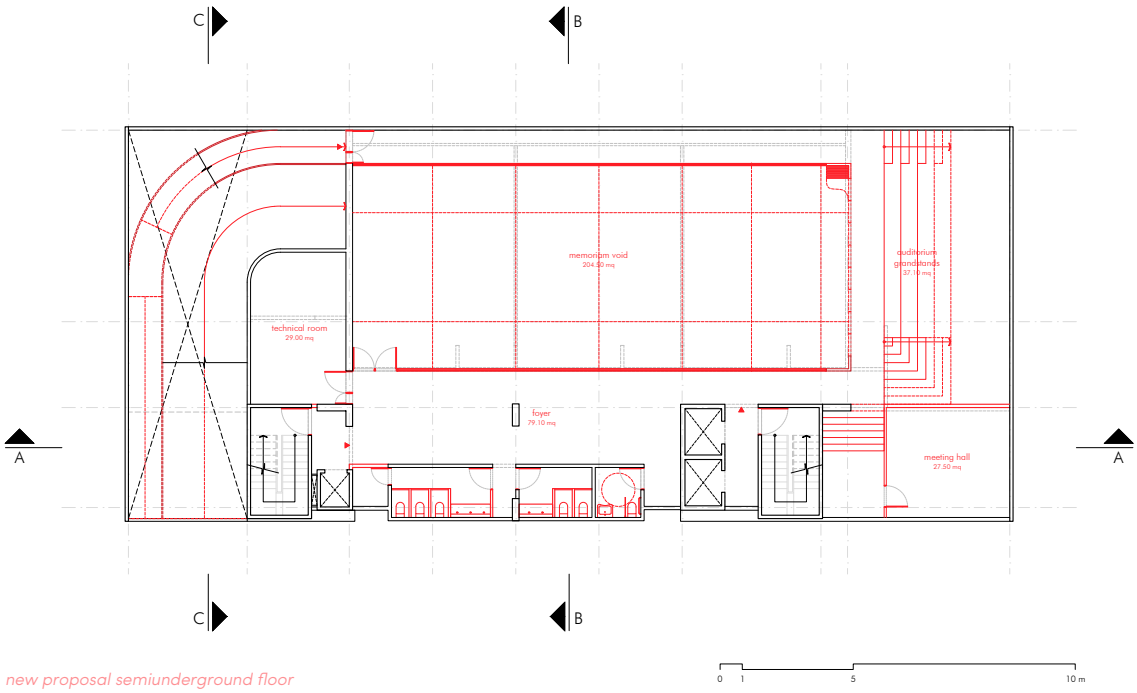
***up until November 2022*

new inversion = **1/4** of original inversion

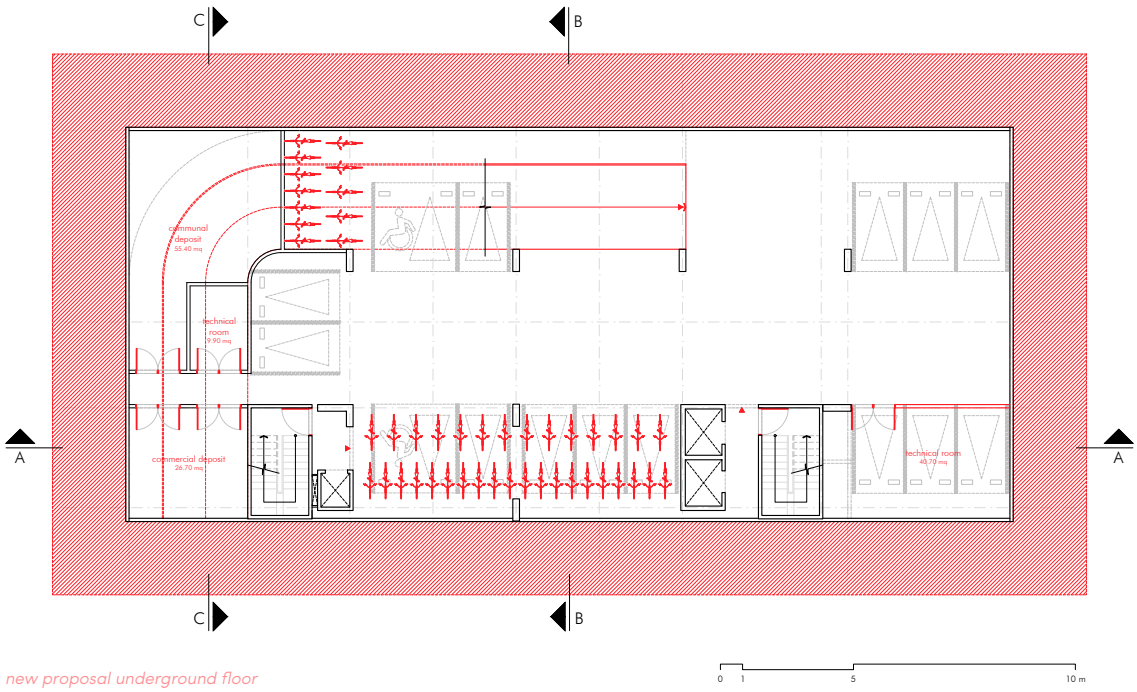


new proposal ground floor

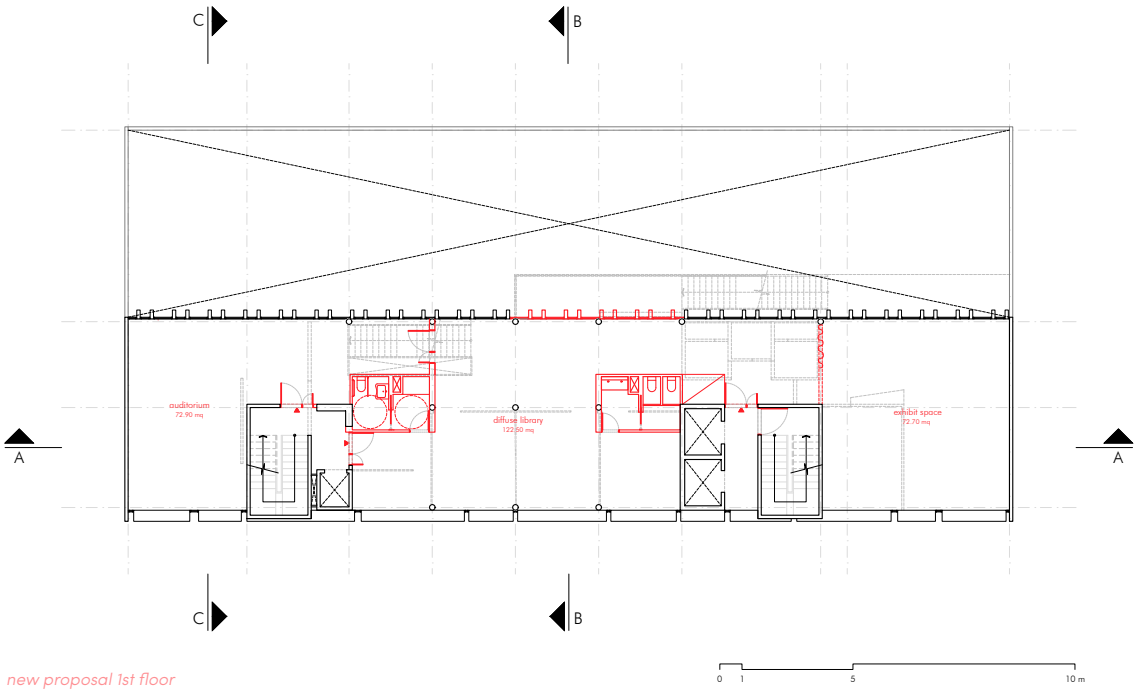

B
NA -1.50
entrance hall
71.70 mq
NA ±0.00
A
B
0
1
5
10m



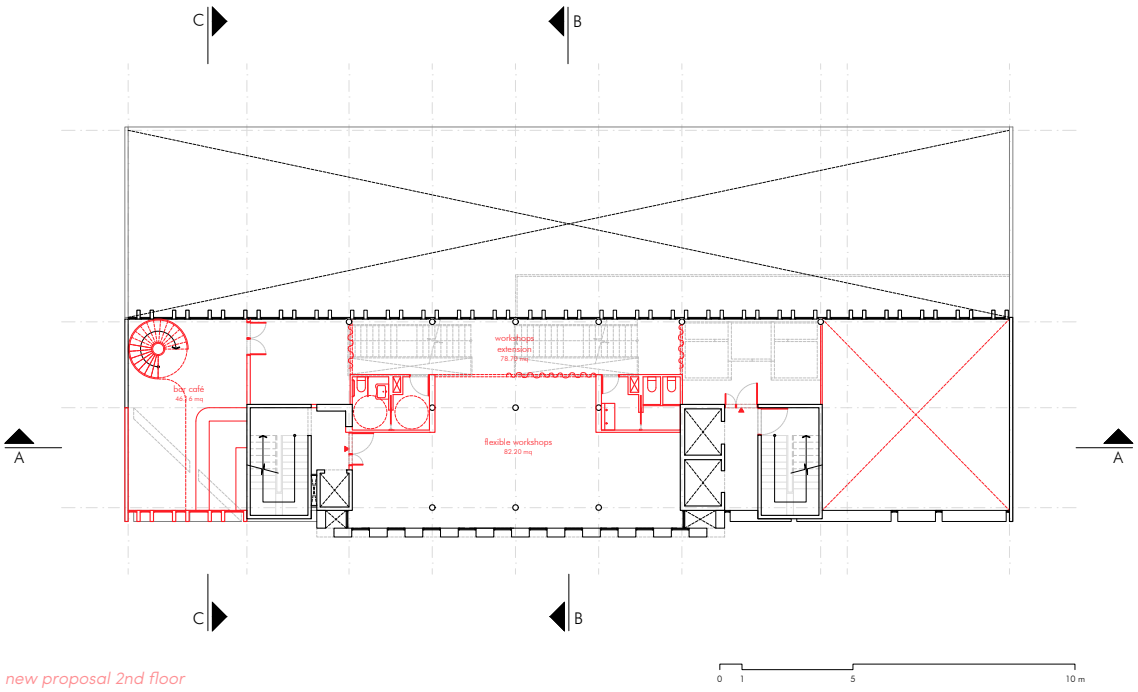
new proposal semiunderground floor



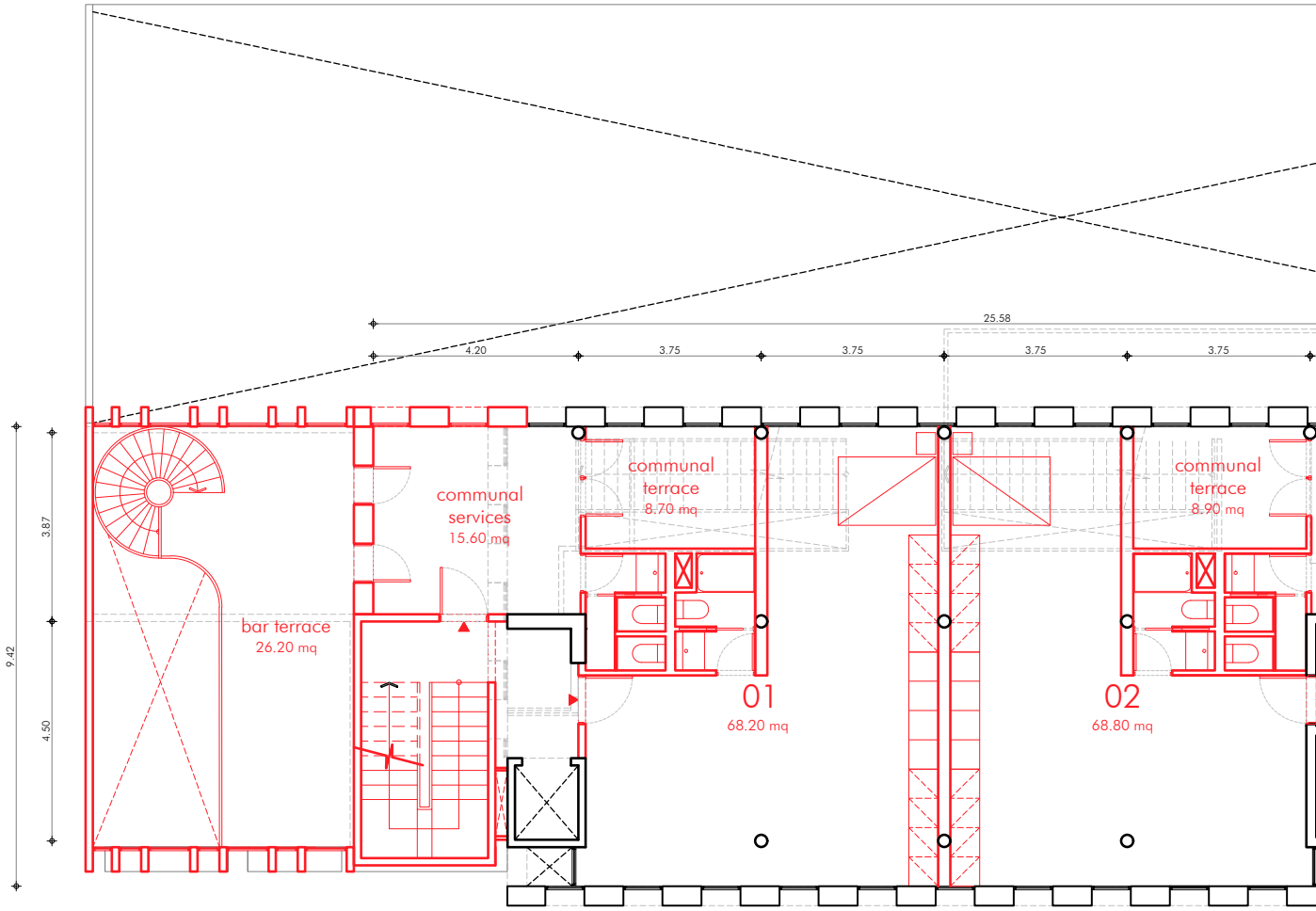
new proposal underground floor



new proposal 1st floor

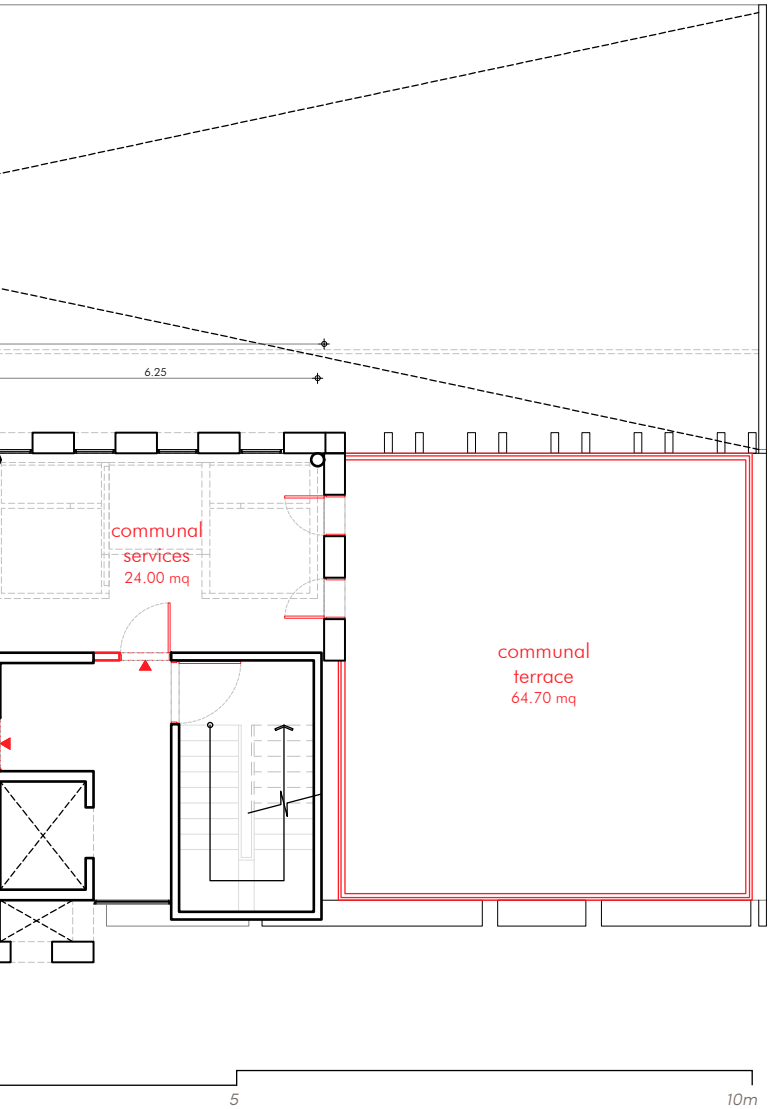


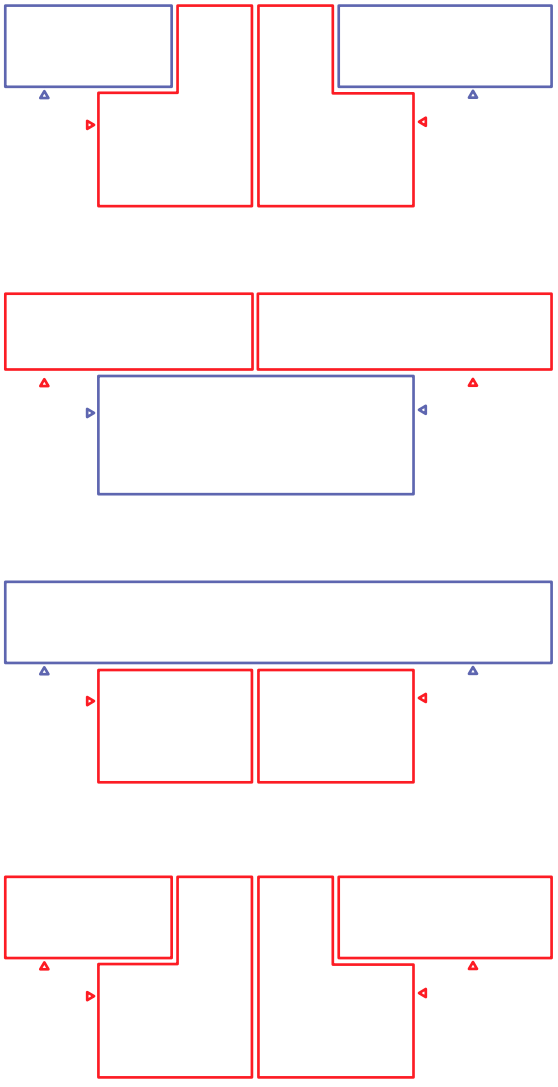
new proposal 2nd floor



new proposal 3rd and/or 7th floor with alternatives (floors 3-10)

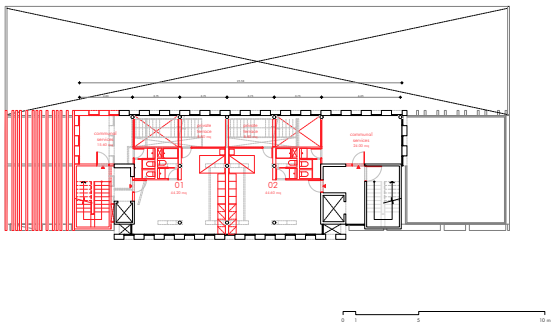
0 1

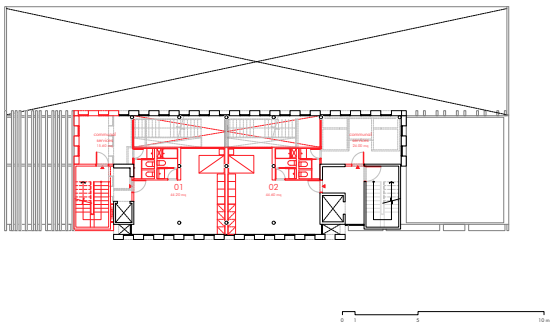


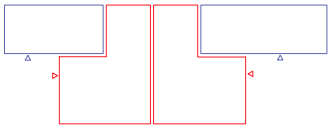


private space
communal space

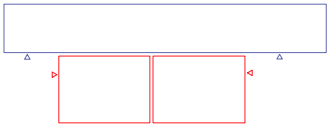
double-height for flexible uses



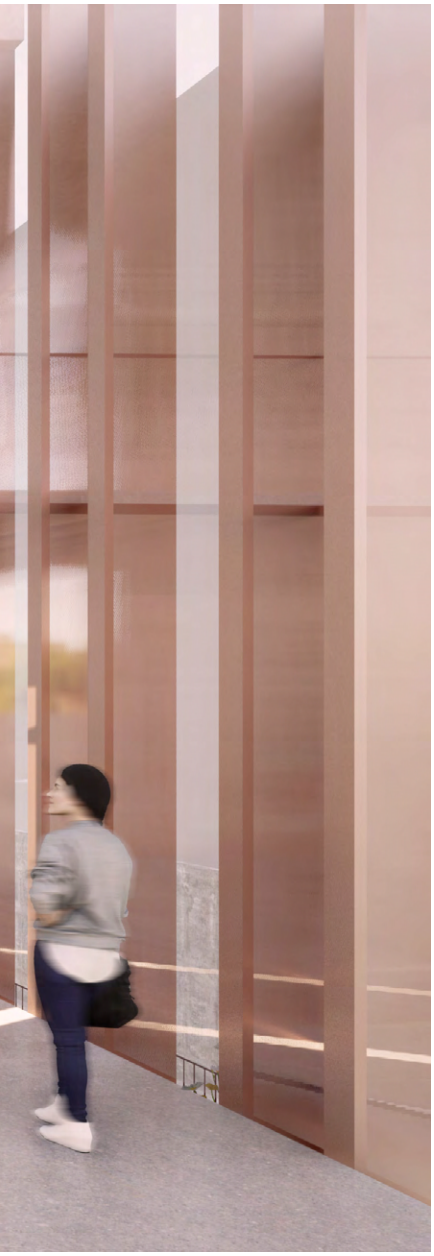




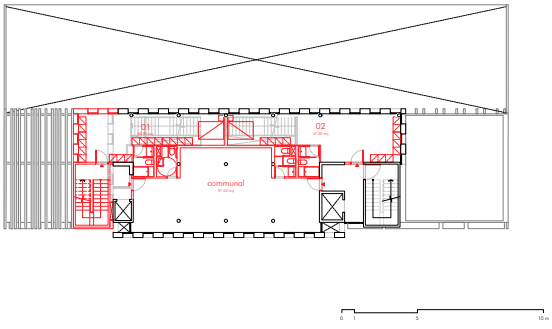
new proposal 4th/8th floor

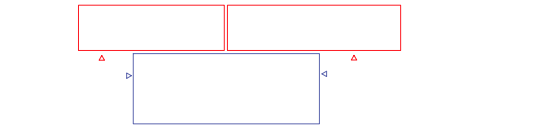


new proposal 5th/9th floor

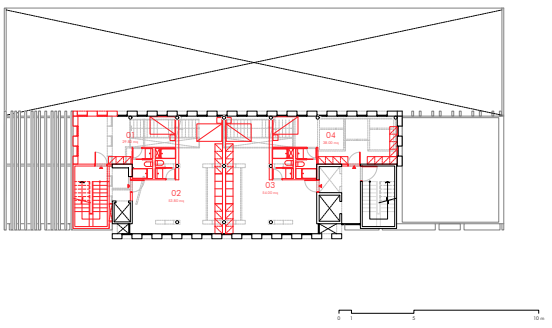


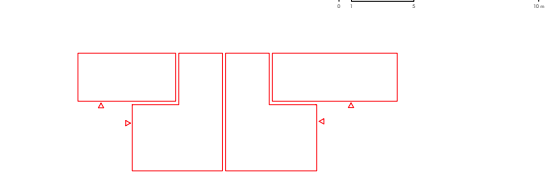
experimental apartment module



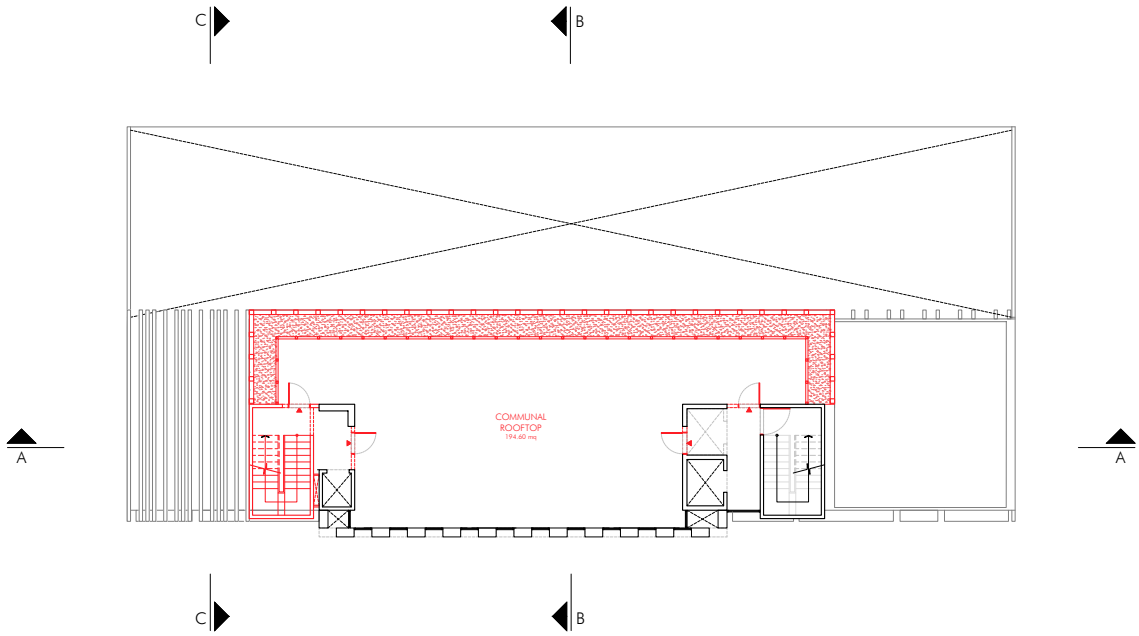


new proposal 6th floor

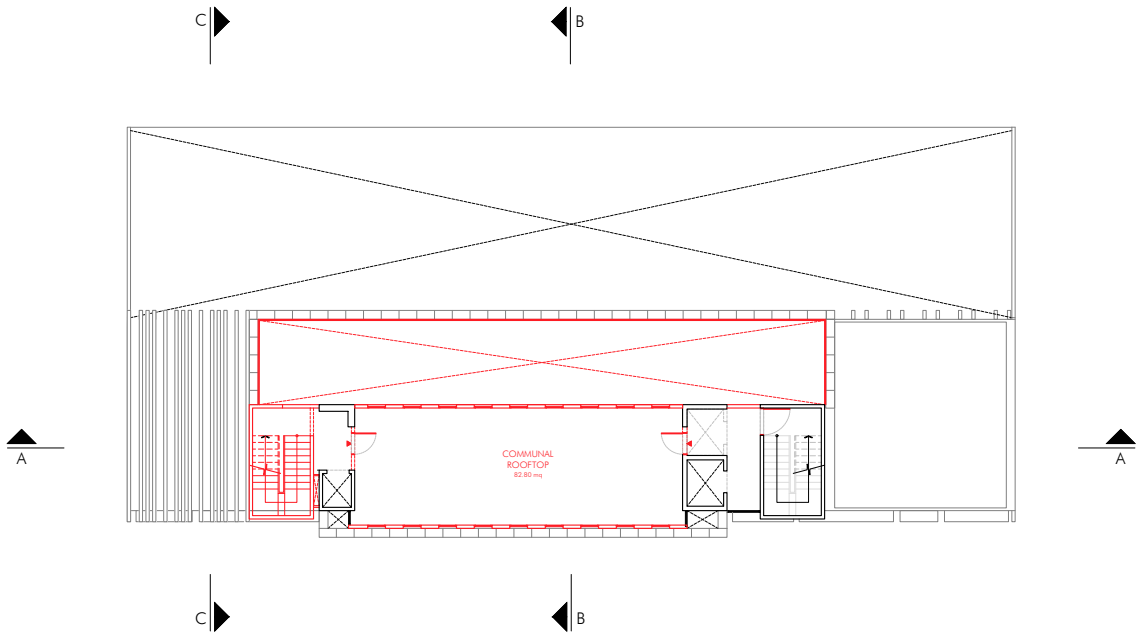




new proposal 10th floor

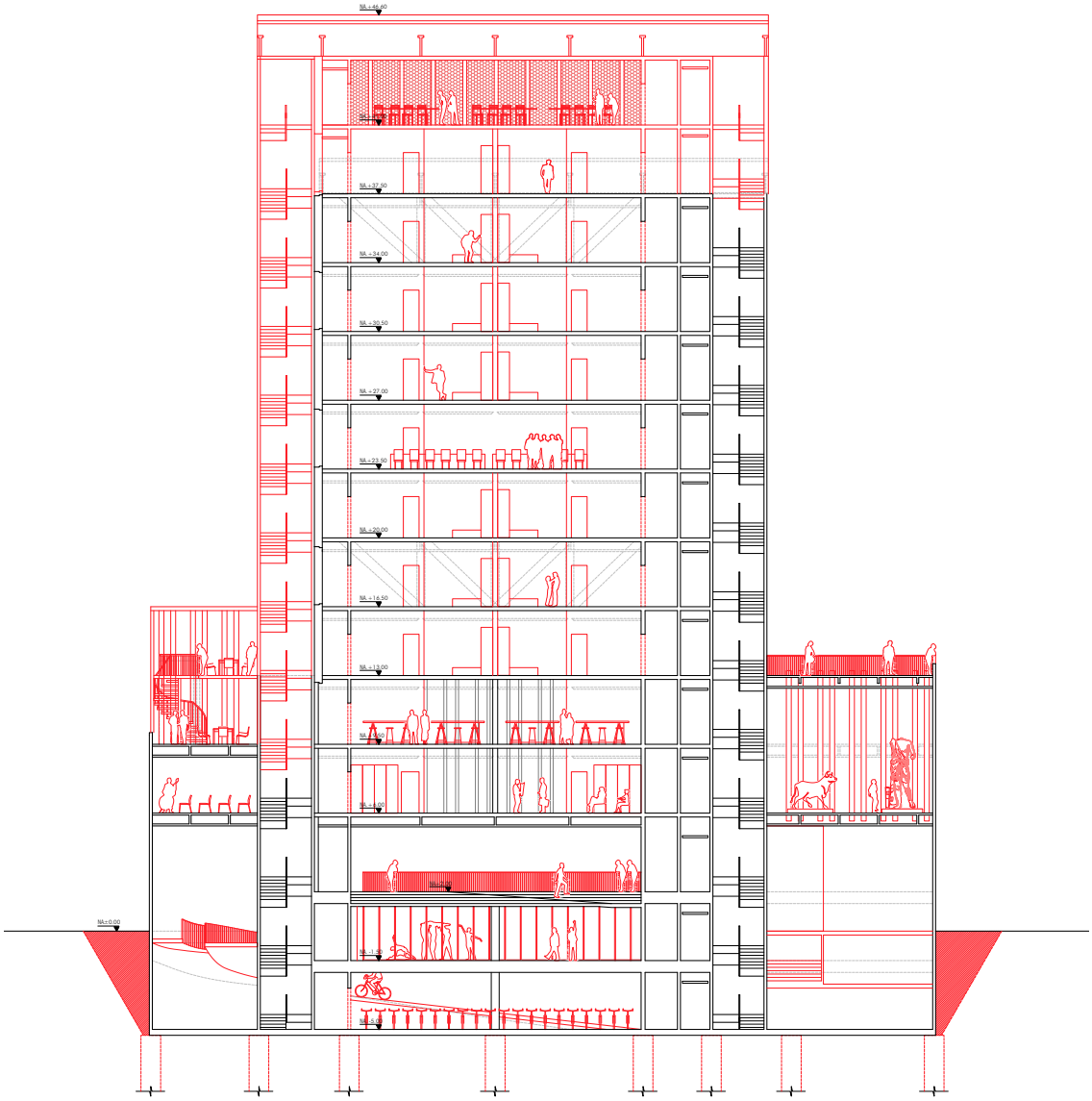


new proposal 11th floor



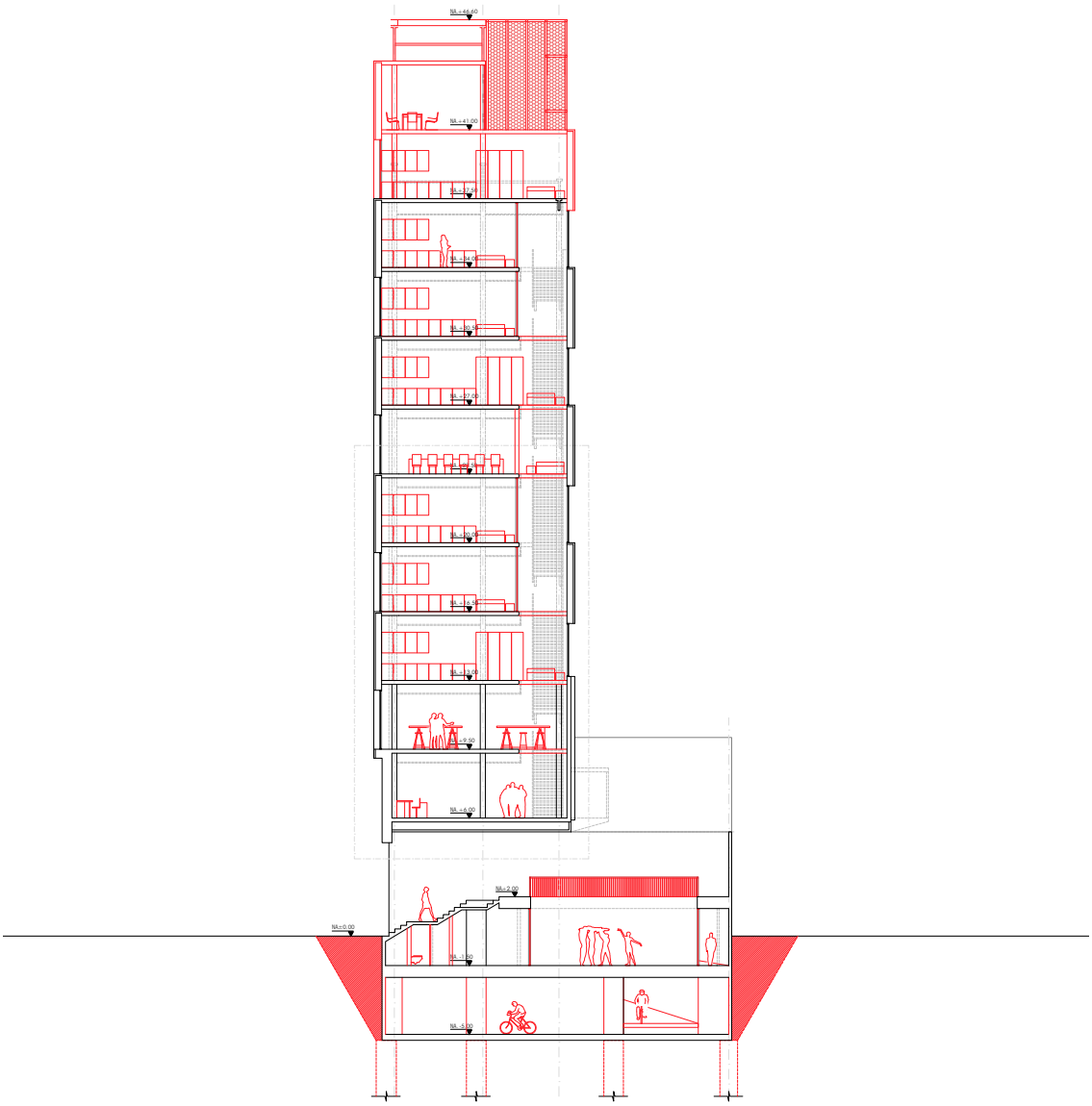
new proposal 12th floor

SECTION A



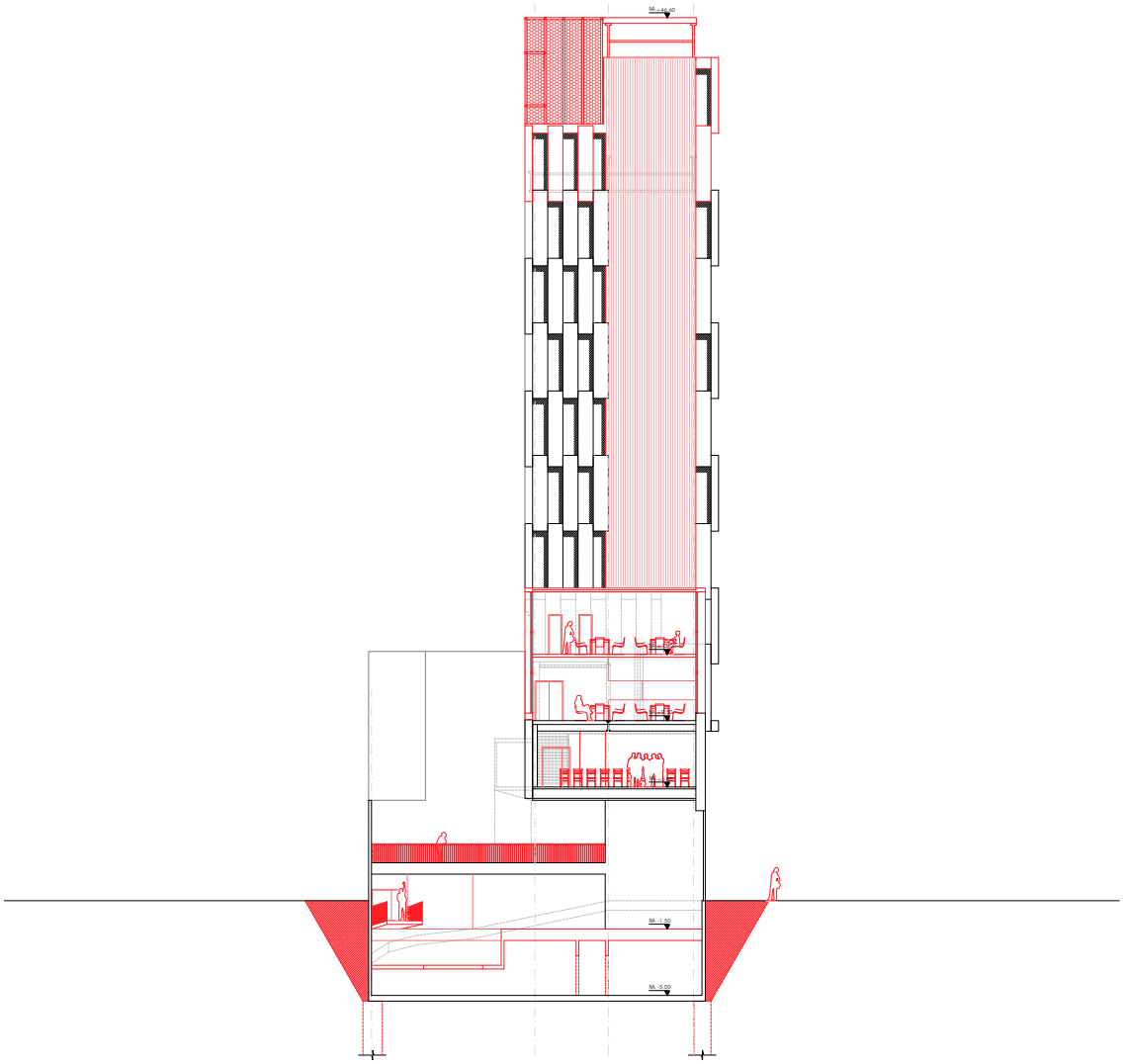
section A–A'

SECTION B

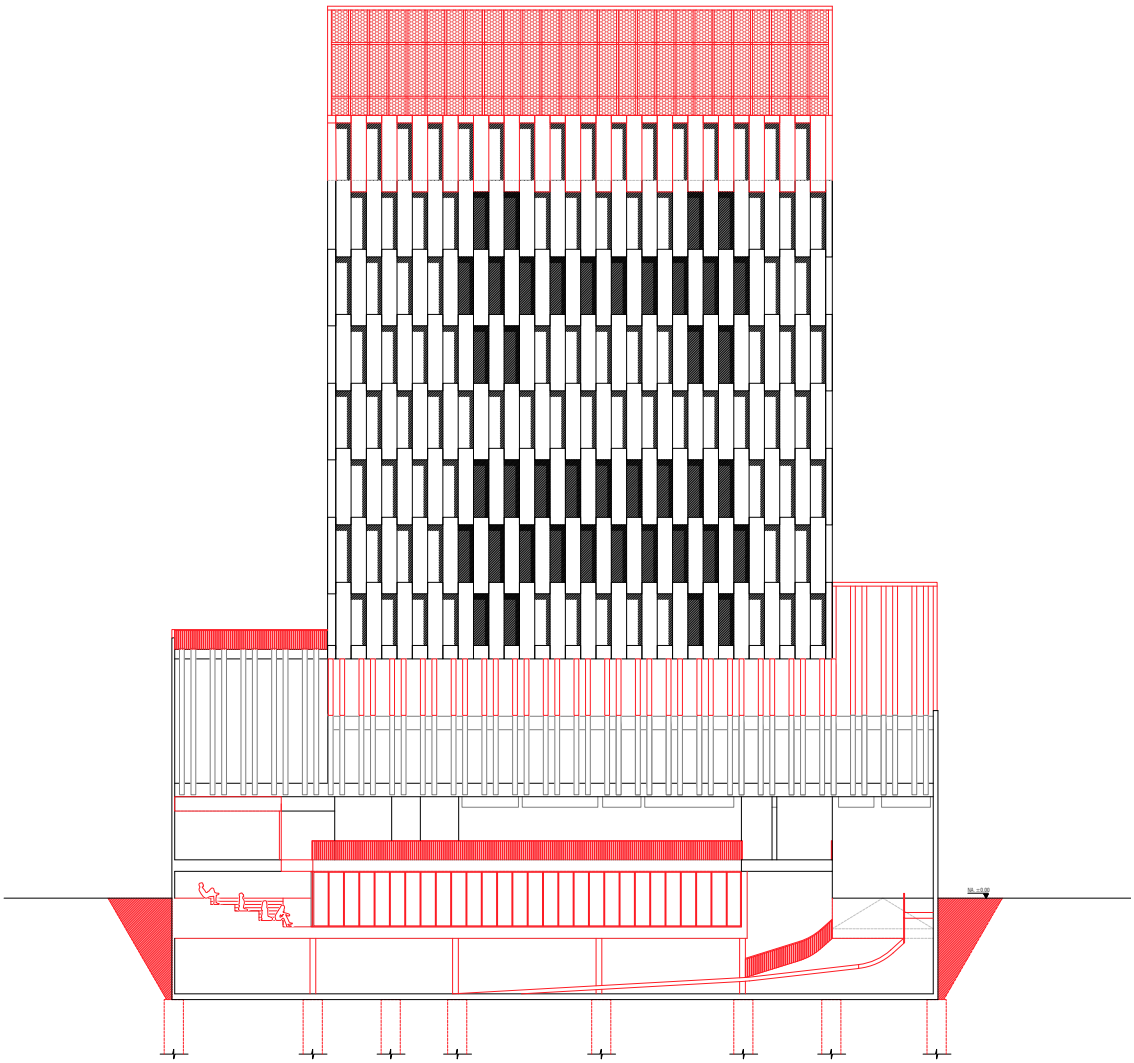


section B-B'

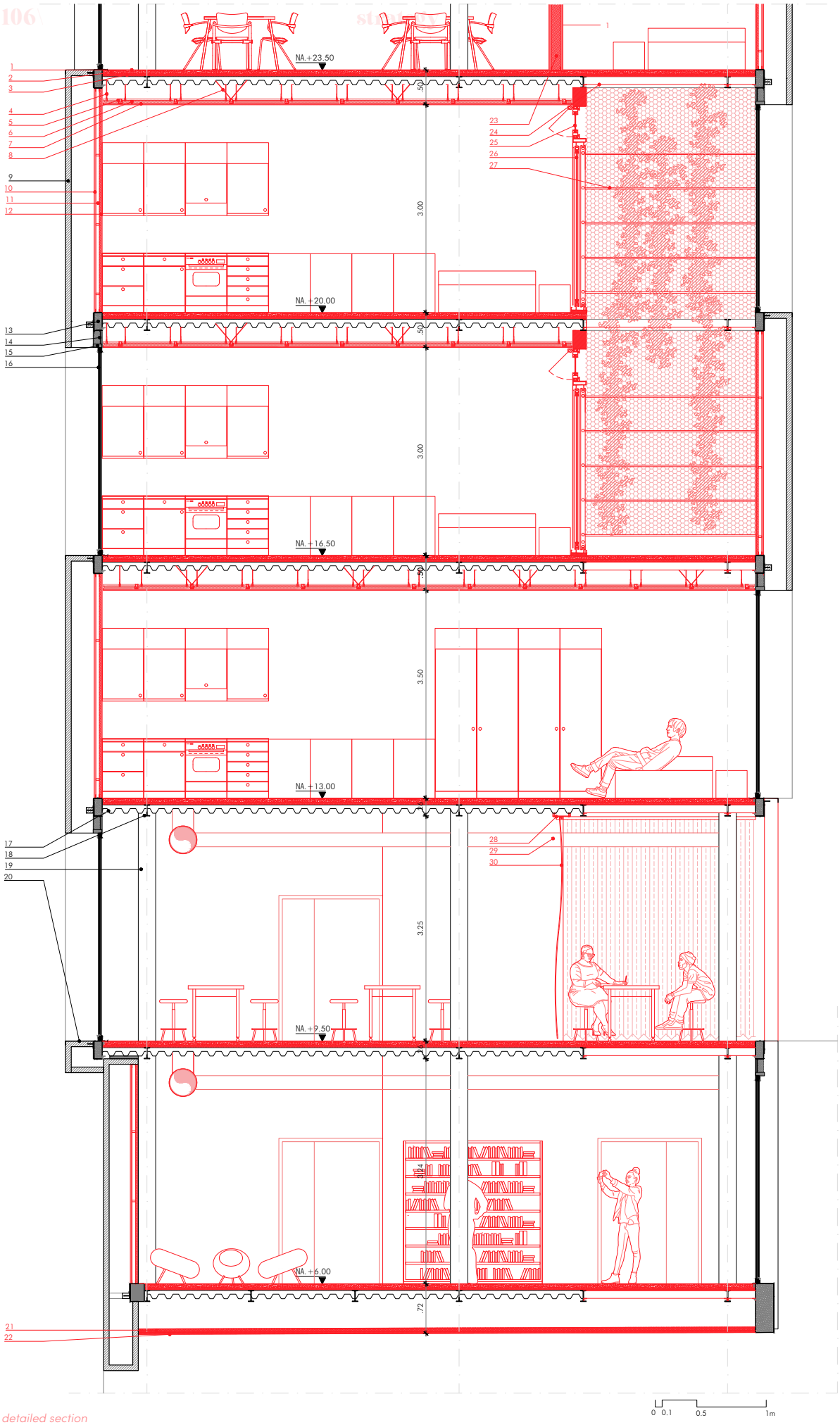
ground floor access



section C-C'



back elevation (east)



sustainability of a new megaproject

detailed section

1 laminate flooring, sp. 8 mm on high-density polyethylene foam sheeting, sp. 3 mm

2 self-leveling mortar, sp. 50 mm

3 rigid panel isolation EPS, sp. 30 mm

4 suspension system consisting of a hook and rigid pendant, provided with micro-drilling with differentiated pitch, centre distance 600 mm

5 orthogonal rider for C-profile, centre distance 500 mm

6 polyester fibre, density 50 kg/m^3, sp. 40 mm

7 double white water-repellent coated plasterboard, sp. 12.5 mm, outer slab coated with clear water paint

8 cross-bracing in two directions at a max. angle of 45° to the ceiling surface, arranged at a distance of max. 4 m in both directions and max. 2 m from the perimeter walls

9 prefabricated 400 cm x 80 cm in concrete with oxifer pigment

10 double sheet of gypsum plasterboard, sp. 12.5 mm + 12.5 mm = 25 mm

11 galvanised steel substructure with 400 mm modulation and air chamber, sp. 48 mm

12 gypsum plasterboard, sp. 12.5 mm

13 tie beam for facade and windows system, 12 x 25 cm in reinforced concrete

14 double sheet of gypsum plasterboard, sp. 12.5 mm + 12.5 mm = 25 mm for window system

15 rock wool rigid board insulation, sp. 80 mm

16 PVB laminated glass (6+1.14PVB) natural

17 embedded floor slab 54+66 mm

18 metal I-beam, 38 x 20 cm

19 PTS metal tubular turnbuckle, 20 cm Ø, plate and articulator connections

20 prefabricated 45 cm x 80 cm in concrete with oxifer pigment

21 substructure of galvanised steel, 60x27 masters hung from corrugated sheet metal

22 pre-painted rolled steel profile with rigid substructure

23 interior parting wall composed by a double sheet of gypsum plasterboard, sp. 12.5 mm + 12.5 mm = 25 mm + galvanised steel substructure with 400 mm modulation and air chamber with lightweight, flexible rock wool board thermal insulation, sp. 80 mm

24 embedded floor slab 54+66 mm for closing existing holes with substructure in L profiles

25 PVB laminated glass (6+1.14PVB) high window for cross ventilation system

26 PVB laminated glass (6+1.14PVB) natural with anchoring for light steel structure

27 galvanised steel substructure with façade anchorage for additional support of climbing plants

28 galvanised steel curtain system for communal spaces

29 exposed and clad installations with mechanical and natural ventilation system

30 rigid, heavy, acoustically insulated fabric curtain as flexible room divider


BIENVENIDOS
FOROS Y LUJOS
4X4
Y CARPAS

In conclusion, the proposed renovation of the abandoned building provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate the potential for community-driven, sustainable urban renewal initiatives. The participatory approach and focus on financial viability aim to create a space that serves the needs of the community and serves as a model for future urban renewal projects.

The financial analysis conducted to determine the cost of the project, revealed that refurbishing the building is a cost-effective solution compared to building a new one. This project offers an innovative solution to the challenges faced by urban communities and presents a promising avenue for future urban renewal initiatives.

By involving the community in the decision-making process and continuously evaluating the project, we aim to ensure its long-term viability and success. The participatory approach empowers the community and creates a space that truly reflects their needs and desires.

In summary, this proposal presents a compelling case for community-driven, sustainable urban renewal initiatives and provides a roadmap for future projects. We hope that this proposal will inspire further research and initiatives in this area.

main elevation (west)

05 conclusions

The main objective of this project is to ***invert the storytelling of White Elephants, while utilizing architecture as a revolutionary strategy***. Through the investigation of the specific case of a White Elephant in Bogota, at the Alcaldía Local de Teusaquillo's building, we were able to answer the question of how architecture can be used to address systemic issues such as corruption and its physical consequences.

The results of this project highlight the ***importance of a strong community bond for the restoration project to succeed***. This is demonstrated by the contrast between successful restoration projects (like the Gasometers in Vienna and the SESC Pompéia Factory in Sao Paulo) and less successful ones (like Potsdamer Platz in Berlin). It became clear that the participatory actions of the community are fundamental in the identification and validation of needs, prior to the beginning of the technical and construction interventions, to convert a space for the community and thus create and strengthen the sense of ownership.

The project is also a ***demand for a systemic and historical national problem, while maintaining a positive and purposeful connotation***. It is evident that the abandoned White Elephant can be transformed into an urban landmark, strengthening good education, culture, art, and entrepreneurship with improved living standards, and sharing values in a flexible society.

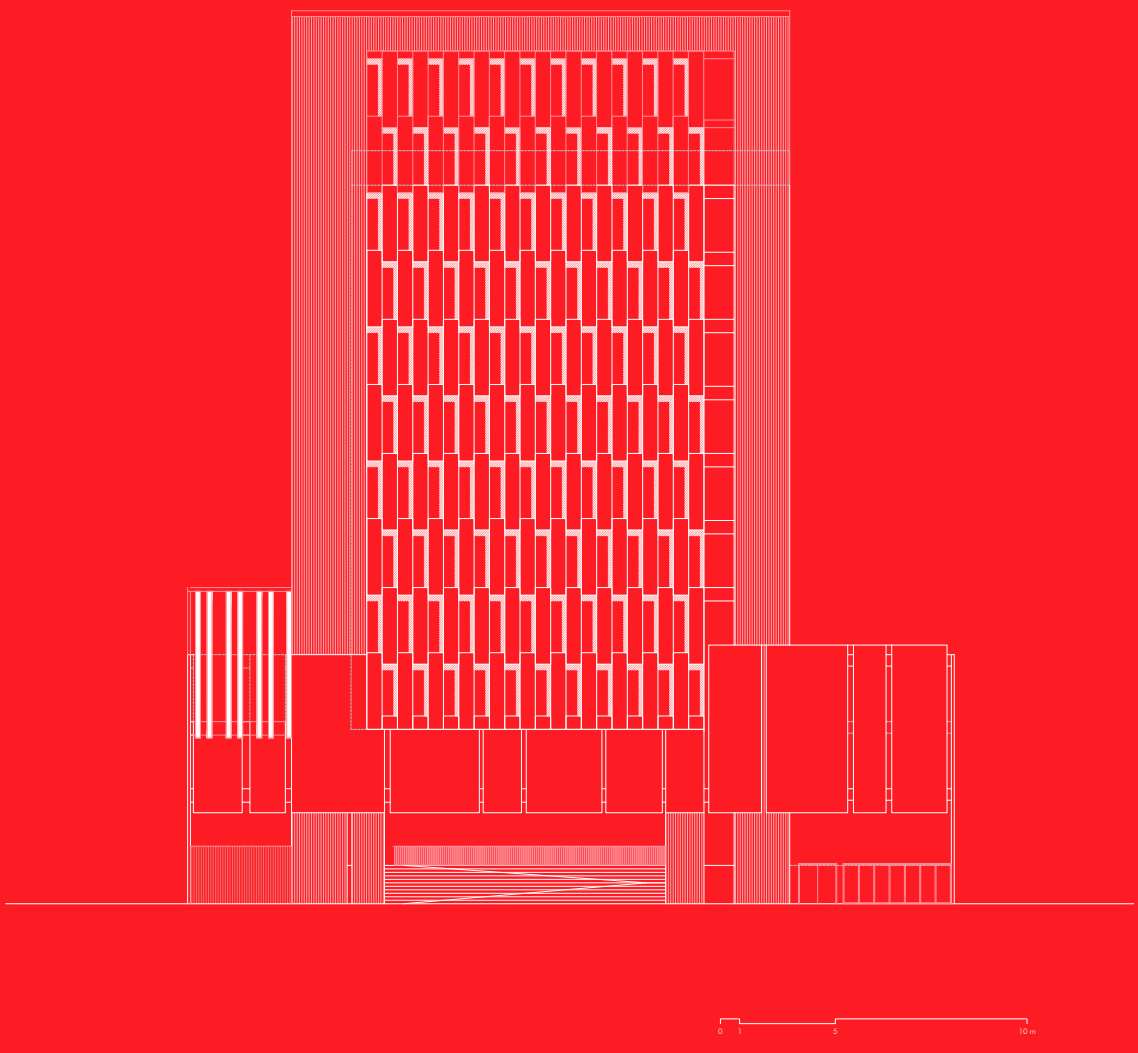
Unlike as expected, this experimental case shows that architecture functions as a treatment of a disease, rather than its cure, since it implies resolving what has already been wrongly done, as well as it encourages doing so in similar "ill" places. This is an invitation to continue exploring how far can and have architecture reached to the social and political causes, even becoming the solving cause of societal needed reforms. Architecture has the power to warn and expose corrupt rulers that despite the "scars" they leave on these works, it is possible to rescue them, even with the limitations derived from these scars, which Architecture also highlights so that the memory of the damage caused is not lost.

According to the development of the project, it is concluded that White Elephants are the manifestation of a systemic and historical problem of corruption, linked to the power of rulers, therefore, the ***architectural strategies proposed in the project also emphasise solutions with a systemic approach linked to the power of civilians and formed communities***. The five replicable strategies: a) becoming an indelible emblem of its history and transformation, b) reconnecting neighbours, c) activating existing structures, d) promoting financial and participatory integration,

and e) improving spatial perception, are adapted to the specific context of the abandoned building site and its urban dialogue, making them conceivable for future projects of a similar nature, in order to mitigate the damage and harm caused by abandoned building sites, known as White Elephants.

It is important to note that the project takes advantage of the architecture not only for its functional purposes, but also for its social, political, and economic intentions. This holistic approach of design can lead to a stronger sense of ownership and community engagement, resulting in a safer and more socially integrated space, and continues the discussion of architecture as an entity that not only represents a function but also given events and morphing perceptions, confirming what Simmel, Weber, and Tschumi have long defended. This architectural creation, beyond its function and artistic sake, ***rescues the appropriation and sense of ownership from the community***, the moment it begins to get involved, resulting in an increase in the quality of life around a safe and socially integrated space.

In conclusion, this project is a ***call to action for architects and urban planners to continue exploring the potential of architecture to address social issues and to replicate successful strategies in other contexts.***



"like literature, the **resistance** *of architecture was coming from the perverse pleasure of its* **uselessness**"

—B. Tschumi

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foreword

introduction

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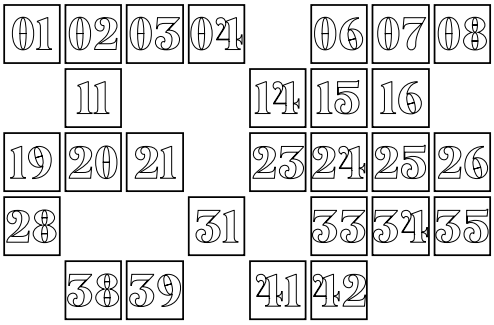

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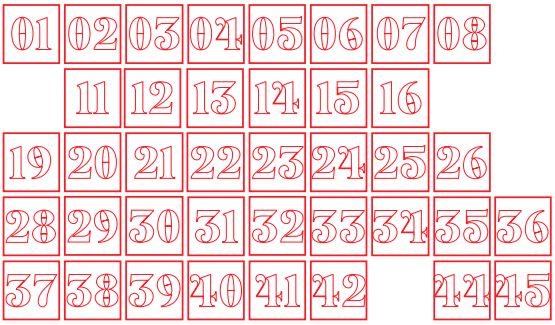

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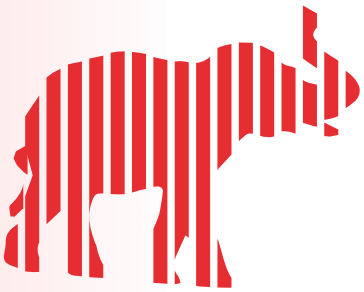

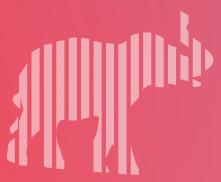

RECLAIMING WHITE ELEPHANTS

a master's thesis by
Ana María Soto Chávez