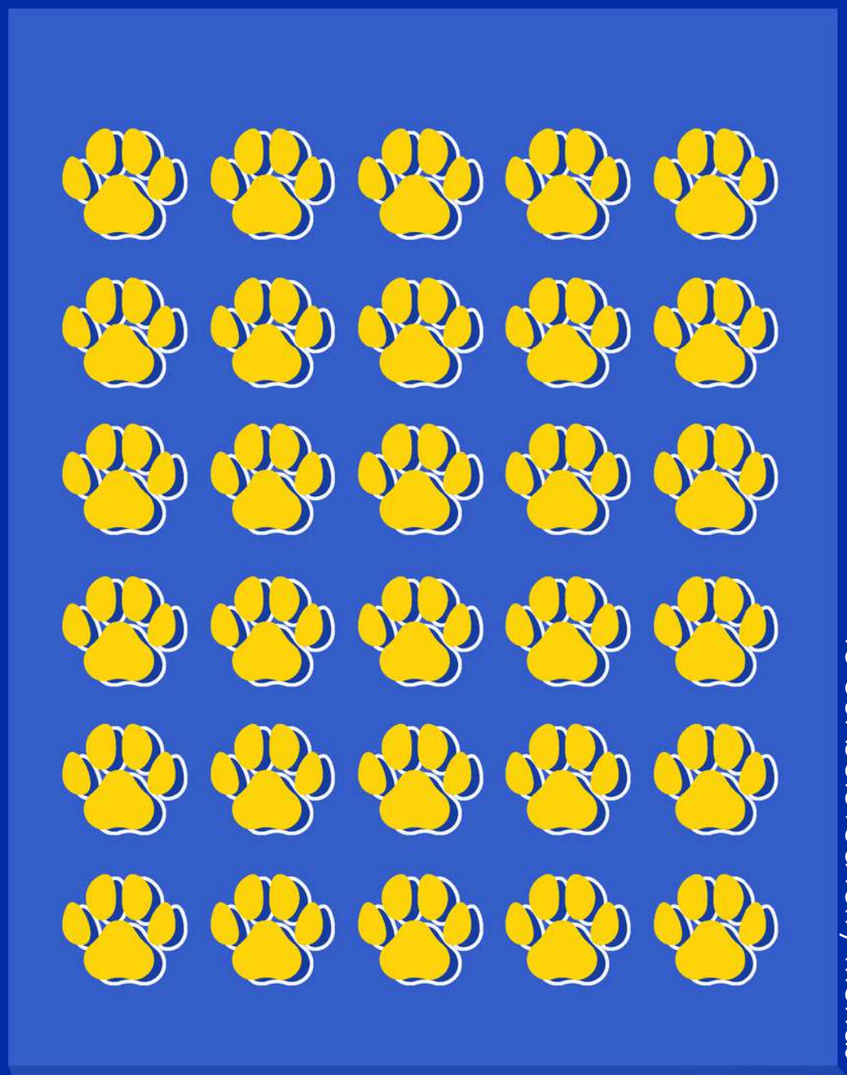


To our beloved furry friends

From Companionship to Remembrance and Back

Pet Care and Mourning Facility in Collegno

Politecnico di Torino

Master of Science Degree Programme
ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY
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Master Thesis

From Companionship to Remembrance and Back

Pet Care and Mourning Facility in Collegno

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Abstract

As pets become increasingly important members in modern families, human develop a close emotional bond with their pets. Consequently, pet loss can cause the grief as intense as the loss of a family member. Due to the short lifespan of pets, owners may experience this loss multiple times, even participating in enthuanasia decisions. However, compared with the relatively mature human mourning system, pet mourning often lacks social recognition, emotional support, related rituals, and dedicated spaces. Pet owners face challenges in expressing their grief. If this grief is not properly addressed, it can cause further emotional pain. Therefore, this thesis explores how architectural space can respond to the needs caused by pet loss.

Currently, there are few typological cases regarding animal mourning spaces. This thesis focus on previous animal mourning project by collecting, analysing and summarizing their developement, design approach and limitations. Based on these findings, this thesis develope an experimental design project in Collegno, a municipality within the metropolitan area of Turin.

This project includes a pet crematorium, a pet cemetery, memorial landscapes, an animal shelter, a veterinary clinic and spaces for daily interaction. It aims to integrate mourning into a broader cycle of life and care. This multifunctional approach aims to help maintain the long-term vitality of the memorial site and reduce the risk of such marginal spaces being gradually neglected or forgotten because of their single function

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Introduction

Problem Statement

Pet ownership began to spread across broader social strata starting in the 19th century. Before this,even though pet keeping already existed in different societies, it was often considered a privilege of the aristocracy. Over more than a century of development, pets have become a close part of daily life.
In Italy, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics, more than ten million households, approximately 40% of all Italian households, own at least 1pet.The total number of pets is around 25.5 million, with cats and dogs accounting for two-thirds of this figure(Istat, 2025). Consequently, this study focuses mainly on dogs and cats, as they share the closest bonds with humans.

A close bond exists between humans and their pets, which is also reflected in the experience of pet loss. Psychological studies show that the death of a pet can cause strong grief for owners, a sorrow comparable to the loss of a family member (Archer, 1997). Although the intensity of this grief, related studies indicate a widespread lack of societal understanding and emotional support. It is therefore considered a form of disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1999; Spain et al., 2019). And the volume of research on this topic remains relatively limited.

In the field of architecture, spaces for human mourning, such as cemeteries, memorial buildings, and commemorative landscapes, have long been important subjects of study. These spaces not only serve with remains but also provide places for memory, ritual and emotional expression. However, there has been limited discussion regarding how architecture can respond to the grief caused by a pet's death.

Through the study of existing pet mourning facilities, it can be observed that such facilities have developed in recent years, they still mainly cater to functional needs, such as the intake of remains,cremation and ash storage. In comparison, spaces designed for farewell, remembrance and emotional expression are relatively limited. This creates a clear mismatch between the strong grief experienced by pet owners after losing their pets and the spatial responses provided by existing facilities.

Therefore, this thesis does not only focus on practical needs the treatment of animal remains. Instead, it explores how design can respond to the emotional expression in the process of pet mourning.

Aims and Questions

In this study, pet loss is considered a stage in the human-pet relationship. This relationship can continue through remembrance even after a pet's passing. Cats and dogs are the most common domestic companion animals, therefore, this study focuses on them. The paper begins by exploring the human-pet relationship, examining how the needs at each stage of this relationship translate into space. It further investigates the culture of pet mourning and its spatial characteristics. From a macro perspective, it showcases the relationship between pets and the city, as well as the operational models of such buildings.

Another objective of this paper is to explore how to raise awareness of this marginalized topic. The architectural practice introduced in this paper introduces multifunctional spaces to encourage understanding and appreciation of the human-pet relationship.

Based on these objectives, this paper raises the following research questions:

- *How can architectural and landscape spaces support people's expression of grief and their emotional experience of continued connection?*
- *What lessons can we learn from historical pet cemeteries and existing pet mourning facilities?*
- *How can these studies be applied to practical situations to create a multifunctional project that differentiates between private and open public spaces for mourning?*

Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative and design-oriented research methodology. The research is divided into four main phases: literature review, case studies, site and regional analysis, and architectural design. These four phases begin by understanding contemporary human-pet relationships, related spaces, and pet mourning culture and spaces, gradually extracting corresponding spatial strategies, and ultimately applying these strategies to Collegno's design practices.

The first phase is an interdisciplinary literature review. The paper integrates relevant literature from multiple fields, including human-pet relationship research, grief psychology, sociology, architecture, cemetery studies, and urban landscape studies, to understand the role pets play in family and urban life. The research explores concepts such as human-pet attachment, grief over deprivation, and enduring connection. These concepts help explain the causes of grief and demonstrate coping mechanisms. Based on this, the paper categorizes human-pet spaces into four main phases: acquaintance, cohabitation, care and farewell, and memory.

The second phase is case studies. Due to the relatively limited number of specially designed pet mourning facilities currently available, the paper does not use a completely unified analytical framework, but rather selects and categorizes cases based on the main questions they address. The case study materials primarily come from academic literature, historical archives, official and architectural project introductions, maps, photographs, and publicly available architectural drawings.

The third phase focuses on Turin, Collegno, and the selected project site. The study includes an analysis of existing pet mourning services and pet remains disposal procedures in the area, followed by a locational analysis of Collegno.

The fourth phase translates the research findings into a practical spatial design scheme, focusing on how to organize different functions within the site to ensure both privacy for mourning and public appeal.

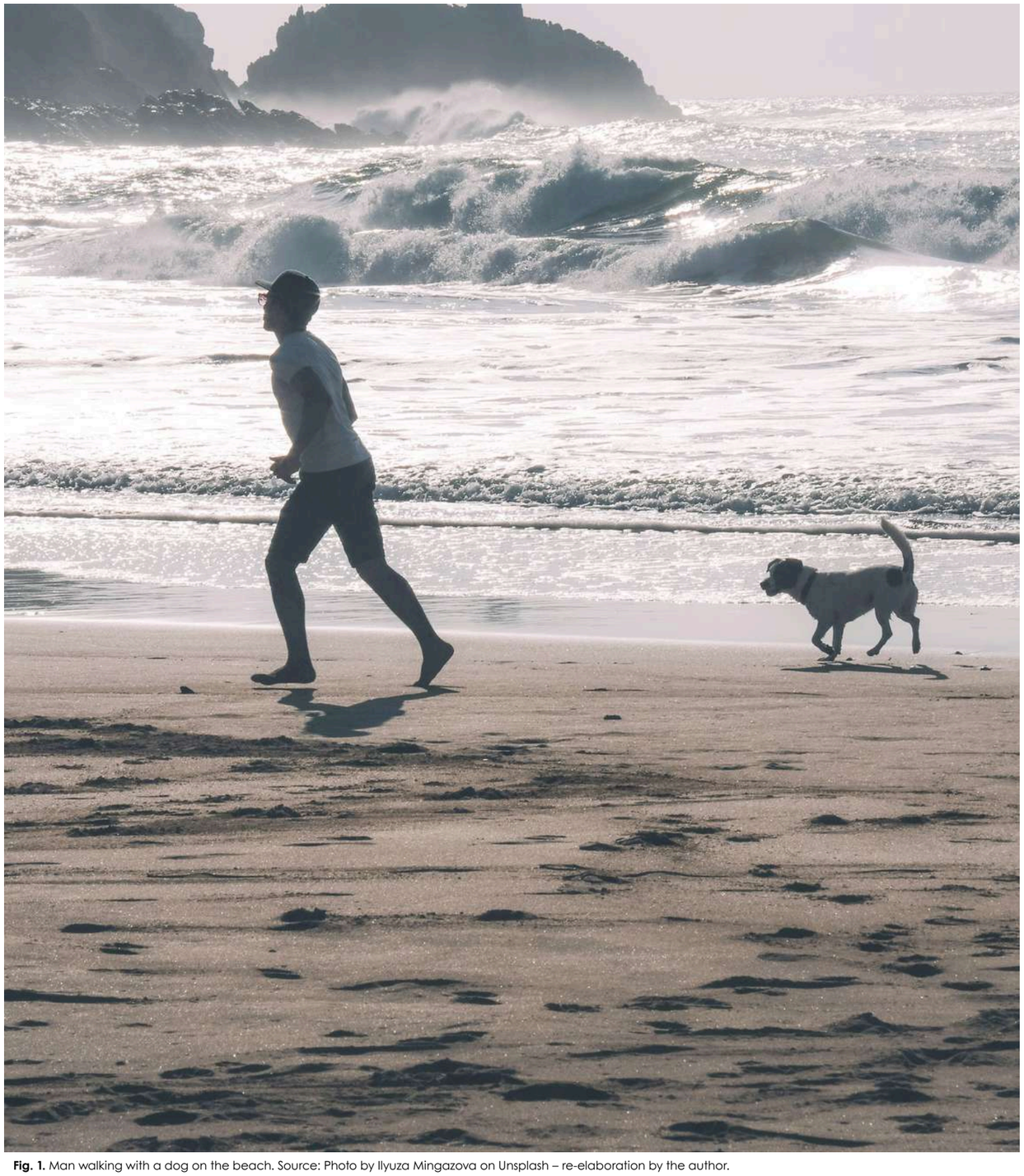


Fig. 1. Man walking with a dog on the beach. Source: Photo by Ilyuza Mingazova on Unsplash – re-elaboration by the author.

01

The Human–Pet Relationship, Loss and Continuing Bonds

1.1 A modern relationship between human and pet

In 2022, Italy's pet products market generated more than USD 4.54 billion in revenue. This figure is expected to reach USD 7 billion by 2030 (Grand View Research, 2023). People are willing to spend considerable time, money and energy on their pets, even though this investment usually brings no direct economic return (Serpell, 1989). Archer (1997) and Serpell (1989) suggest that contemporary human–pet relationships involve strong emotional attachment. This close bond has also been examined from psychological and sociological perspectives.

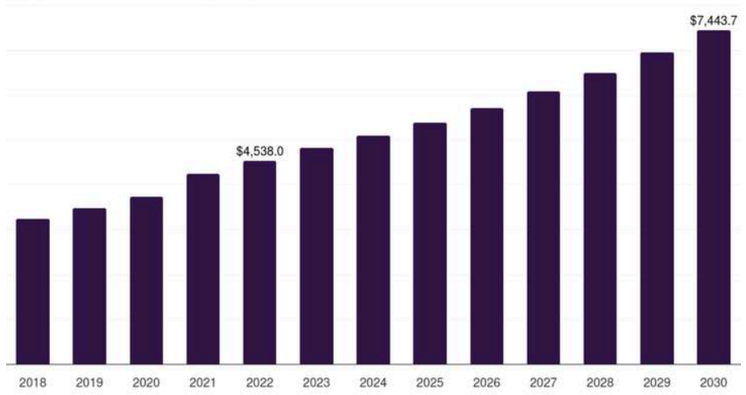


Fig. 2. Italy pet products market, 2018–2030 (US$M). Source: Grand View Research, 2024.

First, it is necessary to distinguish pets from domestic animals. Domestic animals are animals kept by humans for practical purposes, such as food production and labour (FAO, 2005). This thesis focuses on pets. They are not kept mainly for practical use, but live with humans as companions and form emotional bonds with them. Some scholars prefer the term "companion animal" because they believe that the word "pet" may undervalue the animal's position in the relationship. However, this alternative term has also been questioned. This thesis recognises that terminology matters, but uses the word "pet" throughout for the sake of simplicity.

The presence of pets within the home is also challenging traditional ideas of family. In Power's study of dog owners, almost all participants described their dogs as "family members" (Power, 2011). The study had a small and relatively specific sample, so its findings cannot represent all pet owners. Nevertheless, it shows how the social role of pets is being redefined. Some owners call themselves "mum" or "dad" and refer to their pets as "fur babies." Pets may also receive gifts on birthdays and other special occasions (Irvine and Cilia, 2017). These practices help strengthen a sense of kinship between people and their pets.

Several studies show that pets are commonly allowed into everyday domestic spaces, including living rooms, bedrooms and bathrooms. Some owners even allow their pets to sleep on the bed (Serpell, 1989; Franklin, 2006). Research by Power (2011) and Irvine and Cilia (2017) also shows that pets take part in and reshape everyday routines. One participant in Power's study described how her dog initiated activities at weekends and joined a regular evening "ritual" before the dishes were washed. Similar examples can be found in many households. Pets may wake family members in the morning or express their needs for food, walks and play. Through these small actions, they influence the rhythm of domestic life.

Fig. 3 Coco pushing in the bottom drawer of the stacked dishwasher (Cate's diary). Source: Power, 2008, p. 549.



However, this relationship is not entirely equal. Pets may be treated as family members, but their behaviour is still controlled by humans. Owners decide which rooms they can enter and establish rules through training and discipline.

These boundaries may become less strict as pets become more integrated into the family and develop closer relationships with their owners (Power, 2011). Even so, a clear tension remains within the human–pet relationship: pets are treated as family members, but they are also subject to human control.

There is no single explanation for why people form such close relationships with pets, and some arguments remain controversial. Archer (1997) summarises several main views. One focuses on the psychological and health benefits of keeping pets. Another takes a biological perspective, suggesting that animals have developed attractive characteristics through evolution, including the retention of juvenile features. A different view sees attachment to pets as a response to inadequate human relationships. This thesis considers the last explanation too limited. People who have active social lives can also form deep emotional bonds with animals.

Despite these different explanations, many studies have shown that human–pet relationships can have positive effects. Levinson first introduced the term “pet therapy” in the 1960s and drew attention to the benefits of animals for human health. These benefits are not limited to reducing loneliness. Serpell (1986) further explained that pets can provide emotional support, a sense of security and a lasting emotional connection. As pets become increasingly recognised as family members, they also begin to influence people’s lifestyles, domestic spaces and patterns of spatial use.

1.2 Pets within Domestic and Urban Life

How do pets transform spaces that have traditionally been human-centric?

The previous section explored contemporary human-pet relationships and the ways pets interact with humans once they enter the home. Their activities also influence the layout of living spaces. Common examples include dog kennels in gardens, climbing structures designed specifically for cats, and indoor enclosures used to restrict pet movement (Irvine & Cilia, 2017).

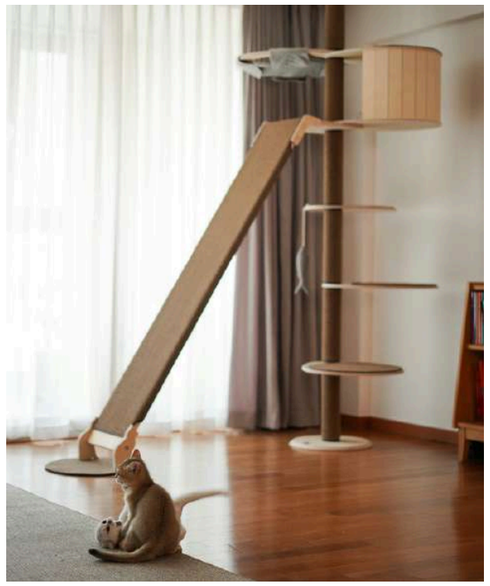


Fig. 4. Indoor cat tower. Source: Photo by YoonJae Baik on Unsplash.

In recent years, some architectural projects have begun to treat pets as legitimate users of space. Examples include the "Positive House" designed by Studio Ruiz Velázquez and the "House of Pet" by HDD Architecture Studio. These two projects employed different design strategies: one focused on reorganizing the home's interior, while the other concentrated on creating novel vertical spaces. However, both gave careful consideration to the animals' physical size, behavioral patterns, and movement characteristics. This approach challenges the traditional, human-centric philosophy of

residential design. Based on these new spatial forms, Yurttaş (2026) proposed the concept of "symbiotic spatiality." Pets should not be viewed merely as occupants dependent on human-created spaces; they are active users of space whose movement trajectories, modes of perception, and physical dimensions should be taken into account during the design process.

As the bond between humans and pets deepens, these spatial transformations are extending beyond the home into the broader urban landscape. Animals are a ubiquitous presence in urban environments, adding vitality and liveliness to the city. Wolch (2002), an early scholar in the study of human-animal relations in cities, argued that animals constitute a vital part of the *anima urbis*—the "soul" or living spirit of the city.

Wolch illustrated this point through the example of salmon conservation in Seattle. Rapid urban expansion threatened salmon habitats; in response, the city undertook initiatives to restore riverine ecosystems, improve fish migration corridors, and modify urban drainage systems, all with the aim of recreating an environment conducive to salmon survival. Anderson (1995) also acknowledged the significant role animals play in shaping urban ecological spaces.

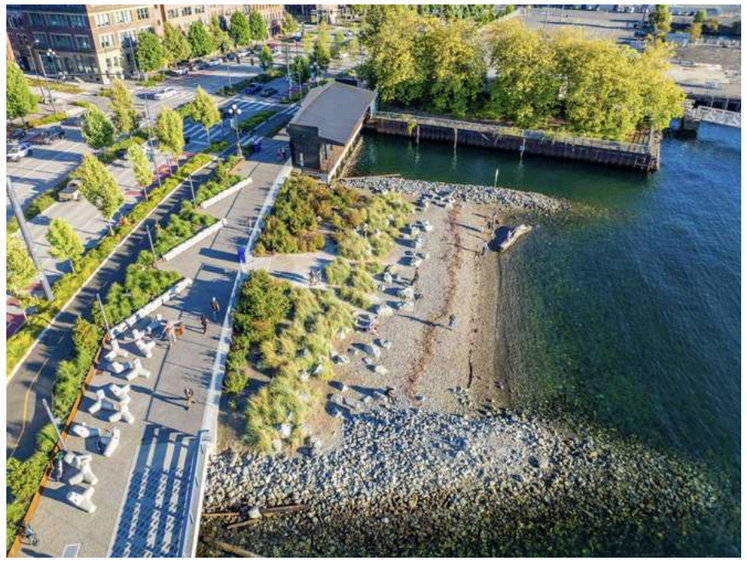


Fig. 5. Pioneer Square Habitat Beach at Seattle Waterfront Park. Source: Photo by Erik Holsather, courtesy of Friends of Waterfront Seattle, via Architizer..

Dog parks offer a more tangible example of how pets influence urban space. As pet ownership has become increasingly widespread, conflicts have arisen between pet-related activities and strict municipal regulations governing where animals are permitted to roam freely. Consequently, dedicated public areas emerged to meet the need for outdoor activities and social interaction. Many of the earliest dog parks were established through the joint efforts of pet owners and community groups. Some of these initiatives revitalized neglected or underutilized urban land, imbuing these spaces with new vitality and meaning (Urbanik and Morgan, 2013).



Fig. 6. Brooks Truitt Bark Park, Sacramento. Source: Photo by Chantel Elder / Eleakis & Elder Photography.

Pet ownership also gives rise to various practical needs. In response, facilities such as veterinary clinics, pet daycares, animal shelters, and pet supply stores have appeared in cities. However, opinions often differ regarding the appropriate place for pets within the urban environment. For instance, some argue that dog parks encroach upon public space intended for human use (Urbanik and Morgan, 2013). Spatial conflicts between humans and animals can intensify when animals lack clearly recognized places within the city.

Wolch (2002) illustrates this issue by citing a study by Griffiths et al. (2000) on feral cats in Hull, UK. Some residents objected to the areas

occupied by feral cats, viewing them as unpleasant, while others regarded these spaces as natural habitats for the animals. These starkly contrasting perspectives ultimately sparked social conflict concerning the animals and the spaces they occupied (Griffiths et al., 2000; cited in Wolch, 2002).

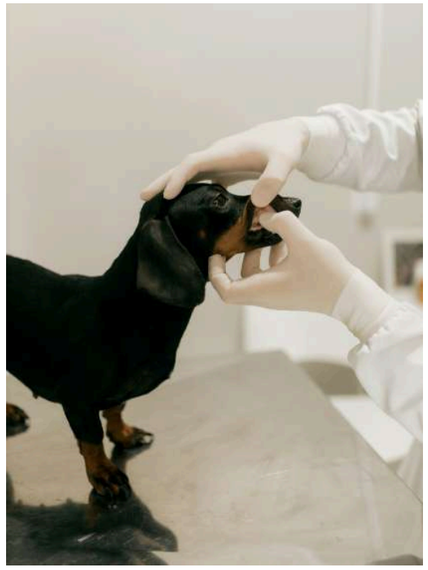


Fig. 7. Veterinary Care. Source: Photo by Alexander Mass on Unsplash.



Fig. 8. Blacktown Animal Rehoming Centre. Source: Photo by Brett Boardman.

On a broader scale, Schuurman (2024) introduces the concept of "multispecies homescapes." She extends the idea of the "multispecies home" beyond indoor spaces to encompass gardens, neighborhoods, and the wider urban landscape. Yet, this form of home is inherently fragile. Schuurman notes that multispecies homescapes can be altered or even vanish due to separation, relocation, changes in family circumstances, or death. Upon the death of a pet, a multispecies homescape may transform into a "deathscape" (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010). The grief associated with a pet's passing is often difficult to express in public settings. Therefore, pet cemeteries, veterinary clinics, and other facilities for mourning and remembrance help people maintain the emotional bonds they shared with their pets. Relationships among family members do not abruptly cease simply because one member has passed away. Consequently, before planning spaces for pet-related mourning, it is essential to understand how this grief is expressed and how the emotional connection between a person and their deceased pet endures over time.

1.3 Pets Loss

1.3.1 Disenfranchised Grief

The previous subsection discussed the intimate relationships between humans and their pets. Further, when a pet dies, the owner may experience grief, and the intensity of which is related to the level of intimacy (Archer, 1997). Strong attachment can lead to intense grief (Spain, O'Dwyer and Moston, 2019). For some owners, the grief caused by losing a pet can be comparable to that of losing a family member. Although many studies indicate that pet-loss grief can be persistent (Archer, 1997; Packman, 2011; Cordaro, 2012) and may cause a range of grief reactions, it often lacks sufficient social recognition and support.

Doka identifies grief following the pet-loss as a form of disenfranchised grief. Social rules not only regulate people's behaviour but also shape how emotions and thoughts are expressed. However, the factors that cause grief are not limited to this, not all experiences that cause grief are socially recognised.

Doka categorized disenfranchised grief as following: (1) the relationship is not recognised; (2) the loss itself is not recognised; (3) the mourner is not recognised. The two additional categories are: unacceptable death situations and expressions of grief that do not conform to social norms (Doka, 2002). Pet-loss grief is categorized as the second situation. Individuals who have formed close bonds with their pets may experience grief, but those around them or society may consider this loss insignificant (Packman, 2011; Cordaro, 2012; Spain, O'Dwyer and Moston, 2019).

Neimeyer and Jordan explain this lack of recognition through four levels: (1) individuals minimise or deny their own grief; (2) family members and friends fail to understand it; (3) social disapproval; (4) Denial from beliefs or religion (Spain, O'Dwyer and Moston, 2019). As their grief is not acknowledged, pet owners may experience more intense grief even developing negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, loneliness and numbness (Doka, 2002). Citing research conducted by Tzivian, Friger and Kushnir, Spain, O'Dwyer and Moston pointed out a positive relationship between social support and pet owners' quality of life. Even if some grief is not socially acknowledged, people can find understanding and support within small groups of people with similar experiences (Doka, 2002).

Cordaro (2012) also emphasises the importance of community self-help groups for coping with grief over the loss of a pet, which can compensate for the lack of social support. In addition, psychological counselling can act as a catalyst, encouraging pet owners to confront and share their grief, find suitable coping strategies and gradually reduce their emotional distress.

1.3.2 Continuous Bond

Many studies show that pet owners repeatedly recall their deceased pets (Archer, 1997; Packman et al., 2011). Klass, Silverman and Nickman firstly proposed the theory of continuing bonds, suggesting that death does not signify the end of the relationship and that emotional bonds remain after a loss.

Packman et al. were among the first to introduce this theory into research on pet mourning. Although broad and systematic research on the relationship between continuing bonds and animal bereavement are still lacking, and no consistent conclusions have been reached regarding its specific impact, studies generally show that pet owners continue to maintain conteact with their pets in different ways after the loss.

Habarth et al. conducted a survey involving 4,336 pet owners who lost a pet within a period. The survey showed that most participants experienced 11 out of 14 persistent connection patterns. More specifically, 98.2% of participants recalled moments spent with their pets, 96.6% talked about their pets with others and 93.6% found comfort in objects left by their pets. In addition, 76.8% of participants were drawn to pet-related locations, and 56.8% participated held memorial activities (Habarth et al., 2017).

Habarth et al. also found that continuing bonds could also cause emotional pain. For example, a pet's belongings may envoke memories of the life shared with the animal while also reminding the owner that the pet has died. However, most participants felt that the comfort derived from these behaviors outweighed the distress (Habarth et al., 2017).

When continuing bonds rely on belongings, ashes, rituals and repeated visits to particular places, they translate into behaviors in different spaces. Examples include pet memorial tablets in Japanese families (Ambros, 2010) and pet cemeteries where people can express their grief, etc. Studies on pet cemeteries has shown that even in some abandoned cemeteries, owners still return on particular dates to visit their pets' graves (Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022). Therefore, pet cemeteries and other memorial sites are not just for burial, but also a bond that sustains emotional connections.

1.4 From Emotional Experience to Spatial Need

Previous sections discussed how pets influence people's everyday living spaces and urban public spaces (Solhjoo, Krtalić and Goulding, 2022; Schuurman, 2024). Relationships within multispecies households are dynamic. López-Cepero et al. (2025) suggest that these relationships generally move through several stages: arrival, development and maturity or transformation to eventual termination.

However, as discussed above, the loss of a pet does not mean the end of the emotional bond. Based on the stages proposed by López-Cepero et al. (2025), this thesis introduces an additional stage of "emotional continuity":after a pet-loss, owners maintain an emotional connection with the pet in various ways. Although a systematic typology of human-pet spaces has yet to be established, this thesis draws together research on human–pet relationships and spatial practices to identify four types: meeting, living, care and farewell, and memory. The specific spatial types involved are illustrated in the following diagram.

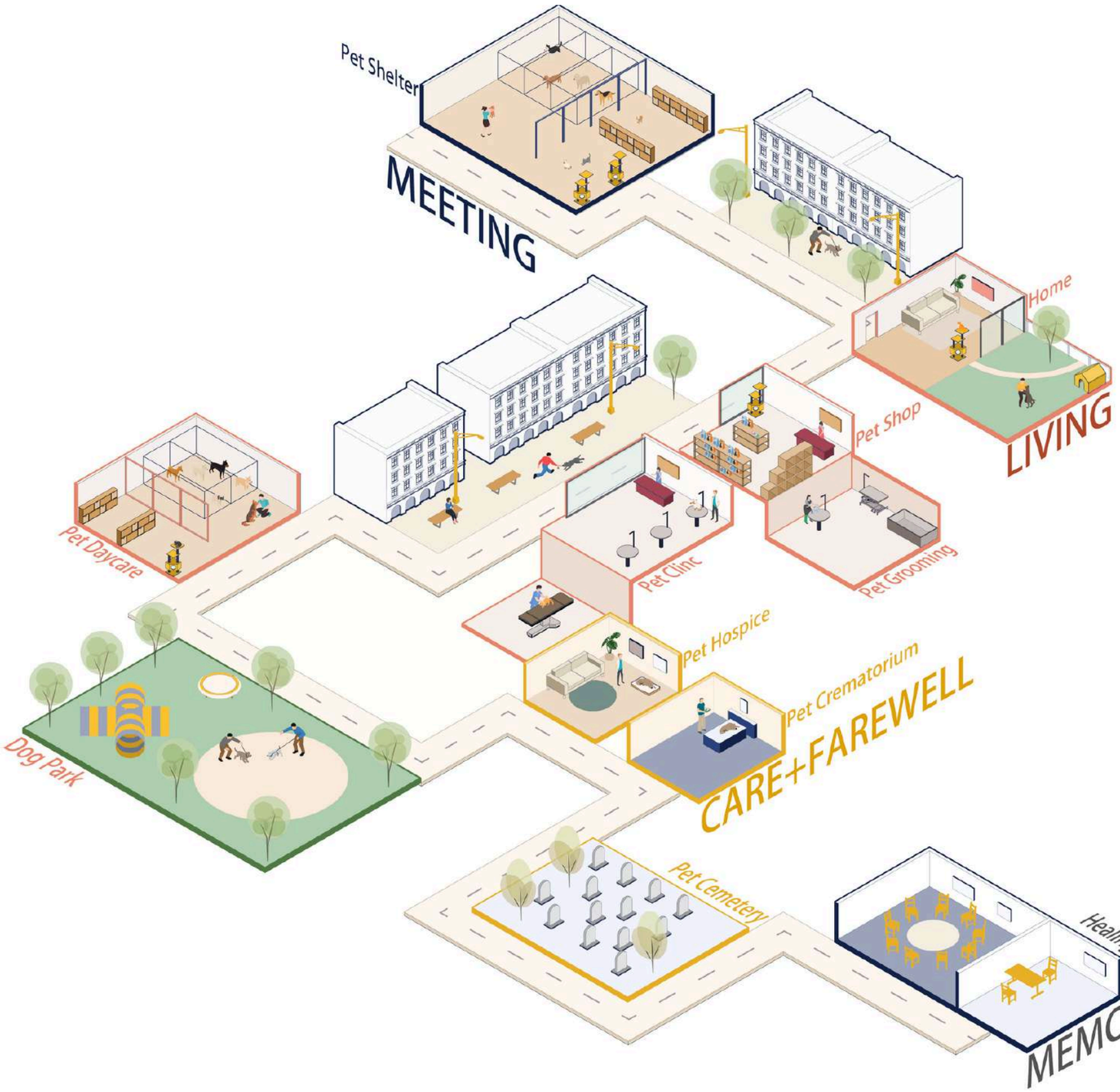


Fig. 9. Human–Pet spaces. Source: Diagram by the author.

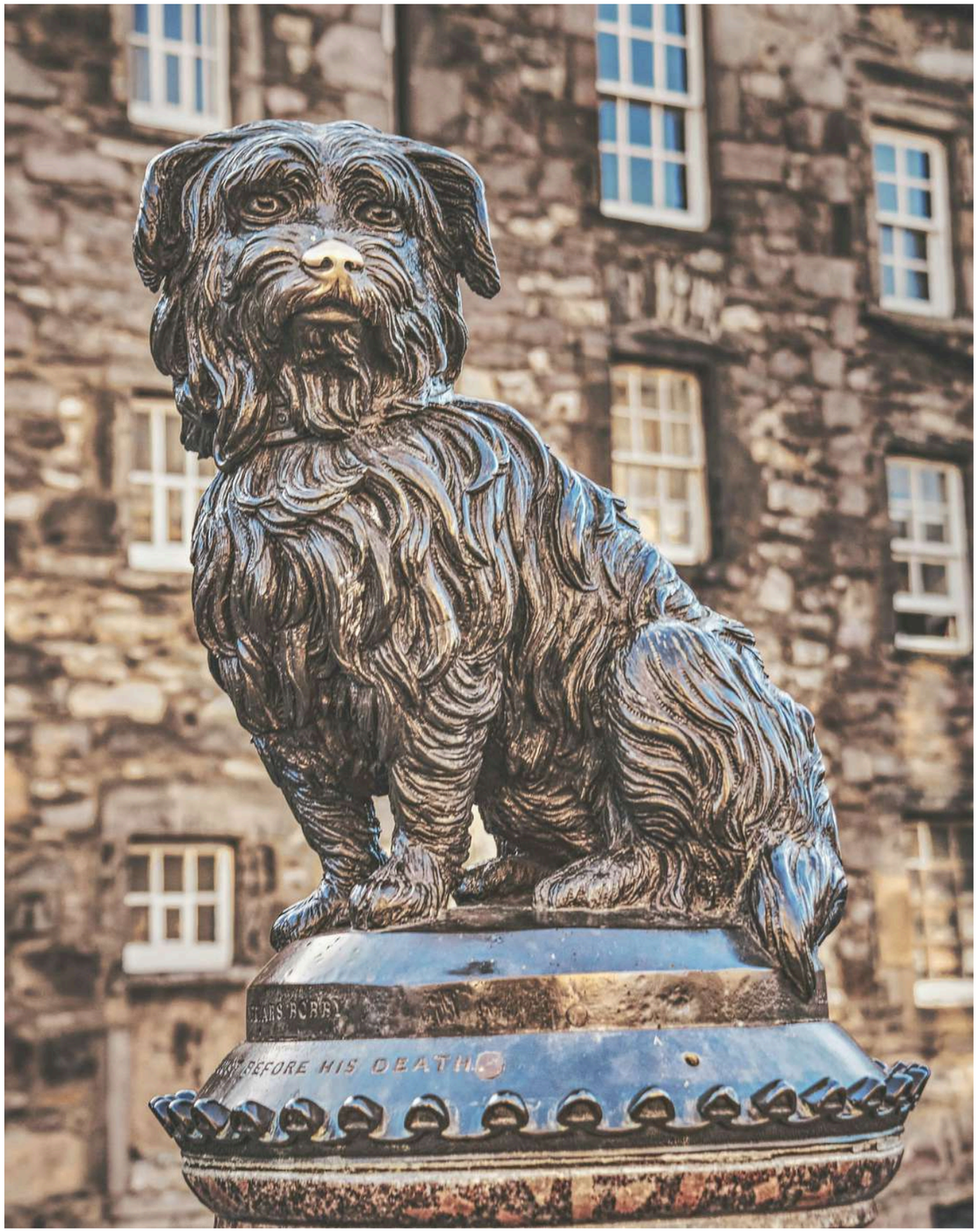


Fig. 10. Greyfriars bobby memorial, Edinburgh. Source: Photo by K. Mitch Hodge on Unsplash – re-elaboration by the author.

02

Pet Mourning Space

2.1 Modern Pet Mourning Methods

Mourning methods for pets often vary due to different religious beliefs and death cultures in different regions. For example, in Europe and the United States, where Catholicism is prevalent, religious symbols such as angels or crosses are often seen in pet cemeteries. Pet funeral institutions often incorporate the concept of "rainbow bridge" into the farewell process. In Asian countries where Buddhism is prevalent, such as in Japanese temples, there are toba made specifically for pets. At some pet funerals, priests are invited to chant special merit-transfer verses for the dead animals. These verses are based on the traditional Buddhist canon, but are often adjusted to suit the special scenes of pet funerals (Elizabeth Kenny, 2004), blessing the pets to have a good destination in the afterlife.

Fig. 11. Pet graves with statues of Jizo, Cat Temple, Kyoto. Source: Kenney, 2004, p. 46.



The concept of the afterlife is believed to help alleviate the owner's grief over the loss of their pets. Religious design elements are introduced into some animal funeral-related space designs, such as prayer rooms, memorial walls and other spaces, to provide pet owners with a quiet and solemn space. Help them complete the mourning and emotional transition for their pets in the space. Combining religious and pet mourning may provide pet owners with a ritualistic and mourning way to express grief. This concept has important implications for the design of animal mourning spaces.

Regarding the placement of pet ashes, some pet owners tend to place their pet ashes near human cemeteries or in pet cemeteries that are easy to reach for them to visit. A small number of people will treat their pet's urn as if the pet is still alive. Sometimes they will take out the urn containing the pet's ashes and take it with them to attend some important occasions, as if their pet is still with them, although this practice is considered to be a manifestation of over-dependence. Of course, a more common way of commemoration is to use a small part of the pet's ashes to make easy-to-carry decorations, such as necklaces and other accessories that can be worn on the body.

Rainbow Bridge

Do pets have an afterlife, and if so, where do they go?

In modern pet mourning culture, one of the most popular and widely accepted symbolic concepts is that pets will go to the "Rainbow Bridge" after death. The concept of the 'Rainbow Bridge' originated from a prose poem written by Edna Clyne-Rekhy in 1959. The poem describes the journey of pets after leaving their owners. They will cross the rainbow bridge connecting life and death and enter a world of happiness and health. Edna envisioned the world connected by the rainbow bridge as a fringe area where pets will recover to their best condition, waiting to reunite with their owners in the future and then enter eternal heaven together. Today, the 'Rainbow Bridge' has become an important symbolic space in pet funeral services. In Europe, pet funeral institutions usually set up concrete memorial spaces or farewell ceremonies to present this concept. For example, the farewell ceremony is usually held in a farewell hall decorated with rainbow bridge themes . The owner can

accompany the pet through the passage symbolizing the rainbow bridge to complete the final farewell. The symbolic meaning of the rainbow bridge also extends to memorial activities, such as the Rainbow Bridge Memorial Wall, decorations engraved with the rainbow bridge, and even landscape installations in nature. Paul Koudounaris believes that the concept of the rainbow bridge is a flexible theological plug-in that can be applied to any belief to convey the vision of reuniting with pets in the afterlife. It is precisely because of this inclusive feature that the 'Rainbow Bridge' has become a universal way of expressing emotions.



Fig. 12. Edna Clyne-Rekhy with the original Rainbow Bridge poem. Source: Photo by Callum Mackay, Ross-shire Journal, 2023.

Public mourning activities

Some pet cemeteries, such as Hartsdale Pet Cemetery and Takarazuka Pet Cemetery in New York, hold public mourning activities at several fixed times each year. On these days, people will come to mourn the animal victims in solemn clothes. We believe that mourning for individual animals is often short-lived. When it turns to mourning for a group of animals, mourning activities carry a wider range of public emotions and can be passed on with the increase of public participation. The objects of mourning may be commemorating animals sacrificed in war or animals harmed by disasters. Such activities have invisible educational significance and make people reflect on their relationship with animals. Animal cemeteries have the greatest

2.2 Duality and semi-publicity of pet funeral architecture

2.2.1 Duality

Pet funeral and memorial architecture are places where people express grief and commemorate pets, reflecting the importance and love for animal emotions. However, these memorial behaviors still take place in spaces designed, constructed and regulated by humans, and even the existence and form of cemeteries are subject to society's cognition and acceptance of the role of pets. Animal mourning space is essentially still an extension of human society. It is both a respect for pet emotions and a controllable meaning, indicating that the boundary between pets and humans always exists.

This duality reveals the complex interaction in the human-pet relationship: pets, as family companions, have established a deep emotional connection with their owners; but as "managed objects" in human society, they are difficult to be completely autonomous throughout their lives. Humans express their mourning and love for pets through pet cemeteries, which also indirectly reflects this unequal dominance relationship, making the memorial behavior of pets both humane and controlled.

2.2.2 Semi-publicity

Pet cemeteries are considered to be semi-public spaces, between private and public spaces, providing pet owners with a place to express their grief and longing for their deceased pets. This expression of personal emotions is private, but unlike burying pets in one's own yard, pet cemeteries are shared spaces that not only need to satisfy pet owners' need not be disturbed during mourning and commemoration, but also allow others to express their personal emotions in this space. Cemeteries are open to the public, and anyone can enter and visit them, which also makes them a semi-public space - both protecting the expression of personal emotions and being open to the public.

2.3 Controversy

2.3.1 Emotional recognition

Misunderstanding and prejudice still exist. 'The customers of pet cemeteries are often portrayed as strange people with an unusual passion for animals.' (Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 38, 40). The grief caused by the death of a pet is often ignored. As Redmalm and Schuurman pointed out, pet owners may be concerned about expressing their grief, fearing that others will accuse them of being too "emotional" or "anthropomorphizing their pets".

For various reasons, the time span for commemorating a pet is much shorter than that for commemorating a human, because the position of a deceased pet in people's hearts may be replaced by a new animal member of the family in the future, or pet mourning tends to be a personal act rather than a family act. The behavior of pet owners mourning their pets may not be recognized by family members or others, and when the owner of the deceased pet can no longer come to the cemetery, it means that the pet tombstone may be forgotten.

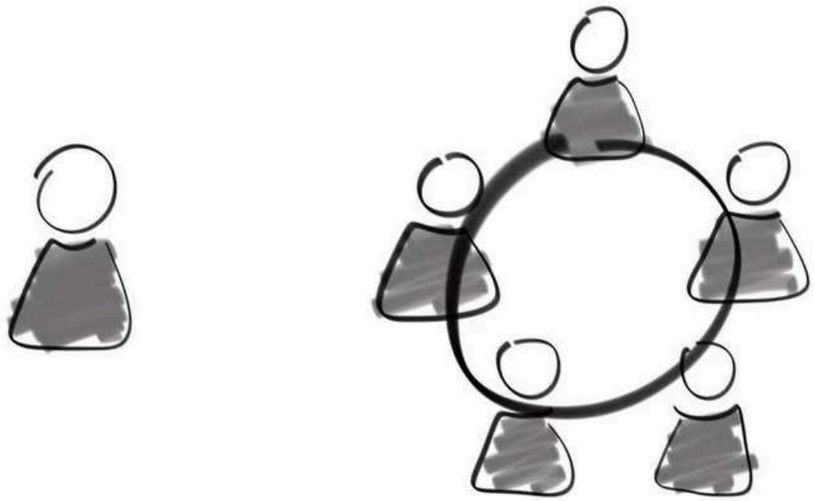


Fig. 13. Time span of pet and human mourning. Source: Diagram by the author.

2.3.2 Concept of afterlife

The way of mourning pets also challenges traditional religious ideas. The key to the controversy is whether pets have an afterlife like humans. According to a questionnaire survey conducted by Ines Testoni, Loriana De Cataldo and others, among the 66% of respondents who believe in the afterlife, more than half of the respondents believe that pets have an afterlife just like humans. This proportion shows that for many pet owners, pets are not just animals, they are more regarded as friends and family. This emotion is reflected in the information on the tombstones, such as the patterns on the tombstones, carved angels and other elements, which show people's religious spiritual sustenance for pets.



Fig. 14. Image of an Angel and a dog in the pet cemetery. Source: Bulls, via Fakt.

It is worth noting that in recent years, the Western Catholic Church has gradually recognized the idea that pets have an afterlife view. This change is a response to the modern relationship between people and pets. Pope Francis mentioned in a public speech that "animals also have souls and they will enter heaven." This statement has sparked widespread discussion in the field of theology. However, the popularization of this concept is believed to play a positive role in promoting the development of pet mourning culture.

2.4 The significance of pet cemeteries and pet funeral buildings

For animals, they rarely think about what happens after death. Disposing of the bodies of deceased animals is something that people need to consider. Animal funeral buildings provide people with a scientific way to deal with animal corpses, and are also a public space for expressing emotions.

Unlike the solemn and complex human cemeteries of the past, pet cemeteries have a sense of intimacy. They are the product of the interweaving of human and animal emotions. Here, people can feel farewell and death in a more relaxed way and experience the meaning of life. The life of a pet is much shorter than that of a human. Most pets only live 1/5 to 1/10 of the life of a human (Marc Bekoff). Although this period of companionship is short, it is an important memory in the lives of people who have lived with pets. The death of a pet is not only the end of a life, but also a heartfelt farewell.

Unlike human cemeteries that focus on mourning for death, the duality of the relationship between humans and pets determines that the emotions conveyed by pet cemeteries are not only mourning for death, but also reflect people's nostalgia for good memories. The original solemn and dignified shell of the cemetery has been removed. The pet cemetery should help people face separation and perceive life by building a soft sense of ritual and narrative space.

The pet cemetery provides a complete pet experience for people and animals to get along with each other. This is the meaning of the long-term existence of the pet cemetery as a marginal building. It is worth noting that farewell does not mean the end, and how to soothe sad emotions is also an aspect that needs to be considered in this project. If the pet cremation space provides a space with symbolic meaning and ritual sense, the pet cemetery focuses more on the continuation of emotions.

2.5 Spaces for Pet Mourning

2.5.1 Pet Mourning within the Urban and Landscape Context

Rather than being static and haphazard collections of grave markers, these sites are characterized by internal and external dynamics that mirror both individual and societal human-animal relations.' By analyzing the entire process of the Hiironen Pet Cemetery in Finland from its establishment and maintenance to its abandonment, Janne Ikäheimo shows a dynamic relationship between the pet cemetery and the surrounding city, and how the changing values of society towards companion animals affect the pet cemetery: The Hiironen Pet Cemetery began to be used in 1971. The initial operator Osey had high expectations for the future of the cemetery.

However, due to improper site selection and poor drainage system, burial became inconvenient. With the development of urban space and changes in population activities, the space of the pet cemetery was further eroded. In the 1990s, the original cemetery was moved to a new site and the Hiironen Pet Cemetery was abandoned. Despite being abandoned, some owners still come to mourn on important holidays, and secret burial activities in the cemetery are still going on.

Janne Ikäheimo's research shows that pet cemeteries are not only emotional places for personal mourning and expression of thoughts, but also an important part of urban space. They should be included in broader and longer-term urban planning to cope with the changing emotional relationship between humans and animals.

Animal Cemeteries and Urban Green Spaces

The development of human cemeteries usually goes through multiple stages: establishment, expansion, maintenance, decline and reuse. In this process, cemeteries gradually transform into multifunctional landscape land . Transforming cemeteries into

multifunctional landscape land. Transforming cemeteries into landscape parks or green spaces has become the most acceptable way of reuse, because it not only retains the memorial function of cemeteries, but also provides green public spaces for cities. Therefore, pet cemeteries designed with reference to the form of human cemeteries may also be integrated into the urban ecosystem through landscape design, becoming multifunctional green spaces with emotional, cultural and ecological functions. As society attaches importance to pet emotions, pet cemeteries can also be transformed into multi-purpose public spaces through reuse.

Urban Green Cemetery

The 21st century is a diversified society. The diversified changes in urban population or the emergence of new urban lifestyles may lead to changes in usage and new understandings of urban green space (Gehl 2007; Franck and Stevens 2007; Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou 2000).

This challenges the original single function of traditional cemeteries. In order to meet people's different spiritual needs, cemeteries, which were considered sacred and solemn in the past, began to transform into part of the urban landscape. (Continued to add). People began to explore the role of cemeteries in today's cities. Therefore, concepts such as "urban green cemetery" and "pastoral cemetery" were proposed, with the aim of emphasizing other services while serving to commemorate the dead. (Helena Nordh, 2018) Although there are cemetery projects such as Woodland Cemetery (Stockholm, 1917) that focus on people's spiritual needs, similar changes are not universal. The design of cemeteries often still follows the official mainstream functional orientation and expression.

Compared with human cemeteries, the design of pet cemeteries is freer and less susceptible to interference from traditional concepts such as religion. Designers can explore the memorial form and function of mourning buildings more flexibly. Pet cemeteries seem to have more potential than human cemeteries to transcend traditional mourning buildings and become a carrier of artistic and emotional expression.

2.5.2 Spatial Relationship between Animal Cemeteries and Human Cemeteries

The history of burying people and pets together can be traced back to the Stone Age. 5,000 years ago, a cemetery for people and dogs appeared on the shores of Lake Baikal in Siberia. In the article "When Whole-Family Cemeteries Include Our Pets", Barbara J. King discusses the trend of pets and humans being buried together in modern American society. The phenomenon of burying people and animals together is not common at present. Some states, such as New York and Pennsylvania, have relevant laws allowing people and animals to be buried together. In recent years, whole-family burials have been advocated by the Green Pet Burial Association, which emphasizes the importance of pets as family members.

In Europe, there are also cases where pet cemeteries are close to human cemeteries. Take Tierfriedhof Wien in Vienna, Austria as an example. This pet cemetery is close to human cemeteries and funeral homes, providing people with a place to bury pets. This cemetery provides a physical space for people to emotionally give pets the status of "family members".

2.5.3 Pet Cemetery Location Types

Based on the study of selected existing Europe pet mourning facilities' cases, from a micro perspective, Pet cemetery locations can generally be divided into the following three types, according to their main relationship with the surrounding area

Urban Green Cemetery

Industrial areas are typically located far from city centers, with convenient transportation and relatively low land costs. These areas are distanced from large residential communities, so memorial activities at cemeteries do not directly impact daily life, which may reduce societal opposition to pet mourning activities.

However, industrial areas generally have poorer ecological conditions, making it challenging to provide a favorable landscape environment for cemeteries, which may require additional construction costs to enhance the surrounding

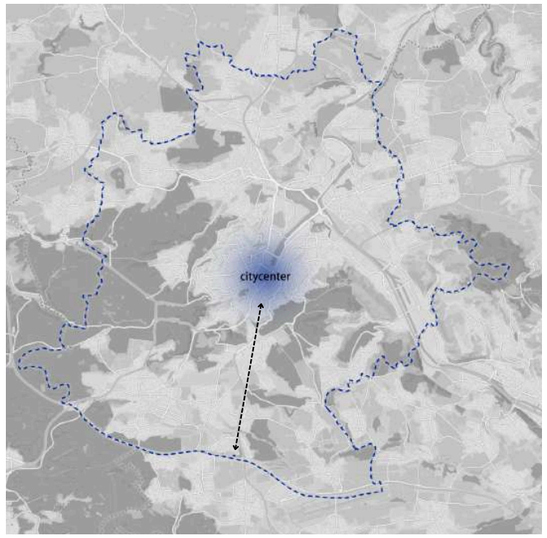


Fig. 15. Stuttgart city area. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.



Fig. 16. Site and surroundings of pet cemetery. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

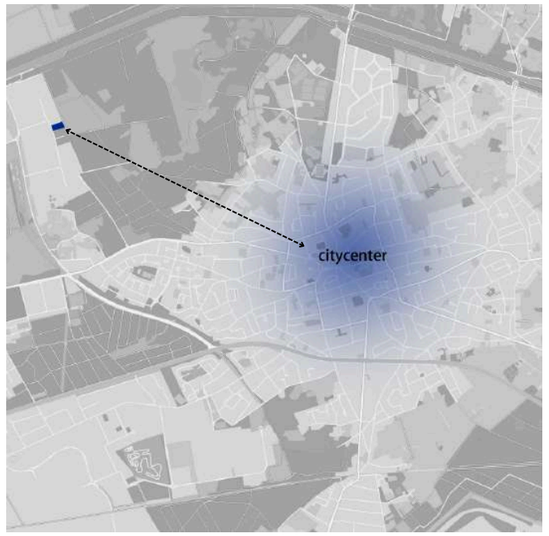


Fig. 17. Lommel city area. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.

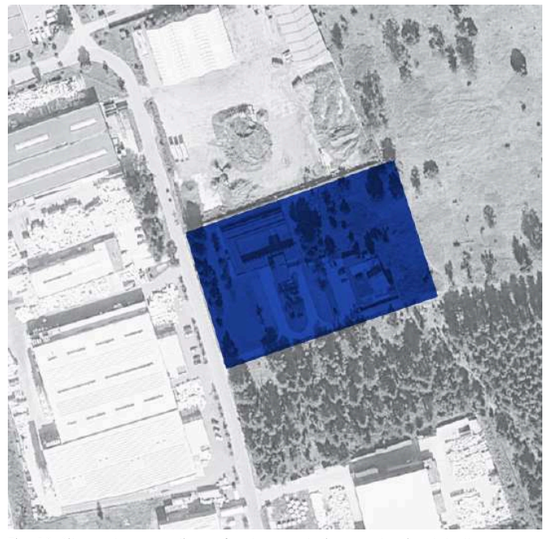


Fig. 18. Site and surroundings of pet crematorium and animal shelter. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

Near human cemetery

Some pet cemeteries are located next to existing human cemeteries. For example, the Vienna Animal Cemetery (Tierfriedhof Wien) is located opposite the Vienna Central Cemetery.

The Kornwestheim Animal Cemetery (Tierfriedhof Kornwestheim) is located within a larger municipal cemetery but separates from the human cemetery area.

These sites offer a quiet and dignified atmosphere. Existing roads and service facilities can support the operation of pet cemeteries. However, it is necessary to clearly define the boundaries between human cemeteries and pet cemeteries.

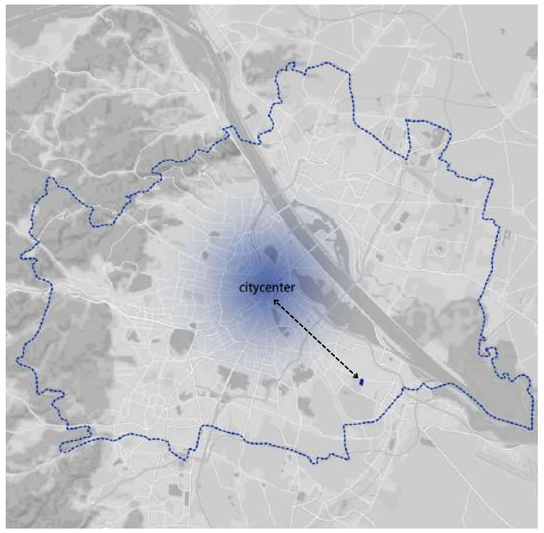


Fig. 19. Vienna city crea. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.



Fig. 20. Site and surroundings of pet cemetery. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

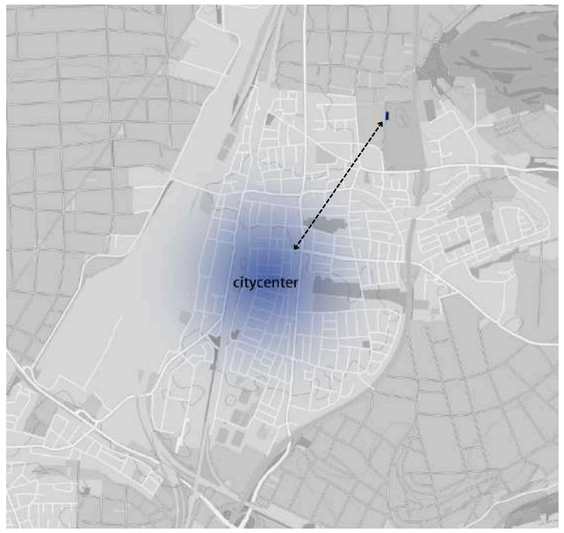


Fig. 21. Kornwestheim city crea. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.



Fig. 22. Site and surroundings of pet cemetery. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

In Natural Settings

Some cemeteries are located in natural areas and far from the city. For example, The Kaknas Pet Cemetery is situated in the woodlands of Djurgården, near Stockholm, separated from the densely populated urban area by a vast public green space. The Borievka

Pet Cemetery is located in the forested area of Dúbravka district in Bratislava, further from the city center. Locating in the nature area is helpful to create a calm memorial atmosphere. Compared to urban cemeteries, natural cemeteries are less affected by human activities and urban expansion, providing a stable and long-term space for mourning.

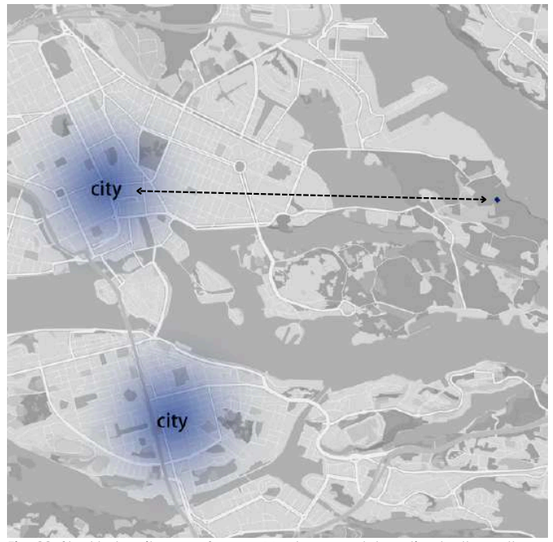


Fig. 23. Stockholm city area. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.



Fig. 24. Site and surroundings of pet cemetery. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

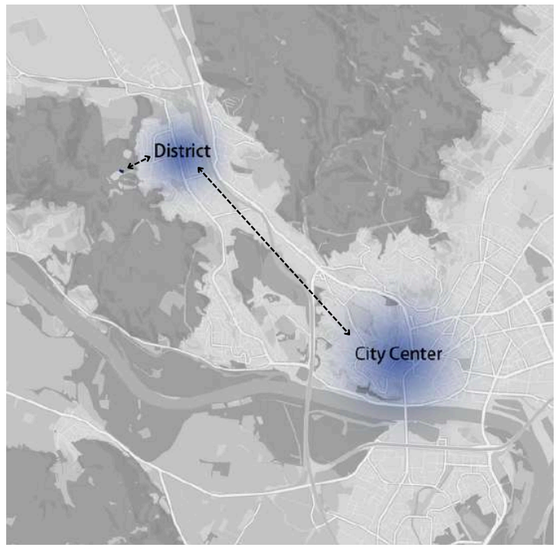


Fig. 25. Bratislava city area. Source: Mapbox - re-elaboration by the author.

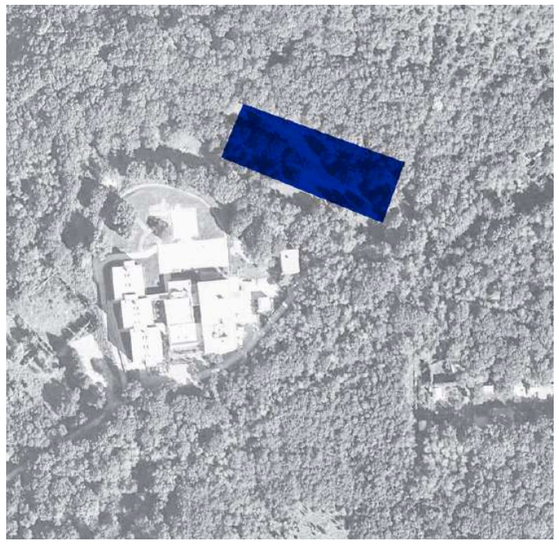


Fig. 26. Site and surroundings of pet cemetery. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

Conclusion

Pet cemetery site selection generally considers areas away from city centers, such as industrial zones or suburban areas near highways, to reduce interference with human life. Site selection

should also avoid future relocations due to urban development. Some cemeteries are located in industrial zones or along highways, offering convenience and low costs, while others near human cemeteries provide a solemn atmosphere and ease of management. In natural areas, cemeteries meet the ecological and long-term resting pet owners' needs. Overall, pet cemetery site selection must balance social acceptability, emotional ambiance, and sustainability, meeting the needs of mourning while considering long-term planning and future reuse.

2.5.4 Site Selection Considerations

Based on relevant literature and analysis of existing animal cemetery locations, site selection for pet funeral architecture should consider the following aspects:

Convenient Transportation

The site should be easily accessible, ideally near highways or transportation hubs to facilitate visitation.

Scale and Multifunctionality

The site should have enough space, serving as a mourning venue and also accommodating multifunctional services in the future. It should be able to host 2,000-3,000 pet graves (considering two phases: Phase 1 with 1,500 graves and Phase 2 with 1,000), a pet memorial park, and a crematorium (150-300 square meters). Additional facilities, such as an animal shelter, veterinary clinic, daily activity areas, and a memorial forest, could be considered depending on the region of location. The total area should be around 15,000-20,000 square meters.

Relation to Urban Space

The cemetery should avoid interference with urban life and take into account the lifecycle of pet funeral architecture and the possibility of future reuse.

Surrounding Environment

If the surroundings positively contribute to a tranquil mourning atmosphere? A natural environment can create a quiet space for mourning and help relieve pet owners' grief.

Summary

site selection should meet requirements for convenient access, appropriate scale, and environment while aligning with long-term urban planning and ecological sustainability principles, creating a space that serves both as an emotional sanctuary and as a public service area.

03

Case Studies



Fig. 27. Pet crematorium in Kranji. Source: Fabian Ong, via Dezeen Awards, 2023.

3.1 Analytical framework and cases selections

The case studies selected for this chapter do not adhere to a uniform analytical framework; instead, they are categorized based on the distinct issues encountered and addressed by existing pet memorial facilities throughout their development. Some cases focus on macro-level issues, such as the relationship between the cemetery and the urban fabric, while others emphasize operational models, spatial layouts, or the internal atmosphere of the memorial spaces. Given the relative scarcity of built pet memorial projects, this chapter also draws upon examples of human memorial facilities. These facilities, having evolved over many years within diverse geographical and cultural contexts, have established mature models for emotional expression and atmospheric design, offering valuable insights for the design of pet cemeteries.

The first group of cases includes Hartsdale Pet Cemetery, Cimetière des Chiens (Cemetery of Dogs), and Hiironen Pet Cemetery. Each of these three facilities has undergone a comprehensive developmental trajectory—spanning inception, growth, and subsequent transformation—ultimately resulting in three distinct yet representative outcomes: continuity, transformation, and abandonment. By comparing their developmental histories, this study explores how pet cemeteries can adapt to changing urban environments and operational conditions to achieve stable, long-term development.

The next case study is the Best Friends Animal Society. Originally established to provide temporary shelter for animals, the project has evolved into a comprehensive animal welfare system encompassing sheltering, burial services, memorial ceremonies, accommodation, education, and various other activities. This case illustrates how the integration of diverse functions can foster public engagement and awareness while simultaneously supporting the project's long-term operation.

The Lommel Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium, along with a pet crematorium designed by Formwerkz Architects, serve as built examples that demonstrate the primary functions, spatial relationships, and circulation systems characteristic of contemporary pet crematoria.

The analysis then shifts to the internal scale of pet memorial spaces. The "Rainbow Planet Pet Farewell Hall" in Beijing was selected as a case study because it offers a variety of memorial spaces differing in both scale and form. This example demonstrates how various methods of pet commemoration can be translated into corresponding types of memorial spaces. The final case studies examined are the Igualada Cemetery and the Woodland Cemetery—both renowned human burial grounds. This study analyzes how they employ landscape, circulation, and the interplay of light and shadow to guide visitors through the process of mourning. While they cannot serve as direct models for pet memorial facilities, they offer valuable insights for shaping the spatial and emotional experiences associated with the loss of a pet.

Overall, the case studies in this chapter focus on five key aspects: long-term development, operational models, spatial layout and circulation, internal functions, and the emotional experience of mourning.

3.2 Development of Historical Pet Cemeteries



Early modern pet cemeteries emerged

After war, pets gradually became family members, the bond between humans and animals grew stronger.

Public animal memorial day were held

Specialized animal crematorium were setup

Some early pet cemeteries have become historical heritage sites and integral parts of the urban landscape.

Fig. 28. History line of modern pet cemetery. Source: by the author.

3.2.1Hartsdale Pet Cemetery

Early pet cemeteries often developed spontaneously in response to local demand. Examples include Hartsdale Pet Cemetery, the first pet cemetery in the United States, and Happy Woodlawn Pet Cemetery, the first in Canada, established in 1933. Unlike Hartsdale, Happy Woodlawn was sold because of financial difficulties after its founder died in 1978. It was later renamed Kennel Inn and has been abandoned since 2011. Hartsdale Pet Cemetery, by contrast, has continued to adapt to social changes and still serves pet owners in mourning today.

The history of Hartsdale Pet Cemetery is mainly documented in Edward C. Martin's book Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery—Hartsdale Canine Cemetery. Martin was also the cemetery's third manager. According to the book, the first burial took place in 1896, when veterinarian Dr Samuel Johnson allowed a client to bury her dog in his apple orchard. At the time, she had no legal way to fulfil this request elsewhere. The burial was reported in a newspaper, and Johnson soon received many similar requests. He therefore set aside part of his land as a pet cemetery, creating the first modern pet cemetery in the United States (Martin, 1997). The cemetery originally occupied only a small part of Johnson's orchard in Westchester County, north of New York City. The area was then far from the metropolis and remained relatively undeveloped, which made it easier for the cemetery to acquire more land later.



Fig. X Pet Crematorium in Lim Chu Kang, Singapore. Source: Photo by Fabian Ong, via Dezeen Awards, 2023.

Although Hartsdale Cemetery began as a direct response to the demand for pet burial, its organisation and management gradually became more formal as it expanded. During the 1910s, a committee was formed, the cemetery was officially registered, and a trust fund was established. This financial arrangement later helped the cemetery survive the Great Depression.

Its operation then began to develop into a more stable management system. During Johnson's time, the cemetery completed its early physical development, including roads, fences, lawns, and the purchase of additional land (Martin, 1997). Alongside private pet burials, its first memorial statue was erected in 1923 to honour dogs that had served during wartime. Public commemorative events for dogs had already been held there before the statue was built. Other memorials for service animals were later added. In this way, remembrance at Hartsdale expanded beyond private memories between people and their animals to include animal histories connected with the city and the nation (Kean, 2013).



Fig. 29. Early View of Hartsdale Pet Cemetery. Source: Martin, E.C., Jr., Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery, 1997.



Fig. 30. Princess Lowff Parlaphy with her two dogs. Source: Martin, E.C., Jr., Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery, 1997.



Fig. 31. Famous Lion Goldfleck's headstone at Hartsdale Pet Cemetery. Source: Martin, E.C., Jr., Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery, 1997.

In the early 20th century, pet cemeteries primarily served the elite class, and many celebrities chose to buried their pets in Hartsdale. The most representative example is the tombstone erected by Princess Lwoff-Parlaghy for her lion cub, Goldfleck.

Another important part of Hartsdale's development was the transfer of its management on two occasions. After Johnson, its first manager, died in 1937, the cemetery went through a short transitional period. Four years later, Chris Scheu and C. George Lassen formally took responsibility for its operation. The cemetery then moved towards a family-based management model, and some of its stricter rules were removed. At the same time, pet burial was becoming more widely accepted. Hartsdale had previously been known mainly as the burial place of pets belonging to celebrities and wealthy families, but it gradually became a choice for a much broader range of households (Martin, 1997).

After this management model had continued for more than three decades, Irene Lassen, the widow of C. George Lassen, transferred responsibility for the cemetery to Edward Martin and Patrick Grosso in 1974. The new managers continued its existing approach while adjusting its services to meet changing public needs. The site was expanded, cremation services were introduced in the 1980s, and a memorial garden was created. The cemetery also began holding commemorative events such as Pet Memorial Day (Martin, 1997).



Fig. 32. Cemetery managers. Source: Martin, E.C., Jr., Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery, 1997.

Hartsdale now has a history of more than a century. The remains of over 80,000 non-human animals have been buried there. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, including pets once owned by celebrities and wealthy families, animal stars, service dogs, and the pets of many ordinary households. Gravestones and inscriptions from different periods record changes in human–pet relationships and memorial practices, giving the cemetery value as a historical landscape. In 2012, Hartsdale Pet Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The cemetery remains in operation today under family management. Its land is protected by a deed restriction, while irrevocable trust funds managed by independent trustees provide financial support for its long-term future. In contrast, some other early pet cemeteries, including Clara-Glenn Pet Cemetery and Happy Woodlawn Pet Cemetery, have lost their original burial function. They now survive only as historic sites and are gradually being absorbed into the natural landscape. Others have been completely abandoned because of poor management and similar problems.





Fig. 33. Public memorial activities. Source: Martin, E.C., Jr., Dr. Johnson's Apple Orchard: The Story of America's First Pet Cemetery, 1997.

On specific dates, public memorial events for pets are held here, including established observances rooted in the tradition of honoring animals that served in war, as well as collective donation activities in which pet owners participate together.

3.2.2 Cimetière des Chiens (Asnières-sur-Seine)

After the Industrial Revolution, growing attention was paid to public health in cities, and the disposal of animal bodies became an important issue. At the time, animal remains were sometimes discarded as household waste. Meanwhile, domestic animals were increasingly being treated as companions, and people began to expect their bodies to be handled and buried with dignity. Against this background, France introduced regulations concerning the burial of domestic animals in 1898. The following year, Georges Harmois and Marguerite Durand founded the first modern animal cemetery in France (Ville d'Asnières-sur-Seine, n.d.; Gaillemin, 2009).



Fig. 34. Portrait of Georges Harmois. Source: L'Écho des jeunes, no. 249, 1 September 1904, p. 1, via Gallica–Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Fig. 35. Portrait of Marguerite Durand. Painting by Jules Cayron, 1897.

The cemetery was established on the Île des Ravageurs, near Asnières-sur-Seine on the north-western outskirts of Paris, and officially opened in the summer of 1899. Its entrance features an Art Nouveau gateway designed by architect Eugène Petit. The original layout divided the cemetery into four sections for dogs, cats, birds, and other animals. Several additional buildings were also planned, including an animal columbarium and a museum, but they were never built (Ville d'Asnières-sur-Seine, n.d.; Région Île-de-France, 2025). By the 1960s, more than 40,000 animals had been buried there. Significantly, the 40,000th animal was a stray dog, and a statue was created in its memory.



Fig. 36. Entrance to the Cimetière des Chiens. Source: Photo by Wowo2008

To understand the development of this early cemetery more fully, it is also necessary to consider how urban growth changed its spatial character. The Île des Ravageurs was located beside Asnières, then a satellite town of Paris. At the end of the nineteenth century, the area's natural scenery made it a popular weekend destination for Parisians (Ville d'Asnières-sur-Seine, n.d.). At that time, the Île des Ravageurs was still an independent island. It offered an attractive natural setting while remaining physically separated from the city.

After the First World War, Asnières was planned as an important satellite town close to the emerging business areas of Greater Paris. With the development of railway connections, the town continued to expand, and former farmland was gradually replaced by residential and commercial areas. As a result, the cemetery became increasingly integrated into the urban fabric. During the 1970s, the island also lost its physical separation. As part of the reconstruction of Clichy Bridge, soil from the neighbouring Île Robinson was used to fill a branch of the Seine. This connected the Île des Ravageurs to the riverbank at Asnières-sur-Seine. The cemetery therefore lost its original island setting and became part of the urban landscape.

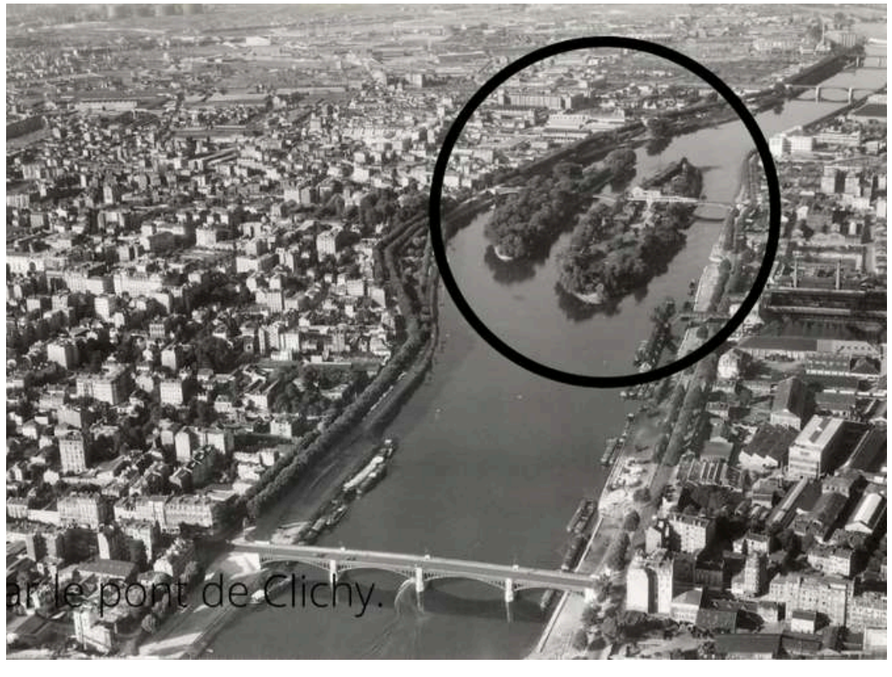




Fig. 37. Île des Ravageurs before and after its connection to the riverbank. Source: Visite du Cimetière des Chiens: Livret pédagogique, n.d., p. 8

The cemetery faced its greatest challenge during the 1980s. Unable to afford the high cost of repairs, its former management board decided to close it permanently. After decades of development, however, the site had already become part of the community's collective memory. The decision attracted wide public attention and protests from animal-protection organisations. In response to this public concern, the municipality of Asnières-sur-Seine intervened to preserve the cemetery.

Over the following years, the Cimetière des Chiens was added to the inventory of protected sites in Hauts-de-Seine. The municipality then formally purchased it and reopened it to the public. Today, the cemetery is no longer simply a burial place for pets. It continues to provide a place for mourning, while also attracting visitors from around the world. In a Google Maps review, visitor Frédéric Pérésoni wrote: "It is an unusual place, but definitely worth visiting. Here, you can truly feel people's love for their pets."

With its long history and strong emotional meaning, the cemetery has gone beyond its original mourning function. It has become a place where emotion, history, and culture meet. Unlike Hartsdale, the Cimetière des Chiens shows that when private management can no longer sustain a project, public ownership can provide another path towards its long-term continuation.

3.2.3 the Hiironen pet cemetery

Unlike Hartsdale and Cimetière des Chiens, the case study selected for this section was not as fortunate. Instead, It more directly reveals the conflict between the early location of a pet cemetery and the later expansion of the city. Inappropriate site selection was also the reason the cemetery was ultimately abandoned. This section draws primarily on the research of Ikäheimo, Puska, and Äikäs (2022). Their study combines material from the archives of the City of Oulu and OSEY (Oulun Seudun Eläinsuojeluyhdistys), together with historical maps, aerial photographs, newspaper reports, and other sources. Field investigations conducted between 2016 and 2021 were also used to reconstruct the site's development before the cemetery was established, during its operation, and after its closure (Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022).

Hiironen Pet Cemetery was located in Oulu, a coastal city in northern Finland, and operated between 1971 and 1993. Its establishment was promoted by the Oulu Animal Welfare Association (OSEY). As local demand for pet burial increased, the municipality provided the organisation with a piece of land free of charge. This later became the site of Hiironen Pet Cemetery.

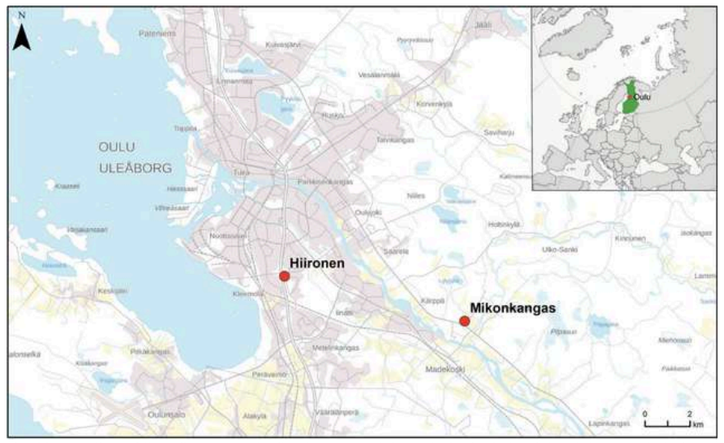


Fig. 38. Location of the Hiironen and Mikonkangas Pet Cemeteries in Oulu, Finland. Source: Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022, Fig. 1. Map sources: National Land Survey of Finland, CC BY 4.0; inset map: Wikipedia, CC0 1.0.

Ikäheimo and colleagues collected aerial images from different periods to compare and analyse the surroundings of the original site. The earliest photographs, dating from the 1930s, show the area as a largely natural landscape with only a sand quarry nearby. Before the cemetery was established, the quarry had already been abandoned and was being used as a waste-disposal site. The newly constructed Pohjantie highway connected the area to the city. However, its proximity to the road also meant high noise levels and limited development value. When the cemetery first opened, the site was therefore still considered part of the urban fringe.



Fig. 39. Aerial view of the future site of Hiironen Pet Cemetery in 1939. Source: City of Oulu, reproduced in Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022, Fig. 4, CC BY 4.0.

Meanwhile, changes in the surrounding urban environment placed pressure on the cemetery grounds: The construction of the new Kaukovainio suburb brought residential areas closer to the site, while a new motorway interchange caused further disturbance. These external pressures, together with the decreasing availability of burial space, eventually made relocation necessary.

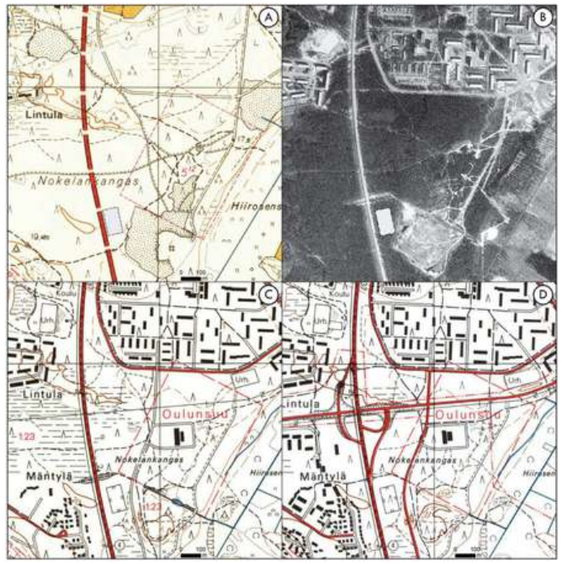


Fig. 40. Changes around Hiironen Pet Cemetery between 1965 and 1989. Source: National Land Survey of Finland, reproduced in Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022, Fig. 5, CC BY 4.0.

Meanwhile, changes in the surrounding urban environment placed pressure on the cemetery grounds: The construction of the new Kaukovainio suburb brought residential areas closer to the site, while a new motorway interchange caused further disturbance. These external pressures, together with the decreasing availability of burial space, eventually made relocation necessary.

In the 1990s, the cemetery was moved to Mikonkangas by OSEY. The new site was considered more suitable for animal burial. It was close to a natural area and, although it remained on the edge of the city, it was less affected by motorway infrastructure and had better drainage. More importantly, the surrounding area was already used for recreational activities. Several paths around the cemetery connected it more closely with people's everyday use of the landscape (Ikäheimo, Puska and Äikäs, 2022).

Today, the original Hiironen Pet Cemetery still contains the remains of hundreds of pets. The municipality has designated the site as green space, protecting it from further pressure caused by urban development for the foreseeable future.

3.2.1Hartsdale Pet Cemetery

The above cases illustrate three possible outcomes for pet cemeteries: continued operation; transformation into a public landscape; or closure and relocation. To be a long-term project, it not only meets burial demand but also depends on factors such as site conditions and management models. As shown by the two management transitions at Hartsdale, stable management and financial support can help a cemetery adapt to changing external conditions. Over time, a cemetery evolves from a mere burial ground into a site that embodies both personal and collective memories. Therefore, the future pet mourning projects should consider several aspects, including the site's natural conditions, financial support and management mechanisms, as well as the future development of the surrounding area.



Fig. 41. Three development outcomes of historical pet cemeteries. Source: Diagram by the author.

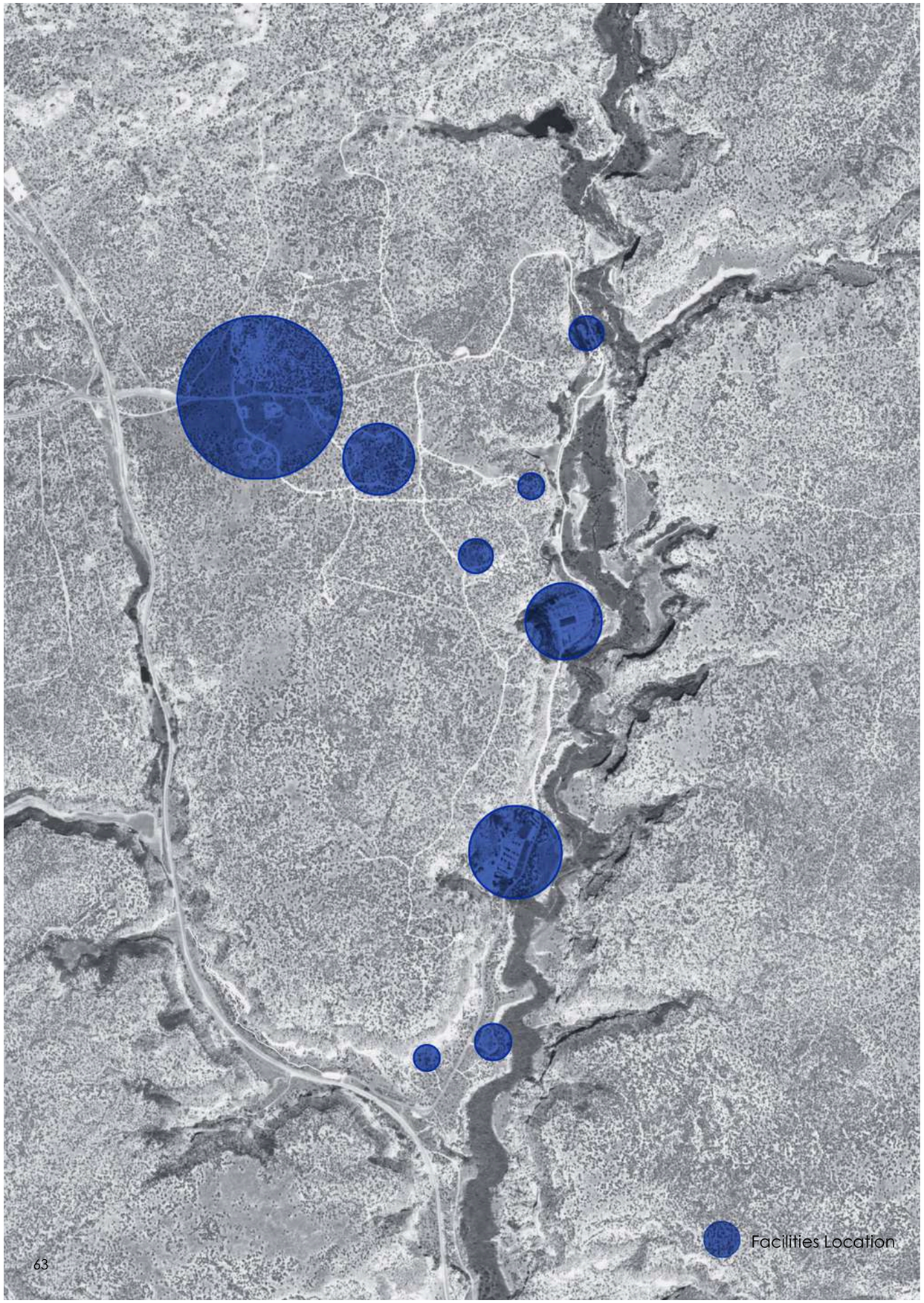


Fig. 42. Distribution of functional areas within Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. Source: Diagram by the author.

3.3 Multi-functional and Operation

Take best friends animal sanctuary as a case study

Best Friends Animal Sanctuary is the largest animal sanctuary in the United States, rising from a small group into a leader of the national animal welfare movement. Its development can be divided into three stages: the founding period from 1984 to 1991, the transformation and expansion period from 1991 to 2003, and the period of national outreach from 2007 to the present (Glen, 2001).

Before 1984 it was a period of preparation, the project began with a group of 28 like-minded friends who operated a small animal sanctuary in Arizona. As the number of animals increased, the existing site could no longer accommodate more animals, and the group began searching for a larger area of land (Wadley, 1998). In 1984, the team selected a site in the scenic Angel Canyon near Kanab, Utah, establishing what would become a nationally renowned animal sanctuary. More than 200 animals from the original facility were transferred to the new site (Wadley, 1998). The phase of transformation and development began in 1990, and the number of rescued animals had continued to increase since its establishment, reaching more than 1,500 by 1990. It includes a range of animals including dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, horses, and pigs. Initial construction conditions were constrained by limited resources; the founding team personally constructed roads, utility systems (power and water), and animal facilities, while also reused existing structures from former film sets—such as converting an old barn into a stable. In 1991, the organisation became a tax-exempt non-profit charity (Havnes, 2008).



Fig. 43. The Movie Ranch. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Best Friends began developing a national movement under the slogan “Save Them All.” After 2007, Best Friends started establishing and expanding a nationwide network of shelter partnerships, Measures such as transporting animals between regions helped reduce overcrowding in local shelters (Glen, 2001). Today, the organization operates the largest animal sanctuary in the United States and has established regional centres in Los Angeles, New York and Arkansas. Collaborating with thousands of organizations nationwide, it is dedicated to achieving the goal of "Save Them All."

During the development, Best Friends has evolved from a basic shelter into a comprehensive complex featuring specialized facilities for medical care, rehabilitation, adoption, volunteer services, education, and memorial services.

Situated in Angel Canyon, Utah, the sanctuary spans 3,700 acres. Within this vast area, distinct zones are designated for different species; however, these zones are geographically far apart—for instance, the horse area is a full three miles away from "Dogtown"—to prevent animals from disturbing one another. The facility is organized into four main sectors: animal housing and rehabilitation areas, a wildlife zone, medical and logistical facilities, and visitor amenities.



Fig. 44. Angel Canyon viewed from Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. Source: Google Maps—photo by T. J. Hart, August 2021.

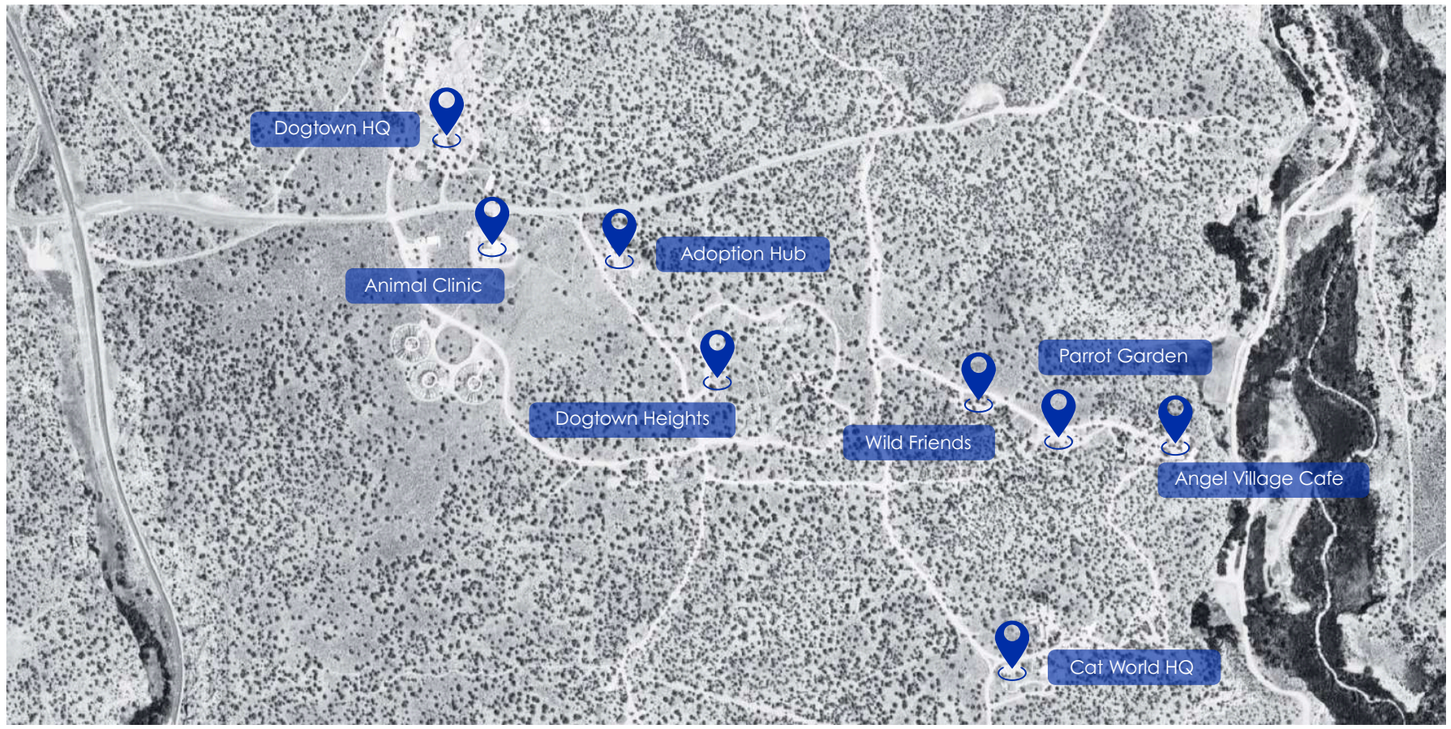


Fig. 45. Distribution of species-specific zones. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

Among the species-specific zones, the companion animal area is the largest and most significant; it includes the Doghouse, Cat World, Horse Haven, Marshall’s Piggy Paradise, the Bunny House, and Parrot Garden. There is also a dedicated zone called "Wild Friends" for native wildlife; the objective here is to rehabilitate animals for release back into the wild rather than for adoption. Only animals unable to return to nature remain for long-term care, and they are housed in a separate area completely distinct from the companion animals(Glen, 2001).

Another important, albeit smaller, section of the sanctuary is the core public-service area, which houses the main veterinary medical center, the visitor center, Angel Village Café, volunteer accommodations, and the Angel Rest pet memorial cemetery. These facilities serve the staff, volunteers, and visitors.

The main veterinary medical center serves all animals across the sanctuary; surgeries and treatments for injuries, illnesses, and chronic conditions are performed here, regardless of the animal's



Fig. 46. Vistor Center and accomodations locations
Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

species. The Visitor Center is a primary hub open to the general public, housing facilities for visitor registration, tour assembly, adoption consultations, and a shop; it also offers free daily guided tours to help people better understand the park's operations. The Angel Village Café serves as the park's canteen and a leisure area accessible to staff, volunteers, and visitors alike.

Dedicated volunteer accommodation has been established for those who come to serve the animals; given the park's vast size and large animal population, volunteers supplement the permanent staff, necessitating specific lodging facilities—ranging from cabins and cottages to an RV park—to accommodate diverse groups of long-term volunteers (Starr, 2025).

Zoning and segregation involve keeping different species geographically separated to prevent stress and conflict arising from cohabitation. The "dual pathways" approach offers distinct strategies for companion animals and wildlife: companion animals are prioritized for public adoption after rehabilitation, while those deemed psychologically or physically unsuitable for home life receive lifelong care at the sanctuary; for wildlife, the priority is released back into the wild after recovery, with long-term sanctuary care reserved for those unable to return to nature.

Volunteer services encourage public participation in daily animal care, raise awareness about pet-related issues, and promote harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

Finally, memorial functions are incorporated into this broader animal-care network. Angel's Rest was established in 1992. It provides burial not only for animals that die within the sanctuary but also for pets belonging to the general public (available for a fee) Now over 9,000 animals have been buried there. The site serves as a resting place containing numerous custom headstones, engraved paving stones, and stone memorial plaques—which can be inscribed with names, dates of birth and passing, and personal messages, or even feature printed photos of the pets. A multitude of memorial wind chimes hang from the trees, creating a signature landscape where the sound of the chimes in the breeze serves as a tribute to the departed. Paths and native desert vegetation are integrated into the cemetery, which is open to visitors during the day without an appointment.

Beyond serving as a burial ground, the site functions primarily as a place of remembrance. Visitors can also purchase memorial bricks or wind chimes to honor their pets without conducting a burial.



Fig. 47. Entrance of angles rest. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.



Fig. 48. Angel Canyon landscape. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.

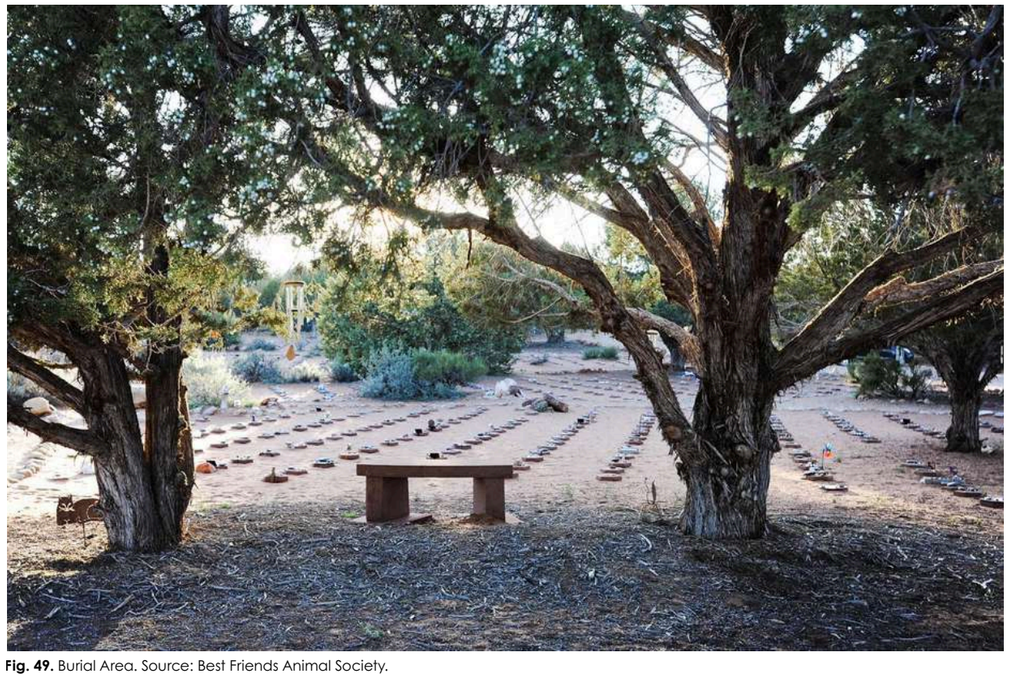


Fig. 49. Burial Area. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.



Fig. 50. Various forms of memorialization: wind chimes, memorial plaques, paving stones, etc. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.



Fig. 51. Public memorial activity. Source: Best Friends Animal Society.

3.4 Pet Crematorium Spatial Organisation

3.4.1 Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium Lommel

Project *Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium Lommel*
Architect *Collectief Noord*
Location *Lommel, Belgium*
Year *2017*
Total Project Area *1,310 m²*
Type *Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium*

The Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium Lommel is located between the Maatheide Industrial Area and the Lommelse Sahara Nature Reserve in Belgium. The project consists of two animal-related facilities: a pet crematorium and an animal shelter. The two facilities operate independently, each with its own enclosed outdoor space and circulation route. Situated between an industrial area and a natural landscape, the project arranges the buildings according to their different functions while also bringing the surrounding natural environment into the spatial experience.



Fig. 52. Pet crematorium. Source: Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily.



Fig. 53. Project location and surrounding facilities. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

Animal-related facilities are often seen as marginal and have limited public appeal. Located between an industrial area and a nature reserve, the project benefits from industrial infrastructure and access to the natural landscape.



Fig. 54. Masterplan. Source: Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily.

The animal shelter is located closer to the industrial area, making it easily accessible to the public. Its U-shaped layout provides a suitable living environment for stray animals. The crematorium is positioned deeper within the site, closer to the natural landscape. It has a more enclosed form and also contains a enclosed courtyard.

Both facilities have separate public and service access, preventing visitors from service activities

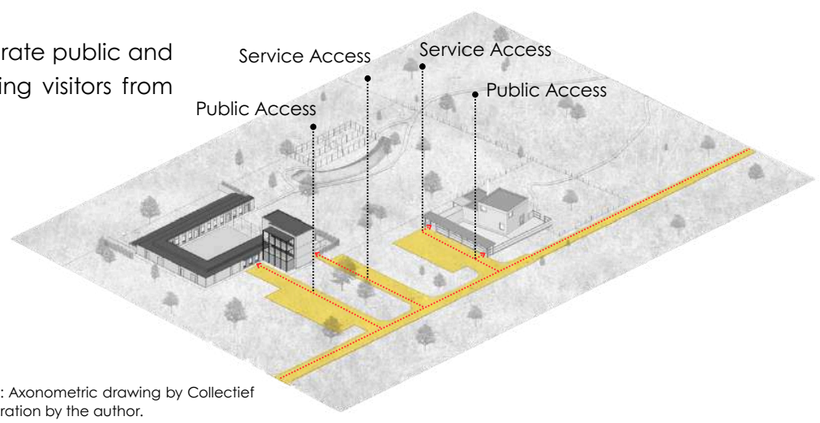


Fig. 55. Access Routes. Source: Axonometric drawing by Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily-re-elaboration by the author.

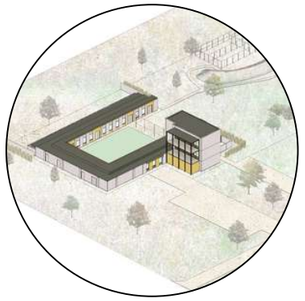


Fig. 56. Animal Shelter. Source: ArchDaily-re-elaboration by the author.

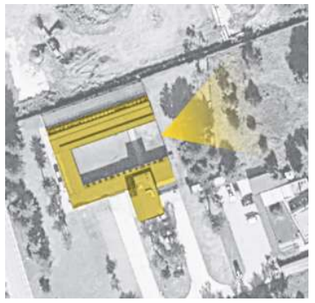


Fig. 57. Courtyard Orientation. Source: by the author.



Fig. 58 . Plan. Source: Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily.

The U-shaped building responds to the surrounding facilities and encloses a courtyard opening towards the nature reserve. Due to the different living habits of cats and dogs, the cat shelter is situated at the southeast corner, a separate three-storey tower. The entrance to the cat tower is located adjacent to the shelter's main entrance and faces the industrial zone, welcoming arriving visitors.

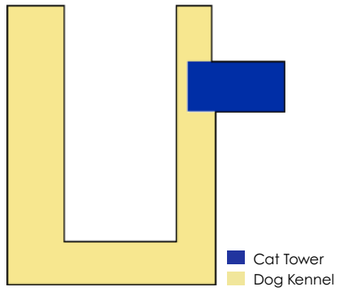


Fig. 59.Animal shelter functional zoning. Source: by the author.

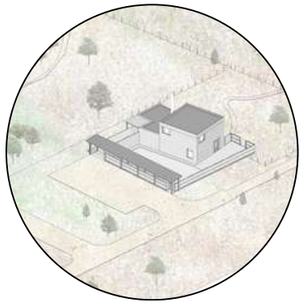
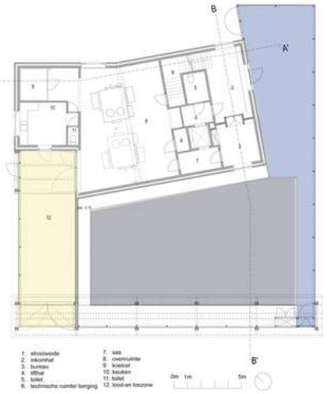


Fig. 60. Pet crematorium. Source: ArchDaily-re-elaboration by the author.

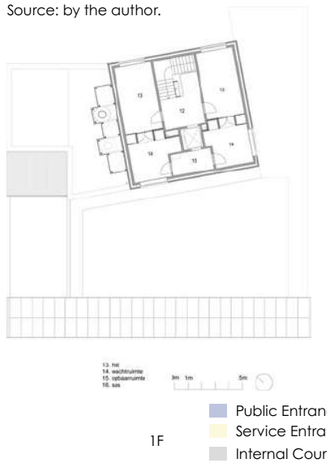
The pet crematorium is a two-storey building with separate public and service circulation. The ground floor mainly contains service spaces.

Visitors enter the space through an independent entrace and then reach to the first floor by stairs, which contains a waiting area and a farewell room. Facing the nature reserve, the farewell room provide a peacful setting.



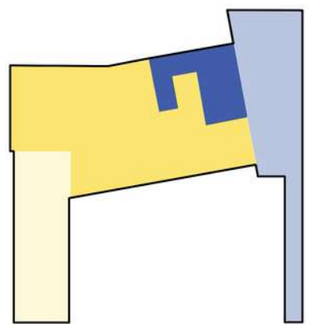
GF

Fig. 61. GF Public and service entrances. Source: Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily-re-elaboration by the author.



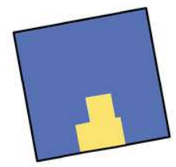
1F

Fig. 62. 1F plan. Source: Collectief Noord, via ArchDaily.



GF

Fig. 63. GF functional zoning. Source: by the author.



1F

Fig. 64. 1F functional zoning. Source: by the author.

3.4.1 Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium Lommel

PProject *Sanctuary Pet Cremation*
Architect *Formwerkz Architects*
Location *Kranji, Singapore*
Year *2022*
Floor Area *125 m²*
Type *Pet Crematorium*

The pet crematorium is located in Kranji, Singapore, designed by Formwerkz Architects. The reason for selecting It as a case study is that its circulation route and architectural form create an atmosphere of the pet's farewell. A mass building volume stands at the end of the landscape axis, as a visual focus that guides visitors forward, which is similar to that of some human mourning spaces. The cremator is placed beneath the tower-like structure, reducing the industrial character caused by the exposed chimney.



Fig. 65. Pet crematorium in Kranji. Source: Fabian Ong, via Dezeen Awards, 2023.

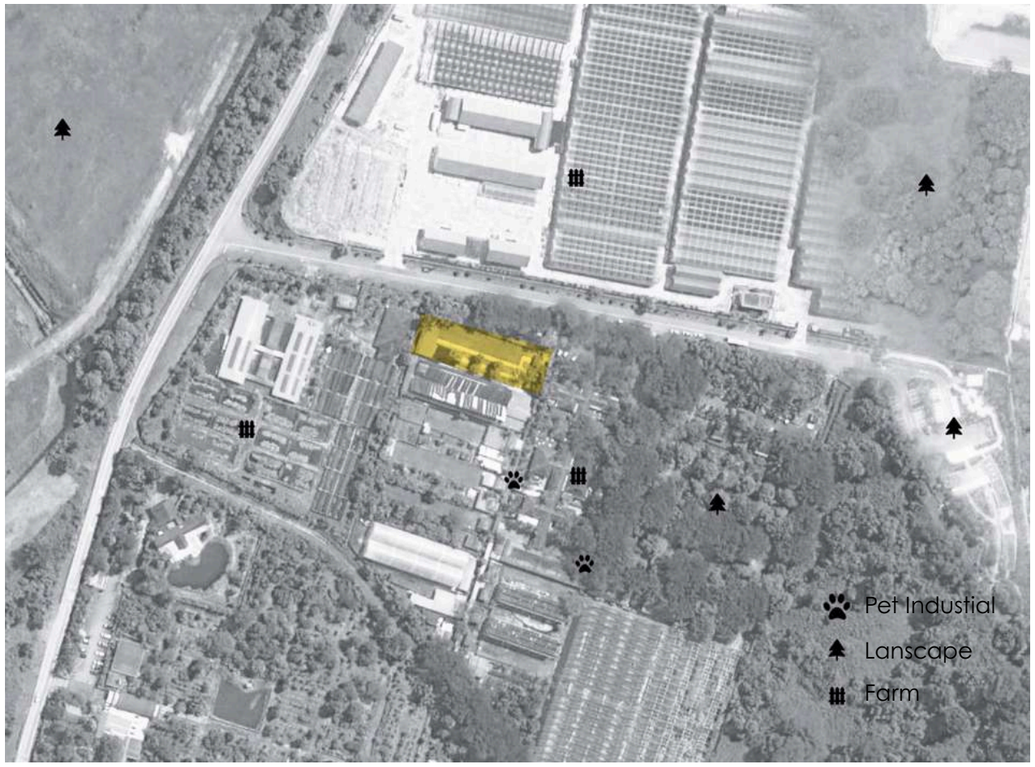


Fig. 66. Location and surrounding facilities. Source: Google Earth-re-elaboration by the author.

Singapore is a highly urbanised country, while Kranji is one of the few areas which retains a rural character. This location keeps the project away from the busy city centers and industrial zones. The surroundings mainly consist of farms and low-rise accommodation, with buildings scattered across the area. The site is also situated near wetland reserves and other natural landscapes, as well as several pet-related service facilities. This surrounding environment provides a suitable setting for pet farewell and mourning.

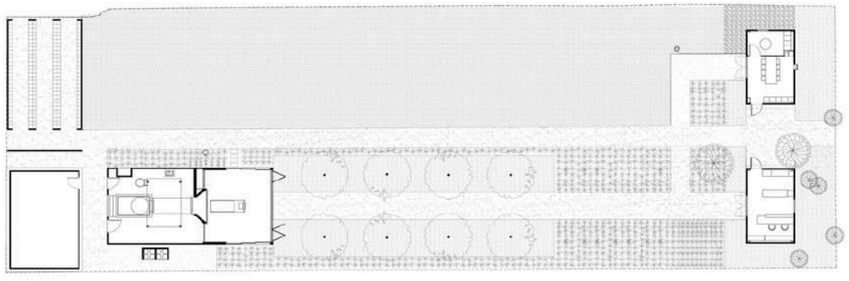


Fig. 67. Plan. Source: Formwerkz Architects.

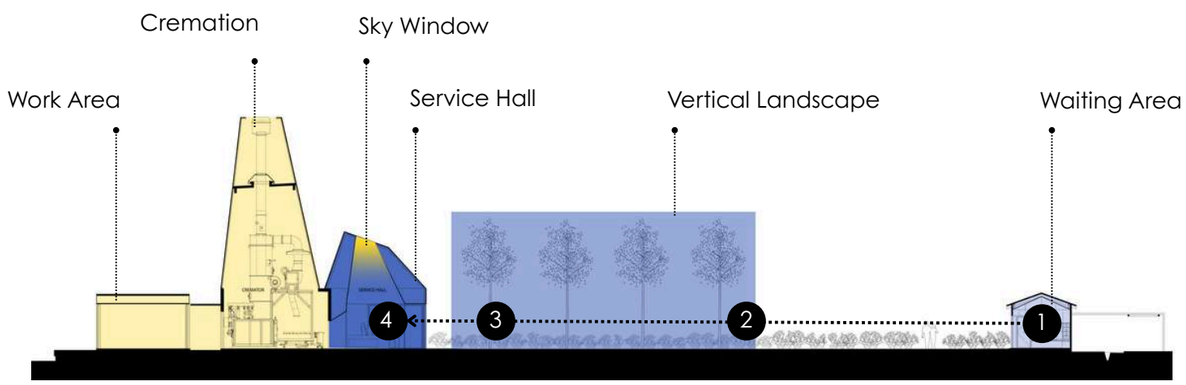


Fig. 68. Procession route. Source: by the author.

Leaving from the reception area, visitors follow an outdoor landscape path towards the tall cremation hall. Symmetrical, orderly plantings lining the route create a solemn atmosphere for the farewell. The path begins with open lawns, while rows of trees gradually appear along both sides, guiding visitors through an emotional transition into mourning. The farewell hall forms the climax of the sequence, where light from the skylight directs the gaze upward and marks the end of the ceremony. On the return journey, the landscape changes from tall trees back to open lawns, gradually leading visitors out of the mourning atmosphere.

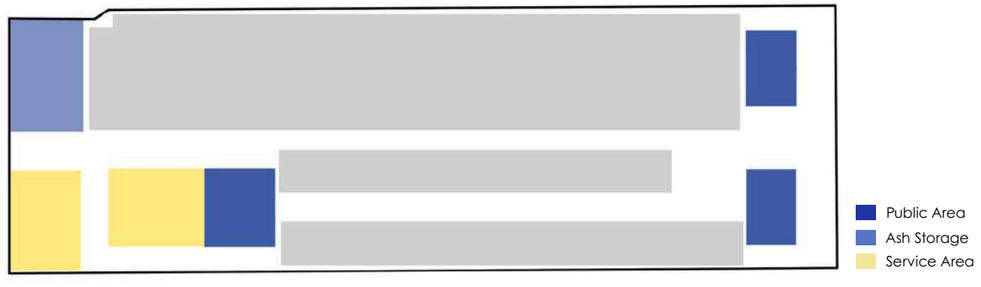


Fig. 69. Functional zoning. Source: by the author.

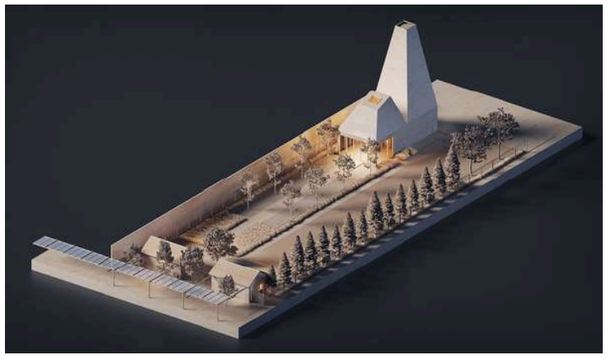


Fig. 70. Model. Source: Formwerkz Architects.



Fig. 71. Waiting Area. Source: Formwerkz Architects.



Fig. 73. Perspective view of the farewell hall. Source: Formwerkz Architects.



Fig. 72 Landscape path. Source: Formwerkz Architects.

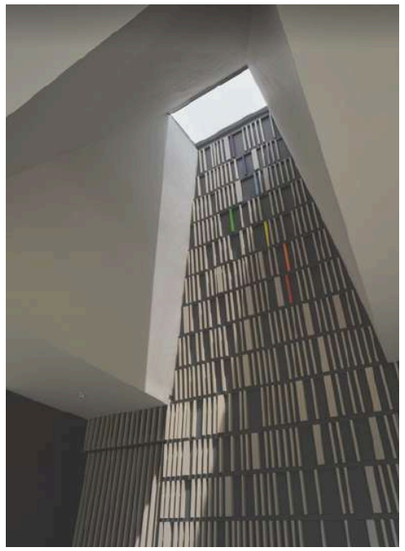


Fig. 74. Skylight in the farewell hall. Source: Formwerkz Architects.

The cremation is designed as a tall, cone-shaped building. This simple form combines practical and symbolic characters. In *Art and Visual Perception*, Rudolf Arnheim notes that "upward forms often evoke associations with transcendence and spirituality."

Comparison of Spatial Organisation





	Animal Shelter and Pet Crematorium Lommel	Sanctuary Pet Cremation
Function	Crematorium | Shelter	Crematorium
Surrounding Facility		
Spatial Organisation	Vertical Separation	Linear Procession
Farewell Room	2	1
Area	311㎡	125㎡

Fig. 75. Comparison. Source: by the author.

3.5 Interior Atmosphere and Functions

Project *Rainbow Planet Memorial Hall*
Location *Beijing, China*
Designe team *NOTHING DESIGN*
Year *2022*
Area *650 m²*
Type *Pet Farewell | Memorial Space*

In recent years, pet funeral industry in China has undergone a transformation; while "cremation" was the core focus a decade ago, new memorial facilities now have begun to pay more attention to the emotional experience of the farewell process. Rainbow Planet envisioned its new facility as a space that responds to the emotions people experience during farewell process.

Designed by NOTHING DESIGN,the new Rainbow Planet Memorial Hall emphasis on the spatial experience of the farewell. In addition to basic functions such as reception and farewell areas, the project introduces spaces for meditation, memorial handicrafts, and religious practices, allowing people to say goodbye in their own ways. The interior mainly uses off-white painted walls and introduces corridors to organize the layout, creating a calmly and peacefully mounirng atmosphere.
The project later got a TID Award in the Institutional Space category at the 16th Taiwan Interior Design Award in 2023.

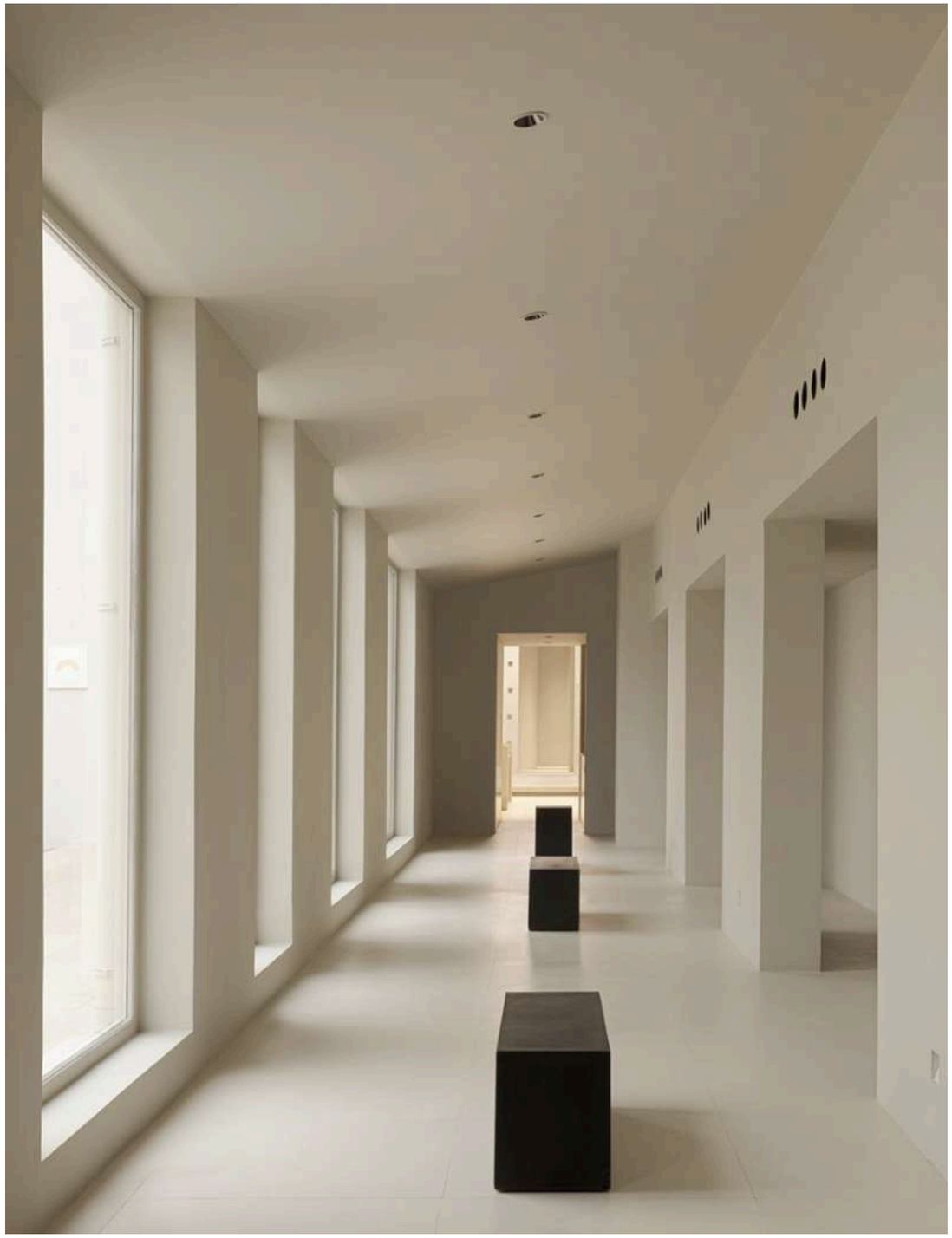


Fig. 76. Connecting corridor. Source: Photo by Li Ming, via gooood.

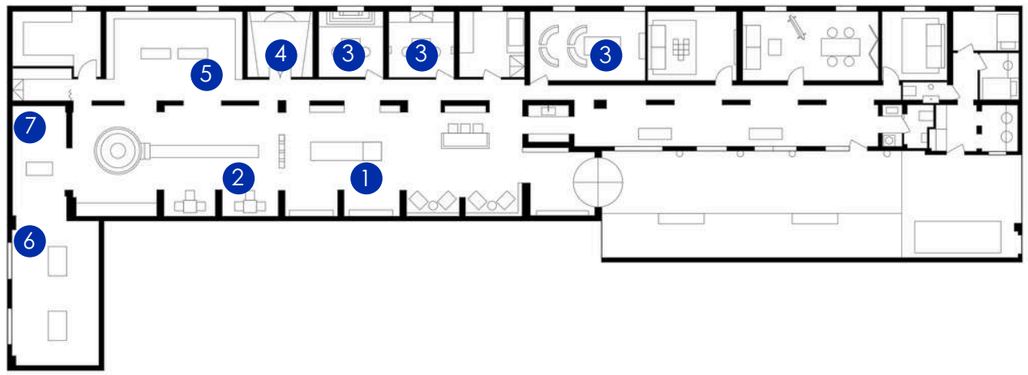


Fig. 77. Plan of Rainbow Planet Pet Farewell Hall. Source: NOTHING DESIGN, via gooood,2003.

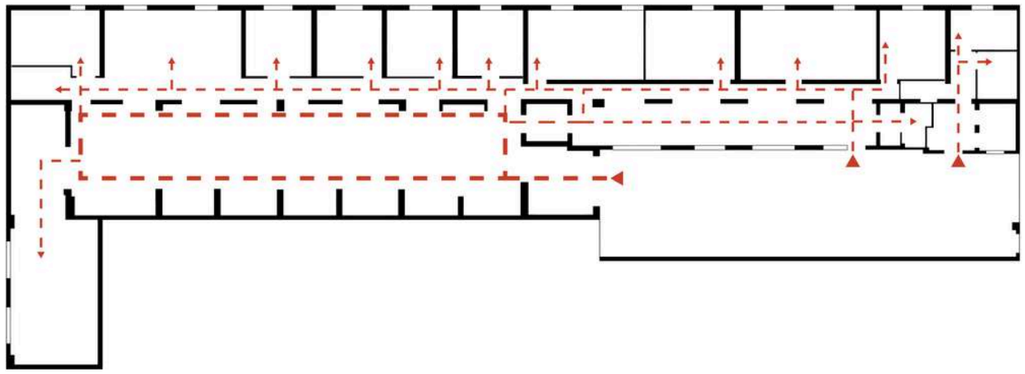


Fig. 78. Circulation Route. Source: Diagram by the author.

1

Display Area
33㎡



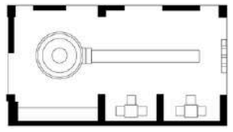
5



Storage
room
25㎡



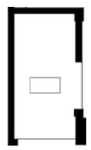
3



Meditation Room
6㎡



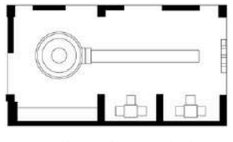
6



Screening
Room
16.5㎡



2



Handicraft workshop
14㎡



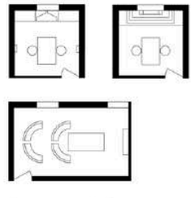
4



Religious
storage
room
12㎡



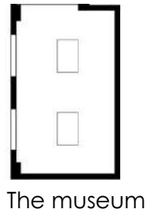
3



Farewell Room
12㎡ | 12㎡ | 23㎡



7



The museum
33㎡



Fig. 79. Functional spaces. Source: Diagram by the author.

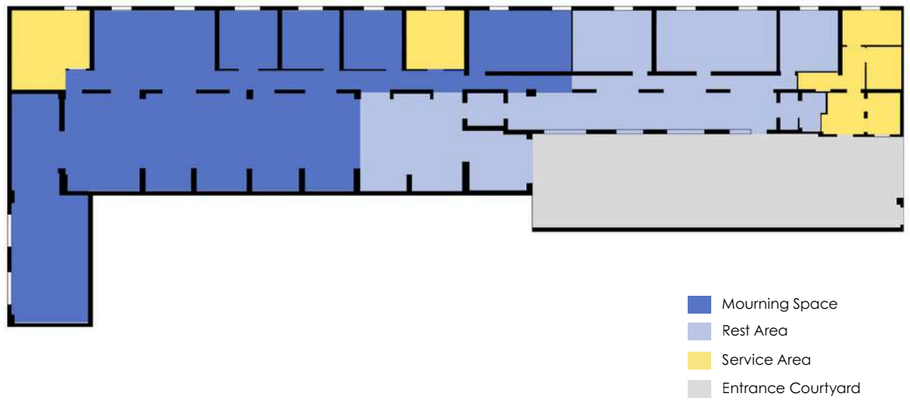
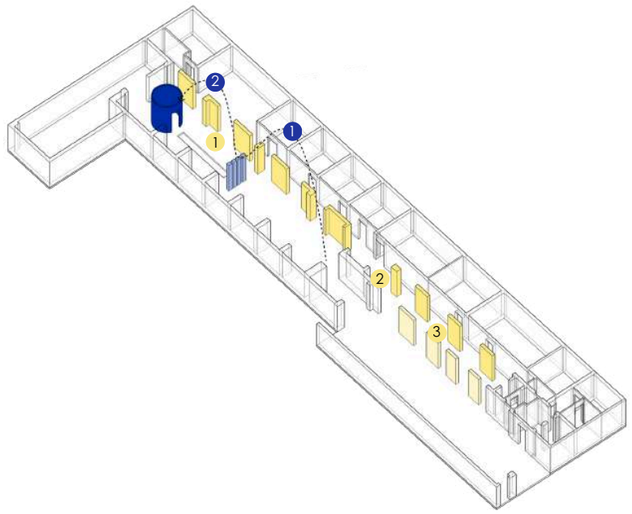


Fig. 80. Functional zonings. Source: Diagram by the author.





The full-height partitions and the cylindrical meditation space are arranged along the central axis of the hall, guiding the flow of movement. Within the limited interior area, the designer creates a continuous sequence of spaces for mourning.



Fig. 81. Central axis and sequence of connecting corridor. Source: Diagram by the author; photos by Li Ming, via gooood.

The mourning spaces are divided by a corridor with the hall. The corridor is arranged repeated which creates a sense of order and solemnity in the mourning space. This spatial rhythm continues to the resting area, where a similar repetition is expressed through the window openings. Natural light enters through these windows, making the atmosphere softer. The corridor facilitates a natural transition of emotions from farewell to peace.

3.6 What can we learn from existing cases?

Site	*Respond to long-term change*	• *Sites should respond to urban development* • *A suitable location can reduce potential conflicts*
Operation	*Stable operation and funding*	• *Land protection and stable financial support are essential for long-term protection* • *Management models need to adapt to changing challenges.*
Function	*Multiple function or cooperation*	• *Cooperating with nearby facilities can prevent pet mourning projects being isolated* • *Multiple functions encourage continuous use*
Circulation	*Separate routes*	*service circulation and publuc routes should be appropriately separated.*
Atmosphere	*Support different emotions*	*Light, materials, the landscape, and degrees of privacy combine to create an atmosphere suitable for gatherings, private farewells, and memory. Besides, the space should consider repeated visits.*

Fig. 82. Strategies Derived from Existing Cases. Source: Diagram by the author.

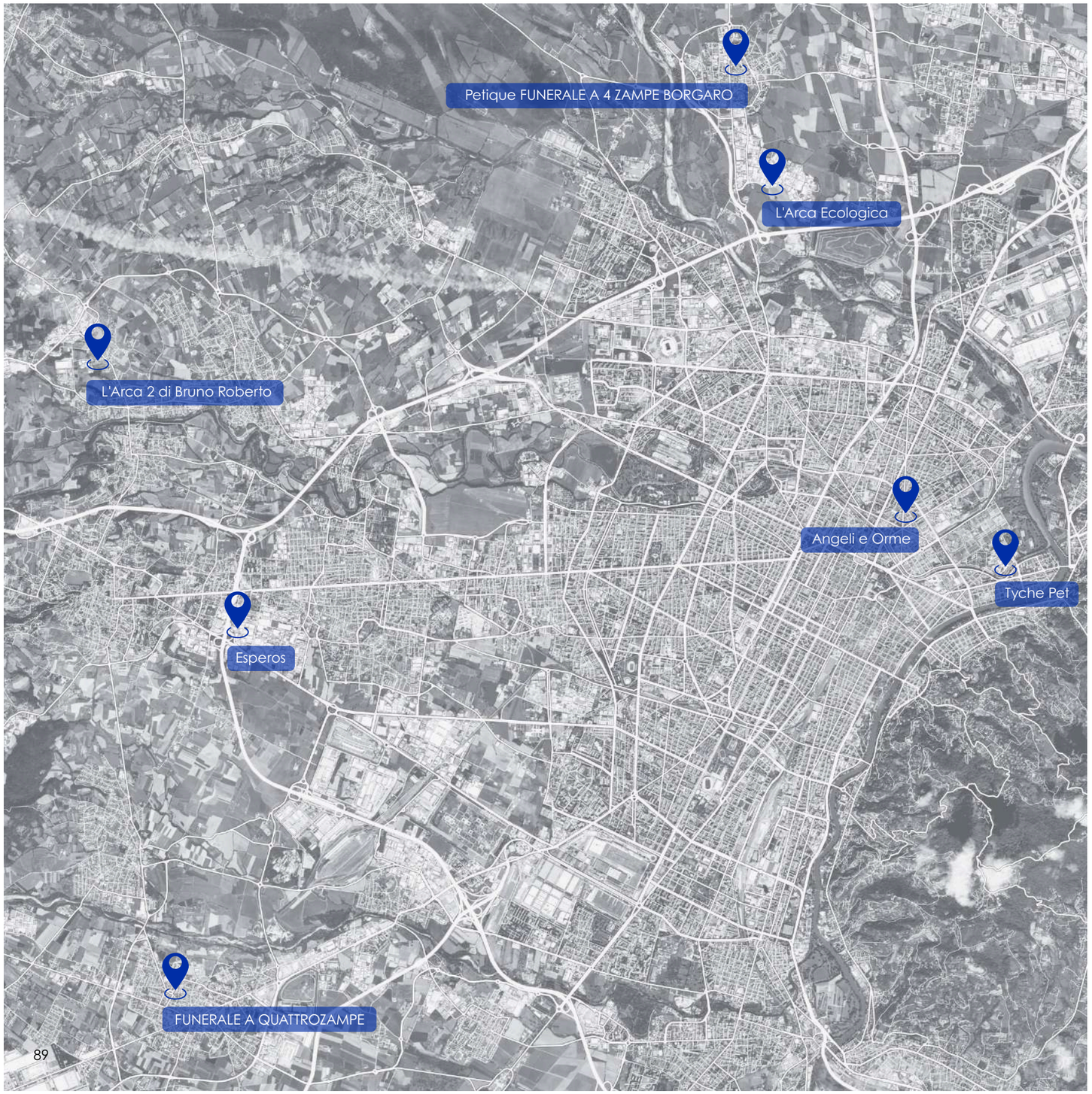
04

The Site: Collegno



Fig. 83. Turin–Collegno context and site location. Source: Diagram by the author.

4.1 Regional Pet Funeral Facilities



Collegno is located in Turin Metropolitan. Turin's pet funeral industry has gradually developed in recent years to meet the growing demand among pet owners for high-quality farewell services. Currently, pet funeral services in Turin are primarily privately operated, offering cremation and various forms of memorialization. Major service providers include Tyche Pet, Lubrano Design Funerario, and Servizi per la Cremazione s.r.l. Reflecting the evolving human-pet relationship, the Turin government announced plans in 2019 to establish a public pet cemetery, demonstrating official recognition of public demand. This project, which is still in the planning stages, is intended to be located next to the Parco di Torino cemetery, though progress has been slow with no groundbreaking information yet available.

The new cemetery is expected to offer approximately 2,000 grave spaces for burying pets, including cats, dogs, hamsters, rabbits, and even horses. The project is anticipated to cost around 1.5 million euros and will be designed in collaboration with animal welfare associations. This initiative addresses public demand. (Wanted in Milan, 2019)

Procedure of the final disposition

Taking Tyche Pet, the first animal crematorium in Turin, as an example:

- After contacting the organization, pet owners can visit the cremation center in person or arrange for the center to pick up the pet's remains.
- The pet's remains are then stored in a special refrigerated room, awaiting cremation.
- There are 3 cremation options: Singola (individual), Singola con Saluto (individual with a farewell ceremony), and Collettiva (collective).
- The remains are transported to the cremation site, located at Lungo Dora Pietro Colletta.
- For pet owners who choose the Singola or Singola con Saluto options, the organization returns an urn containing the pet's ashes.
- Pet' s ashes can be buried on private land or in authorized pet cemeteries.

Additionally, in Italy, laws regulate the disposal of pet remains, and improper disposal is subject to penalties under legal provisions.

Fig. 84. Animal mourning related service facilities distribution. Source: Diagram by the author.

4.2 Chronology of Collegno

Collegno is approximately 9 kilometers from downtown Turin. Its history can dates back to the Roman Empire. Originally as a Roman residence, Due to its proximity to Turin, the area gradually developed into a village. In the 11th BC, it was governed by the House of Savoy. During this Savoy era, the Certosa di Collegno was built, which later became the region's most significant historical structure.

In the 19th BC, the Turin-Rivoli railway was built, Collegno's connection with Turin was stronger. Also during this period, the Certosa di Collegno was converted into a psychiatric hospital, becoming one of the largest ones in Italy.

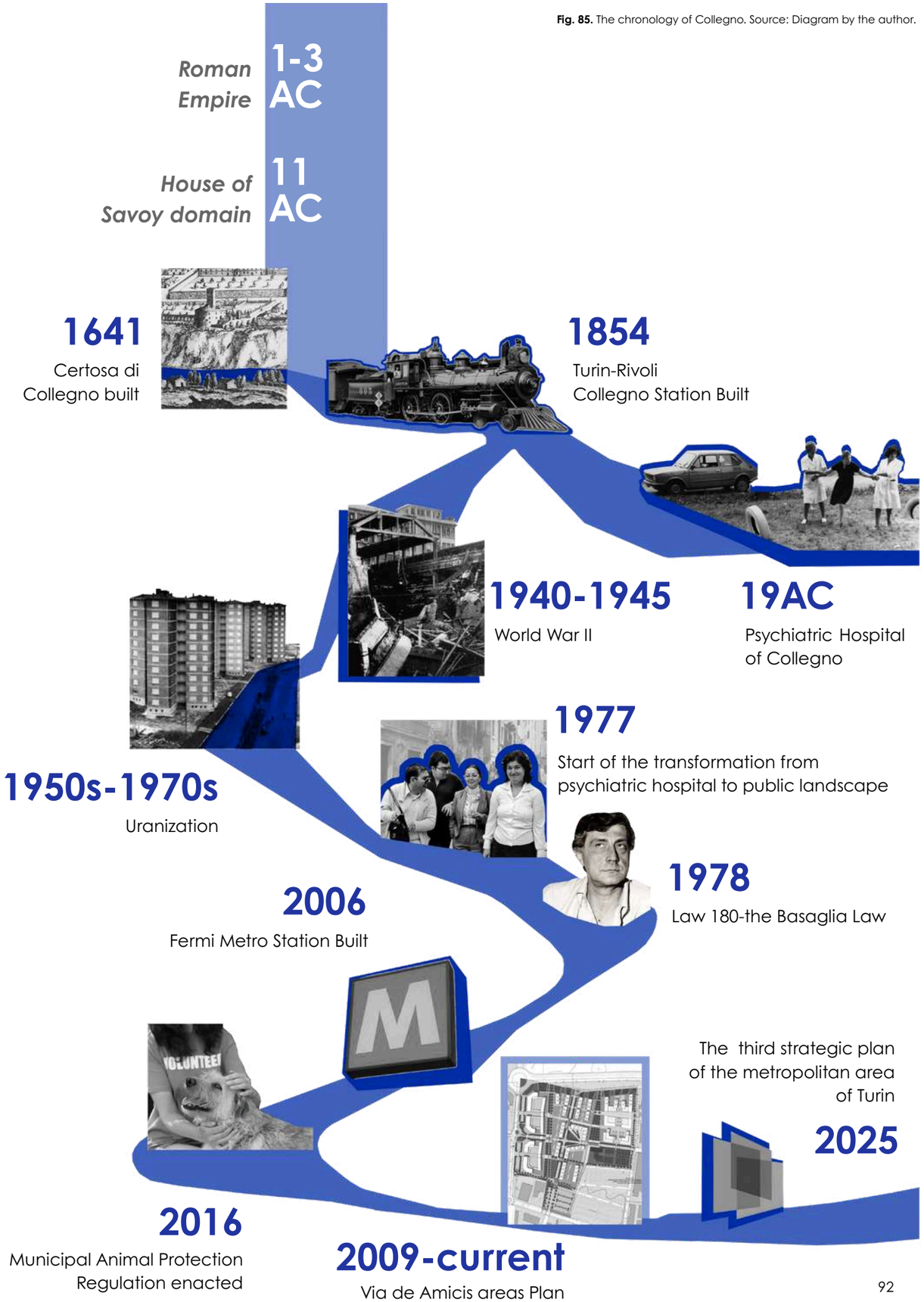
In the 20th century, with the rise of factories such as Fiat, many workers lived in the area. During World War II, due to being close to Turin, the area suffered a bomb. After the war, the city was reconstructed and expanded rapidly. Later the Basaglia Law (1978) was released, and subsequently the Certosa Psychiatric Hospital was closed. This law also changed public attitudes regarding the treatment of the mentally ill, and people began to accept this special group in the city. The closed hospital area was opened and step by step changed into a public park, a well-known example of urban reuse.

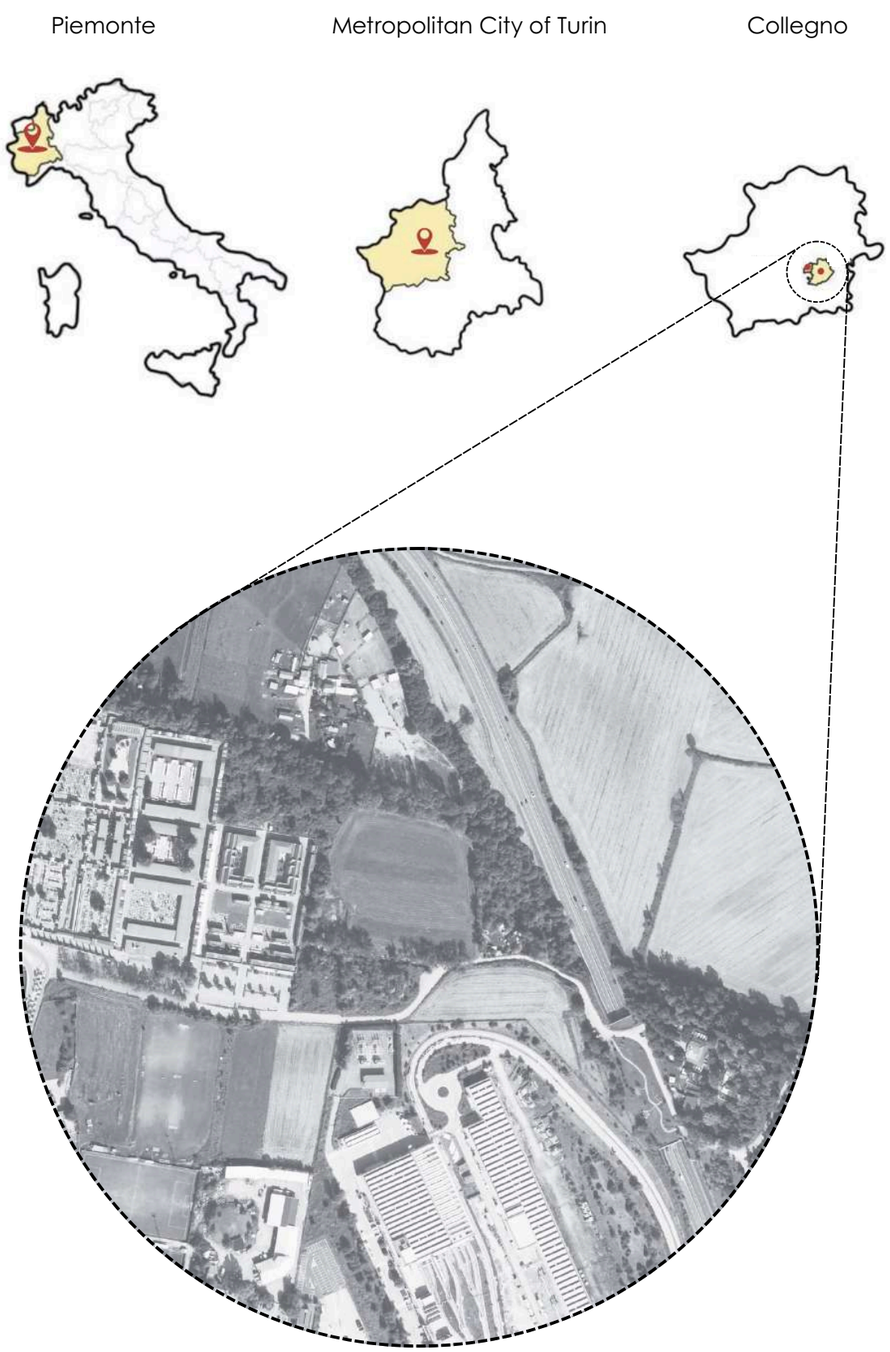
In 2006, Fermi Metro Station was opened, which enhanced connectivity between Collegno and downtown Turin. In recent years, the Collegno government has been promoting another major project: the Via De Amicis Areas Plan, which aims to revitalize abandoned industrial areas and create new urban nodes, including social housing and public green spaces.

In 2016, Collegno enacted the Municipal Animal Protection Regulation. Animal rights were protected, and it shows that pets were seen as more and more important companion animals.

In 2025, the Third Strategic Plan of the Metropolitan Area of Turin was published which focused on improving public spaces and building green infrastructure.

Fig. 85. The chronology of Collegno. Source: Diagram by the author.





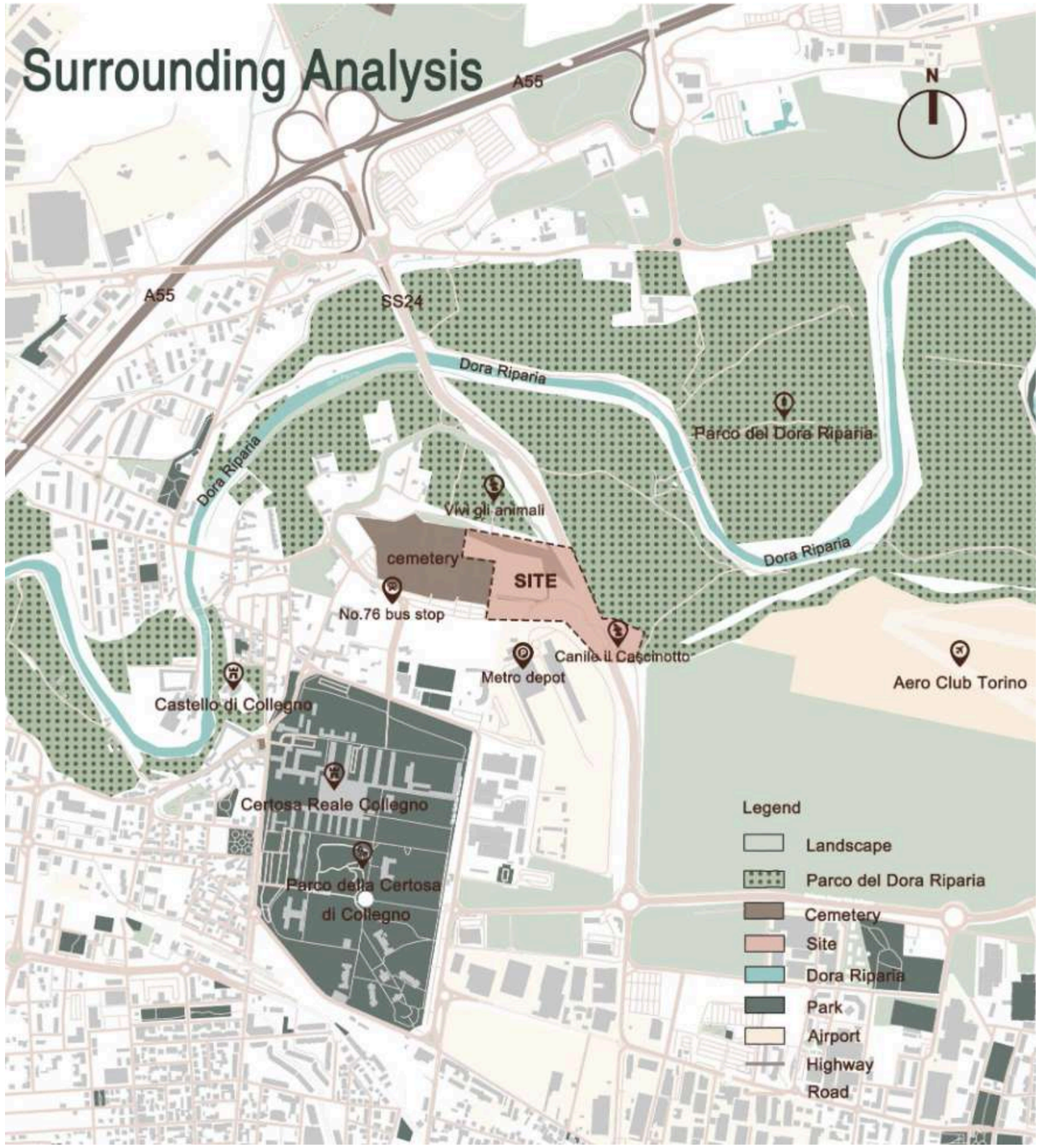
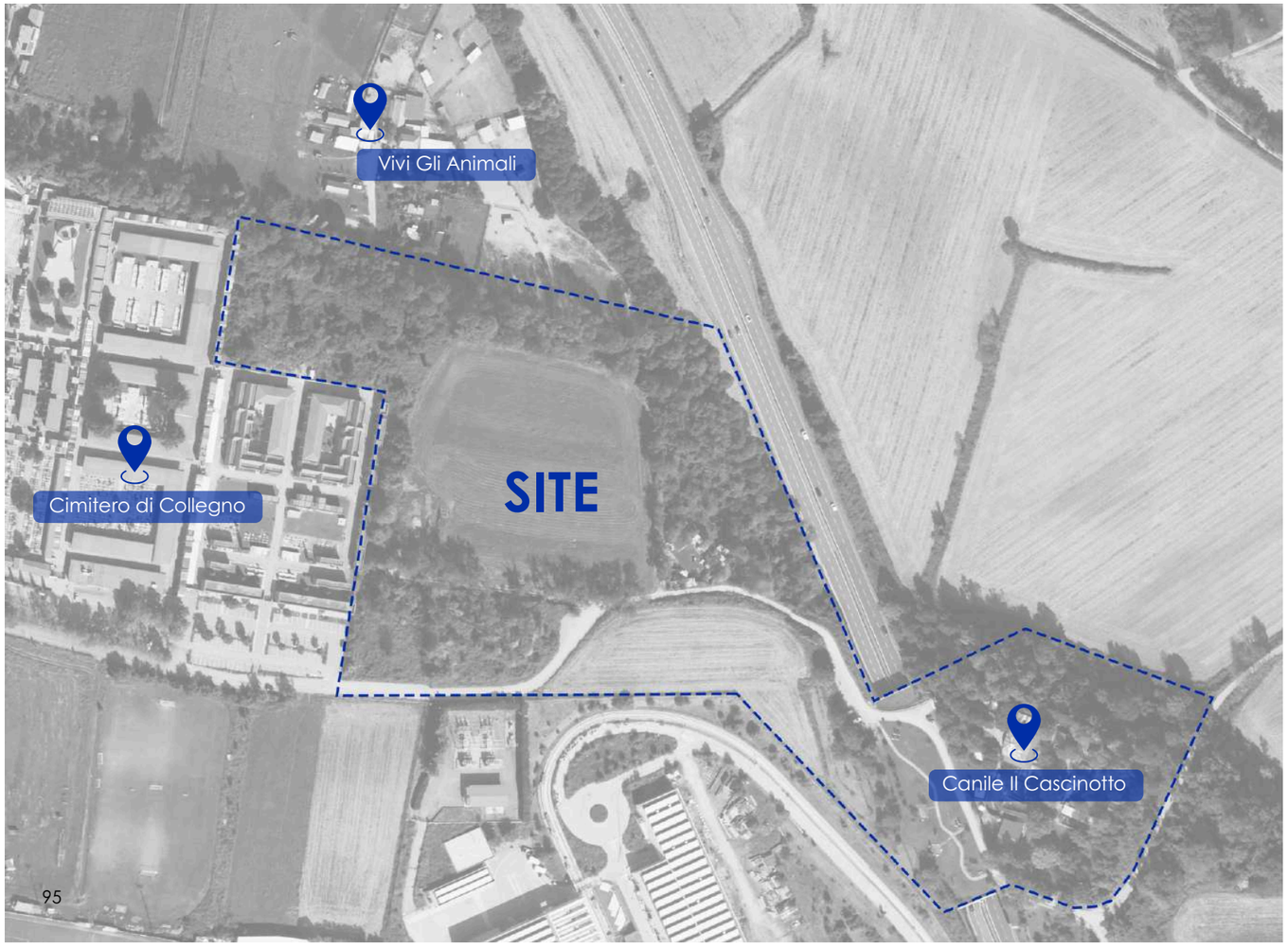


Fig. 86. Location context. Source: Diagram by the author.

4.3 Swot Analysis



Fig. 87. Surrounding human activities. Source: Diagram by the author.



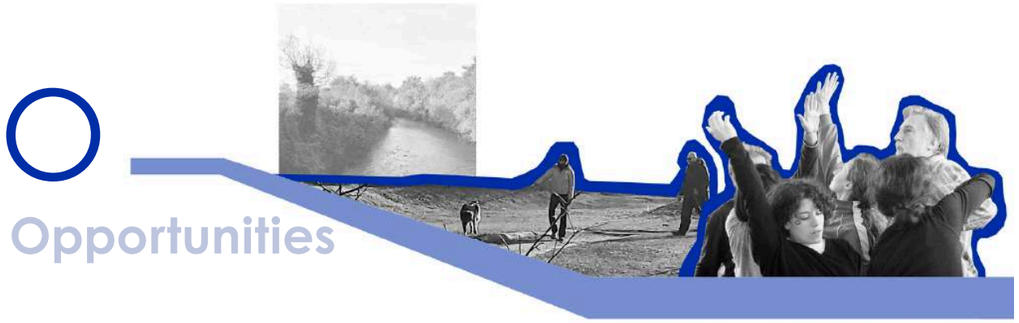
Adjacent to the human cemetery | Located between two animal shelters | Close to Dora Riparia



Narrow access to Vivi Gli Animali | Over 20 m elevation difference at the edges | Disturbance from the nearby highway | Difficult connection between north and south



Shelter Cooperation | Collaboration with Lavanderia a Vapore | Integration into the Dora Riparia landscape network



Cemetery buffers and land-use restrictions | Public Acceptance | Long-term funding, management and maintenance



Fig. 89. SWOT analysis. Source: Diagram by the author.

Fig. 88. Site and context. Source: Diagram by the author.

4.4 Stakeholders Analysis

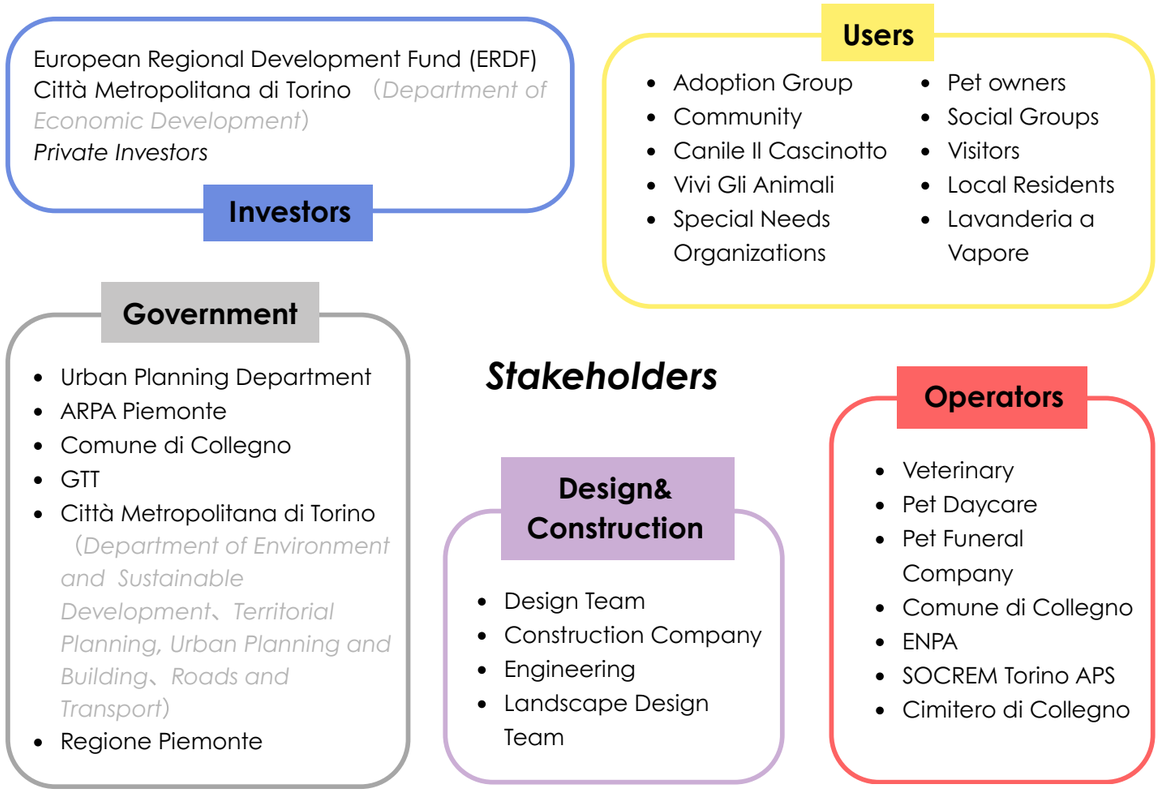


Fig. 90. Stakeholders' categories. Source: Diagram by the author.

Stakeholders are divided into 5 categories according to the role they play in the project: Investors, Users, Government, Design& Construction, Operators.

Investors

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): According to Priorities for 2021-2027，In recent years, Erdf will focus on projects related to social inclusion and environmental sustainability.
- Department of Economic Development (Città Metropolitana di Torino): Provide policy and financial support, and ensure the project's long-term operation.
- Private Investors: Be in charge of the daily operation.

Government

- Urban Planning Department: Access if this project complies with the urban planning.
- ARPA Piemonte: Environmental evaluation.
- Comune di Collegno: Be responsible for approval, management and operation.
- GTT(Gruppo Torinese Trasporti): Ensure the transportation between the site and surrounding areas, for example by setting up the bus station.
- Città Metropolitana di Torino (Department of Environment and Sustainable Development, Territorial Planning, Urban Planning and Building, Roads and Transport): Comprehensive Management.
- Regione Piemonte: Access if the project compliance with regional development policies and coordinate.

Users

- Canile Il Cascinotto & Vivi Gli Animali: Arrange animal activities and human-animal interactions. Not only improve animals' living conditions, but also provide psychological healing for special groups and people who lost their pets. thereby increase the opportunity for human-animal contact and enhance adoption rate.
- Pet Owners: Primary group, regarding mourning, adoption, daycare and so on.
- Community: Provide with outdoor activity space and public landscape.
- Special Needs Organizations: Provide healing space for special groups in the society.
- Social Groups & Visitors: Volunteers, animal lovers and hikers from near the nature park.
- Lavanderia a Vapore: Cultural institutions around the site, potential partnerships, and outdoor cultural activities

Operators

- Veterinary: Providing technical support in animal health
- Pet Daycare: Pets' daily care service.
- Pet Funeral Company：Professional entity in the funeral pr
- Comune di Collegno：Operations.



Fig. 91. Crematorium facade render. Source: by the author..

05

Design Proposal

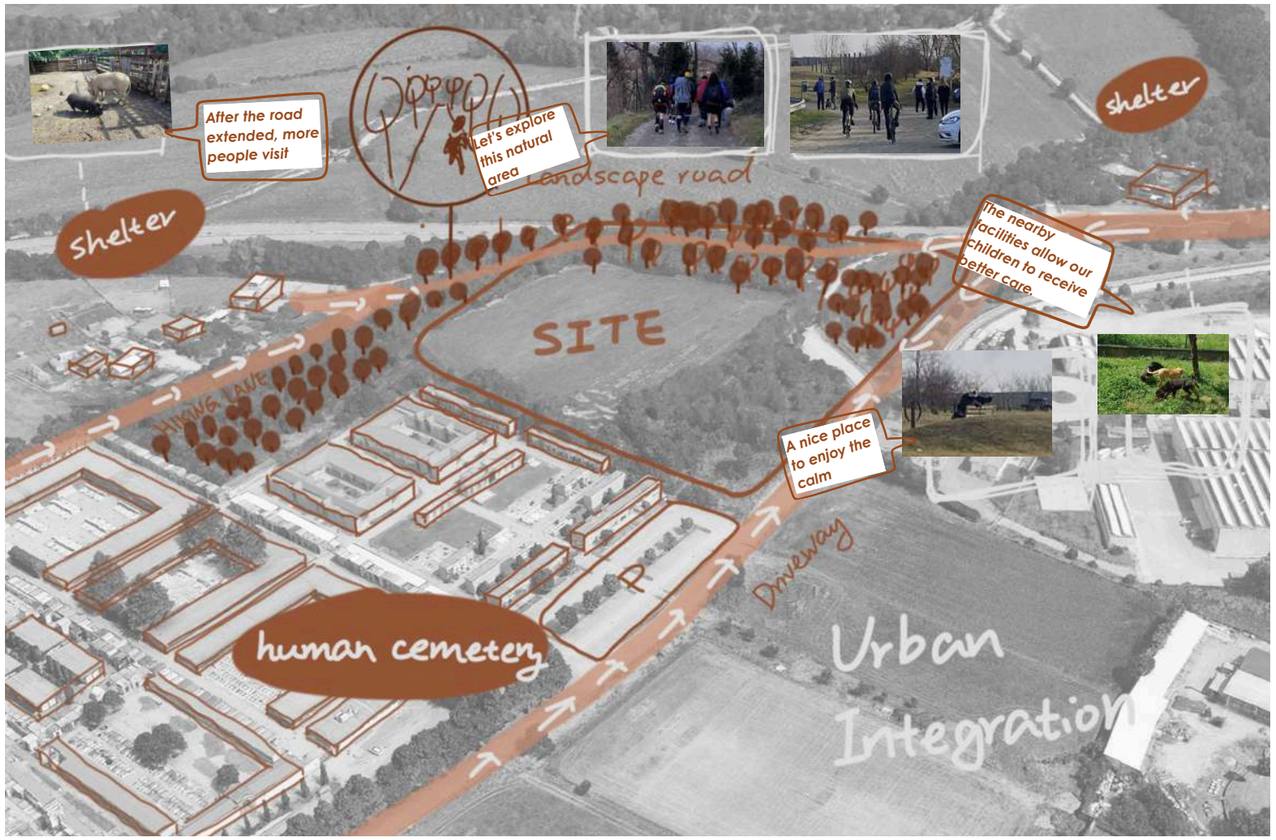


Fig. 92. Site connections and urban integration. Source: by the author..



Fig. 93. Spatial division by straight and curved lines. Source: by the author..

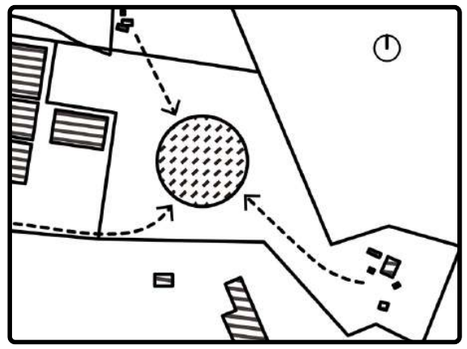
A line can divide a space into 2 parts, while a curve can create several space of different scales, each with privacy.



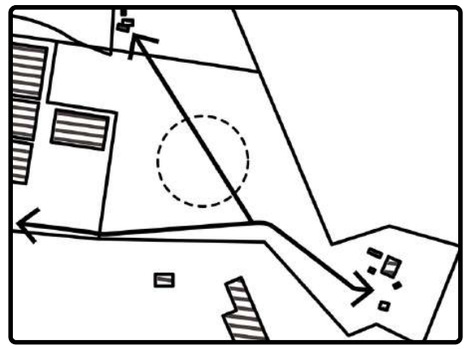
Fig. 94. Rectangular and circular spatial compositions. Source: by the author..

Circular space is centripetal, and these circular boundaries can not be fully closed. Thus enerating a series of transitional spaces.These transitional spaces can be used for: emotional guidance, spatial seperation and spatial transition.

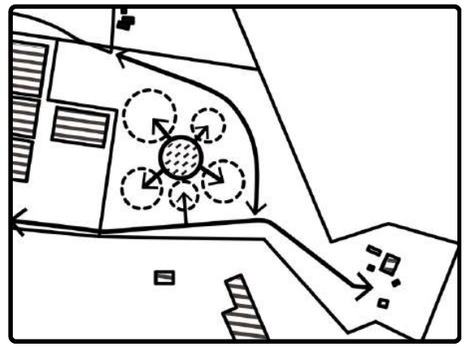
Fig. 94. Site planning strategy. Source: by the author..



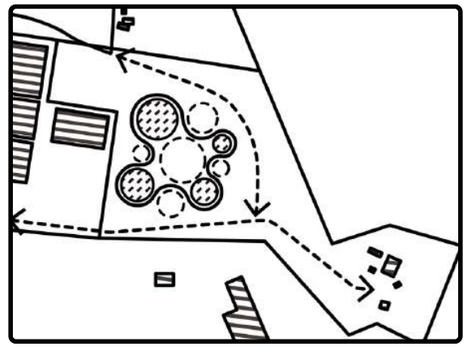
The circular public space creates an inward sense of focus.



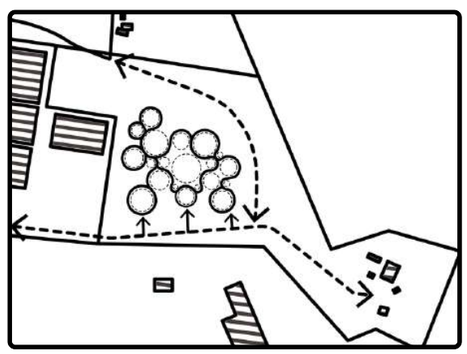
Opening the site boundary and connecting with the surrounding urban space.



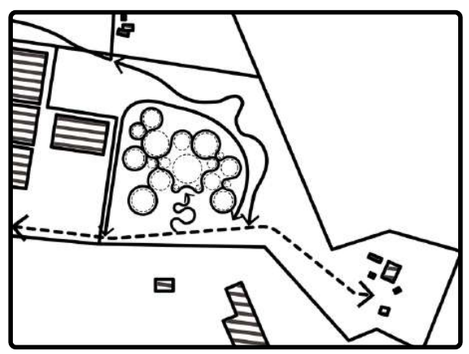
The functional spaces are distributed around the central landscape space.



A continuous curved path connects the various functional areas.

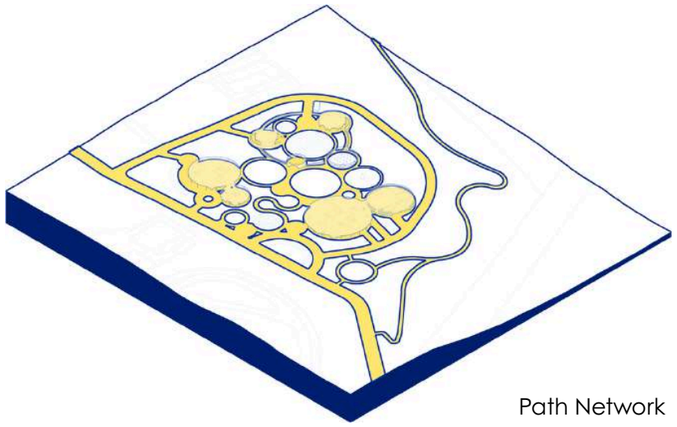


Refine the curve path and introduce landscape elements as buffer spaces between different areas.

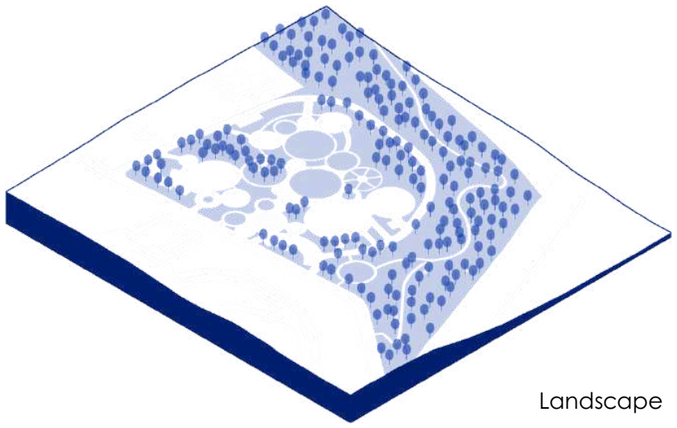


Connecting the site with the surrounding road network.

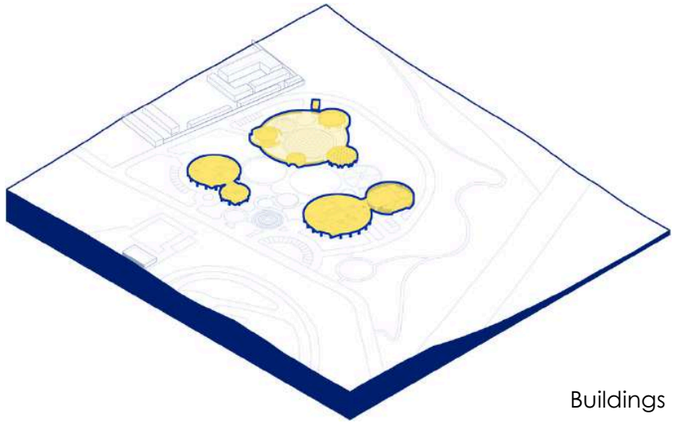
Fig. 95. Site structure. Source: by the author..



Path Network



Landscape



Buildings

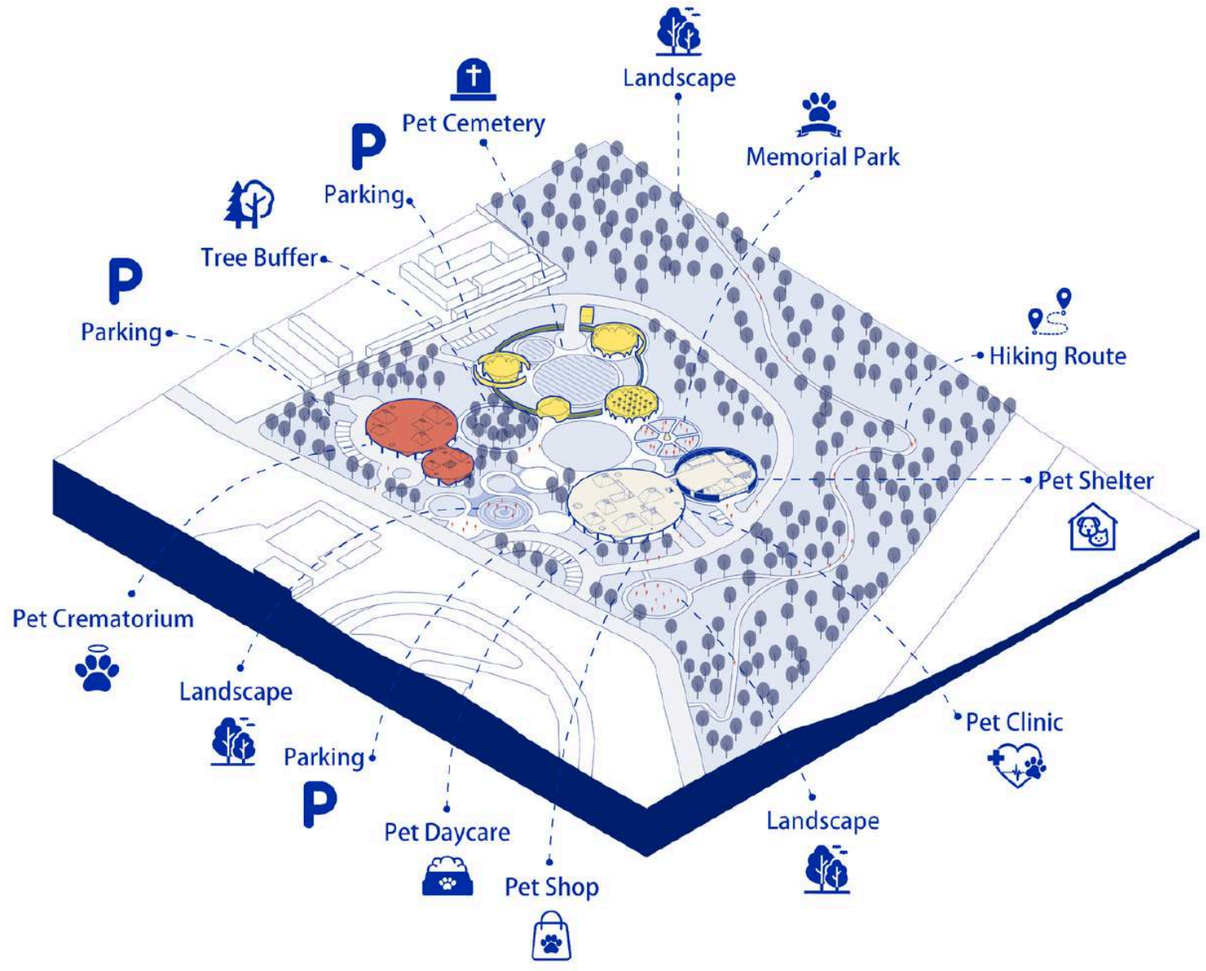
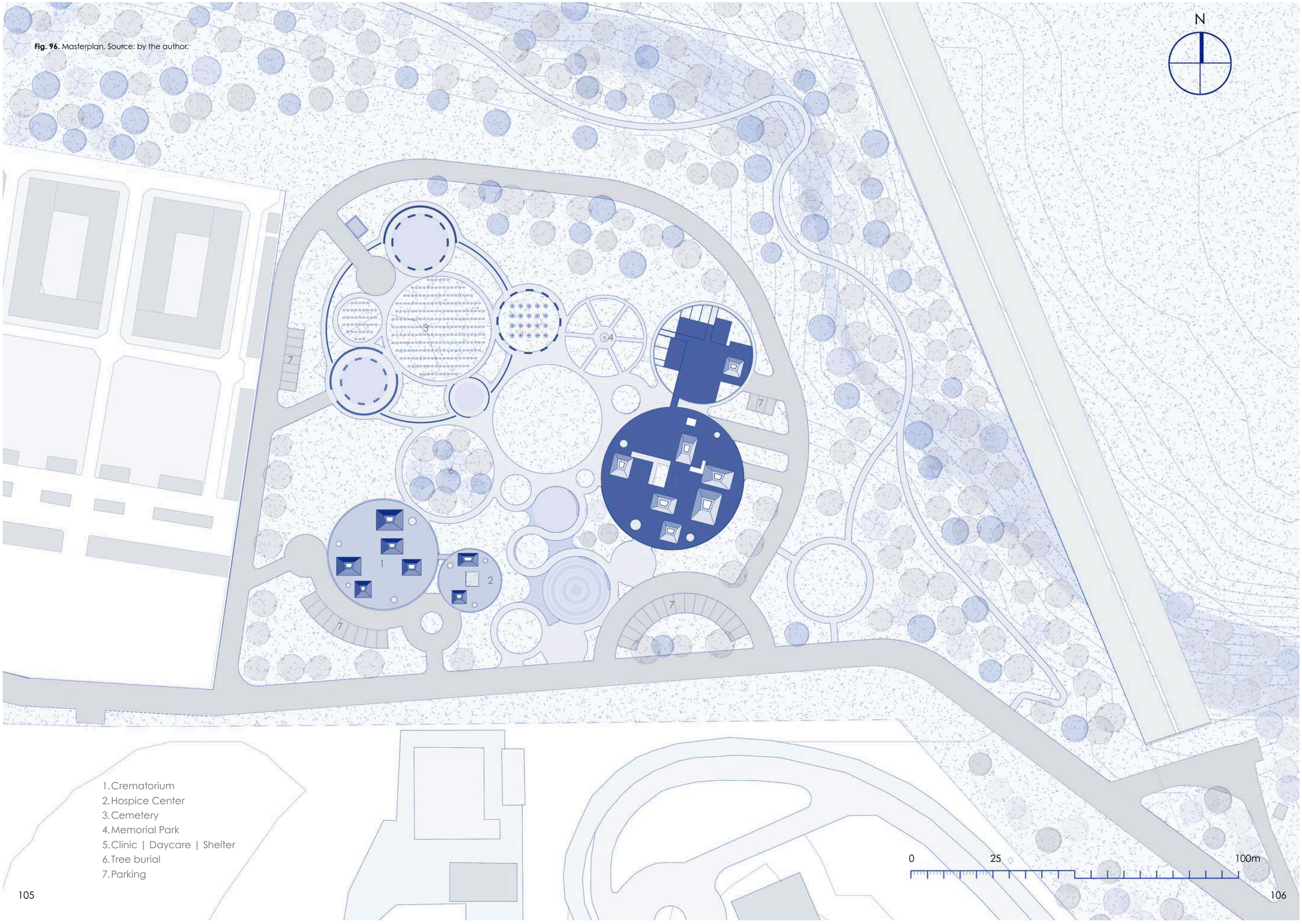


Fig. 96. Functional zonings distribution. Source: by the author..

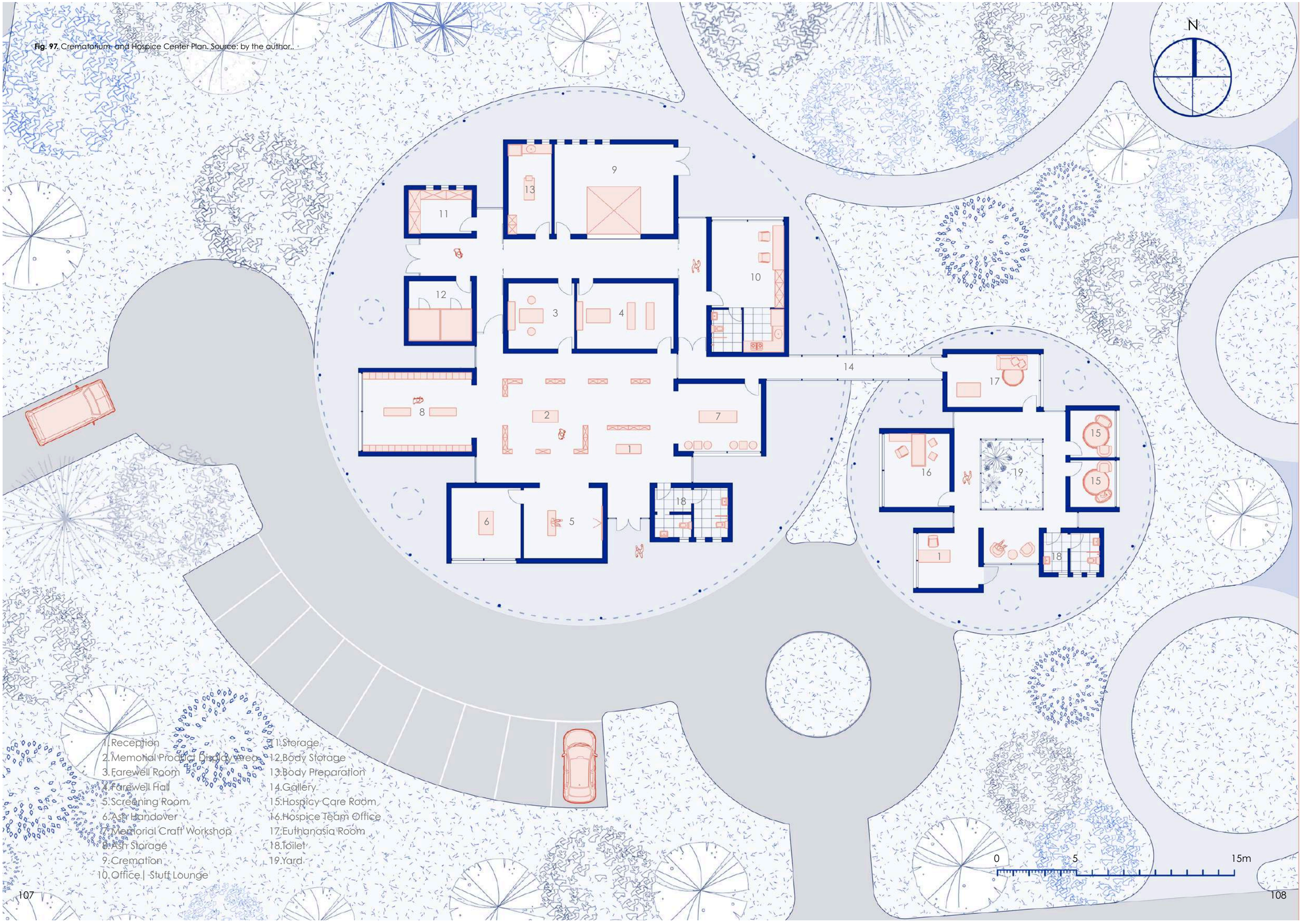
The mourning facilities are located on the side closest to the human cemetery, while the crematorium is adjacent to the external road for easy, independent access. A wooded landscape separates it from other functions, creating a quiet atmosphere for farewell. A more open pet care facility, clinic, and animal shelter are situated on the other side of the site.

Fig. 96. Masterplan. Source: by the author.



1. Crematorium
2. Hospice Center
3. Cemetery
4. Memorial Park
5. Clinic | Daycare | Shelter
6. Tree burial
7. Parking

Fig. 97. Crematorium and Hospice Center Plan. Source: by the author..



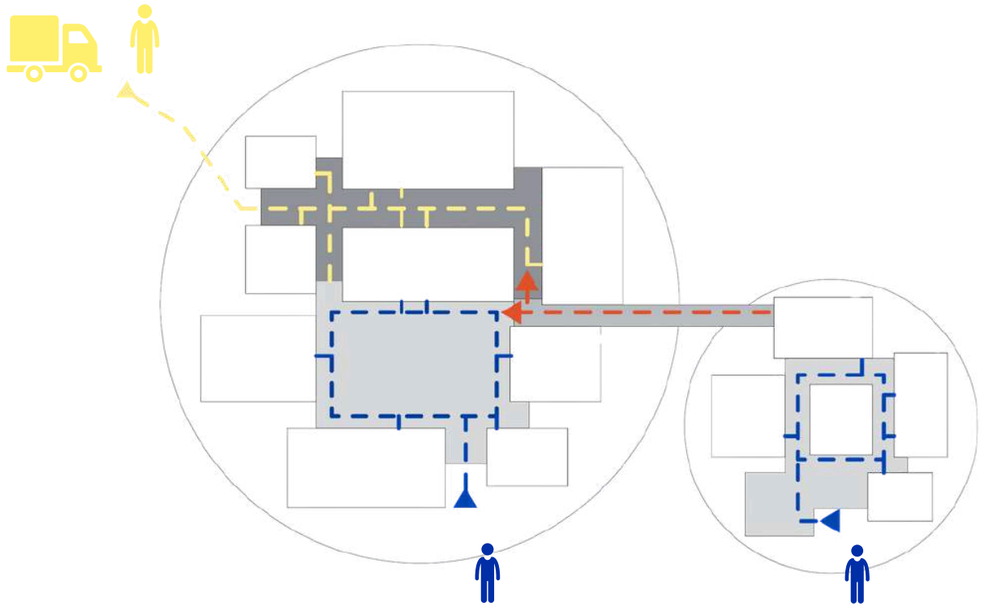


Fig. 98. Access and Circulation. Source: by the author.

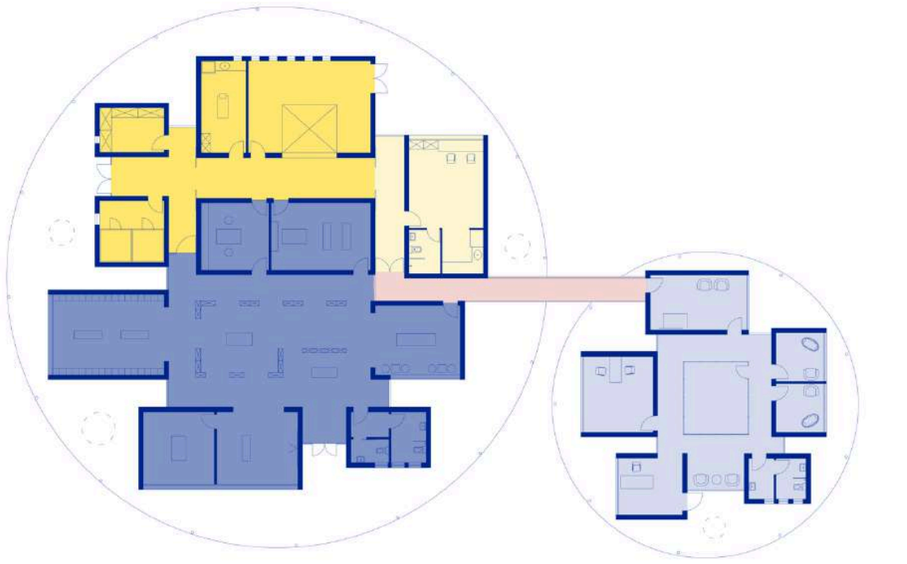


Fig. 99. Functional Zoning. Source: by the author.



Fig. 100. Crematorium and Hospice Center South Elevation. Source: by the author.

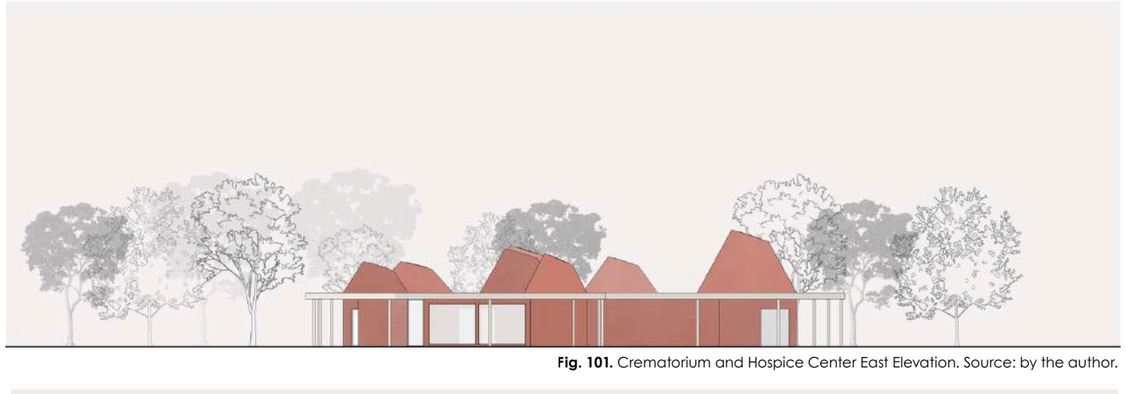


Fig. 101. Crematorium and Hospice Center East Elevation. Source: by the author.



Fig. 102. Crematorium and Hospice Center North Elevation. Source: by the author.

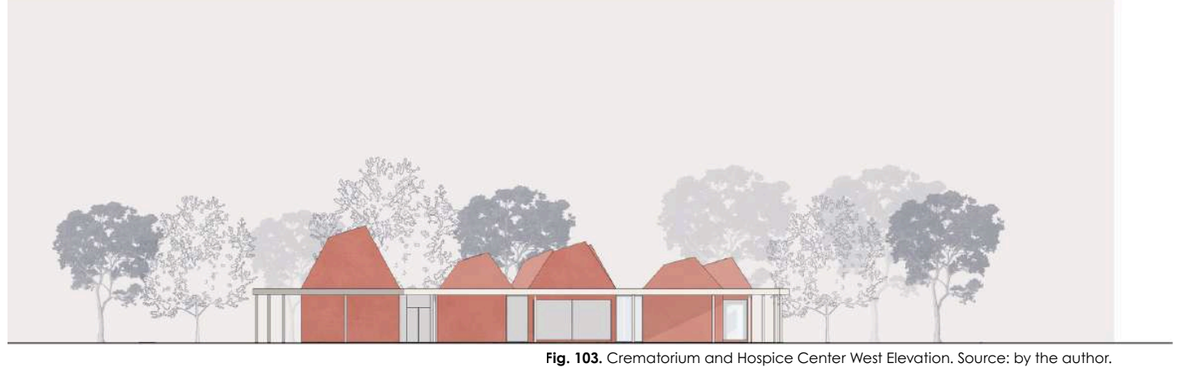
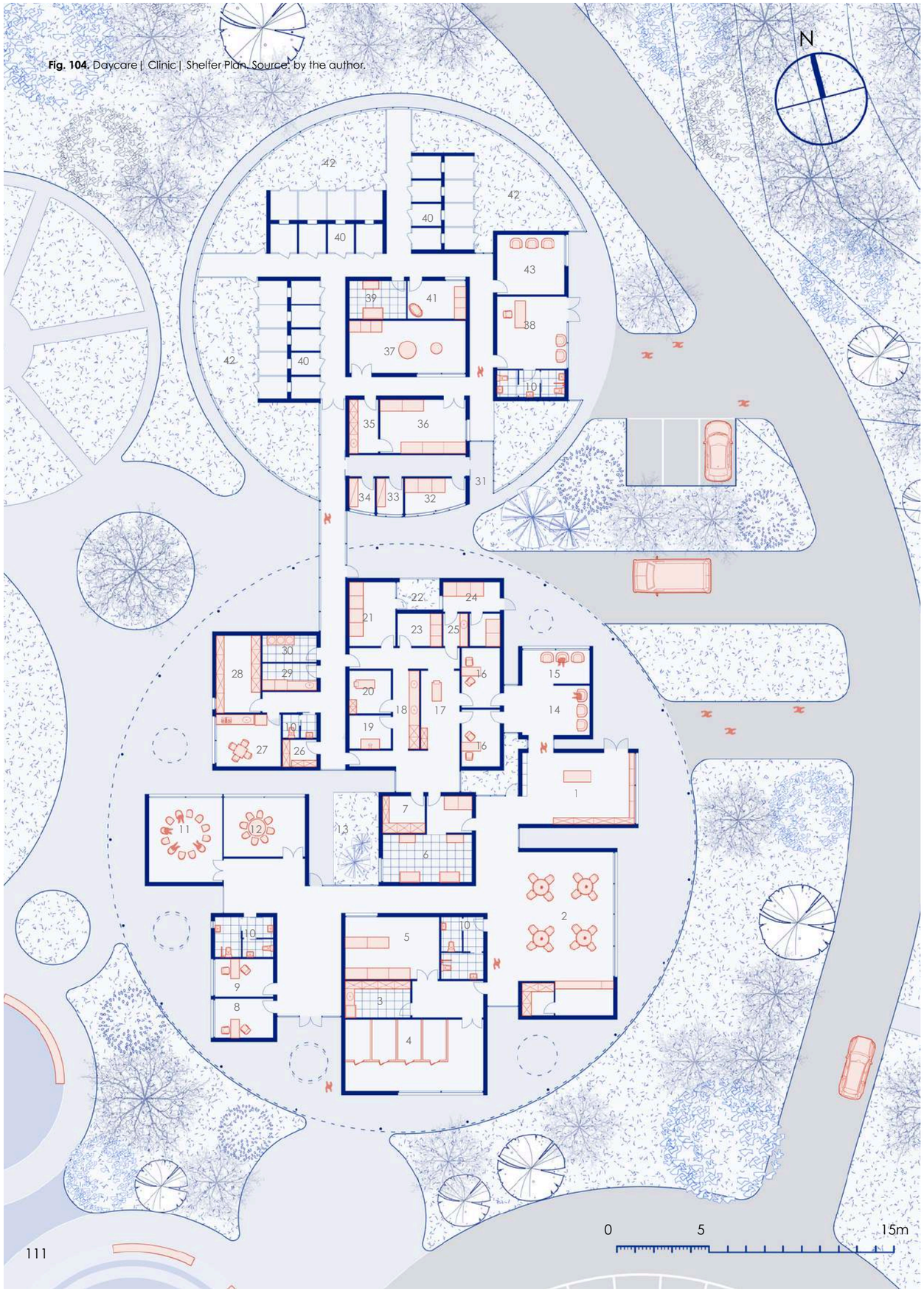
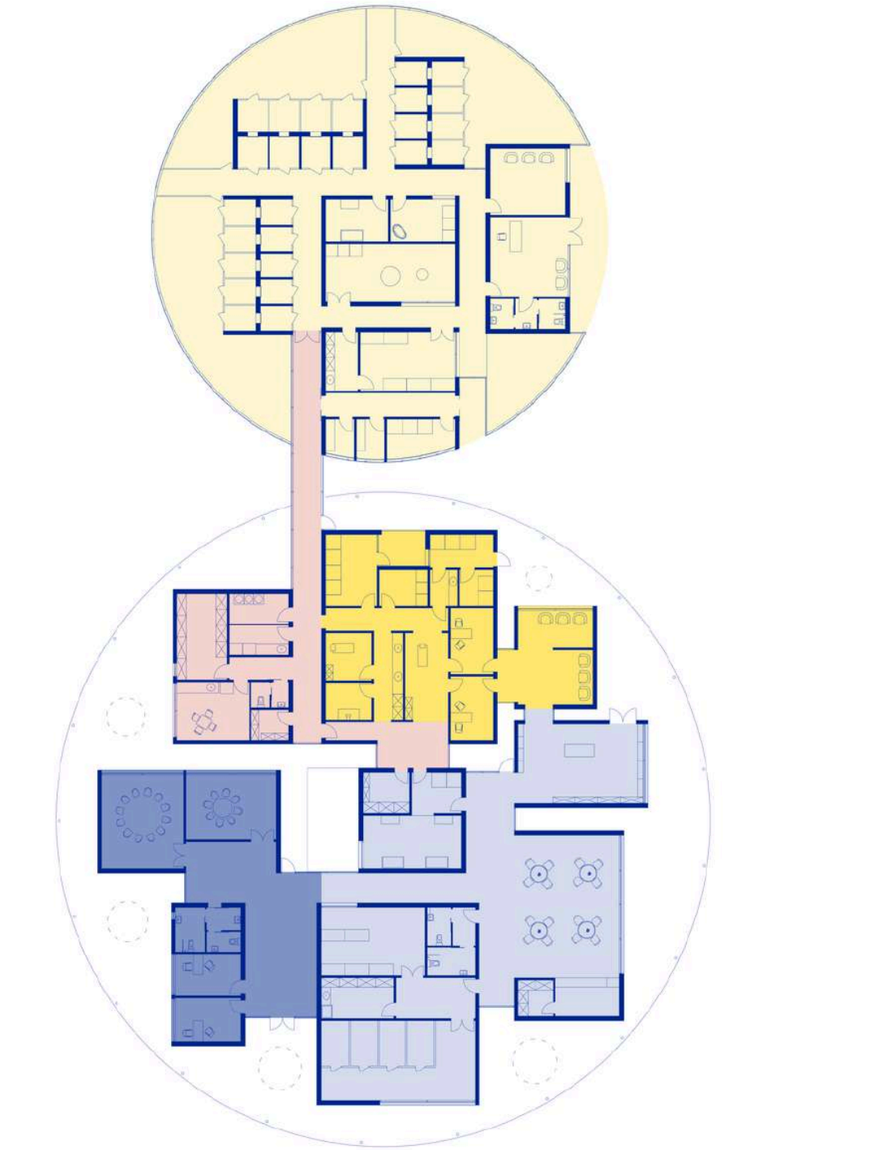


Fig. 103. Crematorium and Hospice Center West Elevation. Source: by the author.

Fig. 104. Daycare | Clinic | Shelter Plan. Source: by the author.





Healing Space Area
Clinic
Shelter
Pet Daycare Area
Support Area

Fig. 105. Functional Zoning.. Source: by the author.

1. Reception | pet shop
2. Café
3. Food Storage
4. Dog Daycare
5. Cat Daycare
6. Pet Grooming
7. Pharmacy
8. Reception
9. Psychological Counselling
10. Toilet
11. Group Therapy Room
12. Support Group Room
13. Activity Yard
14. Dog Waiting
15. Cat Waiting
16. Exam
17. Treatment
18. Preparation
19. X-ray
20. Surgery
21. Dog Ward
22. Dog Walking Area
23. Cat Ward
24. Isolation
25. Dark Room
26. Janitor Room
27. Stuff Lounge
28. Storage
29. Food Preparation
30. Laundry
31. Shelter Animal Entrance
32. Cop
33. Mech.Room
34. Electrical Mech.Room
35. Cat Preparation
36. Cat Room
37. Training Room
38. Entrance Hall
39. Pet Grooming(Shelter)
40. Kennel
41. Puppy Room
42. Dog Walking Area
43. Meeting Room

Fig. 106. Massing and Roof Form Development. Source: by the author.

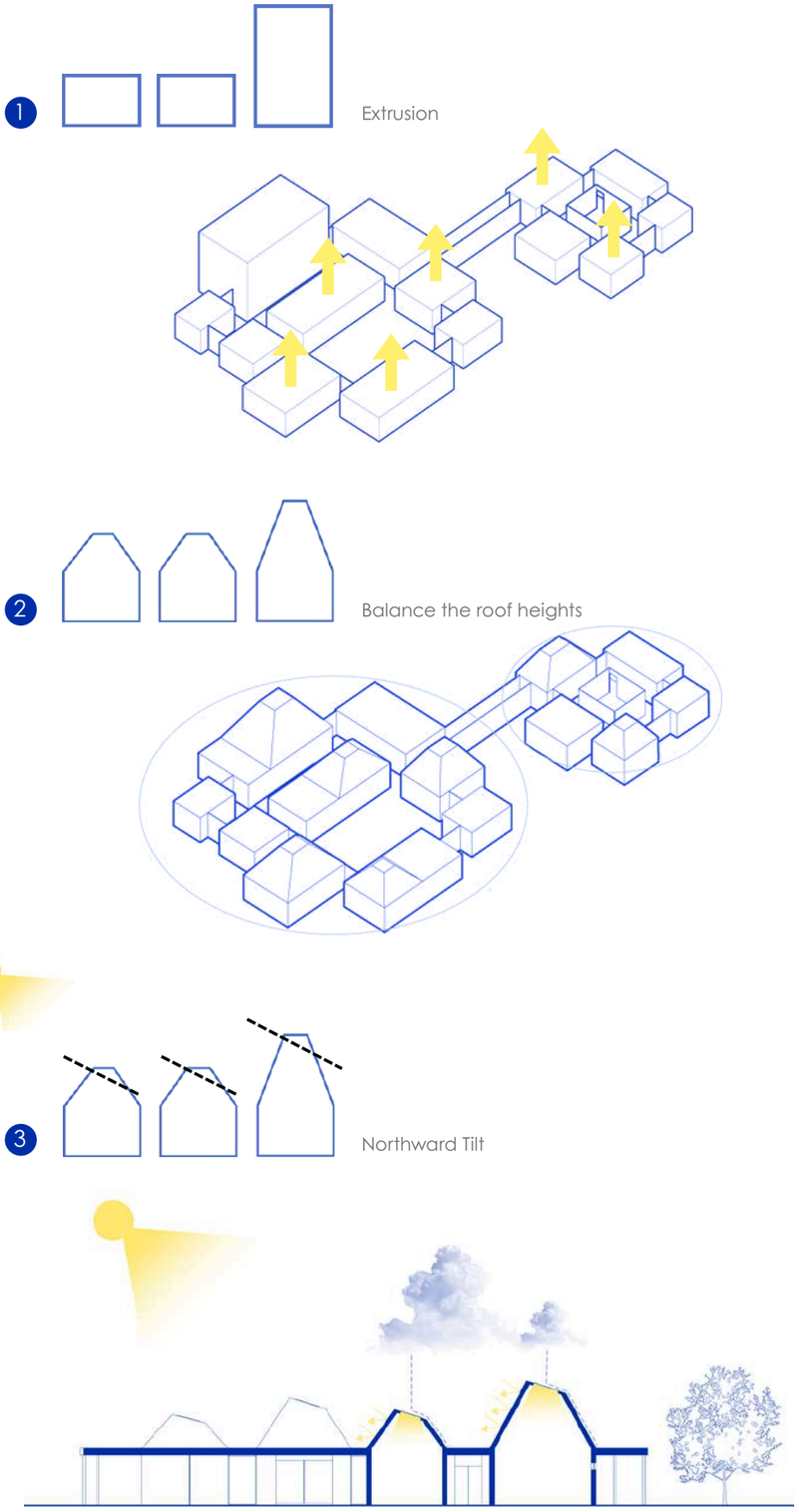


Fig. 107. Daylight and Rainwater Strategy. Source: by the author.

Fig. 108. Cemetery Plan. Source: by the author.

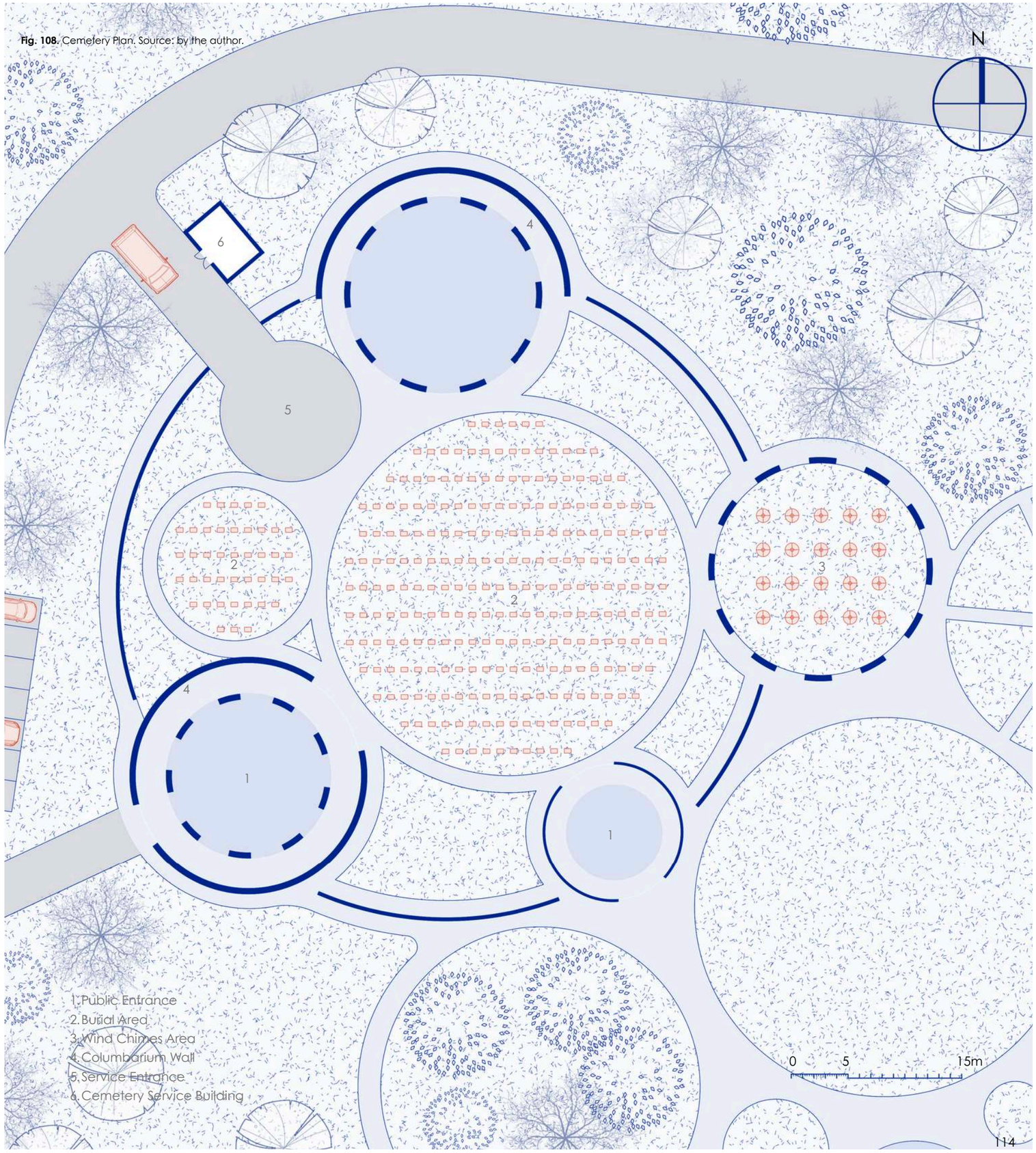
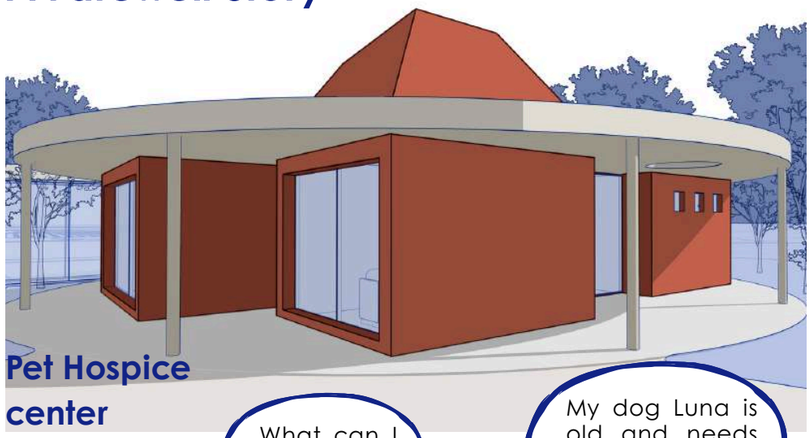
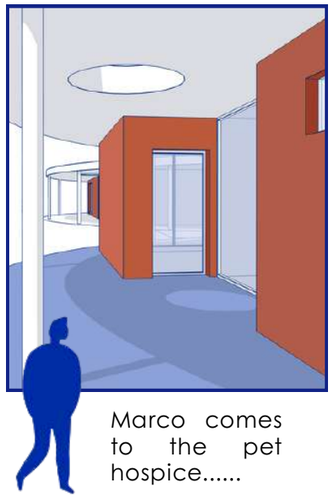
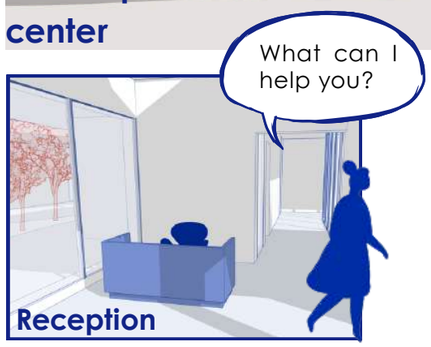


Fig. 109. Storyboard. Source: by the author.

A Farewell Story



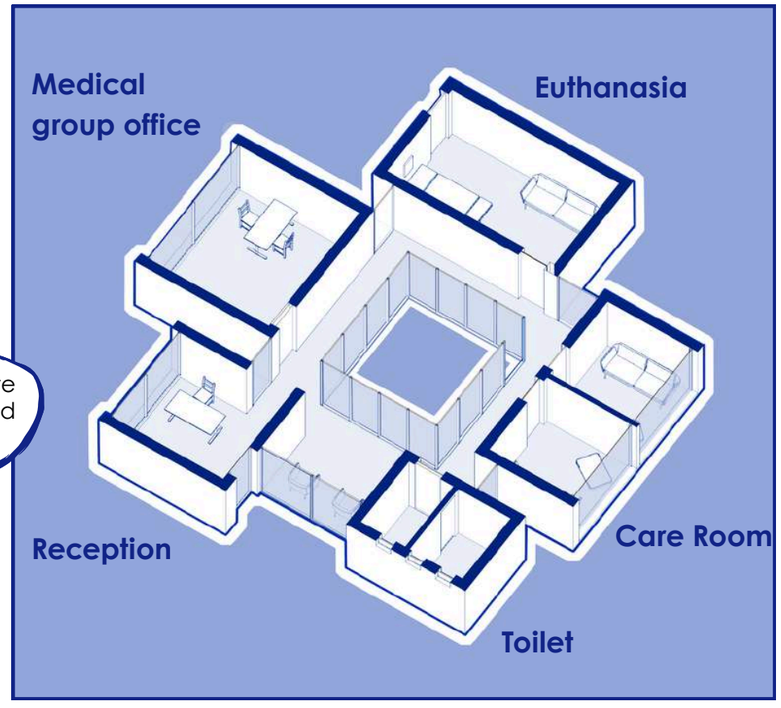


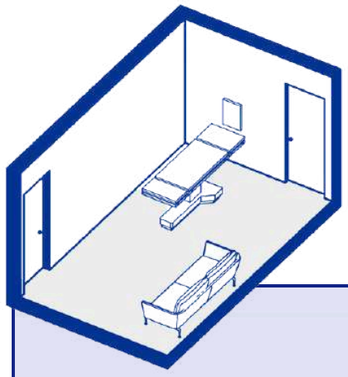






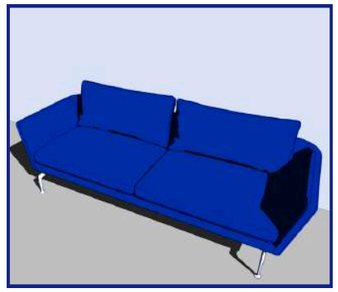


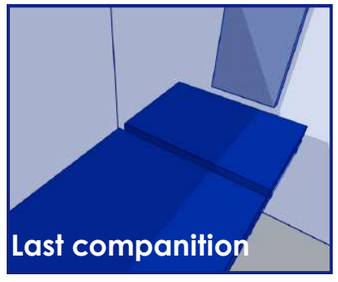


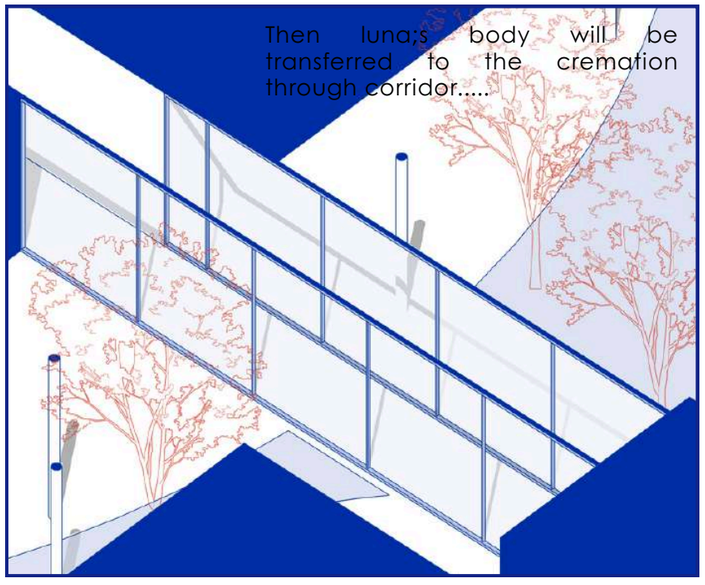


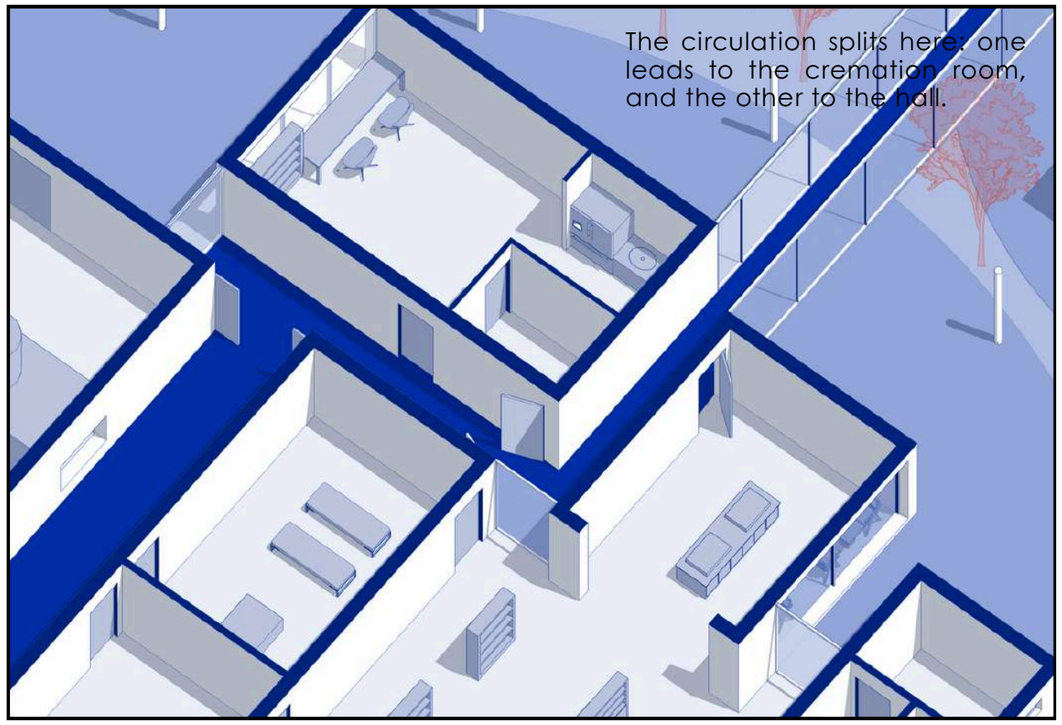
A few days passed, it's time to say goodbye...

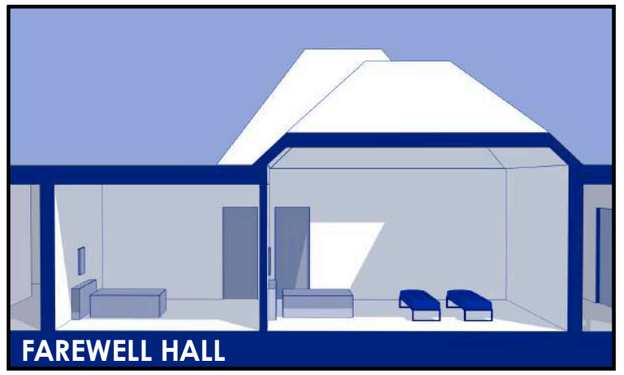


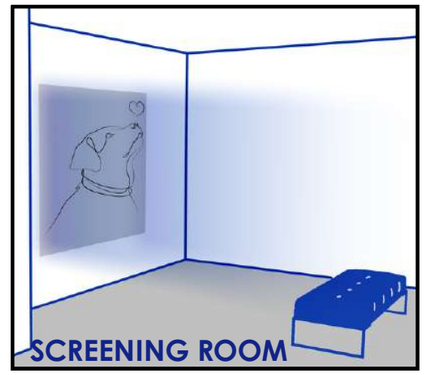


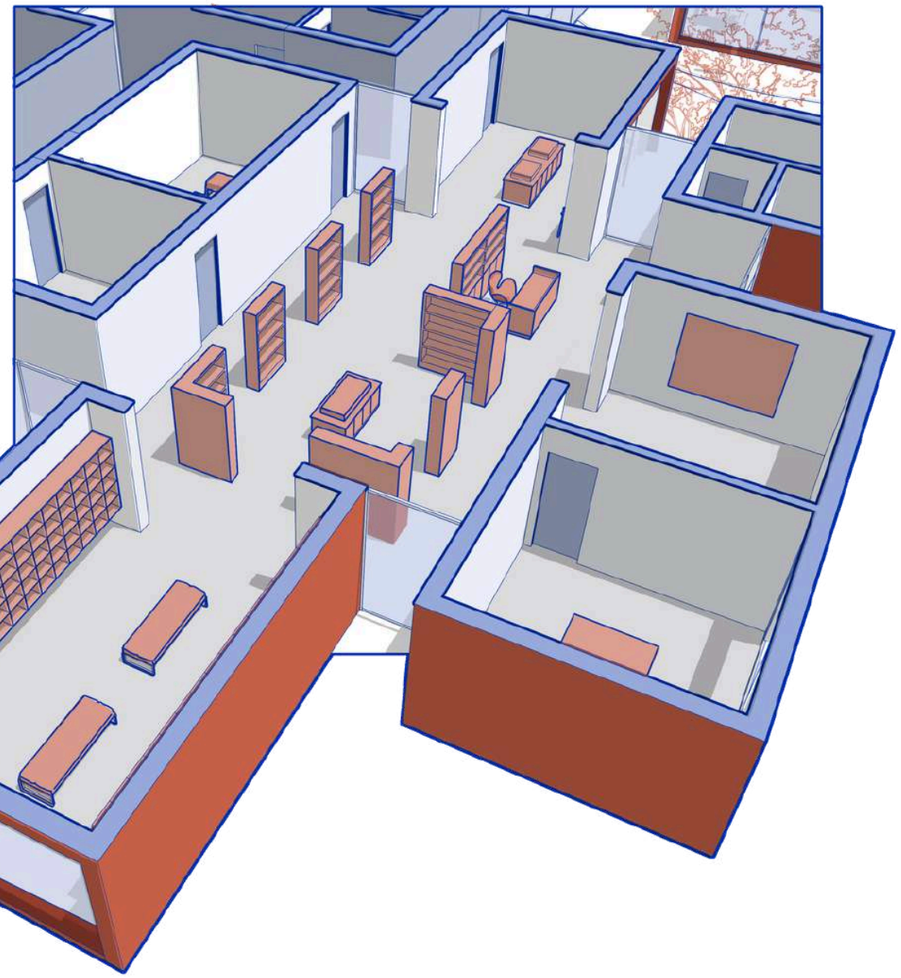


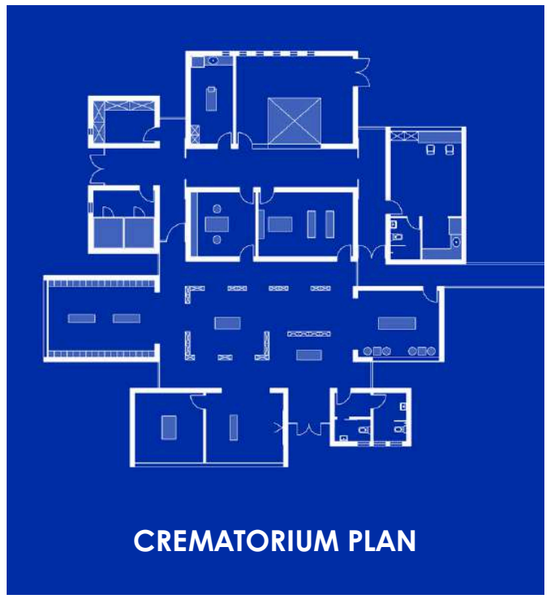




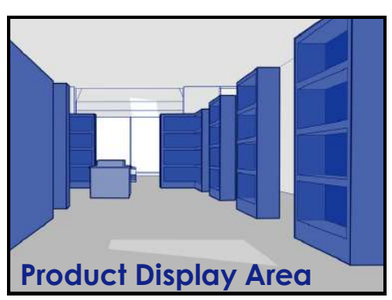


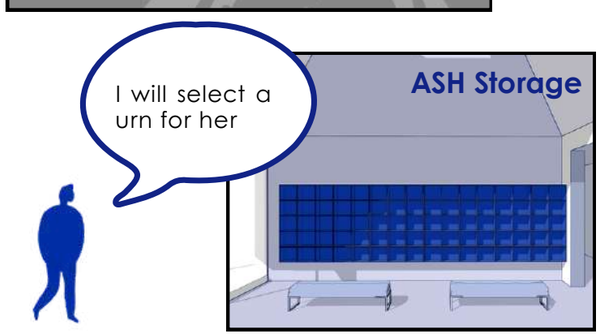




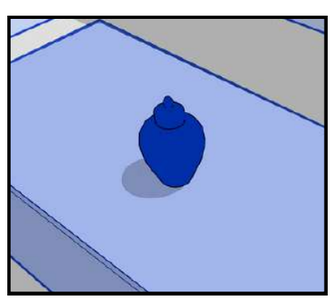






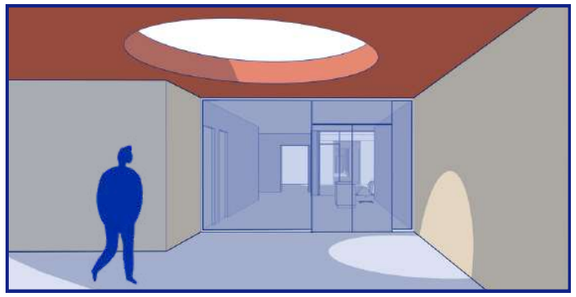




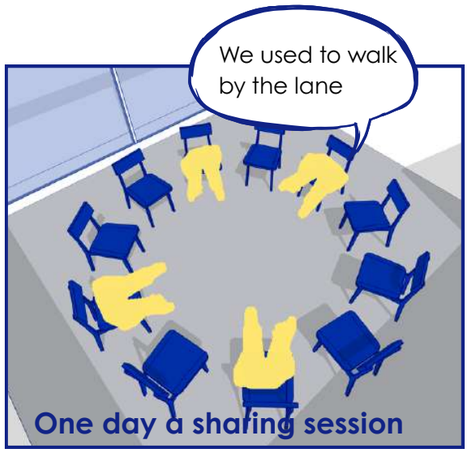


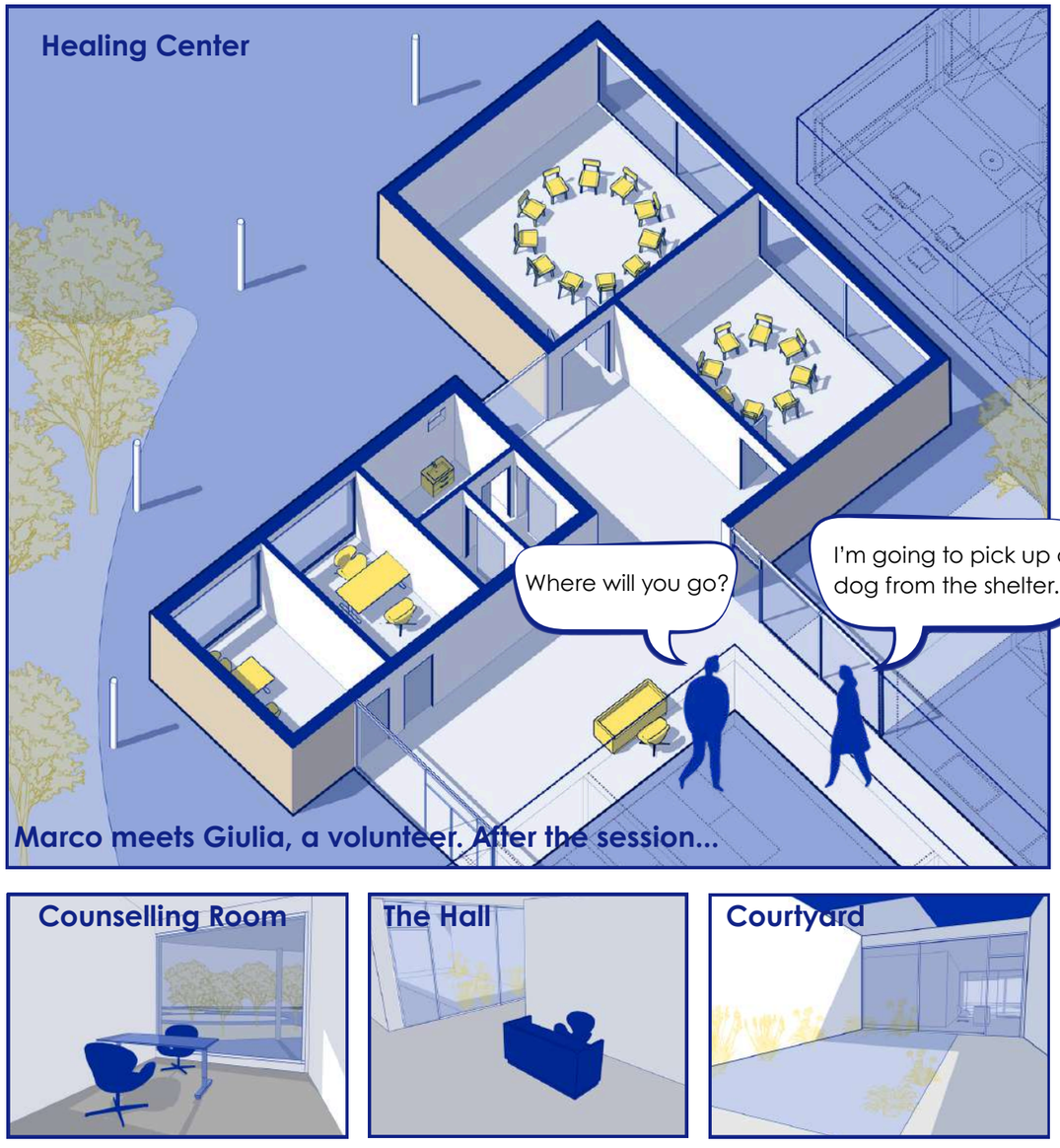
IT'S NOT ENDING.....

A New Chapter

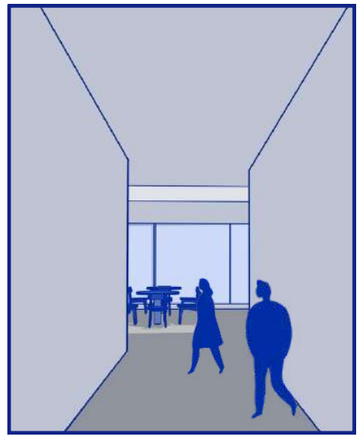


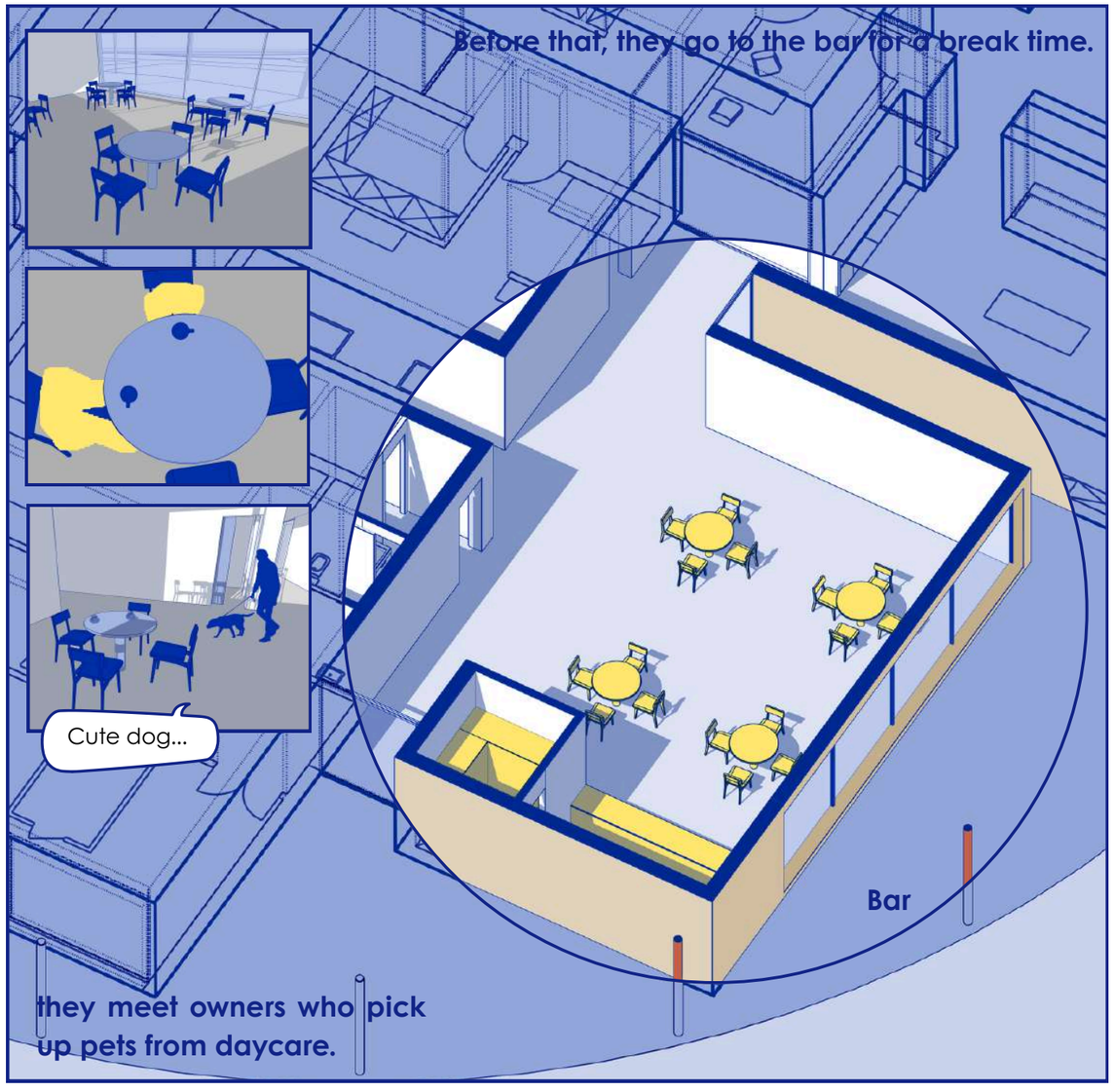
After the farewell, Marco often comes to attend the support group meetings...

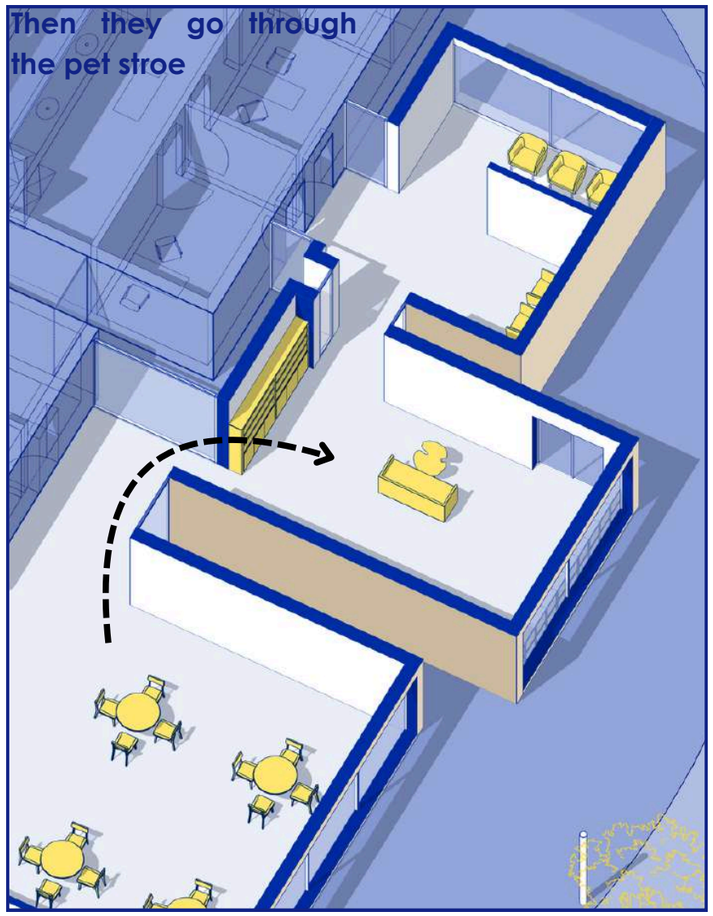




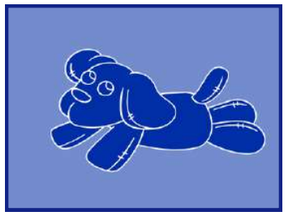




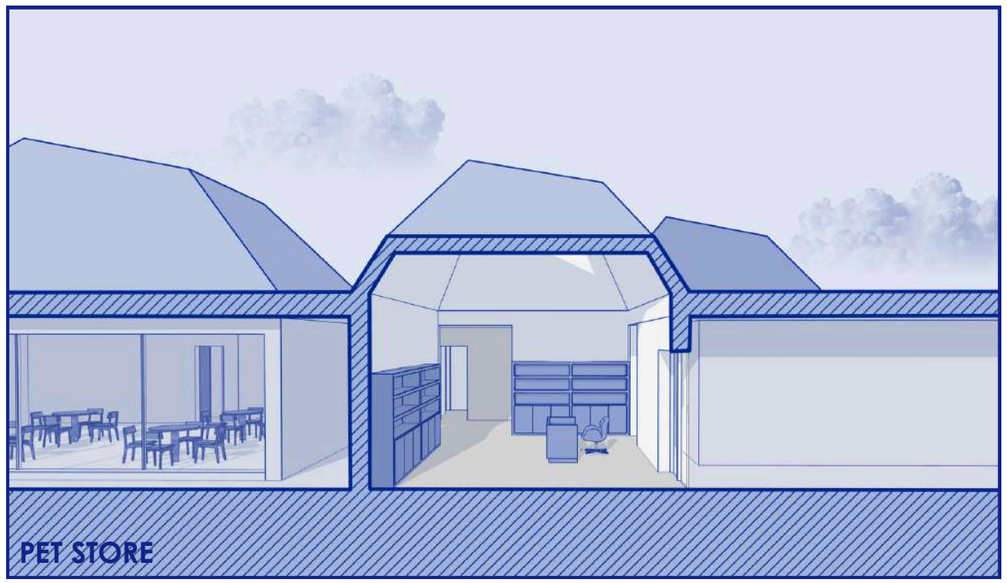


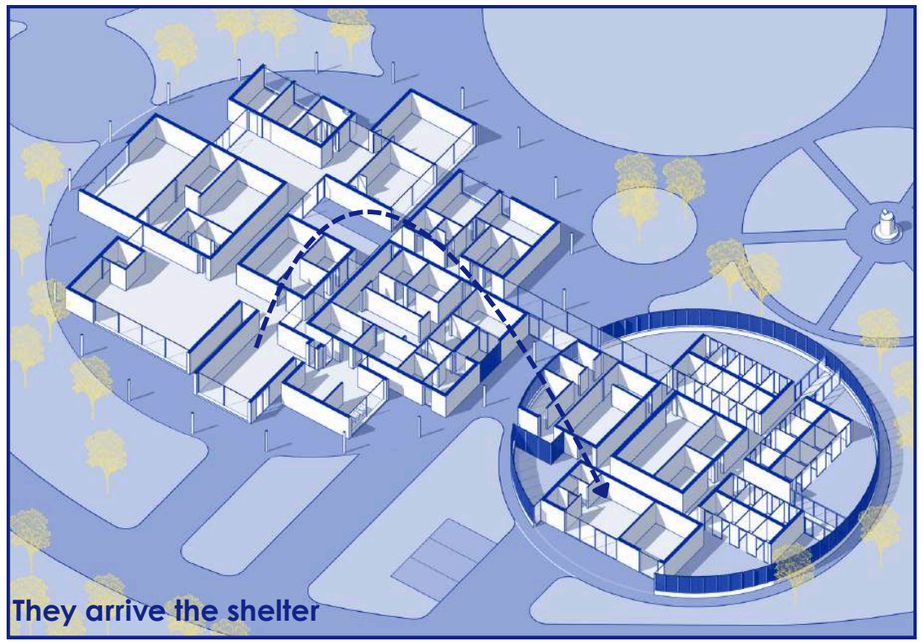


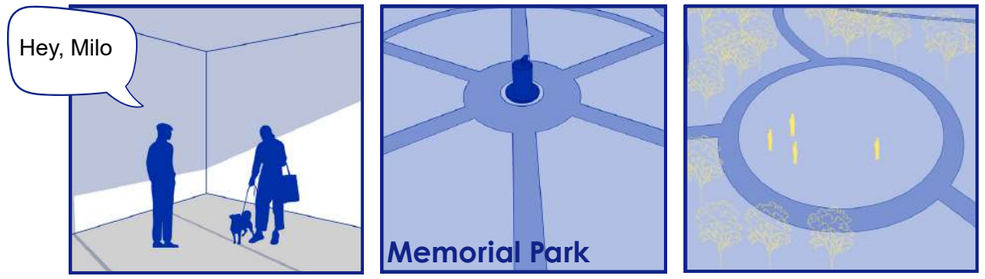


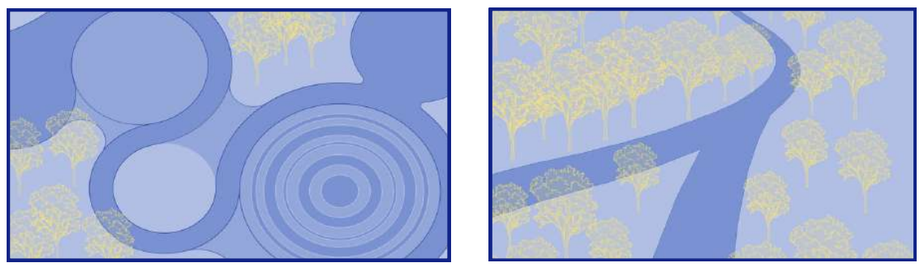


Giulia buys a toy for little dog, Milo.









They walk Milo through changing landscapes and greet people along the way...



Fig. 110. Healing center facade render. Source: by the author..



Fig. 111. Memorial park render. Source: by the author..



Fig. 112. View from the cemetery entrance. Source: by the author..

Conclusion

This paper begins with exploring the close relationship between humans and pets, but the grief caused by the death of pets still does not receive sufficient understanding and support from society. Existing pet funeral facilities typically focus more on practical processes such as body reception, cremation, and ash storage, while spaces for farewell, emotional expression, and remembrance remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study attempts to explore how architecture can respond to the death of pets, understanding it as part of the development of the human-pet relationship, rather than simply the end of an animal's life.

The human-pet relationship does not end with death, and neither do human-pet spaces. After death, people continue to connect with their pets through memories, belongings, ashes, memorial ceremonies, and repeated visits to mourning places. Furthermore, because grief over the death of a pet is considered disenfranchised grief, dedicated pet mourning spaces are necessary. These spaces can provide a place for grief to be acknowledged and expressed, preserving memories of shared life with pets and thus continuing the emotional bond between them. Since mourning is a personal emotion, and these facilities are shared by different people, pet mourning spaces also exist between private and public spaces. It needs to provide a quiet and private environment for mourning while maintaining a connection with the public.

Through research into history and existing pet cemeteries, it's concluded that the longevity of pet mourning facilities depends not only on their mourning and burial functions. The development of Hartsdale Pet Cemetery, dog cemeteries, and Hironin Pet Cemetery demonstrates that factors such as site selection, management models, funding, and the ability to adapt to urban changes all influence the long-term development of mourning projects. Over time, pet cemeteries will become places that carry public and urban memories. The development of Best Friends Sanctuary offers a new possibility for such marginal architecture—enhancing public participation and consensus by introducing multifunctional spaces and diverse public activities.

In terms of functional spaces, the separation of public and service flows is necessary. Compared to human mourning architecture, pet mourning buildings are much smaller in scale and need to provide farewell spaces suitable for individuals and small groups. However, compared to the more formal human mourning process, pet mourning is less constrained in its form and can evolve into diverse memorial spaces for different occasions, as demonstrated by the practice of Rainbow Planet Pet Farewell Hall. The design of pet mourning spaces is similar to that of human mourning spaces, utilizing landscape, light, and materials to create suitable spaces for farewell and long-term remembrance.

These research findings were applied to a specific design practice. The project was located in Collegno, close to Turin, with convenient transportation allowing it to reach Turin and the entire Turin metropolitan area. The site's proximity to a human cemetery, its location between two animal shelters, and its proximity to the landscape system of the Doraliparia River facilitated the integration of mourning functions, collaboration with existing animal-related facilities, and daily outdoor activities. However, the site's elevation differences, interference from nearby highways, limited accessibility, and long-term management requirements presented practical challenges. The project responded to these conditions by combining a pet hospice, crematorium, pet cemetery, and memorial space with an animal hospital, daycare center, shelter, pet services, public activity spaces, and landscape. The landscape separates the different functional areas, yet continuous paths connect them.

This organizational approach corresponds to different stages of the human-pet relationship. Care and end-of-life companionship lead to farewell and cremation; cemeteries and memorial parks allow memories to be attached to specific places; psychological support, sharing activities, volunteering, and adoption make it possible for people to gradually return to daily life. The stories of Marco and Luna, and Giulia and Milo, present this process from the users' perspectives. The loss of a relationship is not simply replaced by another, but rather memories of the past, care for the still-living animal, and new encounters between people coexist in the same landscape. This is also the meaning of "Back" in the paper's title: it is not a return to the state before the loss, but a return to daily life while preserving the original emotional connections.

Limitations

This study also has some limitations. First, the paper primarily focuses on cats and dogs, as they are the most common companion animals and usually form close living relationships with humans. The results may not fully reflect the needs of other animal species. Furthermore, there are still relatively few pet mourning-related facilities and projects, lacking systematic theoretical support. The cases selected in the paper come from different countries, periods, and cultural backgrounds, and the level of detail of the available data varies considerably. Secondly, the emotional and spatial needs discussed in this paper are primarily derived from existing literature, case studies, and architectural analysis. The study has not yet validated these findings through interviews, questionnaires, or post-use assessments with pet owners who have lost their pets, local residents, and facility operators. Grief is a highly personal experience, influenced by cultural background, religious beliefs, and the closeness of the relationship between humans and animals. Therefore, the space proposed in this project should be understood as offering different possibilities for farewell and remembrance, rather than prescribing a specific way for people to mourn. Future research can utilize participatory design, interviews, and observation to allow users to participate more directly in the design process and further adjust the spatial organization and privacy based on their actual experiences.

The Collegno project remains an architectural design proposal. Several practical issues require further study, including construction details, cremation equipment and emissions control, environmental assessment, accessible circulation across the sloping site, operating costs, relevant regulations and long-term maintenance . The proposed cooperation between the local

government, surrounding animal shelters, veterinary services, pet funeral homes, and community organizations is only a potential management framework and has not yet resulted in actual partnerships. Therefore, the future development of the project needs to integrate architectural design with technical, economic, and regulatory studies. Furthermore, the possibility of phased implementation can be further explored, allowing the project to be gradually adjusted according to changes in burial needs, urban development, and the needs of the surrounding community.

Ultimately, this paper argues that combining different spaces such as care, mourning, commemoration, and public landscape can make these marginal spaces an integral part of urban life. The public can be drawn to the site's landscape or public activities, bringing previously overlooked issues to the forefront of public attention, aiming to raise greater awareness and understanding of pet mourning, animal welfare, and the human-pet relationship.

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