



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Course of Laurea Magistrale
Architecture and construction city
a.y. 2022/2023

Beirut Cinema Center

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Abstract

The thesis will be a study focused on modernism in Beirut, revolving around one important structure in ruins, The cinema center of Beirut. After an analysis of the zone and the needs of its habitant, and after studying similar case studies, the next step is to design an extension for the building while preserving it and while preserving the modernist heritage in Beirut.





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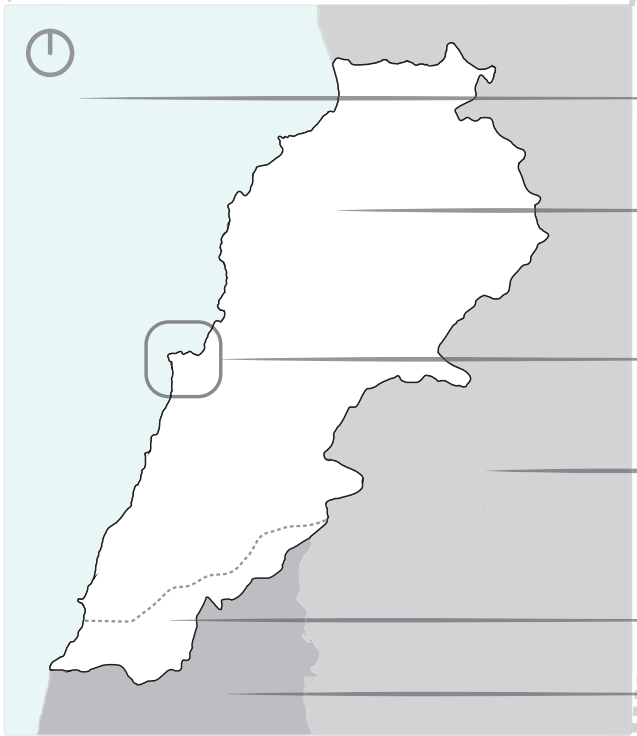
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Localization



World's map



Mediterranean sea

Lebanon

Beirut

Syria

UNIFIL zone

Israel

Graphic representation of Lebanon

With a population of over two million people, Beirut is the country's biggest city. It has a view of the Mediterranean Sea and is surrounded by mountains. The city's shoreline is diversified, with rocky beaches, sandy coasts, and cliffs coexisting. The city has a Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summer summers, nice autumn and spring seasons, and cold wet winters. Due to the fact that it has undergone eight cycles of destruction and reconstruction, the most recent one in 2019 after Beirut port explosion, it is frequently compared to the Phoenix. The religious makeup of Beirut is more varied than that of any other city in Lebanon, and possibly the entire Middle East. In the city of Beirut, there are nine main religious communities, the major ones are the Christianity and the Islam. The city was given the nickname "Switzerland of the East" because to its significant contributions in the areas of business, fashion, and the development of media. It also played an important part in the intellectual, artistic, and tourism life of the Middle Eastern region. However, it is a city filled with perplexing inconsistencies and political issues.



<https://flippednormals.com/downloads/beirut-city-lebanon-3d-model-30-km/>

Introduction

Cultural heritage defines evidence of human history and helps future generations to evolve in a sensible manner. Heritage loss is caused by both wars and natural catastrophe. Furthermore, civil conflicts have a large effect on societies and cultures. This has emerged as a big topic of discussion among governments all around the world.



In the case of Beirut, its image stands as a resilient city due to its heavy past. It is a city that rebuilds on itself to complete the urban landscape that it composes today. Indeed, it is a "phoenix" city that is constantly rising from its ashes. The event that most affected Beirut and whose citizens are still paying the price is the civil war (1975-1990), putting an end to a city center that was the heart of the capital, the meeting place and sociability of the Lebanese.

" With this bloody war, comes the destruction of the city's public spaces which was one of its first effects. From theaters of war, these spaces became issues, then objectives. The city center was destroyed as a symbol of a community coexistence that was no longer allowed.



The objective was to deprive the capital of its centrality, whether physically or socially. **Physically**, the "Green Line", a demarcation line was drawn in the middle of Beirut, which then separated the city between the West and the East with the center of the city in the middle. **Socially**, it divided the people between two different religious parties: the Muslims in the West and the Christians in the East. The city then has a new geography but also a new social hierarchy that will remain impregnated in the psyche of the Lebanese, paralyzing the socialization with the other.

The archetypes of this city center suffer heavily from the consequences of this war. Previously popular places of meeting and exchange, they are now becoming ruins of a past that still affects them. **The City Centre**, one of the major facilities of this center, an ancient heritage of the modernist era in Beirut, by its strategic position on the demarcation line, becomes a key place for the snipers and a real war bunker. The work of the pioneer architect of Beirut modernism Joseph Philippe Karam, has been under construction since 1965, and was never completed due to various interruptions in time. What gives this building its value is especially the concrete shell in ovoid shape that takes as a function a cinema, a **cultural meeting place**.

https://www.reddit.com/r/etymology/comments/rm-k6j1/beirut_1982_the_green_line_demarcation_zone/



<https://365daysoflebanon.com/2016/03/31/saving-beirut-heritage/#jp-carousel-2767>

After the war, it was necessary to reaffirm a centrality and sew the urban and social fabric of the city. A master plan was then put in place by the private company Solidère¹ for the reconstruction of the country. Oscillating between the desire to preserve the memory of Beirut's inhabitants or to apply a Tabula Rasa policy to rebuild a modern city in the image of the Gulf countries, the decision was to privatize the city center so that it would become a base for investment and attraction for Lebanese emigrants since the war and their fellow citizens. The city center then became an experimental laboratory of random reconstruction that did not correspond to the initial image and spirit of the country. Originally intended to be the largest shopping mall in the Middle East, the City Centre took the name of the Egg due to the ovoid shape of its cinema hall, and became the mirror of the mutations of the city of Beirut. Having undergone two significant transformations, the first the impact of the civil war and the second, the intervention of Solidère which reduced it to a concrete shell gutted and placed on a set of slabs, poorly maintained, it then accompanies the city in its changes and becomes the image of resilience.

Despite the new urban planning, public space is nevertheless the least considered in this reconstruction. It becomes a residual space, privatized and set apart from the rest of the city.

This choice comes in response to the end of the civil war, whose history of events has not been brought to light and whose common narrative has not yet been established. The structure is standing there without knowing its faith for its future.

1. Lebanese Society for the Development and Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, founded by former Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri.



<https://voiceofguides.com/alternative-local-tour-in-beirut/>



<https://sansfrontieres.home.blog/2020/09/13/beirut-reborn/>

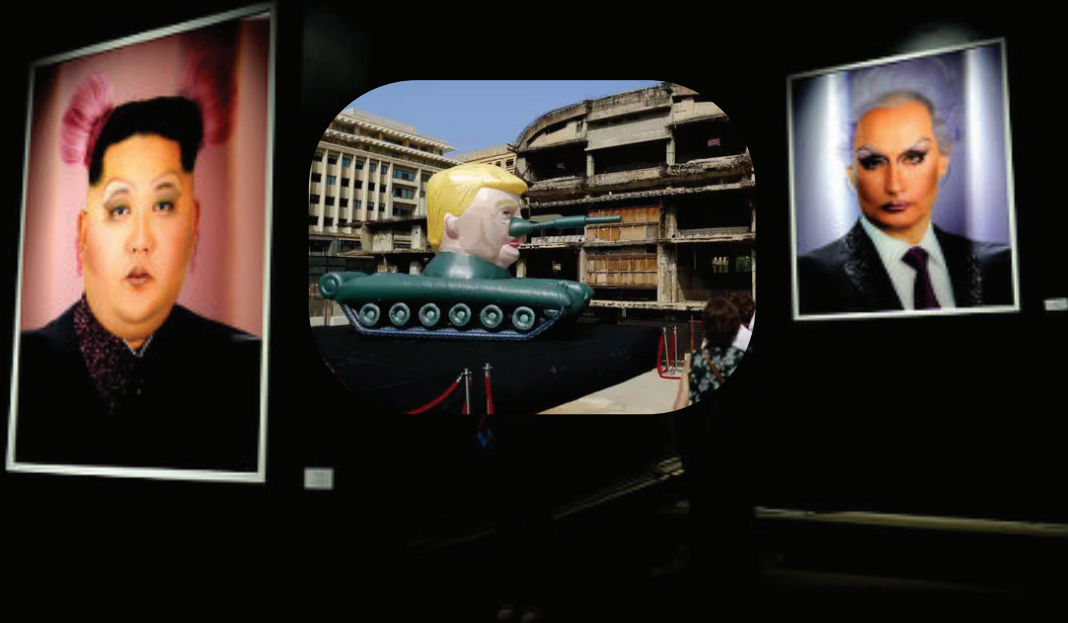
A will then to always socially separate the Lebanese people is present, a decision that results from the political leaders still in power since the civil war. The city center keeps its status of "No Man's Land", the plan set up by Solidère for the Martyrs' Square and the facilities around it not having been realized. Moreover, despite the various competitions launched to rehabilitate the archetypes of the city center, they remain intact since the civil war.

Beirut being a city marked by political, financial, economic and social instabilities because of its geographical position in the Middle East but also because of the corrupt internal politics of the country, becomes a base for the people's demands through the years occasionally.

However, the popular movement of October 17, 2019 marks a turning point in the history of Beirut's public space: it claims to reclaim it after having been privatized over the years.

The emancipation of Beirut's political system is a movement that has been built over the years. It reached its peak in October 2019 when the government decided to tax the free WhatsApp app for its benefit. Behind this banal decision is an economic collapse with a disruption of the banking sector and the bankruptcy of the BDL (Central Bank). This crisis is the result of a corruption fed by the political class since 1990. In order to challenge the political leaders, the heart of Beirut becomes the urban theater for this national movement rising from its ashes while declaring itself once again a place for all, a place unifying the Lebanese people who have been so divided. This event then uses the public space as a mean of reconciliation and suturing of the urban social fabric. The privatized public spaces quickly become a medium of expression as well as urban reunification.

Despite their original function, they are reappropriated and rehabilitated to become a place of welcome for the crowd that manifests itself. This mass then disfigures the urban landscape known as a dead space and transforms it into a place that hosts playgrounds, discussion platforms, a performance stage, a shopping street, and workshops open to the city according to the temporalities of the contestations. The reappropriation then takes different forms: physical, intellectual, symbolic and artistic. It is a changing landscape with a changing organization according to the situations. It becomes a laboratory of urban possibilities to rethink public space in a divided city.



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 Copyright: Copyright (c) 2018 Shutterstock
<https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/world/other-countries/donald-trump-tank-in-beirut-lebanon-by-artist-saint-hoax/articleshow/66201670.cms>

SAINT HOAX exhibition inside the egg



Wael Hamzeh/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock Credit: Wael Hamzeh/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock
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SAINTHOAX exhibition inside the egg

The Lebanese society succeeds in reclaiming the places that were once dedicated to it, adapting and reappropriating them to its personal uses for the common and collective interest through different territorial markings. The egg becomes one of the ultimate symbols of this popular movement and embodies **the eggupation**. It is then the alternative and versatile place of all the ambitions of people who seek to meet, debate together and decide on a better future and this within the concrete hull which is then formed as a third place, a heterotopia far from the reality of the Lebanese society.



Source: Omar Bsaibes

In the context of the city of Beirut, where public space is rarefied or privatized, how does the transformation of a building marked by the popular Beirut movement of October 2019 allow Lebanese society to create a public space open to all and conducive to the cultural development of its individuals?

In the framework of this study, we will first develop the context of the Egg, by studying its decays, and scars due to the war, and how to preserve them, without erasing what this framework went through. The egg, a rare building preserved since the civil war, becomes the symbol of the political expression of the Lebanese society. In a second step, we will look at the characteristics of the city-center which becomes a heritage to be revalorized through a new programming. In a third and final stage, the egg will be proposed as a new social and urban condenser through new architectural intentions and approaches inspired by its past and the transformations experienced in this space during the popular movement in Beirut in October 2019. The Egg will be a public place for all.

1. Downtown Beirut, a public place of sociability

a. A popular center: pre-war downtown planning

Located in the heart of the Middle East, Lebanon is distinguished by its geopolitical position in the Mediterranean. Beirut, its capital, is a port city located in the center of the country's coastline. Indeed, this characteristic as well as the various natural and cultural resources, make Lebanon a territory that has been claimed and reclaimed through the years. It becomes a palimpsest of the different civilizations that have crossed it.

Having been a real corridor in the history of civilizations, Lebanon is a palimpsest. The urban design is the result of the stratification elaborated over time by the various communities that have crossed it.

These traces of history are most visible in Beirut's downtown area which ensures various urban typologies and which will then be our focal point during this study on Beirut. From the Roman colonization to the French mandate, the city center was rebuilt on different occasions on the ruins of the previous civilization. It sees the beginning of the modern era under the Ottoman mandate who let down, between 1840 and 1876, the fortification of the city designed during the Roman period, ensuring then the role of the open port city². Given the growth of the city, its development continued with the establishment of new infrastructure such as the Beirut-Damascus road inaugurated in 1863 given the economic growth of the city, the creation of the railroad in 1895 and the expansion of the port in 1885 as well as by a new urban organization. We see then the genesis of spaces becomes "an interface between the world of industrial production, Europe, and the world of consumption, the Levant³". These come in addition to the old souks intra-muros of the city. Around these places the city is monumentalized to assert the Ottoman power and its authority. Several administrative facilities punctuated by recreational areas and green spaces, to show the urban development of the city, are then erected. This is the birth of the first public spaces in the city of Beirut. This new master plan was influenced by the European urban planning trends of the second half of the 19th century. Beirut then assumed the role of an important economic, administrative and commercial center from its geopolitical position in the Levant.

2. TABET J. (2001), *Portrait de la ville: Beyrouth*, Institut Français d'architecture, p.9.

3. DAVIE M F. (2007), *Beyrouth, de la ville centrée à la ville retournée*. Dans: *Fonctions, pratiques et figures des espaces publics au Liban : perspectives comparatives dans l'aire méditerranéenne*, sous la direction de May Davie, Liban, Éditions ALBA.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the French mandate took over the project of an unfinished modernization. In continuation with the beginning of the breakthroughs drawn under the Ottoman Empire, new orthogonal layouts take shape within the city center. This urbanism was inspired by Baron Haussmann⁴ who completed the master plan for the city of Paris in 1853, reflecting the military and political strength of the city. A new sector was created, the Etoile sector. Designed according to a radioconcentric plan, it was monumentalized in the image of the Place de l'Etoile in Paris, known today as Charles De Gaulle-Etoile⁴, under the direction of the urban planner Camille Durafourd in 1926. Radial axes appearing from the Place de l'Etoile in the center of the sector. This desire to make the image of Beirut in the image of the city of Paris, shows the ambition of France to export its currents beyond its borders. It then founded a break with the Ottoman past of the city by imposing a new architectural style breaking with the existing. The city center then took on an eclectic language with the mixture of Art Nouveau, Art Deco and other new architectural forms⁵.

The Place des Canons (Martyrs' Square) then took on a rectangular and regular shape in the new orthogonal grid. These first two Ottoman-French modernities from the 1880s to the 1930s transformed downtown Beirut as the gateway to the neighborhoods and to the city. It became the place of centralities and reinforced its symbolism of the country.

Lebanon became independent on November 22, 1943. It was then necessary to represent this new reform by reorganizing the territory. Elected in 1958, Fouad Chehab put in place "a policy of national construction through the reform of the State, which was no longer to privilege one confession at the expense of another and by striving to ensure a general balance⁶". He then instituted two reforms: one administrative and one urban. Michel Écochard, a French urban planner, was put in charge of introducing the new ideas of development⁶. He created a land use plan that consisted of decentralizing the city and linking it to its surroundings. His system is defined by a zoning of different functional poles with a new circulatory design.

Despite his efforts to develop the city, his plans were abandoned as too segregated, supporting the physical rupture between communities. However, the city center saw the birth of a new infrastructure within its walls, Fouad Chehab Avenue, later known as the Ring, a bridge that was intended to link the city.

4. SAMARA R. (1996), *Urban Reconstruction in the twentieth century: the postwar deconstruction of Beirut, Lebanon*, School of Architecture, McGill University, Montreal.

5. AWADA F. (2009), « Les apports français et européens à l'urbanisme au Liban. Influences et résistances. », dans : *Conquérir et reconquérir la ville, l'aménagement urbain comme positionnement des pouvoirs et contre-pouvoirs*, Liban, Éditions ALBA.

6. VERDEIL E. (2009), *Beyrouth et ses urbanistes. Une ville en plans (1946-1975)*, Paris, Presses de l'IFPO, p.238.

1. Downtown Beirut, a public place of sociability

b. The popular archetypes of the city center

The city center is now an experimental laboratory for Lebanese and foreign architects and urban planners. With the aim of developing the city, various foreign interventions have been commissioned and are then born. These new architectures are added to the eclectic language inherited from previous civilizations. The city center became a base for different archetypes and cultural activities such as cafes, restaurants, theaters, cinemas. Being the commercial, economic and administrative center of the city of Beirut, it inhabits different monuments that stage these powers. It was the ideal setting for the expression of public opinion and the place where ideals and great reflections merged in the city. Established during the Ottoman Empire, the Great Seraglio and the Small Seraglio were located in the heart of the city. These monuments were formerly part of the city extra-muros and composed places of rest for the merchants during their stay in Beirut. It was the ideal setting for the expression of public opinion and the place where ideals and great reflections merged in the city.

Formerly places of leisure and public exchange, these monuments are now reprogrammed to accommodate political functions and show the authoritarian power of the city of Beirut.

The Great Theater of the Thousand and One Nights, reflects the Ottoman architecture and the glorious years of Beirut. Built in 1920 by Youssef Aftimos, it became a highly coveted place located at the crossroads of two major axes in the city center.

The cinema, which received a great acclaim from the public, came to settle on several fields of the city center. This popular activity reinforces this dimension within the urban environment. The Rivoli, located at the northern end of Martyrs' Square, is one of the emblematic buildings and recognized through the years of this activity. The City Centre, which was intended to be the largest commercial, residential and cinematographic complex in the Middle East, was built at its western end. The construction started in 1960 by the architect Joseph Philippe Karam, it is recognized for its modern language and the symbolism of its cinema hall which takes an ovoid shape.

The Great Theater



Rivoli



<https://www.beirut.com/l/19970>

The City Center
(The egg)



<https://www.facebook.com/Architect.JPK/posts/beirut-city-center-and-egg-here-in-1973from-jpks-websitein-1965-karam-was-the-de/2262406640554097/>

<https://magazine.com.lb/2013/10/03/teatro-al-kabir-le-theatre-des-mille-et-une-nuits-4/>

Among these facilities, the souks were the most emblematic places of the center, reflecting its true commercial and especially social face. Melting under the Ottoman and French mandates, they became the places for the real social mixing, where all confessions met and exchanged⁷.

The Riad El Solh and Debbas squares are located at the gates of the city center and constitute a meeting place before entering the center of activity.

These facilities are mostly organized around Martyrs' Square, which changed its morphology following the French mandate. It adopts a rectangular shape and hosts in its center the statue of the Martyrs recalling the death sentences of the Lebanese by the Ottomans, hence its name.

These facilities within the city center transformed Beirut into "the metropolis of the Middle East"⁸ making it attractive and a place of gathering but also of meetings, exchanges and coexistence between different communities. It stands as a popular center blurring religious masks and social hierarchies.

However, these glorious years were short lived.

The civil war, which broke out on April 13 in 1975, interrupted the glorious years that Beirut was experiencing. It "resulted from a combination of several factors: regional conflicts, the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in 1967, the establishment of Palestinian PLO fighters on Lebanese soil, and local socio-economic and political tensions.

The war lasted fifteen years and ended in 1990. It was a bloody war, generating losses on different scales, both human and economic and material. It caused a rupture within the city which was physically translated by the "Green Line" which cut the city in two, between the West and the East, thus in Muslim and Christian factions respectively. This demarcation line runs along the city of Beirut for 4.5km and covers 70 hectares. It starts from the Martyrs' Square to the Choueifat district in the southern suburbs of the city. It then divides the city center in the middle, turning it into a no-man's land that only the mavericks covet to free their opponents on the other side.

7. BEYHUM N. (1991), *Reconstruire Beyrouth. Les paris sur le possible*, Lyon, Maison de l'Orient.

8. KASSIR S. (2003), *Histoire de Beyrouth*, France, Éditions Fayard, p.16.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/716142778218396101/>

Beirut souks 60's



<https://www.propertyfinder.com.lb/blog/things-to-do-in-lebanon-at-night/beirut-souks/>

Beirut souks today

1. Downtown Beirut, a public place of sociability

c. Civil war or the loss of public space

Following the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, these long fifteen years were destructive for the urban plan of the city of Beirut but also for its social fabric which is still in rupture. It was then necessary to rebuild the city again and restore its center. The destruction and looting of the city center put a definitive end to several archetypal facilities of this former urban heart.

Indeed, the Solidère company took charge of the reconstruction of the city center that had to be raised from its ashes. Created and appointed by the politician and businessman Rafic El Hariri, the land company opted for a policy of laissez faire, of tabula rasa, erasing both monuments of great historical value but also memory, as well as ancient traces of a people in agreement. Although the post-war diagnosis is that only 22% of the buildings in the municipality of Beirut were affected and 6% totally destroyed⁹, the rate of destruction pursued by the private company has been criticized and deemed unnecessary.

It is revealing that the more the work progresses, the more the city center loses its role as a space for sociability.

In fact, the master plan designed by Solidère proposes a new urban division and the spreading of the city center towards its port through a new embankment project of 60 hectares on the sea. A zoning plan was then established dividing the center into 10 different sectors, each associated with a predetermined function¹⁰. The implementation of this plan became reductive for the city center, in its form, its symbolism, but also in the flows of attractiveness and the former social mixing.

As a matter of fact, the war generated new urban centralities, held by the war militias. Thus, each centrality becomes representative of a political party, a confession as well as an identity. The city is then divided according to a social fabric shaped by the civil war. This decentralization affects the city center enormously: the former gateway to the city and the neighborhoods becomes a forgotten space, a construction site that is still recovering but losing its former identity, shaped by an involved facade that is being done in the image of the Gulf countries to attract monetary funds for investment and to revive the economy.

9. VERDEIL E. (2001), Reconstructions manquées à Beyrouth : La poursuite de la guerre par le projet urbain. Dans : Les annales de la recherche urbaine, n°21, p.66.

10. SALIBA R. (2004), Beirut City Center recovery: the Foch-Allenby and Etoile conservation area, STEIDL, Allemagne.



1. Downtown Beirut, a public place of sociability

c. Civil war or the loss of public space



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_Civil_War



<https://www.lebanoninapicture.com/pictures/1983-taking-a-walk-down-bab-idriss-street-while-waiting>



2017 © Joe "Jonzi" Lahdou

<http://cklinesarl.com/beirut-gardens-beirut-lebanon/>



<https://www.lebanoninapicture.com/pictures>

1. Downtown Beirut, a public place of sociability

c. Civil war or the loss of public space

The old urban landscape is then mutated and transformed. The old buildings that surrounded the Martyrs' Square are razed, only two are preserved, now occupied by a hotel Le Grey and the second by offices and the Virgin Megastore. The square itself is stripped of its symbolism, holding in its heart the statue of the Martyrs. It is mineralized and its future remains problematic.

The old souks, robbed during the civil war to cut off all means of meeting and exchange, are remade in the global image, also stripped of their meaning. They are replaced by a shopping mall, named Beirut Souks and taking the form of a semi-covered market, accessible from the street. However, the prevailing atmosphere is not one of conviviality and social mixing. The City Centre is today a concrete shell placed on slabs and posts, uncovered to the city. Among these urban ruins come to settle new projects such as the Mohammed El Amin Mosque, built in tribute to Prime Minister Rafik El Hariri assassinated in 2005. A new neighborhood is born which is that of Saifi Village. From its name, it wanted to form the idea of a real urban village within the city center, taking the form of several residential complexes resembling old traditional houses. Although they take on their facades, they are hollowed out of the same warm and welcoming family feel, the majority owned by Gulf investors or wealthy Lebanese families.

The changes undertaken in the city center support the fact that no will to unite the people and reconcile them is envisaged. From the absence of this ambition then disappear all the collective spaces that the downtown that once been in the 60's.



<https://www.archdaily.com/894168/rafael-moneos-beirut-souks-explored-in-photographs-by-bahaa-ghoussainy>



Scale: 1:10000



From the 1950s through the 1990s, Beirut had a tremendous increase in modernist architectural structures, particularly brutalism, which was popular at the time since it was quick and inexpensive with a little capital input. The buildings included on the sample map are one-of-a-kind structures designed by modernist architects who were regarded as pillars of the period for their ability to adapt their designs to their surroundings and to a Mediterranean atmosphere.

The ones chosen are recognized for being frequented by celebrities, or they have a prominent position in Beirut that cannot be missed.



Carlton Hotel

1955-1957

Karol Schayer, Wassek Adib and Bahij Makdisi

The cornice near the sea had just recently begun to expand when the Carlton Hotel was erected. The structure was likely responsible for most of the subsequent development in the region. The design team provided 140 rooms with unbroken views of the Mediterranean through wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling apertures.

A 2.6m deep loggia extended the space outside. The magnificent hotel had very large reception and eating facilities, all of which faced the outdoor terrace, where the renowned kidney-shaped pool hosted hundreds of weddings and other events. The hotel's destruction in 2008, which many regarded a major loss, sparked a fresh awareness of the need of preserving modern history.



Shams Building

1957

Joseph Philippe Karam

This structure, which faces Pigeon Rock, typifies the flamboyant local interpretation of contemporary architecture, with its most unique expression being the employment of a vivid color palette with 2x2cm enameled pâte de verre panels alternating on the façade.

A less obvious but more significant element is the structure, which is made up of 34 V-shaped columns grouped in two rows that support the building and were initially meant to give it a floating aspect.

A contemporary rendition of the attic roof crowns the structure. Despite being decidedly modern, the volumetric structure of the building conforms to the classical tripartite layout with a base, a body reflecting normal running levels, and a crowning level on top.



Saint-Georges Hotel

1930-1932

Poirrier, Lotte and Bordes with
engineer-architect
Antoine Tabet as architect on site

This landmark hotel, strategically placed at the edge of Saint-Georges Bay, clearly exhibits the influence of Auguste Perret with its innovative use of exposed concrete, rational construction, and space organization. The modular plan responds to the functional requirements expertly. The rooms are arranged around an open-air courtyard beneath which the kitchen is positioned to avoid the intense sun while servicing both the restaurant and the terraces outside. Maximum ventilation and visibility are provided by hollowed concrete blocks in the balustrades and walls.

The large reinforced concrete water tank with the hotel name in relief was built from the ground up, taking into account the addition of the third and fourth storeys in 1946 by A. Tabet.

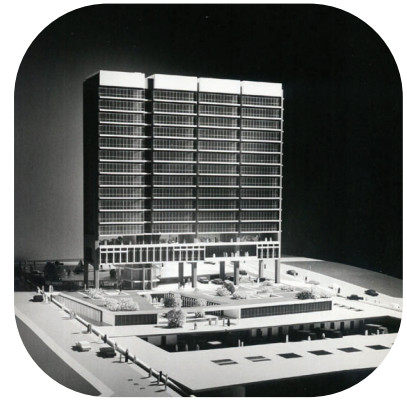


Interdesign

1975-1997

Khalil and Georges Khoury

The Interdesign furniture showroom in Hamra is a brutalist structure that resembles a vertical spacecraft with an unusual sharply pointed roof. The purity of the white walls within tempers what appears to be an assertive urban gesture in a just concrete. The plan is a series of levels that cascade around the circulation core, with full-height gaps between the platforms. The effective spatial device enables for views from various angles, such as side views of armchairs, tables, and other furniture. A curtain-wall facing north controls natural light, while beveled walls on the east side filter light in. Construction began in 1975 and was often halted owing to the war until it was finished in 1997.



EDL

1965-1972

P. Neema, J. Aractingi, J. N. Conan
and J. Nassar

Electricité du Liban, a structure outcome of one of many competitions held in the 1960s to provide Lebanon with public buildings. It is an example of a successful partnership between local and international engineers and architects. To provide an open view from the main street to the Mediterranean Sea, the architects placed the public lobby on a lower level, accessible through a sunken plaza provided to tourists and the surrounding community.

The majority of the structure is supported by four 14-meter-long pre-stressed concrete porticos. Given the vast spans, free partitioning of the floors made of precast slabs was conceivable, a method accessible in the nation since the 1950s. The design is climate-responsive, with a concrete claustra veil on the southern sunny side and full light on the northern side.

2. The Egg or the symbol of the Lebanese political expression

a. A cultural, architectural and cinematographic heritage

Being one of the few buildings preserved since the civil war, the City Centre known today as the Egg for the shape of its ovoid cinema, is one of the few standing witnesses of the events that took place in the city of Beirut. Located on the western side of the demarcation line and in direct proximity to the infrastructure the Ring, it is the work of the architect Joseph Philippe Karam, a pioneer figure of the modernist movement in Lebanon. Under construction since 1965, the project was never completed, quickly interrupted by the civil war of 1975 which left its mark heavily on it. Originally intended to be the largest shopping mall in the Middle East, offering a multiplex of offices, residences and a cinema on the scale of the city¹¹, the egg is today reduced to a damaged concrete shell placed on uncovered concrete slabs and beams, juxtaposed with a large void revealing the hollowed-out basements of this complex.

Indeed, the only completed figure of the project that was underway, the concrete shell, designed by engineer Georges Tabet, housed the 850-seat City Centre cinema, which was called the City Palace. It was an important cultural place during the glorious years of Beirut, surrounded by the major axes of the city and the city's major roads as well as Martyrs' Square and other important facilities. Its central position in the heart of the city put it in the middle of the fighting. It quickly became a war ruin, gutted and sheltering the snipers on the demarcation line. After the war, it is owned by the Solidère land company in charge of the reconstruction of the city center following the sale of the Samadi and Salha families, owners of this building, against shares in the company. It was then categorized as a "recoverable" building¹². It undergoes a modification: the only tower built in the complex is destroyed, leaving only the ovoid shape and the basements, generating a large void in the old slab.

Despite the various attempts to restore and transform this building, designed by different local and international architects,¹³ the egg remains an unchanging figure in the urban landscape of the city center, allowing only the traces of time to take hold of it. This invariability stems from the opposition of different initiatives to the building, which is considered to be the bearer of an important collective memory. The City Centre represents in itself the expression of an identity and a memory threatened by war and reconstruction.

11. KARAM J.P. (1968), « Centre Urbain « City center » », *Al Mouhandess* (11), revue édifiée par l'ordre des ingénieurs et architectes-Beyrouth.

12. BRONES S. (2020), *Beyrouth dans ses ruines*, Parenthèse, MMSH, p. 146.

13. MMAP (1998), Bernard Khoury (2004),

In 1994, the task of constructing the Ministry of Finance on the vacant lot was assigned to Solidere. It was expected that there would be several ideas before a single design was selected. MMAP, a local architectural company, came up with the idea for the proposal. According to their concept, the Egg would be sliced in half along one side in order to incorporate it into the new project, and the present tower would be demolished in order to create place for a taller tower. Because of this, excavation work had to be done on a total of six underground levels in order to construct new foundations and preserve the existing ones. Due to the fact that the Egg cannot be destroyed, it is protected by the Ministry of Culture, MMAP devised a plan to rehabilitate the structure and incorporate it into the building. The Egg was obscured by the newly designed architectural skin of the building. The project was put to halt.

The bombings and other acts of destruction have caused significant damage to the columns that are located on the ground level as well as on the two above stories. MMAP was given permission to fortify both the building itself and the retaining walls around it. In terms of the structural components that are keeping the Egg stable, the originally free-standing shape was rigidified so that any potential disasters in the future may be avoided. The plans of every floor became a forest of reinforced concrete pillars, assuring its stability.

In 2004, the plot's new owners recruited Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury to remodel the egg. Due to the death of the Prime Minister (owner of Solidere), the project was halted once again, and the egg was later handed to famous French architect Christian de Portzamparc, who failed to preserve it. After a third attempt, the project was stopped.

Initially a slab urbanism, the City Centre is the expression of the Beirut modernist era. Its architectural momentum and ovoid shape put Lebanon at the time in the ranks of innovative architecture. The shell quickly became a recognized signature of the architect, reused in other projects in the Lebanese territory, this time accompanied by international architects.

The City Centre also became the symbol of the popular Beirut era and its cinematic imprint. Indeed, standing near several cinema centers including mainly the Rivoli which suffered the consequences of the reconstruction policy based on the tabula rasa of Solidere, it becomes the only trace or even the flagship monument of this era which once existed and united people.



<http://www.christiandeportzamparc.com/en/projects/beyrouth-olayan-2/>

2. The Egg or the symbol of the Lebanese political expression

b. The "Eggupation": the Beirut popular movement

"The Eggupation": the popular Beirut movement On October 17, 2019, the government met to discuss the budget for the year 2020. But this insignificant date, marks a real turning point for Lebanon. Indeed, during this meeting the Minister of Telecommunications proposes a tax on WhatsApp phone calls and other means of telecommunications via the internet. Behind this banal decision lies an economic collapse with a disruption of the banking sector and the inability of the Lebanese state to meet its liabilities.

The same evening, and instinctively, young people meet in Beirut and take to the streets. Although the rallies were initially held to demand an end to the WhatsApp tax, they expanded in the following hours to become more general demands regarding the social, economic and political problems that the political class and the governance of the country since 1990 have entrenched. The Lebanese people no longer demand the rejection of the WhatsApp tax but the fall of the regime, the fall of all politicians who are actors of the status quo, the fall of the system that has and still oppresses them.

The insurgency takes the form of a popular mass movement under the name of Thawrit Techrin or October Revolution. It spread throughout the Lebanese territory through the occupation and blocking of key spaces such as highways and squares, but was concentrated mainly in downtown Beirut, at the Chevrolet crossing in the nearby suburbs, at Al Nour Square in Tripoli as well as the Elia crossing in Saida. It differs from the movements (cf. Cedar Revolution - 2005 and Tol3it Rihetkon - 2015) that led to its formation by its total detachment from political parties: it is the first time that the Lebanese people gather only under one flag, the Lebanese national flag and under one slogan "Kellon yaane kellon" or "All means All".¹⁴

This movement then disfigures the urban landscape, reappropriating public space and reinventing it through a sustainable occupation. The downtown area, whose public spaces were privatized and owned by the Solidère company, experienced a real revitalization. The consciousness of public space is born within each demonstrator who comes to appropriate this corner of the city. The role of the media, in an era where everything is shared online, is growing and becoming a key means of communication¹⁵.

The centrality so sought after by the politics of reconstruction is rediscovered by the October 2019 mobilization.

14. WAEL S. (2020), « How people reclaimed public spaces in Beirut during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising », *The Journal of Public Space* 5.

15. NASSER R. (2012), « The Arab Revolution takes back the public space », *Research Gate*.



<https://www.archdaily.com/941408/public-spaces-places-of-protest-expression-and-social-engagement>

2. The Egg or the symbol of the Lebanese political expression

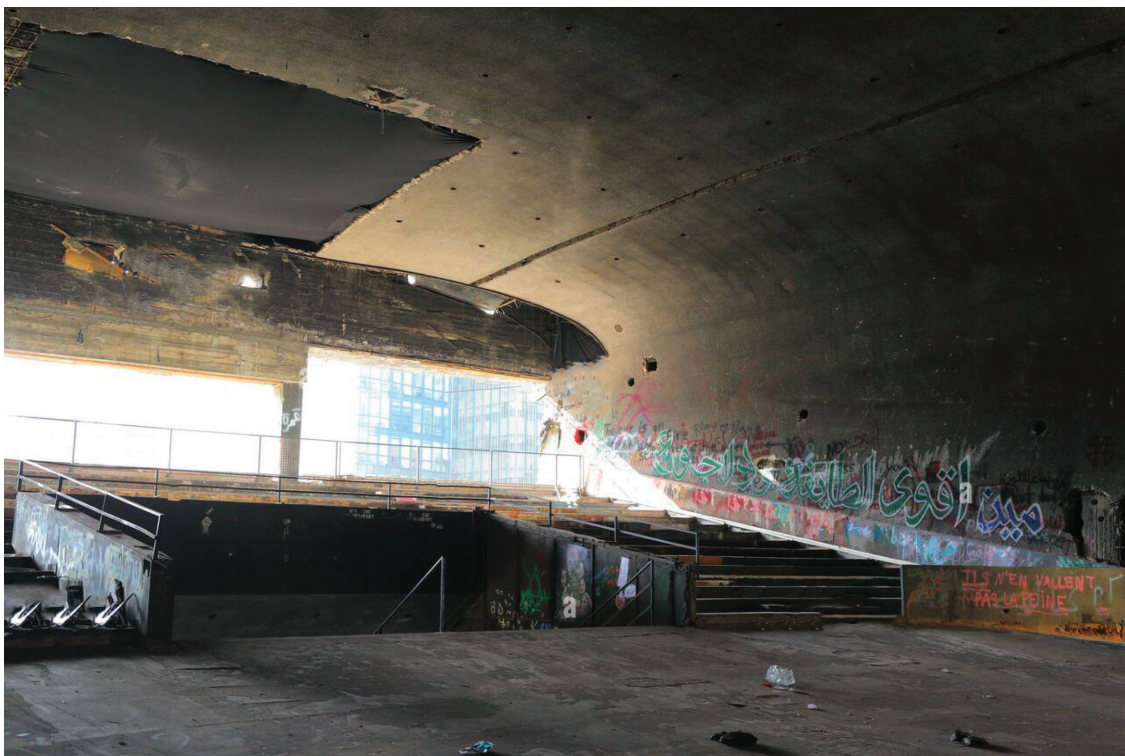
b. The "Eggupation": the Beirut popular movement

The city center is being remade in the image of a real beating heart, a festival, a meeting place and even the former gateway to the city and its neighborhoods. In the reclaiming of these places, the people are making the city according to their ambitions and expectations, in the image of a reconciled people, united and growing together.¹⁵

The protest took different forms and overthrew the government in the first place. Although it was intended to be pacifist, it was punctuated by moments of violence caused by supporters of political parties and security forces. After several months of occupation, this movement was interrupted by the health crisis that was unleashed in the country. The protesters briefly lost hope in the rebuilding of their city with the rapid devaluation of the Lebanese pound which pushed them to seek their future elsewhere.

The revolution resumes 10 months after its beginning, shaken and reanimated by the double explosion of the port on August 4, 2020. Categorized as the largest non-nuclear explosion in the world, it destroyed a large part of the city of Beirut and its nearby suburbs and left scars on the Lebanese people, causing great human and material losses. This human catastrophe ignites the street again and awakens a real anger among the Lebanese. The movement turns into real riots against the government, 4 days after the explosion of the port.

From its term Egg, the occupation of this building left to the abandonment since the war, becomes the Eggupation. It becomes a support of political and democratic expression, but also artistic. Located at its right end, in continuation with the Martyrs' Square, the parking lot of Lazarieh, formerly a residential block, becomes an urban platform to stage the City Centre. It is then planted with tents held by public associations that make it an important cultural pole. In spite of the different proposals that have imagined its transformation, it has been abandoned since the civil war and occasionally over short periods of time hosts alternative and ephemeral programs that put it back on stage in the city. From its reclaiming and reappropriation, the egg becomes a true symbol of the October 2019 movement, a support for the city and change. The occupation of this space has allowed the rebirth of a true cradle of thought. Several privatized universities that never exchanged together, then find a common ground within the shell of the Egg. Former place of film projection, it is then an engine of the revolution of people, and allows even better, the projection in the future of a whole nation.



<https://www.alamy.com/lebanon-beirut-bachoura-bechara-el-khouri-street-city-center-dome-the-egg-and-mohammad-al-amine-mosque-image447225566.html?imageid=63C9BF0E-CF77-48EB-A897-BAF2A8E07E2F&p=1760835&pn=1&searchId=5835e>

<https://www.alamy.com/editorial-beirut-lebanon-12242019-re-mains-of-the-iconic-egg-building-originally-built-as-a-cinema-and-destroyed-during-the-civil-war-image339509430.html>

2 A heritage to be revalued

Architectural intervention



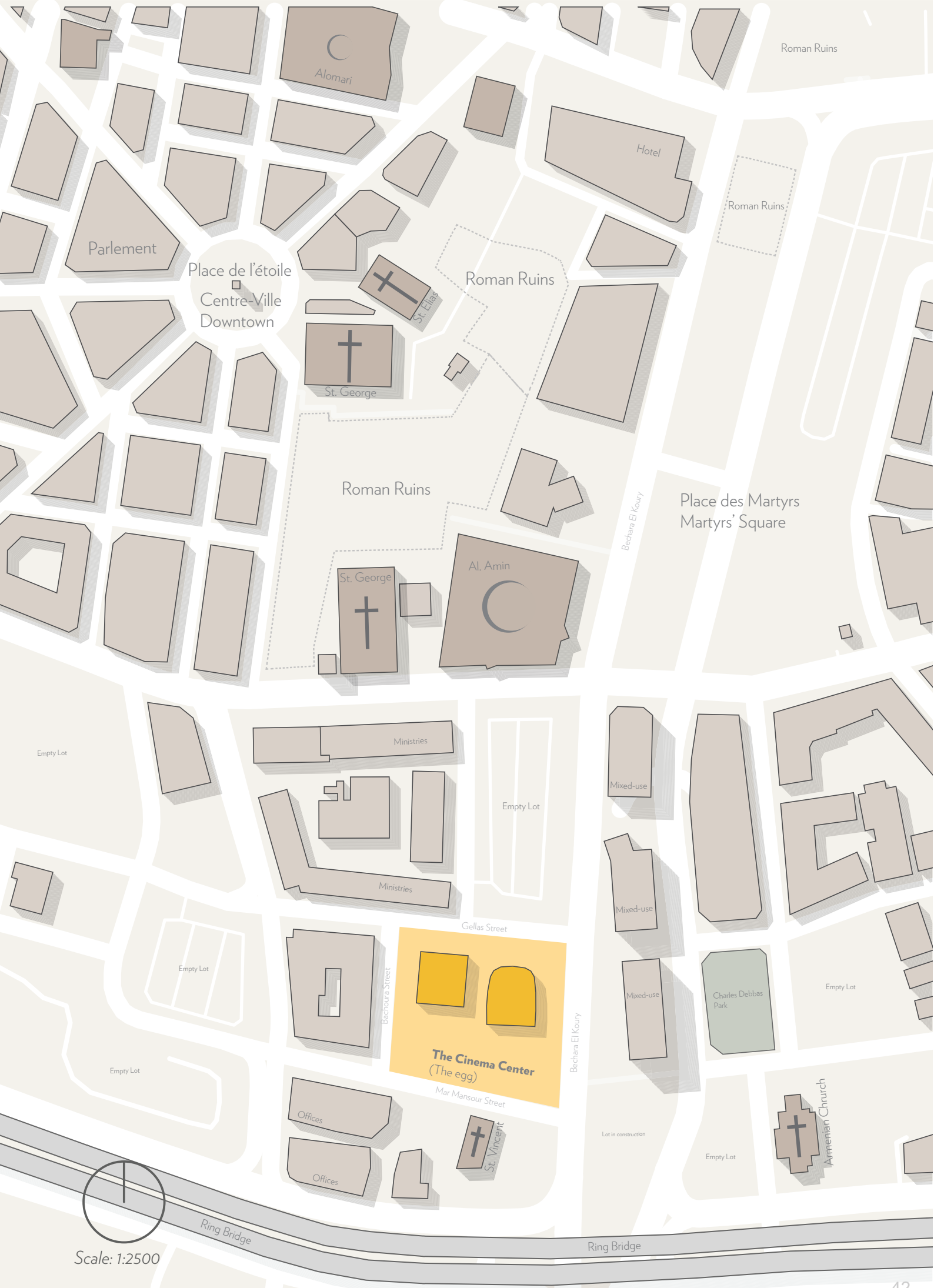


1. The characteristics of **the Egg**

a. The components of the Egg

Context

The Egg has different characteristics that make it an emblematic place. Its urban situation alone raises different issues. Its position on the old demarcation line and near the Ring Road shows its geostrategic position within the city center. It is surrounded by four decisive neighborhoods in the city of Beirut, Bachoura, Monot, Saifi and Downtown, neighborhoods that have evolved independently of the others following the urban division caused by the Ring and the Green Line. These neighborhoods are now in urban rupture, visible on the fabric of the city. This position confers to this place without vocation a responsibility to stitch the urban fabric and to realize the reconciliation of the meeting flows. In addition, the inauguration of the Al Amine Mosque, facing the Saint Vincent Church, a second war ruin, puts it in the middle of two places in tension, two confessions that were the cause of the civil war and whose understanding has still not been established.



Roman Ruins

Alomari

Hotel

Roman Ruins

Parlement

Place de l'étoile
Centre-Ville
Downtown

Roman Ruins

St. Elias

St. George

Roman Ruins

Place des Martyrs
Martyrs' Square

Bechara El Koury

St. George

Al. Amin

Empty Lot

Ministries

Empty Lot

Ministries

Mixed-use

Mixed-use

Mixed-use

Charles Debbas
Park

Empty Lot

Empty Lot

Empty Lot

Gellas Street

Bachoura Street

Bechara El Koury

The Cinema Center
(The egg)

Mar Mansour Street

Offices

Offices

St. Vincent

Lot in construction

Empty Lot

Armenian Church

Ring Bridge

Ring Bridge

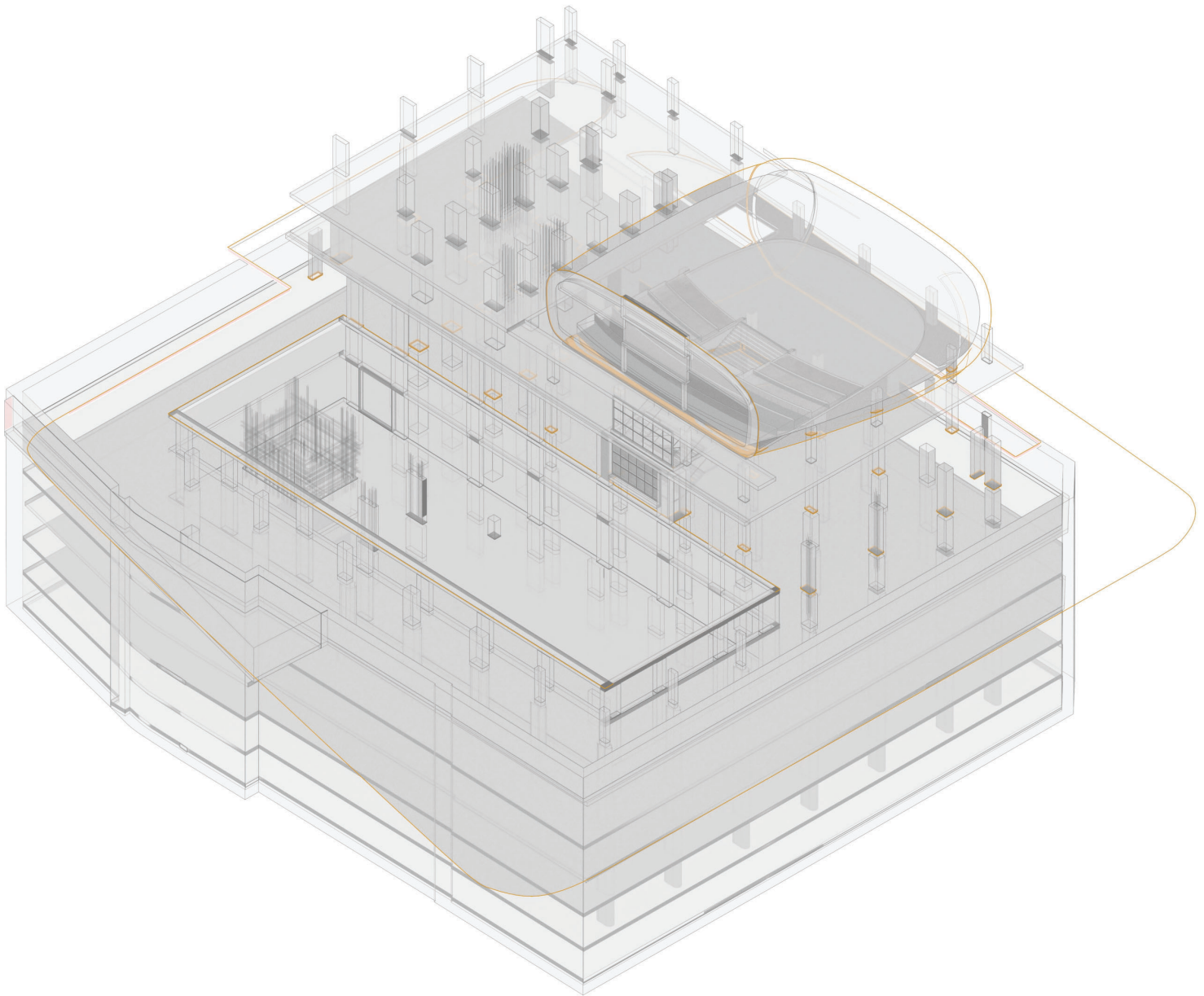
Scale: 1:2500

1. The characteristics of **the Egg**

a. The components of the Egg

Tectonics

The structure of the egg is a second element that makes it a particular building. Composed of a system of slabs and simple posts, it gives it a flexibility with regard to its transformation. The generous span between the different posts, in spite of the different existing frames within this building, allows to consider a multiplicity of spaces in this great place. It is a visible structure open to the air, hence the tectonics of this building, the real expression of its assembly.



Source: Omar Bsaibes



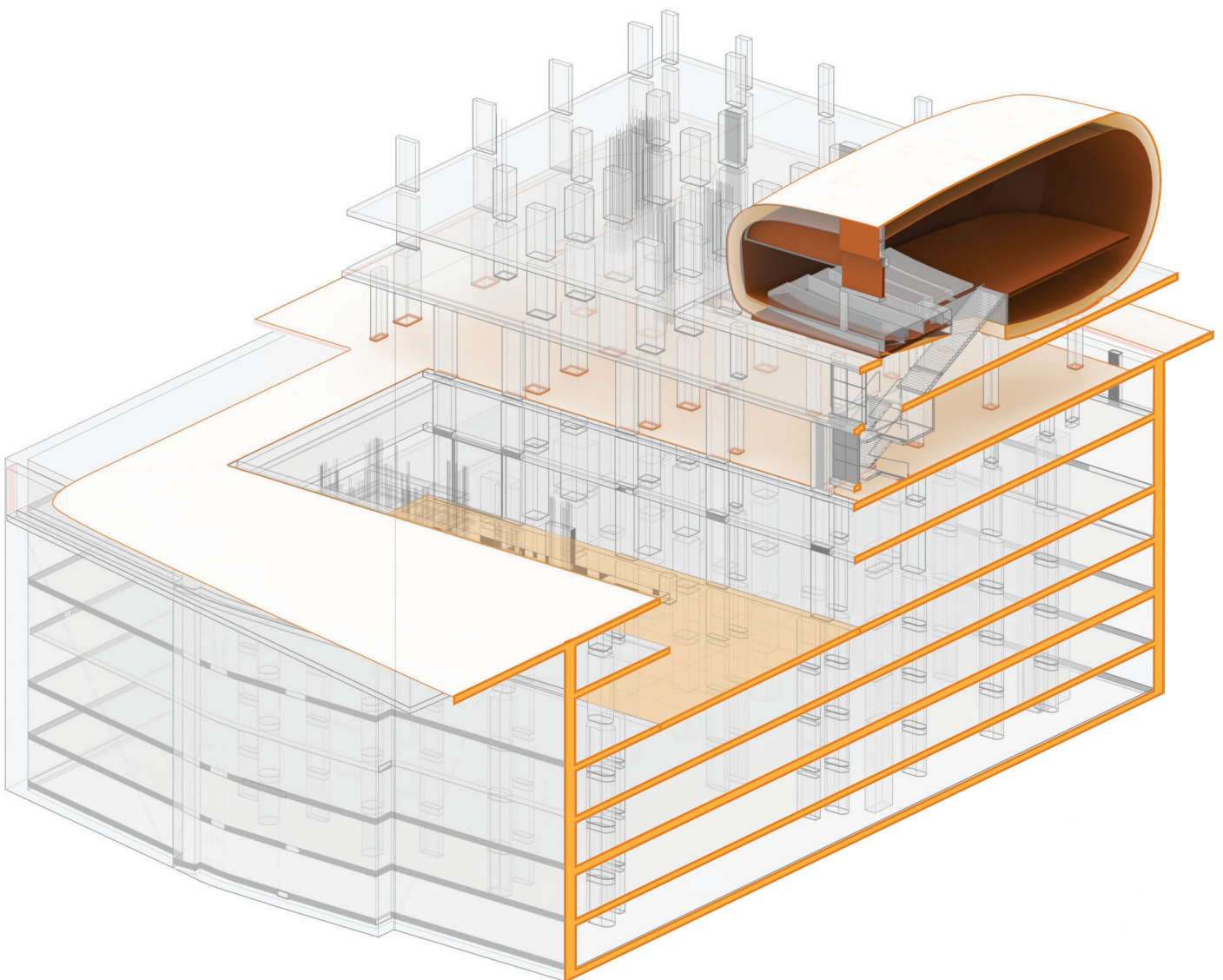
Source: LiveLoveBeirut Facebook Page

1. The characteristics of **the Egg**

a. The components of the Egg

The void

Following the intervention of Solidère on the egg and the destruction of the only tower built, this decision generates a large void in the slab. This void or new forum on the ground floor of the city contrasts the set of slabs and the shell that rise vertically from the hollow that is drawn and opens to the old basements of the imagined complex.



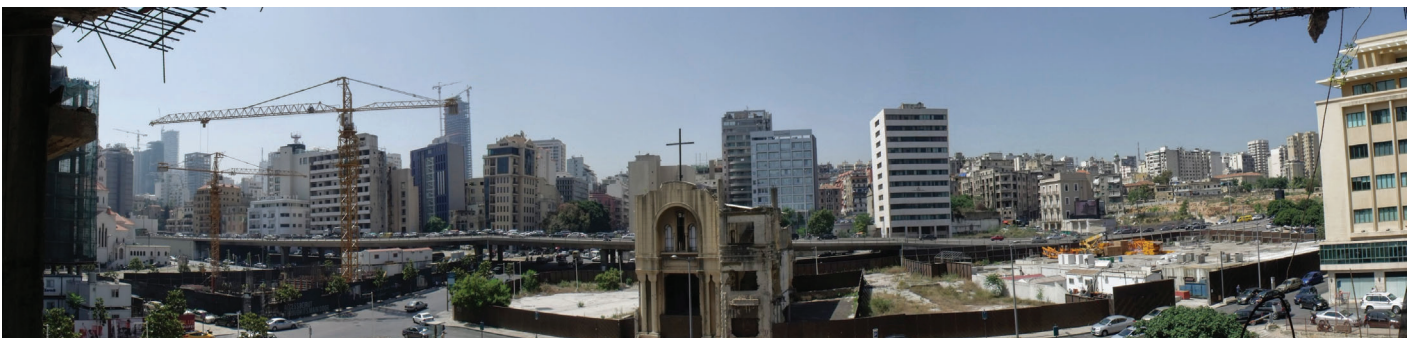
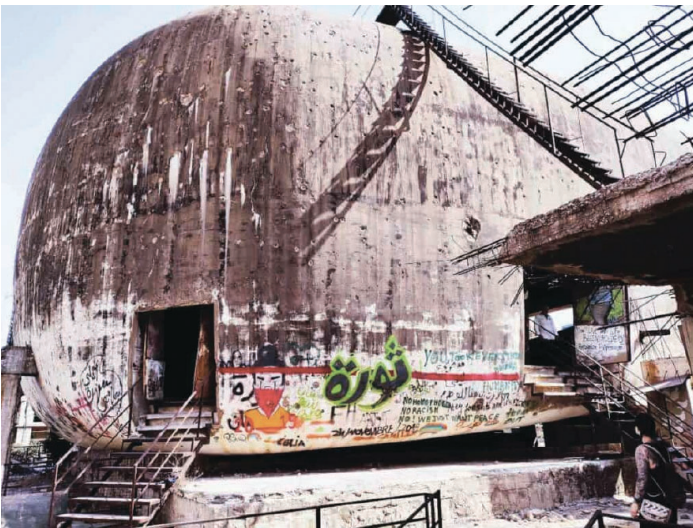
Source: Omar Bsaibes



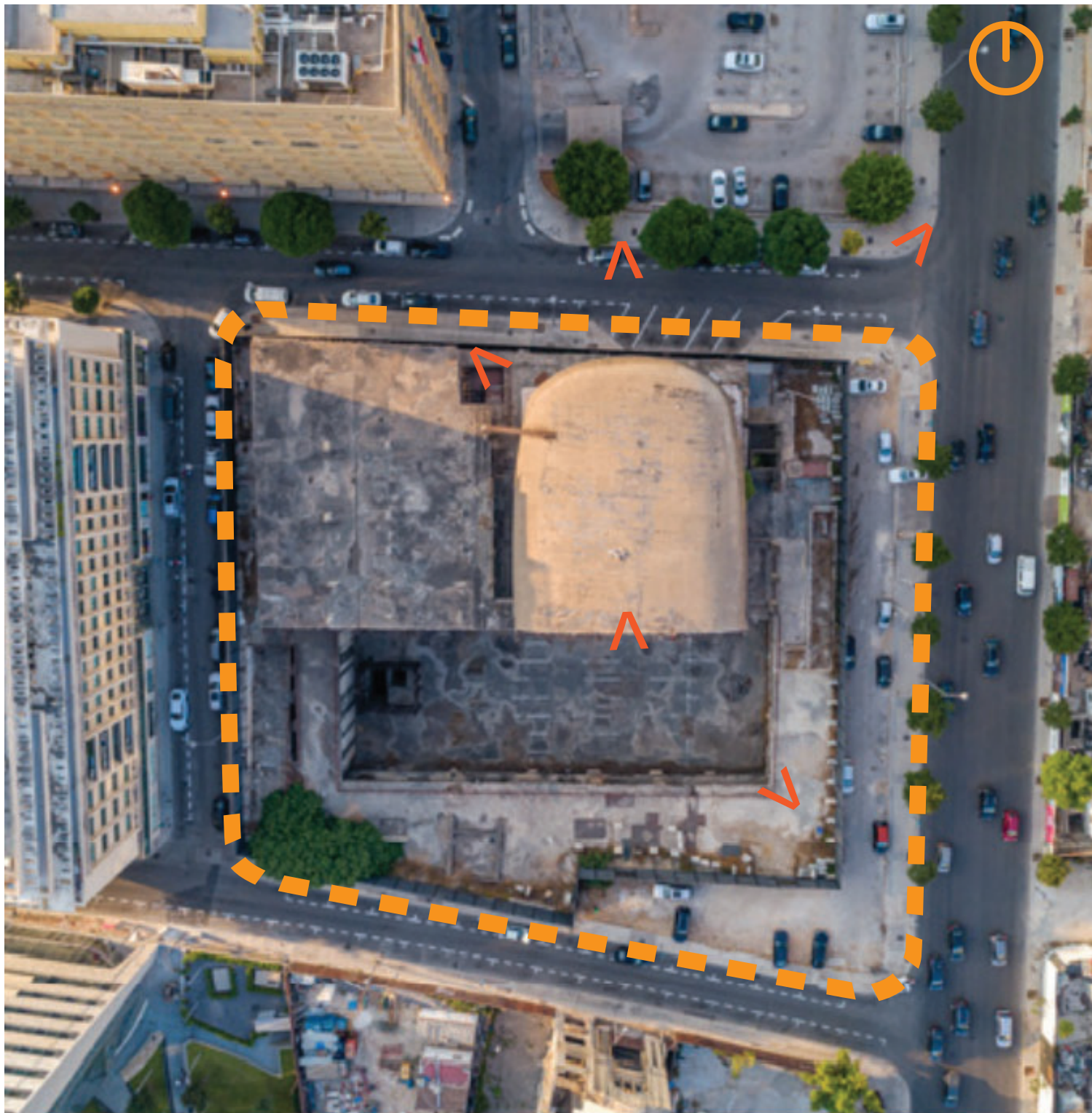
Source: LiveLoveBeirut Facebook Page

1. The characteristics of the Egg

b. Save the Egg



<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/beirut-egg-lebanon-protests>
<https://www.alamy.com/editorial-beirut-lebanon-12242019-re-mains-of-the-iconic-egg-building-originally-built-as-a-cinema-and-destroyed-during-the-civil-war-image339509456.html?imageid=AEC72274-4371-49E2-BE77-A83F4AE1C8F1&p=161355&pn=1&searchId=b25c295ac194c2a2d8cfb13a72782717&search>
<https://voiceofguides.com/alternative-local-tour-in-beirut/>
<https://www.alamy.com/editorial-beirut-lebanon-12242019-re-mains-of-the-iconic-egg-building-originally-built-as-a-cinema-and-destroyed-during-the-civil-war-image339509461.html>



No source: photo taken before Oct 2019

1. The characteristics of the Egg

b. Save the Egg

Significance and meaning

The shell of the old City Centre, the only preserved element of the old complex, confers different symbolisms to the whole project. Its semiotics offers different dimensions to this place. It belongs to the modernist trend that is unfolding on the Lebanese territory, a trend imported from European territories. Designed by the architect Joseph Philippe Karam, pioneer of the movement, and built by the engineer Georges Tabet, it became a signature of modern architecture in Lebanon.

Indeed, this ovoid shape was problematic during the modernist era. In the case of the City Centre, the shape expresses the functionality of its use: a cinema, with very good acoustics.

Materiality

Left abandoned since the civil war, the old City Centre stands out in its context above all for its brutalism. This neutrality in the heart of the city offers it the possibility to be made in the image of the uses that occupy it and to transform itself by taking the traces of time. It preserves then the traces of the painful past and becomes the carrier of the Lebanese memory. It becomes the symbolism of resistance, of a physical but also virtual bunker. It is also the artistic support of several local Lebanese artists. Thus, it is reclaimed by art through the inhabitants of the city. It is presented as a platform for free expression on which individuals project their aspirations





1. The characteristics of **the Egg**

b. Save the Egg





EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION



SOUTH WEST ISOMETRIC VIEW

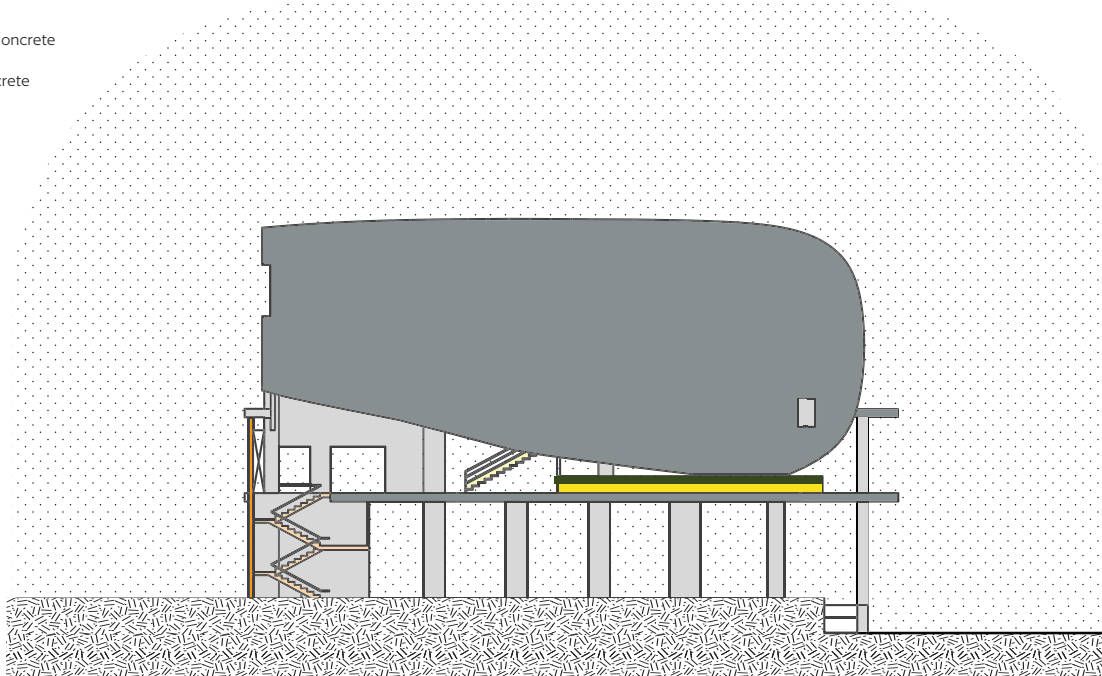
Photos by: Paul Ra

https://vebuka.com/print/210627025139-7e880ddf8255c943631ccb19011c5a8e/From_Recreation_to_Social_Resistance_The_Case_of_The_Egg_in_Beirut_Lebanon

2. Action on the Egg

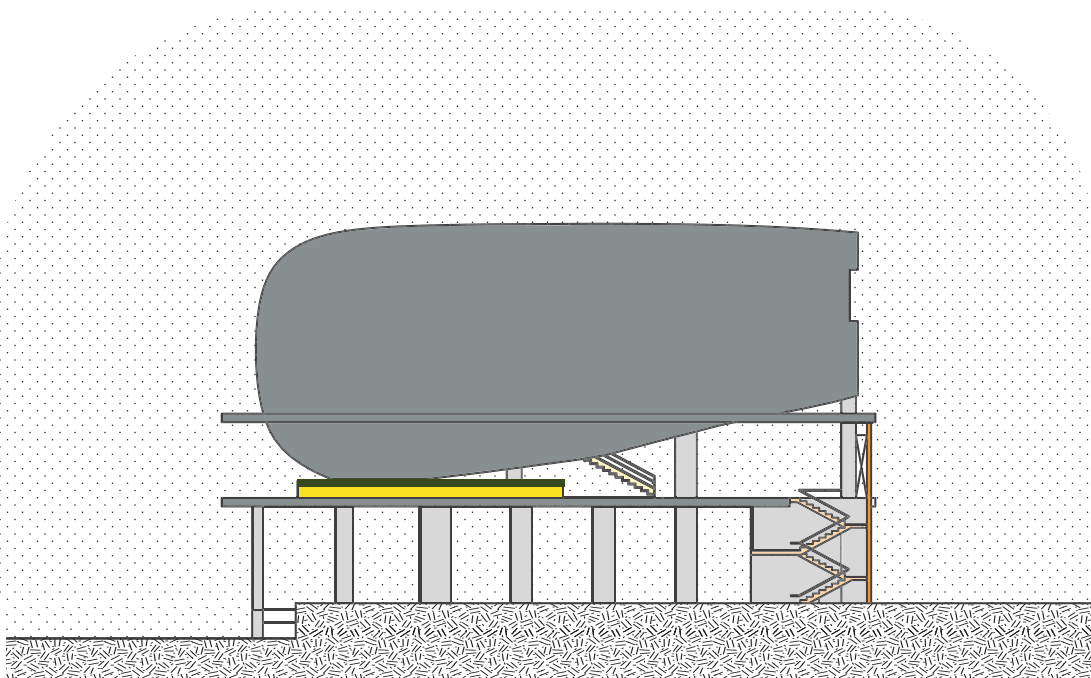
a. Material analysis

- External Plaster
- Internal Plaster
- Reinforced Concrete
- Precast Concrete
- Aluminium
- Steel
- Terracotta



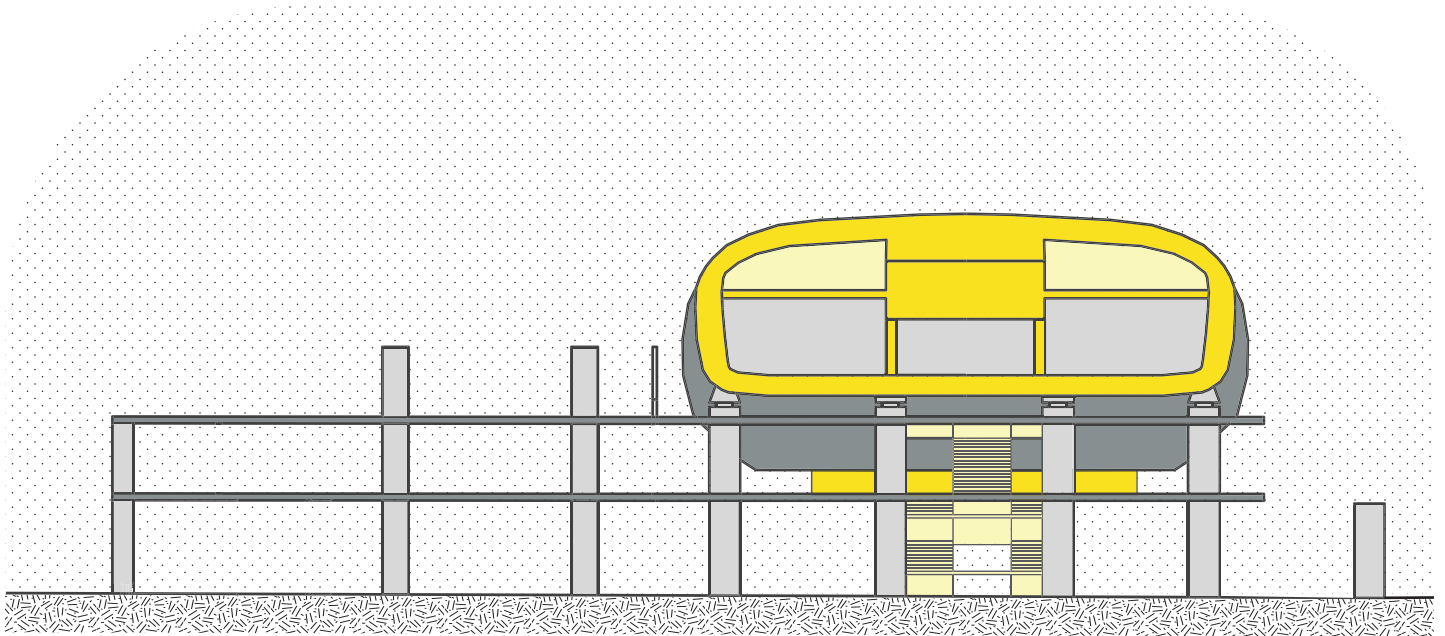
EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

Scale: 1:400

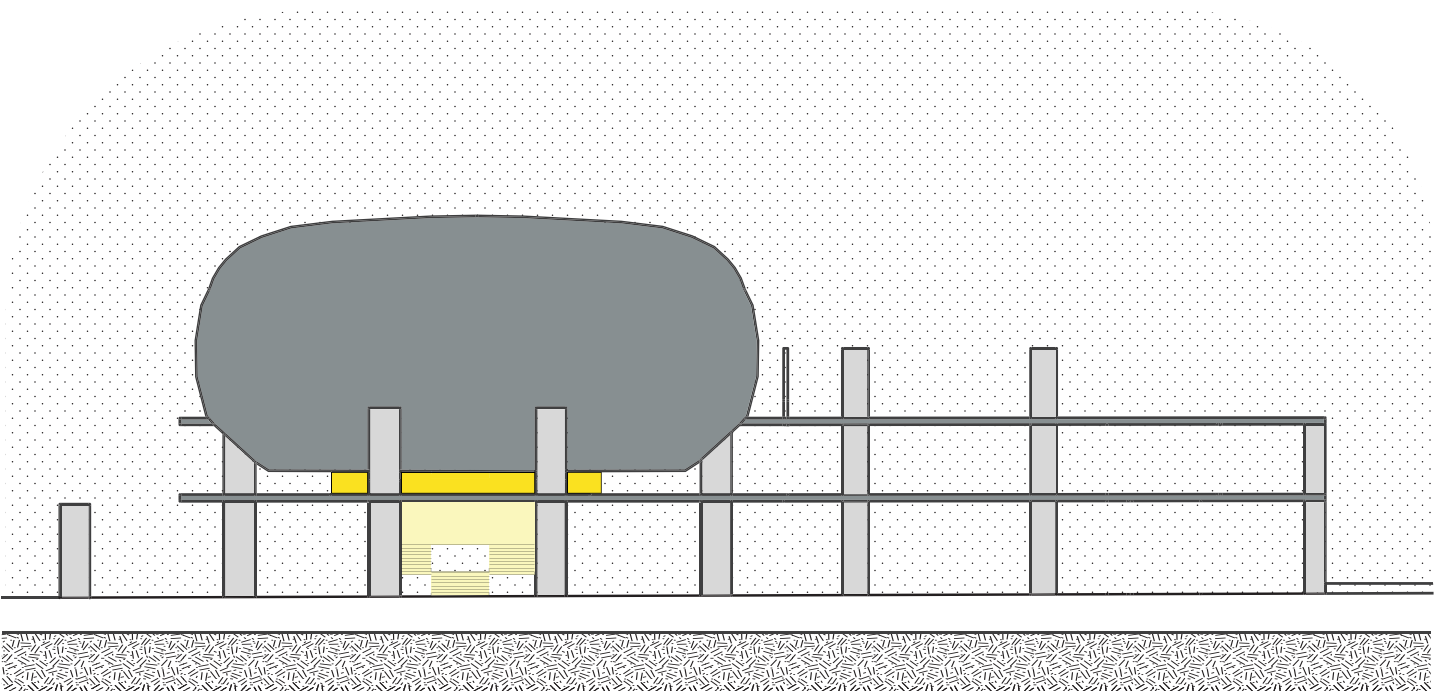


EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

Scale: 1:400


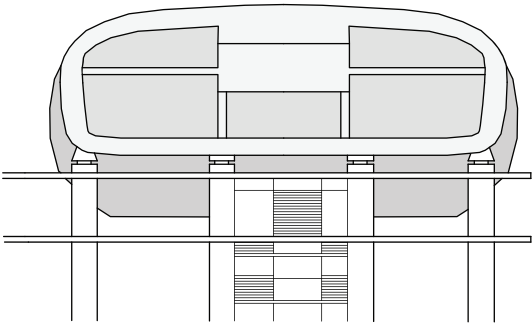



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION
Scale: 1:400


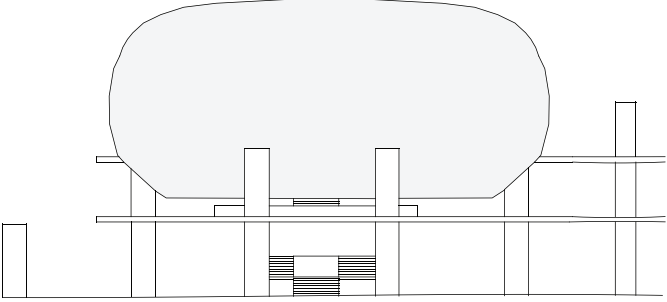



EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION
Scale: 1:400


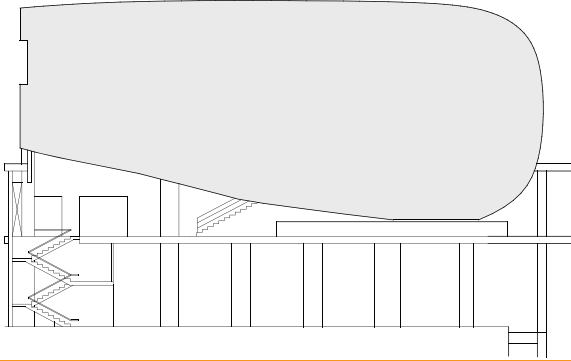

2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	Reinforced Concrete	
		
Level	SOUTH elevation	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	The material was cast in place and then coated with cement, originally the part of the structurue was attached to another building.	
Function	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structural <input type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon	Mix made by combining cement with fine aggregates such as sand, gravel, clay, or shale. It occurs in a variety of colors ranging from white to light grey. The displacement of an iron grid reinforces concrete. A thin coat of paint is occasionally used to finish the surface.	
Notes	Material present mainly eveywhere in the structure, it is the main element of this building.	


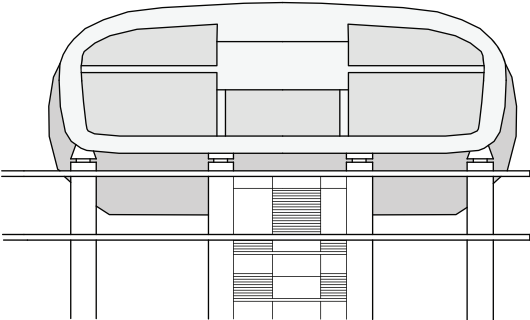

2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	External Plaster	
Hatch		
Level	NORTH elevation	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	The last coat of plaster preserves the structure from chemical and physical air pollutants. It is coated with a light coat of white paint.	
Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon	It is a mixture of cement, water, and sand that hardens upon drying which is used to coat the entire structure and the columns. It is connected to reinforced concrete.	
Notes	The element is present all over the building, but is fading away.	


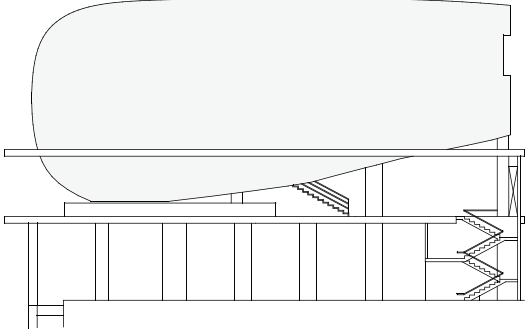

2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	Internal Plaster	
Hatch		
Level	Ground floor	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	<p>The last coat of plaster preserves the structure from chemical and physical air pollutants. It is coated with a light coat of white paint.</p>	
Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon	<p>It is a mixture of cement, water, and sand that hardens upon drying which is used to coat the entire structure and the columns.</p>	
Notes	<p>The element is present all over the building, but is fading away.</p>	


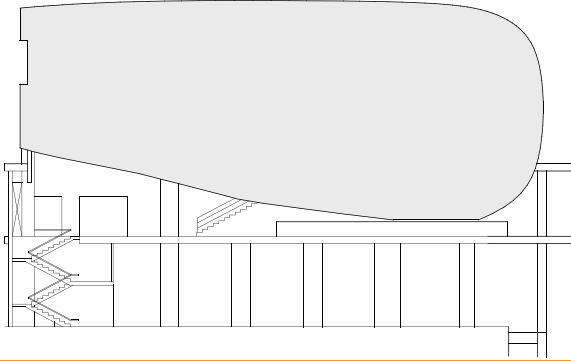

2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	Precast Concrete	
Hatch		
Level	All levels including a staircase + second floor	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	<p>Precast concrete is a kind of concrete that is prepared, cast, and cured away from the actual construction site, often in a factory setting that is climate-controlled, and use reusable molds. Elements made of precast concrete may be combined with those made of other materials to construct an entirely new structure. In most situations, it is used for constructing such structural components as wall panels, beams, columns, floors, and stairs.</p>	
Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon	<p>It is a mixture of cement, water, steel/bars, aggregates, placed on site once precasted.</p>	
Notes	<p>The material used to build the staircase as well.</p>	

2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	Terracotta	
Hatch		
Level	First floor	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	<p>The tiles have a surface that is rough and reddish in color, and their hue is related with the mortar joints. An alteration was made to the material in which the tiles were given a white paint coating as part of the intervention. The tiles have a thickness of 1 cm and a size of 30 cm by 30 cm.</p>	
Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon		
Notes		

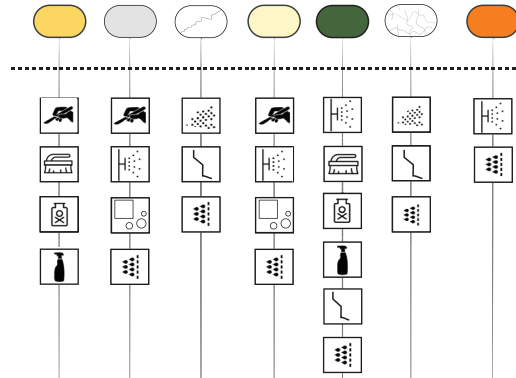
2. Action on **the Egg**

Materiality	Steel	
Hatch		
Level	All floors including a staircase GF to second floor	
Localizaion of the material		
Photo		
Material	Oxidised iron of brown/rusty colour are present.	
Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural <input type="checkbox"/> Non-structural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Functional	Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artificial
Element	<input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling <input type="checkbox"/> Wall/Pilars <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Floor	
Compositon	The material is used to create the structure of the stairs as well as the hand rails composed of vertical and diagonal elements and the cap sides of the stair steps.	
Notes		







2. Action on the Egg

a. Restoration Decays



-  Peeling
-  Corrosion
-  Discoloration
-  Graffiti
-  Human Action
-  Biological Growth
-  Staining
-  Spalling
-  Diagonal Cracks
-  Hairline Cracks
-  Shrinkage Cracks
-  Thin patterned Cracks
-  Serious Cracks

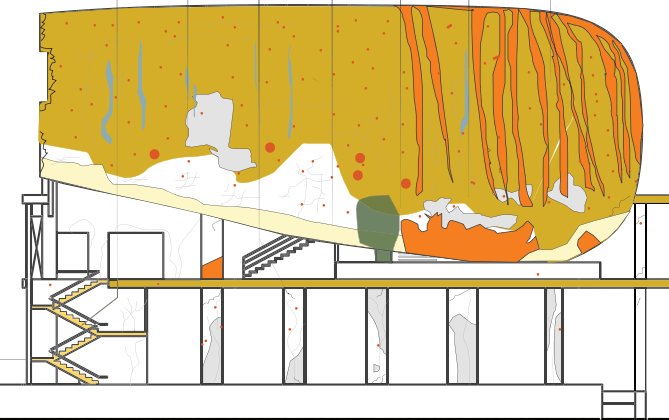


CLEANING

-  Chemical product washing.
-  Water spraying.
-  Brush the surface.
-  Removal loose concrete
-  Use of mild acid solutions.
-  Open the crack area and remove dust residues.

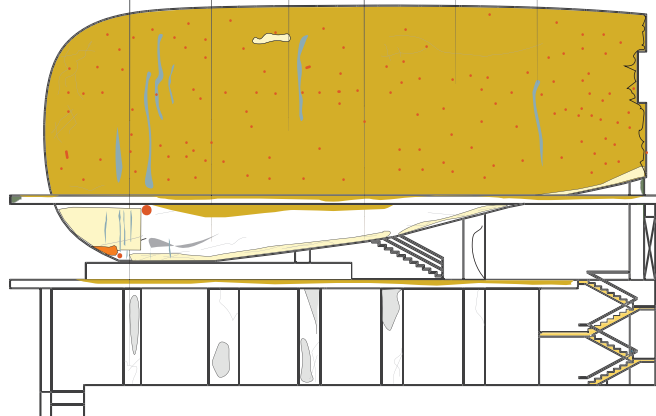
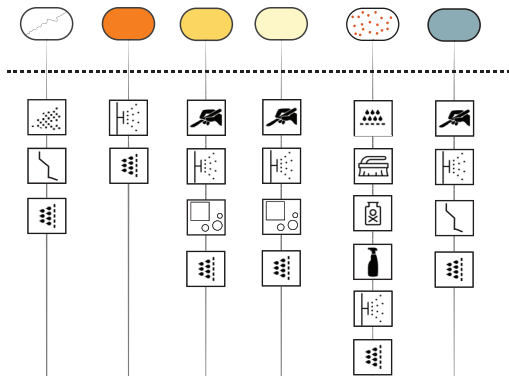
PROTECTION

-  Roof waterproofing layer.
-  Water repellent coating that guarantees water vapor permeability.



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION



Scale: 1:400

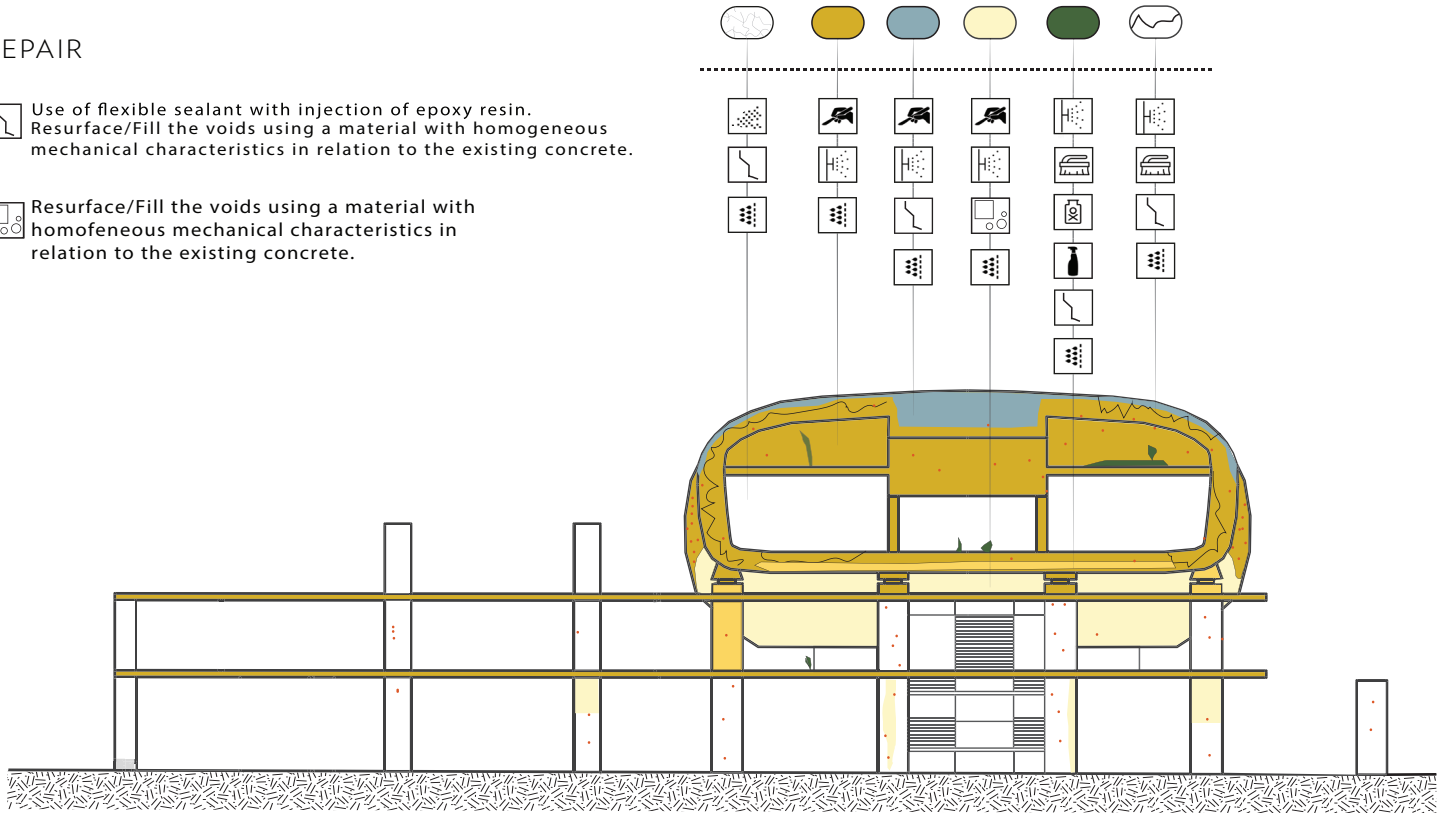


EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

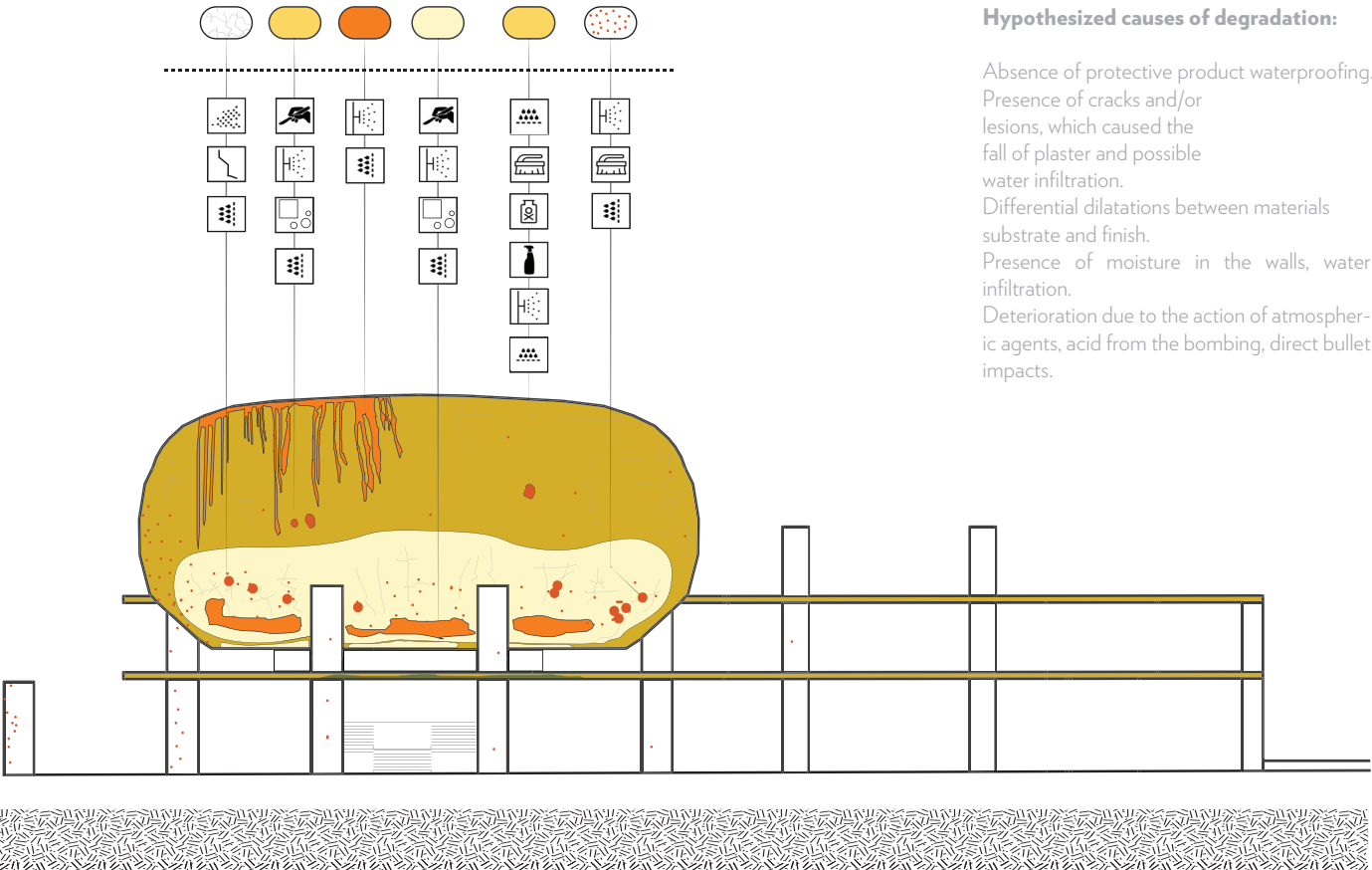
Scale: 1:400

REPAIR

-  Use of flexible sealant with injection of epoxy resin. Resurface/Fill the voids using a material with homogeneous mechanical characteristics in relation to the existing concrete.
-  Resurface/Fill the voids using a material with homofeneous mechanical characteristics in relation to the existing concrete.



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION
Scale: 1:400


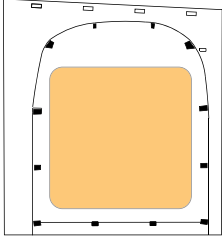
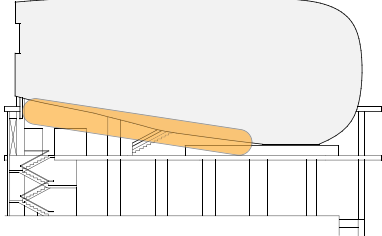




Hypothesized causes of degradation:


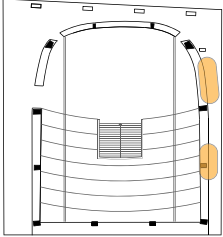
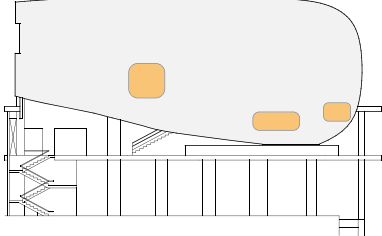

Absence of protective product waterproofing.
Presence of cracks and/or lesions, which caused the fall of plaster and possible water infiltration.
Differential dilatations between materials substrate and finish.
Presence of moisture in the walls, water infiltration.
Deterioration due to the action of atmospheric agents, acid from the bombing, direct bullet impacts.

EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION
Scale: 1:400


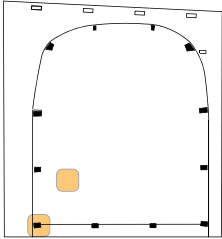
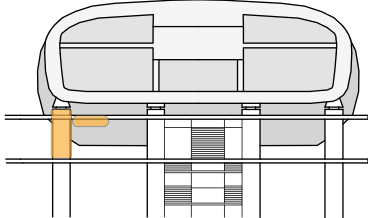


2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Discoloration
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	First Floor, on the slope above
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	 
Decay description	Color variation from what is expected or planned. Originally, the ceilings and the walls were white.
Visible effects at sight	The zones are not thick. Brownish areas seem to be shallow.
Possible causes	Sunlight, severe weather, and high temperatures, along with low quality paint, absence of water repellent layer.
Decay mechanism	The plaster is in poor condition; the surface is marked by a shift in color to dark brownish, which is the result of the building's neglect for more than thirty five years after it was partly destroyed by conflict.
Suggested intervention	Check the degree of discoloration to see whether the decay is only aesthetic or profound in order to avoid additional risky decays.


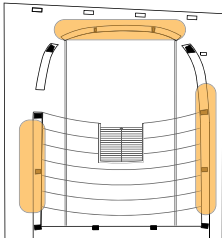
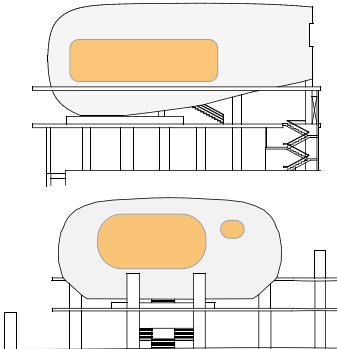

2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Spalling
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, EAST elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	
Decay description	A detachment of the coating from the base along its plane.
Visible effects at sight	Surface discontinuity: plaster Large portions of the plaster layer have come unstuck. The finishing layer is rough and 2 cm elevated from the concrete.
Possible causes	Thermal loops. Climate Impact, weathering.
Decay mechanism	The lack of adhesion between the concrete and the plaster caused the coating to separate from the substrate.
Suggested intervention	In order to avoid more harmful decays, check the degree of separation to see whether it is only superficial or severe. The investigation may be carried out on-site using macroscopic observation.


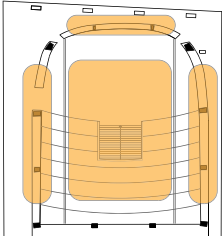
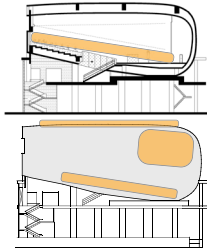



2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Corrosion
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	First floor, SOUTH elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	 
Decay description	Some areas appear darker than the surface's normal tone. Mainly oxidation.
Visible effects at sight	Some zones have a deeper tint than others. Surface irregularity of the concrete, reinforcement metals are exposed. On the surface of the pilar, a few small circular holes of varying diameters.
Possible causes	Weather effect, and a gas or liquid chemically attacks an exposed surface
Decay mechanism	Progressive disintegration of a material caused by the mechanical or cavitation impact of moving gases, fluids, or solids.
Suggested intervention	Exposed reinforcement metal should be investigated. The investigation may be carried out on-site using macroscopic observation.


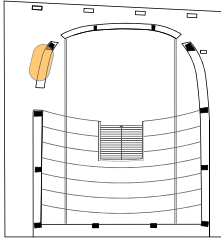
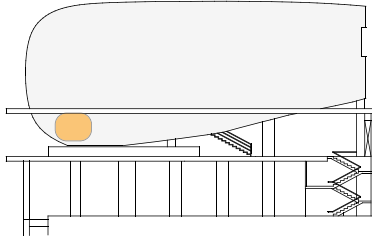
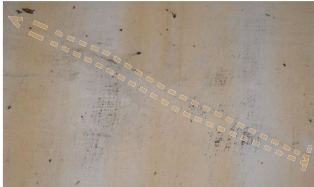

2. Action on the Egg

Decays	Human Action
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, NORTH & WEST elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	
Decay description	Mechanical damage caused by human action
Visible effects at sight	Cavities
Possible causes	The structure was subjected to the impact of bullets during the conflict. Impact of a firearm; projectiles
Decay mechanism	Isolated impact of combat bullets, resulting in the loss of plaster and a piece of the concrete underneath. The degradation is concentrated in the building.
Suggested intervention	Check the detachment status to determine if the decay is problematic. If not, the decay may be kept to keep the memory of past events.
Notes & remarks	This decay is apparent on the structure's four façades as well as internally.


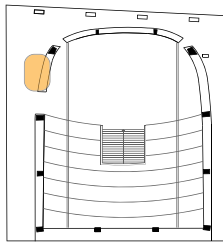
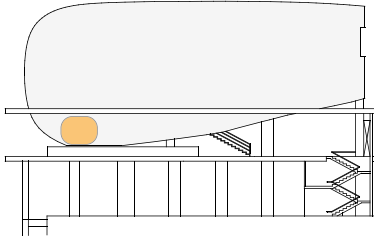

2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Graffiti
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Last floor, on the shell, exterior and interior
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	  
Decay description	Biogeochemical paint, ink, or similar coating on the surface of building materials.
Visible effects at sight	Paint on the surface of the plaster. The majority of the texts include swearing.
Possible causes	Human intervention via the use of spray paint.
Decay mechanism	Human intervention through the use of many color spray cans. The decay is concentrated on the building's interior and exterior walls.
Suggested intervention	No intervention required, unless the painting/grafifiti releases toxic harmful chemicals.
Notes & remarks	This decay is apparent on every part of the shell.


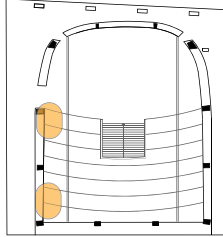
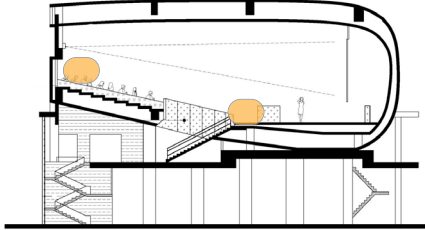


2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Diagonal Cracks
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, WEST elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	 
Decay description	<p>A crack: is the total or partial separation of concrete into two or more portions caused by breaking or fracturing.</p> <p>Diagonal Crack: An angled crack that is generally 45 degrees to the dimension axis of 0.1mm.</p>
Visible effects at sight	<p>The surface discontinuity highlited in the photo (Long Diagonal crack). Small fractures around the large fissure.</p>
Possible causes	<p>The result of a spall, most likely generated by an impact. The material's characteristics (Dosage).</p>
Decay mechanism	<p>An angled fissure formed by shear stress in a flexural part, generally approximately 45° to the horizontal axis; or a fissure in a slab that is not parallel to either the lateral or longitudinal axes.</p>
Suggested intervention	<p>Determine if the decay is only superficial or significant in order to avoid future risk. The investigation may be carried out on-site using macroscopic observation & sonic and thermographic tests.</p>


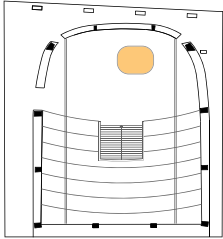
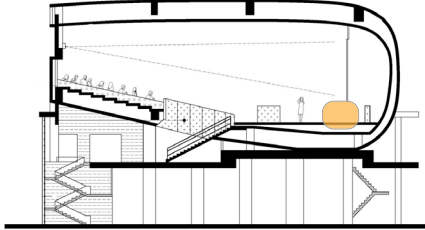

2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Shrinkage cracking
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, WEST elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	
Decay description	Shrinkage Cracks: Cracks in a structure or member caused by tension failure. dim: 1mm
Visible effects at sight	The Surface Discontinuity failure. Smaller fractures all around large crack.
Possible causes	The structure's morphology. The material's characteristics (Dosage).
Decay mechanism	It occurs as a result of tension failure induced by external or internal limitations when moisture content decreases, carbonation emerges, or even both.
Suggested intervention	Determine if the decay is only superficial or significant in order to avoid future risk. The investigation may be carried out on-site using macroscopic observation & sonic and thermographic tests.


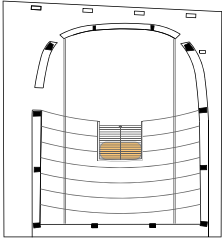
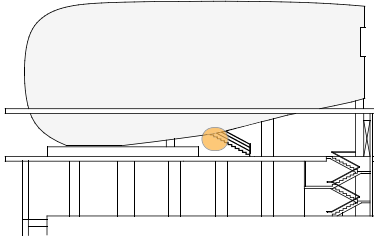

2. Action on the Egg

Decays	Thin Pattern Cracks
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, Interior
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	 
Decay description	Pattern Cracks: fine cracks in concrete in the shape of a pattern with dimensions more between $0.5\text{mm} < 1\text{mm}$
Visible effects at sight	Numerous polygonal fractures with varying dimensions on the surface. The decay has spread onto the surface. Some zones have darker tints than others.
Possible causes	Thermal distinction between the several layers Mechanical processes. Concrete density variability. Material characteristics. Mode of operation: executive. Weather action.
Decay mechanism	It occurs due to a reduction in the volume of the substance near the surface.
Suggested intervention	Determine if the decay is only superficial or significant in order to avoid future risk. The investigation may be carried out on-site using macroscopic observation & sonic and thermographic tests. In the lab: Chemical analysis: alkali aggregates reaction to provide qualitative information on interior detachments and potential fracture expansion. (The phrase "alkali-aggregate reaction" refers to a reaction that happens in concrete over time between extremely alkaline cement paste and non-crystalline silicon dioxide, which is present in many common aggregates. This reaction may cause the changed aggregate to expand, resulting in spalling and a loss of concrete strength.)


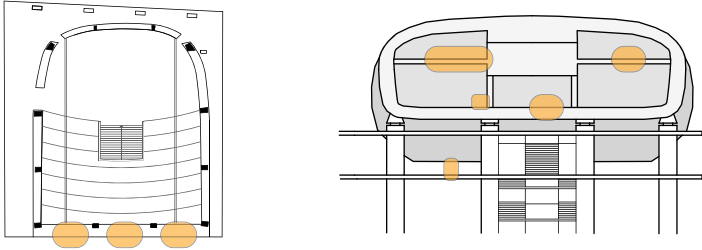

2. Action on the Egg

Decays	Hair line crack
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, Interior
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	
Decay description	Hairline cracks are cracks on an exposed concrete surface that are so light that they are hardly detectable (0.1mm).
Visible effects at sight	A thin fracture that breaks the surface's consistency without affecting the lower layers.
Possible causes	Moisture. Mortar shrinkage upon drying.
Decay mechanism	Hair cracks form on the surface owing to a variety of factors, including atmospheric pollutants, unequal shrinkage, and moisture. They do not entirely penetrate the plaster layer.
Suggested intervention	Take a sample to see whether the decay is only aesthetic or harmful in order to avoid risky decays. On-site: Examination of the nearby structure and details to determine if the hair fractures are caused by a lack of wall stability.


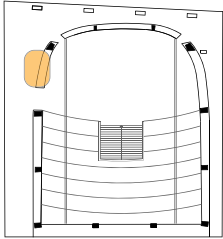
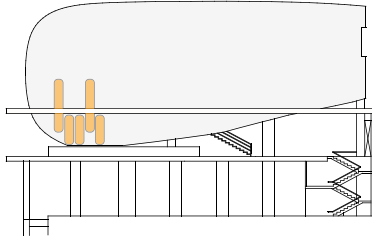


2. Action on the Egg

Decays	Serious Cracks
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	First floor, Stair case
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	
Decay description	A full or partial separation of bars along a line caused by reinforcing corrosion.
Visible effects at sight	Surface discontinuity all the way along the ceiling and the stair step. Material loss because the fracture is substantial (>5mm).
Possible causes	Concrete carbonation. The reinforcing of the frame has corroded. Sedimentation of water.
Decay mechanism	Steel corrosion generally results in bolt rupture, resulting in a fracture.
Suggested intervention	Locate the reinforcing steel beams and chemically examine it to determine their degree of corrosion and the possibility of further deterioration. Consolidate the crack to prevent future movement between the 2 components; use substance that is compatible with the previous ones in terms of chemic elements, texture, and pigment. Development of alternative technical ways to prevent fracture growth.
Maintenance	Check twice a year if any further cracks appears to take action again.

2. Action on **the Egg**

Decays	Biological Growth
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	SOUTH elevation, First and second floor
Localizaion of the decay in plan	
Decay photo	 <p>https://blogbaledi.com/awesome-shots-from-the-egg-beirut/</p>
Decay description	<p>Surface organic growth (moos and grass) Moos are vegetative organisms that make little, soft, green cushions a few centimetres in size. They resemble thick micro-leaves (a few millimetres in size) that are firmly packed together. Mosses typically grow on stone surfaces, open spaces, cracks, and also medium lenght wild plants up to 10-15 cm.</p>
Visible effects at sight	<p>Moos: A thin, soft coating made of of thick, green and brown leaves with little adherence to the substrate. Grass is a form of vegetation that consists of small plants with long, thin leaves.</p>
Possible causes	Long exposure to outdoor areas, with the presence of moisture.
Decay mechanism	<p>The moisture present aided in the growth of micro-vegetation. The moss is localized in certain areas of the structure, particularly the outside, and is therefore visibly caused by precipitation.</p>
Suggested intervention	<p>The use of an ammonia-containing solution softens the moss. Moss removal using mechanical or hydro washing. Specific biocides are used. Low-pressure hydro washing with clean water of the surface to eliminate any residual residues of pesticide and biological bugs. The last preventative intervention against the development of vegetation and autotrophic bacteria by vaporization at low doses of biocide.</p>

2. Action on the Egg

Decays	Trickling
Hatch	
Localizaion of the decay	Second floor, WEST elevation
Localizaion of the decay in plan	 
Decay photo	 
Decay description	Weathering causes unexpected differences in the outward appearance of the building. It is mostly an aesthetic issue.
Visible effects at sight	The flow path of rainfall causes grayish brown streaks that are parallel and vertical.
Possible causes	Exposed concrete without water repellant protective layer causes these dark lines.
Decay mechanism	This all originates with dust and debris in the atmosphere accumulating on the elevation. The stream of precipitation thus tends to wipe certain regions selectively, resulting in significant color contrasts among clean and dirty areas.
Suggested intervention	No intervention required.

NB: Inspired by the Brutalism style, which made considerable use of concrete. As a consequence, the material will remain visible. The building's skin, complete with aging and historical layers, will be conserved. In terms of interventions, **only serious decay and structural damage will be treated**, leaving the remainder of the building unaffected. The structure's shell, along with bullet holes and battle scars, will be preserved.

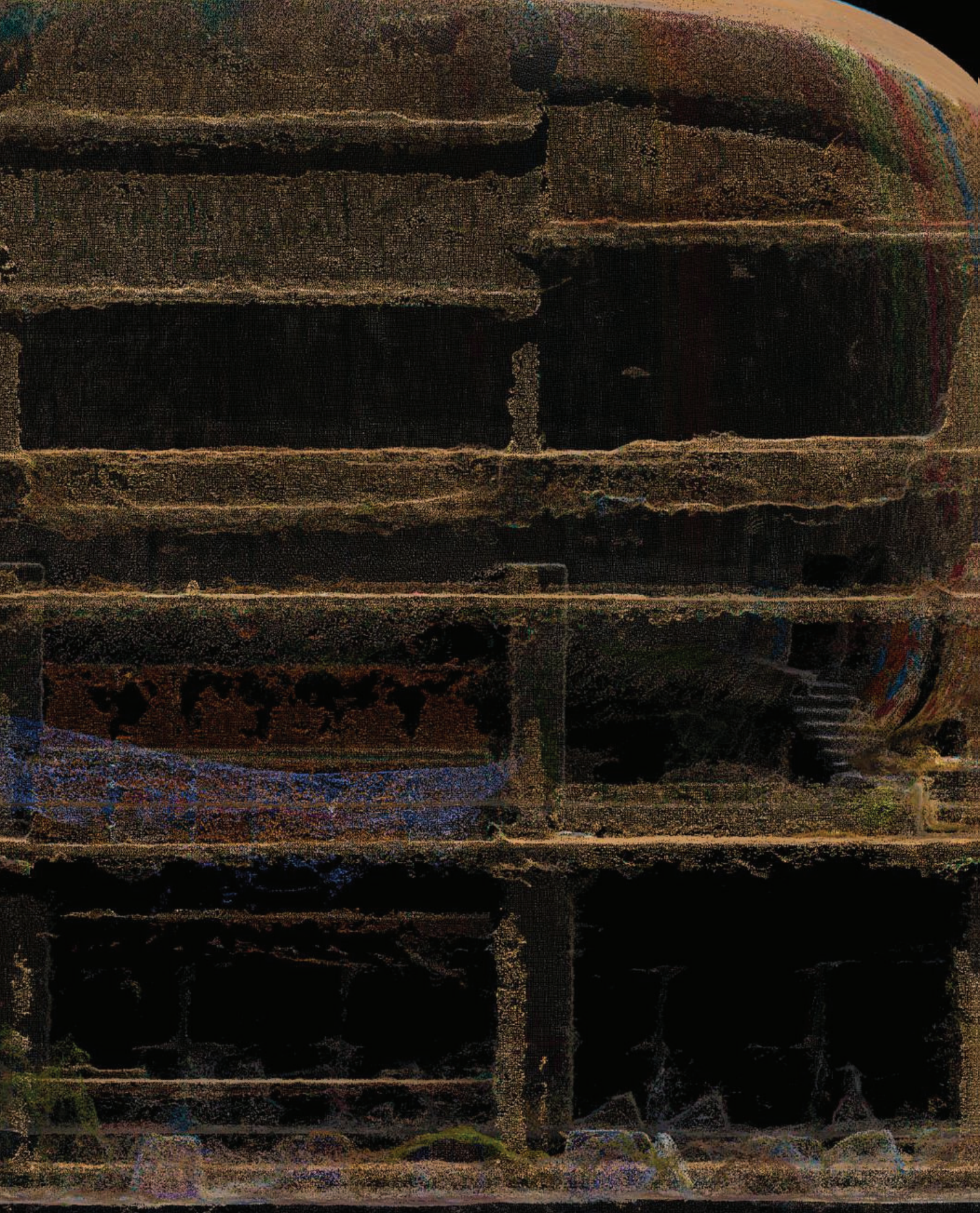


Photo by: Paul Ra

https://vebuka.com/print/210627025139-7e880ddf8255c943631ccb19011c5a8e/From_Recreation_to_Social_Resistan

3 The new social condenser

Architectural intervention



1. New programming for an upgrade

a. A memorial heritage, a look at the Berlin Memorial

P. Eisenman

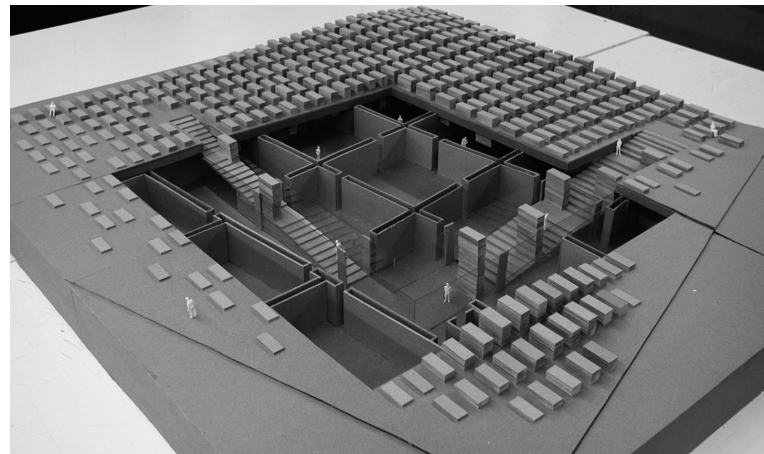
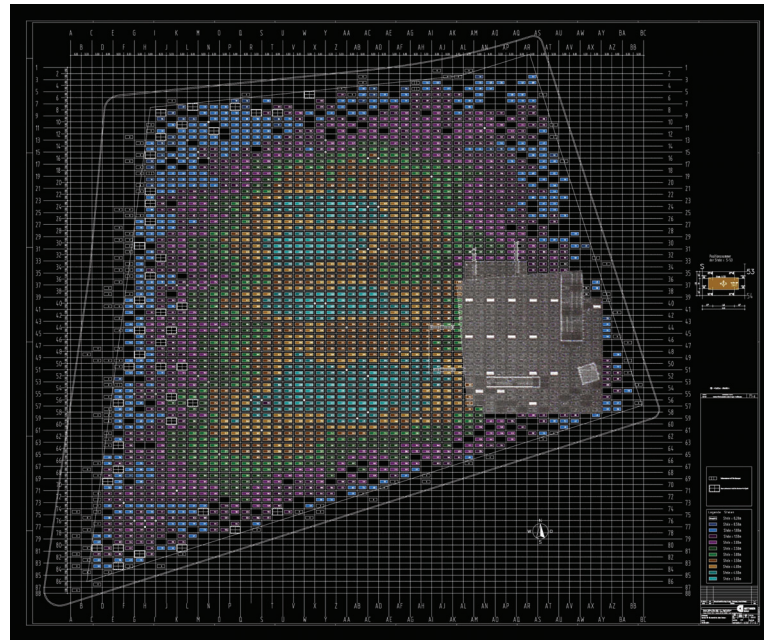
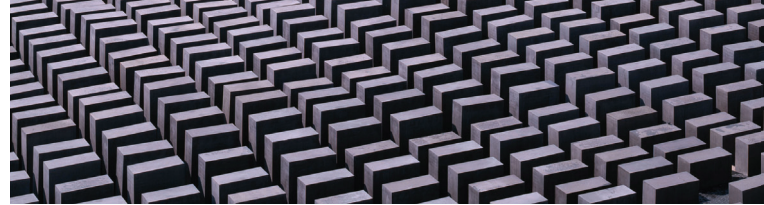
The Holocaust Memorial, designed by Peter Eisenman, is made up of enormous stone blocks that are set on a 19,000 square meter (204,440 square foot) area of ground between East and West Berlin. The 2,711 rectangular concrete slabs on a sloping stretch of ground have equal lengths and widths but differ in height.

Eisenman refers to the slabs as stelae in plural (pronounced STEE-LEE). A stele (pronounced STEEL or STEE-LEE) is a single slab, also known by the Latin name stela (pronounced STEEL-LAH).

The stele is an ancient architectural item used to memorialize the dead. To a lesser extent, the stone marker is being utilized today. Inscriptions are common on ancient stelae; architect Eisenman opted not to inscribe the stelae of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. Each stele or stone slab is sized and positioned such that the stelae field seems to undulate with the undulating soil.

The Berlin Holocaust Memorial was built by architect Peter Eisenman without plaques, inscriptions, or religious symbols. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is devoid of names, yet its strength lies in its mass of anonymity. The rectangular solid stones have been likened as tombstones and coffins.

<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/Berlin-Memorial-to-the-Murdered-Jews-of-Europe-2005>



Physical model: Arrangement of the underground space

<https://www.arcstreet.com/2021/01/memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe-by-eisenman-architects.html>



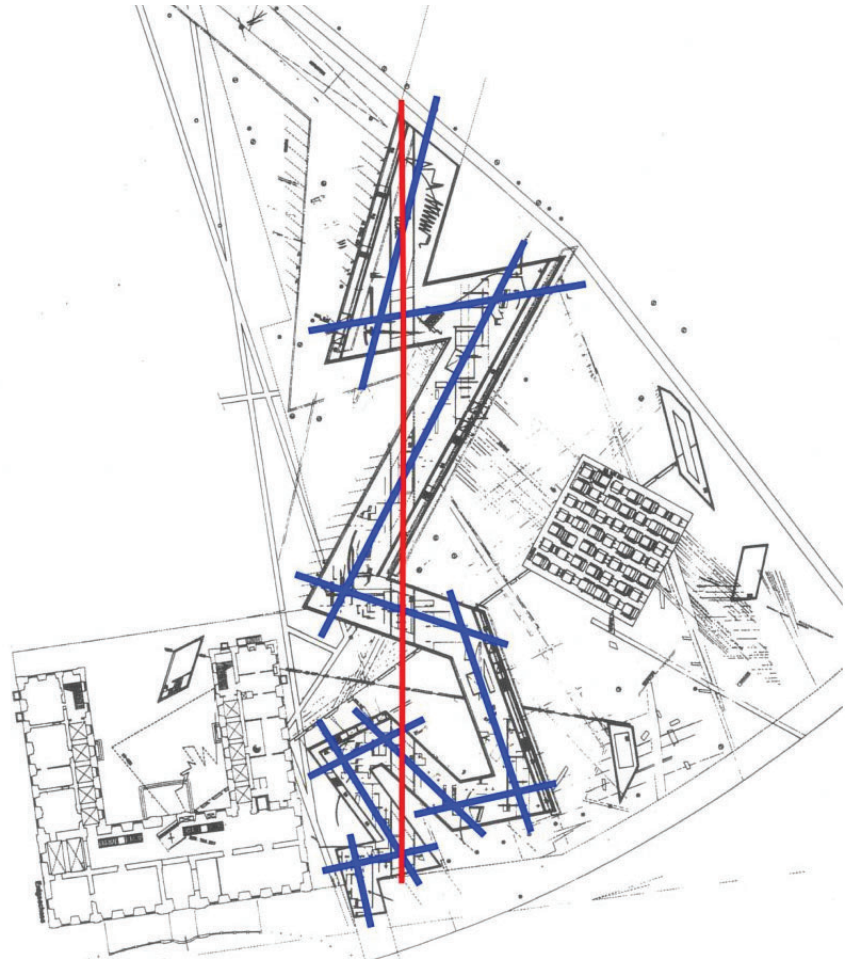
1. New programming for an upgrade

b. A cultural heritage, a look at the Jewish Museum in Berlin

D. Libeskind

The idea takes shape when an abstracted Jewish Star of David is wrapped over the place and its setting. The shape is created by connecting lines between historical event places that give support for the building, culminating in a physical extrusion of those lines into a "zig-zag" architectural form.

Despite the fact that Libeskind's addition looks to be a distinct structure, it lacks a formal outside entrance. To enter the new museum addition, one must enter down an underground passage from the existing Baroque museum. Before reaching a cross-roads with three ways, a visitor must face the worry of concealing and losing sense of direction. The three pathways provide opportunity to see the Jewish experience via German history, exodus from Germany, and the Holocaust. For guests to wander through and experience the rooms within, Libeskind develops a promenade that follows the "zig-zag" structure of the building. The inside appears to be identical to the external perimeter from the outside; yet, the internal regions are exceedingly intricate. Libeskind's planned promenade takes visitors past galleries, vacant spaces, and dead ends. A substantial chunk of the addition is devoid of windows and has a material variation. Libeskind's extension opens out onto the Garden of Exile, where visitors will once again feel lost among 49 towering concrete pillars covered in plants. The towering pillars make one feel lost and bewildered, but there is a moment of ecstasy when one looks up to an open sky. The Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind is an emotional journey through history. The architecture and experience demonstrate Daniel Libeskind's capacity to transform human experience into architectural composition.





1. New programming for an upgrade

c. Philharmonie de Paris

J.Nouvel

Beyond music, the architecture provides a place for music to develop and exist. The roof of the building is 37 meters high. It serves as a public place while also providing a panoramic view of the city and its surroundings. Cafes such as Le Balcon and l'Atelier invite visitors to explore the areas around the Great Hall.

The provision of exhibition, instructional, and rehearsal spaces results in a variety of multi-functional spaces that flow together. Jean creates stunning art by contrasting volume with vacuum, dark and light. The Philharmonie is intended to be a continuation of the public park. Anyone may enjoy the views from the summit, descend along the zig-zag stairs, and appreciate the park's lush open areas.



<https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/case-studies/a4399-philharmonie-de-paris-in-france-by-jean-nouvel-shades-of-gray/>



2. A cultural **settlement**

a. Architectural intentions

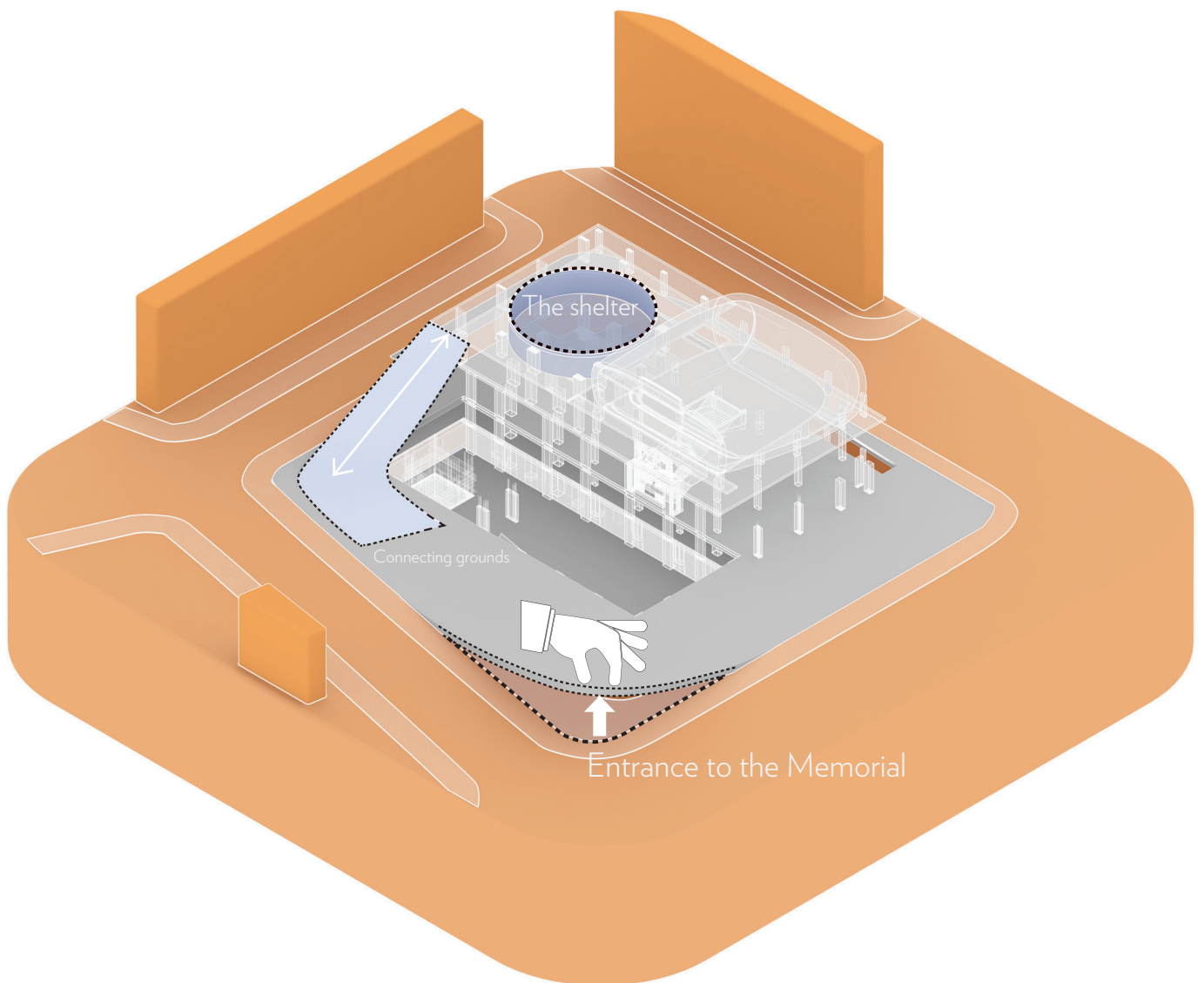
Former commercial and bureaucratic place, integral part of the Lebanese cinematographic heritage of the time which gives it its popular dimension, pioneer building of the Beirut modernist era, war bunker and memorial, festive and futile escape, place for public, political and artistic expression, meeting place. If this building still exists despite all the risks of demolition, and if it still resists the mutations of the city and its close context, it is because the egg, this microcosm apart within the city center refuses to participate in the false image implied today to Beirut and to the Beirutins. It then becomes the image of the resilience of the society that still bears it and manifests itself as a place that is not like the others.

The slogans launched during the popular Beirut movement of October 2019, *kellon yaani kellon* (all means all) to express the rejection of the political class representative of the Lebanese society, reflect the opposition of the people to any decision that stems from its representatives. The Lebanese society, which reclaimed its city center, then makes the collective space by itself. This transformation sets the premises of urban mutability, a process that shows the capacity of cities to welcome change and promote the possible.¹⁶

The city of Beirut, a city resilient to continuous political, economic and social instability, shows itself as a territory that accepts change and adapts to it. The different facilities of the city become the mirror of the changes, including the old City Centre.

Three conditions then become key notions in the construction of the design process of the architectural project of transformation of the egg. The City Centre then becomes the territory of all possibilities as it showed itself during the popular Beirut movement of October 2019, a real experimental hub with multiple and diversified uses.

16. DURAND A. (2017), *Mutabilité urbaine La nouvelle fabrique des villes*, Infolio, p.30.



LIGHT INTERVENTION DIAGRAM

2. A cultural **settlement**

a. Architectural intentions

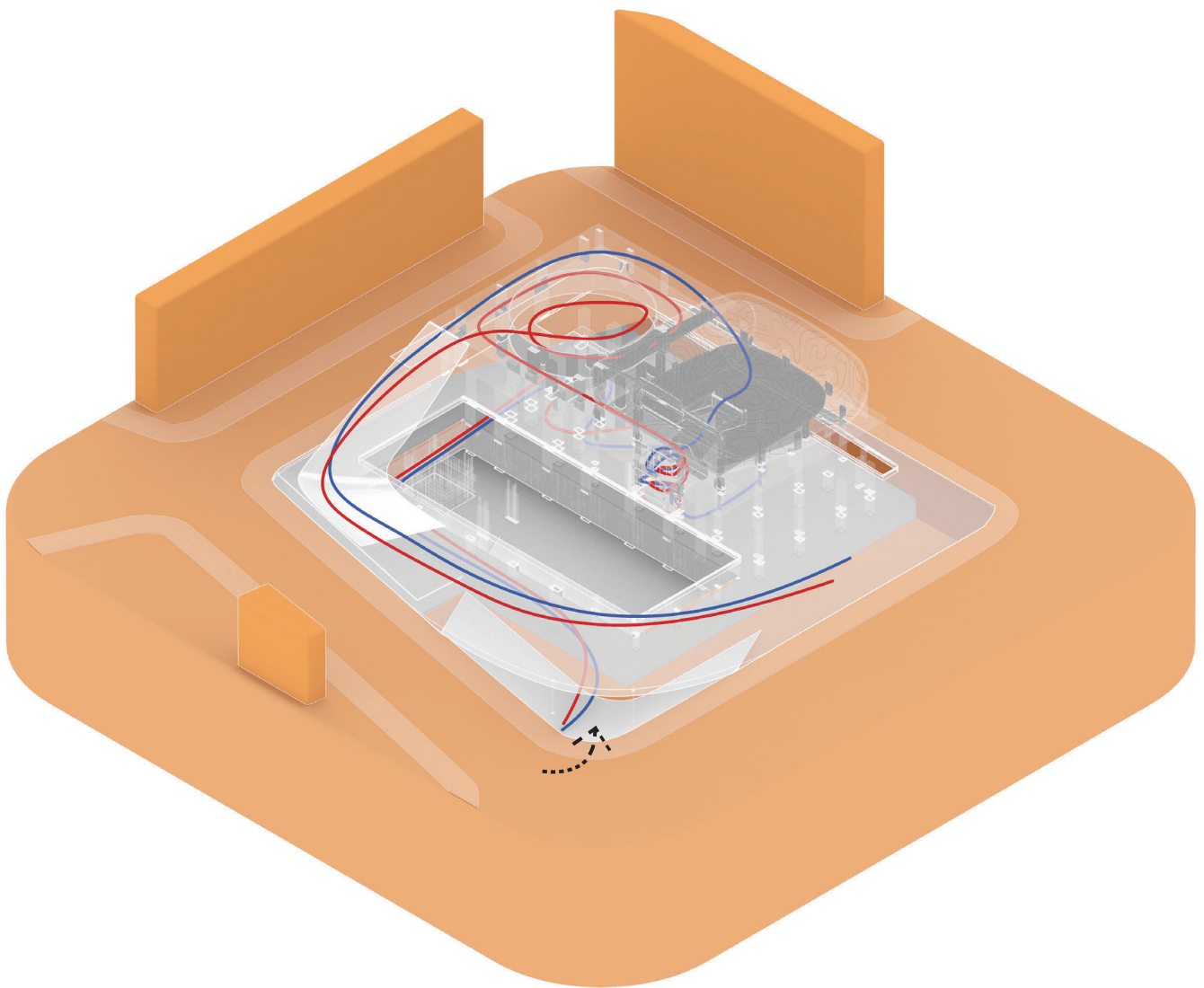
The City Centre, as its history shows, is a multifunctional and flexible facility. It becomes the place of artistic representation and one of the ultimate places of political and public expression in the city of Beirut. Its brutalism and centrality allows the city's inhabitants to make their own collective space. In order to make this place permanently accessible to the public, a new programming, inspired by both the past of the place and the transformations experienced during the Beirut popular movement of October 2019, then raises the building from its ashes.

The City Centre will then be formed of three essential poles that will make the unity of the project: A memorial for all the martyrs of the civil war, an exterior public event place, and a common space, which becomes a multi-purpose place for artistic representation and a public space open to the city, a place for public expression. It is then a question of poly-chronic places to diversify the uses in order to answer a large public with different identities, personalities and needs.

Spiritual Concept:

From the ground level, a very minimal intervention will entice people to the plot's corner; this corner was selected to break the Ring Bridge's stiffness. Once inside, guests will have a complete view of the patio and the egg facing the front door. During the loophole, they will investigate the tragedy that occurred during the civil war, landing to the shelter, a circular outdoor place. The shelter formerly existed on the battlefield, all around Beirut, to protect soldiers from the bombings, usually a hole in the ground, with fire during cold winters.

The materiality of the new public space will be carried out with concrete elements that will shape the exterior areas of the project. While preserving the same spirit of "Brutalism", the contrast is highlighted with the age difference and the decays of the concrete, moreover, the cubic elements are in complete contradiction to the soft and curvy shape of The egg.



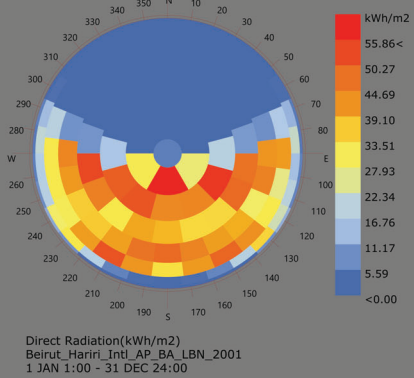
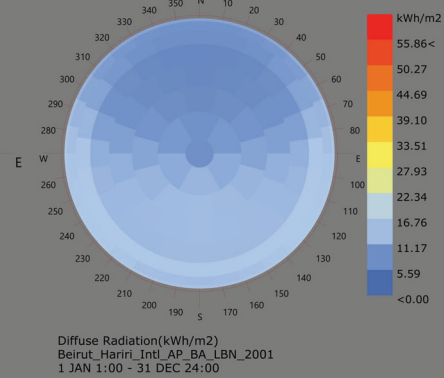
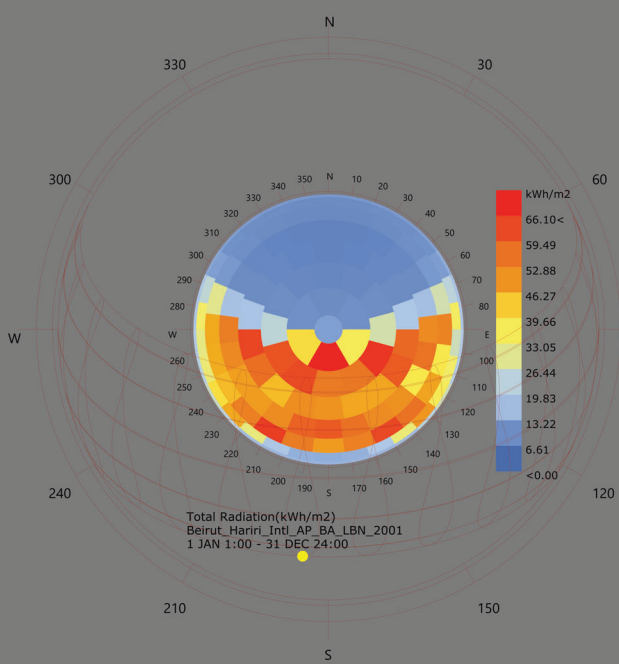
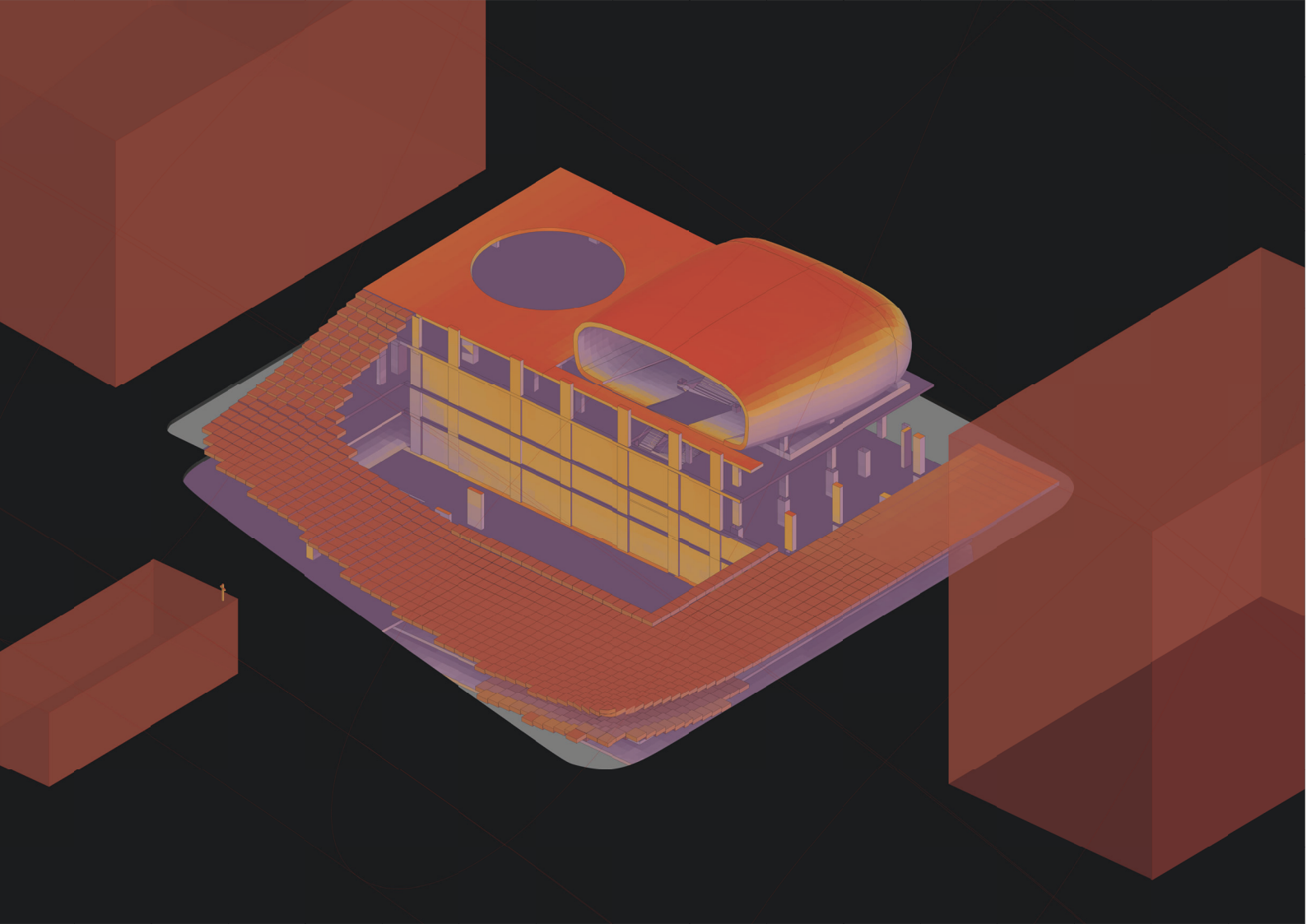
ACCESSIBILITY

2. A cultural **settlement**

b. Architectural approaches

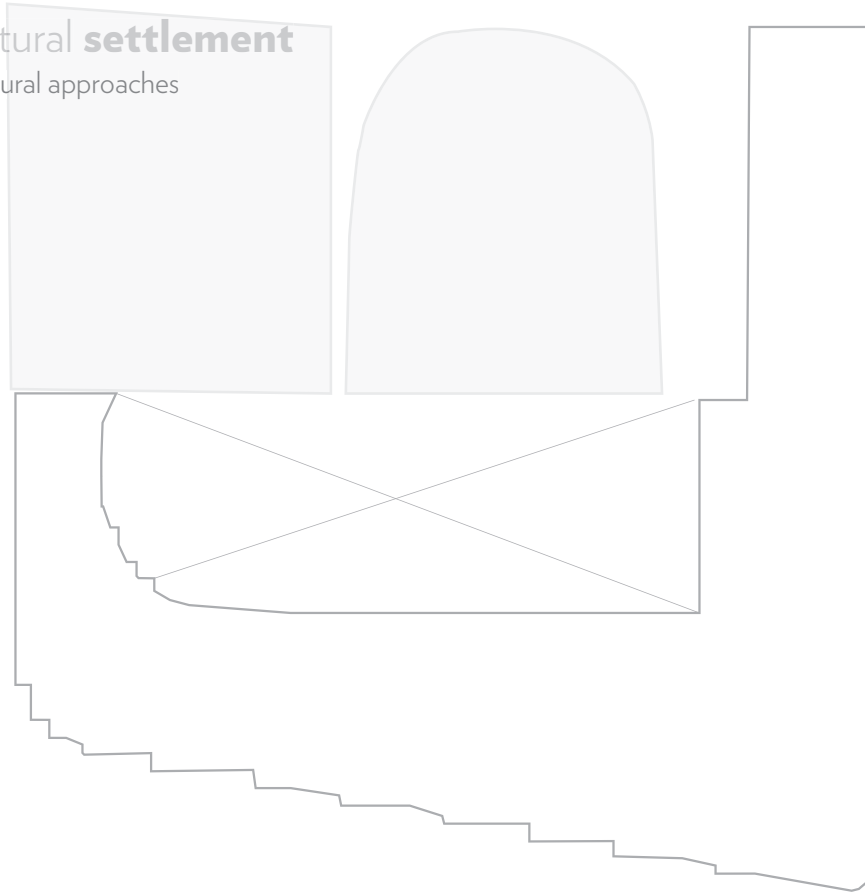
Ladybug enables you to view and analyze weather data in Grasshopper. This contains diagrams like the sun path, wind rose, psychrometric chart, and so on, as well as geometric studies like radiation analysis, shadow studies, and view analysis.

The system was applied on the structure in order to analyse the sun path during a whole year, retracting all the data, and showing it into a diagram with heat analysis. Thus understanding the importance of creating shaded zones, using trees in specific locations.



2. A cultural **settlement**

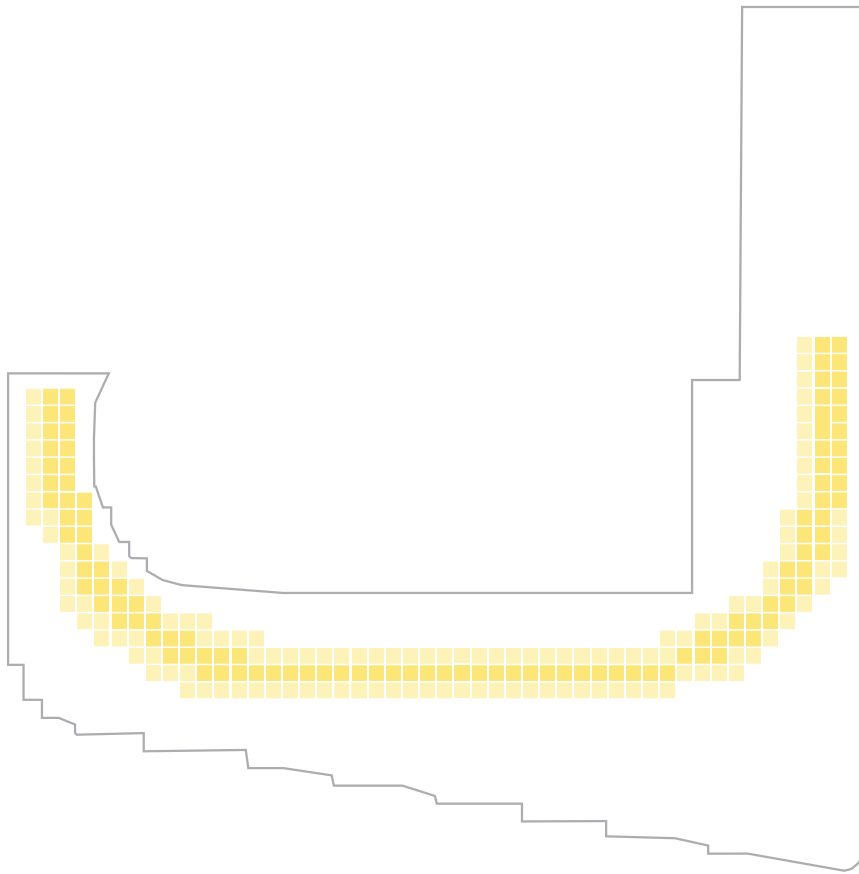
b. Architectural approaches



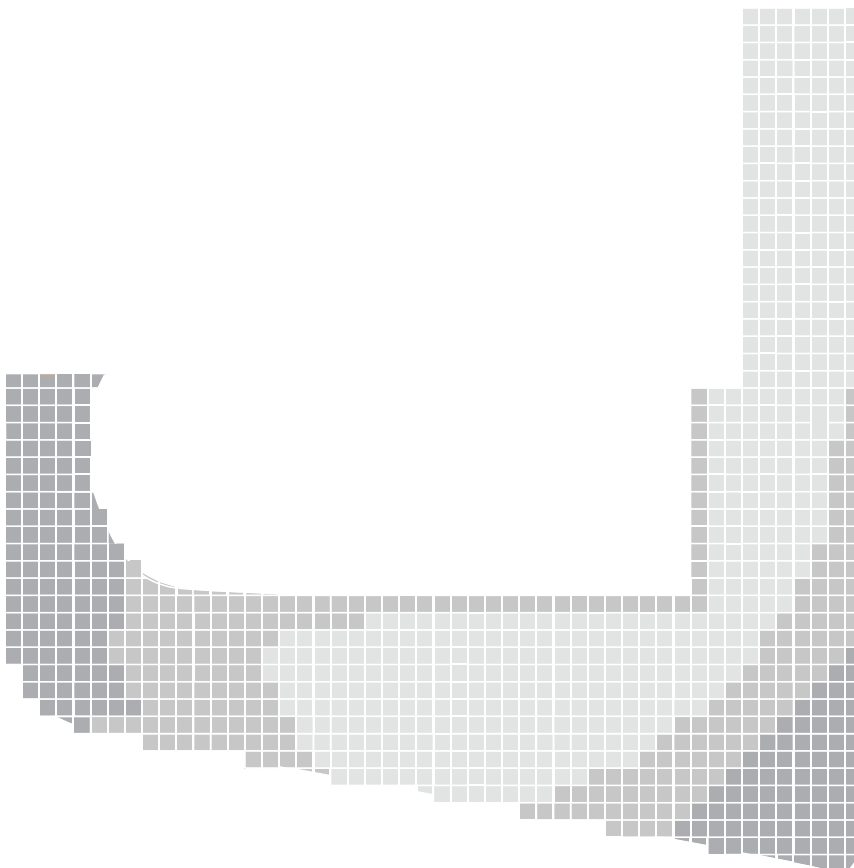
Intervention area



Sound waves direction



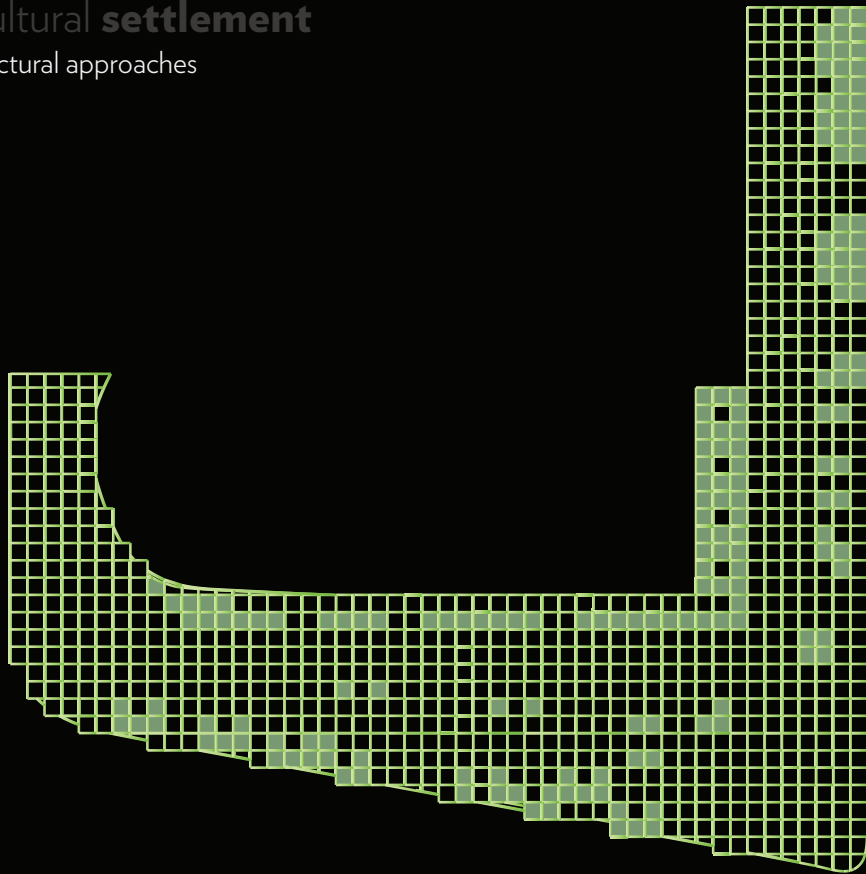
Shortest Path
(Fastest route to reach destination)



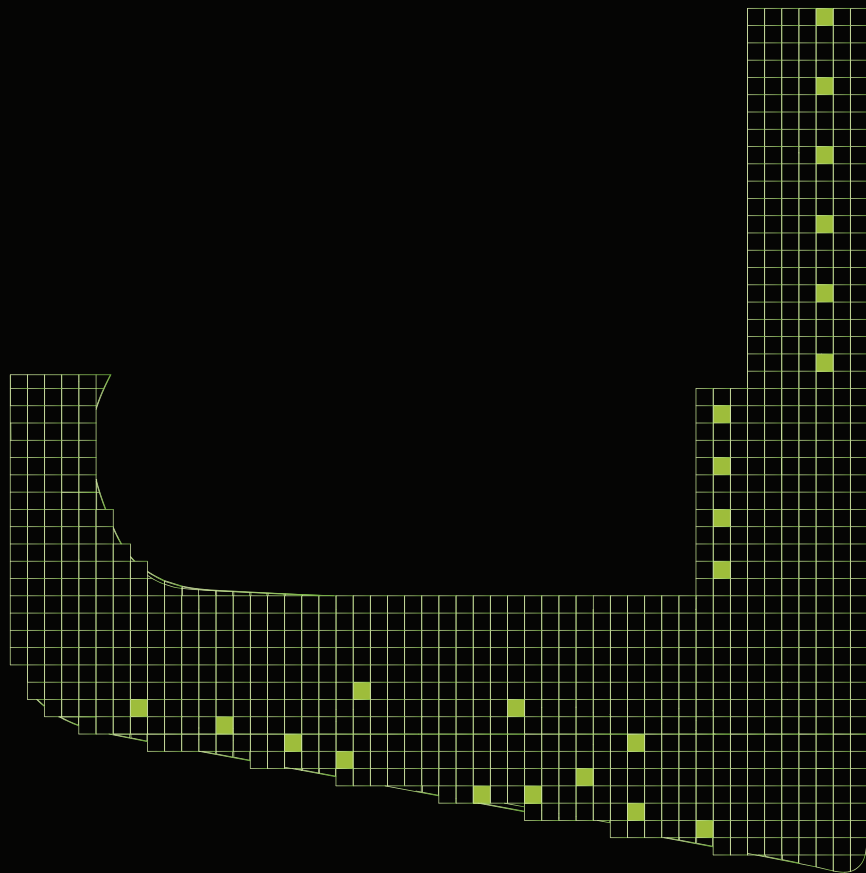
Elevation per cube

2. A cultural **settlement**

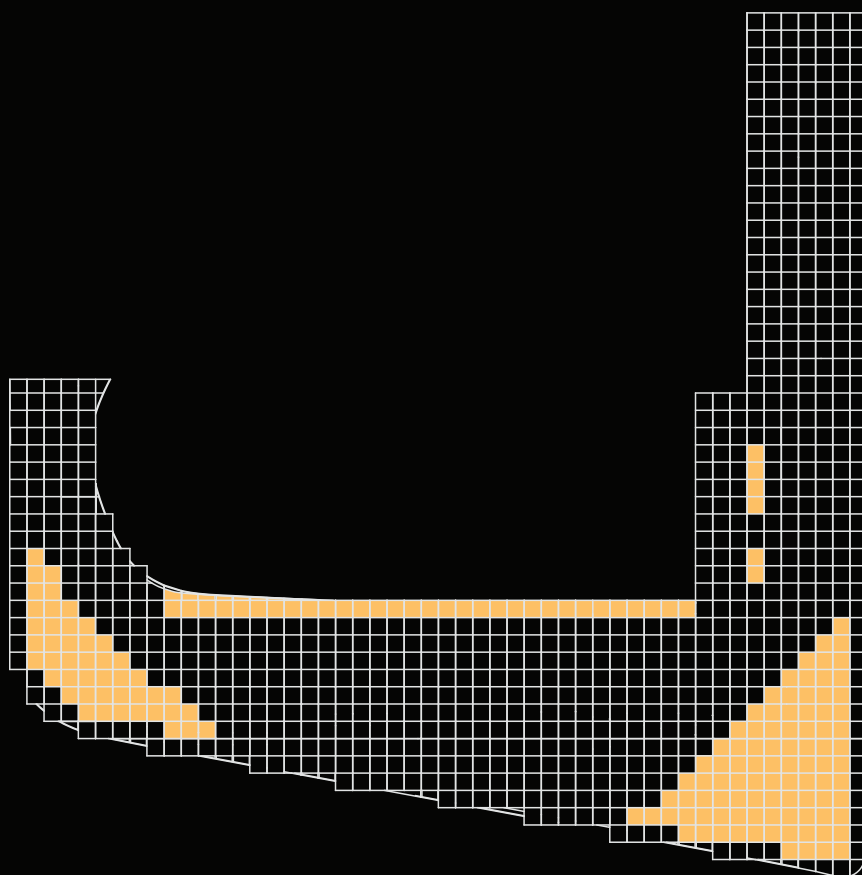
b. Architectural approaches



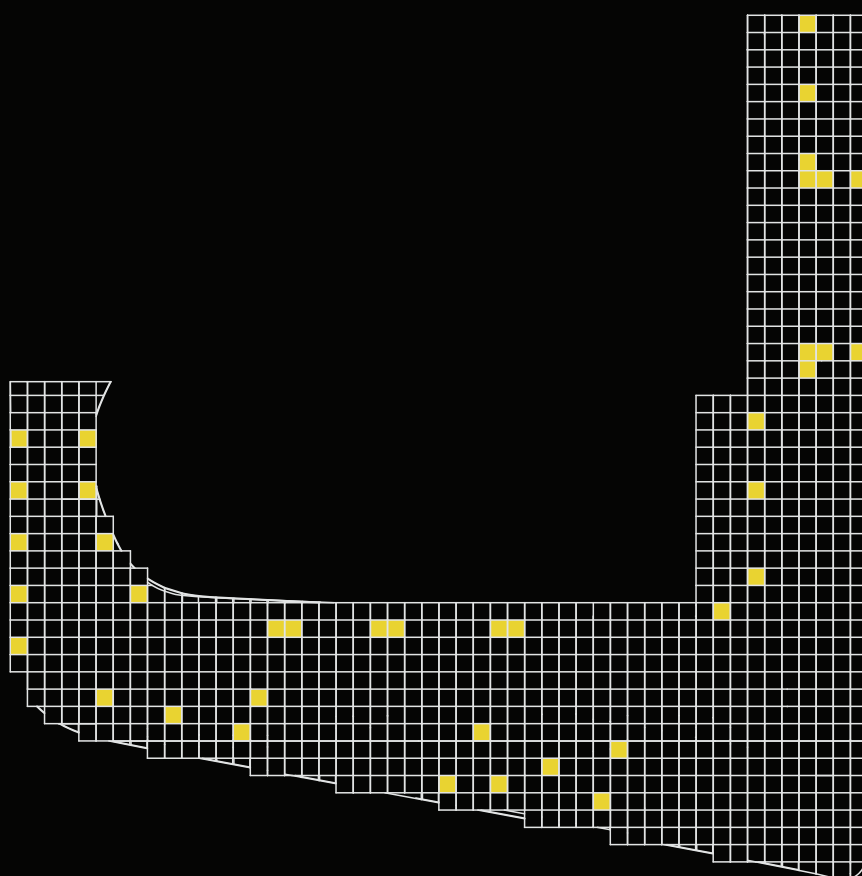
Short height greenery



High plants/trees
(to reduce sound waves)



Seating areas
(55 cm height components)

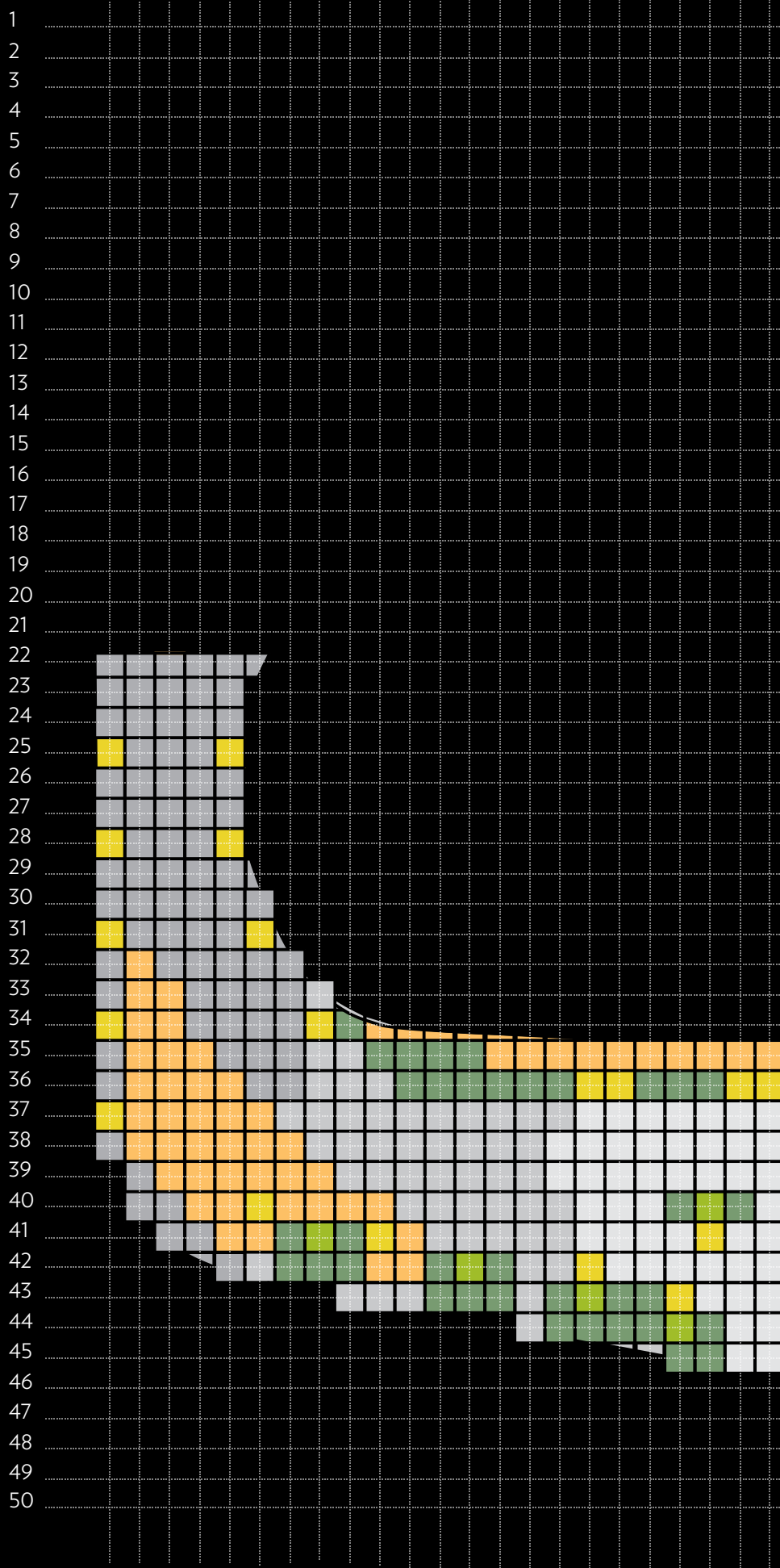


Lighting components
(lights up the path and greenery)

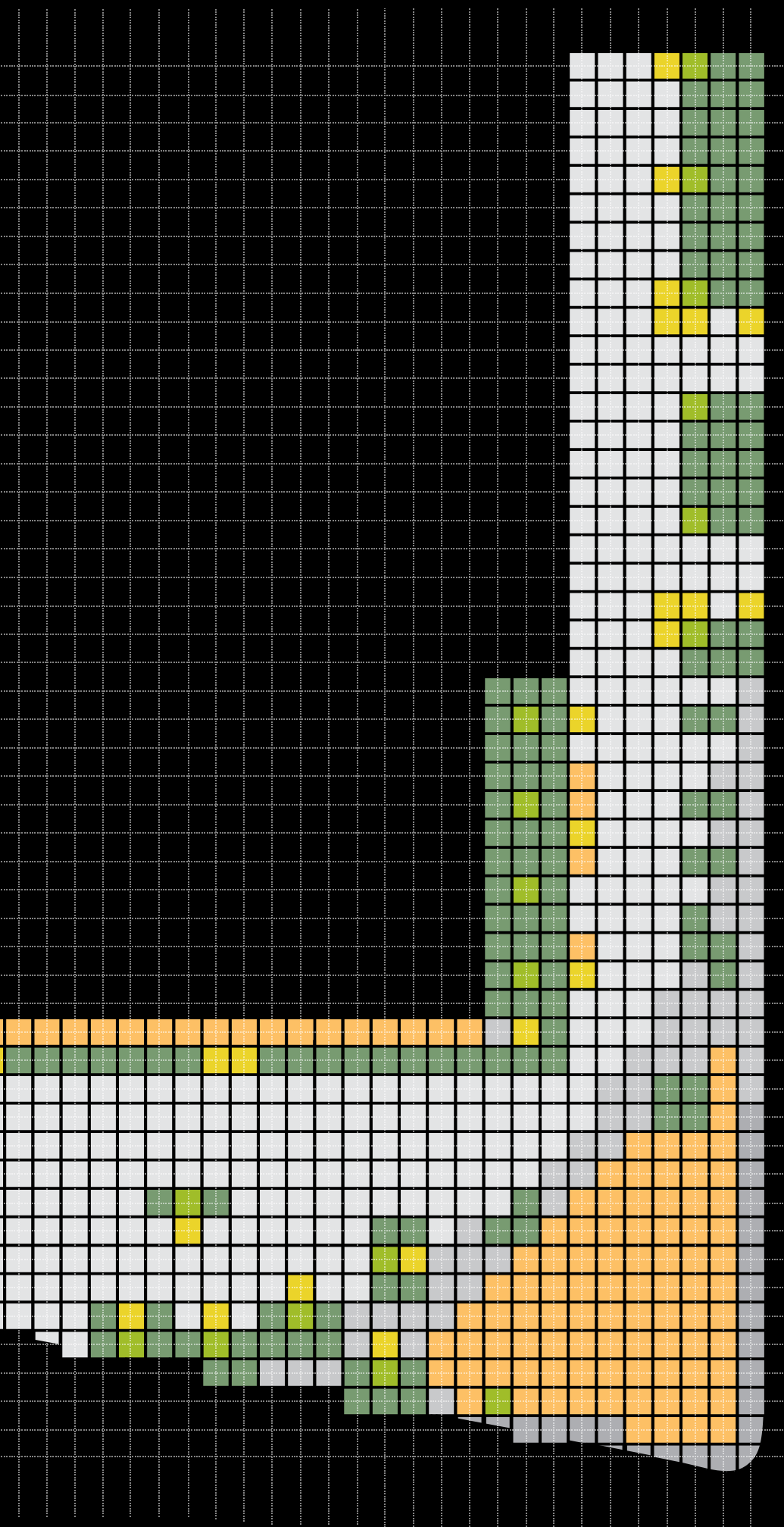
Diagrams

Coding all the components
for a better understanding.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W

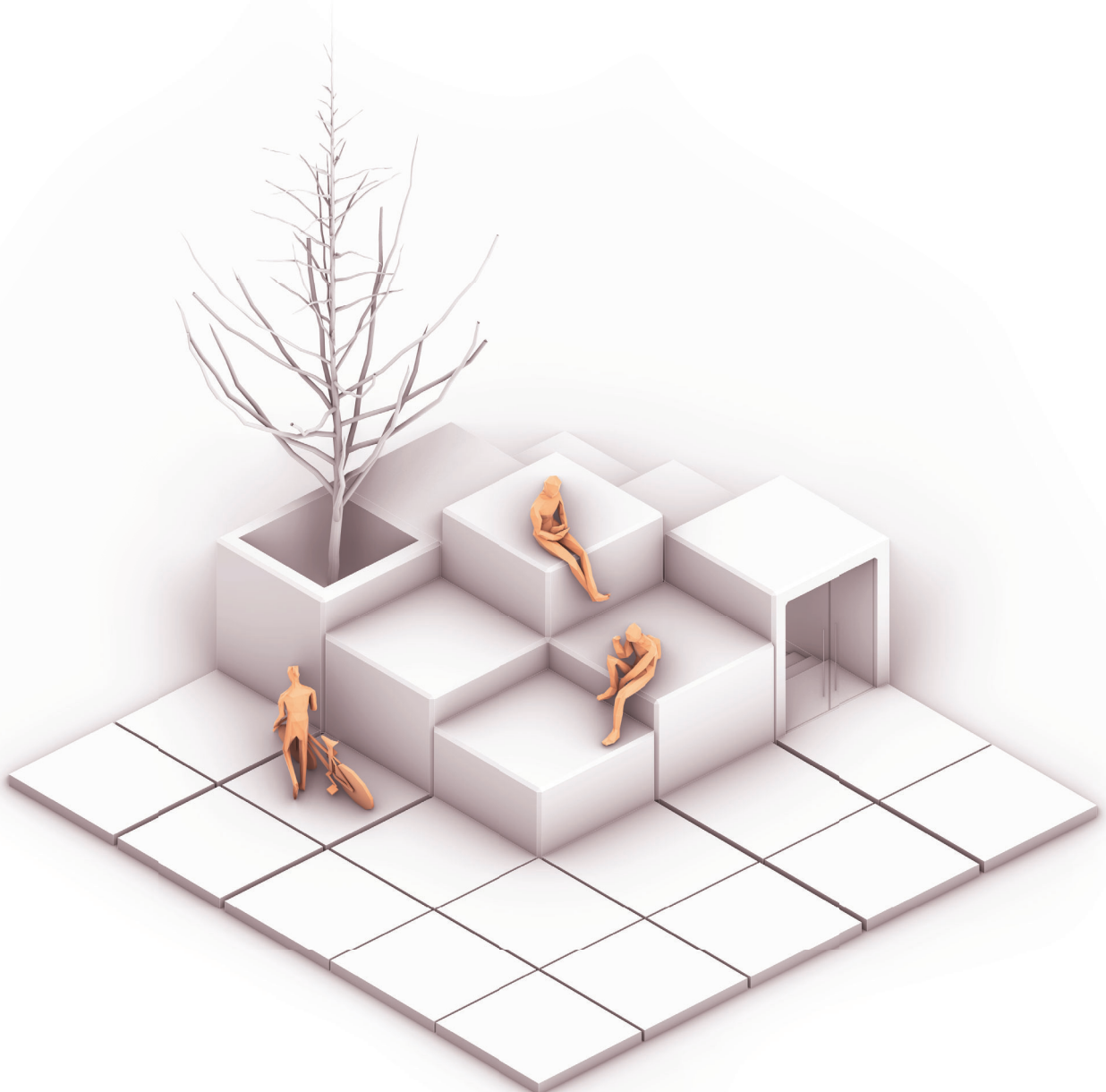
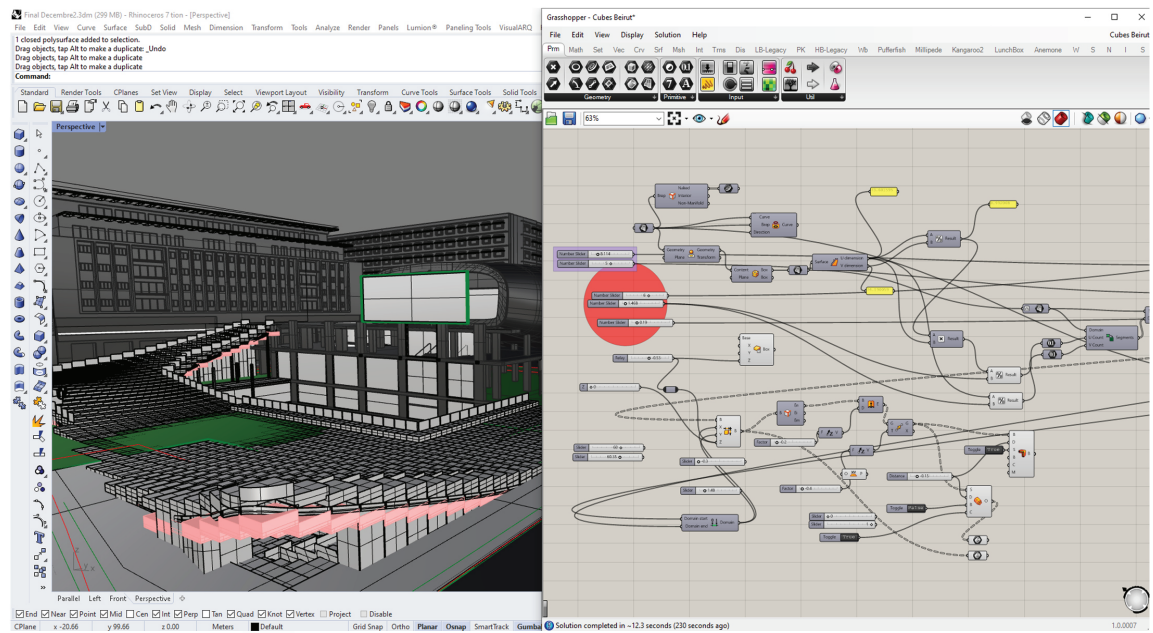


X Y Z A' B' C' D' E' F' G' H' I' J' K' L' M' N' O' P' Q' R' S' T' U' V' W' X'



2. A cultural settlement

b. Architectural approaches



The primary design strategy begins with the use of a standardized modular component; the cube component, which is present throughout the project. A cubic element in total contradiction with the Egged shape building. These repeated elements will help to shape the entire project, particularly the outdoor area, which will be the only landscape intervention built for this project. The remaining functions will be executed inside the existing structure itself. The same modules will serve a variety of functions, including seats for the outdoor cinema, tree containers, lighting devices and even as a main entrance for the memorial. Some of the cubes will be built from an absorbent material, acting as sponges to collect water and store it in water tanks underneath the main deck.

It is essential to note that no further interventions are made, no new structures are constructed, and the attention is mostly focused on the design of the landscape in order to keep the Egg as a main element, even the choice of cubic elements is made to accentuate this difference. A pixelization effect will dominate the project's exterior space, with each component serving a specific purpose.

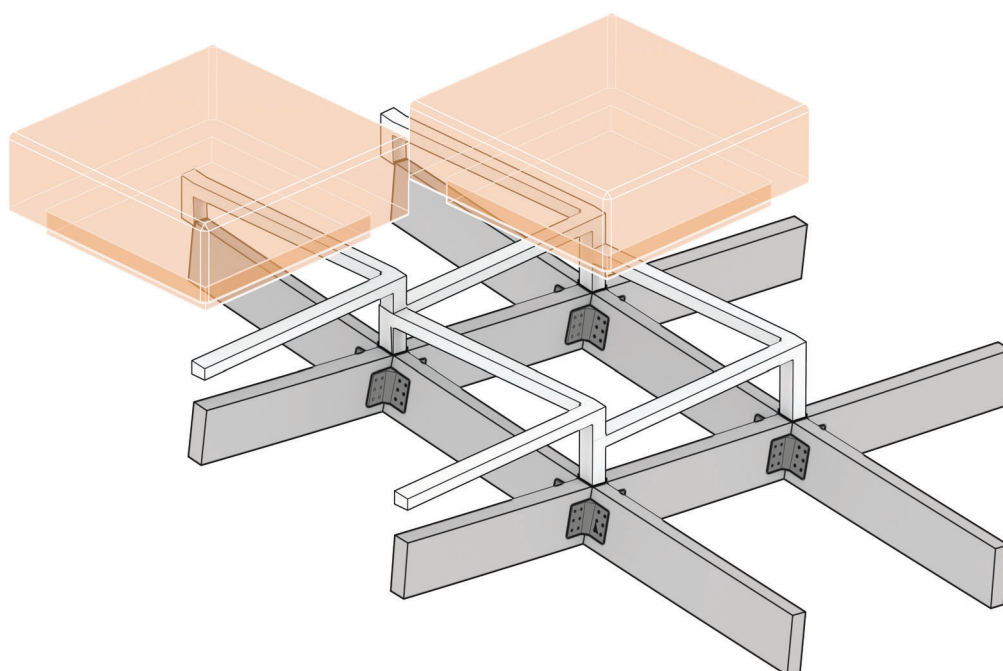
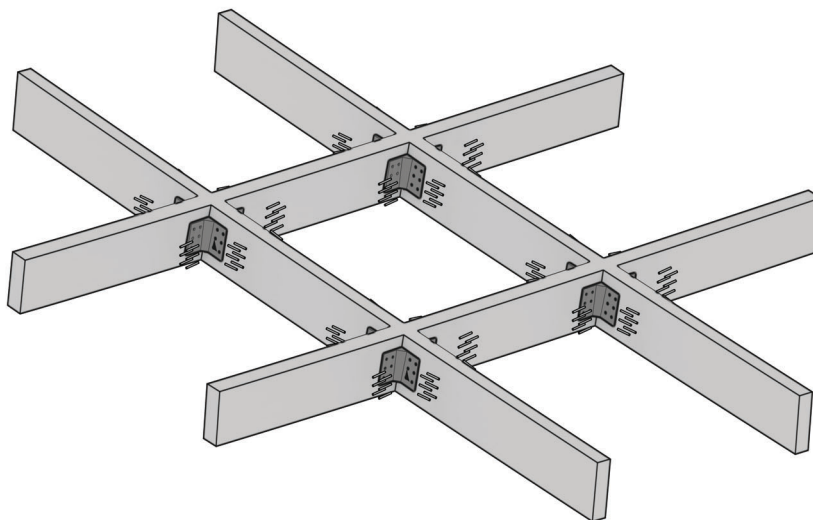
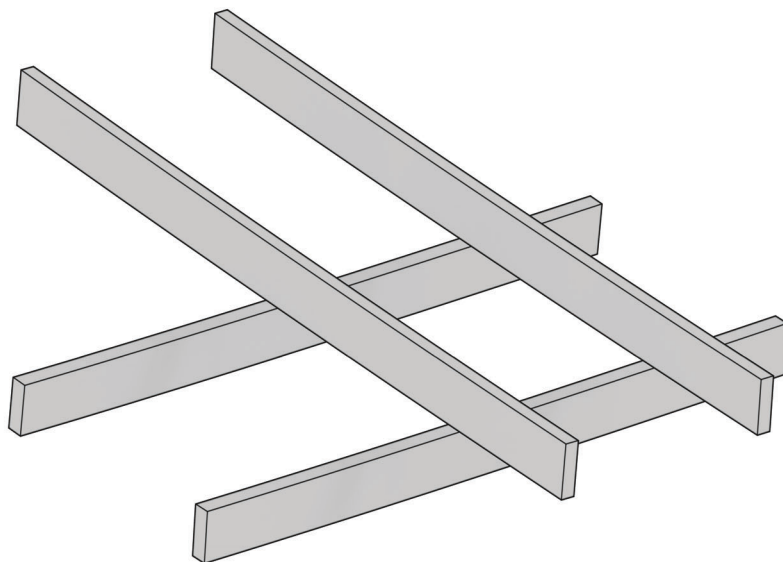


2. A cultural **settlement**

b. Architectural approaches

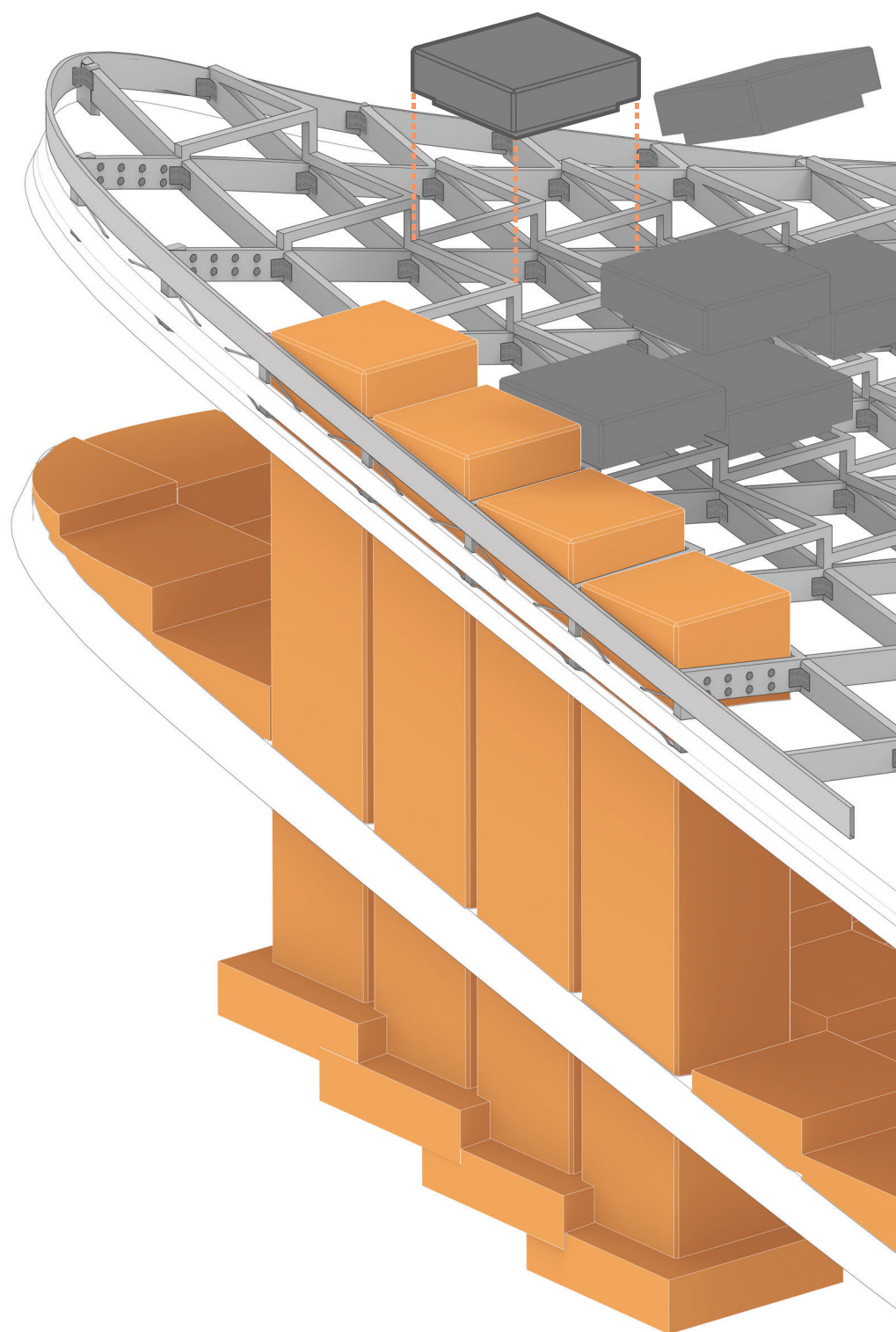
Structural details:

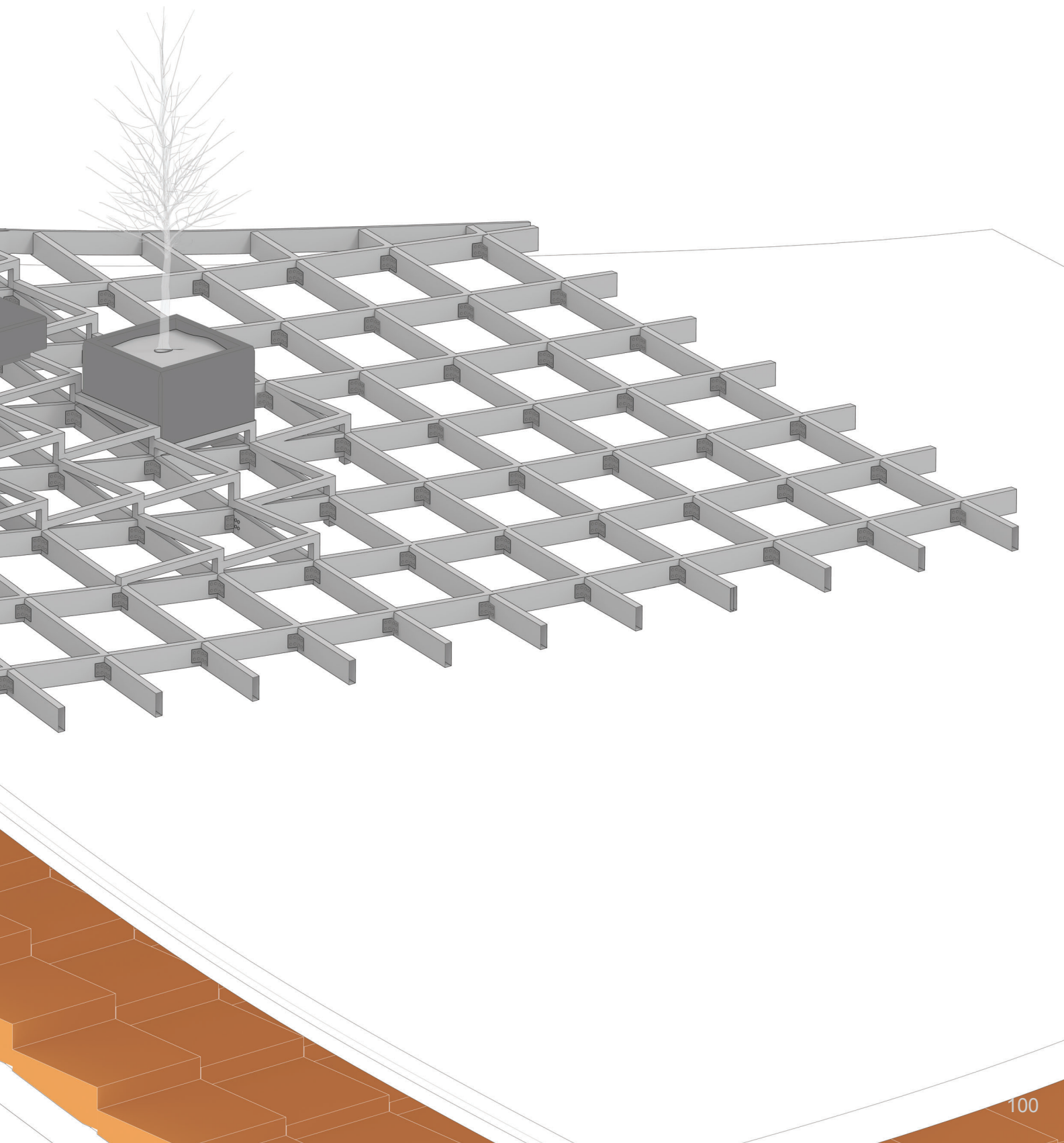
The primary support for the modular component is in the shape of a waffle structure; to put it another way, these pieces are made up of intersecting metal beams that are mechanically joined with bolts on their point of cross-sectional contact. When compared to traditional footing systems, this method has better stiffness and strength. It is more resistant to cracking.



2. A cultural **settlement**

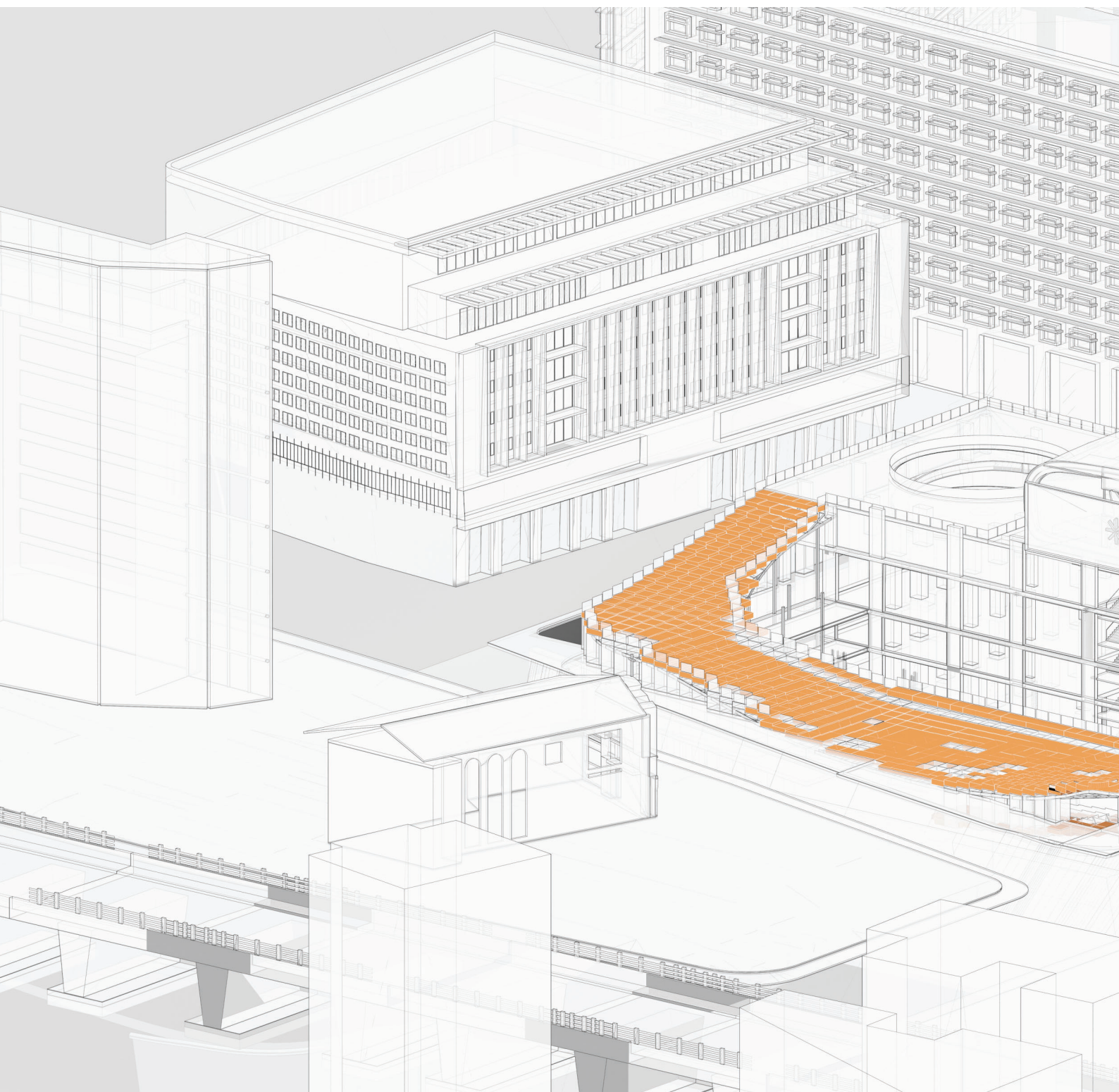
b. Architectural approaches



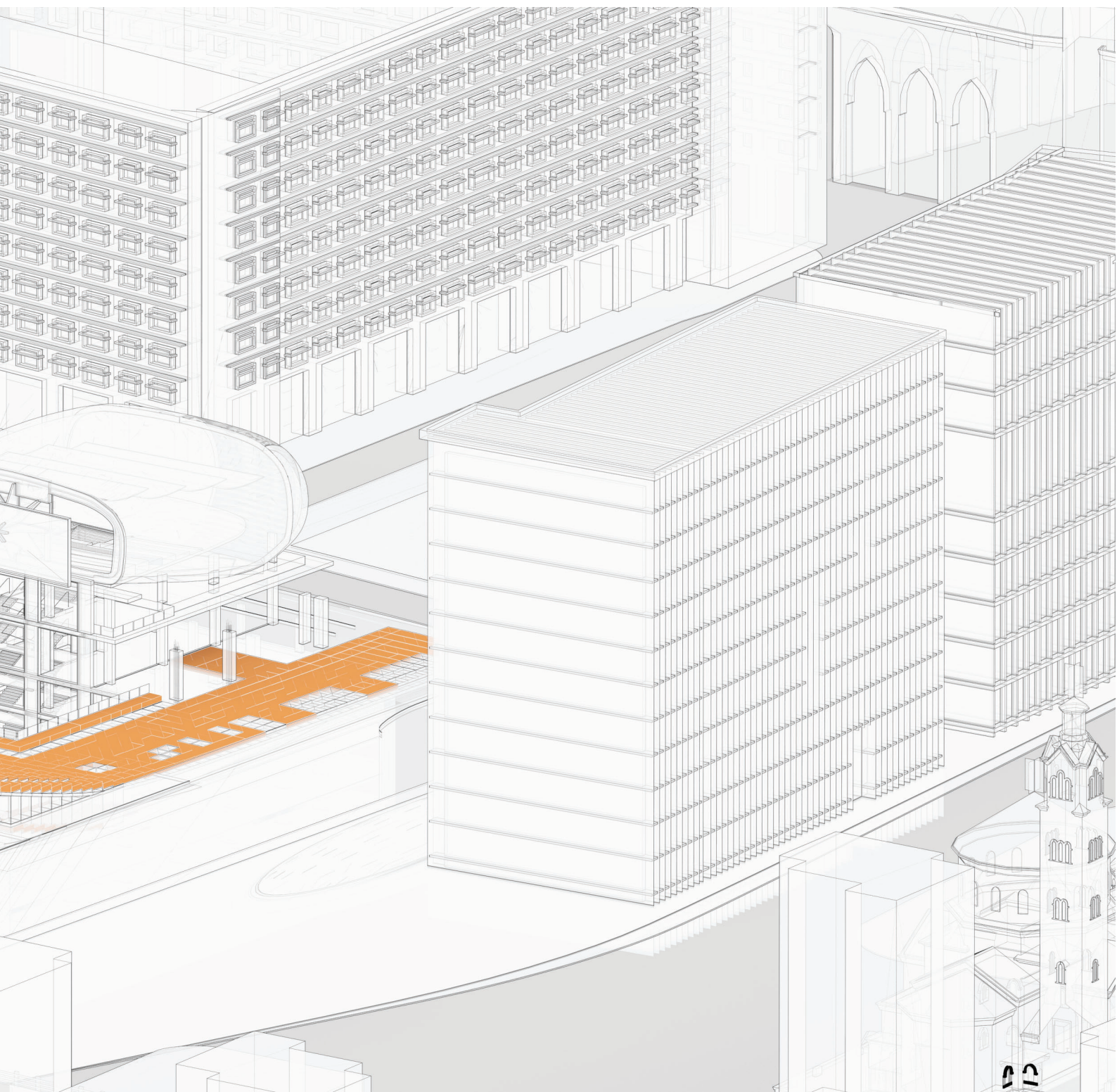


2. A cultural **settlement**

b. Architectural approaches









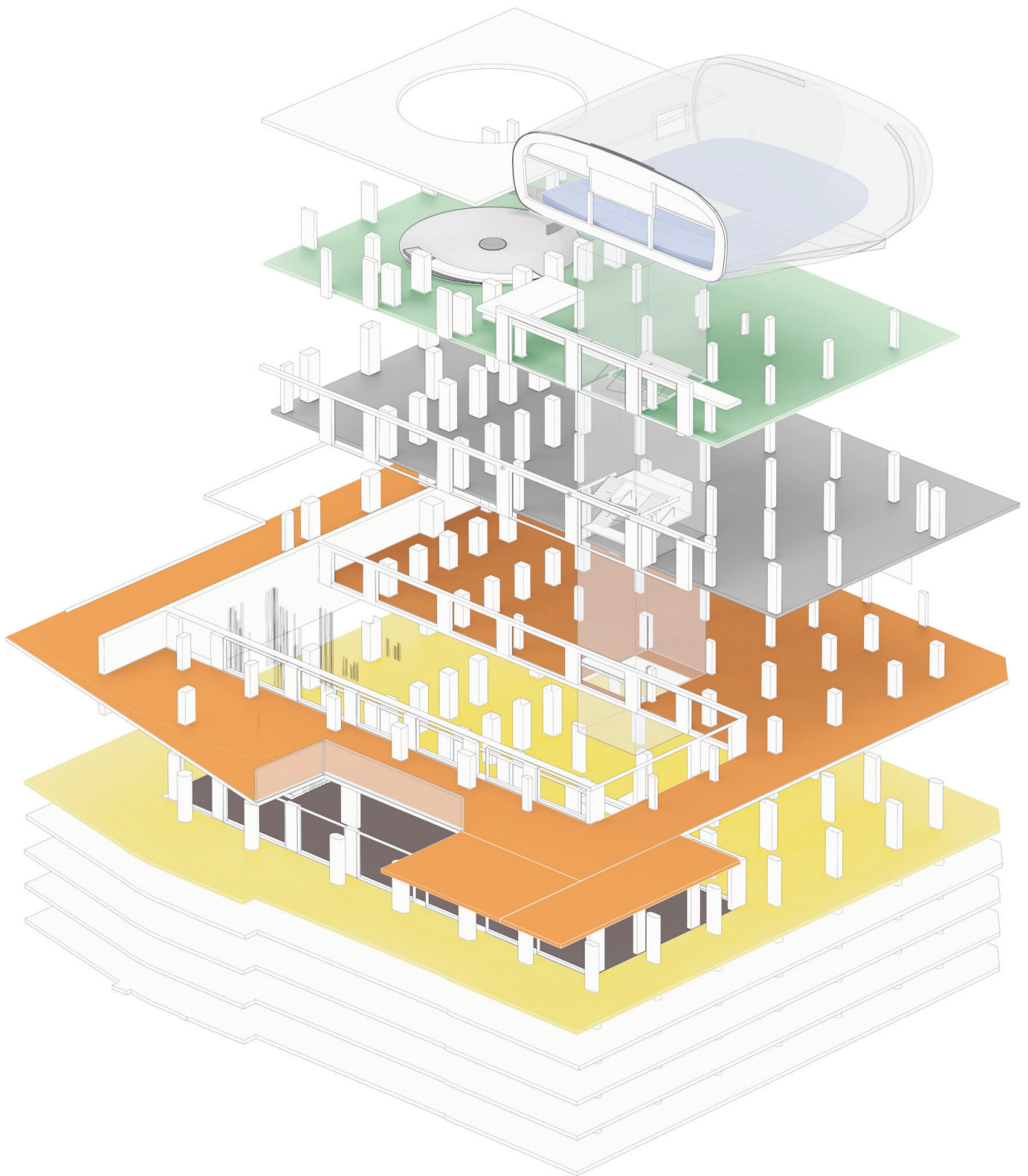
Axonometry



2. A cultural **settlement**

c. Program injection

-  **485 sqm - Exhibition 2**
-  **1226 sqm - Exhibition 3**
-  **1950 sqm - Entrance + Cafee + Admin**
-  **2535 sqm - Exhibition 1**
-  **2400 sqm - Multipurpose / Library**
-  **16150 sqm - Parking**



Exploded Axonometry

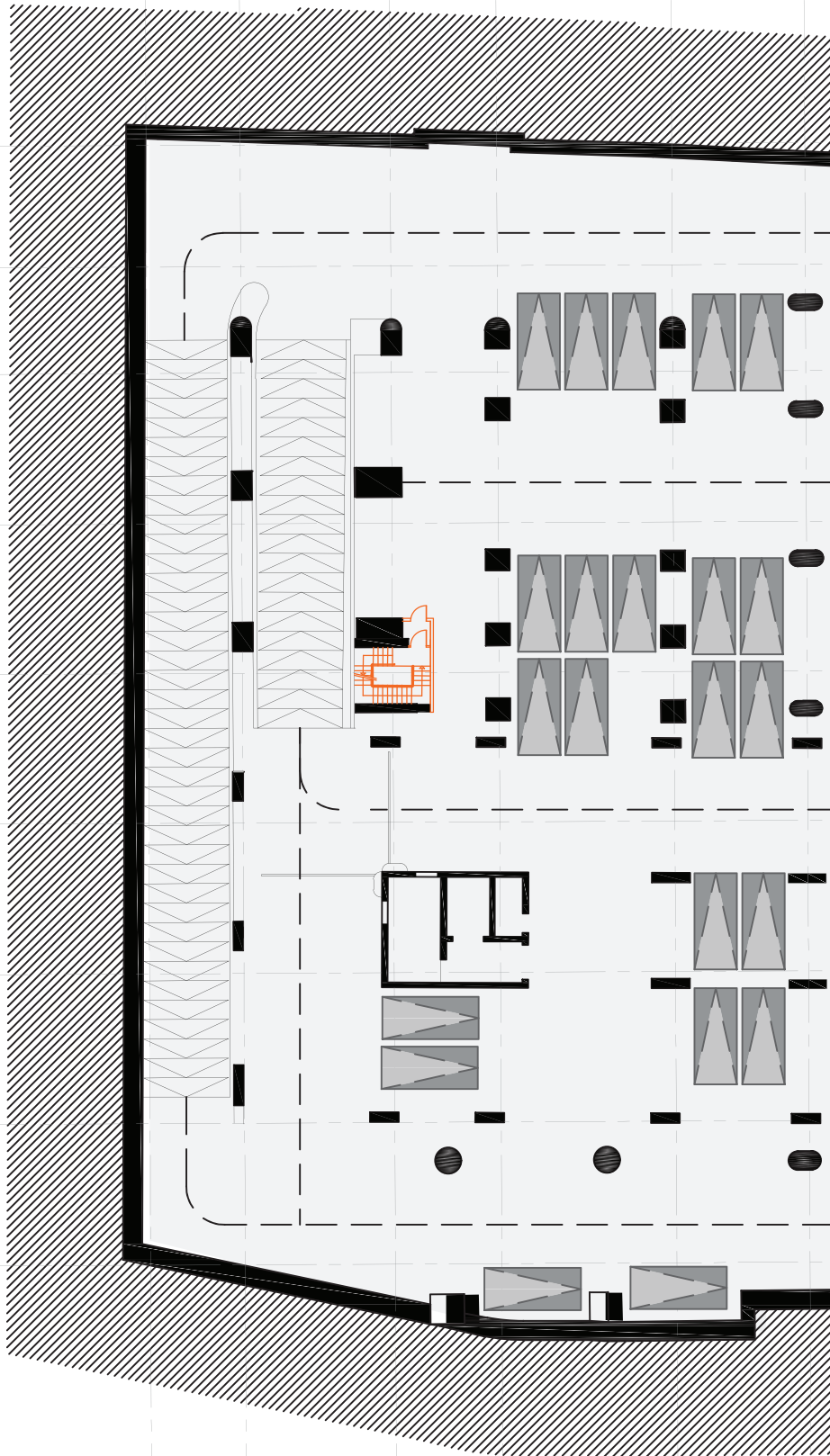
3.Physical Intervention

c. Program injection and application

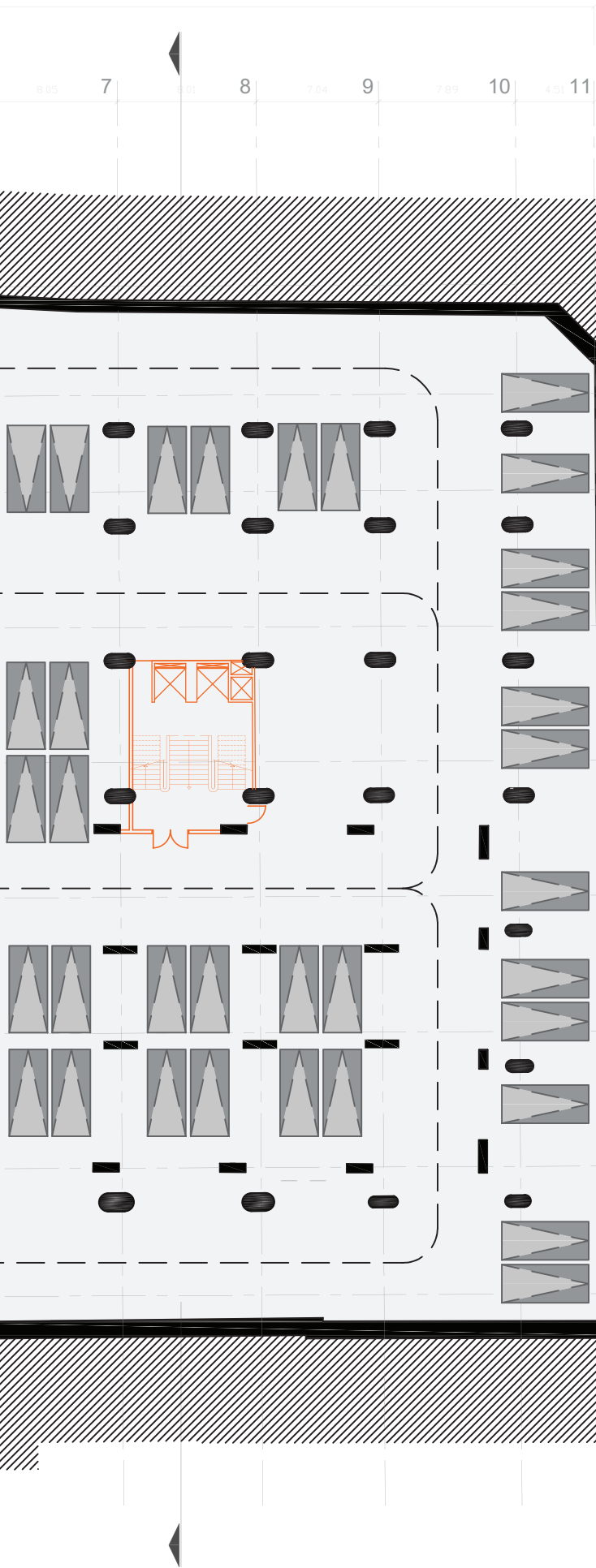
58.2

A
4.31
B
4.53
C
4.83
D
5.17
E
5.78
F
6.02
G
6.78
H
7.36
I

1 5.00 2 7.85 3 9.52 4 10.09 5 8.91 6

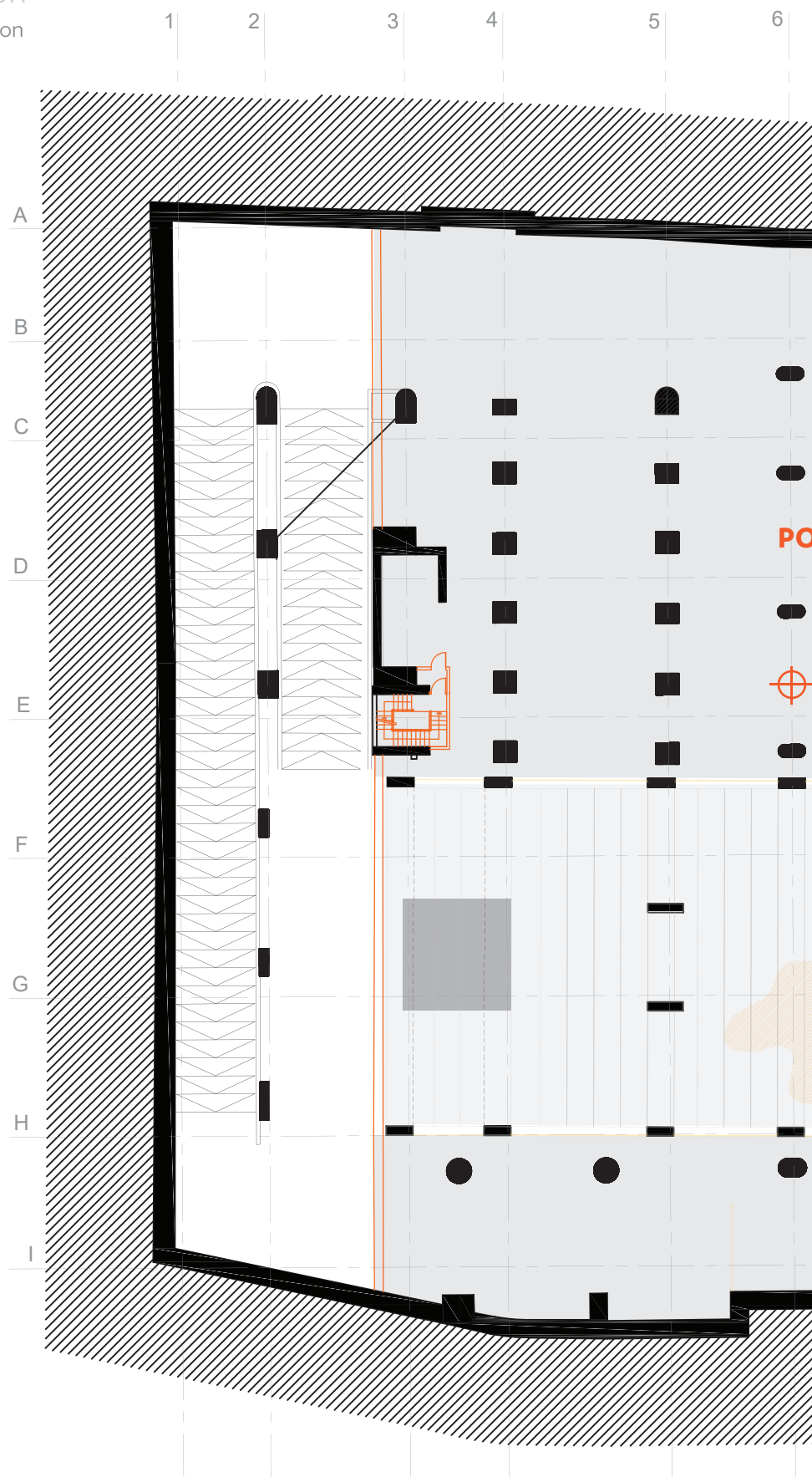


-6 > -3
All parking Plans
1:300



3. Physical Intervention

c. Program injection and application



-2
Open Space Plan
1:300

7 8 9 10 11



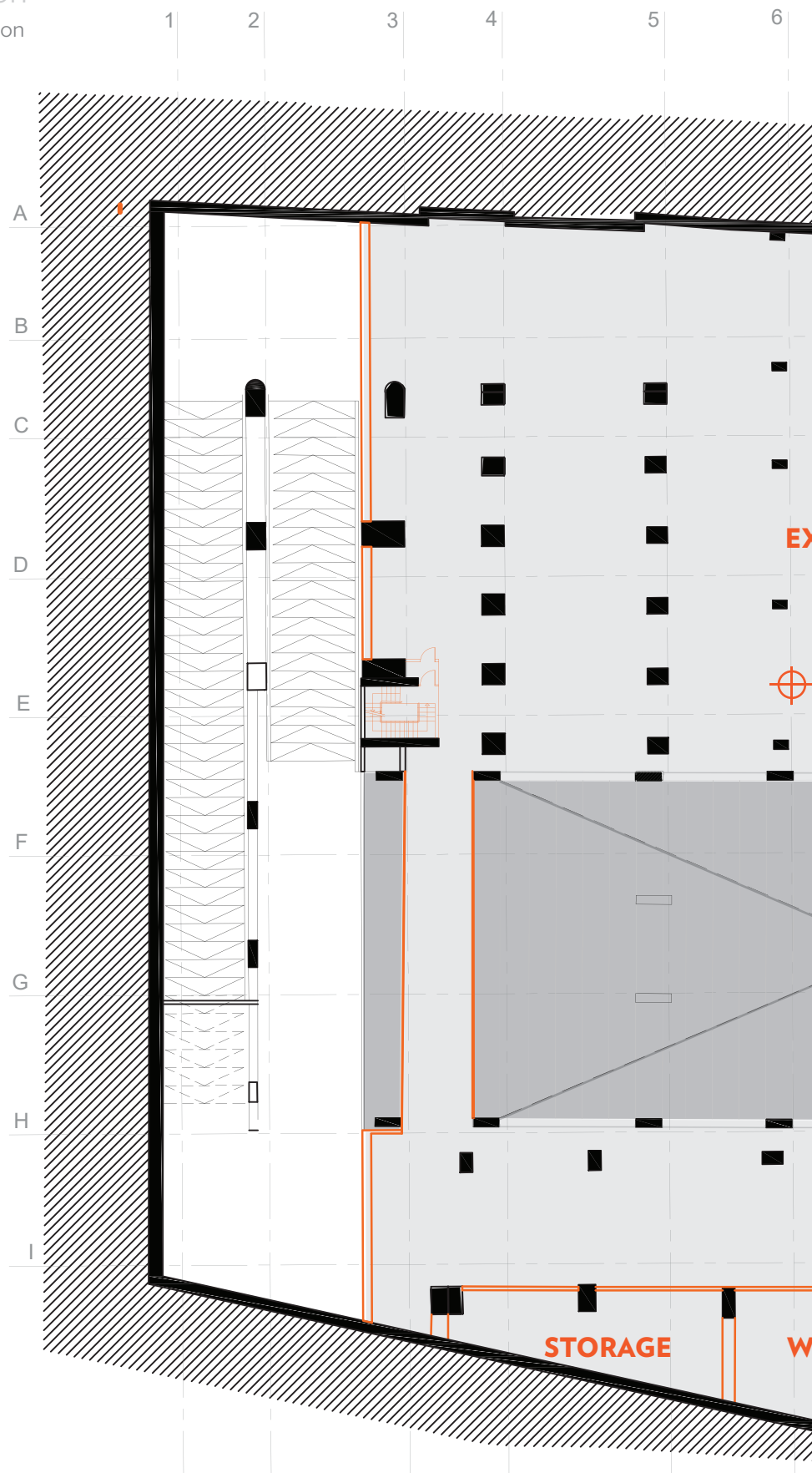
POLYVALENT / LIBRARY

-8.50

OUTDOORS AREA

3. Physical Intervention

c. Program injection and application



-1
Memorial Plan
1:300

7 8 9 10 11



EXHIBITION

-3.60

WAITING AREA

RECEPTION

-3.60

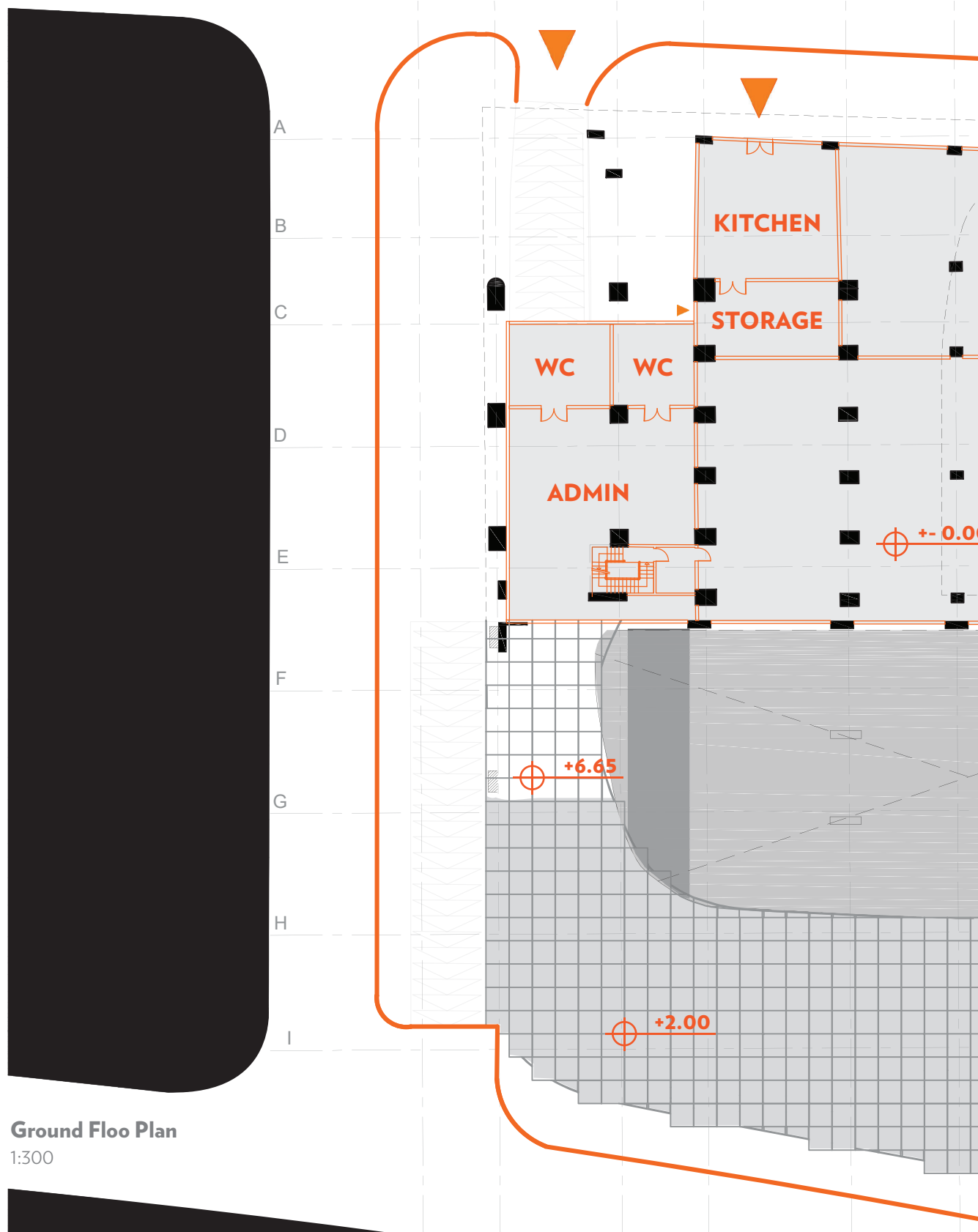
C

+ -0.00

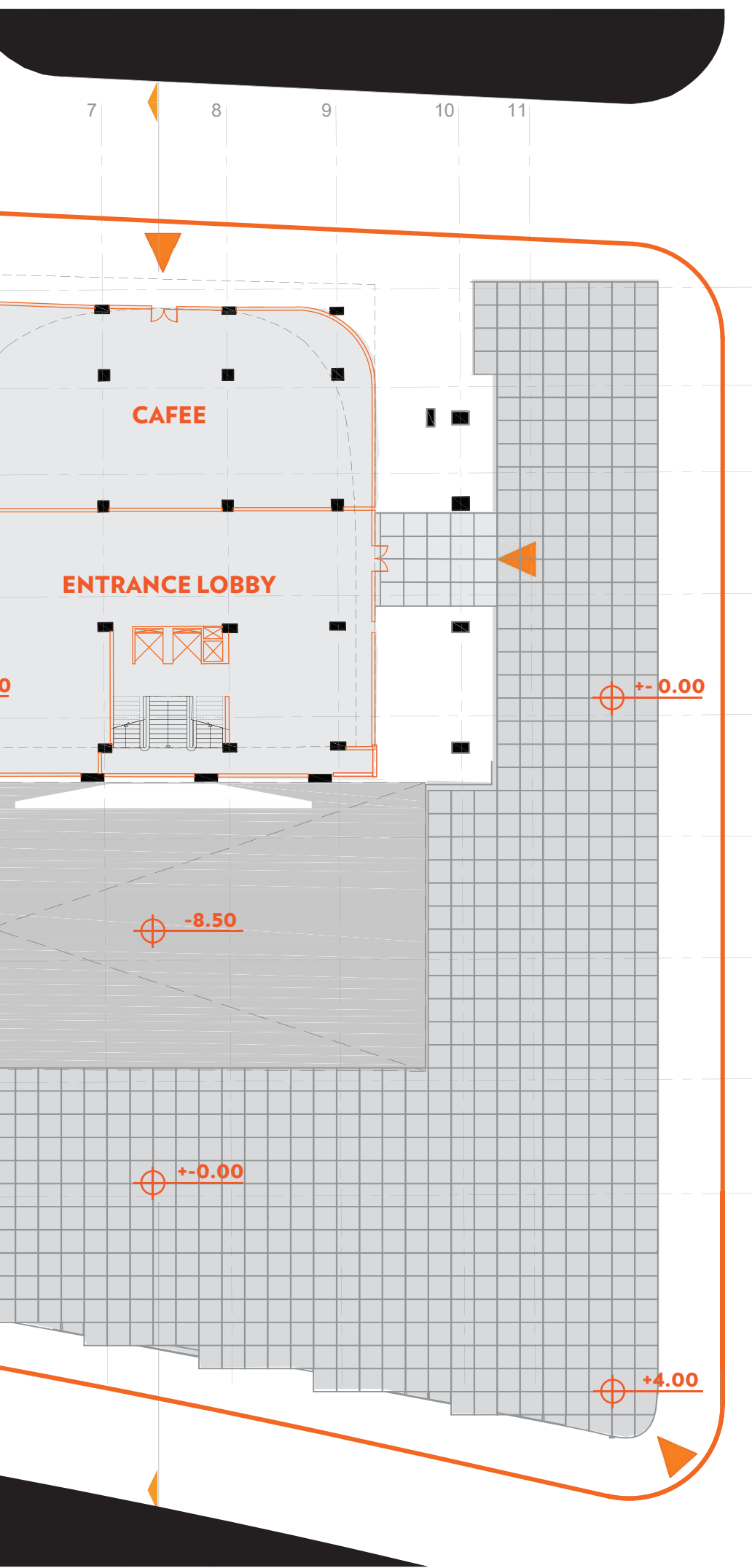
ENTRANCE

3. Physical Intervention

c. Program injection and application

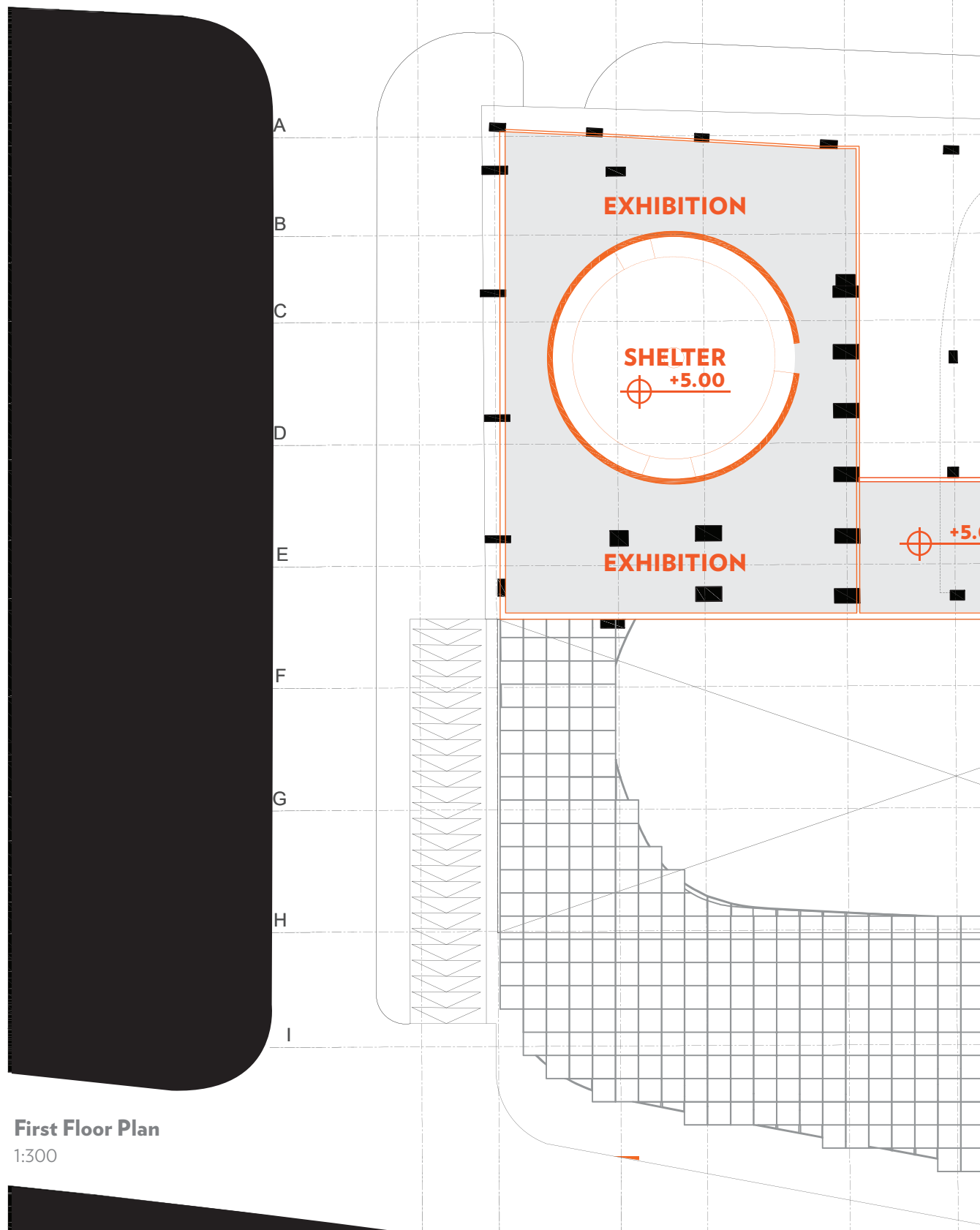


Ground Floor Plan
1:300



3. Physical Intervention

c. Program injection and application



First Floor Plan

1:300



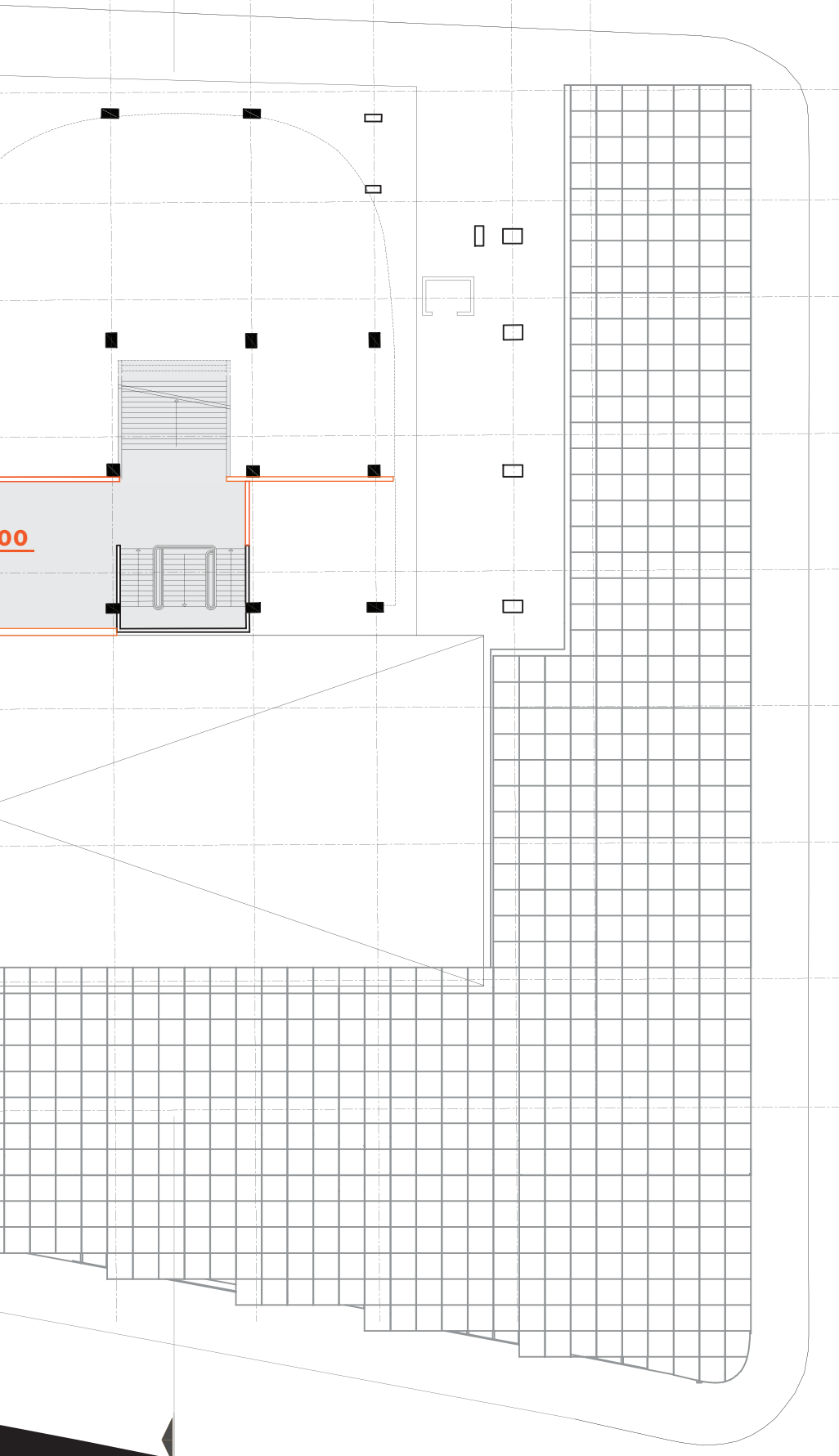
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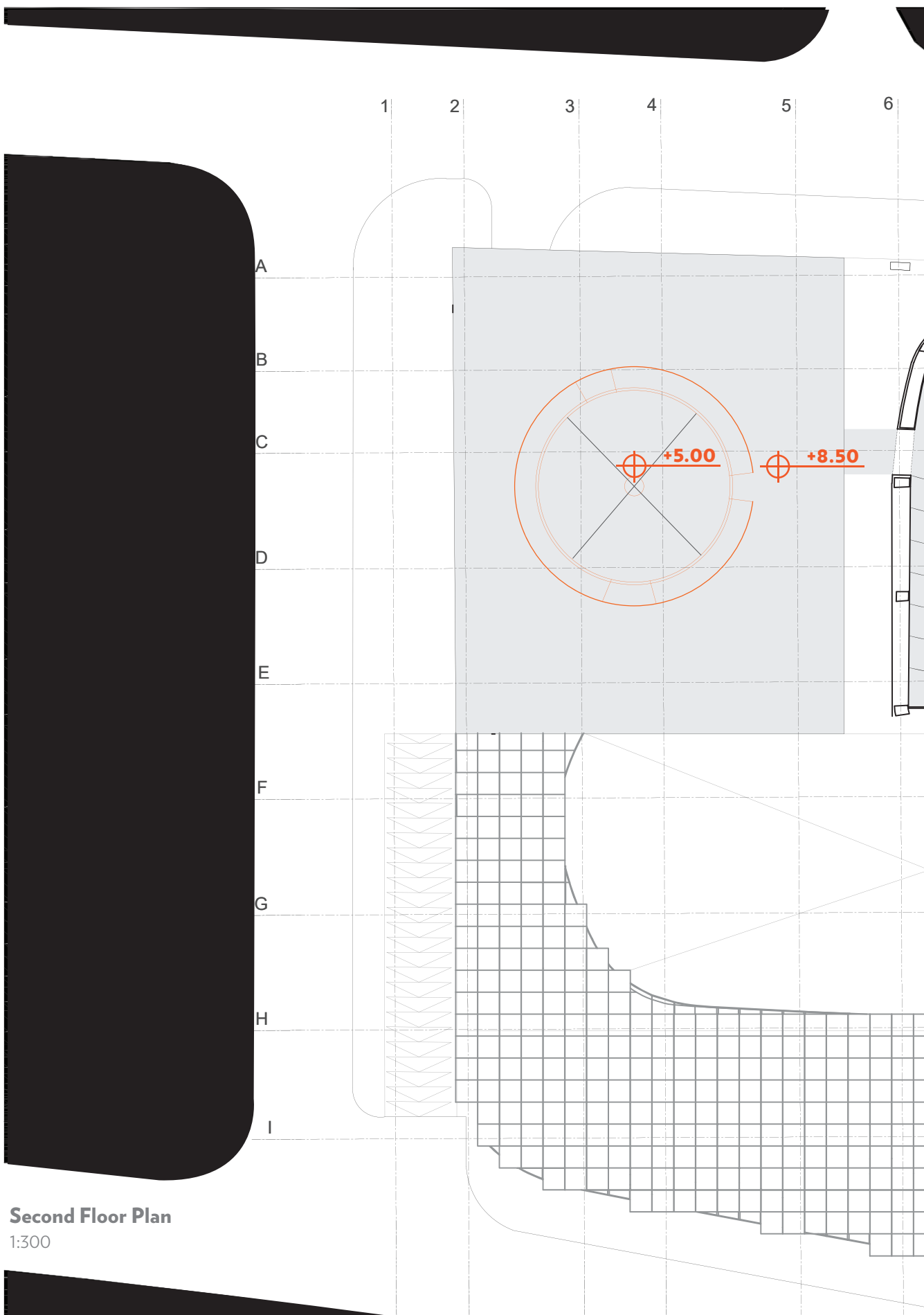
10

11



00





Second Floor Plan
1:300

7

8

9

10

11



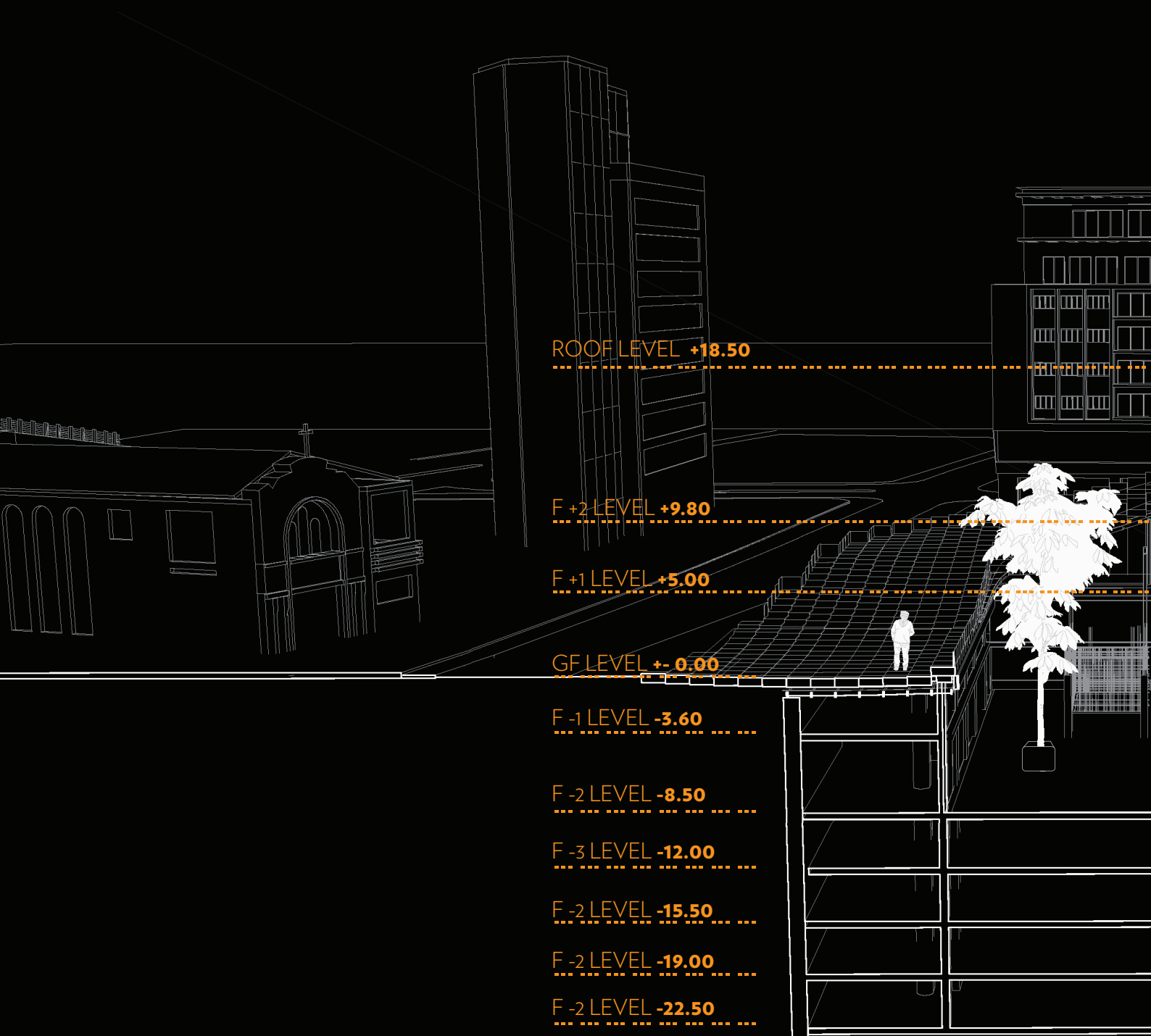
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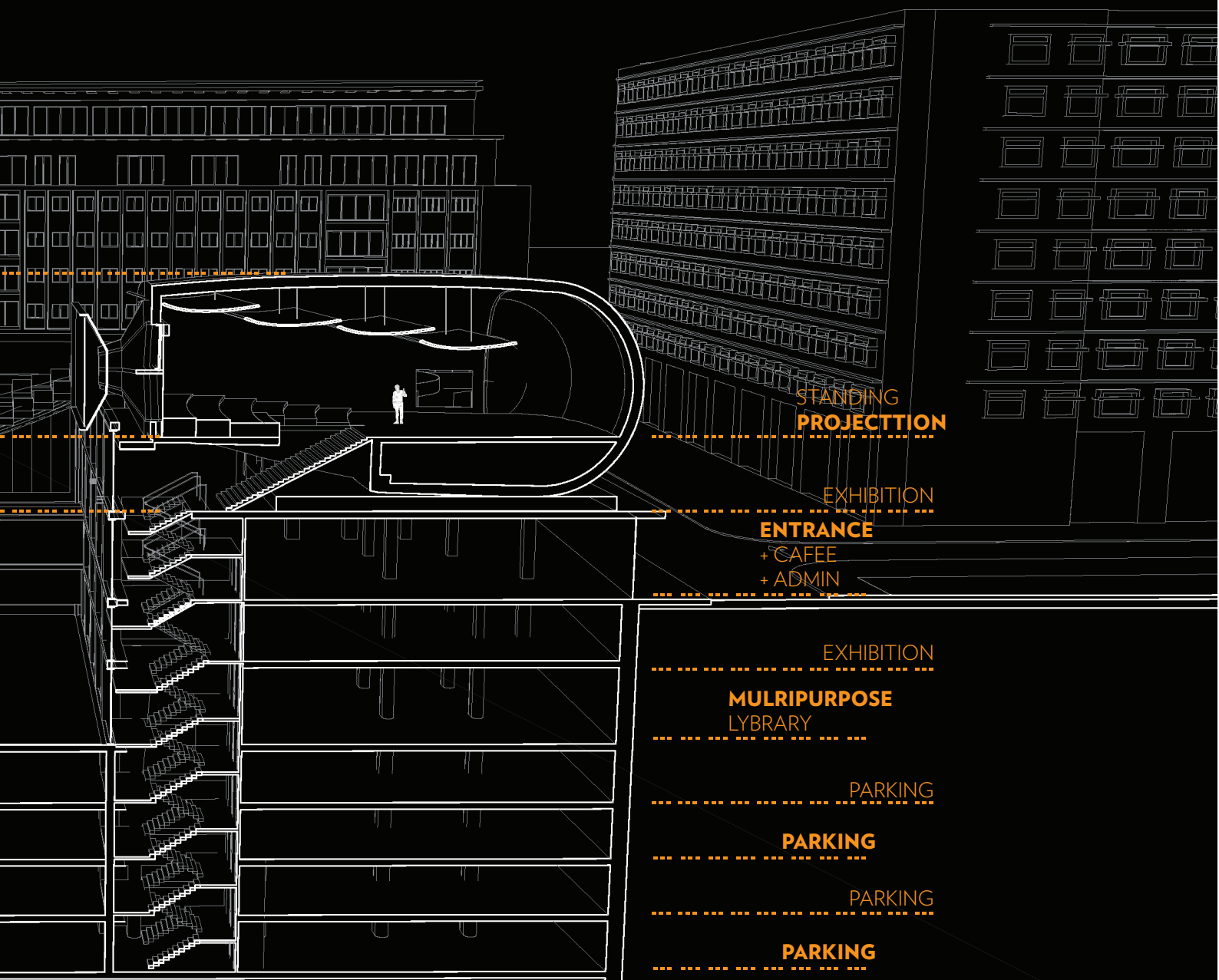
+9.60

+10.45

3. Physical Intervention

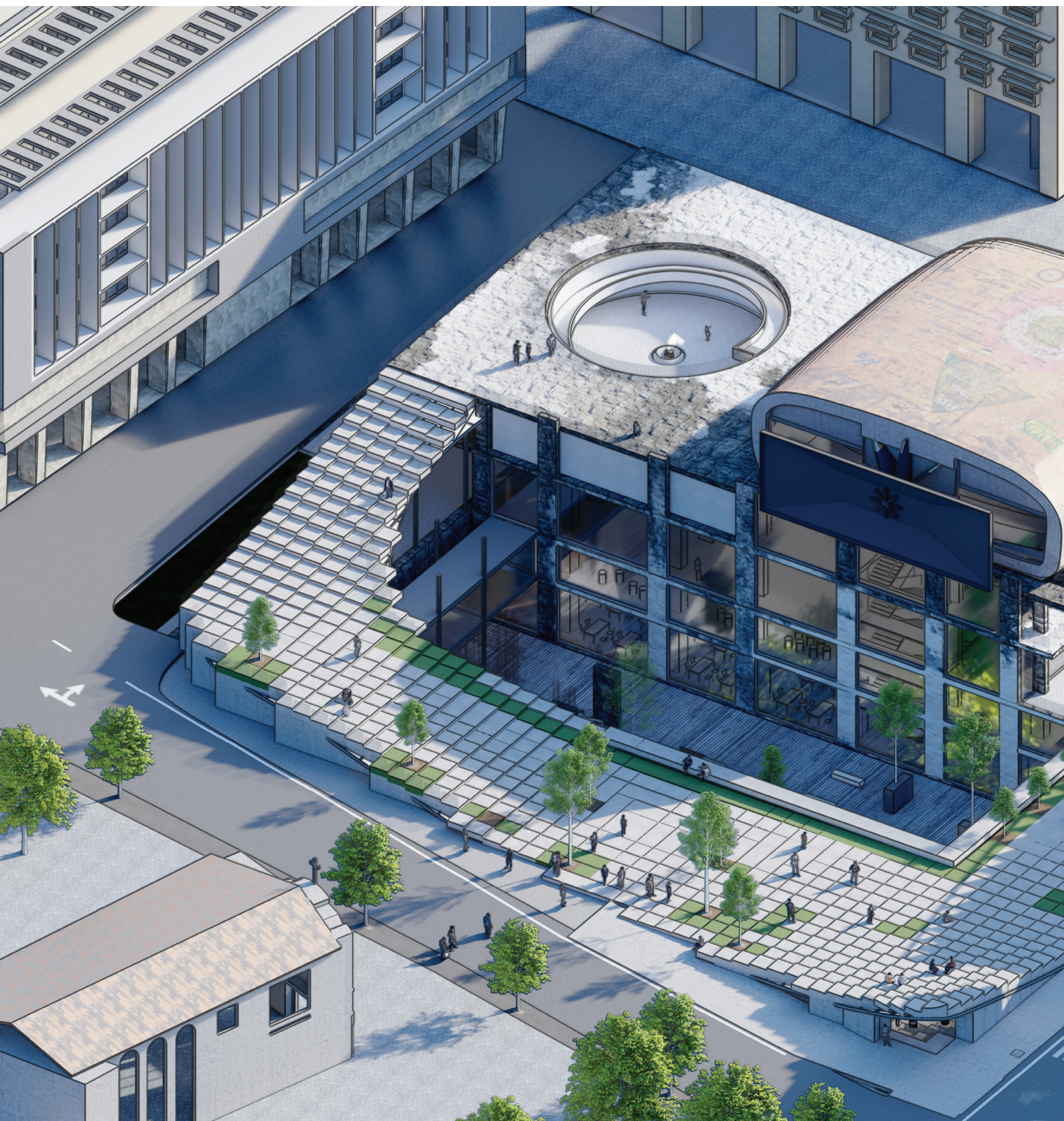
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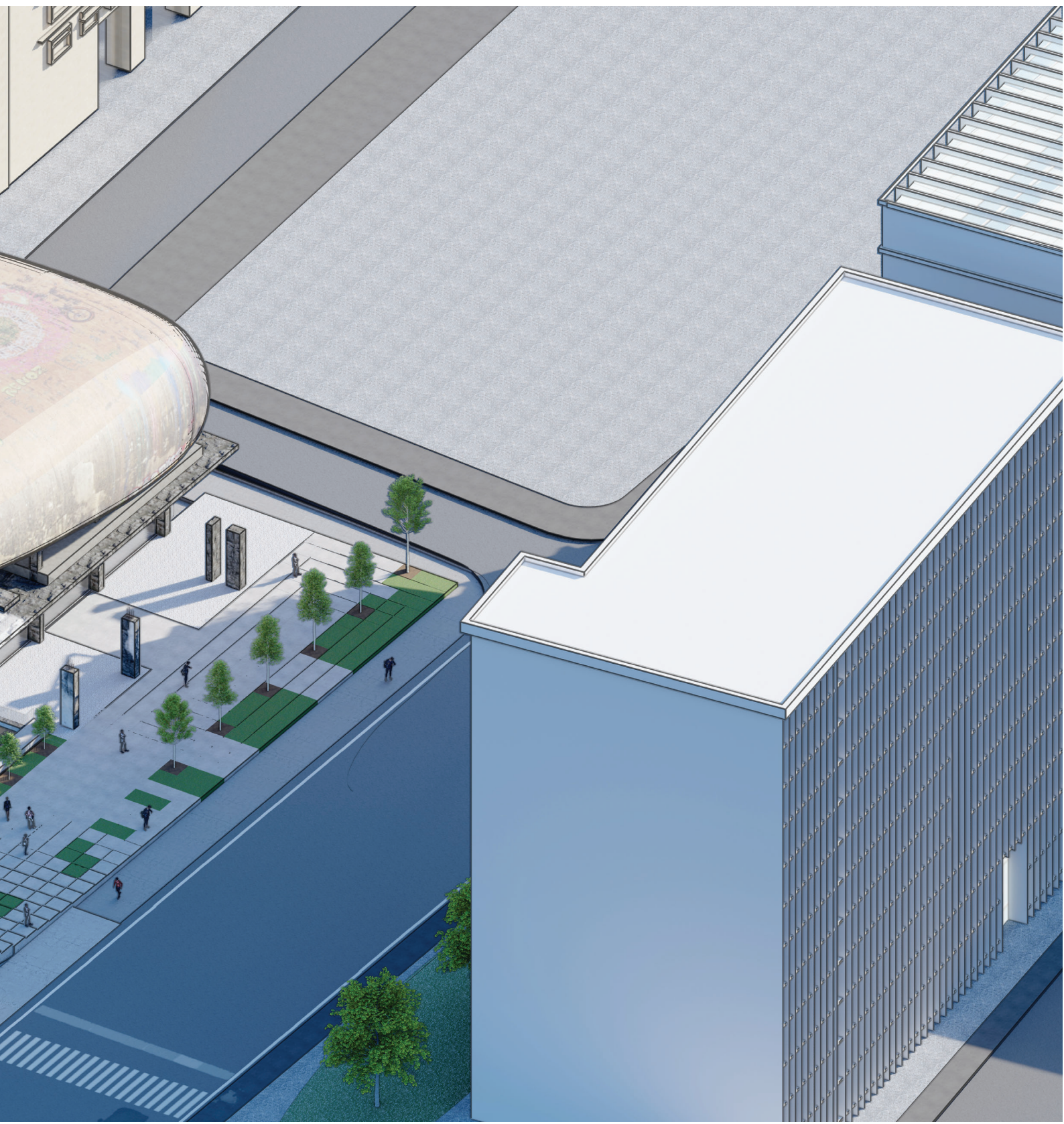


2. A cultural settlement

d. Views

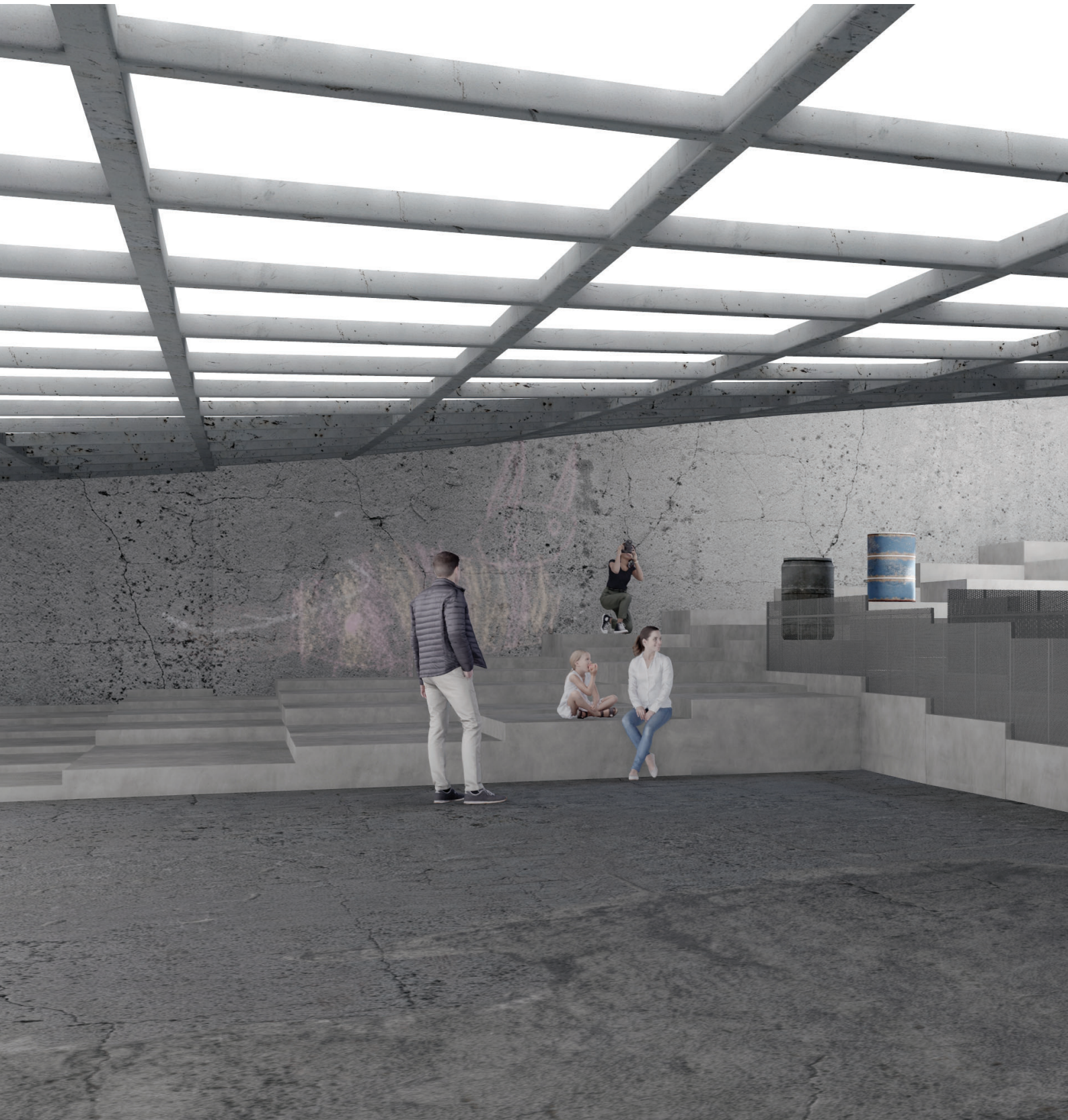


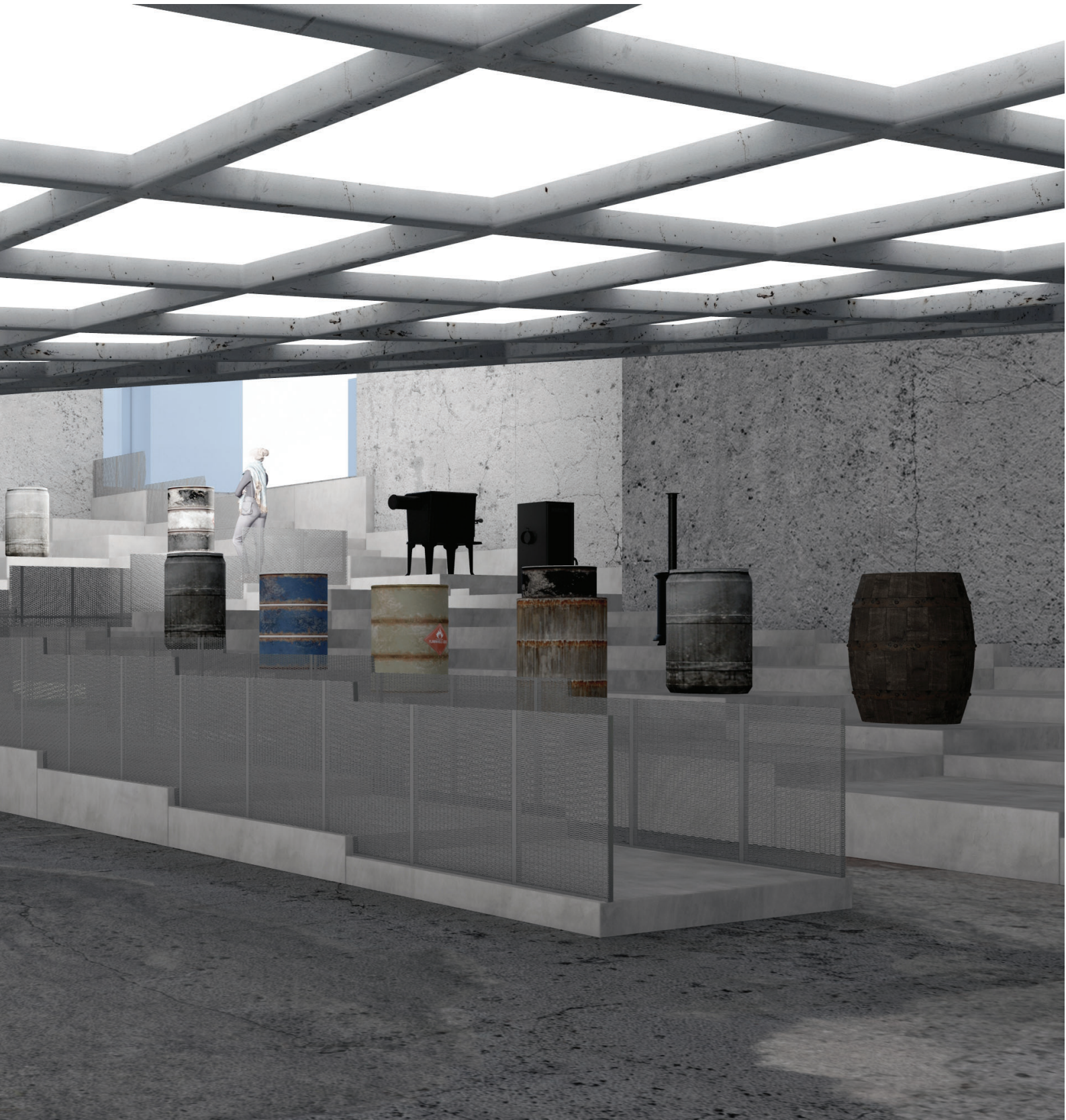
Axonometry



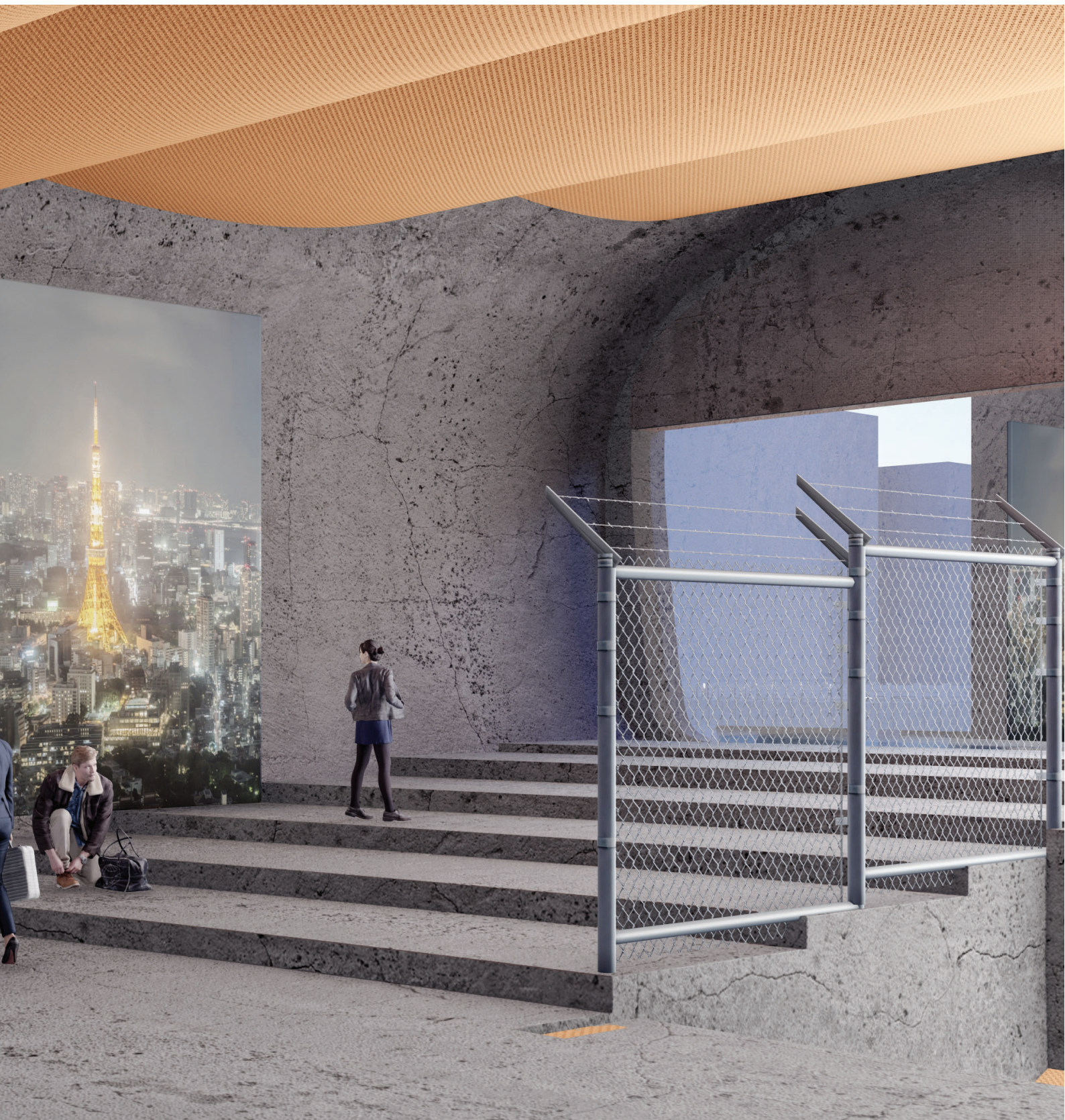








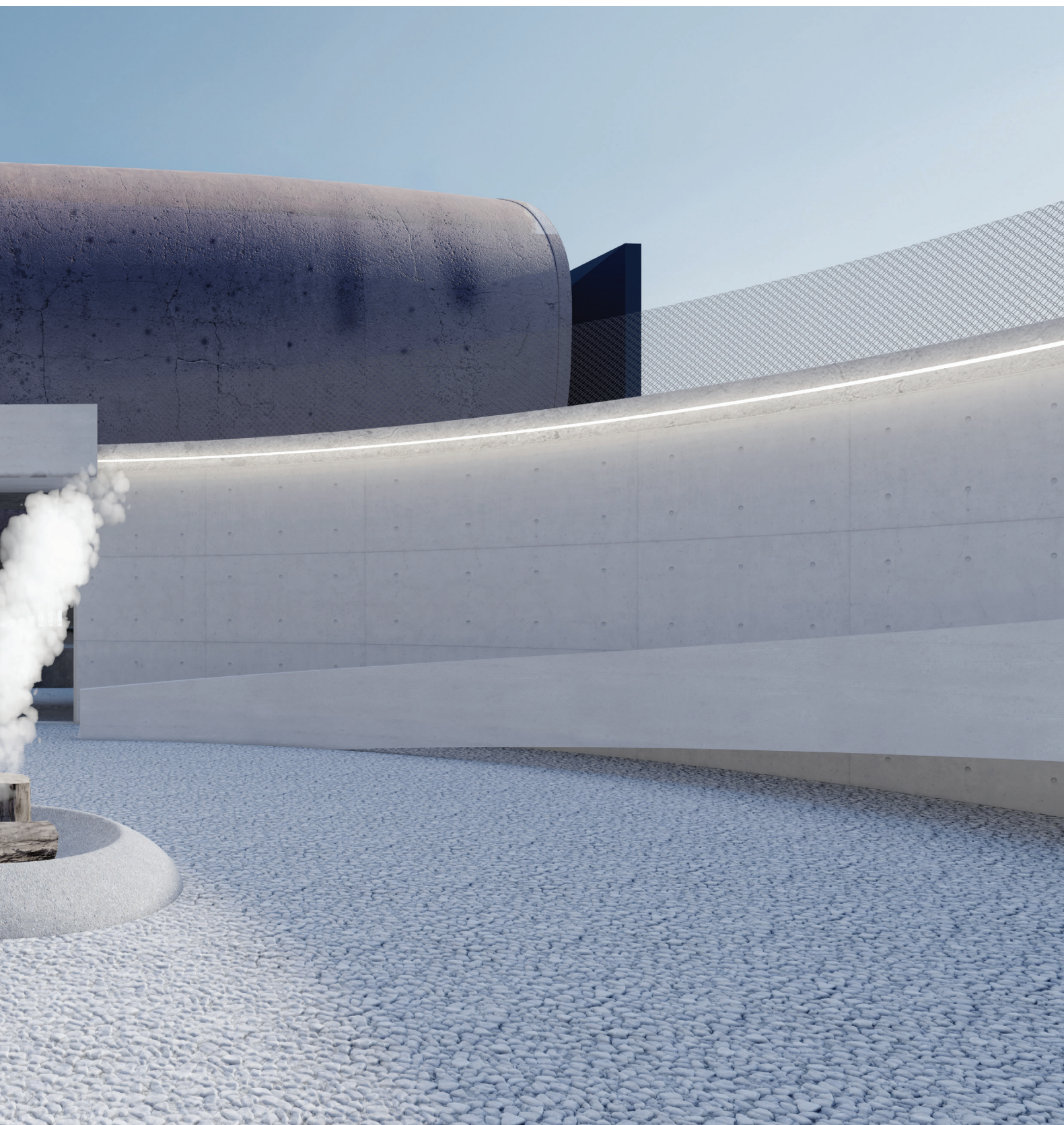












Conclusion

The City Centre, as its past shows, is made in the resilient image of the city of Beirut. During the popular Beirut movement of October 2019, it becomes a driving force of a radical change that is taking place in the city center and marks a turning point in the history of the public space of this place. Within the framework of this project, where the transformation of the building stems from its history, its present but also the future ambitions of this place projected by its own uses, the Egg is reborn and has a third new life. It opens as a real equipment to the city and its center, a place accessible for all, offering a multitude of functions.

This transformation starts, first of all, from the premises of urban mutability, from the participative approach of people who wanted a change in an unpredictable framework in order to find a common future. The second stems from the different uses planned for this space. Multiplying the uses then becomes a second foundation to multiply the flows and gather different identities of people. From this idea, the architectural project takes shape. In order to offer different functions, it is then essential to design spaces that will accommodate these uses. Different architectural individuals are then composed with the context but especially with the egg, creating a tension or even a face to face. This architectural scenario is then inspired by the situation of the Lebanese society which is always in tension with the other and with itself.

In order to reprogram the egg to revalue it, these new functional injections are made in the image of the programmatic improvisations of the popular movement of October 2019, but also, stem from the original function of the place as a true Lebanese cinematographic heritage. Taking then a third dimension to complete this cultural complex, it also represents the festive place, the place of resilience and resistance of the Lebanese.

The project, beyond being the mirror of the city, also becomes the mirror of its society. By its geostrategic position on the former demarcation line, it is redesigned as a meeting place within this major urban, social and political rupture. It then becomes the bearer of the collective memory of Beirut's inhabitants and opens up as a place of major writing of a past, present and a possible common future to come.

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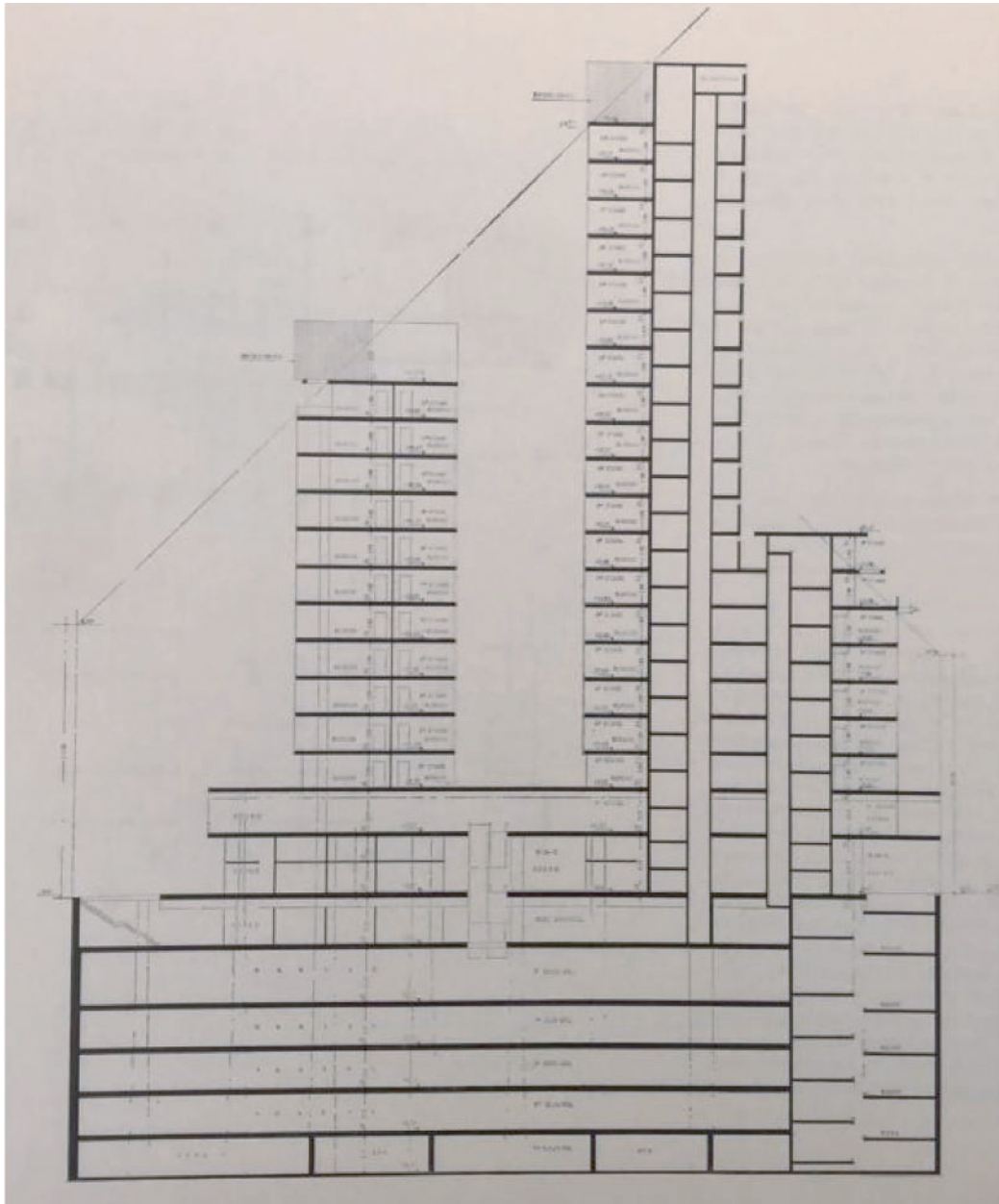
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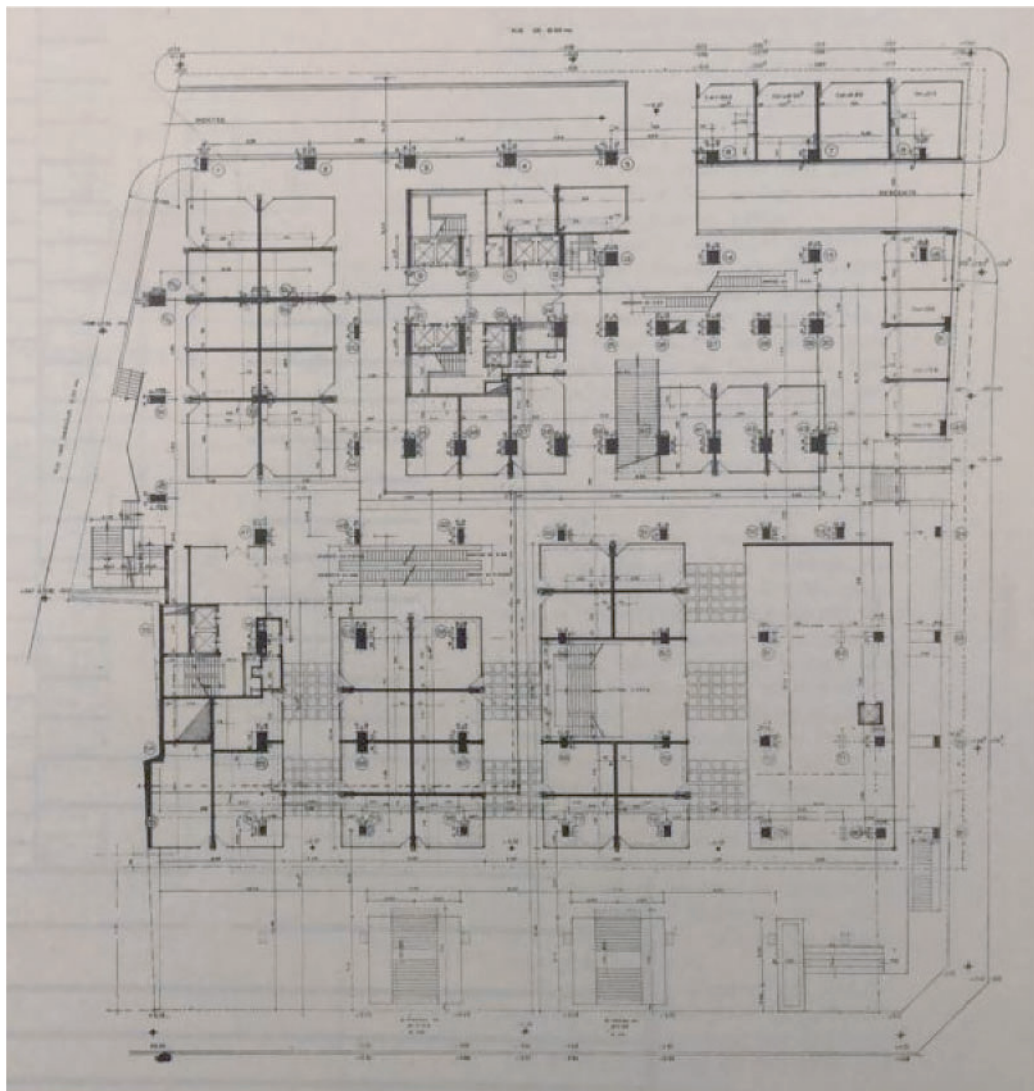
Attachments



Source: Arab Center of Architecture

No specific scale

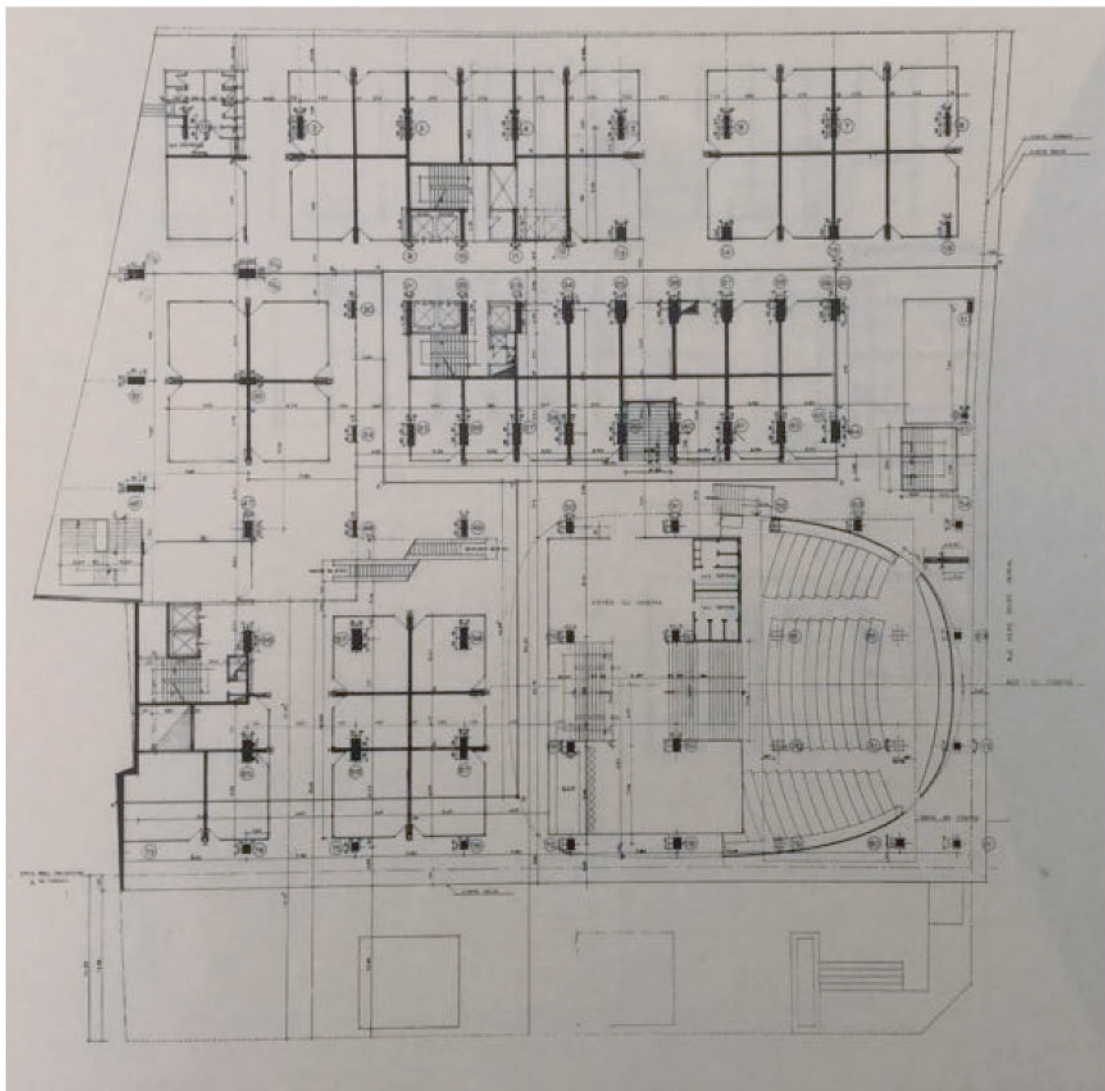
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Source: Arab Center of Architecture

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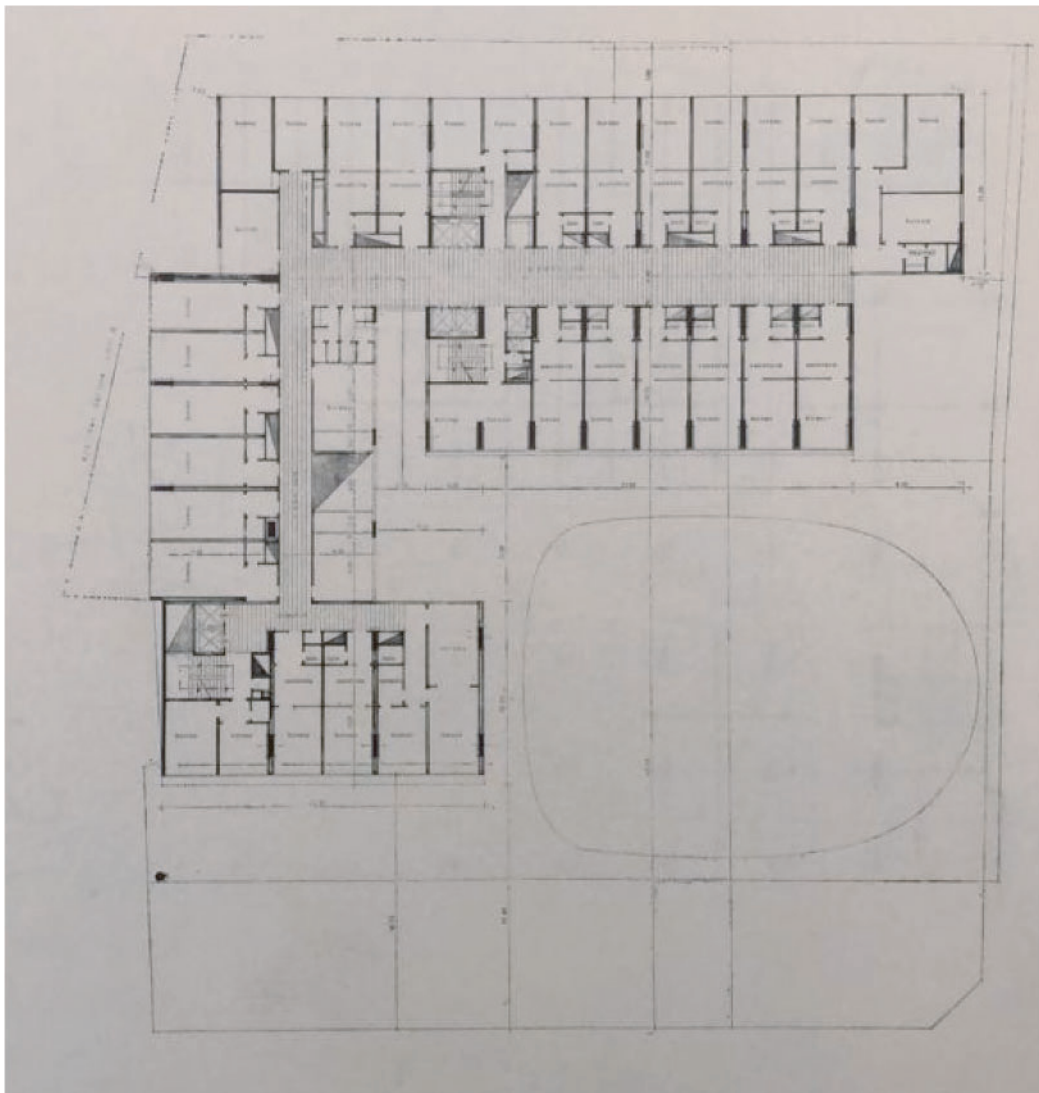
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Source: Arab Center of Architecture

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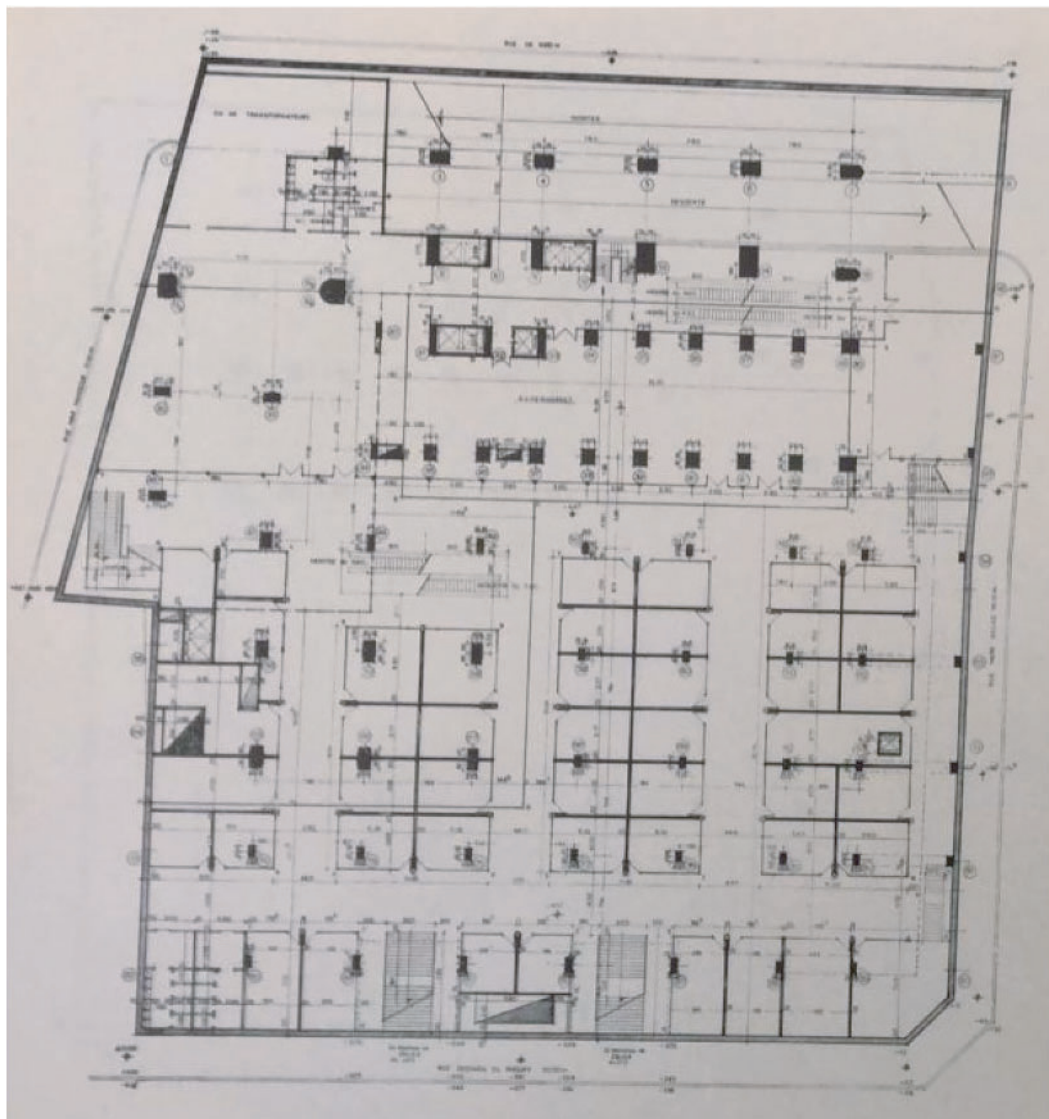
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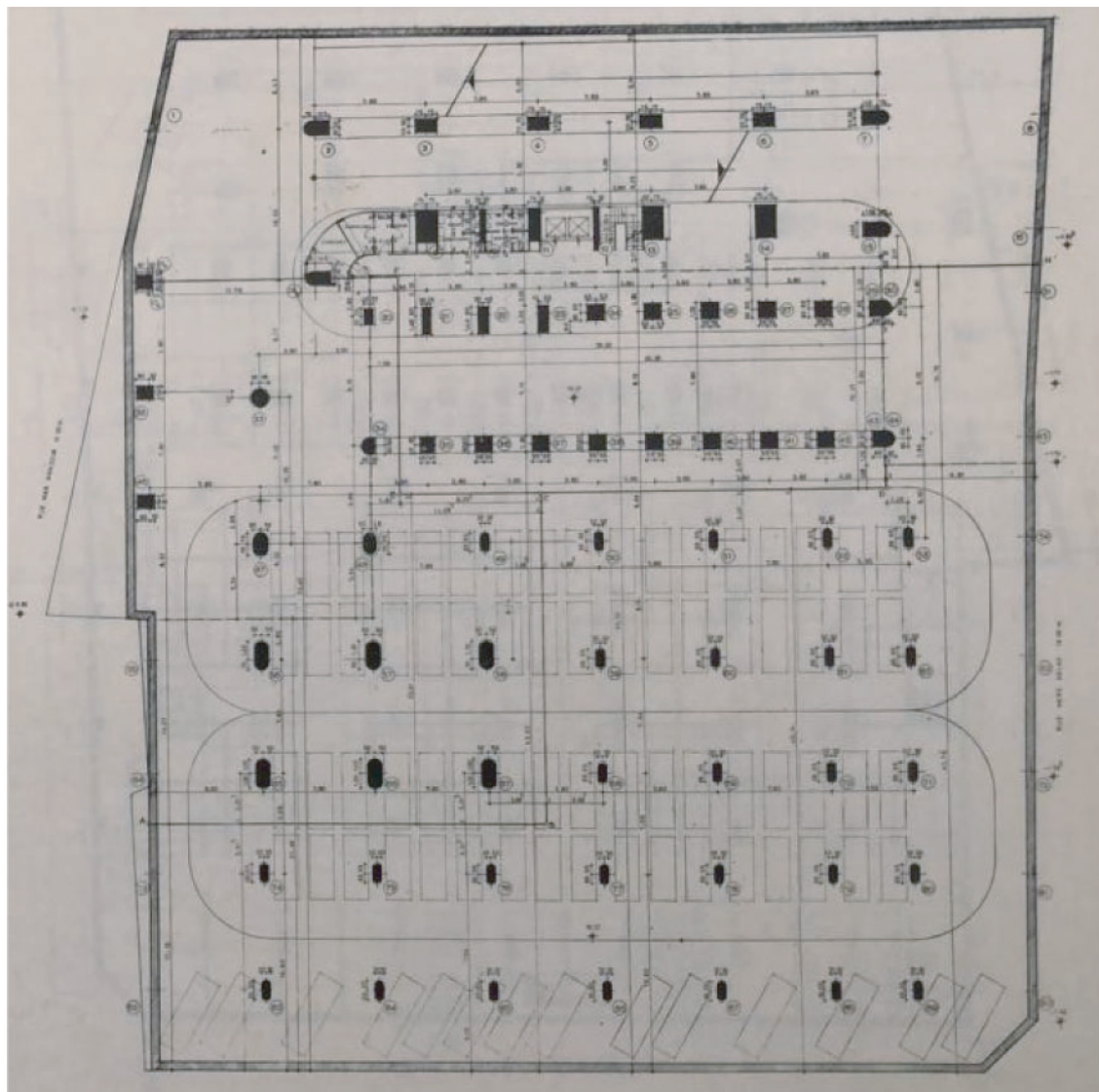
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Source: Arab Center of Architecture

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Acknolegments

This thesis concludes my academic experience. It has been an intense two years, in which there was no lack of difficulties, sacrifices, but also joys and many beautiful moments that I will carry with me throughout my life.

Arriving in Turin at 22 years old and facing a city for the first time that has a different culture and language, was not easy, but, it allowed me to mature a lot.

I would like to thank all the people who supported me in my experience, both academically and personally.

First of all, I would like to thank Professor Manuela Mattone, who really taught me a lot, she helped me to deal with topics whose knowledge was very low, and I am happy that my experience began the first year with her in a virtual classroom, and ended by her side.

Secondly, I would like to thank Professor Elena Vigliocco, who has supported me for the architectural part, always with great willingness. It was a pleasure getting to know her and collaborating with her.

I thank my parents and my family for having accompanied me in this choice over these years.