

# THE LAYERS OF HISTORY



# DIPLOMA

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# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Having begun my studies at the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris, I later chose Prague for my master's degree, drawn by its unique blend of history and modernity.

This international experience has enriched my perspective on architecture, enabling me to appreciate the dynamics between past epochs and contemporary approaches.

My thesis addresses the link between history and modernity, a field that fascinates with its ability to reveal how historical elements can enrich and influence modern practices.

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# 01 INTRODUCTION

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As a student, I traveled a path that took me from Nîmes to Paris, and then from Paris to Prague. Each of these cities, steeped in history, offered me a unique window into the world. In Nîmes , I witnessed the grandeur of the Roman Empire, its age-old monuments bearing witness to a distant but still palpable past. Moving to Paris, the City of Light, I was captivated by the elegance of its architecture, a harmonious blend of the old and the modern, reflecting the diverse chapters of its rich history.

Finally, in Prague, I was fascinated by the Gothic and Baroque silhouettes standing proudly, telling stories of kings and revolutions, of splendor and conflict. In these cities, architecture does more than just reflect history; it lives it, breathes it, and narrates it. The buildings, more than mere structures, are guardians of the past, while being key players in a dynamic present and a promising future.

My journey taught me that architecture is a continuous dialogue between eras, a bridge between the past, present and future. Each city, with its unique heritage, offered me a different perspective on how history can be preserved, honored, and integrated into the fabric of a modern society. Through this thesis, I wish to explore the creation of a dialogue between the past and the present. Nîmes, in particular, lends itself perfectly to this personal exploration, because I consider this city to be a living symbol of this



NÎMES, FRANCE





## HISTORY AND MODERNITY IN ARCHITECTURE IN NÎMES

Nîmes is a melting pot where old and new meet and offers a unique panorama of architecture where each stone tells a story. The Maison Carrée, a contemporary art museum designed by the British architect Norman Foster, is one of the best preserved Roman temples in the world and stands not far from the Carré d'Art. This neighborhood illustrates a dialogue between eras: classical purity and perfection in direct dialogue with contemporary transparency and audacity. Likewise, the arenas of Nîmes, a Roman amphitheater vibrant with life and events, face the Musée de la Romanité. With its undulating glass façade, the latter is a window into history, reflecting the arenas within it.

The coexistence of the past and the present in Nîmes is not merely a physical juxtaposition; it is a catalyst for contemplation on how architecture can maintain its essence over time while embracing the needs and visions of the present. The city's duality does not represent a limitation but a wellspring of inspiration, where each era enriches the other. Within this rich and nuanced context, the question of promoting the Porte d'Auguste emerges.





## LA MAISON CARRÉE AND ITS UNESCO LISTING

La Maison Carrée in Nîmes, a quintessential example of Roman temple architecture, has recently gained recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The listing highlights La Maison Carrée's exceptional preservation and architectural significance, serving as a model of classical elegance and symmetry derived directly from ancient Rome. As a result, it has underscored the site's global importance and has sparked a renewed interest in preserving and enhancing the broader historical heritage of Nîmes.

This new status brings with it a plethora of opportunities and challenges. It raises critical questions about integrating such historic sites within the modern urban landscape. How can La Maison Carrée not only serve as a static monument of the past but as a dynamic element of Nîmes' urban life today? How can this integration be achieved without compromising the integrity and aesthetics of the ancient structure?

The city of Nîmes now faces the task of leveraging this enhanced global profile to foster a sustainable tourist economy while ensuring that the influx of visitors does not impair the monument's condition. Strategies for achieving this involve the development of enhanced visitor facilities, educational programs, and multimedia presentations that can enrich the visitor experience while diverting pressure away from the physical fabric of the monument itself.





## THE PORTE D'AUGUSTE

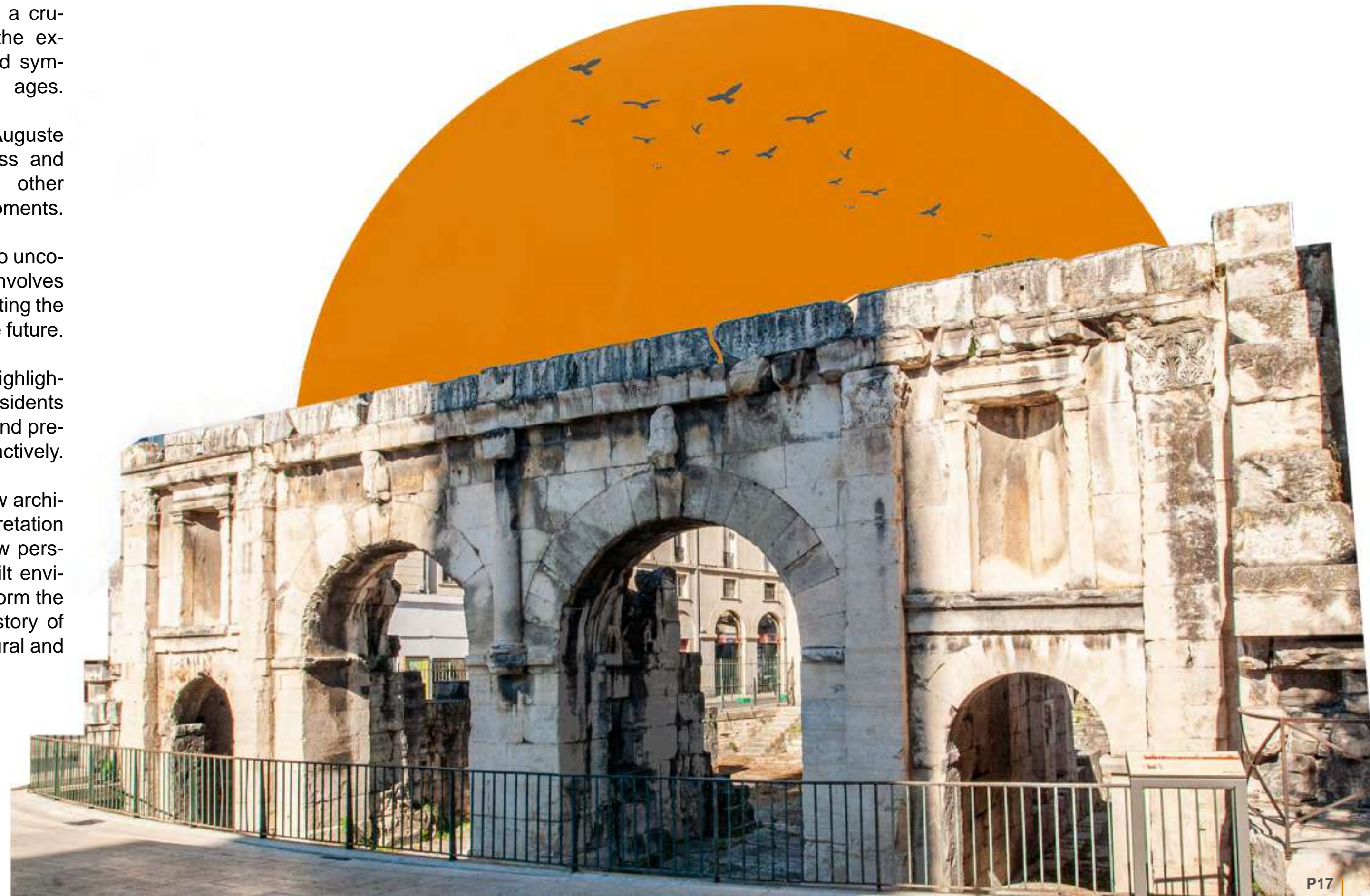
At the heart of this dynamic is the Porte d'Auguste, a remnant of the former grandeur of Nîmes, now relegated to the shadows, awaiting a new chapter in its storied life. This gate historically marked a crucial entry point to the city, symbolizing the transition from the external world into the heart of the Roman city. Its strategic and symbolic importance has been well-documented through the ages.

However, despite its historical significance, the Porte d'Auguste has been somewhat eclipsed over time. Its narrative richness and spatial possibilities seem underutilized, overshadowed by other landmarks, or neglected amidst modern urban developments.

The task now is to explore the site of the Porte d'Auguste anew, to uncover a forgotten chapter in the history of Nîmes. This exploration involves reimagining how this ancient space can serve as a bridge connecting the different temporal layers of the city—both its past and prospective future.

Envisioning a project for the Porte d'Auguste involves more than highlighting this historic monument; it calls for creating a vibrant hub for residents and visitors. This space should foster a dialogue between past and present—a place not only to view history but to live and experience it actively.

Such an initiative offers us a unique opportunity to delve into how architecture and urban planning can crucially influence the reinterpretation and revitalization of our heritage. It prompts us to consider new perspectives on how we experience, understand, and value our built environment. Through thoughtful design and planning, we can transform the Porte d'Auguste into a living testament to the rich, layered history of Nîmes, ensuring that it contributes meaningfully to the city's cultural and social fabric.





# 02 THESIS ANALYSIS AND OBJECTIVES

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## OVERVIEW OF NIMES

First and foremost, the eye is captivated by the color of the roofs in Nîmes, which vividly contrasts with the green arteries bordering the spacious boulevards. These boulevards, which outline the city's past, also structure our view from above.

They evoke the defensive grid of a city once ready to protect itself with robust fortifications. Even today, we can discern traces of these fortifications, now subtly integrated into the fabric of a constantly expanding city. In contrast, the historic city center, with its medieval heart, presents a striking contrast. Unlike the well-planned modern areas, the medieval streets intersect in a chaotic maze, creating a labyrinth of passageways that deviate from any organized structure.

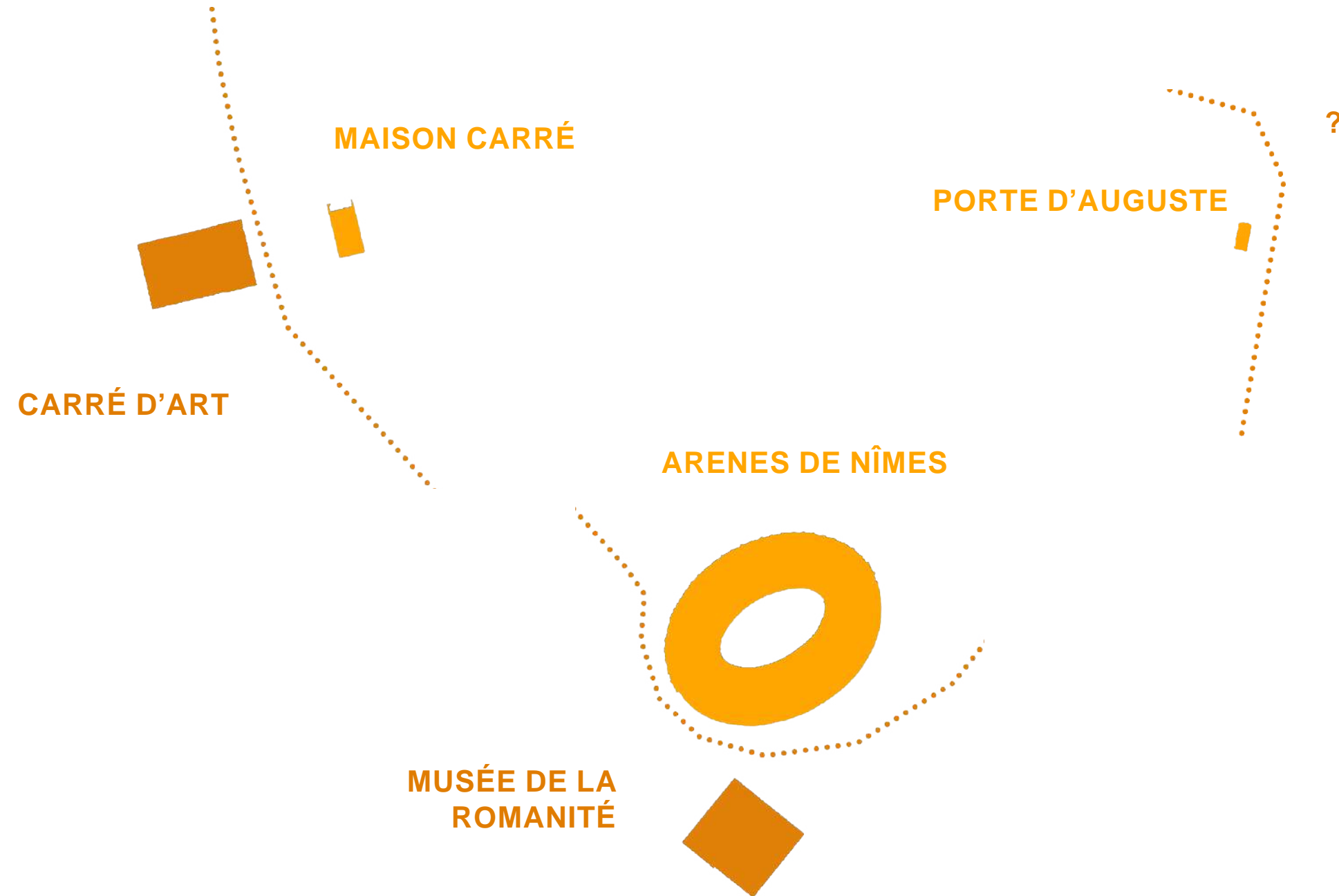


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In this plan, which focuses on the medieval center, we observe a belt that encircles and traces the outlines of the ancient fortifications. By identifying the most important historical monuments in this center, we realize that they are all connected through this same belt.

Moreover, the Maison Carrée and the Arènes de Nîmes have been accompanied over time by modern architectures, such as the Carré d'Art for the Maison Carrée and the Musée de la Romanité for the Arènes de Nîmes. We then realize that this same belt serves both to separate and oppose but also to reflect these modern monuments in relation to their historical counterparts. However, we also note that an imbalance is formed among these three historical monuments, with the Porte d'Auguste seemingly abandoned in a corner of the medieval city.







La maison carré © Ville de Nîmes



Les arènes de Nîmes © Ciel Azur



Porte d'Auguste © Wikipedia





Le Carré d'Art © Architecte Norman Foster



Musée de la Romanité © Architecte Elizabeth de Portzamparc



The Layers of history © Richard Gibout

**CARRÉ D'ART (1993)**

**MUSEUM OF ROMANITY (2014)**

**THE LAYERS OF HISTORY (2024)**



### TRIOLOGIE OF BUILDINGS

In the context of this trilogy of buildings, we will focus on the Porte d'Auguste and the site surrounding it to introduce its missing modern counterpart, which will be positioned on the other side of the belt surrounding the medieval center. Furthermore, considering the construction dates of the other buildings, this fits perfectly into the city's agenda and budget.

Observing these three historical buildings, we notice a striking fact: the difference in size and the methodology used by the architects.

In the case of the Porte d'Auguste, we are working on a building that is small and difficult to highlight visually but is nonetheless a much more important element. It is the key, the gate of the medieval city. Its presence is enough to revive the ramparts that surrounded the city

But a major challenge arises and must be resolved to restore importance to this ancient fortress that everyone indirectly walks around while strolling around the medieval city but without realizing that it is in fact the ancient traces of fortified protections. The challenge may therefore lie much more in raising awareness of what this gate is and the traces of its walls. Therefore, we must at all costs be able to bring these walls to life in the minds of residents, tourists, children, and history enthusiasts.

We will need to analyze this site deeply to understand what the vestiges are, the historical layers, what is still connected to the Porte d'Auguste, and how to improve the space surrounding it. This approach is, from my point of view, cultural and can find architecture as a key partner in arousing this curiosity in everyone. So I suggest moving on to the study of the Porte d'Auguste site and discovering how we could use architecture as a pedagogical partner in this awareness-raising.





### THE AUGUSTUS GATE AND ITS CURRENT CONTEXT

The area around the Porte d'Auguste may not immediately showcase its historical significance. This situation stems from various alterations made during the city's development, often without a consistent urban strategy. This lack of planning has led to misunderstandings and overlooked details in this part of Nîmes. However, this site possesses considerable historical value, as it captures the city's diverse historical layers and evolution.

Despite its historical importance, the Porte d'Auguste currently appears underutilized and somewhat neglected in its urban environment. The urban inconsistencies of its surroundings undermine the prominence and value of this ancient Roman gate. This area's layout and movement patterns are chaotic and do not complement the monument's stature.

When examining the site, some architectural axes and volumes might immediately catch your attention; some are intriguing, while others seem mysterious. Using historical maps and conducting thorough research, we can delve into the site's history. This process reveals the various developmental phases that have shaped its present condition and provides insights into the city's urban evolution. Understanding these elements not only deepens our appreciation of the site's complexity but also highlights opportunities for future projects that can enhance and leverage its historical importance.







## LA PORTE D'AUGUSTE

La Porte d'Auguste is a significant Roman architectural and historical landmark located in Nîmes, France. Built in the 1st century BC as part of the original Roman wall that encircled the city, this ancient gate served as one of the main entry points into Nemausus, as Nîmes was a well-known place in Roman times. Named after the first Roman emperor, Augustus, it stands as a testament to the city's importance during the Roman era.

Architecturally, the Porte d'Auguste features two large arches meant for wheeled traffic, flanked by two smaller pedestrian passageways. The structure, constructed from large limestone blocks typical of Roman engineering, has withstood the test of time, preserving much of its original grandeur. Over the arches, remnants of the original defensive positions are visible, hinting at the gate's dual purpose as both a city entrance and a fortification.

The gate's design exemplifies Roman architectural principles, with symmetry and practicality playing key roles. Although eroded over the centuries, the decorative elements suggest that the Porte d'Auguste was not just functional but also a display of power and prestige. Inscriptions and carvings that might have once adorned the gate would have contributed to this grandeur, symbolizing Roman control and civilization.

Today, the Porte d'Auguste is an integral part of Nîmes' cultural heritage, offering insight into the Roman influence on urban development in southern France. It is not only a popular tourist attraction but also a subject of study for historians and archaeologists interested in Roman architecture and urban planning. The gate stands as a reminder of Nîmes' rich historical tapestry, bridging the past with the present and inspiring awe and respect for Roman engineering and aesthetic sensibilities.





### THE SAINT-BAUDILE CHURCH

The Saint-Baudile church, constructed in 1867, is a noteworthy example of neo-Gothic architecture. With its pointed arches and an imposing spire that defines the local skyline, the church is an architectural landmark near the Porte d'Auguste. The rich design adds depth and historical texture to the area, demanding a thoughtful integration into the surrounding urban developments.

As a visual and contextual partner to the Porte d'Auguste, the church enhances the area's character, creating a layered historical narrative essential for the identity and attractiveness of Nîmes. However, the current urban layout around these monuments lacks coherence, weakening their cultural and visual impact.

A refined urban strategy is needed to fully realize the potential of both the Porte d'Auguste and Saint-Baudile. This strategy should focus on harmonizing these historic sites with the modern cityscape, thus ensuring they contribute effectively to the city's charm and heritage narrative. Such an approach would reinforce their presence, making them focal points that draw community engagement and tourism.





## THE MONTCALM BARRACKS

The Montcalm Barracks in Nîmes, also known as Quartier Montcalm, is a historic military facility constructed towards the end of the 19th century. Construction began in 1893 and was completed in 1896. It was named in honor of the Marquis de Montcalm, a French general renowned for his role in the Seven Years' War in North America.

Historically, the Montcalm Barracks served as a significant center for military troops, especially infantry. Located near the city center, it has become integral to Nîmes' urban fabric. Over the years, the barracks have undergone various uses and transformations, adapting to different roles within the community and the military structure.

As seen on this map and highlighted in this image, the old barracks were significantly larger than today's structure. This scale difference underscores the substantial role the barracks once played in the urban and social architecture of Nîmes. The reduction in size over time reflects changes in military needs and urban development, influencing the utilization of space within the city.

The old barracks also symbolize a break from the traces of the fortified old city of Nîmes, significantly altering the city's urban structure. By becoming a prominent architectural and spatial element, the barracks have challenged and reshaped the historical urban patterns. This transformation has facilitated the integration of modern urban planning principles into the city's fabric, blending the old defensive structures with new public and civic spaces.

Today, the Montcalm Barracks stands as a landmark in Nîmes, notable not only for its military significance but also as an architectural and historical monument. It reflects the period of its construction and the city's evolution, illustrating how historical buildings can influence and redefine urban landscapes. The barracks serve as a testament to the city's adaptability and ongoing dialogue between the past and the present, contributing to the cultural heritage and the contemporary vitality of Nîmes.





## THE TAX CENTER AND PARKINGS

Over the years, this site has had to adapt to various needs and decisions made by the city. The creation of the tax center, along with a redefined road axis that later led to the creation of two parking lots at a strategic point in the city, greatly disheartens me. This passage, through which so many people pass without understanding the richness of its soil and its history, remains a mystery to me as to how it has undergone so much urban change and ended up in its current state.

As can be seen in these images, nothing is done to enhance this site or the comfort of the residents, who find themselves with an army of cars barely camouflaged under two palm trees struggling for life.





*Les arènes de Nîmes, in the 1950s, and its adjoining car park © midilibre D/R*



*La maison carrée en 1987 © Ville de Nîmes, Archives municipales, 308 W 78 489*

However, the various initiatives taken by the city of Nîmes to improve areas that had been marred by parking lots are very encouraging. It is worth recalling that, opposite the Maison Carrée and the Arènes de Nîmes, there used to be some of the city's largest parking lots, which significantly detracted from the aesthetic and historical value of these sites.

Indeed, the space in front of the Arènes de Nîmes was once occupied by a vast parking lot, which met the practical needs of modern traffic but compromised the visual and cultural appreciation of this ancient amphitheater. The presence of cars and asphalt so close to a structure from the Roman era created a striking contrast between contemporary life and the preservation of historical heritage.

Similarly, the area around the Maison Carrée, a remarkably preserved Roman temple, also suffered from this modern intrusion. The site of the Maison Carrée, once the location of an ancient theater that unfortunately burned down, was later transformed into a parking lot. This parking lot long marred one of Nîmes' most precious historical monuments.

Recognizing the need to reclaim these spaces for the public and to strengthen historical engagement, the city of Nîmes embarked on a project to develop underground parking. This initiative has been a resounding success, significantly improving the urban landscape. By relocating parking underground, the areas around key historical sites have been revitalized, thus creating a more respectful environment conducive to tourism and local flourishing.



In this perspective of urban space valorization, the city of Nîmes has implemented underground parking facilities just a few meters from the site of the Porte d'Auguste. However, outdoor parking areas still exist near this site, compromising the urban experience by generating traffic and visual disturbances in an area of great historical value. Therefore, the development of this site represents an opportunity for us to remove these outdoor parking areas. Additionally, new legislation planned for 2024 aims to prohibit street parking in these districts, thus reinforcing our project to enhance urban space and requalify public areas.

As part of a broader initiative, the planned demolition of the tax center, strategically located on the remains of the old barracks and, by extension, those of the city walls, offers a unique opportunity to rethink the use of this space. This project is part of a comprehensive redevelopment strategy aimed at revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood by creating a more attractive and functional environment for residents and visitors.

Observing the evolution of other historical monuments in the city, such as the Maison Carrée and the Arènes de Nîmes, confirms that the planned transformation for the Porte d'Auguste site is logical and addresses issues similar to those encountered elsewhere. Indeed, harmoniously integrating ancient heritage into a modernized urban context is a constant challenge for our city, which strives to preserve its rich past while meeting the current needs of its inhabitants.

The Carré d'Art, facing the Maison Carrée, embodies a contemporary response to urban planning challenges within a historical context. The redesigns have significantly decongested the visual space and improved pedestrian flows, thereby enhancing visitor engagement with the site and smoothly integrating this heritage into the daily dynamics of the city. This modernization has established a subtle dialogue between ancient architecture and modern artistic expressions, enriching the cultural experience offered by downtown Nîmes.

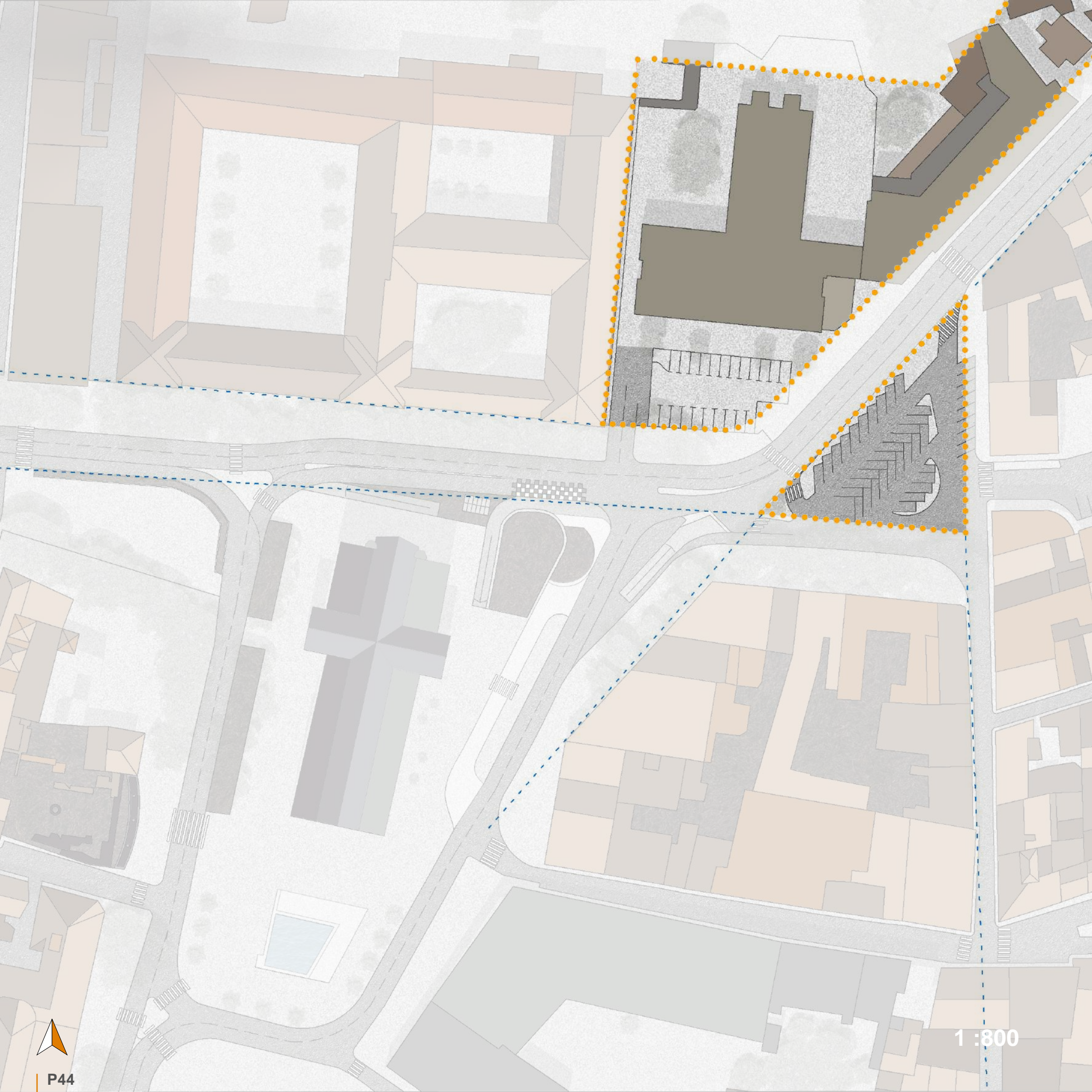
Regarding the Arènes de Nîmes, the introduction of the Musée de la Romanité opposite the Arènes has transformed the immediate environment, providing not only a space to appreciate the city's Roman history but also facilitating richer interactions between visitors and this iconic

monument. This development has strengthened the Arènes as a cultural convergence point, where the past meets the present in an educational and entertaining setting, while also improving the connectivity and accessibility of this historical area.

These examples illustrate Nîmes' approach to managing its historical heritage: a combination of respect for history and pragmatic adaptation to modern necessities. This informs and inspires the transformation projects at the Porte d'Auguste site, affirming our commitment to ensuring that each historical space is both preserved and fully integrated into the city's current urban fabric. This overarching strategy ensures that transformations respect and valorize the past while making these spaces relevant and accessible for future generations.

This site also encounters other urban inconsistencies that require special attention.





## THE BROKEN ANGLE

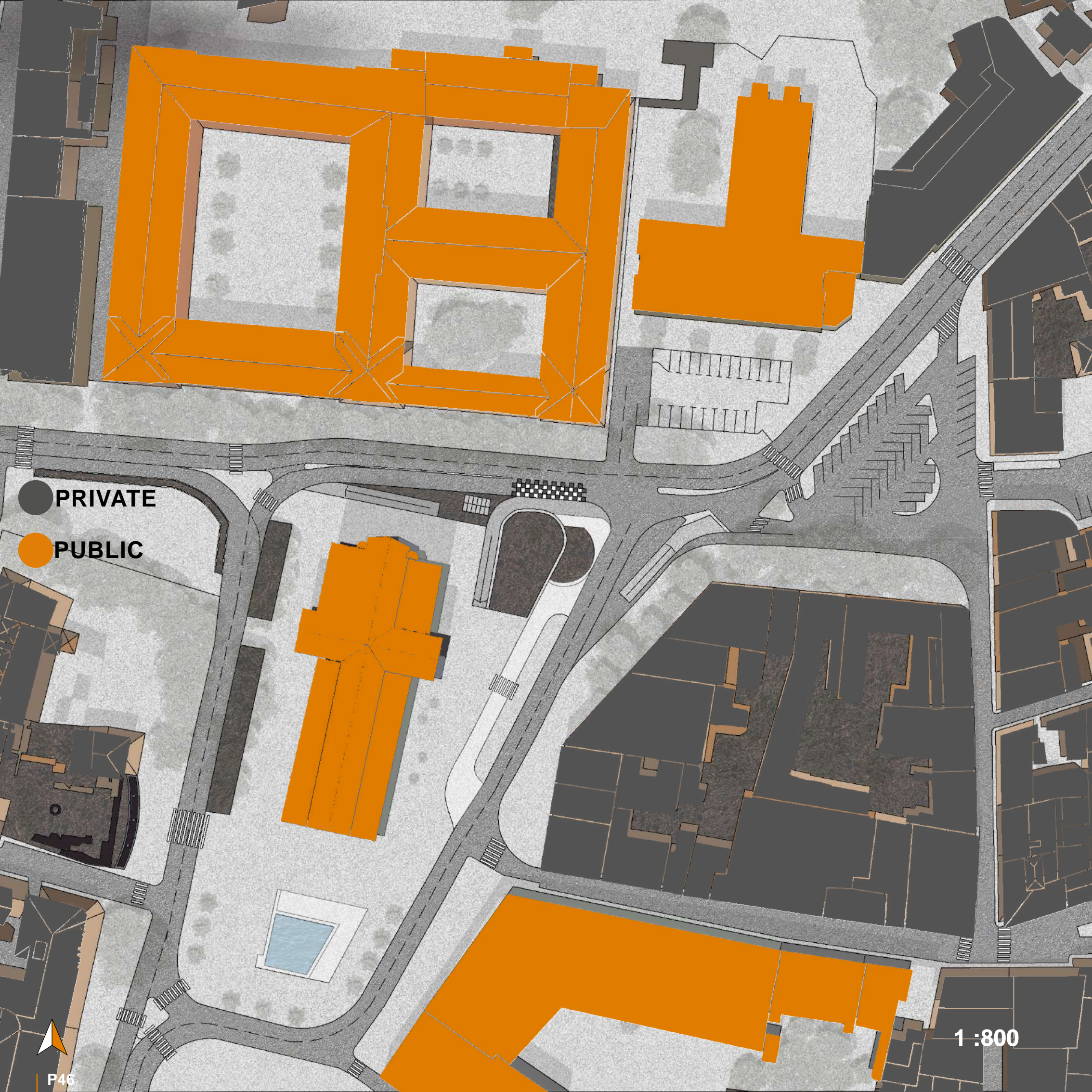
With all historical maps, we can understand the presence of some axes, but this intersection still creates chaos; that is why I call it the broken angle. It seems that the previous architect did not want to fit in with the other buildings and created a gap with a parking lot in front. The layout of the other axes creates a small triangular island of parking that also creates a weird feeling about crossing this part of the city.

It's then kind of difficult to determine which lines are the strongest. Should we consider the case, the history, the tax center, or the old barracks?

When addressing the challenges of this urban area, it is essential to navigate the delicate balance between preserving historical significance and meeting the practical needs of today's city dwellers. The 'broken angle' reminds us of this balance, where every decision can potentially disrupt the harmony of the urban landscape.







PRIVATE / PUBLIC

This site was primarily influenced by sectors that were once private but are now public. It now provides us with greater freedom and more advantageous logistics, especially since the city itself is committed to a strategy aimed at enhancing these historical monuments.

The blocks of private houses also show a lack of activity in this part of the city and a shortage of activity spaces. The tax center is not a particularly favored activity among French residents. The introduction of a cultural activity zone would represent a change that would likely delight many of the local inhabitants. This new space could revitalize the area, bringing dynamism and attractiveness and offering residents and visitors enriching opportunities to connect with local history and culture.



## OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

### SUMMARY OF CONTEXT

This project takes place in a unique context, in the heart of Nîmes, involving a complex urban area rich in overlapping stories. Near the Porte d'Auguste, an under-exploited monument steeped in history is an exceptional site that represents a real window into the city's past. This area is marked by the presence of different layers of history, from the ancient walls to the modern use of the land, including the old barracks and, more recently, the tax office.

The announcement of the upcoming release of the site occupied by the tax center offers an unprecedented opportunity to rethink this space. Not only does this allow us to work close to a key historical monument in Nîmes, but it also paves the way for creating a project that dialogues with the site's multiple temporal strata. Our intervention has the potential to weave these diverse eras together, creating a space that honors the city's rich heritage while introducing elements that meet the demands and aspirations of the 21st century.

Therefore, this project's challenge is twofold: it involves promoting a significant historical monument, the Porte d'Auguste, by placing it in a renewed dialogue with the contemporary city and redeveloping a site vacated by the tax center into a living place that reflects the different layers of Nîmes's history. In doing so, the project aspires to reveal past, present, and future connections, offering residents and visitors a space that celebrates the city's unique identity.

## DEFINITION OF PROJECT GOALS

This thesis aims to design a space that allows a fluid dialogue between the historical past and the architectural future of Nîmes. By exploiting the opportunity offered by the liberation of the tax center and the proximity of the Porte d'Auguste, the project aims to create a dynamic public place where architectural and cultural programming serves as a bridge between eras. This place intends to give a tribute to the history of Nîmes while responding to the needs and aspirations of its contemporary residents, thus illustrating how architecture and urban planning can play a crucial role in reinterpreting and revitalizing heritage for future generations.



# 03 METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPT

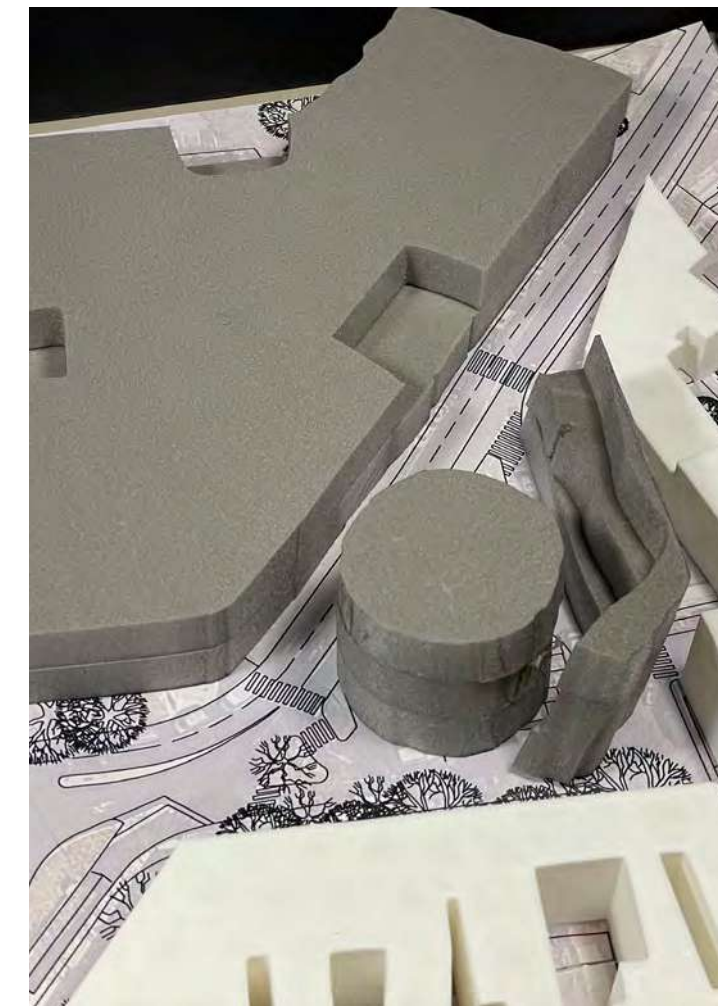
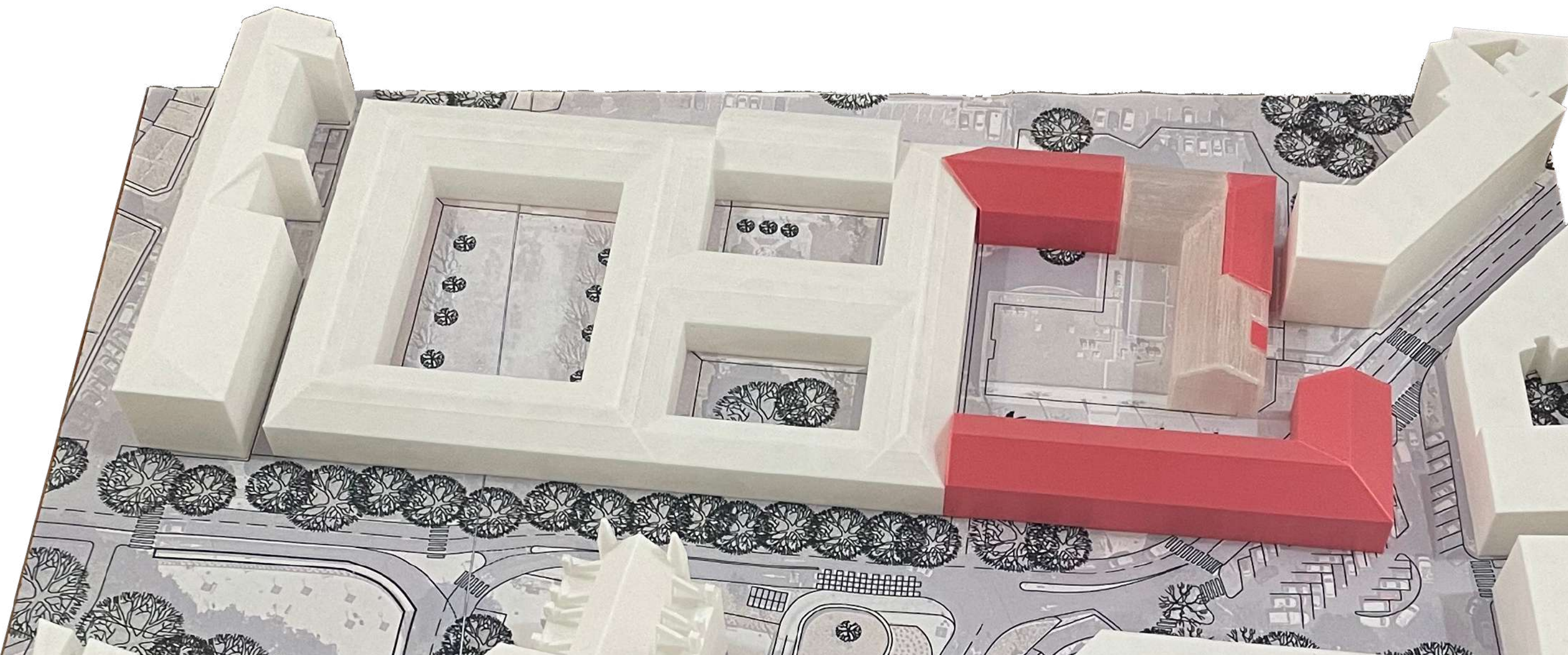
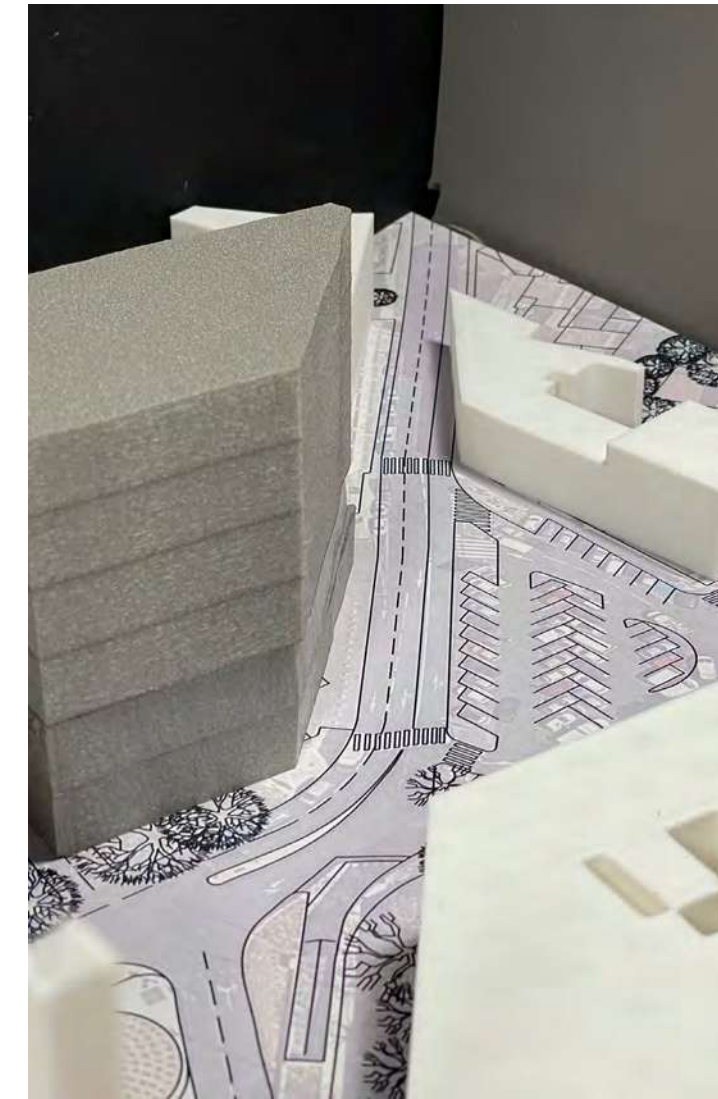
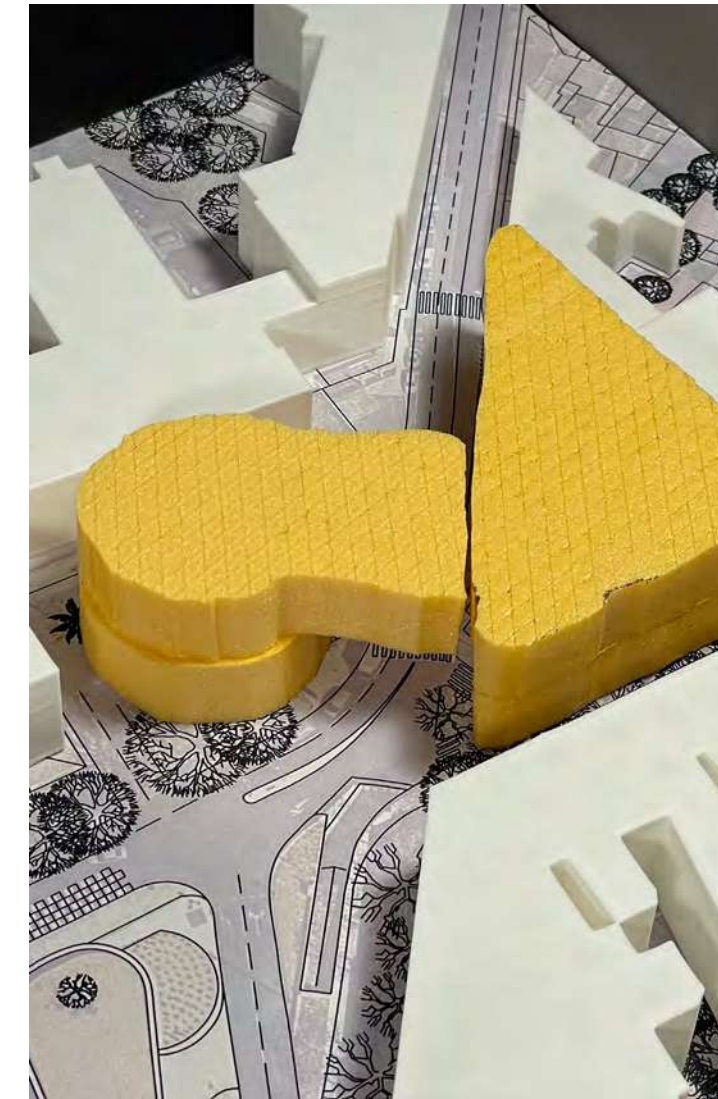
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## EXPLORING DESIGN CONCEPTS

### GENERAL APPROACH AND CREATIVE PROCESS

Through a diverse exploration of the site, I experimented with various approaches and media to realize the fusion of the past with the present or future in a tangible architectural expression. This exploration allowed me to develop proposals that extend from theoretical concepts to practical architectural solutions, thus exploring the site's richness and complexity.





## THE MUCEM IN MARSEILLE: A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

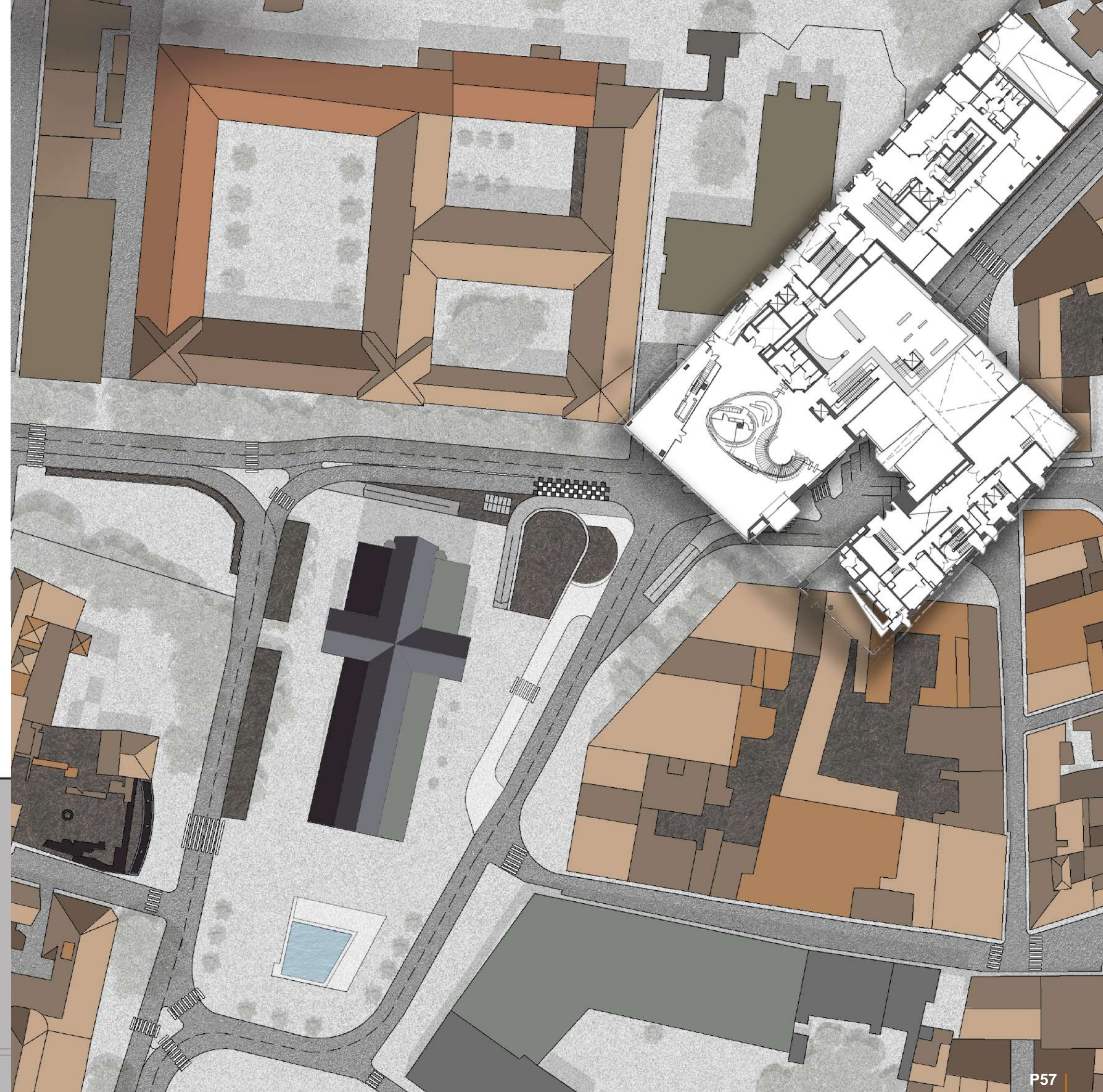
The MUSEM (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations) in Marseille, designed by architect Rudy Ricciotti and completed in 2013, exemplifies how architecture can create connections. This museum's pedestrian bridge, designed by Rudy Ricciotti and Roland Carta, links the historic Fort Saint-Jean to the modern museum, symbolizing a meeting of past and present. It is not just a physical path but a metaphorical one, representing Marseille's deep ties with the Mediterranean. The MUSEM, through its location and design, bridges the city's rich history with its vibrant present.





## MUSÉE DE LA ROMANITÉ

The Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes, designed by architect Elizabeth de Portzamparc and completed in 2018, offers a compelling example of the relationship between modern and historical monuments. This museum, situated close to the ancient Maison Carrée, serves as a mirror to its historical counterpart. The museum's design incorporates dimensions that symbolically reflect those of the Maison Carrée, creating a visual and conceptual dialogue between the old and the new.





## PRESENTATION OF INITIAL PROPOSALS

### Proposition 1:

My first exploration considered creating a direct and physical link between the parking lot and the former location of the tax office. This link was intended to be a modern reinterpretation of the historical function of the Augustus Gate, serving as a new symbolic entrance to the city. I considered various configurations for this passage, seeking to capture the essence of what an entrance to a historically charged urban space represents. However, the complexity of the existing road infrastructure and its disorganization led me to reconsider this approach, pushing me to explore the broader urban impact of the site.

### Proposition 2:

Realizing the importance of urban integration, I redesigned the road axes to propose a more coherent site structure. This reorganization aimed to clarify the flow of traffic while respecting the space's historical and contemporary character. This second proposal allowed me to look beyond the simple physical connection, envisioning a renovated urban fabric that would pay homage to history while enhancing modern functionality.

### Proposal 3:

Continuing the reflection on history and integration, this proposal emphasized the harmony between the different strata of the site's past and the current vision of its evolution. By keeping the road axis as an integrated design component, I sought to materialize architectural history itself, thus allowing the past to dialogue in a tangible way with the present.

### Proposition 4:

This final approach focused specifically on the location of the former tax office, taking into account its history and transformative potential. By combining the old barracks and tax office in a new design, this proposal aimed to create a space that visually and spatially illustrates the site's evolution. The choice of modern materials, such as metal and glass, added a contemporary dimension to the space while allowing plays of light and transparency that invite discovery.

## FINAL CONCEPT COMPARISON AND SELECTION

After careful consideration, the fourth proposal was chosen for its ability to encapsulate a vision that both respects the past and focuses on the future. This concept is part of creating a multidimensional space where architecture serves as a medium for exploring historical layers. The research center envisaged as the heart of this place is intended to be a living homage to the history of Nîmes, offering a space for reflection, education, and celebration of the city's urban and architectural evolution.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELECTED CONCEPT**

In the quest to breathe life and meaning back into the space surrounding the Porte d'Auguste in Nîmes, the project aims to orchestrate an architectural symphony that celebrates the overlapping eras of this emblematic site. Through an approach that respects and values the past while linking it to the present and the future, the project is structured around three main components, each embodying a specific dimension of history and modernity.

## **I. REMINISCENCE OF THE OLD BARRACKS**

The first component pays homage to the old barracks, positioning itself as a monument of memory to the site's transformation. This building is designed not only as a visual landmark but also as a tangible critique of past urban planning decisions that led to the erosion of architectural heritage. Echoing the old barracks, this historical witness invites introspection on the urban evolution of Nîmes, prompting reflection on the importance of preserving the physical traces of our history to enrich the dialogue between generations.

## **II. DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EPOCHS**

The second component explores the interaction between the old barracks and the tax center through an architecture that plays with the notions of emptiness and fullness, thus creating a space inviting discovery and curiosity. This design, resulting from a subtraction process between the two structures, reflects the duality and complexity of the Porte d'Auguste, taking up its proportions and concept of a double entrance. This place becomes a ground of exploration where visitors can physically experience the superposition of historical times, thus strengthening their connection with the city's history.

## **III. FUSION OF THE OLD AND THE NEW**

Finally, the third component is a contemporary expression that links the heritage of the old barracks to the architectural future of Nîmes. Through a layout that respects the existing buildings while introducing a modern shift, this part of the project aims to be a modern reinterpretation of the space, using materials such as metal and glass to offer a new perspective on the old. The play of transparency and opacity engages passers-by, selectively revealing the interior courtyard and traces of the past, inviting discovery and interaction with the site.

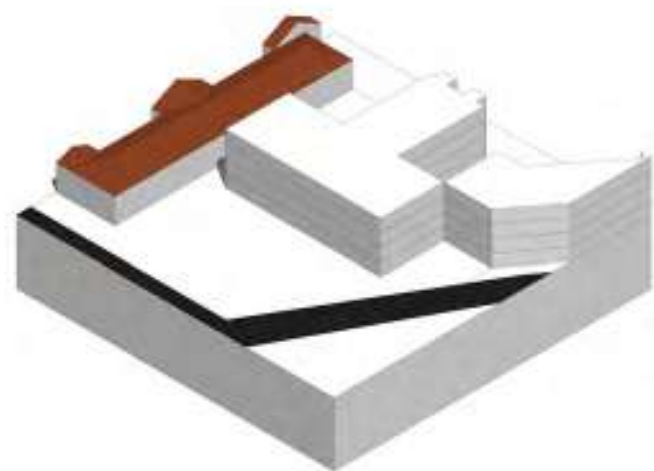
# 04 PROJECT

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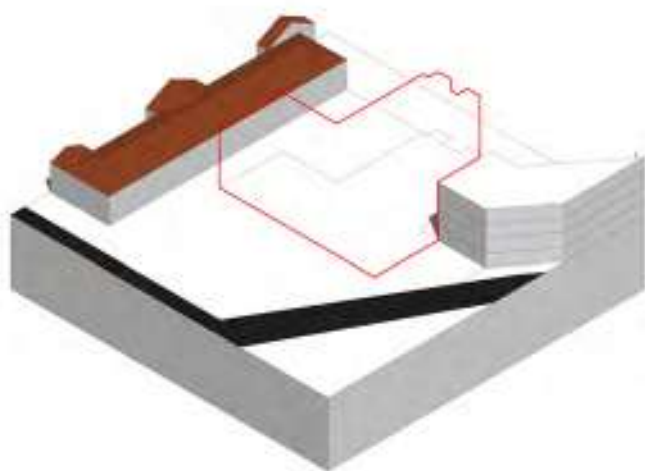


# CONCEPT AXONOMETRY

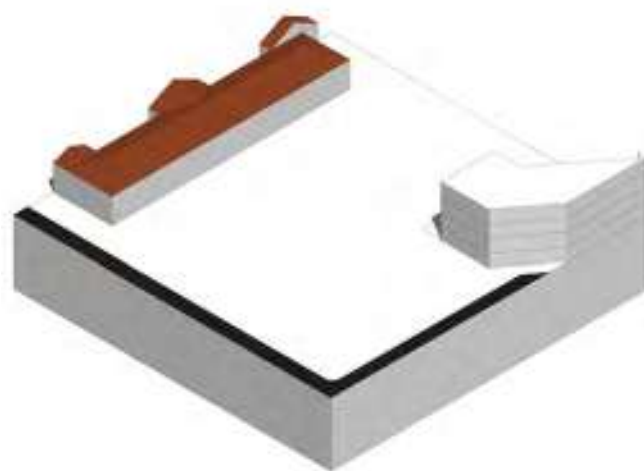
1. CURRENT SITUATION



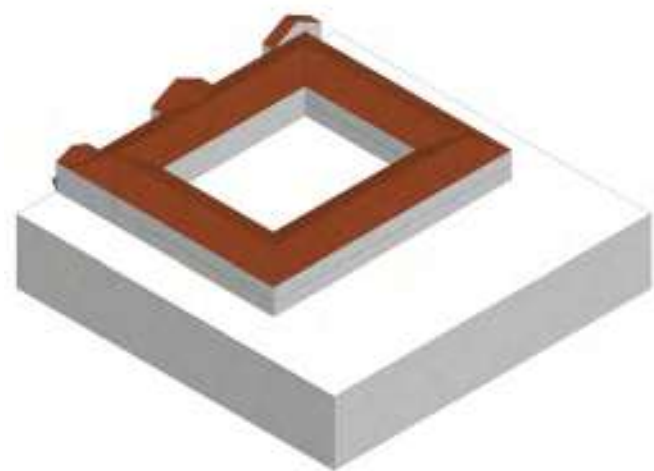
2. REMOVAL OF A BUILDING



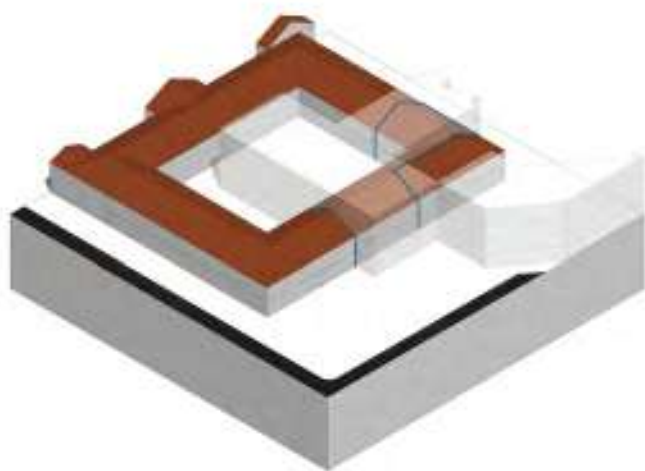
3. ROAD MODIFICATION



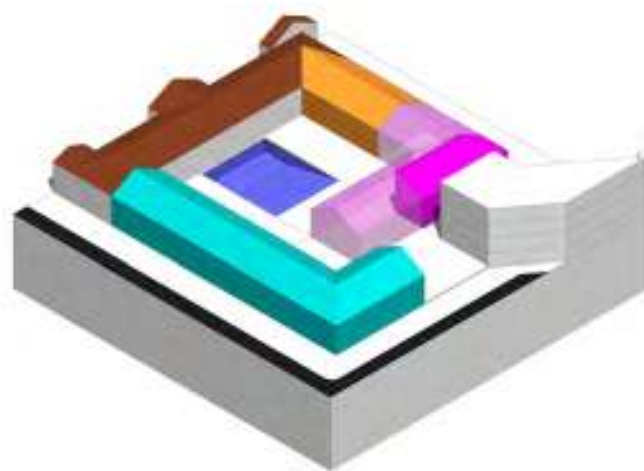
4. HISTORICAL CASERNE



5. COMBINATION OF LAYERS



6. SUBTRACTION / EXTENSION

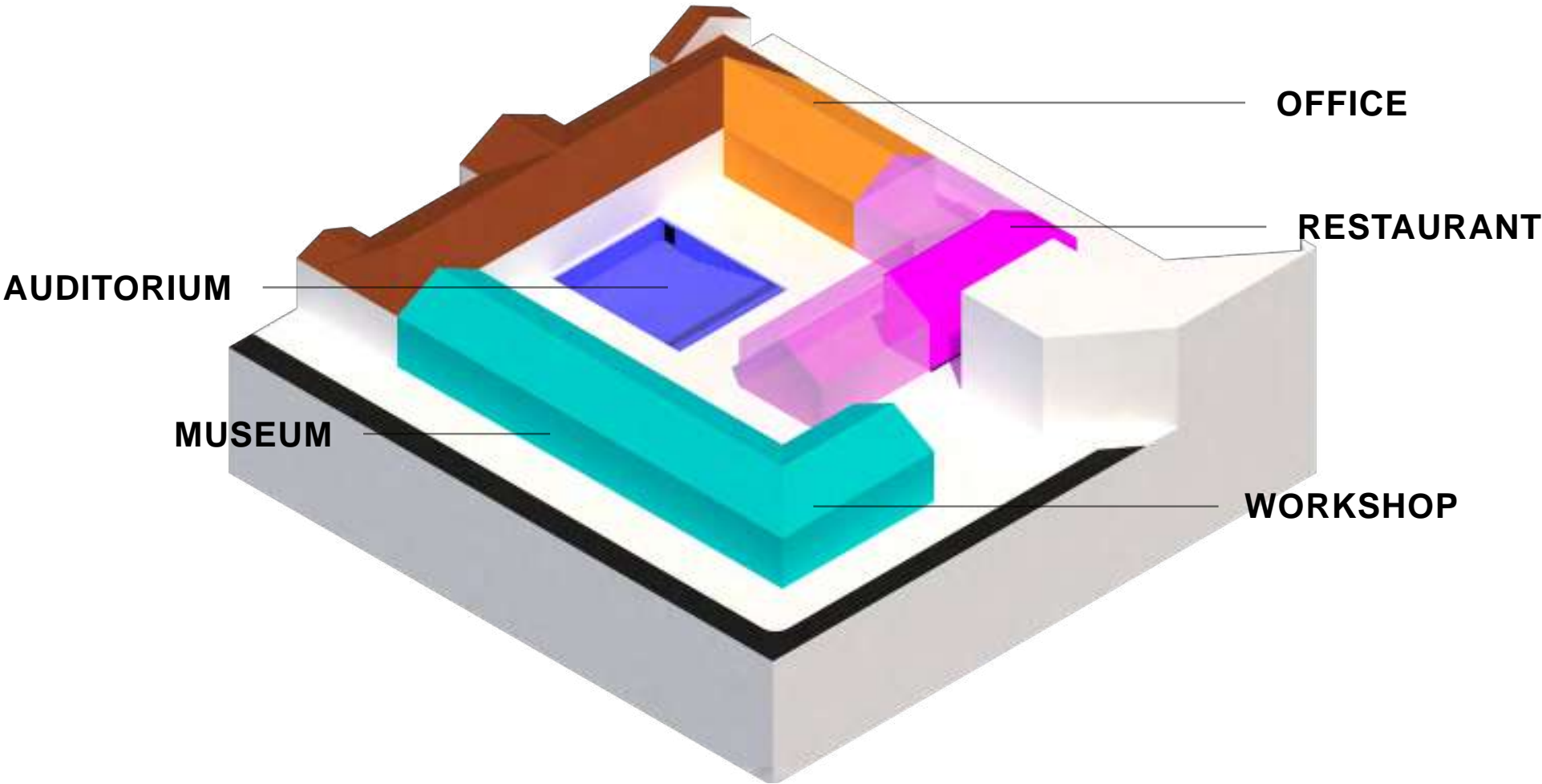


1. As we have seen, the current site presents numerous issues, primarily due to the presence of the tax center, which follows no logical axis and renders the site more chaotic than it already is.
2. This step follows the project's logic: to remove the tax center, thereby freeing up a large portion of the land for redevelopment.
3. The road axis is also modified to follow the city's ancient logic and align with the old axis of the ramparts and the barracks.
4. When working with the site's different historical layers, we take into account the destroyed old barracks.
5. Following this same logic, we also combine the old tax center to have an overall view of the combination of these layers.
6. Through a play of subtraction and extension, we obtain different volumes representing 3 different temporalities of the site. The orange represents the old barracks identically, allowing us to provide a testament to this destruction and serves as an expression of dissatisfaction or reflection on what was destroyed. In purple, the combination of the old barracks and the tax center subtracts the volume of the old barracks. Then, we find the blue part, which is the extension between the barracks and the city's existing urban fabric. This piece stands out from the barracks and distinguishes itself from other buildings by its materiality focused on modern materials.

By combining these three components, the project aims to create a multifaceted space that honors the richness of Nîmes' past while looking toward the future. It is an invitation to rediscover and celebrate the city's history through an architectural lens that promotes exchange, reflection, and community engagement. By transforming the space around the Porte d'Auguste, the aim is to forge a living link between heritage and modernity, creating a place where history is not only preserved but also actively integrated into the fabric of contemporary life.



# PROGRAMME



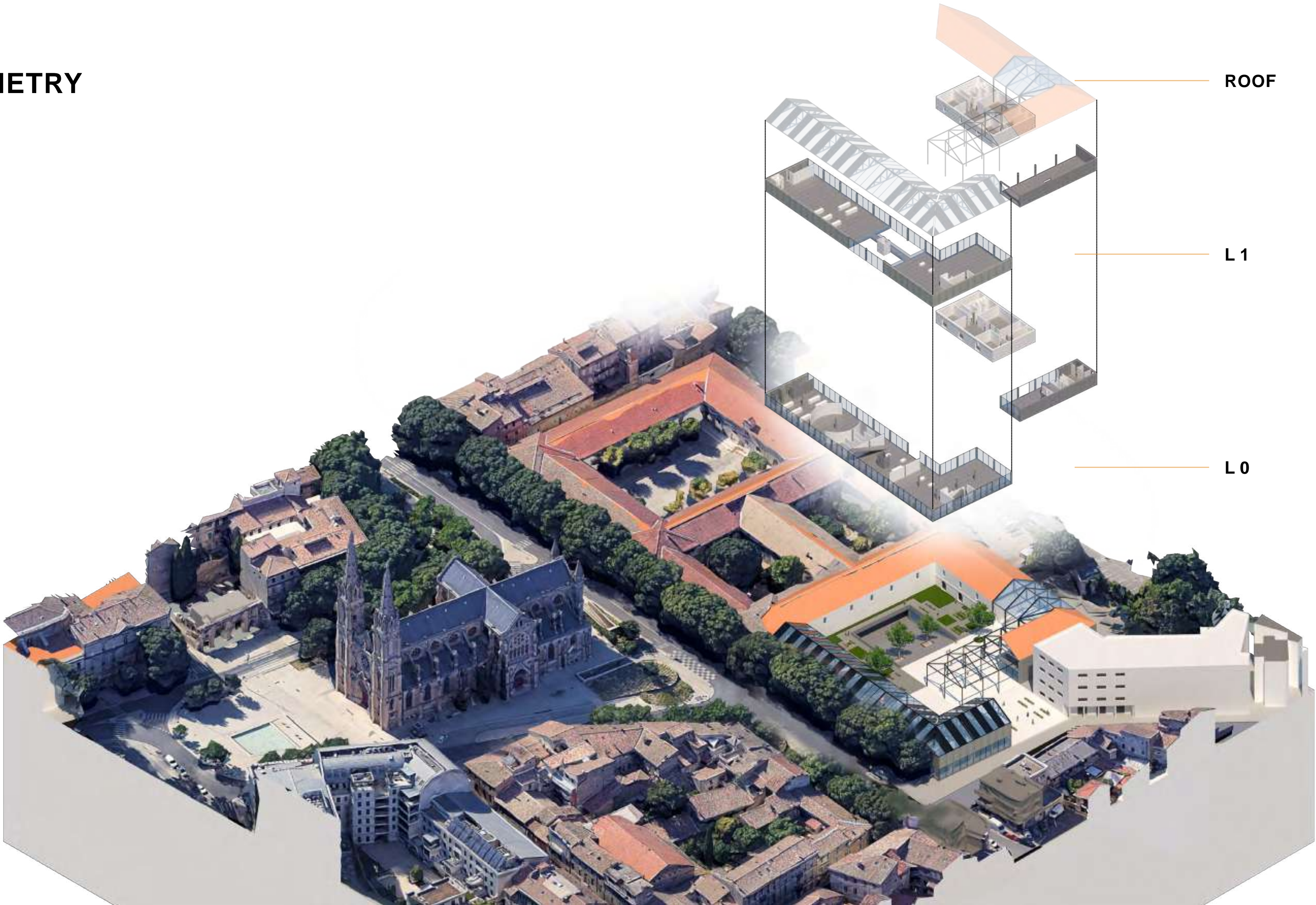
The programs of our project stem from our analysis on how to approach the enhancement of the Porte d'Auguste. We have identified that highlighting its importance necessitates emphasizing its historical role and the traces it preserves.

To facilitate this learning, a cultural space will be created, providing the city with a dedicated area for studying the different historical layers. This center will include workspaces, exhibition areas, rest areas, and conference facilities.

The center, named 'The Layers of History', will incorporate a museum where the works produced in workshops will be displayed. These workshops will also serve as a meeting and shared workspace for the many students from nearby universities. Both programs will benefit from large, brightly lit spaces, enhanced by a glass facade overlooking a vegetated interior courtyard. This courtyard will also house an auditorium for presenting research. A dedicated office within the center will oversee the research and organization of activities. Finally, a café-restaurant will offer a convivial dining space, close to the interior courtyard and various outdoor areas.



EXPLODED AXONOMETRY







## MASS PLAN

The building integrates seamlessly with the extension of the existing barracks, complemented by a row of trees that elegantly connects to the modern extension of the barracks. Moreover, the heart of the center is marked by prominent trees that enhance its integration with the natural environment.







## PLAN L 0 + CONTEXT MASS PLAN

At this scale, the entrance hall is clearly distinguished through the glazed roof, providing an overview of the interior space. Similarly, the restaurant stands out with its indoor and outdoor areas, housed under the same roof that alternates between a metal structure or a closed tile roof.

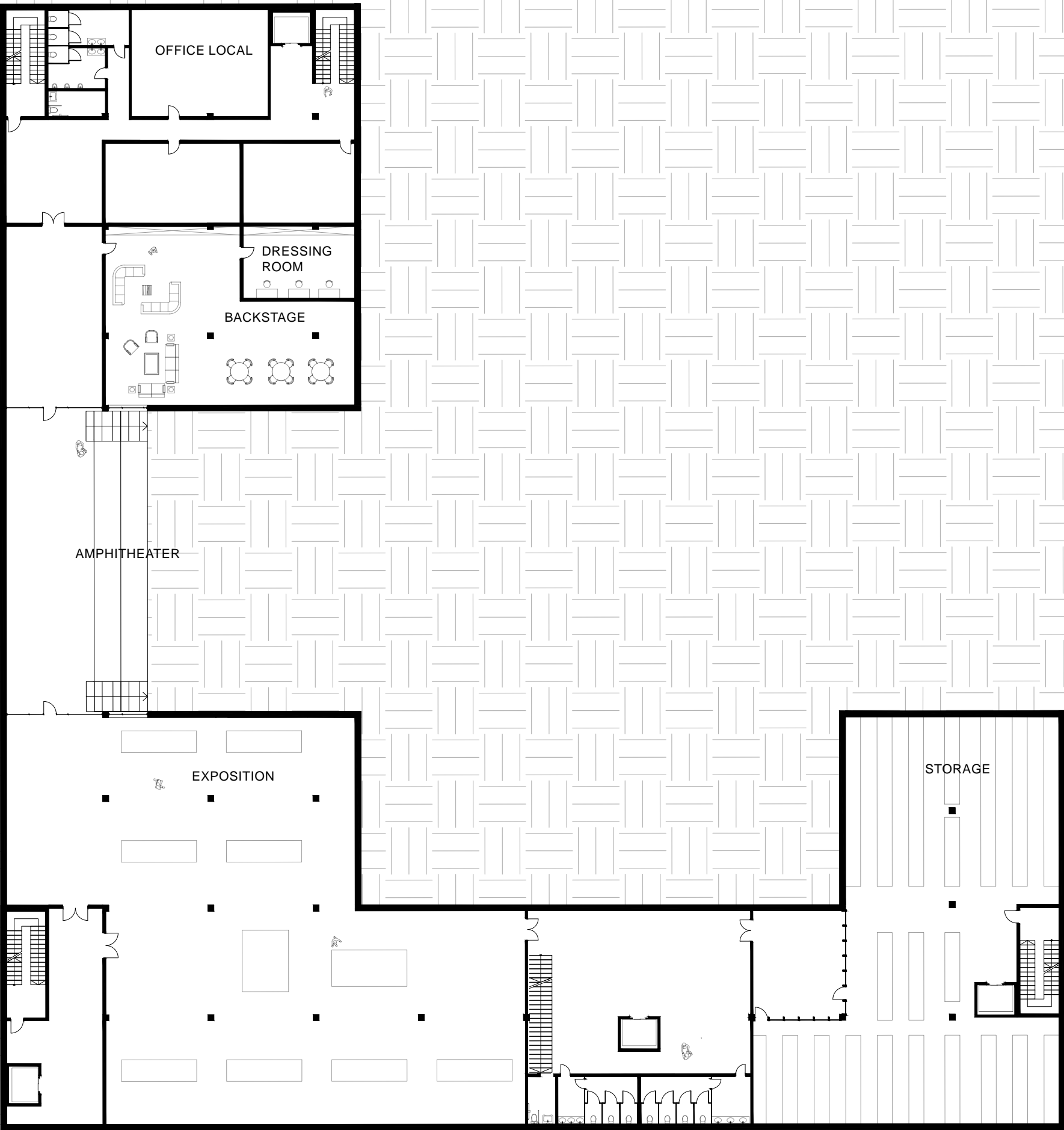
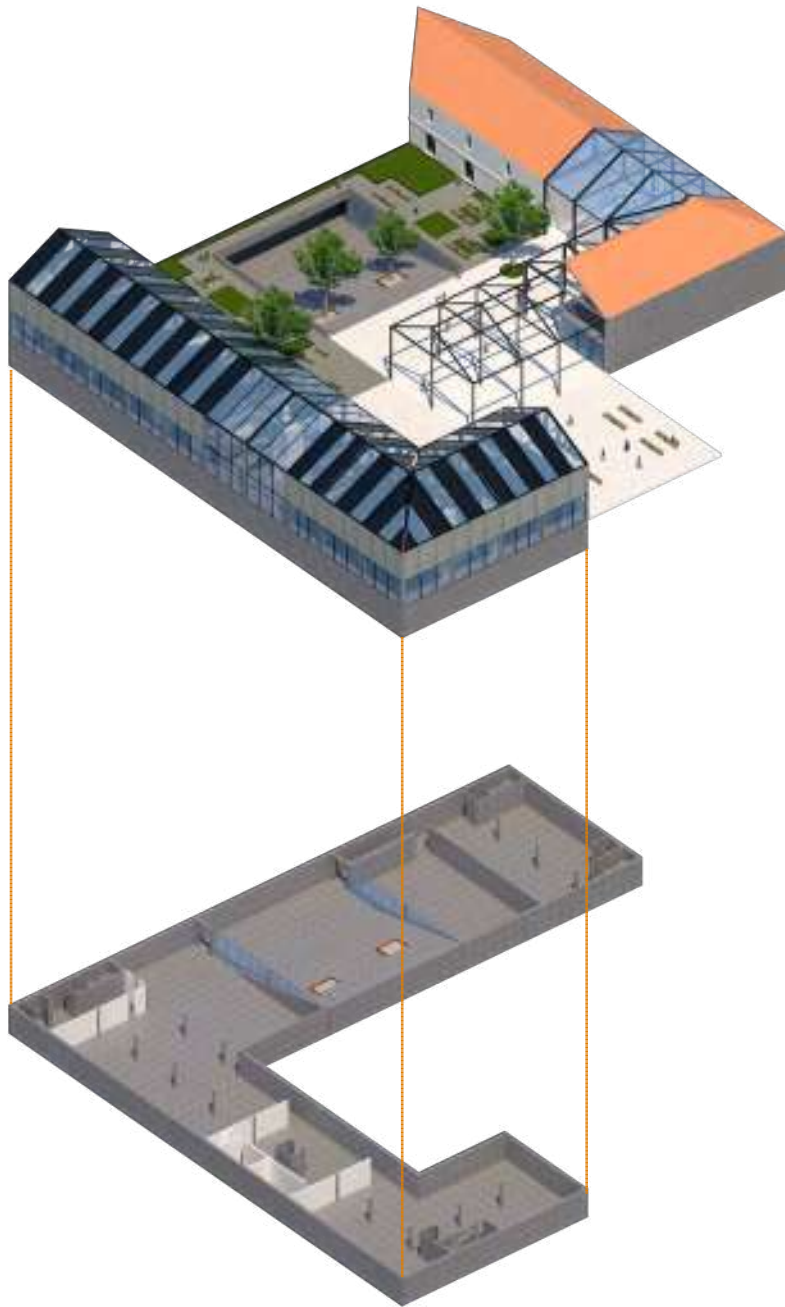




At level -1, we find most of the essential elements for the functioning of the museum, the workshop, and the auditorium. In the north, there is a private area leading to the backstage of the auditorium. This area receives natural light through glass panes aligned with the stairs, creating a bright and welcoming space.

Beyond the auditorium, there is an exhibition space related to the conferences, which is also flooded with natural light and features extensive areas designed to display all the works. This space is ideal for highlighting projects and facilitating discussions and interactions among participants.

Also several storage rooms are also available to support the activities of the workshops. These storage areas are designed to be easily accessible while being spacious enough to accommodate all the materials and equipment necessary for the smooth conduct of workshops and presentations.



L -1



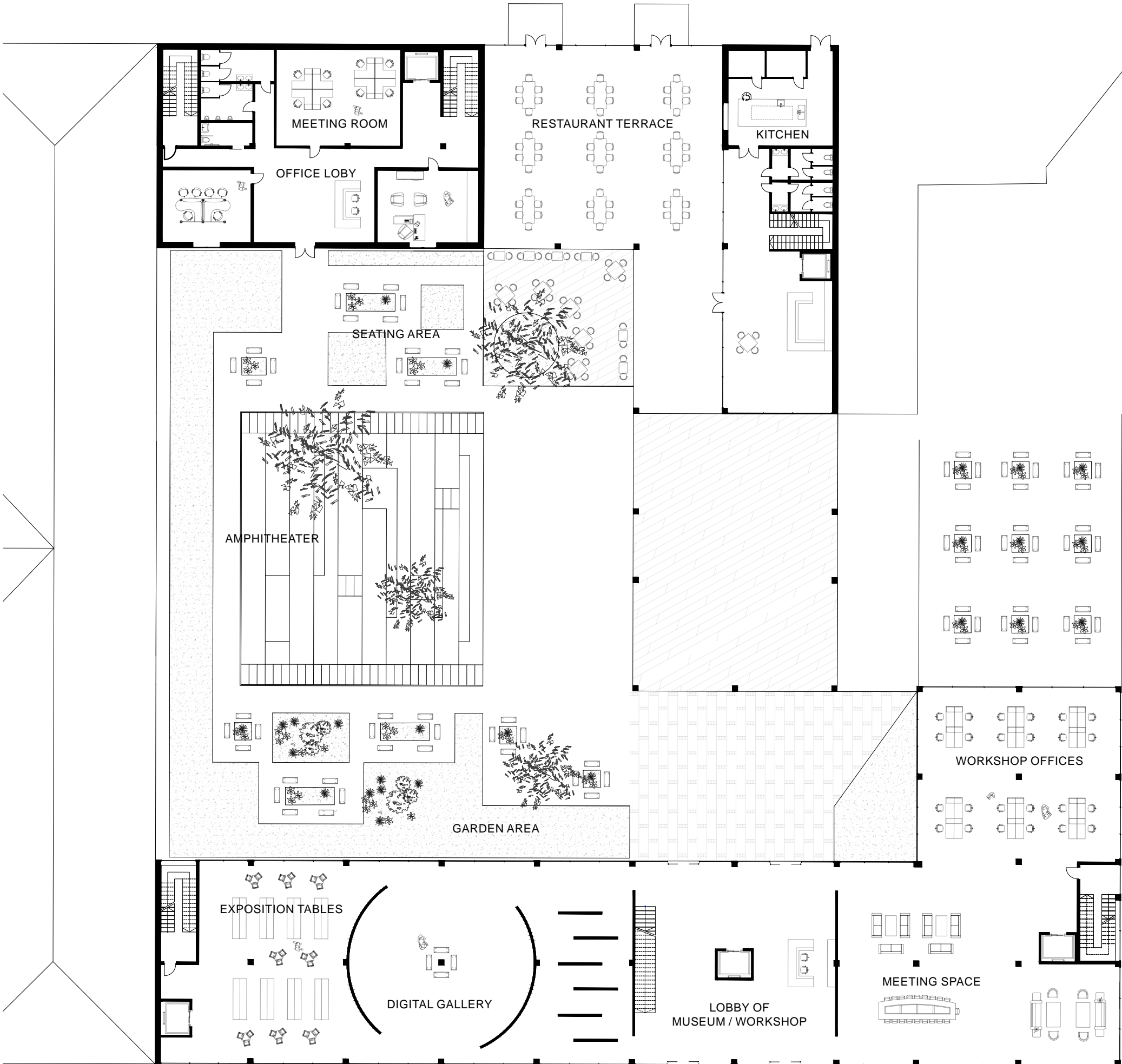
1 : 300



The ground floor is the area where the most layers of history intersect, making it one of the most inviting and pleasant spaces within the building. It features a lush, vegetated courtyard that is abundant with greenery, providing a serene and refreshing environment. The amphitheater is strategically positioned to clearly mark the symmetry axis of the former barracks, integrating historical structure with modern use.

The design facilitates smooth pedestrian flow around the amphitheater, creating a natural pathway that enhances the visibility and accessibility of both the museum and the workshop. These spaces are deliberately designed with glass fronts on the ground floor to foster transparency. This architectural choice not only attracts the curiosity of passersby but also invites them into the Layers of History, sparking interest and engagement.

The lobby's main entrance axis guides visitors directly towards the restaurant. This space is ingeniously designed to be both open and covered, offering a variety of atmospheres and scenic views of the interior courtyard. The arrangement provides visitors with different environmental experiences and perspectives, enriching their visit and encouraging longer stays within the historical complex.



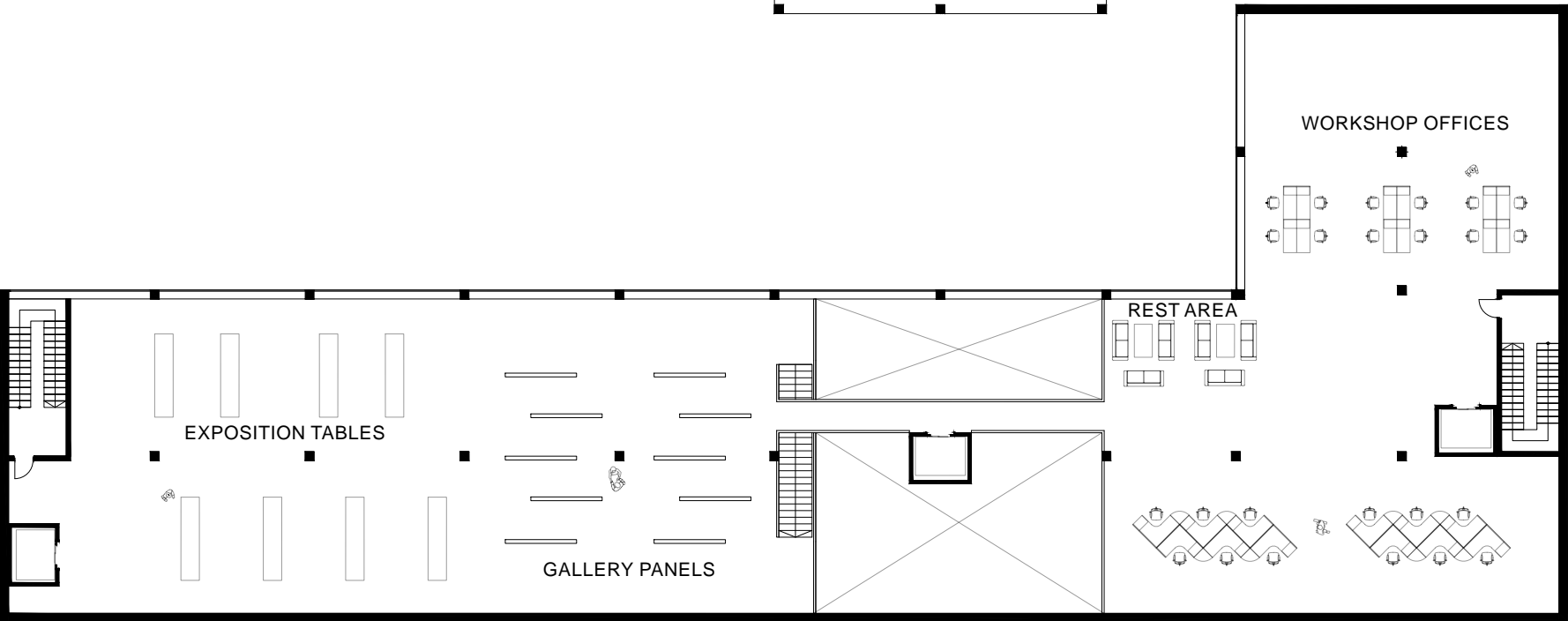
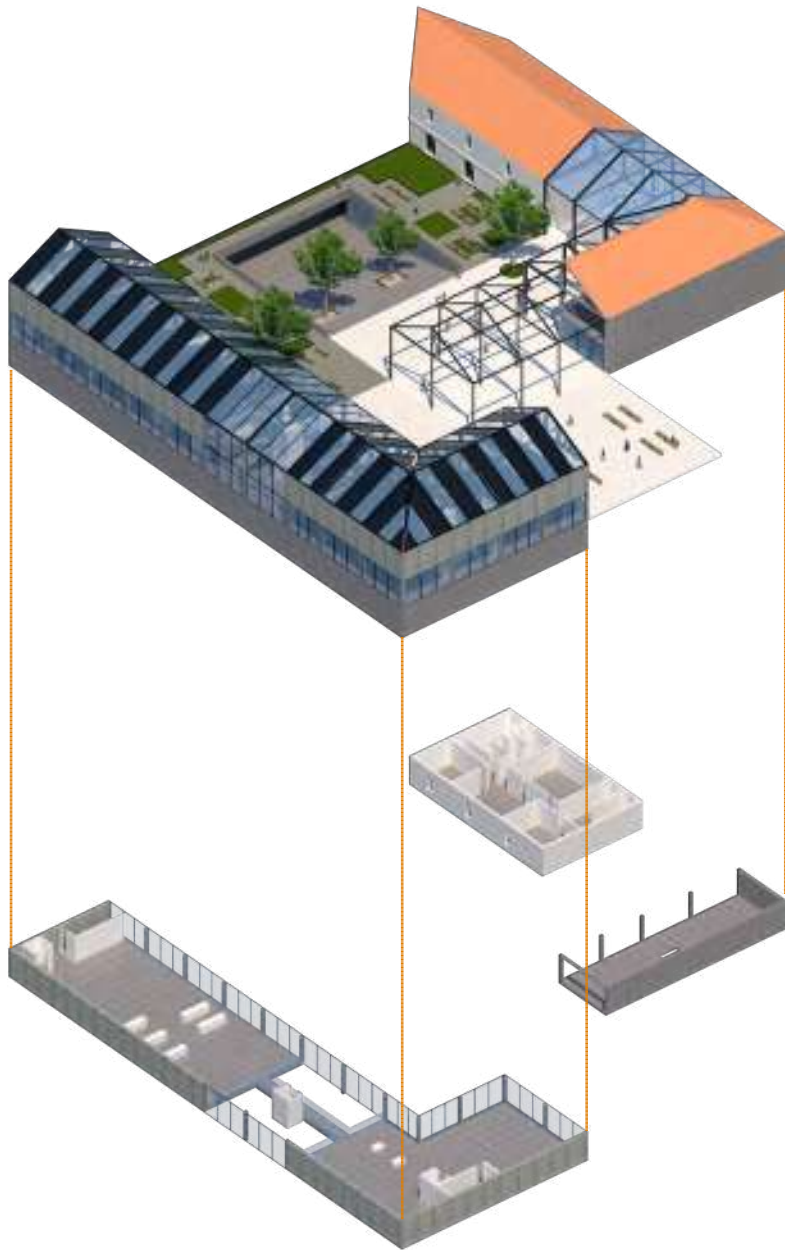
L 0

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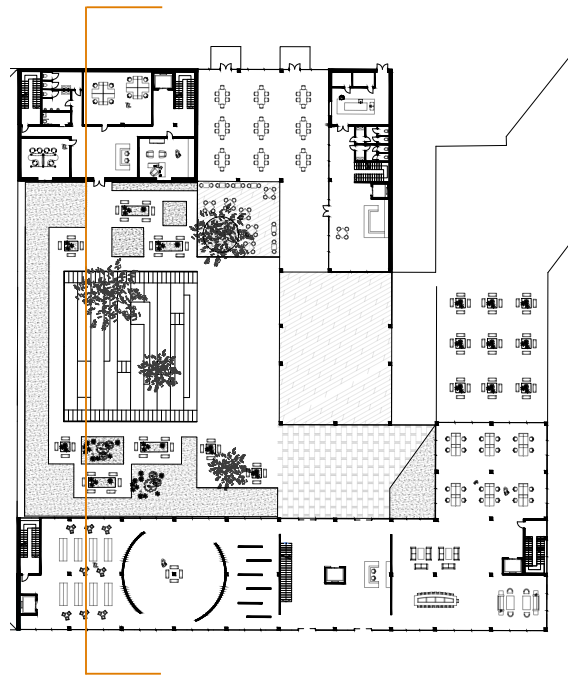
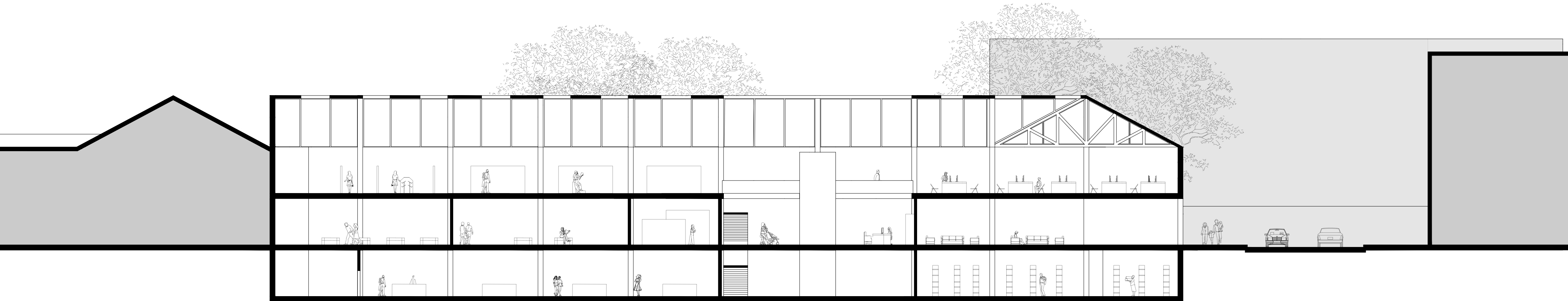
The museum and workshop remain connected on the upper floor through an aerial section located above the lobby, which provides a vantage point over the city. This floor is walled off on the street side to prevent any direct views into the private lives of residents and to refocus visitors' attention towards the interior courtyard. The majority of the light on this floor comes from the roof, which features a grid of panels alternating between solid and glass, creating a dynamic play of light.

As for the restaurant, this elevated viewpoint overlooking the courtyard offers a unique, more aerial perspective, fostering a tranquil atmosphere. This setting allows for quieter moments, making it an ideal place to relax and enjoy the serene environment.



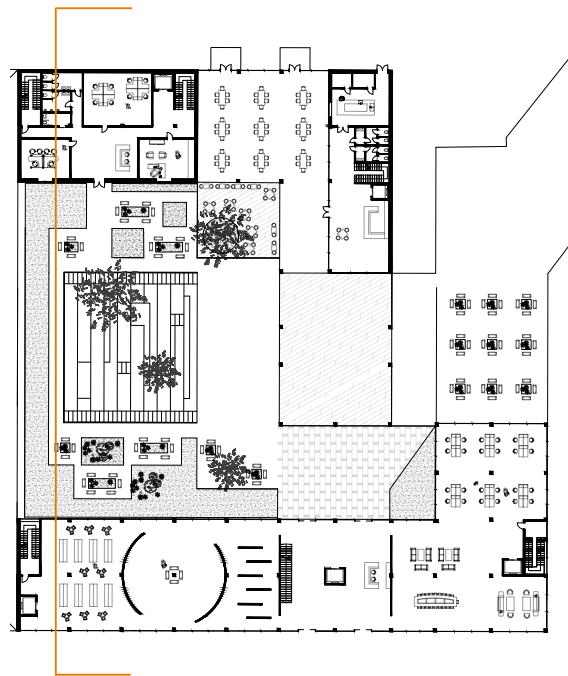
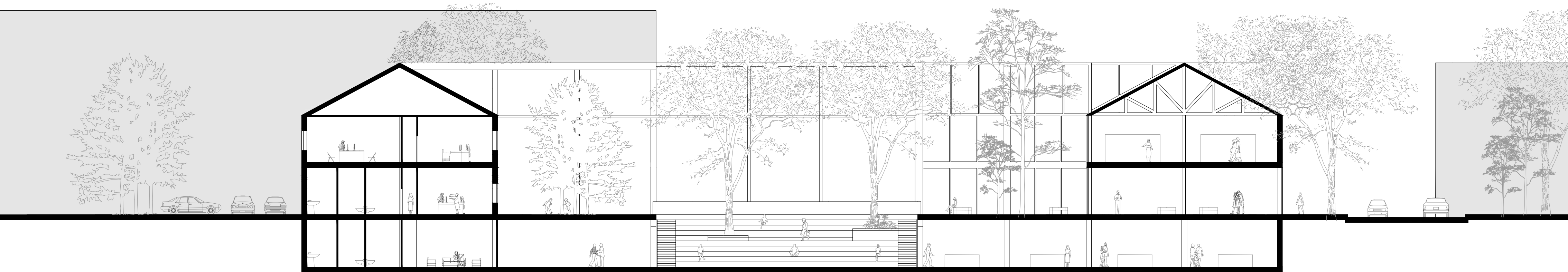


SECTION 1



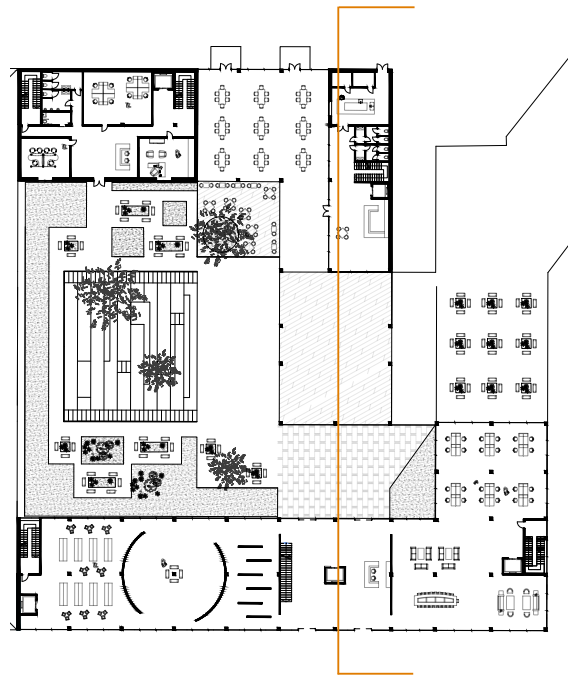
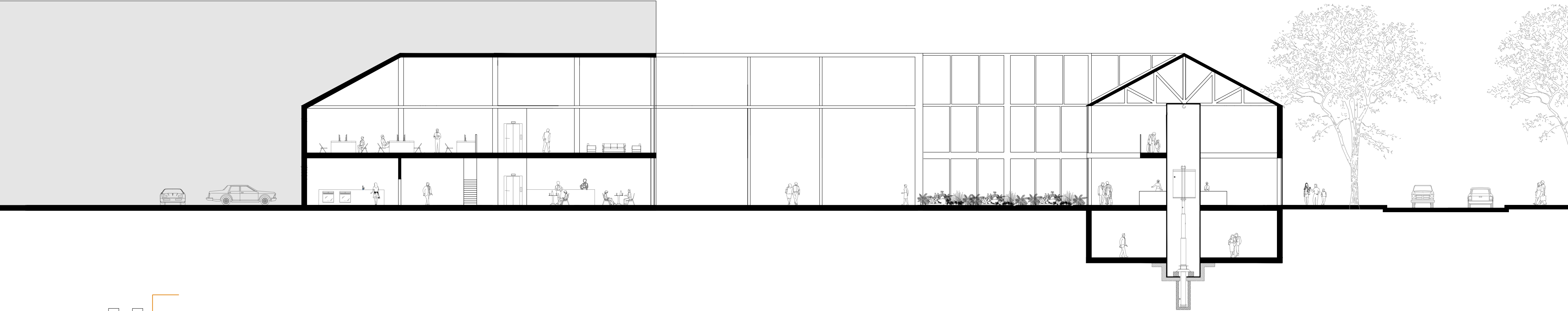


SECTION 2





SECTION 3



1 : 200



ELEVATION NORTH



1 : 300

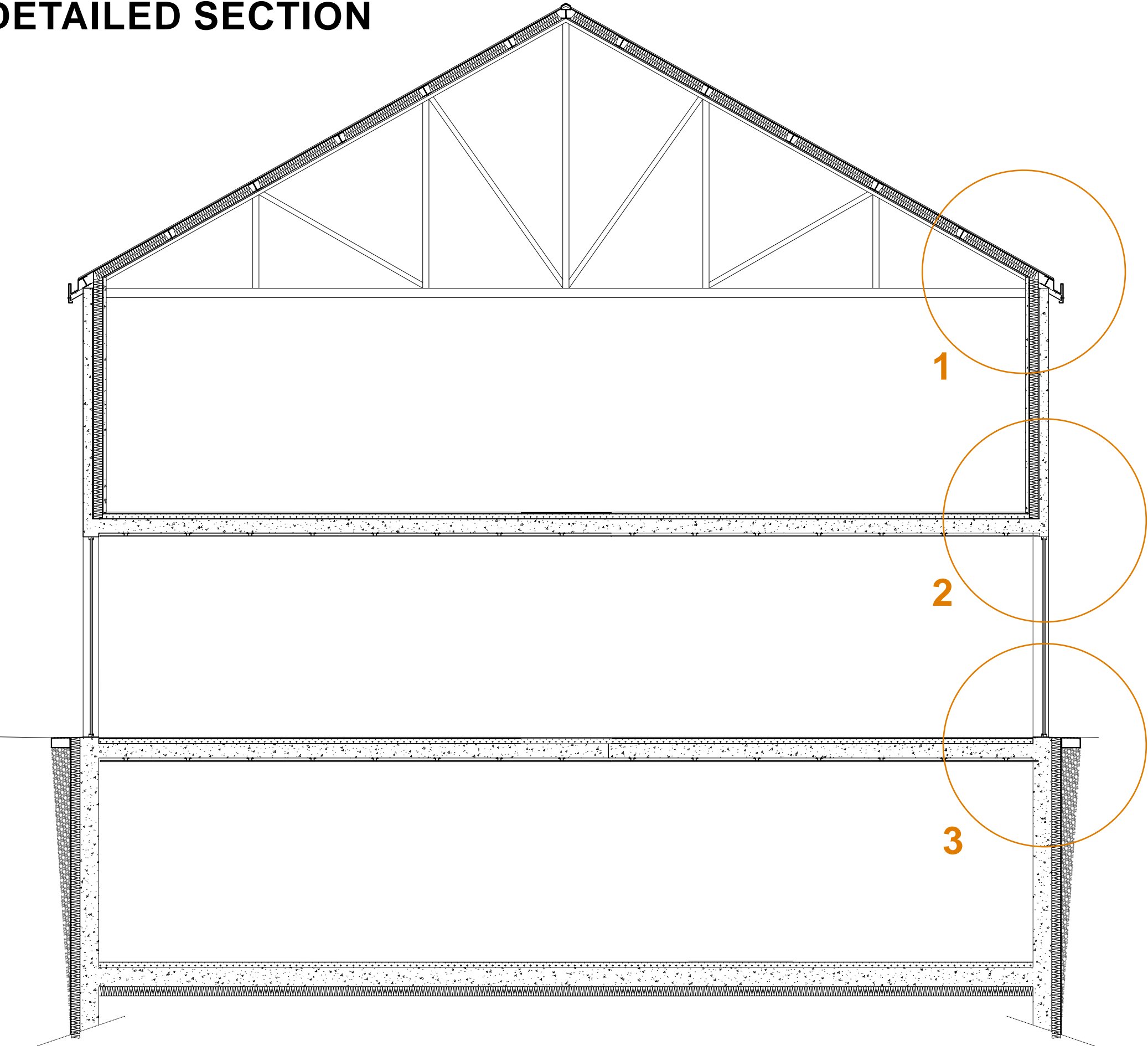
ELEVATION EAST



1 : 300

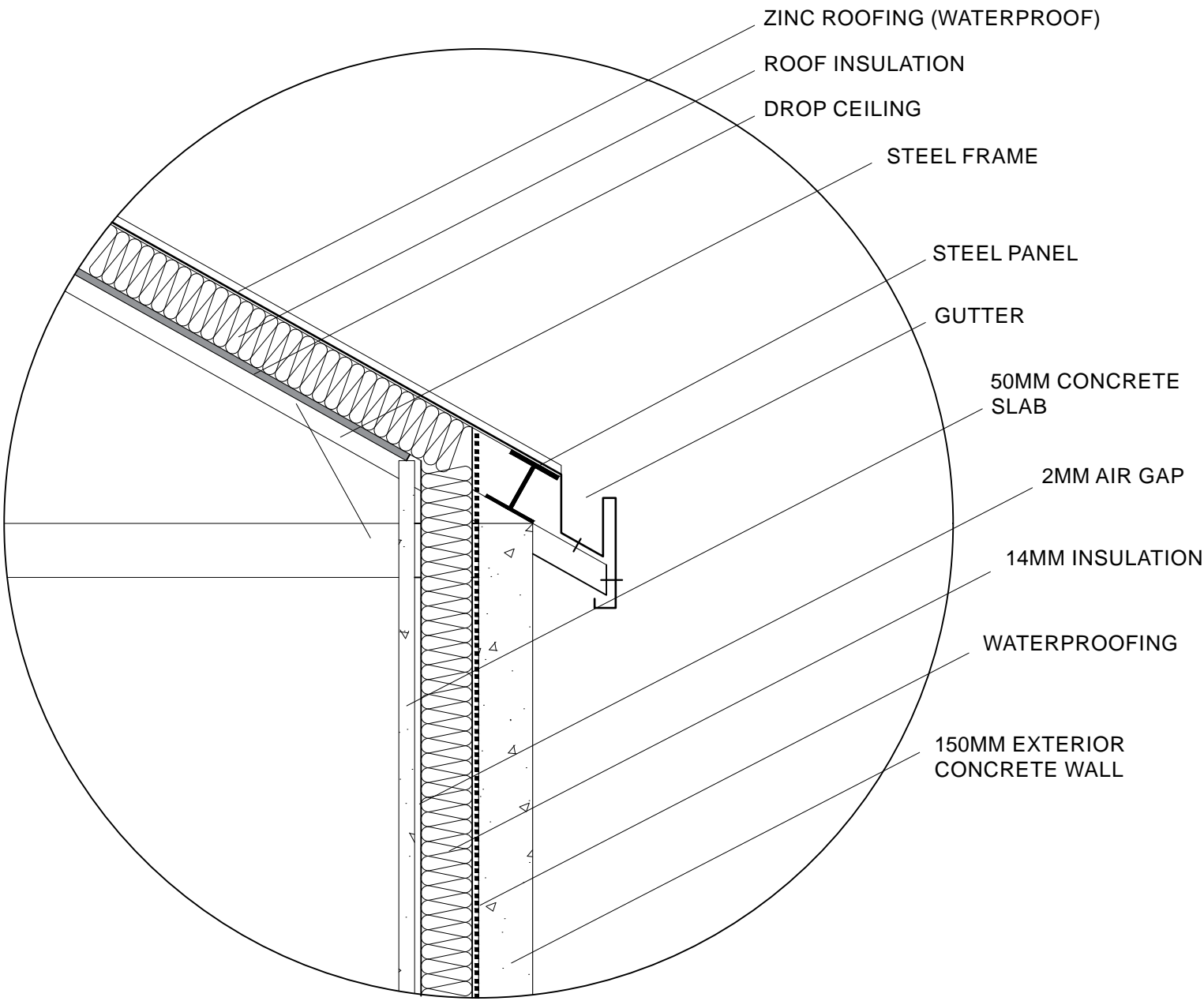


DETAILED SECTION



1 : 80

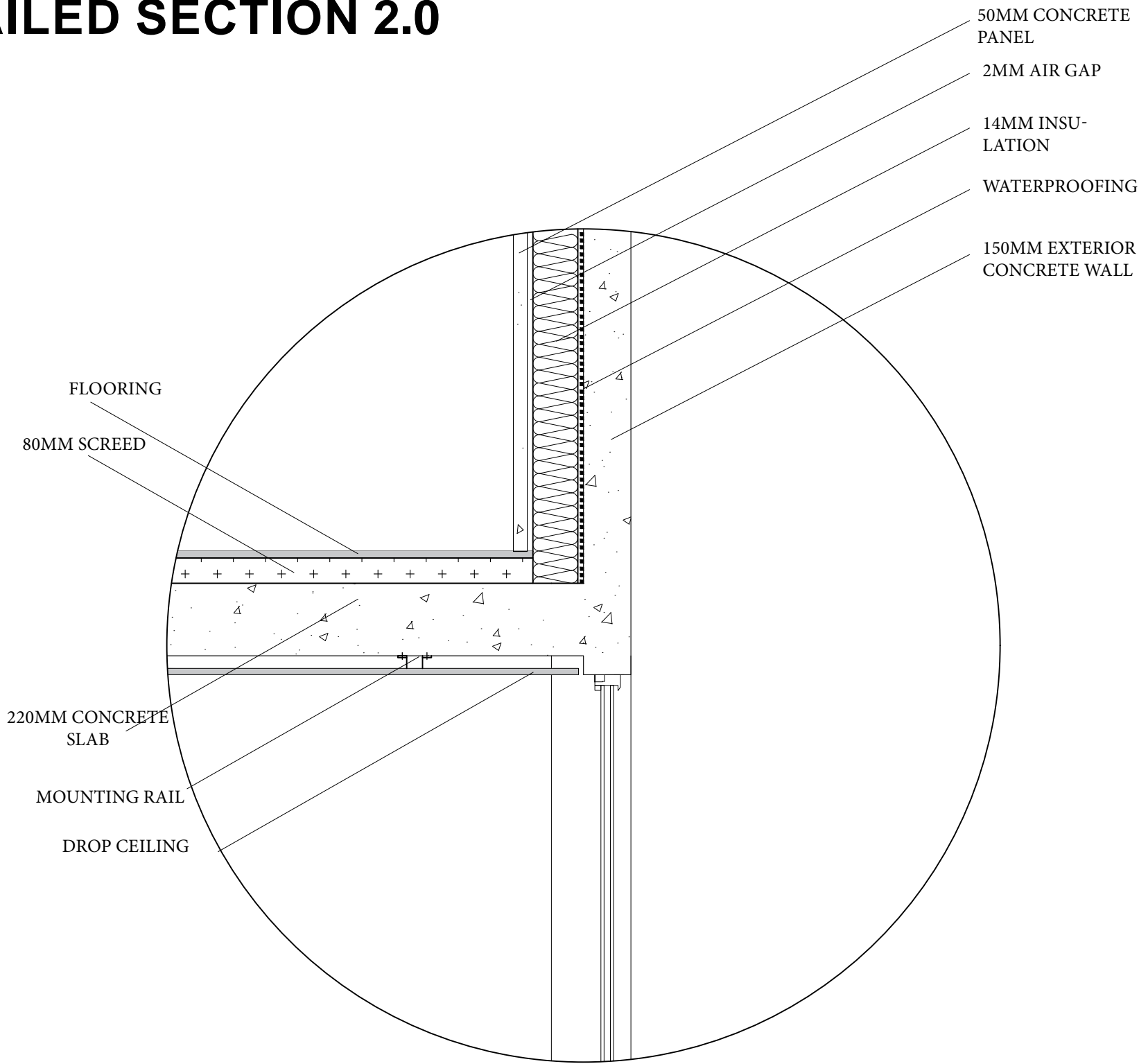
DETAILED SECTION 1.0



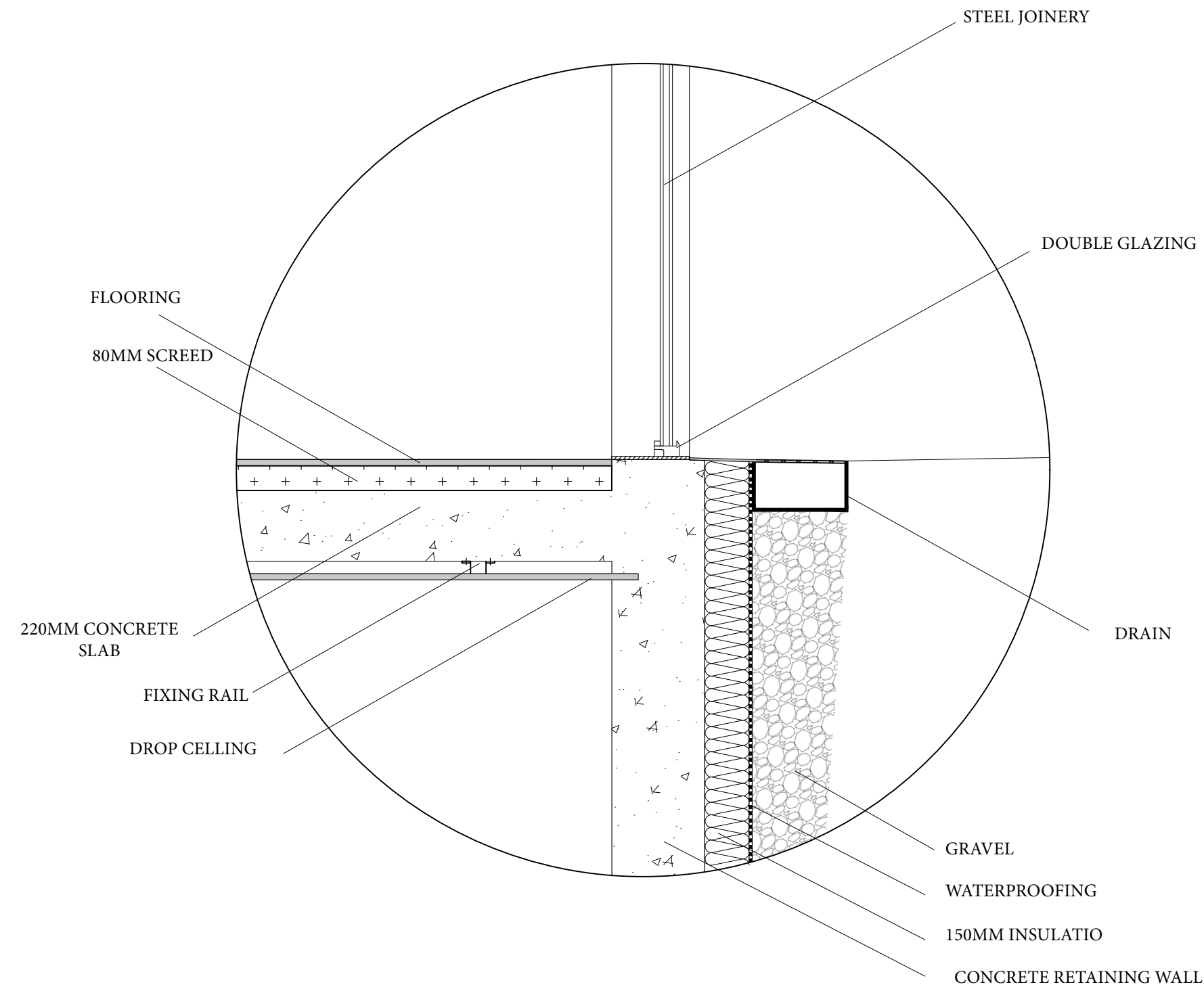
1 : 20



# DETAILED SECTION 2.0



# DETAILED SECTION 3.0



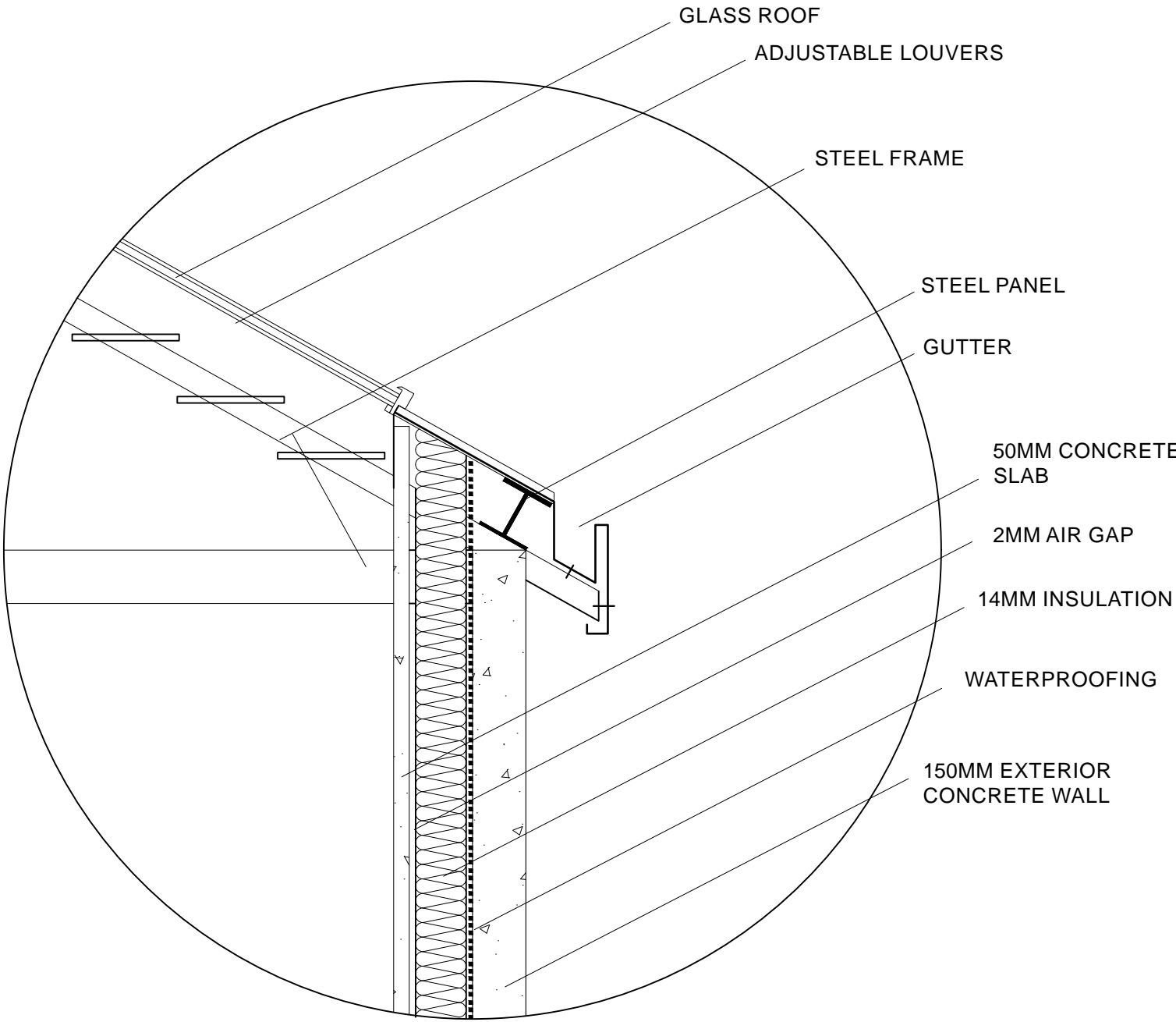


# DETAILED SECTION 1.1 (GLASS ROOF)

This architectural cross-section reveals the structure of a multi-story building with distinct features for each level. In the basement (R-1), a concrete retaining wall provides stability and structural integrity, optimized to withstand the surrounding soil pressures.

On the ground floor (RDC), the façades are equipped with double-glazed windows, offering superior thermal and acoustic insulation while allowing an abundance of natural light. The first floor (R+1) features concrete walls, with exposed concrete both on the exterior and interior, lending a modern and industrial aesthetic to the building.

The roof, supported by a steel frame, is alternately covered with zinc or glass. The glass sections are equipped with mobile solar protections to modulate incoming light and heat.

































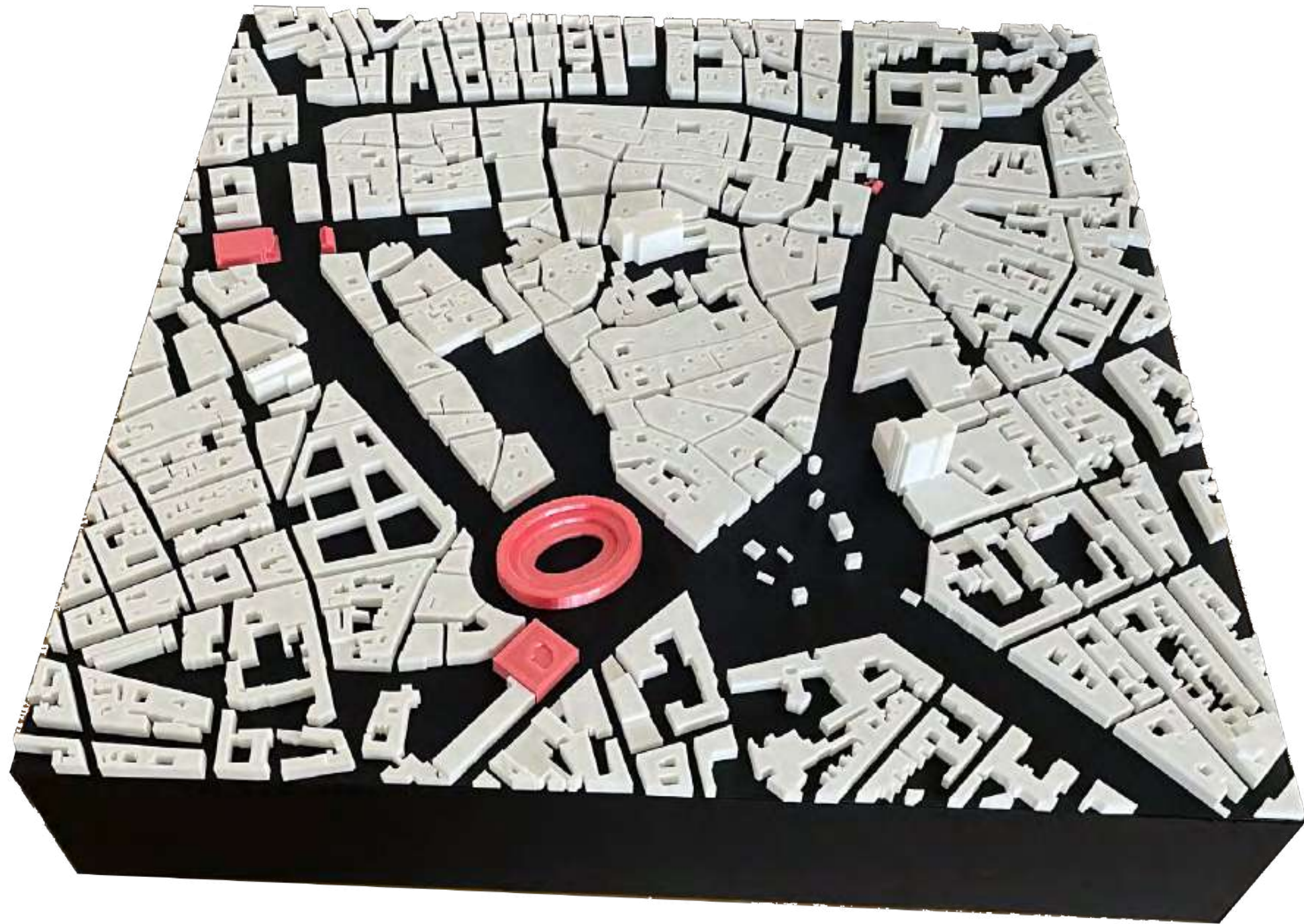








PHYSICAL MODEL 1 : 2 000



PHYSICAL MODEL 1 : 500





# 05 CONCLUSION

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The Layers of History complete the trilogy of historical buildings surrounding the historic center of the city of Nîmes. The diversity of epochs represented by the three buildings of the research center intrigues and immerses visitors in the historical layers of the site. All traces of the site are integrated here through a single project, taking into account all the modifications it may have undergone. An homage to the Porte d'Auguste is rendered through the proportions from the entrance to the inner courtyard, as well as through the project's program. The creation of the center would allow many students to study the historical development of cities and make discoveries that they can also present through conferences in the amphitheater. The project's objective is to restore importance to the Porte d'Auguste by recalling primarily the extent of the city's fortifications, as well as to restructure the surrounding space to strengthen the city's efforts in highlighting historical monuments and perhaps one day see the entire city integrated into UNESCO's heritage.



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- ‘**Cartographie**’, by C'est pas sorcier

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