



THE

HIDDEN

GEMS

TO BE

This past year has been filled with the joys and struggles of balancing our final thesis and other subjects. Despite the everyday burdens and stresses of life, I enjoyed putting together this thesis with the help of my teachers, classmates, and studio leaders.

We were asked when creating our thesis to pick a topic or area that we are interested in and then intertwine it with architectural theory. This combination has led me to investigate a topic related to my upbringing of wandering. I grew up in multiple countries and it has created in me a curiosity to experience different places through exploration and walking. This explorative trait led to my initial encounter with Prague when I first moved here in 2017 where my wandering led me to discover many gems and hidden courtyards throughout the city.

My hope is that in reading through the many pages which I have put my excitement and effort towards, you will also be able to catch a glimpse of me as a person. A person whose exploring is visible in the translation of the project proposal; to turn walking into a greater source of joy and connectivity for the locals who inhabit these neighborhoods.

Thank you to my family for everything you've poured into me which I hope to return ten-fold to you.

Many thanks to my bible study group and close friends who have encouraged me in prayers and blessings. Thank you to my classmates who have been a source of laughter, banter, gossip, and support throughout our years here together. Thank you to Archip for all the years of my study and their openness to change and improving the school.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1- Introduction to Courtyards 6

Why I chose the topic of courtyards- an introduction to the topic. The formatting and thought process of the thesis

Chapter 2- Abstracting Courtyards 12

Individual case studies and draw-in out qualities

Chapter 3- Defining the Ground 44

Diagram and explanation of the ground vs object, focusing on permeability and porosity

Chapter 4- A Curious History of Privacy 50

History, privatization, and the deeper effects of the past

Chapter 5- An introduction to the site 58

Introduction to the site- why the site, historical points, site pictures, and maps.

Chapter 6- What's happening around? 74

Projects, buildings, and spaces around the site which are influential or inspiring

Chapter 7- Analysis and Forming 96

Concept, diagrams and method. Relation to previous chapters- new abstractions, ground level, and public-private relations.

Chapter 8- Concept and proposal 122

Design implementation, site map relationship, flow of movement, inner-yard connectivity

Chapter 9- Details and moments 138

Details and moments, courtyard visualizations and organization, illustrative details of the proposal and materials.

Chapter 10- Implications on the future 158

The importance and future development of courtyards

Index and Citations 166



CHAPTER 1



"In the tapestry of urban design, courtyards are the intricate knots that bind functionality with beauty. Architecture is the skilled weaver, crafting spaces that resonate with both purpose and grace."

- Charles Correa

INTROD
UCTION
TOCOUR
TYARDS

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO COURTYARDS

As a first experience of Prague, the medieval street patterns and preserved architecture stand above other new encounters. It is the closeness experienced as you walk through a passageway and then are met by a new street or business. There is an intimacy in how tall the buildings are compared to the typical human height- where it is possible to interact with strangers just a few levels above you. Wandering around the old town creates this new experience of gem finding; that as you meander through the streets and cut across passageways, you stumble upon unique places. Gems that are the cafes hidden at the corner of the courtyard, galleries that are in the passageway walls, or small designer stores nestled in the archways after you turn out of the street.

These gems via passageway are typical of a medieval meandering streetscape and took form- whether as unplanned urbanism or intentional- in other architectural periods as well. Let's say that they could be seen as a norm in the past as a shortcut, meeting place, new architecture, etc., which was interwoven into the buildings and urban fabric of the city. There was a relationship between the courtyards, passageways, street, and buildings that looks different in the city of Prague today. Instead, there are fewer meandering paths and passages and have replaced the old curved streets with a grid-block form. Courtyards are now cut off from the wanderer and restricted to a building-to-building relationship that is usually just for the tenants.

Looking deeper into the old town, each of these courtyards and gems had characteristics that set them apart from one another. These differences initially had to do with building design and city planning. In different periods city planners and architectural design varied from the original DNA of the old town. Garden city design, block structures, post-modern patterns of settlements, clusters, circular village design, and so on were formed; each of them addressing or not addressing what the courtyards were: a pause between the buildings and an opening for community space.

Sticking with my core interest in the courtyards and their original tracks I was able to find faint modified traces of it in the typical building pattern of Prague. In today's GMOD DNA of Prague we find the block pattern of building, where blocks of apartment buildings build a periphery around sacred spaces accessible only to the residents. The traces of the old town were maintained in outliers- some form of a passageway that cut through the buildings or something that was happening at the inner yard, creating a gem. These outlying cases of interconnectivity within the block itself is a lost form from the medieval pattern of building.

Unfortunately, these courtyard spaces today are underutilized and inefficiently managed. The residents often stare out and see other buildings with nothing, but a few trash cans and cars parked at the base of their building. If they are lucky, their building's personal courtyard has a bench and a tree, something to at least let people chat comfortably with each other when they meet while throwing away their trash. However, in the majority of cases the back end of the building isn't often cared for, it is cut off from the neighboring buildings, or- at its worst, it is inaccessible to its residents.

In a city which is known for its beautifully preserved architecture- so much for its residents is inaccessible and lacks the creativity to connect. Due to the conservative approach with most architectural designs, it would be difficult to propose a serious solution that would convince the general population to take a 'wild card' of a design and run with it. But it doesn't have to be so; the window of opportunity between comfort and solution is written in history books, it's seen in the DNA of the old town. What if by projecting original qualities and characteristics- the passageways, the interconnectivity, the gems and business flitted between routes- could upgrade or adapt the typical block typology today?



Štěpánská arcade shortly after its completion in 1938. On the left you can see a gothic portal as a memento of the demolished house U Hřebeckých, which stood on the site since the 14th century. Source: RL London/Praha Campa (17).

From the initial readings of the old town, an original DNA can be drawn out which is a composition of courtyards and passageways forming the surrounding settlements. These courtyards and passageways are also connected to the meandering streetways, overall creating a built environment that is fluid and intermingles. In the opposite way city planning started to give more structure to the urban environment, which created maps of future block forms, which then created streets. This forms the more modern DNA of the typical 19th century block patterns- the new normal for today.

Comparing the old and new DNA of Prague in hopes of combining the two of them, the precedent studies will look at comparing the old town street patterns and moments to the newer block structures that create the norm of the built environment in Prague.

In order to look at how best to address the selected site and layers different precedent studies were analyzed to help divide and sift through what makes good qualities in comparing the old town to the typical block structure of building today. In the following chapters, different layers will uncover the influencing aspects that affect our everyday lives as we encounter the city of Prague. Starting in the old town by looking at the DNA, gems, and their qualities, and then moving to the relationship between the ground and people, the public-private relationship and the opportunity of combining these layers together and its impact on Prague today.



CHAPTER 2



“Passage ways are the silent narrators of a city’s history, echoing the footsteps of those who came before. In architecture, we bridge the past and present through these timeless corridors.”

- Raphael Moneo

2.0 ABSTRACTING COURTYARDS

Throughout the centuries there has been a progression of pathways. Starting with villages where there might have been a few settlements with paths that wore away more and more to eventually create a larger path or a main road. From these major paths turned roads, and as the villages grew to towns and then cities, the densification would start to make a larger disparity between the small paths and the main roads; the small paths often the foundations for the larger new ones. When you compare the purposes of these paths over the centuries you see the reasons why certain pathways (referring mostly to passages) were maintained or established.

When walking through Prague and experiencing its passageways and courtyards, there are noticeable differences depending on the time period. The context of these passageways influenced how they were designed and thought about. (12)

Prague is well known for its well-preserved gothic architecture, romantic charm of the old town, and the never-ending paths that meander between the three to four story buildings. The adventure and charm that people often find are the gems that they come across, which are the passageways and hidden courtyards. Taking some of these beloved spots in the old town and city center, there are different attributes and characteristics that can be drawn out of them.



2.1 PALAC UNGELT

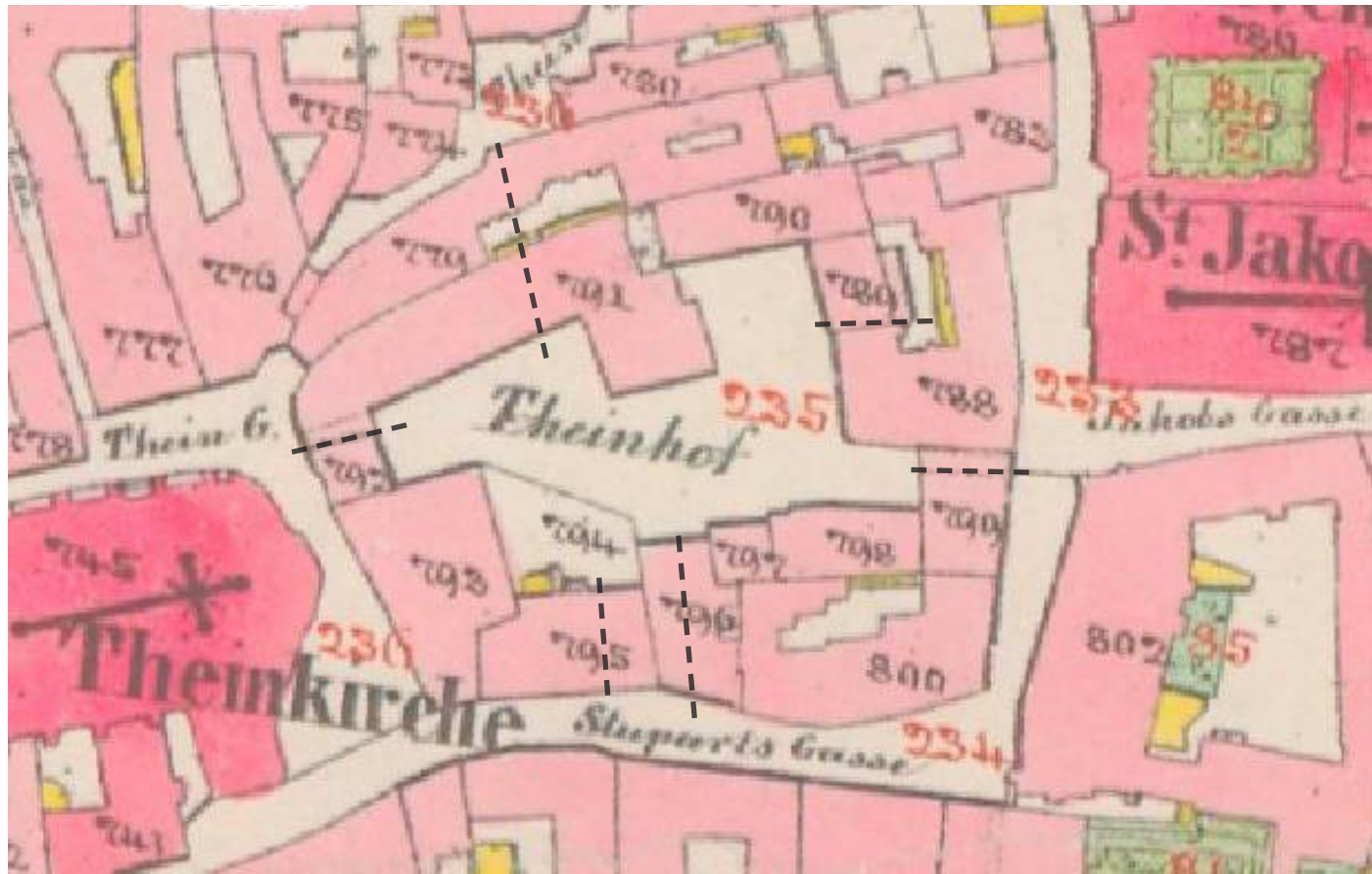
Palace Ungelt | 11th Century | Týnská
ulička Prague 1

Palace Ungelt was first mentioned around the 10th and 11th century and initially associated with the Granovska Palac and its arcaded loggia. At the time it was used as a merchant's yard, which due to its enclosed qualities, was a good location for exchanges.

In the 14th century the word 'Ungelt' came from the German word which mean customs. Then it was used as a customs port to control and manage goods and taxes as well as to exchange news from abroad. Later in the 20th century the palác was partially ruined and poorer groups of people moved into the area with a mixture of businesses and shops. The last time the area was renovated was in 1996.(3)

The earliest map in 1971 shows a cluster of buildings and the walkway of the slow meandering streets that people used. The second half of the block was filled within the next year where the medieval street patterns contributed to the perimeter form and permeability of the buildings.



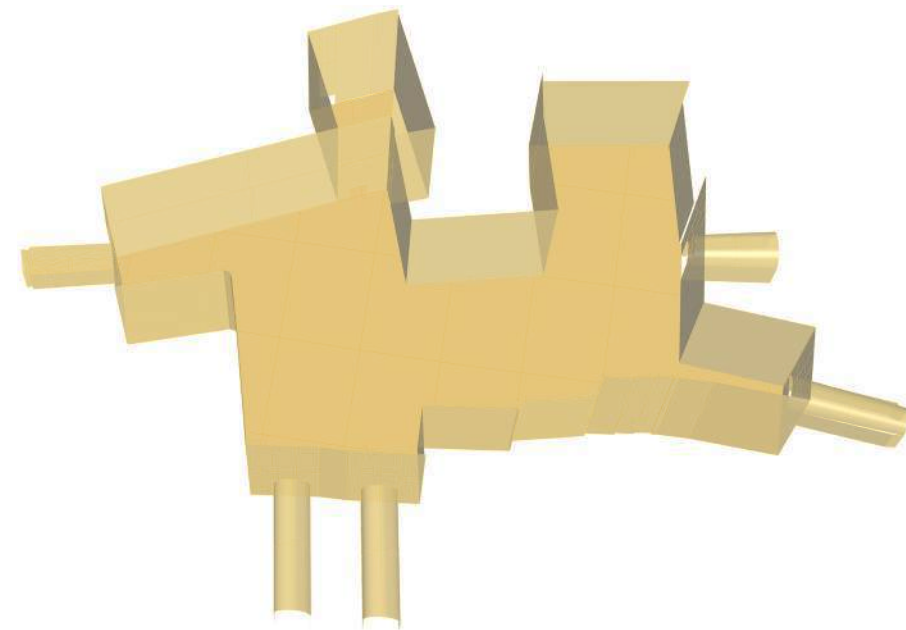


1790-1830 map of Prague from Geoportal Prague. The red dashed lines show the entrance possibilities today.

Due to its historical functions, the buildings are more permeable on the ground level where users can pass through the shops and the main passageway.

Although it is not shown in the plan, the ground level shops today are permeable from the inner yard to the outside at the marked black dashed lines. The large square-like courtyard is well known and passed through today because of the Granovska Palac and its proximity to the Church of Our Lady before Týn immediately after the west passage exit. Looking at the area from a distance, it is a larger courtyard with one main axis that cuts it in half with a walkway and arched entrances at the east and west ends. It comprises 12 buildings (ranging from 6-13m, starting from the ground to the beginning of the roof) surrounding the larger courtyard and a cluster of 8 more buildings on the northern edge. Today it is possible to pass through some of the businesses (as noted in the drawings) and those passages through the southern businesses encounter a terrain change where the businesses have a few very steep steps.

If just the abstraction of all the permeable and publicly accessible walking spaces was made it would look like the diagram above. What makes this passageway so enjoyable is not just the historical context from which it has come



but also the qualities built about it. The permeability on the ground floor makes it interesting and accessible for the users. The main axis that the passageway acts on is accessible for cars which helps with the delivery of goods and makes for an easily readable axis for orientation- the materiality of the cobblestones notes this main axis way. When walking through the space it feels expansive yet intimate and this is due to the height ratios of a maximum of 13m.

These qualities are the multiple layers of what makes the space pleasant for users to continually enjoy. Particularly with this example, the central axis way and the materiality change on the ground is a helpful method that could be applied to other courtyards for division of space in a non-invasive (or wall/fence-like) way. The historical open courtyard has always been a means of people passing through; the only new additions are the buildings that fill the surrounding plots. The four different sides of the building are accessible by different entrances. The various sides of the building are nestled into the terrain from the south side sloping

Pros

- There is a large courtyard space
- Space for storefronts to have their own functions plus a common walkway.
- Comfortable ratio of buildings height to people

Cons

- The outer buildings are semi-permeable.
- Two of the four entrances are not accessible 24/7, they are only permeable via a commercial unit.
- Everyone in the courtyard can hear what's happening in the open space (Ex: large spaces could create larger parties which could result in more noise).

2.2 SLOVANSKY DUM

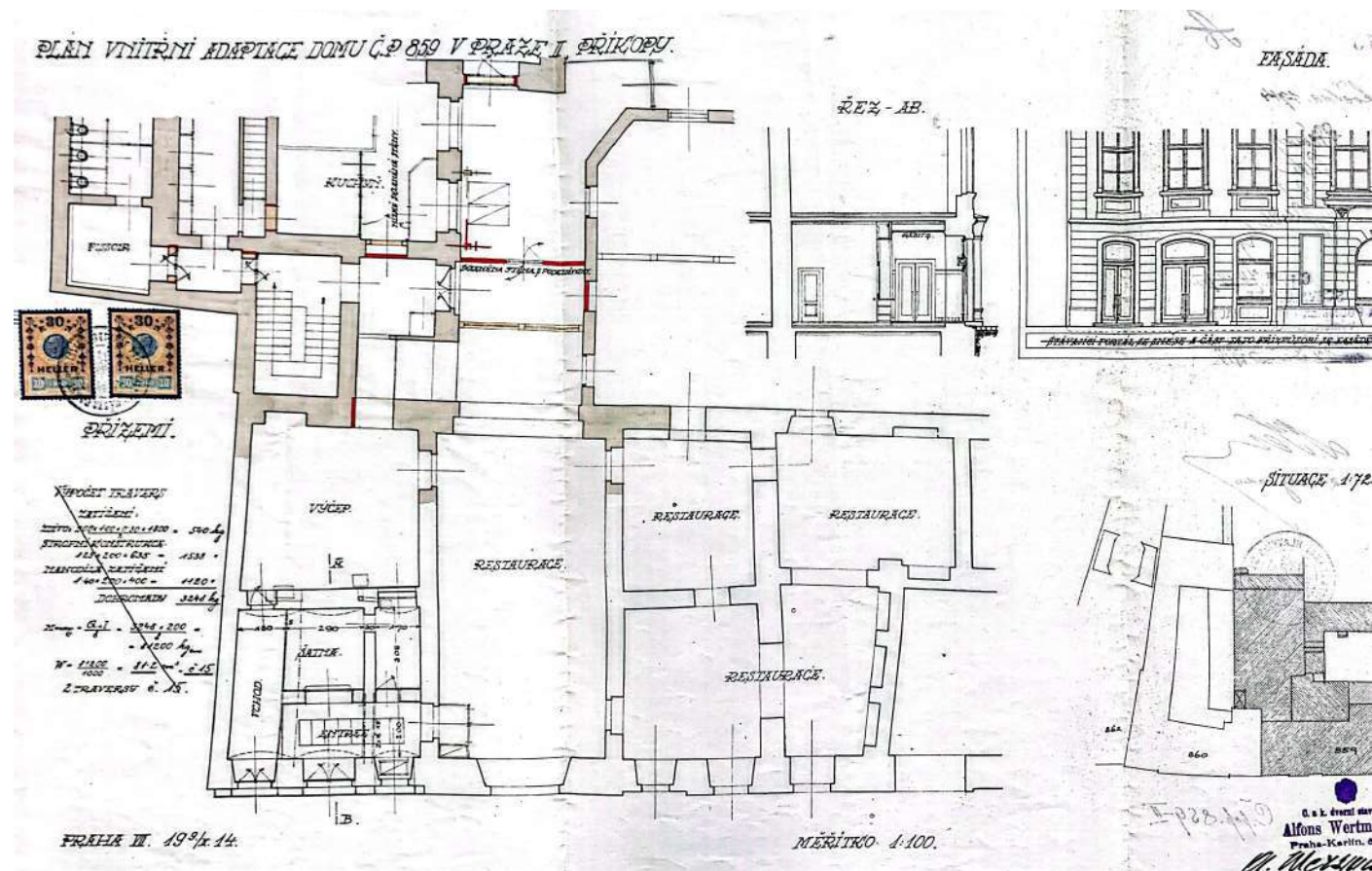
Slovanský dům | 17th Century | Na Příkopě 22, Praha 1

Slovanský Dum (the Slavic house) used to be known as the Vernier palace and was joined together from two separate medieval houses at the end of the 1500s. Although it was initially built with the intention of being a renaissance palace, the project wasn't successful and had a change of ownership at the end of the 17th century.

The 'Slavic House' was rebuilt under the new owner with Baroque influence of a roofed façade gazebo above a symmetrical entryway and a French garden behind the building. The building was again redone by a new owner at the end of the 18th century into a classicist style with an added floor. The owners used the space as commercial and industrial which later- when it was bought by a Deutsches Kasino group- was used to house games, entertainment, restaurants, and a venue for social and political events.

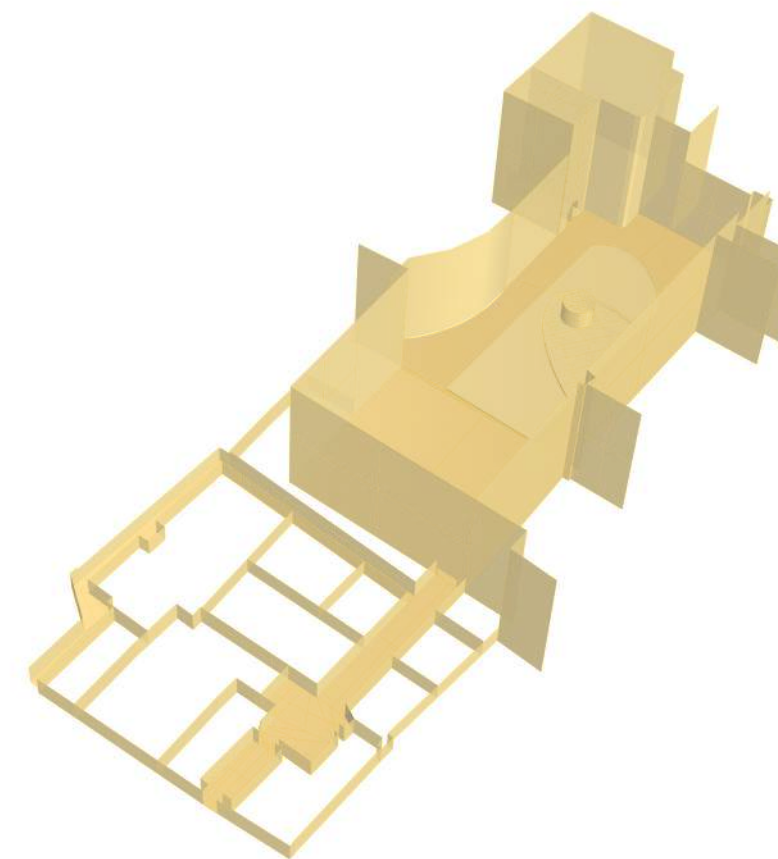
As seen in the map comparison, the surrounding buildings did not enclose the





gardens until late 1938. The overall height of the building today is 26m and the surrounding buildings range from 18m to 28m (starting from the ground to the beginning of the roof) with a total of seven buildings. The symmetrical openings have been preserved and function as two separate and disconnected entry ways into the building from the northern front. As you walk through the entryways they connect at the back of the building before you enter either a restaurant or into the courtyard. Once exiting into the courtyard there is a luscious garden with a variety of restaurants, which eventually leads you out through a double-arched walkway.

In comparison to the other examples their space is much larger. Given the functions of the surrounding buildings, which are mostly offices, banks, and restaurants, the courtyard is a popular place for lunch breaks and leisurely walks. The experience is akin to walking through a small green oasis in the summers amongst a city of bricks and stones. Despite the lost intimacy compared to the other examples the variety of functions is a very attractive feature that brings users into the space.



The courtyard is well situated-or based on the history- nicely enclosed. There are four or five entrances from the street side which take you through Slovansky dum, through varying functions, and then into to the openess. The passageways have adjacent passage-like buildings nearby however they do not cross paths. There are varied opening times for passageways and the courtyard.

Pros

- Publicly accessible but privately located.
- Mixed functions
- Mutual office courtyard
- Connects two different streets
- Large green space amidst brick and historical buildings.

Cons

- Large building ratio to people (average: 22 m)
- Limited use in the winter months

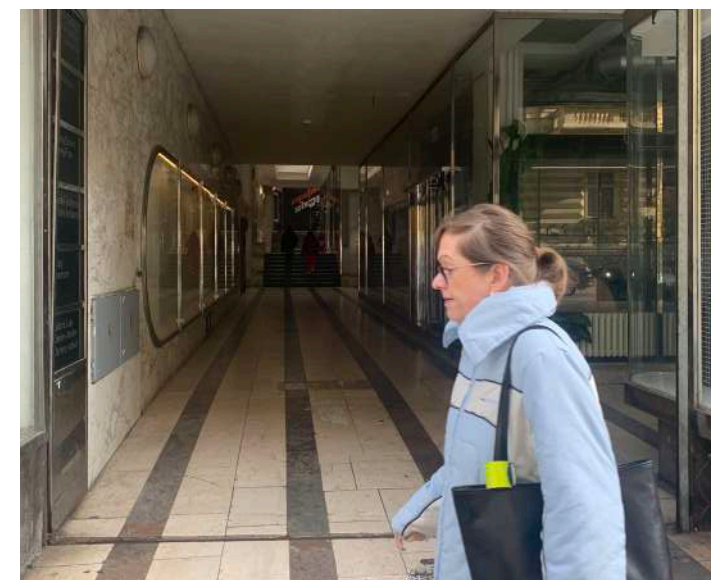
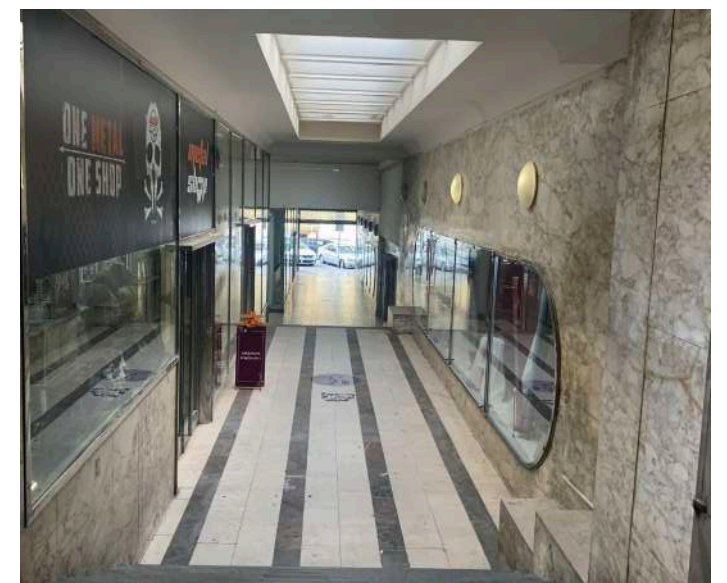
2.3 STEPANSKA PASSAGE

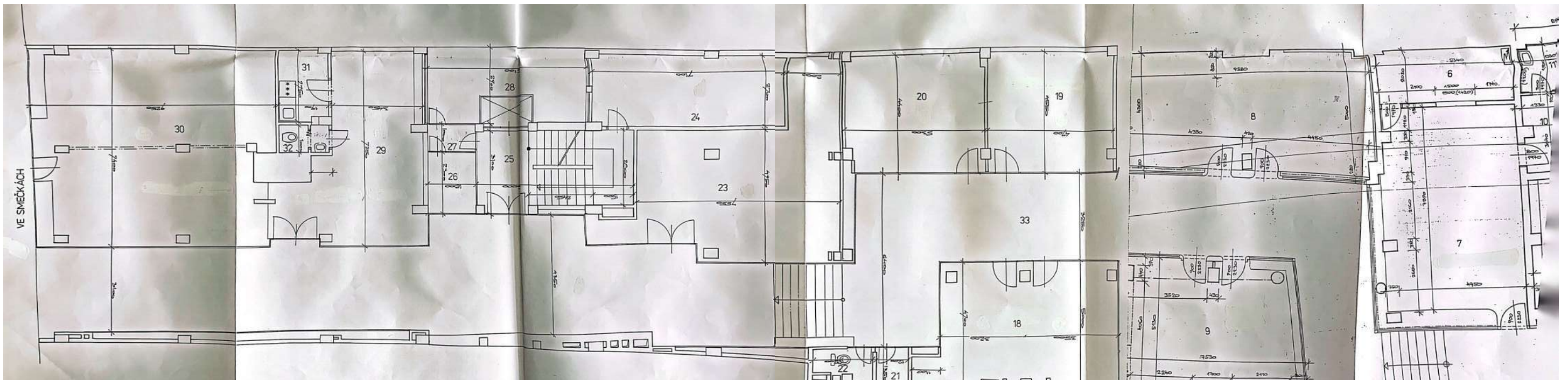
Štěpánská pasáž | 20th Century |
Štěpánská Nové Město, Praha 1

The Stepanska passage was built by a Czech architect named Evžen Rosenberg, who designed a few apartment buildings around Prague. He designed these buildings for the developer Ferdinand Baumann who was originally named after (Bauman pasáž) however today it is usually called, 'The Štěpánská pasáž', because of the street.

Initially, there was a medieval house on the plot in 1381, which was later demolished and replaced by four separate buildings. Two separate buildings were built in 1938 to enclose the block on the street facades and later the two innerbuildings were built in the courtyard.

The passage was built during the functionalist architectural period in Czech where the four buildings spanning between Štěpánská and Ve Smečkách streets had shops on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors.(4)

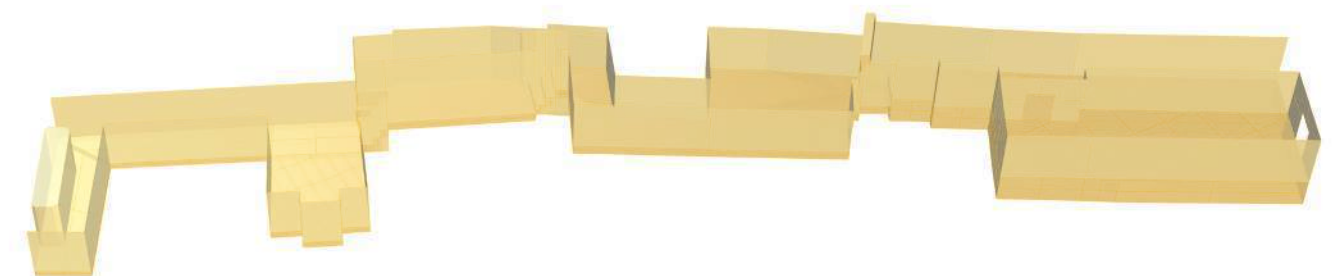




The two outer buildings that are the entrances to the passage are done in different styles, however both have the same features- a big opening with a long passageway. The Štěpánská building facade is a straight granite material while the back Ve Smečkách facade is clad with tiles.(5)

The Štěpánská passage is around 4m in height and changes with the terrain which is 2m in total. Surrounding the steps are different shops, hair salons, tailors, gallery windows, and more private or secret entryways into buildings that have filled the courtyards. The ground level changes throughout the passage, where on varying levels it's possible to enter the various functions. Both entryways are paired with a restaurant, however it is evident that the passageway on the Štěpánská side has a more welcoming aura compared to the Ve Smečkách side. This is partially because the entryway is longer on the second side (Ve Smečkách) and the user just sees that the stairs drop off. However, on the first side (Štěpánská) the user can see that there are stairs leading somewhere. The heavy metal shop and the salon which have low traffic also contribute to the welcoming of the users.

Taking the length of the original plot into consideration, the answered passageway with the added gallery and commercial functions, is an underused method today. Courtyards that are filled with many buildings and require accessibility from the outside of the block could benefit from adding a passage like this one in Prague 1. Addressing blocks that have a change in height- which is a common thing around the four hills that look over the city center- could help address interconnectivity



between blocks without breaking the typical block structure and grid.

The passage connects Ve Smeckach street to Štěpánská street. There is a terrain change of two meters in height from Stepanska to Ve Smeckach. Since the passageway cuts through about 90m the other buildings that fill the courtyard are only accessible by the passageway. So, throughout the walkway there are elevators and stairs to buildings, hair salons, shops, and other businesses.

Pros

- Connects between two different street levels
- Well, lit.
- Multi-functional space
- Connects to residential areas (well utilized/filled courtyards)

Cons

- Can have a creepy feeling if light is out
- Not sure if there are any security cameras
- Opening hours are a little complicated because the passageway needs to be accessible for residents but not public after a certain hour.

2.4 SUPER TRAMP COFFEE

Super Tramp Coffee| 20th Century |
Opatovická 160, Nové Město, Praha 1

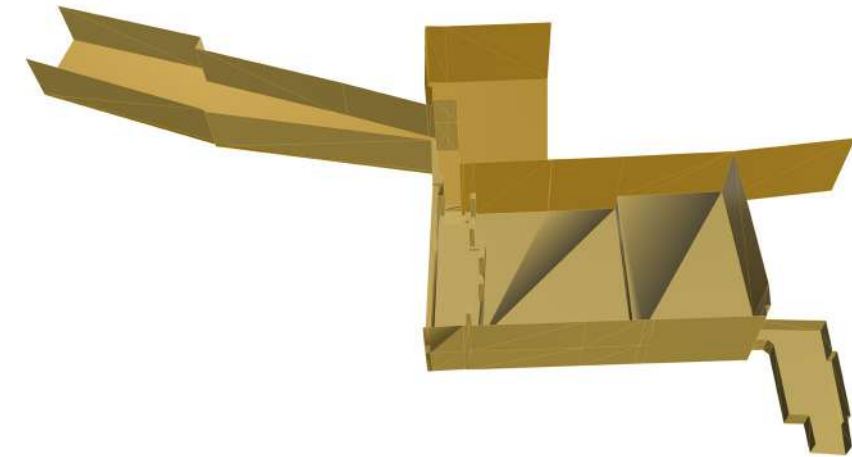
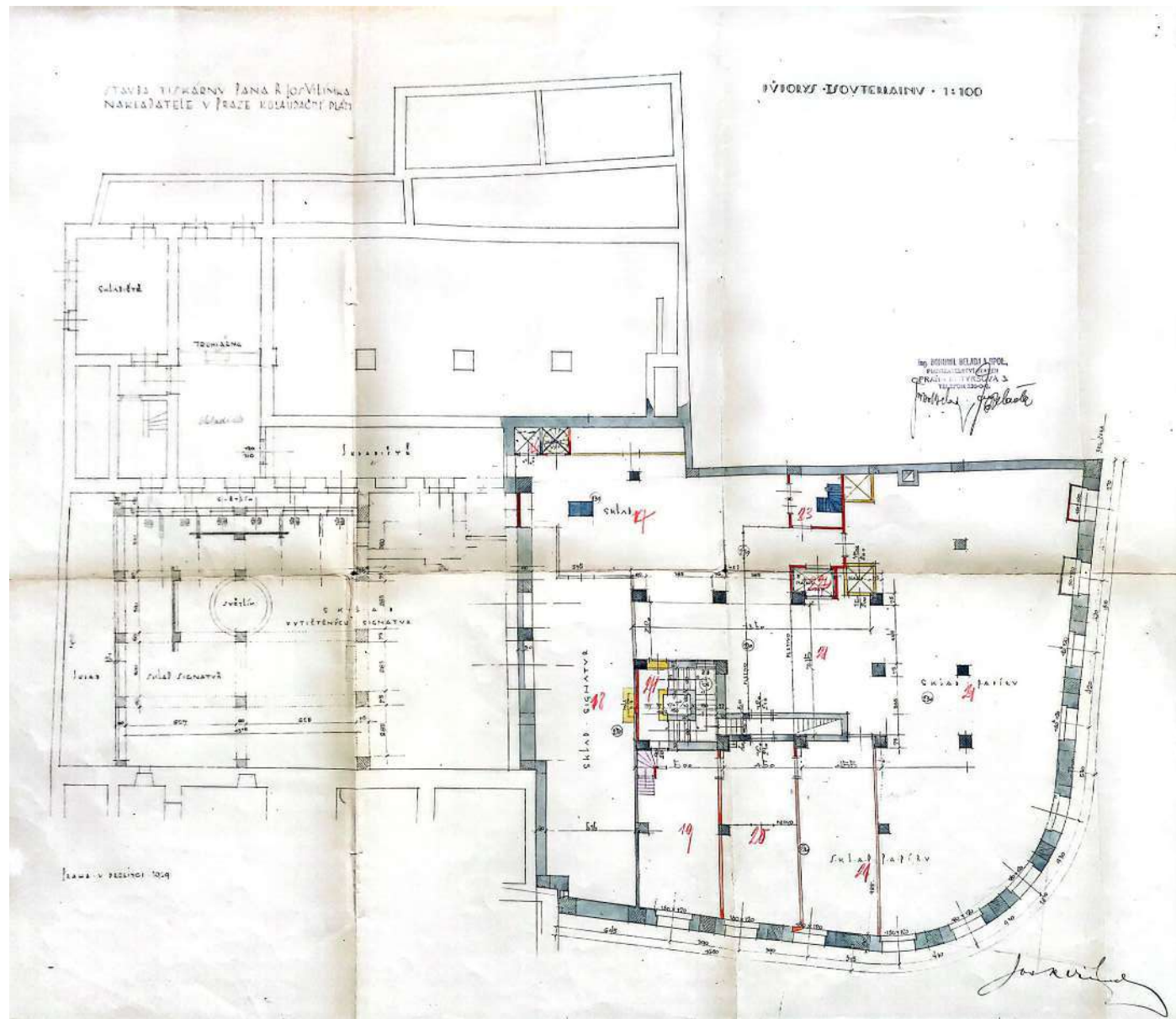
The Supertramp passageway is between the busy streets of Spalena- with a heavy tram and car connection- and the quiet back-winding streets of Opatikova. It has two entrance ways that connect in the middle with a cafe in the courtyard.

The plots of land used to be filled with gardens, where the surrounding buildings were not fully filled until around 1890. The building on the corner plot used to be near a printing press- whose owner lived nearby- where the gardens could be enjoyed. (6)

Entering the passageway from this same side as the former printing press, there a glow in the dark golf venue, two schools, and a mosque. From the other side you slip between a Palestinian shop and down a small alleyway, through an archway and down a few steps to the arcade that view the courtyard cafe- Super Tramp Coffee.

Super tramp's cluster of buildings creates a cozy environment for a courtyard space. The three buildings of varying heights offer semi-accessible platforms, where despite





register, seating, and bathroom. The café is open from 8am to 8pm most days except Sundays and the passageway entrances from both sides are open with gated entrances and restrictive timings.

The in between space has this strange shape of two alleyways that come into an open courtyard space. The height ratio of building to passage goes tight to wide open, from 3m to 18m but a comfortable space because of the 30m x 20m courtyard that is filled with a quiet cafe. The rooftop is accessible.

the 25m height difference to a person- it climbs to, it allows for sounds in the courtyard to be stifled.

With this case study, the multi-accessible levels are a concept that could be drawn out to enhance the courtyard and public spaces together. Since there is a separation yet connectivity, it allows for varying privacies, which could be a great solution for how to create semi-public spaces creating levels of privacy.

Surrounding the semi-public courtyard are other public functions such as restaurants, cafes, entertainment businesses, dance center, gym, mosque, and a school. There are two accessible levels of the café: the ground level and surrounding greenery and the second is where there is the kitchen,

Pros

- It has three 'ground' levels for people.
- Other spaces surrounding it are semi-public with functions
- Quiet function (café) in the center

Cons

- Narrow passageway entrance from Spalena
- Underlit path to the café (both entrances) in the evenings
- Space is dusty and partially inaccessible

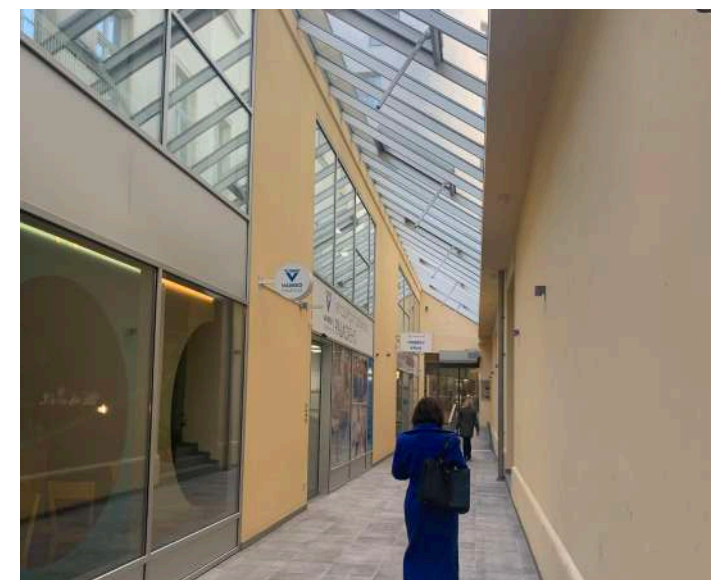
2.5 MYŠÁK GALERIE

Myšák Gallery | 20th Century |
Vodičkova 710, Nové Město, Praha 1

Right off the main traffic way on Vodickova street, users can turn to the glazed facade of the Myšák Gallery. Entering the building many users are met with a short decision to walk downstairs to the Billa grocery store, upstairs to the illusions museum or continue straight to elevators deeper into the building.

The building has shops, a gallery, a nail salon, and a grocery store. Going deeper into the building you pass some empty shops, giving the feeling of a dead end. However, if you continue you can see that there is a tall and narrow passageway with atrium windows bringing a new light into the space. This passageway has some medical offices and a cafe which brings a fork in the walkway to either turn towards the Františkanská Zahrada (the Frantisek Gardens) or into a second building adjacent to the Mysak Gallery which holds multiple medical buildings.

The Mysak gallery passageway cuts through three different buildings. These

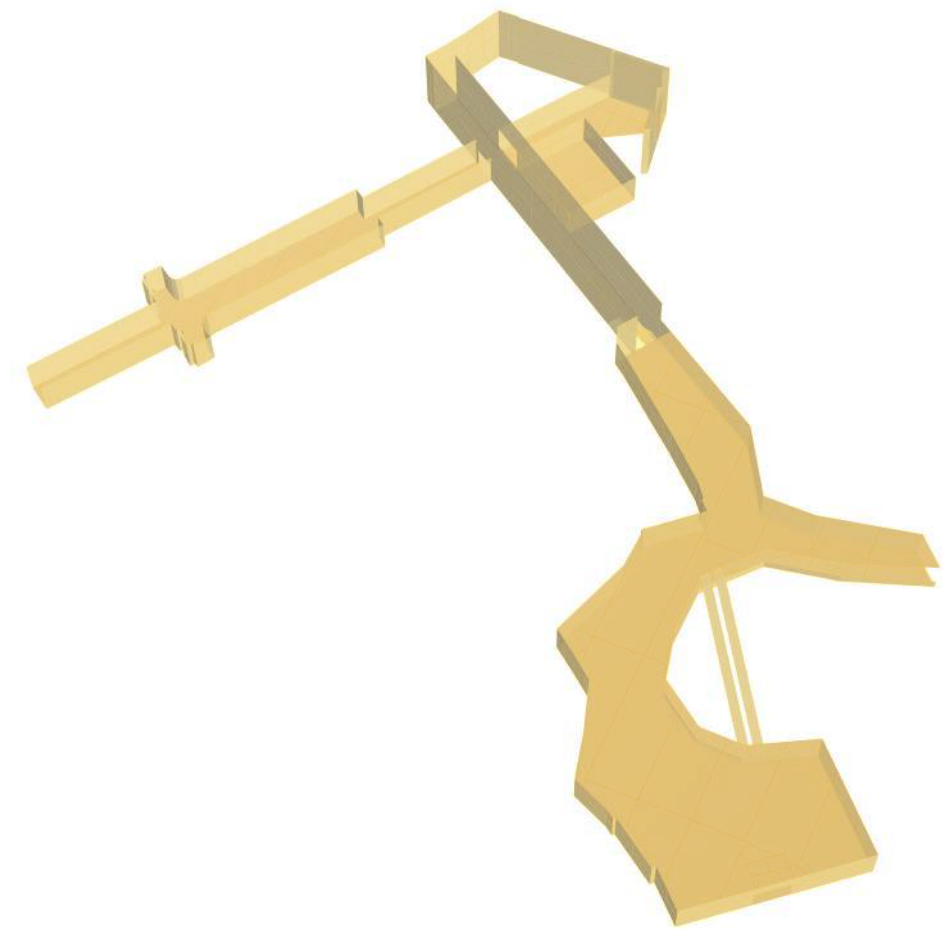




buildings are the Gallery buildings which are on Vodickova Street and the Palackého street building which houses many medical offices. The inner yard (the Frantisek Garden) is connected at the back by an intersection of the Mysak Gallery, Medical facilities and entrance to the Frantisek Garden.

Reading the passage, it creates a three-way axis for users by creating the opportunity to move on multiple levels through at least three different buildings. This precedent study is a good example of multiple levels of interconnectivity by introducing different levels as layers to multiple buildings.

Intertwining more than one building in a dense central location is a quality that could be abstracted for the future building connectivity. The passages multi-functionality and diversity in function types could be another abstracted quality for future developers or architects. Being able to incorporate functions which would not seemingly fit together, allows for the flow of many types of users.



Pros

- Sign at the entrance of the corridor towards the passage
- It is hidden by a secret cafe at the back of the passageway towards the Frantisek Garden.
- The medical facilities are centralized and accessible yet private.
- There are three different streets connected
- There are multiple functions: retail, grocery, medical, offices, gallery, offices, and greenery.

Cons

- Seemingly unknown connections (minimal advertisement about the connections)
- There are limited opening hours due to 3 different functions (the mall, the passageway coffee shop, and the medical practices).
- The levels and connectivity come across as confusing, where the connections in the Mysak gallery are not as understandable.

2.6 NOVE SCENA DIVADLO

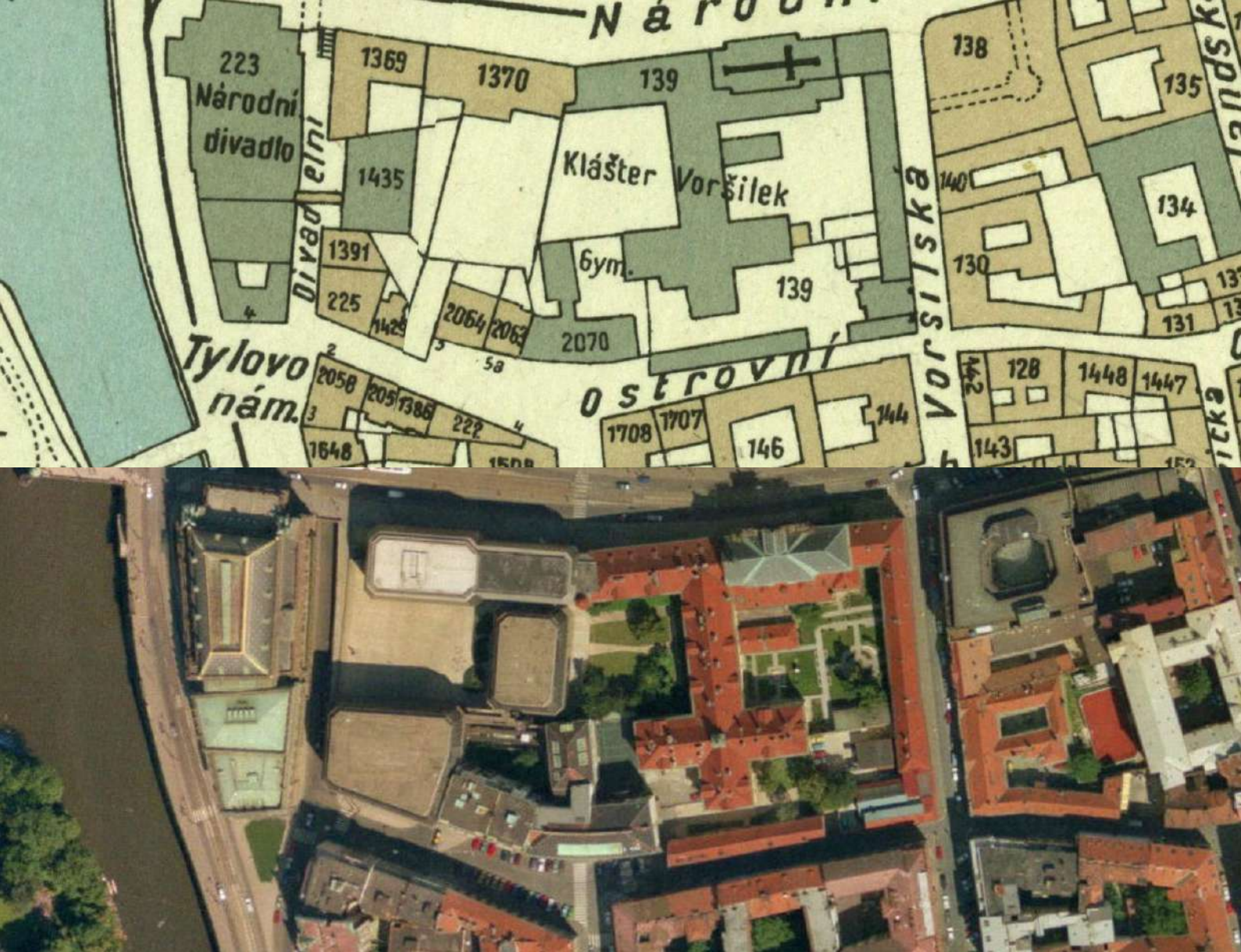
Nove Scena- Divadlo | 20th Century |
Národní 1393, Nové Město, Praha 1

Next to Narodni Divadlo (the national theater) is the Nove Scena Divadlo- which is the New Scene Theater. The plot of land in between the National Theater and the Voršil Monastery had mostly gardens for the monastery as well as the classicist Kaur houses which were eventually demolished leaving the plot largely empty.

In 1977 the national theater underwent construction which brought up discussion about the functions of the area. Initially around 1920 there were competitions started for plots of land around the city- one of which was this plot near the National theatre- which had just been won by Bohuslav Fuchs. The project eventually was given to Karel Prager who brought a multifunctional proposal with spatial flexibility allowing movement under the building. The building was brought to completion in 1983. (18)

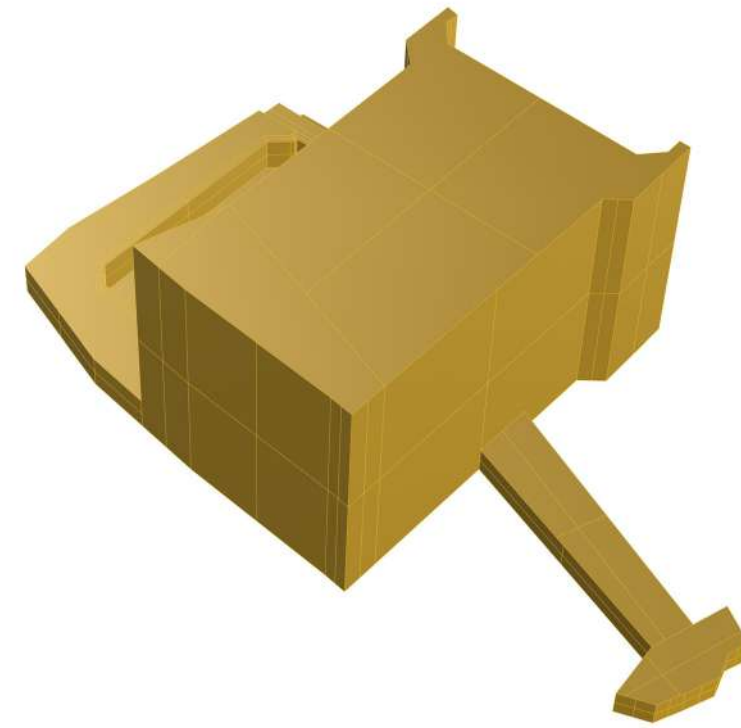
The Nová scéna stands tall over Národní trída (the adjacent tram street), boldly inserting itself into the surrounding Neo-Renaissance characters around. The building





is split into two parts: one side is sleek and transparent, blending in with a nearby baroque monastery, while the other rises on imposing pillars, creating an open passage to the theater. Its architectural style is unusual, with a folded shape adorned with over four thousand glass moldings designed by Stanislav Libenský. Together, these glass shapes form a massive relief, turning the entire building into a unique sculpture and showcasing a groundbreaking use of glass for the 1980s. (19)

Since the building is raised from the ground it creates a free flow of movement below. This openness creates levels that permeate and connect pedestrians on at three different ground levels- between the trams, offices, parking, surrounding buildings- and all four sides of the buildings that this free-flowing space flows under. The functions in the building are a cafe, offices, and a theater for performances which attract users seeking entertainment, however the surrounding areas attract

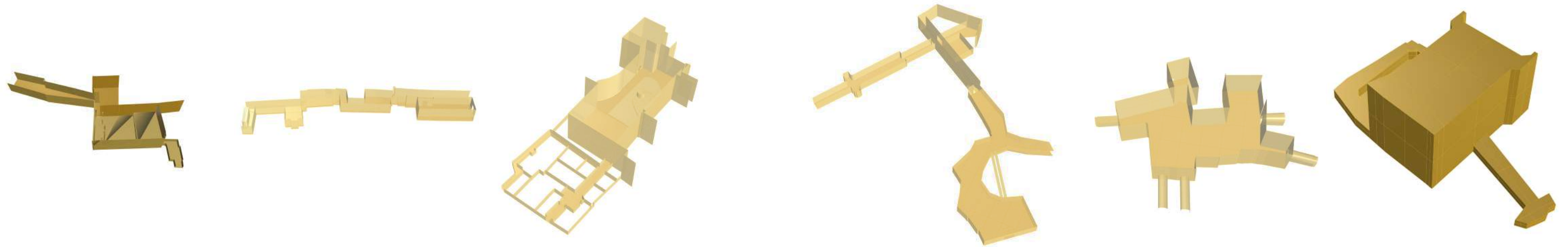


students, religious people, office workers, and make space for the general public. The connection between the three buildings created a kind of open and accessible courtyard which never closes; it could also almost be considered a type of square.

This open courtyard-square with the flexibility for various functions to take place is one of the qualities that can be drawn out of this precedent. To take the ground level and make it as open as possible was created by lifting the buildings off the ground. Although it could be seen as a loss of no ground-floor businesses, the open space allows for pop-up events and varied uses of the space. This precedent allows for more life to be brought in by what the users need and want.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The openness allows for multiple functions of the space- such as pop-up events • The ration of building to people seems very drastic but creates a kind of courtyard for the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a very large open space which takes time to walk across • No ground floor function (businesses) • The surface material and stairs has attracted skaters

2.7 LEXICON OF SPACES AND QUALITIES



From one precedent to another each of the spaces had an abstraction taken- assessing their qualities, the pros and cons, and a physical abstraction of what the space is like solely being experienced by people. Taking the voids of each precedent there are objects and moments that start to take form. Part of this form creates a language of understanding- knowing that the abstraction is a combination of passages and courtyard or open spaces that people can access. This language shows how you go from one space and its characteristics into another.

If these abstractions were each a letter of this, 'abstraction alphabet' then the spaces could be strung together like a sentence. Each abstraction has their own meaning but within one language of courtyards and connecting passages can create variations of connectivity that give meaning to how you experience the spaces. Taking all the abstractions and putting them together there is this lexicon that's created, where someone could walk from one passage and courtyard and connect to another one. Combining each of these abstractions creates a variety of experiences for the user as they go from one abstraction, of maybe a close passageway into a courtyard with a very large buildings, and then could go into a long passage that changes multiple levels.

These are visual representations of how users experience the space and their interconnectivity. If the forms could be altered to create a more pleasant and functional experience for the users, then there is potential in seeing how other courtyards could be interconnected. It could be that plugging in some refined abstractions into various courtyards, could create a new environment for the inner yards. Where after making some space for these abstractions the courtyards could rejuvenate and cultivate a refreshed built environment.

Taking these different qualities into account, they are replicable attributes that can be placed anywhere in Prague. Whether it is taken as an abstraction and plugged into different courtyards or taking the height ratios, social timings, functions, these characteristics allow you to plug in different spaces and allow you to adapt the likable qualities to the new location. If this was taken as a principle with minor local variations, then the romantic and attractive characteristics of the old town would be able to be felt and experienced beyond just the city center.



CHAPTER 3



‘The ground upon which architecture stands is not a neutral plane but a charged site of contestation, where the historical, social, and political forces converge. Architecture, thus, becomes a mediator between the physicality of the ground and the ideological forces shaping the urban landscape.’

Manfredo Tafuri

3.0 DEFINING THE GROUND

After seeing the movement between the inside and the outside of courtyards through abstractions, another layer appears which is the relationship that people have to the ground- how they further move through the space. For example in the Štěpánská passage, there was an overall change in terrain of around four meters, which was experienced by a system of passages and stairs the pedestrian is moving on the ground. However, to understand this experience and movement better, there are three aspects to look at: the ground, buildings, and people.



Firstly to define the ground. Taking the ground by itself, it is one fluid plane that moves throughout space. Looking at this continuous object it flows with (and as) the terrain. The continuous object goes up the hill, it goes around the trees, and it looks as though it envelops its surroundings. Like rolling pastures, they are unbroken until new objects are placed in the field.

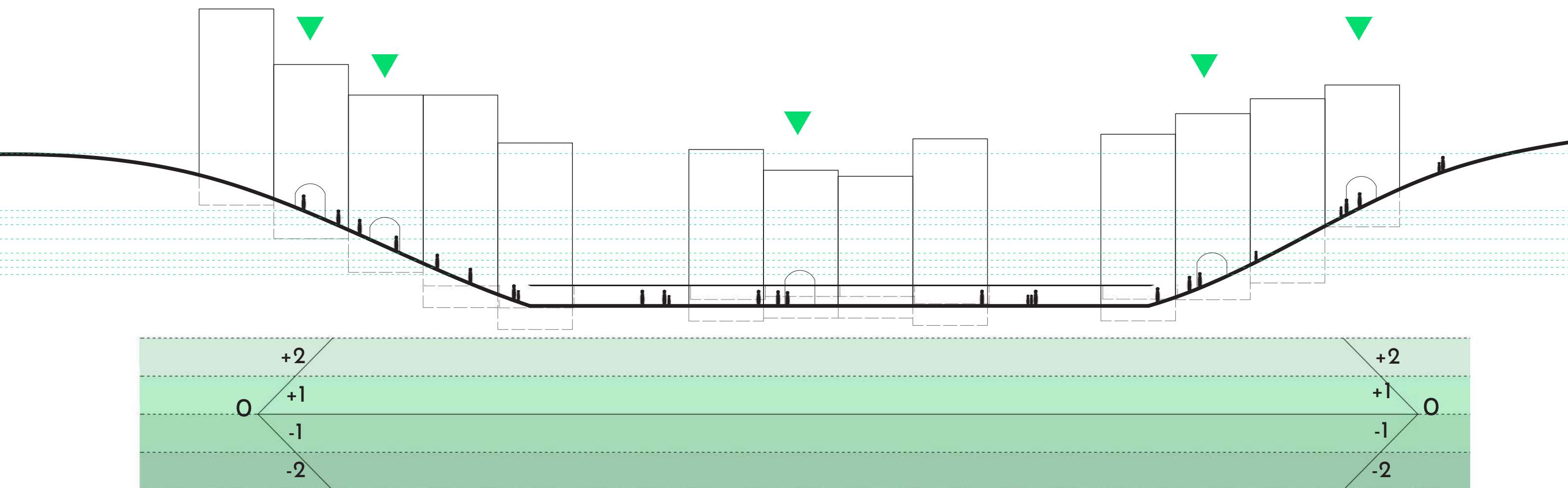
The newly built objects are inserted into this plane by being projected onto the ground and then cutting out a place for themselves. The space they now have stamped into the ground fragments the uninterrupted plane it is now experienced as a series of connec-

tions. These new fragments that envelop the buildings shift the focus on the buildings and create the experience of the ground as something that wraps around them. Both the ground plane and the buildings have people as their common meeting point.

Individually people experience the fluidity of the ground as a plane with or without the buildings. People use the ground as more than just the terrain because it is whatever helps them to move through the space that is the created singular plane. Sticking with the same example of the Stepanska passage the ground plane is cut up but still continuous. The user goes through the passageway up the stairs, onto another platform, then up more stairs, and down the corridor. Despite the switch between the forms of movement, there was one journey created which is the formed ground plane. The ground having a new form, is now the movement snakes through the building as a destination point along the way.

The relationship between these three elements brings to question how to design the experience of one plane moving throughout various spaces with minimal cutting. How to design the planes so that the primary focus is not on the buildings but the user experience of the ground plane as a re-instilled continuous object.

The planes that we can create for people can flow and change levels all while maintaining the same 'ground'. The second diagram shows, despite the changes of moving up and down on the hill- entering buildings at one passageway and coming out another- it is all interpreted as one ground to people. This continuous plane that changes levels could be designed as one object in projects to address the rela-



tionship that people have to the ground in contrast to how the buildings are interacting with the ground. Since the plane can cut through built forms and move up one level or down one level, it allows for multiple experiences on the same terrain, yet at the same time is one object, one plane.

In the diagram, this visual representation shows how our ground level as humans is constantly changing. This gives us the opportunity to address what the ground is for us and how can we adapt the 'human ground' perception onto that of the building's 'ground'. This could result in new passageways, bridges, and connectivity that break through the solid forms of the built environment around it and create its own experience for the users. Instead of the users interacting with the built forms and the street grids that form the environment, the new 'ground'

plane can stitch together a variety of environments which create a different experience for the buildings that it interacts with. This overall reversal of prioritizing the relationship that users have with the ground and their experience can change the atmosphere of the built environment.

Creating one, uninterrupted plane to be experienced by the users allows for an interesting and smooth walk from one location to another. If this could be recreated in spaces today, there would be walkways or areas that are unified as a plane of movement- like the passages that meandered in the old town with the terrain. As a design tool, this would bring ease of direction and movement for pedestrians using the plane as a source of guidance and path delineation.



CHAPTER 4

“The independence of Czechoslovakia is not the product of the moment, but the outcome of long years. It is not the work of one man, or a group of men, but a historic process, the outcome of a complex development.”

attributed to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk

4.0 A CURIOUS HISTORY

An important aspect of this project is the influence that Czechia's history has on its architectural scene. This fourth layer, seemingly intangible, is greatly swaying decisions and progress in architectural and planning discussions. This stronghold which still influences design, and urban interventions today brings a lot of challenges because it is not just going against architectural norms but also societal norms. As with all countries, they are tied to their past, but there is usually a breakthrough- architecturally speaking. There is a rebelling against the norms of building standards, facade types, forms, and experimental projects that fill and replace the city. However, with Prague, though there are moments of it in the city, largely there are still big holes where this upsetting of architectural norms has yet to be swayed.

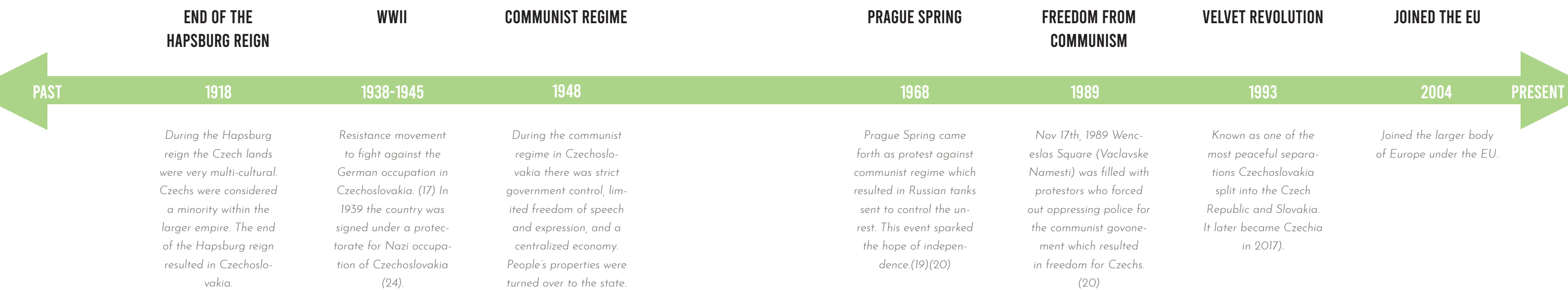
To better understand the influence of history, it is helpful to get a general understanding of why Czechs hold some of their views by looking at a timeline. This timeline shows seven major moments in history that sparked a change in direction or hope for the Czech people.

When reading the different events, it can be seen that Czechs have mostly been under someone else's leadership or group. This shift from one external ruler or governance to another for decades created a discontinuity between generational experiences. Where the identity of the overhead governance was projecting their identity on Czechs.

Another thing that is important from the timeline is that during the oppressive communist regime, people's properties were turned over to the state until the end of the communist regime in 1989 (25)(26). After the fall of communism despite the property restitution that happened, the scar of being stripped of private property created a distrust in public institutions and the government for Czech people (28).

These two things are very significant because they still affect Czechs today. The rooted effects of Czech history sprout the flowers of identity loss, conflicting relationship to architectural styles built during the communist era, a distrust of government bodies, pushback against too many rules, severe public-private conflicts, and more. The extent to which this has trickled into today's politics is also evident, however, the more important and interesting aspect is that the city's building regulations and approaches are suffering because of this.

The effect of the blunt removal of private properties is reflected today in the miserly and sensitive topic of public-private spaces. Where the loss of trust in public institutions/buildings has resulted in a 180 flip to very large amounts of privatization and is now creating the opposite problem of everything slowly becoming private. This privatization has resulted in a building being owned by multiple people instead of one owner which in turn affects building projects.



Often in architectural projects, there is a great hindrance to the speed of production because of the number of stamps, tests, and committees that the building needs to administer or receive in order for the building permit to be administered. Where Czechs are seeking to protect their returned private spaces, they seem to have created even more rules to follow (yet protect) their spaces. In turn, Czechs are seemingly 'traumatized' toward any quick and drastic changes in the environment which is new or unknown which has resulted in a slow and conservative approach to architecture and a new tension between public-private relations.

However, regardless of the hurdle that it has created today, it is also an opportunity for architects and urbanists to help wean the population into styles of buildings that can expand their perception. There is the chance to bring up such topics that are sociological in their extent and push for change in the built environment to influence the interaction and engagement of the locals.

There needs to be a design change that breaks down the barriers of hurt from the communist regime, yet provide a well-balanced reintroduction of the mix between public and the private spaces. Something that allows Czechs to see community and shared spaces in a more positive light without the hesitancy of being stripped of their property.

Taking the historical timeline as something that is only in the past can take a stumbling block and turn it into an opportunity for design change. This important aspect of the Czech story is a stronghold that obstructs architecture and urbanism, but it is a hopeful opportunity for architecture and design to step up and into a deeper calling than just walls and a roof.

4.1 JOINING THE PRECEDENTS

As Prague's population is growing, there the expansions outwards, creating suburbs and increasing commuters into the city center. Despite all the new housing that is being built, there is still a great need for affordable houses where good quality residential spaces with nice courtyards and green spaces are intertwined with their buildings.

Residents' private spaces are starting to dwindle and become a more sacred aspect of their living environments. Tenants will have the option of a little paved square at the back of the building or a small balcony as their private spaces. Or if they want to have a little more space to themselves, the next step up is a public space nearby. The locals lack a space that is in between public and private and extends their property without overpaying for it. On top of these needs many of these issues are challenging to address because of the conservative public-private debate, which is hindering residents from being able to have spaces that are multi-faceted in their design goals.

Since we are not in the past but moving towards the future there is an opportunity to find a way to restore the lost intimacy and identity of Czechs in building methodology today. To do this, there needs to be a comparison of the past layers to the current situation today. Where looking at the successful connectivity of spaces from the abstractions could be drawn out and have their qualities assessed; to see how to take these previous layers and elements and intertwine them on a common site with a common goal. The site needs to be outside of the historic city center, deal with public-private relations with residential buildings, and be in the standard building typology of today; which will be the district of Prague 7- Holesovice.



CHAPTER 5



Architecture should speak of its time and
place, but yearn for timelessness.

- Frank Gehry



5.0 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE

Shifting from the city center of Prague, the main site of the project will take place in Prague Seven. It is on the northern edge of the city center taking its shape from the meander of the Vltava River running north. It was incorporated into the city of Prague in 1884 as the 7th district of the City of Prague after which it grew rapidly.

Choosing an area to compare the city center to was needed more than just outside of the city center. The site needed to be comparable to the old DNA- the original forms of the medieval city settlement patterns to what is considered the norm of building style in the city. This norm of building style happens to be the 19th-century grid and block pattern. The site also needed to be able to apply the previous three chapters as layers of building design.

To become familiar with the site, the following chapter describes the overview of how Prague Seven as a district formed over the past 180 years and the morphology of the built environment today.

5.1 HISTORICAL MAPS OF PRAGUE 7

1842

What is now one district used to be many distant villages and settlements. These settlements (moving from the easternmost side to the west) were Holešovice, Štvanice, Holešovice-Bubny, Letná, Bubeneč- Troja, and Bubny. Holešovice was a farming hamlet, mostly as an agricultural settlement, which never grew or expanded in any large way and eventually it turned into a city suburb.

Štvanice is the island between the northeast of the city center and the south of Letná and Holešovice. It was connected by a bridge that led from then the State station (which today is Masarykovo Station/ Nádraží) towards the Bubny station in the 1900s. It used to be known as Great Venice (Velké Benátky) but eventually became known as Štvanice which means, 'the chase, at the end of the 16th century. The name came from cruel games that were frequently played on the island of baiting and chasing beasts in an arena for the entertainment of the people. Although the island's games were later banned, it continued to offer various attractions to the locals such as the first artificial ice-skating rink in 1932.

Letná has a different history compared to the other former settlements in the area. The area used to belong to the Czech princes and eventually was donated by the king as a part of the castle extension. The large hill was used as a vineyard which was off and on abandoned and then revived. Due to its strategic positioning, it was later used for military purposes leading to fortifications built there, but eventually, the military area was torn down and turned into the Letná Gardens by the municipality.



1889

Bubeneč- Troja used to be known as Ovenec which means sheep because the area was used for herding. The area had a lot of forest which former kings used for hunting game and this even became known as the imperial (Císařský) Island. Eventually, this area was added to the Střimovka park which spans the northern stretch of Holešovice and Bubny.

At the far western edge was Bubny- a small fishing village that competed with the old town for business. Due to its position- across from the river on the path towards the Prague castle- the area was prone to the consequences of military conflicts.

Holešovice and Bubny were merged together in 1850 to create an urban district, however they still developed separately from each other. Bubny as a district developed and focused more on building residential apartment blocks whereas Holešovice turned more into an industrial area. In 1857, after almost 15 years of being incorporated into the city of Prague, there were around 110 houses and 1,200 residents. This number grew rapidly to become 30,000 residents and 780 houses. On the Holešovice side by 1881 there were 32 factories which took beneficial development when the Karlin Rail Viaduct was finished at the same time as the district's forming.

1909

Between the 1840s and 1890s, the district of Prague Seven was taking shape rapidly. By the end of the 20th century, the long parcels of land with gardens and small settlements had projected block structures that were planned to take place. These blocks cut the parcels and divided them following a grid street structure which partially followed some of the former streetways.

Twenty years after this map- in 1909-1914, the traces of the former parcels of land were no longer drawn and the new individually parceled fragments took their places within the block divisions. These plots were fractionally filled in overtime and in some cases were never built on.





2024

Today, overall known as the Prague 7 municipal district of Holešovice, is considered part of the extended city center, where you can reach the old town within a 5-10-minute tram ride. Looking at the overall map there are noticeable differences between the districts based on their built form.

Holešovice is known for its hipster environment and artsy businesses. There are a variety of design and creative events that happen throughout the year such as Design Blok and the Design markets. For many years in a row, the district has been known as a cool and neighborly area to live in, that is family-friendly with two of the largest parks in Prague (14). Unlike any other district in Prague, Holešovice is well known for its neighborly politics where the residents know their mayor and have a genial understanding and mutual love for the district.

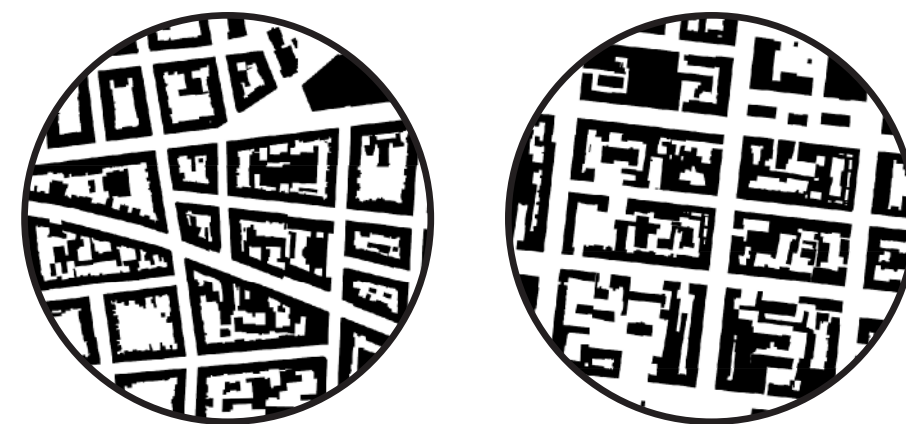
Although there are hills throughout the city, this district slopes down from one hill and ends at with an unusually flat neighborhood. The flat end of the district on the East is also surrounded by the river on three sides which in the past has led to some flooding problems.



Upper and Lower Prague 7

There is a very clear divide in Prague 7 where you can see the planning differs in form and the way that the blocks are filled in. In the lower part of Prague 7 (Holesovice the East part of the district), the blocks are more fragmented where the internal parts aspects are filled with small entities. However, in the Letna area (the West part of the district) the block forms are already complete.

The upper side of Prague seven has a greater variation in terrain compared to the lower side where it is mostly flat. As seen in the map and the Schwarz map of the two contrasting areas, the blocks are also much longer and keep a more orthogonal grid.



This combination of incomplete forms, larger blocks, and flat terrain allows for a greater opportunity to propose a design that incorporates the previous chapter layers.



CHAPTER 6

“Courtyards are the lungs of a building, inhaling light and exhaling tranquility. In the architecture of serenity, these open spaces are sacred breaths.”

- John Lautner

WHAT'S
HAPPEN
INING?

6.0 WHAT'S HAPPENNING AROUND THE SITE?

To look further around the context of the site this chapter will look at some of what is taking place around the lower side of Prague 7 as well as future developments. Although the district as a whole has many ongoing developments, there are a few that stand out which echo the initial few chapters in the old town- reminding us of the interconnectivity of meandering walkways, or public-private relationships with spaces.

Around Prague 7 there are many hidden gems-just like in Prague 1. These hidden gems are unique- whether being uncommonly found or having unique accessibility and insight into the area. There is potential for some of these different elements to be connected like the gems in Old Town by some of the infill and abstractions that were discovered in the Prague 1 gems.

6.1 HIDDEN GEMS

Although there are gems on both sides of the district, this chapter will look at some of the gems on the lower Holesovice side as well as some other important examples that are related to the initial chapters of analyzing the old town.

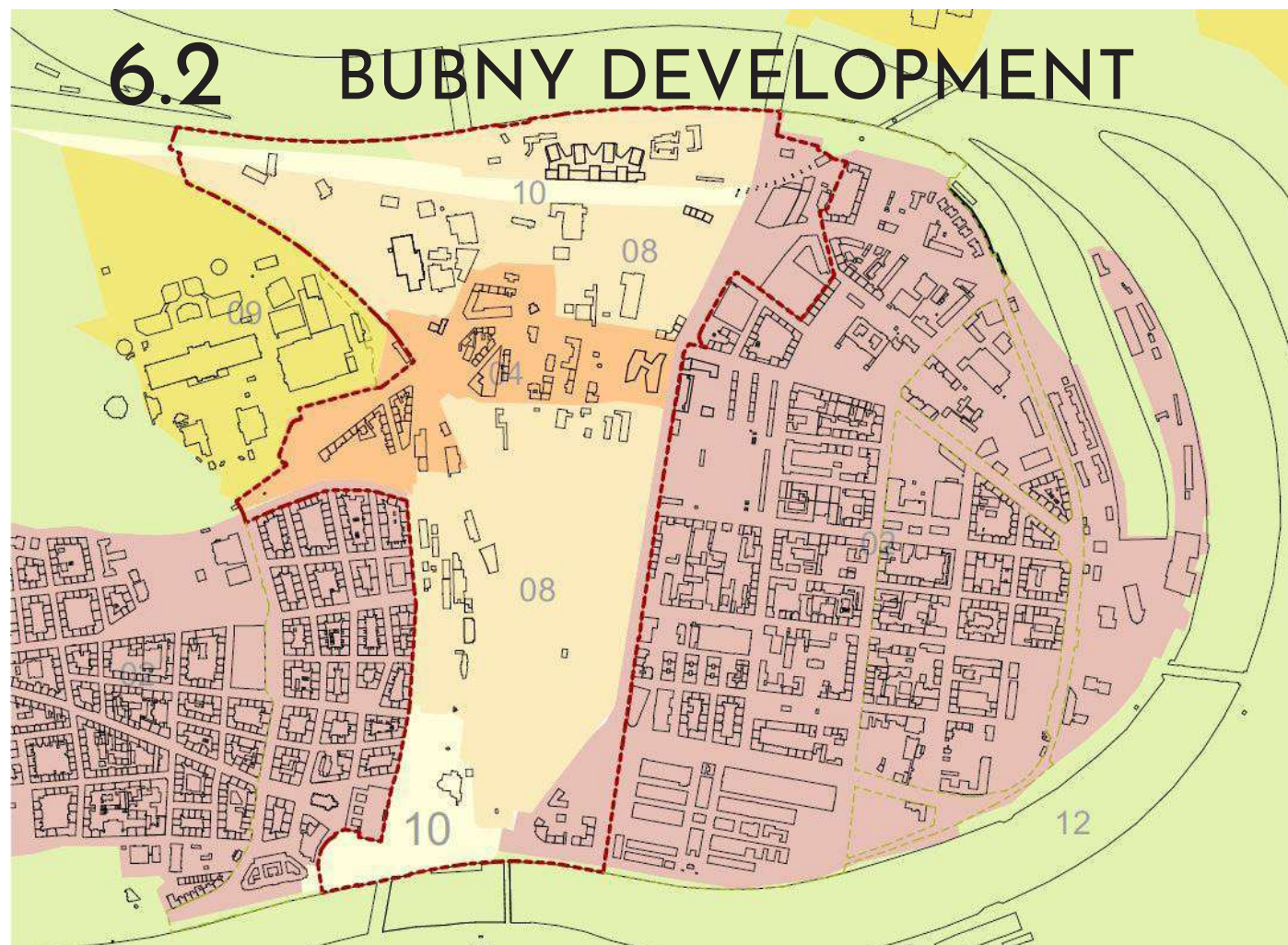
Seeing the divide between upper and lower Prague 7 there is a large brownfield that is a bit like a scar- dividing the two halves of the district. This brownfield is now one of the largest projects happening in the district.

Upper P7- Letna

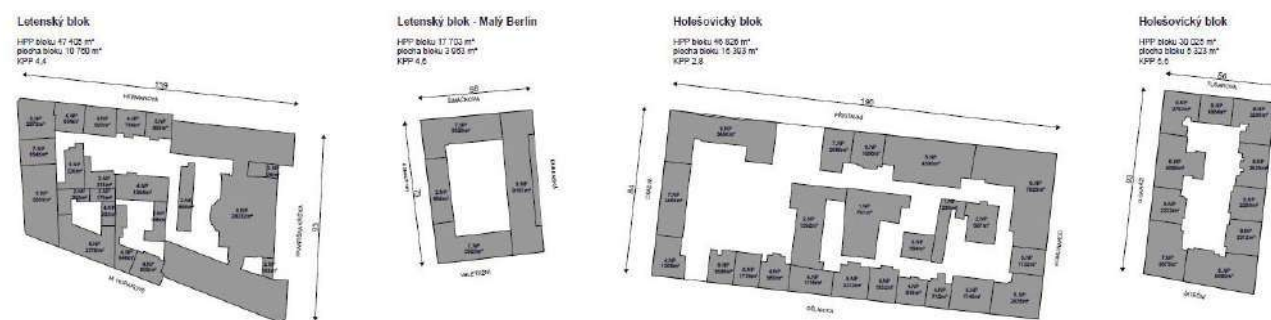
1. Vystaviste entertainment center
2. Prusa Lab
3. Jungle Bar
4. Detské hřiště MŠ Janovského
5. Alfred ve dvore divadlo
6. Farmers Market Hermanák
7. Sottopasso skate park and basketball court
8. Skate plaza Vltavska
9. Peperoncino courtyard restaurant

Lower P7- Holesovice

1. Kontainer Cafe
2. DOX Art gallery
3. Business center open courtyard
4. Osada cafe and courtyard
5. Vnitro Blok
6. Yoga centrum and small square
7. Prazka Trznice
8. Hřiště Sedmíkráska
9. Silo na šterkopísek
10. Residence park and building pathways
11. La Fabrika- Cultural center



The map shows the research which the Bubny development did as research on the area- revealing the different types of block structures that are on either side of the brown field where the new development is taking place.



Building structure-

The structure of the development in the area of Holešovice and Letná is block-like. The Holešovice blocks are more extensive, based on a clear checkerboard grid. Most blocks are about 85 m wide and about 200 m long. The Letena blocks are approximately half the size of the Holešovice blocks.

The Holešovice blocks have a lower building density due to their historically mixed industrial and residential in nature. Except for the blocks near Jateční Street, which are smaller and with higher building density. The floor area coefficient here is up to 2.8; but at Jateční street up to 5.6. Letenské blocks are smaller and have a higher building density. The coefficient of floor areas here is about 4.5.

Many of the new projects are either recently won via competitions or are currently underway. The most important of those developments is the building of the train railway that will connect Masaryk (inter-regional) and Hlavní (national) train stations to the airport. This will make accessibility for tourists and locals to the city center much faster and easier. The second most important development is the surrounding proposal for the rail development which on a wider scale is called the Bubny development.

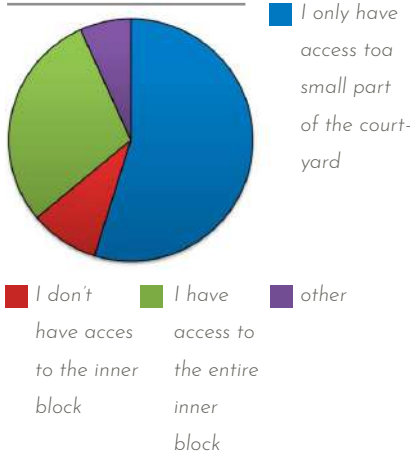
The Bubny development did an in-depth study on the areas surrounding the site which included a block study on the types of blocks that are around the site. This shows there are 3 different kinds of blocks these blocks are as shown in the image below. The blocks vary and the ones on the east (Holešovice) part of the site have smaller dimensions and a different patchwork that fills the blocks. Many of the proposed connections do not bridge the two parts of Prague Seven but rather create their kind of block structure that does not fully resemble either side of the district. Bubny has a chance to be the connecting zipper between the upper and lower parts of Prague 7 and to reinvent the permeability of courtyard blocks as they build over the next decade.

For many decades the Bubny railway station has been abandoned and grown into more of a brown-field. As seen in the overview of the whole area of Prague 7, there is a disconnect between Holešovice and Letná, and this is marked on the map where Bubny is that connecting factor. The Bubny area is the seam between the two areas and has been a gash on the map for many decades now.

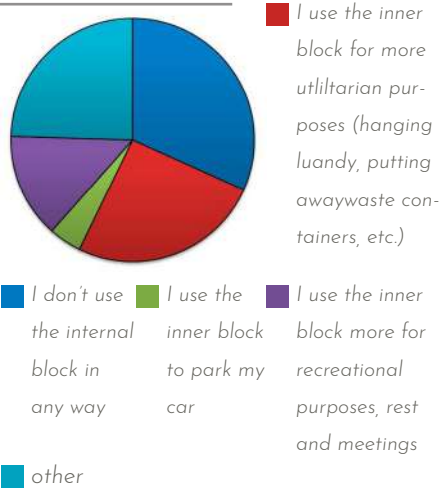
The Bubny project's winning proposal was within the comfort of the standard block-inner yard design. This confirms the norm of filling most of the city fabric with block patterns of buildings yet lacks the innovation of doing something new with those block structures to encourage greater inter-connectivity.

6.3 BIENO VNITROBLOKY STUDY

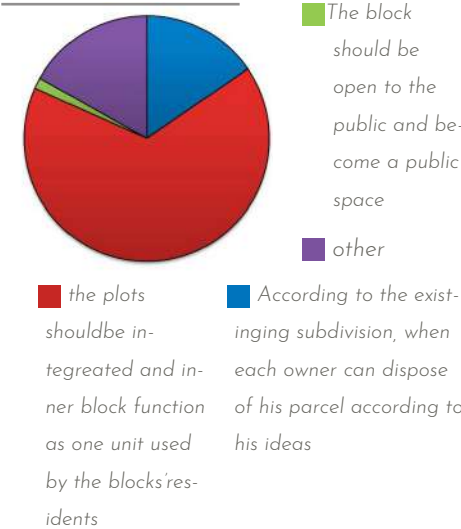
1. What is your relationship with the inner block?



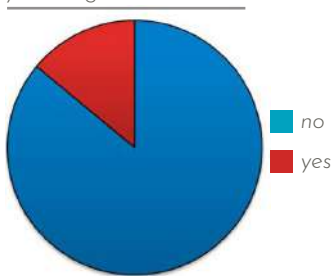
2. What is your way of using the inner block?



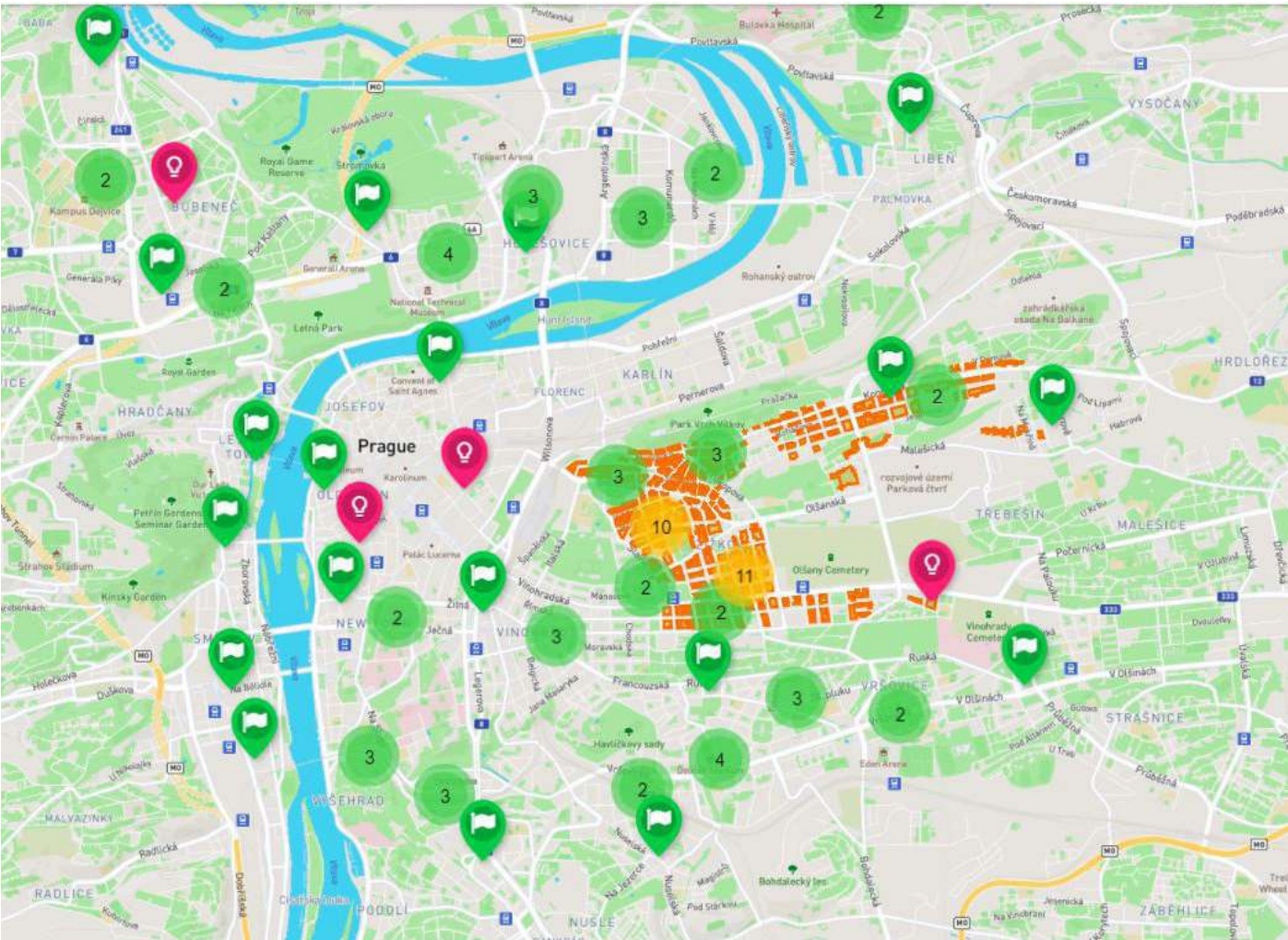
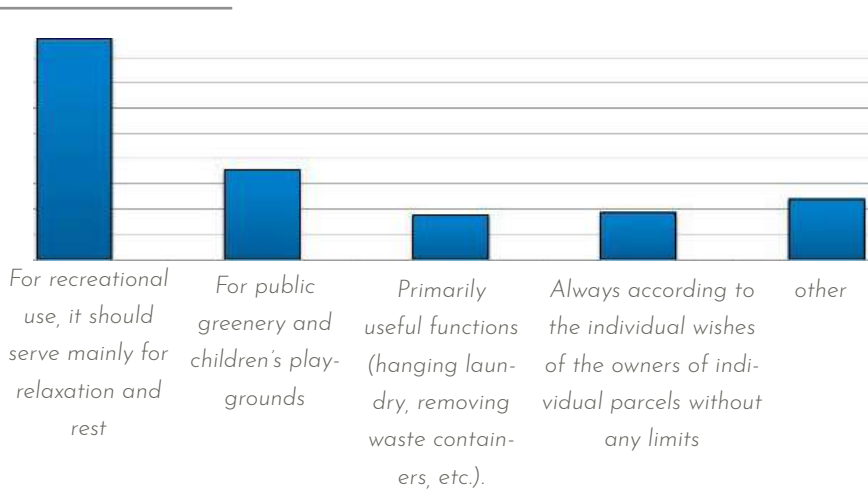
3. In what way should the inner block be organized?



4. Is the condition of your inner yard as you imagined?



5. Is the condition of your inner yard as you imagined?

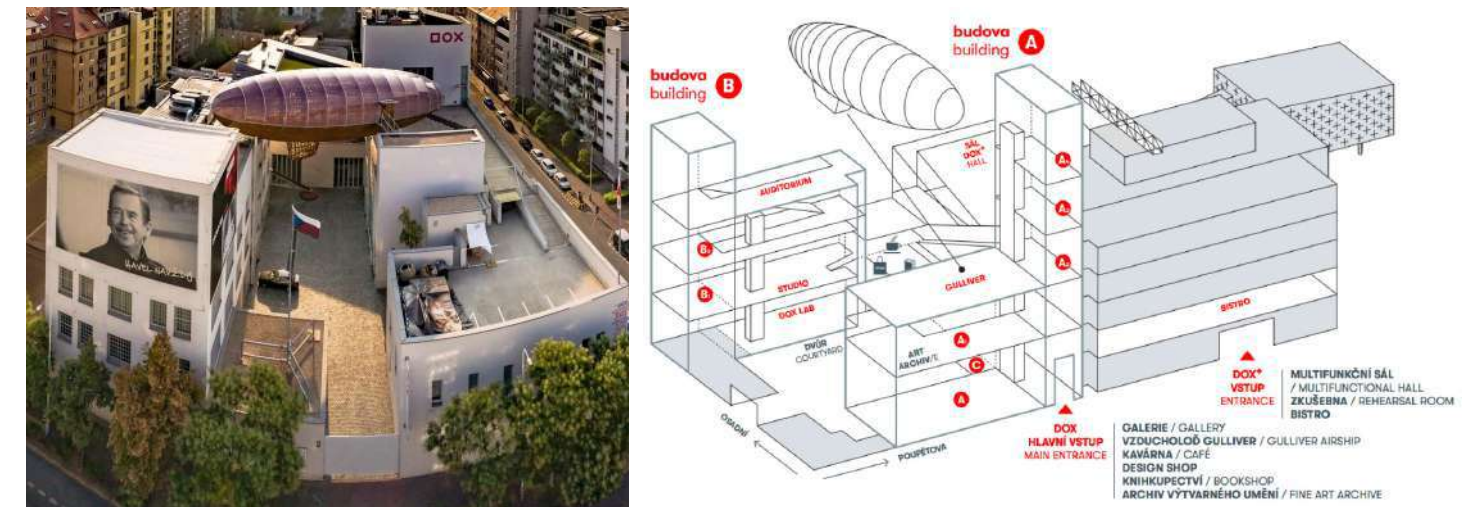


Part of the interconnectivity was brought up as something that the residents noted in a study done by Bieno Vnitro Bloky. Bieno Vnitro Bloky is a group that focuses on courtyards and interventions. The organization is encouraging tenants to revamp their courtyards and find ways to make it more pleasurable for the neighbors. This was done as a part of the study and also has aspects where it is not just about mapping, but also about exploring, noting, and new ideas/ways the courtyard spaces are being used.

People today want to use their courtyards and have them be something more than just a parking spot or garbage disposal area. Bieno's study was taken in Prague 7 and showed that an increasing number of residents desired something more for their courtyards. This information shows the opportunity that the residents are waiting to be fulfilled- in finding a way to improve their courtyard spaces to greater benefit the tenants.



Vnitro Blok- not related to the Vnitro Bloky study- is one of the rare examples in the area of interconnectivity that spans the width of the block. It is the 5th gem on the hidden gems map(page 6.1). The block is a former industrial building that has a passage cafe that users pass through to get from one side of the block to the other. The space creates a nice mix of functions that are outdoor and indoor such as a cafe, event space, barbers, offices, small shops, and retail stores. This particular example fits very well with interconnecting different ends of the blocks while coexisting with the residents.



The Dox Art Gallery is the second gem on the hidden gem map. The owner of the art gallery bought some of the neighbor's courtyard plots to fulfill his design which occupies about 20%-30% of the overall courtyard space. The two buildings have three different courtyards which have multiple levels and accessible roofs. This is a good example of accessibility, conjoining plots, and the use of different ground levels for users. Although the buildings have three separate entrances there are one or two connecting pathways that allow users to move vertically and horizontally between buildings.

6.6 THE SITE



With better context to what is happening around the site now, we can look at the parameters of the area for the proposal. This set of seven blocks is large and heavy on the site with many of the gems from the hidden gems map on the 6.1 map are a part of it.

Taking a look at the historical maps on the following page is the morphology of the blocks.

1842

Historical cadastre map. You can see the way that the plots were initially divided longitudinally. This also gives an interesting contrast to how the people's land might have been divided later.

1889

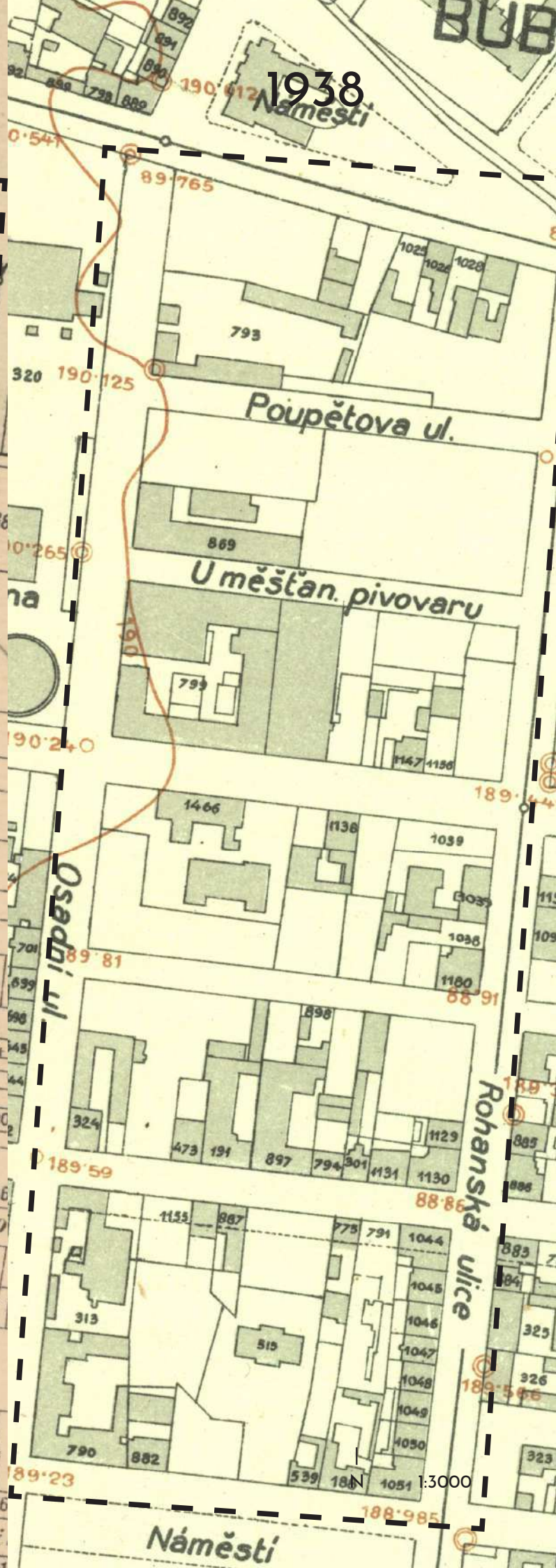
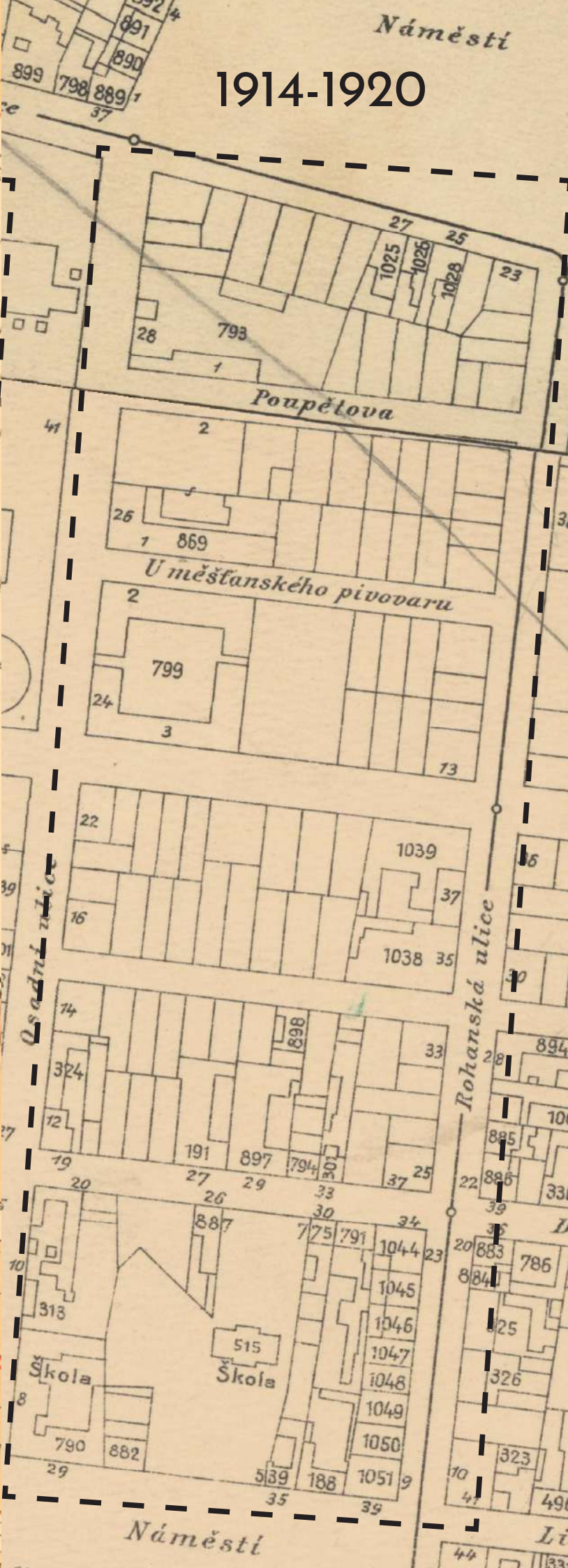
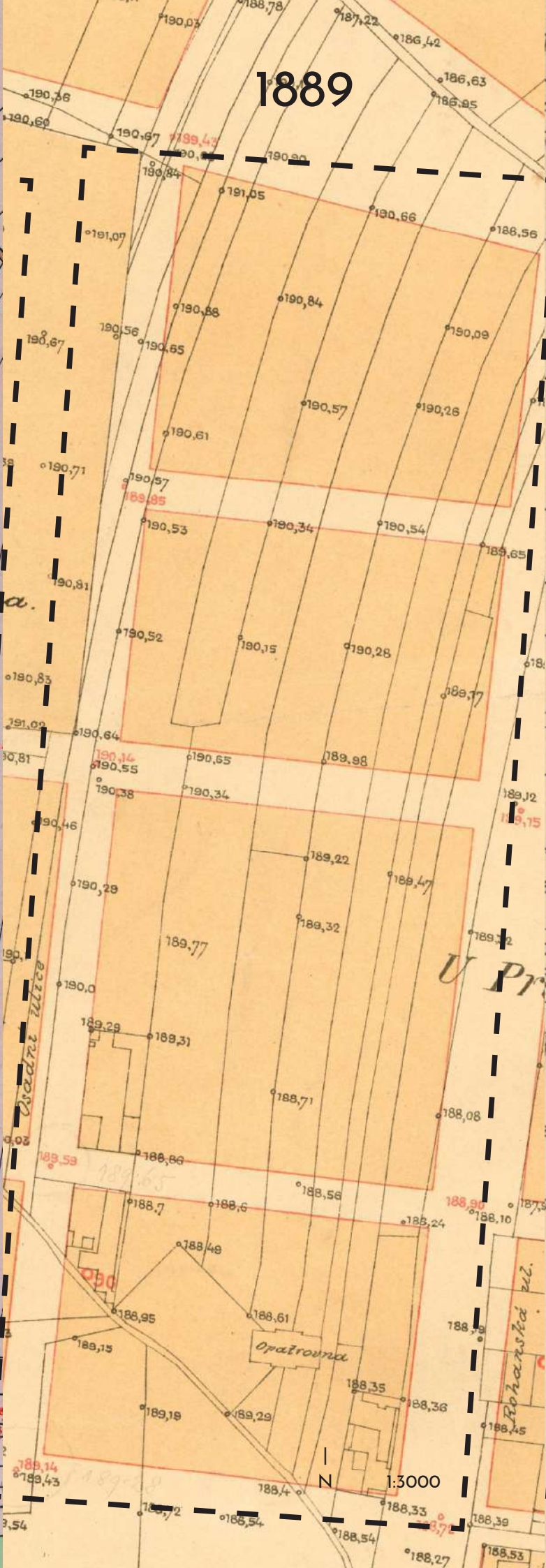
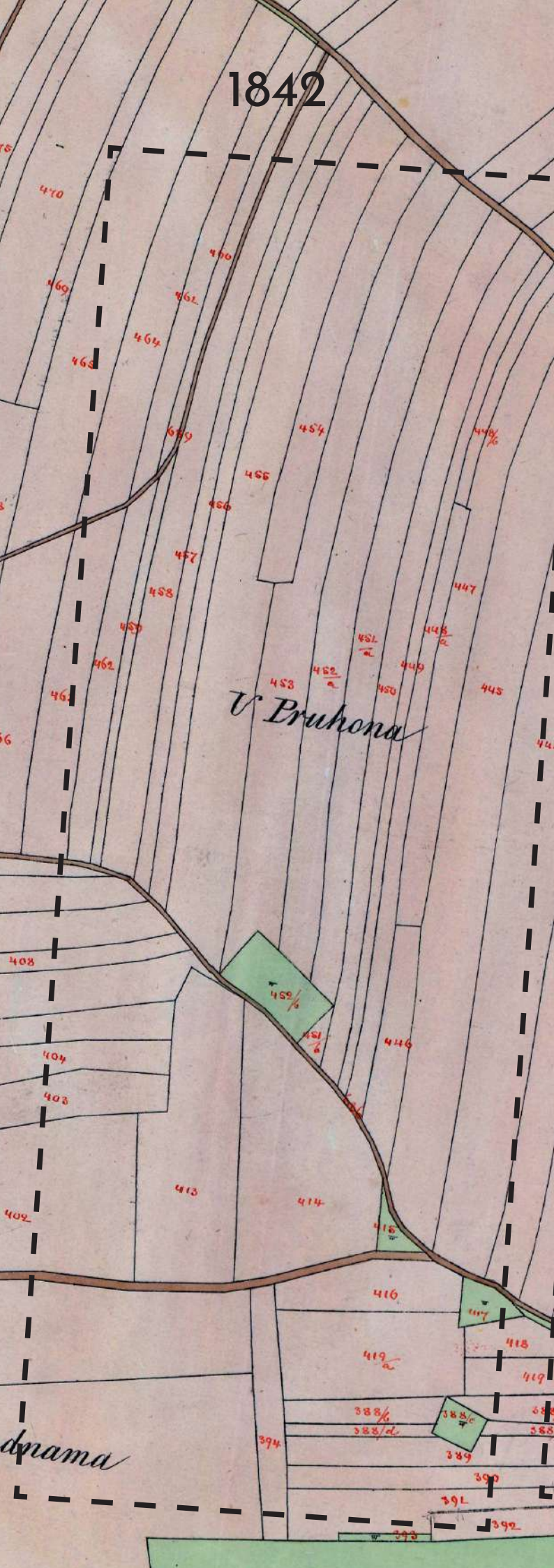
You can see that just within 20 years there is an outward sprawl of the former Holeshowitz towards the south. Overlayed on top are the future blocks to be built over the next many decades. These blocks cover any existing traces of history below. The block overlays in an orange hue are from the 1890s.

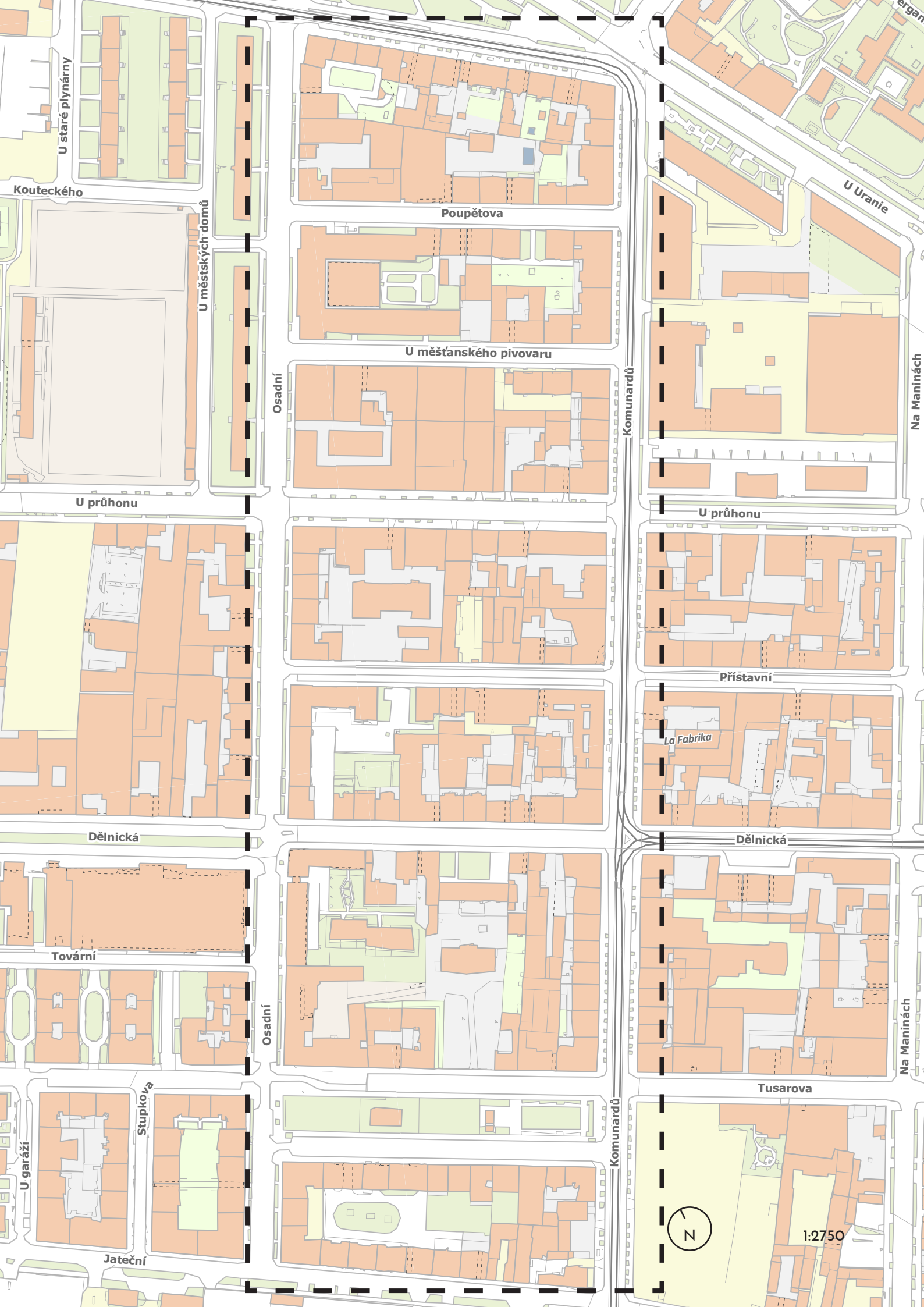
1914-1920

The beginning of filling in the block can almost be overlayed to see how the blocks were divided. Up until this point, we can assume the movement of people was not strictly around the parcels of land. This could have resulted in the way that the block was filled in.

1938

Over the next 20 years as they started to fill in the block, you can see that it is not being filled from the outside working in but rather a mix. With the way that the blocks are patch-filled, you can see how people might have had more accessibility around the buildings (not strictly on the sidewalk but between plots).





2024

The blocks today are filled in with a combination of former industrial buildings, schools, and residential buildings- overall keeping the form of a typical block structure. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 5, these blocks stand out in their larger dimensions and how orthogonal it is in comparison to the rest of the site. The blocks have a variety of functions yet the blocks are incomplete in one way or another. Some of them have empty plots, and others with incomplete building heights in comparison to the neighboring buildings. As a whole, these seven blocks practically connect the north side to the south.

Concerning the initial layers drawn out from the old town, and the problems that should be addressed from them, these blocks are a good place for an intervention. With its large dimensions- each block averaging 190 m x 80 m- there is the need to break up the long streets. The chance to fill in the missing parcels gives an entrance to the courtyard spaces and to complete the block and the lack of terrain change allows a chance for the creation of a new ground plane that could bring that connectivity to the area.

To further analyze the site, it was necessary to analyze the existing functions, openings, and paths to see what the blocks needed and how to better interconnect them.



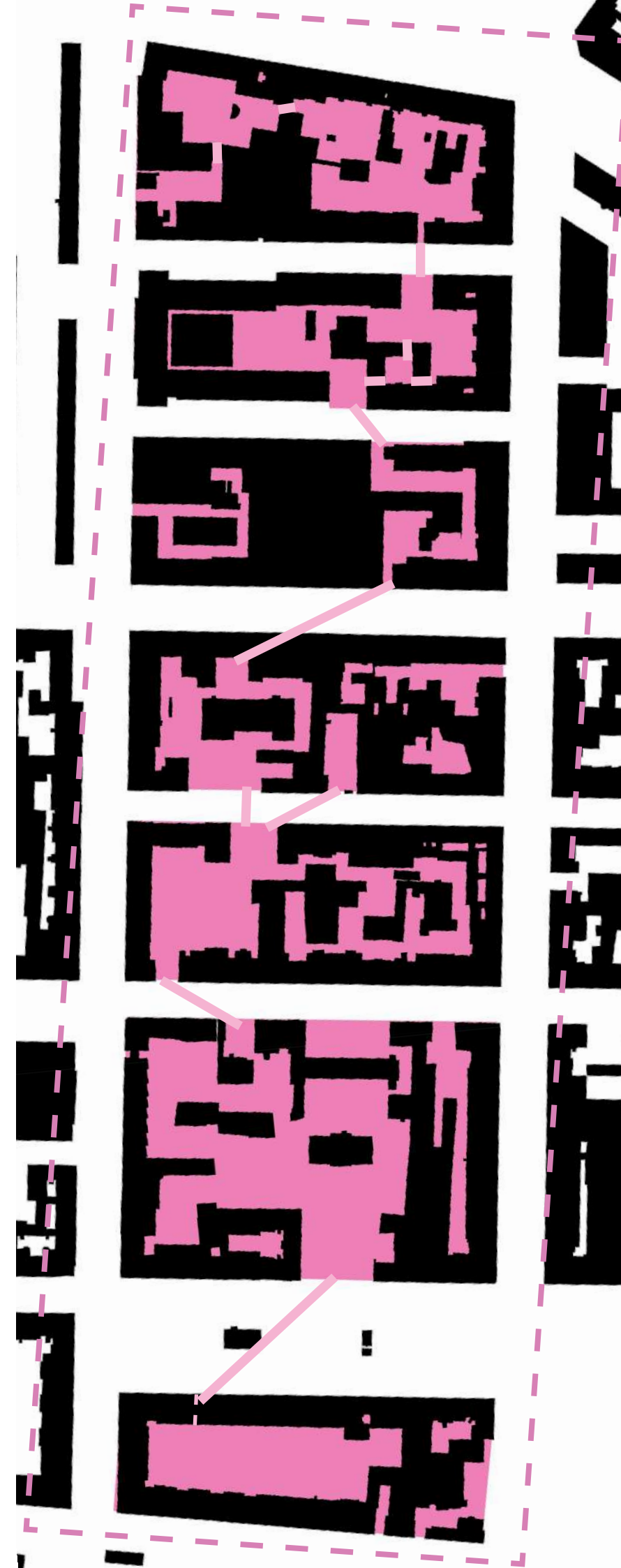
2023

Initially to look strictly at the built-up area, the figure-ground map reveals clearly what is inner yard, is built.

The contrast between built and unbuilt reveals the amount of space between the blocks that people seemingly have access to. It also reveals how incomplete the blocks are which allows working with that opening.



1:2750



2023

Looking closer at the spaces you can see that they could potentially be connected (as seen with the small red lines) and the red highlighted areas that show the missing links in connections the courtyards.

Despite seeing all of these blocks being able to be connected on the site, there isn't this permeability between the blocks (except for one or two examples like the Vnitro-block Cafe).



1:2750



Functions Map

- GROCERY/
SHOP
- RETAIL/
TEXTILE
- OFFICES/
BUSINESSES
- GOVT/BANK
- CULTURAL
- RESTAURANT
- HOTEL/
INDUSTRIAL
- PARK
- FLORAL/
GARDENING
- SALON/
COSMETICS
- EDUCATION
- MEDICAL

Looking at the functions, the site is mostly residential with some public facilities, gardens, and retail functions. On many of the ground floors there are commercial and restaurant spaces.

Some of the buildings lead into the inneryard allowing it to be semi-public. However despite some of the functions being right next to each other, sometimes only one of the functions had the back lot open to the customers/users.

Once noting the various ground floor functions, the mapping revealed how there were 'openings' in the form of a closed entrance.



1:2750



Openings and paths

- NO FUNCTION
ON GROUND
FLOOR
- POTENTIAL
CONNECTIONS

Where there was no function there would sometimes be openings for cars to enter into the inner yard. This continued the previous thought from the figure-ground map.

These entrances were then connected with the courtyard spaces which revealed the potential for connecting the inneryards from one side of the block to the other.

The combination of empty ground floor plots, where there was no function could allow the creating of more functions on the ground floor resulting in a fill-in-the-blank.

However, because of the public-private disputes in the past, it was important to look at who owned the spaces.



1:2750



Ownership and Blue Path Potential Overlay

- GOVT/CITY/
MUNICIPALITY
- COMMERCIAL/
COMPANY
- PRIVATE-
SINGLE
OWNER
- PRIVATE-
MULTI-
OWNERSHIP
- POTENTIAL
CONNECTIONS

The site today has mixed ownership but the majority is privately owned or owned by multiple owners. The potential blue path is snuffed by the numerous ownerships.

The path that could have easily been connected is chopped into multiple fragments that are disconnected. To connect them it would require some deeper coordination between the different owners. The blue, green, and red plots hold the most potential for implementing the connections.



1:3000

When you take the fact that the block structures are not completed, some functions take place in the courtyards and the possible connectivity from the red-lined map, you start to get a hold of something interesting- you start to see traces of the original DNA.

These blocks are so close to being interconnected in the way that the medieval settlement patterns were connected. However, with the more modern 19th-century block forms that are now the new normal, this interconnectivity between plots and courtyards is adapted. With the initial thought of connecting the inner yards by projecting some of the medieval meandering patterns, the map analysis revealed that today's normal DNA still holds the traces of the past. In the readings themselves, the interconnectivity of the inner yards is only being held back by the people's past- their hurt from the communist regime.

If this hurt is already on the mend with examples in the area like the DOX art gallery and Vnitro block, there is growing hope in the opportunity to design now. To redesign the paths between plots which could be a tool for healing the past and reintroducing what inter-block relations look like.

Of all districts to implement this proposal, this area is the best suited for it. It is not only suited because of the blocks and now for the chance to readapt the built environment of the past, but also for the other layers. The flatness of the area holds the potential to bridge different spaces between buildings through a new ground plane and out of the interconnectivity and variety of building types there are new abstractions of experience that can be drawn out from the blocks.

The overall reveals the beckoning opportunity to connect the inner yards. An opportunity that outweighs the divided plots of ownership for the backyards of the buildings and hold the space improves the qualities and makes it more beneficial to the tenants of the block as a whole.



CHAPTER 7

"Architecture is a visual art, and the buildings speak for themselves. Within their walls, courtyards become canvases where life unfolds in brushstrokes of light and shadow."

- Unknown

7.0 ABSTRACTIONS AND FORMS

Looking at the basic building block- the comfortable building style of Prague, it has (generally) shifted from the medieval meandering paths to the grided block typology. Where the alleyways and shorter buildings have now changed to more efficient straight streetways and taller buildings surrounding courtyard spaces. The relationship that people have to the ground, and their experience of the city has shifted. The way that people now own the space, and the density has also changed. It is no longer that people own entire buildings but instead, they own fragments of the building. Or that the courtyard spaces which might have belonged to the street and passageways now belong to individual building plots, where you can see everything is getting tighter. Tight in the sense that things are much more rigid with regulations and ownership causing a spiral of legalities, which makes it difficult to build in that environment.

By linking these different layers, architects, and urbanists can design cities where the intentions are translated in a user-friendly design. A user-friendly design that challenges the public-private relationship that exists between the owner and users with a joined space for community conviviality to grow.

Since the site has a typical block typology, and in some ways could be seen as a futuristic block because of its length, its largeness pushes for a greater need for porosity throughout the block. With mixed businesses on the ground floor and some occasionally in the courtyards, there is the opportunity to permeate the block and allow for not only a more efficient use of space but also a revived and refined public-private space.

If the former analyzed layers are projected onto the typical building blocks, there is a morphing that takes place between old and new. The old attributes of permeability, passageways, and gems in courtyards penetrate the blocks and allow for users to have a pedestrian zone and an improved relationship between the ground and the buildings.

To morph the existing qualities with elements of the original DNA of the medieval city center, the analysis needs to take to look at the initial layers discussed the beginning chapters- the abstractions of the current courtyards, the relationship to the ground, the public-private relationship. Adding the layers such as the existing openings and flow of the site, the influence of surrounding functions, and the larger-scale connectivity between the blocks then there will be the space and ability to transform the blocks' permeability.

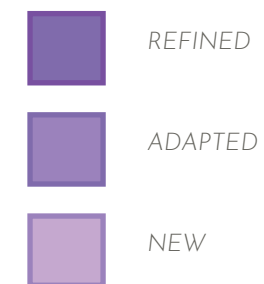
Overall, the site fits very well with the initial layers and precedents that were looked at in the first part of the thesis. The blocks' average of 190 m by 80 m allows for a necessary intervention to readapt the internal spaces of the courtyards. The minimal changes in terrain give the opportunity to create new Ground in tandem with openings in the block. Seeing that the surrounding examples of the area have similar aspects to precedent studies, it makes the possible implementation of this project easier to navigate with the locals.

The initial precedents set up different targets that would allow users to have the best experience and use of the site. Starting with the ground, it creates the base for which you penetrate through the buildings- it should be synchronous and intuitive for the users to walk on and connect to.

With the surroundings largely being residential and offices, the program of the site will be adding to that with more mixed-use spaces. The overall implementation will focus on the public spaces and user experience. Parts of the spaces will include a mix of functions such as retail, cafes and restaurants, offices/businesses, parks and greenery, educational facilities, and grocery stores. The new functions on the site will replace or enhance the existing elements on the site.

7.1 COMPLETING THE BLOCKS

Altering some of the existing buildings by tidying up the courtyards allowed for a greater possibility to renovate and make them more accessible. Although there are small passages existing, the majority of the courtyards are only accessible to the residents with limited permeability between the blocks if you don't have a key.



The current state of the inner yards is cluttered and disconnected from its counterplots, often with small sheds and businesses which have sprung up over the years. By completing some of the blocks with new buildings and repurposing others different forms could be abstracted.



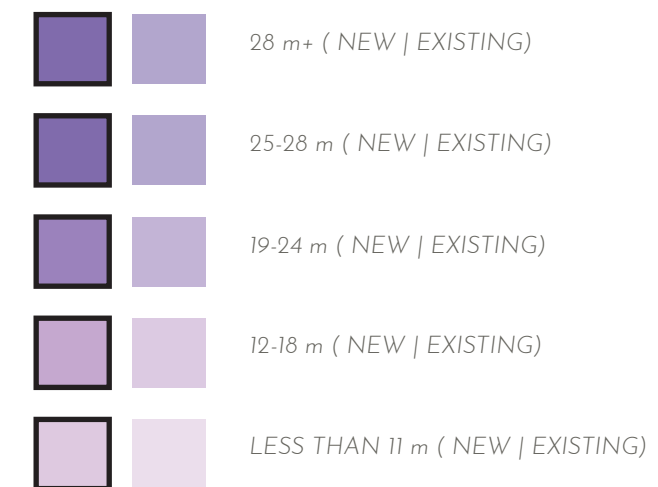
SITE PLAN

1:2750



7.2 NEW BLOCK HEIGHTS

Part of filling in the blocks to complete them also meant thinking about the future of the surrounding buildings. Each of the blocks had a variety of heights ranging from low industrial buildings of 10 m up to newer blocks of 28m. Some of these drastic height differences were adjacent to each other.



Although future developments may demolish the smaller buildings to make space to make more out of the plot, there is value in the diversity of buildings and the way that they are experienced throughout the future of the interconnected blocks. The aim of the project was not to create an empty slate of the blocks but rather to work with a combination of surgical interventions between the existing inner yard and surrounding buildings.

Any new buildings that replace previous ones will range from 23 m-28 m with a few outliers. Keeping with this ratio and outliers (that are usually within the inner yard) will keep a comfortable building: a human ratio that still allows for residents on the top floors to be connected with the ground-level activities.



SITE PLAN

1:2750



7.3 ABSTRACTING THE BLOCKS

As the blocks were cleaned up by removing small additions built in the past few years, the newly defined blocks started to create their own forms that were reminiscent of chapter two's abstractions of the old town.

Looking at the new abstractions in the 19th century refined block, the abstractions show the new permeability within the inneryard. These new forms can be abstracted and analysed for their qualities which in some cases are repeating. Although these abstractions are drawn out from these specific seven blocks, some of these forms could likely be in other blocks around the city. This is because over the years of having backyard plots the tenants and owners would gradually adapt the space to something that was semi-functional for the tenants. Whether that was for trash bins, parking, a bench, a small garden, or just a smoking area.

Looking at each of the highlighted areas on the left map, there are six different shapes that can be abstracted- each of them creating different opportunities and experiences of the space. Overall the new abstractions create new pedestrian zones which creates nice connections for people to experience and walk through in comparison to the long grids on the periphery of the blocks.



SITE PLAN

1:2750



Pros

- The block is very permeable with more than five different entrances from different sides of the block
- The large open space creates a wide walking path which could be filled with local produce markets on the weekends, a park, or public space.
- The parking would be imposed on some of the inner block

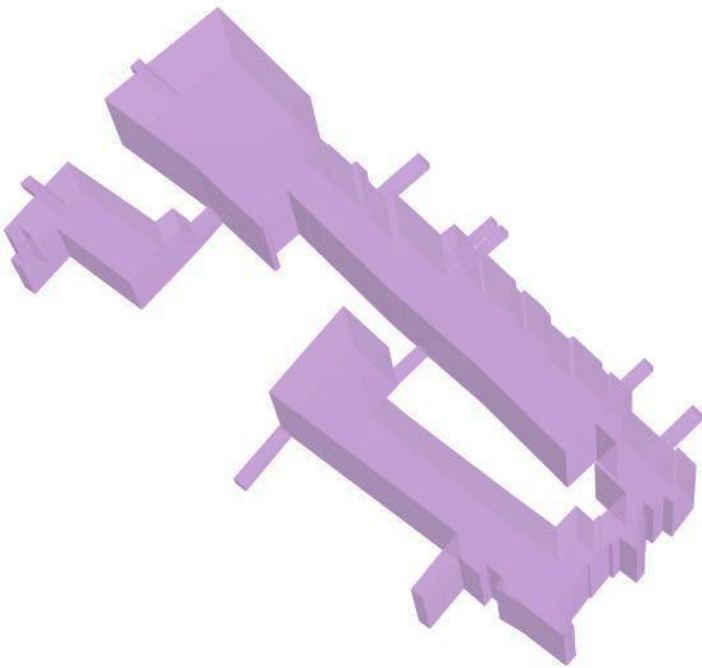
Cons

- The building:human height ratio is on the higher side ranging from 25-28:1 human level of movement.
- The parking would be imposed on some of the inner block



SITE PLAN 1:2750

7.31 ABSTRACTIONS-CLUSTER FILTER



The cluster- filter abstraction is drawn out from a block where there are multiple buildings within the courtyard that are semi-attached and hold some kind of semi-public functions which need external access. This creates a cluster of smaller buildings that requires there to be more internal connectivity between the innyard buildings as well as multiple paths in and out of the block.

This cluster of internal buildings would result in a semi-public space of the inneryard where the small businesses that might be open over the weekdays are closed on the weekends to create a resident-only space. Or in the wider opening of the space it could create public space which could hold saturday morning markets or a park.



SITE PLAN 1:2750

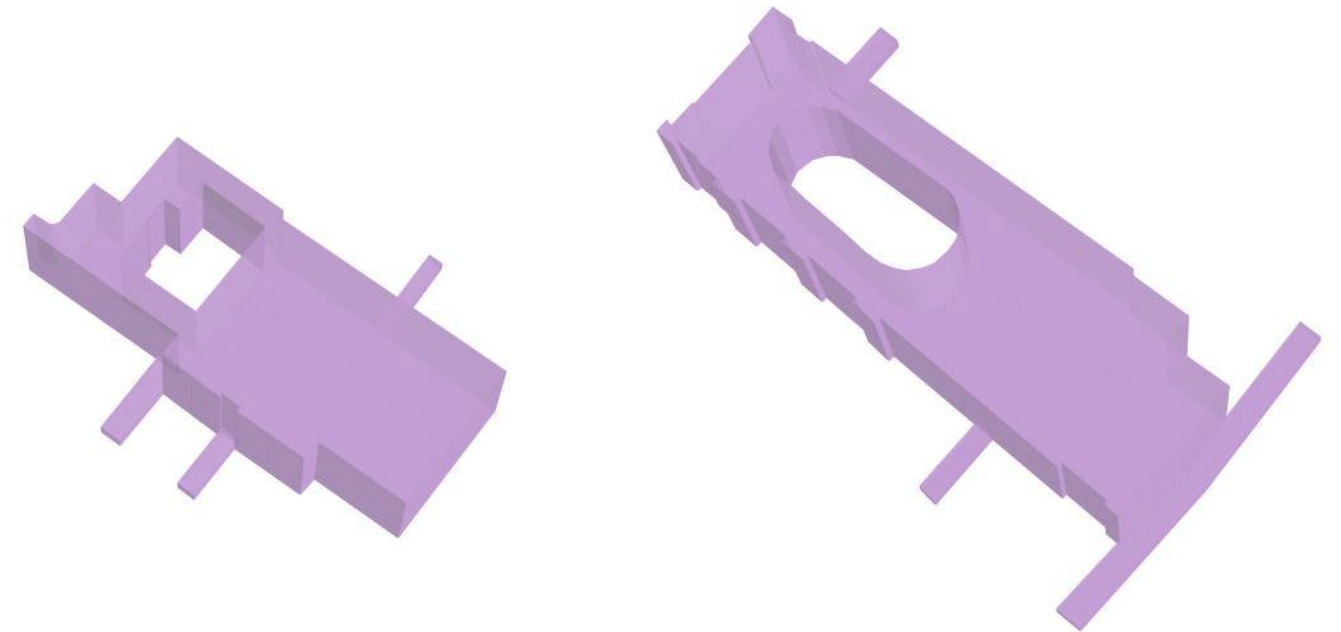
7.32 ABSTRACTION- OPEN COURT

Pros

- The large open space allows for more community engagement activities to take place
- The added greenery will create a more beautiful inneryard
- The large open space could take multiple mixed-forms of use (parking, park, square, community garden, etc.).

Cons

- There would be less privacy because the inneryard is open to the public.
- Possible more noise if there are large groups of children



The open courtyard type is where the inneryard has one large open space. This could be accessible from the doorstep of each building as well as a few passageways that are open to the public. It could also be that the inner park or garden could be semi-private where the access is open to the public but has quieter entrance ways in comparison to open passes under the buildings. The open court courtyard would be refined to created a large green space or square which would add to the biodiversity of the usually drab inneryards. This large space would be open to the public creating a free flow between different sides of the building.



SITE PLAN

1:2750

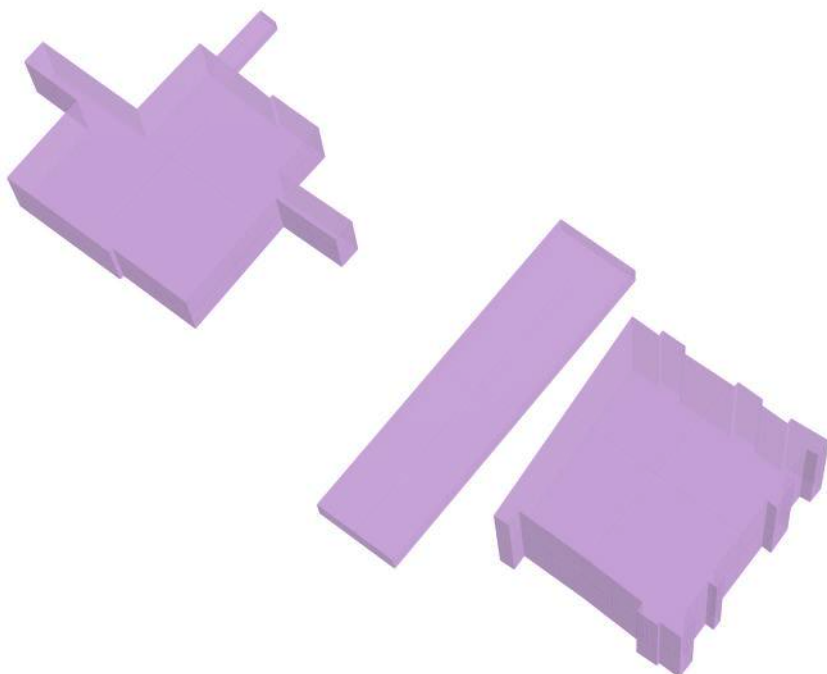


SITE PLAN

1:2750



7.33 ABSTRACTION- WALK THROUGH



Pros

- There is a covered walkway large enough to also be a commercial area
- The division of two blocks creates more intimacy for the courtyards of the new smaller blocks.
- One of the inneryards is accessible only to the residents.

Cons

- One of the inneryards is accessible only to the residents.
- The left courtyard is semi-public which means that the residents would need a designed space and method for them to enjoy the inneryard.

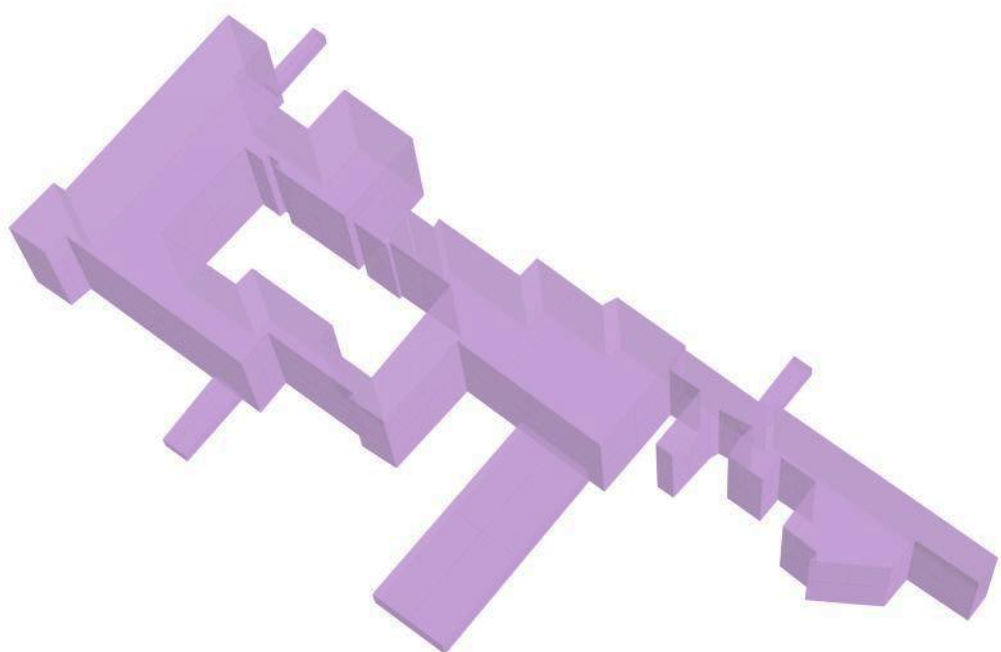
The walkthrough abstraction is created out of a re-adapted building. On the right side of the plot there is a former industrial building which spans the width of the block. Renovating and connecting both ends of the building would create two separate blocks from the larger overall block. However the re-adapted building would act as a covered passage way filled with new ground level functions. The new functions and covered passage way would create new business opportunities as well as a different experience in walking from one end of the six blocks to another.

The covered walkway would be accessible by the shop timings meaning that the porosity of the building is accessible during certain hours of the day. The creation of two more courtyards for the now two blocks creates closer intimacy for the residents of the surrounding buildings.





7.34 ABSTRACTION- NARROW PROMENADE



Pros

- The walkway is narrower but still comfortable creating a personal experience with the surrounding buildings and functions.

Cons

- There is little to no space for parking
- The business on the inneryard is only accessible by passageways, the car entrance or the narrow promenade making it secluded

The narrow promenade is created from the clearing of a narrower pathway between multiple buildings. This narrower path allows for a unique walk across the lateral width of the block unlike the other abstracted forms. The closeness of the user's experience to the built environment around would be akin to walking through an alleyway, however wider. This opens up the possibility to create a romantic promenade through the buildings and repurpose or add to the building at the end of the courtyard.





Pros

- There is unique innermovement between the islands and passages
- Allows for businesses to inhabit the inneryard
- Creates new height within the courtyard to add to the layers of experience

Cons

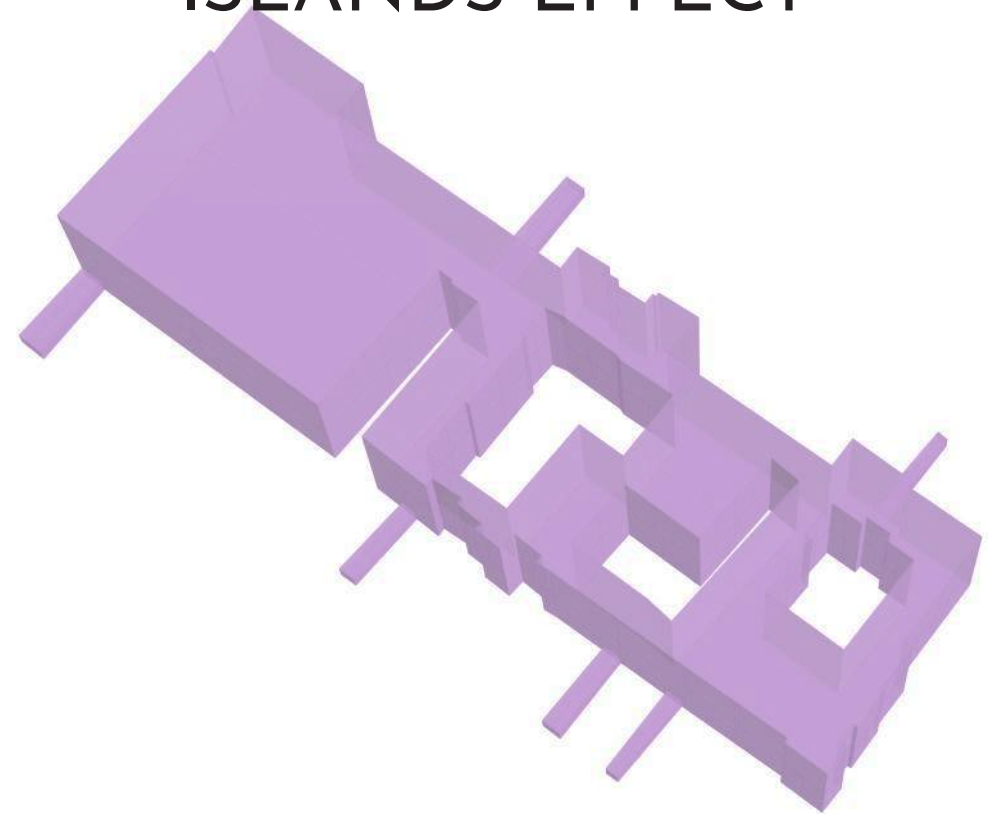
- The businesses in the courtyard might be hard to find if the user isn't aware of the courtyard permeability
- The user could lose orientation if there is no clear signage
- The residents would need to share their inneryard with the public



SITE PLAN

1:2750

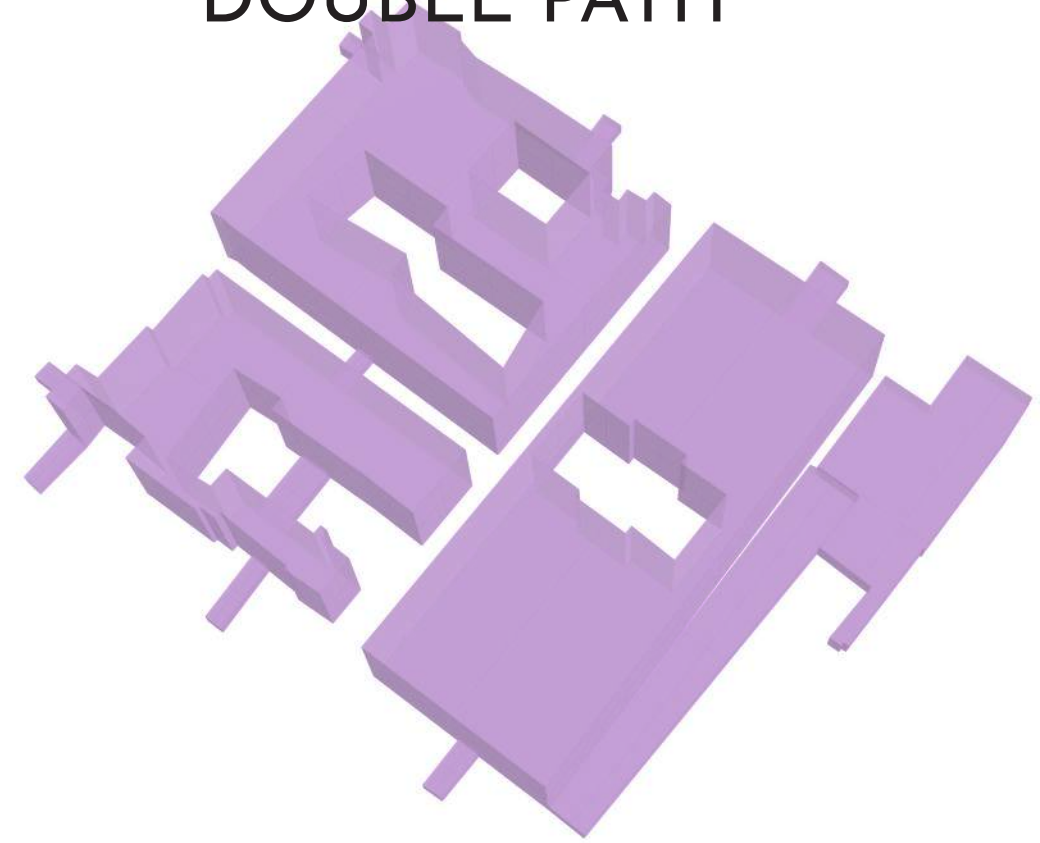
7.35 ABSTRACTION- ISLANDS EFFECT



The island effect- is not like the heat island effect that takes place in cities. This abstraction is created in a similar way to the first abstraction- the cluster filter. Small sheds and buildings were refined from the inneryard to reveal a series of buildings that were floating in the space of the courtyard. Adding more passage ways to connect to the inneryard created two ways of moving through the space- the first from the passageway and the second in a free flow around the islands of buildings in the middle.

This type of abstraction creates an innerstreet environment for people as well as a unique business opportunity for the businesses and buildings that inhabit the courtyard. Introducing some new public space elements, parking, some greenspaces or small squares would create a multifunctional inneryard that could easily become semi-public.

7.36 ABSTRACTION- DOUBLE PATH



Pros

- Allows for nuanced connectivity between courtyards
- Creates multiple courtyards
- allows for privacy of different courtyards based on function

Cons

- There are four blocks instead of one creating a more fragmented block of one block.
- The smaller blocks could result in the need for new street names or difficult for the post services

The double-path was created out of the priority of the school. The school yard is in the center with one building sandwiched on either end of the block with two new buildings which enclose the area. Initially this block had multiple courtyards that were confusingly arranged, with an out of place entrance to the school. It was clear that the school was there first and the surrounding buildings filled in later, however in order to complete the block and create a confined and safe environment for the school children new divisions within the block were created.

For many of the new blocks there are multiple paths- some of which are next to each other creating a double path for two different kinds of users. Although the new divisions don't create large open yards, they create new business-courtyard connectivity and function specific solutions to filtering the users of each passage way.



SITE PLAN

1:2750



7.4 NEW GROUND- CREATING A CARPET

From the new abstractions, the inneryards were able to be interconnected however, there needed to be a connecting element that was experienced at the human level and not just seen from the bird's eye view. This came to be addressed by referring back to the common ground plane from the ground-relationship chapter.



The plane which would connect all of the blocks would be one carpet like tie from one end of the site to the other. This would be created by introducing one plane which is synchronized from one block to another by a combination of material and levels. The ground which would cut through the new openings of the passageways and refined innerblocks would create one surface of movement that flows and is recognizable.

Since the terrain is flat, this is relatively easy to do by making the sidewalk and the paving the same level within the blocks and at certain points outside of the blocks to create a sense of orientation and designated path for the users.



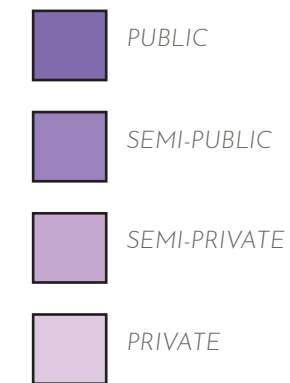
SITE PLAN

1:2750



7.5 PUBLIC-PRIVATE RELATIONSHIP

The proposal of the inneryard spaces is that most of them will be semi-public or public. Very few of them would be semi-private and those would be, the courtyards would be accessible only for the residents of the surrounding buildings.



Since many of the abstractions have the potential to become open to the public, there needs to be an understanding of what the new meanings of the legend says above as well as benefits of creating these kinds of courtyards.

Public spaces would be spaces that are completely open to the public no accessibility timings. Semi-public spaces would have some timings of accessibility that would allow the local residents to have hours where the courtyard is only accessible by the tenants of the block. Private spaces would be redefined to mean a private common space only accessible to the residents of the block.

Opening up the blocks to be more public than before would increase the community engagement and quality of public spaces that are accessible and diverse in the backyard of the tenanat. The new business opportunities and renovation of the courtyards would benefit the tenants by creating a nicer and more effective courtyard with more beneficial functions than before.



SITE PLAN

1:2750



CHAPTER 8

"Passageways are the arteries of a city, circulating life and vitality. Architecture should be the vessel that ensures these pathways are not mere conduits but experiences, connecting people with the pulse of urban existence."

- Richard Rogers

8.0 CONCEPT AND PROPOSAL

The abstractions and their experienced spacial values, finding a common ground plan to interconnect and permeate the blocks with, addressing public-private issues and the site's general analysis, can be interwoven together. These elements together will create a seamless experience for people using the space, whether they are residents, workers, or visitors to the area. The impact of creating more permeable blocks allows for improved connectivity throughout the site. By creating a more porous environment there will be a new mixture of people and businesses which will create a unique environment that fits with the district of Prague 7.

In terms of the city, the surrounding environment of Prague 7 already has existing moments of porosity which the residents and users love. The existing landscape is disconnected despite the existing minimal terrain changes in the area which means that a change in 'Ground' (relating to the change of 1-2 meters up or down) would bring new diversity to the area.

The public-private historical impact can be addressed here with the opening of the inner yards to the public. This would allow for a designed nuance which could allow for more public spaces but still respect the privacy of the residents. This would push the boundaries of what public-private relations could look like in the future of Prague if it was designed with more human experience-based intention.

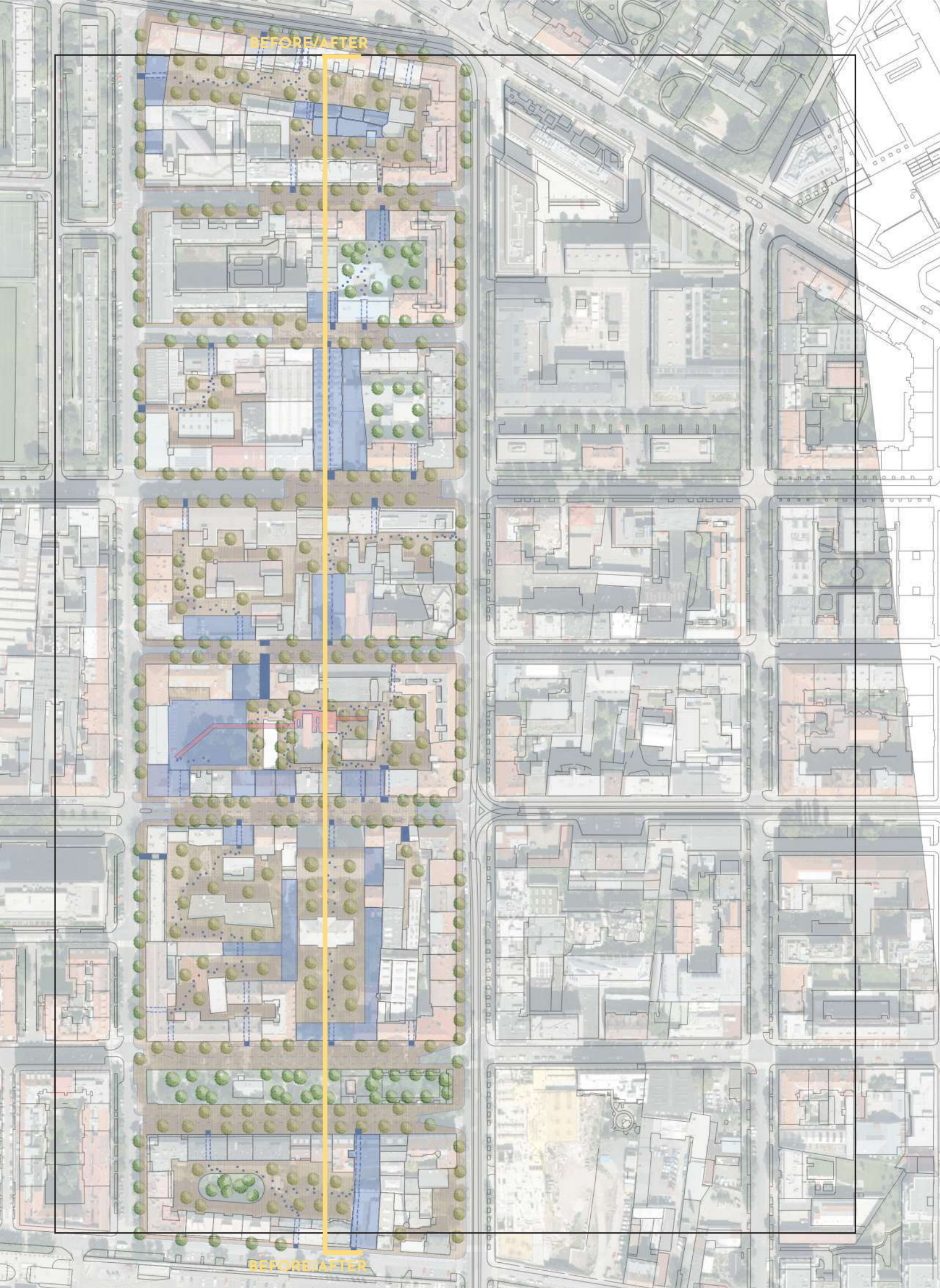
Taking the first element of the abstracted lexicon that is created from the abstractions- these inner yards can take their characteristics abstracted as well. The drawn-out qualities- although at a slightly larger scale compared to the precedents in Chapter 2- are the surrounding functions, the taller ratio of buildings on average, the larger void of space in between the buildings, and the greenery or open spaces.

In a practical and literal sense, this implementation would allow for another unique experience that would fit with the overall hipster environment of Prague 7. The increase porosity and change of Ground would create a subtle yet consistent ground for pedestrians. It would be easily understandable and allow for the surrounding environment to slow down and create more special connection routes for users.

On a wider scale, the interconnectivity between the blocks will look like veins with greenery filling the in between public spaces. This will create a cooler environment, as summers are increasingly getting hotter, and from above it will look like a green patch, almost like a lung. This overarching connectivity also will shift the pace of its surroundings, having cars drive slower, cycling lanes and passageways which divert and separate traffic movement.

Based on the joined analysis of the precedents in Part 1 and site in Part 2 the layers need to be the lens in which the blocks are interconnected. This is done by knitting the blocks together- where one stitch, or in this case one layer, at a time. The different layers are the openings and movement, the ground level(s), the functions, relationships between public and private spaces, and the materiality.

To interconnect the blocks, there need to be passageways and directions of movement that are noted and rearranged. So, the layers of analysis would be to look at openings, the car and pedestrian movement, the blocks forms (of the periphery and the inner yard) and the functions. Once these connections are made then they need to be connected by consistent Ground that ties them together. After the Ground connects the different courtyards then the current activities in the blocks need to be noted and refined- noting the different forms that come out when analyzing the functions and movement. Once these are noted then the solutions, rearranging, openings, and public space details need to be made to interconnect the blocks in a clear and synchronous method.



8.1 PROPOSAL

Looking at the wider surroundings, the proposal of the blocks will be interconnected within each other mostly from the North to South axis between Ortenovo náměstí and Holešovická tržnice. The main connecting factor will be the new Ground plane and the permeability through the new block entrances. The Ground will act as one plane which permeates the blocks through different levels and entryways.

The surface will be different materials to delineate the paths of movement for the users. This will help guide the pedestrians and create an experience that is linked throughout the site. It will construct an urban infrastructure that is pedestrian oriented as well as change the built environment to encourage and create a space that is made for the public. This will transform the 1-2 meter sidewalks into plaza-like connectivity without removing the access of cars.

By making the block more penetrable, and in turn the courtyard more accessible, this begins to transform the typical block typology that is a staple for Prague building types.

Instead of a block that has many small plots, where residents are dissatisfied with the lack of maintenance and the small space for the residents, the building types will be able to have access to their courtyards which will be larger and more public. However,

to allow some privacy for the residents there will be opening hours to the courtyard spaces and greenery to give moments of privacy. Each block will transform into a more nuanced courtyard block type where the Ground and its porosity that flows through the blocks will cater to people more than nuanced way of public-private spaces.

Seeing how in the precedent studies the medieval meandering paths eventually transformed into a grided structure, yet kept the courtyard spaces, this is the next phase of transforming the blocks. Instead of moving from Block type 2.0 to Block 3.0 this is Block type 2.4.

Where the movement between the blocks is a consistent level and material, laying out the direction of movement for cyclists, pedestrians, and cars. Where there is a shift of the built environment to cater and take into consideration how to create a nuanced public-private ratio of space in a city that will eventually need to densify.

The unifying materiality will create a perception to people and cars of unique accessways which are friendly to each of the user types and clear with the direction and flow of the space. Allowing for a free yet structured flow of environment.

This new morphed block type will synchronize with the environment around it while offering unique, comfortable, and easy movement for the public. The porosity between the blocks, attractive yet subtle signage, and the greenery will create public spaces that are attractive not only for the users in the office spaces but also for the residents who inhabit the buildings above.



SITE PLAN

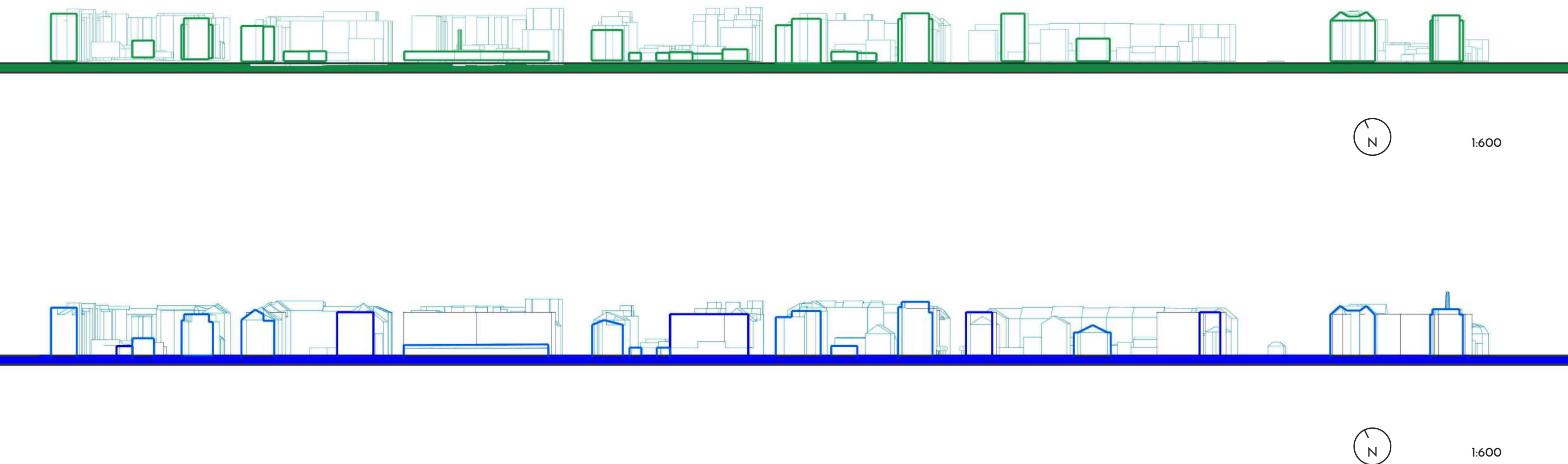
1:2750

8.2 SITE OVERVIEW- BEFORE/AFTER SECTION

The overall proposal of the site focuses on one of the blocks in more detail to show how the concept of interconnecting the blocks could work at the scale of just 1. This island effect block was the chosen block to show the proposal in more detail.

The design implementation shows a colorful amount of new spaces and elements to the block. Starting with the passage ways, there are seven passageways to enter into the courtyard. These entrances are noted with colorful tiles that extend the span of the sidewalk to invite inside pedestrians. Two of the passageways are new while the others were renovated and re-made with the same material as the others.

Once the user enters through one of the passages they are met with the few island-buildings that are businesses and office spaces in the courtyard. As well as a raised red platform.

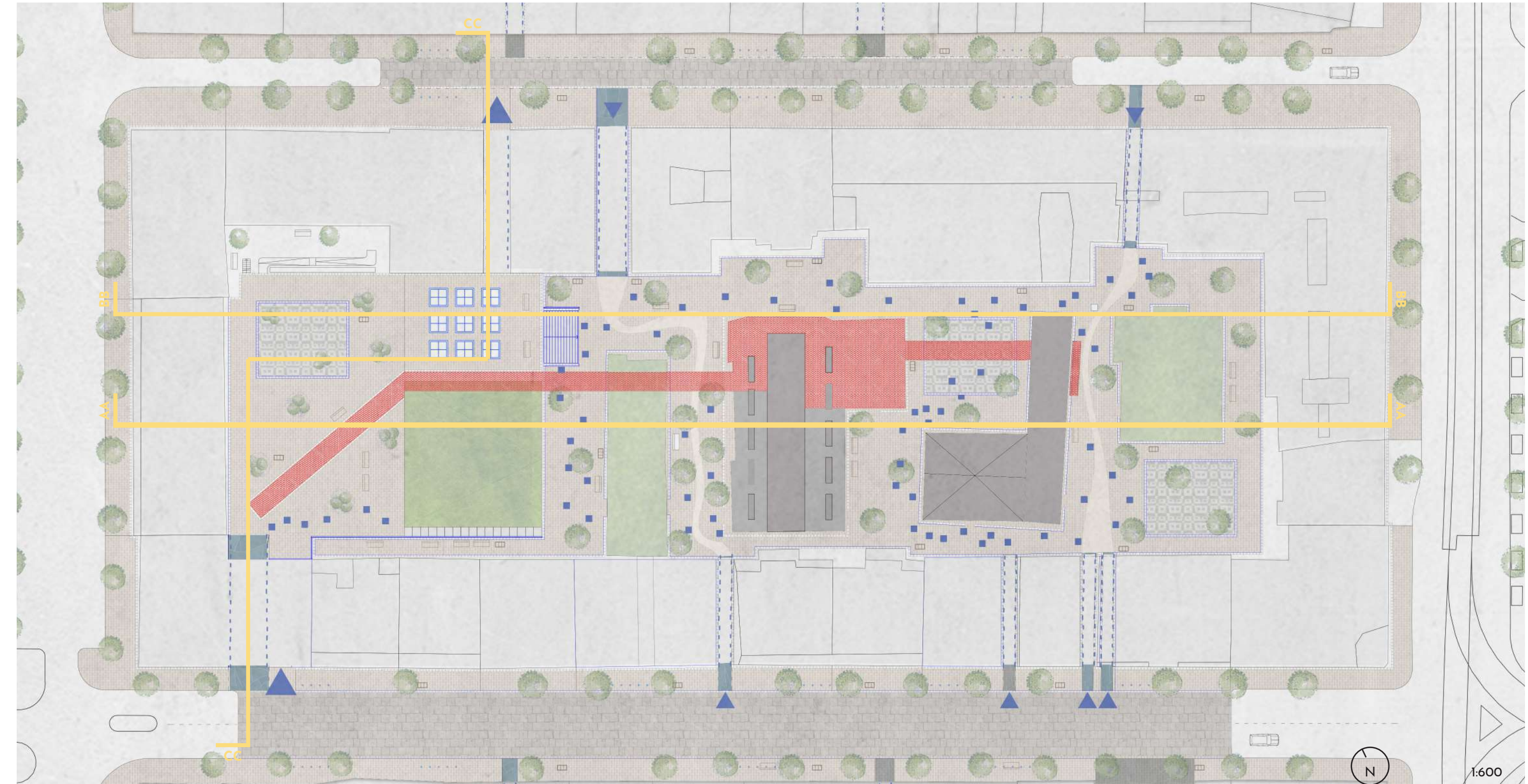


8.3 SITE PLAN-PROPOSAL

To orient the user there are 1m x 1m tiles that are like a trail of the same tile types as the passage ways that guide the user through the space.

Inside the courtyard there is new paving which lines the outer-buildings and functions as drainage, and three different types of paths. These three paths are the tile fragments, dirt curved

paths, and the general surface paving for free movement. The variety of materials on the surface delineates the paths, directions, and flow of movement.



8.4 GROUND FLOOR

The users have new public functions such as benches, trees, lighting, plants and flowers, a community garden, a life-size chessboard, a small square, a green terrace, and a playground, parking, and an underground pavillion.

The raised red platform that users are met was designed as a change of variation in the synchronized plane of the ground

level, allowing for multiple levels of experience.

The red line is made of zinc coated steel and coated in red paint to catch the eyes of the pedestrian. This red line goes up five meters, cuts through the first building on the left and then rests on the roof of the middle building before crossing as a bridge over the small square and connecting through the office

space of the third building. The existing staircase that goes down from the office space is remade with the red painted steel element. Overall creating a unique experience of walking through the courtyard, between the buildings, and through some of the buildings themselves.

Underneath the community garden and play area one level

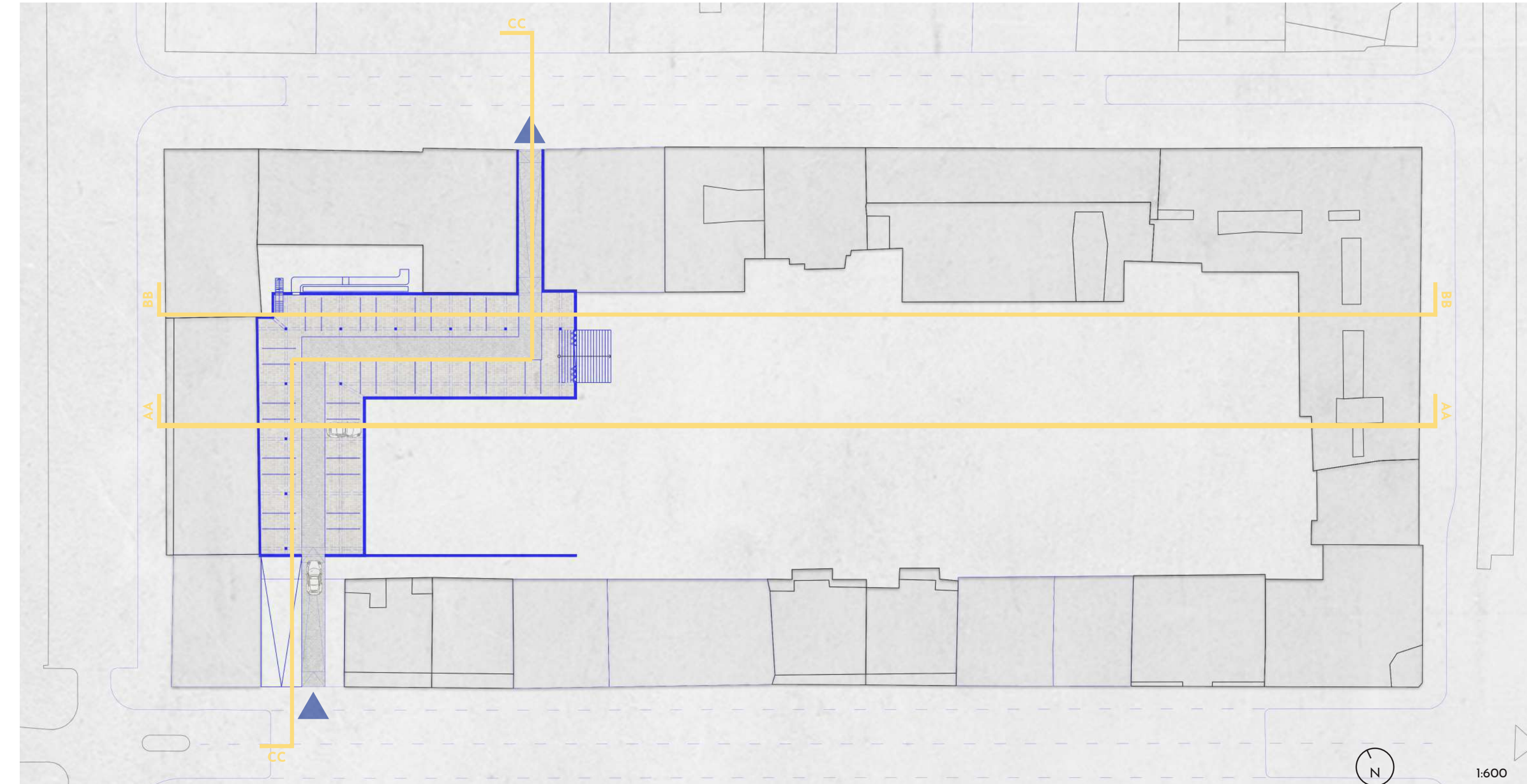


8.5 -1 PARKING

below is a parking for the residents of the block. Previously the plot was used for parking and small businesses with some garden spaces. The parking, now underground, can be accessed in a

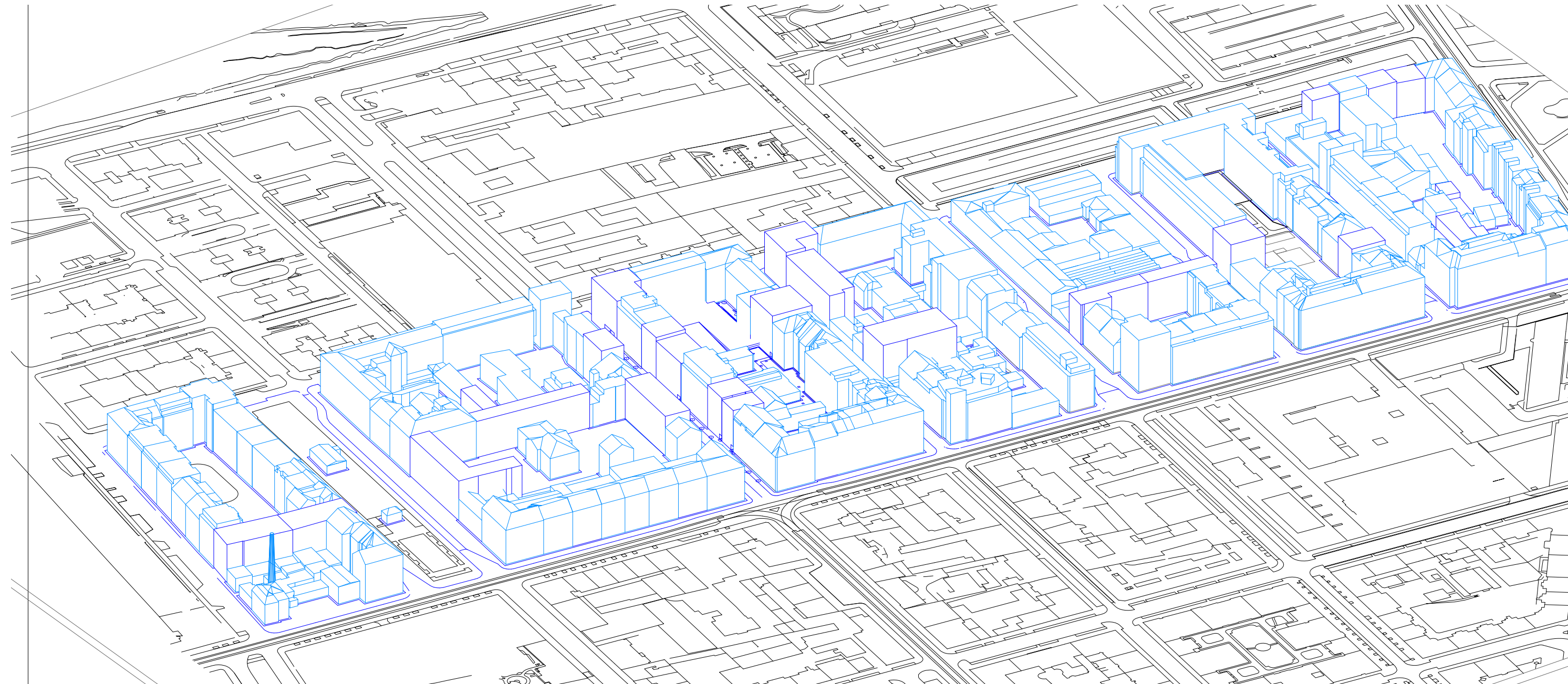
one-way route from the south west ramp. There are 49 parking spots which replaces the previous parking spots in that area. The space will be used one weekend every few months as a dual

event space where there will be no parking admission for that day or weekend to allow a covered market hall, movie area, or event to take place.



8.6 SITE OVERVIEW

The overall axonometric of the site show a bit of how the blocks are more filled out and now fit together. Now it is more visible how the barying heights are experienced and adapted to even out the block or maintain unique elements.



8.7 SECTION AA

The parking is accessible by ramps for the cars and a set of stairs on the east end of the terraced block. All of the entrances would be open to the public when there are events held there.

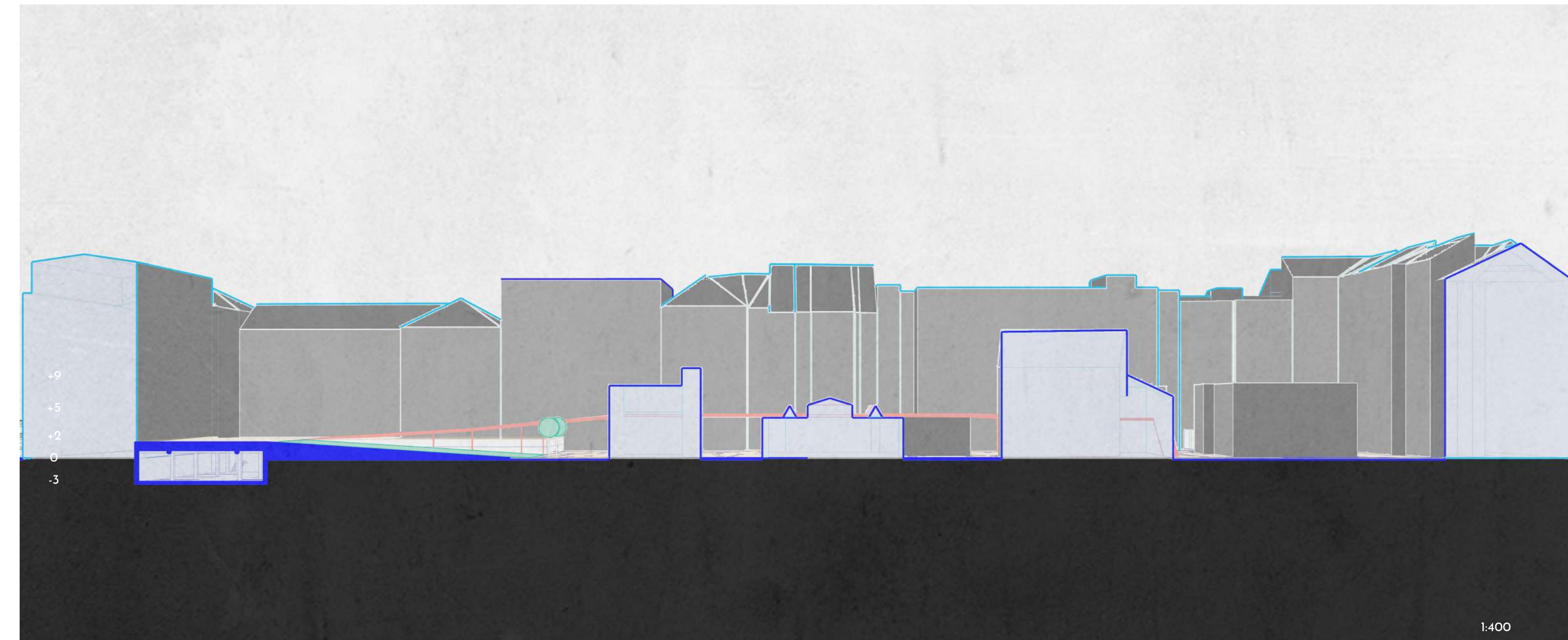
In refining the innerblock certain facades became free because they were previously covered by another shed or building. These free facades had some openings put into them for the deep-

ened porosity of the buildings within the courtyard. With the new access ways around the buildings, ontop of them, and now through them, there is the chance for more businesses to pop up like cafes and restaurants as a sublease of the existing businesses.

These new entry points to the inner buildings adds to the lay-

ered experience of the ground plane and how it can permeate through the building offering a continuous experience for the user that is- more or less- uninterrupted.

Another interesting part of the multiple layers are the varying heights of buildings. With the new plane of the red line it opens up new heights for pedestrian experience, the level of experienc-



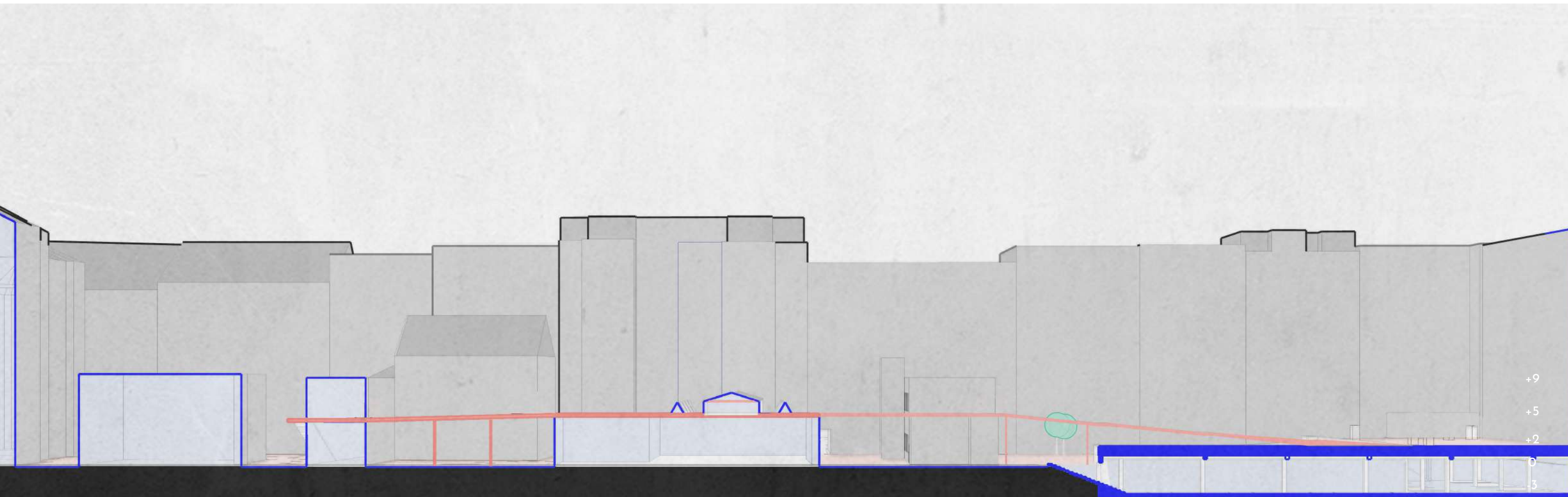
8.8 SECTION BB

ing the surrounding buildings is not just from the ground level nor only inside the varying levels of the buildings themselves. Instead it allows the users to experience up to 5 meters off the ground of the surrounding courtyard buildings in a non-invasive way.

The parking is 4m tall- 2m below the surface and 2m raised

from the courtyards ground surfac. This add another layer of a continuos ground plane where the users could On top of the parking the community garden and play area will give the space for the family oriented neighborhood children to create community. The terrace will be covered in astroturf which will last year round.

The red line walkway has a low slope from the roof of the parking to 5m off the ground where it is then a flat walkway. On the roof of the second building there is a roof-top public space where people who walk through the space could choose to sit and watch the small square below.

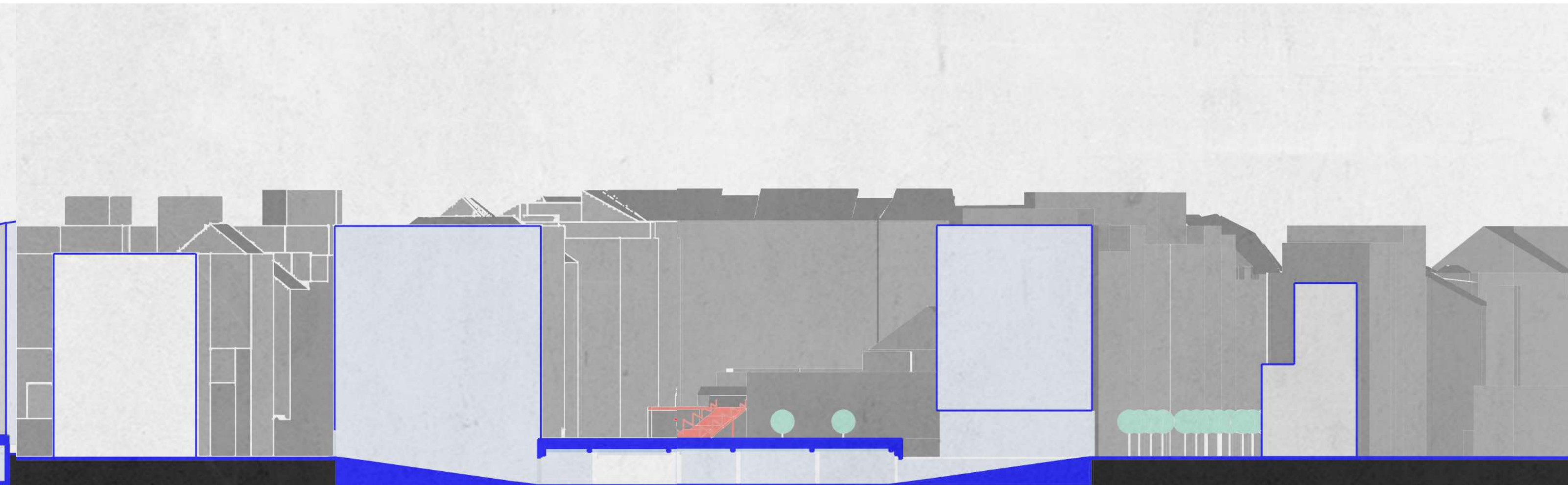


1:400

8.9 SECTION CC

The variety of spaces within the courtyard are intended for public use- where most of the passage ways are open during the normal hours of the day and close between 10pm and 6am. This will allow quiet hours for the residents and time where the inneryard could still be accessed by the surrounding buildings' tenants.

The improved public spaces benefit not only the public but also the residents of the building. In order to maintain the courtyard spaces a buildings owners association would be organized to manage the inneryard. The cost of renting the courtyard spaces- such as the island businesses, events that happen in the underground pavillion, etc.- would contribute towards the upkeep of the public spaces.



1:400

8`9 PROPOSAL

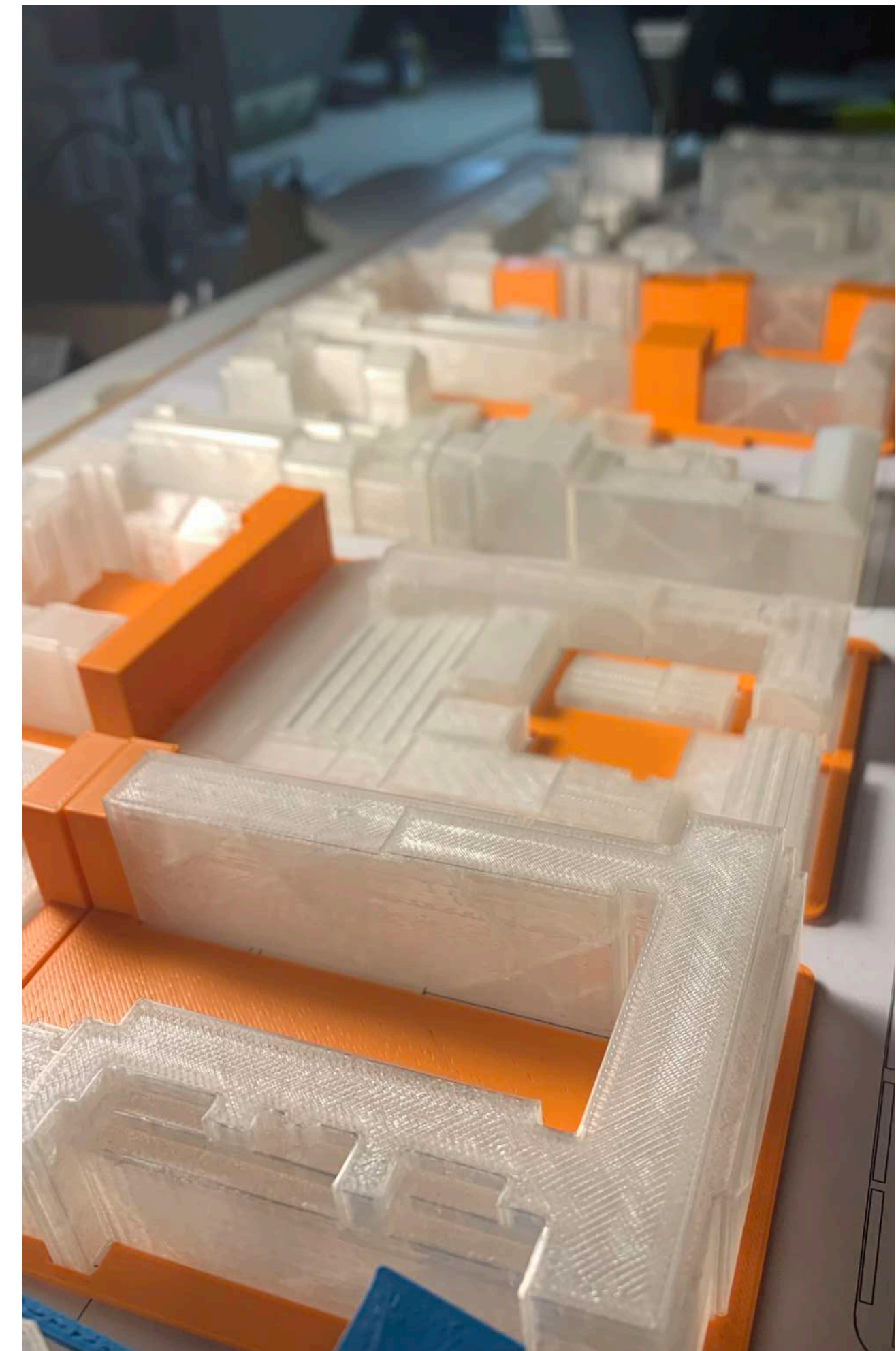
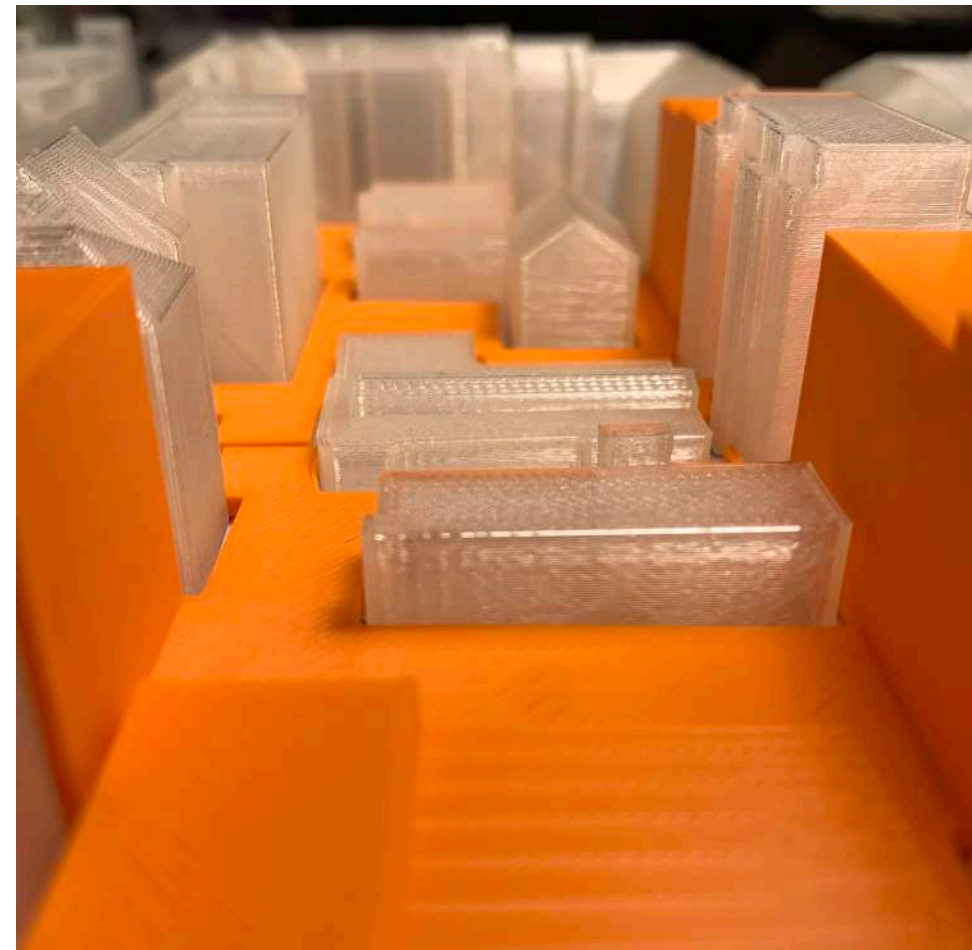
The way the project would be accomplished would be to start with the traffic movement, then the inner yard refinement, afterwards the infrastructure and new Ground, and finally the greenery. To start would be by reorganizing the movement on the site. This would look like redirecting traffic lanes to narrower or specific lanes, adding cyclist lanes and altering the parking arrangements. This would also be around the same time as refining the inner yards.

If a project like this would take off in reality here, there would be events and examples to show the residents how this space could benefit them before the project takes place. This would include workshops, open street days, public participation, and examples with interventions jumping off from surveys and examples like Vnitro Bloky interventions and the Zažit město jinak festival (a pedestrian only day closing off the streets to cars with stalls and public activity for community engagement). As people are enjoying the workshops the blocks will likely be applied one block at a time until all of the blocks are interconnected.

The inner yard refinement would be to remove unnecessary buildings that were recently built (within the past 5-10 years) like small sheds, temporary garages, any buildings that don't have historical significance etc. Part of this cleaning will also be to make the block porous by either altering existing openings to be accessible to the public or creating new passageways and open-

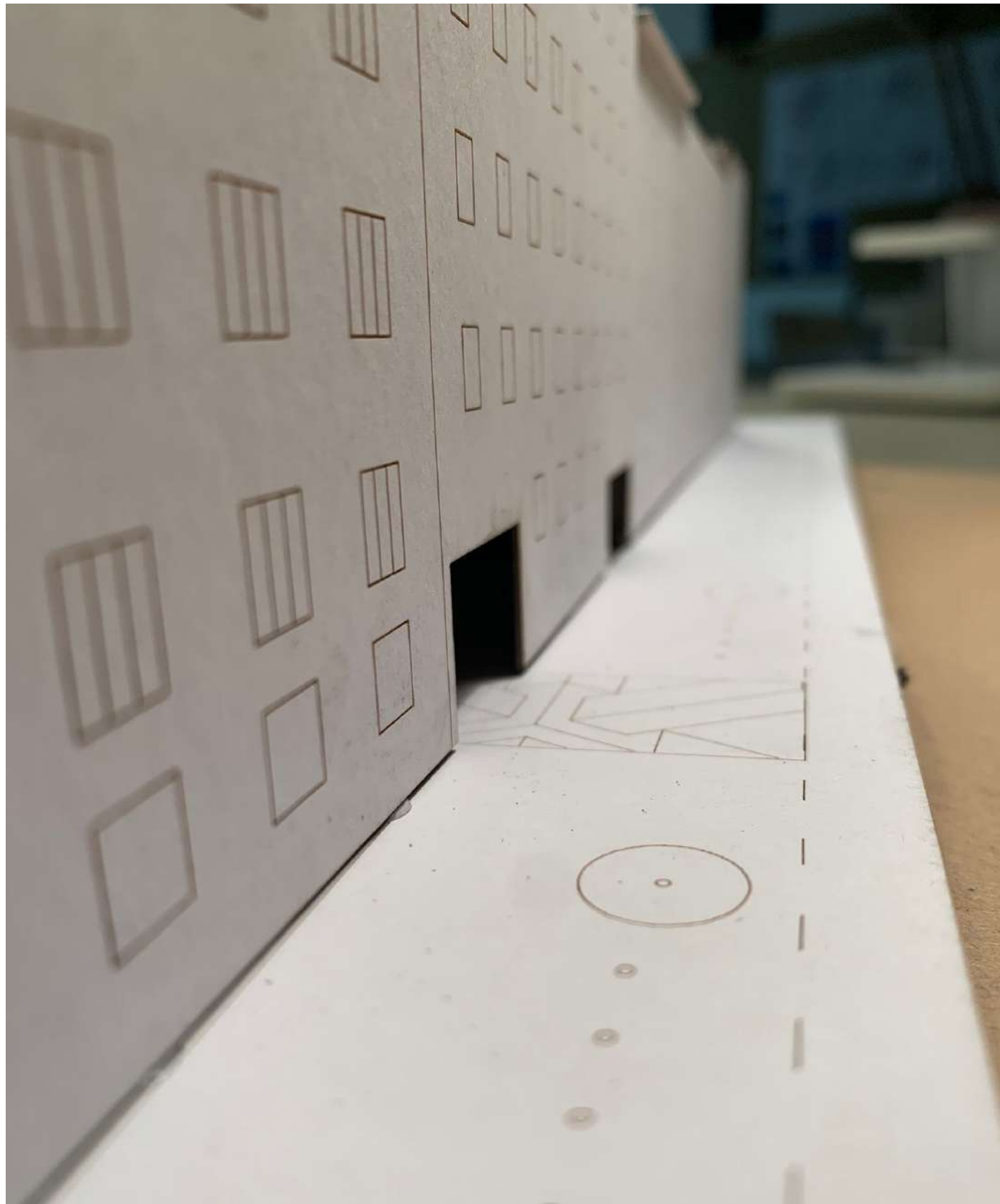
ings in the block. This will clear out parts of the courtyards to act as surgical intervention- varying by block- to make space for newer public amenities and the new Ground and permeability.

The new Ground then needs to be implemented on the site to further distinguish the movement between the different types of users around the site. This new ground would include surfaces which are attractive, subtle, and understandable to act as signage for the public. After this the greenery will be put into place alongside the infrastructure for the Ground. Once these



SITE PLAN

1:2750



In a wider context the site could act as a part of a longer and larger connection between the different green areas. Adding more greenery could have it add to a comfortable and pleasant neighborhood that's almost like a little bit of a green lung.



CHAPTER 9

"The details are not the details.

They make the design."

Charles Eames

9.0 DETAILS AND MOMENTS

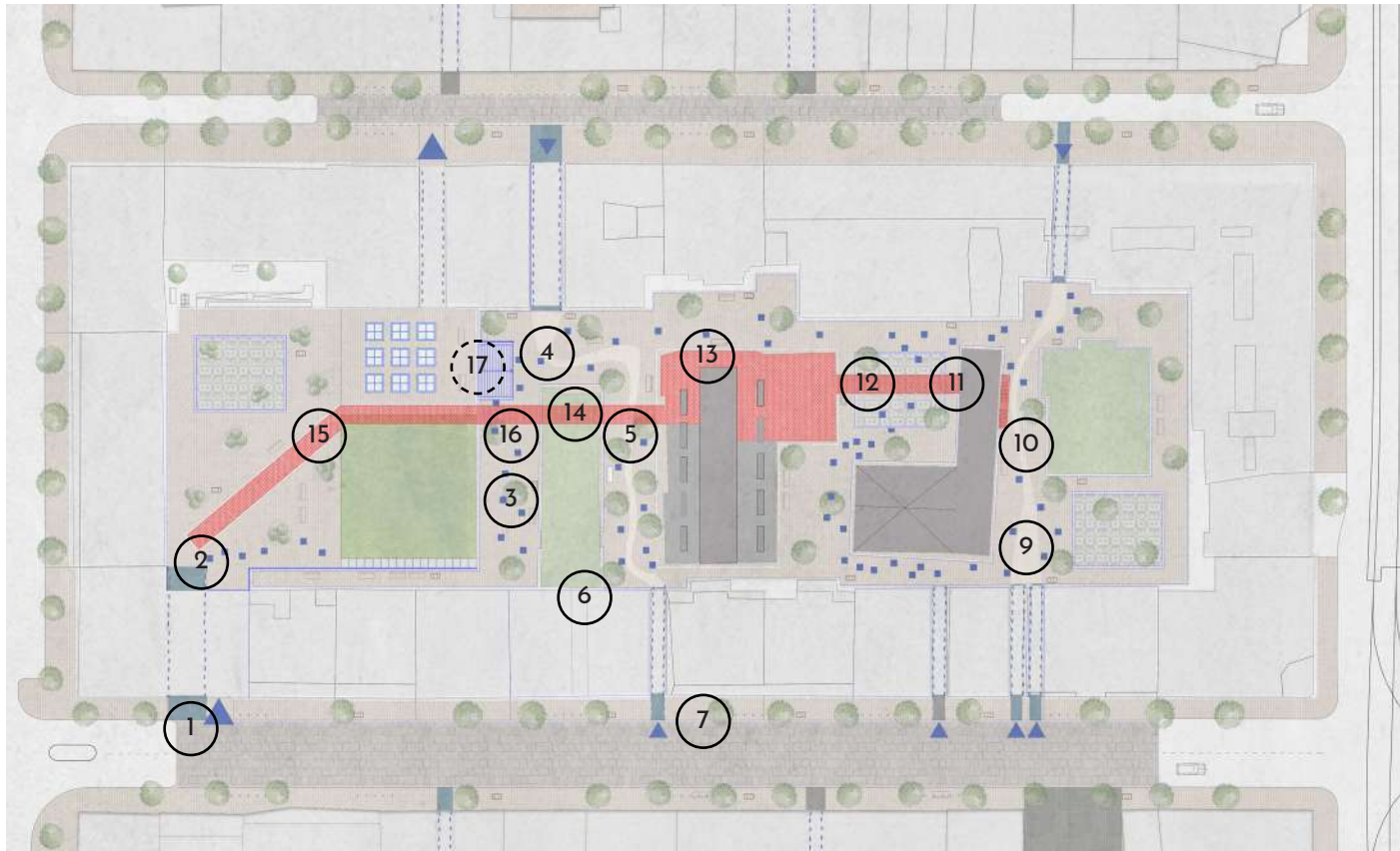
The seven blocks from Ortenovo Namesti to Holesovicka Trznice are interconnected by altering the built environment through public space which breaks the former separation of inside-outside. Although the solution doesn't remove the past experience, it opens up the opportunity to experience a mix of public, semi-public, and private connections for the benefit of the users throughout seven different blocks.

Since the area is filled with offices, businesses, and residents this makes the inter-linking passageways and reuse of the courtyard spaces a more appealing route. Colleagues who work near by could cut through the blocks passageways to a restaurant or other block for lunch instead of walking on the main street with the cars and trams down the 180m straight sidewalk. Or residents could go for a stroll after the saturday morning market at Holesovicka Trznice and then leisurely walk up through the different coutyards to grab a coffee, walk on the terrace, or rest in one of the many open yards.

Experiencing the courtyard space could be like any other public space, but one of the things that makes this project unique are the moments that are created because of the numerous routes that one could take.

To give an idea of how the courtyard is experiences by the user, this chapter will take a walk through the coutyard space. A walking map will act as a guide for a new user to the space and show the entry points to the block and then numerical values noting the parts that the sampled user would walk through to explore the courtyard.

0.91 TALKING A WALK- MAP

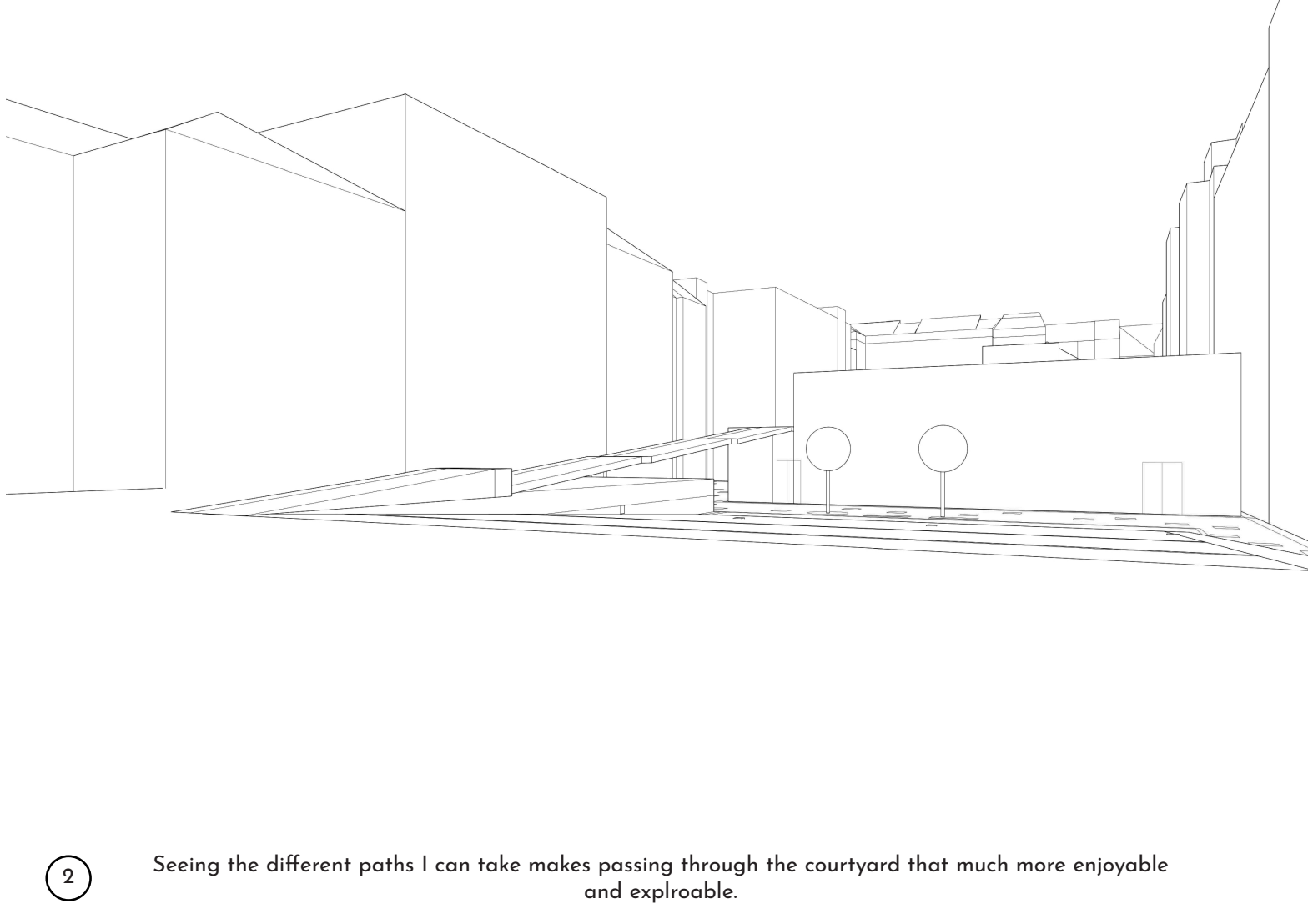


These are the moments on the map, taking a journey through the newly opened courtyard.

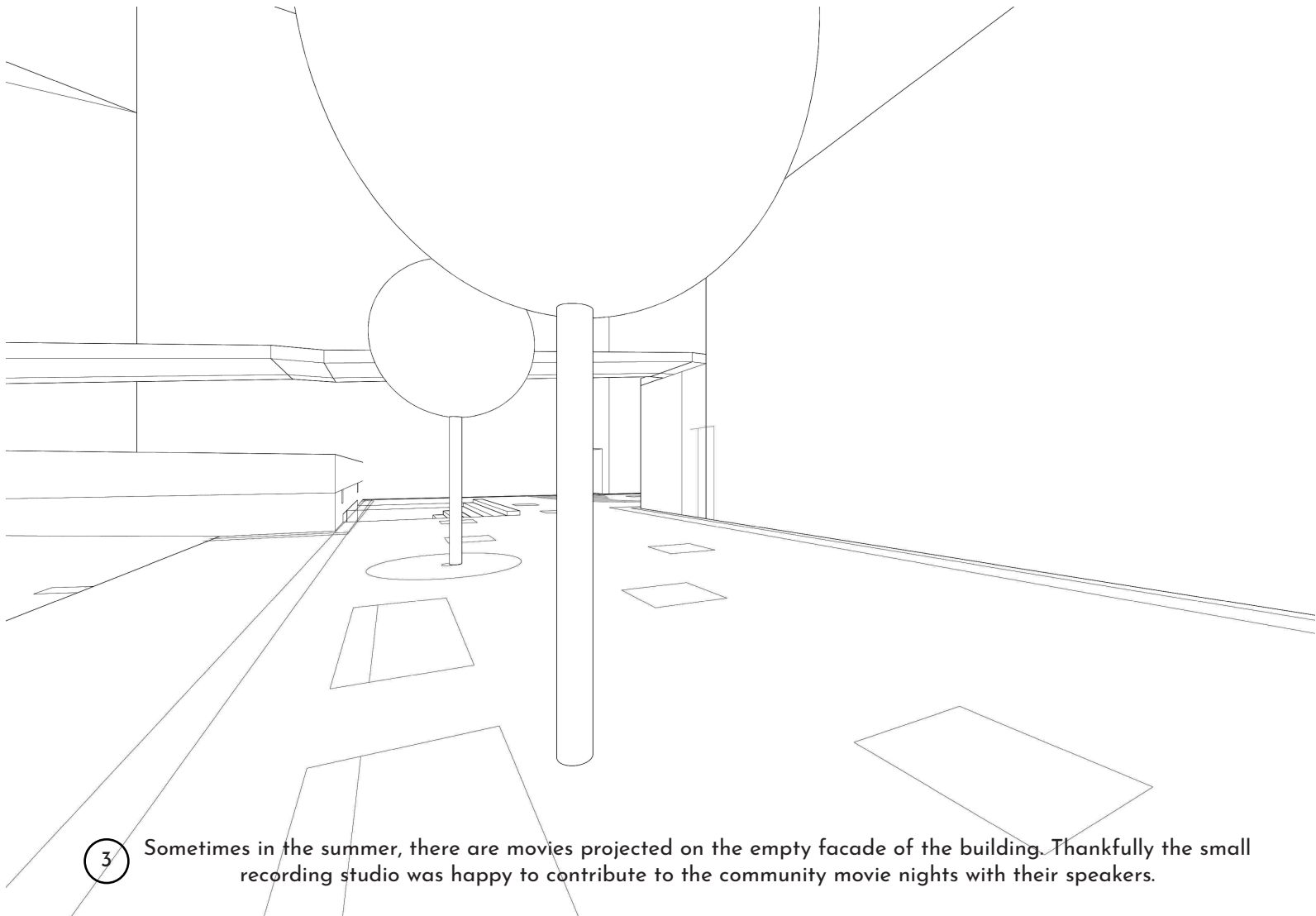
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Following the blue-tile road | 9. The meandering path |
| 2. Ontop of the world | 10. Red line entrance |
| 3. Walking down DOX 2 | 11. Walking the line |
| 4. Following the stone tiles | 12. Roof top rest stop |
| 5. Quaint promenade between buildings | 13. Walking above and across |
| 6. Middle exit from the block | 14. Towards the community garden |
| 7. Along the block | 15. car,movie, or market |
| 8. Another passage entrance | |



1 Took a walk with mom to the courtyard today! We passed a cool skater girl and the parking was pretty empty this weekend, but maybe next week there will be a market happening.



2 Seeing the different paths I can take makes passing through the courtyard that much more enjoyable and explorable.



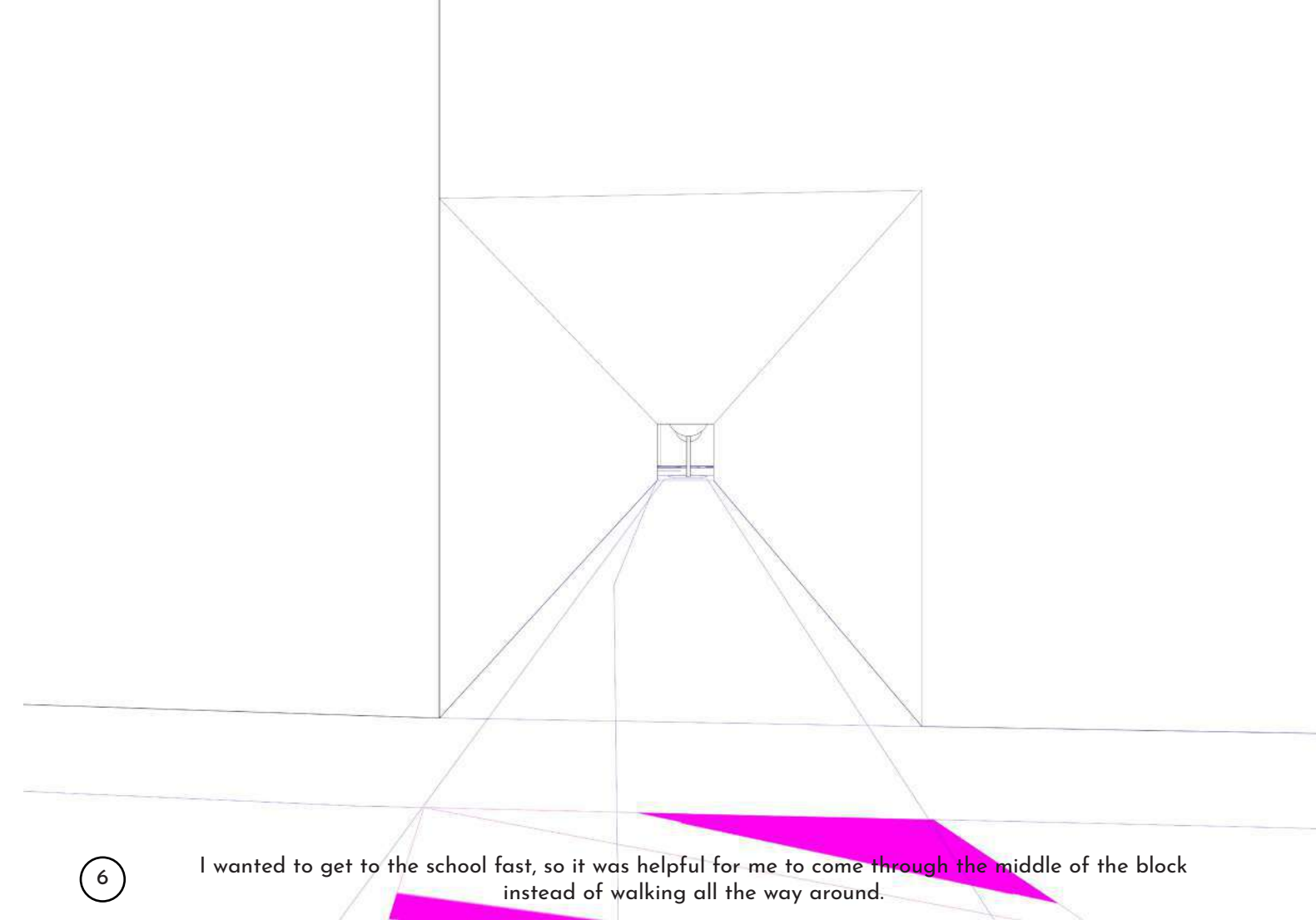
3 Sometimes in the summer, there are movies projected on the empty facade of the building. Thankfully the small recording studio was happy to contribute to the community movie nights with their speakers.



4 It's so nice to be able to pass through the courtyard. I love grabbing a coffee on my way towards the Holka bridge. It is better than driving with the cars sometimes.



5 In the fall, it's nice to see the leaves change color, it makes for a fun walk for my son and his friend. They try to catch the leaves, but I saunter through taking my surroundings.



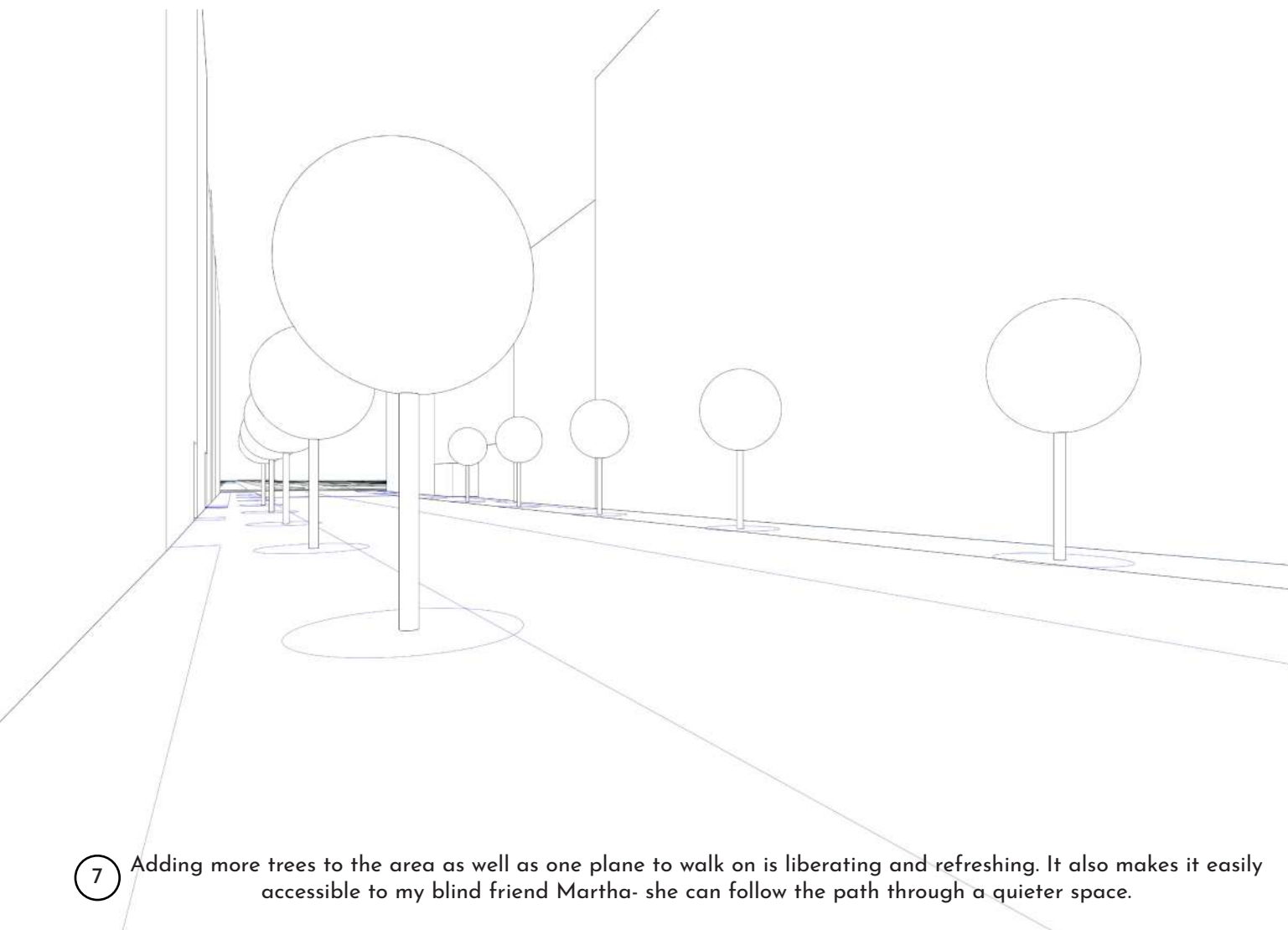
6 I wanted to get to the school fast, so it was helpful for me to come through the middle of the block instead of walking all the way around.



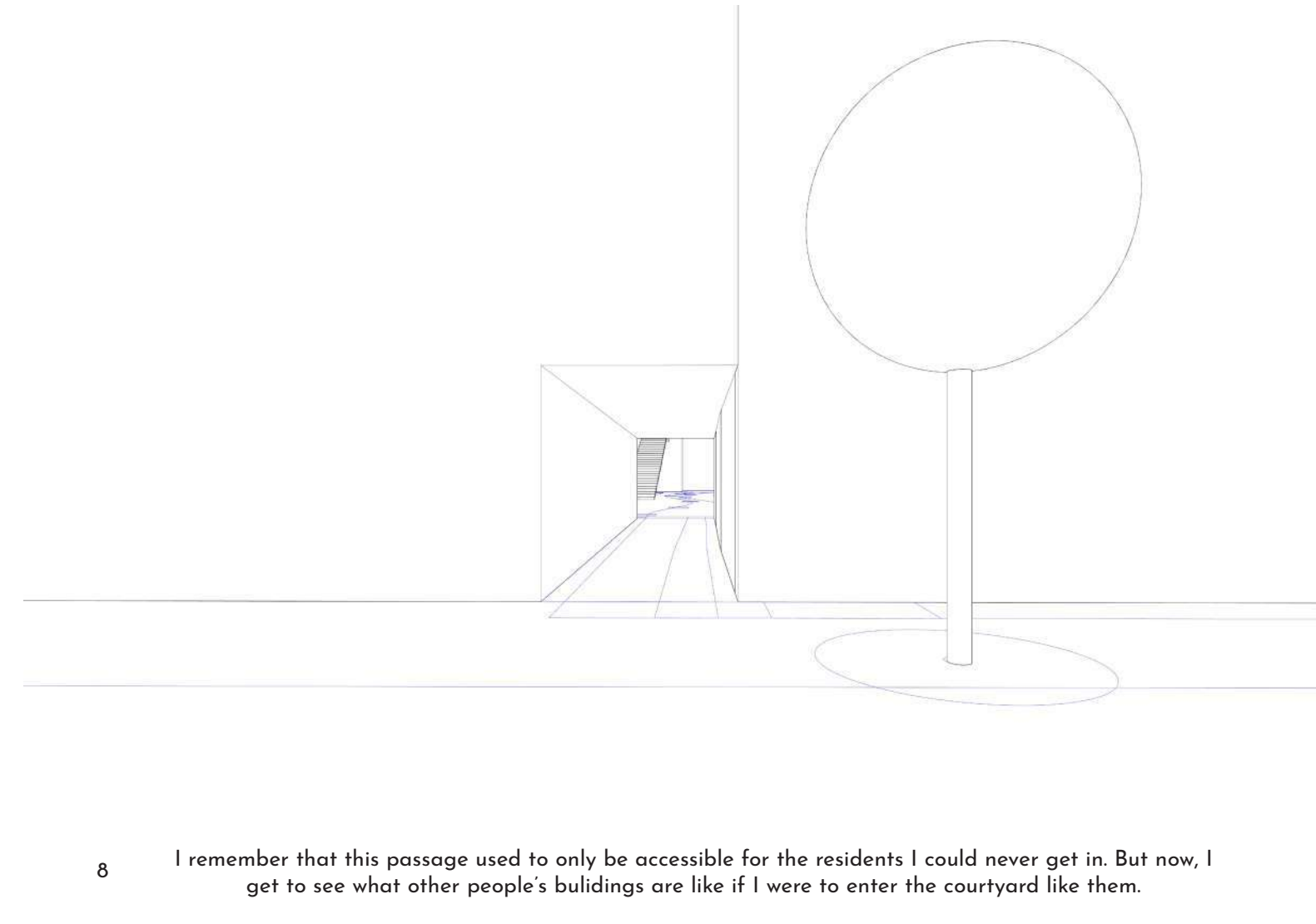
9 The material of this path is made from porous concrete blocks that absorb water. It gives my grandma a little peace of mind since she has bad memories from the last terrible one in 2011.



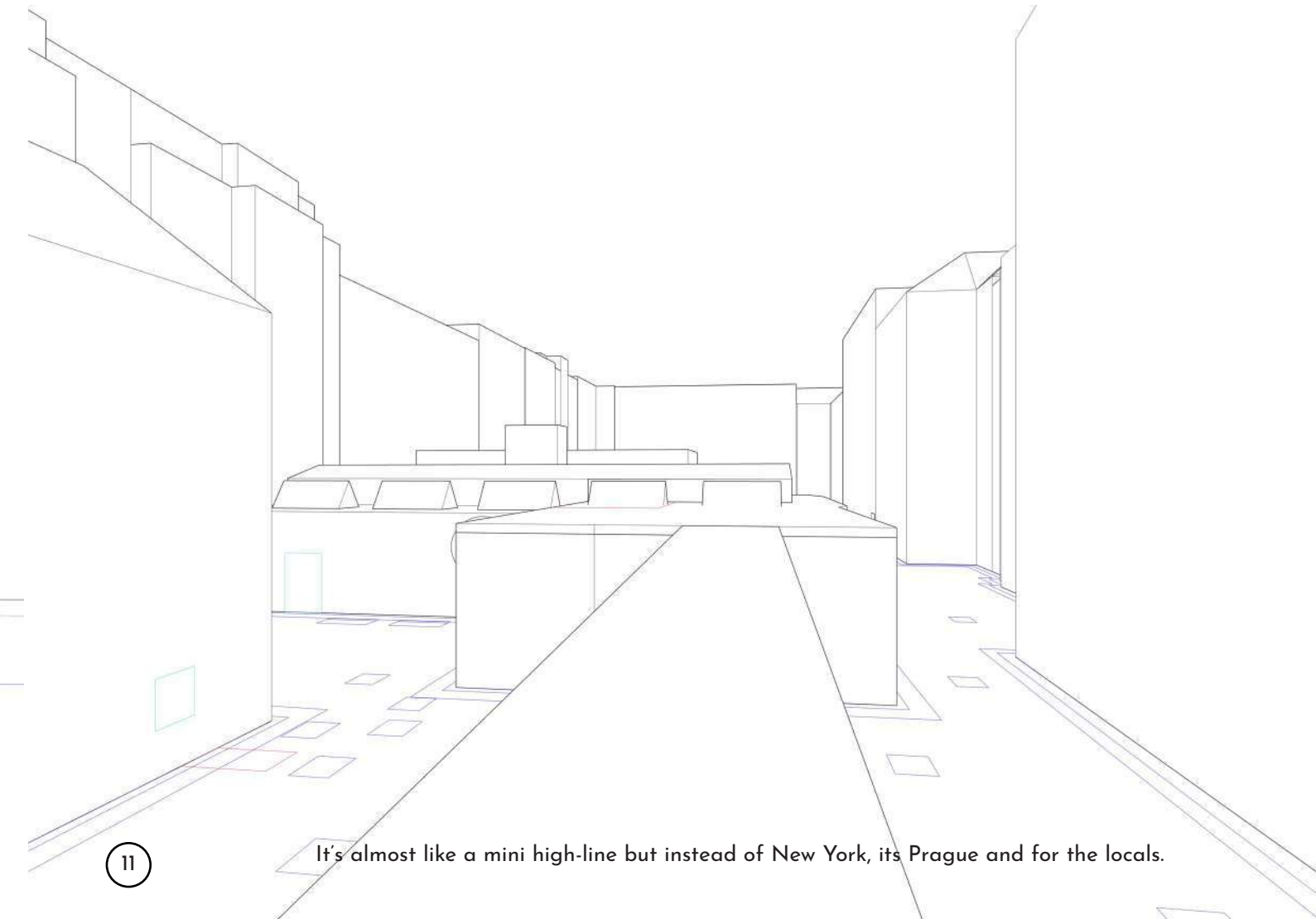
10 It's nice that this business here had a stairwell before. Now there is a cafe and entry point to the red line.



7 Adding more trees to the area as well as one plane to walk on is liberating and refreshing. It also makes it easily accessible to my blind friend Martha- she can follow the path through a quieter space.



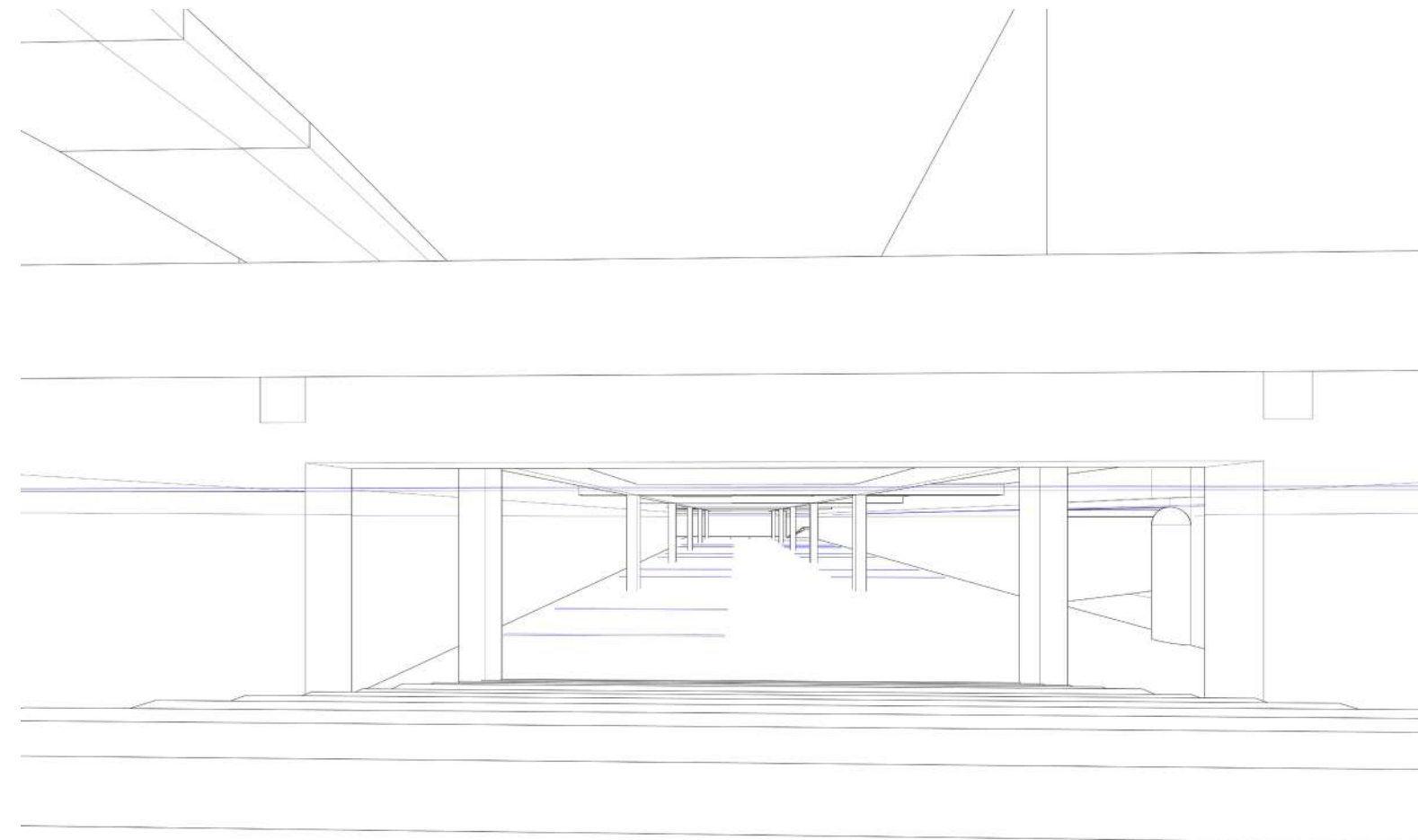
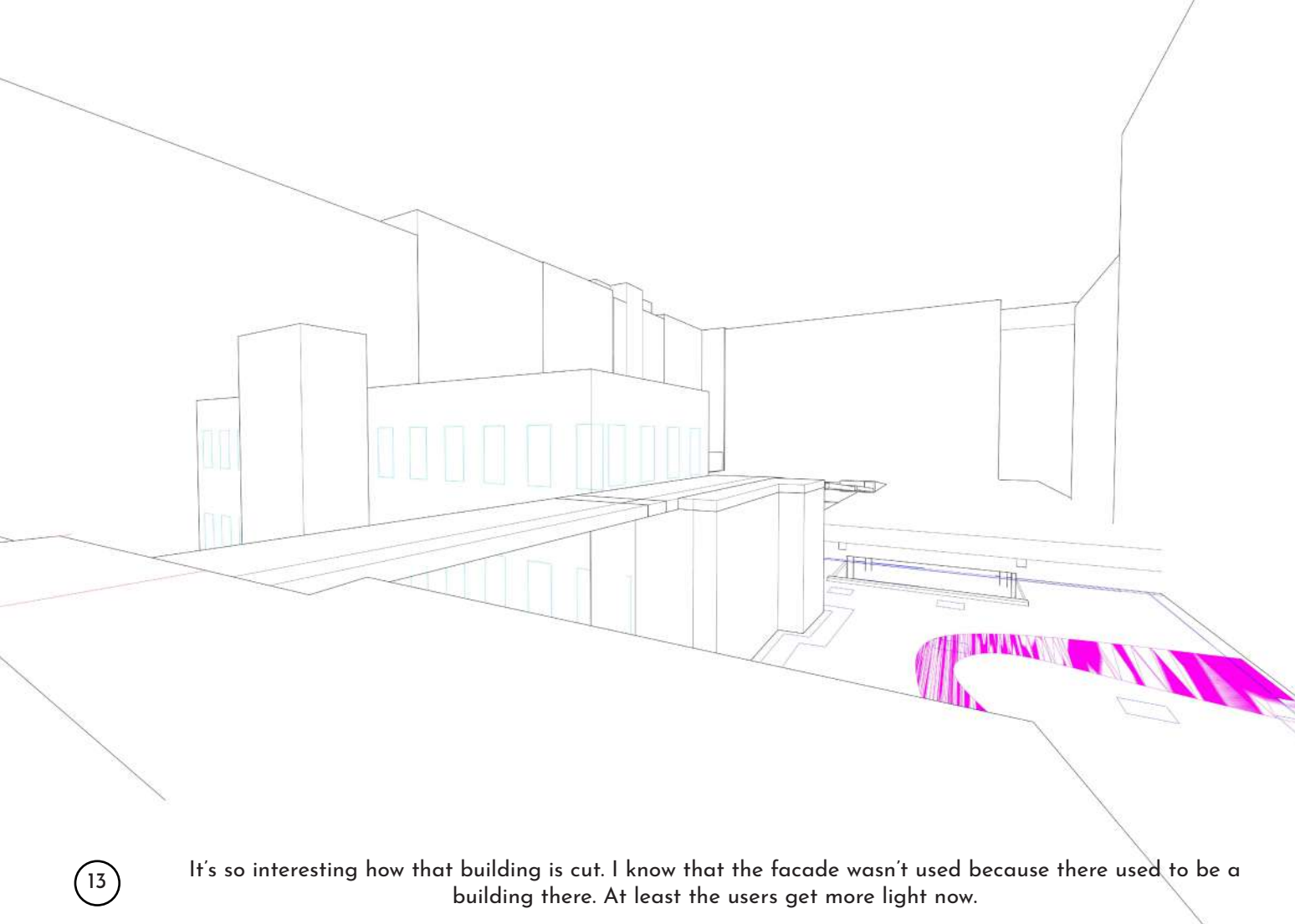
8 I remember that this passage used to only be accessible for the residents I could never get in. But now, I get to see what other people's buildings are like if I were to enter the courtyard like them.



11 It's almost like a mini high-line but instead of New York, it's Prague and for the locals.



12 Dedicek (grandpa) and I went on a walk through his courtyard today and we saw a hot air balloon! It made us think of the Zeplin in the courtyard a few blocks away, maybe we'll go there another day together.



0.92 MATERIAL & VEGETATION CATALOGUE



Paving 1- Stone main path type 1

This paving materials will be on the inner yards as the main texture for users.

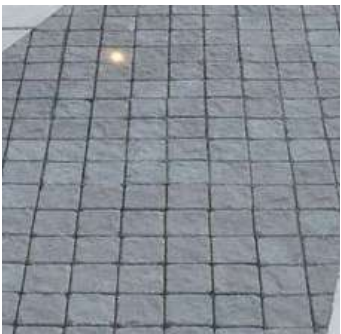


Paving 6- Street stones



Paving 2- Cobble stone side path linin- type 2

This frames the passageways going through the buildings.



Paving 7- Terracing material tiles



Paving 3- Sidewalk Cobble stone



Paving 8- Terrace Material grass



Paving 4- Stone Slate

Drainage cover and building outlines.



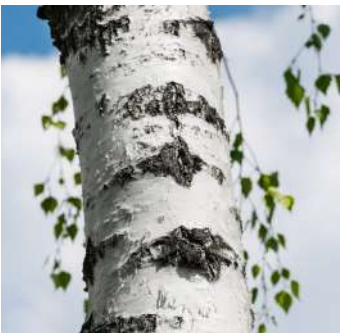
Paving 9- Terrace Material- play area



Paving 5- dirt path



Paving 10-Tree Type 2-Silver Linden



Vegetation 11- Tree type-1 Silver birch tree



Vegetation 12- Tree type-1 Silver birch tree



Paving 13-Outdoor tile type 1



Paving 14-Outdoor tile type 2



Paving 15- Outdoor tile type 3



Paving 16- Outdoor tile type 4



Paving 16- Outdoor tile type 5



Paving 17- Drainage line- Zinc coated steel



Paving 18- Metal grate-tree covering



Paving 18- Gravel- Type 1



Paving 19-Bollard mmcite



Paving 20-



21 Net- Metal mesh for railing



27 mmcite bins



22 Red line-perforated steel grate. Walkway material, light structure.



28 mmcite table- type 1



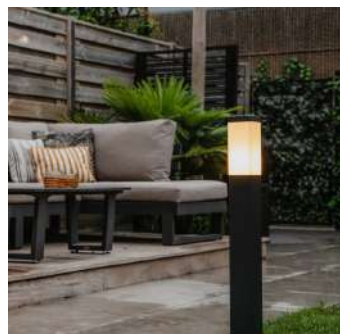
23 Terrace- astroturf



29 mmcite table- type 2



24- Community Garden- green house



30 lighting- lamp 1



25 mmcite bench- type 1



31 paving- porous cobble stone block



26 mmcite bench- type 2

0.94 TILE COMBINATION

The material catalogue plays an important role in the project. The textures, surfaces, and overall atmosphere that creates a good inneryard is largely from the material experience, especially with the plane (or carpet) that acts as a unifying element between the different blocks.

The identifying tile which guides the pedestrian into the passageways and through the inneryard is a combination of waterproof tiles arranged in a unique pattern. This eye-catching arrangement is meant to be vibrant and stand out compared to the rest of the paving. Instead of sticking with a typically Czech cobble stone the design combines a new pattern and material. The contrast from what locals are used to will catch their attention yet not be overwhelming in its appearance throughout the blocks.

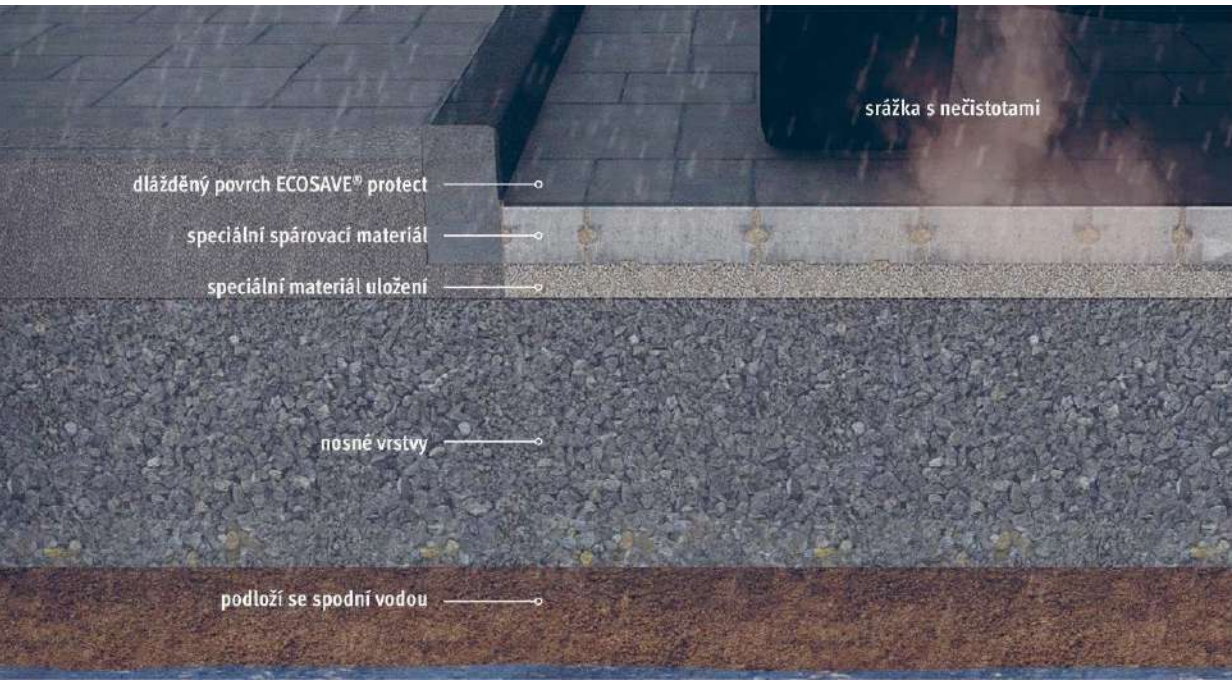
Although the references are not all from Czechia the outdoor weather-proofed tiles would be locally sourced. This will cause some variation in the materiality, however there are similar tiles available.



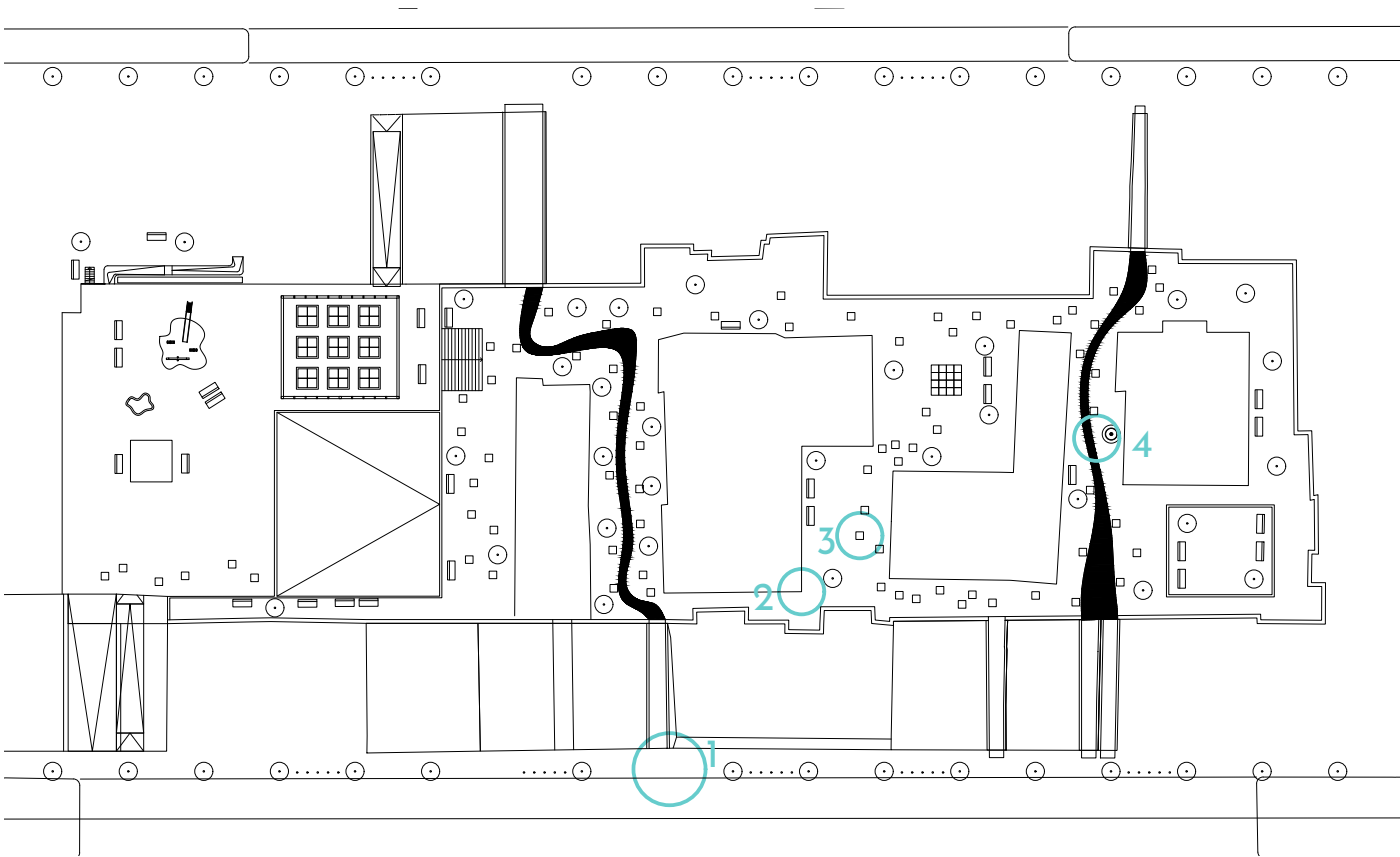
0.95 POROUS CONCRETE BLOCK

One of the materials is a concrete paving block which is porous. The ECOSAVE® tile by Godelmann enables maximum water absorption and evaporation, disappearing within twenty-two minutes without draining away. Unlike traditional pavements, which contribute to flooding and groundwater depletion, ECOSAVE® tiles allow water to soak in through the joints or the stone itself. They feature pores and retention channels that act as reservoirs for water, cooling the surface and significantly surpassing the absorption capacity of conventional paving materials.

This material is on the meandering path that passes through the block. Since the site is in a flood zone using materials that absorb water will help.

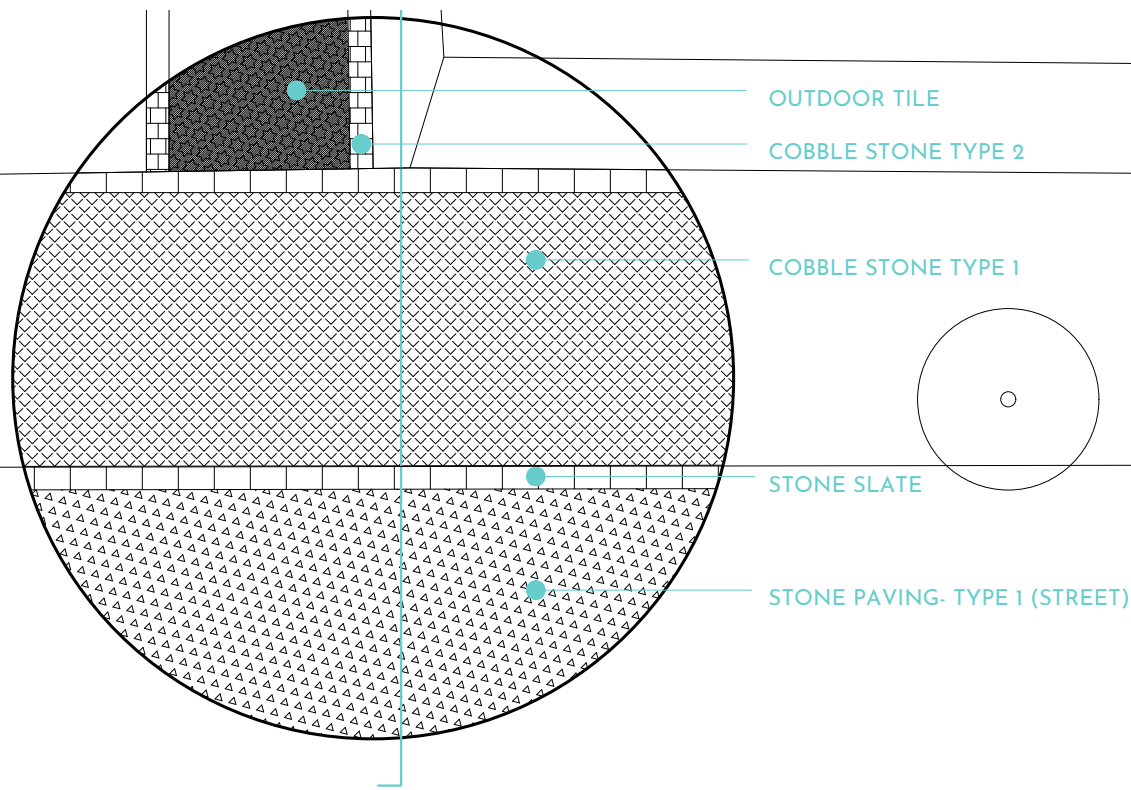


0.96 ILLUSTRATIVE DETAILS



To understand the significance of how the materials interact with each other there are a series of illustrative details showing how the materials work together. Each material has its role in the project, however the paving types are the most important.

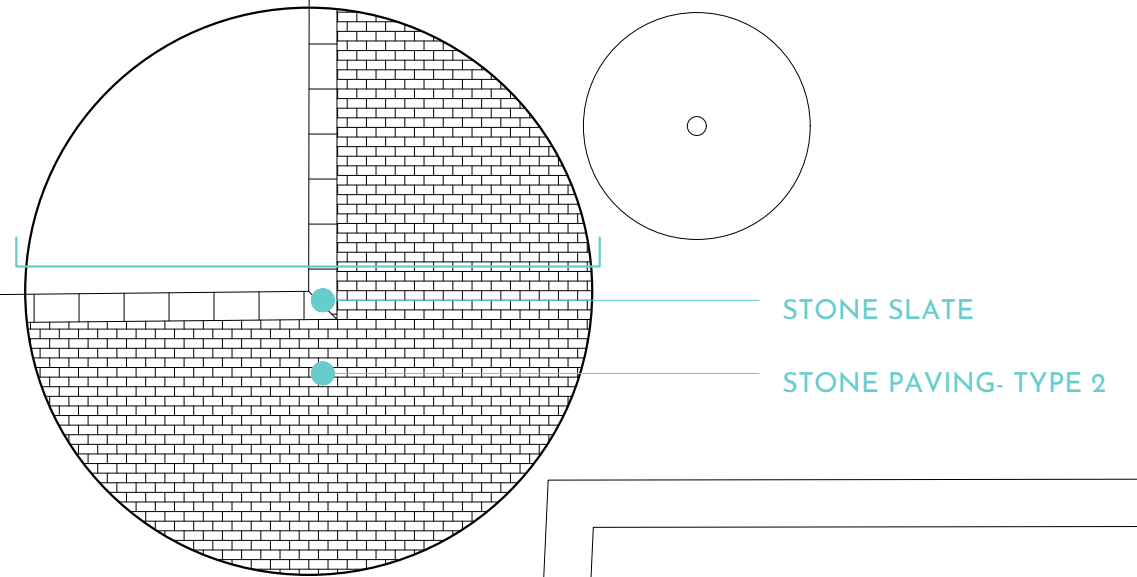
The paving is experienced in texture, walking environment, design, and as one plane. In the details it is drawing how the paving is at one level and the streets for the cars slope up at different points to meet the walking plane that interconnects the blocks.



Sidewalk-street detail

Detail 1- top view

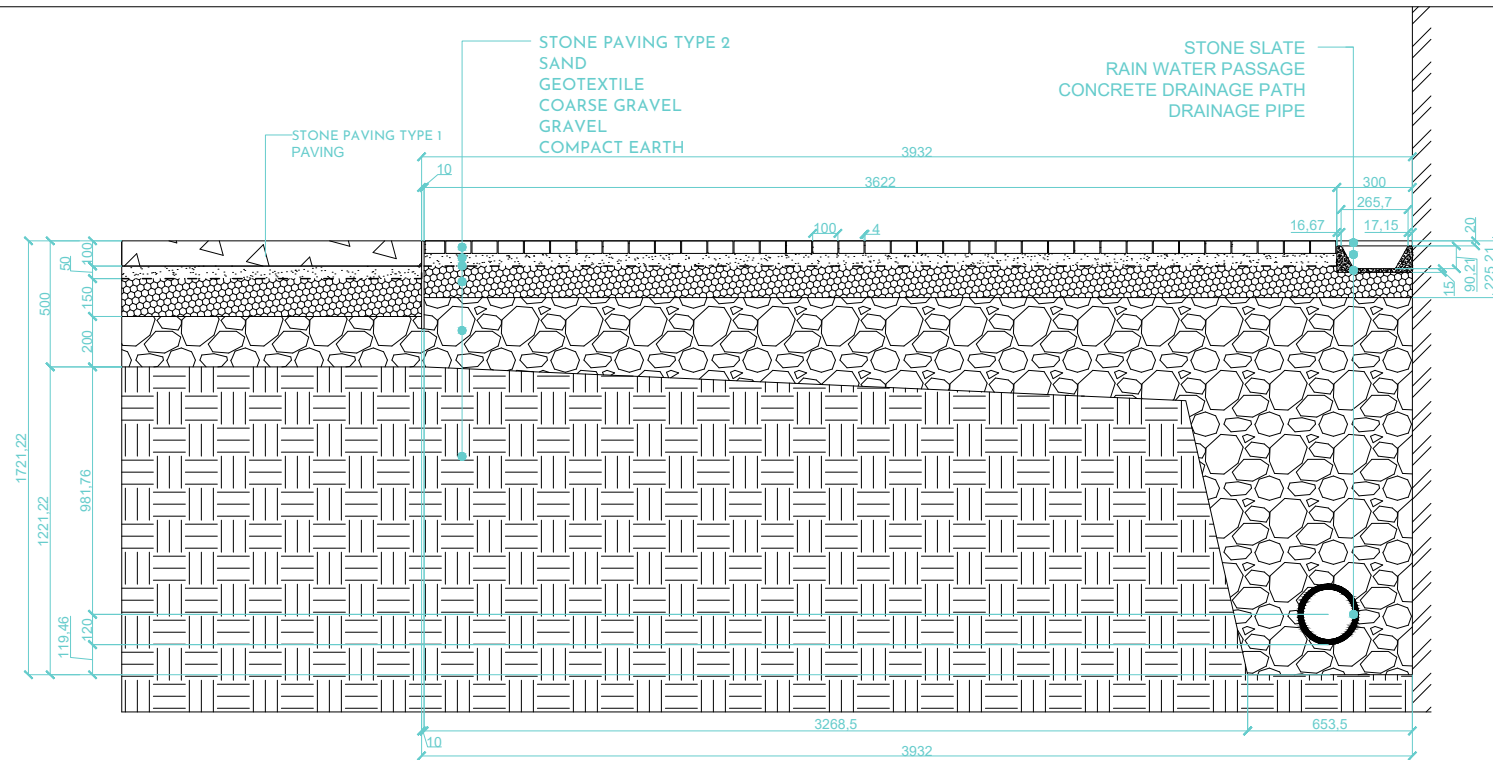
1:100



Sidewalk-building edge detail

Detail 2- top view

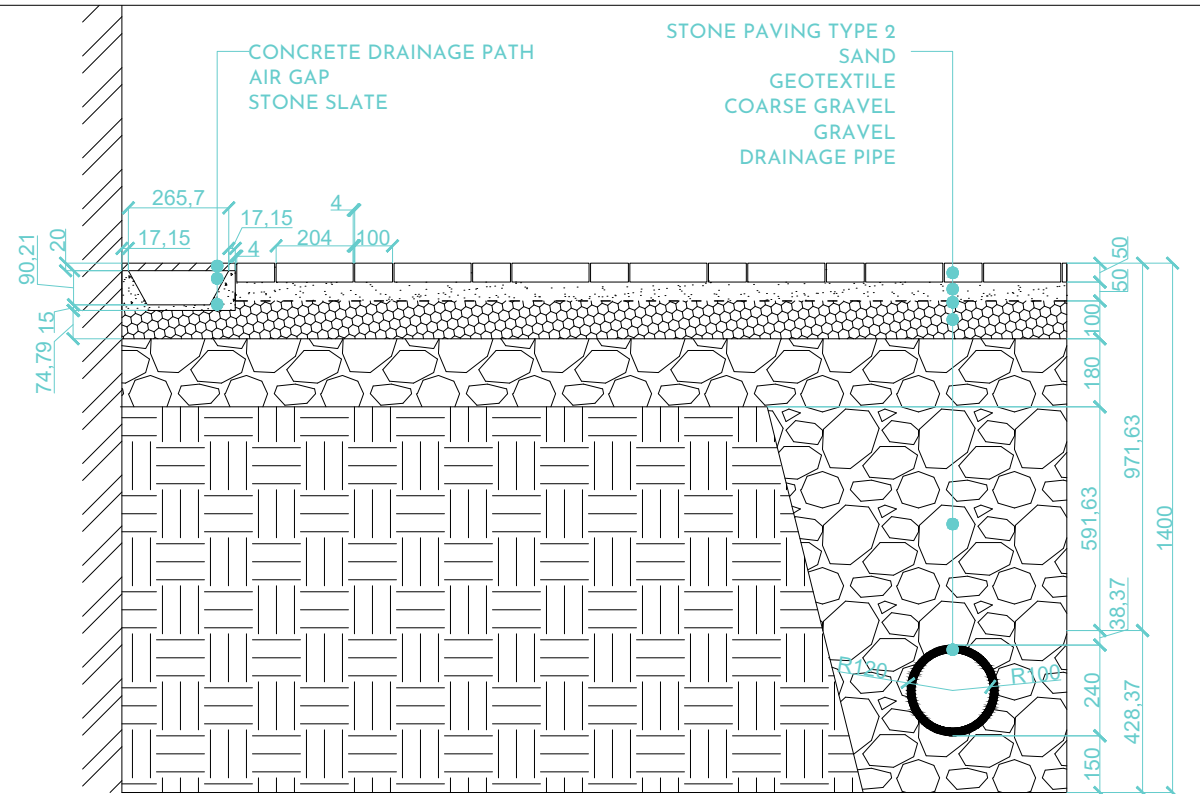
1:80



Sidewalk-street detail

Detail 1- section

1:30



Sidewalk-building edge detail

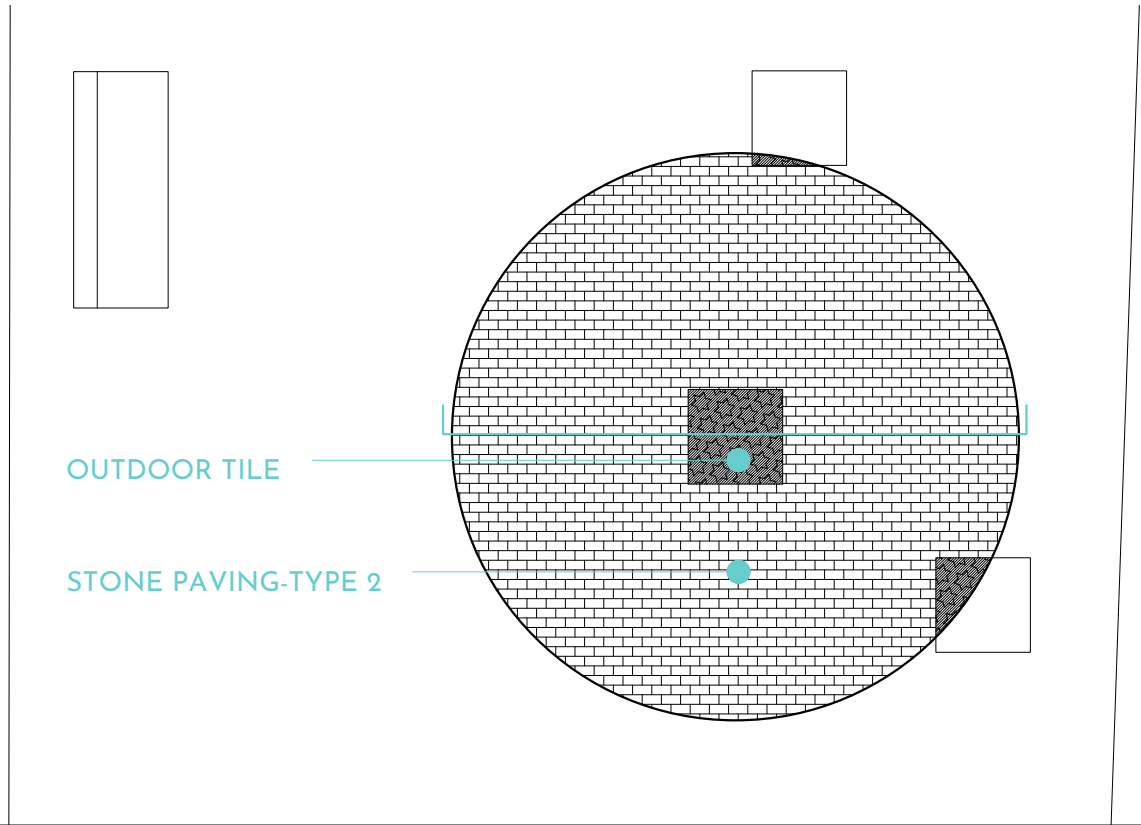
Detail 2- section

1:20

NOTES:

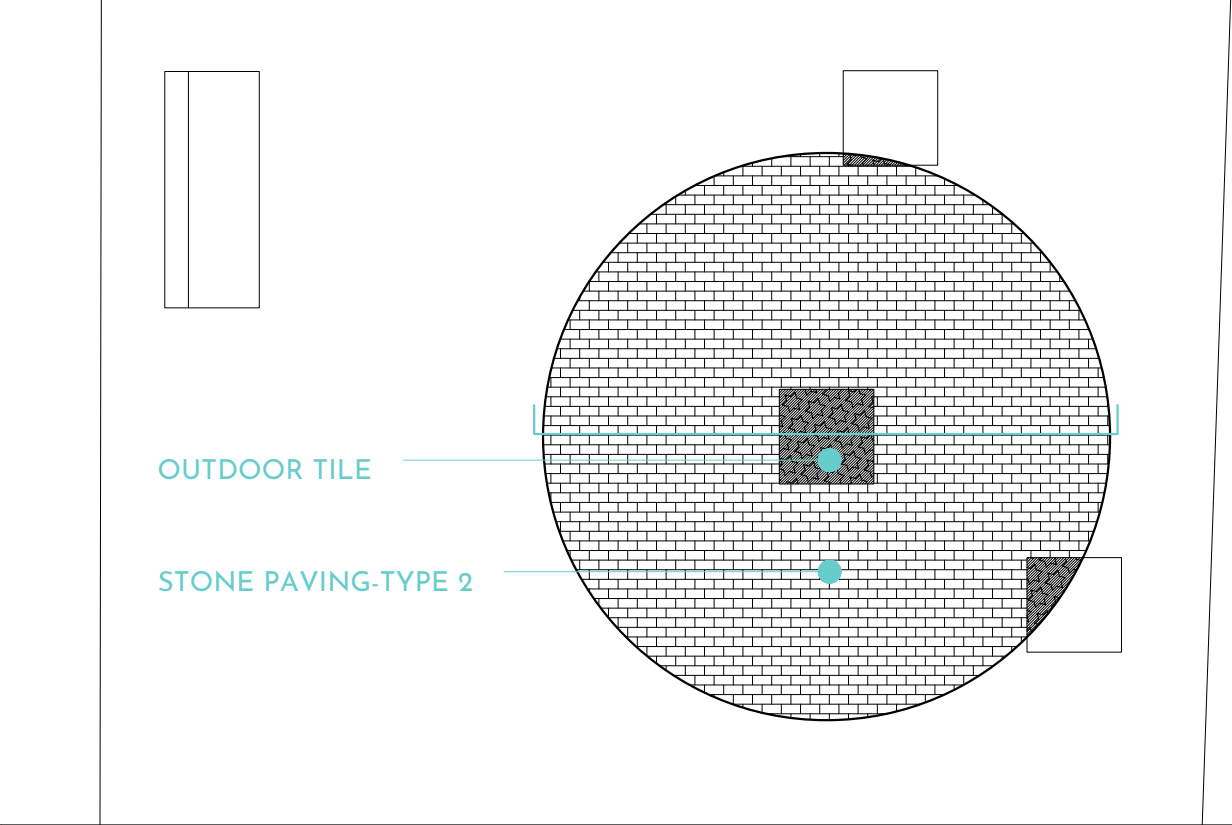
- All cobble stones 100mm x 100mm x 60 mm
- Stone slate 300mm x 20mm
- Street stone paving 300mm x 200mm x 100mm brickbond pattern laying
- Drainage pipe pvc, code specialized
- Concrete drainage pre-fabricated in 500 mm segments
- Outdoor tile weatherproofed, in 1000mm x 1000mm segments

NOTES:



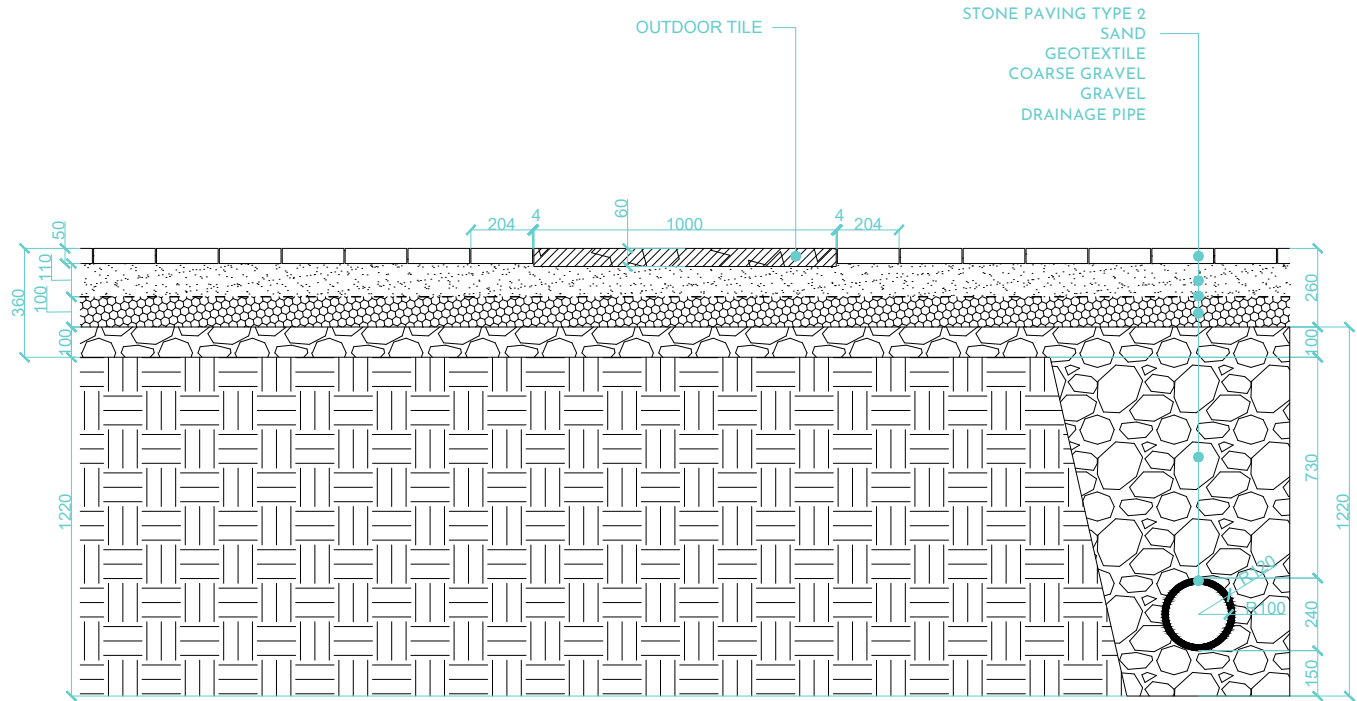
Sidewalk-tile detail
Detail 3- top view

1:80



Path-landscaping detail
Detail 4- top view

1:80

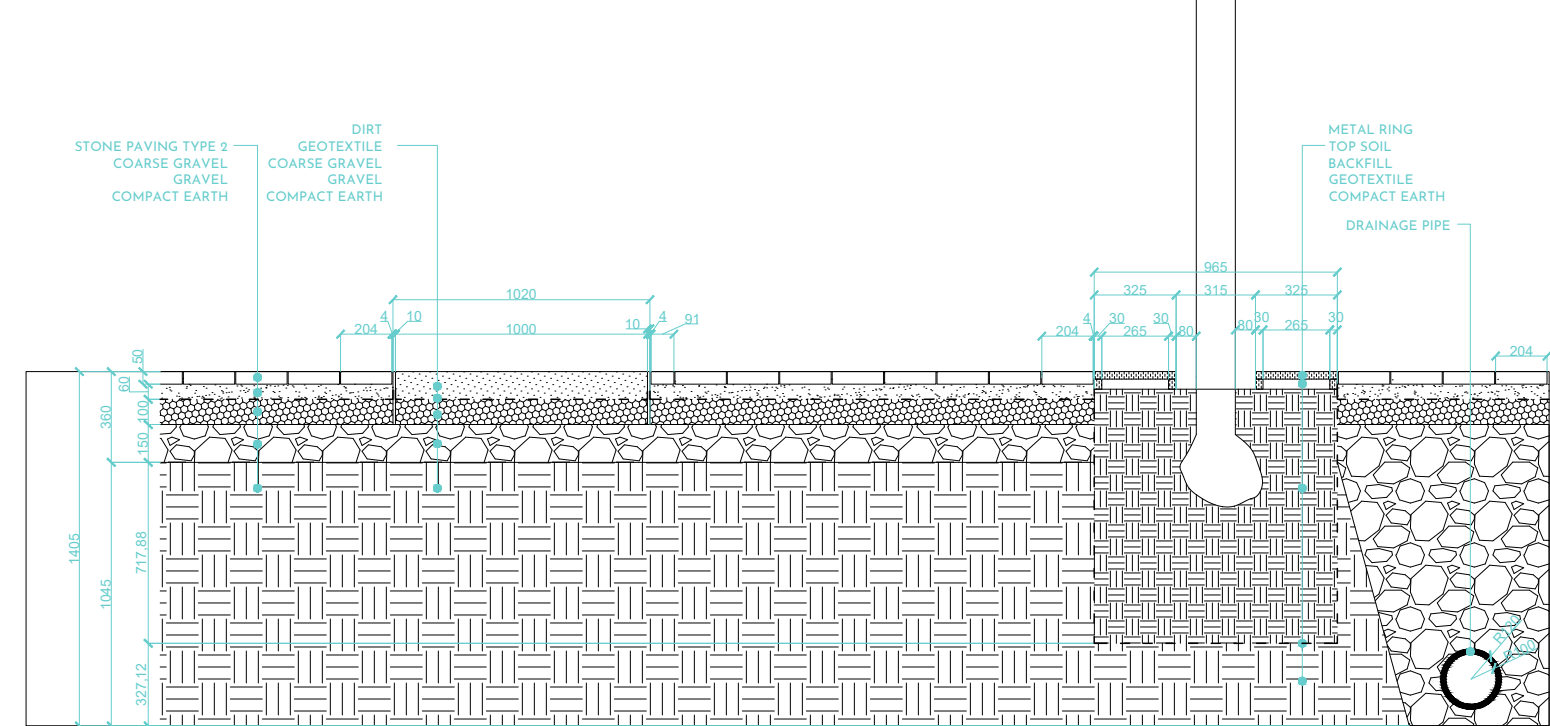


Sidewalk-tile detail
Detail 3- section

1:25

NOTES:

- Cobble stone type 2- 204mm x 100mm, argyle pattern laying
- Outdoor tile weatherproofed, 1000mm x 400mm
- Drainage pipe pvc, code specialized



Path-landscaping detail
Detail 4- section

1:30

NOTES:

- Cobble stone type 2- 204mm x 100mm, argyle pattern laying
- Tree Sappling, Tree type 1
- Metal grate prefabricated, assembled on site
- Dirt path fine aggregate
- Zinc coated steel tree ring- prefabricated porous grate. Assembled onsite
- Tree- type 1. Specified in material catalogue



CHAPTER 10



"It is the traditional theme of this city of the passing of spaces and times in the infinitely transparent and mirroring glass passages, the theme of the presence of something wider, a kind of macrocosm in every part, in every microcosm. The strange gloomy transparency of separate spaces and at the same time their impenetrability - I feel an element in it, wandering, searching for a goal..."

Vaclav Havel

10. IMPLICATIONS ON THE FUTURE

Knowing the city, with its various building forms, its history, and the varied spaces that are throughout the different districts, makes it special for all its unique layering that has made it the way it is today. These layers will continue to build and grow, some morphing together, others creating microlayers beneath the others- all contributing to the dynamics that cultivate the built environment of the city.

This project might not push architectural boundaries with its loud design of a new facade or a new kind of building that would become an icon for the city, but rather it creates a humble trademark for the locals. This trademark, just like the meandering streets of the medieval city center, is something that resonates with people without needing to create a loud icon of design. That original DNA with its gems of hidden courtyards, passageways, churches, and monuments, is what attracts people to the city to begin with. After searching through each layer we were able to see how there is still that essence of the past in reading the forms of the buildings. This essence is uncovered in the DNA of the typical block structure today still holding traces of its origins.

Those traces, abstracted or pulled out from each layer, are what has been brought to fruition in the proposal. It not only carries traces of the past but it also allows for the metamorphosis of the new block types. Where those micro layers of public-private relations, and the relationship to the ground are incorporated into the built environment to upgrade what used to work well with a block type that works better. It works better because it is created from a user-centric design, it plans densification of the extending city center and introduces a step in the direction of abating public-private rigidities, and today there are plenty of opportunities to incorporate this into- like looking back at the Bubny Development.

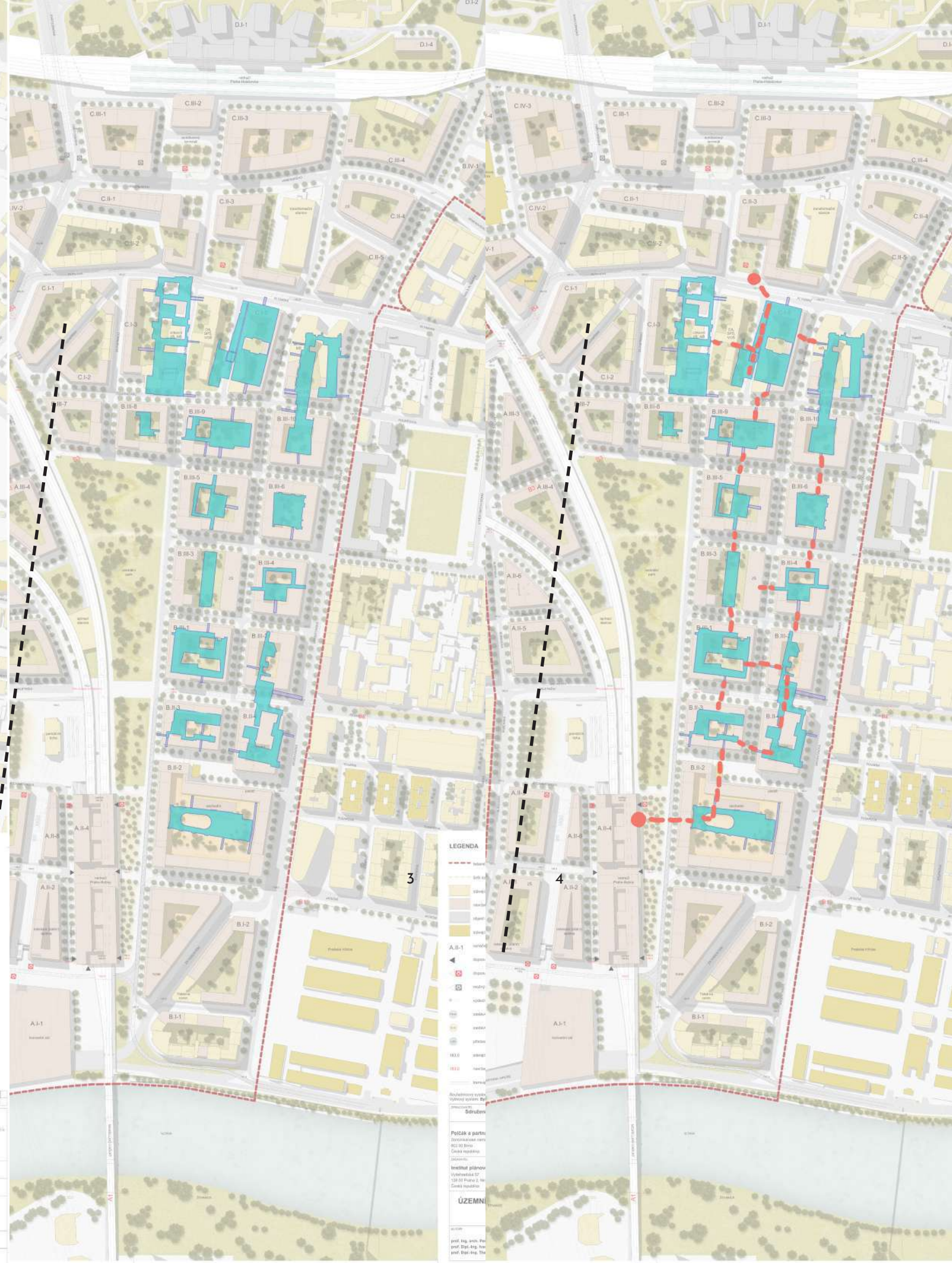
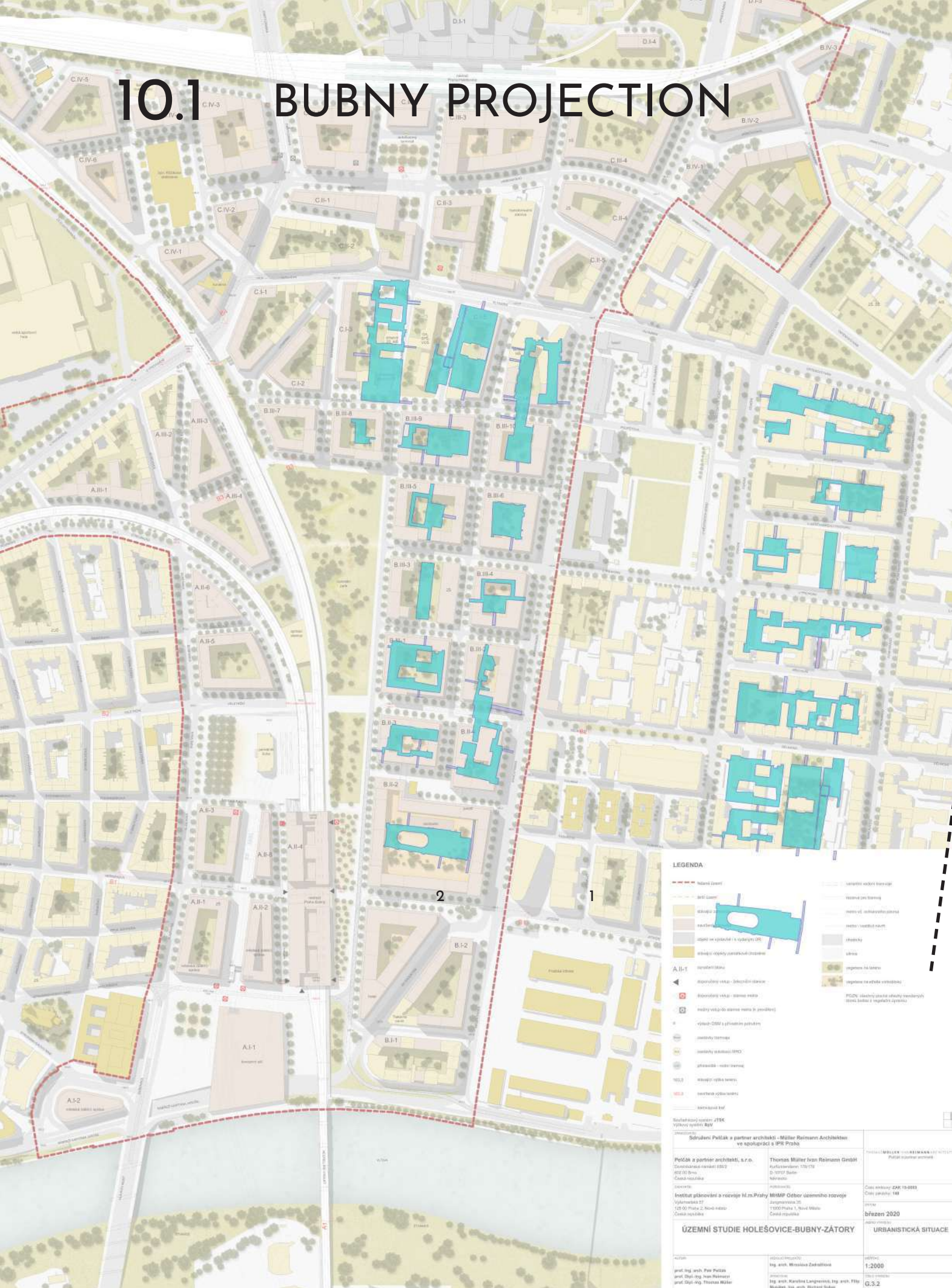
The Bubny development is building multiple blocks of buildings over the next decade or so. As far as the plans and forms read, the block structures have nothing out of the ordinary. However, this is a chance to implement this idea of greater permeability from the beginning of the development.

If you look at the maps on the following pages you'll see that it is possible to take the abstractions from the proposal and project them onto the Bubny blocks. The projected abstractions, as you know, hold different functions for the range of public to private, which fits and brings permeability to the newly proposed blocks.

This topic and proposal are very relevant today because it is even being used in an ongoing project today. If architects or developers could take one extra step and integrate just a few passageways it gives a way for people to step in later down the line. As simple as it sounds, permeating the block and giving shortcuts allows an opportunity for locals to get to know each other and the buildings around them better and that eventually leads to creating more community. Before you know it, there are small clothing exchanges or bake sales happening in the courtyard and then it could turn into a weekly market or a business.

Allowing this space is also beneficial from the architect's perspective because you start to get more of the public and people involved in the design process. More niche architectural and urbanistic questions start to appear which challenges us as architects to think beyond our simple block method and to find the small synapses and nerves that run through blocks.

10.1 BUBNY PROJECTION



In the larger scheme of architectural history, this block transformation is the combination of old and new. It will be noted as some of the humble yet desired design approaches that make the built environment pleasant for the people in the city.

Cities today are in a mixed era of 'contemporary'. This 'contemporary' architectural movement is increasingly shifting away from large and flashy designs of starchitects and shifting towards designs that are sustainable, material conscious, and built for people. To enter the discourse with this project, it would be regarded as a humble solution that is disruptive to sensitive historical events that greatly hang over the Czech people yet is a solution that they would be more likely to move towards rather than filling the blocks with new buildings; resulting in overcrowded blocks and no open courtyards.

In the future, the block structure is not likely to disappear any time soon and that comes with the opportunity to adapt and improve them. The enclosed inner yards were never meant to be watched from the window but experienced and enjoyed. Opening up some walls for a new passage into the inner yard is just the beginning of new architectural, social, and urban opportunities.

Citations and References

1. Butler, Kate. "Bohemian and nationalist narratives: The passageways of Prague". Architecture AU. 07 June 2017. <https://architectureau.com/articles/the-passageways-of-prague/>

2. Prague Now. "Covered Passages: Shortcuts and Alternative Routes. Prague Now. 2014-2024. <https://prague-now.com/history/covered-passages-shortcuts-and-alternative-routes/>

3. MapaMatky. "Passage Routes". MapaMatky. 2024. <https://mapamatky.cz/en/trasy/passage-route/>

4. MIA. "A hidden, neglected gem in Prague 1." Modernism in Architecture. 2024. Ferdinand Baumann House in Prague by Evžen Rosenberg (modernism-in-architecture.org)

5. Series. "It could be the architectural pride of Prague. However, the Stepanska passage is falling into disrepair". IDNES.cz. 08 October 2020. It could be the architectural pride of Prague. However, the Stephan Passage is falling into disrepair - iDNES.cz

6. Wikipedia. 'Josef Vilimek'. Wikipedia printing press. Josef R. Vilímek Publishing House - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

7. Josef Vilimek (April 1, 1835 – December 27, 1911), Czechoslovakian Republic writer | World Biographical Encyclopedia (prabook.com)

8. Josef Richard Vilímek Sr. biography | Database of books (databazeknih.cz)

9. Slovanský Dum. "Slavonic house as an icon of the shopping class with a rich history". Slovanský Dum. 2024. https://slovanskydum.cz/cs_CZ/svet-slovanskeho-domu/slovansky-dum-jako-ikona-nakupni-tridy-s-bohatou-historii

10. Prague.eu. "Týnský dvůr – Ungelt". Prague City Tourism. <https://www.prague.eu/cs/objekt/mista/1260/tynsky-dvur-ungelt>

11. Praha7. "About Prague 7". Městská část Praha 7. 2024. <https://www.praha7.cz/en/welcome-to-prague-7-city-district/#:~:text=History%20of%20Prague%207,and%20fishing%2C%20and%20for%20agriculture.>

12. Správa železnic. "Reconstruction of the Historical Negrelli Viaduct Begins in Prauge. It will take almost three years." Správa železnic. 08 June 2017. <https://www.spravazeleznic.cz/web/en/press/press-releases/negrelliho-viadukt-rekon.>

13. IPR. "DvePrahy". Iprplanninginstitute. 2024. <https://www.dveprahy.cz/>

14. Anderson, Megan. "7 cool neighborhoods in Prague you have to visit". Packing up the pieces. 2024. <https://www.packing-up-the-pieces.com/discover-these-hidden-neighborhoods-in-prague/#:~:text=Hole%C5%A1ovice%20is%20one%20of%20the,bookshops%2C%20arts%2C%20and%20pubs.>

15. Pirodsky, Jason. "Time Out ranks Prague's Holešovice district as world's 20th coolest neighborhood". Expatz.cz. 06 October 2020. <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/time-out-ranks-prague-s-holesovice-district-as-world-s-20th-coolest-neighborhood>

16. Kami. "Holešovice- A Mini Guide to Prague's Coolest District". Kami & the rest of the world. 04 January 2024. <https://www.mywanderlust.pl/holesovice-prague-guide/>

17. Image citation: Stepanska pasaze <https://praha.camp/magazin/detail/funkcionalismus-a-techno-se-spolkem-mapamatky-po-stopach-stepanske-pasaze-a-moderniho-hudebniho-klubu>

18. Den Architektura. "PRAGUE – NEW STAGE OF THE NATIONAL THEATER – CAPACITY FILLED". Day of Architecture. 2024. <https://archiv.denarchitektury.cz/program/praha-nova-scena-narodniho-divadla/#:~:text=Bru-talistn%C3%AD%20budova%2C%20odokon%C4%8Den%C3%A1%20roku%201983,a%20divadeln%C3%AD%20s%C3%A1l%20nebyl%20sou%C4%8D%C3%A1st%C3%AD.>

19. Narodni Divadlo. "New Scene- History. Narodni Divadlo". 2024. <https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/cs/sceny/nova-scena/historie>

20. IPR Praha. Geoportal Online Map. IPR. 2024. <https://app.iprpraha.cz/apl/app/atlas-prahy/>

21. IPR Praha. DvePrahy. IPR. 2024. <https://www.dveprahy.cz/>

22. ChatGPT. AI Software. 2024. Chat.open.ai

23. Brožová, Michaela; Hebler, Anne; and Scaler, Chantal. "Praha Průhody a Pasáže". Euro Art Company. 1997. ISBN: 80-7207-029-0.

24. Institute Terezinske iniciativy. "ANTI-JEWISH POLICY AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROTECTORATE OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA. Institute Terezinske iniciativy. 05 September 2011. <https://www.holocaust.cz/en/history/final-solution/the-final-solution-of-the-jewish-question-in-the-bohemian-lands/anti-jewish-policy-after-the-establishment-of-the-protectorate-of-bohemia-and-moravia/>

25. Prague Radio. "Restiution law came into force 30 years ago. Property disputes continue to this day". Radio Prague Intl. 28 March 2021. <https://english.radio.cz/restitution-law-came-force-30-years-ago-property-disputes-continue-day-8712780>

26. Tycner, Adam. "Reprivatisation changed the Czech Republic." ENRS. 20 August 2013. <https://enrs.eu/article/reprivatisation-changed-the-czech-republic>

27. Demela, Jan; Mikula, Štěpán. "Private Property in Communist Czechoslovakia". ECONSTOR make your publications visible. 30 September 2015. https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/179838/1/revecp_v15_i3_p327-343.pdf

28. Horakova, Nicole. "A Mistrustful Society?: The Lack of Trust in Government Institutions in the Czech Republic". ResearchGate. December 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350596859_A_Mistrustful_Society_The_Lack_of_Trust_in_Government_Institutions_in_the_Czech_Republic

29. Radio Prague International. "Prague housing crisis impacting "more people than it used to before", says expert". Radio Prague International. 27 March 2024. <https://english.radio.cz/prague-housing-crisis-impacting-more-people-it-used-says-expert-8812530>

30. Flexi-mesh. "Our Design". Flexi-Mesh. 2024. <https://fleximesh.com/our-design/>

31. ArchDaily. "Little Red Elizabeth Andrews". Andrew Bartle Architects. 2014. https://www.archdaily.com/640169/little-red-elizabeth-irwin-andrew-bartle-architects/55763170e58ecea2a000081-little-red-elizabeth-irwin-andrew-bartle-architects-photo?next_project=no

32. Špaček Ladislav. "Mozaiková dlažba a pražské chodníky". Příloha Věstníku Za starou Prahu č. 2/2009. https://www.zastarouprahu.cz/webdata/87AD4DB3-AC95-4844-BB56-42FC8CEOC555_02.pdf

33. <https://www.mmcite.com/us/landscape>

34. <https://www.ceskestavby.cz/clanky/predstavujeme-betonovou-dlazbu-propoustejici-vodu-a-chranici-spodni-vody-pred-znecistenim-27706.html>

35. https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdurablegreenbed.com%2Fcommunity-gardens%2F&psig=AOvVaw3Z2beHHPCSQnZ_YyERK-jt&ust=1715156192965000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=OCBQQjhxFwoTCJiu2e6M-4UD-FQAAAAAdAAAAABAR