

_positions

“Architecture as a site of contention.”

Vishesh Sahni

Architecture is not a neutral practice. It is an act of positioning, taking sides, negotiating tensions, and critically engaging with the world. This portfolio, titled “*_positions*”, refuses the comfort of architectural neutrality. Instead, it foregrounds design as a site of conflict, contradiction, and possibility. At its core, “*_positions*” interrogates the dominant narratives of architectural practice, narratives that privilege seamless aesthetics, new construction, and surface stability. It challenges the logic of the tabula rasa, arguing that architecture is not merely the creation but a negotiation of forces: material, spatial, temporal, and ecological. Each project within this body of work is a critical gesture, a stance against the default design conditions. The portfolio engages architecture as a dialogue between rupture and repair, memory and erasure, and surface and depth. It explores the potential of fragments, waste, and discarded materials as innovation sites, where what is broken is not erased but reconfigured. It questions the aestheticization of sustainability, revealing the ecological costs that often remain concealed behind green facades. “*_positions*” is not a collection of solutions but a series of provocations, a practice of architecture that refuses closure. It is an archive of critical positions confronting, questioning, and reimagining design possibilities.

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1	beyond the coordinates of loss
2	a rock born paradox
3	a complex ensemble of time
4	anatomy of repair
5	the living block

_beyond the coordinates¹ of loss

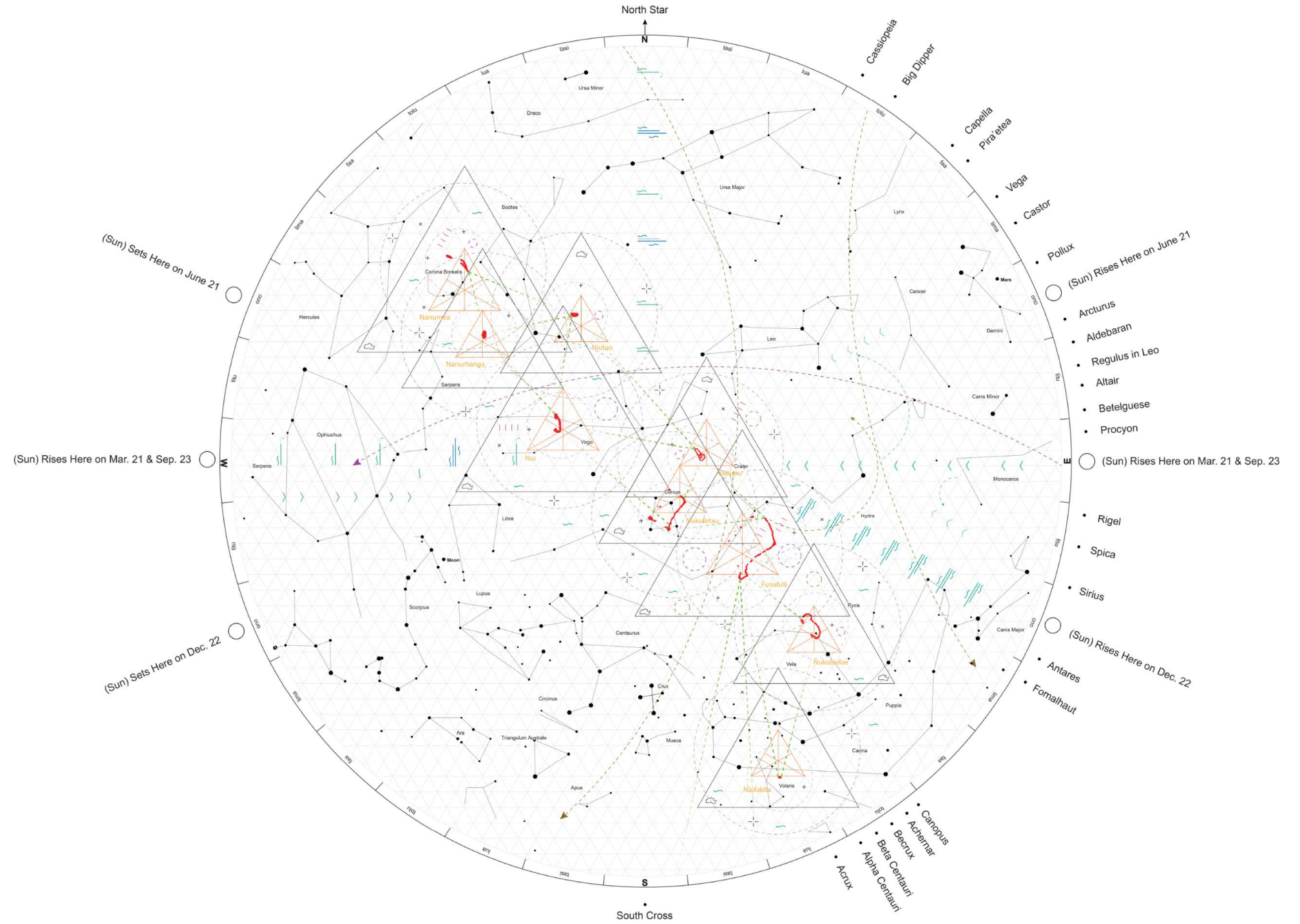
“Alternative maps as testimonies, not territories.”

Group Project: Viksha Nayak, Vishesh Sahni

This project interrogates the legal and spatial assumptions underlying sovereignty, proposing alternative cartographies that serve as evidence of continuity beyond the collapse of visible territory. It challenges the colonial logic of surface-based jurisdiction, where sovereignty is tied to fixed baselines and measurable coordinates, rendering submerged states like Tuvalu legally silent. Against this framework, the project advances an evidentiary cartography, where maps are not representations but archives of relation. A rotating star compass overlays ancestral navigation systems with climate data, revealing distortions between cultural memory and environmental transformation. These misalignments are not errors but exposures, proof of epistemic friction between oral geographies and static legal codes. A fabric map further extends this approach, stitching coral ecosystems, clan geographies, and submerged histories into a spatial archive. Each thread is a juridical claim, and each route is a narrative of persistence. The project proposes a speculative amendment to UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), advocating for recognizing submerged states, cultural waters, and mnemonic jurisdictions. Here, sovereignty is not written in land but remembered across waves, proven not by surface, but by continuity. The map becomes a legal instrument, an archive of survival.

Studio Critic: Dan Miller & Marina Otero
Advanced Studio VI | Spring 2025 | Data Mourning





Te Folauga, the voyage, and Te Aloutou, the guiding star, are not poetic metaphors. They are living documents, mnemonic technologies, through which ancestral routes, currents, and cosmologies are encoded and remembered. These are not simply oral traditions. They are navigational archives. They are maps, fluid, embodied, and rhythmic, that once aligned story and space.

But what happens when the sea rises? When the island a song once led to is no longer there? The climate crisis is not only one of displacement. It is a crisis of orientation. The coordinates shift. The compass spins. Memory is dislocated. This document visualizes that dislocation, not to mourn it, but to expose it.



*As it turns, the stars no longer align. The cartography distorts. And in that, we see what climate collapse cannot hide:
a world still navigable, still sovereign, but no longer mapped by colonial lines.
Here, the first document, gains agency. It no longer illustrates sovereignty; it performs it.*



*This document remembers what is submerged. Its threads follow stories carried by tide and voice,
stories that don't just describe the sea, but lead back to places beneath it, revealing what was once submerged
and still belongs.*

_a rock born paradox²

“Plinth as critique; exposing solidity as a facade for toxicity.”

Group Project: Santhosh Narayanan, Vishesh Sahni

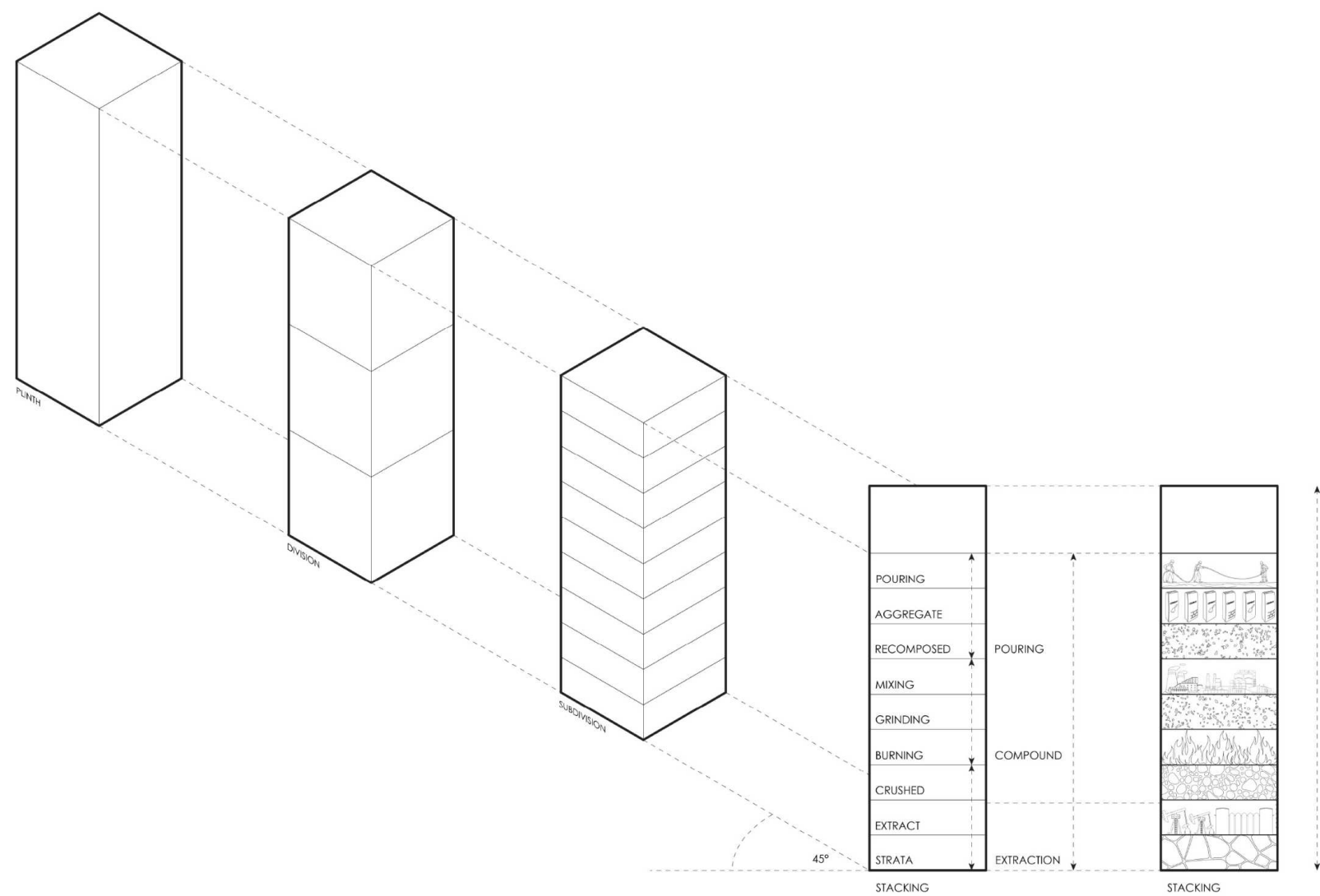
Traditionally regarded as a silent, inert pedestal, the plinth is often seen as a passive foundation, an unchanging base for objects above. However, this conventional perception conceals a paradox within its materiality. Constructed primarily from concrete, the plinth is not a static entity but an artifact of industrial alchemy, a synthetic rock forged from a mixture of cement, aggregates, and chemical additives. Concrete’s existence is marked by a cyclical transformation: beginning as a fluid slurry, hardening into solid form, and eventually deteriorating back into dust. Yet, this metamorphosis is not merely a narrative of change but a revelation of ecological cost. Concrete’s chemical composition is emblematic of industrial toxicity. Its production is a significant source of carbon emissions, while its alkaline nature can leach harmful substances into the soil. The integration of Wax, an ostensibly fluid, translucent material derived from petrochemicals, further amplifies this toxicity. While symbolizing liquidity, Wax is a byproduct of fossil fuels, transforming the plinth into a dual narrative of industrial waste. Thus, the plinth emerges not as a passive base but as a critical artifact, an aestheticized symptom of ecological harm. It stands as a paradoxical monument, simultaneously embodying material transformation and the concealed toxicity of industrial processes.

Critic: Suchi Reddy

Visual Elective | Fall 2024 | Subject Object



*Born of dust, it drinks the sky, Solid strength, a whispered lie.
Alchemy’s gift, a toxic breath, Hides in hardness, whispers death.*



*Yet underneath, the poison sleeps, A trace of smoke, a stain that creeps.
The earth it seals, the air it scars, A plinth that wounds, but hides its wars.*



*Not just a base, but a whispered cry, A silent scream beneath the sky.
It stands, a paradoxical ghost, A monument to harm, disguised the most.*

3
_a complex ensamble
of time

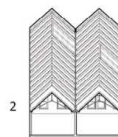
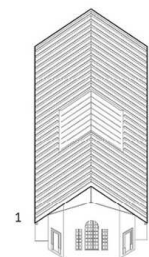
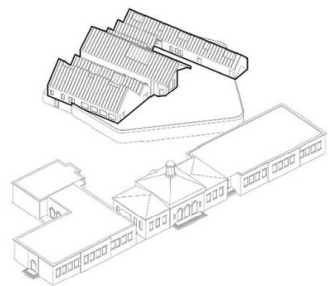
“Architecture as an evolving dialogue, not a conclusion.”
Group Project: Dayoon Oh, Vishesh Sahni

This project radically repositions architectural intervention as an act of temporal accumulation rather than spatial disruption, rejecting the logic of new construction as a default value. Located on Governors Island, it confronts a historic First Army fortification, a site whose very existence is a testament to continuous adaptation, expansion, and transformation. Far from a static artifact, the fort is a palimpsest of shifting military, civic, and ecological functions, each phase an inscription of evolving intent. The project seizes this logic, not as history to be preserved but as a strategy to be continued. Phase 1 dismantles conventional conservation by excavating a subterranean archive behind the fortification, a gesture defined by absence rather than presence. This is not passive preservation; it is a radical act of inscription, embedding knowledge within the earth itself, transforming the site’s geology into a spatial memory. The archive is a refusal to fossilize history; it is history buried alive, waiting to be rediscovered. Phases 2 and 3 extend this philosophy, reactivating an adjacent decaying structure without demolition. The collapsing roof is reimagined as a connective membrane, sheltering and visually unifying the ensemble. This is not a restoration but a reanimation, where decay is repurposed as a spatial negotiator, a scar transformed into a seam, positioning it as a perpetually incomplete text, not a conclusion but a provocation.

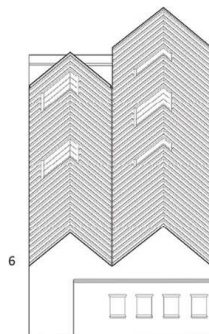
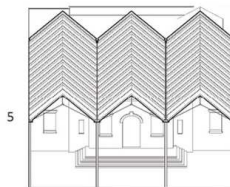
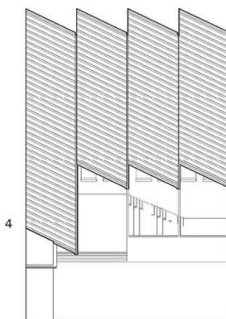
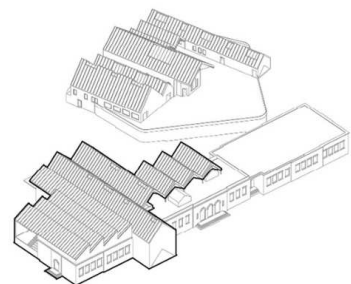
Studio Critic: Wonne Ickx
Advanced Studio V | Fall 2024 | Building on Building



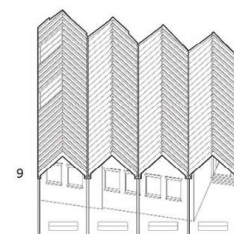
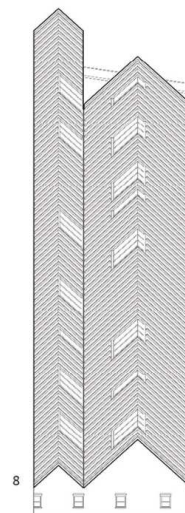
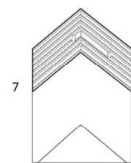
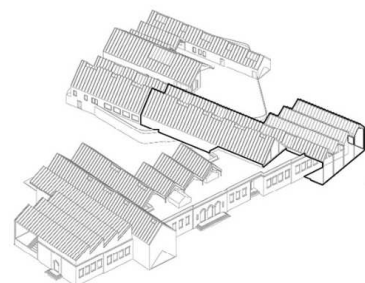
PHASE 1



PHASE 2

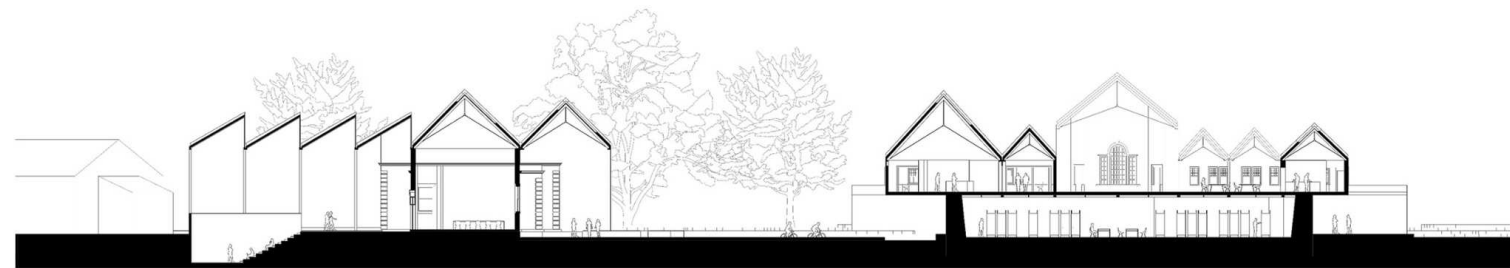
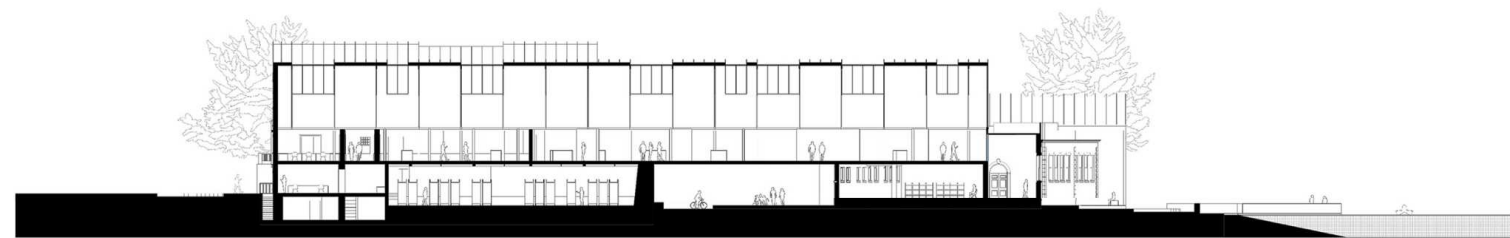
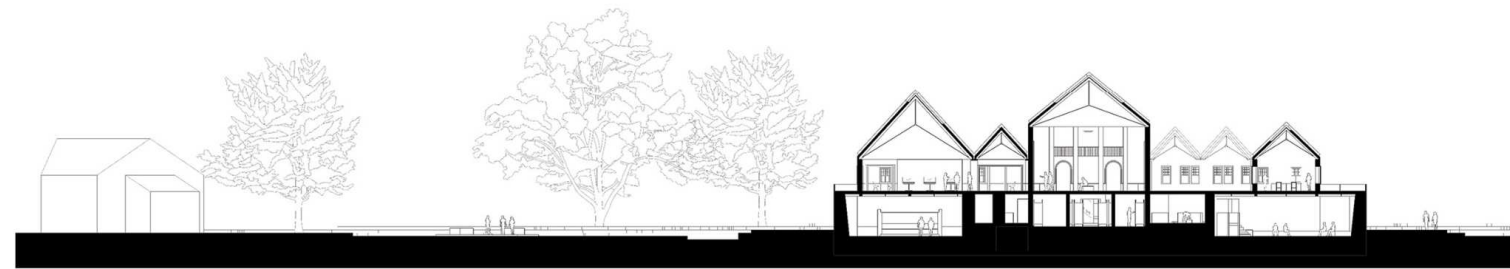


PHASE 3

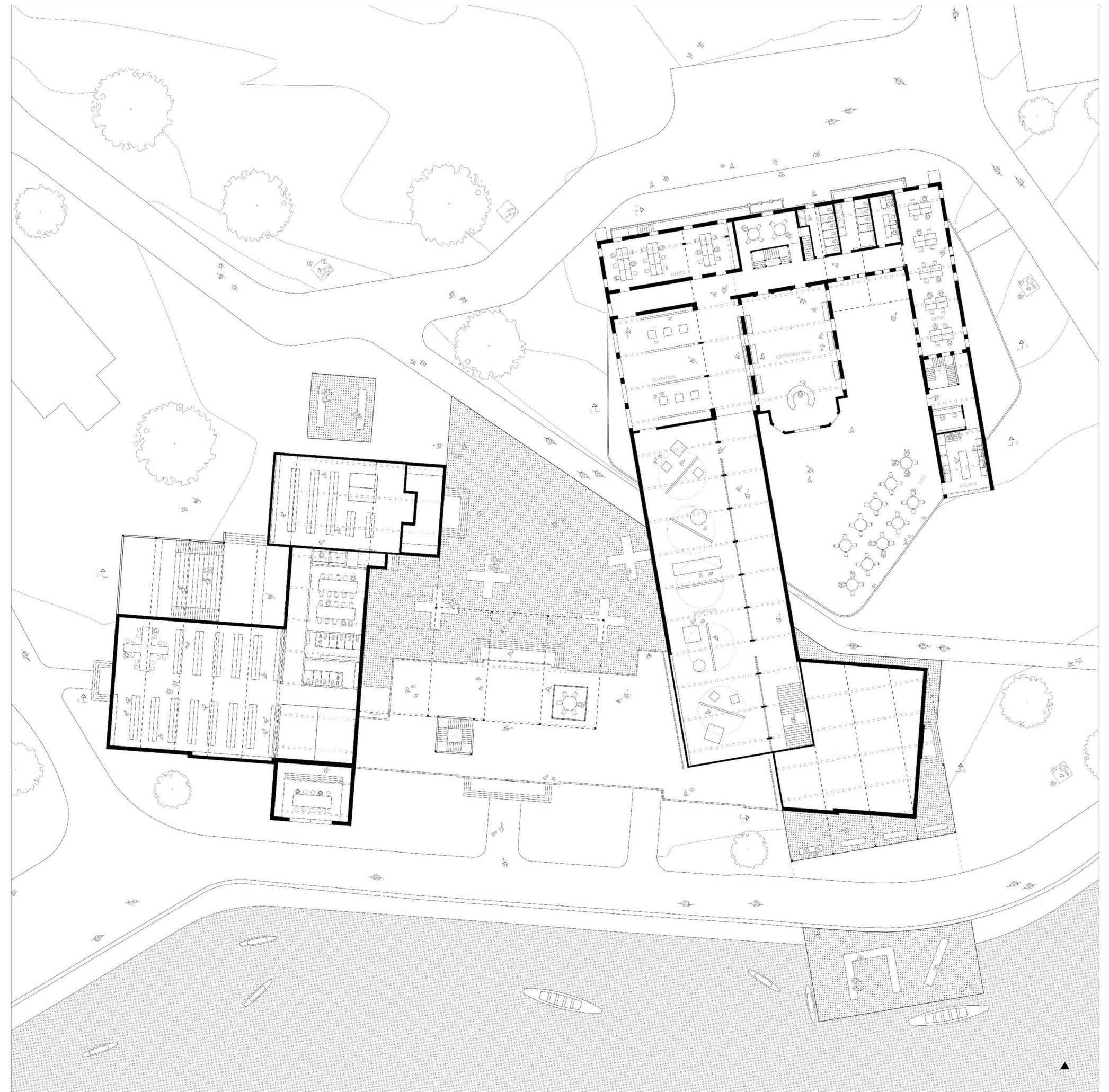


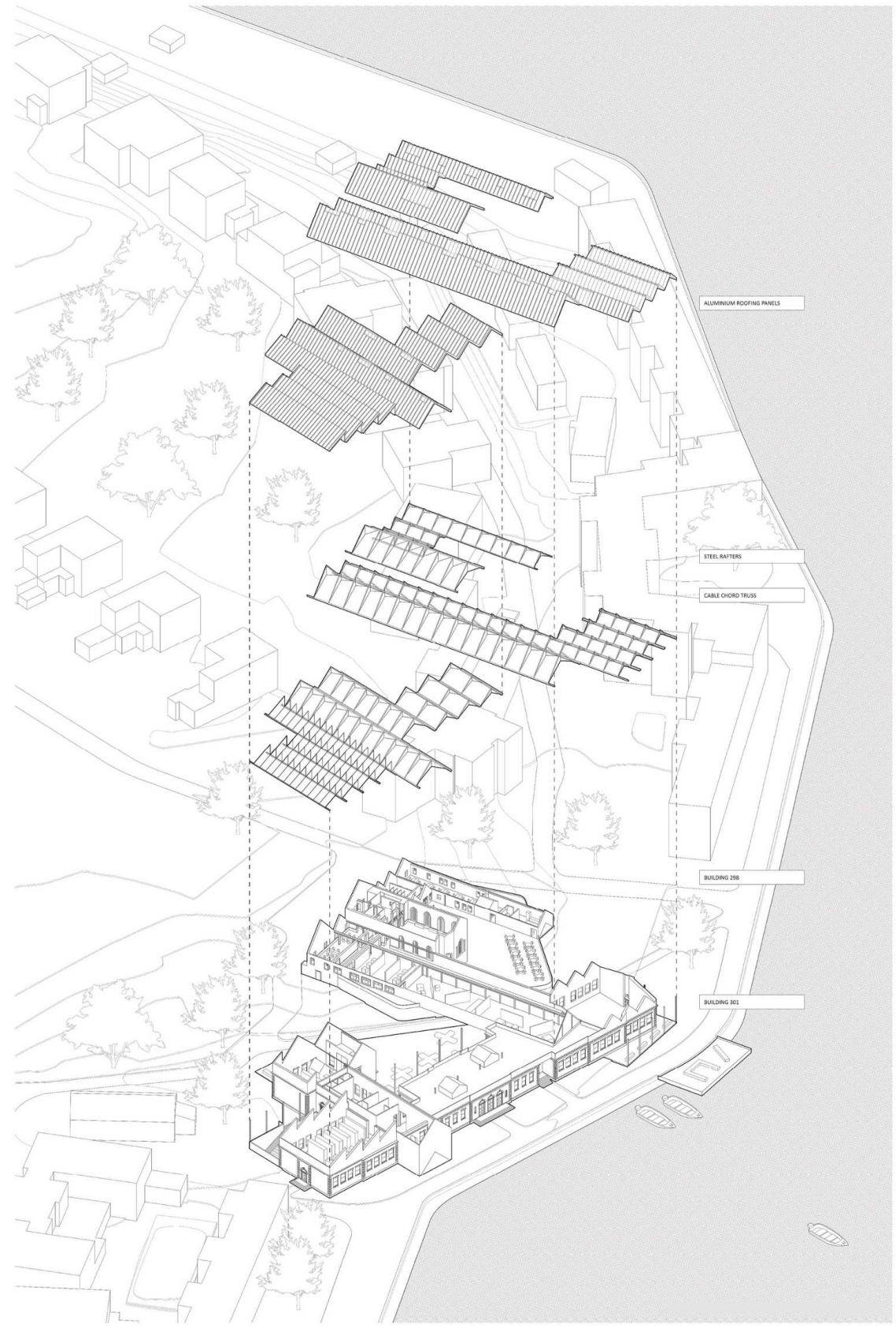
Phases & Roofing Typologies



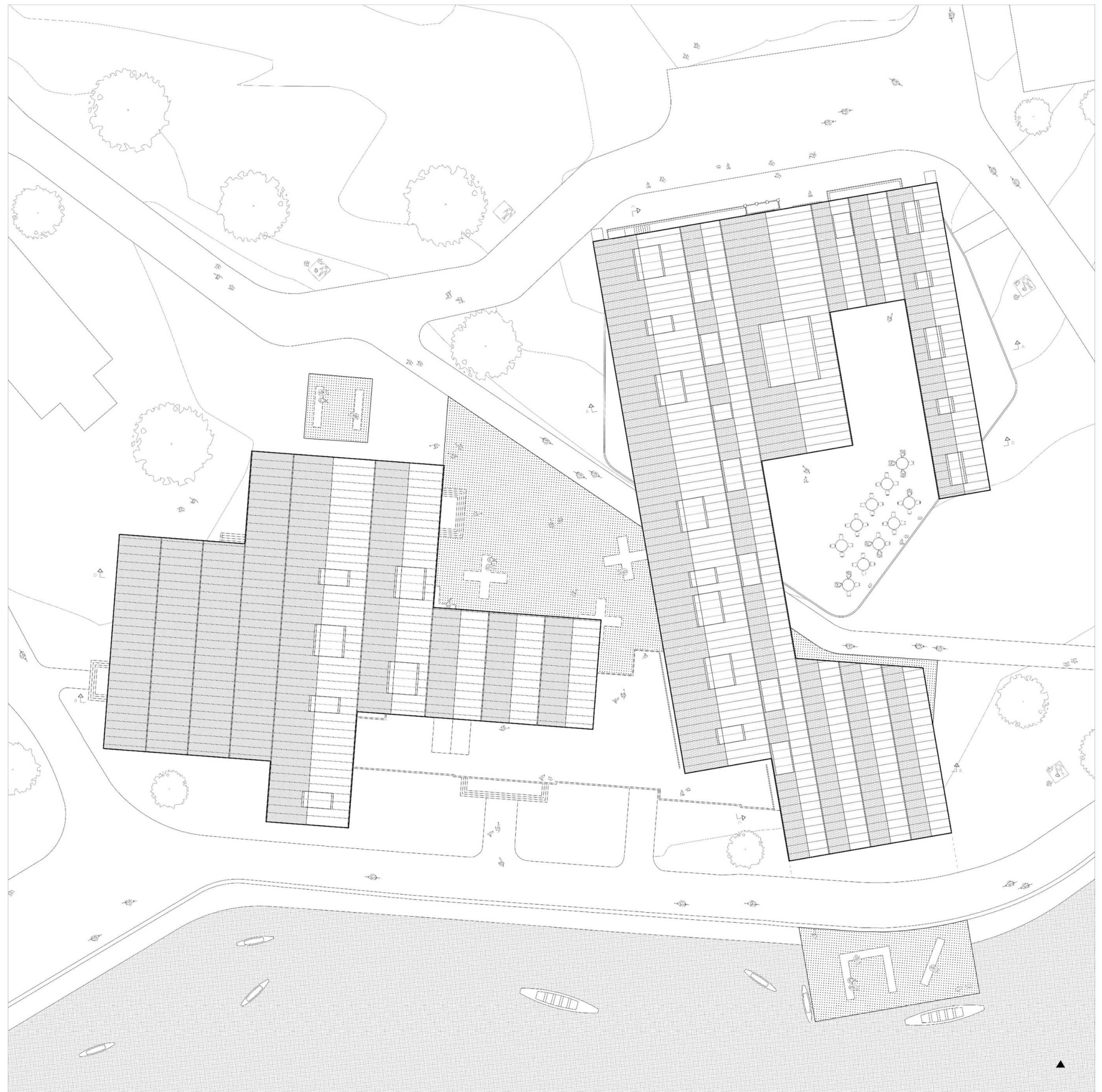


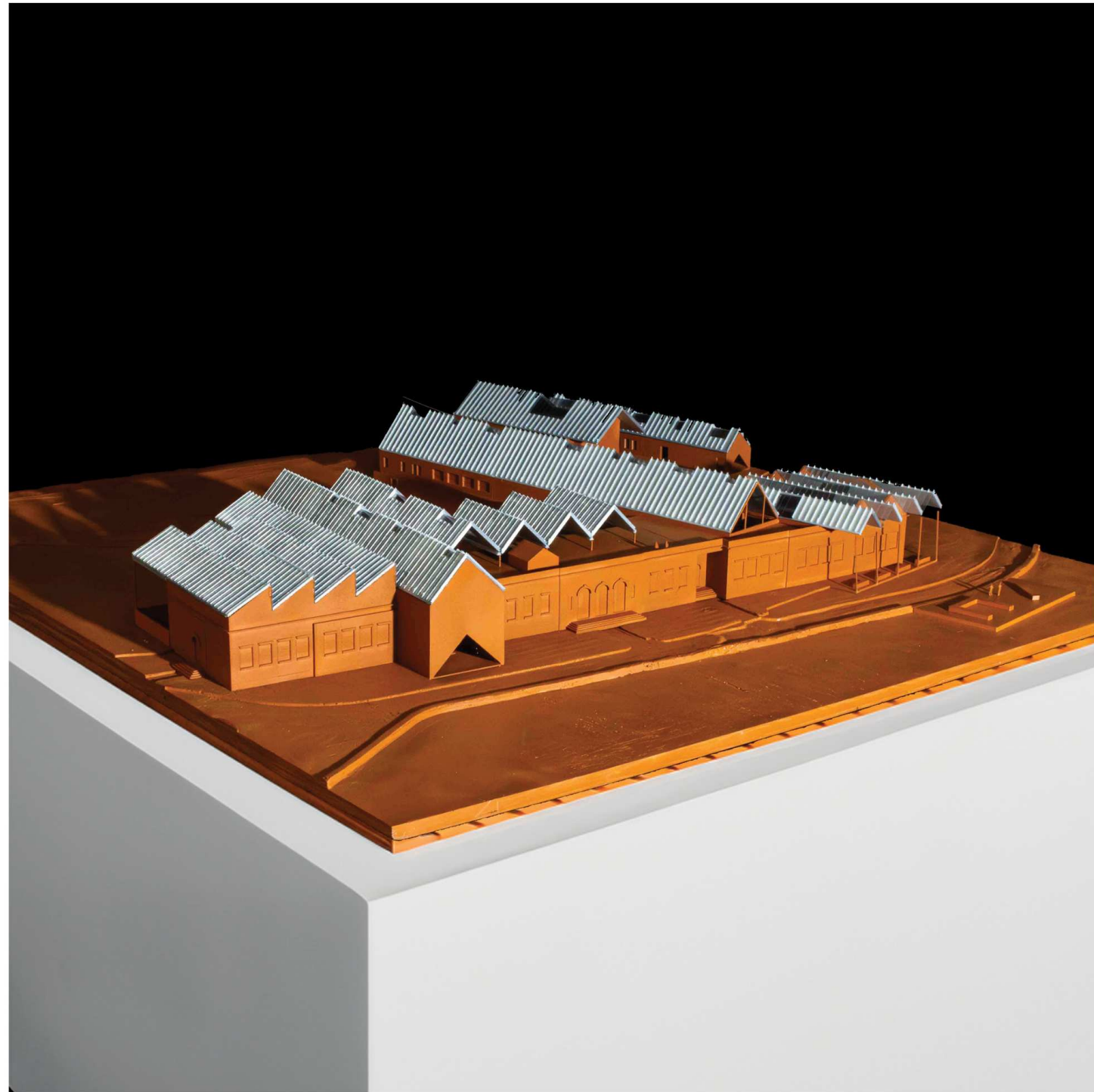
Sections





Exploded Axonometric (Roof)





Physical Model (Site)



Physical Model (Section)

_anatomy of repair⁴

“Chair as a catalog of unions”

Group Project: Shirin Kakakhel, Vishesh Sahni

This project emerges from a critical premise: that the future of architecture lies not in perpetuating cycles of new construction but in cultivating care for what already exists and what is discarded. In an era defined by material excess and environmental degradation, the offcut becomes both a crisis and an opportunity, a latent infrastructure awaiting reinterpretation. Anatomy of Repair engages the overlooked ecosystem of architectural remnants: plywood miscuts, bent steel rods, fractured furniture, jute threads, and industrial fragments. Often devoid of formal classification and standardization, these offcuts are typically relegated to landfills or informal reuse economies. Rather than dismissing them as waste, the project positions these irregular and seemingly incompatible parts as architectural affordances, capable of new spatial relationships. At the heart of the inquiry is a broken chair transformed into a catalog of unions. In this spatial archive, each fragment is lashed, bolted, or clamped, visibly recording its narrative of detachment and reassembly. This is not mere repair but a critical reconfiguration, where each connection becomes a negotiation method, resolving incompatibility without imposing uniformity. The chair is not a finished object but a pedagogical device, a material manifesto of friction, connection, and coexistence, an evolving archive of attachments, contradictions, and negotiated coexistence.

Critic: Amelyn Ng

Visual Elective | Spring 2025 | Waste / Works



*Fractured edges clash, yet bind. Waste reclaims form, a broken kind.
A chair of scars, where faults convene, An archive of unions, raw, unseen.*



Central to the work is the architecture of ties. Clamps, loops, bolts, and lashings are not treated as mere technical solutions; they are spatial agents that determine form through connection rather than enclosure.



Reconstructed entirely from discarded fragments, the chair becomes more than a utilitarian repair; it is reframed as a material catalog, a live archive of connections, residues, and reconfigurations.

_the living block⁵

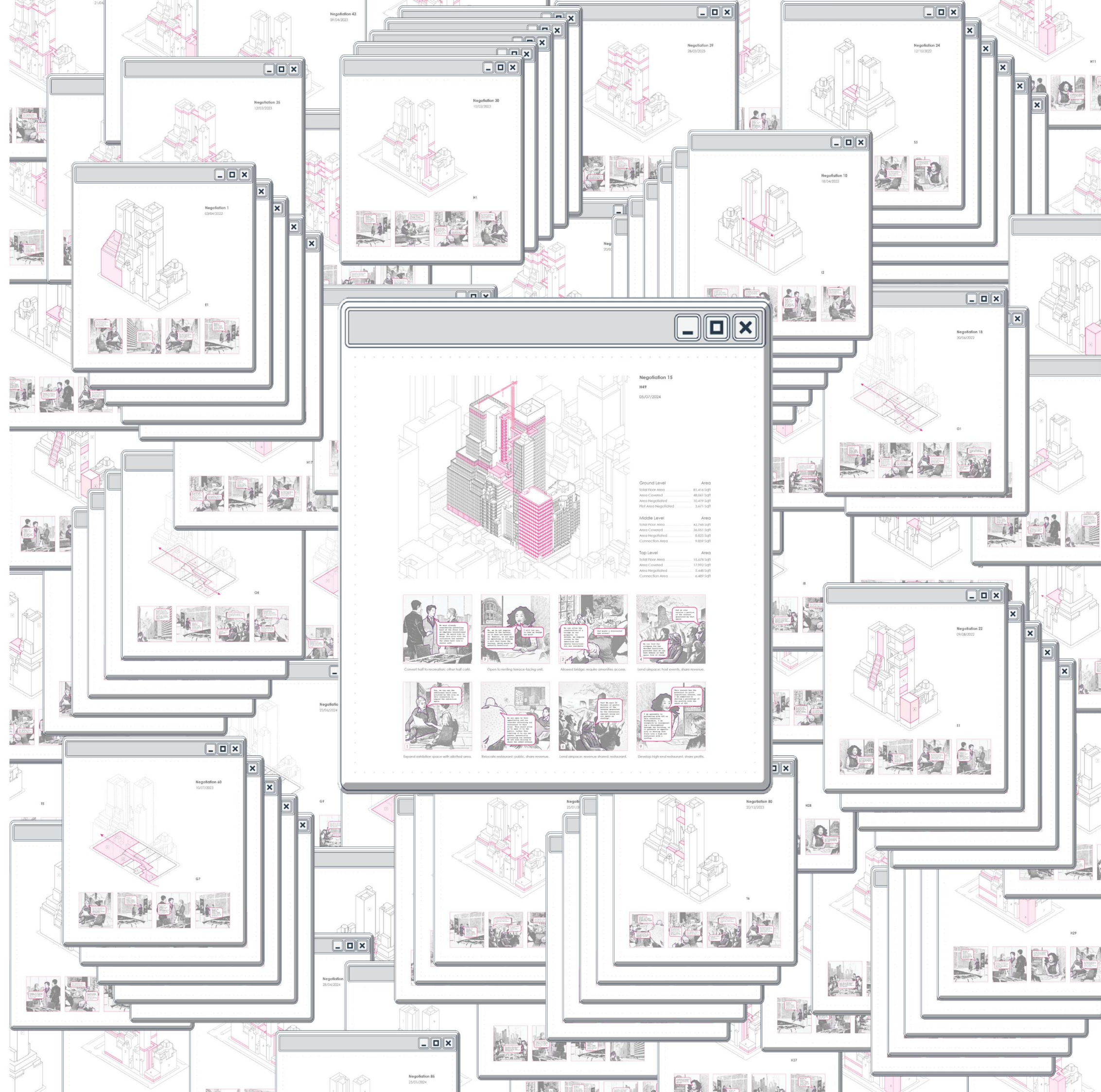
“Architect as mediator and facilitator of civic negotiations”

Group Project: Aneesa Khan, Vishesh Sahni

The Living Block at 425 Park Avenue interrogates the traditional role of the architect, shifting from a designer of static forms to a mediator of civic negotiations. In a cityscape where urban growth has supplanted neighborhood cohesion with isolated high-rises, this project exposes the limitations of design as a purely spatial exercise. It repositions the architect not as an author of outcomes but as an orchestrator of agreements, conflicts and the process itself, navigating the competing interests of residential, commercial, cultural, and public stakeholders. The project foregrounds negotiation as a critical architectural practice, materializing in a stratified network of shared corridors, mid-level linkages, and hybridized upper-floor amenities. Architecture is not an end but an ongoing process, a contested terrain where spatial configurations are the byproducts of deliberation, resistance, and compromise. By transforming the design process into a forum for dialogue, *The Living Block* challenges the neutrality of architectural form, asserting that every wall, threshold, and connection is a crystallization of power dynamics and civic agreements. It reframes the architect as an active participant in civic mediation, where spatial form is the outcome of negotiated relationships. This project embodies architecture as a practice of exchange, where space is a product of contested agreements rather than isolated decisions.

Studio Critic: Sebastian Adamo

Adv Arch Studio Tutorial | Summer 2024 | Re: Park Ave





Designers usually negotiate with one client for a project to facilitate connections. But what happens when the scope expands to include multiple stakeholders at a neighborhood level?



Where is the architect placed in this, ensuring a move away from developers' dystopia of gentrification? The dynamics here shift dramatically.

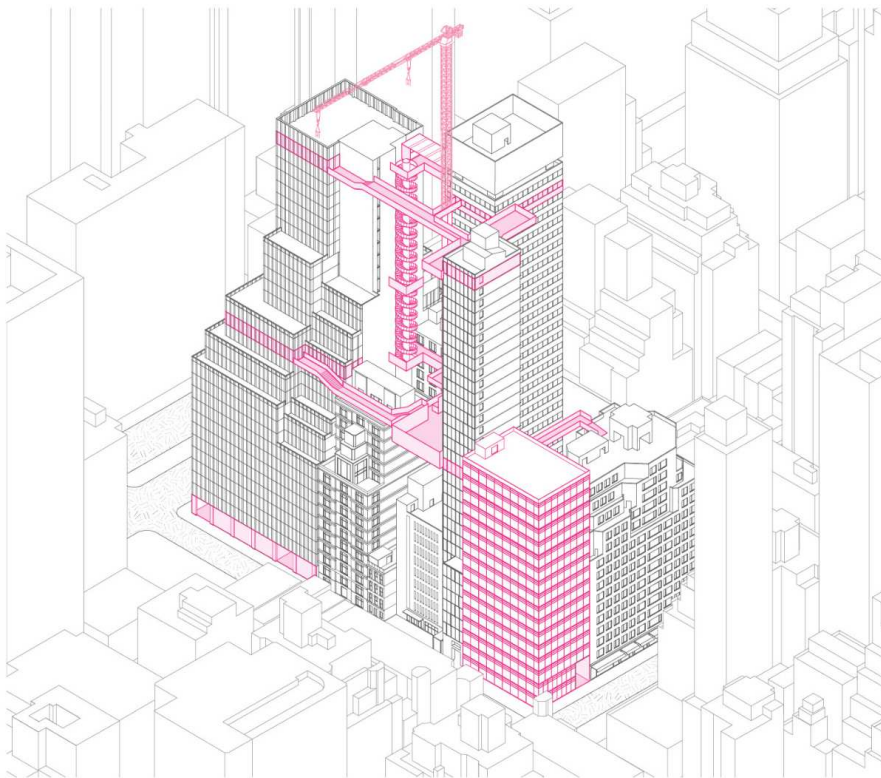


The project is situated at this intersection, questioning the architect's role. It repositions this role from a designer or a problem solver to becoming an active mediator, negotiating a shared neighborhood for its residents.



The project embodies the notion that architects become designers of the process instead, shifting the scope of an architect from drawing plans to drawing negotiations of people inhabiting the spaces.





Negotiation 65

H50

15/0/2024

Ground Level	Area
Total Floor Area	81,416 Sqft
Area Covered	44,253 Sqft
Area Negotiated	6,707 Sqft
Plot Area Negotiated	3,671 Sqft

Middle Level	Area
Total Floor Area	42,768 Sqft
Area Covered	34,376 Sqft
Area Negotiated	8,825 Sqft
Connection Area	9,859 Sqft

Top Level	Area
Total Floor Area	15,678 Sqft
Area Covered	17,992 Sqft
Area Negotiated	5,448 Sqft
Connection Area	6,489 Sqft



Allow bridge, require access to all amenities.



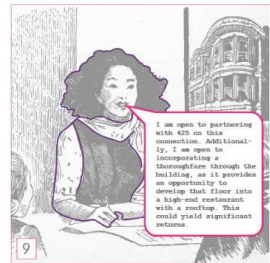
No access, renting unit facing the terrace.



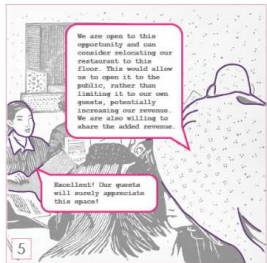
Lending airspace, revenue share model.



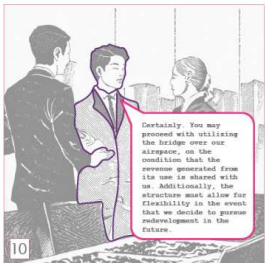
Proceed to accommodate project terms.



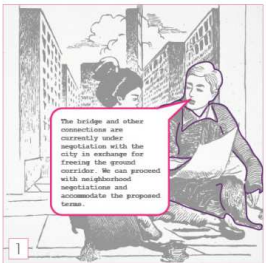
Partner with 425 [1], develop restaurant.



Relocate restaurant, share added revenue.



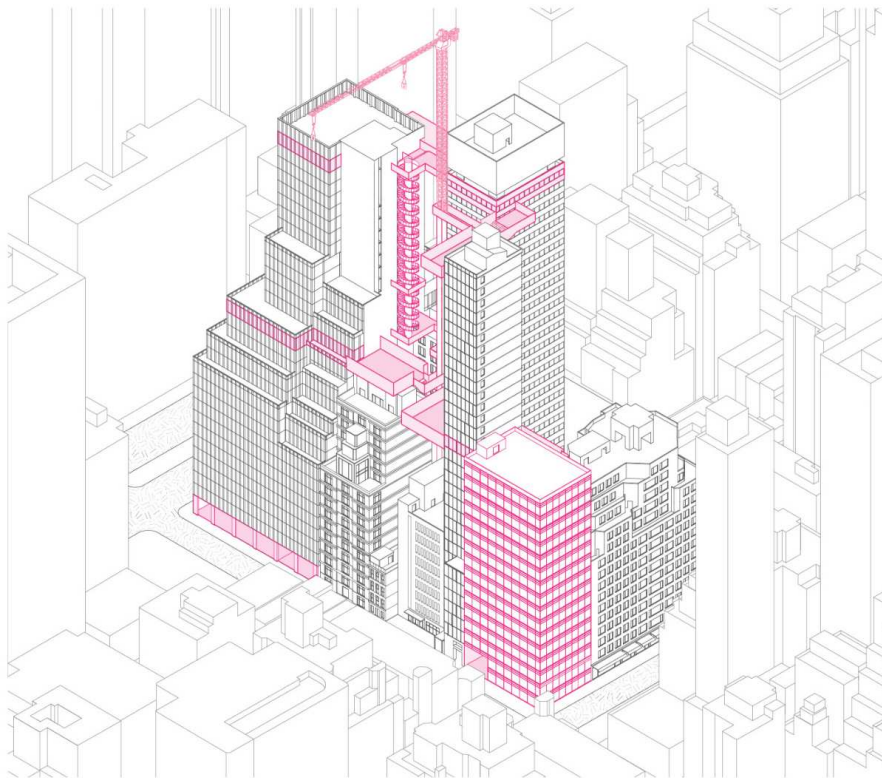
Revenue sharing: future redev, flexibility.



Bridge negotiation for corridor: proceed.

	Plot Boundaries [Original]		Retained Building [Existing]		Retail [Reorganized]		Proposed Connections
	Courtyard [Uncovered]		Partly Wall [Negotiated]		Negotiated Space [Program]		Public Corridor [Proposed]

Negotiations Shaping the Neighbourhood



Negotiation 15

H49

05/07/2024

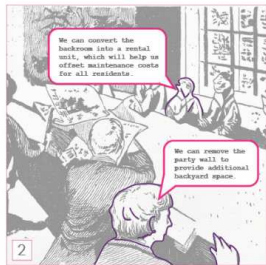
Ground Level	Area
Total Floor Area	81,416 Sqft
Area Covered	48,061 Sqft
Area Negotiated	10,419 Sqft
Plot Area Negotiated	3,671 Sqft

Middle Level	Area
Total Floor Area	42,768 Sqft
Area Covered	36,051 Sqft
Area Negotiated	8,825 Sqft
Connection Area	9,859 Sqft

Top Level	Area
Total Floor Area	15,678 Sqft
Area Covered	17,992 Sqft
Area Negotiated	5,448 Sqft
Connection Area	6,489 Sqft



Opening ground: add, city area allowance.



Convert backroom to rental: remove wall.



Allow backyard use; properly maintenance.



Inclusive: opening backyard, hosting events.



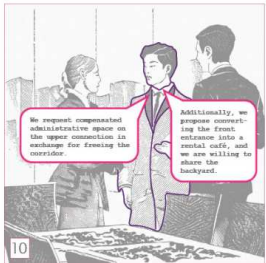
Participate if guests access upper areas.



Convert half-occupied office to rental.



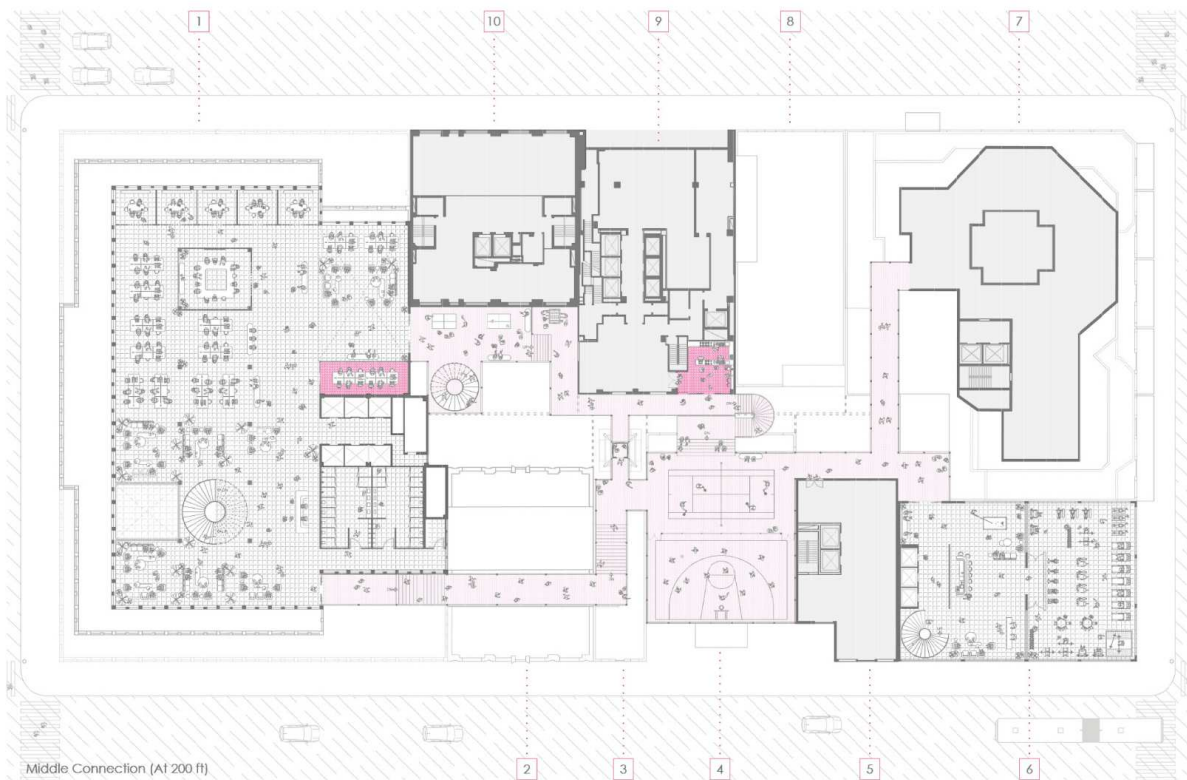
Transform backroom into café: self-run.



Admin space: café, open shared backyard.

	425 Park Avenue [Offices] [Site]		119 East, 55th Street [Residential]		127 East, 55th Street [Hotel]		126 East, 56th Street [Offices]
	115 East, 55th Street [Residential]		123 East, 55th Street [Cultural]		133 East, 55th Street [Retail]		120 East, 56th Street [Offices]

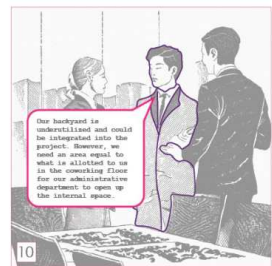
Negotiations Shaping the Neighbourhood



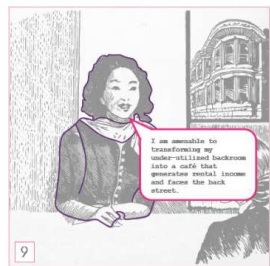
Middle Connection (At 200 ft)



City requests front corridor for extra FAR.



Opening courtyard, swapping admin area.



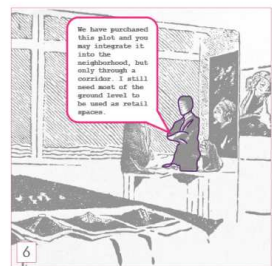
Self-run back storeroom to café, Mutualism.



Allow backyard use, offsetting maintenance.



Open backyard, provide space for events.



Plot integration corridor; provide more retail.



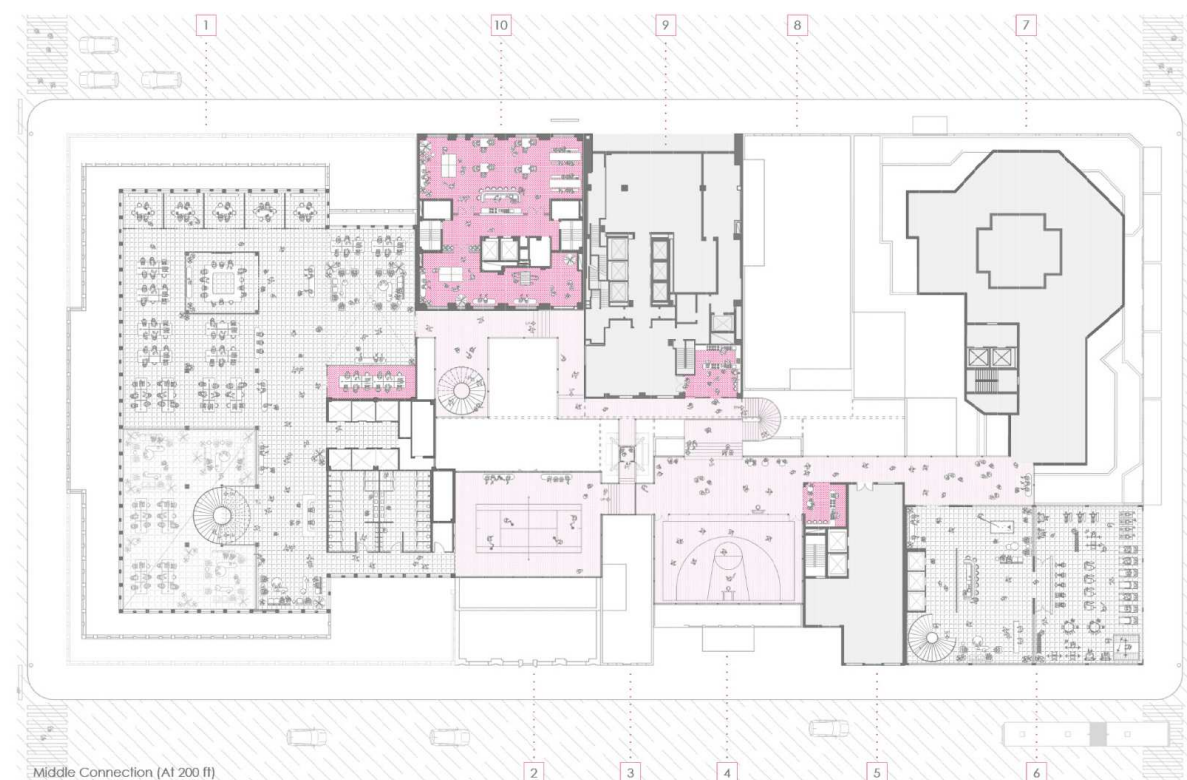
Access to upper play area for ground space.



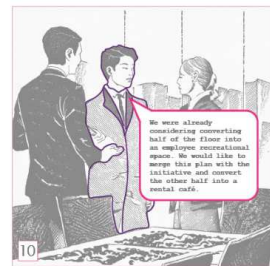
Transform part backroom into a rental café.

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 425 Park Avenue [Offices] [Site] | 3 | 119 East, 55th Street [Residential] | 5 | 127 East, 55th Street [Hotel] | 9 | 126 East, 56th Street [Offices] |
| 2 | 115 East, 55th Street [Residential] | 4 | 123 East, 55th Street [Cultural] | 6 | 133 East, 55th Street [Retail] | 10 | 120 East, 56th Street [Offices] |

This site acts as a laboratory to show these active negotiations that can shape the neighborhood, serving as a model for creating similar typological blocks in the city.



Middle Connection (At 200 ft)



Convert half to recreation; other half café.



Open to renting terrace-facing unit.



Allowed bridge; require amenities access.



Lend airspace; host events, share revenue.



Expand exhibition space with allotted area.



Relocate restaurant; public, share revenue.



Lend airspace; revenue shared; restaurant.



Develop high-end restaurant, share profits.

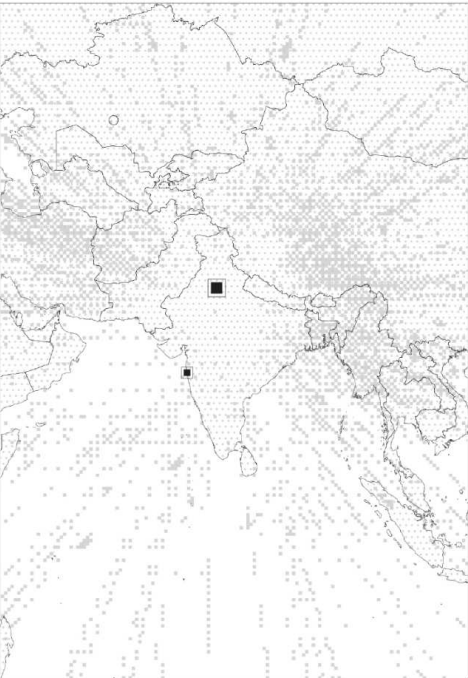
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|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Plot Boundaries [Original] | Retained Building [Existing] | Retail [Reorganized] | Proposed Connections |
| Courtyard [Uncovered] | Party Wall [Negotiated] | Negotiated Space [Program] | Public Corridor [Proposed] |

In response to the existing urban landscape, the project addresses the scope of architects to design conversations; agreements or disagreements.

srijan:

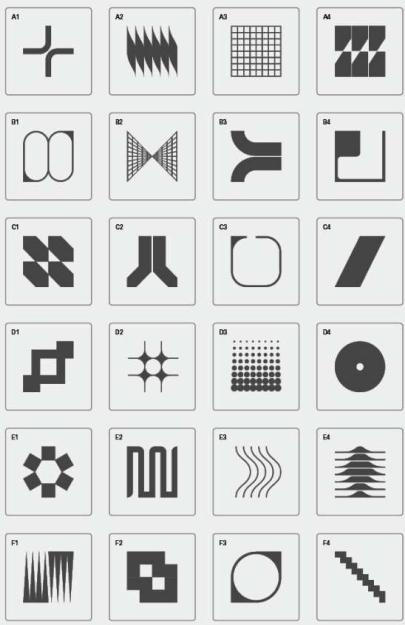
‘Srijan’ is a research-driven, interdisciplinary practice that foregrounds latent narratives: those embedded in materials, memory, and place. It approaches architecture as an evolving dialogue between context, matter, and craft, proposing a fluid, process-oriented design methodology that redefines tectonic possibilities through care, iteration, and responsiveness. At its core, the practice is socially and culturally grounded, positioning architecture as a negotiated act shaped by lived conditions, collective rituals, and embedded resistances. In this, the studio positions itself as both listener and agent, crafting architecture as a public act of meaning-making and repair.

New Delhi, India



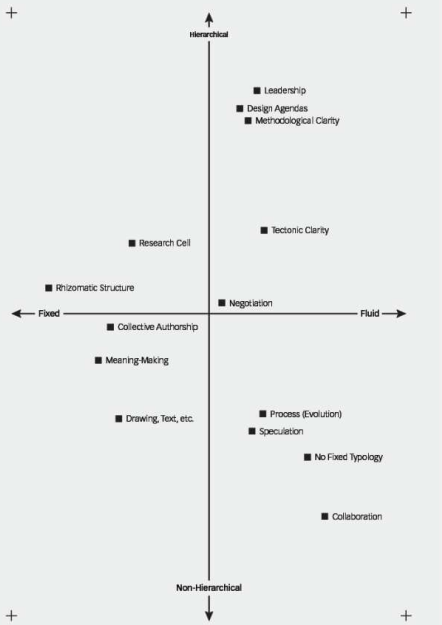
‘Srijan (सृजन)’ is more than just a word; it is a conceptual framework that sits at the core of the practice. Rooted in the Sanskrit verb ‘srij’ (सृज्), meaning to create, to release, to set into motion, Srijan embodies an act that is both generative and liberatory. It is the moment something is brought forth into being, physical or intangible, by articulating necessity, form, and spirit. The word itself is composed of deeper etymological threads. ‘Sri (स्री)’ refers to the spiritual, the sacred principle of abundance, grace, and auspiciousness; it is the animating force behind the gesture of making. ‘Jan (जन)’ means the people, the public, and the collective body into which this creative act is released. Thus, Srijan becomes not merely a creation but a public act of spiritual and social consequence, where design is not authored in isolation but emerges as a response to the shared conditions of life. It resists the modernist idea of creation as rupture, instead proposing creation as continuity, something that grows out of and gives back to the lived realities of its context. The practice understands Srijan as a form of authorship grounded in responsibility: to intervene in the world for resonance, meaning, and repair.

Framework



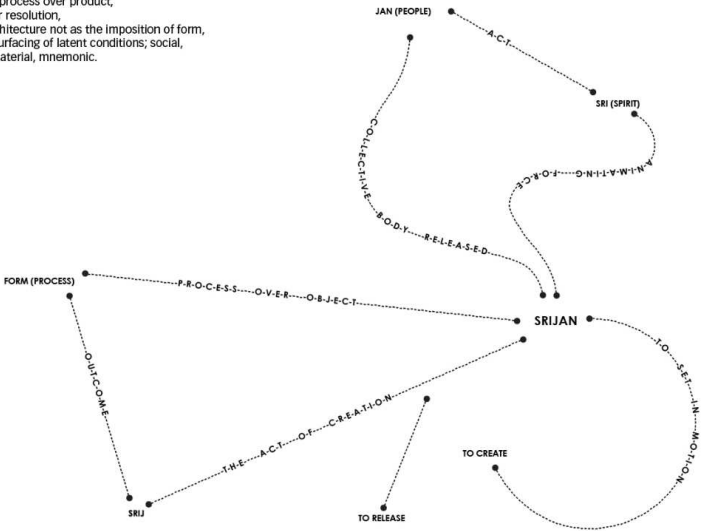
‘Srijan’ operates through a hybrid structure, hierarchical at the leadership level, ensuring conceptual direction and methodological coherence. At the same time, the broader studio remains non-hierarchical, fostering open collaboration and disciplinary exchange. Leadership sets agendas across projects, but roles remain fluid, encouraging collective authorship and dialogue. Rather than scaling linearly, Srijan operates rhizomatically, collaborating with artisans, urbanists, coders, and scholars on a project-to-project basis. The studio maintains no fixed typology but gravitates toward conditions of transformation, where architecture becomes an instrument for negotiation and meaning-making. This fluidity allows it to maintain critical distance while remaining deeply embedded. Functioning simultaneously as a studio and research unit, Srijan engages drawings, texts, fieldwork, and material studies to construct spatial arguments. Projects often begin through immersion and evolve through layered observation and speculation, emerging as buildings, exhibitions, publications, or participatory infrastructures, each treated as a site of public interface and collective authorship.

Operation

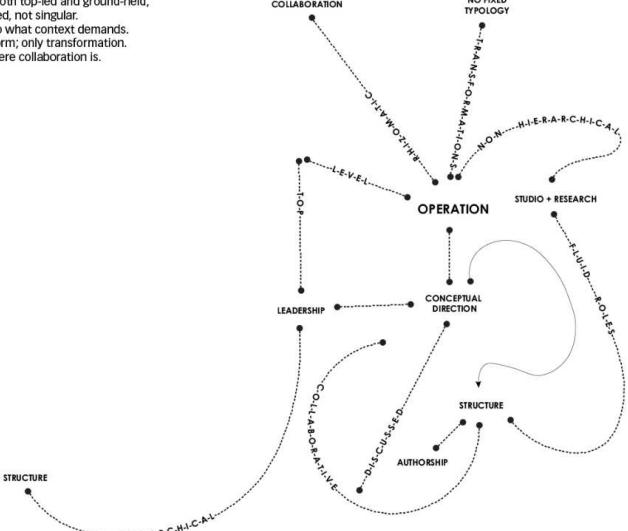


www.srijan.com

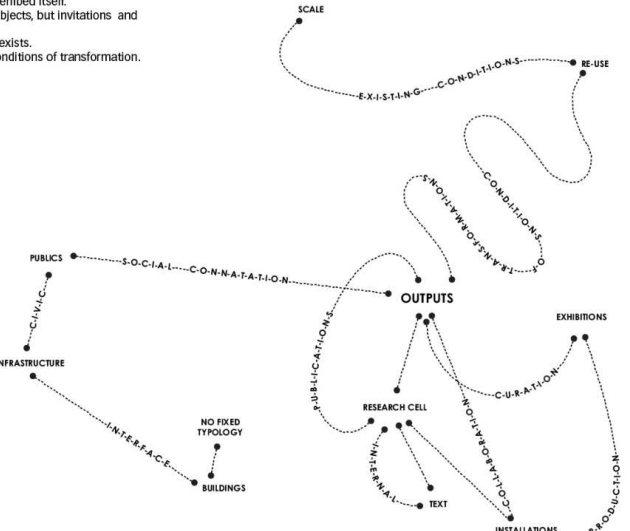
Srijan destabilizes the architect as originator. It privileges process over product, relation over resolution. Invoking architecture not as the imposition of form, but as the surfacing of latent conditions; social, historical, material, mnemonic.



Its hybridity is not stylistic, but structural: A practice that is both top-led and ground-held. Authorship is shared, not singular. Structure adapts to what context demands. There is no fixed form; only transformation. Srijan operates where collaboration is.



It resists the territoriality of typology, choosing instead to embed itself. Its outputs are not objects, but invitations and negotiations. It responds to what exists. Srijan operates at conditions of transformation.



Srijan is a studio. Srijan is a map. It does not arrive, it returns. It is an ecology of relations, not objects. It is not a moment, but a continuum.

