

Studio Jan De Vylder  
universum carrousel journey  
RE-NOW-RE

FROM MONOCULTURE TO A  
BUILDING ROTATION SYSTEM  
Céline Berberat







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While walking through the city I realized emptiness is highly dedicated to time! When spaces that are planned for a user are not used, we refer to them as empty. Consequently emptiness is the opposite of full and therefore it is temporary, and only exists when the full is absent.

Looking at the built urban environment of the city, we find many open spaces, but not in the definition of emptiness if we interpret emptiness as «the absence of something». Emptiness in a well-planned and highly regulated city like Zürich does not exist. And yet we find it sporadically; in the form of undeveloped building plots. This refers to plots, where the building is absent or absent again. These plots are declared by the city as «immediately ready to be built on», as this emptiness should not exist at all according to the city planning.

1% of the city area is empty, but most of the 347 plots are inconspicuous: a private parking lot, a public parking lot, a private garden, a private garden not used by the owner but secretly by the neighbour, a park, a meadow or a field. Some of them already under nature or garden monument protection. Others in contrast make us literally feel the emptiness, by a change in vegetation a different soil as well as a curiosity of use and the absence of regulations and planning. They are «Brachen», plots that were once built-up and are now empty again. This renewed emptiness interrupts the clear narrative of urban development. The «Brache» creates a loop in this development.

In an agricultural context, the value and potential of this loop, of fallow land, has been known for a long time. In the concept of three-field farming, the dominant concept for longer than 800 years, fallow land is integrated into a three-year rotation system and served to rest the soil and promote natural regeneration. By leaving the fields fallow for a year, not only could the yield be increased by about one third, it also led to a collectively organisation of the agricultural land.

The emptiness in the urban development provides space for the «powerless» and enables appropriation and thus the direct and immediate participation of society in urban planning.

The fallow land is always an «in-between», it begins with an end and ends with a beginning. However, the fallow land and interim uses in particular

have an important influence on what follows. Interim uses last on average for 7-12 years and do not adhere to zoning plans and thus show the needs of the residents, they reflect the demand, dreams and ideas of the residents and turn no-man's land into everyman's land.

Fallow land is not only important for citizens, also for nature. Due to the lack of green planning and maintenance, these areas offer the only places in the city where vegetation can develop naturally. Especially the first years of a fallow, where they are taken over by pioneering plants, form extraordinary biotopes in the city. Therefore, it is important that new fallows are created again while others disappear.

A new law, the «Brachengesetz», defines that after demolition or deconstruction of a building, the land and everything remaining on it must lie fallow afterwards and serve as a «Brache» for a certain period of time. With the introduction of this new law, the qualities of fallow land should be preserved in the city. But also it questions today's culture of new replacement constructions and promotes the appreciation, maintenance and further development of existing buildings, as it is worthwhile to preserve a building for as long as possible, since after demolition the land must lie fallow for a certain period of time. The «Brache» is not only integrated, it becomes a design tool for the urban development in a circular process, which leads to a new, more temporary, architecture. The building on the one hand and the «Brache» on the other hand create two temporary, alternating states of a circular process. Deconstruction and thinking about «what remains» become part of the design process. Furthermore, the reuse of building materials is promoted, which leads to buildings being harvested instead of demolished.







Walking through the city on a rainy Tuesday morning, the streets, parks, gardens and playgrounds, thus the open spaces, seem empty.

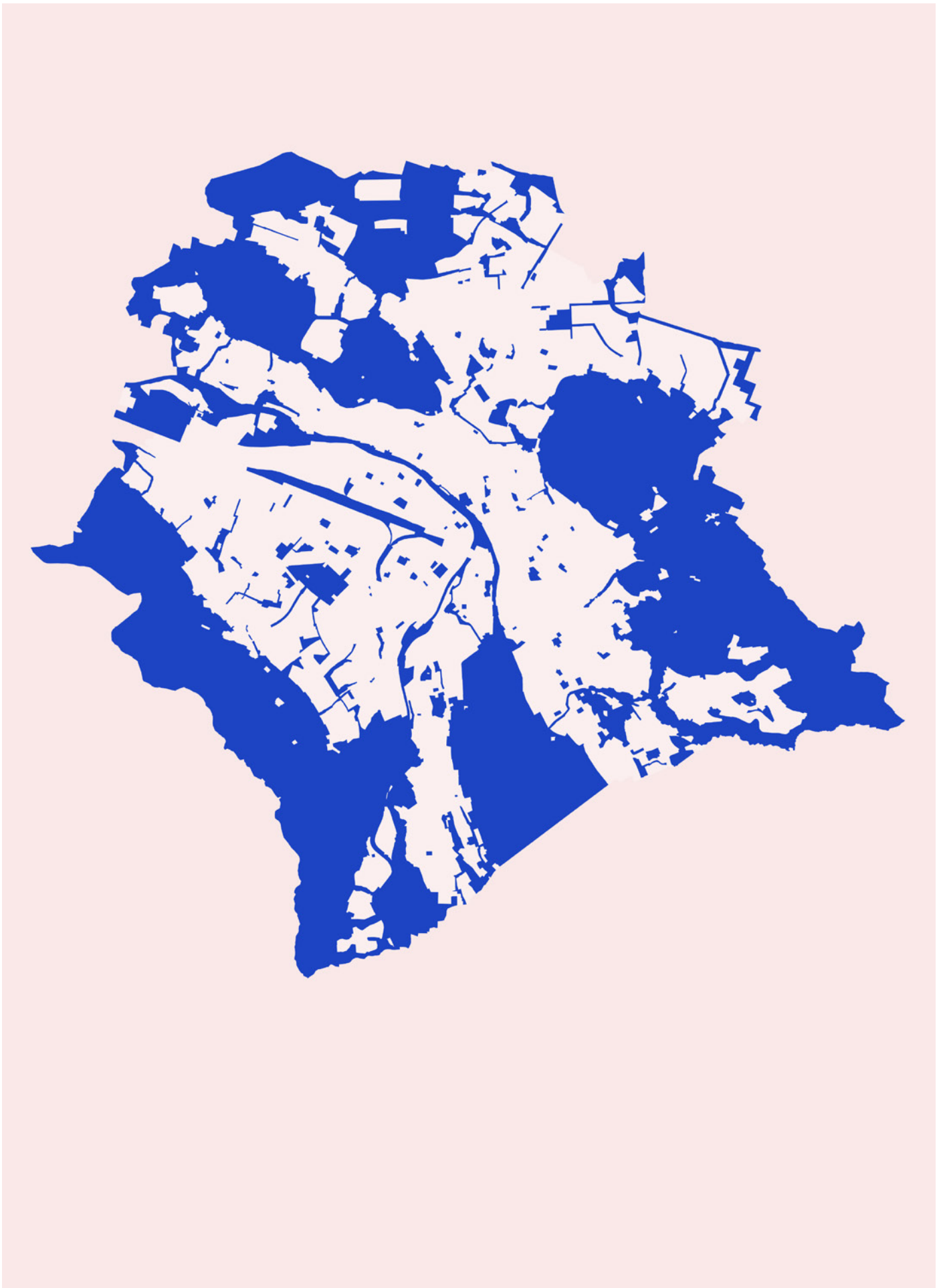
Walking through the city on a warm Sunday afternoon, the apartments, stores, offices and restaurants, thus the buildings, seem empty. Empty of people.

Emptiness is highly dedicated to time: the park is empty when it's raining, the swimming pool is empty in winter and the ice pitch is empty during summer. The school is empty during the holidays and the playground is empty during the lectures. The office is empty during the weekends and my flat is empty while I'm working and so is the church empty on Saturdays while the synagogue is empty on Sundays. The building is empty before it's deconstructed, the building is empty before it's finished, the building plot is empty after the deconstruction of the building and the building plot is empty before the construction of the building.

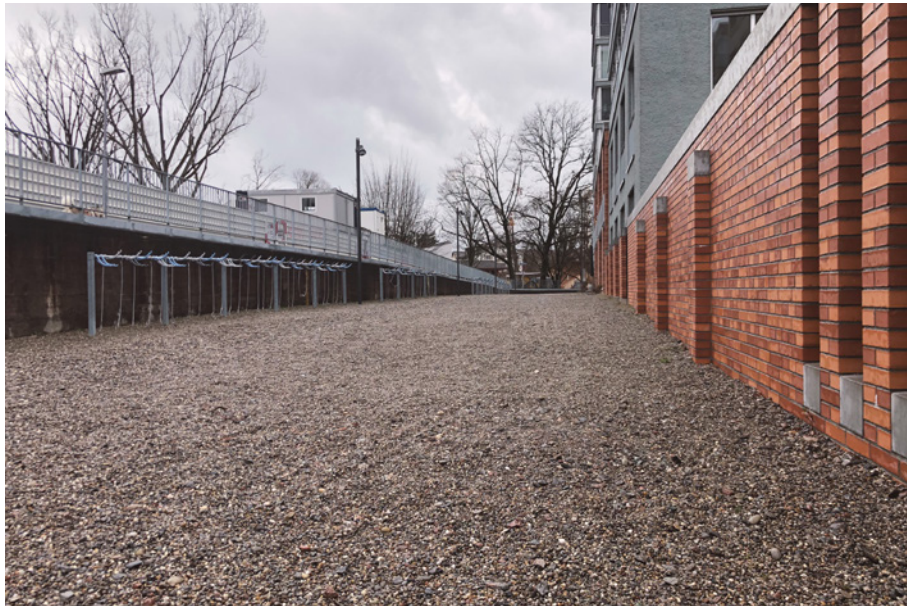


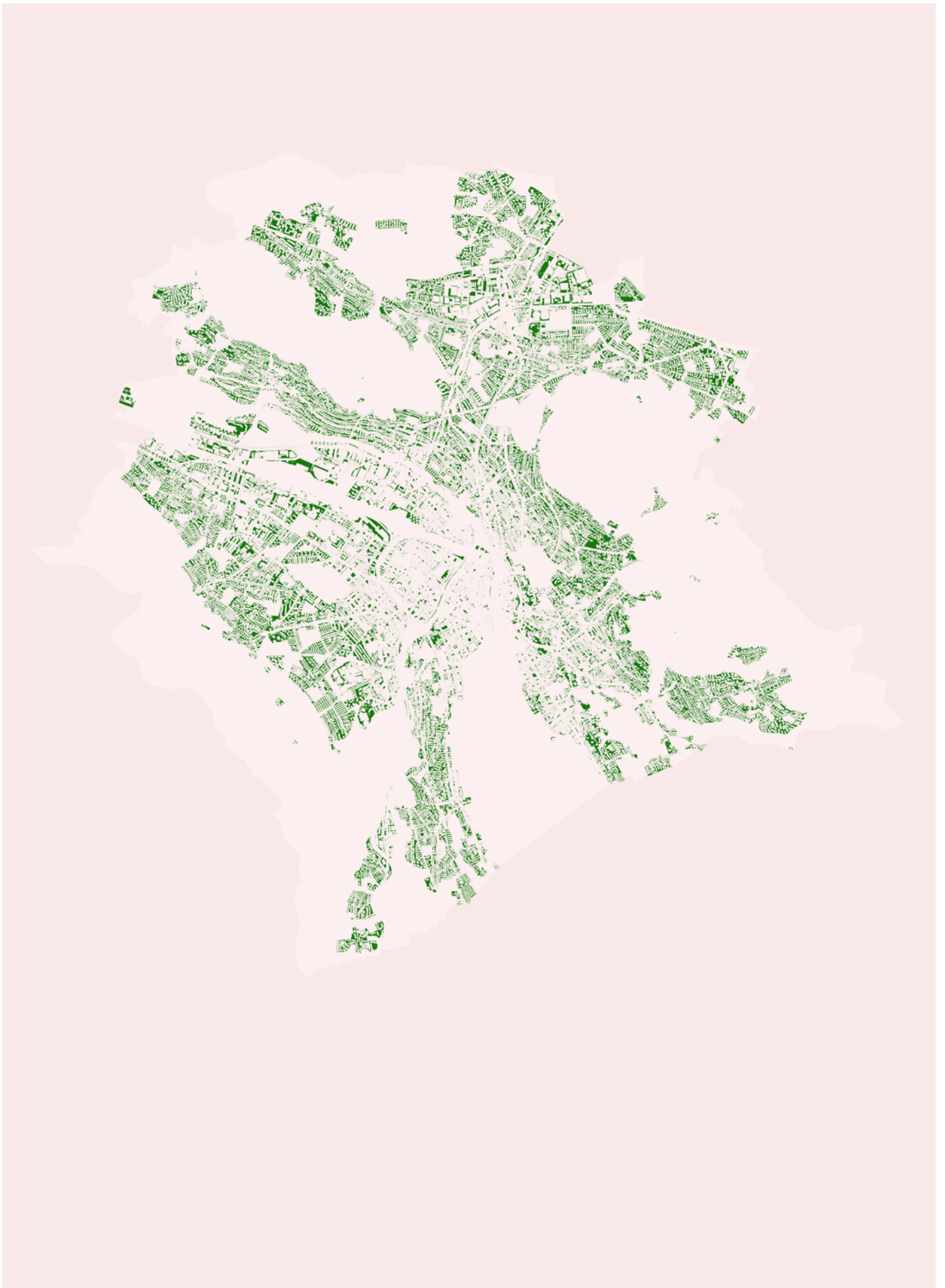
Emptiness in the built urban environment of a well-planned and highly regulated city like Zürich does not exist. And yet we find it: as a product of planning. If we interpret emptiness as «the absence of something», planning implements what is missing in the zoning plan. Therefore, the open spaces of the city of Zürich are not empty, because there is no full equivalent.





Open spaces like front yards, courtyards or spaces between streets seem empty, even often as the emptiest spaces in the city of Zürich. However, they only seem empty because they are lacking a user at a certain point in time. In the built urban environment, these areas are usually not «absence something» but intended as free spaces or leftovers in the context of the building.

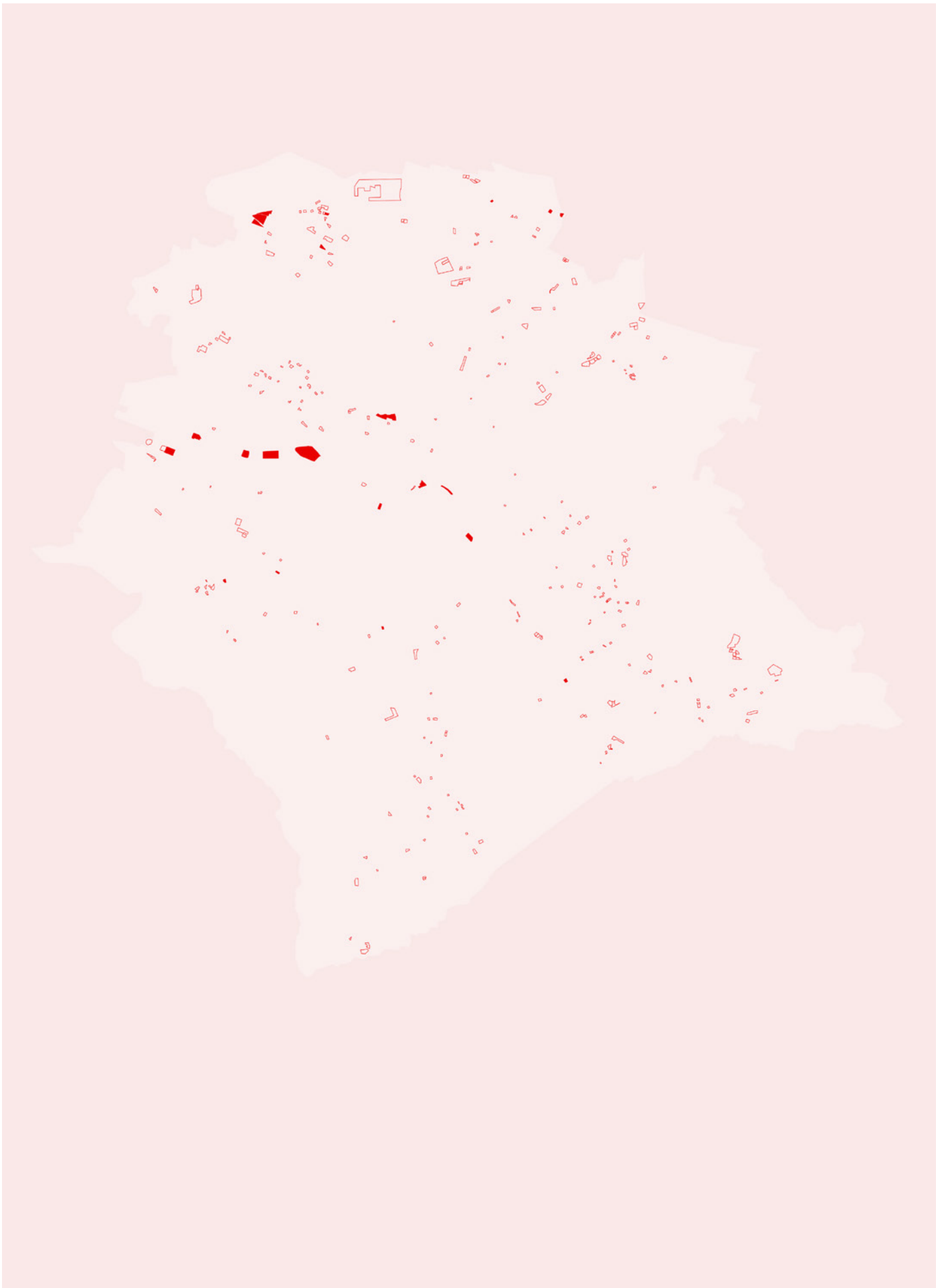




Emptiness only exists when the «full» is absent and therefore it is something temporary. In that way, we can find emptiness in the built urban environment in the form of undeveloped building plots. This refers to plots, where the building is absent or absent again.











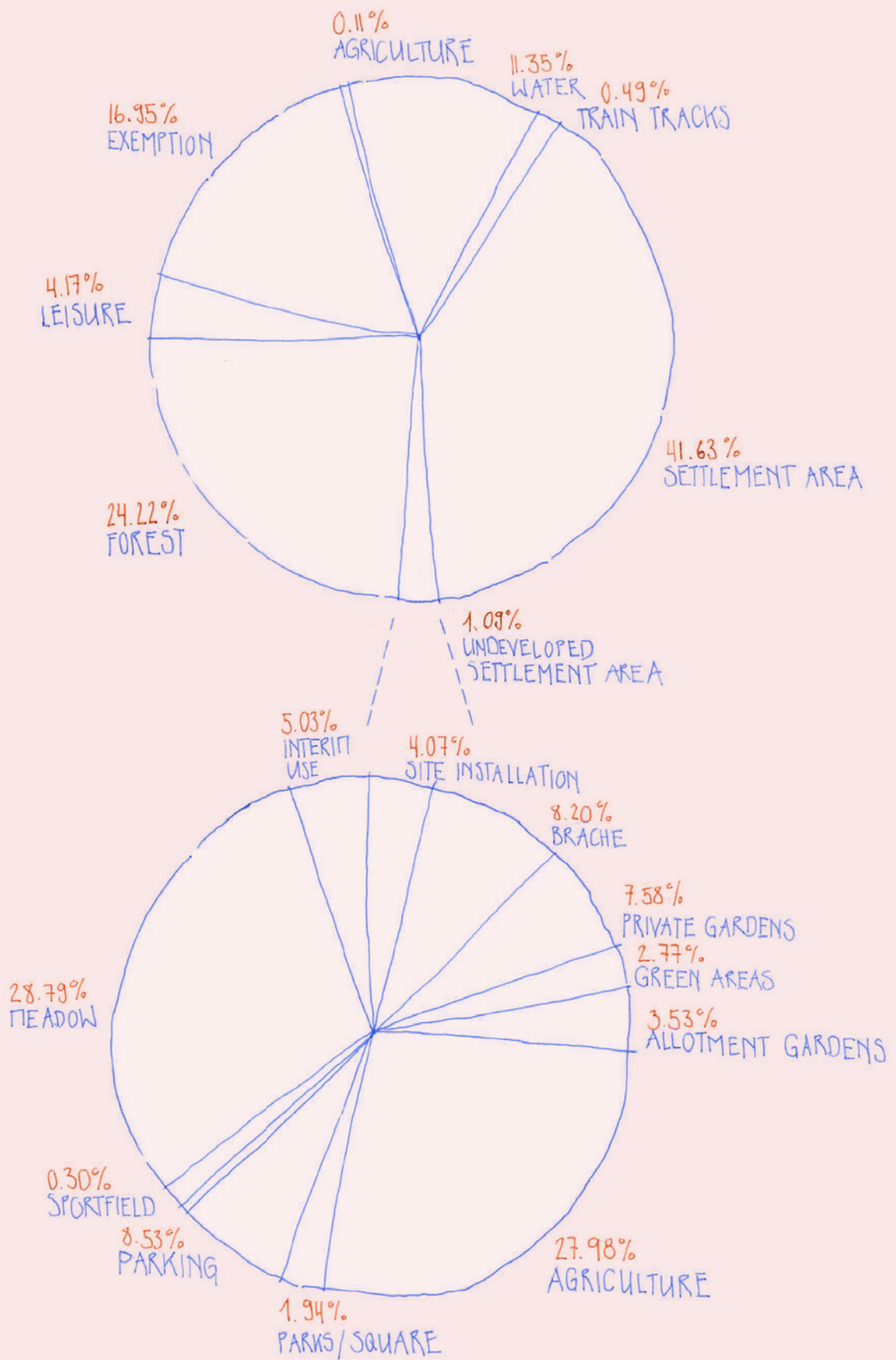
empty // empty and under protection // filled = re-empty «Brachen»

## Flächen Stadt Zürich nach Zonenplan 2018

<b>Total</b>	<b>91 881 145m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Wald</b>	<b>22 250 449m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>24.22%</b>
<b>Erholung</b>	<b>3 832 829m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4.17%</b>
E1 Sport und Freizeit	1 516 251m <sup>2</sup>	1.56%
E2 Sport und Freizeit	621 886m <sup>2</sup>	0.68%
E3 Kleingärten	1 694 692m <sup>2</sup>	1.84%
<b>Freihaltung</b>	<b>15 573 730m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>16.95%</b>
F Freihaltezone	9 892 956m <sup>2</sup>	10.77%
FK Freihaltezone Kantonal	2 747 698m <sup>2</sup>	2.99%
FP Park	1 390 746m <sup>2</sup>	1.51%
FE Friedhöfe	1 372 105m <sup>2</sup>	1.49%
FD Campingplatz	20 865m <sup>2</sup>	0.02%
FC Schulspielwiese/Freibad	117 310m <sup>2</sup>	0.13%
FA Allmend	32 050m <sup>2</sup>	0.03%
<b>Landwirtschaft</b>	<b>105 198m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.11%</b>
<b>Gewässer</b>	<b>10 424 780m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>11.35%</b>
<b>Gleisfeld (R)</b>	<b>445 838m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.49%</b>
<b>Bauland bebaut</b>	<b>39 248 321m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>41.63%</b>
<b>Bauland un bebaut (2022)</b>	<b>1 000 213m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1.09%</b>
davon «re-empty»	181 361.76m <sup>2</sup>	18%
	der Gesamtfläche	0.20%

## Bauland un bebaut 2022

<b>Total</b>	<b>1 000 213m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Baustelleninstallation</b>	<b>40 734m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4.07%</b>
<b>Brache</b>	<b>82 017m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8.20%</b>
<b>Privater Garten</b>	<b>75 837m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7.58%</b>
<b>Grünfläche</b>	<b>27 737m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2.77%</b>
<b>Gemeinschaftsgarten</b>	<b>35 299m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>3.53%</b>
<b>Landwirtschaft</b>	<b>279 849m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>27.98%</b>
<b>Platz / Park</b>	<b>19 433m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1.94%</b>
<b>Parkplatz</b>	<b>85 334m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8.53%</b>
<b>Sportplatz</b>	<b>3 018m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.30%</b>
<b>Umschlag- und Lagerplatz</b>	<b>12 673m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1.27%</b>
<b>Wiese und Weide</b>	<b>287 976m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>28.79%</b>
<b>Zwischennutzung</b>	<b>50 296m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>5.03%</b>
<b>Ownership private</b>	<b>632 398m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>69.59%</b>
<b>Ownership city of Zürich</b>	<b>304 122m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>30.41%</b>
<b>nature / garden protection</b>	<b>96 178.89m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>9.62%</b>





**Aargauerstrasse // Altstetten**  
 until 2011 storage area and workshops  
 today interim use (offices, workshops, prostitution area)



**Station Letten // Wipkingen**  
 until 1989 train tracks // until 2015 parking  
 today interim use



**Carparking // Zentrum**  
 until 1978 warehouse // until 1982 youth center  
 today car parking



**Gerenweg // Altstetten**  
 until 2006 storage area // until 2018 fallow / parking  
 today interim use (refugee center, offices)



**Geroldareal // Zürich West**  
 until 1950 metal company // until 2012 storage area  
 today interim use (bar, restaurant, surfing, etc.)



**Horensteinstrasse // Affoltern**  
 until 1952 street and 2 houses  
 today orchard and meadow



**Im Grund // Affoltern**  
 until 1992 4 houses // until 2021 public garden  
 today green space



**In der Ey // Albisrieden**  
 until 1996 hous and barn // until 2013 parking  
 today green space



**Juchstrasse // Altstetten**  
 until 2020 2 SBB workshops  
 today parking and site storage



**Steinstrasse // Wiedikon**  
 until 1969 2 houses  
 today public parking



**Letzigraben // Albisrieden**  
 until 2003 industry  
 today private parking GL Zürich



**Micafil // Altstetten**  
 until 1980-2017 industry  
 today fallow and interim use (pop-up bar)



**Mühlacker // Affoltern**

until 1999 storage area // until 2020 storage area  
today agriculture and fallow



**Wehtalerstrasse // Affoltern**

until 2021 parking car dealer  
today fallow



**Geroldareal // Zürich West**

until 2008 football stadium  
today fallow and urban garden



**Mühlackerstrasse // Affoltern**

until 2018 meadow // until 2020 site storage  
today fallow and parking



**Rümlangstrasse // Seebach**

until 2020 house and workshop  
today fallow



**Stelzenstrasse // Seebach**

until 2016 2 houses and garden  
today fallow and green space



**Schaffhauserstrasse // Seebach**

until 2014 industry  
today green space



**Seeburgpark // Riesbach**

until 1970 Villa  
today fallow (as part of a public parc)



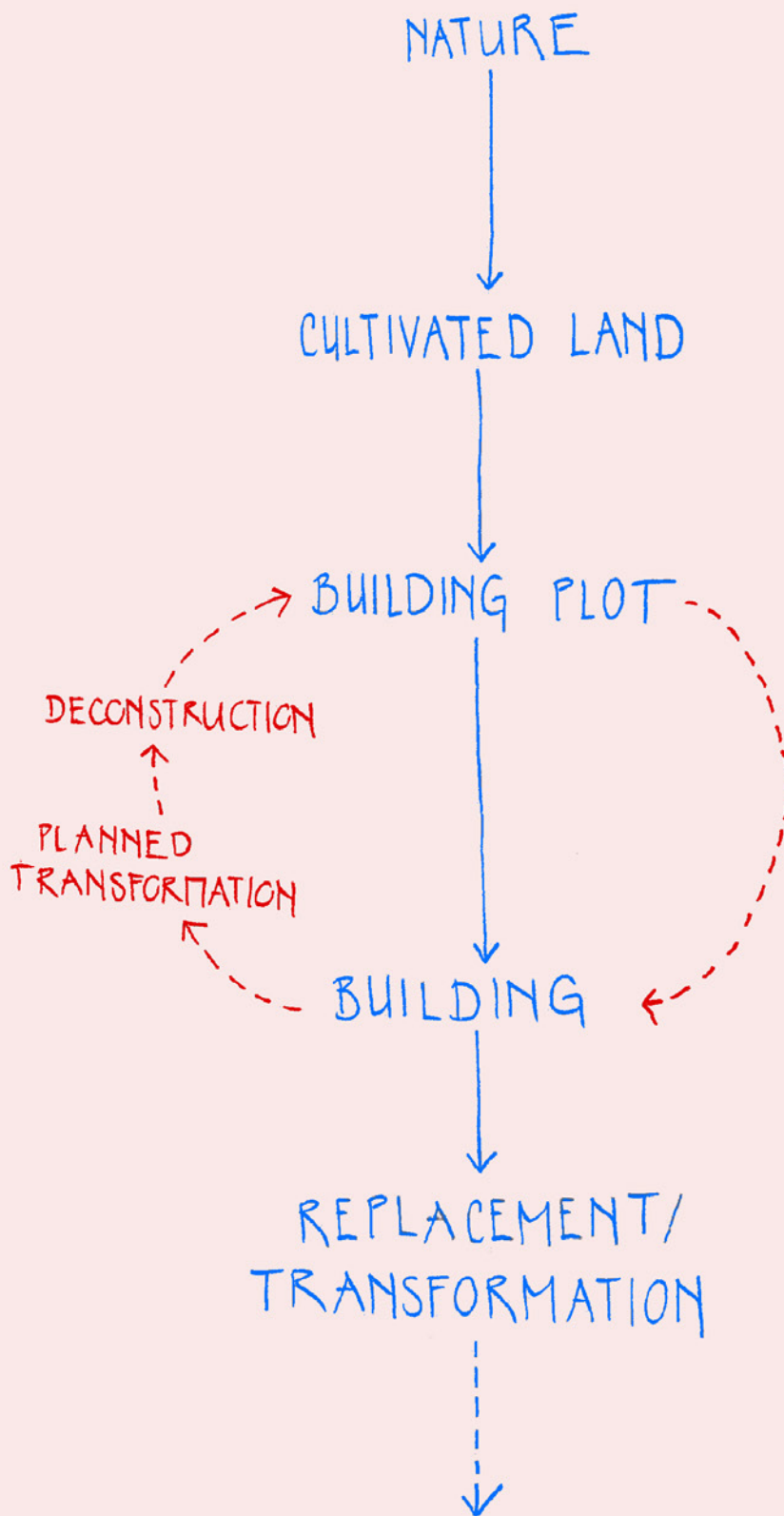
**Sihlquai // Aussersihl**

until 1955 industry // until 2001 transformer station  
today private parking and storage area

## EMPTINESS INTERRUPTS THE CLEAR NARRATIVE OF THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT!

In contrast to merely undeveloped areas that are still within the linear development, «Brachen» form a loop in urban development. In this loop, the areas are not only characterised by the absence of a building. In addition, a change in vegetation and soil can be observed as well as a curiosity of use and the absence of regulations and planning.







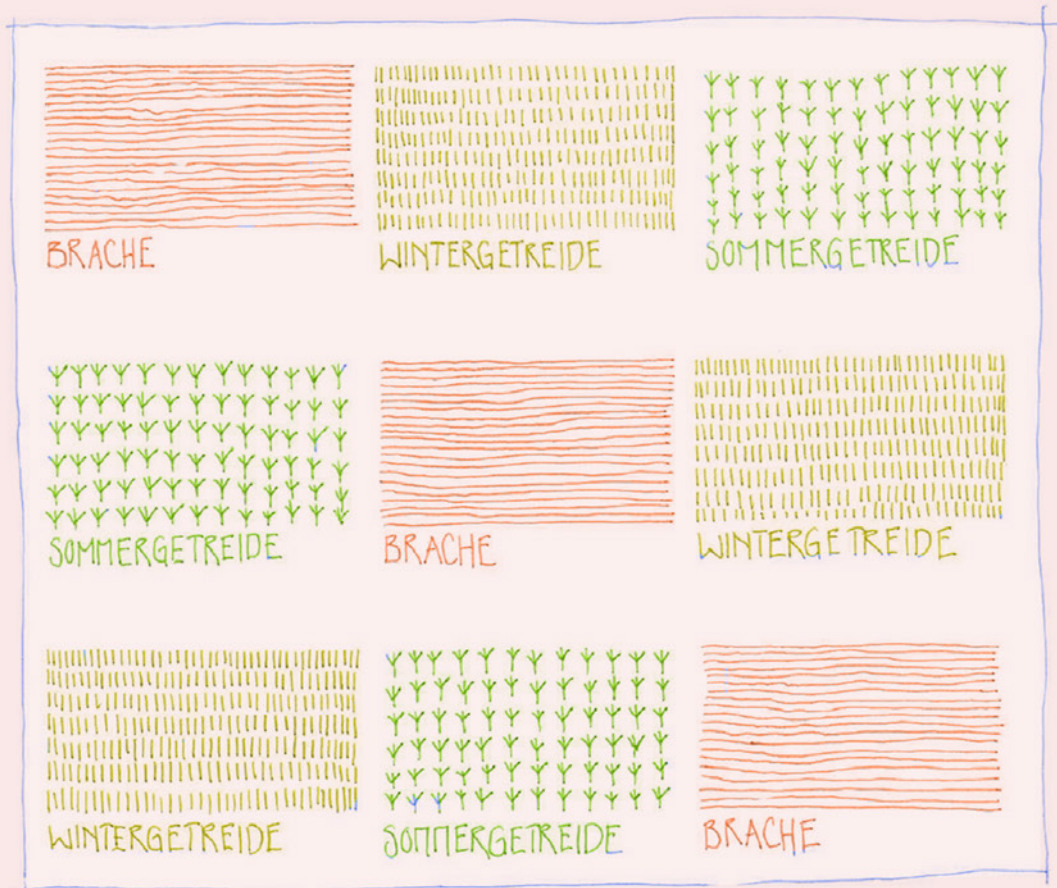


**«SECHS JAHRE KANNST DU  
IN DEINEM LAND SÄEN UND  
DIE ERNTE EINBRINGEN;  
IM SIEBTEN SOLLST DU ES  
BRACH LIEGEN LASSEN UND  
NICHT MEHR BESTELLEN.»**

// Buch Exodus, Altes Testament

In an agricultural context, the value of fallow land has been known for a long time as the quote from the Old Testament shows.

In the concept of three-field farming, fallow land is integrated into a three-year rotation system, between summer cereals (oats, barley) and winter cereals (spelt, rye, wheat) and served to rest the soil and promote natural regeneration. This concept was first mentioned in Swiss documentation in 786 and became widely established from the 11th century onwards. Three-field farming ensured the nutrition of a constantly growing population, because there was not enough fertiliser for permanent cultivation. By leaving the fields fallow for a year, not only could the yield be increased by about one third, it also reduced the risk of famine if one of two harvests a year failed. The fallow land also served as pasture for the village cattle.

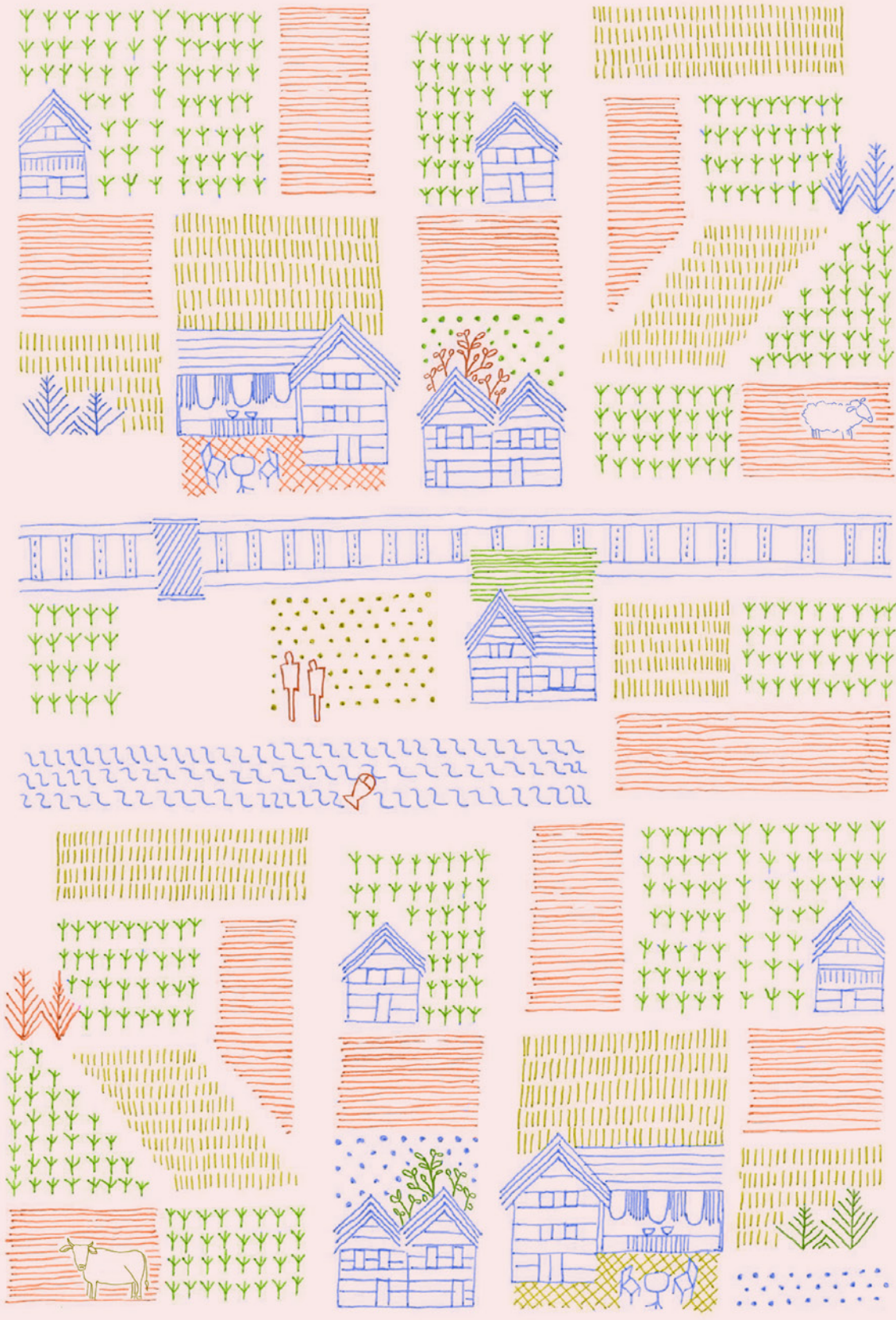


DREIFELDERWIRTSCHAFT

Arable land was subdivided into smaller and smaller parcels due to division of inheritance. The small parcels in combination with the three-field farming concept increasingly led to cooperatively organised rotation systems. A close association of farmers was formed and the arable land was combined into a village field cooperative and organised into «Zelgen», allotments, large utilisation units that were uniformly cultivated by individual farmers. The old parcels and properties remained but were superimposed by the village three-field farming. A «Zelge» consisted of many parcels of land belonging to numerous owners. Thus, the arable land was increasingly perceived as a total property. Especially because fields were available for all villagers to graze their animals during the fallow year. On the one hand, the alliance led to more efficient cultivation of the land and, for the first time, a surplus was produced that could be sold on the market. On the other hand, within the allotment there was compulsory cultivation, and each farmer of his part of the allotment had to keep to the agreed crop rotation and the end dates, so that damage to the land could be avoided, as the plots were often not accessible by their own paths.

The term «Flurzwang», like compulsory cultivation, was understood to mean an agreement between the owners or an enforced regulation by the communities for the cultivation of the fields and the crop rotation. The compulsory cultivation was supervised by the chairman of the cooperative or the village. No farmer could gain an advantage by harvesting early or cultivating other products than agreed. By imposing regulation and organizing agriculture cooperatively, theft of crops was significantly reduced.

In the 19th century, there was an increased change from a collectively organised crop rotation that applied to the arable land of an entire village to individually operated crop rotations on the land of an individual farm. This was further encouraged by improved fertilisers, as it was no longer necessary to leave fields fallow, which also led to the elimination of general grazing.



### **Grünbrache**

As a rotational fallow, the green fallow is usually integrated into the crop rotation. The fallow is not tilled, so the soil can recover through natural regeneration. A natural vegetation is formed by remaining seeds and natural pollen.

Until the 19th century, green fallow was available for grazing of village cattle and was accessible to everyone. Today, this fallow is subsidized.

### **Buntbrache**

This type of fallow only appeared since the 21st century and serves to promote biodiversity and provides a habitat for animals and insects. The fallow is planted with native wild herbs and grasses and persists for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 8 years. The planting is left to natural succession and may not be worked.

The fallow is basically accessible, but this means an intervention in the habitat of animals and plants. Today, this fallow is subsidized.

### **Schwarzbrache**

Through repeated ploughing, fallow land remains free of plant growth and is thus susceptible to wind and water erosion. The fallow is used as a rotation fallow mainly in dry climates, to store enough soil water before the next cultivation.

The fallow is not accessible by other uses because of the continuous ploughing.

### **Intensivbrache**

To improve the soil, fertilizing plants such as clover, alfalfa or vetches are grown for one cycle (rotational fallow) or several years, which enrich the nitrogen content in the soil. The cuttings are used as green fodder for livestock.

The fallow does not allow any other use but favours the subsequent cultivation.





GRÜNBRACHE  
(SUBSIDIES) BIODIVERSITY



BUNTBACHE  
(SUBSIDIES) BIODIVERSITY



SCHWARZBRACHE  
REGULAR PLOUGHING



INTENSIVBRACHE  
LEGUMINOSEN (KLEE, WICKEN,...)  
GREENS FOR ANIMALS // NITROGEN ENRICHMENT



Intensivbrache



Intensivbrache



Schwarzbrache



Intensivbrache



Intensivbrache



Grünbrache



Buntbrache



Buntbrache



Schwarzbrache



Schwarzbrache



Schwarzbrache



Intensivbrache // Buntbrache



Grünbrache



Grünbrache



Grünbrache



Schwarzbrache



Grünbrache



Buntbrache



Buntbrache



Grünbrache // Schwarzbrache

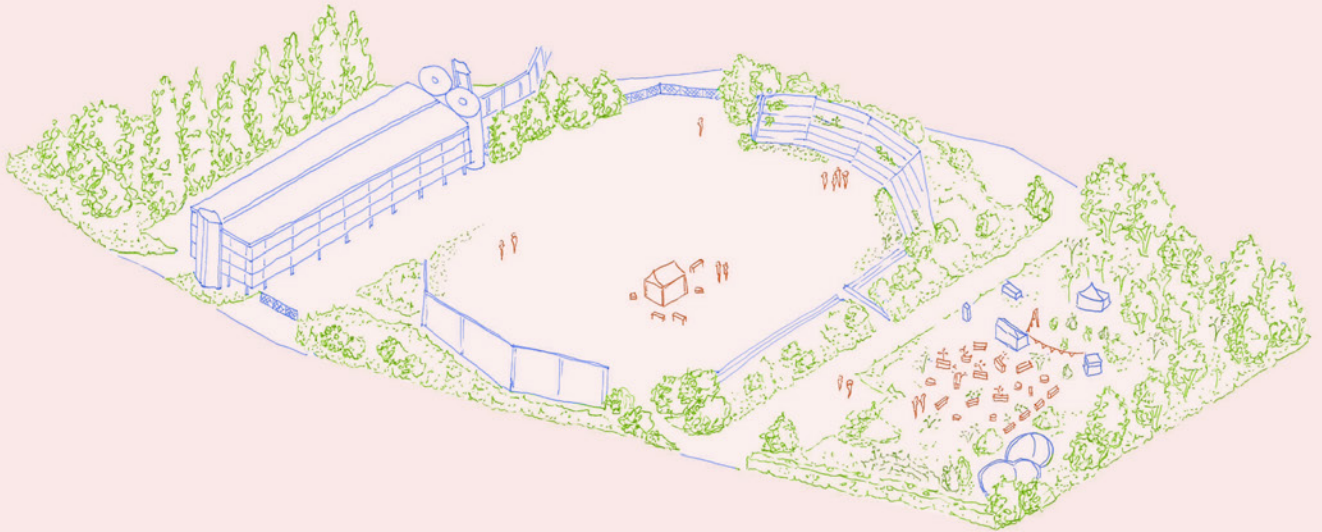
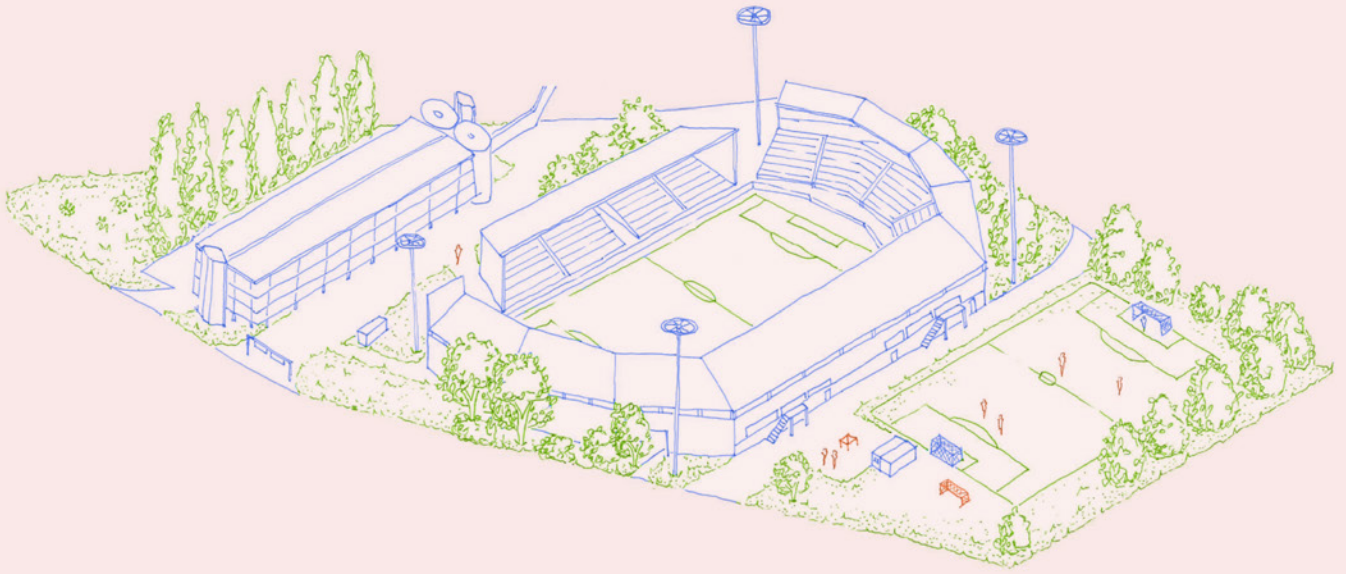


Schwarzbrache

- Grünbrache = accessible for everyone and free for appropriation.
- Buntbrache = biodiversity promotion through the naturally development and succession of the vegetation.
- Schwarzbrache = continued use by another use. Through continuous regulations a appropriation is difficult or even not possible.
- Intensivbrache = interim use. Can have a positive effect on the following.

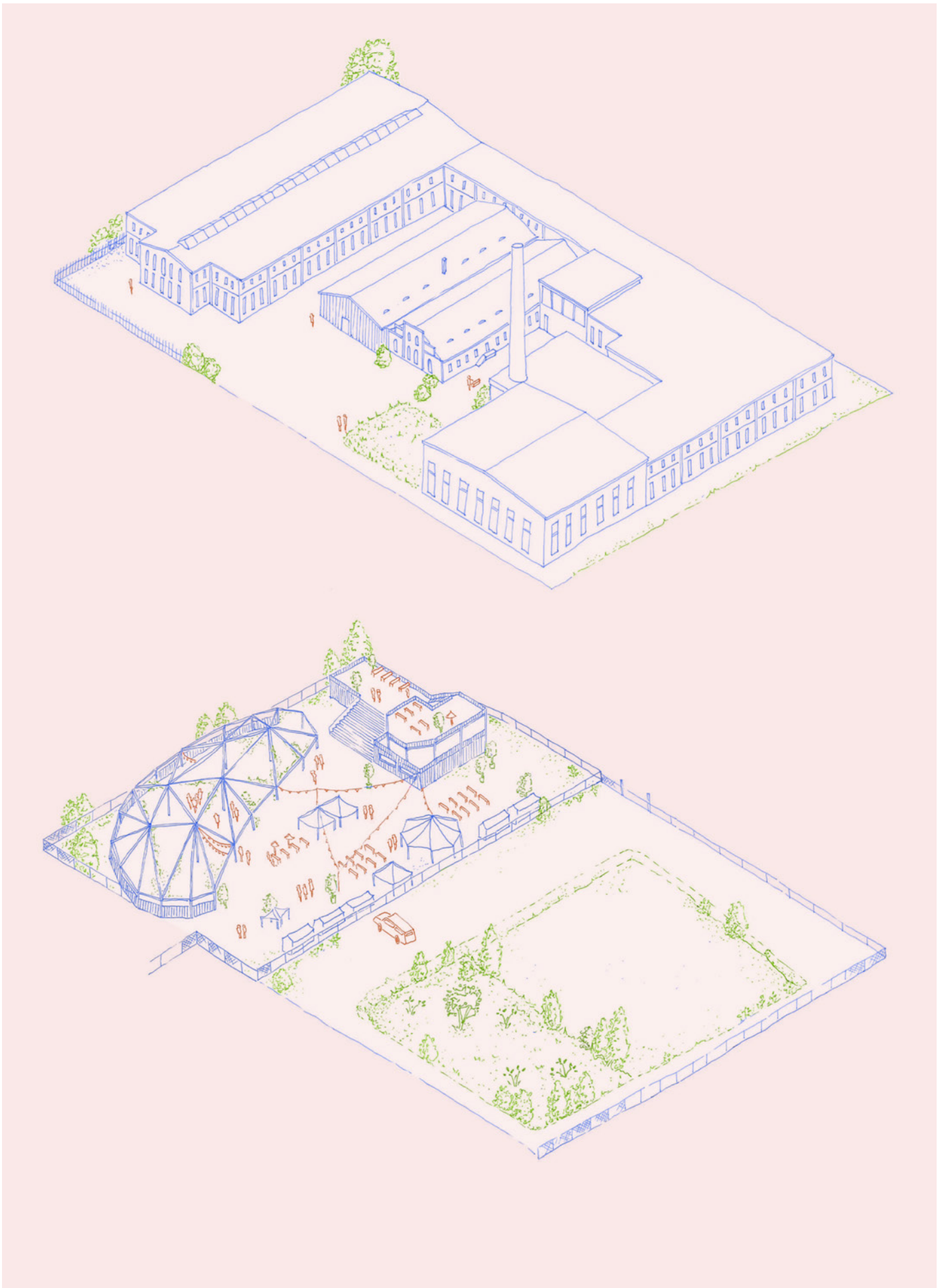
A popular example of a fallow in the urban context is the Hardturm stadium, which was opened in 1929. In 2008, the football stadium was demolished to make way for a new stadium. The new building project was approved by the population, but due to a legal dispute and several objections, it finally came to a standstill. Further attempts to build a new building failed in voting. At the end of June 2011, the city of Zurich gave the area to the «Verein Stadionbrache» for a neighbourhood-compatible, non-commercial interim use until construction of the new Hardturm stadium begins in 2023/24. Various projects were developed, such as a skate pool, a boulder block, a chicken farm and beekeeping, as well as urban gardening. Various interim uses, such as the circus or the street food festival also take place on the fallow. In addition, despite its small size, the stadium fallow has one of the greatest biodiversities in the city of Zürich and is comparable to the «Gleisfeld» or Sihlquai.





The Micafil company was founded in 1918 from the company F. Aebi, which already had a workshop on this site. The electrical company was steadily expanded and enlarged from 1918 to 1978. Since 1980, the workshops and the machine factory have been steadily deconstructed until the last building was demolished in 2017. The site was bought by ABB, which also held a competition for a residential development on the site in 2004. Despite the approved design plan, the project was never carried out, as the company was more interested in the land reserves. 2021, the Pop-Up Bar «Micas Garten» was granted a temporary contract for two years for the interim use of part of the site. The ruderal area that naturally developed on the fallow land for around 15 years today has a biotope quality of exceptional importance.

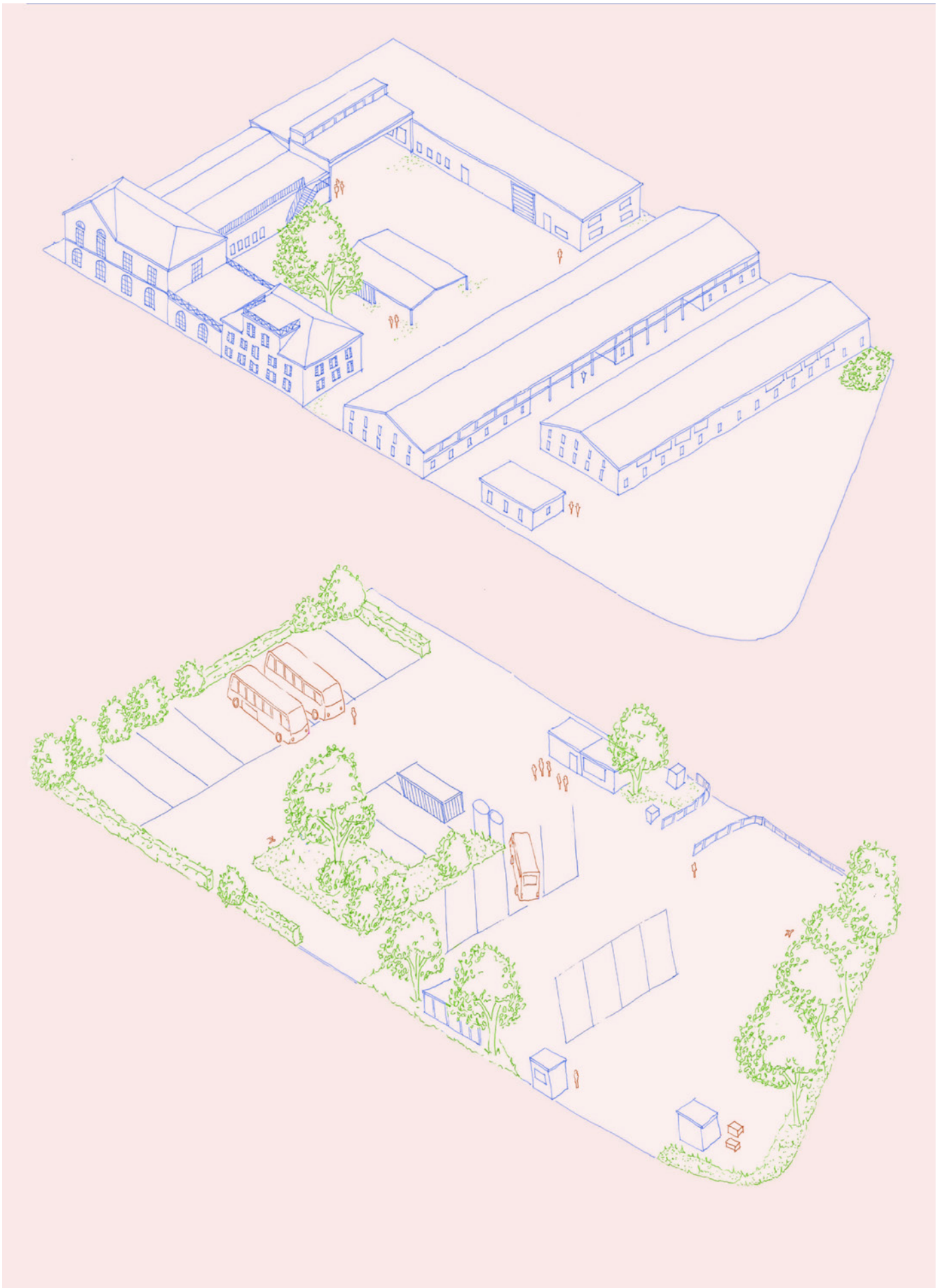




On the site where the National Exhibition was held in 1883, the municipal materials administration was built. In 1979 the front two buildings were demolished and in 1980 the vacant area became a bus parking. Only a few weeks later, the building at Limmatstrasse 18-20 became the autonomous youth centre AJZ. In a protest action for more open space, they tore up the asphalted area of the bus parking. The area became the main stage of the «Jugendunruhen». After a raid in which drugs and weapons were found, the AJZ was closed and definitely demolished in 1982. Various ideas for the use of the site emerged like the extension of the National Museum or a congress centre. Because of the planned city tunnel under the main railway station, all projects were put on hold. As a provisional solution 15 more car parking spaces are added to the fallow land. But even 40 years later, the space is still simply a bus parking.

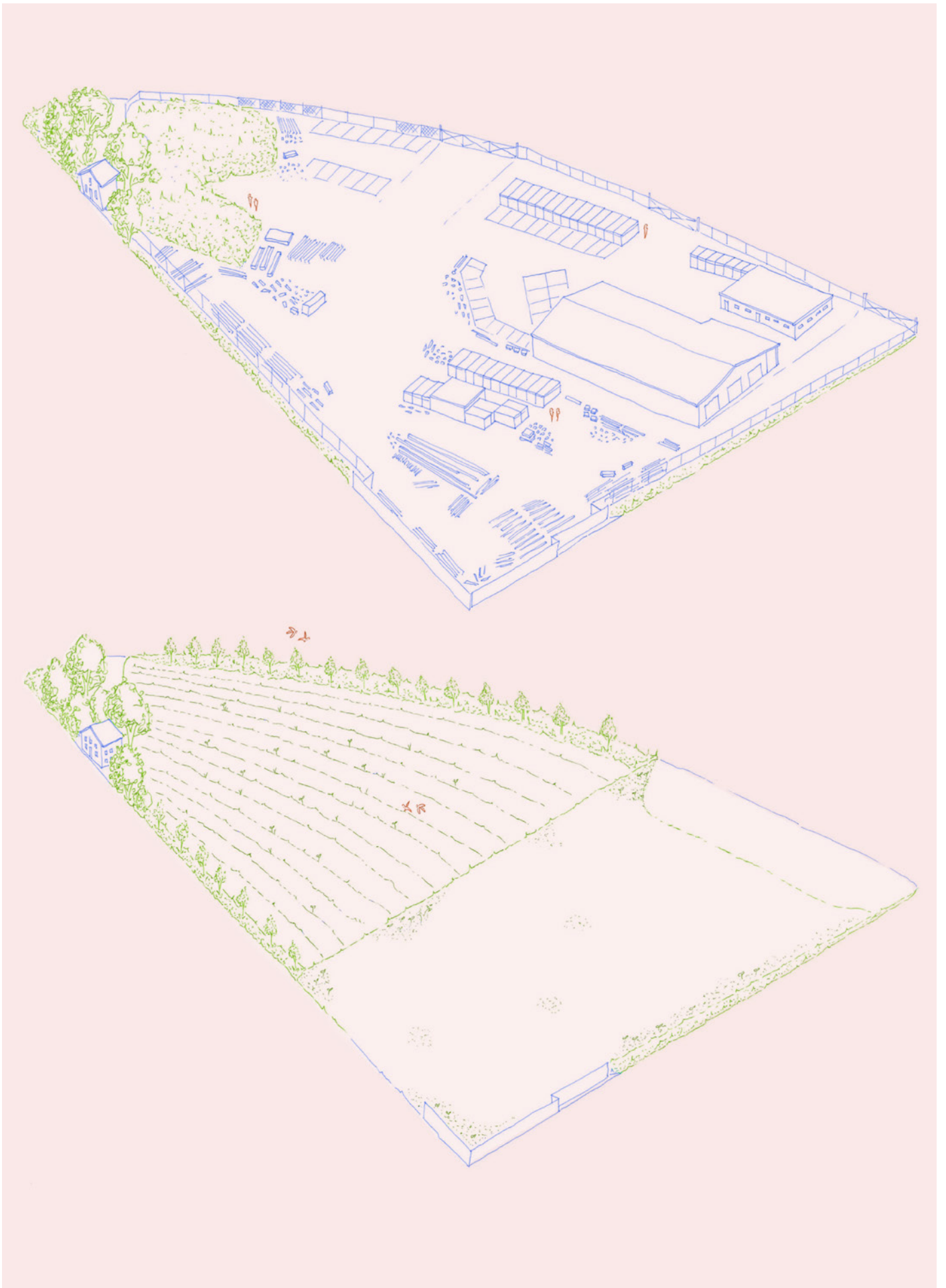




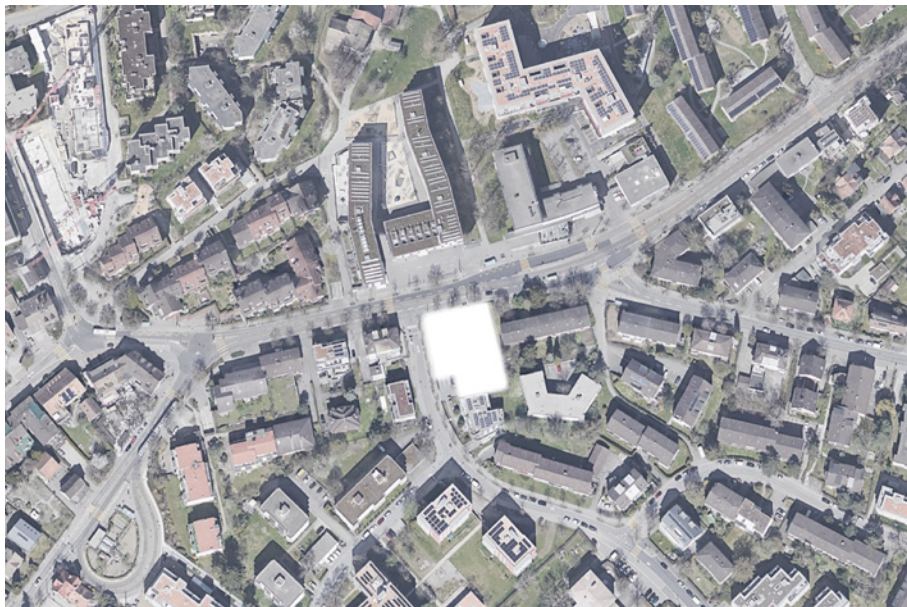


The Mühlacker is located on the very periphery of the city. Part of the area was used for agriculture until 2018. The other part was used as a storage and transshipment site with small workshop buildings until 2000. After that, the land lay fallow. When the start of the large-scale Aspenholz development began in 2007, the former transshipment site was used as a construction installation site. After completion, the land again lay fallow until 2018, when it was again used as a construction installation site for the enclosure of the highway, this time including the agricultural part. A building was erected for this purpose and some areas were asphalted. Since 2020, the land lies fallow again, while the former farmland is again used as such. Pioneer plants have taken over the fallow land again each time.





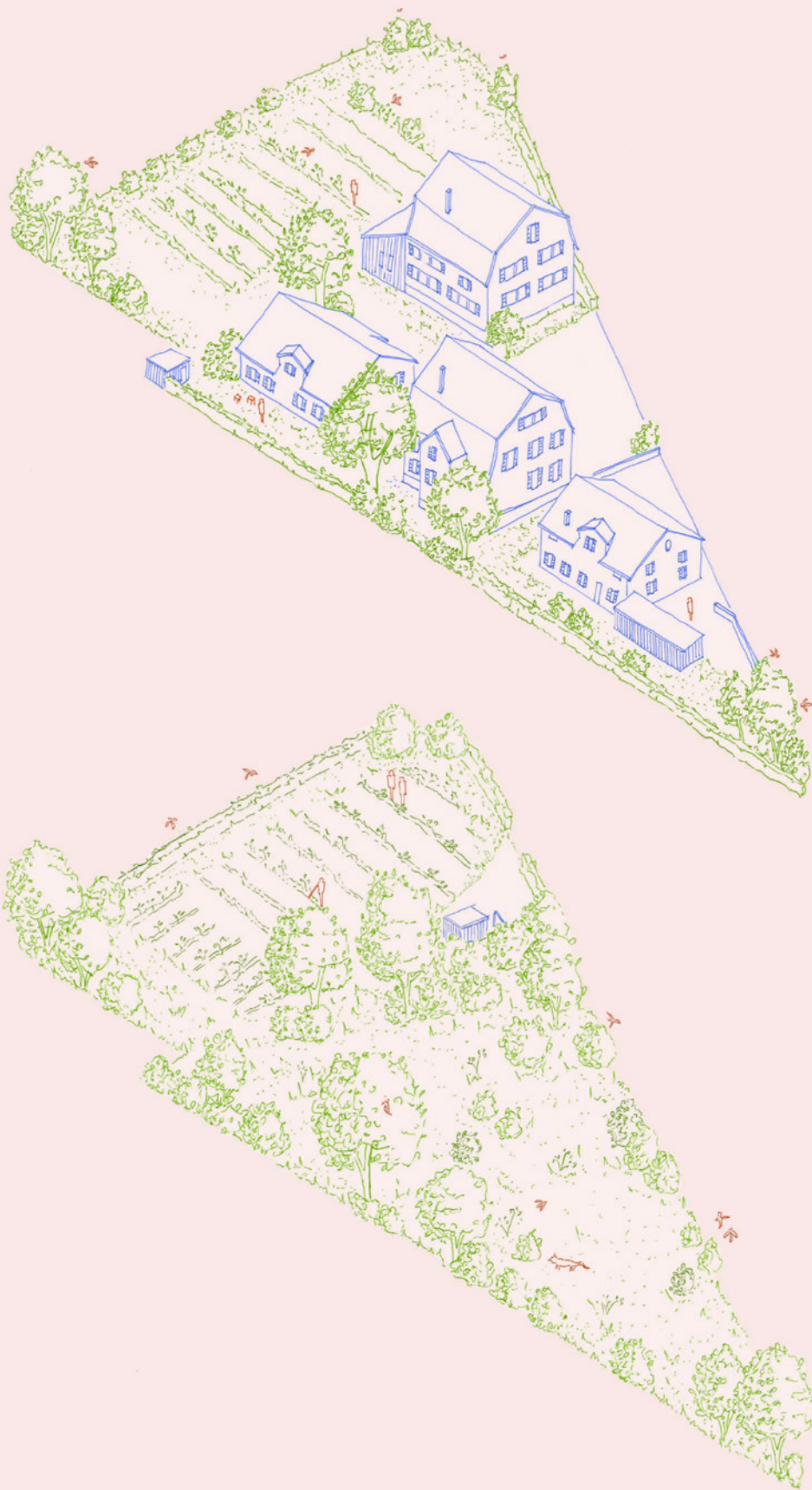
The farmhouse and the barn were built around 1880 and used from 1970 by Grob Automobile as a sales place for second-hand cars. The buildings were demolished in 1993. After that, the property continued to be used as a car park for the car dealer until 2013. Since 2014, the property has no longer been used and flora and fauna have taken up residence, while the development of the surrounding properties has progressed. In 2007, a new shopping centre was built across the street, and gradually the farmhouses are being replaced by residential houses and the undeveloped plots are being built over. The fallow land is the only large green space in the area and is of general importance according to the biotope-classification of Zürich.





The four residential buildings next to Affoltern station were built between 1902 and 1914 and demolished in 1992. The plots of the houses were occupied by lush vegetation with shrubs and bushes. On the plots of the former garden, a community of people from the neighbourhood together with «Veg and The City» established a community garden. The biotope quality of the area is between general and special importance according to the biotope-classification of Zürich. The surrounding area is characterised by many transformations and large building developments.









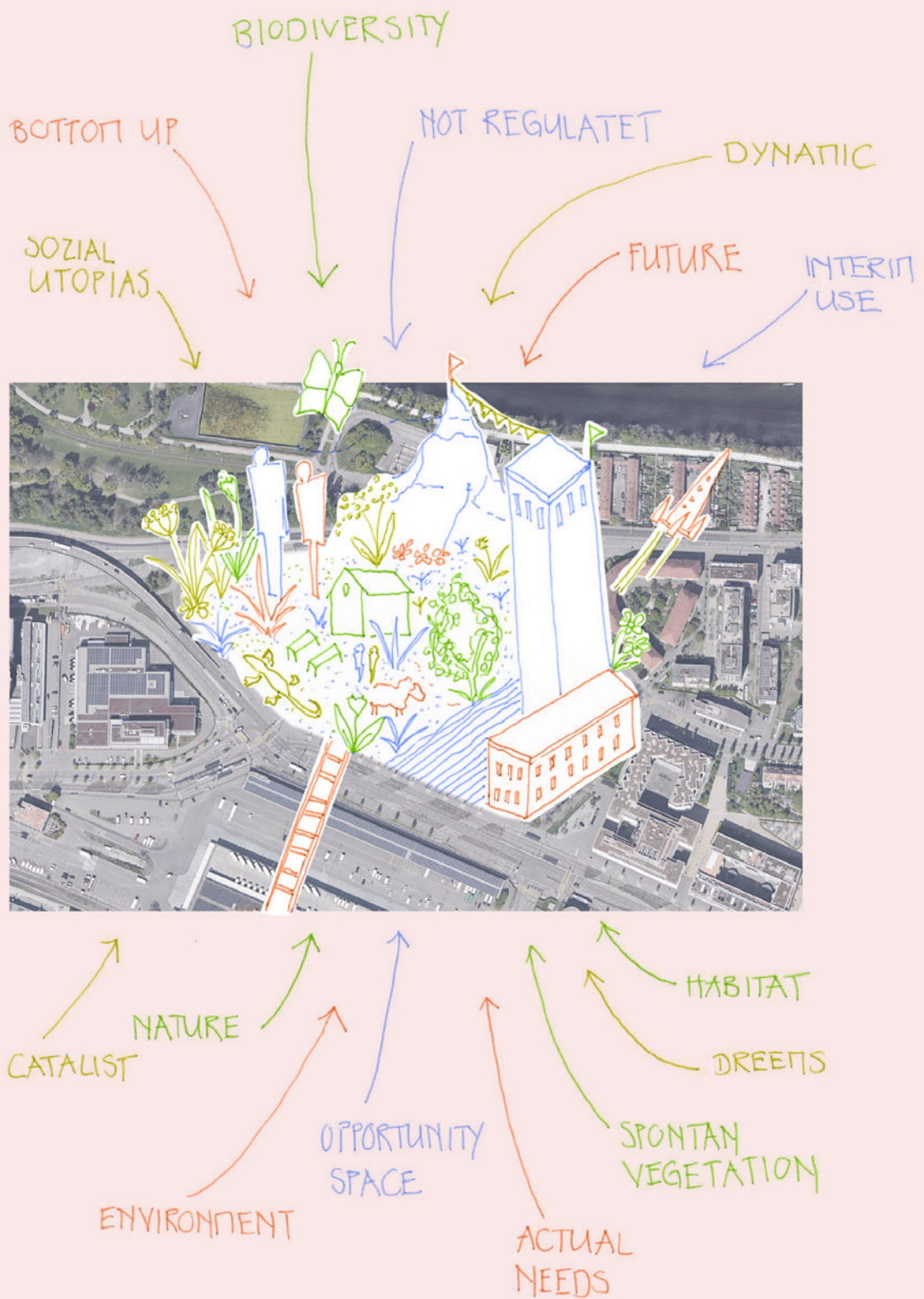


Just as the swimming pool is empty in winter, the «Brache» is temporarily empty of its actual use. During this time, it is the place where Malin stood on a skateboard for the first time, Ruth creates a neighbourhood garden, Jonas and his friends test their self-made drones, Simone's child sees a fox for the first time, Marc plans a summer bar and architecture students make their projects for. The spaces become a projection surface for dreams and ideas. The only thing that matters is that the place is empty and shows this through its character, by the absence of regulations and planning and its temporality.

As Lucius Burckhard wrote: «The solution of the present needs is at the same time the planning of the future».<sup>1</sup> We often plan the future without knowing future needs. Usually politics determines the what, the designer the how and the user, the resident of the city, is powerless: they cannot and are not allowed to change what does not belong to them. The emptiness in the urban development provides space for the «powerless» and enables appropriation and thus the direct and immediate participation of society in urban planning. This is usually more effective than participation in urban planning through politics. The fallow land is always an «in-between», it begins with an end and ends with a beginning. The before is not important for the fallow, and yet the empty space leads to an awareness of urban development. However, the fallow land has an important influence on what follows. In particular, interim uses can enhance the surrounding area, even to the point of increasing land values. Interim uses last on average for 7-12 years and do not adhere to zoning plans and thus show the needs of the residents, they reflect the demand, dreams and ideas of the population and turn no-man's land into everyman's land.

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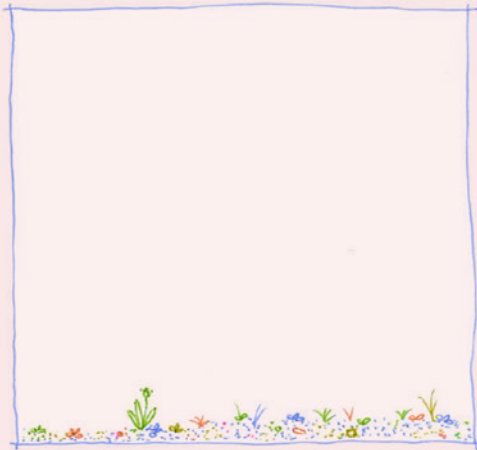
<sup>1</sup>Burckhardt, Lucius: Bauen - Ein Prozess ohne Denkmalpflichten (1967)



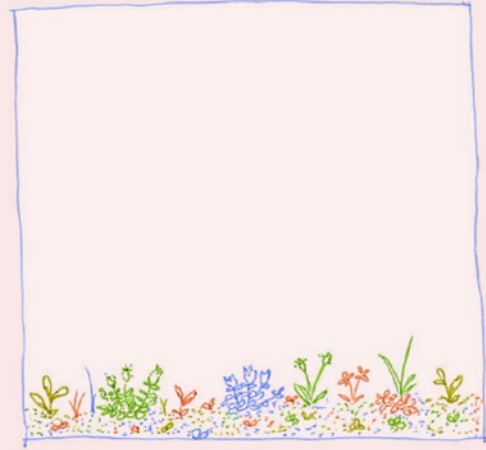
**«EARLY ‹BRACHEN› IN PARTICULAR CAN HAVE A HIGH DIVERSITY OF PLANTS AND BE IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES.»**

// Beate Jessel: Stadtbrachen als Chance

If the fallow lands are not taken possession of by the residents, they are taken possession of by nature. Due to the lack of green planning and maintenance, these areas offer the only places in the city where vegetation can develop naturally. Especially the first years of a fallow, where they are taken over by pioneering plants, form extraordinary biotopes in the city. In order to maintain this condition, which is already replaced by natural succession after 2-3 years and stronger plants colonise the areas, it is important that new fallows are created again while others disappear. «Brachen» often provide a higher biodiversity of animals and plants than many other, regulated, green spaces in the city. Thus, fallow land not only belongs to the particularly valuable areas of nature conservation, it also has a regulating effect on the urban climate, like other green spaces.



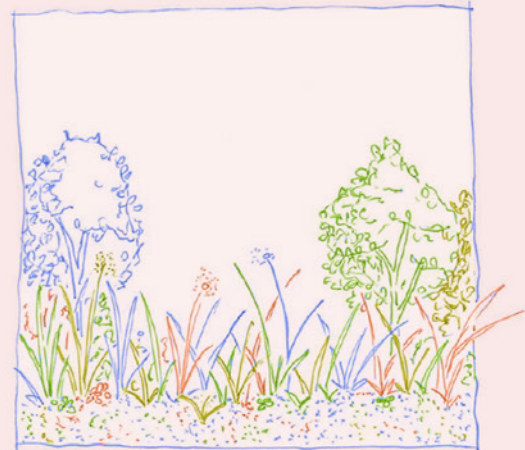
<math>< 3</math> YEARS  
 PIONIERFLUR  
 DOMINANCE OF ANNUELLEN



3-5 YEARS  
 PERENNIAL RUDERAL VEGETATION  
 "TROCKENRASEN"



6-10 YEARS  
 PERENNIAL RUDERAL VEGETATION  
 "TROCKENRASEN" // BUSHES >5M



11-20 YEARS  
 TALL PERENNIAL RUDERAL V.  
 BUSHES // TREES >10M



20-50 YEARS  
 PRELIMINARY FOREST  
 BIRCH, ROBINIE, MAPLE



>50 YEARS  
 YOUNG FOREST  
 BIRCH, OAK

**THE EMPTINESS IN THE  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
PROVIDES SPACE FOR  
THE «POWERLESS» AND  
ENABLES APPROPRIATION  
AND THUS THE DIRECT AND  
IMMEDIATE PARTICIPATION  
OF SOCIETY IN URBAN  
PLANNING.**



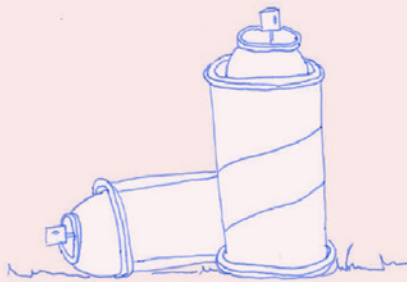
PIONIERPFLANZE  
KRÖTEN BINSE  
(JUNCUS BUFONIUS)



PIONIERPFLANZE  
WEG RAUKE  
(SYSYMBRIUM OFFICINALE)



PIONIERPFLANZE  
BREITWEGERICH  
(PLANTAGO MAJOR)



PIONIERNUTZUNG  
GRAFFITY



PIONIERNUTZUNG  
GARDENING



PIONIERNUTZUNG  
FOOTBALL











We were sitting on the terrace eating dinner when Malin arrived late, threw her backpack against the railing, sat down and said: «Sorry, I lost track of time! I was skateboarding and feeding the chickens on the Brache». Smiling, I had to think back to the time when I myself raised chickens on the «Stadiumbrache». It was a nice time to spend the warm summer evenings in a community on the «Brache» and to realise so many different projects. But like the fallow land in agriculture, the «Stadiumbrache» came to an end when the new stadium was finally built after a few years. After that, there were fewer and fewer «Brachen» in the city, but citizens demonstrated and demanded more unregulated open spaces. It was only five years ago that the «Brachengesetz», a new law, was introduced, on the one hand because the city recognised the potential of «Brachen» and the circular development of the land, on the other hand the protests against the culture of replacement constructions became louder and louder. The demolition of the Mythenschloss, which was 40 years old, or the demolition of the Orion office building, which was only 29 years old, finally broke the camel's back. According to the new law, if a building is now demolished, the land must lie fallow afterwards for a period of time corresponding to the lifespan of the demolished or deconstructed building. A reduction of the time can be applied for if the components of the demolished or deconstructed building are released for re-use or the existing remaining structure is integrated into the design of the new built replacement building.

One can already see the changes in the city due to the new law. I only know of a few examples, such as Brunaupark, where Migros has now been relocated to the existing underground car parking due to urgent redevelopment, and on the rest of the site, densification is now being planned for the existing buildings. The Hotel Waldhaus Dolder was not replaced by a new building either, but the interior was extensively renovated so that it once again meets the aesthetic demands of the guests. They left the eastern part as flats because this worked so well during the interim use. I also heard a story about a villa that the owners wanted to tear down to build a new villa. But since the existing villa was only 20 years old, according to the new law they would have had to leave the land fallow for 40 years. Now they live in the existing villa and are quite happy.

But new «Brachen» have also been created, for example, the Werkerei in Schwamendingen has been deconstructed and is now available for use by the residents. Even if the building was not that old, the change brought

about by the enclosure probably cannot be stopped. However, to shorten the fallow period, certain existing building structures are to be integrated into the project. The new building will also be designed with more reused materials and the amount of concrete will be reduced. The buildings on Winterthurerstrassen were spared for another two years, but when they reached their 100 years, they too were demolished. In my opinion the best new «Brache» is the one in Manegg: the company Avaloq decided to demolish the former staff restaurant, even if they had to leave the land fallow for 10 years afterwards. The reason they gave was that a «Brache» might be just the right thing to give the «Green City» as the district is called, more character and also some green!

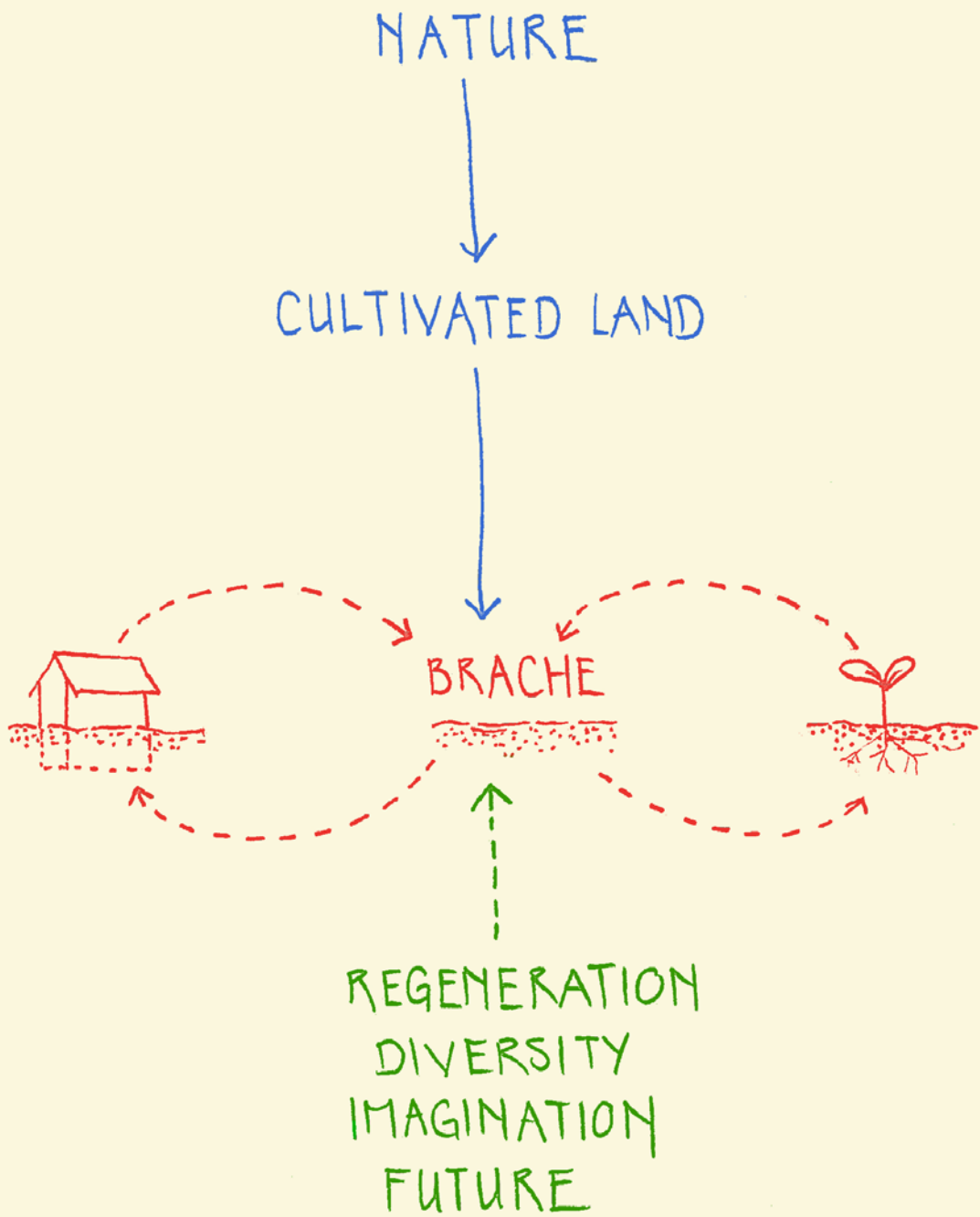
But the law also affects new buildings, because just as the «Brache» is only a temporary condition, the building is also only temporary in the new circular urban development. So deconstruction is integrated into the design process and reuse becomes much more important. We live since a year now on the first «Brache», that was to be rebuilt after the introduction of the law. And so the original housing project was no longer carried out, but instead a more diverse housing project. In addition to the flats, studios and workshops, a restaurant and a pavilion for cultural events was also built. The ruderal area that was allowed to develop naturally and undisturbed is also integrated in the new development and creates a beautiful naturally biotope. The former «Brache» has become a lively neighbourhood, but I'm also intrigued to see what it will be like when the area becomes a «Brache» again. A lot of the construction can be deconstructed for re-use and the remaining elements, as the cores and the foundations will stay like sculptures on the site. I'm curious which traces we leave behind on the remaining elements and how the inhabitants of the city will use them further. I would definitely use the staircase of the north building as a viewpoint, because you have a great view over the track field and Malin would of course use the concrete foundations for skating.

«Mum, will you come with us tomorrow and help us enlarge the chicken enclosure?», my daughter asked me, snapping me out of my thoughts.

«I want to come too», my youngest exclaimed.

«Of course, tomorrow we'll all go», I replied.

The «Brachengesetz» questions today's culture of new replacement constructions and promotes the appreciation, maintenance and further development of existing buildings, as it is worthwhile to preserve a building for as long as possible. This is, because during the fallow period, the land is at the free disposal of the population and it can neither be used privately nor can income be generated during this time. Their temporary state, but also the lack of top-down planning and regulations is essential for the diversity and the appropriation of the fallow land. With the establishment of a new law, the «Brachengesetz», the urban development shifts from monoculture towards a kind of building rotation system. The «Brache» is integrated into the urban development process and promotes a new type of public open space. A dynamic open space that serves as projection surface for the needs, dreams and imaginations of the residents. In this way, fallow land provides space for the «powerless» and enables appropriation and thus the direct and immediate participation of society in urban planning. The «Brache» becomes a design tool for the urban development in a circular process, which leads to a new, more temporary, architecture. The building on the one hand and the «Brache» on the other hand create two temporary, alternating states of a circular process. Deconstruction and thinking about «what remains» become part of the design process. Furthermore, the reuse of building materials is promoted, which leads to buildings being harvested instead of demolished. If the city of Zürich seeks to continue to profit from the qualities of fallow land, the so-called «Brachen», it is important that new fallows are created when others disappear, because the «Brache» can neither be planned nor protected. Otherwise, it is merely a matter of time when all available land is built on.



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## ART. 91: «BRACHENGESETZ»

- I. IF A BUILDING IS DEMOLISHED OR DECONSTRUCTED IN THE CITY OF ZÜRICH, THE LAND MUST LIE FALLOW AFTERWARDS AND SERVE AS A «BRACHE» FOR A DEFINED PERIOD OF TIME.
- II. DURING THE «FALLOW PERIOD», THE LAND AND EVERYTHING REMAINING ON IT IS FREE FROM PROPERTY CLAIMS, TOP-DOWN PLANNING AND REGULATIONS. IT IS AT THE FREE DISPOSAL OF ALL INHABITANTS OF THE CITY.
- III. THE DURATION OF THE «FALLOW PERIOD» IS DEFINED BY THE LIFESPAN OF THE DEMOLISHED OR DECONSTRUCTED BUILDING:

> 150 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	1 YEAR
< 150 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	2 YEARS
< 100 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	3 YEARS
< 80 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	5 YEARS
< 60 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	10 YEARS
< 40 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	20 YEARS
< 20 YEARS	LIE FALLOW FOR	40 YEARS
- IV. THE «FALLOW PERIOD» CAN BE REDUCED IF:
  - a. THE BUILDING MATERIAL OF THE DEMOLISHED OR DECONSTRUCTED BUILDING IS RELEASED FOR RE-USE.
  - b. THE EXISTING REMAINING STRUCTURE IS INTEGRATED INTO THE DESIGN OF THE NEW REPLACEMENT BUILDING.
- V. THE ALLOWED REDUCTION OF THE «FALLOW PERIOD» IS CALCULATED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE BUILDING VOLUME.

THE «BRACHENGESETZ»  
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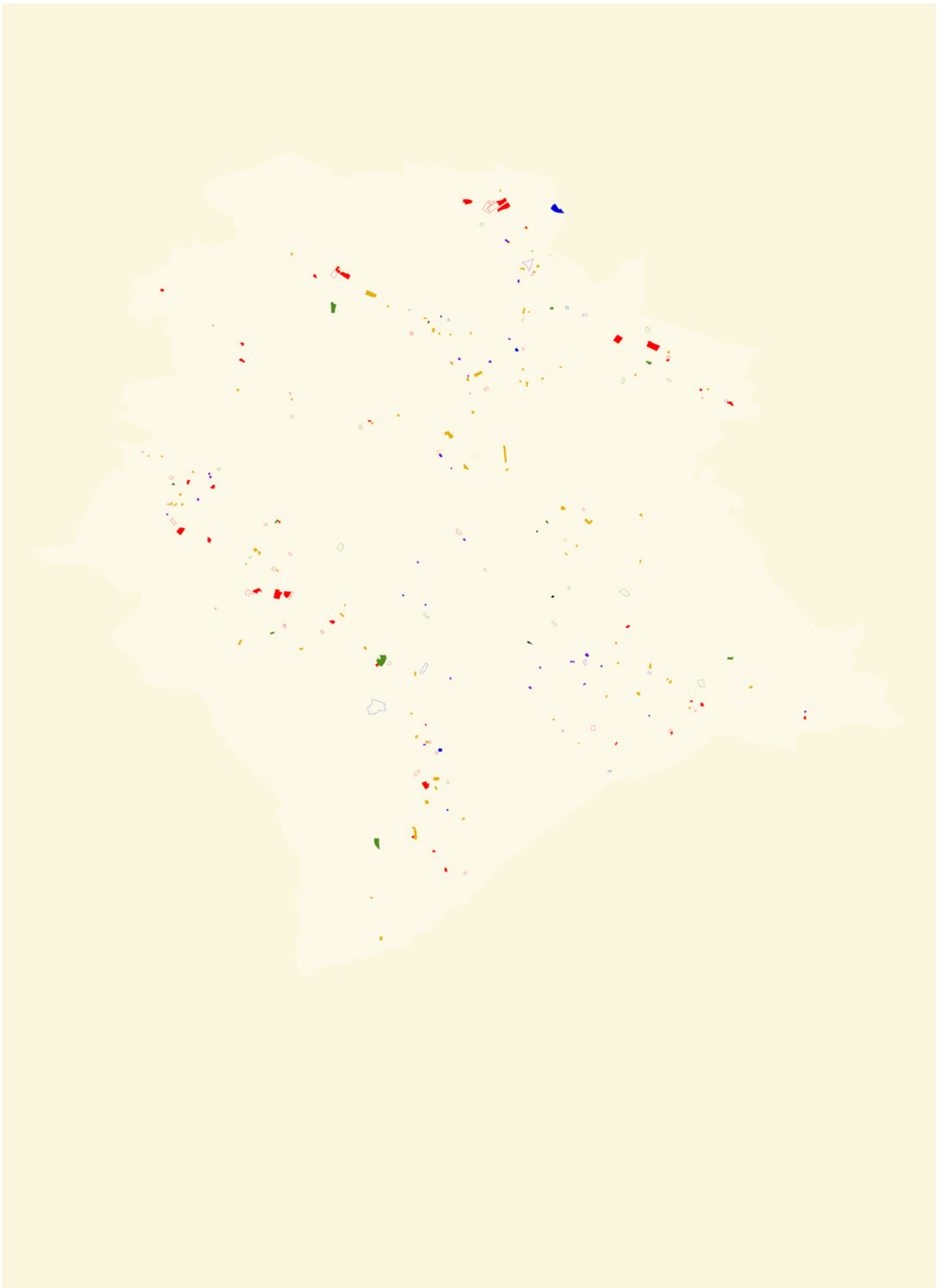
THE AIM OF THE «BRACHENGESETZ» IS TO:

- I. PRESERVE THE QUALITIES OF «BRACHEN» AS A NEW TYPE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.
- II. ENCOURAGE THE APPROPRIATION AND PARTICIPATION OF INHABITANTS IN URBAN DESIGN BY REFRAINING FROM PLANNING AND REGULATING FALLOW LAND.
- III. PROMOTE A CIRCULAR URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF CREATION AND RECREATION, USING THE «BRACHE» AS A TOOL.
- IV. ALLOW THE CITY TO CHANGE IN A MORE DYNAMIC WAY AND REACT TO FUTURE NEEDS.
- V. RESTRICT THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS BEFORE THEY REACH THE END OF THEIR LIFESPAN.
- VI. LIMIT NEW REPLACEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS.
- VII. PROMOTE THE RE-USE OF BUILDING MATERIALS.
- VIII. INCLUDE DECONSTRUCTION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DESIGN PROCESS.

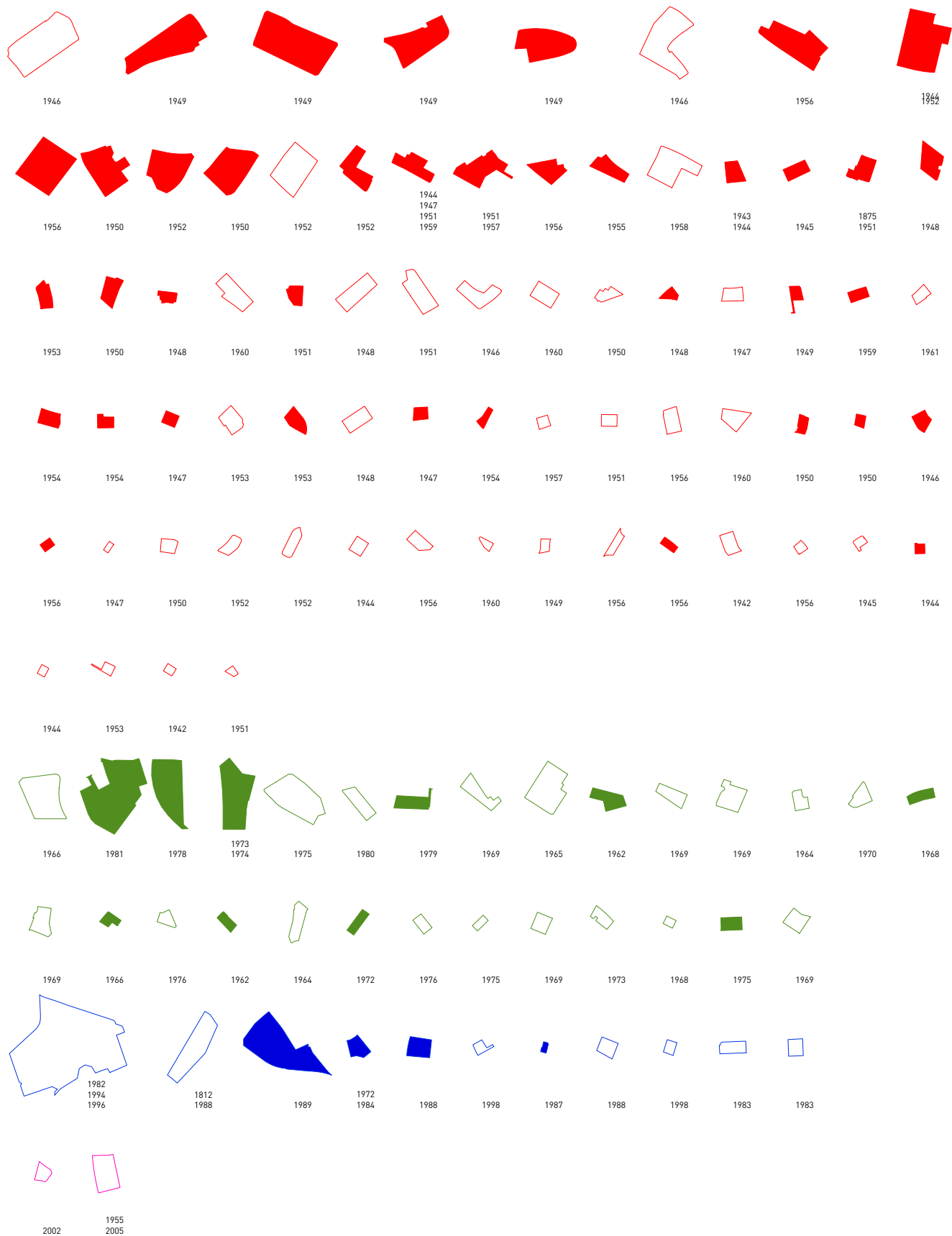
### Current building permits requiring demolition (march 2022)

Total	327 plots	604 044.63m <sup>2</sup>	100.00%
> 150 years	3 plots	2 068.88m <sup>2</sup>	0.34%
< 150 years	44 plots	52 361.68m <sup>2</sup>	8.67%
< 100 years	140 plots	134 423.62m <sup>2</sup>	22.25%
< 80 years	96 plots	252 381.10m <sup>2</sup>	41.78%
< 60 years	32 plots	99 024.42m <sup>2</sup>	16.39%
< 40 years	10 plots	57 962.04m <sup>2</sup>	9.60%
< 20 years	2 plots	5 642.86m <sup>2</sup>	0.93%





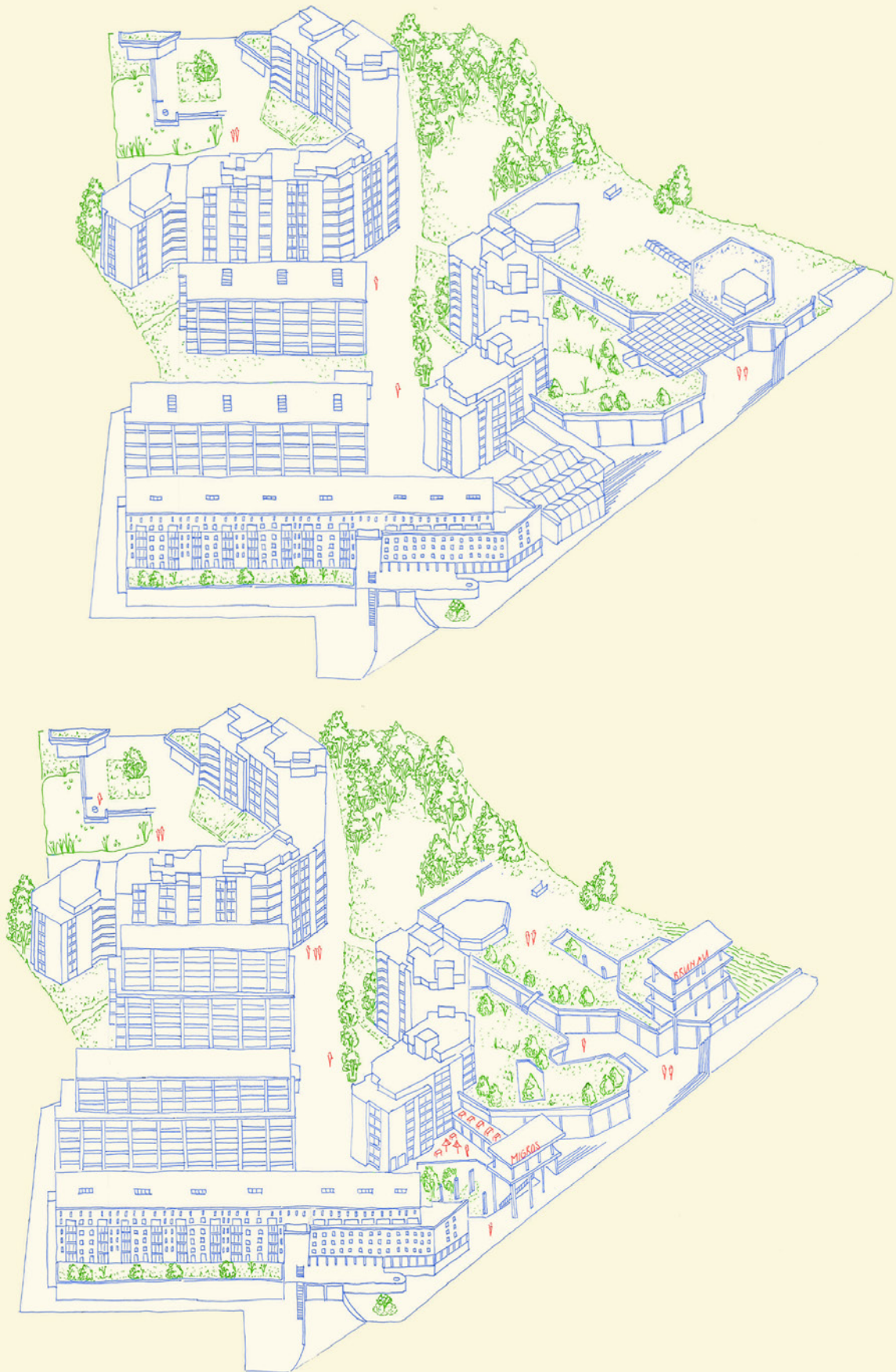




The start of construction of the new replacement building was delayed by three years because the noise protection requirements were not met in the new building. In the meantime, the «Brachengesetz» was introduced by the city council. Since the buildings are only between 26 and 40 years old and a comprehensive refurbishment was carried out in 2011, a new replacement building is no longer worthwhile. The urgency to redevelop the Migros store is increasing. That is why the building owner, Credit Suisse, have now decided to implement the Re-Migros project, which envisages the relocation of Migros to the existing underground car parking. Together with Migros, they are thus setting an example for sustainability and appreciation of the existing buildings. In addition, a densification of the existing buildings is being evaluated.



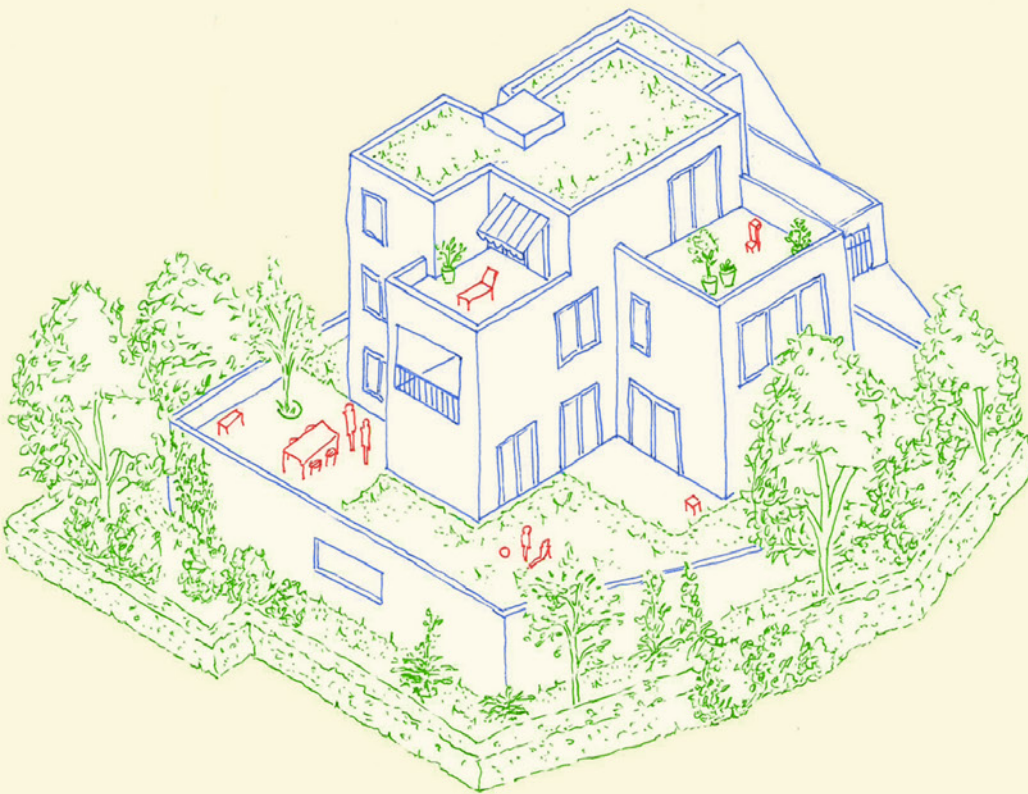
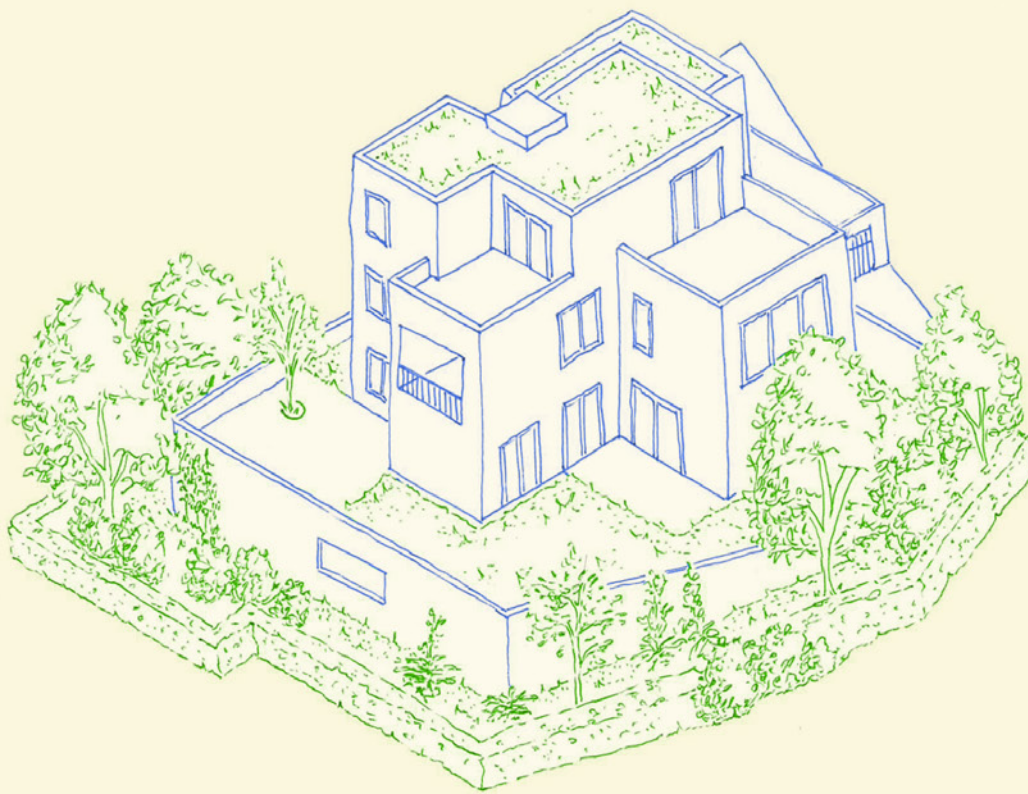




With the desire to have children also came the desire for a house built entirely according to their own wishes. But the property with the existing villa, which the couple bought, would have to lie fallow for 40 years after demolition, according to the new «Brachengesetz».

When they moved into the existing villa, they realized that it is actually quite a nice house and has enough space for children's rooms, an office and other desires. Only the kitchen is separate, instead of being open to the living room as they wanted. «We can also break through the wall to the living room. But a renovation actually still has time, the house is only 20 years old.»





«Thank you very much for your stay at the Waldhaus Dolder. The existing building from the 1970s is still in good condition, but we are aware that it no longer meets the aesthetic demands of well-travelled hotel guests. While the hotel has been used temporarily in recent years, in 2022, it will be extensively renovated according to the plans of interior designers 3LHD. After that, the western part will reopen its doors to hotel guests in new splendour. We look forward to welcoming you back to the Waldhaus Dolder soon.»

Roland Schmidlin  
Resident Manager

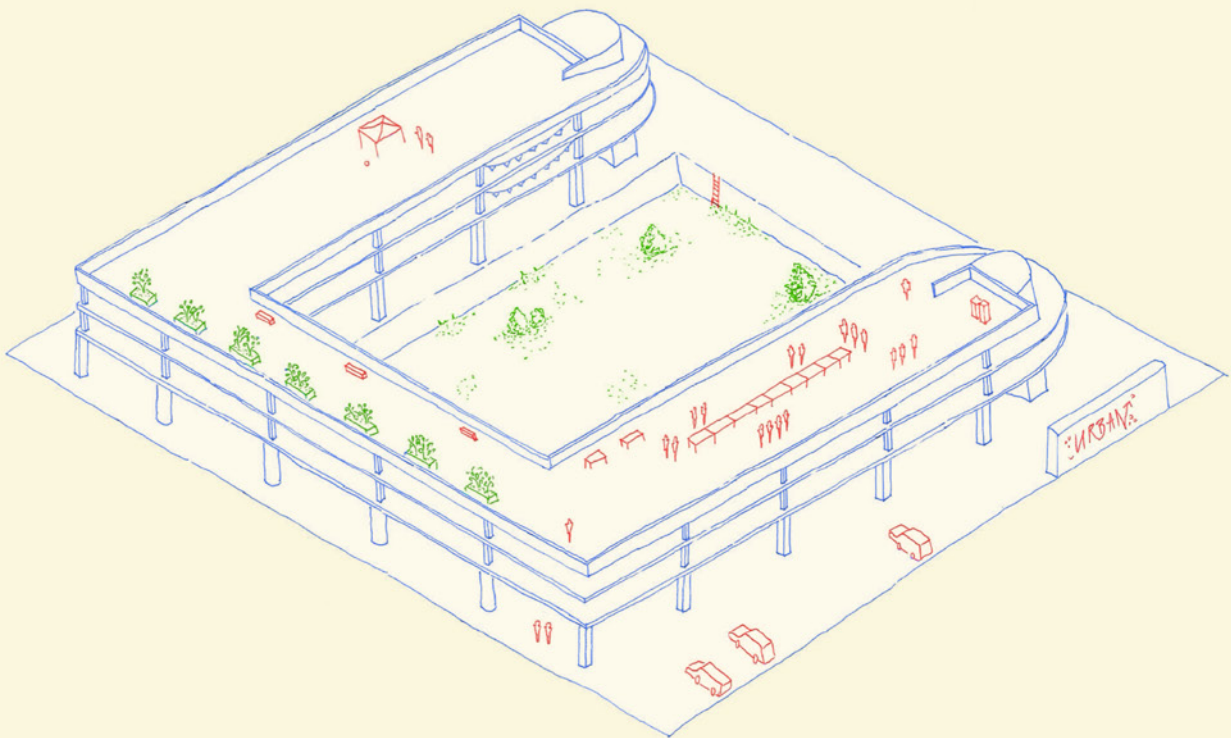
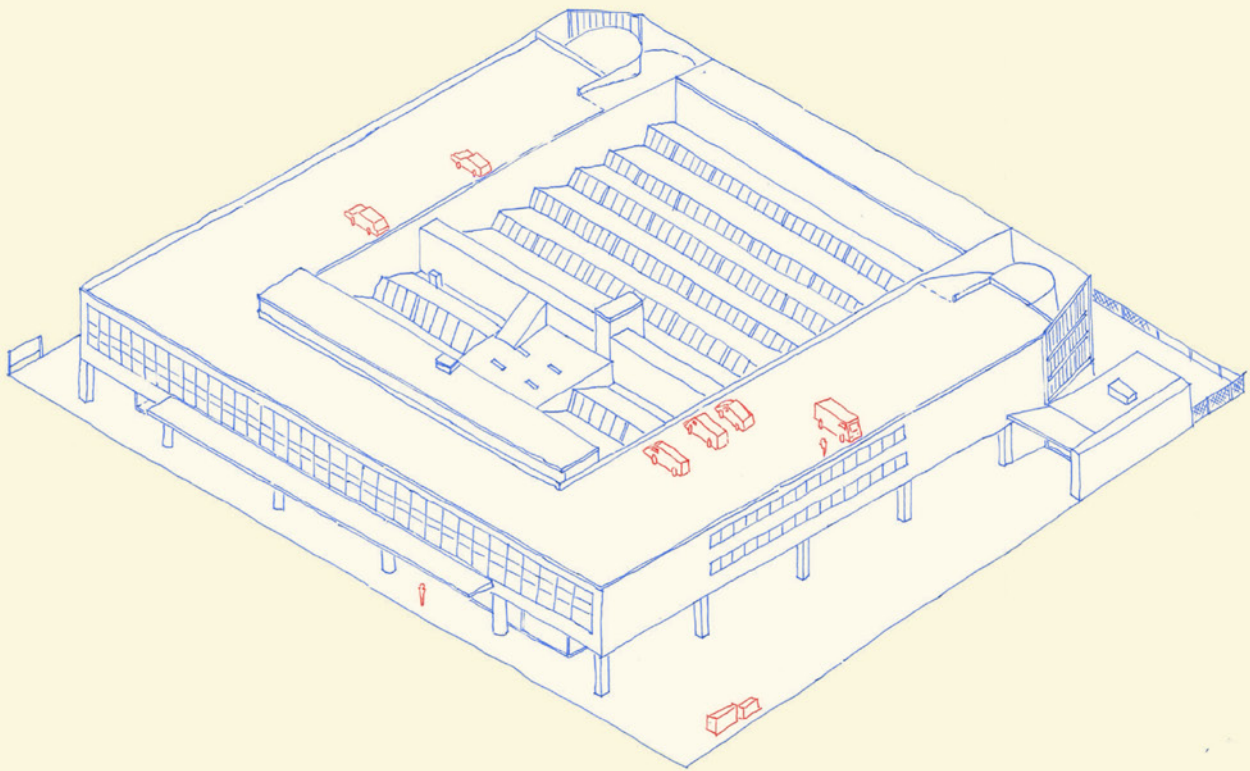




Although the temporary use of the workshop is working well, the developers have decided to demolish the building because the neighbourhood is changing a lot due to the enclosure of the motorway.

The fallow period will be used to revise the new building project. To shorten the fallow period, certain existing building structures are to be integrated into the project. The new building will also be designed with more reused materials and the amount of concrete will be reduced.

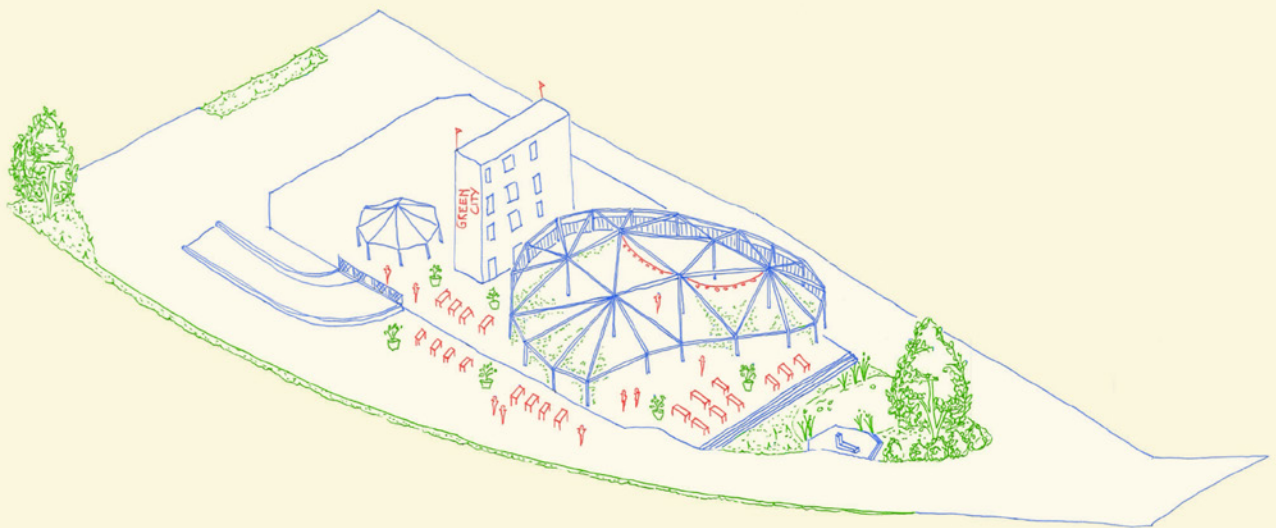
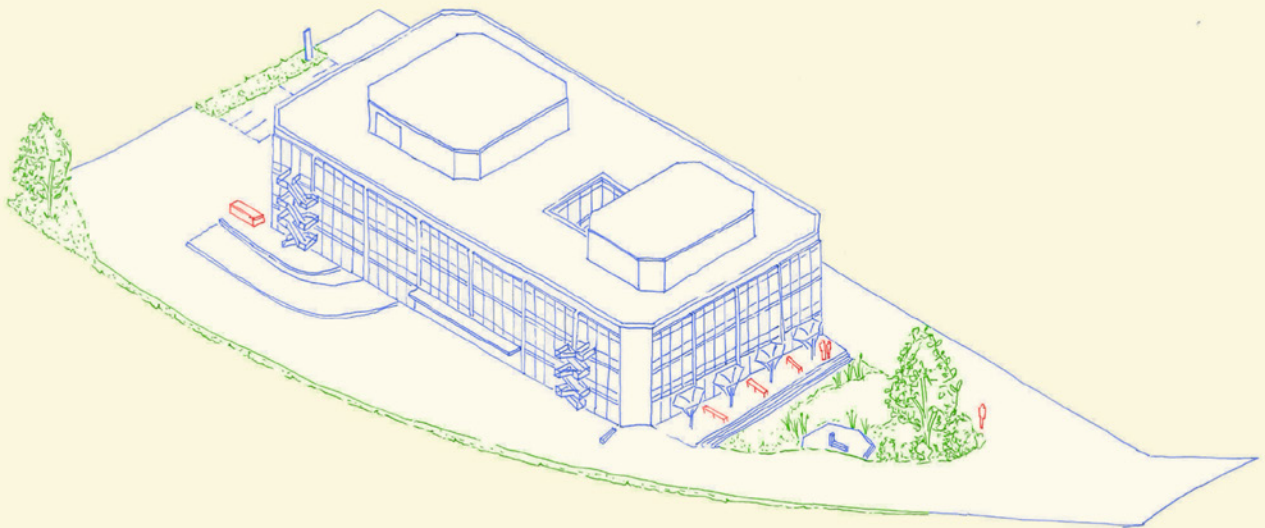




After the introduction of the new law, the company Avaloq considered finding an interim use for the staff restaurant instead of replacing the building with a residential complex. But then they realised that a brownfield site was probably just the right thing to give the «Green City», as the area is called, more diversity, character and green. The «Brache» will also serve as inspiration for alternative uses, as there are enough residential-only buildings in the area.

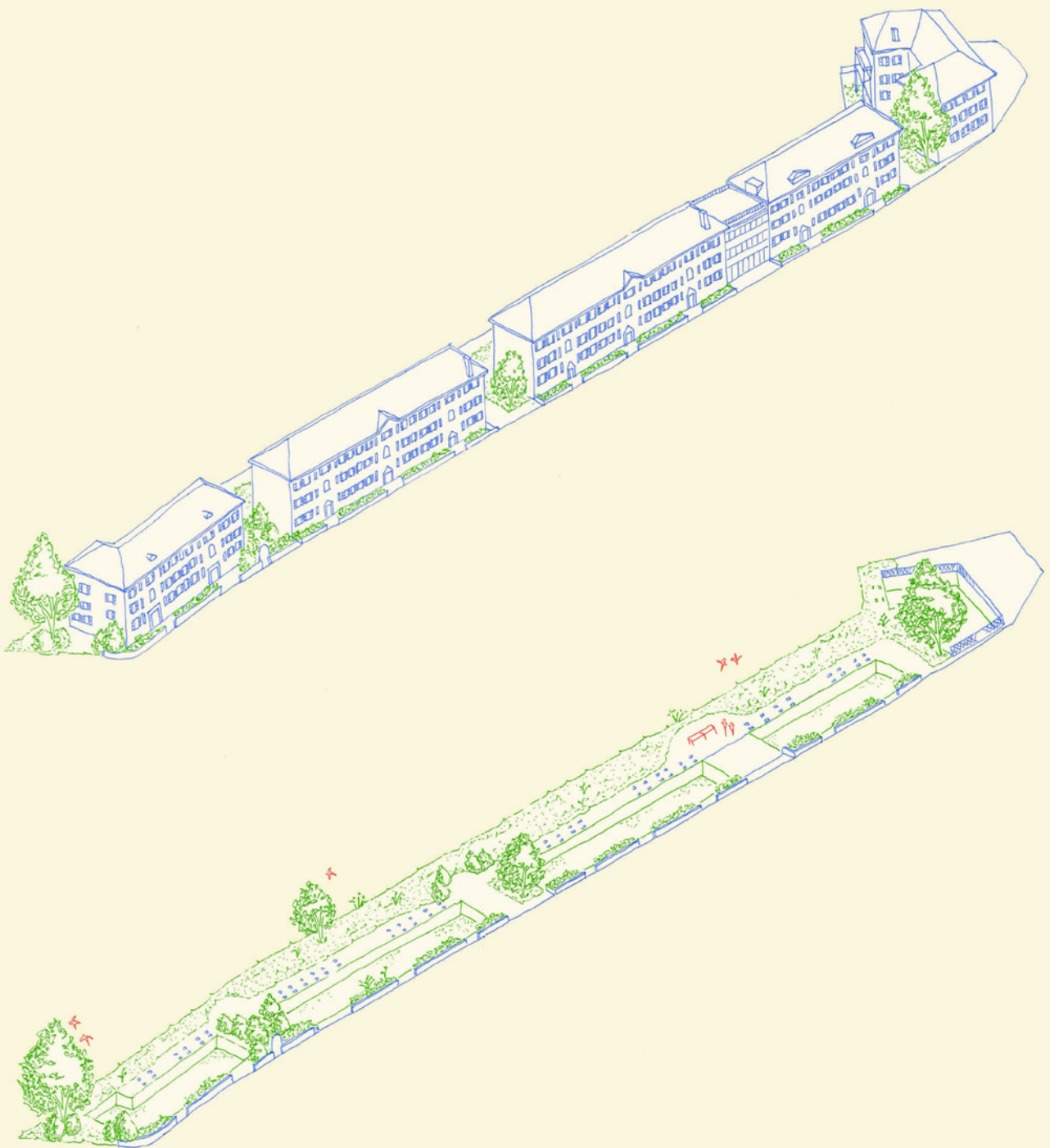






After the introduction of the «Brachengesetz», the Oberstrass building cooperative decided not to demolish the building for two years so that the land would have to lie fallow for a shorter period of time afterwards. An integration of the existing structures is not planned due to the age of the building. However, the fallow period will be used to develop a new project, as the current project could not be approved due to noise protection. Perhaps the fallow land will also provide some inspiration for the new project.





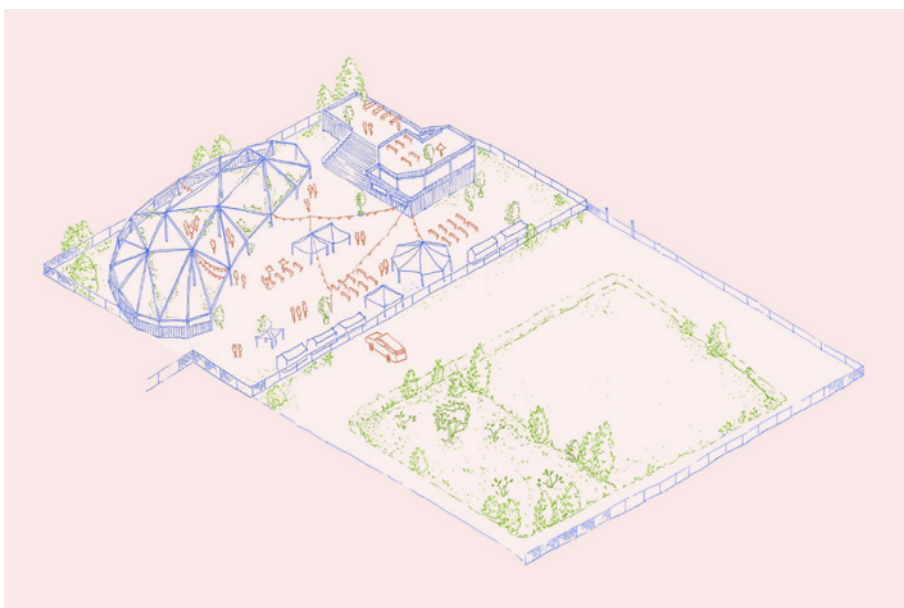
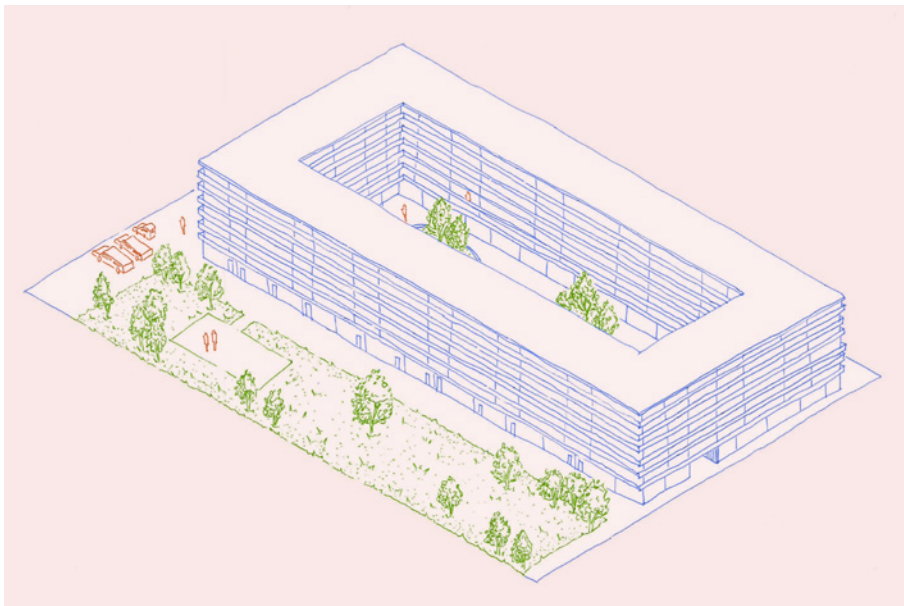
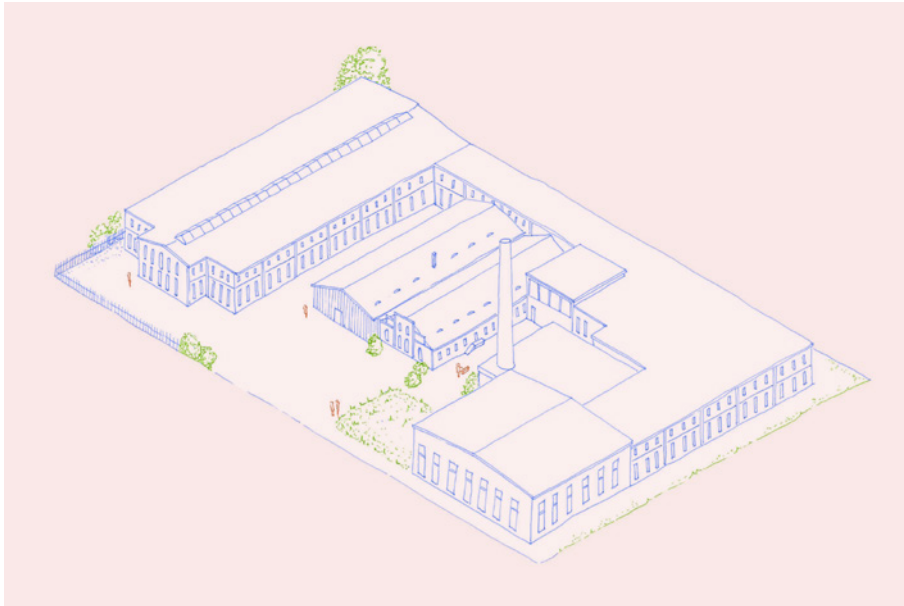




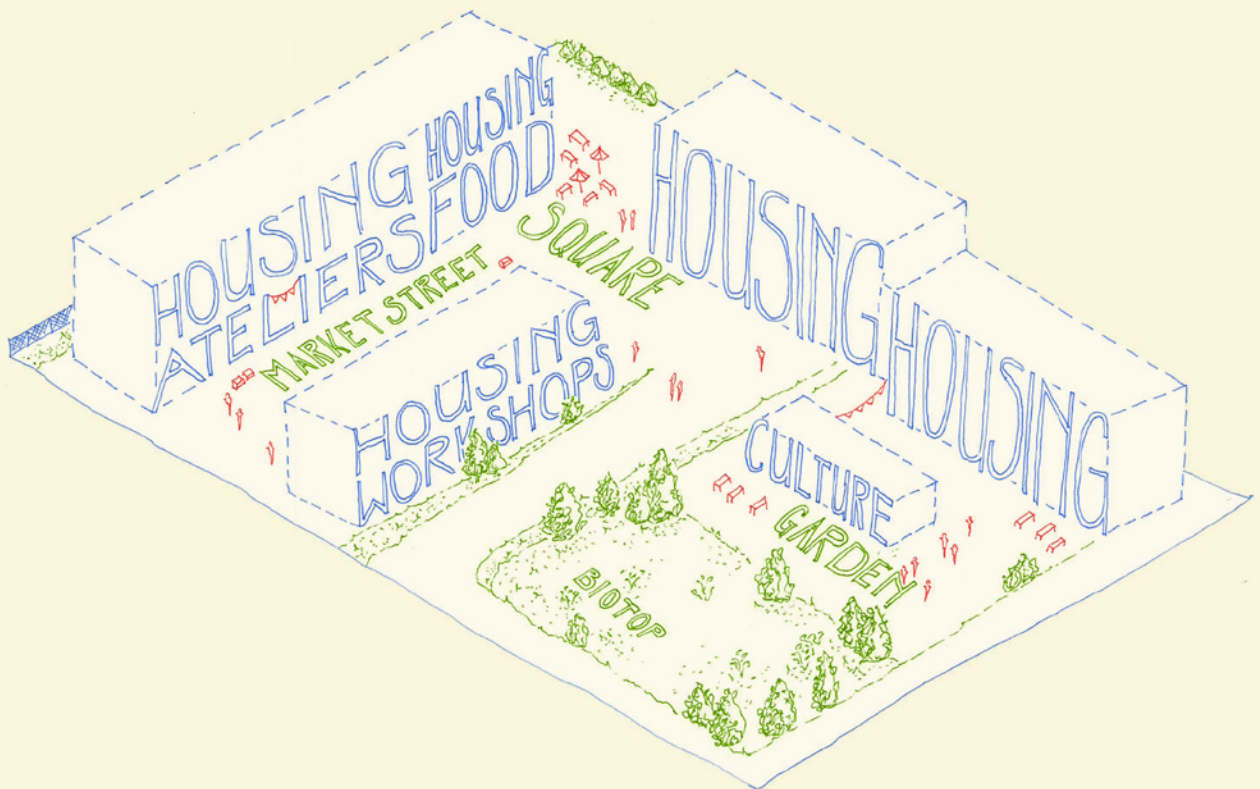
The Micafil company was founded in 1918 from the company «F. Aebi». The electrical company was steadily expanded and enlarged from 1918 to 1978. Since 1980, the workshops and the machine factory have been steadily deconstructed until the last building was demolished in 2017. The site was bought by ABB, who also held a competition for a residential development on the site in 2004. The winning project proposed a residential building with about 140 flats around a large inner courtyard. Despite the approved building permit, the project was never carried out, as the company was more interested in the land reserves. The fallow land was rented out for private parking, but this was not very popular. In 2021, the Pop-Up Bar «Micas Garten» was granted a temporary contract for two years for the interim use of part of the site. The summer bar and restaurant promotes itself as a green city oasis and offers a diverse programme of events, such as yoga classes, concerts, parties, stand-up comedy, gardening courses, and craft markets. The interim use attracts up to 1200 people on a warm and sunny day to the area that only few people knew before. It also showed that the area is perfectly accessible by public transport. Additionally, the ruderal area that was allowed to develop naturally and undisturbed on the fallow land for the last 15 years, has a biotope quality of exceptional importance today.

All these happenings and uses of the fallow land can serve as fertile ground for a new project. The future planning of the site will profit from the insights gathered during the interim use. Rather than starting a project from scratch, the use of a «Brache» can be used as a tool to analyse the needs and wishes of the city's population. In the future, the project become a «Brache» again, leaving it traces behind for new appropriation and providing space again for future needs.







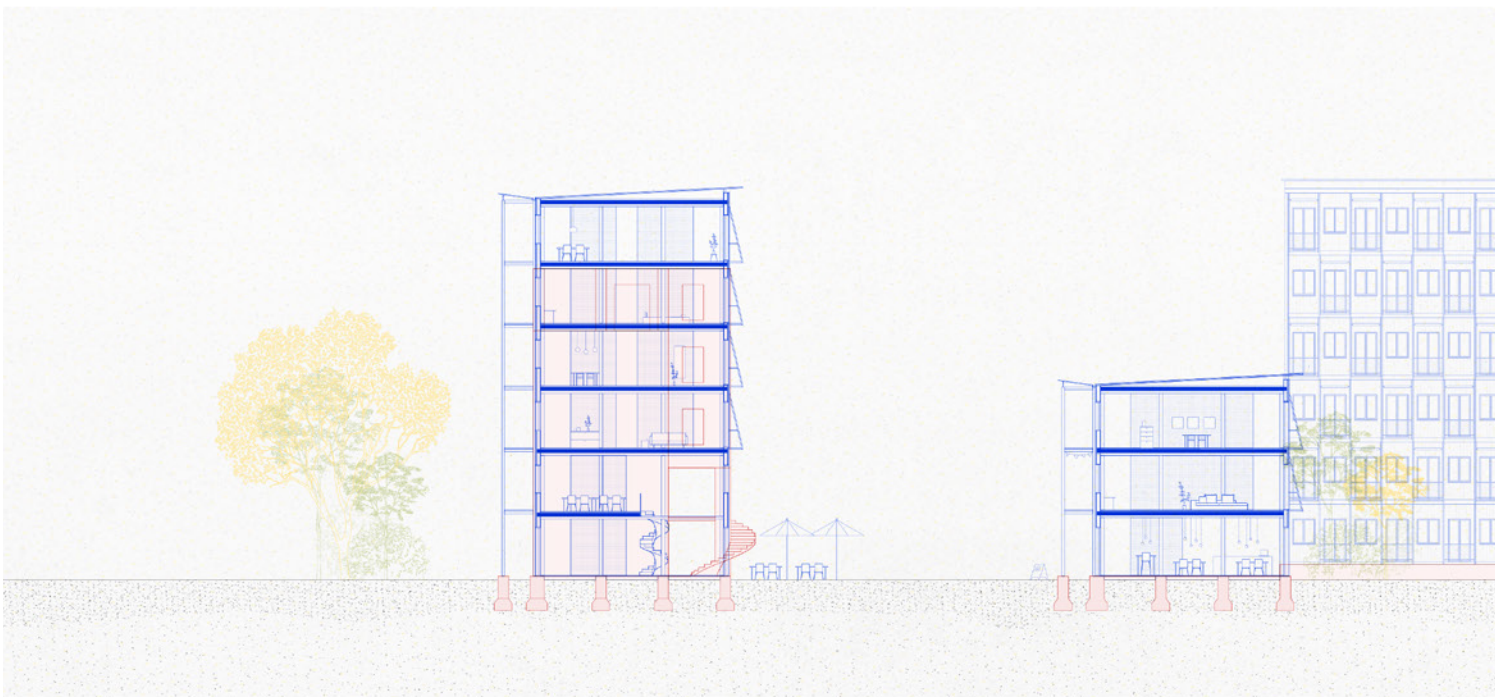


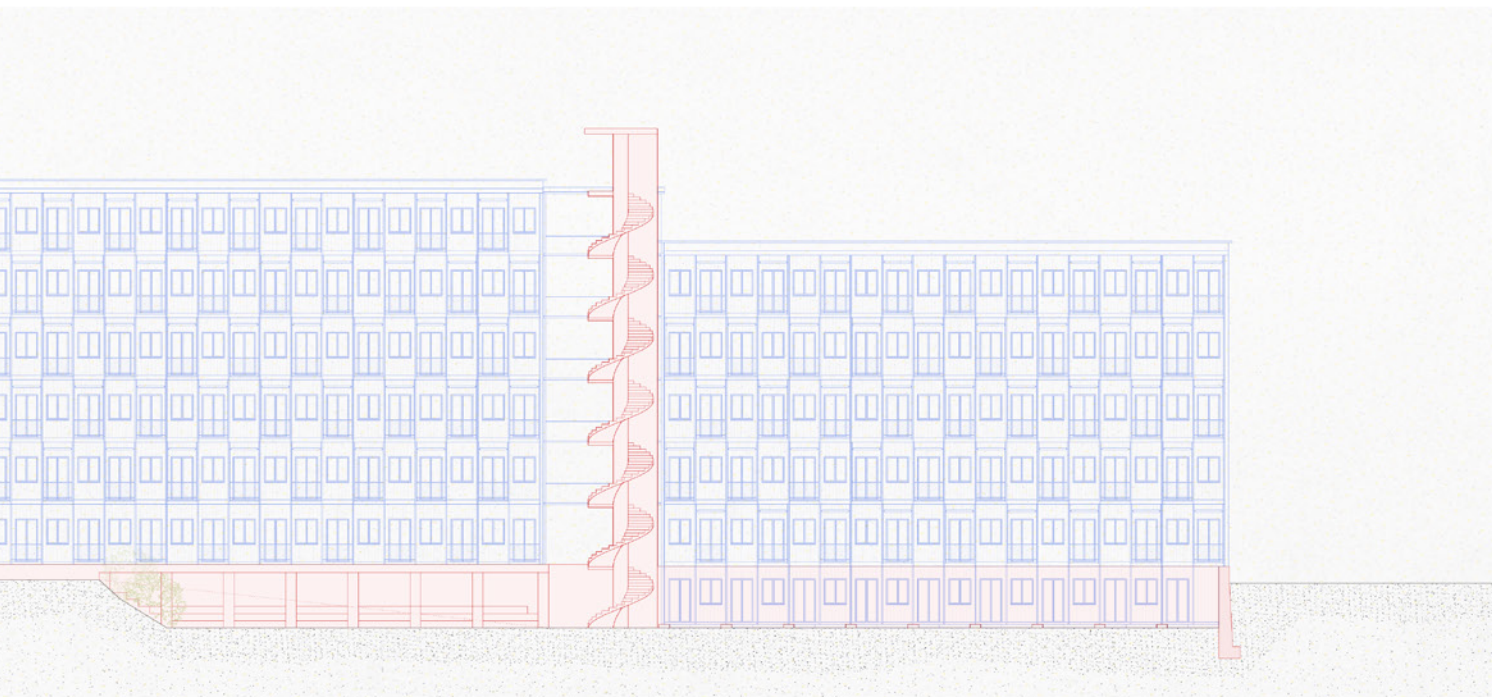


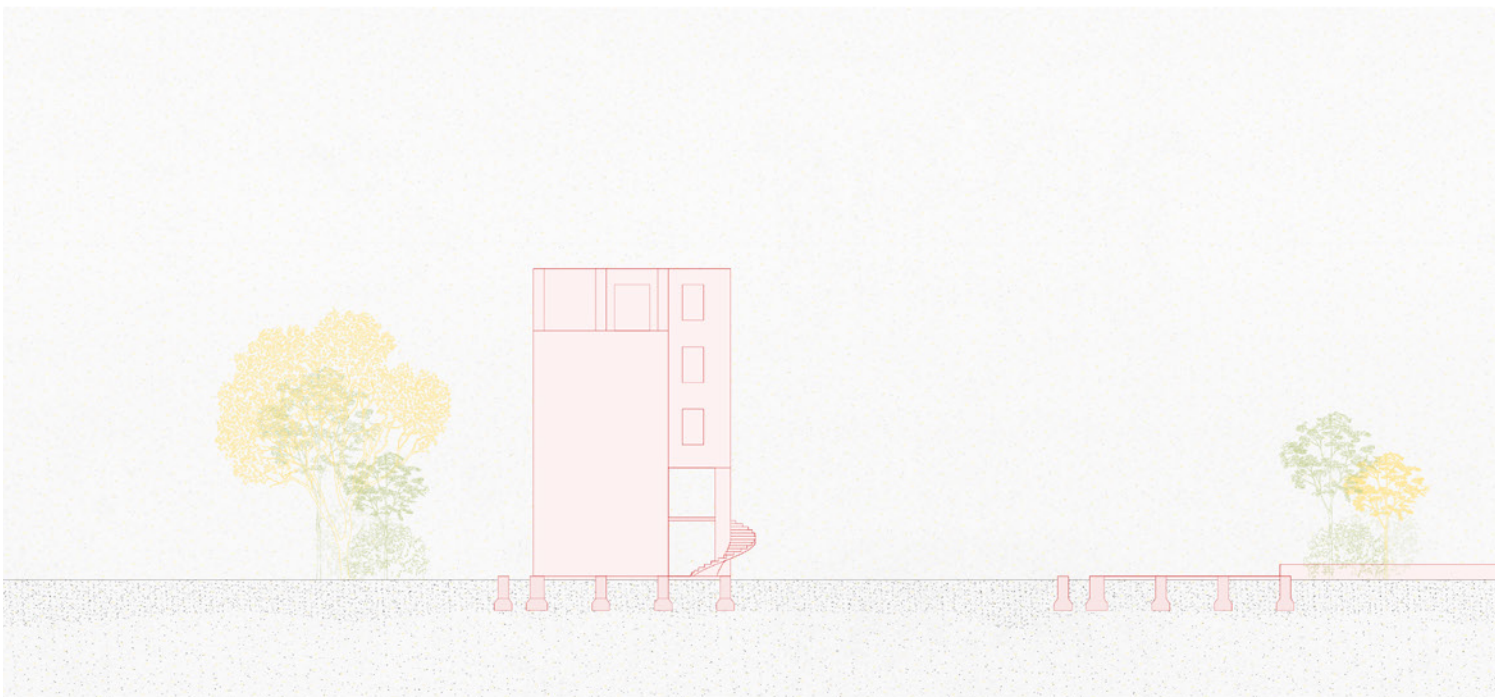




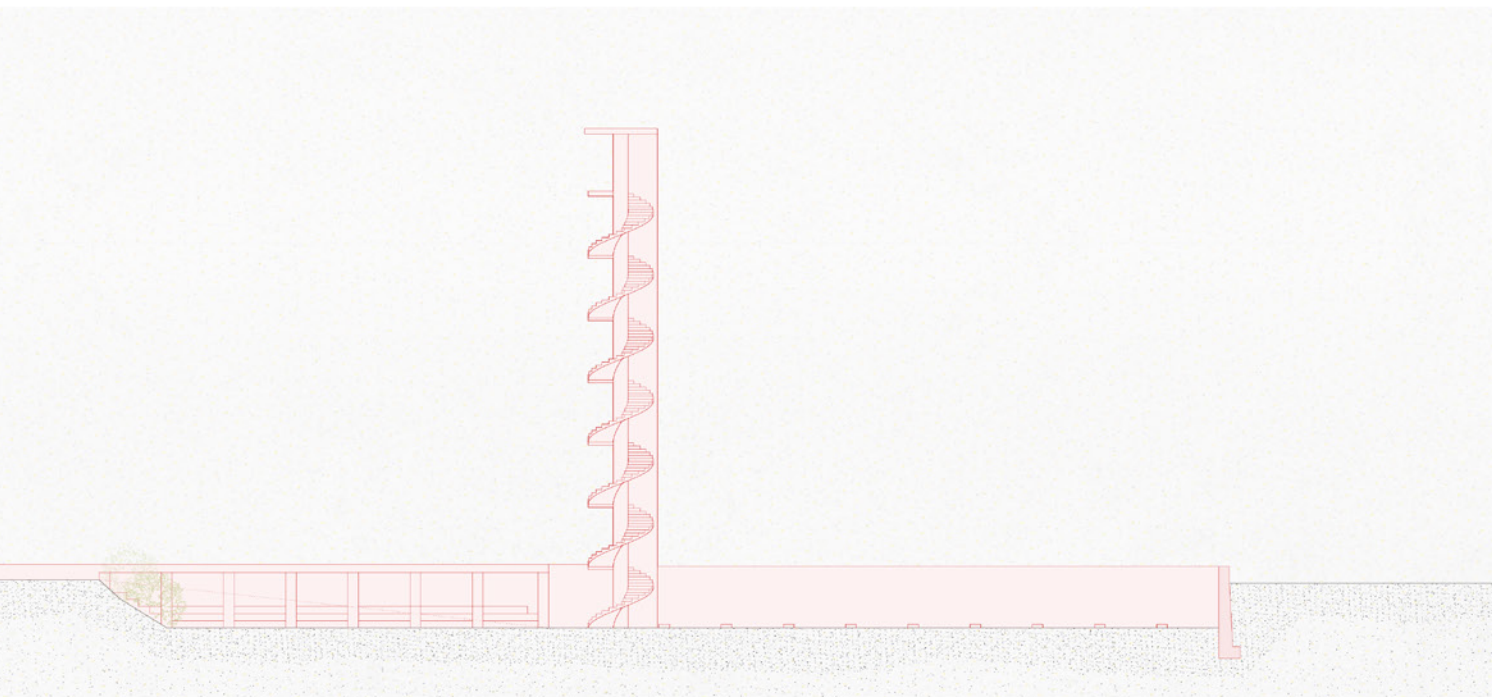


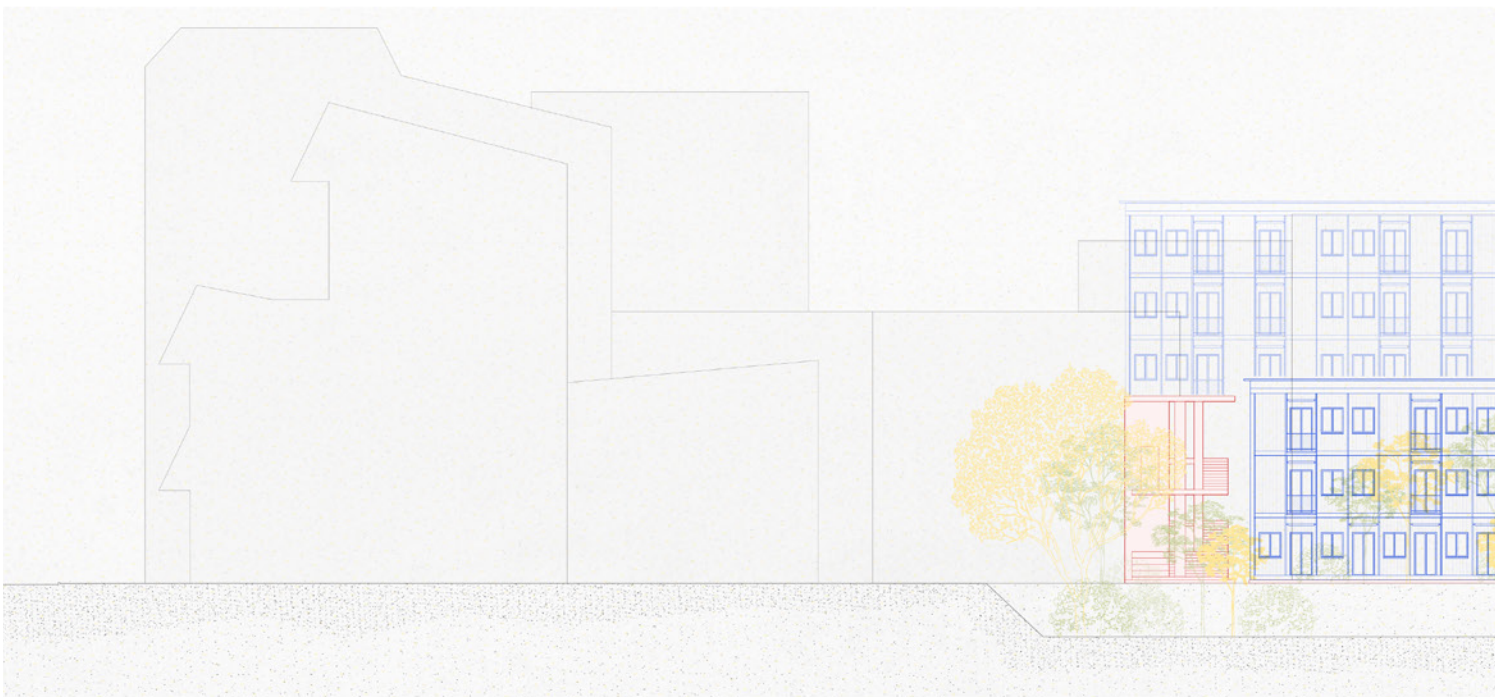


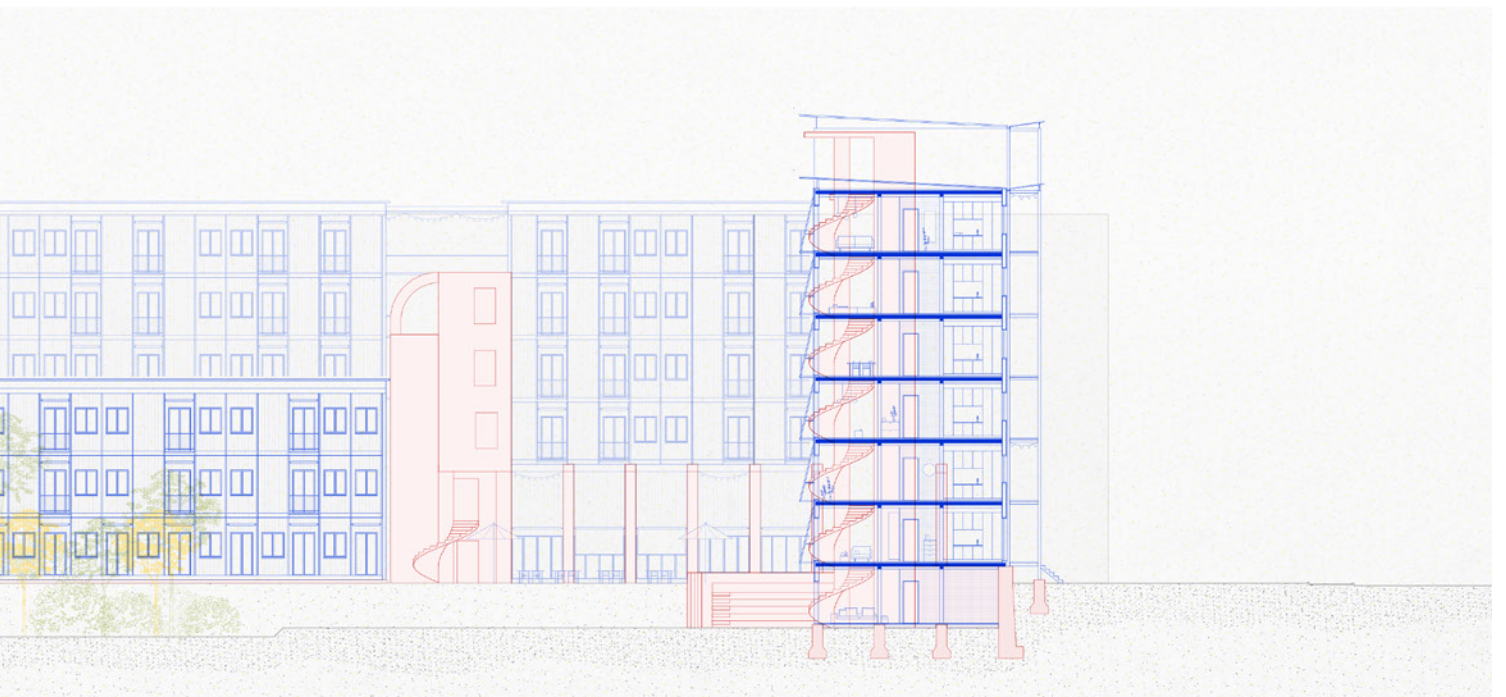


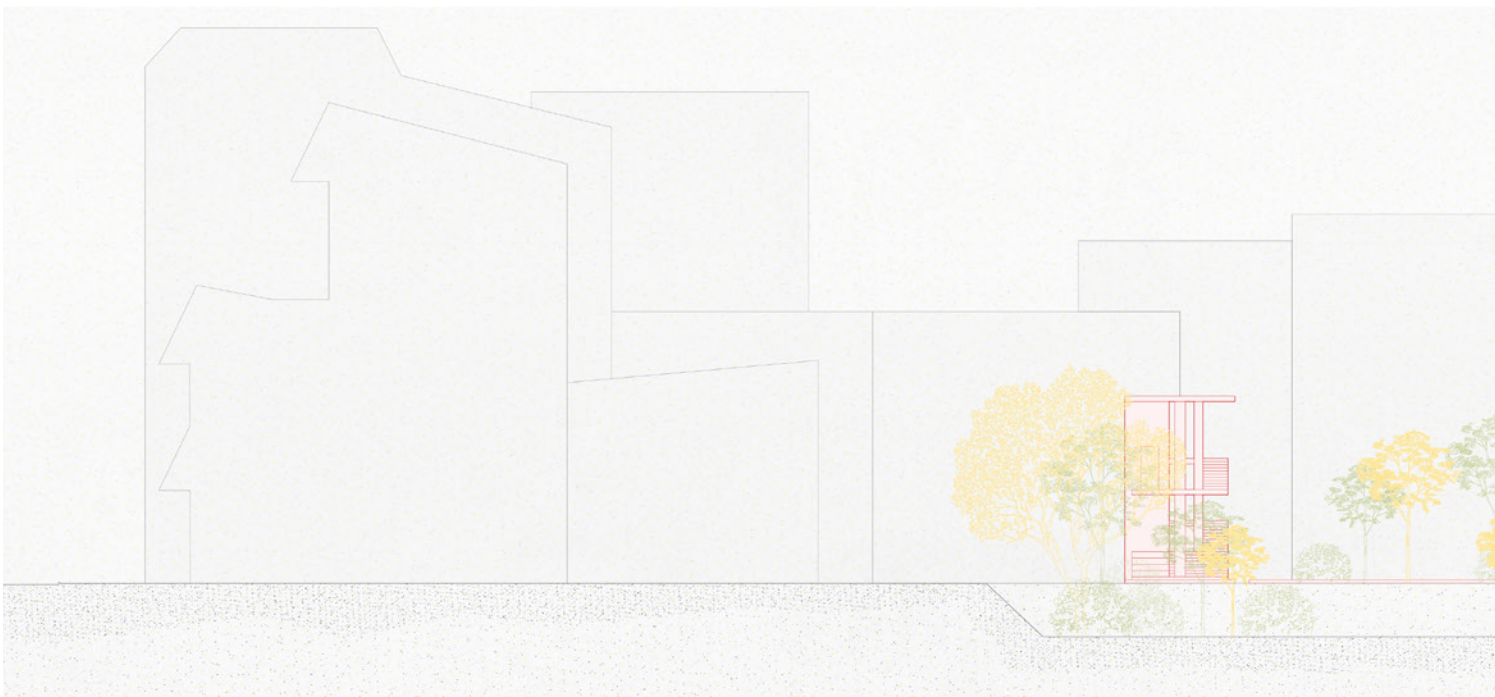


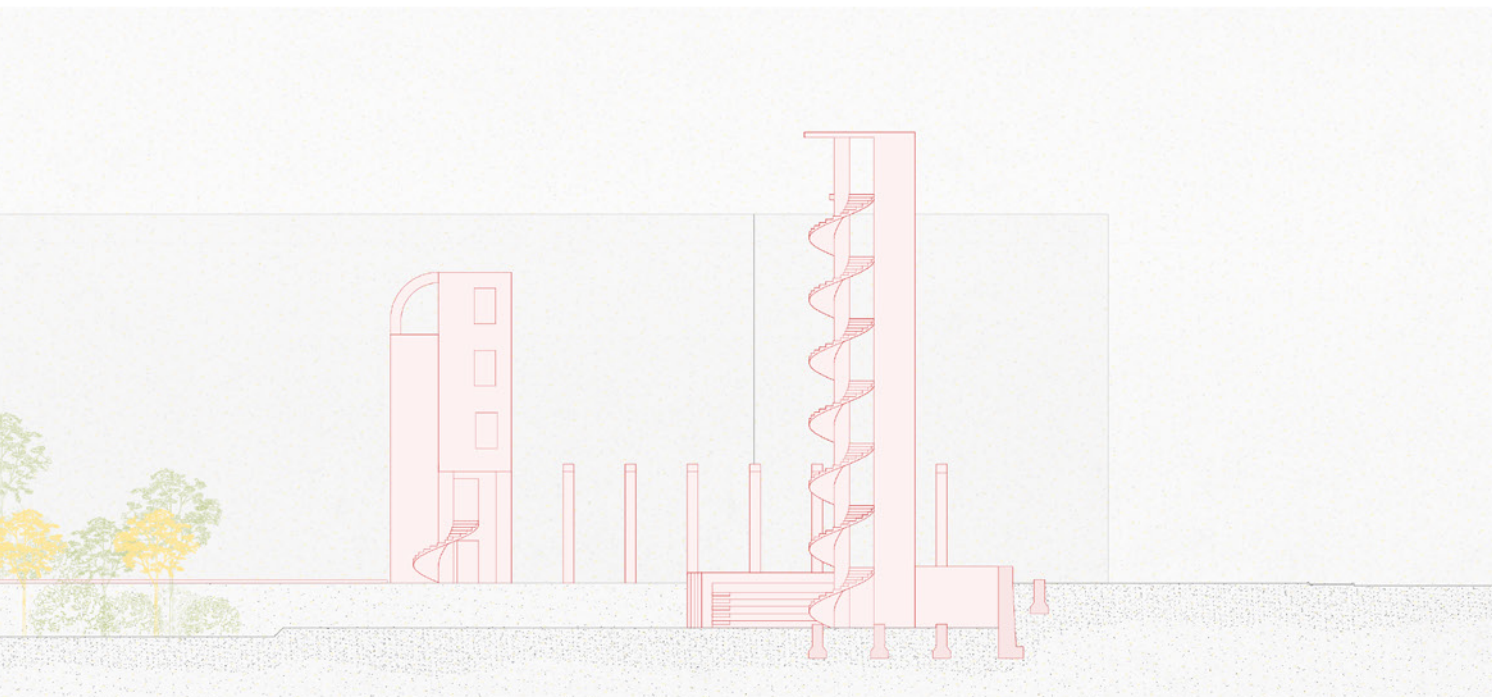


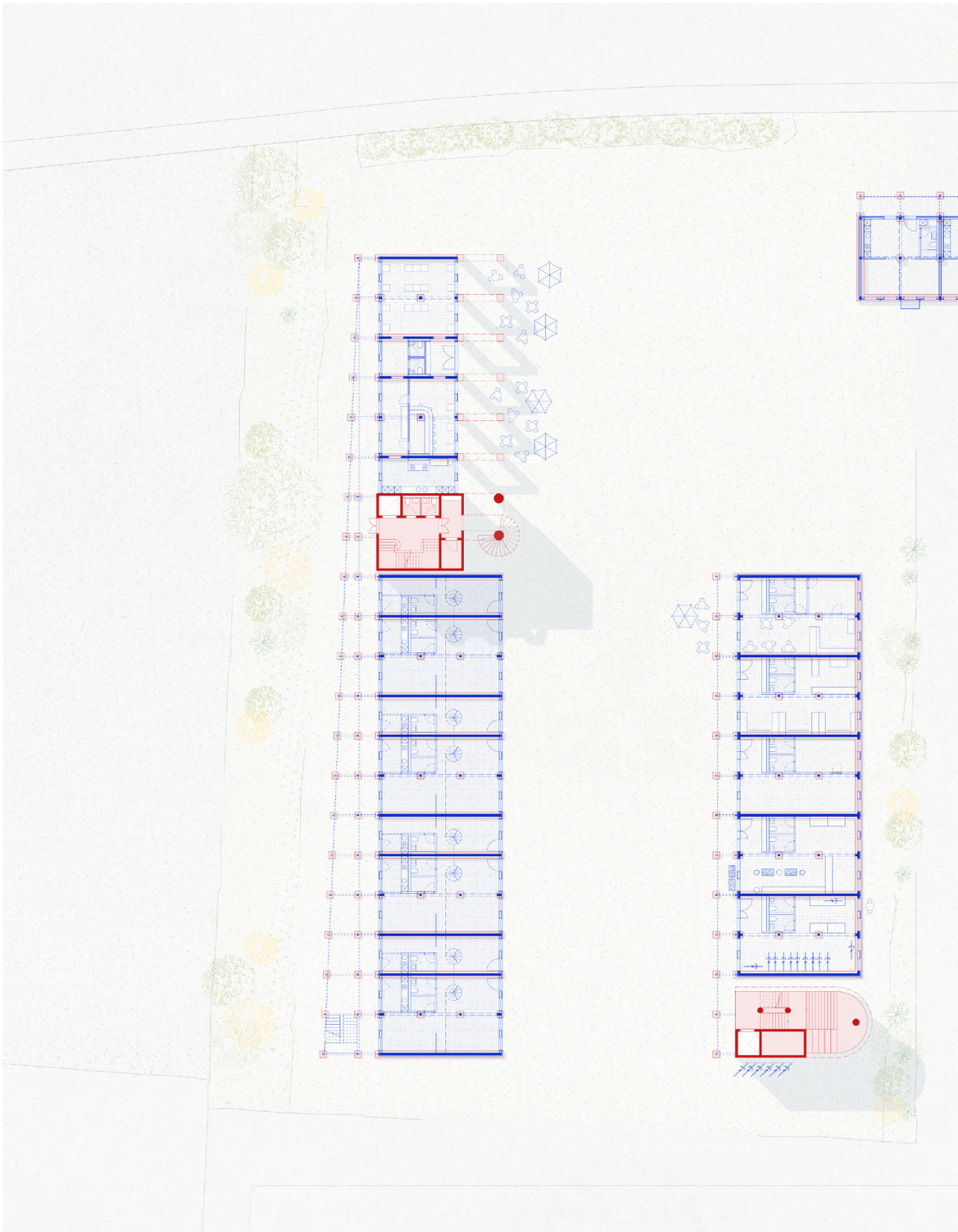




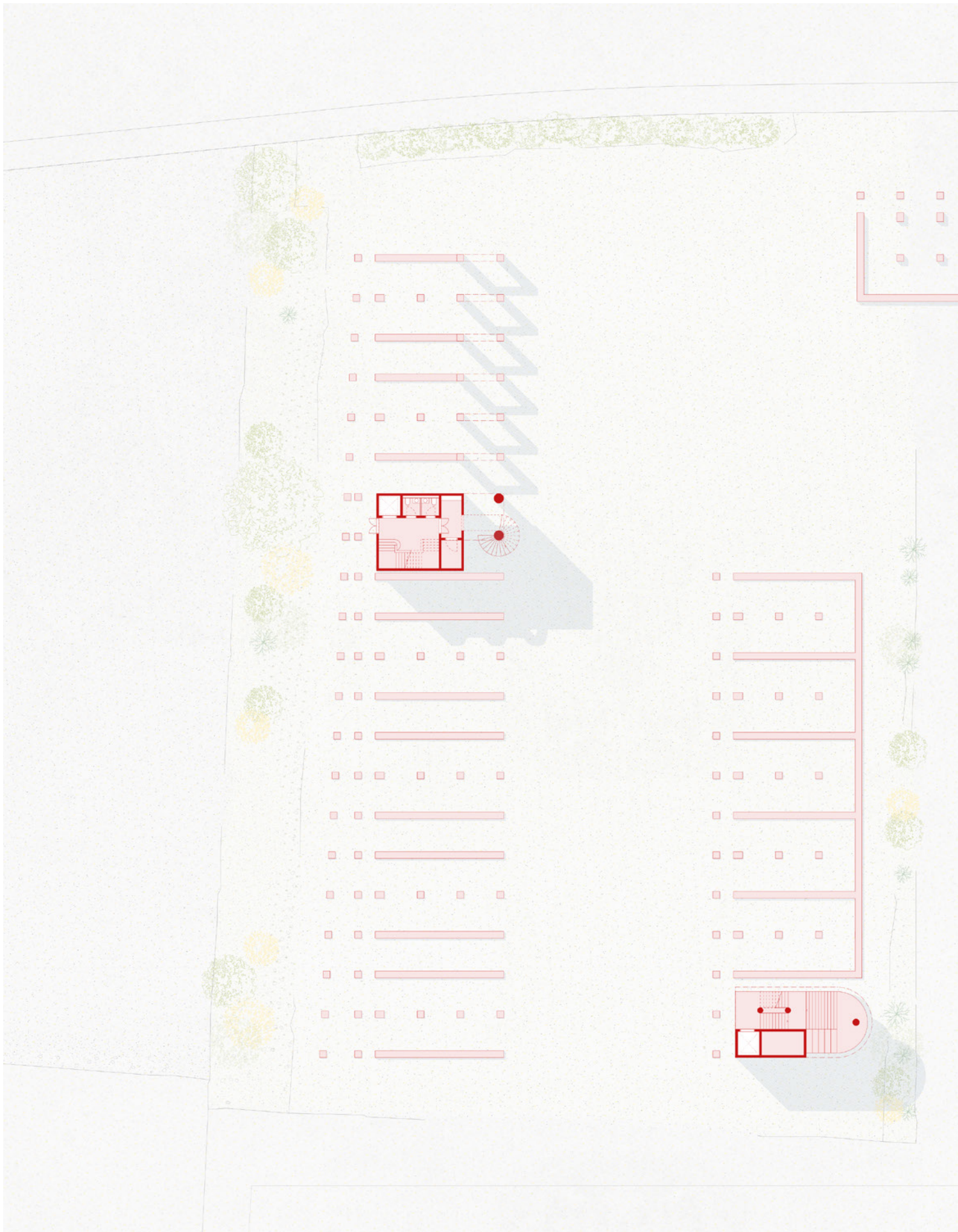




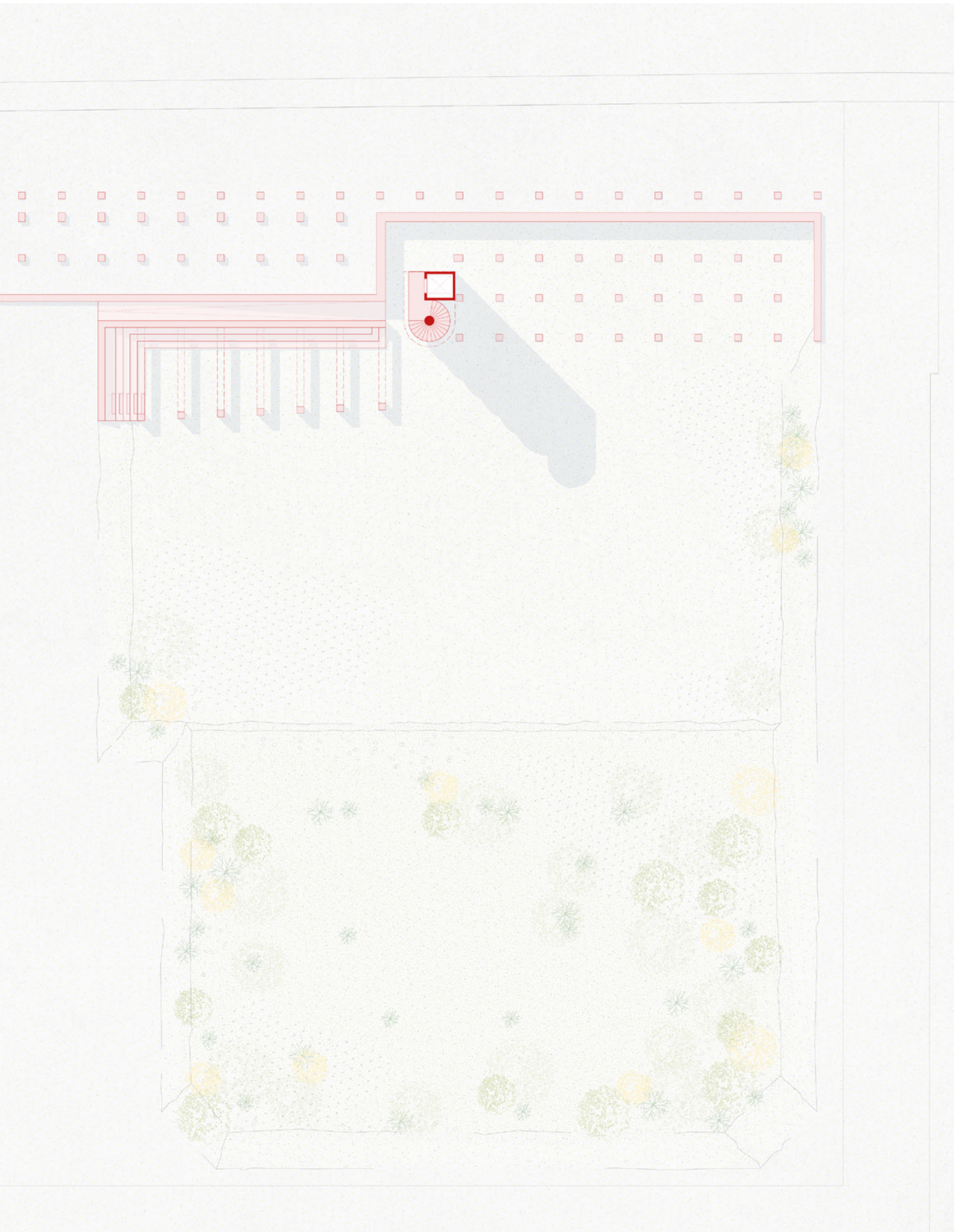


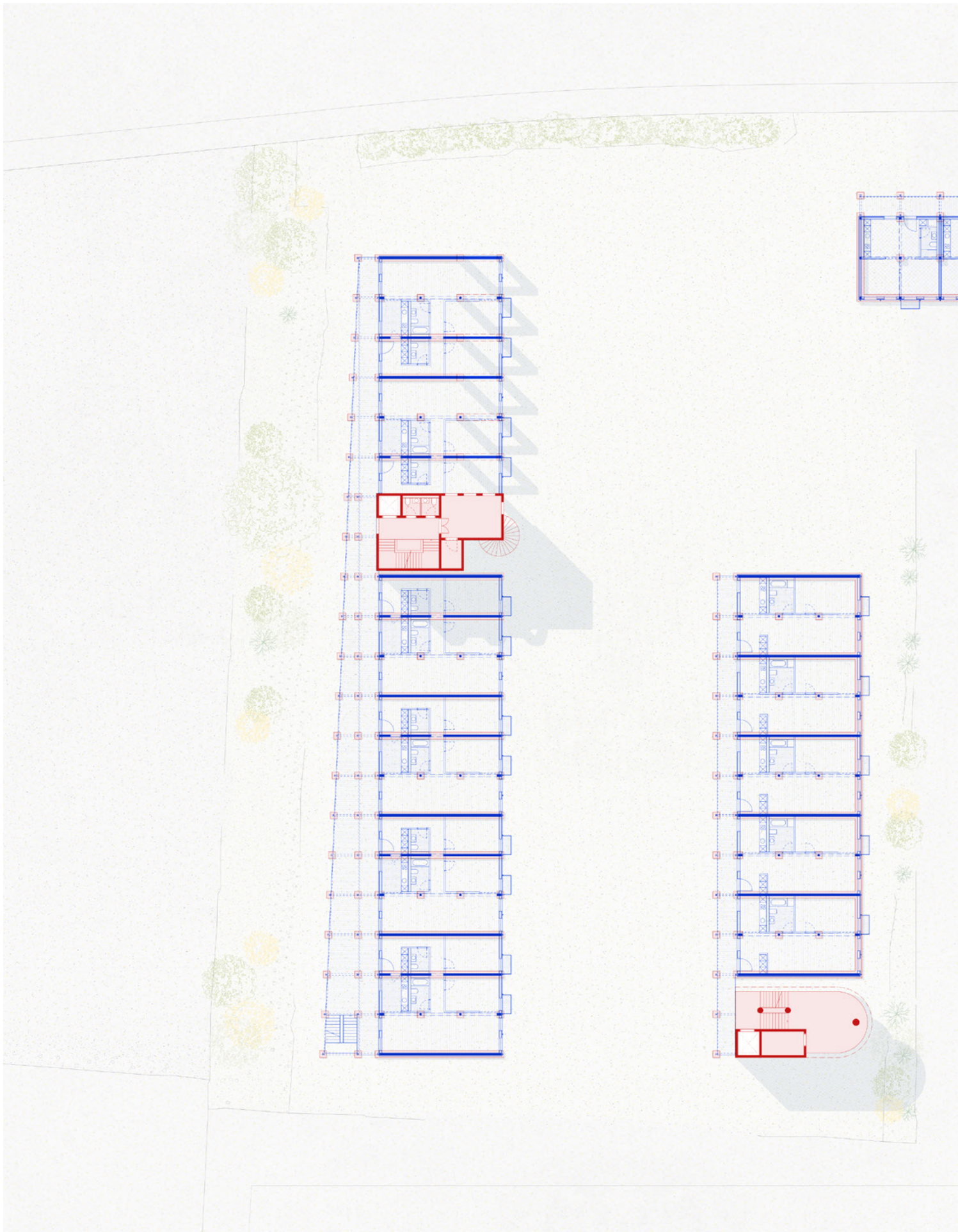


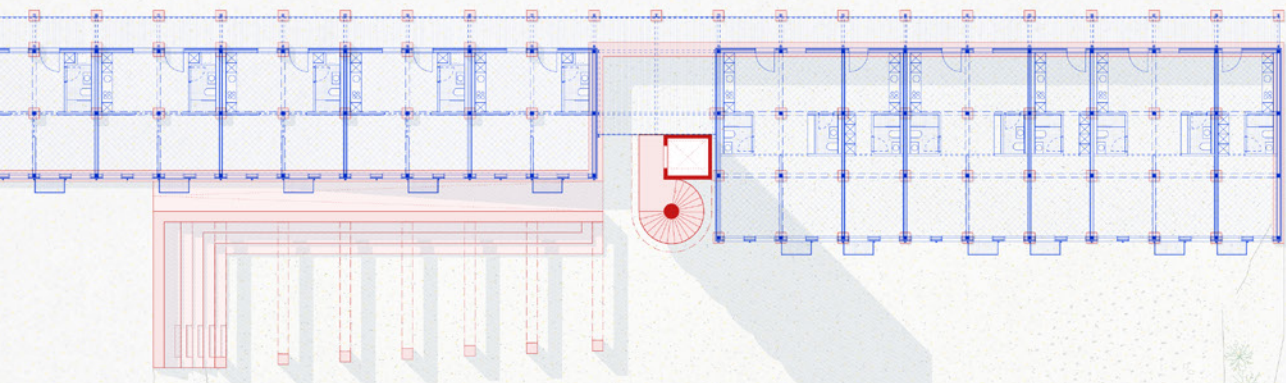


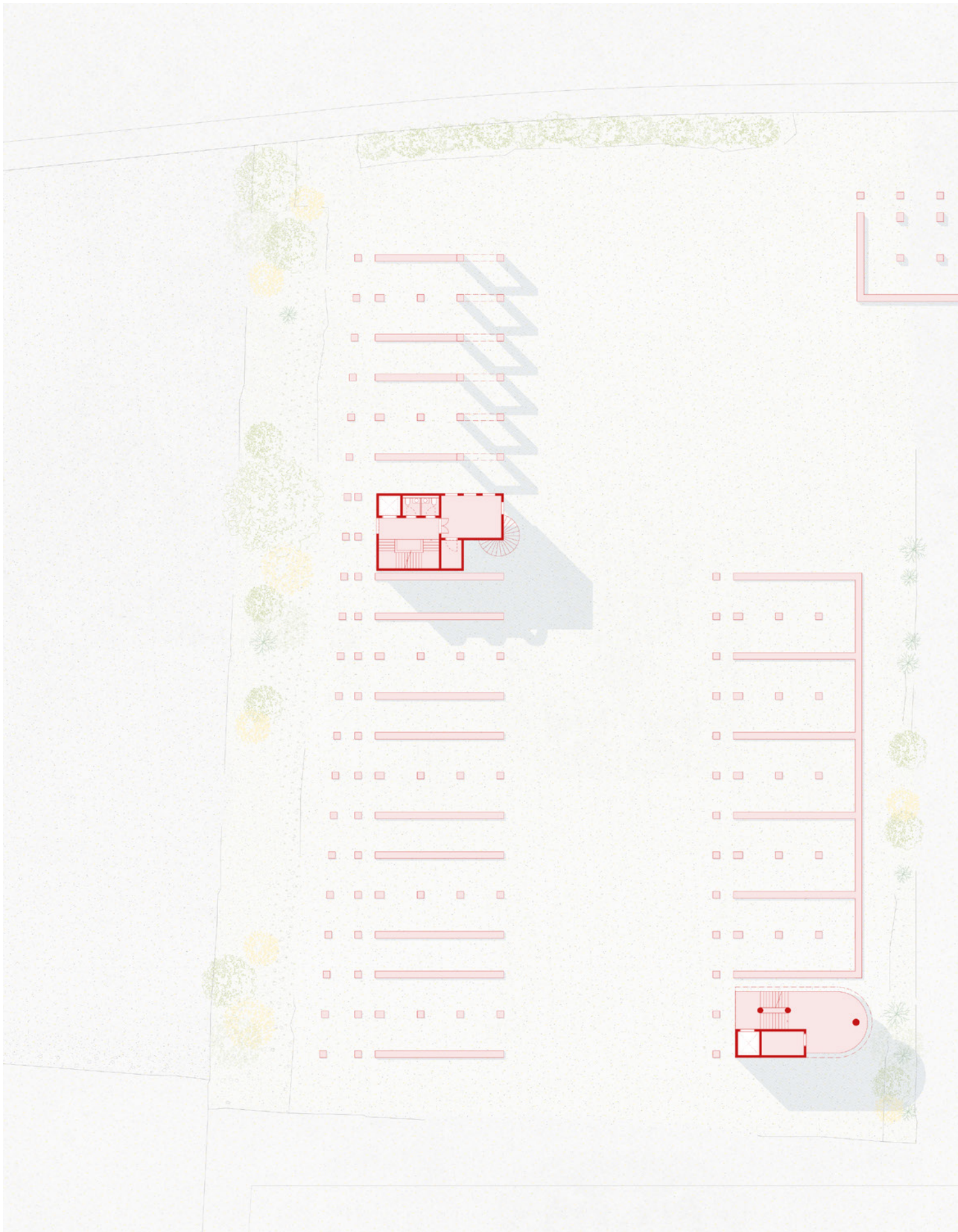


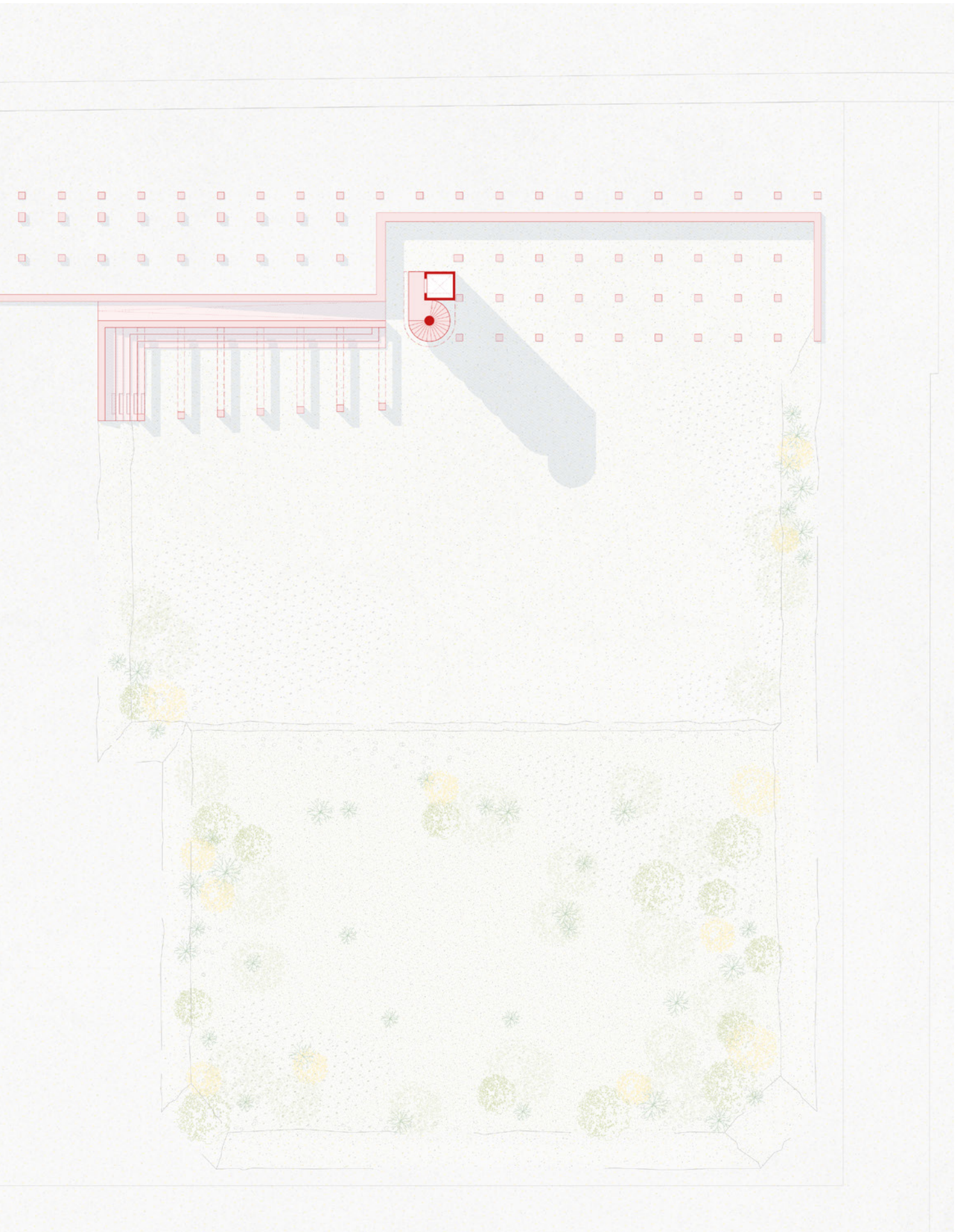


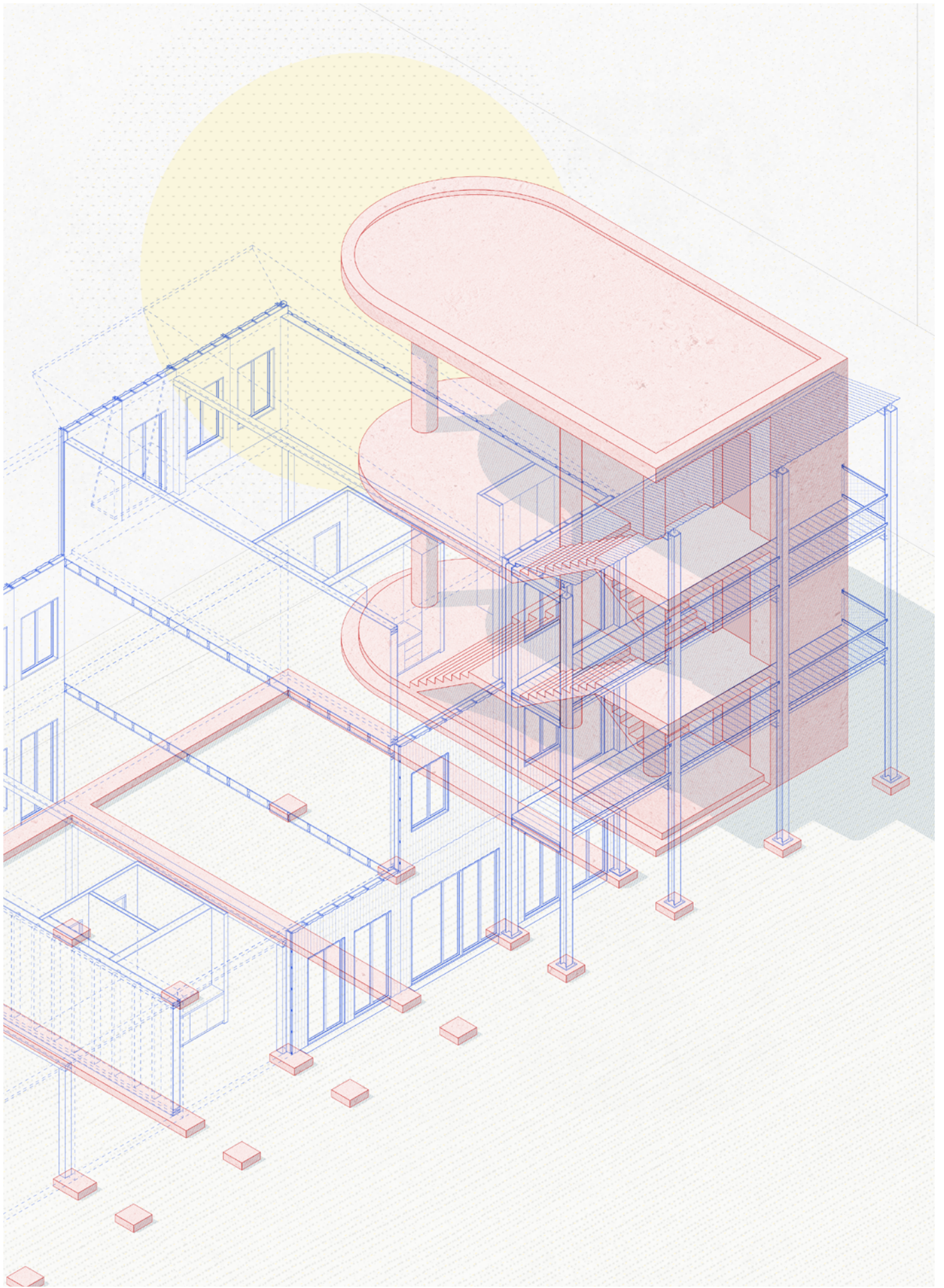


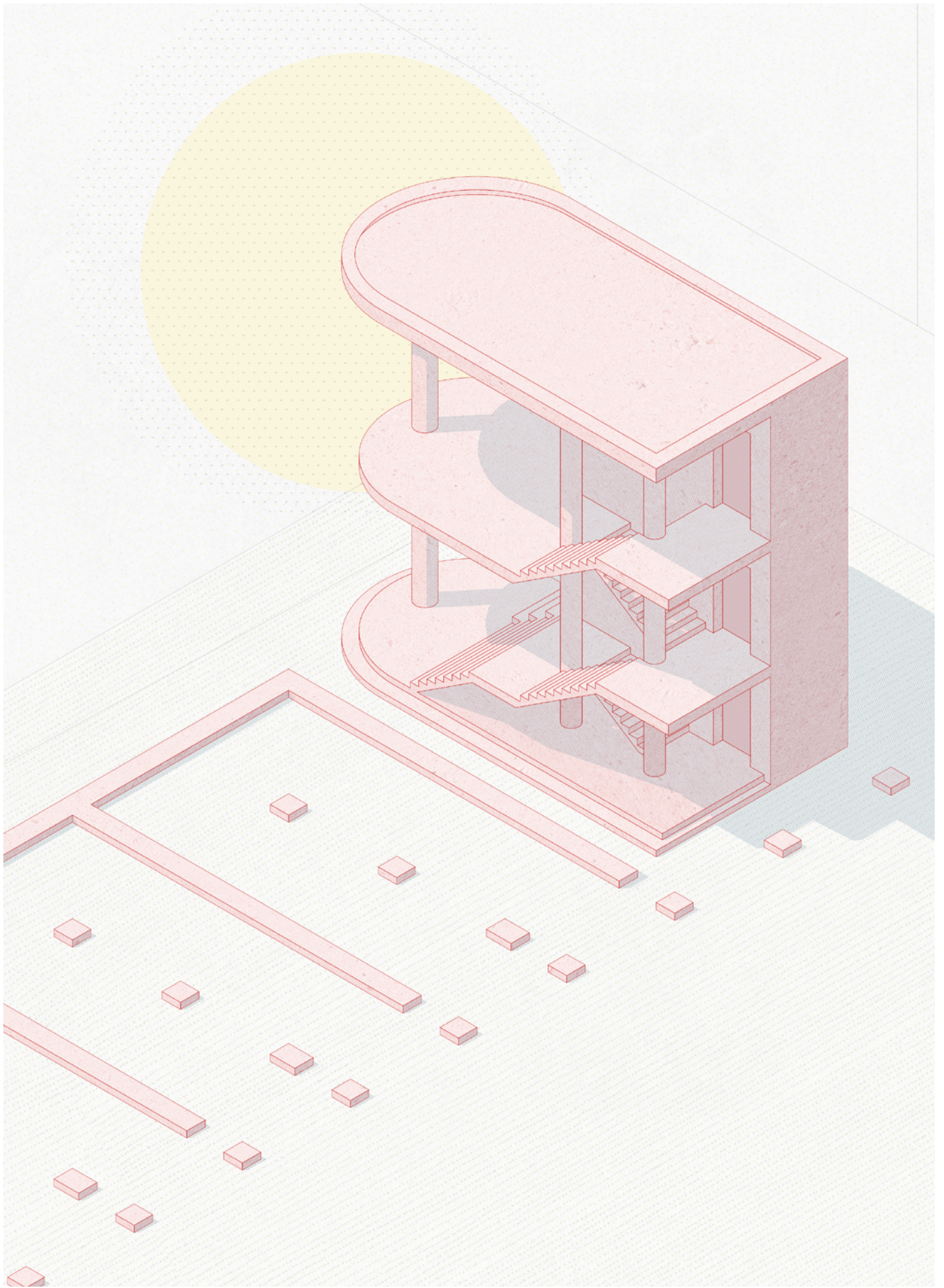


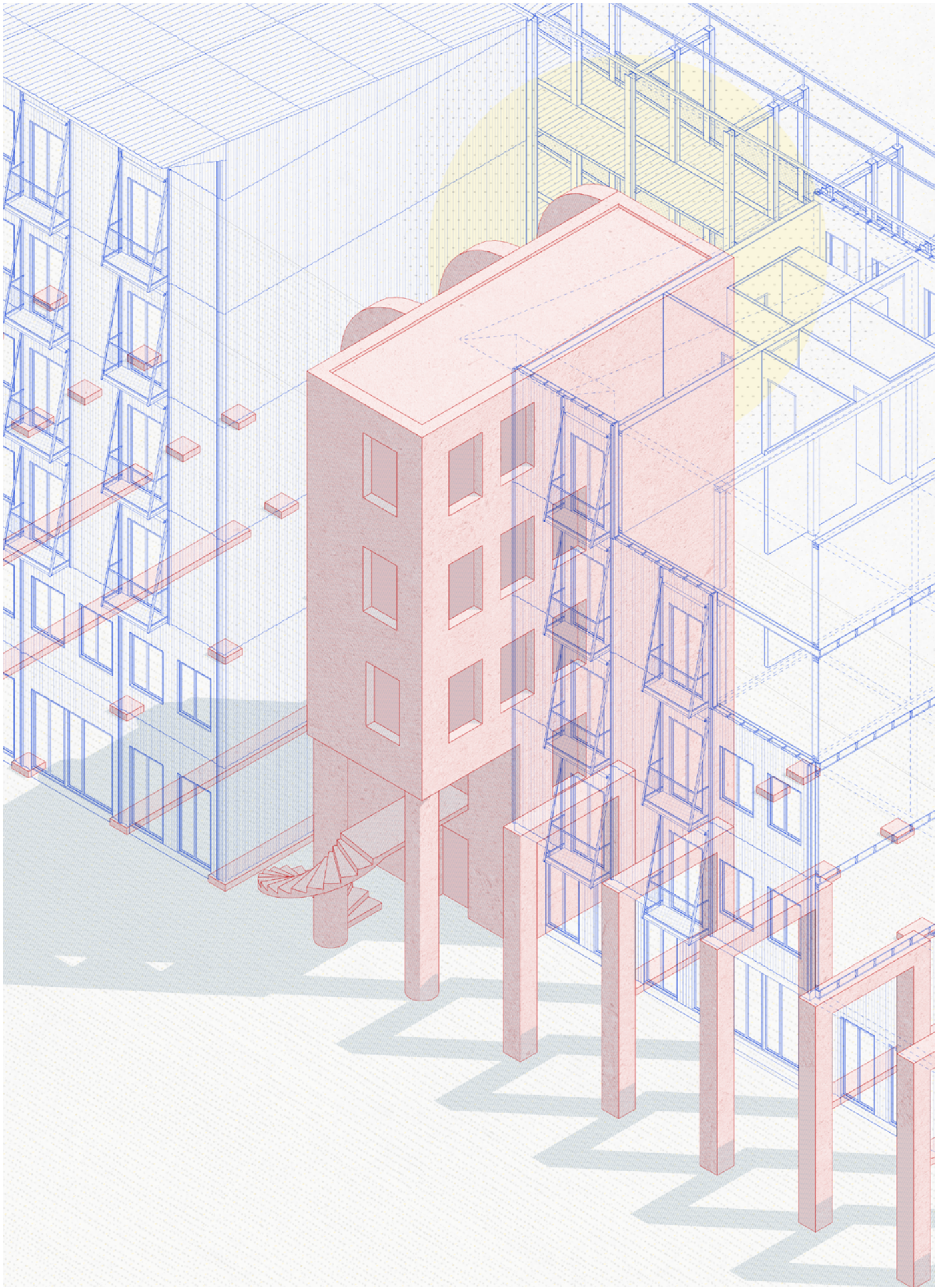






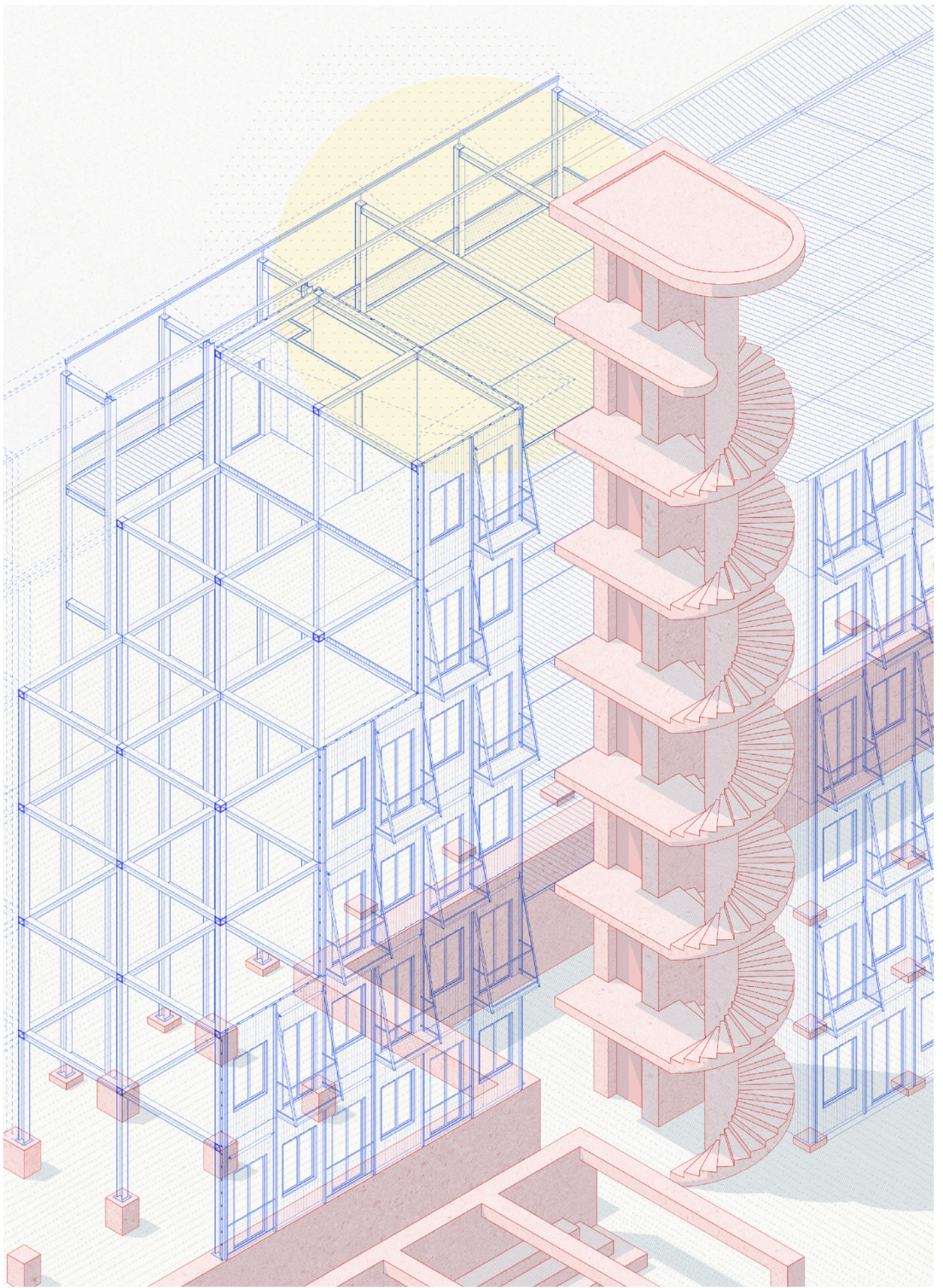


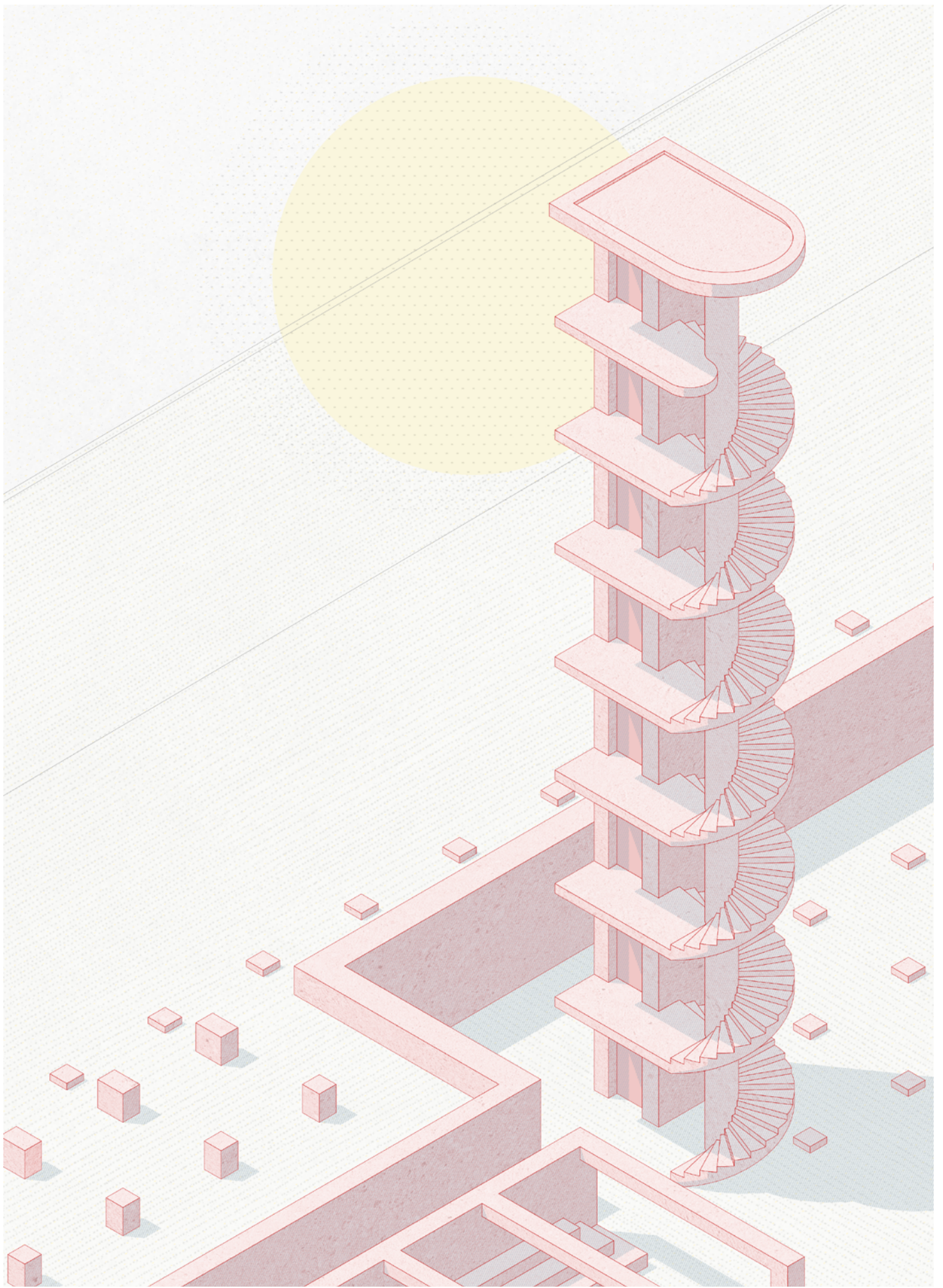


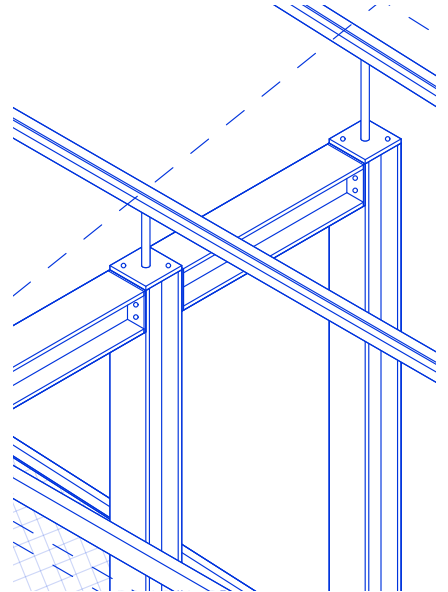
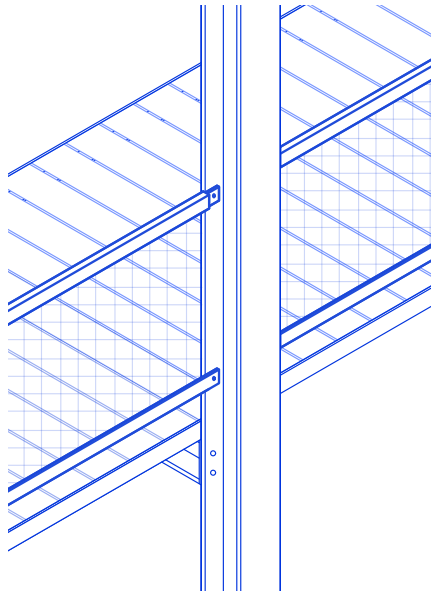
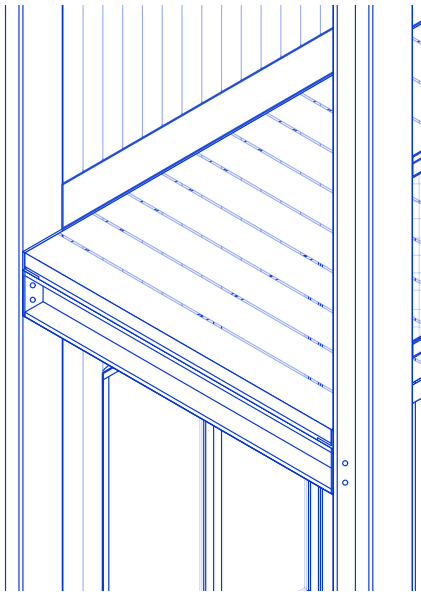


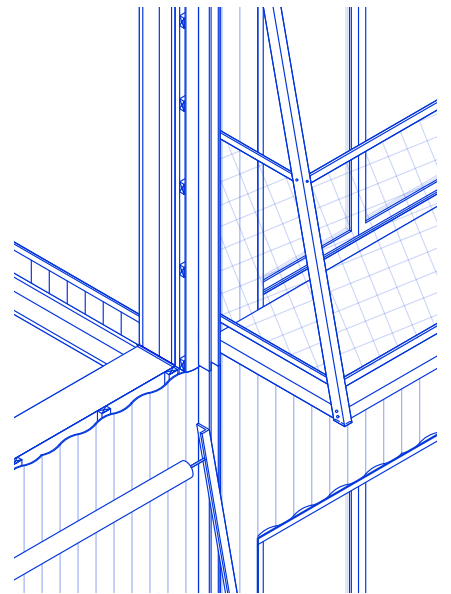
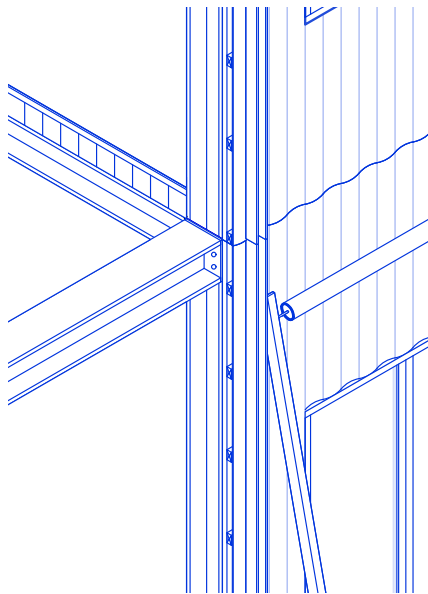
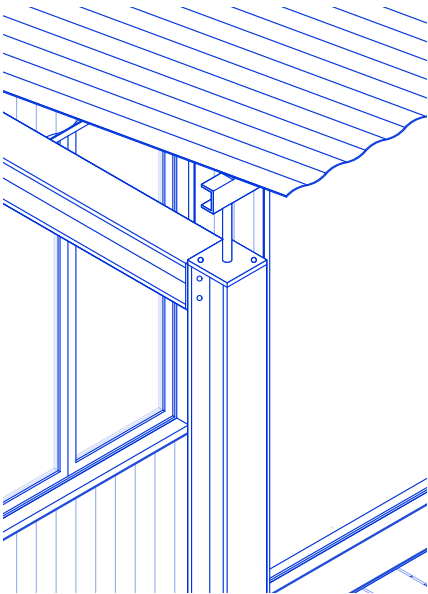
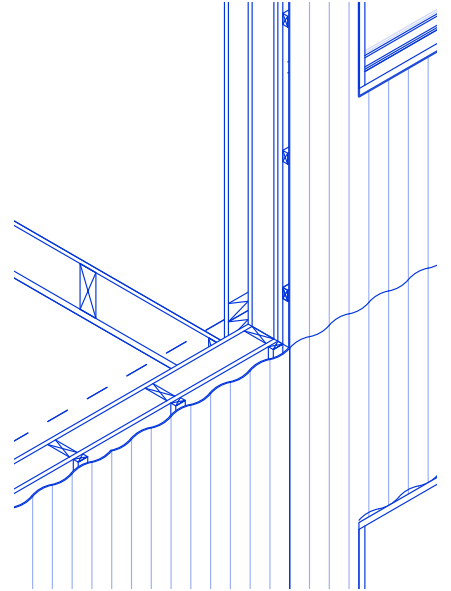
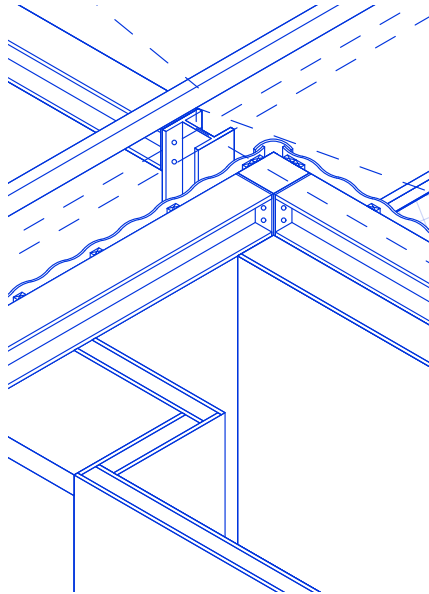










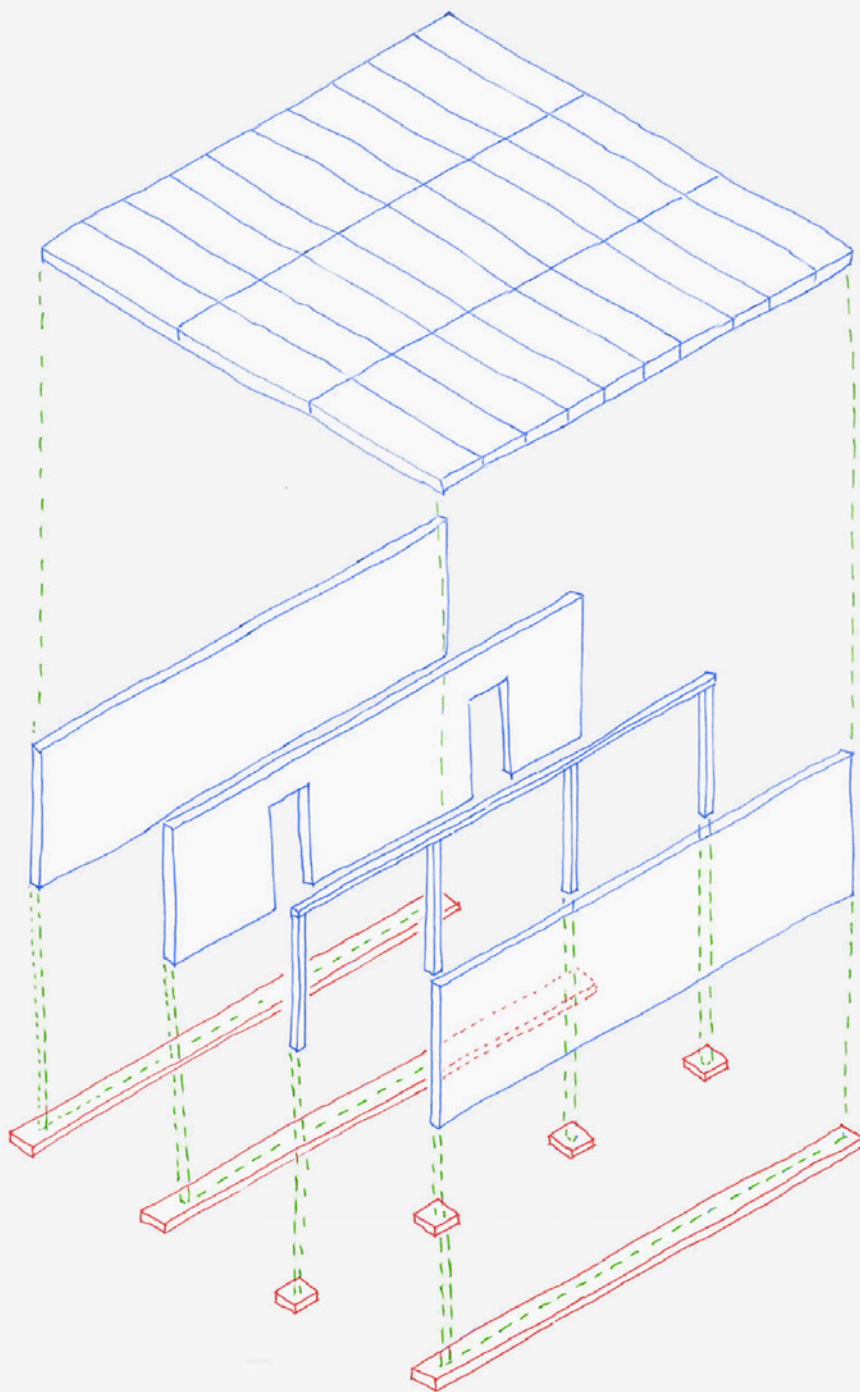


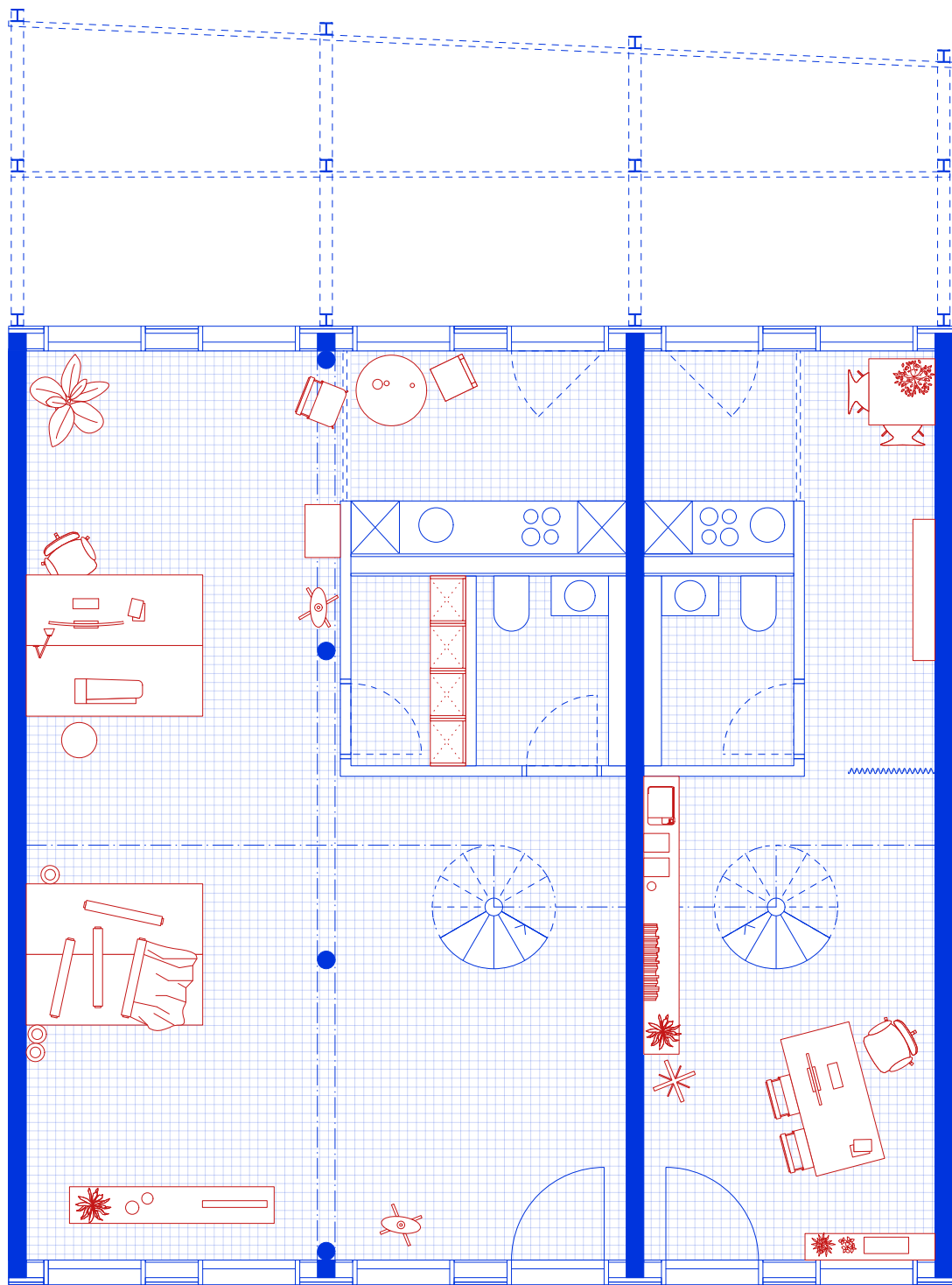


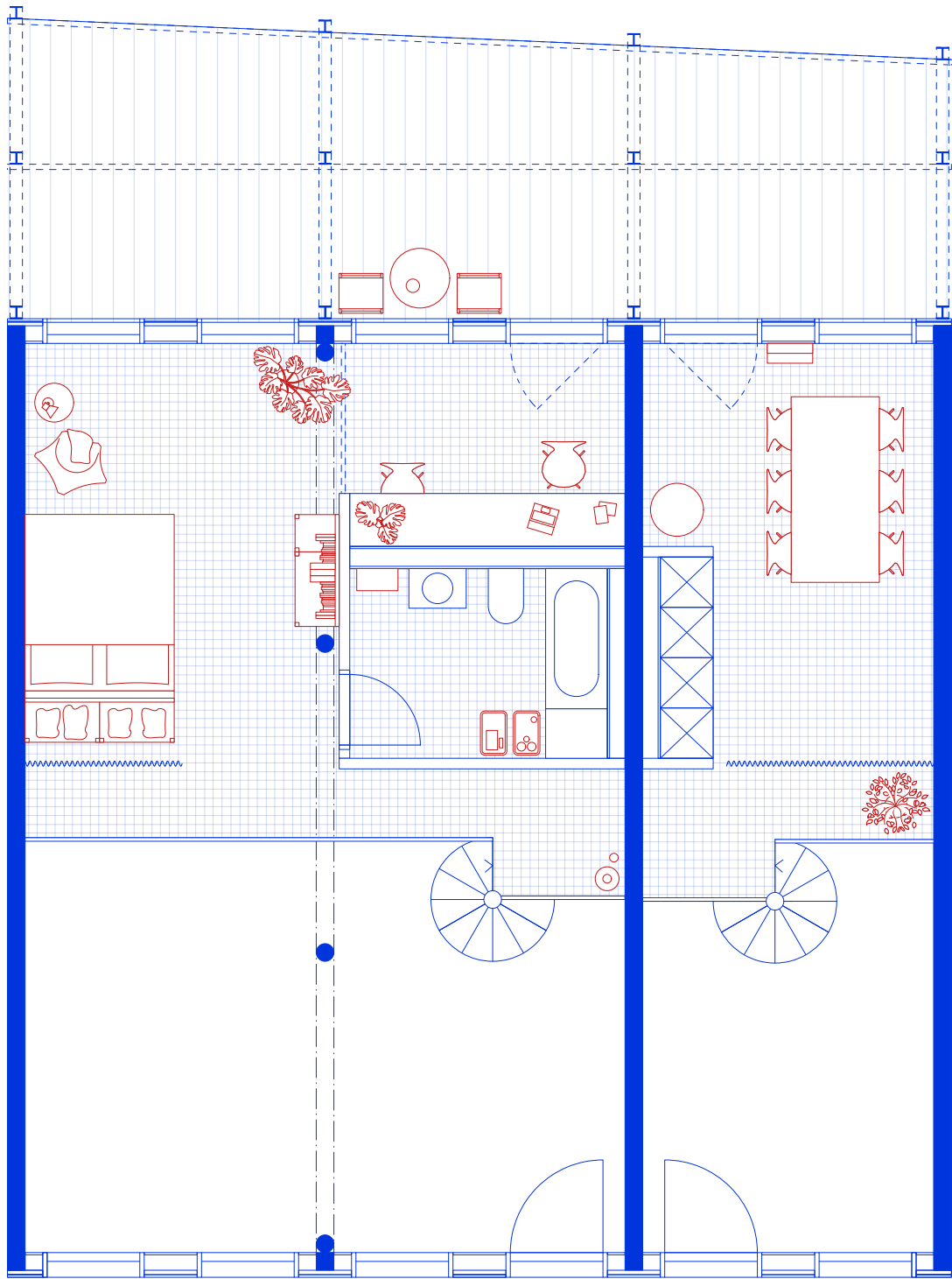


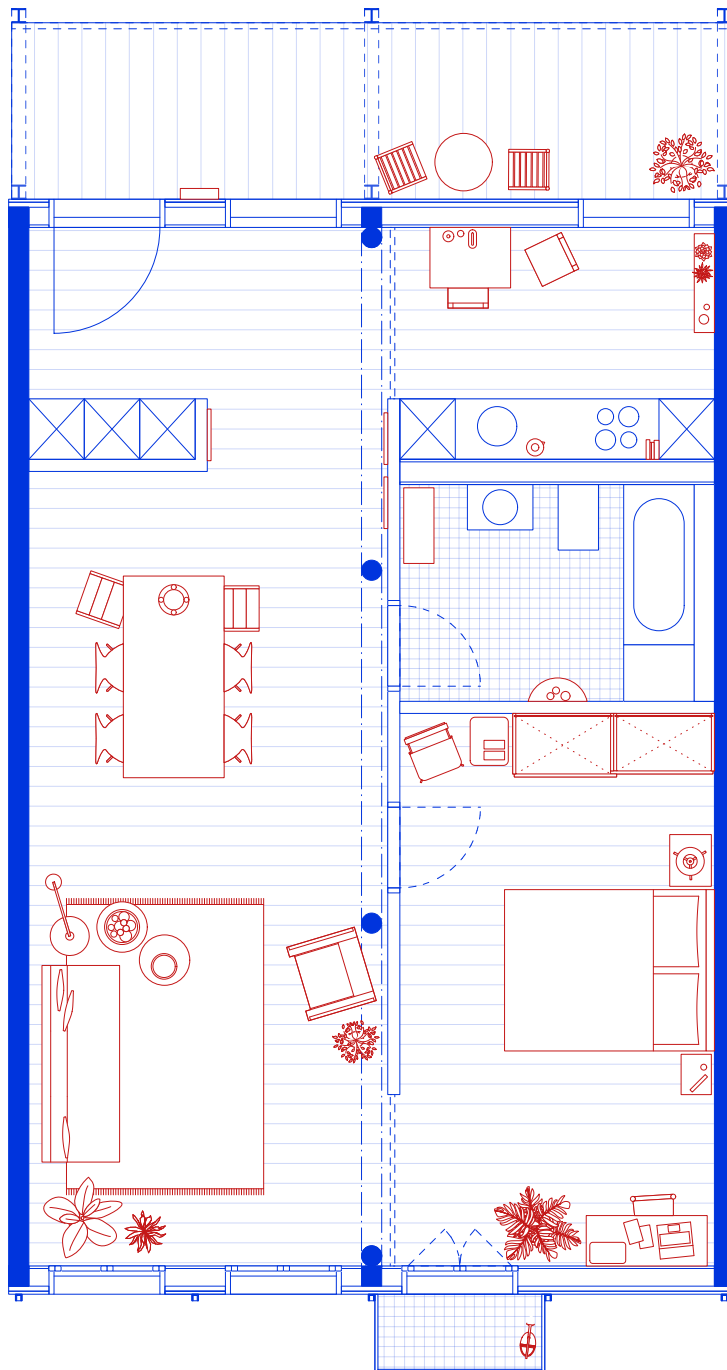


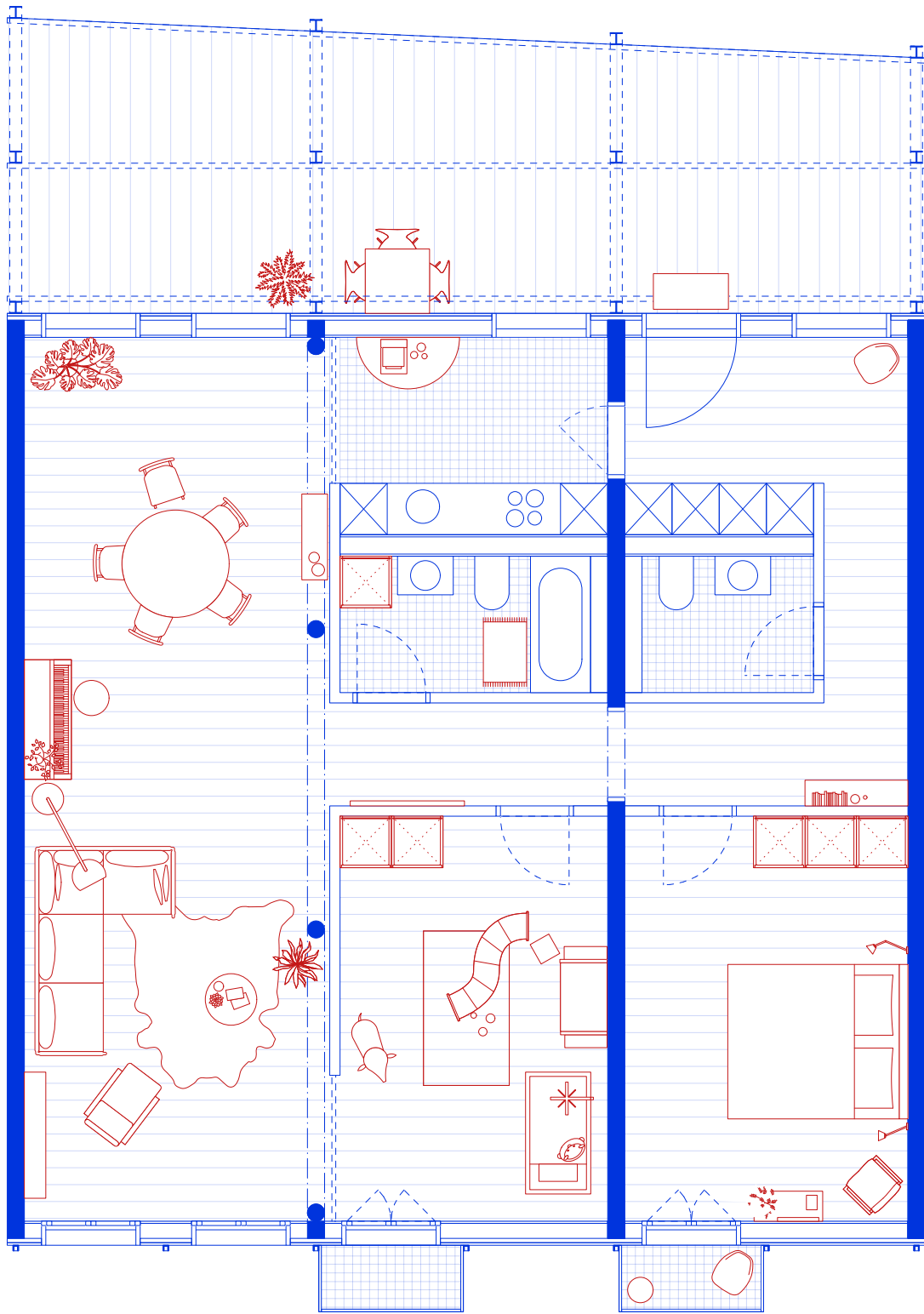




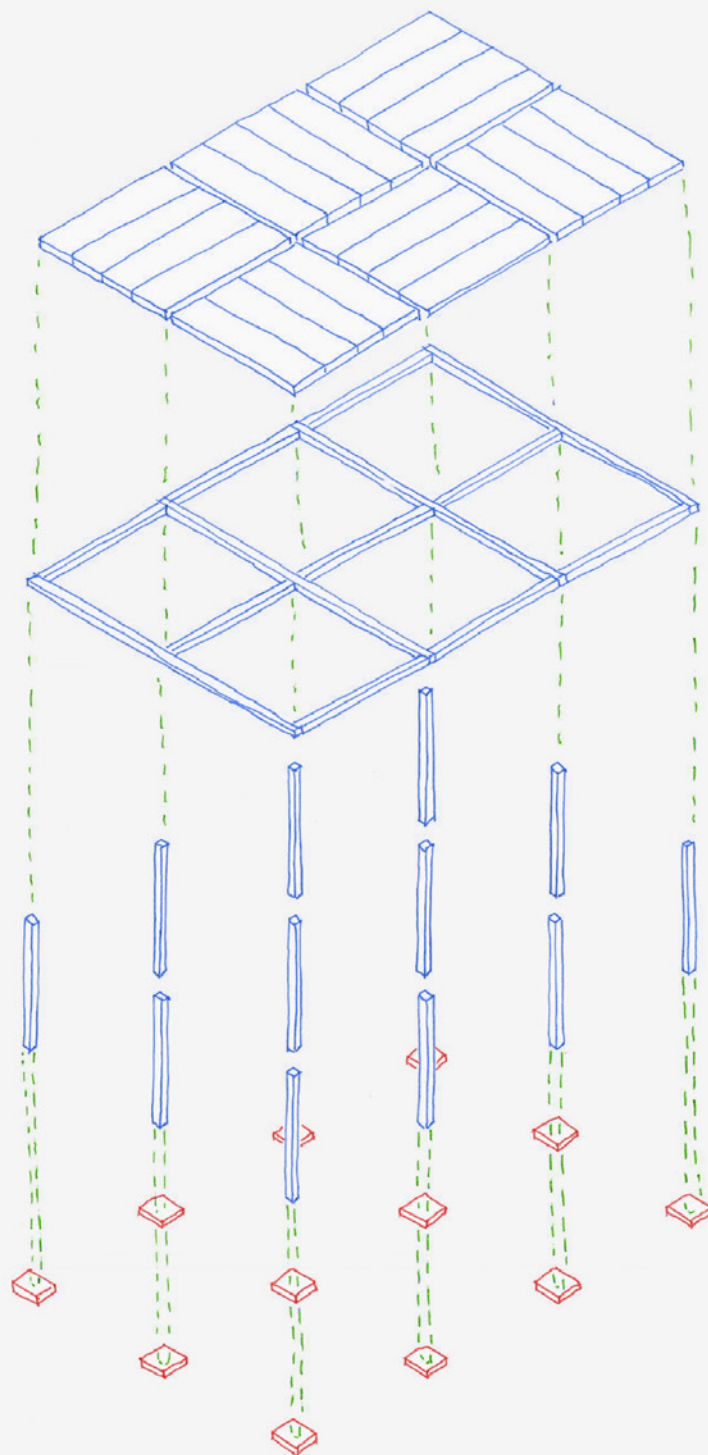


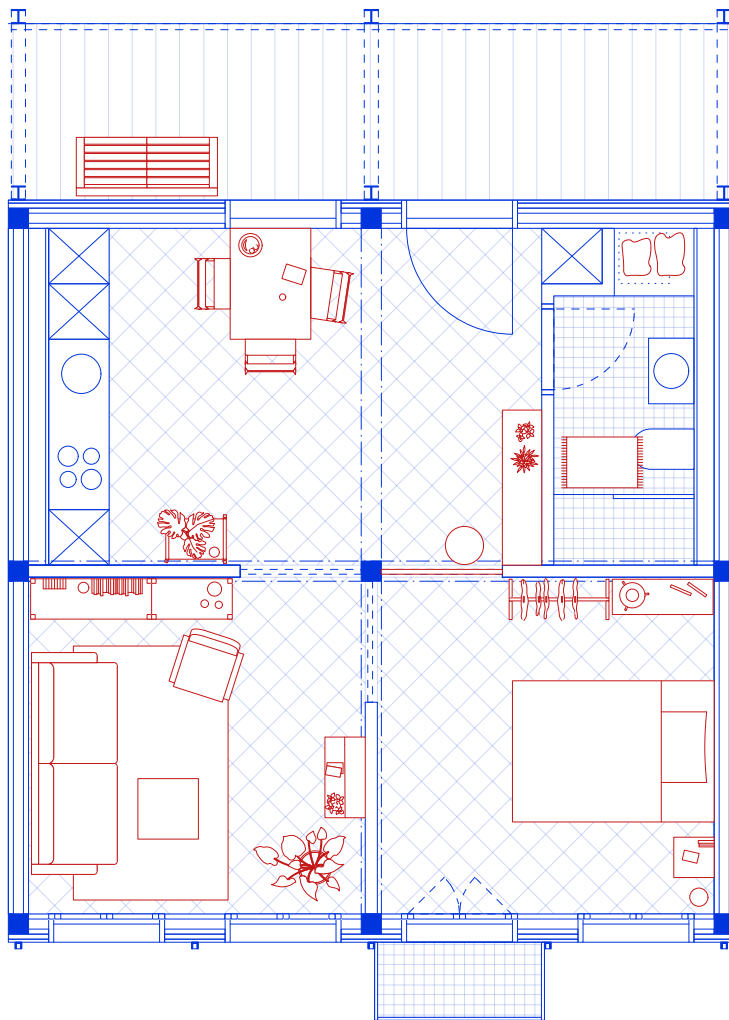




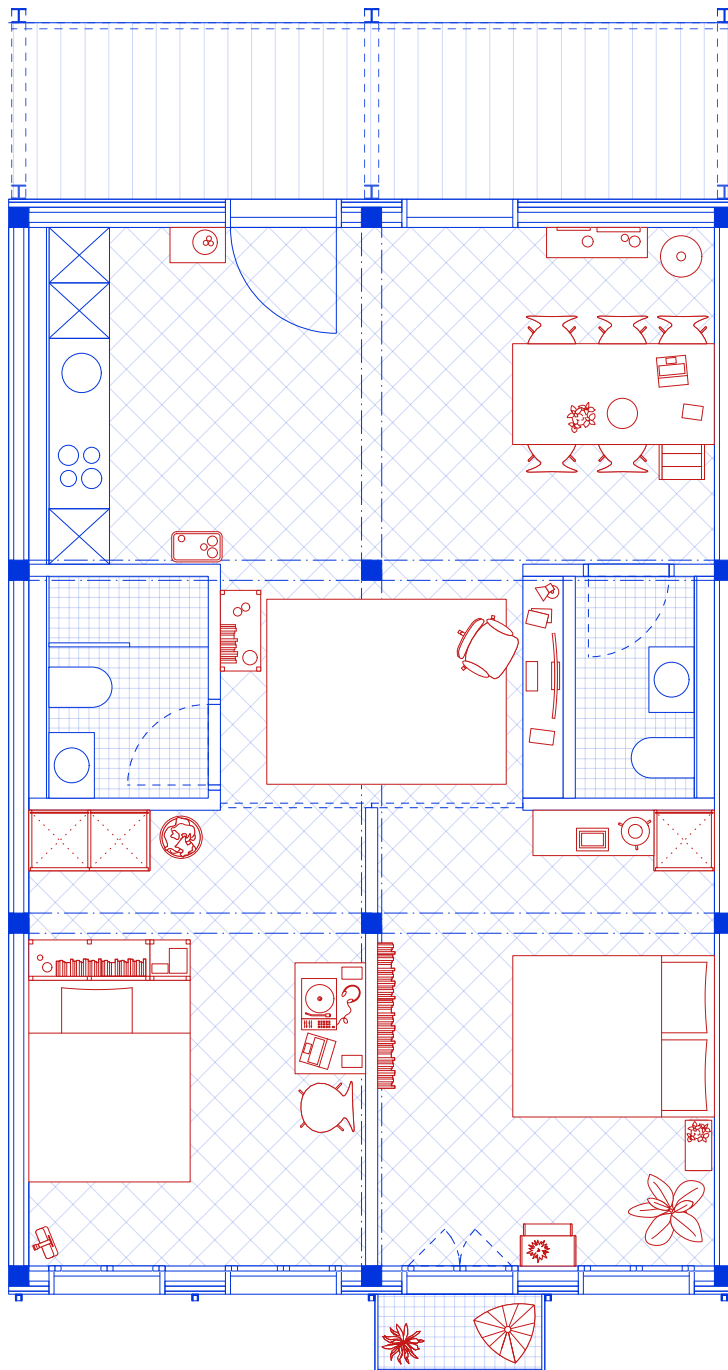


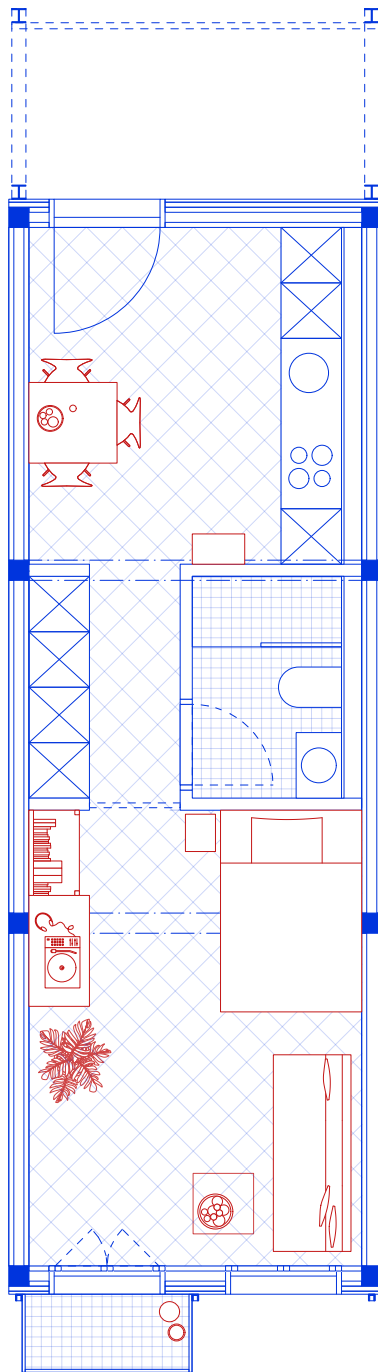


















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