



« *Can we see the earth as a single garden ?* »

The complex Avanchet-Parc has been developed and built in the context of a housing crisis in the 1970s, by the Göhner system that proposed a mass and heavy production of prefabricated concrete. Built with repetition, thus fast and economical the project targets a low-income population class. Nothing seems to be missing there: one sleeps, eats, lives, consumes, prays, consults the doctor, drives, goes to school and so on. Like a butterfly in nature, the original intention was to build a whole life around the qualities that a park offers.

In the 70s, the car is a symbol of freedom; was at and becomes the centre of the sub-urban planning of Les Avanchets. Located in Geneva, the plot is close to the airport and surrounded by two important arteries. The urban planning of the initial project makes a contradictory attempt to conceal the nuisances produced by these two heavy traffic lines while allowing cars to cross the ensemble under a mega-structure-colonnade built in concrete.

A line of speed and nuisances: exhaust gas, noises, fast movement that limits slower ways of moving around and the expansion of the park. The line crosses the ensemble transversally and its lateral extensions distribute the different dwelling blocks, while the ensemble is introverted by massif use of bushes and trees on the periphery that disconnect the complex from its environment.

Today, the idea of putting the car at the center of mobility has become obsolete. Some little interventions happened lately to give more space to the pedestrian and creates connections with the neighborhood, but still insufficient. The lack of safe and comfortable grounds for pedestrian reinforces the desire and need to use the car. Could additional interventions and adaptability permit the park to expand, and allow a possible co-existence between car and pedestrian?



The project tries to negotiate a coexistence between the car space and that given to the slower movements. It proposes to develop a continuous park within the ensemble, and to provide more accessibility and visibility to the pedestrian infrastructure. While restraining the movement of the car to the minimum needed; slowly they can only access the center (where the shopping mall stands) and the dwelling block's underground parking.

A series of interventions attempt to provide connections : by adding a bridge, removing bushes on the periphery, expending the stairs and ramps entrances adding a few column-stairs for vertical connections, removing asphalt for more ground poposity, enlarging the passages in the ground floor of the dwelling blocks for more visibility; and comfort.

At the larger ensemble scale, a bridge already had been added on the south side to connects the ensemble to the public transport and the new densified neighborhood le Quartier de l'Etang. The project propose to add on the northern side a new bridge, where bus stop and single-family garden-houses stands to transit back and forth continuously.

External peripheral entrances are made more visible for pedestrian by removing the bushes and extending the ramp-stairs. As benches and lamps are integrated in the steps, they provide new possibilities for social interactions.

Along the transversal line, column-stairs are added to connects the upper and lower level of the mega-structure. While the upper level permetes visual connections, the parc is slowly extending on the lower level where people and animals can decide to transit or to rest.  
détail : the construction consist of assembling on site the prefabricated concrete steps on the steel reinforced column. The material and the forms are integrating the concrete colonnade shaped by the megastructure.

The asphalt is removed where the parking lots are, to leave a thin strip of hard ground for walking and a thicker line of porous ground for the deployment of the park.

At the dwelling block scale, the passages are enlarged for more generous connection between the previous « back » parking side and the « front » park side. Some existing

double height rooms on the ground floors are opened up to be used by the inhabitants as shared space equipped with common kitchen.

The passage enlargement on the ground floor affects few first floors appartements. But only by adding doors, partitional walls and punctual structure, new flats are created. Kitchens and bathrooms equipment lost from the transformation are reused. The missing bedrooms are added on the roof in a new cross-appartements typology on the attique while the underground laundry rooms are migrating there too. The modular and economical Göhner principle is used as heritage for the roof addition. Only insulation and the structure material is changed from concrete to wood, covering remains eternit. The pitched roof form tries to end the previous flat roof.

Although few little different changes happened: new solar pannels on the terrasse, more performant sun shading and windows, its expression has not changed in 50 years. Within the nowadays energy renovation rush context the ensemble is at risk of being frozen, by being listed. But, couldn't we continue trusting the residents, visitors, caretakers, gardeners, owners and architects to preserve it in good condition and adapt it for the future? Do we want to put it at risk of becoming an expensive monument of the "20th century architectural heritage"?

Moreover, the neighbourhood is slowly becoming dense and denser, with more and more of concrete and asphalt. The Quartier de l'Etang as for instance been thought as an island block with no outdoor green surfaces. Instead of using the cheap construction technics system provided by Göhner in les Avanchets and other ensemble built in Zürich in the same period, the Quartier de l'Etang economical strategy was to put shops and office spaces on the ground floor.

And if the project's ambition to reduce spaces dedicated to the car is deployed in its surroundings, could we imagine, like Gilles Clément, that the « earth » could become a « single garden » ?

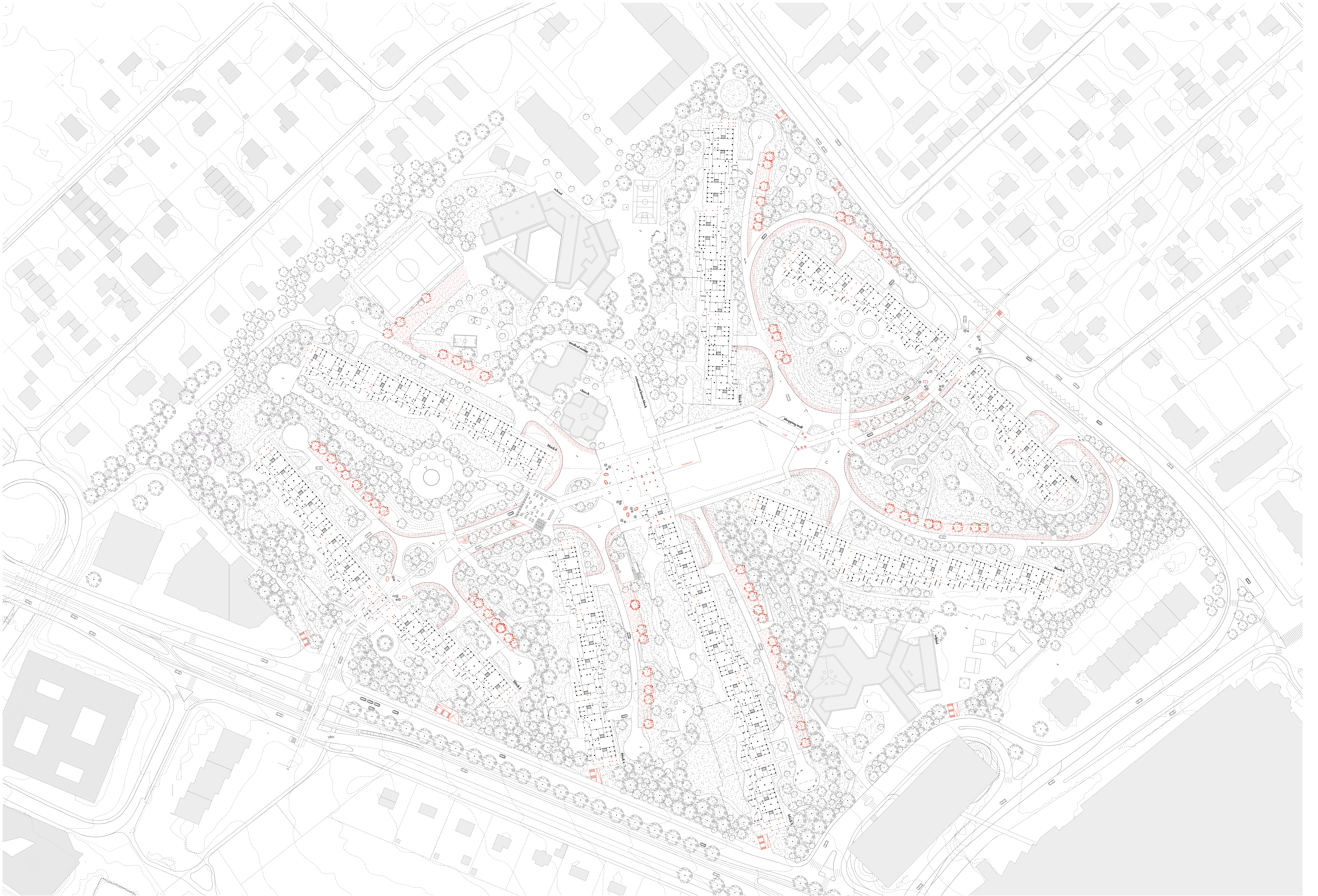






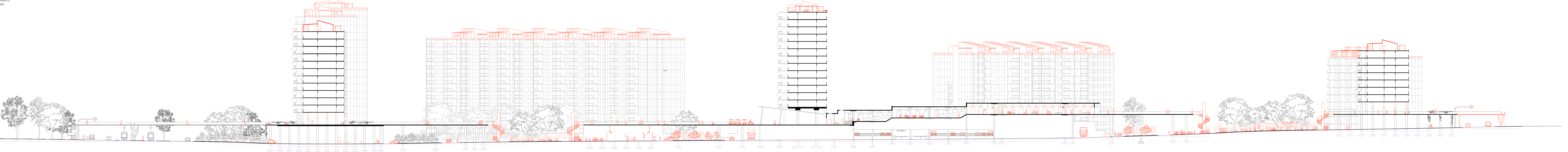








Crossing the ensemble by foot  
Section a-a  
1:300



Existing bridge  
connects the ensemble with the  
public transport and opposite  
side of the street (new densified  
Quartier de l'Étang and  
gardens)

Enlarging Passages  
for more visibility and porosity  
(no front, no back)

Main artery  
the car line is thinner, more space  
is given to the park; pedestrian.

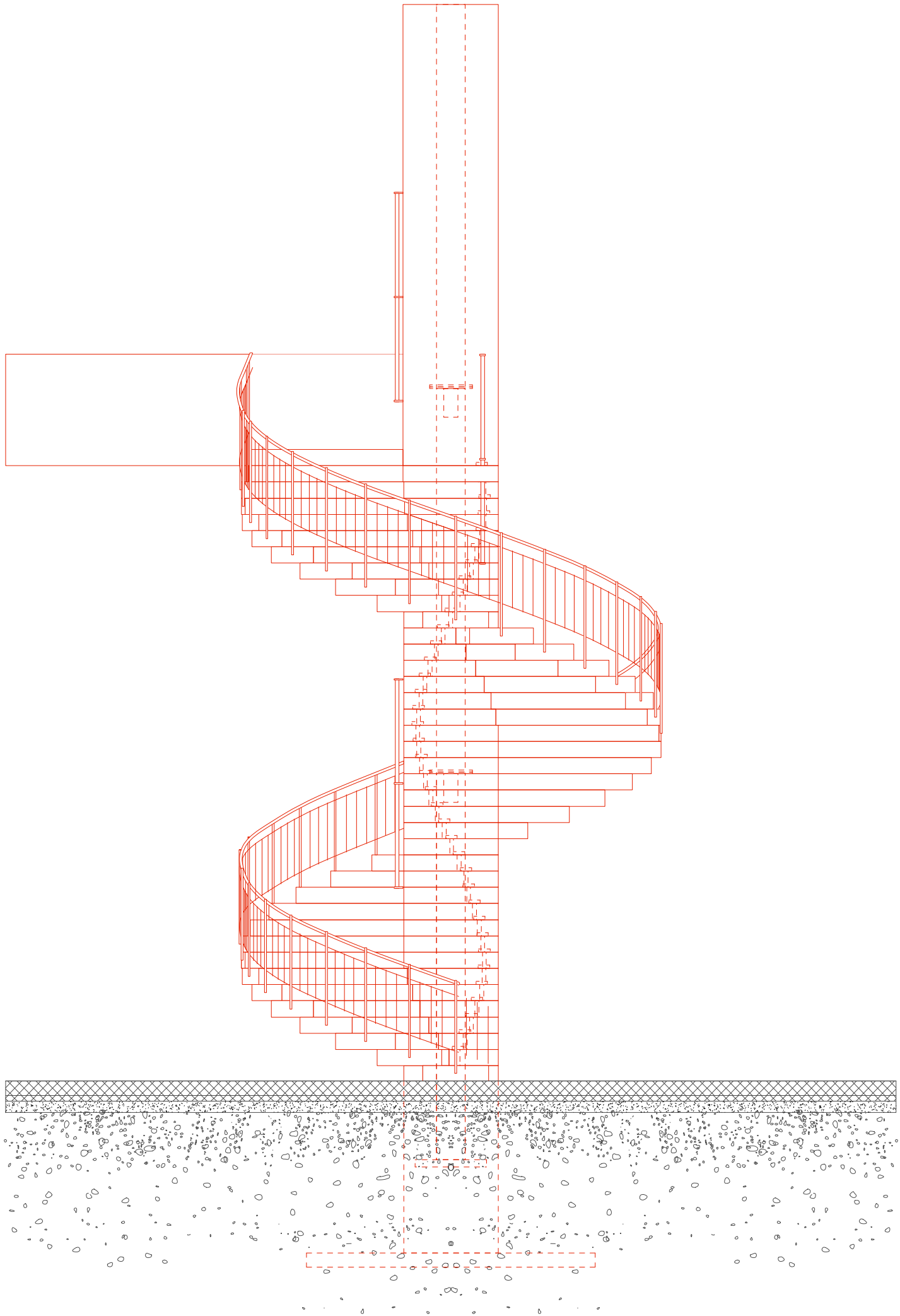
Vertical connections  
a column-stair permit a  
connection between the different  
levels

Shopping Mall Tunnel  
the tunnel is not longer crossable,  
the main artery stops at the  
shopping centre to limit the  
traffic nuisances

Bridge  
the new bridge connects the  
ensemble to its surrounding;  
public transport and the single  
family garden houses.

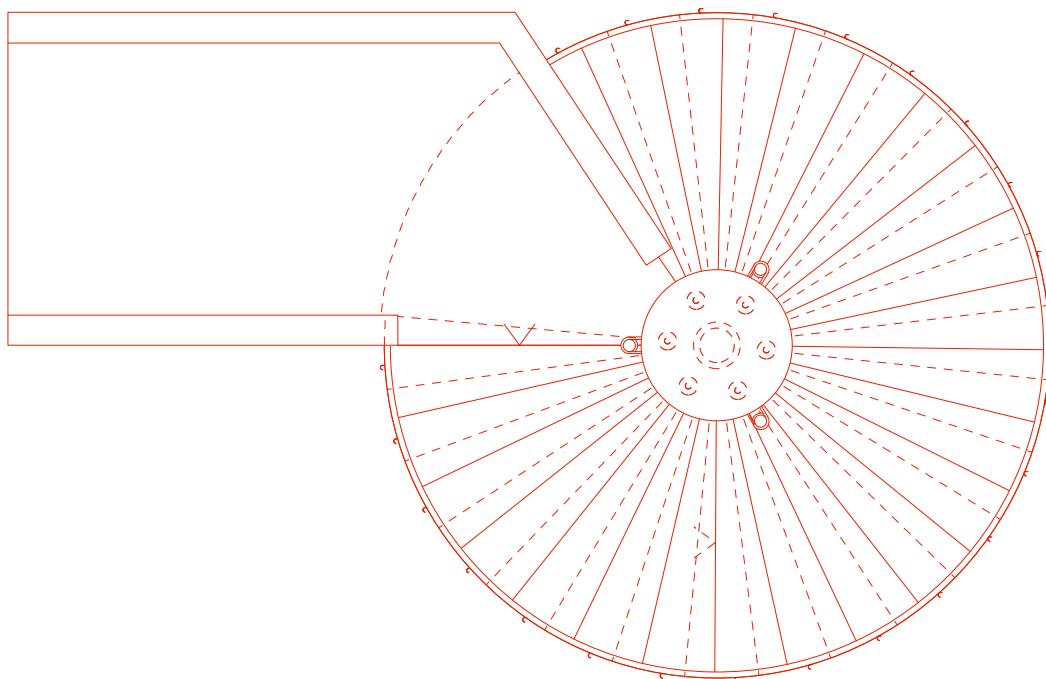




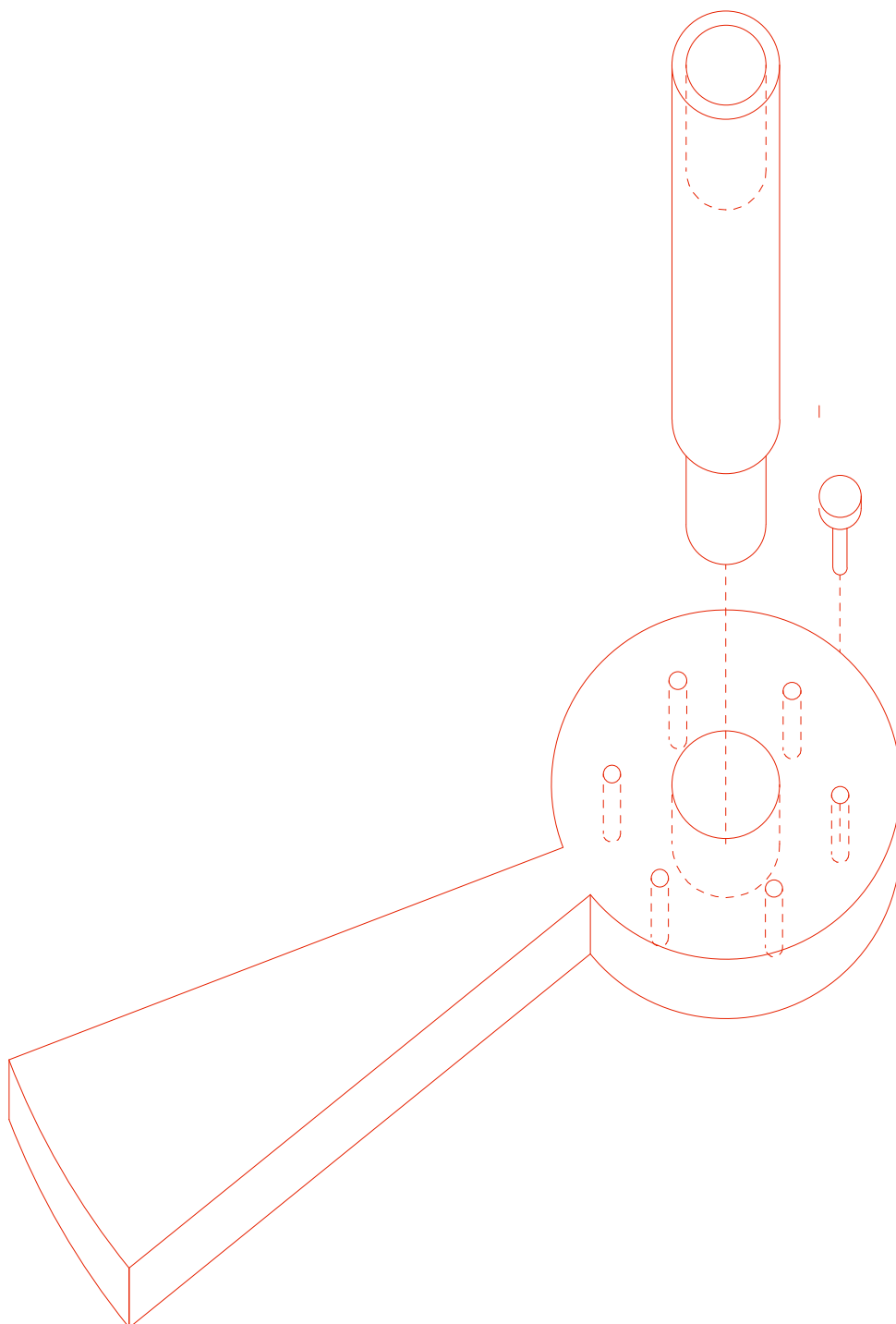


Columns Stair  
Elevation  
1:40





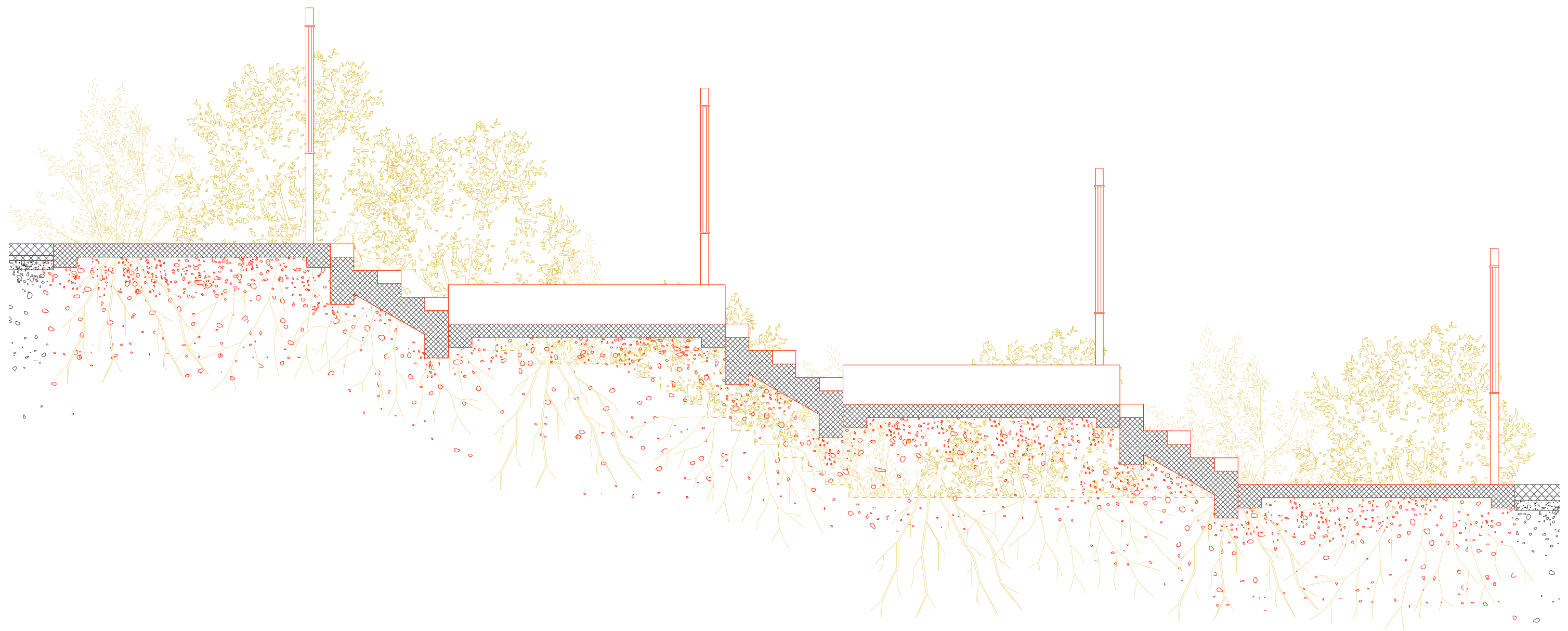
Columns Stair  
Plan  
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Columns Stair, step  
Axonometry  
1:40



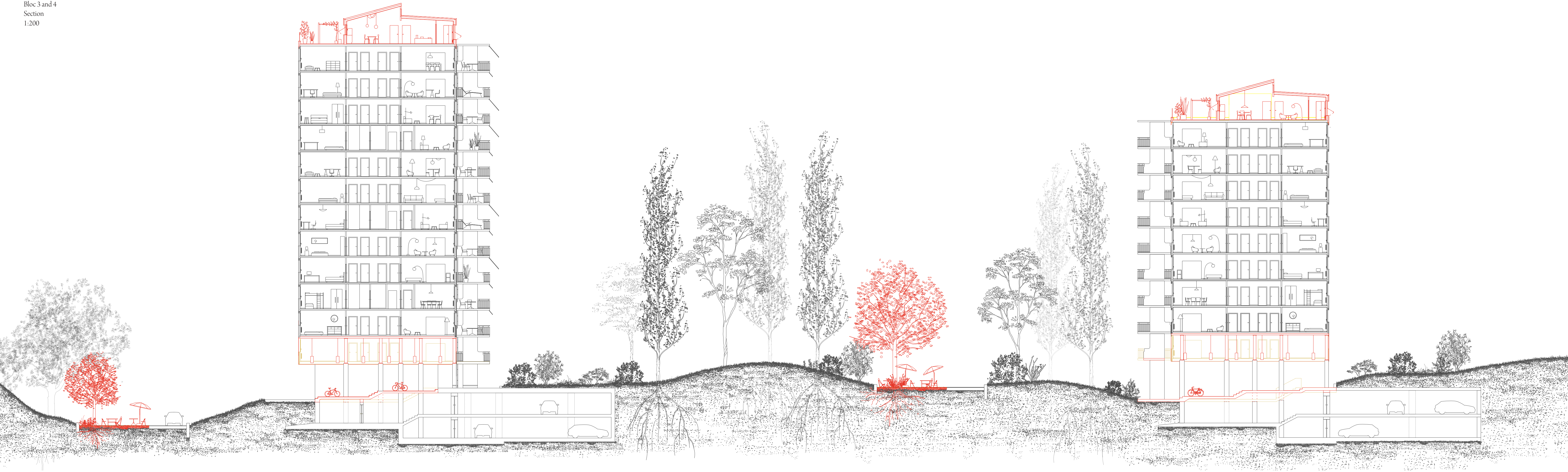




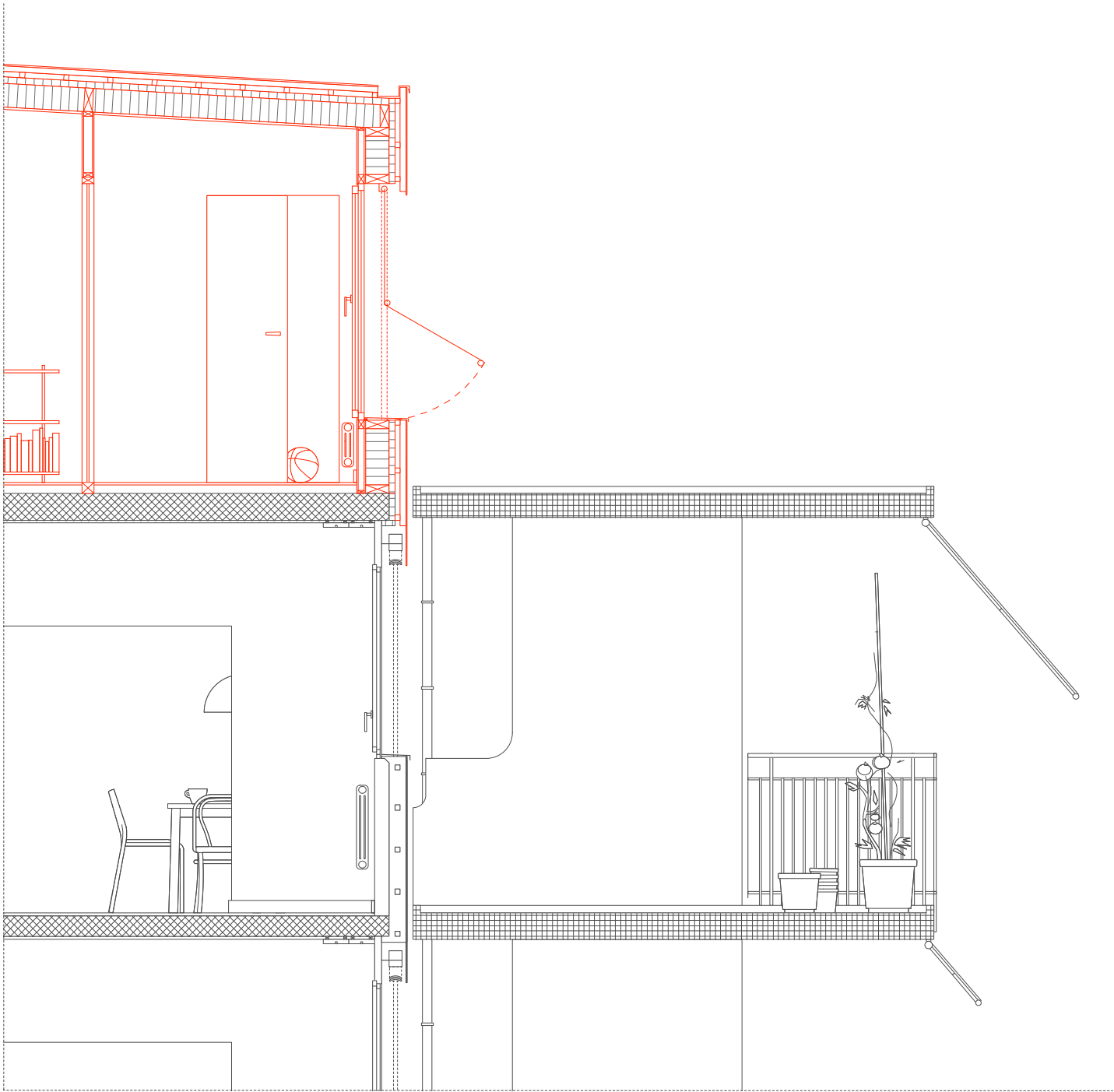
Stair Bench  
Section  
1:40



Bloc 3 and 4  
Section  
1:200

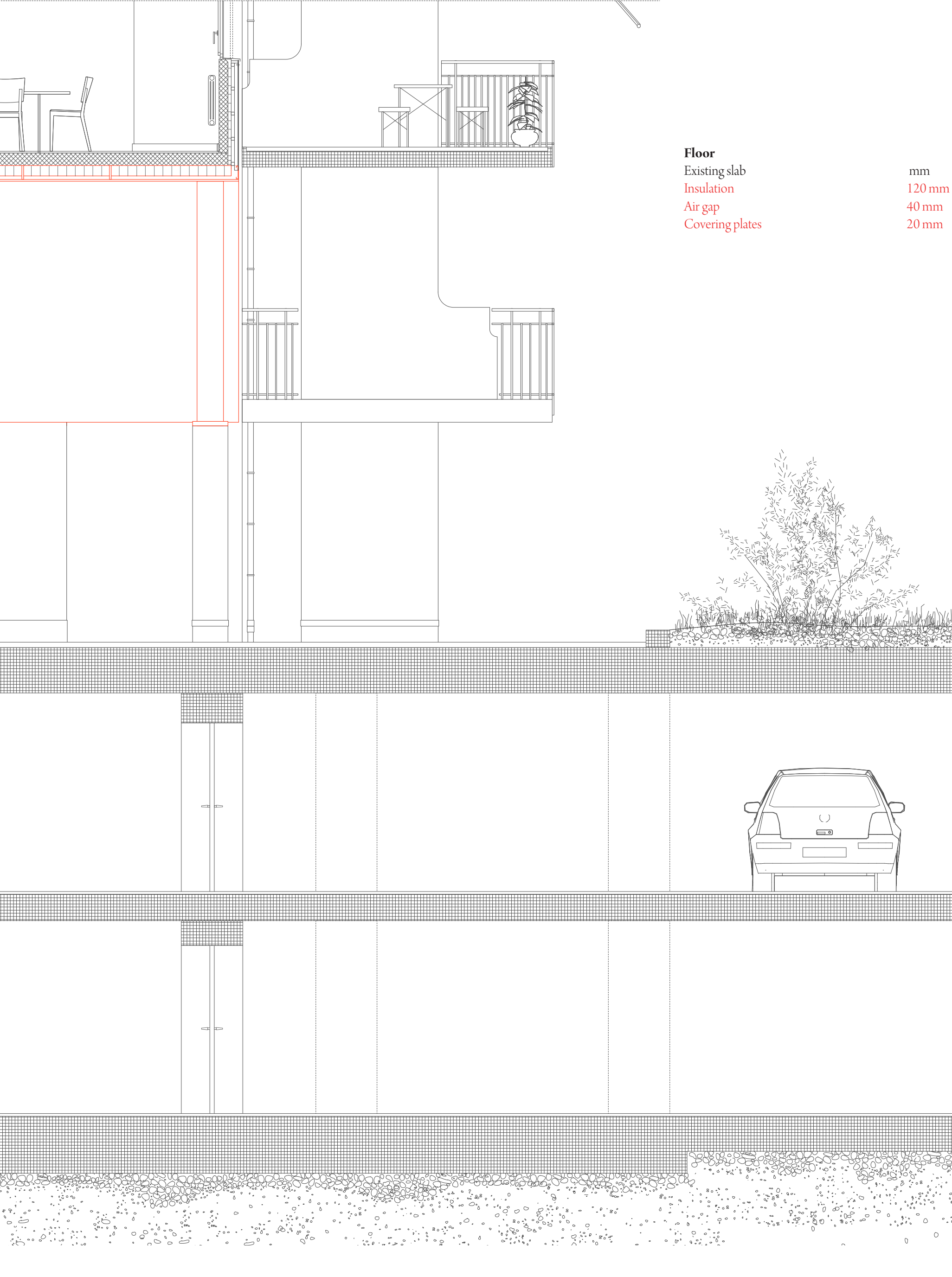






Roof		
Aluminium		8 mm
Air gap		35 mm
Wooden grid substructure		40 mm
Water proofing		
Insulation		40 mm
Prefabricated wooden wall, insulation		160 mm
Vapour barrier		
Wooden covering substructure		60 mm
Plaster		12 mm

Façade		
Eternit		8 mm
Air gap		35 mm
Wooden grid substructure		40 mm
Water proofing		
Insulation		4 mm
Prefabricated wooden wall, Insulation		160 mm
Vapour barrier		
Wooden covering substructure		60 mm
Plaster		12 mm



Floor		
Existing slab		mm
Insulation		120 mm
Air gap		40 mm
Covering plates		20 mm

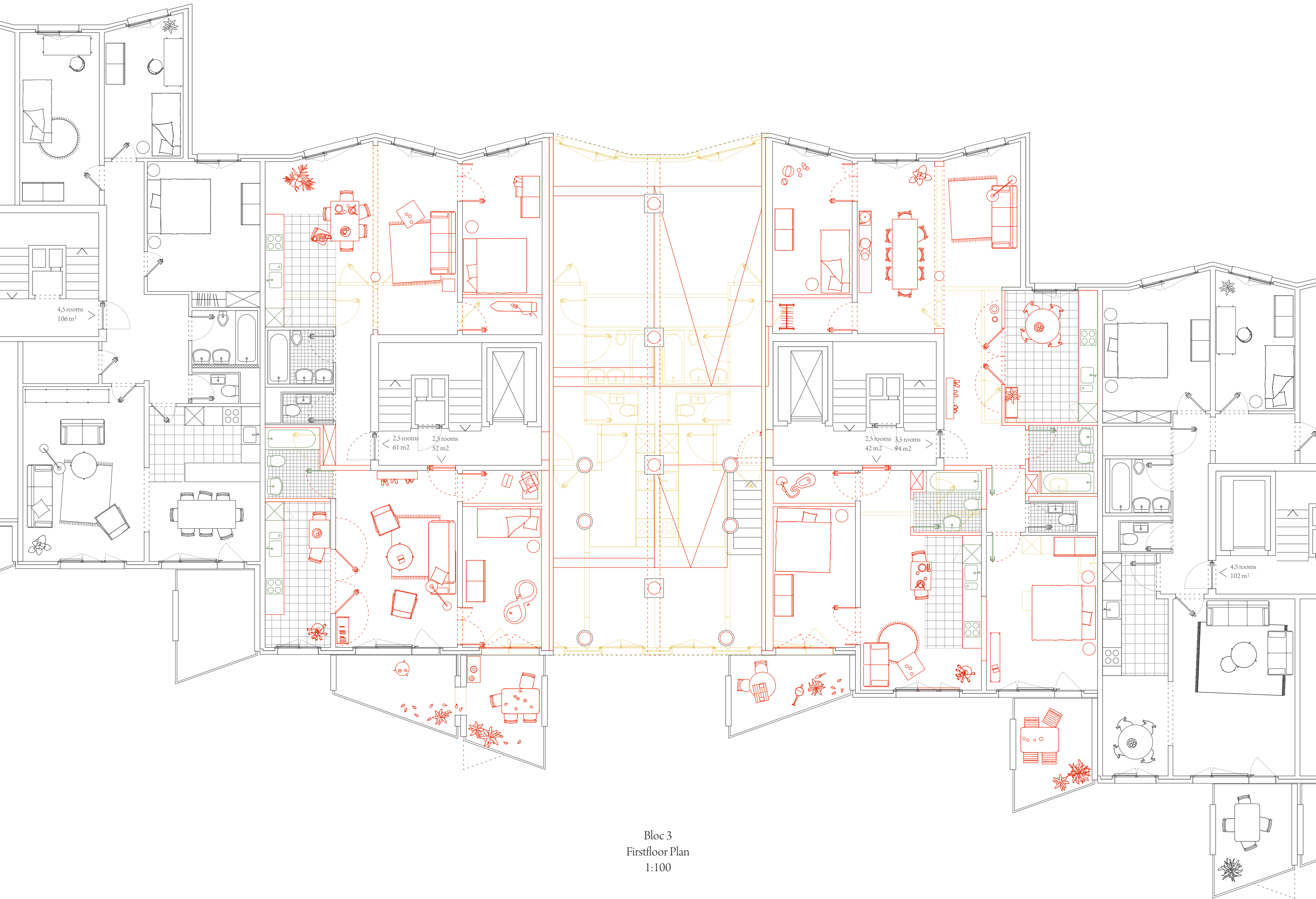


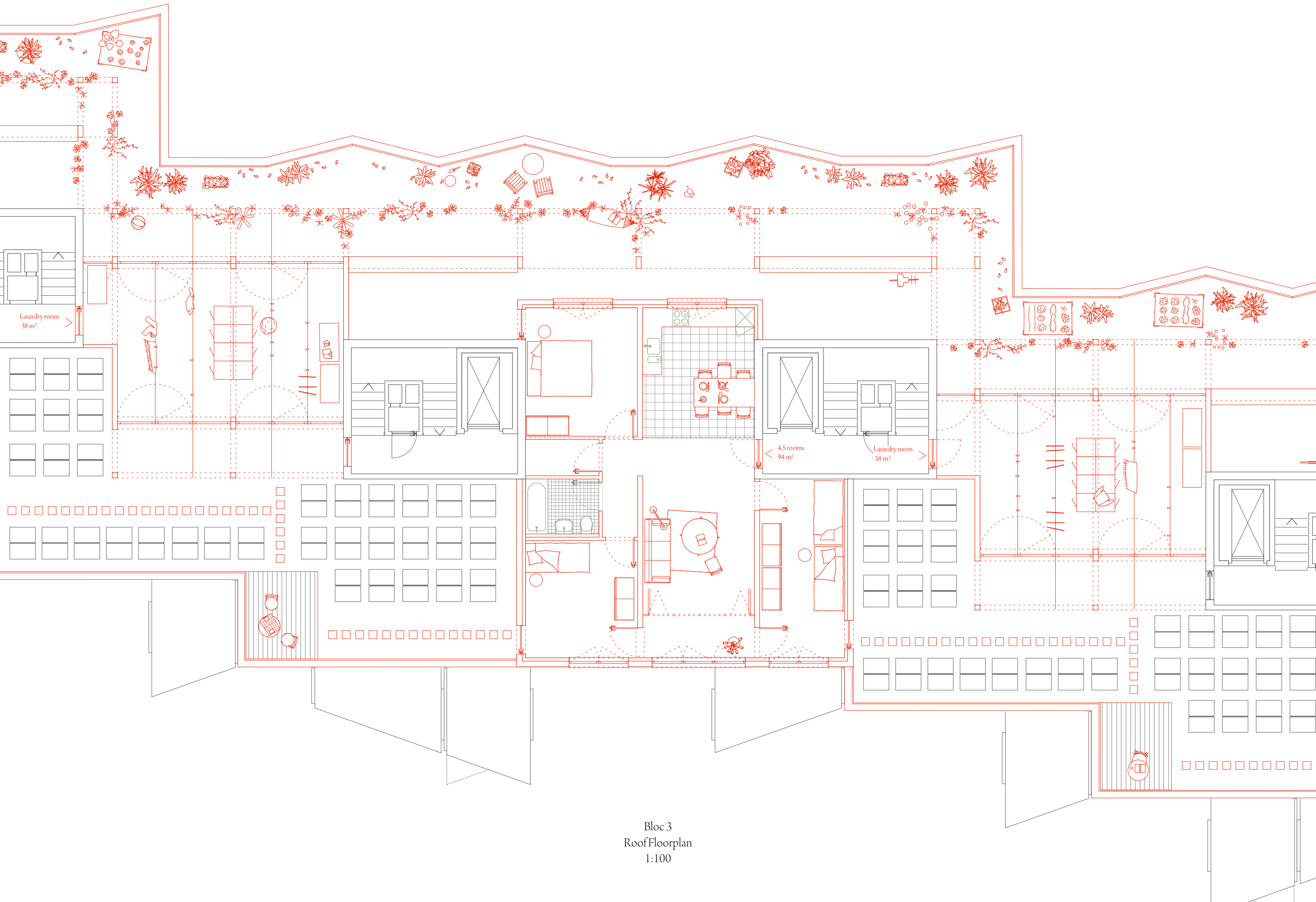












Bloc 3  
RoofFloorplan  
1:100



