

Two wood stories

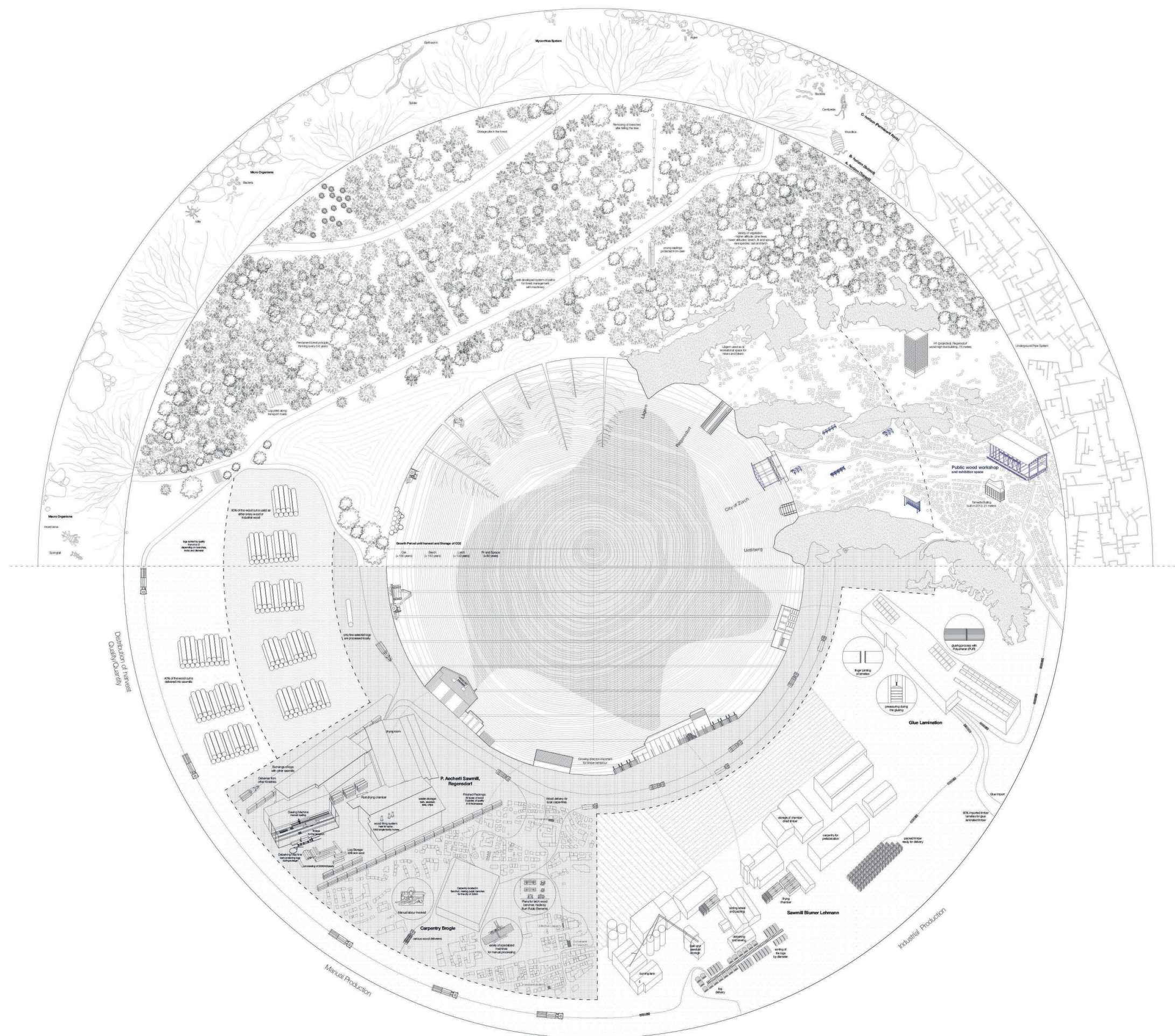
Sarah Rüegg
HS23

During the research I followed two trajectories of the processing of wood growing in the Altberg-Lägern forest area of Zürich. One is the local and often still manual production of timber and the second one is the more industrialized processing of wood done in the larger sawmill.

One of the mills processing entire logs locally is the sawmill P. Aecherli located in Regensdorf. It has been in family hands for three generations and is one of four sawmills remaining in the region of Zurich. To be able to pay salaries and cover production costs, the sawmill mostly processes high quality and precious woods. One of those precious woods is the larch tree wood. It is a very rare species in the region but has a high demand, due to its considerable water resistance which also makes it an alternative to imported timber. Parts of the larch wood which is cut in the sawmill P. Aecherli is afterwards processed in a carpentry based in Winterthur. With simple means but a lot of expert knowledge on the behavior of wood, they produce benches the city of Zurich.

A stark contrast to the local journey described above can be found in the processing chain of spruce and fir wood. These two types of trees make up the biggest part of the Altberg Lägern forest area 7. They can follow the same path as the larch, through a local sawmill but often these two species take a far more industrialized timber processing path. High quantities of spruce and fir cut in the forest and stored on piles are brought into big sawmills like Blumer Lehmann in Gossau. Every day trucks filled with spruce and fir from different forestries, at minimum 80 percent from Switzerland, arrive to be cut. Parts of the spruce cut are then transported to a glue lamination production. With digital tools timber elements are then being arranged for high rise timber projects such as the H1 in Regensdorf. This building will be built only eight-hundred meters away from the P. Aecherli sawmill. This high rise project shows how the local timber production in Zürich is not able to profit from the current timber boom which we see in the building sector.

Wood is seen as the sustainable building material of the future. Its local occurrence and the CO2 capture of the forest and the timber are advertised fervently. Due to the high demand and the need for sustainable living space, timber production is changing into an industrialized process. It is process of necessity but at the same time, local producers like the P. Aecherli sawmill are under a lot of pressure because of cheaper industrialized timber materials often also coming from abroad. With the standardization of timber production, expertise on processing and craft are lost.









In the research of the trajectory around local wood and timber in and around Zürich the change of timber production into a more industrialized process became visible. With the standardization of timber production, expertise on processing and craft are lost.

This project intends to establish a workshop where the craft and knowledge of woodworking can be passed on from craftsman to the public. It should also bridge the gap between industry expertise and public understanding whereby new material interventions in the wood industry can be presented. It is positioned strategically within the creative hub, adjacent to the dynamo with its public metal workshop. Beyond being a mere workshop and educational facility for lay persons the building also connects to a larger network. It evolves into a meeting ground for woodcraft experts, completed with an adjoining exhibition space showcasing innovative wood-based building materials.

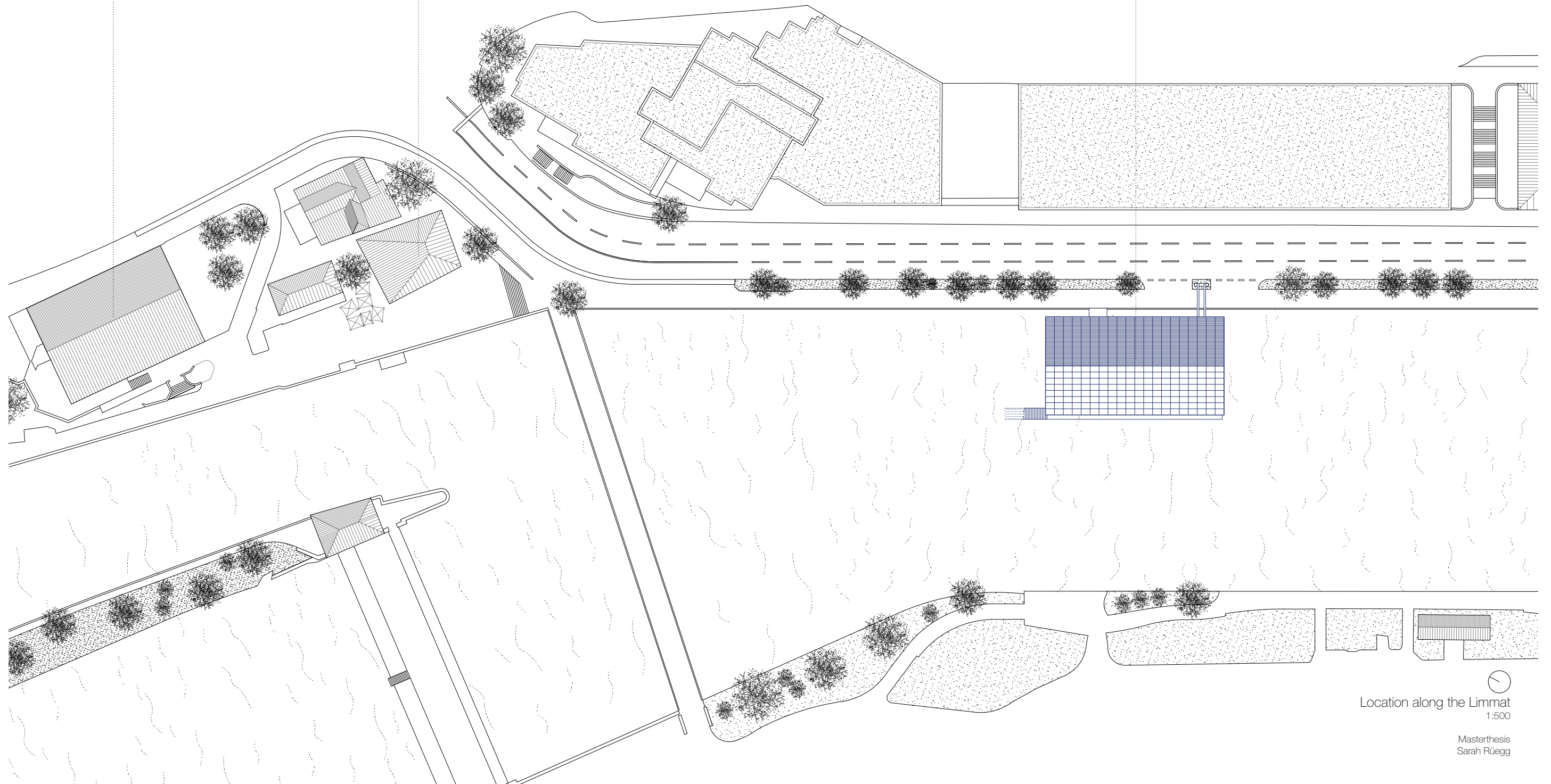
The new building uses the existing foundation of the Schutz und Rettung Provisorium that is located on the Limmat as its location and foundation. This building was established during the restauration and renovation of the Walche building. In 2025, after 5 years the renovation work is finished and the Provisorium will be taken away again. The wood element building on top of the steel structure will be taken back again by the carpentry imposing it in the first place, as they will rerenent it. The foundation is planned to be demolished.

This project proposes to keep the foundation due to its highly labour and cost intense construction and deconstruction. On top of this foundation the new wooden structure follows a long tradition of productive spaces on the Limmat like a cotton mill or a florette spinning mill, that were demolished in 1950 due to the initiative of „freie Limmat“. The wooden building follows the structure of the preexistant foundation. This tradition of craftsmanship in wood is represented on the facade were an overleaving knot is connected with wooden dowels. This open structure not only offers new productive and creative space but also public space that opens up to the Limmat.

Dynamo Jugendkulturhaus

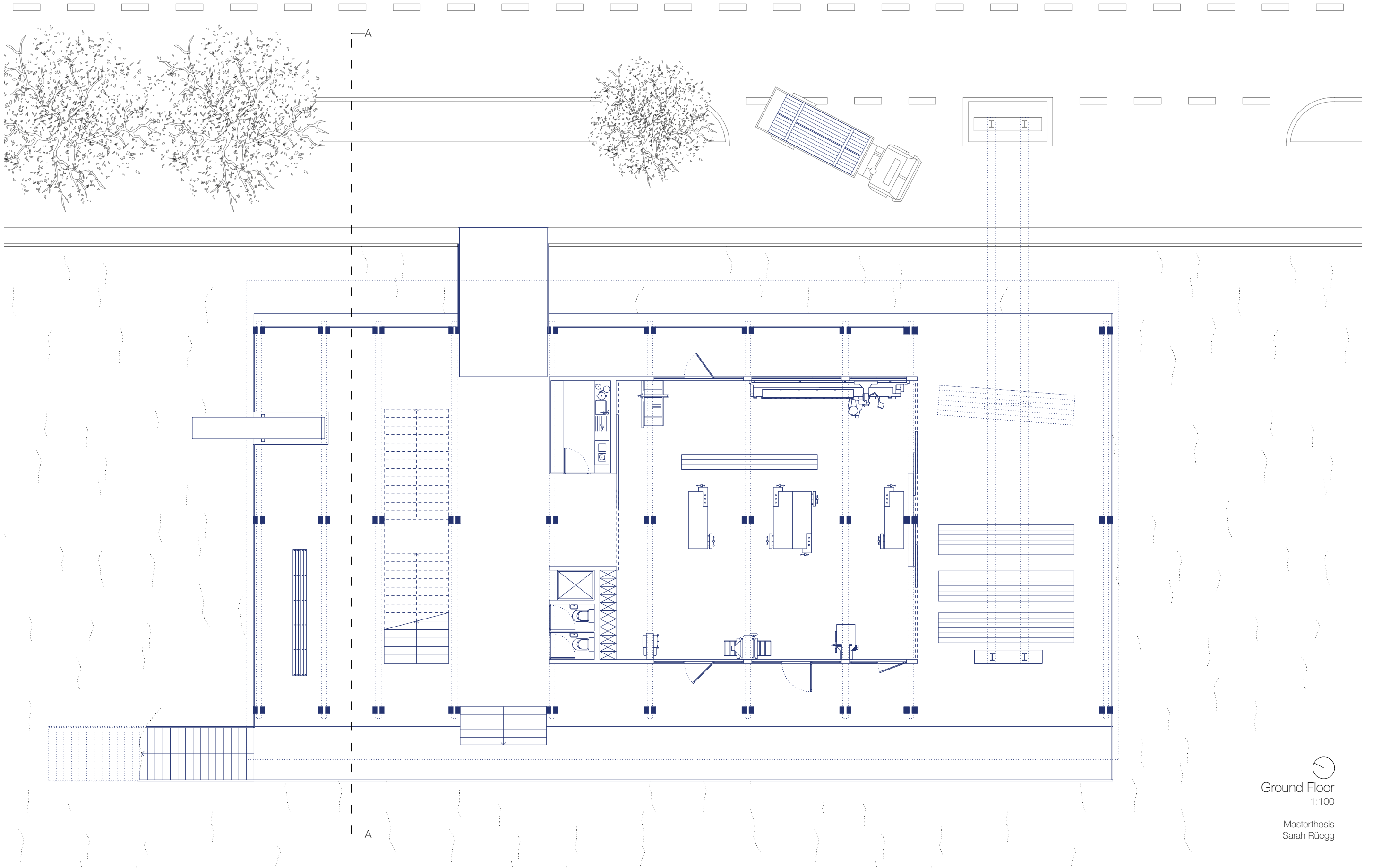
Metal Workshop

Public Wood Workshop
(Provisorium Schutz und Rettung)

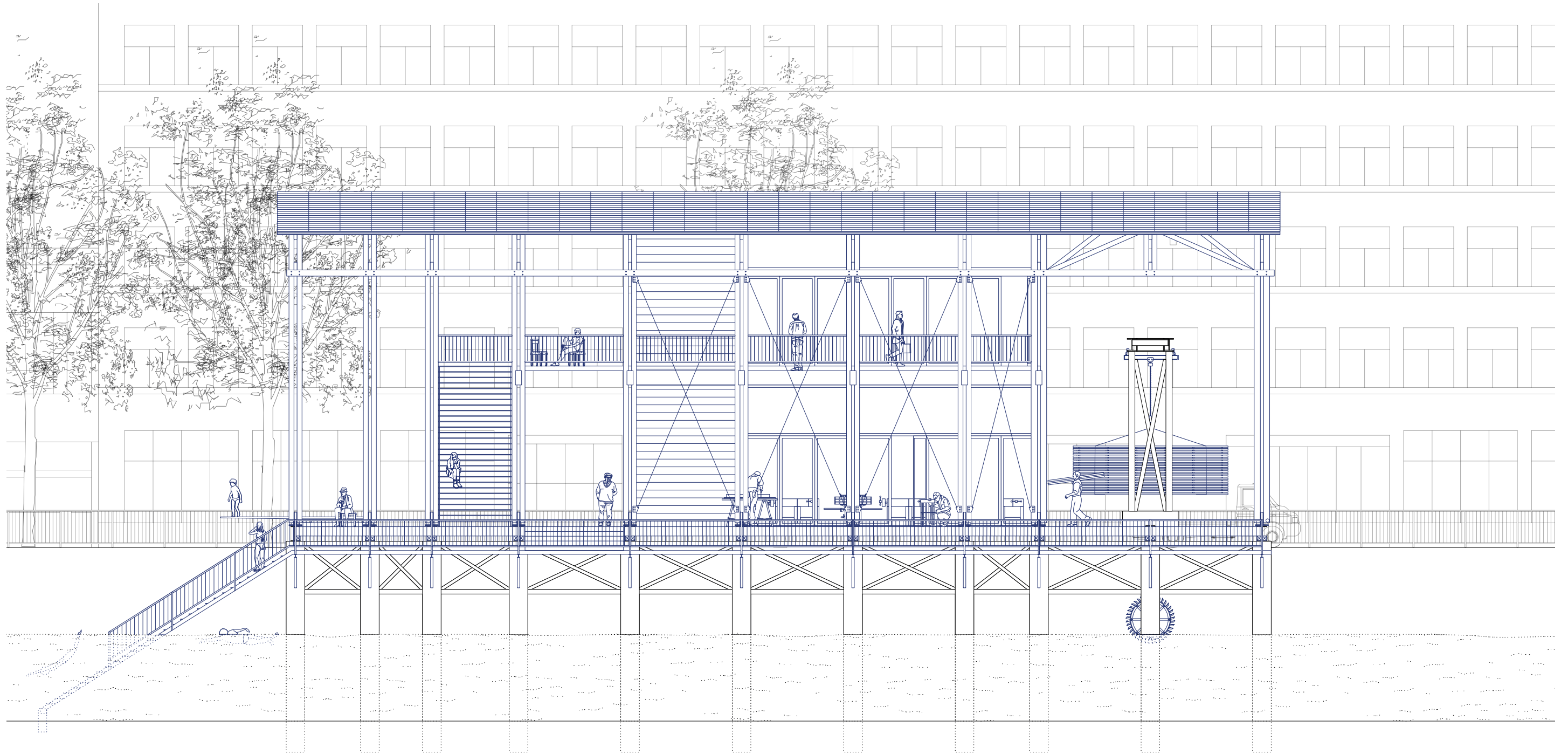


Location along the Limmat
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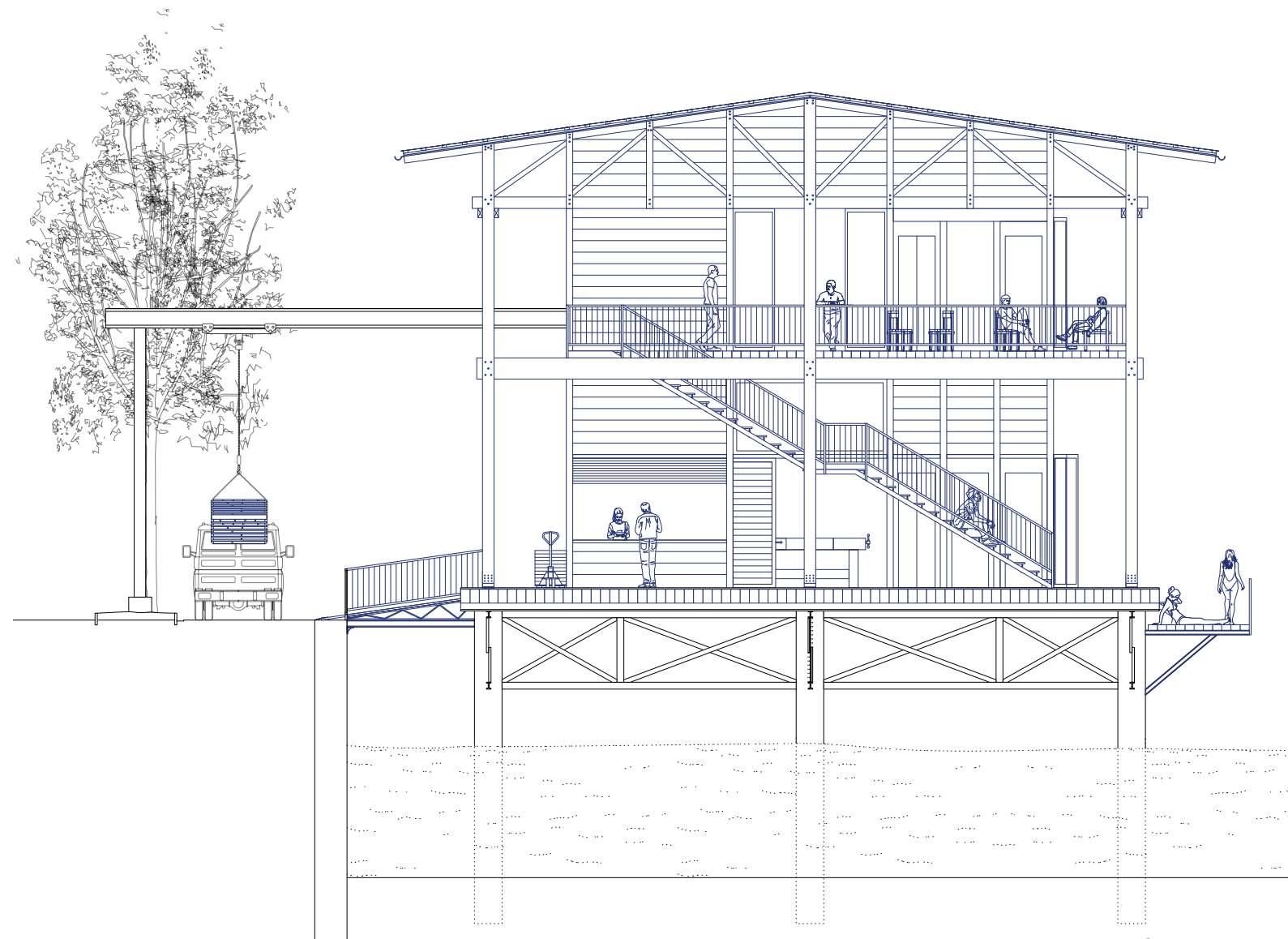


Ground Floor
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View from the Limmat
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Section A-A
1:100

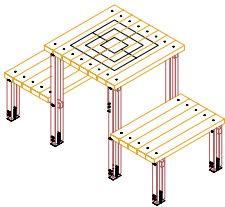
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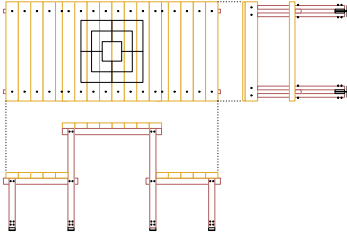
With the industrial production in timber construction, wood is becoming increasingly popular. The construction of high-rise buildings made of wood has begun in and around Zurich following the change in fire safety standards in 2015. At the same time, small sawmills are under pressure due to cheaper industrialized wood materials. Particularly glued laminated timber, which offers various construction methods, is setting new standards. Small sawmills often do not benefit from the flourishing timber boom in the city of Zurich. This project attempts to strengthen the local network of sawmills with a small-scale use of materials. The catalogue with public elements made out of wood for the city of Zurich is a reaction to the existing public element catalogue. Working with wood for public elements not only offers the city the opportunity to use the cities own wood, but also creates a visibility of wood in the city on a smaller scale. In the long term, wooden elements could replace the current element catalogue. Moreover, the wood required for the production of these elements has lengths that even smaller sawmills can produce. The small thickness of the boards also means that large wood scraps can be avoided.

The catalogue works with a simple system that can be expanded. The combination of pliers and threaded screws makes it possible to use different qualities of wood, as it is an assembly-to-disassembly system. The catalogue is closely related to the planned public wood workshop of the city of Zurich. The production of public furniture can be seen as basic production in the workshop: people learn how to use the machines under the guidance of an expert as an introduction to the workshop. This open-source catalogue provides the public with a system that can be expanded for other elements in public spaces. The aim is to encourage the public to further develop and rethink designs. By helping to shape public space, the public should also create a new awareness of local and resource-conserving construction. The catalogue is intended to encourage people to 'do it themselves' and is thus in the tradition of architects such as Walter Segall or Enzo Mari and 6a architects, who have created catalogues for private furniture construction.

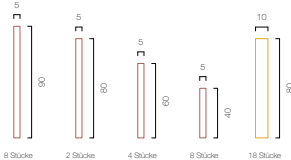
5.0 Spieltisch



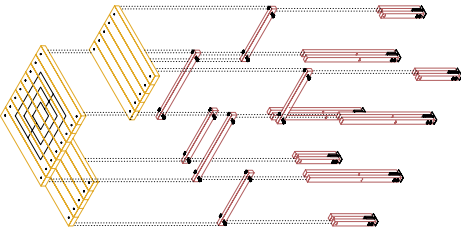
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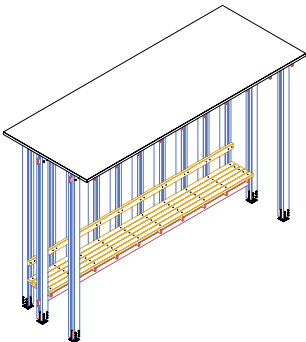


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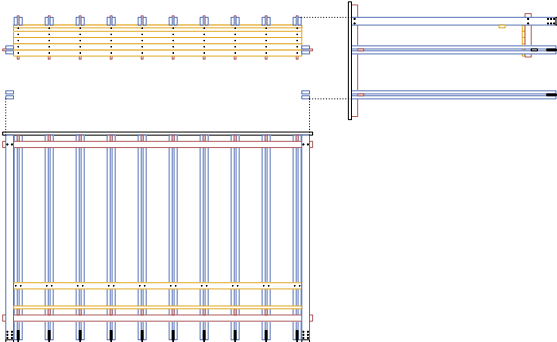


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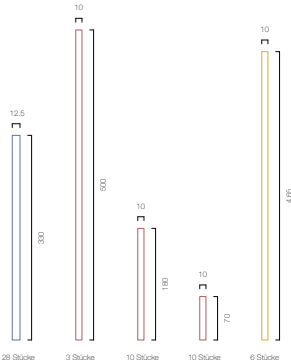
1.0 Bushaltestelle



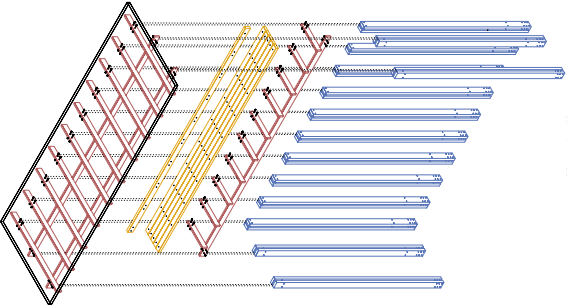
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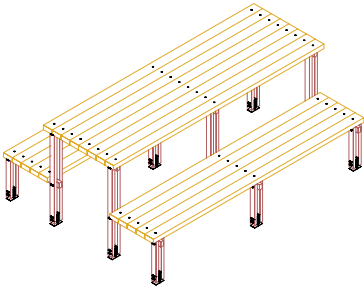


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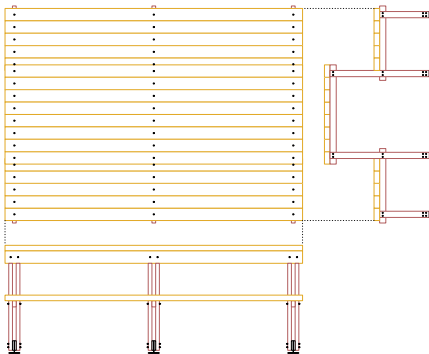


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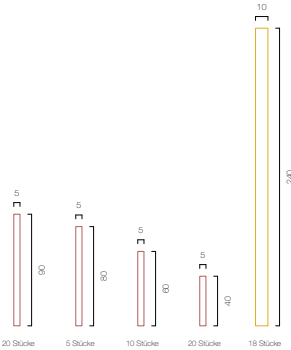
4.0 Picknicktisch



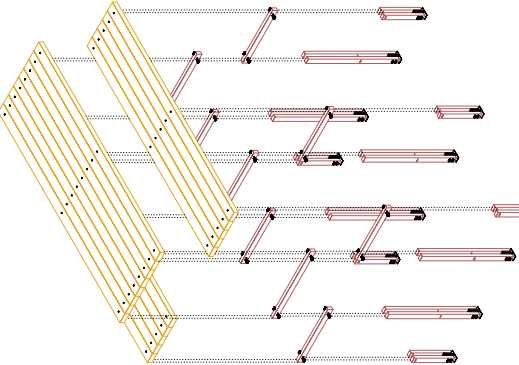
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