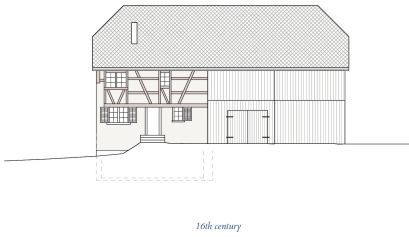


Beau Séjour, Beau Viellir

Manuel Büchel
Diploma FS25
Chair of Affective Architectures
ETH Zürich



16th century

Hochstrasse 58

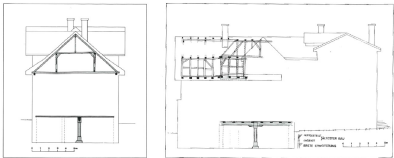
The house at Hochstrasse 58 can be found on the 1682 Zehntenplan of Fluntern. However, it was not until the Müllerplan of 1793 that it became possible to draw conclusions about the size and orientation of the house, which can be recognised as a farmhouse with a gabled roof and associated farm gardens.



According to the Grundprotokoll, the hospital rebuilt the house in 1696 and later operated as a Lehenhof. Findings imply that it was a two-room, multi-purpose farmhouse, probably with a large vineyard due to the sizeable, high cellar.

Archaeological investigations suggest that the roof was constructed in the 17th century, or possibly even the 16th. The stud found in the cellar also dates from this period. This type of cellar construction was used to support the former fire wall and the tiled stove of the old house.

Around 1715, the house was extended by around five metres to the east.



Pension Rinderknecht

The farm belonged to the hospital until 1786. It was then purchased by the Rinderknecht family, who had leased the farm for decades. In 1812, they also acquired the neighbouring property with the house at Hochstrasse 56.

Having originally been a wine tavern, the Rinderknecht family converted the buildings into a guesthouse after 1812, offering meals and overnight accommodation.

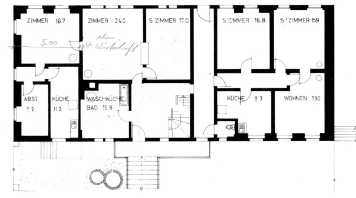
In the 1850s, the barn was demolished, and in 1858, a residential building with a pitched roof was constructed at right angles to the main structure. The rooms on the ground floor were accessed via a transverse corridor, while those on the upper floors were accessed via a central corridor. In 1863, a connecting corridor was added on the third floor between the two buildings (56 and 58).

The location of the pension on the edge of a terrace overlooking the town and lake was particularly beneficial. At that time, the large garden offered uninterrupted views of the Alps and an abundance of space.

Beau Séjour

The successors of family Rinderknecht converted it into the Hotel and Pension Beau Séjour. No major structural changes were made. The hotel was closed again soon afterwards, in 1884.

There have been several changes of ownership since then.



1715



1858

HCB

According to the land register, ETH acquired the building on 3 August 1955. Shortly afterwards, they acquired the house next door at Hochstrasse 56, HCA. This was the third property in the neighbourhood that they had bought. The first property was Hochstrasse 60, HCH: a 1896 villa that remained in the ETH portfolio until a few years ago. Over the next 10 years, they acquired further villas from neighbouring plots. Many of these were used primarily as offices or laboratories. This occurred at a time when the universities were expanding rapidly and urgently required additional space. Both Irchel and Hönggerberg campus did not yet exist at that time.

1970's



It appears that ETH reviewed its own portfolio in the 1970s. At that time, the two houses at Hochstrasse 56 and 58 were severely neglected and categorised as properties that could be demolished. The house with the description 'extremely modest flats' depressed the land value. The villas on Voltastrasse, also belonging to ETH, were in far better condition at that time. The Villa Hochstrasse 60 was not yet classified as requiring demolition in the same report. Nevertheless, scenarios involving the combination of the other plots were examined, as plots HCA and HCB could not be developed in a rational way. An increase in value would have been possible through overall development. Sketches found at the city archive show what could possibly have been built in the 1970s. This intervention would have drastically altered the appearance of the entire area between Hochstrasse and Voltastrasse. However, none of these studies were pursued further.



1989

1980's until today



In the 1980s, buildings HCA and HCB underwent extensive re-modelling. The central corridor layout was abandoned and the flats were given contemporary floor plans, while the façade and volume remained almost unchanged. The exact motivation behind this remains a mystery. By comparing the current house with archival images, it is possible to identify some of the changes. Only upon closer inspection does one realise how little of the original building fabric remains.

Both Hochstrasse 56 and 58 are currently occupied by guest professors from ETH Zurich. This means that there are no long-term tenants living in the house. The apartments are all furnished with corporate-looking chairs, sofas and beds. As most residents do not bring many personal belongings with them, the flats appear very lifeless. In the meantime, the building's condition has also deteriorated. Mouldy windows and a poorly insulated roof make the flats less appealing. There are currently also no outdoor spaces that encourage people to spend time there.



2025

Observations at Hochstrasse & Hinterbergstrasse



Together with Zürichbergerstrasse, Hinterbergstrasse used to be one of the two main access routes to the Zürichberg. Hinterberg was the third and final settlement in Fluntern. For a long time, Hochstrasse was the only route connecting Oberstrasse and Fluntern. Some of the buildings along these streets still stand to this day, reminding us of Fluntern's agricultural past. By observing and drawing these buildings, I have translated a collection of architectural expressions and moments into qualities and inspirations for my project.

A Neighbourhood Fountain



Until 1934, the so-called 'Schmittenbrunnen' fountain stood in front of the *Flarzreihe* at Hinterbergstrasse 48/50/52/54. For a long time only *Brunnengossen* were permitted to use it. The water was divided up according to the plot of the land and was also dependent on the amount of precipitation. This was because maintaining the water pipes was costly and required regular attention. These days, people no longer need to go to the well to collect water. Nowadays, fountains provide a place where spontaneous encounters can take place.

Frontgarden

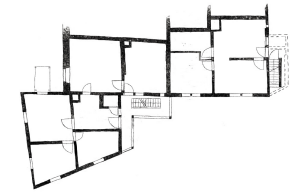


A small garden at the front of the house was a typical feature of *Flarzreihen* and farmhouses in Zurich. It was primarily used for growing food and played an important role in the self-sufficiency of many families. The photo shows a more elaborate garden at Hochstrasse 44. The building was demolished in 1948. Over time, these areas at the front of houses were repurposed for planting flowers.

Today, the front garden at Hochstrasse 58, although rather small, is neither used nor accessible. It is overgrown and serves no purpose other than providing a barrier and safety distance from the road.

Reactivating a front garden can provide a potential threshold space that opens up to the rest of the neighbourhood, which often turns away from the street. Maintaining the garden can strengthen the bond between residents, as it should be a shared task and effort, with the results of regular maintenance becoming recognisable over the years.

New Access System



The history of the house at Hinterbergstrasse 55/57/59/61 dates back to the 16th century. Over time, the former farmhouse has been divided and extended several times to meet the demand for more living space. It was a densely populated building in the past. Like Hochstrasse 58, this house sometimes rented out rooms as a guesthouse. The most striking feature is the wooden access addition, which was only added in 1907. This is a rather atypical feature for a Zurich farmhouse. These elements were reused from another house.



The Laubengang provides access to addresses 57 and 59. The units have recently been internally combined to create one large apartment.

The Layers of History Blur



The Hochstrasse 8/10/12 building complex comprises three addresses under one strongly interlocking roof. It was described as a three-part complex in the 17th century, before the extensions that gave the building its current shape were added. Despite having different owners, the building appears coherent thanks to its uniform colour and material palette. The various extensions are clearly visible in some places, while in others it is difficult to make sense of the building from the outside. A source mentions that the building was very densely populated in the past. In house No. 8, a married couple lived with six children in an area of 80 m². Four owners and four related couples with a total of six children lived in house Nr. 10, which had an area of approx. 100 m². This equates to less than 8 m² per person.

Different Owners Different Faces



The former building at Hochstrasse 73/75 has a distinct appearance, which clearly indicates the different ownership. No. 75 was formerly occupied by a family who ran a landscaping business. The heavily overgrown exterior is testament to this. The addition of a gable-roofed bay at a later date gives the building an even greater variety of faces, providing a different architectural expression on each side.



The original building was demolished in 1950, and the replacement building was demolished in 2023.

Extension Visible Through the Material



The house at Hochstrasse 56 shares a history with the HCB. During the major extensions of the 1850s, a wooden extension was built onto an existing stable on the first floor of the western part of the house. This was clearly visible in the façade. The added section, clad in shingles, contrasted with the otherwise plastered house. This was changed during extensive remodelling work in the 1980s.





What an Old Woman Will Wear

"She looked forward to being an old woman and wearing strange clothes. She would wear a shapeless dark brown or black dress of thin material, perhaps with little flowers on it, certainly frayed at the neck and hem and under the arms, and hanging lopsided from her bony shoulders down past her bony hips and knees."

'What an Old Woman Will Wear' is a short story by Lydia Davis. It depicts a conversation between a woman and her colleague in which she expresses her anticipation of getting older. She is past what others would consider her 'prime'. She is looking forward to the process of getting older and how things will slow down. She also expects that by developing routines and habits, she will find a certain calmness. Initially, I found the story to be very hopeful about ageing. The woman acknowledges the limitations and difficulties that come with ageing, but also recognises its positive aspects and embraces the process.

"she was also looking forward to a time about twenty years after that when she could wear any hat she wanted to and not care if she looked foolish, and wouldn't even have a husband to tell her she looked foolish."

There is a beauty in the freedoms that come with ageing. Flaws are better accepted, which is what makes us so unique as human beings. Wrinkles, grey hair or scars are witnesses to life and lend a certain individuality. The beauty of ageing is celebrated architecturally with a wooden shingle façade, which only achieves its final colour after several years. The time it takes depends on how exposed the area is to the elements.

Built Density Human Density

In the current BZO, a factor is measured for the built utilisation. However, this value has no link to how densely a neighbourhood is inhabited by people. Increasing the utilisation rate does not guarantee that more people will live there, especially when you consider that personal land consumption is still increasing.

The Hochstrasse 58 is located in a W4 zone. This means that 4 full storeys and 1 eligible attic story may be built. The building height is limited to 12.5 metres and a basic boundary distance of 5 metres must be maintained for new buildings. The utilisation of the plot may not exceed 120%. Currently, the plot is already utilised at 150%. However, in terms of building height, the house is still significantly below the limit.

Hochstrasse 58 / FL221	Former ETH Plot	Island Vols-Hochstrasse
Surface area: 402m²	591m²	14430m²
Utilisation: 15%	0.6%	0.3%
Reserve: +113m²	3903m²	8720m²

In my scenario, I am assuming that the HCB can compensate for the utilisation of the neighbouring plot at Hochstrasse 60 by transferring its use. Currently, the utilisation is only at 65%, which equates to a reserve of 750 m², enough to cover my extension. Until recently, the plot also belonged to ETH and was only sold recently. However, as the house and garden are protected monuments, it is unlikely that an extension will be permitted on this plot.

Where a Woman Can Grow Old

The ability to age in your own home allows you to remain in your neighbourhood and community, surrounded by familiar places. This contributes to successful ageing in place. However, it does not prevent problems such as maintaining social relationships, which become increasingly difficult with age. This is a crucial factor for their mental health. It is important for them to feel that they belong to a community. Getting in touch with new people can be hard, as many older people see themselves as a burden on others and often do not attend daytime activities where they can meet others. Many enjoy unplanned encounters on the street or even at home.

The older they get, the more time is spent at home when others are at work. They see themselves as the guardians of the neighbourhood. This is one of the ways in which they feel connected to it.



Die Drei Heven Elderly Housing
Herman Hertzberger, 1970

As architectural interventions, thresholds for spontaneous encounters are created. Some are located on the street and open up to the neighbourhood, which is otherwise rather private. Others are located inside, where a certain closeness to the neighbours is enforced and the presence of others becomes perceptible. The bedroom ultimately becomes the sacred retreat where you can hide from the world.

Kommunales Inventar Attitude to Building on

The two houses at Hochstrasse 56 and 58 have been listed in the municipal inventory for around 15 years. This means that, in the future, if someone wants to carry out work on the house, the monument preservation authorities must check whether it should become protected. This usually relies heavily on the sheet formulated for the inventory entry. The inventory entry for Hochstrasse 58 has been combined together with that for Hochstrasse 56. The joint history of the Pension Rinderknecht is beautifully highlighted in the historical documentation. The inventory sheet appraisal focuses strongly on the urban position of the houses at the junction of Hinterbergstrasse and Hochstrasse, as well as their importance for the local townscape. The position of the houses align with the original position of Hochstrasse. Together with the HCA, the HCB runs parallel to Hochstrasse. They therefore immediately attract attention. Most of the neighbouring houses are narrow and set back slightly. The unusual and varied appearance also draws attention, making the long building history recognisable.

At the time the pension was established, the house was a rural counterpart to the busy, growing city. After it was abandoned, like many other buildings it became a densely occupied residence for people of lower means, attracted by the growing city. Hochstrasse 58 has high value in a neighbourhood characterised by turn-of-the-century villas. The house's agricultural roots are still visible today, but its appearance is more strongly characterised by the conversions. The extensive alterations made in the 1980s mean that hardly any traces of the original building fabric can be seen inside.

Freezing the house in its current state would be wrong. The numerous alterations to the house were made to create more space at a time of great demand. In the spirit of the house, it is important to continue building and, at a time of housing shortage, to create affordable housing. Qualities such as a strong urban presence can remain after an extension. It will be more difficult to consider numbers 58 and 56 as a historical ensemble in the future, as it is unlikely that they will be sold to the same new owner.



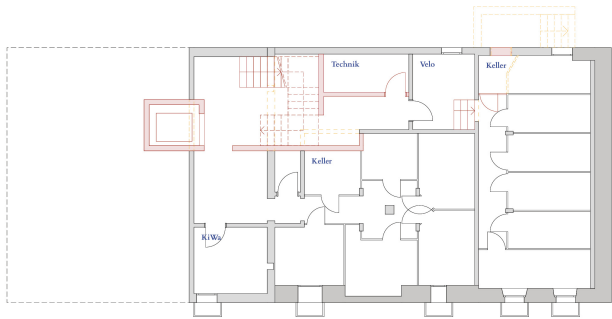


Situationsplan 1:500



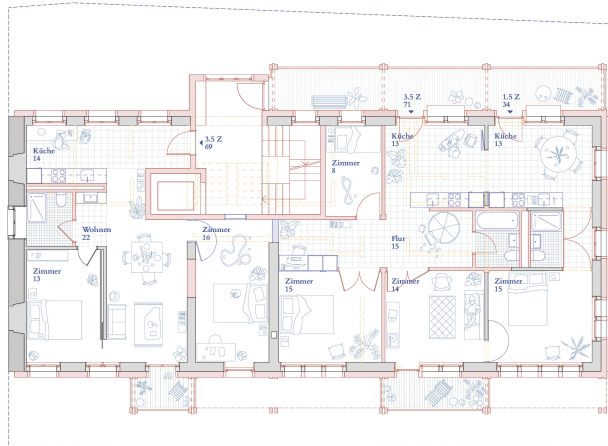
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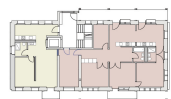




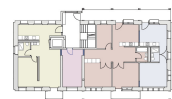
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3.5 Z 69 m² 5.5 Z 103 m²



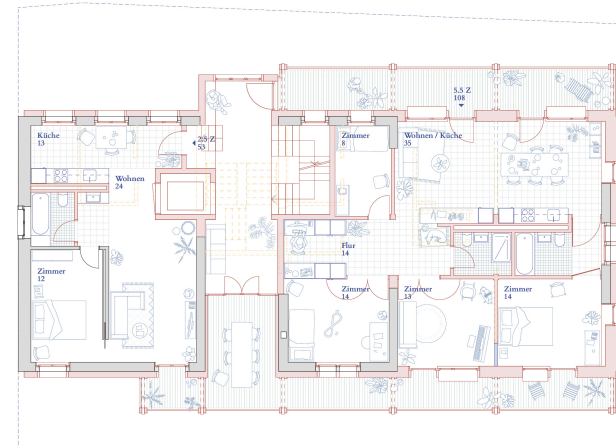
2.5 Z 53 m² 6.5 Z 119 m²



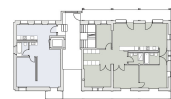
2.5 Z 31 m² 3.5 Z 69 m²
JZ 16 m² 1.5 Z 34 m²



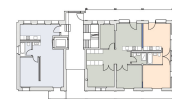
8.5 Z 177 m²



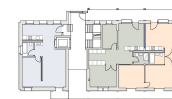
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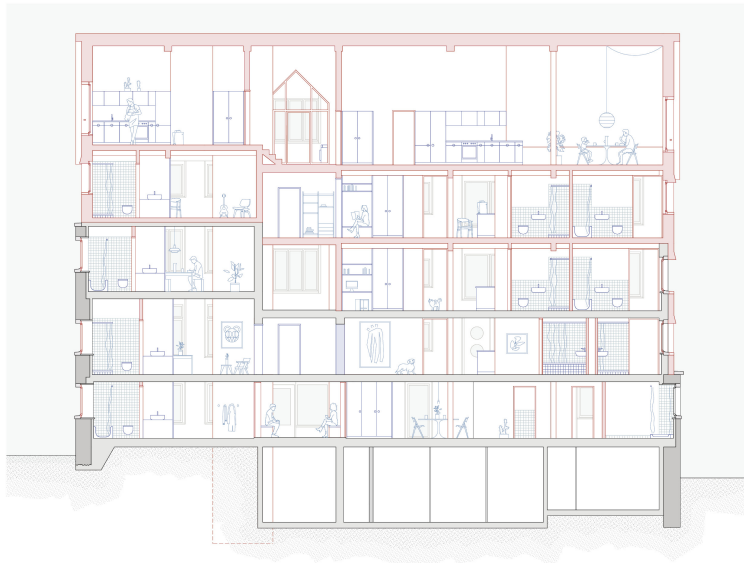
2.5 Z 53 m² 5.5 Z 108 m²



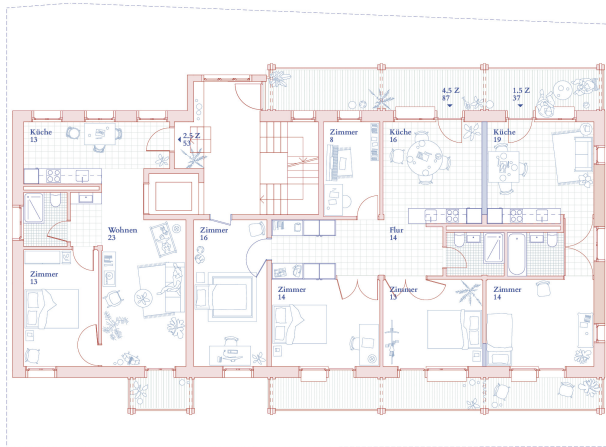
2.5 Z 53 m² 3.5 Z 71 m²
1.5 Z 37 m²



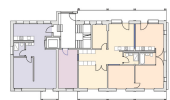
2.5 Z 56 m² 2.5 Z 58 m²
2.5 Z 50 m²



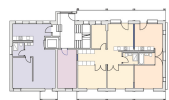
Section



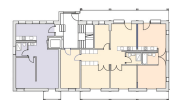
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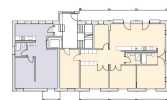
2.5 Z 53 m² 2.5 Z 58 m²
JZ 16 m² 2.5 Z 50 m²



2.5 Z 53 m² 3.5 Z 71 m²
JZ 16 m² 1.5 Z 37 m²

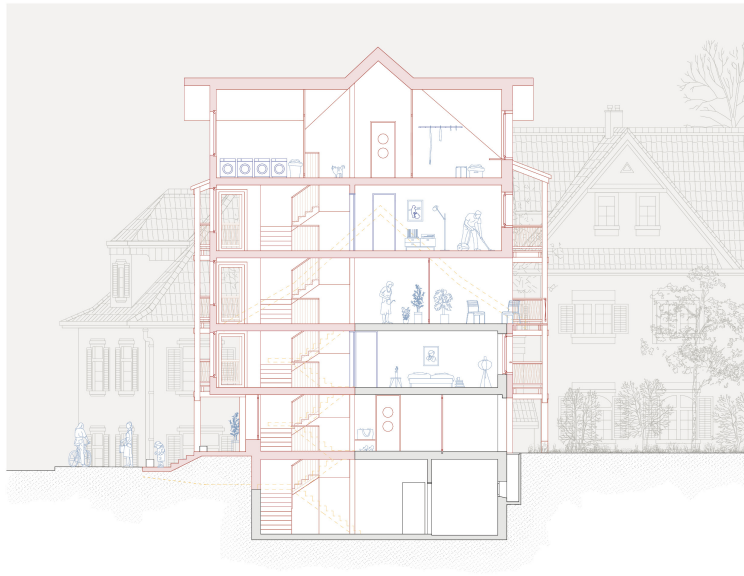


2.5 Z 53 m² 4.5 Z 87 m²
1.5 Z 37 m²

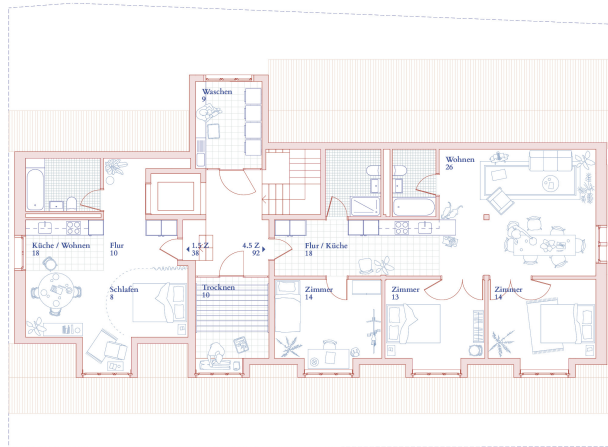


2.5 Z 53 m² 6.0 Z 125 m²

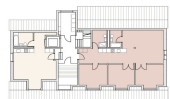




Section Staircase



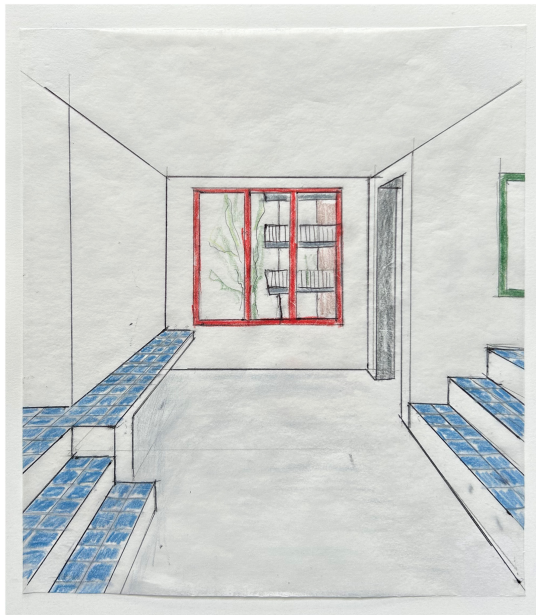
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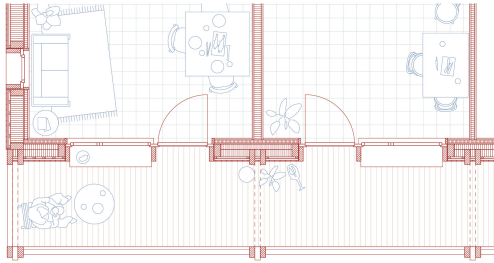


2.5 Z. 38 m² 4.5 Z. 92 m²

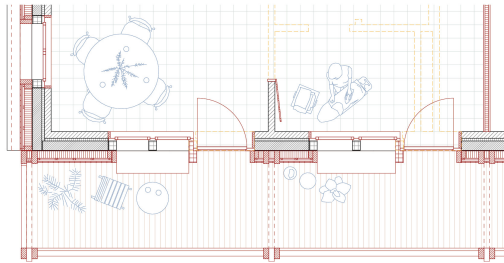




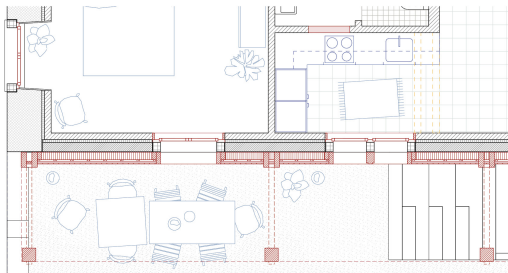




OG03



OG01



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