

An Architecture of Connectivity

Cultural Unveiling of Kraainnest Bijlmermeer

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Foreword

In the realm of urban exploration, I found myself immersed in a journey that led me to Bijlmermeer's Kraainnest neighborhood. Driven by my curiosity about modern and contemporary large scale structure that I had to deal with on daily basis at work, I arrived as an observer of a brutal architecture but soon became a participant in the dynamics of its community.

The shift to living in Bijlmermeer brought realizations about the significance of the culture of a neighborhood on program thus scale. Becoming a resident allowed me to witness firsthand how culture can find its way out of apartments cells and into the fringes of the buildings, where public space is facilitated, even to a lesser extent.

My curiosity had led me to my journey in Kraainnest during my graduation year, where the culture is diverse, yet, the opportunities seem to be lost. After a year of living around the same neighborhood, I understood clearly the users struggles and at the same time their sense of belonging to the neighborhood.

I have become the user of my project, I love where I live but not because of its overwhelming grey and green landscape, I do because of the culture which reminds me of home.

The Essay

Introduction

Taking cues from the CIAM movement, Bijlmermeer was born as a city plan to tackle the need for post-war housing. Its concrete honeycomb apartments and planned green spaces painted a picture of a unique suburban haven just outside Amsterdam. Even though it didn't immediately click with the Dutch middle-class, who preferred cozier neighborhoods with nearby facilities, Bijlmermeer found its purpose as a home for immigrants and refugees, mostly from Suriname. Despite starting off with challenges, this determined community gradually transformed the stark concrete landscape into lively pockets of shared culture. However, when we look at the big buildings, these lively colors still seem a bit separate from the surroundings they're in.

Hypothesis

The Start Statement: *Looking at Bijlmermeer Kraainnest and considering its active community, missed opportunities can be seen in between its large scale set of towers as well as the leftover spaces underneath the metro rails, making a walk in this neighborhood tedious and unexplored despite its active and multicultural community.*

Ambition: *I believe that in order to make this neighborhood more liveable and a good representative of their diverse cultures, you need to consider the human scale which not only trigger the large scale of the buildings but also draws attention to the users needs, therefore, the program. This could be done by analysing the movements of people and their interactions within the contexts as well as simply including them in the design process.*

The End Product: *The end product embraces the existing scale as much as the culture, by creating an pedestrian paradise on the urban level and an interior boulevard on the architectural level, breaking the barriers in between them. It would create a grid of movements all across Karspeldreef with different street divisions loops decorated with programs in the plinth and would make the most advantage of the neglected spaces underneath the metro rails by creating an effortless and eventful journey below and above them.*

Field Research

The Community: *The community in Kraainnest, also known as K-middle, even if coming from different backgrounds, prioritizes its values based on commonality and shared values. A visible instance of this can be seen on two opposite sides of the metro rails where The Light House chapel and Taibah mosque are, two separated community buildings serving their own culture, at the same time, allegedly and according to the residents, they limit some of their daily rituals such as Islamic call to prayer and bell ringing of the chapel due to the respect towards one another.*

Another example is the community tendency towards co-creation that nowadays is in collaboration with the municipality as well, under the name of Hart for K-buurt for further developments in the neighborhood and especially on the target plots of this project.

Users Discussions: *To know better my program, I sat down with the users and discussed topics such as K-middle co-creation plan with the help of municipality, the left over spaces and the lack of life and vibrance at the heart of the neighborhood. The community emphasis was on two things, one, the young community to stay in the neighborhood and the other was to create a beating heart for K-buurt.*

Surveys: *In order to keep the young community in the neighborhood, providing residential buildings is not the only way. People at young age need to be provided with social interaction and a sustainable economy which in the existing are lacking favorable prospects.*

To do so, Kraainnest needs to become a welcoming place for possible visitors who live outside the neighborhood too. This not only helps with the social economy of the neighborhood but also provides an interactive place for the young people to share knowledge and showcase their talents.

Pursuing this further, I conducted a survey that indicates how the residents and the possible visitors of this potentially cultural hub share a common ground when it comes to their interest in use of the public space as both groups mainly mentioned multifunctional, collaborative and vibrant spaces such as shops, gyms, cafes and art related spaces.

Observations: To create a functioning heart in the neighborhood, I was determined to study the movements of the people, around and about which programs people go the most and what are the meeting points are. This was quite easy to tell after a couple of studies since there was only few public buildings on the site. De Kameleon with a shopping mall on the plinth and the residential on top was one main meeting point apart from the transportation platforms where the movements seemed to be more rushed.

Design Process:

Urban Level

Grid of Movements: A comprehensive urban planning endeavor was undertaken with the intention of optimizing the spatial layout within the context of the locality. The goal was not only to align the project with the main street crossing beneath the elevated metro, known as Karspeldreef, by creating three distinct functional streets, but also to establish interconnected pathways that run parallel to the metro rail. This approach effectively eliminated any potential dead ends and improved overall movement flow.

Grid of Programs: The focal point of these interlinked pathways was designed to incorporate various programs that would significantly contribute to the neighborhood's socio-cultural and economic growth. Specifically, I carefully crafted the residential areas along the strip to blend harmoniously with the quieter, more residential aspect of the neighborhood. Simultaneously, I designated the platforms within this layout for commercial purposes, capturing the dynamic commerce of Amsterdam's city center. This integration of commercial spaces was further extended to include a shopping street with a pedestrian-centric focus, mirroring the essence of Amsterdam's urban core.

the highly visible border adjacent to Karspeldreef which is a prominent car route was

dedicated to a range of central facilities, an art center, a sports center, a talent hub, and a commercial center just with enough distance from De Kameleon shopping mall to provide the needs of its immediate users. This approach yielded an urban fabric that not only fosters seamless mobility but also actively nurtures the neighborhood's socio-economic vibrancy, culminating in a dynamic living environment.

Bridging cultures in the neglected urban void: As mentioned earlier, There's a urban void encompassing both the mosque and the chapel, while just across the road stands the old Bonte Kraai building. In my proposed urban plan, I suggest to combine these three entities into a unified community center. The vision is to eliminate cultural barriers and, similar to the rest of Bijlmer community, prioritize shared values that transcend diverse backgrounds. By establishing a community center at this spot, we not only preserve the functional continuity of the street across the main road but also create an inviting destination for newcomers or possible visitors arriving from the transportation hub.

The open Plinth: In a final consideration, observing the urban plan at the street level, I propose the incorporation of open plinths at various junctures. This strategy serves a dual purpose: sustaining the coherence and accessibility of Karspeldreef and the newly integrated shopping street, while also improving the flow of movement and keeping clear views between these areas to create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere.

Architectural Level:

Programmatic Consideration: Dealing with the imposing metro rails and the surrounding structures posed a significant design challenge. Recognizing this, I understood that embracing the potential in these challenges was key. Specifically, I focused on the underutilized neglected spaces below the metro rail. Departing from conventional plinth placement, I elevated the plinth several levels beneath the metro rail. This transformation turned the urban void into an active center. This area now hosts various programs, including open markets for locals and visitors to display their products, co-working spaces, and workshops for collaboration, art, and crafts. Additionally, relocating the mosque and chapel left room for local shops representing the community's culture on either side of the metro rail.

In harmony with the neighborhood's scope, an extended platform stemming from the existing metro station spreads through the project, functioning as exhibition spaces. These interconnected spaces extend to collaborative functions both alongside and beneath the metro station, and also rise above the shopping street parallel to the metro rails. This elevated network extends to communal structures representing both Western and Eastern cultures. The ultimate goal is to develop a united community space that thrives on cultural exchange and shared experiences.

Strategies for Connectivity:

At its core, a community center seeks to establish connections that resonate with cultural roots. To break free from traditional vertical pathways, the design intentionally embraces unfolding and stretching levels interconnected by ramps. These ramps facilitate movement while providing an engaging journey. With occasional split levels, these ramps seamlessly integrate elevated open markets. These markets serve as exhibition spaces, offering glimpses into the community's creativity from the other side of the building. The ramps themselves, around 5 meters high, invite exploration and act as distinctive markers of transition.

These gradual ramps stem from horizontal slabs, creating a continuous narrative as they fold and find support in vertical columns. This integration results in an open-plan layout that dynamically shifts in character along the ramps and the areas beneath them.

Cultural Identity : While concrete serves as the foundation in its primal sense, its role extends beyond structure. It embodies the urban context, the community's essence, ambitions, and pursuits. This thematic embodiment is visible in the façade's composition. The combination of concrete cladding and transparent glass embodies both strength and transparency. Horizontal mullions emphasize visual connections between floors, and discreet vertical supports fortify expansive glass panels. Concrete façade panels appear primarily during human movement along ramps. Aligned with the architectural theme resonating across both cultures, divine illumination comes into play. The façade's interplay of openness and enclosure orchestrates light, guiding the gaze towards central atriums adorned with mezzanines.

Conclusion:

The architectural and urban aspects through my research and design journey has created a harmony of movements from the start to the end of Karspeldreef and brought about endless opportunities in democratic manner. Both proposed urban plan and the architectural design for the heart of K-middle give precedence to openness and transparency that entice users to interact, co-operate and connect in an easier yet structured manner. The urban grid does not end on the street level, but continues to lead the people to an elevated landscape and an interior boulevard.

The open structure serving as a multifunctional community center has effectively incorporated the neighboring large-scale CIAM-inspired structures. It follows a brutalistic approach and in appearance, it blends in within its context. Nevertheless there is a twist in its story as it bridges the gap between the scale and the people by means of humbling down in its brutalistic nature for the purpose of portraying Bijlmermeer's true colors, attaining from the users' culture. This has been achieved by giving precedence to user inclusivity, needs, and emotions.

Through the use of inviting and more readable components comparing to its context, the project has introduced a new architectural typology that could be applied throughout Bijlmermeer, particularly in overlooked spaces derived from the original plan. Overall and on a higher level, I imagine that this way K-middle could become a cultural hub for the historical plot of Bijlmermeer next to other Bijlmer center or even Amsterdam center that could also be a part of a plan for enhancing the social economy and the welfare of the users.

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History and Existing Situation •

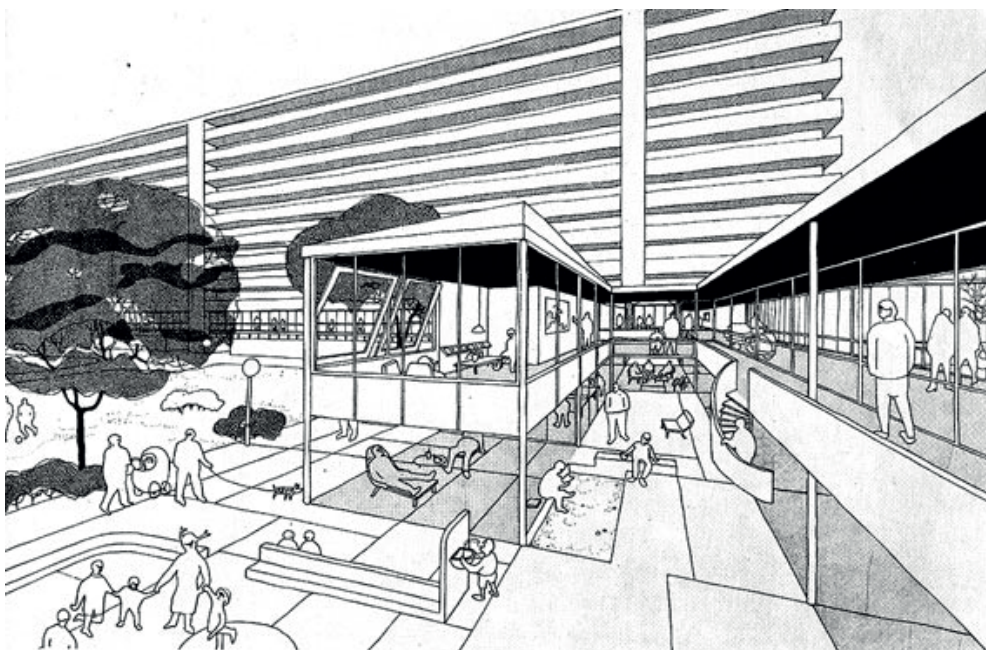


The start of Bijlmermeer•

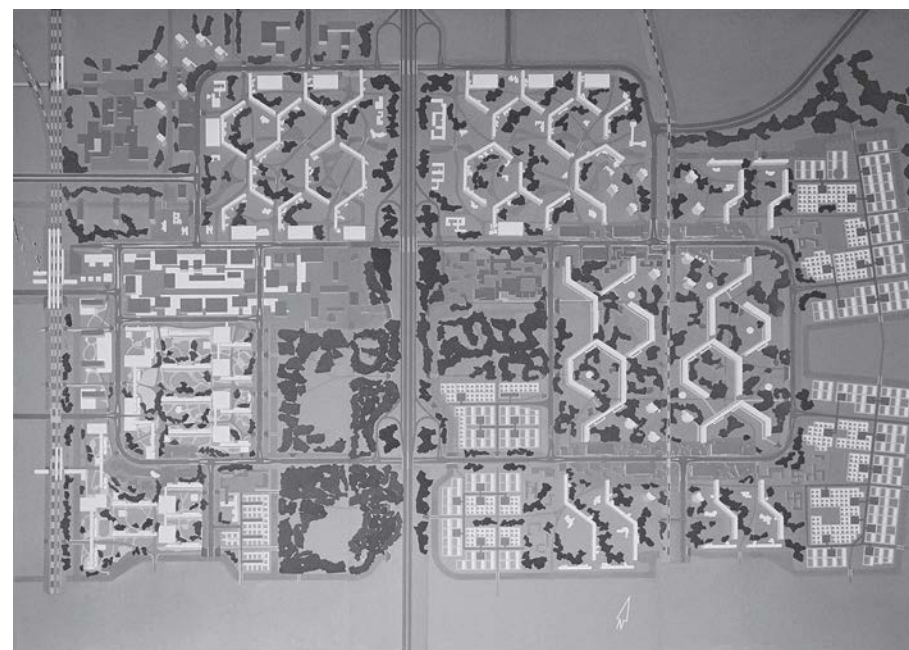
An Expected Utopia in The South-East

After world war II, there was a huge housing shortage in Amsterdam. The Bijlmer was set to be developed as a functional and radiant city that would be an utopian neighborhood by initiating equality in how the residents percieve the neighborhood. Sigfried Nassuth the architect of the project was inspired by CIAM at that time. According to the municipality of south east and in contrary to the popular beliefs that portray Bijlmer as an example for absolute segregation of duties based on CIAM radical ideologies, Nassuth and his fellow designers wanted every (residential) building to have access to spaces with a collective purpose, such as childcare, sleeping places for guest houses, homework rooms and indoor recreation. These spaces were placed in, near or under the buildings where they would exposed to the optimal experience of the ubiquitous greenery. On the gallery of the first floor, the shops would be placed that were open to the public. Having said that, the top-down parties thought of

many homes and as traffic-safe as possible for the residential environment, the construction companies built higher and very systematic. As a result, the original design of Bijlmer came out as large scale high-rise with spacious apartments inside and the mobile traffic was elevated and seperated from the pedestrian and bike routes on the ground level. Building blocks were dissected from one another by means of the nature in between to avoid sound nuisance and to immune the external risks caused by the fast traffic. Apart from that the green was a good potential to become a recreational and leisure space. Soon after the completion in 1968, people did not wish to move in as expected. Dutch middle class families who were initially the target group of these housings preferred a smaller scale housing with a garden in the front and in the back suitable for a family. Bijlmer was considered too expensive with higher rents which then instead of attracting middleclass families the Bijlmer carried certain appeal for single person households.



Binnenstraat met paviljoens, 1967



When the plan was completed, the first renovation and demolition plans were ready.



CIAM Inspirations:

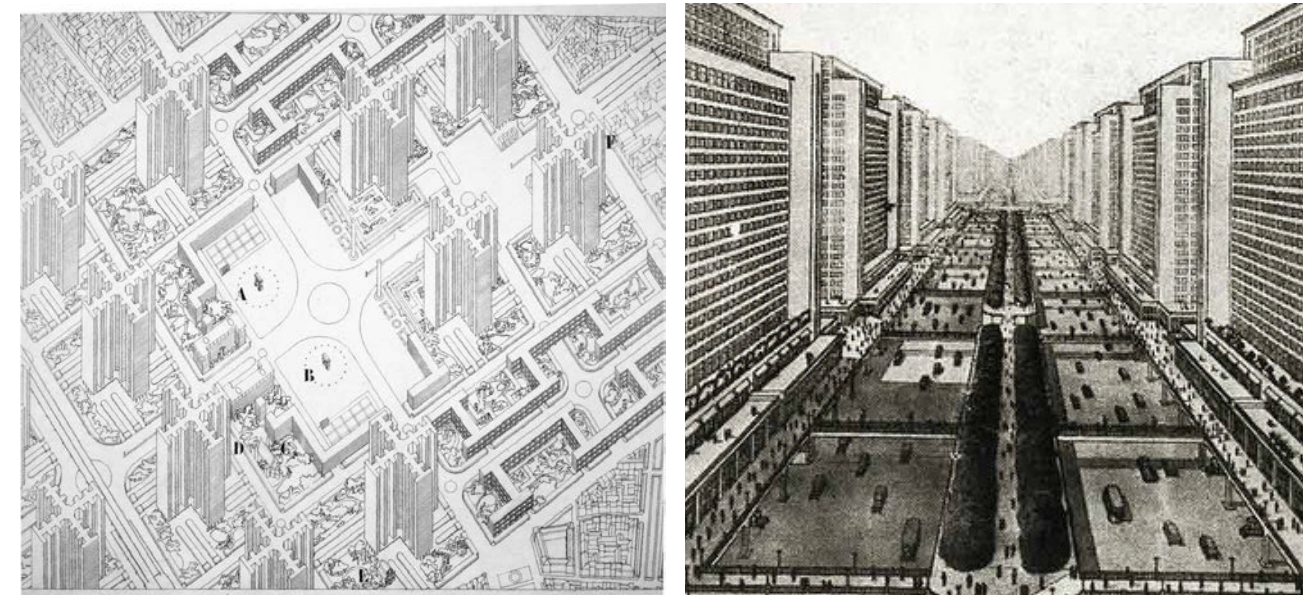
Established in 1928, CIAM was an architectural movement consists of a young group of architects and architectural theorists that organized events and congresses around the world with the objective of spreading modernist principles in the domain of architecture. Some of the well-known proponents of this architectural organization were Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius next to some dutch architects such as Gerrit Rietveld, Henry Berlage, Huib Hoste and Mart Stam. In that way there is no coincidents that CIAM influenced the designers of Bijlmermeer, mainly because its ideas became accepted after world war II and made Bijlmermeer as a project that these principles were established in their most complete form. Two specific congresses of CIAM had an influential role in the design of Bijlmermeer, The one in Brussels which was the second congress and was mainly about rational land development and the forth congress in Athens dealt with the concept of functional city.

Brussels: Future would be high rise set in greenary

Athens: 1. Division of functions (living, working, transportation and recreation) in weel-defined areas as opposed to chaotic conditions of present cities .The cities should be organized according to the four functions and cityplans should conform with this biological and psychological needs 2. uniform and standardized architecture.

Bijlmermeer mainly brought back the principles mentioned during these two congresses. There are also similarities between the orignal design of Bijlmermeer and Ville Radieuse by Le Corbusier, for instance, in Bijlmermeer plan there was clear divisions between functions as stated by Le Corbusier since the residential was designed seperated from the office zones. Also there was a clear di-

vision between slow and fast traffic with pedestrian and cycle lanes on the ground level and the motorized traffic elevated. Next to that, the choice of high-rise building and big open spaces and green in between, was another influence taken into Bijlmermeer design. Pursuing this further, the City planners proposed symmetry, regularity and uniformity and largness of scale which makes Bijlmermeer as CIAM's blueprint.



Ville Radieuse, Le Corbusier, 1930



Bijlmermeer, 1969

Transformation of Bijlmermeer: From Urban Planning Challenges to Societal Resilience

As a result of dutch middle-class families preference for a smaller scale and less uniform housing, Soon after the apartments completion in early 1970s, building blocks remained almost empty, rent prices dropped and Bijlmer started to attract the unprivillaged, particularly a large number of immigrants from Surinam which became independent in 1975. The Dutch government placed these immigrants in the now-affordable social housing in the Bijlmermeer. By the end of the 1980s the Bijlmer had the distinct profile of a poor black neighbourhood. Around 50 percent of Bijlmer residents were unemployed, relying on social benefits and the informal economy to make a living. Consequently, Bijlmer became known as neighborhood with a high level of criminality, drug abuse and unemployment. However, it was after 1992 that the government had full interest in Bijlmermeer issues. In October of that year a huge cargo jet crashed into two of the Bijlmer's building blocks, killing 43 people who were mostly the crew and the residents and were registered. The disaster shocked everyone because it was almost impossible to ascertain who was exactly living in those building blocks due to a lot of illegal inhabitation and they never found out the exact number either. Only after the media coverage, the attention was drawn to the problems in Bijlmer.



K-buurt Development History•

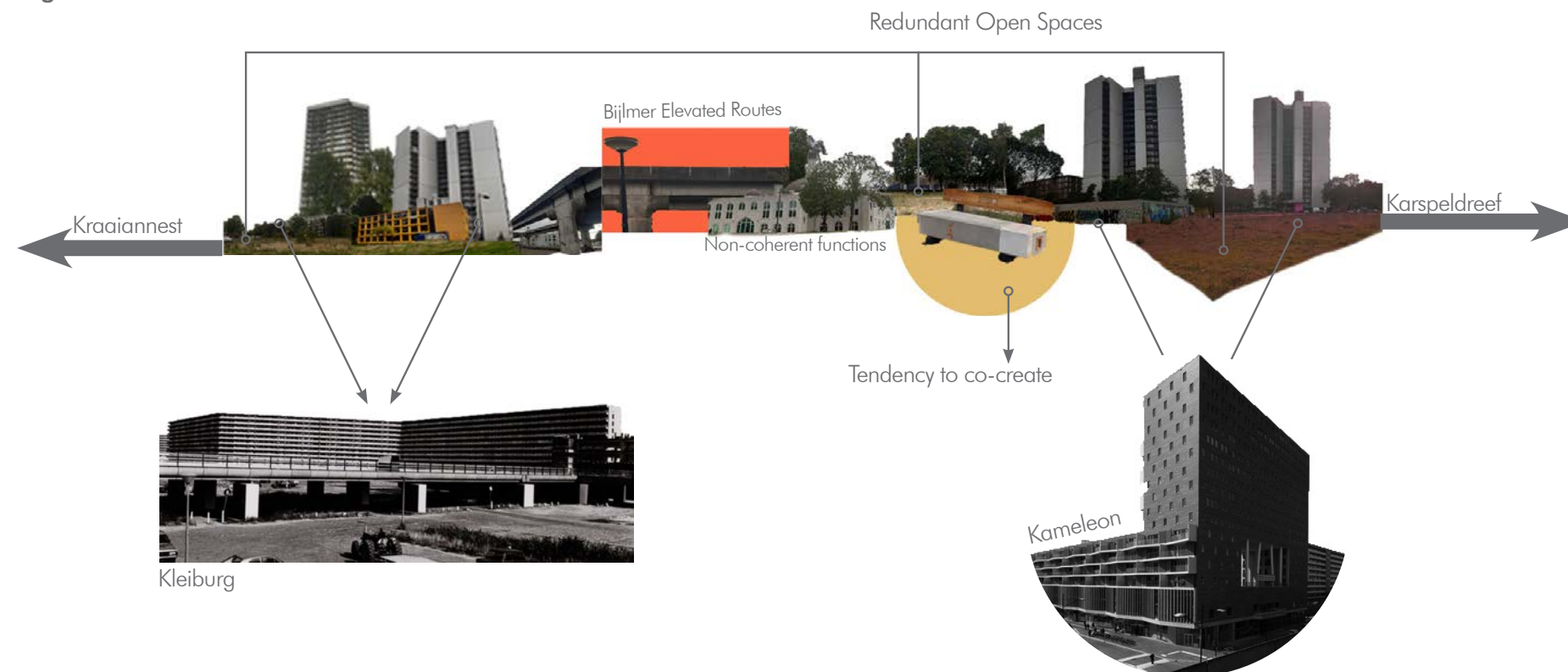
The Evolution of K-buurt in Amsterdam Zuidoost

- The K-buurt is a development area on the outskirts of the city, in Amsterdam Zuidoost, famous for its K-flats, Kameleon, Elevated metro station, and Bijlmermeer's Kleiburg DIY apartment.
- K-flats were constructed around 70's as a response to housing crisis and are famous for their high-rise and large-scale structures.
- Over the past few years, this part of K-buurt that is also known as "K-middle" has been gone through changes. Already in 2001, the neighborhood became a vibrant heart and a neighborhood economy. With the renewal of the Bijlmer started lowering the driveway and the realization of, among other

things, the shopping centre The Chameleon. However, most of the plan has not yet been implemented

- In 2016, the plan development started again. After participation strike in 2018, the municipality worked with the neighborhood on an urban development plan under the name of "K-middle Co-creation" in a broader context of building a liveable neighborhood together.
- The strike started after the institution of an independent organization "HartvoordeKbuurt" in 2011 including a group of residents who want to see positive changes around where they live. The organization has an office in one of the towers (Klieverink) and holds meetings in a food bank across the street and next to

Neighborhood Attributes:



the station and the medical center called “de Bonte Kraai”.

- In September 2016, residents took to the streets to protest against a draft zoning plan for the ‘K-middle’ area and refused to vote for two proposed plans which in the eye of inhabitants was planned by the municipality to continue building up to the metro stop.

- The residents wanted a good square that offers the rich mix of people in the neighborhood and a beating heart.

- They asked for the participation of all kinds of people in the neighborhood and not only those who can afford it.

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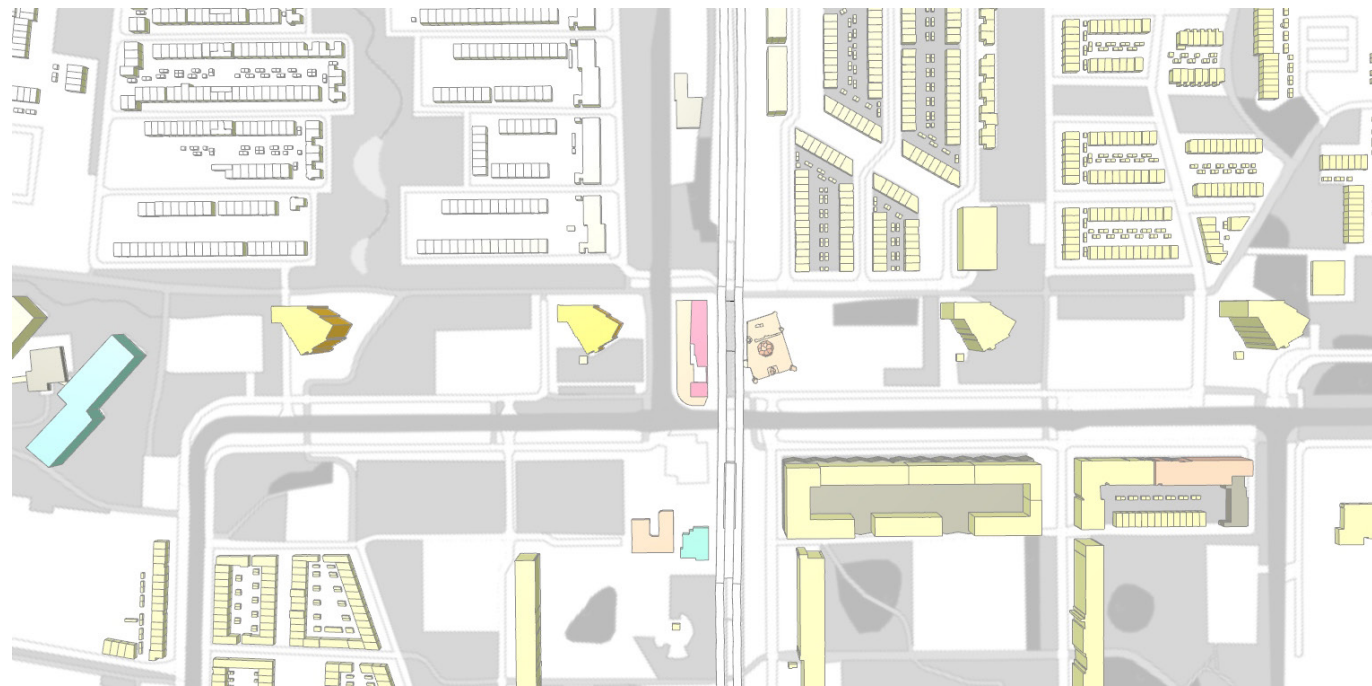


organization “HartvoordeKbuurt” in 2011 including a group of residents who want to see positive changes around where they live. The organization has an office in one of the towers (Klieverink) and holds meetings in a food bank across the street and next to the station and the medical center called “de Bonte Kraai”.

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Program (urban) • Existing



- Looking at the existing program distribution, The whole neighborhood is mostly covered with housing and less public space can be seen.

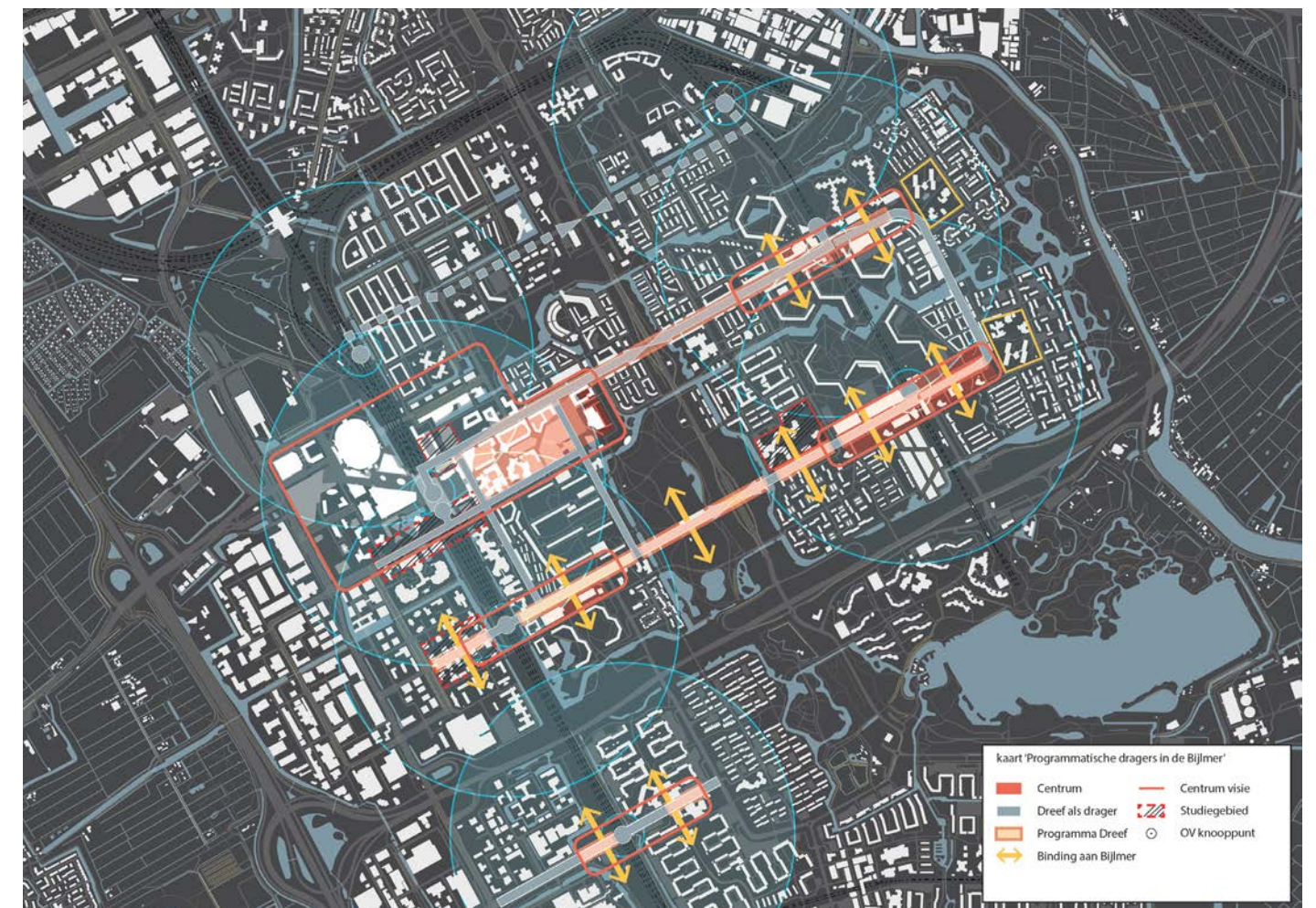
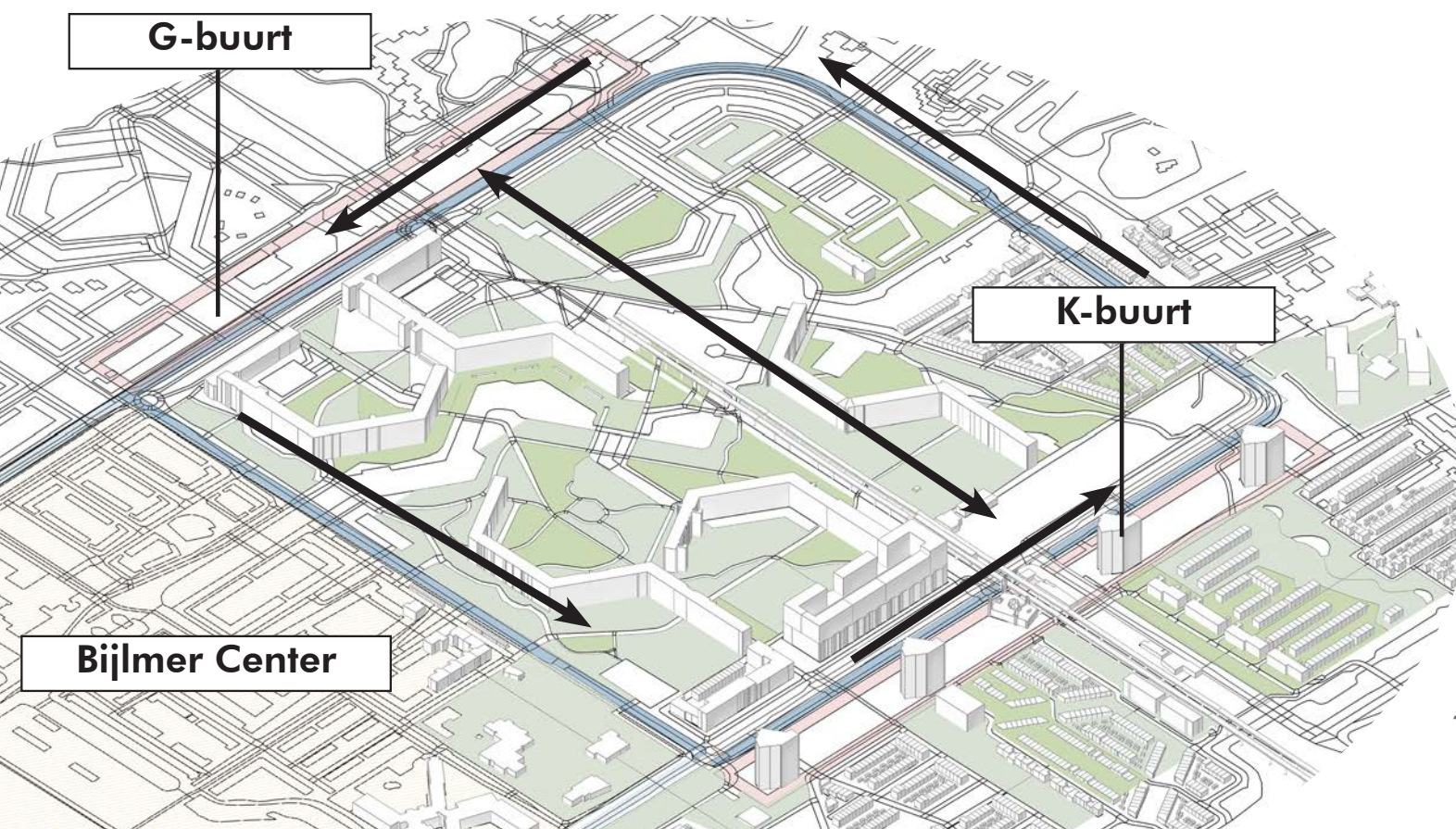
- The towers are interrupted with functions such as a mosque, The metro elevated route, a church and a day care.

- There is a pre-fab student housing in between tower “Kliverink” and “Kempering”, that cannot be seen in the new municipality plans and later in the user research, according to one of the K-buurt representative has nothing to do with the community.



Plot Potential Attribute

The Cultural Hub: Looking at the bigger picture of Bijlmer, the plot of Bijlmermeer sooner or later is gonna be preserved allegedly as a historical site which makes it an interesting location for a cultural hub in Amsterdam Southeast especially for the sake of its good connection to Bijlmer Center, Amsterdam Central and neighborhoods in between, nature and extraordinary brutal buildings.



A scheme of the ambition how to connect the neighborhood Bijlmerdreef and Kaspeldreef in relation to the center of Bijlmer.

The Empty Plots: There had been parking garages for about 4 floors sitting on the currently empty plots, Also in front of “Klieverink” and “Kouwerdnoordweg” towers there can be seen empty plots in the satellite view, However, during covid pandemic, some parts of them has been used for GGD.

The leftover spaces:

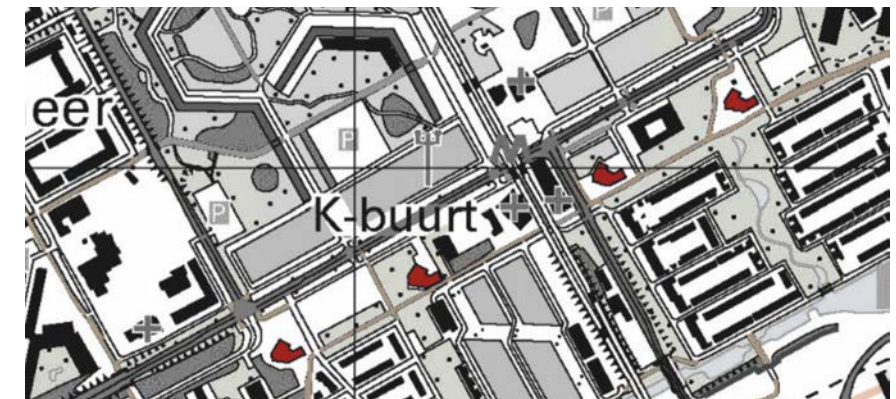
There are also leftover spaces underneath and around the elevated metro that has potentials of being used as a part of a square.

Mosque and Chapel:

just on each opposite side of the metro rail, a mosque and a church could be seen which allegedly due to a reciprocal respect towards one another, they avoid call for prayer and bell ringings.



2012



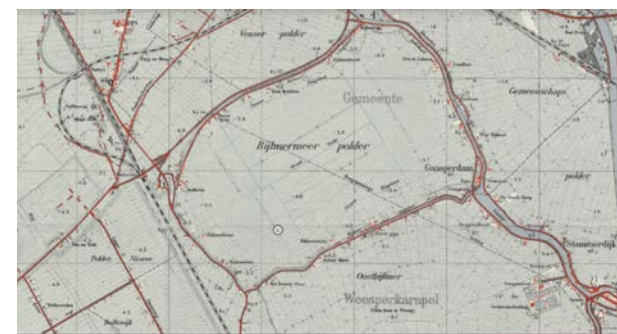
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Urban Fabric•

Roads:

From the historical plans it can be concluded that the creation of roads through time inside the ring of Bijlmer-oost, had led to a grid-like structure over time.



1959



1969



1981



1994



2010



2021

Green:

Combining green with living was an important part of Bijlmer architects plan to the extent that almost all the residential buildings seem to be placed in a park-like atmosphere with a completely passive plinth.



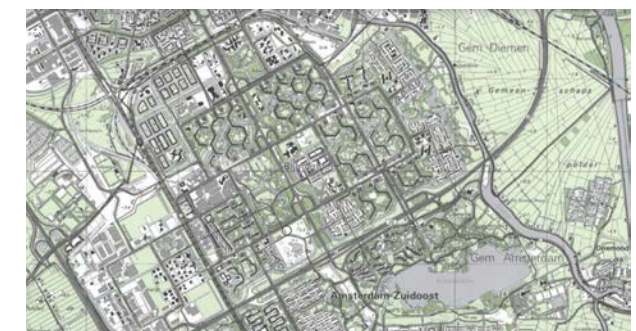
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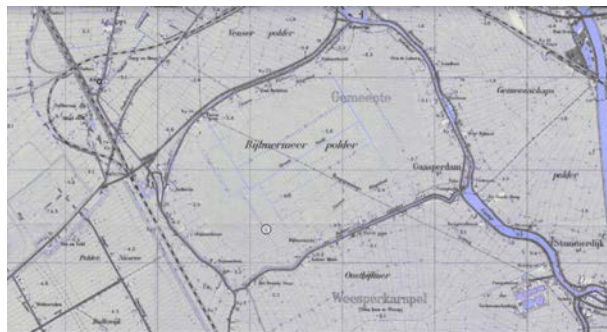
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2021

Water:

Bijlmer was a polder and through time and the developments of buildings, we can see the appearance of water as a part of its initial plan. However this water, especially inside the ring, is only a part of the nature and is surrounded by abundance of green and no sign of public function can be seen.



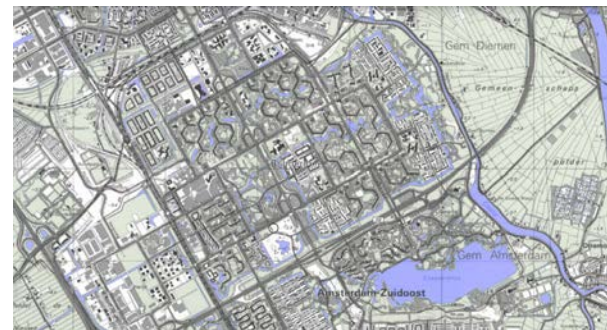
1959



1969



1981



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2010



2021

Conclusions

The man-made plot of Bijlmermeer was created out of grid like plans through time, but instead of placing programs in side these grids that could function as loops, they provided them with lush green and nature hiding the plinth of the concrete building blocks from being open and transparent.

The size of the grids were with big proportions when you look at the empty plots. It is possible to put several buildings there rather than one large scale structure and create loops.

The elevated metro space has a neglected space underneath and around until the edges of the metro, the metro station have potential to expand on each side, however the metro stations in Bijlmer are mono- purposed and only are used for vertical connections

The community buildings such as mosque and the church were made or redeveloped in such a way that are at least a few meters away from the urban void making the empty space beneath even bigger since no other new building can be made there.



User Research •

Inhabitants Meeting •

In order to meet with the future users I first contacted a meeting with “HartvoorKbuurt” organization and I was asked to make a flyer that best explains the point of the meeting:

- The meeting took place with 6 residents and people who work at K-middle.
- The residents in the K-flats are long-term tenants, some of whom have been living here for more than 20 years.
- During the meeting the problems inhabitants are facing, the expectations and the future urban plans of the municipality were discussed.
- Some of the target spaces discussed were the empty plots, the leftover spaces around the metro station, buildings that have been ignored during the redevelopment due to expenses, the renovation of the Bonte Kraai, the communal and collective spaces inside the buildings and etc.



Inhabitants Meeting • View

K-flat Residents

During the meeting, the inhabitants in brought up some important points about how it has been for them to live in this neighborhood:

- The collective space in the core of the towers, have been used for different purposes by the inhabitants of each floor, such as kids playing football there or if someone has a dinner party the would extend it to the corridor of the building. However, this way of using the core, sometimes ended up in conflicts among neighbors due to the noise and discomfort.
- Having lived in these towers, the inhabitants have seen disturbing scene such as throwing trash through the windows or a more concerning issue when some neighbors living on the higher floors allegedly have committed suicide by jumping off their balconies.
- An inhabitant referred to the towers as the pillars and guardians of Bijlmer that illuminate the whole neighborhood with their lights on their turrets. Yet, he explains later that he wishes to have more lights also on the facade of the towers to make them shine.

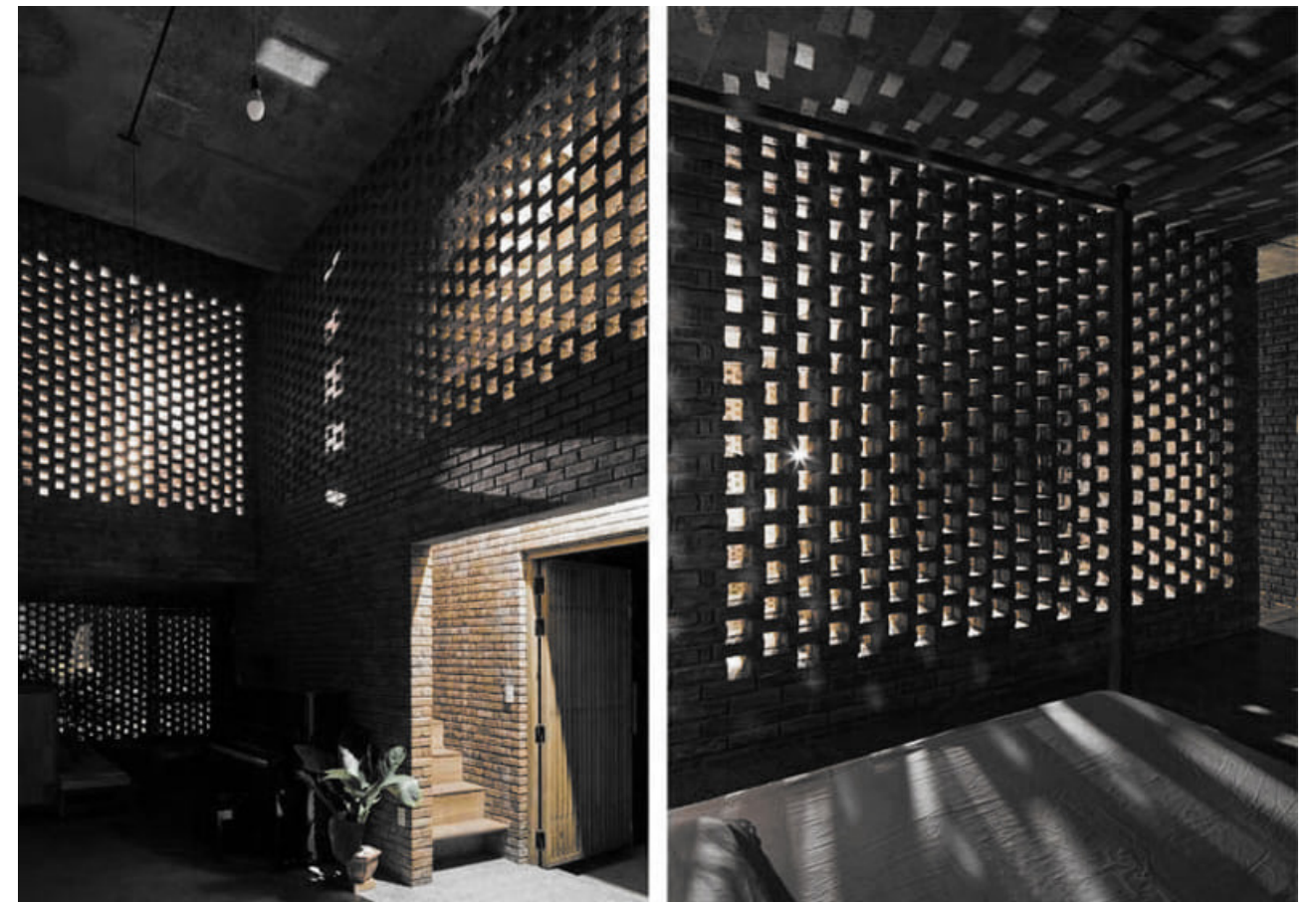


Inhabitants Meeting • View

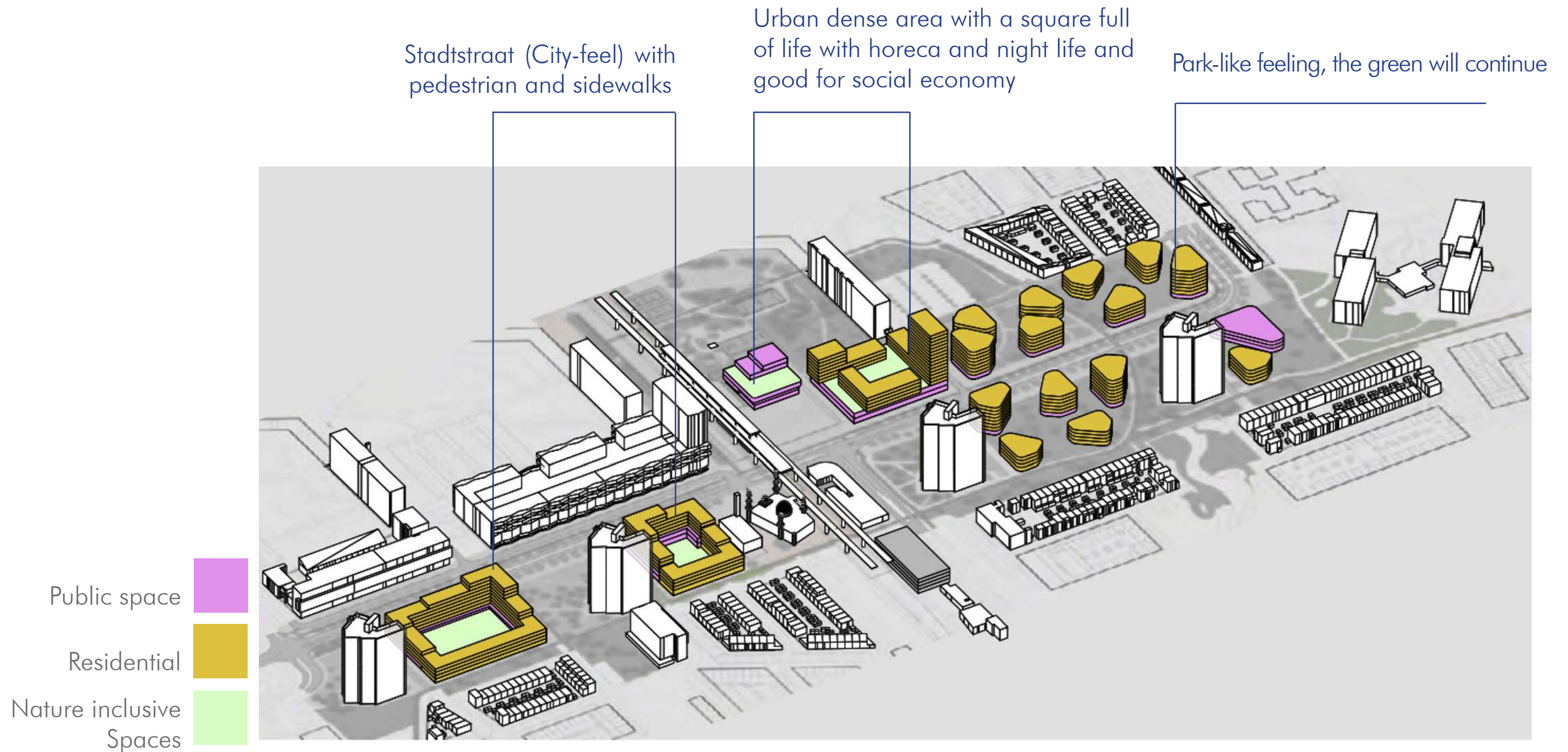
Lighthouse Chapel community

One user who has been living and working in and around the neighborhood and currently is working in the chapel next to the elevated metro rails expressed his concerns about the so called “Lighthouse Chapel”:

- Unlike the name, the building with its long continuous wall has only a long window alongside its border.
- The building that shares spaces with a day-care center used to be higher but due to lowering the elevated metrorail they had to lower the building too.
- There has been times that people tried to draw graffiti on its long wall that the community found disrespectful and thus, they covered the wall with a type of brick that does not let people do that anymore.
- He also mentioned about his ambitions to bring the light in by using some sort of brickwork.

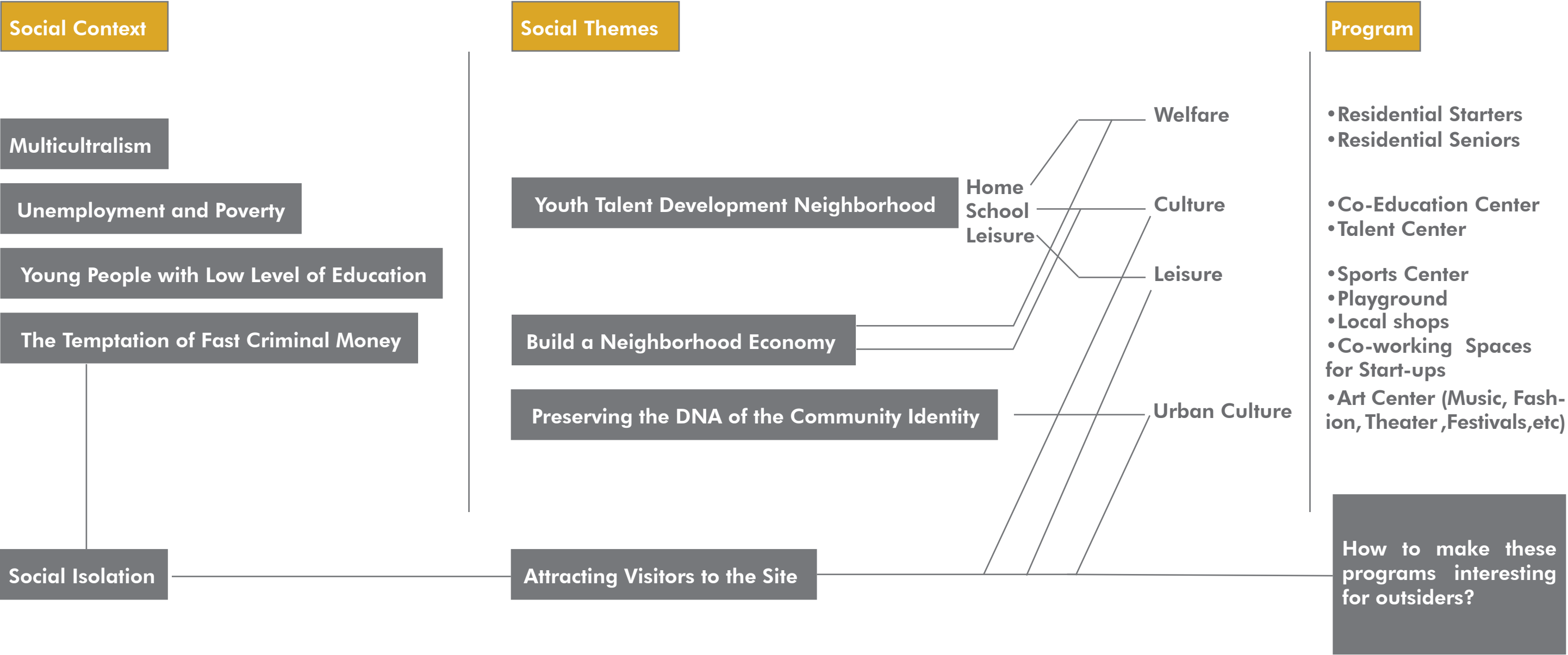


Inhabitants Meeting • Municipality Proposed Plan



Surprisingly, even after the participation of the inhabitants, the new plan still puts the focus on creating mid-rise to high-rise residential. The inhabitants mentioned that this was a request from one of the programs they proposed themselves to create residential for the young people of the community to stay inside the neighborhood. Yet, the question is if there is enough public facility for the young community growth and future

Inhabitants Meeting • Demand



Visitors Survey•

One way to avoid the social isolation especially for the young people of the community in order to stay in the community and integrate with other neighborhoods in Amsterdam is to attract visitors.

This survey was done by people outside Bijlmer-oost neighborhood to understand what type of programs and what qualities intrigues people.

In general most of the contributors prefer either the city centers or a city like areas around them, some qualities of these city centers are portrayed on the next page.

What are some public facilities you are interested in or you find useful?	Where is the public space you just said, located?	What makes the public space, a place you would like to go?
Supermarket	Amsterdam Watergraafsmeer	Proximity
I find myself appreciating more public spaces, where you can be without having to be forced into "buyer or consumer". This could be a park, a canal, makerspace, cultural-artistic-neighbourhood space etc...	Rotterdam	Diverse people, atmospheres, food, exposures according to my mood/vibe.
Library, cafeterias suitable for working, proper sitting areas	Mainly in the center, only parks without suitable conditions for interactions in the nearby area	It offers activities and not only resting places
cafe, bar, restaurant, grocery store, market, park, coffee shop	Den Haag - Archipelbuurt, Den Haag - Voorhout, Den Haag - Willemspark	It's close to me, it has variety of shops, it is calm, it has nice atmosphere
libraries, museums, theaters, creative workshops, shopping mall, next to stations...	It'll be Amsterdam Central	Closer to me - But also the nice atmosphere
Restaurants, bars (live music), cultural venue, museum, supermarket?	The Hague city centre	Good atmosphere, variety in functions
Cafes, bars, music halls, museums, gyms, shops (but not in malls), creative workshops, library	Within the ring of Amsterdam	Nice atmosphere, within a 20 minute bike distance, good food or music
Library	Heidelberglaan 3, 3584 CS Utrecht	Spacious, quiet
dentist, doctor, theater, movies	Bijlmer centrum, Buitenveldert, city	where you can sit and meet people, quiet and green

Visitors Survey • Reference Examples of The City Centers

Amsterdam



Livable Pedestrian



Plinth Outdoor Activities



Canals



Iconic, Collects people



Good Working and Sitting Area



Good Atmosphere next to work or home



Variety of functions



Food and Culture

Other cities



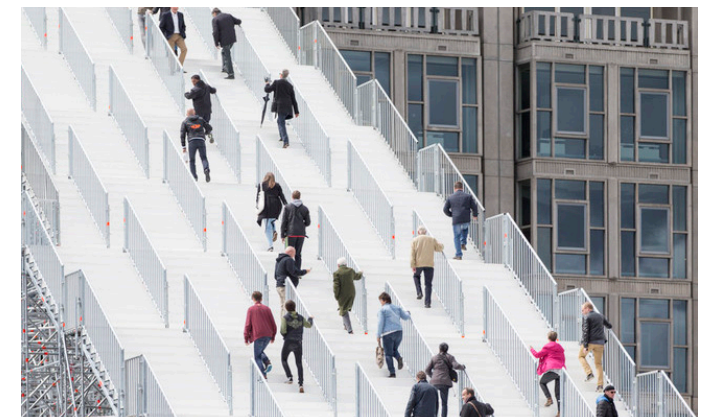
Livable and peaceful Pedestrian



Plinth Outdoor Activities



Food and Culture



Iconic and creates activities, Playful

Conclusions

There are two different types of program needed to respond to the users need :

1- A list of amenities to enhance the neighborhood facilities such as a gym, an art center, educational center etc.

2. Type of programs that tend to put more focus on the socio-economical aspects, to enhance the residents and specifically the young community welfare, such as collaborative spaces, market platforms, bazaars and etc.

the second conclusion, would create a good potential to avoid social isolation for the young community too as they can connect, collaborate, socialize and share knowledge with the possible visitors coming from outside of the neighborhood



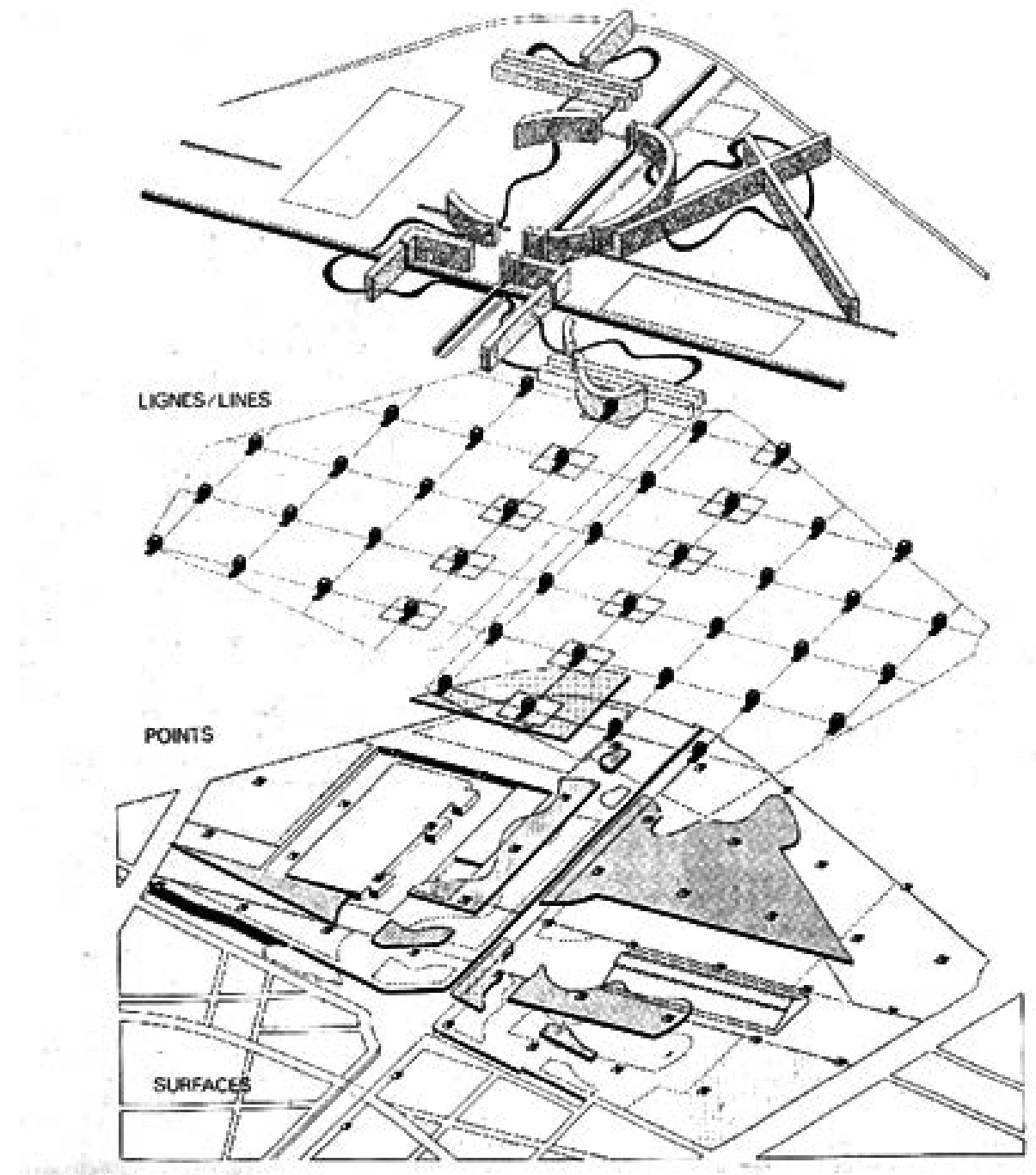
Urban Level •

Points, Vectors, Envelopes • Contextualising the concept

In order to set the program in a context that represents a more or less monotonous context that is set to be a liveable neighborhood for the inhabitants, the next most important element after the building, are the people and their interactions with the context.

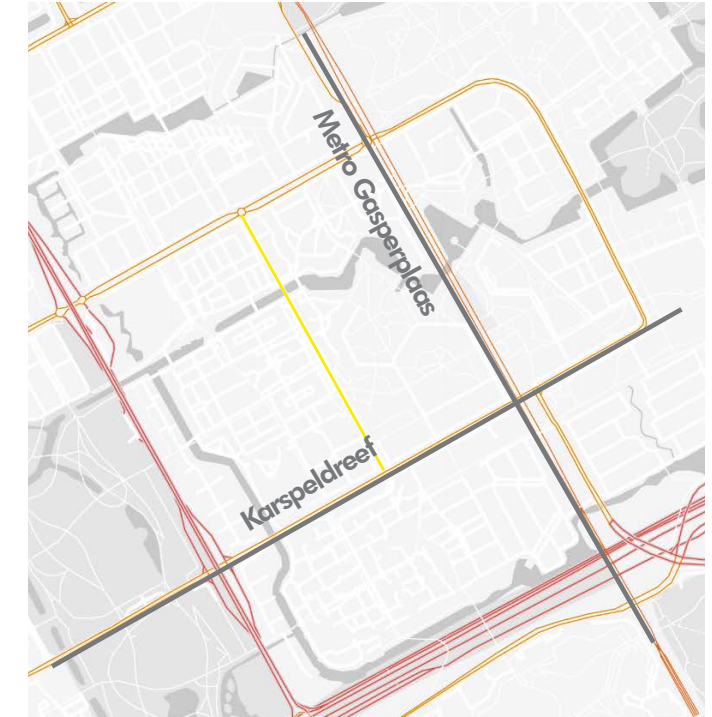
Inspired by Bernard Tschumi and based on observation on the site, I imagine a grid of points as the heart of each upcoming program and event, vectors which indicate the movements from one activity to another and in the end envelopes as surfaces that indicate the space.

Because of the large scale of the project and a lot of intervals in between the building, I would first start doing so in an urban scale to create my initial masses.



- As previously mentioned Bijlmer-oost has a grid-like roads texture and specifically in K-middle, you will see two main axis one Karspeldreef and the other is the metroline that is elevated for about 10 meters above the ground.

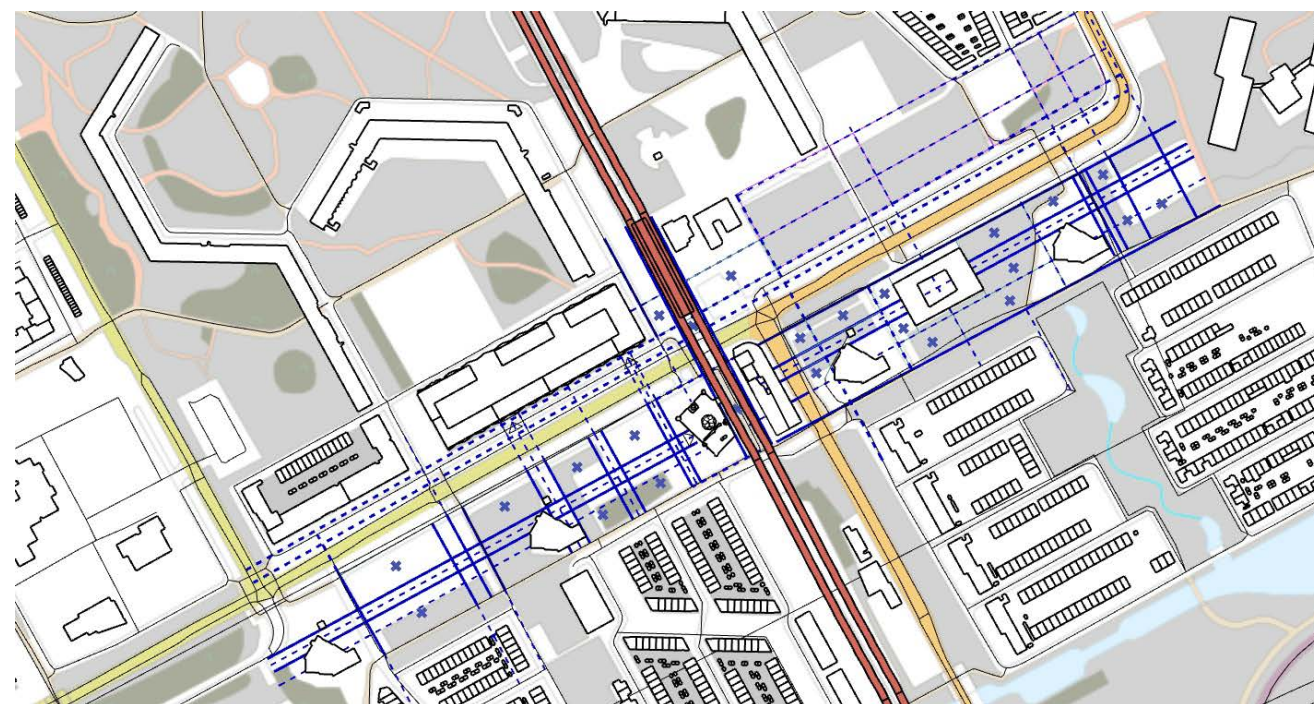
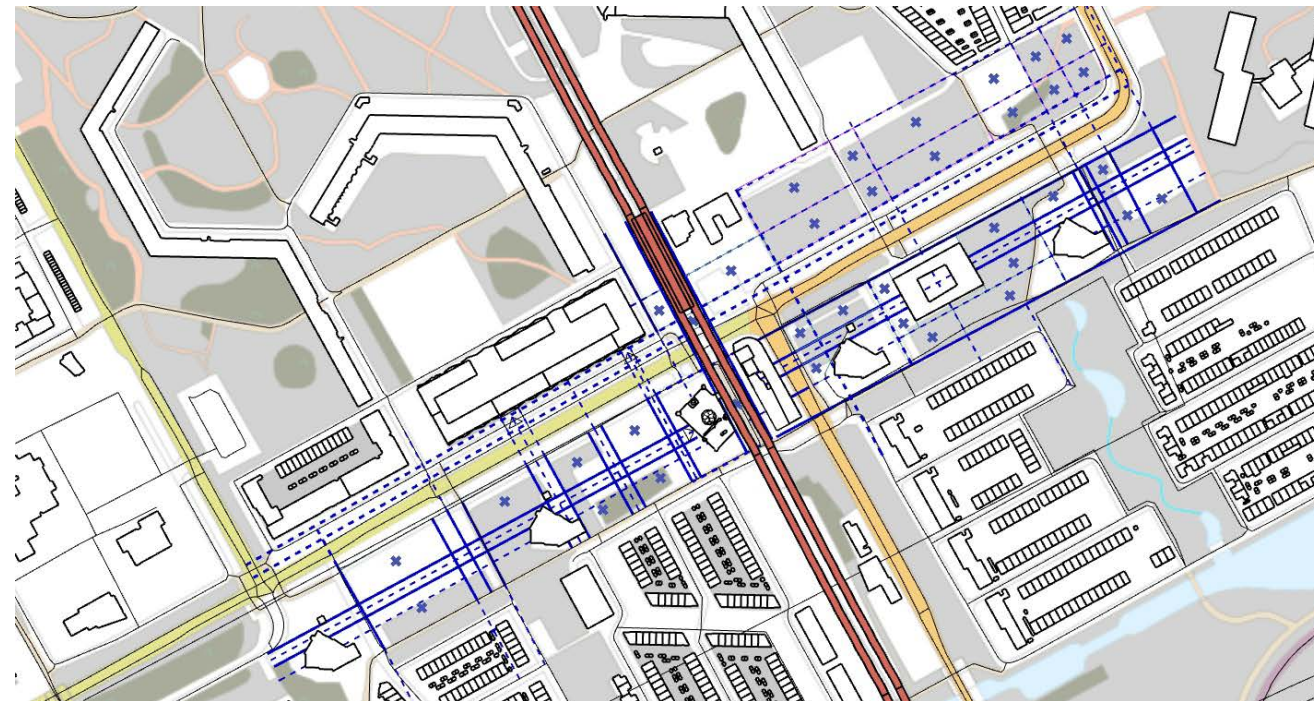
- Karspeldreef is a continuation of a road coming from Bijlmer Arenathat intersects with the metrorail from underneath and continues to Kraainnest and eventually goes in a loop route that goes back to the Bijlmer Centrum.



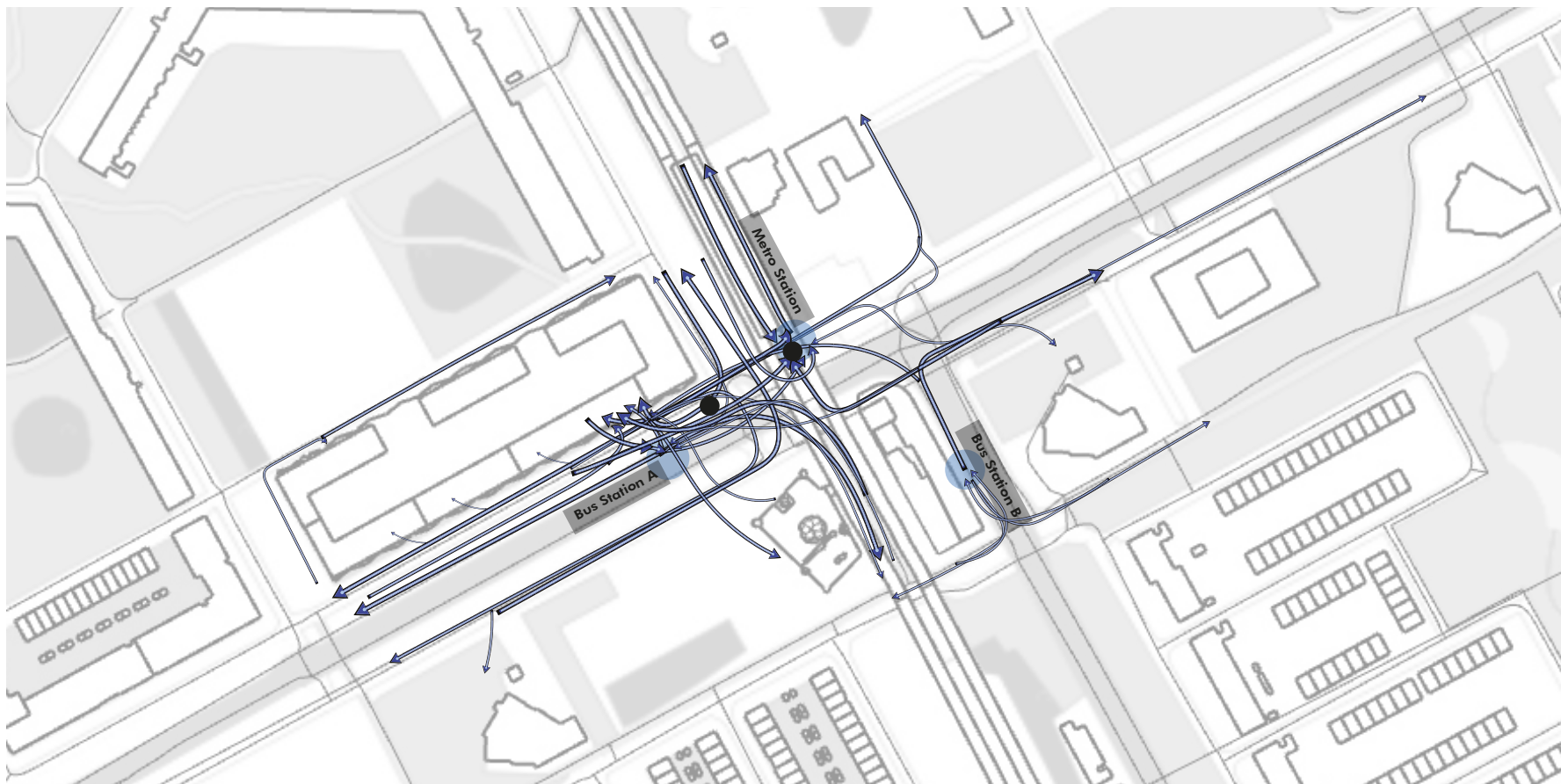
Grid of Points • Based on Axis

In order to make a grid of points two main elements were considered:

- The axis of K-middle and their silhouette to create the boundaries
- The extension of transitional spaces to create gaps for movements as they give a sense of invitation to the next transitional place.
- The dashed lines passing the buildings would not necessarily cut through the buildings but instead adds qualities on the fringe of the buildings that gives a sense of harmony and continuity.



Movements•



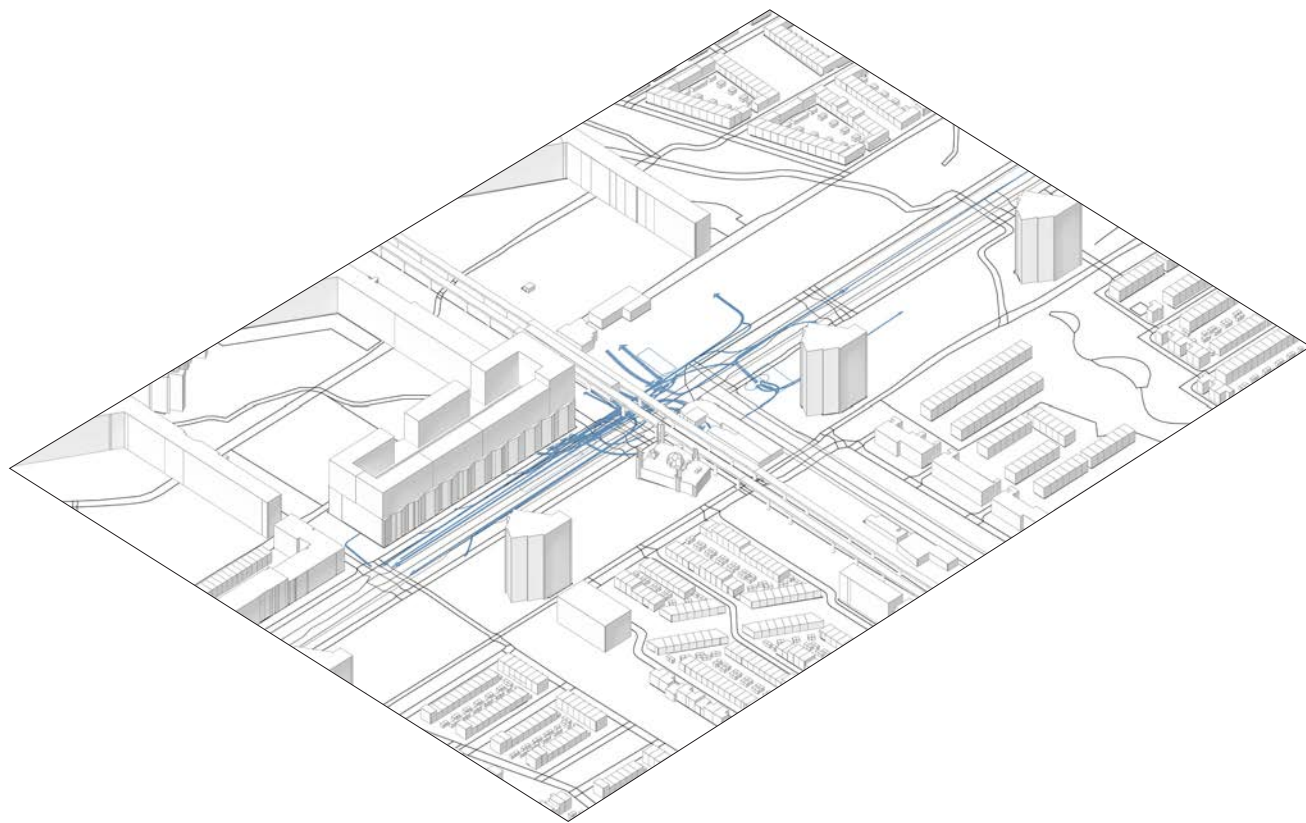
Regarding the interaction between people and the context, I observed the project site a few times during lunch and in the early evening.

- I realized that in both diagrams the fluctuations go around the public transport stations ,the grocery store near the corner of the Kameleon buidling right next to the station and other shops in the smae direction and building.

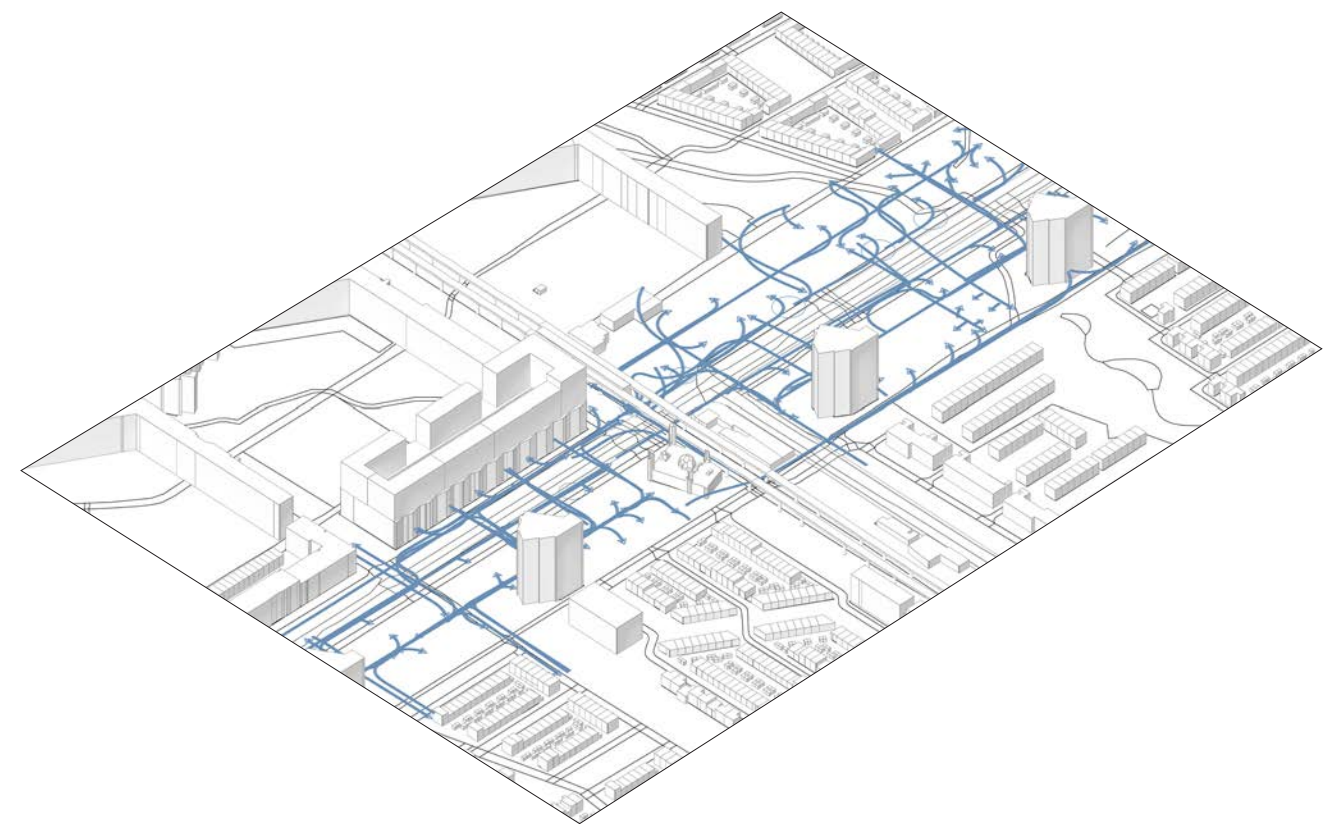
- The residents of the Kflats next to the mosque usually avoid having a shortcut through the flats via the empty plots.

Vectors • Based On Movements

Looking back at the grid, We can see the long intervals between the plots can be solved through the pedestrian gaps that were created based on the transitional elements of the surrounding buildings.

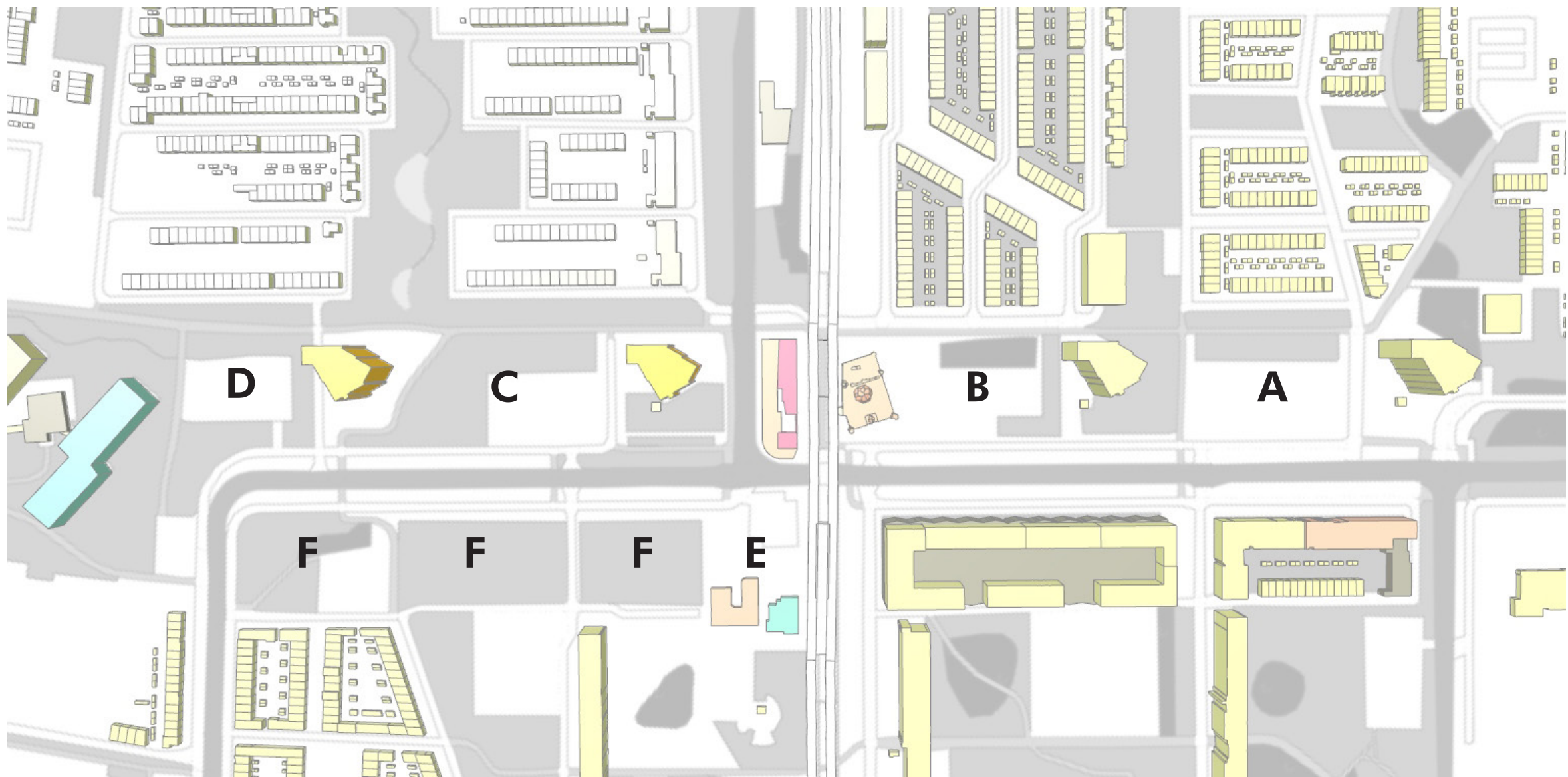


Existing



Ambition

Expected Urban Program•



- Residential
- Community Center
- Daycare
- Commercial
- Medical Center

Empty Plot

A

B

C

D

E

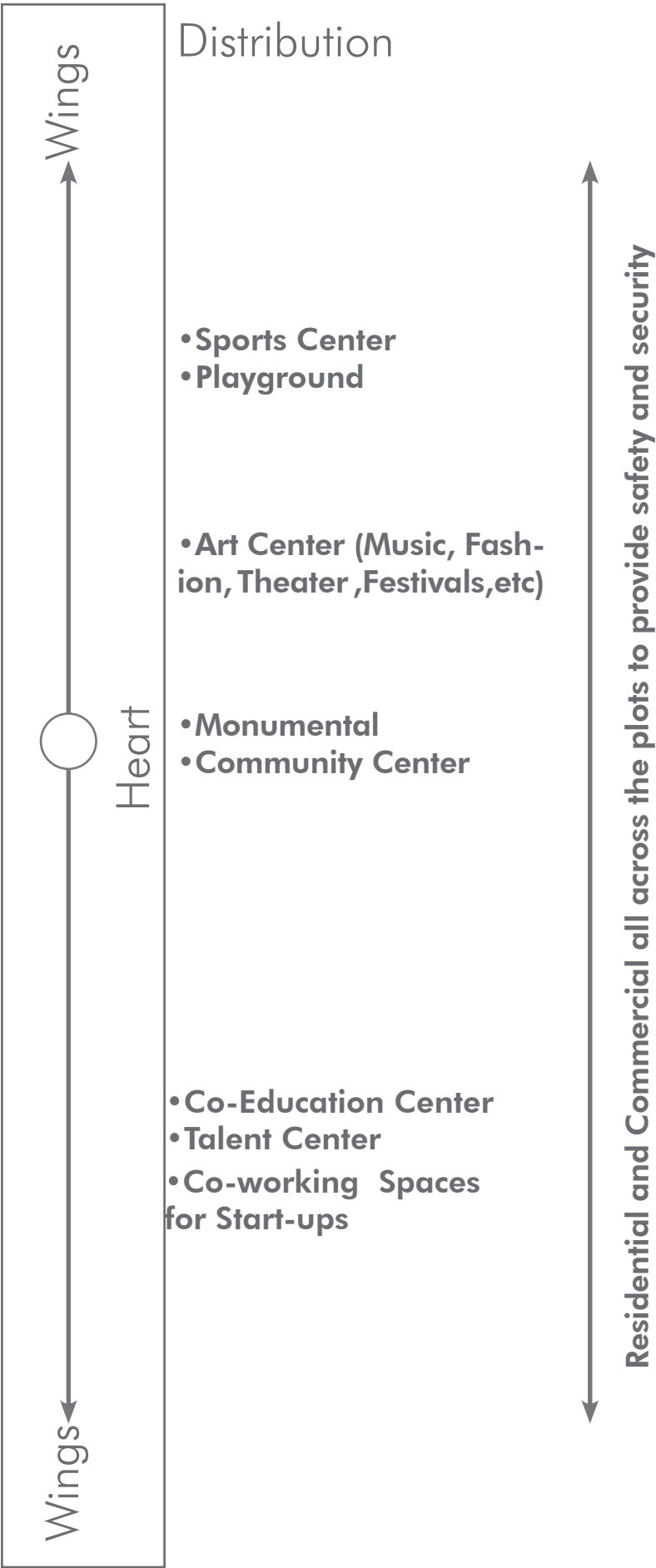
F

Quality

- Proximity to the shopping Center
 - Proximity to the public transport
 - Direct accessibility to Bijlmermeer park
 - Potential of the first spot to notice for travelers on Karspeldreef
- Proximity to the commercial
 - Proximity to the Mosque
 - Proximity to the public transport and view from the metrostation platform
 - Proximity to the future square
- The plot is now being used by a pre-fab student housing
 - Proximity to public transport and view from the metro
 - Across the future square
- The plot gives opportunity for making a vibrant square as the users wished
 - Well known to be the heart of K-buurt
 - In front of de Bonte Kraai food bank and community center
- Closeness to the medical centrum and also the food bank
 - Quieter than around the square
 - Empty plots in the front
 - At the corner of the road that turns back to Bijlmer Centrum
- The plot in the corner is now filled with green.
 - The other plot is being used by GGD
 - Both plots can be used for open air activities such as festivals, Also the corner plot can be used as a monumental building as it is in the dead-end.

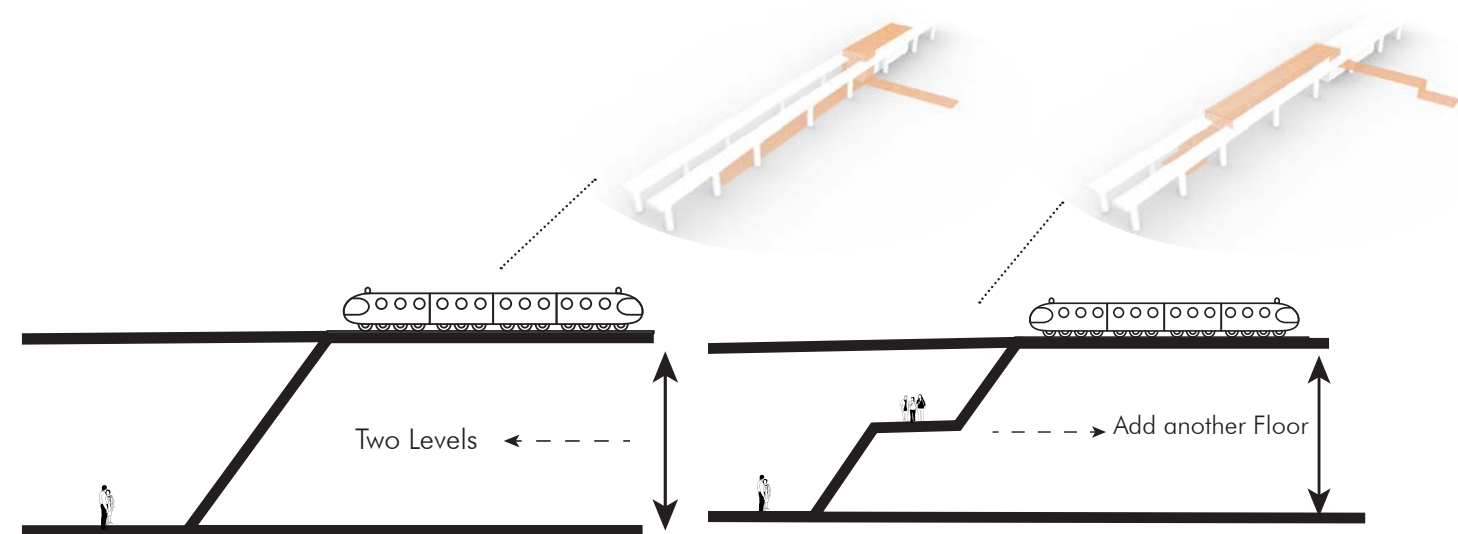
Distribution

- Sports Center
 - Playground
- Art Center (Music, Fashion, Theater ,Festivals,etc)
- Monumental
 - Community Center
- Co-Education Center
 - Talent Center
 - Co-working Spaces for Start-ups

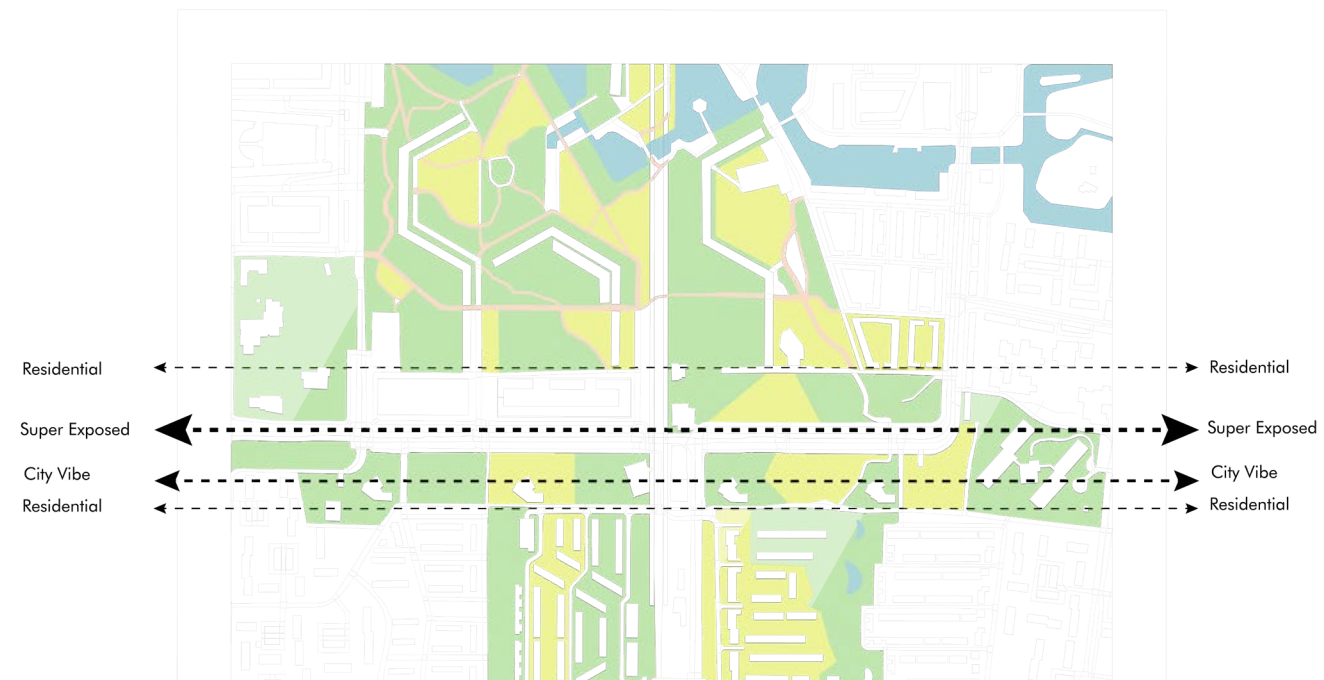


Layering

Vertically : The metro station has the potential of being extended into small shopping mall by dividing the height which is around nine meters into two level so that people coming and going to the platform can do quick shopping

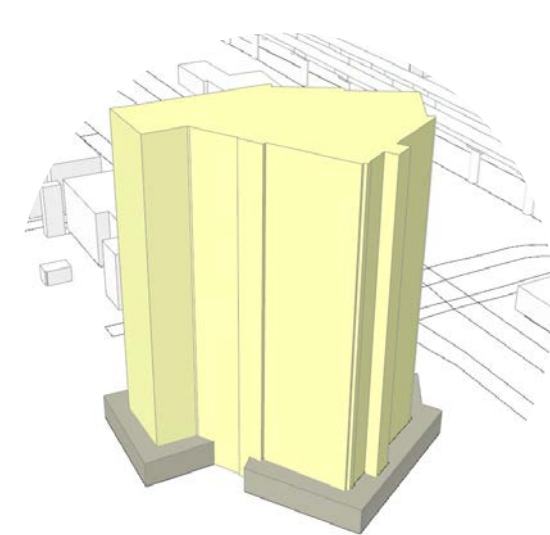
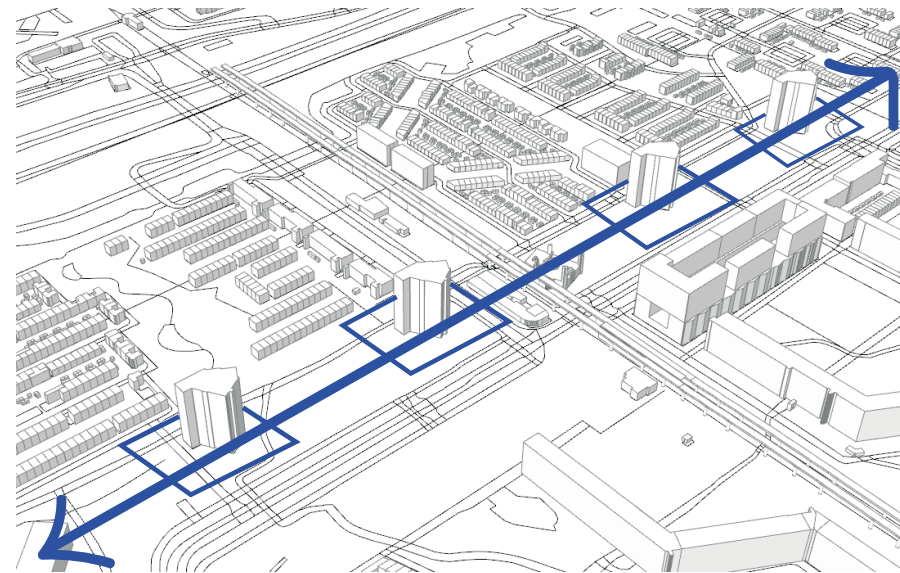
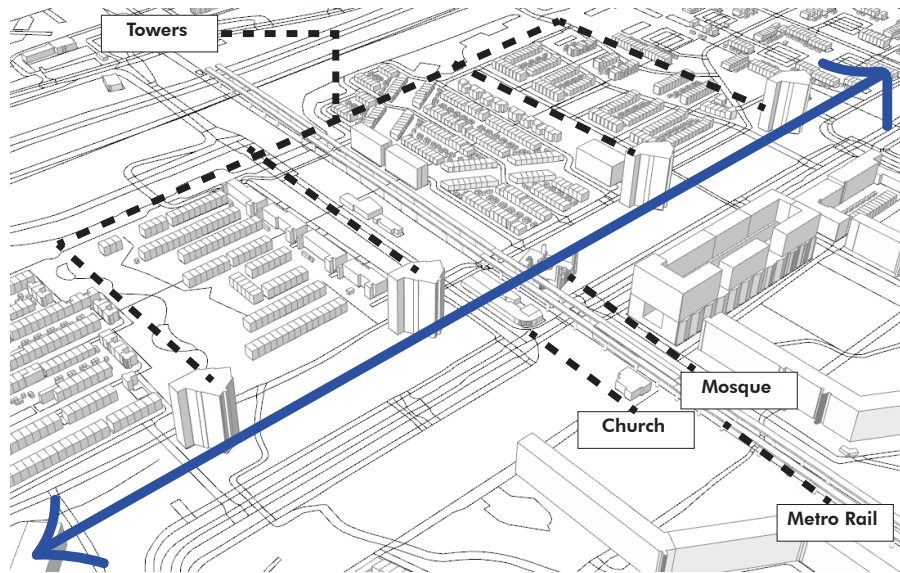


Horizontally : By creating different levels of pedestrian based on the surrounding context, the linear integrity will give way to control safety and privacy.



Obstacles•

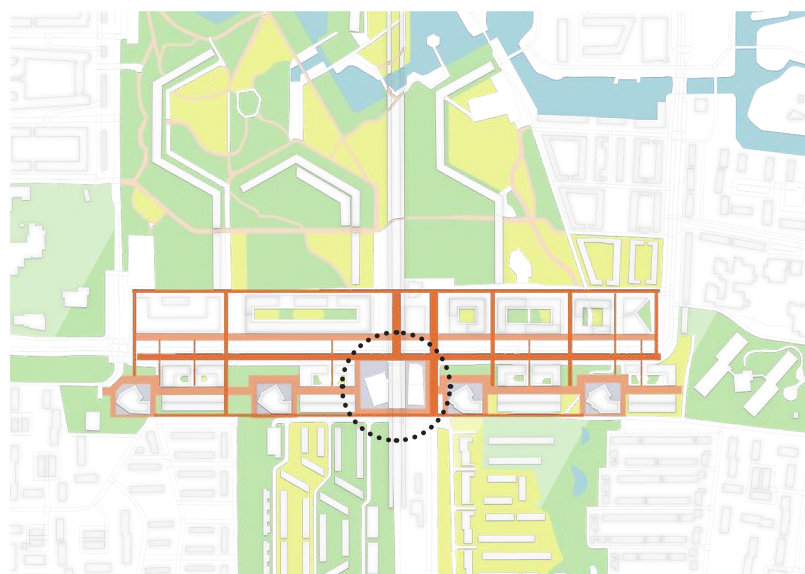
The tower loops: +



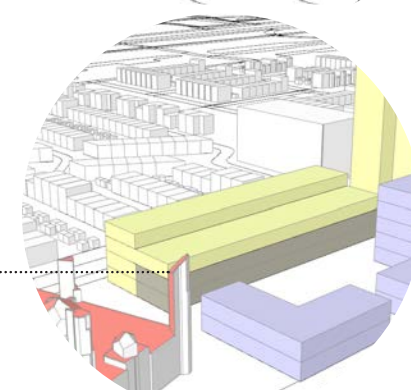
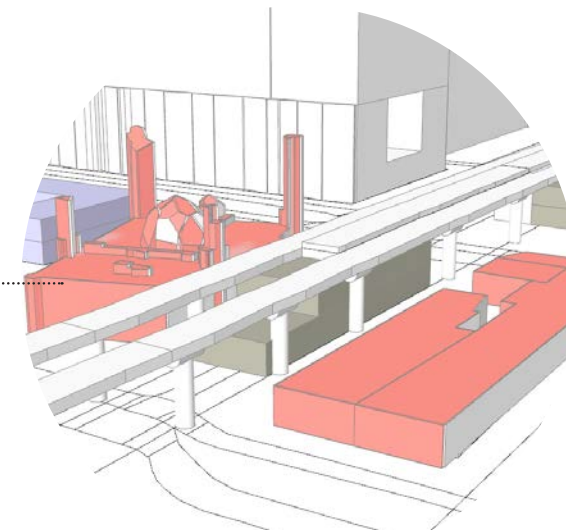
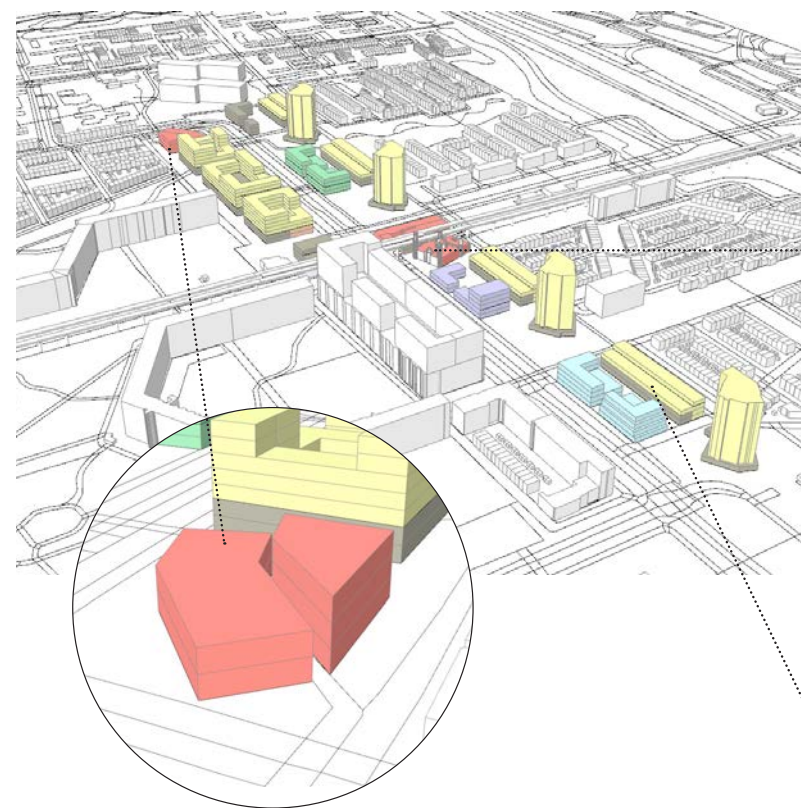
Due to disalignment and disarray in the organization of the buildings there would not be a straight line as a path but this creates the opportunity to create squares for the towers with an extended plinth to keep the privacy of the first floor residents away from unwanted

The Heart Loops

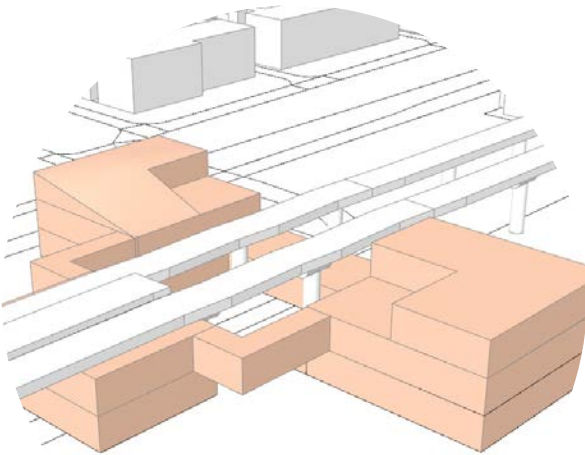
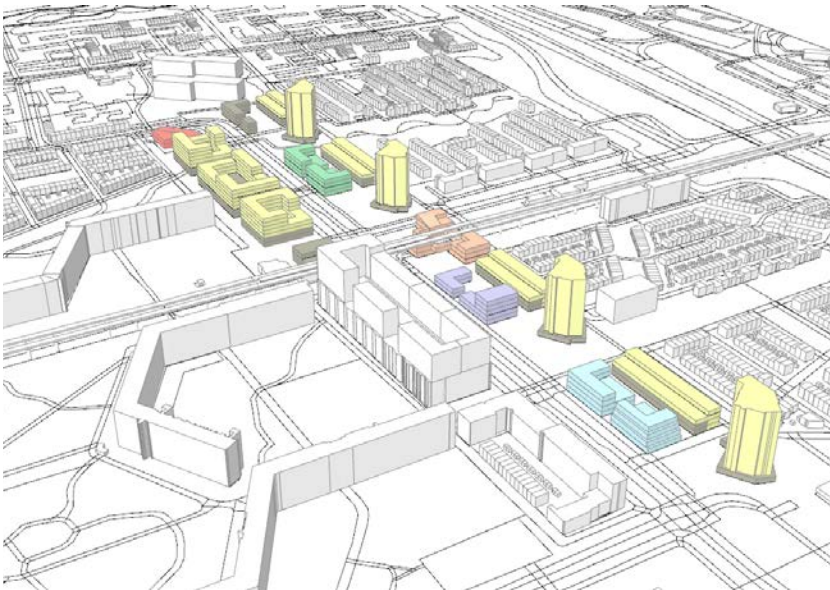
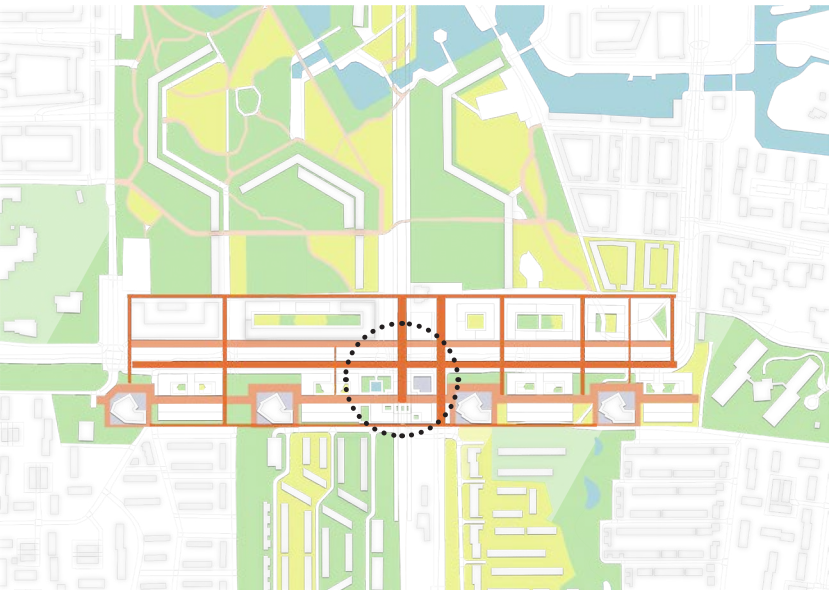
Concept 1:



The heart would open up to an open stepped building directing visitors from the metro platform and would create an open space that passes through the sight of the church and the mosque and gives exposure for the visitors to find their path across the layered pedestrian.

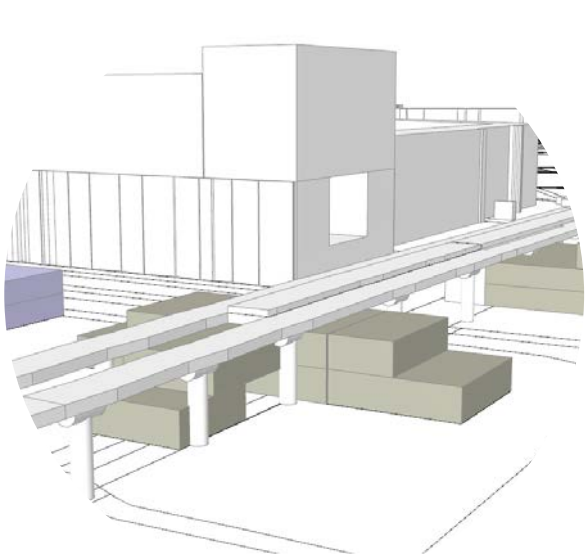
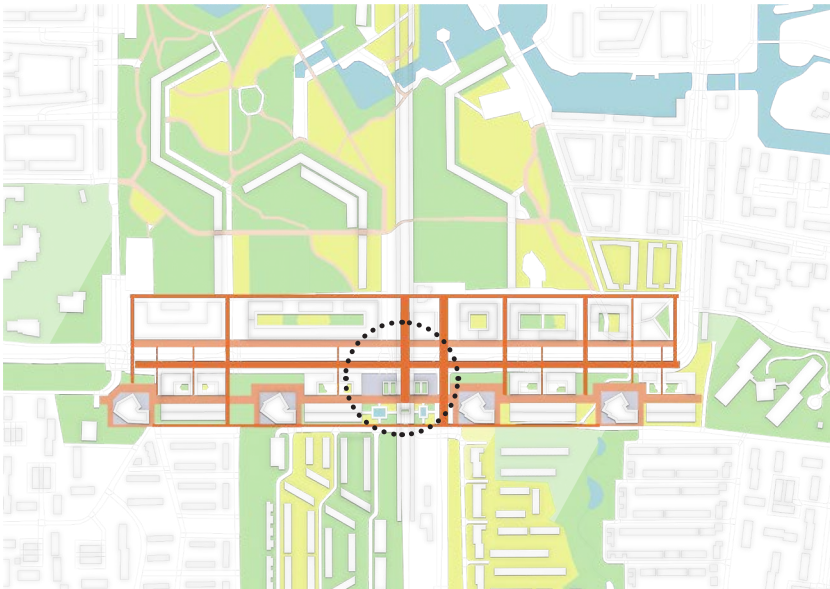


Concept 2:

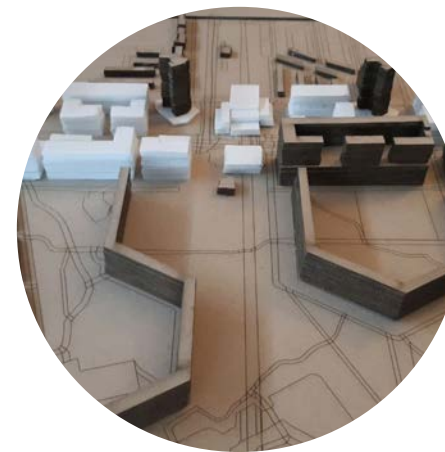
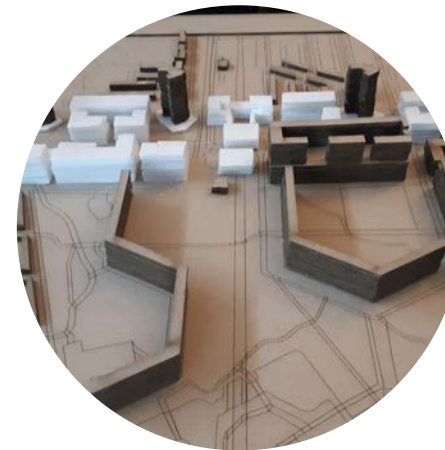
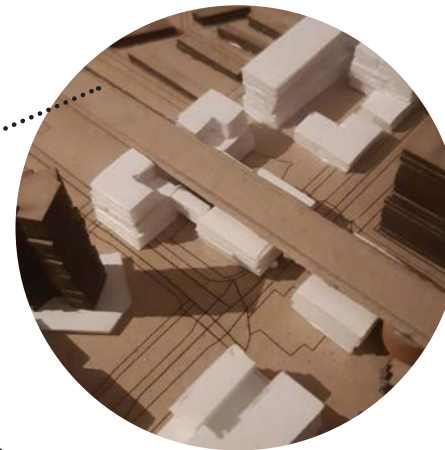
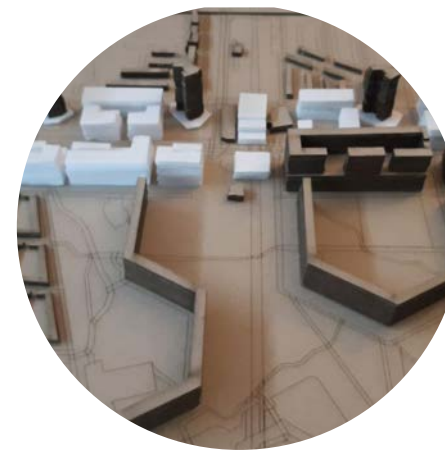
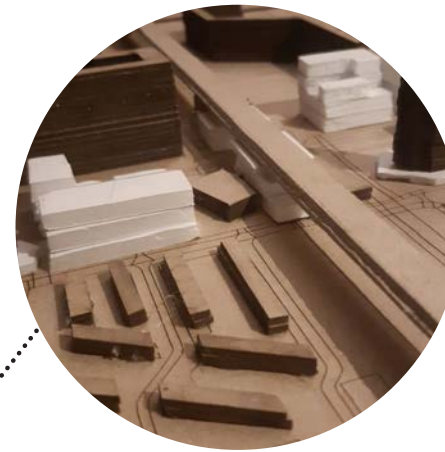
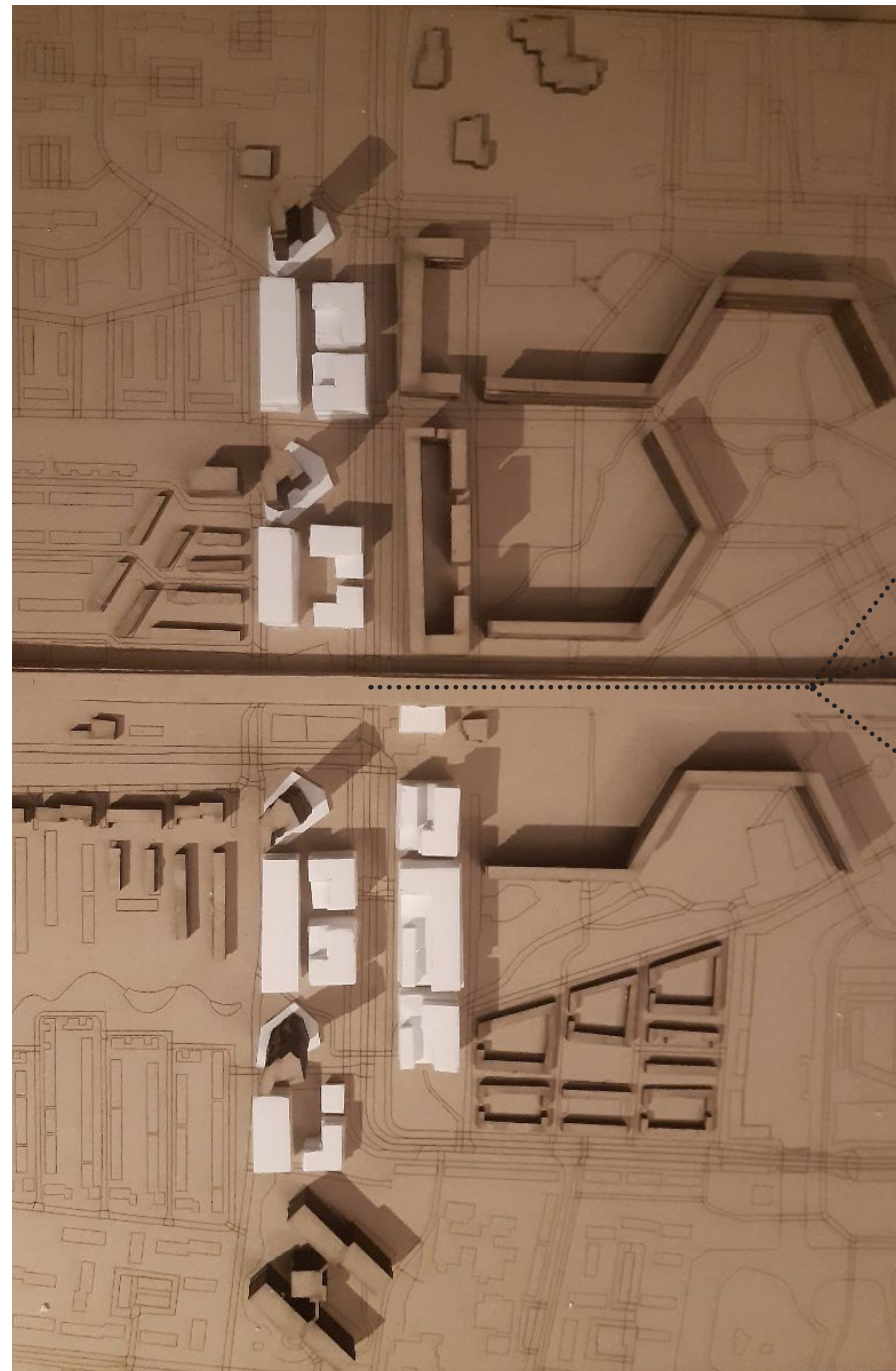


The mixed use of the mosque and the church and the community center as a new building would be the best representative of this potential cultural hub at the heart of K-buurt and would not only add up to the quiet leftover spaces underneath the pillars but also invite people inside the neighborhood and the functional grid.

Concept 3:



There will be plainly another exit from the metro platform where the functional heart is located to invite the flocks of people into the city vibe pedestrian. This means that the church and the mosque can be replaced as a landmark at the end and by the corner of the bigger loop.



It is clear that the linear plot of this project intersected with a great metro connection would put emphasis on two spots, the ends and the heart. Combining a church and a mosque as a community center would be an ideal topic to promote a cultural hub gate like K-buurt. I found the heart of K-buurt where the intersection is an ideal place to reach my goal of inviting people inside this area. The urban structure and the program can be applied to any development to the previous metro stop in G-buurt which is the other side of the gate to the historical and cultural Bijlmermeer.

Design Starting Point •

2-To create not only Residential but also a public plinth underneath. also to create an open plinth at different spots to connect both shopping street and the mainstreet on the most super exposed edge.



1-Opportunity to make the car route smaller and add more functions with movements.

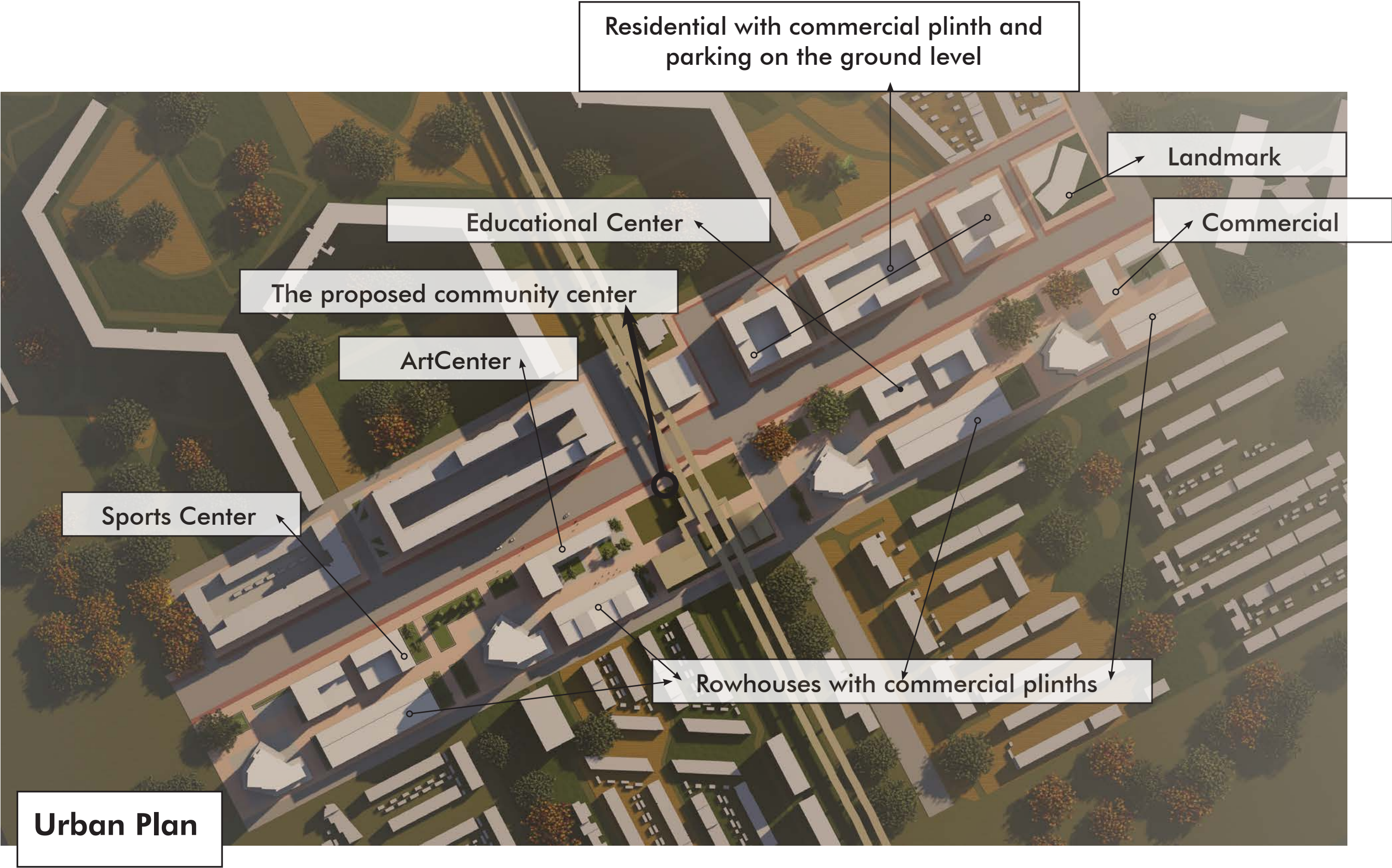


4- I would like to extend the metro connection to the city vibe pedestrian suggested in the previous phase to the existing functions of a mosque and the church as a new intervention of a community center as the suggested pedestrian pass through it make it a great space to have the functioning heart of K-buurt.



3-To create squares around the towers by adding a local shop plinth that helps the loop as well.

Conclusions

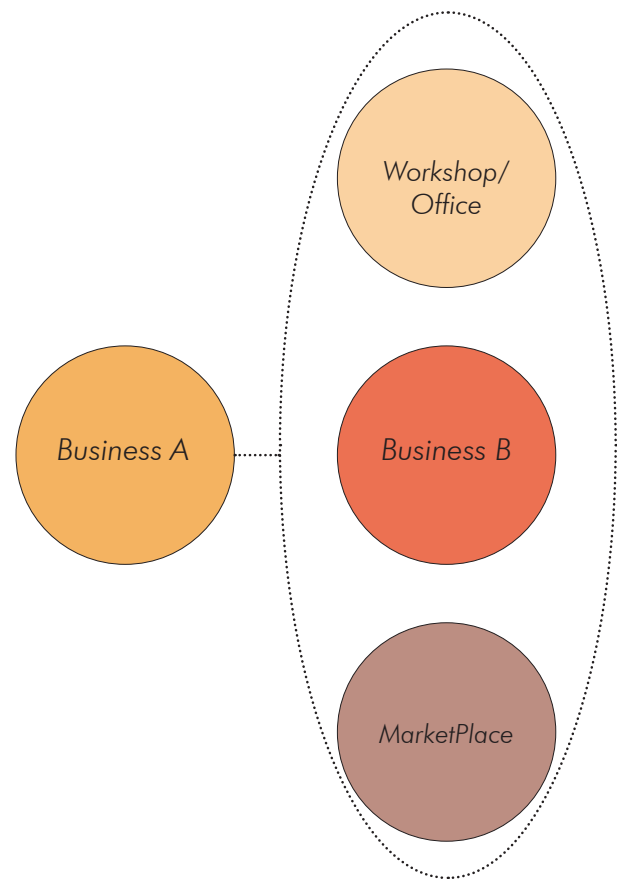


The street routes for pedestrian, bikes and cars were defined.

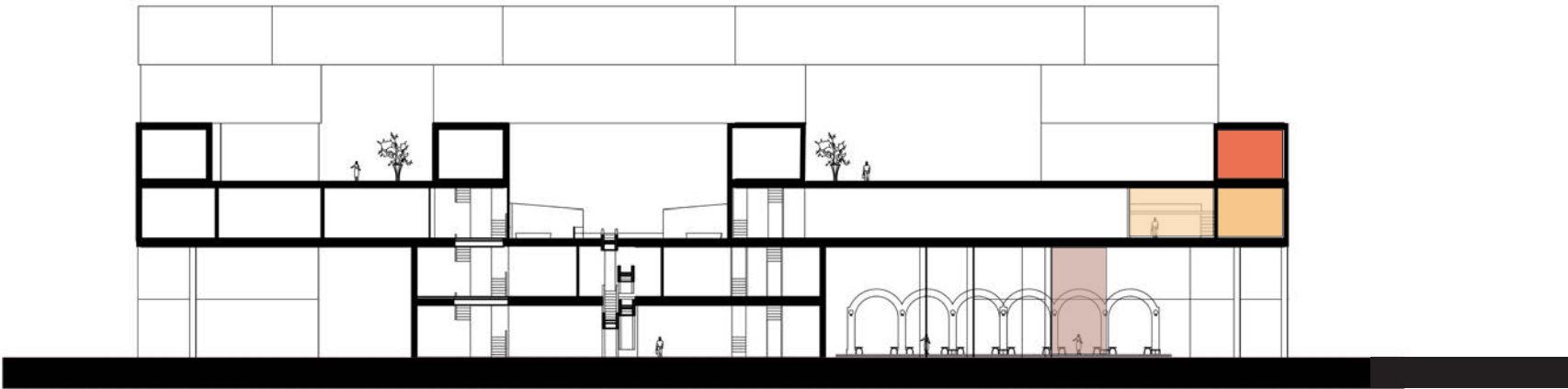
Architecture Level •



Flexible programming and Connections•

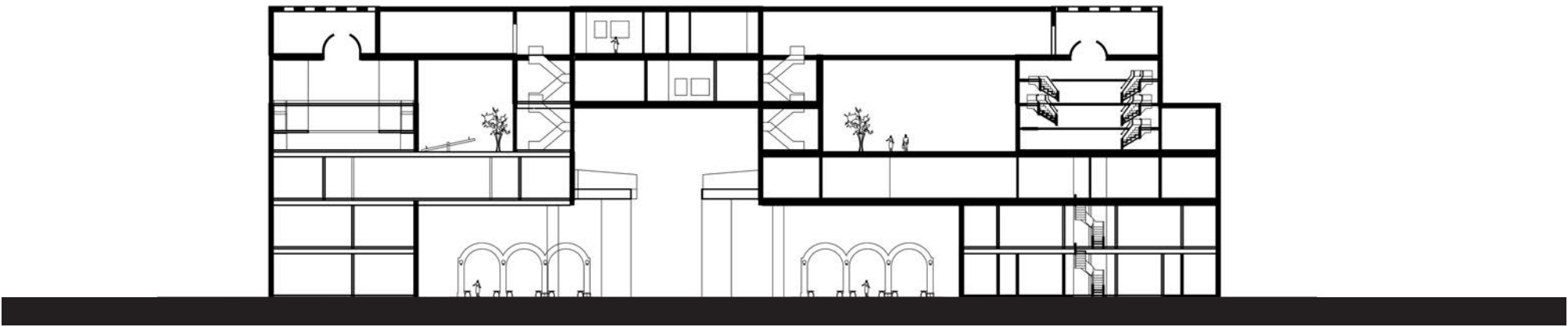


For the sake of social economy, I added some flexible programing where different businesses can combine, mix and match on a temporary or regular basis.



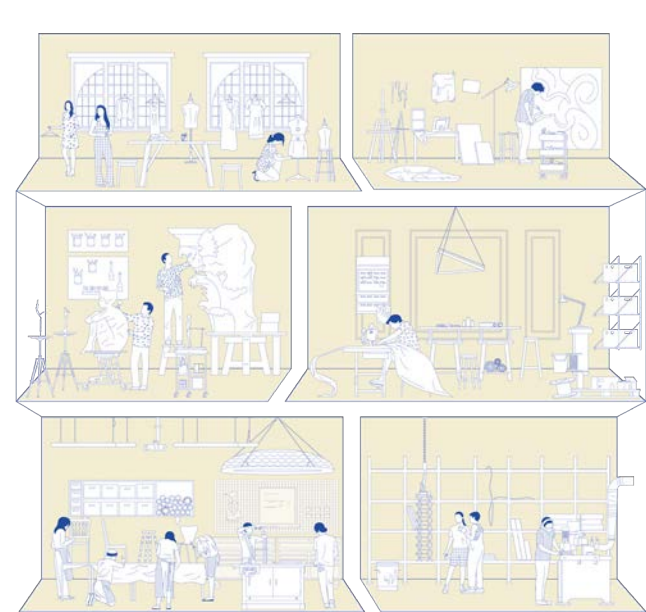
Under

The section Under shows how people can distribute in the project by means of a level underneath the metro platform and then up again to the metro level and section over will be the continuation of the building on the opposite side that goes over the metro platform to create an exhibition where both western and eastern culture are combined as its theme.



Over

Ambition :



•A platform for the young community to collaborate and create to find their unexplored talents.



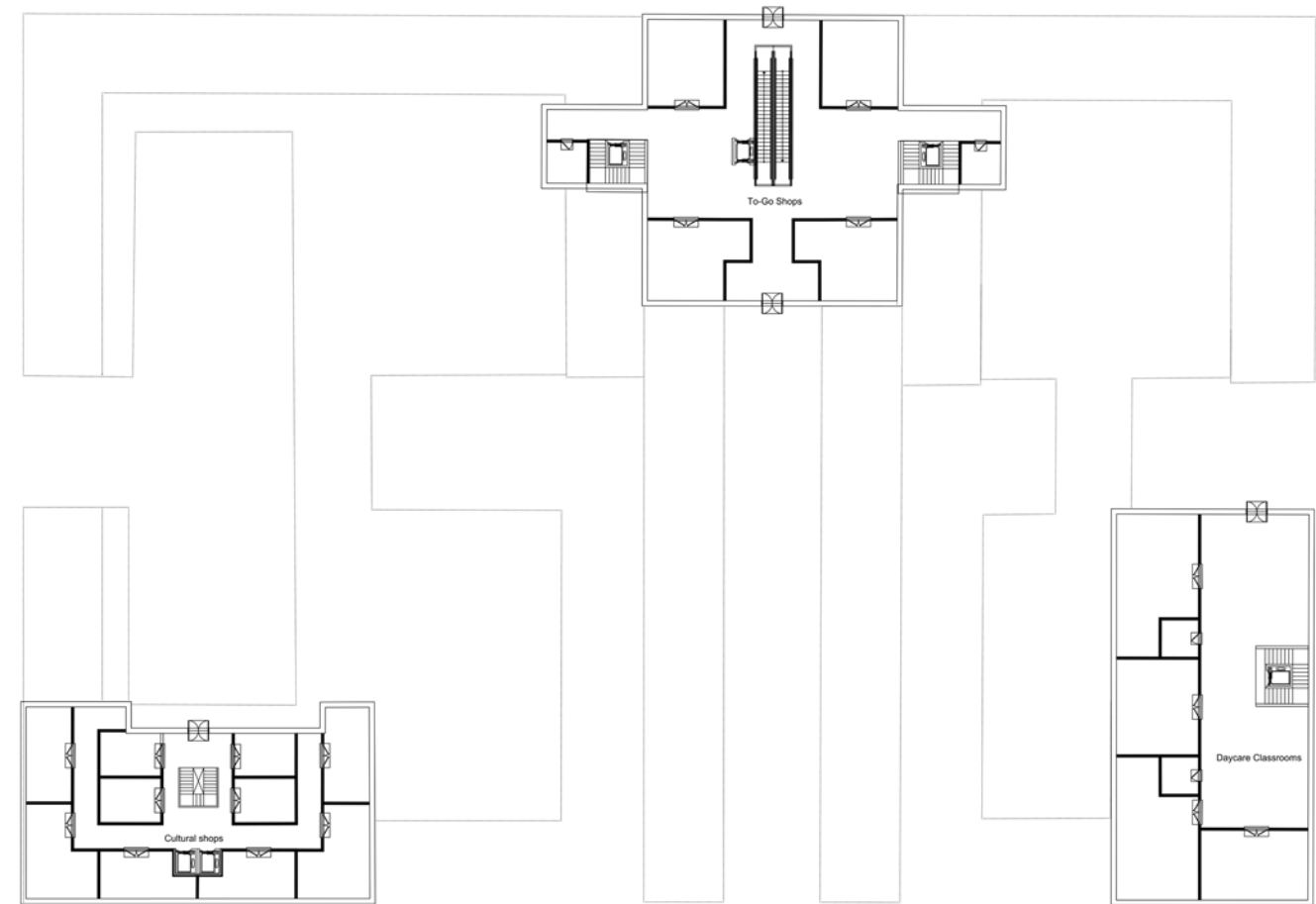
•A platform as a market where both young community and other locals display their products



•Bazaar-like spaces for the locals who sell different specific products

Initial sketches and program placement

The whole project will be hung on 3 main volumes on the ground level and creates pilotis with an organization of columns in a way that the path for a temporary markets would be indicated and the pilotis would be a good covered space for the markets to be held.

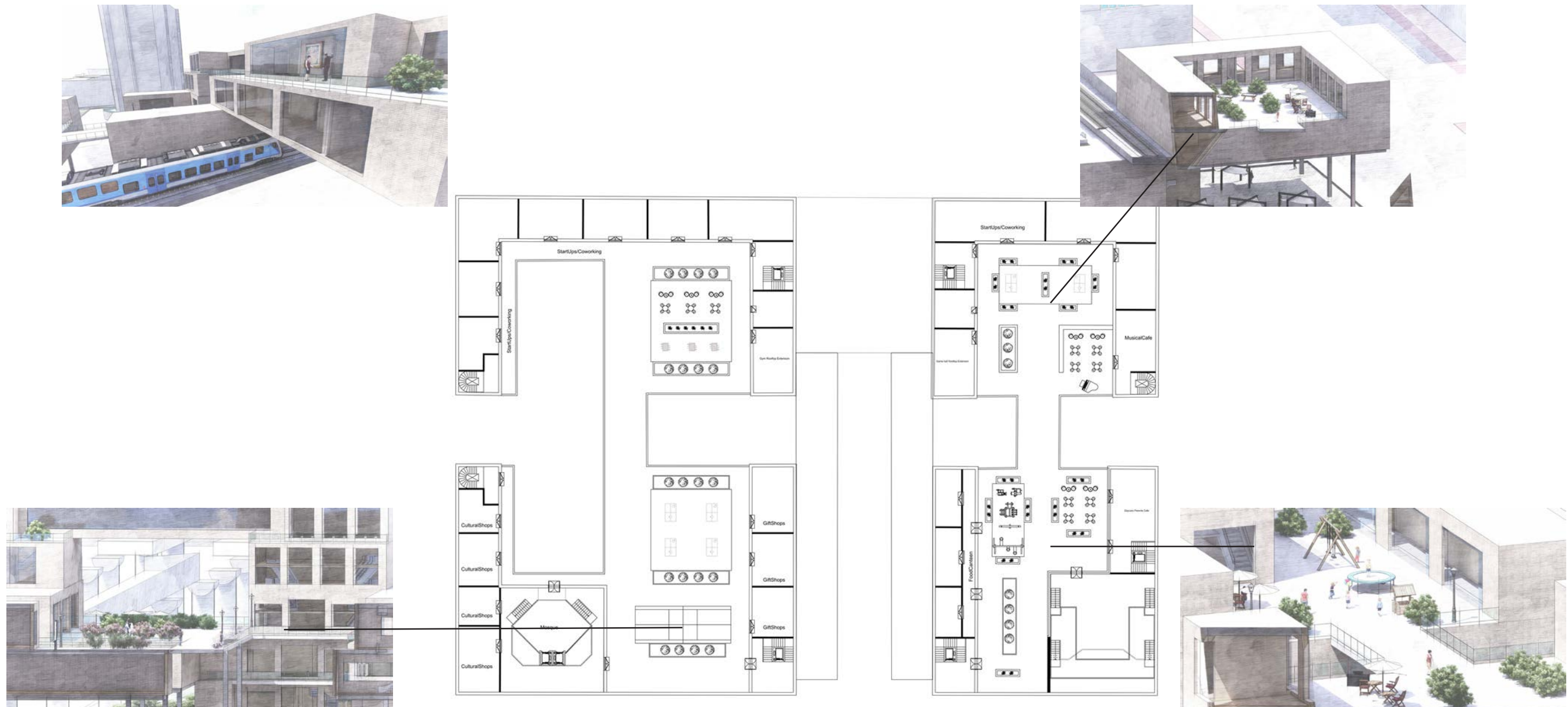


GroundFloor

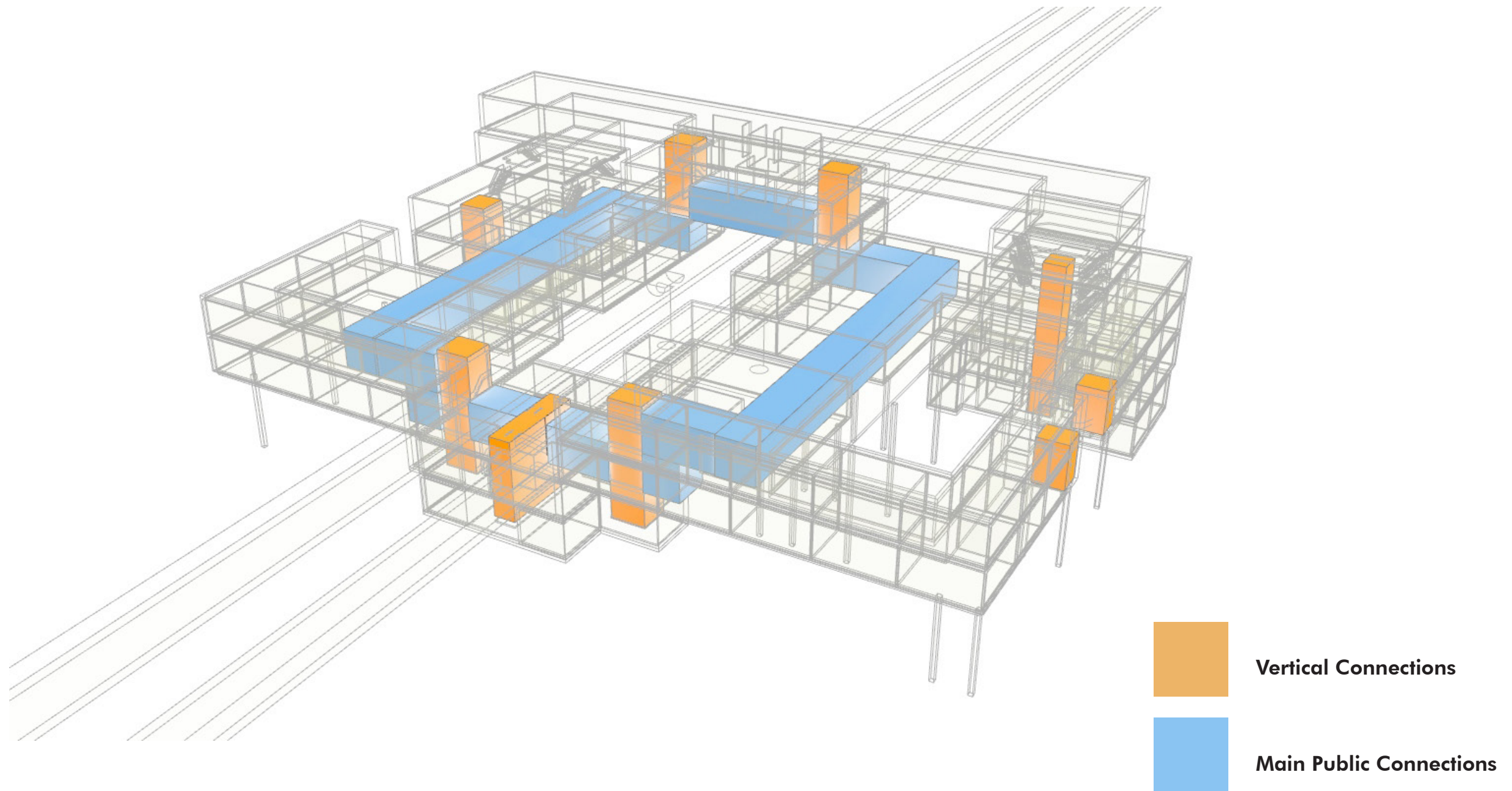




First Floor



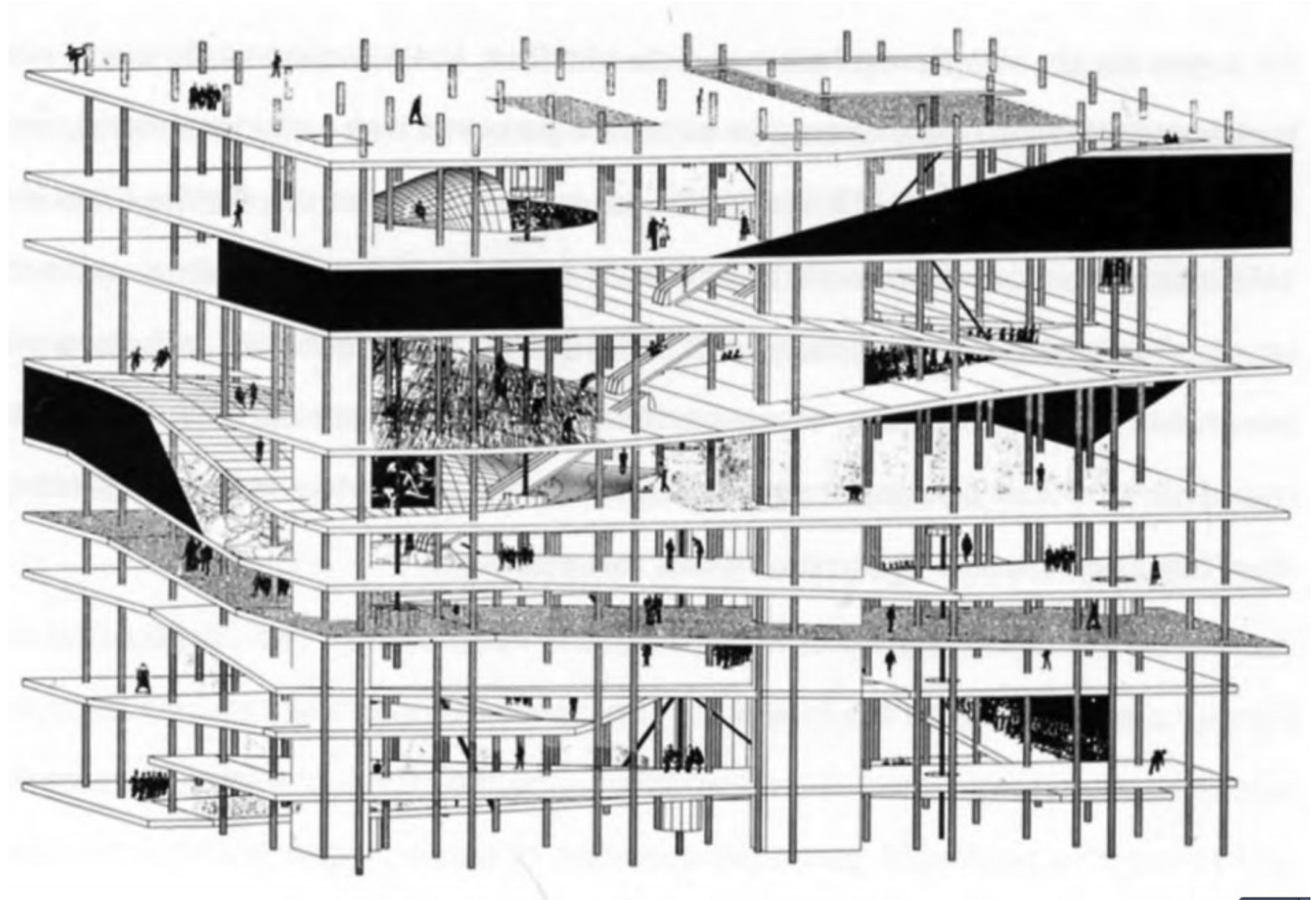
Looking at the floorplans and the scale of the 3d model had made me think if despite having an open plinth the connections are effortless enough for the users to feel welcome going inside this building, it made it clear that a central connection at the metro station only may or may not invite metro passengers, the whole project required to be more connected to the pedestrian levels suggested to the urban level as well, otherwise it would create another type of obstruction just like the existing church and the mosque



The X-Ray of the initial design connections show that the connections require individuals to get in to the buildings , and in order to do so , it still needs a good connection with the public.

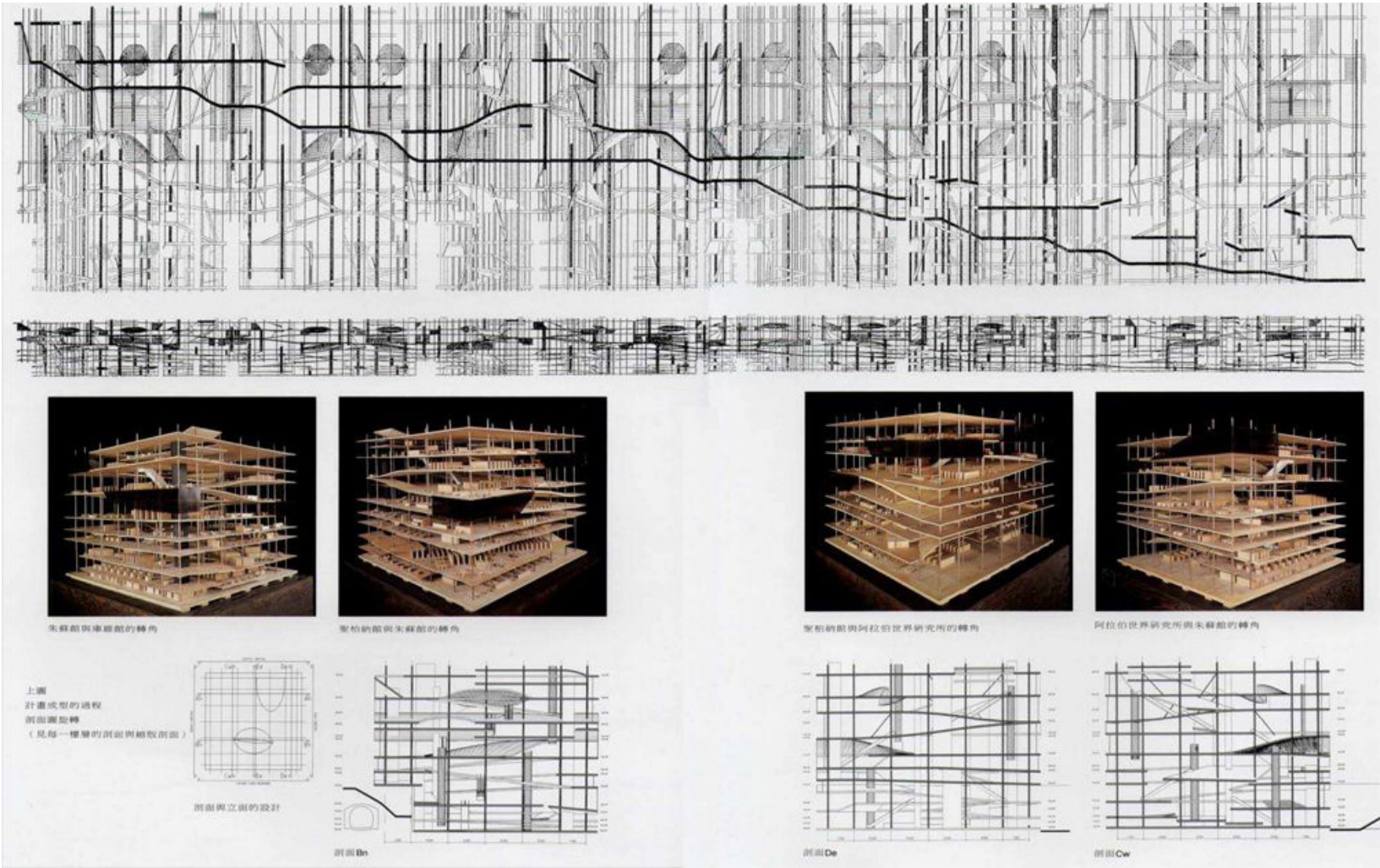
Interior Boulevard• Connections

Case study 1-OMA Jussieu Library



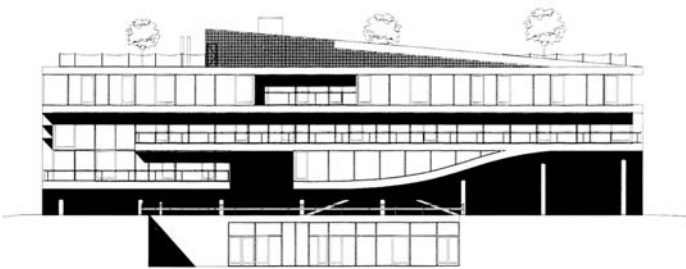
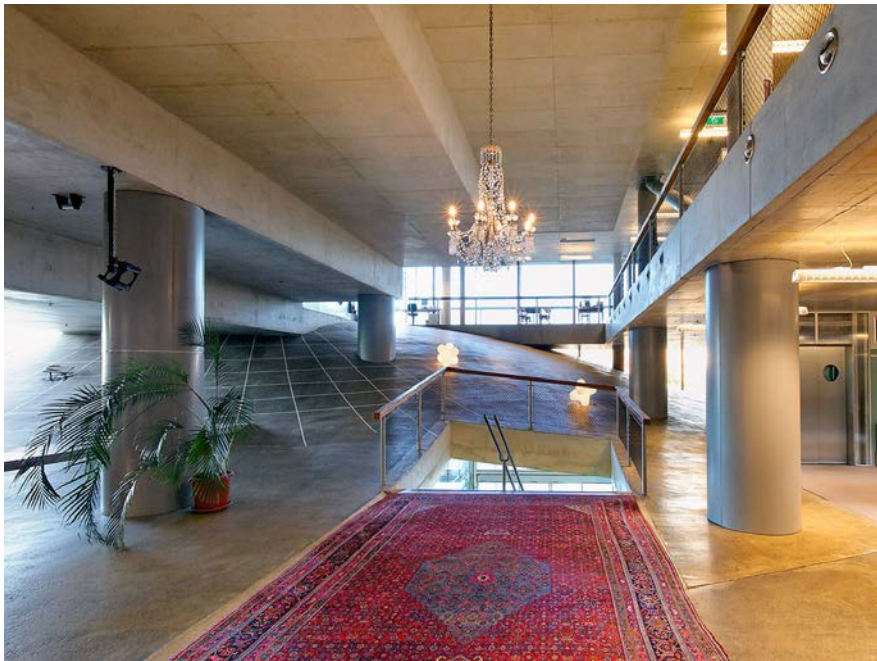
Looking at OMA's Jussieu library , there is not such a thing as a level and all the levels are considered as onefolded surface programmed along the way.

The model they made emphasizes on infrastructure and primary structure. The facade seems to be of less importance and it is again the floors and the columns that create a skin for the building

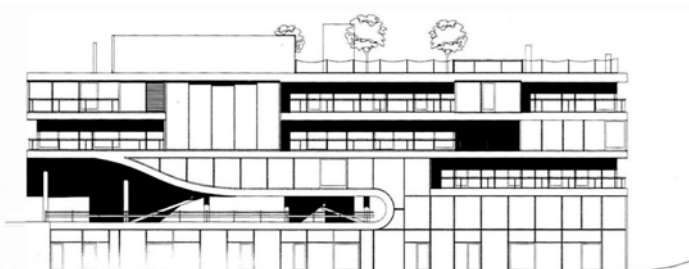


Case study 2-MVRDV Villa VPRO

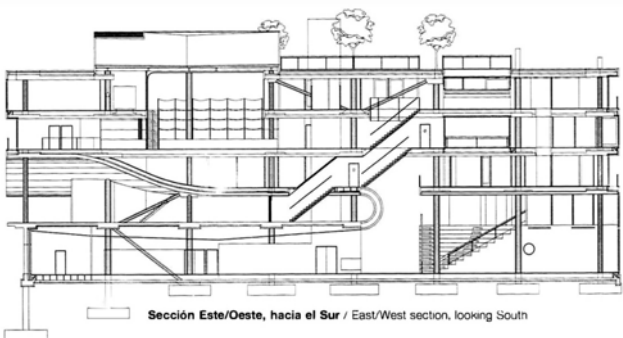
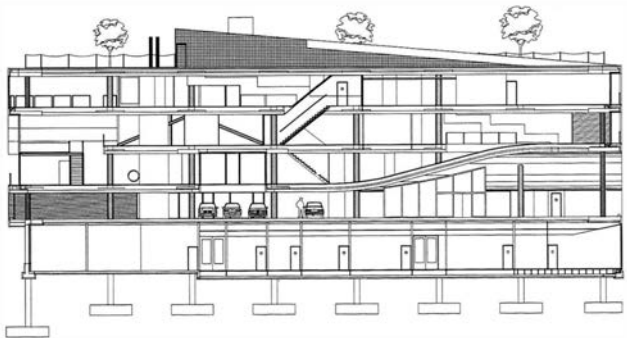
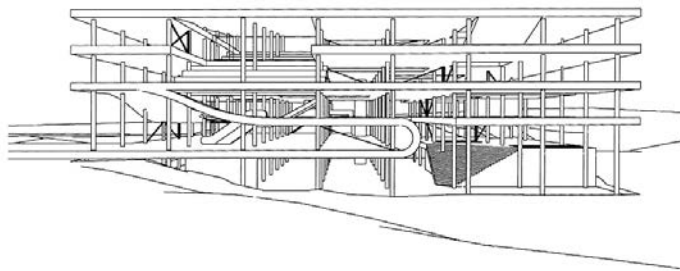
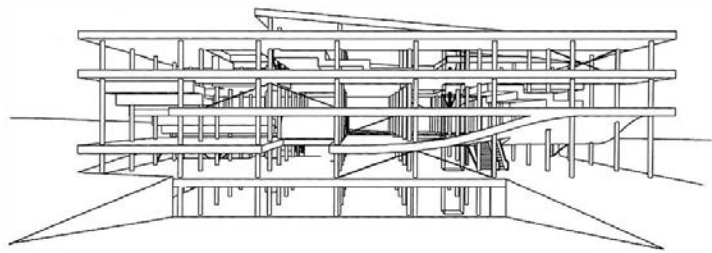
Similar to OMA, MVRDV created an interior boulevard as well, however looking at the photos these ramps are gradual and follow a curve like path, that gives it more length to keep the angle not so steep.



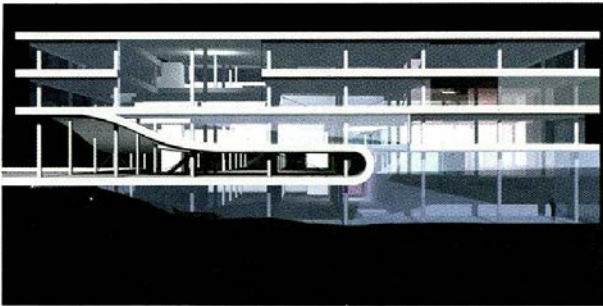
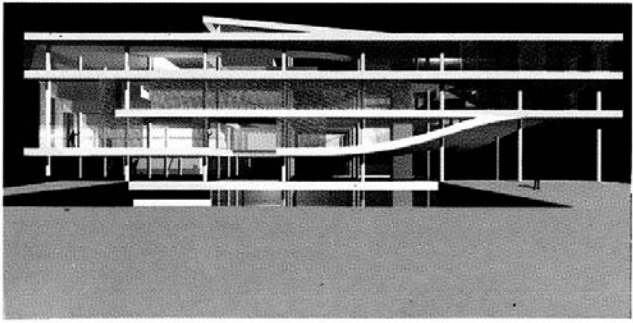
Alzado Este / East elevation



Alzado Norte / North elevation

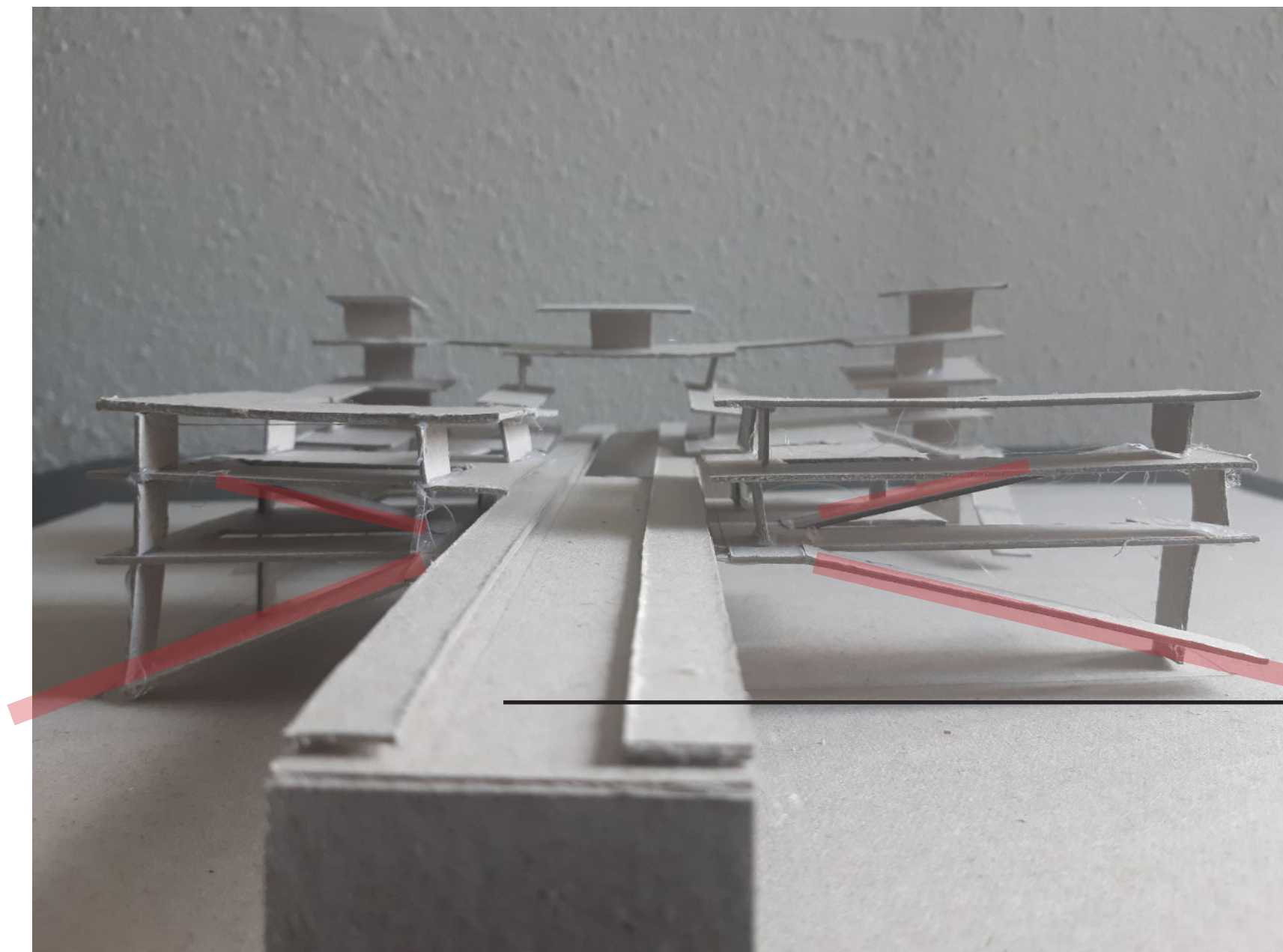
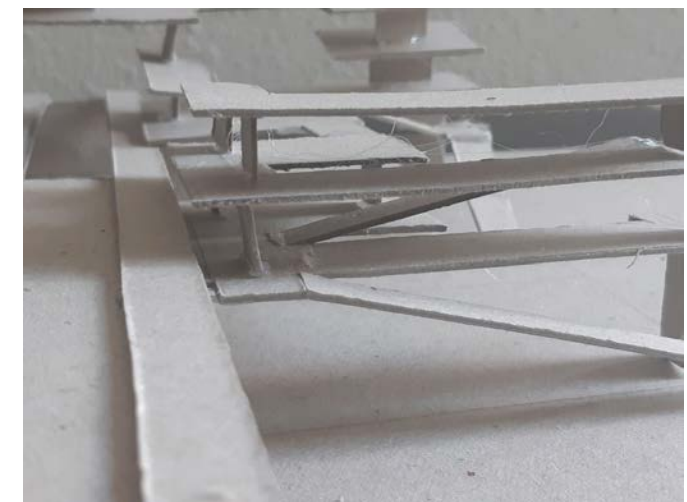
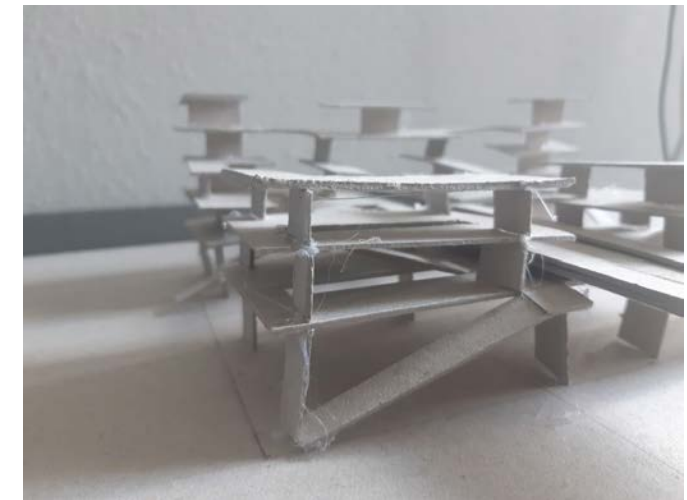


Sección Este/Oeste, hacia el Sur / East/West section, looking South



Interior Boulevard • Draft Model 1

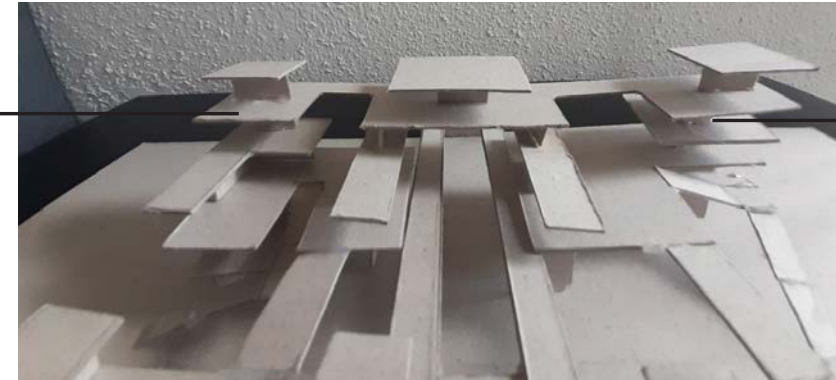
The model was made to answer the question how three levels including cityfloor level, metro level and skylevel are connected to one another and the connection would be as effortless as walking in an interior boulevard by binding the floors together.



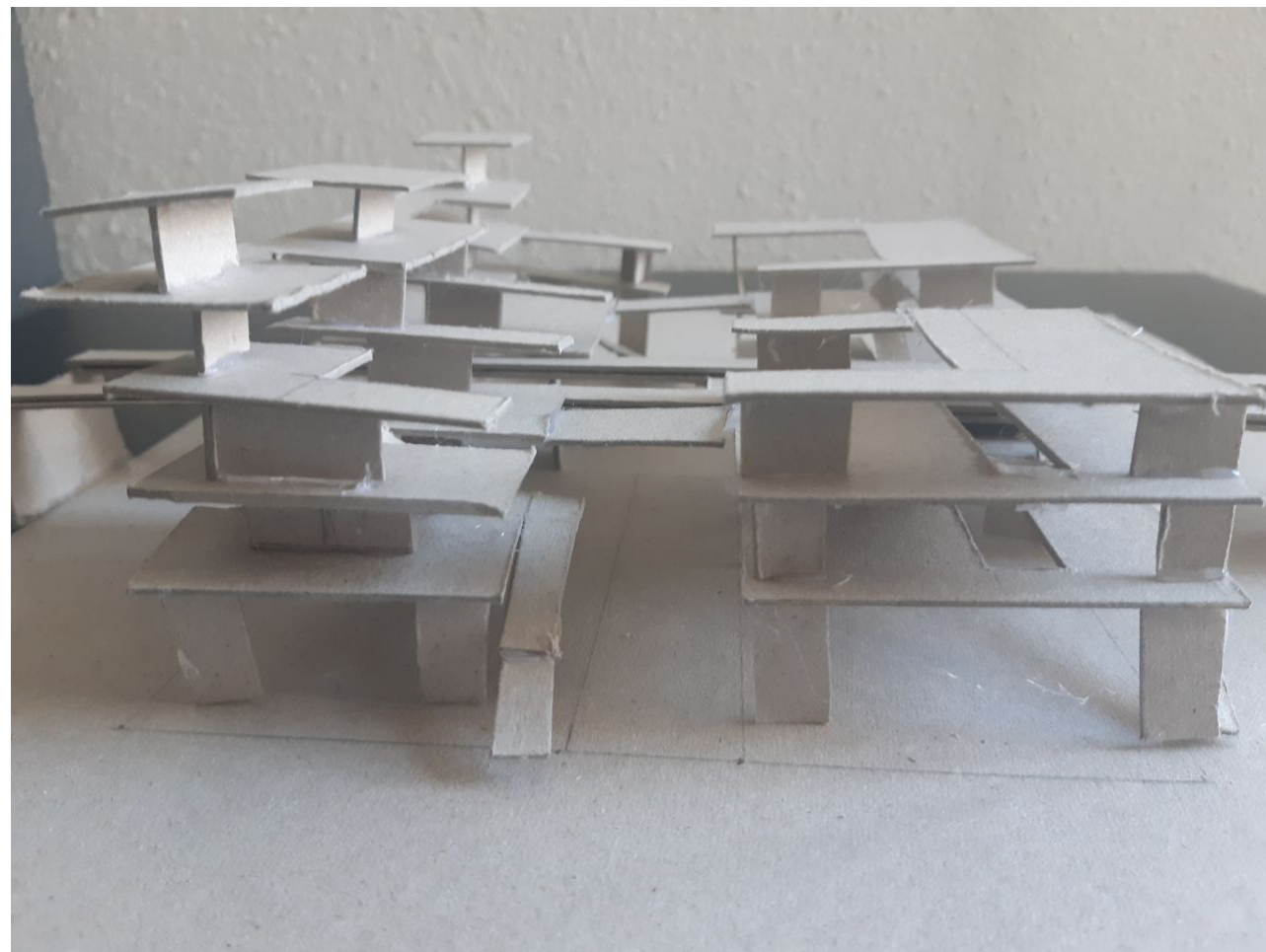
Extended Metro Platform

Even if ramps were implemented it looks like they are only attached to the buildings from the side and still did not shape and drive through the project, from the look of it, you could say it is still a vertical connection dependent model

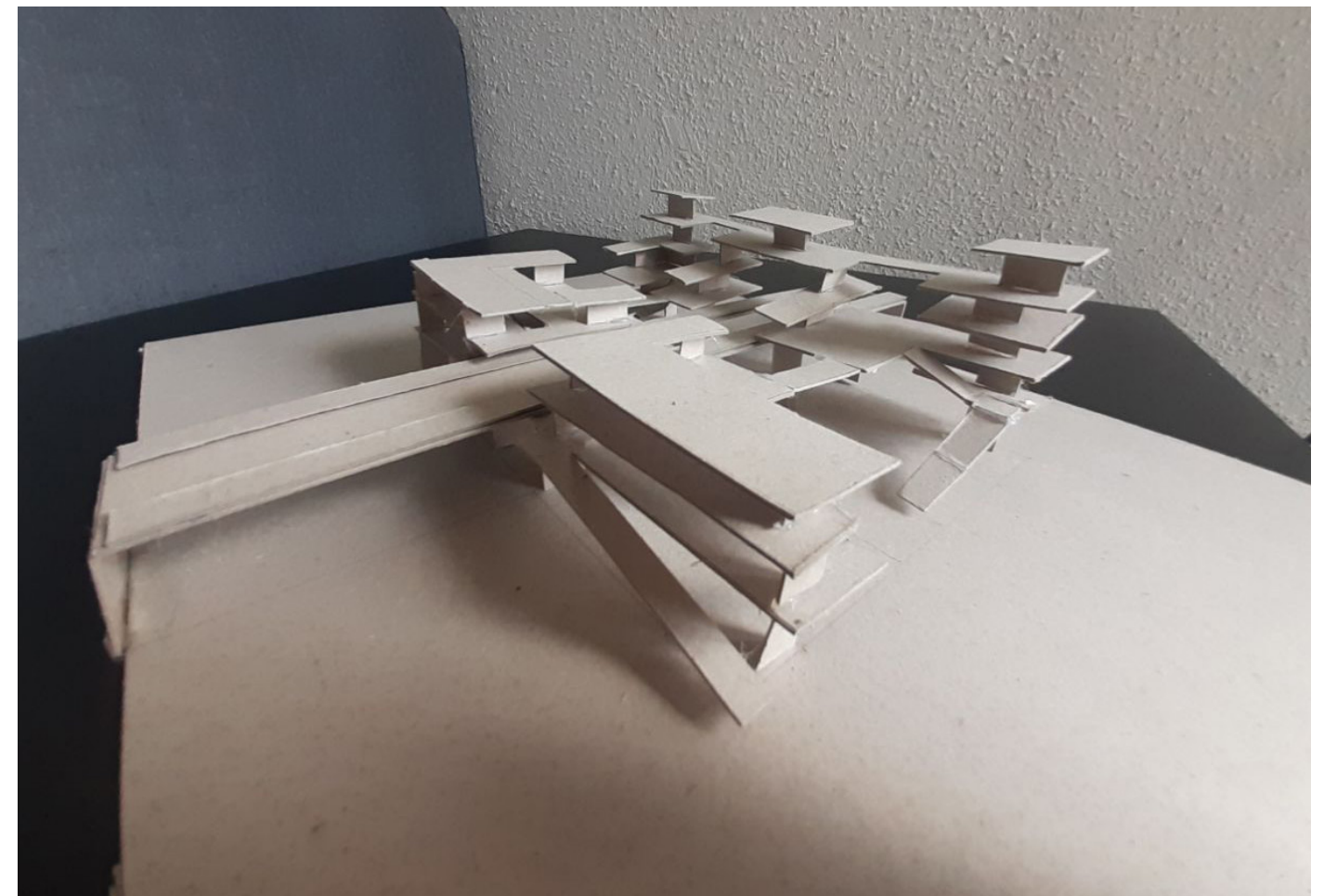
Chapel Side



Mosque Side



Chapel Side



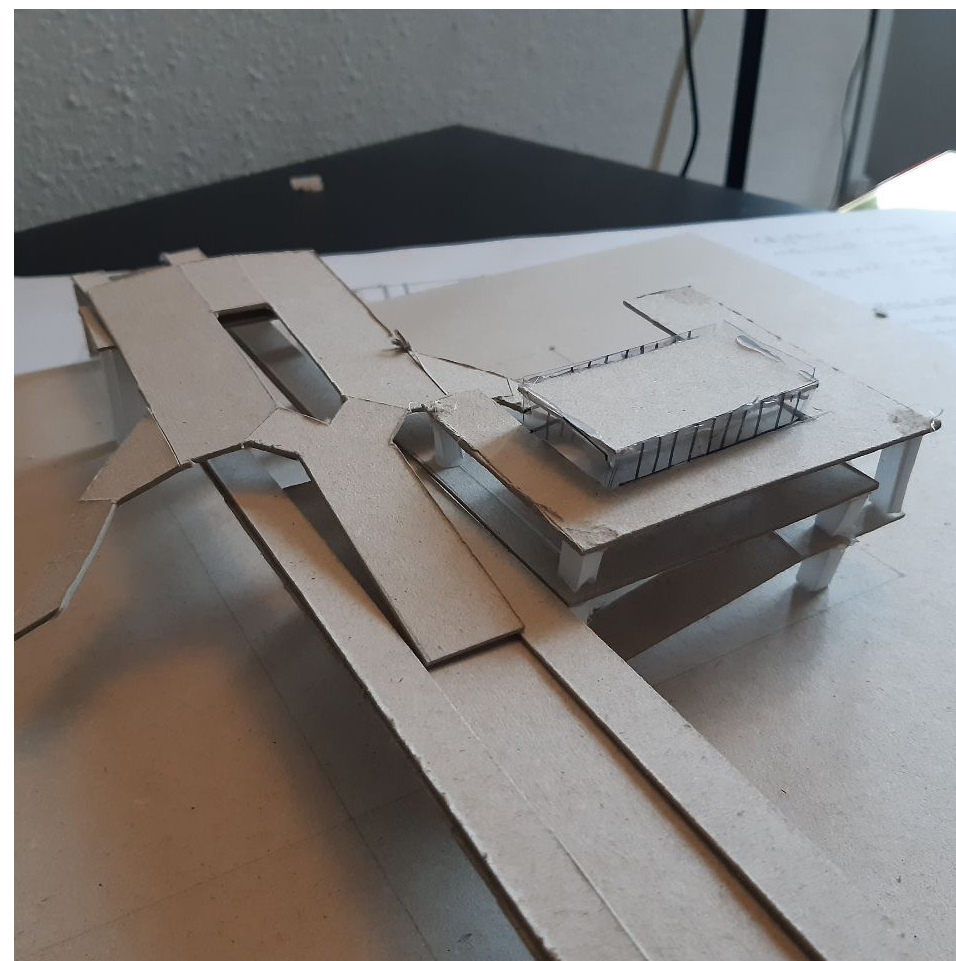
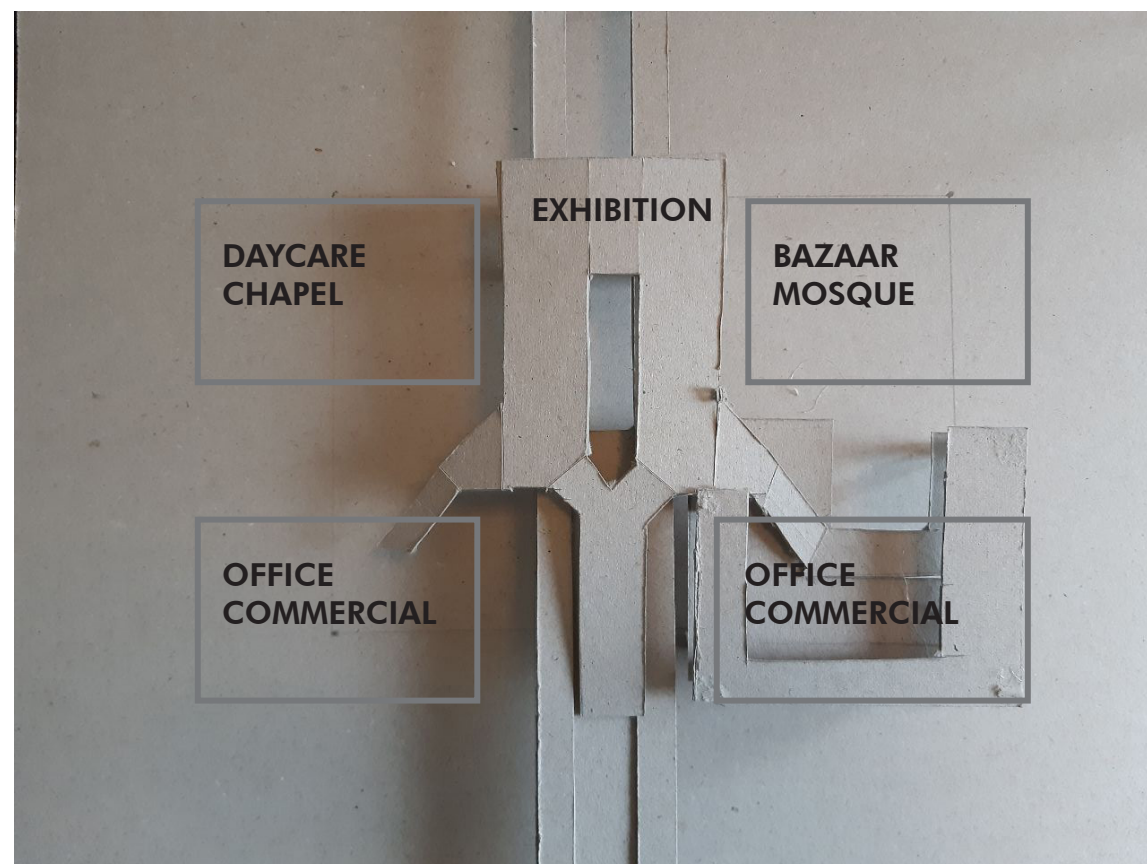
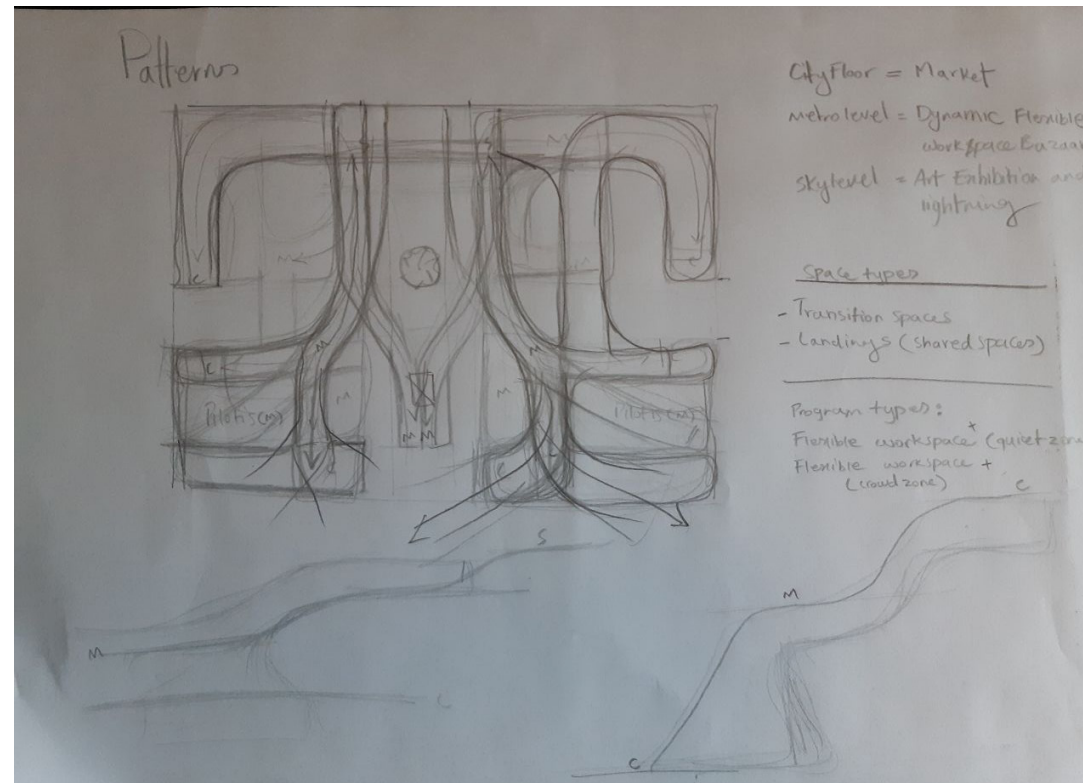
Mosque Side

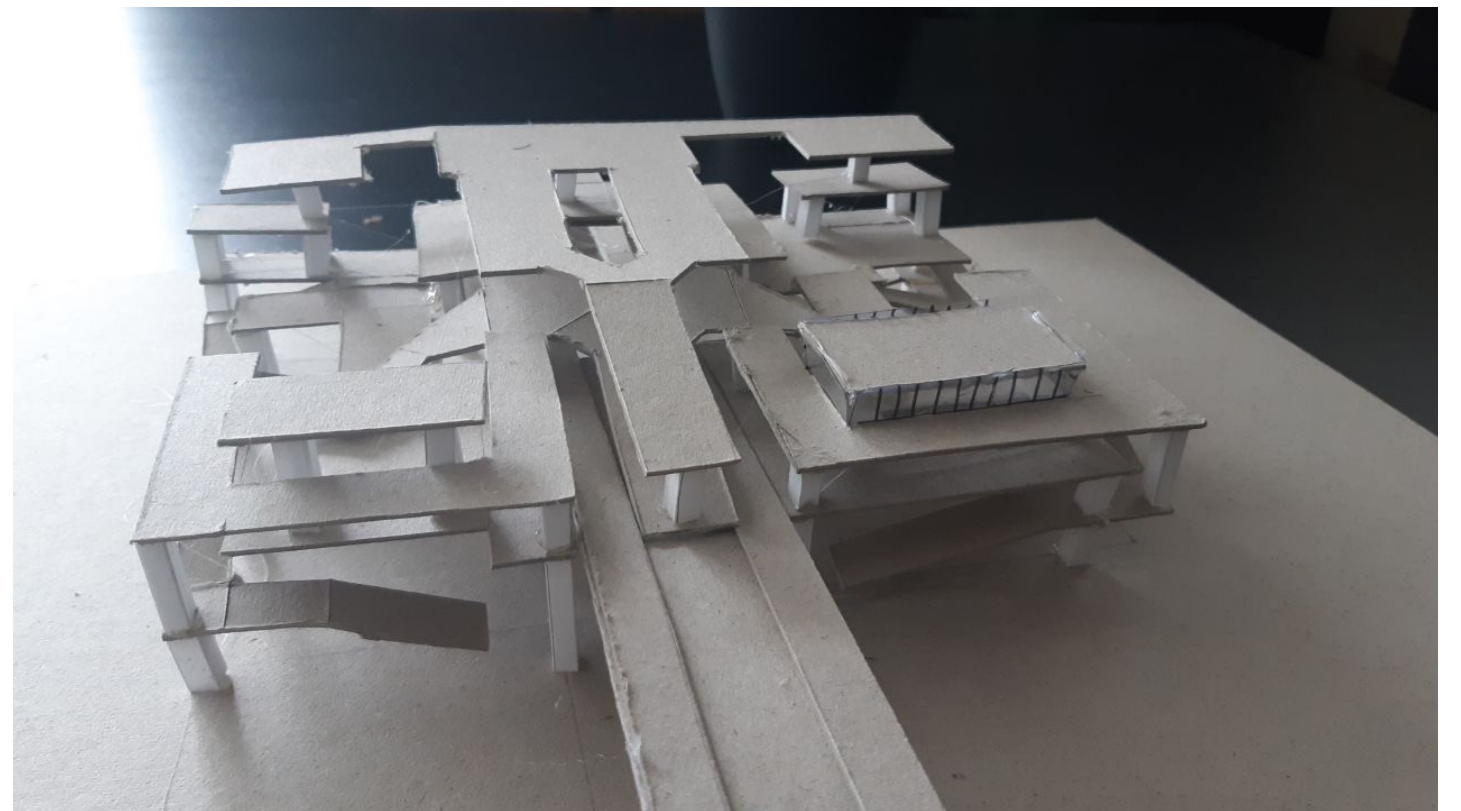
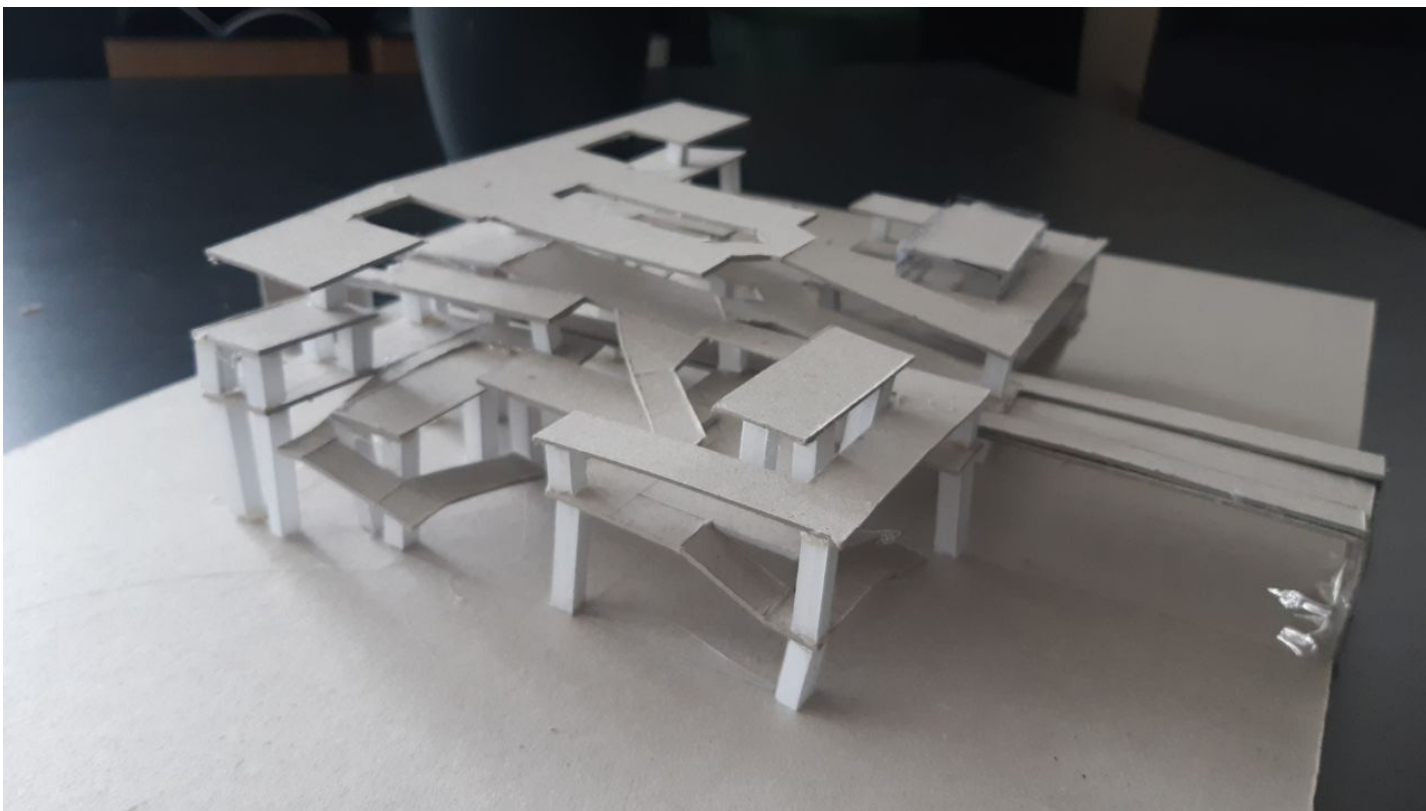
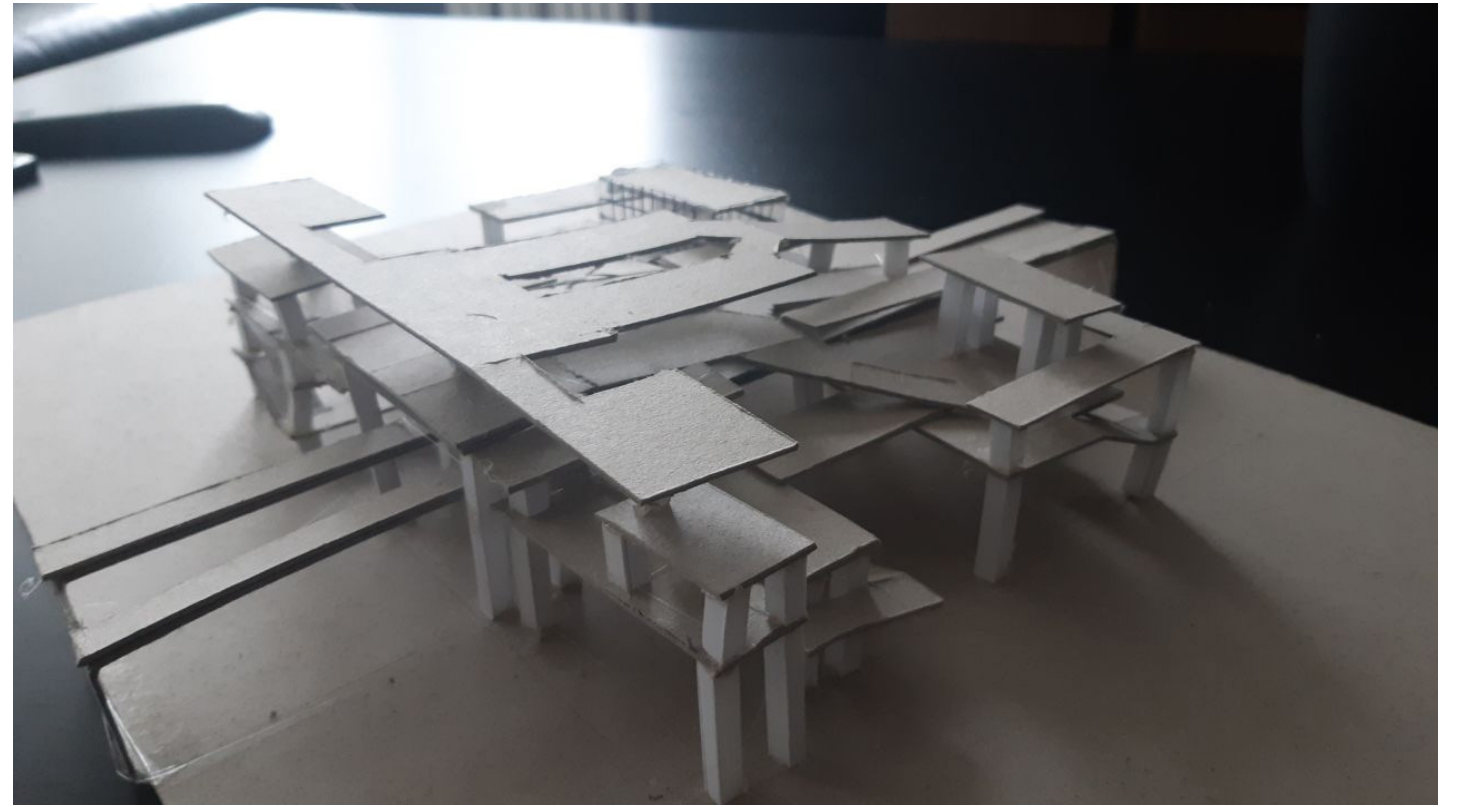
Interior Boulevard • Draft Model 2

The building organization shows that it has been made from several components: the metro station underneath the rails, the community buildings on the side for western and eastern and the front facade on Karspeldreef where the coworking spaces and the market takes place. All of these programs could be connected to one another in an effortless way through the ramps as long as they are not too steep,

This sketch shows how these programs from one corner to another corner can blend together and create new experiences

Process

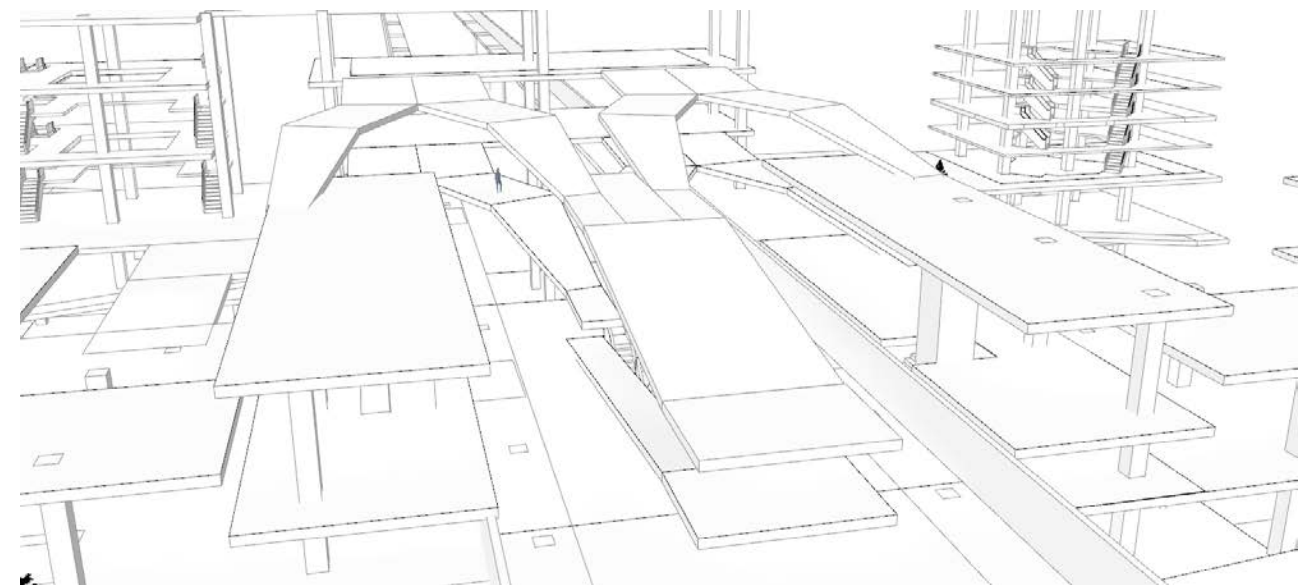
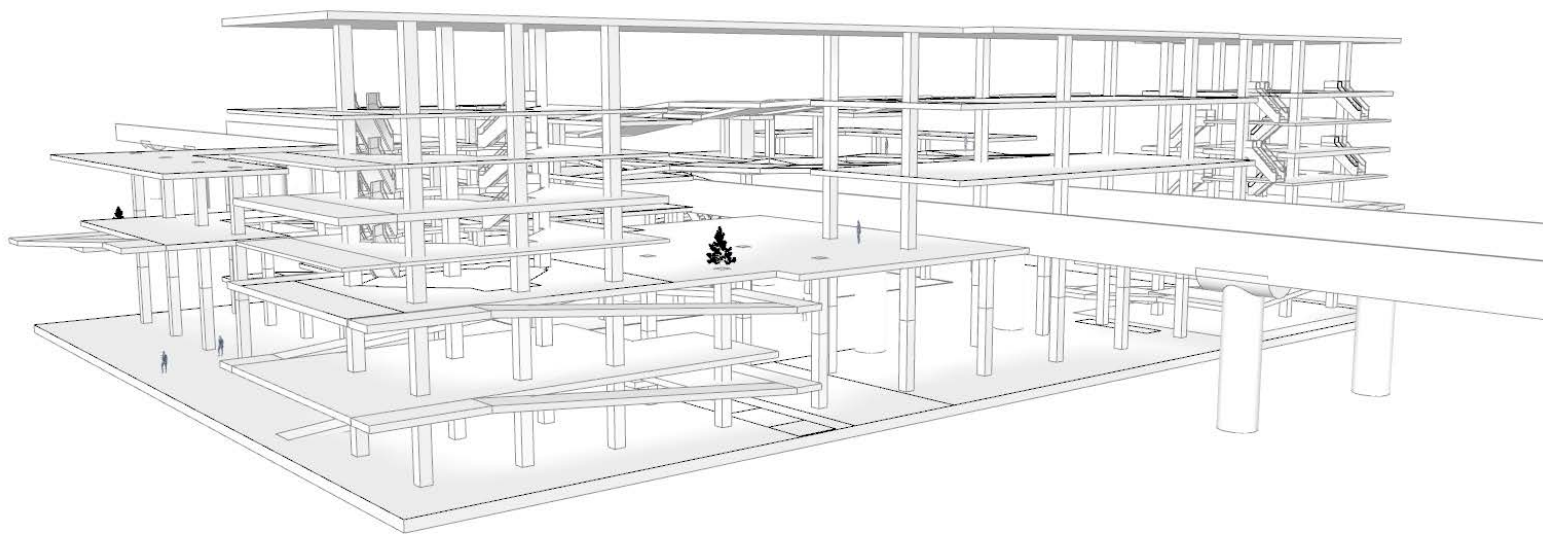
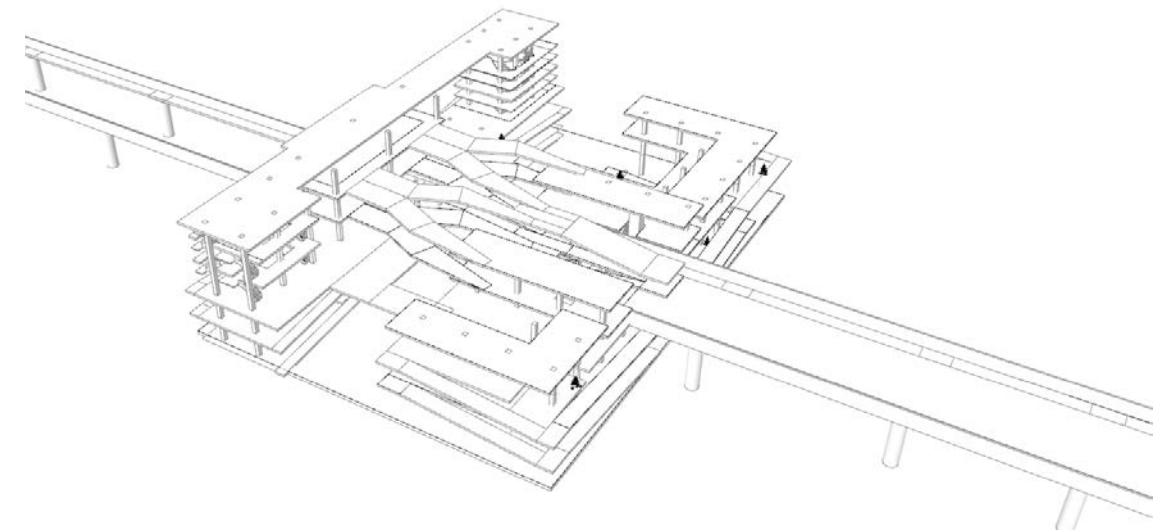
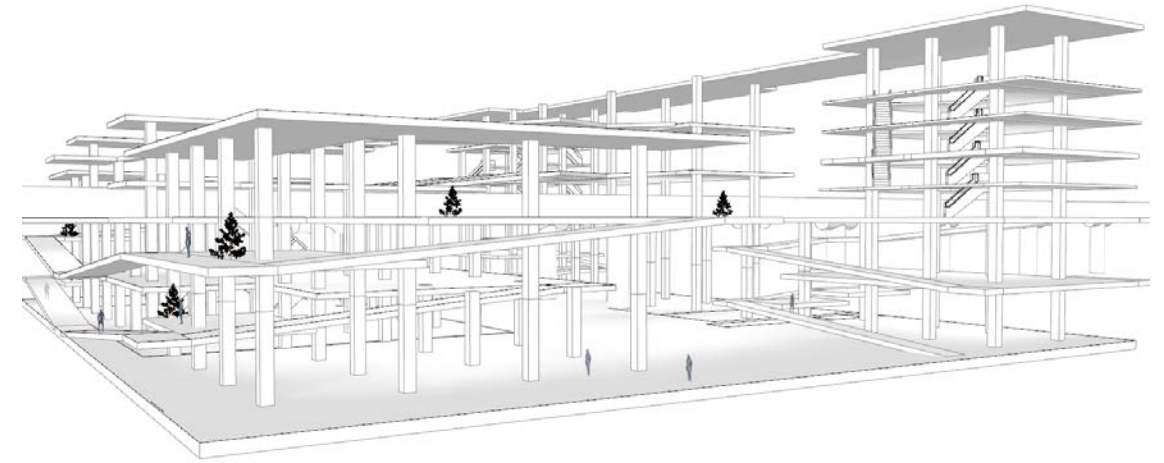




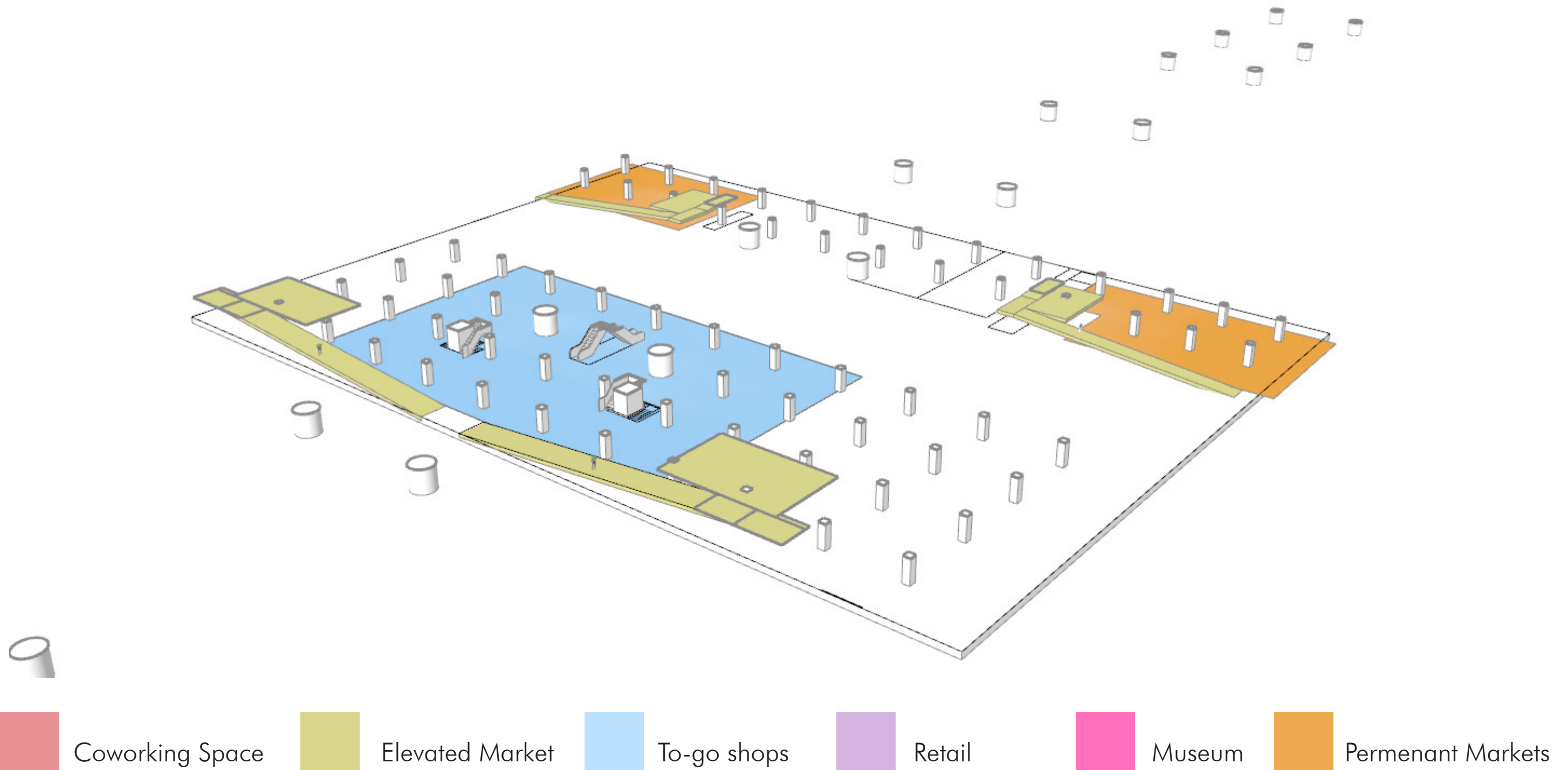
3D Testings:

The model making helped me to know more or less how I can connect the public to my building and there the programs together, but using ramps needed some practicality since the dimensions of the ramp for a project like this with height of around 4.5 meters in order to connect levels is not as small as connecting floors of 3 meters distance, you need a large amount of space or in my case, I decided to go around the facade and yet not to obstruct the views from the main street and shopping mall to the open plinth.

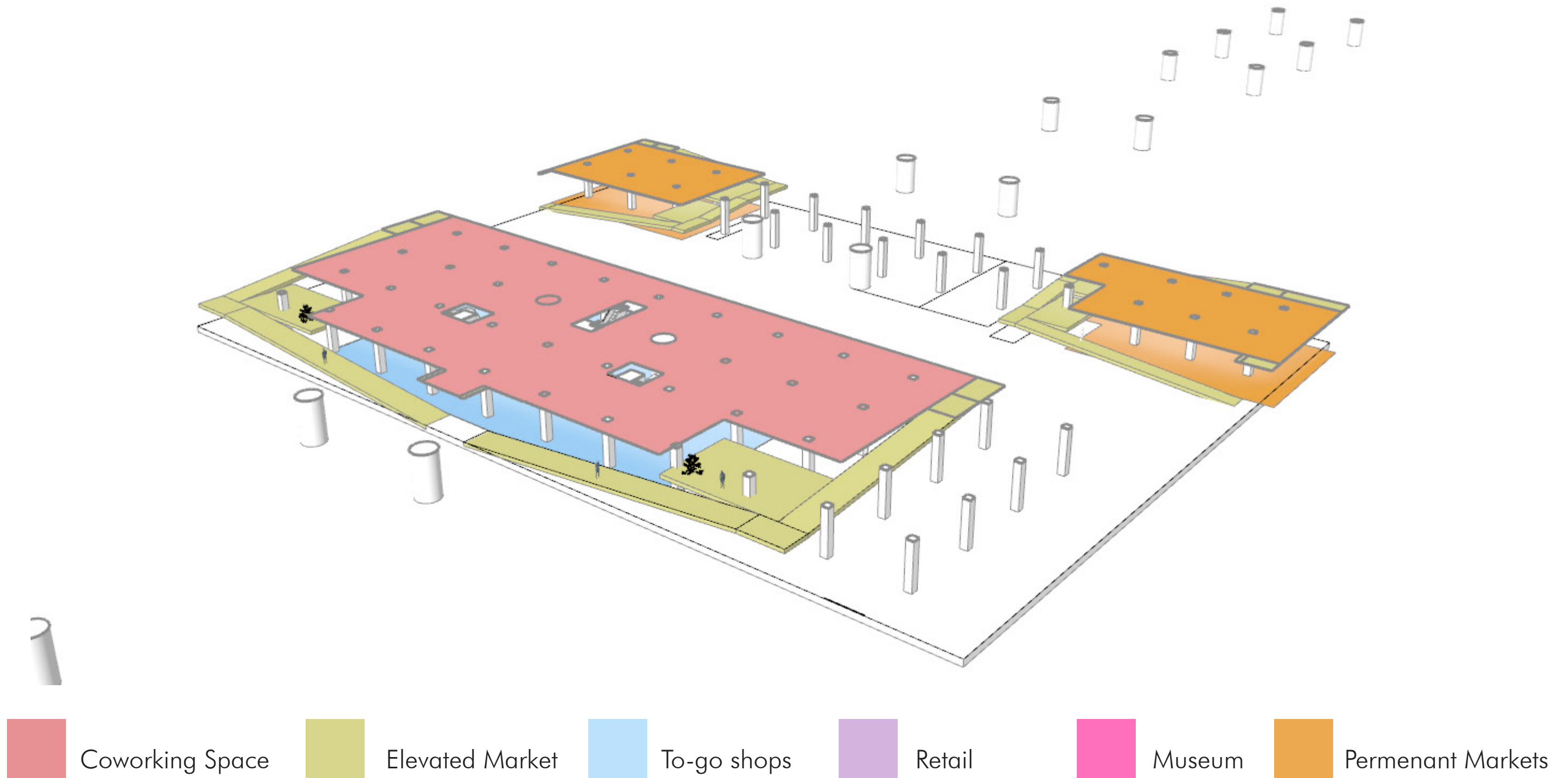
Just like the physical model I only worked with surfaces to make myself clear of the walls and windows and obstructions, based on the physical model I created a bit unconventional design for the ramps starting from the metro platform and above to overcome the gigantic context



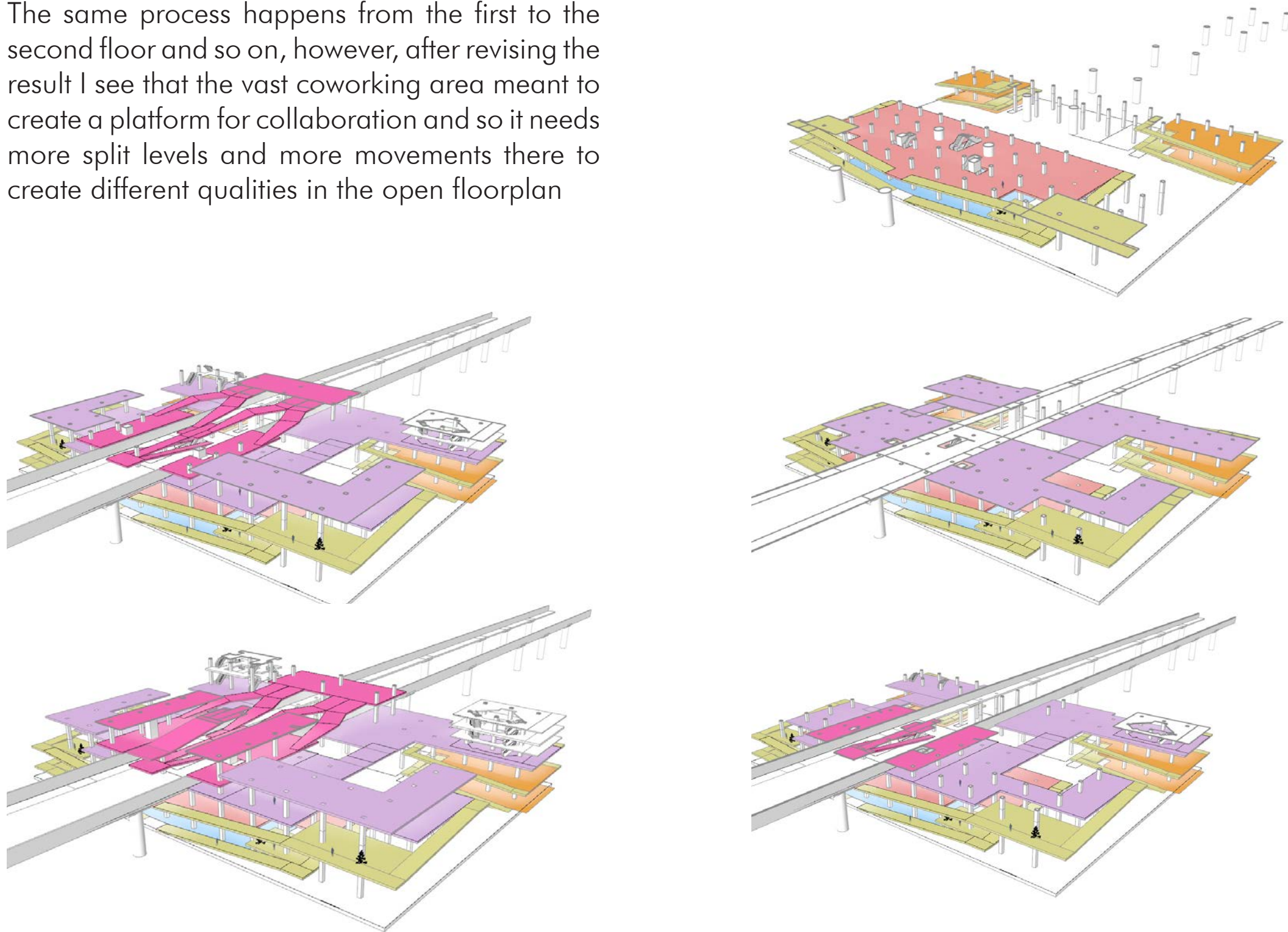
The ramps are gradual as expected but in terms of program in order to make these long ramps welcoming and eventful elevated balconies added working as markets and a landing. Underneath where the muslim and christian community buildings are I also imagined elevated market in combination with a set of permanent shops in for of a bazar, where they can display their products on specific days for the markets.



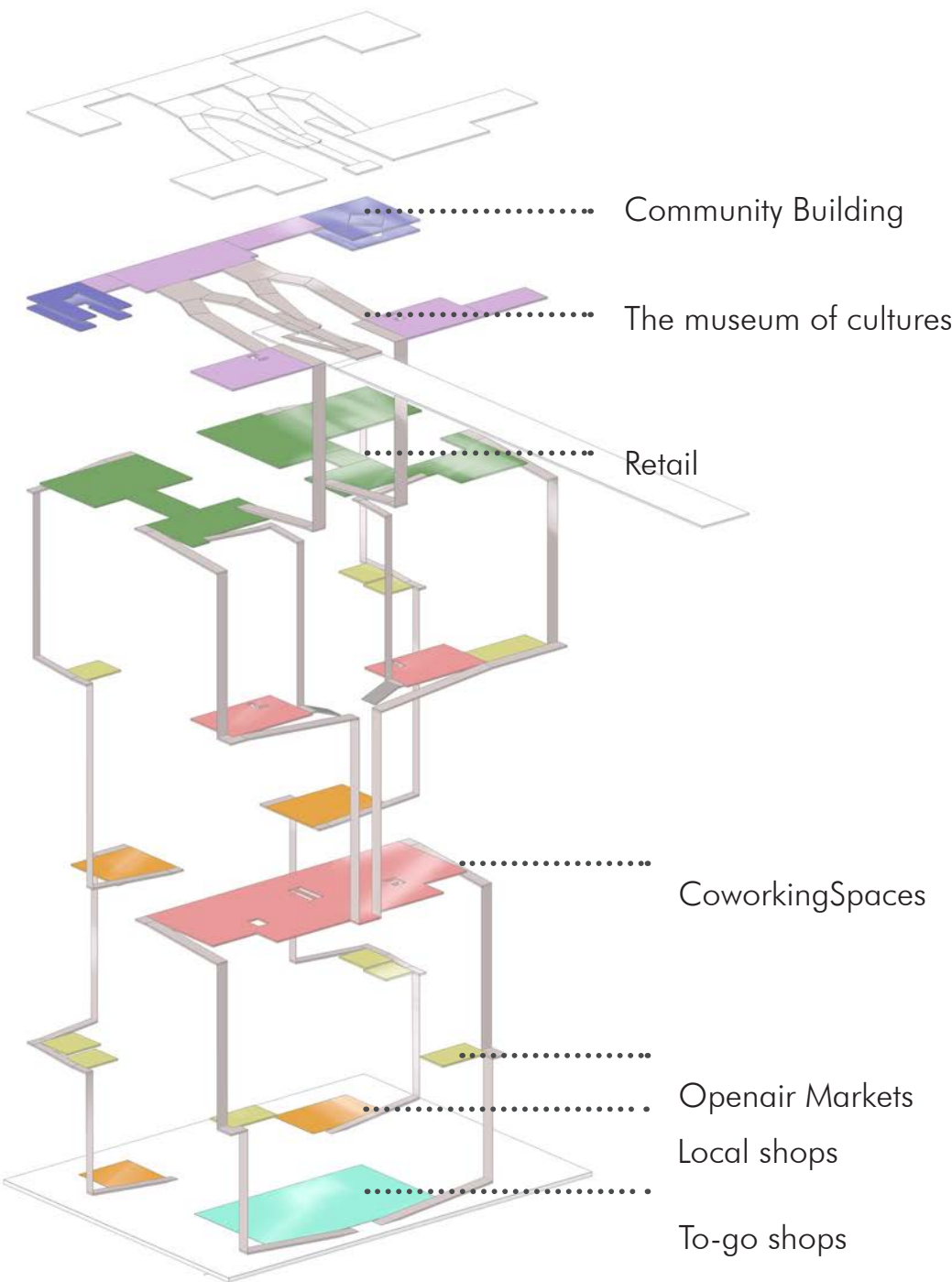
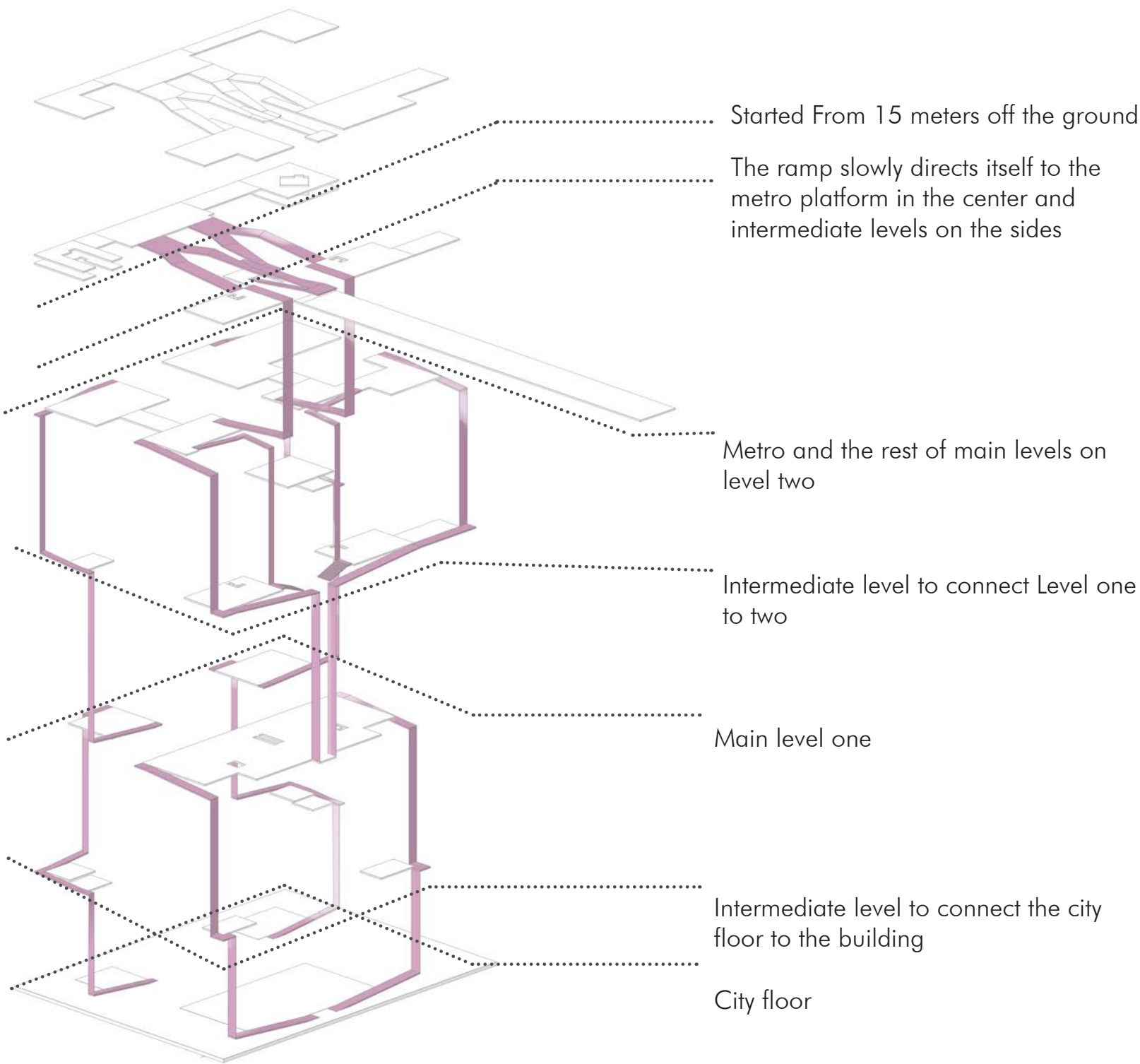
The second floor is a vast platform for collaborative spaces where the ramp s end.



The same process happens from the first to the second floor and so on, however, after revising the result I see that the vast coworking area meant to create a platform for collaboration and so it needs more split levels and more movements there to create different qualities in the open floorplan



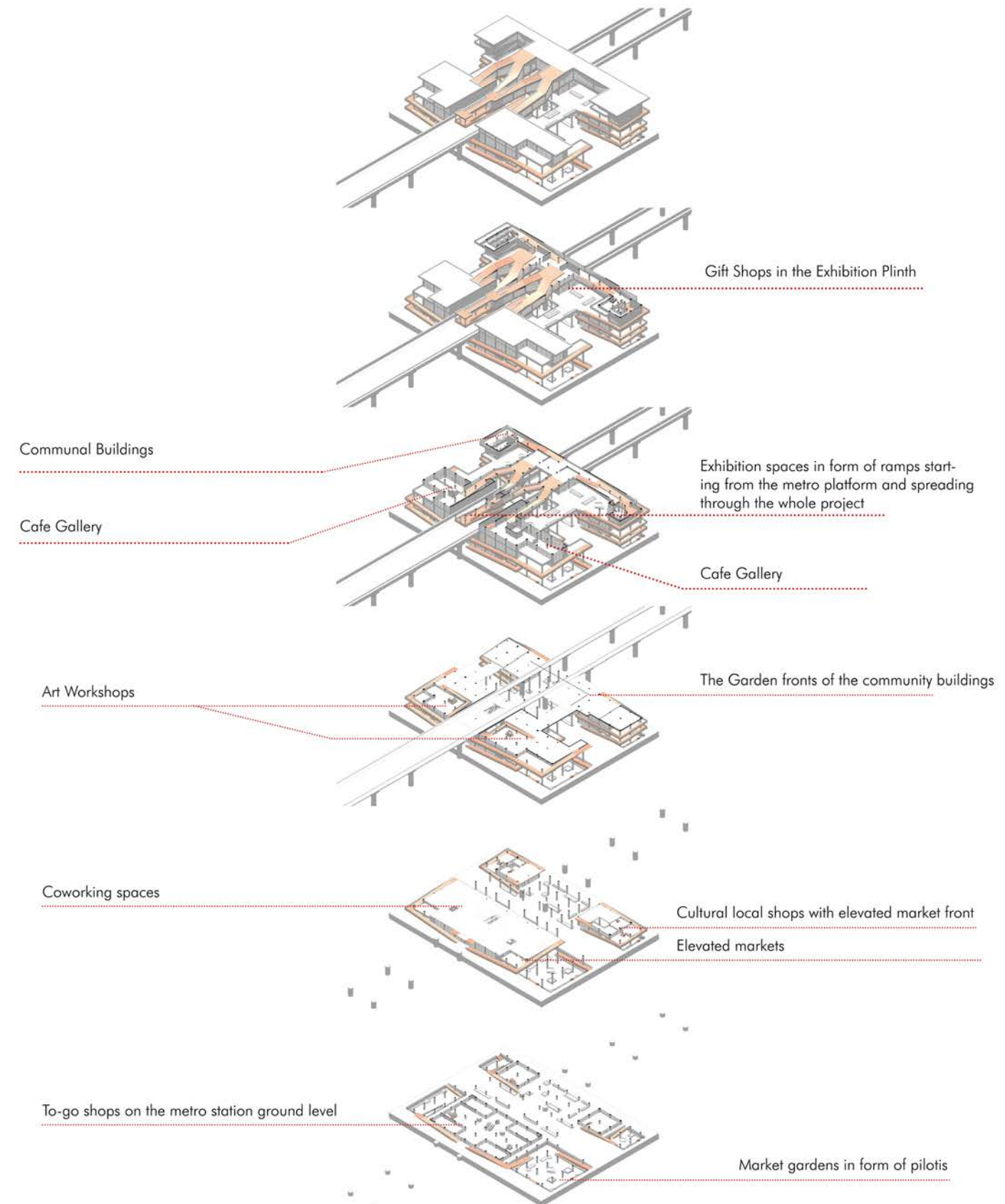
Exploded view :



Final connections:

The diagram shows the final stage where the programs are and how they are connected closely. It can be seen that in contrast to traditional vertical pathways, the routes leading to these programmatic areas are envisioned as seamless and engaging, facilitated by undulating planes and gradual inclines that originate from the pedestrian shopping zone and the primary street. Along these extended, gentle slopes, outdoor markets, exhibition platforms, and retail spaces are thoughtfully integrated at various tiers. This experiential journey extends both within and beyond the architectural framework, forging connections between all the diverse programs.

Binding these spaces together requires special care of the human dimensions and the ramp limitation for example in case of the market, it has now took 1.5 meters below the ground not only to create an enclosed space for the market but also to avoid height clashing underneath the pilotis.



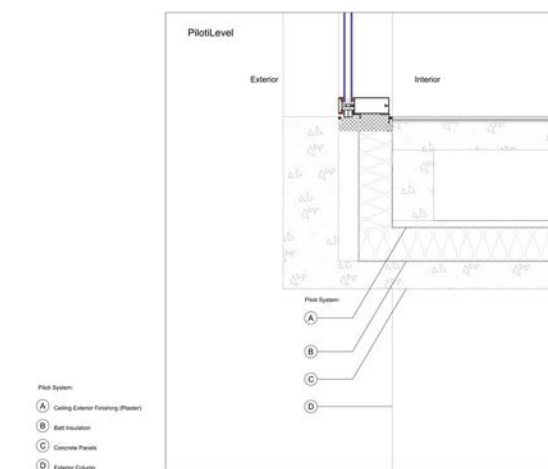
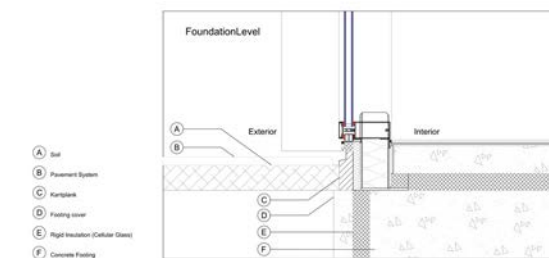
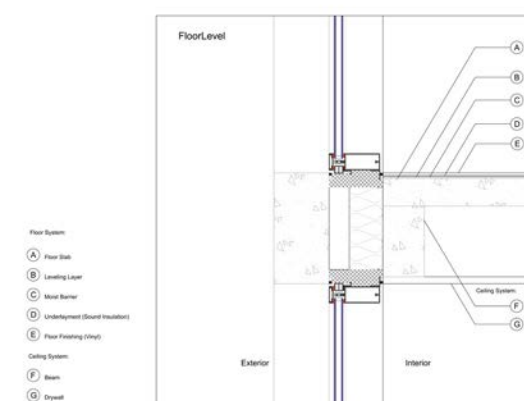
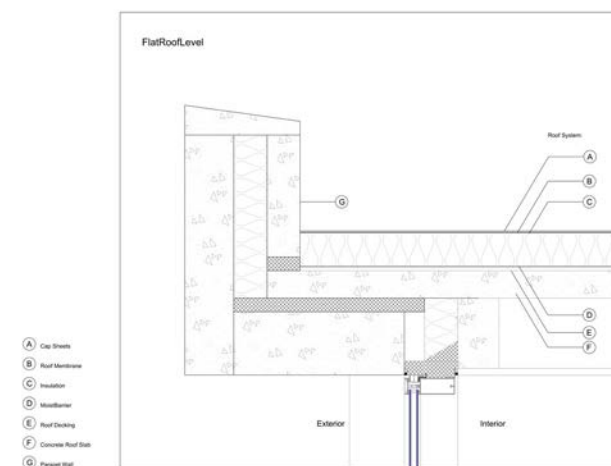
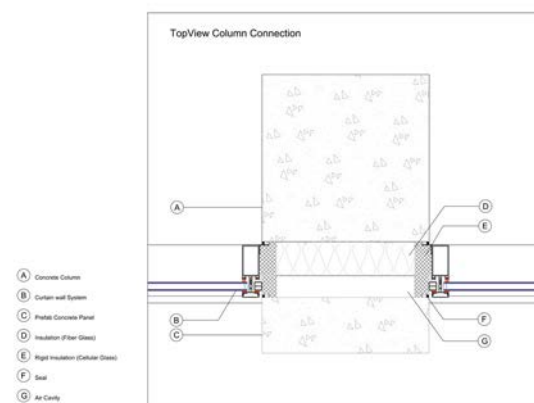
Details:

To create a complete open facade with its primary structure visible I went through a process of finding a way to combine the glass system with the columns and since it is not possible to do so directly as the facade system need insulation, I decided to use concrete panels in combination .

For the details my main exploration goes around how I could create a readable facadet hat stems from the primary structure and uses concrete facade panels az minimal as possible and the glass panel to maximal.

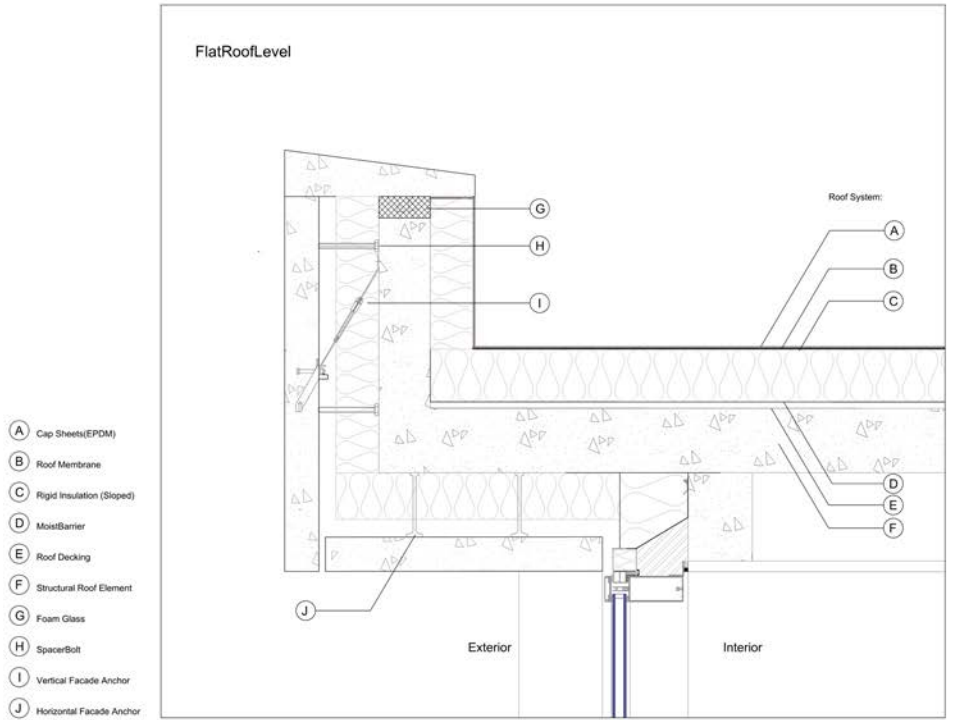
Process 1:

In my initial drawings I went with the flow of using very thick concrete panels just like the 70's style buildings at this context but

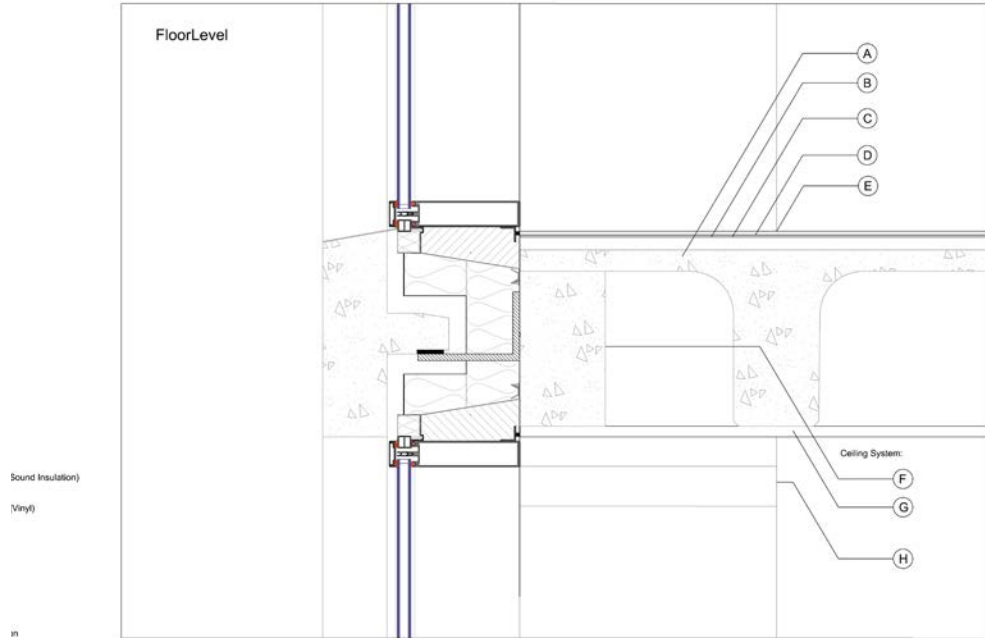


Process 2:

Looking for a way to mount this panels I tried several solutions. however eventually this led up to not using the 70's style thick concrete panels since I wanted to show the facade humble and as open as possible these thick elements only would obstruct the view



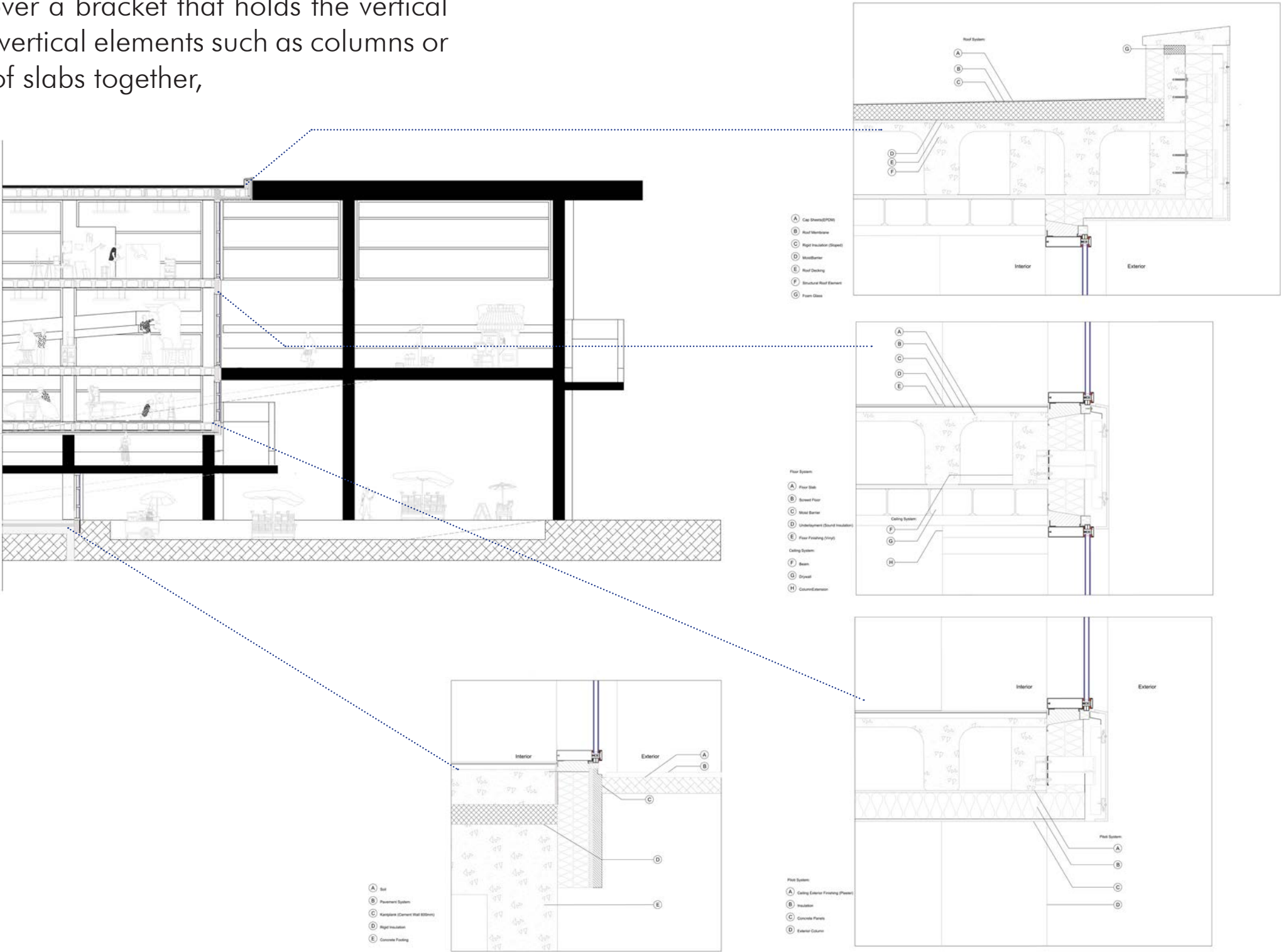
Trial 1: does not work due to the thickness of the panel



Trial 2 :Expensive solution and not very common nowadays

Process 3:

Final solution was to use thin claddings and fastening them through vertical and horizontal frames. Rieder is a manufacturer of these claddings and offers a wide range of panels in different colors and shapes, as for this project I used precast shaped thin cladding that is hanging over a bracket that holds the vertical frames in case of covering vertical elements such as columns or horizontal frames in case of slabs together,



Conclusions•

During the design phase research many of the gaps between the urban plan with the grid of movements and the effortless and eventful experience inside the proposed community center became clear only by doing testings with physical models or 3d models or simply by getting into details and material. I believe by the end of this research the movements stemming from the shopping street had blended into this seemingly brutal structure.

Adding more details to this structures and identifying its smallest element had help me reach a conclusion that a structure can look brutal and at the same time humane.



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