

The Nest

Housing



Ultimate Dwelling

“A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space.”

“All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home.”

“The nest for dreaming, a shelter for imagining - an abode of poetry.”

“Would a bird build its nest if it did not have its instinct for confidence in the world?”

G. Bachelard in ‘The Poetics of Space’

Introduction

In the world of metrics, little attention is directed towards the phenomena of dwelling and its qualitative aspects. This project heavily engaged with DPH and NDSS, but rather than simply abiding by them, it went far beyond compliance. The Nest, as in the Bachelard’s prototype, is a research-led manifesto towards true comfort, intimacy and retreat - the qualities largely ignored by contemporary housing worldwide.

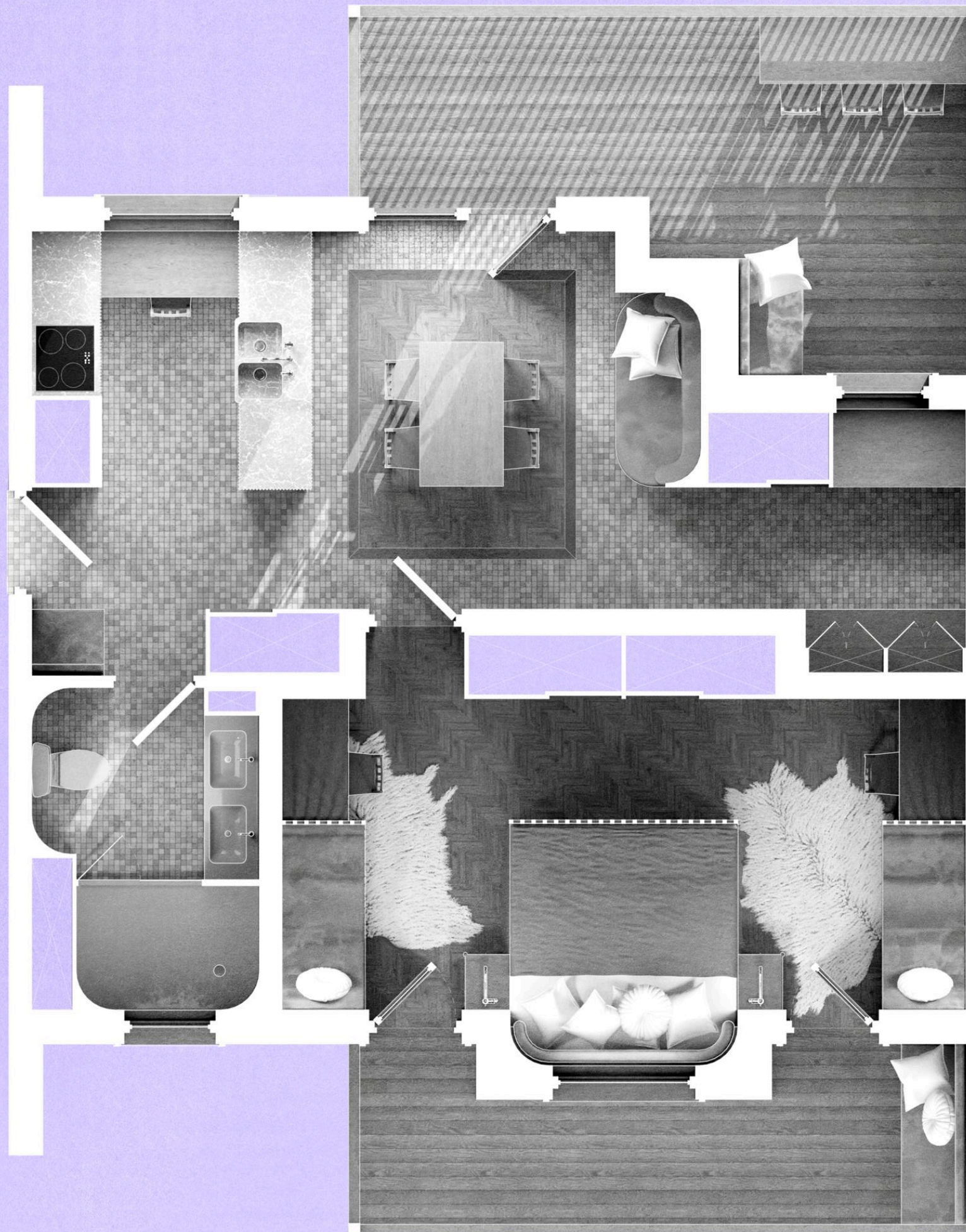
At the core lie two primordial anchors: the womb (an absolute interior that is bodily centered) and the nest (a translativ condition of inhabitation that accumulates psychoanalytic spatial media into truly private space). Both images are non-defensive conditions of protection and reverie within one’s own space. The building therefore abides by the images at every scale - from an individual bed to urban strategy.

What constitutes maximum comfort beyond the minimum while remaining economically sustainable?

How do corporeal spatial media shape the psycho-spatial perception of shelter?

Bedroom

The exploration overall started with the bedroom interior as a compressed dwelling of its own. Via testing and iteration devices like filtered light, porous separators, centred and niched bed, psychoanalytically active colour and material palette were found and implemented. The bedroom is always a scene of both retreat and sexuality. The interior manifesto connects the two via topoanalysis and spatial figures like corner, shell and altar.



Bedroom - core of the nest

The bedroom of the Nest is the primary nucleus. Not compact, but generous, an overarching space for sleep, work and exercise, comprised of key clearances for the full private rituals suite. The bed is 2100 mm wide and embedded into a niche, which is a statement on the comfort of sleep.

Kitchen/dining/living - second nucleus

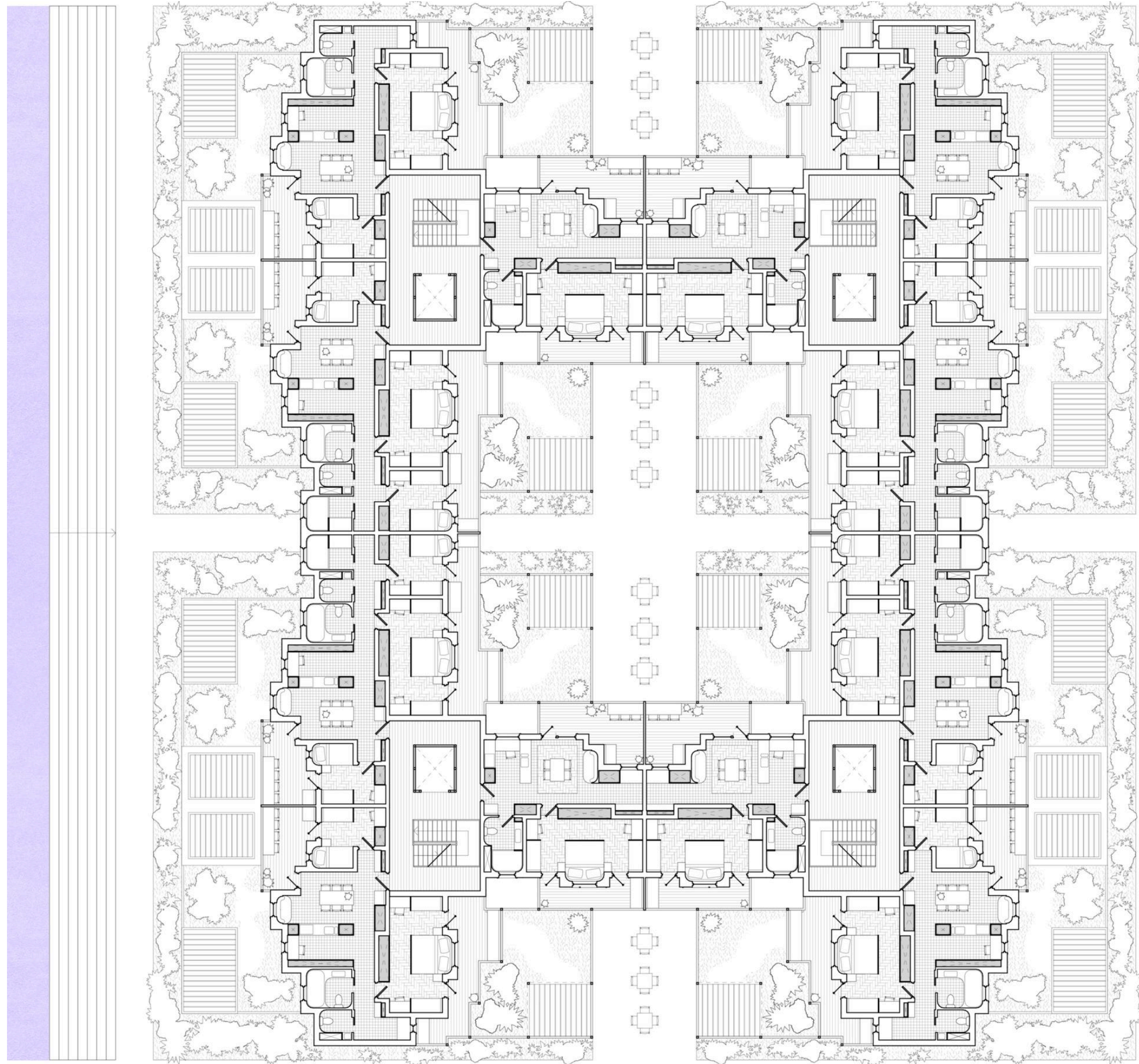
A gathering of primary social spaces is just as carefully arranged. A reimagining of the Frankfurt kitchen manifesto with multiple cooks is the core move. All clearances are designed for 2 people passing effortlessly and coexisting without compromise

Bathroom - hygiene in one volume

The shower is intentionally dual - bringing sexuality into the hygiene volume. The sink is split to allow simultaneous use. The window is a key feature usually absent from modern apartment bathrooms, providing natural ventilation and sunlight.

Terraces - the interior, extended

Private terraces are another key project statement on the necessity of private exteriors. All apartments have a dining terrace, while each of the bedrooms opens into a private pocket of outdoor space. The courtyard is where most private terraces face - an exterior interior. Terraces speak to a filtered threshold mainly, as the outside gradually becomes the inside and vice versa.

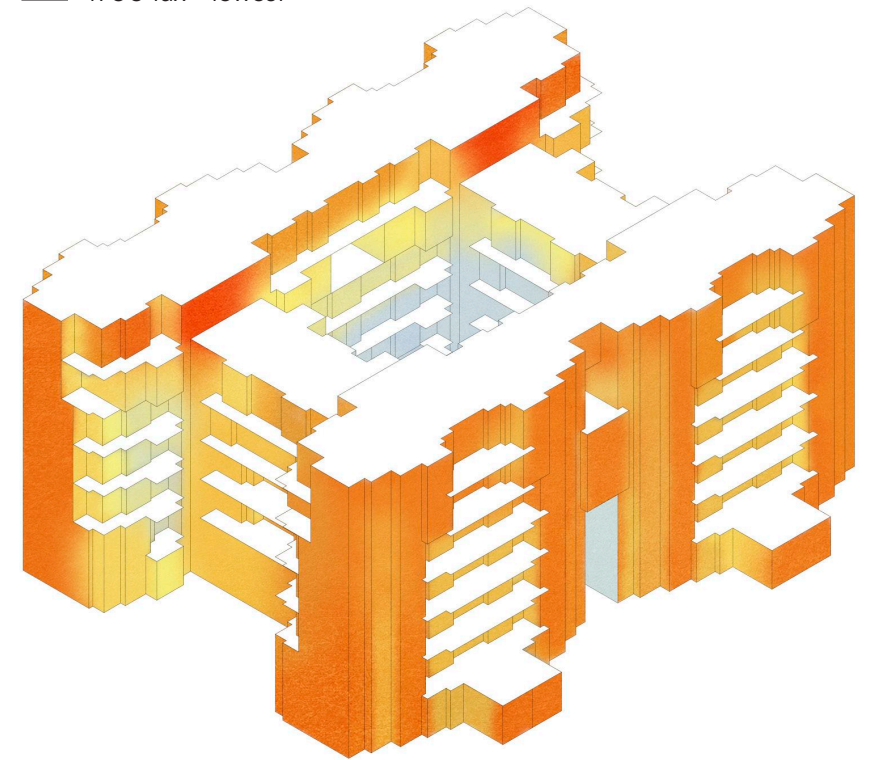


Typical Plan - Affordable Units

V N

1700 lux - lowest

Planar Logic



Everyday layouts with equal light

The typical floor is comprised of affordable units (53%) which were designed not by NDSS, but via a newly developed set of essential rituals and clearances. Therefore, one beds sit at 56 m², two beds at 75 m², and three beds at 92 m², which determines roughly 20 m² of interior space per person. All homes are dual aspect, arranged around 4 circulation cores and a single courtyard volume. Good daylight (tested in Grasshopper) and cross-ventilation were key drivers in environmental design.

The Courtyard

The courtyard was driven by The Housing Design Handbook guidance. Through numerous iterations, this urban form was deemed most effective not only in daylight, facing clearance and planning efficiency, but also in the interior condition it achieves at the 20 m span. A well that privatises the cityscape holds strong against the Nest research agenda.

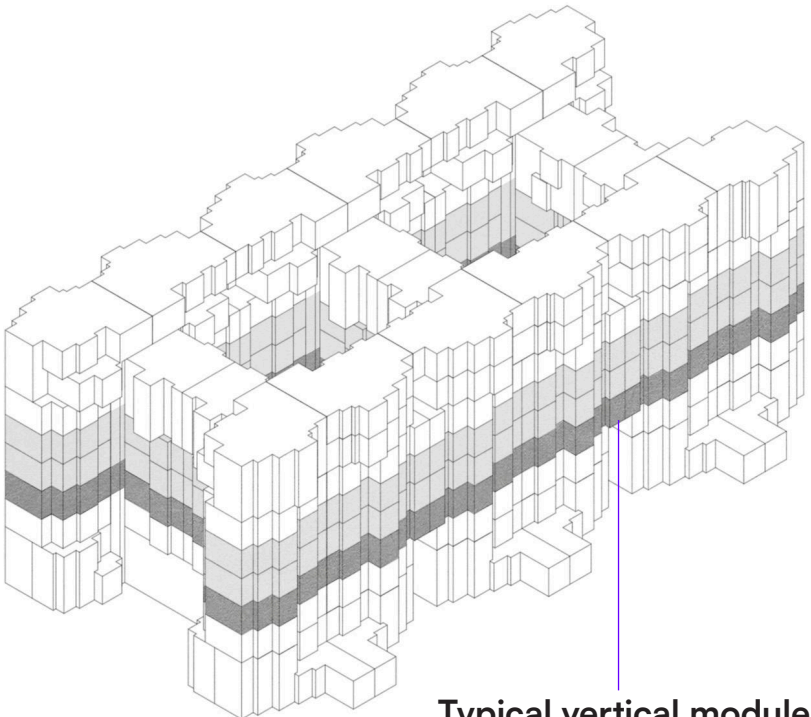
At the river edge

At the river edge the building gives way to the stepped embankment, its 500 mm seating steps descending to the foreshore as a place to sit, picnic and watch the tide. The threshold from courtyard to the Limehouse Cut channel is graduated and generous, never abrupt.

Modular Logic

- luxury 13%
- market 33%
- affordable 53%

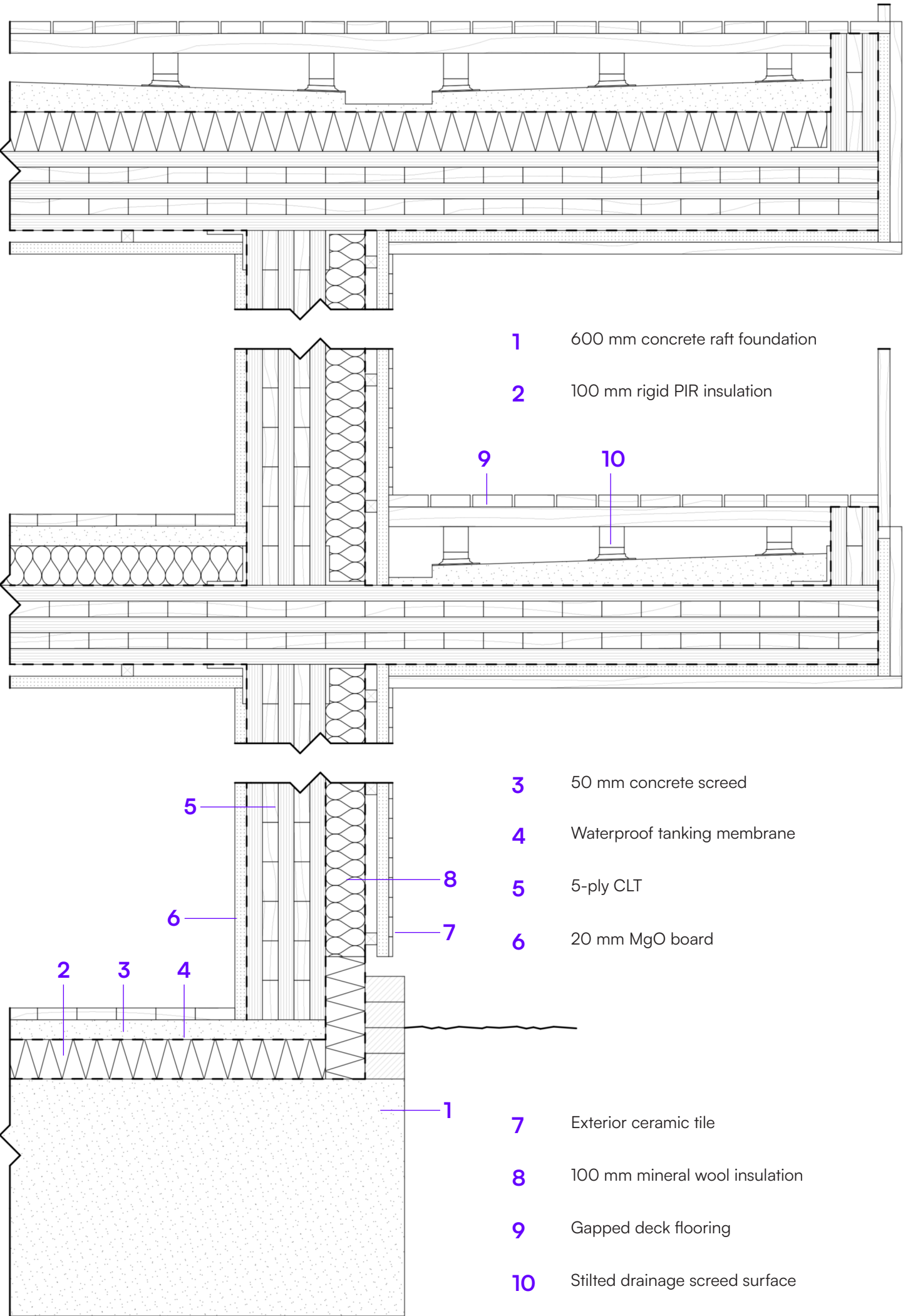
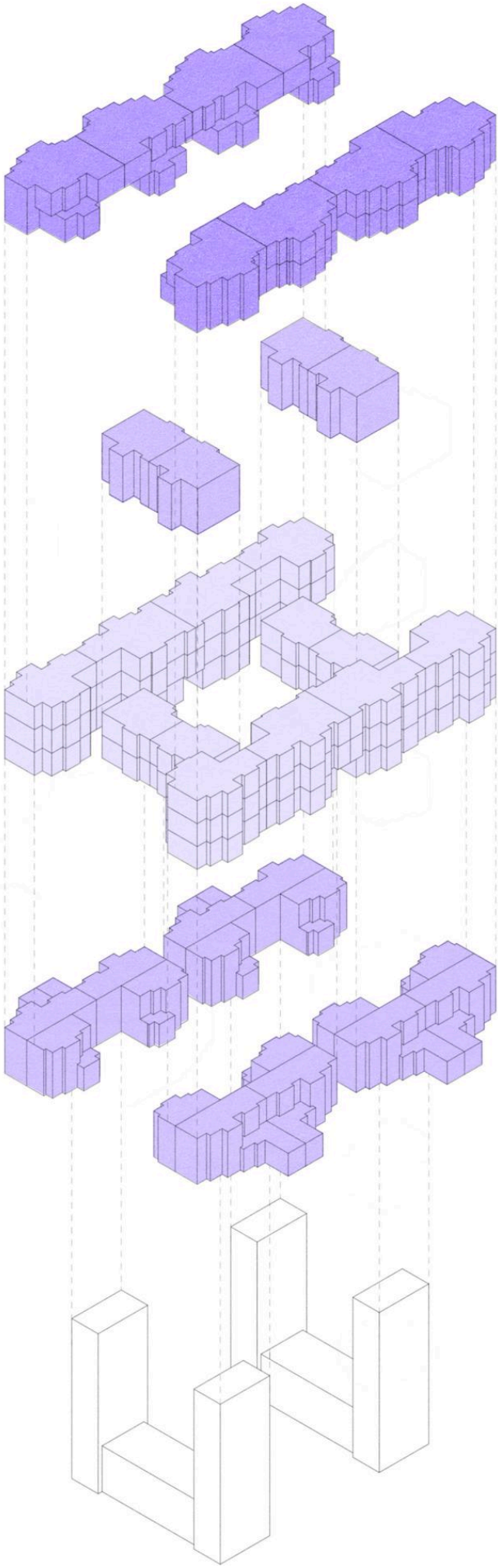
Tenure is mixed in a single fabric without visible segregation. The social housing share is larger than the market share, although kept just feasible enough to be sustainable.



Typical vertical module

The Growing Courtyard Block

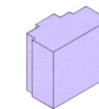
The courtyard block touched upon is assembled through typical corner blocks containing all apartment types present in the devised percentage mix and DPH over 140 considerations. A larger shared void is kept clear with environmental design considerations in mind. A central overhang over each courtyard carries city passage, so the block is never disconnected. The corner blocks with that consistent language can potentially grow laterally, producing long courtyard strips and adjusting to different sites. The middle can also be vertically expanded via a typical floor block containing affordable units (8 to 10 storeys).





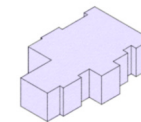
Unit itinerary

60 dwellings at 144 DPH are distributed across affordable, market and luxury shares, but share one architectural fabric. The typical floors are comprised of 1-, 2-, and 3-bed affordable units. At the ground level sit 1- and 2-bed duplex market units with private gardens. 3-bed market and 3- and 4-bed luxury units sit atop the block with sunrooms and rooftop gardens. A hallmark of luxury units, besides larger footprints, is small indoor pools. As a section, the block becomes the itinerary of domestic life - from affordable cores to extended market units crowned with rooftop open space. A single grid and identical finishes hold all tenures together.



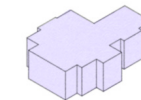
1 bed duplex (8 units)

- GIA: 71 m²
- Terrace: 50 m²



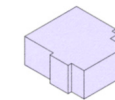
3 bed (8 units)

- GIA: 92 m²
- Terrace: 29 m²



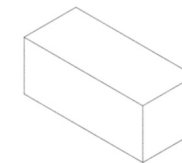
2 bed (16 units)

- GIA: 75 m²
- Terrace: 27 m²



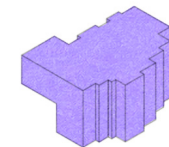
1 bedroom (8 units)

- GIA: 56 m²
- Terrace: 22 m²



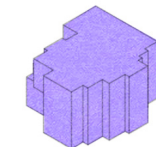
Common amenities

- coffee shop, gym



4 bed triplex (4 units)

- GIA: 243 m²
- Terrace: 138 m²



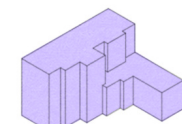
3 bed triplex (4 units)

- GIA: 225 m²
- Terrace: 96 m²



3 bed triplex (4 units)

- GIA: 141 m²
- Terrace: 78 m²



2 bed duplex (8 units)

- GIA: 115 m²
- Terrace: 57 m²

Verticality

The Bachelardian home is always multilevel. The challenge faced was feasibility versus poetics. The measure chosen was to limit multi-level arrangements to non-affordable units. The key driver was the desirability of a detached duplex image, which was expressed in maisonettes.

Southern Facade



Terraces as inhabited depth

The facade is not immediate, but gradual and owned. The goal was to make every part of the building belong to the inhabitants; thus, terraces filter the outside towards the interior. The niches at the exterior level add to the accumulated depth, as the building steps backwards, creating inhabited pockets.

Human scale

The other important feature is the finishes are scaled to the inhabitants. The building deliberately compartmentalises its detail. Battened windows, small tiles, and dense fences overall speak to how big a human is and how wide their perception is.

Grotesque Dimensions

Visual Composition



Introduction

The project positions itself between contemporary ornament production, speculative world-building, and discourses on scalar and dimensional ambiguity. It primarily makes up a close reading of rocaille motifs and the works of Johann Wolfgang Baumgartner in order to construct a legible internal logic within a spatio-visual composition.

Arrangement

The composition uses the Fibonacci spiral and Golden proportion to divide and guide scenes into a legible trajectory. The questions of perceived beauty were approached forensically. Individual vignettes follow the spiral, while the vertical composition remains tripartite as typical of rociles. The lowest band is heaviest and most corporeal, while the uppermost objects are almost ethereal.

Content

The vegetal spine holds and unveils the narrative and structure gradually. It reads throughout every scene, framing and fusing them into one living organism. With movement, scenes shift scale and perspective. Illusions of depth, continuity, and motion are generated. The vegetal band holds the scene in constant transformation.

Into the Earth

Burial Complex



Parting Made Transparent

“Human culture constitutes a product of an ‘existential fear of death’. In order to affirm certain conceptions of the ‘symbolic immortality’, culture produces and manifests practices of treatment of the human remains”.

“Burial industry is a performance for the living and a manifestation of their hope for immortality, therefore a deactivator of the fear of an absolute end”.

S. Mohov in ‘Birth and Death of the Modern Burial Industry’

Introduction

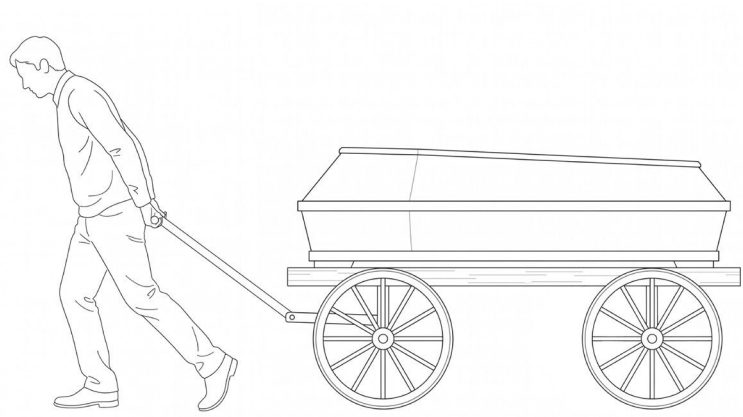
The funeral industry, while as old as time, retains its traditional rigidity as times change and new practices emerge. From medieval neglect of physical matter, through positivist fetishisation of dead bodies, we enter an entirely new era of death as an ecological event that the industry fails to adapt to. The demand today is for personalisation and flexible rituals, as fixed traditions give way, the market adapts, and scepticism towards religion grows rapidly. Humane is the word long absent from the industry. The burial process is usually kept a mystery, hiding behind tradition. This project goes against that grain, making the burial as transparent and interactive as possible. A novel practice of turning bodies into compost, already implemented in narrow businesses, is adapted and expanded. The building takes death and turns it into an interior process, enveloping grief, matter transformation and remembrance.

How can an industrial process of dead-body preparation and transformation be reframed as a ritual of shared labour and time designed not for technicians but for families?

How do corporeal media shape the psycho-spatial perception of loss and return?

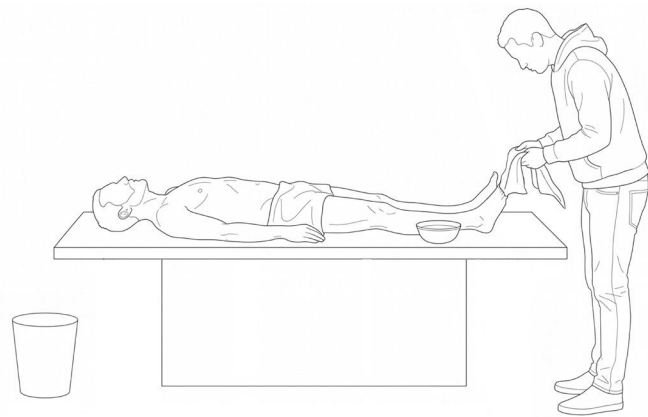
The wake

The project positioned itself as an apparatus of living through grief from the start. Thus, the wake as a final goodbye began the conversation about relationships with the dead body. Caitlin Doughty argues for the importance of being present with the dead body. The key interior space seeks to amplify this presence with viewing distances, light and materiality. Lined in bleached oak, the rammed-earth interior reflects the body’s return to soil from the outset.



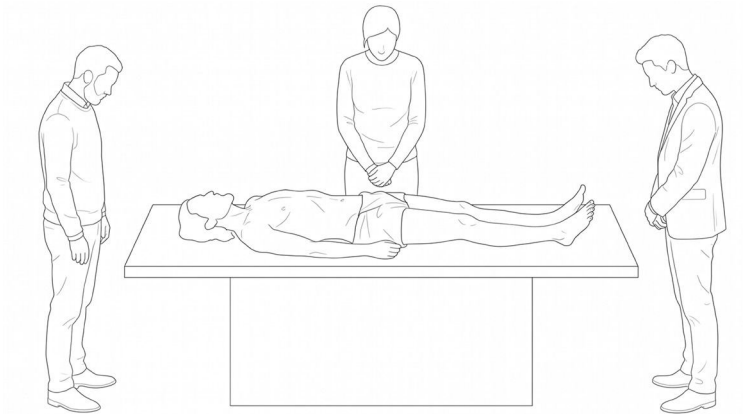
Procession

Starting at the existing footbridge (kept as the first exterior ritual room), the procession descends into the building.



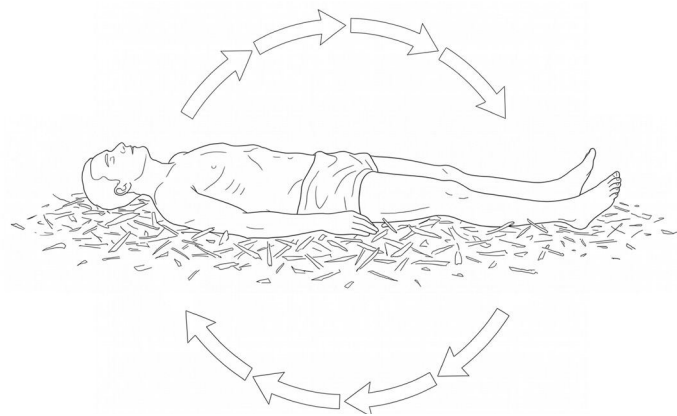
Body preparation

Relatives and staff wash and wrap the body together behind a sheer curtain. From the wake hall you see their silhouettes, so the care is part of the ritual.



Wake

The wake hall holds a body platform with shallow tiers of seating. Families sit as long as they need without a fixed schedule.



Decomposition capsules

The body is put into a sealed capsule packed with wood chips and straw. Over 30 days in the heated capsule, thermophilic bacteria reduce the body to soil.



Soil curing

Finished compost is sieved and spread in shallow 150 mm layers on stepped shelves. The soil then goes to the lab to be tested and topped up with nutrients.



Planting a tree

Cured soil is portioned in a cloister, mixed with site topsoil, then carried to a chosen tree basin. Additions of soil and mulch let the dead dissolve into the tree.

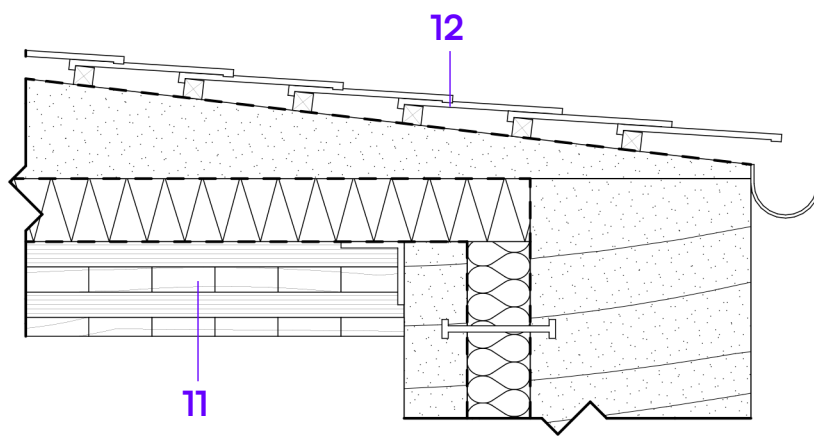
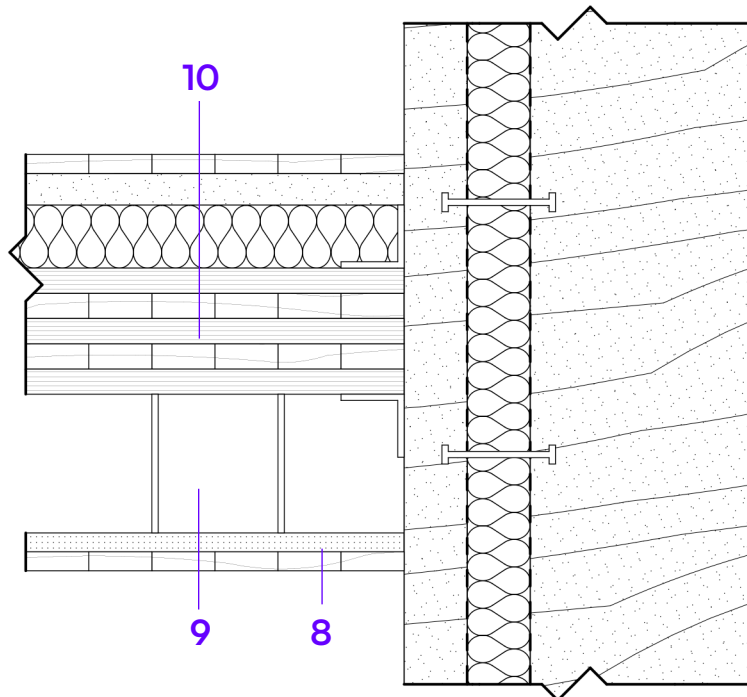
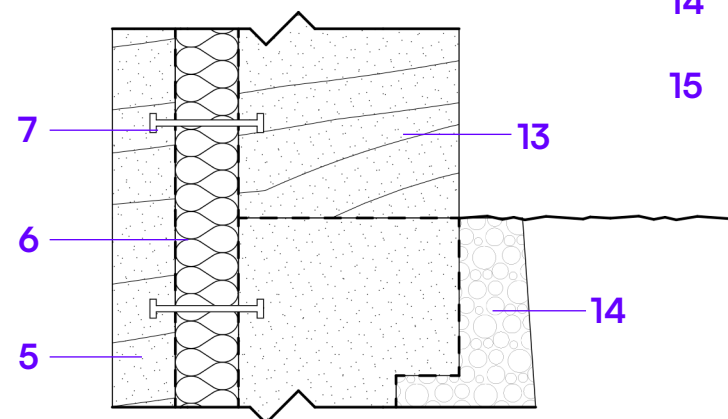
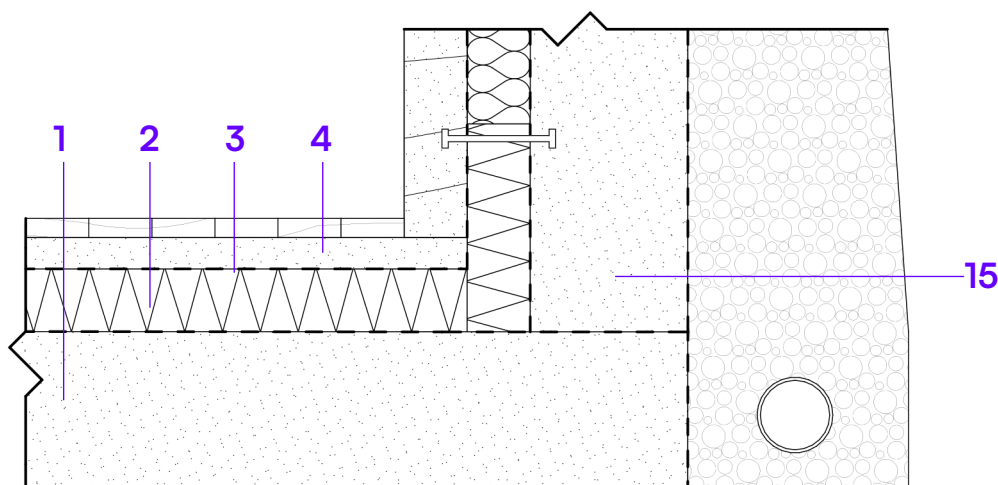


A humane business model

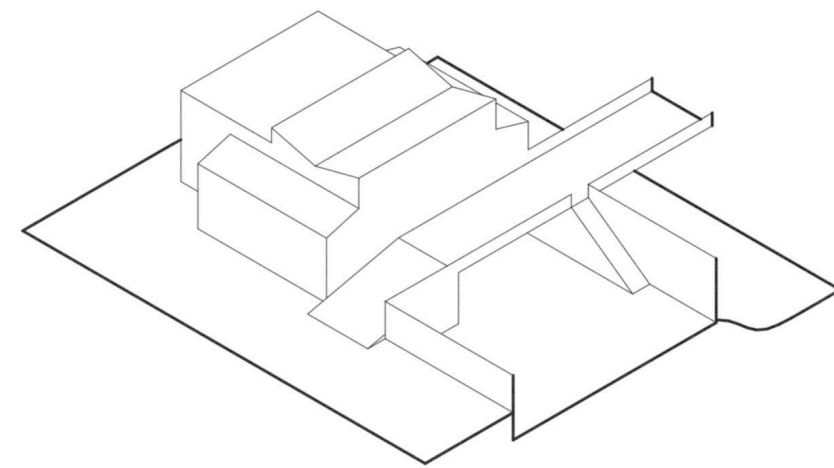
While the modern burial industry prides itself on speed (caskets, embalming, headstones), a new way emerged in Seattle in 2020. Recompose, the first human composting facility, launched with a flat fee of \$5,500 and lets the family decide what to do with the soil. Taking this prime process, the project proposes a full-circle journey appropriate for such an approach. Eight capsules handle eight bodies a month, with one fee covering the wake and body preparation without embalming, 30 days in a capsule, curing, and the tree plot. All processes gain their own space - as the body transforms, the living follow.

Why trees?

Human composting returns people to the cycle of soil, growth and decay that every garden depends on. The process is safe inside the city as opposed to crematoriums, which yield pollution, or traditional burials with embalming that contaminate the ground. This way also saves about a tonne of CO₂ per body. The project is distinct in a way that the body never leaves the site. While a gravestone marks an ending, a tree keeps growing from the person planted beneath. Families return to the same tree for generations, while the garden grows with every burial, greening the urban landscape.



- 1 250 mm concrete raft foundation
- 2 100 mm rigid PIR insulation
- 3 Tanking waterproof membrane
- 4 50 mm concrete screed
- 5 100 mm rammed earth finish
- 6 100 mm mineral wool insulation
- 7 Stainless-steel wall tie
- 8 20 mm MgO board
- 9 Service void
- 10 5-ply CLT slab
- 11 3-ply CLT slab
- 12 Ceramic roof tiles
- 13 400 mm rammed earth wall
- 14 Drainage gravel layer
- 15 300 mm retaining concrete wall



Existing bridge as an entry point

The footbridge, as the key retained context element, becomes an organic access point and part of the ritual procession. The building absorbs the traffic and utilises it.

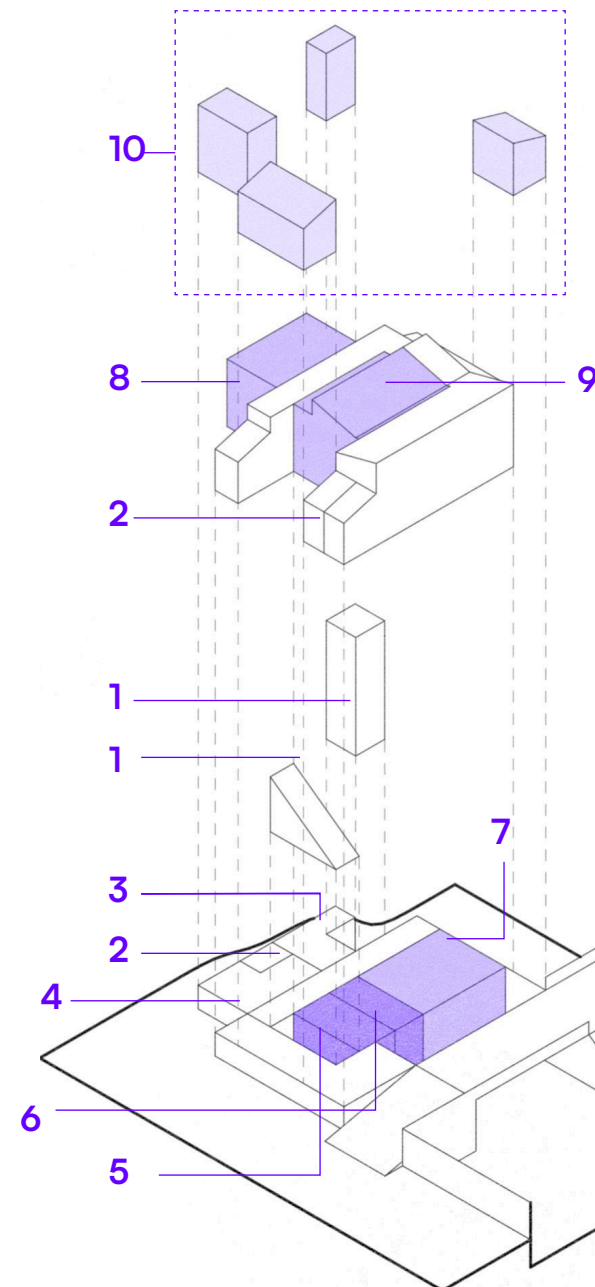
Composition and Arrangement

Minimal excavation

The existing terrain already allows for a multilevel arrangement. The building and cemetery strip only flatten the existing ground, allowing the building to hug the existing topography.

Continuous cemetery strip

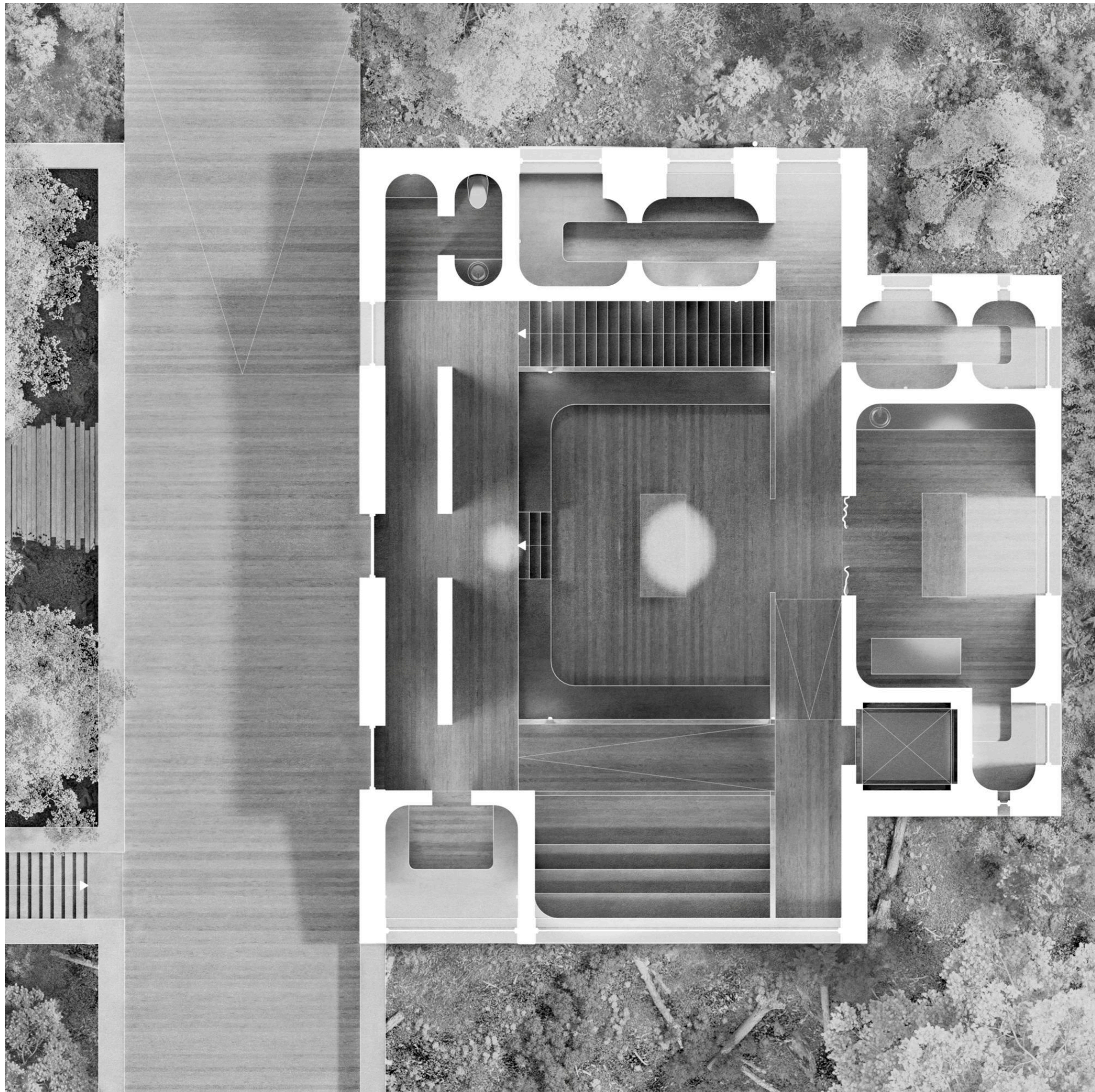
A 15 km cemetery garden strip stretches along the railway as a long tree field. The trees are planted loosely within the set boundaries, free of the orthodox rows. A textured landscape of old and newly planted trees works as a long linear perspective.



- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Lifts and stairs | 6 Soil testing laboratory |
| 2 Toilets | 7 Capsule launch seating |
| 3 Plant room | 8 Body prep area |
| 4 Staff room | 9 Wake area |
| 5 Body capsules | 10 Grieving nooks |

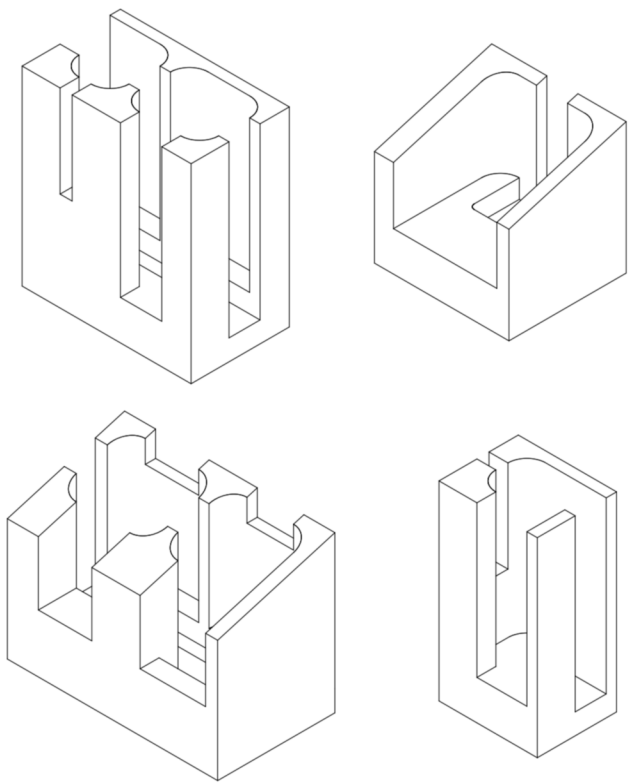
Larger Circulation

A single downward journey governs the ritual as it happens, with transparency and continuity at the core. From the bridge procession to the wake area to the body preparation area to the grieving nooks, downward to the capsules, the soil curing area, the lab and outward to the garden, the process is perceived as one. A single service lift and stair link the areas together, so families and the body descend together. While the procession is split in time, each part can be accessed separately and revisited - the garden has an alternative entrance.



V N

Planar Logic



Grieving nooks

Small pockets of space of single or dual occupancy curve into the plan thickness, each with its own light portal. Partially inspired by Flores & Prats' Mills Museum light cavities, these spaces were a response to the place of emotion in grief. When something needs to happen out of sight, it needs a space to manifest, which the grieving nooks are designed to hold.

The wake as planar arrangement

The wake would be the most ritual-heavy area, and it required particular care in planning. With the body arriving via the footbridge, the cart would enter through the first doorway and be carried towards the washing area via 2 dedicated ramps. The family would enter centrally with steps towards the stepped-down seating. The body platform, central to the arrangement, is distanced from the framing benches just enough (tested manually) to retain a respectful distance, allowing, but not forcing, people to get closer. The washing area, positioned on the same axis as the body platform, is only separated by sheer curtains allowing for observation and participation. The capsule launch seating area is visible from above via the skylight. The roof lights add an additional layer to the ritual as they frame the body platform at midday.



Light Conditions

The light is intended to be soft, yet abundant. Large portals from the side frame the wake area with diffused lighting. The roof slit on the Eastern side lets in a strip of morning light that travels across the hall, while evening light enters from the Western opening. At midday, the roof lights frame the body platform. The building stays lit throughout the day.

Thickness continuity

The 600 mm thick rammed earth walls are carved out of the landscape. The elements stay intentionally heavy. Extraction here is the key move.

Southern Facade



The landscape continued

The facade places rammed earth at the centre. Laid down with visible horizontal courses, the wall reads as compressed landscape. No elevation is treated as the front. Overall, the building reads as close to the ground and horizontal. The wood as strategic lining continues the interior concept into the exterior.

Woodland Transgressions

Cruising Sauna



Bodies that Make the Space

"If orientation is a matter of how we reside in space, then sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as 'who' or 'what' we inhabit spaces with."

"It is not just that bodies are moved by the orientations they have; rather, the orientations we have toward others shape the contours of space by affecting relations of proximity and distance between bodies."

S. Ahmed in 'Queer Phenomenology'

Introduction

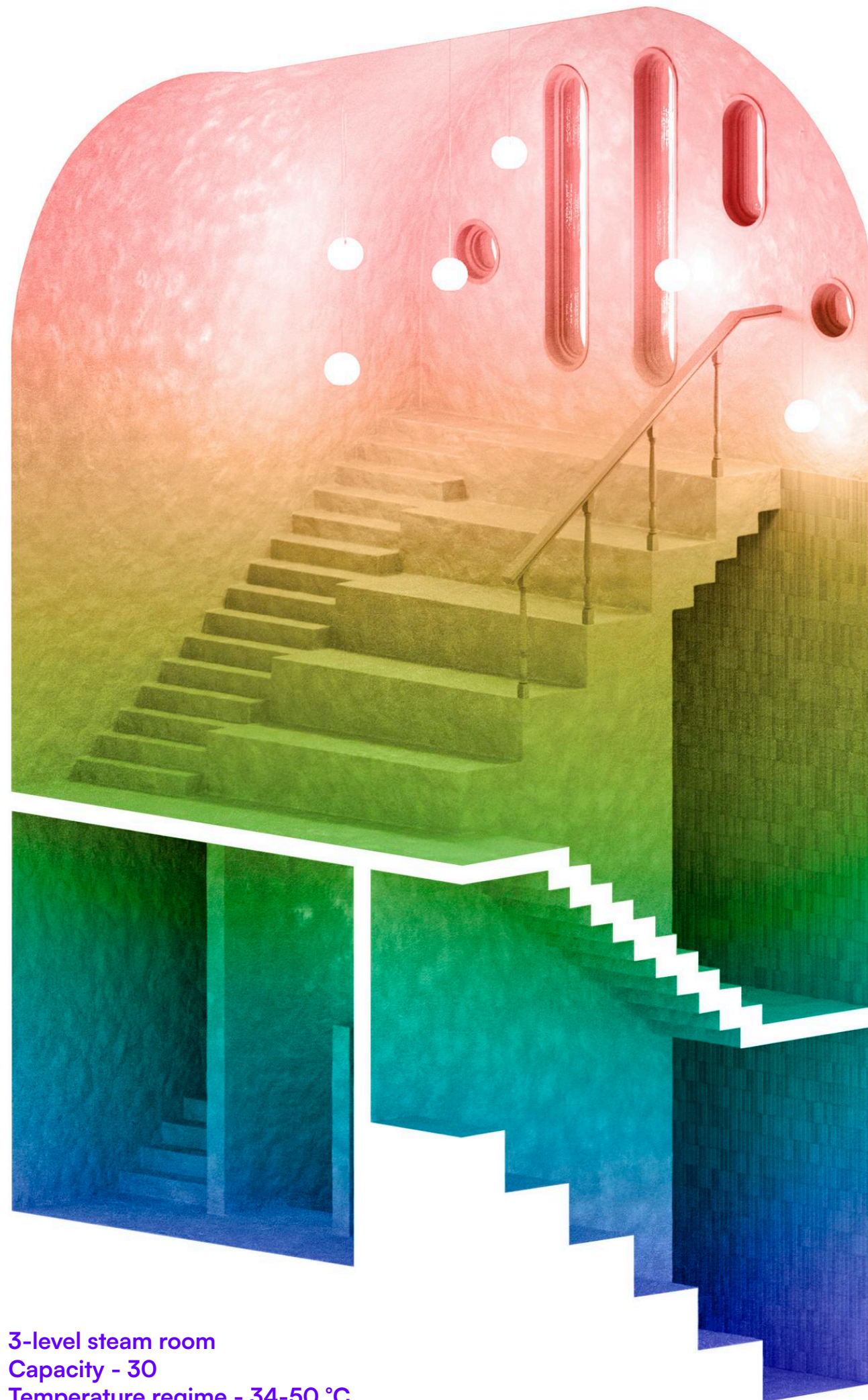
The spatial residue of the gay sauna typology and illicit cruising cultures of the wooded site formed the conceptual core of this project. The sauna has always been a social space as opposed to a purely hygienic one. From the Roman baths to modern bathhouses, gay men built their own world for what the street would not allow. However, a conventional sauna is usually built around gender and privacy. A gay sauna would answer that by turning inward - private cabins, sexual encounters happening behind closed doors. Rather than a gendered enclave or hidden sexuality pathways, this project reworks conventions towards non-gendered space for collective desire, acts of looking, and bodily rituals in the open. The body becomes the key architectural driver. The building is intended to be understood through skin, breath and movement.

How is visibility negotiated as a condition of participation, desire and collective presence?

How do corporeal media shape the relationship between the body and the space it occupies?

The steam room

Any sauna is a place of heat, vulnerability, and altered visibility; thus, its design must start from the body. The sauna encapsulates both withdrawal and sexuality as contrasting conditions, which have to be expressed spatially. Here, that aim takes shape in a body-space amalgamation aimed at blending physical boundaries. The materials carry this: skin coloured tadelakt and matching ceramic tiles create tangible texture and envelop the bathers as they are nude. The vaulted ceiling continues this thread as space wraps around bodies in a closed loop. Steam completes the atmosphere, as it redirects the visual channel towards other senses.



48 - 50 °C

Uppermost point of highest heat and steam clouds. Very brief sessions.

46 - 48 °C

Shorter stay high heat zone for brief moments of relaxation and sweat sessions.

43 - 46 °C

Mid-level steam zone with moderate heat and higher visibility, supporting slower rest.

40 - 43 °C

Transitional zone towards a quieter and more inward section with higher heat.

37 - 40 °C

Darkroom seating with low light and low heat. More active and less bodily demanding.

34 - 37 °C

Lowermost point of lowest heat. Almost completely dark with small private nooks.

3-level steam room
Capacity - 30
Temperature regime - 34-50 °C



Vault - interior device

Inside the building, the vault acts as an instrument of continuous bodily enclosure. It gathers the upper lighter conditions as a form of built sky (close to what a dome usually symbolises).

Vault - exterior device

Outside, the repeated and stepped-down barrel vaults make the building a low and clustered presence in the woods. With a span of 6 m, the vault section resembles the surrounding tree crowns. The ceramic tile continues across the roof and wall as a single weathering skin.

Stair - interior device

The stairs are an agent of vertical journey. An encounter with social and thermal conditions changes with height. The undersides are mirrored throughout the building so the path reads as above, so below.

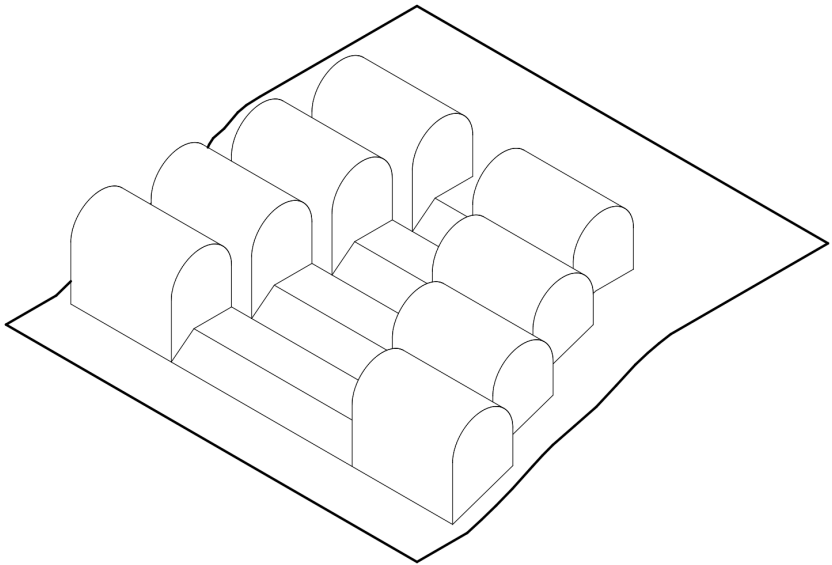
Stair - exterior device

The exterior stair has a different role. It forms a collective threshold between the stepped masses of the building as it narrows towards the top. An instrument of landscape, it gathers space and facades at once: a place to arrive and observe.

Composition and Arrangement

Stepped ground connection

The building is set into the terrain with limited excavation. A basement passage connects the blocks, so circulation stays continuous while the exterior stays crisp. The ground overall steps with the building.



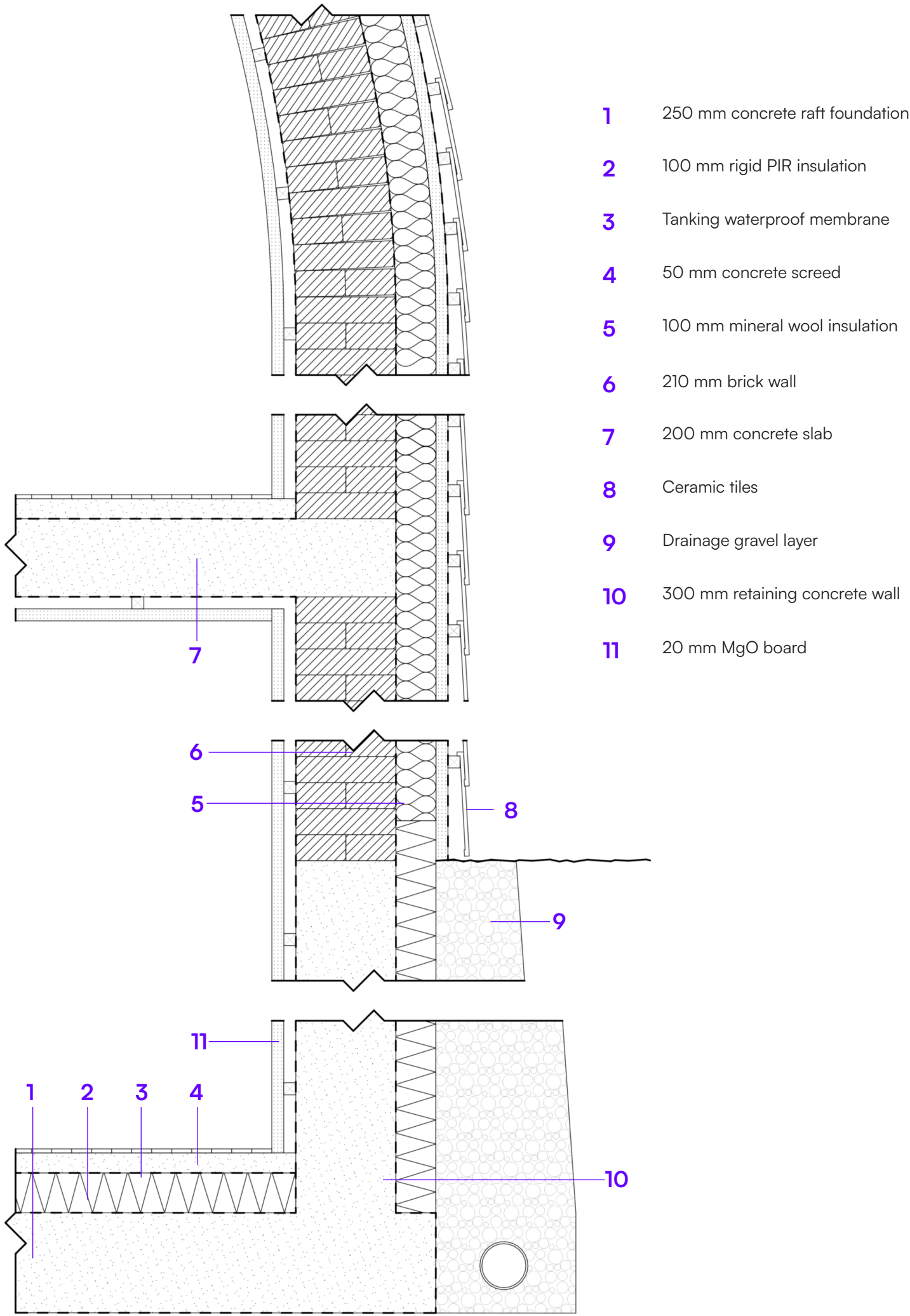
Two building blocks, each formed of four stepped vaulted volumes, face one another across a central exterior stair.

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|--------------|
| 1 | Entry point | 11 | Toilets |
| 2 | Fire exits | 12 | Locker room |
| 3 | Reception | 13 | Bar |
| 4 | Plant rooms | 14 | Dance floor |
| 5 | Staff kitchen | 15 | Shower room |
| 6 | Breakroom | 16 | Plunge pools |
| 7 | Laundry room | 17 | Stage |
| 8 | Office | 18 | Lounge |
| 9 | Darkroom | 19 | Jacuzzi |
| 10 | Steam room | 20 | Dry sauna |

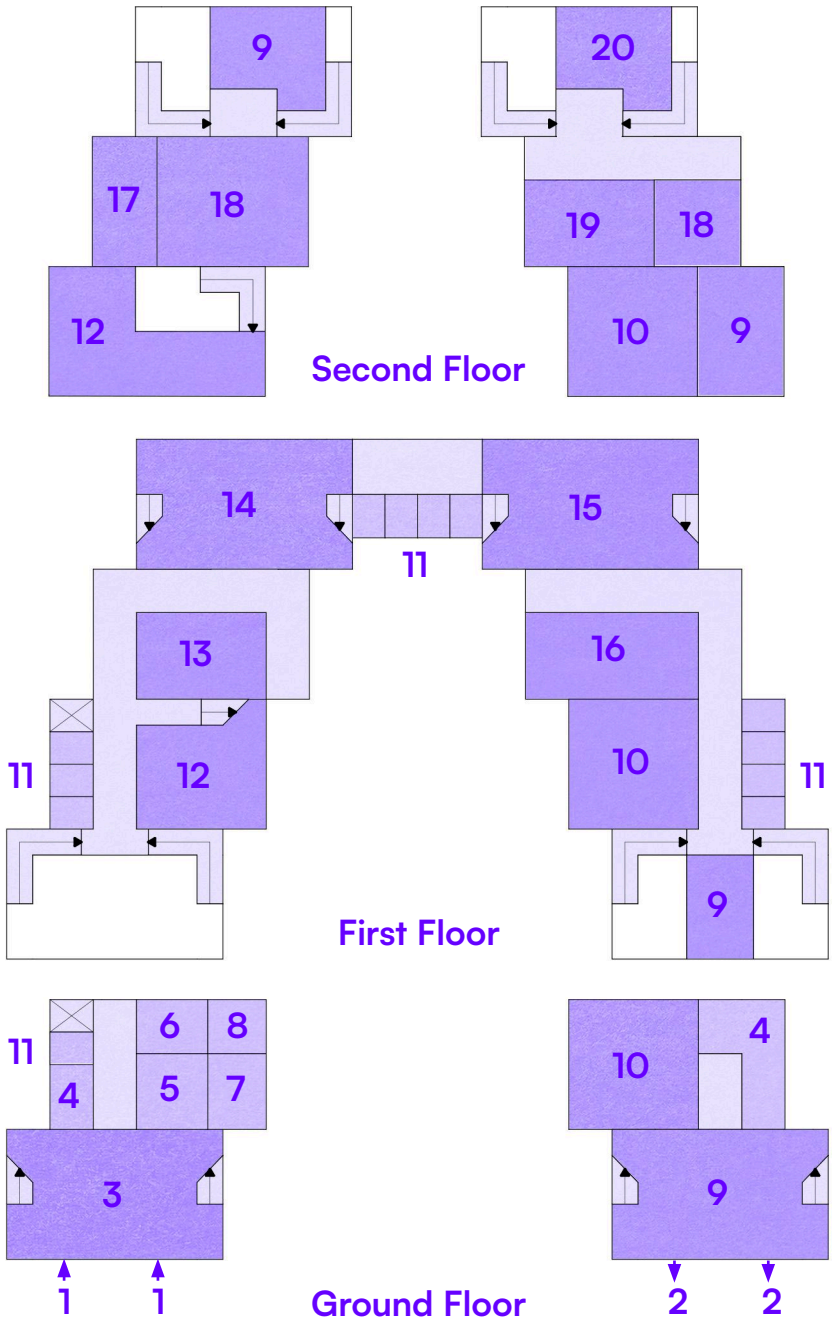
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|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| | Destination | | Circulation |
| | Utility | | Well |

Gradual encounter

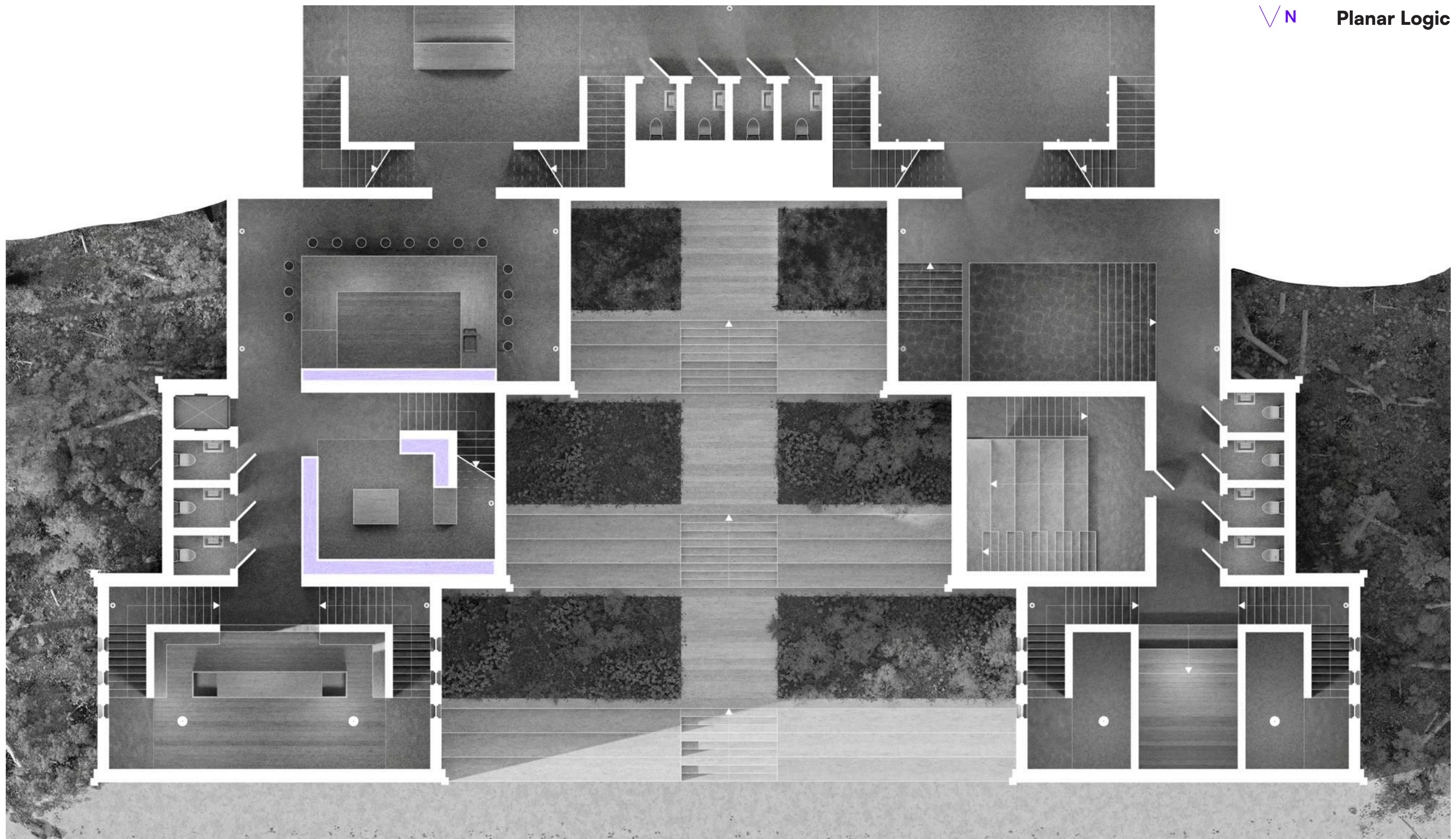
The route starts at reception and goes through the changing and social spaces, after which it splits into wetter, darker or more performative areas. Exposure and intimacy vary along the way, but it is one continuous collective journey. At each turn the visitor chooses the pace and how much to take part.



- | | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 250 mm concrete raft foundation |
| 2 | 100 mm rigid PIR insulation |
| 3 | Tanking waterproof membrane |
| 4 | 50 mm concrete screed |
| 5 | 100 mm mineral wool insulation |
| 6 | 210 mm brick wall |
| 7 | 200 mm concrete slab |
| 8 | Ceramic tiles |
| 9 | Drainage gravel layer |
| 10 | 300 mm retaining concrete wall |
| 11 | 20 mm MgO board |



Ground Floor



A guided journey

The plan is arranged as an enfilade of changing social conditions. Most spaces are open to view and encounter. The changing rooms lead towards the bar and the dance floor, as places to meet. From there, the more inward showers and plunge pools follow. Finally, saunas and darkrooms close the loop of the ritual.

Open to view

Walls between shared programmes are kept to a minimum, so people can see each other from one room to the next. Changing, bathing and circulation are open - to look and to be seen is part of the brief.



Light and darkness

Most spaces are dim. Low light slows perception down, so people are recognised gradually, first as a silhouette or a reflection. In the dark, sound, heat and touch become as important as sight. The lower enclosed rooms are the busiest. The jacuzzi and the upper steam room are the brightest points in section, and face upwards - places to pause and recover.

Eastern Facade



Wood for the woodland

Bleached oak decks counter the ceramic-tile vaults and tie the building to its old oak woodland setting. The decks step down with landings and seating edges, so visitors sit right against the facade. Timber is used as the warm contrast to the tiled vaults.

Openings made for privacy

Tall, narrow openings follow the vault's curvature from above and below. Sills start above head height - no one sees into the bathing or changing areas from outside, but daylight and trees are still visible from inside. Reeded glass disperses both image and light. Seen from the woodland path, bodies are only soft shadows. Looking out, the trees blur into trunks and colour.