

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE PORTFOLIO



**EVIJA
JOHNSTON**

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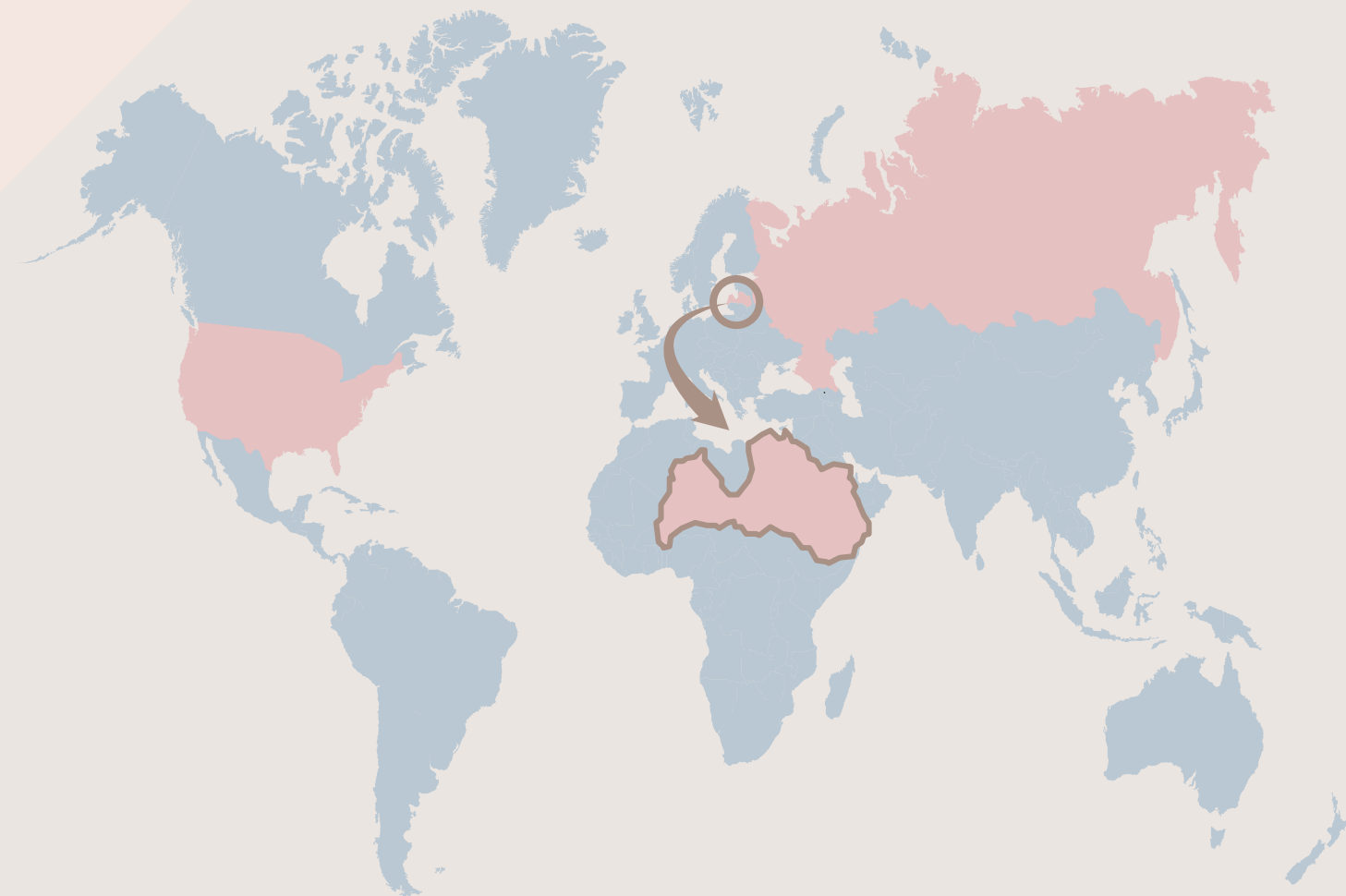
ABOUT ME

I'm a graduate of Interior Architecture from the University of Houston with a strong interest in the relationship between architecture, interiors, furniture, art, and the way people experience space. I'm drawn to thoughtful design that balances function, creativity, and character, and I enjoy exploring how materials, layout, custom elements, and smaller details can work together to create spaces that feel intentional and unique.



Design Journey

My interest in design began through a combination of experiences, from attending an architecture summer program at Texas A&M in 2018 to growing up surrounded by the architectural history and culture of Latvia. Those experiences shaped the way I see the built environment and sparked a curiosity that has continued to grow throughout my education and career. Today, I'm especially interested in creating spaces and pieces that feel personal, purposeful, and connected to the people who experience them.



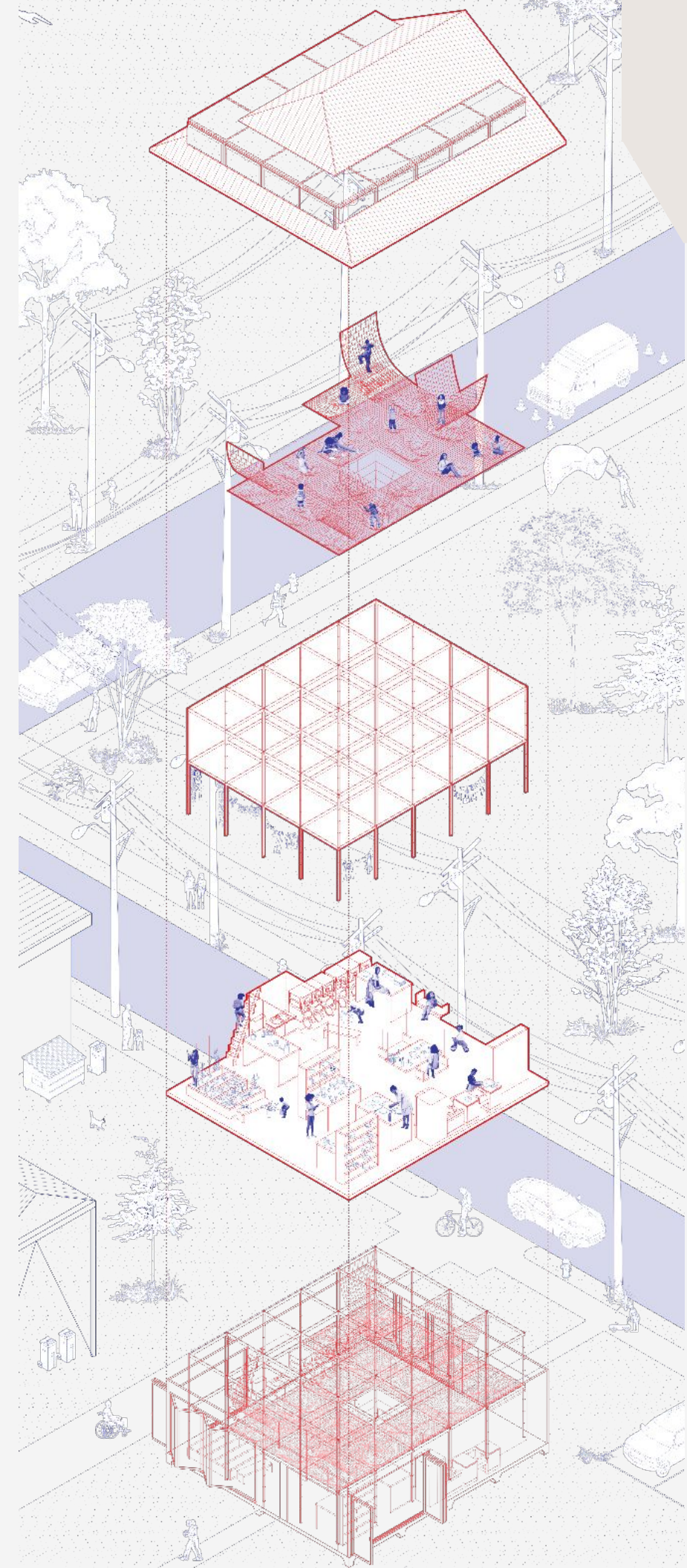
THE COMMON THREAD

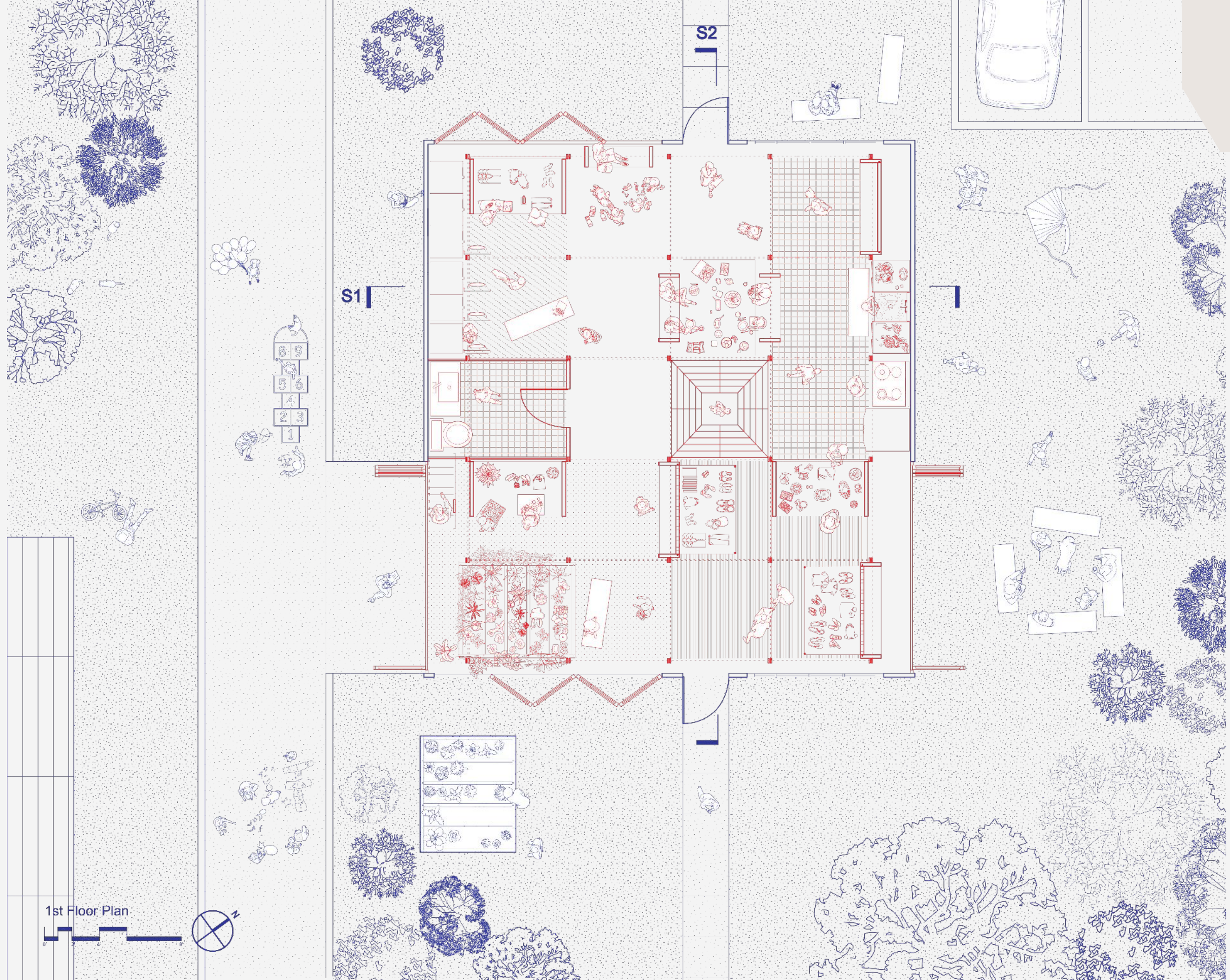
Community Housing + Adaptive Reuse

Located in Houston's Third Ward, this project focuses on the **Young Mothers Residential Program (YMRP)**, an affordable housing community for young mothers and their families near Project Row Houses. A **partially occupied residential building** directly adjacent to the YMRP housing became the site for exploring how an existing space could provide additional support for the families living nearby.

The proposal reimagines the neighboring building as a **shared extension of the community**, bringing together a **communal kitchen, laundry area, gardening elements, and custom furniture systems**. **Flexible surfaces** allow the space to adapt between **cooking, gathering, working, cleaning, and play**, supporting the changing needs of residents throughout the day.

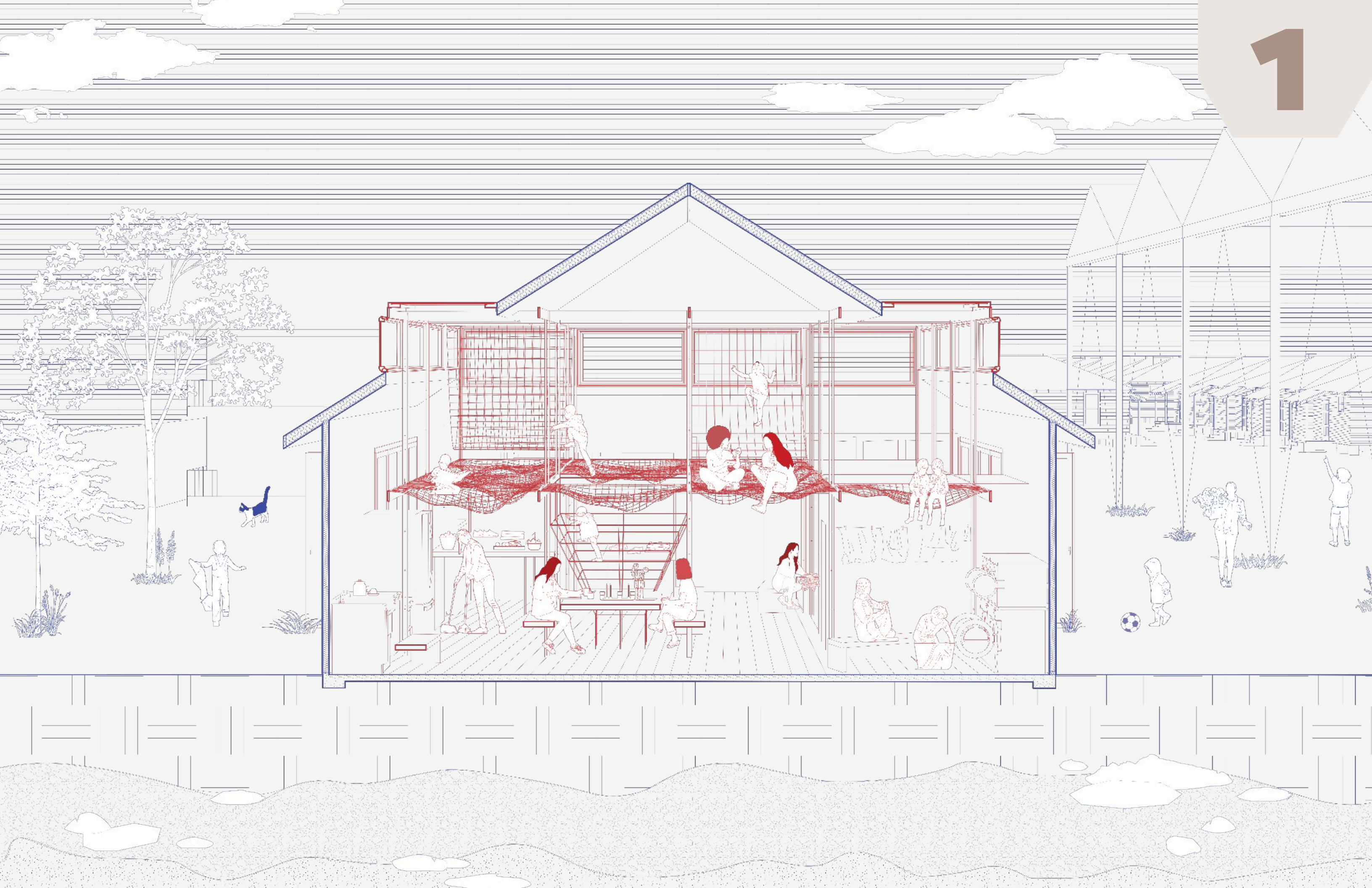
By allowing everyday domestic activities to overlap, the project explores how **shared space can encourage connection and support between families**. An **overhead net** creates an additional area for children while keeping them connected to the activity below, transforming a traditionally functional space into a more **collaborative extension of the surrounding community**.





1st Floor Plan



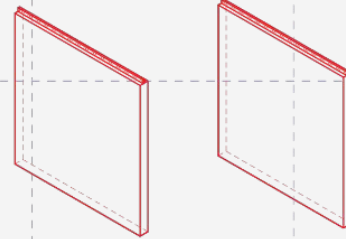




9' vertical columns



Column and beam joint connector (top)



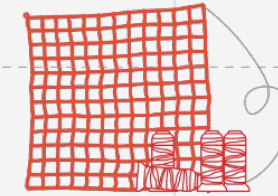
4' x 4' wooden slab



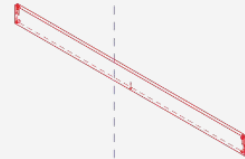
Screw eyes



1.2' x 1.5' wooden slab



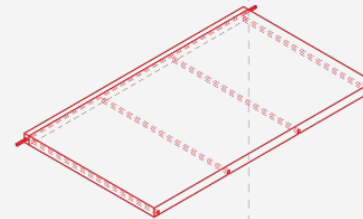
Tensile netting



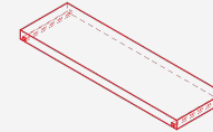
7' horizontal beams



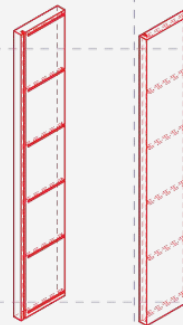
Column and beam joint connector (middle)



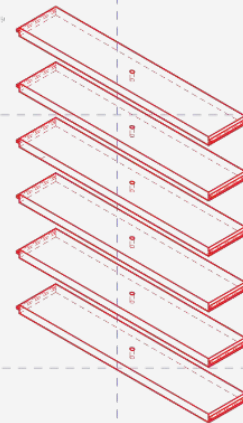
8.65' notched wooden slab



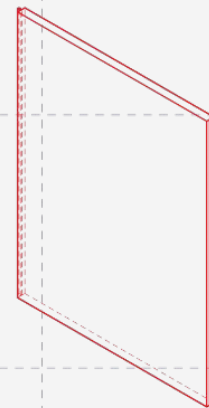
5' x 1.5' notched wooden slab



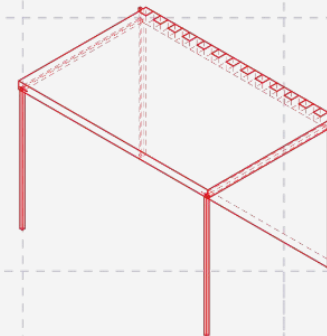
8.5' x 1.5' notched wooden slab



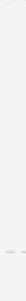
6.5' x 1.25' wooden slabs



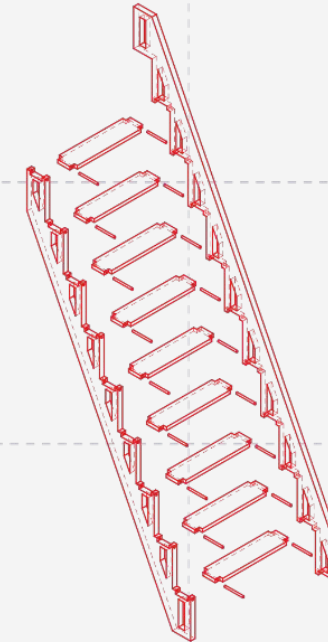
8.5' x 6.5' wooden slab



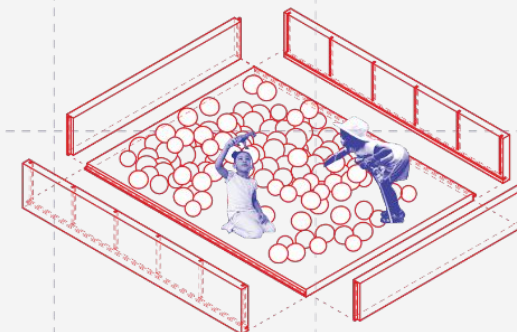
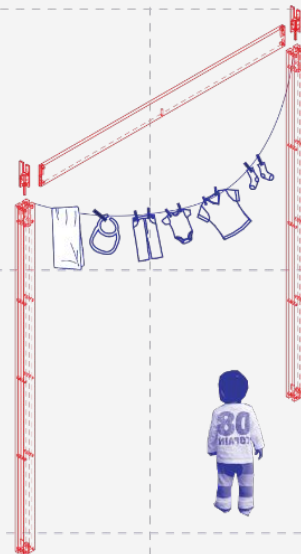
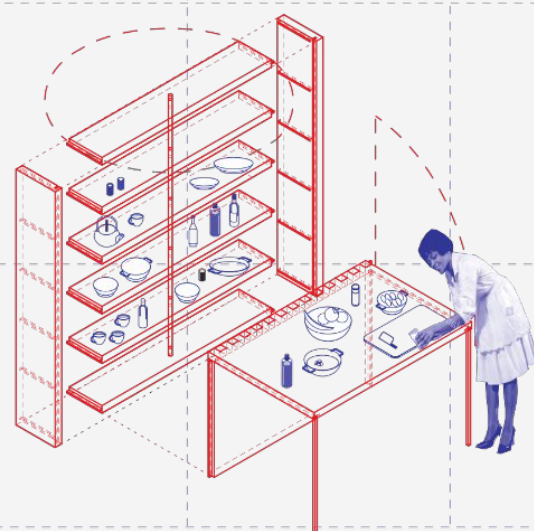
8.5' x 6.5' dovetail jointed wooden slab with bracing

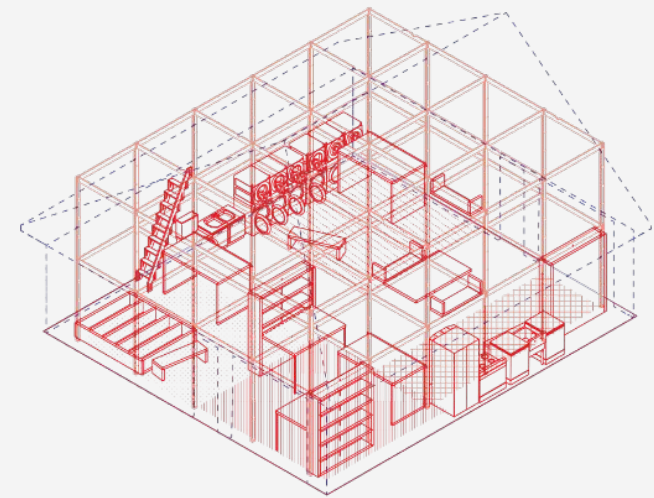
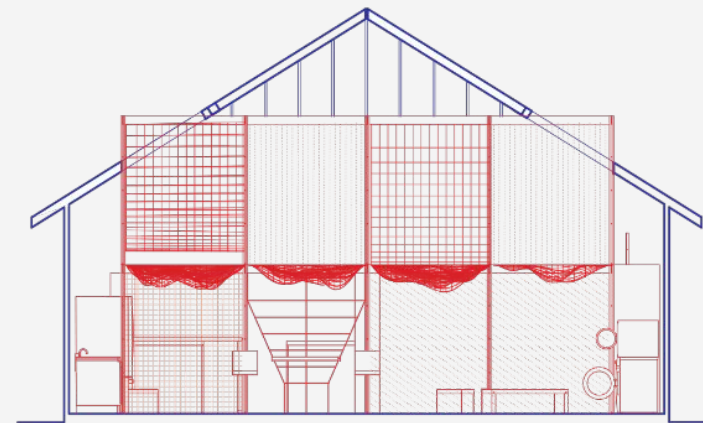
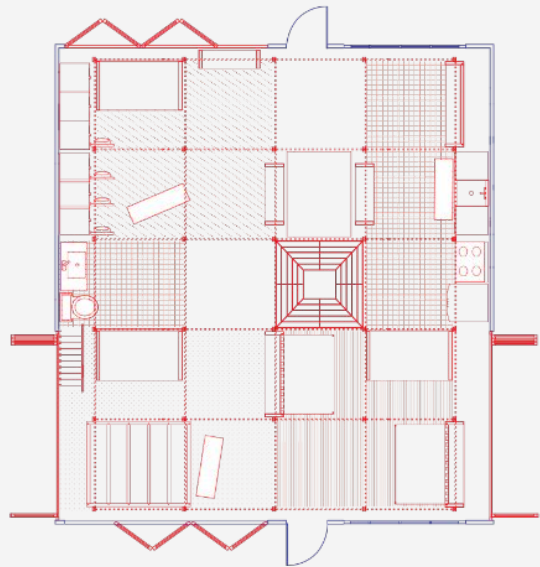
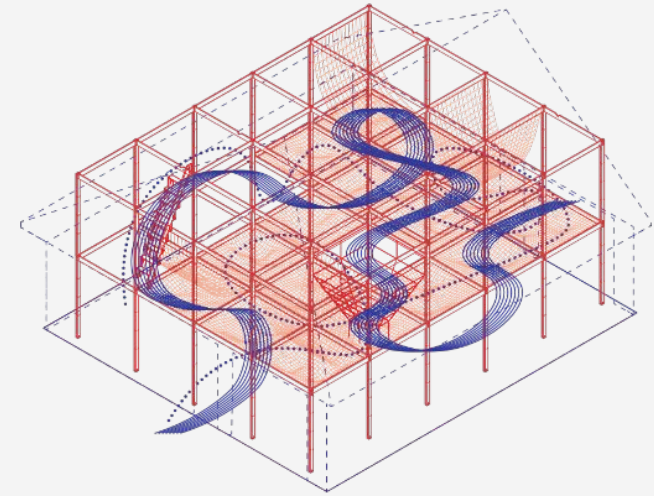
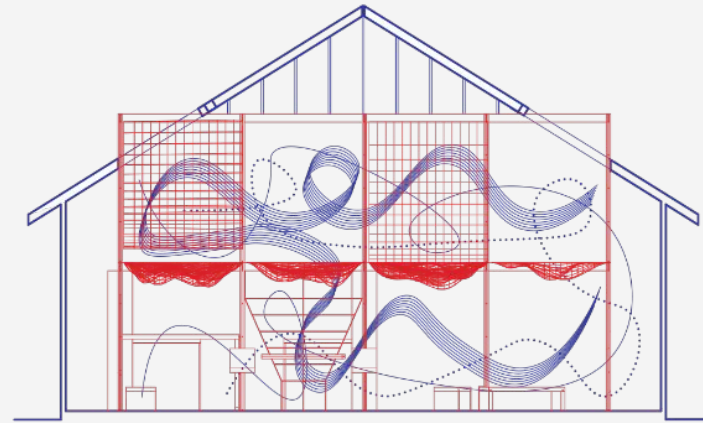
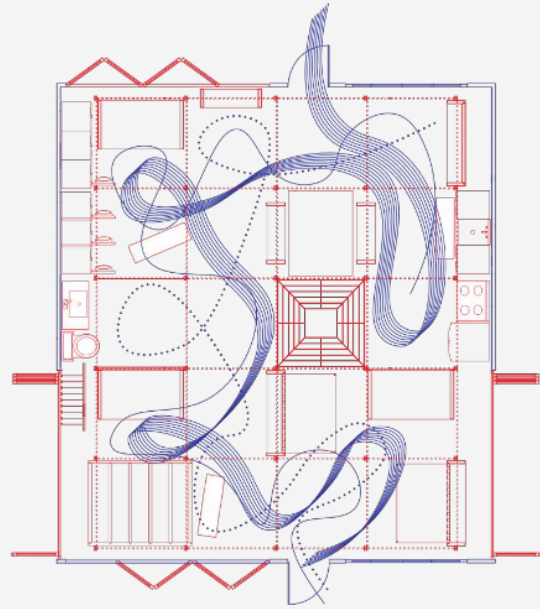
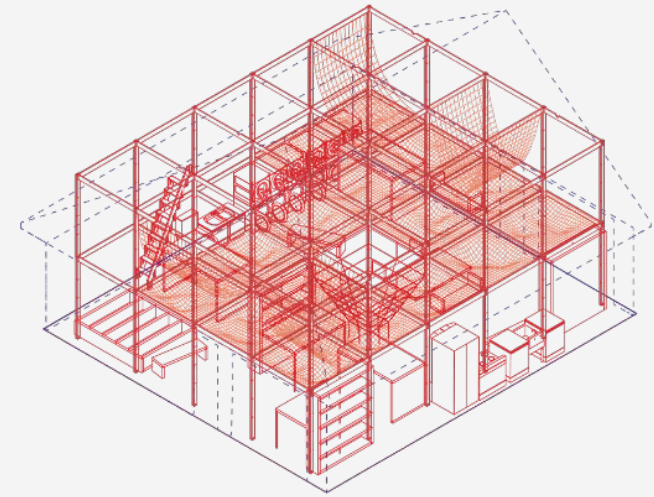
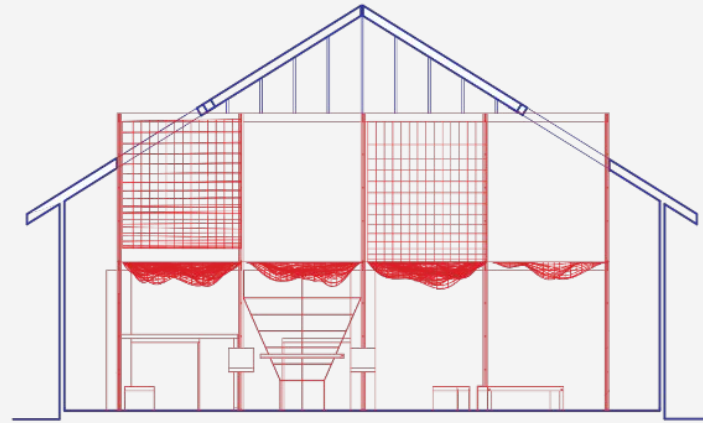
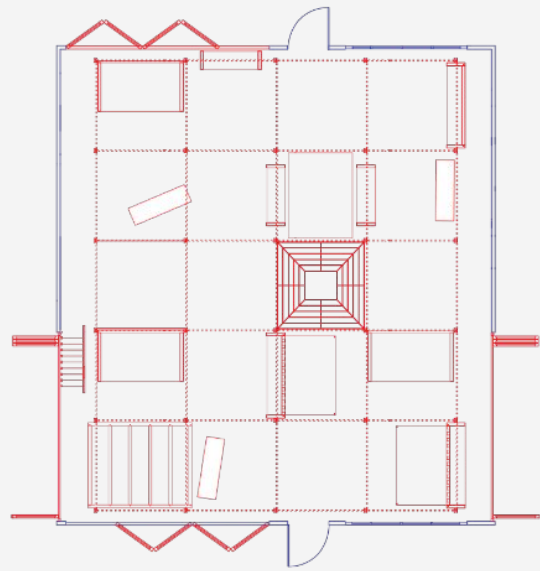


8.65' wooden rod



Jointed collapsible stairs









BEEWORKS

Residential Reuse + Ecological Design

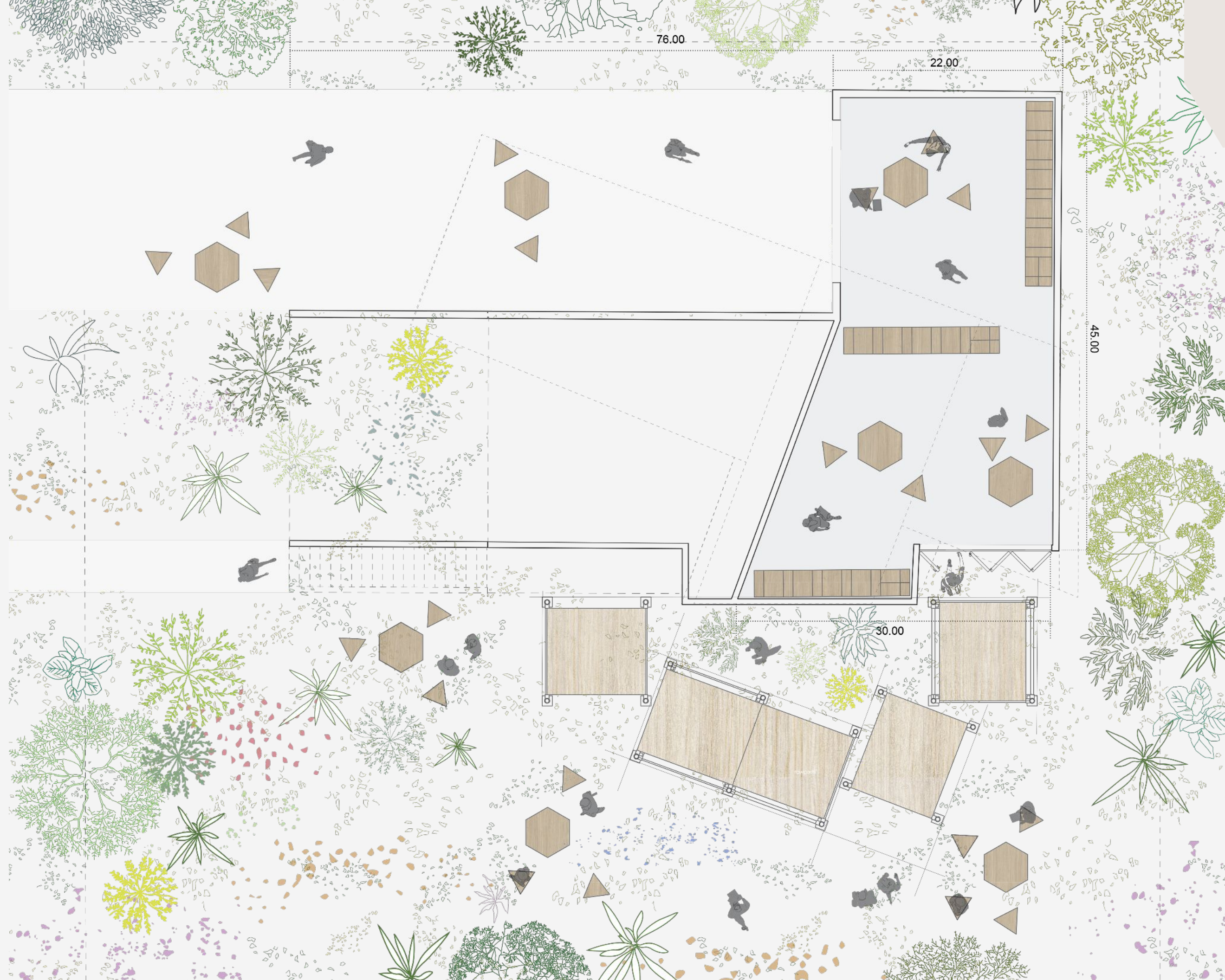
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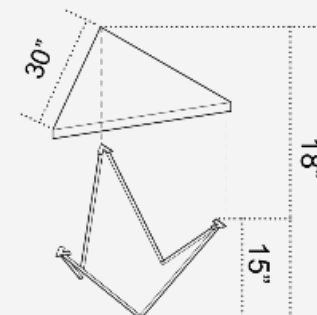
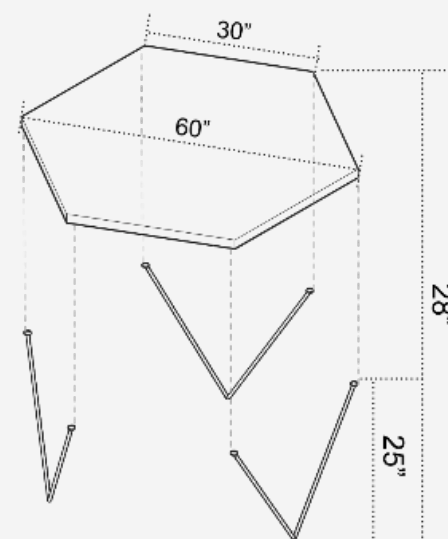
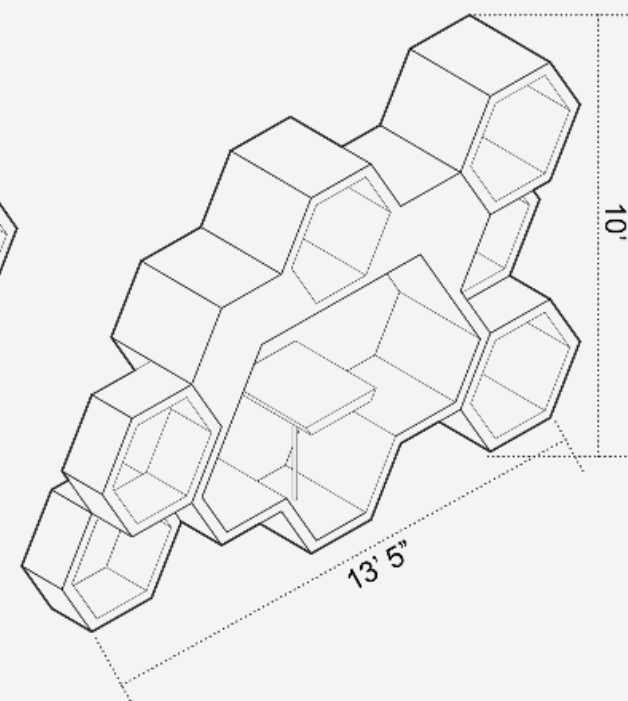
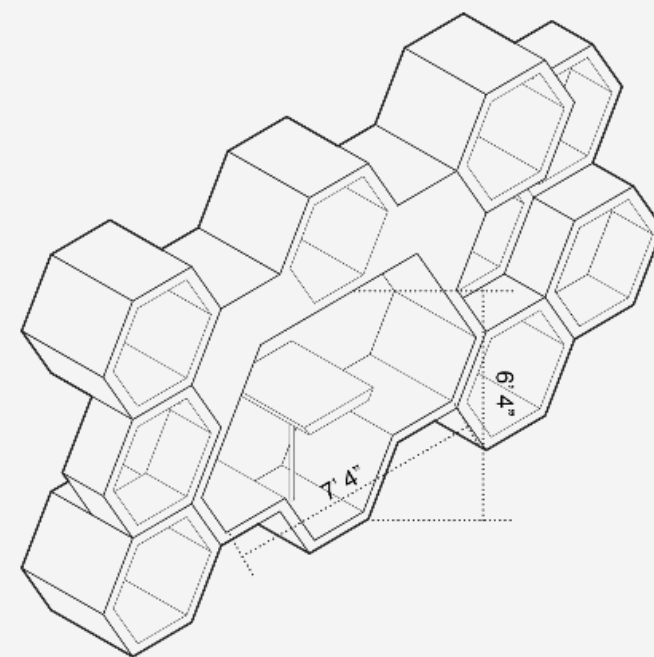
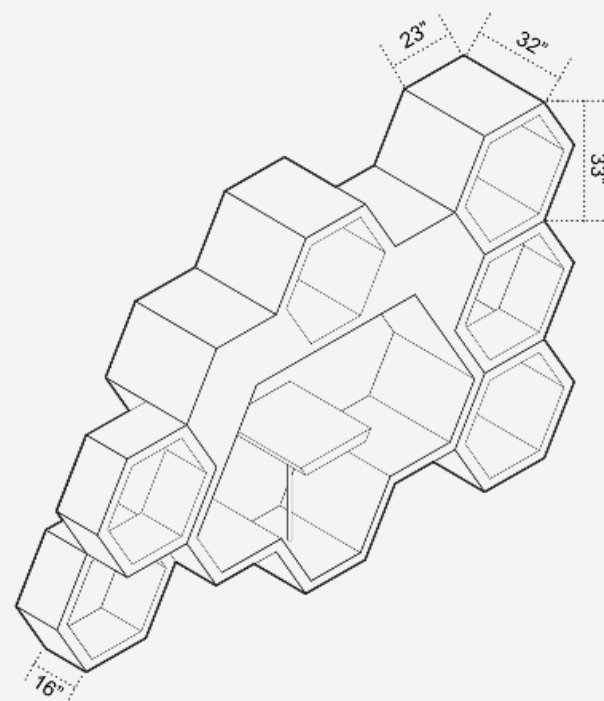
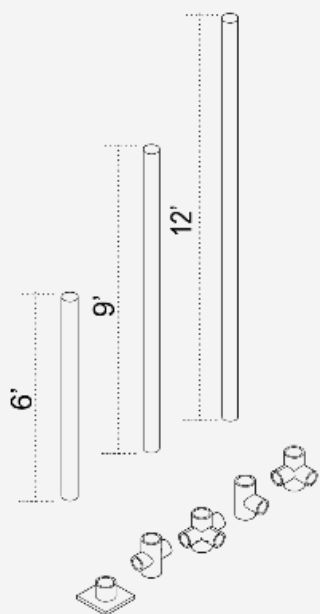
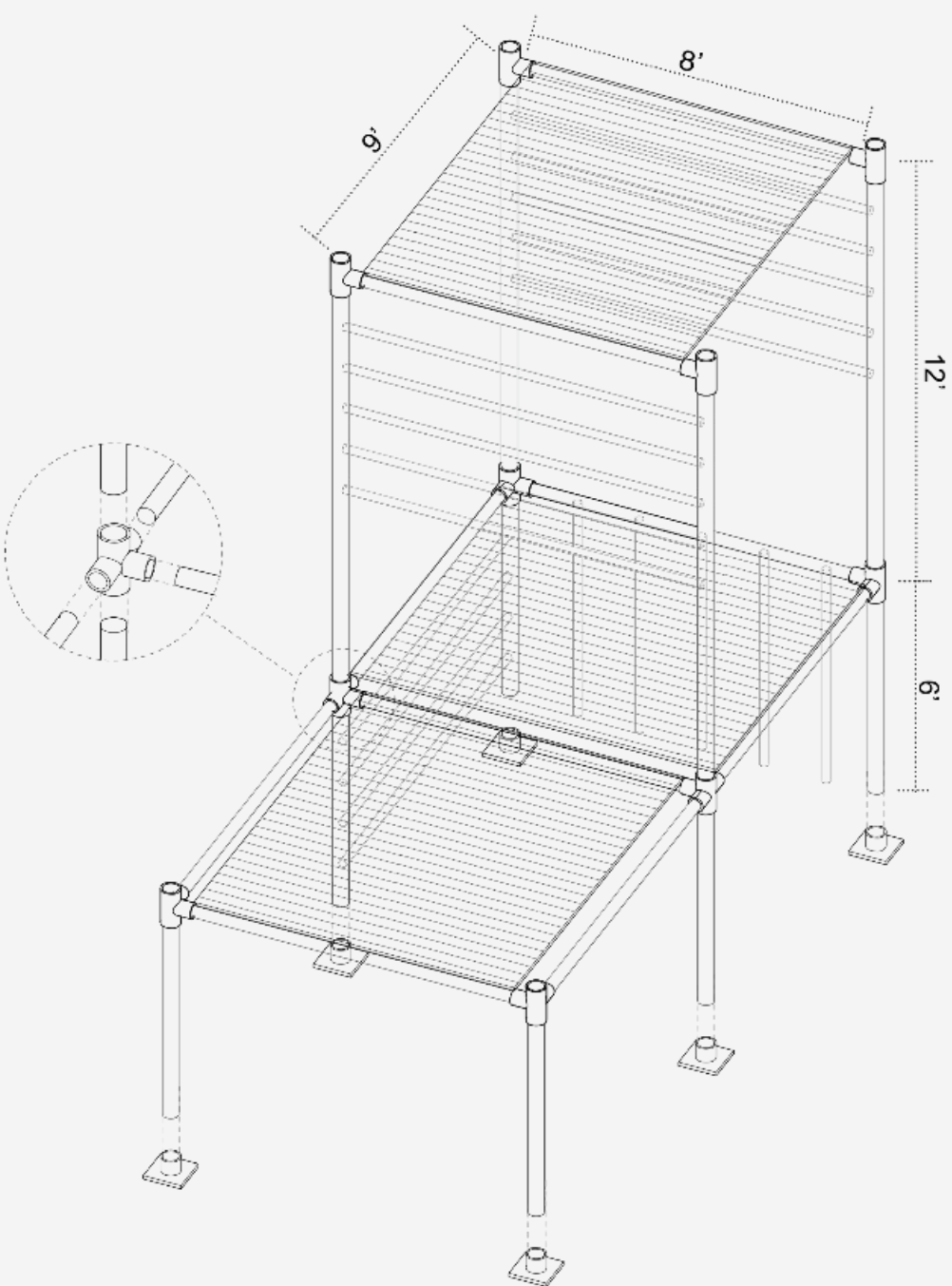
Beeworks explores the **future of the residential garage** by questioning its traditional role and imagining how it could support new forms of occupation. Through an analysis of the surrounding Houston neighborhood, the selected property stood out for its **large open yard with little vegetation**, contrasting with the gardens and plant life of neighboring homes.

Inspired by the **presence of bees**, the proposal connects the garage and yard as **one continuous environment** shared by people and the surrounding ecosystem. An outdoor **scaffolding system** creates multiple levels of occupation and habitat, while **honeycomb inspired furniture** provides adaptable seating and surfaces throughout the garage, landscape, and scaffolding.

Together with new vegetation, these interventions create opportunities for people, bees, pollinators, birds, and other wildlife to **coexist within the same environment**, giving the garage and its surrounding landscape a new shared purpose.

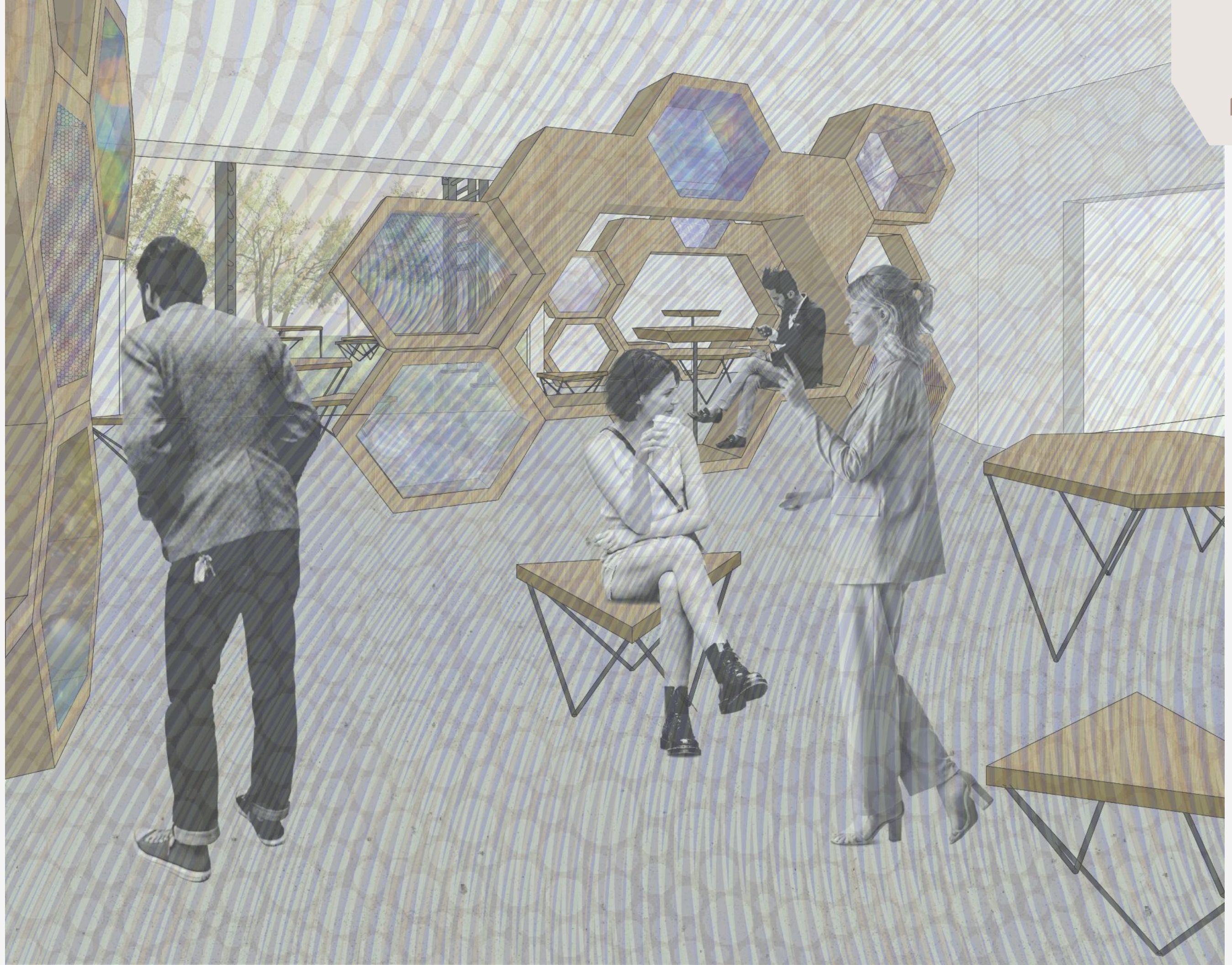












WOVEN

Interpretive Center + Cultural Preservation

3

Woven explores how architecture can **preserve the story of the Clotilda while honoring the resilience of Africatown** and the generations that followed. Beginning with research into the Clotilda's journey, the formation of Africatown, and **Benin and Yoruba cultural heritage**, the project considers how history, culture, and memory can be woven together through spatial experience.

Set in **Mobile, Alabama**, the proposal uses a floating structure where **pieces of the Clotilda are integrated throughout the design** to help tell its story. As visitors move through suspended and enclosed spaces, these fragments become part of the architectural experience, connecting the history of the ship with the people, culture, and community that endured beyond it.

Rather than focusing solely on the tragedy of the past, Woven acts as a **living memorial**, intertwining remembrance with cultural continuity, resilience, and the ongoing legacy of Africatown.



1000 BCE
EARLY YORUBA & EDO
(BENIN) SETTLEMENTS

YORUBA-SPEAKING AND EDO-SPEAKING PEOPLES ESTABLISH AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN WEST AFRICA, DEVELOPING IRONWORKING, TRADE NETWORKS, AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS.

1200 CE
POLITICAL & ARTISTIC
ADVANCEMENTS

THE BENIN KINGDOM SOLIDIFIES UNDER THE RULE OF OBA EWEKA I. IFE AND BENIN BOTH DEVELOP THEIR FAMOUS BRONZE AND TERRACOTTA ARTISTRY.

1500 CE
FIRST EUROPEAN
CONTACTS & TRADE

PORTUGUESE TRADERS ARRIVE ON THE WEST AFRICAN COAST, INITIATING TRADE WITH BENIN & YORUBA STATES, INCLUDING GOODS, WEAPONS, & ENSLAVED PEOPLE.

1700 CE
DECLINE OF THE OYO
EMPIRE & SLAVE RAIDS

INTERNAL STRIFE & EXTERNAL PRESSURES WEAKEN OYO, INCREASING YORUBA CONFLICTS. MANY CAPTIVES FROM THESE WARS ARE SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

1850 CE
BRITISH ABOLISHION
OF THE SLAVE TRADE

BRITAIN OUTLAWS SLAVERY AND PRESSURES WEST AFRICAN STATES TO END THE PRACTICE, BUT ILLEGAL TRADE CONTINUES.

JULY 1860
ARRIVAL OF THE
CLOTILDA IN MOBILE,
ALABAMA

THE CLOTILDA DOCKS IN MOBILE, ALABAMA, & ITS CAPTIVES ARE SECRETLY TRANSPORTED TO PLANTATIONS. THE SHIP IS BORNED TO HIDE THE EVIDENCE OF THE ILLEGAL VOYAGE.

800 CE
RISE OF IFE (YORUBA)
& BENIN KINGDOMS

IFE BECOMES THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL HEART OF THE YORUBA PEOPLE, WHILE THE KINGDOM OF BENIN BEGINS FORMING UNDER THE OSIGO RULERS.

1400 CE
EXPANSION OF BENIN
& OYO EMPIRES

OBA Ewuare the Great strengthens Benin's military & expands its territory. The Oyo Empire rises as a dominant Yoruba state, using cavalry forces.

1600 CE
THE TRANSATLANTIC
SLAVE TRADE INTENSIFIES

EUROPEAN DEMAND FOR ENSLAVED AFRICANS GROWS, LEADING TO INTERNAL CONFLICTS AS SOME AFRICAN LEADERS, INCLUDING THE OBAS OF BENIN, ENGAGE IN THE SLAVE TRADE WITH EUROPEAN.

1800 CE
BENIN RESISTS THE
SLAVE TRADE, YORUBA
WARS CONTINUE

THE OBA OF BENIN RESTRICTS THE SALE OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE, BUT YORUBA STATES CONTINUE WARRING, PROVIDING CAPTIVES FROM THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE.

1860
CLOTILDA'S SECRET
VOYAGE

AMERICAN SLAVE TRADER TIMOTHY MEAHER COMMISSIONS CLOTILDA, ILLEGALLY SMUGGLING 110 ENSLAVED AFRICANS FROM PRESENT-DAY NIGERIA, MANY OF WHOM WERE YORUBA AND BENIN DESCENDANTS.

1808

THE UNITED STATES OFFICIALLY BANS THE IMPORTATION OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS (THE ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORTATION OF SLAVES WAS PASSED BY CONGRESS IN 1807 AND WENT INTO EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 1808)

1865

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR ENDS AND SLAVERY IS ABOLISHED (13TH AMENDMENT), THIS ALLOWED THE CLOTILDA SURVIVORS TO PURSUE FREEDOM AND ESTABLISH AFRICATOWN.

1894

THE HISTORIC UNION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH IS FOUNDED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS, SERVING AS A RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL HUB.

1910s - 1930s

MANY RESIDENTS FIND EMPLOYMENT IN MOBILE'S BOOMING SHIPBUILDING AND LUMBER INDUSTRIES, CREATING ECONOMIC STABILITY.

1960s-1980s

MOBILE UNDERGOES RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBAN EXPANSION. FACTORIES POLLUTE THE AREA, LEADING TO HEALTH ISSUES AND ECONOMIC DECLINE. MANY YOUNGER RESIDENTS MOVE AWAY FOR BETTER OPPORTUNITIES.

2022

THE AFRICATOWN HERITAGE HOUSE MUSEUM OPENS, FEATURING EXHIBITS ON THE CLOTILDA AND THE COMMUNITY'S RESILIENCE.

1860

THE CLOTILDA, THE LAST KNOWN ILLEGAL SLAVE SHIP TO ARRIVE IN THE U.S., BRINGS 110 WEST AFRICANS TO MOBILE, ALABAMA. IT WAS COMMISSIONED BY TIMOTHY MEAHER, A WEALTHY MOBILE SHIPBUILDER, DESPITE THE FEDERAL BAN.

CUDJO LEWIS
(1841-1935)

THE LAST KNOWN SURVIVOR OF THE CLOTILDA AND ONE OF AFRICATOWN'S KEY FOUNDERS.

1872

THE COMMUNITY FORMALLY ORGANIZES UNDER SELF-GOVERNANCE AND THRIVES WITH FARMING, FISHING, AND TRADES SUCH AS BLACKSMITHING AND CARPENTRY. MANY RESIDENTS REFUSE TO ASSIMILATE FULLY INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY, PRESERVING THEIR AFRICAN HERITAGE.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON
(1891-1960)

THE FAMOUS HARLEM RENAISSANCE WRITER INTERVIEWED CUDJO LEWIS AND DOCUMENTED HIS STORY IN BARRACON: THE STORY OF THE LAST "BLACK CARGO."

1914-1918

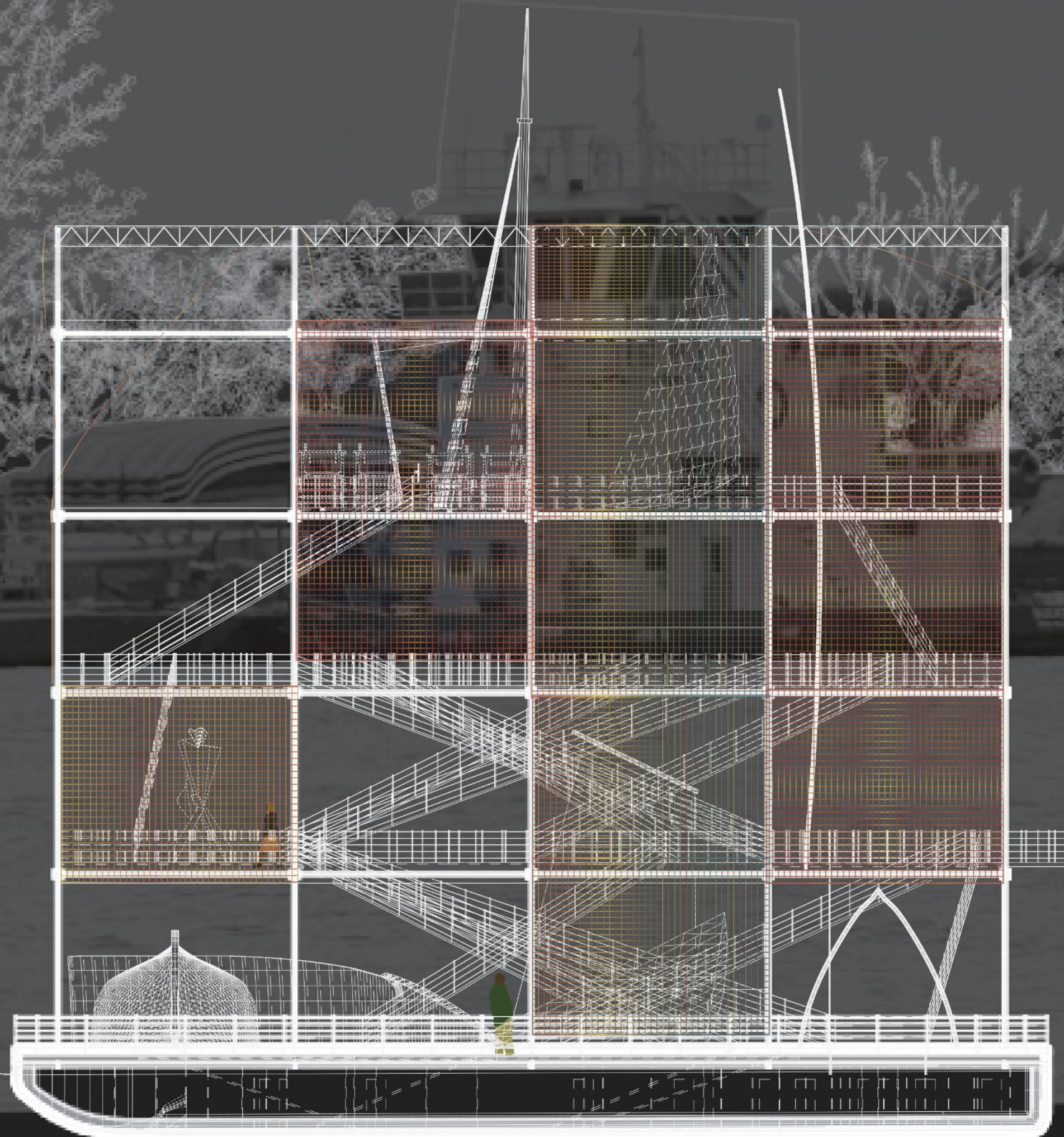
WORLD WAR I SIGNIFICANTLY BOOSTS INDUSTRIES TIED TO WAR EFFORTS. THE U.S. NEEDED SHIPS FOR BOTH COMMERCIAL USE AND MILITARY PURPOSES, LEADING TO A SURGE IN DEMAND FOR SHIPBUILDERS.

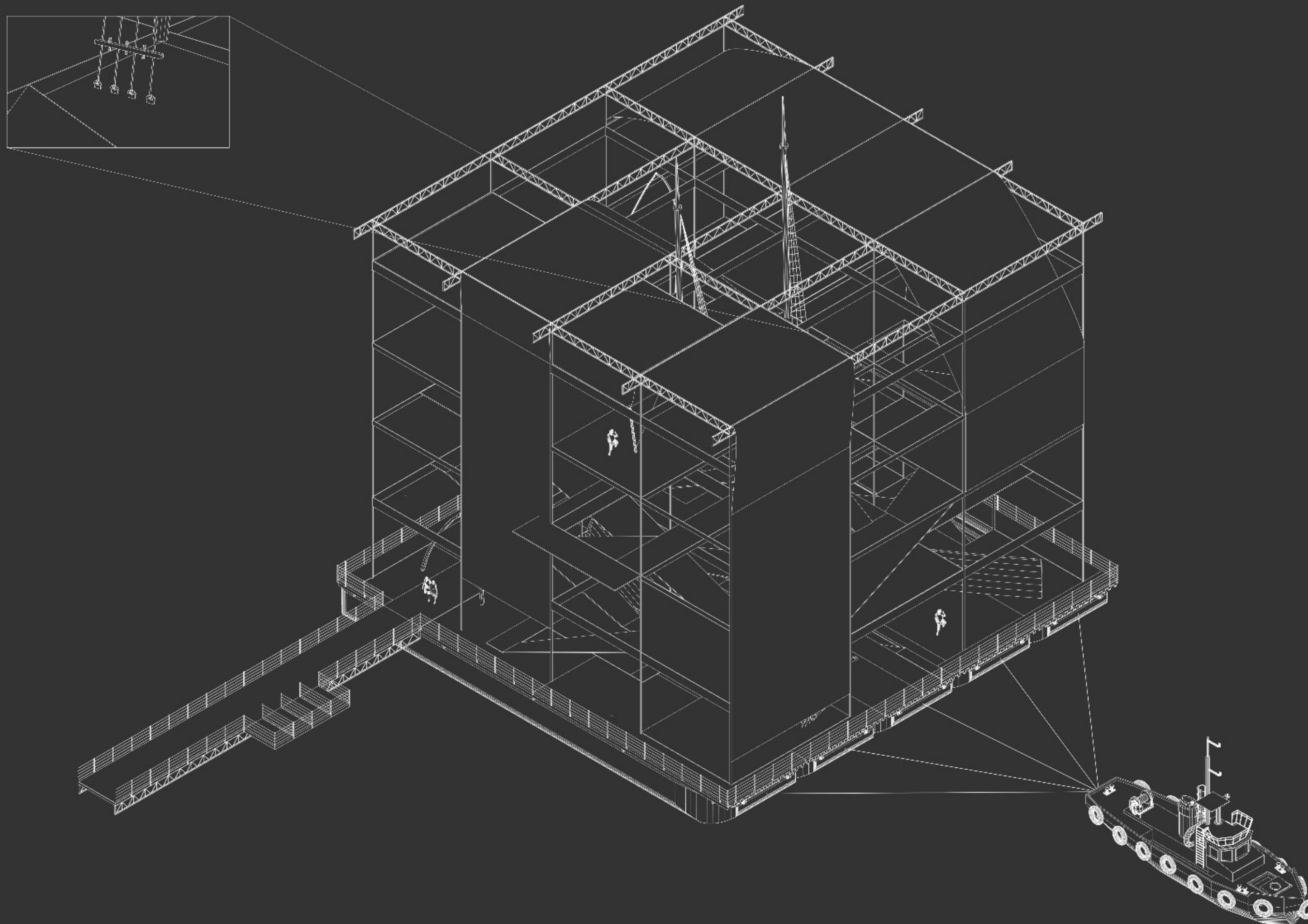
1997

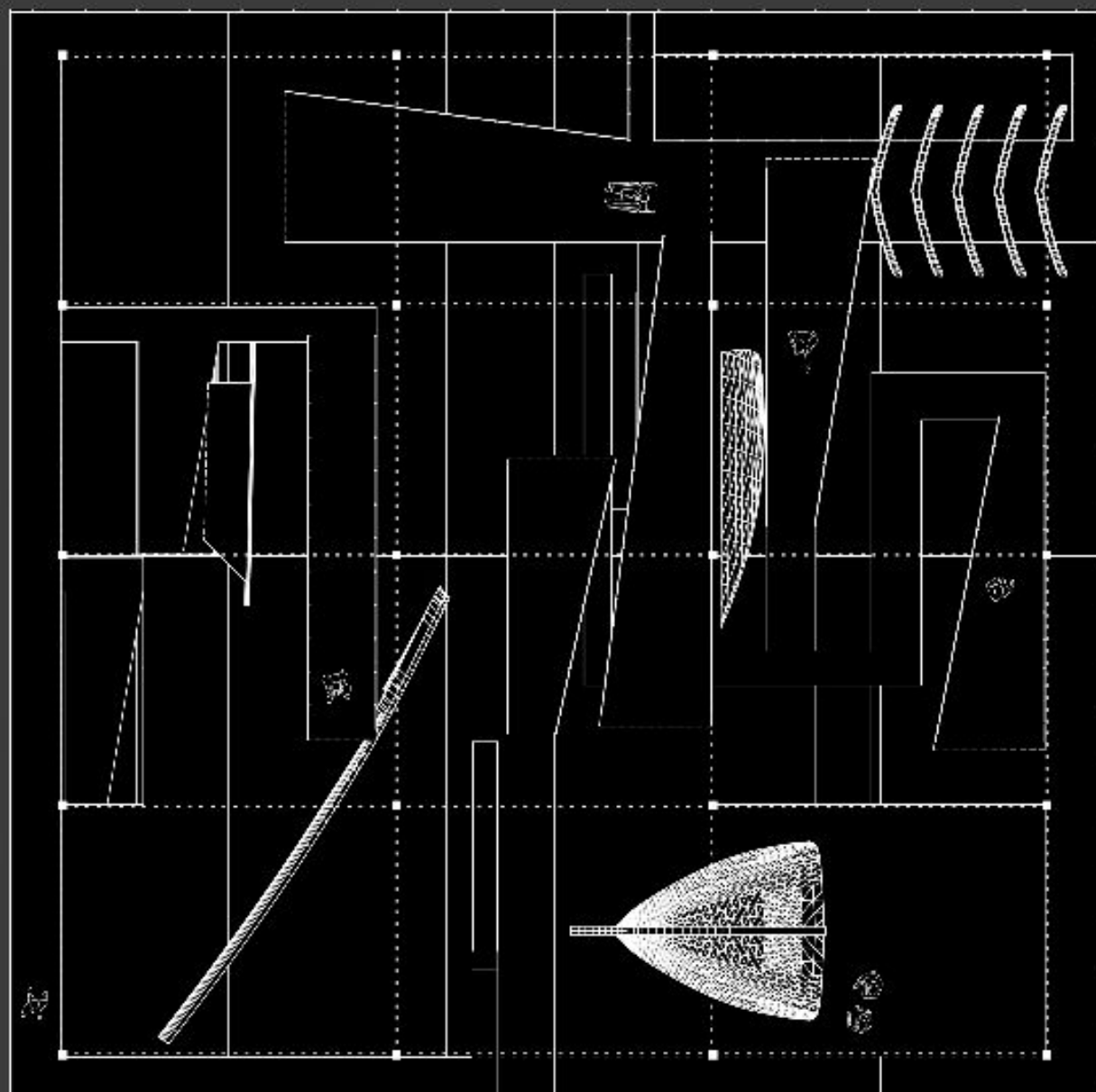
AFRICATOWN IS PLACED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, RAISING AWARENESS OF ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.

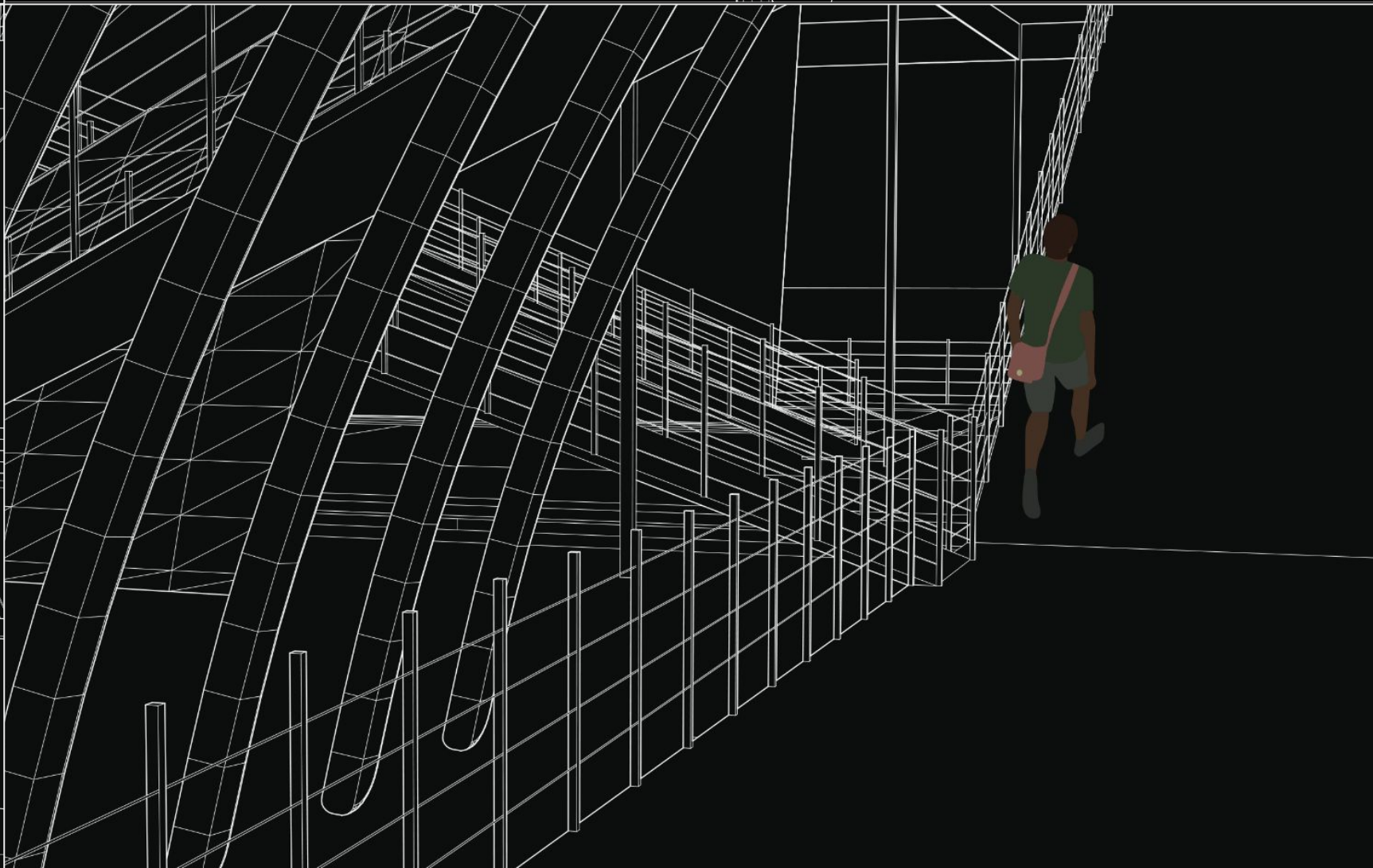
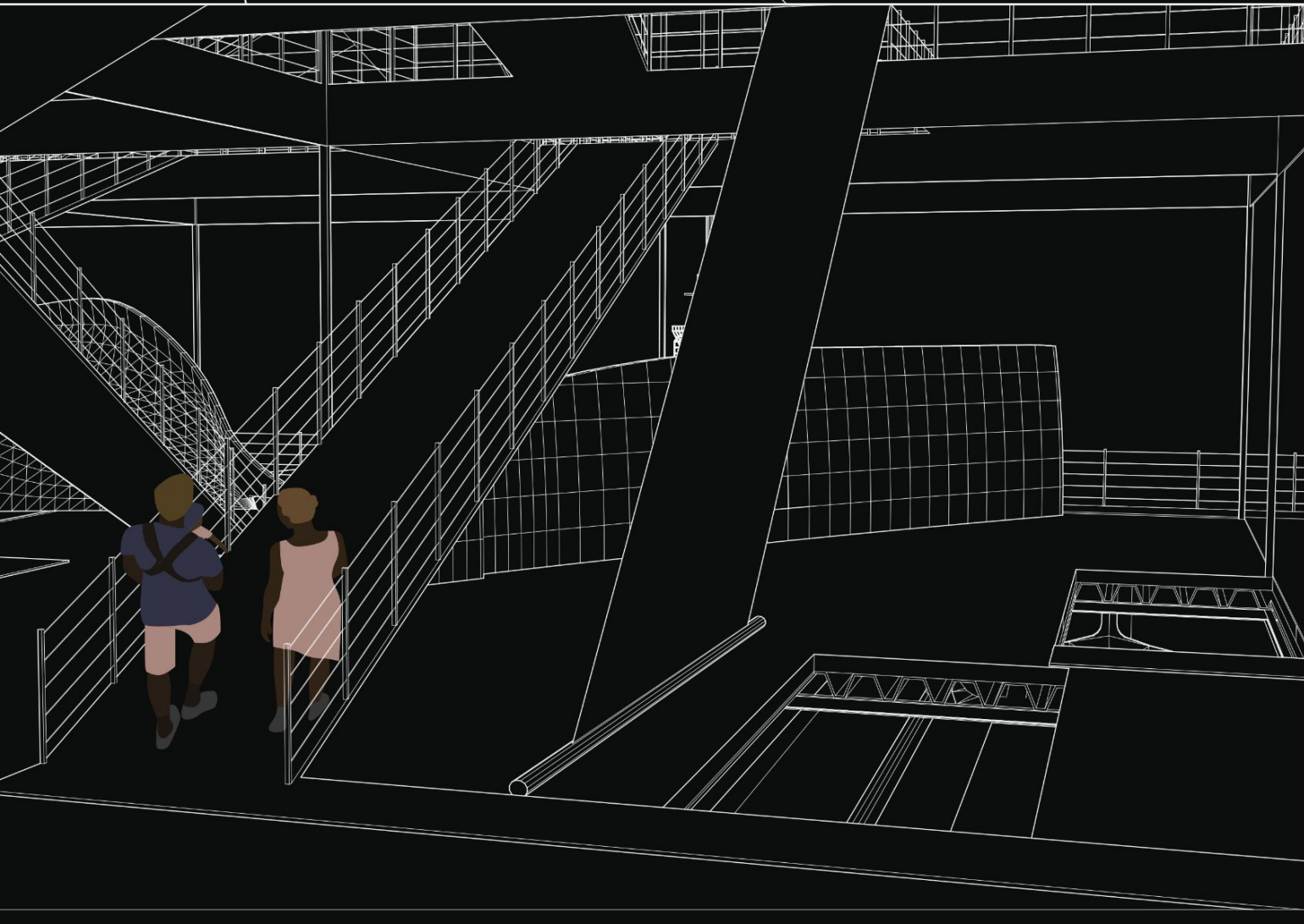
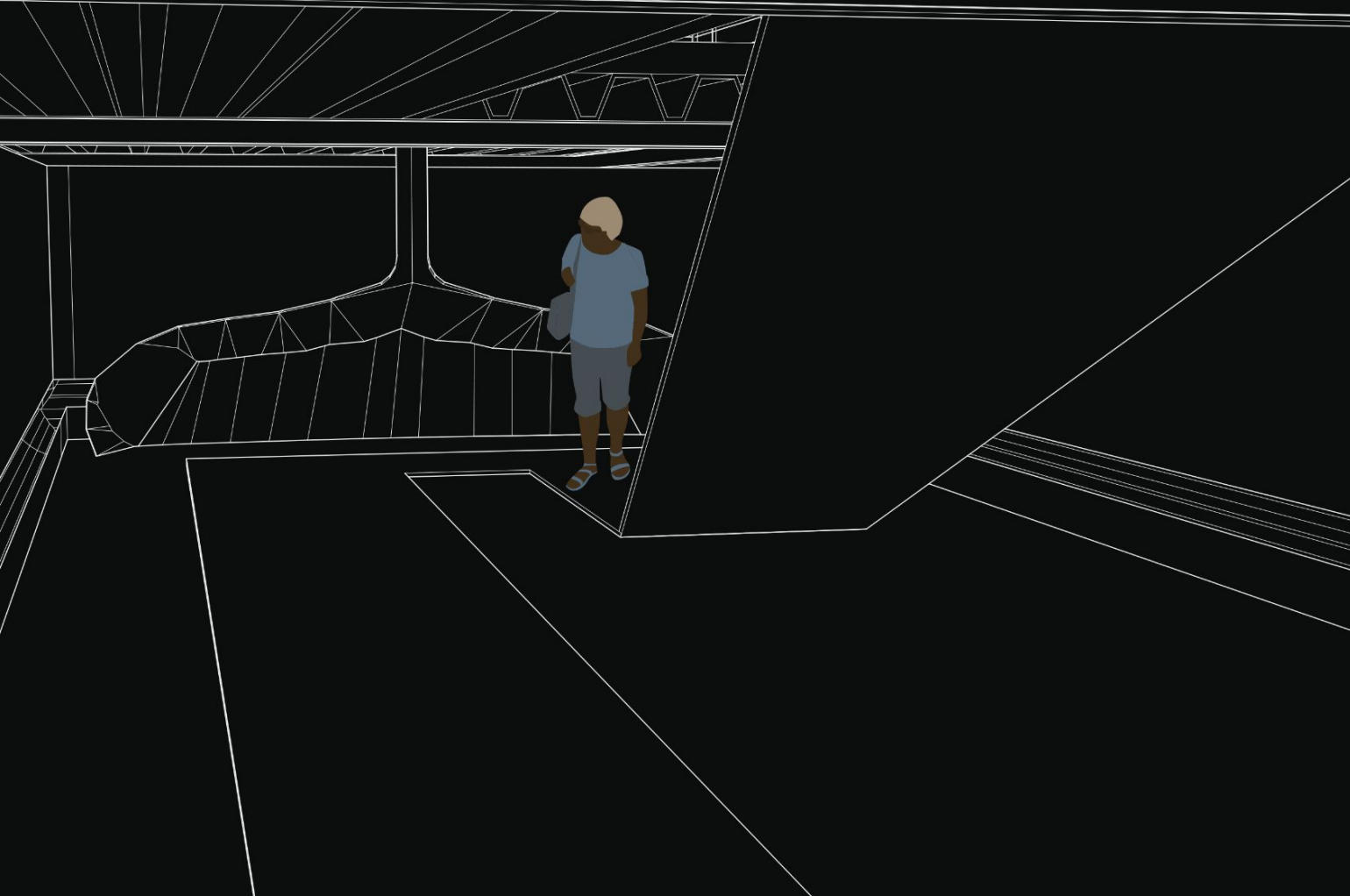
2019

THE WRECKAGE OF THE CLOTILDA IS DISCOVERED IN THE MOBILE RIVER, CONFIRMING HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS AND SPARKING RENEWED INTEREST IN AFRICATOWN'S LEGACY.







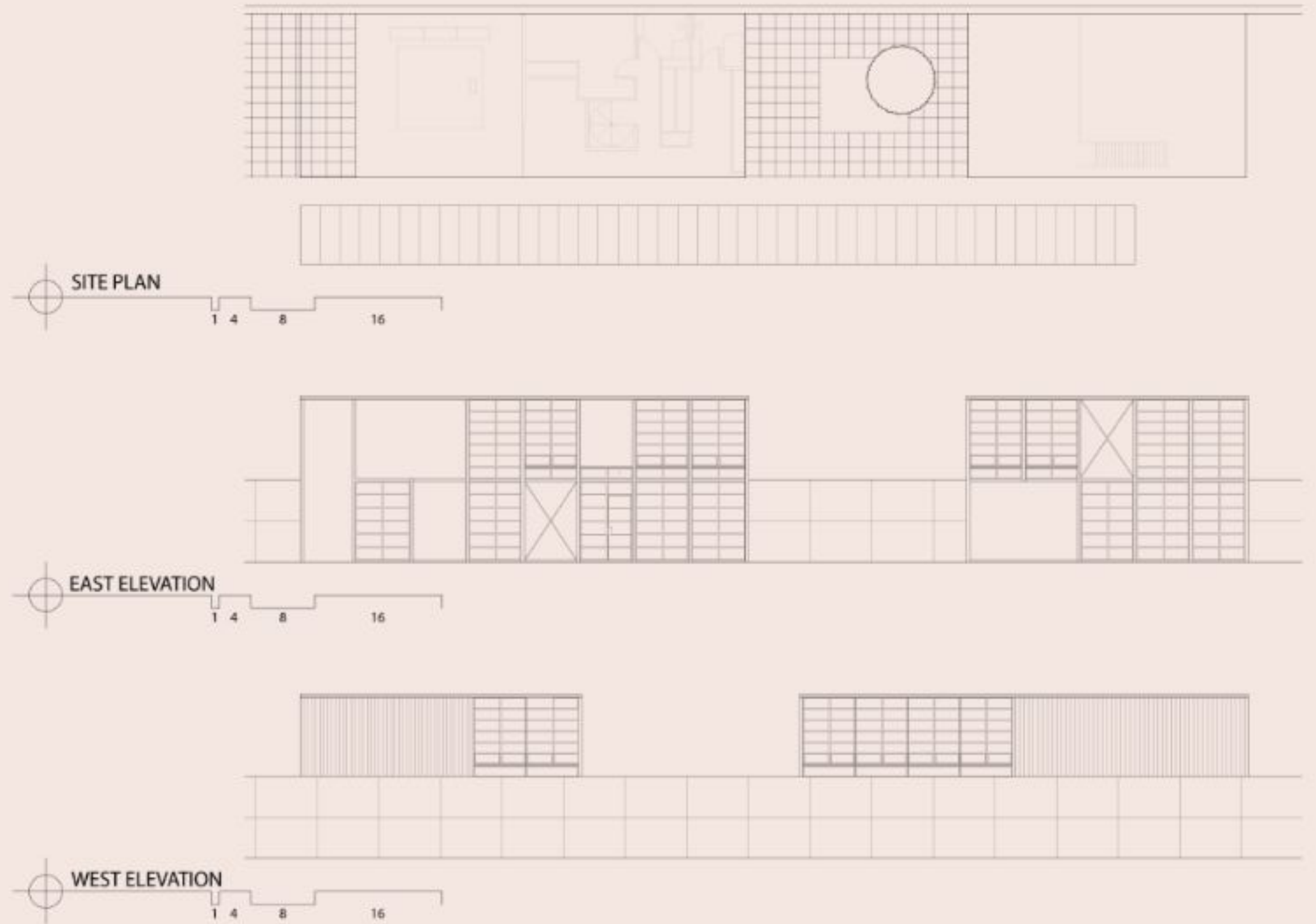


EAMES HOUSE STUDY

Precedent Study + Architectural Documentation

4

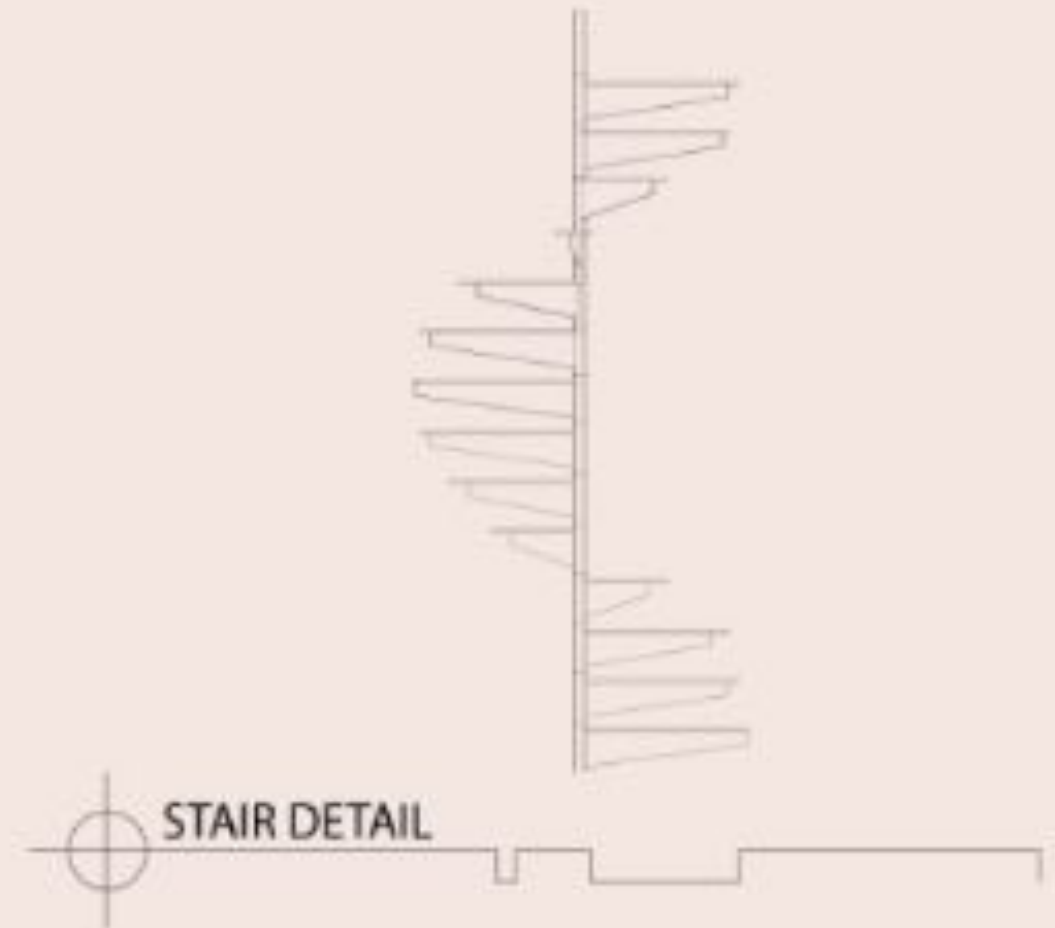
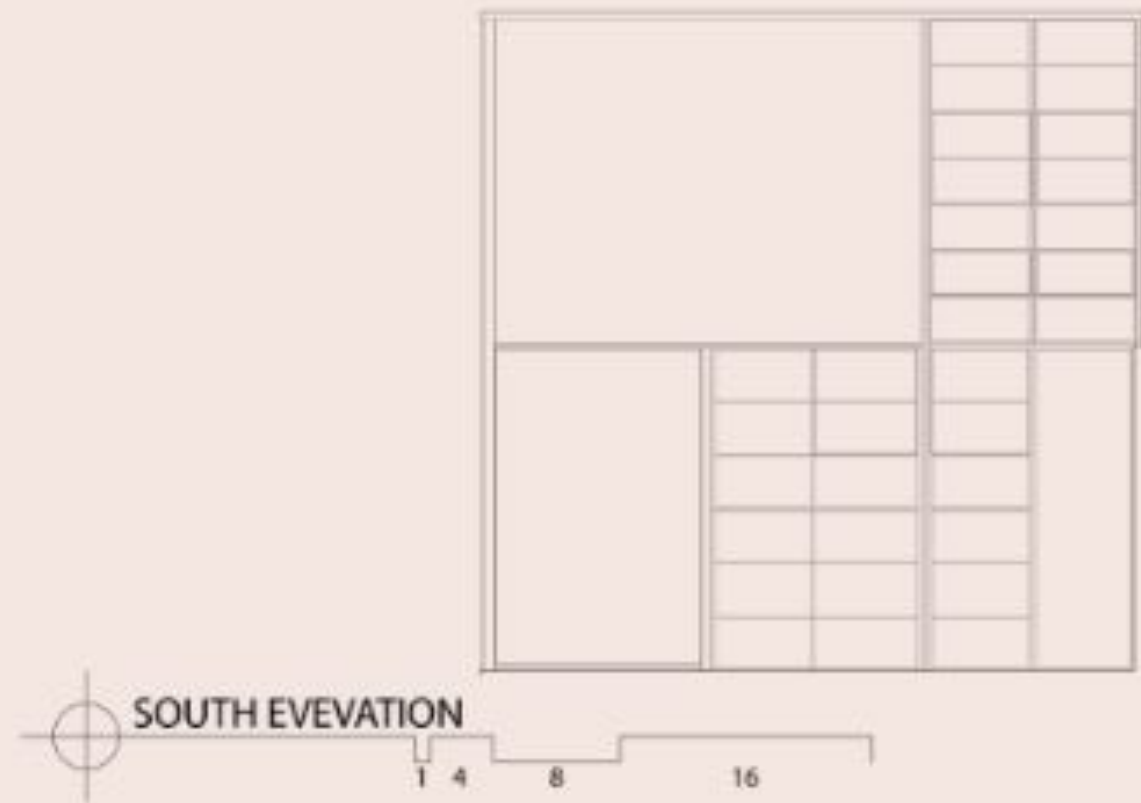
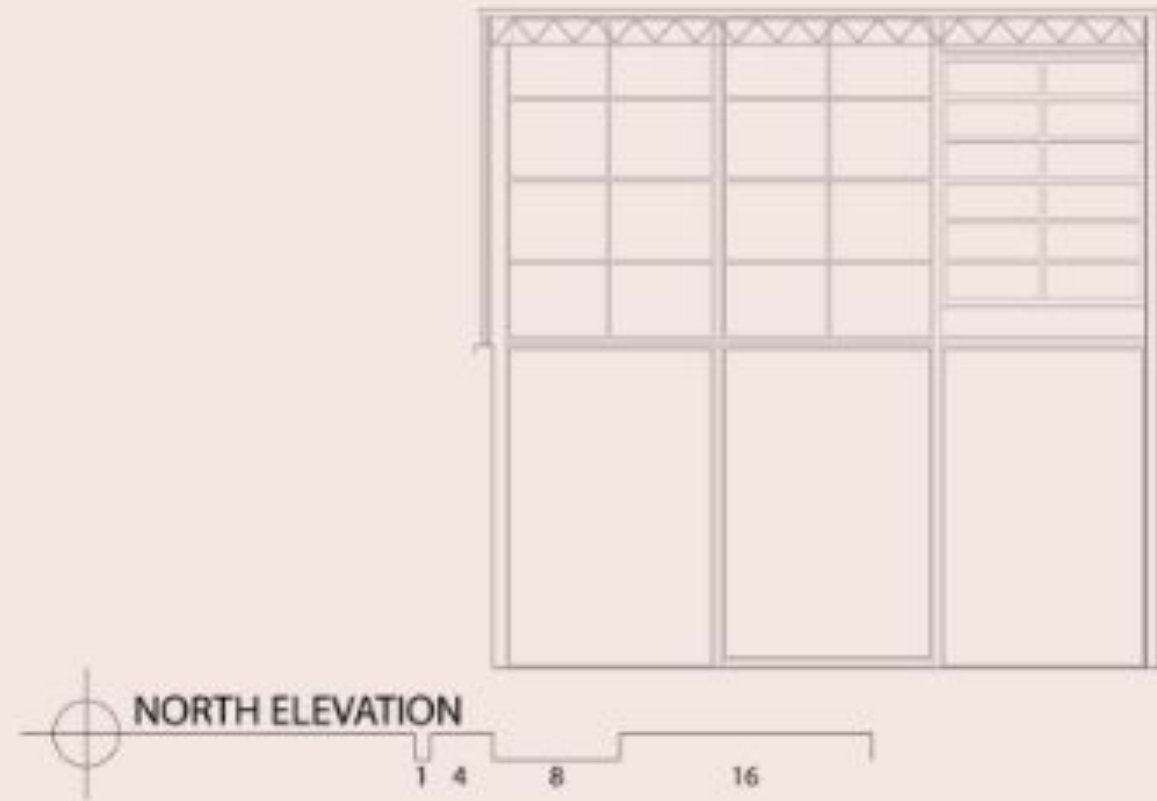
The Eames House Study focused on developing an understanding of **architectural drawing and representation** through the documentation of an existing residence. By recreating the house through plans, elevations, sections, and details, the study explored how **structure, materials, and spatial relationships** are communicated through technical drawings, while introducing the importance of **line weights, depth, scale, and drawing hierarchy** to clearly distinguish architectural elements and create a strong foundation for future design work.



EAMES HOUSE STUDY

Precedent Study + Architectural Documentation

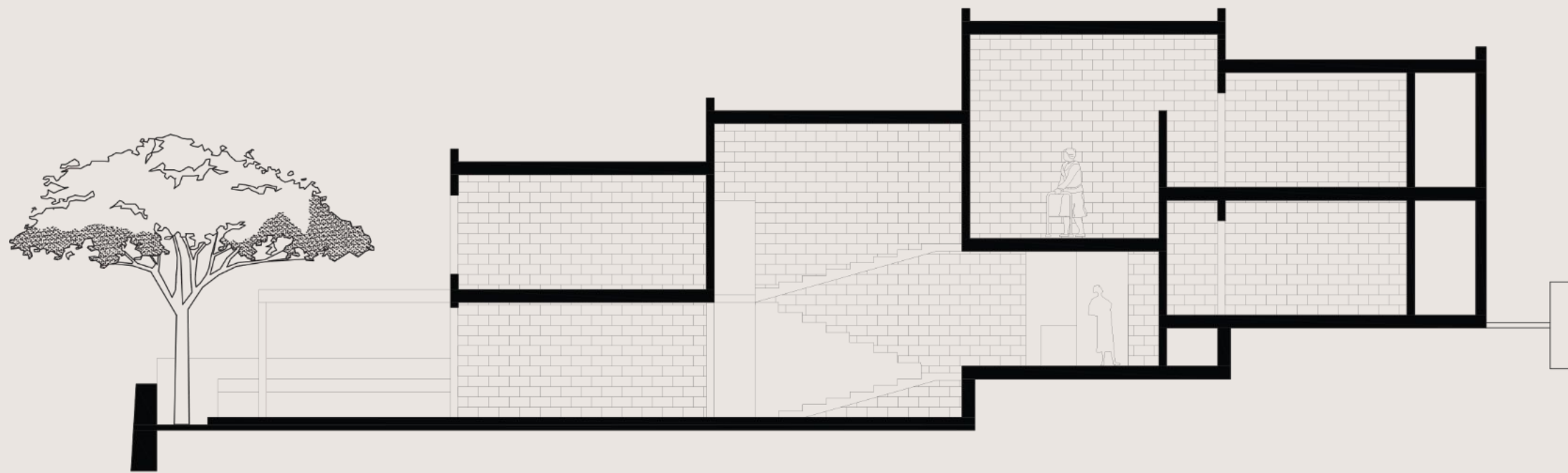
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TELLO HOUSE STUDY

Precedent Study + Architectural Documentation

4



SECTION AA

1 3 M

The Tello House Study focused on developing my understanding of **residential architecture and spatial organization** through the documentation of an existing home. By studying its plans, elevations, and architectural details, the project explored how **individual spaces connect and function together**, while strengthening my ability to read, interpret, and recreate architectural drawings using **AutoCAD and Rhino**.

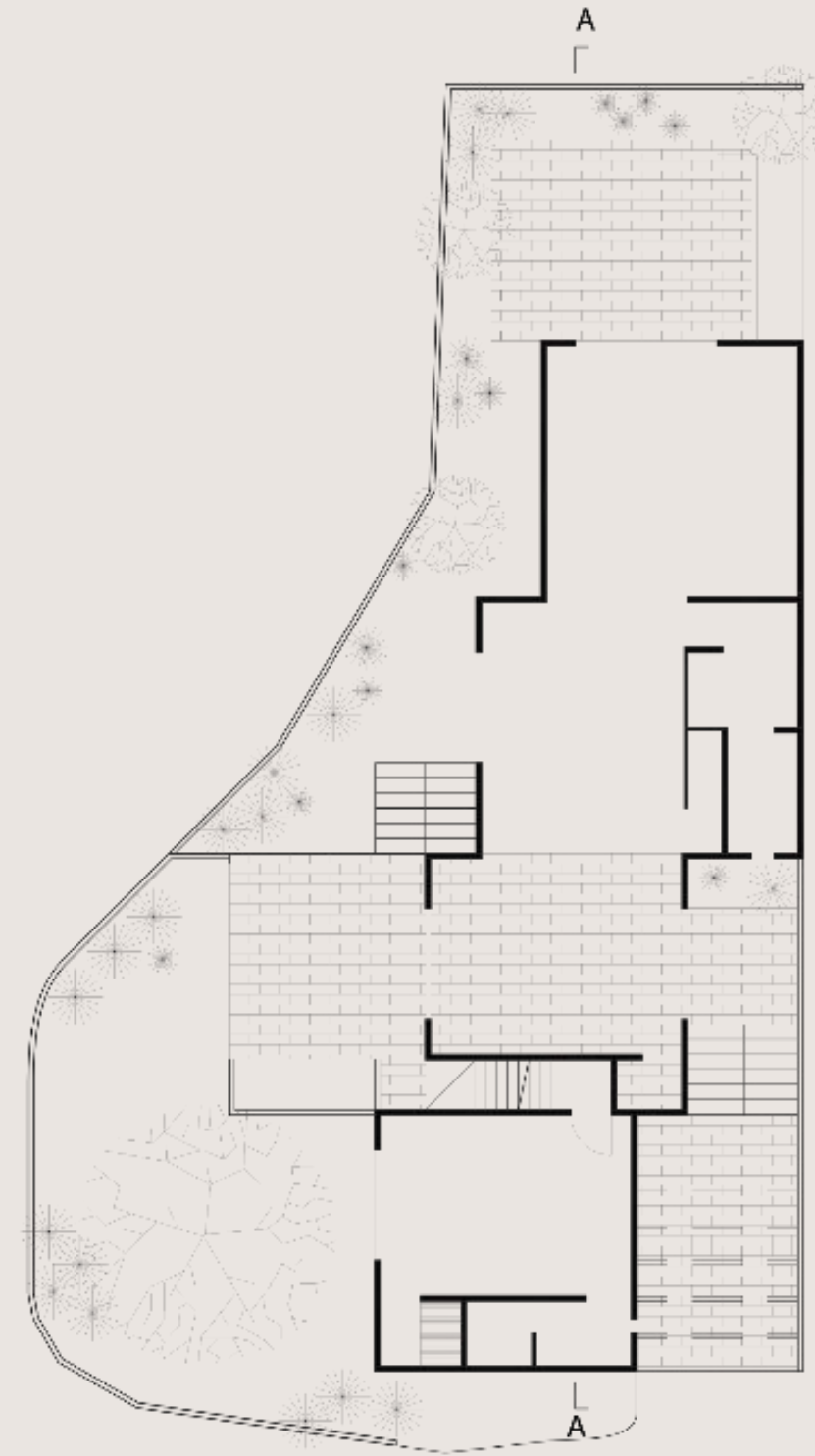
TELLO HOUSE STUDY

Precedent Study + Architectural Documentation

4



GROUND PLAN
1 3 M



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1 3 M



THANK YOU

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