

*Collective Agency*  
*A Resilience through Connections*

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“Creative democracy implies progressive thinking, which goes beyond the mere opposite of conservatism. Creative democracy is a way of living that adopts democratic thinking in all dimensions of daily and public life. Democracy is more than a state’s form, it is way of living of all civilians, who in an active, or creative way develop their live in the community of their family, the neighbourhood, the city, land, the world.” (Bleeckere, 2007)



## Content

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Introduction	8
The identity of a Resilient City	10
The Role of Permeability in Architecture	12
Connecting form and negative space	14
The Role of Permeability in a City	16
Understanding the Permeable Constructs	18
The Parameters of Physical Connectivity	24
Visual Permeability	30
The Value of Social Space	32
The Individual Identity as a Collective	34
Developing the Objectives for this brief	36
Crafting Civic Architecture	40
Placemaking	44
Connecting the wider context	52
Connecting Counterparts	64
Reflection through Materialization	70
The Reciprocal Frame	74
Conclusion	82
Bibliography	86
List of Figures	88



## Introduction

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In this thesis shows the desire for an ideal resilient city and what is needed in order to achieve this for its occupants. First, I discussed the intertwining connections between individuals and communities sense of identity within the urban realm. And show the resilience of the city to transform in the face of challenges. I go on to suggest that permeability is the central to the social fabric of movement within the city and region. I expose the importance of visual permeability And the transparency needed in creating longevity in this city. Finally I exposed the importance of social space in creating an inclusive public realm for the several identities that inhabit it. I expose the importance of visual permeability and the transparency needed to instill longevity into a city. I reveal the importance of social space in creating an inclusive public realm for the several identities. Finally, I translate these social progressions into a final design project where am I create an agency for collective agency. Exposing the invaluable entity that is collected from collective identities.





## The identity of a Resilient City

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The resilience of a city is heavily dependent on its inhabitants. Numerous factors cause a city's resilience, but its inhabitants are the most significant and influential. The people who live in a city play a critical role in shaping its character, economy, and social fabric. A resilient city can adapt to changing circumstances, bounce back from setbacks, and thrive in the face of challenges.

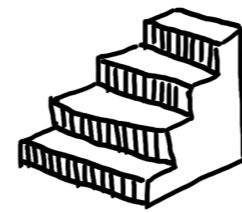
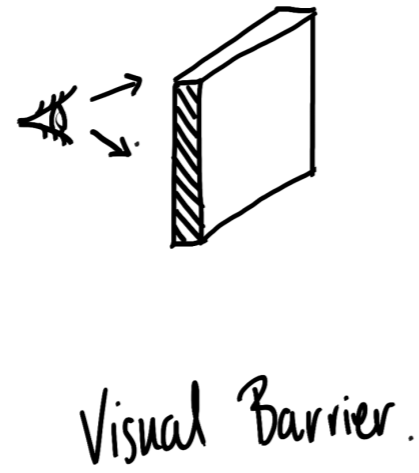
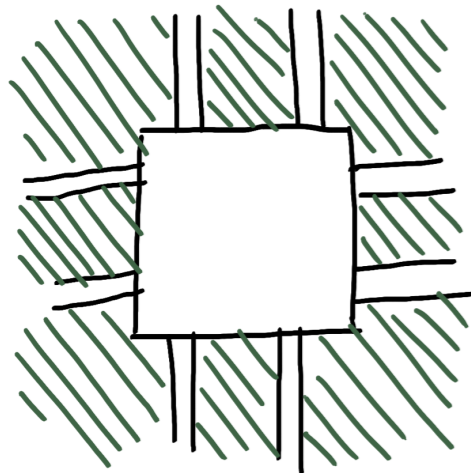
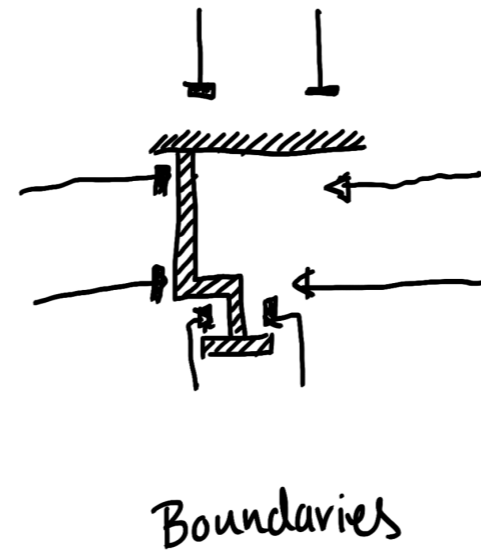
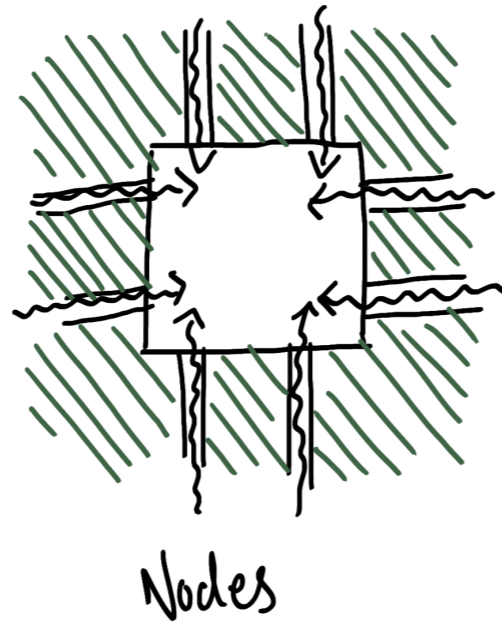
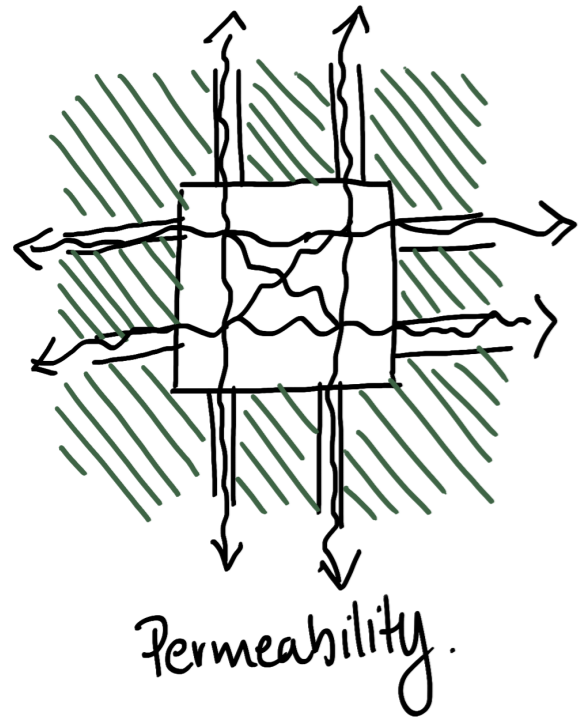
The endurance of a city relies on the collective and individual sense of identity in a region. The fundamental element of executing a functional city for citizens is encouraging design catered to the user's needs. "Public life changes constantly in the course of a day, week, or month, and over the years. In addition, design, gender, age, financial resources, culture, and many other factors determine how we use or so not use public space" (Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre, 2013). The city must become flexible to any problem that it may encounter. The citizens must be at the forefront of making these decisions due to their inherent involvement in the longevity of a city. The citizens can enforce their collective and individual identity to transform the city. This identity is fostered through the needs and wants of the occupants and framed by the culture and location that it develops.

In creating the ideal city, a population's collective and individual sense of identity plays a crucial role in ensuring the longevity and sustainability of a city. It fosters social cohesion, encourages diversity and inclusivity, and promotes creativity and innovation.

"In political terms, this (the input from a range of identities) means that a collective identity under modern conditions can arise out of a process of public argumentation and debate in which competing ideals of identity and political legitimacy are articulated, contested, and refined." (Mouffe, 1995)

The engaging individual promotes diversity and inclusivity within the population, fostering creativity and innovation. As collectives and individual identities shine through, it creates a sense of pride and ownership over the city. The increased attention motivates people to take responsibility for their public realm and contribute positively towards the development of their city. The citizens become more integrated into participating in community events, and support local businesses.

The globalized city is a collective of differing identities referring to values, beliefs, traditions, and customs that may define a group of people. The city must adapt to cater to a multitude of identities and nurture its alliance. For an urban environment to foster an environment where individuals are motivated to express their viewpoints, it must exhibit permeability. A permeable city provides porous attributes for easy access, visual transparency, and enriching social interactions.



## The Role of Permeability in Architecture

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### The definition of Permeability

“The state or quality of being permeable” (Oxford Dictionary, 2022)

“A quantity measuring the influence of a substance on the magnetic flux in the region it occupies” (Oxford Dictionary, 2022)

In architectural terms, permeability considers the flow through and between spaces. The permeability of boundaries permits the occupant to travel through space while interacting with multiple districts. Between these spaces lie a combination of private and public spaces which are inherently important to the functionality of a city. In this thesis, we focus on the public spaces. “While it is no doubt true that the work of citizenship requires a multitude of spaces, from the most private to the most public, at the same time public spaces are decisive, for it is here that the desires and needs of individuals and groups can be seen, and therefore recognized” (Mitchell, 2003). Through looking at the public spaces we become familiar with the users within a given area. People utilise public environments to connect with others and socialise outside of their private realm.



4 figures arranged randomly with negative space resulting



The same 4 figures arranged to create positive space (a triangle)



The same 4 figures arranged to create positive space (the letter A)

Figure 2

The figure-ground theory  
(Frederick, 2007)

## Connecting form and negative space

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The public spaces are created between that built up mass of private space. When discussing built mass, “form” refers to a building or object with physical shape and structure. In contrast, “negative space” indicates the area surrounding the form that is devoid of physical construction or mass. When a form is situated within a negative space, it creates an additional obstacle. The size and placement of this form can significantly alter the negative space, depending on its scale and shape. Therefore, the assembled collection of forms determines the size, shape, and scale of the void around it. The interplay between form and negative space is crucial in architecture and planning as it affects the physical, visual, and social connections between forms and negative spaces. This directly affects how people occupy and use a specific area.

The arrangement of forms can directly alter a space depending on its configuration. This is evident when looking at The Figure-Ground Theory. “The figure-ground theory states that the space that results from placing figures should be considered as carefully as figures themselves” (Frederick, 2007, pp. 12-13). Frederick reveals how the negative void can enhance the form. The surrounding area exposes certain elements of the built environment that bounds it. This negative space allows citizens to interact with the built world while encouraging moments or refuge. These spaces can be utilised as external rooms or volumes creating curated spaces for citizens to occupy.

The negative spaces surrounding the built world are the foundations of the urban realm. These areas create berating space for civilization to circulate, communicate and occupy. Gruber and Ngo refer to this type of space as “the common

space.” “In the common space, in space produced and used as common, people do not simply use an area given by an authority (local state, state, public institution, etc.). People actually mold this kind of space according to their collective needs and aspirations. Where public space is necessary as the mark of an identity- it is, that’s to say it belongs to, the authority- common space tends to be consistently redefined: commons space happens and it is shaped through collective action” (Stefan Gruber and Anh-Linh Ngo, 2021). The open space becomes an adaptable area changing over years, hours, and minutes transforming for the common good.

The common ground becomes a practical entity for the citizens, creating movement between citizens and connecting the built forms with negative spaces. The continuous connection is crucial for a city’s resilience as it generates a legible and concise atmosphere for the occupants. The permeable town allows for diverse use of space for citizens, creating an array of altering areas across the city. Porousness, the ability to pass through an area, is a critical attribute to the success of the urban realm. In architectural terms, circulation is similar to the movement of blood in the human body. Much like how the blood flowing through the human body sustains human existence, the importance of circulation through the urban environment sustains citizens’ life and the city’s success rate circulation in the urban environment. It’s not about getting from A to B but rather a system that connects citizens to each other and their surrounding landscape. The movement through space is the fundamental resilience of the urban realm, bringing life, prosperity, economic value, and social interactions. Therefore, circulation and connection are the core of the Urban environment.

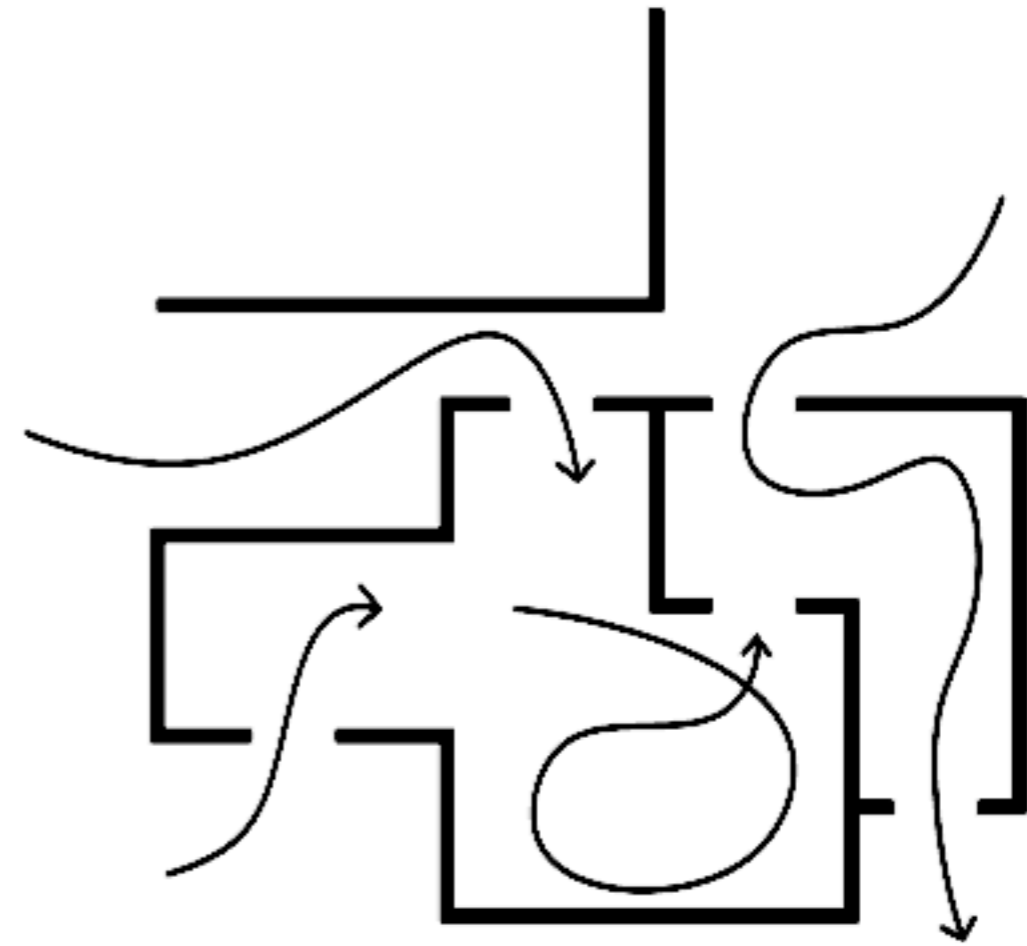
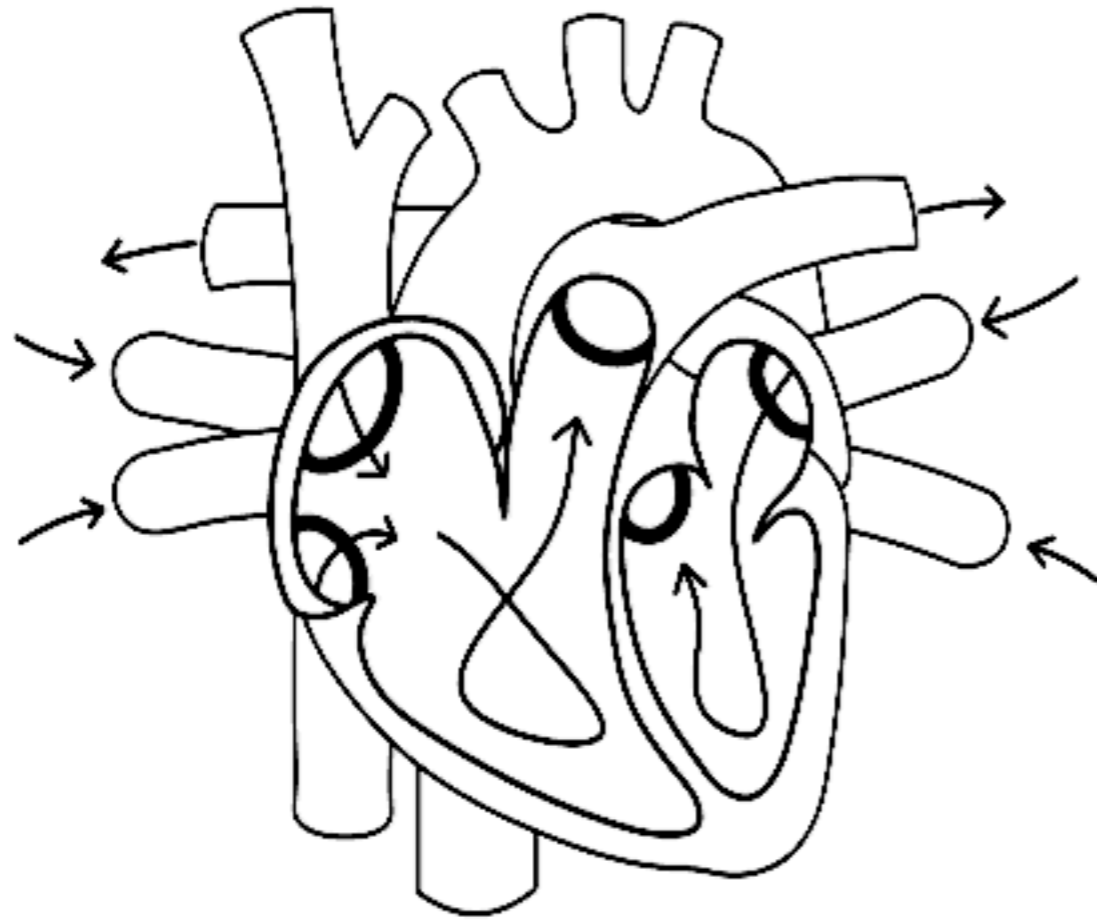


Figure 3

The core understanding of permeability and circulation.

## The Role of Permeability in a City

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Permeability for this thesis is the infinite connection of space, creating circulation for the citizens' use. Permeability allows the occupant to engage in social interaction while allowing the traveller a choice of the voyage. Permeability is the beginning of choice in society. "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I- I took the one less travelled by, And that has made all the difference." (Frost, 1916). The connection of a space is the foundation of giving the occupants a choice. Allan Horning refers to the limits of citizen's 'rights' and the potentials for its future expansion in The First Amendment Right to Public Forum. He suggests that Public Space is a utensil for citizens to express their thoughts and understandings with themselves and others.

"With human movement injected, spaces seem more active and energetic, giving a sense of dynamism and rejuvenation, thus leading to the attraction of even more users to the vicinity." (Hoong, 2017). The circulation in the urban setting should reflect the citizen's wants and needs. The porous space becomes an amenity, connecting social interfaces and functions within a space. "Towns need to establish places where activities can take place and groups can go where they feel secure and free" (C. Holland, A. Clark, J. Katz, and S. Peace, 2007). People are fundamental to the urban setting, so an area should aim to become durable, porous, and active. The circulation surrounding spaces add passive surveillance, allowing people to feel secure while encountering social activities.

The intertwining city gives a large expanse for each citizen's complex needs and circumstances. Allowing for permeability throughout the

urban setting ensures its resilience in the face of political, social, and economic shifts. The ever-changing city demands a foundation to withstand these constant changes. The permeable city promotes inclusivity and accessibility. The urban realm caters to citizens to move freely throughout the urban environment and access a variety of spaces for work, play, and social interaction. "Circulation routes are the pathways people take through and around buildings or urban places. Circulation is often thought of as the 'space between the spaces,' having a connective function" (Hammer, 2016). A porous system allows ease of movement between spaces while encouraging different interactions between people and their environment. The places one passes through may act as a hub for social activity and contribute to the area's vibrancy when multiple individuals or communities begin to circulate the urban realm. Ultimately, the permeable town is a critical component of a resilient and sustainable urban environment that prioritizes the needs and well-being of its citizens.





Figure 4

The Locations of the Circulation Study

1. Tolka Valley

2. Smithfeild

3. Temple Bar

4. North Wall Quay



## Understanding the Permeable Constructs

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Mitchell describes French psychologist Henri Lefebvre's theories suggesting the different spaces offer a profound analysis of the political role and the understanding of space and how it may shape and reflect the places that one may live. He dictates a sense of space as an everyday essential through mental, physical, and social space. "The right to the city was the right "to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete usage of ... moments and places ... " (Mitchell, 2003). The concept of space as a utensil implies that it can be utilized in various ways to cater to the needs of individuals throughout the day. This leads to the creation of interconnected spaces that serve multiple purposes, resulting in a versatile and well-connected society. In essence, space can be seen as a tool that can be used to enhance the quality of life for its occupants

Lefebvre discusses a city as a collective of citizens where the city functions as an *oeuvre* in which all its citizens participate. *Ouvre* directly translates as "a substantial body of work constituting the lifework of a writer, an artist, or a composer" (Webster, n.d.). In the case of Lefebvre's writings, he refers to the city as the body of work and its occupants as its creator. "More and more the spaces of the modern city are being produced for us rather than by us. People, Lefebvre argued, have a right to more; they have the right to the *oeuvre*." (Mitchell, 2003). The movement through the urban landscape is not only a result of accessibility but also a right to shared social space. Spatial connection allows the occupant to immerse in society and create a path. The differing approaches people inevitably choose generate a sense of identity for the area as an individual and a collective.

Permeability in an architectural construct is the circulation in and around the built environment. The movement through space creates ease, activity, and social engagement for the traveller. In the case of this study, the permeability of space is separated into three main categories: physical permeability, visual permeability, and social permeability. "Permeability, especially in public spaces, is a quality indicator which increases the value of space in terms of physical, functional and perceptual features." (Aysel Yavuz, Nilgün Kuloğlu, 2014). The permeability of space creates pockets of activities for citizens. The array of pockets means multiple diverse spaces can evolve from these areas to cater to the occupants. The diversity in the environment creates a collective identity for the city. Thus creating intrigue and social engagement for visitors.

The permeable city is one where each citizen can exist across scales of public and private space. It is where each individual can coexist in their shared collective region. The circulation of a city plays a fundamental role in social engagement within an urban setting. By looking at the relationships of hierarchies of space, boundaries, and order through the origins of the regions built in Dublin's inner city, we can begin to examine the civic relationships that occur when people begin to gather and create a sense of identity within a city. The functionality of the space becomes transparent, and the inner workings of the space begin to thrive.

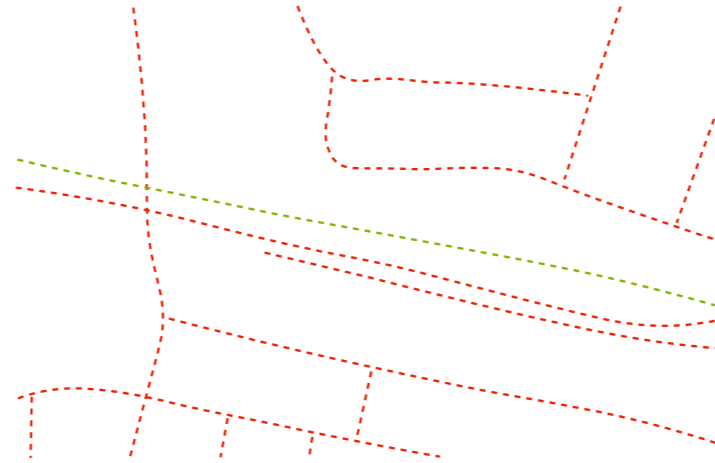


Figure 5

Circulation Study- Tolka Valley

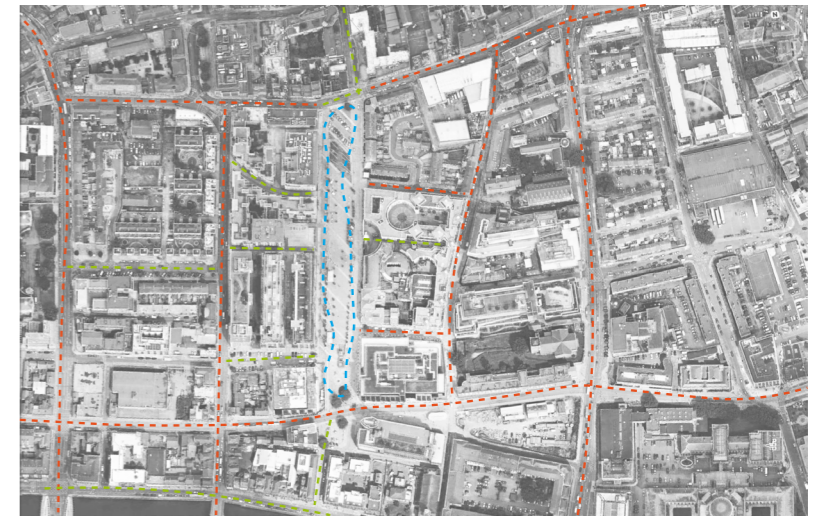
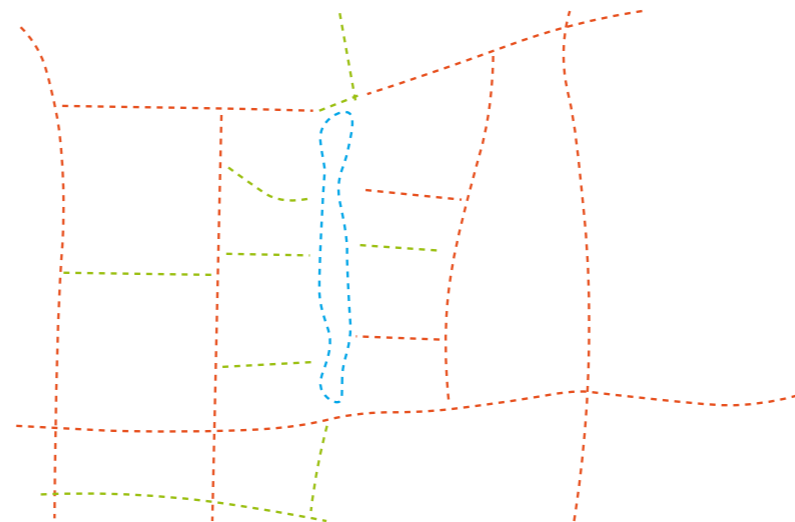
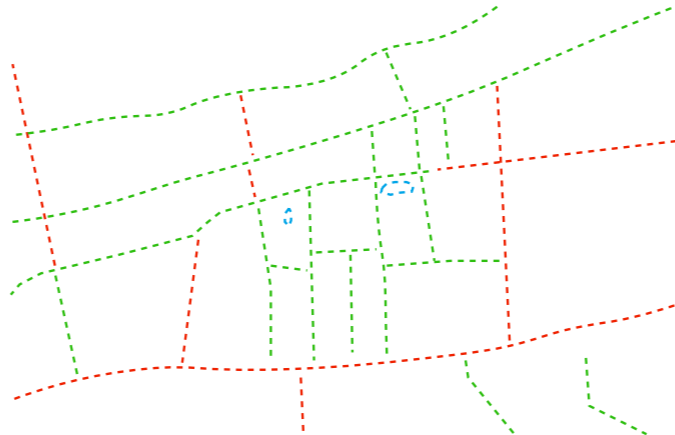


Figure 6  
Circulation Study- Smithfield





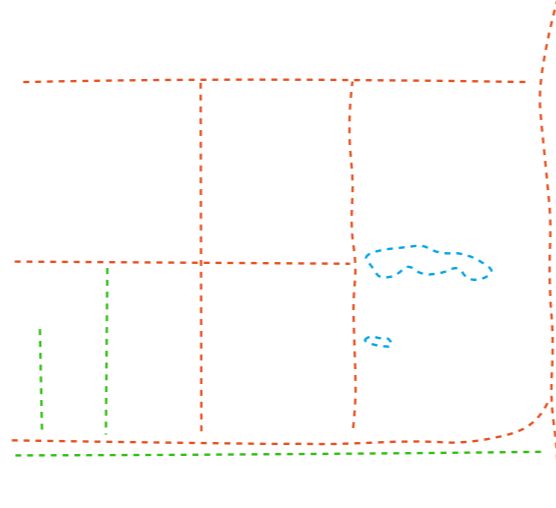
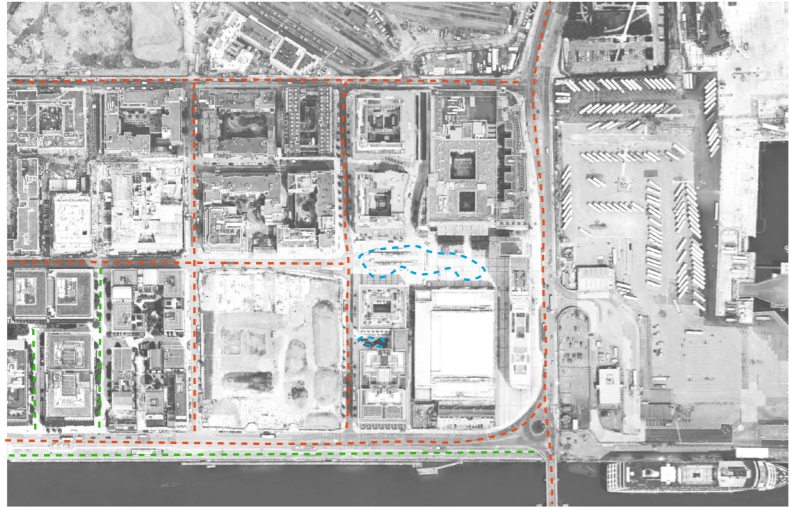


Figure 8  
Circulation Study- North Wall Quay



## The Parameters of Physical Connectivity

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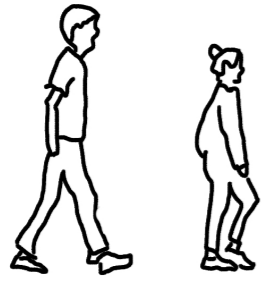
The physical permeability of architecture acts as a filter guiding people through, around, and between spaces. The physical attributes directly connect to the movement of society through the urban context. The physical characteristics of permeability are evident when dealing with accessibility, horizontal circulation, vertical circulation, and boundaries.

For this study, physical permeability has been broken into three main categories, fast circulation, slow circulation, and social space. The primary purpose of fast circulation is to move from point A to point B efficiently. Slow circulation allows the occupant to get from A to B while encouraging them to stop for a social interaction or reflection. Social space can enable citizens to become partake in communal interactions, debates, or conversations.

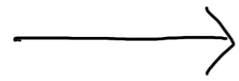
The formula for creating a city that encourages serendipitous encounters involves identifying the three types of circulation. By minimizing fast circulation, it extends the opportunities for slow circulation and social space. By doing so, people can engage in conversation, encounter different amenities, and utilize the urban realm to its fullest potential. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that fosters social interaction and community engagement.

“Now the great function of the city is . . . to permit, indeed to encourage and in- cite, the greatest potential number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between all persons, classes and groups, providing, as it were, a stage upon which the drama of social life may be enacted, with the actors taking their turn as spectators and the spectators as actors.” (Jacobs, 1961)

Accessibility plays a vital role in the foundations of permeability as it is where a threshold or circulation space occurs. The porous urban environment stems from the foundation of its entry. A traveller may access an area through a point, such as a door, stairs, escalator, elevator, or pathway. “The extent to which an environment allows people a choice of access through it, from place to place” (Ian Bently, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn, Graham Smith, 1985). The ease of transition through regions is vital to the underlying concept of connection. Accessibility in the urban context is crucial to enable all citizens to interact with their environment. The obtainable public realm influences citizens to reflect on and improve their current surroundings, creating and nurturing a public realm bespoke to their needs and requirements



Fast Circulation



Slow Circulation



Social Space

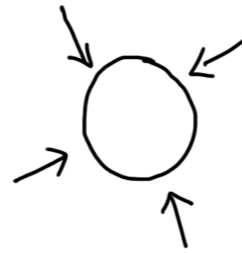


Figure 9

An Explanation of the Types of Circulation.  
Fast Circulation  
Slow Circulation  
Social Space



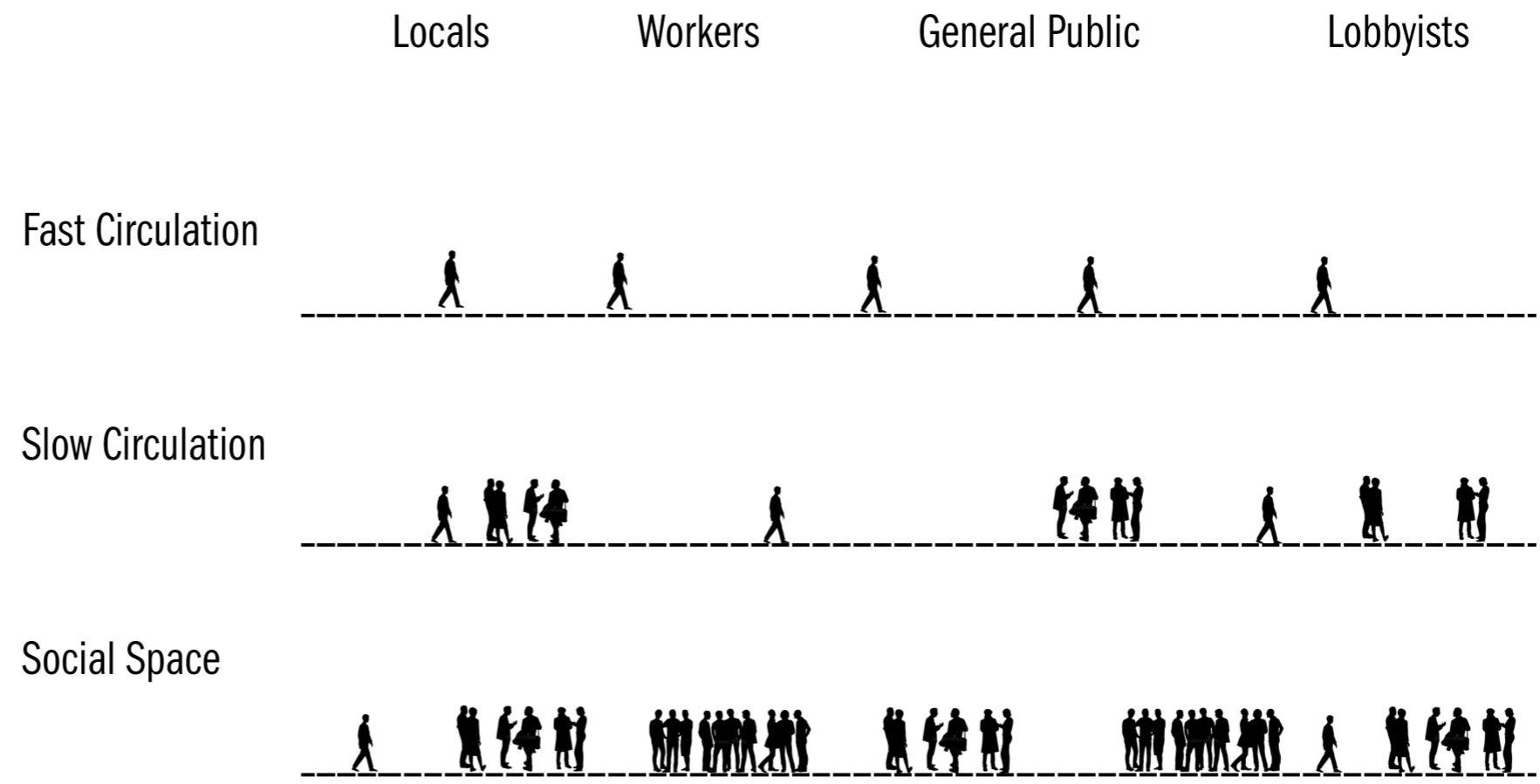
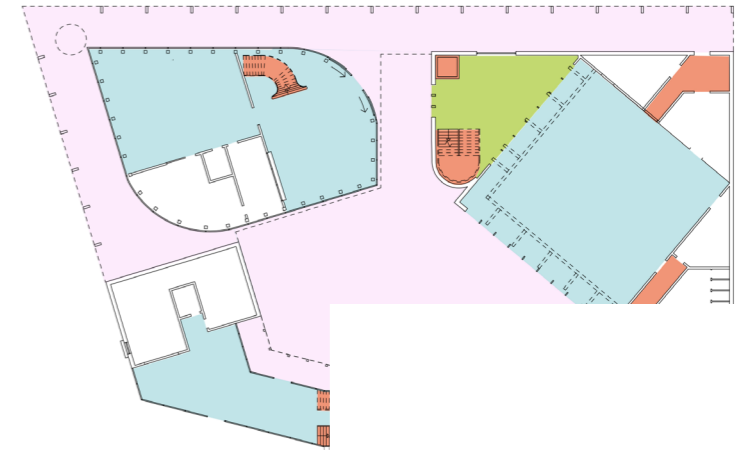
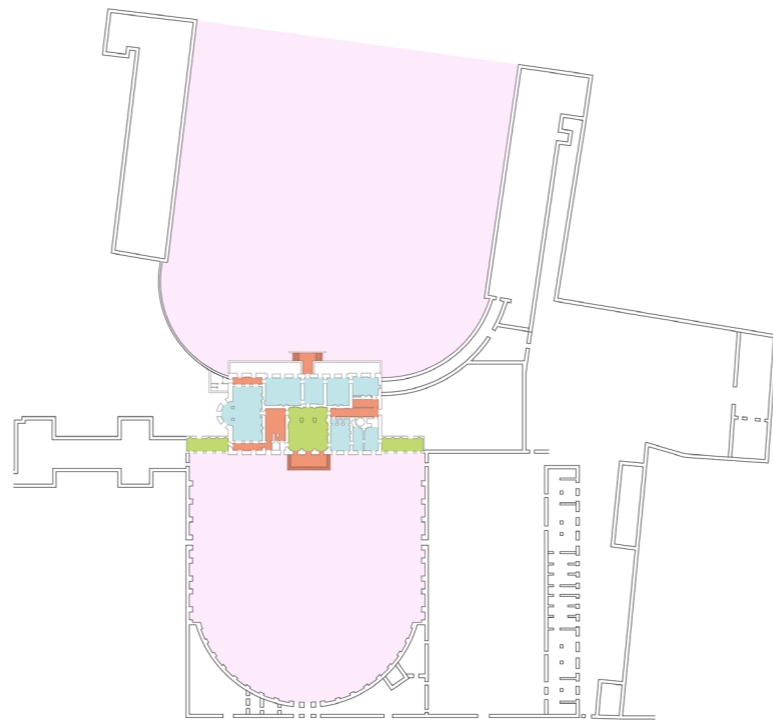
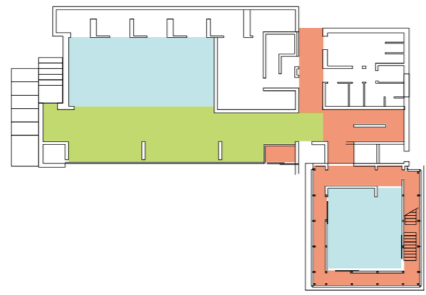


Figure 10

A Comparative Exploitation of the Types of Circulation.



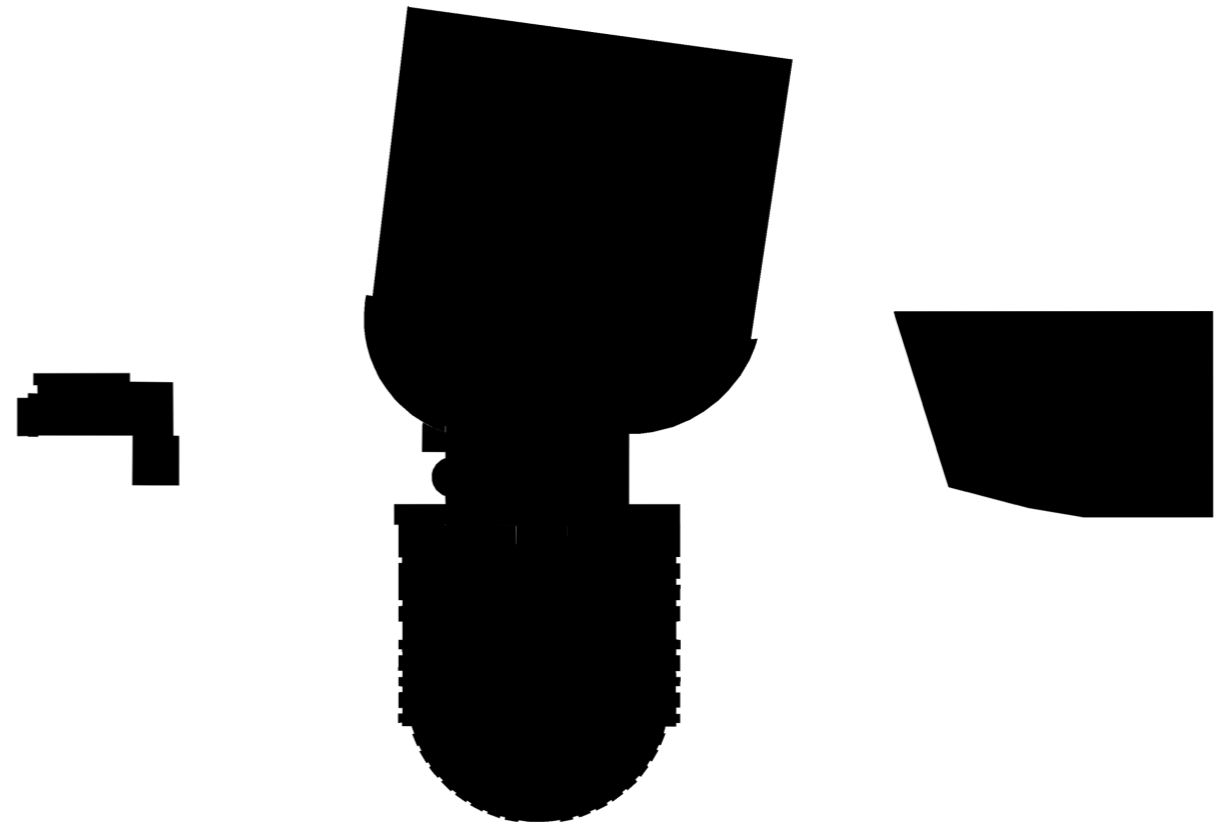


Figure 11

A Study of Circulation on Public Assembly's in Ireland  
Fast Circulation (red), Slow Circulation (green), the Internal  
Social Space (blue) and the External Social Space (pink).

- A. Meath County Council offices in Dunshauglin
- B. Leinster House on Kildare street, Dublin 2.
- C. Proposed Project as Developed in Part 2

Figure 12

Comparing the Scales of the Same Public Assembly's in  
Ireland



## Visual Connection



Figure 13  
Visual Connection

## Visual Permeability

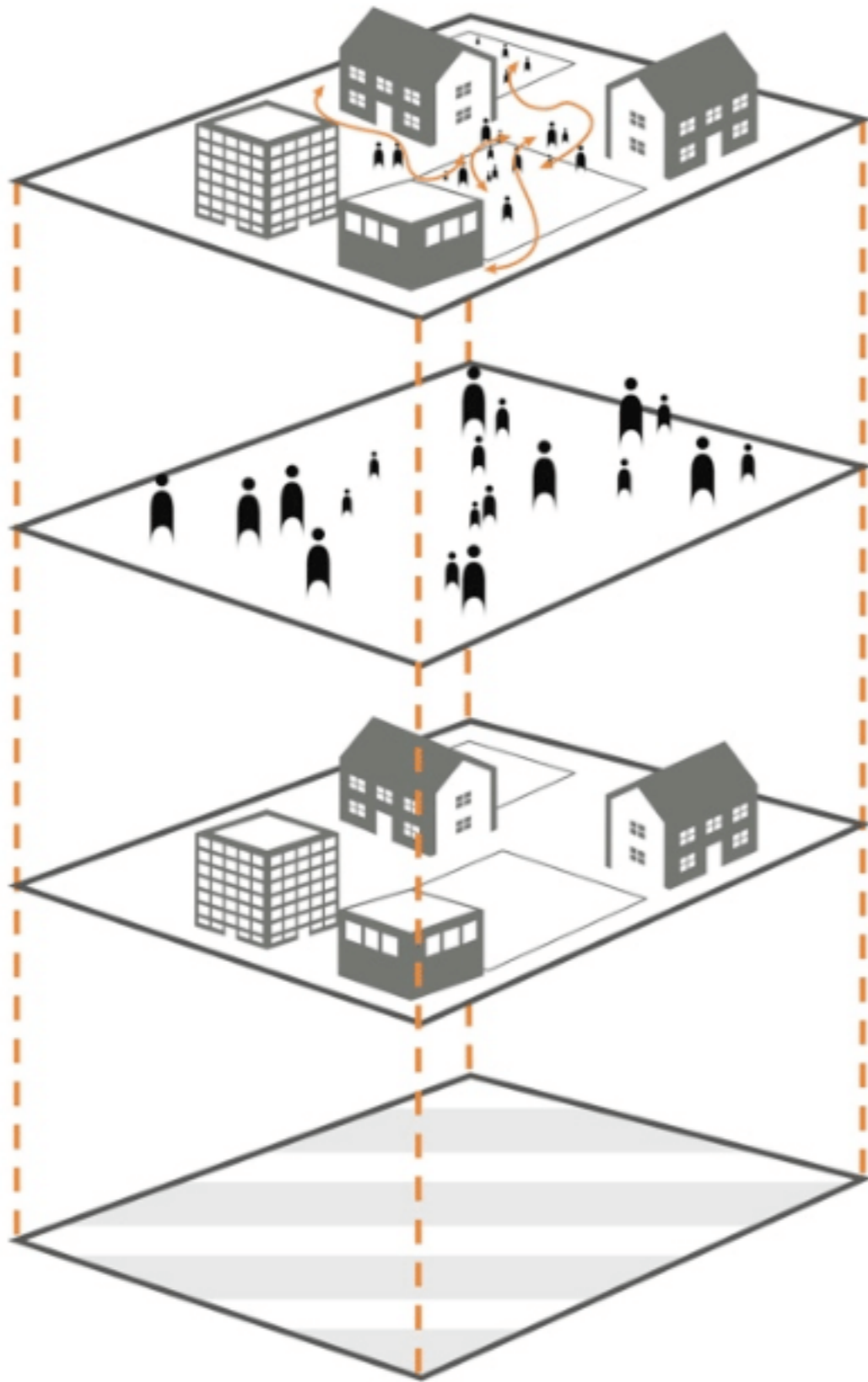
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Visual transparency is an essential aspect of permeability because it allows occupants to see beyond the immediate limitations of space. “This (architectural transparency in) design demonstrates the potential to create various spaces where each space is open and closed, connected, and separated from each other with visual transparency. Transparency allows architecture users to orientate themselves while increasing their awareness of their relationship with the surrounding objects and spaces” (Eunki Kang and Eun Joo Park, 2021). This connection can create a sense of openness and contact with the surrounding environment, enhancing the overall experience of being in that space.

Visual transparency can enhance permeability, allowing the occupant a range of visual and physical connections. This assembly is achieved through various means, such as open floor plans, large windows, and transparent materials. By creating visually open and permeable spaces, movement and interaction between different building areas facilitate communication and collaboration among a broader range of occupants.

Optical transparency fosters the relationship between citizens and their urban environment, enabling them to become familiar with it. The added value of connecting citizens with their environment empowers them to lead change dictated by their needs. “Like the People’s Party of the late nineteenth century, homogeneous notions of the people and the transparency of representation between the people and its leaders in a large, diverse, modern society is no more than a fantasy of wholeness.

Fantasies can also be enabled, however, and populist movements can thus produce political identities that fundamentally shape broader hegemonies.” (Francisco Panizza, Benjamin Ardit, Sebastian Barros, Glenn Bowman, David Howarth, Ernesto Laclau, David Laycock, Joseph Lowndes, Chantal Mouffe, Oscar Reyes, Yannis Stavrakakis, 2005). Therefore, enabling the citizens to input directly into their future realm inherently instils transparency into democracy. Demolishing hierarchies within the democracy allows the citizens to lead change that benefits the occupants’ needs.



**RELATIONS**

**PEOPLE**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**CONTEXT**

Figure 14

The Relationship between Context, Architecture, People and Relations  
(Nada Shehab and Ashraf M.Salma, 2018)

## The Value of Social Space

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The social permeability of space is a fundamental element for an engaging, resilient urban realm. Social qualities can inject life into the urban environment. A city's physical and visual permeability fosters and enhances the opportunity for social interface in and around the urban realm. The permeability through the urban environment creates various spaces, adding diversity to the urban landscape and allowing for an array of activities. "The plan should incorporate a variety of public spaces that respond to different needs (e.g., streets, neighbourhood parks, large parks, markets) and consider proximity, walkability, safety, and accessibility, as well as affordable transit options." (J. Zheng Jia, J. Kher Kaw, A. Gapihan, S. Kim, M. Garcia Lozano, R. Nitti, 2016). It is vital to have connected space to create public freedom that caters to people, encouraging use and activity. The social space in the urban environment fosters social interactions, enriching discussions, events, and conversation.

"Some planning theorists call for urban variety and liveliness and simultaneously prescribe "in-between" densities. For example, in the Winter 1960-61 issue of *Landscape* magazine, Lewis Mumford writes, "Now the great function of the city is . . . to permit, indeed to encourage and in-cite, the greatest potential number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between all persons, classes, and groups, providing, as it were, a stage upon which the drama of social life may be enacted, with the actors taking their turn as spectators and the spectators as actors." (Jacobs, 1961)

Lewis Mumford refers the social spaces within the urban environment as the backdrop to life, where the day-to-day events and activities take place. The social spaces give citizen's space to form opinions,

partake in conversations while ultimately forming their identities. Horning describes a space as a place to maintain "the effective system of freedom of expression" while enabling "participation in the social and political process" (Horning, 1969). The combination of the two theories allows the space to become the formwork for future democracy, encouraging politics into the everyday occurrence throughout the city.

The collection of public spaces across a city permits a diverse use for citizens. The fundamental element of executing a functional permeability for the public realm is encouraging citizens to experience life's pleasures with great ease and versatility. The selection of spaces along the porous city forms a place for various activities, enhancing the visualisation of diverse community's and identities. The occupants gain the power to utilize these spaces as they need. The adaptable city gives power back to the citizens, allowing the people to create a city provided for themselves. Mouffe (1993) explains by blurring the lines between private identity and public identity to create a collective desire exposing the freedom of speech. The most appropriate principles for realising quality in Mouffe's eyes is to view the system "as a system of cooperation between free and equal persons" (Mouffe, 1993). He believes that the idea of a "rational self-interested choice can provide a shared idea of citizens' good appropriate for political purposes and independent of any particular doctrine." (Mouffe, 1993). By eliminating the hierarchy of political agendas and allow the space between (social space) become the foreground for new agency.





## The Individual Identity as a collective

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The globalized city is a collective of differing identities referring to values, beliefs, traditions, and customs that may define a group of people. The city must adapt to cater to many identities and nurture its alliance. “In political terms, this (the input from a range of identities) means that a collective identity under modern conditions can arise out of a process of public argumentation and debate in which competing ideals of identity and political legitimacy are articulated, contested, and refined” (Mouffe, 1995). An individual identity allows one to express oneself freely, while a collection of identities within a region forces a dynamic space. The debate of sharing ideas and concepts encourages a fruitful conversation resulting in an inclusive outcome. Philosopher Machiavelli believes that “the principal task of a modern and democratic political philosophy is precisely the articulation of individual liberty and political liberty, for it is there that the question of pluralistic and democratic citizenship is rooted” (Mouffe, 1993). For society to act in favour of the common good, it is imperative to examine the individual psyche and understand the foundation of their needs. Thus, several ideas from different citizens can be built upon to create a collective understanding of the citizens at hand. A population’s collective and individual sense of identity plays a crucial role in ensuring the longevity and sustainability of a city. It enables social cohesion, encourages diversity and inclusivity, and promotes creativity and innovation.

In Habitat International Coalition, Sugranyes and Mathivet (2010) translate Lefebvre’s thoughts on how a city should function. Lefebvre describes the citizens right to the city as a “radical

reinvention of social relations of capitalism and the spatial structure of the city.” (Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet, 2010) . This is why Lefebvre suggests that “the right to the city cannot be conceived as the simple right to visit or return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a right to urban, transformed, renewed life.” (Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet, 2010). The cities can transform into new typologies, generating space for a new way of living and injecting a new way of thinking about how cities may be constructed for the occupants rather than relying on the stagnant typologies that came before.

Allowing the people to interject and create a conversation around discussions that will ultimately affect them is vital when ensuring that it is the right decision for most occupants. It is essential to involve citizens in the discussions that will ultimately impact them. This approach creates an inclusive environment that caters to the needs of the demographic involved. “This reformulation of urban life offers more equity, where the majority of inhabitants achieve happiness and solidarity, generating and redistributing the benefits of the city for all. We are aware of the challenges of this particular aspiration for social justice. Some call it wishful thinking or an illusion. We call it indispensable utopia in order for another world to be possible.” (Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet, 2010).

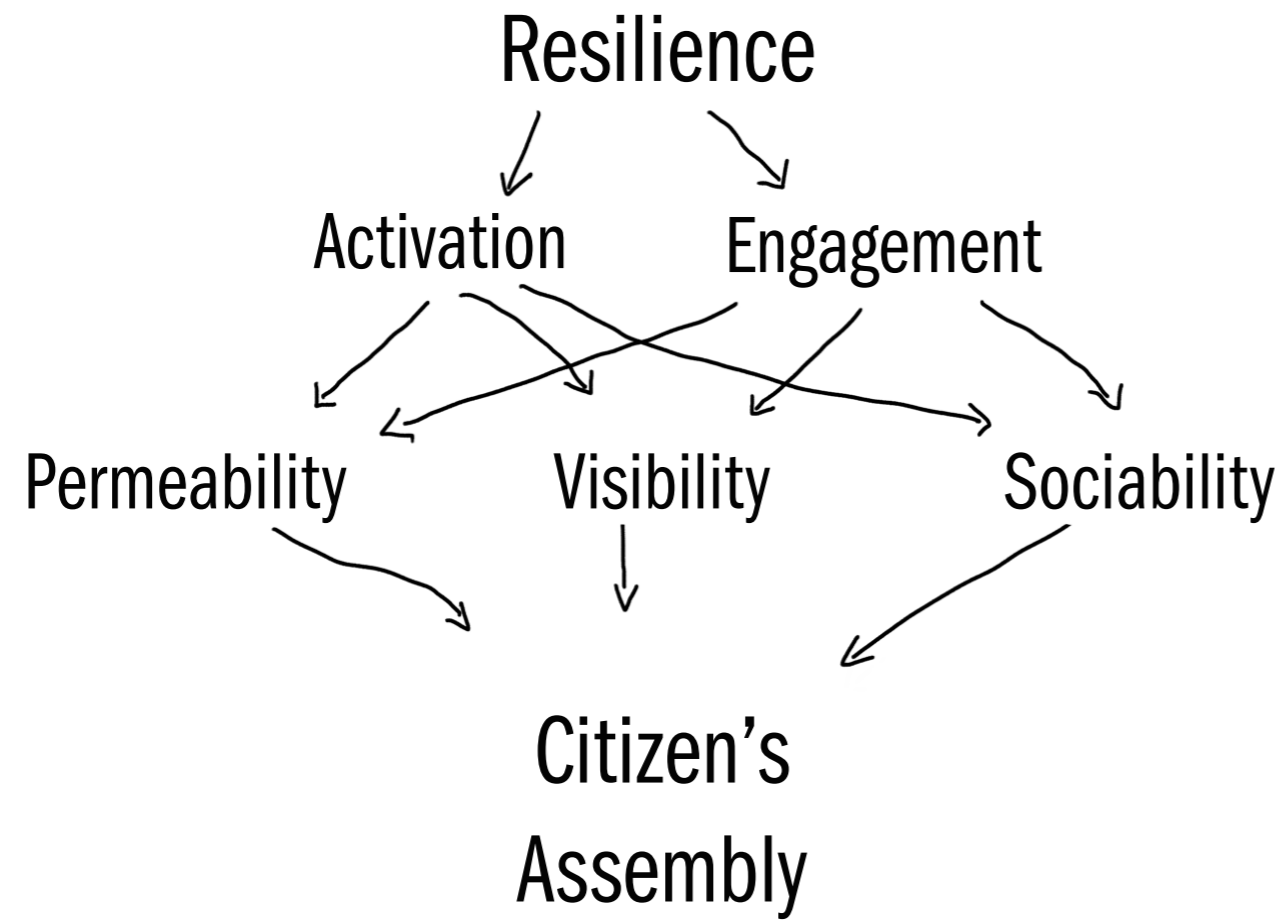


Figure 15

Program Leading to the Brief

## Developing the Objectives for this brief:

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In order to successfully instil ideas of conversation, debate, where citizens lead change, there must be a base to have these conversations in a controlled environment. The controlled environment will reduce these ideologies from running rampant as well as becoming a place of enquiry. This type of space causes for a new architectural typology, a halfway house between a social space and a parliament building. It is vital that the structure is inviting, to generate an influx of people and spectators while also maintaining a place of respect to others. Federici explains that this typology only works under the pretense of redefining ideologies in a cooperative manner in order to “end separation between the personal and the political” (Federici, 2019). Allowing citizens to lead the conversation of political issues that directly affect them creates a space for dealing with problems that are relevant to the area. The political industry becomes an inclusive and engaging conversation for everyone.

Looking at Dublin, Ireland’s capital city, there is no focal point for citizens to engage directly into political affairs. A citizen’s assembly will encourage citizens to voice their opinions and concerns in a safe, controlled environment. It challenges the hierarchy of parliaments, allowing citizens to become a focal point in political change. This follows along from the words of Chantal Mouffe, “A pluralist democracy can only exist as long as there is conflict” (Mouffe, 2005). The assembly establishes a ground of shared respect and negotiation for common ground. The assembly currently has no permanent residency, meaning the public can only partially indulge in the political shift without a permanent landmark.

“In the common space, in space produced and used as common, people do not simply use an area given by an authority (local state, state, public institution, etc.). People actually mold this kind of space according to their collective needs and aspirations. Where public space is necessary as the mark of an identity- it is, that’s to say it belongs to, the authority- common space tends to be consistently redefined: commons space happens and it is shaped through collective action” (Stefan Gruber and Anh-Linh Ngo, 2021).

The assembly is a citizen-run forum designed to promote debate while acknowledging irreconcilable differences. The assembly sets out to achieve a common good for the majority of citizens. The assembly becomes a malleable institution to conduct a range of needs by the citizens for the citizens.

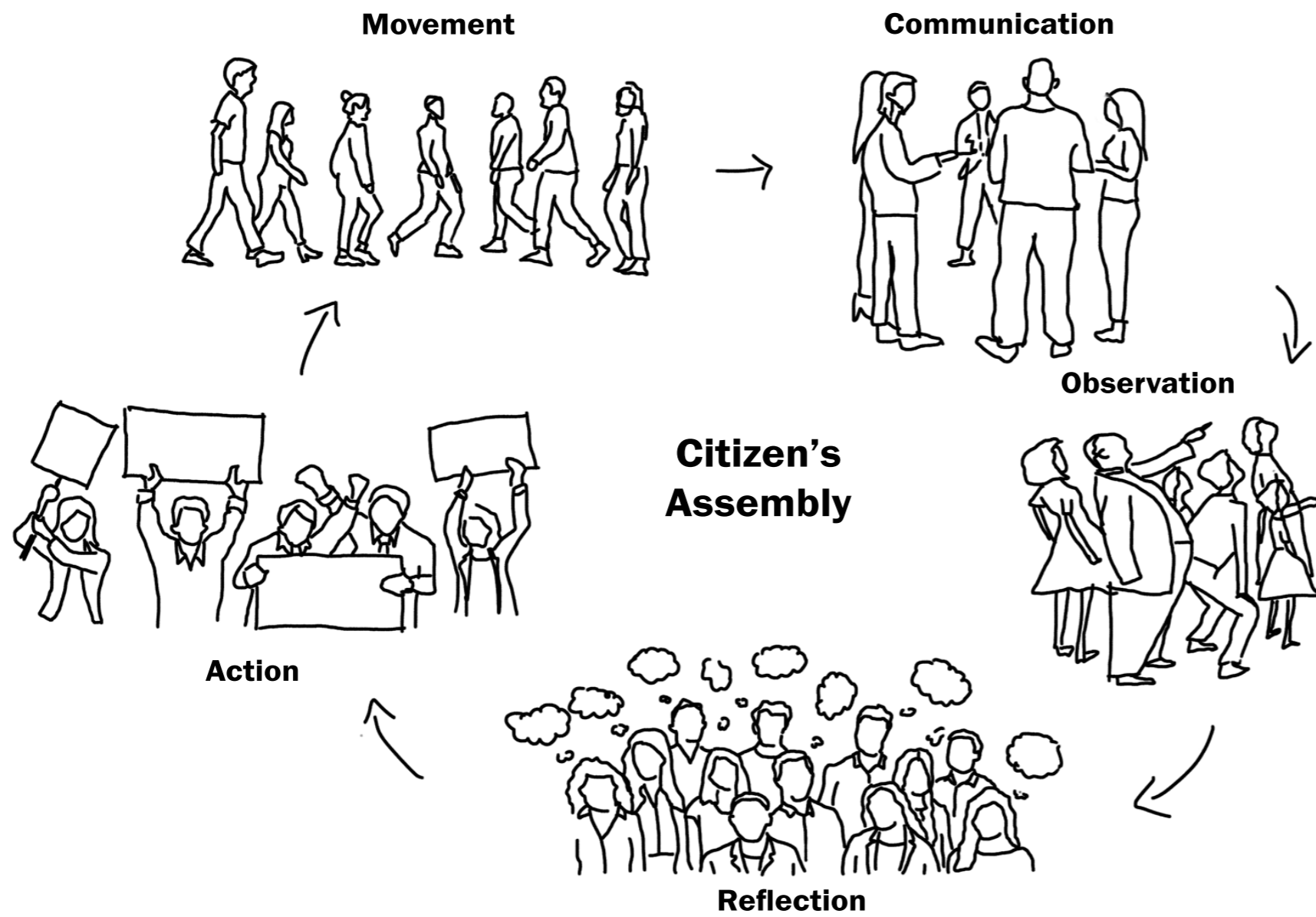


Figure 16

The Agenda for the Citizen's Assembly

# Resilience

- Now → Less civic engagement due to no permanent location
- Built → Inform, engage, and represent the citizens
- Future → Longlasting changes for generations to create an inclusive democracy

Figure 17

Resilience of the Citizen's Assembly





Figure 18  
The Civic Courtyard

## Crafting Civic Architecture

---

Civic buildings hold a hierarchy of power through their inherent ability to make change, but this power often only benefits those who penetrate the facade. The austere nature of these constructions can eliminate people from making change, due to their lack of approachability with a large bounded façade to the exterior world. In both historic and modern urban contexts, there are numerous typologies for civic space-making and place-making. These civic buildings, with their grandiose architecture, symbolize authority that extends into the surrounding streetscape, framing the space and asserting dominance over the context. Typically situated in a central square, these structures often protrude into the public sphere. However, despite being in the heart of the space, they can also convey an essence of being out of reach and unapproachable to common citizens.

There is potential for a new type of architectural typology to become a permeant meeting space for citizen's to divulge. The civic assembly has the potential to offer civic engagement through interaction and connecting directly within the wider context. Mouffe describes this liberal democracy as being the "gap between the people and its various identifications" (Mouffe, 2000). She suggests leaving space for people to populate and interact. This connection will lead to a collective agency where people engage in political agendas.

The brief for the civic space is centred around creating a resilient environment that connects citizens and place through collective agency. The assembly is focused on anticipating future movements and opportunities for expansion, which is made possible by the size and potential sale of the space. This civic space is designed to facilitate movement, communication, observation, reflection, and action.

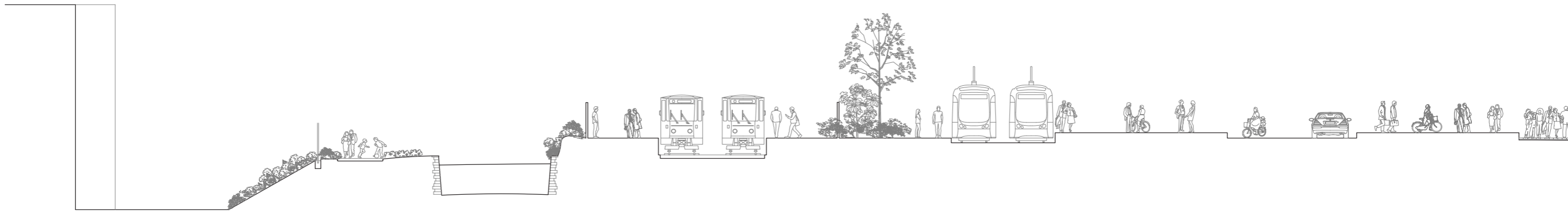
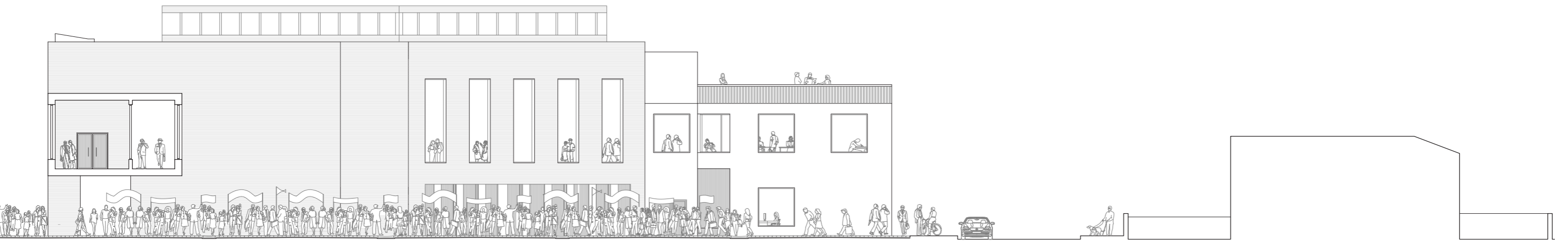


Figure 19

Section through Scheme showing the Civic Courtyard  
Flooded by Protesters





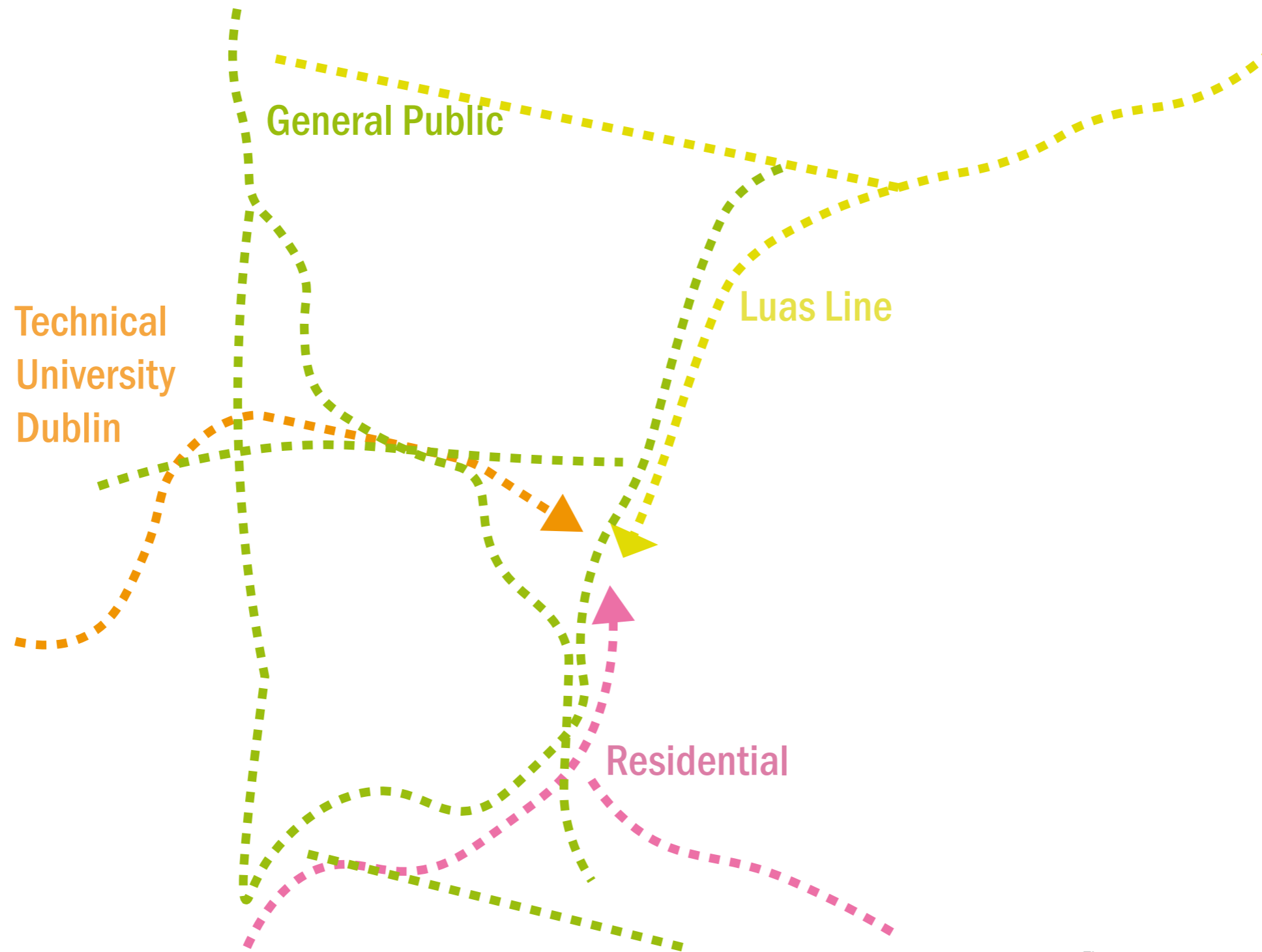


Figure 20

Connecting the wider Context to Civic Engagement

## Placemaking

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This thesis design project is set in Dublin, the capital of Ireland where there are many identities, to interact through local and global politics. Major routes connect Dublin with the rest of the country making easily accessible to citizens from all parts of the country. The site is located close to the heart of Dublin, this means that it is easily accessed with direct connections to the main Hueston and Connolly train stations. The citizens assembly requires a prominent site location to encourage the citizen's to engage in politics. The locals, people passing, observers, lobbyists and people from around the country recognise the civic identities engaging in debates.

This thesis is set in the heart of Broombridge It has a large significance where industrious built environment collides with the residential world. The Royal canal acts as a division between the two worlds. This is why the site south of the Royal Canal is an ideal location. The civic assembly will introduce a common ground where citizens from any industry or setting are welcome to share and explore their views. The site is located on the edge of the industrial estate to the South of the royal canal. A large residential area of Cabra is located to the South of the area with the Technical University Dublin to the West. There is potential for a student civic agency, allowing integration between the two institutions.

The area has direct relationship to the city centre and to Leinster house with the Broombridge luas and train station adjacent to the site. The Train is a national thoroughfare that can bring citizens directly into town or across the country. The luas runs directly to Leinster House, where interactions, observations and conclusions can be relayed. The site is nestled between Broombridge Road and Bonnow Road. The Broombride Road is one of the main thoroughfares to cross the Royal Canal, connecting the industrial estate with the residential realm. This bustling connection will lead to an influx of people to the building.

It is important to introduce a space for the people within this otherwise segregated area surrounded by a transported hub. A large civic space will introduce a sense of community and engagement to the area. It will generate an influx of activity, buoyant conversations, and an overall sense of community to the area. Bacon describes the role of an architect as the creator of not only the structure and mass of the built environment but as an instigator to "an all-encompassing experience, to engender involvement." (Bacon, 1974). He explains that architecture is not something to be seen but it is to be experienced.

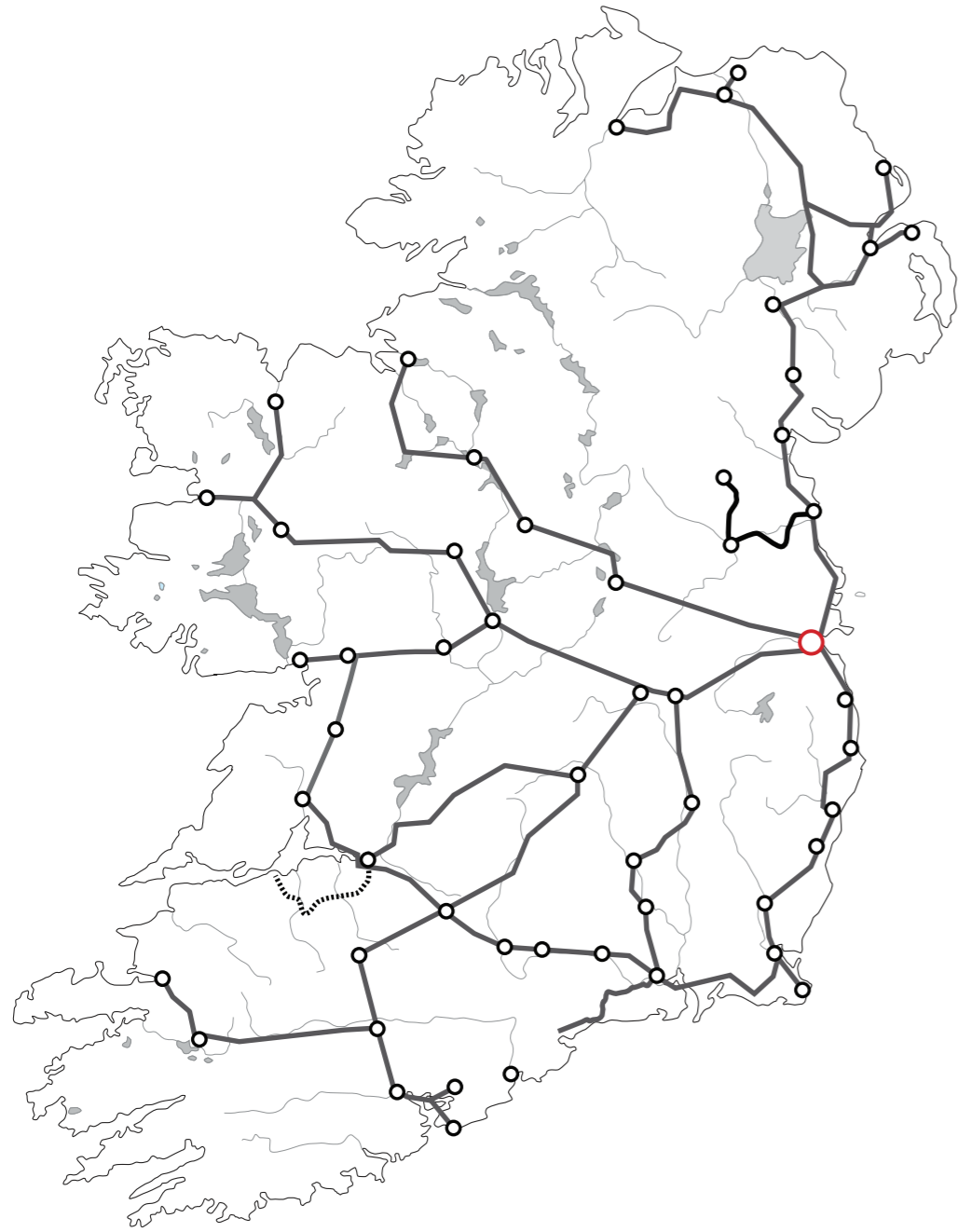


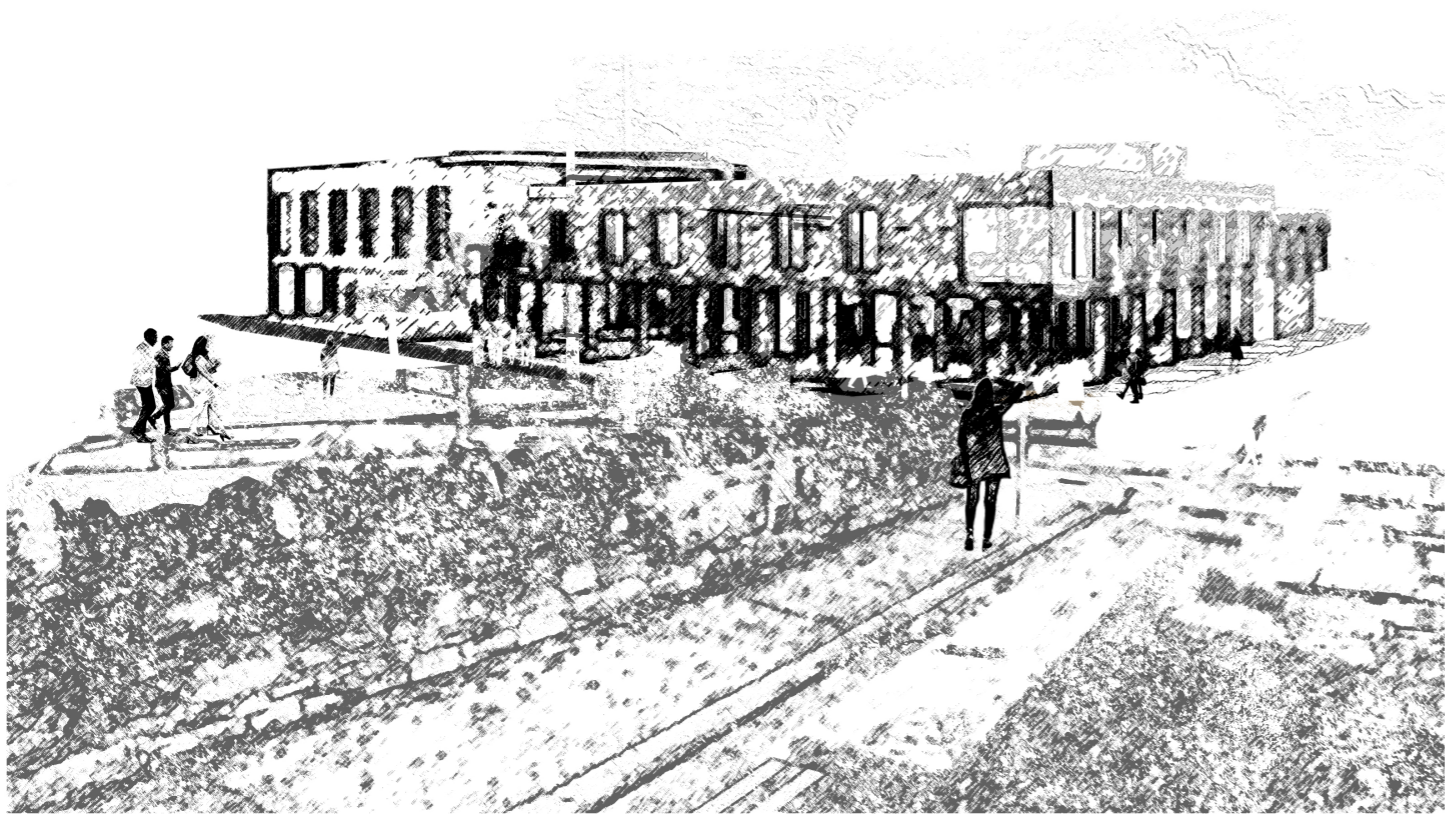
Figure 21- Left

National Context of Dublin and the Potential for Civic Agency Exposing direct National Connections

Figure 22- Right

Sketches Conveying the Approach to the Scheme from the wider Context





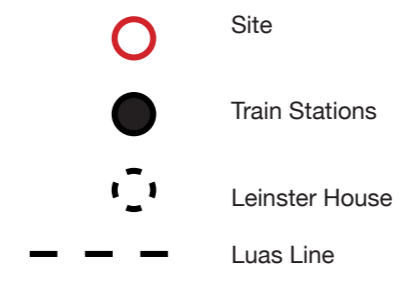


Figure 23

The Location of the Citizen's Assembly in Relation to Dublin City's Wider Context



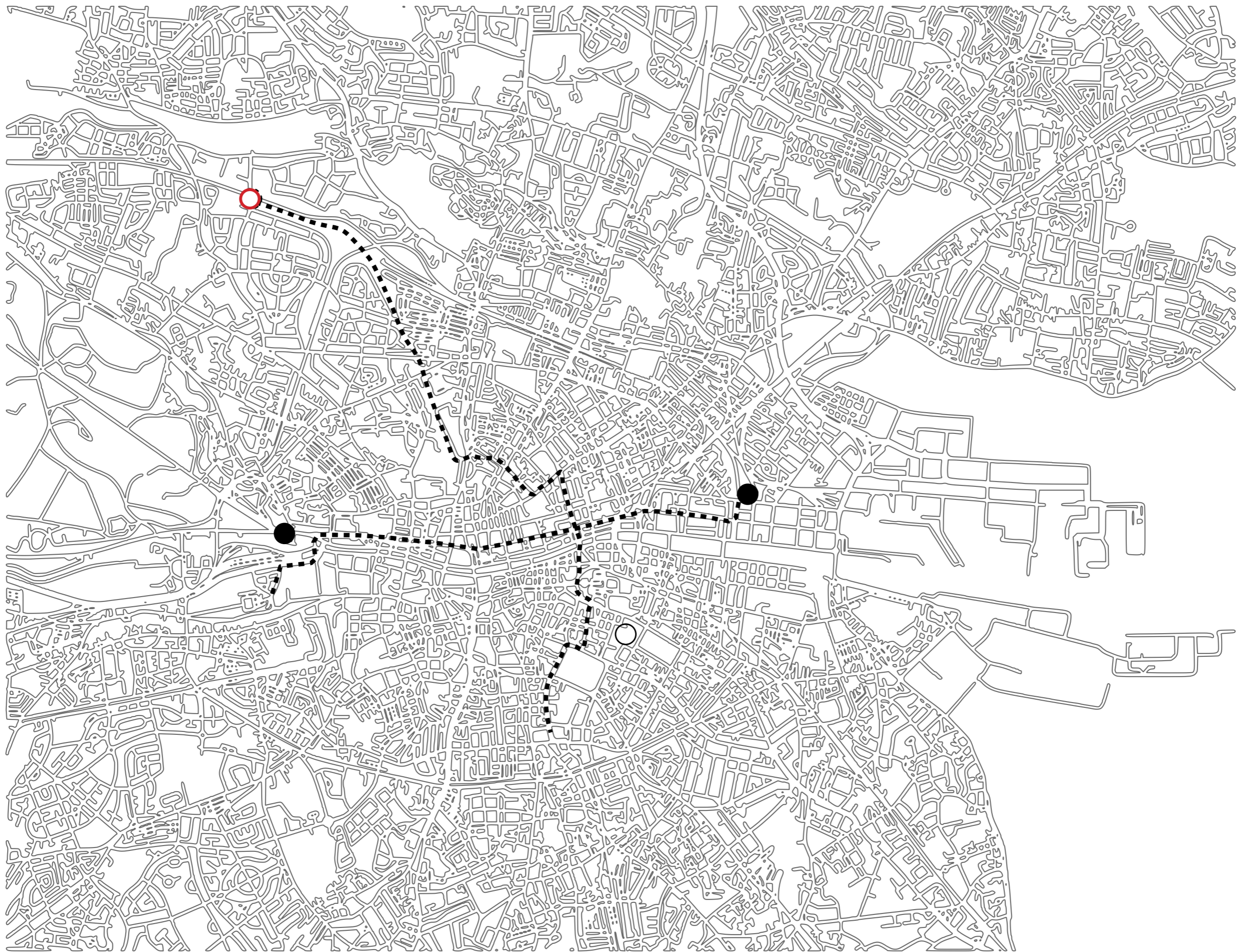




Figure 24

The Citizen's Assembly in Relation to it Surrounding Con-  
text







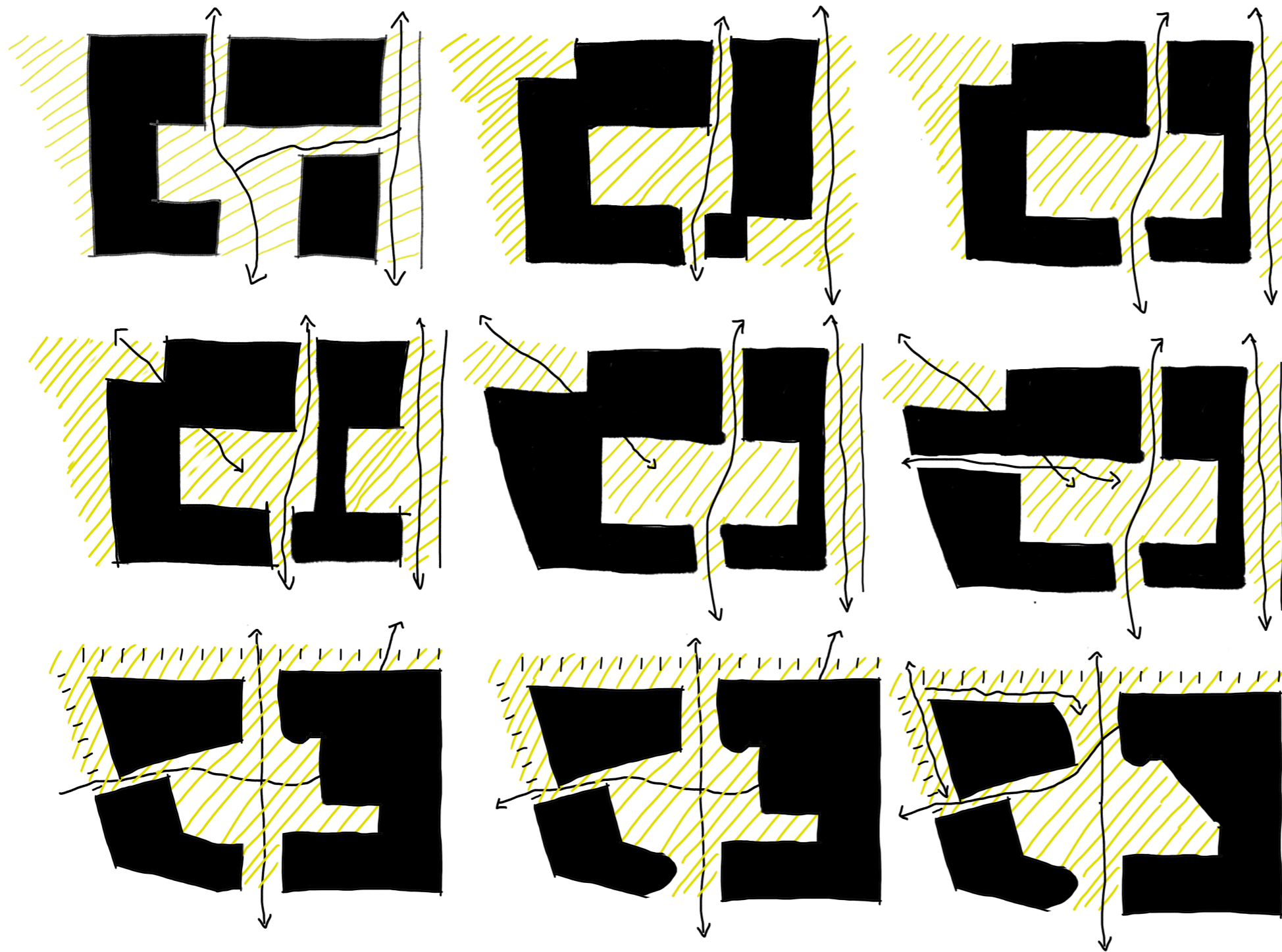


Figure 25

Arrangements of the Citizen's Assembly to Engage with the Surrounding Context and Citizen's

## Connecting the wider context

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The proposed scheme is defined by circulation, thresholds, and social space. The new civic plane is organised, surrounding the ability to have multiple niches and spaces to allow citizens to engage in conversation. The project is built surrounding the large civic space in the core of the project. It is important for the scheme to frame the streetscape, having accessibility to the wider context. The use of curves within the main north and south entrances guides the traveller into and through the large civic courtyard. The North and South entrances are inline to encourage pedestrians to pass through civic space encouraging people to become aware of the ongoings in the political universe. The north and west entrances lead the occupants through the under craft of the building. This threshold space gives the traveler a sense of compression until they emerge into the large, expansive courtyard.

The entrances to the scheme are orientated to highlight the main chamber. The doors leading into the chamber open into the civic courtyard allowing for larger numbers and an expansion to the scheme. The large civic space can become a place of protest or large public gatherings. Encouraging Mouffe's thoughts on conflict "However such an 'agonistic' democracy requires accepting that conflict and division are inherent to politics and there is no place where reconciliation could be definitively achieved as a full actualization of the unity of the people" (Mouffe, 2000). The space aims to gather people from all walks of life to exchange their thoughts. The large public courtyards in the grounds for people to share their thoughts with respect for irreconcilable differences. The project is driven to create a new typology of architecture with which it conducts civic connection.

Thereby, encouraging the dynamic range of public identities to come together as a collective and exchange conversations and debates within a civic domain at the core of the city. The reliance of a city is dependent on the creation of form where citizens can gather to converse and share ideas, regardless of their social status or position in society. In this space, every individual has an equal opportunity to contribute to the civic agenda, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation among the members.

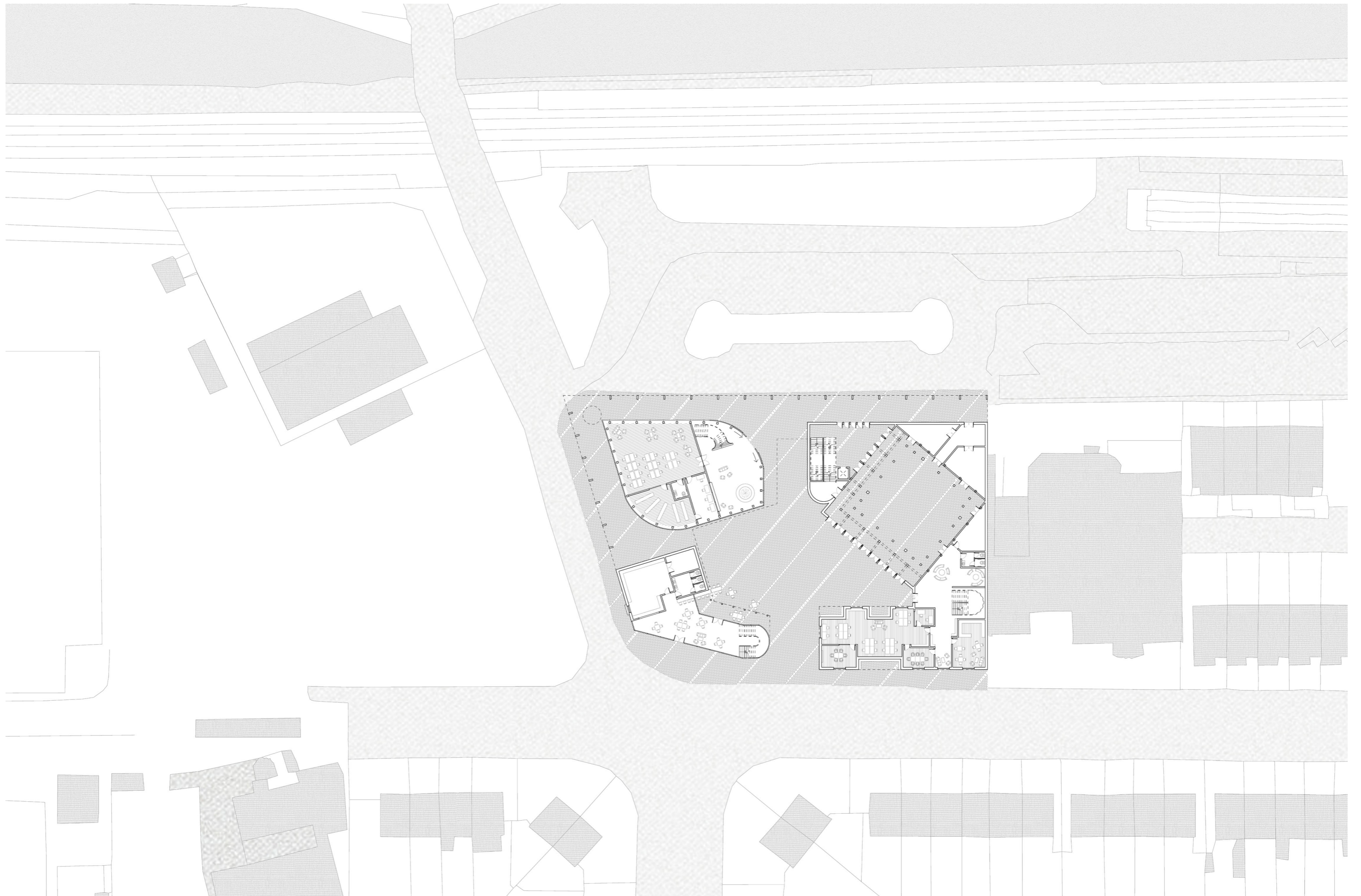
This idea of a resilient collective is essential for building strong communities that can withstand challenges and crises. By promoting inclusivity and collaboration, individuals can work together towards common goals and find solutions to complex problems. To achieve this kind of collective resilience, it is crucial to create spaces where individuals feel empowered to share their thoughts and ideas freely.

The scheme has multiple conversation spaces (encouraged by intimate seating areas and benches throughout its circulation to instigate conversation amongst the public) The cafe on the ground floor spills into the large civic courtyard maintaining a robust place for conversation throughout the day. The large foyer to the north of the development allows citizens to stop and make inquiries about the ongoing agendas while also serving as an area where people can leave their opinions in relation to ongoing discussions. The plan is flooded with meeting spaces to allow for sensitive or intimate conversations. The scheme becomes a device, for knowledge and ideas from the civic engagement to report back to the public sphere.

Figure 26

Ground Floor within it's Context



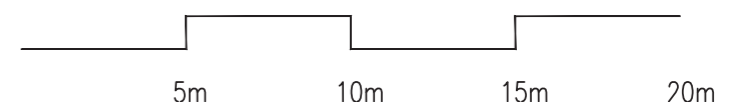
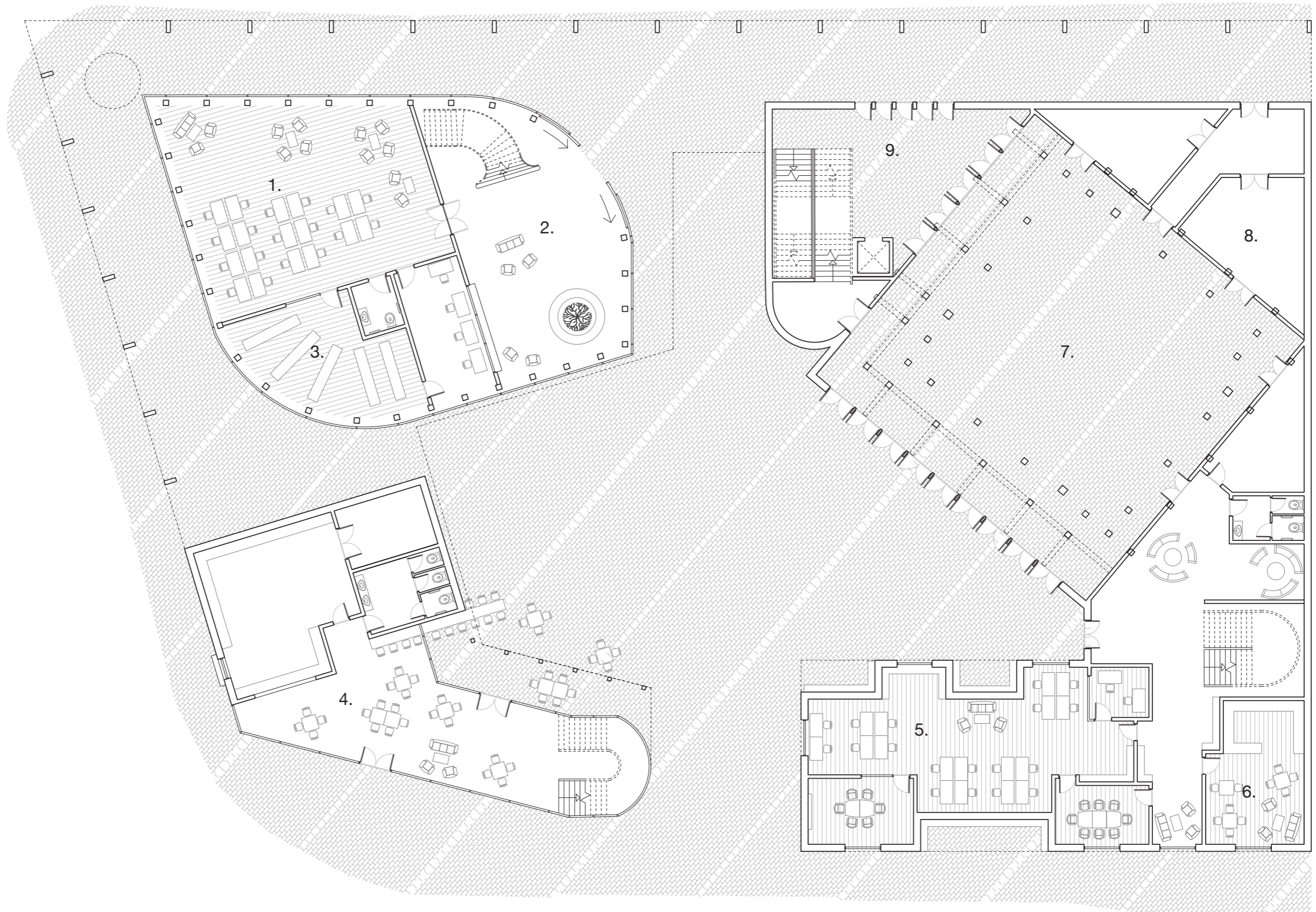


1. Library
2. Entrance Foyer
3. Archive
4. Cafe
5. Offices and Meeting Rooms
6. Staff Room
7. Main Chamber
8. Storage
9. Entrance Lobby to Chamber

Figure 27

Ground Floor Plan







- 10. Offices and Meeting Rooms
- 11. Anti-chamber
- 12. Waiting area for lobbyist
- 13. Public Viewing Mezzanine
- 14. Lecture Hall
- 15. Slow Circulation
- 16. Meeting Rooms
- 17. Dining Hall

Figure 28

First Floor Plan

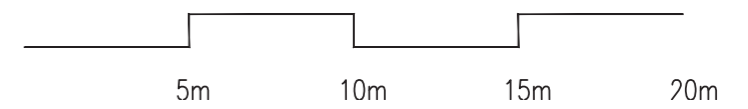
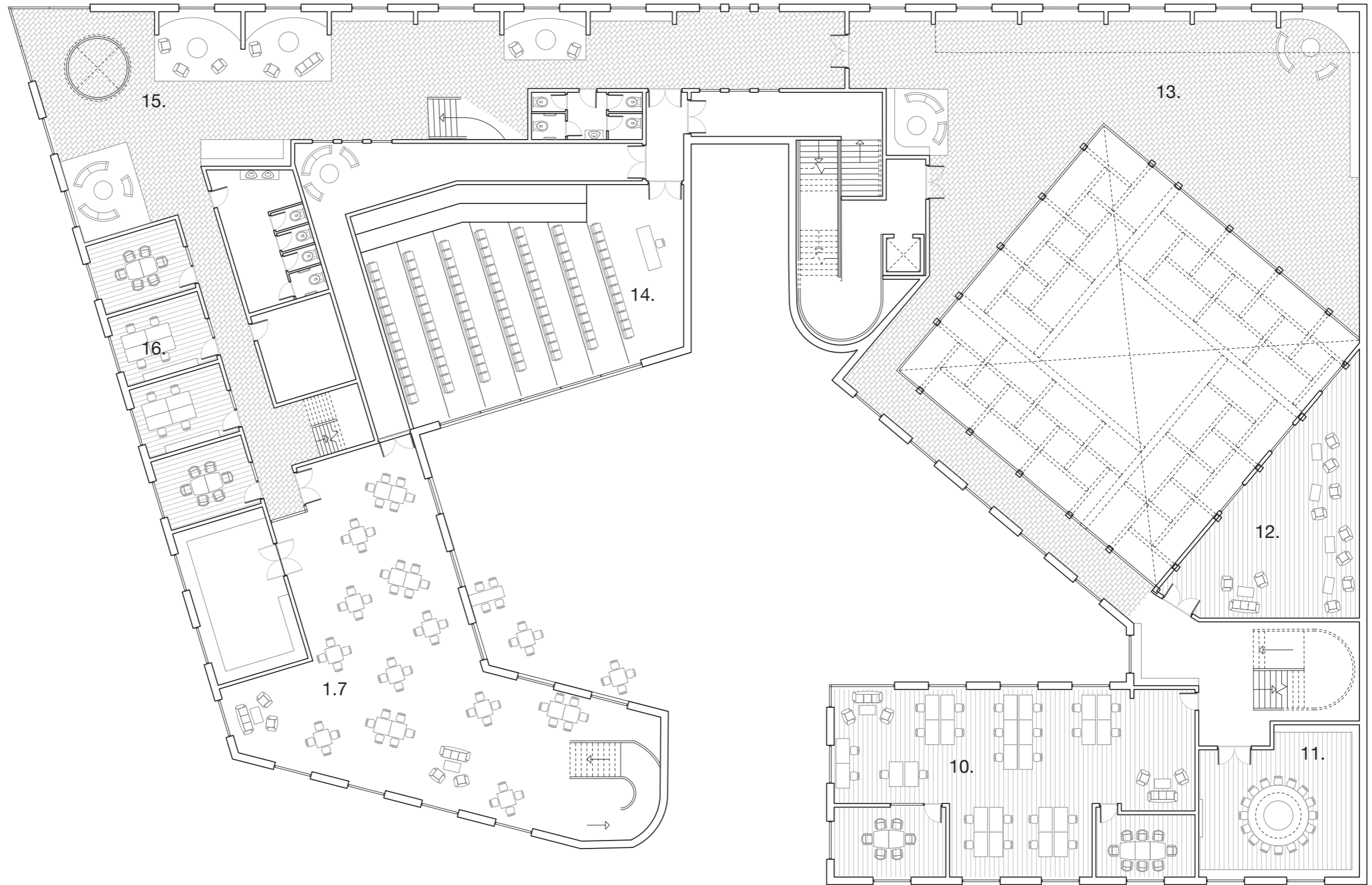




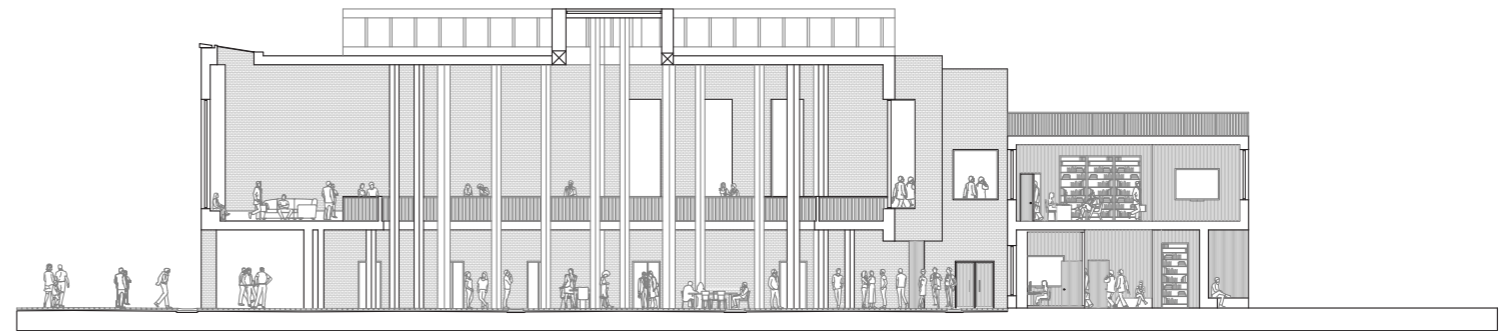


Figure 29  
West Entrance into Civic Courtyard  
Figure 30  
Section C & E





Section C



Section E

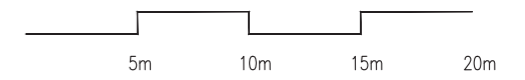
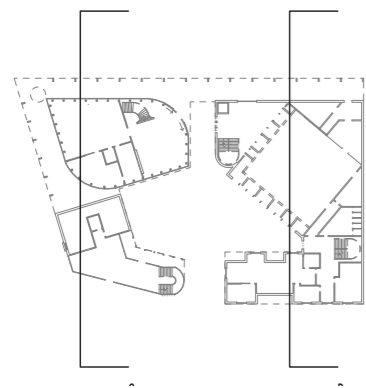
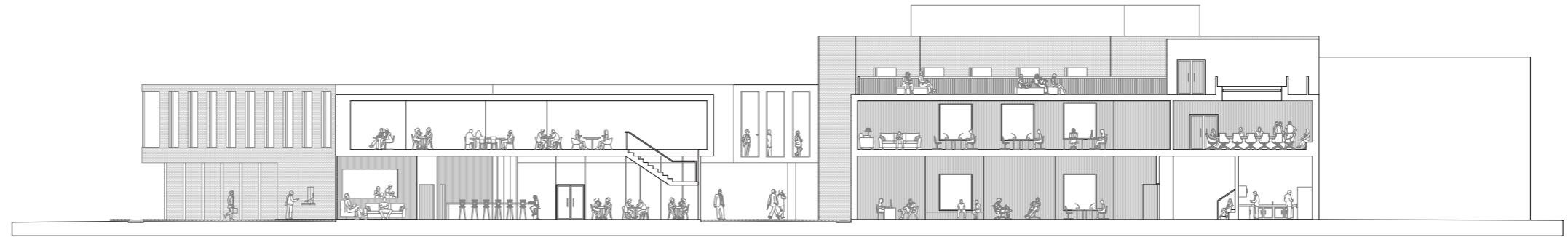
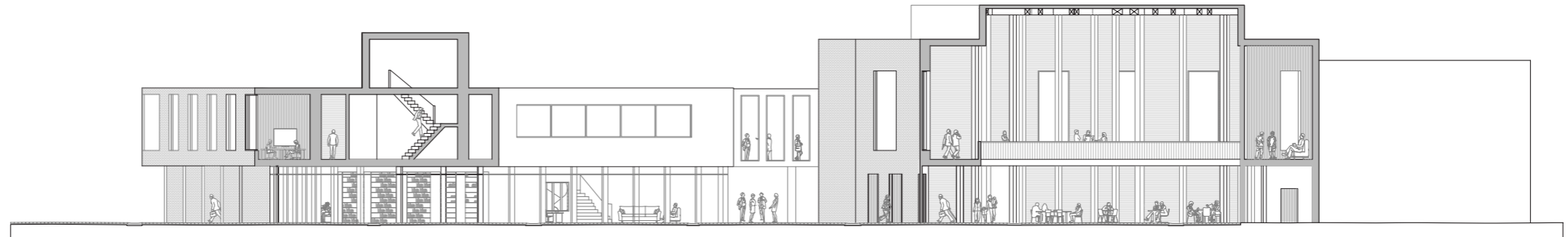


Figure 31  
Section A & B



Section A



Section B

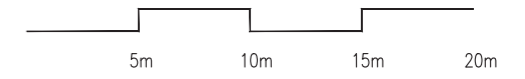
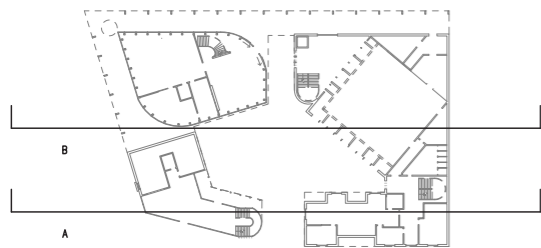




Figure 32  
Slow Circulation



## Connecting Counterparts

---

“We then introduced the notion of political affordances. This captures the fact that implicit boundaries and physical obstacles corral human movement, consequently opening or closing avenues for political action, which links reciprocally with normative visions.” (Crippen, M. and Klement, V., 2020)

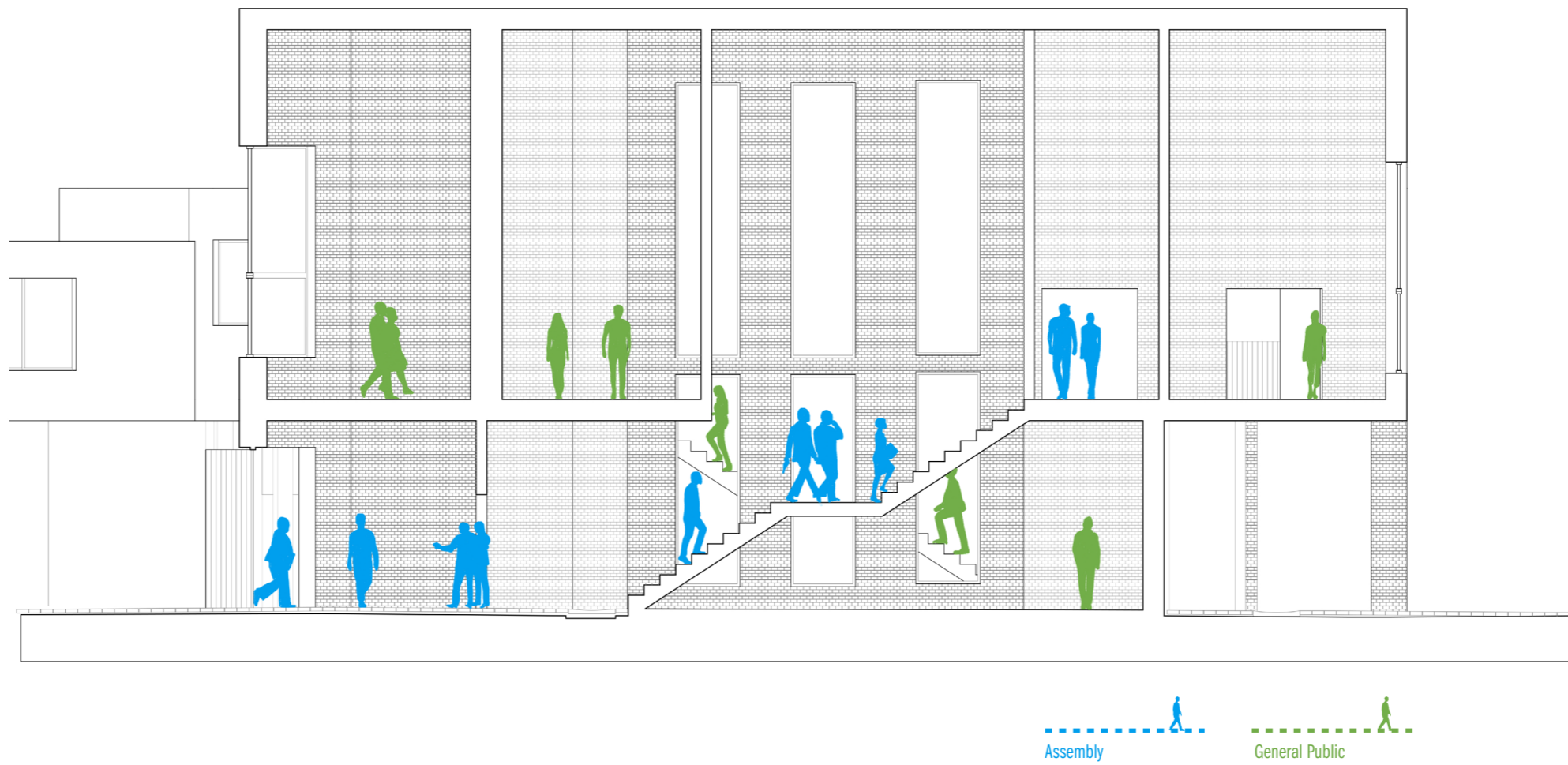
Circulation pathways and routes that allow people to move through space. These pathways have multiple functions, some are purely designed for fast circulation, efficiently getting people from A to B. Most of the circulation in this scheme is characterized as slow circulation, allowing people to circulate while encouraging a place of refuge or serendipitous encounters. This content encouragement to create places of conversation and debate is mimicked throughout the project, creating niches, seating areas, wide pathways and intimate cocoons.

The building caters for a number of occupants. Identified the four main occupants, the general public, secretariat/employees, lobbyists, and the assembly. The circulation must be conducted in a sensitive manner, to instill a professionalism and order to the debates. Due to the sensitive Conversations conducted in the main chamber during debates it is vital that the general public, lobbyist, and the assembly do not mingle at side of the main chamber.

The conversation within the main chamber must be conducted in an open manner. Therefore, each group must enter and exit the main chamber through separate thresholds. The roots of each participant must be mapped noting their

overlaps. This system informing the arrangements of the Of the circulation in the plan. The aim is to reduce any infiltrating opinions from the general public lobbyists or otherwise. This allowed the plan to explore a complex circulation where the assembly go straight from the chamber to the first floor Directly into the dining hall. The lobbyists enter this game through the entrance leading into the offices and meeting areas. They are led directly to the first floor and entered the anti-chamber where they can oversee the ongoings of the main assembly but restricted from interfering until they are admitted into the main chamber. The general public enter the scheme through the main threshold and guided to the upper mezzanine to watch the actions within the main chamber.





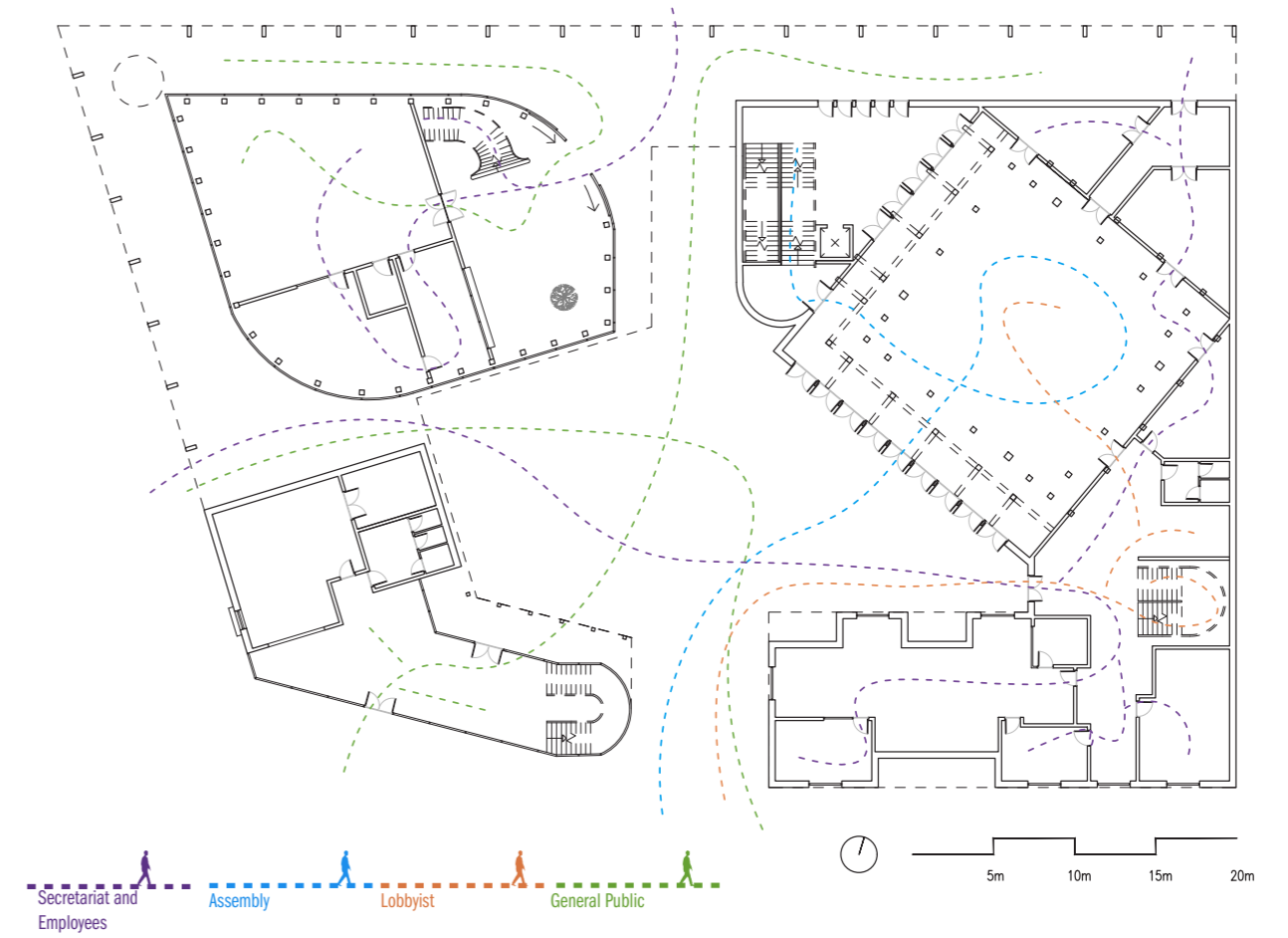


Figure 33- Left

Section through Circulation between the Assembly and General Public



Figure 34- Right

Route of the Occupants within the Civic Assembly

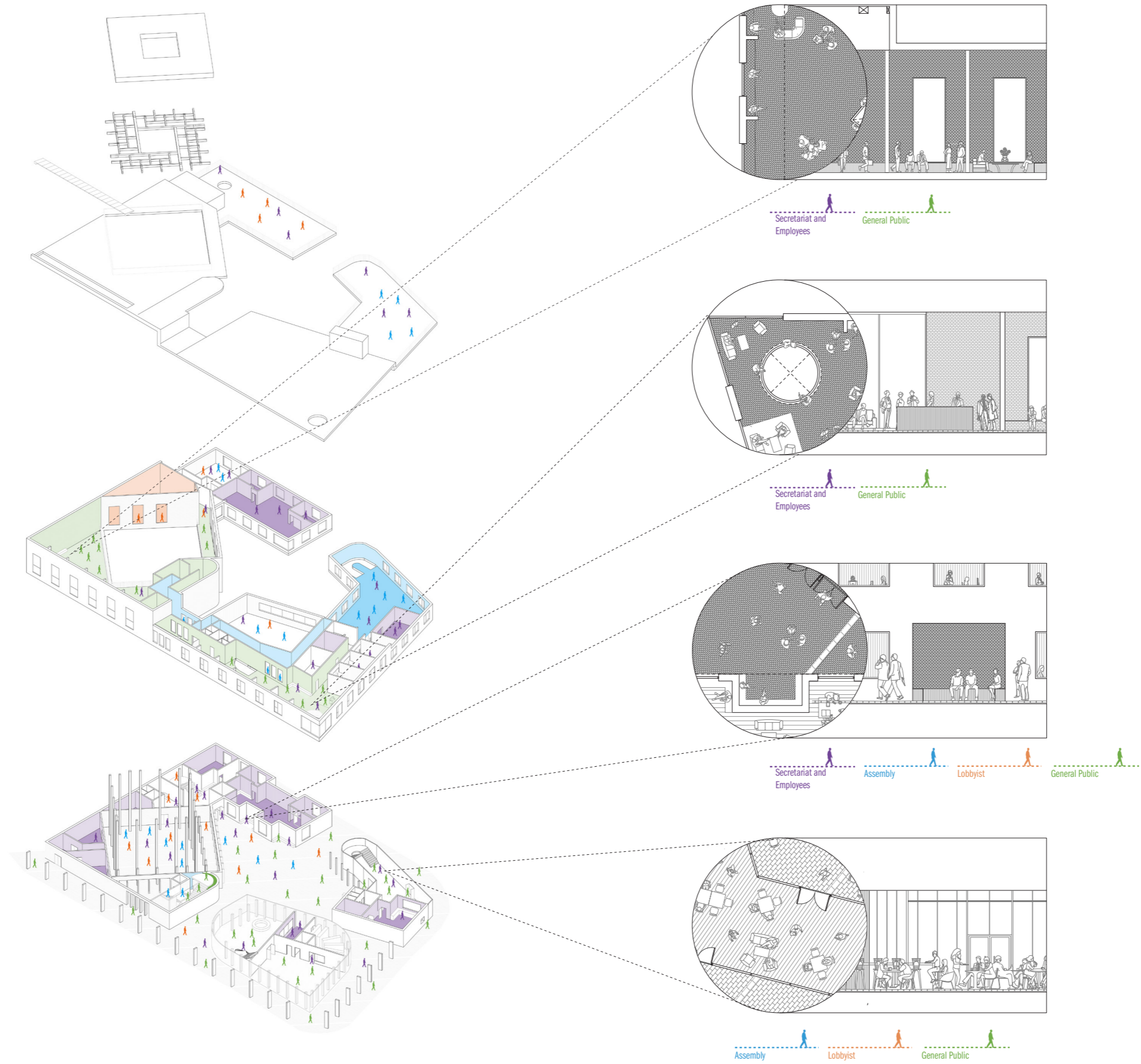






Figure 35- Left

Isonometric of Circulation Paths and the type of occupied Spaces

Figure 36- Right

Isonometric through the Circulation Paths of the General Public and Assembly



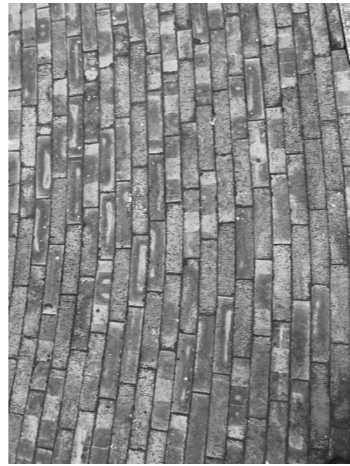




Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Meath County Council, Dunshaughlin  
Audrey Murphy 30/01/2023



Fraumünster Church Rathaus Zürich  
Audrey Murty 19/09/2019



Munster University Cork  
Taken by: Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



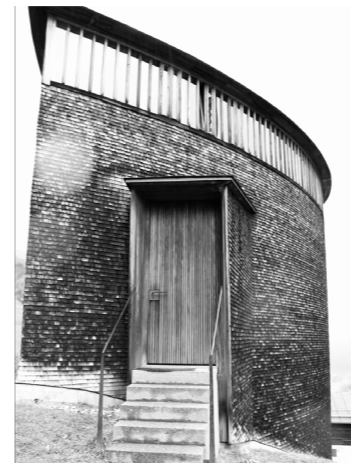
Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, Meath  
Audrey Murphy 30/01/2023



National Botanic Gardens  
Audrey Murphy 26/01/2023



Munster Technical University, Cork  
Audrey Murphy 10/03/2023



Saint Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg  
Audrey Murphy 19/10/2019

Figure 37  
Study of Paving, Circulation and Thresholds

## Reflection through Materialization

---

When writing about Alvar Alto's Town Hall, Frampton describes the exploration of materials and the tactility of space as essential to the enhancement of the surrounding environment.. "It is symptomatic what's the priority given to site that we can find it necessary to remind ourselves that the tactile is an important dimension in the perception of the built form. One has in mind a whole range of complementary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of material; they're almost palatable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement" (Docherty, 1993). The use of materials can alter the perception of the occupant. Changing the materials in a space may convey a change of use. "Just as it is possible through choice of materials and colors to create a certain palette in a city, it is equally possible through planning decisions to influence patterns of activates." (Gehl, 1987). Altering the materials within the urban fabric can signify the citizens' use, activity, and level of engagement. The tactility and acoustics of a fabric change a person's perception of a space.

The scheme is constructed using three primary materials, brick, timber, and glass. The carefully chosen materials signify specific themes followed throughout the design.

The strong robustness of the brick conveys the stability within this democracy, and as a collective comes change. This surface upon which a messy collective democracy happens flows through and into the civic courtyard, connecting the exterior world to the political agenda. The brick set out to direct the eye toward the main chamber. This continuation becomes the ground for the protesters and the general public to

consume and engage. Everyone is integrated as a collective through the continuation of surfaces, giving the nod to a collective society. The continuation through that materiality visually connects the areas, continuing from the equality of this type of political shift.

The timber element continues to form the main structural components of the building. The timber construction conveys the environmental progression in society and the change in a democracy. The timber frame conveys a new way of looking at democracy and highlights that civic buildings do not have to be constructed of stone and lavish materials to have an impact on society.

The timber continues to create more intimate spaces for conversation and intimate discussions on a smaller scale. The smaller meeting areas and rooms above the robust brick paving require a more refined articulation due to their sense of intimacy. The reduced room size engages conversations of a smaller scale, occupying up to twelve people. There is a shift in the environment where it becomes a more intimate interaction to articulate conclusions or even gather thoughts. Then from there, relay the conclusions to Leinster House.

The sizable windows and largely transparent ground floor to the west of the scheme allow visibility through the entire scheme. It allows spectators to spectate and observe what is happening within the building. The visibility causes intrigue to the scheme encouraging more citizens into the heart of the civic space. The openness of the scheme exposes the transparency of democracy through this architectural typology.





Figure 38- Right

Entrance to Main Chamber and Offices from Courtyard

Figure 39- Left

Intimate Conversation Spaces







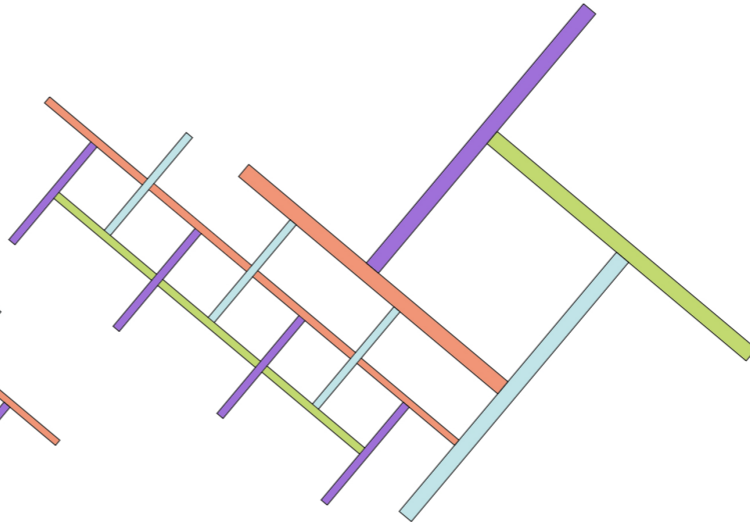
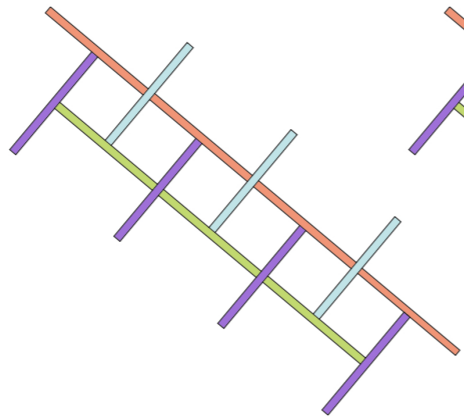
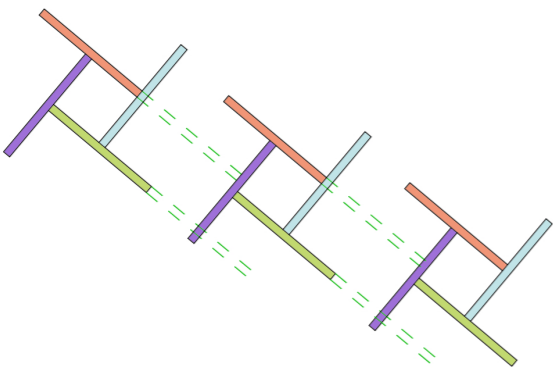
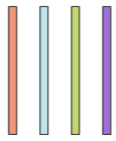


Figure 40  
Mezzanine over the Main Chamber

## The Reciprocal Frame

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Reciprocal frame is a type of structural system that involves four equal beams interconnected to create the main structure of the main chamber. The four elements are interdependent, relying on each other for support and stability. This design reflects the ideals of working as a collective, emphasizing the importance of inter-reliance and cooperation among members. Similar to the citizens assembly, this reciprocal frame would not work as a single entity but rather requires the collaboration and coordination of all its components.





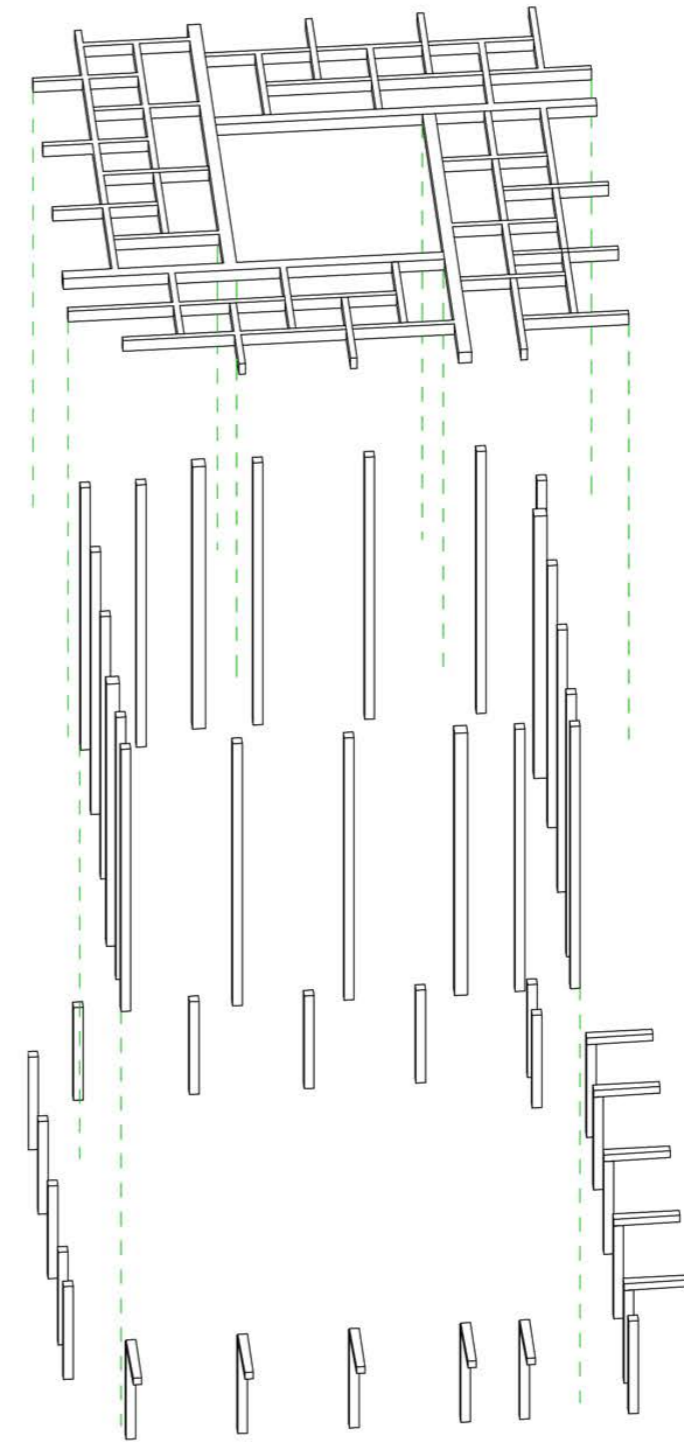


Figure 41

Structural Diagram

Figure 42

Main Structure within the Main Chamber

Figure 43

Perspective Section through Main Chamber and Offices



Floor:  
Wooden floorboards- 24mm  
Impact sound insulation, battens- 40mm  
Counter floor-20mm  
Joists- 150mm  
Hanger beams- 200mm  
Sound insulation- 50mm  
Battens- 25mm  
Plywood-25mm

Wall  
Brick- 112.5mm  
Ventilated Cavity- 10mm  
Plywood- 25mm  
SIP panel- 115mm  
Plywood- 25mm  
Brick- 112.5mm

Inner Structure  
Glulam Column 400mm

Roof  
Waterproof Membrane  
Insulation- 100mm  
Vapour barrier  
Plywood- 25mm  
Reciprocal Frame beams-400mm

Figure 44

Structural Detail and Elevation of the Main Chamber Space



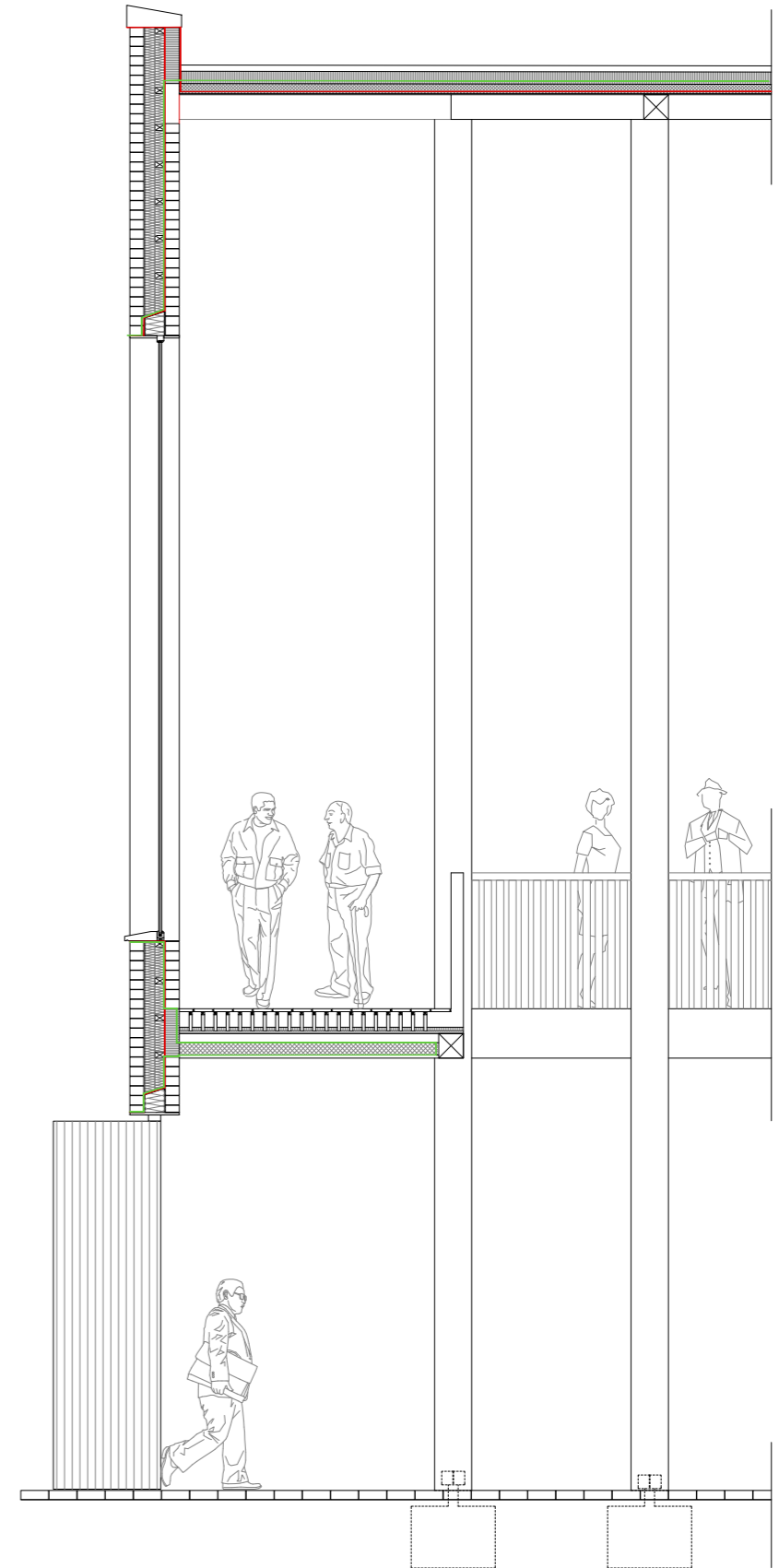






Figure 45

Mezzanine over Chamber overlooking Civic Courtyard



## Conclusion

---

This thesis asks how the future of a resilient city looks? In order to create a long-lasting city, it should first cater to its citizens as an individual and collective identity. The citizen's involvement in and through an urban realm encourages life and activity to trickle through the public spaces. Encouraging these spaces of bustling identities to create an activated urban realm is vital. The job of a city is to create a space catered to the occupants.

The project explores the ideal and architectures that formulate connections. This connection relates to the physical connection intertwined within the urban realm. The connection through and around the built environment exposes choice to society for the first time. Physical accessibility grants the public to utilize the space, encouraging social, economic, and political growth.

The answer to a dynamic city is to encourage citizens' opinions and allow for change. Change must begin by creating a permeable communication system whereby the citizens can infiltrate the political framework. How might this architecture relate to the social structure and be informed by the city? We look at the functioning city and the role that citizens have in creating a sustainable city. The need for more public involvement calls for a new architectural typology that encourages civic engagement through a political agency. An architecture that embodies its representatives and adapts to the ever-changing evolution of the city. An architecture that instills protection surrounding the right of an opinion and grants irreconcilable differences. Following Mouffe's suggestions to encourage conflicts to result in the conclusion best suited to the majority of citizens, "it is in our power to create the practices, dis-

courses and institutions that would allow those conflicts to take an agonistic form." (Mouffe, 2005). In order to achieve common ground in today's political agenda, there is a need for a new typology of architecture where the hierarchies of opinions dissolve. To create a space where the citizens are encouraged to participate, debate, communicate, and find common ground where the majority are satisfied.

This thesis sets out to encourage democracy in citizens' everyday lives, allowing the citizens to guide the conversation. Silvia Federick claims that by pushing the discussion into everyday conversation and installation, the center of political struggles will remain unchanged, "push an end to the separation between the personal and the political, and between political activism and the reproduction of everyday life" (Federici, 2019). Practicing these common grounds during day-to-day experiences is vital to ensure that the foundations of this political shift stick. Federici explains that things do not just happen overnight. It happens over time, so it will become the norm if this shift begins in our everyday lives.

The research informs the architectural project, exposing the need for connections in the urban context. The project enables citizens to connect within a framework surrounding the political structure in Ireland. Through physical connectivity, virtually permeably, and social endurance, this new architectural typology begins the journey to a collectively liberal society.







Figure 46

Main Chamber Space



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[Accessed 13 01 2023].





## List of Figures

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- |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sketch of Circulation Types                                                                                   | 23. The Citizen's Assembly in Relation to it Surrounding Context                                |
| 2. The figure-ground theory (Frederick, 2007)                                                                    | 24. Arrangements of the Citizen's Assembly to Engage with the Surrounding Context and Citizen's |
| 3. The core understanding of permeability and circulation.                                                       | 25. Ground Floor within it's Context                                                            |
| 4. The Locations of the Circulation Study                                                                        | 26. Ground Floor                                                                                |
| 5. Circulation Study- Tolka Valley                                                                               | 27. First Floor                                                                                 |
| 6. Circulation Study- Smithfeild                                                                                 | 28. West Entrance into Civic Courtyard                                                          |
| 7. Circulation Study- Temple Bar                                                                                 | 29. Section C & E                                                                               |
| 8. Circulation Study- North Wall Quay                                                                            | 30. Section A & B                                                                               |
| 9. An Explanation of the Types of Circulation.                                                                   | 31. Slow Circulation                                                                            |
| 10. A Comparative Exploitation of the Types of Circulation.                                                      | 32. Section through Circulation between the Assembly and General Public                         |
| 11. A Study of Circulation on Public Assembly's in Ireland                                                       | 33. Route of the Occupants within the Civic Assembly                                            |
| 12. Comparing the Scales of the Same Public Assembly's in Ireland                                                | 34. Isonometric of Circulation Paths and the type of occupied Spaces                            |
| 13. Visual Connection                                                                                            | 35. Isonometric through the Circulation Paths of the General Public and Assembly                |
| 14. The Relationship between Context, Architecture, People and Relations. (Nada Shehab and Ashraf M.Salma, 2018) | 36. Study of Paving, Circulation and Thresholds                                                 |
| 15. Program Leading to the Brief.                                                                                | 37. Entrance to Main Chamber and Offices from Courtyard                                         |
| 16. Agenda for Citizen's Assembly.                                                                               | 38. Intimate Conversation Spaces                                                                |
| 17. Resilience of th Citizen's Assembly.                                                                         | 39. Mezzanine over the Main Chamber                                                             |
| 18. Civic Courtyard.                                                                                             | 40. Structural Diagram                                                                          |
| 19. Section through Scheme showing the Civic Courtyard Flooded by Protesters.                                    | 41. Main Structure within the Main Chamber                                                      |
| 20. Connecting the Wider Context to Civic Engagement.                                                            | 42. Perspective Section through Main Chamber and Offices                                        |
| 21. National Context of Dublin and the Potential for Civic Agency Exposing direct National Connections .         | 43. Structural Detail and Elevation of the Main Chamber Space                                   |
| 22. Sketches Conveying the Approach to the Scheme from the Wider Context.                                        | 44. Mezzanine over Chamber overlooking Civic Courtyard                                          |
| 23. The Location of the Citizen's Assembly in Relation to Dublin City's Wider Context                            | 45. Main Chamber Space                                                                          |