

**Operating in Otherness:**  
A worker's Club for the Tolka Valley Industrial Estate

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“the social spaces of distraction and display  
become as vital to urban culture as the spaces of  
working and living”

(D. Harvey, “Consciousness and the urban experience.”, 1985, p. 256)

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Tolka Valley Industrial Estate, Glimpse from the Canal.

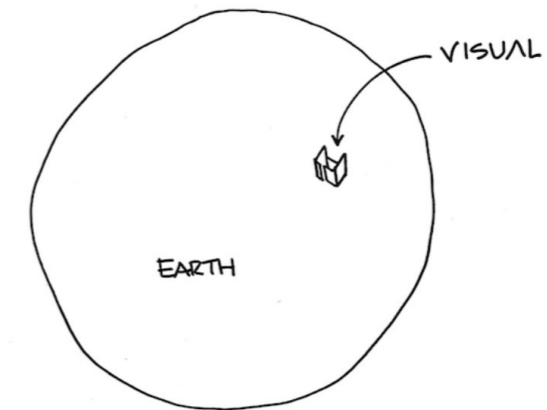
## ABSTRACT

When is a place a space and a space a place? When does a space within a place; that houses a place for a space; that enables a place to become a space, and from that space, we have a greater place occur? If ever? How can anyone or anything begin to make an understanding of themselves and their existence within the grand context of the world and its systems without a designated base beyond their home? Why would an architect help with this? Can an architect help at all?

This thesis seeks to understand how discursive structures are formed and question their necessity for assisting in a well-functioning, well-rounded society. Through a celebration of otherness and interest in alternatives to scripted cities, differences are viewed as positive forces and essential elements in the formation of meaningful place-making.

Extractions and combinations of thought found in a multitude of disciplines resulted in the proposal of a modern-day Worker's Club designed for a specific place and a particular group of people. Through playful methods and presentation, the project aims to make an assertive point regarding the necessity of true social places and the associated contingencies that arise from trying to promote a 'good space to make decisions...'.<sup>1</sup>

1. Helena Fitzgerald, 'A Good Space to Make Decisions About a Place', VISUAL, Carlow, 26th February- 22nd May 2022. Extraction from Exhibition Title.



*A space for making good decisions about place.*

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1. Helena Fitzgerald, A space for making good decisions about place

Fig. 2 Helena Fitzgerald, image still from exhibition A Space for Making Good Decisions About Place, VISUAL Carlow 26th February - 22 May 2022.

# ORIGINS

## Thesis Introduction

The thesis is concerned with the fabrication of discursive structures and how architecture may, or may not, assist in providing people with the means to navigate, and more meaningfully engage with their surroundings and dually how a constellation collective may interact with that given structure. Reflectively, the thesis is derived from a combination of individual experiences and shared conversations. These events have acted as ‘signals’ towards the theme of ‘otherness’ and they assist in the hopes of formulating a greater personal understanding of how one can design empathetically while advocating for the users and their environments.

The phrase constellation collectives is an oxymoron, as a constellation of people typically denotes a group who have shared similarities but remain as individuals; they are connected by one thing, i.e. the bus they take in the morning, but do not operate beyond that. Whereas a collective of people, aware of their individualism, subsume individuality to achieve a common objective. Thus, constellation collectives make up groups of people who only connect on limited means, but these means become of greater importance to their lives.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, to my definition, Jane Jacobs, author and theorist, among other things, surmises this type of relationship:

*Cities are full of people, with whom, from your viewpoint or mine, or any other individual's, a certain degree of contact is useful or enjoyable, but you do not want them in your hair.*<sup>3</sup>

Discursive structures refer to informal systems that enable people to mediate, translate, and imagine solutions. As the socially engaged architect Helena Fitzgerald remarks, to their core they are nodal points which evolve in response to the particularities of people and place.<sup>4</sup> The importance can change depending on the emphasis the user group places upon their means of discourse. A discursive structure could vary in scale from an object such as a cup or a table, to as large as an assembly hall. Ultimately, a discursive structure is a means of reaching an understanding and it is through cooperative dialogue that individuals can establish their common grounds by observing the nuances and complexities that arise. However, discursive structures do not require agreeing with each other but recognise an awareness of the group's beliefs, shared characteristics, and understanding of each other's commonalities and differences to be a successful outcome. Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck notes that it is valuable to discover similarities and to begin to

*...recognise differences as variations of the same...*<sup>5</sup>

A definition of the architect's skill set will vary on the context, climate, and epoch in which the architect operates. However, irrespective of that, a handful of skills prevail across time and are a shared commonality amongst architects despite the differences in their means of practice. In some shape or form, an architect will utilise their observation skills to make recordings and drawings. At a later point within this thesis, how an architect's skill set can be enhanced and affected by the introduction of other disciplines and how these disciplines can be used to develop discursive structures shall be explored.

2. Constellation collective is a phrase I have derived from a conversation with my friend Oliver Kongsgaard Prag. Oliver lives on a decommissioned lighthouse boat in Copenhagen along with 9 other people. After explaining his living situation, he asked "... and what is your living constellation?" to which he got embarrassed as he realised that is not how English speakers refer to their living situations. Since then, I have found the word to be a more appropriate way of thinking about how we interact and live with others, be it a meaningful connection like the North Star or a fleeting one like a shooting star.

3. Jane Jacobs. "The Life and Death of Great American Cities". (New York: Random House, 1992) p.53.

4. Helena Fitzgerald. "Caring for Place, Constructing Common Worlds". Building Material, no. 22 (2019). p.137.

5. "...as good as it is to experience a similar kind of occasion repeated in different places and different kinds of occasions occurring in the same place."

Aldo Van Eyck, "About Place and Occasion, the in-between realm and Labyrinthian Clarity", (Student Exhibition, Witwatersrand. September 1962) accessed via <https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/articles.php?artid=1863>.

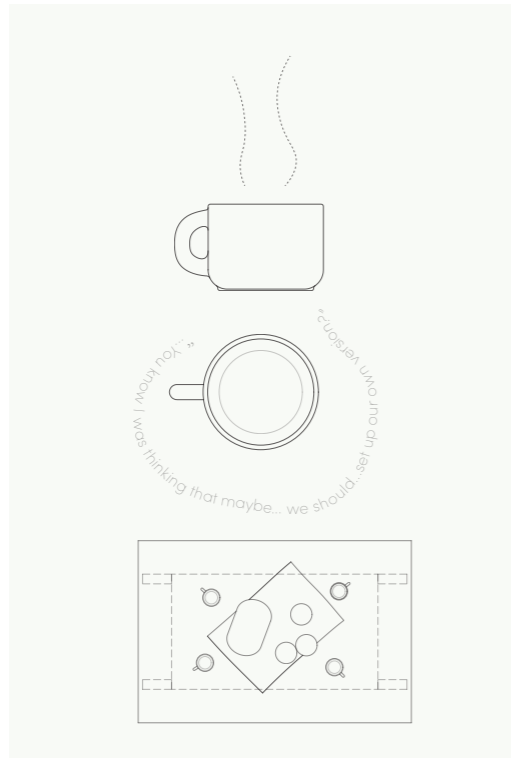


Fig. 3

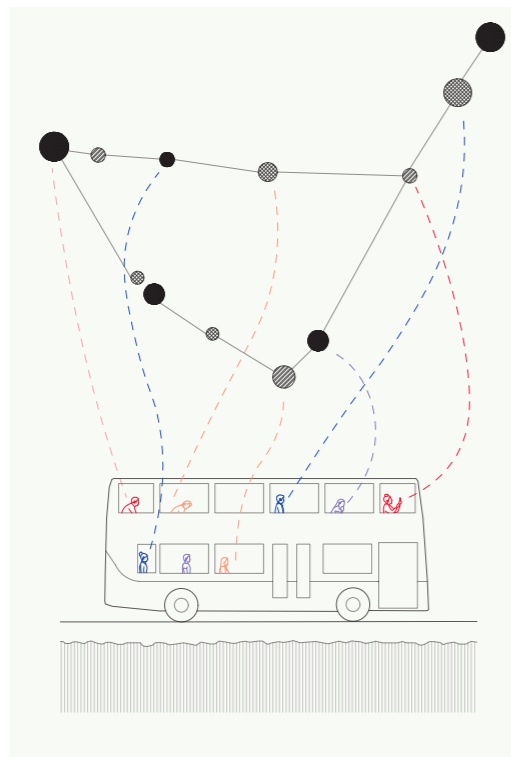


Fig. 4

Fig 3. A tea cup as a discursive structure.

Fig. 4 Passengers on a bus as a constellation collective.

# URGENCY

## Response to Year Theme

(See Thesis Touchstone 1 in Appendix)

The thesis arose from an opposition to the studio year’s theme of “Urgency: Radical Thinking, Transformative Action”. Collectively, these words on the first appearance instil a sense of haste with selective forward thinking. They are too contained within the immediate difficulties they intend to solve, such as the climate crisis, and are suggestive of the architect playing a hero role in solving this collective dilemma. Furthermore, it encourages the notion of the architect being central to this change, when in fact the architect is a small cog within a larger system of counteracting cogs. Ultimately, a theme like this or perhaps its wording goes against what I believe the role and value system of the architect are. However, on extraction and isolation of these words, a more appropriate understanding of architecture’s role for today can be developed; A role which utilises the history and culture of both architecture and of the architect.

- **Urgency:** An earnest and persistent quality; insistence
- **Radical:** Latin; Radix – Root, thus Radical thinking: Refers to an understanding of something’s origins or ‘roots’, seeking to resolve problems based on first principles and foundations.
- **Transformative:** A marked change in something or someone.

From these definitions, the following are marked as keywords:

### Marked Change – Roots – Basic Principles – Insistence

These beginning words were later joined with the following definitions and were essential assistants in the formation of the project.

- **Constellation:** A group of visible stars which form a perceived pattern or outline. The observed pattern is particular with an associated connection. The parts exist individually but also form a larger whole. The whole isn’t necessarily better, that is dependent on the view of the person either within the constellation or watching from the outskirts.
- **Deliberate:** Carrying out something with intention and consciously. Deliberate work is not done in haste and its consideration is explicitly evident.
- **Operating:** Being in effect, managing in a particular way, carrying out a task. Some form of structuring system is in place that instructs the way of working.
- **Negotiation:** Discussing with the intention of reaching an agreement, however, with an inherent give-or-take character as opposed to consensus.
- **Observing:** Noticing, perceiving, or remarking on something/ someone as significant.
- **Collision:** Making direct contact with something else, perhaps intensely but briefly.

## WHY Fountainhead and NOT Juror 8?

### *Establishing a Position and Attitude*

Returning to a reflection, the 1957 film *12 Angry Men* is my earliest memory of encountering an architect. If my memory is deceiving me, the film is at the very least one of my earlier understandings of a profession being used to indicate a person's character and reiterate the assumed traits back to an audience. The film follows a deliberation of a first-degree murder trial. All contained within a single room, the jurors encounter difficulties in reaching a consensus as their differences force them to question their morals and values. Juror 8, the first to vote not guilty and insist on a collective discussion reveals his profession to be an architect. He shares with the other jurors his understanding of measurements and movements to prove omissions, and by acting rationally and calmly, utilising his design skills throughout, Juror 8 approaches his fellow jurors with his concerns of reasonable doubt. Through much-tensioned talk, re-enactments, and cross-comparisons the jury reaches a point of consensus in acquitting the accused of murder, largely thanks to juror 8's insistence on justice.

I mark this first encounter as a positive and one which remains aligned with my understanding of the role of the architect today. I am thankful that Juror 8 was the first depiction of an architect I encountered and not Ayn Rand's protagonist architect Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*, a character who champions individualism over collectivism and embodies the author's ideals of Objectivism.<sup>6</sup> However, I see traces of Roark in my time at architecture school, manifested in tutors and guest reviewers, whose influence trickles down into my peers. Roark appears on my parent's television screen reviewing other people's homes and he

he sits comfortably in glossy magazines showcasing 'lifestyles'. Roark is often praised within circles of 'architecture of architects' making him inescapable. Worst still, Roark is by no means exclusive to a single gender shapeshifting into she, we and they and can be found in a multitude of different cultures and contexts.

Contrasting to Roark, Italian Postmodernist architect Giancarlo de Carlo believes that an emphasis on the "why" as opposed to the "how" is an important stance for the architect to take when defining their ethical position. He asserts in *Architecture's Public*, that architecture's credibility can be defined by its capacity to have a public, which he sees as the people who 'use and bear architecture'.<sup>7</sup> As an ambiguous professional title, architect, given to 'head-bricklayers and God', De Carlo states an architect is defined by the given epoch they operate in and more directly by the political power giving the architect their 'use'.<sup>8</sup> A higher power to the architect grants them their means of creation, i.e. materials, land, authority and money. Due to this, the architect is subjugated to becoming obedient, or as de Carlo phrases it, "an operative appendage".<sup>9</sup> The result of this leads to a concentration of the problems of how, the concerns of why are neglected and with that the cultural commitment of the architect.<sup>10</sup>

A fear of subordination to the Roark personality and model motivates a strive for an alternative means of practice found within the practice of socially engaged architecture; A broad stroke term to which *Architecture's Public* leads towards.

6. Objectivism as defined by Ayn Rand is "the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute". Ayn Rand, David Harriman. "Journals of Ayn Rand" (New York: Dutton, 1997) p.1170-1171.

7. Giancarlo de Carlo, "Architecture's Public". Republished in "Architecture and Participation". (New York: Spon Press. 2005.) p.6.

8. De Carlo, "Architecture's Public", p.5.

9. Ibid, p.5.

10. "Concentrating on the problems of 'how', they played into the hands of the power structure. In neglecting the problems of 'why', they lost track of the most important reasons for their cultural commitment." Ibid, p.7.



## SOCIALLY ENGAGED ARCHITECTURE

### *Exploration of a mode of practice*

Socially engaged architecture has no one set definition. In fact, the notion of architecture not being socially engaged is perplexing, as Jeremy Till notes all architectural production is socially engaged due to its dependence upon human interaction for its construction and occupation.<sup>11</sup> However, not all forms of architectural practice place an emphasis on the social agenda of their work, or the ‘why’ to return to De Carlo. Socially engaged architecture seeks a greater narrative of human life and a shared commonality amongst these types of practices is in the search for a means of refocusing the profession away from its market-driven disposition and towards a form of empathetic, altruistic activism.<sup>12</sup> This form of practice does not detach itself from conditions of politics, socioeconomics, or climate change, but instead is characterised by these factors, including internal changes within the architectural community. Thus, internal, and external factors begin to act more cohesively in their efforts to establish an alternative. Through this means of working it becomes apparent that neutrality is no longer available for the architect. Positions of neutrality are uncommon in socially engaged architecture as there is an awareness that doing so alleviates the architecture of a political agency giving way for other controlling forces to do so.<sup>13</sup>

This in turn is reflected in the methods socially engaged practices use, which often involve a certain level of participation with a wider network of stakeholders. Noted in *Demystifying*

Architectural Research, socially motivated practices and their research methodologies contribute to ‘the questioning of assumptions, values and received ways of doing by working to create agency in communities and with clients’.<sup>14</sup> Julia Udall continues remarking that through research which emphasises the value of lived experiences and nonprofessional expertise, a practice’s chosen commitment to equality, sustainability and social justice can be supported.<sup>15</sup> Till further supports this belief in *The Negotiation of Hope* in which he refers to ‘the expert-citizen/citizen-expert’ paradigm, which highlights the immediate initial imbalance found in normal architect, client and user scenarios and frames a mechanism for approaching participation.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Fig. 5 & 6. Stills from *12 Angry Men* depicting Juror 8 utilising his design skills to assist in the jurors discussion.

11. Blundell-Jones et al., *Architecture and Participation*. (New York: Spon Press. 2005.) p.xxvi.

12. “Abandoning itself to the market makes one-self complicit in the machinations and exploitations of the market.” Blundell-Jones et al., *Architecture and Participation*. p. xxvi.

13. *Ibid.* xxvi.

14. Anne Dye et al., *Demystifying Architectural Research: Adding Value to Your Practice*. (Newcastle upon Tyne: RIBA Publishing. 2015) p. 44.

15. Dye, *Demystifying*, p.44.

16. *Architecture and Participation*.p.27.

# MAPPING PRACTICE & METHODS

## Mapping the other type

(See Thesis Touchstone 2 in Appendix)<sup>17</sup>

Socially engaged architecture is considered the other type of practice. This characterisation of marginalisation appeared in the mind map exercise amongst the people, practices, and projects identified. Each element involved is somewhat different. This exclusion or otherness lends itself to a wide variation of spaces concerned with how people can interact with each other freely and non-judgementally. These spaces are by definition ‘the other space’ and are disconnected from the home and workplace. The provision of a space for common exchange between one another operates differently from conventional communal spaces in that there is typically an established agenda and intention that drives the space’s operation. For example, the Foodhall in Sheffield, initiated by students is an ‘open public dining room and kitchen’,<sup>18</sup> where the meals, made from surplus food donations, are served on a ‘contribute what you can’ basis enabling the food hall to promote sharing of all kinds.<sup>19</sup> Equally, the Parisian-based practice, Encore Heureux, in their project Grande Halle in Colombelle, Normandy generated a space characterised by alternative means of enabling people to congregate. A former industrial workshop was converted into a creative incubator, providing workshops, shared workspaces, artist residencies, a café and a large event hall to the locale. The project’s philosophy of questioning ‘the conventional methods of construction of the city’ are carried through from the project’s construction to the building’s agenda and was initiated from the collaborative approach taken from the offset of the project.<sup>20</sup>

17. The above understanding of socially engaged architecture was developed through reading and an accompanying mind map. (Appendix 2) As an initial starting point, I drafted a mind map of the overarching term socially engaged architecture. Within the mind map various practices, projects, people, and methods are constellated together to understand how they relate to one another, if at all. From this exercise, it became clear that socially engaged architecture is as broad as architecture itself, but that particularities were also emerging. The mind map then became an exercise of identifying a focus of examination. The ethical beliefs of socially engaged architecture practices follow through their design and research methodologies to generate the necessary outcomes. These methods tend to promote participation with an egalitarian agenda and emancipatory outcome. Thus, the methodologies used by contemporary practices with a stated interest in social engagement became a prominent aspect to examine.

18. Sheffield Foodhall. “Sheffield Foodhall-About”, Foodhall Project. Accessed via <https://www.foodhallproject.org/>.

19. Eleanor Young. “Everyone Welcome”. The RIBA Journal, January, 26th, 2017. Accessed via <https://www.ribaj.com/buildings/the-foodhall-project-sheffield>.

20. Normandie Aménagement. “La Grande Halle, Colombelle”. Accessed via <https://www.normandie-amenagement.com/realisation/lagrande-halle-colombelles/>.



Fig 7.

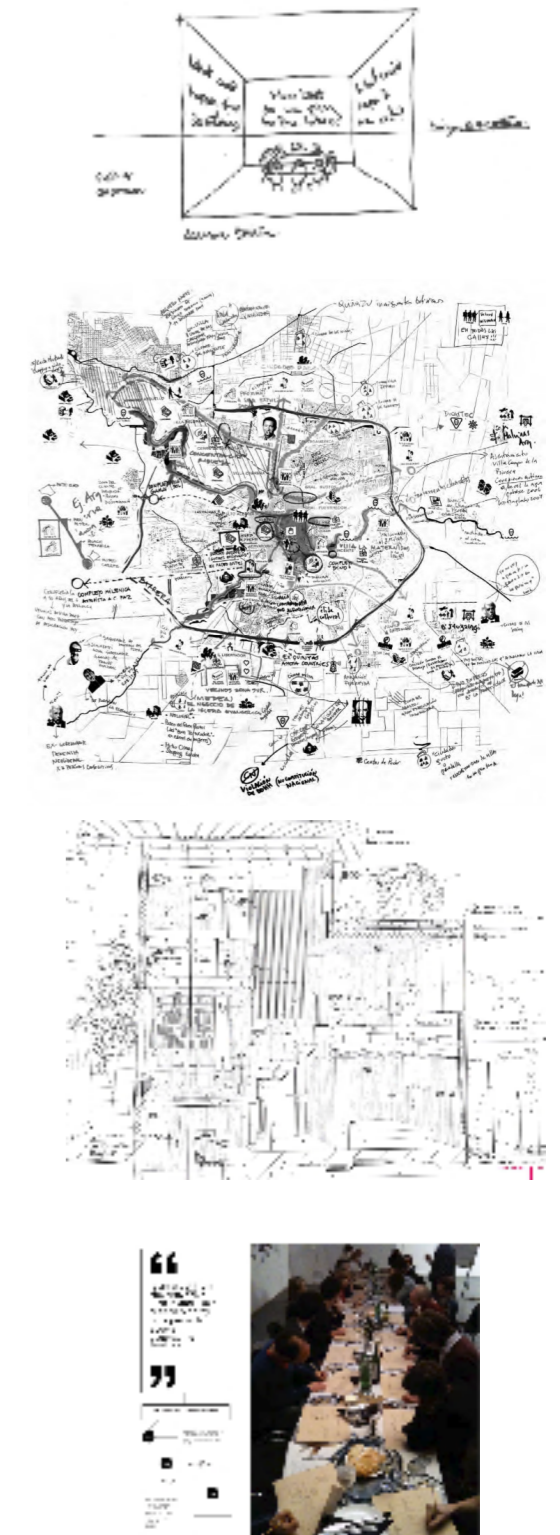


Fig 8.

Fig 7. Extracts from mindmap; examples of documents produced by architects, see appendix for full map.

Fig 8. Extracts from mindmap; examples of drawings as communicative tools, see appendix for full map.

## SPACES IN PLACES

### *Third Space/Place/Theory*

The concept of the third space emerged whilst making the mind map and with that, the confusion between the third place, (Ray Oldenburg, Sociologist) the third space (Edward Soja, Critical Geographer) and the third space theory (Homi K. Bhabha, Critical theorist) emerged. They begin to merge at certain points and an effort to eliminate two and rely on one for the thesis' argument was considered. However, it was dually realised that a combined understanding of these theories from different fields enables architecture to contribute more readily. The latter two theories allow for a broadening and shared space of knowledge to emerge and give room to new positions.<sup>21</sup> Whilst conversely, in a triad of sociology, geography and architecture, conceptualisations of third space can begin to be spatially realised.

For Oldenburg, third spaces are environments outside of one's home and workspace. They are upbeat in their temper and tenor; The purpose is to enjoy the company of one's fellow human beings and to delight in the novelty of their character – not to wallow in pity over misfortunes'.<sup>22</sup> Essentially, the third space allows for expression, creativity and above all; conversation. The informality of what Oldenburg observes in these public gathering places he argues is of great importance to a functioning democracy and civil society and promotes civic engagement.

Geographer E. Soja builds upon French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's triad conception of space. To Soja, geography consists of three realms a tangible space, an imagined space and finally a hybrid of the former two which is a space people truly live in and experience. The third space relies on the actions of the First Space

mediated through the expectations of the Second Space.<sup>23</sup> Soja claims his theory enables and encourages people to think alternatively about the significance of space and the spatiality of human life. The aim is to extend the scope of one's 'established spatial or geographical imaginations'. Soja's theory is 'purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings'.<sup>24</sup> This provides critical geographers with a framework to develop spatial theorising reflective of their time. This in turn is useful for an architect, as it can be used as a directive tool when deciding on an approach.

Finally, Homi K. Bhabha uses the third space as an understanding of identity and community, specifically in the postcolonial condition where, he notes, 'unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation' exist. Within Bhabha's third space theory, every person is a hybrid made up of their unique combination of identity factors.<sup>25</sup> Social and cultural exclusions are reflected in this makeup. When two groups of different cultural traditions encounter each other a new type of negotiation takes place, one which happens in the third space of Enunciation.<sup>26</sup> As each group learns and shares with one another a new common identity is formed, where people are 'neither the one nor the other'.<sup>27</sup> The third space is thus a mutual space that enables an engagement with 'new cultural politics of difference'. By providing a new space for difference, the third space enables, to return to Soja, critical thirding-as-Othering.

21. Iikas Karin, Iikas and Gerhard Wagner. "Communicating in the Third Space." (New York: Routledge, 2009) p.60.

22. Ray Oldenburg. "The Great Good Place (New York: Marlowe and Company, 1999) p.26

23. 'a fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individuality and collective experience and agency'. Edward D. Soja, "Third space: journeys to Los Angeles and other real and imagined places". (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) p.24.

24. Soja, "Thirdspace", p.16.

25. Homi K. Bhabha, "The Location of Culture". (London: Routledge, 1994) p.3.

26. 'With the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness. This place is a productive one, which differs from liberal relativist perspectives on 'cultural diversity' and 'multiculturalism', which form another discursive space'. Iikas Karin, "Communicating in the Third Space", p.57.

27. Ibid., p.2.



Fig 9.

Ray Oldenburg  
Sociologist

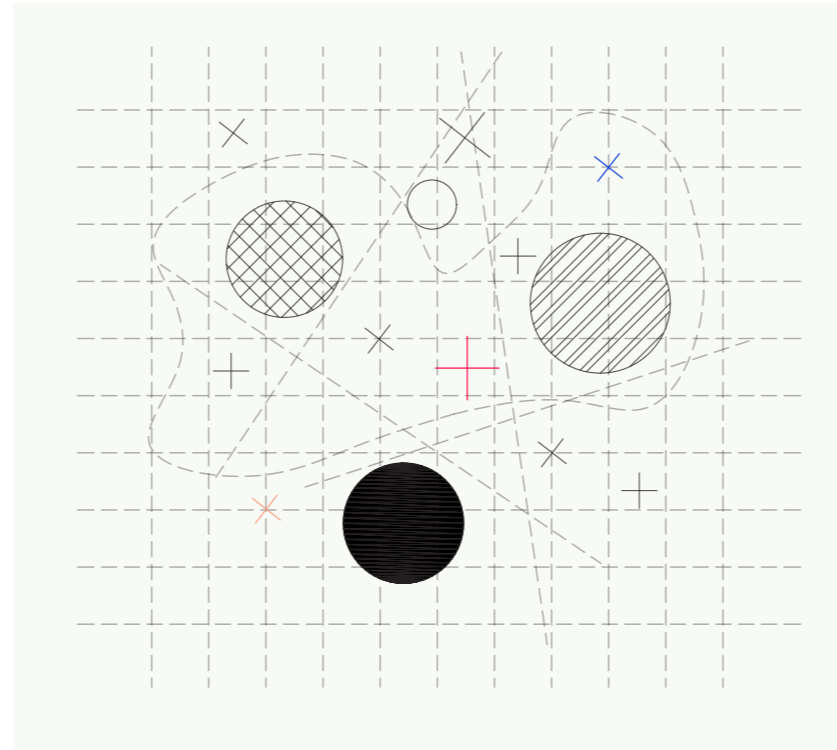


Fig 10.

Edward Soja  
Critical Geographer

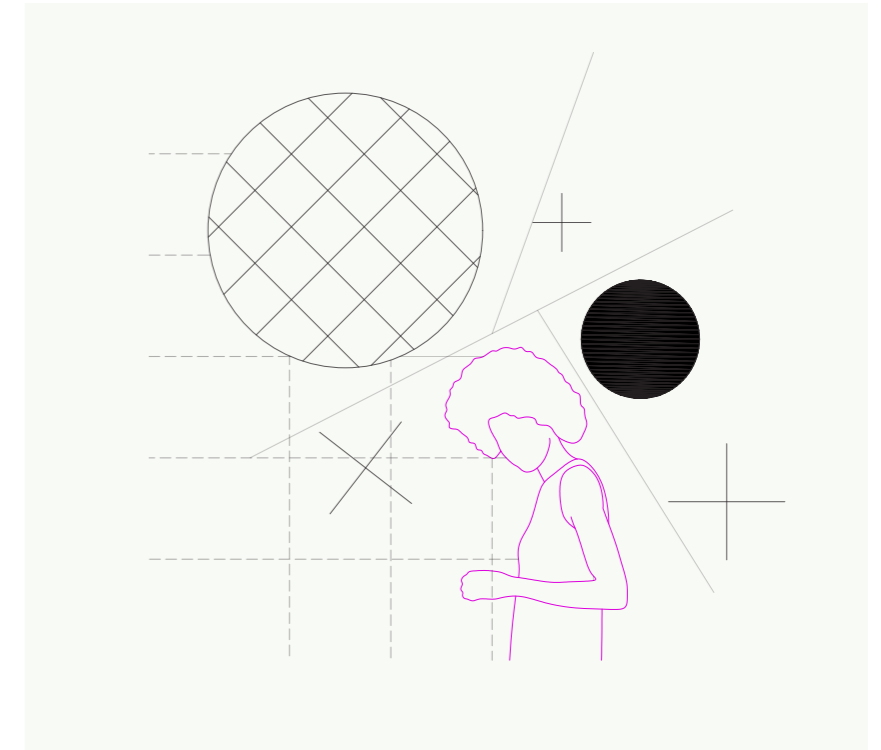


Fig 11.

Homi K. Bhabha  
Sociologist

How to these theorists become applicable to architecture?  
Oldenburg establishes a type or supposed place, Soja provides an approach and Bhabha provides the individual thinking and reminder of the need for empathy. Combined they give an understanding of the importance of difference and multiplicity within our built environment and also point towards the importance of areas of our lives, cities and landscapes having a heterotopic character and occurrence. An interesting conclusion, giving all of the above theorists at a particular point in time have referred to Foucault, a philosopher who expanded immensely on the concept of heterotopias.

Fig9. - 11. Summation diagrams of theories

## SENSE + DISSONANCE

### *Understanding theories and their application to architecture*

Connecting the previous theories back to architecture and design methods became the next challenge to understand. Another field of study, ethnography, became assistive in understanding how other fields can be applied to architecture, or indeed, architecture applied to them.

Ethnography, a branch of anthropology, is defined as a qualitative method of describing lived conditions as experienced by people.

<sup>28</sup> The data is typically composed of interviews and observations and enables conclusions to be drawn as to how particular societies and individuals function. The American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, described his practice of anthropology as one that generates thick descriptions. Geertz recognised that analysis can often omit subtleties recorded from interpretative methods. A thick description is a qualitative way of measuring as opposed to a thin description which is considered quantitative. By interpreting the context in a thick description, the conditions of a group can be better understood by external people. <sup>29</sup>

While perhaps not verbalised in the same manner, in architecture the conception of operating through thick descriptions is common practice. As stated previously, means of observation is one of the architect's most useful skills. Lucas sees graphic anthropology as a way in which an architect can contribute and benefit from anthropology. Drawing in this manner requires you to slow down and engage tentatively with the scene you are observing. 'Knots of dense social interaction' begin to emerge as you 'unpick materiality, relationships in context, gesture and posture, and overlapping mesh works'. <sup>30</sup> In addition to the concept of thick descriptions,

thick descriptions, the concept of lifeworld from anthropology becomes helpful to the architect too as a means of generating a deep understanding of what it means to dwell in a space, which has the ability for a 'more socially informed and engaged architecture to emerge'. <sup>31</sup> By observing, an architect operates as a reflective practitioner.

Within socially engaged practices there is a tendency towards some form of participation as a design methodology. Participation provides the potential of providing people with direct involvement in their cities and enabling them to recognise their inherent city ownership. <sup>32</sup> The introduction of participation in a project makes confrontation with differences inevitable. Suddenly, as Till phrases, in the dialogue between the

*'personal with the social, the individual with the collective, [a] political spaces emerge[s]'. <sup>33</sup>*

With this awareness, the role of agonism and its potential value to architecture appears. Devised by political theorist Chantal Mouffe, agonism is an 'action-orientated approach' to pluralism. It aims to assist in dismantling the 'sacralisation of consensus' and that in a true democracy, conflicts and confrontations are indications of 'democracy [being] alive and inhabited by pluralism'. <sup>34</sup> As the opposite of antagonism, agonism sees oppositions as adversaries and as essentials for seeing others' differences as positives, which assists in defining oneself. Differences in agonism are sought, celebrated, and considered fundamental for democracy. Agonistic discourse is therefore defined by both its conflict and mutual admiration.

28. Anthropology, by contrast, is an inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the world.

29. 'Looking at the ordinary, in places where it takes unaccustomed forms, brings out not the arbitrariness of human behaviour but the degree to which its meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed' Clifford Geertz. "The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays." (New York: Basic Books, 1973) p.14.

30. Ray Lucas, "Anthropology for Architects, Social Relations and the Built Environment", p.xv.

31. Ibid., p.2.

32. Ammon Beyerle. "Participation in Architecture: agonism in practice". (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, 2018) p.2.

33. Jeremy Till. Architecture and Participation". (New York: Spon Press.) 2005. p.31.

34. Laclau Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe.. "Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics". Second ed. (London: Verso. 2014). p. xv.

# PRIMER TESTING

## Reimagined route for the Finglas High Cross

The previous understanding of agonism with notions of how an architect may communicate back to a particular group of people was tested through a week long exercise. The primer imagined the high cross of Finglas' recently demolished Church becoming a moveable table that is carried around the environs of Finglas, enabling various people to use the table in whatever means they feel necessary but also allowing them to discuss the future of Finglas and also the future of the extensive site in Finglas which now exists due to the churches removal. The table is then ultimately a discursive structure and one which is enabling the creation of constellation collectives.

As assistance to the drawings, the different colours of the people refer to the maps referencing the areas these people are coming from in Finglas. The colours are used to emphasise that each person is different to the other, and that their differences are worth celebrating and are quite literally colourful additions to the world of the table and beyond.

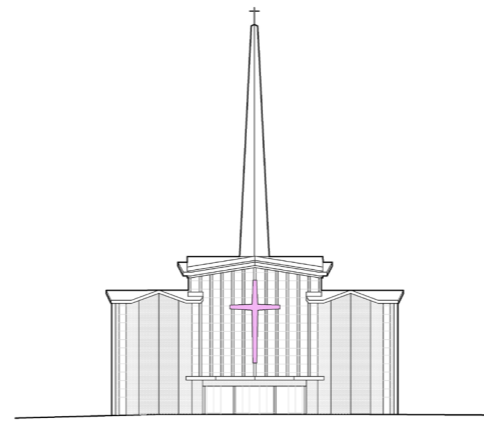
While the drawings were well received at the review, the concepts or indeed language were greatly questioned. Agonism was deeply misunderstood as a desire to cause conflict, leading to the theory being tucked away for many months. On reflection this was a disheartening response on my behalf and I should have trusted agonism in its application to architecture more.



Constructed in 1967

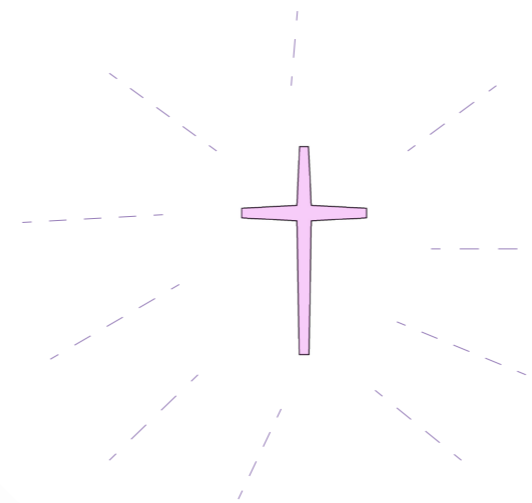


Demolished 2019

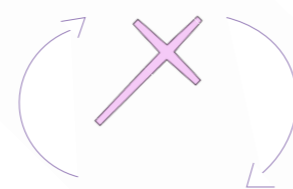


Church of the Annunciation  
1.500 North Elevation

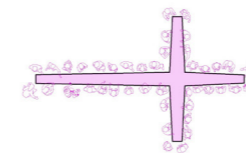
Of the 216,296 bricks, 28 12m concrete columns, 1000m2 of stained glass, and 1878m2 of copper, there is...



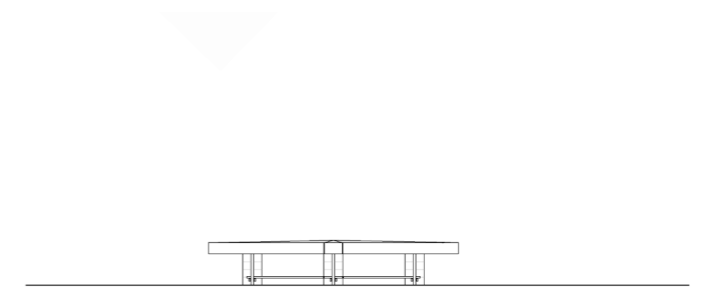
Only one remaining piece!



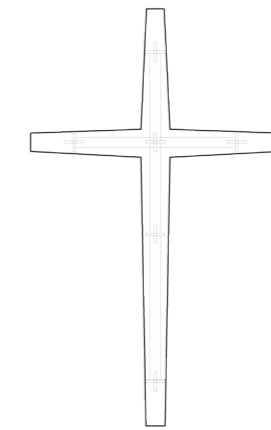
Rotate



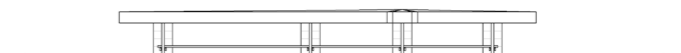
Congregate!



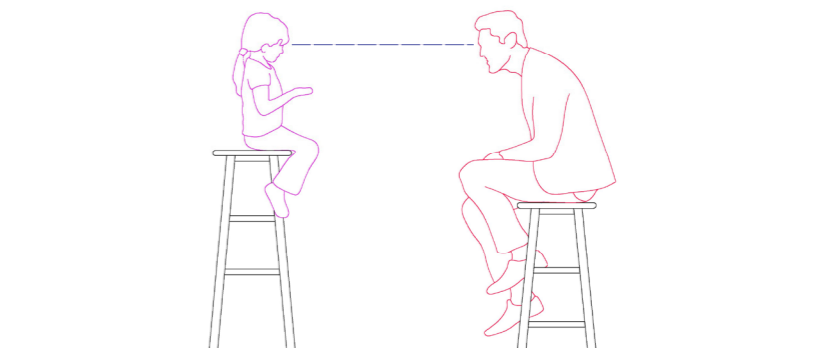
1.100 Short Elevation



1.100 Plan  
Support leg positioning



1.100 Long Elevation



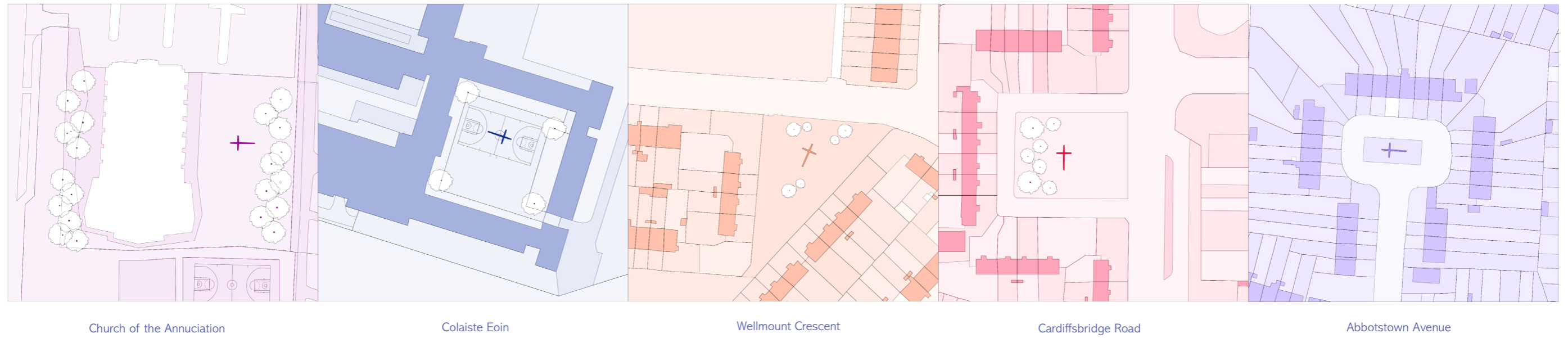


Fig. 13. Locations in Finglas with table.

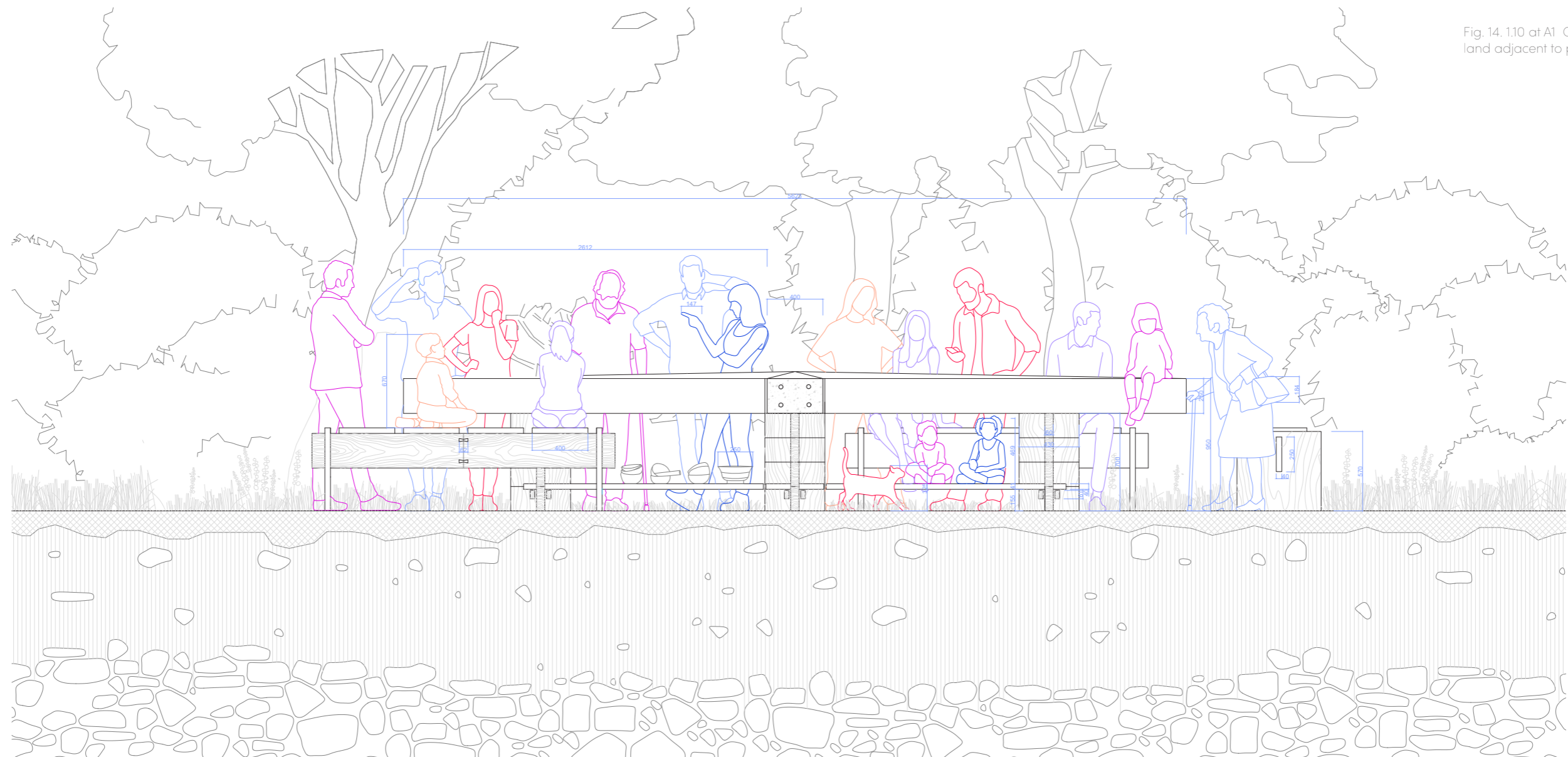
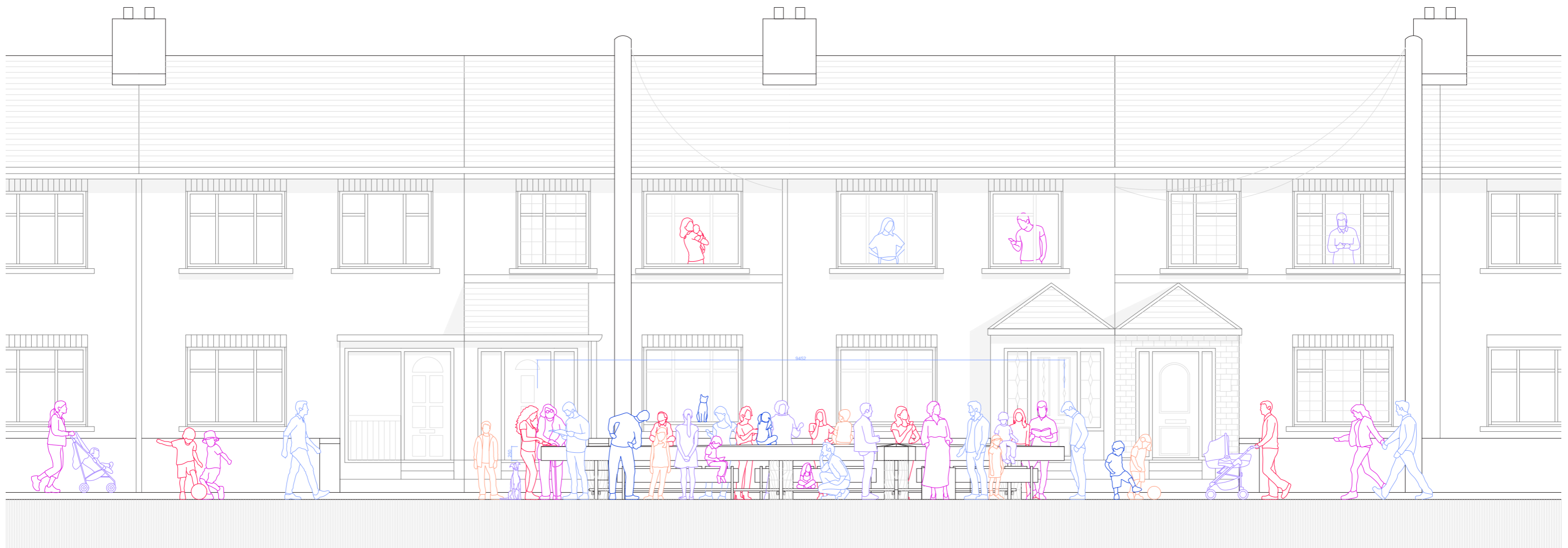


Fig. 14. 1:10 at A1 Cross Section of Table in land adjacent to previous church site.





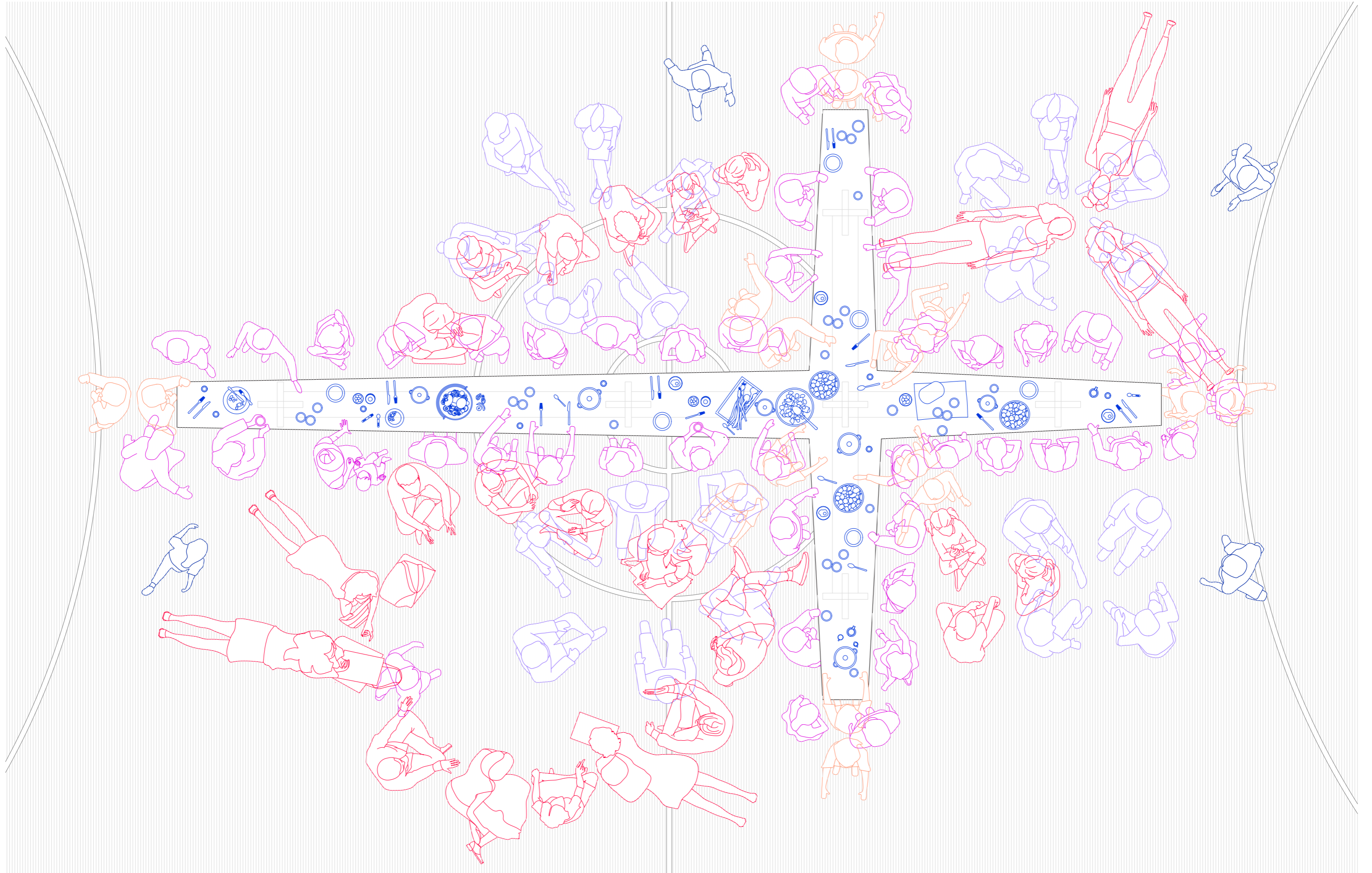


Fig. 16. 1.20 Overlay plan at A1 of various user groups interacting with table shown above the Colaiste Eoin Basketball Court.

# TOLKA VALLEY

## Response to Site

Reflection 1

The Tolka Valley is located in the Northwest of Dublin with an edge defined by the suburbs of Finglas, Cabra, Ashtown and the tail-end of Glasnevin. Notably, between the Tolka Valley Park and Cabra sits the Dublin Industrial Estate which hugs a vast portion of the southern edge of the park. Monocultural conditions are a shared characteristic of these environs, and they appear to have a greater impact than the valley's namesake river. A peculiar, yet ultimately anthropogenic result. Combined with one of the national rail lines, and the Royal Canal, the area becomes further disjointed and divided as these elements are typically bordered with austere fencing preventing interaction. Additionally, a socio-economic layer is woven through the physical condition with both appearing to perpetuate the other, leading to an area of the city that appears to lack a 'raison d'être' other than housing.

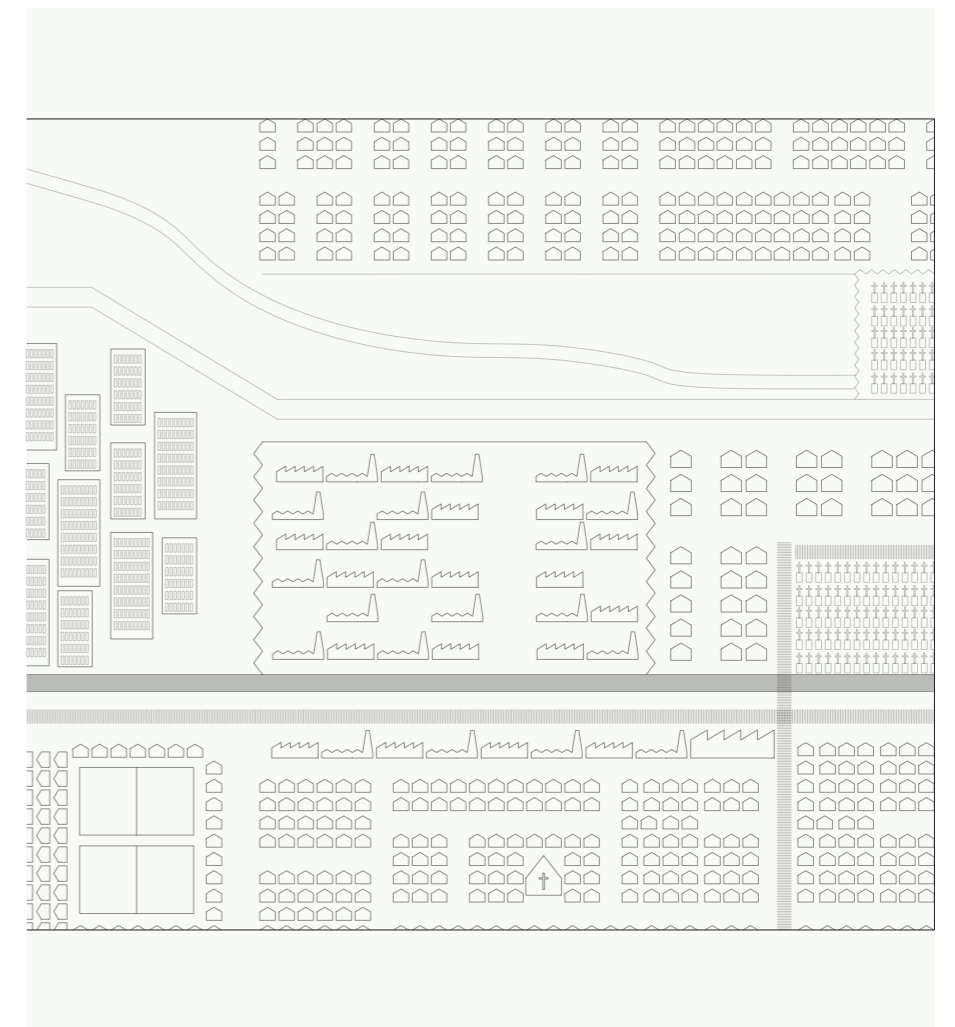
Interestingly, the suburbs of Tolka demonstrate a range of building cultures from the past century. To the South, the radial organisation of Cabra's housing development, to the North the edge of Finglas, with a similar housing typology to Cabra but organised linearly, to the East the more established city suburb of Phibsborough and to the West, the new high rise, high-density developments of Ashtown. Despite being built at different times, the conditions of Finglas, Cabra and Ashtown appear to not have learned from one another with Cabra and Ashtown in particular, lacking a formalised centre, rendering them listless housing spreads. Despite the appearance of order and utility, there is little room for speculation, which has led to frustration when searching for a site. With Ashtown being a recent development, it appears that the city will continue to sprawl to the edge of the M50 ring road meaninglessly and detrimentally to the rest of the city. These areas pose the valid question of who and what are we building for?

The outward sprawl of the city provokes a return of an inward look at the area, resulting in the industrial estate appearing as a viable site location. The industrial estate is an example of an area in flux as its zoning de-transitions. The current live planning applications for the industrial estate see an increase in residential buildings which appear to be perpetuating and promoting the conditions of the surrounding environments. I fear that the industrial estate will ultimately be reformed into a new type of its neighbours and not be a viable addition to the city at large. This fear is prompted by the potential the industrial estate position is in to be reinterpreted and configured to become a defined place within its own right.

The industrial estate appears at large as an enclave of mute buildings with blank, sheer elevations. Yet the activities behind these fronts appear to be rich and of wide diversity. Despite this, there is no strong provision of communal facilities for the people of the Dublin Industrial Estate, and it is very much a place to go and swiftly leave again. A place solely occupied by work will struggle to form an identity and culture as its occupation in relation to time is too scheduled. An intervention of needs is required to first acknowledge the people that currently occupy this territory and enable the beginnings of the people of the Dublin industrial estate being seen and heard. Without that, as Teerds notes, a reality and gain of recognition cannot be granted.

*'this only can be achieved in a shared culture, a common world, in which space is not an amalgam of double Dutch voices'.*<sup>34</sup>

*The once harmonious landscape has been transformed and distorted by endless and anonymous suburban villages*<sup>35</sup>



34. Hans Teerds, Constructing Culture: A Political Perspective, *Architecture and Culture*, 2:2, 2014, 213–223, DOI: 10.2752/205078214X14030008752542

35. Sibyl Moholy Nagy, *Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture in North America*, (New York: Horizon Press) 1957, p.198.

Fig. 17. Cartoon drawing of how the Tolka Valley felt. Swathes of boundaries, graveyards, and housing with ominous figures in the forms of high-rise apartments and large-scale churches. Somewhere in the middle sits the industrial estate.

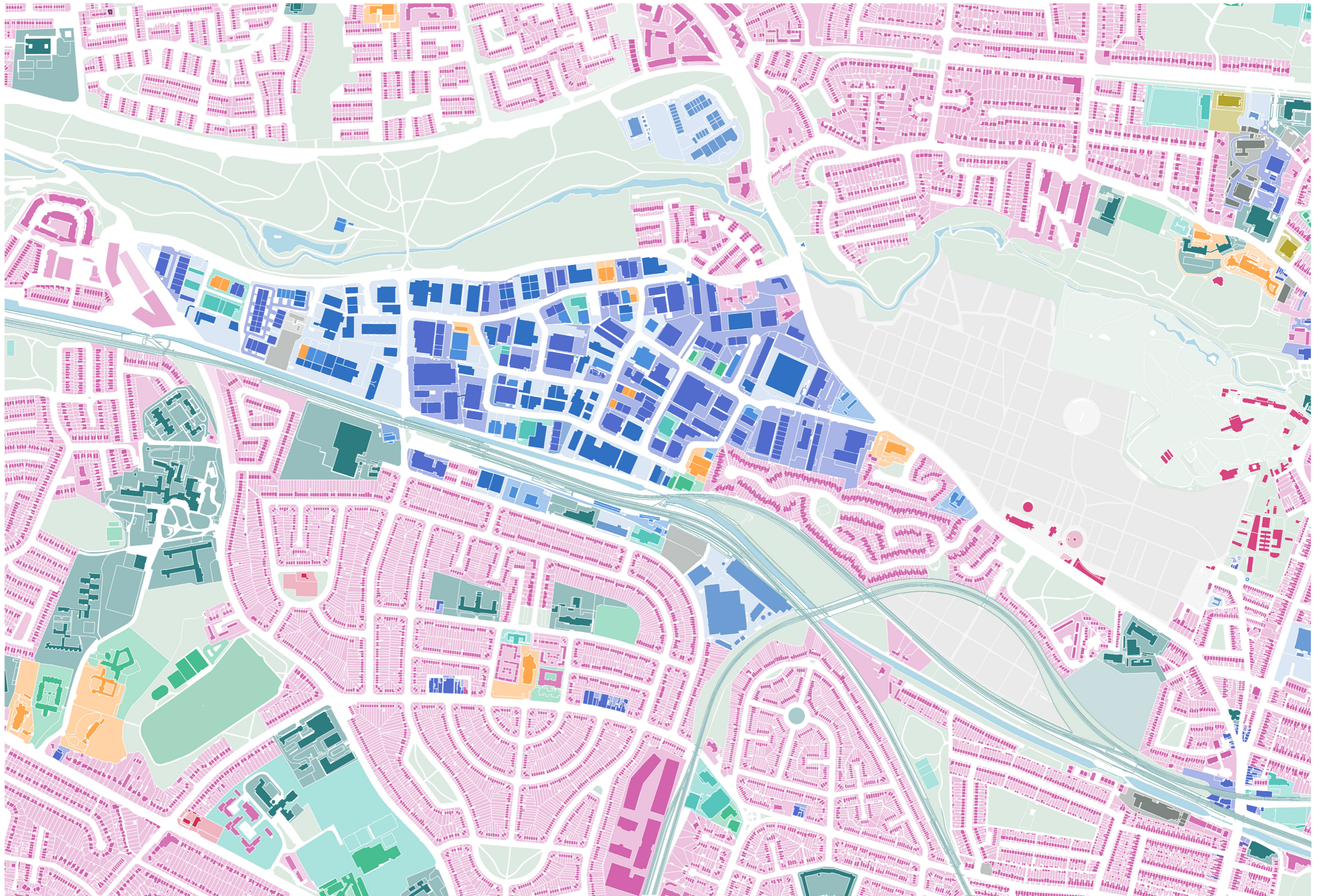


Fig 18. Wider Tolka Valley area 1:10000  
at A2

## THESIS VESSEL

### *A Worker's Club and supporting infrastructures*

Through thesis development research and the investigations of particular range of typologies emerged centred largely around alternative ways of socialising beyond the usual suspects of cafes and pubs. From that, the intent of finding a relatively ordinary brief with humble provisions was established.

Site: Due to a frustration or inability to speculate intuitively in the wider context of the Tolka Valley, the Industrial Estate presented itself as a more adequate space to freely respond and speculate. Furthermore, the architectural language of the estate is a familiar/unfamiliar one, which is an appropriate challenge.

Brief: The brief has been made by looking at the pre existing programs of the estate and recognising an apparent gap that caters for the workers social needs and relaxations.

Characteristics: To communicate collectively or individually become compatible or transferable to other elements such as material, construction, and typology and begin to dictate programme adjacencies.

Local attitude: Reacting to the current, future, and past conditions of the estate assist in establishing and understanding of the local attitude and awareness of the built fabric.

The brief thus forms a critique, or diatribe to the current character of the estate and the future planning applications that see a vast change in the areas makeup and marking of the people who work there, and ultimately questions...

*Can architecture act as a mediator to the change occurring within the estate and the wider world of the estate?*

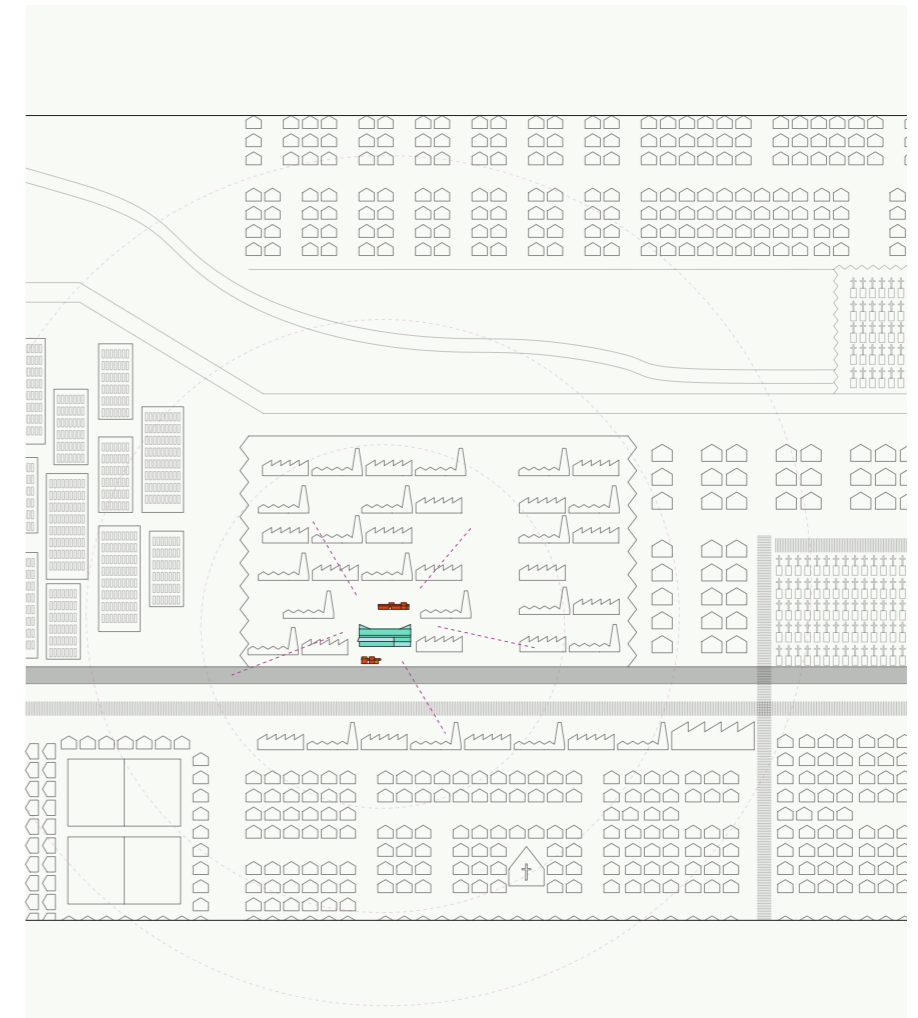


Fig 19. Listless caricature with proposed insertions. The beginnings of becoming listful!

# THESIS VESSEL

## Extracts from T.D. as guiding sentences

Reflection 2

The following extractions and images on the following page were hung from the beginnings of the second semester as reminders of the aim of the project.

An Intent:

and they assist in the hopes of formulating a greater personal understanding of how one *can design empathetically while advocating for the users and their environments.*

A Catchment Group:

The phrase constellation collectives is an oxymoron, as a constellation of people typically denotes a group who have shared similarities but remain as individuals; they are connected by one thing, i.e. the bus they take in the morning, but do not operate beyond that. Whereas a collective of people, aware of their individualism, subsume individuality to achieve a common objective. *Thus, constellation collectives make up groups of people who only connect on limited means, but these means become of greater importance to their lives.*

An Operative Scope:

1) *Discursive structures refer to informal systems that enable people to mediate, translate, and imagine solutions.*

As the socially engaged architect Helena Fitzgerald remarks, to their core they are nodal points which *evolve in response to the particularities of people and place...* A discursive structure could vary in scale from an *object such as a cup or a table, to as large as an assembly hall.*

A Criteria:

He asserts in Architecture's Public, *that architecture's credibility can be defined by its capacity to have a public, which he sees as the people who 'use and bear architecture'.*

2) Ultimately, a discursive structure is a means of reaching an understanding and it is through *cooperative dialogue* that individuals can establish their common grounds by observing the nuances and complexities that arise.

A Characteristic:

1) This exclusion or otherness lends itself to a wide variation of spaces concerned with *how people can interact with each other freely and non-judgementally.*

2) The provision of a space for common exchange between one another operates differently from conventional communal spaces in that there is *typically an established agenda and intention that drives the space's operation.*

An Outcome:

1) *As each group learns and shares with one another a new common identity is formed,* where people are 'neither the one nor the other'.

The third space is thus a mutual space that enables an engagement with 'new cultural politics of difference'. By providing a new space for difference, the third space enables, to return to Soja, critical thirding-as-Othering.

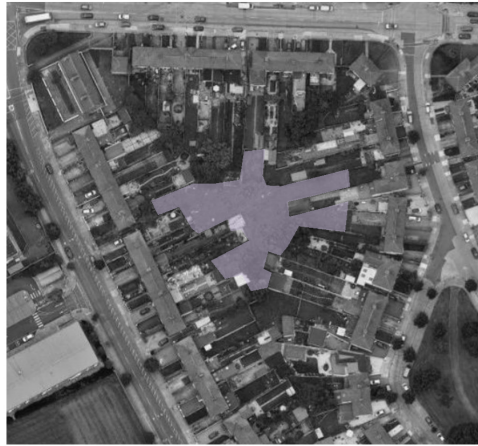


Fig. 20. Appearance of Enclave conditions across Tolka Valley.

The frustration of finding a site lead to an observation of various enclave conditions that appear readily across the valley. In some instances, they appear as pleasant, hidden worlds whilst those very characteristics could also be interpreted as undesirable

## INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

### Character and Condition

The Tolka Valley industrial estate appears as a desolate place, with little to no apparent activity. The muteness of the building types and there lack of inward views gives the impression that a large portion of the estate is either vacant or dormant. Perhaps the estates most beguiling quality is its proximity to the city centre and thus its neglect from surrounding environs.

On closer inspection however, the estate is operating in a healthy manner with a wide range of activities taking place within its sheds. Ranging from churches, distribution centres, construction product production and food production, the estate can be considered lively.

Returning to an urban geographer, J. R. Bale questioned the curious nature of industrial estates and how they are considered to be 'a neglected aspect of urban and industrial geography'. An industrial estate from the perspective of an urban geographer is greatly different to other urban industrial areas as it is specifically planned for industrial enterprises solely. Yet despite this specificity, the definitions of what estates are do not capture their current workings and it remains fascinating that such a ubiquitous condition can remain unsystematically studied and charted.

Bale, attempts to provide 'a more all-embracing definition' of an estate. To the left, are a selection of the definitions Bale found and his understanding of how they may be expanded upon. Notably, the last definition is the one I found most appealing and instigated the chosen brief.

"... (b) "areas specifically selected, planned and equipped for lighter manufacturing purposes, or completed factory buildings being let to a variety of manufacturing companies"

Estates need not be "specifically selected, planned and equipped" for any particular type of occupant, many housing a great diversity of enterprises.

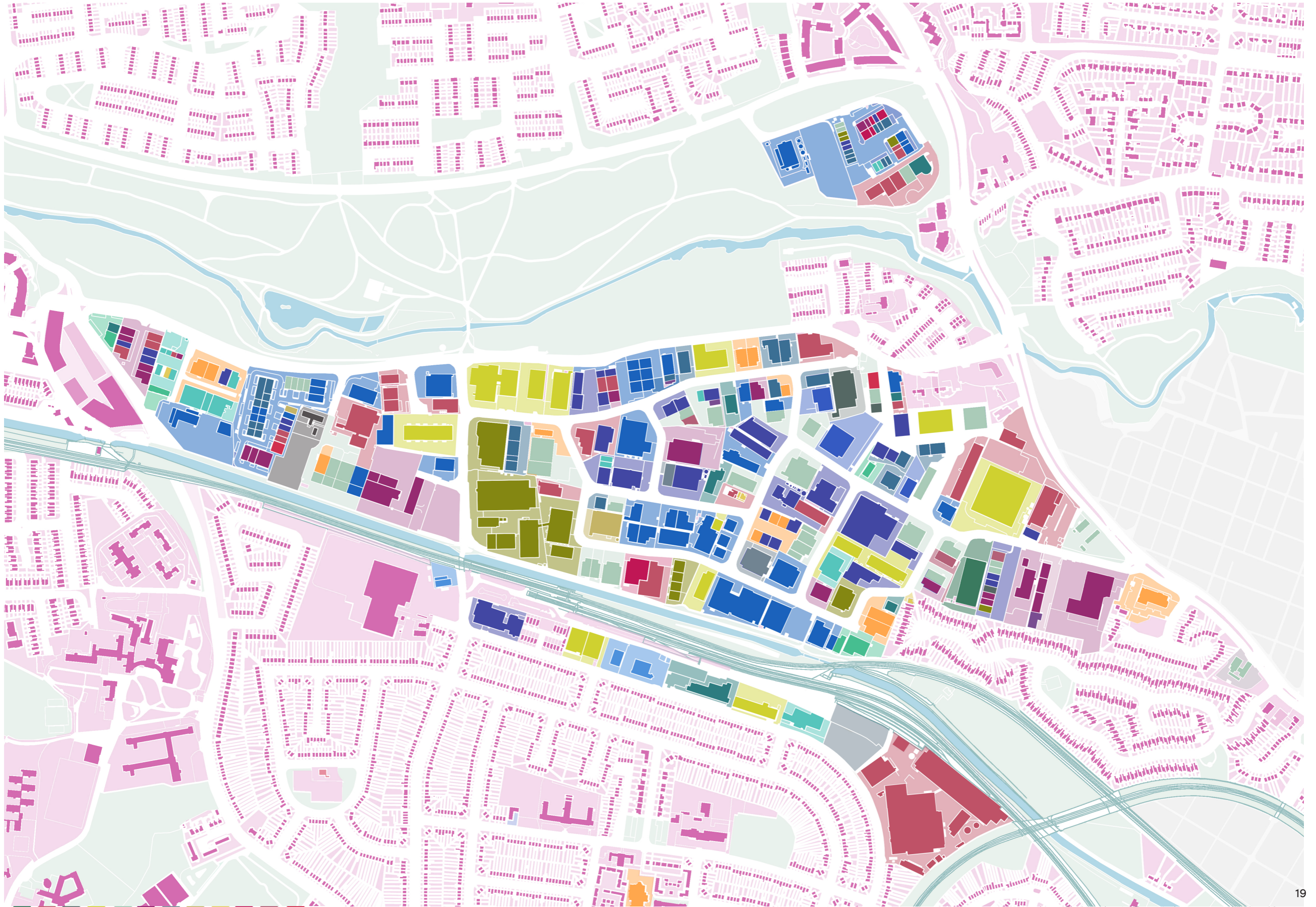
(c) "they are concerned and constructed for the needs of industry today and with the provision for future developments"

Estates may not provide for future developments, especially where the estate has been converted from existing premises and where a high degree of site cover may exist before the first occupant even arrives.

*(d) estates provide on a communal basis such features as recreational facilities and public utilities;*

*The sharing of facilities on a communal basis rarely extends beyond the sharing of basic utilities such as gas, water or sewerage. The days when even large estates were provided are*

**virtually over...<sup>36</sup>**



- Recycling
- Food
- Flower shops, Christmas & Packaging
- Car Mechanics
- DIY Hardware
- Repair
- Laundry
- Calls
- Recording Studios
- Event Companies
- Social Services

Fig 21. Industrial Estate industry types, 1:5000 at A3.

## EXISTING TYPE

### *A placed building culture*

The previous industries and businesses are carried out in buildings which look like the following to the right. The materials and construction of these buildings reiterate back to people the internal volume of these sheds. They are immensely mute in colour, character yet are often grand in scale and portion.

The typical material palette of these buildings includes corrugated metal sheeting, brick, blockwork, and steel frames. Some buildings sometimes give hints towards the type of activity that may occur in them which is typically noted in the roof lighting and form.

There is a tendency for the buildings to emphasise signals back to people, making them easily read and usable. For example, a common characteristic is to change the material above the entrance, or to colour specific entrances. Certain elevations show no obvious openings allowing the building to blend into its surroundings. While the buildings initially appear devoid of design or thought, on further inspection they are in fact riddled with conditions of “both-and”, making them a playful, subtle building type to respond to, learn from, and hopefully use to generate architectural characteristics with greater levels of resonance to this particular place. Understanding the building culture of the surrounding context gives a more comprehensive interpretation of the local context.



Fig 22.

Fig 22. Collection of photographs from the Tolka Valley Industrial Estate.



## DCC SUBMISSION

### Engaged writing

Dear Planning and Urban Form Strategic Planning Committee, In my opinion, the listing of Strategic Development Regional Areas (SDRAs) has failed to consider an urban condition which exists across all quarters of Dublin, the Urban Industrial Estate, and one which is pertinent in addressing if the council hopes to achieve their Core Strategies outlined in Chapter 2, were the term “Just Transition” is noted as a supportive principle for ensuring ‘no members of society are left behind when transitioning to a zero Carbon Society’. While the industrial estate is relevant to a number of your chapters, I am opting today to solely address Chapter 14, Land Use Zoning, with my response primarily relating to 14.6 Transitional Zoning Areas.

In 2019, 35 industrial estates in Dublin were identified as being viable areas for rezoning which could provide mixed-use housing developments and retain local employment: fundamentally being “new key growth areas of the city”. The number was further narrowed down to 4, with the Dublin Industrial Estate, West of Glasnevin Cemetery and South of the Tolka Valley Park being one of the key estates for Dublin’s future growth. Of the 17 SDRAs included in your plan, none of them are a dedicated industrial estate area and only a singular SDRA, Naas Road, includes part of an industrial estate condition. Chapter 13.1, states that an SDRA is characterised as an area capable of “delivering significant quantities of homes and employment for the city”. Combined with the following planning applications for large-scale, residential development within the industrial estate listed under reference numbers 4865/22 and 3166/22, could your committee please clarify why the Dublin Industrial Estate has not qualified as an SDRA?

In my opinion, it is a fault of the City Council to not recognise the valuable impact that could be made by emphasising an area, such as the Dublin Industrial Estate and establishing the estate’s developmental status within your governance. Furthermore, the neglect of the North West of your district’s boundary, with Finglas being the sole representative, shows an apparent lack of overall consideration for the city’s wide redevelopment.

The Dublin Industrial Estate does not qualify for a Local Environmental Improvement Plan (LEIP), or for a Local Area Plan (LAP) despite meeting several of the characteristics outlined as being the basis of prioritisation of such plans: “economic, physical and social renewal, development potential and ability to assist in the delivery of the core strategy, need for regeneration within an area based on the Pobal Index of Deprivation”. The only mention of the Dublin Industrial Estate appears in Chapter 2 under 2.7.1 where a Feasibility Study and Local Statutory Plan are suggested to be carried out over the remaining 5 years despite the Council proposing the Estate in 2019. The surrounding environs of Cabra, Finglas and Glasnevin are duly marked as LEIPS. Currently, the areas of Finglas and Cabra exist as forms of residential monocultures, if the industrial estate was included as an SDRA, a LEIP, a LAP, or given a status as a Transitional Zone a means of readily and perhaps meaningfully connecting these environs could be achieved, thus moving closer to one of your core strategies of resiliently developing Dublin in the age of the climate change.

By making an industrial estate such as the Glasnevin one an SDRA, the point of 14.6 of generating transitional zone areas would be best devised and implemented. Again, the Dublin Industrial Estate reiterates its viability as it is an area abutting residential areas, and parklands, characteristics the document refers to as being characteristics of transitional zones.

Figure 15 emphasises the richness of the estate and a character which can be readily translated into a new living environment. One which would meet a number of the objectives listed in 5.5.1 relating to the National and Regional Plans. Additionally, Figure 16, while highly speculative, captures the essence of the Dublin industrial and promotes an understanding of celebrating both localised and globalised characteristics, of which the industrial estate has in ample folds. It would be both a missed opportunity and a grave disappointment to the city to see the industrial estate transform into an extension of the Ashtown/Pelletstown area which lacks character, rigour and services in being a viable, liveable area.

It would be my hope that within your biannual reviews of the development plan (as stated in 16.3.1) that the Dublin Industrial Estate will be assessed and reviewed, and the potential of an interrelationship between the Estate to its neighbouring suburbs can be better implemented. The industrial estate should be treated as any other suburban area of the city, with public consultation from the surrounding environs, if it is to one day be for people, people must play a principal role in its reformation.

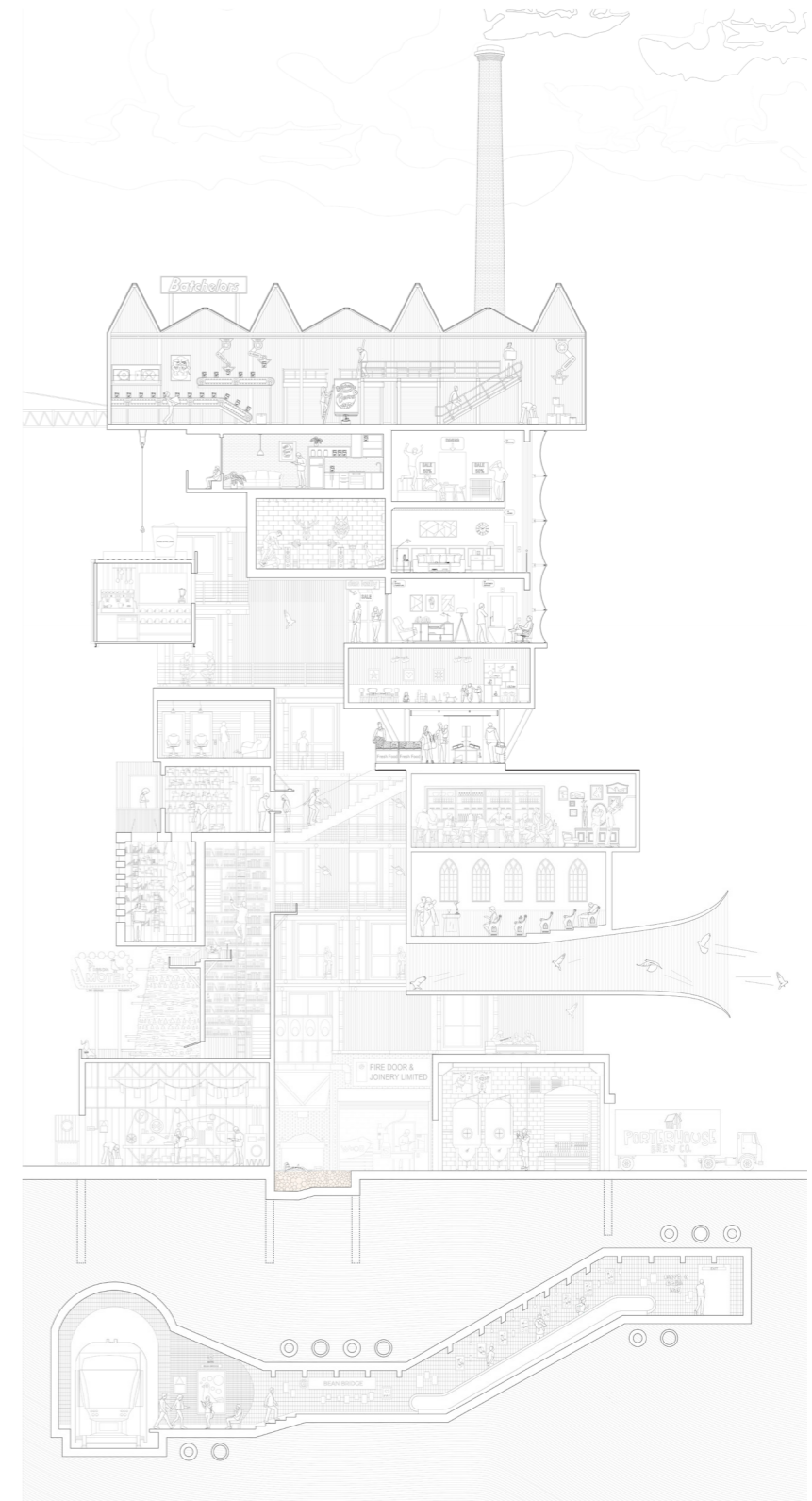


Fig 23. BEANTOWN, a speculative project imagining the future of the industrial estate.

# SITE

## Chosen Site Location

The chosen site is a brownfield site which sits towards the left side of the Tolka Valley Industrial Estate. At one point the site marked the edge of the estate, now it marks a singular point. It consists of two 'units' of the estate, numbers 10 and 11 respectively. Part of the attraction to the site is that it is one of the few remaining sites that has direct access to the Royal Canal, while also its main access road from giving a direct connection back to the Tolka Valley Park. Being vacant for over 12 years, the site has been sitting idly awaiting activity.

An inappropriate planning application of high rise apartments was dually rejected by the council for this site and forms part of the response against such developments that the chosen brief supports.



Fig. 24. Photo of unit signage, with two units site sits on highlighted.

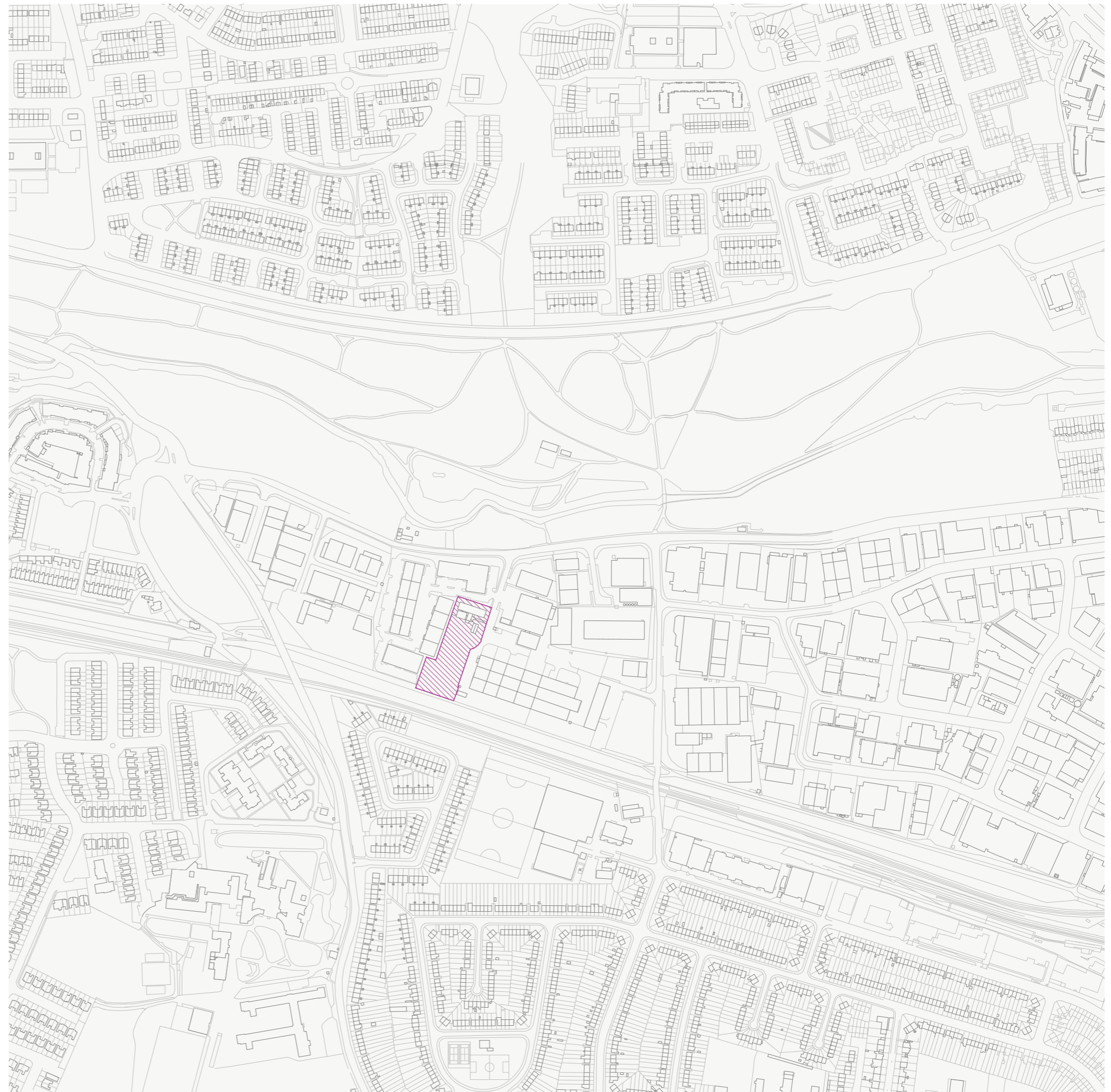


Fig 25. 1:5000 Site Location Plan

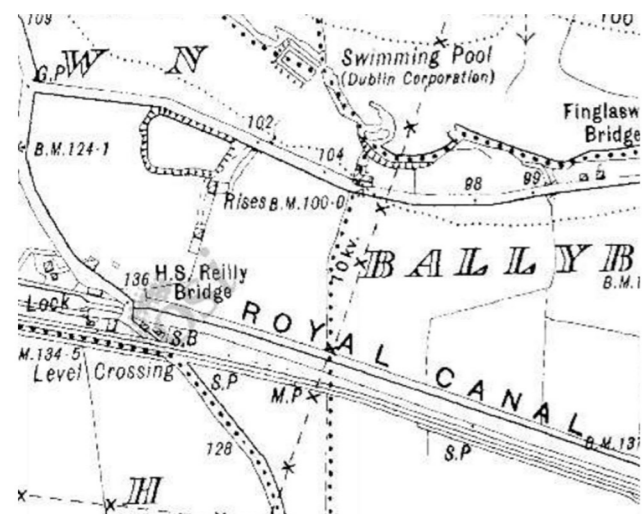


Fig.26. 1829 and 18426 inch Map



Fig.27. Site aerial 1995, Previous pastures of fields still present adjacent to the site.



Fig.28. Site aerial 1999. Factory building added towards Canal edge.



Fig.29. Site aerial 2013. Factory removed from site.



Fig.30. Site aerial 2022.

Aerials of Site through the 1990s- today.

## “CLUBS! MORE CLUBS!”

### Worker’s Club Origins

Reflection 3

*“Comrades, set up clubs! Let these clubs be the tribune for all who seek conscious freedom! Let them be beacons for the masses, seeking meaning, but not knowing the way! Clubs! More clubs! And as fast as possible!”*<sup>36</sup>

Originating from Soviet Russia, the worker’s club typology was part of a triad of new buildings geared towards indoctrinating communist ideologies and pedagogies. Paired with housing, and a food hall, the club formed the central point of the triad and was the built replica of ‘life itself’, becoming for some a second home disconnected from work and home life, and ultimately the place where an individual gained a greater awareness of, and, exposure to the collective. Menacingly to some, the club was intended to occupy a worker’s free time entirely to duly shape them for the ‘polketeriat’.

Constructivist architects referred to the clubs (and all other new architectural and urban typologies) as social condensers, a characteristic and condition which is enabled by the mix of programmes, but more so by the possibility of activities that the range of rooms enables. A club would vary in scale depending on the number of people, catering for a range of 500 to 1500 people on average. On a base level, a club would include an assembly hall, foyer, quiet recreation room, library, reading room, resource rooms, occupiable roof, and external terraces. Additionally, a club would need to have a space for personal reflection and quiet rest, which games rooms and classrooms provide, but of larger importance were spaces for collective activities.

Larger clubs would have a dining hall and a gymnasium as well as multiples of the previously listed. The rooms from a constructivist point of view were organised in a way that enabled them to function separately and together, pinpointing adjacencies and partitioning as an architectural tool. Rooms were also required to be more than their namesake, such as the foyer, which may act as a room independently, become an overflow to another room and also be booked as a place to rehearse/meet/play.

There are 3 main aims of a Russian Workers Club:

1. Political education of working masses
2. Serving cultural and lifestyle demands of the workers and the elevation of the cultural level of a worker.
3. ‘Physical health of the proletariat by way of mass exercise and sports’

From that, it’s safe to say the Russian models are primarily fuelled by the necessity of the building operating as propaganda. The club appears as some sort of combination of a public living room, school, and new church that enables a complete system of things to take place. i.e. a performance could be prepared and consumed in one venue.

The Soviet Russian Painter, Alexander Deyneka, produced a range of illustrations which were assistive in understanding the qualitative factors of a worker’s club, as well as giving an insight into the type of propaganda that may have decorated the interiors. The deconstruction of art itself as an elitist form is an evident underlying aspect of these illustrations, in which normal people are depicted epically going about their day-to-day. Simultaneously

elevated to the status of a high art yet conversely removing the aspects that make art inaccessible; nuances of design are stripped to flat surfaces, ombre colours replaced with bright, factory-made colours and furthermore the locations of the illustrations either in a magazine or a poster- No frame, no rope, and no entry fee, just there for you to see.

36. ‘Rabochie Klubi’ [Workers’ Clubs], *Izvestiya*, No.10 (9th May, 1917); quoted in, *Iz istorii Sovetskoy Architekturi 1917–1925. Documentii Materiali* [From the History of Soviet Architecture 1917–1925. Documents and Materials], K. Afanas’ev, V. Khazanova, eds (Moscow, 1963), p.X.



Fig.31. Alexander Deyneka, illustration for *Bezbozhnikustanka* [‘Atheist and the machine’], No.5 (Moscow, 1926).



Fig.32. Alexander Deyneka, "We Must Become Specialists, Master's of our Craft", 1930.

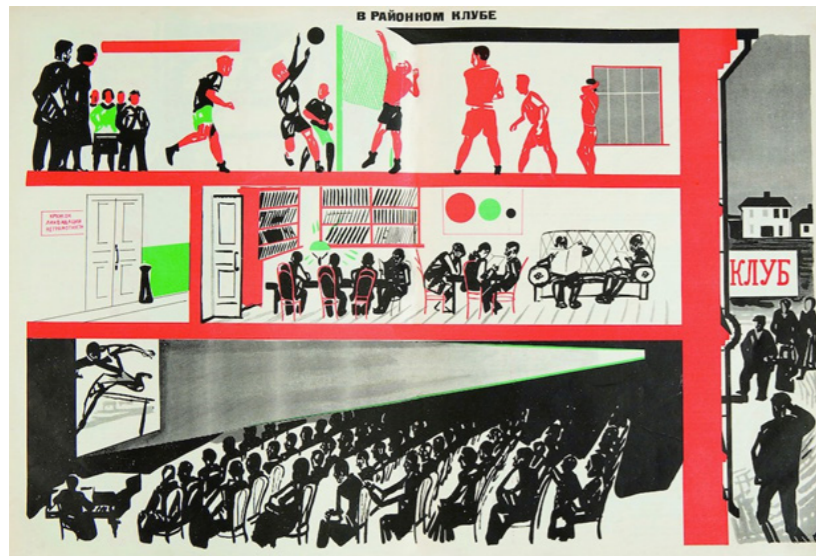


Fig.33. Alexander Deyneka, "At the Local Club", 1927.



Fig.34. Alexander Deyneka, "We will transform Moscow into a Model Socialist City", 1929.

Supposedly, the workers club placed a large emphasis on the public assembly component compared to the European Model of the People's House found often in France and Italy. (Maison du Peuple, Casa del Pueblo and Casa Del Popolo, respectively). However, Victor Horta's Maison du Peuple, Flores y Prats Sala Becket, (a remodelled social club - "Pau i Justícia") and Terragni's Casa del Fascio disprove that quite readily. These three show the natural importance of the assembly aspect, there is just less of an outward expression of the assembly in the form of the building, which perhaps the Russian models are too fond of. People's houses present themselves as being an alternative means of socialising and relaxing to a public house, but their function extended far beyond their sociability means. The provision of pragmatic services such as office space for workers' organisations was also a central component of the typology. Thus, they become a point of reference for 'popular life both symbolically and functionally'.

The extract to the right describes an immense spectacle at the La Paix Maison du Peuple in Roubaix. The description in many ways is the extreme height one could hope for in a modern understanding of a worker's club. The description is useful in thinking about the occupation of the building and what the spaces may allow for. Furthermore, the description is useful in placing a Maison du Peuple into a visual history and combining other artists' work together to think of how the material quality of the workers club would influence the atmosphere. The work of impressionists such as, in which the everyday spectacle of people's lives is captured is evoked from the above description. The above is more aligned to the work of Manet and Lowry in which specific, everyday spectacles of people's lives are depicted. Lowry also ventures into this in his scenes of football games and train stations. Perhaps in a duller sense, the project is more aligned with the work of Hammershøi where mute interiors are often depicted and less so of a spectacle. I don't think that is a negative quality by any means to be aiming for with a building. In fact, a lot of buildings would probably be better if they were a bit more mute.

*The sight of the cooperative, at two o'clock in the afternoon, was unforgettable and indescribable. All of the rooms – and even the courtyard – were packed with a joyous crowd. The goal was to win prizes: whether at Maze Billiards, at 'trou-madame', or the frog race... At eight-thirty, an excellent orchestra composed of 40 musicians went at it for the first dance. People were dancing everywhere, in the courtyard, the smoking den, and the ballroom. Forgetting the miseries of the present, opening their hearts to hope, they let themselves be carried by the waltz, and loosened up their legs to the enticing sounds of the polkas and the square dances. There were two or three thousand dancers; in the midst of the dazzling lights, under the chandeliers and the chains of coloured glass, under the flaming red lanterns, the general impression was superb... Around midnight the ball finished. The trumpet brass band 'La Renaissance' gave a concert while fireworks shot sparkling bouquets into the heavens, from rockets made in the De Bar workshop. And the cherry on top: a seven-meter high balloon was launched into the air, with 'La Paix' emblazoned upon it. Suddenly it was ablaze, and exploded with a deafening roar, sending sparkles in all directions: a true image of the socialist idea, which, elevating itself above all the meanness, will shine throughout the entire world, carrying with it the light and the truth!*<sup>37</sup>

37. Paula Cossart et al., The French 'Maisons Du Peuple' as Politicising Spaces: A Study of the La Paix Workers' Cooperative in Roubaix (1885-1914), p.35.

## “CLUBS! MORE CLUBS!”

### *Worker's Club Origins - Assistive images*

The following are a selection of images of Worker's Club with particular attitudes that had an inherent influence on the thesis project.



Victor Horta, Maison Du Peuple, 1899

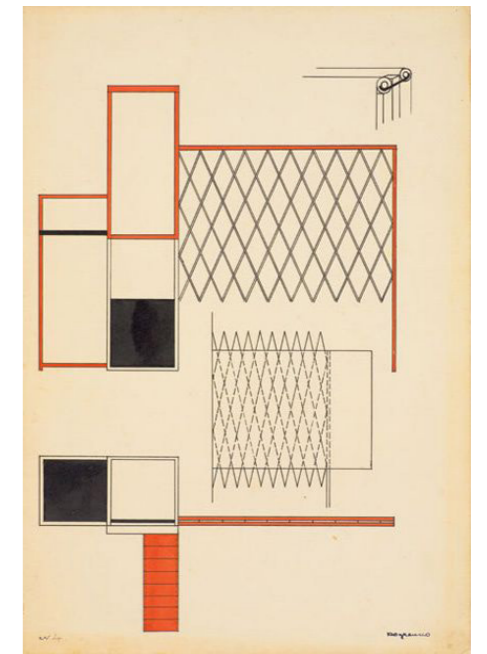


Aalto Sali - Jyväskylä Workers' Club 1929

Secondary entrance, with articulated canopy.

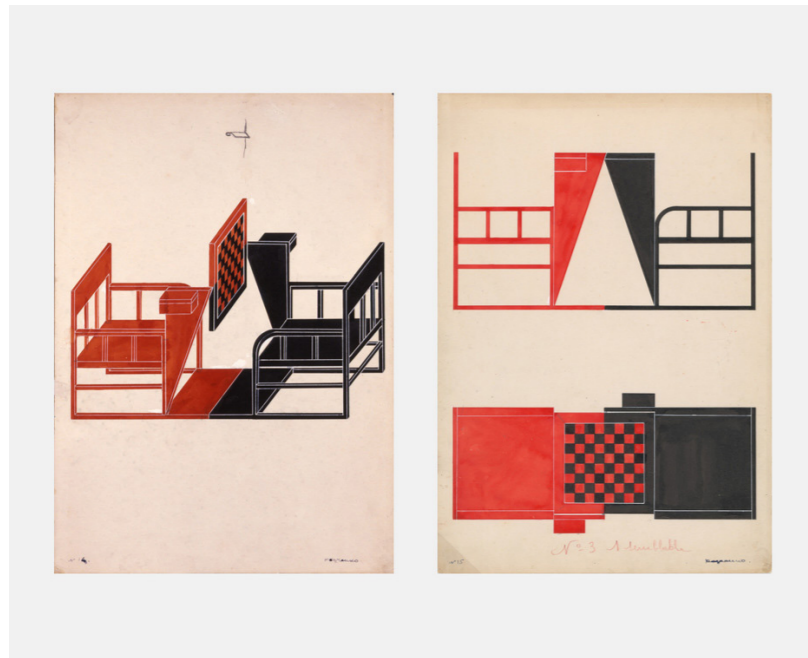


Sign of care to the workers, protective door handle.



Specific furniture for the new worker.

Informative walls and the importance of outdoor space



Appealingly, Zuev as the backdrop to games.



Alexander Rodchenko, Lenin's Workers' Club, Paris Exo 1924



Ilya Golosov's Zuev Worker's Club

*If workers gathered at the zuev in numbers large and small, engaged in activities formal and informal, planned and spontaneous, harboured doubts, found new confidence, talked amongst themselves about work, about food shortages, about the government, the factory, about the cost of heating in their apartments, about anything, argued with each other, laughed, complained, let off steam, met people they didn't know, made friends, played out rivalries, just played, relaxed, watched performances, listened to union leaders and party presentations, participated to some, to any extent in anything, were exposed to ideas they did not know that made them think about themselves, beyond themselves, felt they belonged to their society, to something larger or just simply belonged.*<sup>38</sup>

38. <https://architecturesmodels.com/2020/12/13/ilya-golosov-zuev-workers-club-moscow/>

## WHAT IS A CLUB?

### *A heterotopia*

Reflection 4

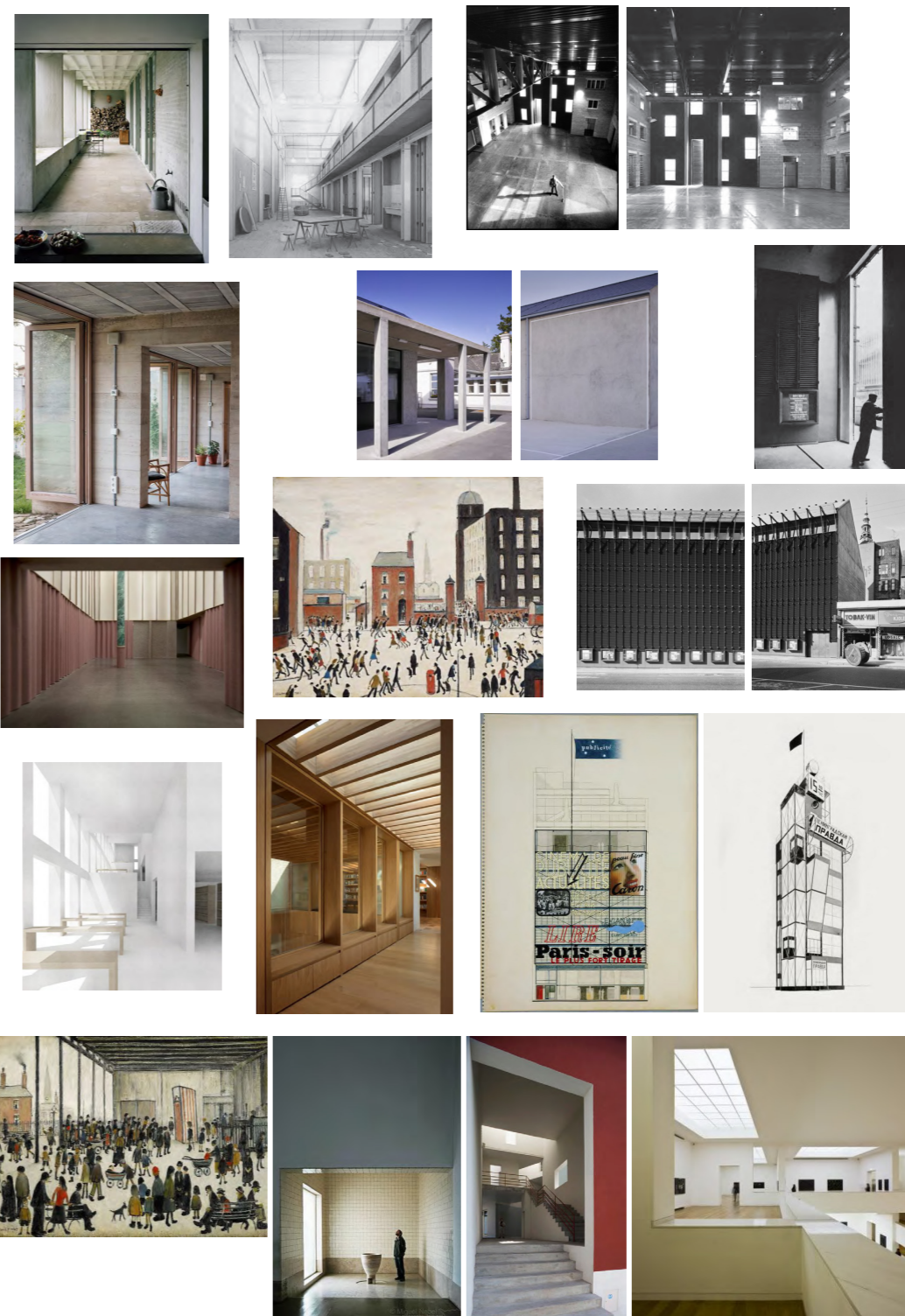
A club typically consists of a group of people who are united by a singular interest or goal. The following words are commonly found before club: Sports, Book, Country, hobby, personal, social, service, secret, night, and social. They're usually a black-and-white thing: You're either in or you're out, and that's that. The exclusive or inclusive depending on your positioning in the club can be seen as either a negative or positive characteristic of a club. It is its inherent focus on an overarching singular aim that sustains a club's existence.

A club has a sense of familiarity for its members, there's an associated comfort in its presence, be that a physical spatial quality or a feeling the member gains. Clubs aren't necessarily always viewed as positive things. Certain groups utilise a club model to further their beliefs which may be unpopular and associative qualities of racism, sexism, and exclusion as characteristics of the club.

A club is used by both subculture groups and 'mainstream' groups. These can be affected by age, race, and gender as well as one's socio-economic background.

A club is a heterotopia by nature and if not a heteropteran in physical character and agenda, a place in which the mind and body can imagine a heterotopic way of living.

A club by nature is a third space and thus a heterotopia.



Moodboard of references.



## BRIEF

### An Approach

The brief's programme was developed by looking at various versions of the Russian Constructivists model's of the Workers Club as well as versions of the People's House found across other European countries. These were assistive in understanding what a modern workers club may include.

A typical People's house includes the following:

- Library
- Reading room
- Theatre
- Tea rooms
- Bookshop
- Lecture Hall

Depending on the country the club is in and the given people it caters for, a House of the People may also include food provisions for its users such as eggs, milk and flour. The purchasing of these everyday items enables people to spend more time in the House.

A Traditional Russian Worker's Club typically includes the following:

- Foyer (with cloakroom)
- Auditorium
- Quiet recreation rooms
- Library
- Reading room
- 'Kruzhki' Sections or Circles for individual
- Classrooms
- Childrens playroom/ Creche
- Occupiable roof
- Exterior terraces

An initial combined understanding of these programmes and an awareness of what the industrial estate may need suggested the following programme:

- Foyer (with cloakroom)
- Hall
- Studios
- Group Workspaces
- Kitchen

- 'Kruzhki' Sections or Circles for individual
- Classrooms
- Childrens playroom/ Creche
- Occupiable roof
- Exterior terraces

- Repair and mechanical facilities
- Showers and Changing rooms
- Laundry services

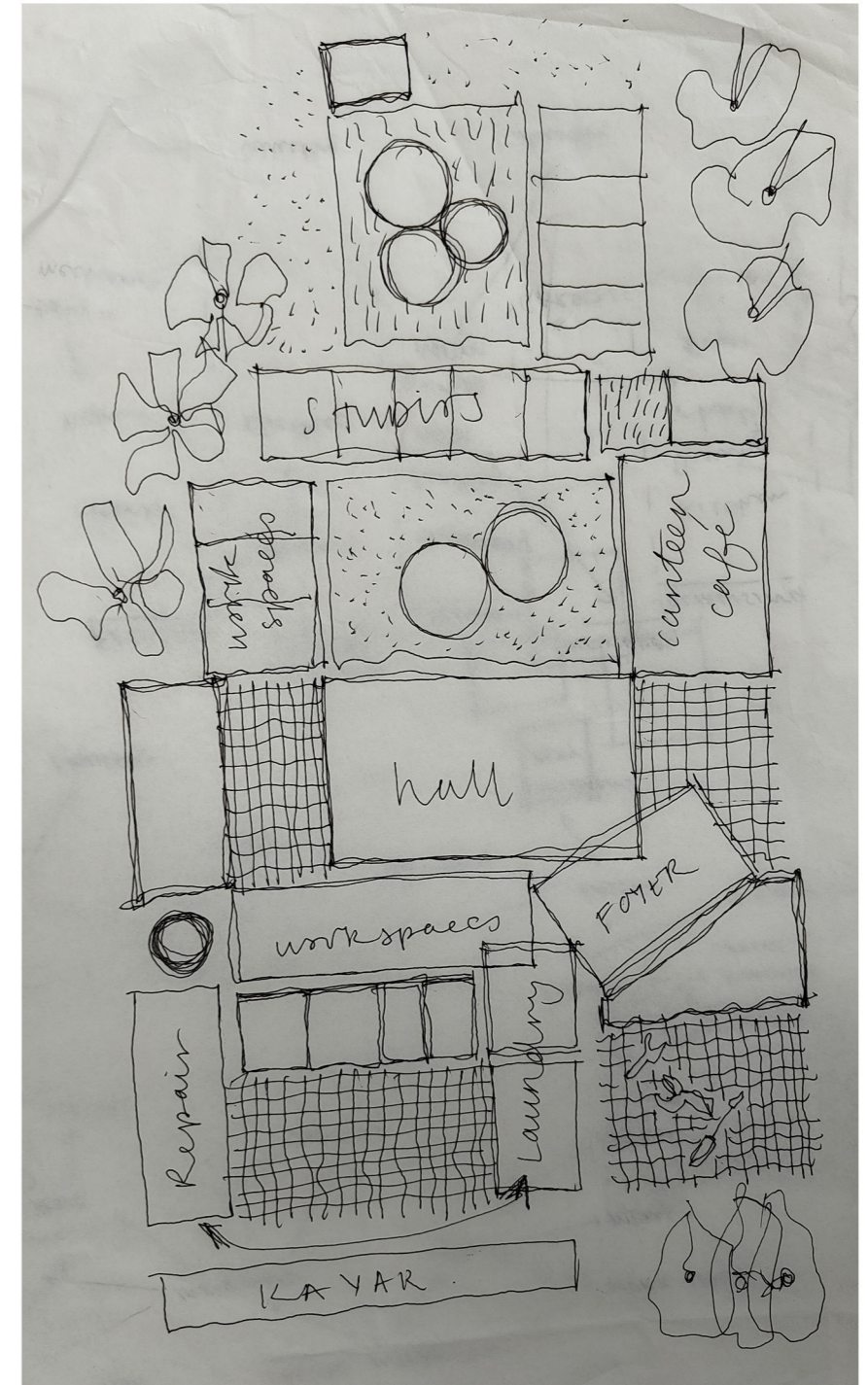


Fig 35. A placeless Worker's Club Brief. Sketches like these were formative for forming the brief.

However, the parameters of the site and its capacity began to take a play on the desired brief and resulted in the brief being reduced and reimagined, ultimately for the betterment of the project overall.

Prior to that, the brief and its sizing were established and revisited as seen to the right.

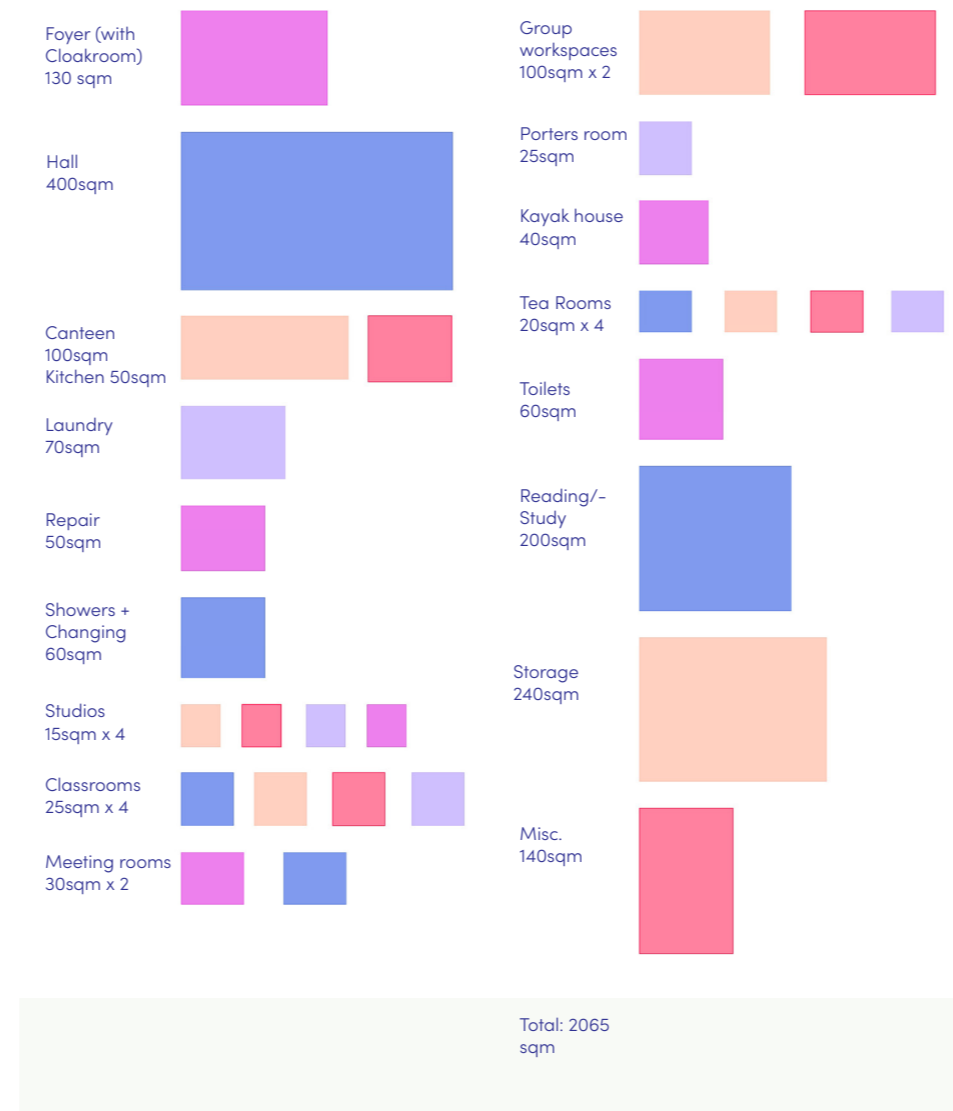


Fig 36. Initial Brief.

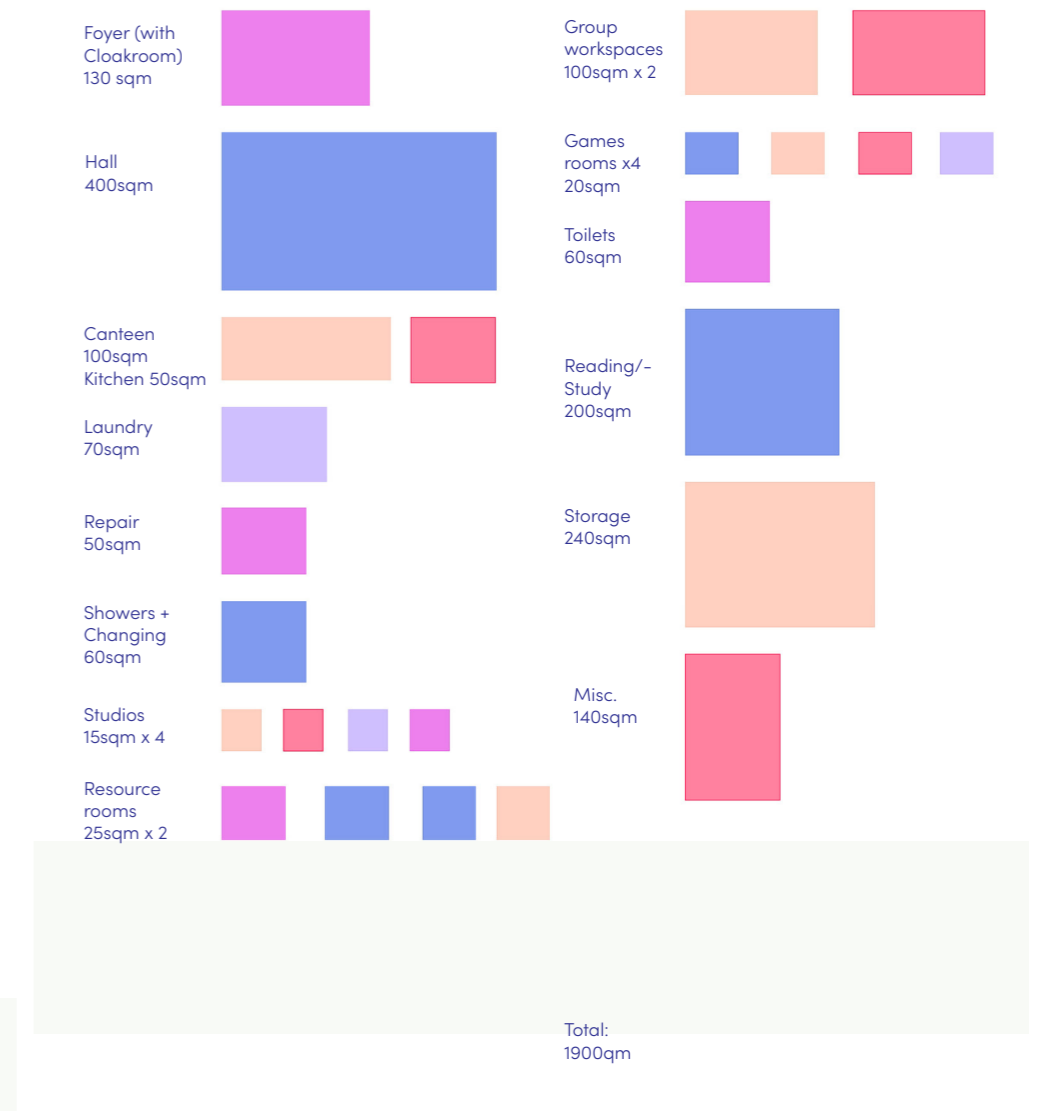
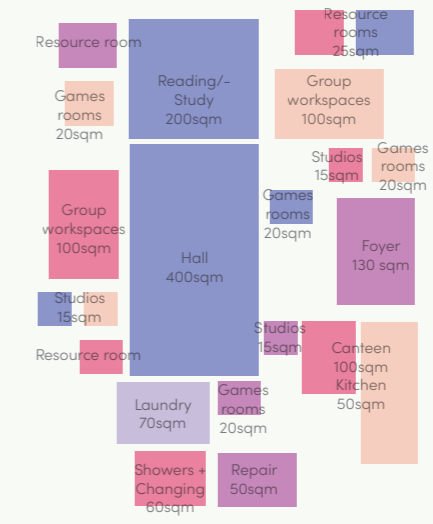
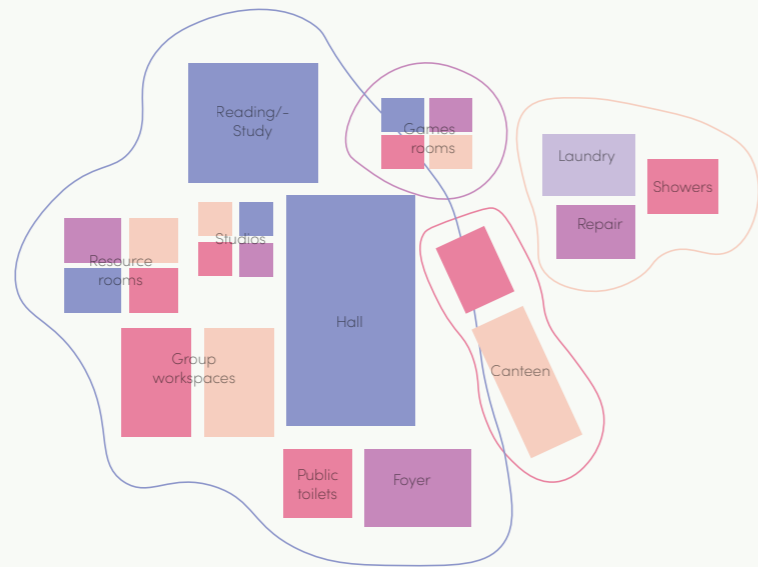
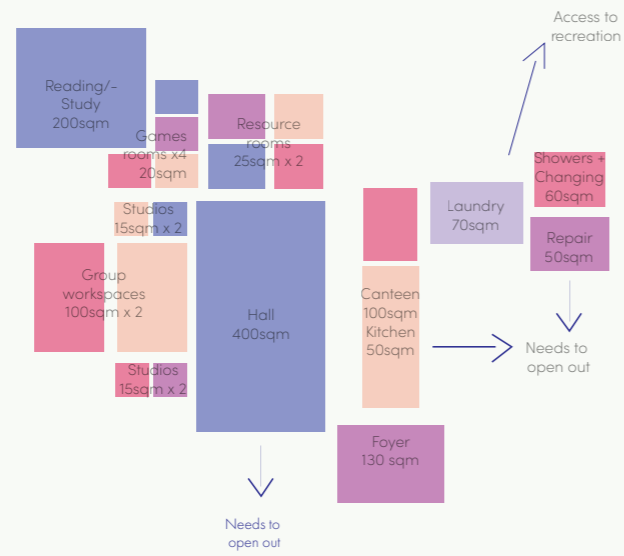
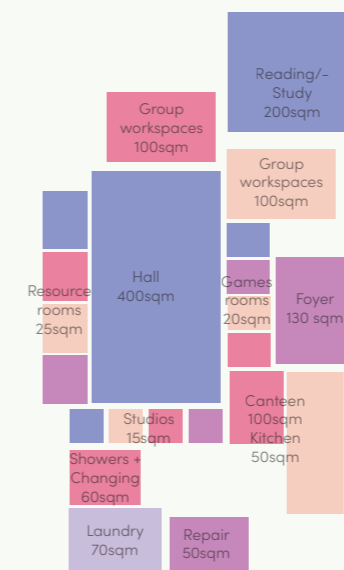


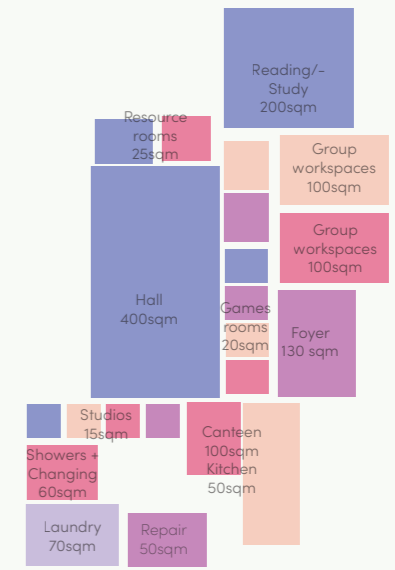
Fig 37. Brief Revised.



Orientating rooms in relation to their required sunlight



Re-arranging the above order



Re-arranging the left order

Fig 38. Examples of diagrams used to consolidate understanding of programme.

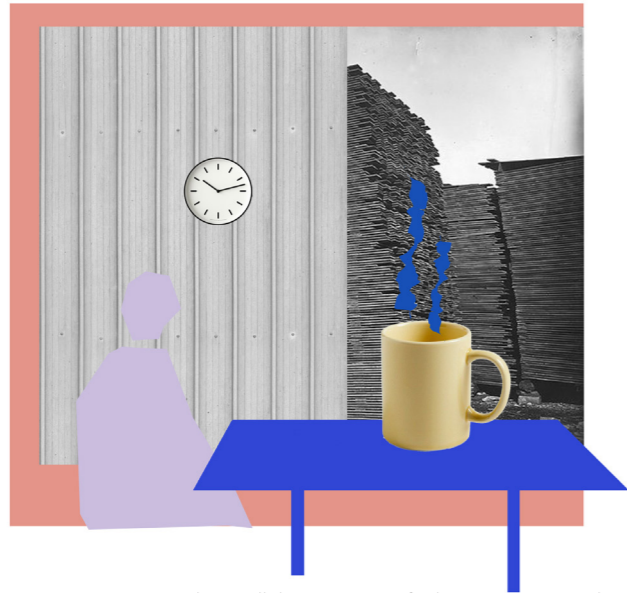


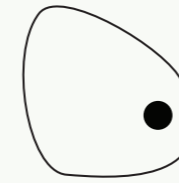
Fig 39. How a person there all the time may feel. At ten past ten the porter of the timber yard has a coffee. The cup seems big, as the day is only beginning.

The previous page insights how an understanding of the brief and the relationships the rooms may have was developed. The diagrams were never seen as finalised things and were constantly changed to reflect the current thinking of the project.

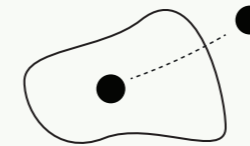
To the right, the understanding that the boxes are also simply shapes that represent something much more is demonstrated. While in many respects the thesis would have supported a rigorous study of the genuine people in the industrial estate, the timeframe of the semester does not allow for that. With that in mind, and an awareness of my minds wandering tendencies, the people of the industrial estate were reduced to blobs that solely focus on the relationship to time within the estate. There exists three types of people within the estate: people who are there all the time; a nine to five working week, people who are there one day and here another day; a maintenance person who is not needed everyday and lastly a person who is there to move onto the next; a delivery driver for instance would be in the estate to move onto somewhere else in Ireland.

The scale and perception of spaces is altered by the person and their individual needs. This exercise pointed out the importance of several rooms, with the canteen trumping the hall in terms of importance. Whilst that is counter to the Worker's club model, it feels fitting to recognise that in a modern society the emphasis on certain spaces and what they cater for inherently shifts. Simultaneously, this exercise helped to weed out unnecessary element of the brief that were no longer relevant.

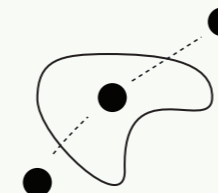
People who are...



...there all the time



...here one day, there another



...here, to move onto the next

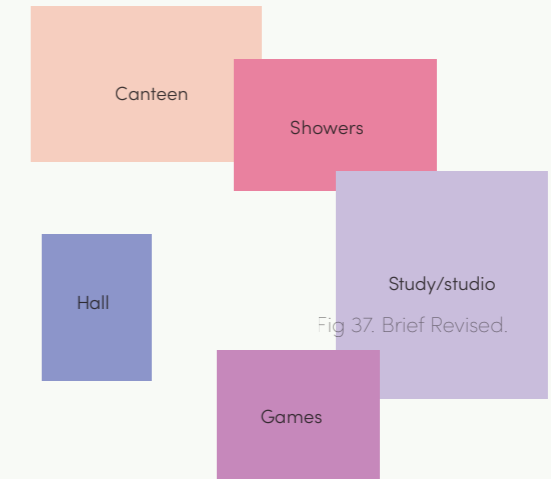
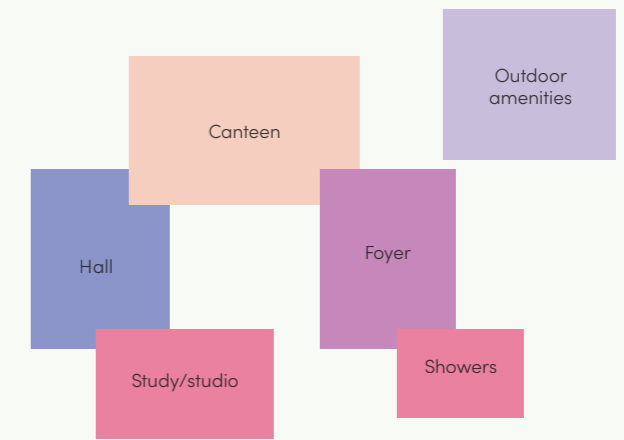


Fig 37. Brief Revised.

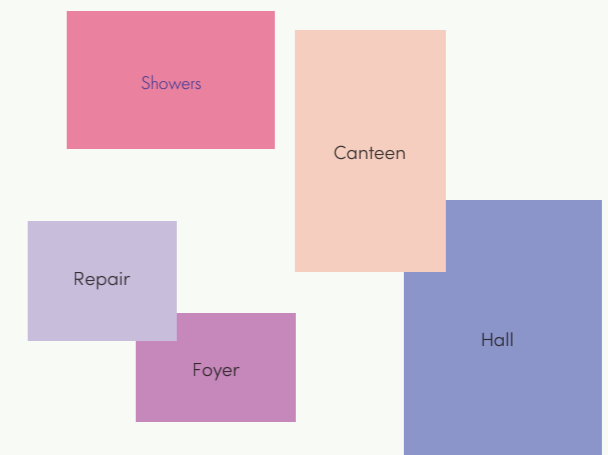


Fig 40. Scale and perception of particular rooms within the club, dependent on the persons time relationship to the Industrial Estate.

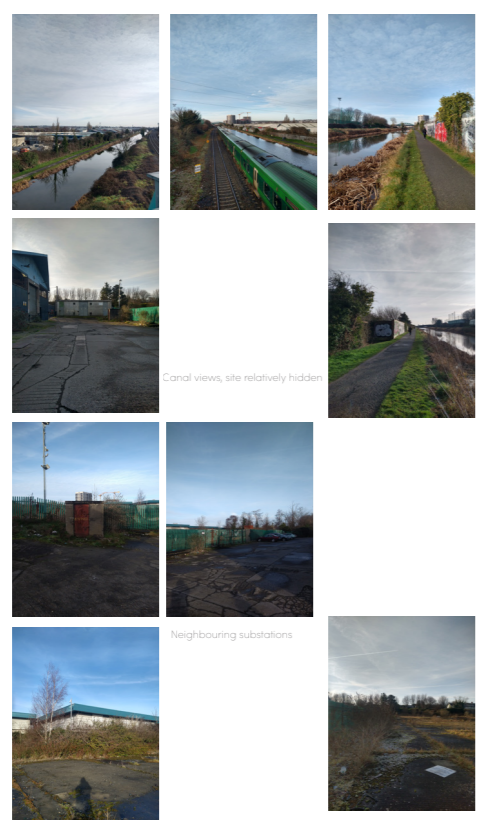


Fig 41 . Collection of Site photos, grouped in their locations displayed in way they were used when designing.



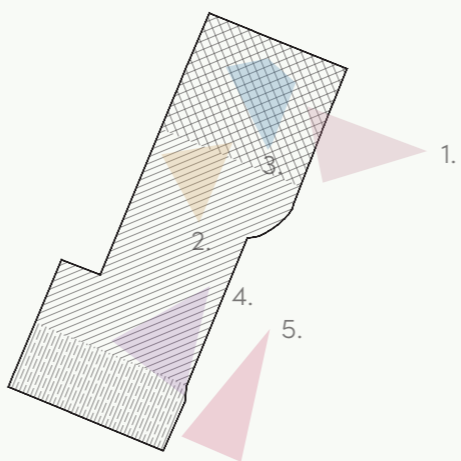
1.



2.



3.



Existing Site photos



4.



5.

Fig. 42. Site Photos as displayed at final review.

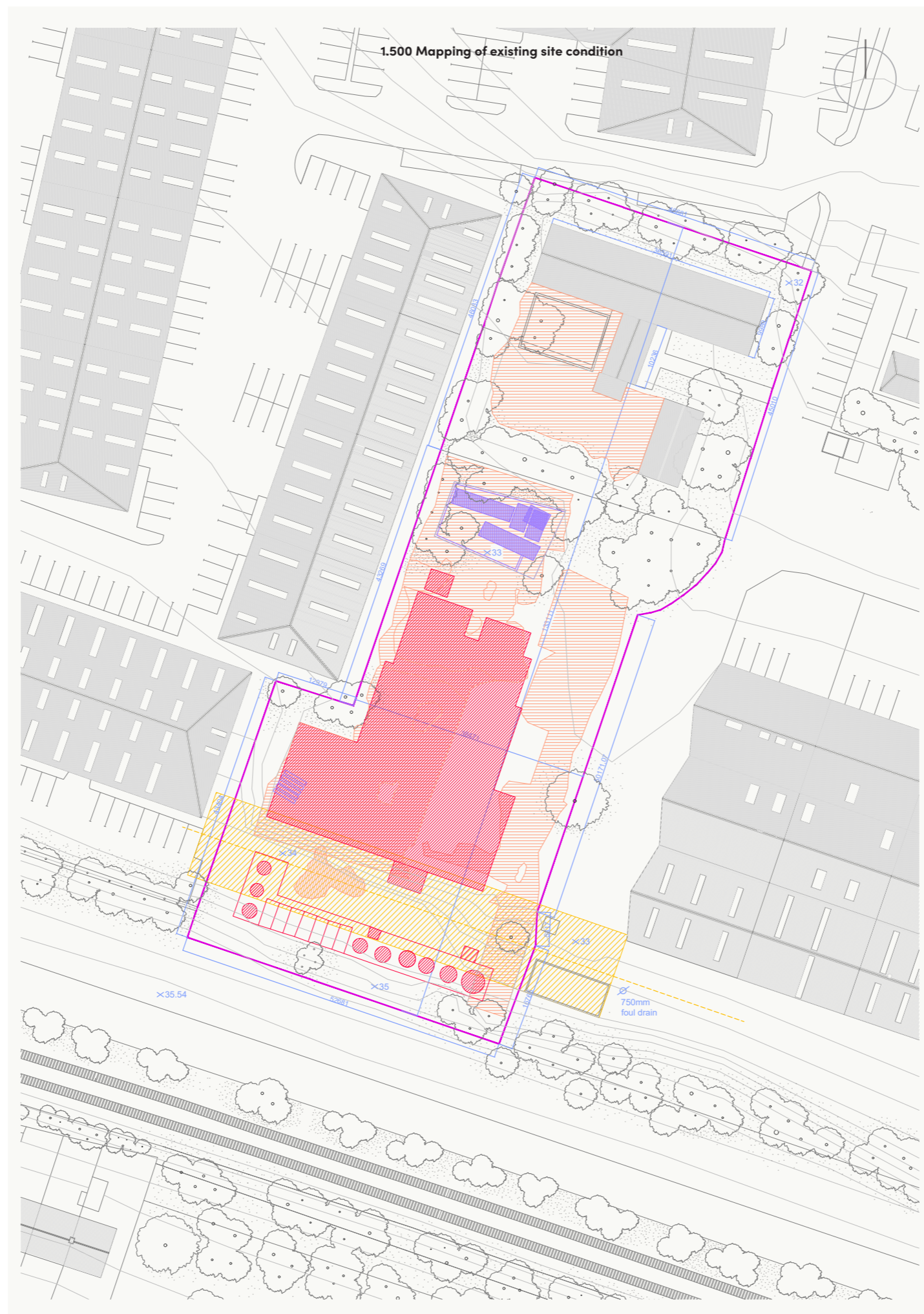


Fig. 43. Existing Site Condition 1.500 at A3.

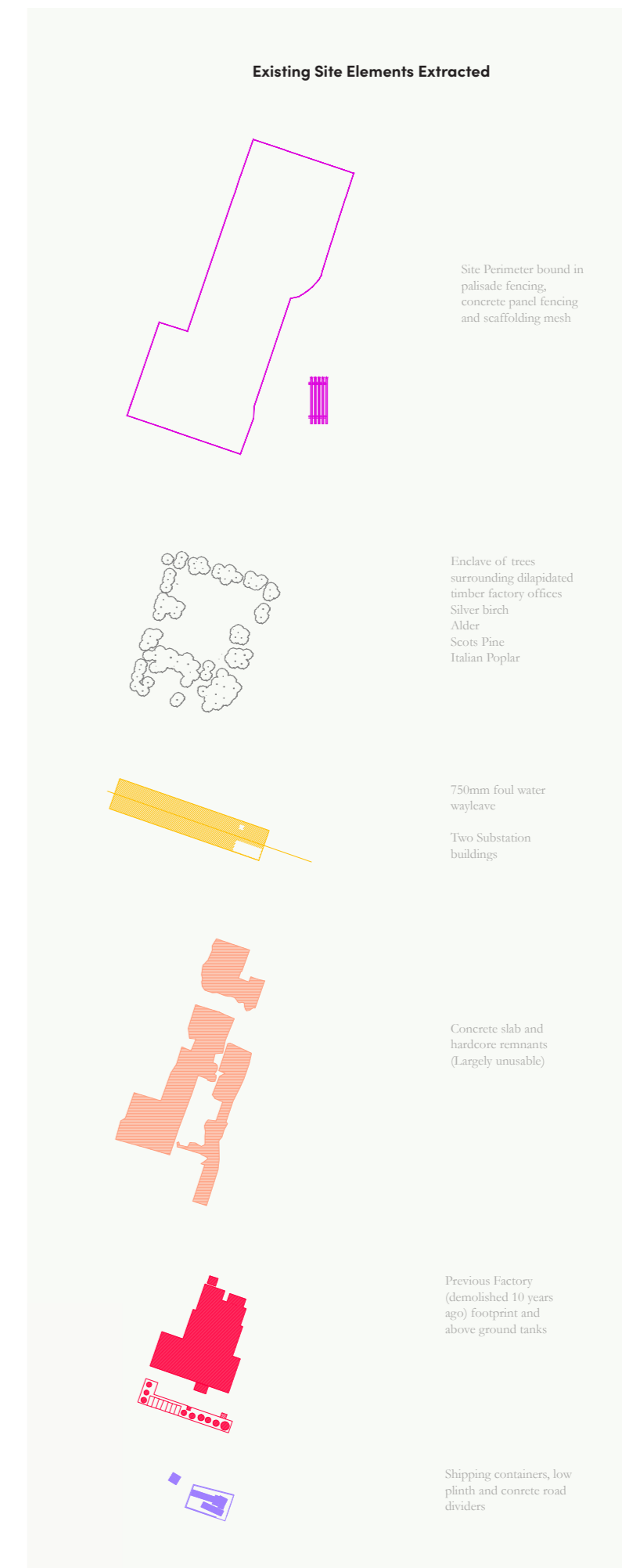


Fig. 44. Existing Site elements extracted.

The site in its current condition appeared daunting as there was no ‘obvious’ or immediate thing to latch onto. This prompted the drawing to the right which is a combination of observations and recordings of elements existing and previously present on the site in the hopes that they prompt the beginnings of a response.

The drawing, and its elements extracted prompted a series of overlays which act as abstractions, accurate observations and speculations. All of these characteristics enabled a considered response to the site to be formed.

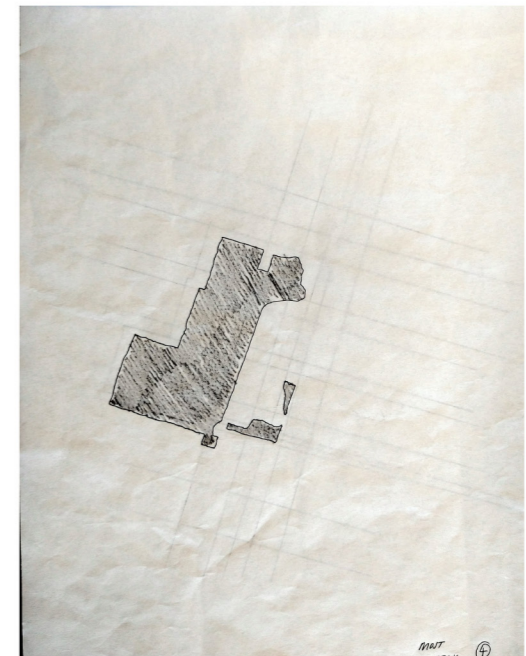
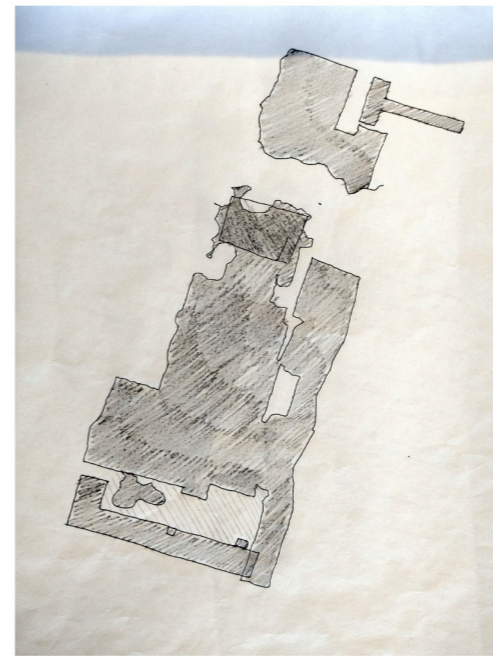
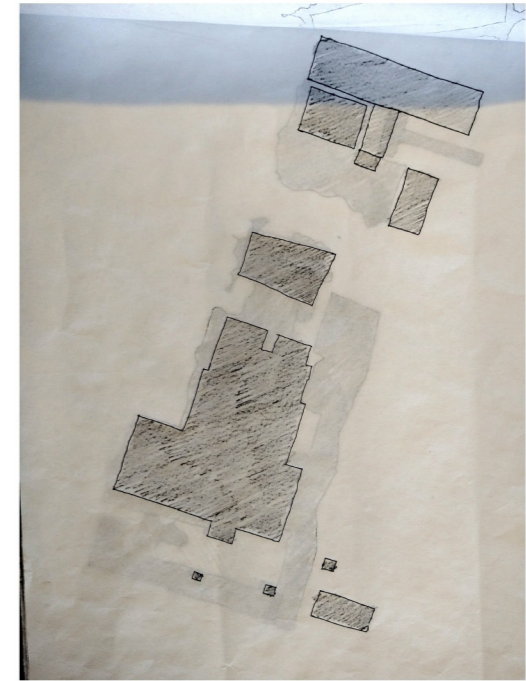
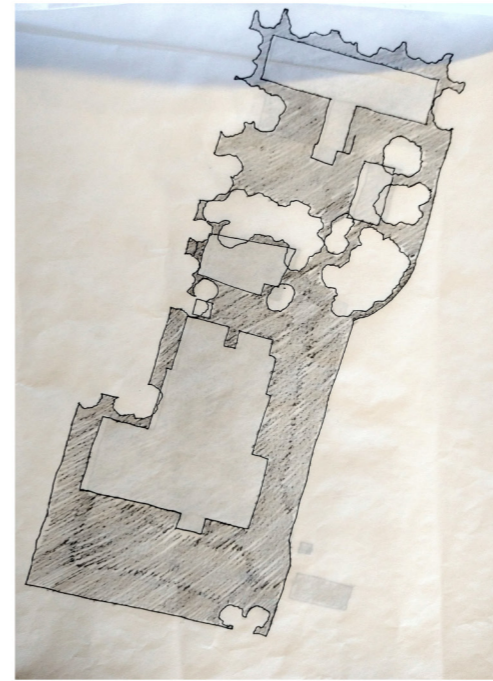
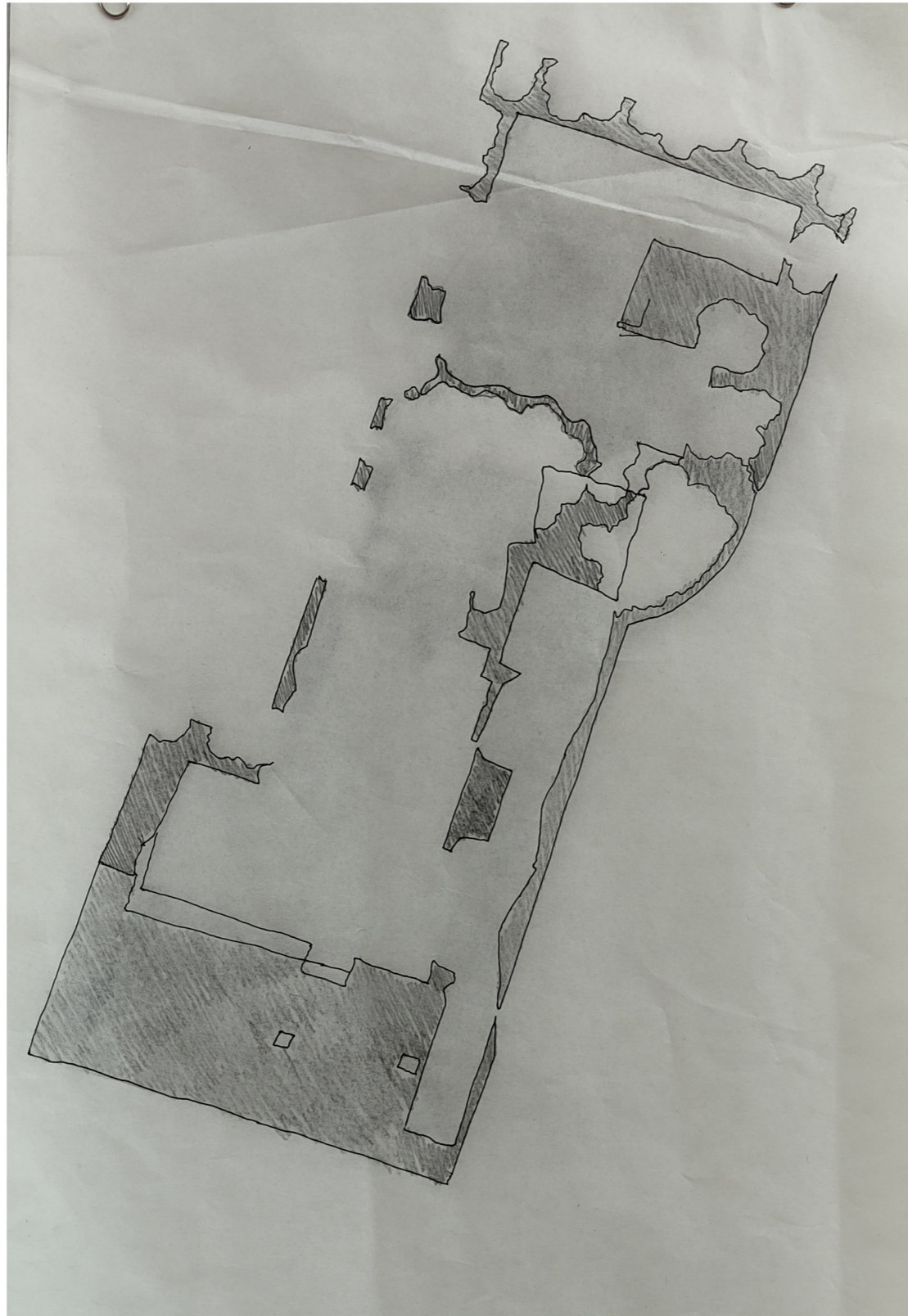


Fig. 45. Exploratory drawings- series of overlays which act as abstractions, accurate observations and speculations.

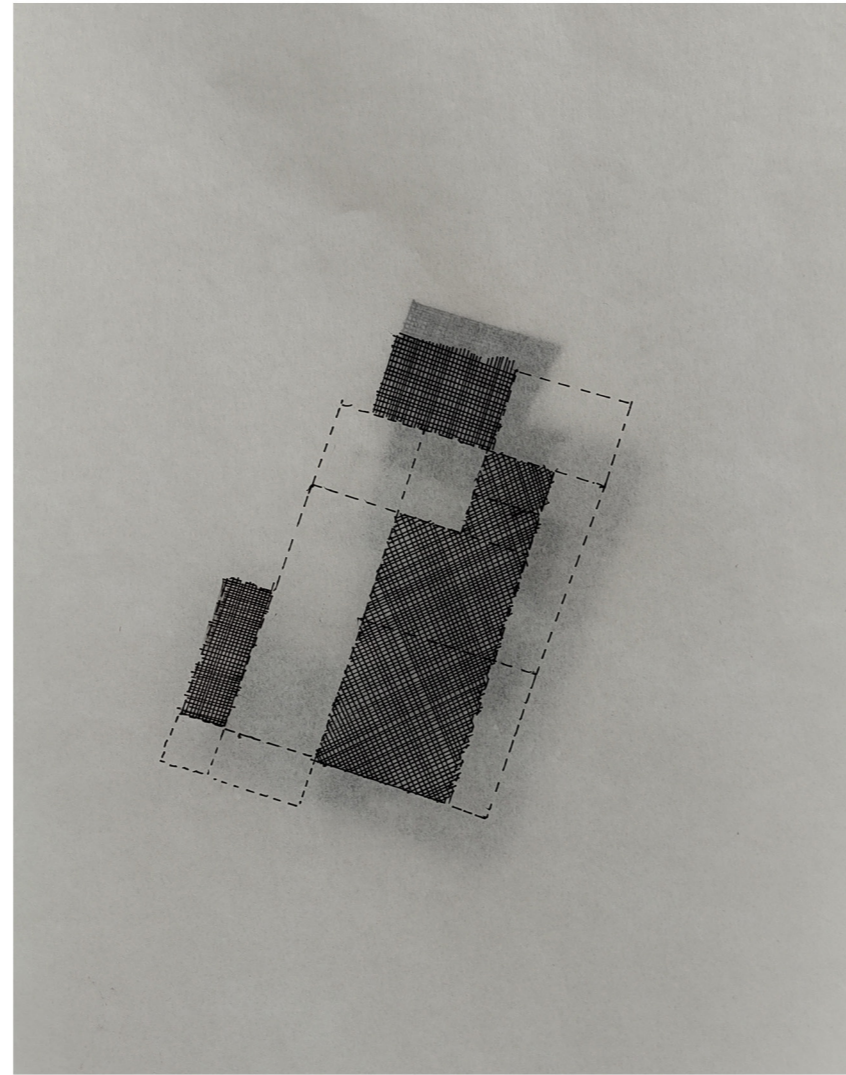
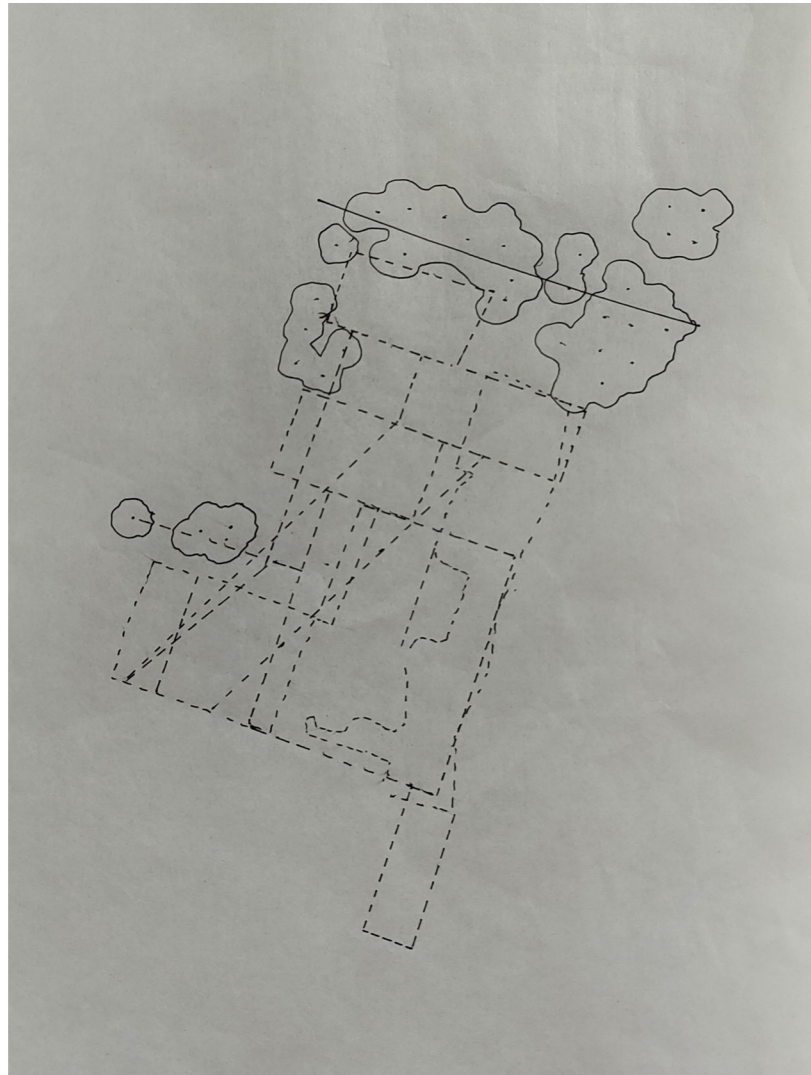
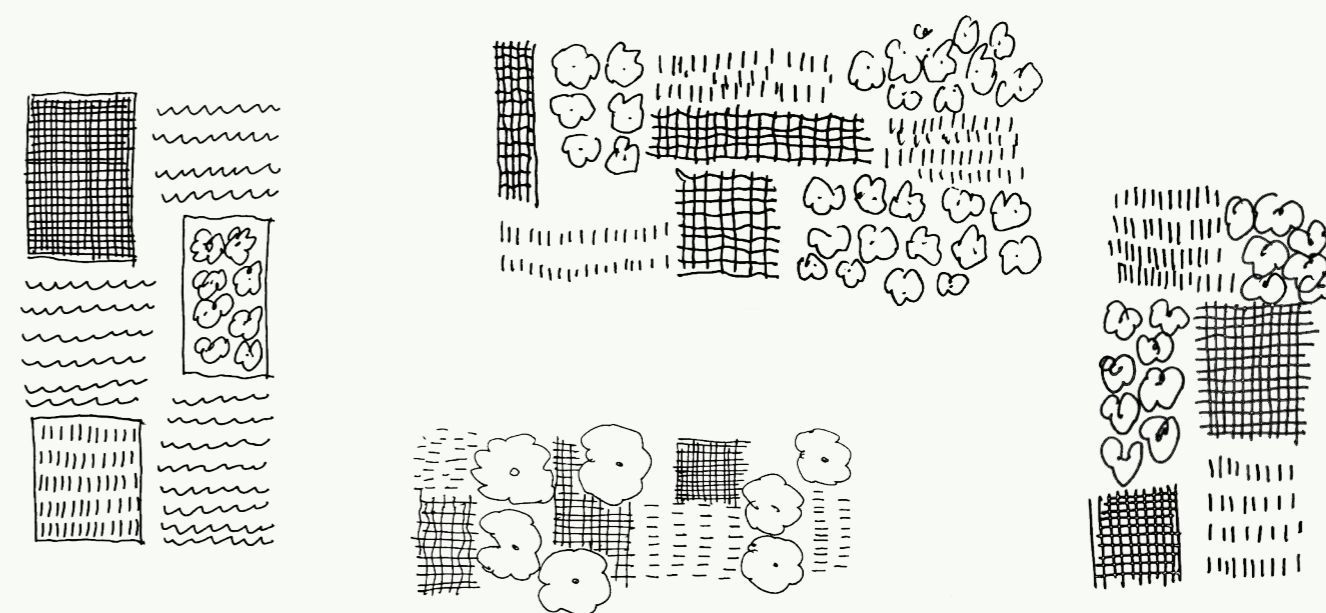
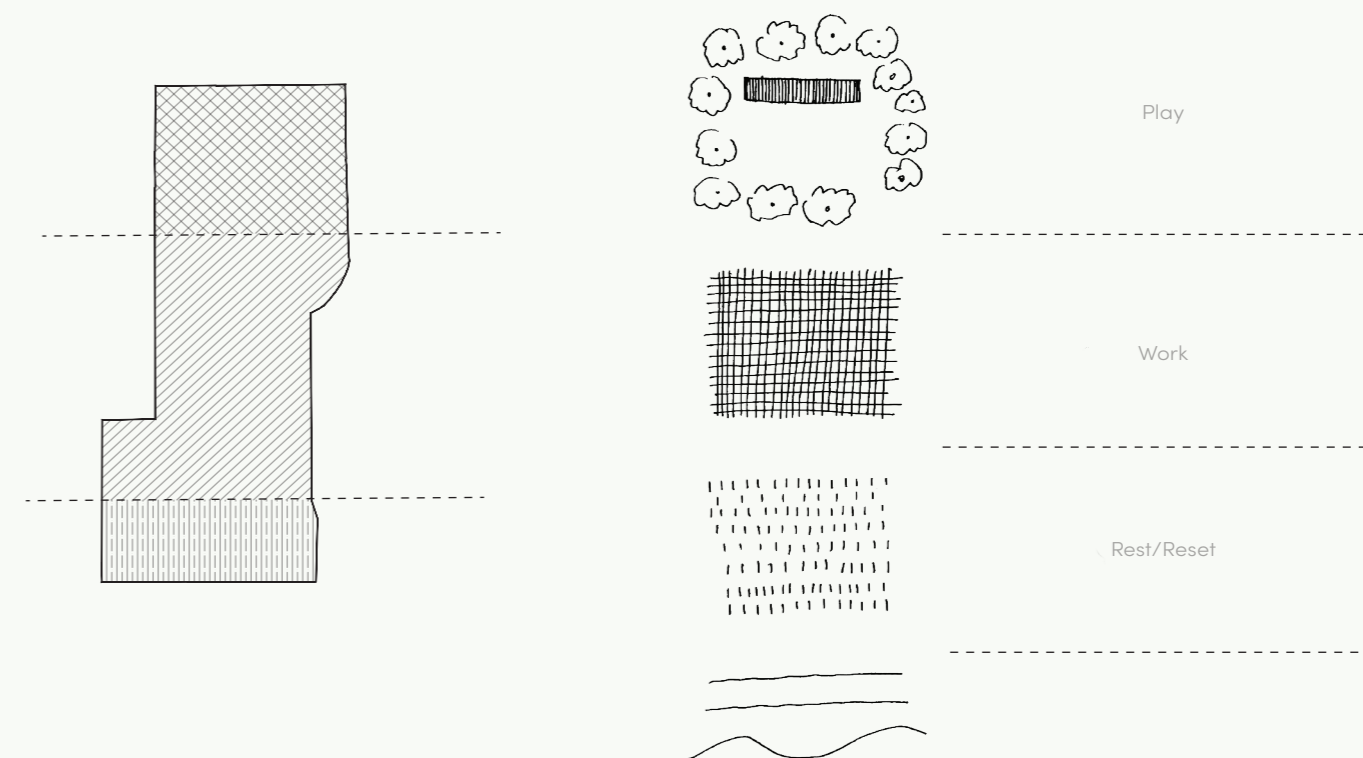


Fig. 46. Exploratory drawings continued.



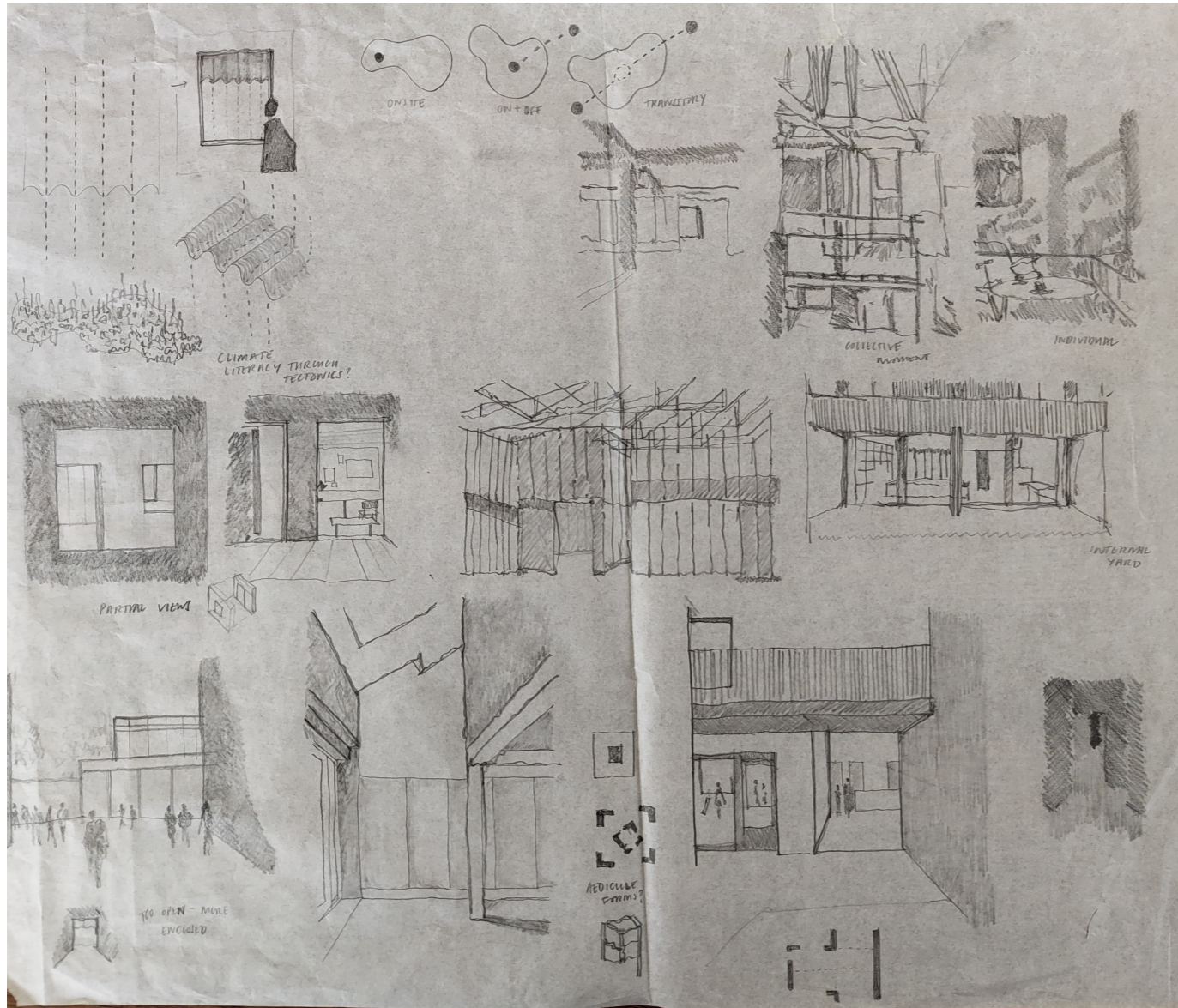
Fig. 47. Exploratory drawings as presented for final review.





The site analysis drawings reiterated the site's insistence on being split into thirds. Each third's associated word reflects its existing character and determined the type of activity the particular third should have. The attitude towards the site begins to reflect the understanding of the brief, and form initial responses to the organisation of the programme. The bottom right are abstractions of plans and sections, attempting to understand how spaces of play/work/rest may interact. This revelation in the sites makeup lead to the introduction of the toilet and sports pavilion to the scheme.

Fig. 48. Approach to Site summarised.



Simultaneously to making drawings of the site, momentary drawings were being produced to help expand on initial sketches which were made in response to the understanding of a workers club that was beginning to form.

The moment axonometric is an expansion of an interest drawn above about partial views. It depicts an outdoor space, entrance and down stepped laundry room. The drawing gave hints towards the interests that would appear later on in the final project.

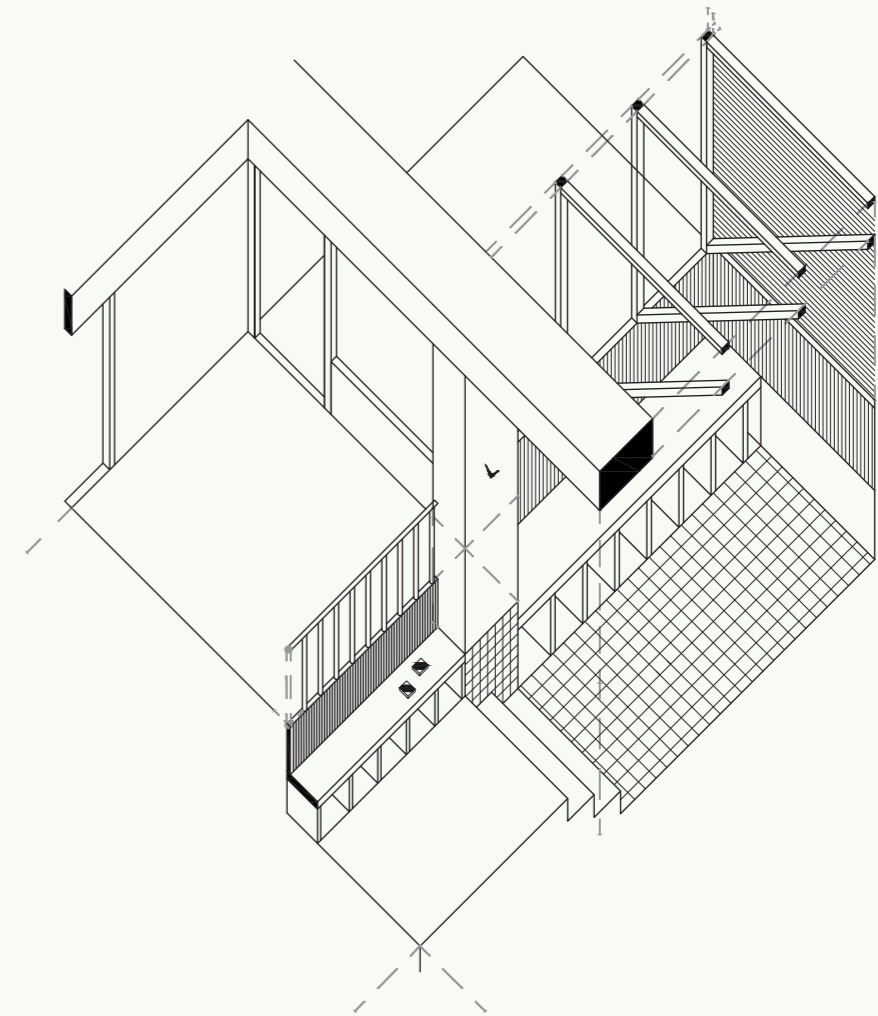


Fig. 49. Momentary Axonometric

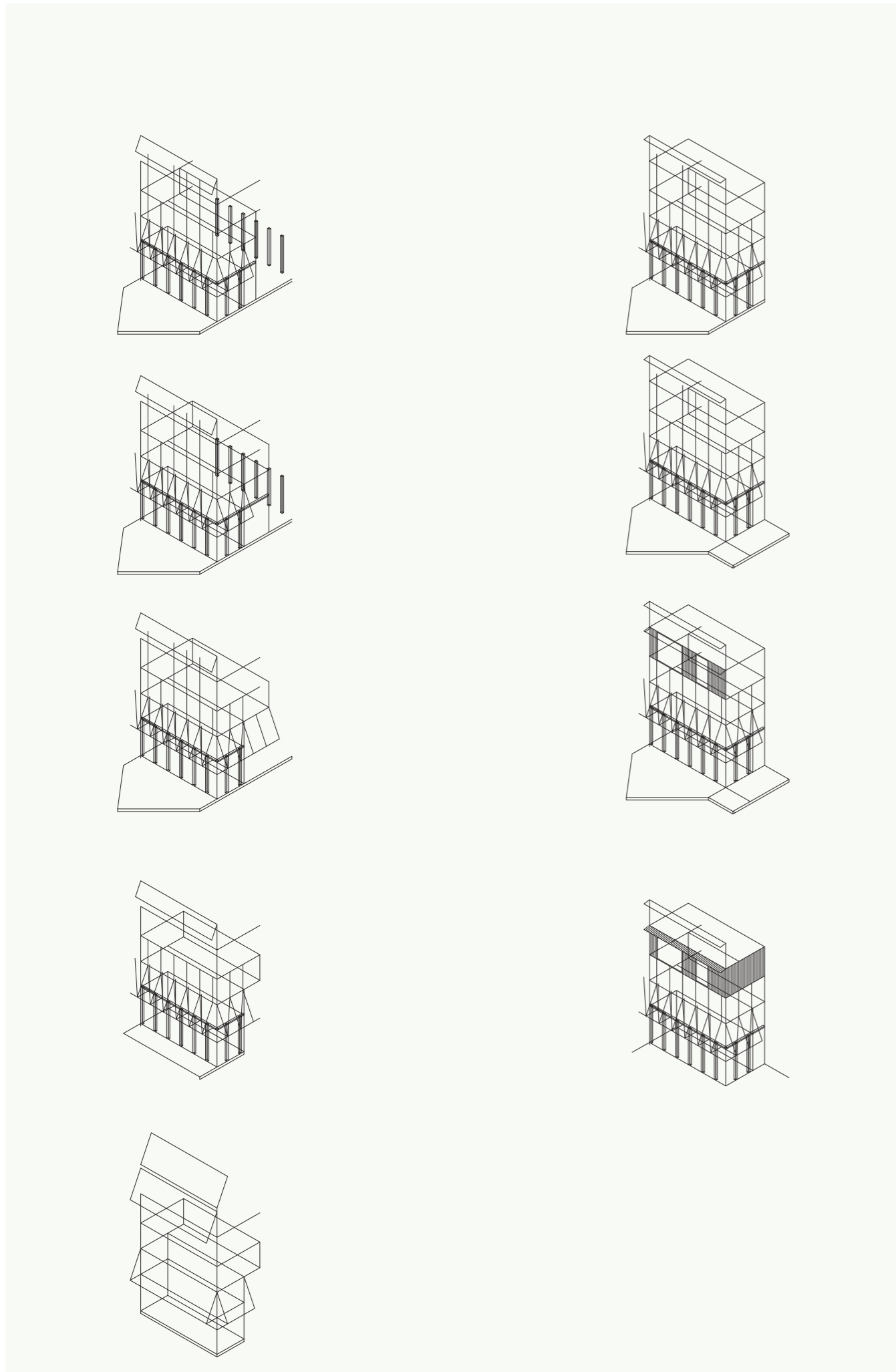


Fig. 50. Momentary Axonometric of an external condition.

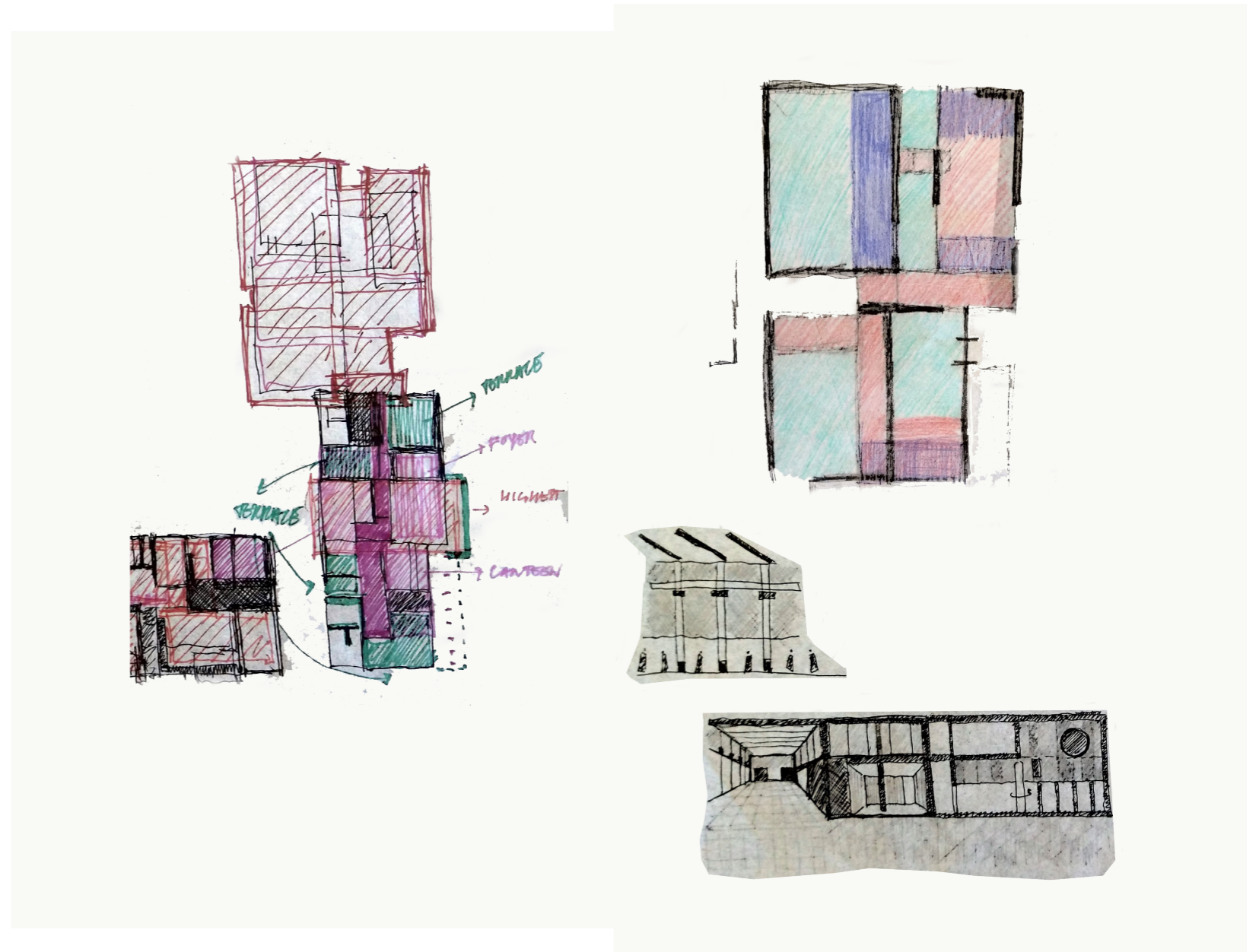


Fig. 51. Sample of sketches drawn with the same intention as the axonometrics.

A similar approach was attempted in understanding the external character of the building and how the canopies may behave at different levels. In the previous drawing I failed to retain the tracings of how the drawing was made. In this instance there was an effort to demonstrate that and the focus became more so on recalling the previous iterations as opposed to the final outcome, which sadly or disappointingly looks like a lego shop front model, i.e. not the desired outcome.

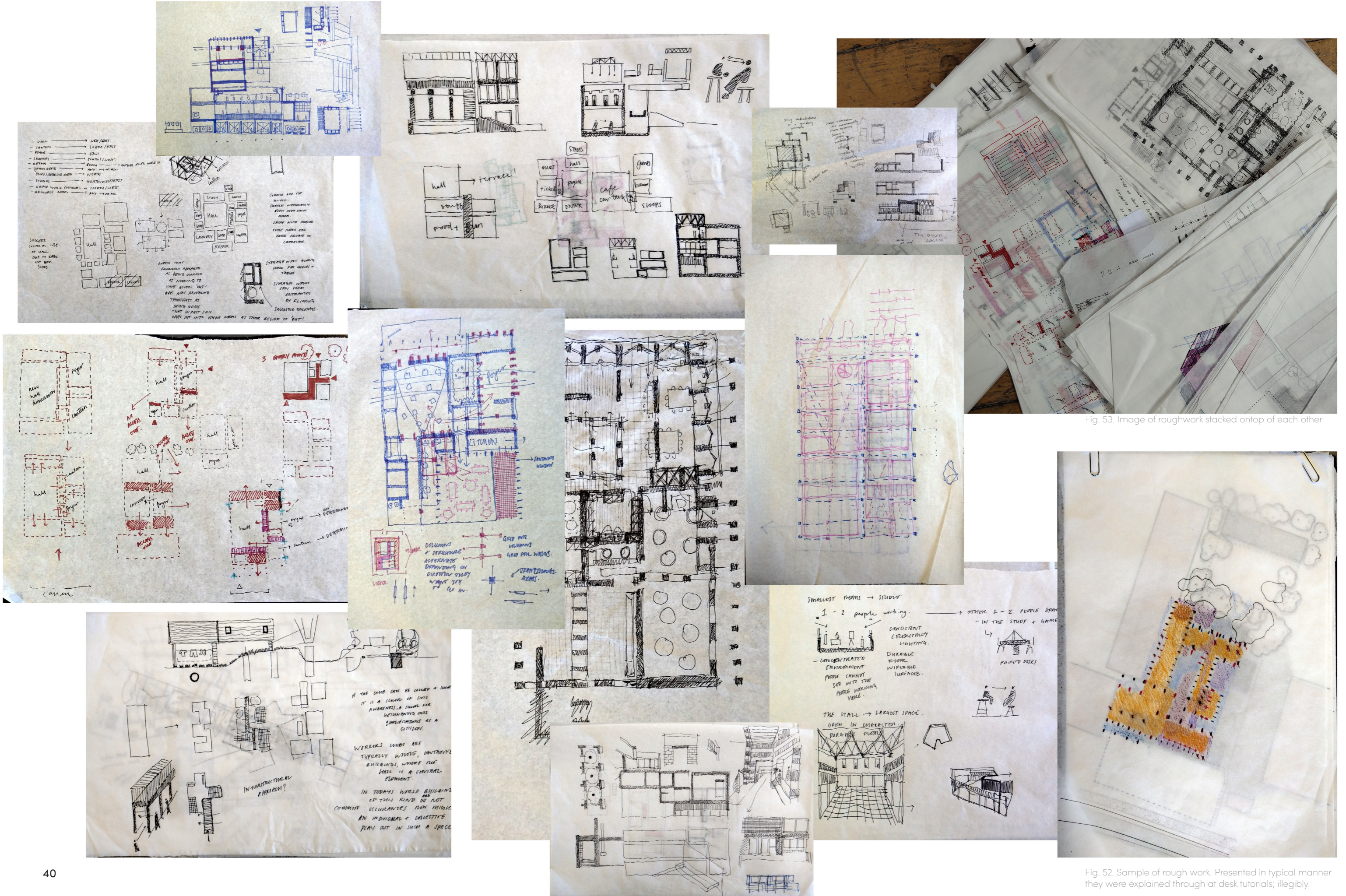


Fig. 53. Image of roughwork stacked ontop of each other.

Fig. 52. Sample of rough work. Presented in typical manner they were explained through at desk tutorials; illegibly.

The project hit a point where the direction and intention felt misaligned. To assist in realigning, Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* was studied. The book's understanding of the inherent patterning in buildings gave great direction to a number of the moves in the scheme and enabled a project-specific pattern sentence to be written which is the following:

*A MOSAIC OF SUBCULTURES sat within an INDUSTRIAL RIBBON with SMALL PUBLIC SQUARES, acting as ACTIVITY NODES, making PUBLIC OUTDOOR ROOMS. These spaces are also forms of COMMON LAND, that allow for CONGREGATION, activities where people meet and quiet corners as well. These are explored through a variation of SITTING SPACES and an awareness of EARSHOT CONDITIONS.*

The notion of patterns was also a helpful metaphor as I recognised I tend to work in an additive, patterning manner, which I think comes across in the type of exploratory sketches and models I make. At this point, I can recall being told in 2nd year to "stop doodling, and get on with it" which clearly didn't go through.

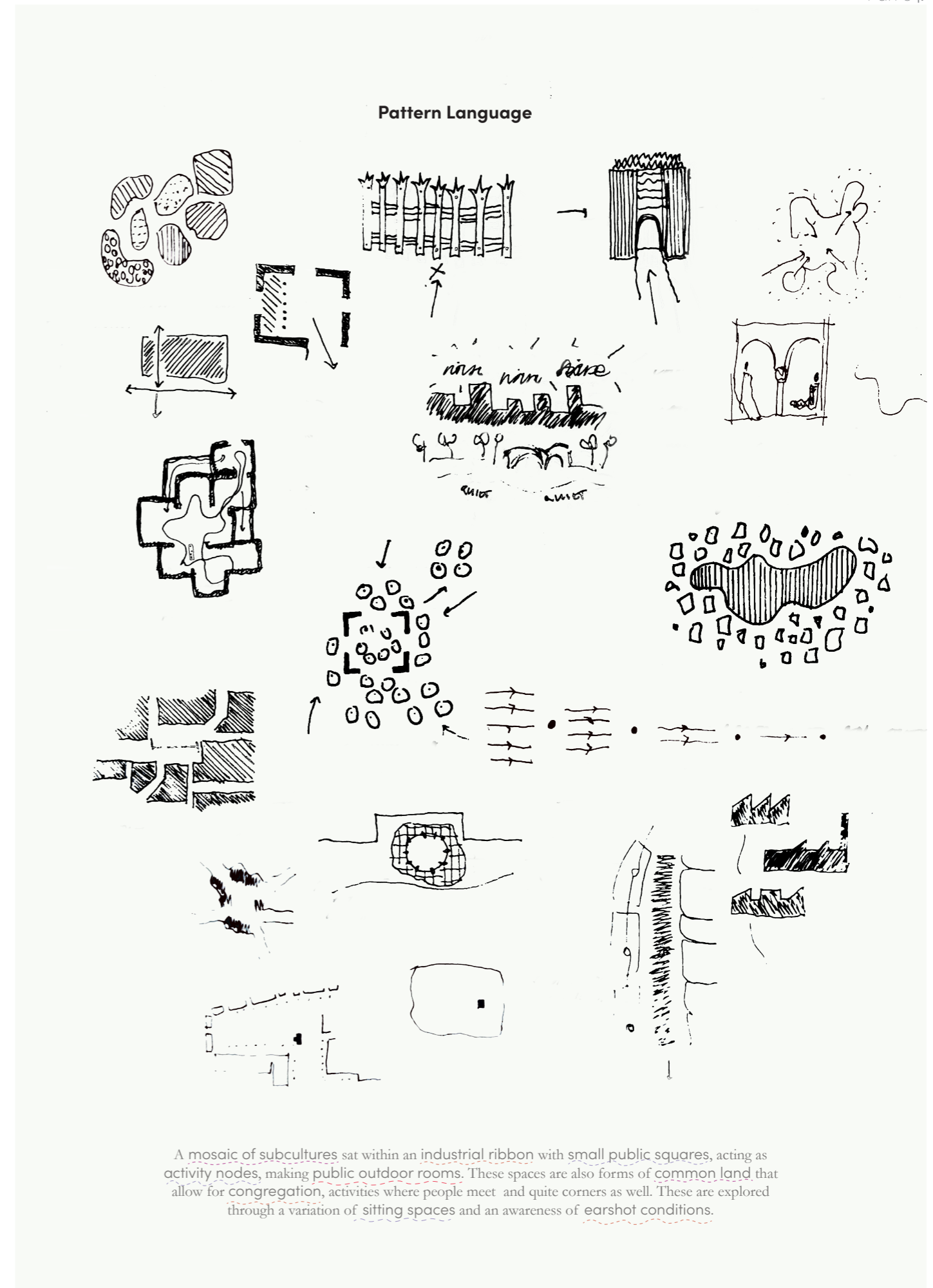
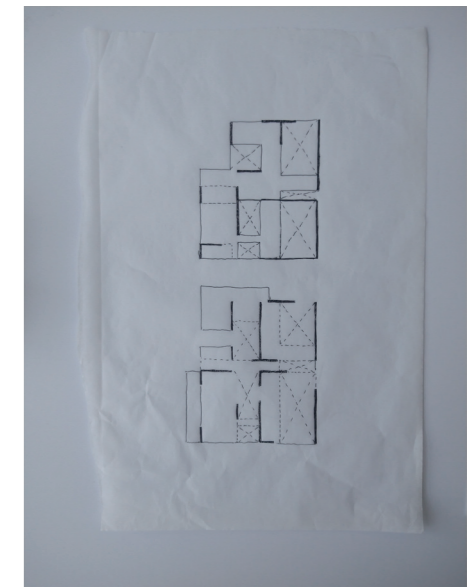
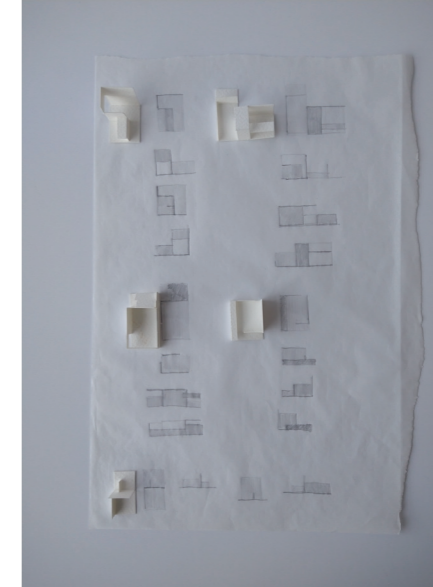
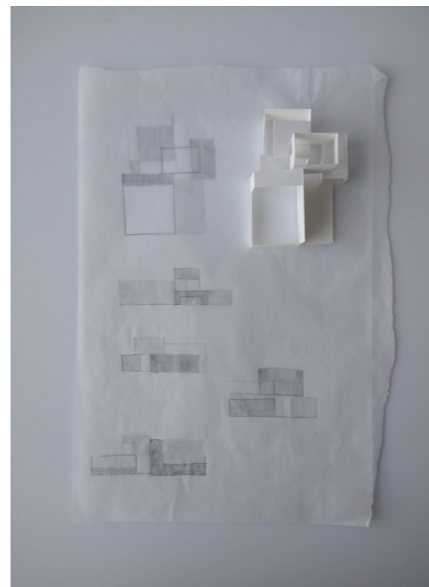
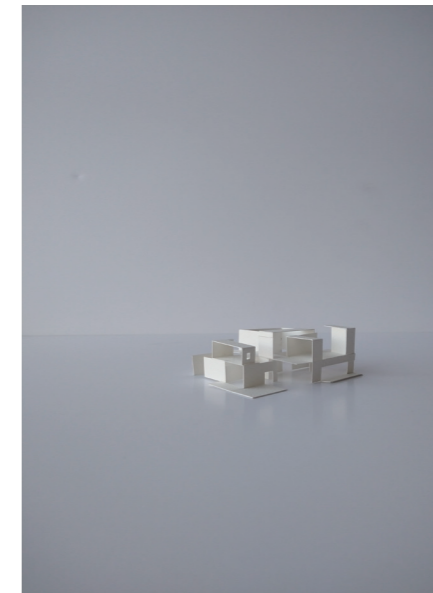
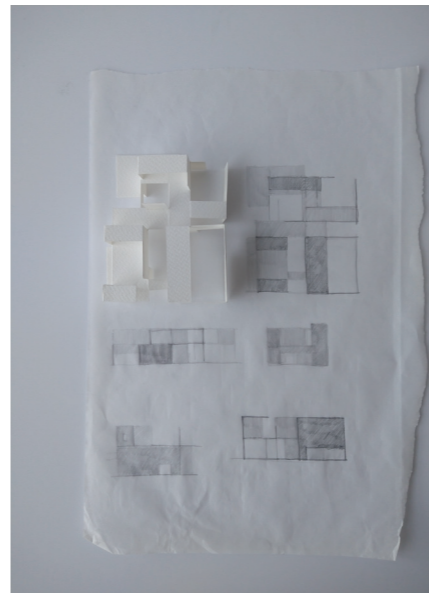
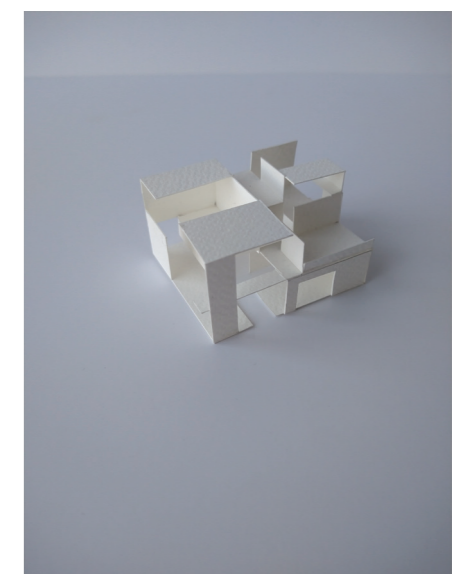
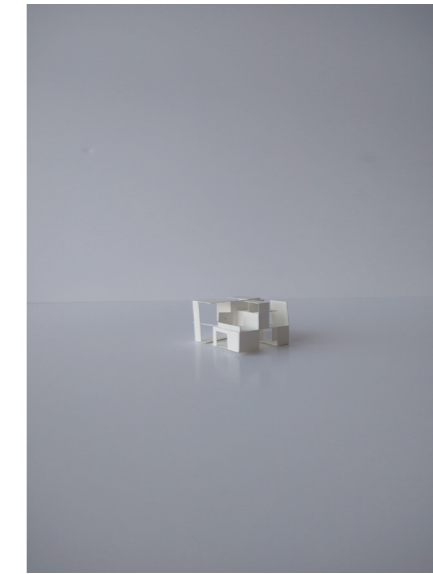
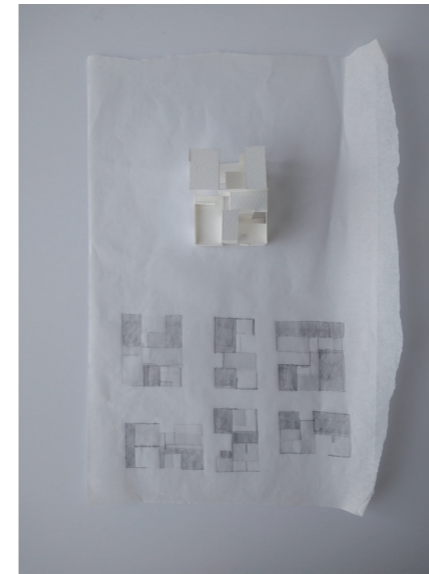
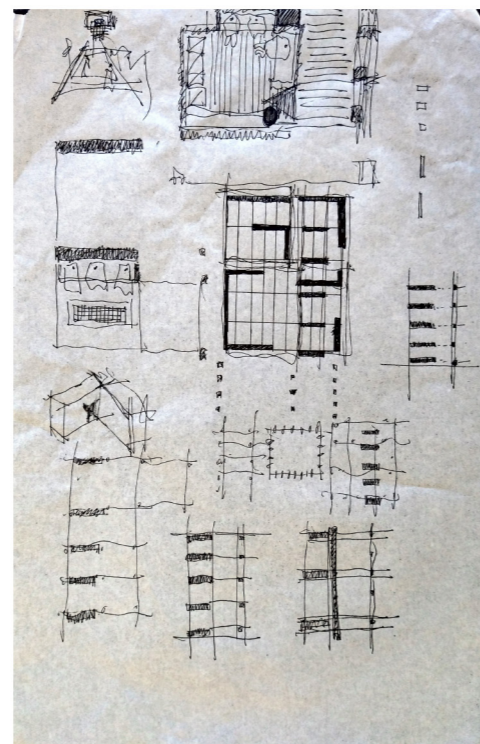
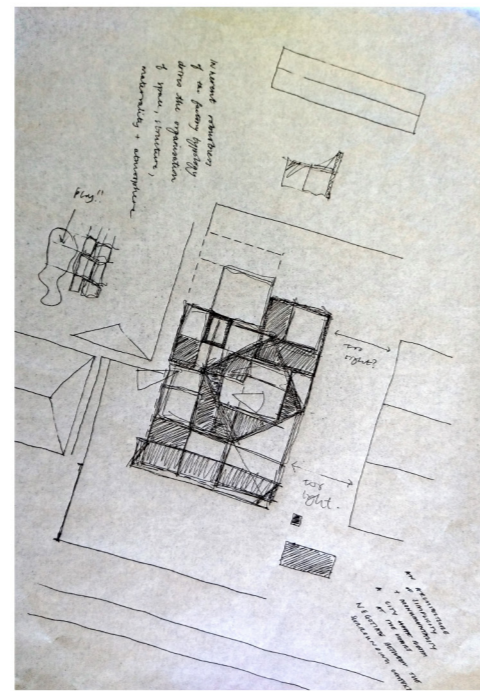


Fig. 54. Pattern Language



The following are a series of models that were made in response to recognising the main building can only occupy a particular portion of the site and were means of beginning to test the form of such an object. The sketches to the left are a sample of the sketches made to either provoke a model or made in response to a model.

Within the photographs, each model has an accompanying series of sketches which were a means of testing the quality of the model and eliminating certain aspects of them. Certain sketches were then drafted in scale and formed the beginnings of generating plans.

Notably, the model to the far right in the middle greatly resembles the final plan.

Fig. 55. Models and their accompanying sketches.

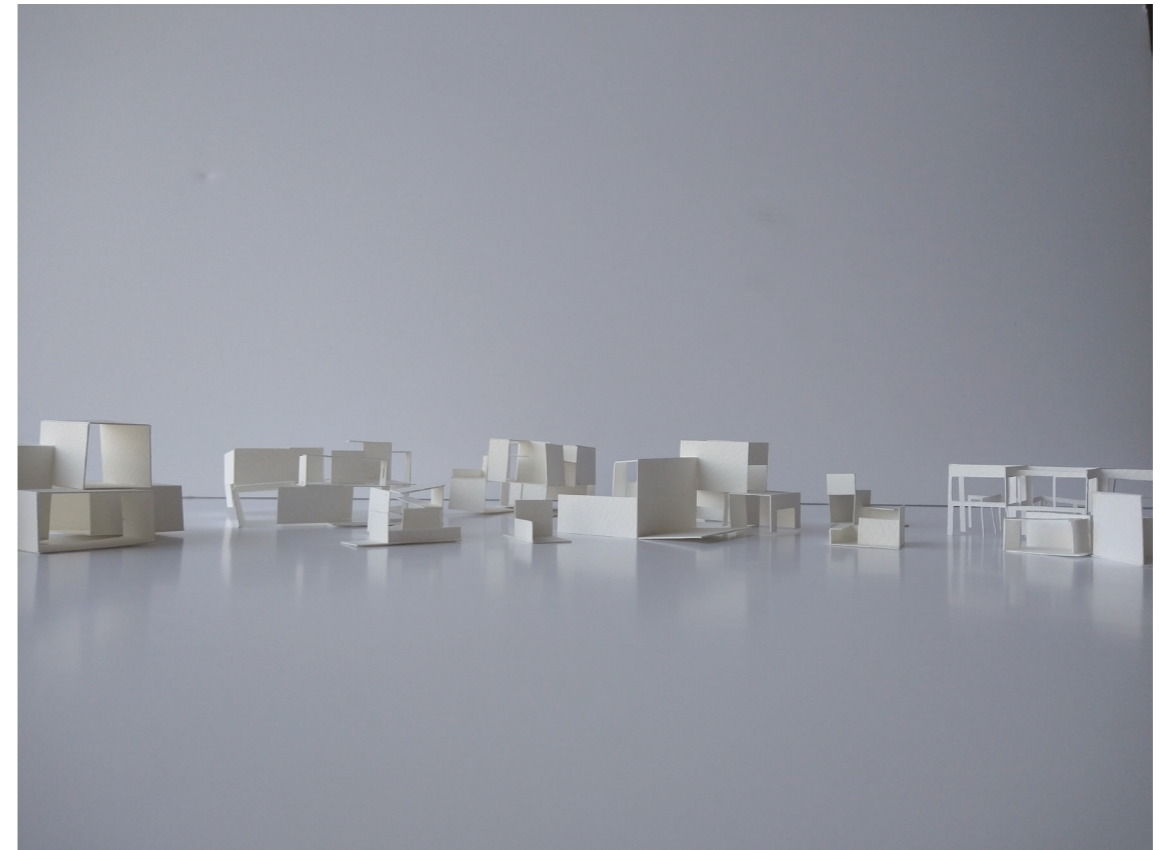
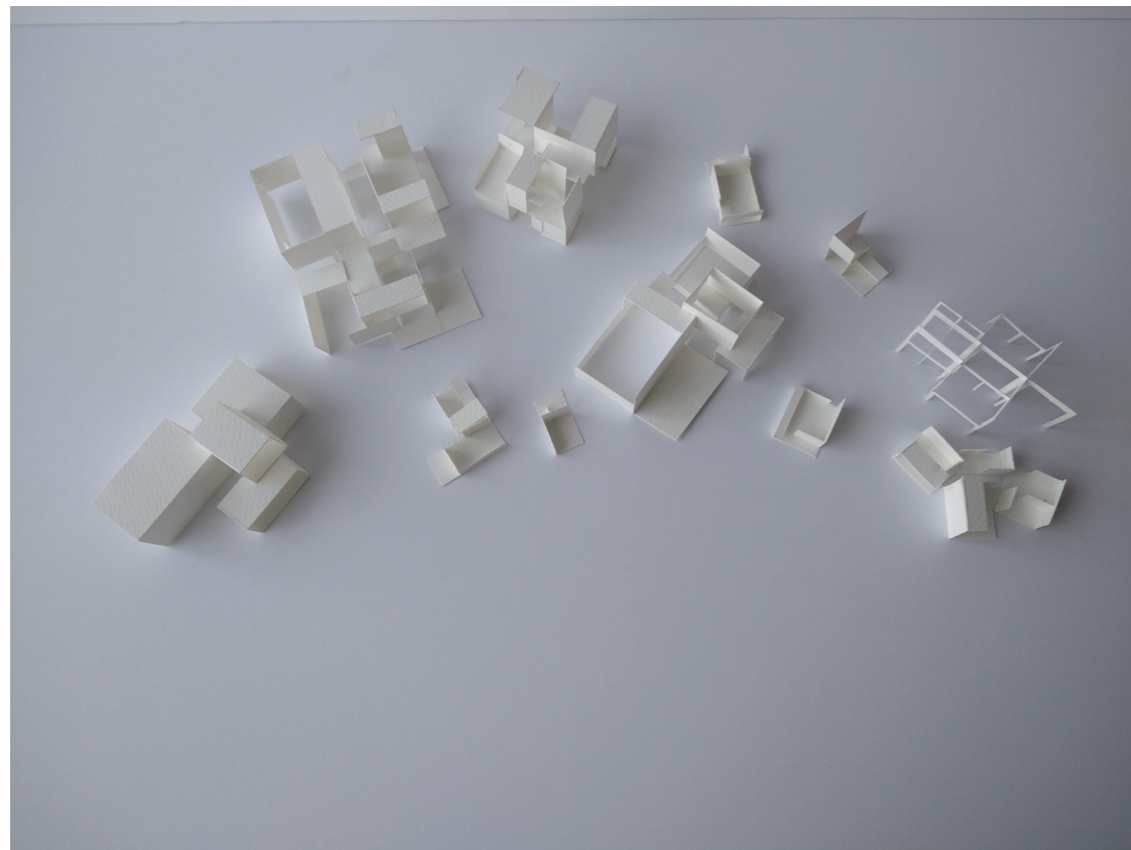
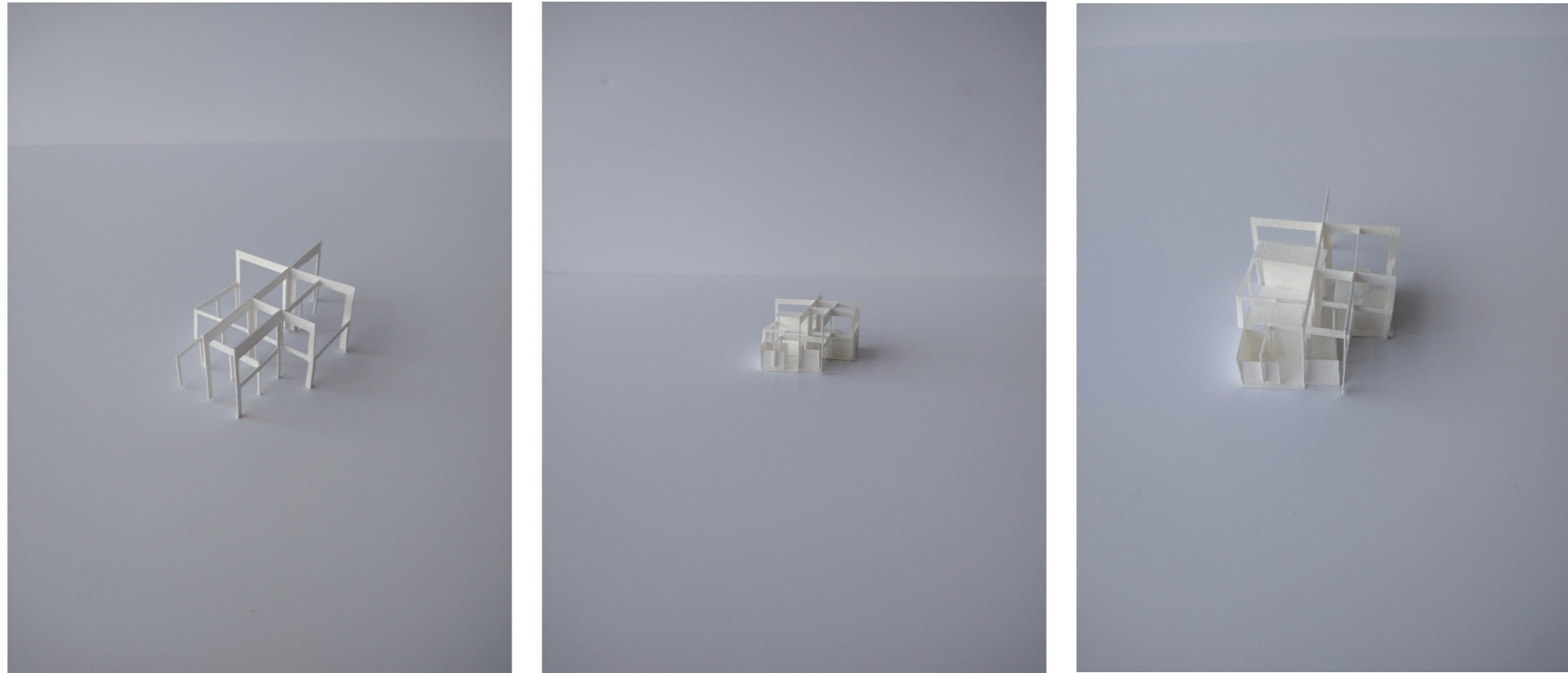


Fig. 56. Models and their accompanying sketches continued.



Fig. 57. Final Ground Floor plan of the Worker's Club, Canal facing toilet pavilion and Sports pavilion 1:200 at A3.





- 1. Public toilets
- 2. Cycle repair station
- 3. Worker's club main entrance
- 4. Foyer Hall, 2 an open-air yard
- 5. Laundry
- 6. 'Familiar' entrance
- 7. Men's Hall
- 8. Passage room, with benches and coat hooks
- 9. Coat hooks, overhang above
- 10. Self-service areas
- 11. Canteen
- 12. Kitchen
- 13. Repair
- 14. 5-aside pitch with gym curtain fencing
- 15. Sports pavilion entrance
- 16. Changing rooms + showers
- 17. Bar
- 18. Resource room
- 19. Kitchenette
- 20. Storage
- 21. Equipment storage

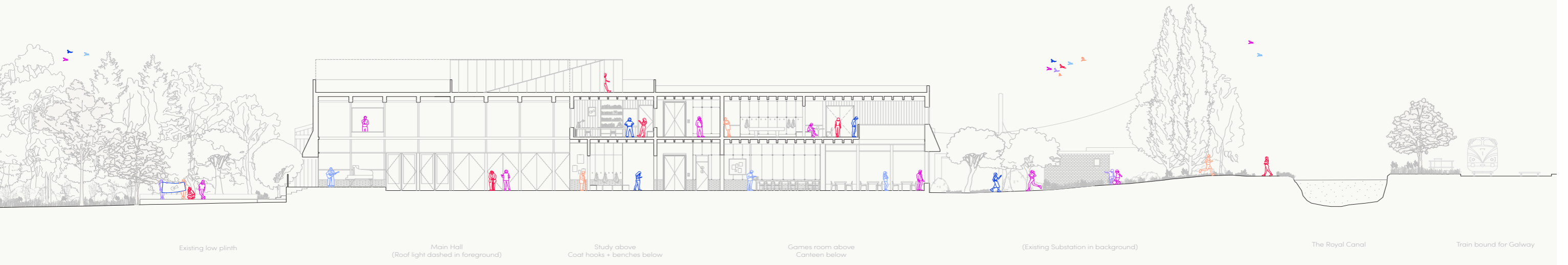
Ground Floor Plan 1:200







Fig. 58. Final First Floor plan of the Worker's Club 1.200 at A3.



The toilet pavilion for many would be the first point of contact with the Worker's Club and potentially their only point. With that in mind, the pavilion is designed to afford those people, the passersby, the same fortunes the workers are given; A place to sit, benches lining the waiting places, a place to reset, the toilets themselves and a place to play, the bicycle repair shop. The pavilion follows the slope of the site and provides a route through to the Worker's canteen, a place where anyone is welcome to eat. While defining the edge of the site, the toilet pavilion is also forming a continuation of an established language of service buildings which line the canal that appears in the form of silos and substations, two of which are on the site. Additionally, the pavilion aligns with a small train maintenance platform across the canal, a pleasant parallel of maintenance to maintenance.



1.50 Section through Canal facing Public toilet

Fig. 61. 1.50 Section through Toilet Pavilion

The sports pavilion takes the footprint of the dilapidated shed. The first major window which extends beyond the roof is aligned with the path taken through the trees from the Worker's Club. Below these windows is a resource room, connected to the bar, an ideal place for a painting class or a party. The main entrance of the building is to the left and is flanked by benches which look onto the five-a-side pitch. Similarly, to the toilet pavilion, there is access through this pavilion, but in this case, it is only to those familiar with the place and less likely to be discovered. This drawing marks the first appearance of TVWC - the name of the club - Tolka Valley Worker's Club, which appears on all the buildings. Either on the panels directly or on the canopies.

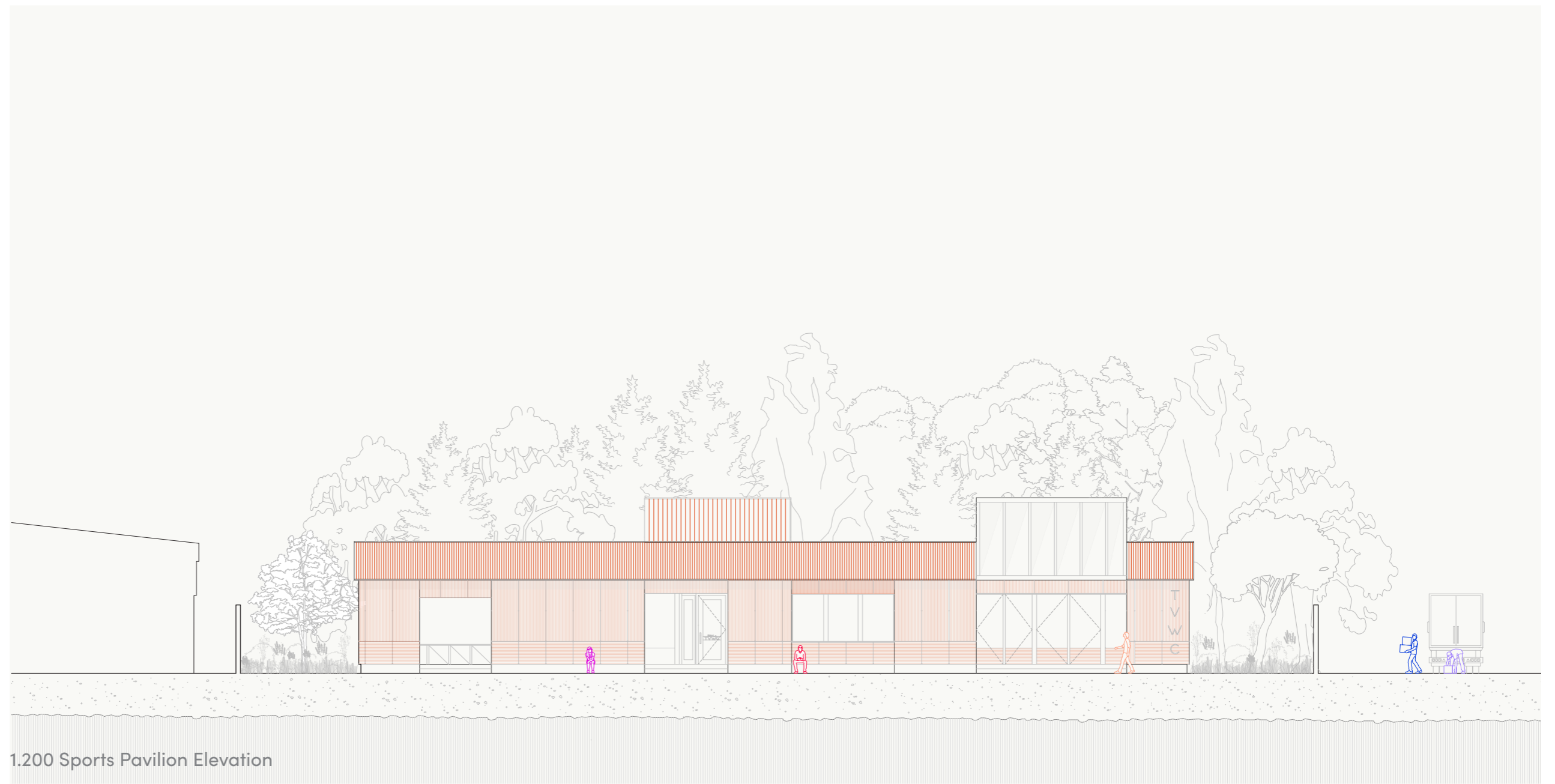


Fig. 62. Sports Elevation

The section cutting through the Canal gives a sense of the presence of the Worker's Club at the water's edge. The toilet pavilion and bicycle repair shop take prominence, with its distinct red panels. Behind, the Worker's Club sits a metre below the entrance of the pavilion, and whilst a vibrant green, is not demanding of the passersby's attention. The long blue metal canopy above the canteen indicates to passersby that the building is welcoming nonetheless, and the undercroft where the repair shop is located may attract onlookers as to what latest fixing is occurring. Whimsically, the light wells above the foyer and the hall pop up, mimicking the language of the toilet pavilion windows, and perhaps signifying to the observant passersby that there's more going on here than imagined. An observation which would be correct, as from this vantage there is no awareness of the sports pavilion and the carry-ons that may occur there!





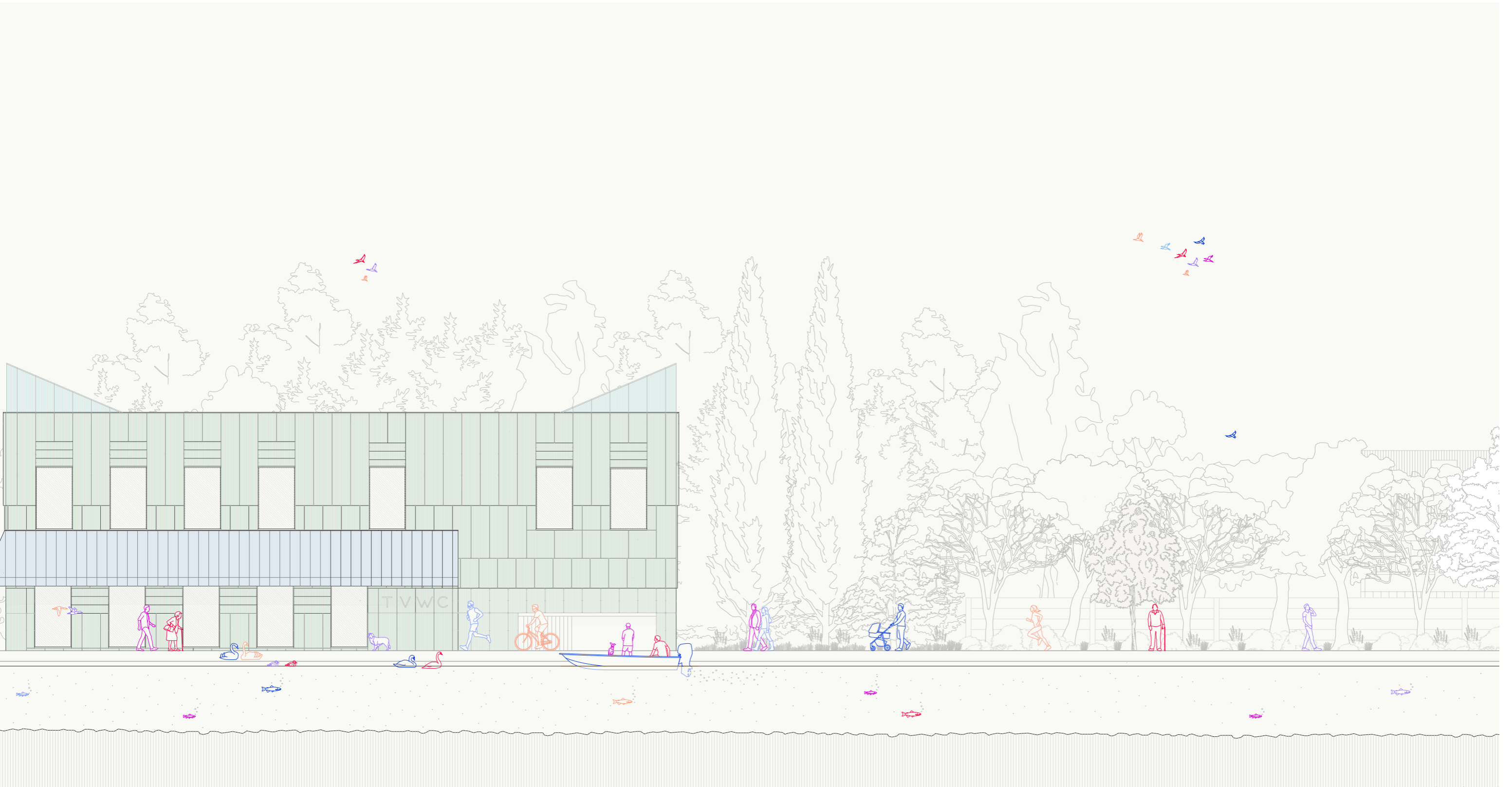


Fig. 63. Elevation through Canal

The construction of the structures seeks a robust and straightforward character. Each building generates its own internal datum of block to a designated height, atop of which a timber frame is erected. Externally insulating the buildings also for a thickness to be generated which can be occupied in the windows and give more pronounced door entrances.

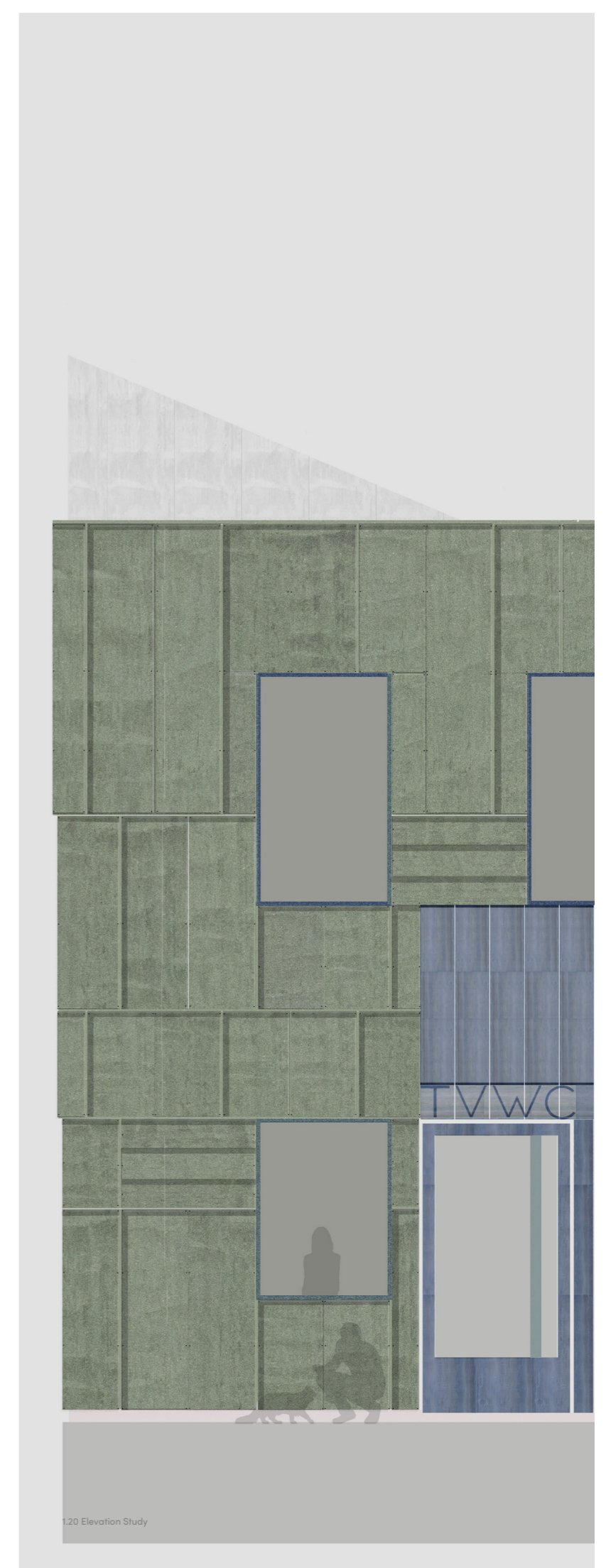
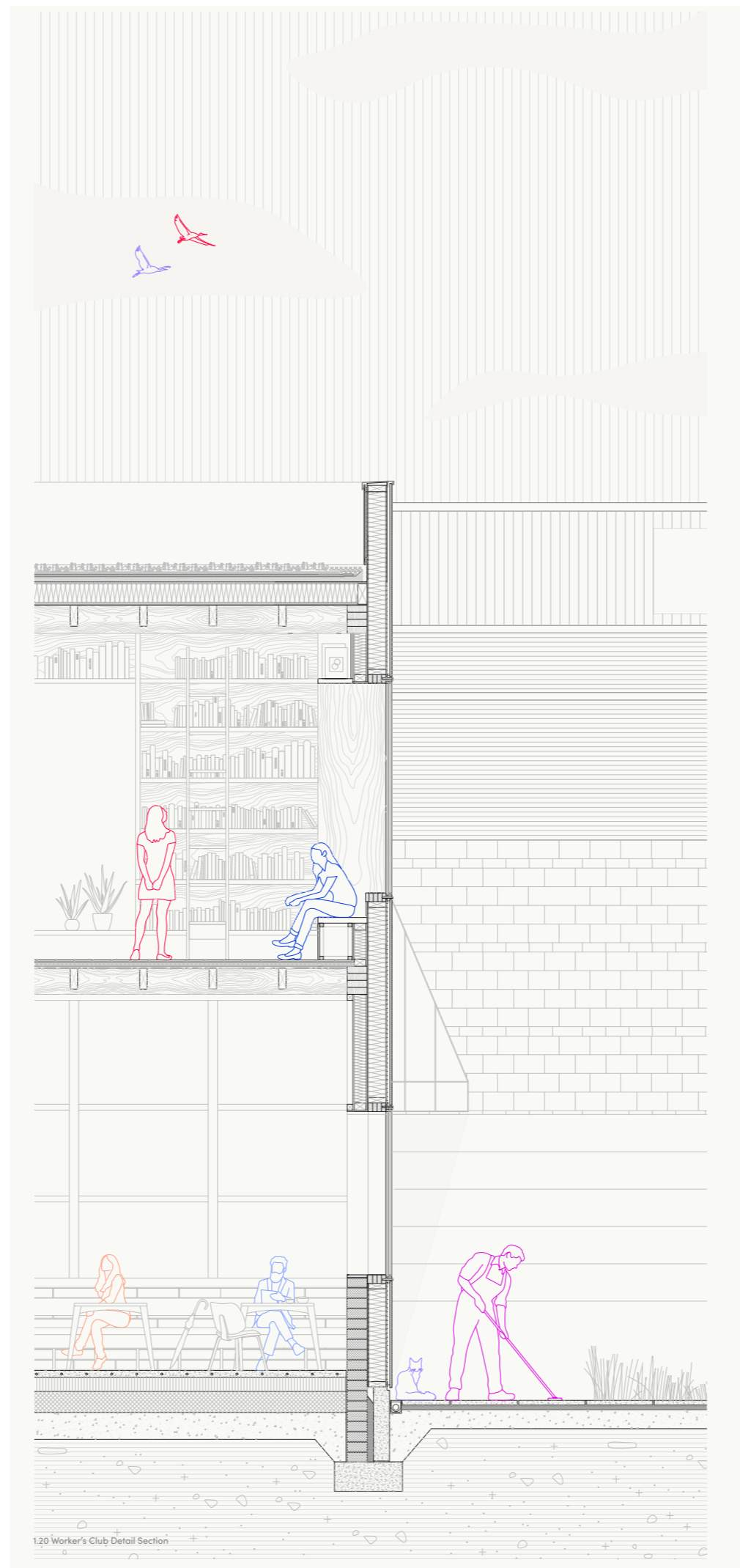
Each entrance of the Worker's Club is marked by a specific blue metal canopy which contrasts the green of the fibre cement panels, harking back to the understanding of the Industrial Estate's tendency to be apparent in its entrances to the users. Underneath the canopy a porter sweeps while his cat keeps watch.

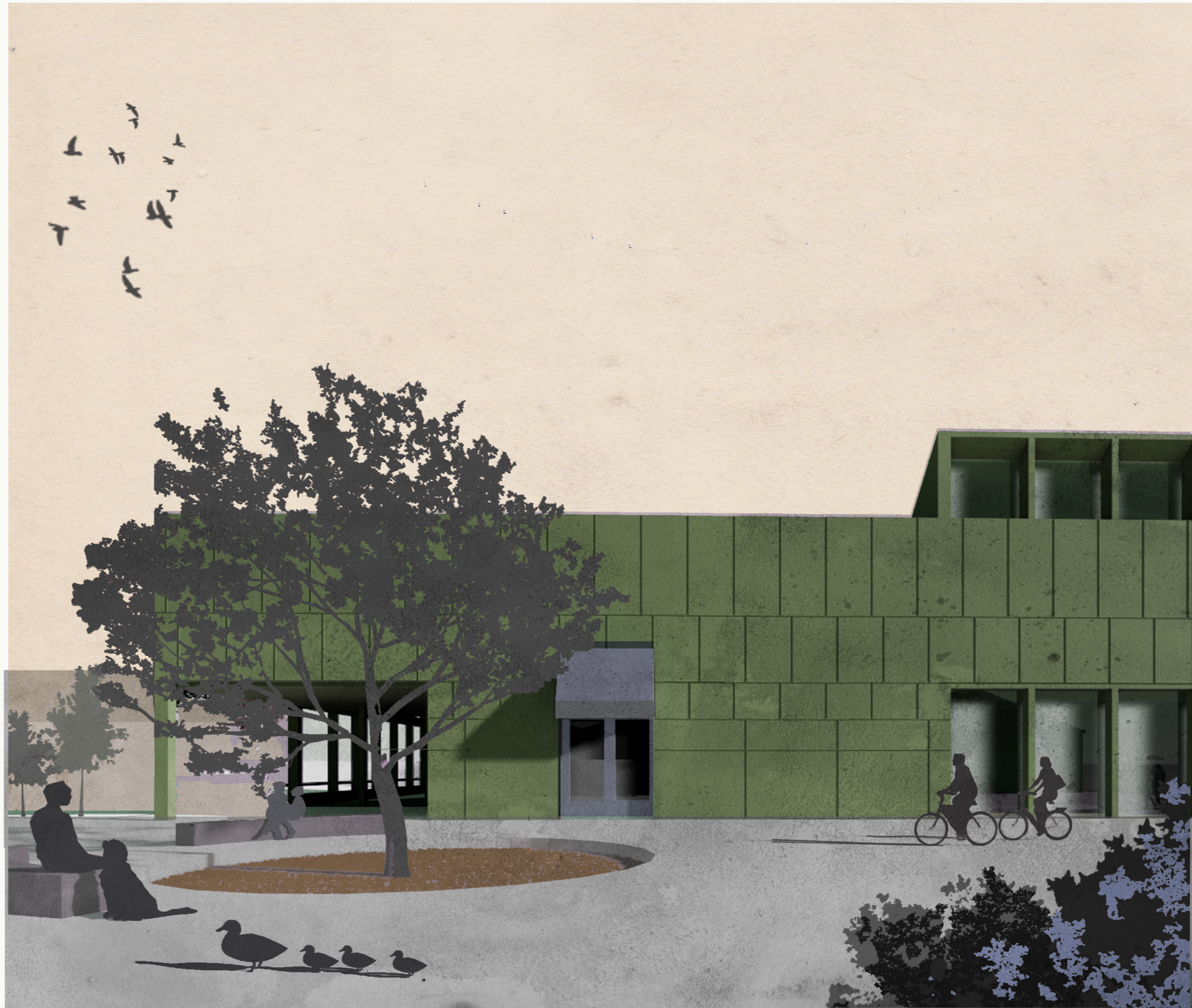
The panels are cut limitedly, which giving the impression that they are cut more regularly using a variety of sizings. The different sizings enable a more playful facade to a building which could readily appear very flat. The subtle shift gives the facades a light sense of dynamism, a characteristic not found in its surrounding neighbours.

Internally, different rooms are lined accordingly. In the instance of the detail section the ground floor room expresses its timber construction with pronounced linings, whilst the first floor reading room above covers that expression with another one of bookshelves and seats.

On the elevation, the turn in fibre cement panels indicates ventilation behind.

Fig. 64. Detail Section and Elevation Study





The space between the adjacent shed and the Worker's Club forms a new public courtyard, split 'somewhere in the middle', as according to A Pattern Language by the existing tree, which sits on the current site boundary. The space now enables a route through from the Tolka Valley Park, the Industrial Estate to the Royal Canal. Yet much like the Worker's Club itself, it is a route solely for the people familiar with the place, or fellow canal custodians such as ducks and their ducklings.

(Please note the dog sitting, who is in fact my dog, Aldo, who accompanied me on site visits and oversaw drawing production.)

Fig. 65. Collage of Worker's Club in newly formed courtyard

## CONCLUSION

*But really, only the beginnings*

‘Architecture is the only art form that affords us the opportunity of being vogueurs who watch the outside from the outside and also being interior watchers. We can also observe the inside from the inside. It is all made up of a series of outside fragments and inside fragments. We are always faced with the illusion of depth realities’

-John Hedjuk

The theme of Urgency brought immediately to my attention that I feel no desire as a person or architect to accept things at face value. Architecture throughout time revels in re-evaluating itself, and its producers, architects, ravenously enjoy spending time defining their relevance to given circumstances. Whilst this is enjoyable from time to time, I do not think it is entirely necessary and removes the focus from the direct job at hand which is to provide spaces that people care about and can build a particular understanding of themselves and their greater worlds within. Hence, there is no real need for urgency, as it's what the subject inherently promotes. Perhaps the only form of urgency I can entertain is that of the inclusion of a wider range of professions to enlighten one another and hopefully thus prompt a more rigorous response to climate change beyond the guise of green walls/roofs and all timber-built structures. The world is simply too complex to be solved in such singular solutions.

The theme ultimately raised a great range of personal philosophical questions concerning my understanding of

the ethical and political stance an architect may take. Questions like these will not be solved in a semester, and if I'm lucky enough might find a form of resolution over my lifetime. In particular, the theme enabled a thesis that I believe reflects a great deal of my personal interests and that a great deal of my character comes through in the work. For example, the material choice and their treatment were never decided or finalised based on naïve aesthetic moves and extravagance was deemed unnecessary. A preference was made for work which relates to its given territory and social conditions and out of that comes the three end-result buildings.

The final thesis project came at a late stage in the semester due to a lack of confidence in my ability and self, which on reflection was a shameful thing to allow to take such a hold of my being. From an agonistic point of view, the project is good because it isn't... or at least that was a useful thing to say when it seemed like it might go no where at all! Once up and running in some capacity the project did begin to take into account the questions which arose in thesis development. Perhaps most enjoyably, the project itself allowed for real-world occurrences such as the limitations of the site to make genuine, informative moves to the project, which I hope will readily translate to becoming a practitioner.

In conclusion, the final thesis resonates with me as a moment of regard for my process, various trains of thought and the work that comes out of that. While reaching a more consolidated point of completion would have been desirable, the current standing point is suggestive of a potential positive completion which I may think through over the summer months. It is the beginning, by no means an ending, of how I hope to practice and position myself as an architect.

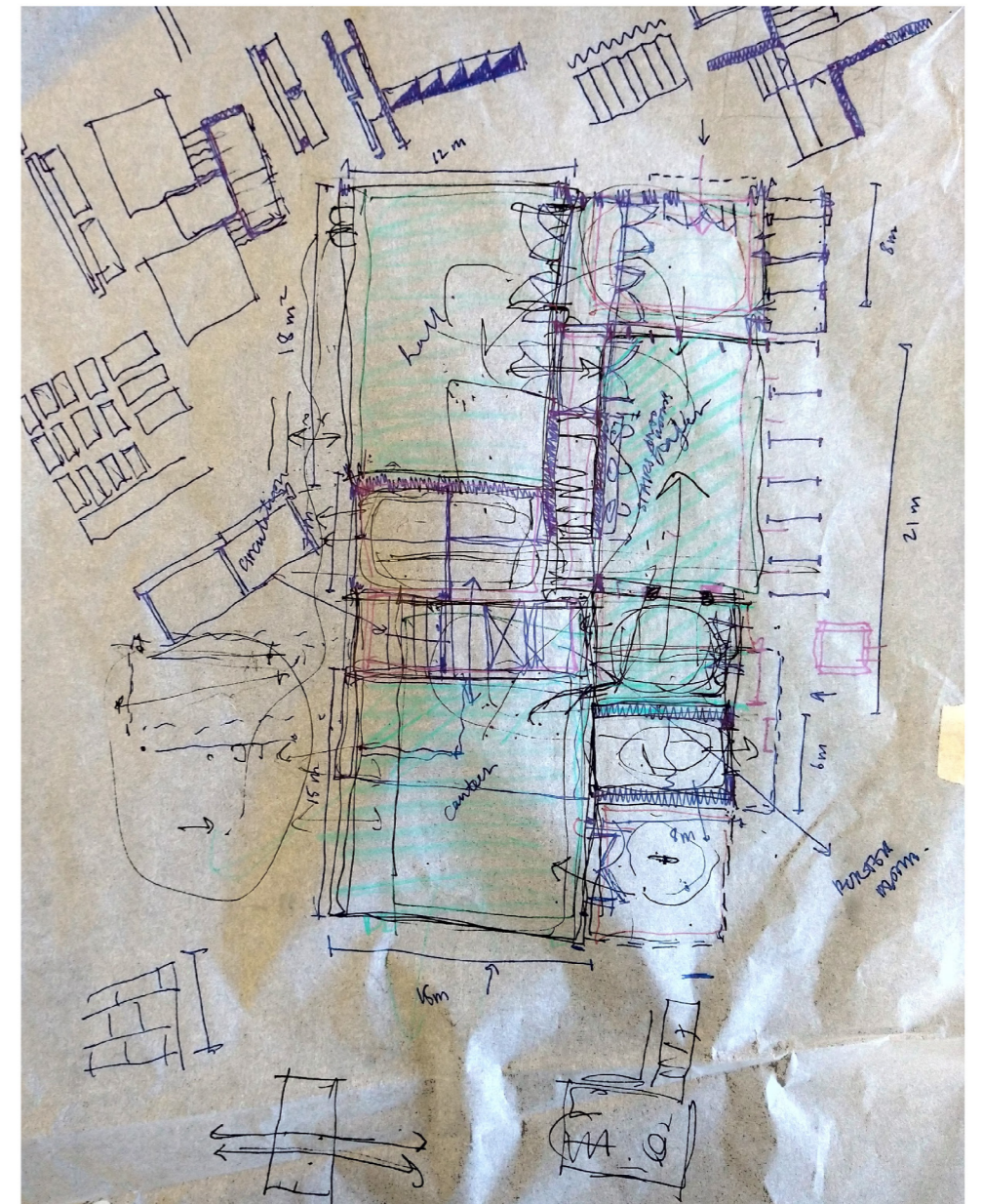


Fig. 66. A particularly messy, but important sketch.

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## FIGURE LIST

- Figure 1 and 2: Helena Fitzgerald, image still from the exhibition *A Space for Making Good Decisions About Place*, VISUAL Carlow 26th February - 22 May 2022. Accessed via <https://visualcarlow.ie/whats-on/a-space-for-making-good-decisions-about-place>.
- Figure 3: Discursive structure understanding, completed by the author.
- Figure 4 Constellation Collective understanding, completed by the author.
- Figure 5 and 6: Stills from *12 Angry Men* depicting Juror 8 utilising his design skills to assist in the jurors discussion. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlasofplaces.com/cinema/12-angry-men/>
- Figure 7: Selection of images from Mindmap exercise.
- Figure 8: Selection of images from Mindmap exercise.
- Figure 9: 1 Diagrams representing third space theories, completed by the author.
- Figure 12: Figure 16 Primer testing application of research thus far, completed by the author.
- Figure 17: Listless drawing completed by the author.
- Figure 18: Wider Tolka Valley area 1.10000 completed by the author.
- Figure 19: The beginnings of becoming lustful, completed by author.
- Figure 20: Enclave study, completed by author.

- Figure 21: 1.5000 map of industrial estate's industry types, completed by the author.
- Figure 22: Collection of photographs from the Tolka Valley Industrial Estate, taken by the Author.
- Figure 23: BEANTOWN, a speculative project imagining the future of the industrial estate, completed in part by the author alongside other students in Semester 1.
- Figure 24: Photograph taken by the author.
- Figure 25: 1.5000 Site Location Plan, completed by the author.
- Figure 26. -30 Retrieved from <https://webapps.geohive.ie/mapviewer/index.html>.
- Figure 31: Alexander Deyneka, illustration for *Bezbozhnikustanka* ['Atheist and the machine'], No.5 (Moscow, 1926). Retrieved from Anna Bokov (2017) *Soviet workers' clubs: lessons from the social condensers*, *The Journal of Architecture*, 22:3, 403-436, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2017.1314316.
- Figure 32: Alexander Deyneka, *Vrayonnom Klube* [At the local club], illustration for *Bezbozhnikustanka* [Atheist and the machine], No.3 (Moscow, 1927). Retrieved from Anna Bokov (2017) *Soviet workers' clubs: lessons from the social condensers*, *The Journal of Architecture*, 22:3, 403-436, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2017.1314316.
- Figure 33. Aleksandr Deineka *We Must Become Specialists, Masters of Our Craft* (Nado samim stat' spetsialistami, khoziaevami dela), 1931. retrieved from <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/280213>

## FIGURE LIST

Figure 34: Alexander Deyneka, 'Prevratim Moskvuvobraztsoviy sotsialisticheskiygorod proletarskogo gosudartva' ('Transform Moscow into an exemplary socialist city of the proletarian state') (Poster, Moscow-Leningrad, IZOGIZ, 1931). Retrieved from Anna Bokov (2017) Soviet workers' clubs: lessons from the social condensers, *The Journal of Architecture*, 22:3, 403-436, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2017.1314316.

Figure 35: Initial Brief by the author.

Figure 36: Brief revised by the author.

Figure 37: Placeless workers club Brief Sketch by the author.

Figure 38: Examples of diagrams used to consolidate understanding of programme.

Figure 39: How a person there all the time may feel. At ten past ten the porter of the timber yard has a coffee. The cup seems big, as the day is only beginning. By the author.

Figure 40: Scale and perception of spaces from the perspective of the users, by the author.

Figure 41: Existing Site Condition 1.500, completed by the author

Figure 42: Collection of Site photos, grouped in their locations displayed in way they were used when designing. Taken by the author.

Figure 43: Site Photos as displayed at final review.

Figure 44: Existing site elements extracted, completed by the author.

Figure 45: Exploratory drawings- series of overlays which act as abstractions, accurate observations and speculations.

Figure 46: Exploratory drawings continued.

Figure 47: Photograph of Exploratory drawings displayed.

Figure 48. Approach to Site summarised.completed by the author.

Figure 49. Momentary Axonometric by the author.

Figure 50. Momentary Axonometric of an external condition by the author.

Figure 51: Selection of sketches working in a similar manner to the axonometrics, by the author.

Figure 52: Collection of roughwork, by the author.

Figure 53: Photograph of roughwork, by the author.

Figure 54. Pattern Language by the author.

Figure 55. Models and their accompanying sketches, by the author.

Figure 56. Models and their accompanying sketches continued, by the author.

Figure 57. Final Ground Floor plan of the Worker's Club, Canal facing toilet pavilion and Sports pavilion 1.200 at A3, by the author.

Figure 58. Final First Floor plan of Worker's club, by the author.

Figure 59 + 60. Final Site Sections, by the author.

Figure 63: Final Elevation through canal facing toilet pavilion and Worker's club, by the author.

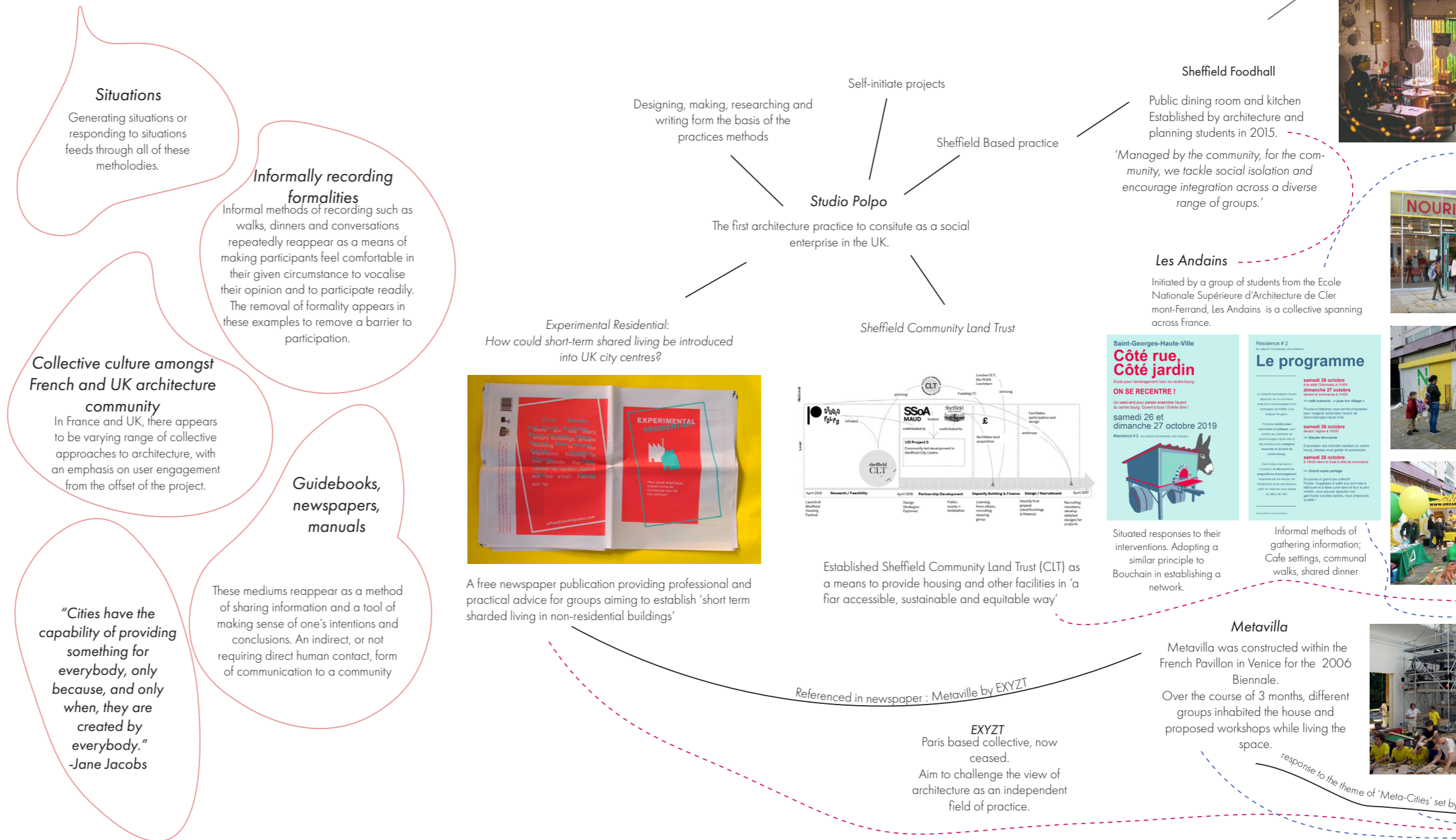
Figure 64: Detail Section of Worker's Club and Elevation Study, by the author.

Figure 65: Collage of Worker's Club in newly formed courtyard, by the author.

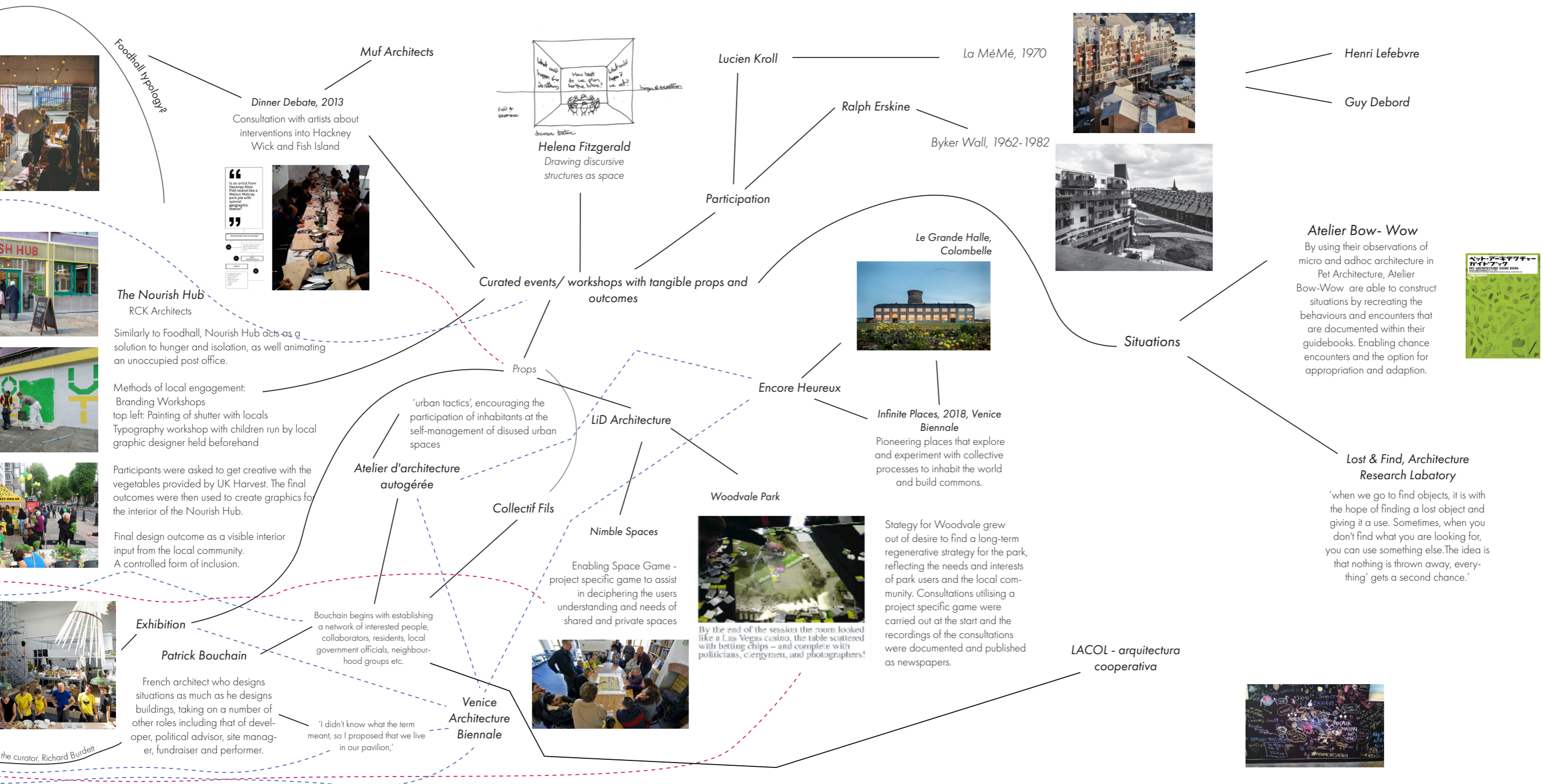
Figure 66: A messy but important sketch, by the author.

# APPENDIX

## 1) Thesis Development Mindmap.









2) 3 Steres with a View - Project 1, Week 1.

he first project of the year was a week long task of compiling an image response to 'sustainability'. I chose a selection of stills from artists Michael Salistorfer and Jurgen Heirnert's video titled '3 ster mit Ausblick'. The singular point of view of the video documents a wooden cabin being burned piece by piece within its own wooden stove, revealing the view previously hidden by the cabin.

The video in many respects goes against a large portions of the teachings I have encountered in architectural education. The hearth is suddenly the destructor, the cabin once dismantled means nothing. The video acts as a reminder that there is an tempermental short term provision to everything, even architecture, even architects! We can only truly act in our current situation, which may be altered at a later stage.

The video became an accompaniment to responding to the theme of Urgency of the year, and reflectively at the end of this process has gained relevance again as a means of understanding an attitude in terms of material choice in the design project.

"3 ster mit Ausblick"  
"3 steres with a view"

Michael Salistorfer & Jürgen Heirnert

Video stills, 2002

The piece overturns the function of the domestic fireplace, shifting its common meaning of the centre of the household and a place of gathering and spirituality to the exact opposite. i.e. the assailant of a kind of intimacy and security that are slowly attacked to offer nourishment for the stove - nourishment to the core to the betterment of none.

URGENCY: RADICAL THINKING, TRANSFORMING THE

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE ROOT OF AN ISSUE IN ORDER TO

TRANSFORMATIVE

Project 1  
C16341746  
Kate Hunter Hanley