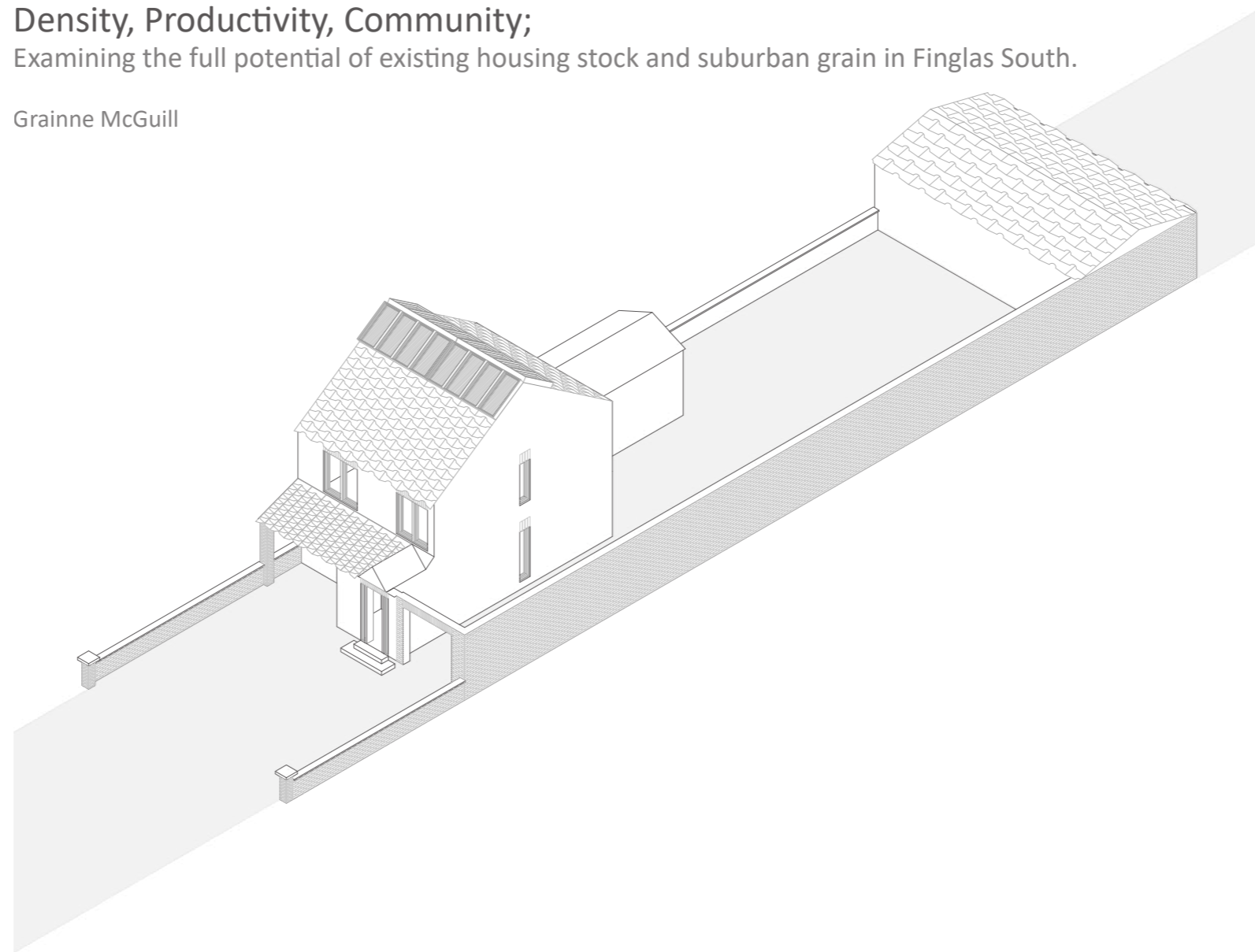


Density, Productivity, Community;

Examining the full potential of existing housing stock and suburban grain in Finglas South.

Grainne McGill



Acknowledgements

My most sincere gratitude to Sima Rouholamin and Martin Spillane for their guidance and encouragement throughout the year; for the generosity and enthusiasm with which they shared their knowledge and expertise, and for their pragmatism and zeal which made the completion of this thesis possible.

To my wonderful sister and parents, whose love and support has been an unwavering source of joy and comfort throughout my college career.

And to my fantastic friends, both from architecture and elsewhere, for their open ears and ready advice. Thank you for helping me to get the best out of my time as an undergraduate student.

Abstract

The subject of my thesis project is the 1950s scheme of terraced housing in Finglas South. Built by Dublin Corporation as part of the slum clearance efforts which sought to improve the living conditions of Dublin's working classes, these houses are symptomatic of the ethos of homeownership and suburban living situations which blossomed in Ireland throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

Designed during a chapter of Irish history which was characterised by a society very different from that of contemporary Ireland; with a very different set of urban criteria in mind, this scheme today finds itself ill adapted to the challenges of the 21st century.

This project attempts to improve their efficiency in terms of both density and thermal performance, and to augment their adaptability in such a way as might strengthen the intergenerational stewardship of the area and safeguard the buildings' future. Both climate crisis and housing crisis considered, the fact that these houses do not conform to what might be considered the contemporary ideal of residential architecture should not render them obsolete or worthy of demolition. Nor should the sanctity of the suburban private plot in Irish society exclude them from eligibility for reimagination. This design exploration endeavours to address both of these realities in a practical and considered way.

Novel approaches to antiquated challenges must be informed by the context in which these challenges have their origins; their success only measurable in terms of the shortcomings by which they are preceded. This thesis development research paper places the terraces of Finglas South within a wider contextual theme of housing practices throughout Irish history.



Overview

Introduction; outlining the research paper.

Concepts of 'home' in the Irish context. Why does the suburban private plot command such reverence in our contemporary culture?

Dominick Street Tenements; the origins of multi-family housing.

Nightmarish and forsaken, or a lesson in communal longevity and transgenerational stewardship?

O'Devaney Gardens; the next chapter.

What can we learn from the scheme's failure?

Royal Canal Crescent; contemporary Ireland.

The ambitions embedded within 21st century designs for multi-family housing, and their realisation in architectural form.

Conclusion; findings.

A novel interpretation of the suburban terrace.

The Site; Finglas South.

The Brief; density, productivity, community.

The Existing Condition; stoic and inflexible.

The Proposal; a dynamic and versatile future for Finglas South.

Citations

Appendix

introduction

The term 'home' has its etymological origins in the Proto Germanic 'haimaz' signifying dwelling place or fixed residence (Harper, n.d.). In the contemporary English language, it may be described as a uniquely versatile word, in the sense that it is critical to the most mundane logistics of day-to-day life whilst also capable of expressing something of our societal ambitions and values. To be at home is to be at ease, to be enveloped in the spatialized echo of our own character; to be a homeowner is to have stability and security. To describe one's dwelling place as a home, as opposed to a piece of accommodation or a lodging, carries a very specific implication of comfort and safety. Yet its exact significance eludes precise definition.

The abandonment of inner-city housing for the promise and prosperity of the suburbs is by no means a uniquely Irish phenomenon. We are something of an anomaly, however, in that this pattern of settlement actively and absolutely excludes the apartment from our collective definition of the word 'home'. Many of our European neighbours exhibit apartment blocks as some of their most valuable (and most valued) housing stock; Germany for example boasting an apartment-dwelling percentage of its population which is no less than 56.1 (Statista, 2022). Ireland's figure of 7.4% (Statista, 2021) pales in comparison.

In the midst of the climate crisis, there is increasingly wide acknowledgement of the imperative for our cities to become more compact. But the unspoken shun of high density housing developments is simply not conducive to achievement of the objectives outlined in Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework. In twenty-first century Irish society, why might it be the case that the concept of apartment seems only to encapsulate a transitory living condition, as opposed to a lifelong home?

It stands to reason that so staunch a national mentality must have its (very deep) roots in our cultural memory. In attempting to answer this question, this essay will explore the evolution of multi-family residential architecture in Ireland; its successes and failures and the attitudes by which it has been shaped and interpreted, through examination of three examples based in the Tolka Valley and its environs. Tenementised Dominick Street of the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stoneybatter's infamous O'Devaney Gardens scheme, and the contemporary Royal Canal Crescent apartments in Ashtown.

dominick street tenements

Once one of Dublin's most elegant Georgian boulevards, the palatial abodes of Dominick Street had been hewn into tenement flats in the 1830s and descended to slum status by the early twentieth century (Rowley, 2019, p.208). Where the staring sash windows had borne witness to a golden age of aristocratic grandeur, the lustrous silks and satins of the promenading ladies' gowns were replaced by the threadbare rags of some of the city's most impoverished families. Where the purposeful footsteps of gentlemen's smart leather shoes had graced the stoops' carved cascades trod the bare feet of destitute children.

In the climate of widespread fear which followed the collapse of two tenement buildings on nearby Church Street in 1913, Dominick Street (which by then had acquired a certain notoriety for its unsafe and insanitary living conditions) embodied the essence of the inadequacy of Dublin's housing stock. The ensuing housing inquiry (the report of which was published in 1914) condemned vast swathes of the city as being 'unfit for human habitation' (*Report of Inquiry*, 1914, p.2) seemed a ringing endorsement.

The stately brick facades were falling prey to rain, mist and smoke with the elevated sulphur content which was the result of the city's bituminous coal-burning fireplaces and furnaces. Roof slates and lead seams were being corroded by the acidified moisture, and the ingress of water through the external walls and roof had ultimately penetrated some of the timber structural members and begun to cause rot and decay. This was exacerbated by the deep excavation of the basements, which drew groundwater and rising damp (Ibid. p.12).

The Church Street tragedy was preceded by deadly structural failures on Townsend Street in 1902 and on Cumberland Street in 1909, but seemed to make glaringly apparent the possibility of imminent catastrophe in a way which neither of these incidents had. But as well as the rapidly

deteriorating stability, the buildings of Dominick Street bore the internal alterations of their conversion from single family dwellings, and the wounds inflicted by their generations of occupants.

In many cases their division into flats had been crude (with a view to maximising the number of units at minimal cost); partition walls having often been inserted regardless of the position of the long-spanning joists (usually 275x50mm Baltic pine) which supported the upper floors. The manner of their occupation contributed to their 'dangerous character' (*The Irish Times*, 1913) in the fireplaces lit from dawn till dusk which added to the humidity and penetrating damp. In the resultantly rotten floorboards which might not have led to total collapse but could disintegrate underfoot. In the lack of light in the stairwells and the missing banisters; taken by the most desperate tenants for firewood in times of hardship. In the worn treads of the stairs themselves; timber slats which had borne hundreds of thousands of footsteps in their dangerously extended lifetime (the sagging effect is even visible on the stone stoops in pictures from the photographic survey which accompanied the 1914 report). In the aged brittleness of the glazing; the windows and fanlights poised to shatter at the overly boisterous slam of a door.

More murderous yet than the built dangers of the Dominick Street tenements (and their ilk elsewhere in the city) was the plethora of diseases harboured within their burgeoning walls. 'Where the sun does not go, the doctor goes' (Kearns, 1994, p.14) was a widely used idiom (albeit with a very straightforwardly sinister significance) in tenement era Dublin, referring to the darkness of slum housing in relation to the generally poor health of those who lived there. Whether the phrase sought to imply that the correlation between these two conditions was coincidental or direct, the fact remains that from 1920 to 1940 the death rate observed in the inner city was twice as high as that in the suburbs,

dominick street tenements

whilst infant mortality (of children under one year old) was five times higher.

Aided by gross overcrowding, widespread malnutrition and what was dubbed a 'congenital debility' (*Irish Press*, 1936) of the immune system which had developed over generations of slum-dwellers, disease in the tenements 'spread like wildfire' (Kearns, 1994, p.13). But furtherly perpetuating infections' ability to thrive in these inner-city hovels were constructional elements of the buildings themselves. Laminations of decaying wallpaper (deposited one atop the other by a palimpsest of inhabitation) provided a haven for colonies of insects, and the animal hair in plaster dating from the houses' Georgian origins attracted lice. The damp exacerbated ailments such as rheumatoid arthritis, whooping cough (primarily amongst children), pneumonia and tuberculosis. Perhaps most grave amongst the plethora of threats to public health was the plumbing (or lack thereof); most tenement buildings having only one privy for the use of fifty to eighty persons. In many cases this was no more than a hole in the ground enclosed by a ramshackle hut, and poor (or in some cases, nil) drainage resulted in breeding grounds for the bacteria which cause typhoid and diphtheria.

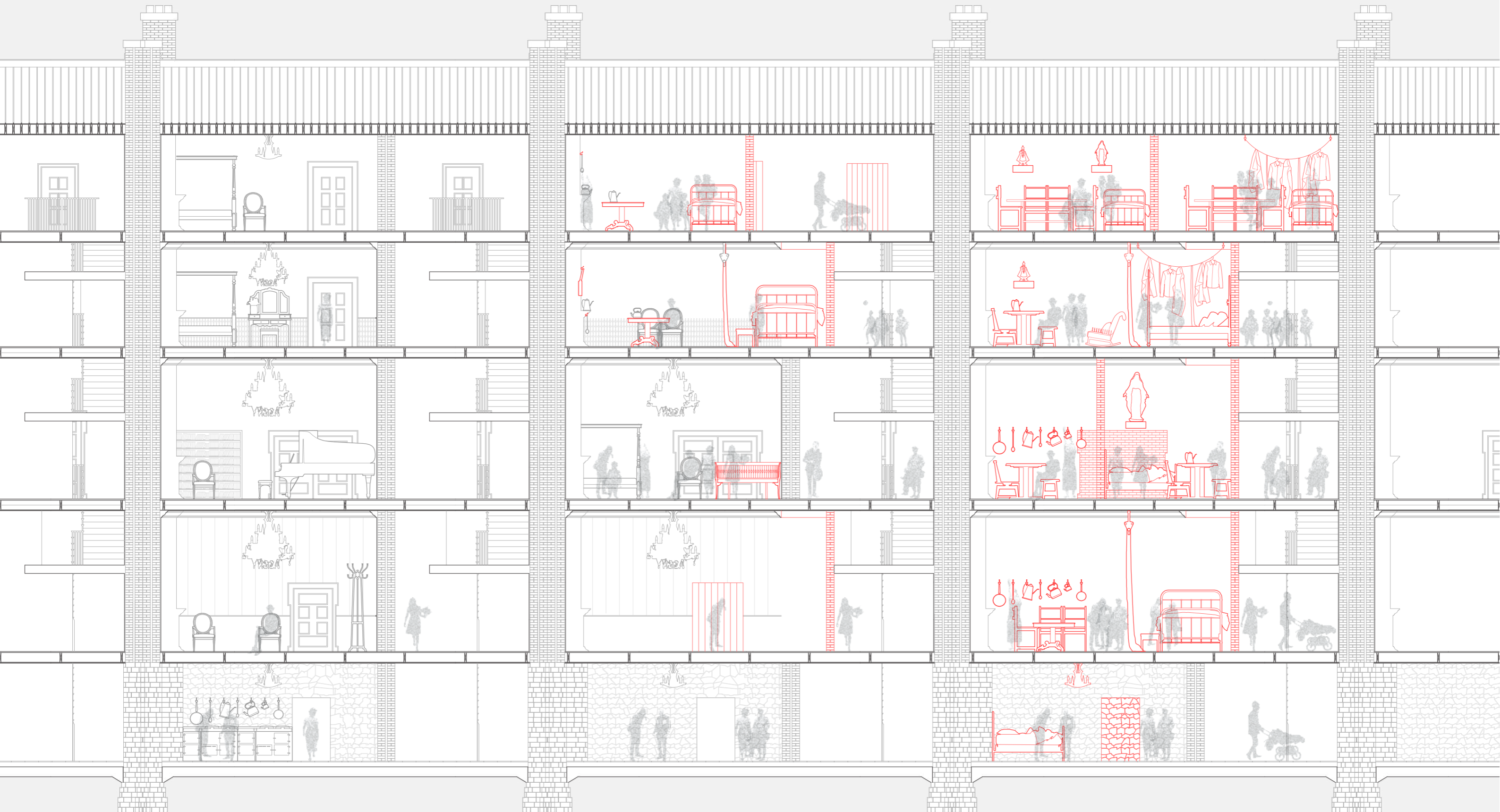
A dwelling place which endangers the lives of its occupants might be described as the antithesis of a 'home'; so flagrant the defiance of the word's inherent implications of safety and sanctuary. The tenants of Dominick Street dwelled where the very roofs over their heads seemed primed to collapse and bury them beneath; where the walls themselves appeared to amass a universe of pathological micro-organisms. If we are to interpret the Dominick Street (and other) tenements as having embodied the oxymoron of 'dangerous home', how might it have transposed into contemporary attitudes towards multi-family residential architecture?

Public discourse during the tenement era characterised inner-city housing in such stridently unambiguous language as 'municipal shame', 'fetid', 'foul blot on the social life of Dublin' (Departmental Committee appointed by the Local Government Board for Ireland, 1914); some commentators even going so far as to declare 'evil' (Mitchell, 1920) the 'despotic and merciless' slumlords who allowed their tenants to languish in such abjectly miserable living conditions. Might it be the case that commentary of this ilk has, in the fullness of time, morphed into a sensationalist narrative of fetishized poverty? Sufficient in poignancy to ingrain into the Irish mentality the inferiority; both social and spatial, of high density housing? Possibly so. The fact is that few are alive today with first-hand experience of the Dominick Street (or any other) tenements. The tangible reality of their squalor, the material manifestation of the hardship contained within their walls, might be said to have passed out of living memory. What remains undiluted, if not made more concentrated, by the passage of time is the narrative; canonised in the stories which form the basis of our understanding of Ireland's social history.

The following drawing shows numbers 4, 6 and 8 Lower Dominick Street from 1794 to 1911 (approximately). The grey indicates elements dating from the buildings' Georgian construction, the red alterations made by tenement slumlords endeavouring to increase the houses' capacity. Density during this era was measured in people per cubic (as opposed to square) yard, allowing for shocking numbers of people to legally reside under a single roof. Number 4 for example boasted a whopping 59 tenants in 10 different households (based on the census of 1911), living in a house originally designed for one family and perhaps a modest compliment of servants.

dominick street tenements

Note: the overall density of Dublin City during this era was 38.5 people per acre; a figure nearly twice as high as that of Britain's twenty largest cities. The statistic for Dominick Street was even more alarming; cited as lying somewhere between 103 and 113 people per acre in 1926 (Browne and Nolan, 1925).



'After moving for weeks in the shadows of Dublin's tenements, a visit to Crumlin where many a slum dweller has been mercifully transplanted, gives an impression of ascending from some fetid, subterranean sewer into the blithesome sunlight of a spring morning. Up here, in this airy wind-swept, sun-bathed plateau, far from the squalor that palled their earlier times, there is being written for those reprieved slum denizens a chapter in what might well be titled 'Paradise Regained'. Here are flowers instead of cluttered garbage and debris; song birds instead of stifling effluvium of open drains; the robustious laughter of happy, healthy children instead of the querulous moaning of ailing little ones; hope instead of despair'. (*Irish Press*, 1936)

The slum clearance efforts which arose from the Church Street collapse were as frenzied as they were dogmatic; granting the suburban private plot an almost mythically paradisaical quality amongst inner-city tenants. But it is at this stage that the tale of Ireland's residential evolution branches into two directions; the other of which is the Simms era flat complex.

It was not until 1957 that residents of the Dominick Street tenements would be rehoused in Stoneybatter's newly completed O'Devaney Gardens scheme (Rowley, 2019, p.208). Designed by Charlie McNamara (Simms' deputy and successor as housing architect), this project employed very similar architectural language to Simms' earlier designs. The horizontally linear monoliths, the pebbledash render set back from the brick facing, the fortress-like impregnability of the outwardly oriented façade contrasting with the perforated deck access of the internal world all bearing a close resemblance to Simms' highly successful schemes at Thorncastle Street and Henrietta Place (amongst many others).

With flats of up to five rooms, both public and semi-private (in the form of the deck access) outdoor space, internal plumbing (initially

championed by Simms) and cooking facilities, O'Devaney Gardens' conception embodied a certain heroism; posited itself as the built saviour of the Dominick Street tenements' hundreds of victims. Simms had established an overarching ambition for housing schemes of this kind; that they cater for the immediate necessity of slum clearance and acquire their full value as lifelong family homesteads with the passage of time. That they command urban sites; to allow for the unstable employment situations of the poorest families who would be living there (flats were rented at a lower cost than their private suburban counterparts, hence their designated tenants were of very low income and often relied on casual work / day labour in the vicinity of the city centre). That they enforce a basic standard of living which was sacrosanct; that private internal plumbing (for example) be considered a necessity as opposed to a cost ineffective luxury. (Simms came into some conflict with the Corporation on this matter). In O'Devaney Gardens and elsewhere, this was a mantle which McNamara took up with zeal.

In both design and execution, O'Devaney Gardens initially appeared to deliver on these unspoken promises. Residents' accounts document the Dominick Street tenants' pilgrimage through Broadstone and Phibsboro on foot, and their delight at the unprecedented modernity of their new homes. The scheme enjoyed several decades of socio-spatial success and blossoming community, even winning a Tidy Districts title in 1977 (Rowley, 2019, p.215). Its decline into national disrepute from the 1980s onwards was born of a myriad of both social and architectural issues, some of which had festered since before the Gardens' inception. For example the stigma attached to such corporation schemes and the 'schemers' who lived there; one resident even going so far as to say that many of her peers would lie about their address in job interviews (*Stories from O'Devaney Gardens*, 2013). Other issues were more recent in origin; not least among them the completion of the Montpelier and Dunard

Road housing estates in 1983, and the subsequent exodus of tenants from O'Devaney. This would spell the beginning of the breakdown of community in the flats, where people who had lived alongside the same neighbours for their whole lives were suddenly faced with the prospect of strangers next door.

To what extent was O'Devaney Gardens' failure as an experiment in high density housing fuelled by its architectural shortcomings? Possibly to a limited one; confined for the most part to the annexed arrangement of the site (set apart from its surrounding context), the isolation of the stairwells (which were poorly lit and completely unoverlooked), and the inadaptability of flats. Where their garden-city-dwelling contemporaries could extend outwards or open the ground floor plan, opt for a second bathroom under the stairs or convert the attic, put a shed in the back garden or keep a car in the driveway, the tenants of O'Devaney Gardens had only the option of new windows and doors or a fresh colour of paint over the façade. But these facts are true of many successful high density housing developments elsewhere in Europe; they cannot account for the Gardens' degradation to the point of wholesale demolition.

'Do the slums make the slum people, or the slum people make the slums?' (Cowan, 1918).

The most accurate answer to the question of O'Devaney Gardens' architectural failure might be described as something of a chicken and egg (or an egg and chicken) paradox; the solution of which is of course that a circle has no beginning.

The scheme's physical disconnect from the historic urban fabric by which it was surrounded may have contributed to its demise. Against O'Devaney Gardens were turned the backs of North Circular Road's hulking mansions (to the west), the gables of quaint Ross Street and Ashford Place and

Cottages (to the north), the exclusionary perimeter of St. Bricin's Military Hospital (to the east), and the fine-grained terraces off (upper) Infirmity Road (to the south). It occupied these backlands in a manner which sought to exist as an island; independent not only of the established urban grain but of the adjacent communities. One resident described the stigma of being from the flats as 'a black tar' (*Stories from O'Devaney Gardens*, 2013), and cited this as being the root of the communal spirit which was so prevalent in O'Devaney Gardens in its infancy (that the tenants were unified in the face of such latent external adversity). But was the site's isolated arrangement the result of such presuppositions on the part of Charlie McNamara and Dublin Corporation? Was it merely the built reflection of an existing social hierarchy? Or was the tenants' societal annexation from Stoneybatter, Cabra East and the wider context of Dublin city born of the island-like separatism of the scheme itself? One might be described as having fed the other, in something of a feedback loop.

Further exacerbating the issue of the Gardens' urban isolation was their lack of facilities. With almost no amenities of their own and limited access to those of the adjacent communities, the football pitch was the scheme's only concession to communal activity. Although this was very successful in providing a focal point throughout the 50s, 60s and 70s (residents fondly remember the 7-a-side leagues which were such a year-round source of pride and entertainment), the onset of car theft and joyriding in the 80s saw the football pitch turned into an arena for such unsavoury antics. The widely publicised commentary of 'antisocial behaviour' became something of a national mantra where all matters pertaining to O'Devaney Gardens were concerned, and what had started as a node of community devolved into the stage upon which this mantra was played out. O'Devaney's football pitch was at the heart of the 'antisocial behaviour' chant; at once its theatre and its subject.

The role which the stairwells played in the scheme's downfall also came into effect from the 80s onwards, in conjunction with the sudden availability of cheap heroin (Grehan in *The Journal*, Bodkin, 2015) which would plague the social housing complexes of Dublin city throughout the following decades. The devolution of the circulation cores into lawless blind spots was a testament to the importance of passive surveillance in residential developments; to this day serving as something of a cautionary tale. O'Devaney Gardens' stairwells were unlike those of their Simms-designed predecessors, in that they were integrated into the building envelope as opposed to extruded out from the inward-facing façade (in the form of free-standing towers with gallery walkways spanning over to the balconies). On a practical level, however, they shared the same shortcomings. The Gardens' lack of sheltered gathering spaces relegated neighbourly encounters to the stairwells and pram sheds, although the latter were at ground floor level around the perimeter of the courtyard, with all the passive surveillance of the windows above bearing down upon them. The former, however, were only overlooked in very narrow glimpses where they connected to the deck-access balconies at each floor (the windows on the half-storey landings were placed above eye level).

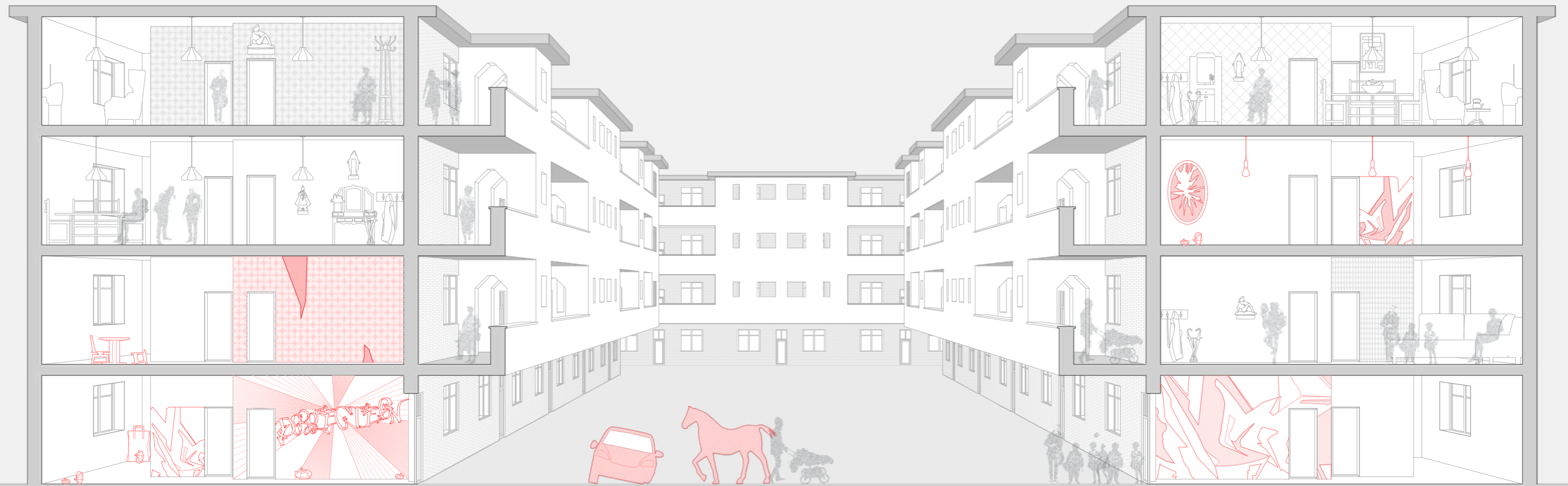
The stigma attached to O'Devaney Gardens was compounded by the government scheme of 1985 which sought to incentivise public tenants to buy their own homes, but on the condition that the home in question be a house as opposed to a flat. This was initially dreamt up as an emergency means of introducing a sense of personal investment in the community; of ownership and accountability, in the social housing complexes of Ballymun. In both instances the scheme functioned to speed tenants' flight from the flats to the houses (in O'Devaney Gardens, to the Montpelier and Dunard estates).

'Arguably, the retention of the estate's houses in the face of the flats' total obliteration – beginning with the tower blocks in 2004 – points to the general antipathy towards flats in Irish culture.' (Rowley, 2019, p.230, on the demolition of Ballymun).

The definitive exclusion of the flat from the veritably state sanctioned definition of the word 'home' speaks volumes to what seems an almost predestined fate of high density housing in Ireland. Might the 1985 doctrine of houses as homes and flats as unworthy of ownership still be at large in the Irish psyche? In the company of the 'foul blot on the social life of Dublin' which came before? If so, how does it present itself in the context of contemporary developments which are privately managed (as opposed to publicly owned)?

Echoes of the 1985 buy your own home policy might be said to resound in current discourse surrounding the purchase of existing housing stock by private investors. In October 2022, Taoiseach Michael Martin cited investment funds as having been the buyers of approximately 13% of the national total of houses which had been sold between January and September (Finn, 2022). Preliminary discussions regarding the implementation of new policy to stop the purchase of homes by such private investors were only floated in light of the shift from the sale of apartments and multi-family complexes to houses and estates. The implication is nearly identical to that of 1985; that only houses (and not apartments) merit statutory protection from self-serving profiteers of property.

o'devaney gardens



The Royal Canal Crescent apartments in Ashtown, Dublin 15 were designed by O'Mahony Pike for Castlethorn Construction property developers in 2012, as phase three of the ongoing strategic development of the area. The Ashtown/Rathborne/Pelletstown masterplan might be described as something of a twenty-first century interpretation of the traditional garden city, in its occupation of a greenfield site on Dublin's urban fringe and its creation of a satellite-town-esque residential hub which is entirely newly built. It fundamentally differs from Ebenezer Howard's original vision, however, in its composition of mixed typologies (as opposed to the homogeneously 2-bed terraces of nearby Cabra). For the purpose of examining the evolution of multi-family residential architecture in Ireland, the apartment blocks which bookend the terrace on the crescent's eastern side might provide the best insight.

Distinguished by their travertine cladding and extra height from the duplex-come-townhouse hybrids which span the curve between, these five-storey bookends house a single-bed apartment at ground floor level and two-beds above. With open plan kitchen-living-dining areas to the south and double bedrooms (and ensuite) to the north, these apartments cater for the spatial fluidity which is so universally desirable in contemporary residential architecture. The balconies (which are south facing and adjacent to the dining area) differ from those in O'Devaney Gardens in that they are fully (as opposed to semi) private and serve only to provide the residents with outdoor space for personal use (not for access). Also different to O'Devaney's balconies is that which they overlook; the busy road of the Royal Canal Crescent as opposed to the Gardens' communal outdoor space. Beyond the road is Crescent Park, but obscured from the apartments' view by the railings of the park's boundary and the curving line of trees behind.

The buildings' deferral of responsibility for the provision of communal outdoor space to the private balconies and the park opposite speaks

inherently of an ambition (on the part of the architects and developers) for a short-term dwelling situation. Only the stairwells make a spatial allowance for communality, and there is no designated area for hypothetical children's outdoor play. Neither does the open plan of the living areas suggest an intention for the units to function as lifelong homesteads; the lack of spatial division does not concede any adaptability for the conflicting activities and requirements of potential co-inhabitants.

The architectural phenomenon which Ellen Rowley dubs 'suburban placelessness' might be at play in some of the shortcomings of these apartment buildings. For a piece of architecture to come into being is a difficult ask at the best of times; for it to simply spring forth from a greenfield site, without built context to inform it or existing urban grain to tether it, seems almost to doom its fate.

My design proposal is anchored in the belief that Dublin's urban footprint is sufficient to sustain its current and projected population; that sprawling developments in the vein of the Royal Canal Crescent are not the solution to the current housing crisis.



conclusion

Might a new interpretation of suburban apartments aid architects and planners in the necessity to densify living conditions in Irish towns and cities? One which accounts for the cultural factors which are at play on the issue of high density housing? It is my hope to explore ways in which the terraces of the Tolka Valley might be adapted to a higher capacity; to introduce new multi-family units to the existing condition.

It stands to reason that garden-city suburbs were 'an easy sell' (Rowley, 2019, p.19) to the deprived tenants of early to mid-twentieth century inner-city Dublin. The *Irish Press*' quote upon arriving in newly built Crumlin from the depths of Dublin's tenements outlines the sense of relief and delight which almost seemed to embody a new beginning for the residents. Although this does not entirely explain contemporary Ireland's fixation with the suburban terrace as the basic increment in which the concept of 'home' is measured, it can account in part for the significance of the single-family unit in the Irish cultural psyche.

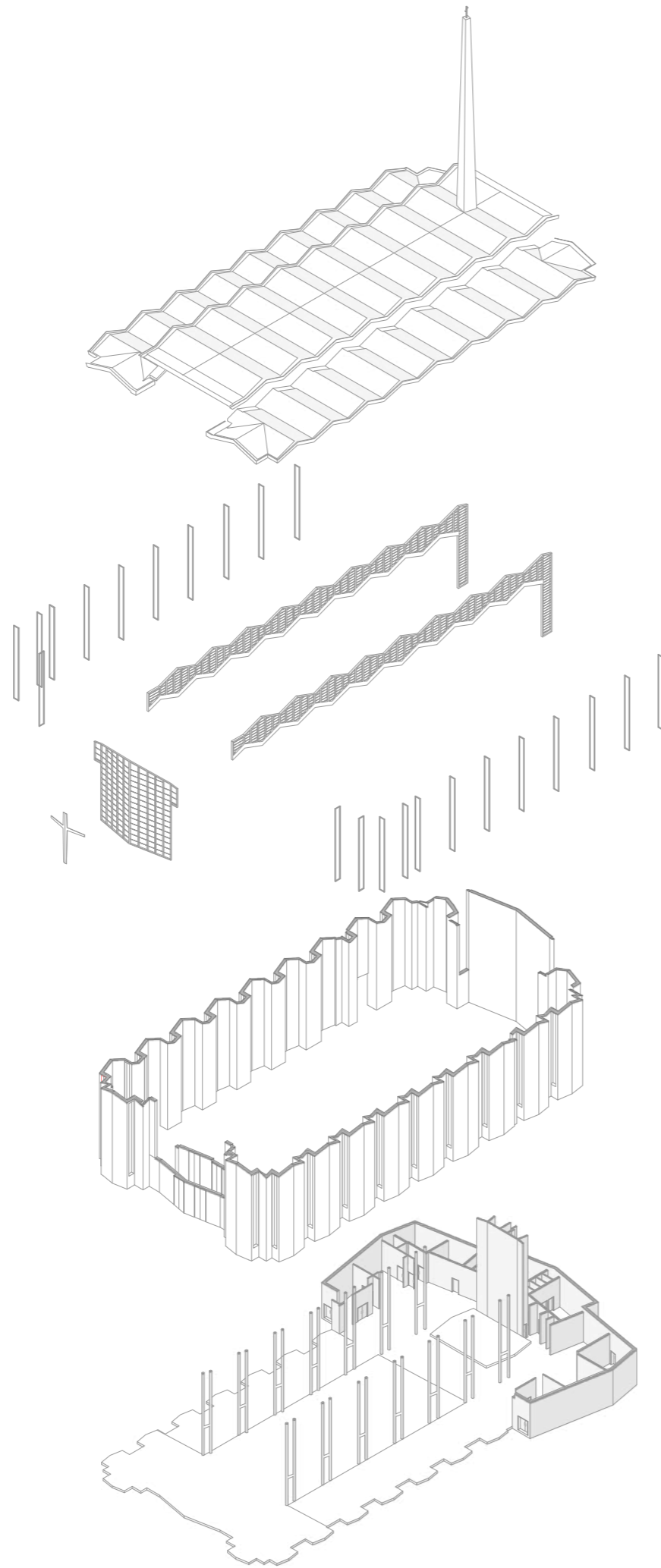
Consolidating this significance were both the objective failures and the unfavourable narratives which developed around Corporation flats of the early to mid-twentieth century (of which O'Devaney Gardens is but one example). The delivery of this state-sponsored definition of high density housing with such mixed results; its architectural language to this day imbued with socioeconomic stigma, has undoubtedly had a bearing on the ability of subsequent multi-family residential developments to appeal to the Irish public as lifelong homes.

the site

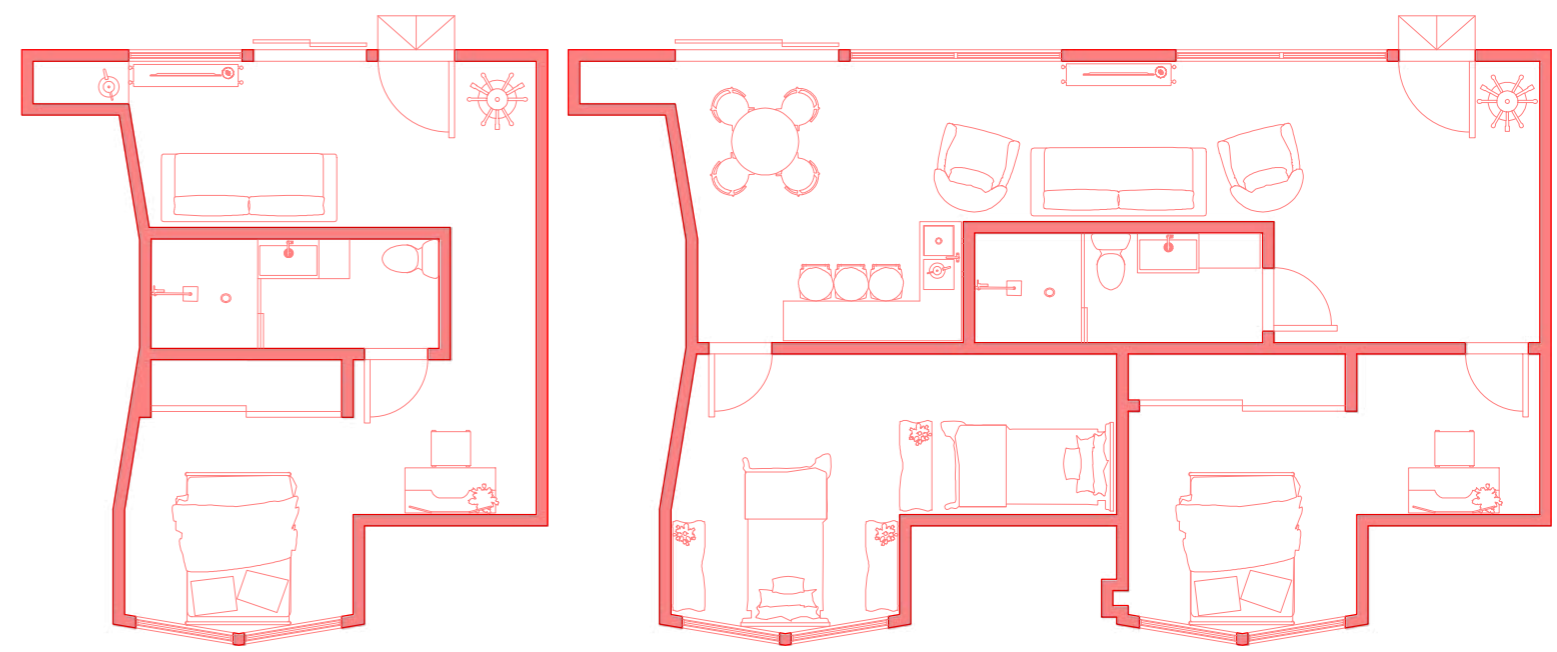
Finglas South; directly north of Tolka Valley Park. The solid red bars indicate the existing terraces which I propose to retrofit; the outlines would be newly built elements. The black hatch identifies houses of the same type (1950s cast-in-situ concrete terraces) in the area; different building typologies are outlined (for example Erin's Isle GAA club to the north).



the site

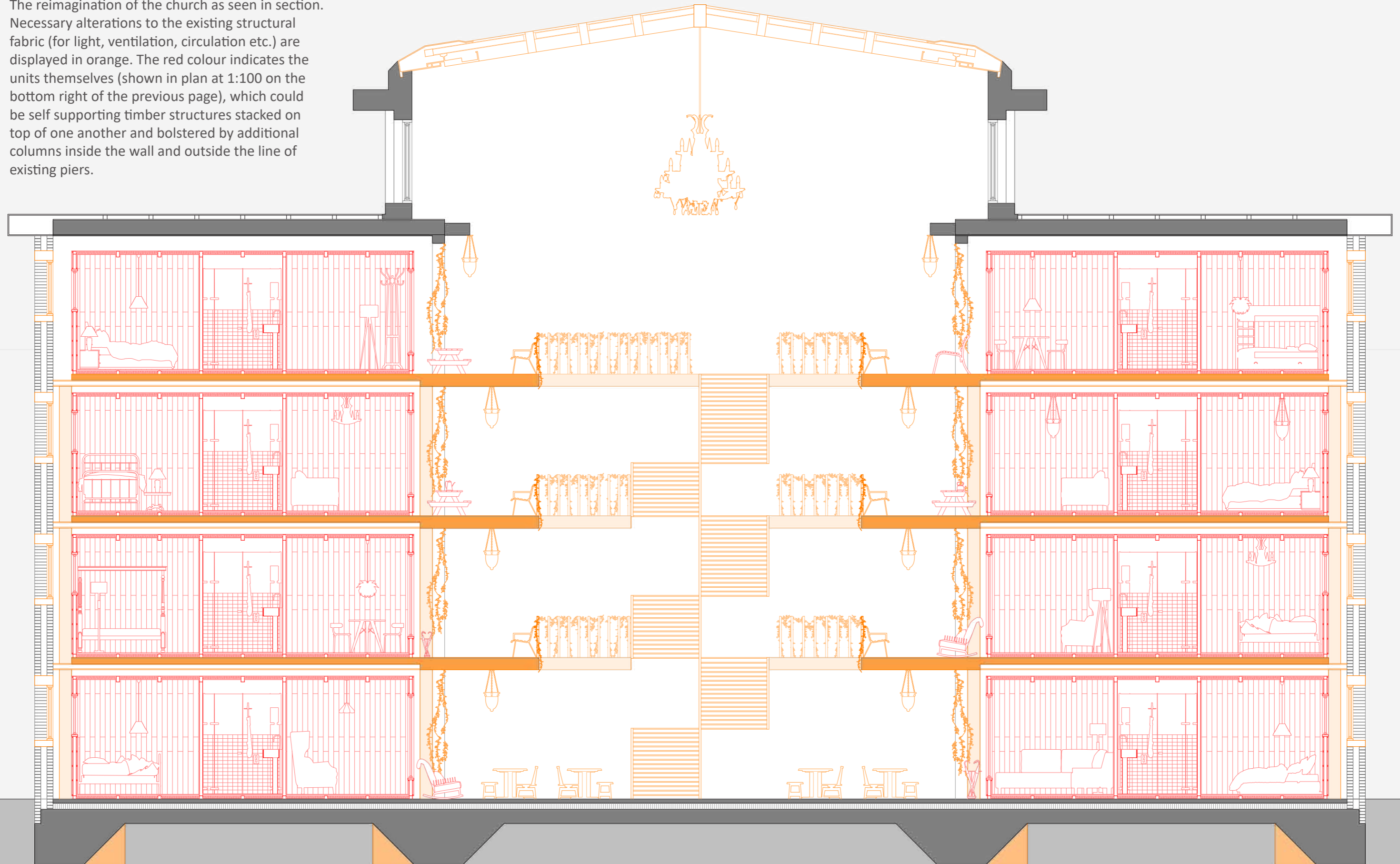


This page shows Finglas' Church of the Annunciation (prior to its demolition in 2018) reimagined as temporary housing for residents of the terraces, in which they could live for the duration of the reconstruction of their homes. The church was one of 33 identified by the Dublin archdiocese as having the potential to be rezoned for residential use, due to dwindling congregation numbers in the locality.



the site

The reimagination of the church as seen in section. Necessary alterations to the existing structural fabric (for light, ventilation, circulation etc.) are displayed in orange. The red colour indicates the units themselves (shown in plan at 1:100 on the bottom right of the previous page), which could be self supporting timber structures stacked on top of one another and bolstered by additional columns inside the wall and outside the line of existing piers.



the brief

Axometric view

Showing the removal of private rear gardens and the repurpose of cul-de-sac roads into communal allotments.

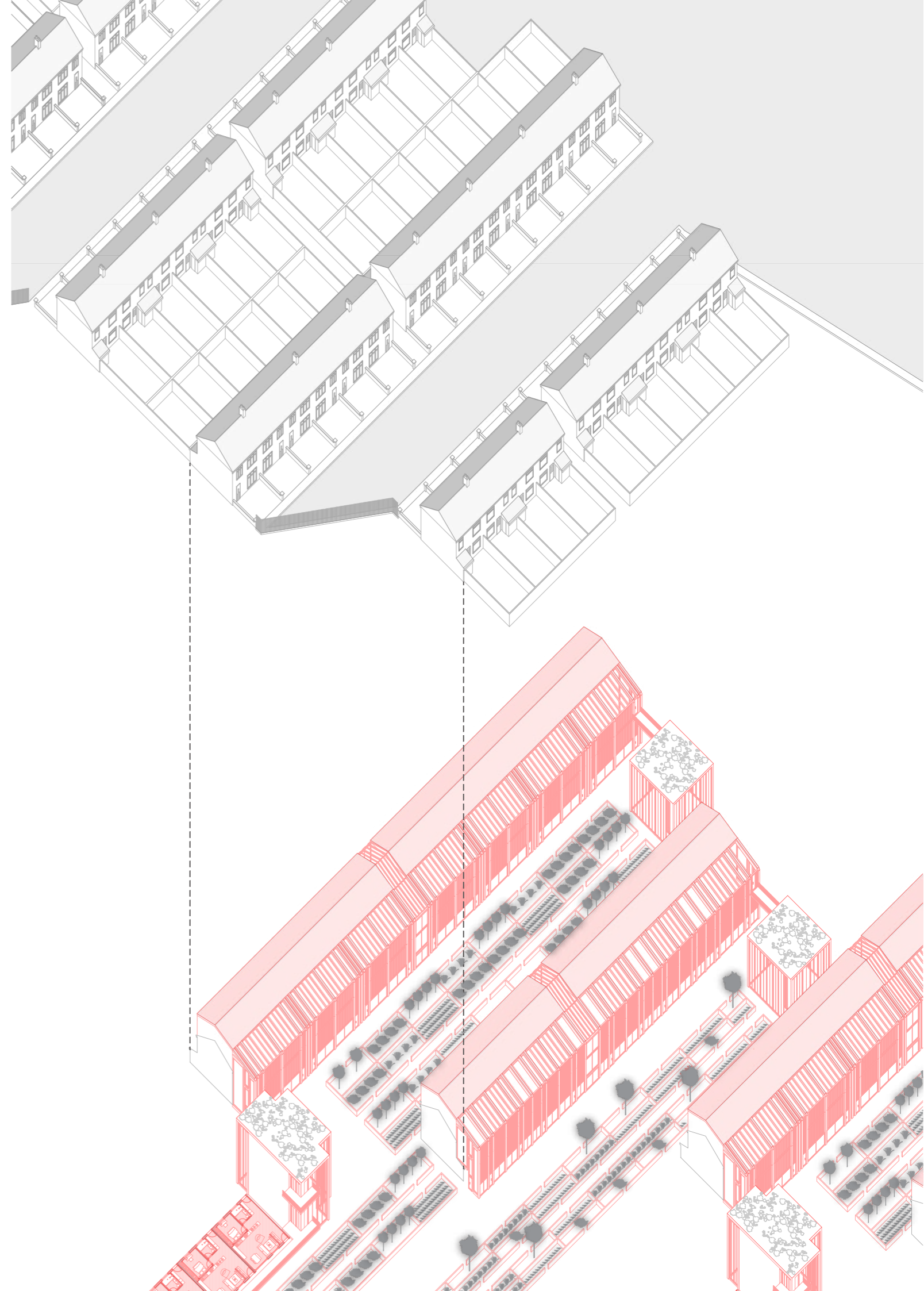
A one bed unit is introduced as the third storey of the existing terraced houses (which are 2-storey, 3-bed cast-in-situ concrete constructed in the 1950s).

The driveways are replaced by glazed wintergardens which serve to improve the houses' thermal efficiency by creation of an insulating microclimate to the south facade.

Density is achieved by addition of the new units.

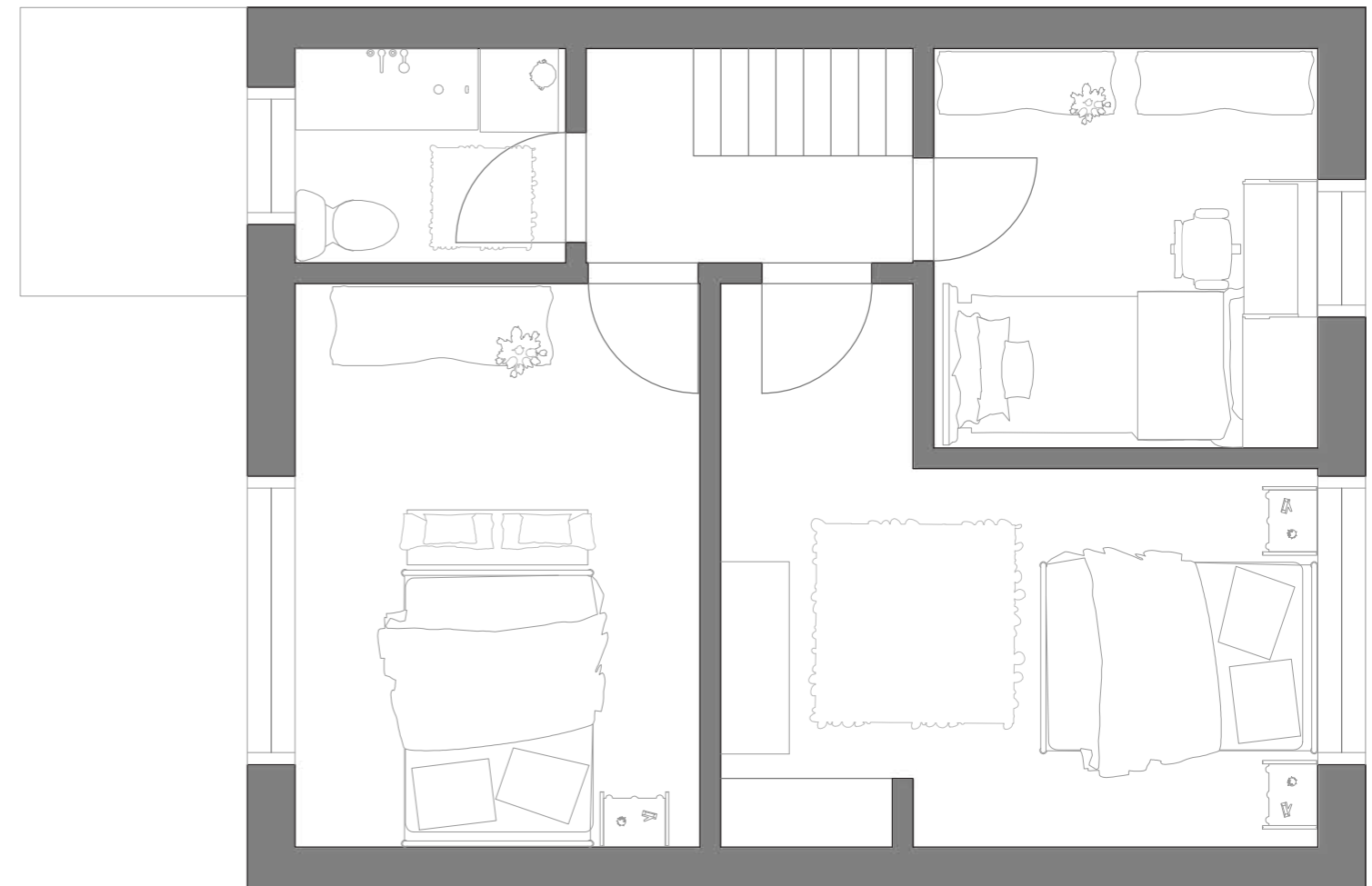
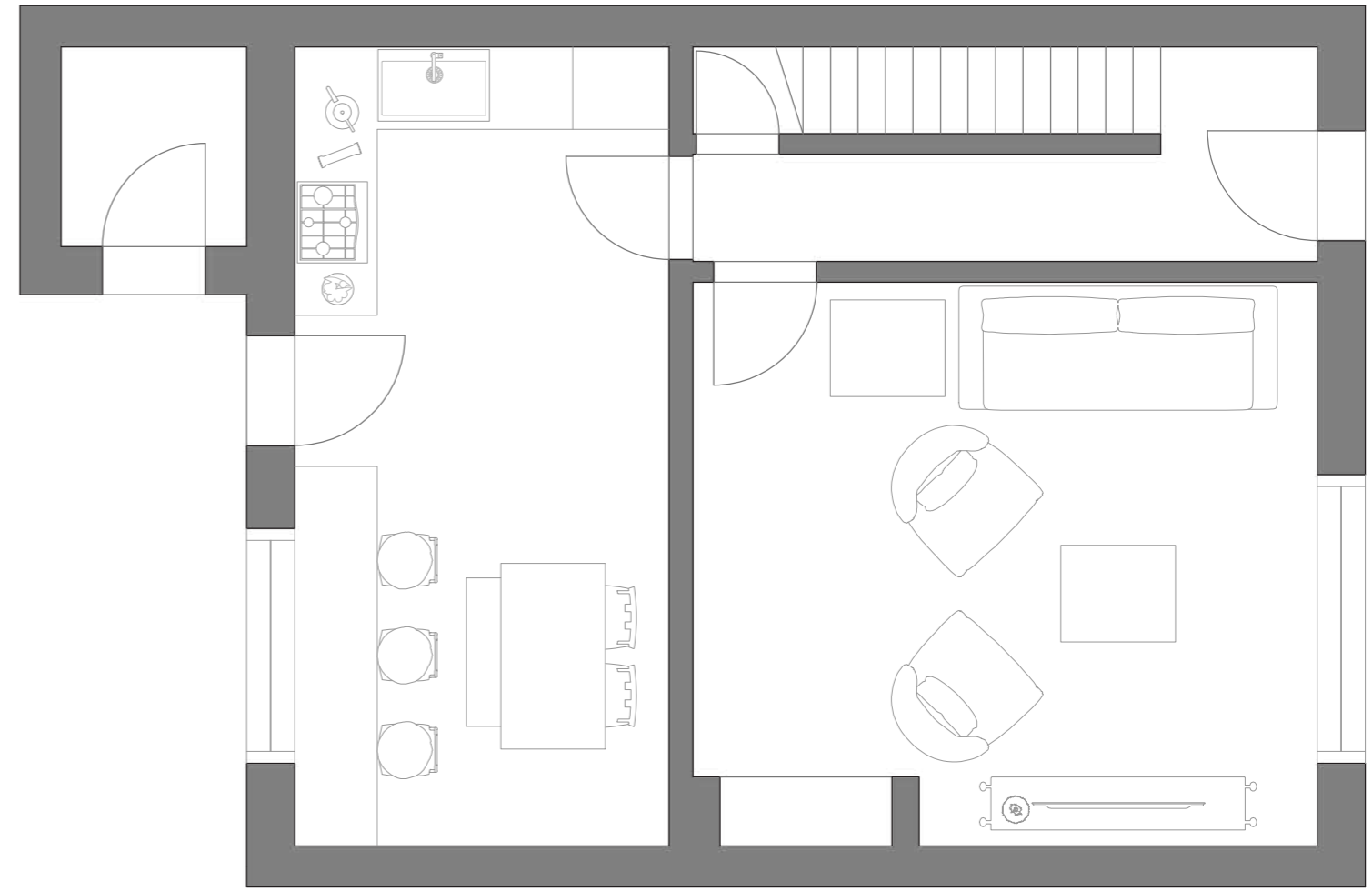
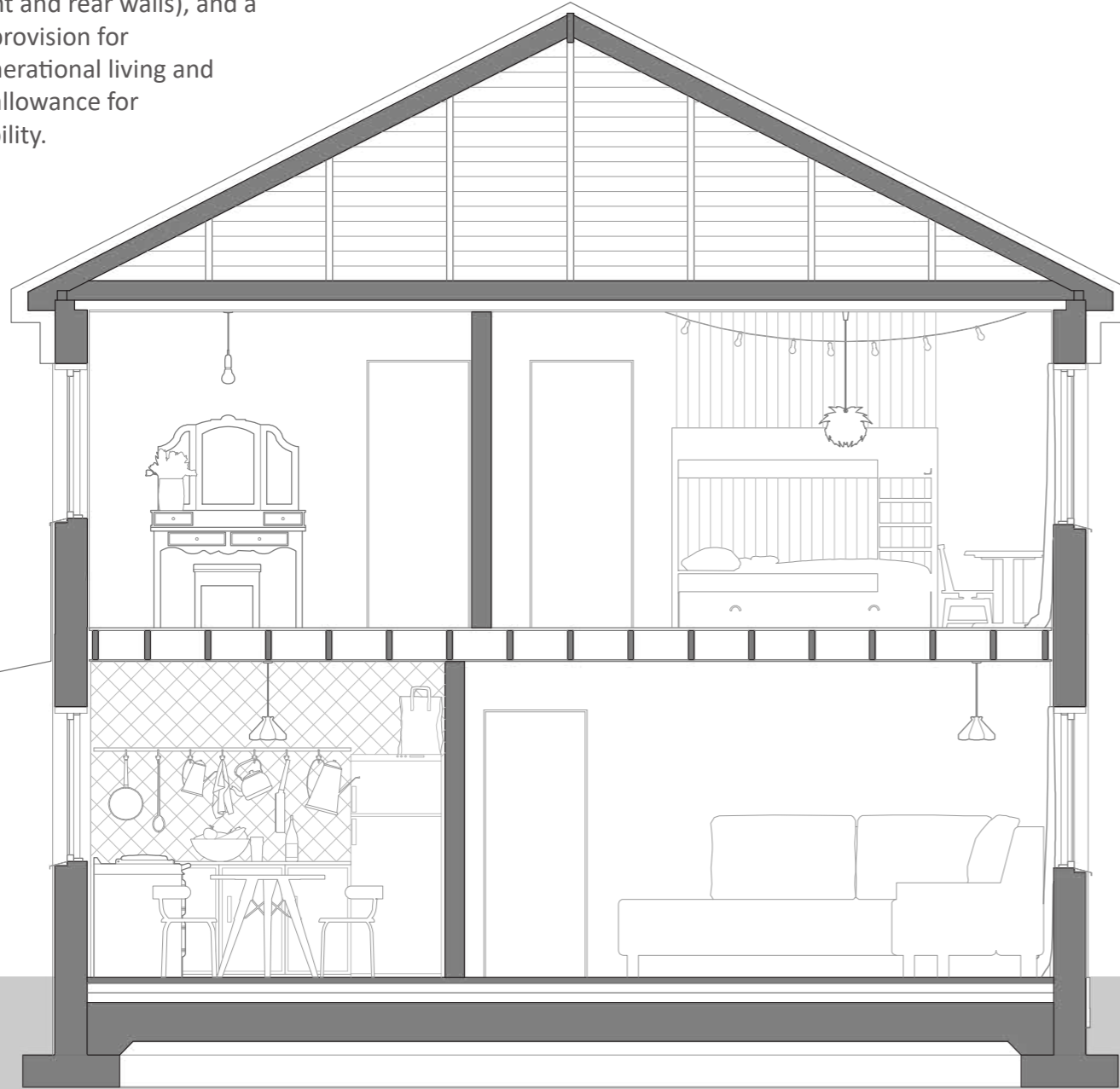
Productivity is allowed by the allotments and wintergardens; in which residents can grow fruit, vegetables, herbs and grains as contribution to their annual consumption.

Community is promoted through the social nature of these indoor/outdoor spaces.

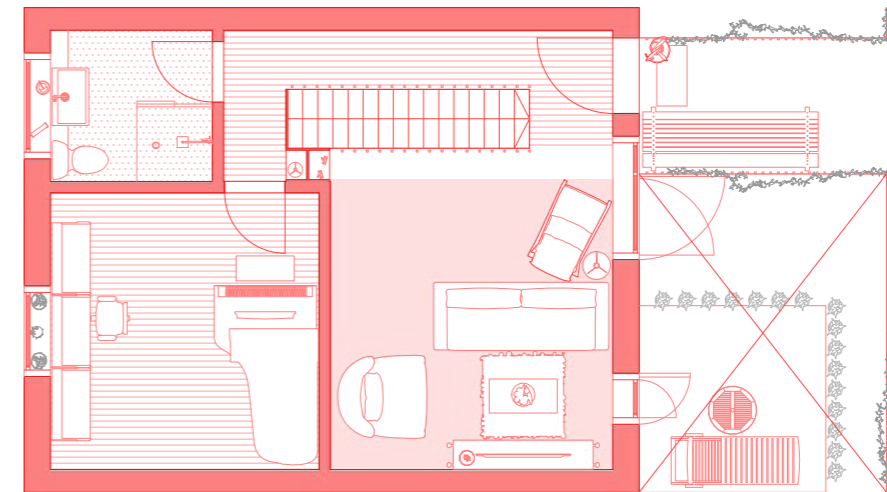
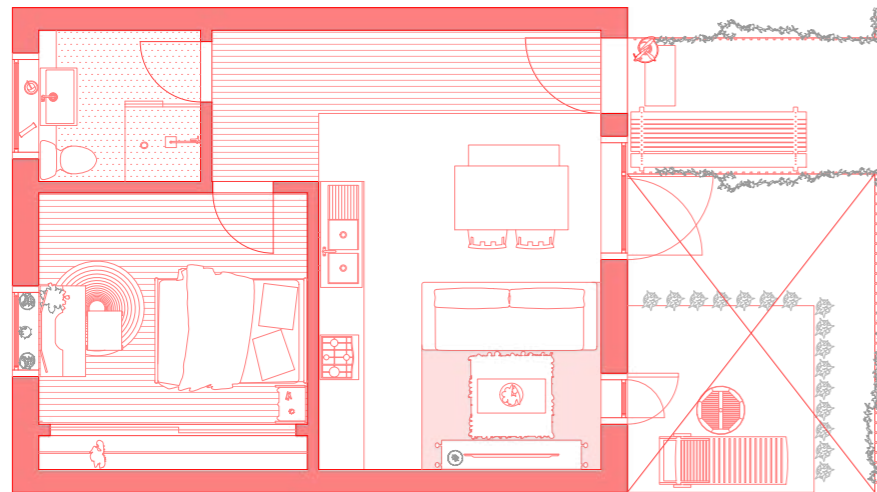
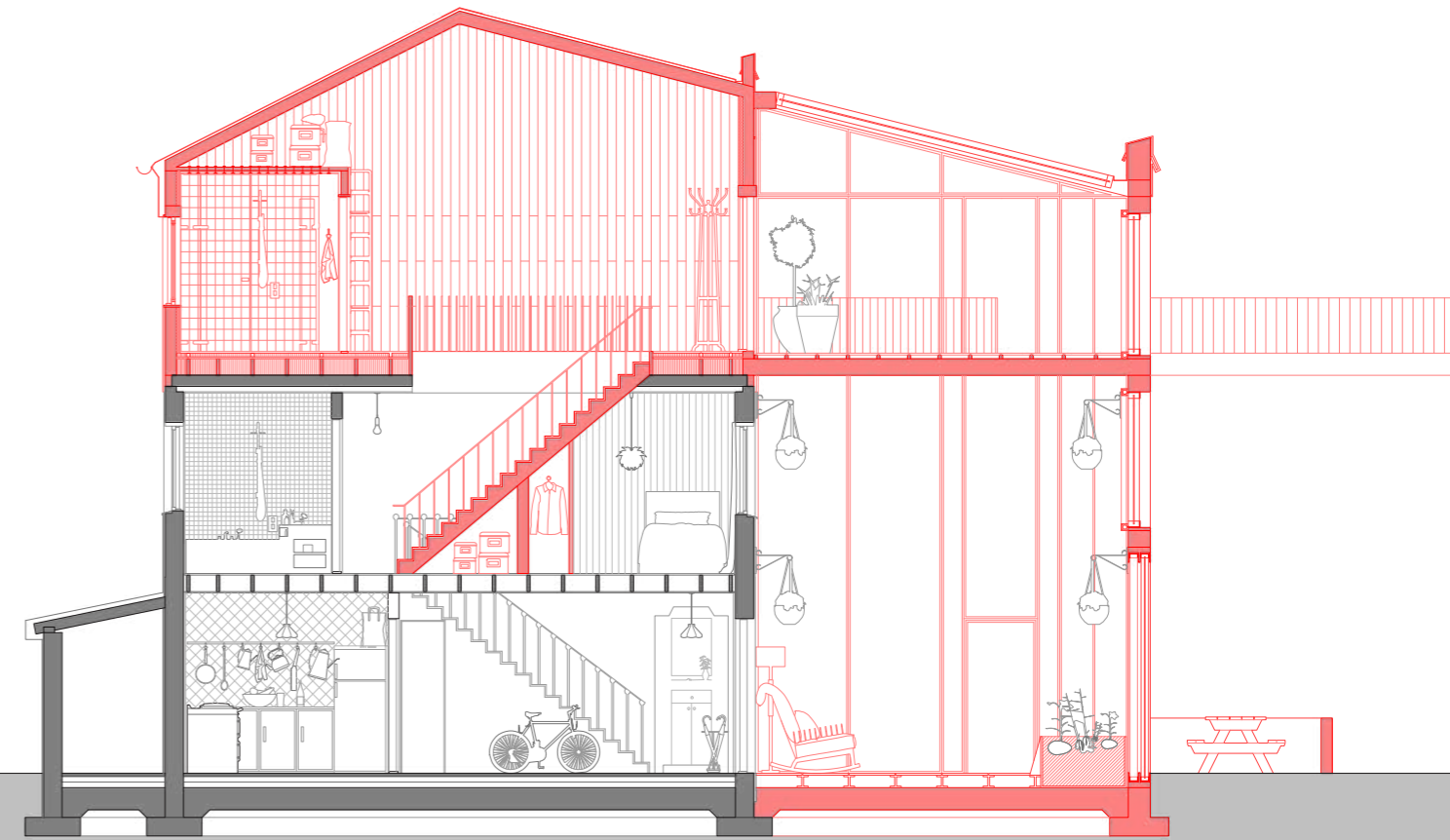
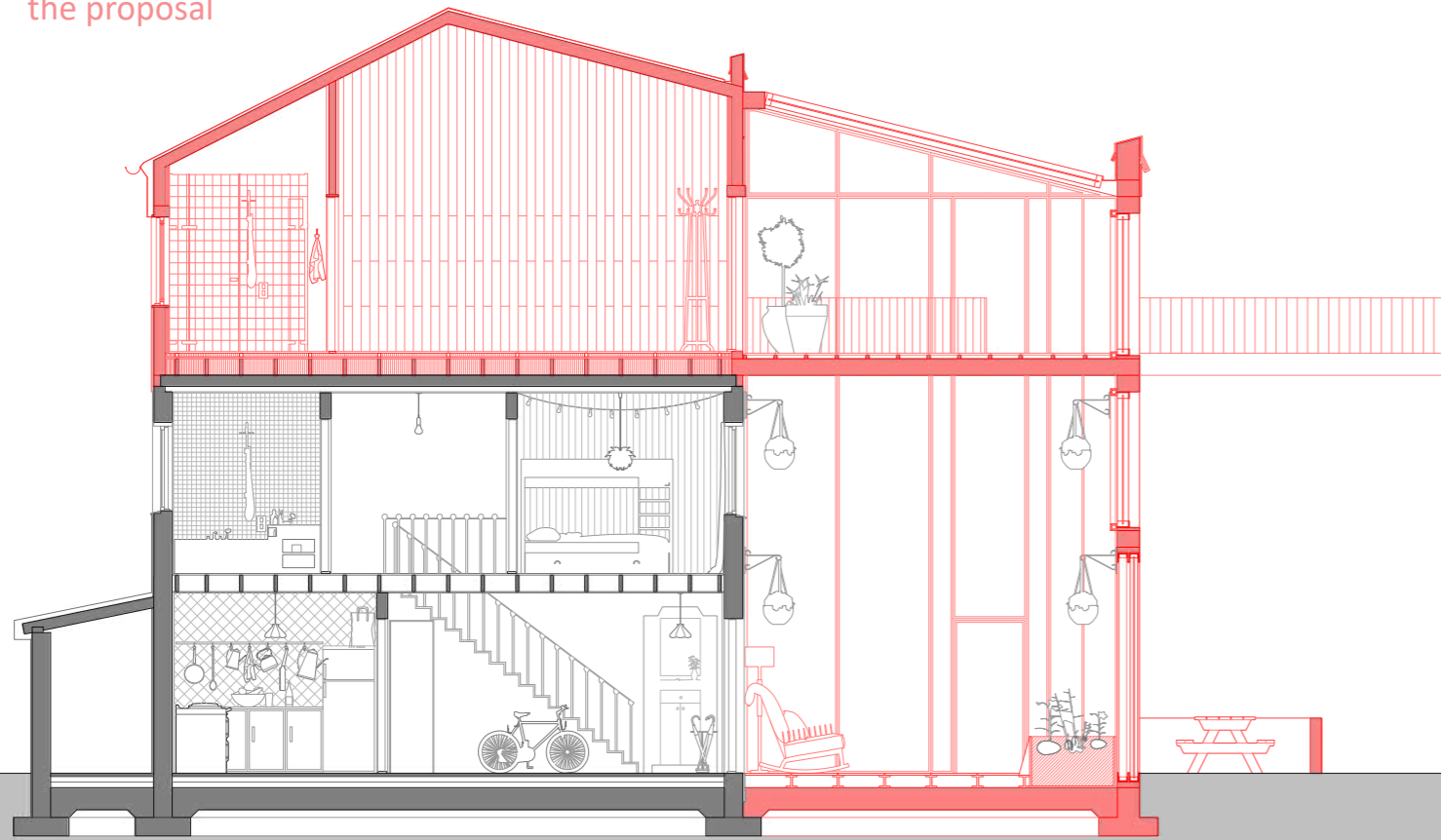


the existing condition

Shown in section and plan at 1:50.
Problems with existing housing stock of this type include leaky roofs, thermal inefficiency (due to the uninsulated ground slab and front and rear walls), and a lack of provision for intergenerational living and spatial allowance for adaptability.



the proposal

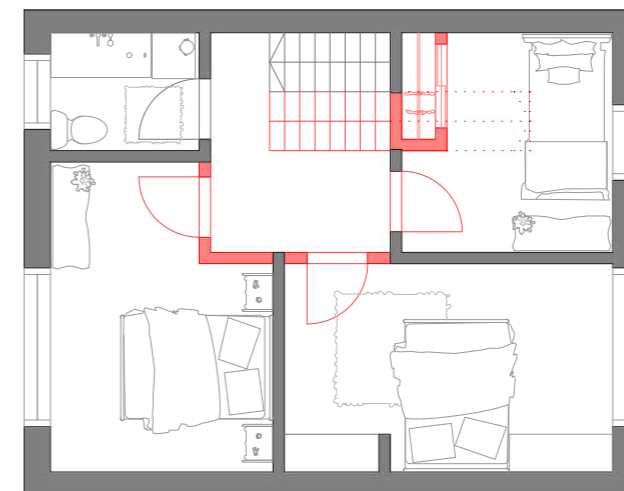


PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO TERRACED HOUSES.

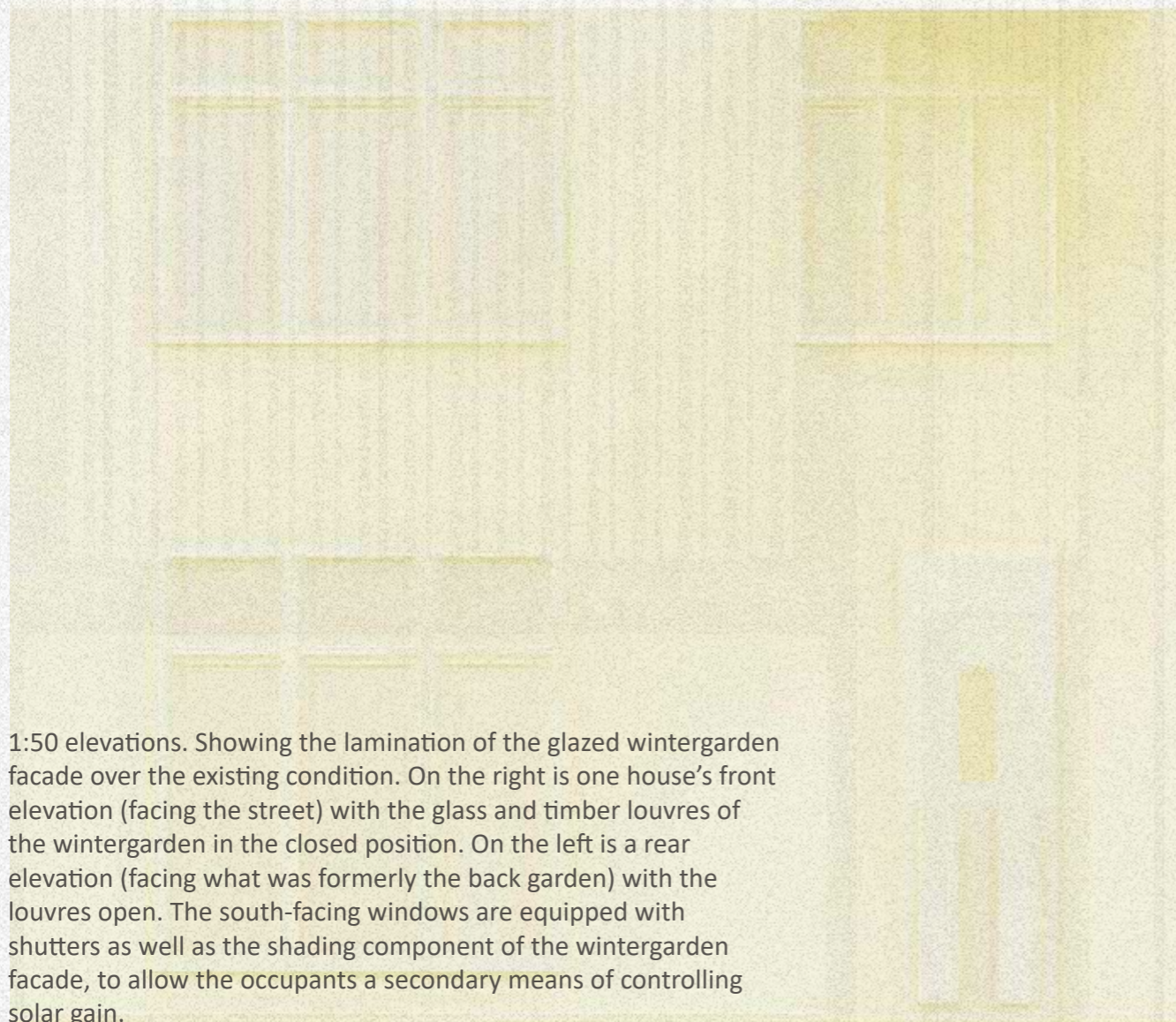
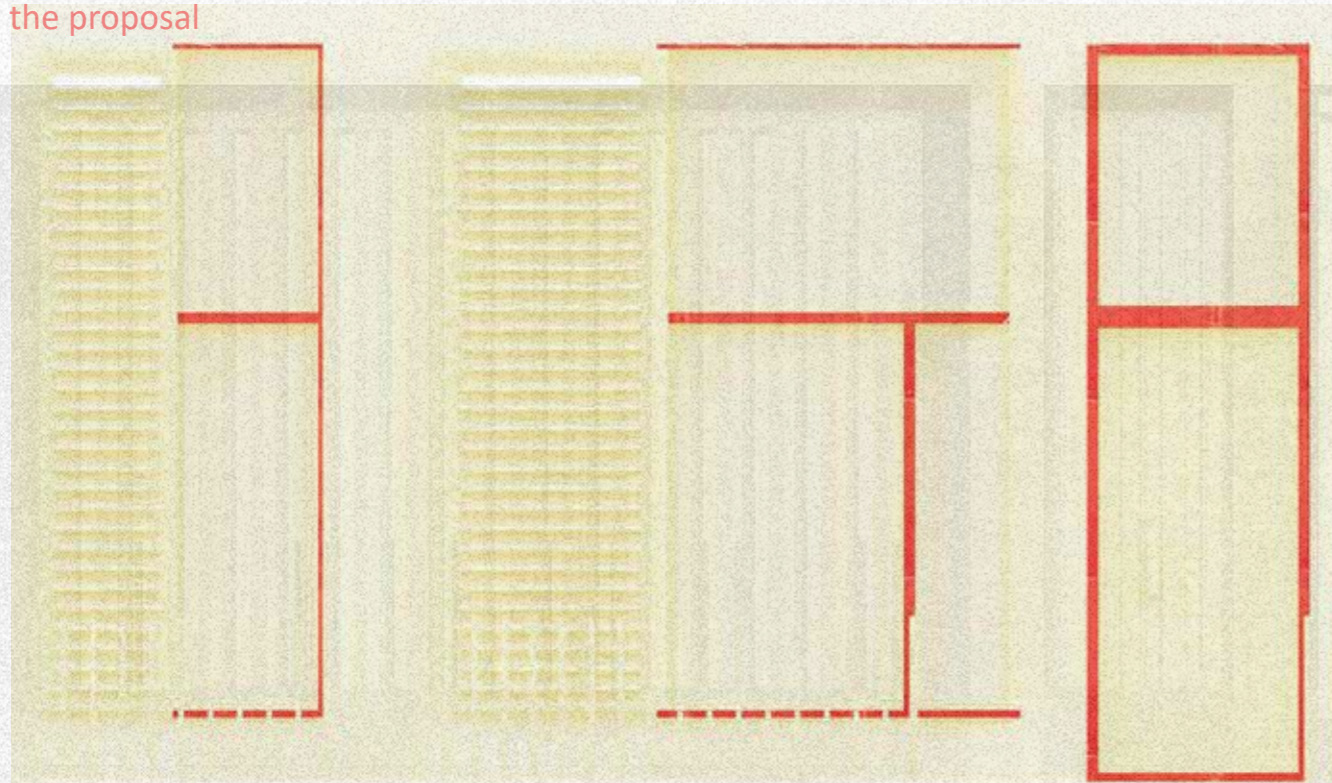
Scenario 1 (left) shows the additional storey as a self contained apartment; ideally for a young professional or a student.

Scenario 2 (right) shows its optional incorporation into the existing house. This might be preferable for occupants who have, for example, an elderly parent not wishing to live alone, in which case the north facing room could be maintained as the bedroom, with kitchen/living/dining to the south.

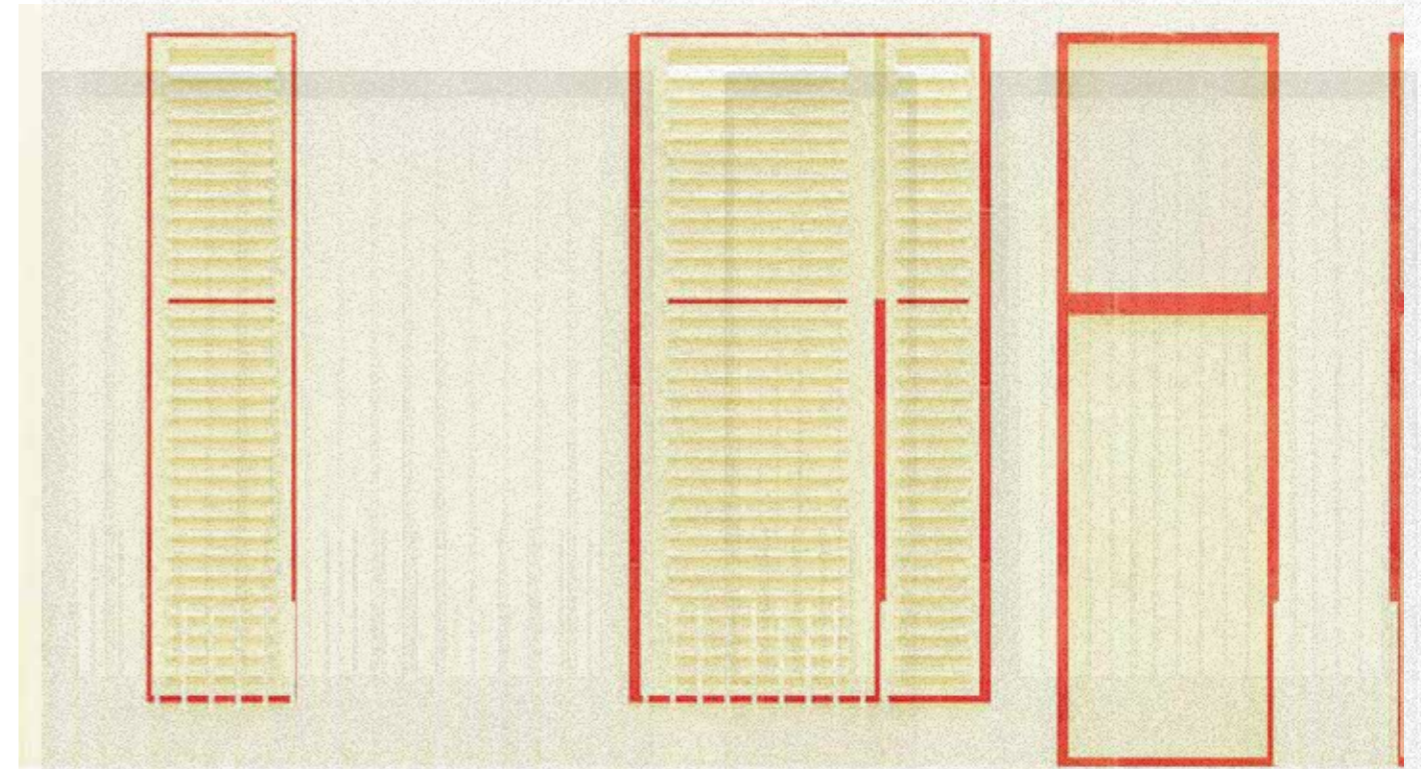
Alternatively, families in need of more space could extend upwards to use the area for a study/playroom etc.



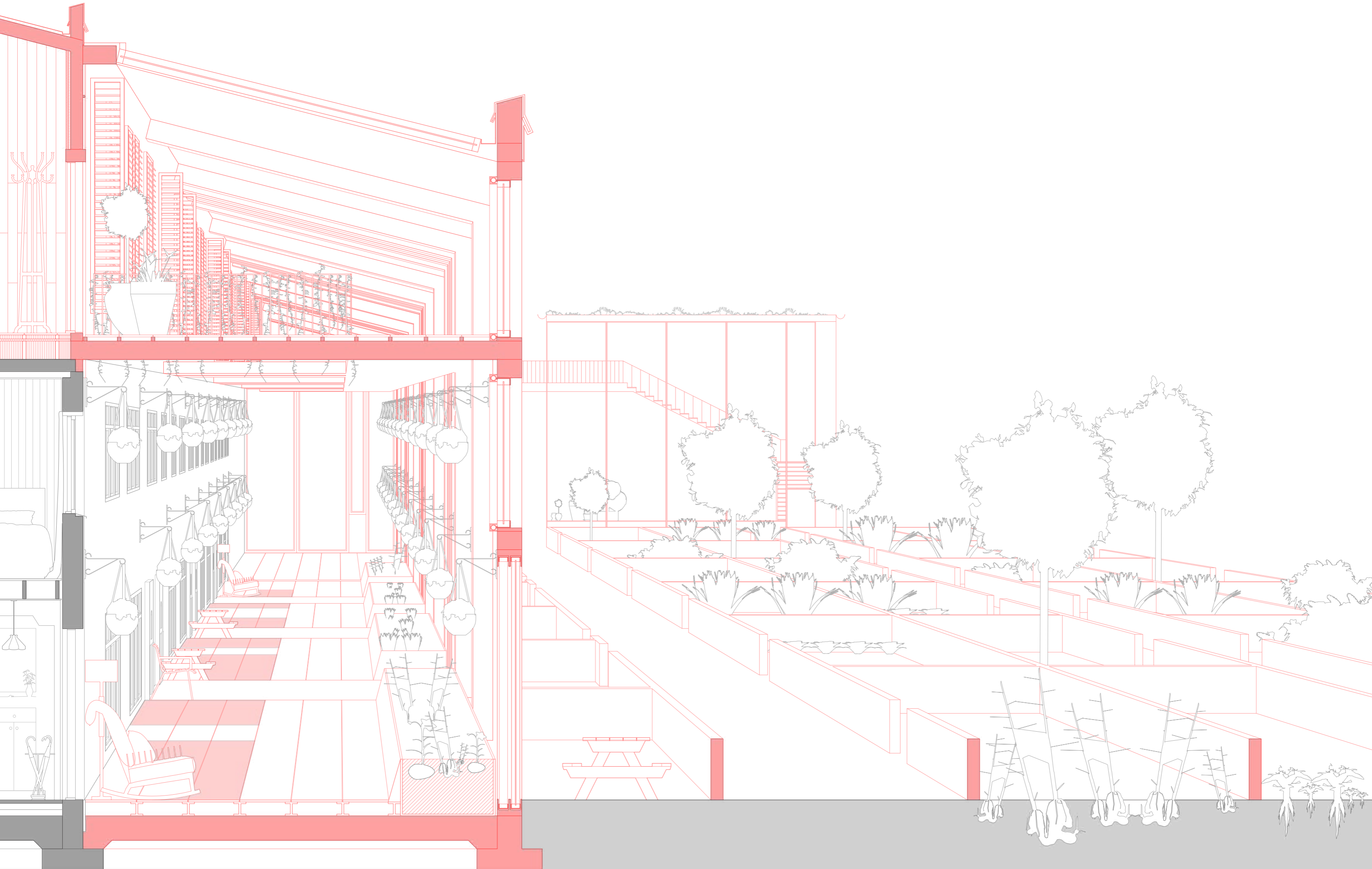
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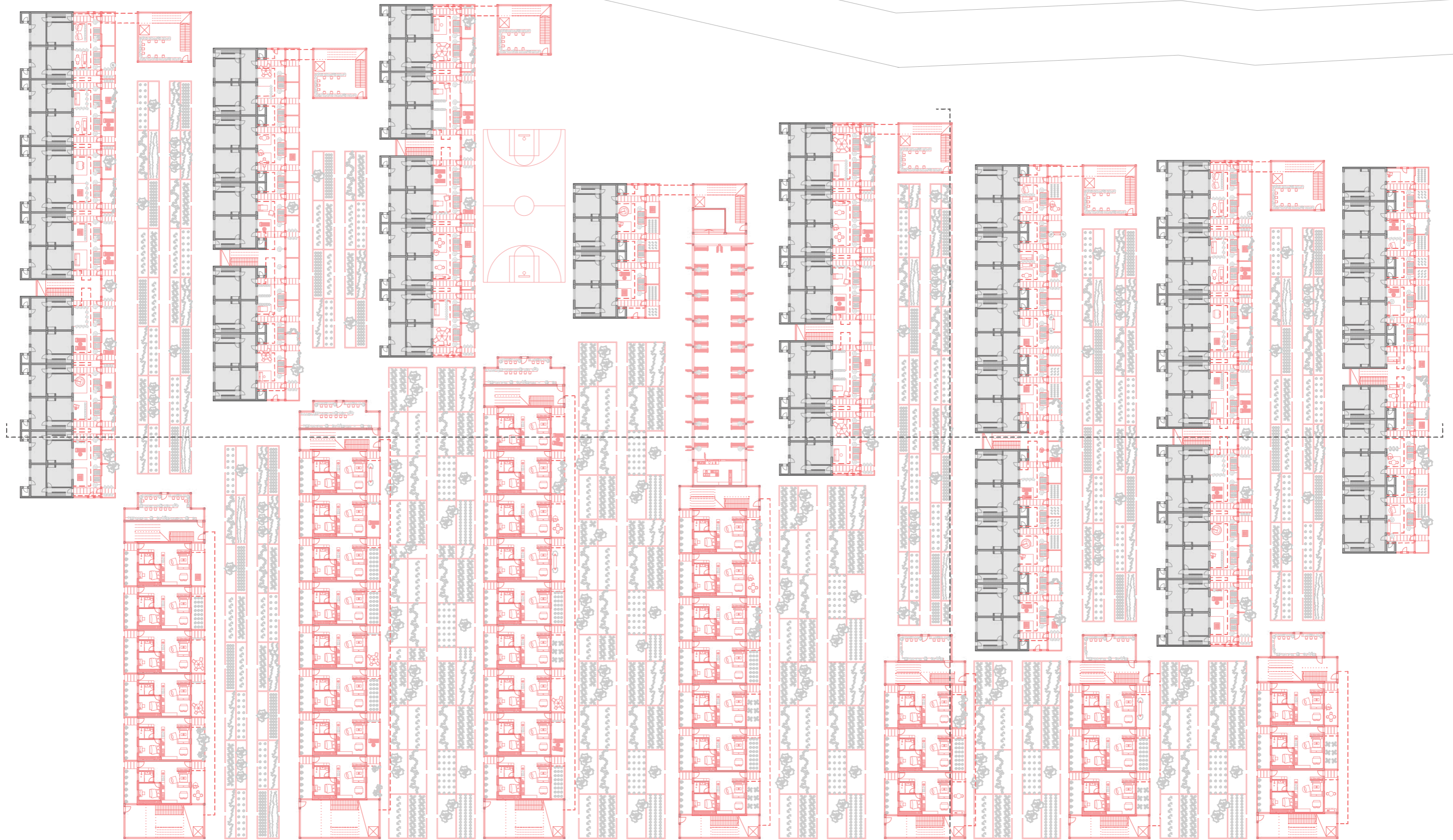
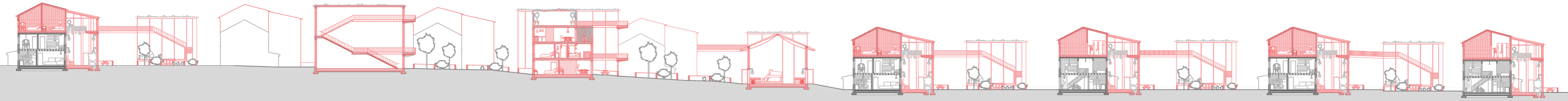
1:50 elevations. Showing the lamination of the glazed wintergarden facade over the existing condition. On the right is one house's front elevation (facing the street) with the glass and timber louvres of the wintergarden in the closed position. On the left is a rear elevation (facing what was formerly the back garden) with the louvres open. The south-facing windows are equipped with shutters as well as the shading component of the wintergarden facade, to allow the occupants a secondary means of controlling solar gain.



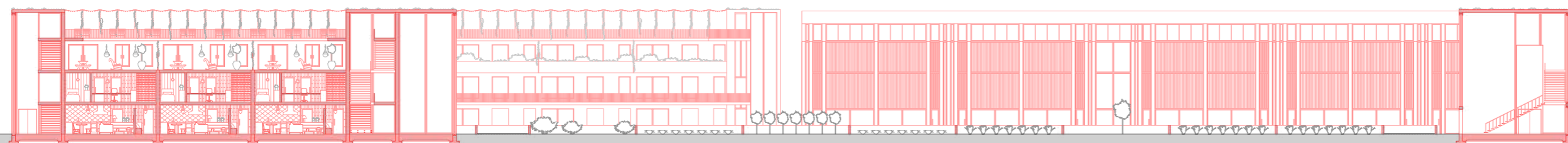
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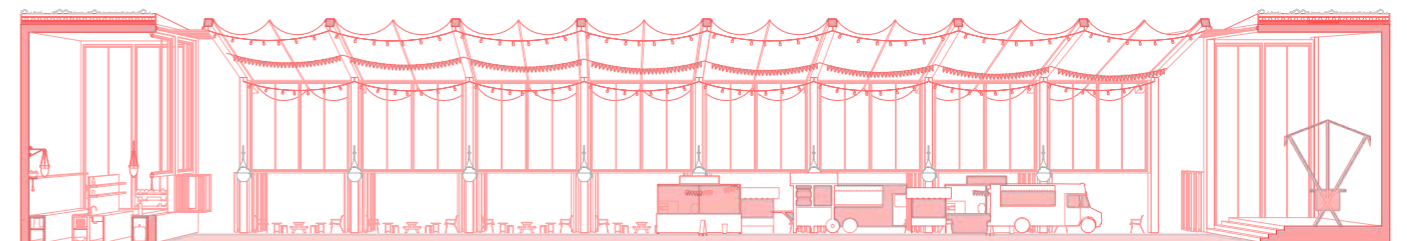
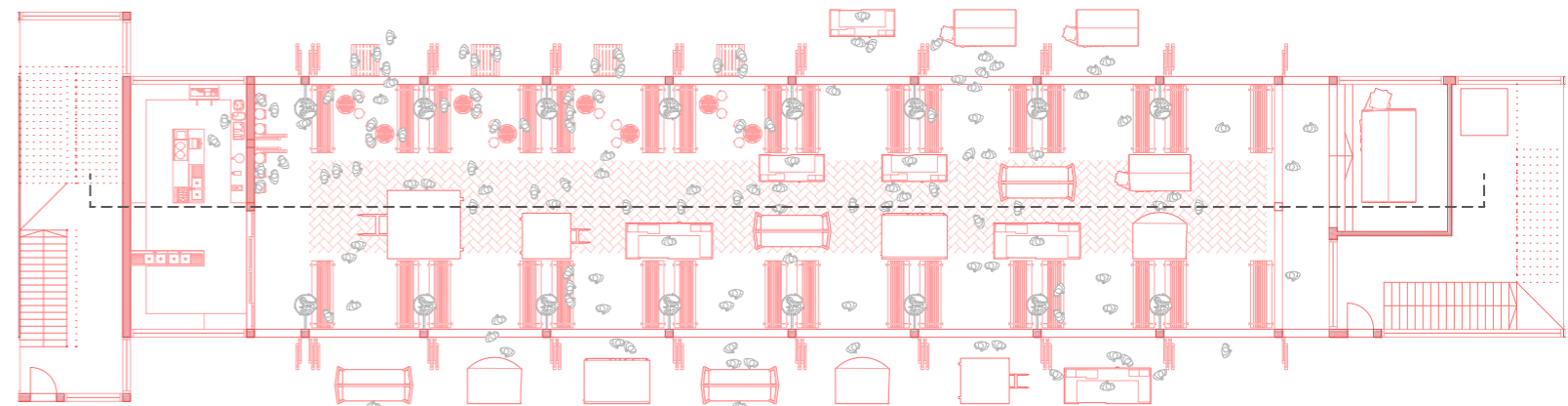
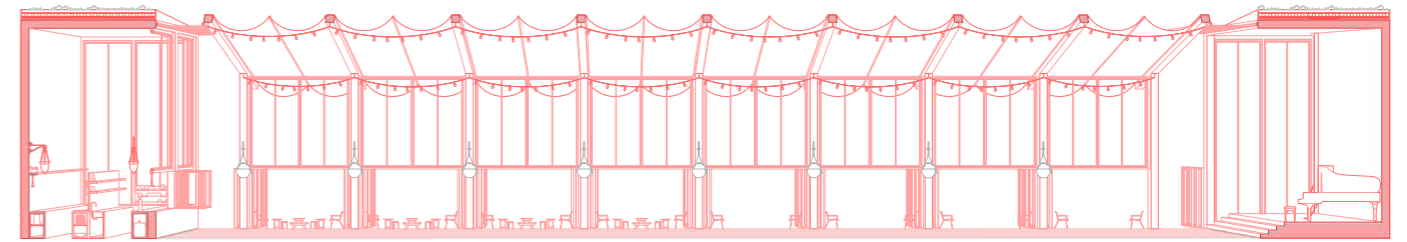
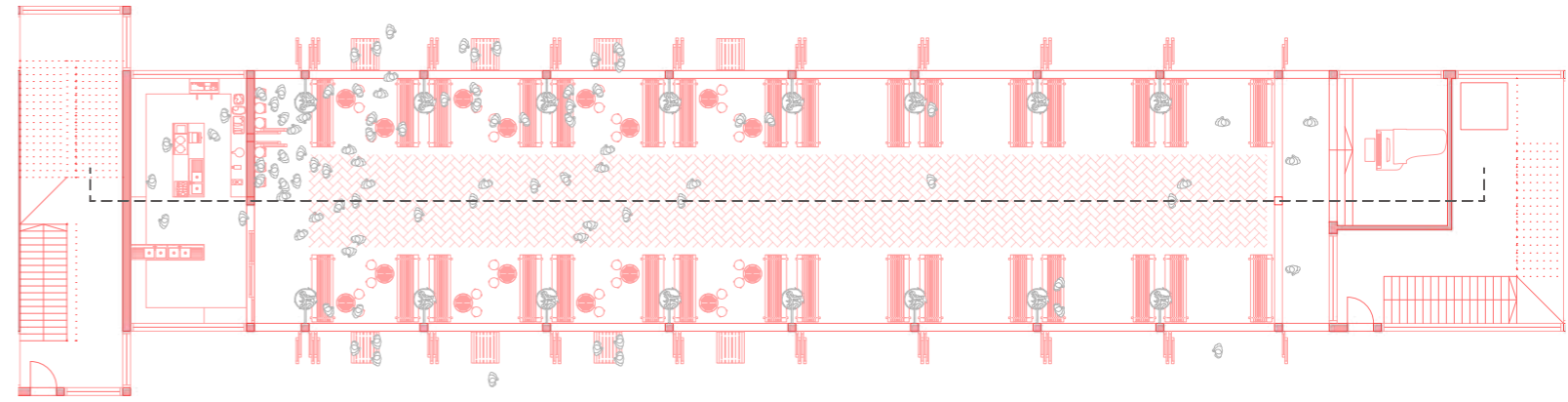
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Community.
Village hall; providing a focal point for the community. This could function differently on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis; as a cafe and indoor/outdoor public seating space, a bar and restaurant (which might operate on the basis of a voluntary rota and only open on weekends), a market hall (for visiting vendors or for locals selling produce yielded by their allotments), and as a venue for community meetings or small recitals, respectively.

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Regenerating Finglas' Housing Stock

A note on Dublin City Development Plan's chapters 5: Quality Housing and Sustainable Communities and 13: Strategic Development Regeneration Areas

The need to encourage an urban growth pattern which is compact as opposed to sprawling is well established in chapter 5 of the Development Plan. Policy QHSN4, entitled Key Regeneration Areas, details Dublin City Council's endeavour to improve living conditions and diversify demographics in neighbourhoods which have fallen into a state of physical deterioration; drawing a parallel between design and maintenance of the built environment and the quality of life of its inhabitants. The spatial character of Dublin City might be described as the stage upon which society is allowed to unfold, and QHSN4 recognises the importance of urban and architectural design in Dublin's development as a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable city. QHSN6 (Urban Consolidation) furthers the agenda of densification through its references to new developments within existing curtilages; stipulating that they should meet the same people-per-acre figures as greenfield and brownfield sites. QHSN10 details how this should be carried out with respect for spatial context and existing urban character; a point which I feel is imperative in the celebration of Dublin City's rich social and architectural history and culture. Even the most mundane, inefficient or aesthetically divisive buildings hold a unique place in the story of our city's evolution, and it is important that this be recognised throughout Dublin's metamorphosis into a more sustainable urban environment.

Strategic development regeneration area number 3 names Finglas Village Environs and Jamestown Lands as its catchment; an area stretching west from Finglas Village to Cardiffsbridge Road, and as far north as the border with Fingal County Council's jurisdiction. It is my opinion that this should be extended southward to include Tolka Valley Road and Park, and eastward to include the Finglaswood culvert. Section 13.5 of the Strategic Development Regeneration Areas programme cites Finglas' potential capacity (by area), good connections to transport and existing social infrastructure as some of the criteria by which it qualifies as an SDRA, but each of these would be strengthened by incorporation of the tract of land spanning to Gortmore Terraces (to the east). The greenfield site at Finglaswood culvert seems a prime opportunity to replace an overlooked wasteland with a vibrant communal amenity; Tolka Valley Road is a vehicular thoroughfare and an integral part of Dublin Bus networks, and Finglas Youth Club and Erin's Isle GAA club are important contributors to the social infrastructure of Finglas Village and Jamestown.