

SPATIAL
COMMONING:
RE-IMAGINING
WELLINGTON'S
CENTRAL-
CITY
LIBRARY
&
CIVIC
SQUARE.

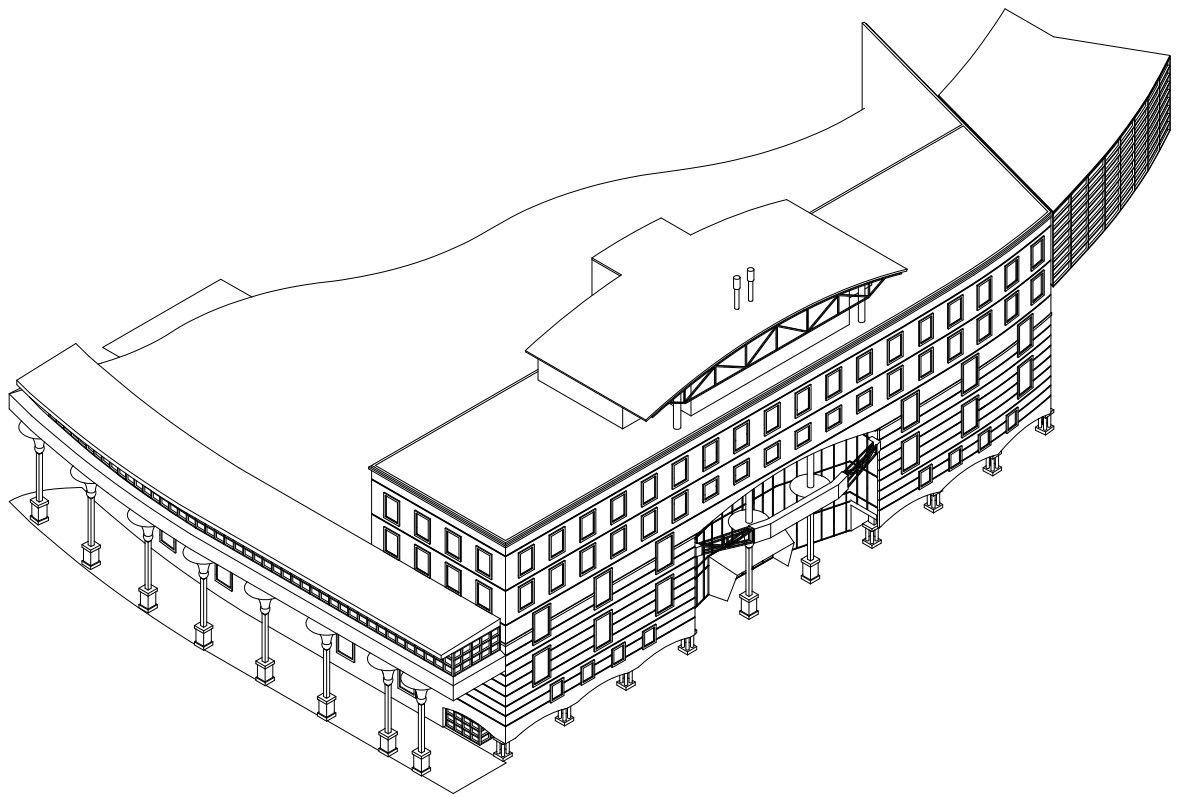
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SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE [PROF]

**SPATIAL COMMONING:
RE-IMAGINING WELLINGTON'S CENTRAL CITY
LIBRARY & CIVIC SQUARE**

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ABSTRACT

What if architecture could promulgate its resistance to urban inclinations of segregation, privatisation, and individualisation?

The neoliberal climate of contemporary cities has reduced architecture to a mere tool for capital accumulation. Architecture, consumed and produced as a form of capital, is facilitating the progression of inequality and environmental degradation, nullifying its humanitarian agenda.

In counter-reaction to the capitalistic conditions of the city, and the conviction that architecture can express social cognition, this thesis re-imagines, two essential community containers – Wellington Central Library and Civic Square as an urban common.

The primary intent of this thesis is to develop a speculative commons framework that architectonically articulates sharing and commoning practices in the context of Wellington City centre.

This research argues the pertinence of commoning theories in contemporary urban cities. It examines the genealogy and characteristics of the urban commons and how it could be spatially constructed.

It examines the historical significance of the existing building to inform the tectonic characteristics of the urban commons. It investigates the conceptual and formal devices of Post-Modernism to drive the spatial and representational aspects of the design process.

Moreover, it explores the evolving function and the societal role of libraries within the era of digitisation. It identifies an adaptable programmatic framework for the 21st-century library envisioned as a common.

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INTRODUCTION

Under the dynamics of neo-liberalisation, contemporary urban cities are increasingly prioritising economic growth, exacerbating social and environmental issues. The commodification of architecture within this context is perpetuating a cycle that benefits only a few at the expense of most, diminishing its social cognition.

In reaction to the status quo, there has been an increasing number of initiatives based on urban commons, concerned with urban collectivity, shared governance and community revival across the realms of economics, politics and urban design.

Revealing itself as an applicable opportunity, the Wellington Central Library has been closed since March 2019, for an indefinite amount of time, due to reports that in the event of another significant earthquake, the structural flooring system will literally “pancake”. Amongst the tumultuous public division between the “to save” or “to scrap” argument, this thesis takes the position of entirely re-imagining the Library and adjacent Civic Square as an urban common.

The primary intent of this thesis is to develop a speculative framework that spatially articulates the conditions of the urban commons, that are otherwise bound to a tectonically disconnected social practice. Leveraging the timely closure of the public library, it develops an architectural proposition that highlights the importance of commoning values in the city midst the counter forces of capitalistic dominance.

The research and design-led methodology spatially synthesise three theoretical drivers - the urban commons theory, the historical significance of the current library, and the evolving library typology. The scope of the thesis involves, developing the overall design of the Library and Square and its programmatic organisation, including integrated sub-systems.

Firstly, this thesis argues the pertinence of urban commons theories in architectural production today by studying architecture's evolving relationship with capital and its social purpose. It examines the genealogy and characteristics of the urban commons and adapts an existing framework for constructing it.

Secondly, it identifies a formal/representational driver congruent with the urban commons through exploring the historical significance of the Library and Civic Square site. It investigates the historical context and spatial attributes of Post-Modernism, as well as the conceptual and formal technique of collage.

Lastly, it investigates an adaptable programmatic framework for the contemporary urban library. It examines the changing socio-cultural role of the library typology and applies two frameworks – one guiding the construction of the urban commons and the other broadening the concept of the contemporary library program.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

**THIS THESIS DEVELOPS
A SPECULATIVE COMMONS FRAMEWORK,
TO AMPLIFY WELLINGTON CITY LIBRARY &
CIVIC SQUARE
AS AN EXPLICIT SPATIAL COMMONS.**

METHODOLOGY

Design-Led Research

This thesis adopts both a research and design-led methodology. It is guided by an iterative and evaluative design process, which adheres to Jane Rendell's description of design research as "the process that operates through generative modes, producing works at the outset that may then be reflected upon."¹

Qualitative Research

The research is a form of qualitative research, which is defined by Denzin and Lincoln as an "interpretive approach...that attempts to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."² This approach was pertinent in construing and translating the theoretical data of this research into the three-dimensional forms and space.

Moreover, it amalgamates interdisciplinary discourse in which there are three literary layers; 1) the urban commons theory, 2) the historical significance of the current library, and 3) the evolving library typology. The second layer gives the first and third constituents that lie beyond the scope of architecture, an architectonic substructure that drives the design process.

Mixed Mediums of Research

The generative design process consists of different modes of gathering, representing and testing information. It gathers literary research, case studies, photographic and mapping methods, while it visualises and tests through diagramming, hand-sketching and digital modelling, leading to a non-linear process of experiments, concept design and developed design.

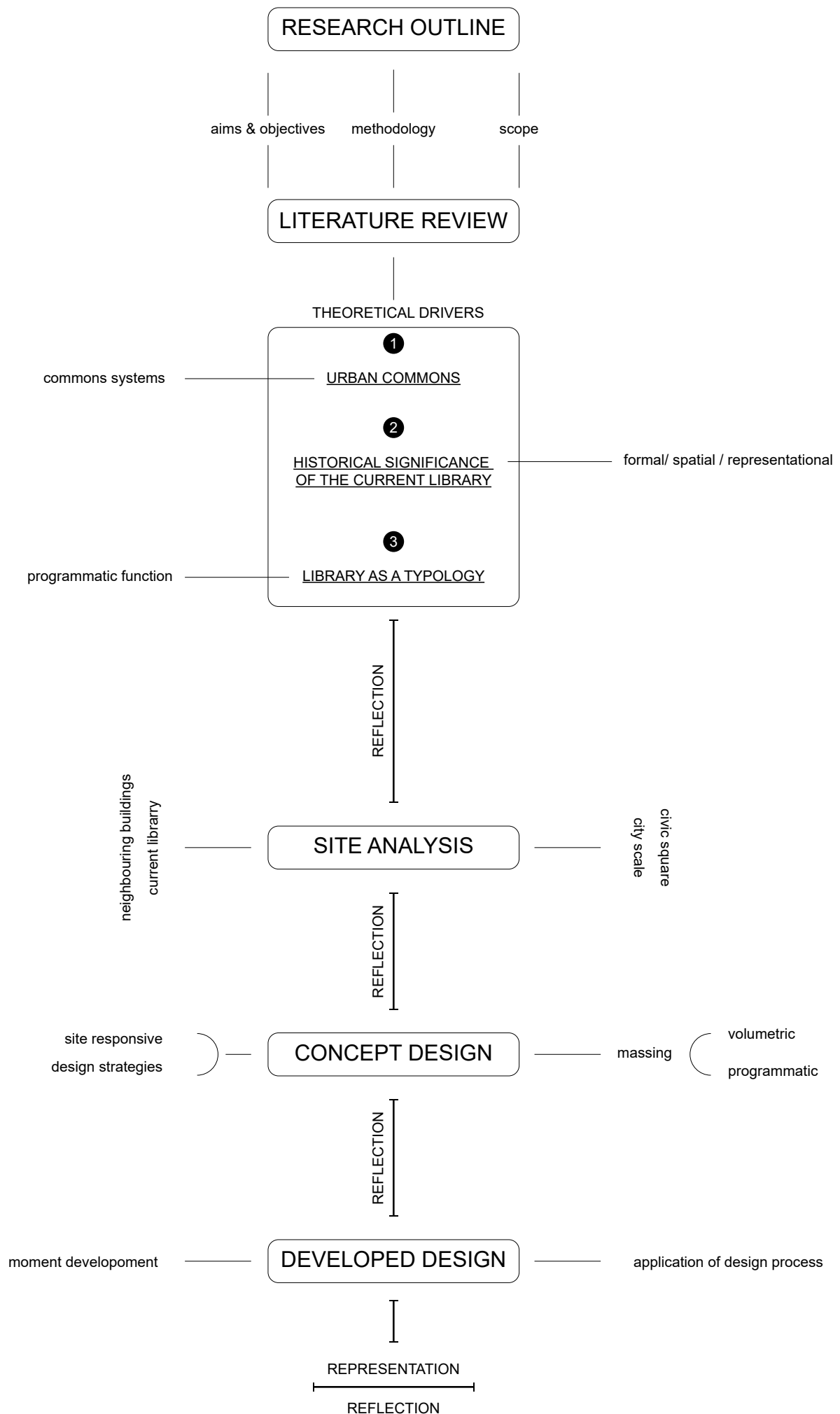


Fig 2. Methodology diagram

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This thesis investigates how the design process of Wellington Central Library and Civic Square can develop into a speculative commons framework to tectonically represent the active promotion of sharing and commoning practices in the urban city.

Aim 1: *Investigate the relevance of urban commons in architectural production today by examining:*

- a. Architecture's relationship with capitalism and social cognition
- b. The genealogy and spatial characteristics of the urban commons
- c. How the urban commons are constructed – a current framework

Aim 2: *Identify an architectonic (formal and representational) driver congruent with the urban commons through studying:*

- d. The historical significance of the current Library and Civic Square
- e. The history and spatial attributes of Post-Modernism
- f. The spatial technique of collaging by conducting a comparative case study

Aim 3: *Determine an adaptable programmatic framework for the contemporary urban library by exploring:*

- g. The evolving socio-cultural function of the library
- h. Programmatic frameworks compatible with urban libraries and commoning
- i. Participatory aspects of urban commons through a case study

Aim 4: *Develop the design of the new library by:*

- j. Spatially articulating/translating key theoretical findings
- k. Producing iterative design explorations
- l. Reflecting and evaluating design outcomes against proposed aims

SCOPE

This research is a speculative design process to emphasize the spatial, formal and representational power of architecture to amplify sharing and commoning practices in the selected building/sites - Wellington Central Library and Civic Square.

It is not within the research scope to consider the realities of monetary, structural, construction and legal constraints.

There is no commentary on the tumultuous “to save” or “to scrap” arguments. Instead, demolition is assumed, to explore a commons approach relevant to contemporary urban conditions.

The scope of the new proposal focuses on; 1) the overall design of the Library and Square (rather than developed design details), 2) the programmatic arrangement, and 3) the outline of integrated urban commons sub-systems.

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chapter one

URBAN COMMONS

1.0	chapter overview
1.1	the bigger picture
1.2	destruction of architecture's social agenda
1.3	geneology of commons
1.4	comparison between CPR's & urban commons
1.5	what is the urban commons?
1.6	commons in the city past and present
1.7	commononing through sharing
1.8	how to design the commons?
1.9	conclusion



1.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This investigation argues the pertinence of urban commons in today's urbanised world. It begins with an overview of the "bigger picture," which illustrates the global economic predicament under the dominance of capitalism, the subsequent lack of social cognition in architecture, and the opportunity for the profession to leverage its political capacity.

It re-interprets the works of architectural theorist, Reiner de Graaf, who claims that the current architectural zeitgeist operates according to the logic of capital, at the cost of inequality. As a materialisation of capital, de Graaf claims that architecture's social agenda has nullified. Hence, he questions the possibility of "other spaces" that diverge from capitalistic systems that prevail in contemporary cities.

In response to de Graaf, this thesis argues that these "other spaces" emerge through the revival of the commons. Thus, this chapter examines the origins and evolution of the urban commons, defines its characteristics and conditions, discusses the pertinence of its crucial aspect - sharing. Subsequently, architectural professor, Jeffery Chan's Systems Approach is adapted as a socio-spatial programming framework to guide the design of the urban commons.

In short, this chapter sets the backdrop for the key argument of this thesis; there is an opportunity for the architecture of the Wellington City Library to counter-react to the dominance of privatisation, segregation and individualisation, and amplify public space through the framework of urban commoning.

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1.1 THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Economic Dilemma of 21st century

The Doughnut Diagram published by the economist Kate Raworth, communicates contemporary global conditions in terms of our planet's physical limitations and societal foundations. While the central green ring describes the "ecologically safe and socially just space" - the ideal position between these two zones, it is clear that we are exceeding our environmental boundaries and falling short in meeting basic human needs. The model shows us in explicit terms, a holistic view of *where we stand and where we should be standing*. It heightens our attention to the two prominent problems of the 21st century, which is extreme environmental degradation and social inequality, as we are lurch towards dangerous tipping points.

The Driving Force of Architectural Production

Current global conditions are inescapably dictated by capitalistic motives. The ascendancy of capitalism, the zeitgeist of the present time, has commodified everything for the purpose of limitless growth and monetary gains. Depicted in the Doughnut Diagram, the neo-liberal model contradicts the limits of our

planetary system and societal requirements. Subsequently, under the auspices of capitalism, architecture does not ethically respond to these challenges.¹⁰ Instead, it has transformed the purpose of architecture and urban spaces to maximise profit, and in the process is promoting segregation, individualisation and privatisation.

The Architectural Landscape

To illustrate the contemporary architectural backdrop, the Taxonomy of Architecture Diagram by Zaera Polo depicts the categorisation of the different practices that have become popular in the 21st century. Whether you are an "activist," rejecting architecture's dependence on conventional market forces, focusing on community-based projects, or a "populist," engaging with made-for-media, visual-based approaches, the diagram prompts reflection on one's ideological stance against others. It frames who is standing where. It highlights the political nature of the discipline, which has been relatively absent from the discipline since the 1970s.

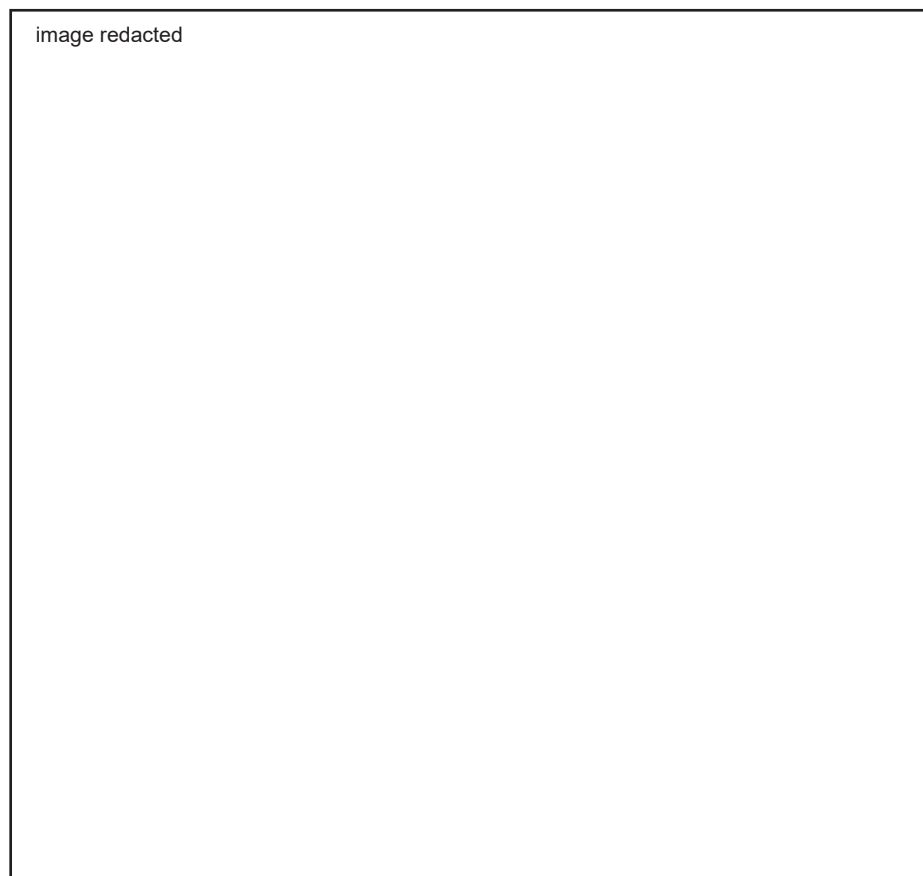


Fig 3. Doughnut diagram

Fig 4. Political compass a taxonomy of emerging architecture

1.2 DESTRUCTION OF ARCHITECTURE’S SOCIAL AGENDA

Beyond the dictionary definition of architecture, limited to the practice of design, its physical form, style, quality, etc., this thesis posits that architecture manifests social responsibility, which needs revival. In the article, “A Century that Never Happen”, partner of OMA, Reiner de Graaf declares that “architecture is now a tool of capital, complicit in a purpose antithetical to its social mission.”¹¹

The capitalistic zeitgeist of architecture exemplified through the global ascendancy of skyscrapers, “starchitecture”, and privatisation of space, alongside the sharp decrease of public expenditure and descending number of public housing and spaces.

Rather than physically expressing social cognition and emancipation, as critically regarded in the Modernist Movement, architecture now is regarded as strongholds for wealth and capital.¹¹ Architecture embodies a profitable investment, the returns of which are defined by its uneven distribution.¹² Hence, as wealth is increasingly outpacing income growth, architecture as a powerful social, economic, and political tool facilitates the progress of inequality.

Subsequently, Graaf presents the question: is there an alternative to building capital? He questions the possibility of “other spaces” that require the re-imagination of space that depart from capitalistic systems. In response, this thesis argues the notion of urban commons as a plausible solution.

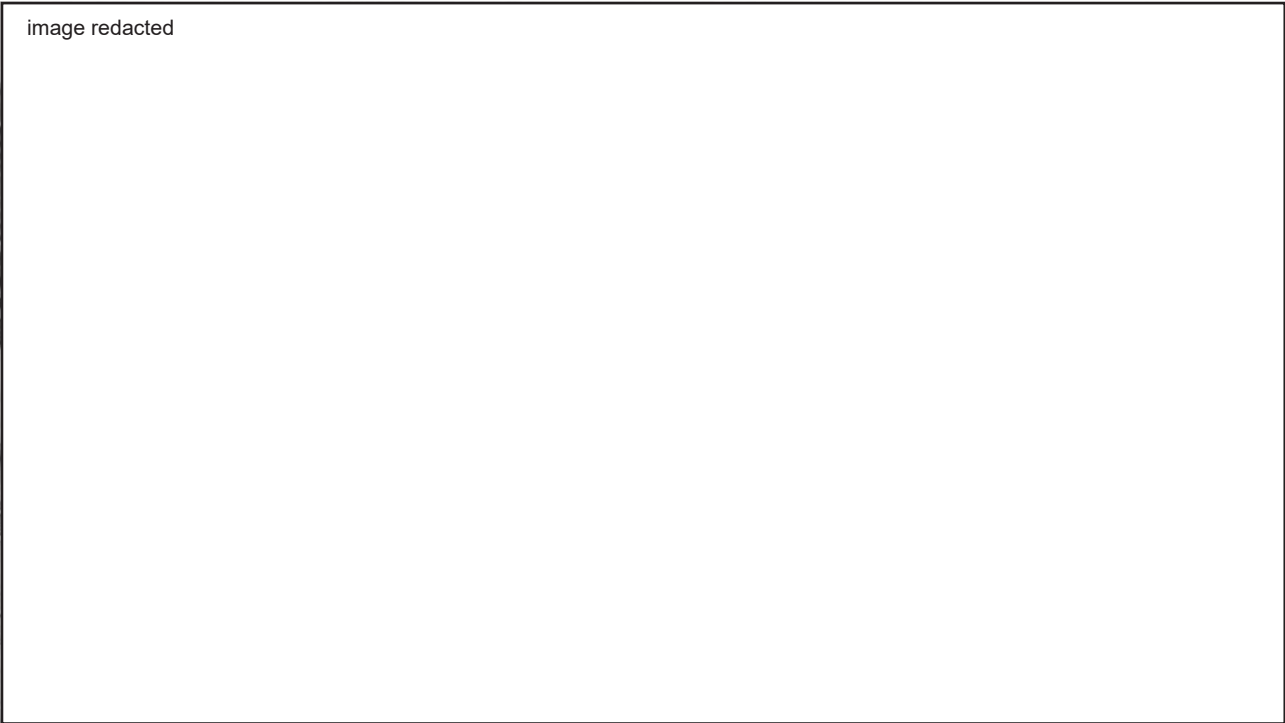


Fig 5. pruit-igoe apartment block

1.3 GENEALOGY OF COMMONS

Interchangeably, the terms “commons,” “commoning,” and “commoners” denote shared resources owned and sustained in common for individual and collective benefit. Traditionally referring to natural resources, the scope of commons has diversified into health, cultural, knowledge, digital and urban spheres. Characterized as an active process of collaborative governance and management, rather than a static object or place, examples of commons range from land, air, water, wildlife, blood banks, indigenous societies, Wikipedia, community gardens, and beyond.⁴

The resurgence on the topic of commons is attributed to the works of political economist Elinor Ostrom, whose debunking of the “Tragedy of the Commons” won her a Nobel Prize in 2009. Initially coined by economist William Forster Lloyd in 1833, then popularised by ecologist Garrett Hardin in 1968, the phrase embodies the overuse and depletion of shared natural resources exemplified in deforestation, animal extinction and freshwater shortages, etc. Hence, privatization and authoritarian state intervention have overridden the governance of the commons, in which Ostrom sought to disrupt.

In her book “Governing the Commons,” Ostrom gathers sociological, anthropological and historical data to theorise commoning principles in which shared resources were collaboratively governed in the long run.² Thus, contrary to Hardin’s argument Ostrom draws on the “several millennia” of “mutuality and negotiation of commoning.”³ However, having already been studied and applied to various common pool resources such as natural and digital commons, Ostrom’s design principles must be further explored in the urban realm.¹

1.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN CPR'S & URBAN COMMONS

In the article, “Ostrom in the City: Design Principles for the Urban Commons” professor of Law and Public Policy, Sheila Foster and associate professor of Public Law, Christian Laione, assert that to design and construct the commons in the city it is important to address the different realities between Ostrom’s studies on CPR’s and the urban commons (comparison shown in Fig 6). According to Foster and Laione, Ostrom’s design principles need to be adapted into the condition of the urban context which is “congested, heavily regulated and socially and economically complex.”¹

While many of Ostrom’s design principles are directly applicable into constructing the urban commons in the city, including the provision and utilisation of resources adjusting to local conditions, recognition by prevailing authorities and the collaborative rules and decision-making processes (participatory approaches), others such as collective governance solely from commoners must be modified to suit urban conditions.

COMMON POOL RESOURCES (CPR)	URBAN COMMONS
Mostly renewable resources prone to depletion	Cities are neither renewable nor prone to depletion,
Usually natural resources i.e. forests, fisheries, topsoil etc.	Usually urban infrastructure i.e. parks, roads, civic squares etc.
Resources have well-defined boundaries	Are able to be multi-use, and repurposed for a wide range of users
The provision and the utilization of resources are congruent with the specific regional environment/ community conditions	Are “constructed” - outcomes of collaborative “social processes” and “institutional design” to produce common goods and services
The commoners contribute to the rules and decision-making processes	Varying in scale – from the wider city scale, the suburbs to a single block
The commoners monitor the enforcement and violation of the rules, and impose graduated sanctions on wrongdoers	Cities are eminently regulated and have established laws and politics thus urban commons requires property and legal experimentation
The utilisation of resources is considered a self-governed right by prevailing authorities	Political, social and economic conflict are prominent in cities due to the diversity of resources and people
Collective governance of CPR’s is managed without intervention i.e. state, market etc.	Collective governance of urban commons needs to be supplemented by other urban actors i.e. state, NGO

Fig 6. Comparison table between CPR & urban commons

1.5 WHAT IS THE URBAN COMMONS?

Distinguished from public and private space, urban commons are spaces in contemporary cities unrestricted and uncontrolled by the prevailing authority regarding its rules and forms of use. Open to and governed by all its users, urban commons simultaneously manifest human relations, the continuous process of human cooperation and negotiation, and materializes as its product. Thus, inseparably, urban commons embody both physical space and autonomous social practice, beyond the boundaries of the state and market.

Categorised into two types, urban commons are organized as either closed or open spatial systems. The former defines an enclosed shared space exclusive to a specific community; the latter denotes openly accessible spaces, unlimited to a particular group of commoners. Exemplified in Fig.7, “the Commons” is a

residential apartment development in Melbourne, Australia, in which residents internally share amenities such as laundries, rooftop gardens, energy networks, practicing forms of collective occupancy, governance, and maintenance.

On the other hand, in Fig. 8, the natural phenomena of a frozen waterway in the city emerge as a form of ecological commons open to all society members, where commoners freely occupy and govern the space. Unlike the residential development’s form of commoning, which is considered a collectively private space⁵, the waterway reveals explicit sharing relations and collaborative arrangements, expanding on the notion of who can participate. Other spatial commons in the city include sidewalks, empty lots and community gardens etc.⁶

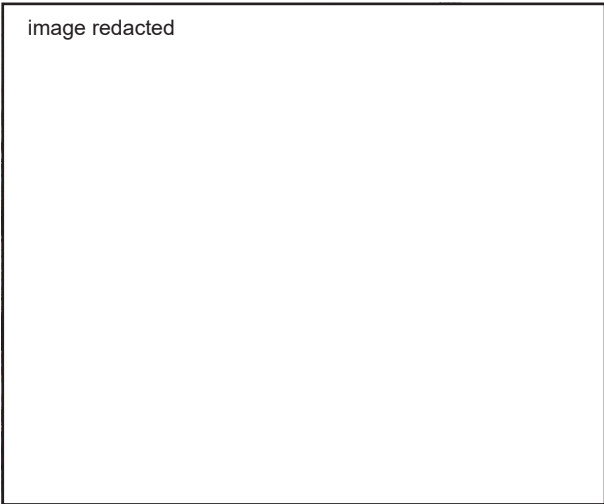


Fig 7. “The Commons”, residential apartment

Fig 8. Frozen waterway in the city

1.6 COMMONS IN THE CITY PAST AND PRESENT

Traditionally, the commons were a form of human rights and sustainability. It fulfilled many functions in society, from meeting everyone's basic wants and needs, protecting resources from depleting and maintaining, in-exclusively, political rights for all. Likewise, the commons in cities and cities as an entity have been essential facilitators of societal development as an epicentre of political and economic progress.

However, amongst the ascendancy of urbanization and neoliberal policies in cities, the notion of the commons diminished. The state began to manage what used to be the urban commons in response to the apparent exclusion, exploitation, and repression of resources. The "state-tification" shifted the governance from the commoners to the state, endorsing the idea that the state and market would ensure socio-economic and political inclusivity.⁸

In contrast, as cities increasingly render themselves as the geography of capital, urban spaces are being commodified. Under capitalism's rationale, cities are challenged with the contradictory goals to serve social, ecological goals as well as maximize economic returns. Hence, globally, systematic budget shortfalls have led cities to pursue financial goals, forgoing the consideration of the majority's societal and environmental needs.⁸

Therefore, what used to be the commons, then the public sector provisions, is now being offered by the market. Private businesses are increasingly providing necessary resources at a cost, leading to new closed enclosures in the city.⁸ Thus, the city's spaces and resources are emerging as exclusively accessible to those who possess enough monetary capital, dismantling universal sustainability.

1.7 COMMONING THROUGH SHARING

As global populations rise, and more people begin to live in cities, the equal allocation of scarce urban resources will continue to be a pressing issue. This challenge is amplified considering the uneven distribution of wealth in cities and the inability of the state nor market to provide resources equitably.⁹ The urban commons is an alternate paradigm in the city that counter-reacts segregation, privatisation, and individualisation,⁷ through sharing and commoning practices.

However, it is essential to distinguish commoning practices from capitalism masked as a sharing economy, exemplified in business models such as UBER, Airbnb, etc. As an alternate force to capitalism, the urban commons defies the logic of the conventional economy, promoting non-economic sharing models to facilitate the efficient use of limited urban resources.⁵

As segregation of classes through wealth disparity and socio-political division is becoming an ascending reality of neoliberal urbanism, the city requires substantive forms of sharing between diverse people.⁹ Beyond the spaces of mere co-presence, such as a public footpath or green space, urban commons aims to improve social cohesion and solidarity between various occupants of the city by engaging with diverse practices of active commoning.⁹

Defined by the practices of "cooperation," "non-zero-sum social interactions," and "self-reinforcement," to manage a shared resource by a set of rules agreed by all its users⁸, commoning denotes the active resistance to private spatio-political formations in the city, presenting an equitable and sustainable vision of the future city.

1.8 HOW TO DESIGN THE COMMONS

Regardless of the increasing interest in the urban commons, assistant professor at Singapore University of Technology and Design, Jeffery Chan, asserts that a lack of knowledge exists in designing it. In the article “A Systems Approach to Designing the Urban Commons and their Sharing Practices,” he references the assertions made by prominent urban commons theorists, David Harvey and Stavros Stavrides.

While one claims that the urban commons are “organised,” “produced,” “appropriated,” and “used,” the other suggests that “inventive solutions,” that supplement architecture, can contribute to creating the urban commons. Chan emphasizes that while both imply its constructive nature, these observations of active practices are devoid of how to design it.⁹

Thus, Chan argues the pertinence of the “systems approach,” which functions on various scales by interrelated systems and subsystems, to inform the design of the urban commons. Its characteristic of embodying a set of goals beyond built form increases the possibility of producing and sustaining the urban commons. Chan asks the six following questions to guide the design of the urban commons. These are further explored in Section 3.3, informing the overall program of the proposal.

1. What is the urban commons system? What are the total goals of the system?
2. What are the sub-systems of the system and their respective objectives? How justifiable? What are the relations between the objectives of sub-systems and the total goals of the system?
3. What is the larger environment (related elements and other systems) in which the system is situated? What are the constraints and potentials from the environment?
4. What influences does this system have on the larger environment? Does this system threaten/benefit other related systems?
5. Who, or what are the “enemies” of this system?
6. What are the criteria for evaluating the performance of this system?

1.9 CONCLUSION

To conclude, this chapter argues the need for urban architecture to respond to the broader human and planetary conditions. As exemplified in the Doughnut Diagram, neoliberal urban policies and practices continue to exacerbate societal and environmental issues to which the architectural profession has lost its well-established social cognition.

Within this global moment, this chapter explores the relevance of commoning concepts to address these global predicaments and promotes the notion of the commons as an alternative force to contemporary capitalism, which, unavoidably, is a crucial driver of today's urban spaces and architecture.

Although architecture nor the commons is not the sole solution towards achieving ecological and societal goals worldwide, this thesis's design outcomes intend to delineate from the city's current capitalistic trajectory and be driven by sustainable societal welfare.

Following Chan's System's Approach that informs the programmatic requirements of the proposal, the next step of this thesis seeks out a tangible (formal and representational) architectural driver in which the history of the site becomes a point of departure. Thus, the following Chapter 2 explores the language of early Post-Modernism and its potential to carry this critical social narrative.

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chapter two

POST-MODERNIST APPROACH

2.0	chapter overview
2.1	historical significance of current library & civic square
2.2	language of postmodernism
2.3	neue staatsgalerie - a postmodern collage
2.4	conclusion

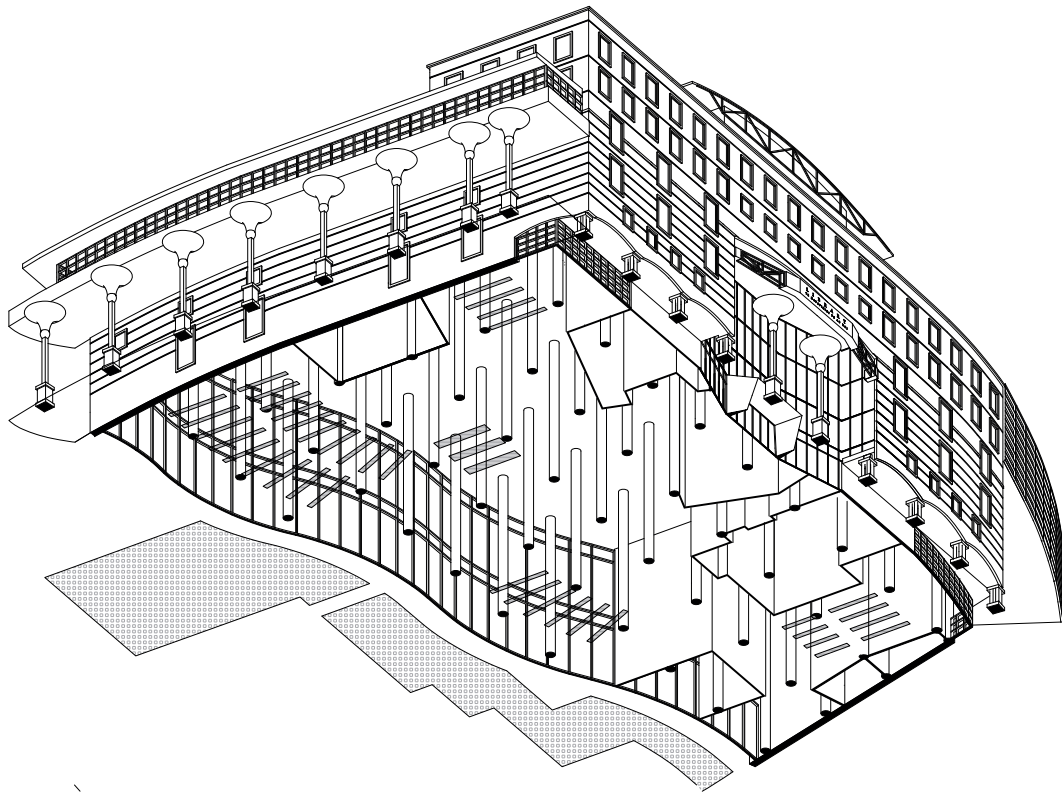


Fig 9. Axo view of the current Wellington City Library

2.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Since March 2019, Wellington's Central Library has been closed for an indefinite amount of time. As its future to be demolished or restored is under speculation due to seismic challenges, this thesis takes the timely opportunity to completely re-imagine the library and civic square as an urban common.

Although re-envisioned afresh, the design process begins with re-interpreting the current building's historical significance. It argues its importance as a manifestation of early Post-Modernism in New Zealand, and an architectural expression of the movement's pivotal social cognition, congruent with the research intent of reviving the commons through architecture.

Hence, this chapter explores the zeitgeist of Post-Modernism and its key design principle of collaging, drawing links to the application of bricolage to express heterogeneity in the city. It revisits the current building design by local architect Ian Athfield, as well as the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Germany by British architect James Stirling.

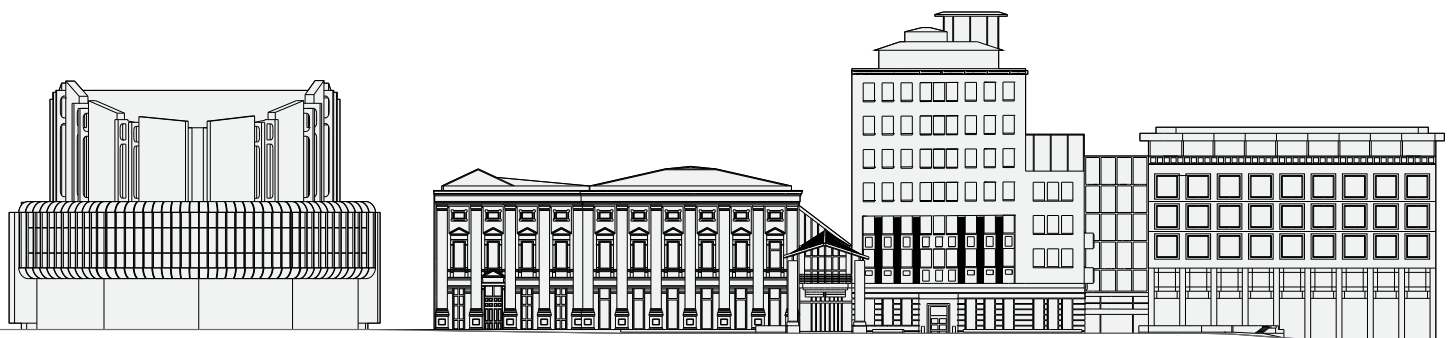
This chapter argues the relevance of Post-Modernism's conviction that the architectural component of style and representation is an active and communicative medium, that can be used to reinforce the narrative of the urban commons in today's contemporary cities.

2.1 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRENT LIBRARY & CIVIC SQUARE

Brief History of Wellington Architecture

Notable architectural developments in New Zealand emerged during the interwar period with the help of the state. The capital's building boom began in the 1920s, despite The Depression, building activity continued supported by government intervention. Many large public buildings such as the National War Memorial (1931), (former) National Museum (1936) and the Wellington Railway Station (1937), were erected materialising the zeitgeist of the Modern Movement.

Wellington's architecture distinguished itself from urban developments in Auckland and Christchurch. Established here was the Ministry of Works (MoW), founded in 1876 (privatised in 1988), led the construction of major public infrastructure including transport networks, power stations, public building etc. 1946 marked the formation of Wellington Architectural Centre. This organisation was a voluntary version of the present-day NZIA, which created a platform for active discourse about the urban developments around the city.¹¹



modern

neo-classical

post-modern

Fig 10. Roll-out elevation of current buildings enclosing Civic Square

Following the overseas trends, Wellington's architecture adopted a range of international styles.²³ Notably, Art deco buildings prevailed in the 1930s, mostly associated with Industrial and Decorative Arts Exhibition in Paris in 1925.¹⁶ At the same time, Modernism landed in New Zealand and gained popularity during the post-war economic boom of the 1950s to 1960s.²⁰ Postmodernism followed soon after and benefited from Wellington's high-rise boom in the 1970s to 1980s.²³ As a result, Wellington city presents an assemblage of architectural styles, tracing international movements of different periods.

Historic Overview of the Library - Te Matapihi Ki Te Ao Nui

In 1841 New Zealand's first public library, the Port Nicholson Exchange and Public Library, opened within a raupō hut in Wellington City.⁴ Experiencing various changes in its locations, names, primary operators, number of patrons, and fees, the library established itself under Wellington City Council as a public library in 1893. More than 100 years after its first introduction, the library issued its first free book in 1951, manifesting a form of social empowerment through the democratisation of knowledge commons/resources.

Simultaneously offsetting the erection of several branches across Wellington, the library relocated from Wellington's business and suburban hubs to the city's civic district. From Molesworth Street in Thorndon (1841), the Athenaeum in Lambton Quay (1877), Adelaide Road in Newtown (1888), the library occupied the block between Victoria Street and Jervois Quay (1940) in Wellington's city centre. Here, the library first inhabited the current Wellington City Gallery, then re-opened in 1991 in its present form designed by Ian Athfield.

Historic Overview of Civic Square - Te Ngākau

Completed in 1992, the Civic Square was designed in collaboration between Athfield Architects, Craig Moller and Stephenson and Turner in 1988. Composed on an island block, bounded between Victoria St and Jervois Quay, it is a typified model of the European urban square, characterised by the rectangular open-air space encircled by public buildings.²

Built on land reclaimed by the Wellington City Council, this civic area hosts historical structures, including the Wellington City Library (1991), Civic Administration Building (1951), Public Art Gallery (1940), and the Old Town Hall (1904). Built over the 20th-century, the ensemble of buildings manifest diverse styles such as Post-Modernism, Neo-Renaissance and Art Deco.

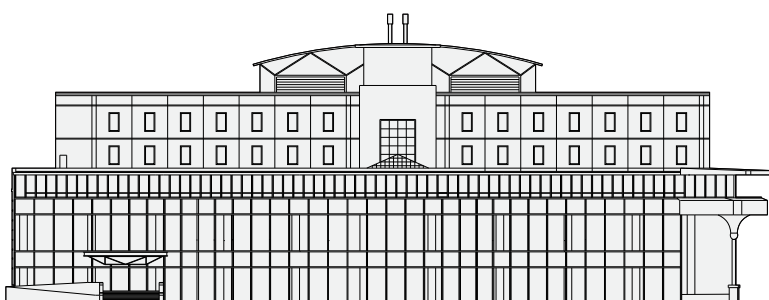
This heterogeneous display of architecture² reflects the visual miscellany of Wellington City's urban developments.² To this day, Civic Square is widely used by Wellingtonians as a centre of democratic – socio-cultural and political activities such as protests, day-lounging and as an urban pathway.

Sir Ian Athfield – A Key Figure in New Zealand's Urban Developments

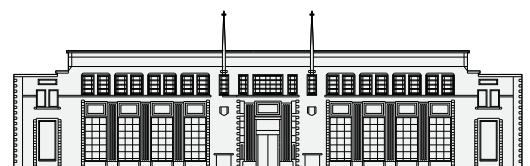
The historical significance of the Library and Civic square is attributed to its main designer – Sir Ian Athfield. Recipient of NZIA Gold Medal, the highest award achievable in New Zealand, Athfield has gained more than 60 awards across his extensive body of work that span over five decades.

Athfield's architectural career, following his Diploma of Architecture in 1963, began at Strutron Group Architects where he progressed to being a partner in the firm. Here, Athfield designed and supervised on a variety of projects including universities, schools, commercial enterprises, libraries, churches, civic spaces and more.¹¹ Following a dispute with its senior associates, Athfield left the firm in the mid-1960s and established his architecture firm, Athfield Architects in 1968.

Athfield Architects completed a wide range of works from small scale residential houses to larger commercial buildings. Notably, in the late 1980s, Athfield worked on urban projects – public interventions, retaining the design conviction that architecture held social responsibility. Amongst architects who rejected the idea that architecture had power nor the responsibility beyond itself, form, function, aesthetic and space, Athfield viewed architecture and urban design as a medium that could change society.¹¹



post-modern



neo-classical

Athfield's architectural style evolved according to emerging movements of the time. From his student years to practice, Athfield enjoyed the diversities of the field. For example, Athfield simultaneously admired the works of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudi and German-American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.¹¹

In contrast to one another, Gaudi's work associated with "Catalan Modernisme" was highly subjective, characterised by organic, sculptural and ornamental forms, whilst Mies, one of the pioneers of Modernist architecture, took an objective approach leading to reductive "skeleton and bone" architecture.

Another key influence in Athfield's urban work was Dutch architect, Aldo van Eyck, who was a member of Team X, a group of European architects who sought to challenge mainstream Modernism. Eyck wrote "house is city and city is a house," asserting that a city is a city if it is also a house, and vice versa. He promoted the importance of the application of anthropology into architecture in which "community," "neighbour" and "cluster" were critical urban and architectural drivers – which "struck a chord with Athfield."¹¹

Post-Modern Zeitgeist

In rejection of mainstream Modernism that was creating "Identikit Cities," distinguished by "anonymous," "impersonal" and "repetitive" buildings,²³ Post-Modernism emerged in New Zealand during the 1980-1990s. Encapsulating the early Post-Modernist zeitgeist, Wellington Central Library and Civic Square are historic urban markers of this era.

Major Post-Modernist publications at the time included the book *Complexity and Contraction in Architecture* (1996) and "The Language of Post-Modernism" (1977) by America's most influential Post-Modernist figures, Robert Venturi, and the latter by Charles Jencks. Internationally influential, the authors promote the design language of richness, juxtaposition and ambiguity, embracing the notion of "both-and" opposed to "either-or."

Consistent with Post-Modernist characteristics, Athfield's work was "eclectic," "ever-changing" and "experimental"²³ as he embraced a collage of diverse architectural expressions. Thus, promoted by Jencks and Venturi, who criticized the Modernist elitism, the Library and Square are forms of populism that ordinary citizens would equitably share, enjoy and understand.

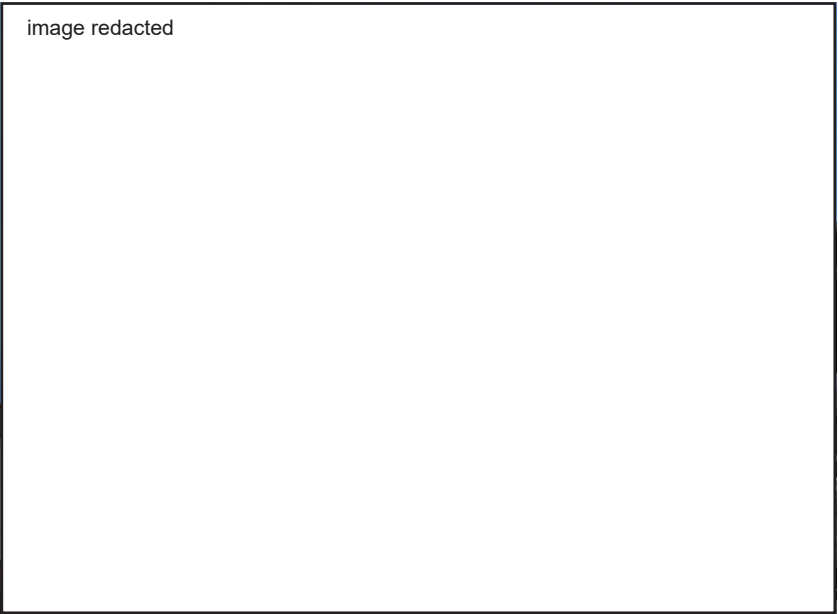
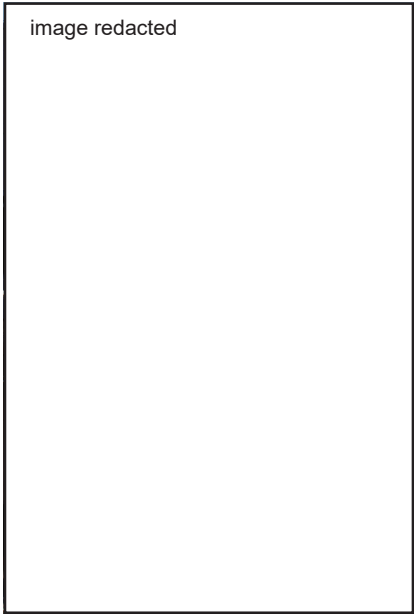


Fig 11. *Front facade of the current library*

Fig 12. *Back Facade of the current library*

Significance of Void & Solid

Pertaining to the Post-Modernist “both-and” condition, and Eyck’s urban conviction, Athfield conveys the importance of “in-between” spaces in the design of the Civic Square. Concerned with the notion of the “house and neighbour” and “buildings and street,”¹¹ Athfield sought to equalise the importance of the “left-over space” between buildings, by transforming the eastern end of Mercer Street into a substantial public space, made exclusive to foot-traffic. It’s success to Wellington City Council’s approval and further commissions to work on the adjacent Wellington Central City Library and Capital Discovery Place, enhancing Wellington’s urbanity.

Moreover, the Library manifests the dual conditions of solidity and permeability. The low and horizontal mass of the entire structure, perceived from its front and eastern faces, have a heavy presence ascribed to the impenetrable stone materiality and the condensed height of the colonnade. This apparent solidity is juxtaposed against the four-storey tall glass opening at the front façade, while at the back of the building, a full-height, curving glass wall exhibits weightlessness, light and visual transparency. The Library simultaneously expresses two stylistic dichotomies. One is of classical solidity - permanence, endurance and monumentality, and the other is High-Tech’s use of glass and steel, to express visual permeability, periodic advancement and anti-monumentality.

Lastly, the Square’s importance is reinforced through the incorporation of several design layers expressed in its materiality and its treatment of edges, entries and centre. The Square is finished with red and yellow terracotta tiles that form a diamond pattern. Largely scaled according to the sizeable site, the

graphic aesthetic gives vibrancy to the often dull and anonymous pedestrian footpaths in the city.

Diverse forms of “edges,” “entries” add experiential layers to the Square. Athfield uses a combination of urban devices such as ramps, seats, grass, pools and staircases around the Square increasing social, community and cultural expression. The centre of square is marked by the “Ferns” installations, designed by one of New Zealand prominent sculptors, Neil Dawson. Floating 20m above ground level, the spherical metal sculpture consists of native ferns such as ponga, wheki, puniu, petako and lace ferns. It simultaneously elevates the importance of public art and embodies national distinctiveness – adding to community identity and a sense of belonging.

Bi-Cultural Aesthetic

Nikau palms were a motif used by Athfield to ornament columns that followed along the front façade and evolved into free-standing forms towards the northern face of the building. Native to New Zealand, the Nikau palm is a reference to Maōri heritage, used to thatch the earliest houses.¹¹ Forming a colonnade, rooted in classical Western architecture, the nikau palm columns manifest bi-cultural meaning.

Inside the building, Athfield collages high-tech components, with Maōri culture. Exposed services, perforated metal beams, stairs and balustrades detailed with steel, reinforced the industrial aesthetic. Concurrently, the colourful graphic of ground-floor carpet alludes to the teeth of Taniwha.²² A guardian water spirit in Maōri mythology, it draws similarities to the function of libraries in today’s society – a physical safeguard to the knowledge commons.

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Fig 13. *Nikau palm column/ sculpture*

Fig 14. *The graphic carpet “Taniwha”*

2.2 LANGUAGE OF POSTMODERNISM

In the late 20th-century, Post-Modernism was the internationally dominating movement in architecture. Contrary to Modernism, Post-Modernism rejected the notion of a universal style and socio-spatial totality. Instead, it encompassed the era of pluralism and expanded into several streams such as eclecticism and contextualism, Post-Modern Classicism and more.¹⁴

Distinguished from Modernist conviction that architecture was “enabling neutral,” materialising flexible backdrops for its users to openly express themselves, Post-Modernists architecture needed to be in the foreground.¹ In the reverse of Modernists

images which conveyed “simple anodyne” architecture behind an array of “gambolling” people and activities, Post-Modernist believed that architecture, like a movie set, needed to manifest theatricality for its users.¹

In celebration of socio-cultural heterogeneity, the Post-Modern zeitgeist encapsulates the acceptance of diversification, change and evolution of social structures and institutions. Thus, Post-Modernist architects were free to experiment with their own stylistic, representational and visual aesthetics agendas.

2.3 COLLAGE CITY

The book “Collage City” by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, published in 1978, is one of the most influential books of the early Post-Modernist era.¹ Koetter, internationally renowned American urbanist and architect, and Rowe, a distinguished British born American architectural historian, and critic was also a teacher and friend to the great Post-Modernist architect and Pritzker Prize winner, James Stirling, whose works exemplified his critical spatial approach of collaging.

In this manifesto-style book, Koetter and Rowe assert that successful cities collage socio-spatial discontinuities, fragmentations, layers, juxtapositions, and gradual formations. In a departure from the Modernist paradigm, Koetter and Rowe reject the idea of utopianism, driven to build an entirely new utopian city. Instead, it promotes the notion of bricolage – the practice engaged by a bricoleur who creates using the material in their surroundings, not ex-nihilo.¹

Hence, the book instilled the Post-Modernist thought that the city gave the context for the architecture. Contrary to the Modernists whose architecture began with small-scale elements, the “little bits” and worked outwards to the city, Koetter and Rowe advocated for urbanists and architects alike to observe the broader city and work inwards,¹ exemplified in the notion of “museum city.”

In denouncing the totalistic masterplanning, Koetter and Rowe propose that urban design be informed by a network of miniature

utopias. In celebration of radical heterogeneity, the socio-cultural and socio-spatial diversity in the city, the book ends with an “Excursus” – an appendix of images depicting eight types of urban spaces that exemplify the Post-Modernist revolution.

1. Memorable streets – exceptional or unusual areas – Cuba St
2. Stabilizers – key spatial connectors – Lambton Quay
3. Potentially interminable set-pieces – ubiquitous details – piping elements, moulding details, arch geometry, urban sculptures
4. Splendid public terraces – notable open civic space – Waterfront
5. Ambiguous & composite buildings – juxtaposed structures – Victoria to Willis St
6. Nostalgia producing instruments – spaces that provoke past sentiments – Railway Station
7. The garden – exceptional vegetation space – Botanic Garden
8. Commentary – spaces prompting options, stories, conversations – Civic Square

In section 4.2 of this thesis, Rowe and Koetter’s Excursus is re-adapted to fit the Wellington City context. To framework the design process of bricolage, buildings, structural elements, open spaces, and urban moments form a collage palette to drive design explorations.

2.4 NEUE STAATSGALERIE – A POSTMODERN COLLAGE

Jencks asserts that the Neue Staatsgalerie is the “high art” of Rowe and Koetter’s theories in Collage City. He summarises the building as the epitome of early Post-Modernism similar to how Corbusier’s Villa Savoye and Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion encapsulated early Modernism.¹²

Building Overview

Completed in 1984, the Neue Staatsgalerie (New State Gallery) in Stuttgart, Germany, was designed by British architect James Stirling of James Stirling, Michael Wilford, and Associates. Stirling’s considerable body of work, since the mid-1950s until his premature death in 1992, had a significant local and international influence on architects, students, and academics.⁶

The Neue Staatsgalerie is an extension to the existing Staatsgalerie (State Gallery), an Italianate style, early 19th-century building. The new building houses public galleries, a musical theatre, administrative offices, and a restaurant.

The Neue Staatsgalerie is on a rectangular island site between two parallel roads. From the front towards the back of the site, there is a steep topographical rise. There is a public footpath that crosses through the site connecting the two roads.

The museum’s front entrance on the ground floor is marked by a tall steel and glass structure between a staircase on the right and a ramp on the left. These ascend to the first-floor terrace hosting the entrance foyer and galleries, in which below is a carpark. These are formed in a U-shape block in which at the centre is an open-air rotunda displaying sculptures. Above and behind the gallery is an administration and archival wing, as well as a music school.⁷

The Neue Staatsgalerie manifests the apex of Post-Modernist design in the late 20th century that re-knits architecture with the urban fabric¹³ and is a significant contribution to contemporary urban architecture.⁷

A crucial aspect of the design is ascribed to the use of collaging techniques, in which Stirling uses as a conceptual and formal tool.¹⁰ Conceptually, Stirling amalgamates the conventional programmatic and site issues with broader socio-spatial challenges such as monumentality, civic space, context, ornamentation, and rhetoric.¹⁰ While formalistically, Stirling’s design embodies an elision of iconographic and plastic images, forms, themes, and materials.¹⁰

Historic Backdrop of Stuttgart

Stuttgart is a city located in the capital of Baden-Wurttemberg, which manifests significant 18th-century developments, revived in Stirling’s design.

The city’s historic core, with medieval origins, accommodates buildings such as the Neues Schloss (New Palace), Staatsoper Stuttgart (Opera House 1912), and Altes Schloss (Old Castle), which are distinguished by features such as their axially, formality and monumentality.¹⁷

However, Stuttgart became too receptive to Modernist planning during the post-war reconstruction of the city, progressively detaching from its historical backdrop. The ascending erosion of the spatio-cultural characteristics of Stuttgart led the city to hold a competition for the Neue Staatsgalerie, which was won by Stirling, Wilford and Partners.

Beyond reviving and repeating the Neo-Classical language of the city, Stirling “collides” the traditional with Modern motifs. The continued dialogue between the two embodies the “epoch of transition,” which defined the times of Stuttgart’s conception.

The tensions of transitioning from Modernism to Post-Modernism is epitomised in the Neo-Classical rotunda.¹⁸ Traditionally enclosed, the Neue Staatsgalerie is exposed to the sky and stripped back in decorative detail, drawing attention to the pure geometry of the drum.

Another Post-Modern transition includes the vision of the museum shifting from the “city-museum” to the concept of “museum city.”¹⁵ Whilst the former treats the museum as the instigative focal point, the latter is the museum developed as a reflection of the city.

Neo-Classical monumentality is re-interpreted through the use of traditional stone throughout the building with superimposing ornaments of colourful modern steel and glass. Exemplified in the entrance tower, triangular canopies, handrails and the undulating glass wall, Stirling adheres to collaging techniques to express a pluralistic monumentality.

In the overall composition of the Neue Staatsgalerie, Classical axially and order are pierced by a diagonal route. Divided into quadrants by four axes, the museum consists of a rectangular plan with a cylindrical drum in its centre. Following the central

axis, the entrance tower at the bottom, the rotunda in the centre and raised terrace are all aligned, accentuating the diagonal route cutting through the site.

Moreover, Stirling interweaves juxtaposing conditions of informality with monumentality. Following a “populist” and “anti-monumental” rhetoric⁵, the museum is a democratic monument free from the notion “one size fits all”. It transformed a traditionally formal typology into a playful experience. Counteracting the monumental stone finish throughout the building, Stirling incorporates overt paradoxes such as colourful air-intake funnels and colourful canopies, handrails and parapets.¹⁸

Stirling's Contextual Backdrop

Stirling's architectural career, spanning four decades since the 1950s, coincides with the “revaluation” of architecture following World War II. Modernism's form and function were emerging as archetypal masterpieces, that were significant¹⁷ Throughout Stirling's career, his architectural repertoire is simultaneously a critique as well as an extension of Modernist principles.¹⁷

Stirling's work, typified in the Neue Staatsgalerie, manifests his fundamental functionalist ethos. He asserts, “functionalism remains a guiding principle...including references and associations where it enlightens.” Stirling sought to expand the Modernism's functional credo to include contextual and historical aspects of the city.¹⁷

Despite Stirling's refusal to be labelled under a specific trend or movement, including Post-Modernism and Late Modernist¹⁸, Michael Wilford describes Stirling as a “magpie.”¹⁷ Characterised by his intuition to observe, assimilate, collect and merge ideas, Stirling's collagist agenda is apparent.

Under the Modernist conviction that architectural integrity was dependant on observing the modern world, Stirling translates the condition of heterogeneity and pluralism into his architecture. Reflecting an authentic image of life, the Neue Staatsgalerie is conceptual and formal “radicality”¹⁷ that embraces the amalgamation of different and diverse ideas and experiences that constitutes life.

Stirling's Representation

Hand drawings were fundamental tools throughout Stirling's design process, as an explorative medium and representational device.

The process of drawing was a critical aspect to finding the conceptual essence of architecture and the development of Stirling's creative and inventive design language.²¹ Every project Stirling followed iterative conceptual and schematic studies leading to the development of the final plans, sections, elevation, top-down and worms-eye axonometric, isometric drawings.²¹

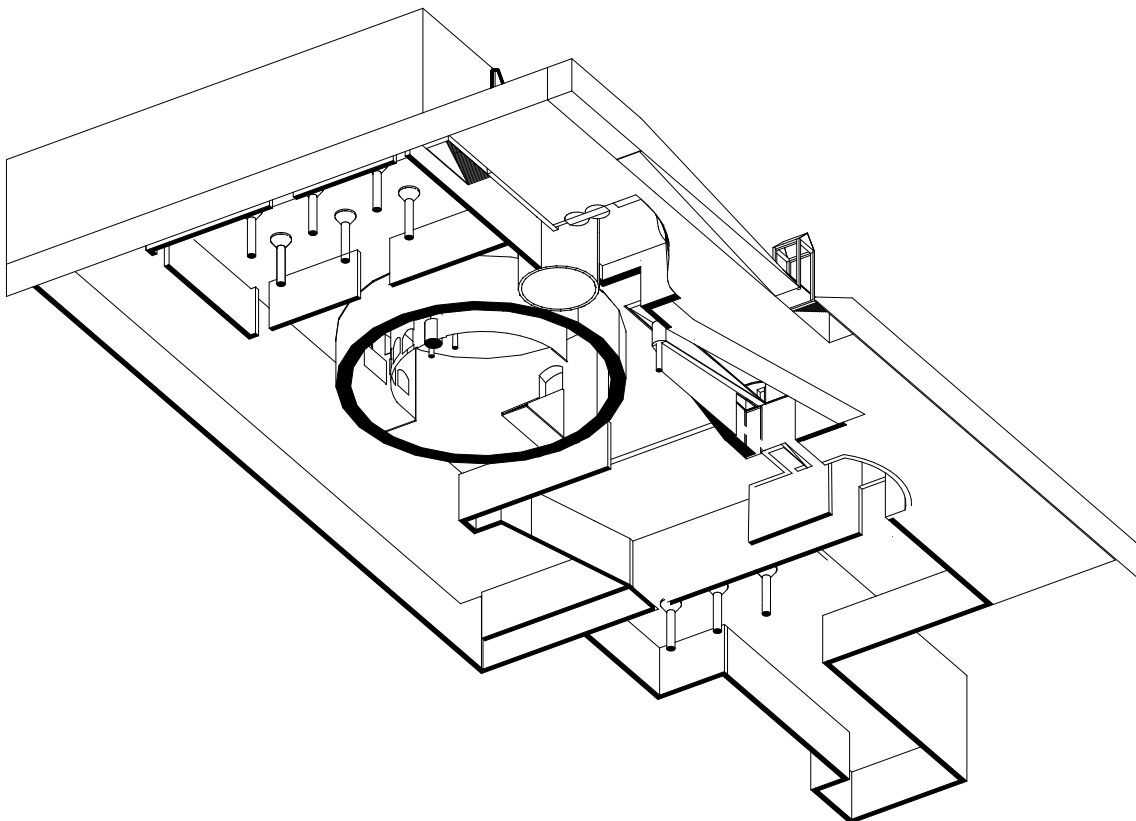


Fig 15. Axo view of Stuttgart Museum

Stirling's drawings were intentionally "hard," "restrained" and "scientific." His images on paper represented the minimum necessary to depict the maximum information. Through the repeated process of drawing and redrawing, the scope and detail of the image were represented diagrammatically and refined until it became "factual" opposed to a mere artistic impression.²¹

Axonometric drawings, a parallel drawing technique, were particularly favoured by Stirling. Characterised by conveying three-dimensional spatial and volumetric arrangements in one image without distortion, the "axo" clarified how interlocking systems, tectonic sequences and complex assemblies came together.²¹

Conveyed in Stirling's worms-eye axonometric drawings is the important vital between solid and void, and its equal importance. In the Neue Staatsgalerie, Stirling simultaneously extends the notion of the "continuous solid" of the traditional city and the "continuous void" of the modern in the central rotunda.¹⁹ Rather than imitating the form of a classic pantheon, Stirling replaces the solid climax with a void. The centrality of the open-air drum signifies the significance of the negative and positive space which was a crucial driver of Stirling's methodology.¹⁹

"Promenade Architecturale" – The Civic Pathway

Coined by Le Corbusier in 1942, the term "architectural promenade" encapsulates the sensorial experience of architecture as one moves through space. In the Neue Staatsgalerie, the interlocking internal and external promenades is an image of a collaged city. It conveys itself as a microcosm of Stuttgart, which is characterised by diverse cultural fragments that are historical and present.

Programmatically, the museum accommodates the cultural amenities of the city such as galleries, library, auditorium, restaurant, musical school and more. These cultural fragments are an extension of the city's urban system, connected by its dynamic pedestrian circulation.

The episodic promenade materialises a dialogue between past and present. Stirling juxtaposes "incongruent simultaneity" of heterogeneous elements and experiences.¹⁹

The sequence of the internal spaces includes a classic enfilade of gallery spaces with entrances marked by abstracted pediments, simplified mouldings, and High-Tech large skylights, glass enclosures and undulating glass façade.

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Fig 17. *Entrance of Stuttgart Museum*

Fig 18. *Terrace perspective*

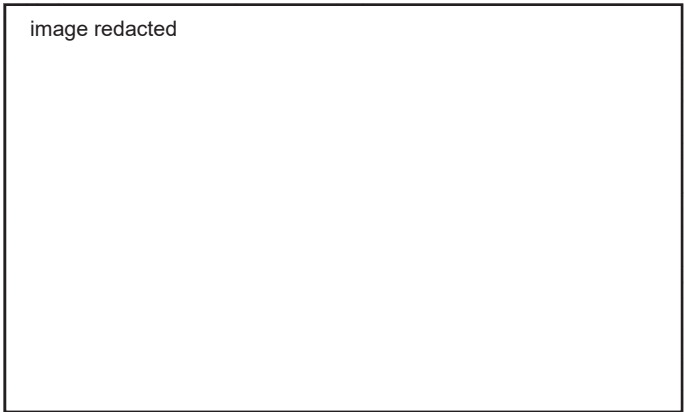


Fig 19. *Comparison between the Stuttgart Museum (Left) and Altes Museum (Right)*

Accessible 24-hours a day, the external promenade is led by greenery and pocket spaces, linking to the cylindrical rotunda, then to motorway entrance toward the museum. These routes offer visitors to walk through the museum site without entering it internally, converting passers-by to pass through.

Translating complex realities of cities, Stirling incorporates a series of thematic layers of architectural experiences in the museum. To be discovered by the visitors, there are languages of humour – a hole punched out of the stone façade of the car park, left as a ruin; of linearity and curves – in the overall composition of the drum inside a square, organic growth; as the creepers travels around the walls of the rotunda and, flow - in the sequence of terraces, promenades, staircases, ramps and arcades.

Contextual Collage

Acclaimed American theorist of Post-Modernism, Charles Jencks emphasizes contextualism as a “dynamic design strategy.”⁹ Jencks argues Post-Modernists value coherence in the urban fabric through explicating the existing surrounding context with “transforming continuity.”⁹ Like musicians producing in musical variation in a single performance, Post-Modern architects developed various versions and deviations connected to the local architectural language.

The Neue Staatsgalerie is indisputably described as “contextual” amongst architectural critics, in which its design makes direct references to the Stuttgart’s built environment.⁸ “Observant” of his surrounding context, Stirling transformed various urban components into the architecture of the museum. Exemplified in the design of the lift shaft and triangular canopies at the entrance, Stirling alludes to the local coal mine and the neighbouring bus shelters.⁸



Fig 20. Collage elements of Stuttgart Museum

Populist Collage

Attributed to Stirling's architectural success and populist intent, the Neue Staatsgalerie became West Germany's second most visited museum from its original 52nd place,⁷ hosting more than a million visitors the first year it opened.⁸

Underpinned by formal and conceptual collaging techniques, the museum manifests architectural appeal to ordinary citizens and critics alike through various architectural "ambiguities." There are many juxtaposing compositions in which Stirling overtly blends and contrasts opposing spatial codes all over the building.¹²

Stirling balances the notion of "urbanity" and "remembrance" through the distortion of historical references through contemporary influences. Exemplified in material choice, Stirling uses travertine and sandstone, rooted in Classical 19th-century museum design, alongside flamboyantly coloured industrial steel attributed to the 1970s High Tech architecture.¹ Additionally, in the central open-air structure, the segmental arches and Egyptian cornices allude to traditional forms in the Pantheon, yet are constructed with reinforced concrete - a modern material.¹⁴

Regarding shifting styles of the overall structure, the main U-shaped gallery block is distinguished by its classical, monumental, and solid nature, reflecting the adjacent old museum. This is juxtaposed next to the new museum's entrance foyer formally characterised by oblique glass façade with vibrant green mullions and rubber floor – a talking point for both architects and the wider public.¹²

Balancing the past and present, the Neue Staatsgalerie reflects the diverse taste of its users. Whilst the polychromic details such as the bright pink and blue handrails and orange revolving door structures appeal to the youth, the "Schinkelesque" drum, traditional masonry facade and details such as the traditional Egyptian cornices, speak to the older generations.¹⁴

Epitomising ambiguities, the central rotunda like structure is a "domeless dome," alluding to Schinkel's translation of the classic Pantheon in the Altes Museum.¹⁴ Simultaneously, an outdoor and indoor space, the structure is open to the sky, at the building's heart.

The rotunda plays an ambiguous role in the dialectic between Classicism and Modernism. The rotunda is composed in the centre of the Classical gallery sequence of enfilades and the Modernist free plan foyer. The tensions between the two "contradictory paradigms" are expressed through Stirling's own interpretation of the traditional rotunda. Rather than manifesting the building apex, it is a void and a "non-space."⁷

Jencks recalls how different users interpret and experience this space. Observed as being used in a multitude of ways by various individuals from children playing, models posing, to the painting elderly, some saw it as a variation of the Pompidou Centre, while others made connections to the Schinkel's Altes Museum and the Hadrian Villas.¹²

In short, the architectural aesthetic of the museum accommodates diverse experiences and interpretations for different users. Through collage Stirling's diverse architectural vocabulary juxtaposes conflicting and unexpected spatial codes throughout the museum, resulting in an architecture that is inclusive in intent.

Eclectic "Stirlingism"

Unrestrained to singular or rigid Classical or Modernist paradigm, Post-Modernism materialised eclecticism involving individualism and contrarianism. Embodying freedom of individual expression, Post-Modernist architects juxtaposed various theories, styles, and ideas, driven by personal interpretations and experiences.¹

In his 1984 RIBA lecture, Stirling expresses his anti-adherence to specific architectural styles or types of symbolism. Instead, he asserts his designs are "eclectic" and "ambiguous."¹² He describes the Neue Staatsgalerie as "perhaps" alluding to Schinkel's Altes Museum or "perhaps not," denoting his disinterest in fixation or commitment to one theory.

In essence, Stirling practiced architecture as a "free artist,"¹² characterised by overt personal whim. In Neue Staatsgalerie, Stirling expresses this "Stirlingism"¹⁰, combining various architectural styles, forms, finishes, etc.

Fig 21. Collage experiment

2.5 CONCLUSION

To give architectural tangibility to an otherwise less tangible “social practice” of the urban commons, the built history of the Wellington Central Library and Civic Square became a starting point. Athfield’s adaptation of Post-Modernist devices such as dual conditions, juxtapositions and experiential richness were deduced to the design approach of collaging. Subsequently, Rowe and Koetter’s seminal book *Collage City* and Stirling’s *Neue Staatsgalerie*, the architectural manifestation of its principles, inform the development of the design process.

Formalisation of the Urban Commons - Modernism vs. Post-Modernism

The Modernist zeitgeist, following World War II, led to “architectural solutions” that met basic social needs. Despite its centring on societal wellbeing – fostering community and social interaction, its adherence to “top-down approach” and “form follows function,” led to sterile and rigid structures, designed by those detached from the wider populace.

In quest of activating the urban commons, Modernism’s architectural translations are disconnected to the experiences of ordinary people. Instead, its simplification of structures embodies the pursuit toward utopia, which is counter-intuitive to the complex realities of the city – an ever-changing network of socio-cultural, economic, environmental and political factors.

In response to Modernism’s universal style, that did not spatially translate the human condition, the zeitgeist of Post-Modernist architecture was to engage with the public’s interests. It celebrated the expression of plurality, choice and change. It understood the power of architecture as an active and communicative medium to depict diverse realities.

Congruent with the urban commons, Post-Modernism’s celebration of the heterogeneous society was expressed through its eclectic and populist intent. Relatable to ordinary citizens, Post-Modern architecture was a collage of multiple styles, in which its aesthetic diversity accommodates various experiences, connections and uses.

Key Findings

Stirling’s *Neue Staatsgalerie* and Athfield’s *Wellington Central* library typifies the Post-Modernist technique of collage. As populist buildings, they exhibit spatial qualities of juxtaposition, ambiguity and richness - alluding to conceptual and formal familiarities and interpretations that engage with the public’s interests.

Both buildings are contextual collages. Athfield’s Library distinguishably incorporates bi-cultural aspects – a juxtaposition of Western and Maōri themes to connect to its local audience and express identity. At Stuttgart, Stirling’s appeal to its visitors through the use of Neo-Classical elements – relating to the city’s traditional built environment, as well as local objects into architectural forms.

Athfield and Stirling express the importance of juxtaposition of solid and void. In the *Wellington Central Library*, Athfield exhibits proactivity to enclose the Civic Square, to create a socially significant void – an urban living room at the heart of the city. Likewise, Stirling incorporates a civic void in the centre of the museum, accessible 24-hours daily, promoting in-exclusive accessibility.

In essence, collaging as an architectural technique and aesthetic style, manifests the spirit of the urban commons. This thesis posits the importance of its architecture to articulate its programmatic function and relationship to the public realm, as a container of the knowledge and cultural commons. Moving forward, the next chapter of this thesis discusses the proposed library program to enhance the stimulation of the urban commons.

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chapter three

LIBRARY PROGRAM

3.1	chapter overview
3.2	library as a commons
3.3	the evolving library
3.4	programmatic framework of library
3.5	participatory design

3.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Following the previous chapter's focus on the architectonic driver of this thesis, this section investigates the evolving library program as an urban common - findings outlined in this chapter form the theoretical basis of the programmatic organization of the proposed library.

Extending Athfield's description of the program of the building – “a supermarket for books,” this thesis proposes a much broader programmatic framework. It adapts Chan's System's Approach – defining the construction of the urban commons and Drobnik and Tajeri's “Hypothesis”- encapsulating the holistic design of the library.

The participatory design process of Dokk1, the largest public library in Scandinavia, is examined as a design approach that facilitates the creation and future sustenance of the urban commons. Despite the conflicting propositions of collaborative systems and the Post-Modernist agenda of the proposal's design process - aspects of participatory design are considered into the design process.

3.1 LIBRARY AS A COMMONS

Within the context of the neoliberal city, where time and space are increasingly becoming economic resources, the library emerges as a counter-space. As the use of time and space must equate to productivity and capital gain, libraries materialize a non-commercial platform that does not require one's presence to be justified by capital. Thus, operating as an open and accessible space, libraries offer a space to consume its resources, via paper books, digital media or other mediums, for free.

From the perspective that knowledge is a form of commons, the library is an advocate of social empowerment through equal access to knowledge and information. Operating within an inherently unequal society, the role of libraries is critical. Libraries play a part in breaking the problems that are continuing cycles of inequality, including offering shared spaces between diverse user groups and activities, reducing social segregation, and extending access to education and resources to tackle issues such as illiteracy,⁸ access to internet, and knowledge disparity.

3.2 THE EVOLVING LIBRARY

Since the first active library 5000 years ago in Mesopotamia, the library has maintained a “stable” reputation as a “valuable institution” in society.³ However, in the era of rapid change, libraries must adapt to today’s socio-cultural conditions to retain its social relevance.

Digitization

Over the last 20 years, the widespread use of digital devices and the internet has put into question the library’s primary function as a physical collection of books. Driven by technological advancements, there has been a significant shift away from print to digitized resources. Opening accessible avenues to information, through Google, apps, online platforms, eBooks, the library is no longer the exclusive entity enabling public enlightenment and empowerment.¹

Reviving “Socialisation”

Technological changes are reinforcing the library’s critical social role as an urban container for social interaction and collaborative learning. The ubiquity of personal devices used for educative, leisure and commercial practices are decentralizing networks,

isolating people from direct human engagement. Congruent with the urban commons, the library today is a socialization hub, facilitating intellectual, artistic, every-day human-to-human exchange.

Consumer & Producer Hubs

In short, the “democratization” of knowledge enabled by the conditions of the digital era, is transforming libraries into multi-faceted hubs for “consumers and producers”.² As Accessibility to knowledge has expanded, reaching ordinary citizens and experts alike, producing information is no longer exclusive to the few but to the masses.

Moreover, as knowledge is unlimited to one medium, the library is given a hybrid character. Traditionally used as a “quiet” reading space, where patrons were mere consumers of information, libraries today accommodate large multi-functional spaces for small, medium and large groups. Functioning as an educational, recreational and commercial space, the library program is extending to open workspaces, computer facilities, gallery space as well as cafes and restaurants.

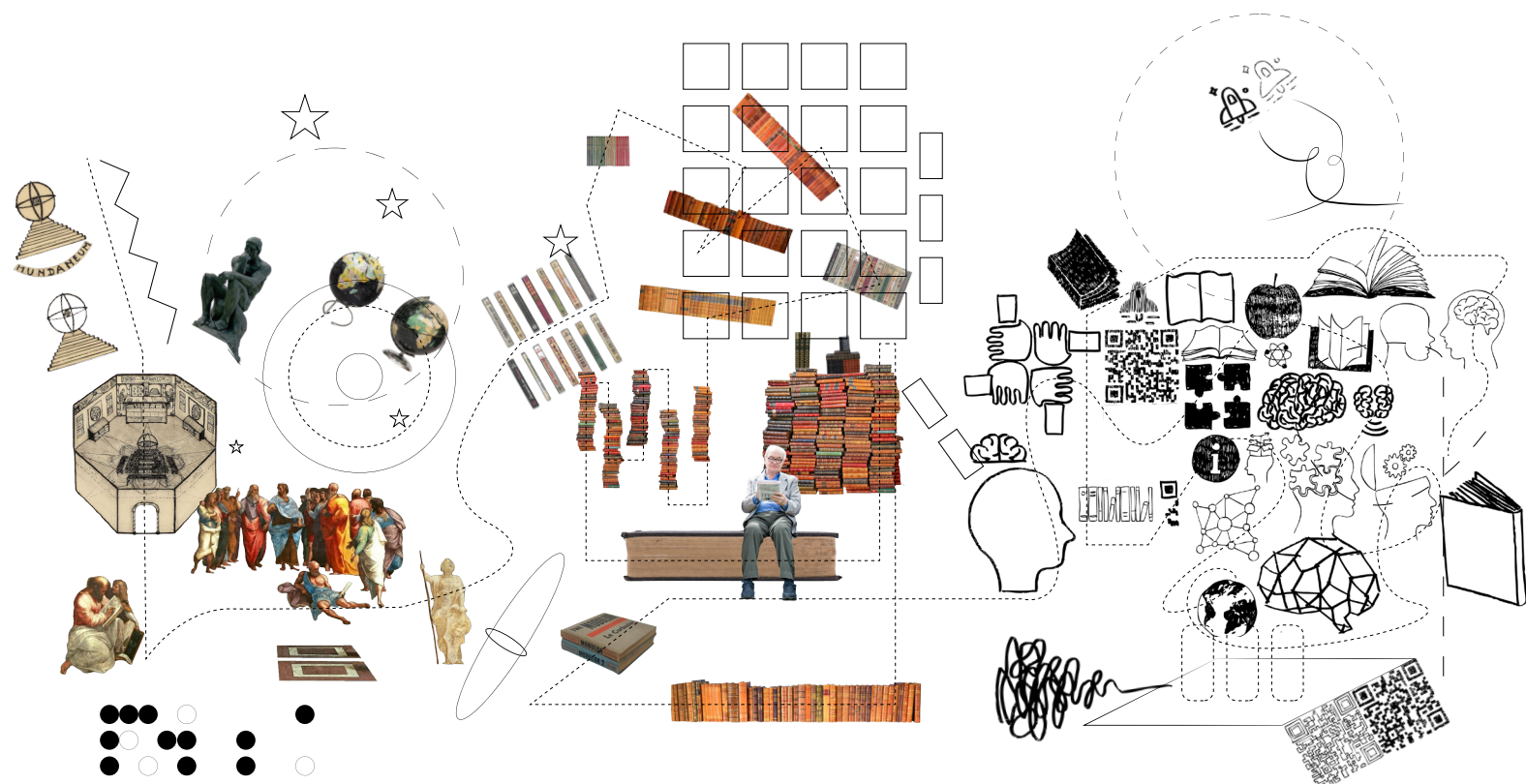


Fig 22. Evolving library as a program

3.3 PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK OF LIBRARY

Application of Chan's System's Approach

Fig 23 shows the programmatic application of Chan's "Systems Approach", (in extension of section 1.8), to construct the urban commons. A critical aspect of the common's framework is the design of a continuous circuit, driven by community use and participation. The proposed library's program encapsulates the active involvement of the community through various operational strategies.

However, specific to the library program, missing from Chan's Approach is the articulation of building function and tectonic guidelines. Thus, an additional framework unspecific to the commons was deployed to develop a "holistic" library program – the "hypothesis."

	NEW LIBRARY PROPOSAL
Systems / Sub-Systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Membership point system (Fig XX) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Points are earned by: volunteering (human resources i.e. sharing skill-sets), issuing and returning a book, (adding to the library's information i.e. posting an online journal/book review – fostering community interest & discussion) Point are spent by: participating in library services (i.e. taking classes offered in the library) buying community-made goods and services (i.e. artwork, plants, crafts, performances)
Objectives/ Sub-Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self-sustaining - introduce elements such as garden, energy resources, learning systems driven by user/community usage. Community engagement - consider participatory design elements Social inclusion – consider the needs of the wider demographic (i.e. disability, age, wealth)
Constraints from the Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unoccupied surrounding buildings – decreasing the number of permanent users who could add to vitality of space Blocked exit and entry point into Civic Square Relatively small population of Wellington city
Threats to the Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicting / competition with private / commercial / other public providers of same community systems
Enemies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Free-riders (i.e. people taking from community garden without contributing) People feeling unwelcome to library services
Criteria for Evaluating Performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Social capital (community formation) Inclusive design (accessibility for people in wheelchairs) Self-development of individual members

Fig 23. System's approach table

Background of “Hypothesis” Framework

In the article “Library Design Guides; A Hypothesis,” By Michael Drobnik and Niloufar Tajeri, the authors critique two well-established library design guidelines and propose their own “hypothesis.”

Allan Konya, in “A Briefing and Design Guide” published in 1986, presents structuring guidelines for the 20th-century library. Shown in Fig.24, despite the Konya’s claim that this is a flexible/adaptable framework, the design sequence is linear, rigid and in hierarchical order, conveying the top-down process with definable and un-ambiguous elements. It follows the Modernist design conviction that architecture was the solution to a problem, attempting to define, detail and rationalize the process of designing the library.⁴

Similarly, in “The IFLA Library Building Guidelines” by the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) printed in 2007 proposes new design guidelines for the 21st-century library. The design guidelines encapsulate a “functional approach,” addressing critical programmatic stages and challenges, mirroring the Modernist paradigm. A difference to its predecessor is the insertion of the “future” into the building program. Again, regardless of the authors’ assertion that these guidelines are adjustable to local conditions, the visual language of the diagram manifests a “functioning machine.” Limiting modifications to the guidelines, the hierarchal order of function and “flow between volumes,” allude to a pre-defined spatial composition.⁴

Both guidelines pursue a rational approach, typifying the library design brief. These Client driven briefs usually refrain from end-user engagement and architect input, forgoing the prospect of holistic development.⁴

Description of “Hypothesis” Framework

In response, Drobnik and Tajeri propose a tripolar framework (Fig.26) to guide the programmatic design of the contemporary library typology. The framework expands the idea of “program” beyond function (“building function”), to include factors of the site (“site convergence”) and future (“future potentials”).⁴

The program of “site convergence” encapsulates the site’s “ethical,” “environmental” and “societal” conditions. Here, society’s history, values and beliefs and its discourse and criticisms are critical parameters.⁴

Equally crucial, “future potentials” encompasses future changes that will impact the programmatic structure of the library.⁴ From COVID-19 to digitization of books, climate change and beyond, how spaces respond to change are determined through the subject perspective, values and imagination of the architect, in which they emerge as essential design drivers.

In essence, this framework departs from the conventional top-down library design process. It explores the program of the library through indeterminate functional, contextual and future parameters, and ascribed the same level of significance. The design process integrates feedback loops of “analytic adaptation,” “performance evaluation” and “hypothesis generation,” depicting the practice of application and continuous reflection against a broader framework.⁴

Application of “Hypothesis” Framework

Fig 27 illustrates the application of the “hypothesis” framework to brainstorm, and pinpoint important elements for the proposed library program, which were:

Future Potential – sustainability (environmental and social) and anticipated technological developments (virtual learning, artificial intelligence, new digital mediums)

Site Convergence – political capital and diverse architectural styles

Building Function – accessibility and socializing

In response to these findings, two distinct programmatic elements are incorporated into the proposal. First, the addition of the community centre, responding to the social intent reinforced through system’s approach and ‘hypothesis’. Second, the idea of programmatic zoning of the library layout (opposed to allocating specific programs) to leave open-ended the ways use in exchanging and consuming knowledge. Importantly, this approach also acknowledges the future development of digital resources, i.e. online library resources adding to the virtual networks of the commons.

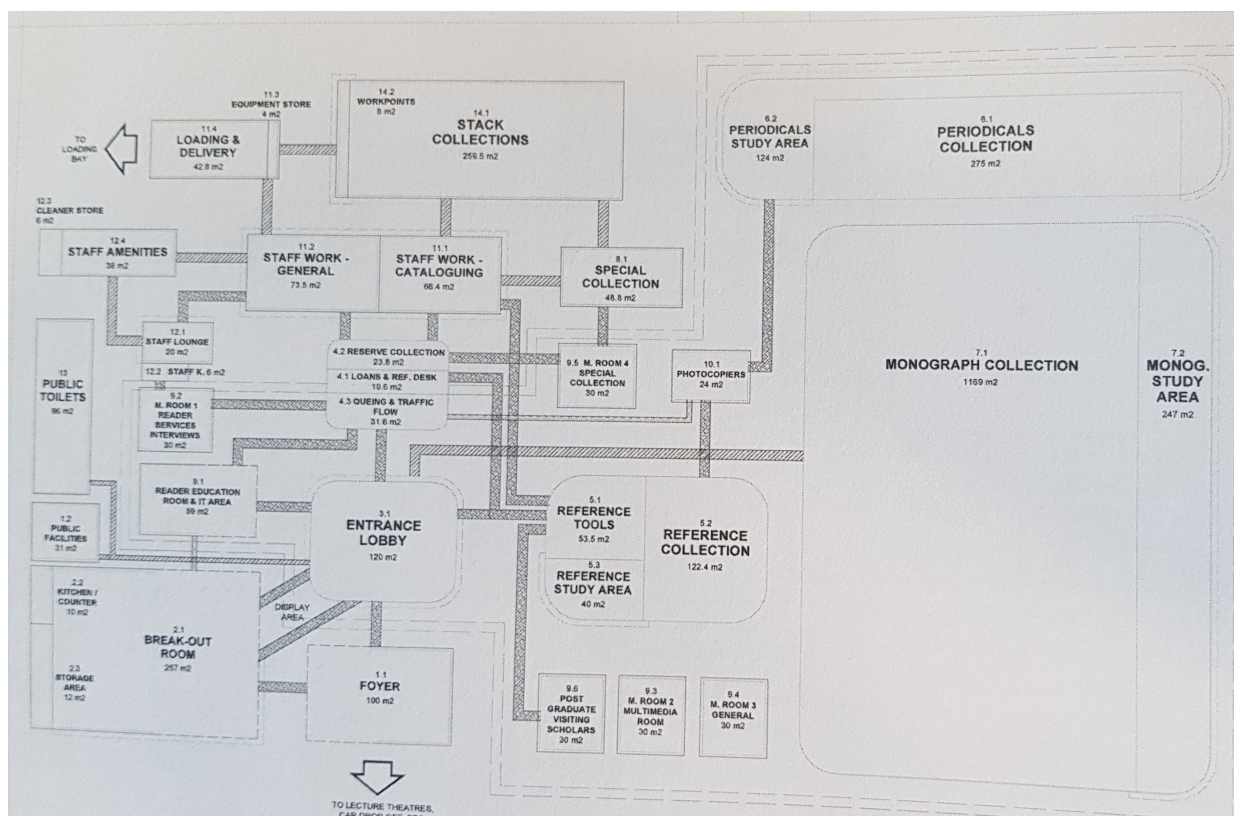
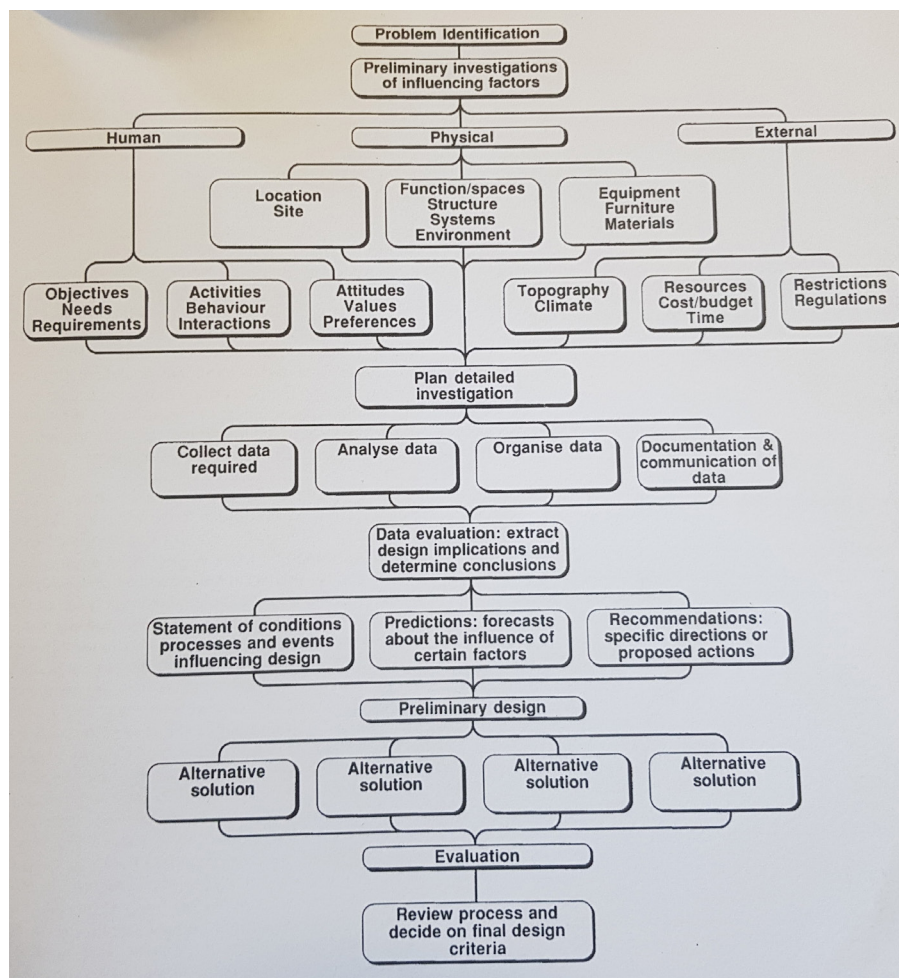


Fig 24. Allan Konya's "a briefing & design guide"

Fig 25. "The IFLA library building guidelines"

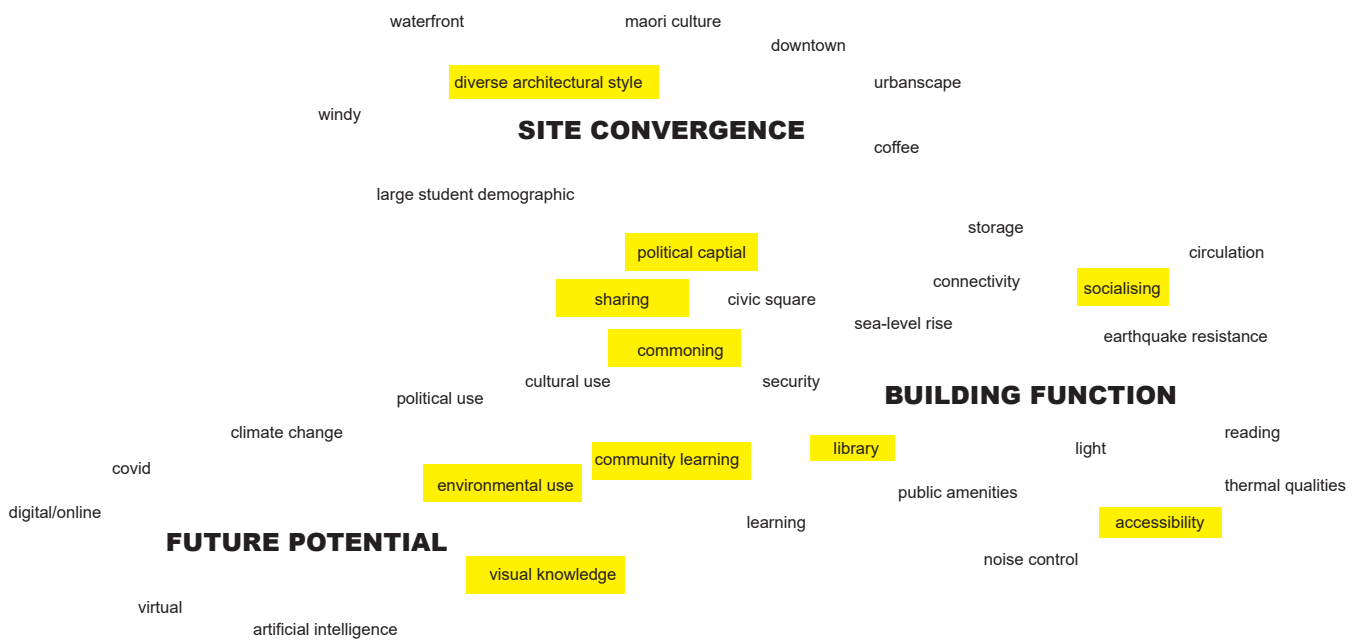
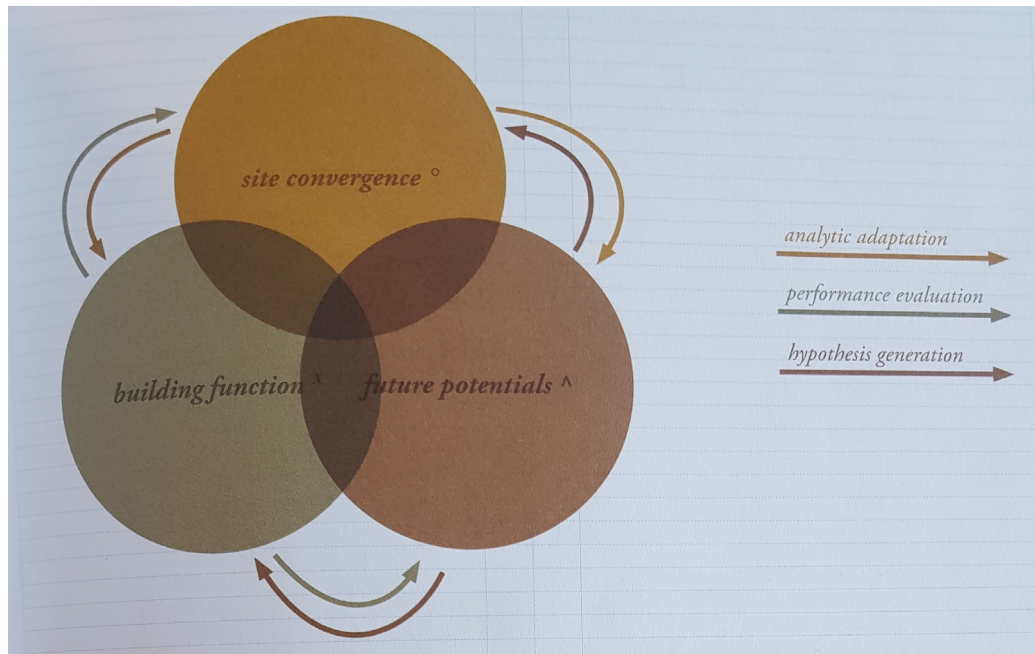


Fig 26. “hypothesis framework“ by Drobnik and Tajeri

Fig 27. *Application of hypothesis framework*

3.4 PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Embracing participatory governance and inclusivity, urban commoning is the ongoing process of participation, sharing and collaboration between various agents in the city. Rather than an “accomplished set of things”⁵ it requires continuous public involvement throughout its life cycle.

Architectural professor, Diane Ghirardo asserts that the creation of public space should incorporate bottom-up strategies. Ghirardo claims “successful” public spaces serve community needs, values, beliefs and created when members of that local populace continue to frequent it.⁷

In this sense, the design process is an opportunity to engage with the broader public, community groups, regional council, to address the agendas of the collective, which increase the likelihood of community sustenance of well-shared and managed space.

Already in Denmark, it is government policy that all municipal projects engage with the community. Considered a practice of participatory democracy, it requires public involvement at the beginning of all civic projects.⁶ Exemplifying this participatory model, is the design process of the “Dokk1” public library by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects in Aarhus. Completed in 2015, the design outcome and process encapsulate its ambitions to “open up all branches of knowledge to every generation and social class.”⁵

Using participatory strategies within the design process, inhabitants of the city were “co-creators.” Using “user-generated

design techniques,” answers to questions such as “why do you come to the library when everything is online,” were considered into the design of the media space, which subsequently developed into a flexible space for collaboration and networking.

⁶ The library connects with the public in many ways; such as in its naming process (public contest), and its ringing bell notifying a birth in Aarhus.

In short, Dokk1 demonstrates participatory methods, allowing its patrons to contribute towards the library’s content, service and space – fostering a sense of membership, community and opportunity for everyone.

Post-Modernist Approach versus Participatory Design

Inherent contradictions between the Post-Modernist approach and participatory methodologies are apparent. The fundamental principles of urban commons, namely its collaborative, inclusive and community-based approaches, directly align with participatory processes. Likewise, the populist and eclectic intent of Post-Modernism (and its collagist agenda) is congruent with the urban commons in its expression of the diverse paradigms that make up our communities.

However, the subjective design expression of Post-Modernists require architect direction conflicting with bottom-up participatory processes. To balance these two perspectives (the autonomy of the architectural designer and collaborative aspect of urban commons) this thesis considers the incorporation of co-creating elements within the design process and identifies specific phases or elements suitable for participatory input.

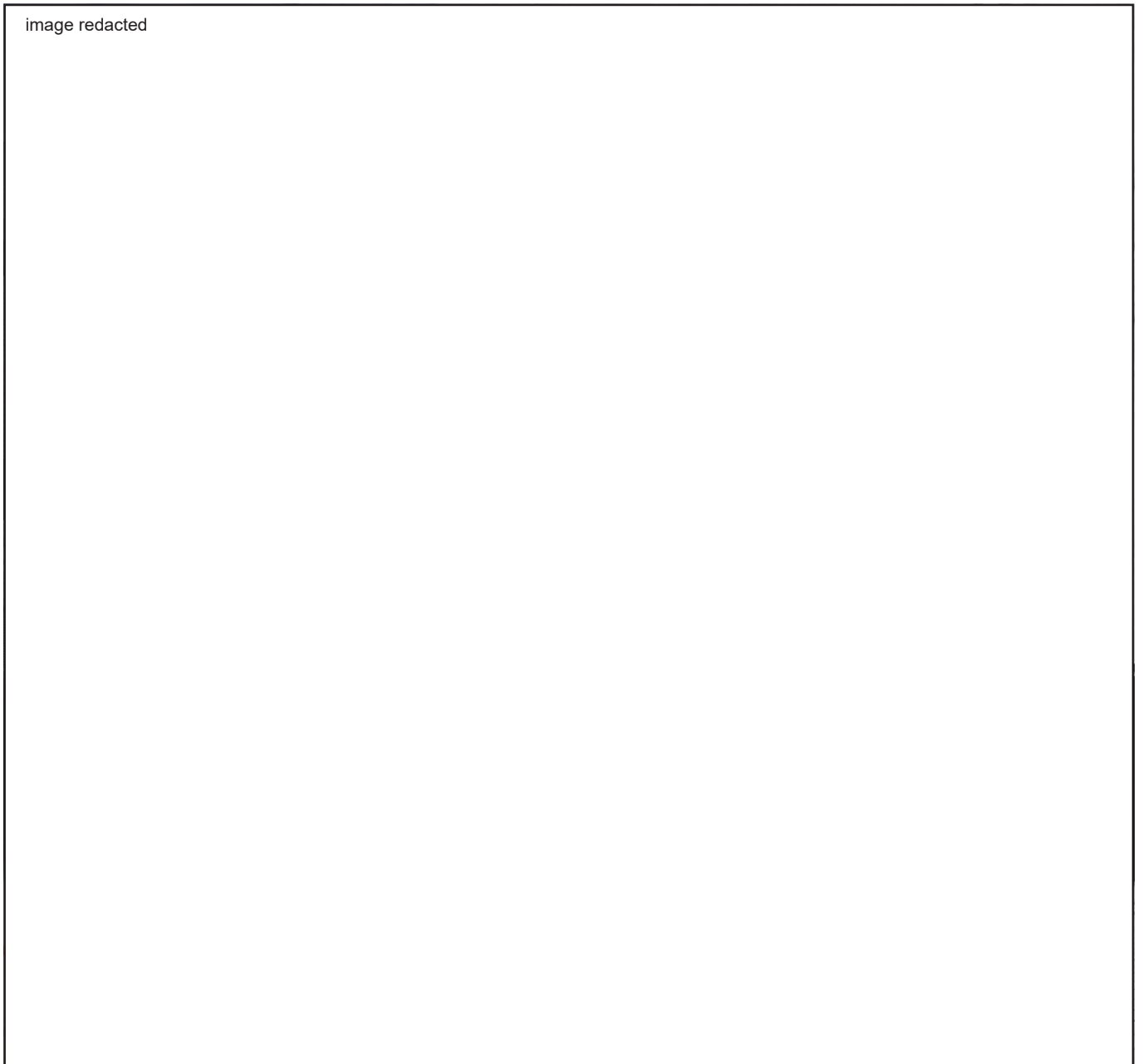
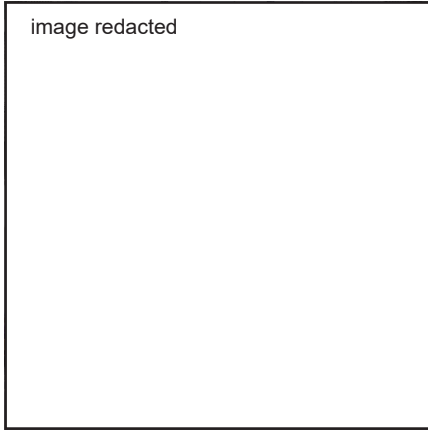


Fig 28. *Photos of Dokk1*

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chapter four

DESIGN

4.0	points system
4.1	collage mapping
4.2	pattern exploration
4.3	local objects
4.4	iterations of library zones
4.5	site studies - CBD
4.6	volumetric studies
4.7	concept design
4.8	facade iterations
4.9	design progress
4.10	library form iterations

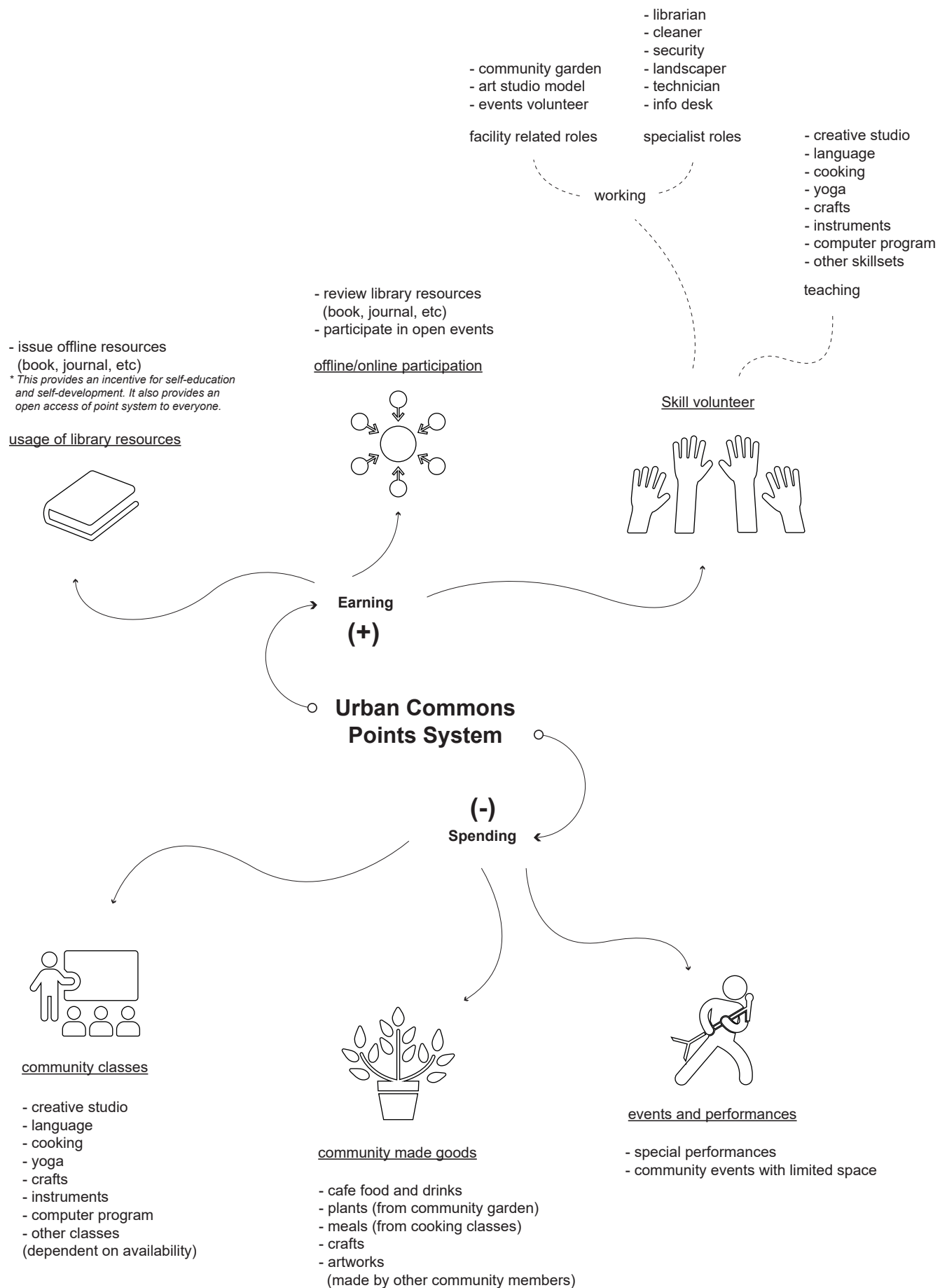
4.0 POINTS SYSTEM

Commons System

As described in section 3.3, in order to construct the urban commons, programmatic systems must be defined.

This research proposes a “point credit system” (Fig.29)- whereby one can earn and spend points in the library. This is heavily dependant on community participation and is a self-sustaining, continuous circuit of public activity.

Community inclusion is a crucial driver whereby diverse user groups are encouraged to participate - there are no prerequisites.



* Specific point weights of each activity shall be discussed with the community.

Fig 29. Point's System diagram

4.1 COLLAGE MAPPING

Post-Modern Collage

Following Rowe & Kotter's "library as city" motif and the city being a "juxtaposition, fragmentations, discontinuities" of spatial utopias, (discussed in section 2.3) the map below highlights the eight areas mentioned in Collage City in Wellington CBD Setting.

The following pages present visual recordings of each area to identify the "utopias" - the distinct architectural and urban characteristics.

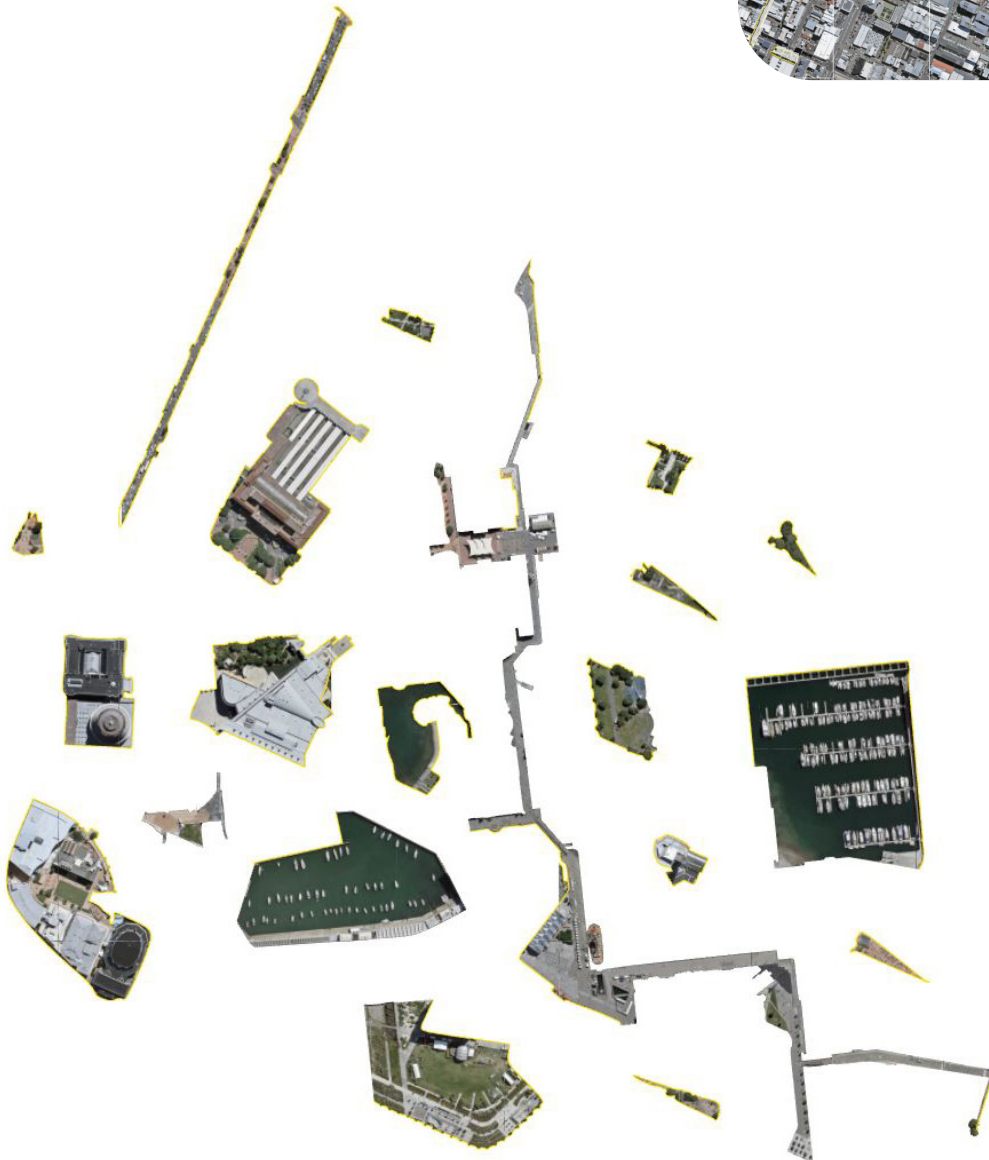


Fig 30. Aerial map of Wellington CBD, highlights 8 excursions

Fig 31. Cut out of 8 excursions

Interpretation of Excursus

The following local areas matched the description of eight “excursus” of the collage city.

1	memorable streets	/	Cuba St
2	splendid public terrace	/	Waterfront
3	stabilisers	/	Lambton Quay
4	ambiguous and composite buildings	/	Victoria - Willis St
5	nostalgia producing instruments	/	Railway Station
6	commentary	/	Civic Square
7	the garden	/	Botanic garden
8	potentially interminable set pieces	/	Urban moments

Exploring images of the city - forming collage palette

A following collection of photos show no clear objective criteria, somewhat a personal recording of the author as a “flaneur”/ wanderer/ ordinary urbanite. This implies that every observer of the city will perceive different objects and aspects of the city.

The collection intends to highlight reoccurring visual elements of each area and visual artifacts that stand out.

Despite the subjectivity of the visual reading (rather than representing the wider commons), it provides the author with a base material to build upon and respond to. Thus, this exercise provided the author collage materials for design experimentation alluding to Stirling and Athfield’s design approach of “contextual collaging.”

1 / Cuba St - memorable streets

The recordings highlight three visual images. Firstly, the presence of decorative elements of neo-classical buildings. Secondly, a series of sculptural interventions along the street, expressing vibrancy in form and colour. Lastly, the piping language that is added for functional requirements.

ground pattern and geometries

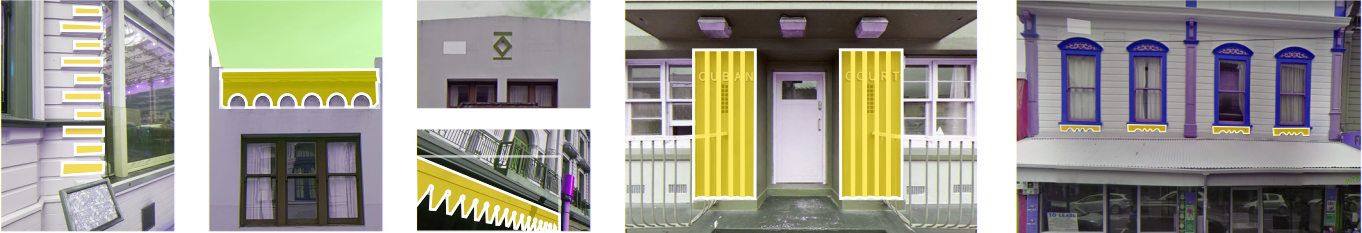


functional artifacts

sculptural artifacts



building pattern and styles



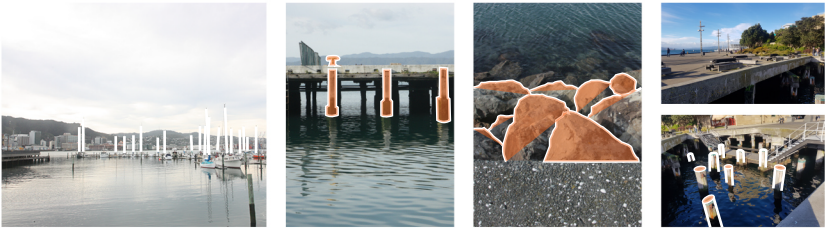
street moments

Fig 32. Photos of Cuba St

2 / Waterfront - splendid public terrace

Along the waterfront, more urban design elements contribute to the atmosphere of the area. There is a clear reminiscence of industrial port elements. (cranes, wharf, etc.)
There is a continued presence of urban sculpture, adding to the quirkiness and individual creativity.

water and greenery



ground cover



waterfront artifacts



crane, historical artifacts



sculptural interventions



memorable buildings

Fig 33. Photos of Wellington waterfront

Lambton quay presents diverse architectural qualities, ranging from monuments, heritage buildings to modern high rise buildings. It contains the most urban qualities attributed to the scale and density of buildings.

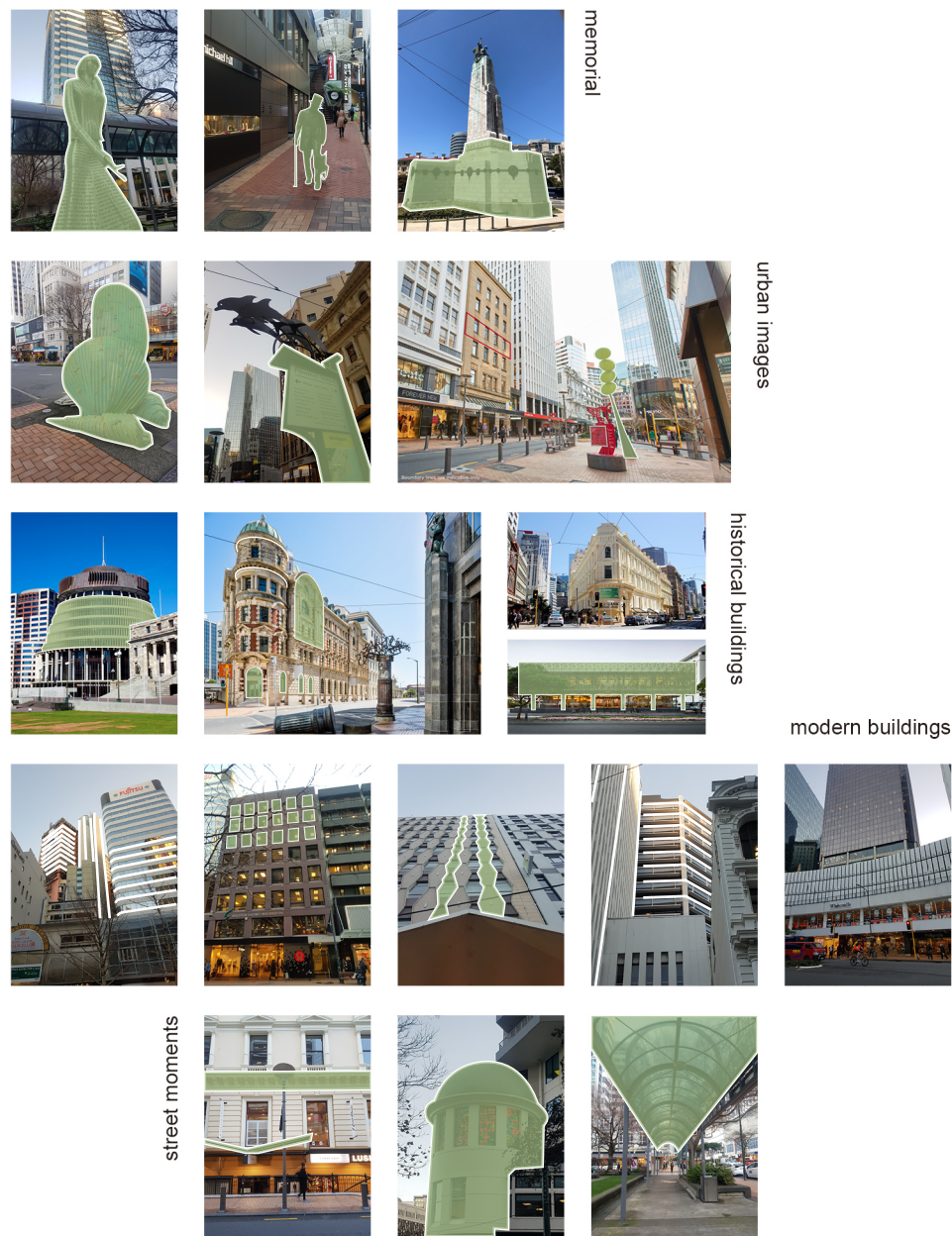


Fig 34. Photos of Lambton Quay

4 / **Victoria & Willis St - ambiguous and composite**

Victoria to Willis Street consists of traces of various architectural styles and typologies. It is predominantly commercial, showing a lack of public space open for everyone. The street also operates as a key transport route for private vehicles and public buses. This adds to the uninviting atmosphere to the area.

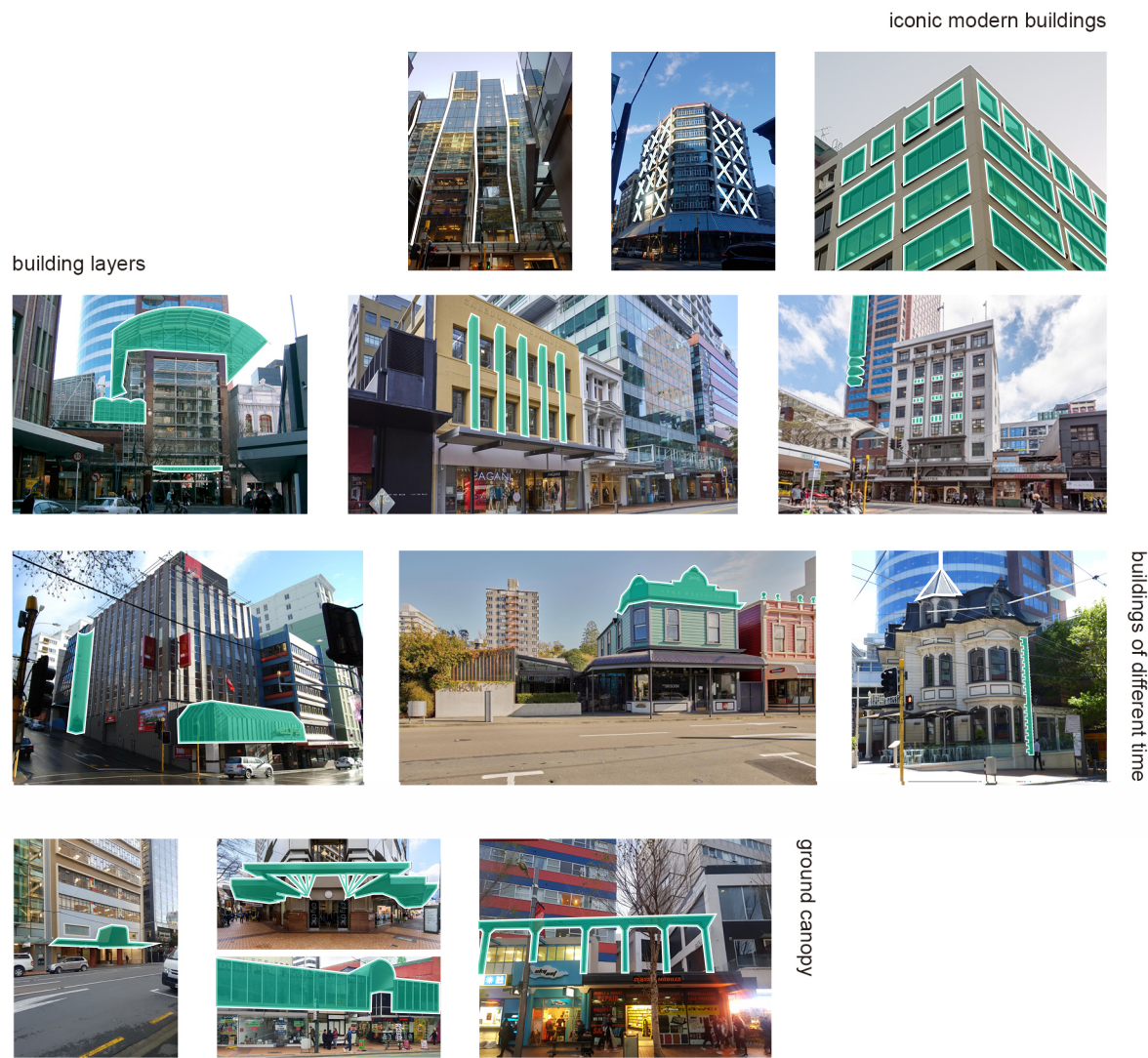


Fig 35. Photos of Victoria - Willis St

5 / Railway station - nostalgia instruments

Railway Station is one of the key transport hubs in Wellington. The neo-classical entrance to the station marks as a crucial image to Wellington City. Neo-classical language is present - symmetry, ornamental details, arces and domes etc.

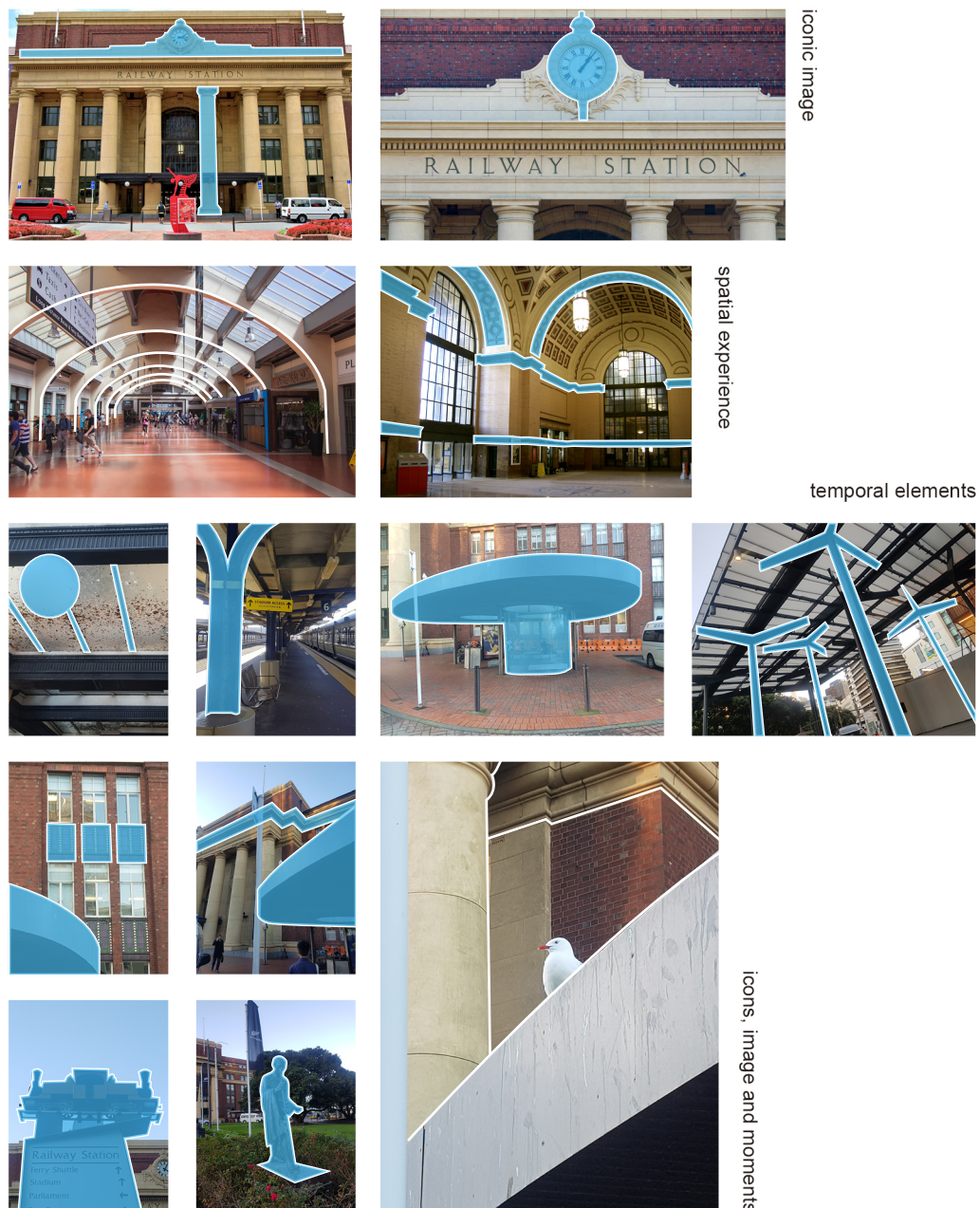
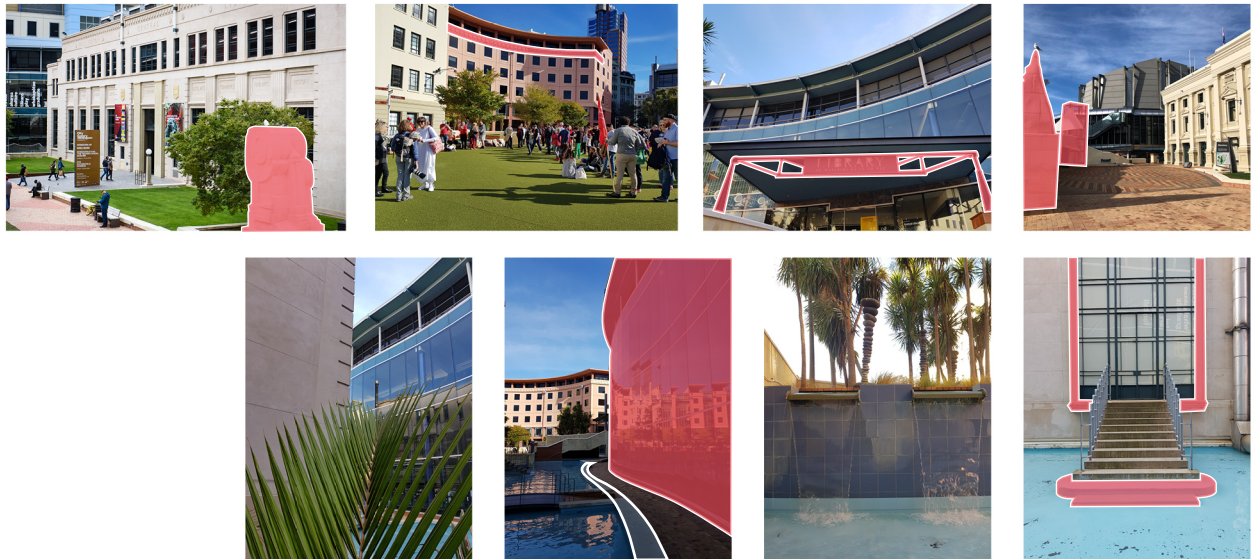


Fig 36. Photos of Railway station

Civic square presents a dynamic and rich atmosphere from various urban sculptures, vibrant material finishes and playful interventions. The collection of different architectural elements and various iconic sculptures make it a significant urban space attractive to the public.

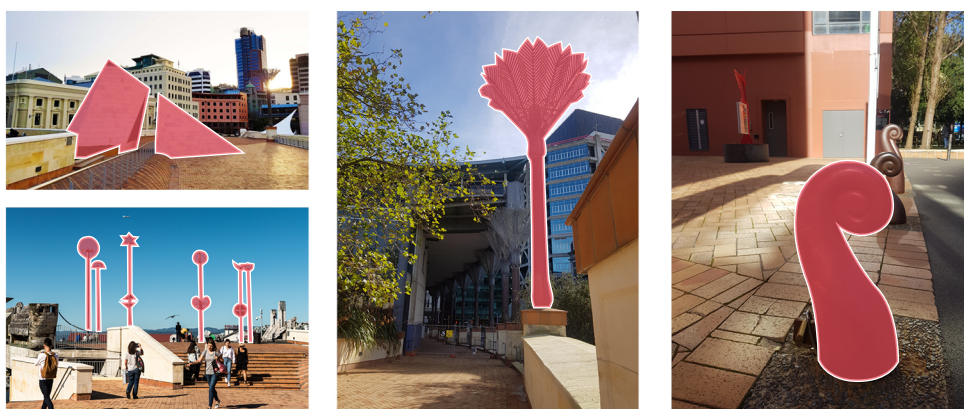
rich architecture



architectural moments



civic / common



memorable artifacts

in between moments



Fig 33. Photos of Civic Square

7 / Botanic garden - garden

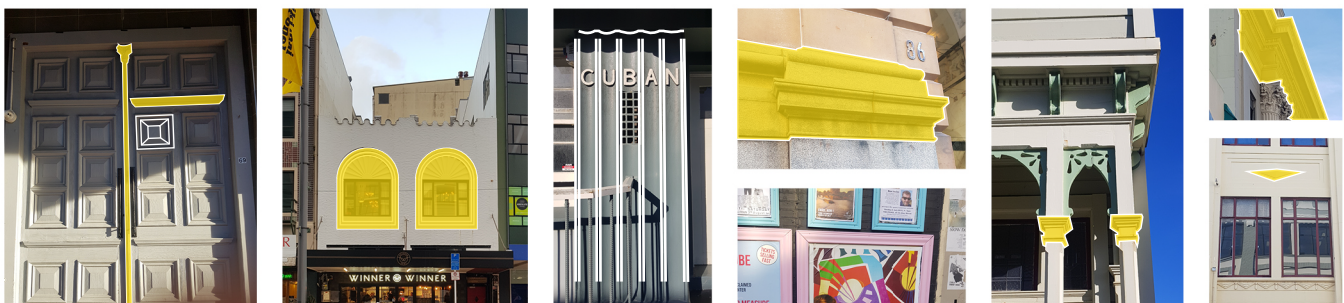
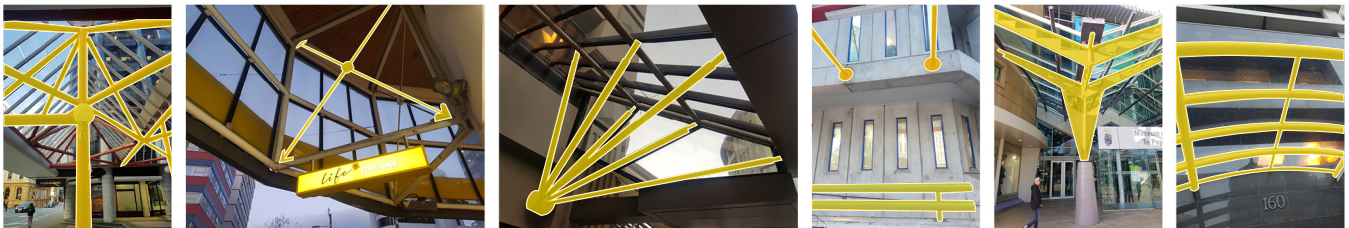
The botanic garden is distant from the CBD area, therefore plays a less significant role in forming the urban experience of Wellington. This area offers an immersive into nature. The challenge lies in how these qualities can be realised in an urban setting with buildings incorporated.



Fig 38. Photos of Botanic Garden

These moments highlight visual language that is conspicuous throughout the centre of the city, piping, moulding and arch/fillet. These elements set the urban scenery of Wellington and provide a design language that one could apply to respond to the visual context of the city.

piping



moulding



arch/ fillet

Fig 39. Photos of Urban moments in Wellington

4.2 PATTERN EXPLORATIONS

Pattern Finding Exercise

These drawings illustrate architectural patterns found around the city of Wellington. It abstracts the pattern by altering the scale and density of shape. These patterns can be a robust visual amplifier in the design of a building. It also provides a conspicuous way to respond to the visual language of the city.

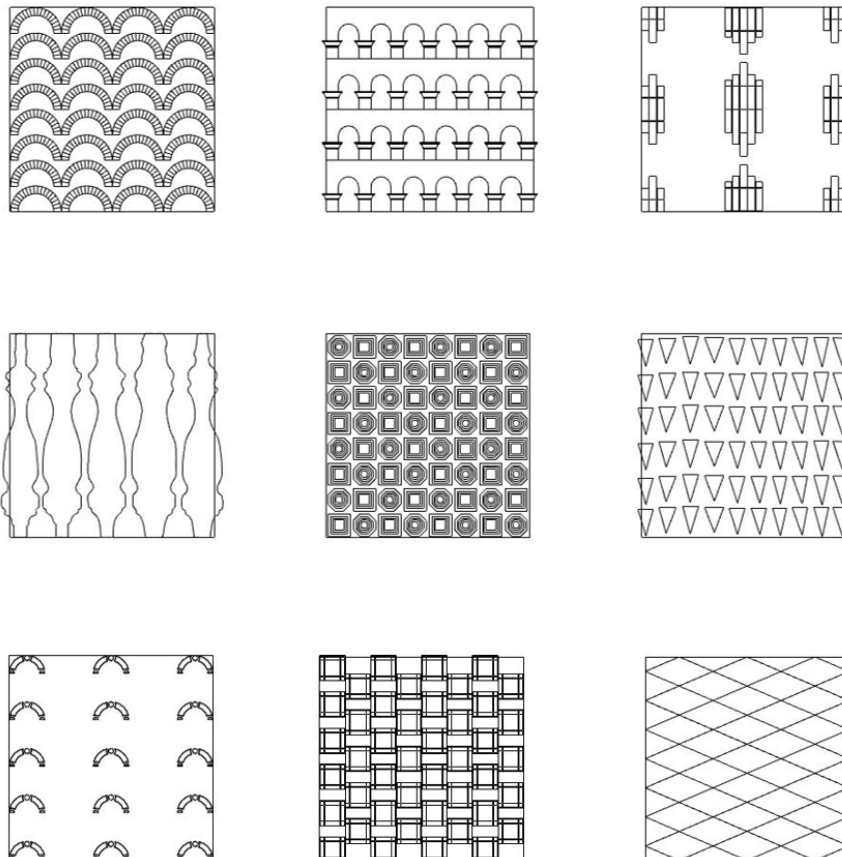
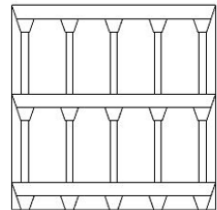
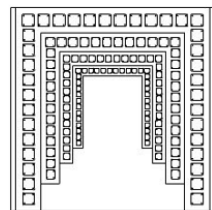
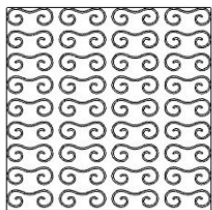
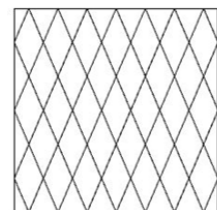
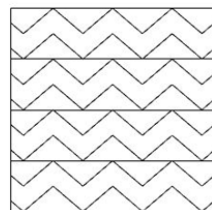
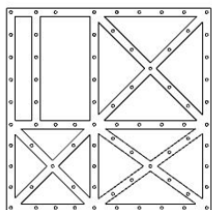
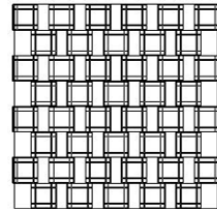
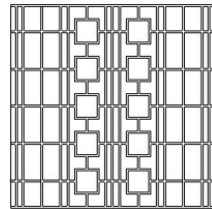
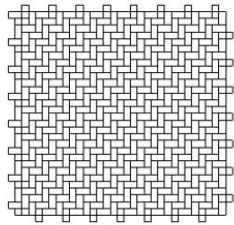
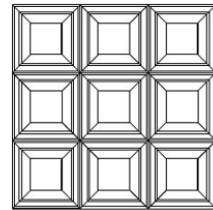
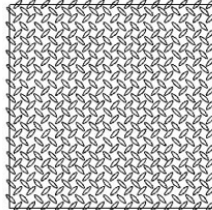
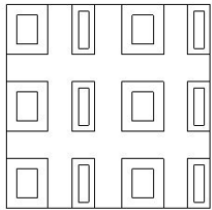
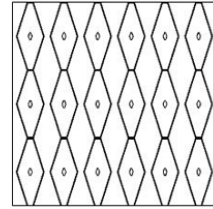
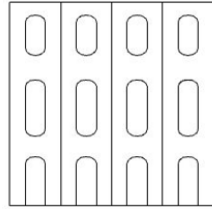
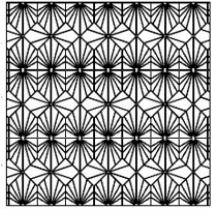
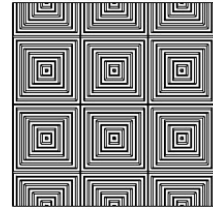
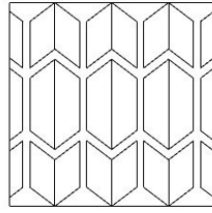
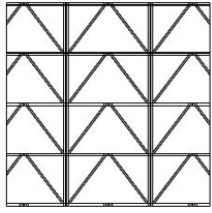


Fig 40. Patterns of Wellington city



Pattern Collage

These collage drawing use two-dimensional patterns to develop and inform three-dimensional space. It shows that patterns can be translated into openings, facades and steps. The application of this method implies repetition of distinct form in a three-dimensional space. The design effect deriving from collaging of patterns are particularly effective to create a playful space and unexpected planning composition.

However, it displays a strong folly quality with a devoid of functional consideration. This exercise also revealed that colouring/ material development could be an element that can drastically change the impression and aesthetic experience.

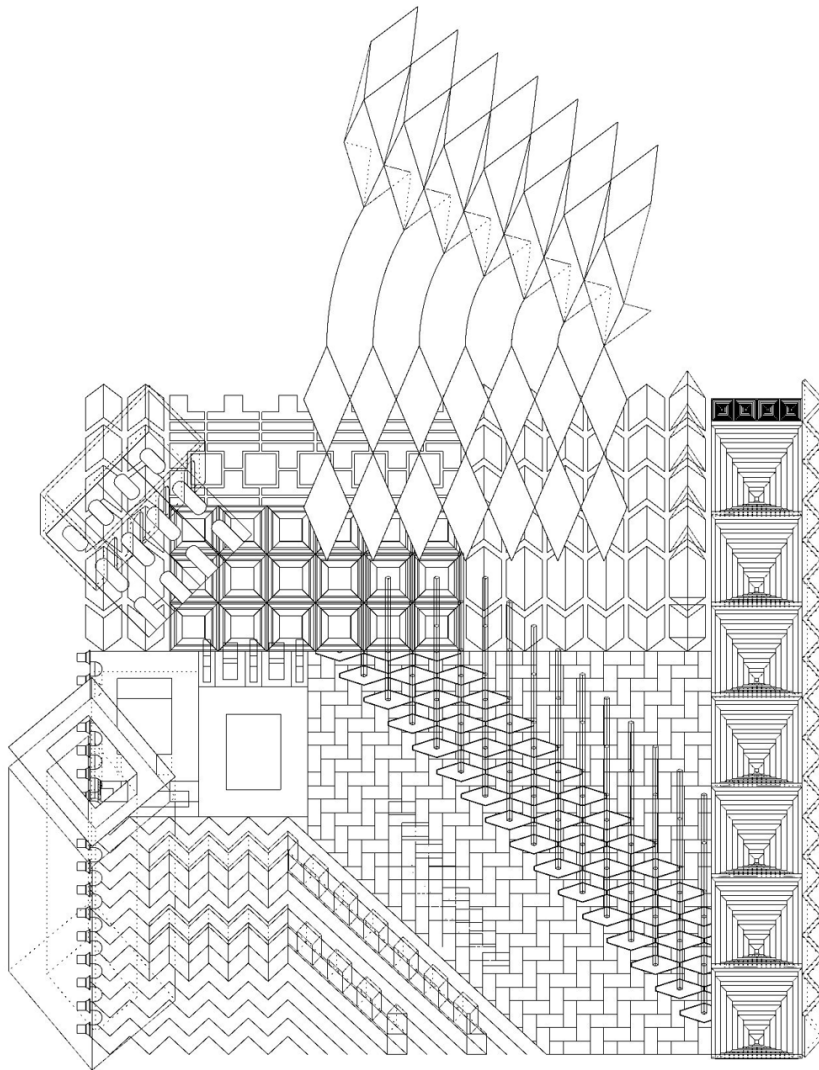
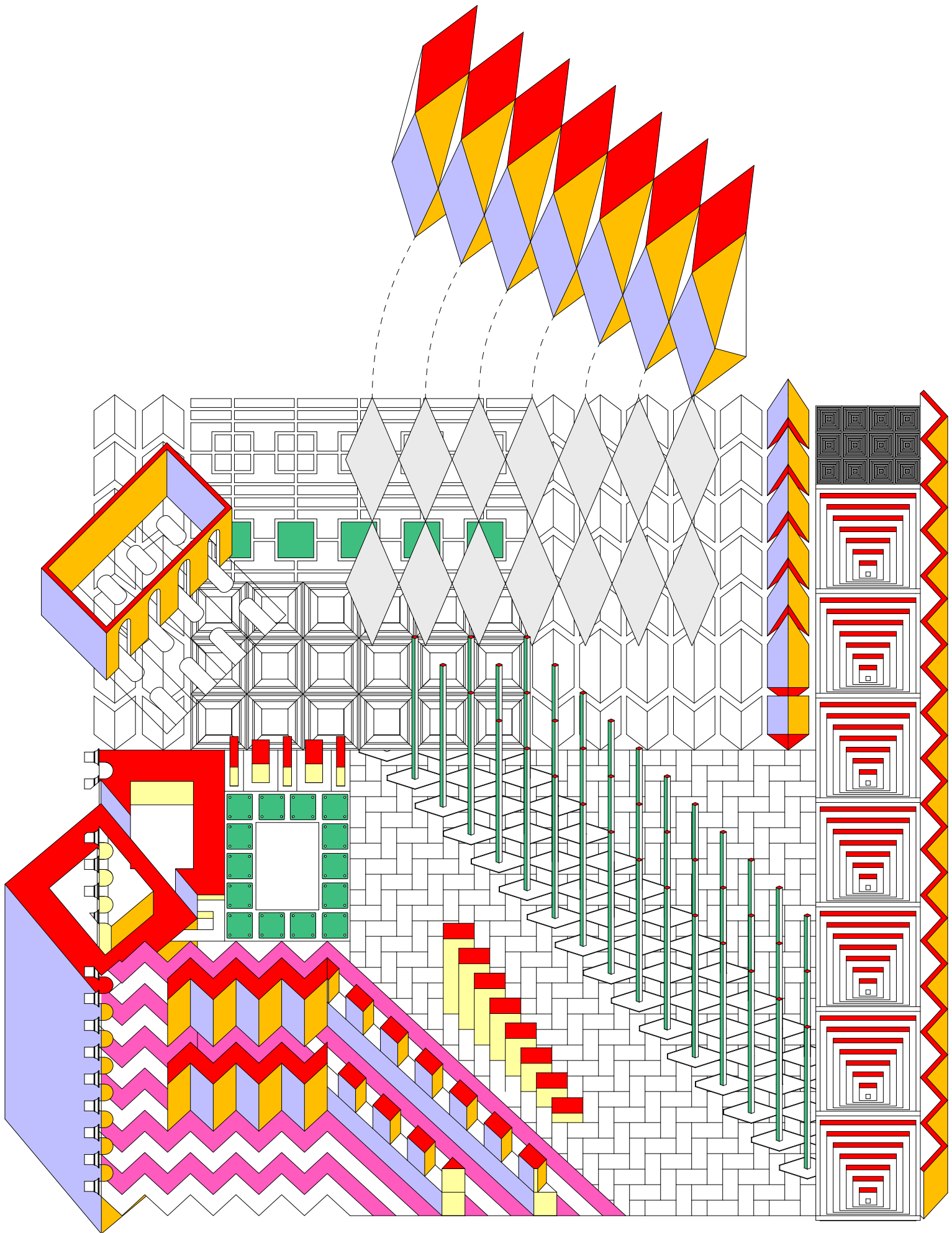
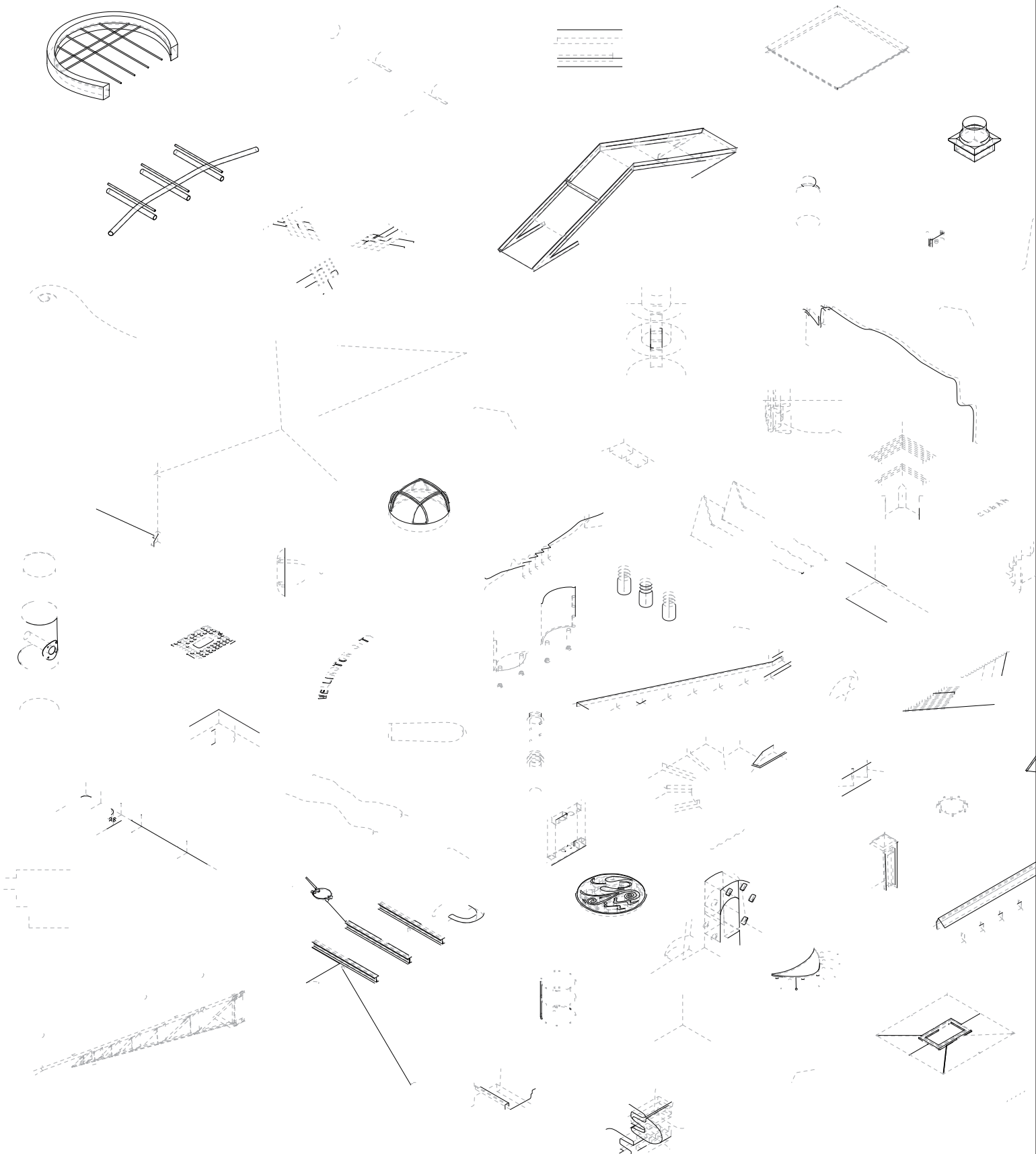


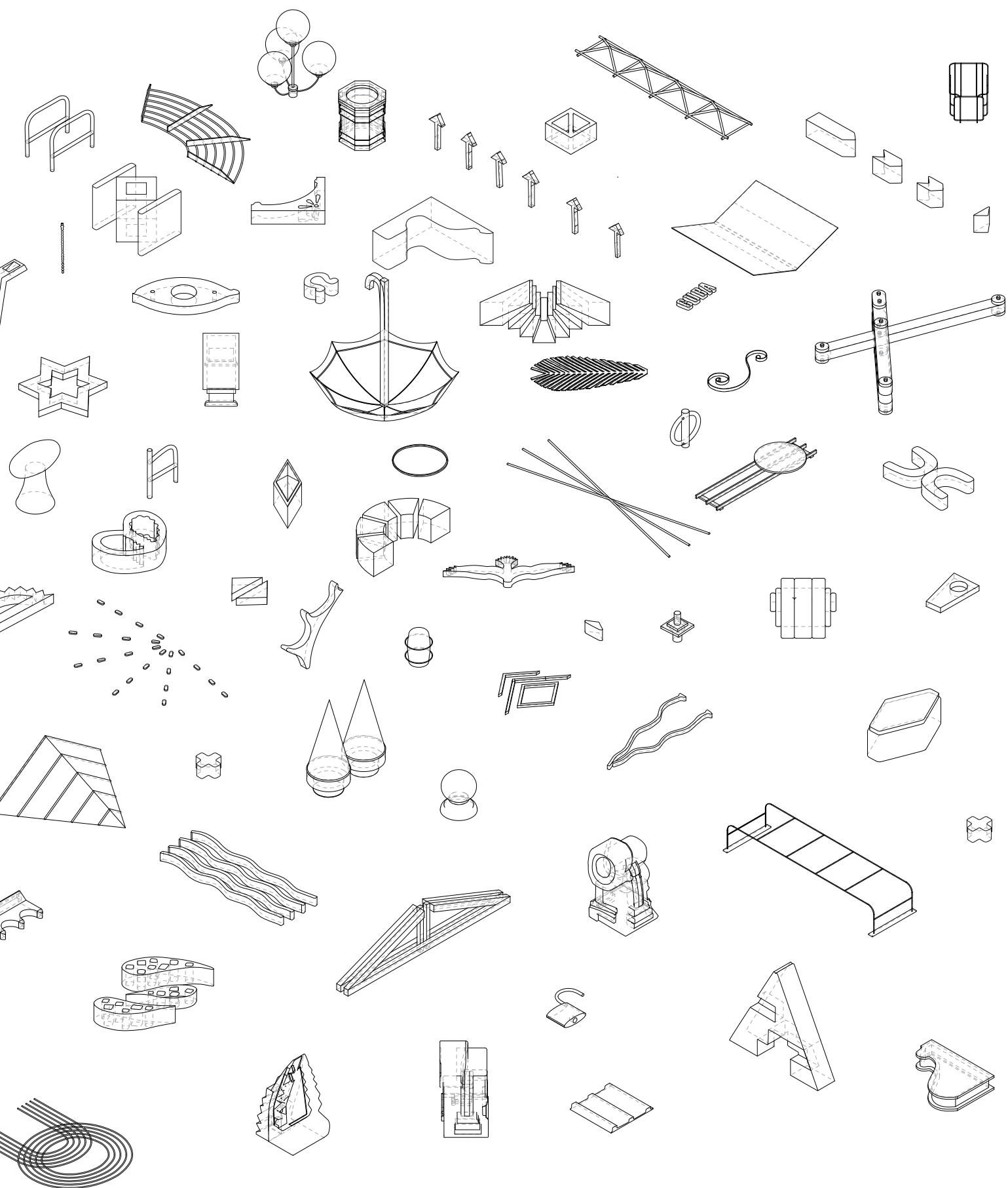
Fig 41. Pattern collage (black and white)

Fig 42. Pattern collage (coloured)



4.3 LOCAL OBJECTS





Object Collage

These object mash-ups explore the crude composition of locally collected objects/artifacts. These artifacts are distorted, scaled, and sliced to form sculptural objects, overtly referencing the local context. This operation successfully conveys the idea of collaging.

However, functional or spatial consideration is required during the combining process. This approach can be applied to the later design by developing different parts of a building in isolation to each other and combining them in a later stage.

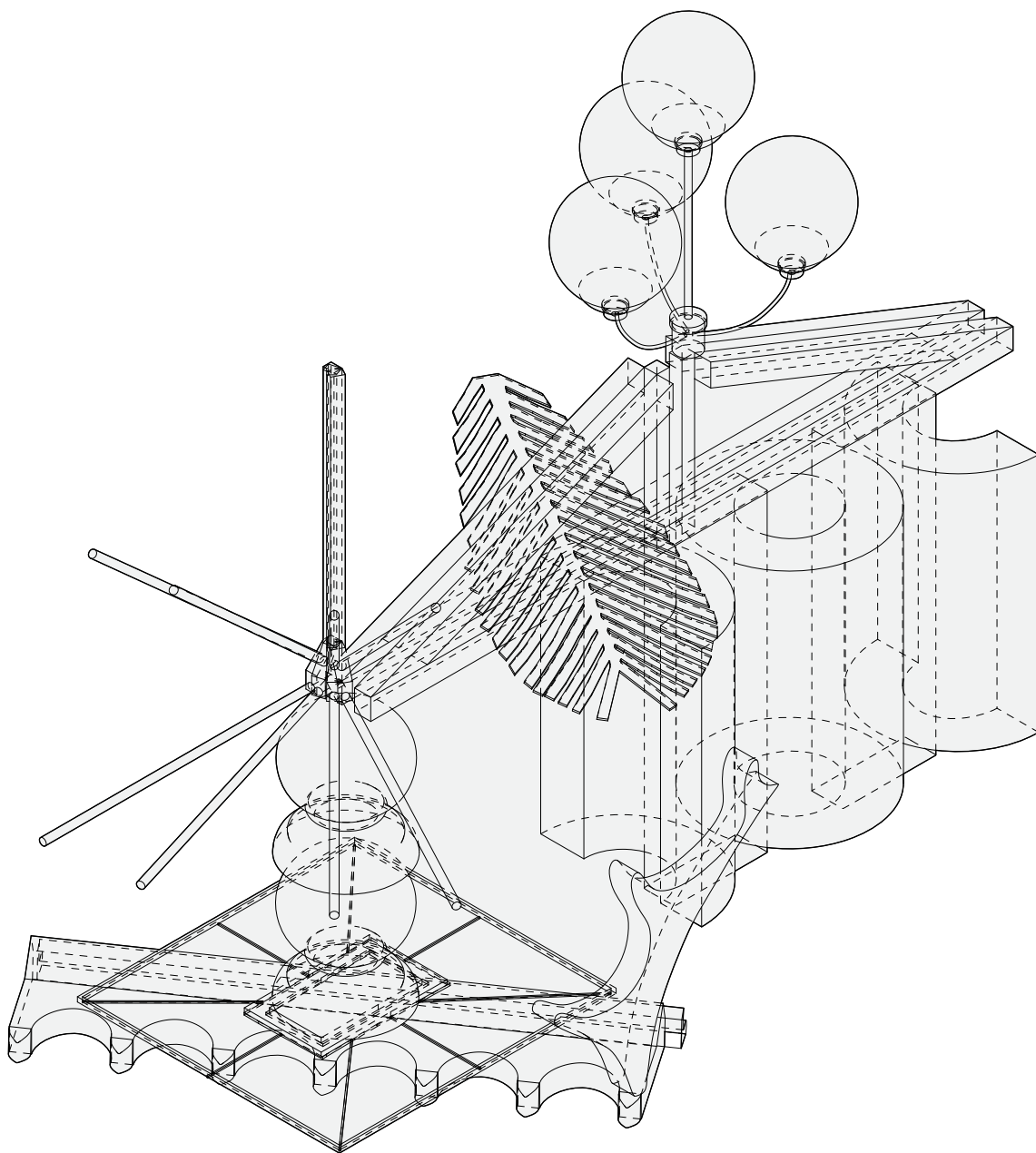
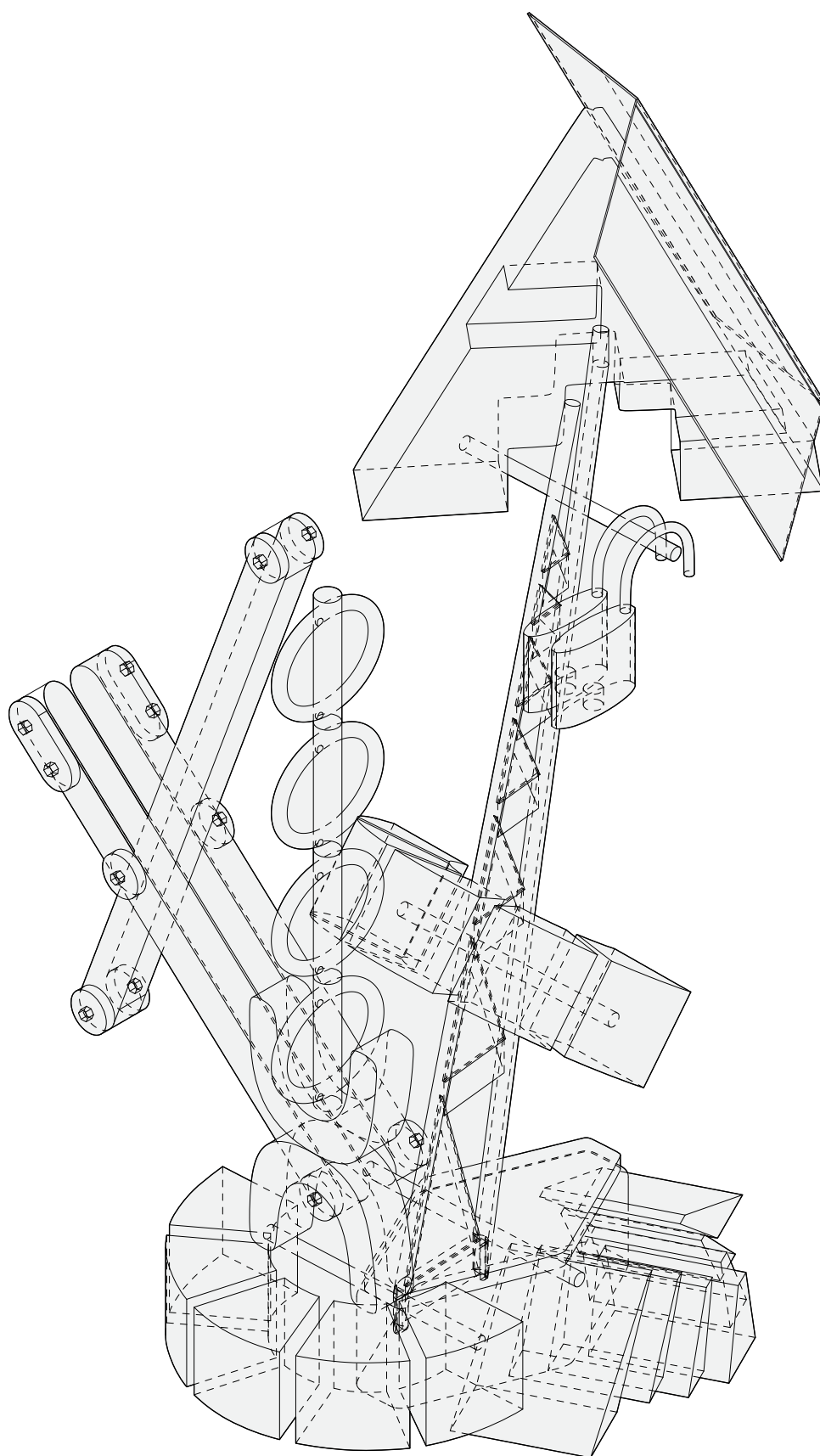


Fig 44. Object collage 1

Fig 45. Object collage 2



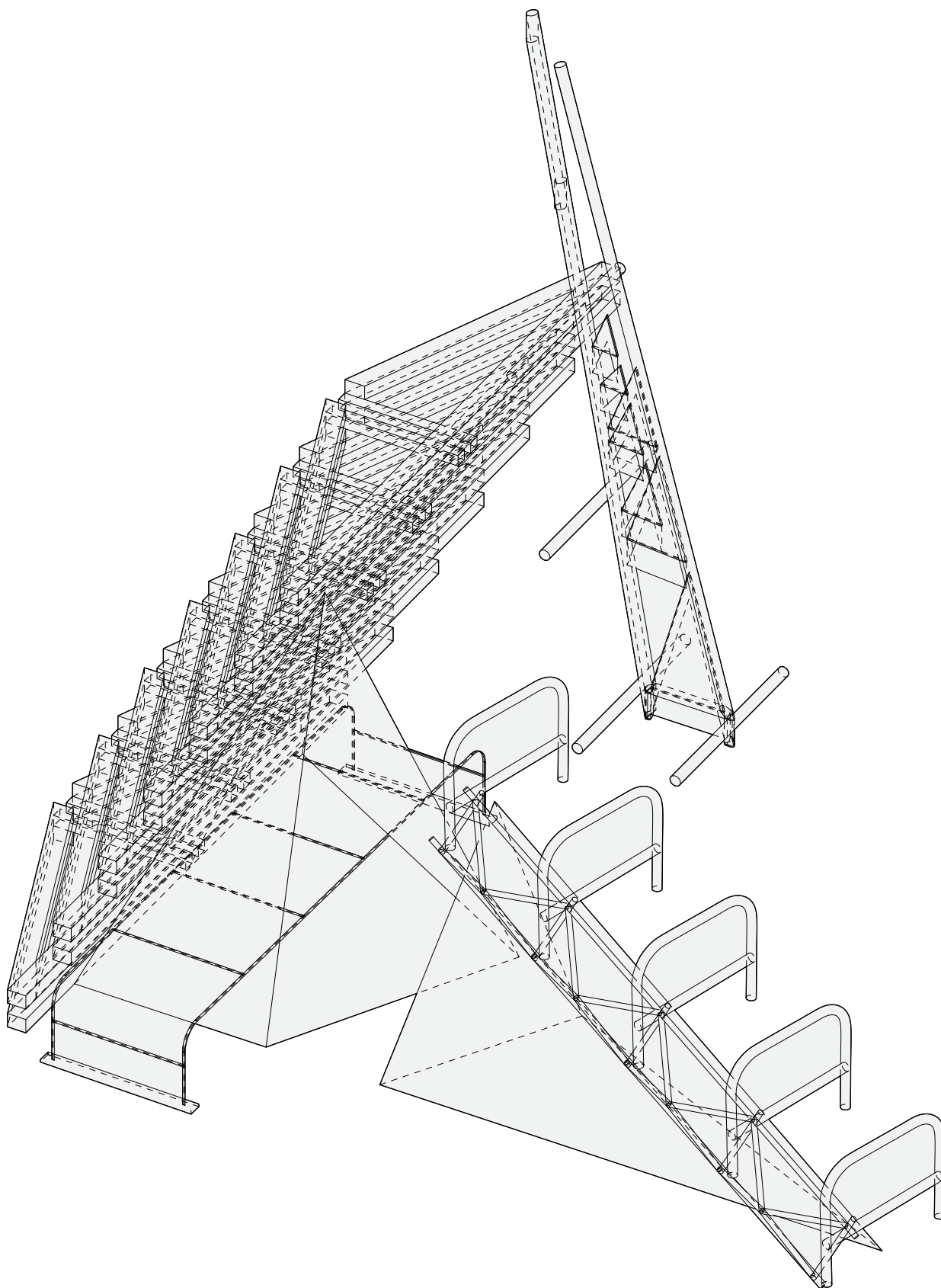
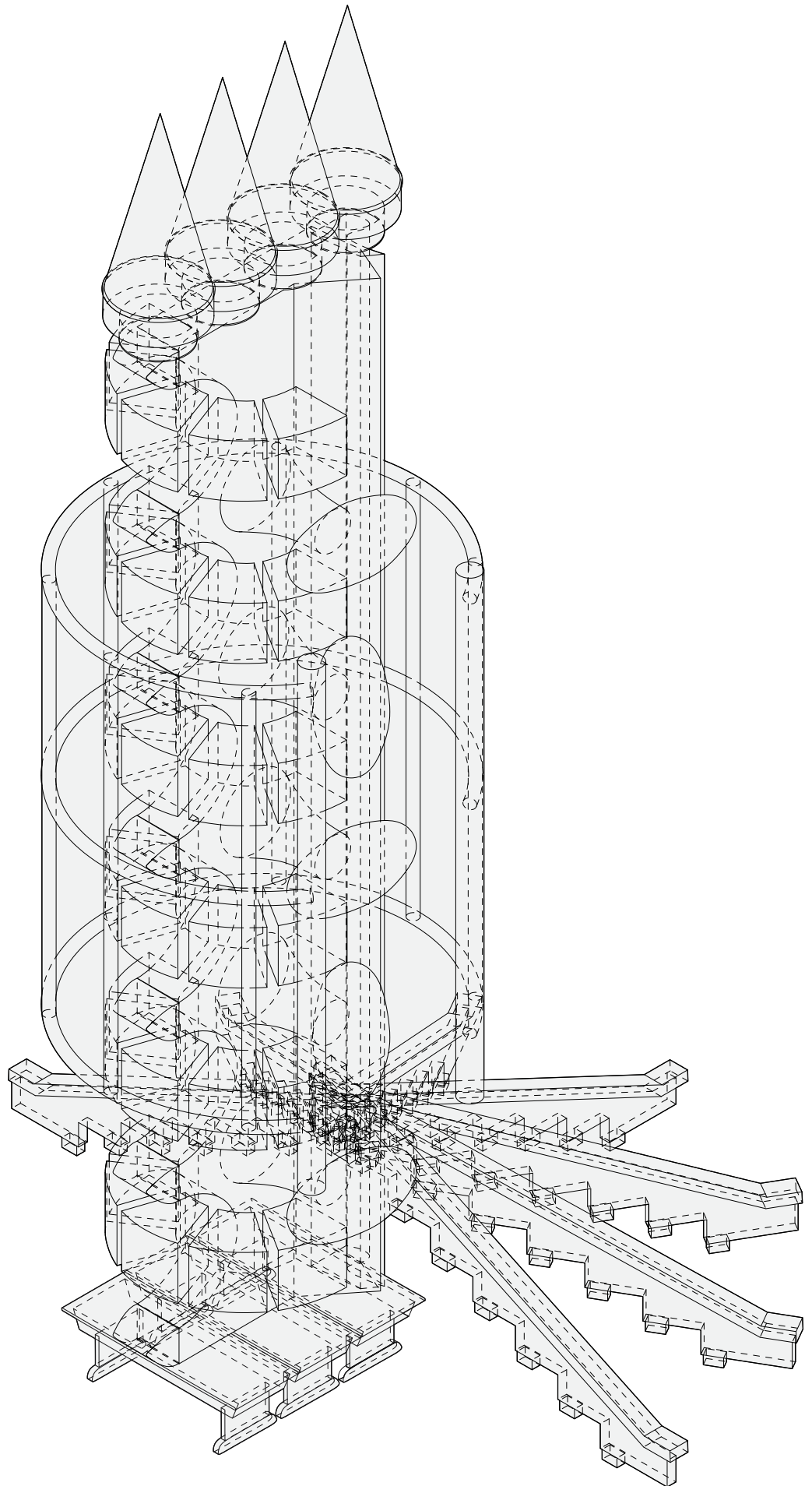


Fig 46. *Object collage 3*

Fig 47. *Object collage 4*



Visual Language Development

Moulding

These iterations adopt the essence of the city's visual languages to explore their formal possibilities. Above drawing illustrates "moulding" applied on a box at different scales and angles. Through the adaptation of computational design, this process showed similarities with subtracting, slicing and railing. Thus, these actions could be further adapted to develop the building form.

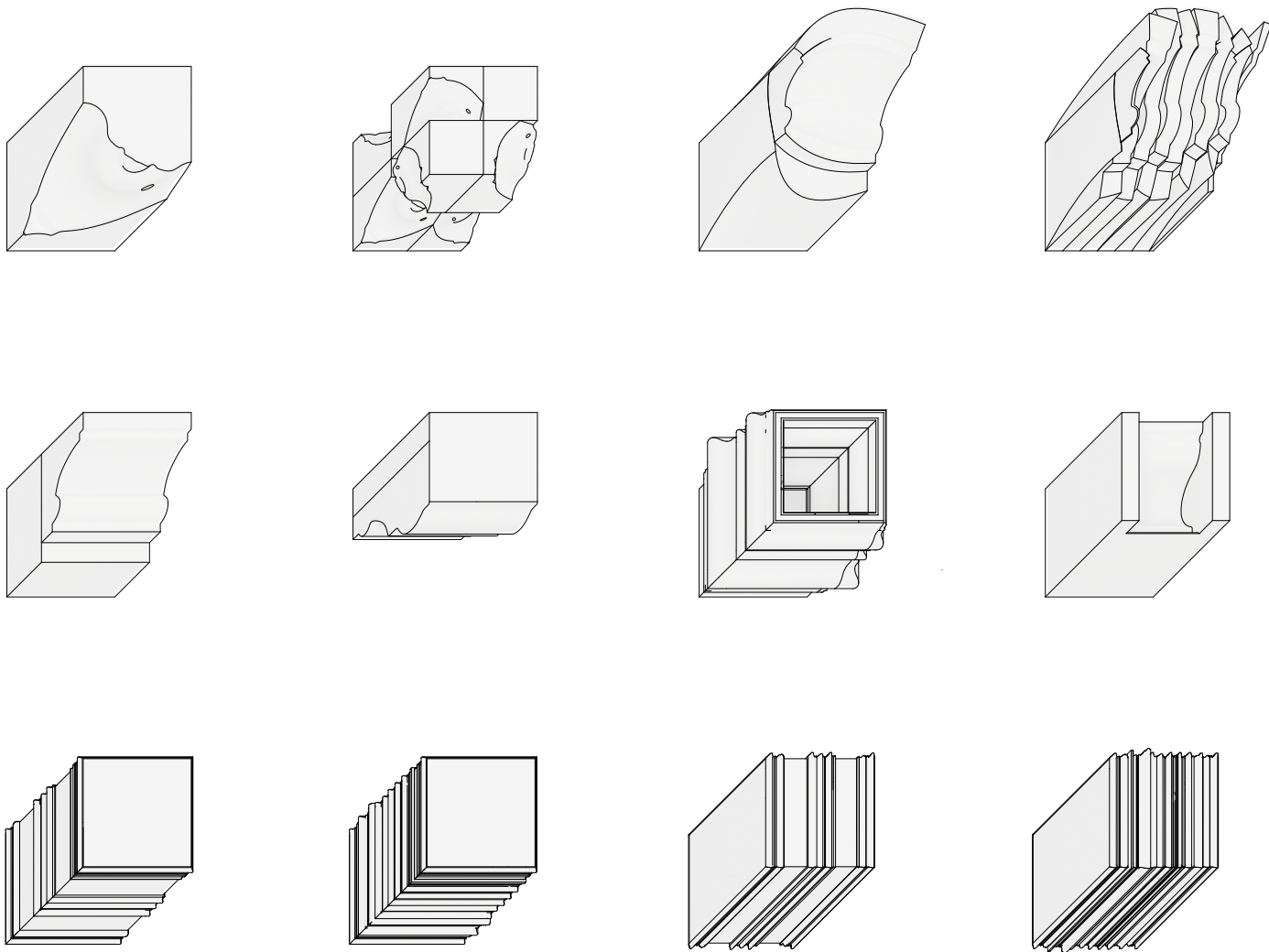


Fig 48. Exploration on "moulding"

Piping

Piping elements were also explored as another re-occurring structural and decorative elements around the local built environment. This exploration was mainly to investigate how it can add a pattern to an architectural form. The iterations conclude that piping can be either structural or folly-like. It also shows that piping has a dominant impact on the aesthetic of overall artifact and adds playfulness to the form.

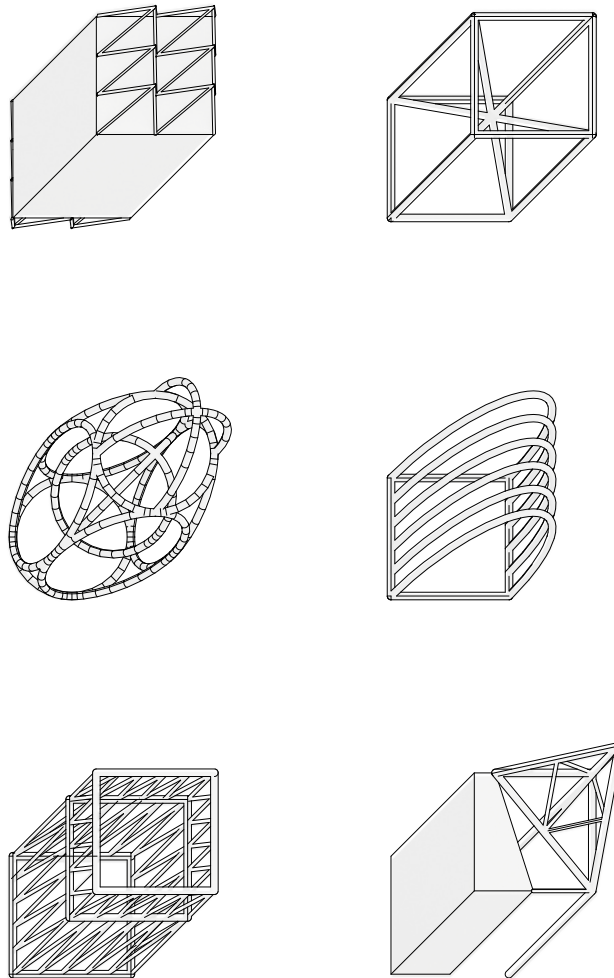
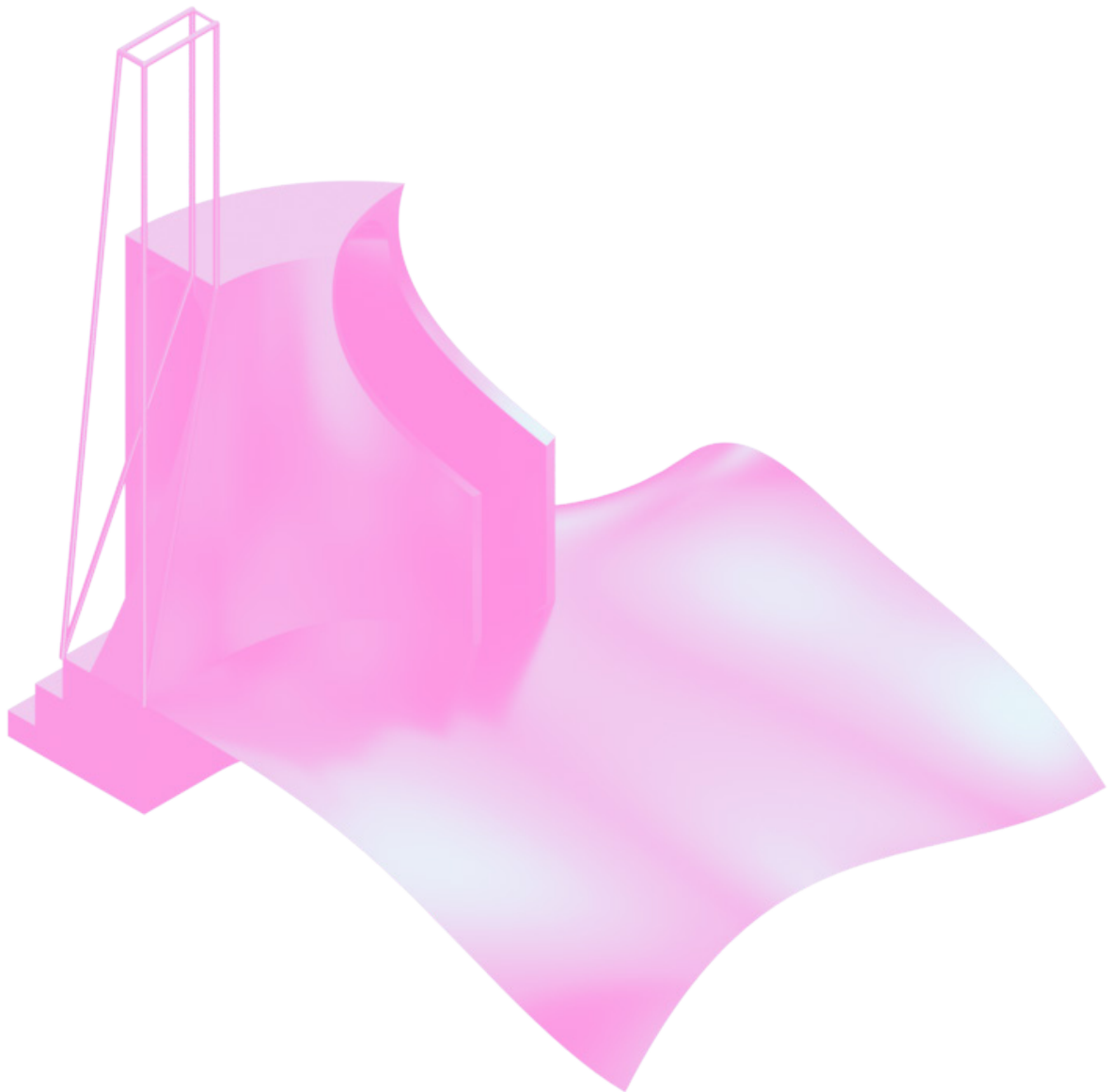


Fig 49. Exploration on "piping"

Moment Development

These moments reveal the three-dimensional development of objects and patterns through the mode of collaging. This method enables three-dimensional experiments between different objects and created playful urban interventions which begin to imply the functionality of the space and spatial experience.



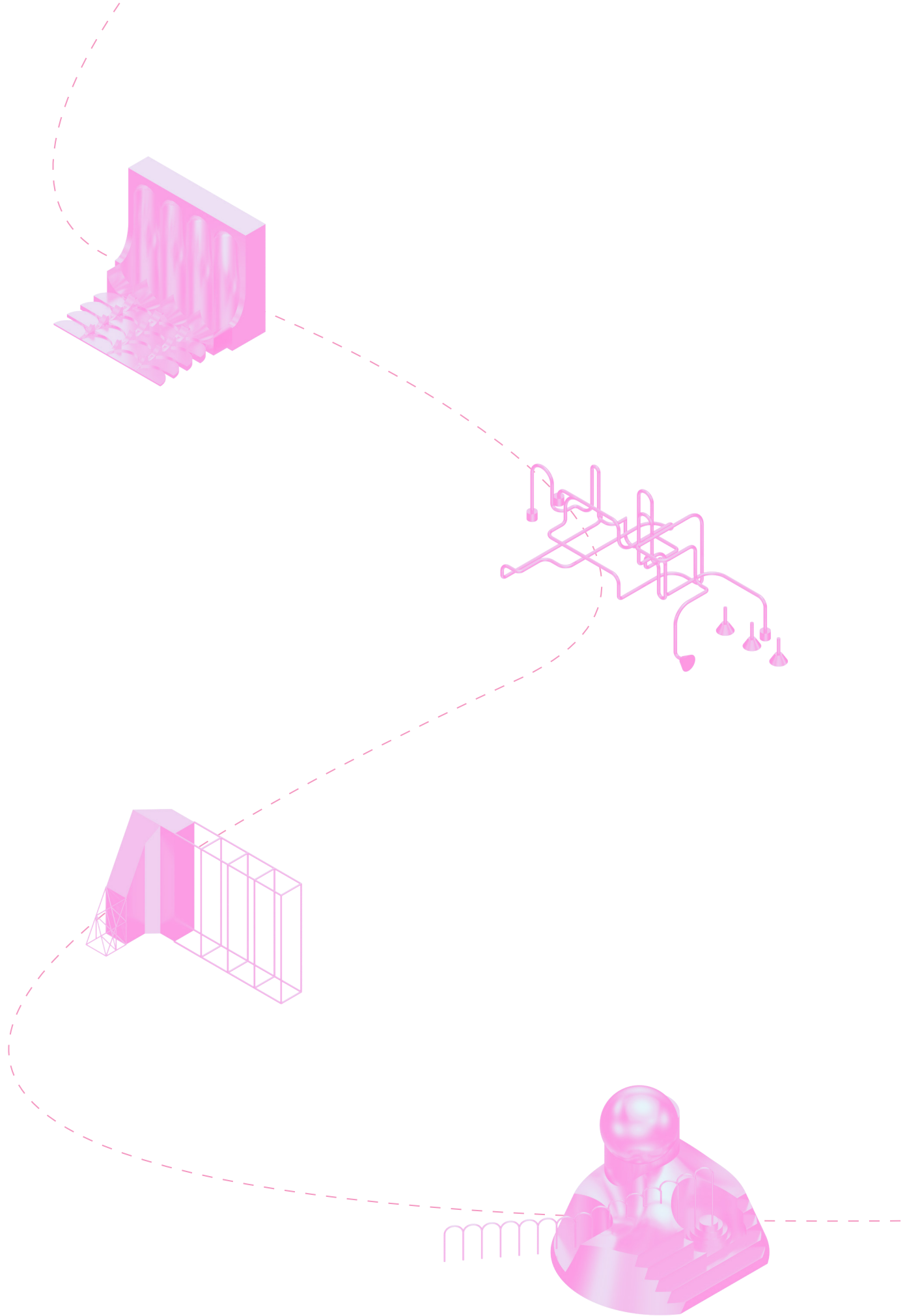


Fig 50. *Moment developments*

Sketch Collage

This sketch attempts to use another medium to create hybrid space using objects and patterns gathered in previous steps. It is found that this approach tends to reveal the image of the building rather than three-dimensional qualities of the space. However, intuitive design (based on the flanner experience) is expressed through this medium which is highly subjective.



Fig 51. Sketch collage

Reflection

In this section, a series of design experiments, concept massing and site analysis were carried out to familiarise the designer with the visual language of the Wellington City Context. This is so that the outcomes of the design are familiar and relatable to Wellingtonians that experience the new space.

The design qualities presented from these experiments form the basis for tangible architectural/tectonic and spatial development of articulating the commons. Conditions such as sharing, collaborating, and socialising all imply the notion that a diverse array of people in the city are coming together. Symbolising the city, the notion of connection and diversities, the images of the city through collage is argued to formalise the concept of commons.

Moreover, through an iterative approach, different mediums were used to test the idea of architectural collaging, adding to the pool of images for the designer to respond to.

4.4 SPATIAL ITERATIONS ON LIBRARY ZONES

Formalising Different Ways of Consuming Knowledge

These design iterations attempt to formalise spatial characteristics of activities relevant for consuming knowledge. Deliberately, they are not program specific, but describe a means of obtaining knowledge - this is so that the library can be flexible to changes in the modes or medium of which people are learning.

These iterations introduce formal languages that could enhance the experience or better facilitate the loosely defined activity.

Reading

- considers how light would alter the reading experience.
- proposal of different level of porosity
- exploration on the floor to provide platforms and seating for reading and to prevent excessive movement

Listening

- departs from a compact isolated box
- surface iteration to establish a visual connection to the surrounding
- spatial iteration to consider acoustic performance

Watching

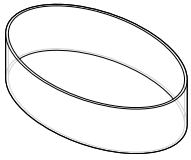
- respond future-oriented ways of watching (holographic, immersive)
- isolate space to avoid distraction
- exploration of different ways of creating external connection while maintaining the sightline to be undisturbed. (e.g. internal courtyards, skylights)

Reflection

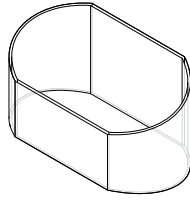
In reflection, these design experimentation lacked a systematic approach and reasoning. This approach does not align with the commons framework and clashes with other design drivers. Hence, key elements here would be applied in a loose sense but will not be prioritised over the collaging method.

Fig 52. *Spatial iterations*

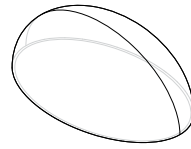
reading



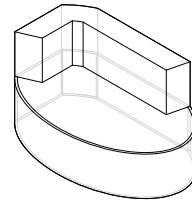
Eclipse Base
Future oriented,
immersive watching space



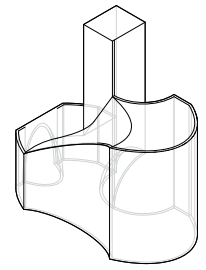
Combination with flat
surface for flexibility
of projection



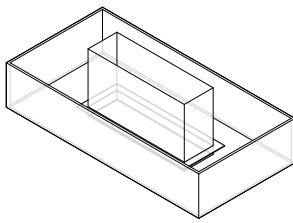
3-dimensional curvature
to respond to
immersive watching



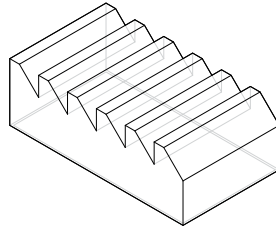
Combine rigid space to
allow for different types of
equipment to be used.



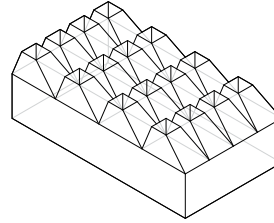
Form of watching space
to be determined by
different ways of watching
- static to immersive.



Enclosed individual
watching space with green
courtyard at the centre.

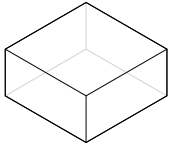


Roof light to allow
daylight in.

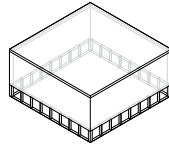


Roof light develop to cater for
individual watching activity.

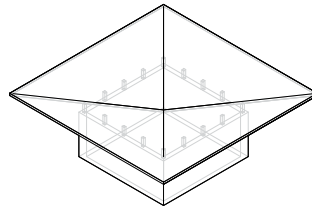
listening



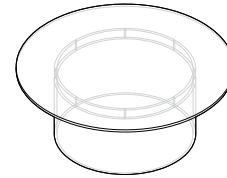
Rectilinear Base
Functional space



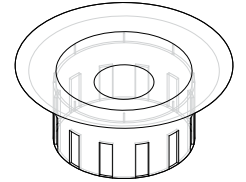
Opening at the bottom
for indirect daylight



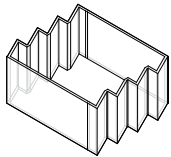
High Openings
for indirect daylight,
overhang to control sunlight



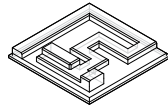
Cylindrical form to achieve
minimal sightline



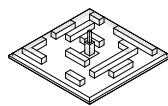
Slanted Roof/ porous wall to be
better lit and inclusive, blurring
the definitive function



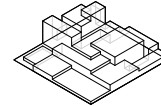
Facade opening
iterations to allow
indirect sunlight



Different built-in
seating to provide
more space to
read

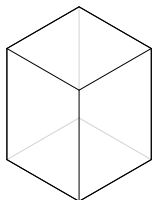


Seating centered
around a fireplace or
central piece.

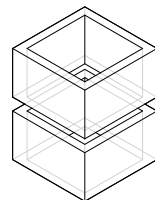


Different levels of
seating to let
users to read in
different postures

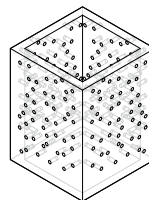
watching



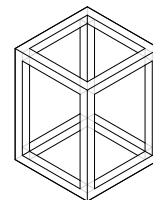
Rectilinear Base/ pod



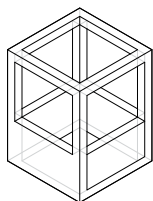
Slit cut-out to reveal
a glimpse into the pod



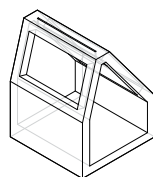
Porous screen to soften
the pod space



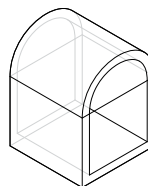
Fully transparent rooms



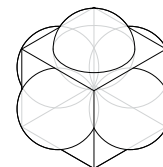
Stepped down room



Daylight access
through angled high
window



Arched room -
curving inwards
to concrete
sound to centre



Alcove seating
within the frames
of dome openings

4.5 SITE STUDIES - CBD

Figure Ground

This figure-ground map shows the density and voids around the immediate site. Notably, the encircling buildings around civic square form one of the most considerable urban voids in Wellington.

The library is exposed to several corners/ intersections.

The library is located at a crucial changing point of the city.

1. It operates as a bridge between commercial and public zones: the main CBD area to key public area, harbour.
2. Together with neighbouring buildings facing the Civic Square, it alters the primary orientation of the road and buildings.
3. It marks a change in building scale. The building scale decreases pass the city library.

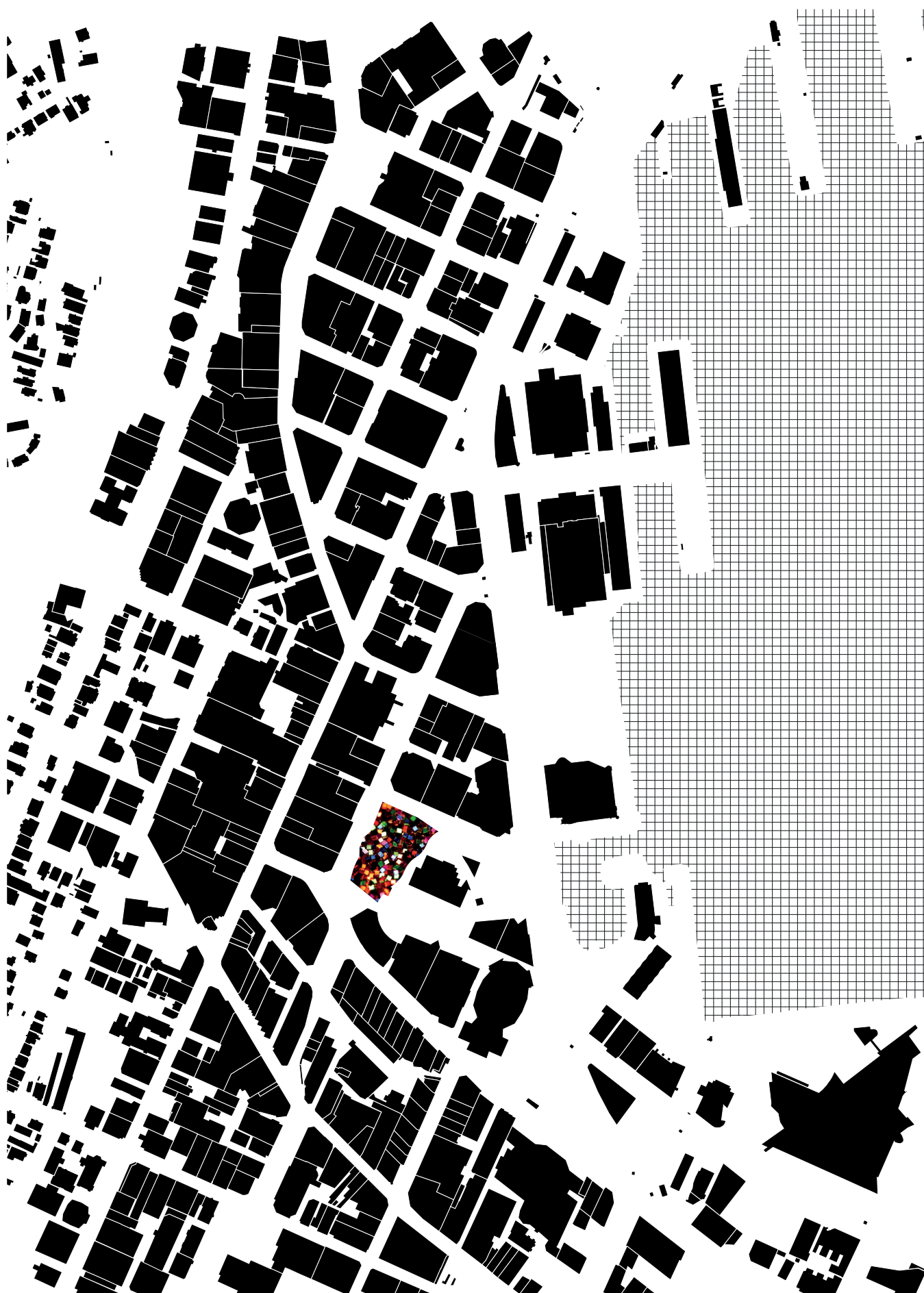
Fig 53. *Figure ground of Wellington CBD*



Site



Buildings



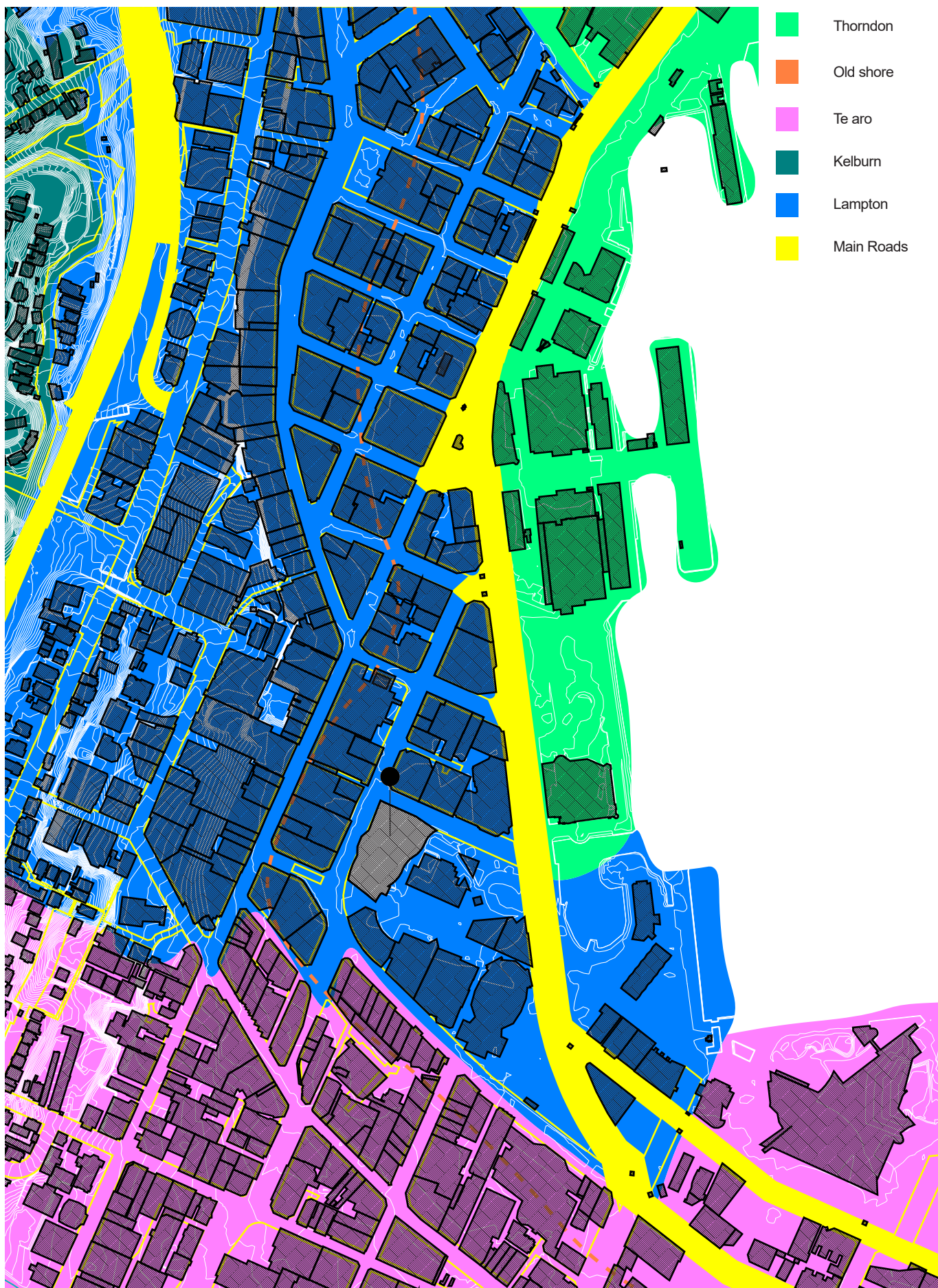
Zoning Plan

This map indicates that the library is situated near various suburbs/ zones. Each Zone entails varying demographics. i.e. Te Aro/ Kelburn- students, young professionals and Thorndon/ Lambton Quay - professionals. This immediate zoning around the library implies potential key demands from the users. However, it is noted that this library must function beyond the immediate surrounding occupants rather inclusive to the wider area of Wellington City.

Fig 54. Suburban zoning of Wellington CBD



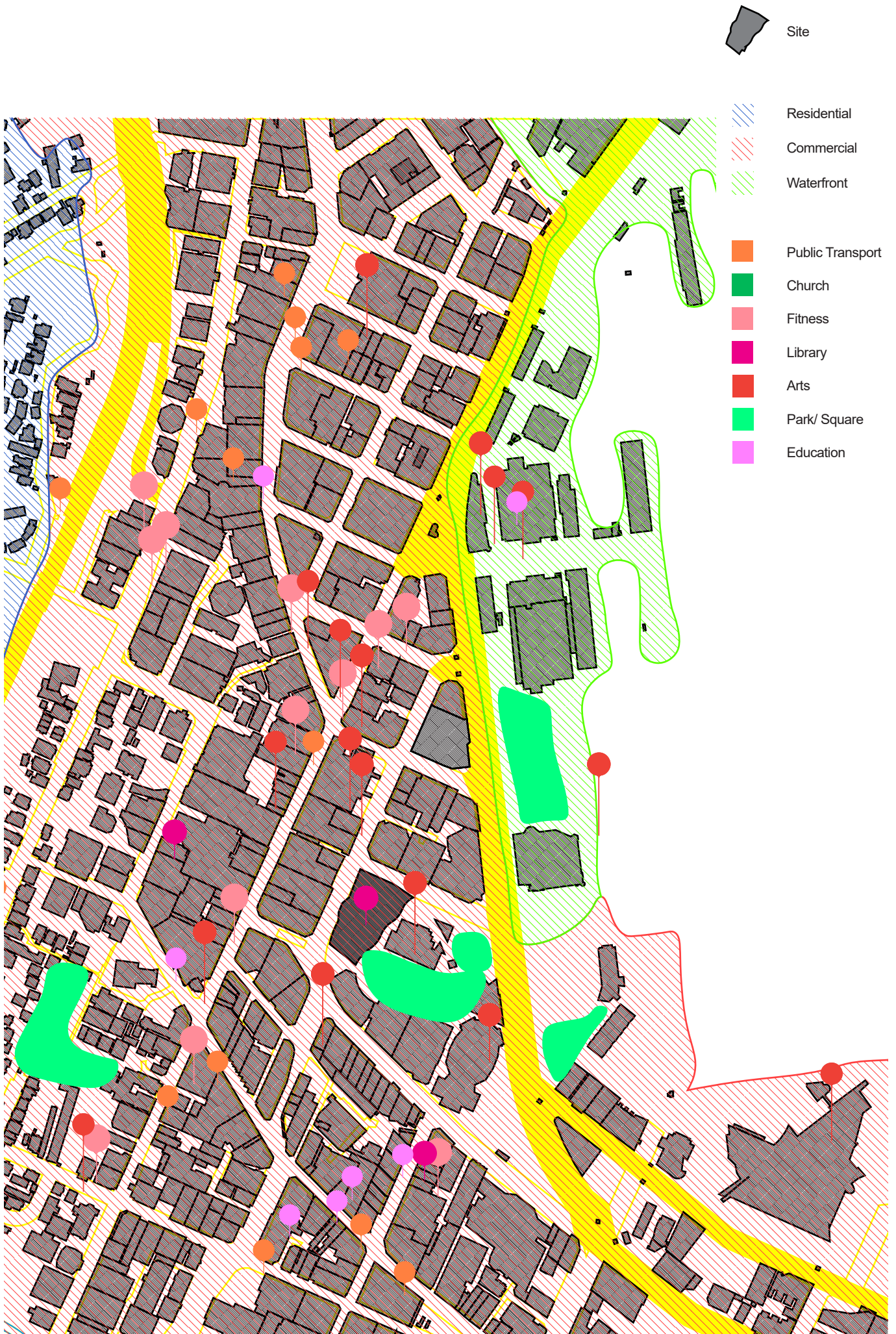
Site



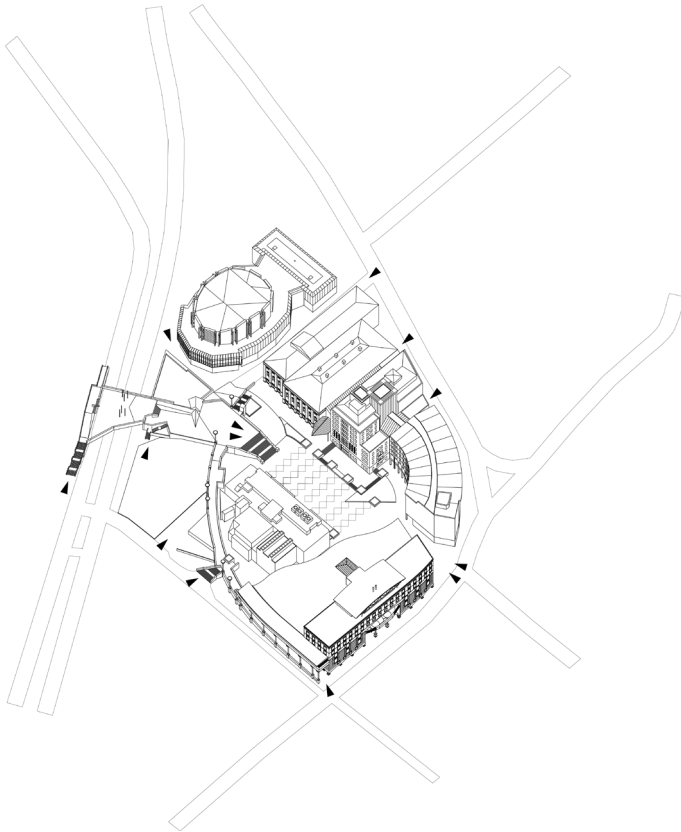
Amenities Plan

This map reveals a range of building uses around the city library. The dominance of commercial buildings are shown through the zoning. (unmarked buildings) Therefore, the library must provide a missing public space accessible to anyone. Although, there are a few public spaces scattered around the city. There is a lack of variation. The study also reinforces the need for a public community centre, which is ubiquitous in the suburbs, but not present where it contrasts from its setting the most.

Fig 55. Amenities plan of Wellington CBD

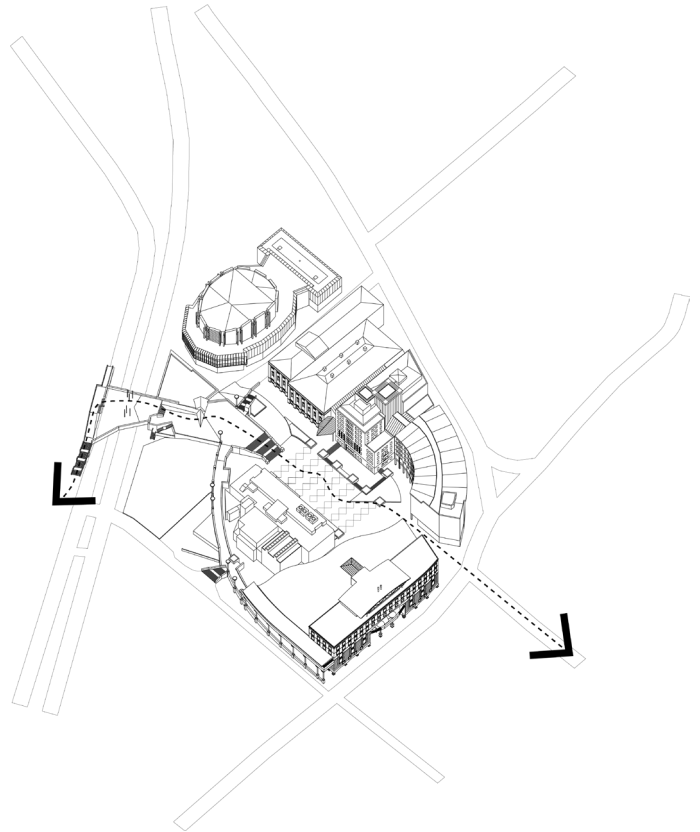


Site Analysis - Civic Square



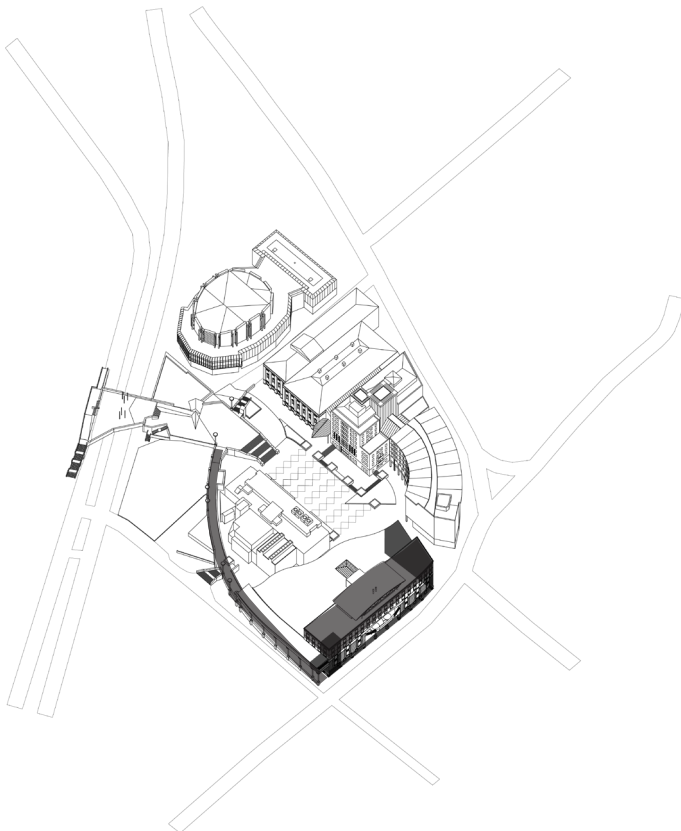
1

access to civic square
- numerous access points into the civic square



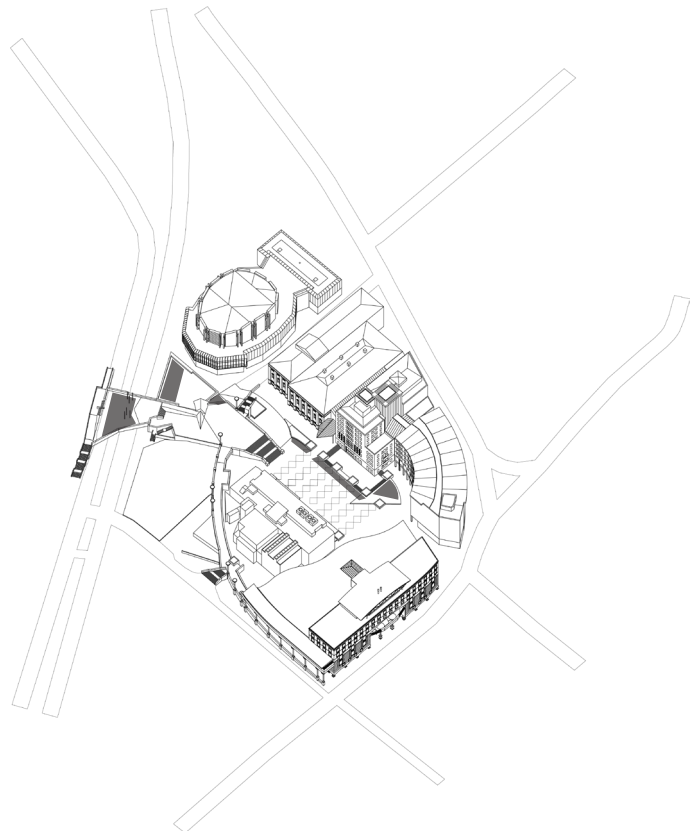
2

main movement / direction
- City to sea bridge to Willi St



3

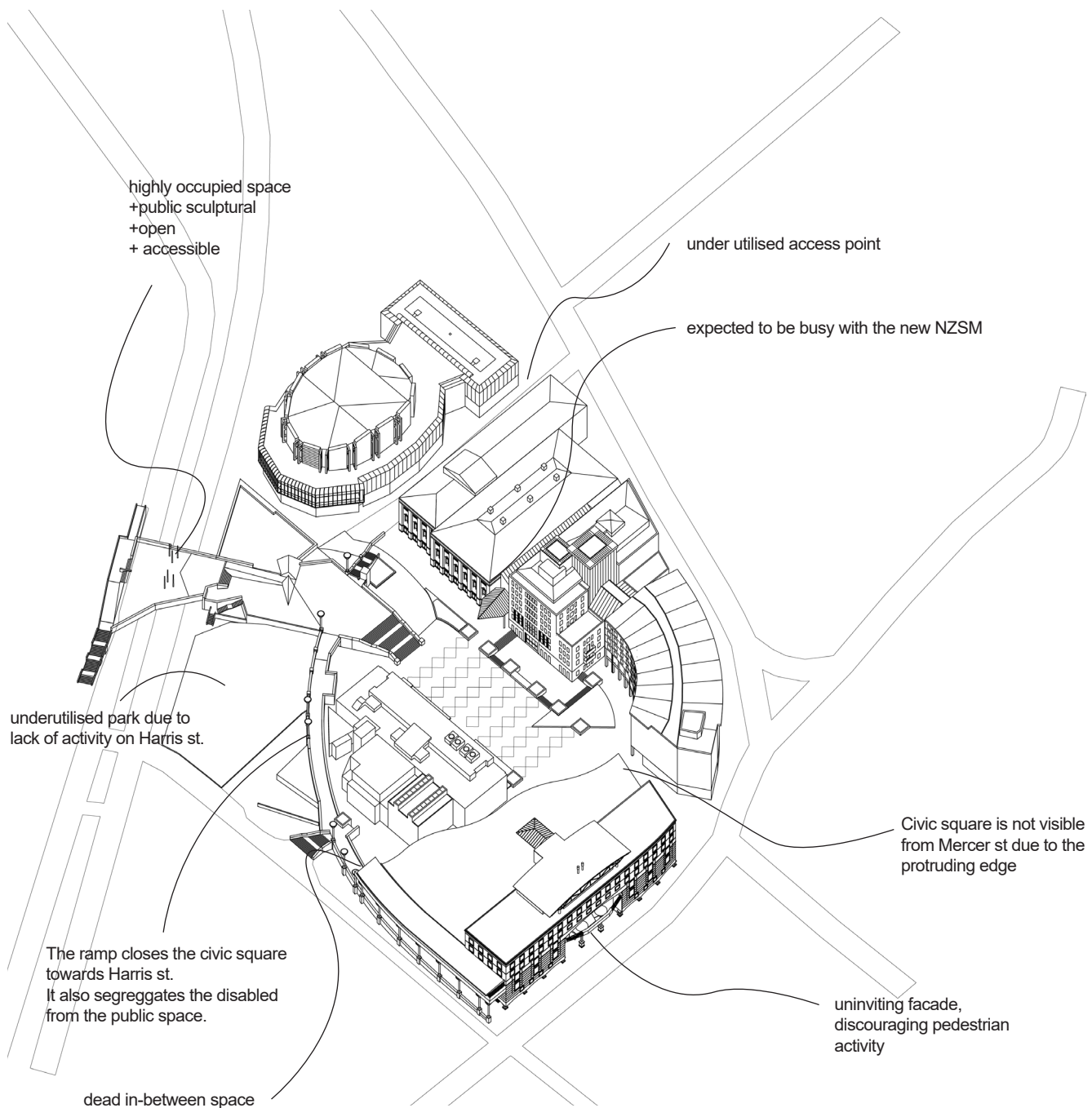
current library issues
- accessible ramp, building form, occupation



4

public occupation
- public mainly occupy the edge of the
civic square and city to sea bridge

Fig 56. Axo site analysis diagrams of the civic square



The current library building has two key issues. Firstly, the library detaches the civic square from surrounding areas. The front facade (Victoria St) is uninviting for pedestrians as the library fronts the street without any provision of open space. The accessible ramp to the side of the library separates the civic square from Mercer St. As a result, these streets are under-utilised, creating a significant disconnection between CBD area to the waterfront and harbour area.

Secondly, the building occupation is not transparent and public. The short colonnade further reinforces the solidity of the building. The top levels are inaccessible to the public; hence the building cannot be fully experienced or owned by the public. The new library proposes an overt display of public use to

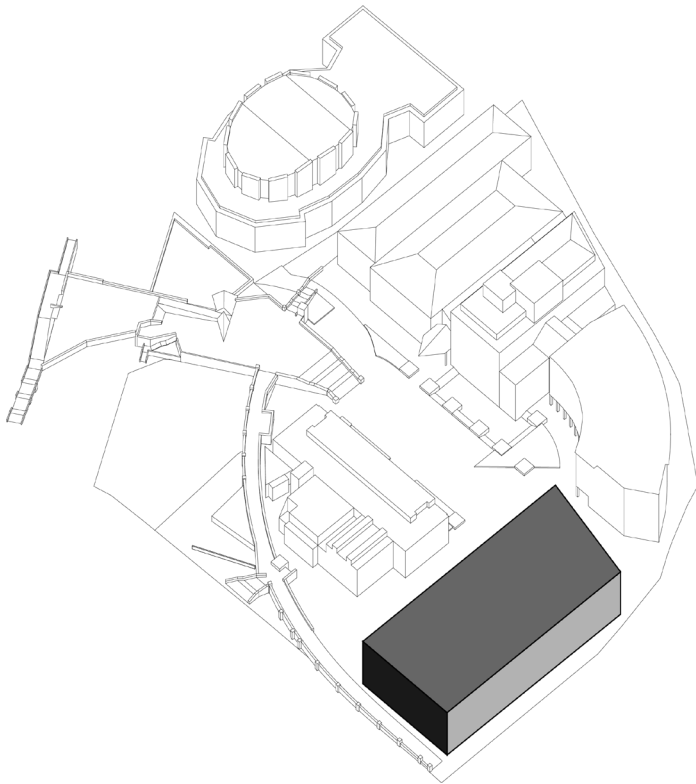
convey the idea of collective ownership of the commons.

However, the back facade (Civic Square) reveals the dynamic qualities of the building and is more integrated with the surrounding context. Through the use of urban interventions (ramp, green wall, water features), the edge of the building is softened. The use of Nikau Palms sculpture/ columns provide familiarity through the bicultural image it contains.

Despite the positive elements, it is observed that civic square functions as a thoroughfare rather than an occupation space. The library adds to the closed-nature of the civic square, thus, resulting in this space to be under-utilised.

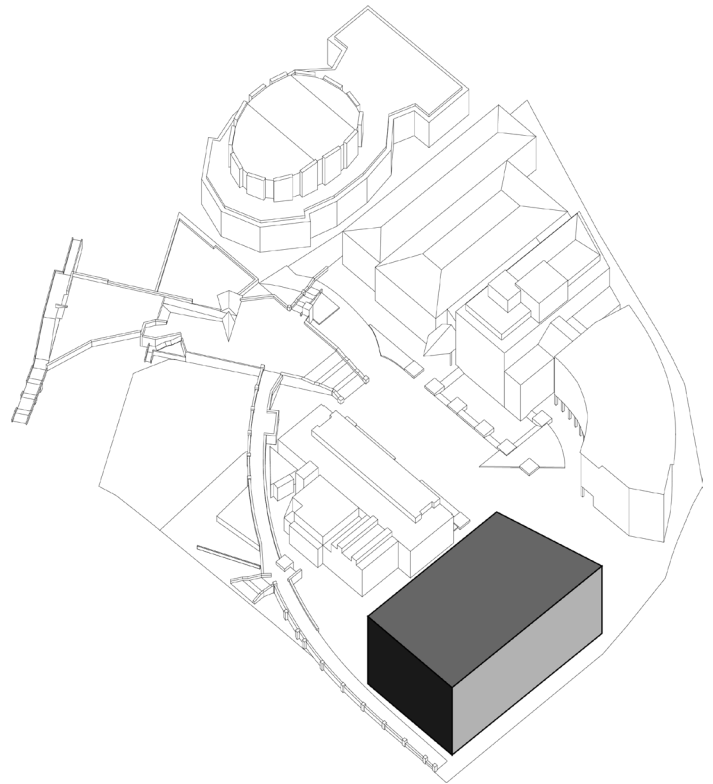
4.6 VOLUMETRIC STUDIES

Library massing



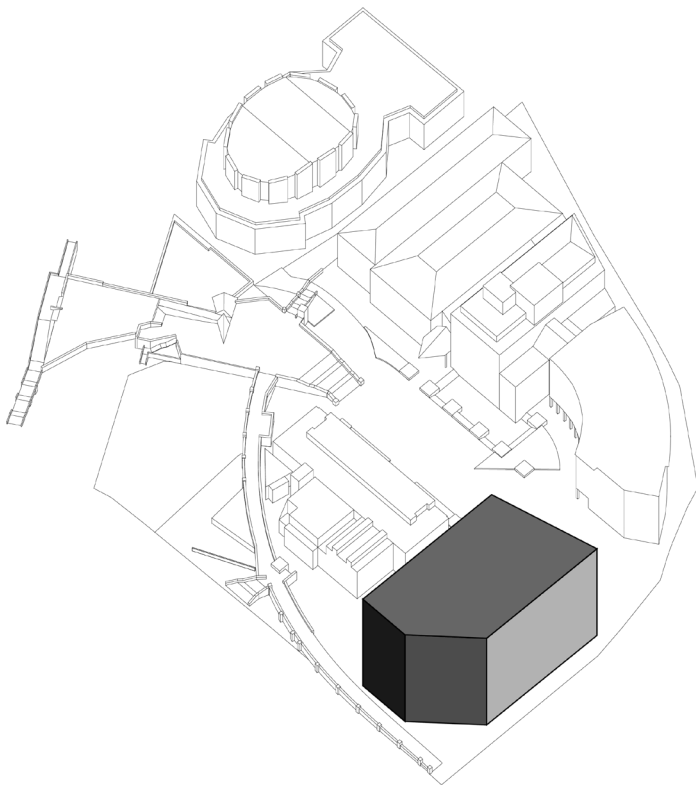
1

current building form
- not inviting



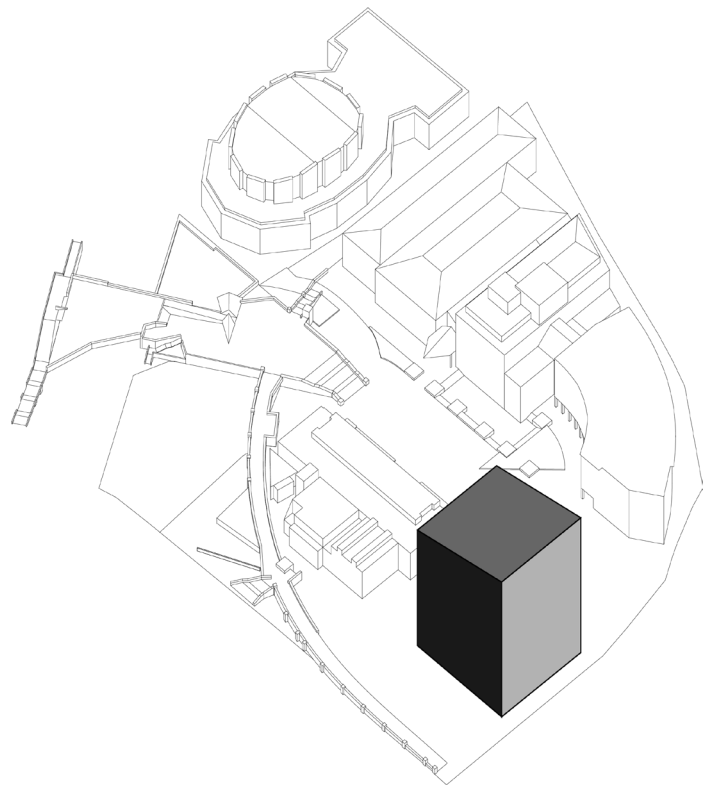
2

remove protruding edge
- makes Civic Square visible from Mercer Street



3

Slicing the corner of Harris and Victoria St
- inviting from all intersections

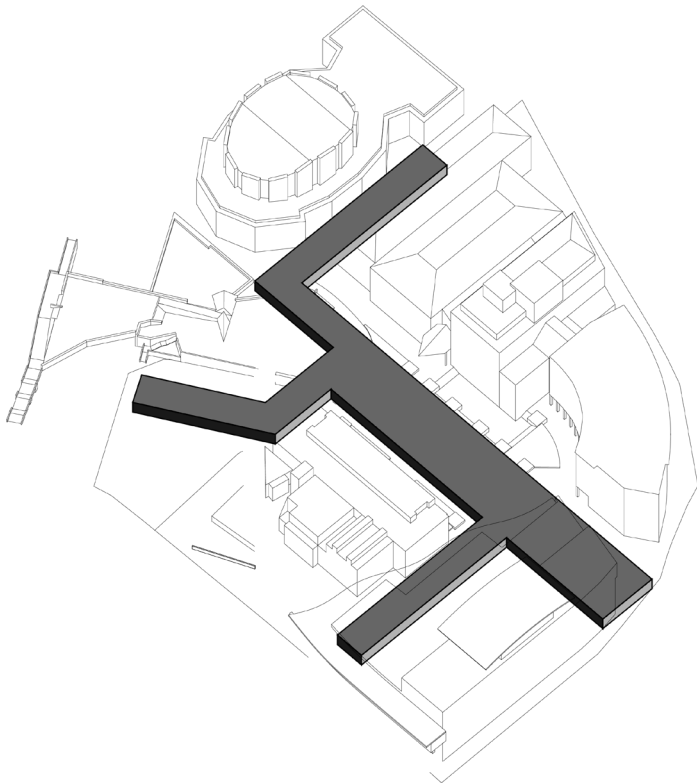


4

minimising building footprint
- to increase the civic square and
provide more public space

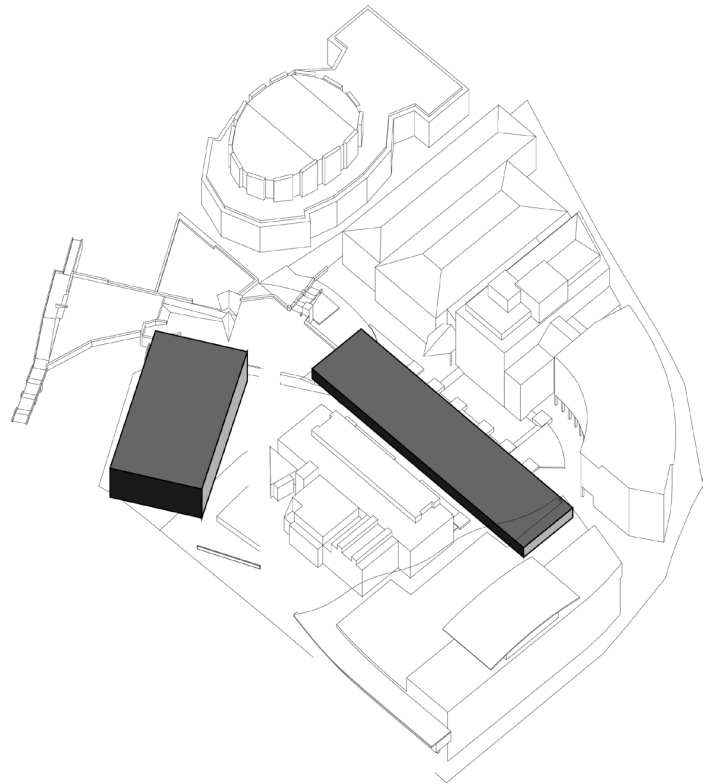
Fig 57. Massing diagrams

Exploration around civic square



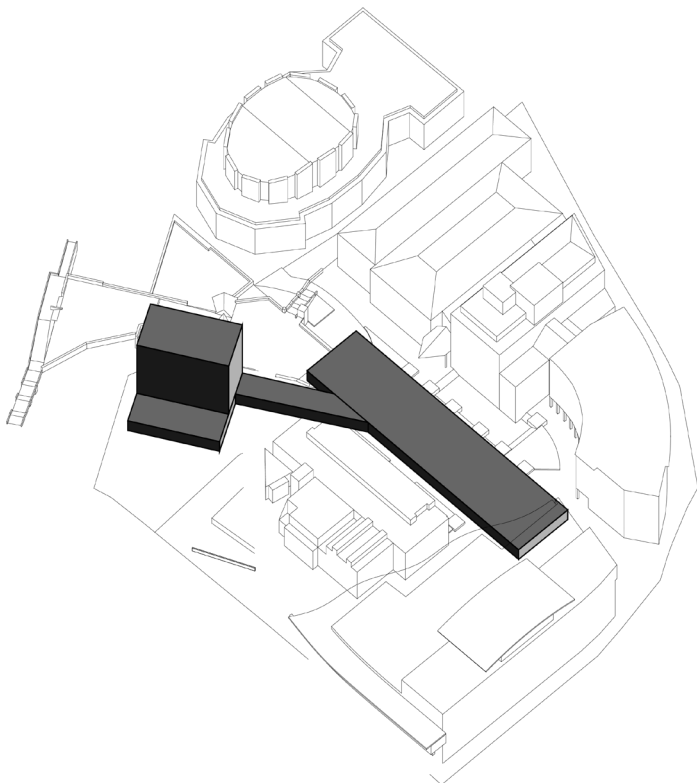
1

propose the library to extend out
- create more integrated building



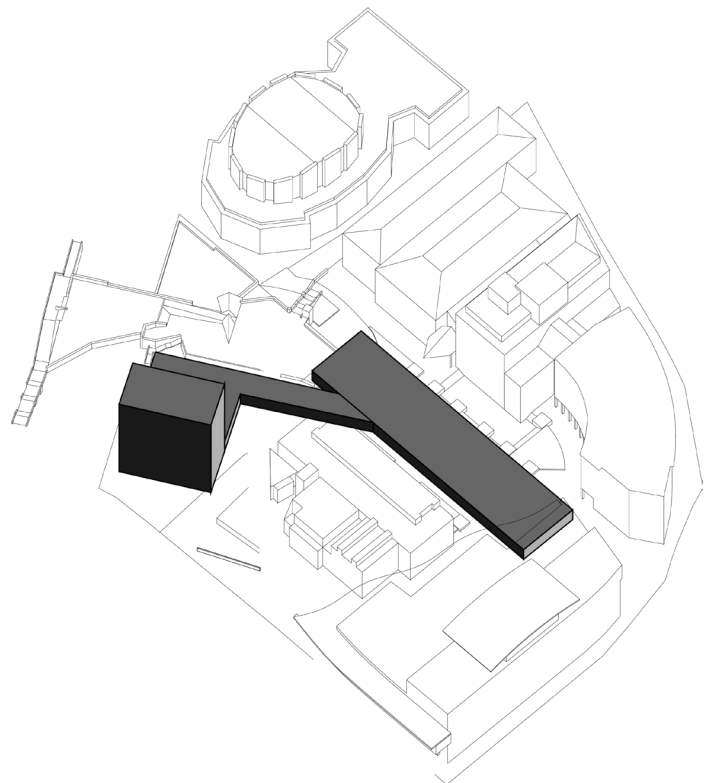
2

occupying Jack Ilott Green
- attempts to make the library accessible from City to sea bridge
- close proximity to Jervois Quay, unpleasant for pedestrians



3

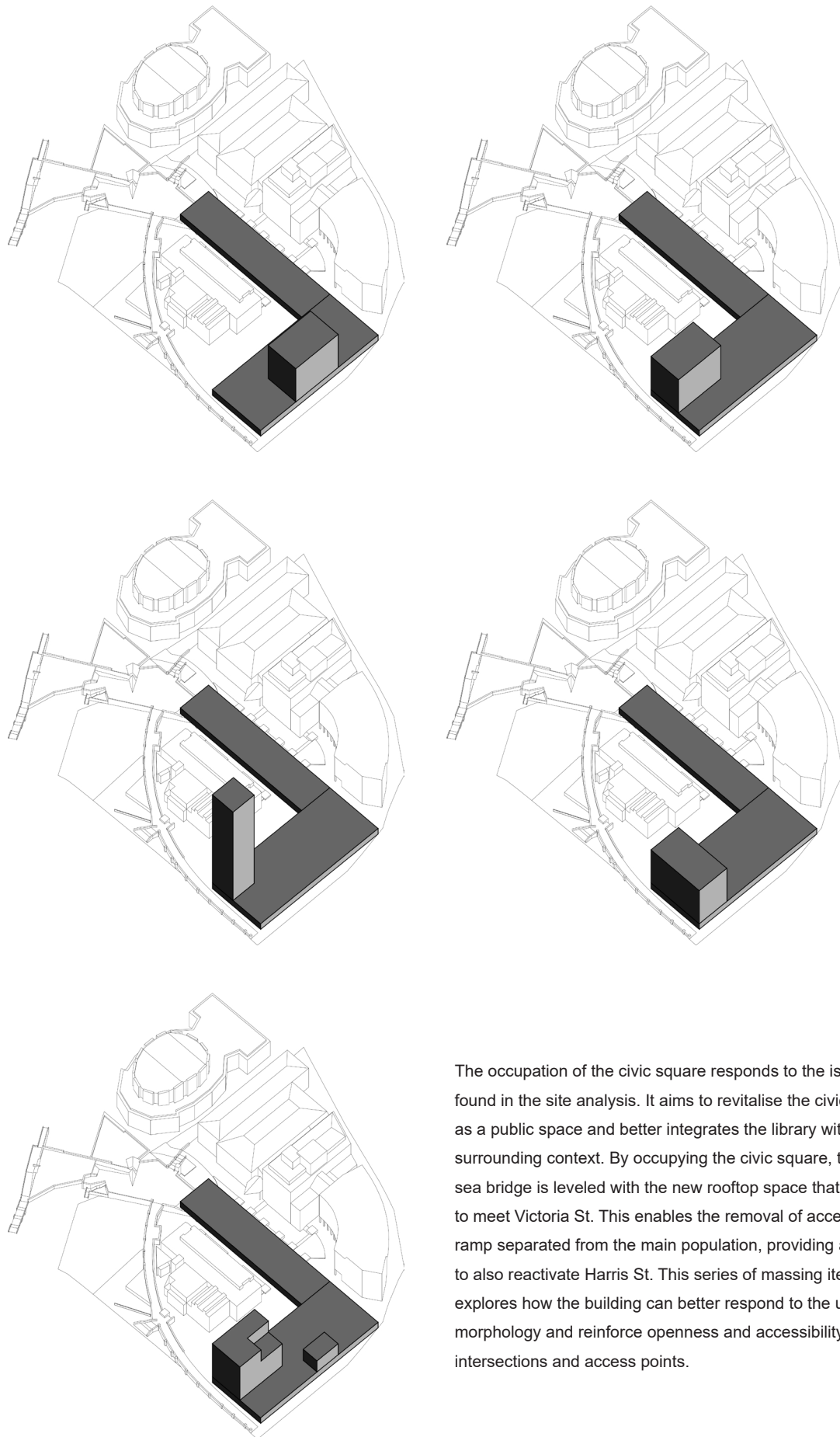
Jack Ilott Green opt 1
- connection to city to sea bridge and retaining some park space
- to distant from civic square and the rest of the CBD area



4

Jack Ilott Green opt 2
- extend city to sea bridge and massing closer to Harris St
- fails to contribute to the improvement of the civic square

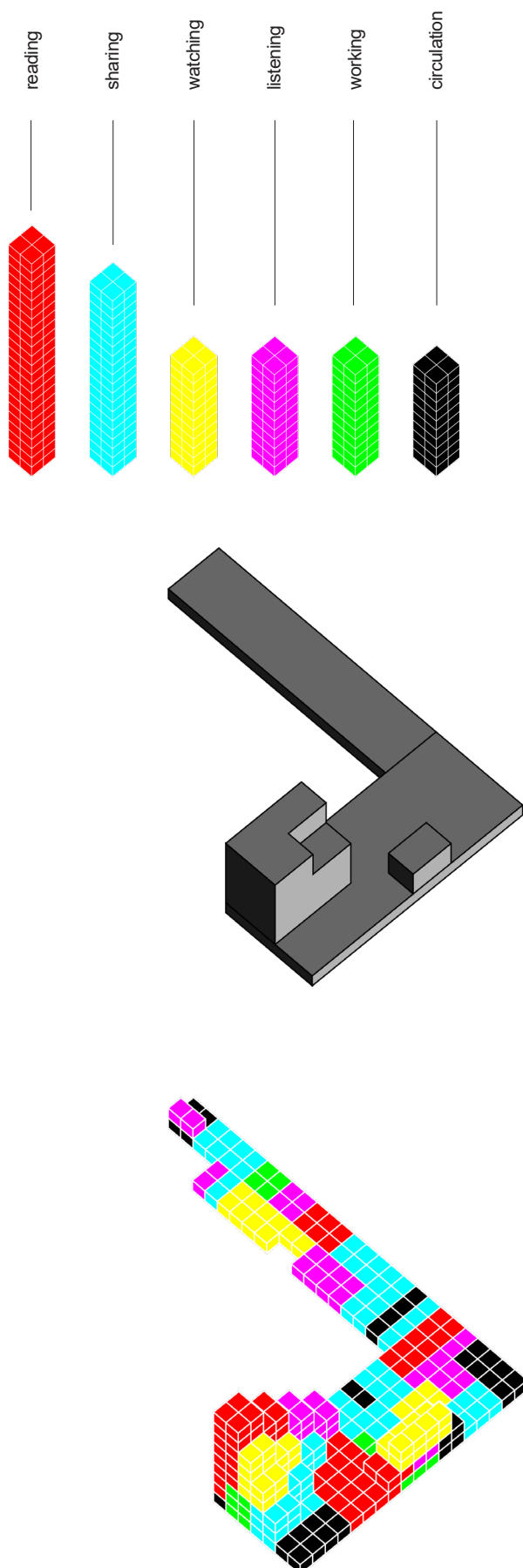
Connection established



The occupation of the civic square responds to the issues found in the site analysis. It aims to revitalise the civic square as a public space and better integrates the library with the surrounding context. By occupying the civic square, the city to sea bridge is leveled with the new rooftop space that extends to meet Victoria St. This enables the removal of accessible ramp separated from the main population, providing a possibility to also reactivate Harris St. This series of massing iteration explores how the building can better respond to the urban morphology and reinforce openness and accessibility from key intersections and access points.

Fig 58. Massing diagrams continued.

Program massing



- Analysis of the current program identifies that future adaptation is tricky due to heavy focus around physical books.
- Proposed programming attempts to extend the program to its activity level to give flexibility and open-ended nature. The opening activity and reshuffling allow dynamic integration of activities (rather than the programming/ spatial organising, i.e. by book genre - current), encourage other activity to merge and integrate into the library - to extend the notion of knowledge exchange through different modes.
- The proposal will have a big emphasis on learning and other modes of consuming knowledge & commons through sharing

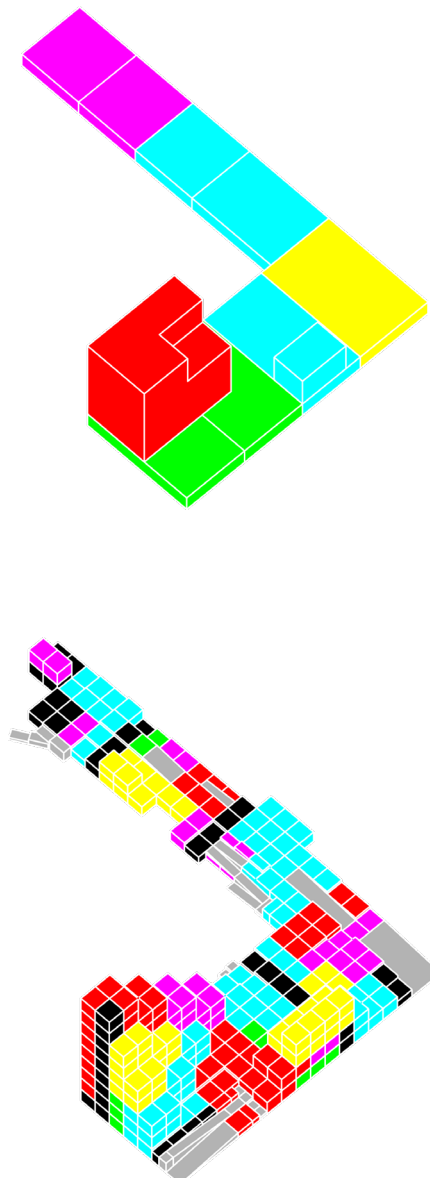
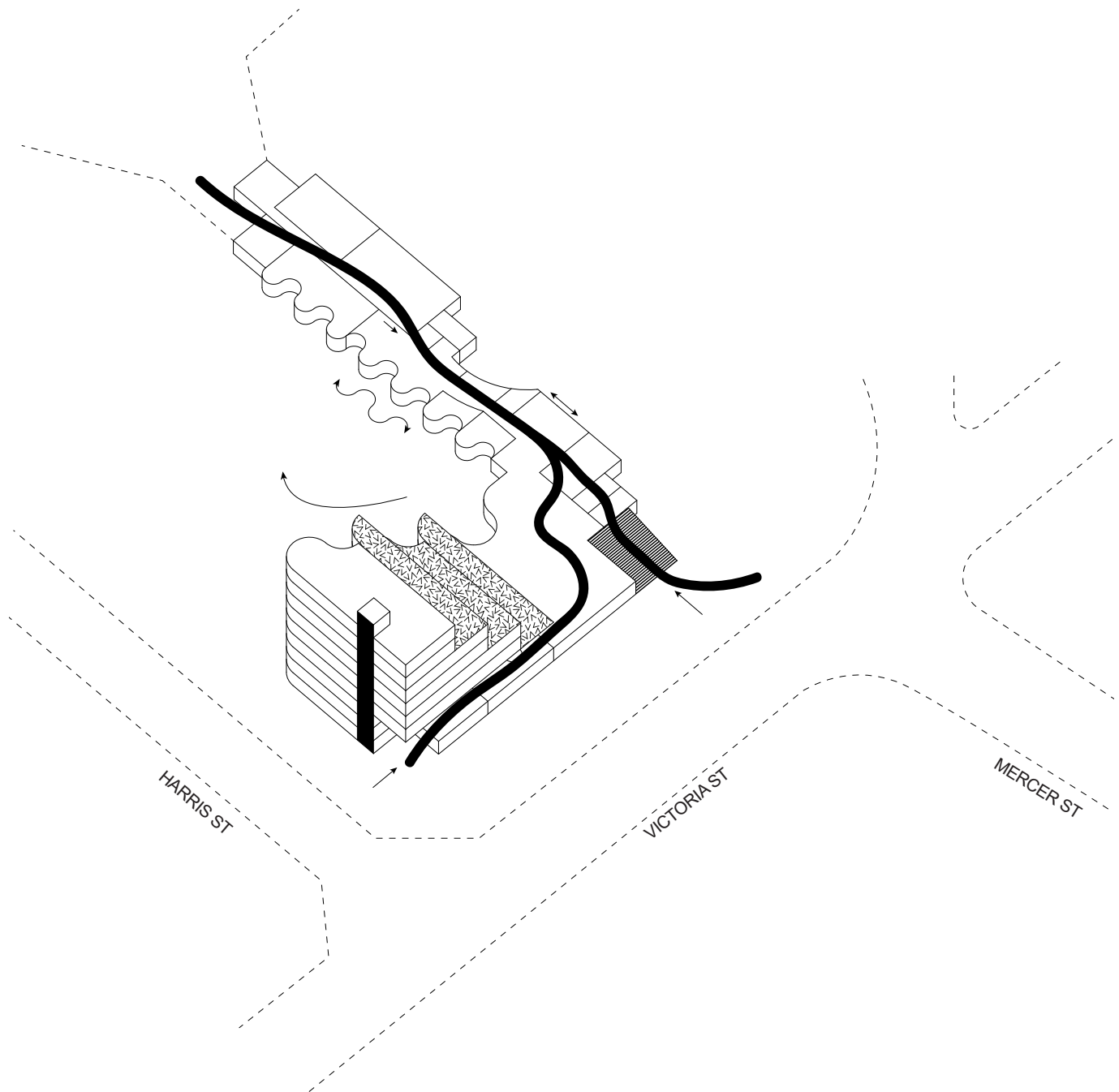


Fig 59. Program massing application

4.7 CONCEPT DESIGN



1. Elevated civic square (inhabitable rooftop)

- The library extends out to the civic square to occupy the whole site. This results in a better connection to the city to sea bridge (by levelling) and provides more edge and thoroughfares to the pedestrian going through to occupy.

2. Shift the library to the corner (higher towards Harris St)

- The library massing responds to the surrounding urban fabric. It also opens up civic square to Victoria Street, making the visual connection as well as a more inviting scale.

3. Wavy form to reference historical and Wellingtonian visual language

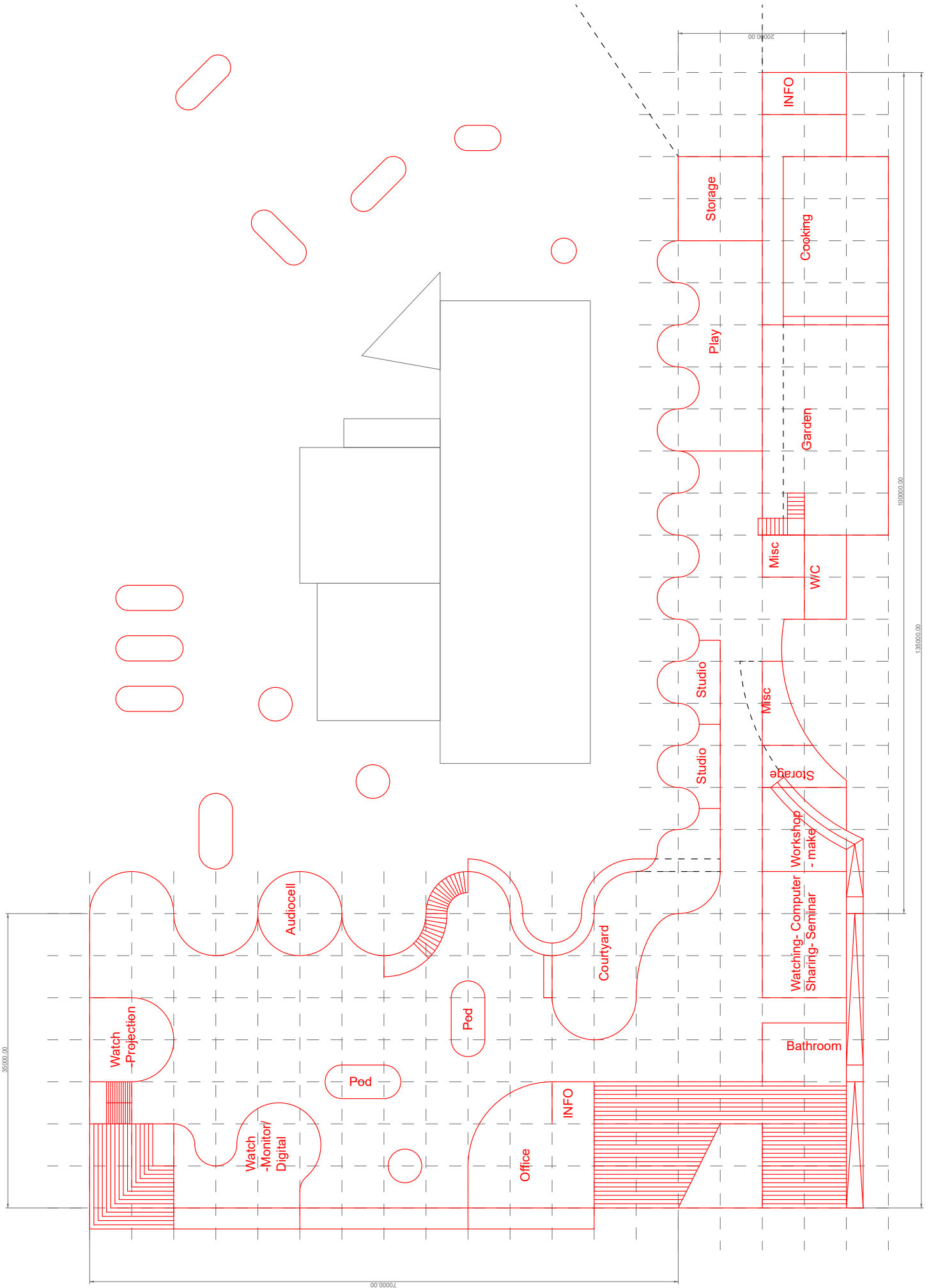
- The wavy form visible from the waterfront and civic square attempt to create visual marks that reference the language of Wellington. It also alludes to the previous library by Athfield.

The proposal includes two grand exterior staircases at each corner, leading up to the new civic square. This intends to make a physical connection to the street. A key program arrangement shows library related-programs facing Victoria St and community centre related programs on the current civic square area.

The scattered interventions intend to continue the formal language of the library throughout the civic square. These are proposed to function as public toilets, shelters, bike parks, etc.

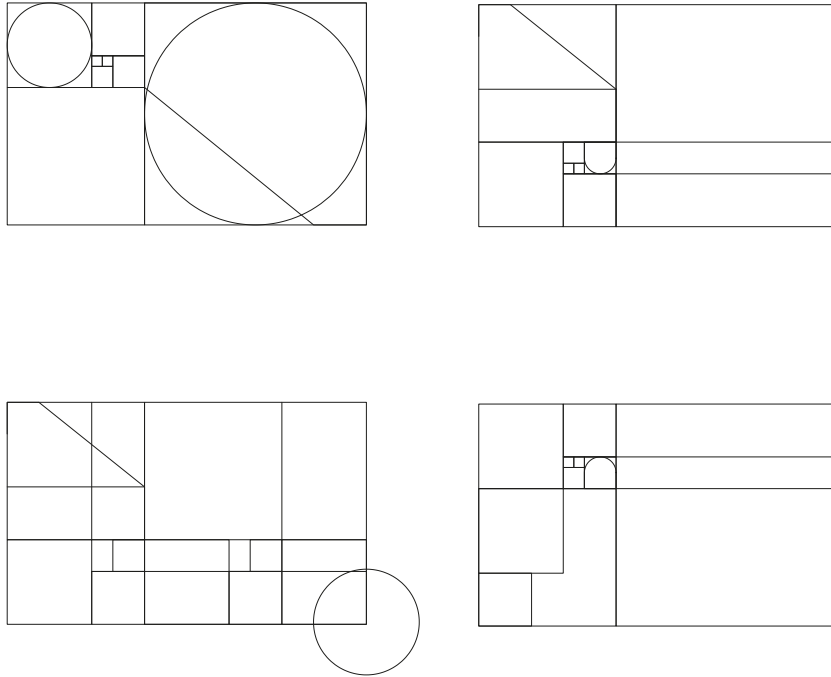
Fig 60. Library concept axo drawing (left)

Fig 61. Library concept plan drawing (right)



4.8 FACADE ITERATIONS

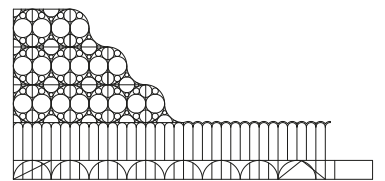
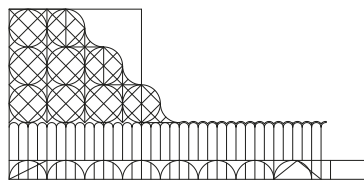
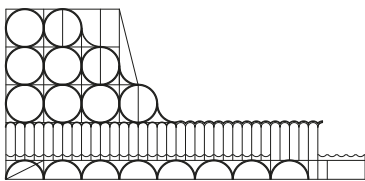
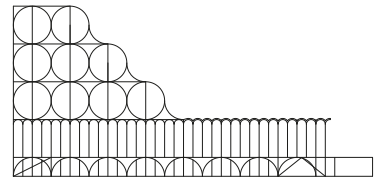
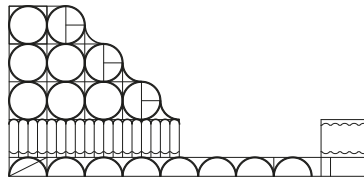
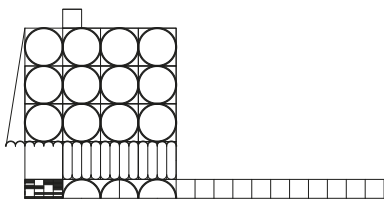
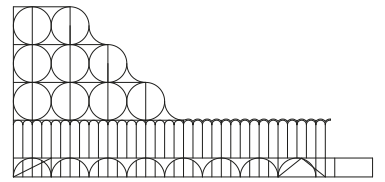
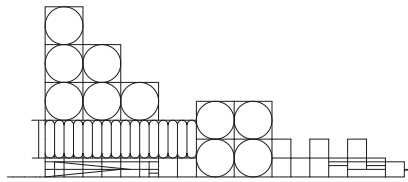
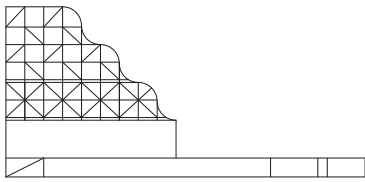
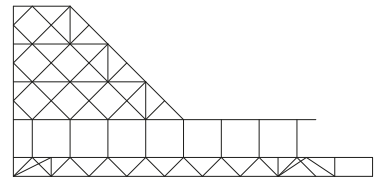
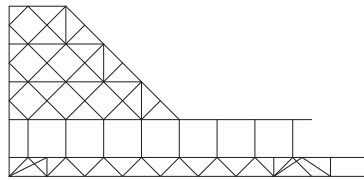
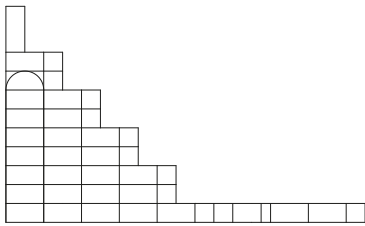
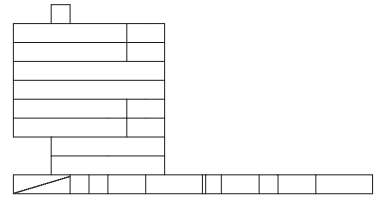
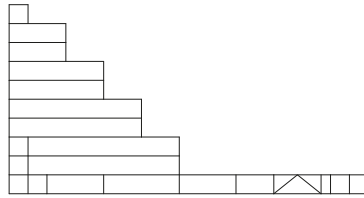
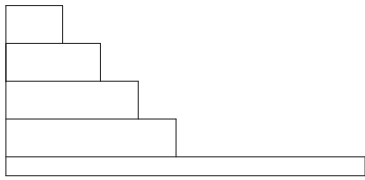
Fig 62. Golden ration base



Following drawings of the facade, these developments seek to integrate neo-classical elements and geometric patterns, gathered from the previous design explorations. The focus here is to distil circular/ arch geometries onto the facade to create a memorable aesthetic for the bypassers.

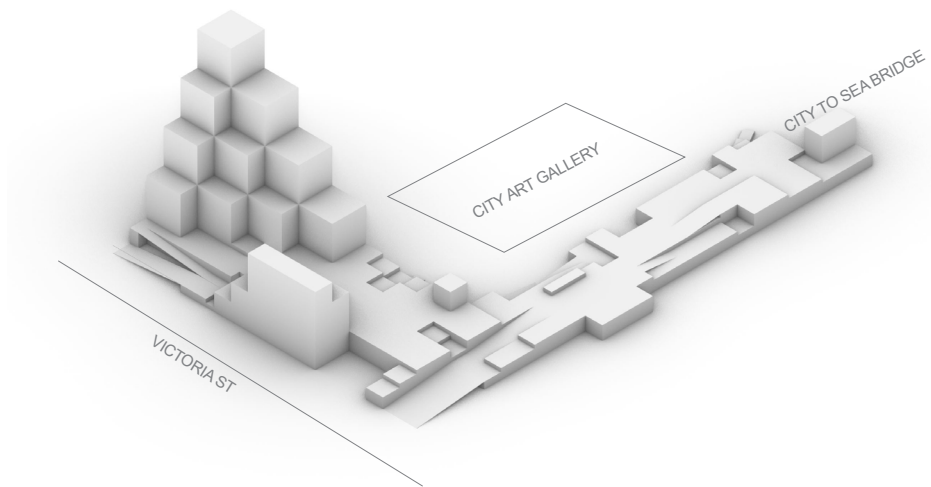
It is concluded that the exploration is very limited to two dimensional and is ineffective to develop the building better. These iterations lack the consideration of interior space, three-dimensional depth, relationship to the building plan, etc.

Fig 63. *Facade iterations (geometrical)*

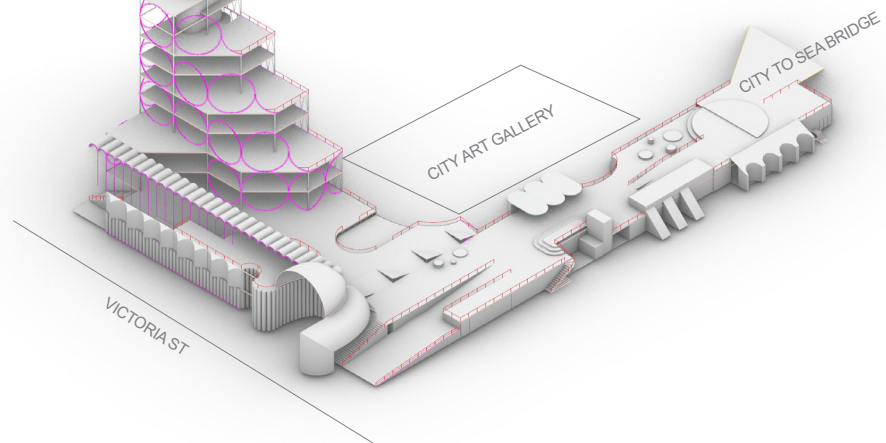


4.9 DESIGN PROGRESS

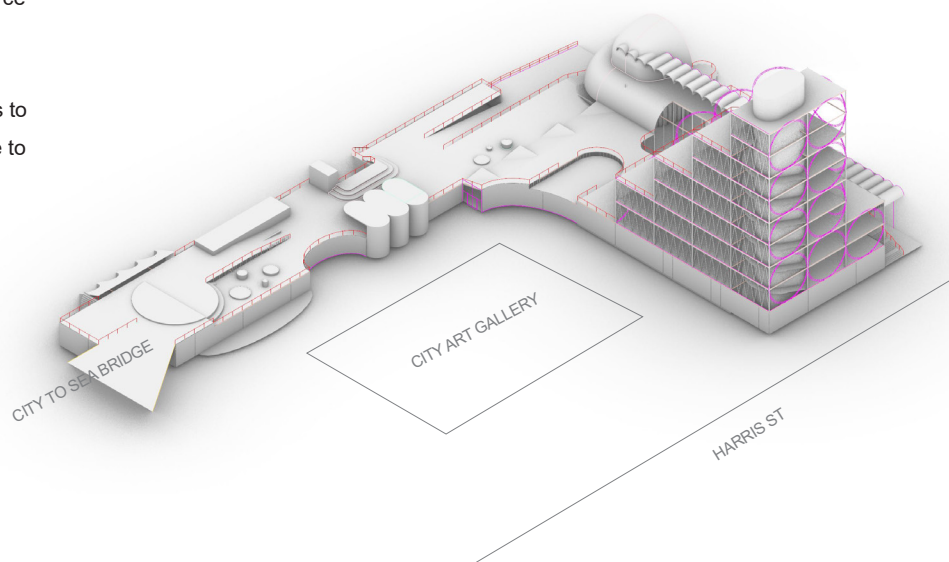
- more detailed massing to show level changes on the rooftop and building formation around the corner.
- keeping the new elevated civic space visible from the street



- responding to the streetscape of Victoria St and implementing collage materials to establish visual connection to the city.
- making the entrance of the library prominent to invite the public
- modifying the levels to keep the new elevated civic space more inhabitable



- proposing varying patterns on the different facade to reinforce the idea of collaging and heterogeneity
- plug-in design interventions to the new elevated civic space to create public interactivity



The following three-dimensional models illustrate the development of the building.

Notably, different elements are plugged into the building aligned with the collaging design approach. The design interventions seek to blur the boundary between inside and outside to increase the accessibility of the library. It also aims to provide numerous function and spatial qualities to satisfy the need for varying occupants.

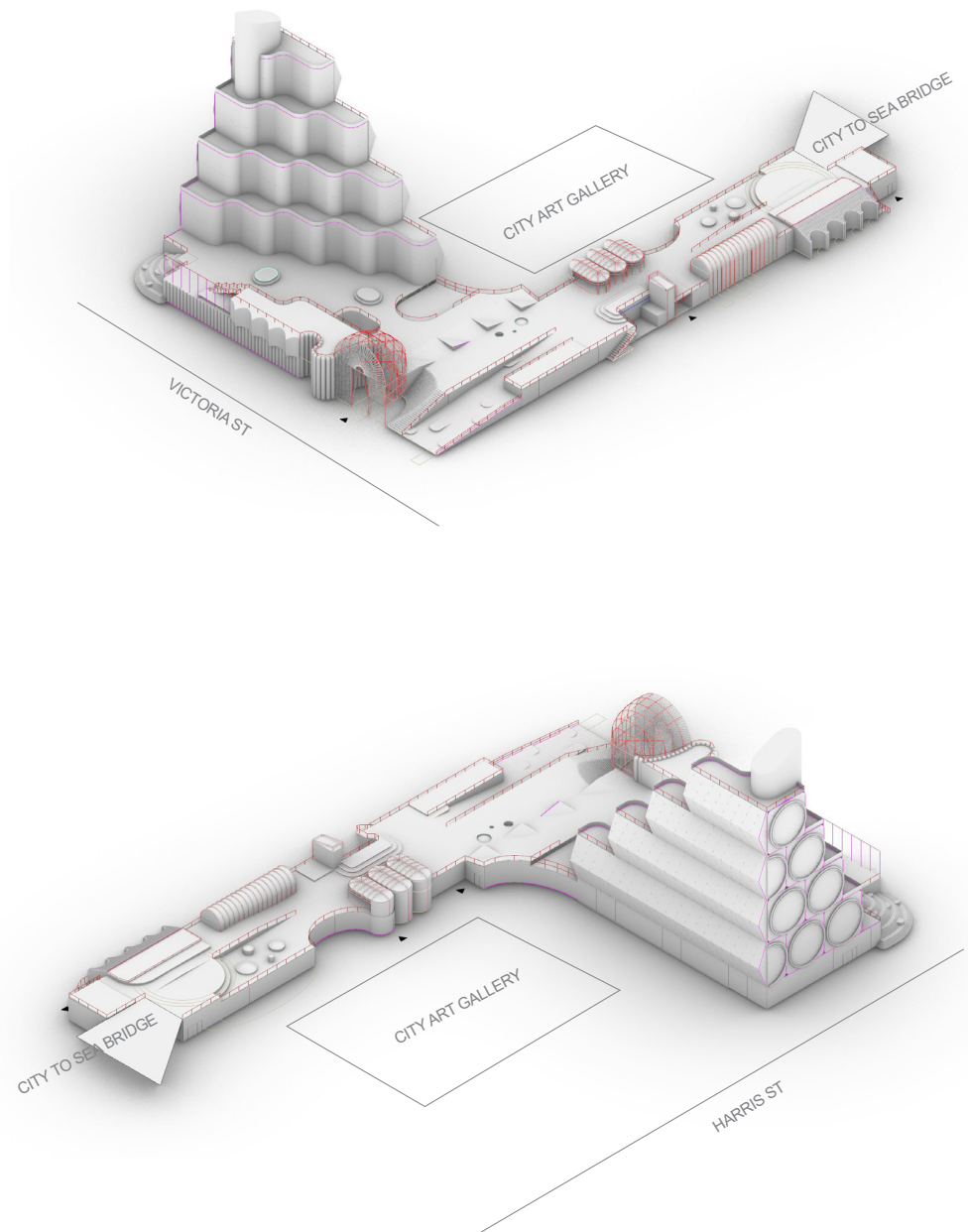
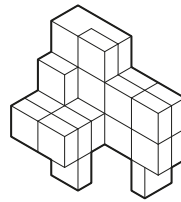
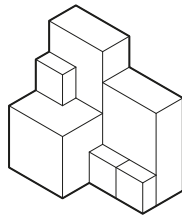
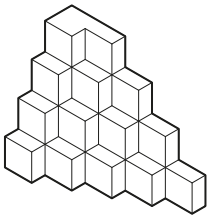


Fig 64. Progress snapshots of the working model

4.10 LIBRARY FORM ITERATIONS

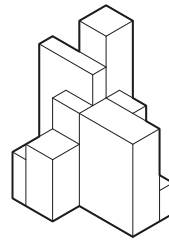
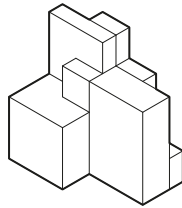
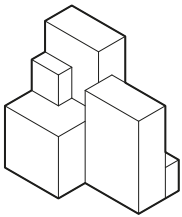
The following iteration shows volumetric development of the library. It shows how the library building will be integrated into the rest of the proposal and implement previous design processes.

1



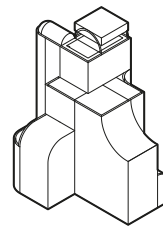
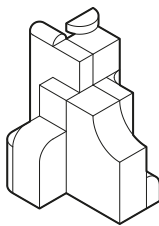
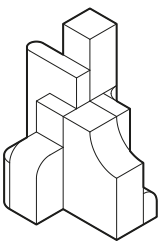
exploration on different ways to be connected to the new elevated civic space.

2



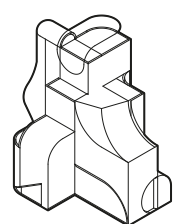
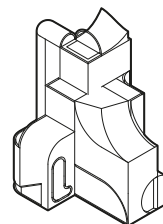
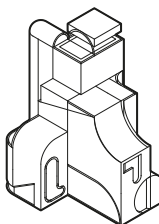
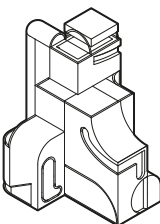
volumetric re-arrangements that consider neighbouring buildings, program zoning and internal spatial qualities

4



application of arch and mould language to respond to previous design studies and develop dynamic spaces. A key focus was to create an accessible public rooftop that offer spatial experience that is very limited in a commercial setting.

3



development of openings to express visual connection with passer-byers. Each opening intends to capture different activity and spatial qualities.

chapter five

REPRESENTATION

- 5.1 drawing set - developed design
- 5.2 axonometry
- 5.3 renders

5.1 DRAWING SET - DEVELOPED DESIGN

The proposed Wellington Central Library extends the conventional (function-driven) framework of the library through the adaptation of a hybrid urban commons system. The primary intent of this proposal is to design a highly accessible and interactive public space for sharing and learning - thus explicitly public.

The building footprint is extended to cover the entire civic space. This introduces an occupiable "civic rooftop" which levels with the "city to sea bridge", establishing a more significant connection of the waterfront to the CBD area. The main library building is situated towards Harris St providing a larger civic space that extends out along Victoria St. The removal of the current ramp and proposal landscaping along the main library area seeks to revitalise Harris street.

The building consists of three main spatial zones: library, community centre and civic rooftop. All three zones are interconnected and share consistent design language of Post-Modern collage qualities. Each zone conveys heterogeneity of building function through ever-changing spatial qualities.

Fig 66. Site plan 1:2000



1 20 40 m

LEGEND

- 1 Connect to and level with "City to Sea Bridge"
- 2 Recess the Mercer St and Victoria St intersection
- 3 Rejuvenate Harris St with landscape design
- 4 Inhabitable civic space/ thoroughfare on the rooftop



THE CIVIC ROOFTOP

Roof Plan

The civic rooftop manifests direct connectivity through numerous access points and provides a dynamic civic playground for all Wellingtonians to occupy. It provides a rich visual narrative of the city of Wellington and offers various civic functions.

Three primary access points are established, one directly through “city to sea bridge” and the other two at the corner of the civic space, activating the road intersections nearby as a public space. The connection to “city to sea bridge” is established not only through levelling in height but also through continuing the scale and populating urban interventions that extend the playful atmosphere.

Secondary access points respond to the immediate context, one towards the city art gallery and the other in front of the town hall.

An additional access point is provided that links the civic space to the library. This showcases the full integration of the library into the elevated civic space.

These access points aim to facilitate the current circulation and pedestrian flow better while showcasing the openness of the entire space.

The proposed civic rooftop is filled with smaller interventions that increase utility value and satisfy a great range of spatial demands. These interventions blur the boundary between the internal to external spaces. Each intervention formalises the visual characteristics of Wellington. It intends to evoke a sense of locality through visual references. The interventions break the large void square into fragments, providing interactive and functional zones. It encourages fluid movement around the site and maximises the occupiable edge spaces.

Green spaces are integrated on and around the civic rooftop. The landscaping around the city art gallery aims to better connect the proposal to neighbouring buildings. The public art installation area (13) is proposed to facilitate community-led art schemes.

In essence, the notion of shared space, shared governance, shared activity, shared city imply the aesthetics of the commons. The open and transparency of the spaces foster a sense of perceivable community - encouraging people to socialise and connect, which manifests a stark difference to the broader context of the CBD - full of anonymous buildings.

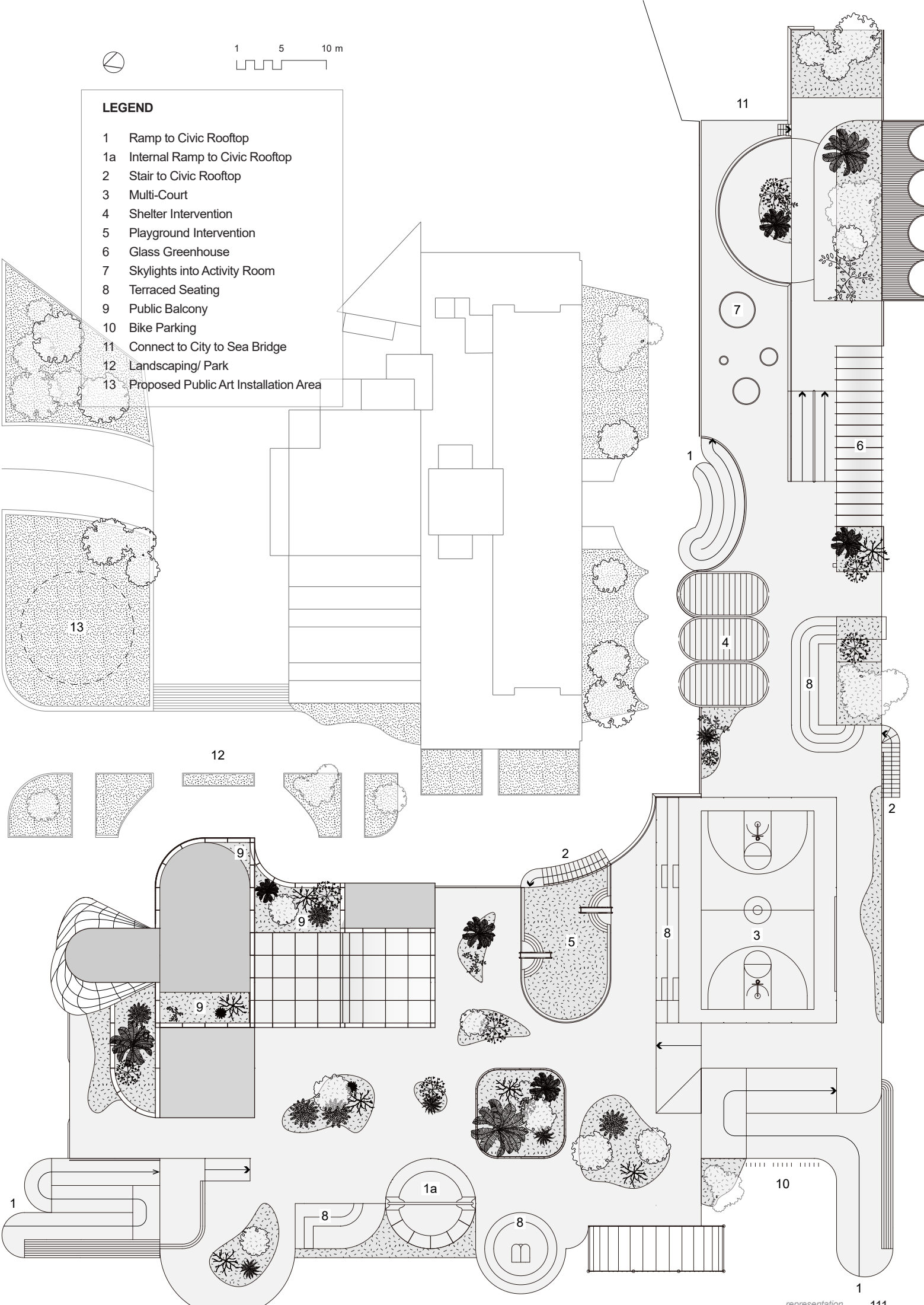
Fig 67. Roof plan 1:500



1 5 10 m

LEGEND

- 1 Ramp to Civic Rooftop
- 1a Internal Ramp to Civic Rooftop
- 2 Stair to Civic Rooftop
- 3 Multi-Court
- 4 Shelter Intervention
- 5 Playground Intervention
- 6 Glass Greenhouse
- 7 Skylights into Activity Room
- 8 Terraced Seating
- 9 Public Balcony
- 10 Bike Parking
- 11 Connect to City to Sea Bridge
- 12 Landscaping/ Park
- 13 Proposed Public Art Installation Area



LIBRARY

Ground Floor Plan

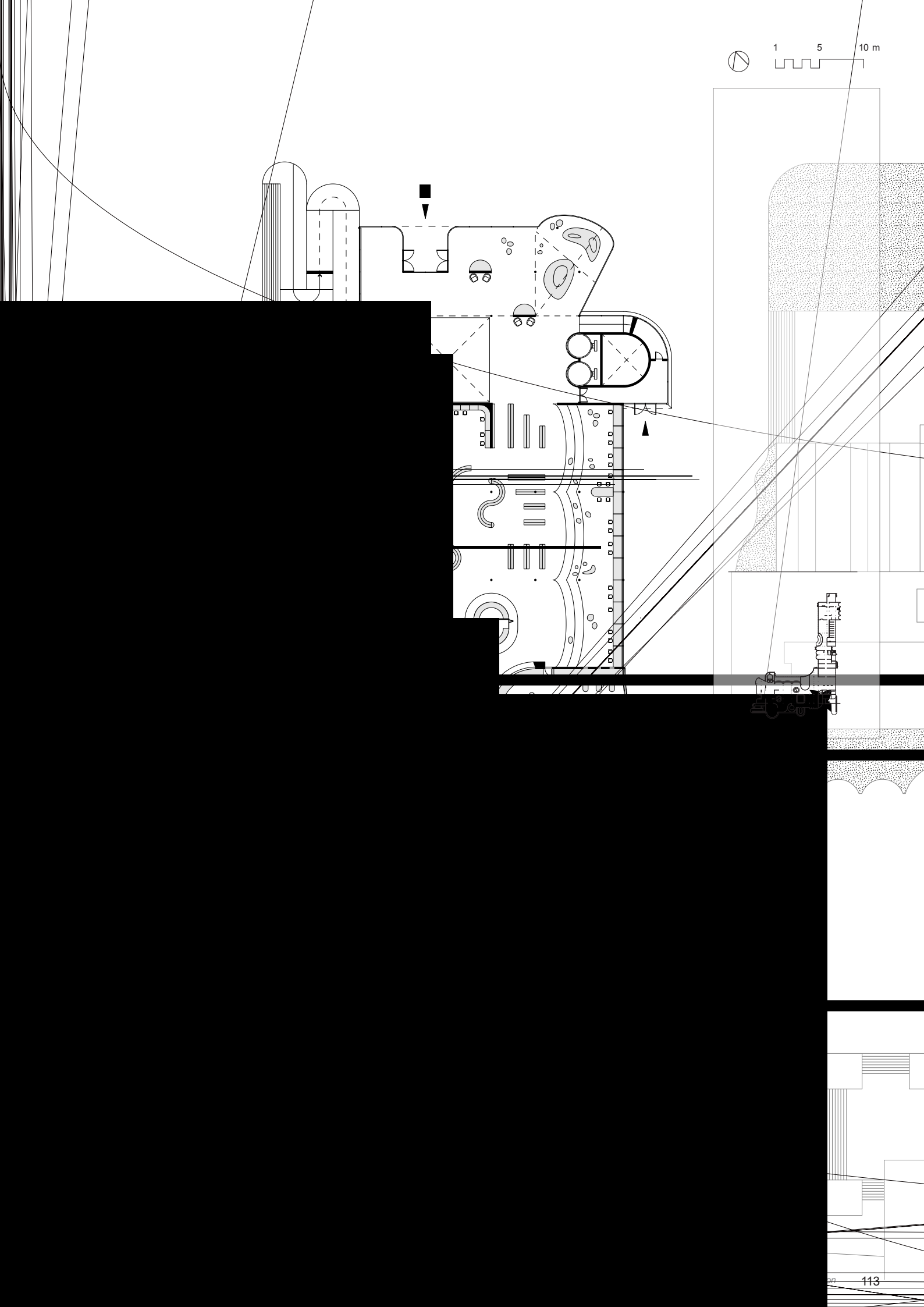
(*Planning is based on 5 x 5m grid, it utilise an integrated structural system of shear wall and moment frames.)

The library consists of an open plan ground level and varying pocket spaces on upper levels. Zoning is loosely defined according to the way resources are consumed. (i.e. reading, listening, watching, etc) The ambiguity of the zoning responds to changing aspects of knowledge storage and consumption. The proposal offers diverse spatial qualities (ceiling height, porosity, size, light, etc) throughout the levels to consider demands of wide range of demographics.

Key design elements are as stated:

1. Public arcade (17) - separates the library and the community centre while providing important circulation.
2. Courtyard (15) - establishes connection to the civic rooftop space and brings natural light into space.
3. Cafe (16) - cafe serves as a key program under the points system. Together with the courtyard and the internal ramp beside it, they form an inbetween zone that encourages public access without interfering the main library area.
4. Hub (12) - The strip of space along the east facade. The entire space is stepped down, creating a large open space intended to invite users to work or study in groups.

Fig 68. Ground plan of the library area 1:500



COMMUNITY CENTRE

Ground Floor Plan

(*Spatial planning is based on 5 x 5m grid, it utilise an integrated structural system of shear wall and moment frames.)

The community centre occupies the current civic square area. It consists of a series of rooms on linear arrangement along the elongated footprint. Each room varies significantly in the spatial quality according to its function. All the rooms are accessible and open to an enfilade that forms the primary circulation. This reinforces the connection between each space. The community centre is highly transparent in and out. The majority of the centre is finished with a clear glass facade to display vibrant community acitivities. This enlightens the surrounding in-between spaces on the ground level, reassuring the connection to its neighbouring buildings.

Key design elements are as stated:

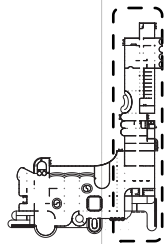
- 1. Enfilade (12) - Connects all the rooms and
- 2. Public Arcade (4) - provide a thoroughfare through the community centre
- 3. Community Lobby (6) - offer an open space for anyone to inhabit

Fig 69. Ground plan of the community centre area 1:500

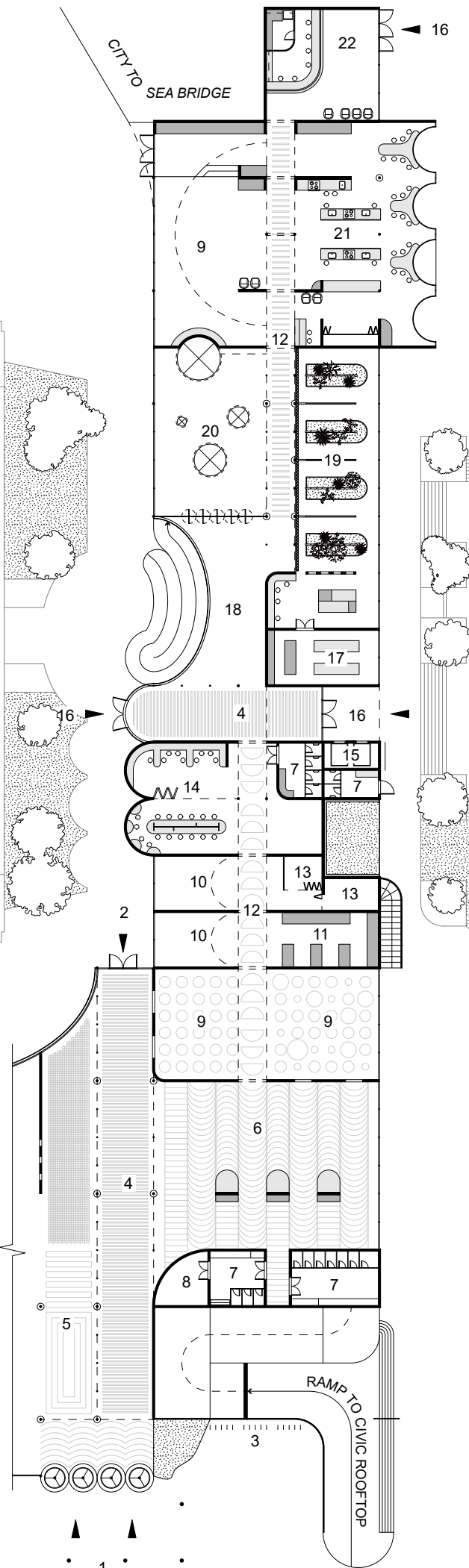


LEGEND

- 1 Main Entrance
- 2 Library Entrance
- 3 Bike Park
- 4 Public Arcade
- 5 Library Lobby
- 6 Community Lobby
- 7 W/C
- 8 Misc
- 9 Event Hall
- 10 Meeting Room
- 11 Resource Centre
- 12 Enfilade
- 13 Multi-Room
- 14 Creative Studio
- 15 Lift
- 16 Community Entrance
- 17 Storage
- 18 Hub
- 19 Community Garden
- 20 Activity Room
- 21 Cooking Studio
- 22 Reception



extends to
LIBRARY (ref. pg XX)



SECTION AA'

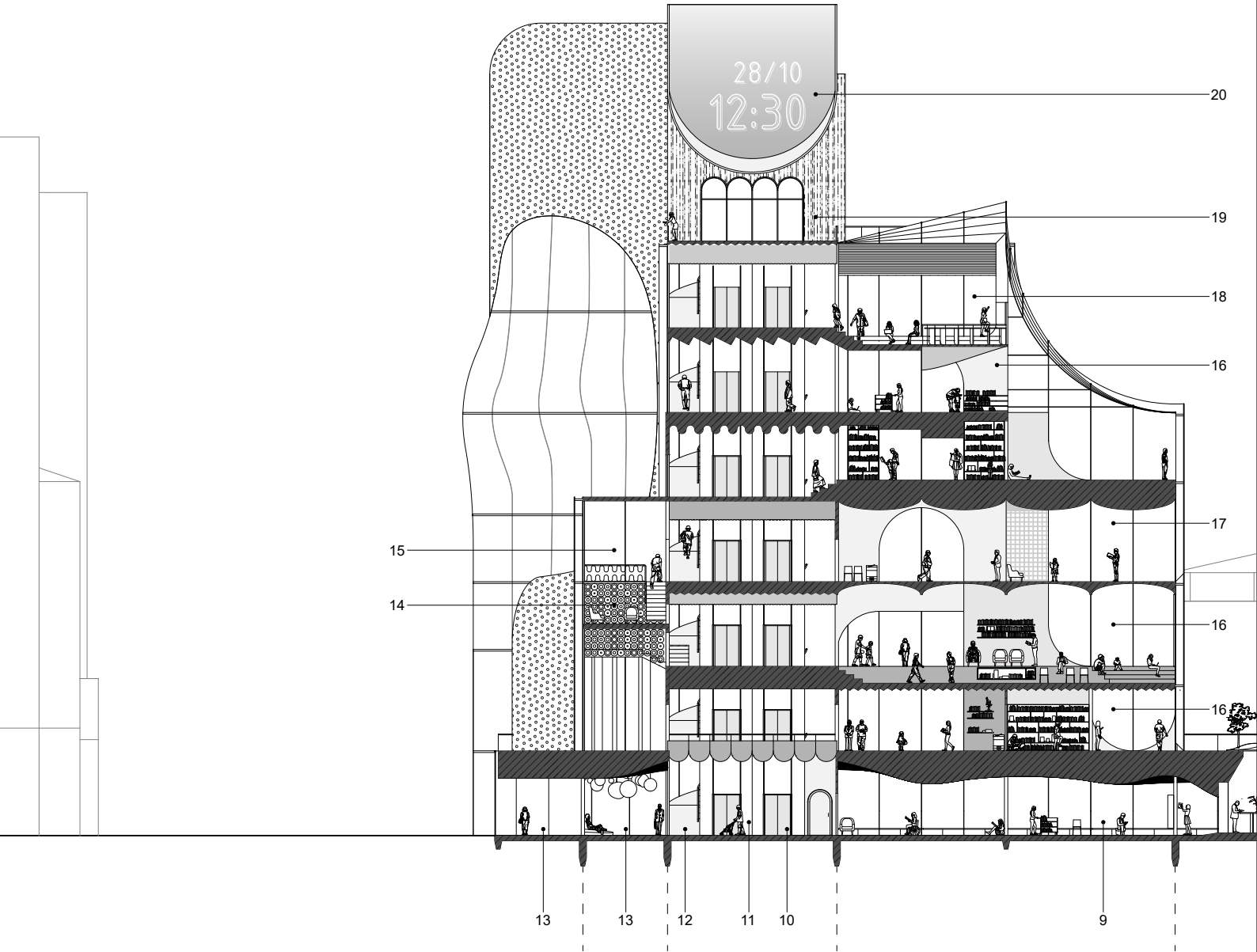


Fig 70. Section AA' through the library area 1:400

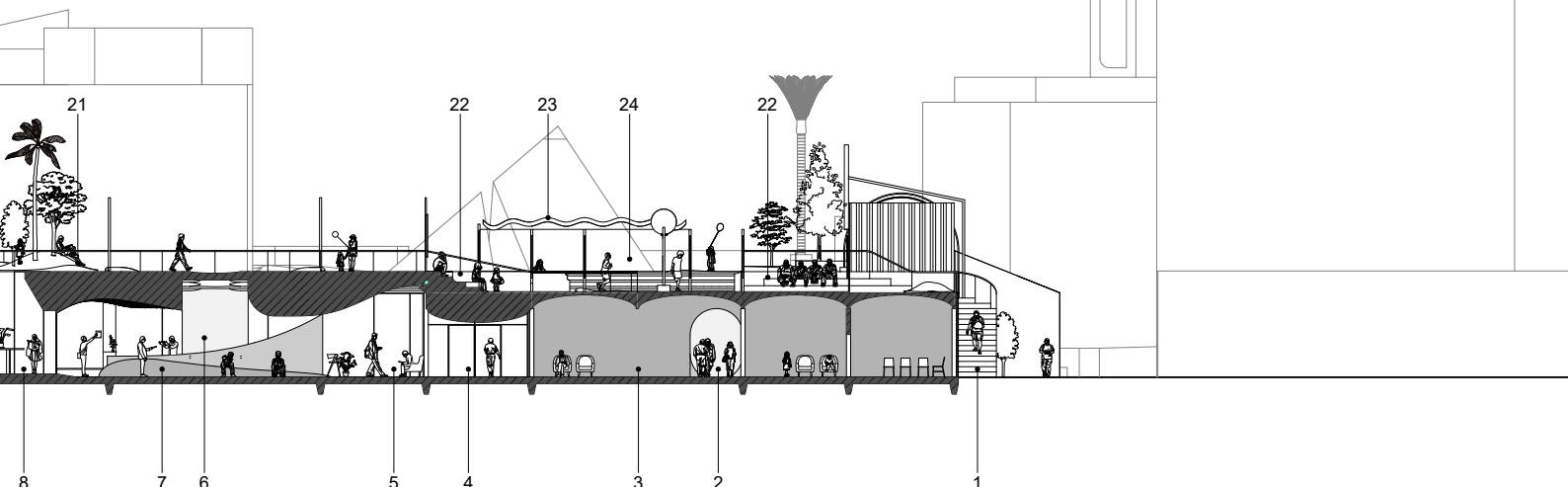
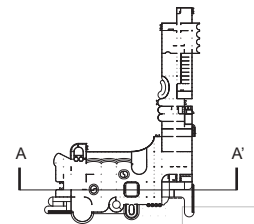
1 7.5 15 m

LEGEND

- 1 Stairs to Rooftop
- 2 Enfilade
- 3 Community Lobby
- 4 Public Arcade
- 5 Library Lobby
- 6 Staff Area
- 7 Reception
- 8 Pod
- 9 Shelving Area
- 10 Lift
- 11 Atrium
- 12 Ramp Circulation
- 13 Hang-out Area
- 14 Working Zone
- 15 Listening Zone
- 16 Reading Zone
- 17 Sharing Zone
- 18 Watching Zone
- 19 Balcony
- 20 Digital Clock
- 21 Greenery
- 22 Terraced Seating
- 23 Shelter
- 24 Multi-Court

This section shows the diversity in spatial qualities across all levels of the library. It partially reveals the connection of the main library building to the civic rooftop.

- open balconies for habitation on higher levels
- stepped levels creating varying spatial qualities responding to the zoning plan
- Digital clock (20) adds to the civic presence of the library and alludes to the historic clock that used to be on top of the Townhall building
- fluid ceiling design on the ground level in relation to the open planning of the ground level creates a dynamic spatial experience. The parametric aesthetic associated with this design adds to the collage approach introducing various architectural style in one building.
- Internal arch partitions loosely define different zones in the library



SECTION BB'

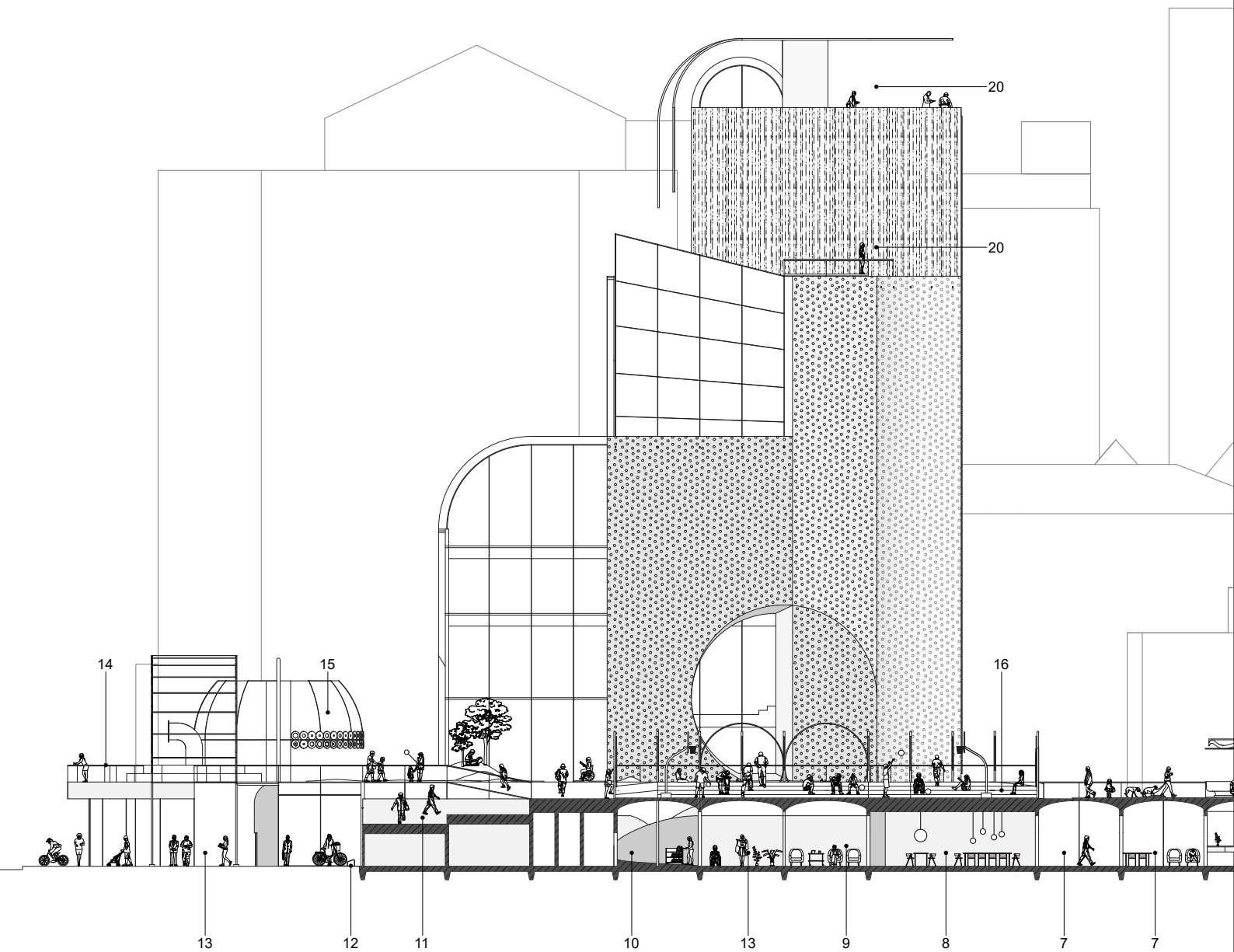
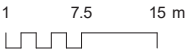


Fig 71. Section BB' through the community centre area 1:400

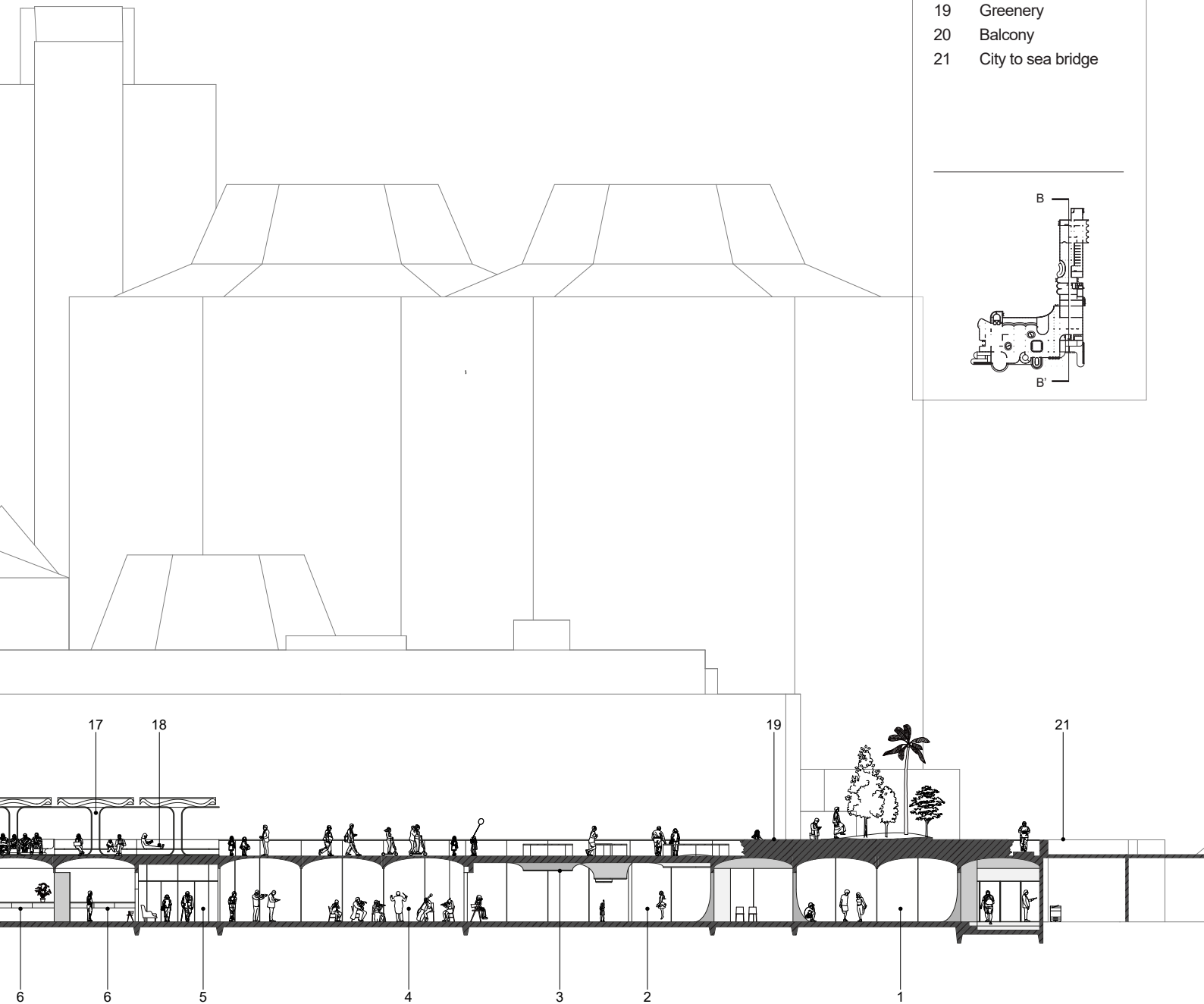
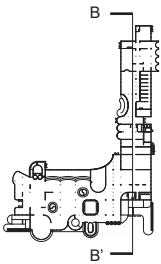


This section illustrates the varying spatial qualities of the community centre and its relationship to the inhabitable civic rooftop.

- key connection between the civic rooftop and community centre is established through various skylights (3)
- concave ceilings reference the arch geometry prevalent in Wellington.
- civic rooftop forms a close link to Victoria Street at a pedestrian scale
- rooftop balcony (20) provides the public rich spatial experience normally inaccessible for some demographics

LEGEND

- 1 Event Hall
- 2 Activity Room
- 3 Skylight
- 4 Hub
- 5 Community Lobby
- 6 Creative Studio
- 7 Meeting Room
- 8 Event Hall
- 9 Library Lobby
- 10 Community Lobby
- 11 Ramp to Rooftop
- 12 Bike Parking
- 13 Main Entrance
- 14 Platform
- 15 Internal Ramp
- 16 Terraced Seating
- 17 Shelter Intervention
- 18 Seating
- 19 Greenery
- 20 Balcony
- 21 City to sea bridge



ENTRANCE

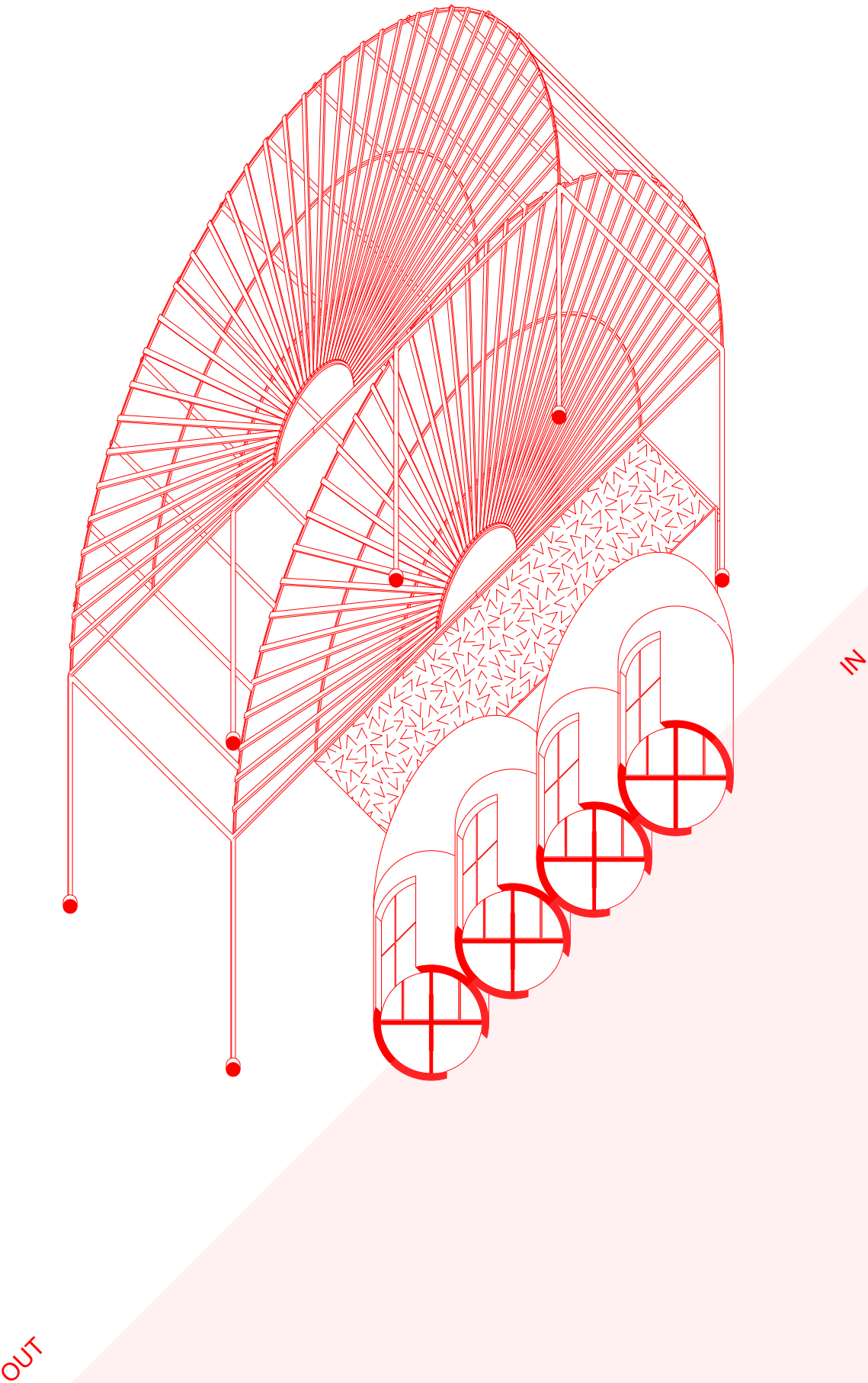
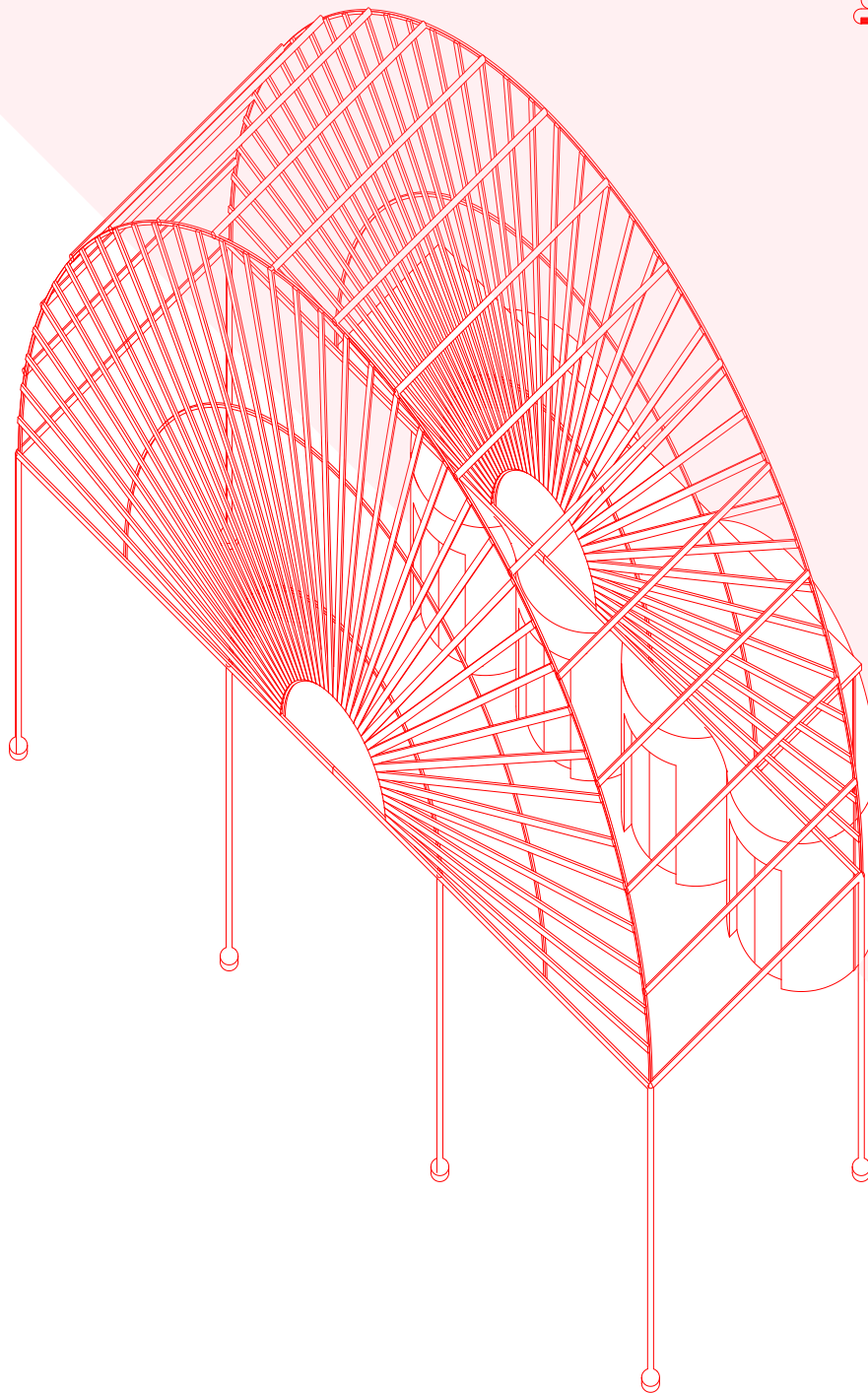
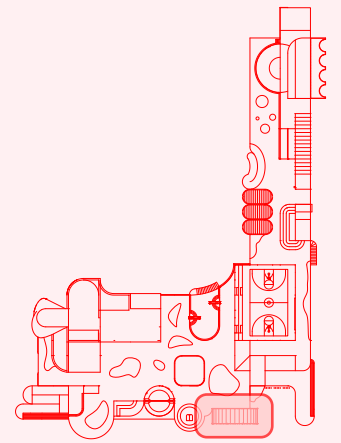


Fig 72. Axo of the entrance gate
Fig 73. Worm's eye of the entrance gate

1 1.25 2.5 m



IN

OUT

The main entrance consist of an arch structure and revolving doors. This moment is intentionally extravagant to reinforce accessibility and create inviting threshold for the public. The arch structure combines the piping language and decorative neo-classical qualities of Wellington.

INTERNAL RAMP

OUT

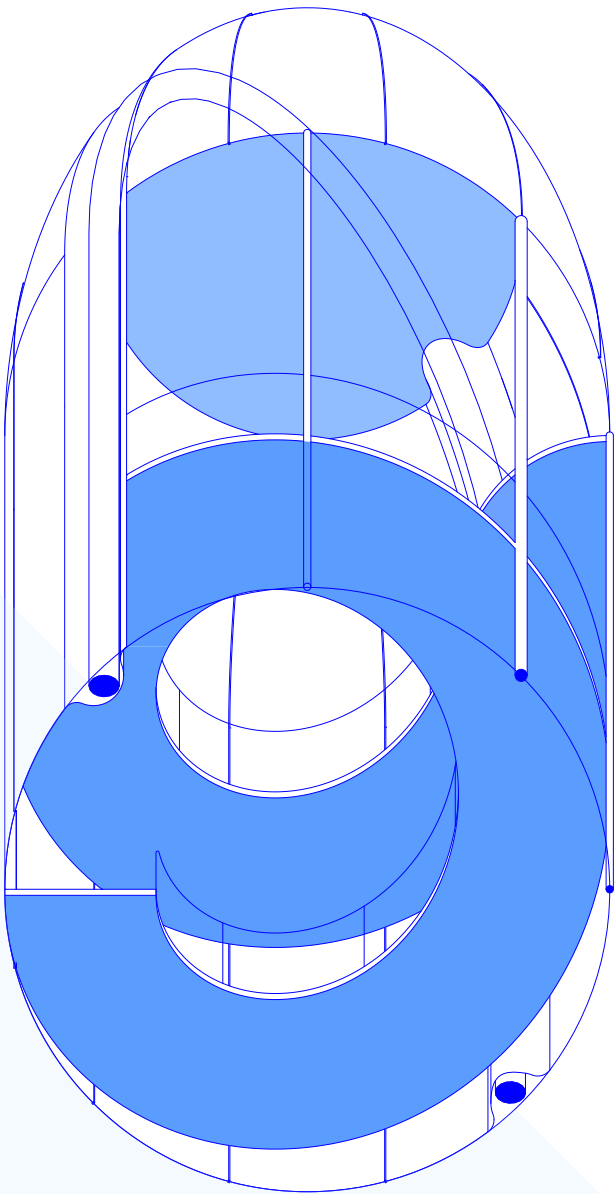
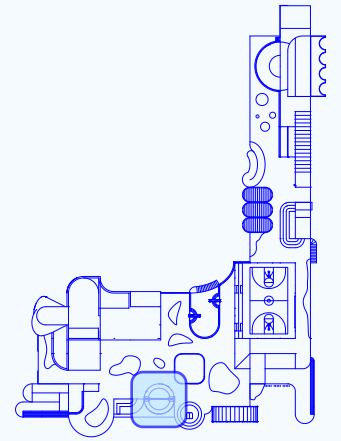


Fig 74. Axo of the internal ramp
Fig 75. Worm's eye of the internal ramp

1 1.25 2.5 m



OUT

IN

The internal ramp is partially enclosed in glass with accent piping to introduce playfulness to the structure.

PLAYGROUND/ RECEPTION

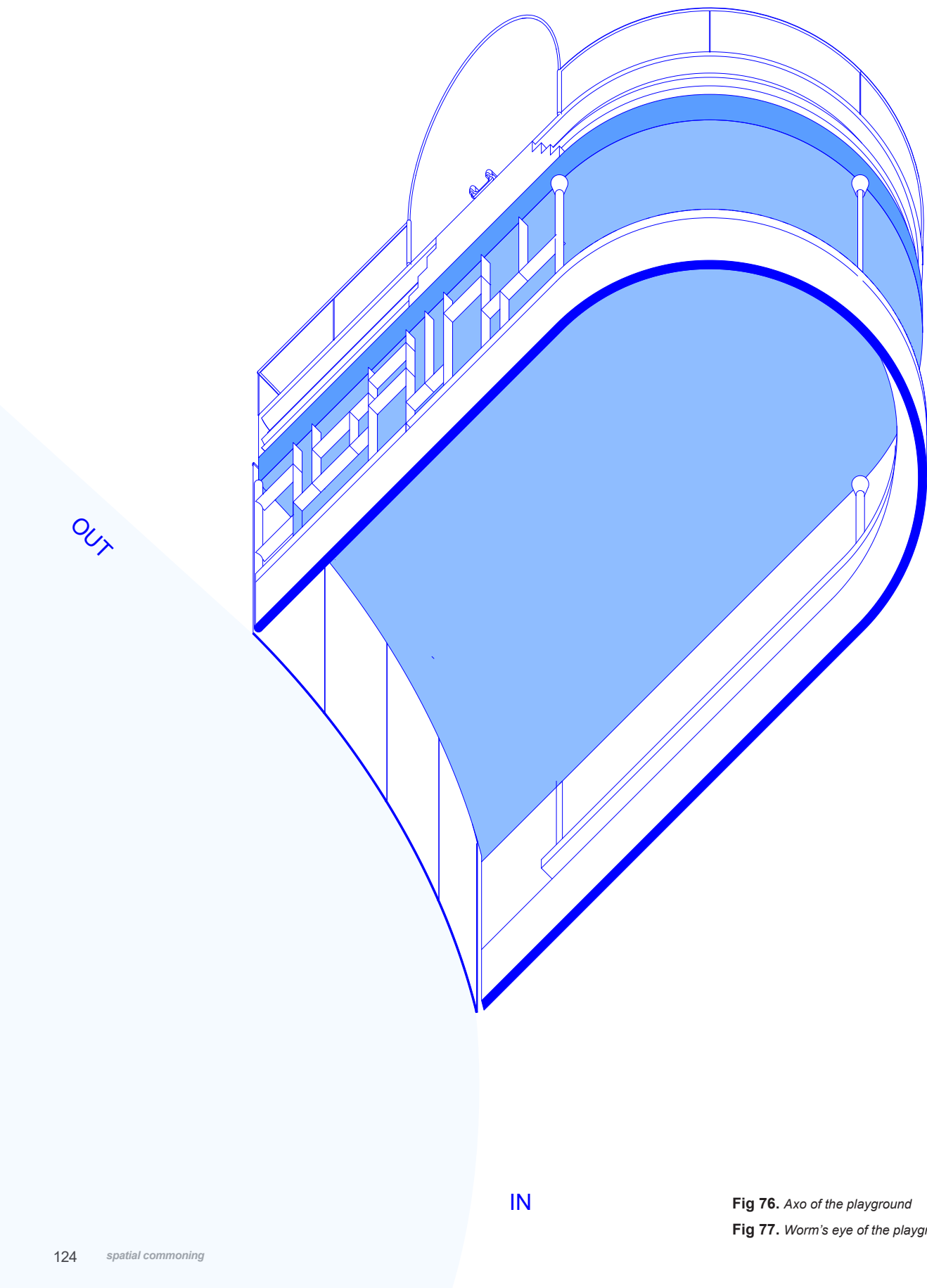
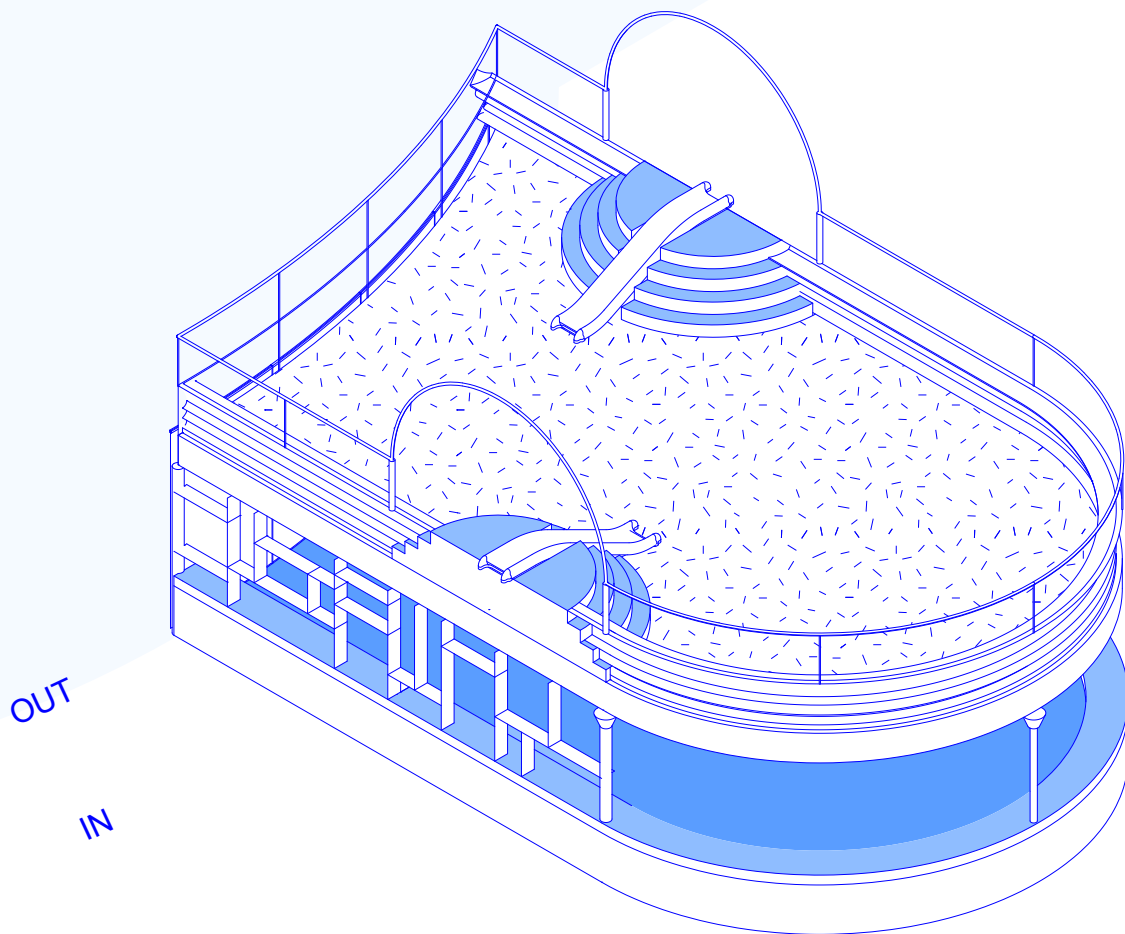
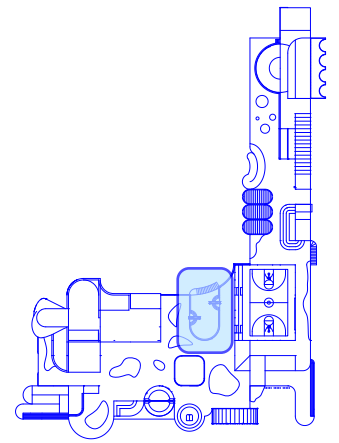


Fig 76. Axo of the playground

Fig 77. Worm's eye of the playground

1 1.25 2.5 m



The stepped playground has soil ground on top and reception under creating a spatial linkage between inside and outside. It adds to the dynamic environment of civic rooftop.

SHELTER

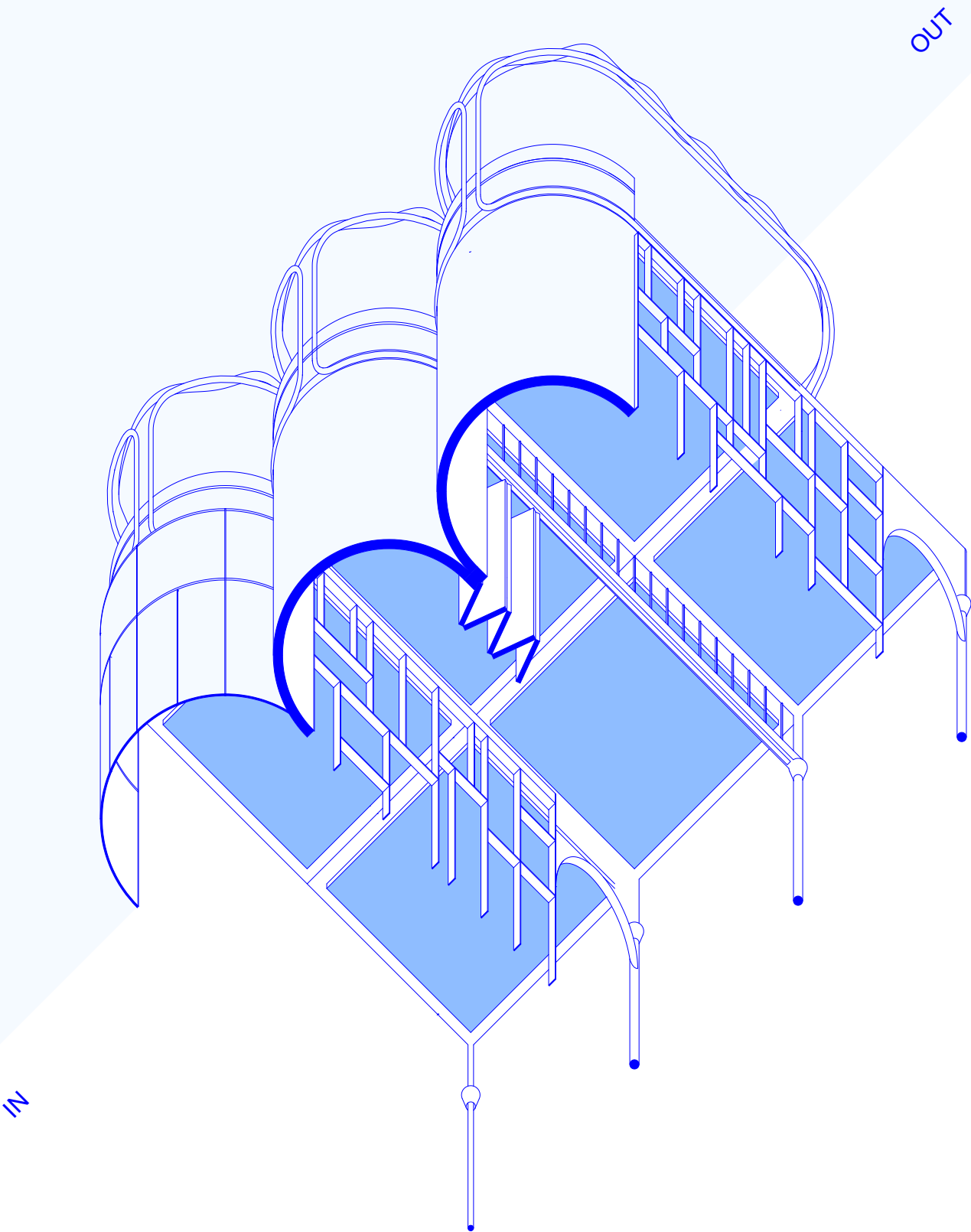
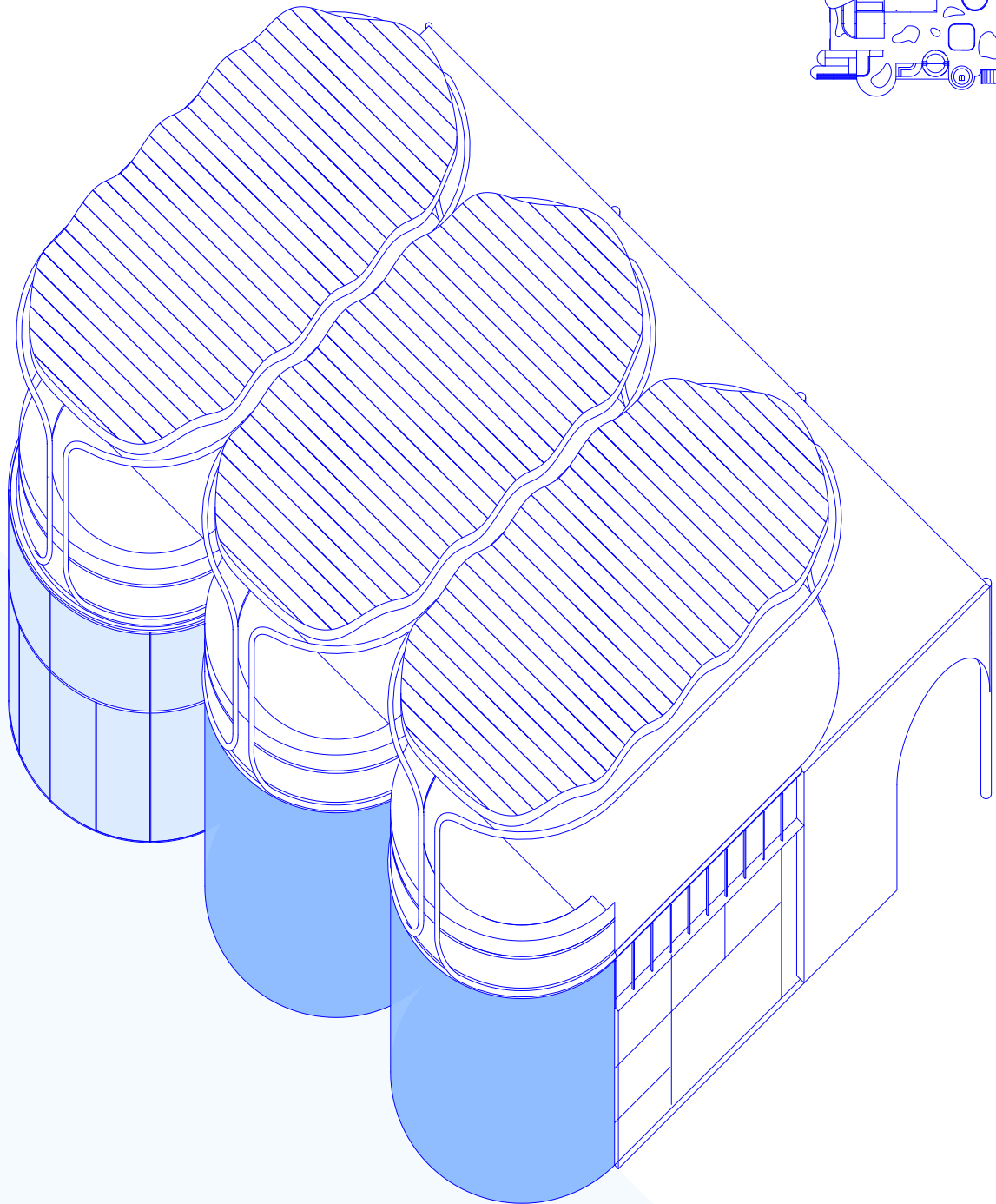
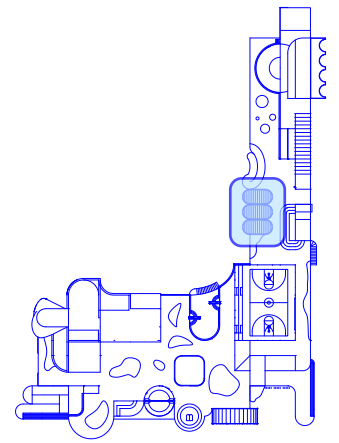


Fig 78. Axo of the shelter

Fig 79. Worm's eye of the shelter

1 1.25 2.5 m

IN

OUT

The shelter provides a shaded and lit platform for sedentary occupation. The wavy roof form implies the artistic function of creative studio underneath and integrates playfulness to the civic rooftop space. It also alludes to the Wellington CBD buildings as it is a re-occurring form.

COOKING WORKSHOP

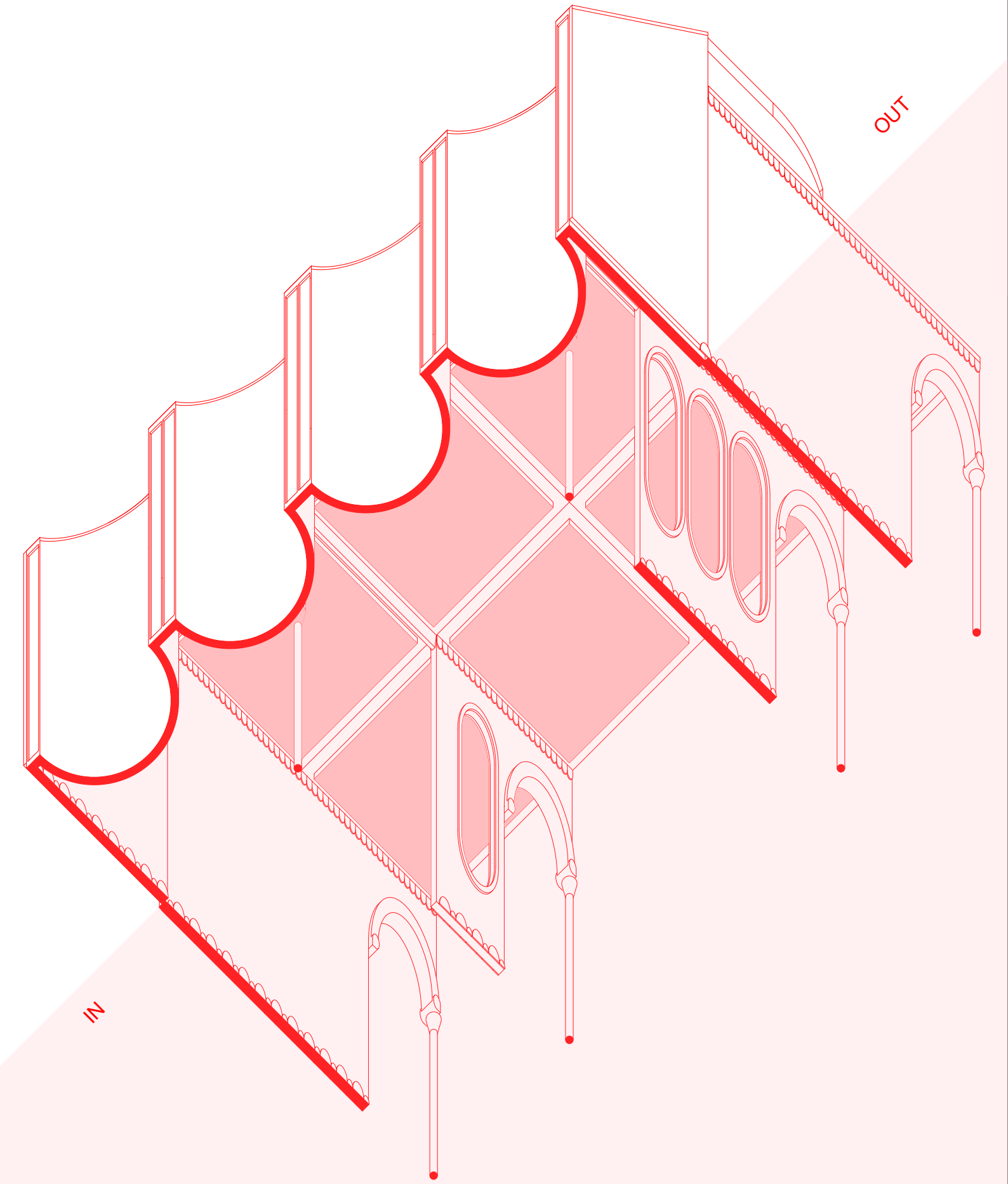
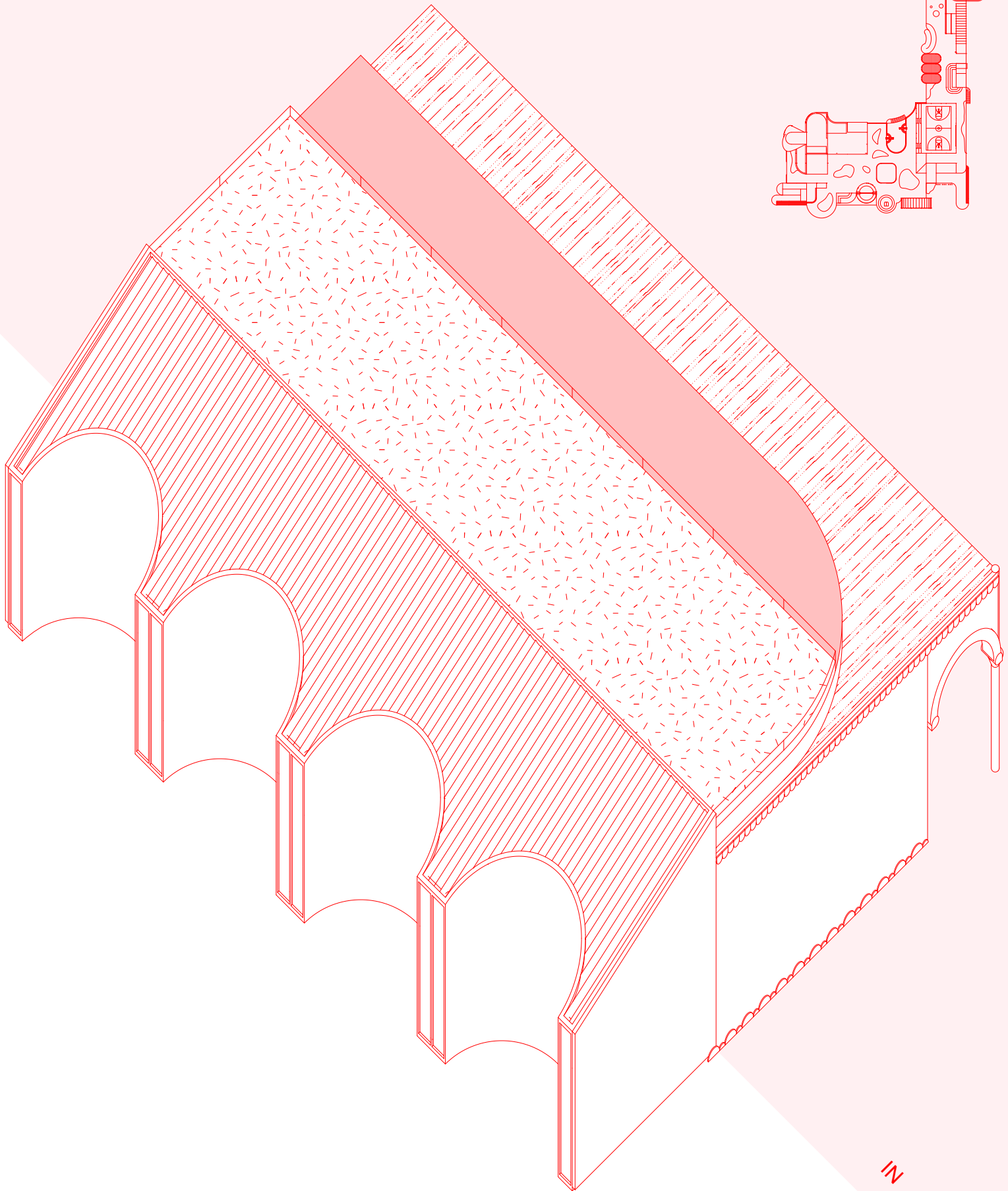
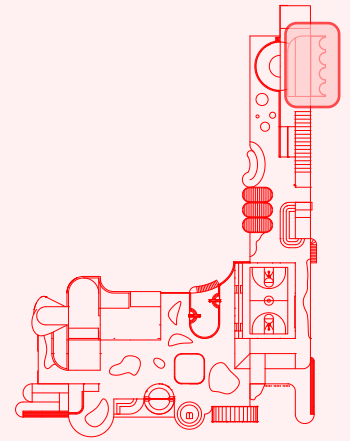


Fig 80. Axo of the Cooking workshop

Fig 81. Worm's eye of the Cooking workshop

1 1.25 2.5 m



IN

OUT

The cooking workshop provides a dynamic facade to activate surrounding inbetween spaces. It frames glimpse of activities to be visible from outside. On the top it provides stepped green platform for occupation.

GLASSHOUSE

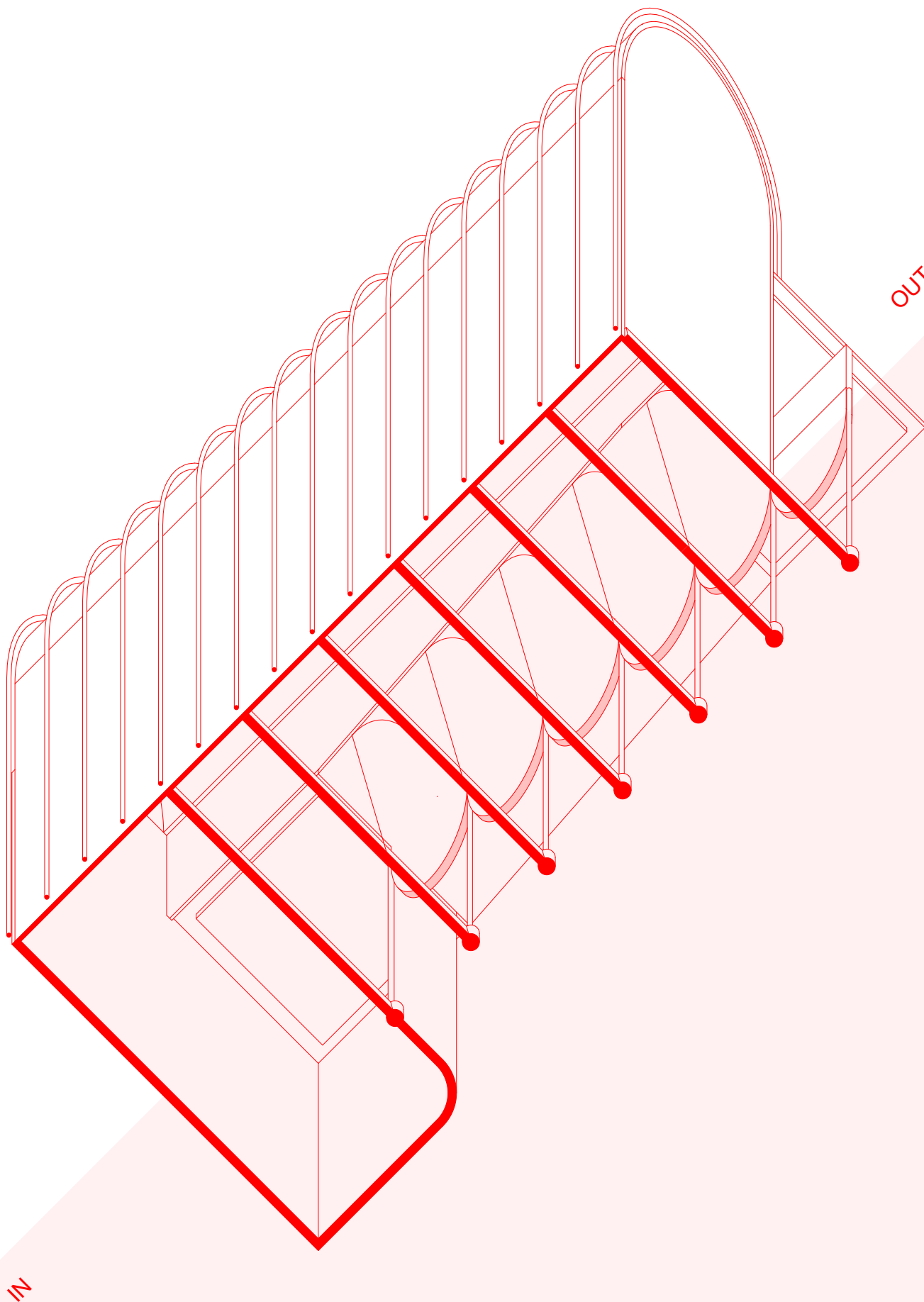
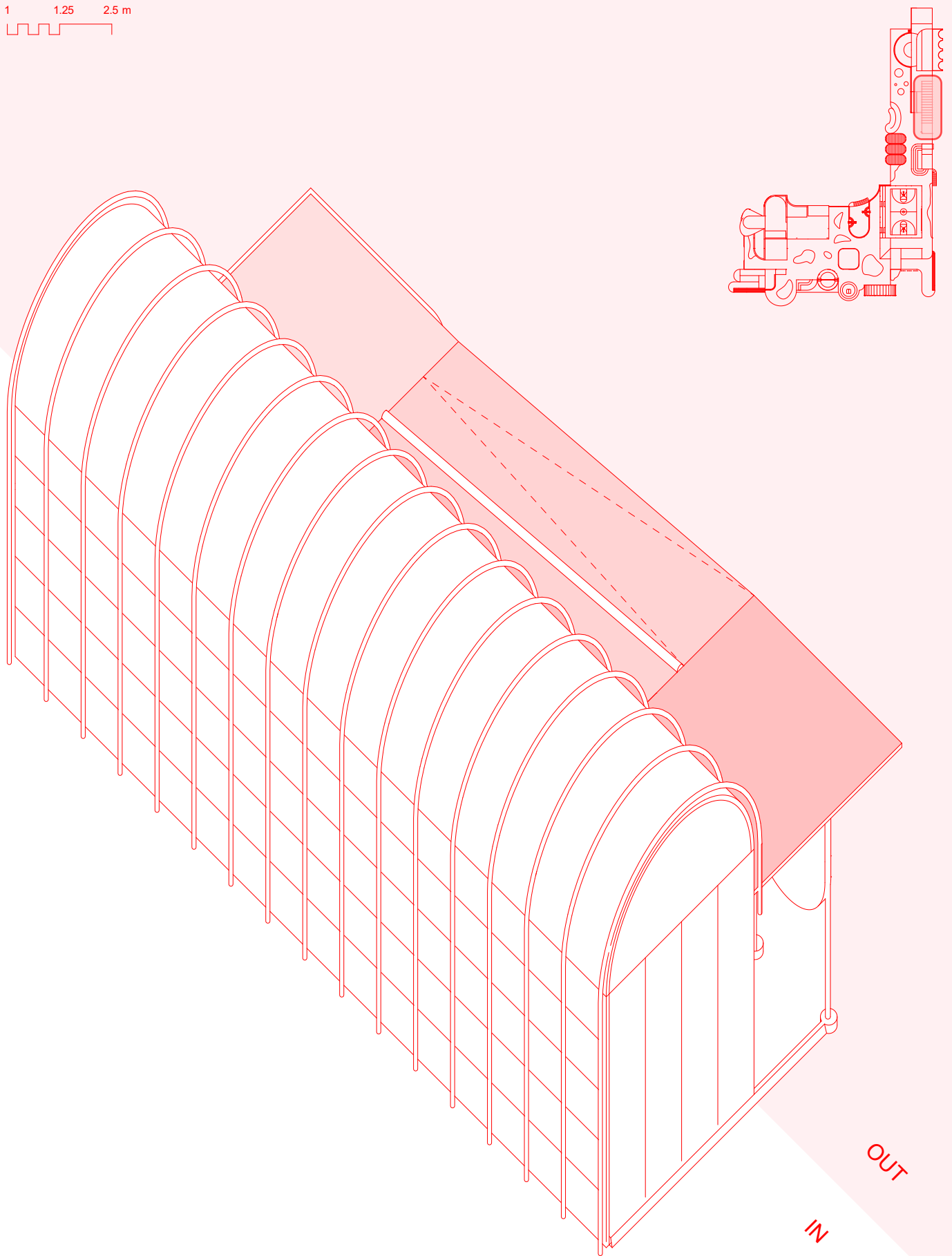


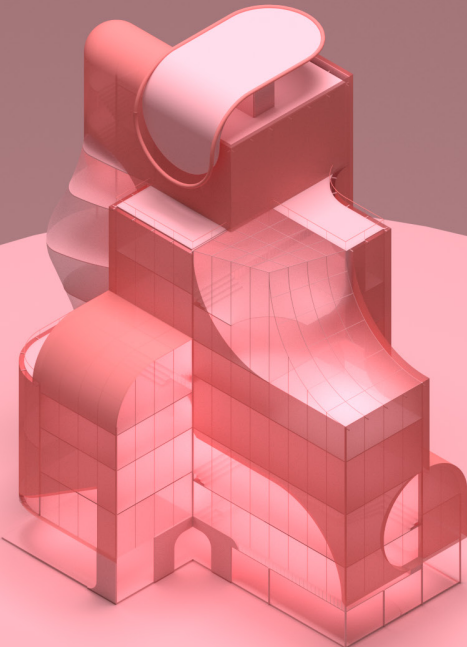
Fig 82. Axo of the greenhouse
Fig 83. Worm's eye of the greenhouse

1 1.25 2.5 m



The glasshouse provides a space for community garden. It is fully transparent establishing a visual connection between the community centre and the civic rooftop. A level change occur along this glass house giving views into the glasshouse at different heights.

THE LIBRARY



Library Block

This image detaches the library building from the rest of the proposal to highlight its dynamic formal language and facade treatment. This can be understood as a large design intervention collaged alongside numerous other interventions presented previously.

- The form of the library manifest combination of different volumes merged to generate an idiosyncratic spatial outcome.
- The library has a base glass facade throughout and a mesh skin that wraps around the building, framing different activities in the library.
- The displaced volumes enable numerous external balcony spaces throughout the building. This makes the building publicly present.

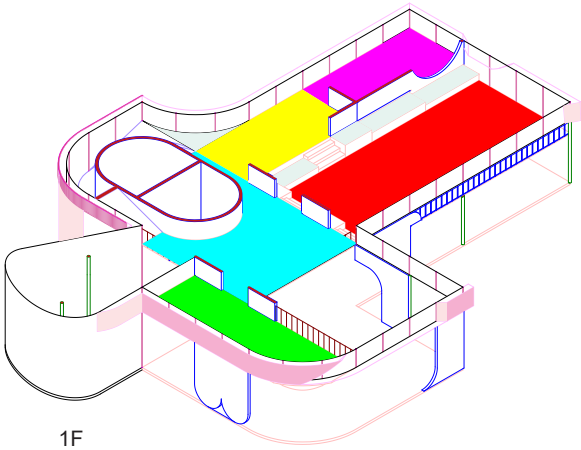
Key design features

- malleable rooftop balcony shelter
- distorted glass facade (facing Harris St)

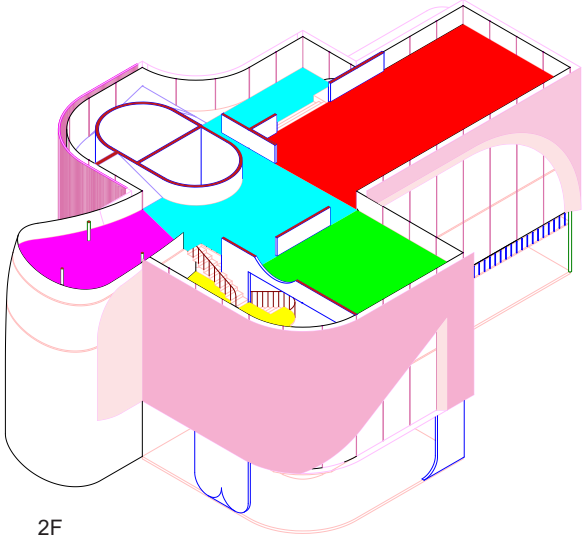
These design features aim to address the weaknesses identified in the current library. (i.e. making rooftop space accessible to the public and celebrating it, activating Harris St)

Consequently, the dynamic aesthetic and spatial qualities of this building add positively to the atmosphere of the proposed civic rooftop. It acts as a significant anchor that grounds and integrates the surrounding areas.

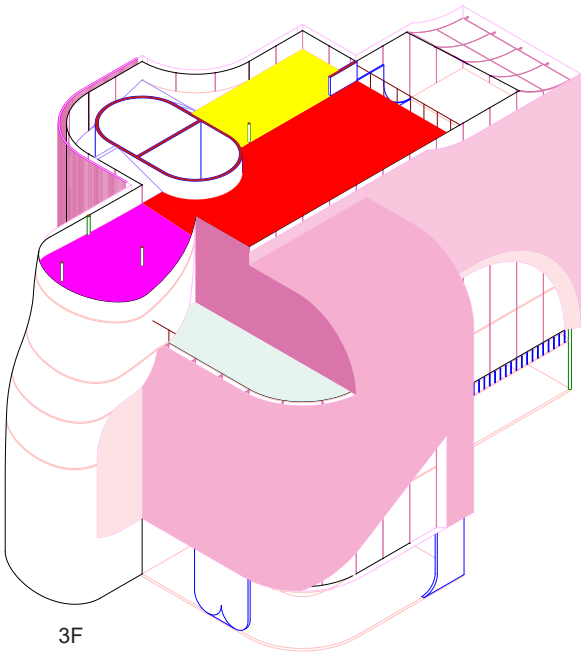
Library zoning



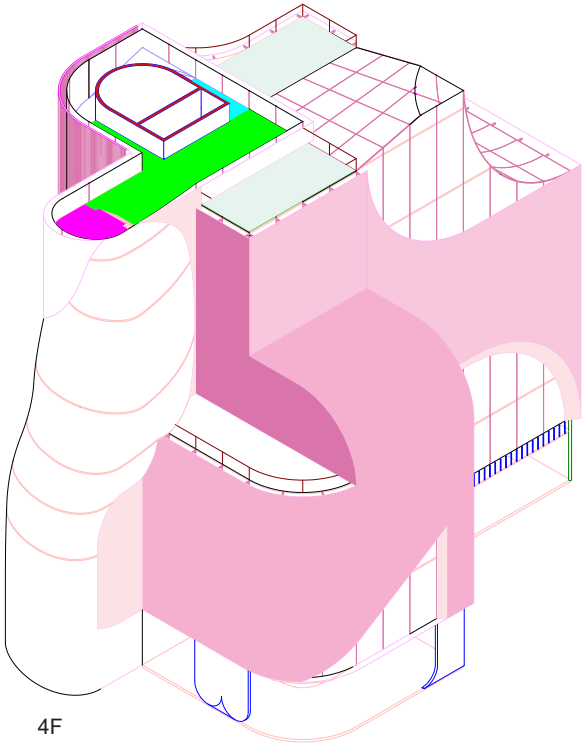
1F



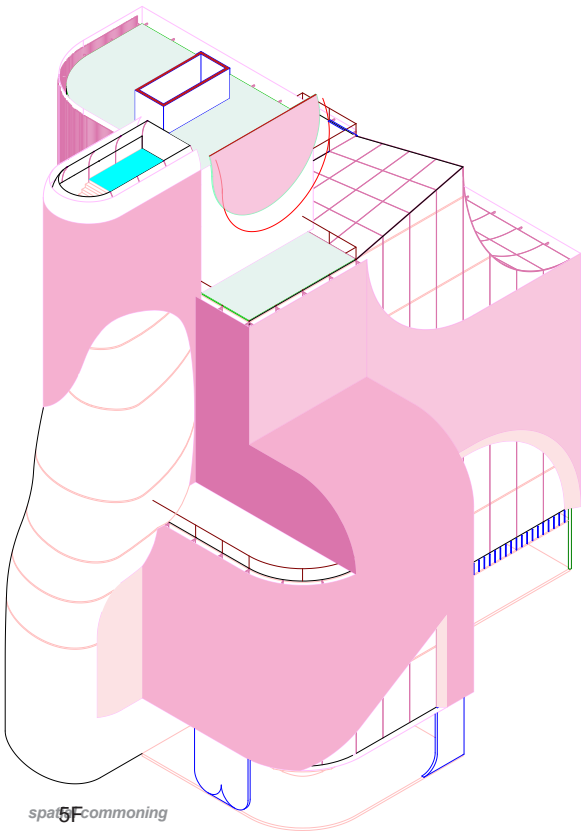
2F



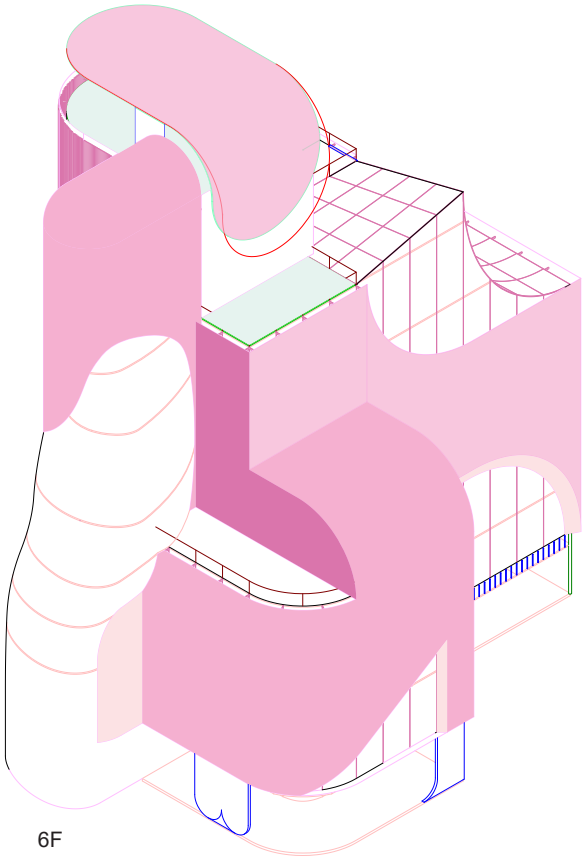
3F



4F



5F



6F

The library zoning is arranged in conjunction with the volume development. The displacements of volumes that result in varying spatial characteristics determine the arrangement of program zoning. Majority of spaces are spatially interlinked unless the program requires the space to be more enclosed. In these cases, spaces are disconnected through floor level changes.



Fig 85. Zoning of the upper library floors

5.3 RENDER

perspective moments

On representation

The representation of the developed design proposal seeks to express the spatial and formal qualities only. It keeps the material palette incomplete to anticipate community participation for furthering this scheme.

Each community member is expected to add colour/ pattern/ material choice of their preference to the base image provided by the architect.



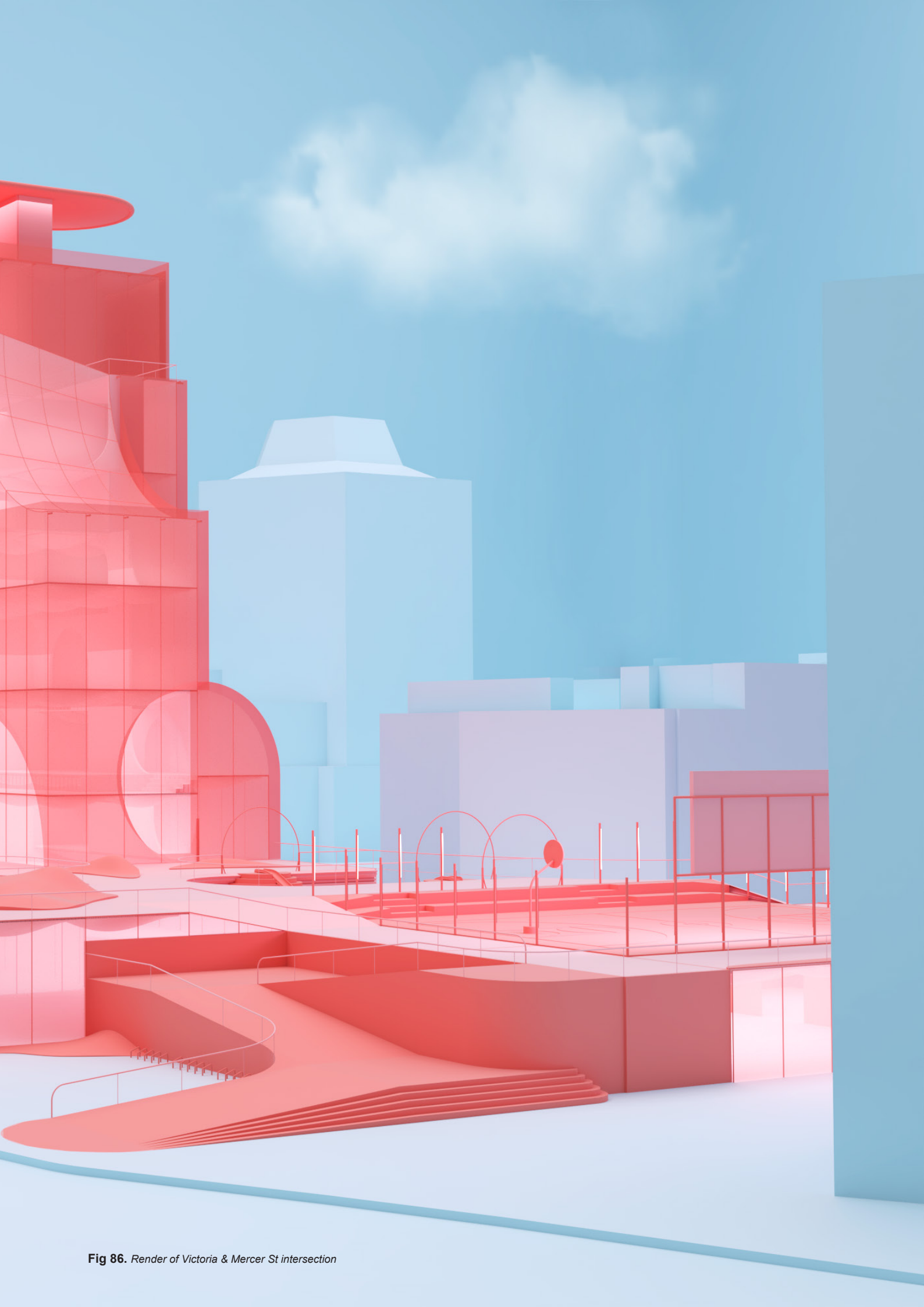
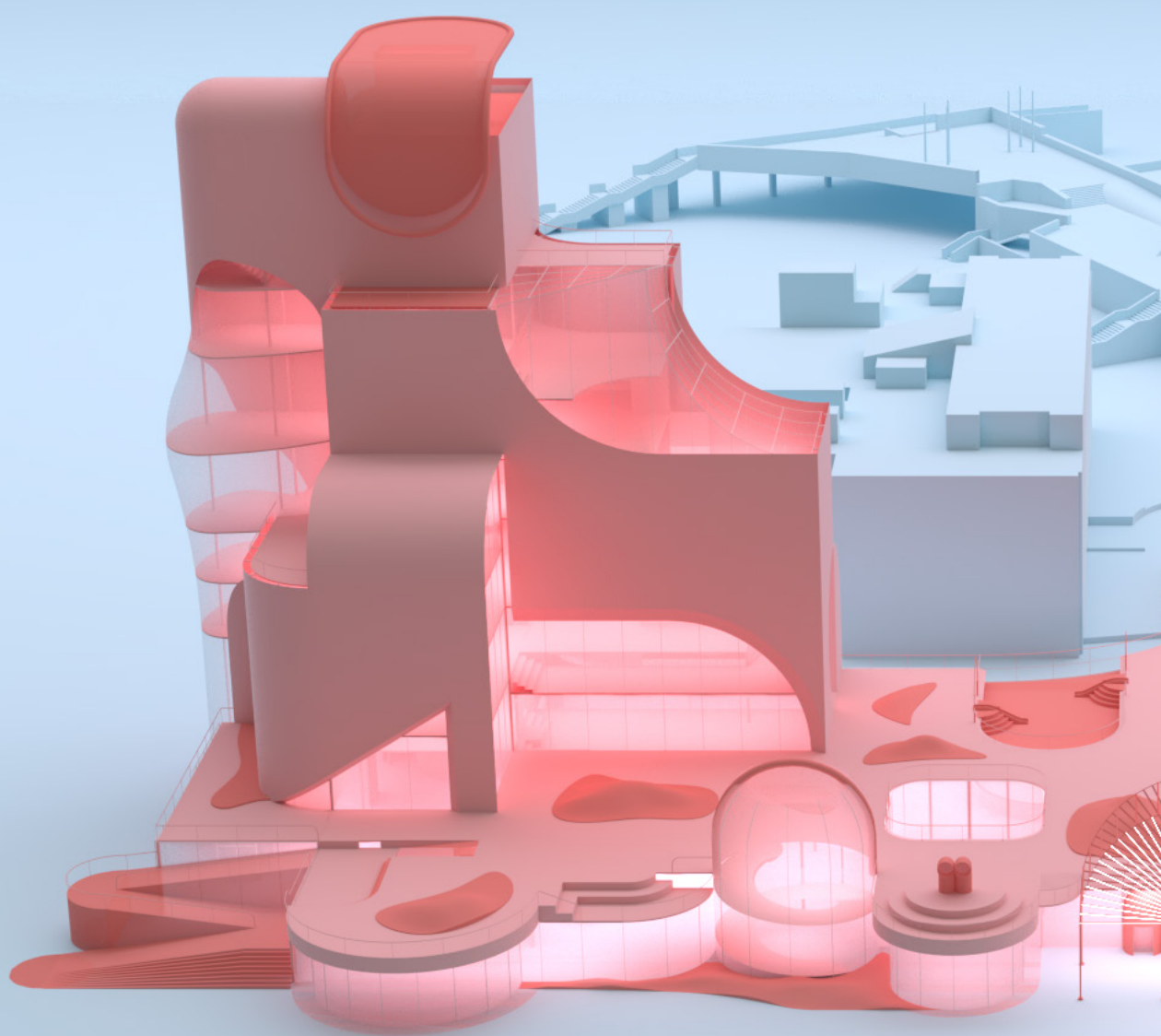


Fig 86. *Render of Victoria & Mercer St intersection*



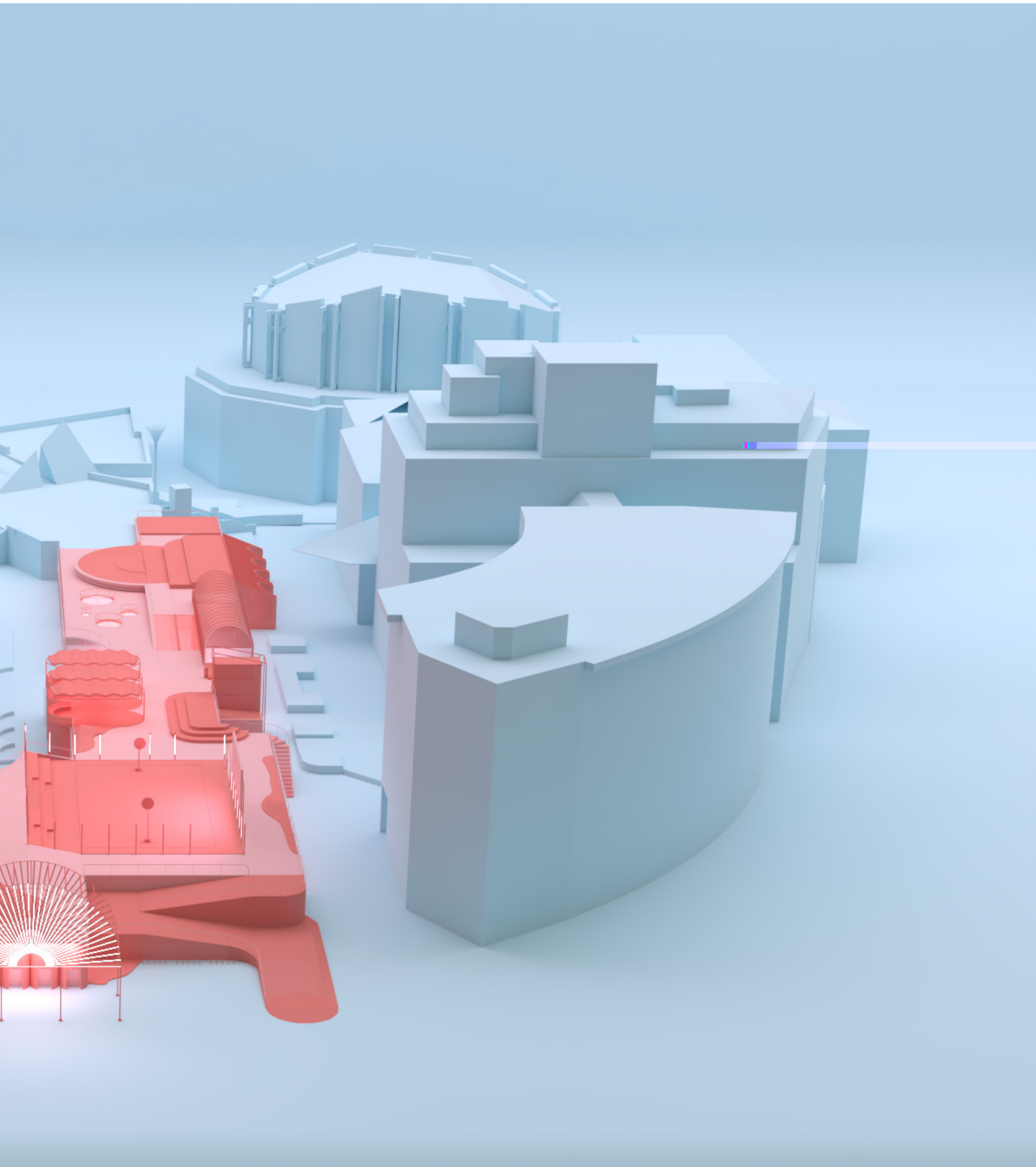
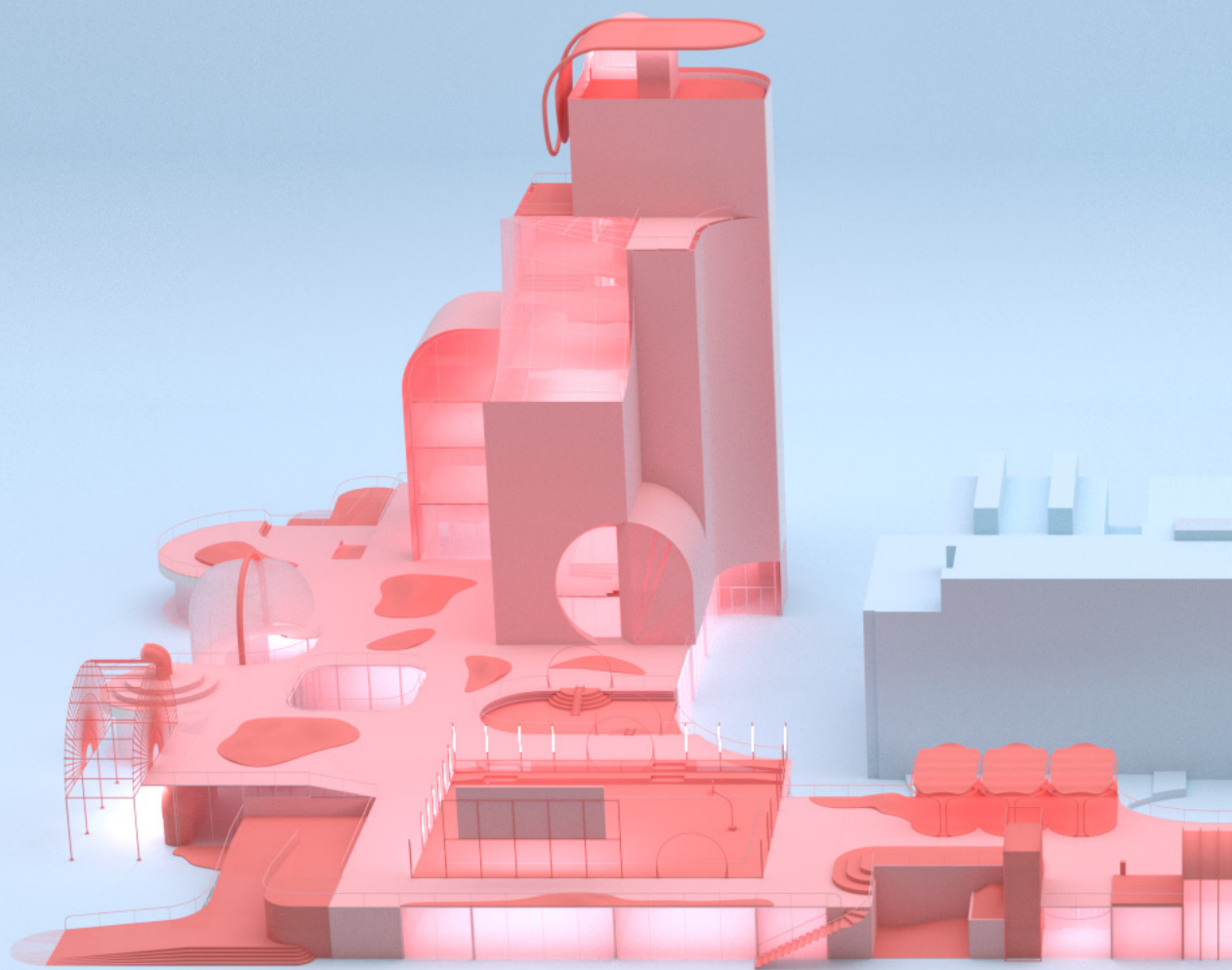


Fig 87. *West elevation from Victoria Street*



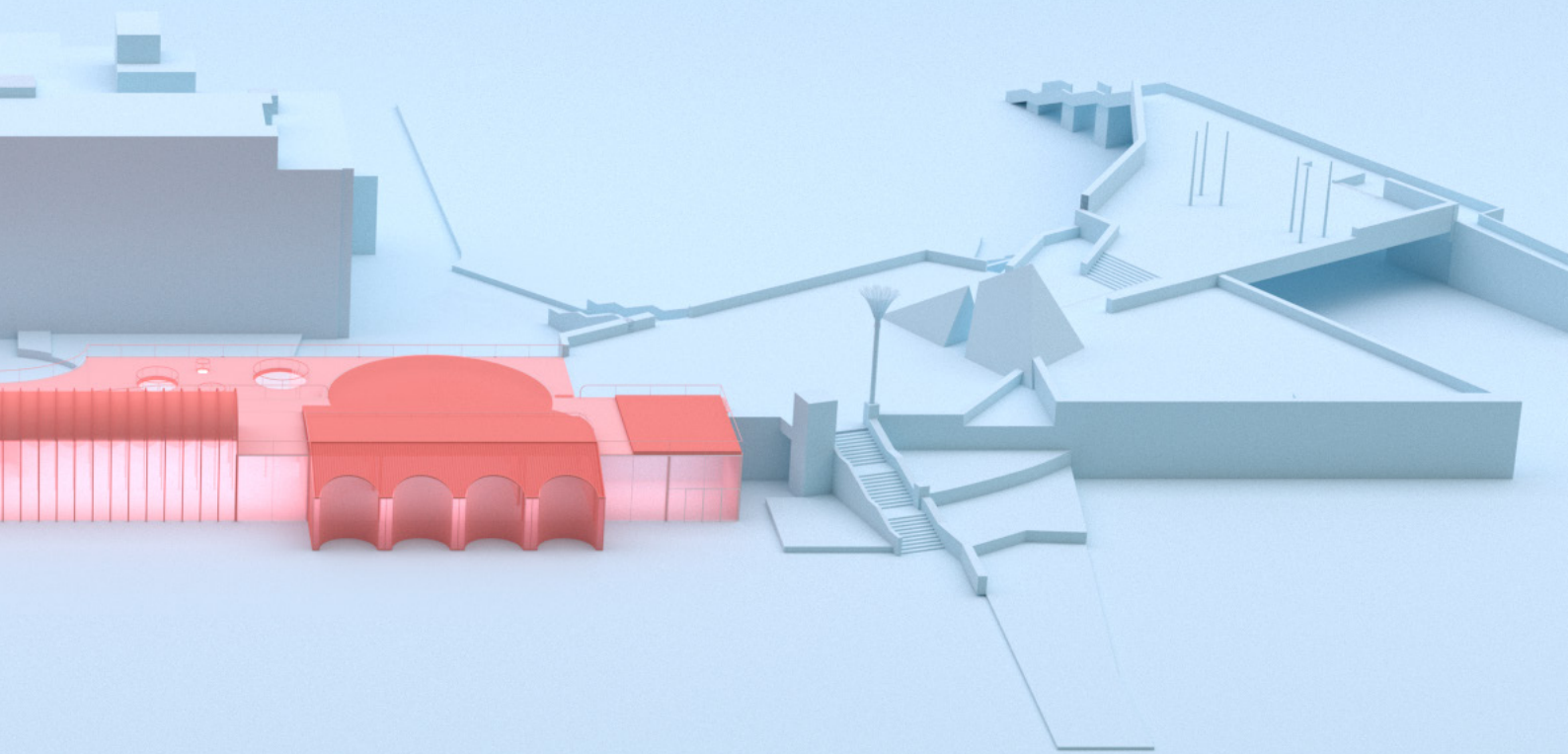


Fig 88. *South elevation*





Fig 89. *Render of the Civic roof day & night*



Fig 90. *Render of the main entrance*



Fig 91. *Render of the main ramp access*



Fig 92. *View towards the library*



Fig 93. *View towards the shelter*



Fig 94. *View from the internal ramp*

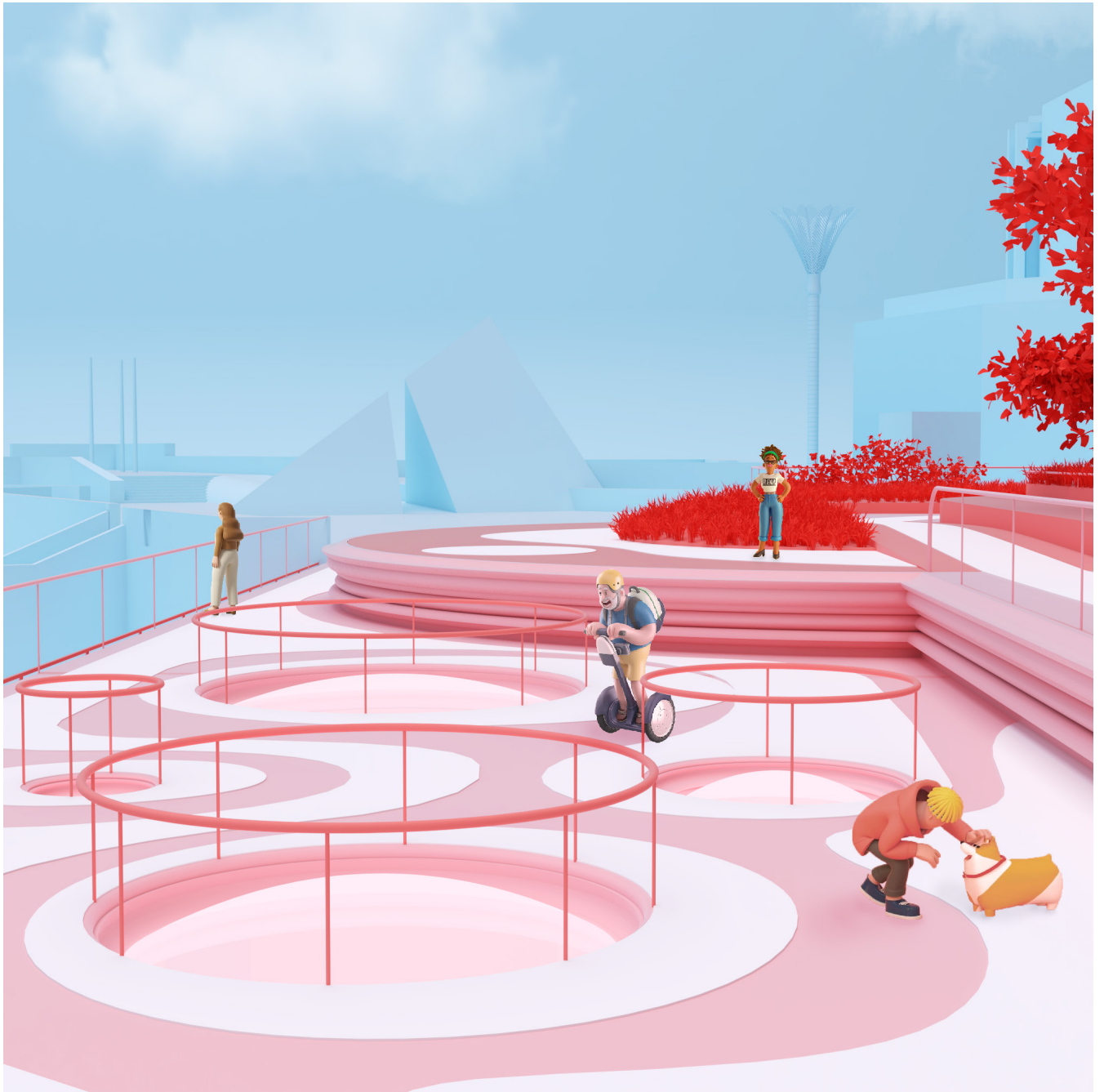


Fig 95. *View towards the skylights*





Fig 96. *View of the library atrium*



View from the main entrance of the library towards the library reception



View from the seventh level showing the level change and varying ceiling patterns according to programmatic zoning, circular glass elevators

Fig 97. Library interior moments



View towards the enfilade



View inside the glass house towards the activity room with skylights

Fig 98. Community centre interior moments

CONCLUSIONS

Key Thesis Intent

In response to the bigger picture, this thesis argues that commoning concepts need to be elevated to a higher level of importance in the development of urban cities such as Wellington. It attempts to spatially articulate commoning characteristics and conditions into the design process of the Wellington Central Library and Civic Square. This research argues the importance of these sites to leverage its physicality, popularity and timely closure to publicly champion its social and environmental cognition and re-imagine its architectonic representation and programmatic function.

Speculative Commons Framework

To give architectonic substructure to urban commons (limited to social practice) that was specific to the Wellington Central Library and Civic Square, Post-Modernism ascribed to the current building was investigated. Connecting the building to the movement's international realm, the epitome of Post-Modernism – the Neue Staatsgalerie by Stirling, was studied in comparison to Athfield's library. The key findings that were seen to enhance the commons were the technique of collage and the spatial articulation of the city – library as microcosm.

At the same time, the library's programmatic framework was also examined, combining Chan's framework for constructing the commons and Drobnik and Tajeri's programmatic guidelines for contemporary libraries. The main conclusions from applying these approaches through the paradigm of the commons were the importance of incorporating a community centre into the library, the idea of loose programmatic zoning of the library and the possibilities of commons systems within the internal programme of the library.

The "final" developed design spatially articulates the commons by dramatizing its sharing and commoning practices through its proposed programmatic function and more importantly, its architectural form. It is a public theatre of community learning, sharing and socio-cultural exchange.

Key Design Moves

- Extending the raised platform of the City-to-Sea-Bridge to create an inhabitable civic roof
- Determining three key spatial zones – the library, community centre and civic rooftop
- Incorporating "collaged" elements – that articulate different programmatic moments

REFLECTION

Form & Design

The proposed library alludes to playful Post-Modern eclecticism, and “library as a city” motif - featuring an array of collaged and abstracted geometries that intend to convey the visual language of Wellington City. The drastic abstraction of geometries weakened the contextual locality of the building in which Wellingtonians could relate to, instead, it is entirely open to interpretation and imagination. Thus, material selection and application through participatory design is suggested to reclaim local specificity. Thus, the building would benefit from specific, or more direct reference to the city's-built environment as intended in the Collage City inspired “Excursus” journey around Wellington City.

The design subjectivity of the architect is overt – congruent with the Post-Modernist approach, but the ownership of design is questionable – it contradicts the inclusive and collaborative notions of the urban common.

The contextual qualities emerge from the immediate site – that become the key architectural gestures. For example, the extension of the City-to-Sea-Bridge is apparent in its equal levelling of the civic roof as well as the collage of pocket spaces, seating, shelter and vegetation spots allude to the sculptural compositions that exist on the bridge.

Design Method - Collage

Collaging was used as a primary design method. It extends

beyond the building form to affect building function and occupation at varying levels and scales. Multiple interventions are developed in isolation to each other and plugged into the form of the overall composition. This approach successfully creates dynamic spatial assemblage that carries heterogeneity within one building – mirroring the plurality of the city.

Commons

The final proposal is not entirely an urban commons, it is a tectonic reflection of its values. In reality, the collective governance of the council-owned institution would still remain, however this thesis adds a layer of community activated systems, that could be sustained autonomously (the point system) to enrich the commons experience of sharing, learning through exchange, socialising, negotiating etc.

The point's system established in this thesis relies less on design thinking rather inclined towards policymaking. This raises a question on the role of architects within the common's framework, as the system must be validated by other policy-makers. However, this thesis reveals that extending the traditional role of architects (from design) to consider the overall operation of the building heavily affects the design output. Notably, the adaptation of the programmatic framework of the contemporary library and the commons, had a large influence in the spatial planning of the building. This proves that involving the architect in the from the early stage can better facilitate the overall program integration of community-based activities.

IMPLICATIONS

This thesis responds to the emerging global discourse of the urban commons. It attempts to re-interpret and apply its characteristics and conditions, which are “incompletely theorised,”³ in the design process of the new Library and Civic Square proposal. Thus, the architectonic articulation of urban commoning could be in the interests of different disciplinary fields such as economics, politics, sociology etc, which in collaboration with the built environment has the power to reinforce and influence future policies and development strategies in urban cities. Thereby making cities more equitable, inclusive, socially and environmentally sustainable etc.

Further Advancement of Research

This thesis could adopt a richer level of public engagement to ground the project closer to reality. In reflection of the methodology, its designer-driven approach is ascribed to confining nature of academia as a student. From personal experience, university projects cultivate visionary projects thus are unconditioned to the realities of practice. Reflecting this tendency, the design approach, from one point of view, could have better integrated participatory processes in which other stakeholders, such as librarians, patrons, neighbouring residents and the council could contribute to in the design process. This could have led to more informative and practical insights such as – where to draw the line or can there be a line drawn between balancing participatory practices and letting the architect have their design autonomy.

FIGURE LIST

- Fig 3.** Raworth, K. (2017). A Doughnut for the Anthropocene: humanity's compass in the 21st century. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 1(2), e48-e49
- Fig 4.** Abascal, A. Z.-P. G. F. (2016). Architecture's "Political Compass": A Taxonomy of Emerging Architecture in One Diagram: *archdaily*.
- Fig 5.** Research, U. S. D. o. H. a. U. D. O. o. P. D. a. (1996). Demolition of Pruitt-Igoe. *Wikimedia commons: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research*
- Fig 6.** Comparison table between CPR & urban commons 20
- Fig 7.** Clarke, P. (2017). *Nightingale 1: Breathe architecture*.
Dellenbaugh, M., Kip, M., Bieniok, M., Müller, A., & Schwegmann, M. (2015). *Urban commons: moving beyond state and market* (Vol. 154): Birkhäuser.
- Fig 8.** Jenkins, K. (2012). *On the frozen canals of Amsterdam: Velvet escape*.
- Fig 11.** Sheehan, G. *The Escalators*. *Assemble Papers*. <https://assemblepapers.com.au/2020/10/15/on-wellington-loss-and-looking-ahead/> 12 Athfield Architects <https://athfieldarchitects.co.nz/projects/civic-community/wellington-central-library>
- Fig 12-13.** Athfield Architects <https://assemblepapers.com.au/assemblepapers/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/5-1200x878.jpg>
- Fig 14.** NZ Places. <https://nzplaces.nz/place/wellington-city-library>
- Fig 16.** Stirling, J. (1978). *Staatsgalerie Stuttgart*, Stuttgart, Germany, View of library from below: MoMa. 35
- Fig 17-18.** Ludwig, S. (2009). *Neue Staatsgalerie no. 04*: flickr.
- Fig 19.** Šmídek, P. (2008). *Altes museum*: archiweb.
- Fig 24 – 26.** Fig 24 – 26. (Abascal, 2016; Clarke, 2017; Dellenbaugh, Kip, Bieniok, Müller, & Schwegmann, 2015; Jenkins, 2012; Laione, 2017; Ludwig, 2009; Mørk, 2009; Raworth, 2017; Research, 1996; Šmídek, 2008; Stirling, 1978; Zhang & Chan) Michael Drobnik, M. Tajeri, N. (2008) *Volume#15: Destination Library. Library Design Guide a Hypothesis. Volume* (Amsterdam, Netherlands). Archis
- Fig 28.** Mørk, A. (2009). *Dokk1: Schmidt Hammer Lassen architects*.

