

the **BORDERS** between us

**THE BORDERS BETWEEN US:** Critiquing spatial relations  
through the rupture of borders

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## Introduction: The urgency of political space

“Man is apolitical by nature. Politics arise only in the space between men”<sup>1</sup>. This phrase dictates how important shared space is. How it molds us into a political human being through co-existence. Through co-appearance. This space was defined by Arendt as the ‘space of co-appearance’<sup>2</sup>. We will start on the reverse side of things though, not by looking at the spaces of appearance in our contemporary space, but by understanding their targeted elimination. Once the public space itself, this space of co-appearance that we seek has turned into a tool, designed to manipulate, to control; turned into a tool of compliance. If the public space of appearance is meant to emancipate us from an atomized existence, the space of appearance now is only meant to make the undeniable truth of public space dictation appear, the spectacle. It’s not meant to be the arena of confrontation but rather the anesthetic to make you numb, to make critique and confrontation with the perceived and sub-sensory experiences of space, obsolete.

‘The borders between us’ is a critical, architectural, political and philosophical attempt to understand how space dictation by numerous forces (ideological, practical, political, metaphysical) eliminate this ‘political act of confrontation’, what happens in this process of elimination and how we, as human beings, are affected by these dictations of spatial agency and design. It is also an attempt to recover confrontation as a political act – through spatial rapture and appropriation.

After the critique of public space and the lack of ‘spaces of co-appearance’ we move onto looking into the private, with heavy insight on the house and its extensions. How does private space dictate our subjectivity and the way we appropriate space? Does it also use the same initiatives as public space following a political springboard? Does it manifest this initiatives in a different way? When does the ‘border’ come into play?

This research is also an attempt to recover confrontation as a political act – through spatial rapture and appropriation. Heavily influenced from Gordon Matta Clark’s interventions, we lastly move into two case studies, one in Ghent and one in Bruxelles, with the one in Bruxelles getting a bit more ‘spotlight’ since it does answer to the Neoliberal architectural praxis more, being a/the metropolis. In these case studies borders get examined, and cuts are being proposed, starting from public borders, moving into more private ones.



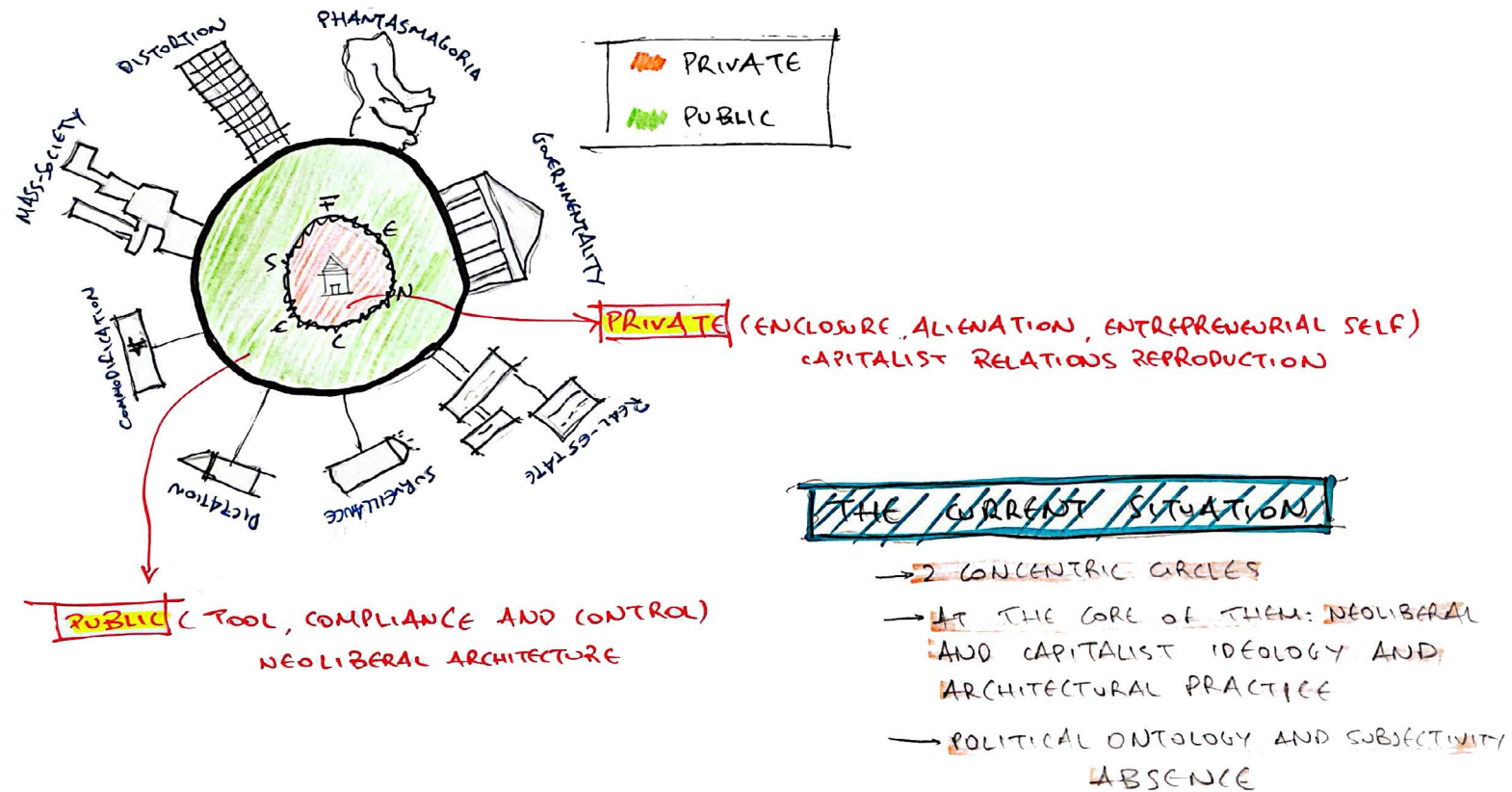
*Public space as confrontation, Athens 2011, The occupation of Syntagma square*

1 Arendt Hannah, Introduction into Politics, Schocken Books, 2005-first published in 1993, p.93

2 Arendt Hannah, The Human Condition, The University of Chicago Press, 2018-first published in 1958, p.198

# CHAPTER I

## Mourning the polis: The loss of confrontational space



The modern, as well as the contemporary polis (a lot of the time), lacks spaces of genuine and political confrontation. Once a practice and a condition of appearing before others, like in Ancient Greece (with all its flaws), the polis as we understand its meaning from the industrial revolution forward, is systematically designed to express the ideologies of the main political and economic regimes of the 20th and 21st centuries, Neoliberalism and capitalism. Both engraved in vague meanings like entrepreneurship, complexity, invisible hand(s), system(s), and so on, the polis of today appears as nothing more than it actually is: a well-polished tool - with its magnificent lights, forms, billboards - designed to manipulate, to awe, to eliminate critique, to eliminate confrontation, to divide, to conquer. The polis then, as suggested by Arendt and experienced by the Ancient Greek meaning, is dead. For us to better understand its 'death', and imagine the potentiality of a rebirth, we need to look closer at its two basic spatial components, the public and the private.

## Axis I: The spectacular public spaces of numbness and enchantment

Neoliberal ideology, revolves around the basic notion that ‘the world is too complex for a human being to understand and act upon and they should focus on self – entrepreneurship and let the organizational methods of the market and individual antagonism sort out the rest’. Following its masters lead, contemporary architectural design begins at the same complexity, which now becomes the design itself, embracing the entrepreneurial subject along the way, which is supposed to self-optimize, self-care, self-actualize. What spawns out of this spatial design rhetoric, is an urbanity which is no longer a site of collective identification and politicization (after all, if the world is too complex, what’s the point, right?) and has become an environment of individual enchantment and affective consumption.

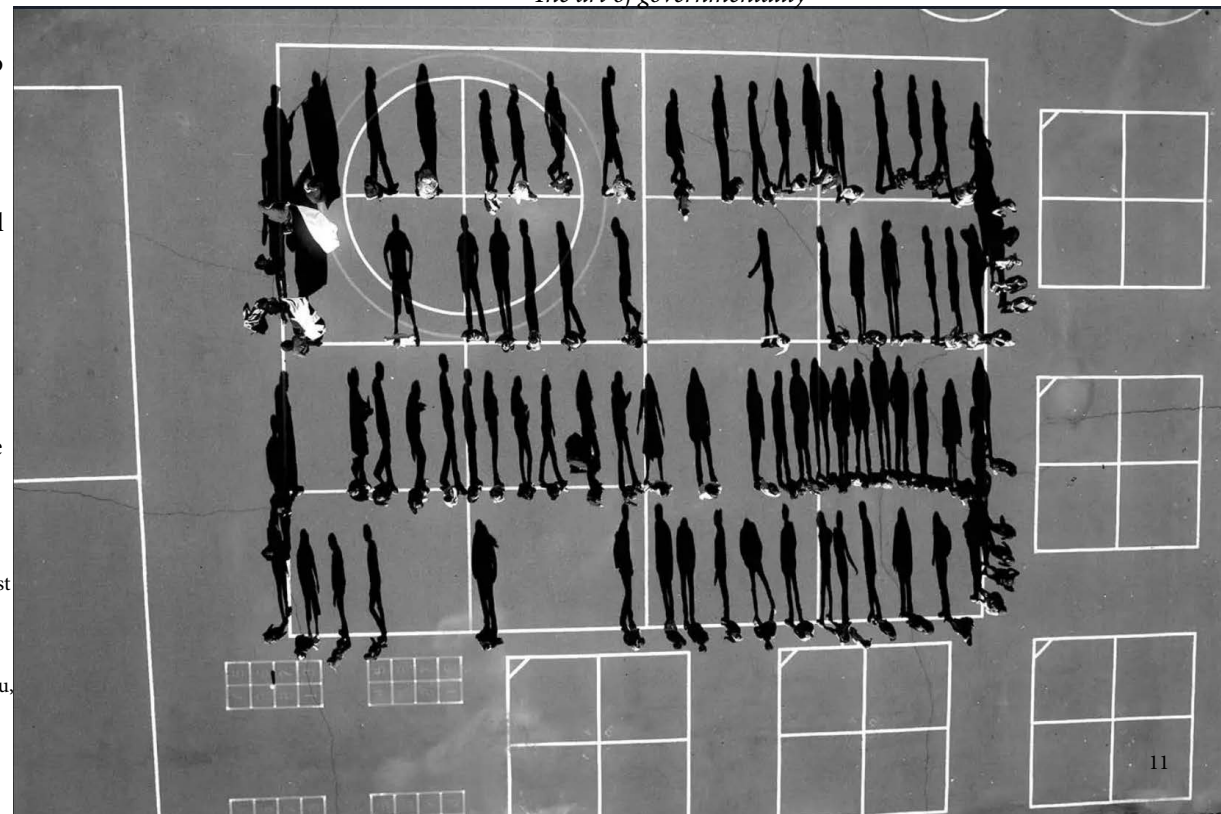
Public space thus, becomes an enchanted spectacle – a commodified experience designed to distract, not an enabler of politicization; designed to create numbness, not promote critique as a fundamental aspect of human existence, similar to the way Kant described it in ‘Critique of Pure Reason’<sup>1</sup>. For Kant, critique is not merely a negative, restrictive endeavor but an essential ‘tribunal’ that establishes the limits and possibilities of human understanding. As Guy Debord described it in his ‘Society of the spectacle’, public space becomes an image to replace reality, and public life, engulfed by the image itself, becomes a public performance, optimized by the neoliberal and capitalist policies, institutions and ideologies of today<sup>2</sup>. Our relationships with each other are no longer direct, but are mediated through representations, advertisements, architectural symbols, consumer culture.

The image of today’s public space is a representation itself. Its ultimate aim, is a manipulation of the subjectivity of the human, aimed to work on the sub-sensory level of existence. “*What appears is good; what is good appears*”<sup>3</sup>. What appears is phantasmagoria, the spectacle. As Baudrillard described it, the ‘sign’<sup>4</sup>. Whether in the form of dazzling malls, polished parks, glossy condo towers, or ‘placemaking’ projects, the spatial condition of today manages perception itself. Reflecting on the quote we used earlier, and introducing another one from Ranciere, saying that “*Politics is about what can be seen and said about space, in a specific time*”<sup>5</sup>, we can understand that public space is censored visually and rhetorically. You can’t understand anything of it because

of its complexity, its ‘depthlessness’<sup>6</sup> as Jameson described it, and you can say nothing of it through its enchantment and produced awe in the eye of the beholder. Architecture itself thus becomes a censoring, affect machine.

6 Jameson Fredric, Postmodernism, or, The cultural Logic of late Capitalism, Duke University Press, 1991

*The art of governmentality*



1 Kant Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, first published in 1781  
2 Debord Guy, Society of the Spectacle, greek trans. Yorgos-Ikaros Babasakis Metechmio, 2016-first published in 1967,  
3 Debord Guy, 1967, p.19  
4 Baudrillard Jean, Simulacra and Simulation, Galilee, first published in 1981  
5 Ranciere Jacques, The Division of the Sensible, greek trans. Theodoros Paradellis Eikostou Protou, 2012-first published in 2000, p.17

## Axis II: The enclosed private - House as a factory, border as fetish

The same spirit of entrepreneurial architecture follows the private sphere as well. The strict binary polarity between the private and the public is not natural – it is a modern ideological construction. And yet in this irrefutable and – almost – indisputable polarity, the architectural axis, festered by its political and economic origin from industrial revolution onwards (Neoliberalism and Capitalism) follows the same schema of design.

From spectacle to aestheticized space, from enchantment to alienation, from eliminating critique to control and compliance, the design principles of the private are the same as the public, only here their material formations and manifestations differ. Both extremes – hyper-spectacular public spaces and hyper-curated private spaces - are different expressions of the same neoliberal aesthetic ideology: your value is in consumption and not contestation. The name of the game is the alienation of the individual. And here in the private it happens through multiple ways. The first one to mention is how the house works as an optimizing machine of the entrepreneurial worker. Historically the most important commodity of capitalism was (and is) working ‘hands’. Through the split of private and public, domestic labour is rendered invisible. As Federici says, what is private is often what capitalism wants to keep unaccounted for<sup>1</sup>. In her theory, it’s the notion that the split between private and public follows the binary gender split and how the worker as a man, being more ‘efficient’ needs the house as the preparation for his working duty, and that gets done by the unpaid labour that women go through in the private. To quote Federici, “. . . *they call it love, we call it unpaid labour*”<sup>2</sup>. So we see how the house operates as a factory, a well-oiled machine, designed to produce the worker, self-optimized, isolated, antagonistic, alienated. All the ‘qualities’ capitalism and neoliberalism advocate, the same exact ‘qualities’ they look for in public space. This schema aims again at the elimination of critique, but here it becomes even more prominent how the elimination of critique is a method of controlling the masses and dispersing them to individuation so they can never acquire the solidarity value that’s ‘owed’ to them, as co-existing beings, the merging of a communal and social body that can actually imagine and experience a different future for themselves.

If space reproduces social relations, then the reproduction of the social relations that take place in the house are not ones of solidarity, empathy, mutual-aid, but rather of alienation, individuation, self-optimization and ultimately capitalist and neoliberal in their roots. Crucial to the architectural manifestation of those ideologies is a very mundane and almost banal object, the **border** (as in fence, wall, boundary etc.). The border is the main point of focus in this project. It’s first assigned ‘job’ is to make the polarity between private and public materialized. Even if we follow the ancient Greek example

of the public and the private, a polarity in itself as the house was viewed as a necessity and the public was the amalgam of life, there always existed intermediary spaces like the Agora, the Stoa and so on. But with the border, the private, with its Neoliberal and capitalist meaning now gets extended to the outside, it acquires more space than its actual walls.

This ideology gets extended to the backyard and or the courtyard. The atomized individual learns to appropriate space through ownership. ‘What is mine is mine’, and what I hold dearest to me is my (entrepreneurial) self. This is the spectacle manifestation of the border. If we acknowledge that the spectacle is not simply what you see, it’s how subjectivity is organized, subconsciously or unconsciously, so that critique becomes harder, or even obsolete, we can start critiquing the border as a ‘micro’ spectacle. Here we say micro, in comparison to the dazzling spectacle that exists – or is – public space.

Borders are often read as banal and neutral, a purely pragmatic demarcation of property, but precisely because they are so unremarkable they enact a micro-spectacle of order. The border is a mediator for what is yours and what is mine, or in other words the separation between us as something natural. The border turns the backyard into a commodity. It’s about producing the subject that consents to enclosure. In other words it governs us, by subtly instructing us. So we see how the polarity then is not only a legal or spatial distinction, it’s a phenomenological experience like the spectacle in Baudrillard’s and Debord’s sense.

Following Ranciere’s use of the Plato analogy, that writing and speech are equivalent surfaces of silent points that lack the impetus of live speech<sup>3</sup>, borders as flat surfaces don’t juxtapose the depth in the three-dimensional sense, they juxtapose the ‘alive’ of merging. The border becomes a written rule, a mute command: ‘You do not belong here!’ But with its natural appearance and neutrality, the border also becomes fetishized in the Marxian sense of the ‘fetishism of commodity’<sup>4</sup>. The border is a fetish object. It disguises its true function (upholding privatized capitalist social reproduction) and appears as a simple commodity of personal security or lifestyle enchantment, exactly in the Marxian sense that commodity is not just an object with, use and monetary value, but a social relation between people, mediated through things. The border thus becomes the symbol of alienation and atomization in the private. It separates private from private. It shields the reproduction of labour from critique, both by enclosing the

1 Federici Sylvia, Patriarchy of the Wage, PM Press, 2021, p.8

2 Federici Sylvia, 2021, p. 17

3 Ranciere Jacques, The Division of the Sensible, greek trans. Theodoros Paradellis Eikostou Protou, 2012-first published in 2000, p.23

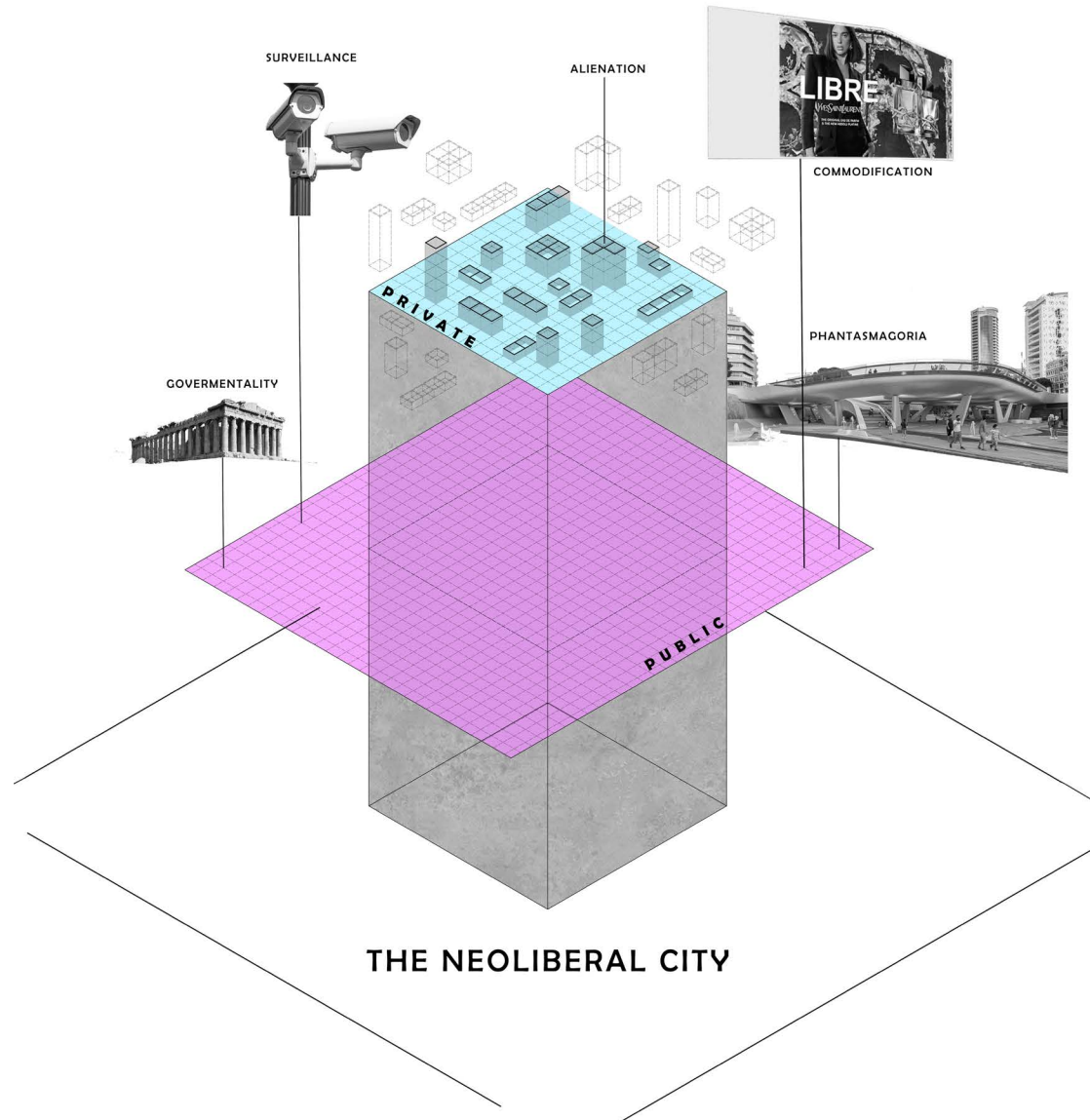
4 Marx Karl, Capital Vol.I, first published 1867, Part 1: Commodities and Money, Chapter 1: Commodities / Section 4: The fetishism of Commodities

reproduction itself in the private, making it less or non-visible from the outside, but also in a more subconscious and unconscious sense, forming an atomized subjectivity, making us not really care about what's on the other side. It fetishizes enclosure. It prevents merging. It operates in the subconscious and unconscious, molding subjectivity into its representations.

So the border here takes the form not only of the three dimensional space but as the fourth wall in the cinema: one that doesn't only block bodies, but conditions perception. It's a phenomenological surface that dictates how we relate to space without our existing awareness. It's not just what the border separates; it's what it makes us not see. So in the built environment the border is also the 4th wall, a surface that flattens life by appearing silent, blank – yet which performs an active, ideologically loaded role in the staging of modern alienation. And like in cinema, the question that follows is: What happens when we break it?



*Private space as a factory, Labour power breeding*





## Rethinking the border: From blockade to threshold

So we see how the border is the symbol of today's alienated society. But an important question arises. Can the symbol of alienation itself, the border, be 'hacked' into a tool for political reconnection? Can the very structure of enclosure be appropriated? The practical notion to do this, this project suggests, is 'breaking the border'. Breaking not only its material form, but its symbolisms, its phenomenological and ontological existence. Before we talk about how we suggest we would do this, it's important to understand that this move would be a question. Can we understand, through a/the void, what a border actually is and represents, through its opening? Can we see what 'wasn't there'? And, can we imagine a different space through a different type of appropriation.

Imagination always has a future connotation. If it's change we are imagining, then capitalist urbanism already has an answer for us: social change is something that happens later, elsewhere. We needn't think about it since we won't experience it. As a counter to that we bring forth the idea and practice of prefigurative politics. By definition, prefigurative politics means enacting the social relations, decision-making processes and forms of solidarity we want to see in the future, right now. It originates from radical movements like the 'Occupy wall street', the Zapatistas movement, the assemblies that took place in Buenos Aires in Argentina after the economic meltdown, movements that rejected the idea that 'the ends justify the means'. They insisted that, the means themselves are part of building the ends, that you practice social change in small-scale experiments. That, you inhabit a space differently as a form of embodied critique.

Following Stavrides's argumentation on this, space has exactly this quality. It simultaneously represents, materializes and enables alternative social relations<sup>1</sup>. So here what we want to do is break borders, break the alienation that stands in our way of societal and communal emancipation and use the practice of prefiguration in order to experience what we imagine and want, in these newly formulated arenas of contestation. When, even the idea of the border is removed from the human consciousness, there arises a new space, a new social relation that veers off from exclusion and onto integration, onto solidarity. Enter Commoning.

When borders are removed and backyards merge into common spaces, the space itself prefigures a commons, and people can perform the potentiality, rather than just talk about it. When we break borders we don't merely create more 'public' space in the administrative sense, we create spaces of encounter, conflict and mutual recognition; spaces for collective action. This marks the move from the abstract of society, a constitutional infinity in which we only exist as a number, whether that number would be our age, income, tax number, to the community relational, a relational based on

political existence, visibility, proximity, responsibility and negotiation. Now we can experience the true political act, the way Arendt described it. Why we suggest this radical spatial interruption and intervention, this creation of a semi-public space, is also, because of scale.

In the political making of the self, scale matters. In the current situation jumping from the enclosed private to the mass public is scary. So scary, that people just exercise their given 'political right' of an anonymous vote in a ballot every 4-5 years. In these intermediary spaces you can practice recognition, trust and confidence through Commoning. What we suggesting is scaled down spaces of rehearsal that actually provide a reality in themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Stavrides Stavros, *Common Space: The City as Commons*, greek trans. Dimosthenis Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos, Angelos Novus, 2018-first published in 2018

## The minimum cut: Suggestion, not solution

Let's bring forth again the allegory of the 4th wall in cinema. In cinema, to break the 4th wall is to pierce the illusion – to return the gaze, to acknowledge the artifice, to collapse the divide between spectator and scene. This project proposes a spatial equivalent: the minimum cut. A deliberate rupture. A breach in the surface. A hole in the border. Not a demolition, but an incision. As Matta-Clark taught us, “A *minimum cut that produces maximum confusion of space*”. But here confusion is not chaos. It is possibility. It is the moment the spectacle fails to cohere and space begins to speak again. The border, once the 4th wall, ‘folds’. Suddenly the 4th wall is not the border. It's us. The encounter, the gaze returned. The shared threshold. In the ‘crack’, confrontation is not conflict – it is recognition. It is Commoning. A hole in the border is not a solution. It is a question. Another person who used the incision, the void, the porous, as a question was Gordon Matta-Clark himself. He introduced the idea of Anarchitecture.

A word yet to be defined, as he refused to define it, precisely because its purpose, was not to supply a blueprint. It worked as a radical moment of rupture in the spatial condition of its time. It questioned the viewer, “What do you see”? Lefebvre describes these ‘moments’ as brief interruptions in the repetitive and controlled structures of everyday life<sup>1</sup>. Following the same route, our notion of the minimum cut is just a suggestion, it is not design imposition. What we suggest with the hole in the border, the minimum cut, is a spatial rupture in the logic of enclosure. It punctures the simulation of natural separation. It triggers a moment of cognitive and perceptual dissonance. Why is this open? Who can cross? What does it mean? What happens after this breakpoint and question, how we experience this void, what we do with it and how this threshold can formulate new types of spatial and communal relations, is solely up to the inhabitants. Maybe this break in the spectacle makes room for what Jameson called ‘cognitive mapping’<sup>2</sup>.

This is a very important part of this project, the one that banishes the architectural ego of the designer as god, and only makes an inquiry for the people to try it out. If it is the ego of the architect that is encapsulated in the form, and if we agree that the form is problematic, it is the abolishment of that ego that can enable us to break the form and try something different. As we understood earlier, authoritative power – whether that comes from the architect, the politics or economics – plays a key role in the subjectivization of the individual. If we want to alter that, we need to redistribute power back to the people to decide for themselves, the freedom to try out new forms of social relations through space.

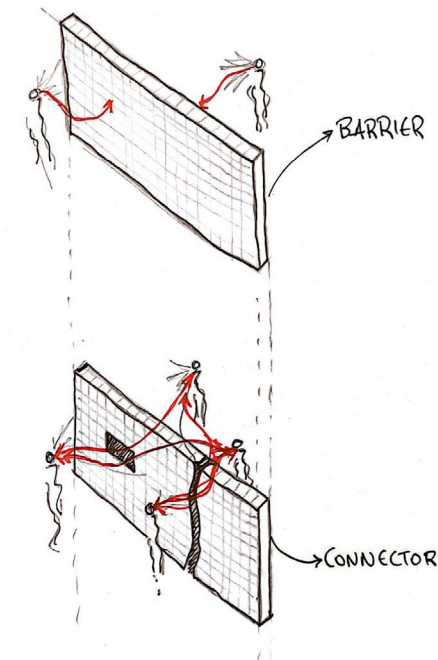
This then is an invitation. An invitation to Commoning measures. An invitation to community. Not an instruction or an imposition. In resisting the despotism of the

1 Lefebvre Henri, Critique of Everyday Life, trans. John Moore, Verso, 1991-first published in 1947

2 Jameson Fredric, Postmodernism, or, The cultural Logic of late Capitalism, Duke University Press, 1991

architect, this project aligns with John Turner's advocacy for autonomy in housing. Turner argued that when residents themselves are the authors of their environment, the resulting spaces more genuinely reflect social needs and aspirations, fostering well-being and collective agency<sup>3</sup>. Fostering commoning and different types of relationality, fostering a potentiality that seems to be so out of grasp with the predominant usages of contemporary space.

3 Turner John, Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments, Pantheon Books, 1977, p.140-160



Gordon Matta Clark



*“Undoing is as much a democratic right as doing”, Gordon Matta Clark*



AN ARK KIT PUNCTURE    A KNEECAP FRACTURE    AN ACUPUNCTURE  
 AN ARCHITECTURE    IN ARCHITECTURE    AN ASTRAL VECTOR  
 ANARCHY TORTURE    ON ARCHITECTURE    AN AUSTRAL UNDER  
 AN ARTIC LECTURE    AN ATTIC TORTURE    A VECTOR TASTER  
 ATLANTIS LECTURE    AN ARTIC VECTOR    A NARCO TRADER  
 AN ORCHID TEXTURE    AN ART KIT TORTURE    AN ASSTRAL FACTOR  
 ANT LEGISLATOR    ANARCHY THUNDER    A FILLI DUSTER  
 ANARCHY LECTURE    A LETTUCE TEXTURE    A FULLER BRUSHMAN  
 AN ART COLLECTOR    AN ART DEFECTOR    AN AUSTRAL BUSHMAN  
 AUNT ARTK TORTURE    AN ASS REFLECTOR    AN ARTIC TRACTOR  
 AN AIRKEY TACKLE    AN AIRKEY TACTILE    AN AIRKEY TICKLE

ANARCHITECTURE  
AN ARCHITECTURE  
ANARCHI TECTURE

A KIND OF SPINNING-SPIRALLING EFFECT  
UNDOING OF TRADITIONAL THINKING OF ARCHITECTURE  
ARCHITECTURE BECOMING SOMETHING OTHER - SOMETHING OTHER BECOMING ARCHITECTURE  
TROUBLING OF SOMETHING THOUGHT TO BE CLEAR  
WHAT IS ANARCHITECTURE?  
A MULTIPLIER  
A QUESTION THAT MOBILIZES DEBATE

**A HOLE THAT MOBILIZES COMMONING**

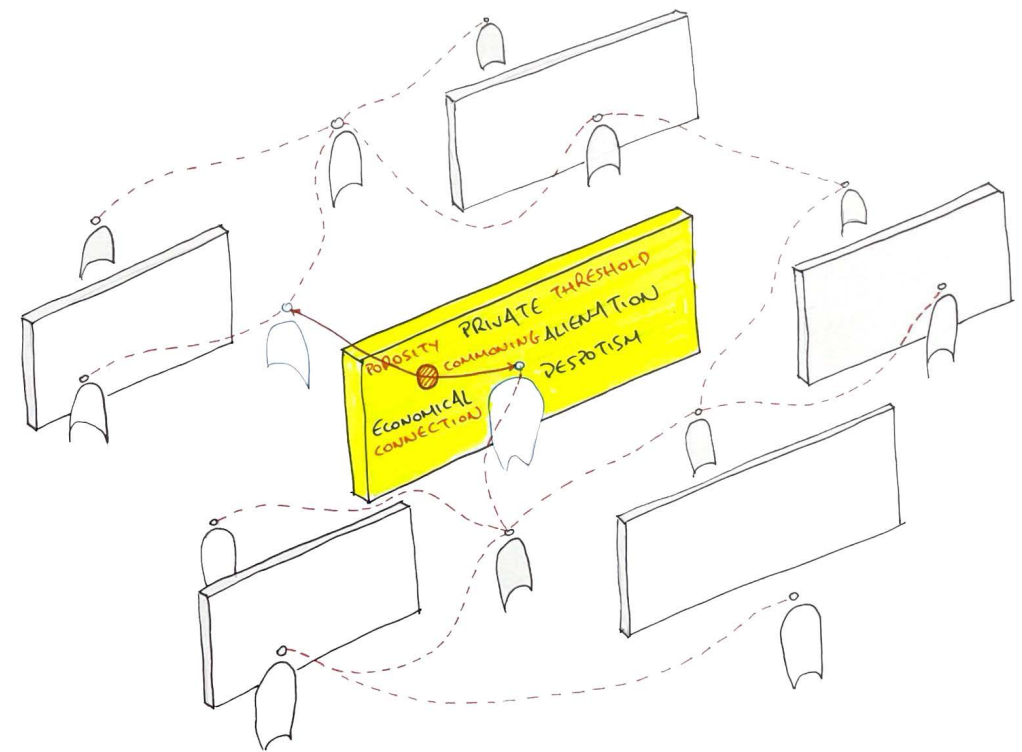
*“We are all prisoners cause we believe the houses around us contain us”, Gordon Matta Clark*

## Diagrams of Possibility: Thresholds, voids and scales of Commoning

It's really important to talk about how we potentialize creating new arenas for Commoning on a collective scale, and how this endeavor has the capacity to break the indisputable polarity between public and private, and social and communal. A new addition to the scale of the city, which ultimately can prefigure and potentialize a new way of living in relation to others, and to ourselves. What the diagrams 'speak' about is understanding the section between how architecture and the authoritative architectural subject operate, and what we propose: the idea of the suggestive threshold. A porous where nothing is predetermined, which works first and foremost as a question. Then the question expands to 'Where do we go from here?'

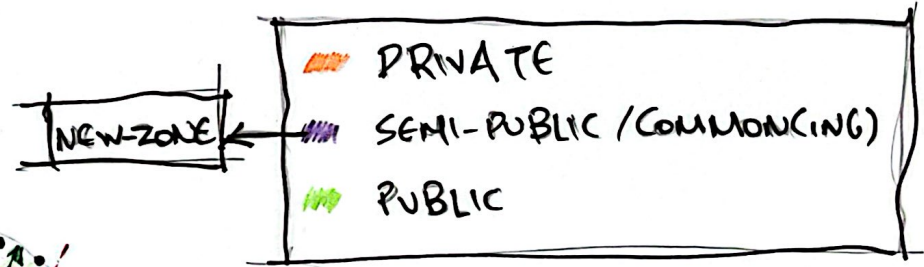
This question is an invitation to think, to act (politically), to appropriate. A hole in the border is a question that demands a different answer than the one the system supplies. There are no potentialities in voids for the system. There's only opportunity to fill in the 'gaps'. A border is a non-responsive surface. It says 'NO!' without explanation. It blocks rather than mediates. It allows no dialogue, no ambiguity, no negotiation, no suggestion. In Rancierian terms, it fixes the 'sensible order'<sup>1</sup> – what belongs to whom, who may appear where, and who may not. In contrast, a hole in the border – or a suggestive threshold that invites ambiguity, porosity, or friction – functions not as a mute surface, like we mentioned earlier, but as a live edge. It is not yet decided, not yet claimed. It can become a site of confrontation, negotiation, and relation – what Arendt would call the space of appearance and what Stavrides would call a platform for Commoning<sup>2</sup>.

This proposition is an act of *Détournement* – the one that derives from the Situationists – a practice of hijacking or subverting existing (cultural) forms to create new meaning. The border itself gets hijacked. Not torn down, but cut. The cut itself is not a (grand) design – it's minimal, uncertain and suggestive. This uncertainty is its power: it invites users to reimagine what is possible to see, say and act upon. To see the 'everyday' as a site of political potential.



1 Ranciere Jacques, *The Division of the Sensible*, greek trans. Theodoros Paradellis Eikostou Protou, 2012-first published in 2000, p.29

2 Stavrides Stavros, *Common Space: The City as Commons*, greek trans, Dimosthenis Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos, Angelos Novus, 2018-first published in 2018



**PUBLIC:** BREAKS ITS  
 SECLUSION BY RUNNING  
 BACK IN WITH SEMI-  
 PUBLIC - SPREADING  
 IN IT.

**SEMI-PUBLIC:** WITH PRIVATE BREAKING  
 FREE AND COMMONING STARTING, A  
 NEW 'ARENA' IS FORMULATING, THE  
 ARENA OF TRUE POLITICAL EXISTE-  
 NCE, THE ARENA OF CONFRONTATIO

**PRIVATE:** WITH "BREAKING FENCES"  
 THE PRIVATE BREAKS FREE OF ITS  
 ENCLOSURE - COMMONING STARTS  
 TO HAPPEN

**THE POTENTIALIZED PREFIGURED**

- THREE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES
- EACH ONE WITH NO 'SOLID' BOUNDARIES
- AT THE CORE POTENTIALITY, PREFIGURATION, CONFRONTATION, SOLIDARITY, COMMUNITY
- POLITICAL EXISTENCE INTO PLAY

# ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

**AUTHORITATIVE SUBJECT**

Space as commodity / product	Space as process / invitation
Architect as central expert	Architect as enabler / question - poser
Form predetermined	Form open-ended / incomplete
Users as passive recipients	Users as co - active producers
Enclosure and meaning of use	Openess to appropriation and reinvention
Reinfroces alienation and hierarchy	Fosters community and commoning
<p><b>ARCHITECT</b></p> <p>Closed form</p> <p>Commodity</p> <p>Passive user</p> <p>Closed outcome</p>	<p><b>ARCHITECT</b></p> <p>Minimal cut</p> <p>Invitation</p> <p>Active user</p> <p>Emergent commons</p>

**SUGGESTIVE THRESHOLD**

## Case studies: Ghent and Bruxelles

### Ghent, Belgium

This project has been initiated in Ghent as a case study of trying to understand how all these would apply to the real environment. The area of interest was selected as a neighborhood with communal capacities since there is no grand scale buildings or usages that would interfere with the idea of an altered space appropriation. We have a mostly, housing neighborhood. The added quality in this is that the borders or backyards are prominent as the dividers we are describing, since for example here the people know each other at least on the neighboring scale and yet the borders are in place. The paradox of ownership and alienation vs shared space and appellation exists strong. Also this is a neighborhood of many cultural and societal differences since we can find people of all ages and cultures here, which would make the attempt of re-appropriating space with a communal value in its core of action dossier, albeit harder since the different cultures and ways of inhabiting make shared space a need to develop care, understanding and accepting the difference, respecting difference, and letting it flourish.

The first move was to analyze the area of interest. Understand its built and non-built environment through sketches, maps, images, texts and by talking to the people of the area (i got invited in their community assembly). Also important is to understand the neighborhood habits and the way people 'use' space. Do they have communal activities? Do they have shared space? Are there activities that take place in the public? Are there initiatives that break the duality of private-public and feel private and public at the same time? Gathering all this information is important not only to define a first line of axis but most importantly to understand that each place, since there's people involved is unique, cause people are unique. Turning down the idea of uniformal architecture, of modules to be applied in the same way on different location and understanding that spatial interventions are only meant for a specific place and time.



**PROBLEMATICS**

- Houses rotate on the inside
- Is wall for safety depending on the state of the landscape?
- Do collective sit around
- What many usages/activities around

**BORDERS**

Does it work? **WHERE?** **Do we live it?** (How) could we change it?



**CEMETERY**

**COMMUNITY HOSTEL**

**FARMER'S MARKET**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Allow car movement
- Joined buildings
- Open environment
- Without activities
- Different cultures / social backgrounds

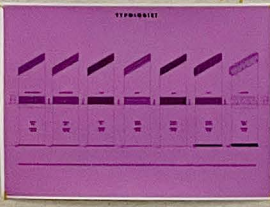
RELATIONS: HUMAN - HUMAN AND HUMAN - ENVIRONMENT

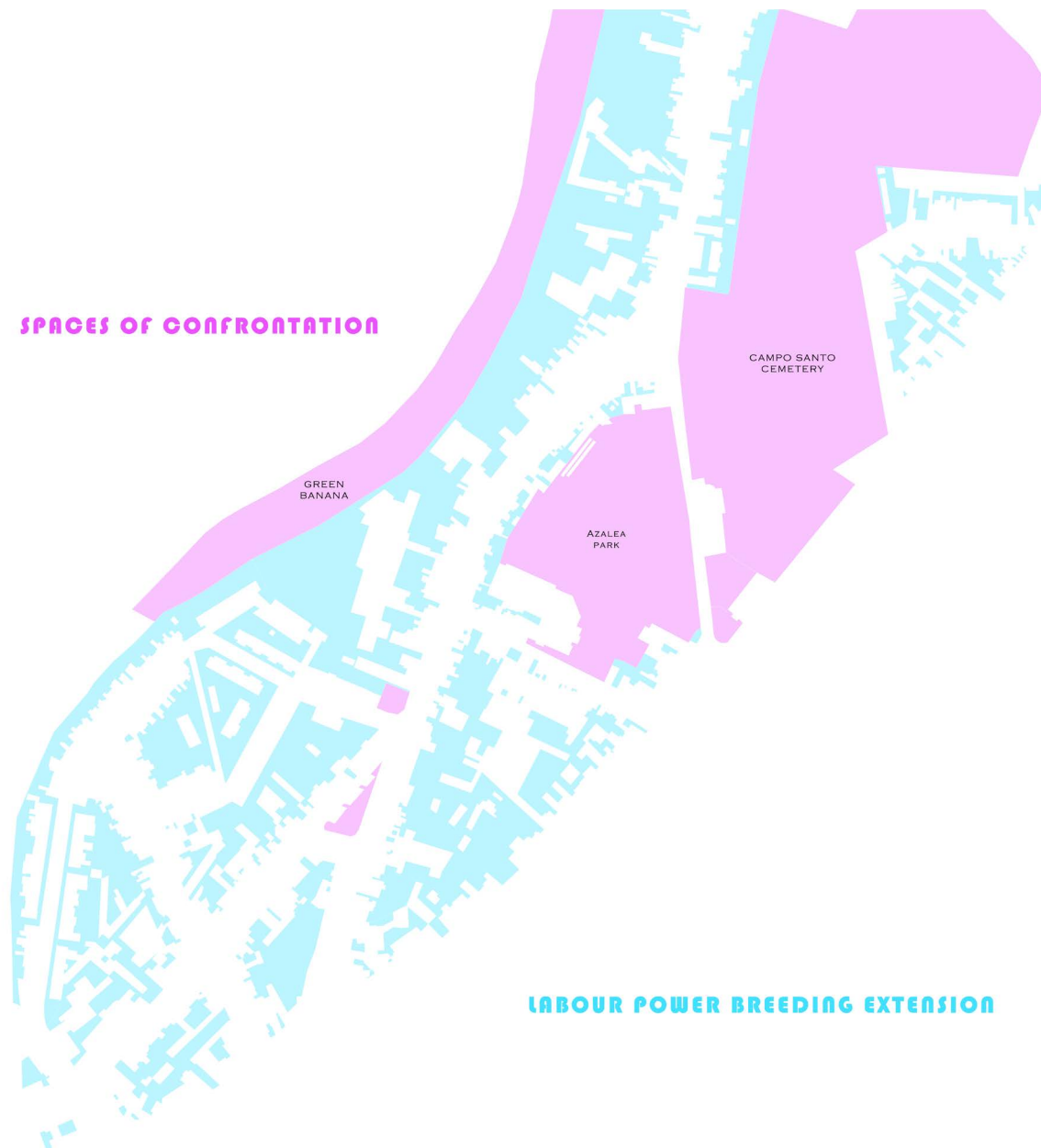
Diagram of designing for the common

IMPORTANT NOTES

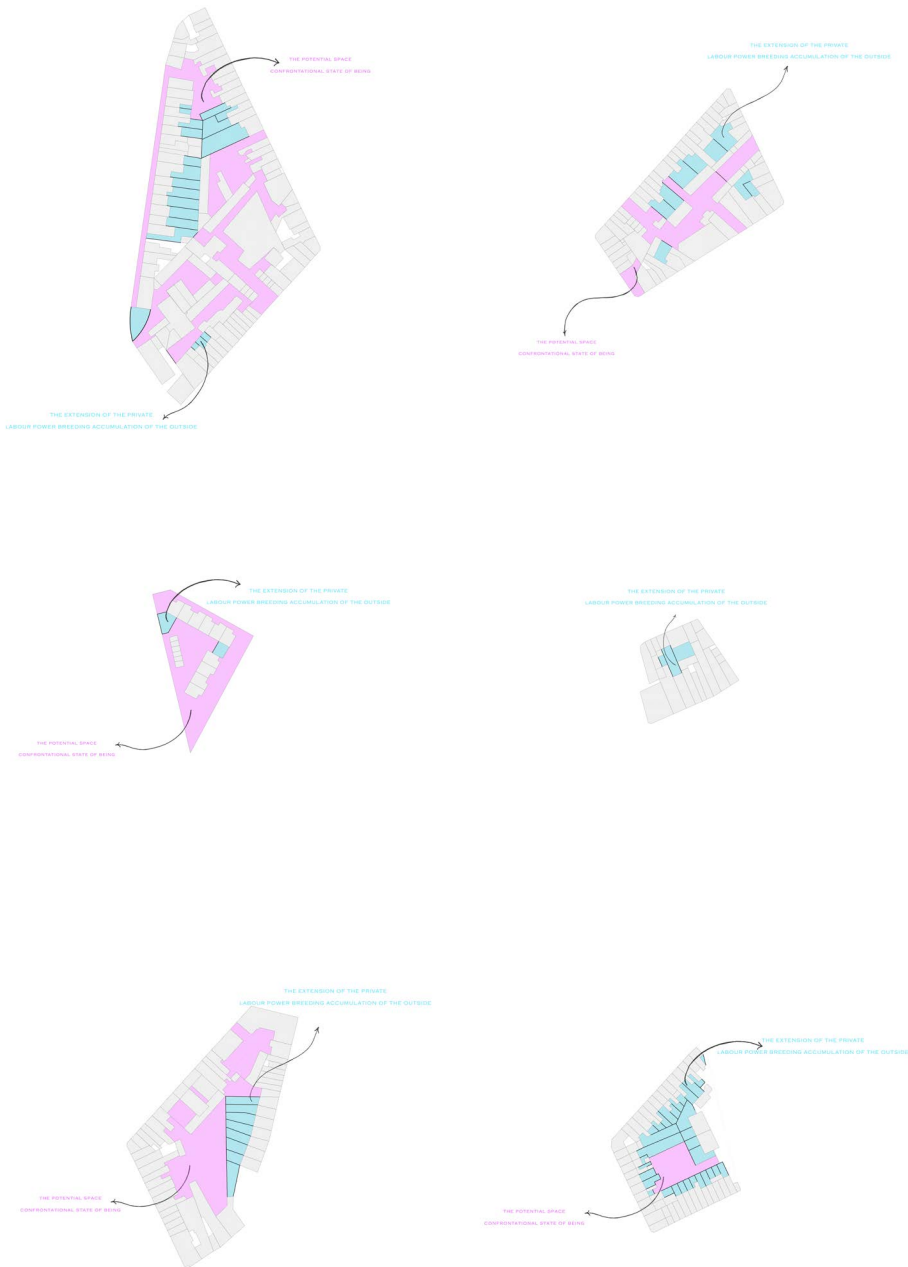
Diagram of designing for the common

IMPORTANT NOTES





Important in this process became the maps of 'labour power breeding' and 'spaces of confrontation'. These give us an indication of the potentialities of the scaled arenas we are proposing and also how they (would) correlate to the already existing, if any, spaces of confrontation. Cause the idea is one of continuation: from the private to the semi-public to the public, all in constant flow, all borderless, all blending with each other.

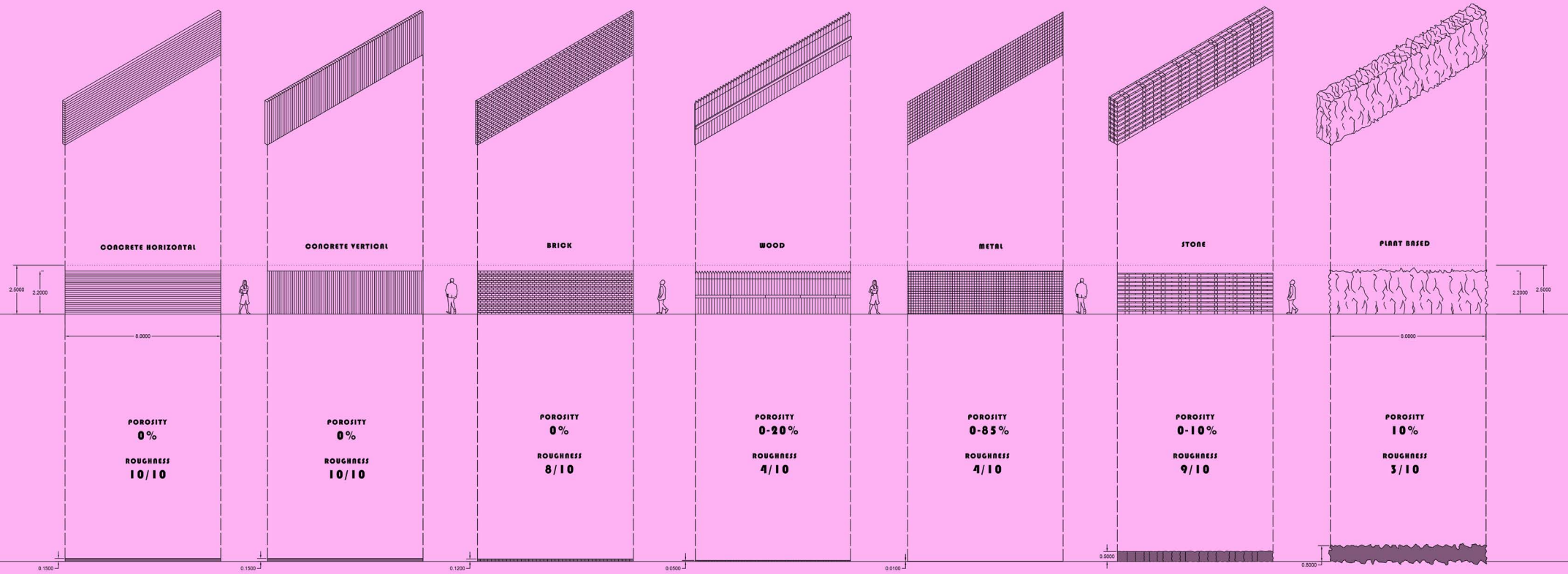


**E  
X  
A  
M  
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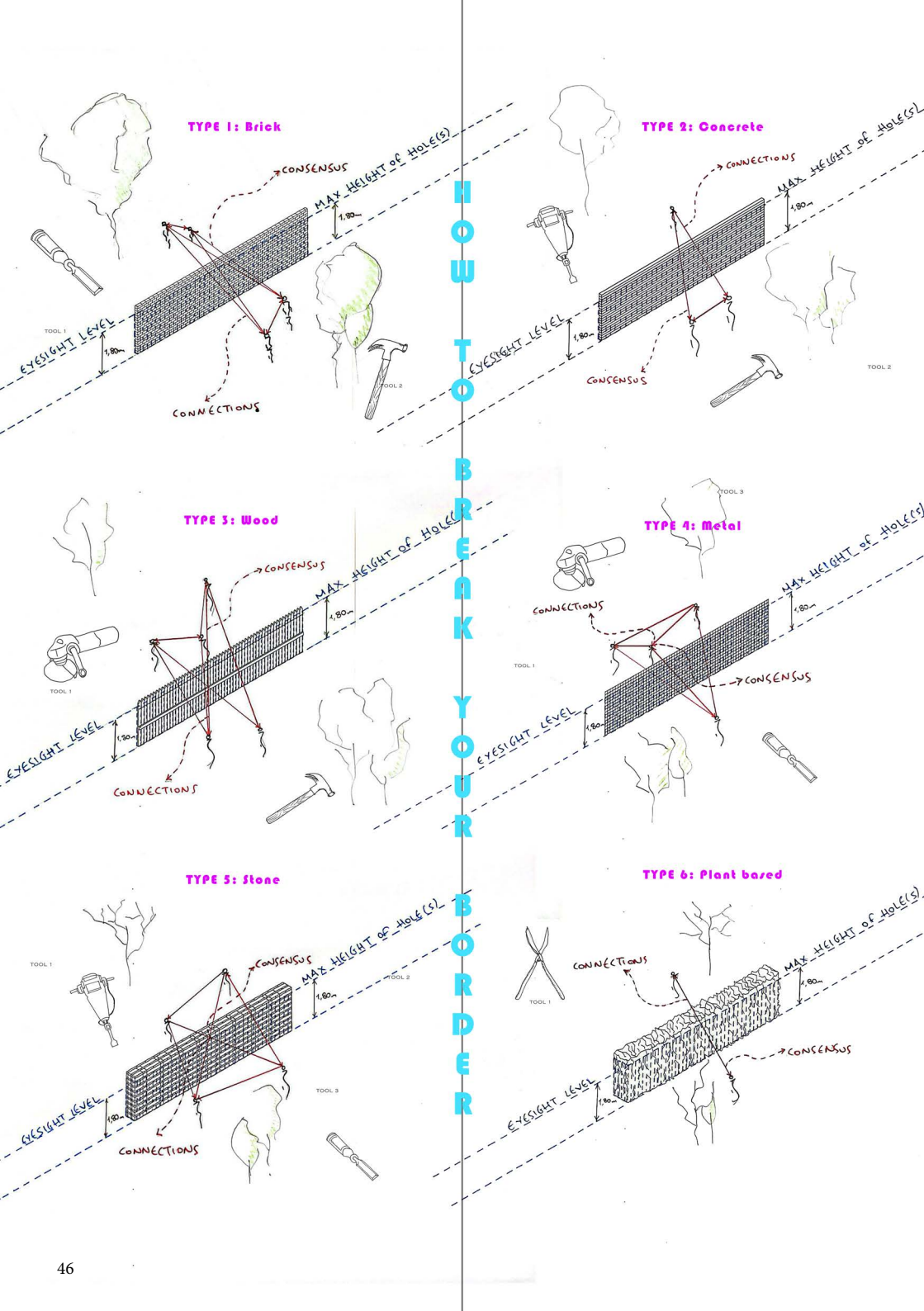


Then we have the example of applying the cut we are proposing on a border (in this case a fence). This is defined by moves we need to make.

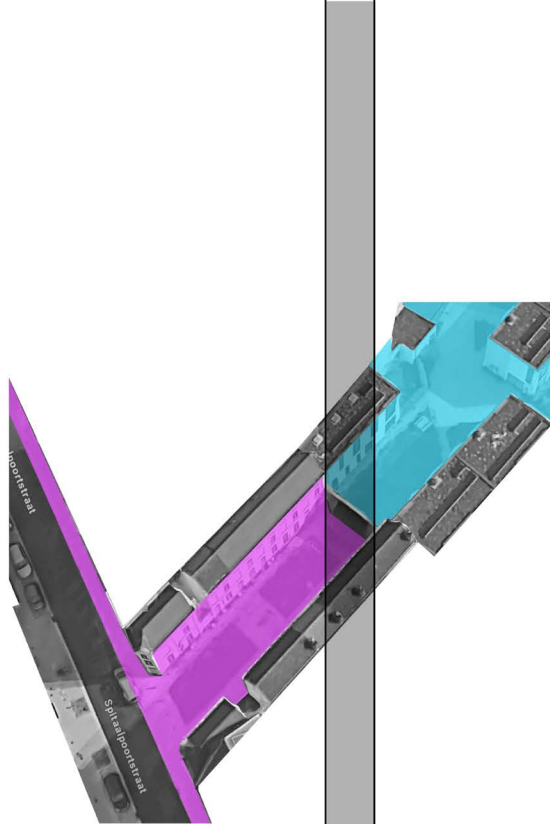
# T TYPOLOGIES



First move we need to make is map out the borders themselves in the area of interest. By doing so, we understand the materiality of them, how hard it would be to open a hole or a creek in them, what the already existing porosity levels are.

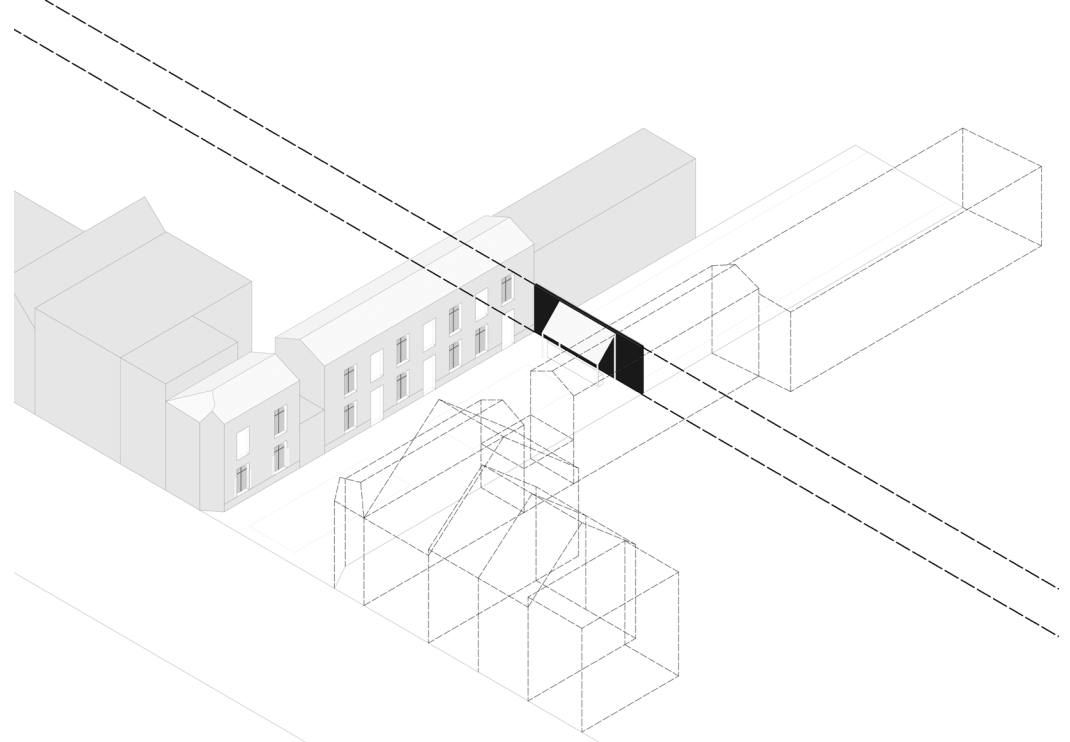


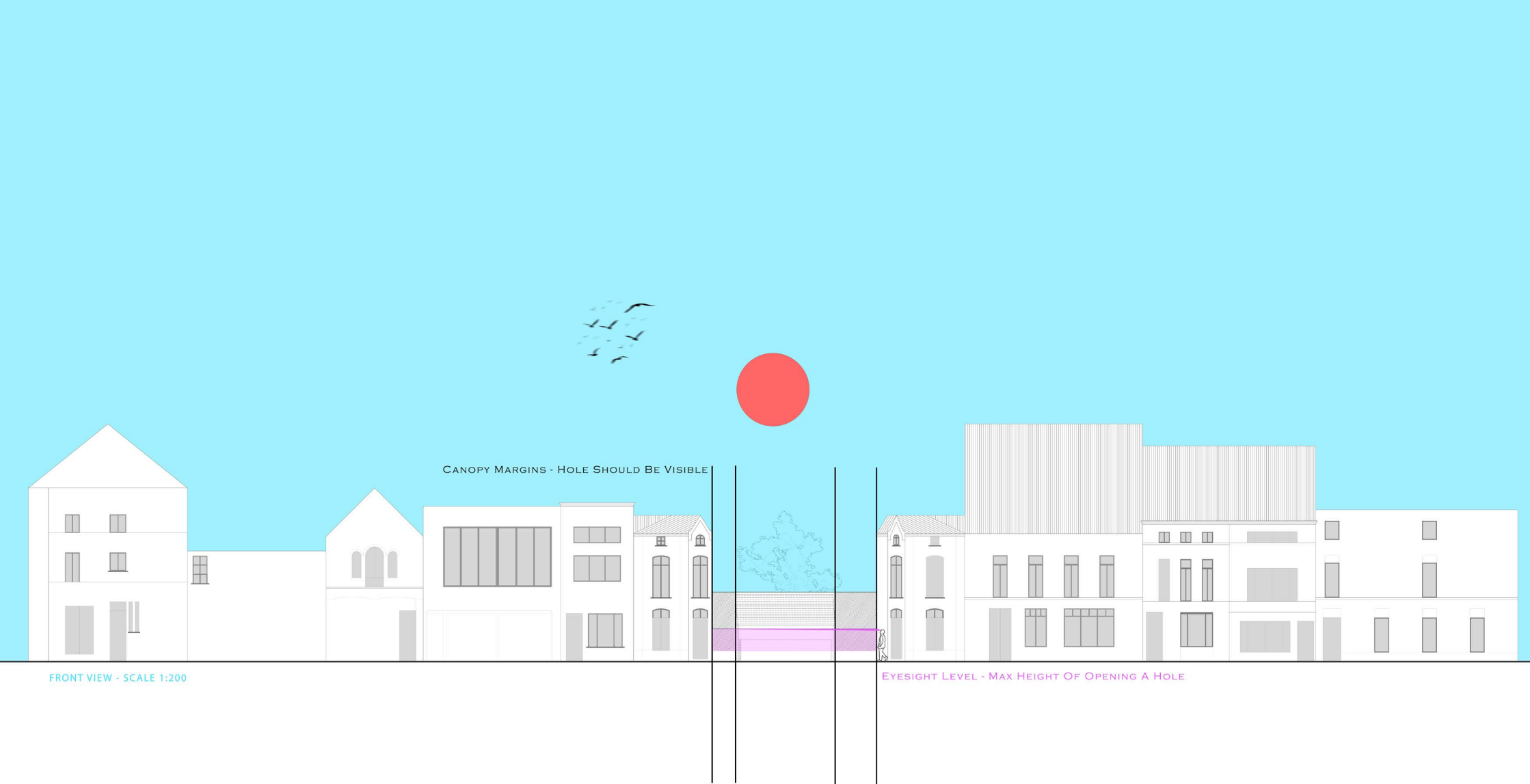
Depending on the type of materiality you'd need the correct tool(s) for the job. The practicality of breaking a hole in a border is easily attainable. The hard part is reaching a consensus to do it. Consensus equals participation. What you always need to bare in mind is that on the opposite side of the fence there's always someone there. What horizontal agreements mean is that you both, through accepting your differences and embracing them can reach an agreement on how to do it, if you want to do it. You should never impose your opinion on others. And it's the exact focus of this project regarding the despotism of architecture as panacea with the correct solutions. This is only a suggestion. True participation is up to you. This is an effort to eliminate the architect's power altogether.



## the **BORDER** in question

Here we have an example of a specific border and how we could try out this initiative of cutting borders. This border was selected because it already is a public border, since its front area goes out in the street. This would help us to make people feel more comfortable with trying this intervention, since they would not feel that their private space gets violated or harassed. The other value of this would be that this intervention, if it would start on a border like this, it would get people curious since they would have access to view and experience from the public space. Since this proposition of an intervention is only a question, it's the curiosity also that would help people to exercise a move like this themselves, skipping the figure of the architect, or viewing them only as a member of the community. They would acquire agency to appropriate their space the way they want.

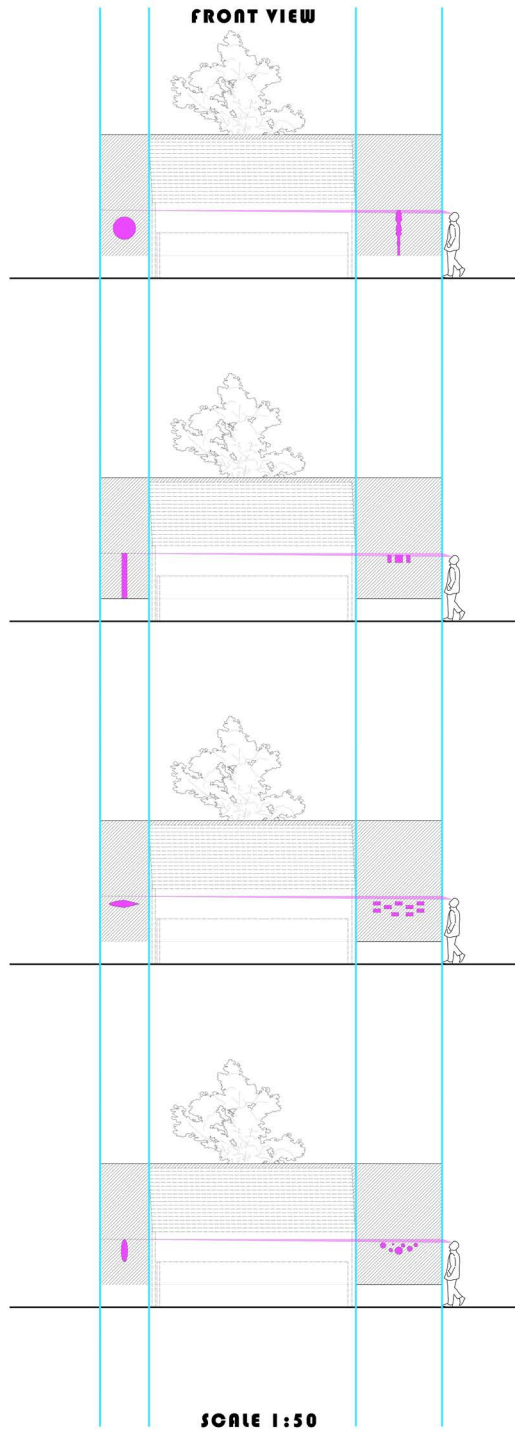




A couple of important notes to mention on this example:

- This particular border has a canopy in the middle. If this intervention is about enhancing the public sentiment and getting people curious about confronting each other it should be as visible as possible. If you make a hole behind the canopy it would be hidden from the public. So opt for the designated zones on each side
- There should be a maximum height of making a hole and that is eyesight level. Anything above that would just work on the aesthetic level and wouldn't serve the purpose this intervention suggests. You need to be able to see the person on the other side.

EXAMPLES OF OPENINGS



SPIRITUAL PORSTRAT

## Bruxelles, Belgium

Bruxelles is going to be the main focus now. A city with an abundance of characteristics that would make it the perfect candidate to try out an initiative like this. A city that subscribes more to the view of the contemporary polis as I described it earlier. Applying our theory to Bruxelles historical urban development we can see that Bruxelles falls in line with a bourgeois ideology of human dictation and control through spatial design.

Further on, for the working classes (workers terraced housing) individual housing was built on narrower plots, but with the same architectural character as the bourgeois housing, offering a reduced version of the referential type deprived of its reception and service functions. This transposition to popular housing reflected the bourgeois desire to dominate the working class by imposing its own way on life through architecture<sup>1</sup>.

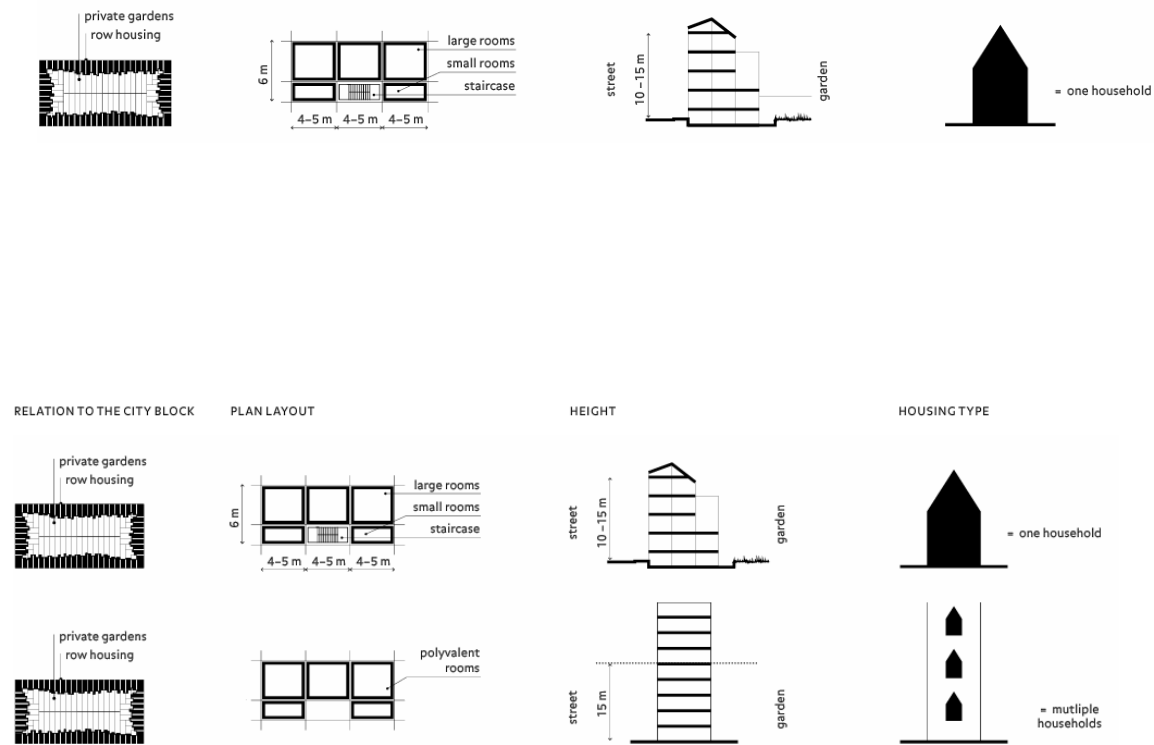
Drawing from the same book, when it talks about the polyvalent interior layout of the housing blocks, there gets mentioned that "... brick party walls that provided privacy from neighbors"<sup>2</sup>. This is another indication of a spatial ideology and design that fosters alienation and manipulating subjectivity to create the entrepreneurial type of existence. The idea here is that privacy is sold as something important for the self, making fear actually dictate our interactions with space and with each other. This is 'class A' ownership. The border marks what is yours and what is mine.

Bruxelles in general acquired through the years an individualistic character which, as you can imagine, was adapted in the urban development of the city. The individual character of the dwellings, emphasizes the individualistic nature of Belgian society<sup>3</sup>. The city was drawn and developed with this individualism in mind, leading to heterogeneous neighborhoods and people with no common ground and no 'design' to merge and form communities. There was, and maybe is, a desire with power relations to dominate subjectivity through spatial design. Examples of a 'contra' to that, got silenced, like the bataillon carres, leading to workers losing their communal life that they had acquired there.

Regarding the commodification of space that became more and more prominent after the modernist movement and its ideologies, we arrive at the 20th century Bruxelles. At the end of the 1970s, Bruxelles was marked by a rejection of the city (as was happening in Europe with the post-modernist movement) and the departure in large numbers of the middle and upper classes for the hinterland, leaving the city, with the scars of modernist ambitions. Bruxelles then, was in the hands of developers who approached it as

a place of business rather than a qualitative space to live, leading to space being viewed only as a commodity and for the economic and political regime of today that dictates commodities values through their own ideologies<sup>4</sup>.

4 Brussels Housing Atlas, 2023, p.112



Comparing private collective housing with the standard housing type of terraced housing

1 Ledent Gerald - Porotto Alessandro, Brussels Housing Atlas, Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, 2023, p.100-102  
 2 Brussels Housing Atlas, 2023, p.24  
 3 Brussels Housing Atlas, 2023, p.22-23

Walking around Brussels trying to find a potential location for a case study of the same root as the one in Gent, I 'stumbled' upon st. Gilles. What initially sparked my interest was the housing stock of st. Gilles which felt 'heavy' in the sense of over-built, the courtyards themselves, seeing that a lot of them are dissected into small little fragments, with the dissector being the border as a fence. Also important for me was the community feeling that seemed to be prominent in this area, differentiating from downtown Bruxelles which felt more of a consumerist and tourism oriented zone. Here, shared space didn't really feel like the phantasmagoria or the commodity that we described earlier in the project, but more of an alive space, to be shared, to be appropriated, to be tried and tested into the things that we would want to see in our city. In addition, since I wanted to also find a 'public' border that could be of interest to try and do the same with the 'Spitalpoorstraat' example, I was very fortunate to stumble upon a border like that, quite literally in the geographical center of st. Gilles. So St. Gilles seemed to collect all the characteristics of an area in the city that would be of interest to explore in this project.

Some additional information and historical facts that helped me select this area as the case study for Bruxelles:

About statistics:

- Largest foreign population of any Bruxelles municipality
- Second poorest municipality of Bruxelles

Drawing under these two, a project like this, a project of emancipation and one of trying out a different way of living on all levels, for me is always worth trying out in an area of 'struggle'. Historically, a meaning highly connected with immigration and with poverty, this seemed of huge interest to me. Also, throughout my experience, it is the multi-cultured basis of a community that gives it life, keeps it on the edge of its seat and can be used as a constant ignitor for different usages of shared space, for collective gathering and appropriation, fostering 'curiosity'.

About historical development:

- Origins – medieval/pre 19th century
- St. Gilles began as a village on routes leading south from Brussels (old chemin-chaussées)
- Several main streets follow old alignments that predate modern plans (Choussee de Waterloo, Rue de la Victorie)
- 19th century – rapid urbanization
  - Belgian independence alongside with the urbanization happening in the 19th century following industrialization bringing industry to the city (both as capital and as building stock) and the addition of ever-improving transport made st. Gilles -as did for the rest of Bruxelles- urbanize fast, creating heavy flows of functions, people, interests to flood

the city.

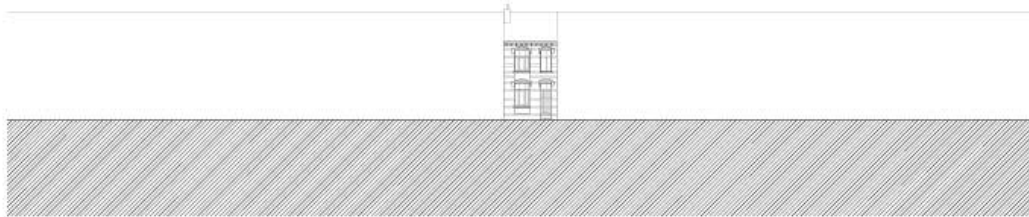
- Along came:
- terraced housing
  - commercial corridors
  - workshops
  - ultimately, the emergence of a working / middle class residential fabric
- This is when the municipality densified into the urban patch we see today

## 13 Worker Terraced House

COMPLETION: 1899 (unbuilt project)  
 ARCHITECT: Emile Demany  
 ADDRESS: /  
 NUMBER OF UNITS: 1  
 UNIT FLOOR AREA: 63 m<sup>2</sup> + garden 19 m<sup>2</sup>  
 HOUSING TYPE: Terraced house

This ideal workers' house was presented in a manual by Emile Demany to assist administrations and private individuals in charge of housing the working classes. It reflected the desire of the ruling classes to house workers according to the former's own

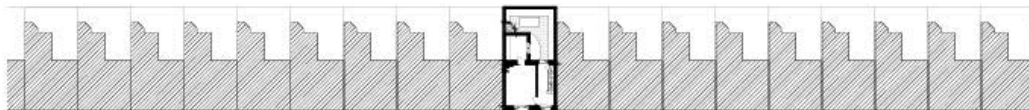
codes: in an individual family house with a great concern for hygiene. There are many such houses in the Brussels area. The proposed plot is small: 5.5 m wide by 11 m long. The house is placed on the street side while a garden occupies the rear of the plot, where an exterior toilet can be found. The house is organised in two bays, one containing the staircase and the other the main room, which is just over 4 m deep. On the ground floor, an annex with the kitchen extends the house into the garden. On the first floor, there are two bedrooms. The house has a cellar, as well as an attic in which two rooms are found. The façade of the building is made of brick, enhanced by some ornamental blue-limestone elements. The motifs and the carefully organised brick and stone bonding are reminiscent of larger, bourgeois, houses.



Façade 1:500



First floor plan 1:500



Ground floor plan 1:500

*Worker Terraced House, Brussels Housing Atlas*

About 20th century – Art Nouveau and civic ambition

- Many art Nouveau gems / architects Victor Horta – Paul Hankar

About mid 20th century – modernization, rapid decline:

- St. Gilles saw some neglect and also demolition

- By mid-century the area mixes preserved heritage with modernized blocks and social housing

About late 20th and 21st century – diversity, regeneration and tension:

- High population density and strong immigration, created a multi-cultural and relatively young community (about 50000 people in 2,5km<sup>2</sup>)

- From 2000's onwards, parts of St. Gilles experienced gentrification (cafes, galleries, rising rents) while other areas remain(ed) socio-economically fragile producing both opportunity and social tensions

- Local-regional bodies now run renewal contracts (e.g. Midi station area, neighborhood contract) and public space projects (e.g. square Jacques Frank redevelopment)

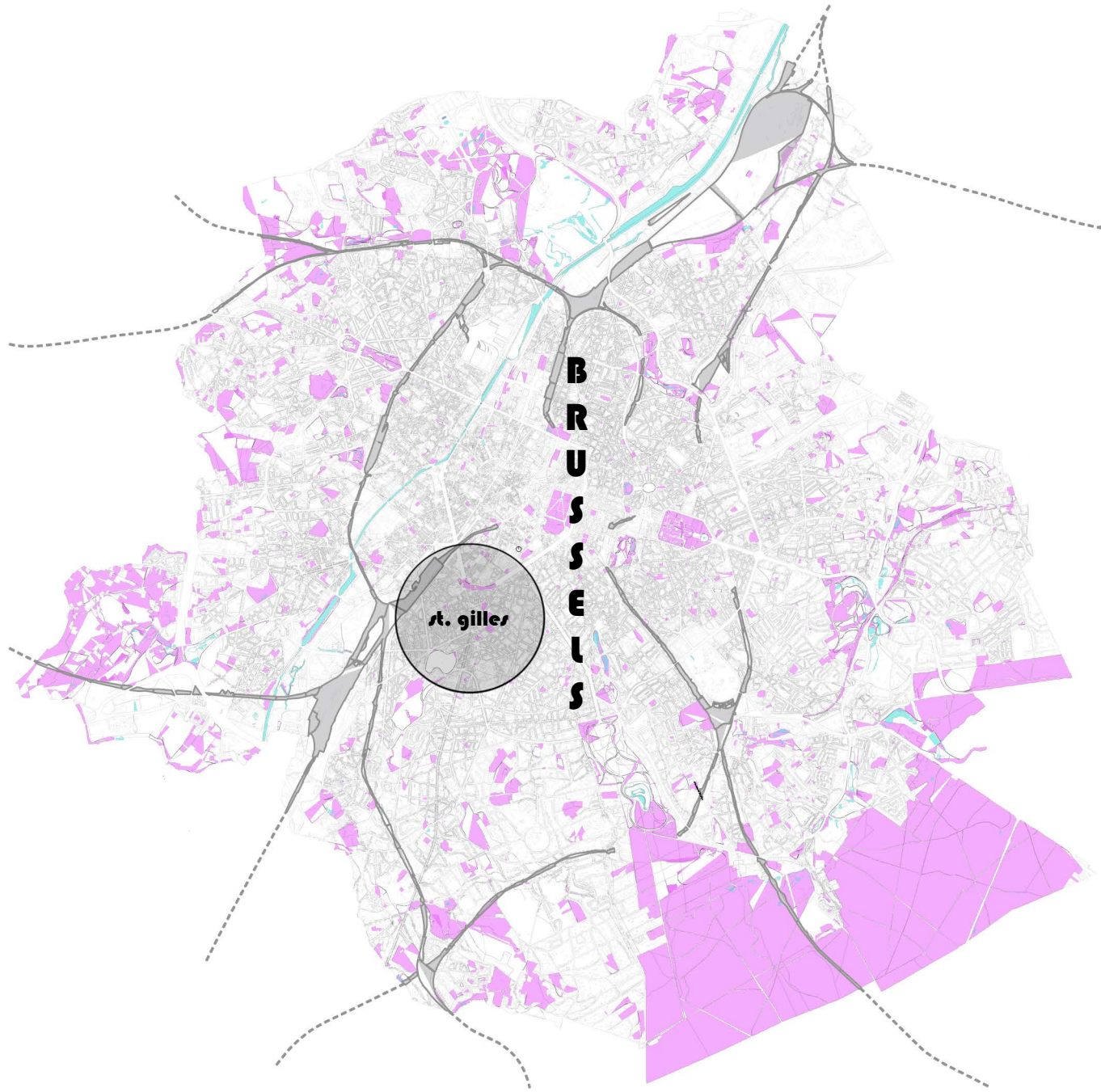
Some key urban themes and tensions:

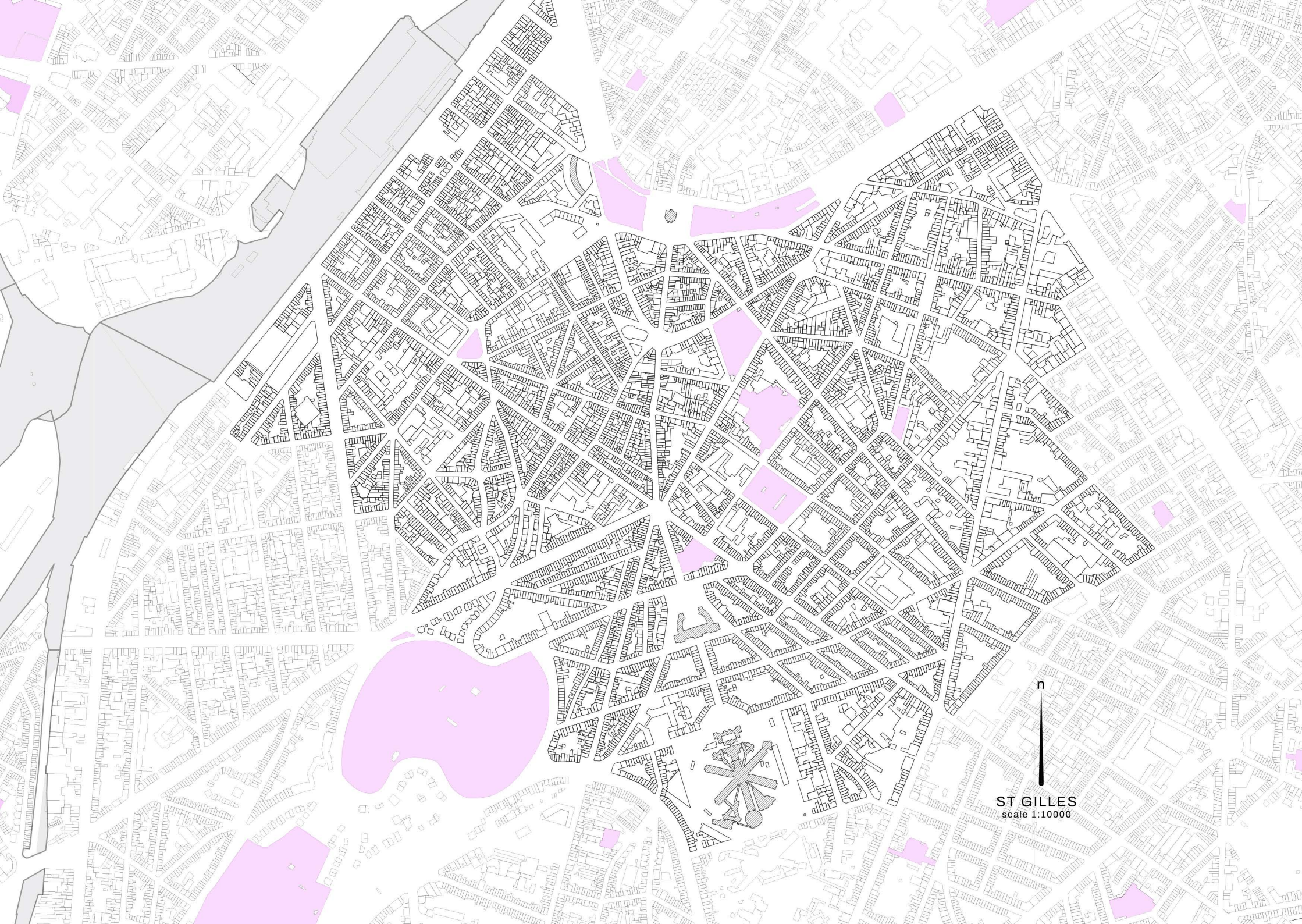
Heritage vs modernity: strong Art Nouveau heritage is protected in pockets

Density and housing pressures: St. Gilles is one of the most densely populated areas of Brussels. Communes, making housing, public space and mobility are some key issues

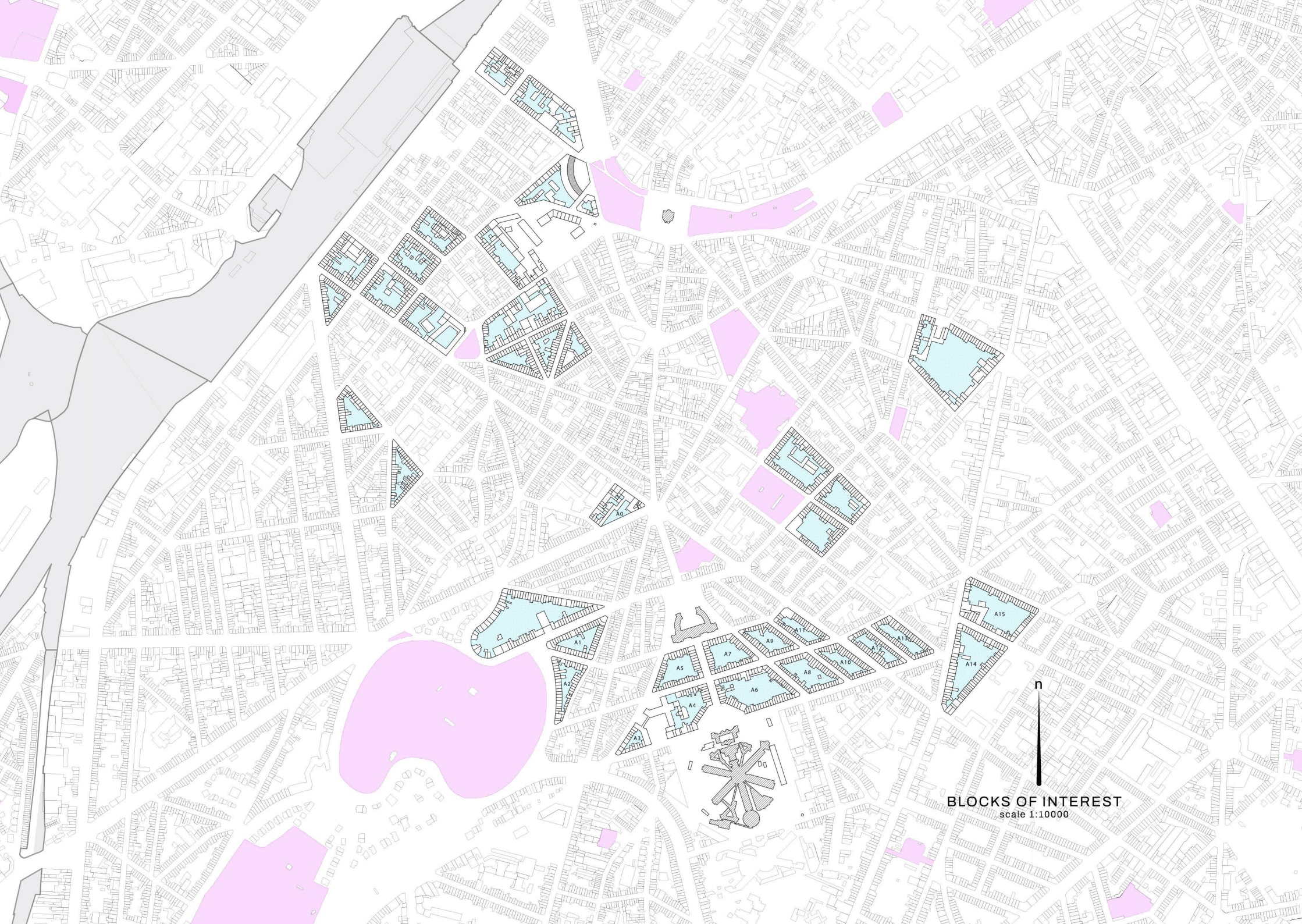
Gentrification and social displacement: documented academic and local debates show selective migration, rising property interest and social mixing policies

Safety, policing and urban design: Recent years have seen initiatives to redesign public space (e.g. squares) partly in response to safety and social problems – a live example of urban design used for social policy (this could go either way: it can go the way of authorization and controlling through spatial design, ethics and pedagogy or towards a more communal and emancipating thinking, design and acting of and in space)





ST GILLES  
scale 1:10000



**BLOCKS OF INTEREST**  
scale 1:10000



A1  
A2  
A3  
A4  
A5  
A6  
A7  
A8  
A9  
A10  
A11  
A12  
A13  
A14  
A15

## The A0 block

The A0 block was selected initially because of its central position in the municipality of st. Gilles. Walking alongside the southeast border you get a sense of a non-forgiving boundary, one that feels 'heavy' when you walk next to it. So if we want to breed curiosity, I think choosing a spot that pedestrian and/or car traffic is 'heavy' could work in everyone's favor. It potentially 'draws' more eyes. Additionally, here we have what I call 'from public to public' since both sides of the border are public, as one side is the sidewalk of a main road and the other an atrium of the public function of a school. But one of them appears private since the blockade is in place. So even though the function appears public, the space itself functions as private.

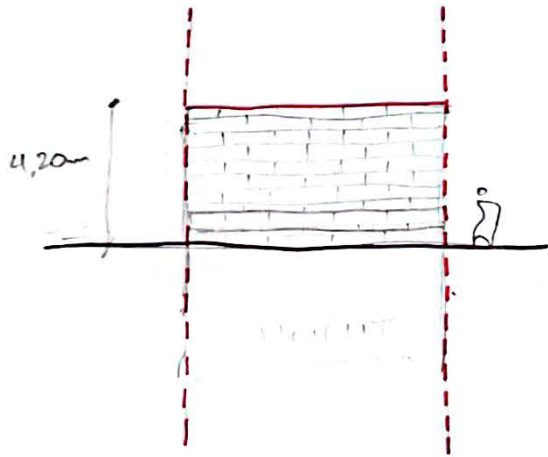
Opening up the public functions of the city is a strong initiative of mine and one that would counter the main narrative of urban design and pedagogy: briefly explained, the neoliberal and capitalist main narrative of designing the public functions of the city, spawns school - and public functions in general- designed in a sort of enclosed-prison manner. That happens in order to hide the function operating from the rest of the public and in doing so, the freedom to act as you like in these enclosed spaces remains hidden, breeding the neoliberal subject that is. Furthermore, the private appearance of the public functions, creates a sort of springboard for the privatization of the city and its civic functions. If you can run a sort of simulation of a public function appearing private then the ultimate step to making the public function private, has already been prefigured, borrowing from our theory from earlier, but now with the opposite connotation.

△<sub>o</sub>

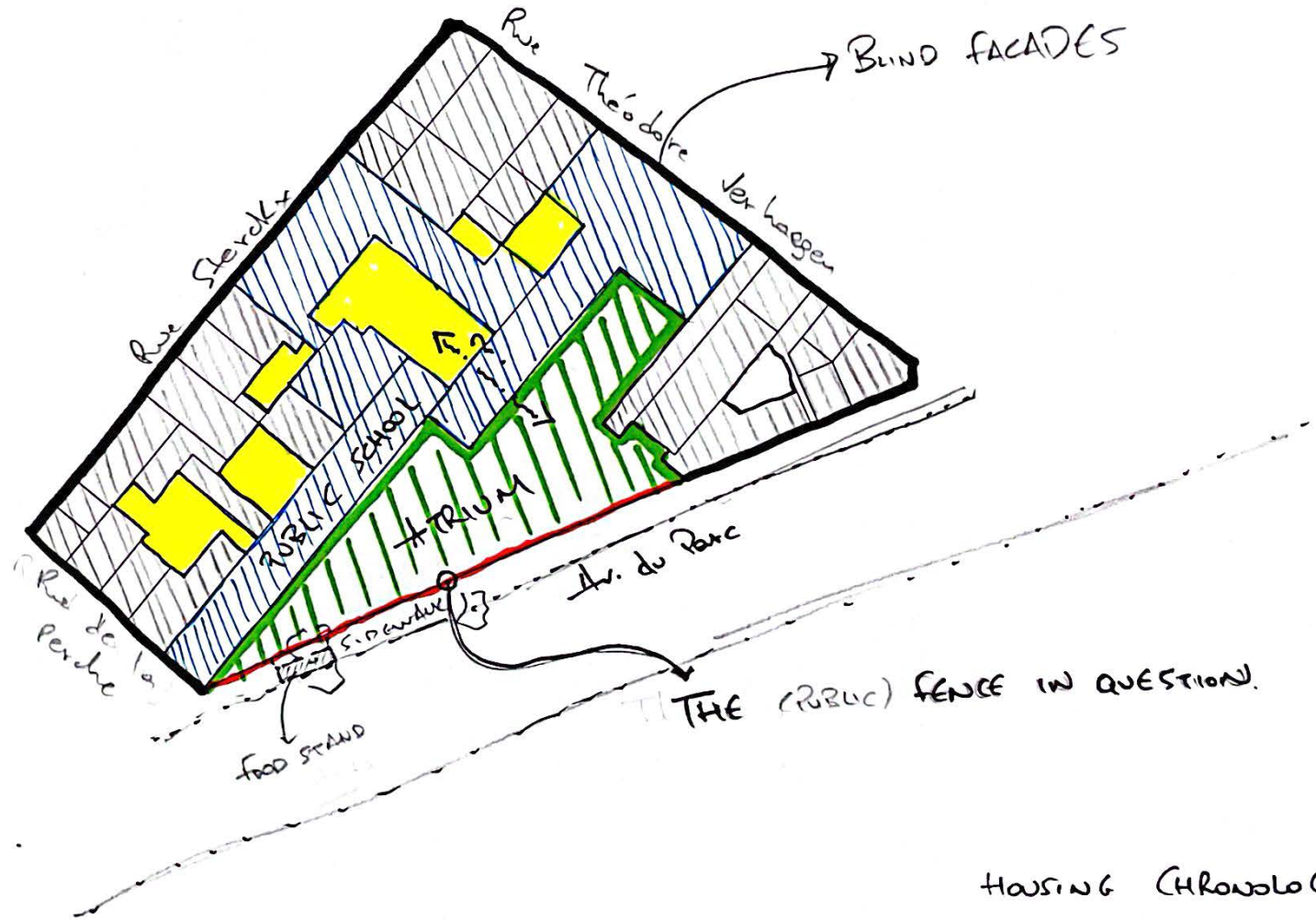
# 'PUBLIC WALL' BLOCK

ATRIVUM: 1256,50m<sup>2</sup> (+ 268m<sup>2</sup>)?

 SOLID FENCE



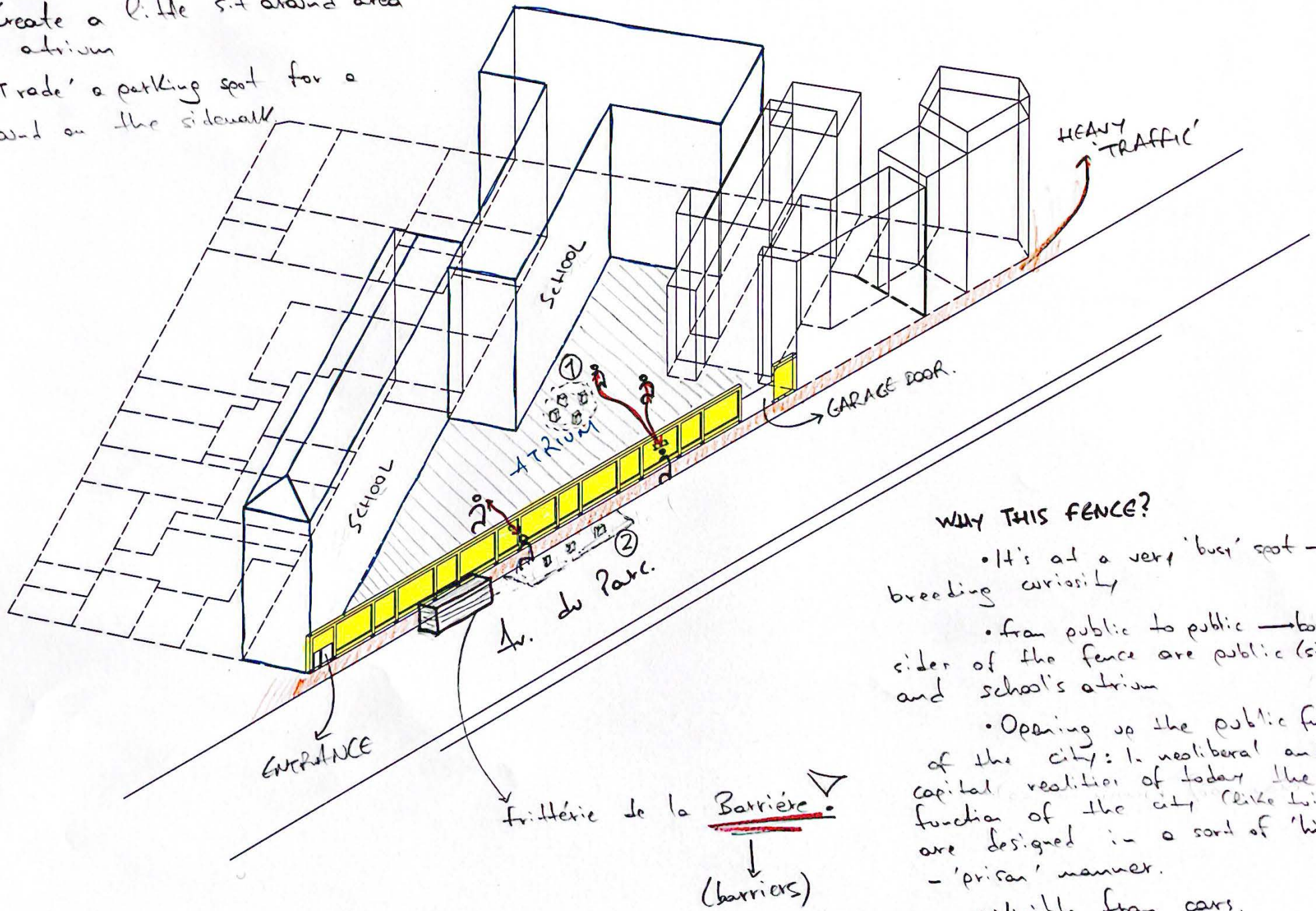
BUILDING HEIGHTS  
20m



HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
20th - 21st

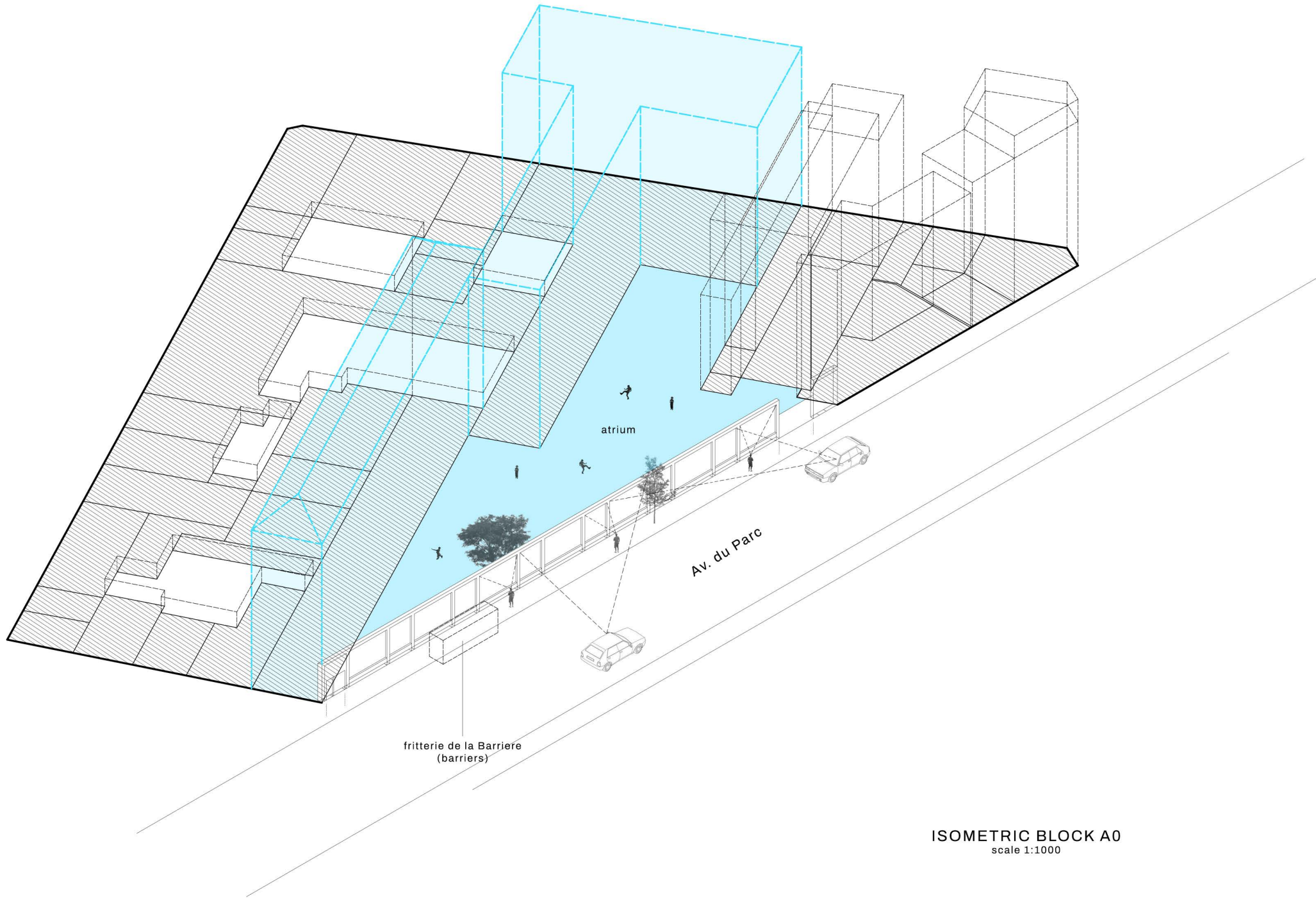
IDEAS FOR THE (LEFTOVER) BRICKS:

- 1) Create a little sit around area in the atrium
- 2) 'Trade' a parking spot for a sit around on the sidewalk

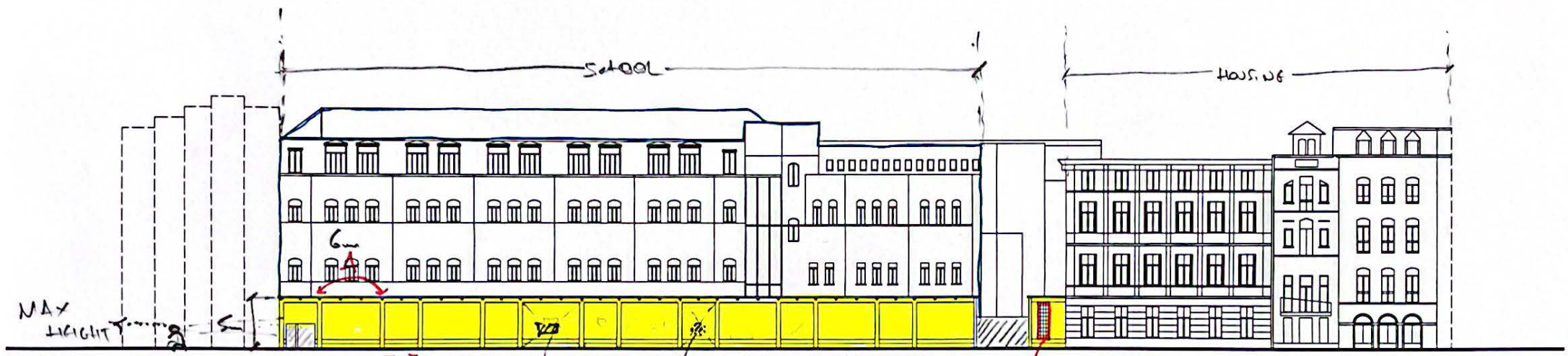


WHY THIS FENCE?

- It's at a very 'busy' spot → breeding curiosity
- from public to public → both sides of the fence are public (sidewalk and school's atrium)
- Opening up the public function of the city: 1. neoliberal and capital realisation of today the public function of the city (like London) are designed in a sort of 'hiding' - 'prison' manner.
- Visible from cars.



ISOMETRIC BLOCK A0  
scale 1:1000

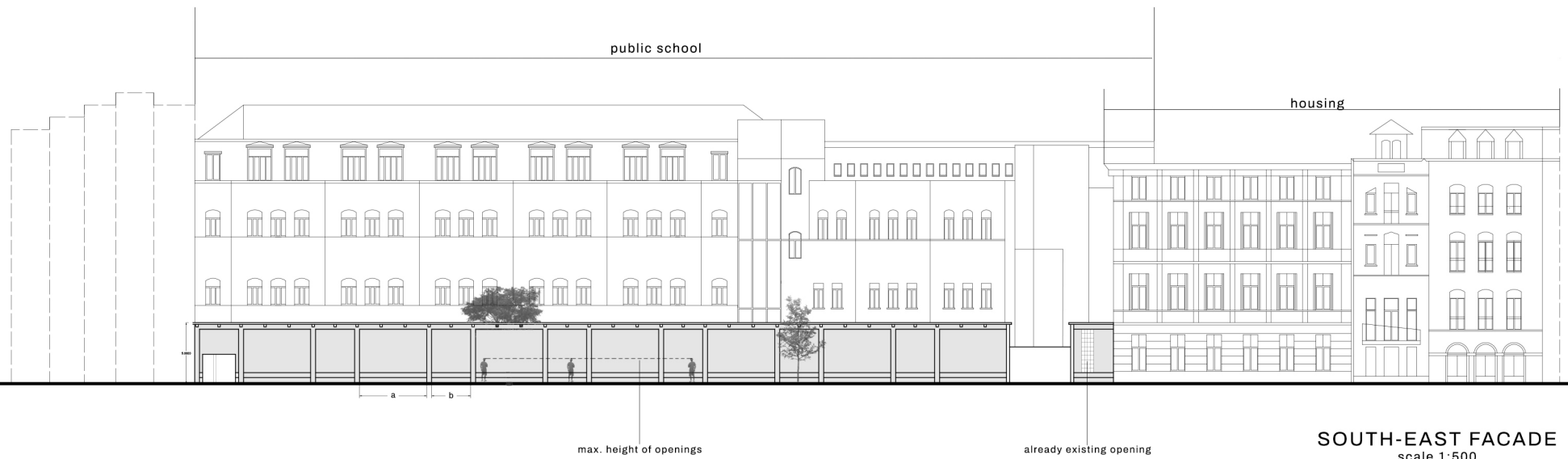


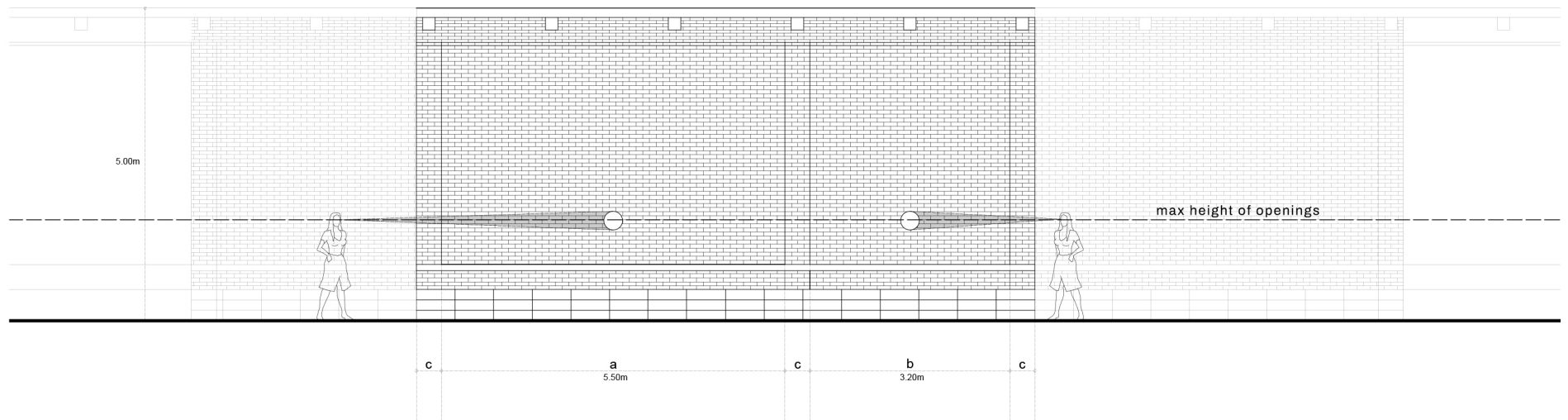
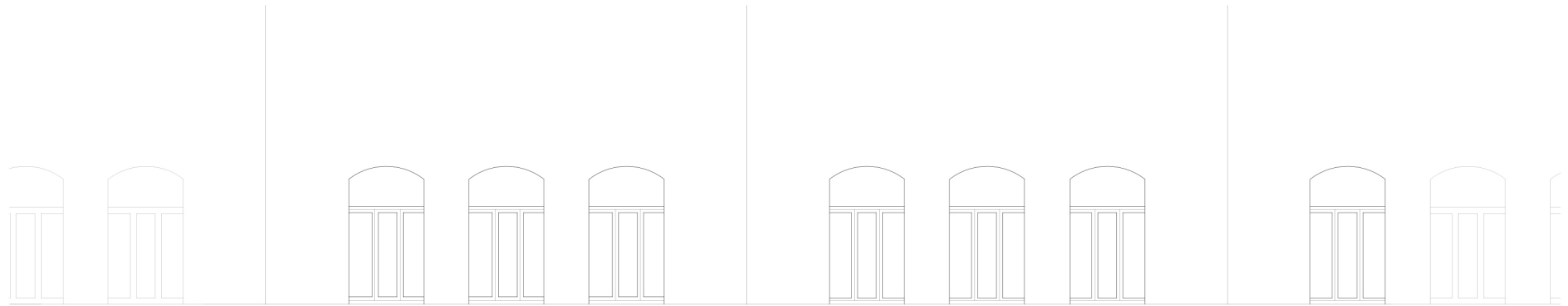
A > B  
 ↓  
 THE 'RHYTHM' OF THE FENCE

POTENTIAL OPENINGS.

Already an opening.

FACADE 1:500





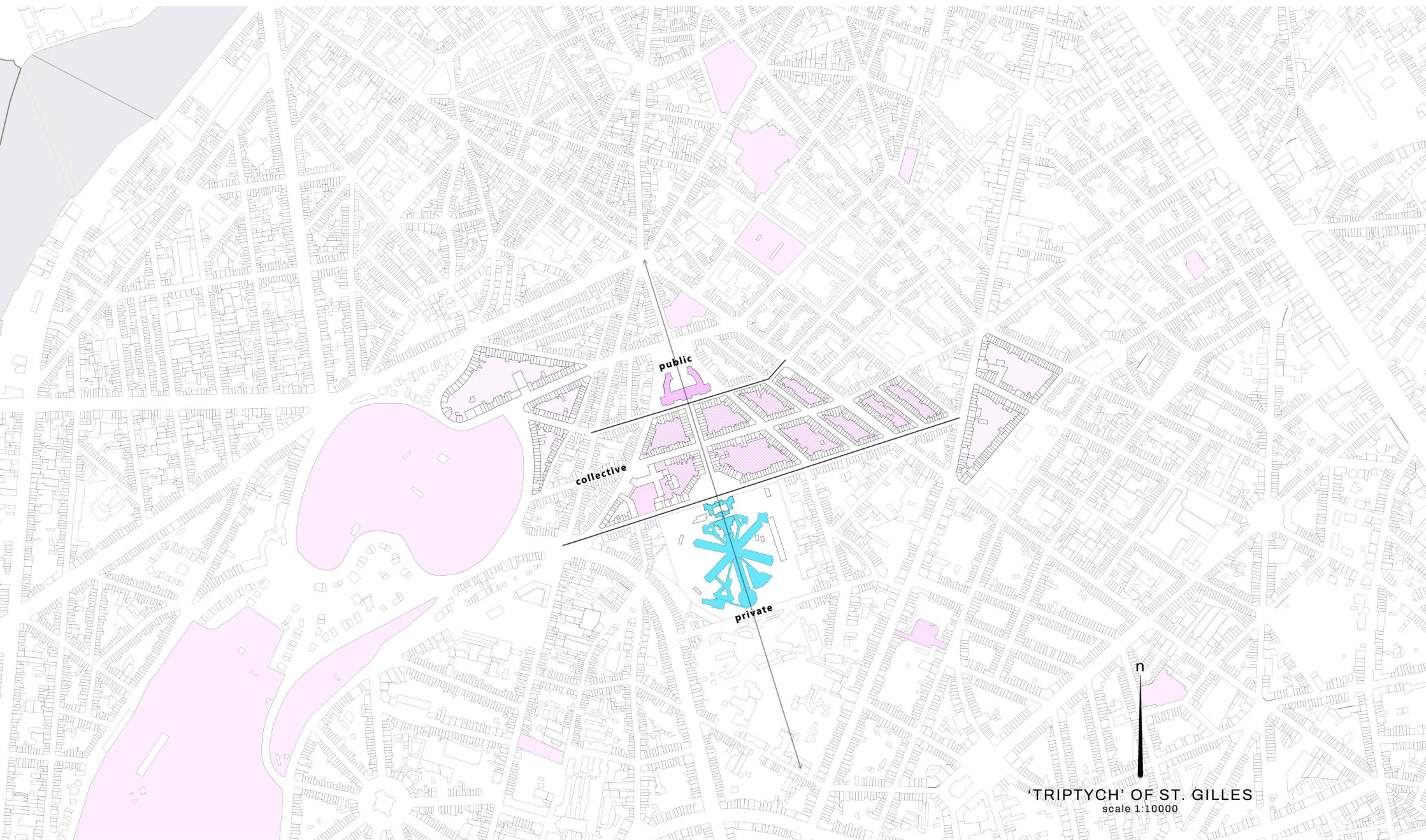
OPENING(S) EXAMPLES  
scale 1:100

## The 'triangle'

After identifying some blocks in the general area of the municipality of St. Gilles that would be of interest to research further, I focused my research in an area I like to call 'the triangle'. Located in the southeast area of St. Gilles, the 'triangle' has as its ends/points/edges/boundaries, two very important buildings in the idea of what today's city actually is and represents. On one side you'll find the 'utmost public', the building that represents (or should at least) the public function of the city, the city hall. On the other side, the utmost private, the ultimate border, the prison of St. Gilles, the building that represents most of all what alienation, isolation, borders, means. And in-between, lay some housing blocks with their courtyards absolutely dissected by borders, almost like prison-backyards, to put it with a sense of exaggeration. So this could serve as the perfect area to realize, or at least tend towards this idea of creating a new sphere in the city, the one of 'semi-public', as now, the existing situation is the main form of today's city, the one that only finds private or public spaces.

By opening up the borders in our courtyards we can prefigure a collective space that would serve as a true shared space, in-between the utmost public of the city hall and the utmost private of the prison. Small note here is that, if we also indulge in this idea of 'training' in these intermediary spaces, on how to appropriate shared space, how to find appellation in it, then we would potentially be more 'well-equipped' to imagine new ways of the contemporary city. We are noting this as there have been plans to close down the prison of St. Gilles, a plan that always gets postponed. If and when it happens: what if the actual people of that neighborhood could imagine their neighborhood the way they want, since the prison is their neighboring building? What if, instead of a big corporation privatizing this ground, or even the state making plans of its next day, it would be the confidence of the people that would imagine and realize a new space for their city? Maybe the training in the collective space(s) would help to resist a top-down solution and tend towards one of more bottom-that doesn't really have to go-up.





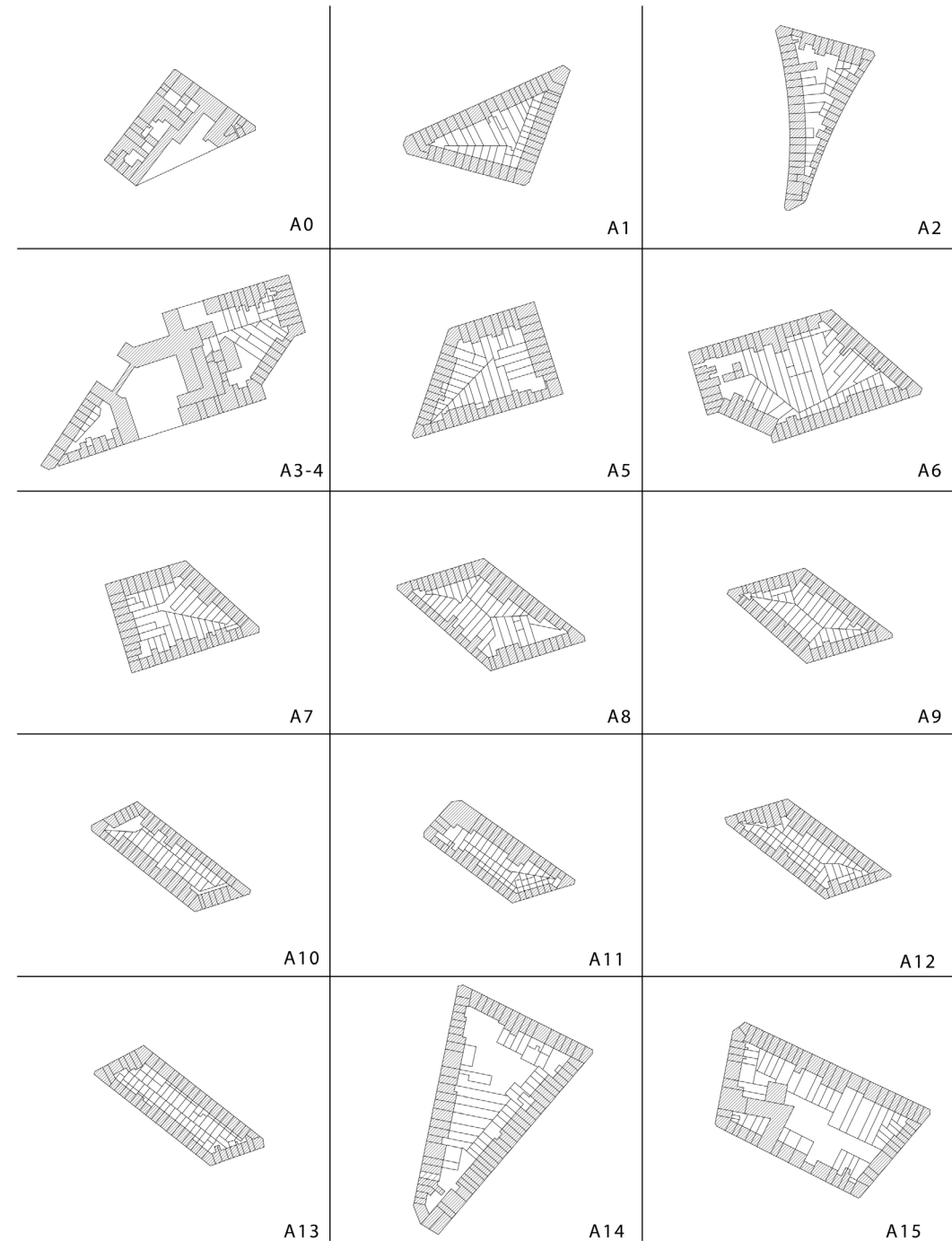
## Blocks of interest

Researching on the neighbourhood, made me identify some 'blocks of interest' with the predisposition of dissected courtyards though maybe borders-fences and also acknowledging the potentiality that breeds in these spaces if we could realize the idea of breaking borders.

I identified 15 blocks in close proximity located in 'the triangle'. In those 15 blocks, the A0 one included, i tried to study both the examples and potentiality of the normal housing blocks and opening up their borders and also the one of breeding curiosity by intervening on a fully public one.

## The 'notes'



Researching on the housing blocks, there are some axis of the notes I made. Starting from the perimeter I noted if there are any openings to enter the housing block itself, aside from the private 'opening' of house doors. When that wasn't the case, the block gets marked as 'blind facades'. Secondly I marked the housing chronology, of when the buildings were actually built, which comes along with specific characteristics for them, alongside the heights of the buildings, a marking that i dim as important in order to understand the distance from the ground floor, in my opinion the only truly public and -to be- shared space. The 'ground zero' of the city is the utmost public. In addition to this note, its important to understand that in a lot of cases in Bruxelles housing stock, the ground floor of the courtyard belongs to the ground floor of the building and the upper floors have as an 'outside' the terraces, which are also noted down. So with the 'Y' axis comes a differentiation in the accessibility but also in the 'ownership' of the shared space itself. Then we move into the courtyards and their elements. Some of the notes regard the sizes of the backyards with the minimum and maximum noted and the potentiality of the area, which means how much space is there if we unify the space itself. Then we have notes on the materiality of the fences as we did earlier with the porosity graphs on the fences of the case study in Ghent and their heights. Additionally some notes on specific characteristics of each block, unique only to them, as design always has -or at least should have- site specific origins and meaning.

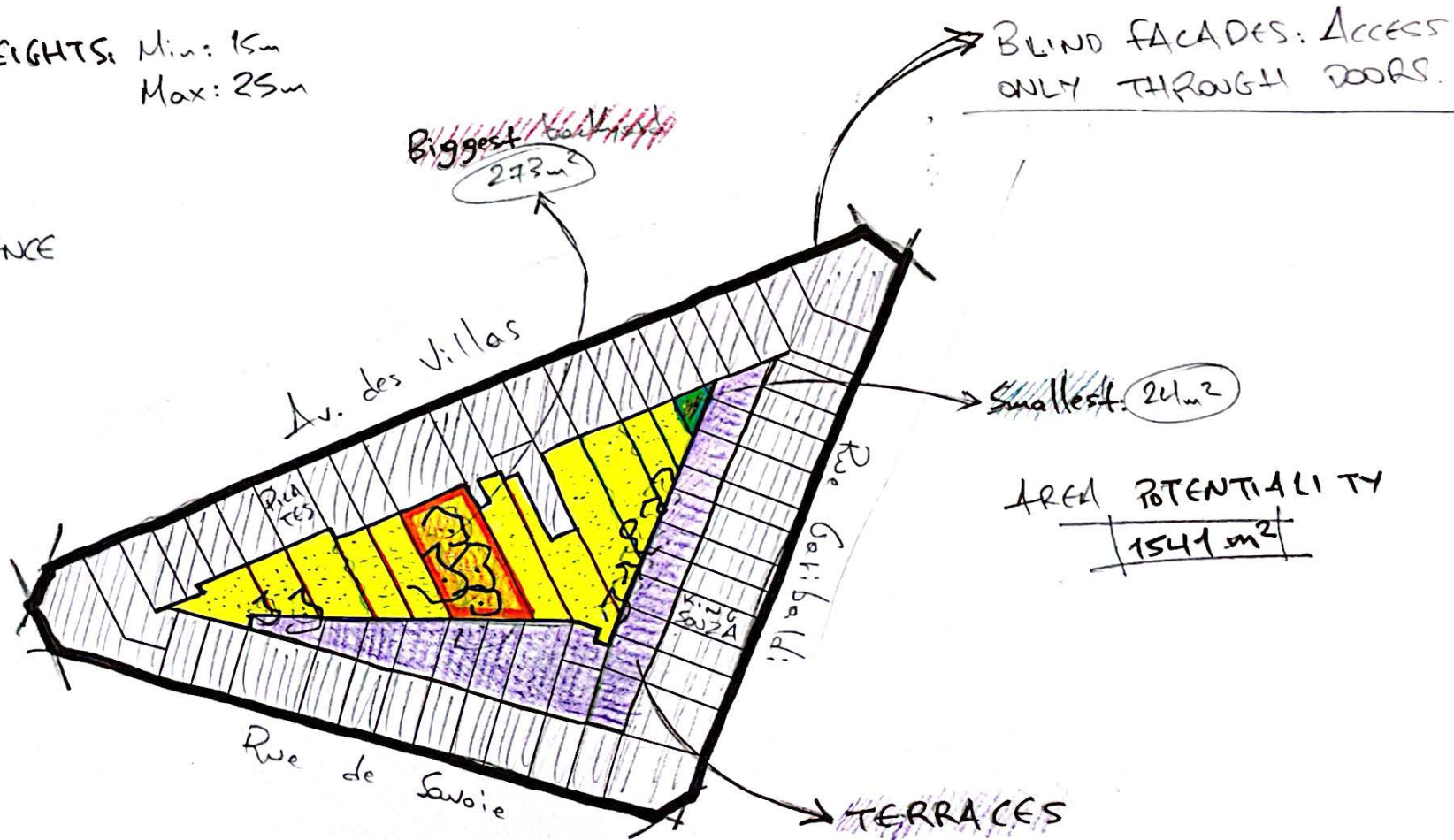


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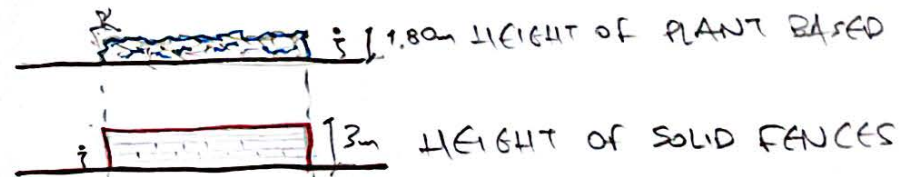
# HOUSING BLOCK

BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min: 15m  
Max: 25m

-  SOLID FENCE
-  PLANT BASED FENCE




HOUSING CHRONOLOGY:  
19th - 20th - 21st



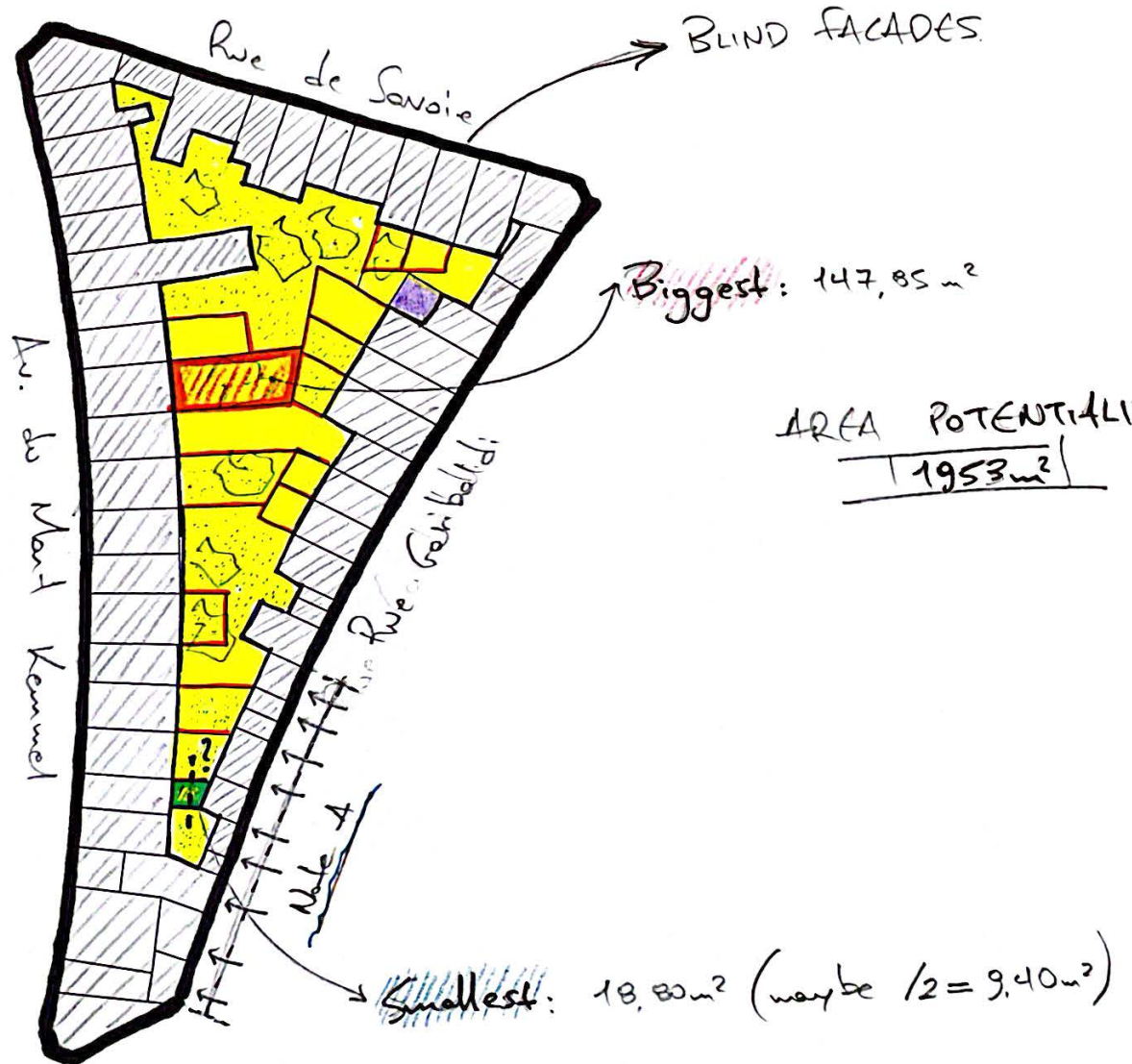
# A<sub>2</sub> HOUSING BLOCK

BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min: 5m.  
Max: 25m.

 SOLID FACCE

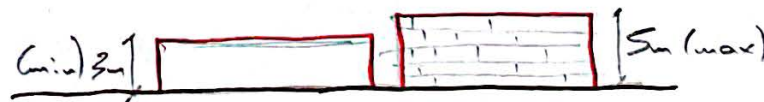
Note A Very low (human height) garage, brick, fences.

→ Would be an interesting experiment + would explore the extrovertedness of this intervention.



AREA POTENTIALITY  
1953 m<sup>2</sup>

HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st



A3-4

HOUSING BLOCK(S)

AREA POTENTIALITY

2184m<sup>2</sup>

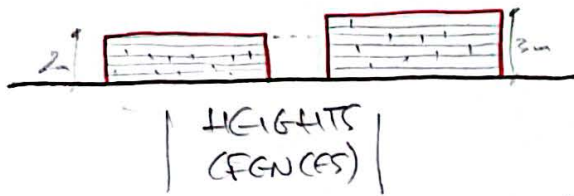
BUILDING HEIGHTS

Min 10m

Max 25m

SOLID FENCE


HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th-20th-21st



NOTE: CENTRIPETAL OPEN AREA  
 ⇒ Can move towards this with openings  
 ⇒ Tough cause of the big building in the middle  
 ⇒ The use of it could make it easier?

**A5 HOUSING BLOCK**

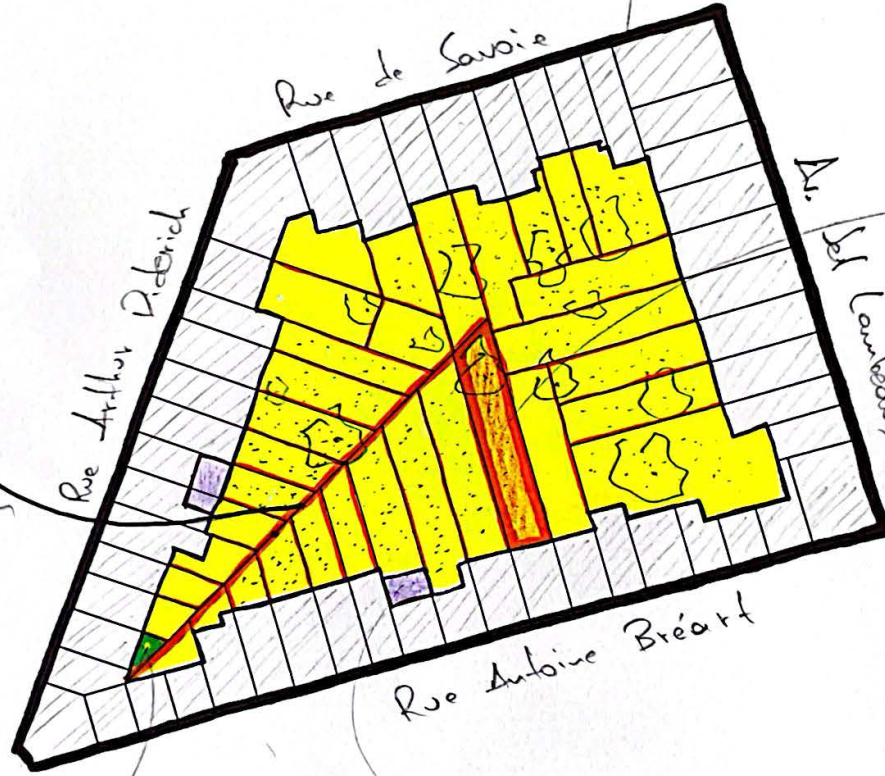
BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 12m  
Max 24m

 SOLID FENCE

NOTE:  
This diagonal fence looks like a spine. It would be interesting to work on this spine-imbalance it with some holes

HOUSING CHRONOLOGY:  
19th - 20th - 21st

Smallest: 15m<sup>2</sup>

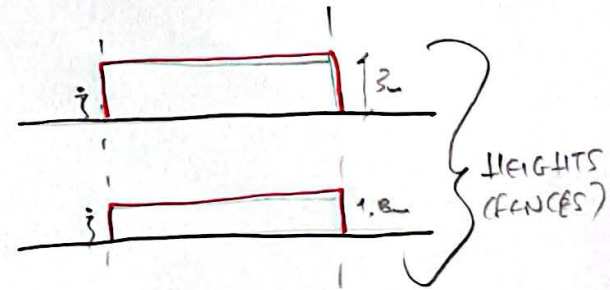


BLIND FACADES.

Biggest: 210m<sup>2</sup>

AREA POTENTIALITY:  
3855m<sup>2</sup>

TERRACES



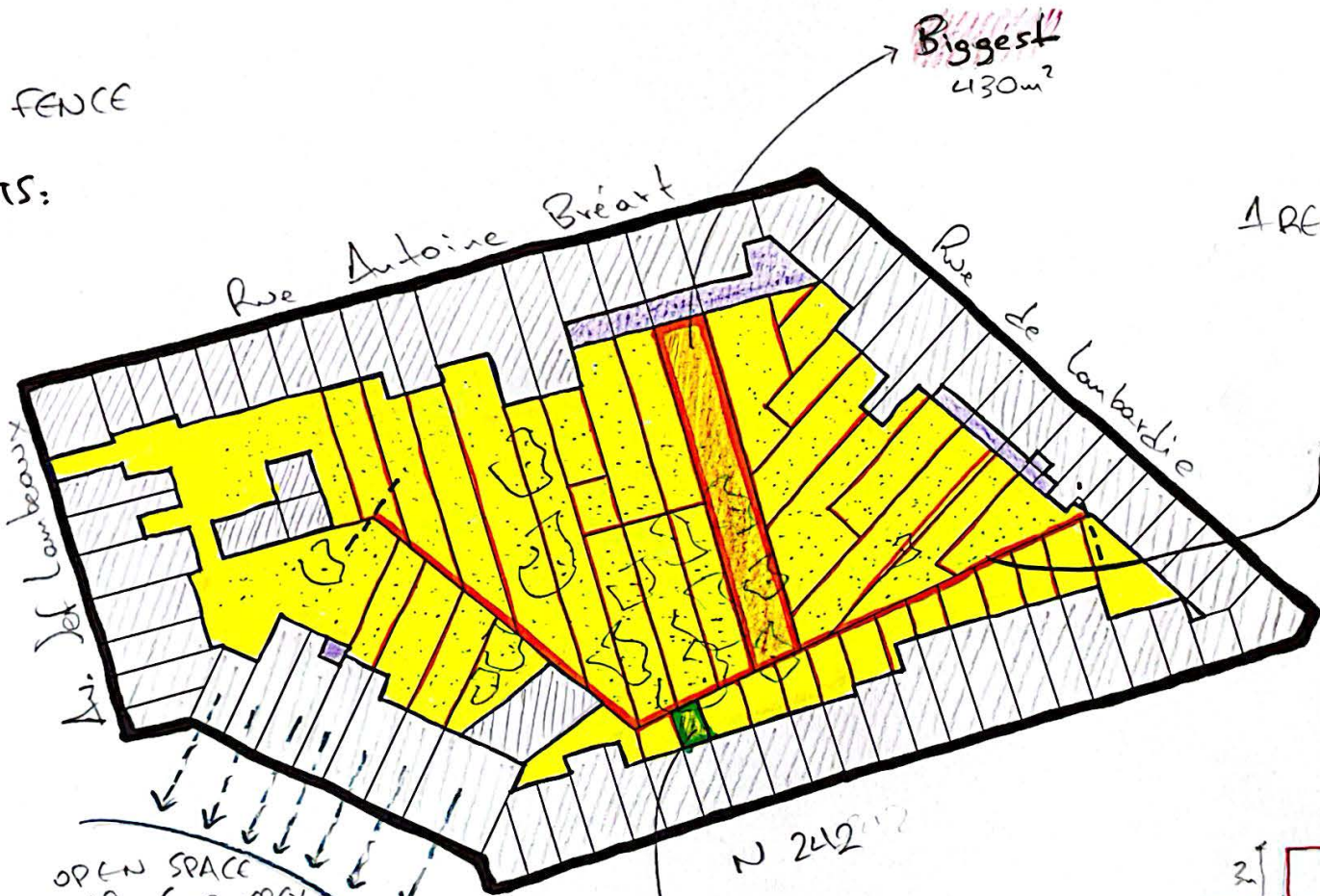
# A6 HOUSING BLOCK



BUILDING HEIGHTS:

Min 10m

Max 24m



Biggest  
430m<sup>2</sup>

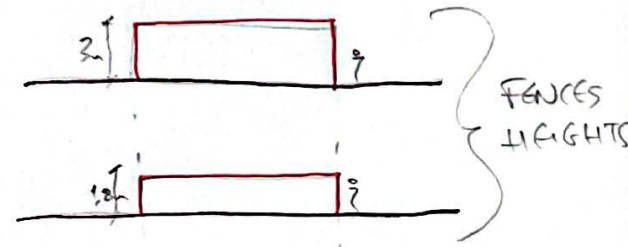
AREA POTENTIALITY  
6467 m<sup>2</sup>

NOTE: SPINAL FENCE

OPEN SPACE  
NEAR-EXTRAJERCY?

HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st

N 242  
Smallest  
28m<sup>2</sup>




# A7 HOUSING BLOCK

AREA POTENTIALITY  
3340m<sup>2</sup>

## BUILDING HEIGHTS

Min 10m  
Max 24m

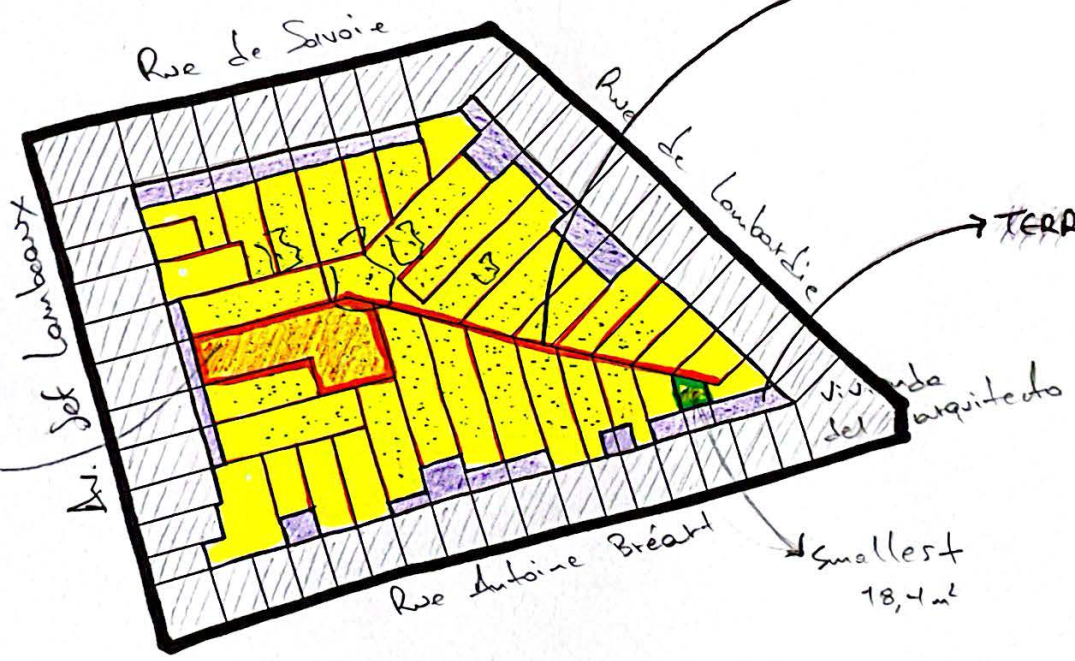
 SOLID FENCE

Biggest  
260m<sup>2</sup>

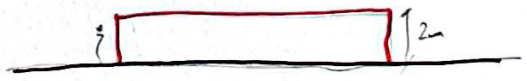
NOTE: SPINAL FENCE

TERRACES

Smallest  
18,4m<sup>2</sup>

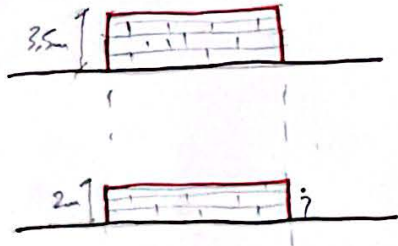


HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st

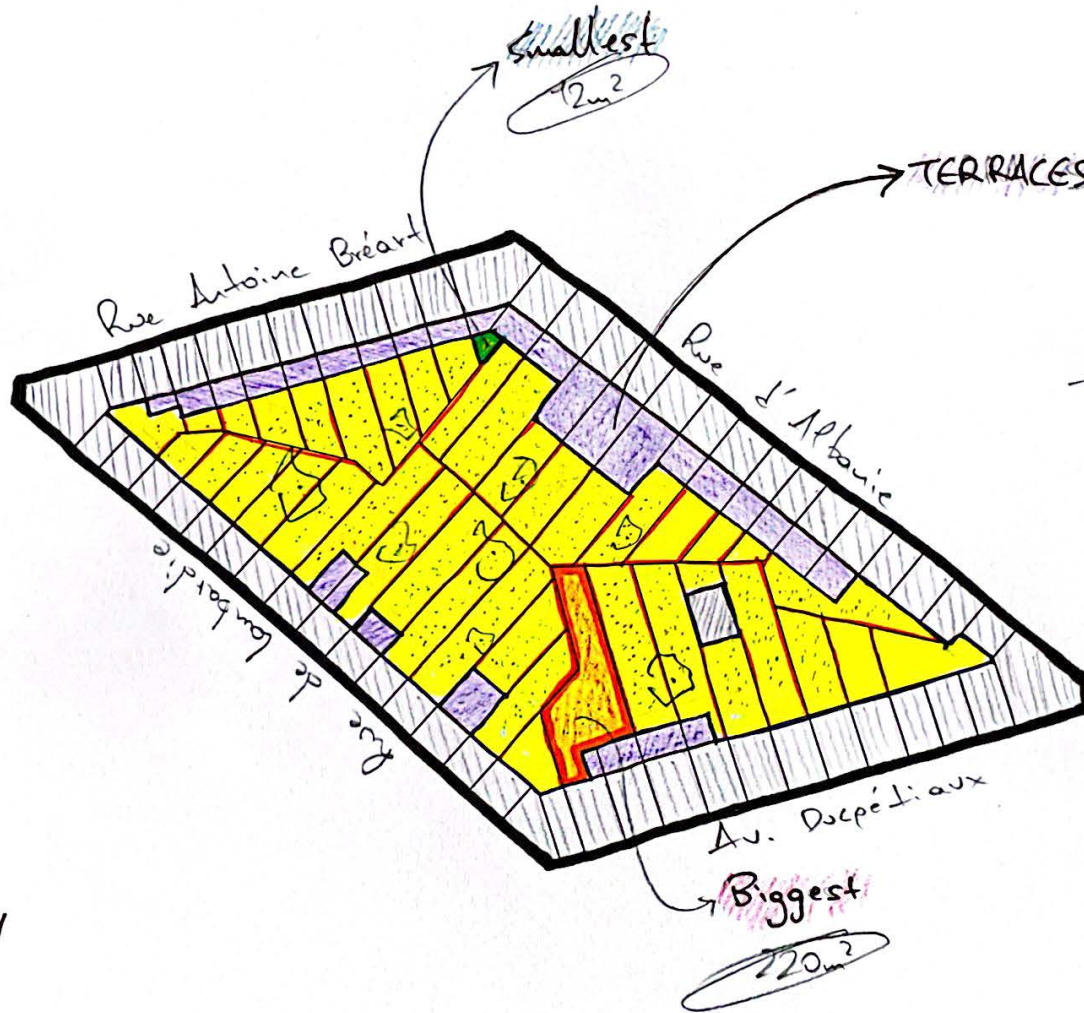


18 HOUSING BLOCK

 SOLID FENCE



HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st




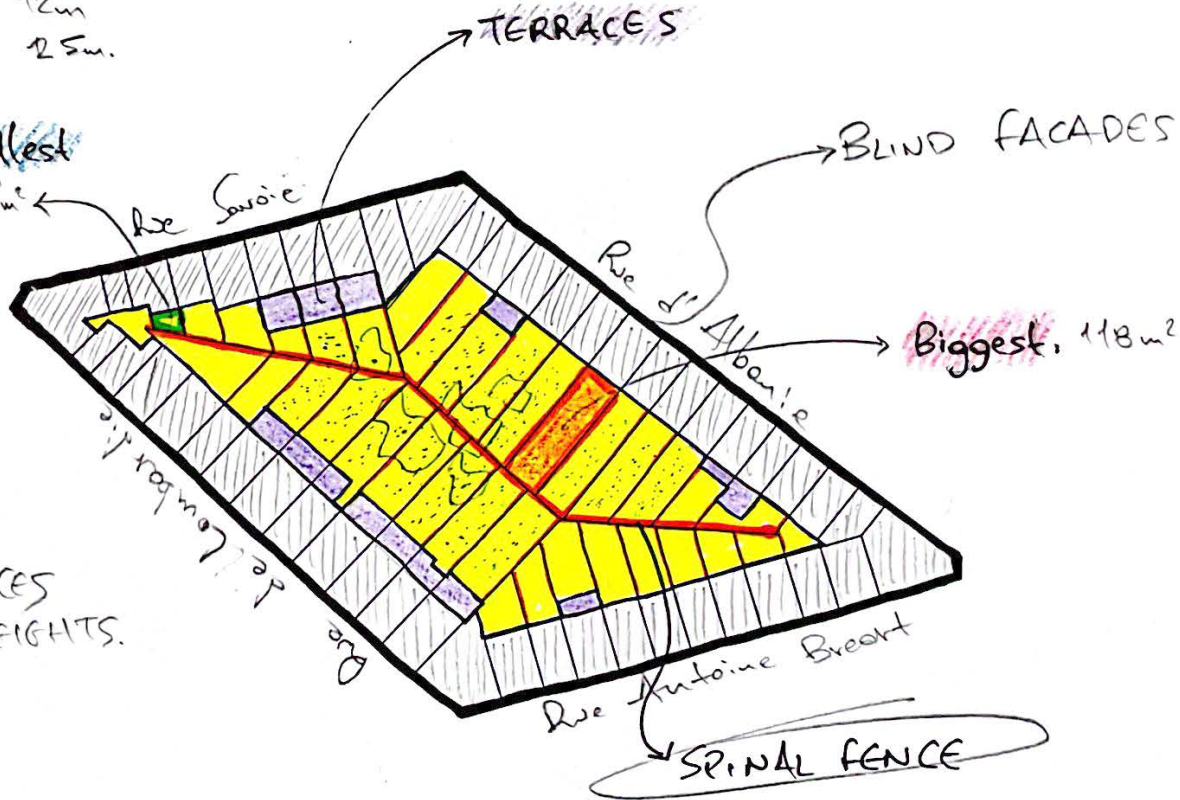
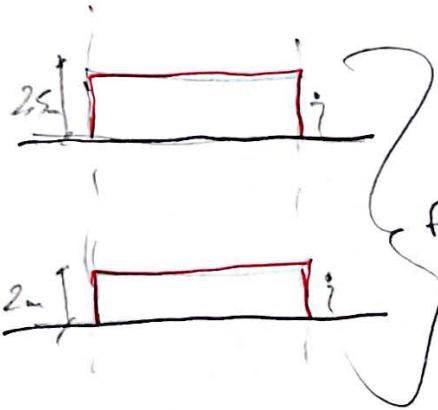
AREA POTENTIALITY  
3725m²

19 HOUSING BLOCK

BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 12m  
Max 25m

Smallest  
13,66m<sup>2</sup>

 SOLID FENCE




HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
18th - 20th - 21st

AREA POTENTIALITY  
2428m<sup>2</sup>

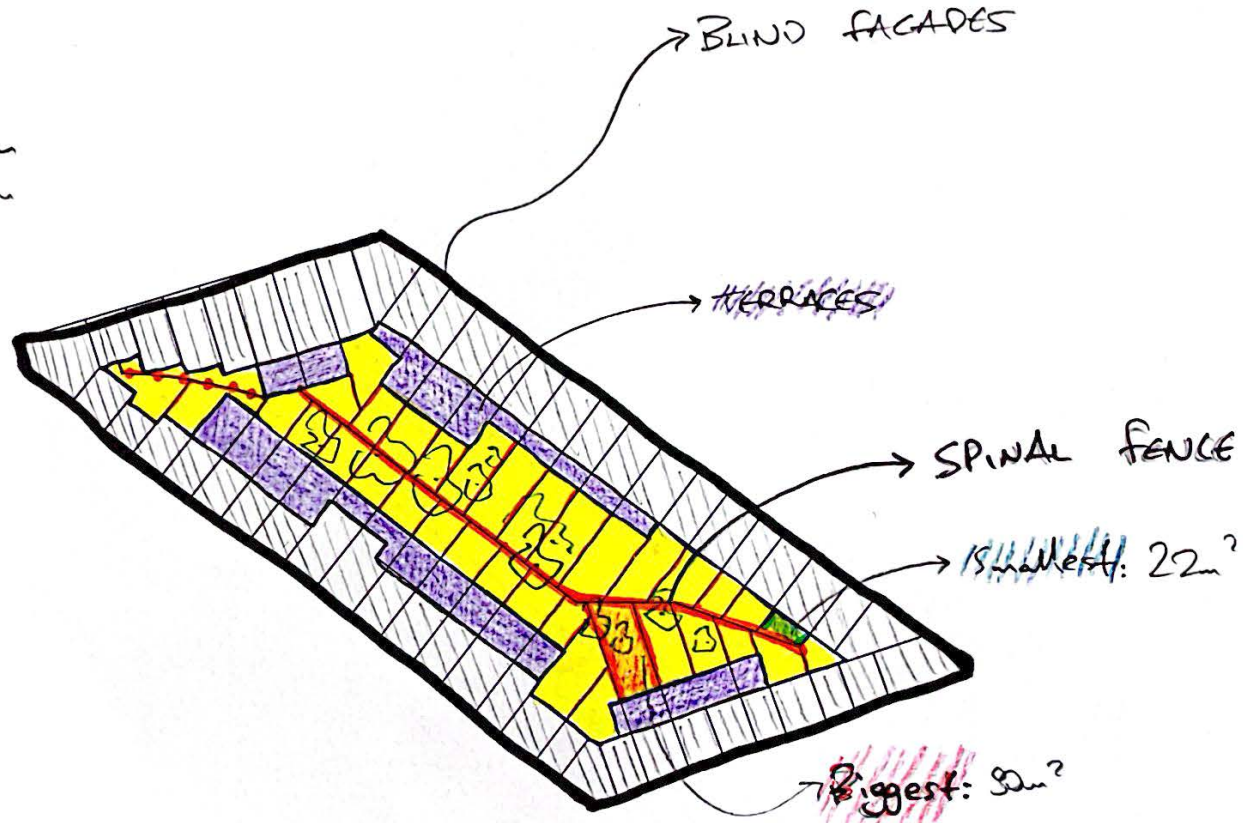
A10 HOUSING BLOCK.

BUILDING HEIGHTS: min 12m  
max 24m

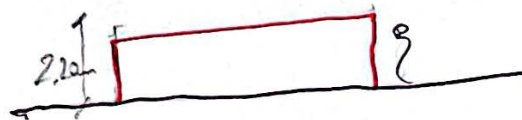
 SOLID FENCE

AREA POTENTIALITY

$2148m^2$



HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st

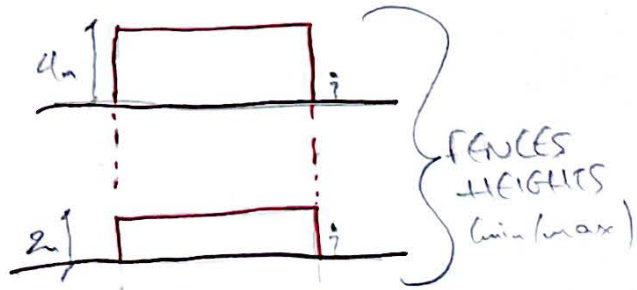


# A1 HOUSING BLOCK

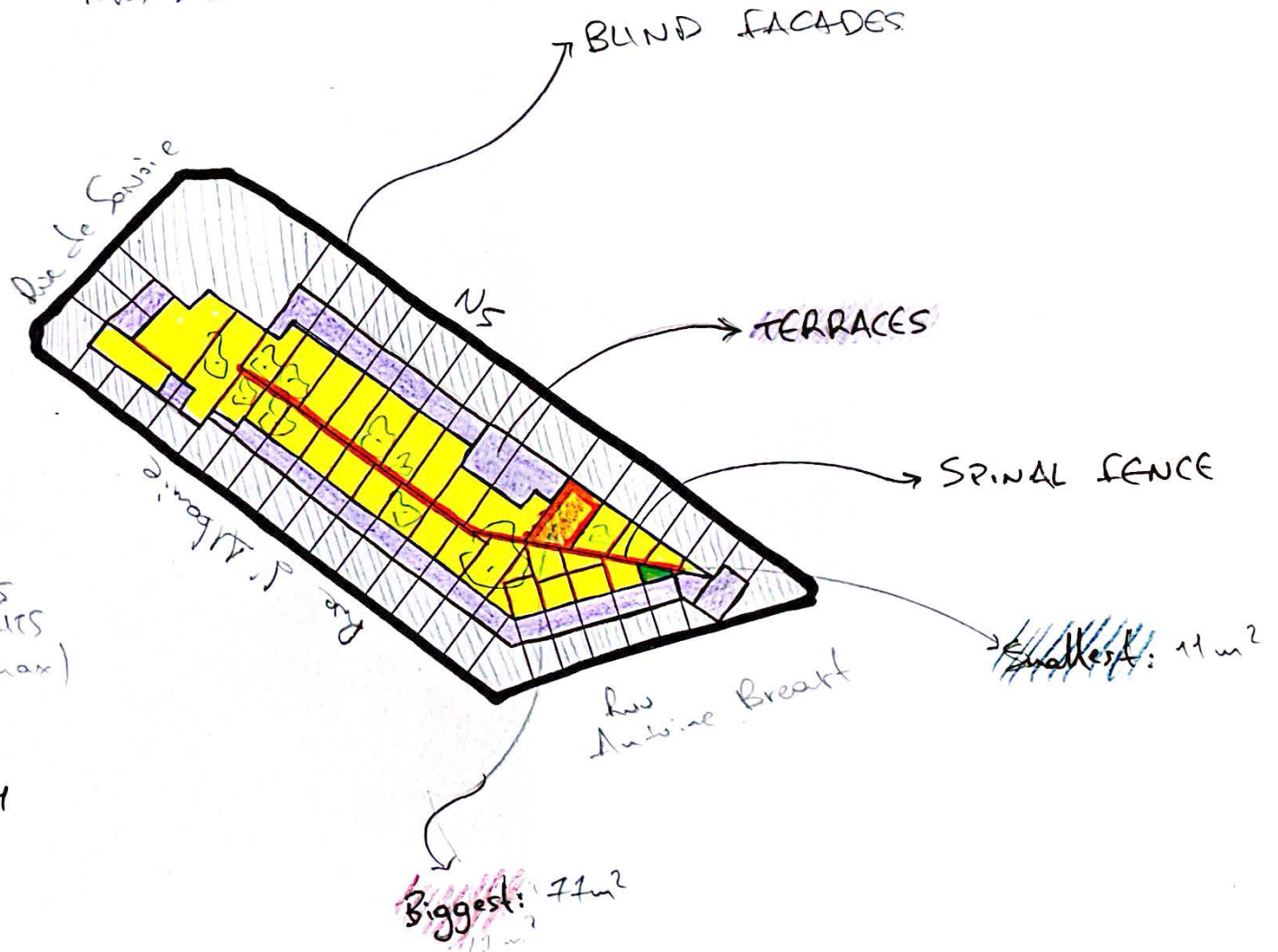
BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 12m  
Max 24m

 SOLID FENCE: 1.2m

AREA POTENTIALITY  
1657m<sup>2</sup>



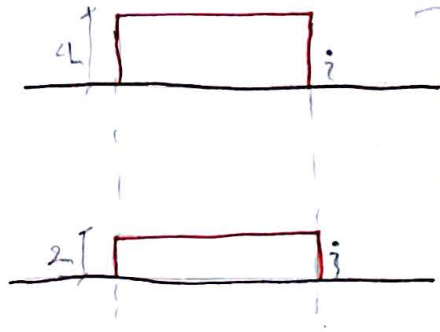
HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
18th-20th-21st



**A12 HOUSING BLOCK**

BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 12m  
Max 22m

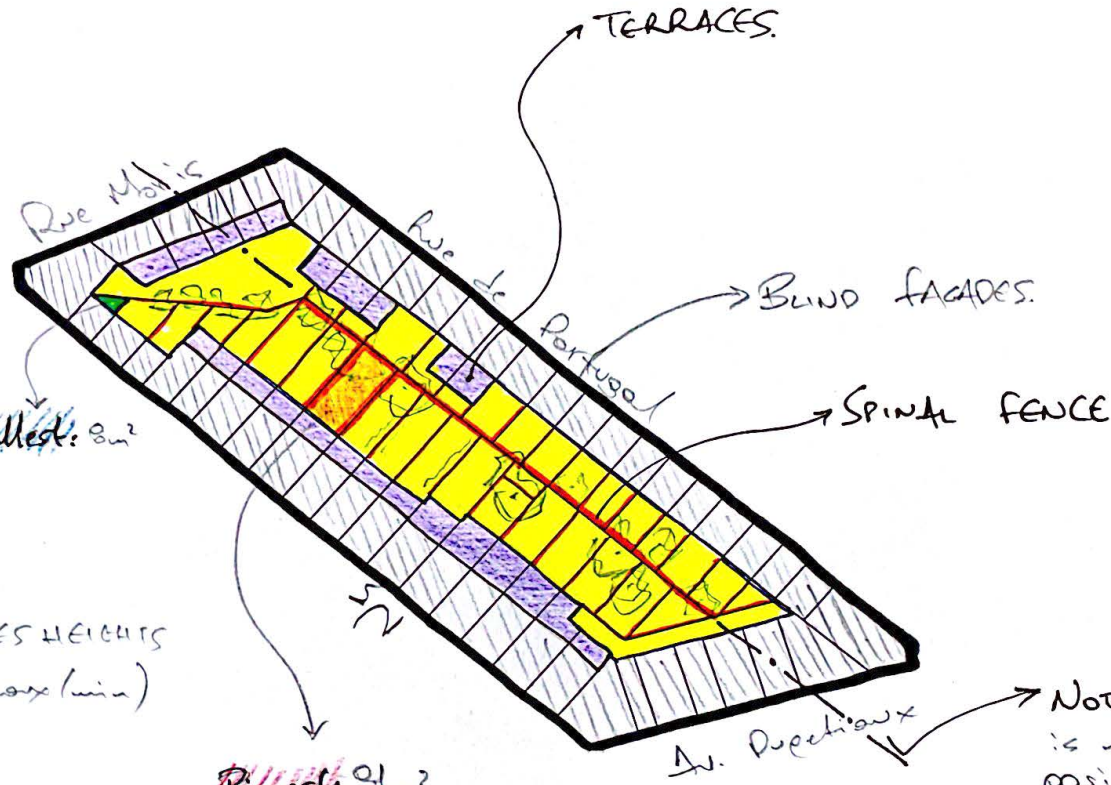
 SOLID FENCE



fences heights  
(max/min)

Smallest: 8m<sup>2</sup>

Biggest: 91m<sup>2</sup>



NOTE: The spinal fence is not in a symmetrical position - the backyards on the one side have more surface than the ones on the other.

HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st

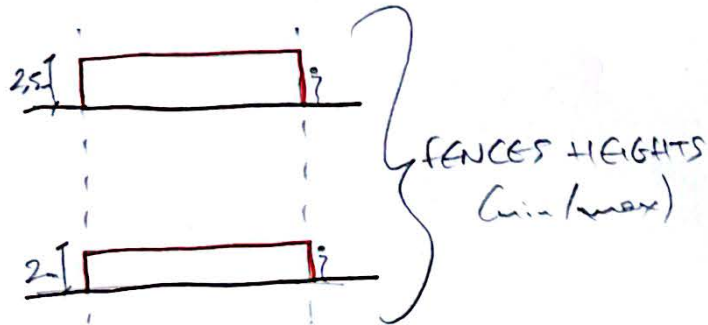
AREA POTENTIALITY  
1980m<sup>2</sup>

A13 HOUSING BLOCK

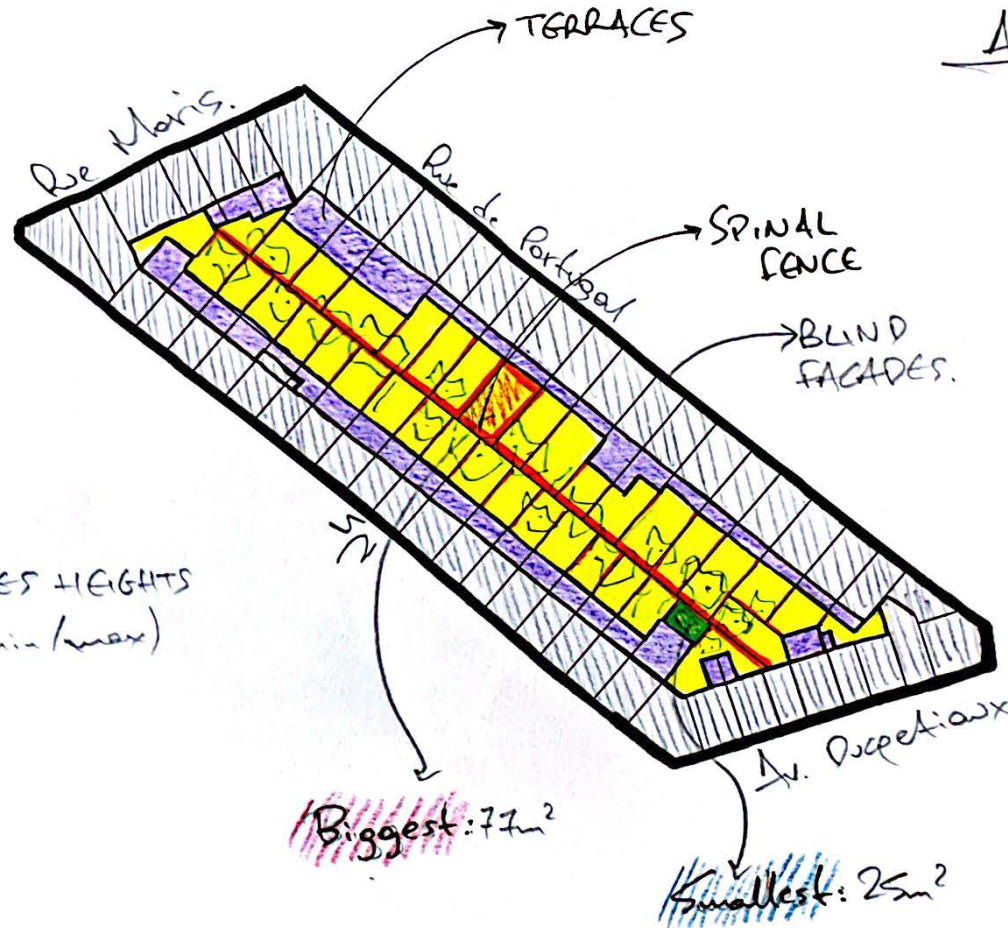
BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 12m  
Max 22m

AREA POTENTIALITY  
1925m<sup>2</sup>

 SOLID FENCE





HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
19th - 20th - 21st



**A15 HOUSING BLOCK**

**AREA POTENTIALITY**  
 $5271m^2 + 2138m^2$

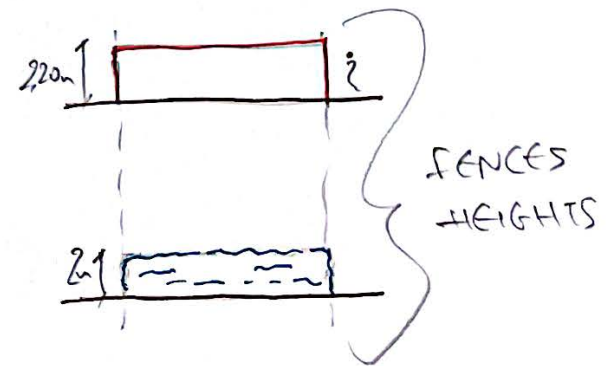
BUILDING HEIGHTS: Min 8m  
 Max: 30m

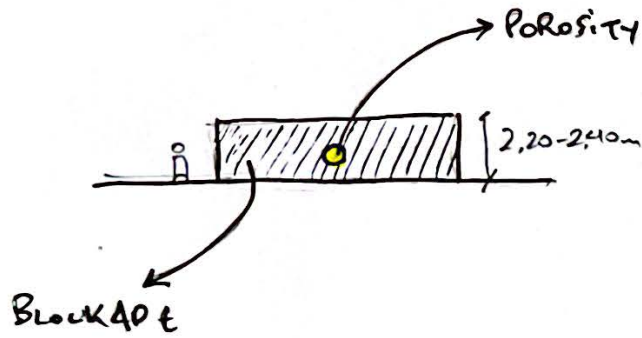
-  SOLID FENCE
-  PLANT BASED FENCE



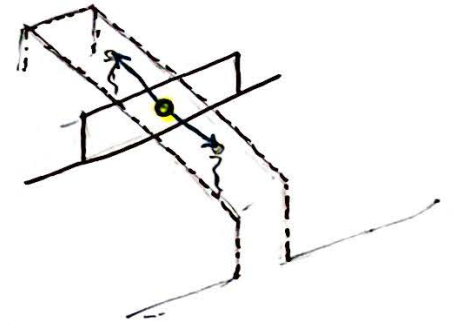
NOTE. THERE ALREADY EXISTS A COMMON SPACE  
 WOULD BE INTERESTING TO TRY AND 'SPILL' THE BACKYARDS  
 THERE

HOUSING CHRONOLOGY  
 19th - 20th - 21st

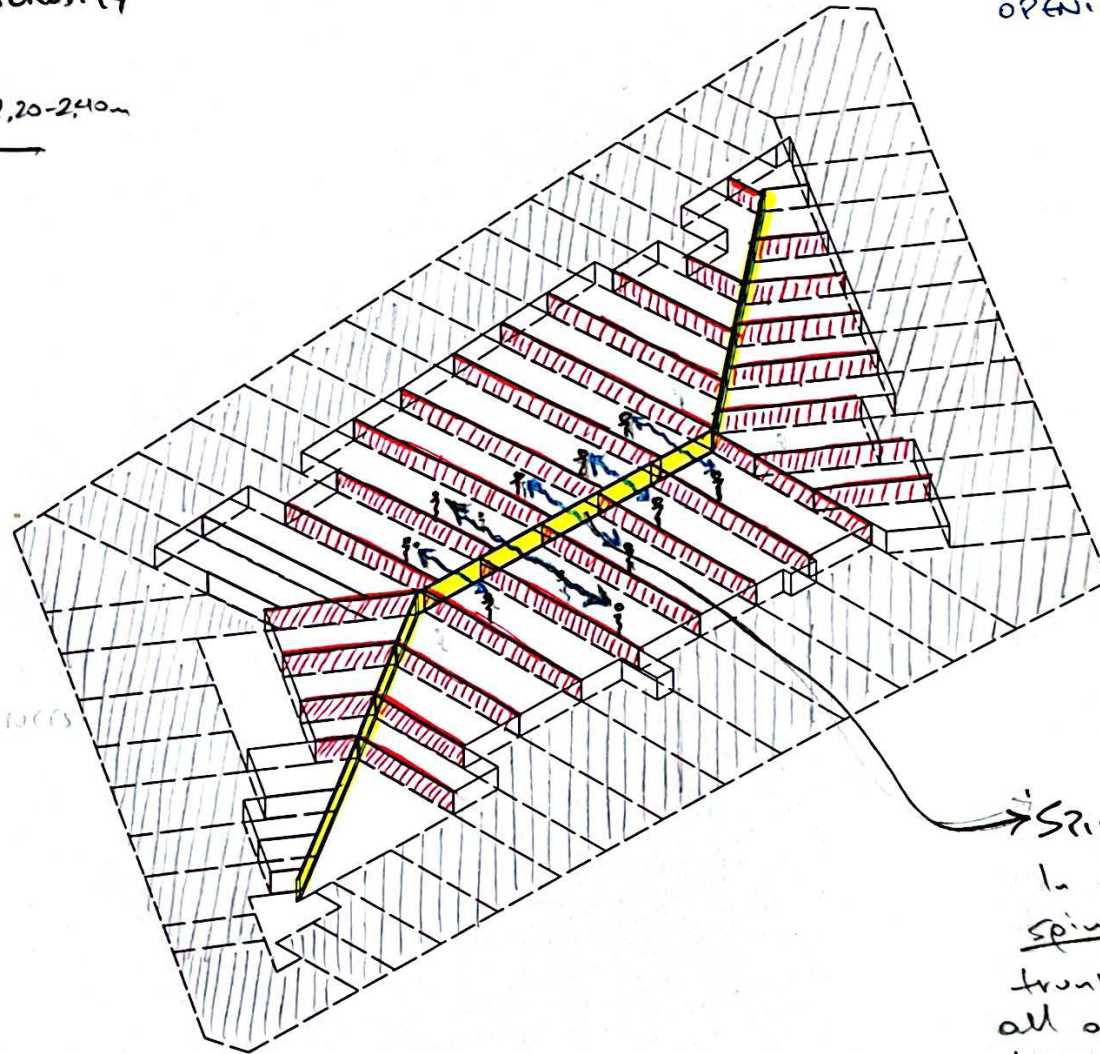




OPENING THE 'SPINAL' FENCE



This fence appears as the most omnipotent here: seems like it was always there - not installed by the humans but from the system itself. If we open that one up maybe the others would follow.



SPINAL FENCE - OTHER FENCES

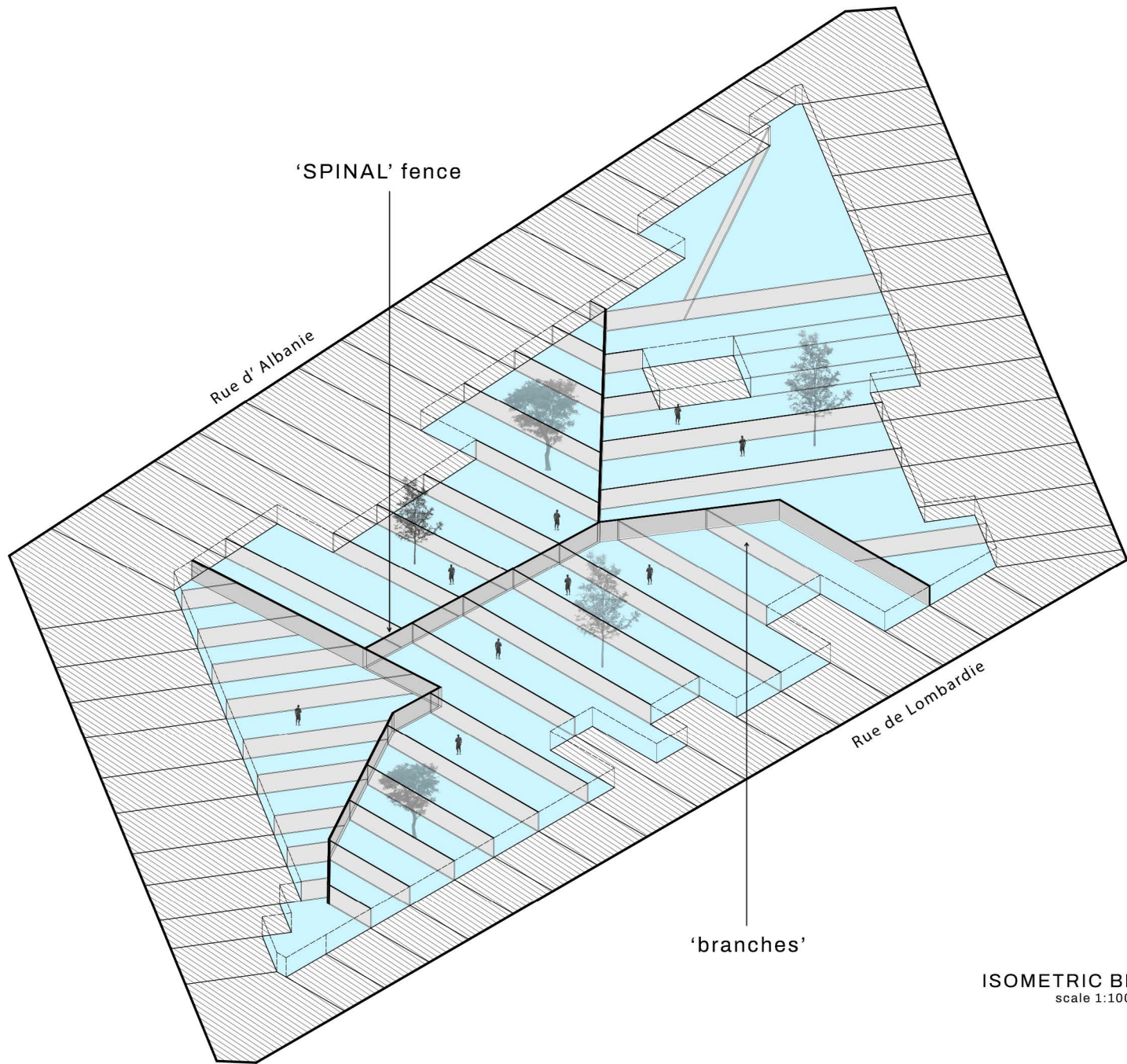
SPINAL FENCE

>  
OTHER FENCES

→ SPINAL' FENCE:

In these blocks there appears to be a spinal fence: much like a tree trunk and its branches (almost) all other fences start from this one. My suggestion would be to start on this fence. This is a fence that seems the most to represent what we are talking about - the idea and practice of alienation.

→ In my opinion - for openings ←



'SPINAL' fence

Rue d'Albanie

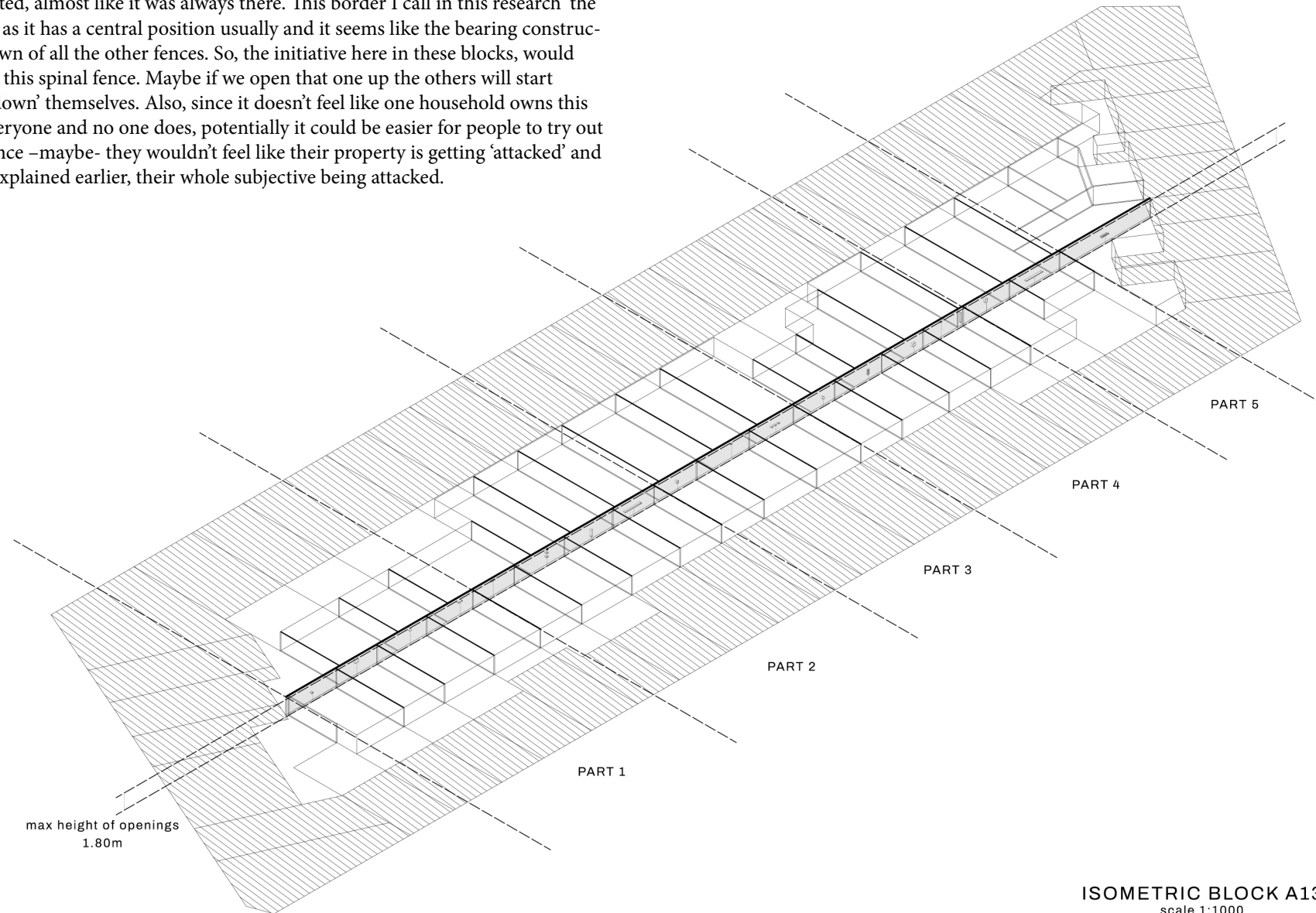
Rue de Lombardie

'branches'

ISOMETRIC BLOCK A8  
scale 1:1000

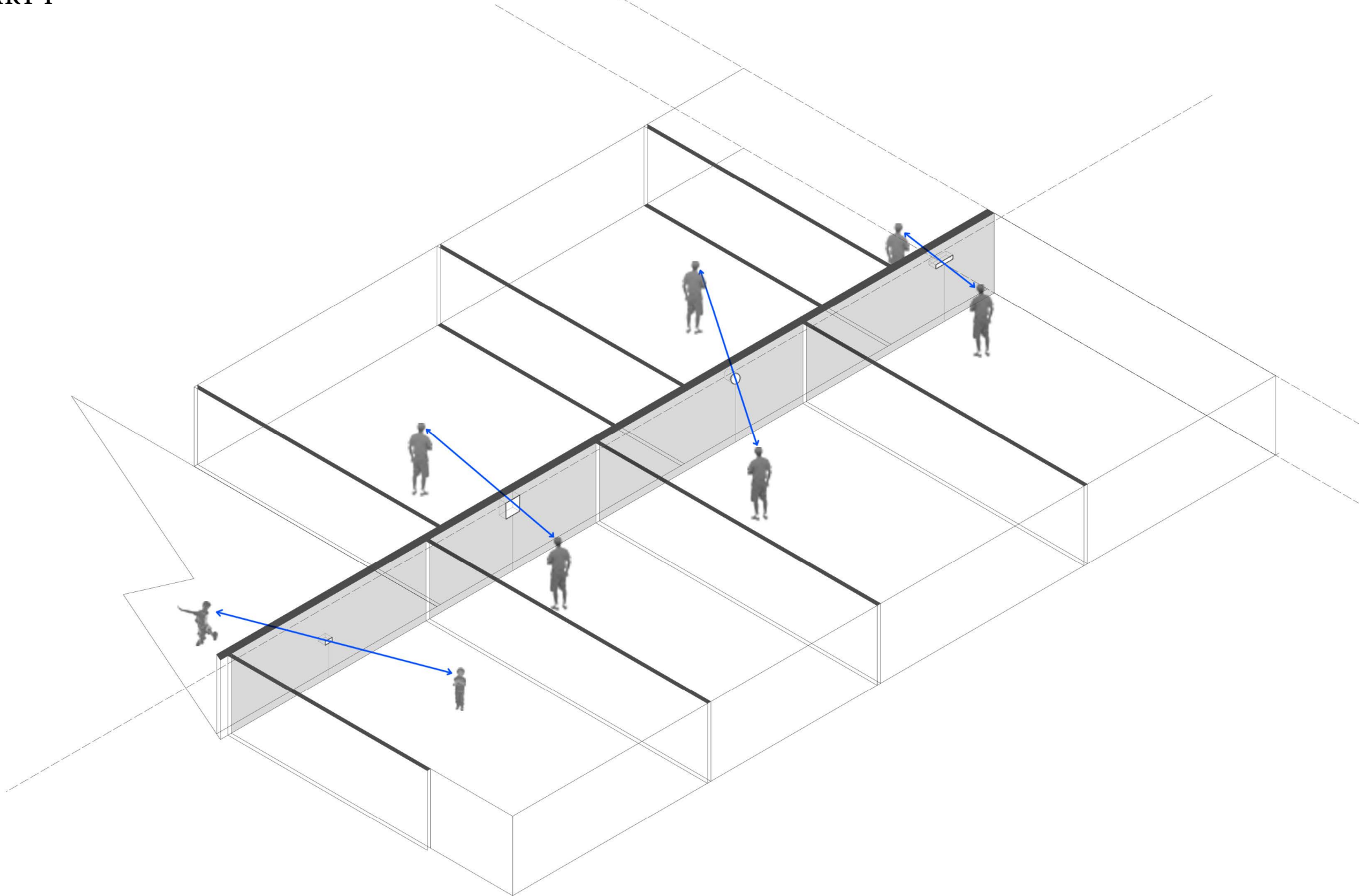
## The spinal fence

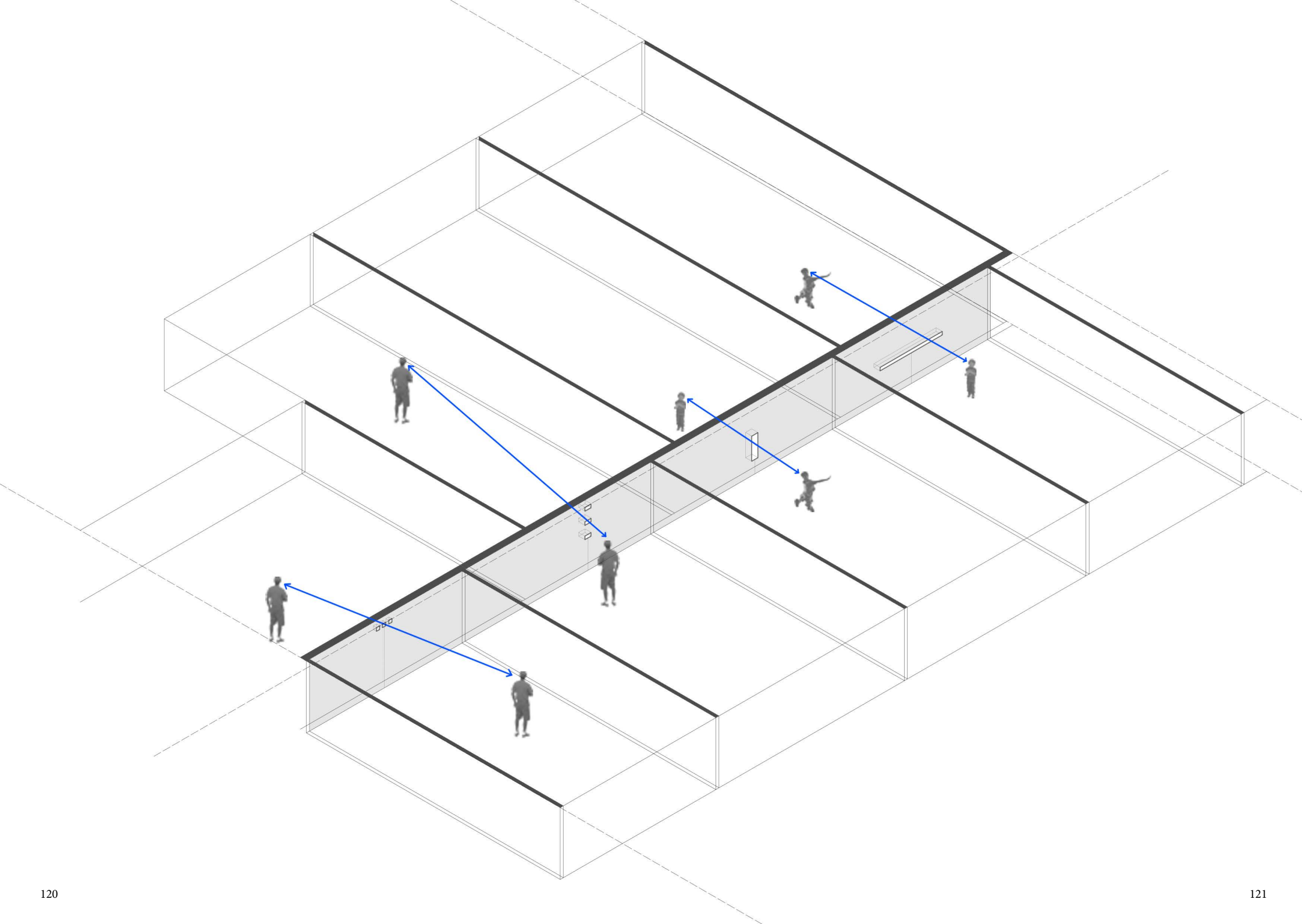
Lastly, though the observation and research of these blocks, there appeared to be a very important characteristic, a border bigger than the others, one that seemed to be the first erected, almost like it was always there. This border I call in this research 'the spinal fence' as it has a central position usually and it seems like the bearing construction and spawn of all the other fences. So, the initiative here in these blocks, would be to 'attack' this spinal fence. Maybe if we open that one up the others will start 'crumbling down' themselves. Also, since it doesn't feel like one household owns this fence but everyone and no one does, potentially it could be easier for people to try out openings, since -maybe- they wouldn't feel like their property is getting 'attacked' and thus, as we explained earlier, their whole subjective being attacked.



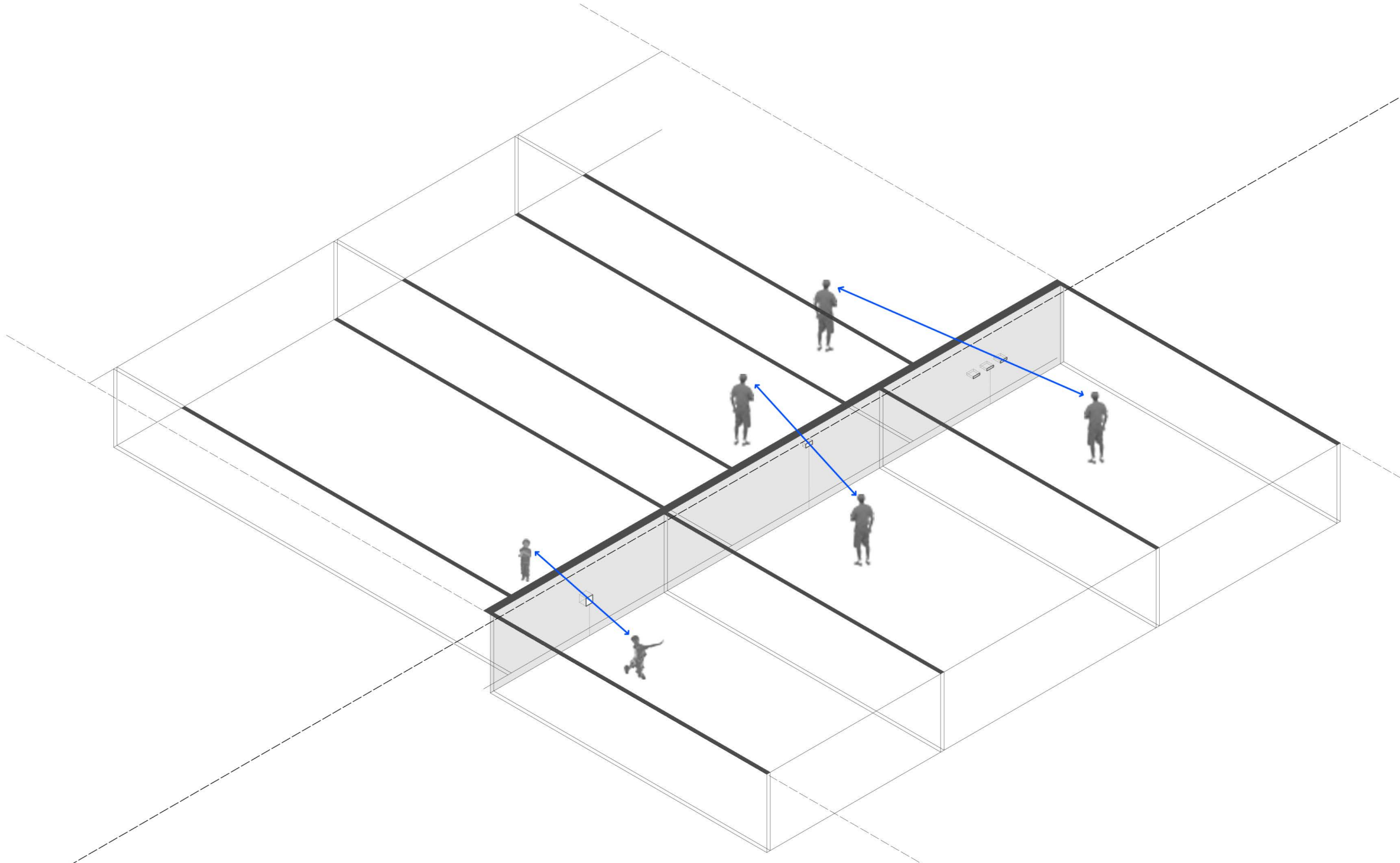
# EXAMPLES OF OPENINGS

## PART 1

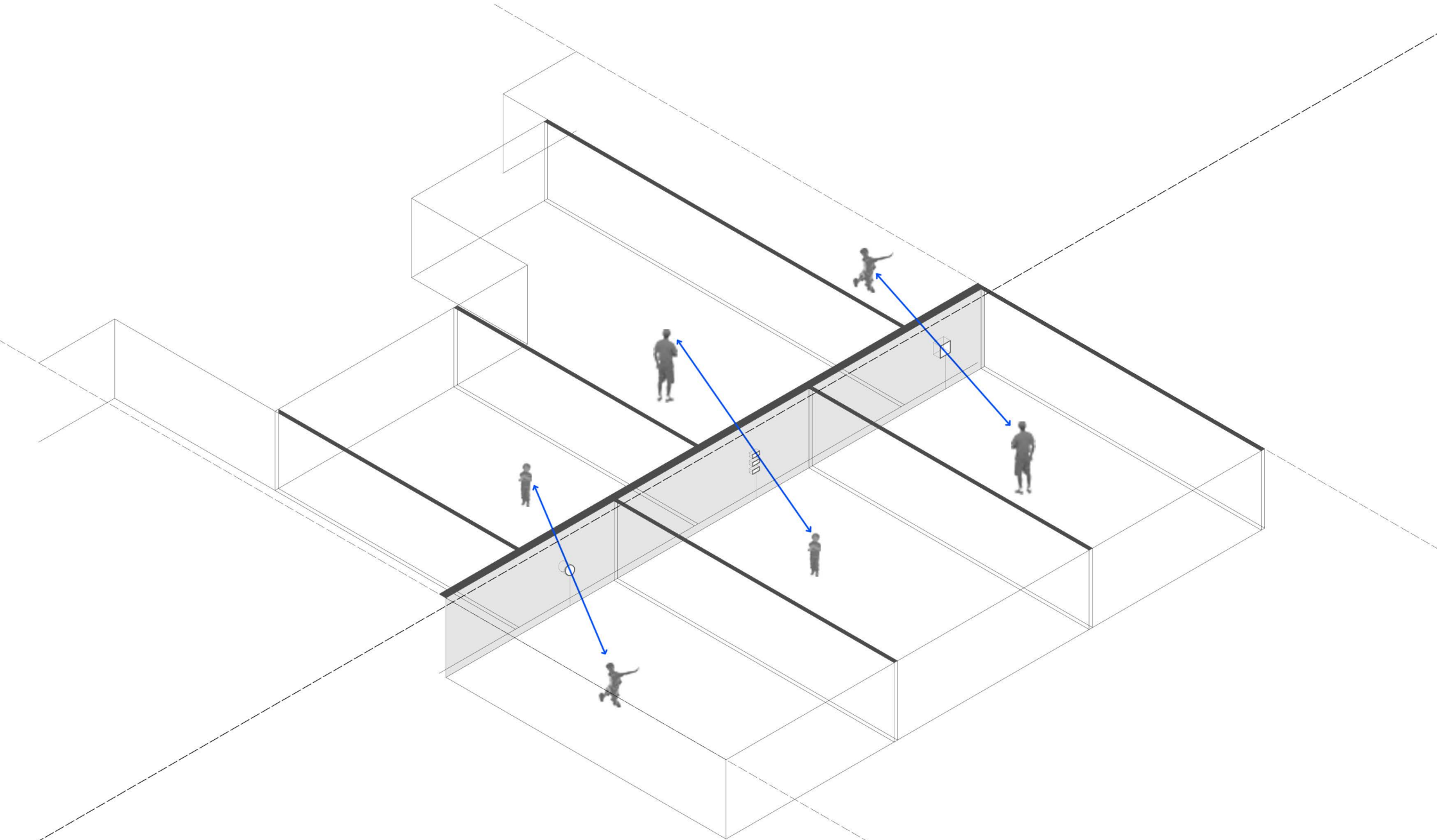




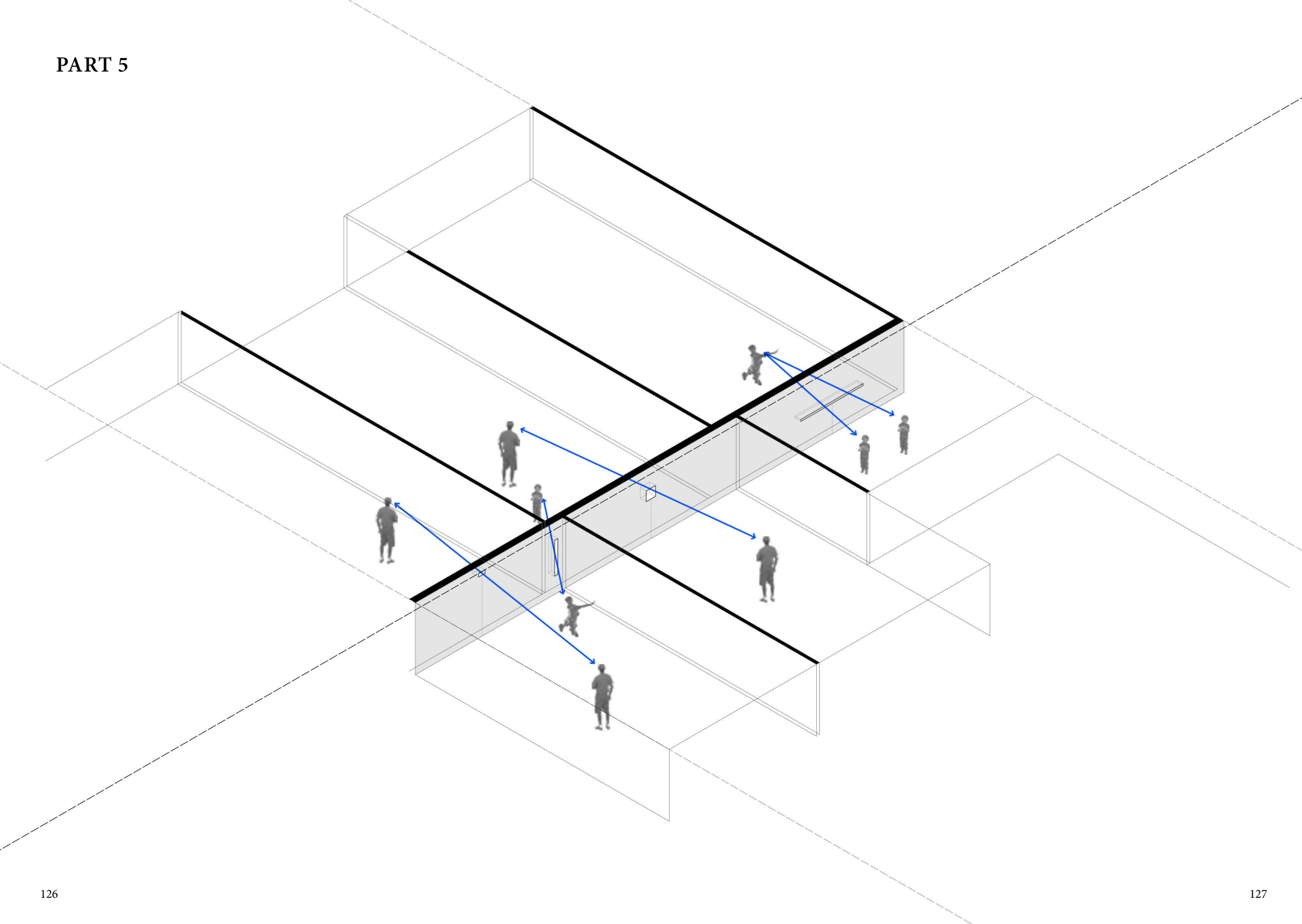
PART 3



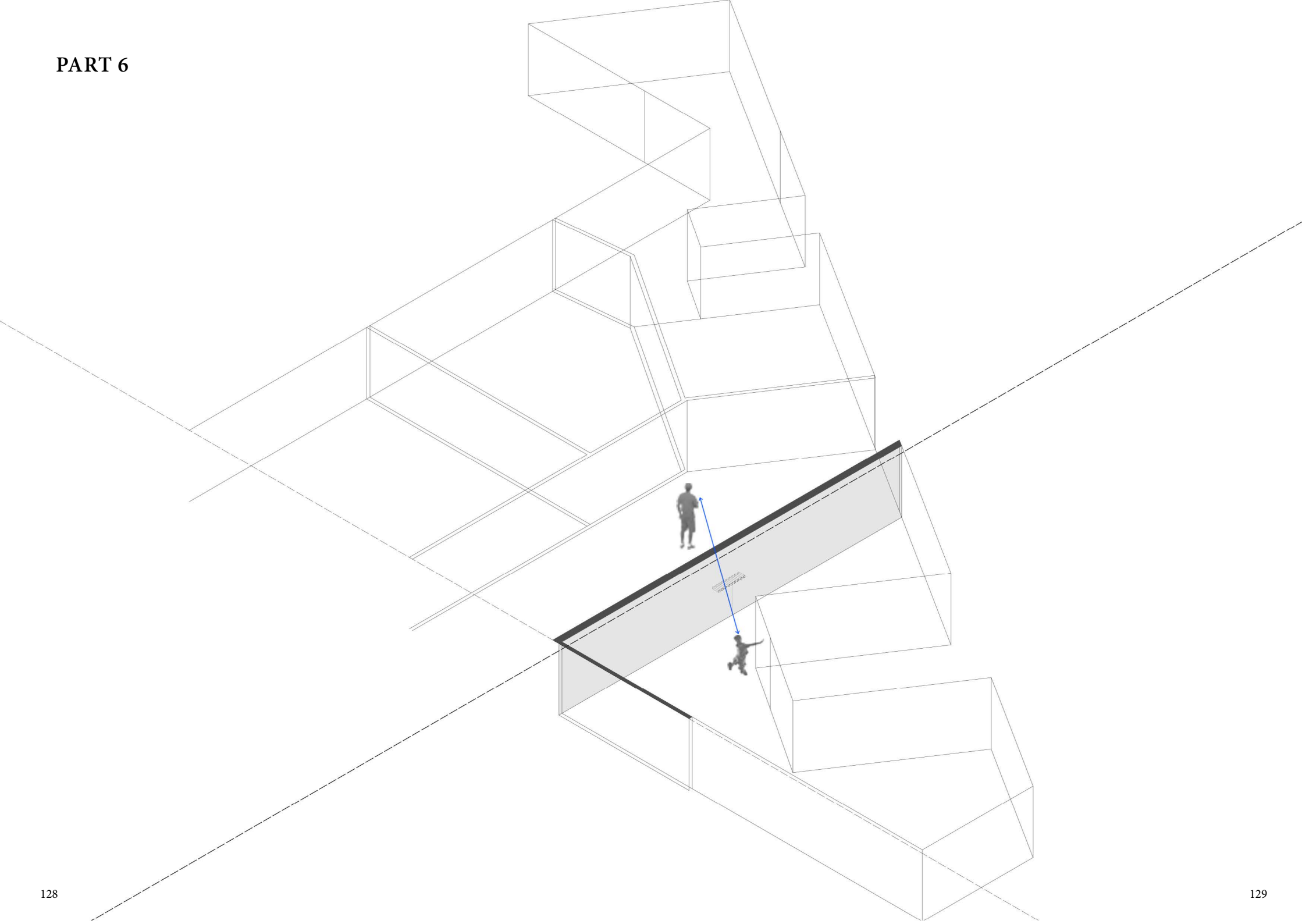
PART 4



PART 5



PART 6



## **Towards a politics of becoming**

This research project is a double faced question. What is there that we don't see? How does it formulate our subjectivity, without us knowing about it? And if we can see what is there, can we hijack it in an effort to change our (spatial and relational) reality? Can we alter the very same thing that blocks our political subjectivity into one that fosters it? Can we take back and redistribute power through spatial alteration and collective appropriation? The border itself and the minimal cut we are suggesting is not an end, or the end. It is only a beginning. Not an answer but a question. Not a closed, predetermined form, but one that's pliable from our own bare hands. A prefiguration that will let us experience the ends that we thrive for, through the means themselves. An invitation to act right now. A vow not to stay enclosed, inside the enclaves of capitalist and neoliberal reproduction of social relations that have been forced upon us (or we are imprisoned inside them). A vow to spread. If we alter our relationality and environment through Commoning, we must keep it open-ended. Or else we risk creating (and becoming) another form of enclosure. If our political existence depends on confrontation, the question is: Can we, through minimal spatial intervention, reanimate the political - the shared, the lived, the confrontational?

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