

Public bath in Gamlestaden

Bath as a platform for recreation and social activity



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Abstract

Bath culture is existing in many cultures represented in Sweden today and it is a space where we are all equal. Therefore, it is an ideal space for different people to interact with each other. A public bath is a social meeting place where people gather physically but at the same time, they are there themselves.

The site in Gamlestaden makes the bath available for a large group of people in Gothenburg due to the good connections with public transportation, and in this way different people can go for a bath under the same roof. The bath will function as a platform for citizens to engage and meet.

The design proposal consists of a bath, bistro, and a park. The thesis focuses on the rituals (undress-nude-wash-swim-sauna-sweat-wash-dress) conducted when taking a bath. A public bath is the only space where people watch each other naked it demands an understanding of how materials react to our bodies. This master thesis seeks to understand and materialize the space in which people relax and enjoy.

A starting point for this project is the discussion of building a new regional bath due to the lack of baths in Gothenburg, and I believe there is a gap between the large baths run by the community and the private spas. It is an attempt to present an alternative bath beyond the existing baths in Gothenburg.

This project is executed through research by design as a tool, and it is represented by a mix of iterations, drawings, physical models, and visualizations. Studies of built references are used to understand the spatial and structural execution and literature is studied to understand theoretical concepts of spatial experience.

Keywords: recreation, bath, rituals

Student background

2020-2021	<i>Master of Science in Architecture</i> Chalmers University of Technology, SE
2019-2020	<i>Master's exchange in Architecture</i> École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), CH
2018-2019	<i>Architectural Intern</i> Ahrbom & Partner arkitektkontor, Stockholm, SE
2015-2018	<i>Bachelor of Science in Architecture</i> Chalmers University of Technology, SE
2014-2015	<i>Design & Arts</i> Lunds Konst/Designskola (LKD), SE

I. Prologue

Research question

How can architectural spaces amplify the rituals conducted in a bath and contribute to recreation and social activity in Gamlestaden?

Thesis background

Bath culture came from the countryside and were adapted in an urban context by the end of the 19th century. In Sweden, public bathing became a facility for the working class where they could take a bath and clean themselves. Later, when the standard increased and new ideas was established, the public bath developed and became a recreational facility. (Hallemar & Forsell, 2019)

Today public baths are the only space where people, unknown to each other companion and are naked together. It is an unspoken acceptance within the group. There is a certain tension in the air when going to a public bath, and we all adapt to the rituals.

Gothenburg is an expanding city, and the municipality claims that new baths is a necessary measure to sustain the populations swimming skills and public health as the availability of baths and the tourism in the future. (Göteborgs Stad, 2016)

I also believe there is a gap between the range of existing baths today. Either one can visit a luxurious spa or a large swimming facility, there is a need for baths which is not only programmed for the organized sports movement or expensive spas. This master's thesis positions itself between these two typologies.

Method

The project has been conducted through a research by design method to create a design for a bath in a park in Gamlestaden, Gothenburg. An exploration phase started the project where historical baths were studied and later led to a research phase with both theoretical studies and studies of built references. The design process then followed by a development of program and a site analysis.

The design developed from an exploration phase of site, volume, and constructions, which later were being investigated and evaluated. This is followed by a design process where precise drawings, models and construction details led to the final design proposal.

Delimitations

The site of this thesis project is proposed to become a public park as Gamlestaden is developing and built with housing. The municipality, *Göteborgs stad* has not developed a detailed development plan for the site. This thesis is a speculative proposal for a bath and an addition to the park.

Aim

The aim of this thesis project is to propose a public bath in Gamlestaden with the ambition to provide the inhabitants with a bath facility for recreation and social activity. The bath is a place to gather alone or together.

I believe that the everyday bath, and meeting between persons in silence is a way to interact. The presence of an unknown nude person next to another requires certain design. Therefore, it is important that these meetings will be performed in a space, which creates a sensory experience, working with temperature, materials, and light. Focus on materiality and detailing to create spaces for bodily experience through rituals conducted within a bath.

Reading instructions

I. Prologue presents an overview of this master's thesis. II. Preface with the project references, history, and future development of the site. III. Design proposal consists of drawings and model photos and collages to interpret the master's thesis project. IV. Epilogue consists of a discussion and bibliography.

II. Preface

References



Crematory in Gävle. Natural light enters through the long windows between the wall and the ceiling and provides a view of the surrounding forest. The floors are clad in slate stone and the ceilings are clad in pine, which gives a natural interior, connected to the outside. It is an introvert building but although it has a clear connection to its surroundings.

Figure 1: ELLT - Gävle krematorium, 1960



Japanese public bath in Tokyo, functions as a meeting place for locals in a neighbourhood. The bath consists of several pools, sauna and relax room. This bath has an everyday character and is elegant executed with an idea of how different materials affect each other. The Japanese bath as a typology and phenomena stands as a reference to this project.

Figure 2: Schemata Architects - bath, 2019

Site analysis

Today the site (Kvarteret Abborren) in Gamlestaden is an empty parking lot. Since 2020 the parking lot is not in use any more due to the move of SKF's headquarter. Kv. Abborren was previously occupied by traditional Landshövdingehus and a laundry facility. The buildings were demolished in the mid-1970s and became a parking lot for employees at SKF.

To the east, Kv. Abborren faces the oldest parts of SKF's industrial estate, a four-storey building with a clear industrial character in brick. The facades are considerable long, mainly towards Artillerigatan. The eastern parts of the parking lot are to be built with housing in the future and therefore it demands an understanding of its relation to structures, materials, and proportions.

Säveån flows south of the block and is surrounded by trees and bushes and can be described as a lushy area, which is preserved. The park between Säveåns Strandgata and Säveån is treated as something to observe from the bath. To the north, the site is delimited by the relatively hard trafficked Artillerigatan. Trams, cars, and buses pass by, making the street a barrier between the buildings on both sides of the road. The trees around the site are preserved and functions as a border between park and road.

Gamlestaden can be divided into subdivisions where, northwest is a whole new city project, northeast belongs to the historical Albert Lilienberg layout, southwest is the historical industrial area, and the southeast is the previously industrial area occupied by SKF. The site of the bath is right in the middle of these subdivisions of Gamlestaden where the bath is to be surrounded by a park.

With its close connection to Gamlestadstorget this site is available for a large group of people in Gothenburg with its good connections with public transportation.

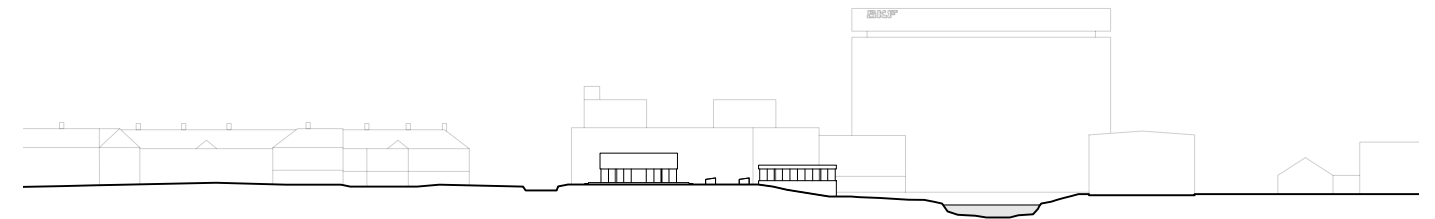




Figure 3: Kv. Abborren 1955

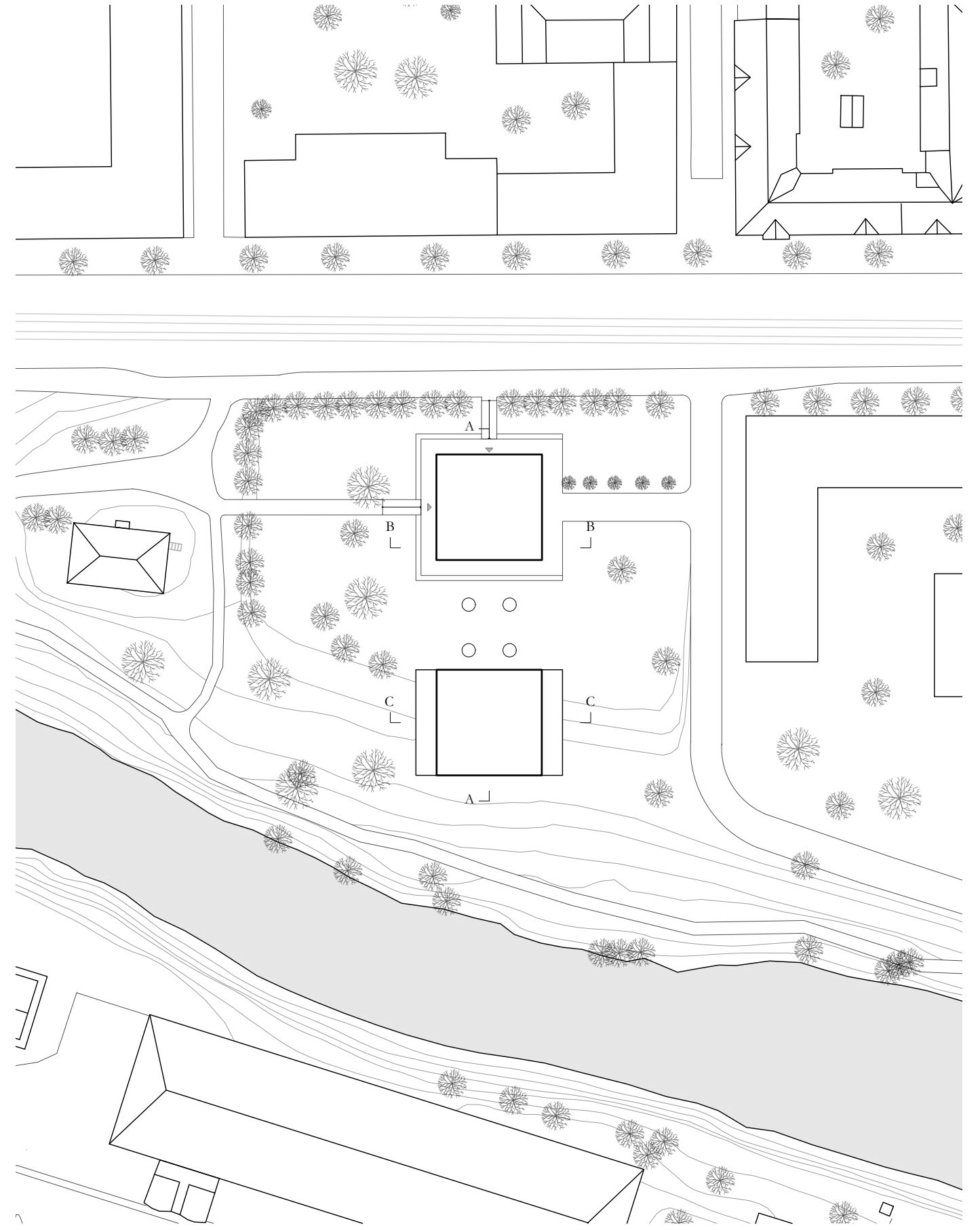


Kv. Abborren 2021



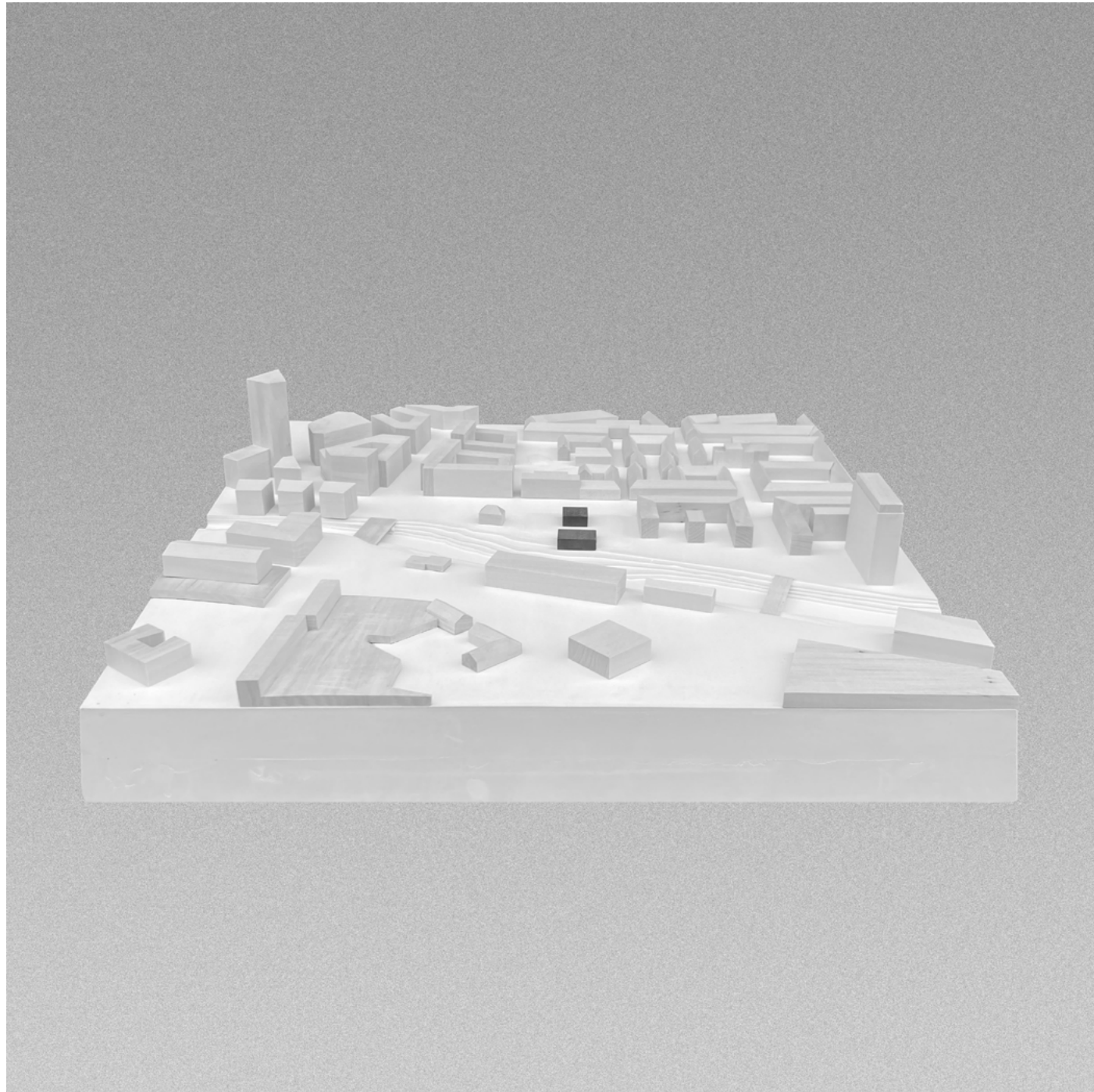


Site plan 1:5000

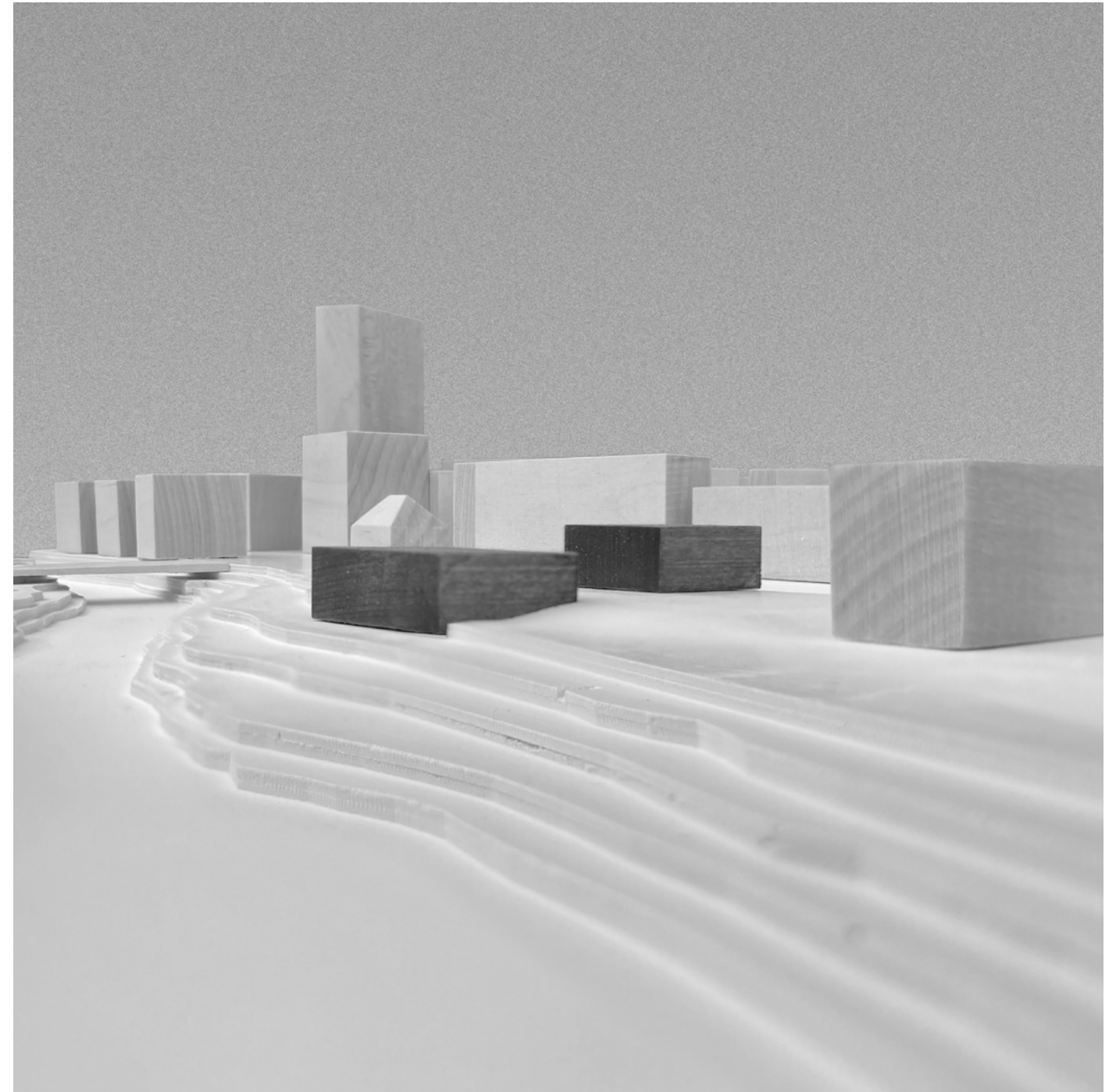


Site plan 1:1000





Site model 1:1000



Site model 1:1000

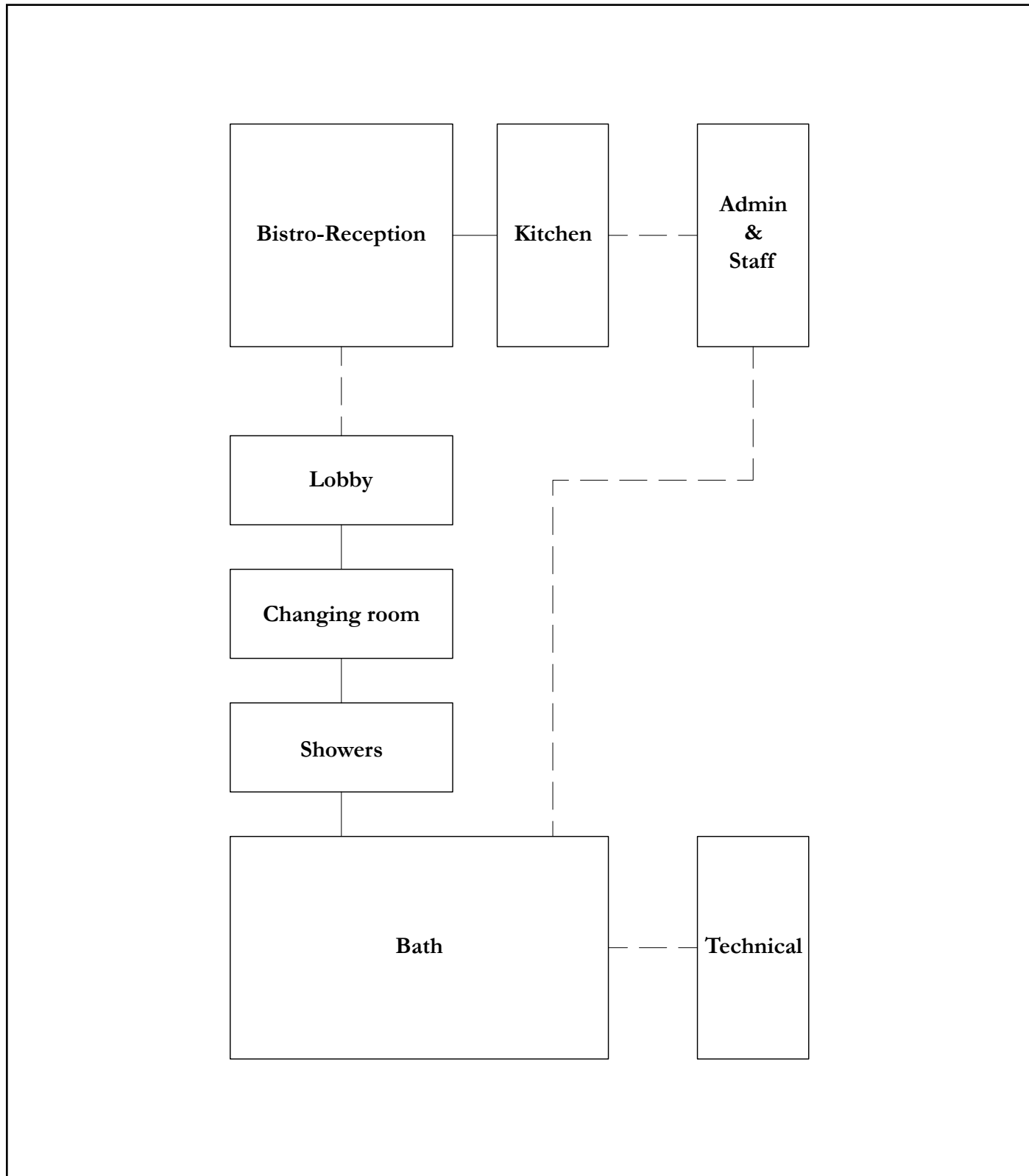
Description of program

The bath consists of two buildings connected underground. The entrance building consists of two public functions, bistro and reception, and administration on the first floor. The bathhouse consists of changing rooms, showers, bath, and sauna.

Lobby, reception, and bistro are located towards Artillerigatan in northwest. The second lobby in the basement is the entrance to changing rooms and showers. The main bath with pools faces towards Săveân. Functions for washing and relaxing is the link between the changing rooms and the pools.

The two buildings have the same roof construction, with four steel columns bearing the concrete coffer system roof. The walls are carried out in different materials and constructions. The entrance building is constructed with concrete walls supported by steel pillars and sections of glass attached to the ground. This let large amounts of light in and at the same time creates a transparency between the bistro and the park. Everything below ground level is carried out in brick and tiles. The bearing walls are constructed with a cross bond brick wall, and everything above ground level is constructed in concrete.

The window's lines are the same in the buildings to enable a visibility and transparency but at the same time enclose and create an introvert space in the bathhouse.

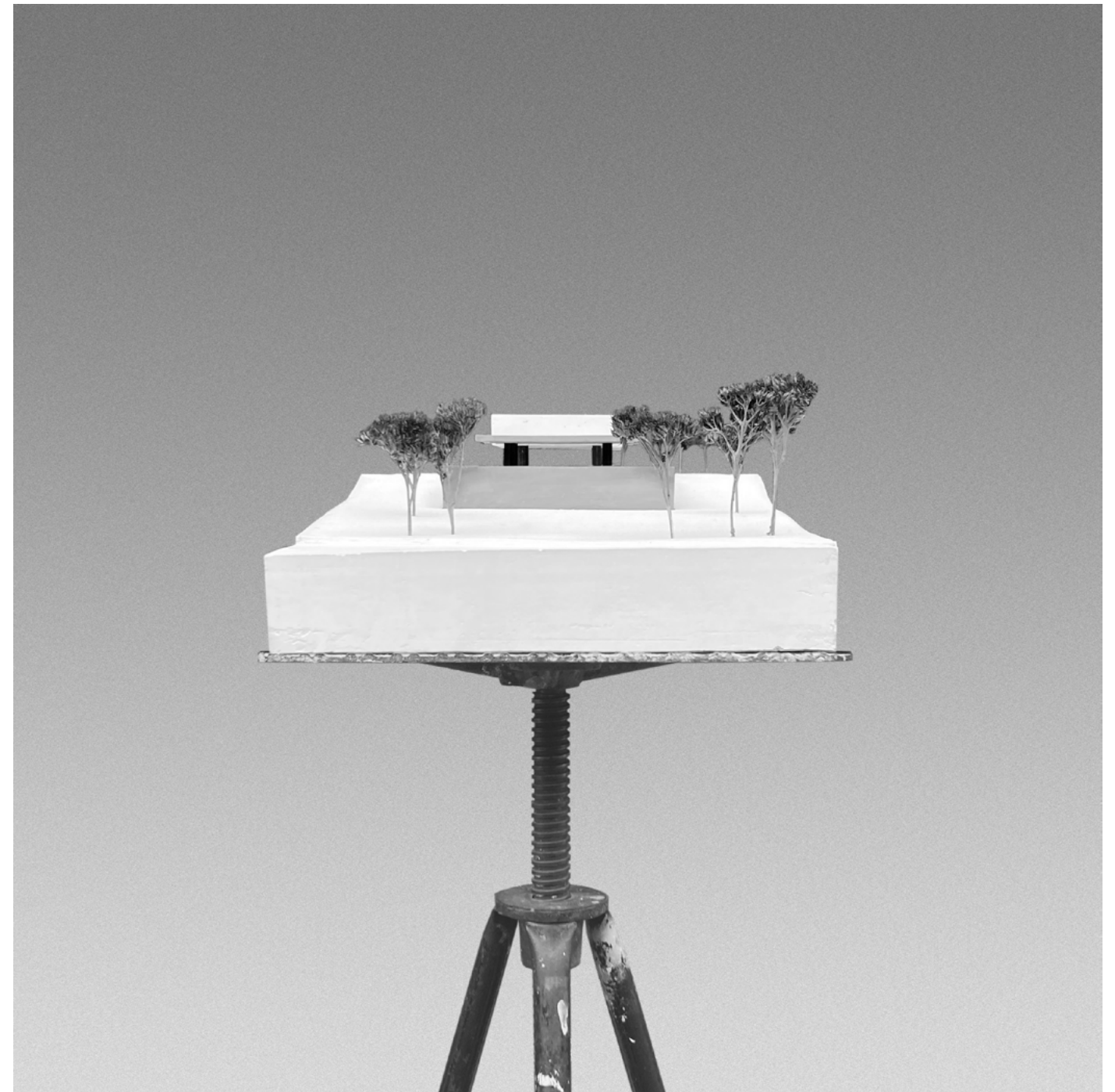
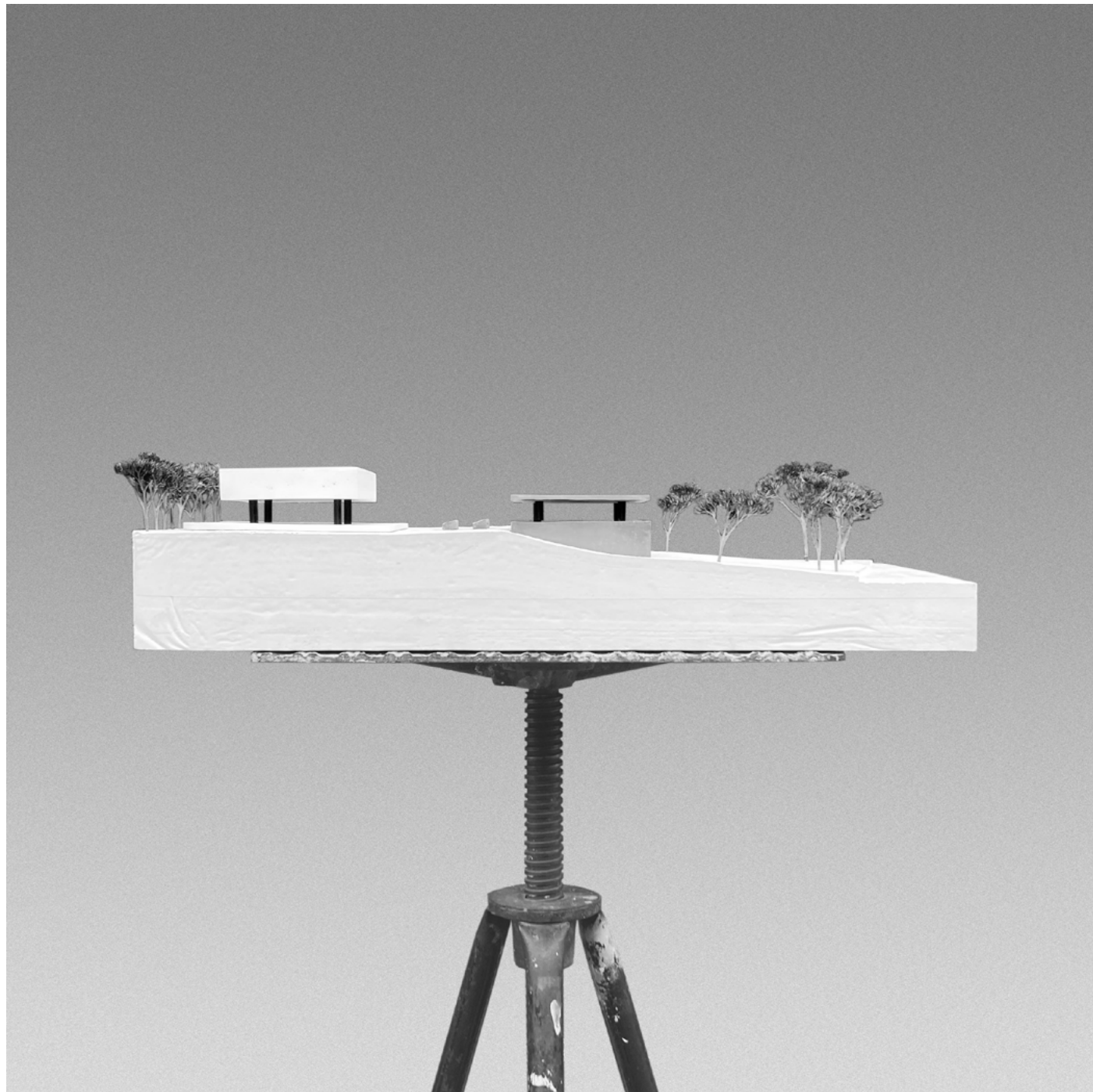


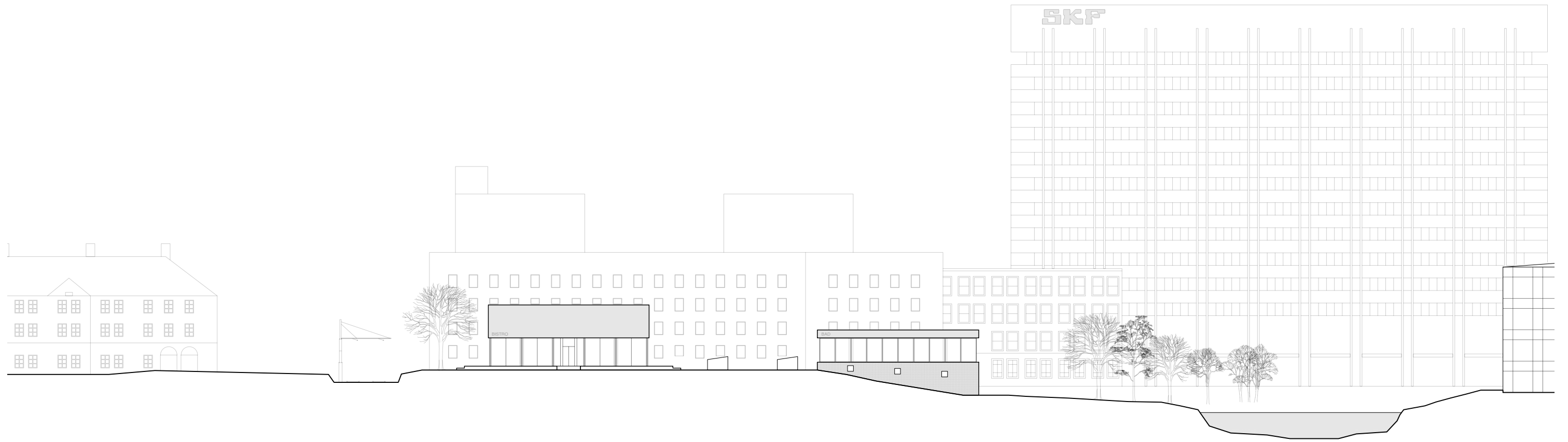
Space program

PLAN 0		PLAN -1	
Entrance & Bistro	240	Staff	30
Reception & Bar	17	Storage	47
WC	12	Lobby	53
Kitchen	32	WC	32
Communication	82	Changing room	118
Total:	380 sqm	Showers	116
		Bath	435
		Sauna	67
		Stair	12
PLAN 1		Communication	153
Office	23	Technical	40
Staff	23	Total:	1100 sqm
WC	4		
Communication	32	PLAN -2	
Total:	82 sqm	Technical	350
		Area total:	1900 sqm

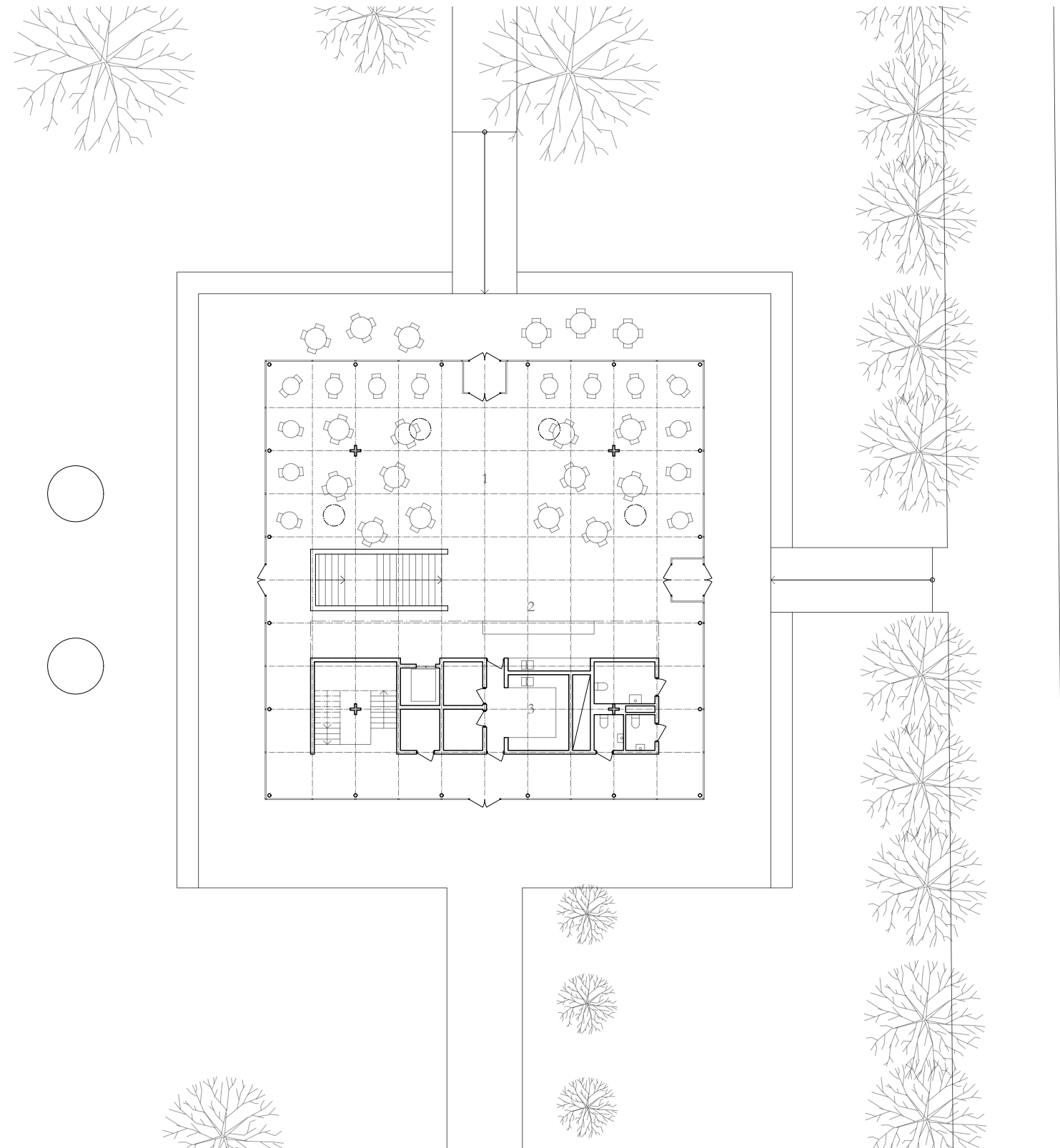
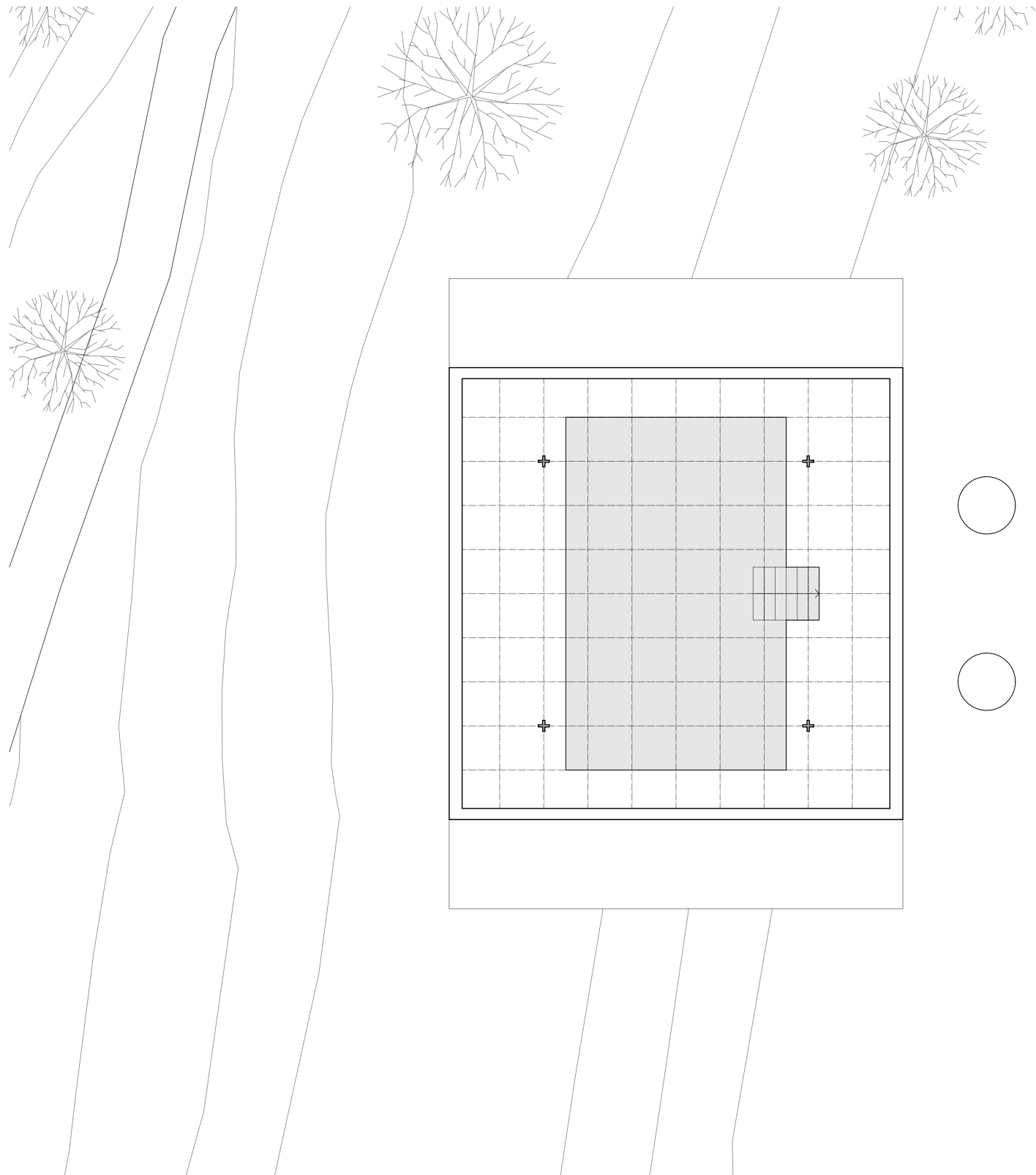
III. Design proposal











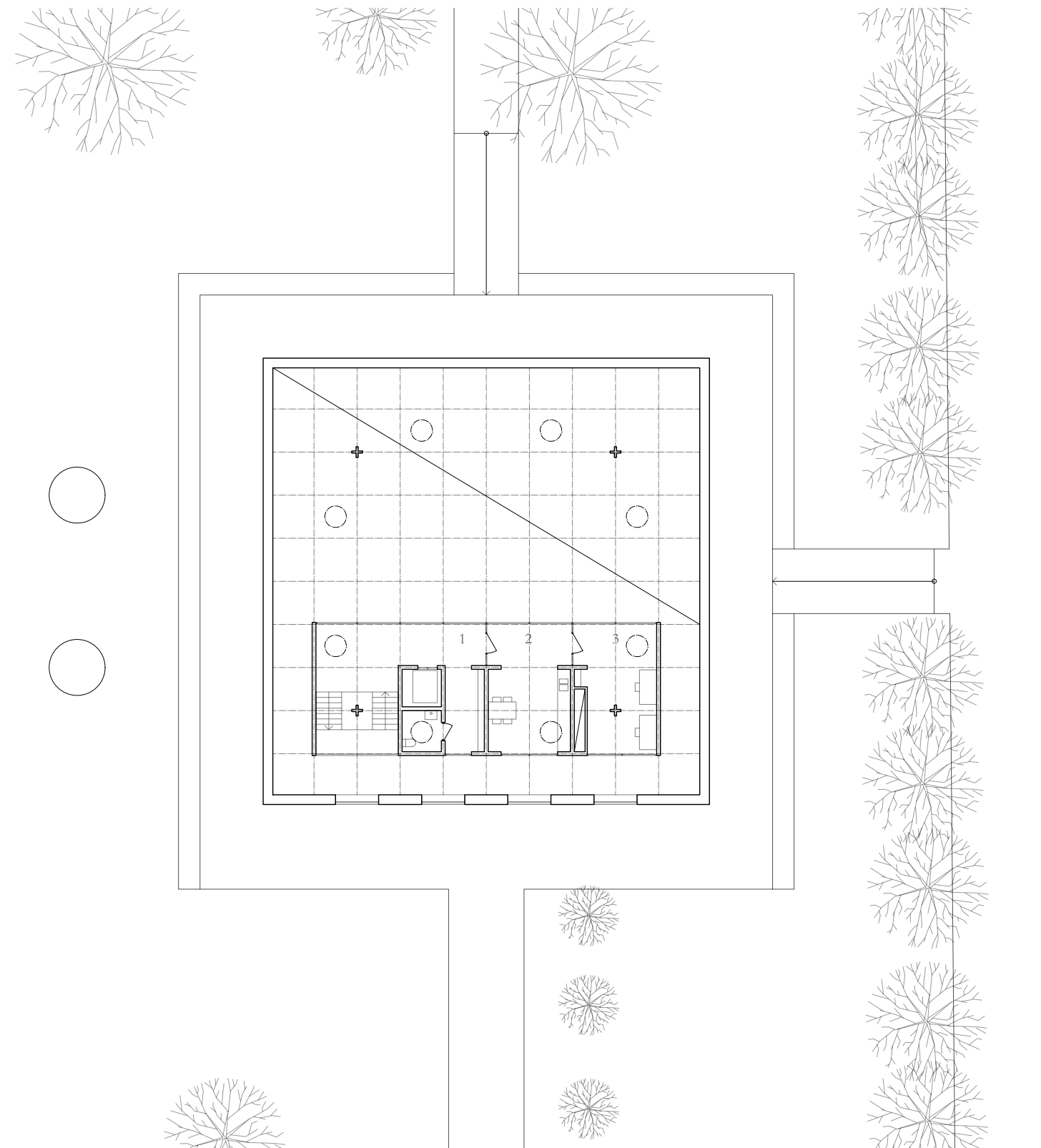
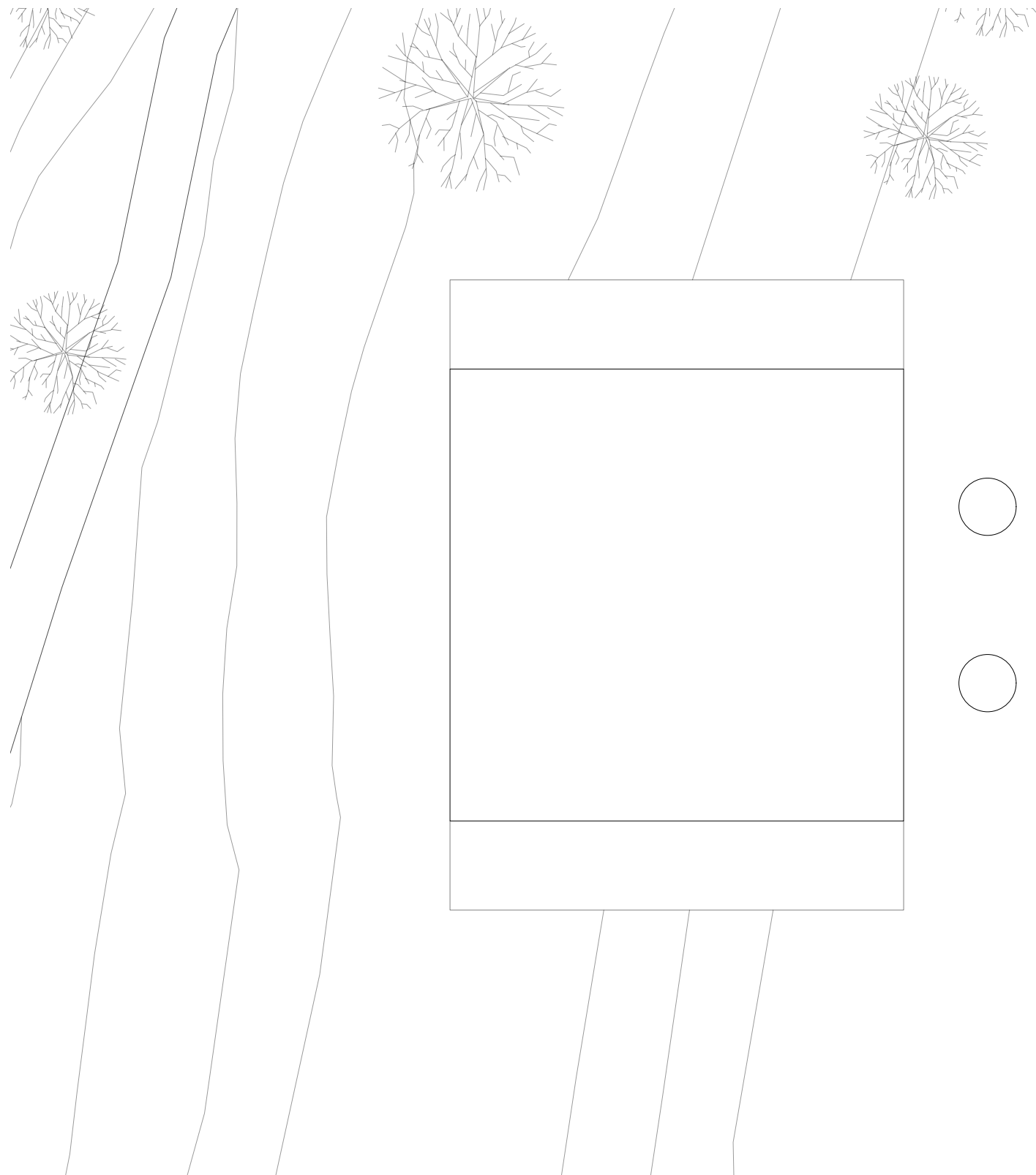
- 1. Bistro
- 2. Reception
- 3. Kitchen



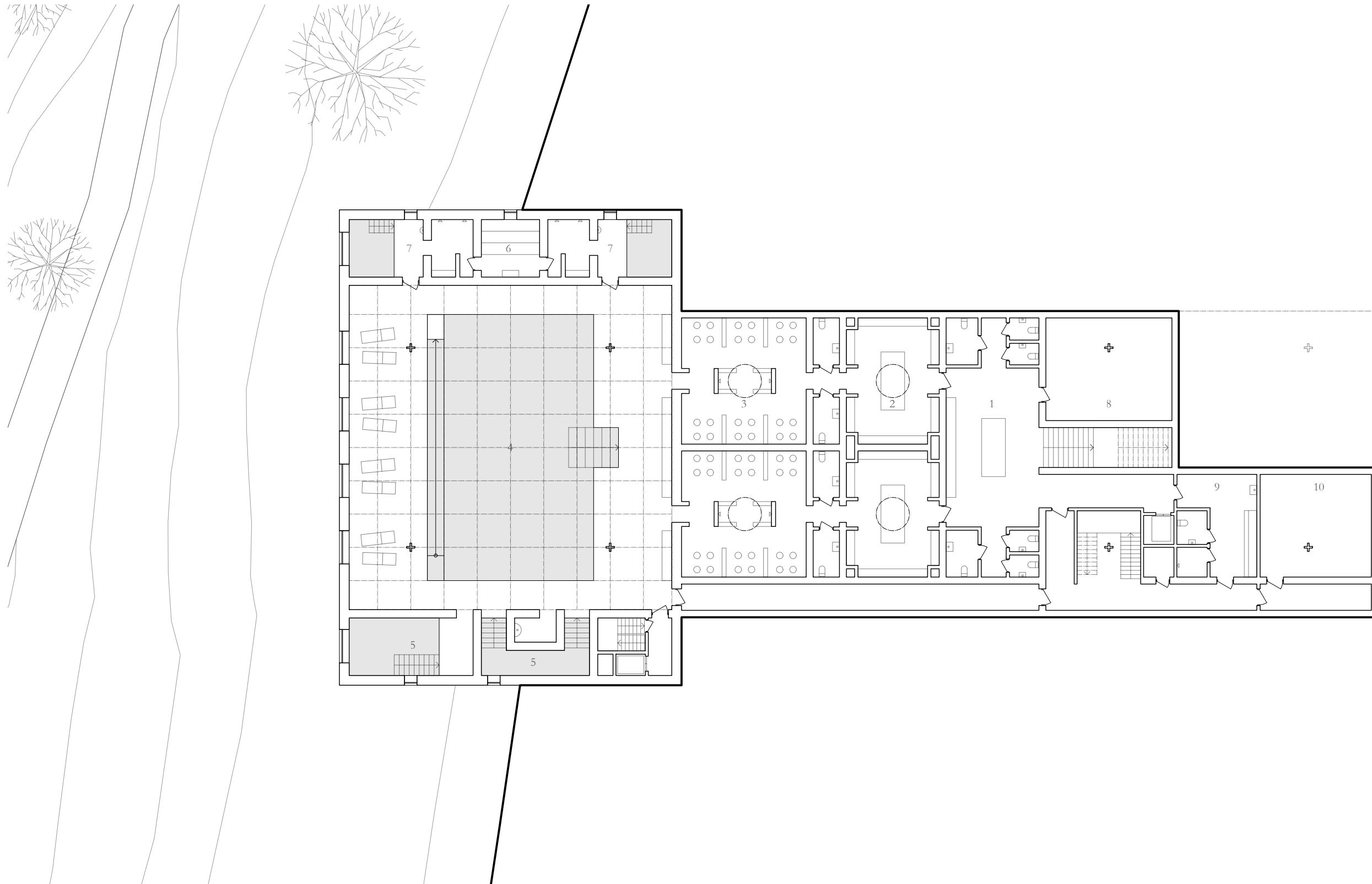
Model 1:20 reception



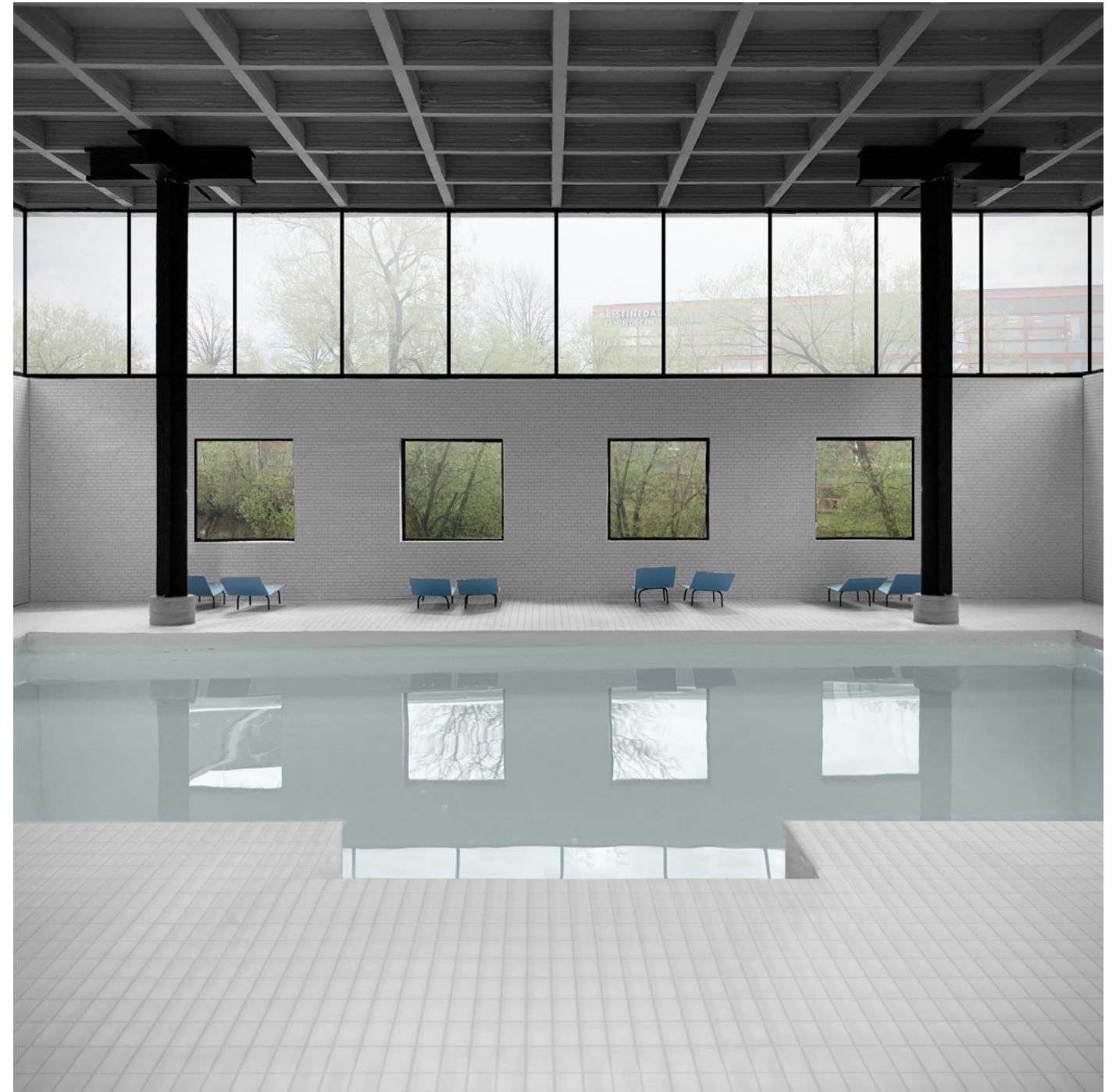
Model 1:20 bistro

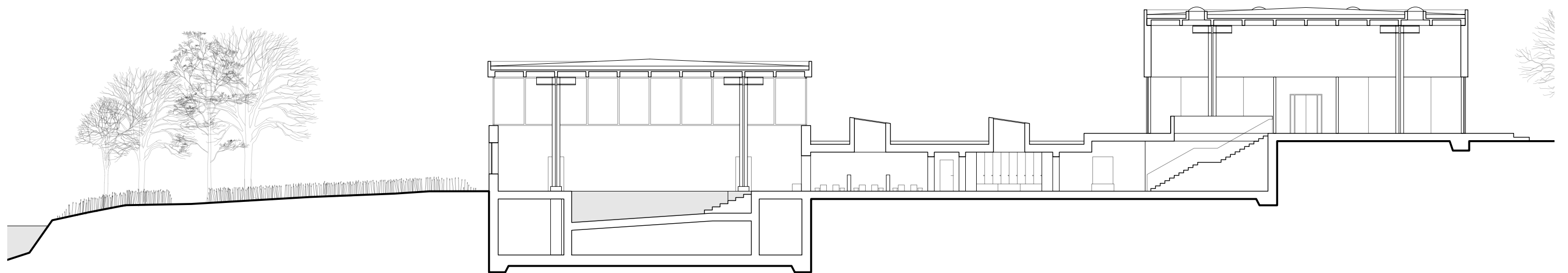


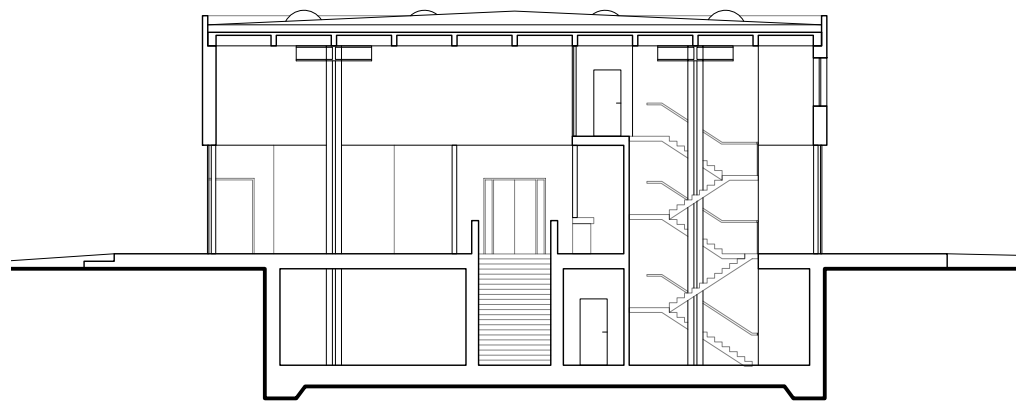
- 1. Cloakroom
- 2. Staff
- 3. Office



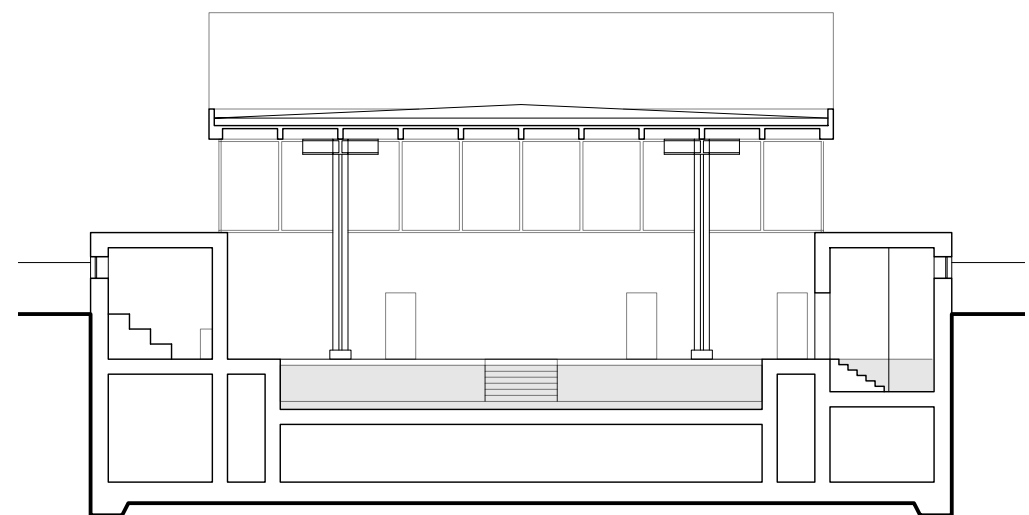
- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Lobby | 5. Hot bath | 8. Storage |
| 2. Changing room | 6. Sauna | 9. Staff |
| 3. Showers | 7. Cold bath | 10. Technical |
| 4. Main bath | | |



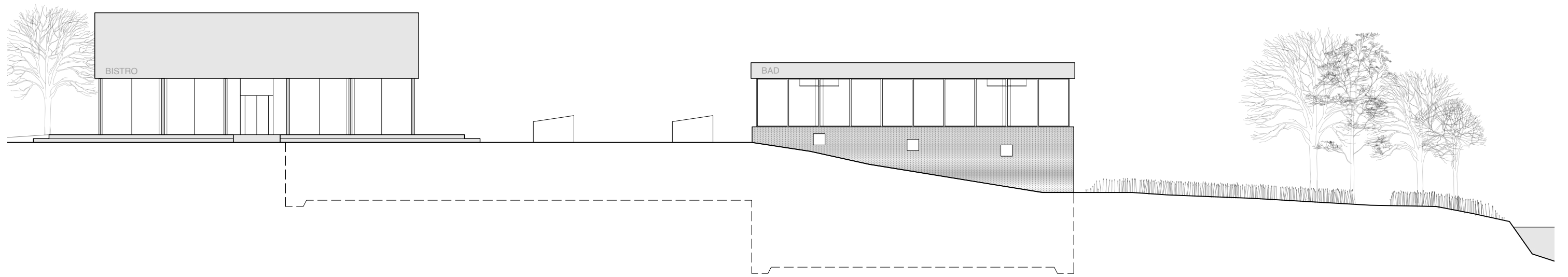


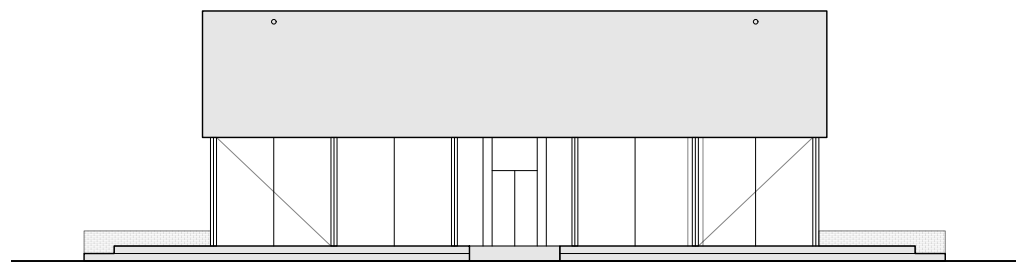


Section B-B 1:250

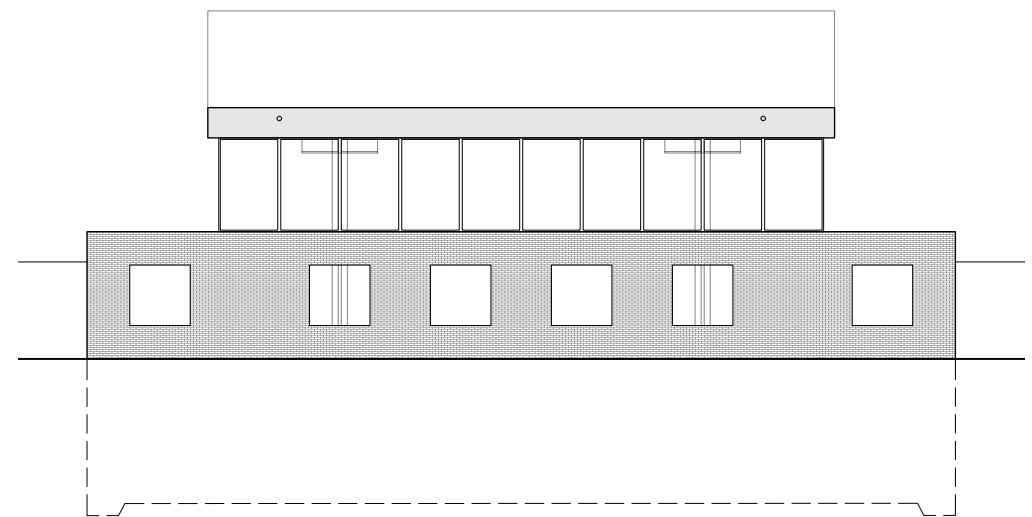


Section C-C 1:250

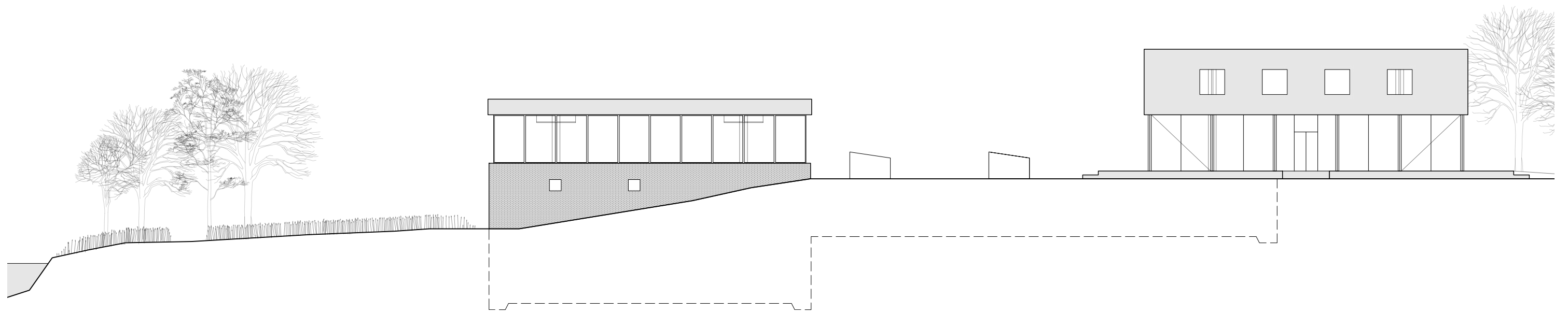


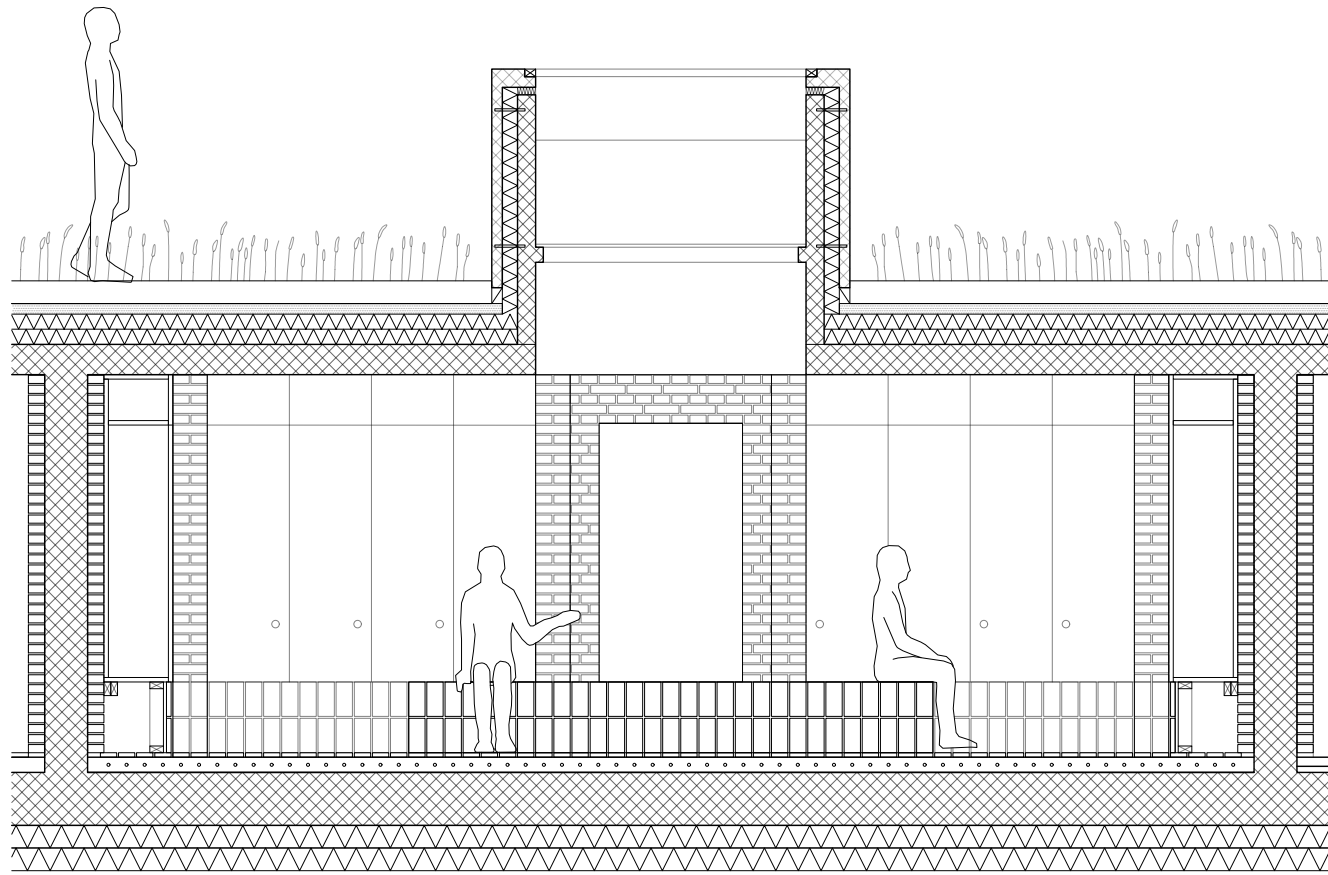


Elevation north 1:250



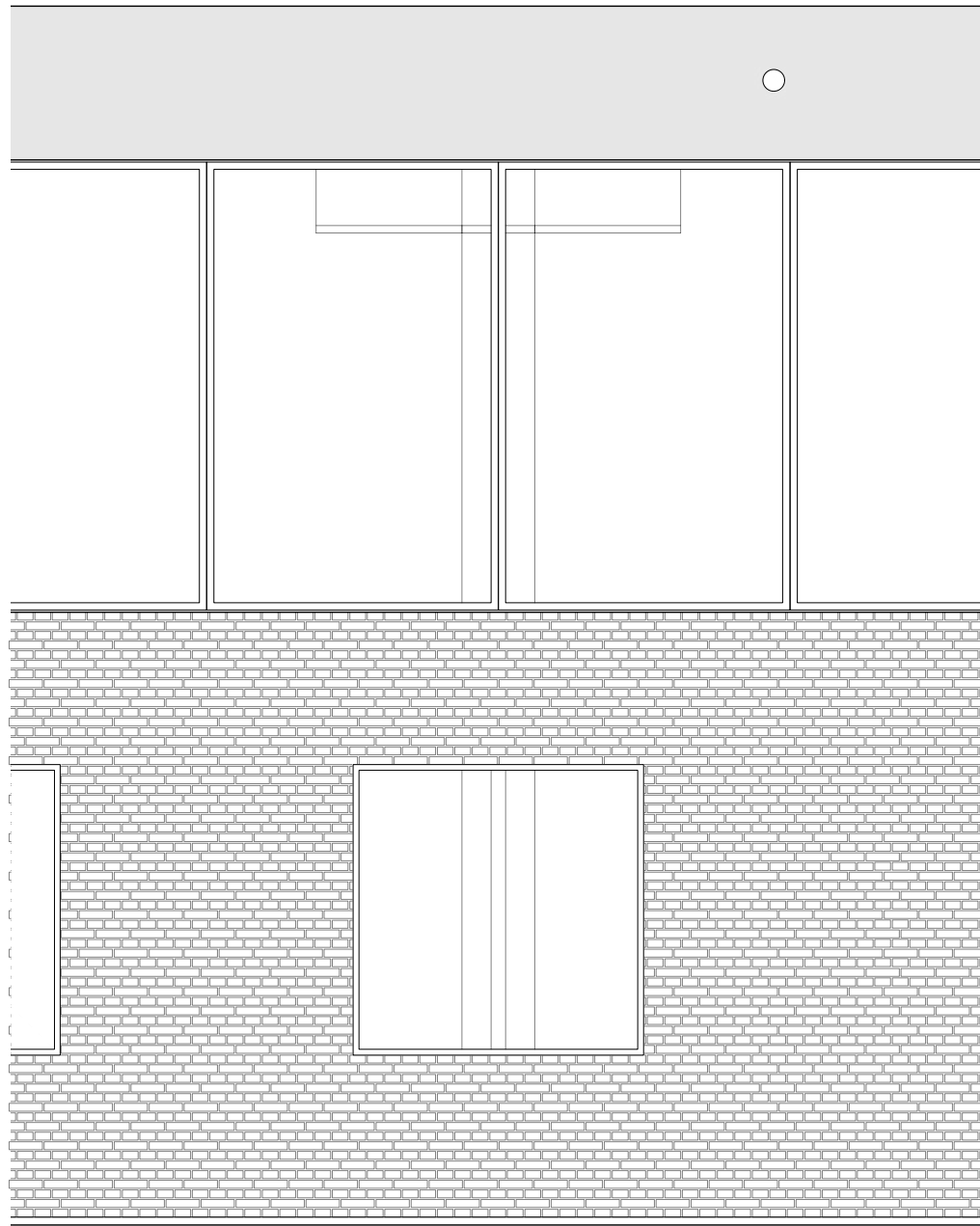
Elevation south 1:250



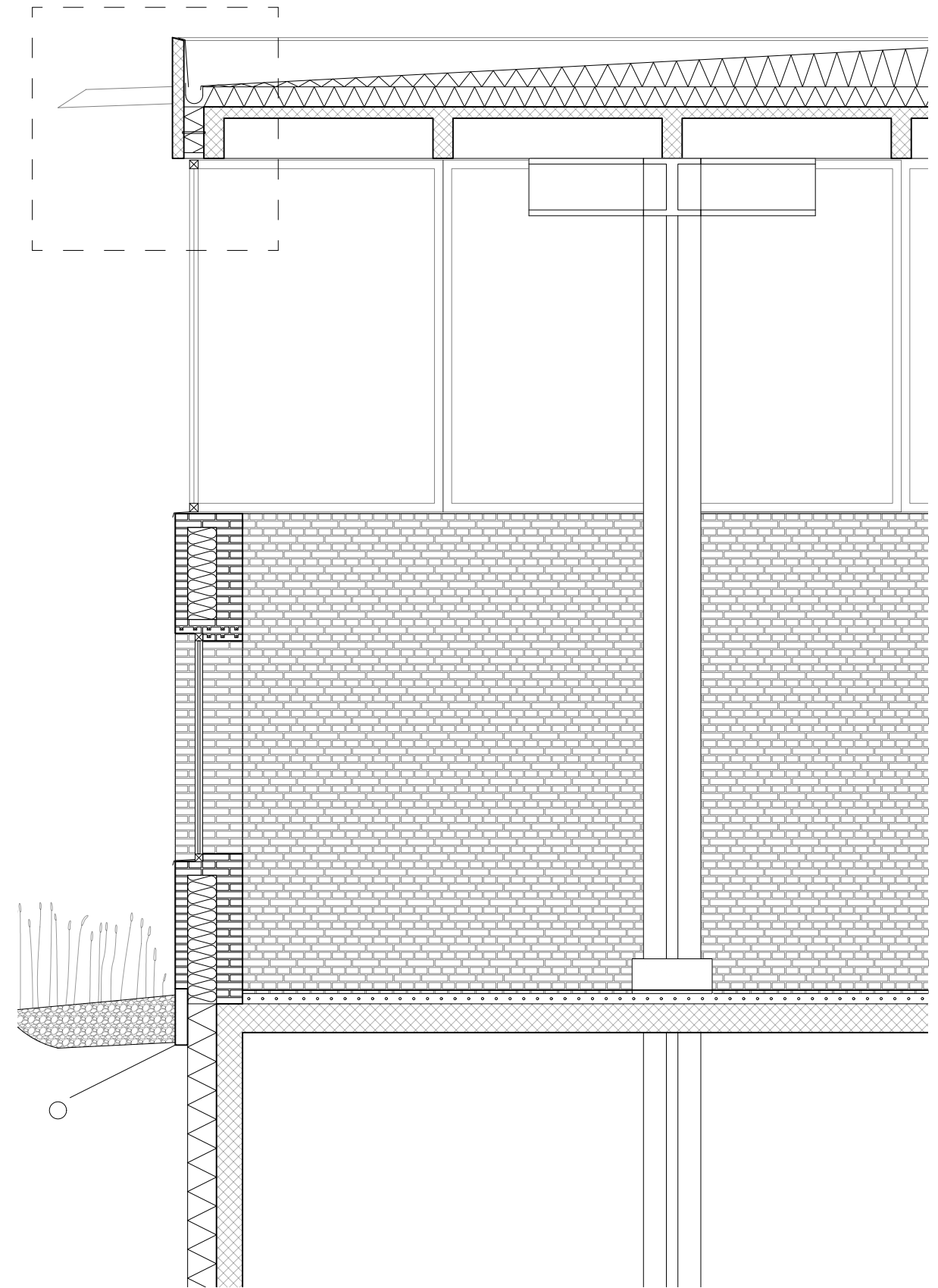


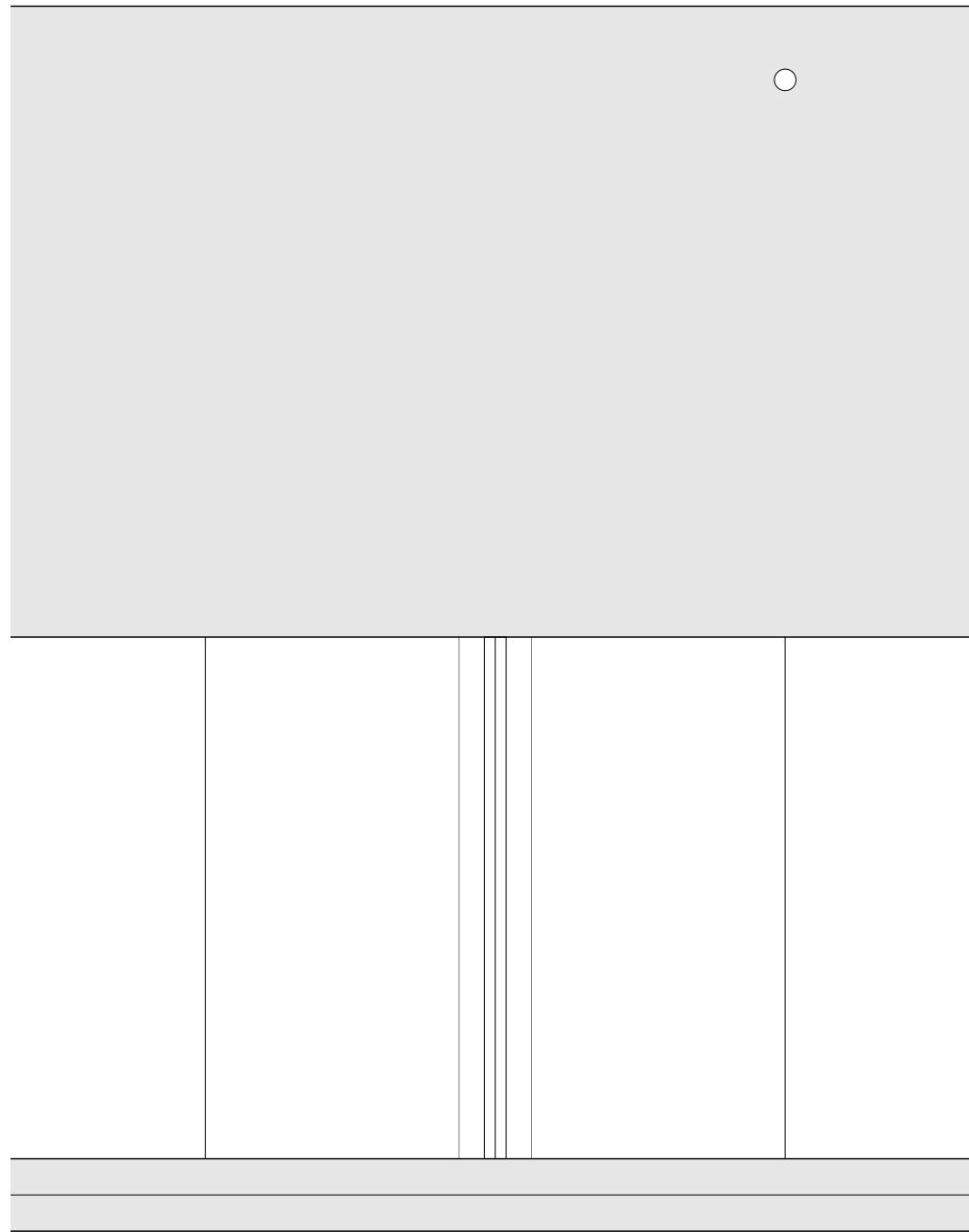
Roof	620	mm	Lantern	290	mm
Vegetation bed	150	mm	Double safety glass	25	mm
Vapor barrier	70	mm	Precast concrete	120	mm
Insulation	200	mm	Insulation	100	mm
Concrete	200	mm	In-situ concrete	70	mm
			Translucent glass	16	mm
Floor	780	mm			
Tiles	30	mm			
Heating	100	mm			
Concrete	350	mm			
Insulation	300	mm			



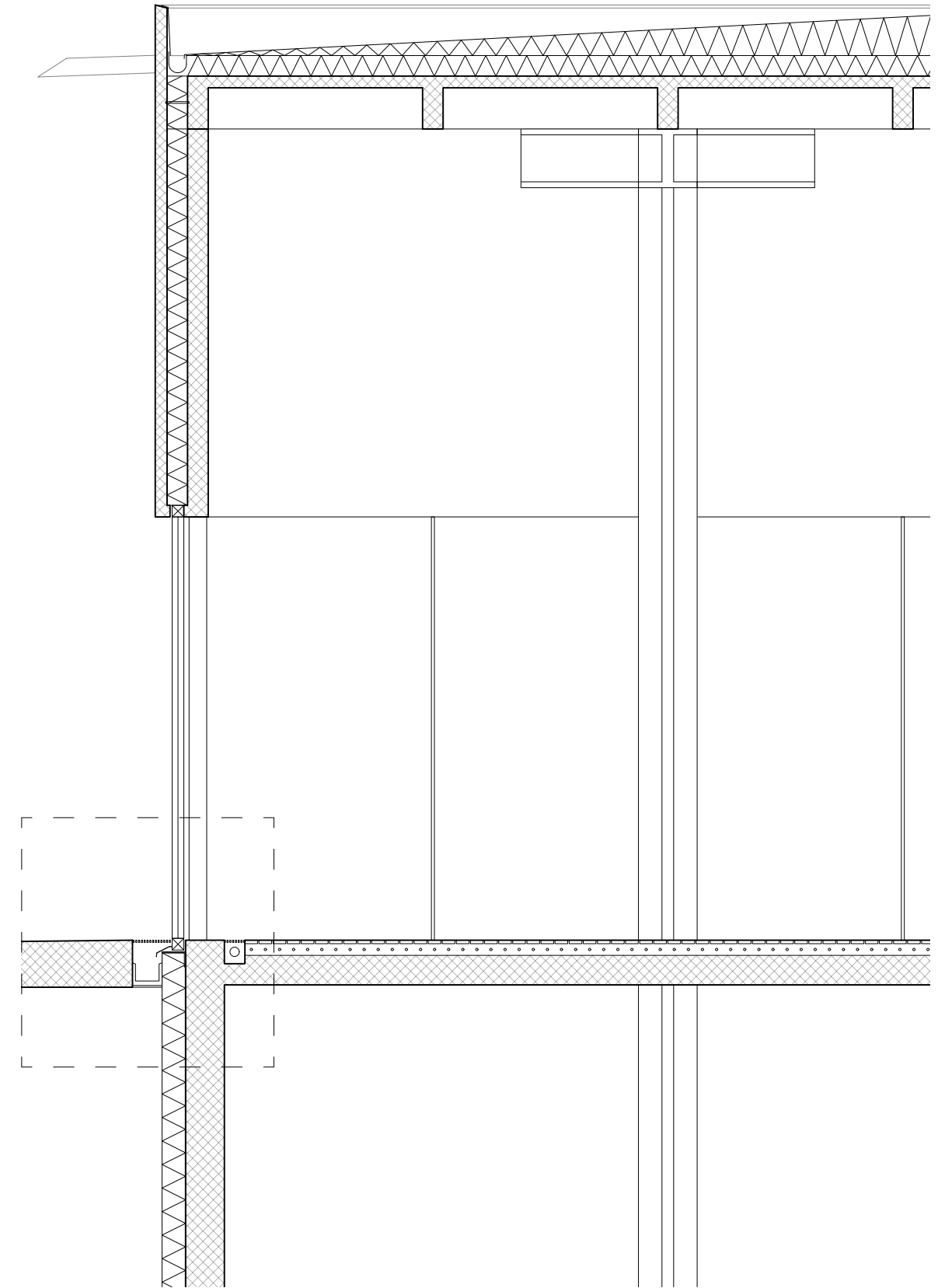


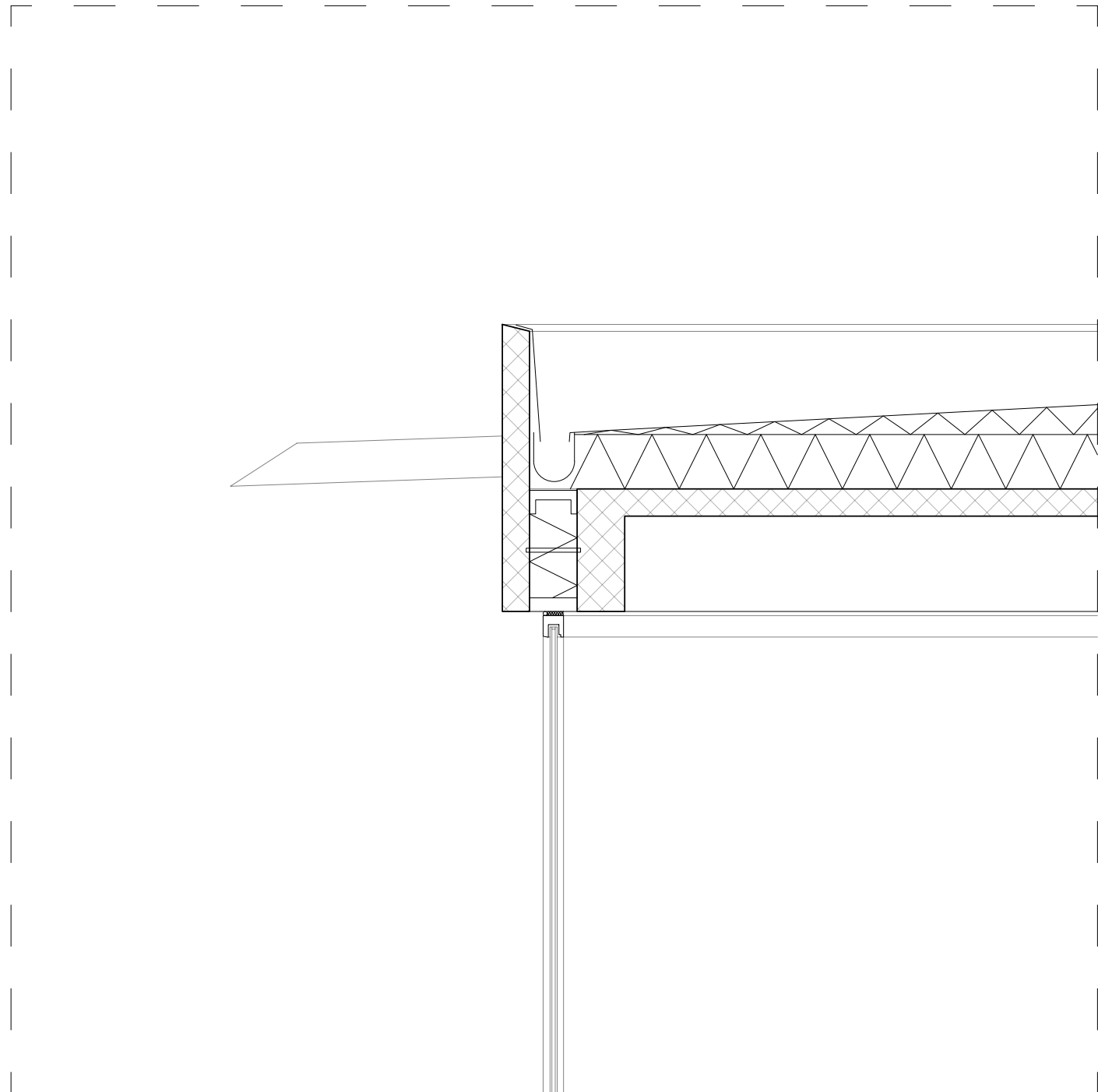
Roof	900	mm	Floor	380	mm
Vapor barrier			Tiles	30	mm
Insulation	250-500	mm	Heating	100	mm
Cofferred slabs	150-400	mm	Concrete	250	mm
Wall	586	mm			
Brick	108	mm			
Insulation	250	mm			
Glazed brick	228	mm			



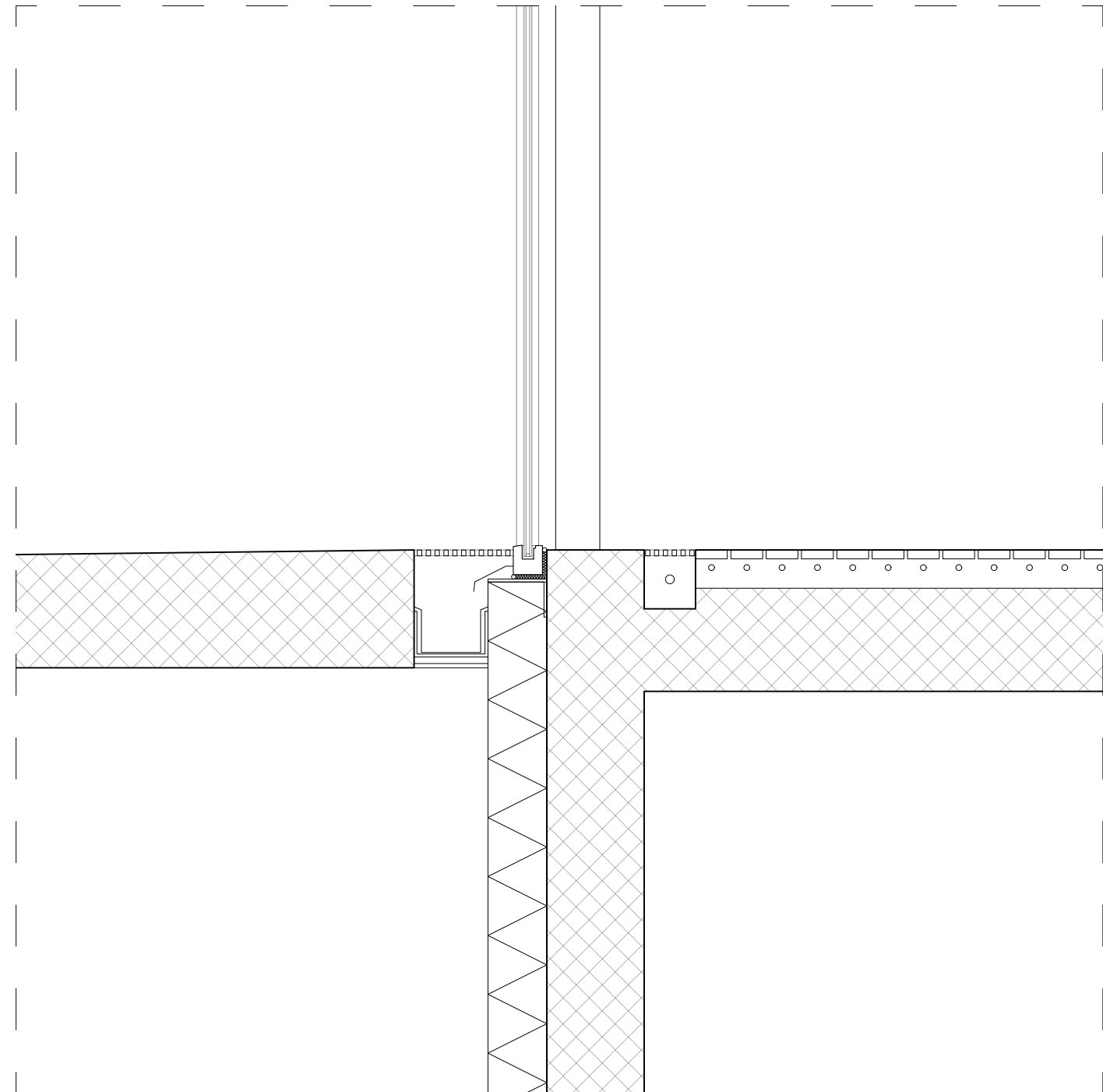


Roof	900	mm	Floor	380	mm
Vapor barrier			Tiles	30	mm
Insulation	250-500	mm	Heating	100	mm
Coffered slabs	150-400	mm	Concrete	250	mm
Wall	450	mm			
Precast concrete	100	mm			
Insulation	175	mm			
In-situ concrete	175	mm			





Detail roof 1:20



Detail ground 1:20

IV. Epilogue

Conclusion

The elegance in this project is hopefully carried out and exposed through its construction where every element and material have its own function, glass, steel, brick, and concrete.

The challenges in this project are connected to the site in different scales and levels. The context around the building is changing and it will be heavily transformed in the coming years. To understand how a bathhouse can interact with a public park and take advantage of it has been an important aspect in this master's thesis. I hope this project can be a part of the discussion about the connection between semi-public spaces and public spaces.

This project started in connection to the discussion of building a new regional bath due to the lack of baths in Gothenburg, and I believe there is a gap between the large baths run by the municipality and the private spas. I imagine a space where friends or colleagues can visit for a bath and a beer afterwards, or a space where a family can play in the park and have a coffee and cinnamon bun. I hope this project can help as an alternative to the existing baths but also future baths in Gothenburg.

Gothenburg 2021

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Figures

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Photographer unknown (1955)(*Kv. Abborren 1955*) https://www.eastgbg.se/utsikt_fran_gamlestadstorget.htm

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Master's Thesis Spring 2021