A House Full of Stories

Anton Axell

Examiner: Walter Unterrainer
Supervisor: Tina Wik

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Anton Axell

Student background

architecture student 2018-2024

MArch Architecture and planning beyond sustainability
Chalmers School of Architecture

BArch
Lunds Tekniska Högskola

Photography
HDK-Valand

& various courses in humanities studies

Abstract

This thesis explores value and heritage in an urban context and what role it can play in sustainable development. Spanning from discourse on urban development and value management to a finished architectural proposal, the thesis is developed trough a critical discussion on urban development and value. The thesis is written within the studio Building Design and Transformation for Sustainability and aims to discover the beauty the lies within the environmental turn and explore the boundary between preservation and transformation, patina and decay. This thesis is site-specific and based on a listed building in central Gothenburg, which has undergone various periods of use and renovation but currently finds itself in a void, between the development of the area and the building's own history. The development of the architectural proposal evolves through discussion of value management and through analysis of the building's existing structure and character. The overall aim of the thesis is to contribute to the discussion on urban development and on what is considered worth preserving in an era where the building industry is dominated by growth and profit instead of improvment and adoptation. The discussion is based on various theorists, using theories from Helena Mattsson and Jil Stoner to William Morris and John Ruskin among others.
This thesis seeks for the subtile changes, and finding the balance between the intangible, subjective values and spatial interventions. This thesis also aims to find a humanistic approach to sustainability and architecture, where the exploration and adaptation of a building's current state play a significant role. The method is shaped by an iterative design driven research and critical theory building. The outcome is an architectural proposal to the buildings continuous management and usage, suggesting both preservation and transformation as a design strategy.

Keywords: Heritage, Preservation, Value, Public Space

Content

Dig where you stand

Prologue

Architecture provides us with frameworks for social interaction, creating a sense of belonging to places, fostering togetherness with other people, and contributing to identity formation. Therefore, working with the existing built environment should be an essential aspect of sustainable community building. In contrast to the existing built environment, which often tells a story of the time-consuming process of building houses, our contemporary era is characterized by the age of production, offering the possibility of perfect surfaces and new materials where the smooth and clean surface is considered normal. From the perspective of late capitalism, there is motivation to exploit for profit, leading to the demolition of worn-out and rough environments in favor of new, shiny building complexes. It's ironic that urban residents often seek out authentic, older, and weathered environments in the countryside when they want to escape the city's perfect surfaces. The norm in the city, our economic center, tends to be exclusive and shiny environments, perpetuating a constant pursuit of the new and an eagerness for development and growth. Despite many newly constructed buildings boasting individuality and new forms, the environments are often perceived as homogeneous and uncritical. The building that this thesis focuses on is a dilapidated office building in central Gothenburg, Skeppsbron 4, built in 1914. Skeppsbron 4 is listed, considered of cultural historical value, and partially protected from demolition, but still lacks a clear place in the area's development plans. The previous tenants, including Sweden's first Chinese restaurant which opened in 1959, were evicted from the premises in 2016. The property manager, Higab, owned by the city of Gothenburg, took over the property from a private entity in 2015. Since then, they've reinforced the building's foundation for 30 million SEK and have been tasked by the city to manage historical buildings and provide the city's cultural life with spaces at reasonable rents. Despite this, the city does not yet know how the building will be used or what role it will play in the new planned area. The area around Skeppsbron 4 is undergoing development, with the keywords for the new area plan being sustainability, inclusivity, and vibrant urban life. Plans change from year to year, and so far, large hotels and office complexes have been built in the area, including the new hotel Draken, whose slogan is directly taken as the title of this thesis: *A House Full of Stories*. The question is, how and for whom is the story being told? Skeppsbron 4 is characterized by layers of use and interventions where marble and bohus grey natural stone meet corrected sheet metal and flaking surface layers, creating a void where the building fits neither traditional cultural history nor the normative surfaces of late capitalism. This thesis aims to advocate for Skeppsbron 4's obvious and continued presence in the area, highlighting the inherent quality that the building possesses through its history and current condition. By attempting to justify a proposal that doesn't require as much urban space as the other new constructions in the area but has a greater impact on the social life of the city, a significant portion of managing the existing building is based on compromises, taking into account environmental considerations, architectural values and economics.

The Swedish national board of housing, building, and planning (Boverket, 2021) states that people living in a place should be able to feel pride and belonging. They articulate that as society progresses, it is also important to create conditions for preservation since it is a crucial part of building a sustainable society, as the existing environment represents already used resources and tells stories about our past. Therefore, they states, a building, place, or neighborhood cannot be carefully shaped without being seen in its context. The formulations are subjective, and so is the interpretation of them. In this thesis, I argue that the development around Skeppsbron In this thesis, I argue that the development around Skeppsbron does not meet the sustainability requirements desirable in an resilient city. Office hotels, hotels, and condominiums built with an architectural language that communicates symbolic capital and shiny surfaces.

Architecture professor Helena Mattson (2004) writes in her book Arkitektur och konsumtion (Architecture and consumption) about how consumption has attained the highest status in society and how this is reflected in architecture today by shifting the architect's role from producer to consumer to influence the aesthetic quality of buildings (Mattson, 2004). Mattson also suggests that after WW II, in the era of late capitalism and beyond, everything is defined by the changes brought about by technology and science. In these rapid changes, something she calls the aesthetics of interchangeability is formed. The aesthetics of interchangeability is a direct result of consumer society. It is widely accepted today that production, especially of buildings, and consumption are among the biggest causes of our collective environmental crisis. In direct opposition to the aesthetics of interchangeability stands our already built environment and the architect's role is to manage it instead of producing new buildings according to the logic of consumer society. Visions for a sustainable future city often consist of grand ideas that require significant resources, and our buildings and urban infrastructure are too tightly bound to modes of unchecked free-market growth (Bauman et al., 2018). However, architecture has a tricky relationship with capitalism and the free market since it depends on them. Nevertheless, the discussion needs to shift from pitching new ideas to a more adaptable approach to our common problems, which can be termed as a resilient attitude. Resilience has evolved from being a radical concept focused on ecology and self-sufficiency to a broader perspective concerning the right to the city and empowerment (Bauman et al., 2018). Fundamentally, it's about creating a resilient and adaptable society, as opposed to eternal growth and development. Our built environment and heritage play a crucial role in this because, with the right approach, it can demonstrate how we can adapt to the built environment instead of conquering it. But to keep up with the transition, we need to reassess our view of what is considered valuable or not, scrutinize the small details and changes that have significant effects but minimal impact. We need to move away from the aesthetics of interchangeability and towards an architecture built on the consideration of collective memory, adaptation, and post-occupancy.

Thesis questions

In relation to the context stated on the previous pages, this thesis asks two questions. First, how might low intervention transformation motivate public use for a municipally owned building? This question is more directly focused on the actual context and the discussion of value, aiming to identify small interventions with significant impact on the building's public use. This is explored through theory building and design driven research. The second thesis question emerges from the first and has a broader perspective, ideally answered by the end of the thesis: what role can our built heritage play in a resilient urban future?

Delimitations

At one of my first lectures at Chalmers about architecture and sustainability, the lecturer said to the students: get you a friend that is good at math (Helmfridsson, 2022). Unfortunately I did not get that friend. Therefore is this thesis delimited to the discussion about intangible values and growth, not the technical or green aspects of architecture such as energy efficiency or ecosystems. Neither will the thesis focus on the building process, that would say by whom its being built and exactly the mechanisms behind. In another lecture when starting the master thesis preparation course the professor said: do not try to save the whole world (Unterrainer, 2023). But maybe you can try to save one building. This thesis is limited to one specific building, Skeppsbron 4 as a study object, and the development of surrounding neighborhood. In this thesis architecture serves as the collective term for all the fundamental desires and decision making processes that drive the development of the built environment, being aware that there's a big difference between, for example, an old family country house and a 19th-century building in an urban context.

Reading instructions

This thesis disposition is overall divided in three parts. Part one is a discussion on urban development and heritage from a broader perspective where references are provided continuously. Part two is the inventory of the building, a deeper analysis of it's spatial conditions, it's history and what is available on site. Part three is the proposal and metamorphosis of the building, going deeper in it's future usage and program, binding part one, two and three together.

Method

The thesis method is shaped by an iterative design driven research and theoretical development, positioning it self in a critical and discursive framework. By critically discussing heritage, value, and urban development, the method becomes more of an approach to the existing environment and what is considered worth preserving and highlighting, where the act of choosing becomes as important a part of the design as the design itself, where the main design method can be referred to as experimental preservation or value based design. The method has both an empirical and philosophical character, and one could also call it speculative and realistic at the same time. Speculative in the sense that the thesis examines the boundary of architectural value in relation to forces it cannot control, and realistic in the sense that the thesis is conducted in close dialogue with the property manager. Through conversation rather than interviews with different actors, the future program of the building is shaped. The thesis primarily explores and works with three values: age value, identity value, and social value. This is explored and represented through traditional and non traditional architectural tools such as film, photographs, models, and drawings presented in a booklet of 79 pages and an exhibition.

Part

1

A city and it's visions

Spatial encounters within the built environment influence how we shape our identity and understanding of who we are and can become. Therefore, it's crucial that the built environment represents as large a portion of a city's inhabitants as possible. The stories and narratives architects and planners choose to convey are vital to critically examine in order to achieve as diversified a representation of the city's built environment as possible. Preservation of heritage and memory has the power to curate a more diversified representation of various societal values and stories (Avrami, 2020). Critically scrutinizing the built environment from a preservation perspective means asking: for whom and by whom? Some stories are allowed to be told in the city, while others are excluded, which is manifested in the built environment. The historical environment plays a significant role in urban development, not only as an existing resource but also as an acknowledgment of multiple narratives. It's crucial to push the boundaries of what is considered important to preserve or tell so that it resonates with as large a portion of the inhabitants as possible. Therefore, it's not solely about preserving the physical structure but also the collective memory and shared experience of the city. Cultural environments are a vital part of a sustainable society; they tell a story but are also already used resources and invested capital. However, to achieve greater inclusion in our societal development, we need to broaden the concept of cultural environments are and can be.

Skeppsbron 4 is an example of a building that is stuck in the past, partially protected from demolition but still lacking a clear place in the future development of the area it stands in. Different layers of use, material choices, decay, and renovation have made the building difficult to define in terms of its cultural historical values and challenging to determine its clear role in the cityscape. Various architectural expressions characterize society and reflect contemporary views on different issues such as technology or traffic. Despite the widely accepted notion today that it's barbaric to demolish older buildings, there's seems to be a constant shift towards development that favors economic growth rather than sustainable development. Along Skeppsbron, steamboats used to operate from the mid-1800s, taking the inhabitants of Gothenburg out into the archipelago, while the houses along the quay housed restaurants, shops, and offices; it was a bustling meeting place that now feels like a distant memory. Where Skeppsbron 4 stands today, there used to be a stone house that made way for the reinforced concrete building standing there now (Carlsson & Wedel, 2017). The block where Skeppsbron 4 is located is called Redaren, and not long ago, it was a fully occupied block with businesses on the ground floors (see picture 10 from 1987 in appendix). The old three-story brick buildings that were connected to Skeppsbron 4 were demolished in favor of traffic engineering solutions such as the expansion of the tramway, parking lots and the Göta Tunnel. There's no escaping the fact that the area along Skeppsbron will undergo development; the question is at what cost to Skeppsbron 4's unique character and what new stories will unfold within and between the buildings. As a case study for preservation, Skeppsbron is a good example to examine value in relation to urban development.

Development of Masthuggskajen, February 2024.

Gothenburg has evolved from a shipyard and industrial city to focusing on the knowledge and event sectors. This is manifested in the built environment along Skeppsbron and Masthuggskajen through inventories in hotels and office buildings. The built environment reflects a city's attitudes and values; demolishing in favor of new construction signals that development always leads to something positive. It's difficult to argue against growth because the consequences are unpredictable, and undisclosed conditions can only be predicted by the future. In this void, between the past and development, Skeppsbron 4 has become stuck. Preserving and reevaluating the city's old environments has the potential to create an attitude that promotes social growth rather than economic growth, as the buildings is already invested capital, the social or cultural investment can be greater. Therefore, Skeppsbron 4 is an excellent study subject to investigate the role and value a deteriorated building with a rich history can have in an area undergoing development into a location with offices and hotels.

Architecture professor Jill Stoner writes in the book Toward a Minor Architecture (2012) about how architecture is built upon "languages of masters," noting that in the past, the masters were monarchs and rulers, whereas nowadays it's largely the large-scale building industry. Stoner argues that what she refers to as major architecture is a product of a culture dominated by symbolic capital, originating from the top of the economic power structure. The construction around Skeppsbron and Masthuggskajen, according to Stoner's perspective, is driven by abstract economic forces governed by the free market and can be defined as major architecture. On the other hand, Stoner contends that minor architecture is mobilized from below. It is architecture that does not aspire to symbolize power or capital and does not generate any excess. This thesis interpretation of minor architecture is the architecture we don't always define as architecture, the immaterial space that varies in value depending on who visits it. Minor architecture relies on minor resources and is about creating places within the already built environment, unlike major architecture with a profit agenda (Stoner, 2012). It's important to bring up because, one could say that this thesis work at Skeppsbron 4 falls under the definition of minor architecture. The building has been neglected, and its soul and existence are constantly threatened by profit-driven neoliberal architecture. Just as there's a sense of loss when old buildings are demolished, there's also a feeling of alienation when offices and hotels are built as large complexes in the city, as these are spaces that can only be visited by paying guests. Minor architecture, in this thesis view, is about providing the city with public spaces that residents can make their own, where the architectural language is an assemblage of layers of use. Skeppsbron 4, according to this thesis, is worth developing in that direction, and the work with existing buildings and places should not be seen as less important just because it doesn't necessarily generate economic growth or new form. Developing Skeppsbron 4 into a public space and embracing its unique aesthetic in relation to the surrounding new constructions is an approach that goes against the logic of eternal growth and, therefore, this thesis believe it is an important feature in the area, as the building has the potential to signal a more sustainable attitude towards growth and resources.

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Higab, the building's property manager, is a municipal company tasked by the city with managing and developing Gothenburg's cultural heritage sites, as well as providing local, independent cultural activities with low-cost venues. The background to the establishment of Higab was the clearance of an entire block in central Gothenburg, the Nordstaden district, in the late 1960s to make way for a 60,000 square meter shopping center, Nordstan. The blocks on which the shopping center was built were considered dilapidated, and political decisions were made to demolish eight entire blocks (Fritz, 1997) to create space for commerce and modern ideals. Many craftsmen and artists had their workshops and studios in the demolished blocks, which is why Higab was founded by the municipality as a company to provide new premises for everyone who had lost their workplace. Today, the demolition of the old blocks is considered catastrophic by many, and the view on clearance has changed to seeing built environments as a valuable resource. However, economic calculations, driven by business interests, continue to largely govern urban development because they are measurable values. At the same time as Nordstan was completed, in the late 1970s, the industrial boom that Gothenburg had experienced since WW II came to an end. The shipyards, which were Gothenburg's major employers along the river, closed down because it was cheaper to manufacture ships in countries like Portugal and Korea, leaving many people unemployed. At the same time, Gothenburg began to adapt to a globalized economy where the city's competitiveness needed to be strengthened. The transition from a port and industrial city to a knowledge and events city began, and exclusive office and residential quarters started to be built along the river (Despotovic & Thörn, 2015). Skeppsbron 4, originally built for offices, housed many different companies from the shipping industry during its heyday.

Demolition of Nordstaden

To understand the development of the area around Skeppsbron 4, we must also understand the influence of neoliberalism on the development of the built environment. Neoliberalism cannot be defined as an absolute ideology, but can rather be seen as an engine driven by capitalist principles of continuous growth and accumulation of capital. The basic premise of neoliberalism can be described as less state control and more free market, meaning that the free market is considered the most efficient way to redistribute not only financial but also social resources. This is manifested in the logic of debt (Bose & Self, 2014), and can be seen as symbolic capital invested in exploitation projects with the aim of generating profit. Architecture as a discipline in itself is not in a position of power to control the free market, but as the authors of the book Real Estates: Life Without Debt (2014) express, architecture is not afraid to confront the instruments of neoliberalism in order to overthrow them. The most logical approach in relation to the ideology of neoliberalism and growth would have been to luxury renovate Skeppsbron 4 with borrowed capital and rent it out to capital-strong companies or alternatively convert it into condominiums overlooking the river, what Stoner (2012) referred to as major architecture. Since this thesis does not want to adhere to that logic, but rather to immeasurable values inherent in the existing character that Skeppsbron 4 possesses, it is also important to present that there are no absolute values and that what is considered valuable to an economist is not always what is worth from the architect's perspective. One person's patina is another person's dirt. This contradiction, which this thesis encounters, despite the fact that the building is not currently under threat of demolition, is a problem. Architecture that is based on an idea of societal improvement can, through representational means such as drawings and renderings, depict a dream of a world that has not yet been built and through the visual convey a feeling or a vision, thereby sparking debate about how society can become better for everyone. Architecture that motivates a developer is architecture that has already proven to yield profit, which Mattson (2004) would argue falls within the category of the aesthetics of interchangeability, as it is understandable from a commercial perspective rather than an architect's dream of the poetry of a space. But how do you justify value, other than the principle of a commodity's or a building's economic value? Reaching an agreement between growth and intangible values in economic means is difficult when different disciplines invoke different orders of value.

The sociologist Luc Boltanski and the economist Laurent Thévenot present a theory of value systems and contradictions in the influential sociological book On Justification, Economies of Worth (2006). Drawing on previous sociologists and political thinkers, including Émile Durkheim's (1858-1917) theories of human community and collective reality, they attempt to provide a framework for the moral structure that justifies people's convictions and principles of valuation.

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They argue that at the top of the value hierarchy is what the authors refer to as the common good, a principle that can be seen as universalist (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). They suggest that in the economic market, based on the fundamental principles of liberalism's figurehead Adam Smith (1723-1790), competition and economic value hold a higher place in the hierarchy than what they call the principle of the common good, which can be summarized as utilitarian normative ethics. Assuming that the norm, the set of constant values that govern the development of the area around Skeppsbron, is based on market norms and economists' ontology, what is valued most highly is what is worth the most money. According to Higab, Skeppsbron 4 has a maintenance deficit of 70 million SEK, which is a challenge as their mission is to provide cultural actors with relatively cheap rents compared to the market. Higab's mission would fall under the value principle that Boltanski and Thévenot advocate in their book, which is summarized briefly by human community, the common good, and the philosopher John Rawls's (1949-2002) difference principle, which states that economic and social injustices should be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged individuals in society. So, in summary, the focus of the work on Skeppsbron 4 revolves around the value systems of three actors: the market, the property owner, and the architect. Together, they must justify their motivations for what is considered valuable in the continued development of Skeppsbron. Currently, since Higab does not know how to tackle their value principle in providing cultural actors with cheap rents for the greater good of the city, one can see that market norms are slowly guiding the development of the area while Skeppsbron 4 remains protected for now. This obviously complicates the architect's role in justifying a value other than the inherent quality the building possesses in terms of its historical layers, collective memory, and potential public use, which, according to Boltanski and Thévenot, ranks higher in their value system than the economic value the building can generate in the short term due to its development potential and central location.

However, the philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) argues that architecture in itself cannot produce freedom and any higher moral value for those who need it most. In an interview about his text Space, Knowledge & Power published in Skyline (1982), exemplifies Foucault this through Jean-Baptise Godin's Familistere (1859), where the moral intention of the architecture was to provide freedom and a better life for the workers who lived there. Yet, Foucault continues, no one could leave or enter the place without being seen by everyone from the balconies overlooking the large courtyard. Thus, Familistere's architecture could just as easily be oppressive if the intention was to monitor people. The architect's value principles and good intentions can therefore easily be turned into something entirely different if the property owner, developer, and market do not share the same value system.

How should then the architect's intentions and value principles be justified in relation to market forces? The principle of the common good can be applied to Skeppsbron 4, as preservation and low intervention transformation as a design strategy intend to open up the building to a public destination.

Current state Skeppsbron 4, February 2024.

But if we assume that architecture can be an autonomous discipline, where intentions and interaction with relevant actors are disconnected, architecture itself has an inherent value that can still be linked to the principle of the common good. To describe this, we can turn to the philosopher Gaston Bachelard's work The Poetics of Space from 1958 (2014). Bachelard argues that spatial value is primarily created by people's experiences and fantasies and not as a consequence of a building's actual design. The value of space occurs in a kind of poetic process that involves a variety of sensory perceptions that together create our experience of the space. If we view these sensory perceptions and material memories as a foundation of human experience, something to gather around and relate to, then even the inherent value in architecture, according to Boltanski and Thévenot, is valued higher than the free market's profit calculation. Furthermore, it can be argued that Bachelard's thoughts on experiences and the perceived space are more likely to be met when retaining a building's original character and as many layers of history as possible, as it would presumably create sensations for a larger portion of people since the collective memory of the place has had more time to develop.

In the book Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City (2005), architecture historian Mark Crinson describes the connection between collective memory and the city as a physical collection and landscape of practices and objects that embody the past and present through traces of a city's building and rebuilding. He refers to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and his theories on collective memory as a binding force among people, where physical places act as common reference points, which Halbwachs referred to as collective spatiality. Halbwachs argued that history was a rationalized version of the past, while memory was intimately linked to collective experience (Crinson, 2005). Architect Aldo Rossi (1932-1997) expanded on Halbwachs' theories of collective memory in his book The Architecture of the City (1966), which was written as a counterargument to the modernist development of European cities after WW II. Rossi argued that a city remembers through its buildings and that the preservation of older buildings and their character is preserving human memories stored in our minds. Identity, Rossi believed, is the sum of all traces in the city, and an identity crisis occurs when the city loses its buildings in favor of development, leading to a loss of memory and identity crisis (Crinson, 2005).

If we go back to Boltanski's and Thévenot's theory of the principle of the common good as the highest value when it comes to holding groups and society together in a way that benefits the majority of people and connect it with architecture, collective memory, and urban development, one could argue that an architectural style, when it comes to reprogramming existing buildings, should work to preserve the details that embody the building's previous use to the greatest extent possible and highlight the human experience that exists in the traces of time. In this way, the architectural ambition becomes to create value for as diversified a group of people as possible, not necessarily the most capital-rich individuals or companies. Thus, it's more about an approach to inclusion and about sparking imagination and memories, rather than solely romantic aesthetics and nostalgia.

Skeppsbron 4   ● planned development   1:250
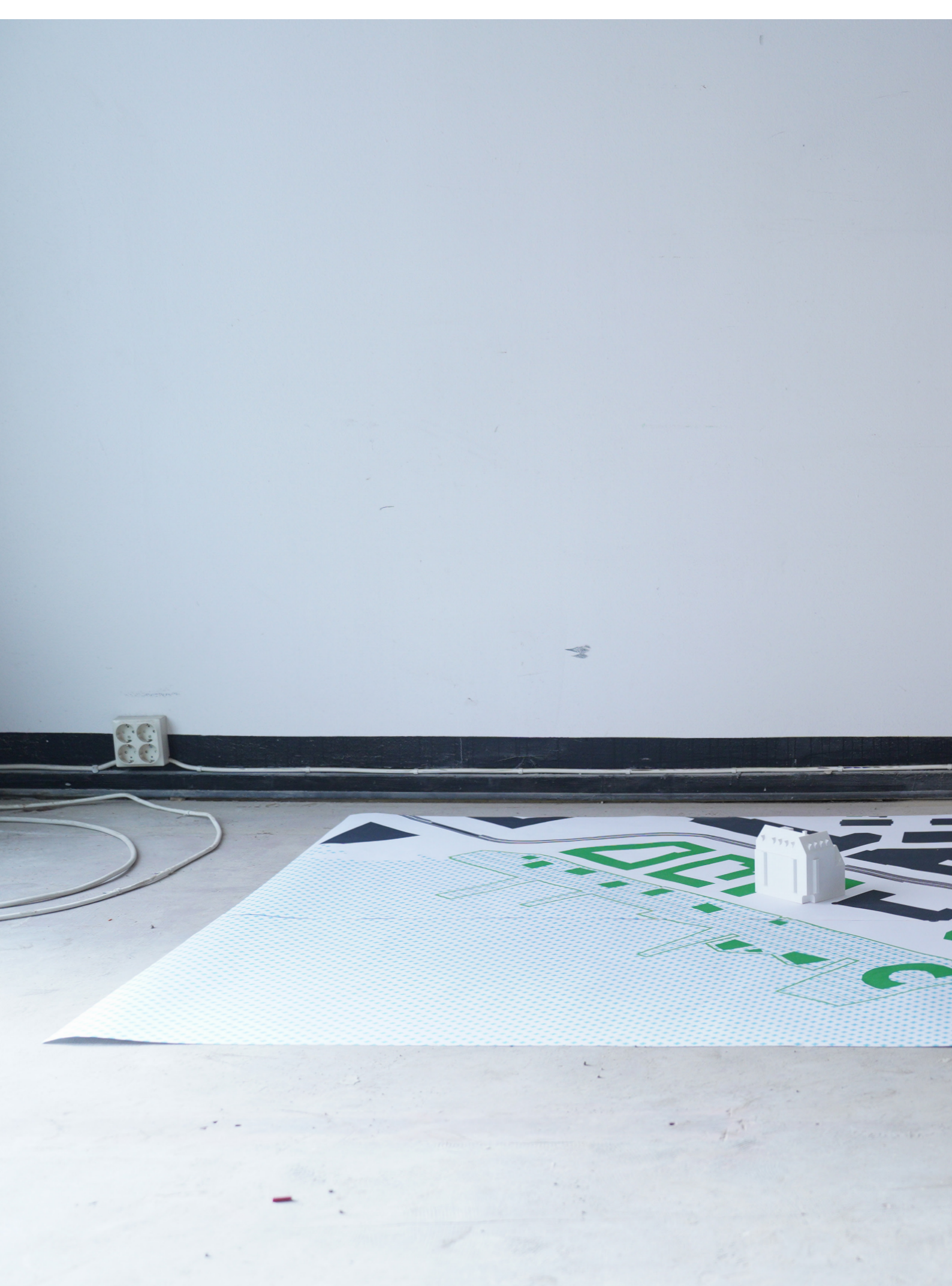
Development of value

Architecture's value, both in its materials and creativity, is often reduced to its price in the market. When we see architecture as just a part of the environment and subject it to economic analysis, architects may lose their higher artistic and moral motivations. The market's perspective can disconnect architects from their work. Even well-intentioned creative ideas, like turning waste into something useful, can be overshadowed by economic constraints (Cairns & Jacobs, 2014). In economics, it is understood that buildings have a limited lifespan, and as time passes, their economic worth decreases. Therefore, it's essential to consider how the form and value of architecture interact, giving it a sense of self-awareness and adaptability. The work with Skeppsbron 4 can be referred to as value-based management or adaptive reuse. In order to manage and protect a place and make changes to it is crucial that you know why it is important and what elements contribute or not to the importance of the place.

The preservation and development of architectural heritage are not static and change over time with the development of society, and to understand my own positioning and method, it is important to comprehend the historical thought development regarding conservation and value. The foundation of the Western perspective on the conservation of the built environment was primarily shaped during the 19th century, notably by John Ruskin (1817-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896). They developed the idea of managing existing resources and viewed existing buildings as physical expressions of cultural values and a source of social and educational development (Bond & Worthing, 2016). However, the overall view of what was worth preserving was still fixed on prestigious buildings based on power and class.

In recent years, Ruskin's and Morris's ideas about what was worth preserving have evolved, and there has been a broader acceptance of recognizing value in the everyday, not just in historical monuments. Important milestones in the modern approach to the conservation and development of the built environment after the Second World War that are worth mentioning include the Venice Charter (1964), European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975) and the Washington Charter (1987). The Venice Charter, for example, declared that a historic building encompasses not only the architectural work but also the surrounding context, emphasizing that historical value is not exclusive to monumental works within the architectural canon. Furthermore, the Venice Charter discussed that a uniform style is not the goal of conservation and restoration; instead, interventions from all periods of a building should be respected, and modern techniques are welcome as long as they are justified (Jokilehto, 1998). The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage developed the perspective on preservation by emphasizing that society must manage its resources and that the existing built environment is an economic asset that can be used as a resource to develop the local community. A decade later, The Washington Charter declared that the perception of what is considered culturally valuable varies from culture to culture and that there is, therefore, no subjective approach to value and authenticity (Bond & Worthing, 2016).

Today, the preservation of buildings is no longer just about preserving historical monuments and authenticity but involves cultural, social, and economic processes. There has been a shift, and it is ongoing, from only considering certain buildings worth preserving to seeing almost everything as worth preserving in times of the current resource and environmental crisis. Today's approach, including this thesis, can be referred to as adaptive reuse. Constructing new buildings when there is already a substantial amount built is not sustainable from an economic, social and ecological perspective. Adaptive reuse involves identifying a new function for a building and making spatial changes, not necessarily extensive, to adapt the structure for a new purpose (Cleempoel & Plevoets, 2019). The value of existing buildings has thus shifted from being about aesthetics, history, and authenticity to focusing on seeing the existing built environment as a resource to be used in new ways. At the same time, the work that laid the foundation for the discipline of preservation is not in vain but should be viewed as an ongoing discourse that is constantly evolving, with the field expanding as more buildings are constructed and new societal problems have to be included.

What is it worth?

Working with value-based design as a method involves relating to and classifying what is a value and why. In addition to a building's material and market value, there are intangible values that are important to consider in the work with existing structures. This thesis will primarily categorize three intangible values to relate to; age value, identity value and social value. The concepts are chosen based on what this thesis consider suitable to apply to Skeppsbron in relation to the building's historical and urban context.

      Age value was formulated by art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), who argued that a building's age takes precedence in value over its historical significance. Riegl claimed that the historical context could only be fully appreciated by individuals with prior knowledge and understanding. Age value, on the other hand, is self-evident and accessible to people from all different backgrounds. Riegl argued that a building should embrace its natural cycle, and its decay should not be counteracted, acknowledging limitations in decay. He stated that if a building truly possesses age value, there should be signs of age and use, while the original forms should remain distinct (Cairns & Jacobs, 2014). Skeppsbron 4 exhibits clear signs of the passage of time, traces of renovation and use, while the original essence is manifested in the building's form and primarily its facade expression. To contemporize Riegl's concept, this thesis would extend it to mean that age value is about our subjective imagination manifested in the physical environment. Architectural elements with clear signs of age are imbued with history, both objective and subjective. Objective in the sense that something has actually happened there, subjective in the sense that each experience and imagination the element evokes is unique from person to person. Thies thesis believe that age value imparts places with an inviting feeling, where each user has a greater chance of making it their own.

The identity value of architecture can be described as the collective memory of the city's inhabitants. Architecture and art historian Mark Crinson characterizes the city's collective memory as a physical landscape that embodies the past and present through traces of the city's construction and reconstruction. Crinson argues that the city remembers through its buildings, and the preservation of older structures is a way to safeguard memories in the human consciousness, where we project our identity through cultural, political, and social events in the city (Crinson, 2005). Identity value is, therefore, the characteristics of an environment that create a sense of identification and connection, entirely subjective and independent of other properties than an individual's personal relationship to a place or building. It can be stated, however, that the longer a building stands, the more identity value it acquires as more people are exposed to it. It is challenging to formulate clear arguments for identity value, as is the case for many other intangible values, but researcher Axel Unnerbäck formulates it as people's feelings of being deprived of something of personal value when demolitions or other changes occur in their perception of the city (Unnerbäck, 2003). Skeppsbron 4 is not currently threatened by demolition, but the consideration of identity value is important in the development of the building, as it has become a part of the inhabitants' collective memory.

The term social value refers, similar to identity value, to the meaning a place holds for groups or individuals but focuses more on the events that have taken place or are taking place at the place or in the building (Bond & Worthing, 2016). The events that have unfolded at the location throughout history shape the identity of the place and are perceived as identity-building for its users. In the development of a place or building, social value is important to consider regarding what it can contribute to society in terms of function; for example, it may serve an educational purpose or have a community-strengthening effect. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate whether the various historical events at the location have social value and, in the development into a public space, to assess the social values it can generate.

In this thesis, it is essential that no value takes precedence over another. The aim is to remain open to all values and constantly reevaluate in order to make the most informed choices in the transformation of the building. It's not necessarily about creating something new, but rather immersing oneself in the discourse of the subject, and engaging with, interpreting, and developing what has already been formulated. The values should be seen as guides and as an approach or method in the selection process. Working with existing buildings largely involves reevaluating and making choices, and it is crucial to incorporate values into details such as surface finishes and simultaneously consider values in a broader societal context. The architectural value of Skeppsbron 4 has already been manifested in the building being listed and protected from demolition. However, the function and management of the other values have not been defined or addressed.

2

Architecture and design collective Uglycute were early in challenging the concept of taste and beauty ideals. They elevated materials traditionally deemed low-status, such as particle board, by giving them a chance and placing them in a new context. Above is an image from the Djurgårdsbrunn project (2002) where the collective worked with inexpensive materials in contrast to an inn from the mid-1700s.

3

Jorge Otero-Pailos' project The Ethics of Dust (2008) explores the distinction between patina and dirt, inspired by John Ruskin's thoughts on dust as a register of time. In an abandoned factory, Otero-Pailos employed a latex cleaning technique used in preservation to remove dirt from buildings. The dirty latex sheets were then hung on a metal frame. The project sheds light on the building's history in an alternative way while challenging the concept of heritage and value.

Displacement of value

Alois Riegl stated that only a pile of waste for example cannot possess what he defined as age value, and I agree. But for the preservation and transformation of existing built environments in our time of climate change and our other common problems to be relevant today, the concept of value must be challenged. In the traditional discourse on preservation, which is based on ideas predating our questioning of institutions and overproduction, the starting point often revolves around canonization and education for future generations. As previously mentioned, previous thinkers on the subject have laid a solid foundation for how to respect the built environment and preserve its intangible values. However, in today's world, with more buildings of various characters than ever before, it is important to allow those working in the preservation of the built environment to act with greater freedom in their choices of which stories are worth preserving or retelling. An object that Riegl would argue possesses no value might today have the potential to spark debates about beauty and ugliness, or even save energy and labor by not being discarded.

        In the book Experimental Preservation (Arrhenius et al., 2016), the discussion revolves around the role preservation can play in addressing contemporary social and climate-related challenges. The book can be seen as a contrast to the institutionalized, traditional values in the work and management of the built environment, with the goal of transitioning from a dogmatic approach to a more open and free perspective. The authors describe experimental preservation as a practice that critically reevaluates and challenges conventions about what can be considered heritage or not. To demonstrate that even objects traditionally deemed to lack value can possess potential, the concept of quasi-object is presented. Quasi-objects are described as those objects that exist outside of institutionalized heritage and, unlike monuments which represent society's collective definition of heritage, involve the small interactions we have with each other, the undefined shared experiences surrounding an object to which we all subjectively relate. For example, waste. It's about how we choose to work with these quasi-objects and question or highlight the role it can play and history it can tell.

        By adopting a non-hierarchical approach to the building's different layers of value, this thesis can relatively freely decide what to change or preserve. This thesis interest lies in the small changes that have a big impact and in highlighting what is not considered valuable because I believe that today we cannot afford to exclude any material, building or object that already exists. In the same way that previous theories and analyses of value should not be disregarded in favor of a new liberated approach, canonized monuments and important historical sites or buildings cannot be pitted against what is here referred to as quasi-objects. The common enemy, however, is the hegemony of good taste and the relentless pursuit of the perfect surface. It is about discover the beauty that lies within the environmental turn and that heritage can trigger conceptual frameworks whose influence extends beyond the boundaries of monuments and allows us to relate freely to our own subjective history and surroundings.

Challenging values is thus about critically reevaluating conventional values. Ruskin's and Morris's approach to conservation was formulated at a time when materials like metal or plastic did not exist. So, it's not about questioning the historical discourse but about using it in new ways and viewing it from today's perspective. There are no absolute values, just as in the economic market, devaluation of what is considered valuable or not occurs all the time. The act of choosing what is valuable is to assign value to something, but ultimately it is up to society to determine how something is received as valuable or not. However, a large part of the population is excluded from the process of constructing an architectural identity, which makes it extra important in the work with Skeppsbron 4 to preserve as many layers of history as possible. This thesis see heritage as traces and remnants of the past that allow us to imagine. Imagination is subjective, and so is the concept of value.

John Ruskin might have seen the traces of Skeppsbron 4's usage as injuries of time, and he romantically referred to forgotten buildings and ruins as the lower picturesque. In Ruskin's contemporary context, it was often traces of war and poverty that had left ruins behind, but he saw it as important to preserve the lower picturesque because it could reinforce a critical attitude towards the events that caused the ruins, as well as towards aesthetics and modernization. Skeppsbron 4 bears clear traces of previous activities, renovations and demolition, something that traditionally might not have been seen as worth preserving, but which in this thesis opinion, can strengthen a critical attitude towards producing new things and also highlight stories that are often overlooked in the development of new neighborhoods.

Structure and form

Another interesting contemporary thinker on preservation is the architect Rem Koolhaas (1944-). His office OMA worked on the transformation and preservation of The Hermitage, a former palace used as a museum in St. Petersburg. Instead of renewing and restoring the palace, the office explored the interface between the roles of architect and archaeologist by preserving the building's rawness and decay. In the publication Preservation Is Overtaking Us (2014), Koolhaas describes how his office has become more interested in undertaking preservation projects in recent years because they simply see it as more relevant to work with existing resources than to design anew. They even go so far as to argue in their manifesto that new forms are no longer relevant (Koolhaas, 2014). In OMA's work with existing buildings, they do not seek new forms but rather work to supplement the building's existing forms and change the reception of its cultural significance and how the public perceives them. Koolhaas argues that the creativity of the architect's role has shifted from creating new forms to transforming the public's perception of existing forms. Thus, the preservation of buildings has transitioned from being seen as a conservative practice to a creative one and holds a significant place even in the world's leading architecture offices.

In OMA's work on the Hermitage, they focused on examining the existing condition of the building and proposed new spatial organization rather than new form, giving renewed value to each element. They describe their project as a non-project where their role as architects takes on more of a curatorial or intellectual comprehensive approach (OMA, 2005). The project aimed to find an approach to the palace's character and present its entire history, including aspects traditionally overlooked, not just the canonized values like classical architectural elements or stories of noble families. Their task was to find small discreet changes that improved the Hermitage's function rather than imposing major alterations. This thesis see this approach as a new way of thinking that speaks to how architects no longer necessarily need to introduce large changes to achieve significant impact, which also aligns with this thesis approach to the development of Skeppsbron 4. It is not about creating something new, the structure and forms are already available. Instead, it's about relating to the existing structure and identifying cultural and aesthetic values through supplementation and value based design. Therefore, it's not about altering the building but rather changing how the building is perceived. John Ruskin also argued that it was justified to change and replace large parts of a building's material as long as the original form was recognizable (Cairns & Jacobs, 2014). In the case of Skeppsbron 4, this thesis believe it's more justified to work on enhancing the existing by reshaping the visitor's experience of the building through small changes devised after inventorying and evaluating the different values of the elements and stories embedded in the building.

14
Use "neglect" to expose value?

4

Use "neglect" to expose value? Rendering from OMA's Hermitage project (2005) illustrate the approach of making small changes to highlight the building's alternative values by renewing the context and spatial organization rather than the form.

Part

2

Documentation of the present and past

With the positioning in part one, the inventory of Skeppsbron 4 starts from an examination of the building's social, identity-forming, and age-related values. Inventory and documentation are a dynamic process, and having access to the building throughout the project has been an important part of the exploration to constantly reassess, test, and see different perspectives. The inventory extends throughout the project, and on the following pages, the building's current state and the parts that later lead to the thesis proposal are presented.

To describe the current situation the house is in, a brief factual introduction is needed. Skeppsbron 4 is situated in central Gothenburg, right next to the river and between two major tram stations. Traffic engineering planning and reconstruction have long characterized the area, effectively cutting off the pathway along the river past the house for a long time.

"One day you arrived, you didn't know if it was a one-way street in one direction or the other. The next day, they had closed an entire street."
-previous tenant

This thesis does not focus on the traffic engineering solutions in the area; that would have been another thesis. However, it is aware that the situation is evolving and therefore focuses on enhancing Skeppsbron 4's future position in that context. The surrounding buildings are from different time periods and of varying typology. The nearest neighbor to the west is a house that was built ten years before Skeppsbron 4 and has been taken care of to a much greater extent. It has recently received an extension that won Sweden's most prestigious architecture prize. To the east, there are parking spaces that create a void in the connection between Skeppsbron 4 and that direction to the city. Further to the west lies the electricity power plant, which has a distinct industrial character, before the street ends at the canal and is met by the newly built hotel, measuring over 100 meters. To the south, an urban space is formed between the building's rear, shielded by the neighboring building to the west, and the tree valley to south before the tramway divides the area.

Working methodically with such a complex building is crucial to obtaining as comprehensive a picture as possible. The practical part of the inventory has involved exploration with tools such as pen, paper, laser measurer, camera, and field recorder. The documentation of the building's physical current state has involved walking clockwise through one floor at a time and documenting with notes and a camera, measuring and sketching. Through access to archives of older drawings, informal meetings with previous tenants, and investigation of the building's current condition, a history of the building has emerged, which has also served as the in depth context for the thesis. This thesis believes that a building so centrally located in the city, with which so many have a relationship, makes it impossible or difficult to gather comprehensive data through interviews in a short period.
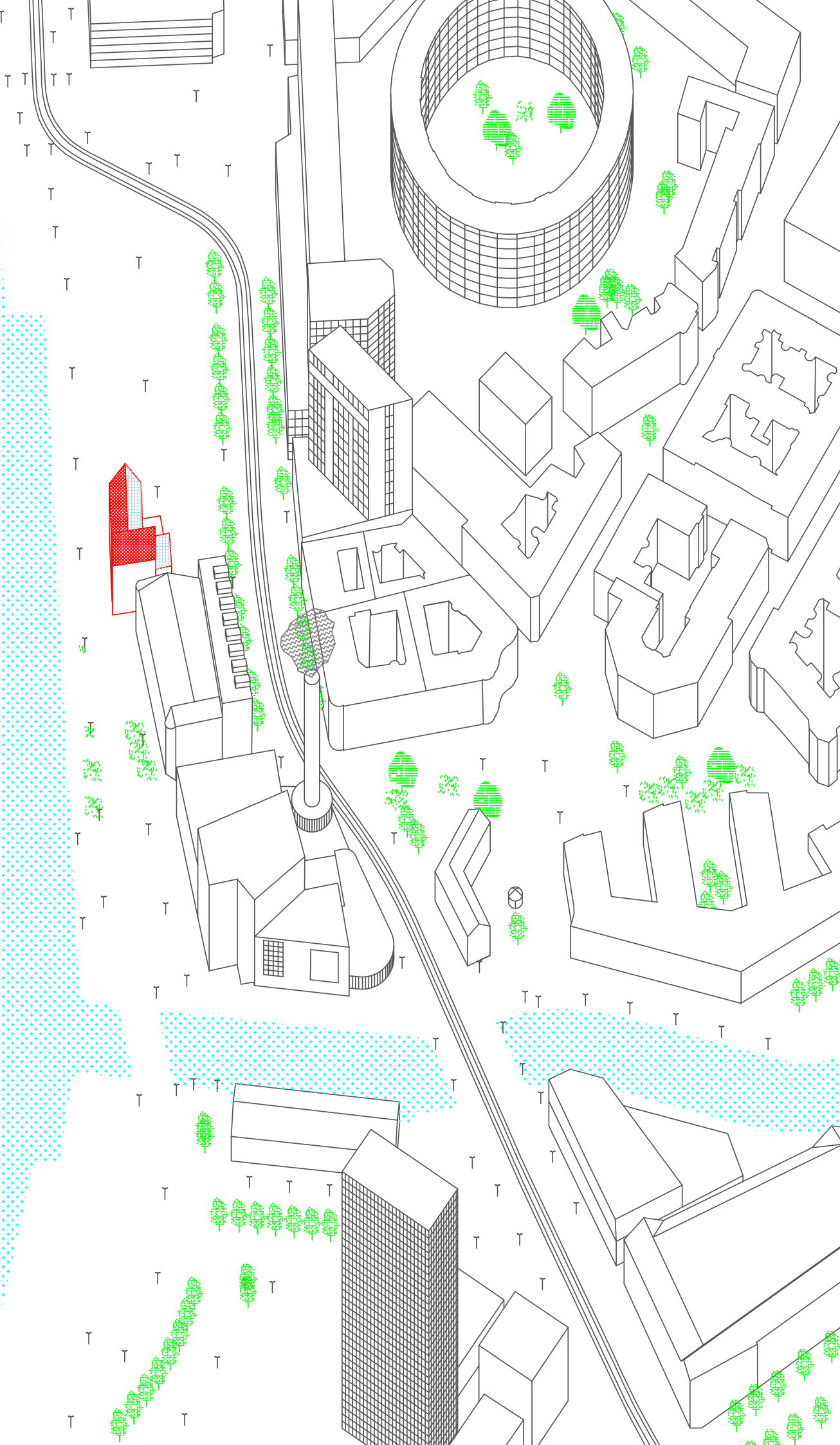
Pedestiran path along the river northward, February 2024.

Development of the area, February 2024.

Floor by floor

The building today consists of six floors, a basement, an attic, and a wing in the southwest. The roofs were originally covered with tiles. Currently, two of the roofs are covered with tiles while the rest are covered with metal sheets. The exterior of the building is adorned with copper sheets used for downspouts and coverings. The windows have been replaced over the years, some dating back to the construction year, retaining wooden muntins and frames. The facades facing north and west are made of lime-rendered lightweight concrete, and the ground floor has a facade of bohus granite natural stone with a decorated naive expression. The main staircase has large leaded windows facing south and is clad in swedish kolmårds marble and cement mosaic with forged railings. The elevator, which runs between the basement and the fifth floor, has been there since the beginning, and it also features forged details in the shaft. The facades facing south and east were previously plastered in a light color and have been covered since the 1980s with red and yellow metal sheets.

The eastern part of the ground floor was originally a retail space and has most recently been used as a shop. The floor features a checkered cement mosaic dating back to the period when the building was constructed. The walls have layers of paint from various periods, resembling an abstract painting. A large wooden window overlooks the river to the north. Currently, it is used as storage space for dismantled construction materials from when the eastern wing was demolished. The southern part of the ground floor was originally the courtyard of the building, which was covered with a roof in the early 1950s. Its most recent use was as a restaurant kitchen. The floor and walls are made of concrete with flaking white and red paint. The wall facing south was demolished in 2016 during foundation work and has since been rebuilt using lightweight concrete blocks. The northern part of the ground floor was most recently used as a dining area for a restaurant, where openings have been closed with wooden stud walls to accommodate temporary office space. The central service corridor also features a checkered cement mosaic floor, while the remaining floors are made of concrete. The basement is made of white painted concrete with windows blocked off facing the street. In the middle, there are original wooden windows used for bringing in light from what is assumed to be a floor made of cement glass in the former courtyard. The four floors of the eastern wing were originally used as offices. The most recent use was also as offices. The rooms have been left mid-demolition or renovation. Floors two, four, five, and six have been used as offices since 1915. The floor plans have remained relatively constant over the years, although various small changes have been made, such as new paint or new walls with built-in windows. Many companies from the shipbuilding industry have been housed in the building, which is sometimes revealed by features such as curtains with lighthouses on them.
All these layers contribute to the building's identity value, yet a formal description does not nearly capture the subjective experience that each visitor encounters.
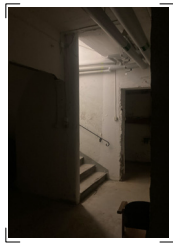
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Basement
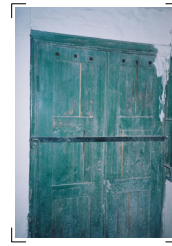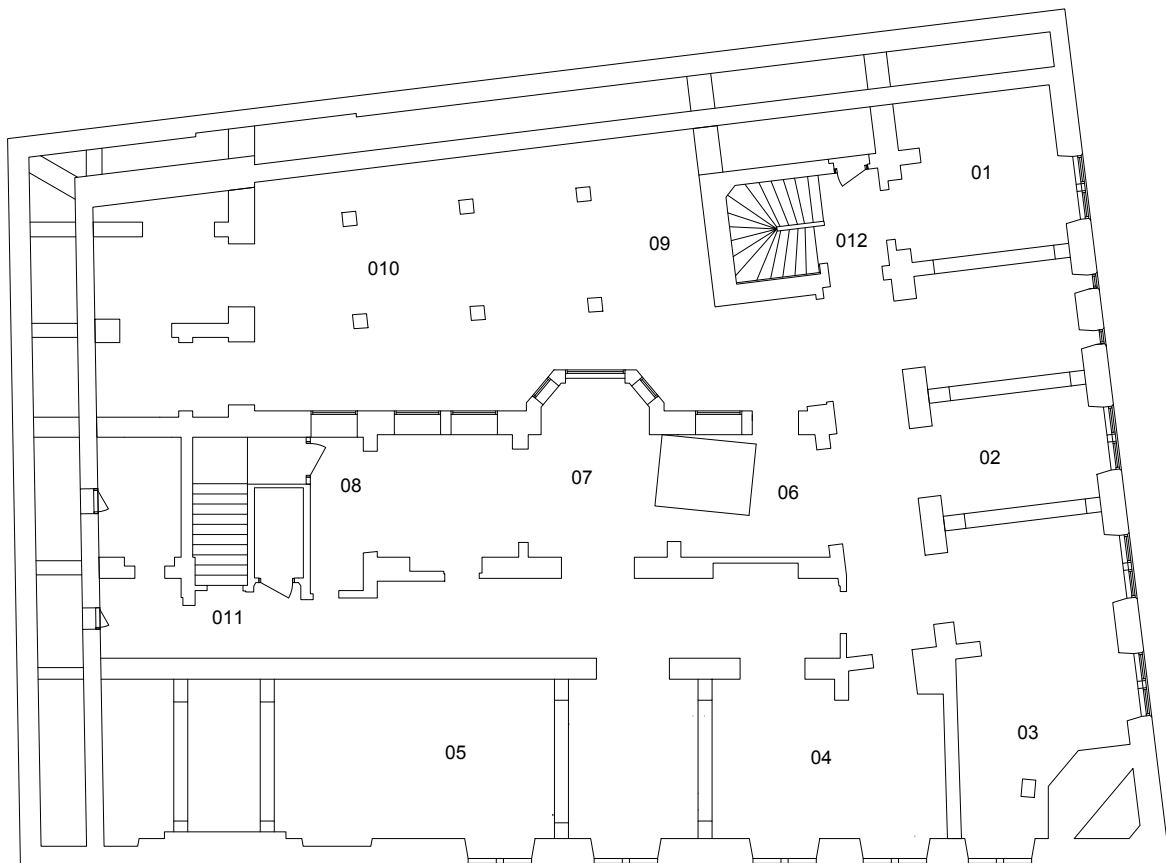
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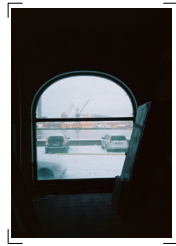
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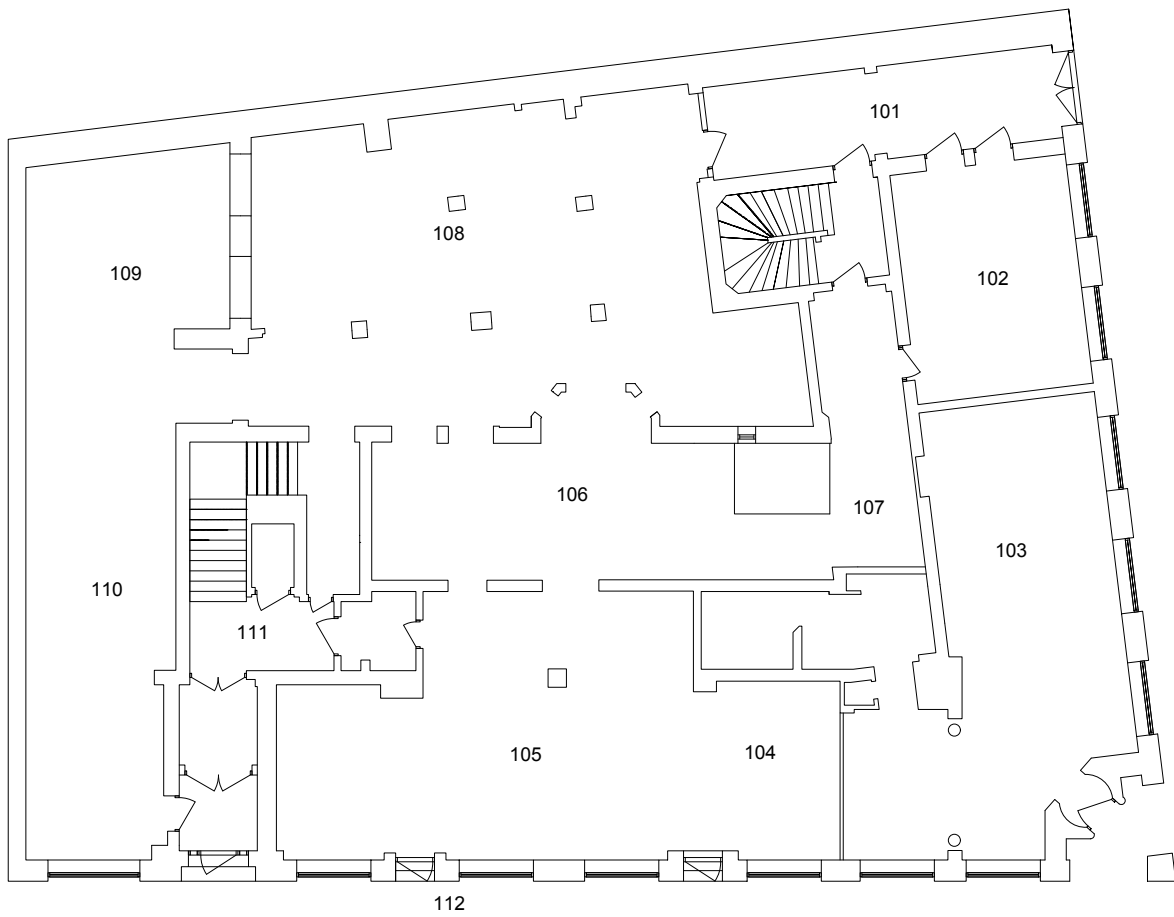
Ground floor
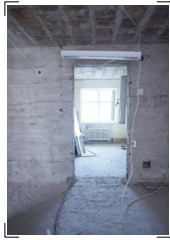
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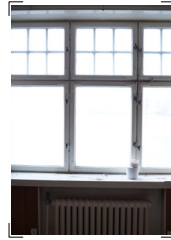
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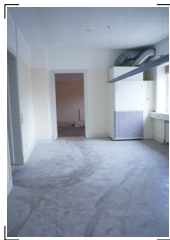
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Second floor

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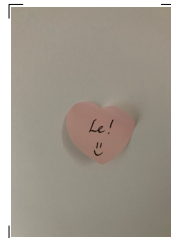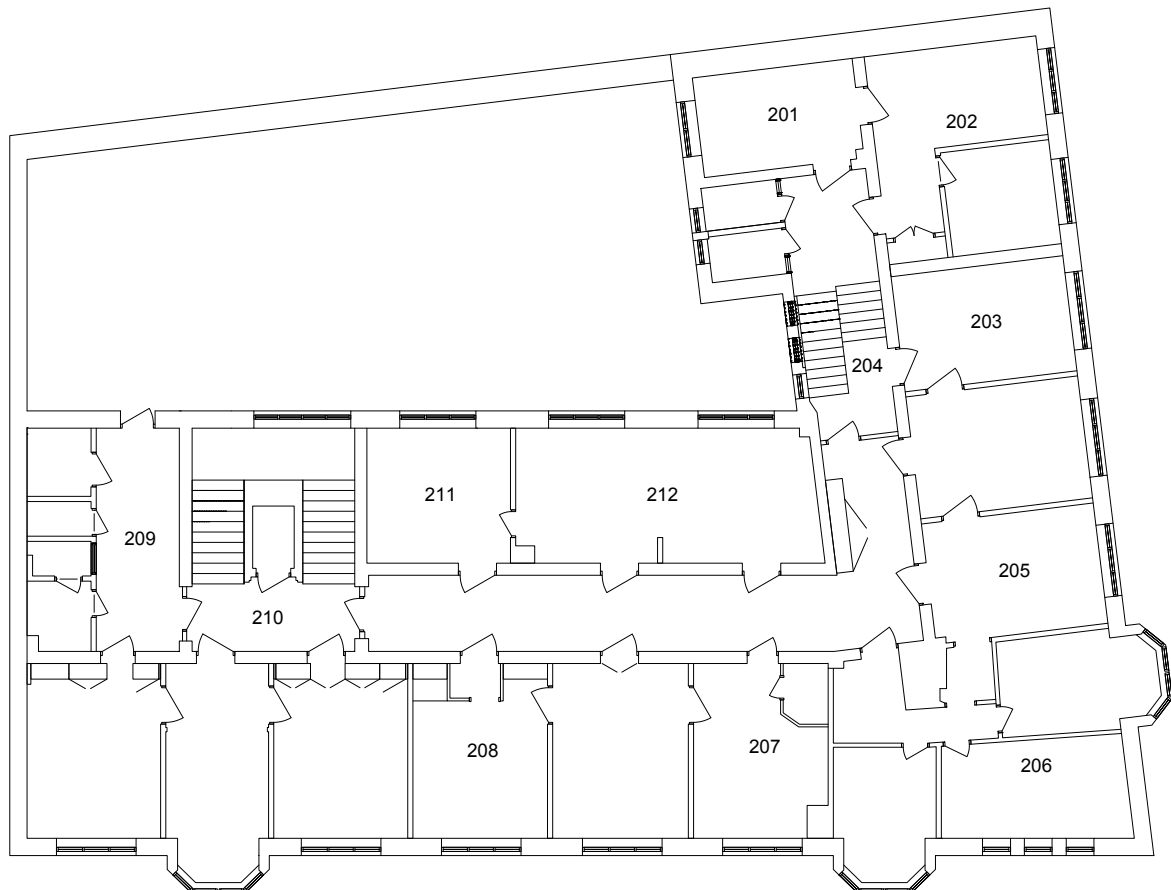
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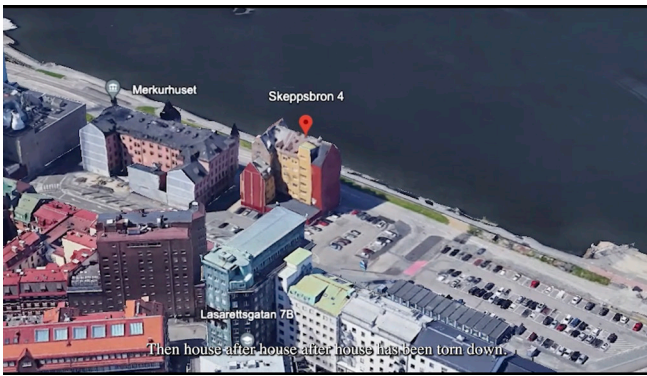

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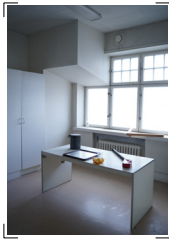
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Fifth floor
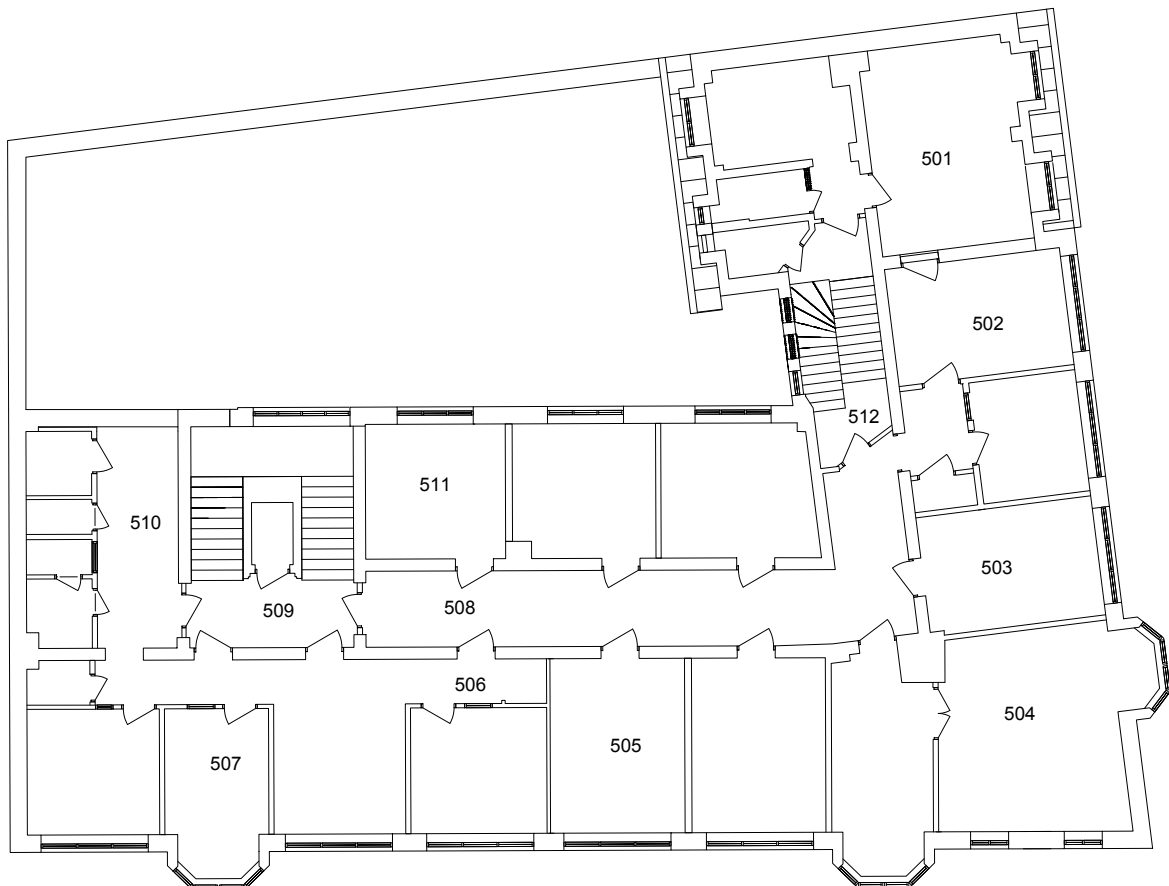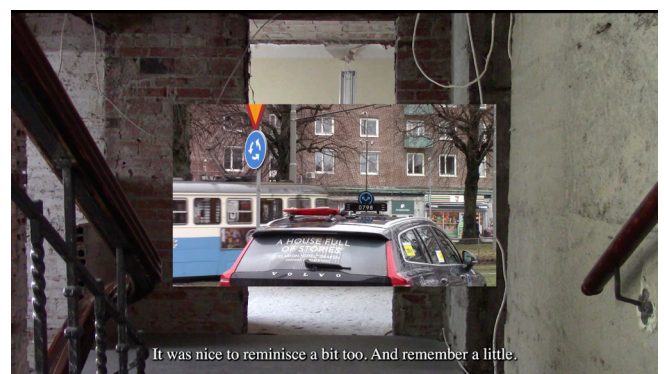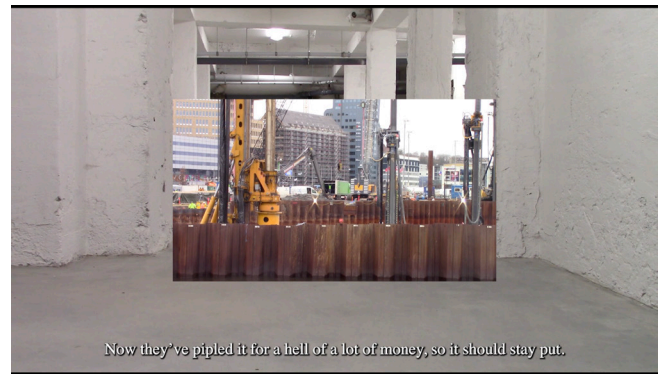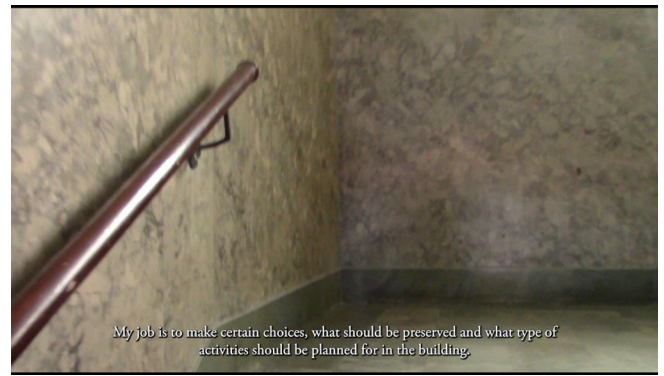
During the thesis process, people who had previously worked or had a relationship with the building were visited. The meetings had a spontaneous nature. It could involve visiting a restaurant that was previously located in the building but had now moved to the other side of the river, running into someone who had attended a party in the building, or scheduling a meeting with someone who had a shop there. Through these encounters, a picture of the building's social values emerged, where fragmentary stories were relived on the various floors. These alternative histories, which all too often are forgotten in favor of the neoliberal development where profit interests and tourism take precedence over the small local life that once took place in the building, are worth highlighting as they provide a picture of the city's collective memory.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyVdqKa6Chs

Demolition

In the book Indispensable Eyesores: An Anthropology of Undesired Buildings (2009), cultural anthropologist Elaine van der Hoorn writes about the emotional ties that people have to buildings considered unwanted in the urban landscape, or as she puts it, buildings that are eyesores. Unwanted buildings are those that have often fallen into disuse and entered a state of decay (van der Hoorn, 2009). Van der Hoorn argues that the ties people have to unwanted buildings are contradictory because even if they are demolished, the absence of them can evoke mixed feelings as they have been part of the city's identity and the collective memory of its inhabitants.

At one point, Skeppsbron 4 began to be demolished to make way for development in the area. A garage under the water in the adjacent river was to be built, and Skeppsbron 4 needed its foundation reinforced due to the significant interventions in the surrounding area. After several years of planning and spending a few hundred million SEK (SVT, 2023), the plans to build the garage were halted, and Skeppsbron 4 was now abandoned and partially demolished since 2016. This thesis has not conducted interviews to investigate how people in the city perceived Skeppsbron 4 as an eyesore or not, but it assumes that its abandonment and decay after demolition, the building's different layers from different eras, and the humble activities in the building in recent years have positioned Skeppsbron 4 as an unwanted building in the city that not long ago was threatened with demolition. Before the demolition began in 2016, the original layout of the building was mostly unchanged, and few alterations had been made over the years to adapt the spatial layout for the various activities that came and went over the years. After 2016, large parts of the basement, ground floor, southwest wing, and the entire southeast wing were demolished. Load-bearing structures that were removed were replaced with steel beams in the ceiling and concrete pillars. To reinforce the foundation, the construction workers needed to bring in tools, so many walls were taken down, holes were made in the floor, and a temporary opening was created in the roof towards the south.

Demolition has, strangely enough, not always been seen as something negative, but rather as an opportunity for something new, for example Haussmann's renovation of Paris. Demolition signifies the end of one history but also the beginning of a new one. Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs argue in the book Buildings must die: A perverse view of architecture (2014) that the demolition of architecture has a sort of sacrificial logic that provides a blank slate, thus a rebirth, creating new opportunities for renewal. Demolition in this sense becomes a form of creative destruction. Of course, this should not be interpreted as demolition being desirable, but rather as architecture's mortal enemy. However, it's an approach that involves seeing opportunities instead of obstacles in the fragments, as the political and market forces that determine whether something should be demolished are not always influenced by architects or other interest groups. The demolition in Skeppsbron 4 have created new spatial possibilities, spatial complexity, and unexpected aesthetic qualities. The demolition also left behind windows, doors, and other useful materials such as floor moldings and radiators. And if demolition is architecture's worst enemy, preservation should be regarded as architecture's best friend.
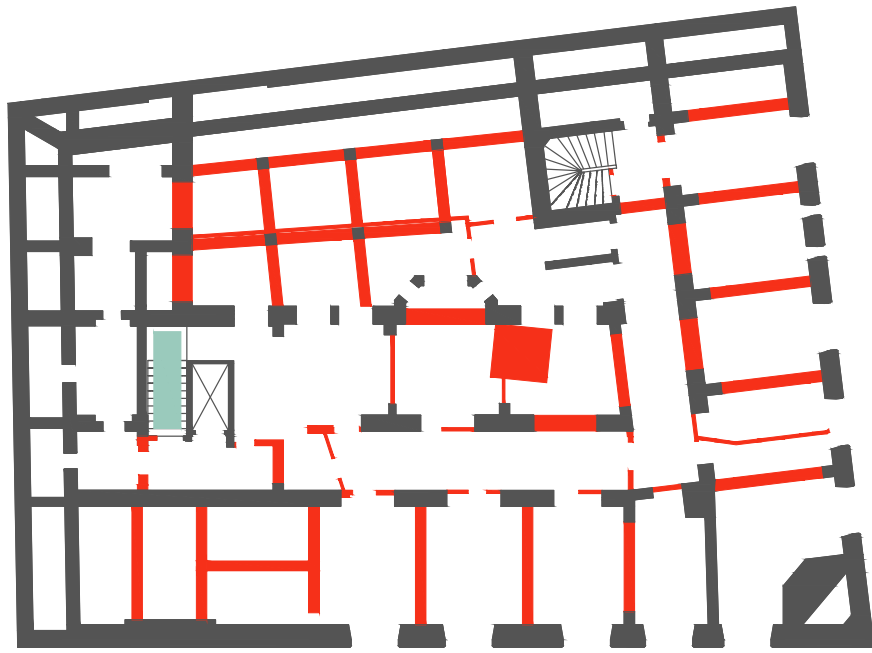
Basement

Ground floor

SCHEMATIC PLANS
EXISTING AND DEMOLISHED

LEGEND

● existing

● demolished 2016

● demolished fixed interior

● demolished before 2016

● restored

38

6

5

Belgian architectural firm AJDVIV, composed of Jan de Vylder and Inge Vinck, often works with the aesthetics of the unfinished. In the project PC Caritas in Melle, Germany (2017), where a closed mental hospital was transformed into a public meeting place, they allowed the previous demolition and ongoing decay to influence the project's aesthetic concept. The architectural philosophy in their practice is based on reimagining each element to be something other than what it appears to be at first glance and celebrating flaws and imperfections rather than trying to conceal them. In this way, they challenge conventions of aesthetics and redefine the perception of what architecture can be.

All this dust, dirt, depravity, and

spatial complexity.

7

The artist and architect Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) famously challenged conventional notions of demolition to unveil the residencies and inherent spaces concealed within destruction. His artworks demonstrate the distinctiveness and qualities that places possess in their raw honesty, compelling viewers to look beyond the finished surfaces of the built environment and contemplate the diverse assumptions of their own spatial imaginations. Matta-Clark's artworks aimed to showcase our potential and innate capacity to alter our spaces and engage in the public realm by making it their own. He engaged in destructive interventions with buildings that had been relegated to valuelessness and awaited demolition. In doing so, Gordon Matta-Clark, internationally renowned, illustrated that ruination and demolition can nurture artistic or architectural creativity. While some may have regarded the initial demolition work on Skeppsbron 4 as architectural trash, this thesis chooses to explore the new spatial possibilities and aesthetic qualities it has generated.
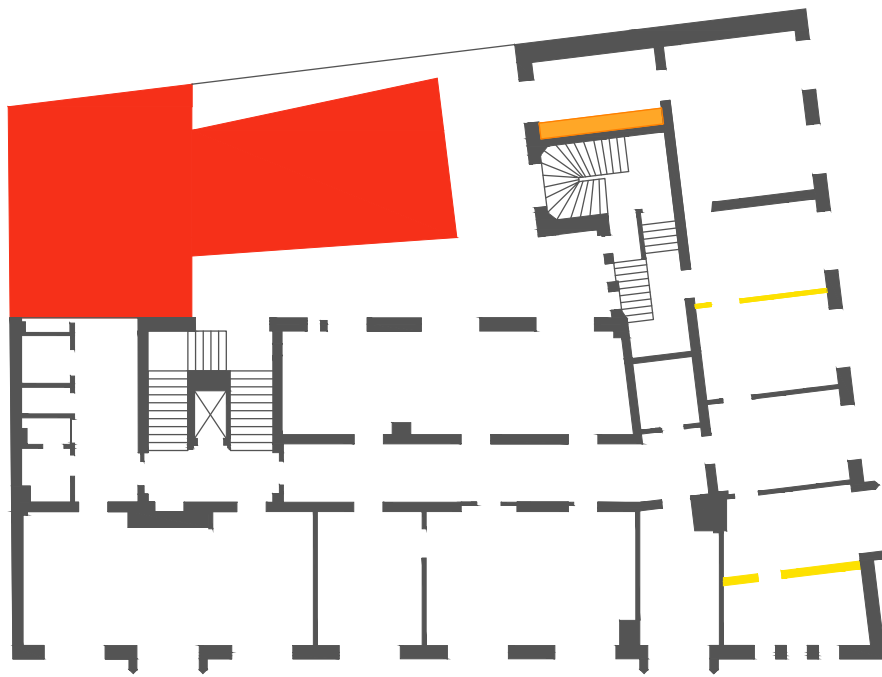
Second floor
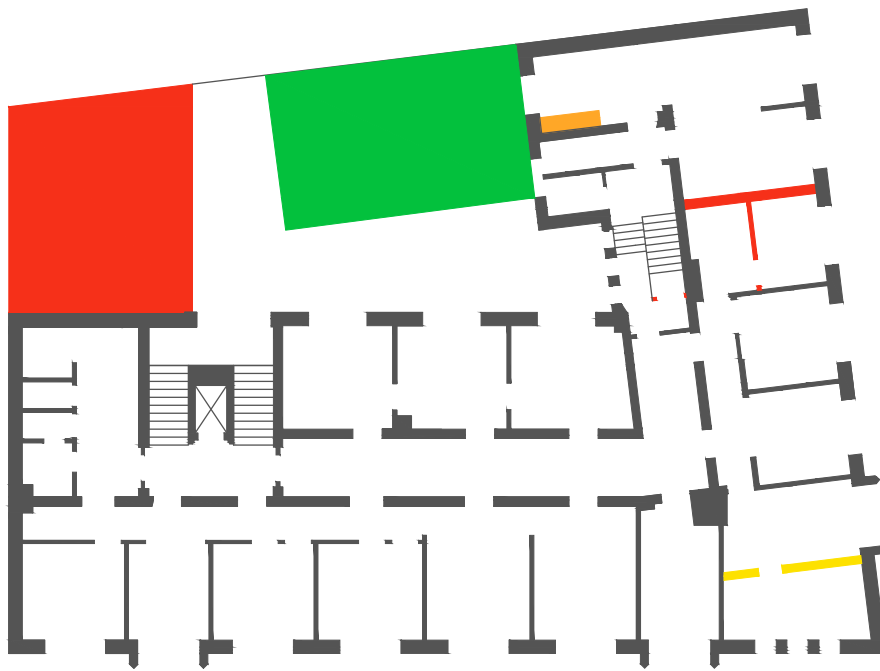
Third floor

SCHEMATIC PLANS
EXISTING AND DEMOLISHED

LEGEND

● existing

● demolished 2016

● demolished fixed interior

● demolished before 2016

● demolished and rebuilt

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Hole between the basement and ground floor from previous demolition.
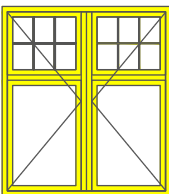
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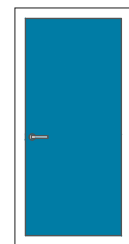
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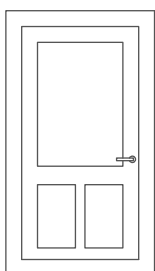
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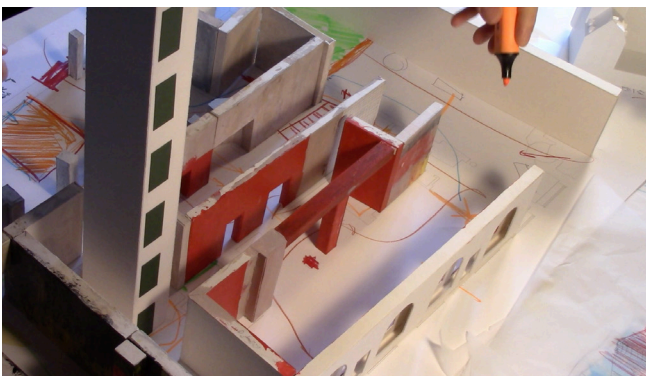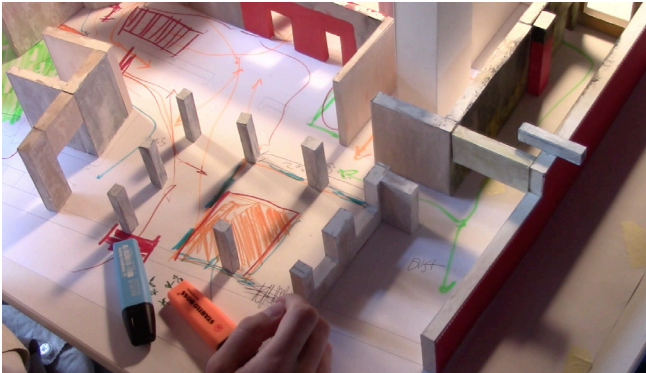W12

W13

W14

W15

D1

D2

D3

D4

D5

D6
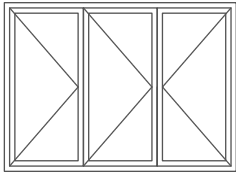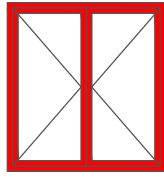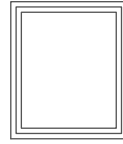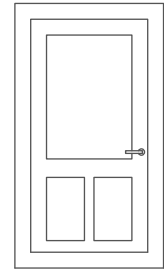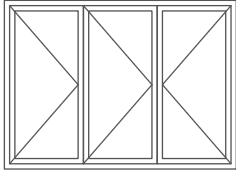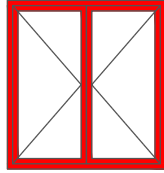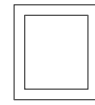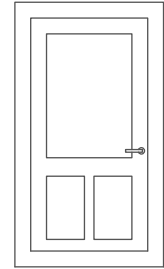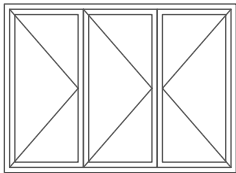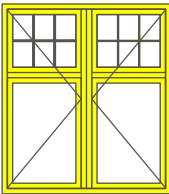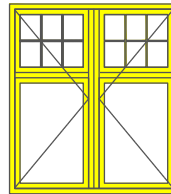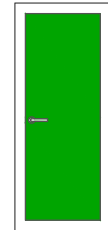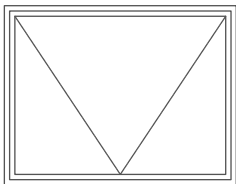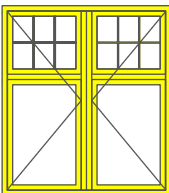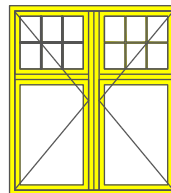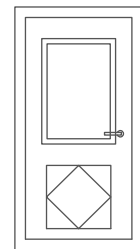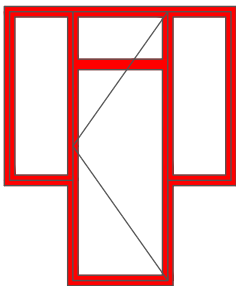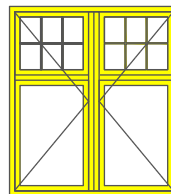
D7

UNUSED WINDOWS AND DOORS
PREVIOUS DEMOLITION

42

Current situation to south, February 2024.

Current situation to east, February 2024.

These walls are actually what's stopping the flow, and shutting everyting of really.

Some type of atrium or light entrance is definitely needed here.

A process model at a 1:50 scale was created, where the structural elements from the first floor were given their age related identity and character. Walls that are preferably removed to open up the floor's circulation are mostly temporary stud and plaster walls. The surface layers of the elements resemble abstract paintings, which reveals the building's age value and natural cycle. This process can best be described as value based design and designing by erasing.

44

Exploratory sketches/ideas
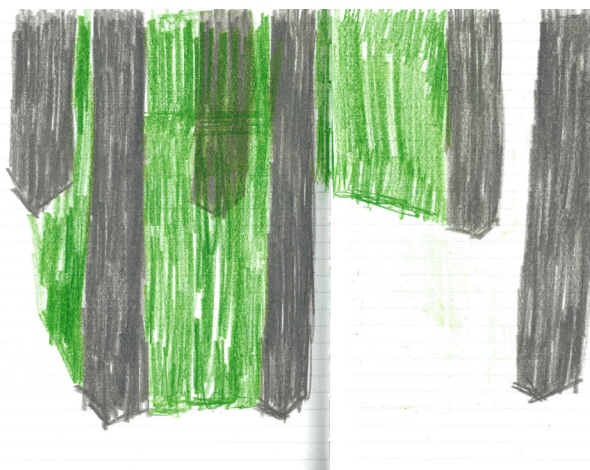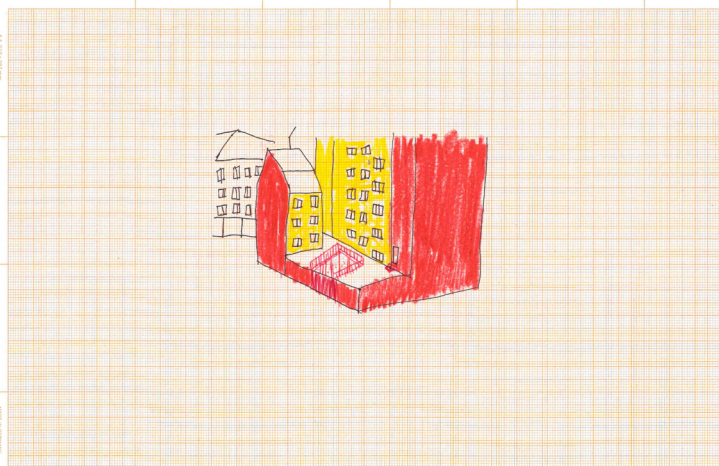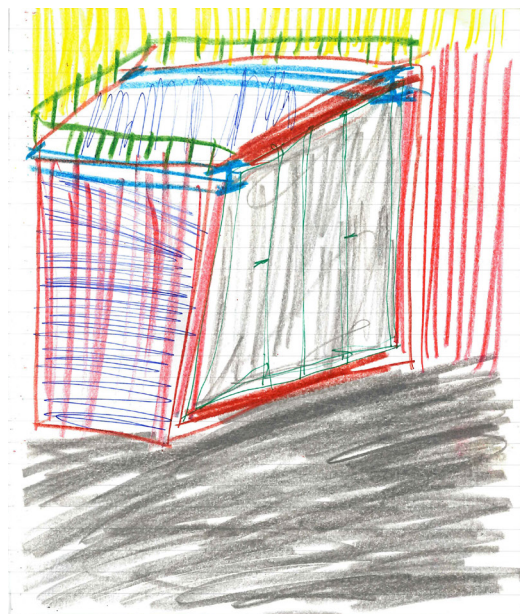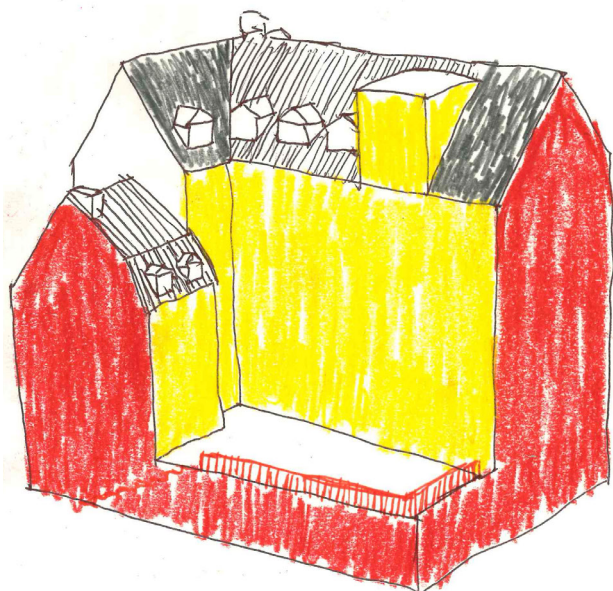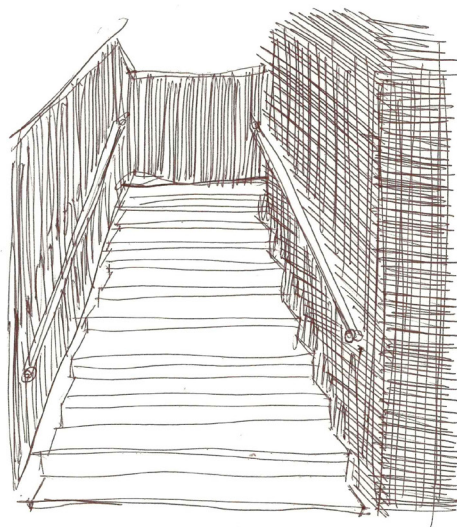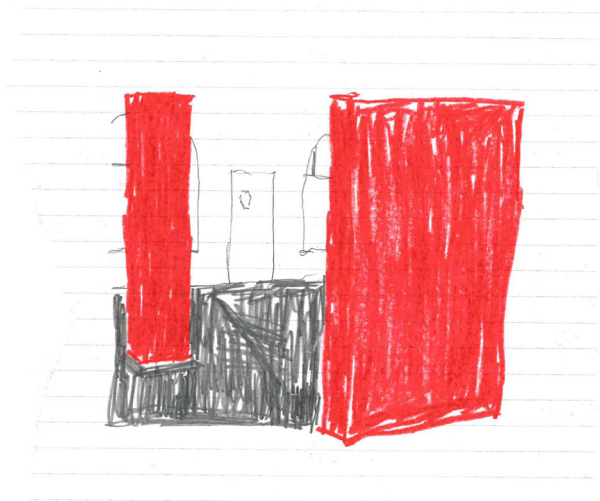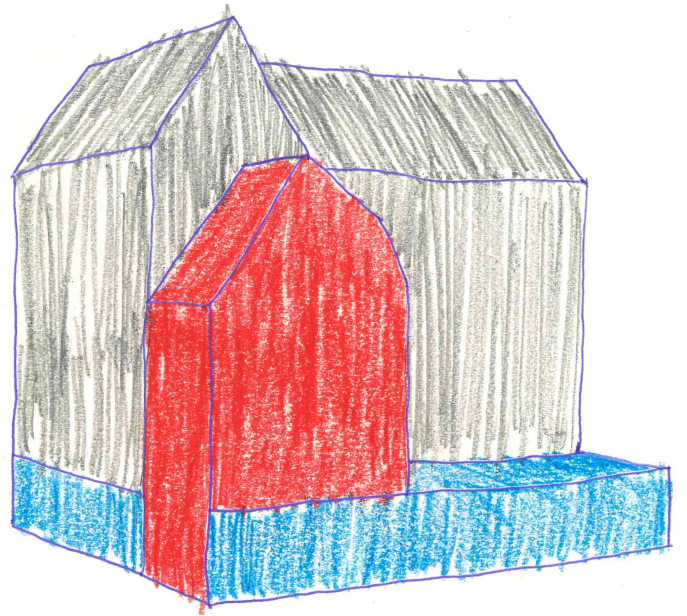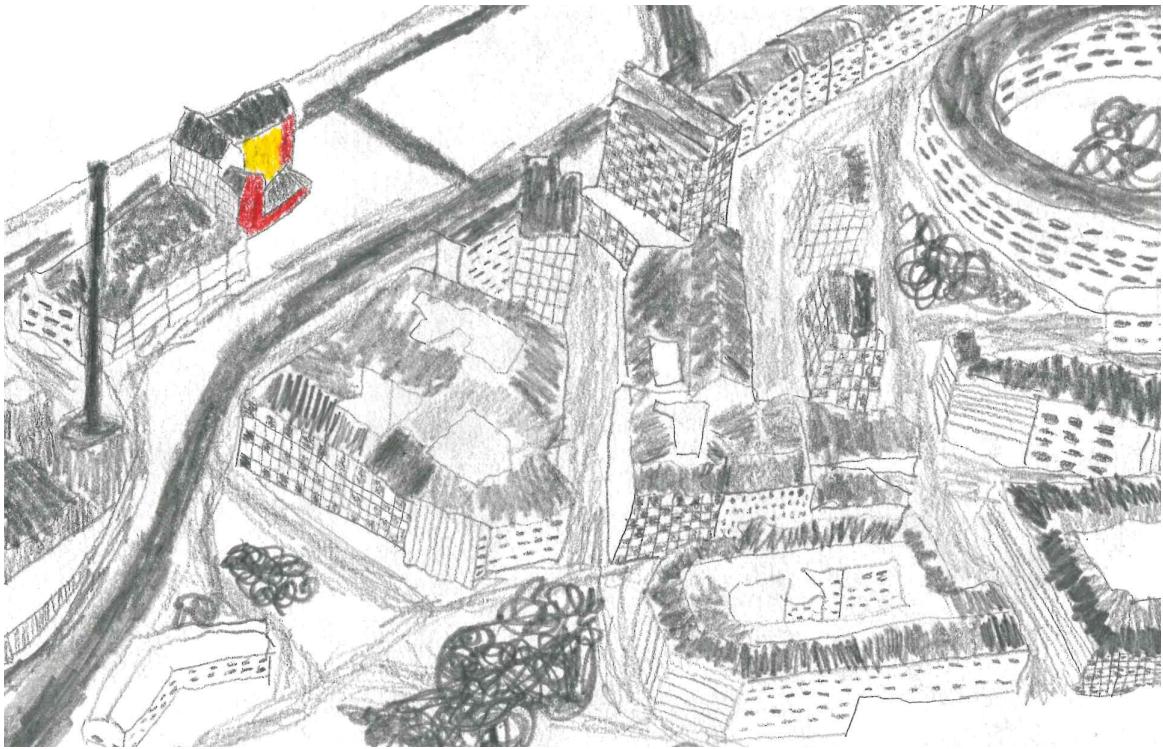
Part

3

Skeppsbron 4

The proposal revolves around this thesis identified values by suggesting preservation, transformation, and maintenance as the main architectural approaches. Through preservation and maintenance, the building's age and identity values are preserved but also contribute, according to this thesis, to an inclusive architectural language that a larger proportion of people can relate to, thus contributing to the social values. To enhance the building's functionality in line with the program, spatial changes are made to improve the building's circulation and interaction with its outer surroundings.

The program aligns with the property manager's mission to serve the city's residents with affordable spaces for cultural activities. It has evolved through dialogue with the property manager, Higab, by having an office space in their premises and access to the building throughout the project. The proposal can be seen as emerging from conversations with Higab but also as a critical evaluation of what needs to be done to further strengthen their mission in the city. This includes addressing questions regarding heritage and architectural values, as well as creating democratic meeting places. A detailed description of how the building is used is provided under TERMS AND CONDITIONS on the following pages.
The proposal is not only intended as a finalized design concept but also as a part of the discussion and discourse surrounding the survival of the building, the development of the area, and what is considered heritage or not. As Jorge Otero-Pailos puts it: "The question for me is how can we lower the guard of preservation, which is so much about guarding—protecting heritage—so that it becomes open to other interpretations of heritage that are not intra-disciplinary but that are extra-disciplinary and that come from art and architecture? "
The design is based on and utilizes the ongoing demolition, which has created new spatial opportunities and aesthetic qualities, as well as left behind doors, windows, and other useful materials. The proposal includes floors 0, 1, and 2, the entire four floors of the southwest wing, as well as the parking lot to the south. The remaining part of the building is proposed to be preserved as office space and rented out by the property manager to generate income for the project and address the building's deficit.

The survival of the building extends no further than the people who care for it and drive the process forward. To allow the building to evolve beyond the proposal, it is important to understand the processes that allow it to extend its lifetime. This includes maintenance, repair, and renovation. The proposal addresses this by suggesting supervision of selected parts and providing the program with a workshop that can be used for the repair and maintenance of the building's broken windows, doors, and other construction elements. A examination by an engineer is needed for overview of structural soundness of the building, especially to determine the lifespan and condition of the concrete in the supporting structure.

28.5 m

33 m

24 m
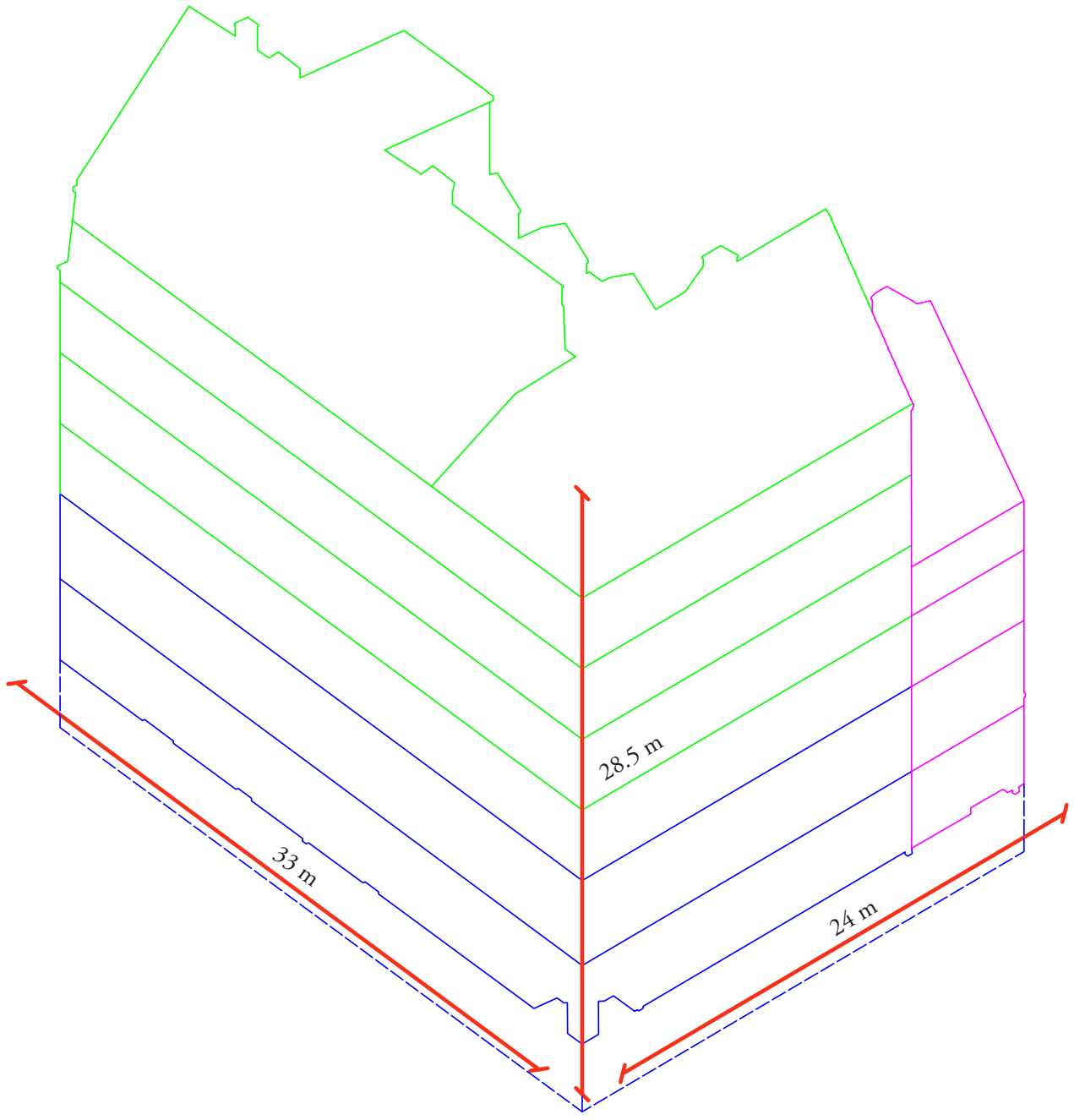
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- public 25%
- semi private 10 %
- private 65 %

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This contract is binding upon signature. These terms and conditions apply to all members of Skeppsbron 4. Upon signature, members undertake rights to utilize the building and obligations to maintain the building and participate in the development of the activities. The property manager has the right to terminate the contract immediately if the member misbehaves in a way that is considered to harm the building, impede the activities, or behaves offensively towards other members or visitors.

2. BUILDING OVERVIEW

2.1 Skeppsbron 4 is a community-driven space and partially open building for its members. The basement level, ground floor, second floor, and southwest wing are available to members. Keys and access to these spaces are provided upon contract signature. The third, fourth, and fifth floors are rented out to private companies that share a common outdoor area with the rest of the building.

3. USE AND MAINTENANCE

3.1 Workshop

Members have access to the workshop 24 hours a day. After completing an approved safety course, you, as a member, have free access to all the workshop's machines. The workshop can be booked for shorter projects, with priority given to projects that involve reusing leftover materials from the building that can be used by the residents. The workshop should be cleaned, and the tools returned to their proper places after use. Members are responsible for emptying the sawdust collected in the basement as needed.

3.2 Café

The café is open by agreement of the members. Café revenues go to Skeppsbron 4's common fund and are reinvested in the building. As a member, you are expected to work in the café twice a year. During café opening hours, it is the responsibility of the working members to decide what is served. During parties and other gatherings, the kitchen can be used as necessary.

3.3 Music Studio, Editing Room & Photo Studio

The music studio, editing room and photo studio can be booked for a maximum of one week at a time. It is also possible to book a fixed weekly time slot for a one-year period at a time. After use, the equipment and rooms should be left in good condition and cleaned.

3.4 Art Studios

The artist studios are rented out on a project basis. The applicant applies with a brief description of their project and an approximate time frame, and rental is granted subject to availability. There is no waiting list. The applicant must be a member of Skeppsbron 4. The project can last a maximum of 12 months. The artist studios are equipped with kitchen and toilet facilities along with some fixed interior elements, except on the second floor, which shares facilities with the common workspace. The workshop on the first floor is accessible to artists 24 hours a day.

3.5 Common Workspace

As a member, you have access to common workspaces on the second floor. You do not need to reserve a spot. The office is also used as a meeting room for the association's annual meeting and other gatherings. Wi-Fi is included in the membership fee.

3.6 Exhibition Space

The exhibition halls on the basement and ground floors are available for members and external actors to organize exhibitions. An exhibition has an unlimited duration as long as no one else applies to exhibit. Projects created in art studios exhibit their projects after the end of the period. Exhibition walls to attach between pillars are available in the storage room on the basement floor. The exhibition space can also be used for workshops and other events.

3.7 Lecture Hall

During lectures or film screenings, there is a room equipped with a projector and screen on the basement level. Extra chairs are available in the storage room on the same floor. The sliding walls of the black box can be opened up to extend the lecture hall if necessary.

3.8 Common Outdoor Spaces

The outdoor common areas, on the roof, and at ground level facing south are collectively taken care of by the association's members. Water collection and cultivation are managed by the members. A major cleaning day is organized once per season. The metal gate to the courtyard and the garage door to the south are opened to connect indoors and outdoors when needed. The roof is accessible via floor 2, through the southwest wing, and in the southeast.

4. FINANCIAL

Skeppsbron 4 is a partially municipality-subsidized meeting place, which means that the costs of using the building's rooms are relatively low. As a member of Skeppsbron 4, you are expected to contribute to the social values of the place and participate in its development. Building the social values of the place means that you, as a member, help create the content of the building that contributes to its function as a meeting place. This is related to the development of the place; however, suggestions for small changes to improve the functionality of the rooms as needed are welcomed. As a member, you are also expected to participate in the maintenance of the building to the extent possible without professional help. One can say that the commitment in the house is voluntary work in exchange for access and usage in return.

4.1 Membership Fee

A membership fee of 200 SEK is paid upon contract signing. Thereafter, an annual membership fee of 500 SEK.

4.2 Revenues

Café revenues are fully returned to Skeppsbron 4 and should primarily be used to purchase goods for sale in the café. Members may organize the sale of their art, fanzines, or other conceivable items without having to donate a portion of the proceeds to the association.

4.3 Additional Costs

Members are responsible for the cost of materials that do not come directly from the previous demolition of Skeppsbron 4. Purchases of common materials, equipment, or other useful items are made based on decisions of necessity and within the framework of the association's annual budget.

GBG   13/5/20   *Alex*

_____   _____
PLACE, DATE   SIGNATURE MEMBER

_____   _____
PLACE, DATE   SIGNATURE PROPERTY MANAGER

JULY 2024

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Reuse workshop	2 Office workshop	3 Open workshop	4 Common cleaning	5 Cafe open Vernissage Chalmers	6 Cafe open Chalmers exibition	7 Cafe open Chalmers exibition
8 Reuse workshop Chalmers exibition	9 Right to the city lecture & discussion Chalmers exibition	10 Open workshop Chalmers exibition	11 Common cleaning Chalmers exibition	12 Cafe open Chalmers exibition	13 Cafe open Kulturföreningen BRUNNEN party	14 Workshop linseed oil paint Cafe open
15 Reuse workshop Film screening PUSH	16 Office workshop	17 Open workshop	18 Common cleaning	19 Cafe open	20 Cafe open	21 Cafe open
22 Reuse workshop	23 Heritage & sustainability lecture	24 Open workshop	25 Workshop booked Common cleaning	26 Film screening Sossen och det skruvade tornet Cafe open	27 Cafe open	28 Workshop plaster with limestone Cafe open
29 Reuse workshop	30 Office workshop	31 Open workshop				

0   15   30 m

SITUATION PLAN

LEGEND
- public entrance
- cafe & artist studios entrance
- office entrance

OVERVIEW PLAN
BASEMENT
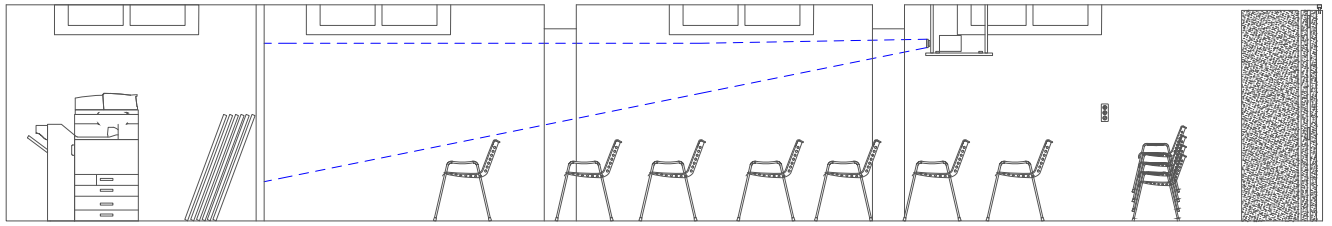
01 storage cafe
02 editing room
03 music studio
04 photo studio
05 district heating
06 storage
07 lecture hall
08 black box

09 exhibition hall
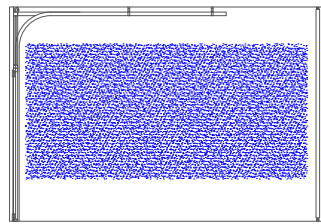010 exhibition hall
011 dust room
012 cleaning storage

LEGEND
● existing
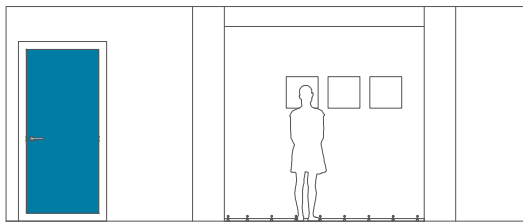● new
● reused
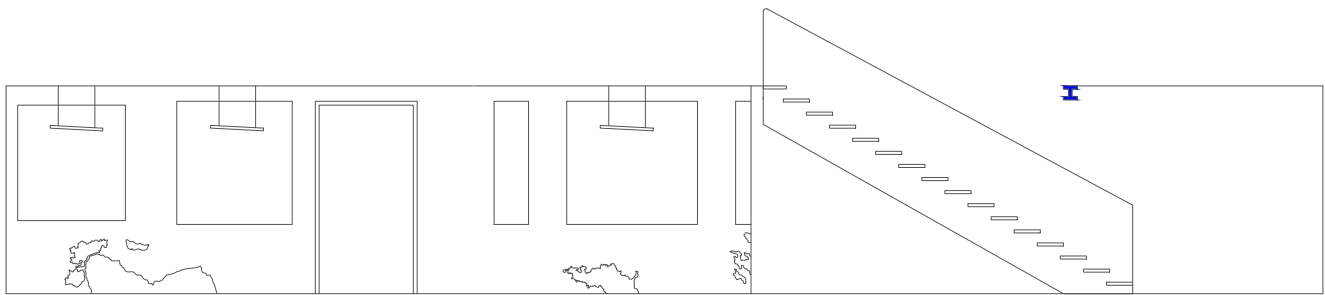● removed window
● new opening
● restored

06 Storage   07 Lecture hall

07 Lecture hall

010 Exhibition hall

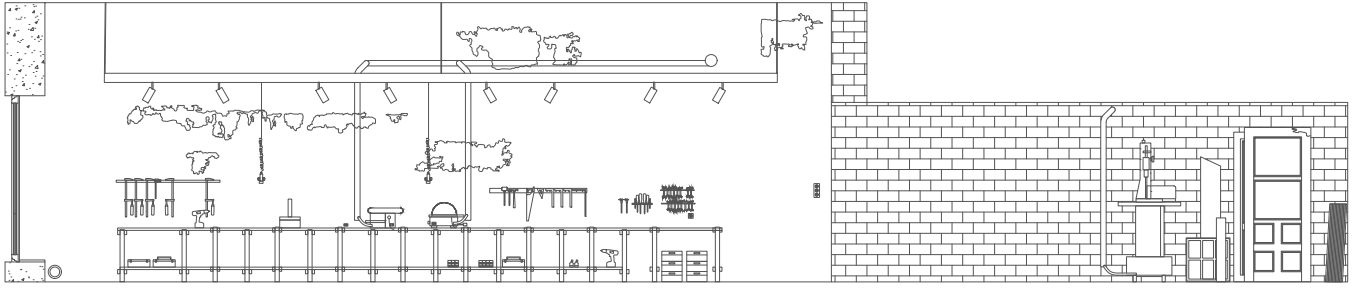
09 Exhibition hall   Stair 0-1

FRAGMENTS
BASEMENT

101

102

103

105

104

107

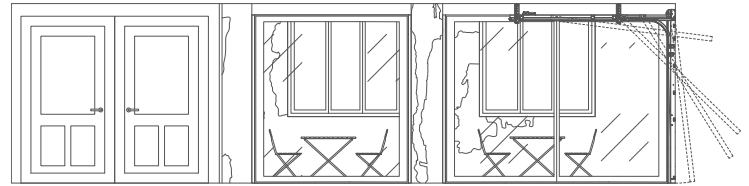106

OVERVIEW PLAN
GROUND FLOOR

LEGEND

● existing

● new

● reused

● new opening

● restored

101 garbage room
102 cafe kitchen
103 cafe
104 exhibition hall
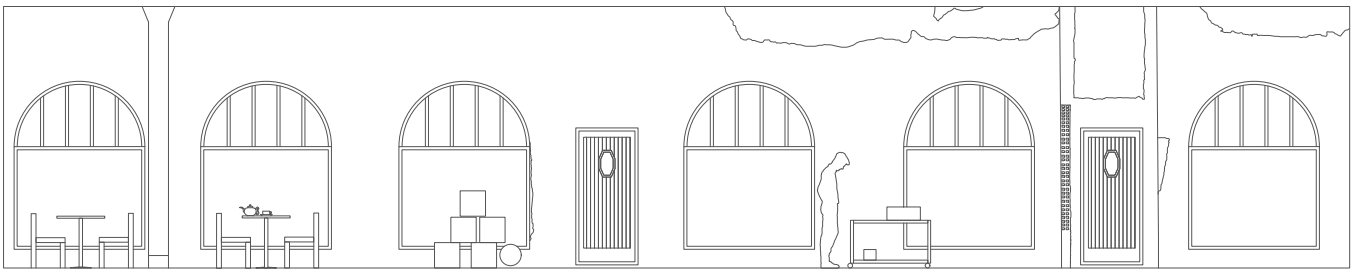105 common space
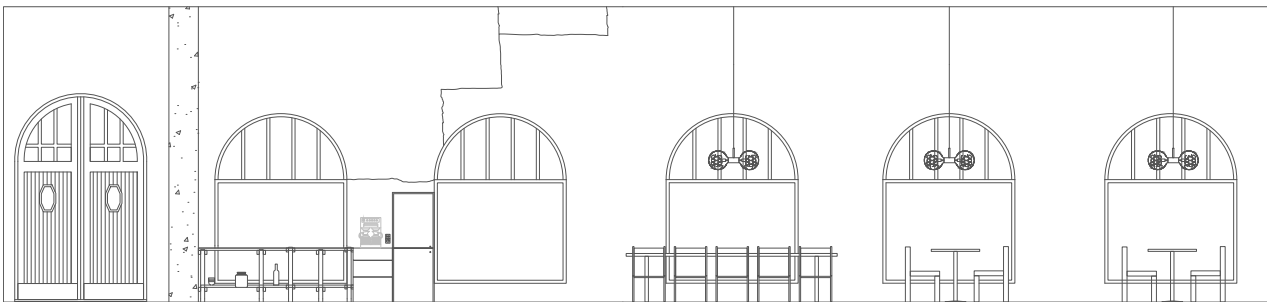106 workshop
107 outdoor space

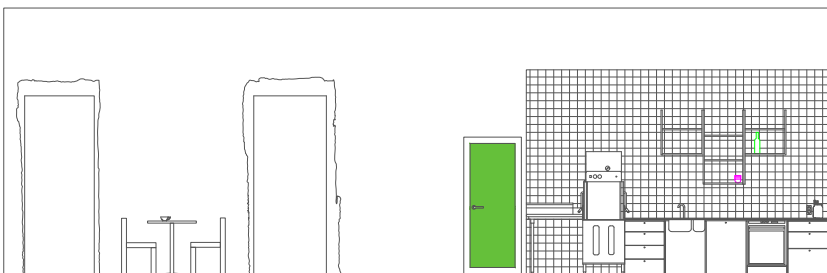**58**

106 Workshop

105 Courtyard

104 Exhibition hall

101   103 Cafe

102 Cafe kitchen

FRAGMENTS
GROUND FLOOR
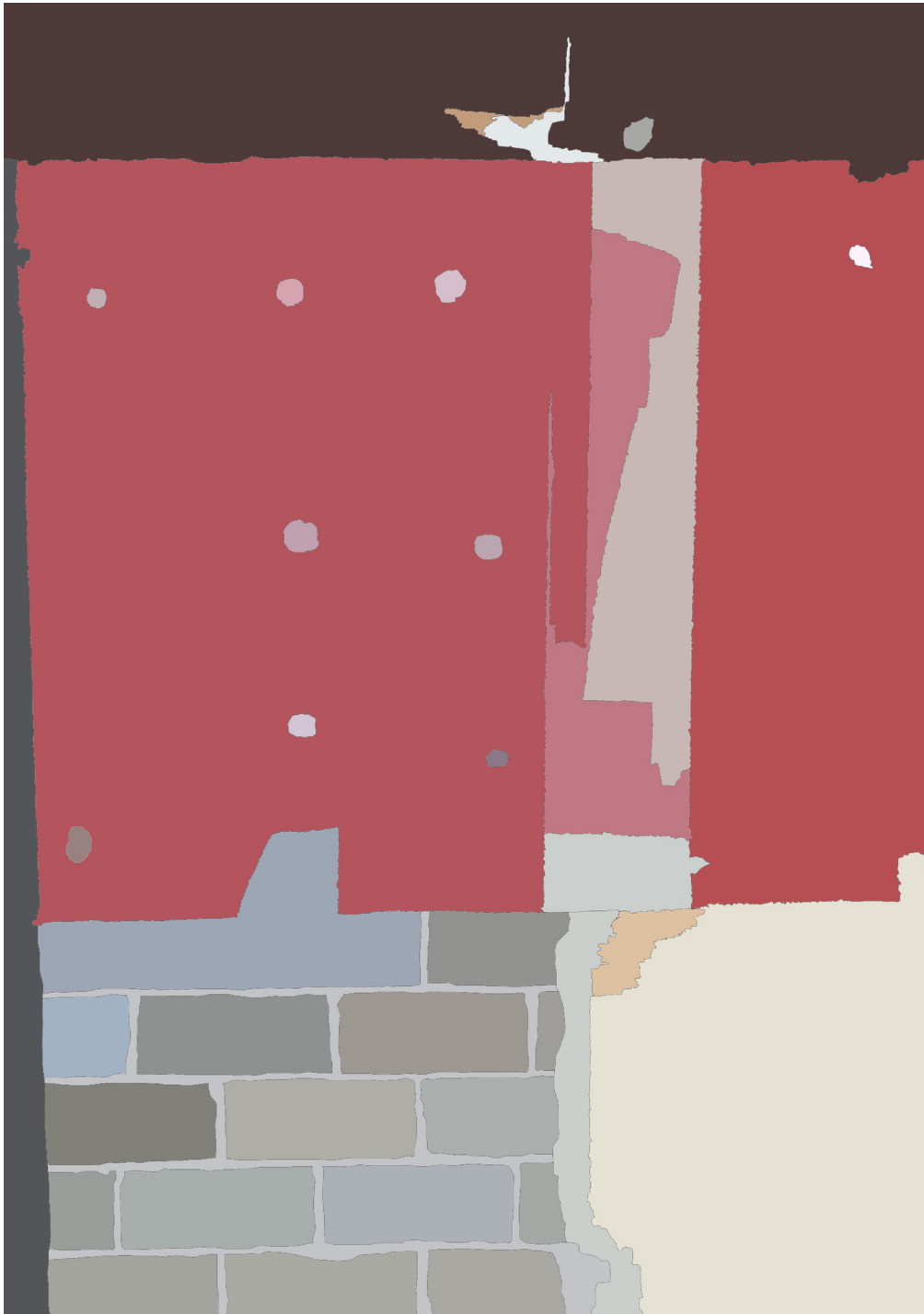
DETAIL 104
WALL FRAGMENT

The surface layers of the walls resemble abstract paintings, which reveals the building's age value and natural cycle. The spontaneous character that years of use and previous demolition have created is difficult or impossible to replicate and is preserved as a record of time, where each person's imagination or interpretation determines which story is embedded in Skeppsbron 4's heritage.

DETAIL 105
WALL FRAGMENT
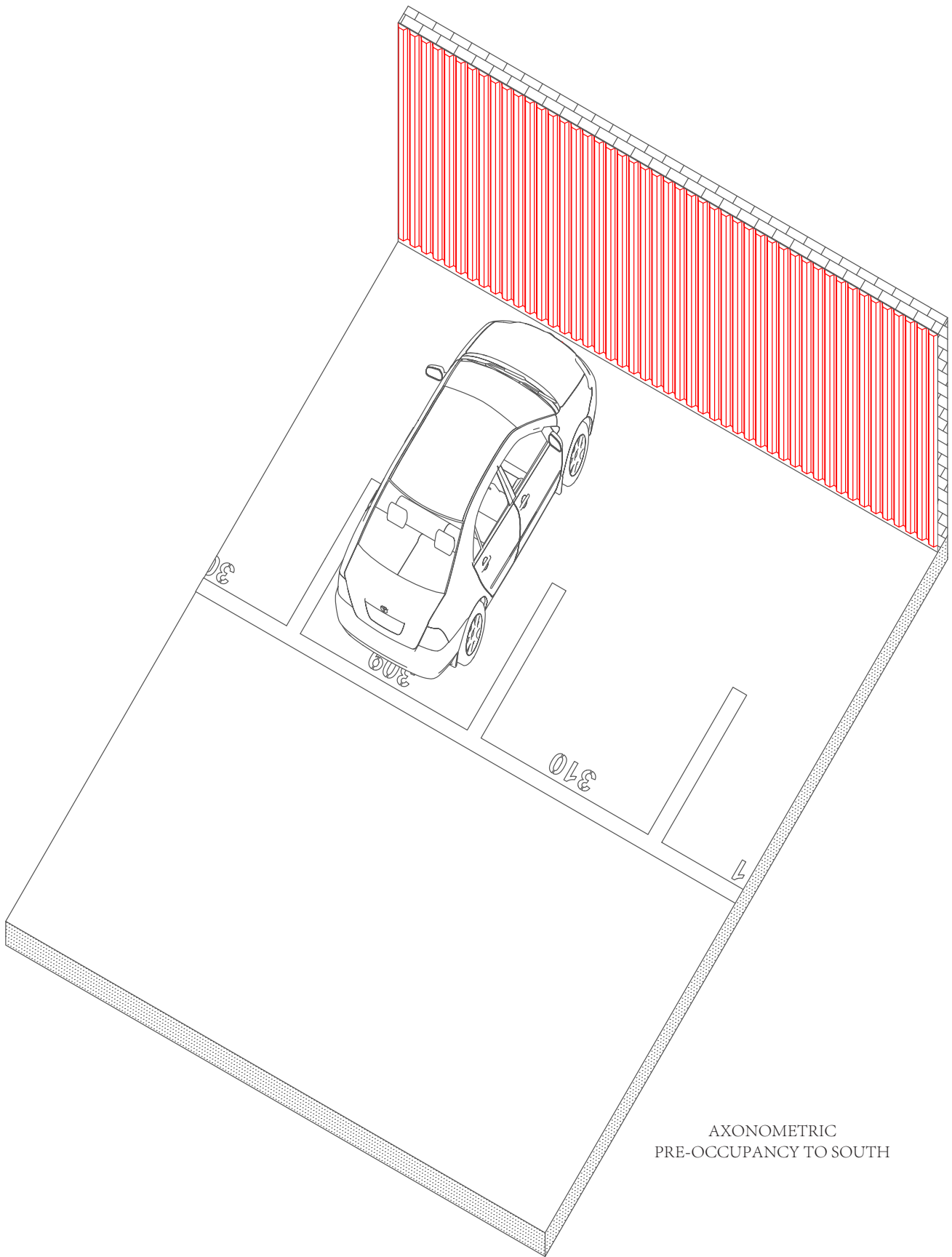
AXONOMETRIC
PRE-OCCUPANCY TO SOUTH

62
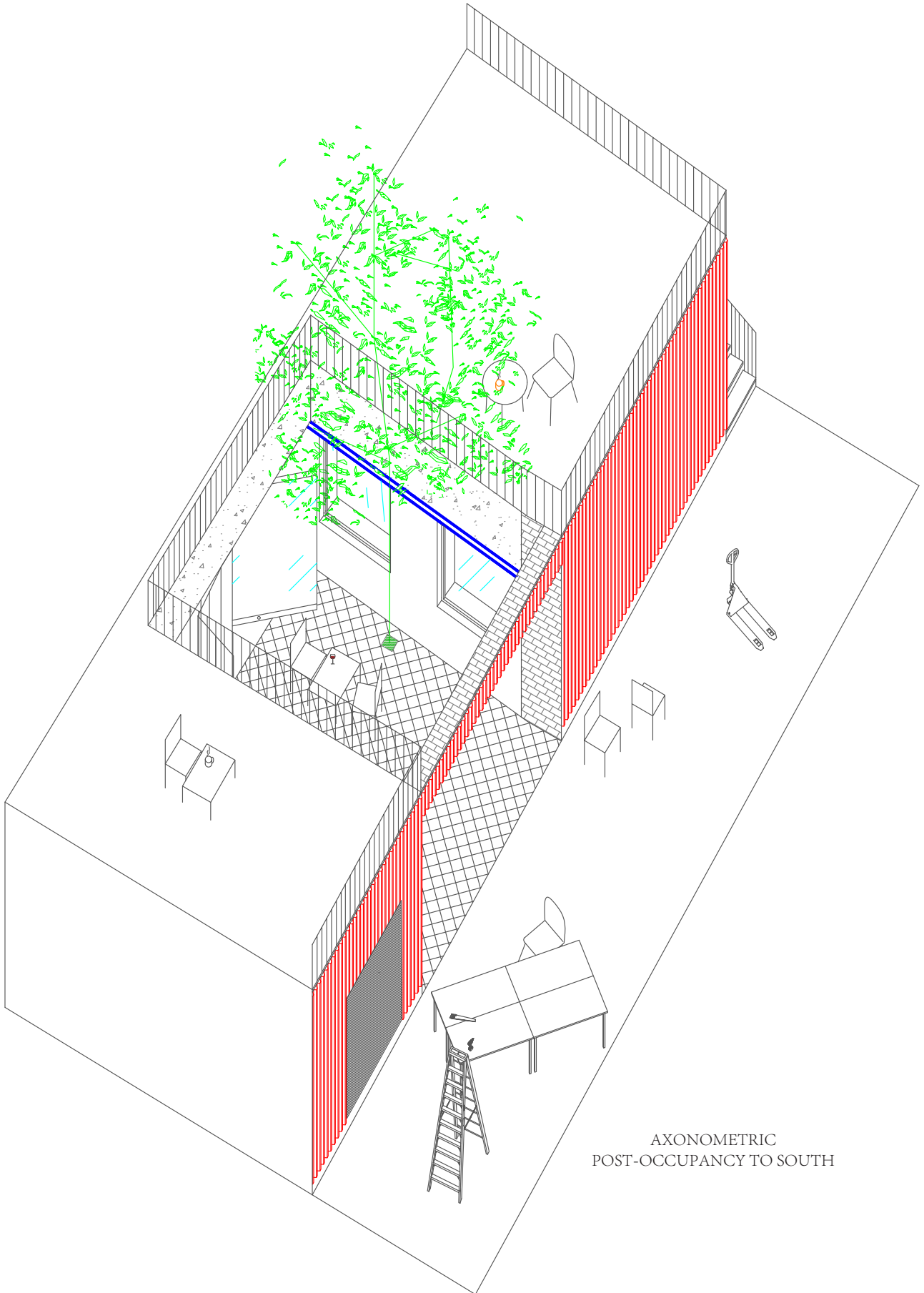
AXONOMETRIC
POST-OCCUPANCY TO SOUTH
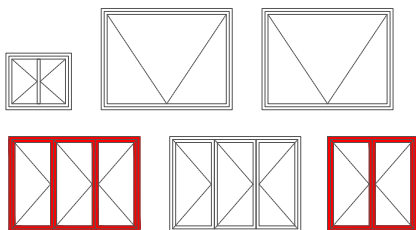
ELEVATION
SOUTH

LEGEND
● existing
● new
● reused

W4 W5 W11 W9

64
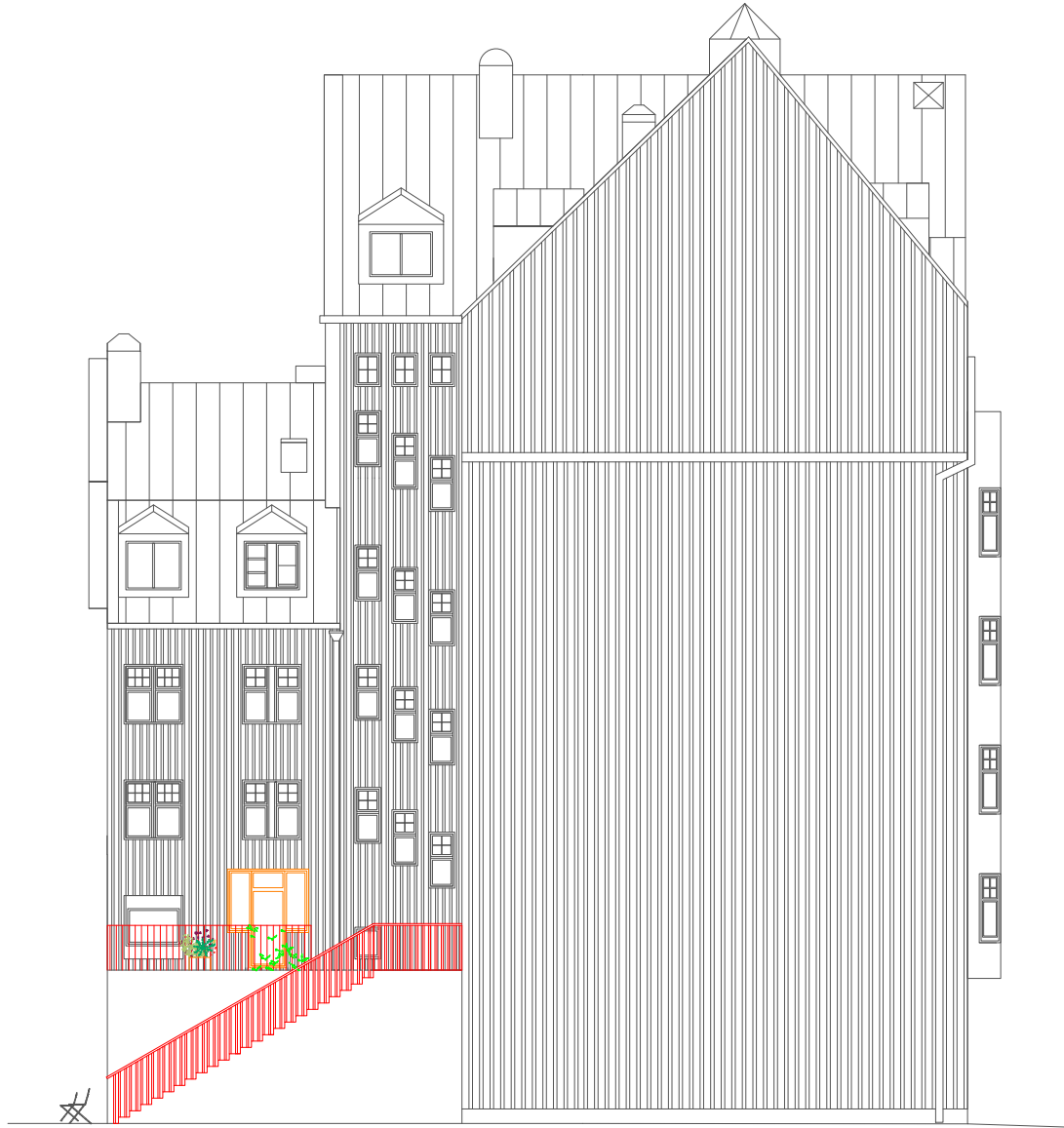
0 1   5   10 m

ELEVATION
EAST

LEGEND
● existing
● new
● reused

D1

201

202

203

204

205

209

210

208

206

207

a

a
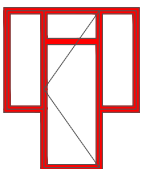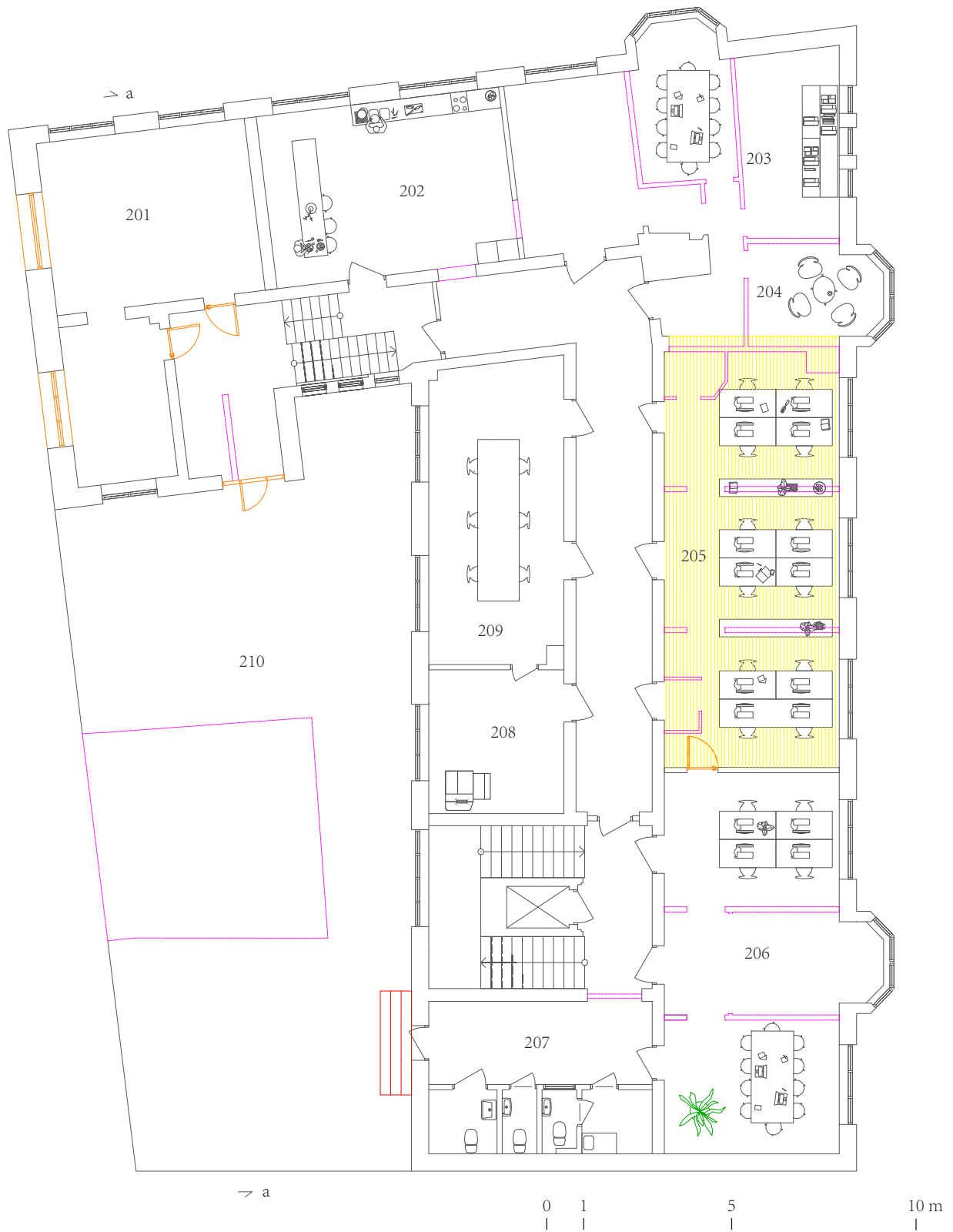
0   1   5   10 m

OVERVIEW PLAN
SECOND FLOOR

LEGEND
● existing
● new
● reused
● erased wall/roof
● levelled floor

201 art studio   209 meeting room
202 common kitchen   210 common roof
203 workspace
204 chill
205 workspace
206 workspace
207 facilities
208 printer

66

0   1   5   10 m

SECTION AA

LEGEND
● existing
● new
● reused
● removed window
● new opening

01 storage cafe
102 cafe kitchen
201 art studio
301 art studio
401 art studio
501 art studio
601 ventilation

Concept model of the southwest wing at 1:50 scale, constructed from materials preserved from the demolition of the southeast wing. The character of the artist's studios is permissive and raw. It doesn't matter if some paint spills on the floor. The interior condition of the southwest wing is preserved to the greatest extent possible. The ongoing demolition has opened up holes that are being closed with doors where privacy is needed. Direct sunlight from the south is not always desirable, especially for activities like painting, therefore two floors retain their closed metal facade. The model aims to show the aesthetic qualities created by the previous demolition and usage as a treasure instead of trash.

68

Elevator (1915) 0-6

Wood panel (1915)

Kålmårds marble (1915)

Green paint (2005)

Main stairs 1-7 (1915)

Office floor 2

Red pillar floor 1 (1954)

Stairs southwest wing 0-4 (1915)

AXONOMETRIC
VERTICAL CONNECTIONS

Stair 0-1 (2024)
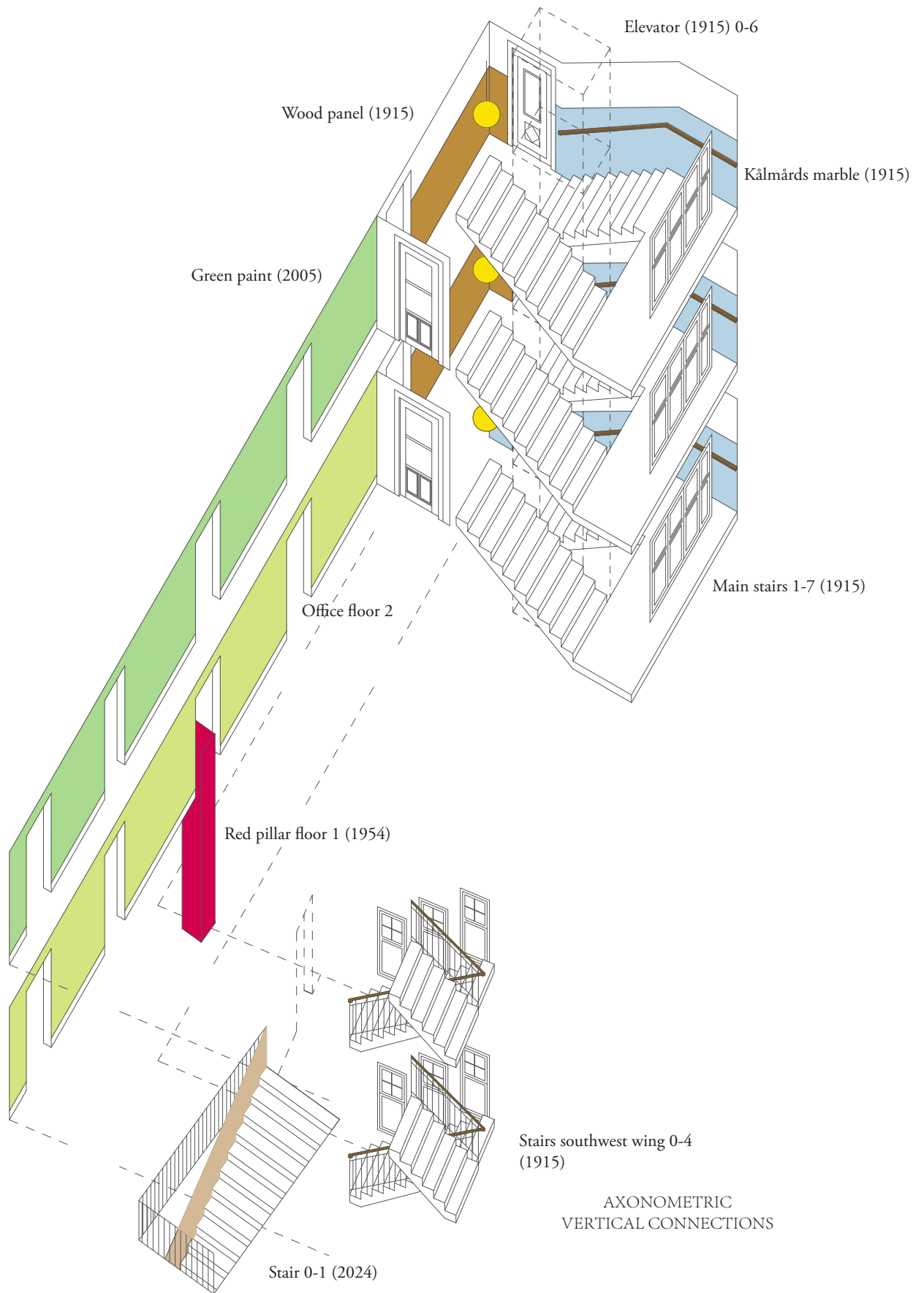
To extend the lifespan of Skeppsbron 4, certain maintenance measures are needed for the limestone plaster, windows, and the reinforced lightweight concrete. Over the coming years, original wooden windows will require maintenance. Suggestions for maintenance include cleaning and scraping down to healthy wood on frames and sills, filling holes with wooden plugs, applying a base layer of raw cold-pressed linseed oil, and painting with linseed oil paint. To avoid carbonation and chlorides in concrete, which could lead to rust in the reinforcement, the facade plaster should be repaired and, in the worst case, replaced. The base in bohus granite is in good condition and will stand for many years, increasing in age value.

0   1   5   10 m

ELEVATION
NORTH

LEGEND
● maintenance / supervision

0   1   5   10 m

ELEVATION
WEST

LEGEND
● maintenance / supervision

Epilogue

This thesis initially posed two exploratory questions. These questions were largely tailored to the building and its situation but also crafted in a way that allowed for exploration of architectural values, aesthetics, cultural heritage, neoliberalism, and sustainability. The first question, *how might low intervention transformation motivate public use for a municipally owned building?* can be said to have been partially answered, as merely generating interest in the building as an architecture student has resulted in opening it up for public, free use for a period when an exhibition related to the issues addressed in this thesis will take place. Proposing a low intervention or light touch transformation means, to the greatest extent possible, starting from the existing qualities of the site and what is available to work with, which requires an analysis and thoughtfulness that may not be as evident when the result is finished as in a sensation-driven architecture, or as this thesis refers to it, Jill Stoner's concept of major architecture. Various abstract and concrete forces in society drive growth and increased consumption, which is widely accepted to contribute to unsustainable development environmentally, socially, and economically. Different wills and interests in society are constantly pitted against each other, and somewhere architecture ends up in the middle of this wicked problem.

　　This thesis started from the widely accepted fact that we are living in a time of a global environmental and financial crisis and chose to discuss it through the existing built environment in relation to neoliberal and urban development. Drawing a conclusion on such a comprehensive topic is not possible. However, it is possible to take responsibility as an architect and position oneself. In the thesis project plan, it was stated that to make architecture culturally relevant today, we need to see the beauty in the environmental turn. It is a statement that intuitively felt true but was never explored in depth. Culture can be defined in many different ways but can be briefly seen as human-produced patterns of actions, beliefs, and knowledge about them (Nilsson & Olsson, 2014). Thus, culture is not solely about cultural conditions but can be regarded as something continuously created. Furthermore, it can be argued that the behavior of consumption is culture. A culture that, with today's understanding of its impact on our planet, is becoming increasingly irrelevant, as is architecture that follows the same logic. In sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's contemporary classic Consuming Life (2007), Bauman discusses how consumer culture is a culture of constant dissatisfaction. From a sociological perspective, Bauman describes how human bonds are formed and mediated through consumption. Bauman argues that belongingness is created through a self-identification process, the results of which are defined by signs of belonging obtained through consumption. From this perspective, the logic behind consumer culture becomes understandable; feeling a sense of belonging is fundamental to us as humans.
The thesis begins by asserting that architecture creates a sense of belonging, which it still maintains is architecture's strongest force.

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If then, belongingness is good for us, while consumption and growth are detrimental, the question arises of how we break this negative pattern. This thesis's answer is to reassess what is available, to attribute value to that which does not need to be consumed in order to feel belongingness. By challenging the conventional notion of architectural value in a late capitalist consumer society, one may challenging the cultural landscape that capital-rich market forces conform to in their pursuit of accumulation. This shift may redefine what is desirable for fostering interpersonal community. Consequently, the aesthetics and logic of interchangeability could be devalued relative to a more enduring aesthetic, one that lends itself to infinite variation through creativity and analysis. The concept of aesthetics is used because this thesis is based on the premise that in today's information society, the image of something is the strongest driving force in our collective perception of culture. Through images, visions, feelings, and dreams are communicated. For something to feel culturally relevant, it must be communicated in a way that evokes associations with something people perceive as valuable in that sense. Sustainable architecture, therefore, cannot solely rely on technological advancements to contribute to sustainable development, but also on the possibilities inherent in addressing human attitudes and behaviors. Thus, for architecture to become culturally relevant in our era of environmental and economic crises, stirring emotions and communicating dreams about what is yet to be built, architecture needs to communicate, and architects need to represent a form of architecture that starts from what already exists and, with as few resources as possible, makes the greatest difference possible. This may be achieved by extracting as much poetry as possible from places dismissed by consumer society as valueless or seen solely by neoliberalism as an opportunity for exploitation. In this context, the architect has the responsibility to determine which image of sustainability they communicate. Merely presenting sustainability in numbers will not change the culture that drives growth forward.
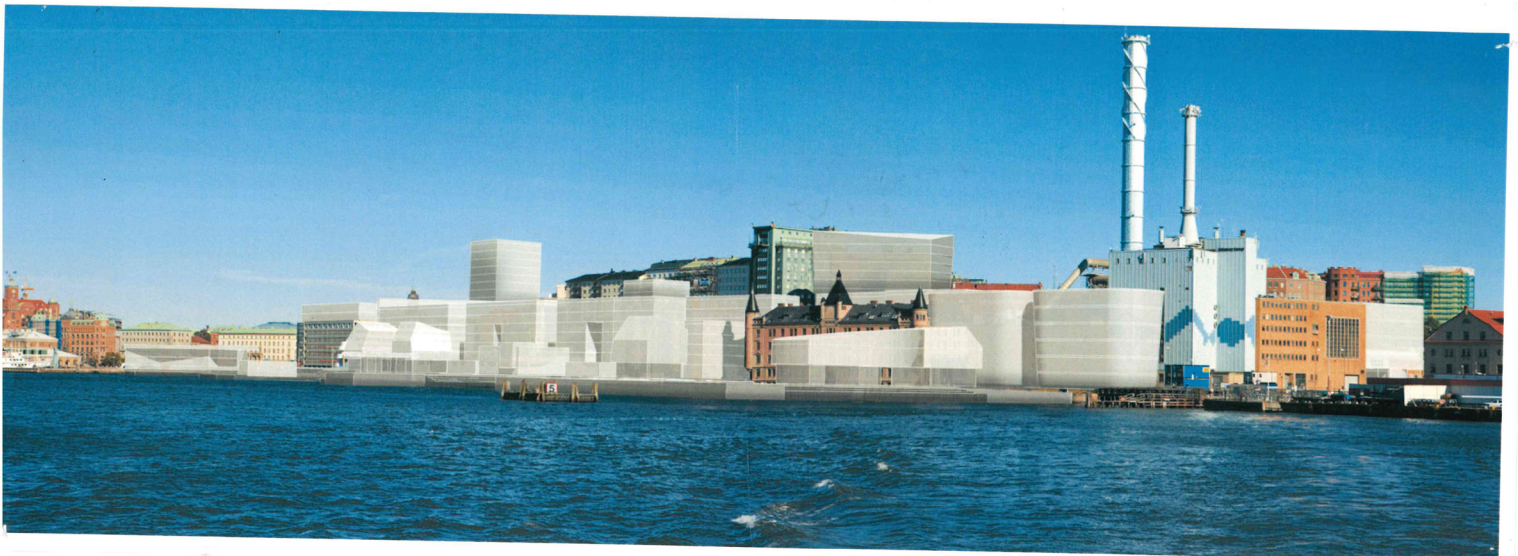
Found rendering inside of Skeppsbron 4, showing the planned development of the area where the building is not included.

By posing the question *how might low intervention transformation motivate public use for a municipally owned building?* the thesis acknowledged that the proposed transformation would include a public function, though not necessarily how it would be justified or how it might be utilized. Has the question been answered? Yes and no. By assuming resources are scarce and investments few, the design process has involved restricting itself to what is readily available in the building's immediate vicinity. Through discussions about value, aesthetics, and development, this thesis has sought to provide motivation for this design approach. One could argue that the question has developed an approach rather than a simple answer. An approach to the built environment and unexpected values but also to compromise. The principle of the common good, which was among the interpretations of this thesis regarding motivating public use for Skeppsbron 4, also involves finding a balance between the interests of stakeholders. Higab is a municipal, yet profit-driven company that needs revenue to survive. Allocating 35% of the building's space for public, citizen-driven use is not only a limitation of this thesis but also a compromise to justify the program.

Since the thesis positioned itself on the premise that Skeppsbron 4, despite being a listed building for the time being, may eventually make way for other developments, the proposed program for the building was largely developed through the stories that once unfolded within its walls, thus emphasizing the social value of the built environment. Not directly because the program or design of the proposal drew inspiration from the actual events that occurred in the building, but rather from the feeling of the authentic life that once existed there. The authentic life once lived in the building all too often needs to relocate outside the city in favor of neoliberal urban development. This is not a new phenomenon, and authors like Jane Jacobs and Sharon Zukin can be mentioned as pioneers on the subject. A quote from one of the conversations with a former tenant was *"It was some sort of agreement, instead of them raising the rent, we got to do things ourselves."* This small story has played a significant role in the process of developing the transformation proposal. By preserving much of the building's current state and taking a free approach to its inherent values, users are allowed to make the space their own without fear of making mistakes during changes, where post-occupancy becomes an equally important part of the proposal as the proposal itself.

Working with low intervention and preservation has been a challenge. Documenting, evaluating, and analyzing rather than striving to work with architecture in a more classical sense, like establishing order and rhythm, or achieving greater architectural impact by creating openings between floors or rearranging structural elements until it resembled something John Hejduk might create. Redefining the role of the architect to manage existing values has diverged from what we were taught during our education.

As Rem Koolhaas puts it: "*I think that architecture is gone. It's a very interesting question whether it is gone forever or whether under certain circumstances we can imagine that it will come back. In any case, it is gone for now.*" The fact that even such a successful architect with so many large building complexes to his name expresses himself in this way must mean that in many ways, we find ourselves there today, in the environmental turn, where we need to reassess the role of architecture to take more responsibility for what is available and take responsibility for the ugly, the beautiful, the good, and the bad through preservation and adaptation. While it would have been exciting to create something new, Skeppsbron 4 possesses architectural qualities that cannot be replicated. The spontaneous quality and complex layers of history can only be achieved with time and use. Therefore, it has been important not to fill every space, every corridor, but to allow users to experience the building's original form as much as possible.

     The second question, which had been smoldering throughout the entire project, what role can heritage play in a resilient urban future? As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, the concept of resilience means being resistant when crises occur. Given that we live in a time of climate crisis and the construction industry accounts for a significant portion of carbon emissions and resource consumption, the answer becomes simple: we can learn by adapting to it. However, in doing so, we also need to broaden the concept of heritage, what is considered valuable. Because if we choose to preserve only certain buildings, we also exclude the people who do not have access to those environments. The same applies to the environments we choose to construct. A resilient and sustainable city is a just city. This thesis does not present any sustainability figures but can note that a night in the cheapest room at the new hotel west of Skeppsbron 4 costs 2000 SEK. That is a high price to pay for stories when they are available in our existing built environment. The work on this thesis has not entailed inventing a new method or an architectural toolbox that can be applied to any cultural historical building. Instead, it has contributed an approach to the built environment and a conclusion that compromise with what is available is necessary. In another world where resources and money were infinite, compromise wouldn't be necessary. However, we don't live in that world. This should be taken into consideration in the continued development of the area.

THE FINISHED WORK LASTED THREE MONTHS BEFORE BEING DEMOLISHED FOR URBAN 'RENEWAL'
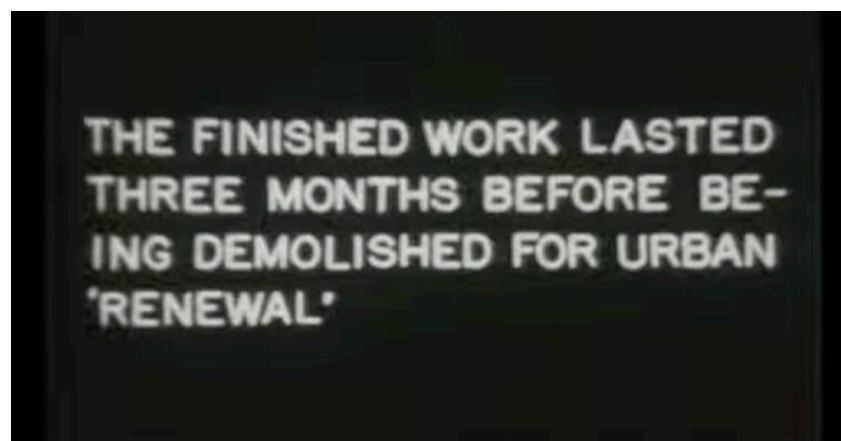
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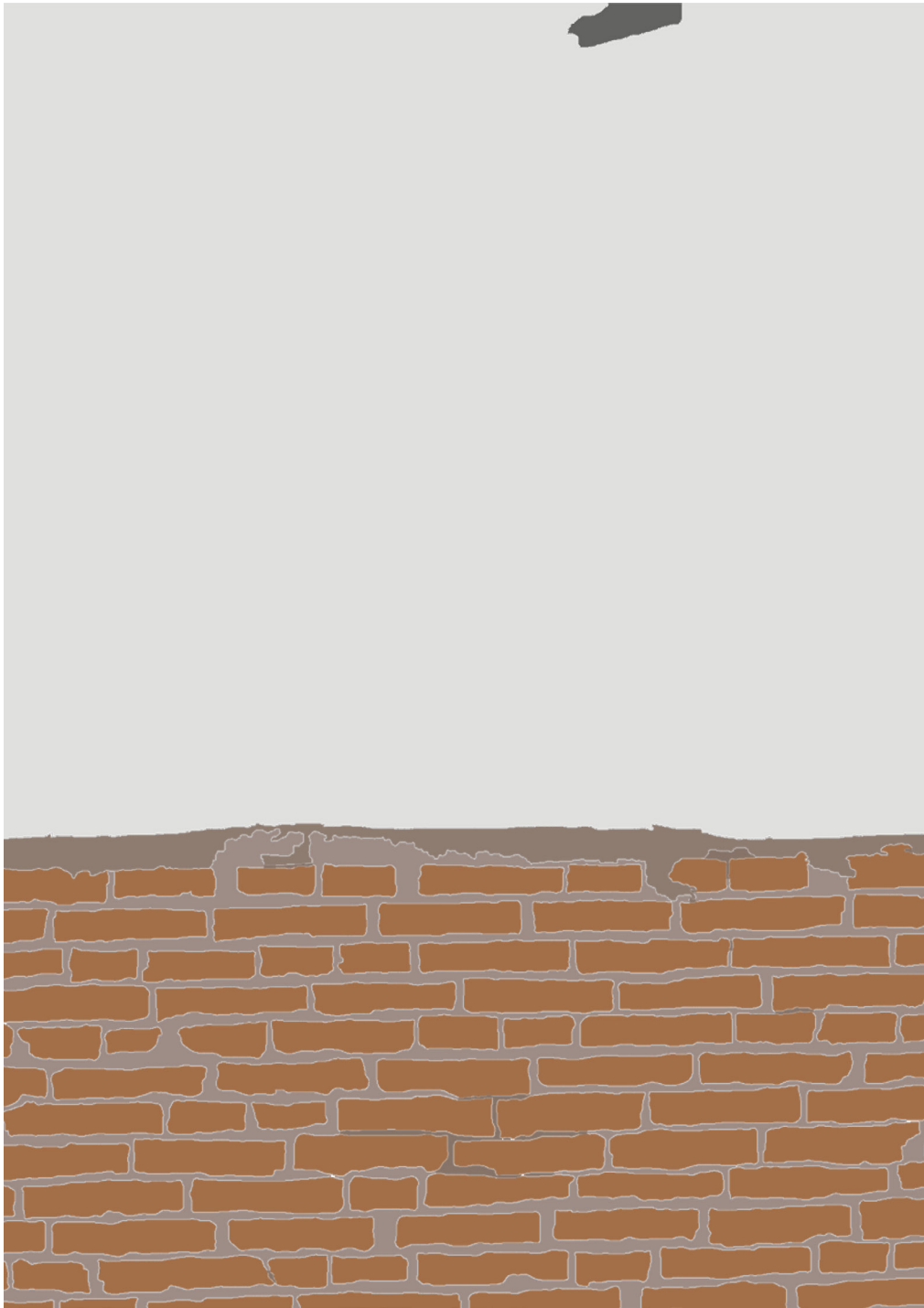
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Appendix

DETAIL 107
WALL FRAGMENT

DETAIL 201
WALL FRAGMENT