

F&LPM



Keyi Shi

RCA MA / INTERIOR DESIGN / SuperREUSE

WHERE WATER

MEETS

URBAN

LIFE



FLOW

15 Westferry Circus, London E14 4HD

This project reimagines the relationship between architecture, water, and the urban body within the context of Canary Wharf—a hyper-dense financial center where water exists merely as a visual boundary rather than an active spatial agent.

By identifying the missed potential of the site's proximity to the Thames and the surrounding docklands, this proposal introduces a hybrid programme combining a bathhouse, hotel, and public spaces. Drawing inspiration from the sequence and ritual of ancient Roman bathing culture, the design creates a journey through a series of thermal environments—ranging from warm to hot to cold, and concluding with steam and sky.


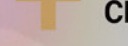

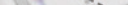
More than a place for rest, the project offers an urban ritual—a place where the modern city dweller can pause, reflect, and reconnect with both self and environment.

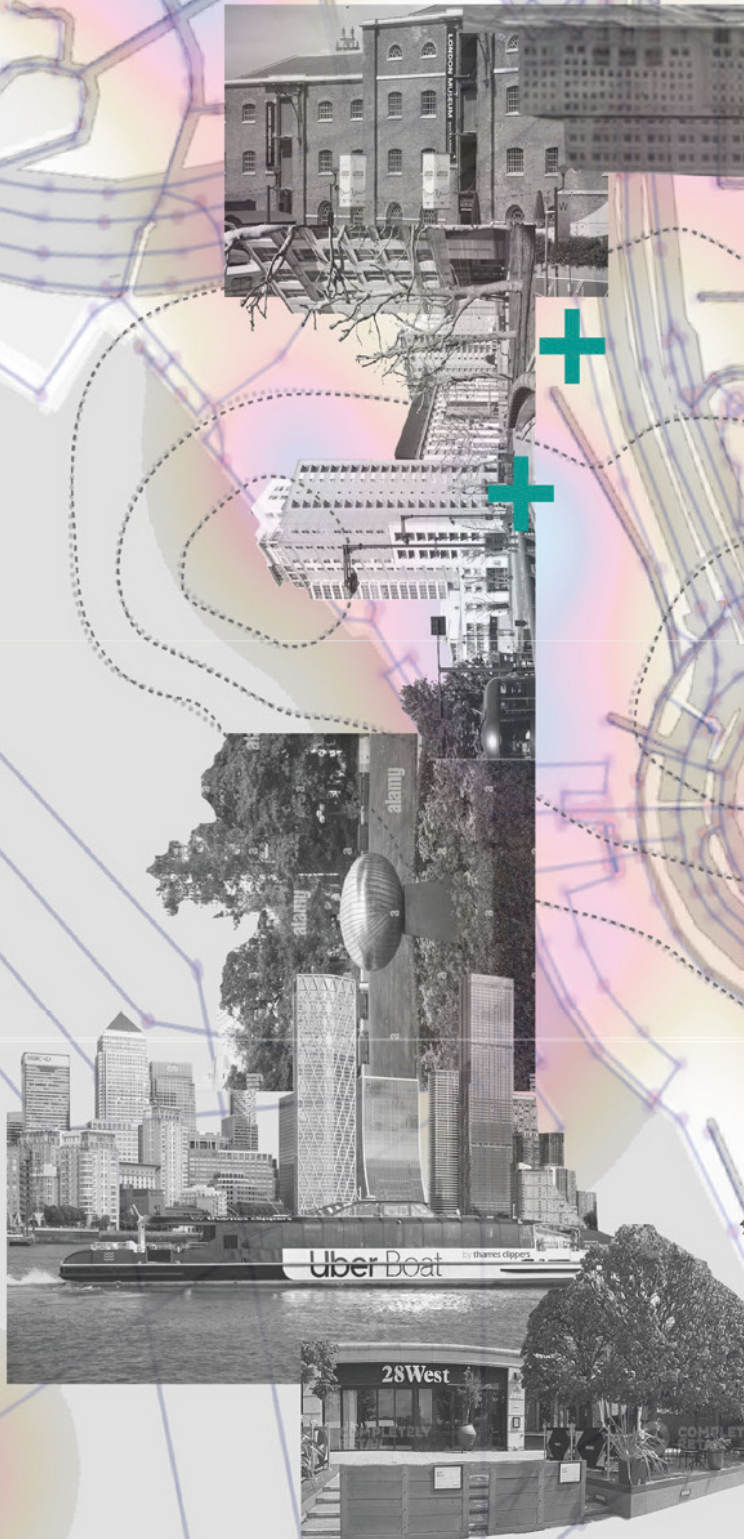


About Site

Canary Wharf is now full of offices, shopping centres and transport hubs. Everything is about being efficient and fast. Those spaces that prioritise productivity and profitability over cultural identity or human well-being.

Even though it's surrounded by water, our building doesn't really use it. You can see the water, but you rarely get to touch it, be close to it, or interact with it.

-  SITE
-  BUSINESSES
-  SHOPPING CENTER
-  APARTMENT
-  RESTAURANT
-  RAIL STATION

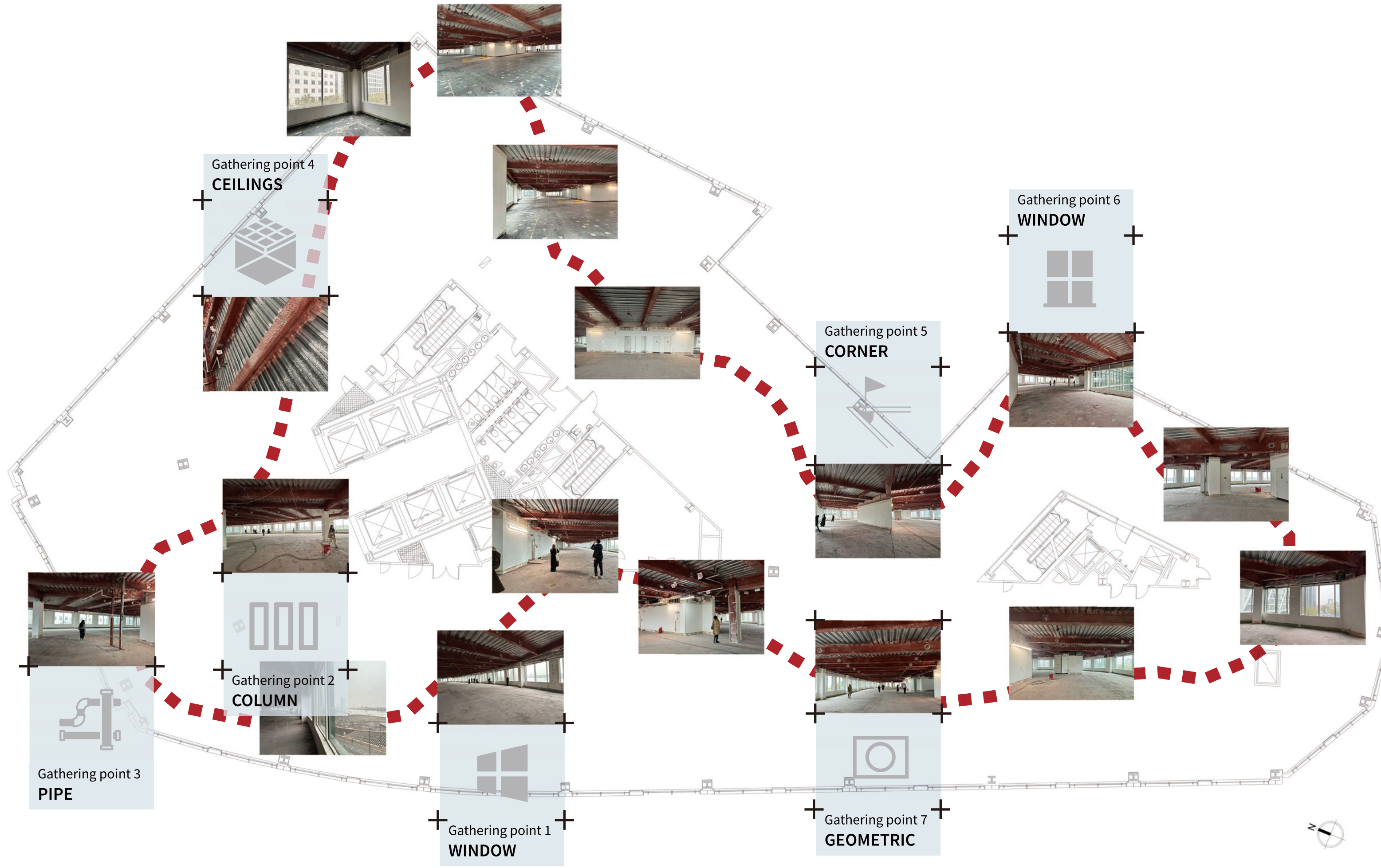




Inspiration

In this group of photographs, different people are in the same bare static space with their own behavioral paths and directions, showing the dynamic character of space.

This phenomenon inspired me: space itself, though static, can be given new meaning through behavior and perception through interaction with people. By exploring the relationship between people and space, I hope to reveal how exposed space can become a place for dynamic behavior and emotional stimulation.



The platforms in this site are very open and make me feel relaxed.



The window of this space is very transparent so I will walk along the window.



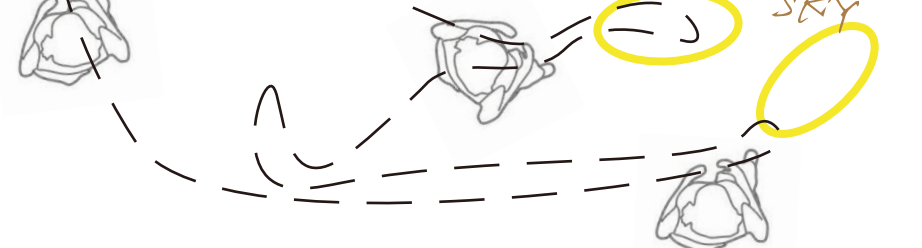
I want to explore the void which is another word for hole.



The unexpected geometrics & forms such as the case intrigued me a lot :)



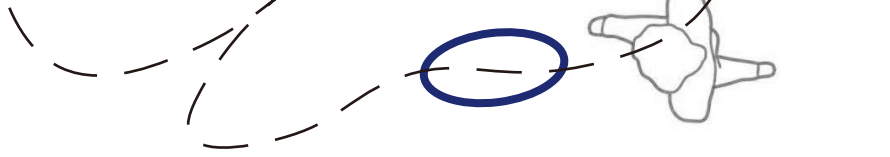
Observed the unique shape of the building, and we could see different views from different angles.



As the first time I arrived the building, I was caught by view, windows and nature.



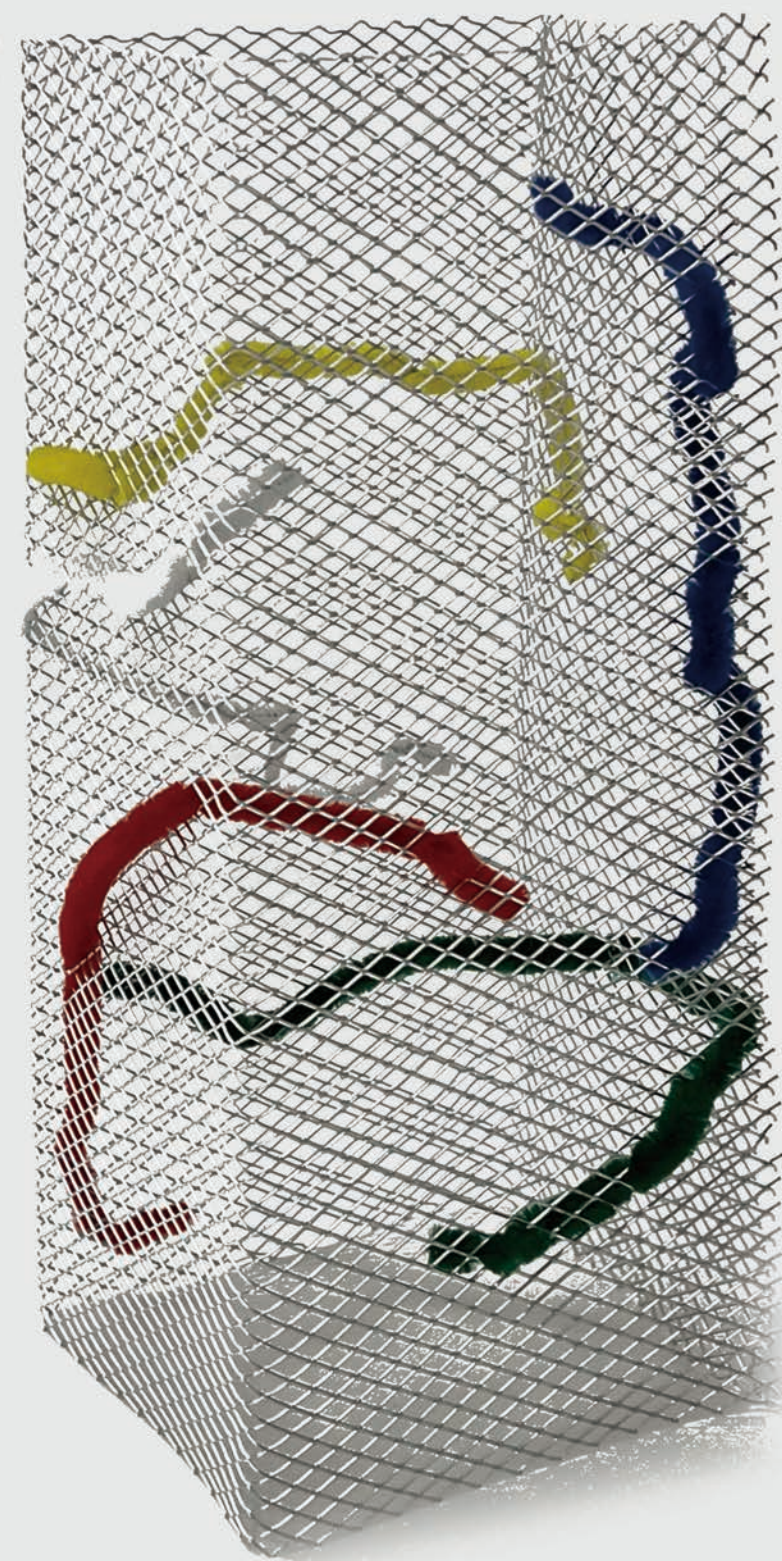
I was interested in the void in the ceiling, wondering what was missing inside.



Memory & Personal Trajectories

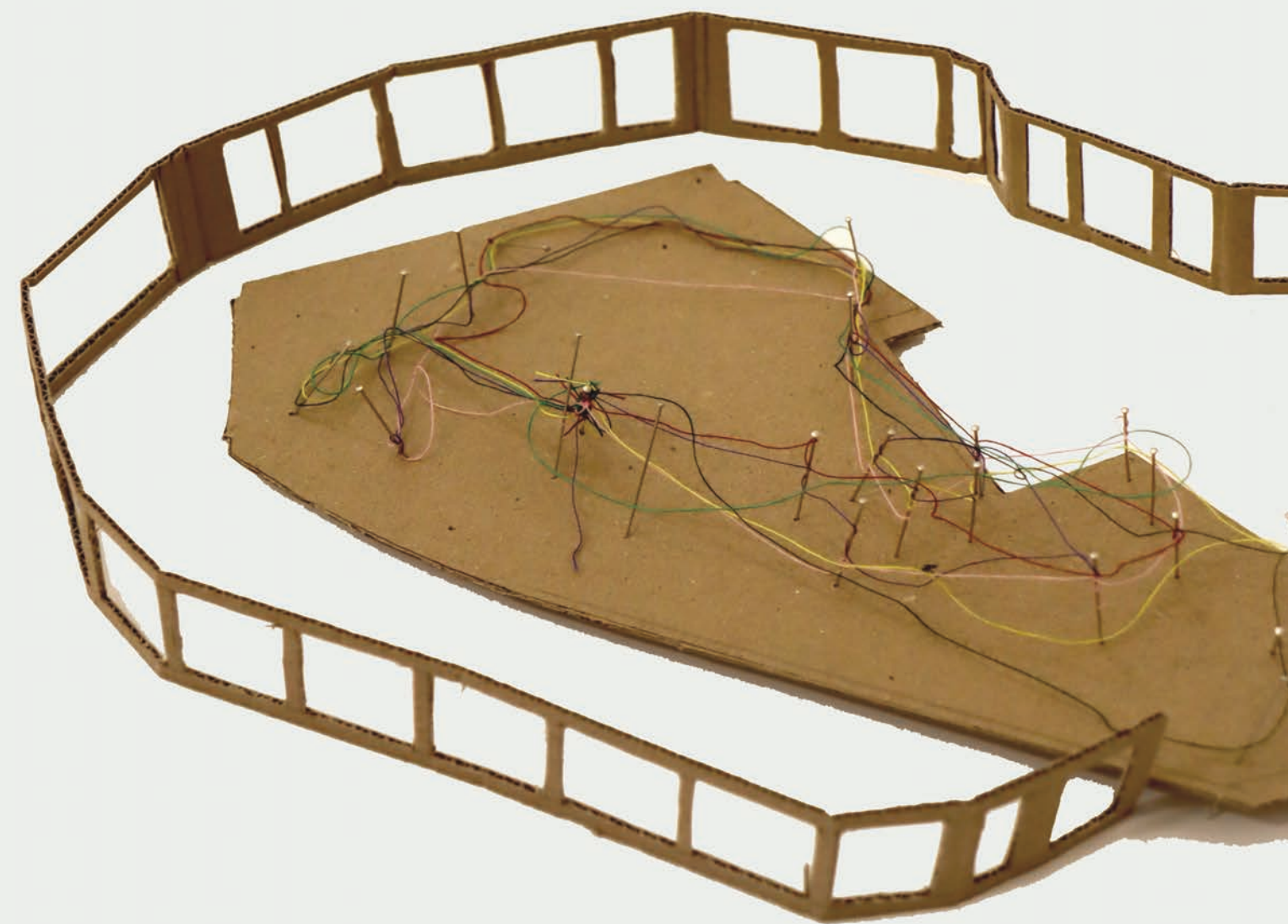
In this section, I documented the subjective behavioral paths and remembered points of interest that were most distinctive to seven people (including myself) in the space. These points of interest reflect each person's unique interaction with the space: some people were drawn to the light from the windows, others were impressed by the exposed texture of the ceiling, and others chose to linger in areas where geometric shapes stood out.

The distribution of these paths and points of interest illustrates that although the space is static, each person's behavioral trajectory and memories infuse it with dynamic meaning. Space acquires emotional value and diverse interpretations due to individualized perceptions and memories.



STEP 1

The first phase of the model is framed by a silver grid structure, symbolizing the metallic texture and cold order typical of Canary Wharf's architecture, while expressing an initial impression of the site and its surroundings. When looking at the exposed space, I noticed the lack of function and decoration inside, with only the dynamic element of the elevator contrasting with the static space. This contrast between dynamic and static inspired me to explore the dynamism of the space and to propose how to introduce more dynamic elements into the static bare space to break its monotony, laying the foundation for subsequent research.



STEP 2

By using a multi-level combination of lines and points (the connection between needle-like structures and lines), I began to try to embed people's trajectories into specific plane spaces. During the research, I observed that specific elements in the exposed space (such as window lighting, column arrangement, and ceiling structure) implicitly guided people's behavior, and gradually revealed the connection between dynamic trajectories and physical characteristics.

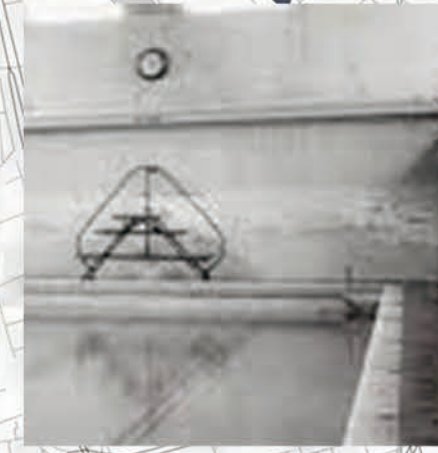
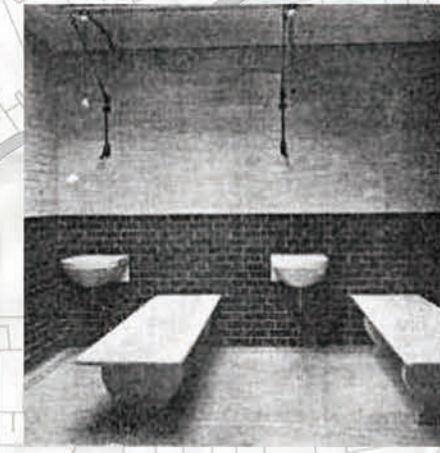
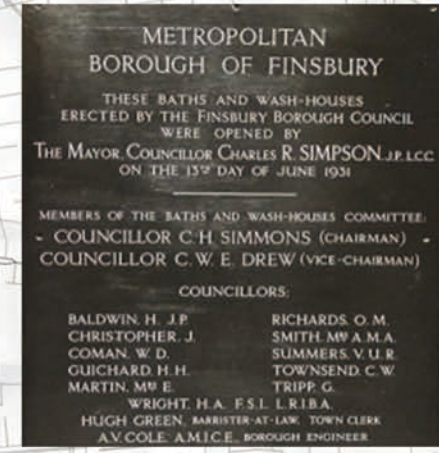
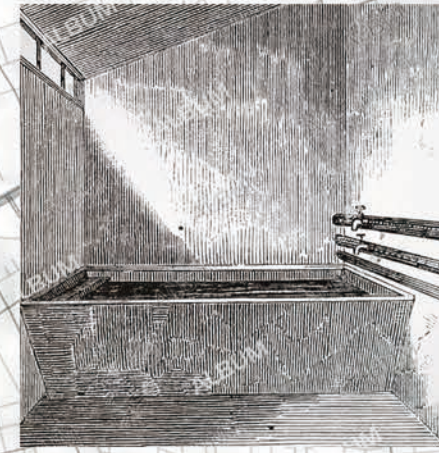
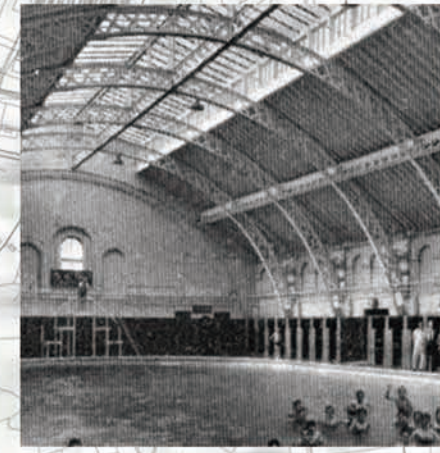
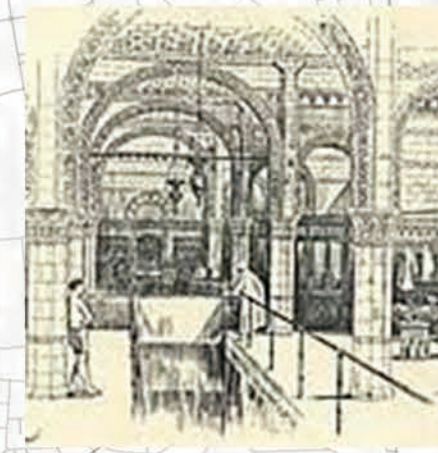
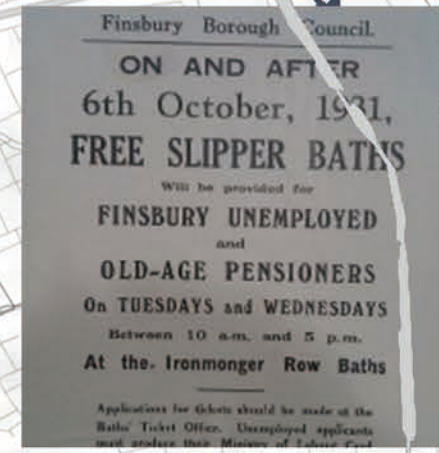
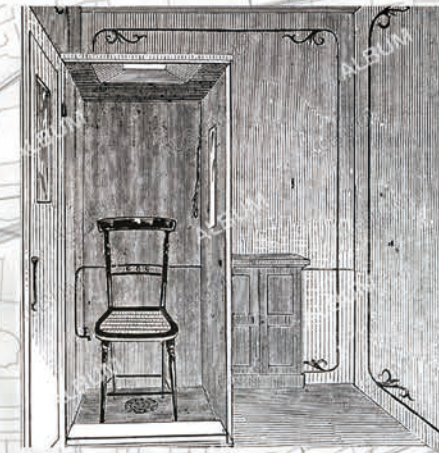
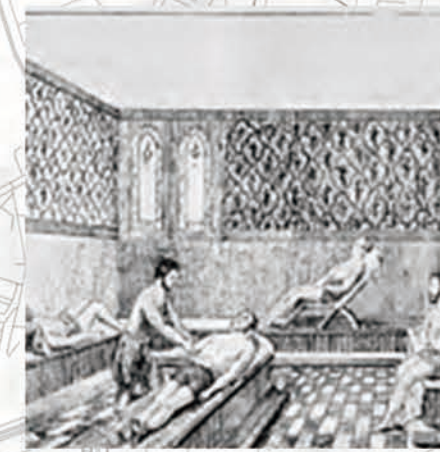
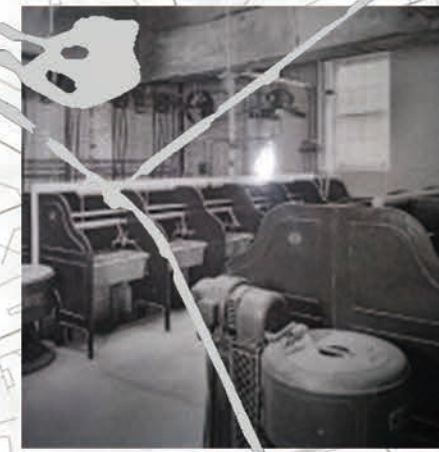
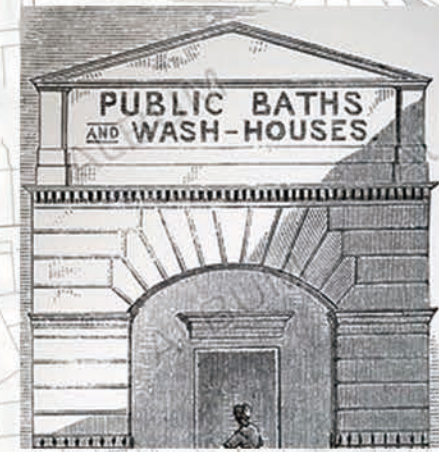
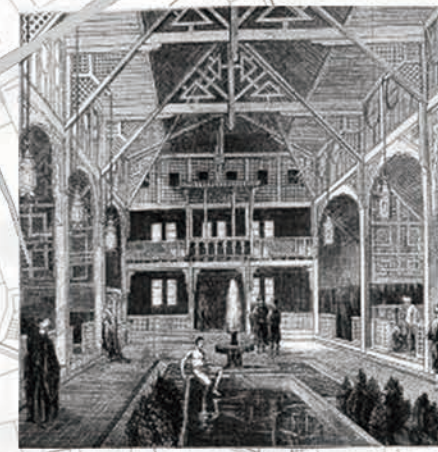
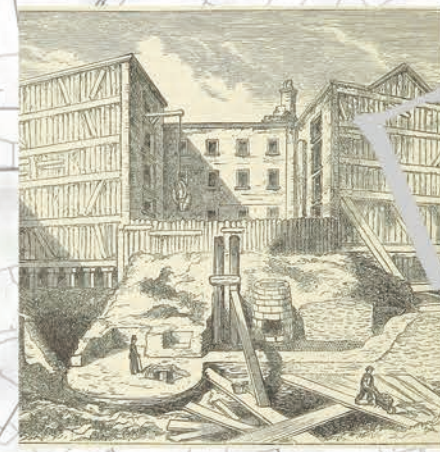
About Compression Artefact

It's an unoccupied, empty space in Canary Wharf. I tracked the movement paths of different users and identified several "gathering points" triggered by spatial characteristics such as windows, ceiling conditions, columns and geometric intersections. My aim was to reassign meaning to this static environment through bodily perception and free movement. This investigation later became the foundation for my thermal journey design in Term 2.

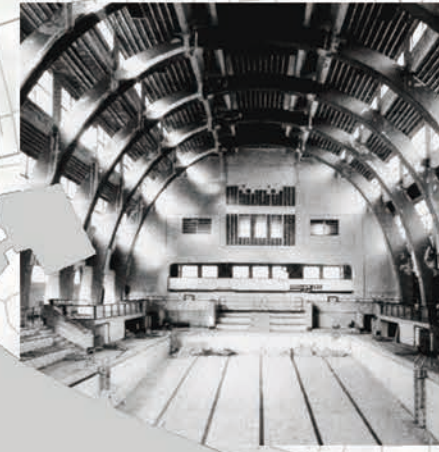
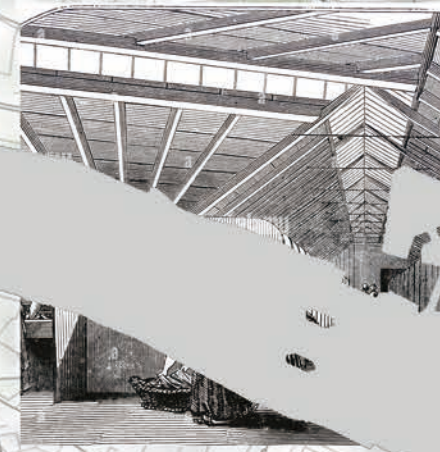


1: 200





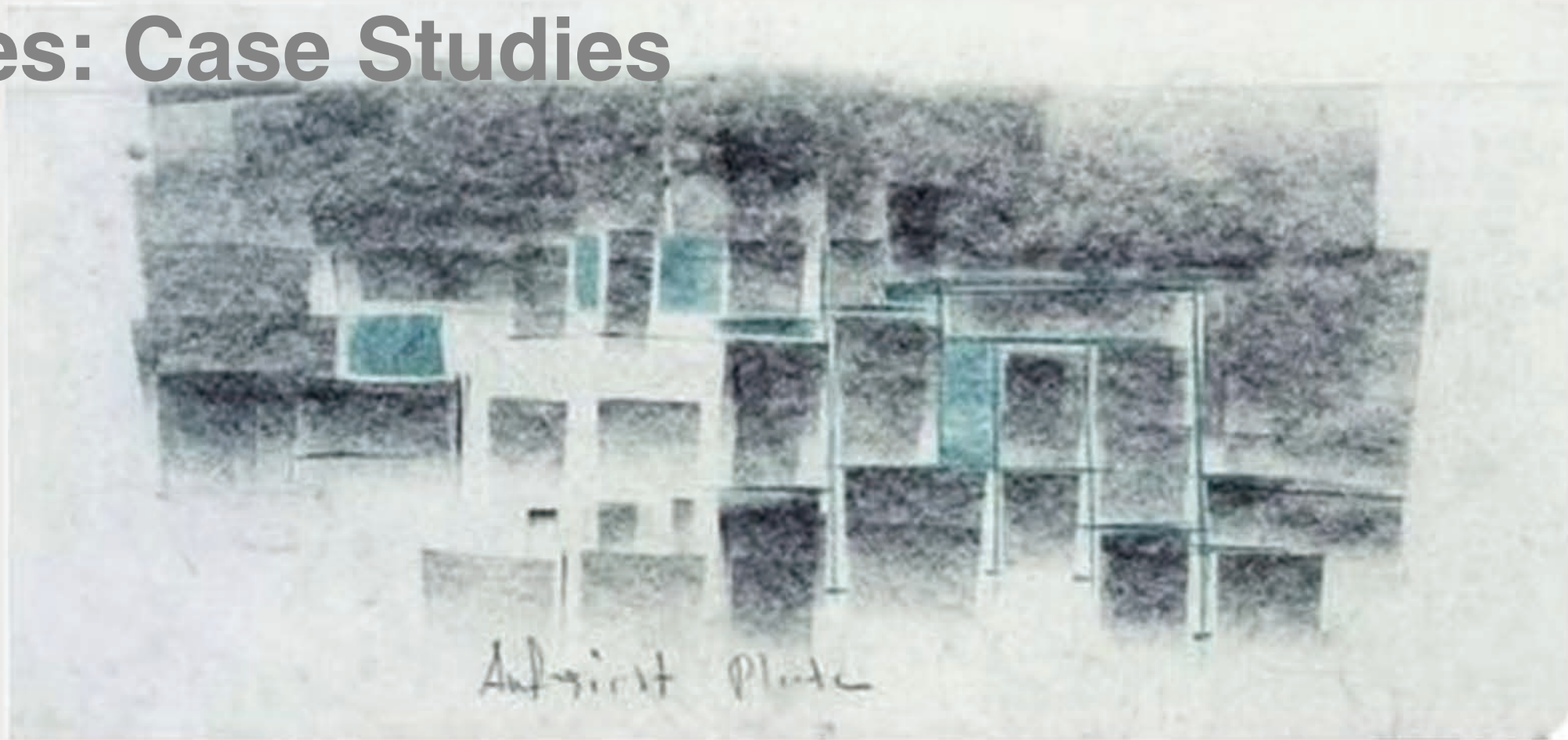
About History
 However, looking back into history, especially around the Thames, we find a very different attitude toward water and public space. This page shows the presence of numerous public baths along the river. These buildings were not only for hygiene, but also for gathering, relaxing, and connecting with others.



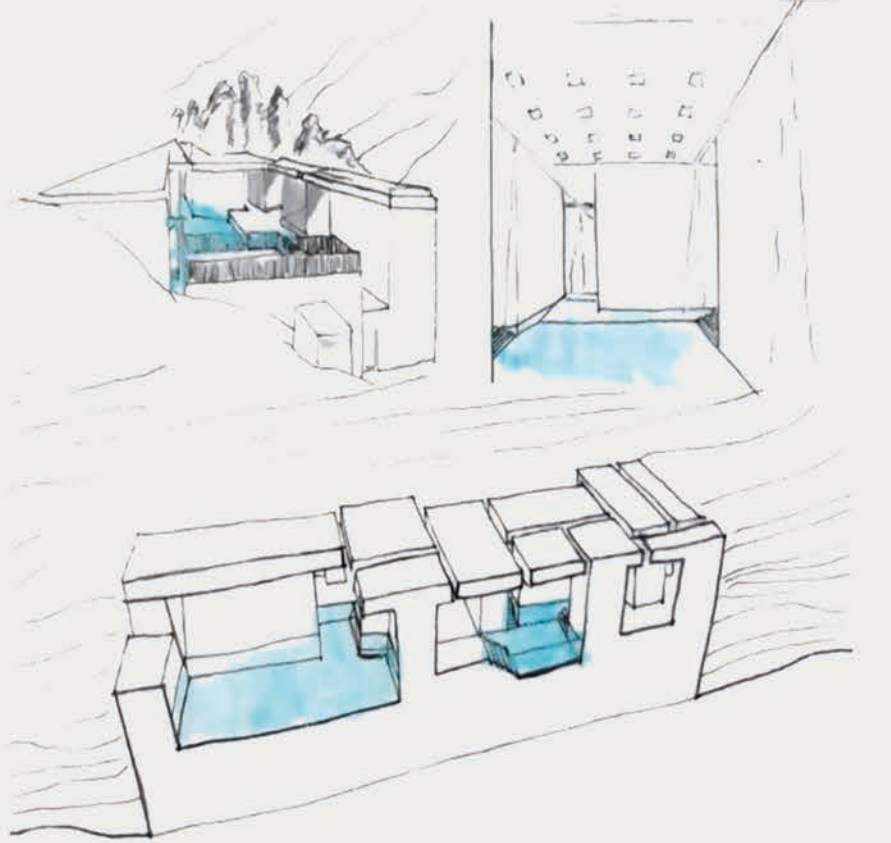
CAN WE BRING BACK RHYTHM SLOWER?



Contemporary Bathing Spaces: Case Studies



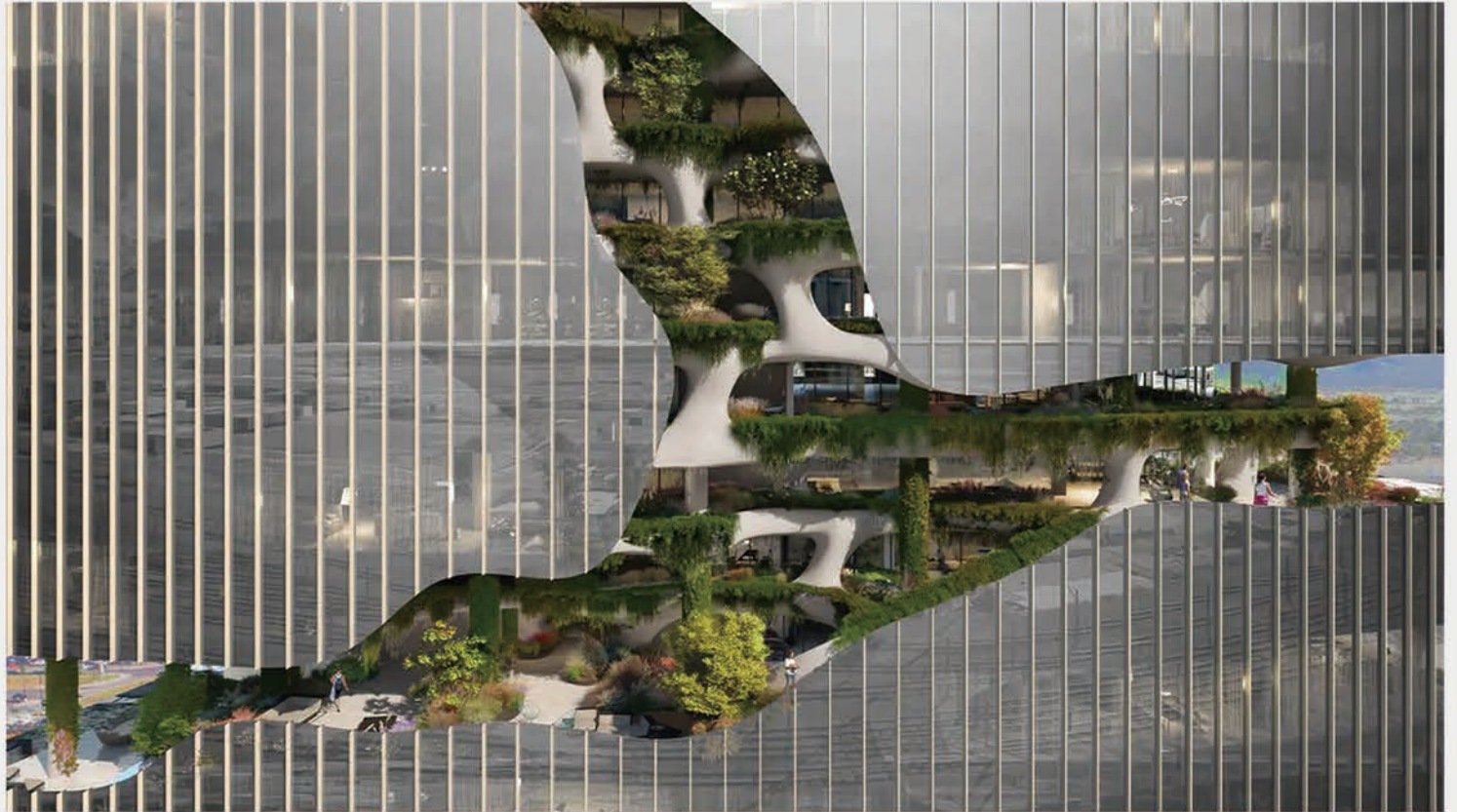
Therme Vals



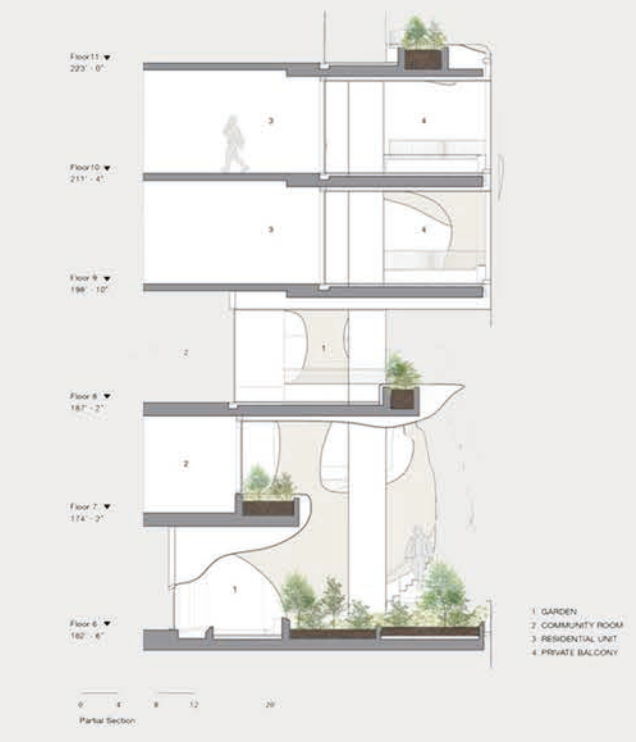
Zumthor uses stone (Valser stone), natural light, echo and water temperature changes to create a multi-sensory experience. Each space controls different smells, humidity and light, making the body a "tool" for exploring the space.

Therme Vals is not an open "public swimming pool", but guides users to "explore" through narrow paths, corners, holes and secret doors. This maze-like experience brings unexpected feelings at every turn.

Therme Vals' space is blank. It has no guides or signboards. Users must use their bodies and senses to understand the building. This is a trust in the users and the most "poetic" part of the building.



One River North



Ma Yansong's One River North is a residential complex located in Denver, USA. The core design language is a "canyon" cutting the building facade. This canyon is not a surface decoration, but an intervention of natural forces, symbolizing the interruption and reconstruction of the urban order by nature, and also creating a sky garden and public trail that runs through multiple floors.

This building "cuts" the natural landscape into the urban building volume in a sculptural way, allowing residents to experience "walking through the mountains" in the vertical space. The canyon embeds the natural experience into high-density urban life, blurring the boundaries between architecture, landscape and structure.



About Persona

Canary Wharf has a diverse mix of people. The largest group is office workers— who mostly use the space during lunch or after work. Then we have locals and short-stayers, who prefer comfort and routine. Visitors, students, and commercial staff MAYBE more flexible and varied usage patterns. That's why the building needs spaces with different rhythms and levels of openness.

22%

Local Residents

spend more time in the spa on weekdays or in the evening, prefer comfort and routine, and bring the family along.



18%

Short-stayers

Office Crowd

usage times focused on weekday midday and evenings, and demand focused on fast socializing.



28%

10%

Commercial staff



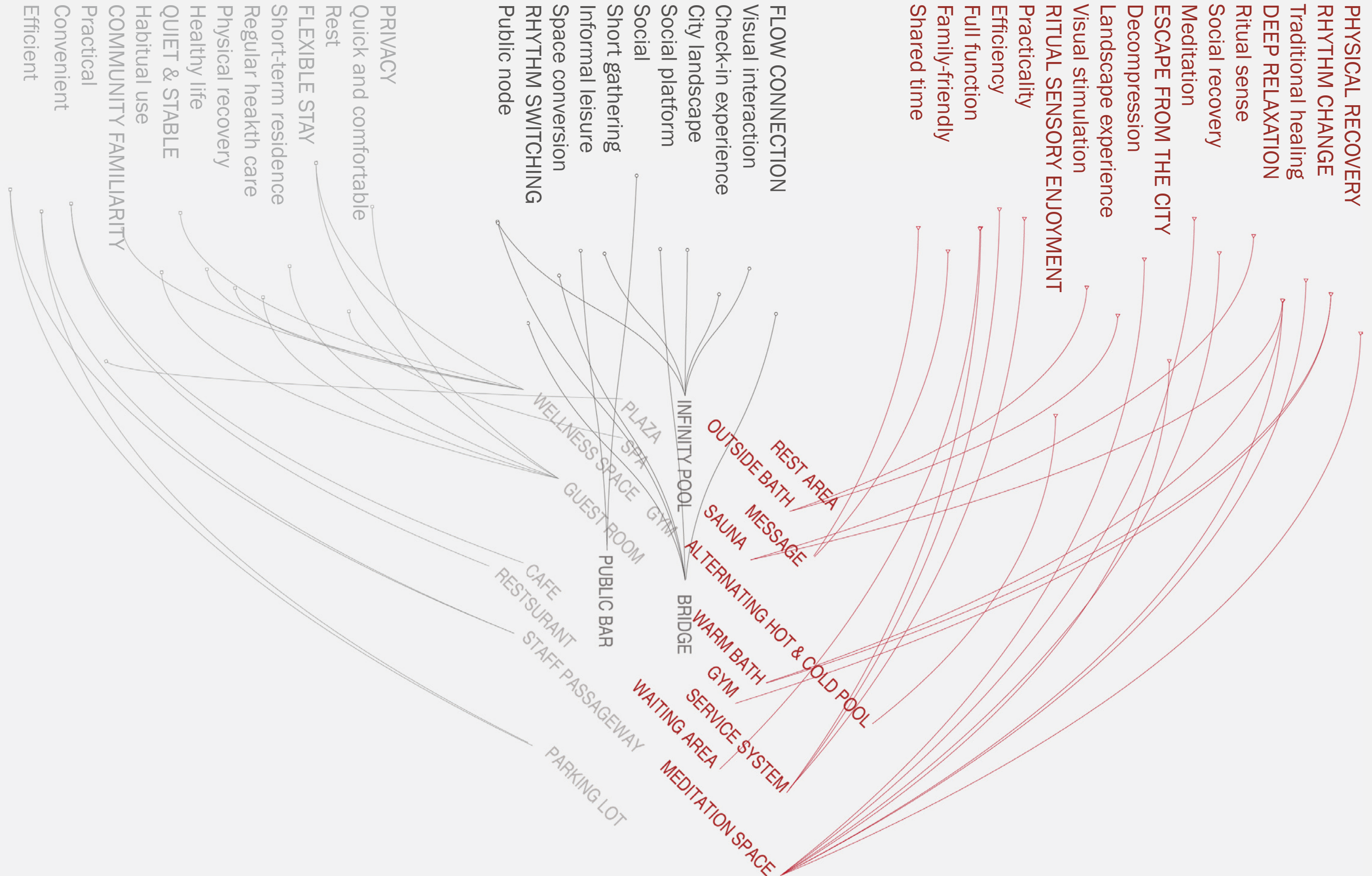
10%

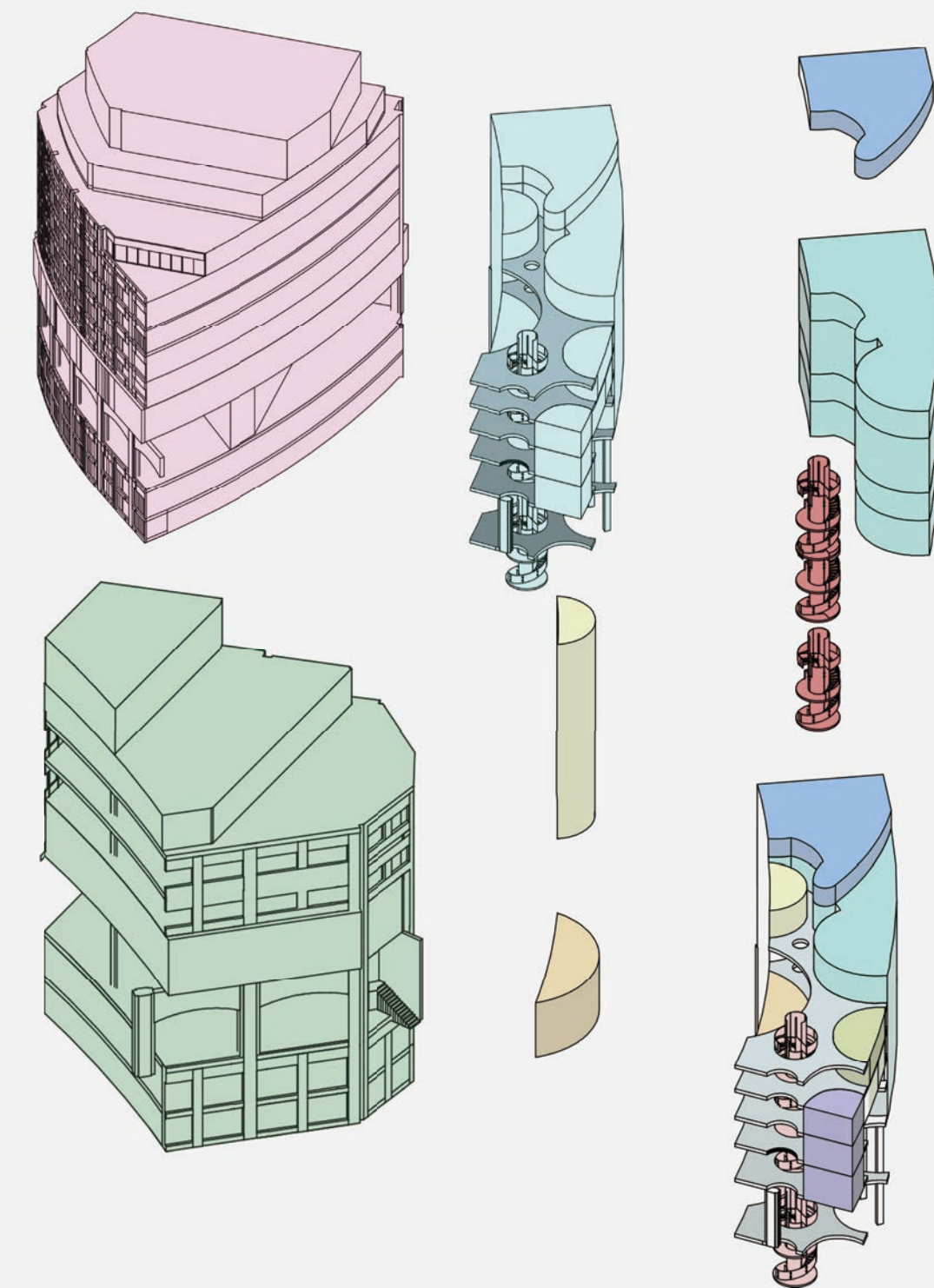
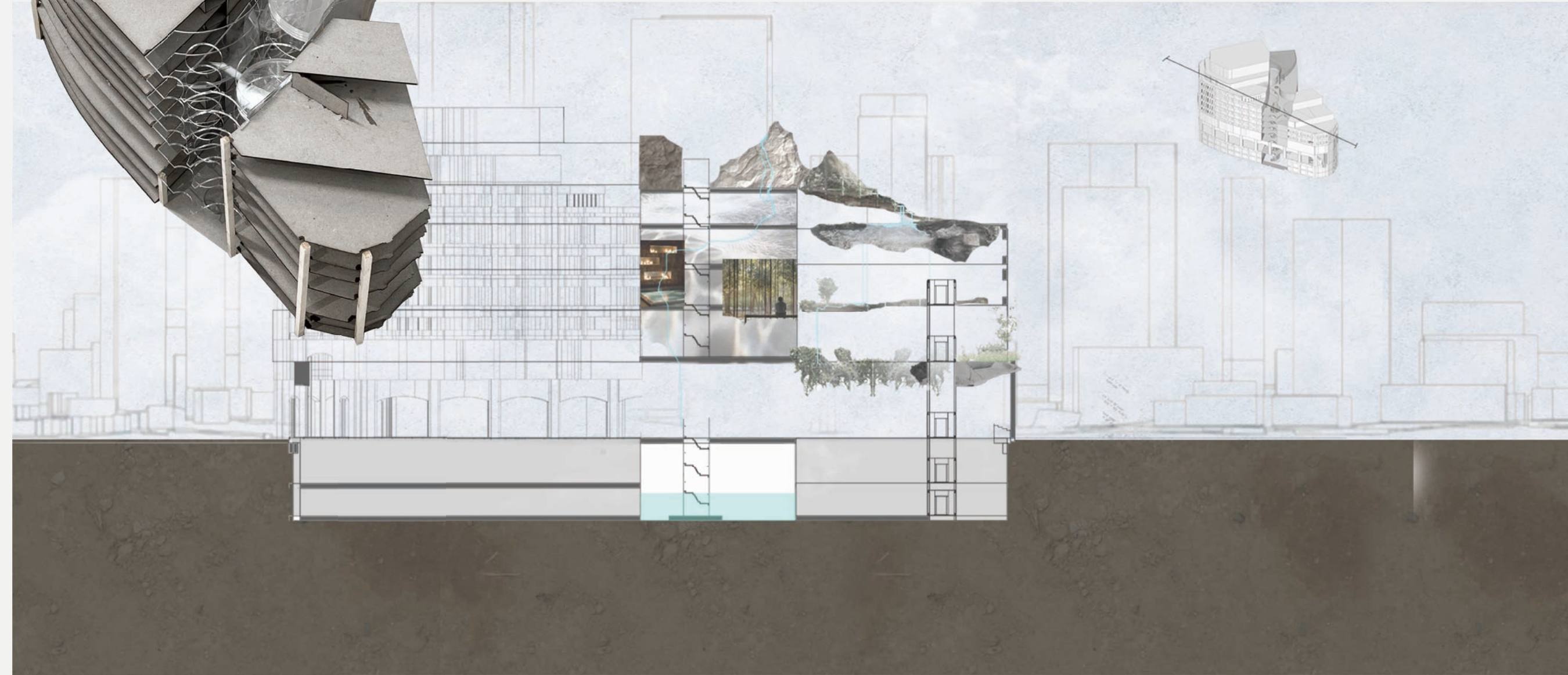
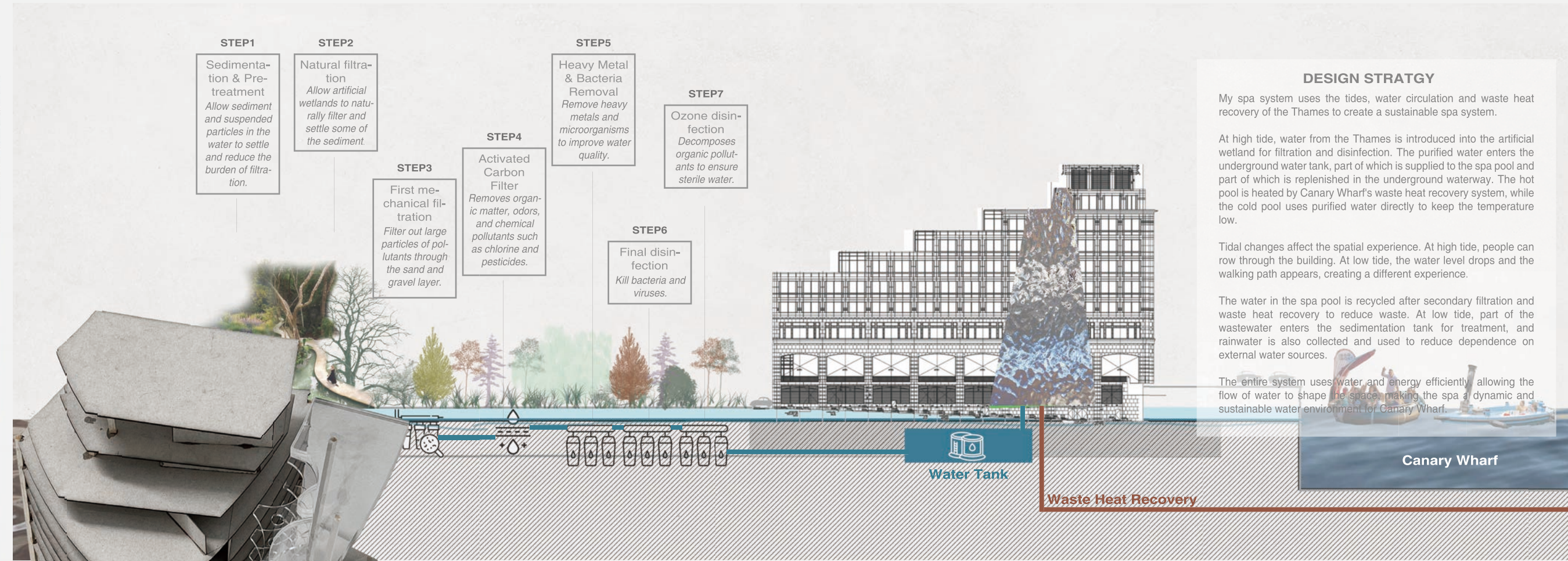
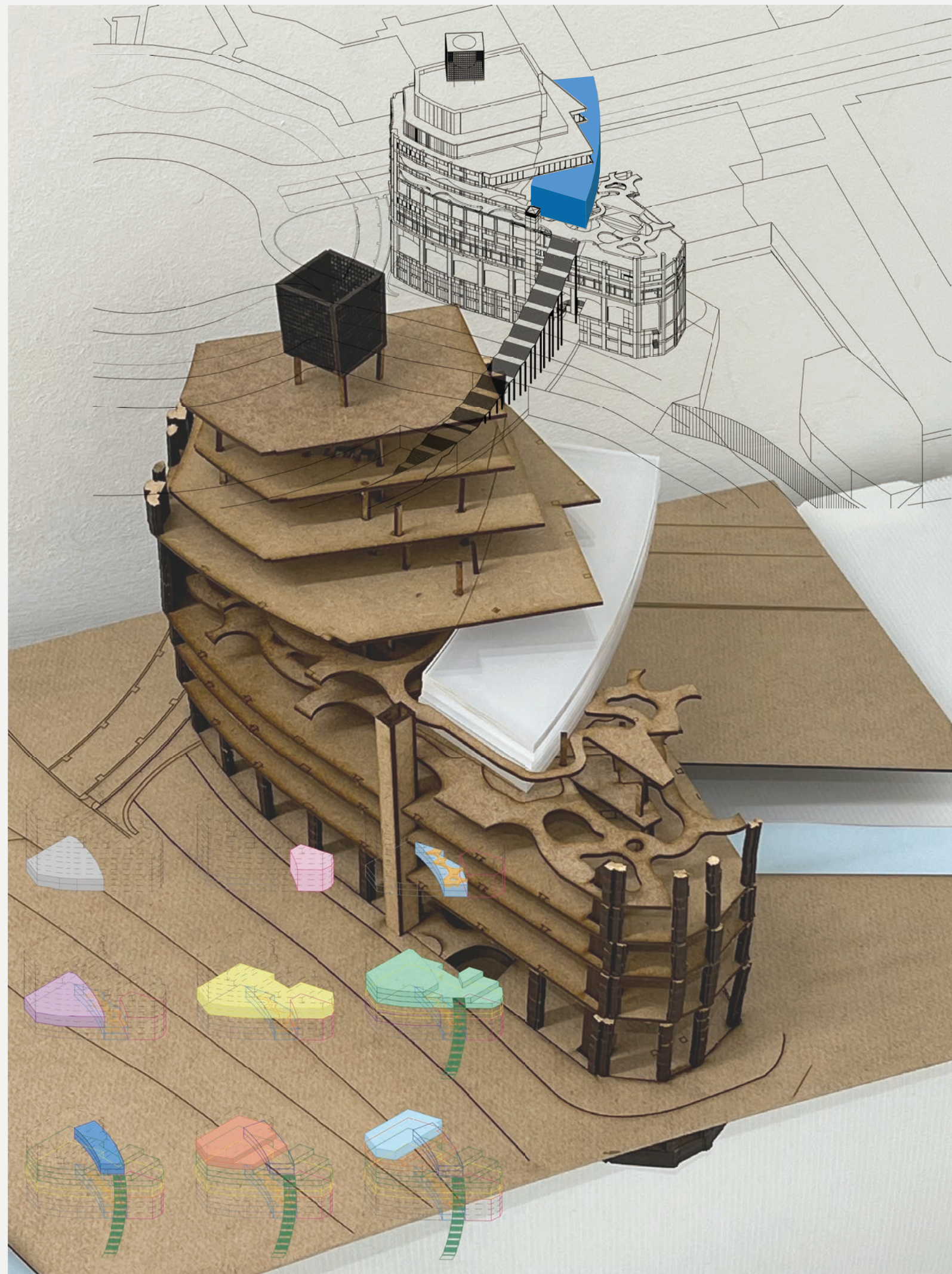
Student



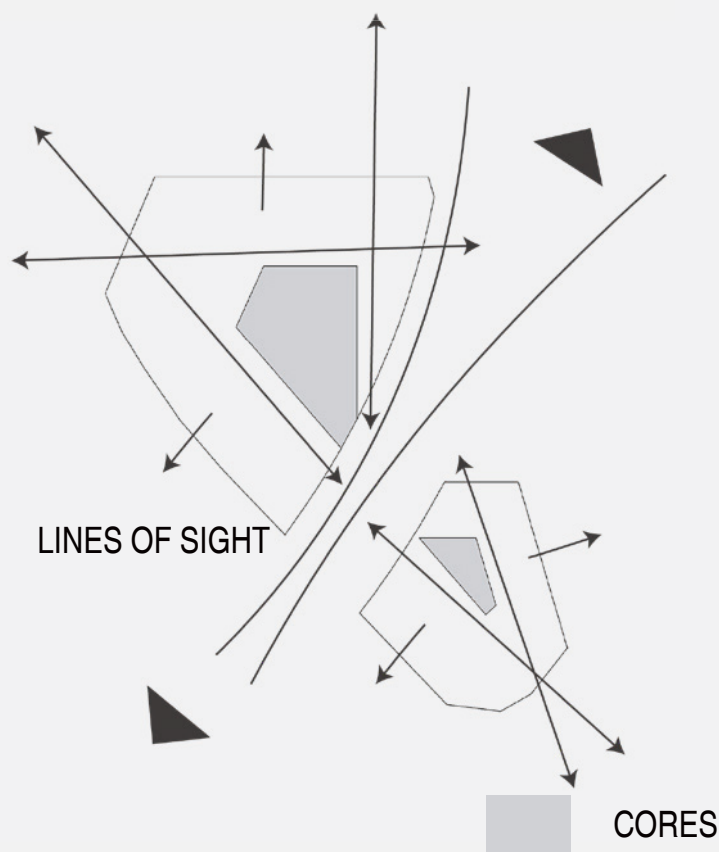
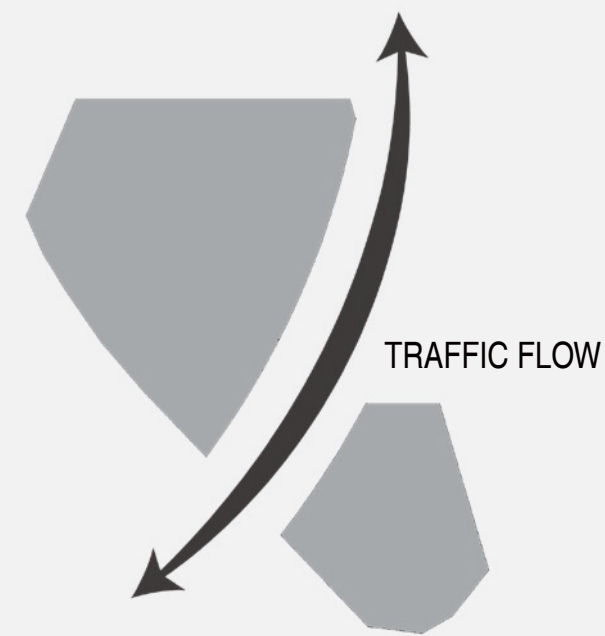
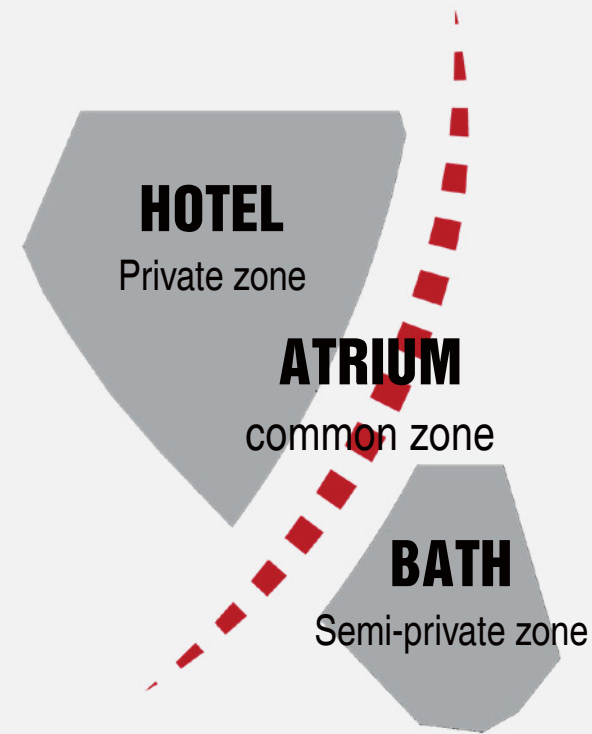
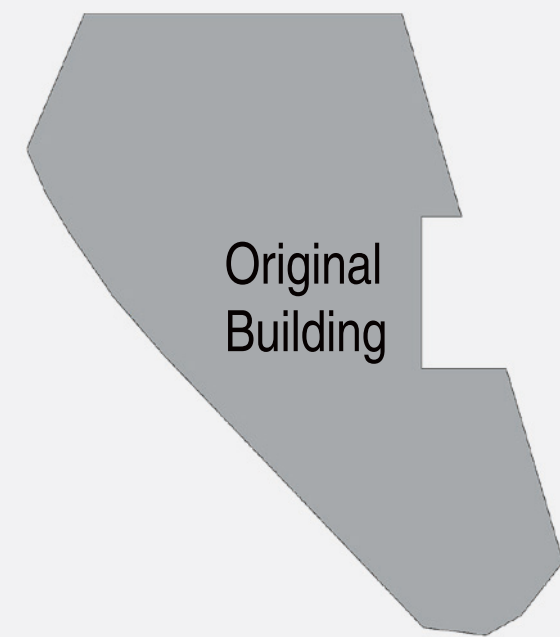
12%

Visitor





In Term 2, I conducted a series of diverse spatial explorations to investigate the potential of the site from multiple perspectives. These experiments involved testing various material combinations, spatial configurations, and conceptual frameworks. By approaching the site through different lenses—such as movement, atmosphere, public/private boundaries, and user interaction—I was able to uncover a wide range of possibilities. These studies not only deepened my understanding of the site's character but also informed the development of a more refined design direction for the following term.

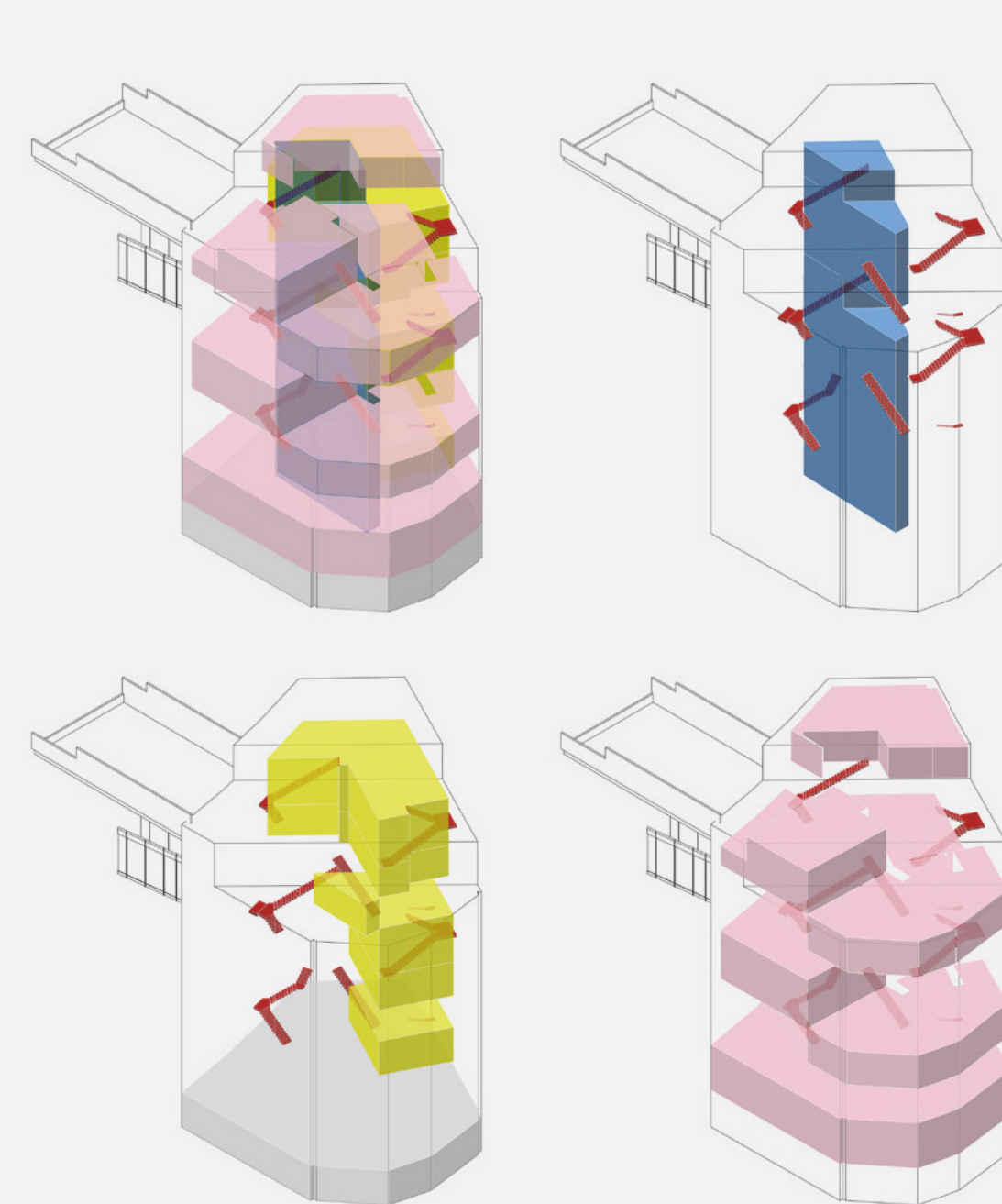
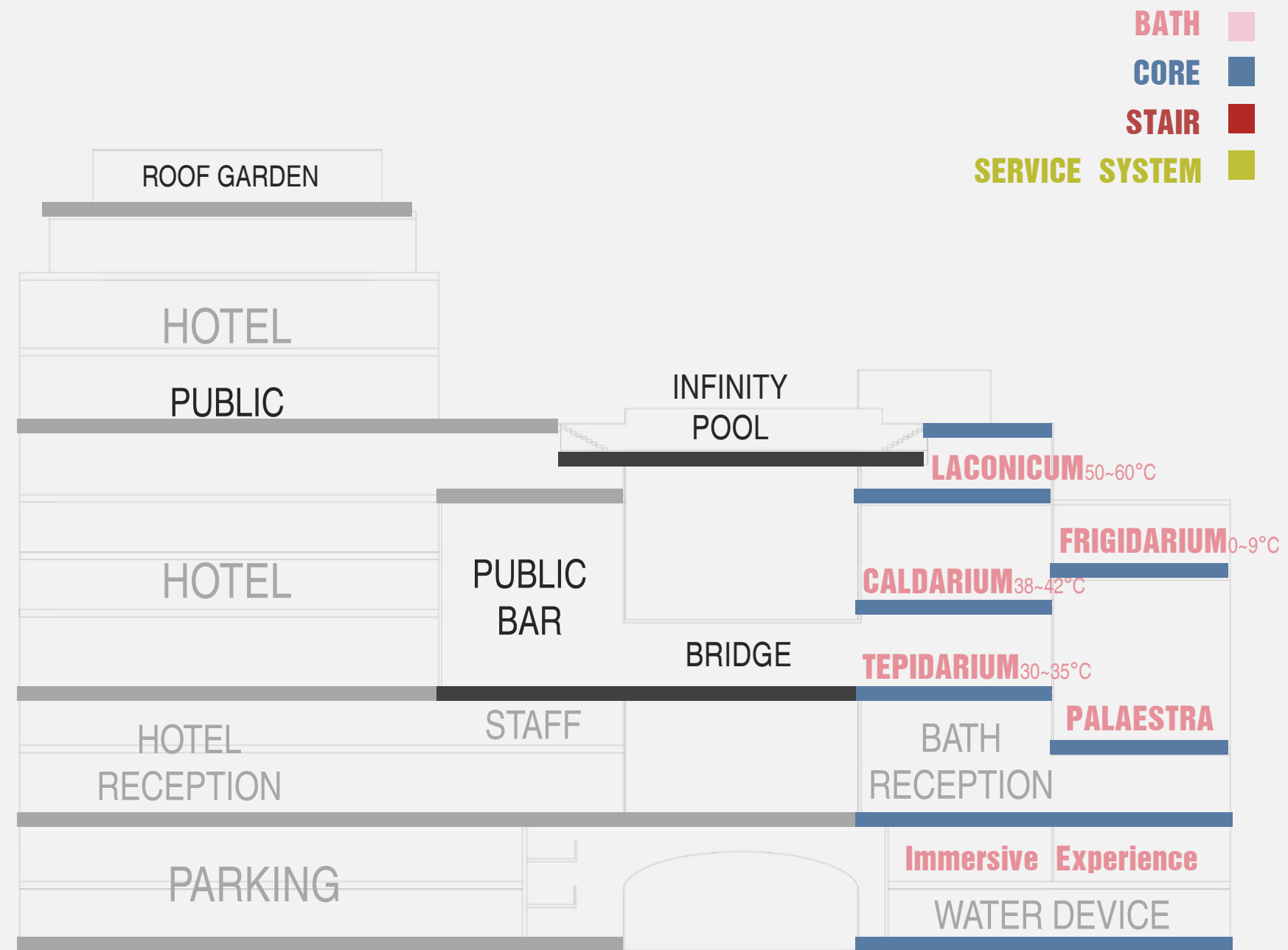


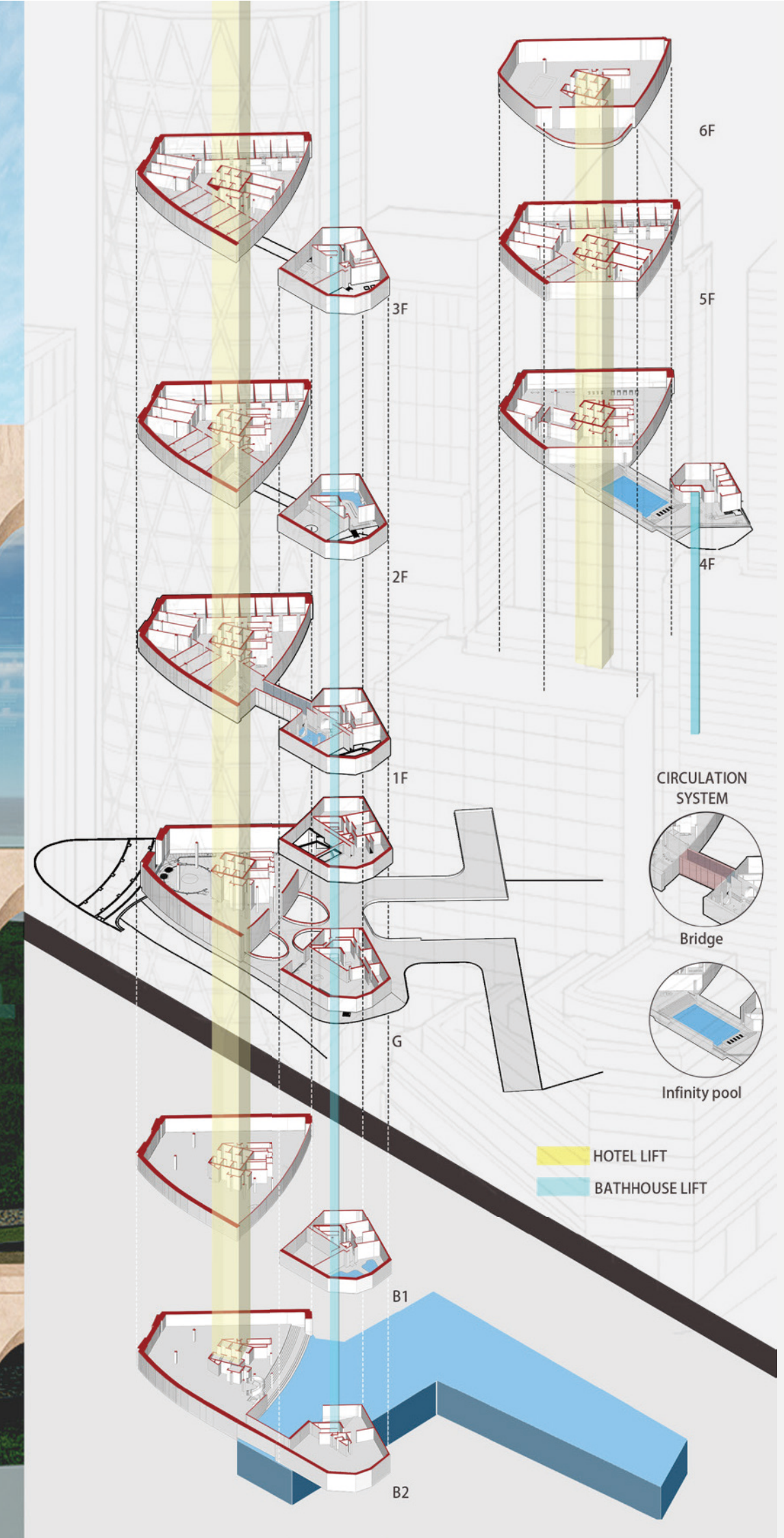
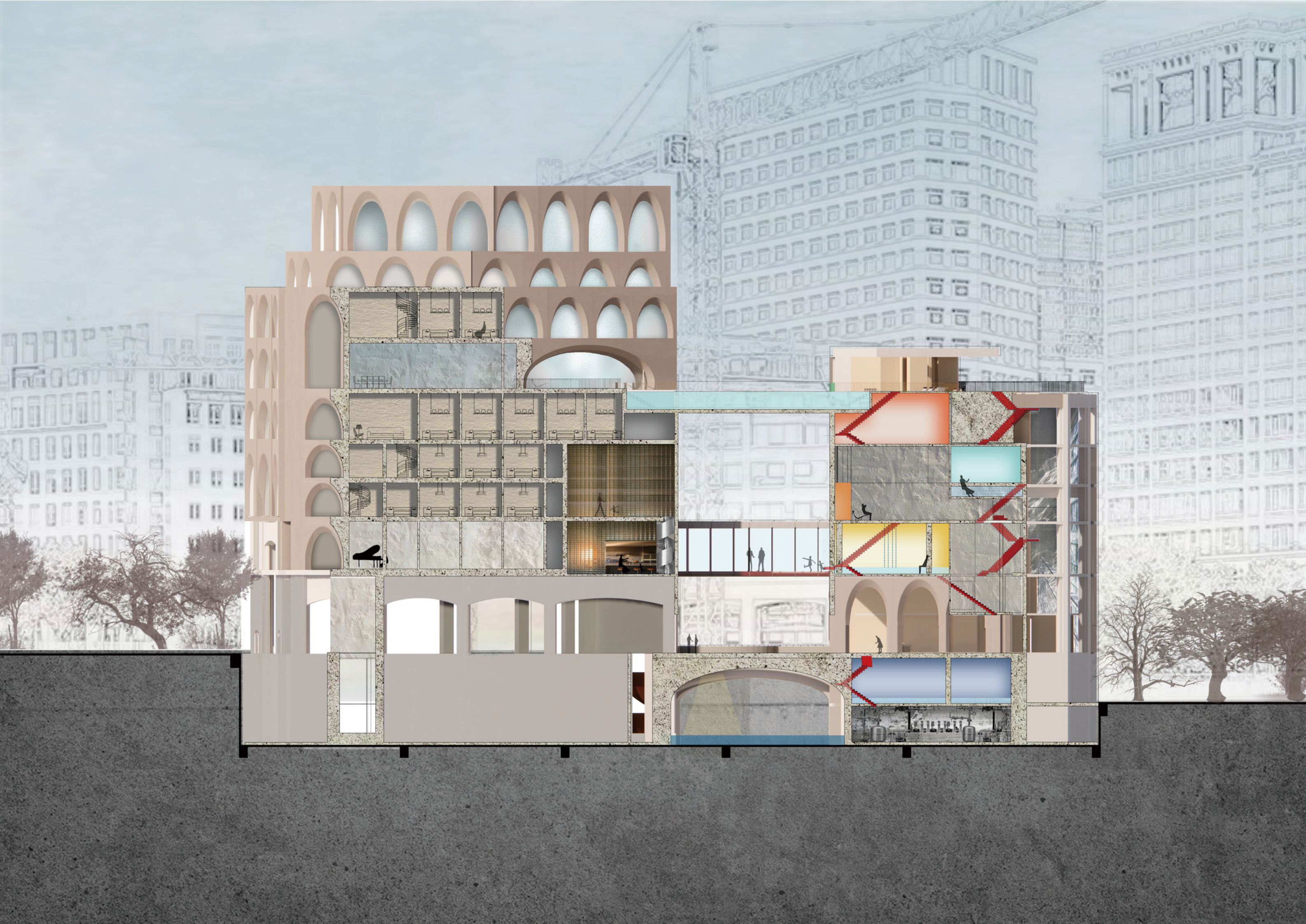
About Block

To emphasize the bathhouse as the core experience, the original building is divided into two volumes, opening up a central void that becomes a shared atrium. To make sure different space have independent experience

This common zone links the bath and the hotel while creating a spatial rhythm that moves between programs.

The atrium brings in natural light and ventilation, enhancing spatial openness. A full analysis of view corridors was also conducted — each bathing space will be placed to capture specific landscape moments.







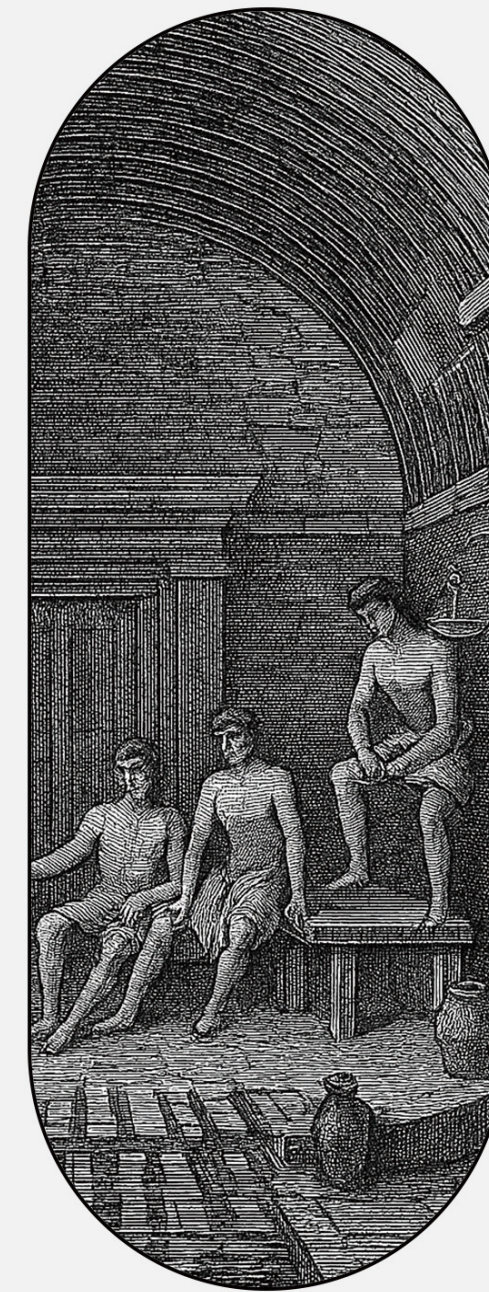
PALAESTRA



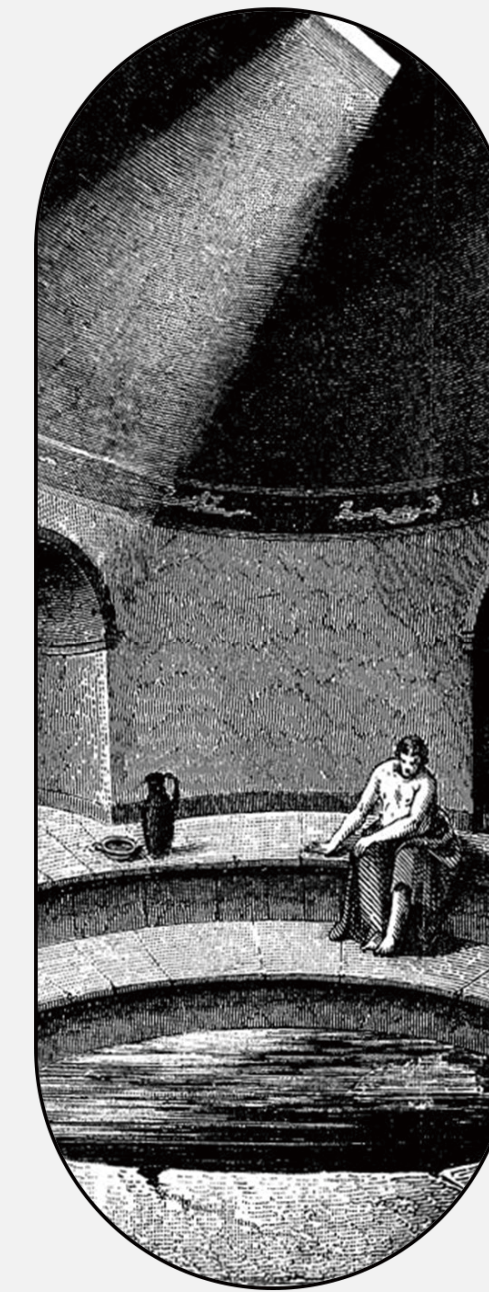
TEPIDARIUM



CALDARIUM



LACONICUM



FRIGIDARIUM

1

PALAESTRA

Function: This is the starting point of the whole bathing process, where people perform physical activities

Purpose: to warm up the body, promote blood circulation, and prepare for the rest of the bathing process. It has a social function and is a place for friends to meet and discuss politics or business.

2

TEPIDARIUM

Function: Transitional space for the body to gradually adapt to the hot environment from the post-workout state.

Temperature: Between 30~35 °C

Humidity: Mild

Effects: Opens up the pores and relaxes the muscles. Helps with the transition into the hotter Caldarium.

3

CALDARIUM

Function: Core bathing area, similar to a modern sauna + hot tub.

Air temperature approx. 40~50 °C

Water temperature approx. 38~42 °C

Humidity: High humidity

Effects: sweating and detoxification here.

4

LACONICUM

Function: Extremely hot, dry space for further perspiration and relaxation.

Temperature: approx. 50~60 °C

Humidity: low humidity (dry heat)

Function: deep detoxification, helps body regulation and vasodilation.

5

FRIGIDARIUM

Function: Wrap up space for cooling the body, shrinking pores and restoring normal heart rate.

Temperature: 0~18 °C

Humidity: Medium to low

Effects: Quickly cools the body and prevents heat stroke. Mental relaxation to end the whole bathing experience.





FLOOR PLAN 2RD

Bath Space

- 1 Warm bath 30-35°C
- 2 Service system (storage, toilet, shower)

3 Water drinking fountains

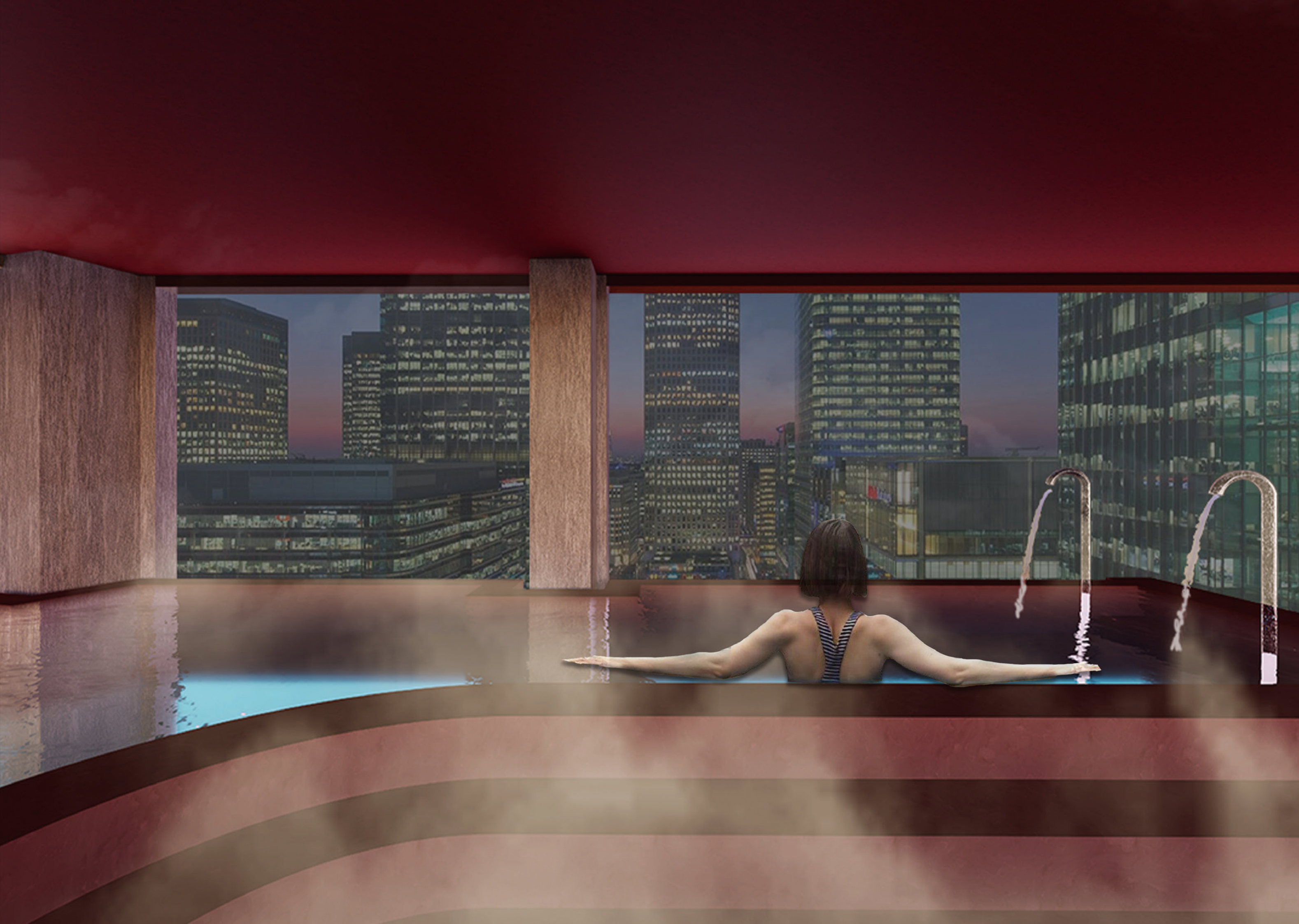
4 Rest area

Hotel Space

5 Public bar

6 Wellness lounge space





FLOOR PLAN 3RD

Bath Space

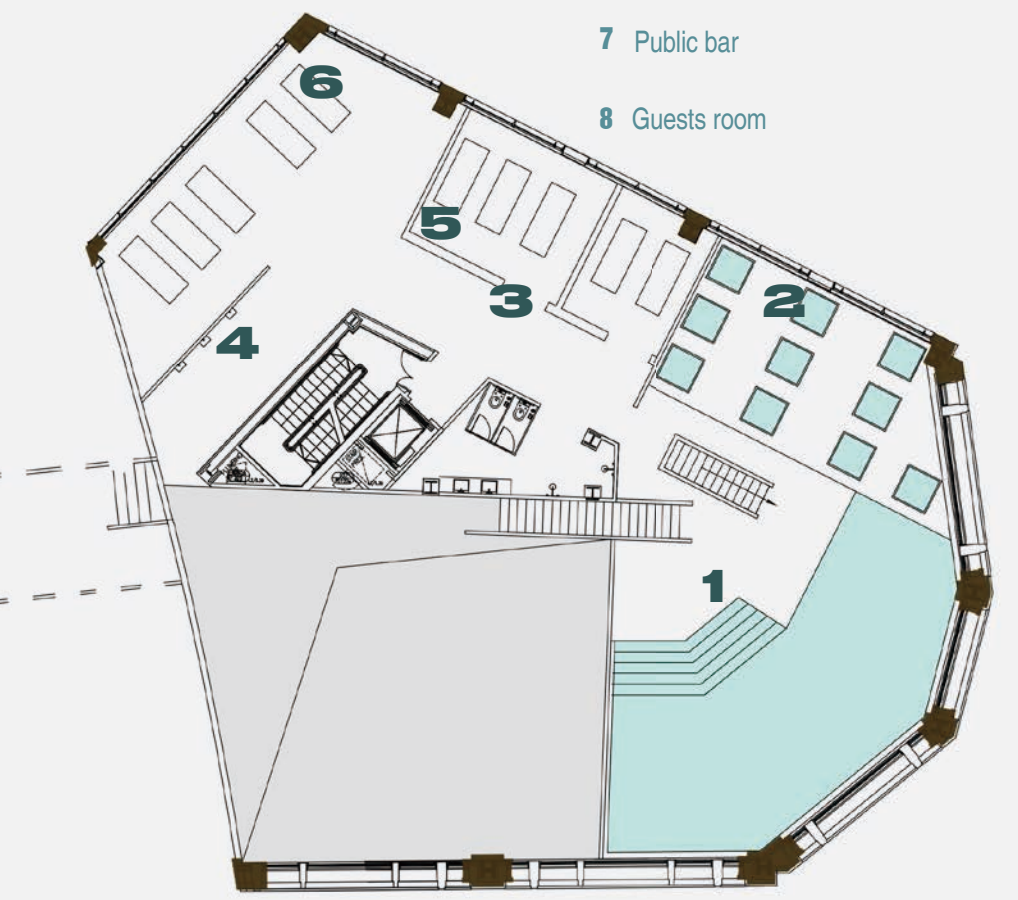
- 1 Hot bath 38-42°C
- 2 Service system (storage, toilet, shower)

Hotel Space

- 3 Public bar
- 4 Guests room







FLOOR PLAN 4RD

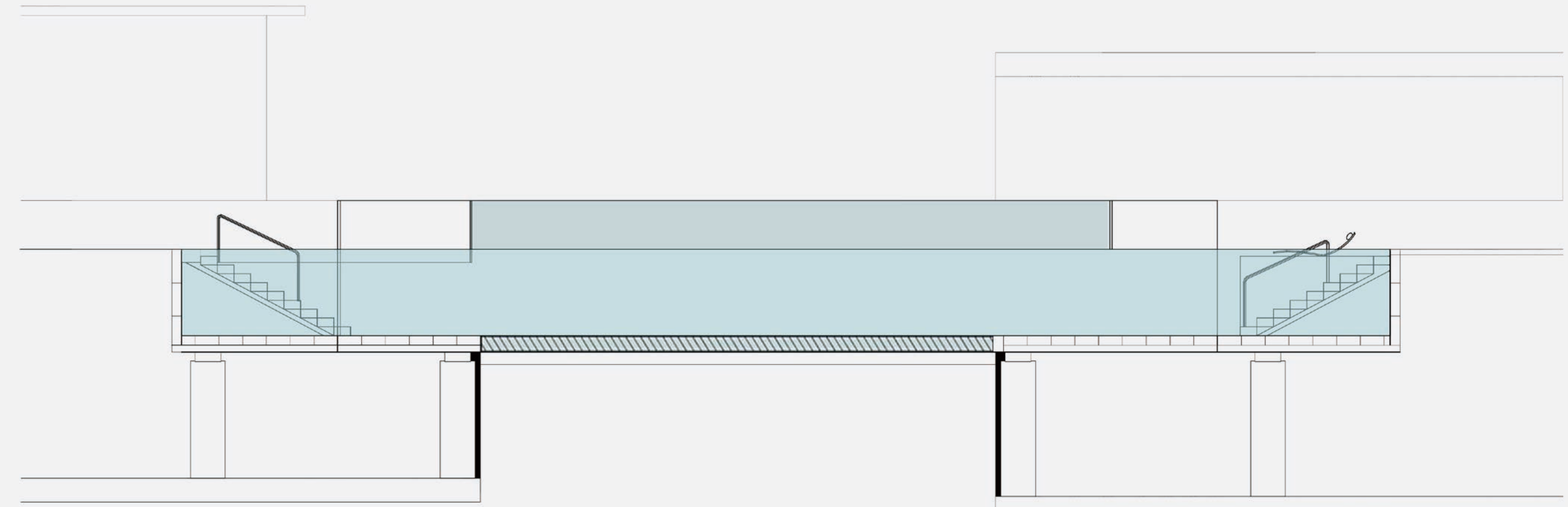
Bath Space

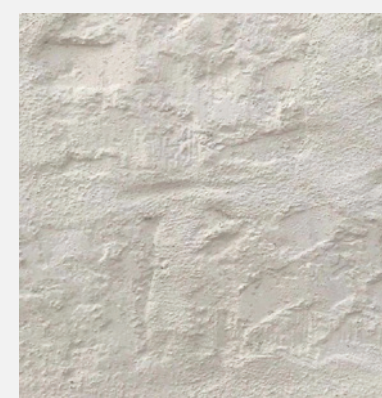
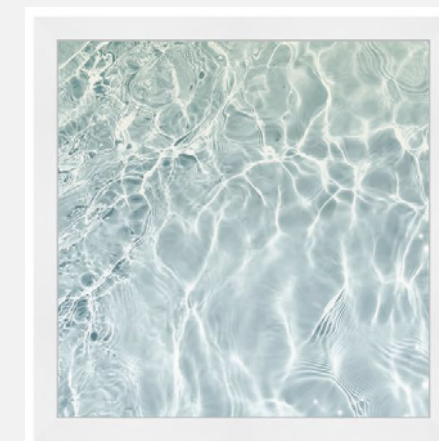
- 1 Cold bath 0-18°C
- 2 Ice bath
- 3 Service system (storage, toilet, shower)
- 4 Water drinking fountains
- 5 Message
- 6 Rest area

Hotel Space

- 7 Public bar
- 8 Guests room











Royal College of Art 2025