



# A House for Prisoners

*Diploma project: Autumn 2018  
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*Censor booklet*

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### **Introduction:**

In Norwegian prisons today, there are approximately 6-10 individuals serving a sentence despite having severe psychological disabilities. In fact, they are so mentally ill that they could qualify as incompetent of serving a regular prison sentence. This practice has been going on for many years.

The current situation regarding these individuals is that they are being held in solitary confinement due to their antisocial and aggressive behaviour, – paradoxically, the use of isolation is making them even worse.



*Isolation cell,  
Ila Detention and Security Prison,  
(Foto: Lars Erlend Tubaas Øymo)*

The Committee against torture (OHCHR) is concerned by a 2017 report of the Parliamentary Ombudsman who found that the use of isolation for persons with psychosocial disabilities and lack of provision of proper health care services led to the deterioration of health of these individuals. OHCHR indicated that the state party should abolish the use of isolation for these individuals immediately and find alternative methods whenever possible. The individuals are being put in full isolation from others as this is the only alternative the Norwegian correctional service has to offer. According to *Straffegjennomføringsloven* §37, these individuals can be isolated up to one year.

The use of isolation of inmates in prison has been a subject of criticism in many different places in the world. Especially in Scandinavia, the use of isolation has been criticised by many experts, organizations, and professionals. Isolation is a harsh and painful intervention in the individual's life, and goes far beyond the strong constraints that already arise from the general deprivation of liberty. Isolation is characterized by prisoners spending 22-24 hours of the day's hours alone in a cell, and that meaningful social contact is typically reduced to a minimum. In the Norwegian prisons, isolation of inmates is one of the most restrictive interventions that one can be subjected to.

*“What’s crucial is not necessarily the character of the space, but rather the absence of psychological meaningful social interaction – that’s the definition of isolation.” – Peter Scharff Smith, professor, UIO.*

## **The idea:**

Initially, I was really fascinated by the concept of being separated from society. I questioned what it really meant to be separated, and the effects of separation. As my initial investigation begun, I started to imagine different of ways of being separated – both in an architectural and a societal way. It was first when started to read prison philosophy, that I truly found the interest for imprisonment.

I started to imagine how it would be to stay in one enclosed space with the same characteristics for a long period of time, and architecturally, what those characteristics would need to be. This was indeed very difficult to imagine, as my empirical knowledge was limited.

During my research, I stumbled upon an article about a few prisoners in Norway who are being isolated, despite having psychosocial disabilities. The lack of provision of proper health care services was leading to the deterioration of health of these individuals. Sadly, the prison system does not have any better ways of protecting the prisoners from harming others or themselves, besides keeping them in isolation.

I became very interested in how one could counteract the detrimental effects of isolation, and how an eventual de-isolating process could be. This again led me to think of how one could try to create a better alternative for these individuals, or at least discuss possible ideas.

This became the initial basis for my thesis.

## **Initial investigations and development of the idea:**

At the start of the semester, I came in contact with Randi Rosenqvist. She is the foremost forensic psychiatrist in Norway, and she was in charge of the evaluation regarding Anders Behring Breivik. She is currently working with the isolated individuals at Ila Security and Detention prison. We had a great conversation at her house, and she gave me valuable insight on how to proceed with the project.

After the meeting, I refined the research I had gathered into a collection of words. These words were applied as spatial representations or diagrammatic drawings. The purpose of this exercise was to investigate the inherent architectural potential of the words that could relate to de-isolation and the imprisoned individuals.

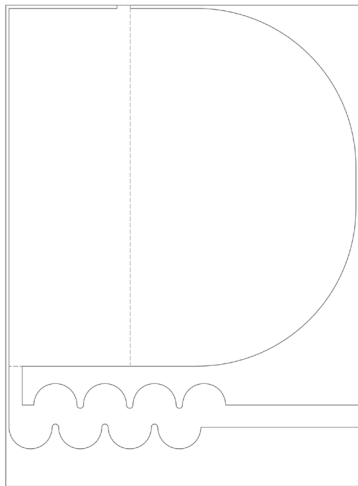
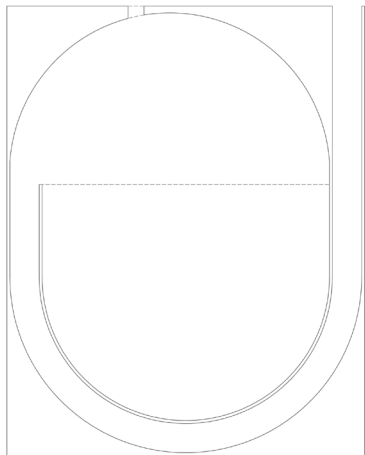
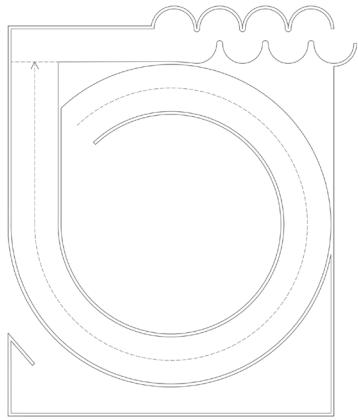
**Activate,  
Variate,  
Normalize,  
Sort.**

In the beginning, the diagrams were meant as a linguistic translation of the words into architectonic ideas – only to see if they had any architectonic potential. They were purely abstract, and couldn't be interpreted or read as functioning plans. It was at a later time that they gave the potential I was looking for.

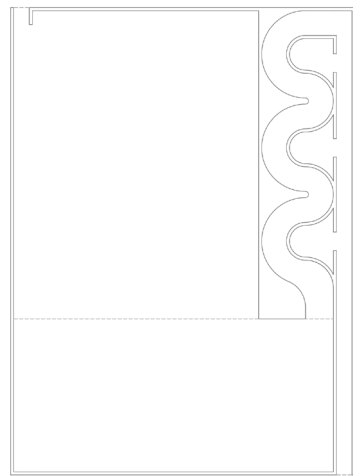
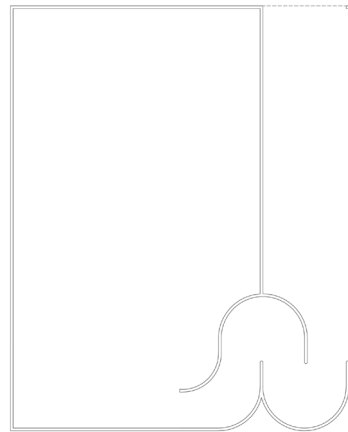
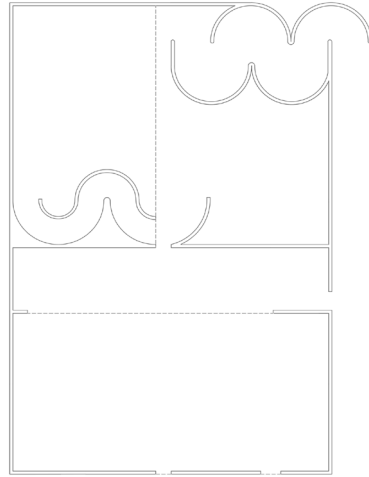
*The full description of the diagrams is shown in the process-booklet.*



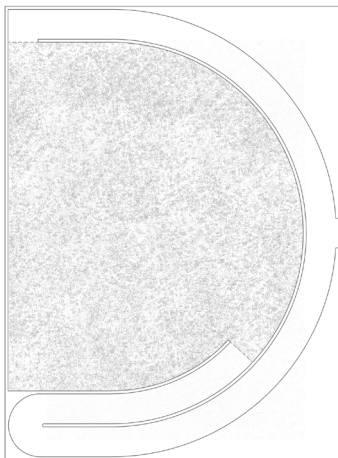
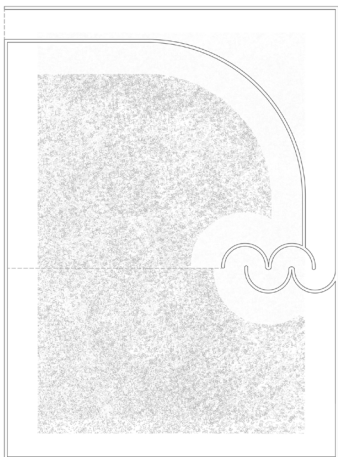
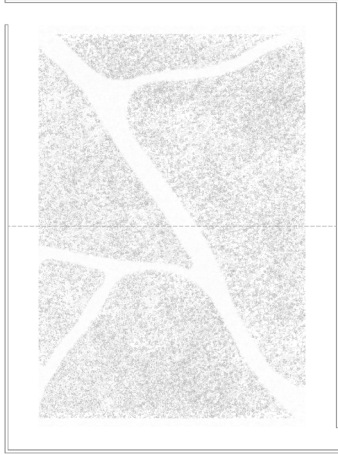
*Activate*



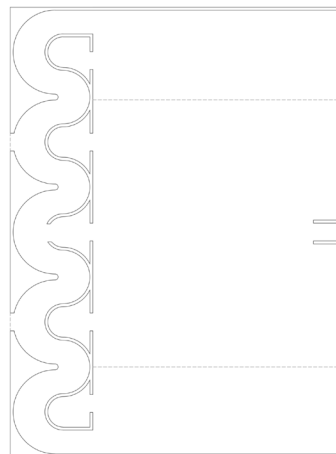
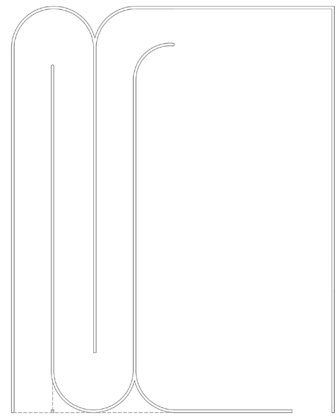
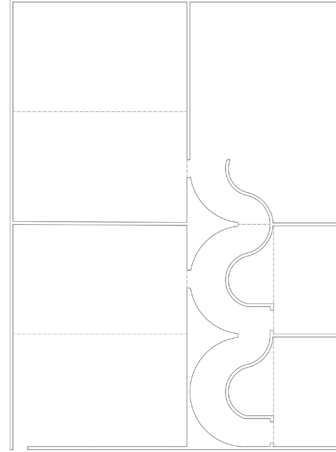
*Variate*



*Normalize*



*Sort*



## **The program and the sequence of space:**

In the second phase of the diploma, I went on to analyze existing and conceptual prison plans and ideas. This exercise gave me a clearer picture of what a prison should look like, and the hierarchical order the spaces. From the information found, I was at this point almost able to put together the program for A House for Prisoners. There was only one part missing: the psychiatric aspect of the prison.

In Mid-October, I visited the psychiatric department at The Oslo University Hospital where I met Psychiatrist Ann Færden. This meeting was very helpful, and it gave me the tools for taking care of the psychiatric aspect of the project, like specific detailing, what psychiatric patients need and so on.

The list of spaces or program needed for making *a house for prisoners* was initially based upon *Funksjons- og arealveileder, kravspesifikasjon for fengselsbygg, Statsbygg 2015*, but with my own modifications. I had also a very important and helpful conversation with Prof. Em. Hedda Giertsen, and Prof. Em. Elisabeth Tosrup.

ENTRANCE:

1.	SECURITY PORTAL	20m2
2.	ARRIVAL AREA	14m2
3.	VISITATION	10m2
4.	CONVERSATION ROOM	10m2

EMPLOYEE ONLY:

5.	SECURITY ROOM 1	30m2
6.	SECURITY ROOM 2 + TOILET	40m2
7.	STORAGE/TECHNICAL	4,5m2
8.	WARDROBE	20m2
9.	COPY/PRINT	4m2
10.	WC	8m2
11.	SINGULAR OFFICE	10m2
12.	SINGULAR OFFICE	10m2
13.	SINGULAR OFFICE	10m2
14.	MEETING/LUNCH	40m2

INMATE:

32.	CELL + TOILET 1	15m2
33.	CELL + TOILET 2	15m2
34.	CELL + TOILET 3	15m2
35.	CELL + TOILET 4	15m2
36.	CELL + TOILET 5	15m2
37.	CELL + TOILET 6	15m2
38.	UU-CELL + UU-TOILET	16m2
39.	CELL 1	8m2
40.	CELL 2	8m2
41.	CELL 3	8m2

EMPLOYEE + INMATE:

15.	HCWC	6m2
16.	KITCHEN	20m2
17.	STORAGE	4m2
18.	OUTDOOR AREA 1	50m2
19.	MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 1	85m2
20.	MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 2	70m2
21.	SITTING AREA/BUFFER ZONE 1	18m2
22.	CLEANING/STORAGE	5m2
23.	TOILET	2.5m2
24.	SHOWER	2.5m2
25.	SITTING AREA/BUFFER ZONE 2	30m2
26.	CONVERSATION ROOM	9m2
27.	HCWC	6m2
28.	THERAPY ROOM	10m2
29.	SMALL M.F.SPAC/STORAGE	10m2
30.	MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 3	58m2
31.	COURTYARD/SENSING SPACE	420m2

## **The architectonic order:**

When thinking of order in a project, it feels natural to contemplate all the architectural layers that, in a specific order, make up the totality of a project. I think that this will impact how a project is understood and perceived. In my case, *a house for prisoners*, – it can also be beneficial to think this way. This is because of how each architectonic element relates to another element, and in what order. In the project, I addressed the following architectonic elements hierarchically:

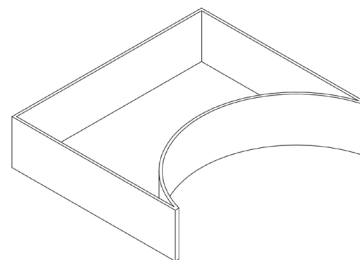
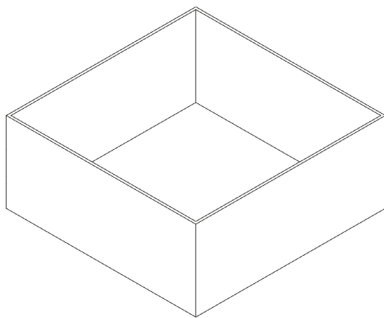
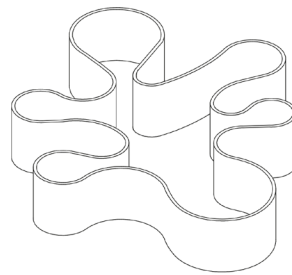
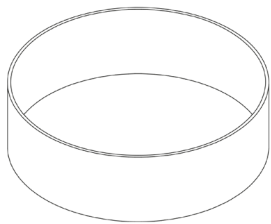
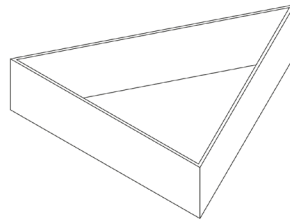
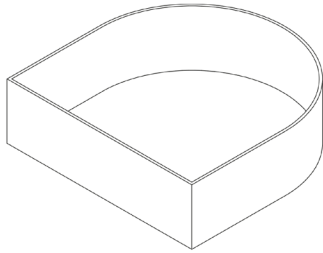
**The wall:** *The transition between two things*

**The corridor:** *The space in-between*

**The Centre:** *A point in the surrounding mass*

**The Cell:** *Where all things comes to an end*

*The full description of the elements is shown in the process-booklet.*



## **The proposal**

The proposal of The House for Prisoners is to hopefully create a better alternative for these isolated individuals. It aims to create good spatial conditions where individuals get psychiatric surveillance, activation and meaningful social interaction. They will be protected – from themselves, and from others.

Within the plan of the building, a haptic garden will give natural stimulus from plants, trees and fresh oxygen and act calming upon the individual. The overall aim and idea of the house of prisoners are that the institution should have a de-isolating and normalizing effect on the individual, and from there make a transition possible to a psychiatric hospital easier.

The House for Prisoners will act as an independent prison institution in Eiksmarka near Ila Detention and Security prison in Bærum, Norway. Although the prison house is self-sufficient, it will have close relations to Ila Detention and Security prison, due to their expertise and experience with these individuals. The capacity of the prison is to withhold maximum 9 (+1) prisoners in 10 cells, as it would not be beneficial to have more.

The total area is calculated to 1500sqm, and the spatial program is based upon Funksjons- og arealveilder kravspesifikasjon for fengselsbygg, Statsbygg 2015. Additional background information for the task is based upon: Stortingets Representationforslag 227 S (2017-2018).



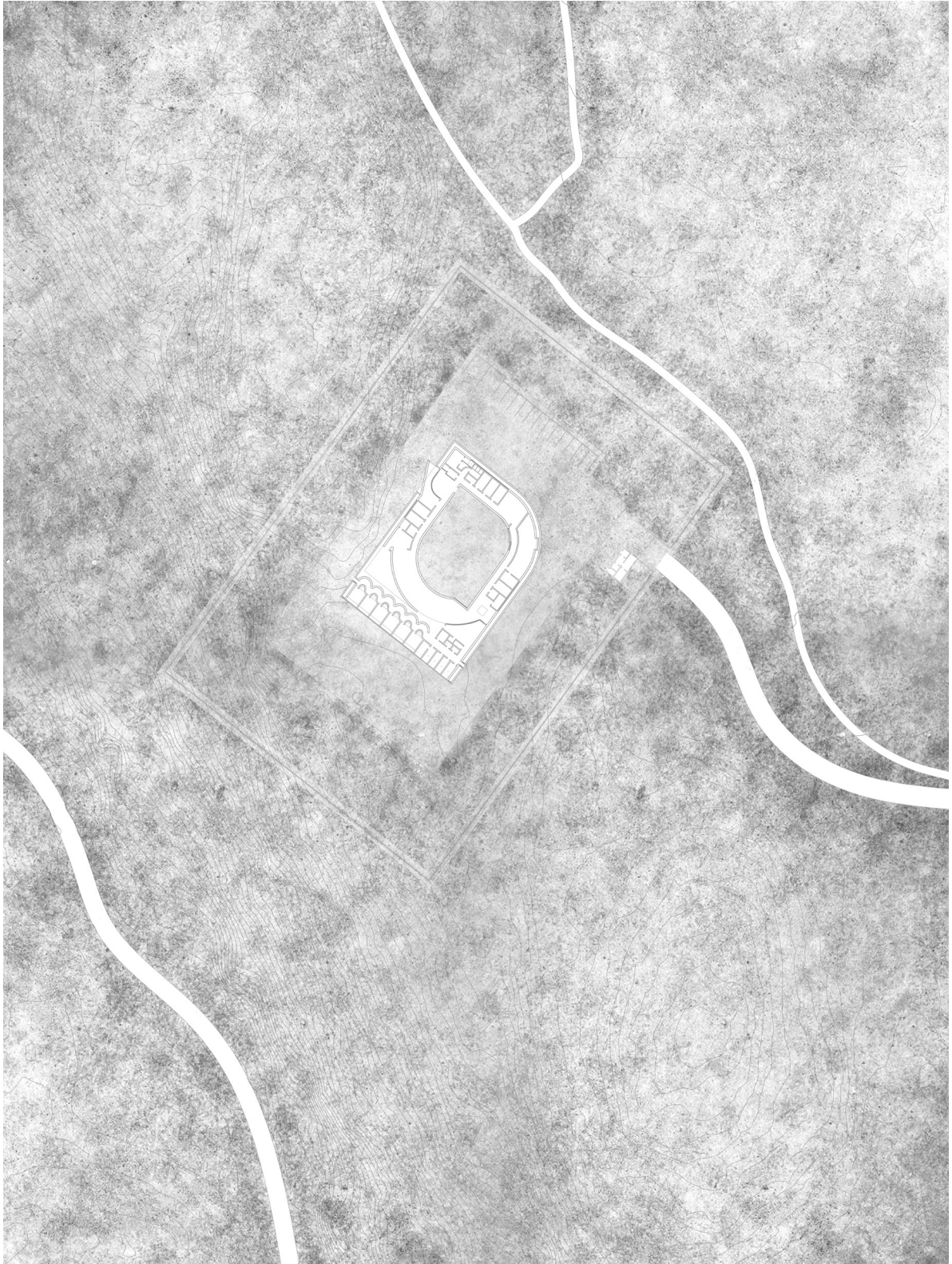


**Key locations:**

1. Location: The House for Prisoners
2. Ila Detention and Security prison
3. Norwegian national road 168

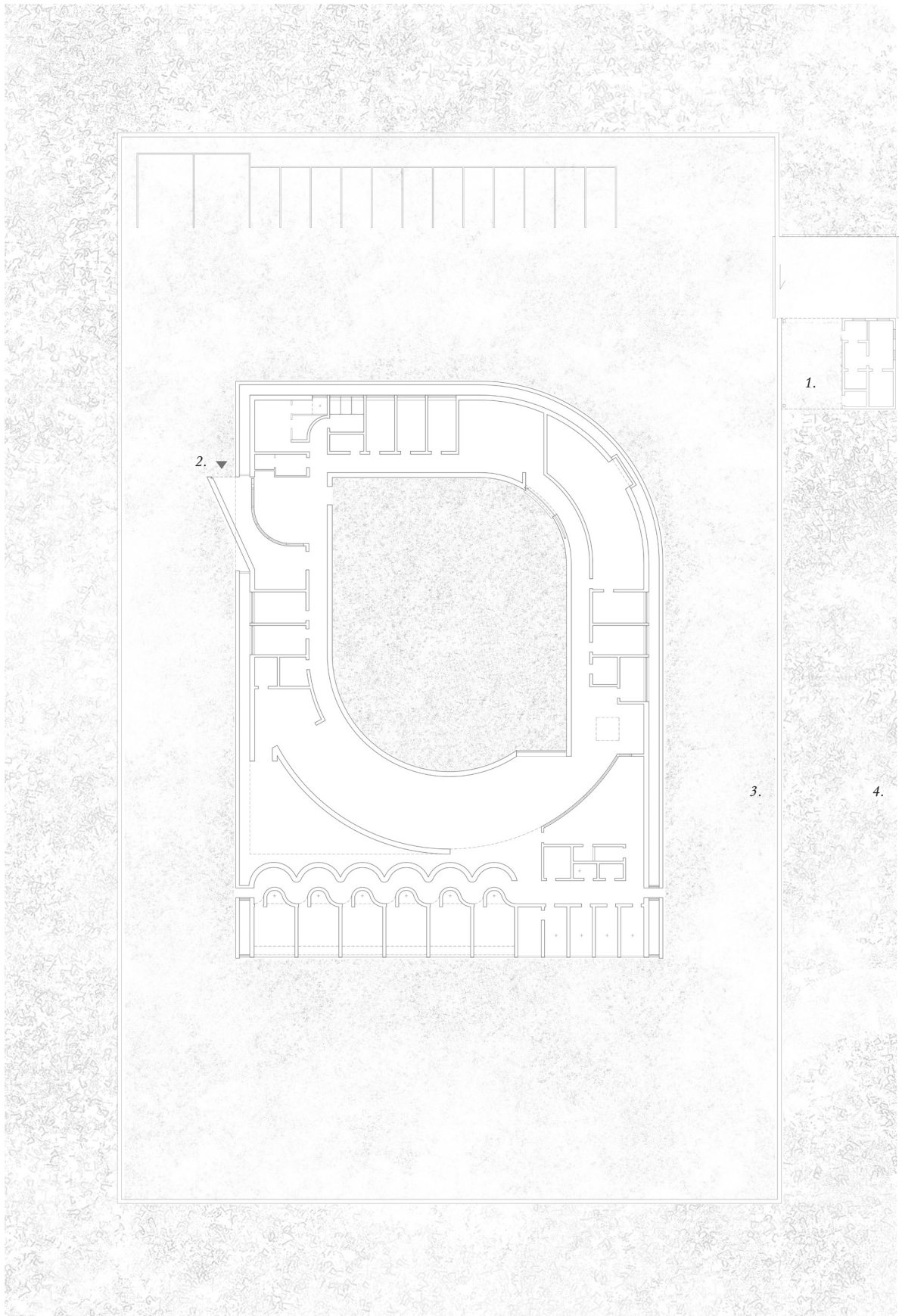


Scale: 1 : 5000 A2



**Situation map**  
Scale: 1 : 750 A2

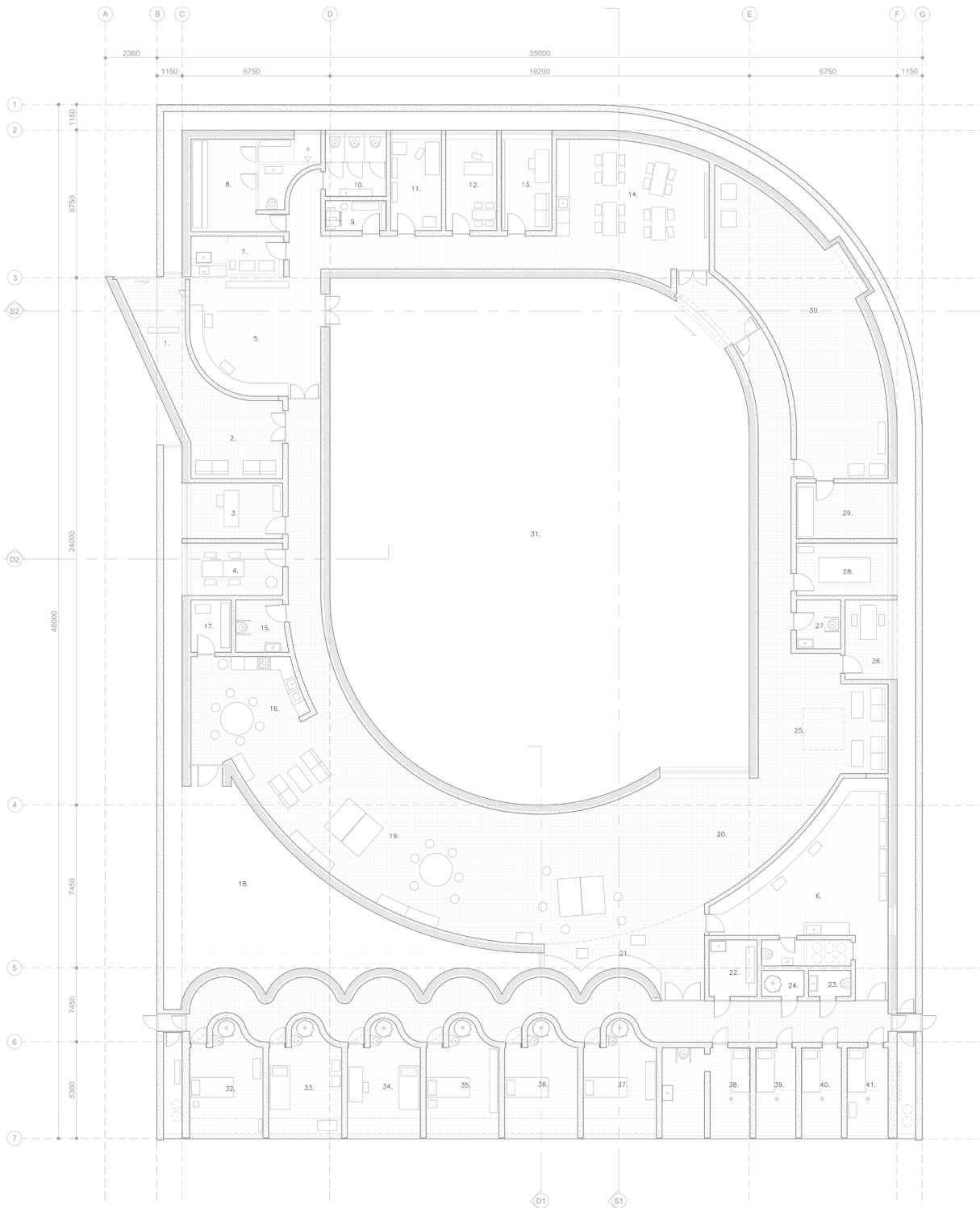




**Ground level**  
Scale: 1 : 200 A2

- 1. Main gate
- 2. Main entrance
- 3. Perimeter zone 1: Secure access
- 4. Perimeter zone 2





**ENTRANCE:**

- 1. SECURITY PORTAL
- 2. ARRIVAL AREA
- 3. VISITATION
- 4. CONVERSATION ROOM

**EMPLOYEE ONLY:**

- 5. SECURITY ROOM 1
- 6. SECURITY ROOM 2 + TOILET
- 7. STORAGE/TECHNICAL
- 8. WARDROBE
- 9. COPY/PRINT
- 10. WC
- 11. SINGULAR OFFICE
- 12. SINGULAR OFFICE
- 13. SINGULAR OFFICE
- 14. MEETING/LUNCH

**EMPLOYEE + INMATE:**

- 15. HCWC
- 16. KITCHEN
- 17. STORAGE
- 18. OUTDOOR AREA 1
- 19. MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 1
- 20. MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 2
- 21. SITTING AREA/BUFFER ZONE 1
- 22. CLEANING/STORAGE
- 23. TOILET
- 24. SHOWER
- 25. SITTING AREA/BUFFER ZONE 2
- 26. CONVERSATION ROOM
- 27. HCWC
- 28. THERAPY ROOM
- 29. SMALL M.F.SPACE/STORAGE
- 30. MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE 3
- 31. COURTYARD/SENSING SPACE

- 6m2
- 20m2
- 4m2
- 50m2
- 85m2
- 70m2
- 18m2
- 5m2
- 2.5m2
- 2.5m2
- 30m2
- 9m2
- 6m2
- 10m2
- 10m2
- 58m2
- 420m2

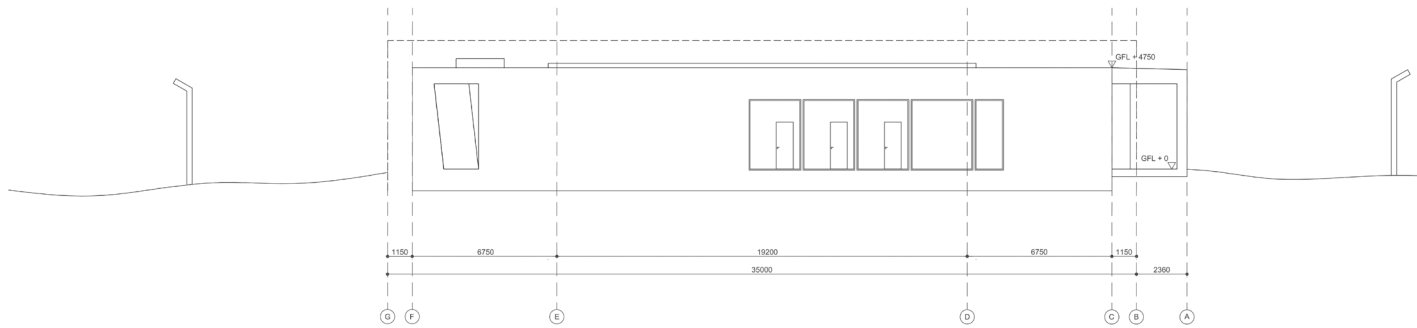
**INMATE:**

- 32. CELL + TOILET 1
- 33. CELL + TOILET 2
- 34. CELL + TOILET 3
- 35. CELL + TOILET 4
- 36. CELL + TOILET 5
- 37. CELL + TOILET 6
- 38. UU-CELL + UU-TOILET
- 39. CELL 1
- 40. CELL 2
- 41. CELL 3

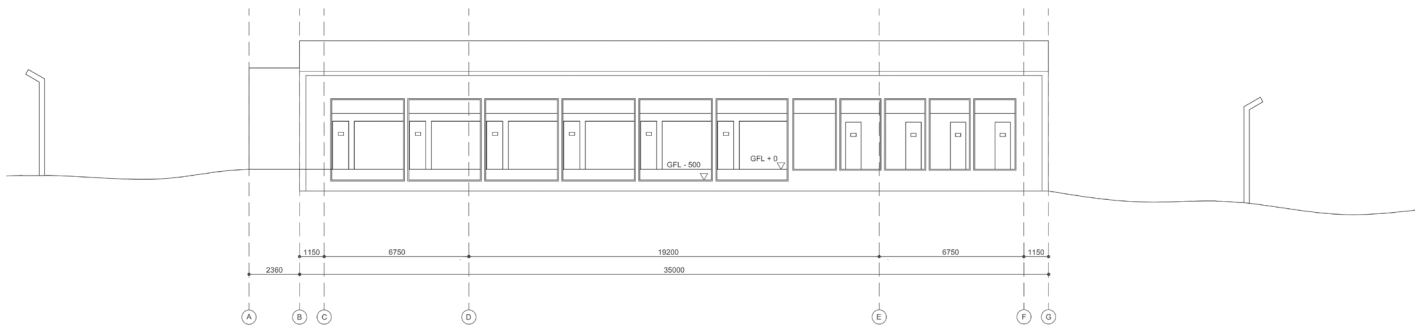
- 15m2
- 15m2
- 15m2
- 15m2
- 15m2
- 15m2
- 16m2
- 8m2
- 8m2
- 8m2

**Main plan**  
Scale: 1 : 100 A2

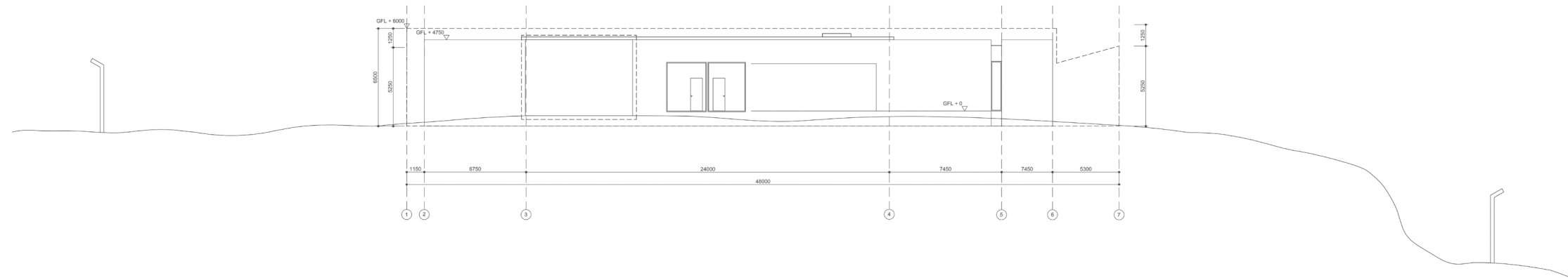




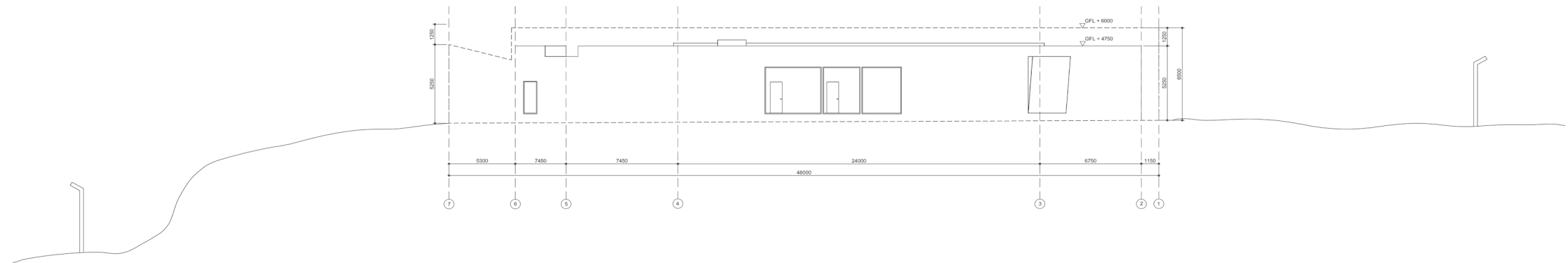
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Scale: 1 : 250 A3



Elevation: S/W  
Scale: 1 : 250 A3



Elevation: N/W  
Scale: 1 : 250 A3

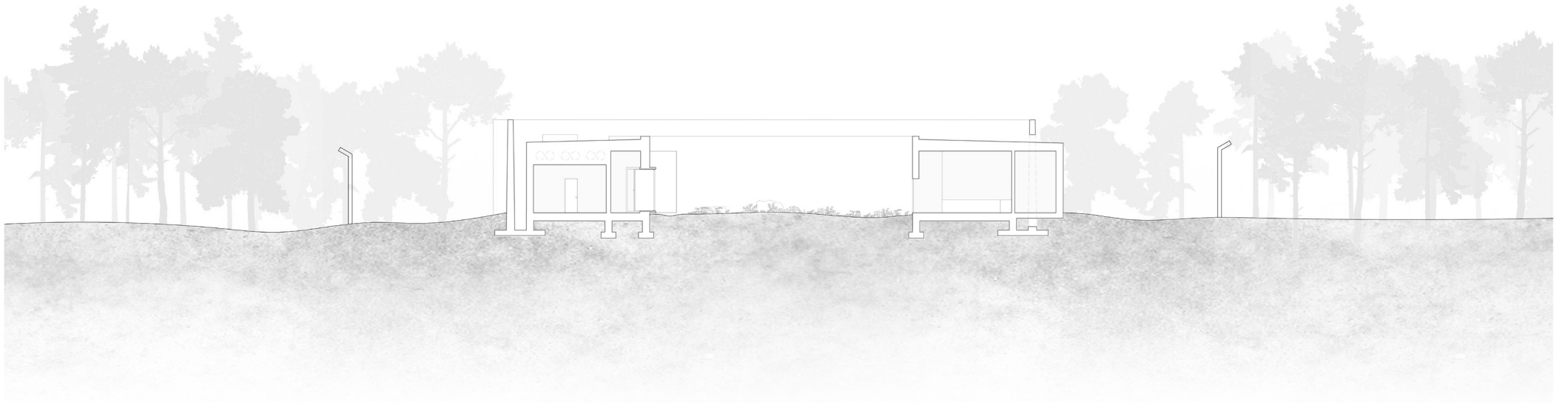


Elevation: S/E  
Scale: 1 : 250 A3

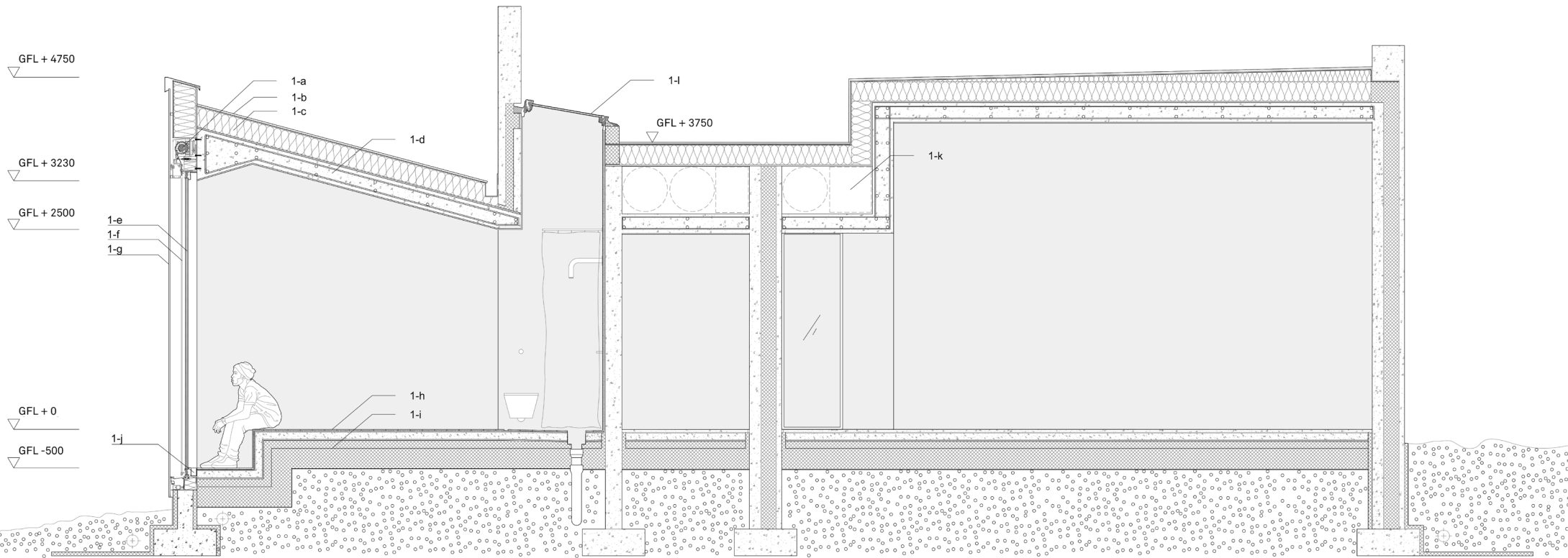




**Section: S1**  
Scale: 1 : 250 A3

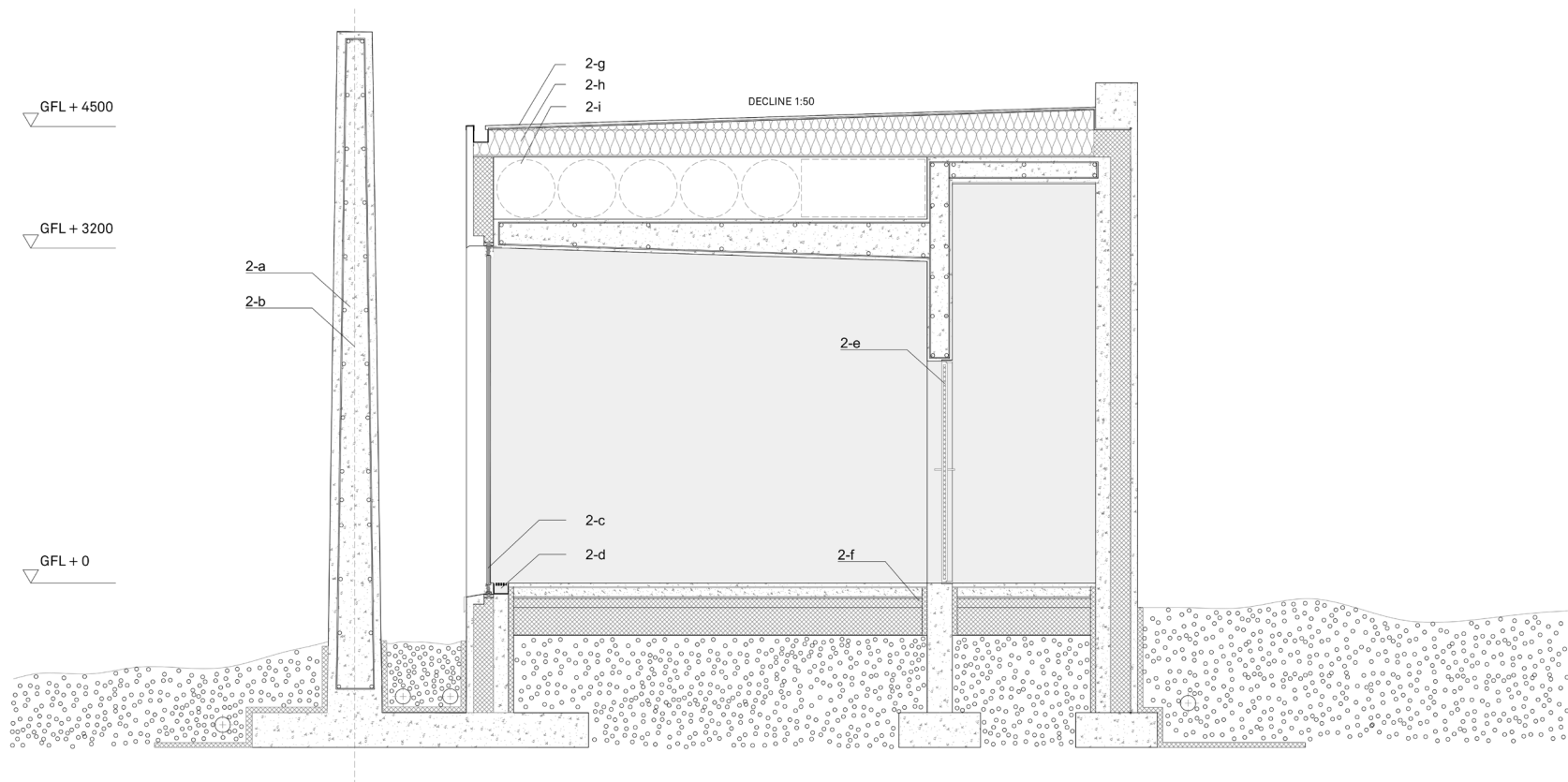


**Elevation: S2**  
Scale: 1 : 250 A3



- 1-a EL- controlled solar shading system (motor)
- 1-b Roof covering (PVC)
- 1-c Insulation 250m
- 1-d Enforced concrete ceiling 230mm
- 1-e Security glass (11+11mm)
- 1-f Blind (Alu. blade 12mm)
- 1-g Laminated glass 6+6mm
- 1-h Floor heating/floor (water proof construction)
- 1-i Insulation 350mm

**Detail: D1**  
Scale: 1 : 50 A3



- 2-a Enforced concrete wall w=200 - 450mm
- 2-b Post-tension cable
- 2-c Laminated security glass 4+4mm
- 2-d Ventilation grille
- 2-e Soundproof door
- 2-f Insulation 350mm
- 2-g Roofing (PVC)
- 2-h Insulation 250 mm
- 2-i Technical/Ventilation

**Detail: D2**  
Scale: 1 : 50 A3

