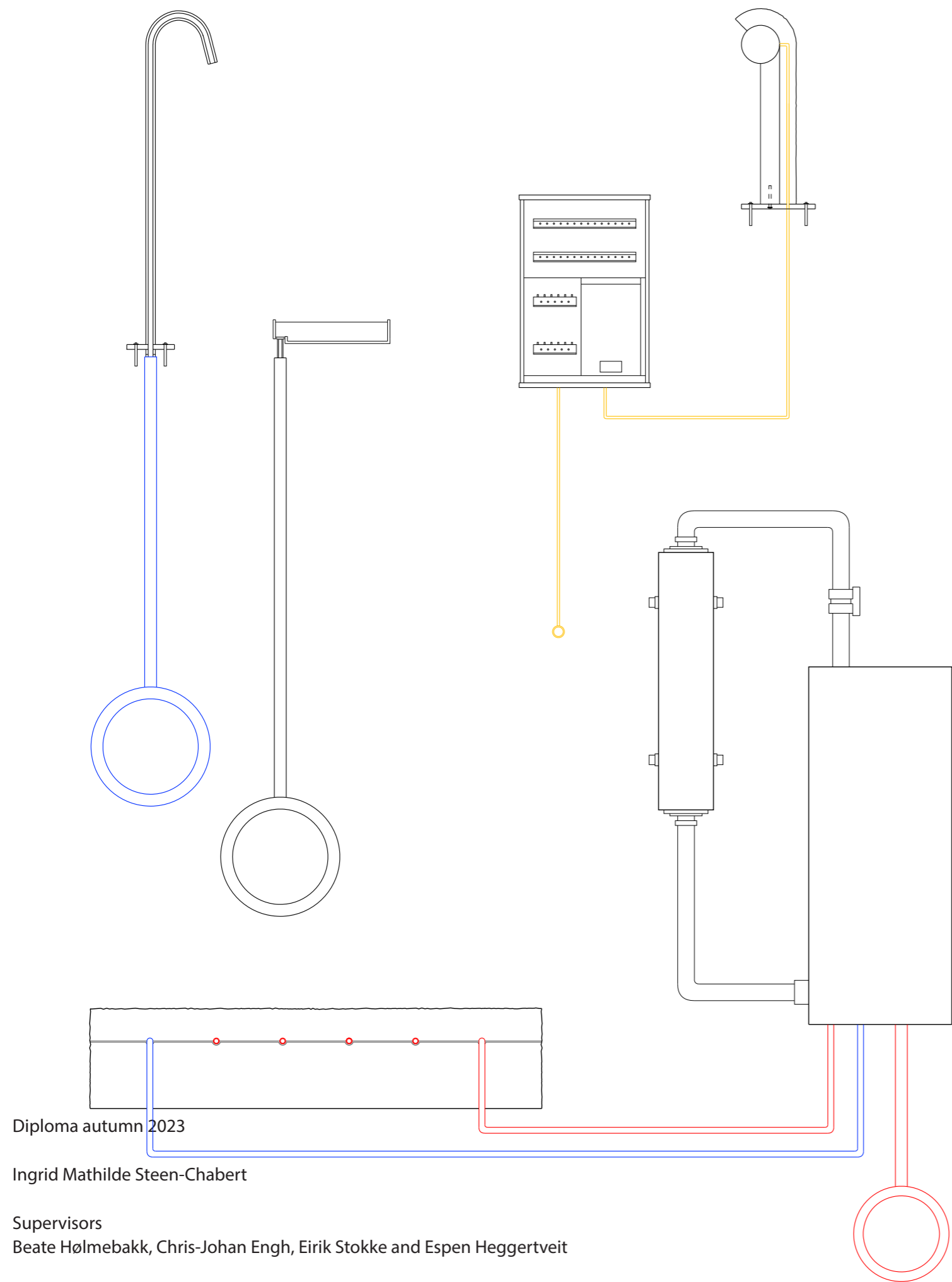




HANGING OUT: ACCOMODATING THE UNEXPECTED



Diploma autumn 2023

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# Brief and method

The program of this diploma is to develop three non-commercial meeting points at three different sites in Oslo.

The aim of the brief is to explore the inherent possibilities of public space to accommodate for unexpected encounters and different uses through architecture. Is it possible to plan for the unexpected, that which one can not foresee in advance?

As a starting point, I have studied references, that are displayed in the pre-diploma booklet, and identified four qualities that I have explored throughout the diploma semester. Based on these investigations, I have developed meeting points on three different sites that constitute different urban situations within the city center of Oslo.

# Abstract

Today, most public spaces are designed for a specific activity such as a playground or a sports facility, and activities which are considered unwanted are actively discouraged. This diploma is about exploring architectural qualities that can accommodate different uses in the public realm, and how common resources such as water and heat can contribute to establish meeting points in the city where people with different backgrounds, in various life situations, can meet.

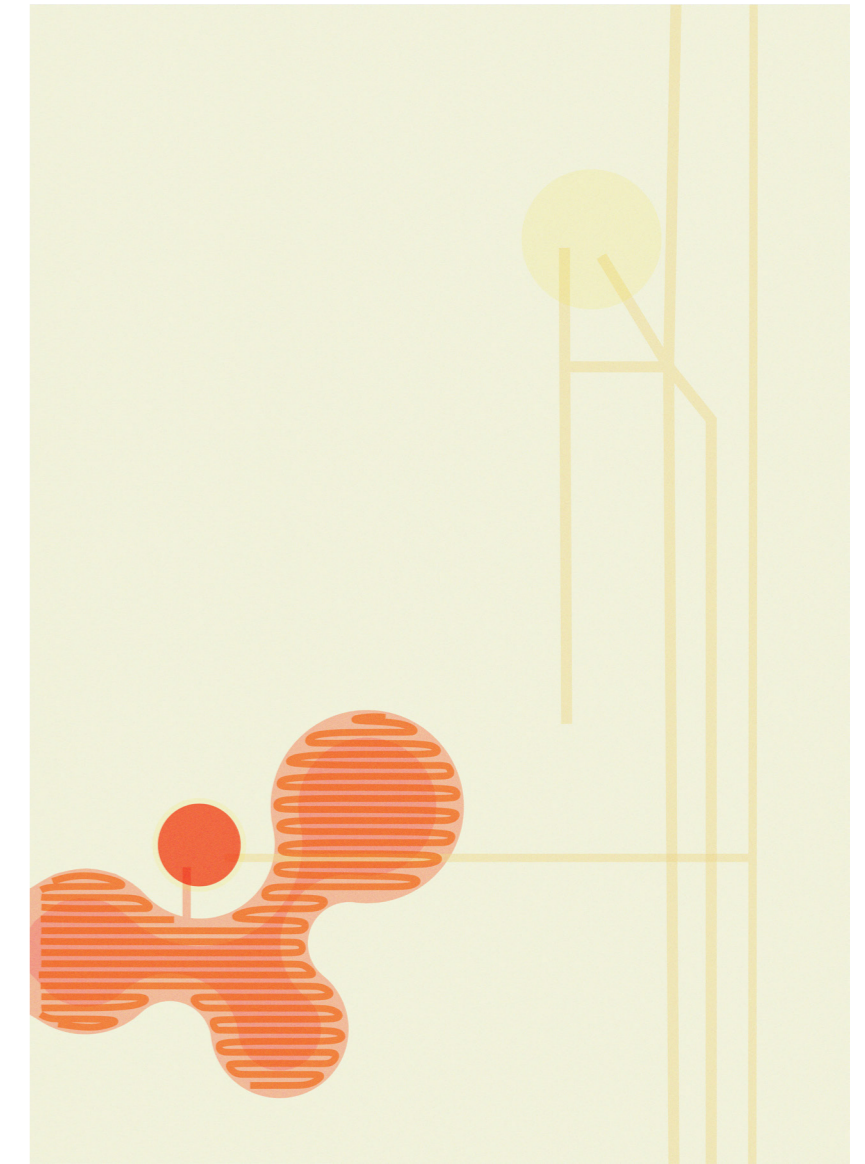
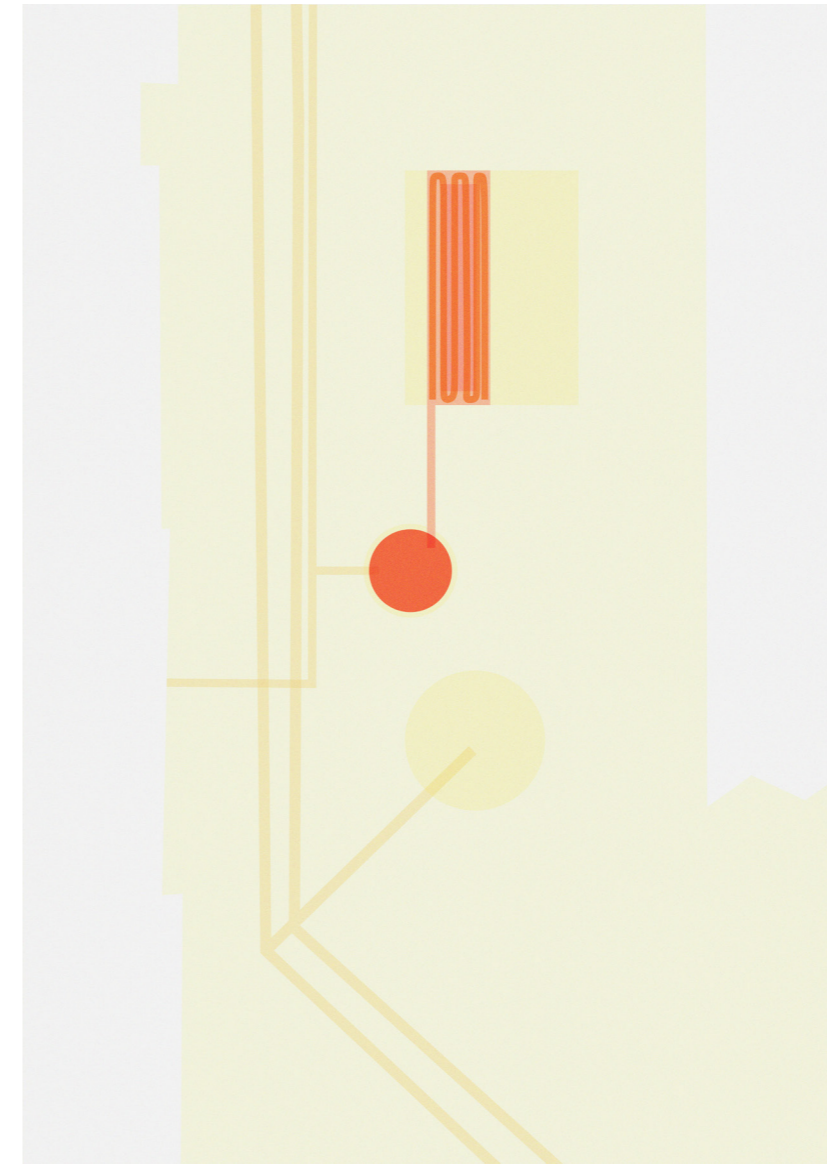
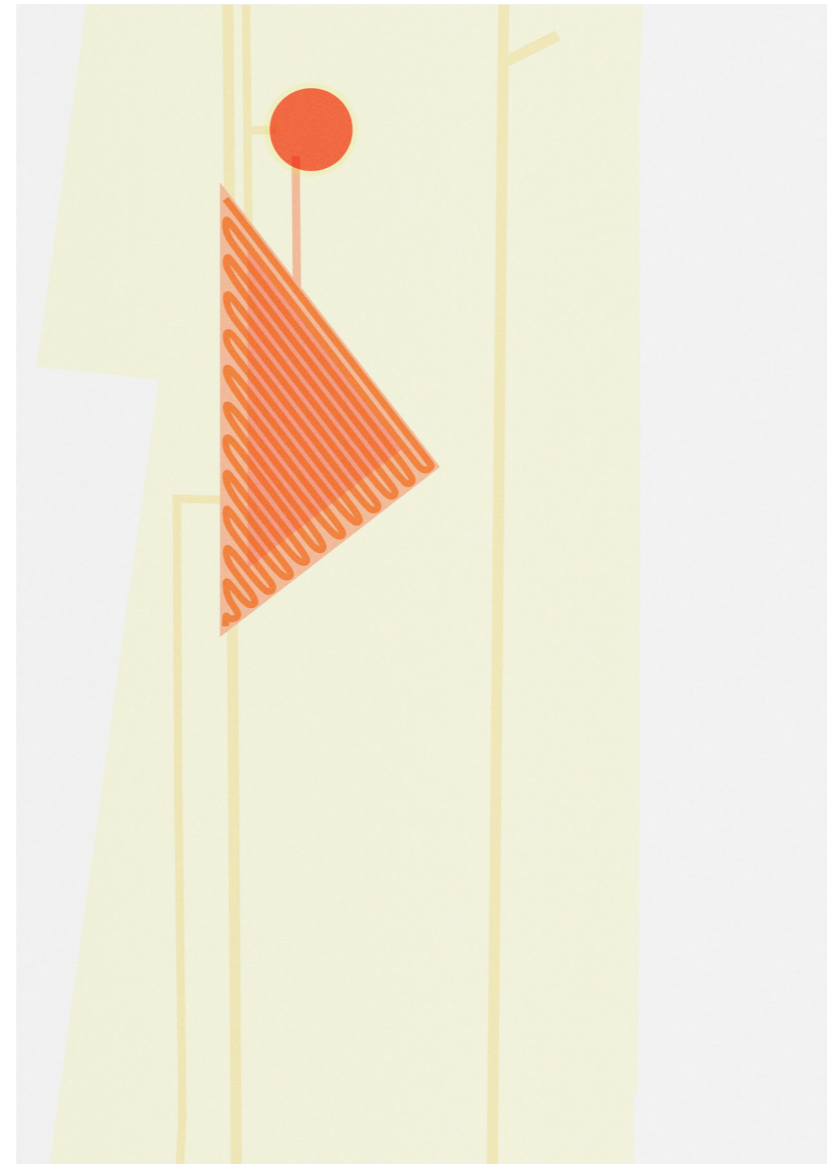
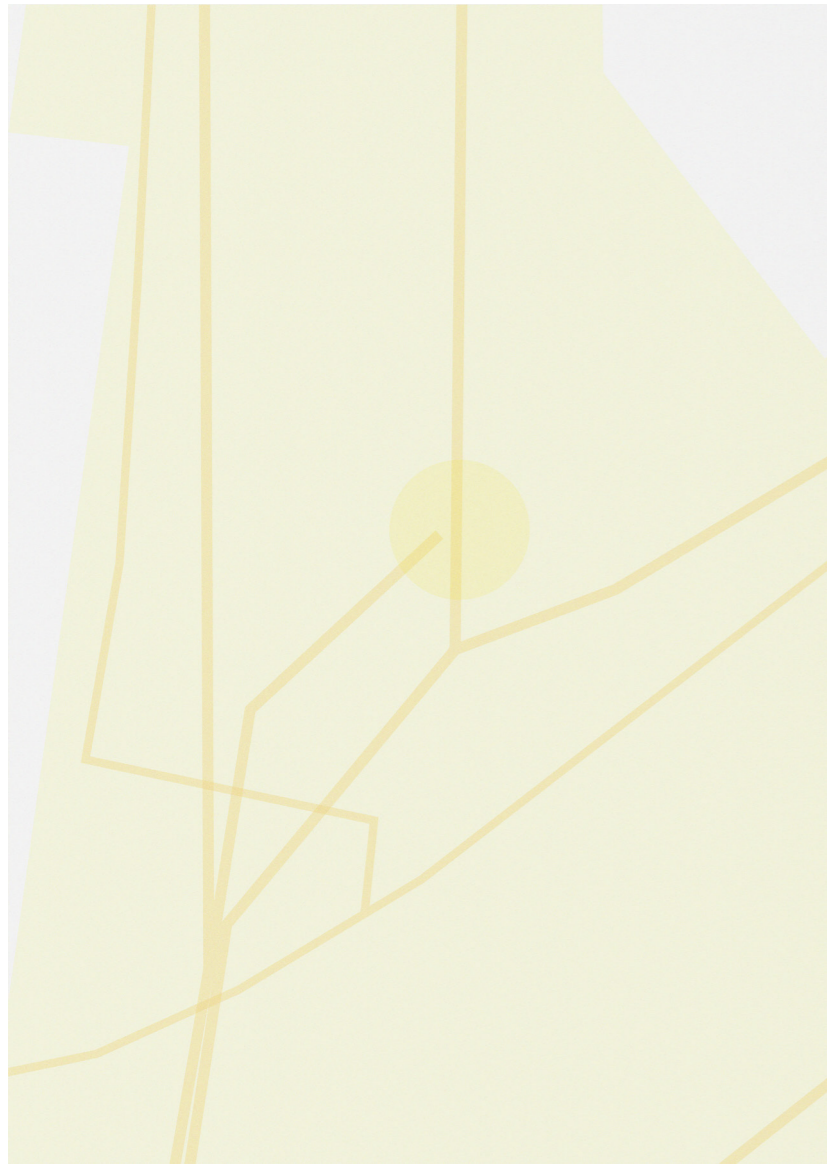
My project is to design three non-commercial public spaces to hang out in Oslo, which are not intended for a specific activity. This is to induce the chance of various interpretations and the chance of different people meeting. The aim of the brief is to explore the inherent possibilities of public space to accommodate unplanned encounters and different uses through architecture. What are the prerequisites for hanging out when there is no specific activity?

As a result of the vast population growth in large European cities in the 19th century, public authorities considered it their duty to provide certain common goods in the public realm. Eventually, both urinals and drinking fountains became common sights in Norwegian cities, and in 1911 there were 73 cast iron public urinals in Oslo. However, today Oslo has the lowest coverage of public toilets compared to other Northern European capitals and only a few drinking fountains are left. The commons that earlier were considered public responsibilities is now to a large extent left to commercial actors.

The project investigates how shelter from weather and access to water and heat can be used as a starting point for developing public spaces, in addition to specific architectural qualities such as the balance between being visible enough to feel safe and at the same time sheltered enough to feel comfortable.

In Oslo, there exists a large network of underground public infrastructure with 3 000 kilometers of municipal water and sewage pipes and 700 kilometers of district heating pipes. The project makes use of this infrastructure by connecting to it and making these common resources available in the public realm. During the warmer half of the year, water in different forms is made available, and during the colder part of the year, heat is connected to the project. The extent of the spaces increase and decrease throughout the different times of year, where snow occasionally functions as an additional wall.

The project is both site specific and general. All interventions are based on some of the same principles and ideas, and some elements that I call public artefacts are standardized and can be mass produced. The materials in the project are glass fiber, granite, hot-galvanized steel (for constructive components) and stainless steel (for non-constructive elements). These materials have a robust public character, and although they can be perceived as hard or cold, I wish to use these materials in new and inviting ways, among others by being especially concerned with various degrees of visibility.



# Sites

In 2016, the city council in Oslo marked out an area in the central part of the city to liberate spaces that are used for parking cars. Within this area there are 57 parking lots that represent a great opportunity for the municipality to develop new public spaces.

The area can be divided into three different categories. The first category is the neighborhood, which has high housing density, whereof many of the housing blocks are municipally owned. The second category is the city center, with a large variety of functions and a lot of people passing through. Finally, the third category is the waterfront. This area has changed drastically during the last decades, developing into a “hub” of business and pleasure, where private and commercial interests to a large extent dominate the public spaces.

To explore how architecture can accommodate for unexpected encounters in different urban situations in the city, I have developed a meeting point at three different parking lots within each category.

The first site is Monrads gate 3, situated in the neighborhood. The second site is St. Olavs gate 21 in the midst of the city center. Lastly, the third site is at Vippetangen, a central part of the waterfront that is yet to be developed. I call them the front yard, the street and the square.



# The Front Yard

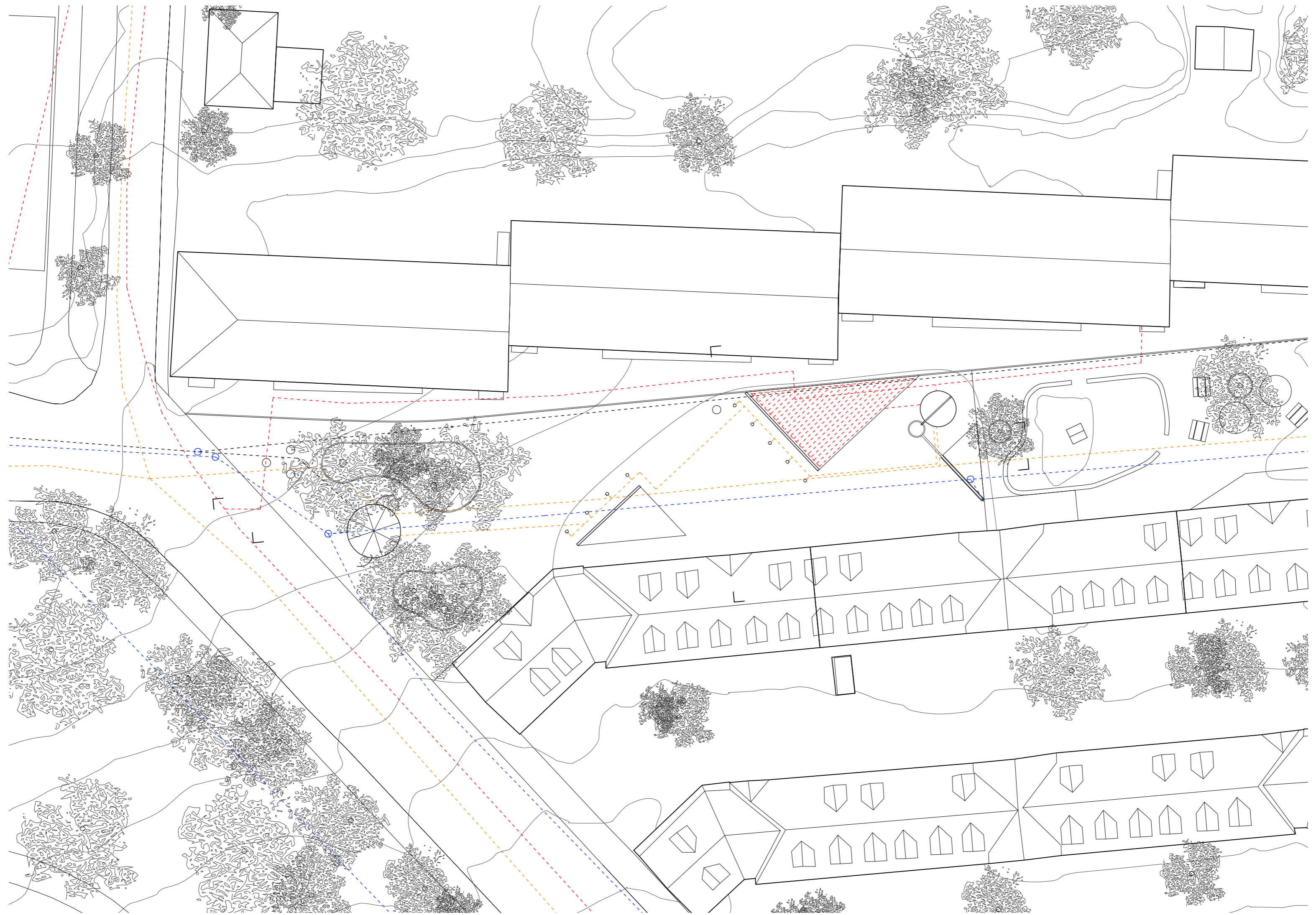
*The yard in front of a house; between the house and the street.*

The front yard functions as a filter between the public space of the street and the private space of the home. It is situated in-between two housing complexes, one with living rooms facing the yard and one with entrances connected to it. Low granite walls, varying from 1,4 to 0,9 meter height, guide the movement through the space framing entrances to one of the housing blocks, leaving that which is on the other side somewhat unrevealed, yet allowing an overview. Connected to the walls, there are lighting and granite platforms in different sizes. These are not benches, not beds, not stages, but could be all three.

In the north, in the most public part of the plot, there is a space that facilitates public urination in-between large, old trees, lighting up the surroundings. In the other end of the plot, the more private part, there is drinking water that also could be used to fill a watering can or to wash a bike. Here, there is also a technical room illuminating this part of the plot. In this small building there is a heating exchanger connected to district heating, providing waterborne heat from the district heating system to pipes going through the largest platform.

During the warmer half of the year, the front yard fills the whole plot, while during winter, snow constitutes an additional wall, shrinking the space to concentrate around the heated platform. To guide surface water, the terrain is slightly altered, ensuring water to flow towards the trees and grass at the site.



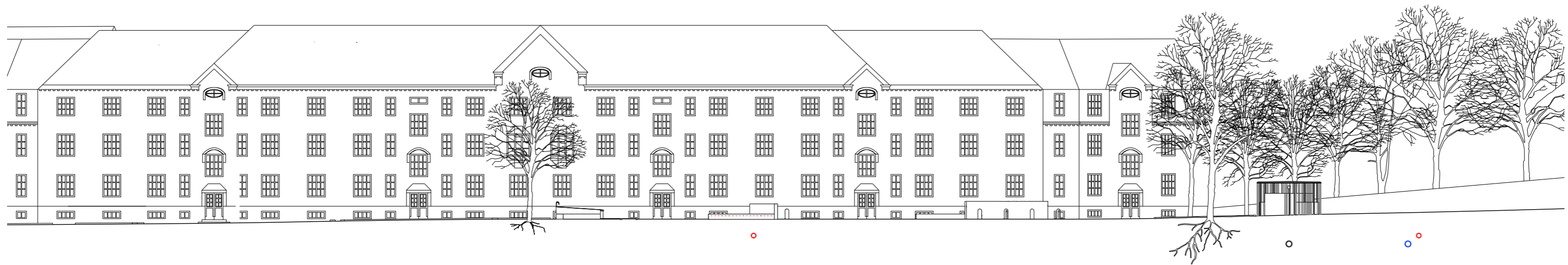




The front yard

The stone walls

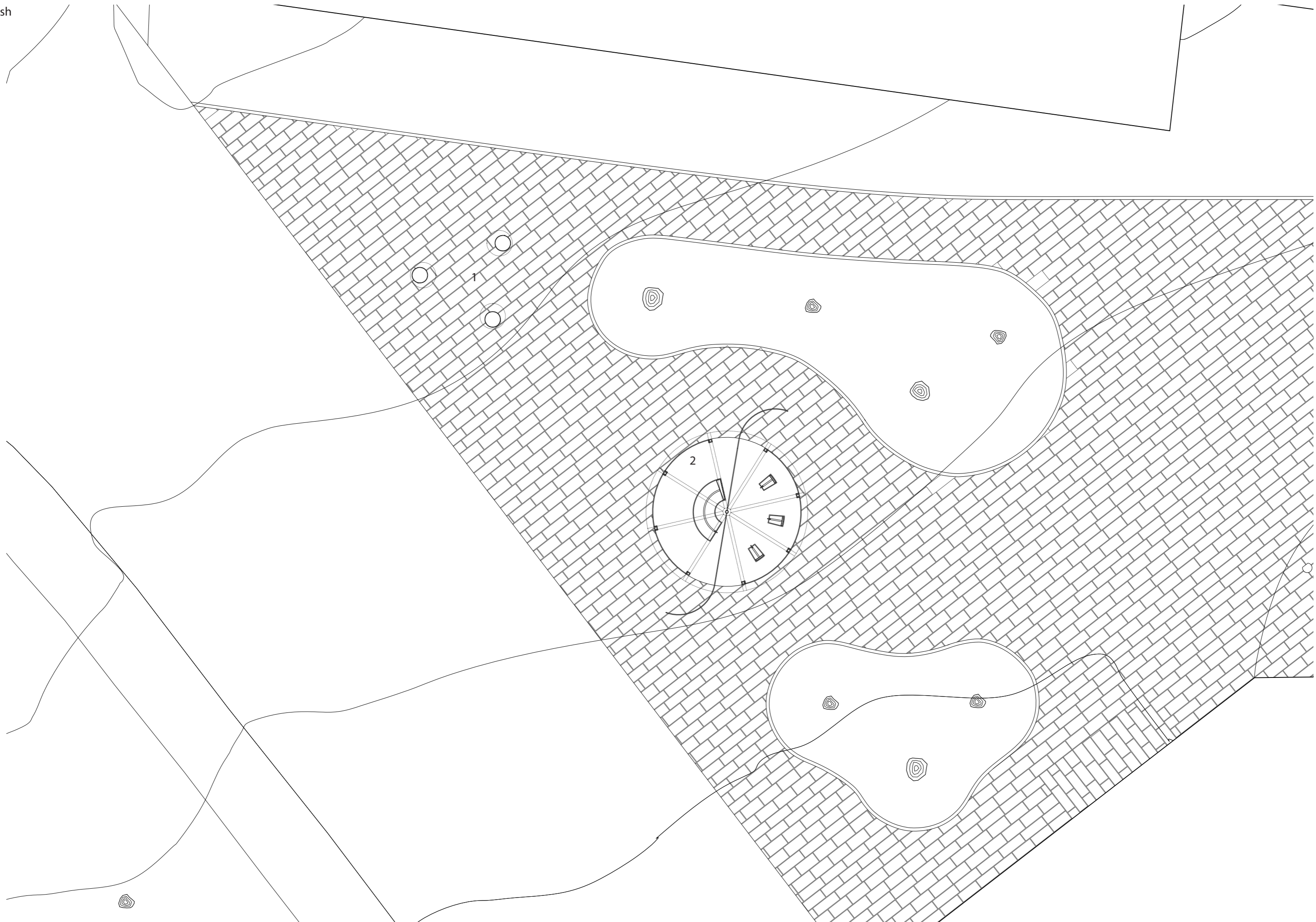


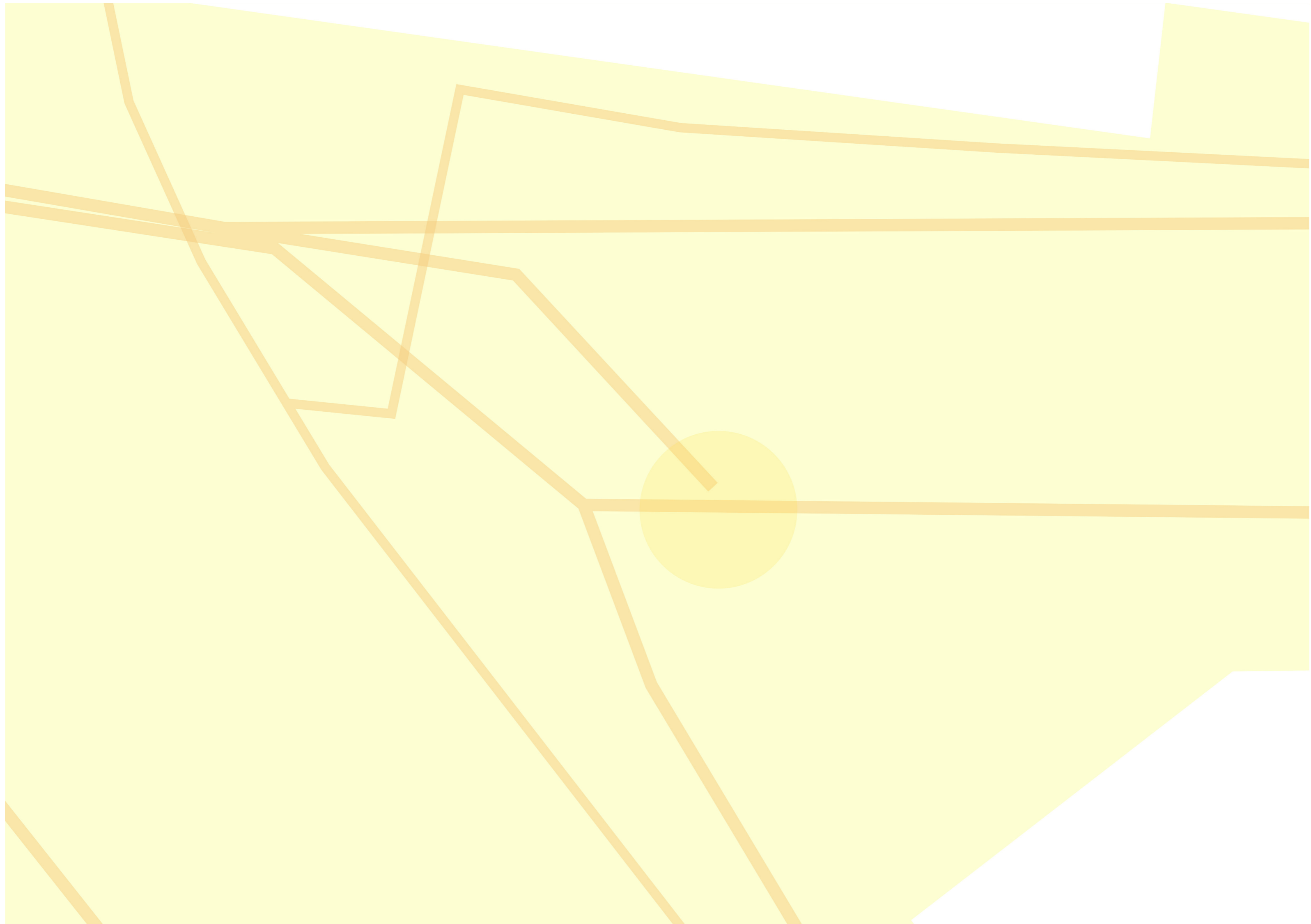






1 Garbage can tables  
2 Constructed bush









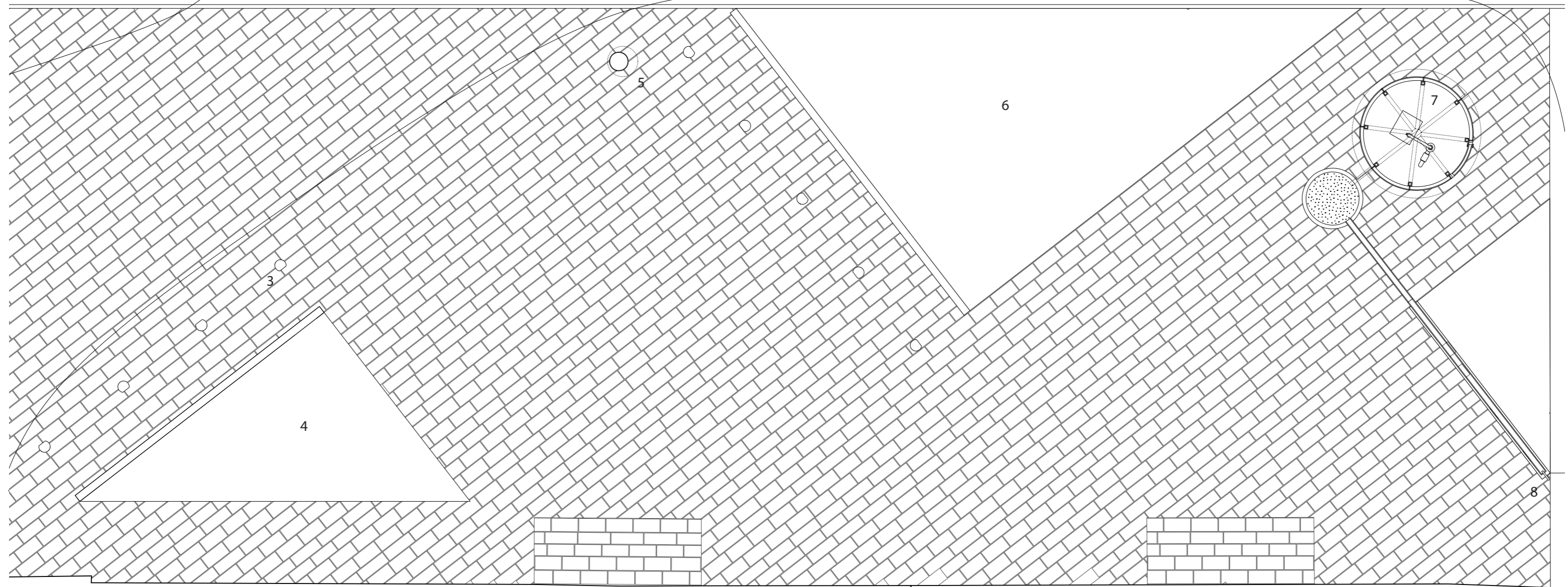


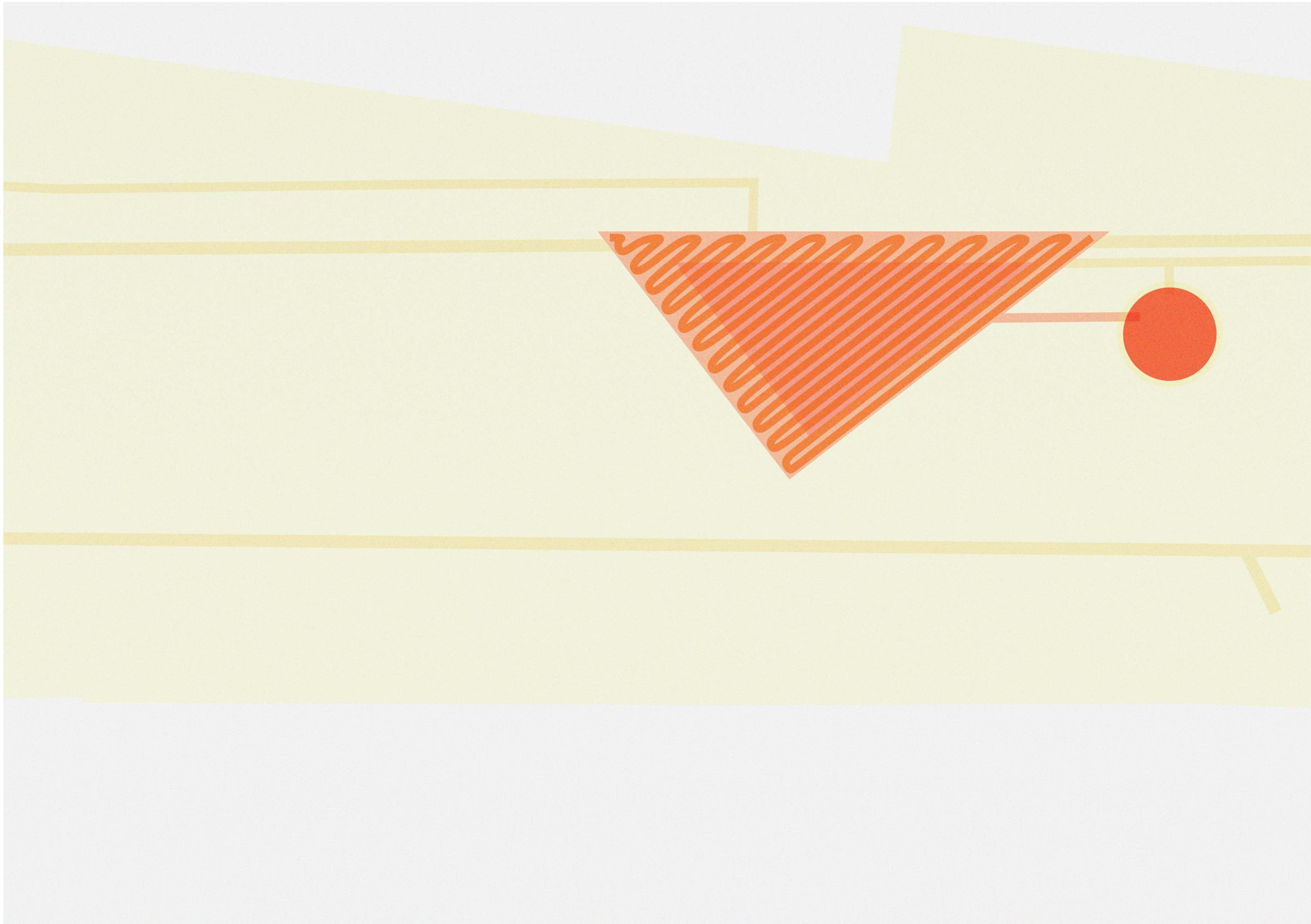
Guiding movement



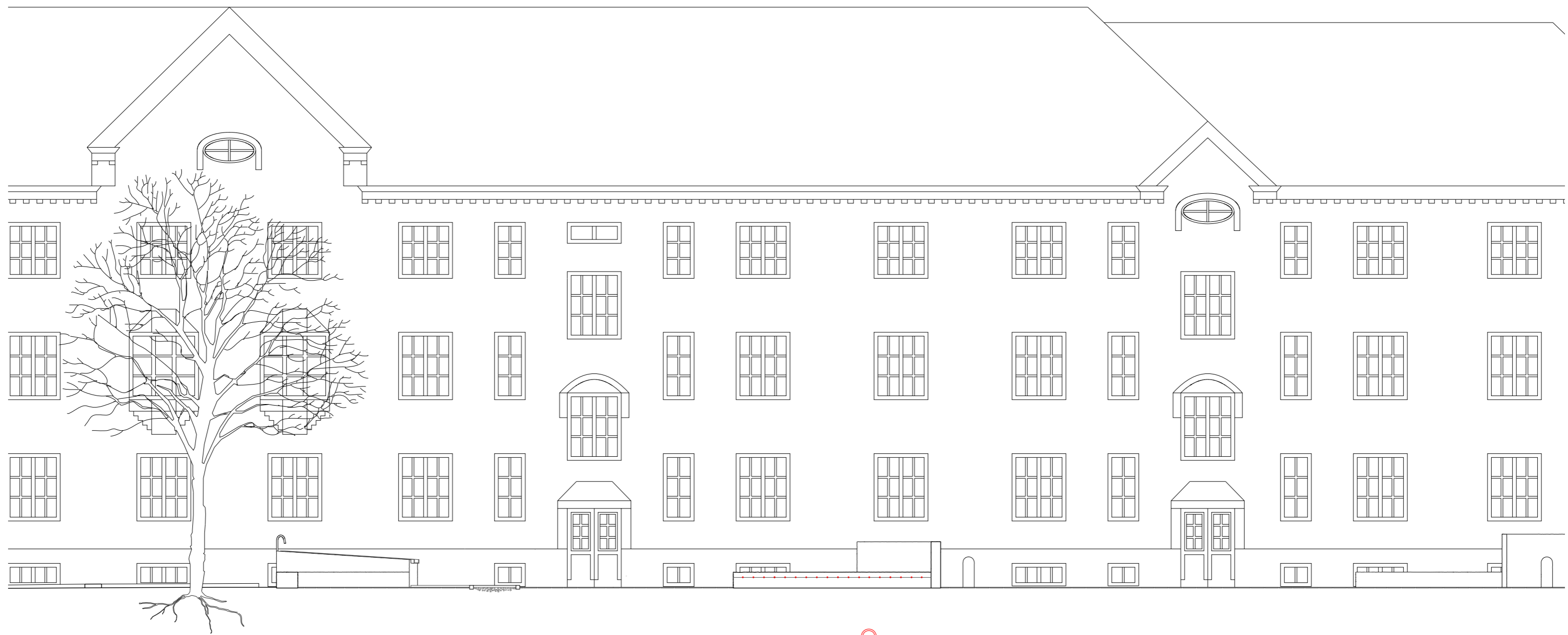


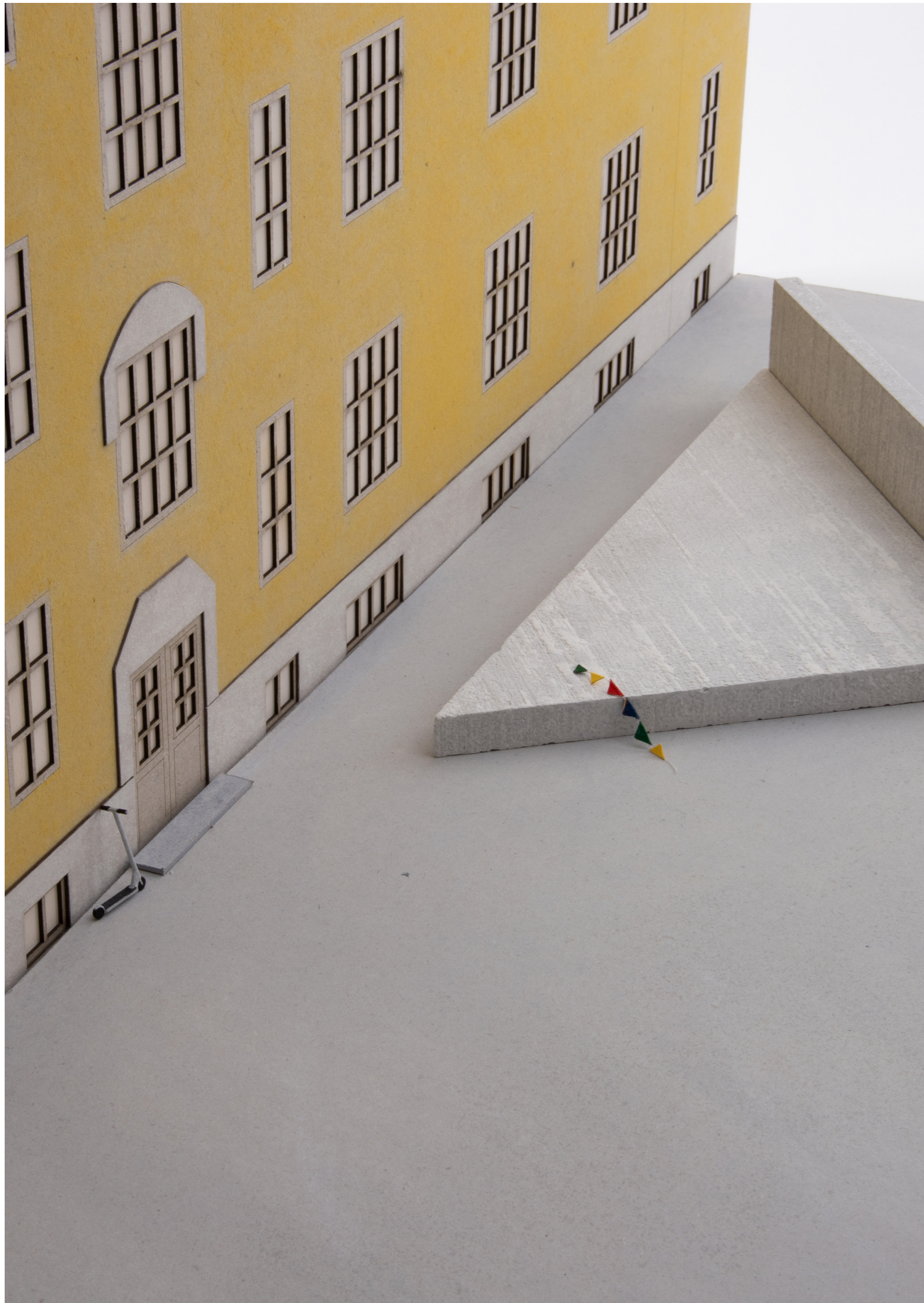
- 3 Illuminating seats
- 4 Platform
- 5 Garbage can table
- 6 Heated platform
- 7 Technical lantern
- 8 The tap (drinking water)



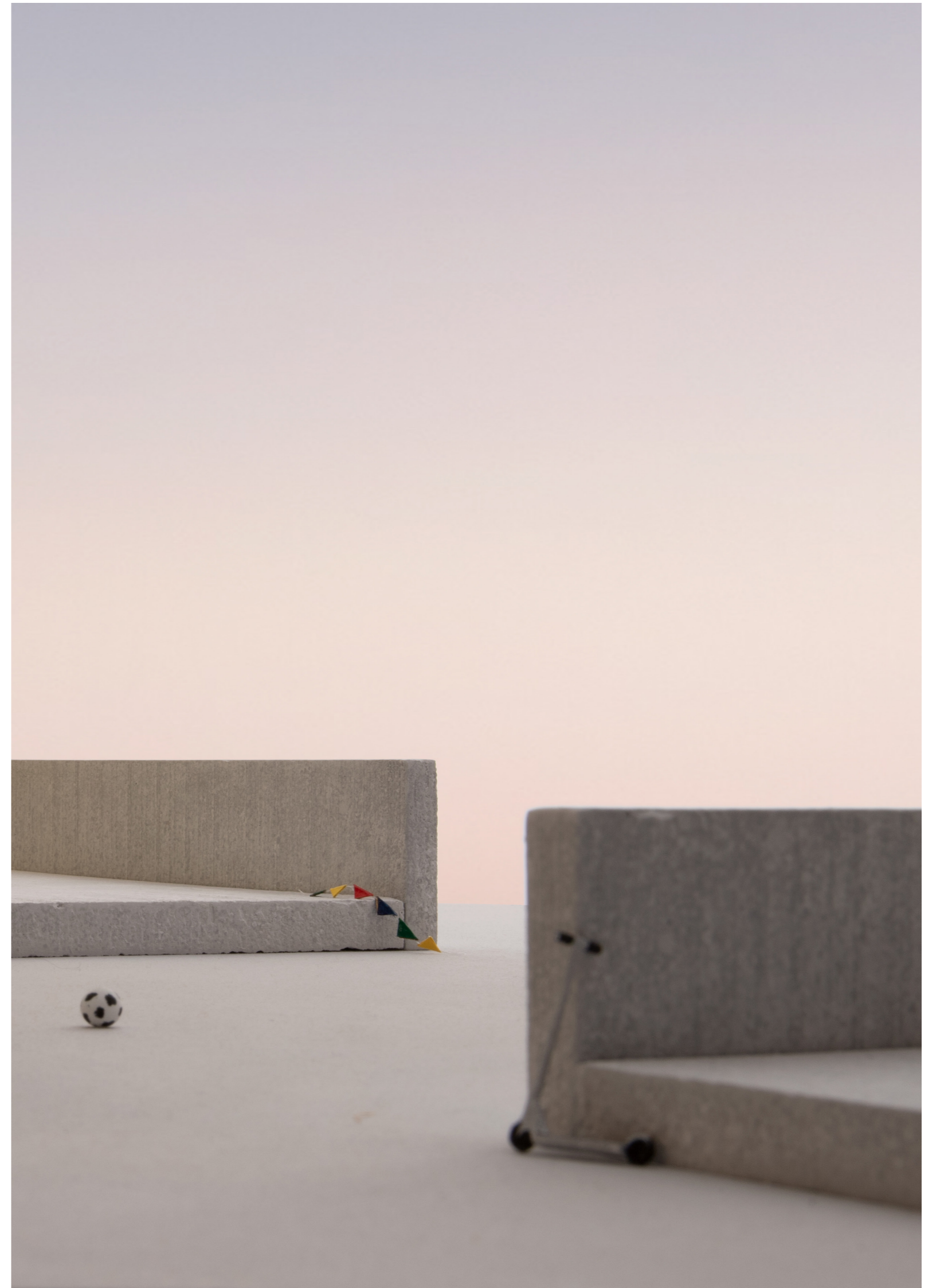








Framing the entrances





# The Street

*A public thoroughfare.*

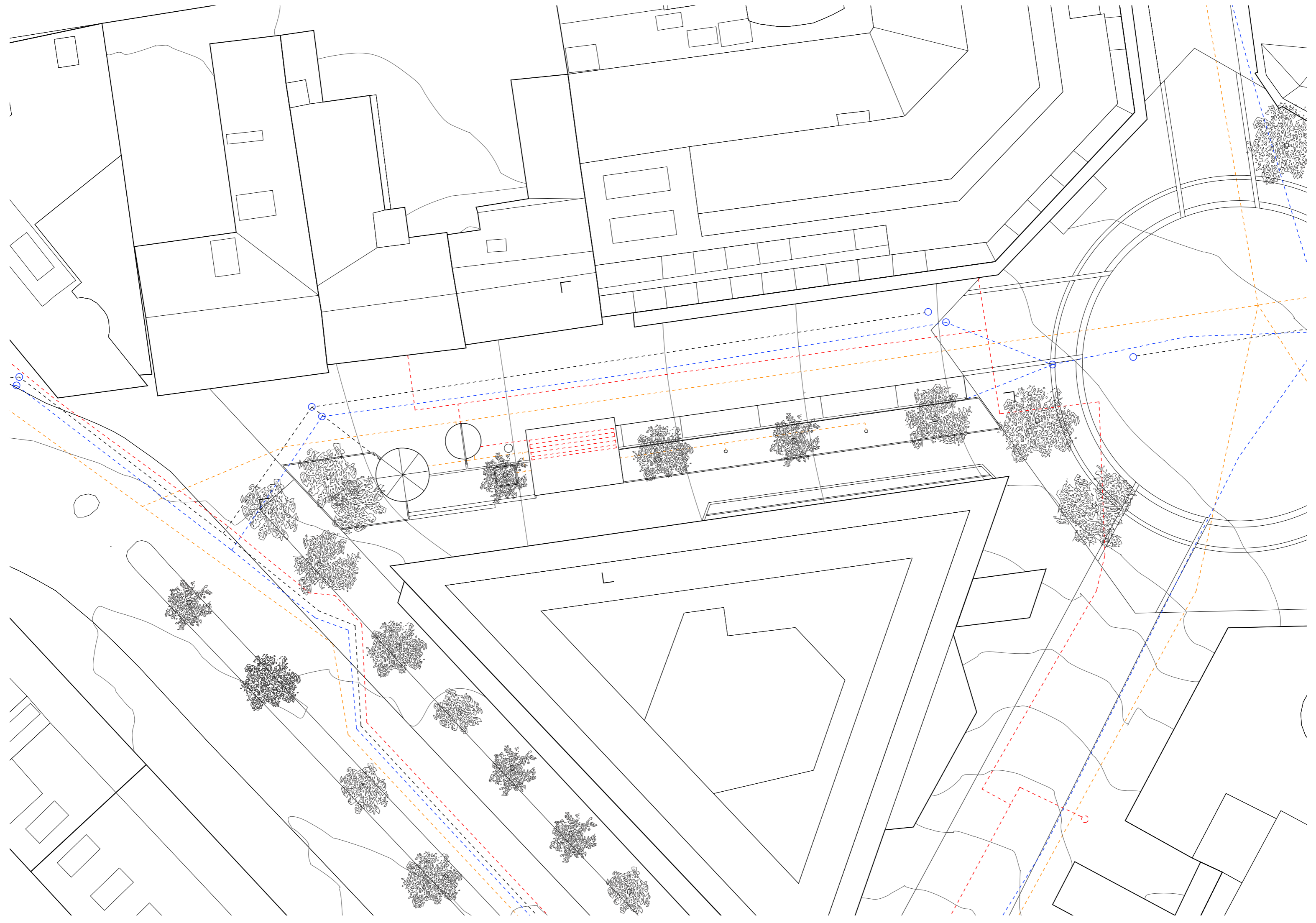
The street is a connector in the city, a place to both pass through and to hang out. The plot is sloping, going from the lively St. Olavs square in the east to the heavily trafficked Ring 1 in the west. The street was originally established to have a direct connection between the Royal Palace and the St. Olav church. Over the years this connection has diminished, and the project is therefore concerned with strengthening the movement through the street, from one point to another.

The architectural interventions are concentrated in the middle of the street, where there already are existing trees dividing it. The southern part of the street is narrower, while the northern part is wider, more open and active, with architectural elements connecting directly to it. A long granite platform follows the street from the square, down to the lower part of the plot. Connected to drinking water at the top part, it leads the water through the plot, down to a space where the water can be peed in before it goes down to the public sewage system.

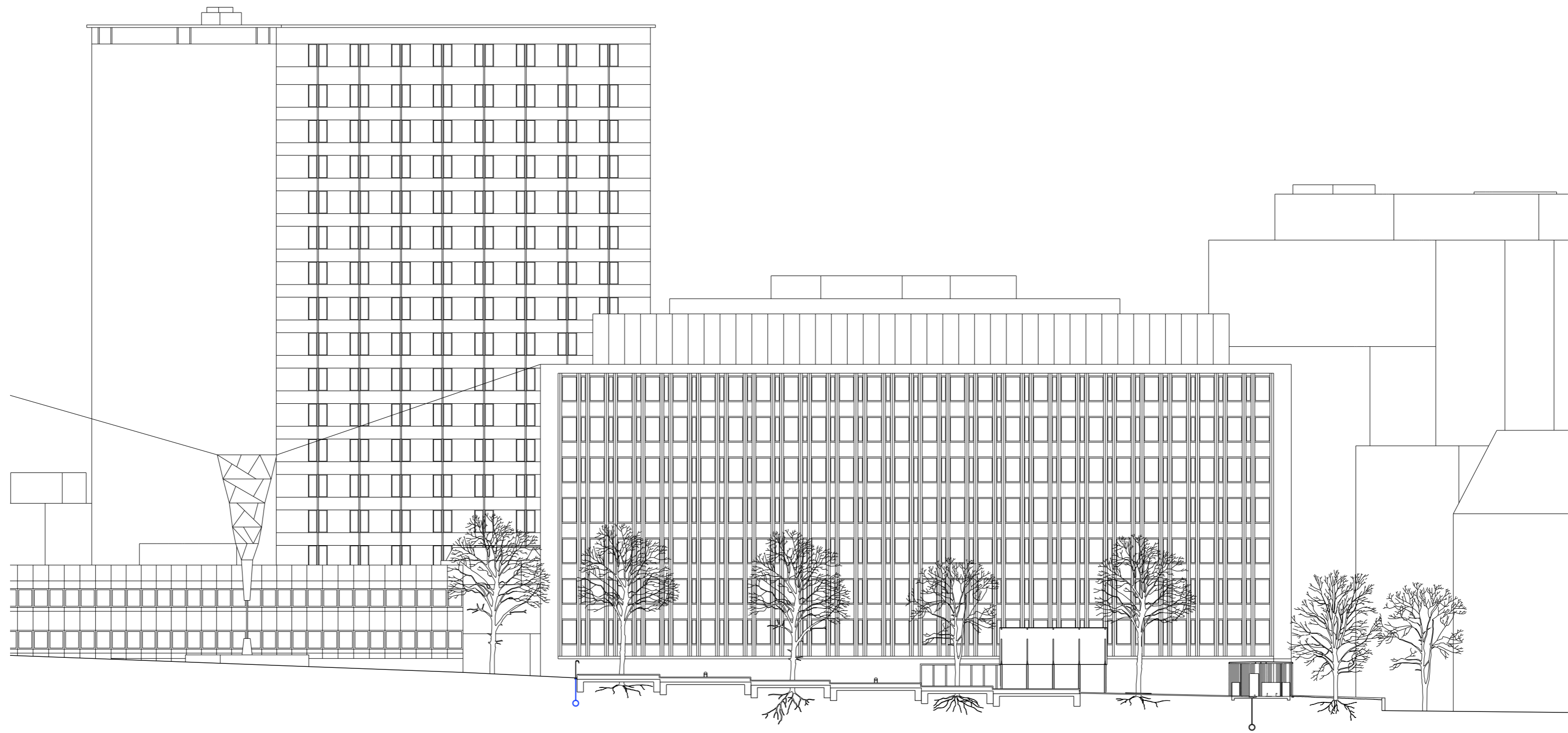
At this part of the plot there is also a roof, a stationary public umbrella. The steel roof stands on steel columns with glass fiber walls in-between the columns. Hanging from the roof on two sides are steel chains leading rainwater to gutters and providing a filter between the street and the space under the roof. This space is divided in two, but the glass fiber panels allow one to see shadows of what is happening on the other side of the wall. On one side you have the platform which is heated by waterborne heating pipes, while the other side is more open, with four illuminating elements that that you can lean on. This side is directly illuminated, while the space on the other side of the wall is indirectly lighted by the same elements. A technical room between the roof and the space to pee in also lights up this part of the plot.

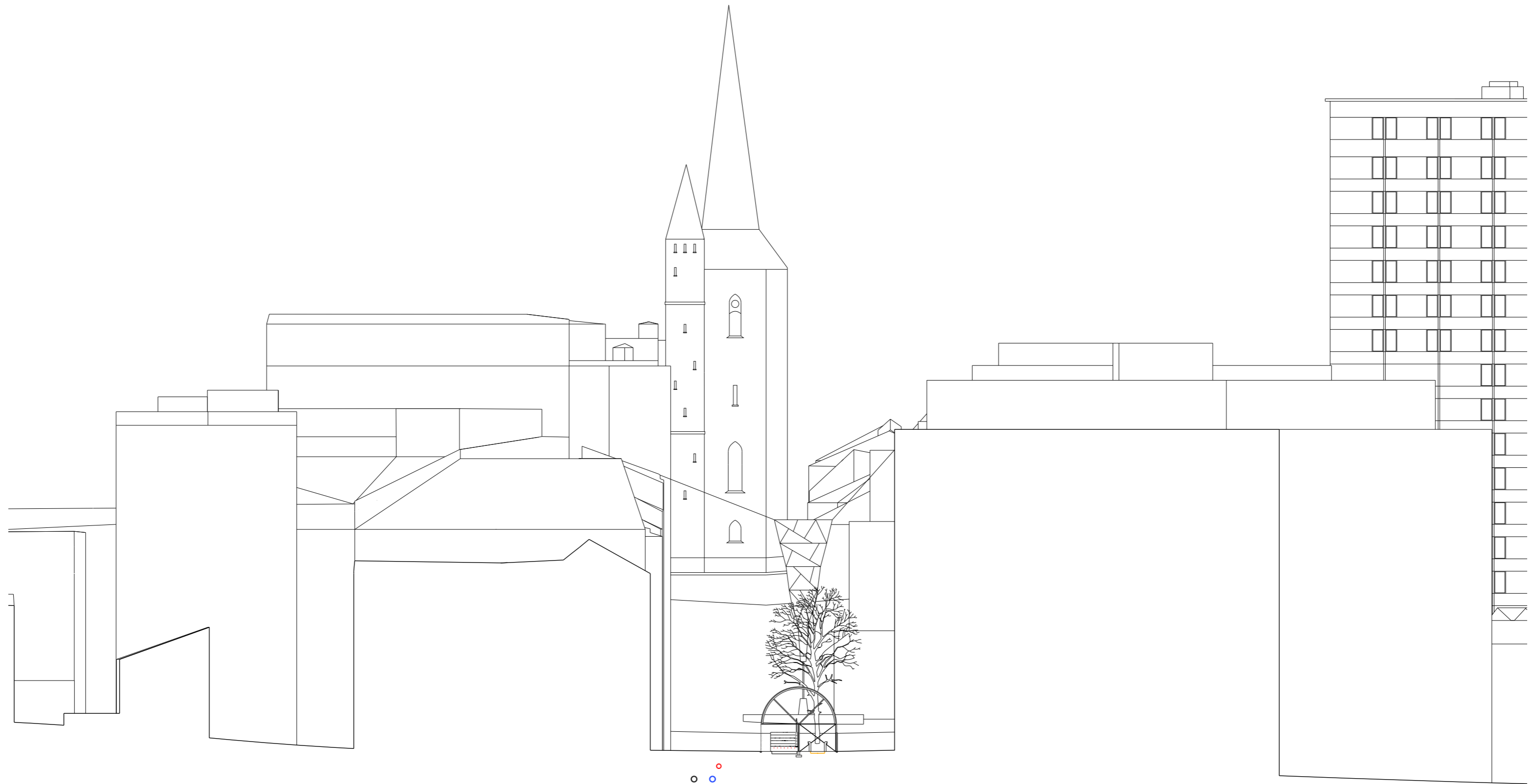
Surface water is led to the trees and other greeneries on the plot. The platform has foundations that span over the roots of the trees, allowing water to pass through under the platform, to the trees.



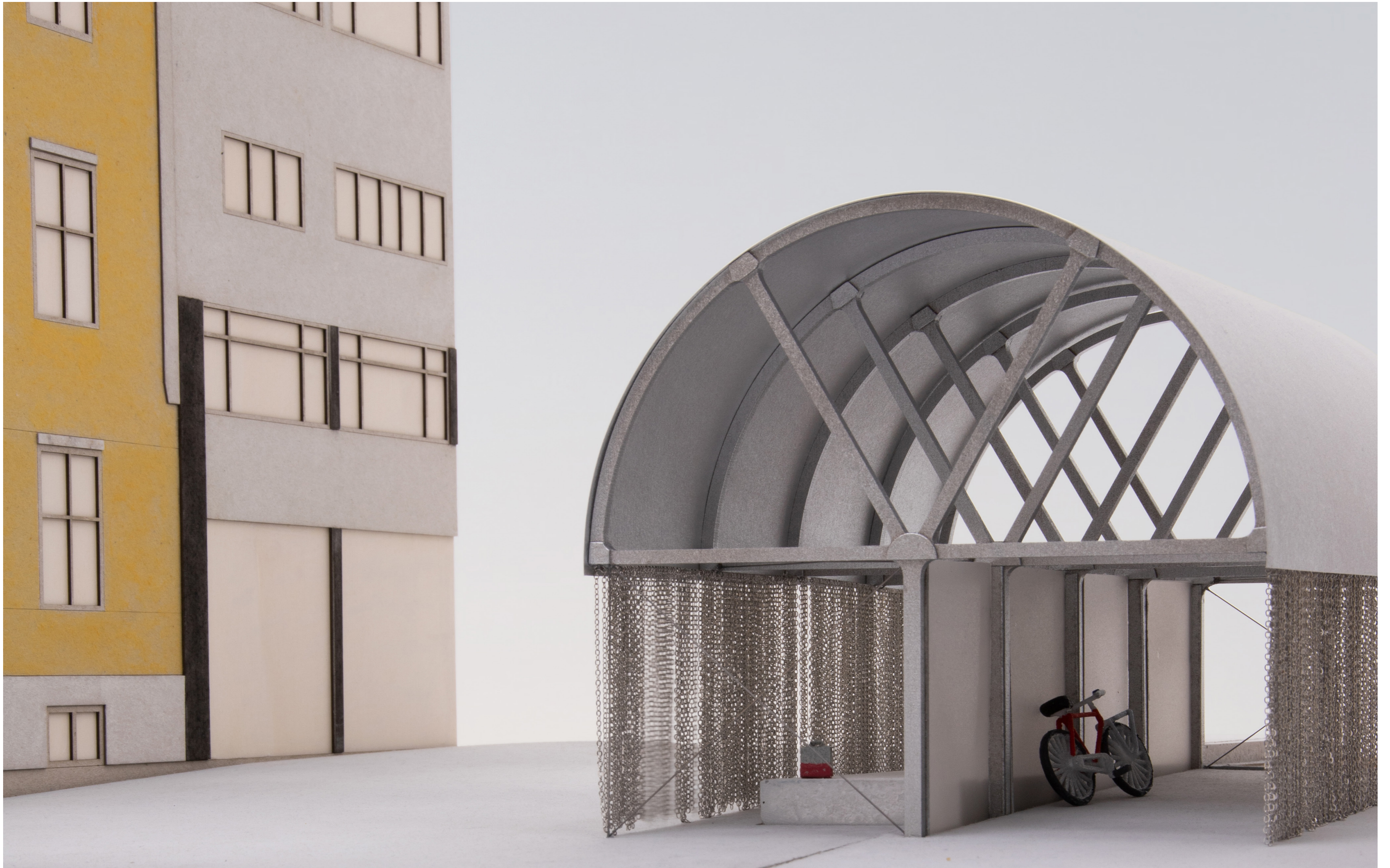








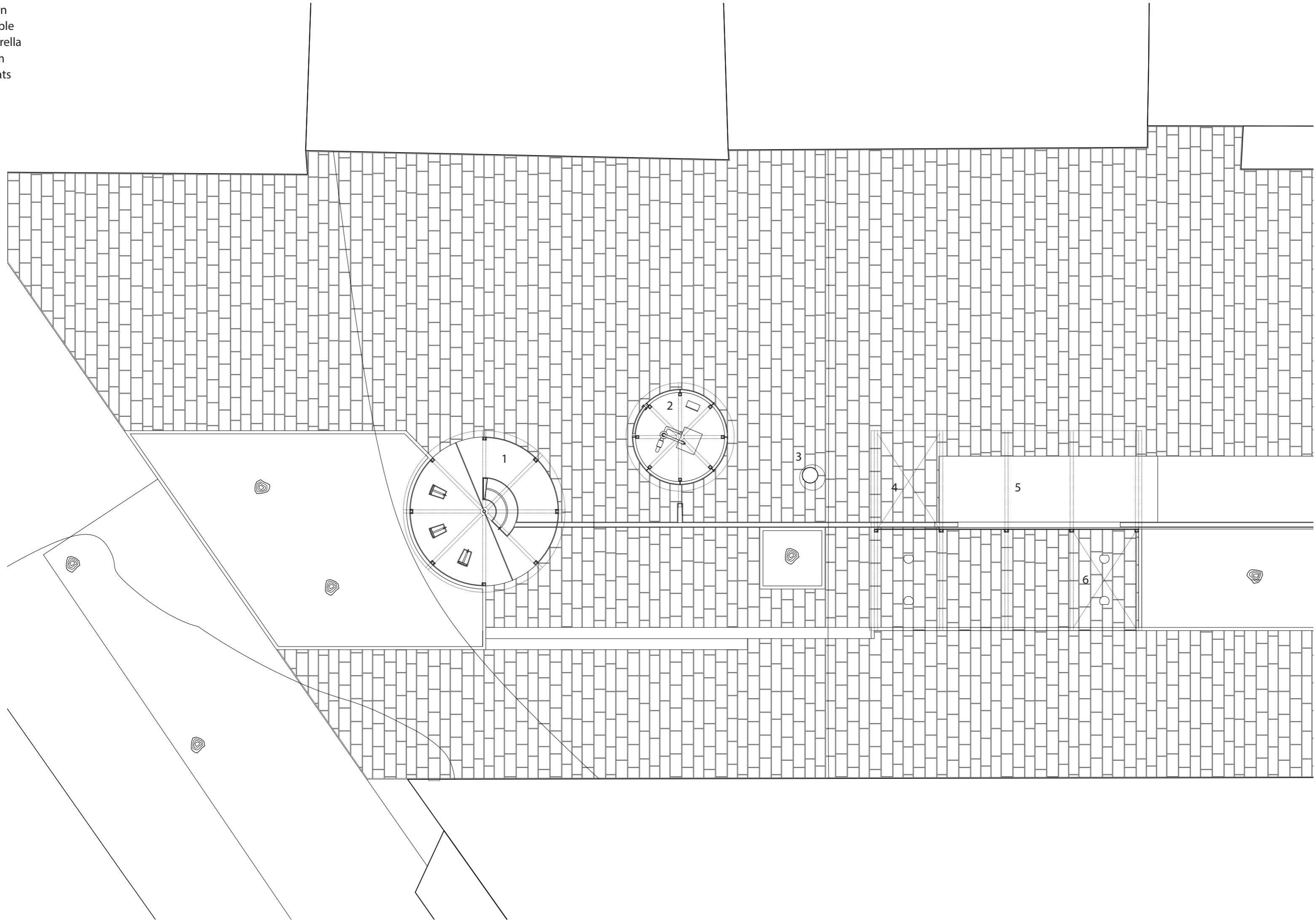
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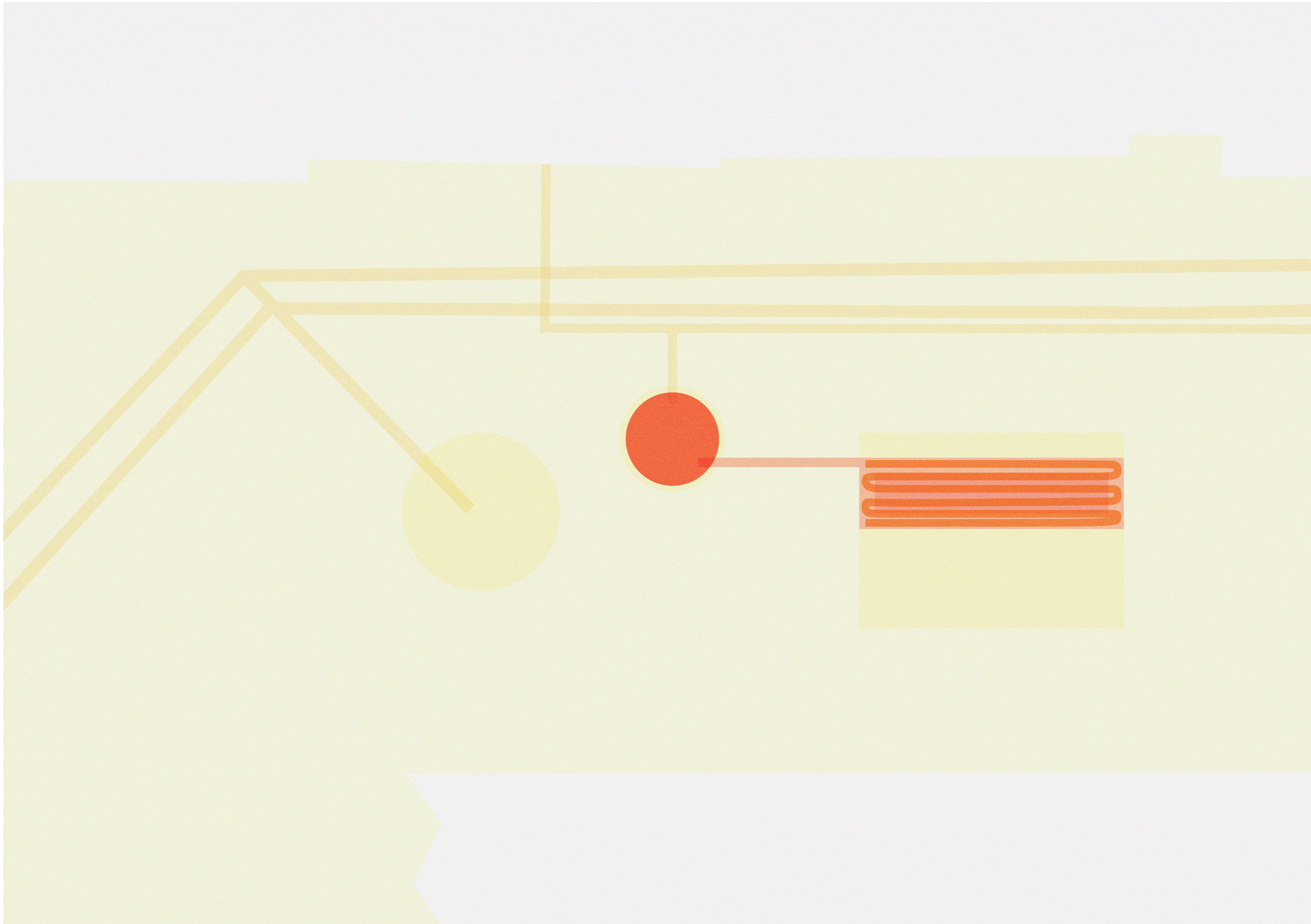


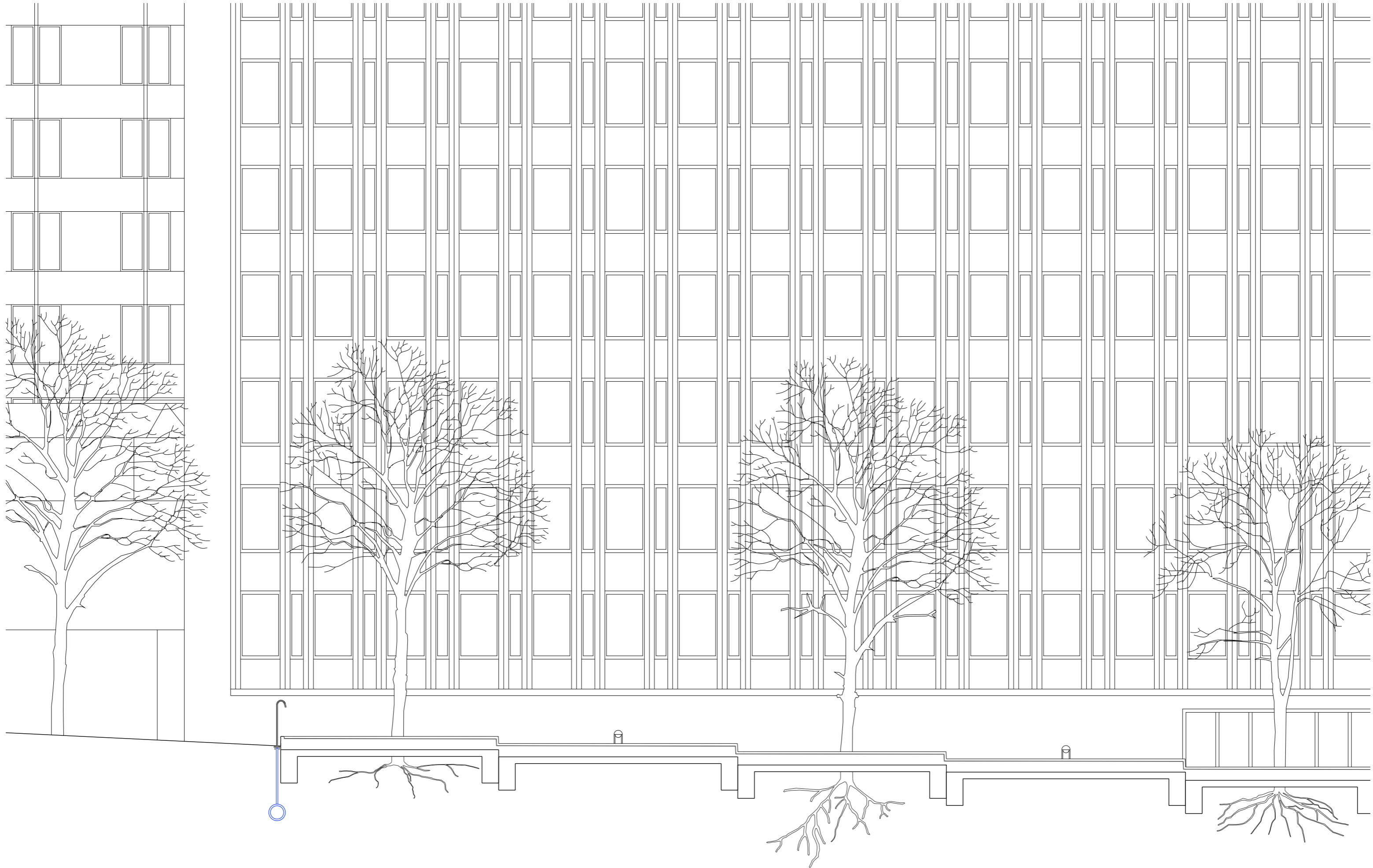
The street

The chains as a filter

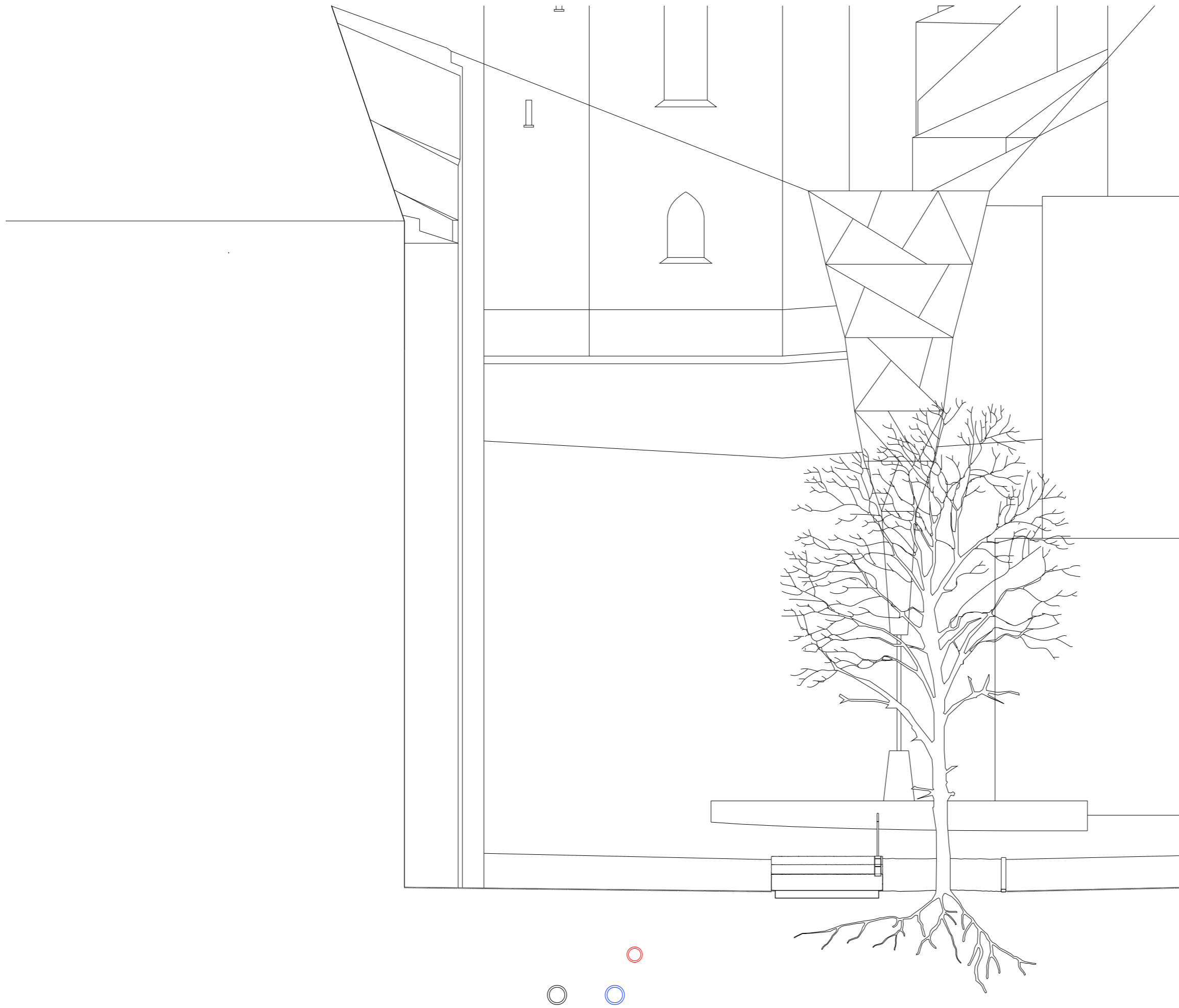
- 1 Constructed bush
- 2 Technical lantern
- 3 Garbage can table
- 4 Stationary umbrella
- 5 Heated platform
- 6 Illuminating seats





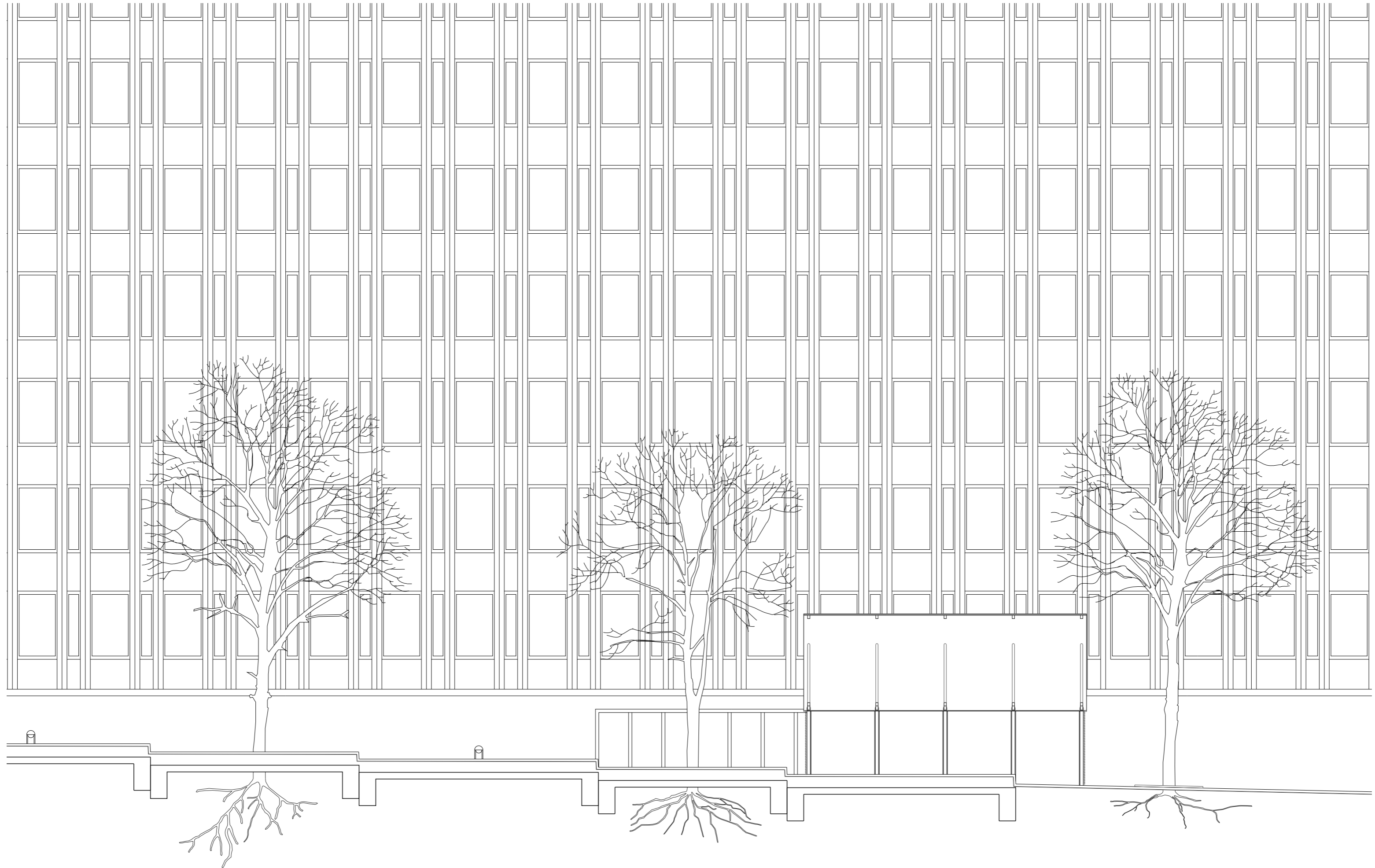


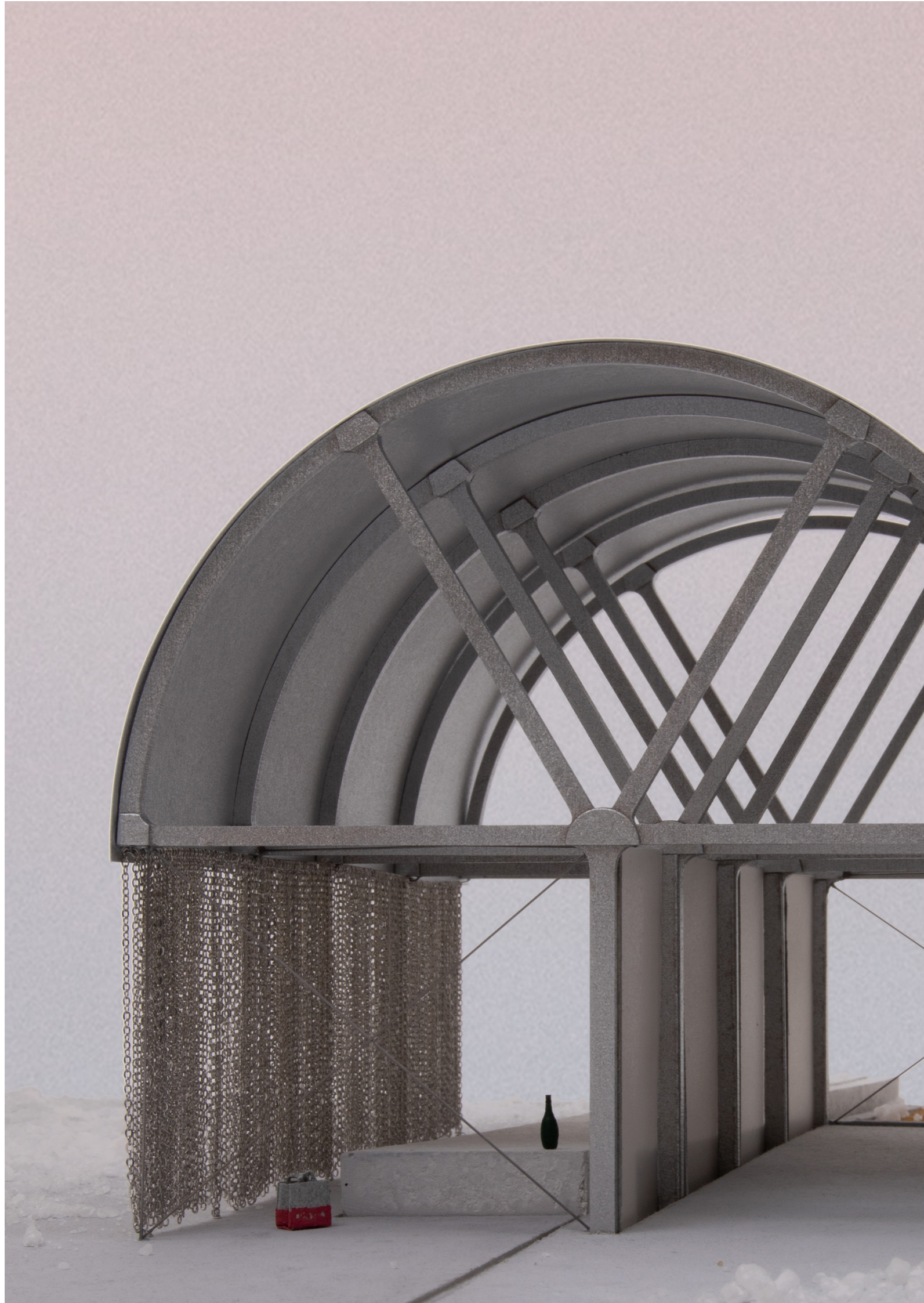




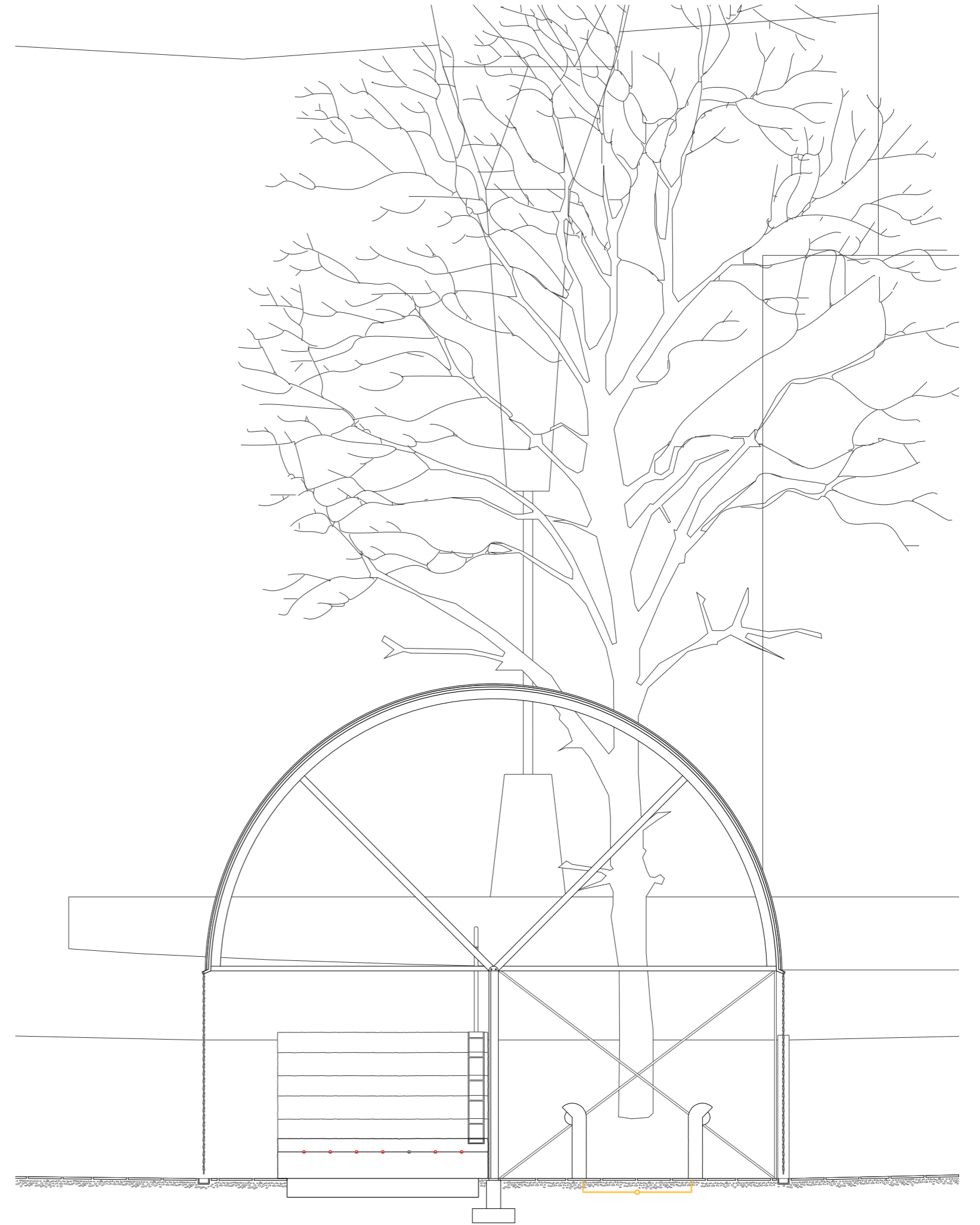








The snow as an additional delimitation of the space



# The Square

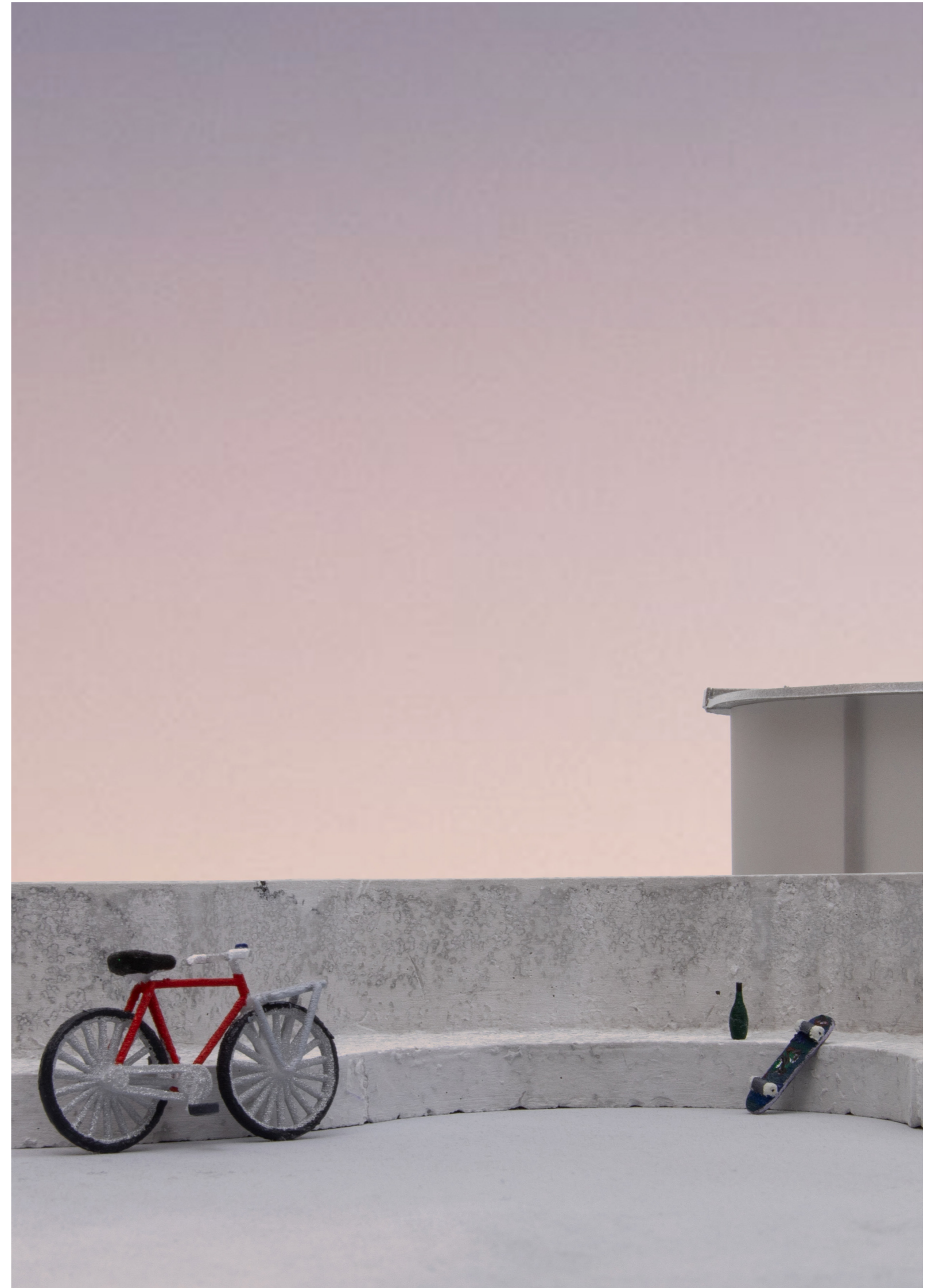
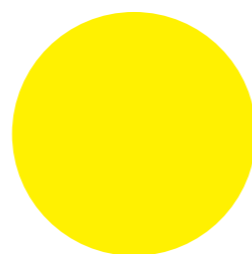
*An open public area where people gather.*

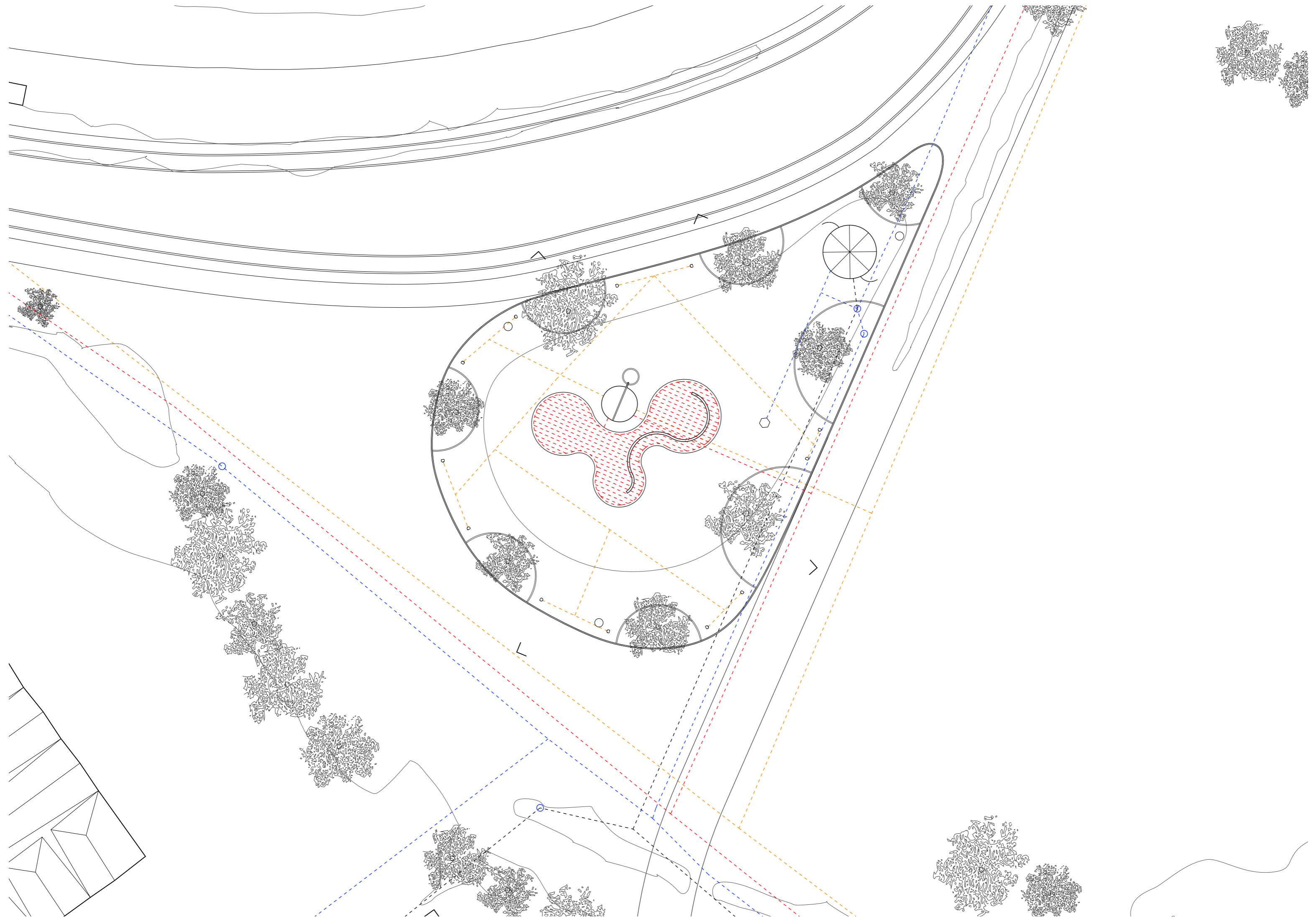
This intervention is based on a future scenario of Vippetangen, where this last part of the central waterfront is developed with district heating and an extended cruise terminal on the east side of the area. The planned development is not clear yet, but in all scenarios it seems that the vastness of the earlier port will remain. A new tram line will pass on the upper side of the plot while the harbor promenade goes by on the other side. With this as a starting point, the project cultivates the open character of the area, centering the architectural interventions.

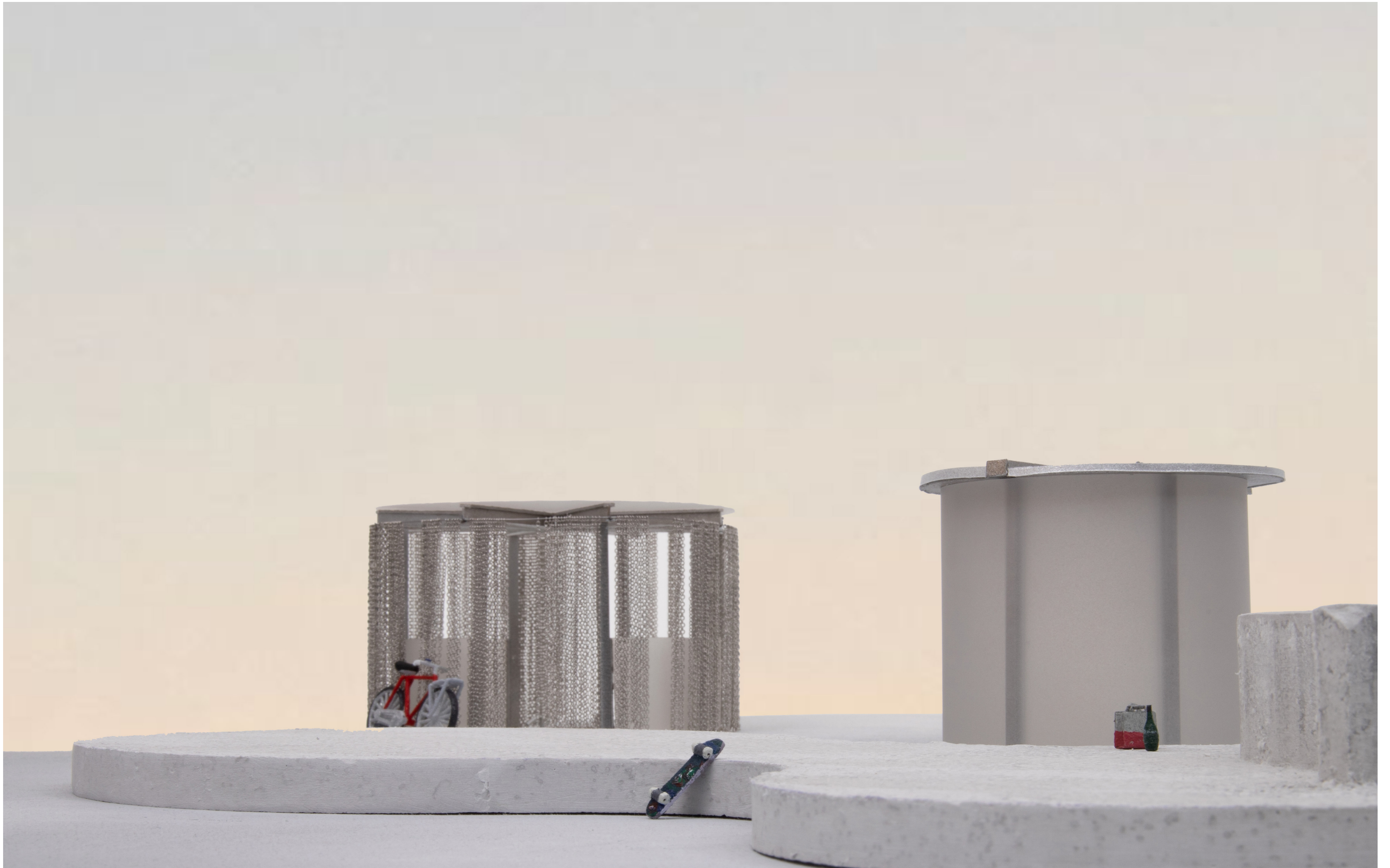
The characteristic form of the plot originates in an earlier tram line transporting grain from the port to the city. This edge is kept, now in the form of a gutter instead of a tram line, and with trees along it, taking care of surface water. A slight alteration in the terrain is made for surface water to flow to this edge.

The central square element consists of a heated granite platform with niches facing the sun, and a granite wall protecting from wind in all celestial directions, in addition to providing shade on warm days. The platform is illuminated by the connected technical room, and activated by a water fountain.

In the northern part of the plot there is a space where one can pee a bit sheltered from the rest of the square. The many entrances to the square ensures that it addresses all sides of the plot equally, which underpins the characteristic vastness of Vippetangen.

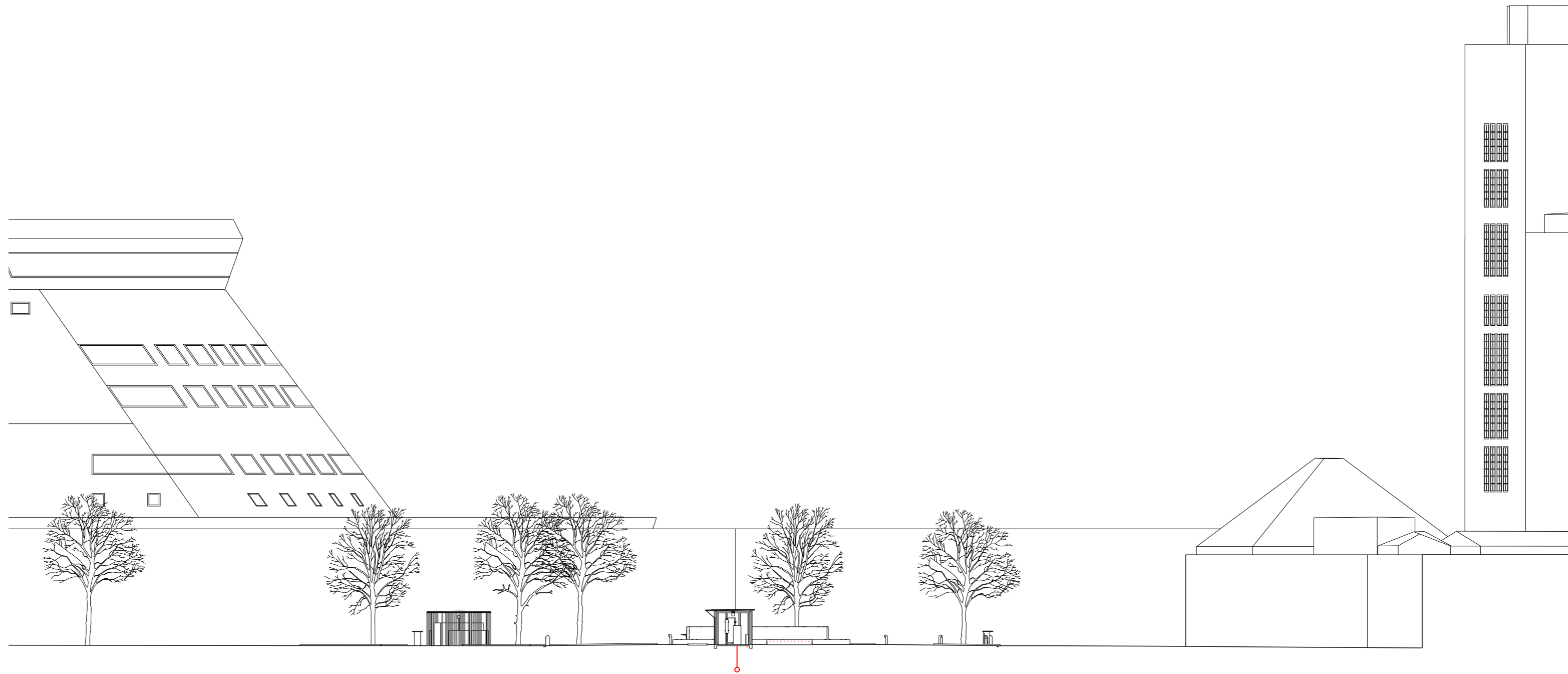


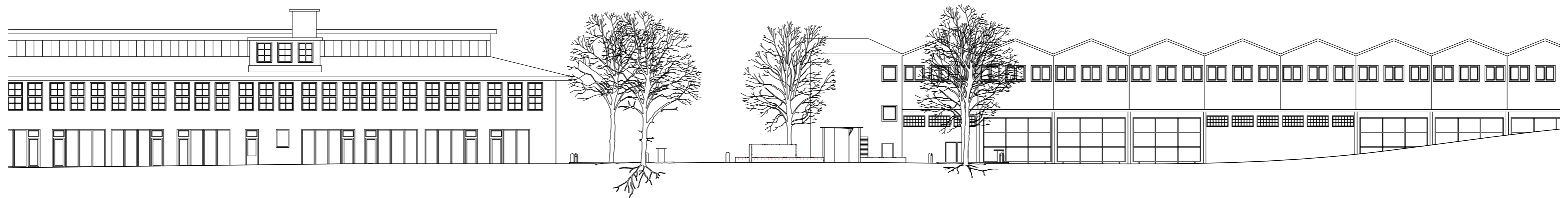




Facilitating peeing in the back

The technical room in relation to the heated platform

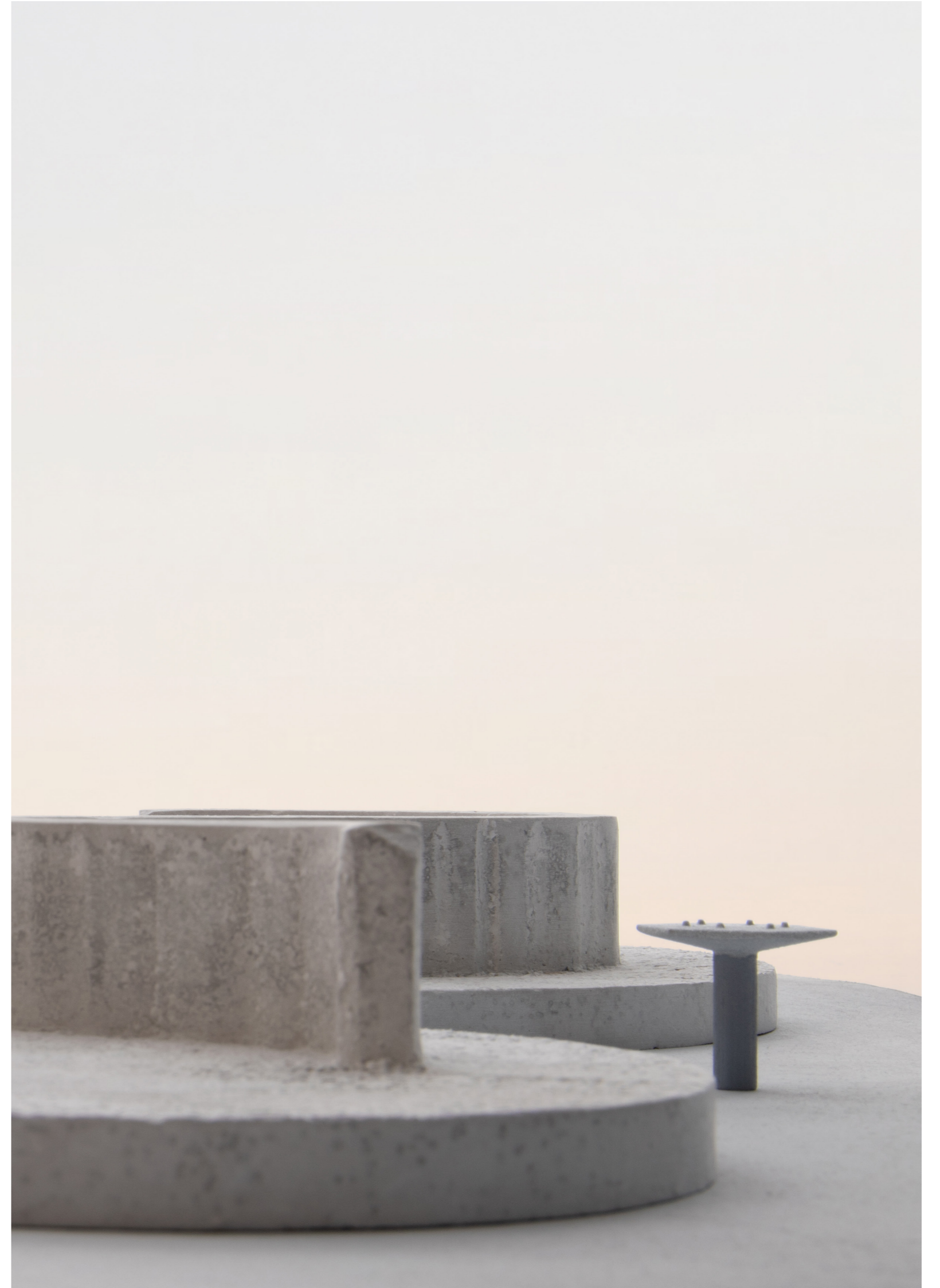






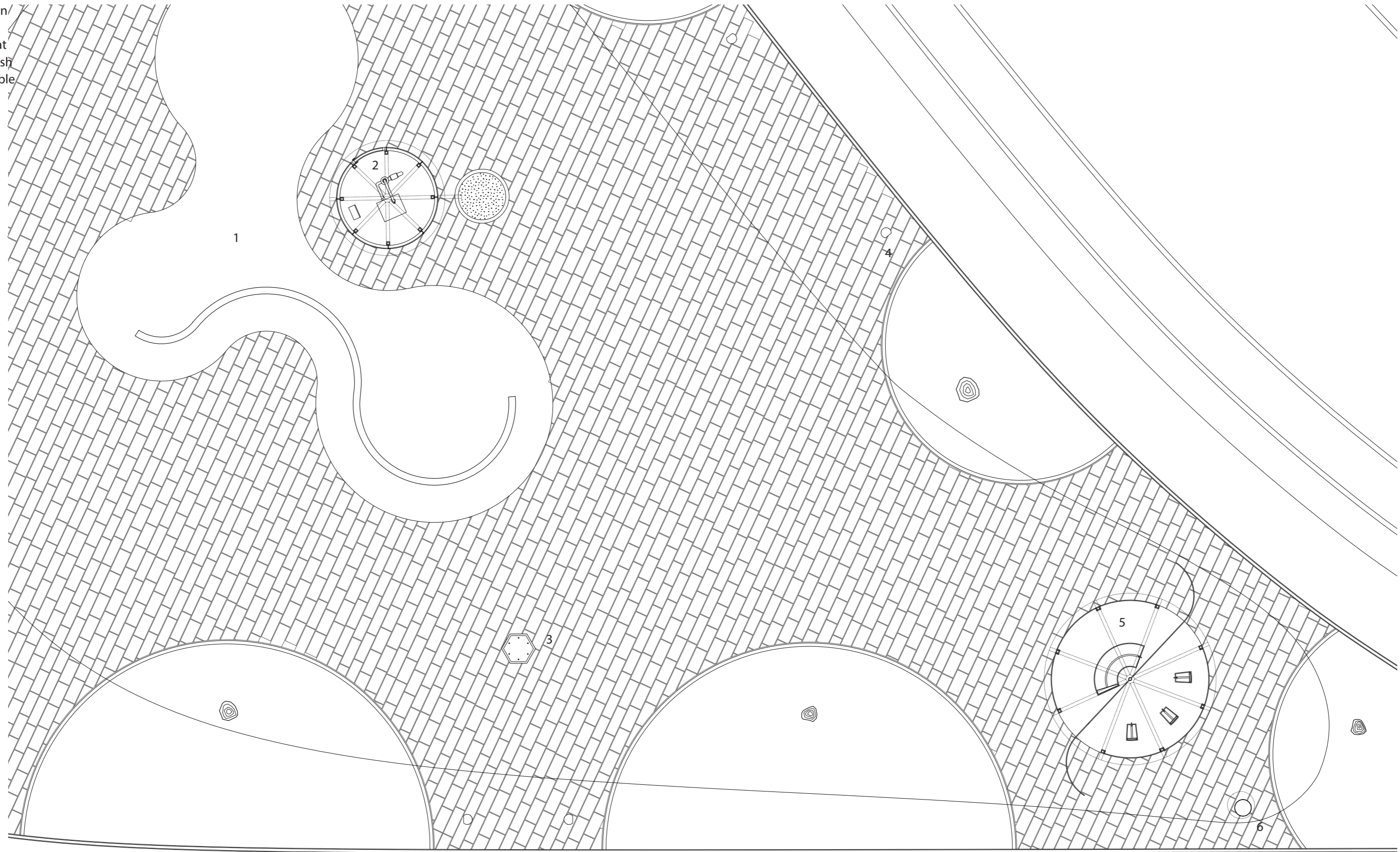


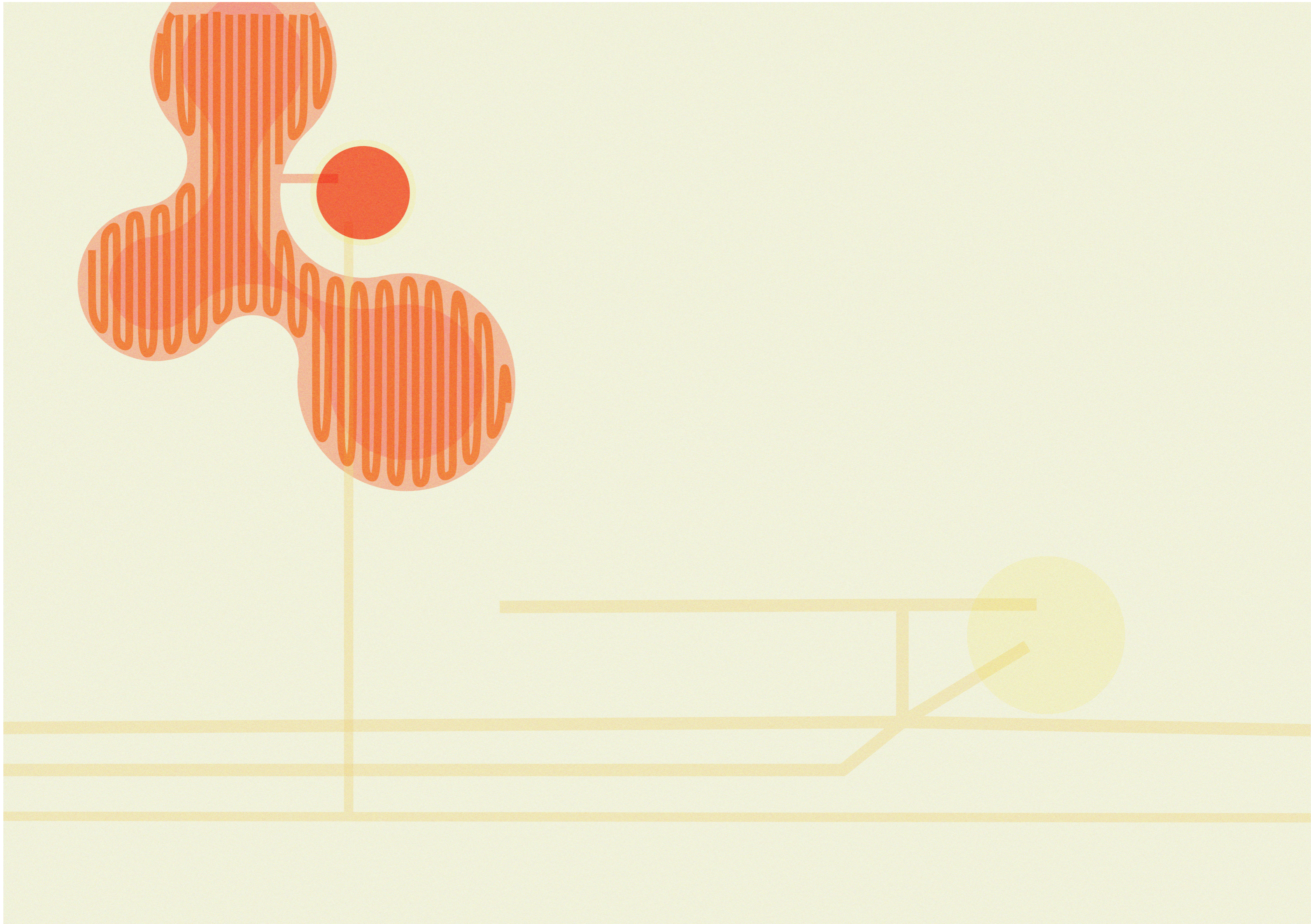
Hint of use



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- 1 Heated platform
- 2 Technical lantern
- 3 Water fountain
- 4 Illuminating seat
- 5 Constructed bush
- 6 Garbage can table



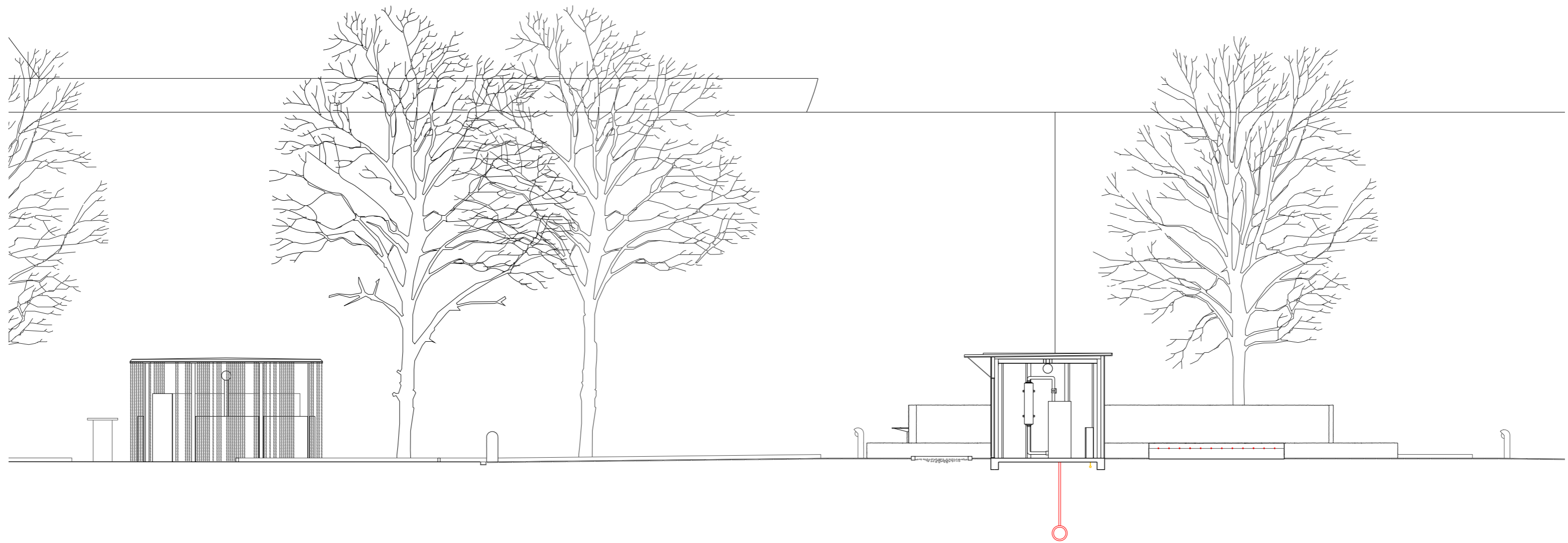




The heated platform and the protecting wall

The garbage can table







Hanging out in the cold

# Public Artefacts

The public artefacts are standard elements that can be mass produced and placed around the city in connection to new public spaces.

*The constructed bush* is a space where one can pee; a man made bush that keeps its leaves throughout the year. It is constructed of steel columns and beams, with 1,2 meter tall glass fiber walls and a glass fiber roof. A steel rail with steel chains is welded to the beams. The chains can be moved around to either close off or open up the space, depending on what makes the person using the space more comfortable.

The space has four water basins, one large one suited for peeing while standing up and three small ones suited for peeing while squatting. The smaller ones have taller water taps which can function as a handle for those whose balance is a bit rough. In squatting position you have your back covered, overview of both entrances and can chat with the person squatting next to you. All basins have small immersions so peers have something to aim at. A 1,8 meter tall steel wall that comes in two different lengths, divides the space so the squatter does not feel surveilled by the standing peer. When no one is peeing the constructed bush is a covered, illuminated outdoor space with running water where you can take a telephone call while waiting for it to stop raining.

*The technical lantern* is a 6,2 square meter isolated room for the heat exchanger connected to the district heating system and for the fuse box enabling electricity to the illuminating elements in the project. It is constructed by steel columns and beams, with a steel roof and glass fiber walls. The construction is insulated with aerogel insulation panels letting light from the inside of the room pass through the walls and illuminate the outdoor surroundings. This way, the important role of the technical infrastructure in the project is underpinned by acting as a lantern in the city.

*The drinking fountain* is made of granite and steel. It is inspired by old drinking fountains that were often found in school yards. Its height of 80 centimeters makes the drinker have to stop and bow down to drink. In addition, the nozzles are connected in such a way that if you hold your finger over one of them, the other ones make higher jets, which can enable play.

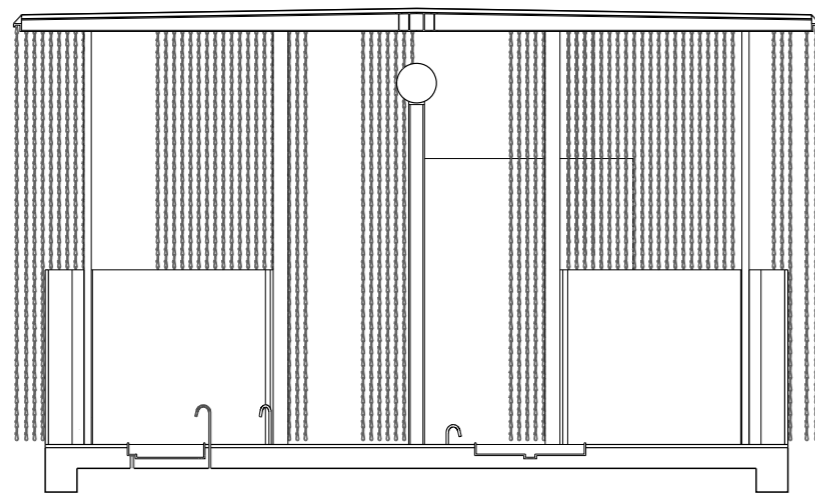
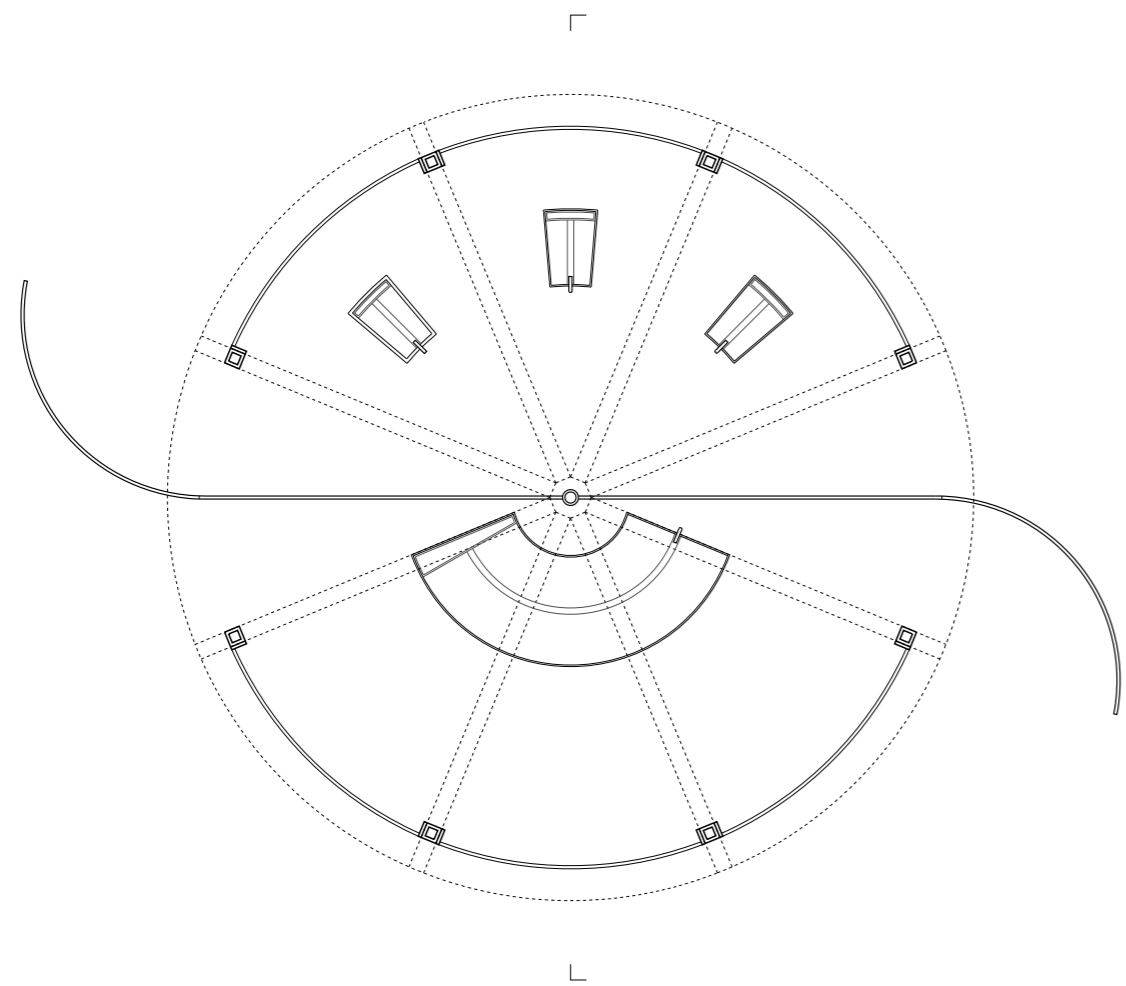
*The tap* is a simple steel tap transporting municipal water to the public surface.

*The garbage can table* consists of a steel bottom and a granite top. The top part is 1,1 meter above ground level, the same height as a bar table. It extends in one direction, while in the opposite direction there is a hole for throwing garbage.

*The illuminating seat*  
The illuminating seat is made of granite and is 80 centimeters tall. It glows at the same time as it constitutes an element that you can lean on.

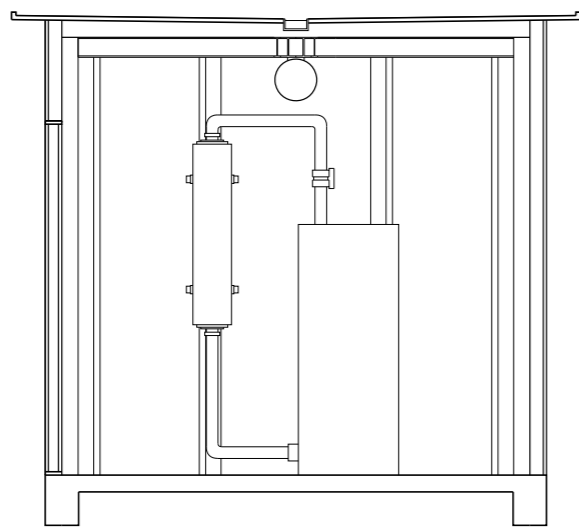
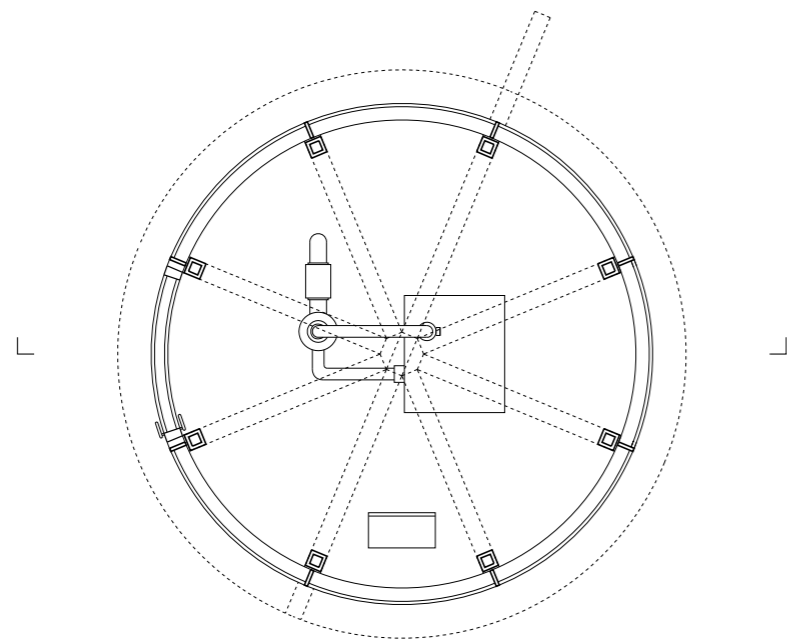






The constructed bush 1:50





The technical lantern 1:50



Model 1:30

