

GATE TO THE SACRED



Master thesis project in architecture

Autumn 2013

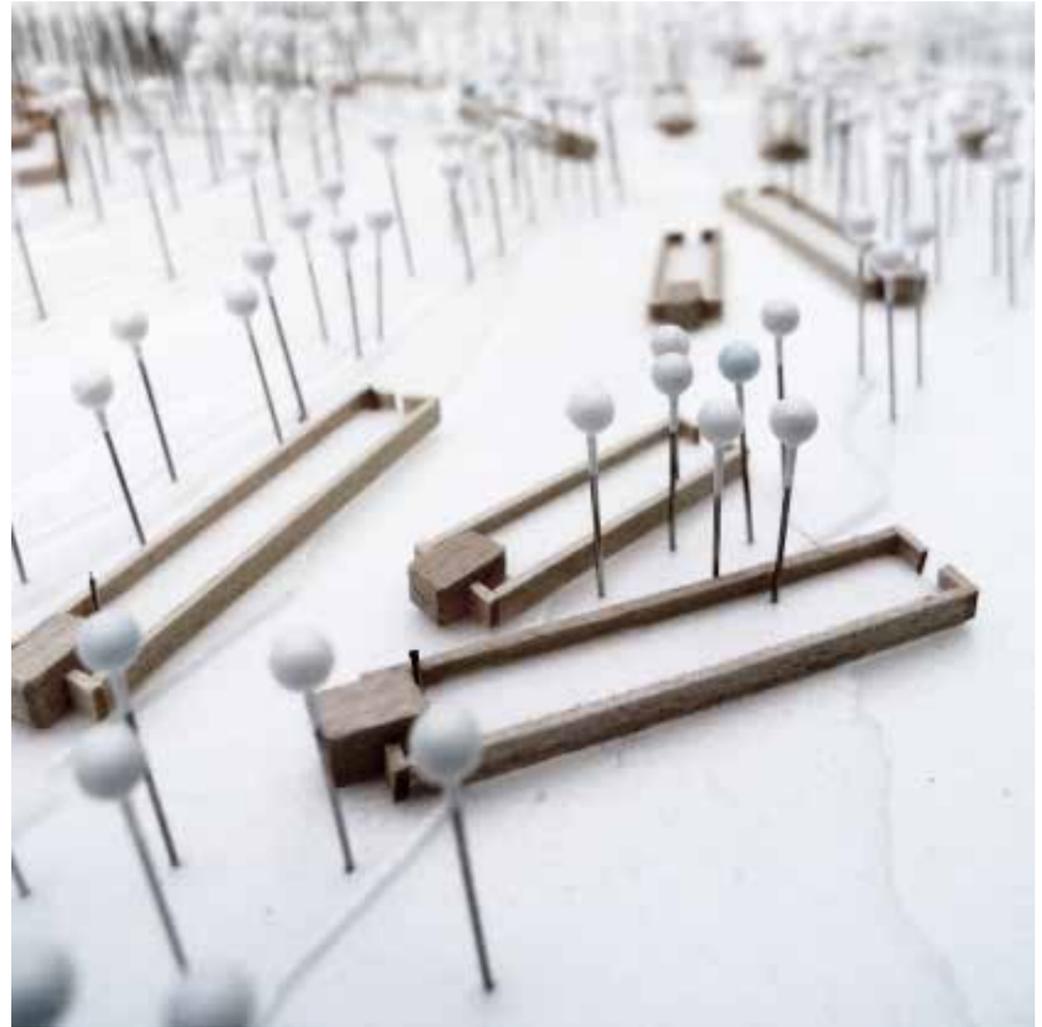
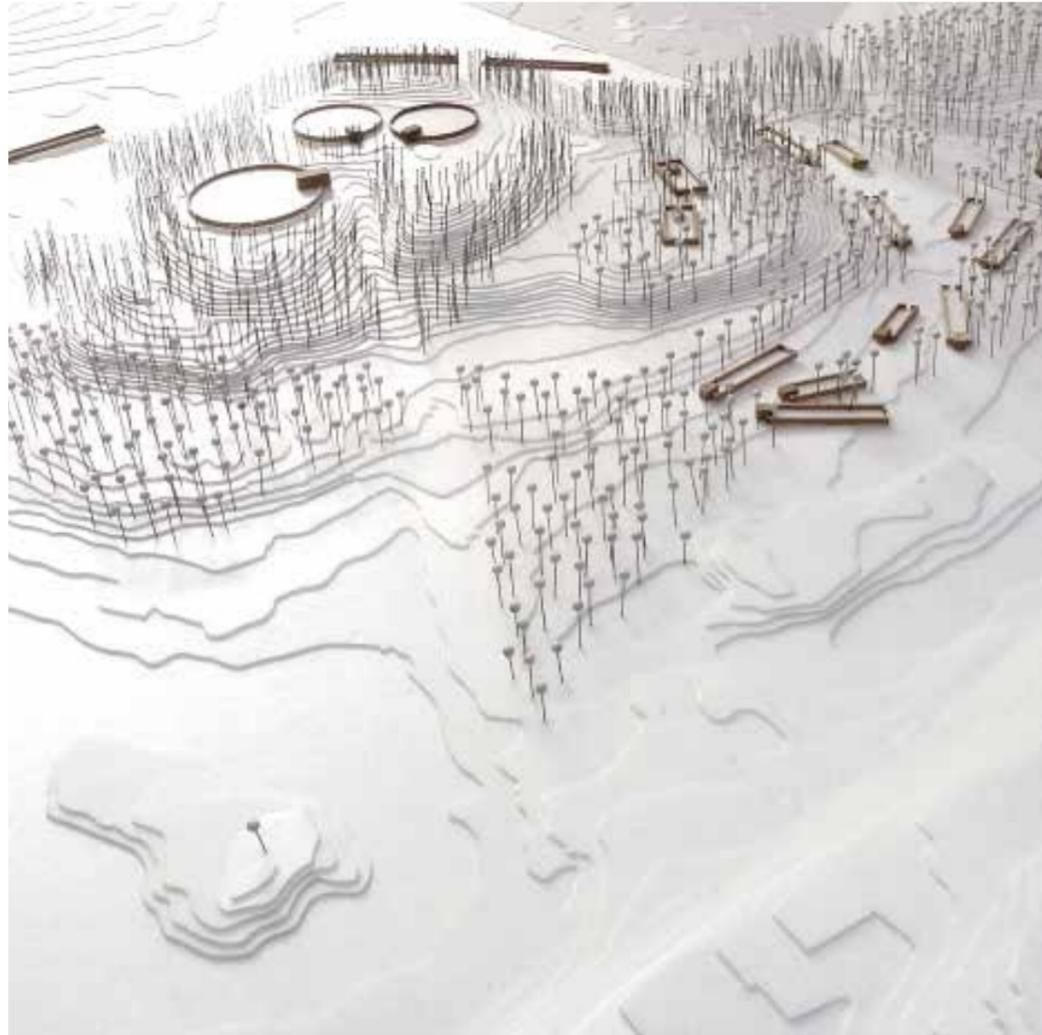
Chalmers University of Technology

by Lowa Sundh

Gate to the sacred is an interfaith chapel on Järvafältet's graveyard. The chapel is open to everybody and all ceremonies no matter what religion or culture. A service building, floral shop and visitor centre are included in the program and are supposed to serve the chapel and the closest area of the graveyard. The building is located on both sides of the path in to the graveyard. Gate to the sacred becomes a gate and a sanctuary between the city and the graveyard.

PROGRAM

Järvafältet is in the north suburbs of Stockholm. It is one part of Stockholms protected cultural reserve that goes through the city. It was decided that Järvafältet would become the north part of Stockholms cemetery a few years ago and an architecture competition was announced. In 2010 the competition was settled and the Danish architect Kristine Jensens Tegnesture and Paul Ingemann had made the winning proposal. They made a proposal called The Islands which was based on a concept of making the cemetery in to small islands of graveyard that would be enclosed by concrete walls and leave as much as possible of the recreational park untouched.



Järvlafältet is surrounded of multicultural suburbs like Akalla, Hjulsta; Kista and Rinkeby and has about 60 000 people living in the surrounding area. It is about 8 % of Stockholm's residents. The population in the area is younger than average and there is a greater proportion of foreign origin than the rest of Stockholm.

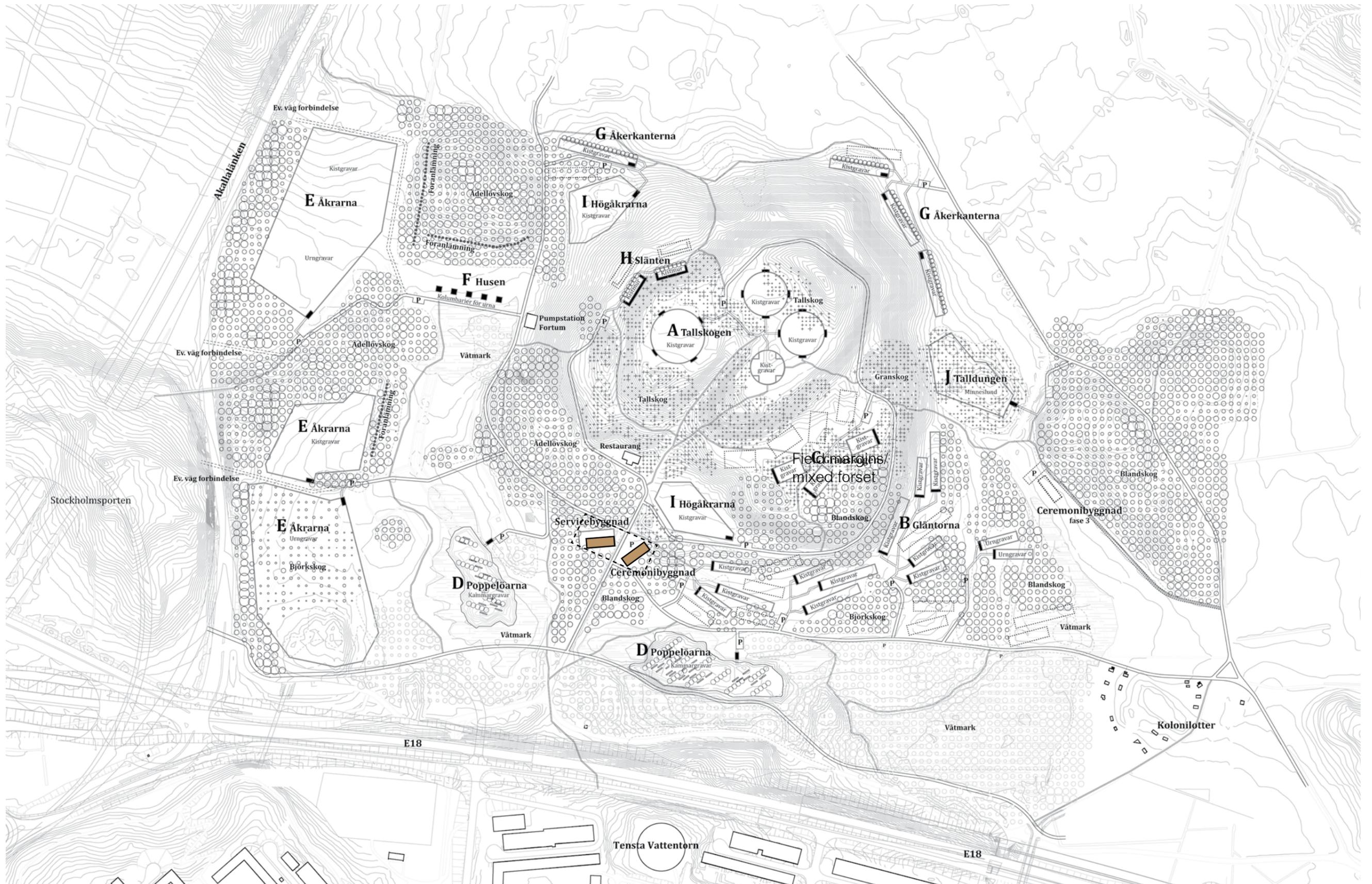
City



Nature



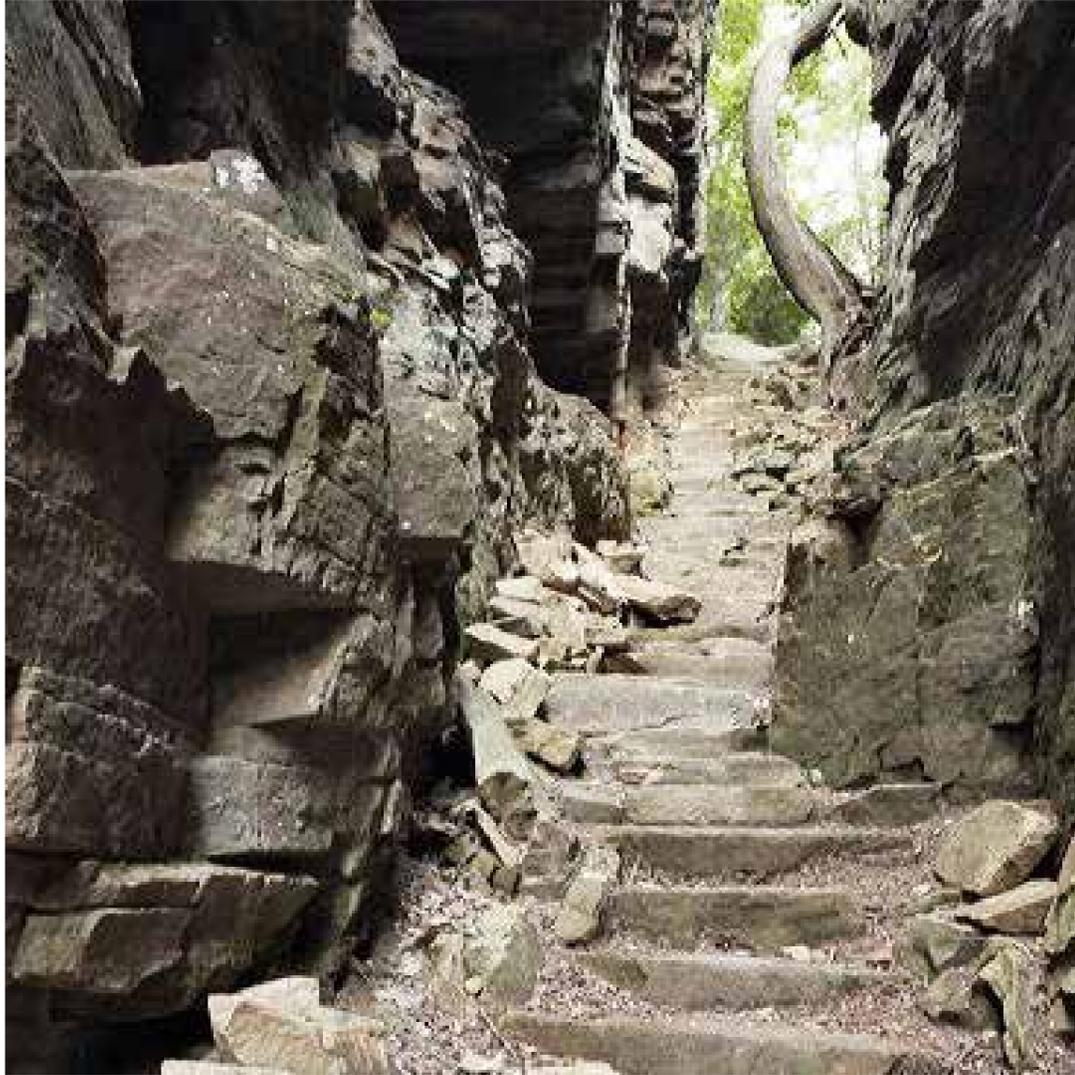
The municipality has had meetings with people from the area and discussed the winning proposal and how to develop the program to the area. They decided to have a chapel and a service building in the south part of the area parted on both parts of the path in to the cemetery area. When the chapel was discussed they wanted the chapel to be an interfaith chapel which is open to all people no matter what religion or culture they perceive. It was also concluded that the people in the area wanted the chapel to be open to all kinds of ceremonies and not only for funerals.



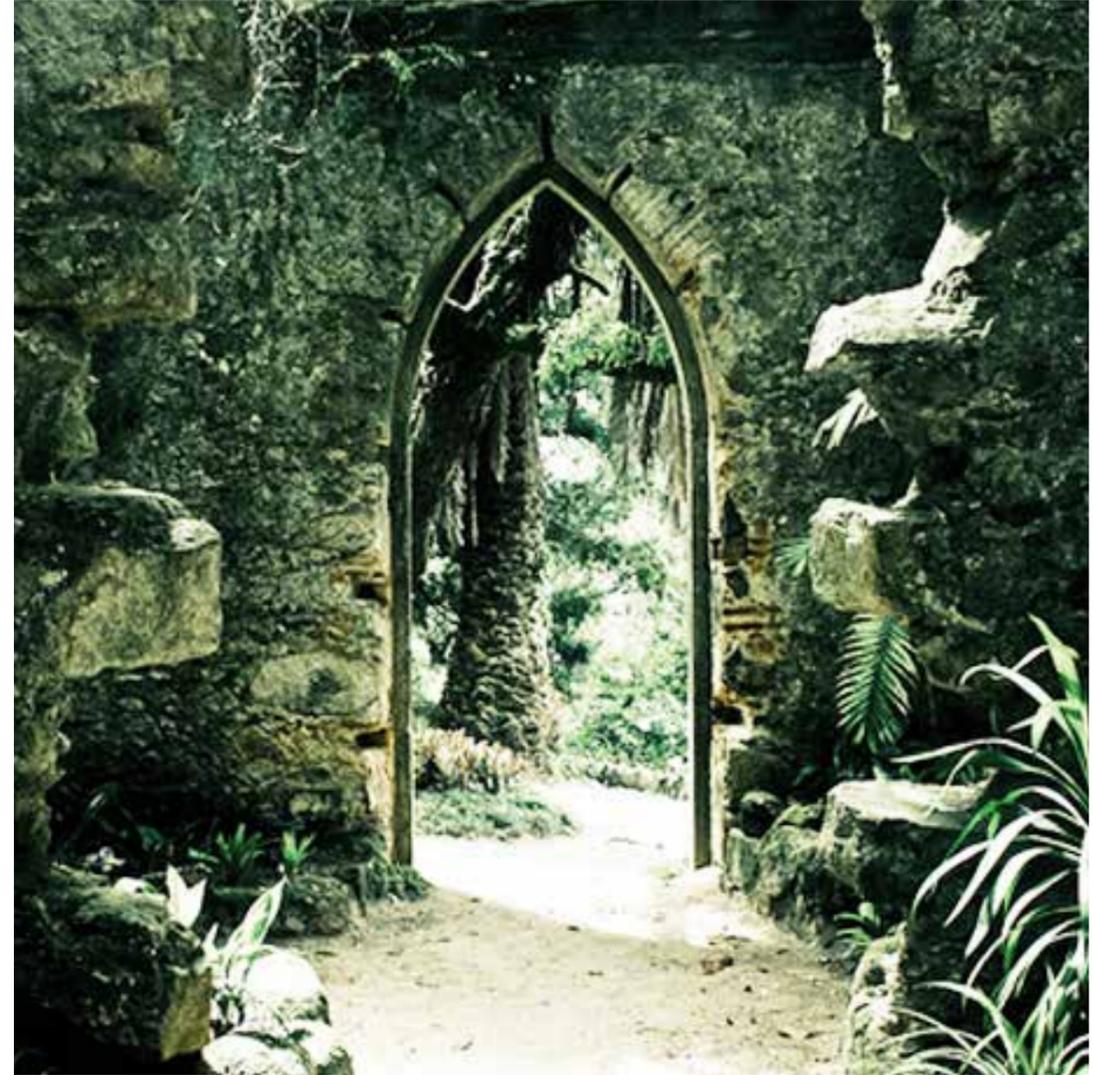
Existing program for Järvafältet's graveyard

INSPIRATION

Contrast between inside and outside

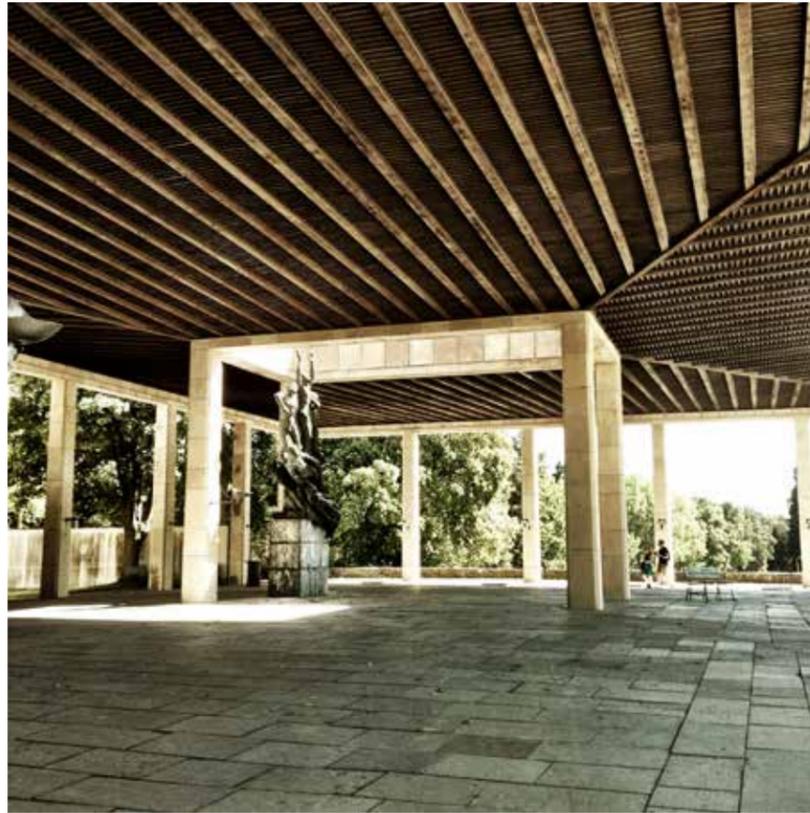


Portal to a new dimension

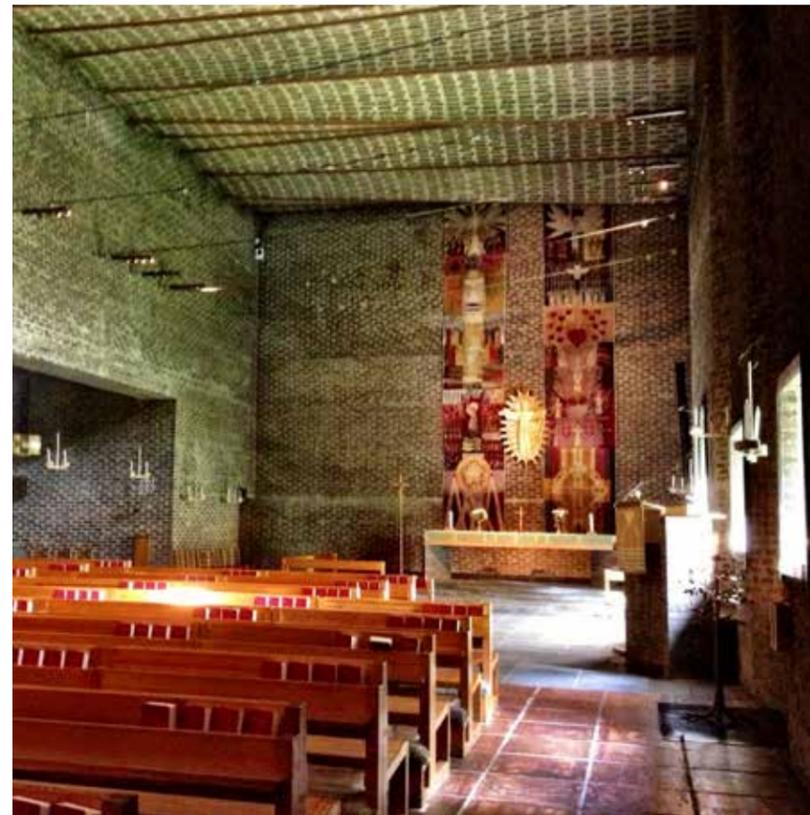


STUDY VISITS

Skogskyrkogården



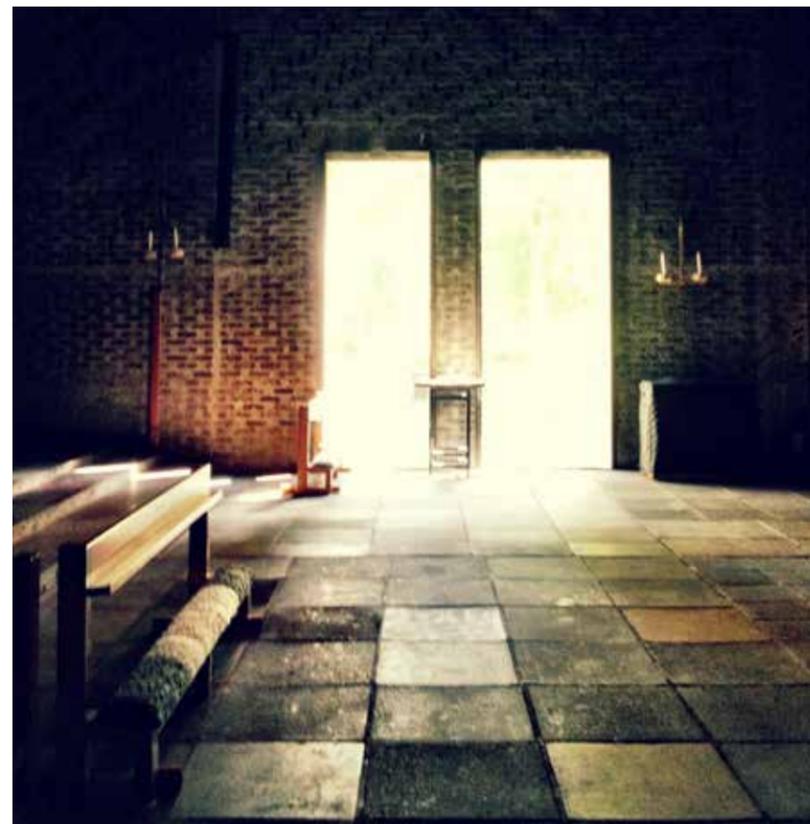
Markuskyrkan



Västerorts kyrkan



Sankt Görans gymnasium



PROJECT

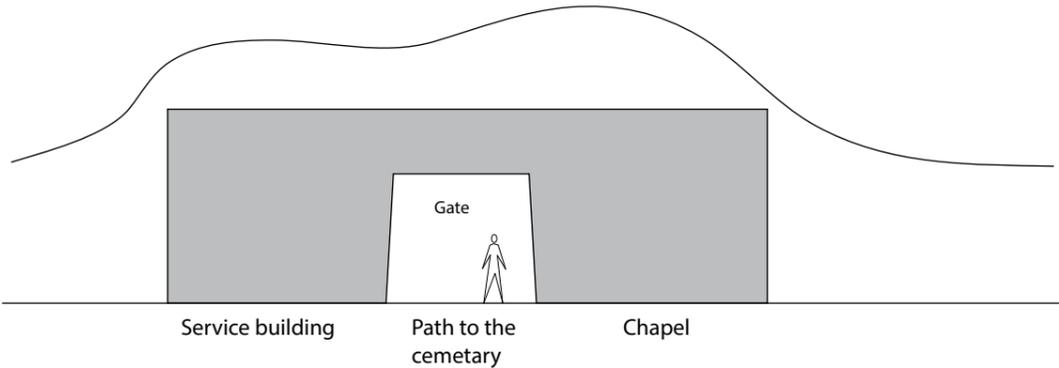
CONCEPT



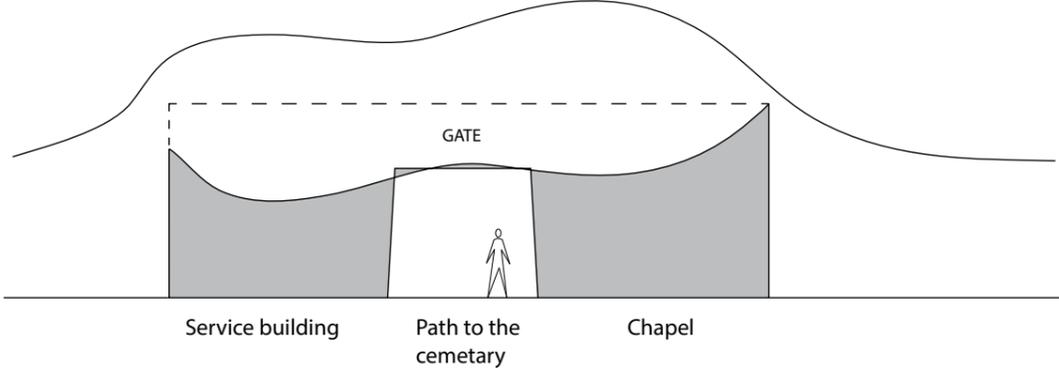
The chapel becomes the portal between the city and the cemetery.

Considering that the chapel and the service building are located on both sides of the path to Granholmstoppen and the cemetery area I wanted the building to become the portal to the area. It feels like different dimensions when you come from the busy and stressful city and come in to the calm park with the beautiful nature. With the gate I want to enhance the feeling of two dimensions and add a new dimension or rather in between portals. The in between is supposed to be a place where there is nothing else but you and the people in between the walls. A sanctuary where everybody is welcome and you can share a moment together or go in to your own contemplation.

GATE TO THE GRAVEYARD



The chapel and the service building are situated on two sides of the path in to the cemetery. The siluett of the building is suppose to create a portal to the area.



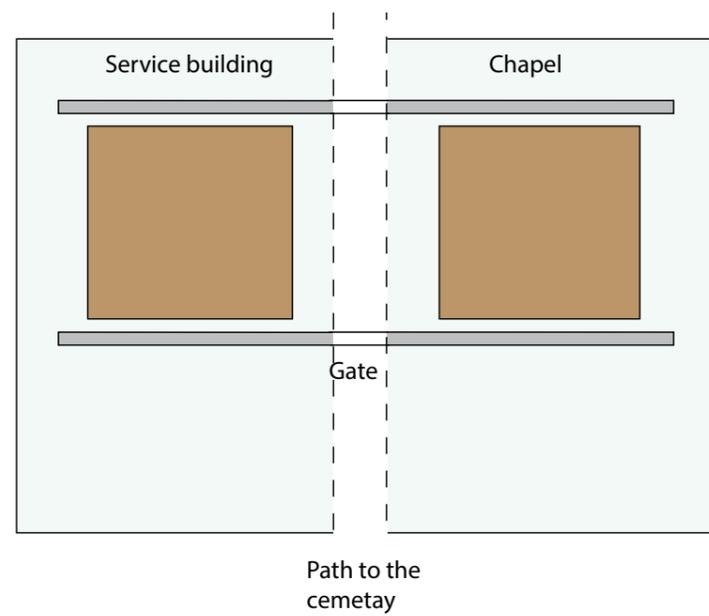
The silhouette of the building should complement the hills and the surrounding nature



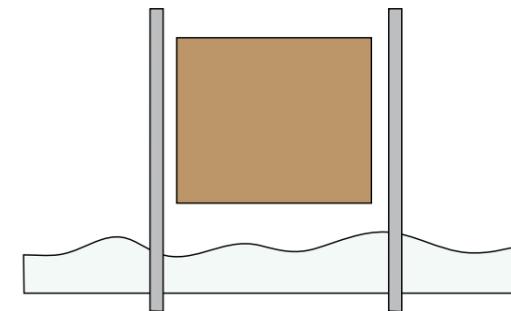
There is wetland on the site of the building. The water is taken care of by a water mirror surrounding the chapel.

To get the feeling of going through a gate I've been inspired of walls going round a city or a building and making a gate through it. Therefore the building is put between two concrete walls which come up through a water mirror that frames the area of the gate and strengthens the portal to the area. In between the concrete walls all the functions of the chapel and service building are included. The inner functions are stretched between the concrete walls with wooden volumes. The volumes are floating over the water mirror and connected with bridges. When you are inside the wooden volumes you are inside the sanctuary where you can connect with your closest family or just sit down and go in to your own sanctuary. When you pass through the volumes you can see the light coming down the walls and reflecting on the water mirror.

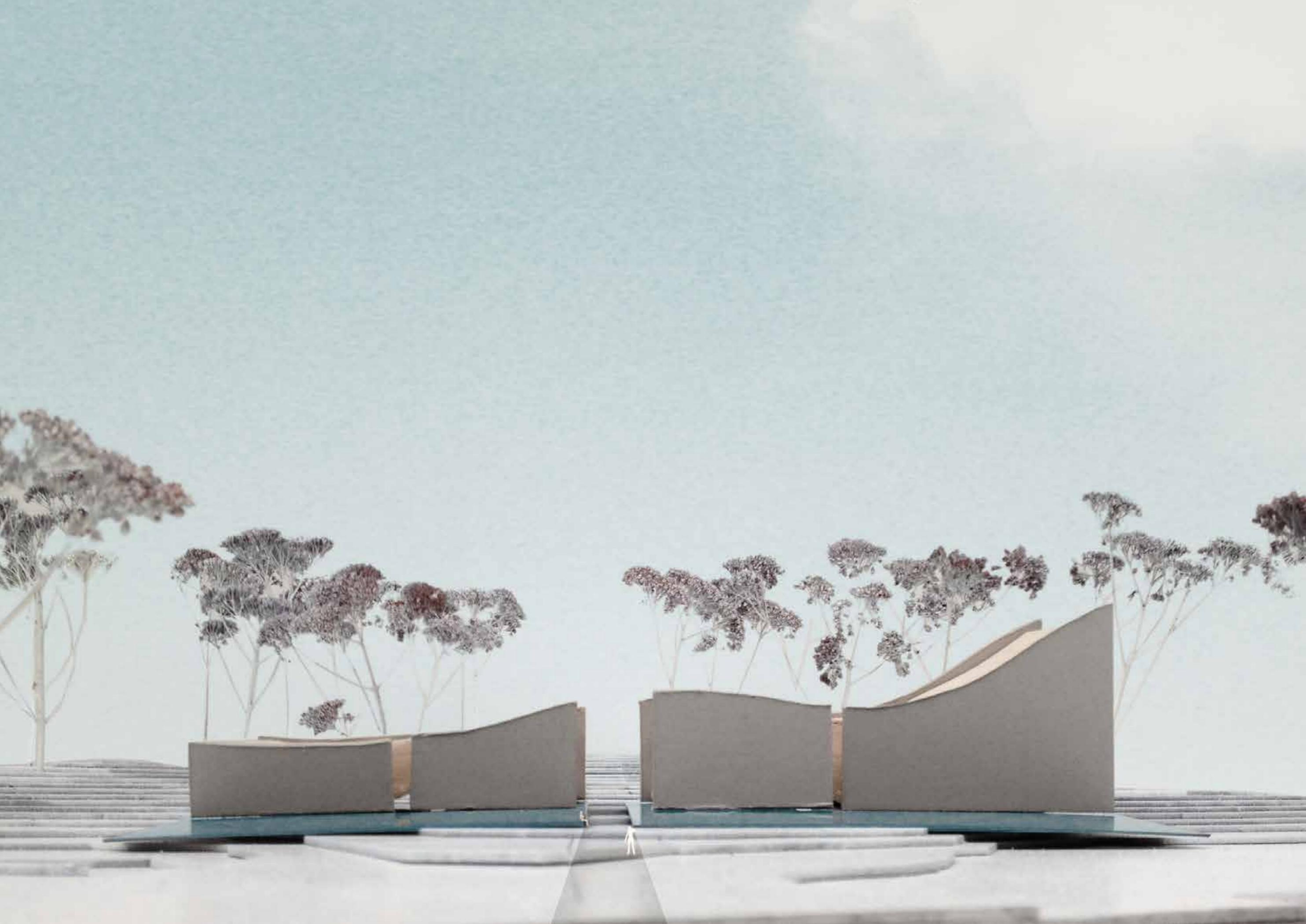
WOODEN VOLUMES BETWEEN THE WALLS



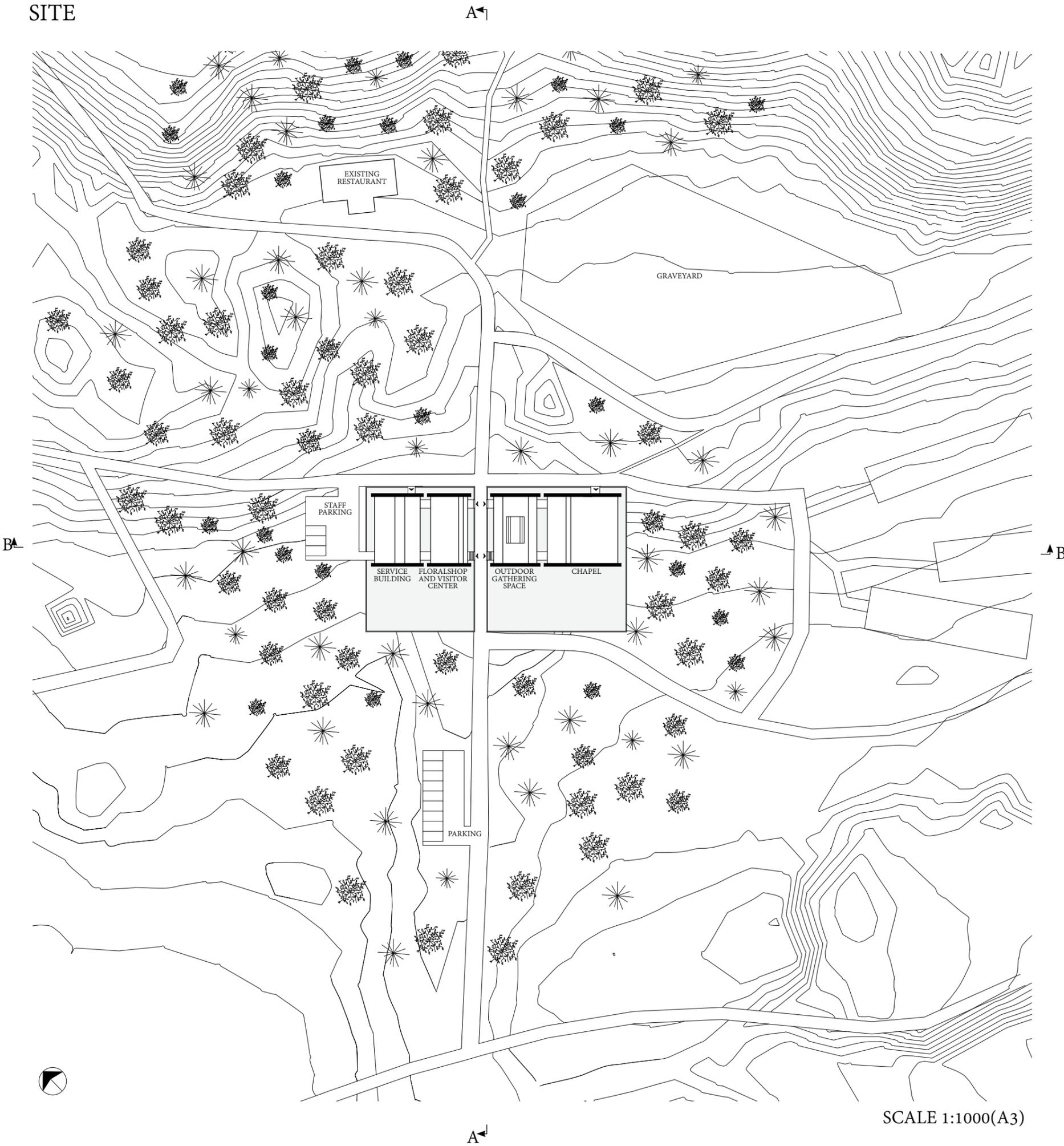
The gate will consist a parted watermirror and two straight walls that are cut throught. The walls will carry the service building och chapel over the water with beams that goes from one siluett wall to the other.



The walls continue down to the ground and the wood volumes fly over the water



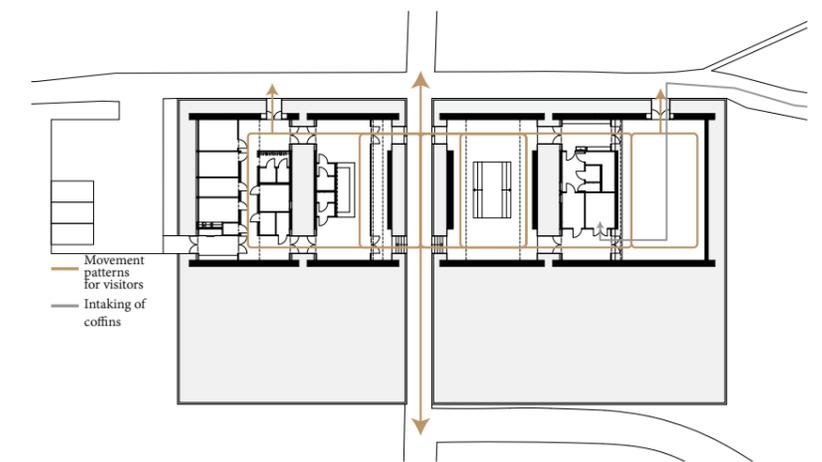
SITE



LIFE AND DEATH SIDE BY SIDE

The graveyard is a contemplating area for the people visiting the graves. Even though the visitors go through the gate of a sacred they should feel welcome and able to walk along the path without being disturbed in their contemplation. The gate to the Sacred is there for partly closed between the gathering spaces to not disturb people in their own spirituality. The people who are visiting the chapel are free to gather and perform their ceremonies without thinking of the life outside. They have their own sanctuary between the concrete walls where they can celebrate life and death.

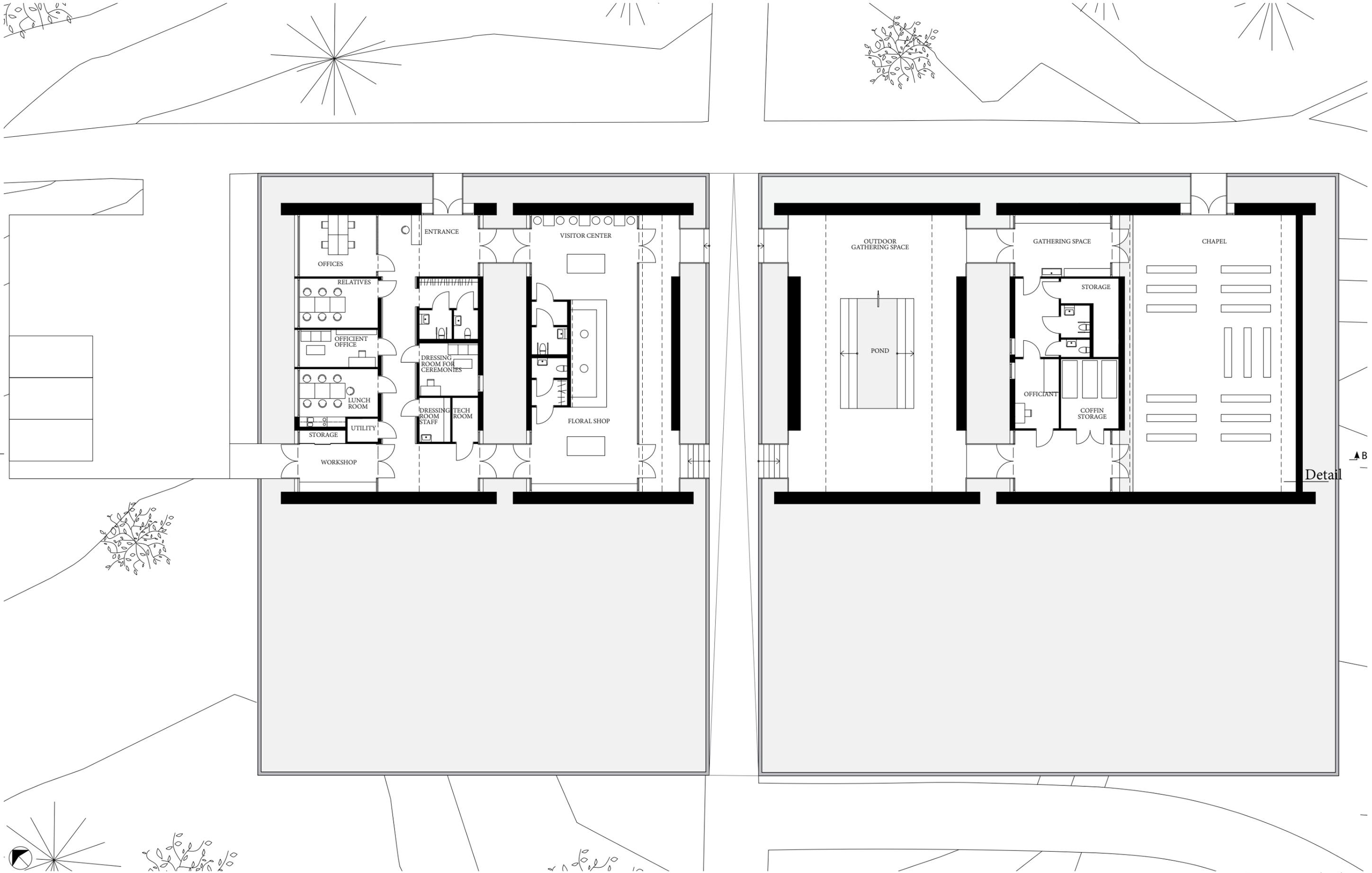
ONE WAY IN - ANOTHER WAY OUT



The walk through the building is important to embrace people in the atmosphere of spirituality. There is always another way out than the way you came in and parties don't have to cross paths if not preferred.

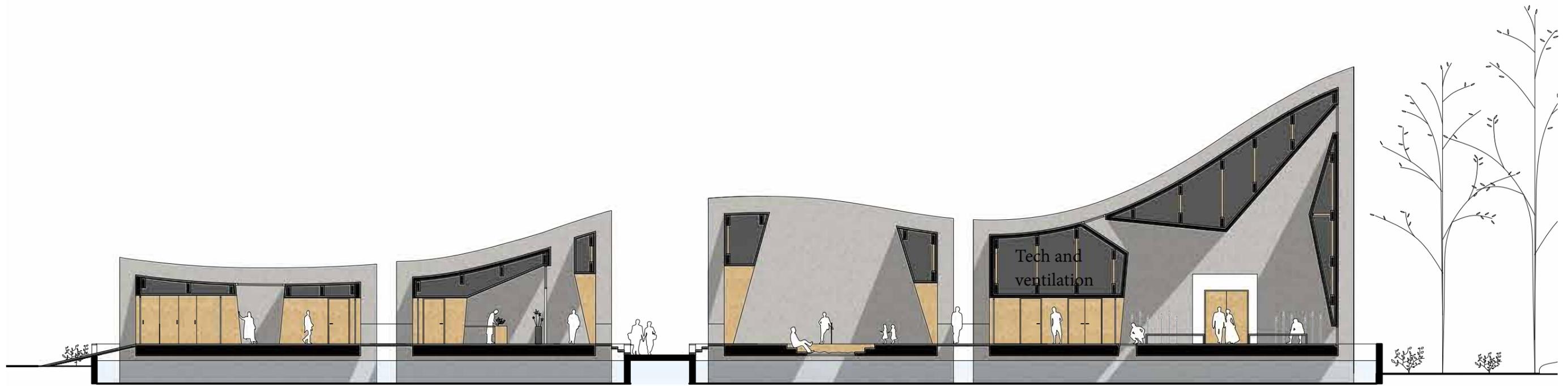
SCALE 1:1000(A3)

PLAN



SCALE 1:200(A3)

SEKTION B-B



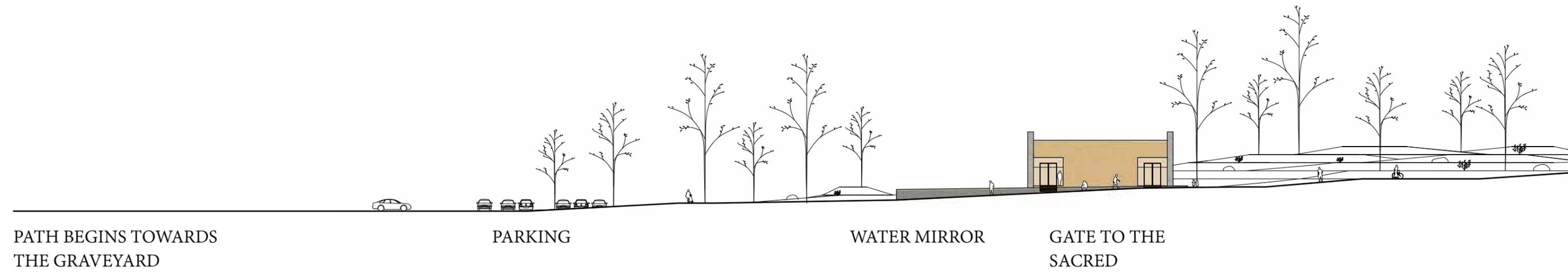
SERVICE BUILDING

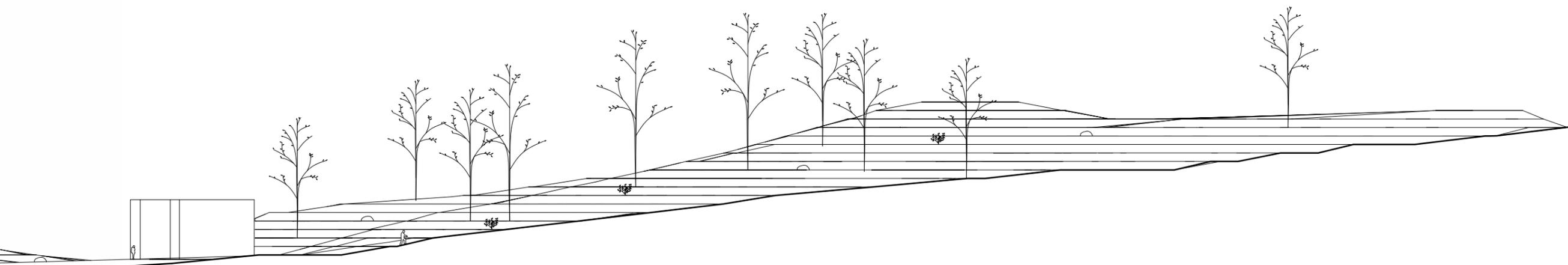
FLORALSHOP AND
VISITOR CENTER

OUTDOOR GATHERING SPACE

CHAPEL

SECTION A-A





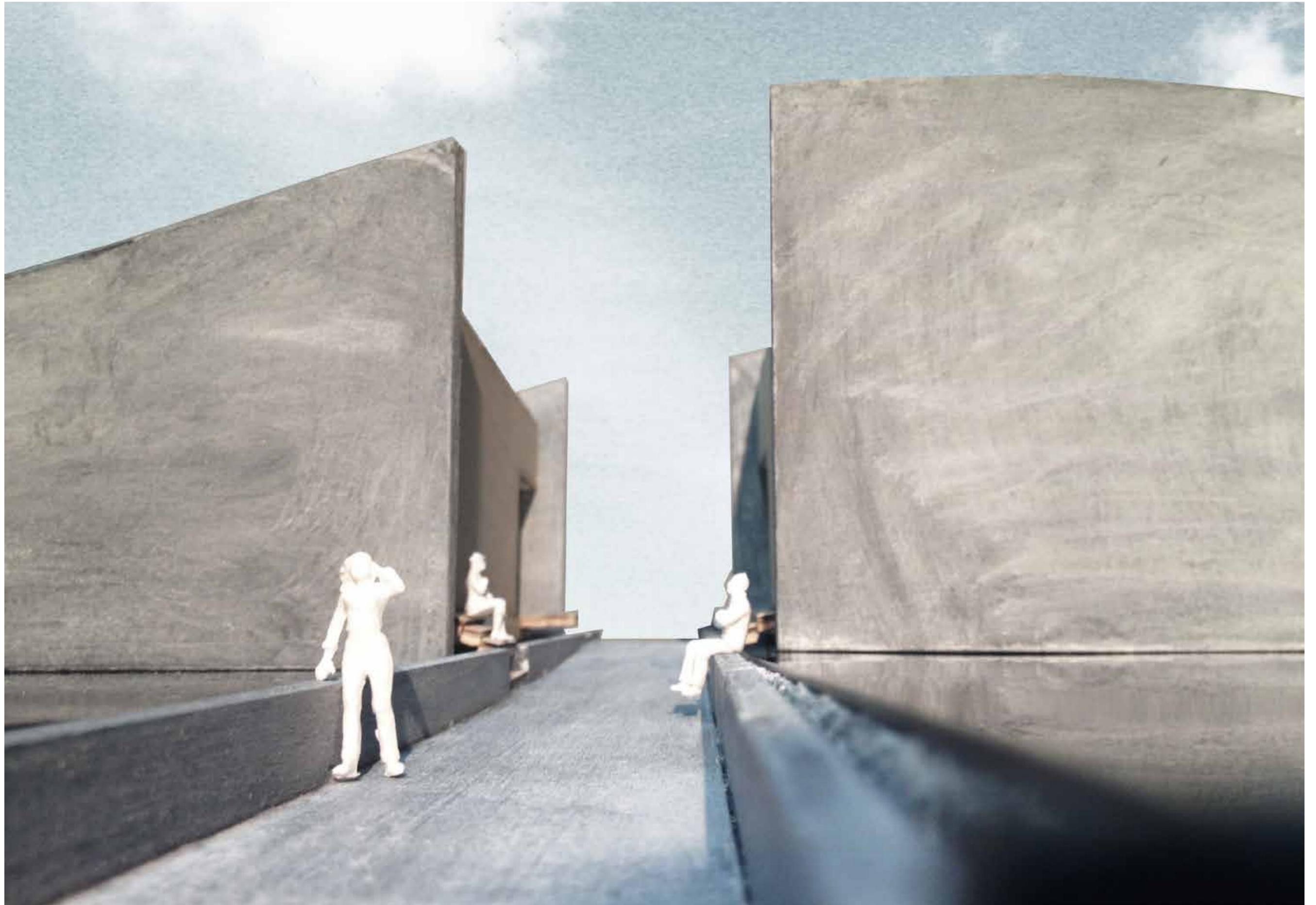
EXISTING
RESTAURANT

GRANHOLMSTOPPEN

THE WALK TO THE GATE OF SACRED

Nowadays we are forced to take in so much commercial and facts all day long that we never have time to sit down and think about our own lives or the people around us. We are in need of places which is calm and where we can meet our friends and family to celebrate important events of our lives. Birth, marriage and death are important moments in everybody's life no matter what faith or culture you are born in to. With the increasing diversity and the lack of places where everybody is welcome we don't acknowledge the importance of a sanctuary where we can celebrate together or take a pause to think about our lives or not even think about anything.

When you arrive to Järvafältet from the south side you pass one of the busiest roads in Stockholm to get in to the park area. You can see the silhouette of a concrete wall in the blooming nature which is responding to the hills in the horizon. The silhouette of the walls and the nature reflects in the water mirror. When you pass the stressful road that parts the city from Järvafältet you are greeted with allotments and fields with cows and sheep. The road is still very loud but when you go further in to the area the noise slowly disappears. The path leads you to the water mirror and the silhouette walls that is parted by a path and creates a gate in to the area. You walk along the path side by side with the water surface and after a while you are walking along the water surface and you meet the silhouette walls that you saw from the other side of the road. You go in through the gate and are washed with the silence inside the walls.



Walking to the gate



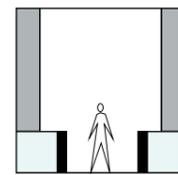
Floral shop and visitor center with a sightline to the service building



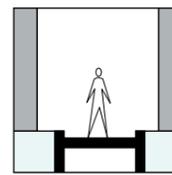
Brigdes connects the floating boxes

In between the rigid walls there are wooden volumes stretched between the walls. The path continuous straight ahead to the graveyard but if you are here to participate in a ceremony, buy flowers or just contemplate in the silence you can stay in between the walls. The openings in the wooden volumes give hints of what is happening between the walls. To the left you can see a flower shop and to the right you can see a peaceful gathering area.

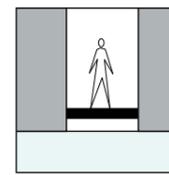
WALKING WITH WATER



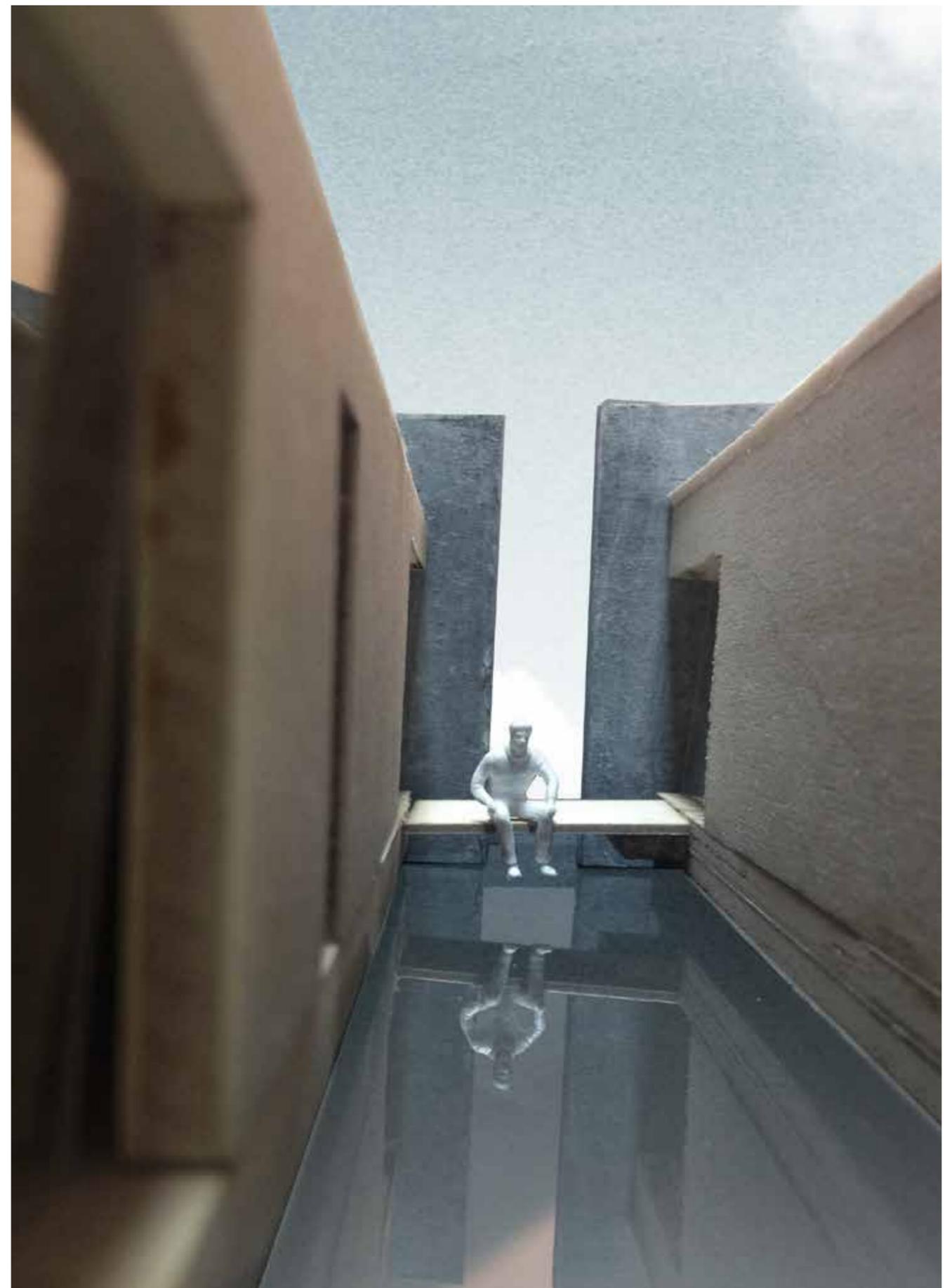
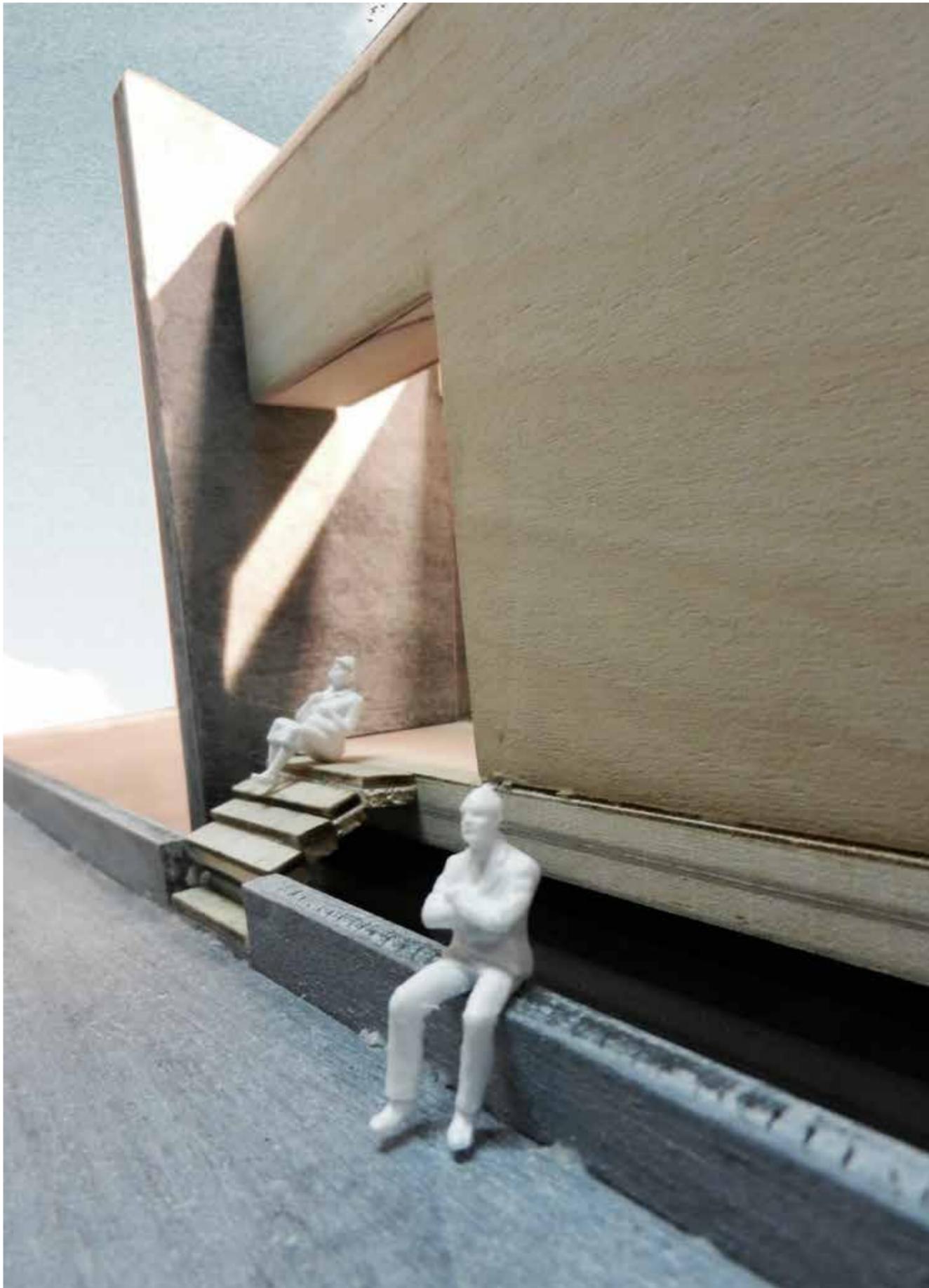
Walking under the water



Walking along the water

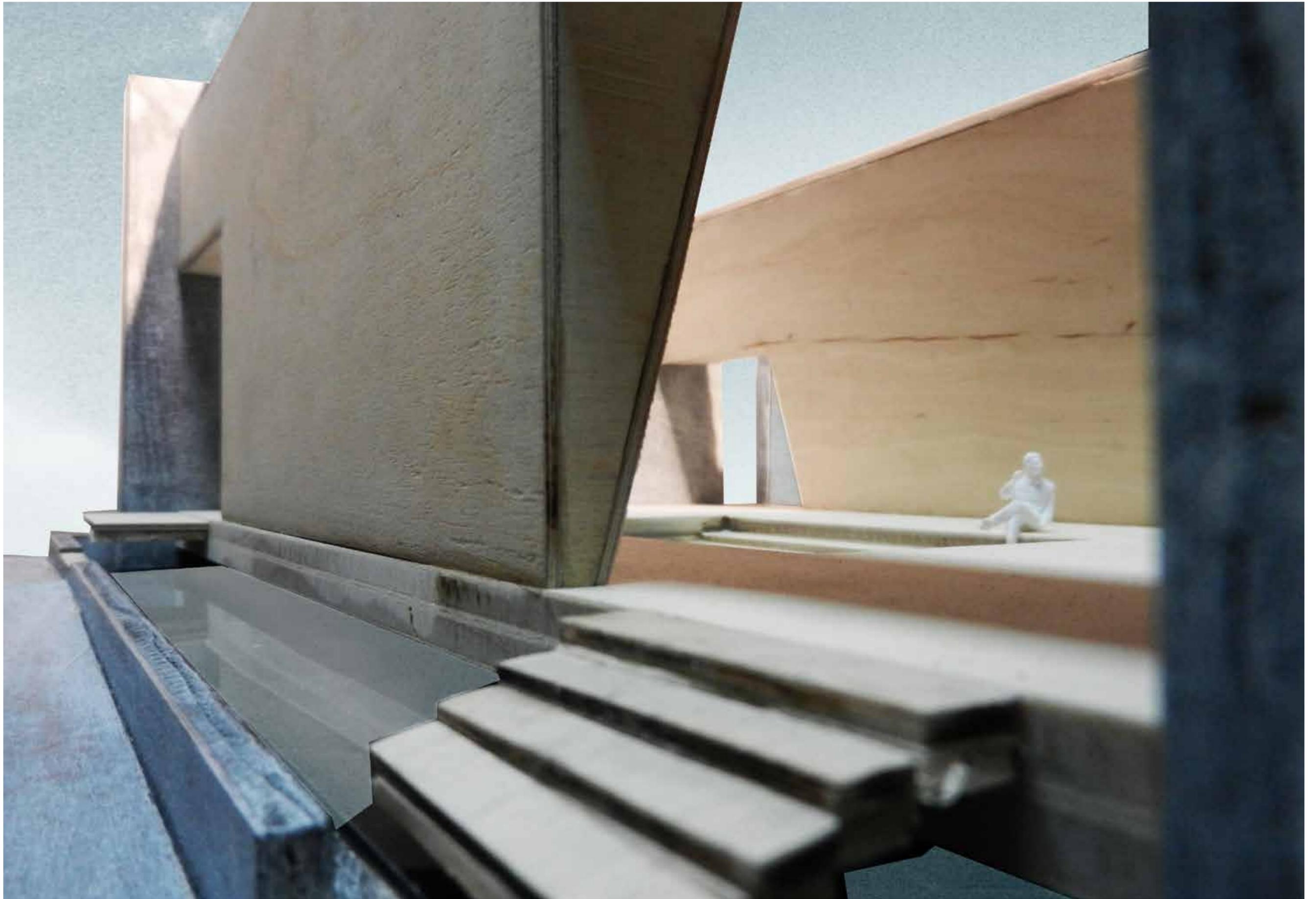


Walking over the water



Contemplating in between the wooden walls

You can take wooden stairs in to the flower shop and the gathering space. When you go up the stairs you can see that the inner volumes are floating over the water and the wooden volumes are connected by bridges. The gathering space is opening up to the sky and to the ground with a small pond with pure water coming from a tap. Here you can wash your hands or feet before you go in to the chapel. In this space people can gather before or after a ceremony and prepare the rites or their minds for the experience.



From the path you can take stairs and bridges to the outdoor gathering space.

The guest of the ceremony can gather in the inner waiting hall before the ceremony and then go in to the ceremony space. The light comes in through the wooden volumes and enhances the sculpture of the room. The room is rectangular to be as flexible as possible for different ceremonies and for different cultures and to give good acoustics. There are no symbols or focal points in the room. The views to the outside are limited in the volumes because the most important feature of the building is to focus on the ceremonies or your own contemplation rather than being influenced by the outside. The gate should be a refuge from the life outside the walls.



In the outdoor gathering space there is a pond where visitors can wash your hands or feet before going in to the chapel

When the ceremony is done you either go to the outdoor gathering space again to collect and celebrate or you go out through the concrete wall straight out to the green nature. If you visit the chapel to contemplate you can go in to the chapel through the gathering space or by the opening in the concrete wall.



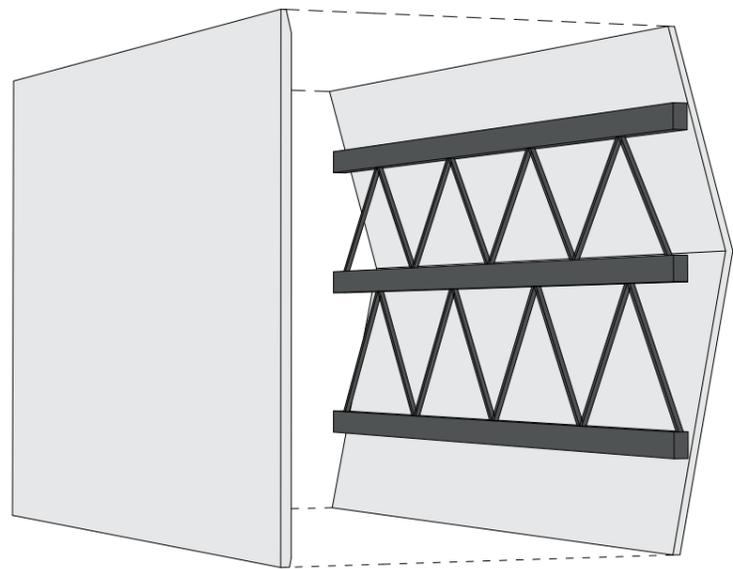
Chapel with light coming in through the wooden volumes

THE VIEWS AND THE LIGHT

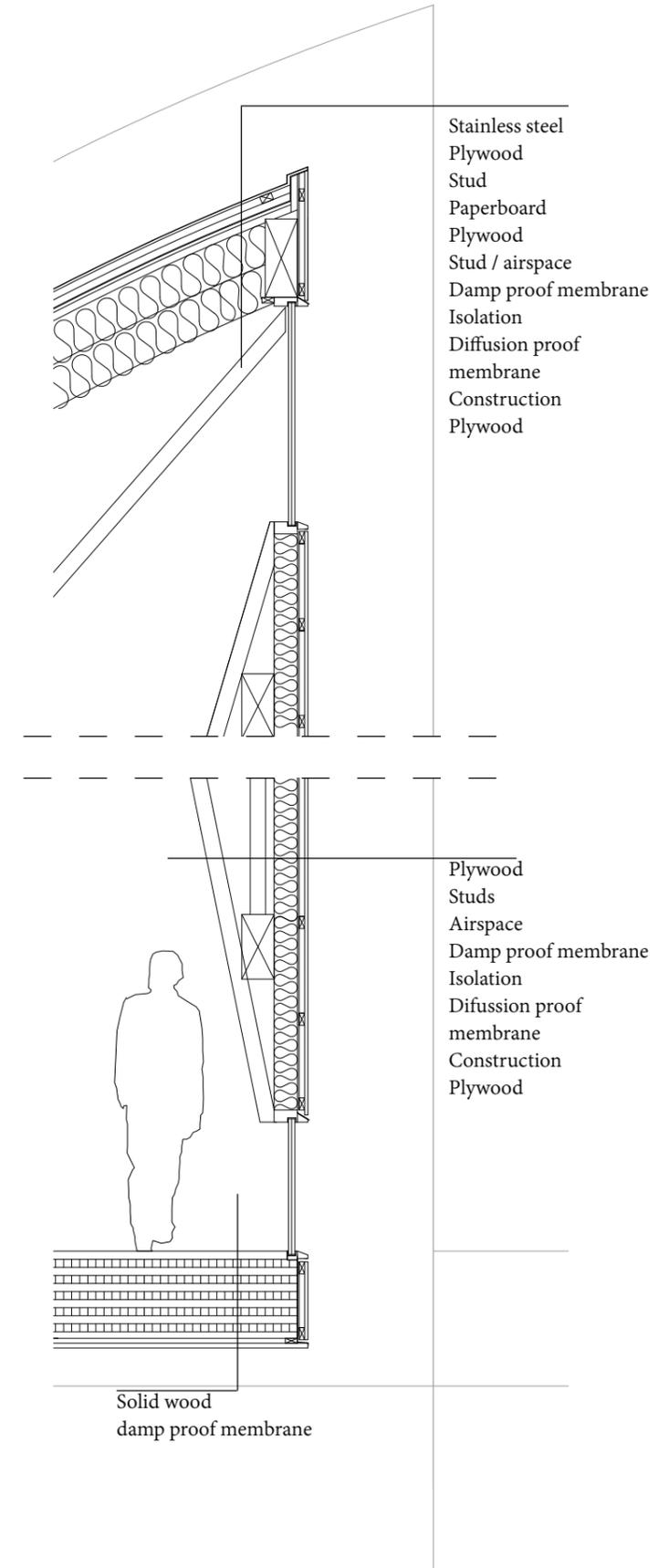
In Gate to the sacred the views are limited to the outside to really focus on what is happening between the walls. You only get small views out when you are on the bridges passing between the contemplating rooms. You always walk along the concrete walls and have sightlines straight ahead. The paths never pass each other in the building and you never have to take the same way in as out. The light comes in between the wooden volumes through strips which go from one concrete wall to another. The light is diffuse and enhances the feeling of floating volumes.

CONSTRUCTION

The wooden walls are made of lightweight beams to hold the volumes up and they are covered in plywood both on the interior wall and the facade.

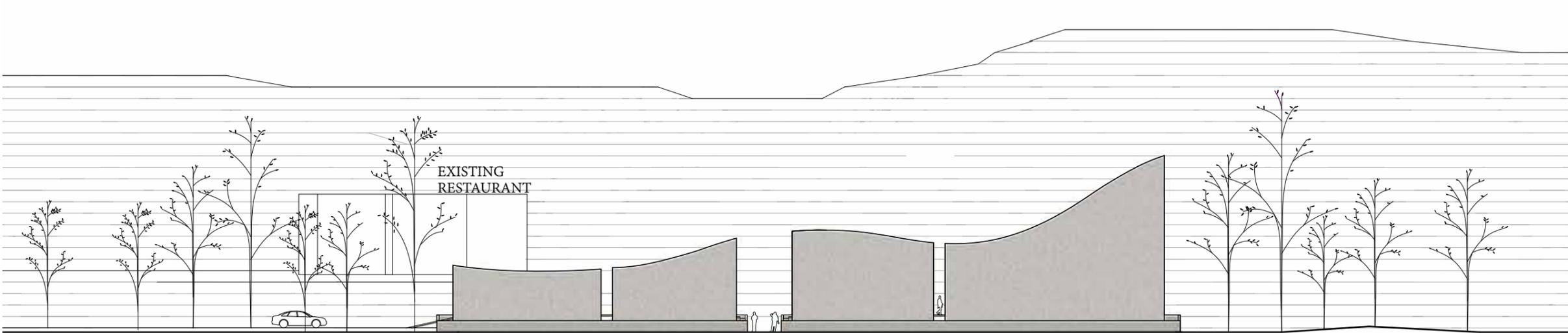


WALL DETAIL

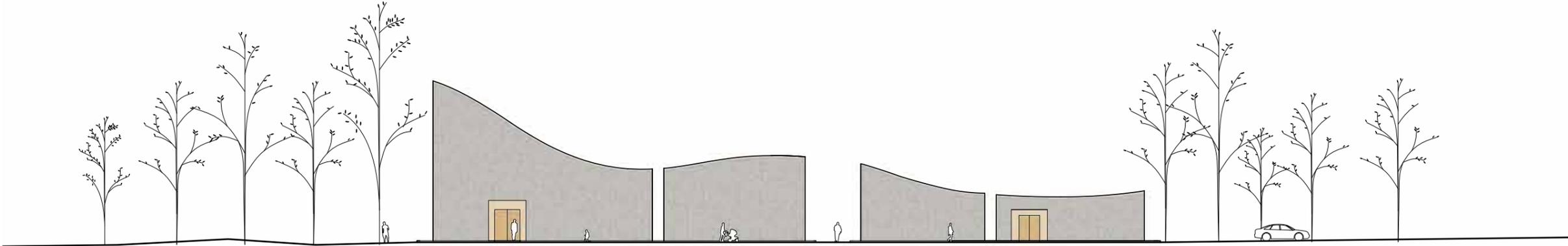


SCALE 1:40

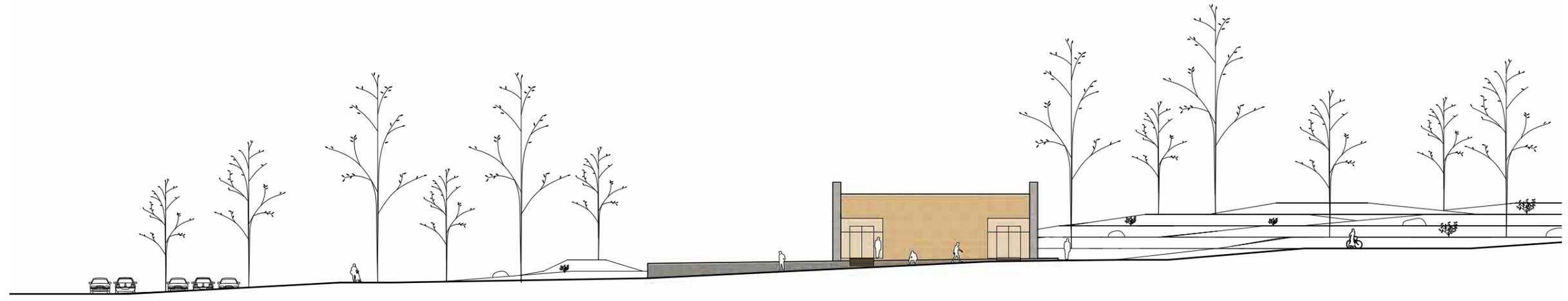
FACADE



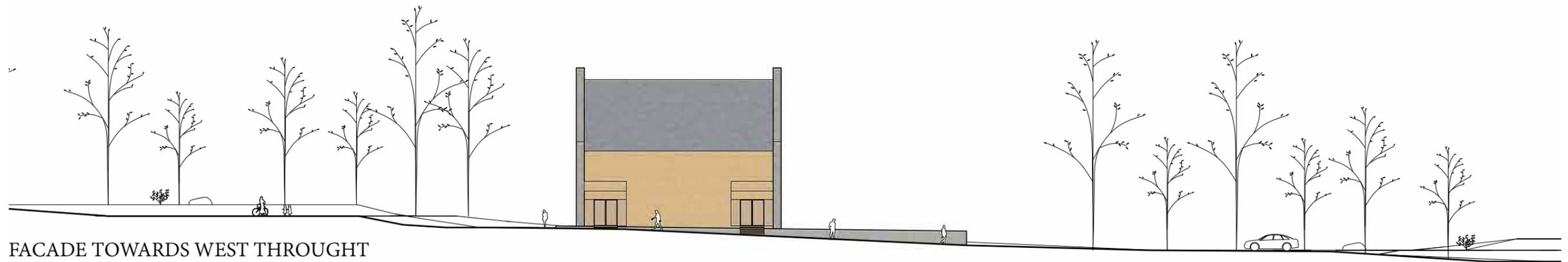
FACADE TOWARDS SOUTH



FACADE TOWARDS NORTH



FACADE TOWARDS EAST THROUGHT
THE PATH

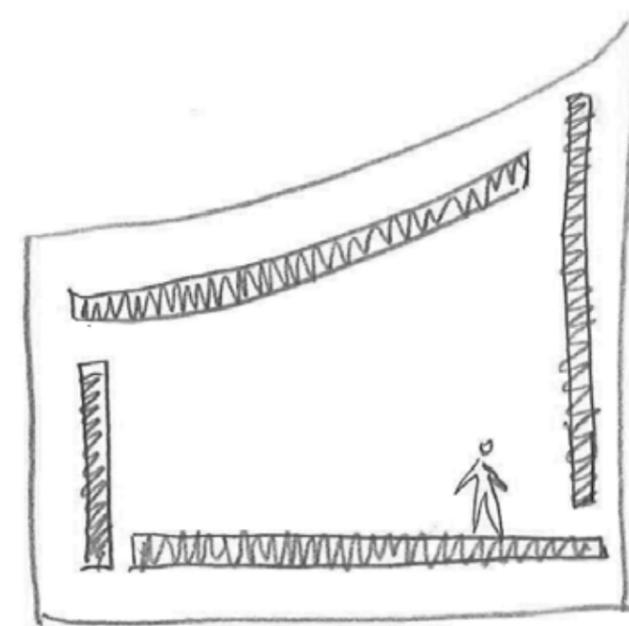
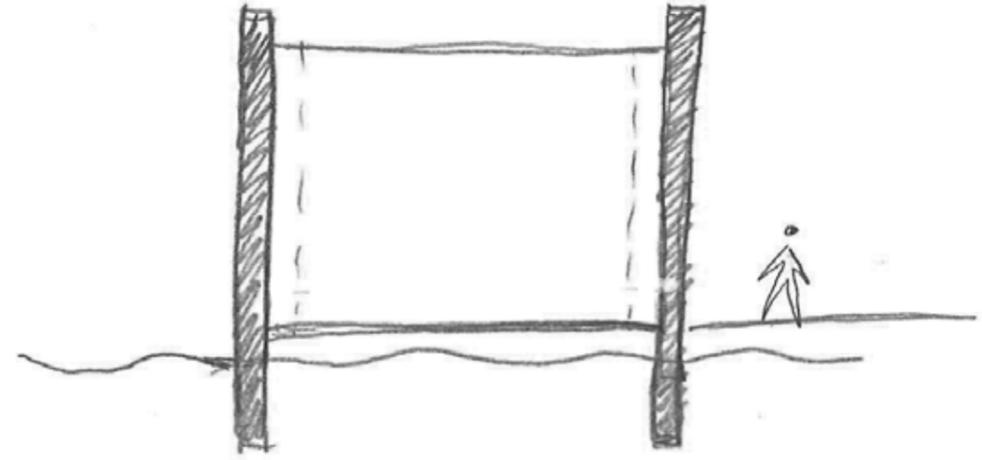
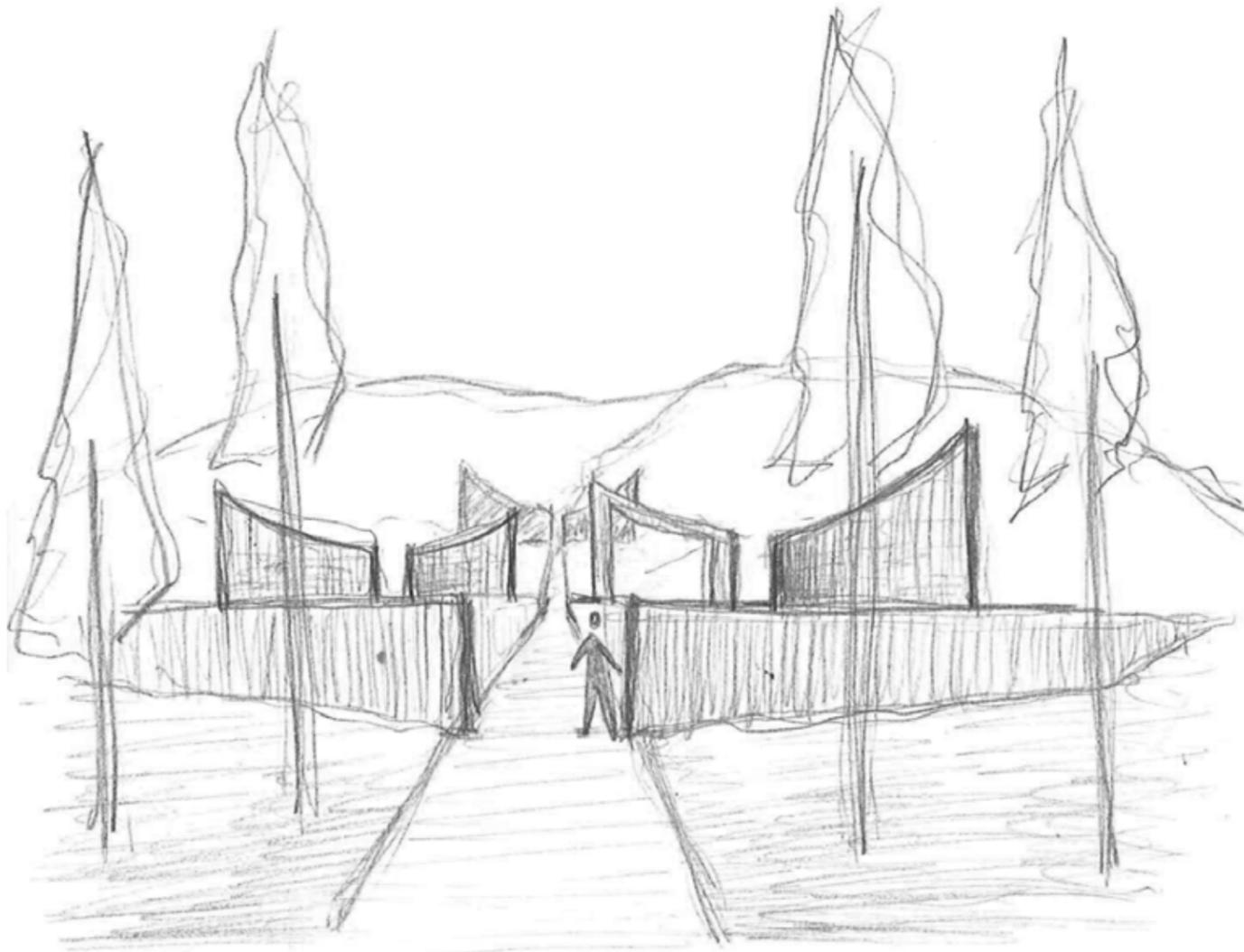


FACADE TOWARDS WEST THROUGHT
THE PATH

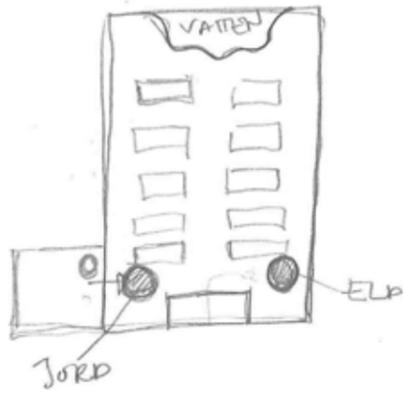
PROCESS

SKETCHING

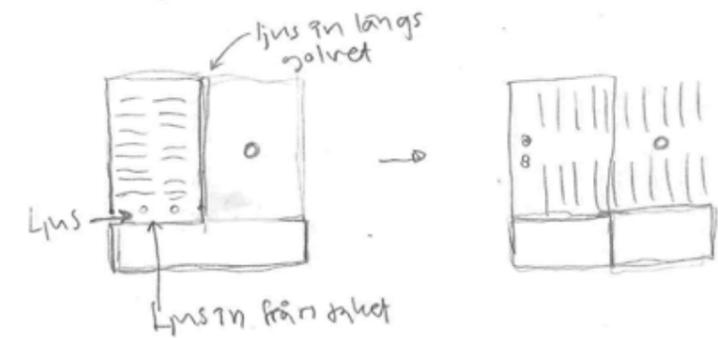
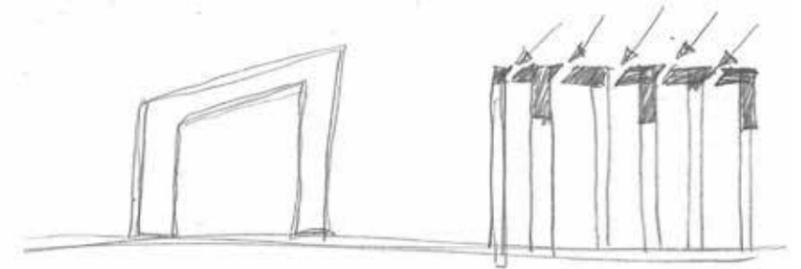
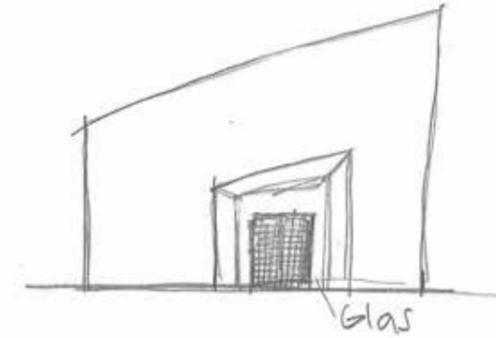
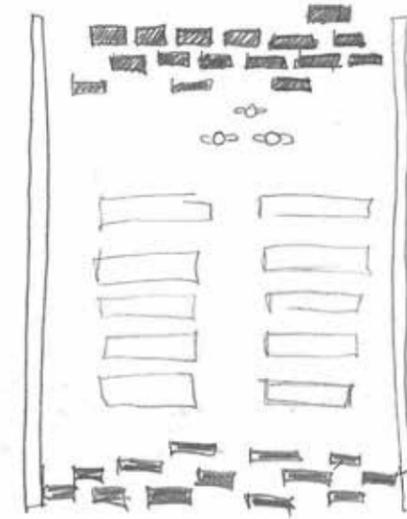
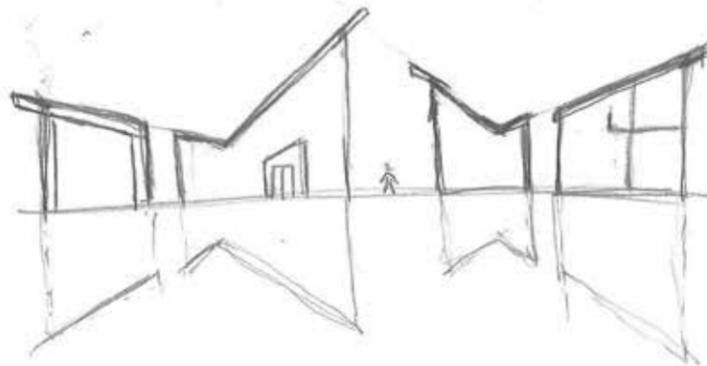
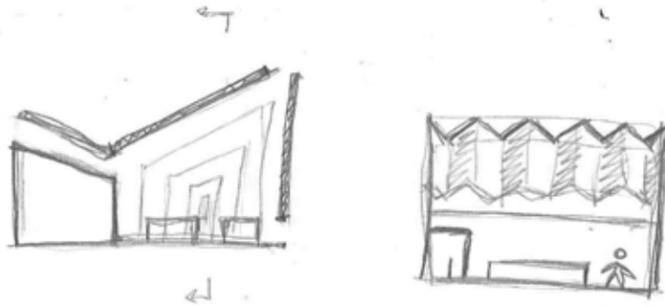
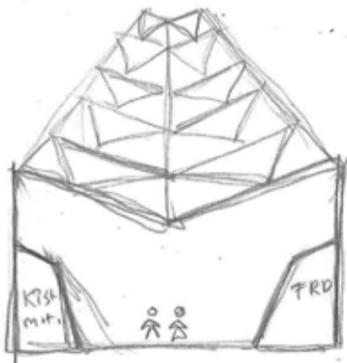
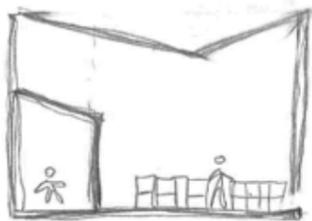
THE RIGID WALLS



THE SILUETTE

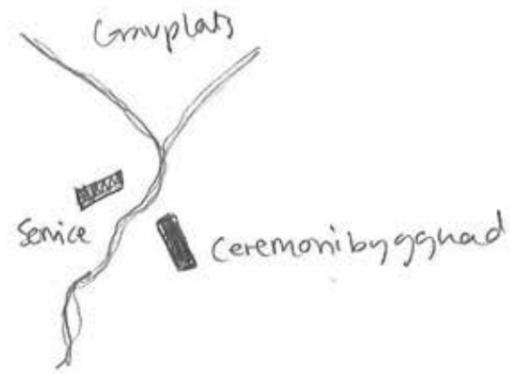


JORD

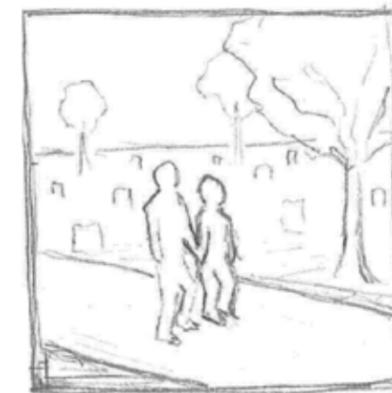
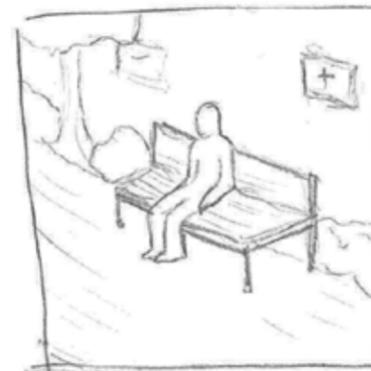
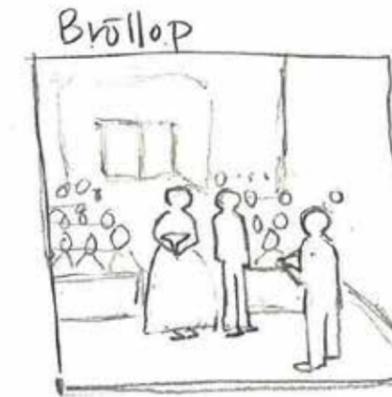
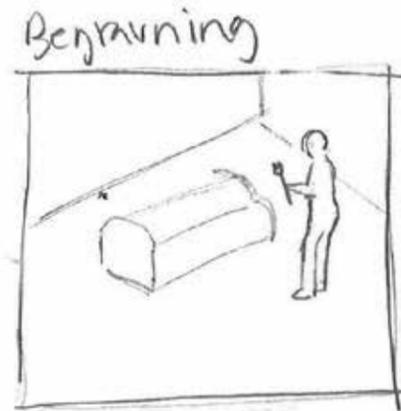
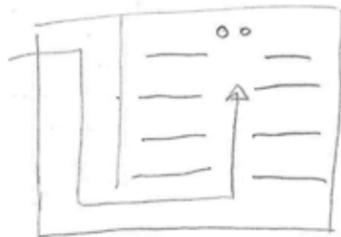
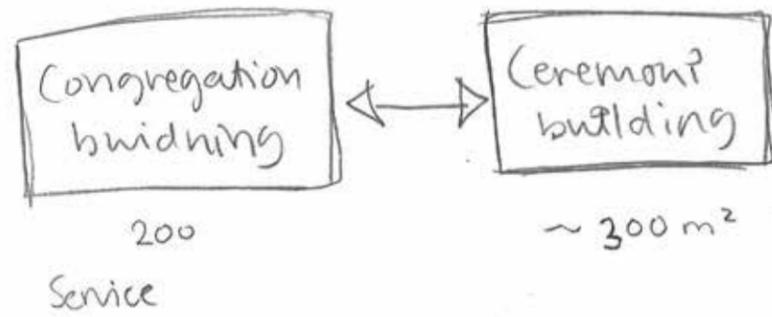


CEREMONIER

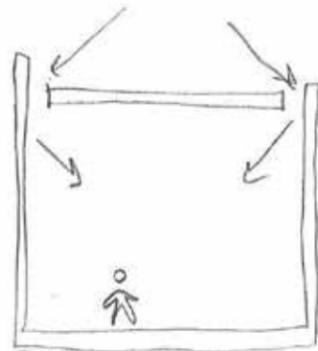
1. Gathering
2. Procession
3. Anteroom
4. Ceremony



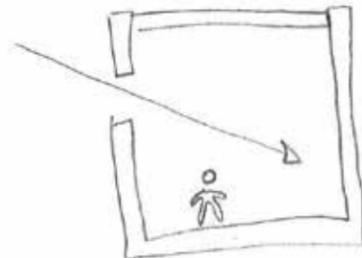
JÄRVAFÄLTET 300m² d ~500m²



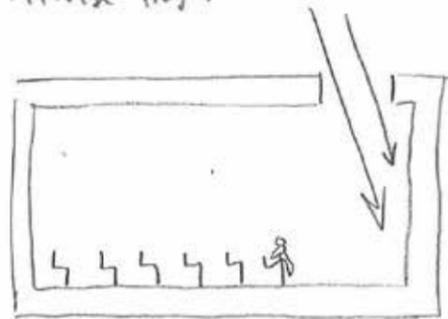
THE INTERIOR



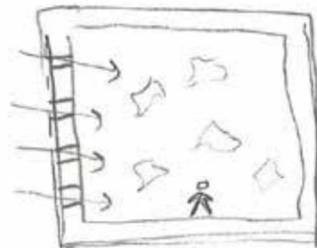
Diffuse light



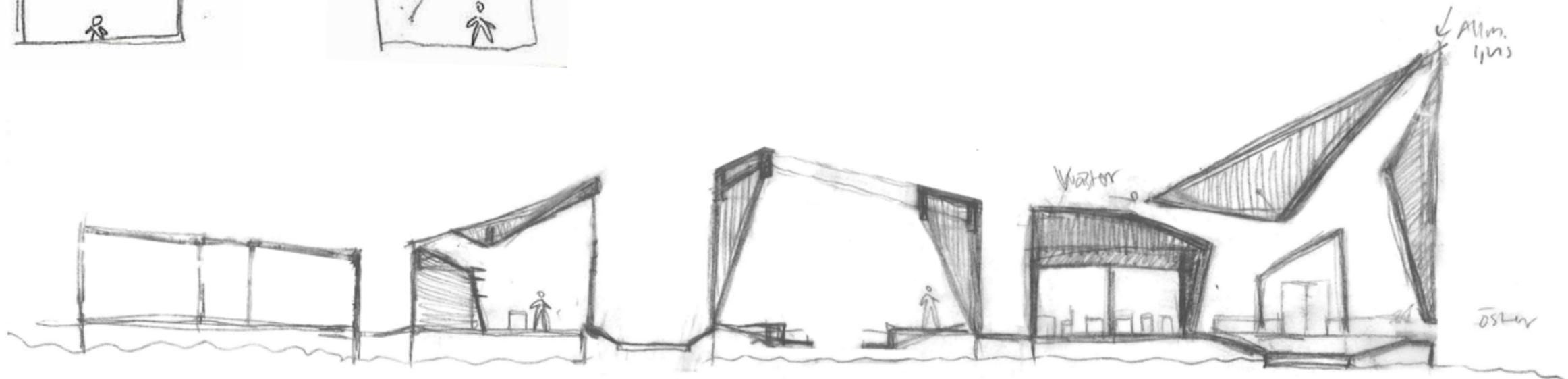
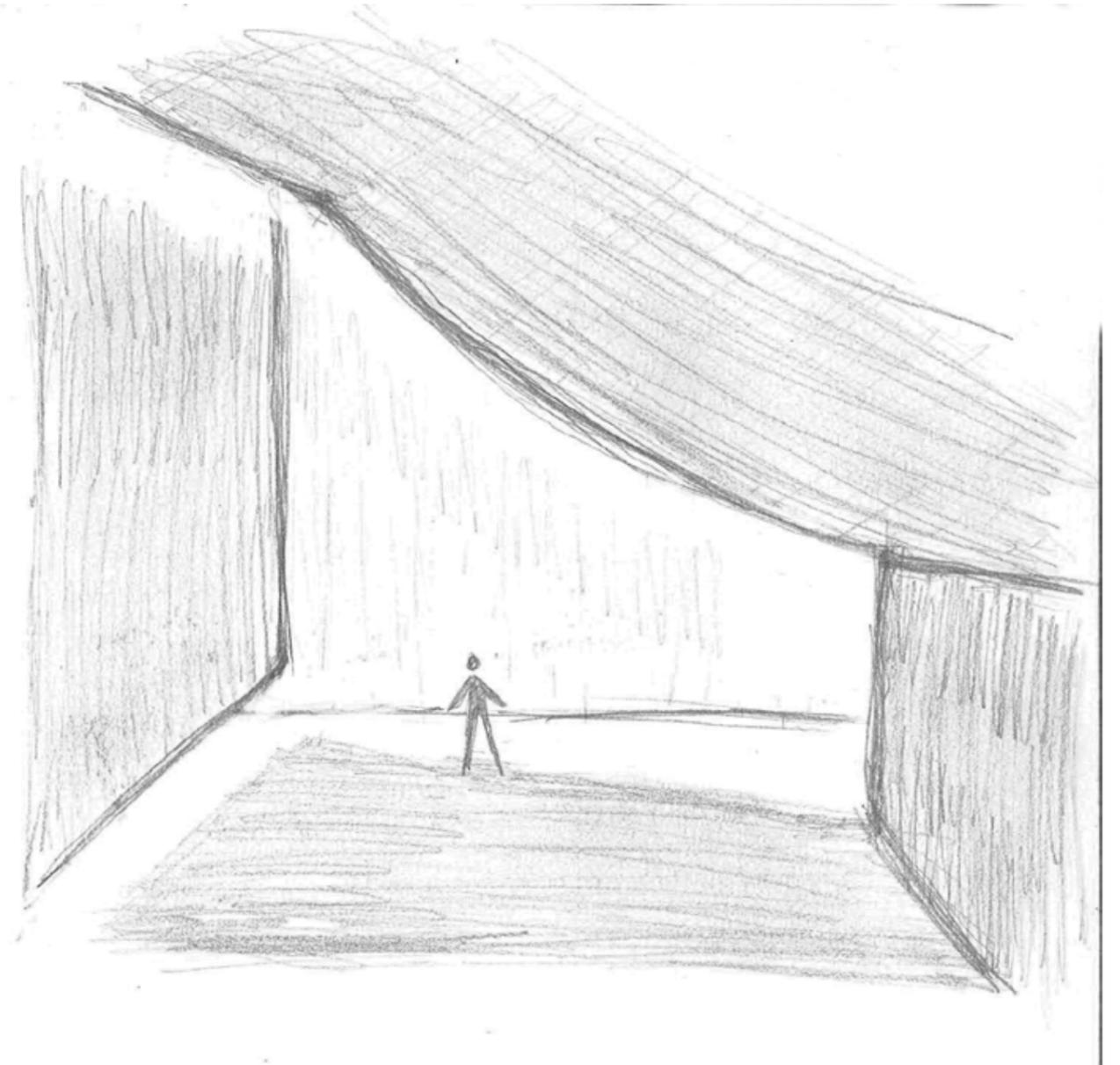
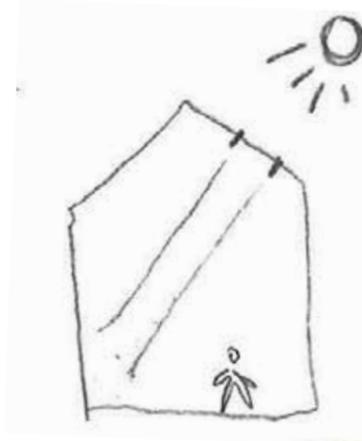
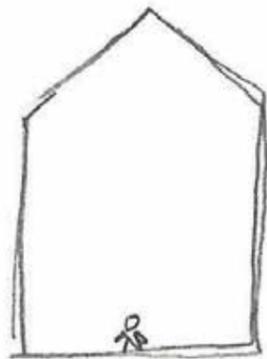
Window light



Focused light



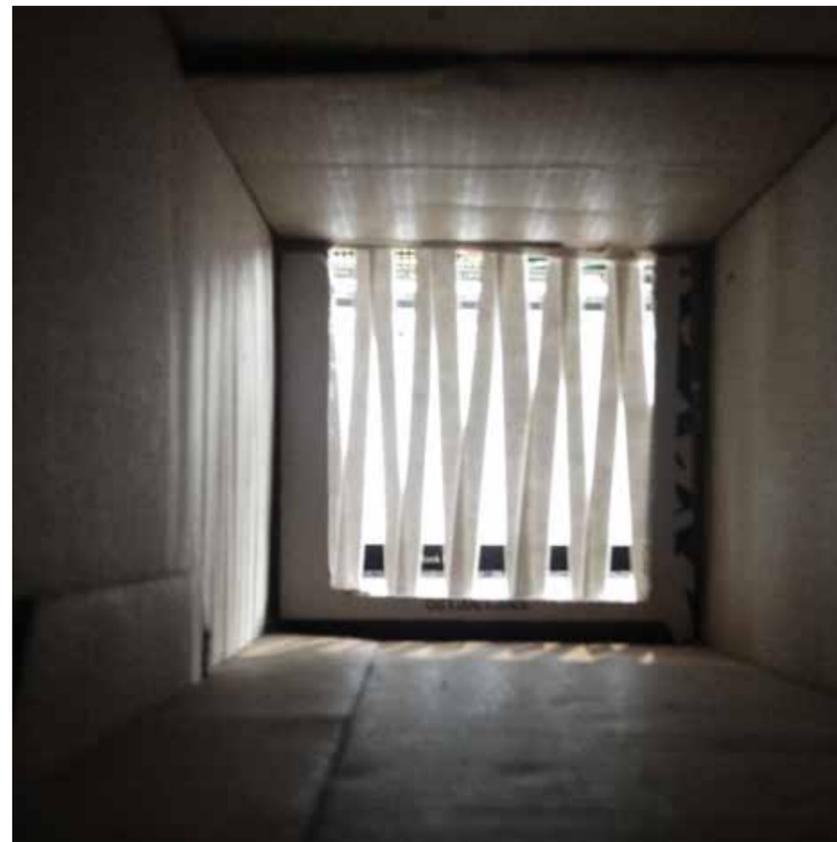
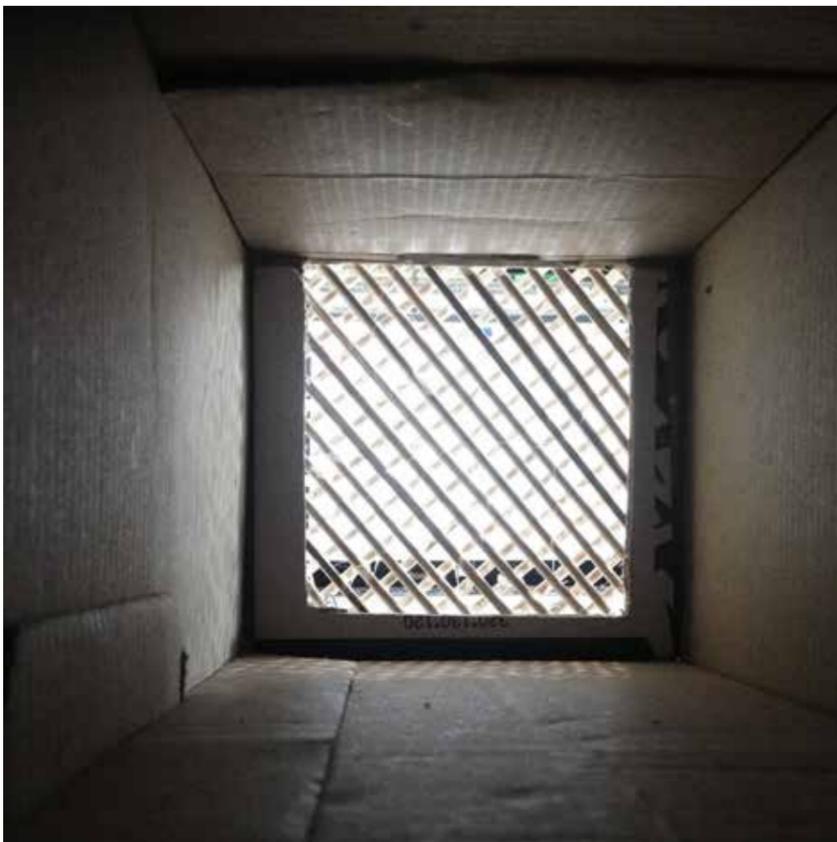
Patterned light



MODEL STUDIES

LIGHT

Natural and artificial light is often used in churches to direct attention, encourage for contemplation, the feeling of togetherness and to join in prays. In a secular building it should be possible for all the different ceremonies to have the light directed or focused at the space where the attention should be. For example a couple is getting married or a child getting baptised. In colder climate the architect has to be aware of the lack of light during winter and also try to use as much low light as possible.



CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

In Christian churches natural light was used to symbolise or get the feeling of holiness. In Romanesque domes they used only a few small windows to punctuate the massive walls to send rays of light in to the dark hall it were thought to be light from God. Later on the Gothic cathedrals thought the windows where the essence of beauty and used coloured glass to be a fusion between man-made and the light of God. During the Baroque period the architects started to control the light to highlight the fresco on the ceiling and illuminating the altar.

SYNAGOGUES

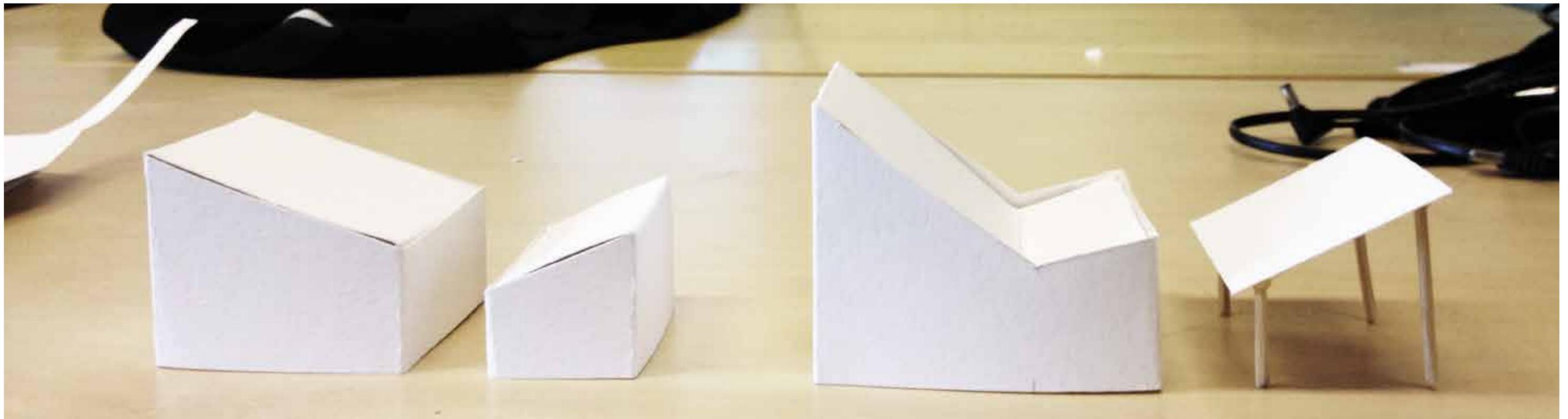
In synagogues light was thought to be God's first act of creation and God was often called The light. The light has a similar importance in synagogues as in Christian churches. It is an eternal light that never dies out and represents the presence of God. The hall should be lit from windows, glazed walls and skylight. The room should be free from distraction and enlighten the bimah from above to make him the centre of attention. The walls should also be lit from above and if there is a window it should be a diffuse light.

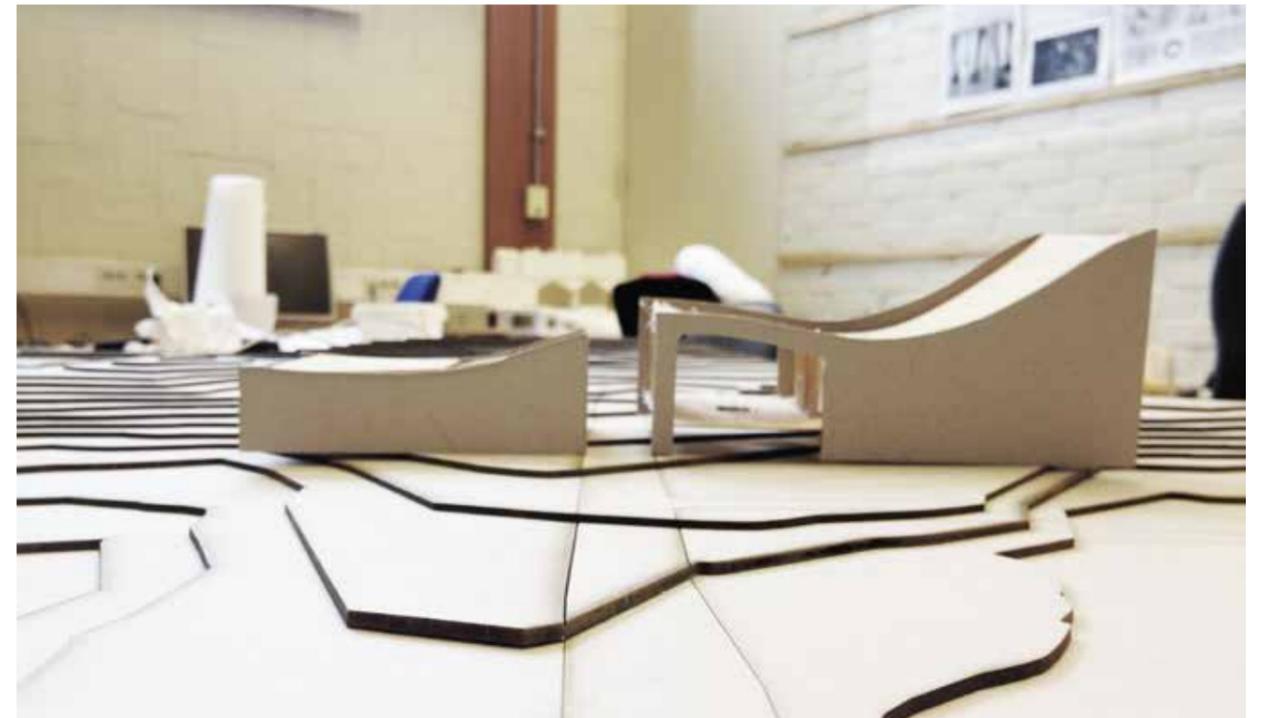
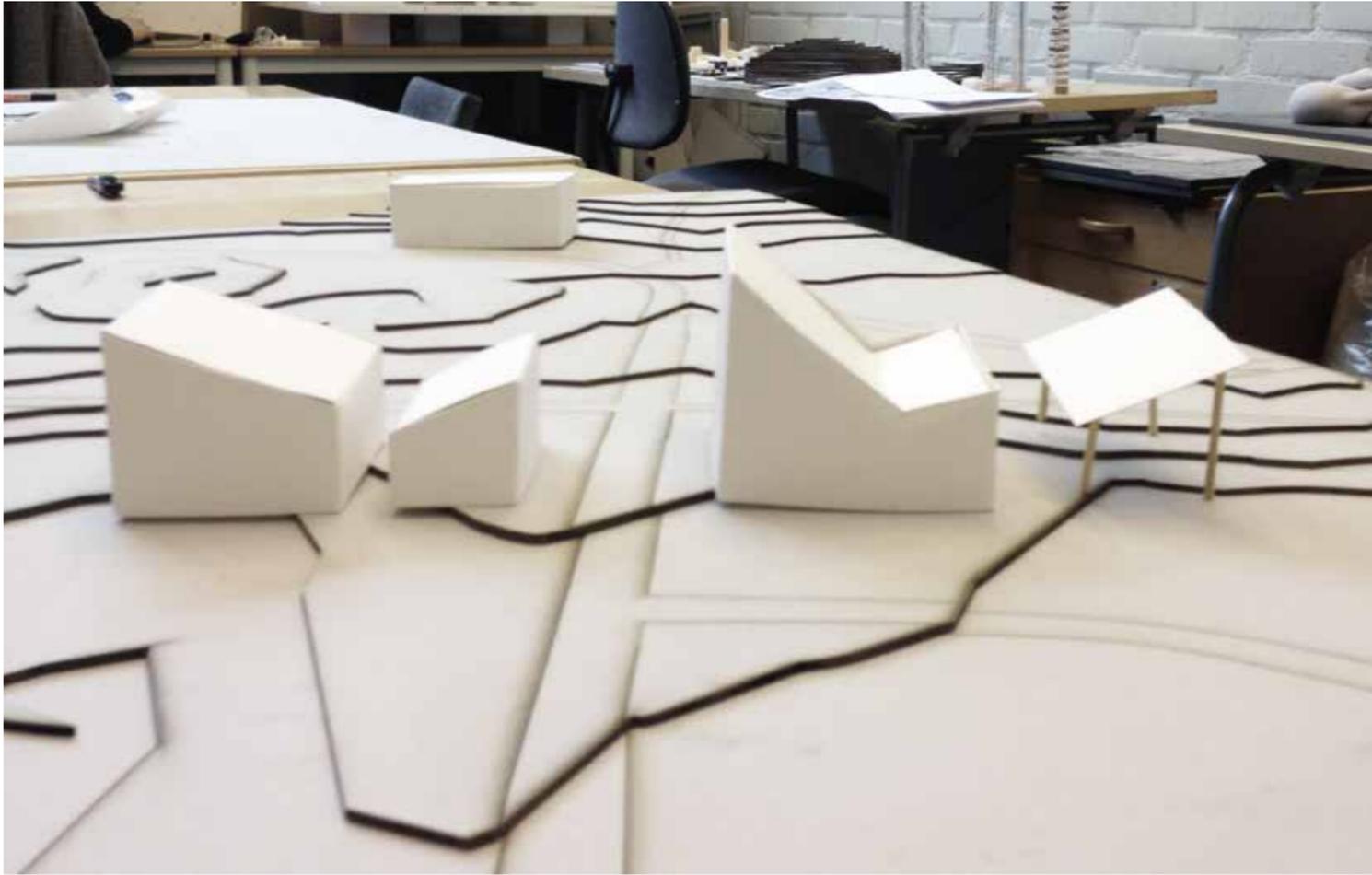
MOSQUES

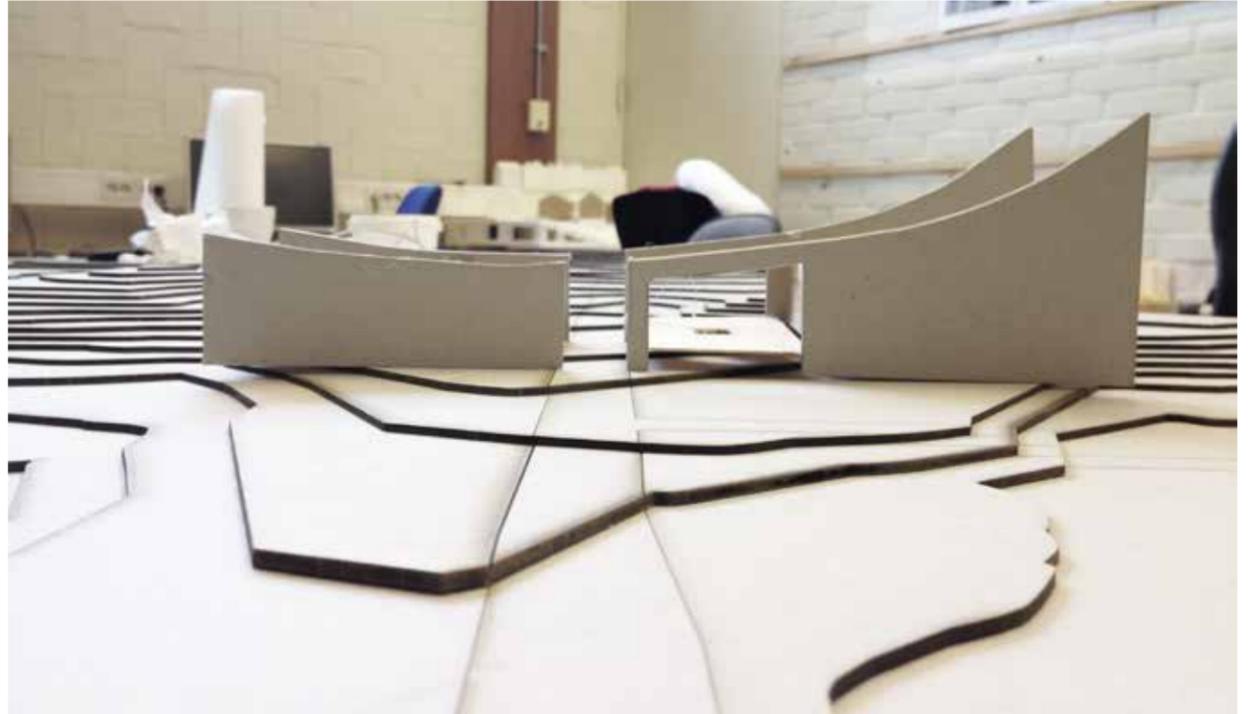
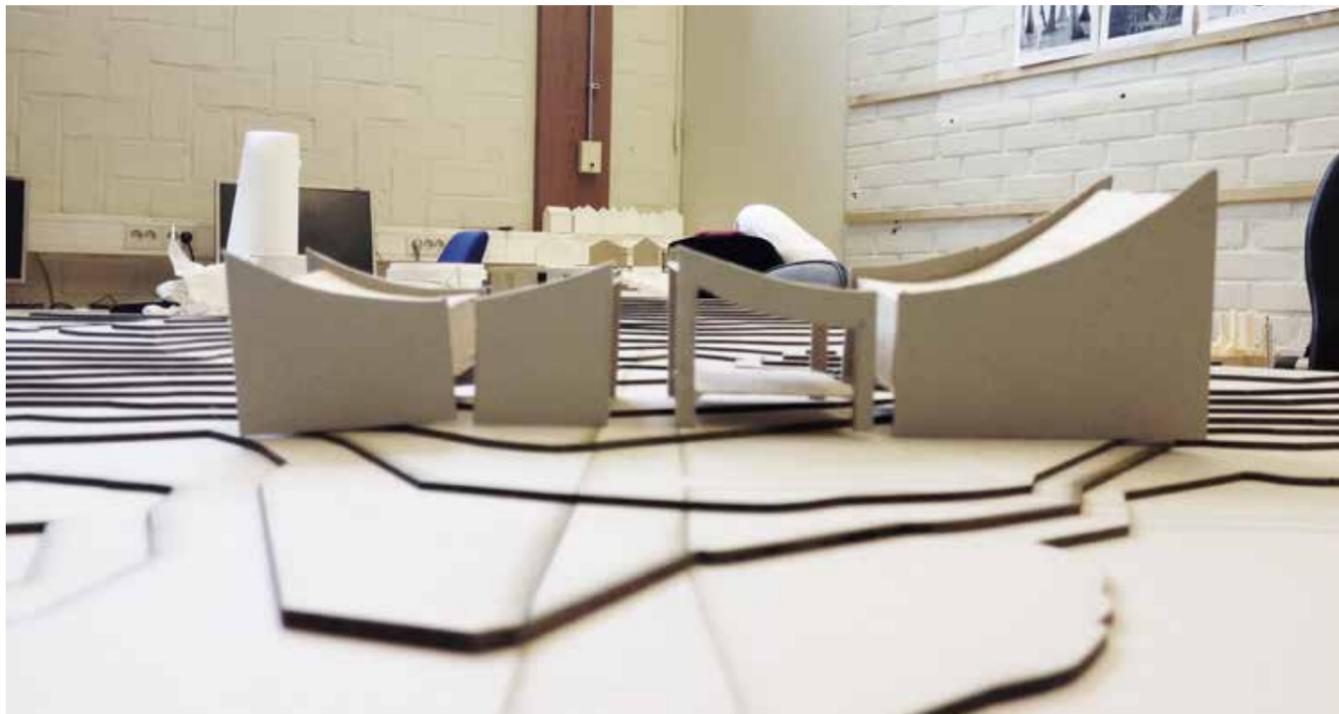
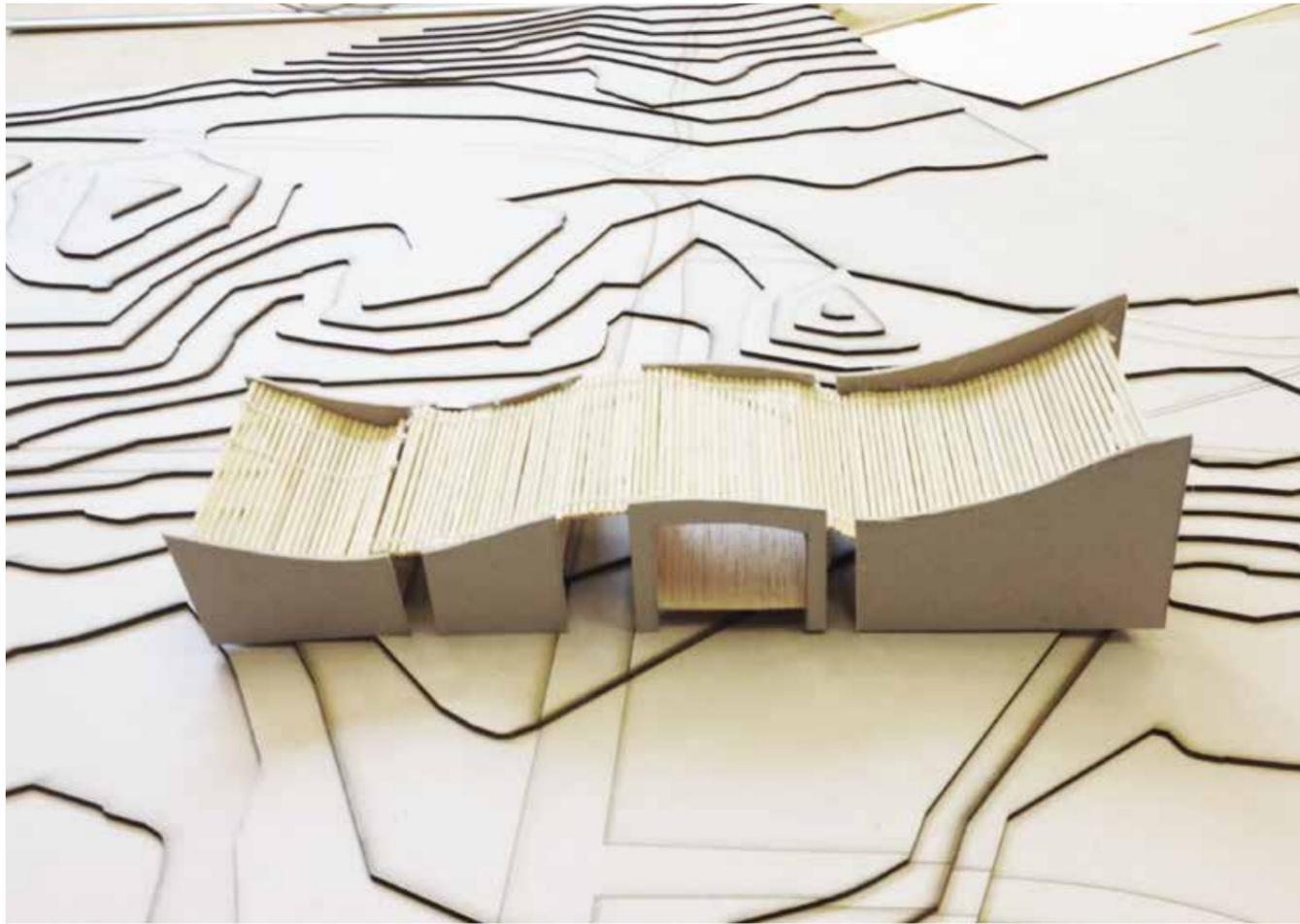
Except for Kaaba in Mecca, light is not used to indicate symbolic meaning in the mosque. In Islam they say that "God is the light of the heaven and the earth". The light is suppose to define the form of the prayer hall and its extents rather than creating mystical atmospheres. The mosque should be illuminated evenly to produce a space of great unity and peace.

MODEL ON SIGHT

Working with models to study shapes, conditions and composition of the interior





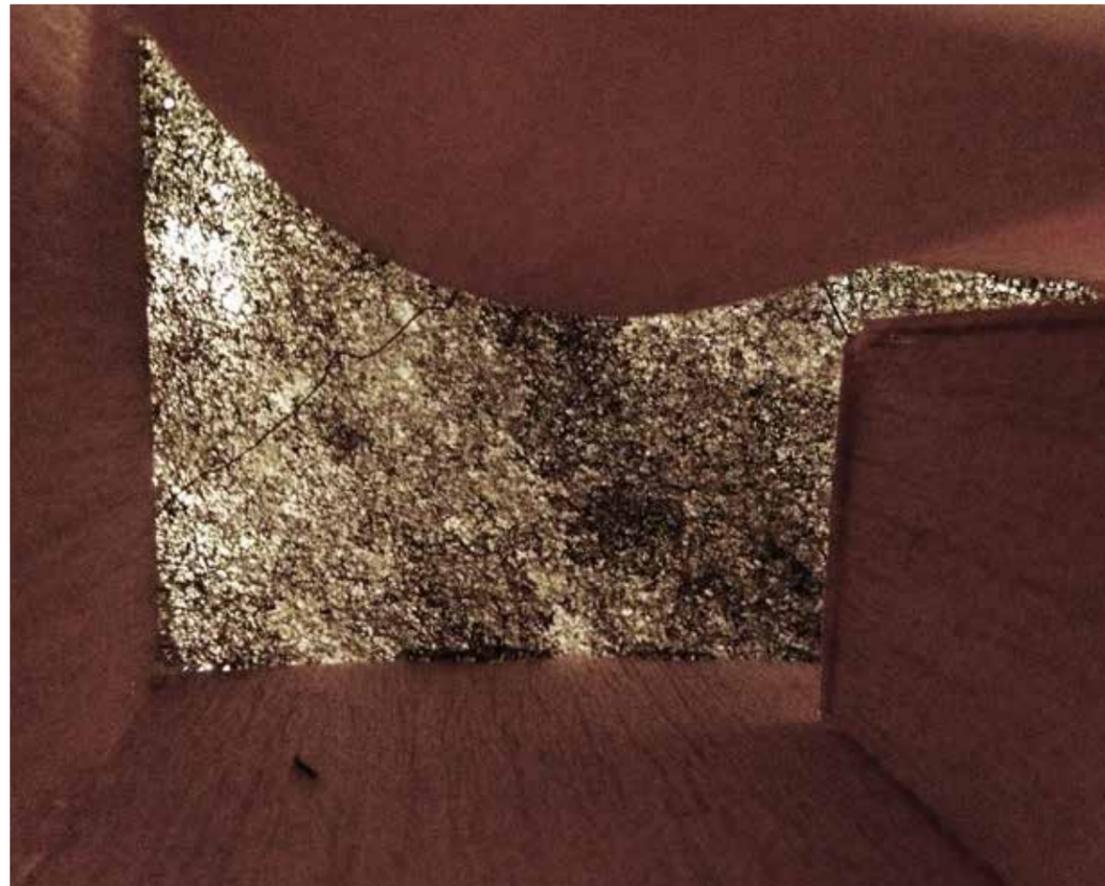
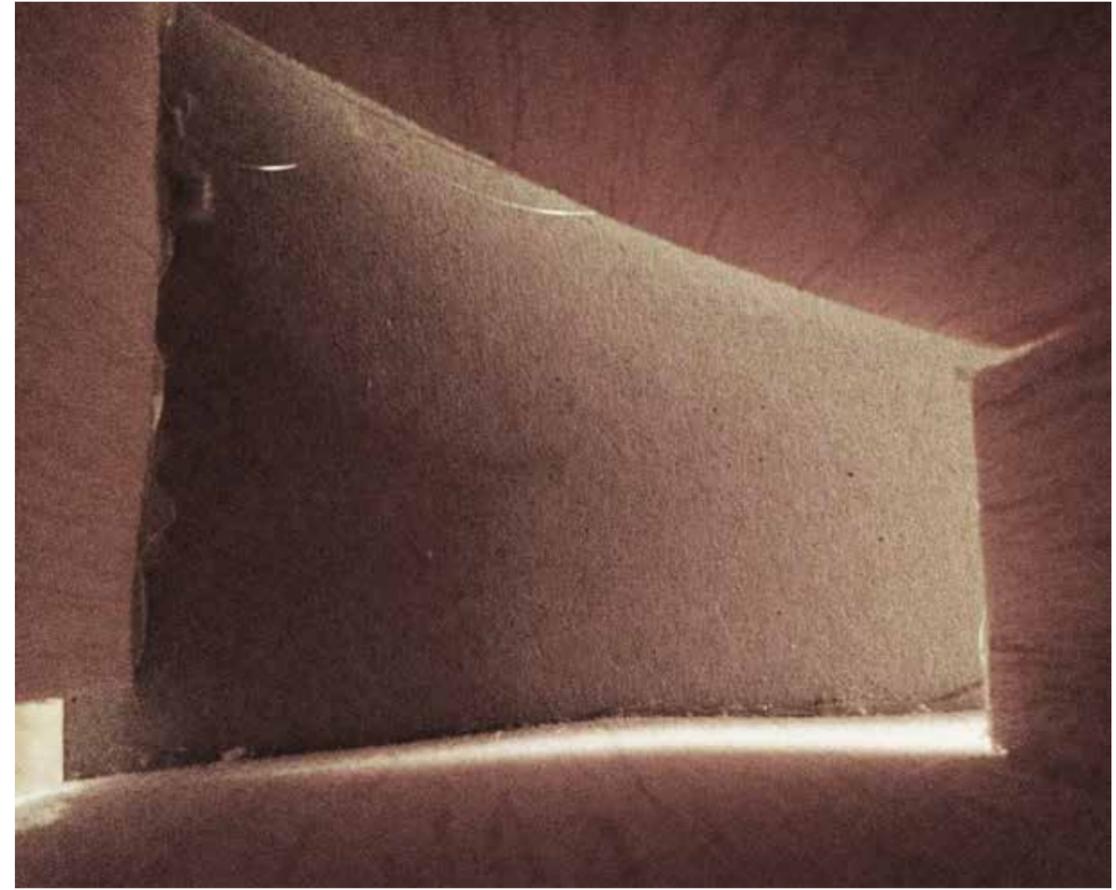


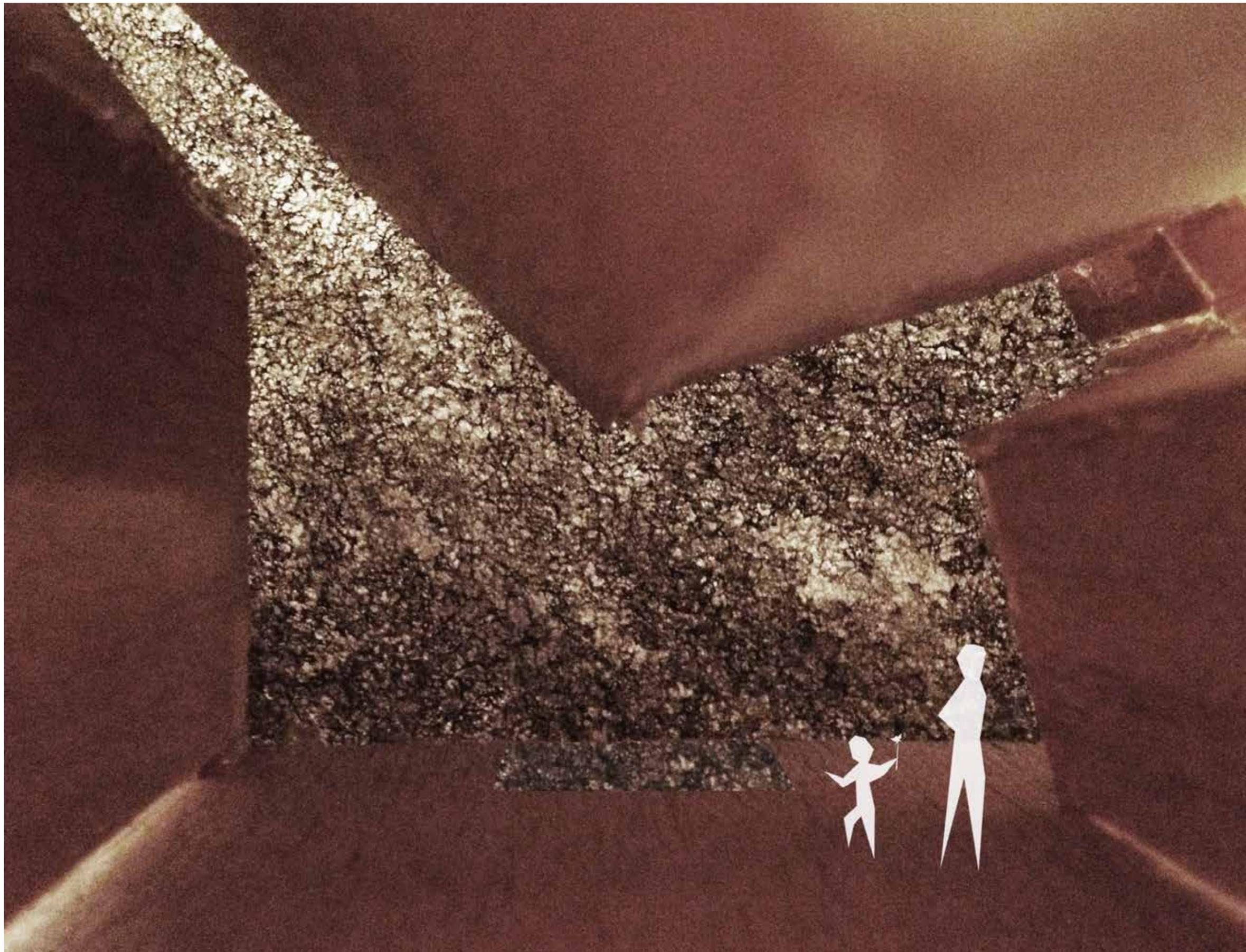
MATERIALITY AND INTERIOR

Working with models to study shapes, conditions and composition of the interior



Transparent concrete was used as a reference when making the models for the interior.







PRESENTATION AND FEEDBACK



MODEL IN SCALE 1:50





Colophon

Master's programme Architecture and Urban Design

Design studio
Matter, Space, Structure

Examiner Morten Lund
Supervisor Daniel Norell