



VARONE 2127

- A study on relation between human & the home through design
of a private villa

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Chalmers University of Technology
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
Examiner: Mikael Ekegren
Supervisor: Björn Gross



2022

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ACEX35

Abstract

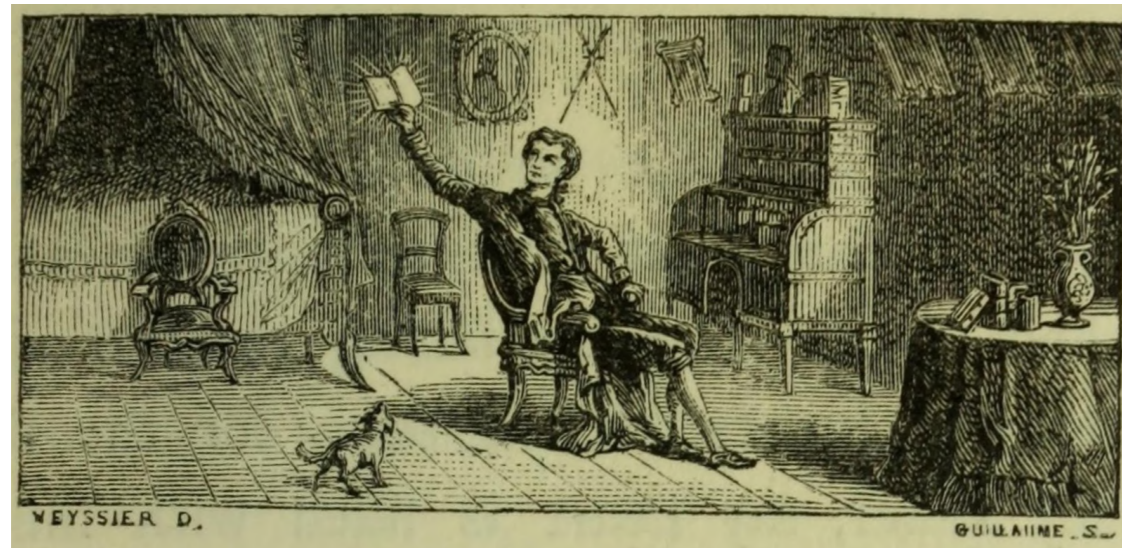
The relation people have to buildings is undeniable. It is even more obvious in our homes, a place we are born in, we take our first steps, we construct our memories, we spent time with our loved ones and a place we die in. It has been with us evermore as humans have been seeking for reliable shelter as long as its existence extends back in history. Or as Xavier de Maistre describes it in *A Journey Round my Room* (1794),

"...it is here that during one half of a life-time we forget the annoyances of the other half. But what a host of thoughts, some agreeable, some sad, throng my brain at once, — strange minglings of terrible and delicious pictures! A bed sees us born, and sees us die. It is the ever changing scene upon which the human race play by turns interesting dramas, laughable farces, and fearful tragedies. It is a cradle decked with flowers. A throne of love. A sepulchre."

This shows how distinctive and intimate the relation between human and the home is. Therefore the question of more personalized design of homes becomes relevant here. This thesis focuses on designing a private house in a very unique and attractive part of Switzerland, in relation to above mentioned point of view as the main design approach.

In that sense what is better than looking at this unique relationship between mankind and the home extensively and form the elements that also come very close to human beings and their bodies. Namely to look at the details as an extension to architecture. Through this, the whole becomes more interconnected and a link is created that further strengthens the relationship between individual and the built environment.

Keywords : Architecture, human, home, relation.



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Introduction

Reading instructions

The term personalized design and designing from inside-out is used repeatedly in this work. By the two of these the author do not determines to personalized as to a specific client and their requirements but human in general, as a tailor-made suit customized for a particular occasion to fit on a specific body which is the landscape in this case. Also as a matter of fact since the process of creation and design is such a subjective action, obviously, that the terms rather refer to the architect and his way of approaching the project.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to get close, as much as architecture possibly can, to humans. The home is one of the most, if not the most, fundamental man-made ingredients of our life which we all share in common. We all have some kind of a place we call home. The meaning of home can differ considerably and it does not necessarily need to be characterized by matter in a physical sense, nor by a place. As the thesis intends to go back to architecture's roots, which is its relation to humans, according to the author. Designing a private house is considered as a reasonable starting point for this work.

Aim

This thesis will focus on the relation between architecture and its consisting elements. How the built environment can bear the stamp of being designed inside-out and extensively with the vision to create a seamless whole.

In particular, It investigates how the design of a housing project can be related to a specific place, and fully equipped, to an extend where the future inhabitant will only need to bring very few personal items when moving in. Everything else is made by the same perception and for the same context as the house itself.

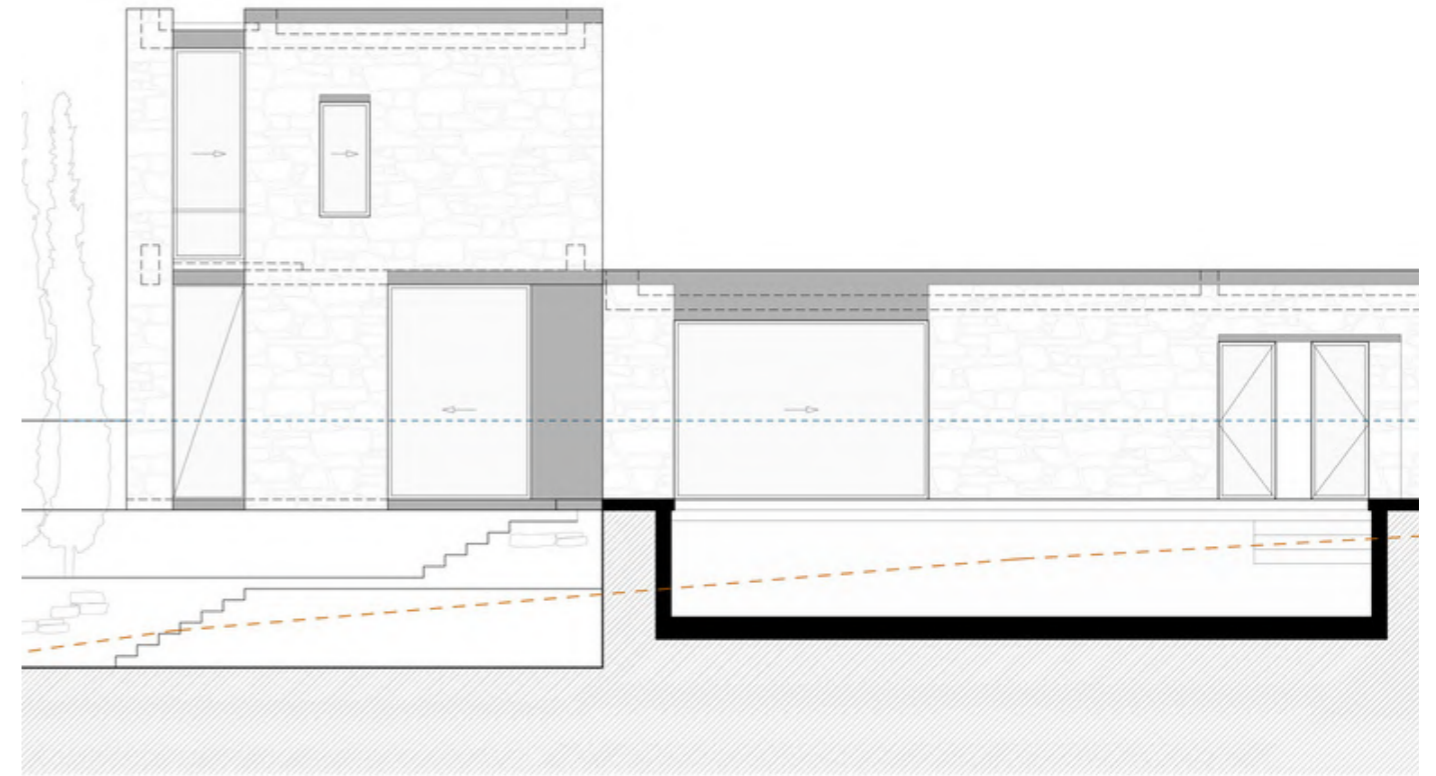
Research questions

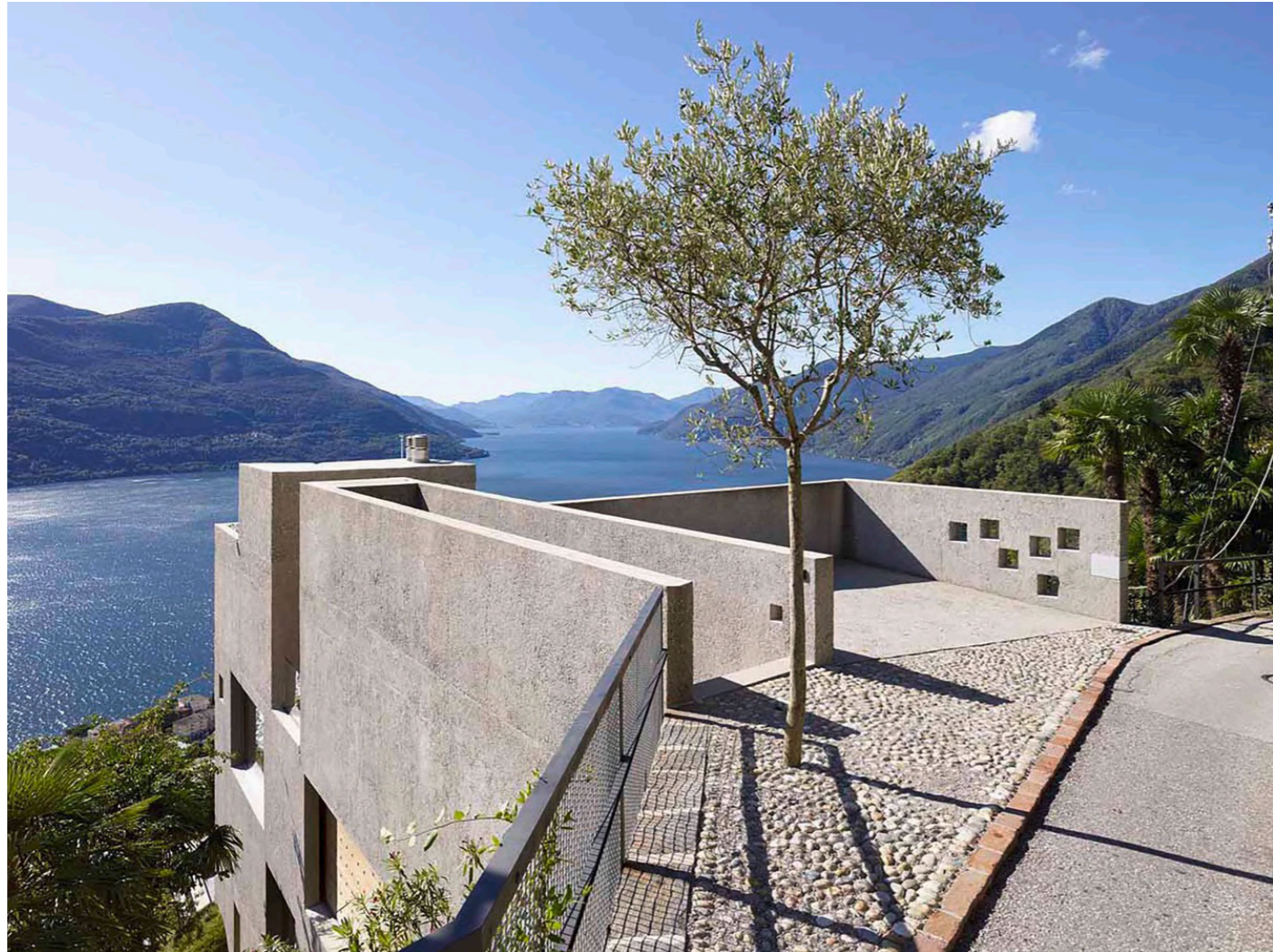
- How will the design of a private villa in this specific piece of land (Varone 2127), in Brissago, Switzerland, be?
- How can architecture strengthen the relation between the home and its inhabitants to make a meaningful whole?

Research by design is the main approach in this master's thesis. The design itself will be consisting of different phases in a closed loop rather than on a linear timelapse. This means the design phase will be an ongoing process throughout the whole project. As it is displayed in the time plan at the end of this work, the first part will be dominated by researching through case studies, literature studies and sketching to study the anatomy of human and come closer to it in order to design adapted to it, but also to be able to then make the connection between the architecture and the human through the project as a whole, architecture's long arm.

The second phase will then be dedicated to designing the surrounding, which is the building itself. As mentioned, the plan is to progress in a closed loop of ongoing adaption of the design from different ends in order to transform the knowledge gained during the investigation into one whole housing project.

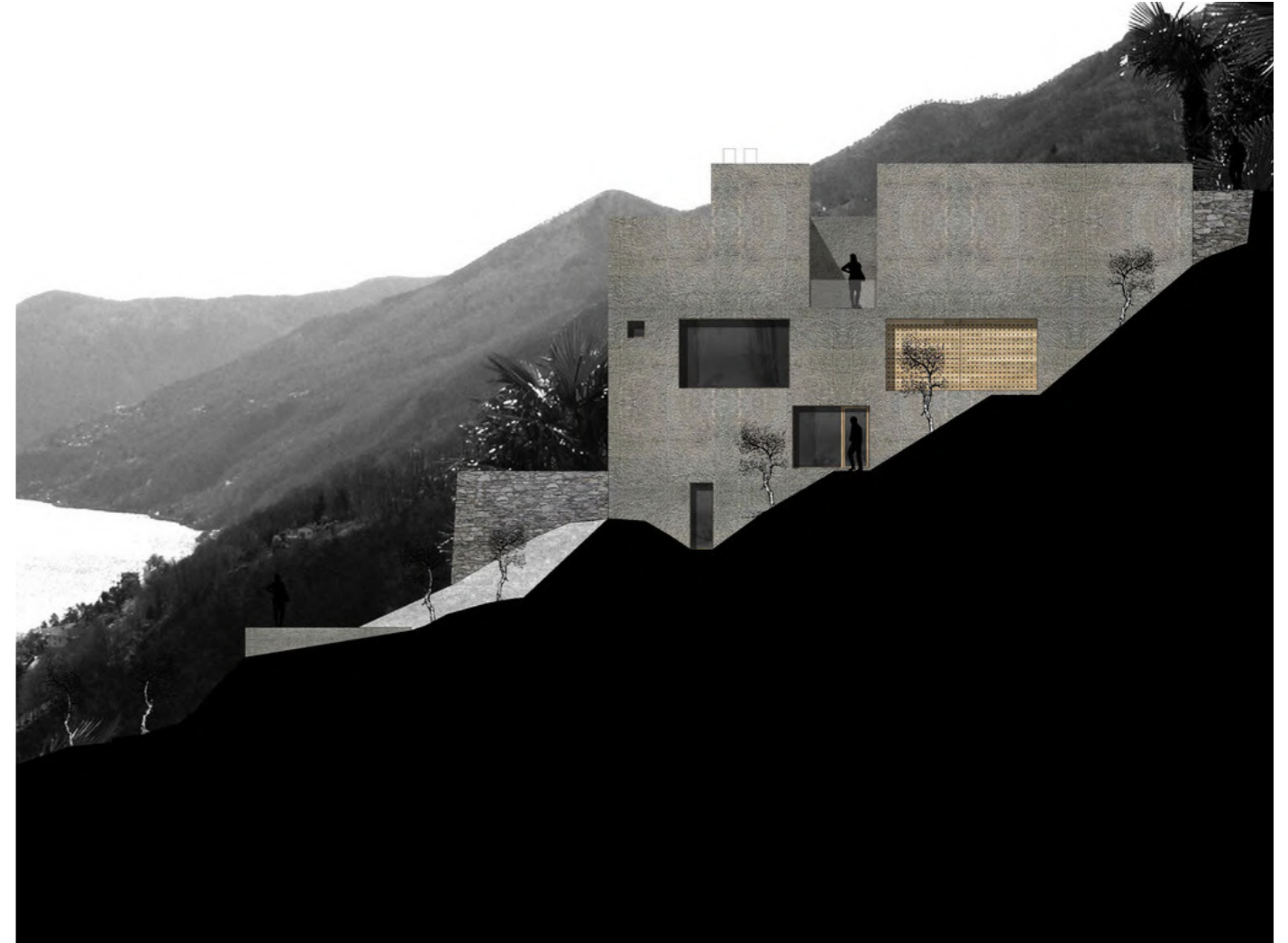
This investigation seeks to tackle the research questions from an aesthetic point of view rather than solving general global issues such as environmental challenges or poverty. The focus is the loveability factor rather than sustainability. Nonetheless the visual value has its impact on how the built environment is preserved and sustained. The thesis neither aims to impose how the relation between built environment and its constituent components or ornamentation, e.g. the furnitures, should be. Instead, how in a certain context these can be merged.





Wespi de Meuron Romeo, House in Brissago
Varone 2127

Brissago, Switzerland 2013
Figure 4



Wespi de Meuron Romeo, House in Brissago
Figure 5

Brissago, Switzerland 2013
Spring 2022



Wespi de Meuron Romeo, Holiday house in Scaiano
Varone 2127

Caviano, Switzerland 2005
Figure 6



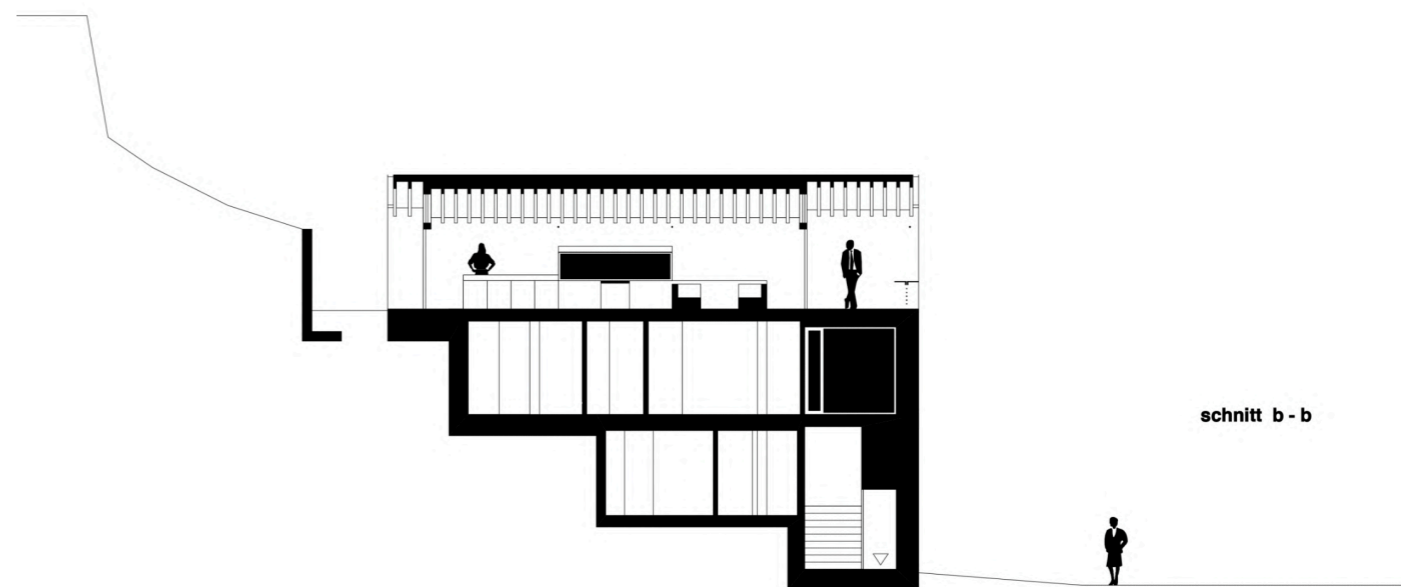
Wespi de Meuron Romeo, Holiday house in Scaiano
Figure 7

Caviano, Switzerland 2005
Spring 2022



Wespi de Meuron Romeo, House in Morcote
Varone 2127

Morcote, Switzerland 2003
Figure 8



Wespi de Meuron Romeo, House in Morcote
Figure 9

Morcote, Switzerland 2003
Spring 2022

Background

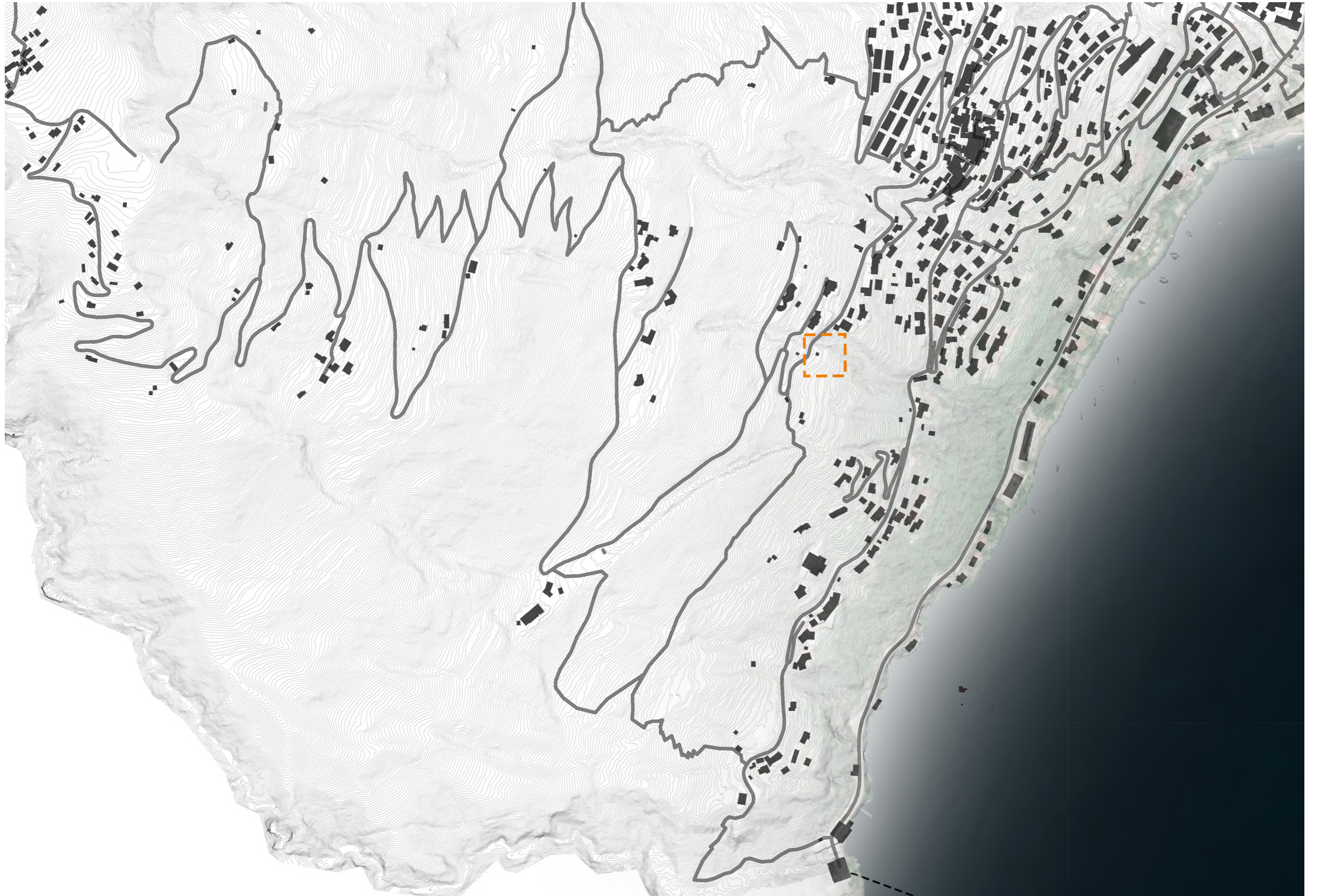
The chosen site, Brissago, canton of Ticino in southern Switzerland, is an Italian-speaking region with palm-lined lakes and sharp Alpine peaks. This region is known for many things, not least for its warm climate, nature and the terraced vineyards. However, when it comes to architecture, it is not an exception, being one of the hottest spots in the whole country for tourists and people from all over the country, but also for architecture firms as the demands are vastly high, especially for private villas.

I personally had the opportunity to travel a lot in Switzerland during my ex-change semester in Lausanne and became inspired by the architecture, landscape and also the contrast one can experience in culture, language, climate, architecture, etc. for being such a small country compared to Sweden.

Apart from that for a long time, I've been inspired by the great work of some big names in architecture and have been trying to figure out the main essence or the one thing that they all have in common which makes these works great to my eyes. In my opinion, the magnificent attention they all paid to the details from the smallest component to make a unified whole is the resemblance which brings all the masterpieces together. This has turned into an obsession which provokes a desire to take this very superb opportunity given at the very end of a didactic journey to investigate the relation between these very little but sharp elements and its context as a whole. For instance, the furniture inside a house.

With the given background, this thesis strives to combine the two ideas of personalized design and designing from inside-out on a specific piece of land, into one housing project.



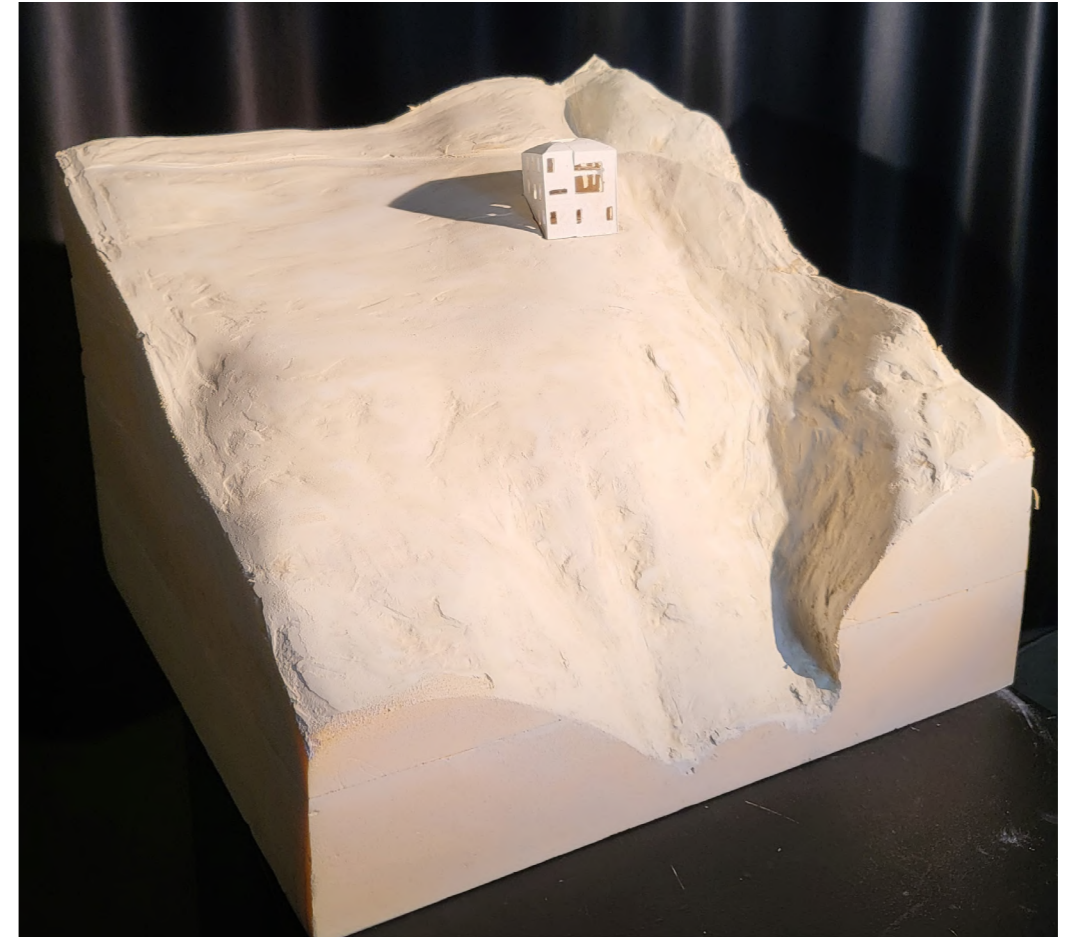


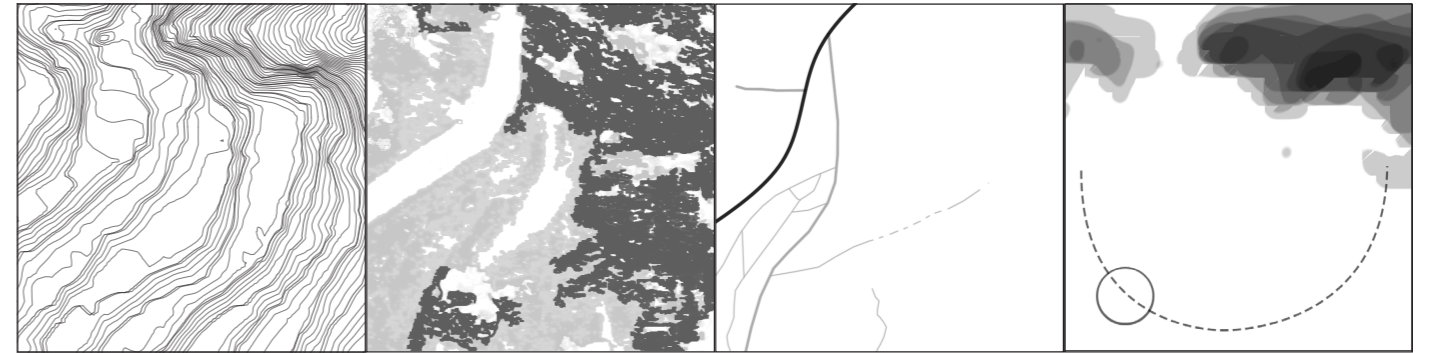
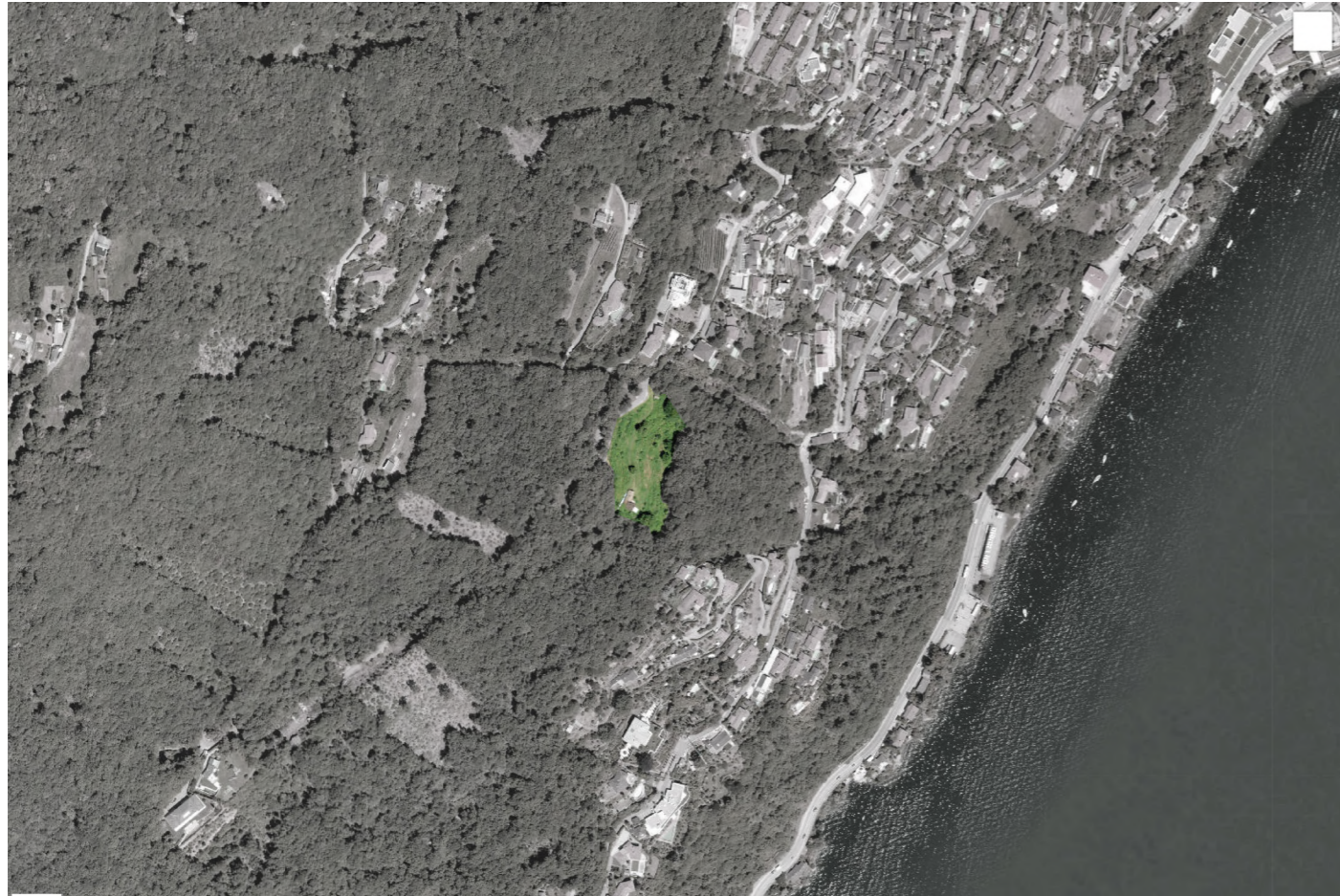
+876 m

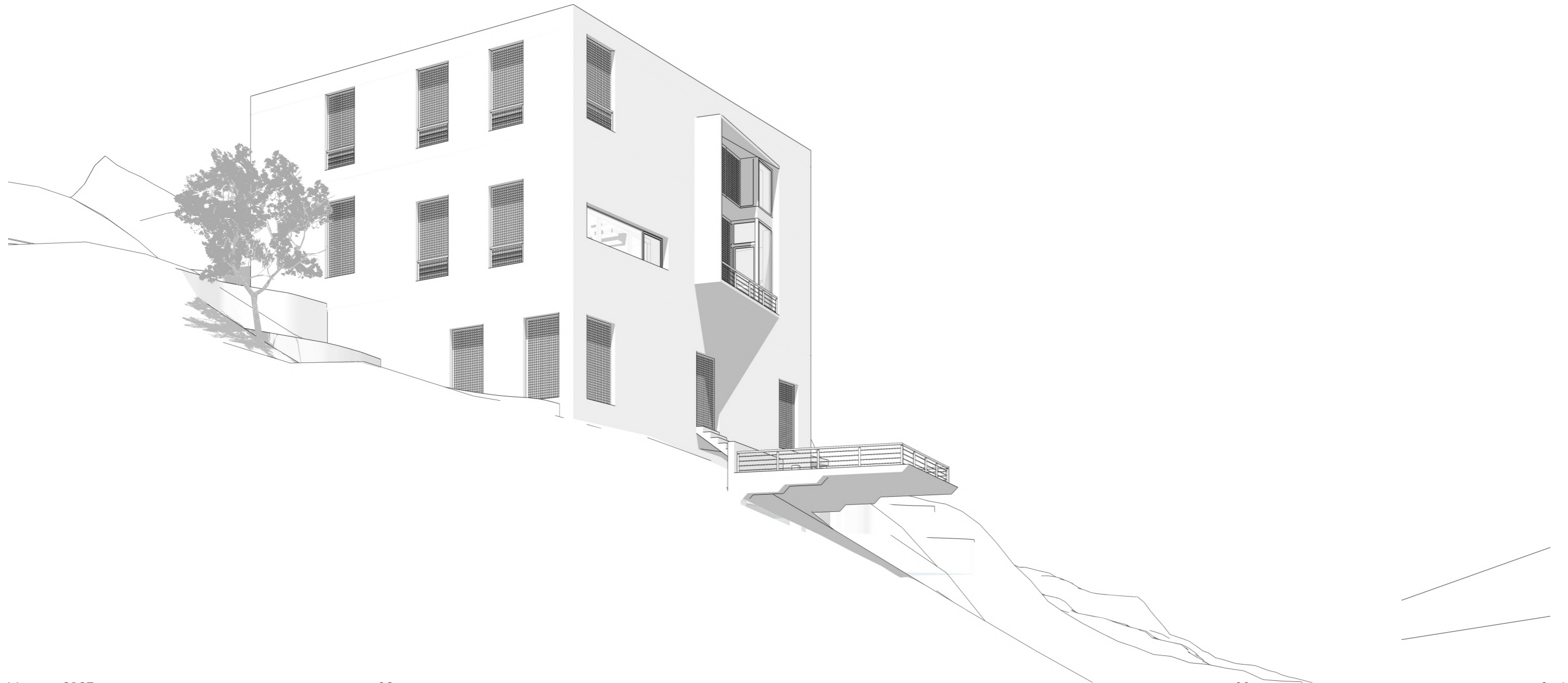
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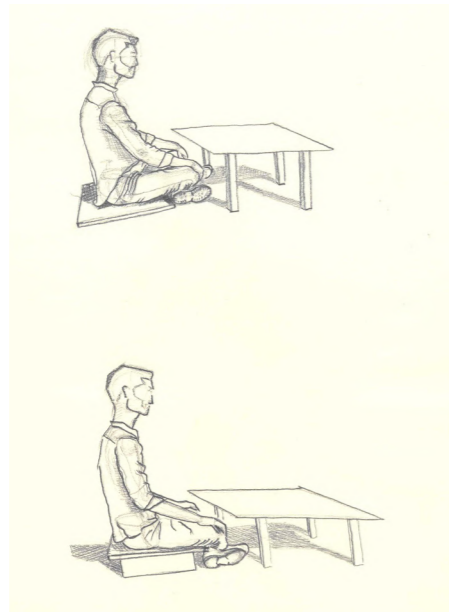
+193 m

The site





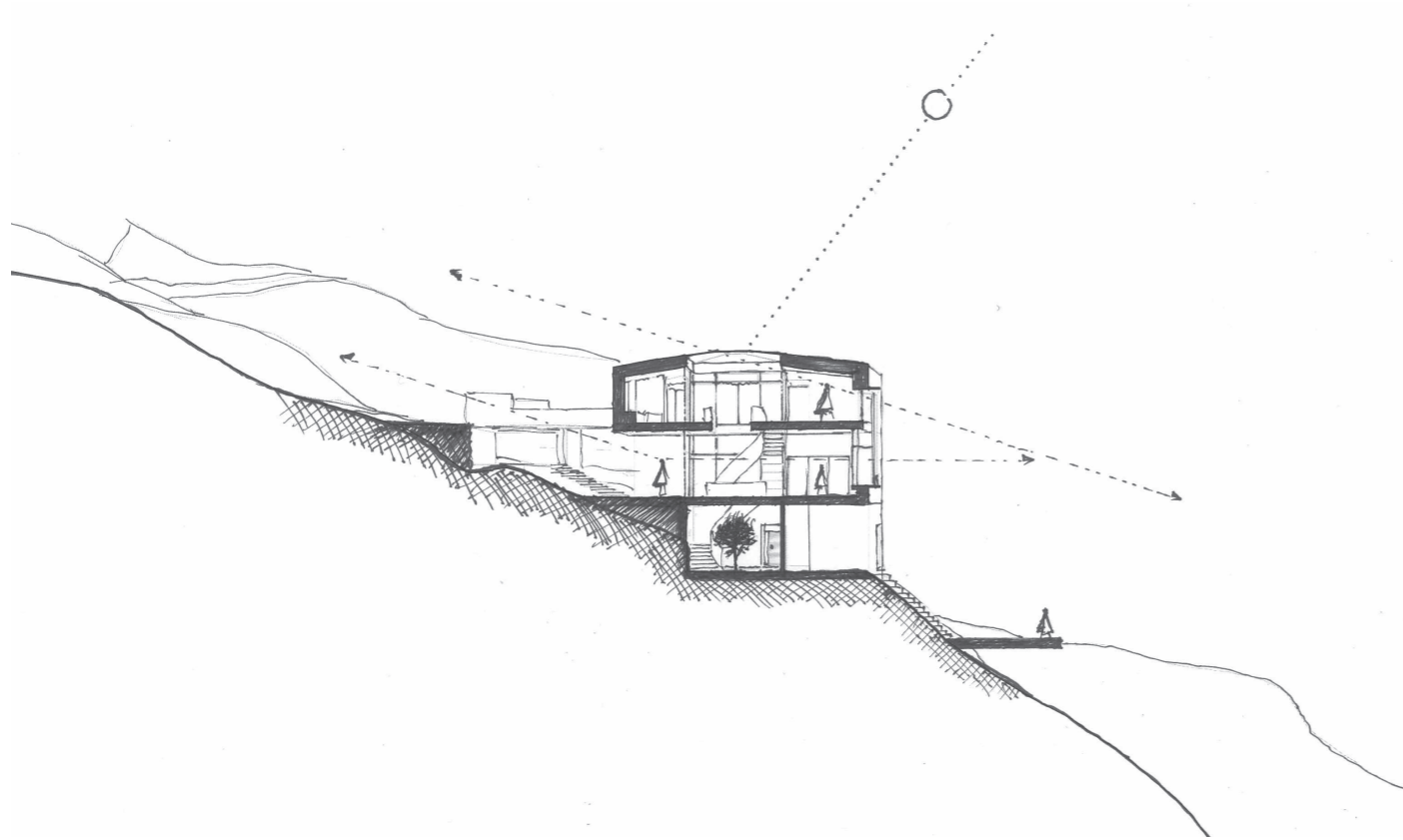


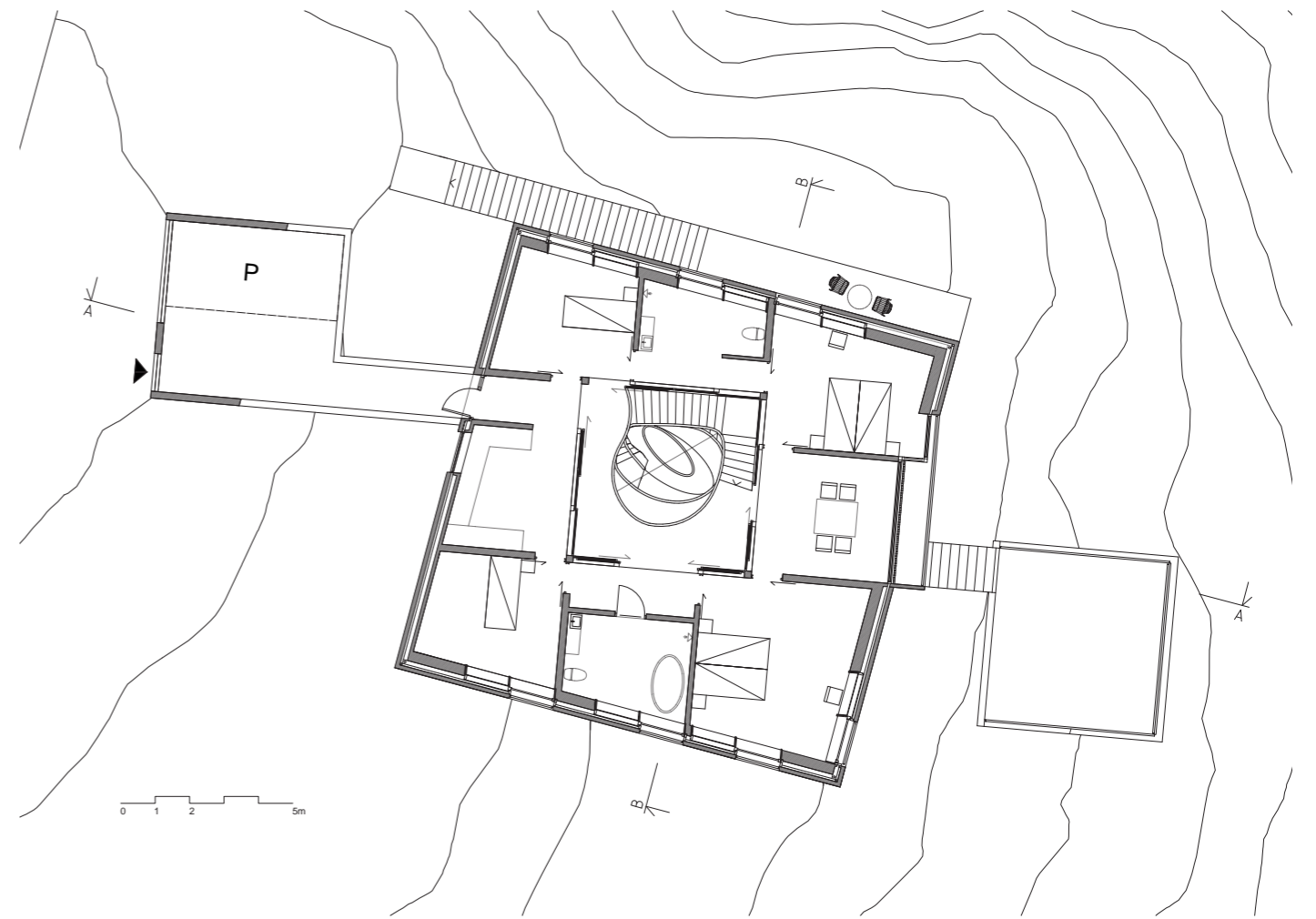
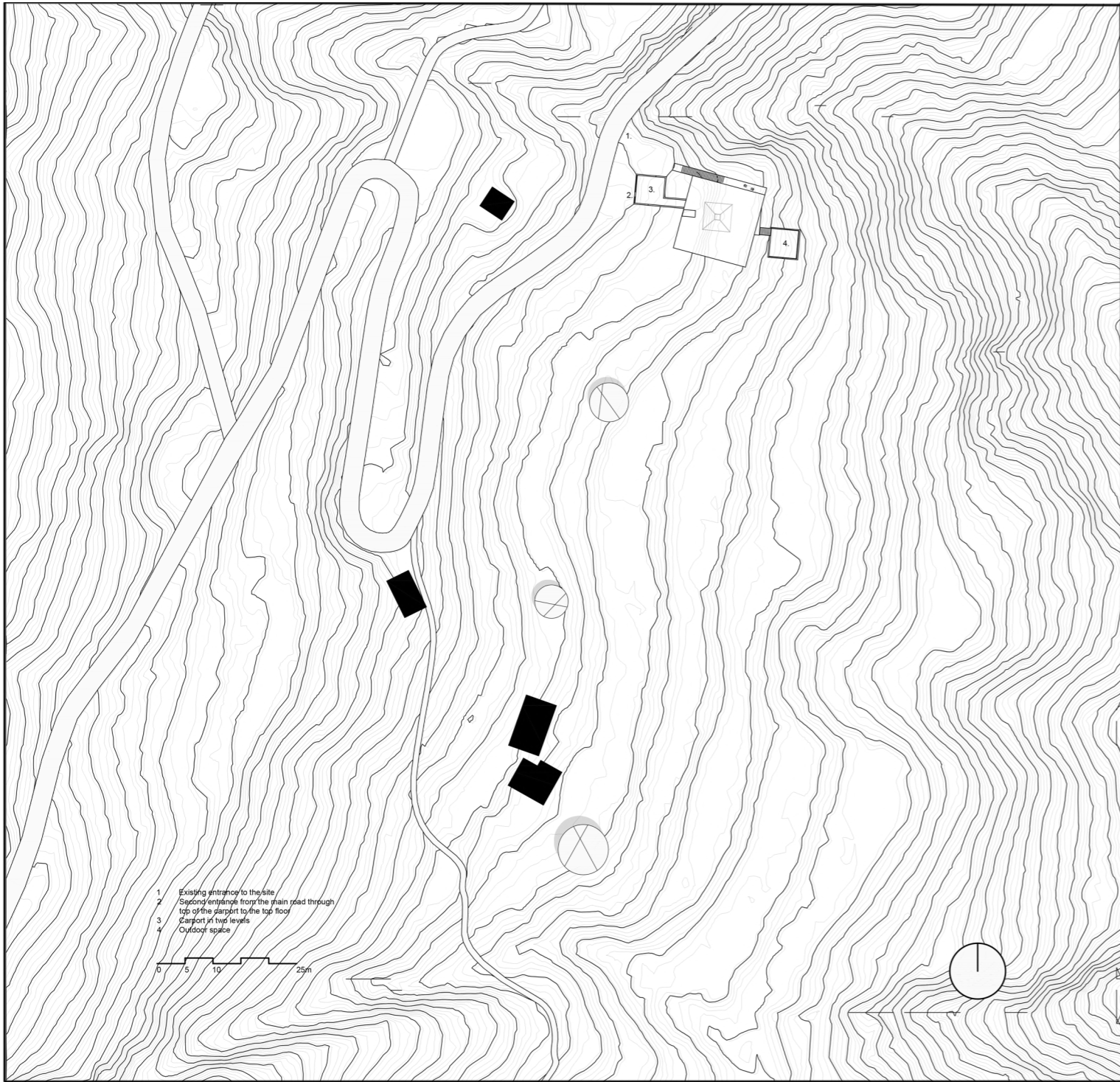


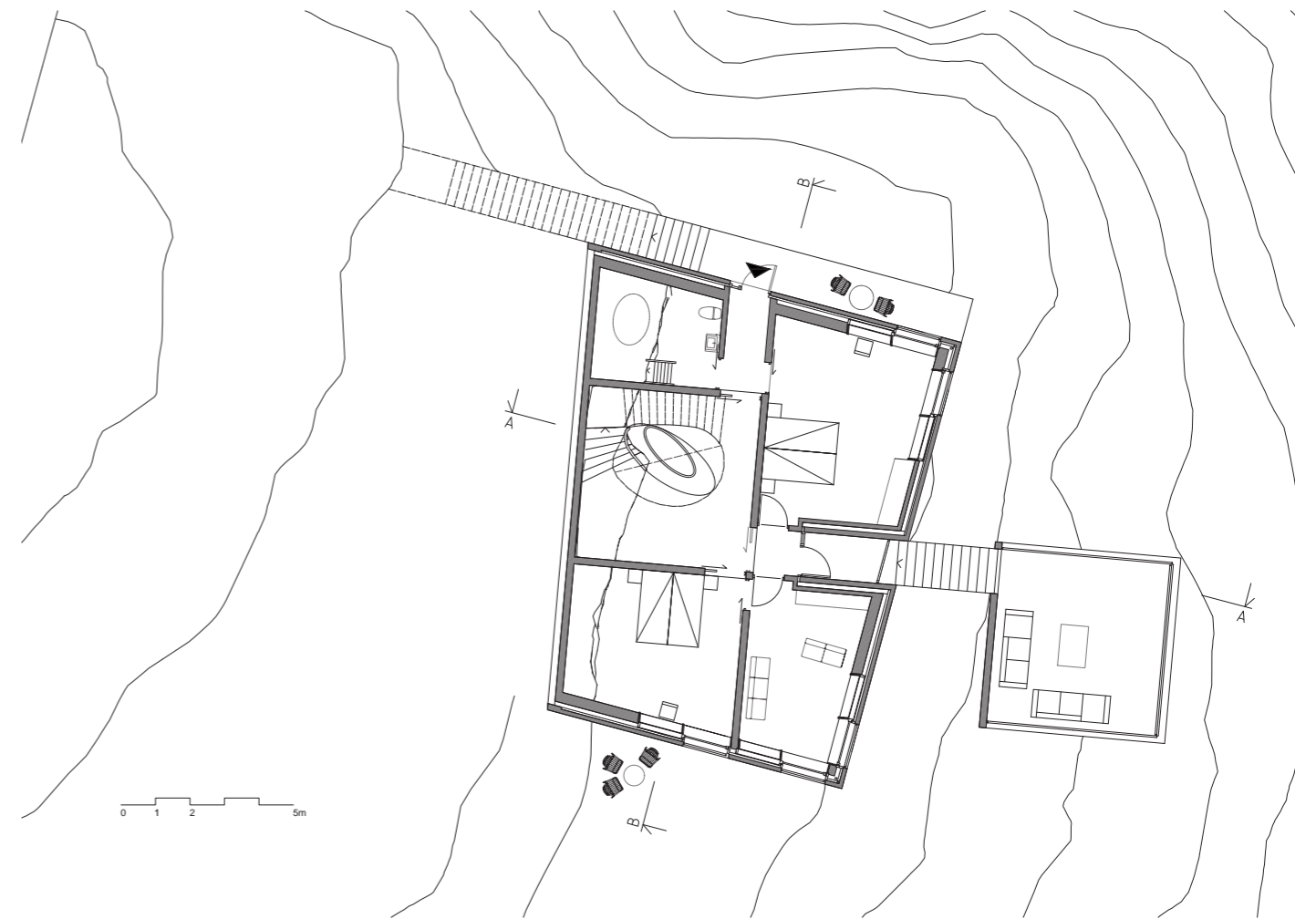
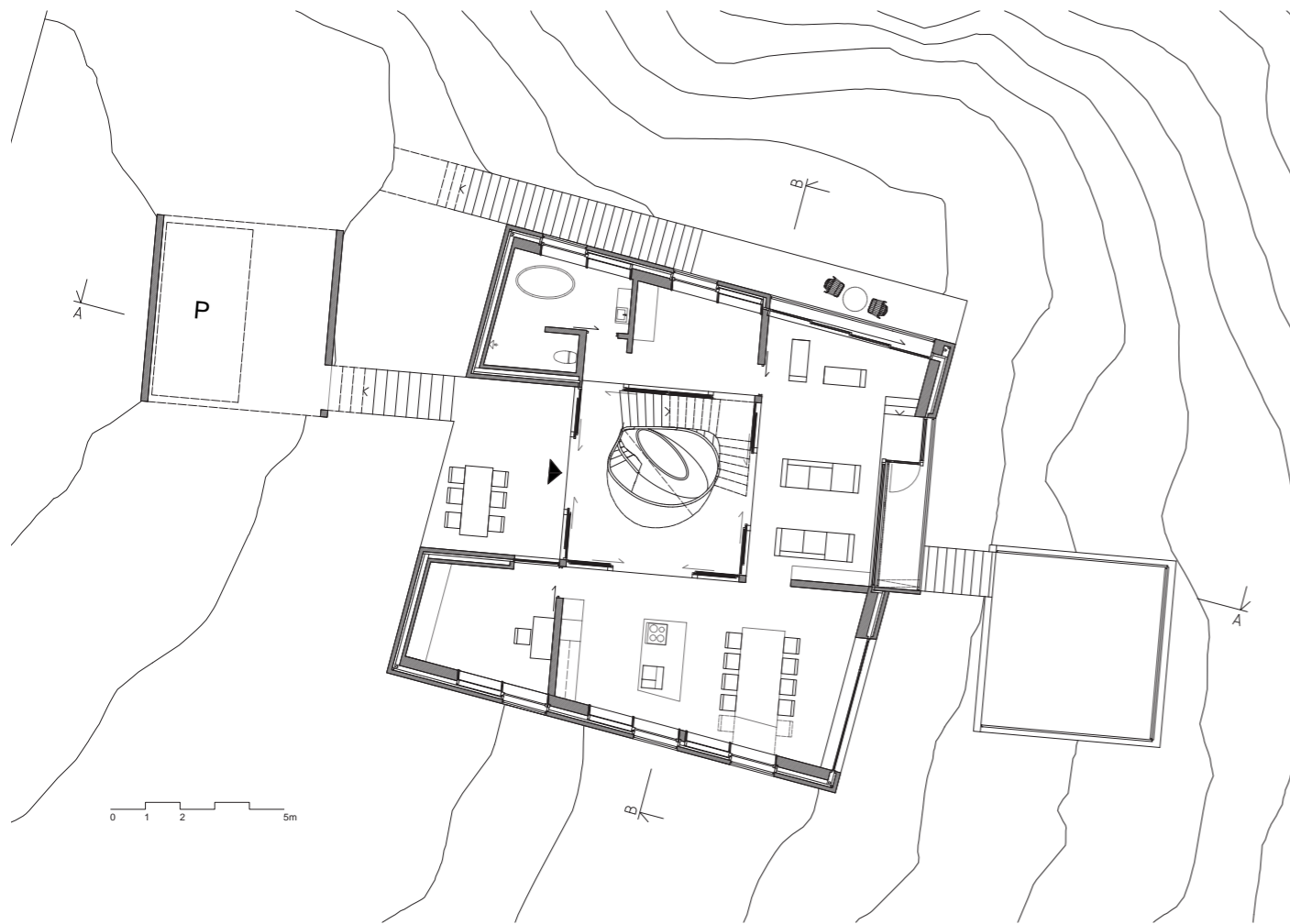
In order to better understand the relation between humans and the home, the idea for this exercise was to get to know the human body at first. The interesting conclusion made at the end of this exercise of sketching human anatomy was that, even without seeing the faces, one will have a prediction of the emotions that are expressed by these bodies and how they are shaped around different objects.



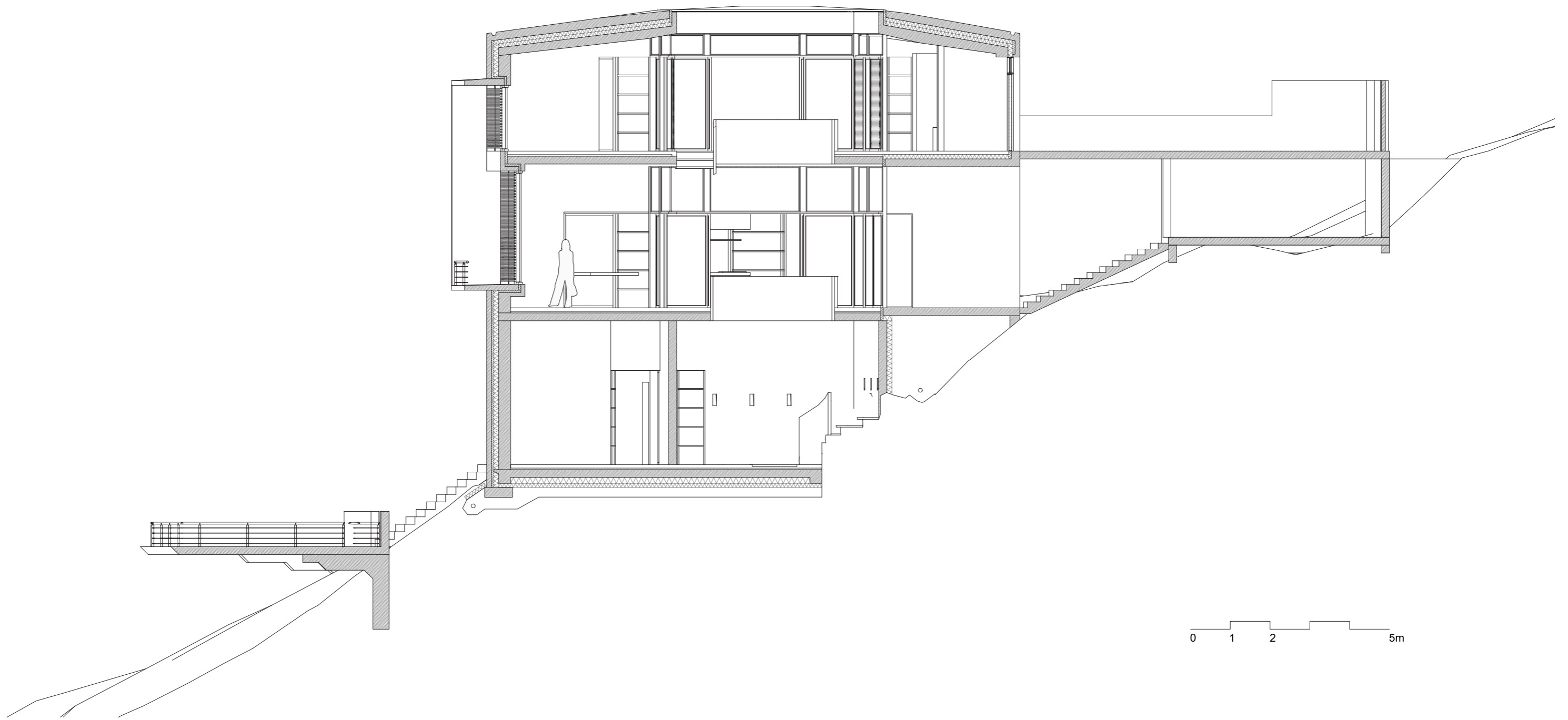


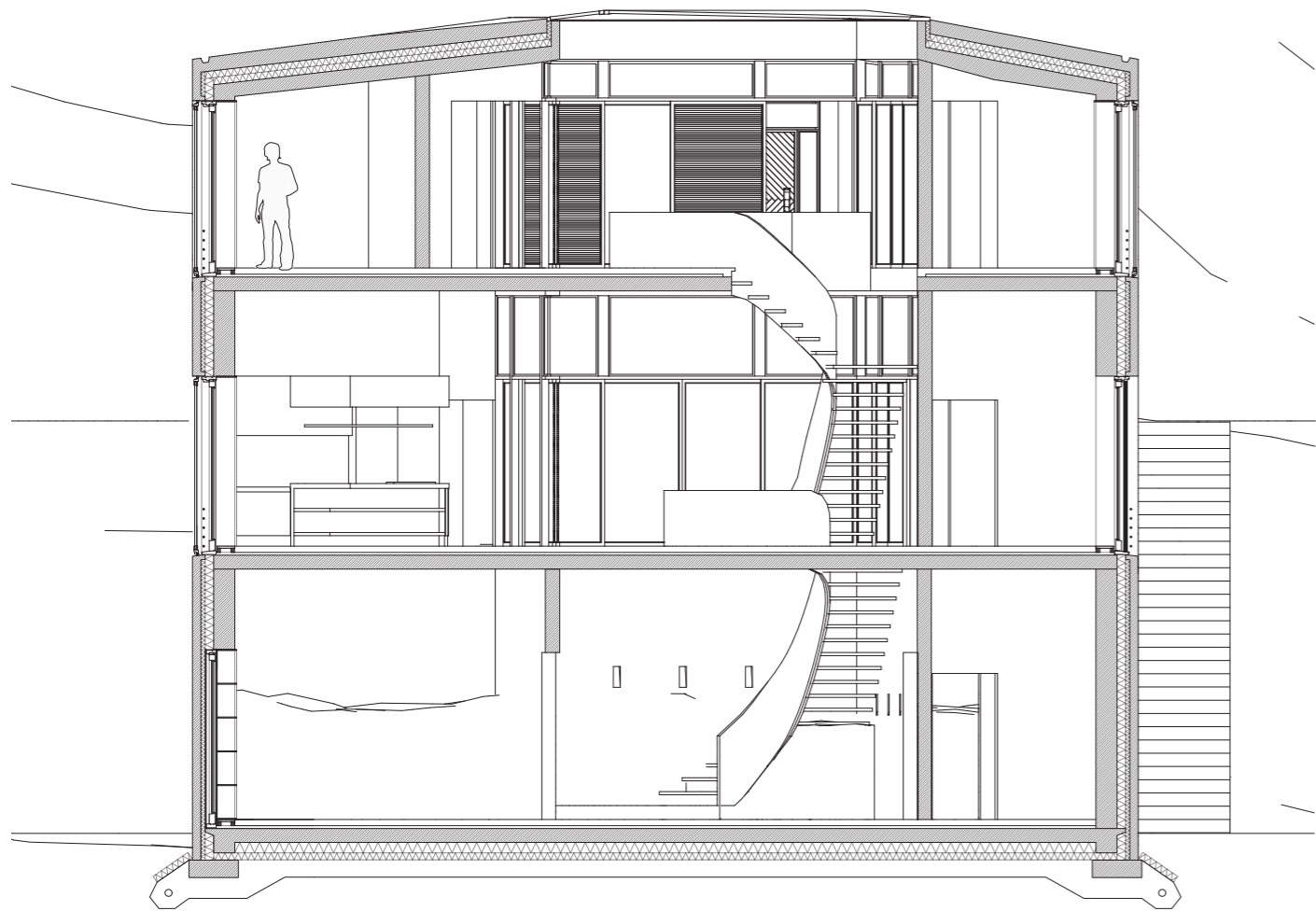






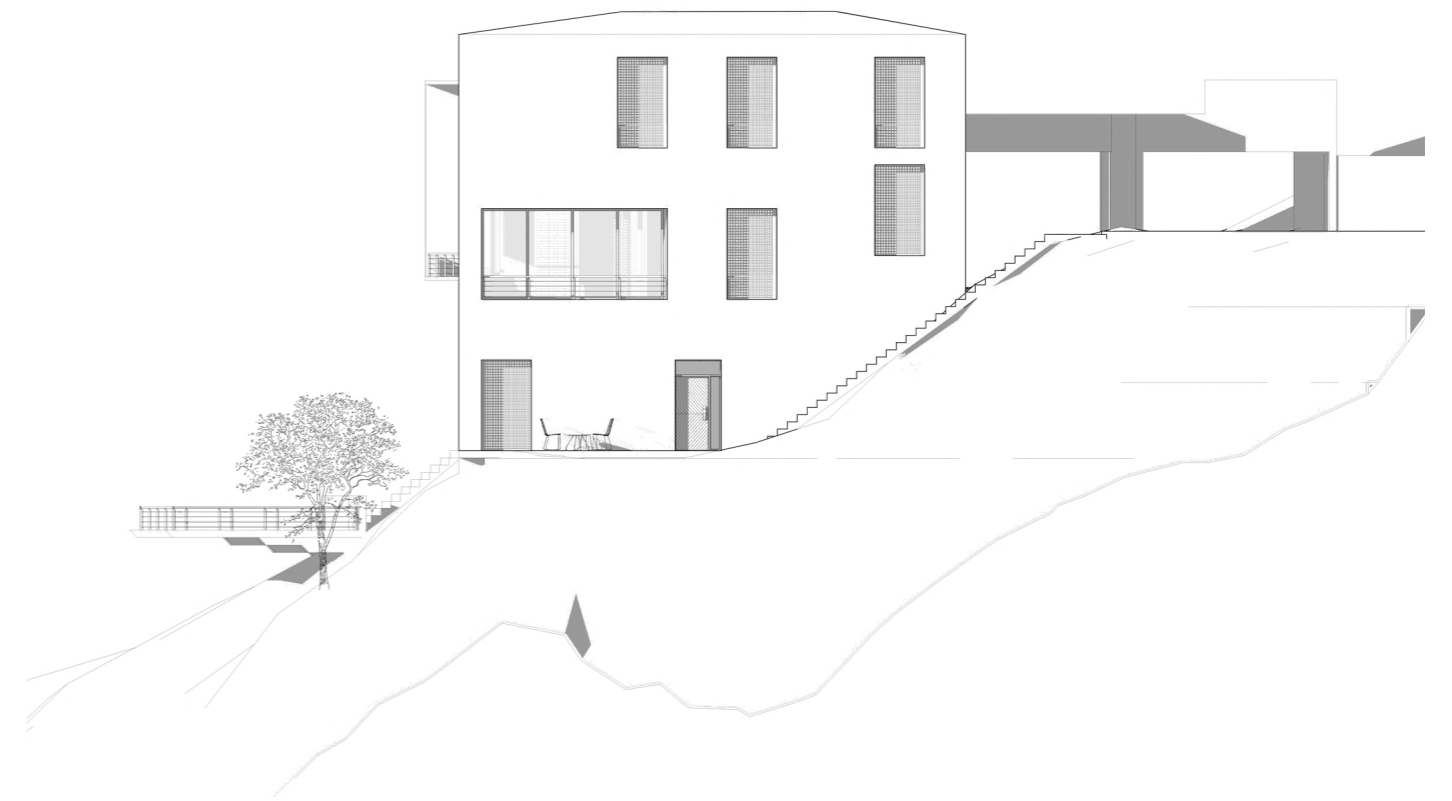
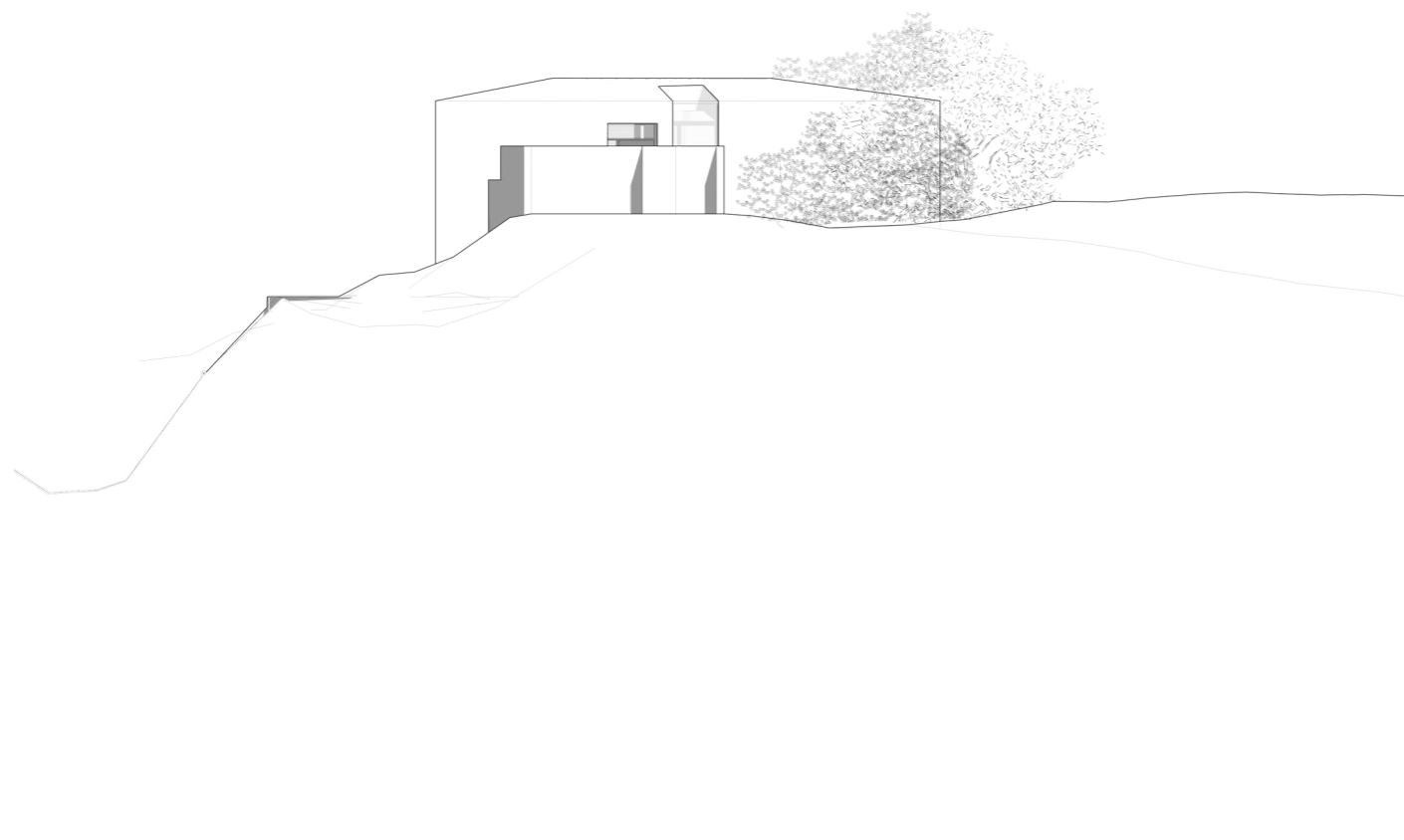


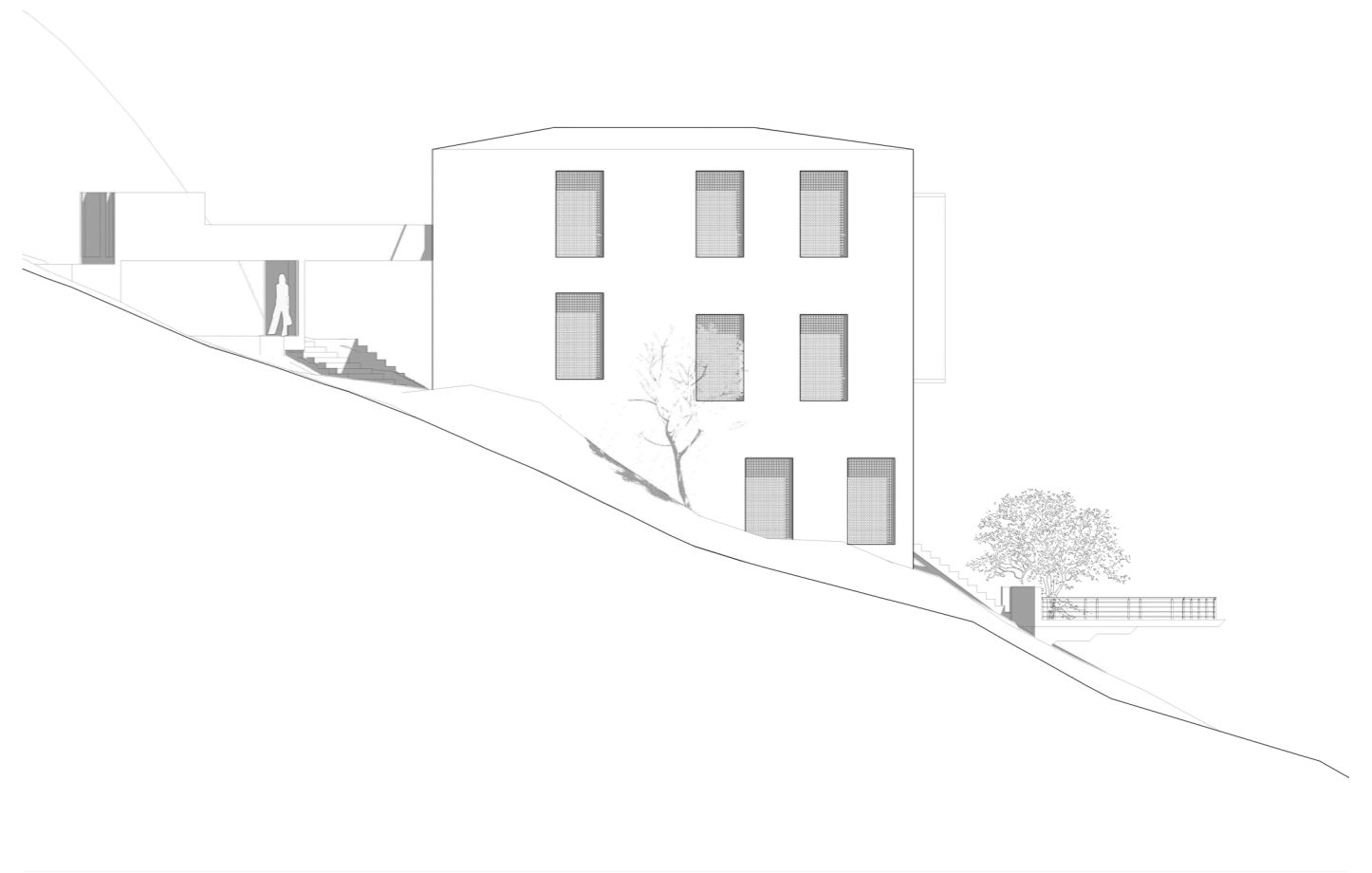
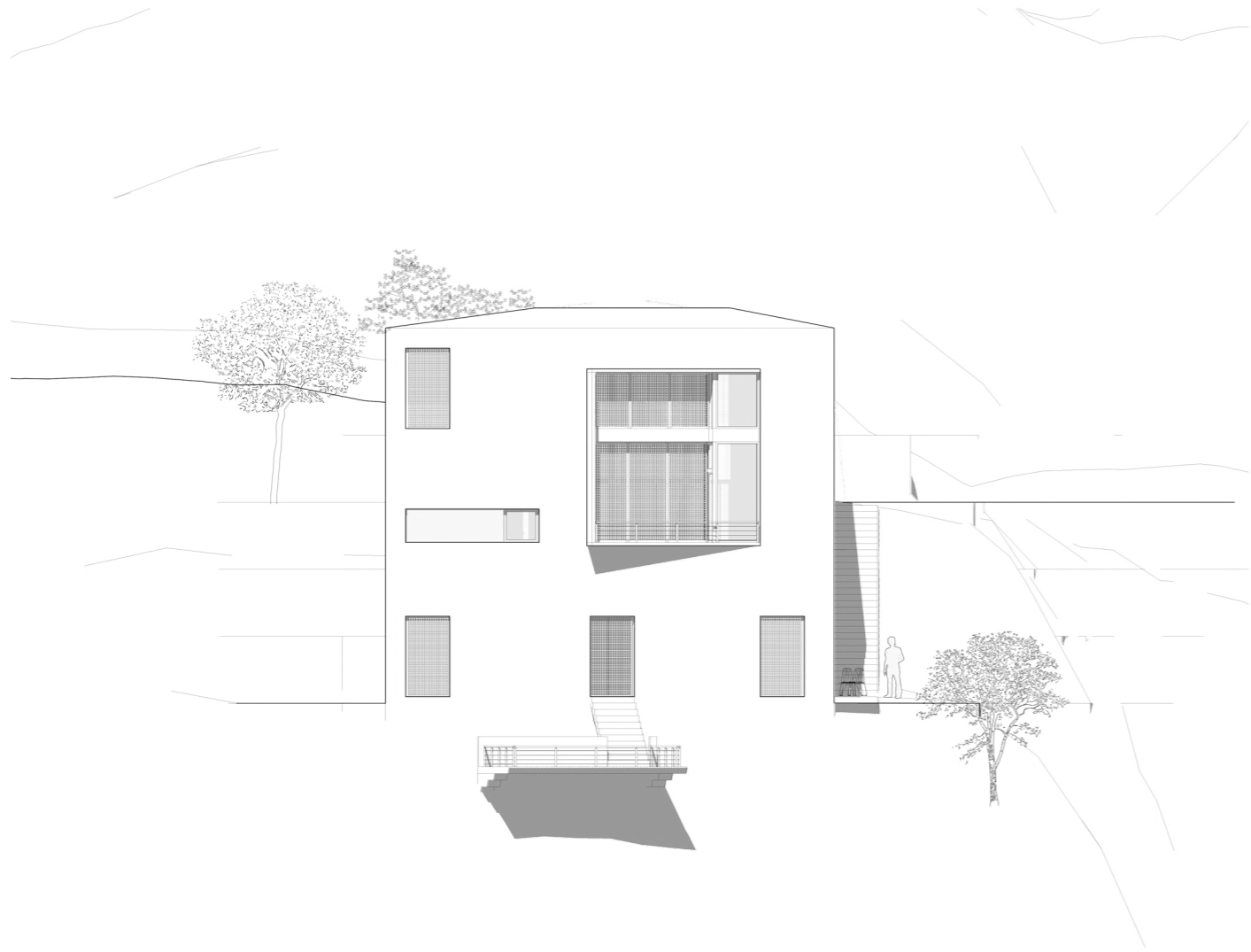


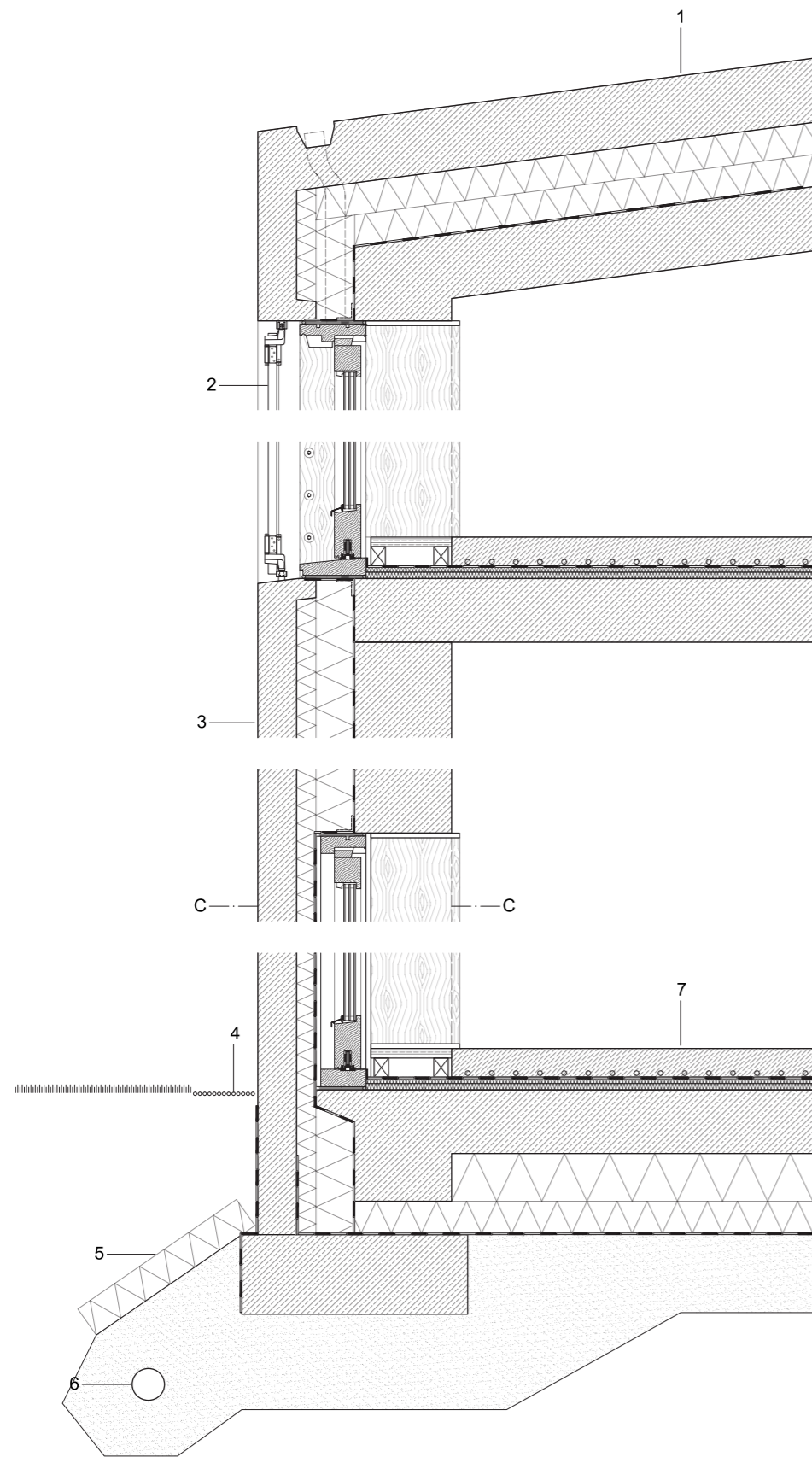


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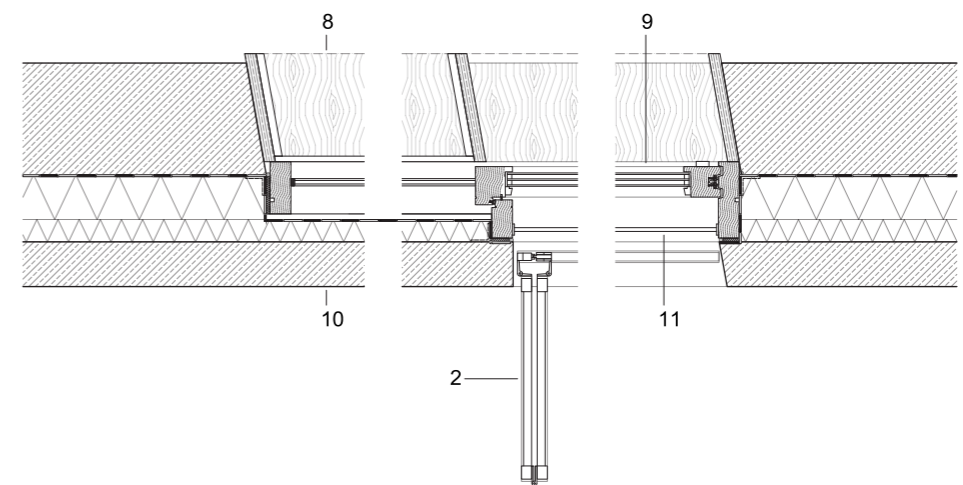


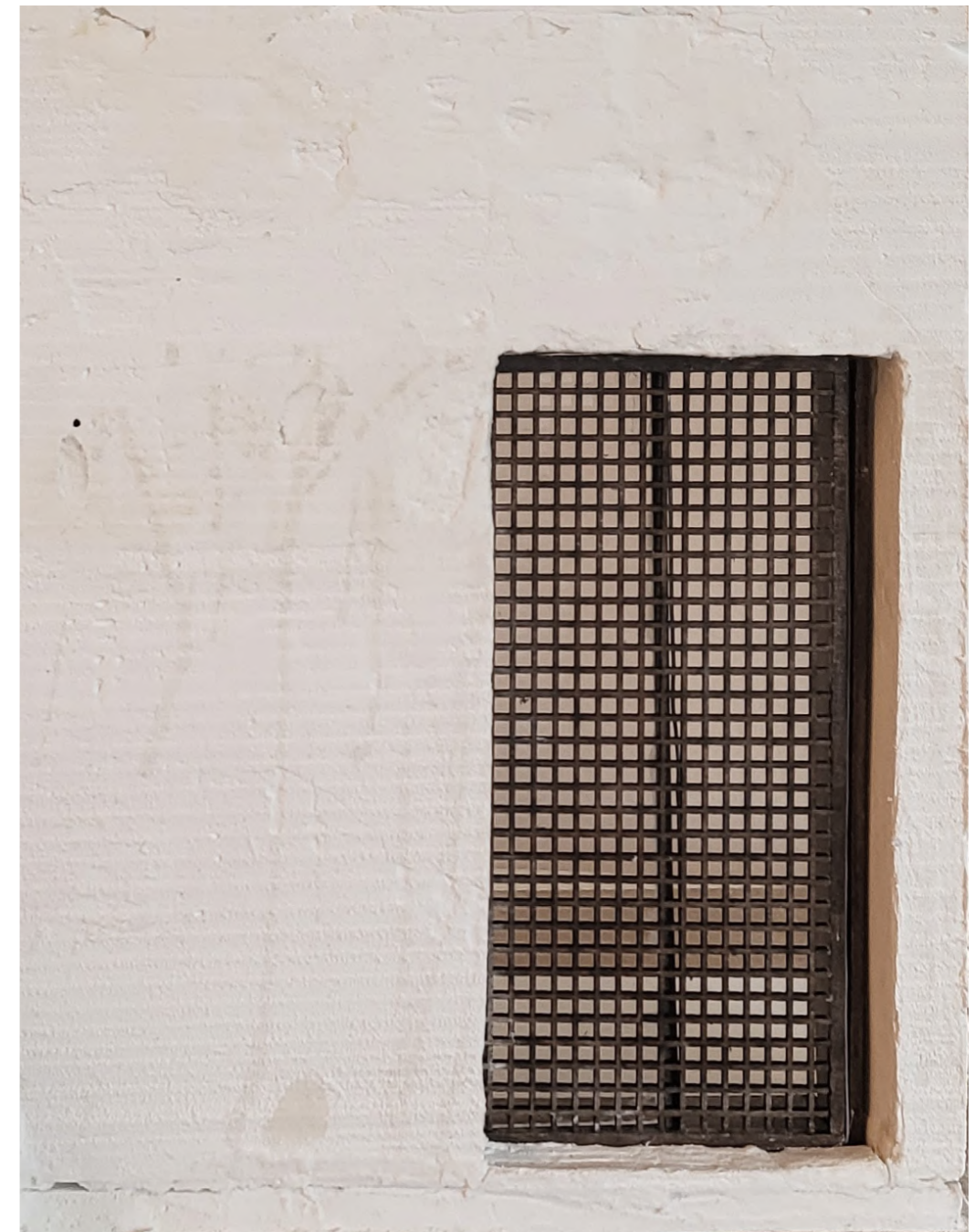
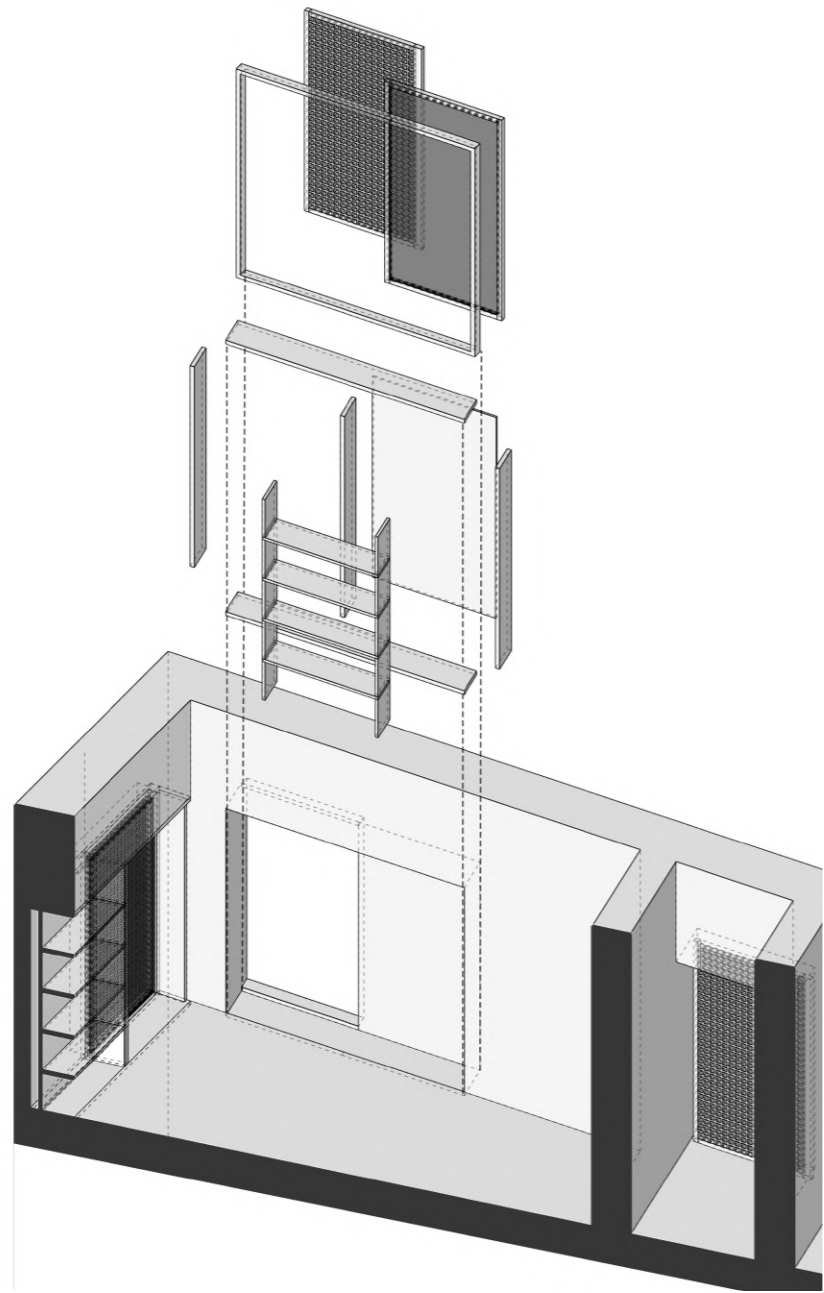




- 1 200 mm waterproof reinf. concrete roof
200 mm exp. polystyrene thermal insulation;
adhesive fixed
Polythene vapour barrier
200mm reinf. concrete
- 2 Walnut folding shutter
- 3 120 mm waterproof reinf. concrete outer wall
180 mm exp. polystyrene thermal insulation
Polythene vapour barrier
300 mm reinf. concrete internal wall
- 4 Bed of gravel
- 5 Exp. polystyrene perimeter insulation
- 6 Drainage pipe
- 7 90 mm impregnated cement-and-sand screed
with underfloor heating, finished smooth with
control joint

- Polythene vapour barrier
2x 20 mm exp. polystyrene impact-sound
insulation
200 mm reinf. concrete floor
200 mm foam-glass insulation
Sealing layer
300 mm bed of gravel
Woven monofilament construction fabric
- 8 Built-in shelf system in stained antique walnut
plywood
- 9 Walnut sliding window
- 10 120 mm waterproof reinf. concrete outer wall
60 mm exp. polystyrene thermal insulation
Polythene vapour barrier
15 mm oriented-strand board
- 11 Cable deck railing







Discussion



During the course of this thesis, the direction of this work has changed many times, so has the outcome, which in this case is the design of the house. It has been nothing but an enlightening process on many different levels. In summary, the goal and method of learning by doing has been achieved. This booklet is a limited and carefully selected number of exhibition materials in order to best showcase how the research questions in this work are answered in form of a building. However as mentioned earlier the subjectiveness is in the nature of architecture, and this project is no exception. This supports the fact that there is not such one answer to the research questions in this work, therefore no answer is right or wrong. To clarify it even more; the author does not by any means refer to this project as an absolute answer to the research question, neither how the architecture should be regarding the site or the aim of this project. But instead, as an investigation in designing site-specific private homes that only has touched the very surface of a deep ocean.

Nevertheless, one could assume that this methodology of designing from inside-out and choosing this particular starting point (the relations between human and the home), is suitable for the purpose of this particular investigation. This is readable, easily in projects where function is a prioritized aspect. Thus, as in an office building where the whole is adapted to the measures of the action taking place in it, one can take it to another level and argue that these measures, in its turn are then adapted to the appliances used for these actions, e.g. a desk. Furthermore, that desk is perhaps adapted to the size of an A4 paper. This imposing parable in my opinion is worth to study in another context, e.g. a home and the paper in this case could be our bodies or our senses.

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Images

- Figure 1 Weyssier D. (2022) Image. (Online image). Retrieved from <http://www.datadeluge.com/2017/03/a-journey-round-my-room-1794.html>
- Figure 2 Giorgios Sfakianakis. (2022) Image. (Online image). Retrieved from <https://www.desypri-misiaris.com/projects/monoliths/>
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