

Gustavsbergs keramikatelj er

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Master Thesis

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Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
Master's programme of Architecture and Urban Design
Direction: Building and Tectonics

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Abstract

For the majority of artists today their workplace, the studio, is fundamental. It is an essential space where art can be created, and sometimes even displayed to the public. Over several decades, art has been considered a growth factor for urban development both in Sweden and internationally. Yet many already existing studios are at risk of disappearing. With over 700 artists waiting for a studio in Stockholm, with a queue time of up to 30 years to be assigned one, there is an apparent need for more space.

This master thesis investigates the need for additional studio space for ceramicists, with a particular focus on the ceramic process and the location Gustavsberg, Värmdö. Today approximately 113 artist, mainly ceramicists are housed in Gustavsbergs Porslinsfabrik old premises. The historic connection to the porcelain company is not only favored by locals but is also internationally acclaimed. For over 80 years, it has been a vital hub for Sweden's leading ceramic artists and continues to make strong impressions on both domestic and international contemporary art. Today, over 120 artists are waiting for a workspace in the factory's old premises.

The main objective of this research is to explore how to materialize the ceramic process through a design proposal, and to investigate how the connection between the artists' studio and the public can be strengthened. The focus is to integrate the different stages of the ceramic production into the exhibition experience, while maintaining functional and private workspaces for the ceramicists.

Keywords: Gustavsberg, ceramic ateliers, open studio, exhibition

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Student Background

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M.Sc Architecture and Urban Design

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Keramisk form

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BFA in Architecture

Umeå School of Architecture

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Part I

Purpose & Aim

This master thesis aims to investigate how one can create a design proposal that is defined by the ceramic process as well as the relation between the artists' studio and the public. The main focus is on how the different stages of the process can be a part of the experience of the exhibition. Further, the thesis aims to explore how one can create spaces that strengthen the connection between the artist and the public all while maintaining functional workspaces. The outcome will be a design proposal for private ceramic studios with shared areas that have a clear link to the exhibition space.

Research question

How can the ceramic process define the configuration of an architectural proposal with the aim of strengthening the connection between the ceramicist's process and the public, while maintaining functional workspaces?

Method

This master thesis is mainly conducted through research by design. It is divided into three main parts. The first introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis, consisting of literature studies, secondary research, and studies of built references. The second part describes and analyses the site, the historical context, and the immediate context of the project. Additionally, the general ceramic process and the history of the ceramic process in Gustavsberg is described to give some background to the placement of spaces in the plan of the building. This leads to the third part of the thesis, the design proposal which is based on the previous parts. The explorations of the design process lead to a full design proposal that consists of carefully conducted drawings, models, and construction details along with interior details.

Delimitations

The aim of the thesis is not to create a project that accommodates 120 studios. It is a proposal of an extension and addition to the already existing studios, that will only house a small amount of the space needed. Neither will the thesis focus on the municipality's agenda or financial aspects of Gustavsberg. Economic aspects of the proposal will be included to some extent, however, the articulation and character of the building will be prioritised over economical solutions.

Background

For the majority of artists in Sweden today their workplace, the studio, is fundamental. The studio is the base for production and explorations. It is therefore a prerequisite for creative environments where art can be created and displayed to the public (Stasinski, 2017). Over several decades art has been considered a growth factor for urban development both in Sweden and internationally (Murzyn-Kupisz & Działek, 2017). Yet many already existing studios are at risk of disappearing due to the housing boom (Cederskog, 2018). With over 700 artists waiting for a studio in Stockholm, it takes 10-30 years queue time to be assigned a studio, and centrally located studios usually require a longer waiting time. (Ateljékön - Stockholms Stad, 2023)

In Gustavsberg, a town on the island of Värmdö in the Stockholm archipelago, the G-studio is located. It is a studio association founded in 1989, consisting of 113 artists, artisans, and designers. The ateliers of the members are allocated in three buildings that were a part of the old porcelain factory, Gustavsbergs Porslinsfabrik. Since the beginning of the 19th century, there has been a production of porcelain ware in Gustavsberg and it is in those old factory premises that the Ateljehuset is located. It was in 1942 that Wilhelm Kåge formed Gustavsbergs studio, the G-studio. It was launched as an experimental aesthetic workshop for the porcelain factory. Artists such as Stig Lindberg, Karin Björkqvist, and Lisa Larson were a part of the workshop and created artefacts in large and small series (Eklund, 2017). For over 50 years, the Studio served as a creative sanctuary. The Studio House was equipped as a small factory within the factory, with potters, casting workshops, plaster workshops, painting rooms, and kilns. Here, artists could work freely, with plenty of time and opportunities to experiment. The business was influenced by economic conditions, and during the optimistic years of the 1950s and 1960s, new generations of artists emerged. At its peak, over 50 people worked in the Studio House, including around 15-20 artists/designers. The Studio was Gustavsberg's version of an international effort to enrich industry and artists. It was challenging to make a profit from art production as it was, and with worse times, activity shrank, and it was shut down. What was left of the studio after that was shut down when the factory closed down in 1993 (Arvidsson et al., 1997).

However, the premises carried a peculiar magnetism and were then filled with artists from the studio association that took over the name G-studion. The studios are now spread

over these three houses: Konstnärshuset, Dekorhuset, and Chamottehuset, and are used by painters, glassblowers, textile artists, designers but mainly ceramists. Today they facilitate a kiln room, spray cabinets, a hot shop, a common kitchen and toilets on each floor, and a larger bookable space. The buildings are adapted for heavy industry, with big elevators, concrete floor, and water in most of the studios. 70 percent of the artists of G-studion include ceramic works in their practice, which makes it hard to find a fitting studio in the Stockholm area (Stasinski & Wallert, 2018).

For 80 years, Gustavsberg has been a hub for many of Sweden's most prominent artists. There are very few municipalities in Sweden with such a strong profile as Gustavsberg and with such potential for future-oriented development. The artists of the G-studio are making strong impressions on contemporary art both in Sweden and abroad. (Cederskog, 2018). And today over 120 people are waiting for a space in the G-studio (Tonström, 2022).

The artist's studio and the public

To understand the relationship between the artist's studio and the public one must consider both the physical and conceptual aspects of the studio space. On the physical level the studio serves as the primary space for the artist to create their artwork and in some cases exhibit the work to the public. On a conceptual level, the studio is a reflection of the artist's creative process and can provide insight into their artistic vision (Joselit, 2011). It can serve as a conceptual extension of the artist's work. As Bishop (2023) argues, "the studio is a key site for understanding the aesthetic and political stakes of contemporary art". It can not only reveal the artist's working process but also their source of inspiration, the creative challenges faced, and offer a deeper understanding of the art to the public. The physical location of the studio can also play a role in the artist's relationship with the public, as it can be a site of interaction and collaboration. For example, artist residency programs often provide a space for artists to work alongside other artists, as well as engage with the local community through public exhibitions and events. (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2016)

The architecture therefore plays a great role in shaping the relationship between the artist's studio and the public. Understanding the studio as a site of creative production and social interaction can inform how the spatial configuration of these spaces can be shaped to allow interactions with the public. However, the cultural dimensions of the space is also of importance, not solely the physical composition of the studio. It impacts the way artists interact with each other and the public, as well as it can influence the way creative work is produced and shared. Furthermore, the phenomenological theories of embodiment and experience, which emphasize the role of the body in shaping our perception and experiences of the world, should be taken into consideration. These theories suggest that our experiences are not just shaped by our environment, but are also mediated by our physical bodies and interactions with both other people and objects (Jacob & Grabner, 2010).

In 'Atmospheres: Architectural Environments, Surrounding Objects' Zumthor explains and emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the interior and exterior of a building. Architecture should create a sense of place and concentration, enveloping and holding people. He continues to describe the movements in architecture as a temporary art, defined by the motions of the people around it. In the chapter 'Between Composure and Seduction' he further highlights the significance of spaces that are self-drifting and

discoverable, that evokes a particular mood that captivates and entices people. Which leads to 'Levels of Intimacy' where Zumthor describes the various aspects of intimacy such as size, dimension, scale, masses, and the gravity of objects and how that affects how a building communicates itself, its characteristics and qualities. As a consequence, the distinctive relationship between these different factors can trigger emotions in people/ the users/the visitor. (Zumthor, 2006) This aligns with Pallasmaa's idea that architecture should facilitate an existential experience and evoke an extension of life. Pallasmaa also emphasizes the social exchange that occurs within works of architecture, stating that our experience of architecture informs how we interact with one another. Therefore, by embodying cultural values and beliefs, spaces that enact a sense of identity and belonging can be created. (Pallasmaa, 2009)

These different perspectives pose that architecture is not just about the physical structures of the design, but also about the experiences that these structures can create and the social exchanges that then occur within them.

The ceramic process

The process of making ceramics can vary depending on the specific type of ceramics being produced, the techniques used, and the personal process of the artist. The following is a general overview of the steps involved in making ceramics:

Preparation of the clay: The first step is to select the appropriate type of clay for the desired object. The clay is sometimes then cleaned, mixed with water, and in some cases other materials such as sand or feldspar are added to create the desired texture and properties.

Shaping: The next step is to shape the clay into the desired form using various techniques such as hand-building, wheel-throwing, or casting. The clay may be shaped while wet or dry, depending on the specific techniques used.

Drying: Once the clay has been shaped, it must be allowed to dry slowly and evenly to avoid cracking or warping. This process can take several days or even weeks, depending on the thickness of the clay and the humidity of the environment.

Bisque firing: Once the clay has completely dried, it is fired in a kiln at a low temperature (usually between 800-1000°C) to remove any remaining moisture and harden the clay into a durable material called bisque.

Glazing: After the bisque firing, the ceramic piece is coated with a layer of glaze, which is a liquid mixture of minerals that will melt and fuse to the clay during the final firing. The glaze can be applied in various ways, such as dipping, spraying, or brushing.

Final firing: The final firing takes place at a higher temperature (usually between 1100-1300°C), which causes the glaze to melt and form a smooth, glassy surface on the ceramic piece. This firing also gives the clay its final strength and durability.

Finishing: Once the final firing is complete, any excess glaze is removed and the ceramic piece is inspected for quality. It may be sanded or polished to achieve a smooth finish, and any additional decorative elements may be added at this stage.

The process of ceramics requires patience, skill, and attention to detail. While modern technology has introduced some new methods and materials, many traditional techniques are still used today and require a deep understanding of the properties of clay and glaze. (Reijnders, 2005)

The ceramic process in Gustavsberg

Gustavsberg has a long and rich history in the field of ceramics, with ceramic production dating back several centuries. During this time it has been an important part of the region's cultural and economic landscape, and maintains to be so. Over time, the process of the production of ceramics in the area has evolved significantly, as new techniques, materials, and technologies have been developed and adopted.

In the pre-19th Century, the production of ceramics in Gustavsberg began and was mostly done by local artisans and potters. The clay was sourced from nearby deposits and the pieces were shaped by hand using traditional techniques such as coil-building, slab-building, and wheel-throwing. The pieces were then decorated with simple designs and glazes, and fired in outdoor kilns.

The establishment of the Gustavsberg Porcelain Factory in 1826 marked the beginning of a new era in ceramics production in the region. The factory introduced modern production techniques and machinery, which allowed for faster and more consistent production of high-quality porcelain tableware. The factory also developed new glazes and colors, and established a reputation for innovation and quality.

In the early 20th century, Gustavsberg continued to expand and innovate, with the establishment of new factories and the introduction of new materials such as stoneware and earthenware. The mid-20th century saw a renewed focus on design and innovation, as Gustavsberg began collaborating with some of the most important designers of the era to create unique and creative ceramic pieces.

In the 21st century, the process of making ceramics in the Gustavsberg area has continued to evolve, as new technologies and techniques have been developed and adopted. There is a growing interest in eco-friendly and sustainable production methods, and many local artisans and studios are experimenting with new materials such as recycled clay and glazes. Handmade ceramics remain popular, with a focus on unique designs and personalized pieces. (E. S. Arvidsson et al., 1997)

Built references

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Vilhelm Wohlert & Jørgen Bo, Humlebeck (1958)

Located in the landscape of Humlebæk, Denmark, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art stands as an intriguing composition of architecture and art. The museum showcases a compelling example of how architecture and art can not only integrate, but also enhance one another. The museum's relevance to the thesis lies in its spatial qualities, the promenade created by the different spaces, as well as the materials used in the building. Louisiana serves as an instructive case study, illustrating how architecture seamlessly intersects and interacts with the world of art and creativity, not only by its essence but also by its contribution, a central concept of this thesis.

Landskrona Konsthall, Sten Samuelson & Fritz Jaenecke, Landskrona (1963)

Located in an urban setting, Landskrona Konsthall stands enclosed by the surrounding greenery. The building was erected as a temporary exhibition hall for industrial design on Landskrona's 550th anniversary in 1963. The structure is of a concrete frame and large glazed facades. Hidden on the inside of the exhibition hall one can find a discreet atrium garden. The surrounding area of the building is a sculpture park with works of 20 different artists. The relevance of Landskrona Konsthall derives from the program and size of the building, the characterized solid repetitive facade, and the intimate courtyard.

Nyckelviksskolan, Marge Arkitekter, Stockholm (2023)

Diverging from previously mentioned references, the extension of Nyckelviksskolan takes a role in the thesis as a reference for its practical use. The addition houses a ceramic workshop on the ground floor and a sculpture workshop on the second floor. The extension relates to the already existing built environment of the premises and acts as a link between them. For this thesis, the extension of Nyckelviksskolan serves as a reference for dimensions of the common spaces, and the spatial qualities and configuration of the functional areas. Furthermore, it acts as a reference for requisite materials essential for utilization within ceramic spaces.

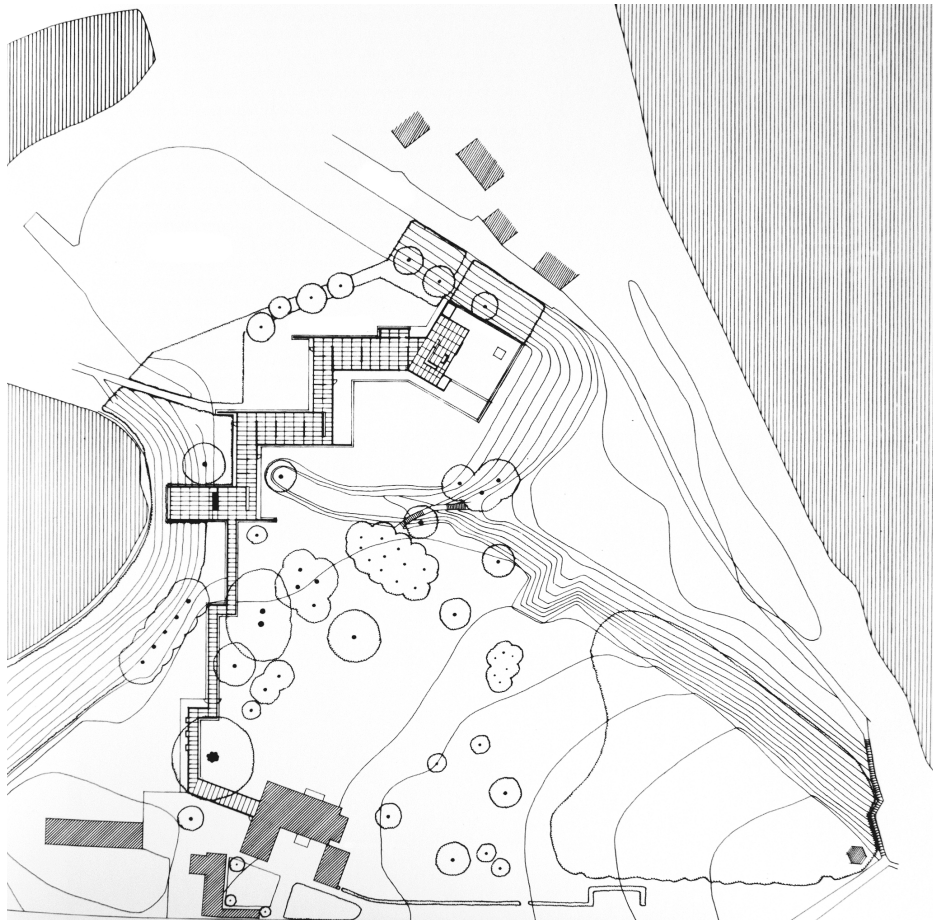
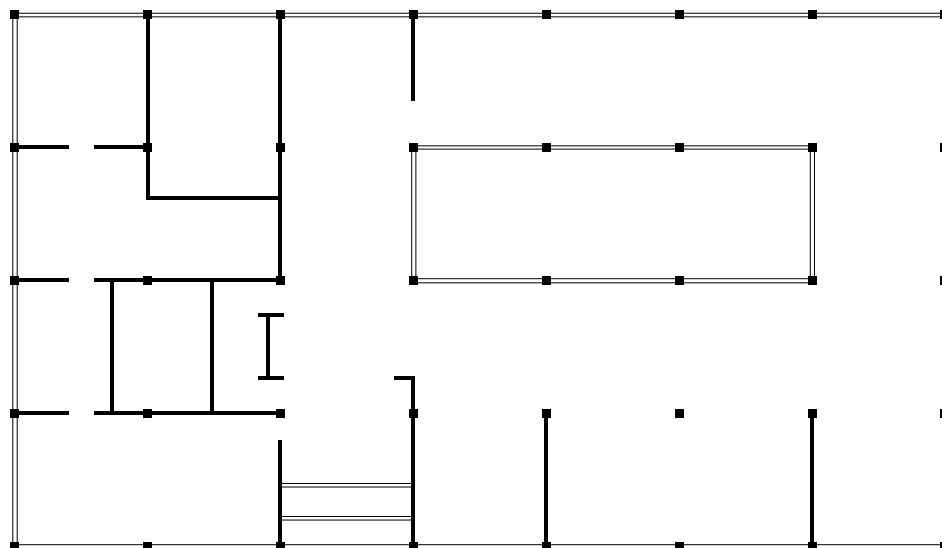


Fig. 1
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art







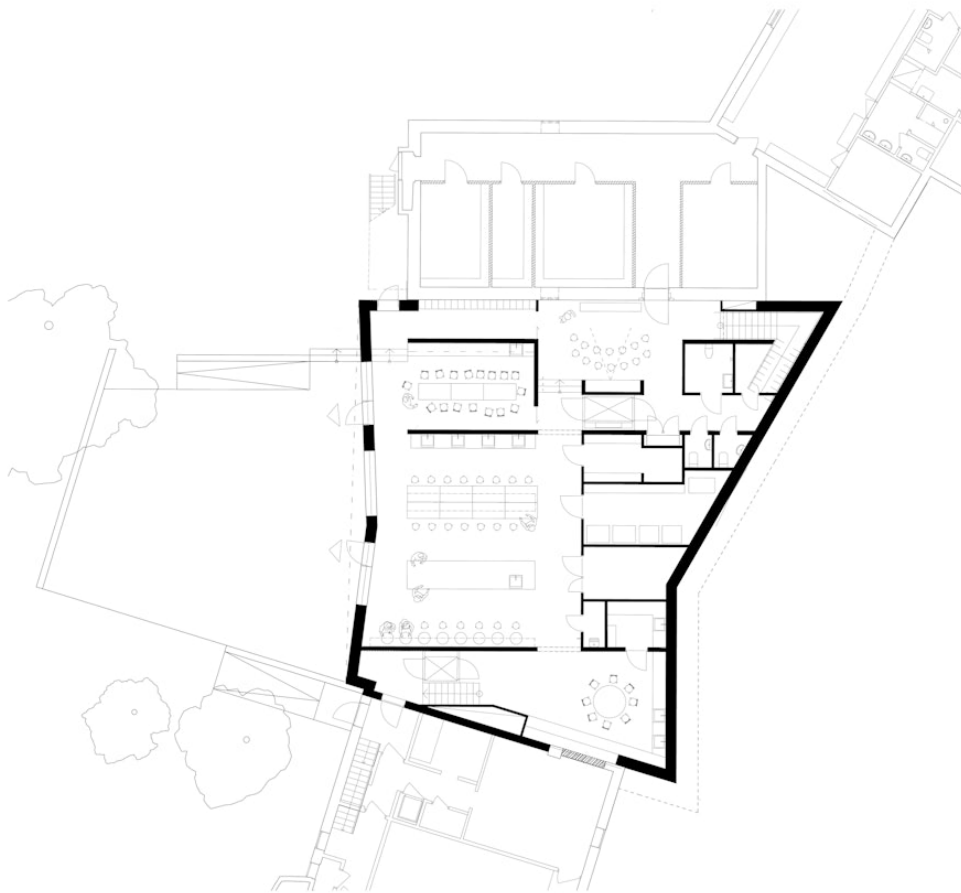


Fig. 2
Nyckelviksskolan



Part II

The site

Gustavsberg is located 22 km east of central Stockholm. It is a central location in Värmdö where half the population of the municipality lives. The urban area of Gustavsberg has had a large influx of people and the town has grown for several years.

The origins of Gustavsberg can trace back to the middle of the 17th century when a brickyard was built at Farstaviken in the Stockholm archipelago. The name Gustafsberg was given to the facility in 1661. Later in 1825, the porcelain production was started. When the porcelain factory was started, the brickyard was still in operation. In addition to a kiln located by the shoreline in the current factory area, there was at least another brick kiln out on Täckå udden. The manufacturing of brick continued, in addition to the porcelain production, into the 1930s. The factory gained success and a company town was formed. Between the years 1825 and 1830, 36 factory and residential buildings were built. In 1937, they began to rebuild the entire company town. Small villas of 54 square meters and larger apartment blocks were built in 1945-1951. At the same time, the old workers' housing was upgraded. Gustavsberg flourished from the end of the 1940s and a few decades onwards. Despite the proximity to Stockholm, Gustavsberg came to live a life of its own during the late 19th century and a large part of the 20th century. In 1993 the production of household porcelain was shut down, despite a protest and 20,000 signatures. (G. Arvidsson, 2007)

The closure of Gustavsbergs porslinsfabrik has meant that land has been freed up in the former factory area. During the first years of the 21st century, parts of the factory area were converted into offices and residences with an excellent location by the harbor, where shops and restaurants were also added. Gustavsbergs is undergoing major development and occupancy, since 2013 major changes have been underway where, among other things, the old factory area in the harbor has been replaced by new housing, most of which are condominiums in the form of apartments and townhouses. Other parts of central Gustavsberg are also being renewed and developed with housing and businesses. Gustavsberg and Värmdö municipality is one of the municipalities with the largest percentage population growth in Stockholm County. Today, the company town, with uninterrupted operations since the 17th century, is protected as a national interest for cultural environment conservation. (Kulturmiljö Och Byggnadsvård - Värmdö Kommun)



Stockholm city

Gustavsberg

The immediate context

The site of the project is a short walk away from the factory area. Following the shoreline of the harbor, driving or walking with the water to your right and the trees to your left you arrive at the site. Today, the plot of the project is a meadow with almost no activity. The plot is surrounded by trees to the north, west, and east. The trees to the north obscure part of the view towards the sea, at least during the spring and summer. While the trees to the west act as a barrier between the site and the residential area on the other side of the road. The immediate context is mainly residential areas with a few commercial exceptions.

Four buildings protected as a national interest for cultural environment from the company town, are visible from the site. Farsta vik, a mansion from 1896, which today is a residential association. Ankhuset, a small yellow cabin from 1915, built on a slight rise close to the water, surrounded by reeds and with a view of Gustavsberg harbor and Farstaviken. It was used to raise ducks until the 1930s. Today it is a community premise. Oxstallet, 1903, made from yellow brick, a characteristic of many of the houses from the company town in Gustavsberg, that are made from leftovers from the porcelain factory. It is also used as a community premise today. Farsta garage, built 1920, is made with the same yellow brick as Oxstallet. The building is today used as a private home. This is all enclosed by the nearby forests and nature reserves, creating a calm and inspiring atmosphere.





- (1) Farsta slott, 1750. (2) Farstahus, 1886. (3) Farsta udde, 1911. (4) Farsta vik, 1869. (5) Ankhuset, 1915.
 (6) Oxstallet, 1903. (7) Farsta garage, 1920. (8) Elkvärn och strandvillan, 1882. (9) Kattholmens kraftstation, 1905.
 (10) Glashuset, 1971. (11) Packhusen, 1887-1940. (12) Tornhuset, 1898. (13) Gula byggnaden, 1826. (14) Slamhuset,
 1859. (15) Gamla verkstadshuset, 1877. (16) Torkhuset/Porslinsmuseet, 1876. (17) Brännugnshuset. (18) Dekorhuset,
 1872. (19) Gustavsbergsstudion, 1896. (20) Chamottehuset, 1984. (21) Hushållsporslinsfabriken, 1940. (22) Vattenhjulet,
 1895. (23) Hänkelhuset, 1916. (24) Panncentralen, 1940-1950. (25) Sanitetsporslinsfabriken, 1938-39. (26) Västra port-
 vaktstugan, 1888. (27) Stallet, 1888. (28) Badkarsfabriken, 1947. (A) The site

The historic context 1:7500



The immediate context 1:2000





Part III

Project description

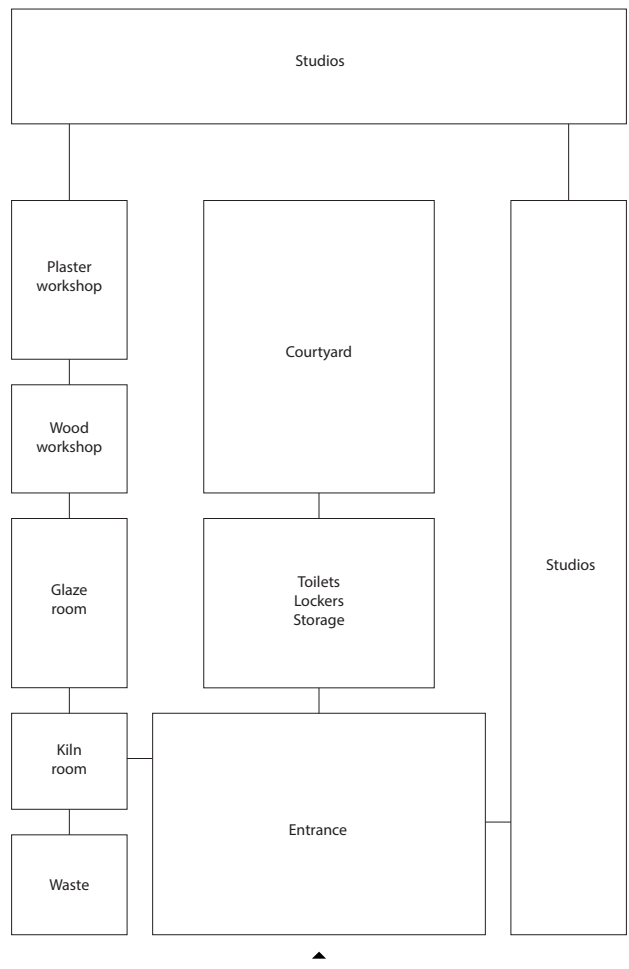
Arriving at the site by foot or by car one is met by a sculpture park in the untouched meadow and the trees surrounding it. Driving further there is an entrance and parking area with greenery in the middle that is used as an outdoor exhibition area. Gravel encircling the building gives easy access to the studios and workshops for loading and unloading. The rest of the plot around the building stays untouched and will as well be used as a sculpture park or outdoor exhibition area. The building sits in the landscape like a hollowed out block of clay. The placement of the building aligns with the shoreline and is pushed back from the street to create an undisturbed environment. The plan is defined by the ceramic process following its different steps, creating a promenade that walks the visitors through both the creative process and necessary stages of the clay. After arriving into a spacious entrance, the walk begins through the ceramicists' studios inviting the visitors to a glimpse of the individual process and the first stage where the clay is shaped. Continuing further to the next optional steps, the common plaster workshop and wood workshop. Thereafter, the promenade continues into the glaze room and lastly the final necessary step, the kiln room. Walking through the building as a visitor, one follows along the whole ceramic process as a part of the experience of the exhibition where the ateliers become the exhibition space. The placement of the private studios is in accordance with the sun, blocking out most of the direct sunlight from the south. The studios are also placed with the surrounding nature in mind, with views either towards the water, the trees and the meadow, or the yellow mansion Farsta vik and the trees enclosing it. The common workshops are situated towards the small hill on which a road and pathway is placed, as the importance of privacy is not as necessary as in the private studios. A core with necessities, a kitchen, storage space, toilets and lockers, is placed central allowing easy access for all while still being close by the common area. Further into the building is a courtyard, bringing light into the corridors while also creating an intimate and calm outdoor space. The graveled courtyard with a brick path along the three glazed walls can also be used as an exhibition area with the solid brick wall that acts as a backdrop for the art pieces. The studios all have large sliding windows allowing abundant light into the space and providing easy access to be able to move out and work. The sliding doors between the studios creates a flexibility of being able to increase the studio size if needed, apart from their use to alter the ateliers to exhibition space. With the small ceramic community where most ceramicists are acquainted it also gives the possibility to easily work on collaborations, and strengthen the community by making it easier to share experience and knowledge among each other.



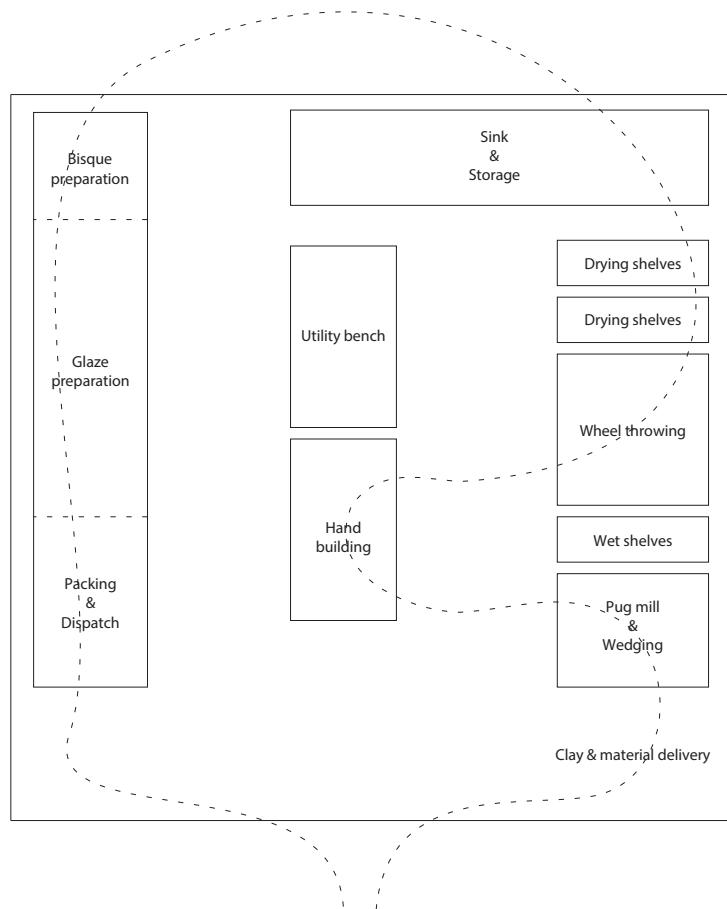
Site plan 1:1000

Program and space specification

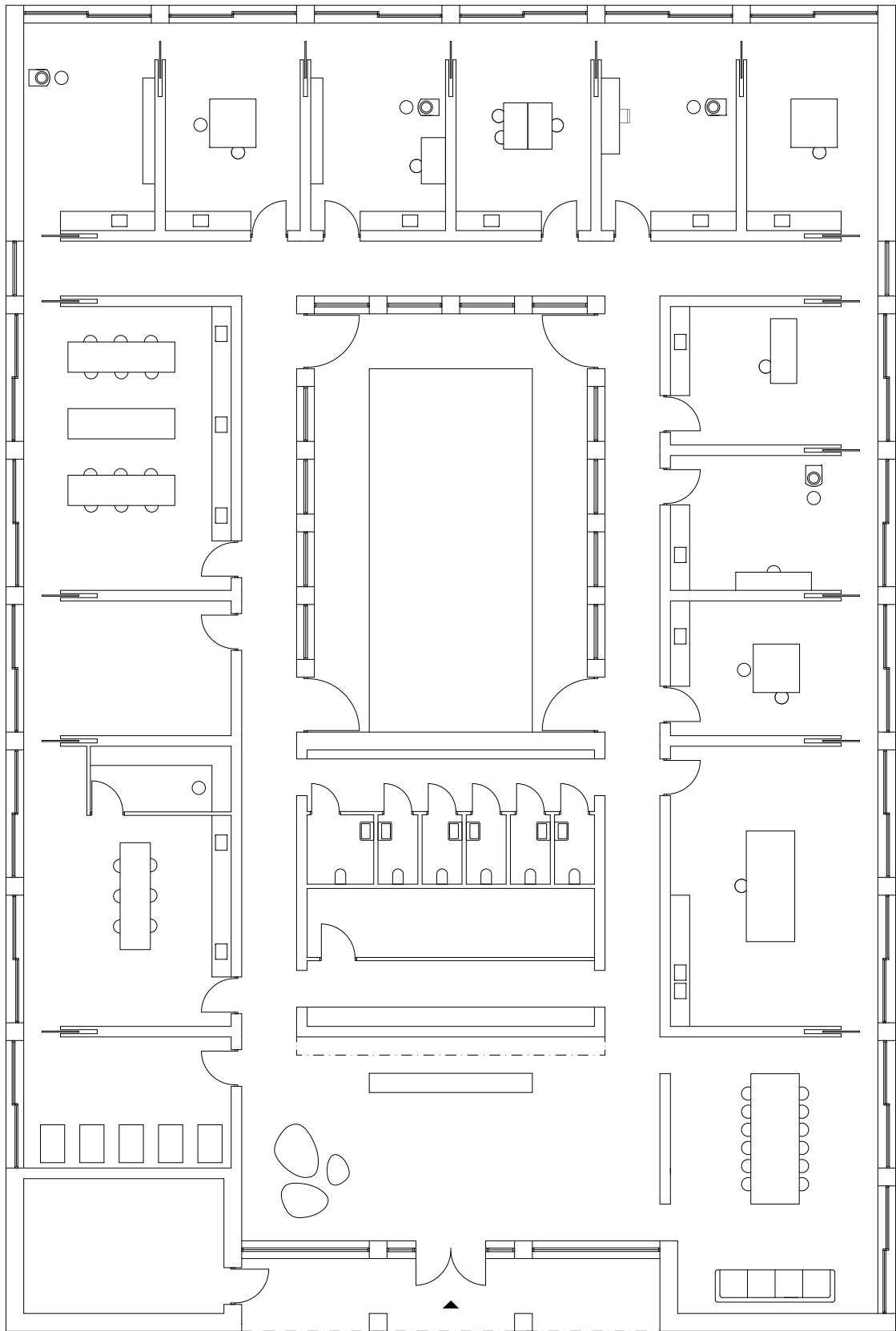
Use	Area
Entrance	90 sqm
Common room	60 sqm
Kitchen	19 sqm
Storage	20 sqm
Cloakroom & restroom	42 sqm
Waste	30 sqm
Plaster workshop	64 sqm
Wood workshop	31 sqm
Glaze room	64 sqm
Kiln room	30 sqm
Studio 1 x 9	31x 9 sqm
Studio 2	64 sqm
Corridor	139 sqm
Courtyard	124 sqm
<hr/>	
Total building area	1288 sqm



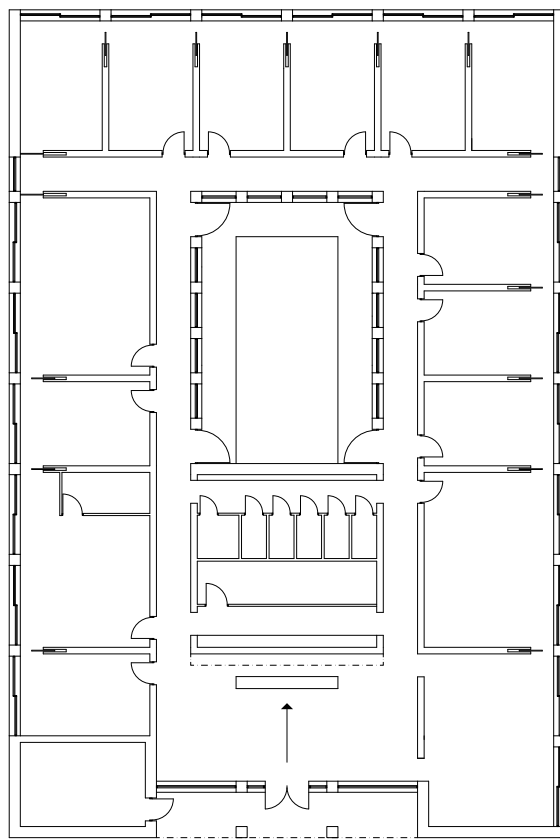
Studio sequence



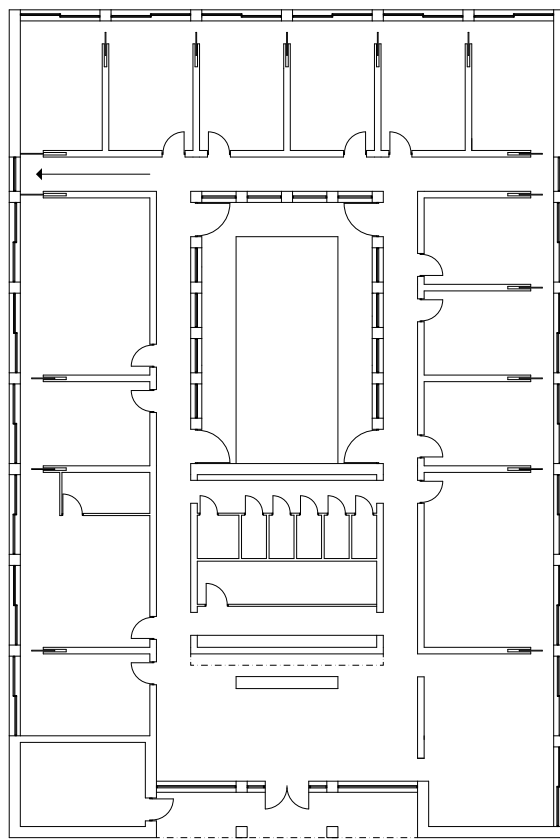




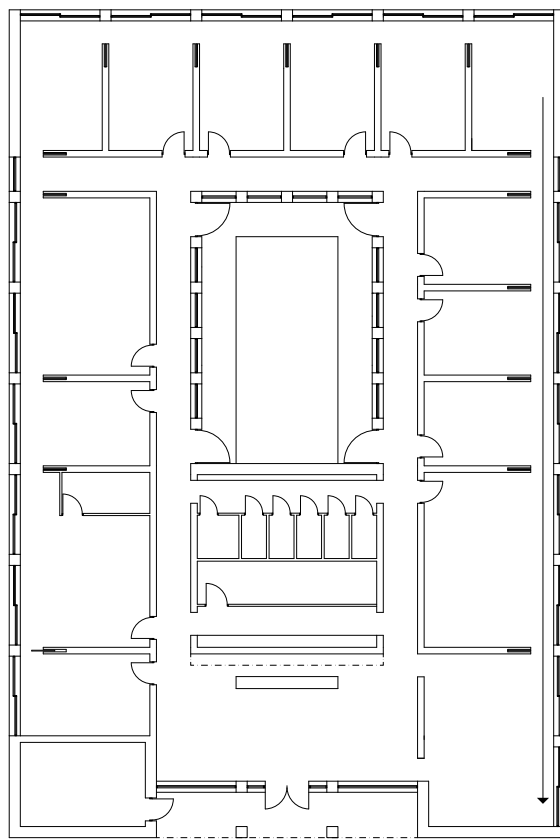


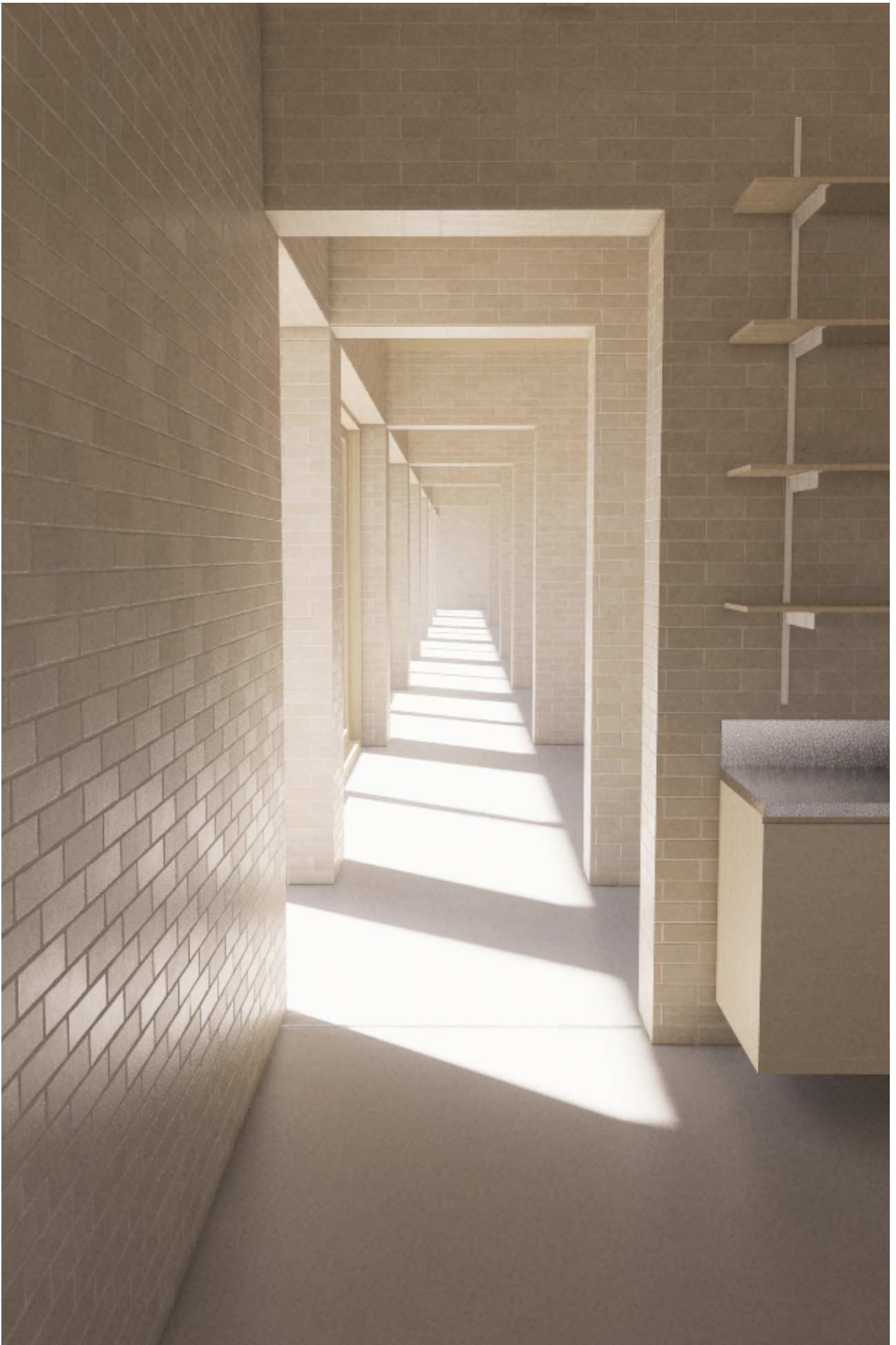


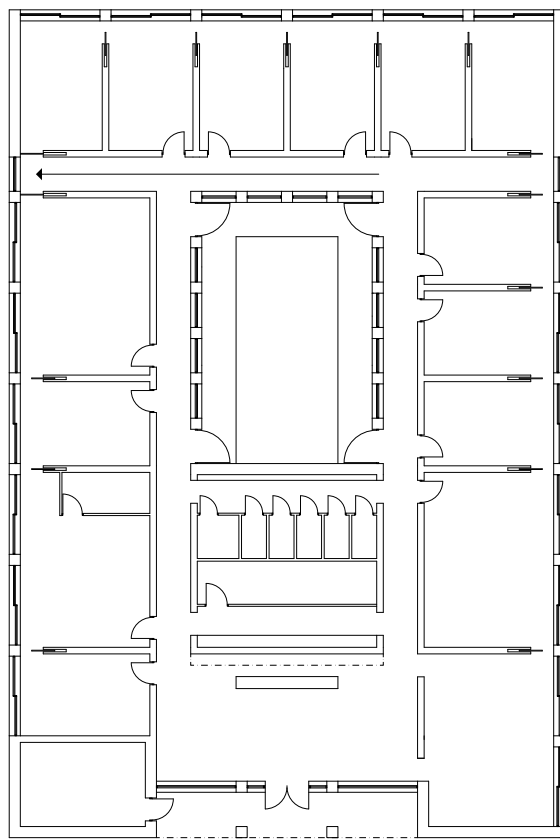














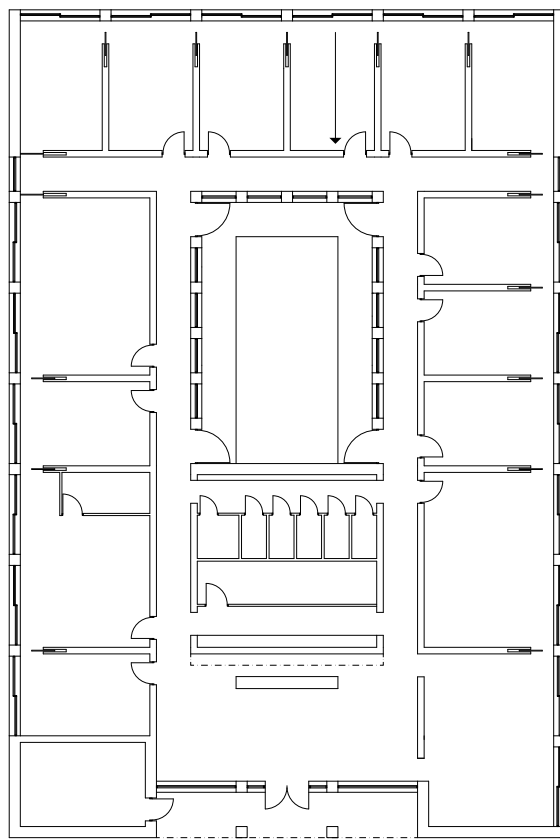


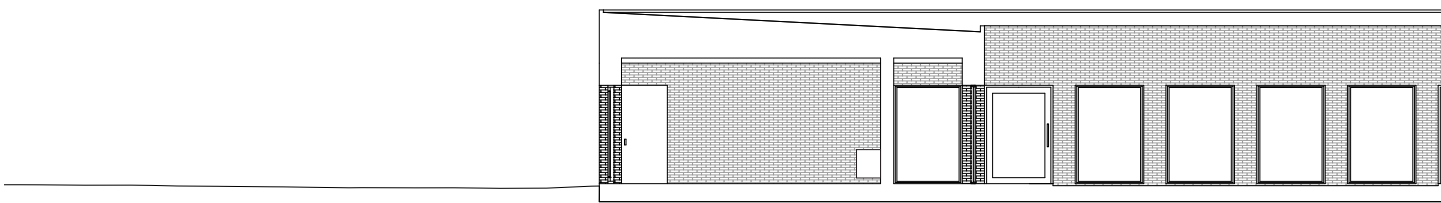


Fig. 3

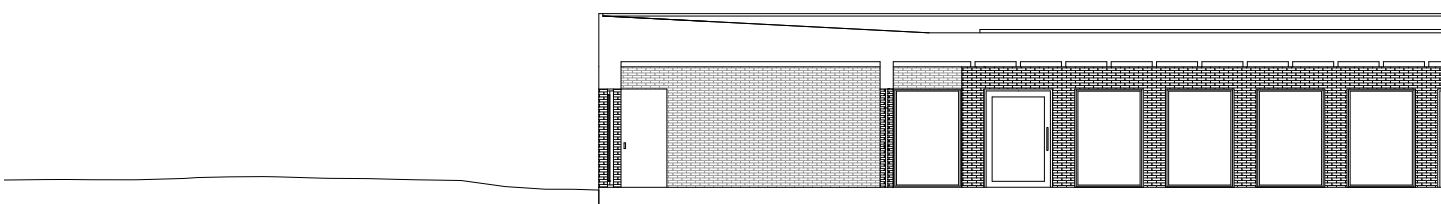


Site section 1:250



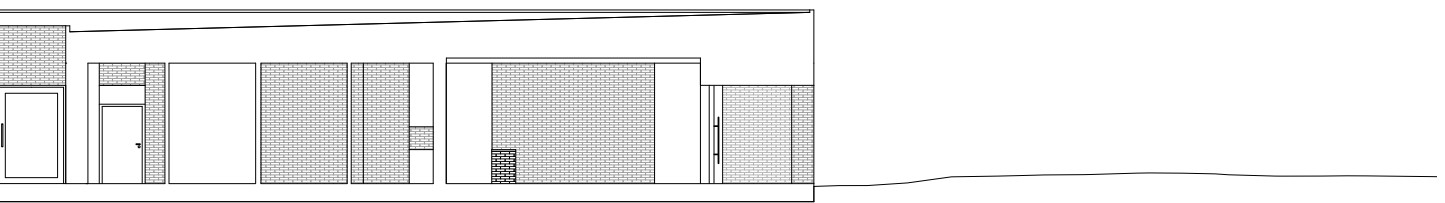


Section

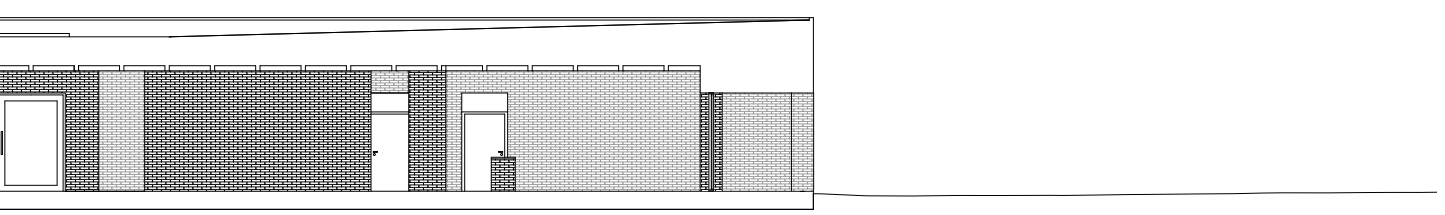


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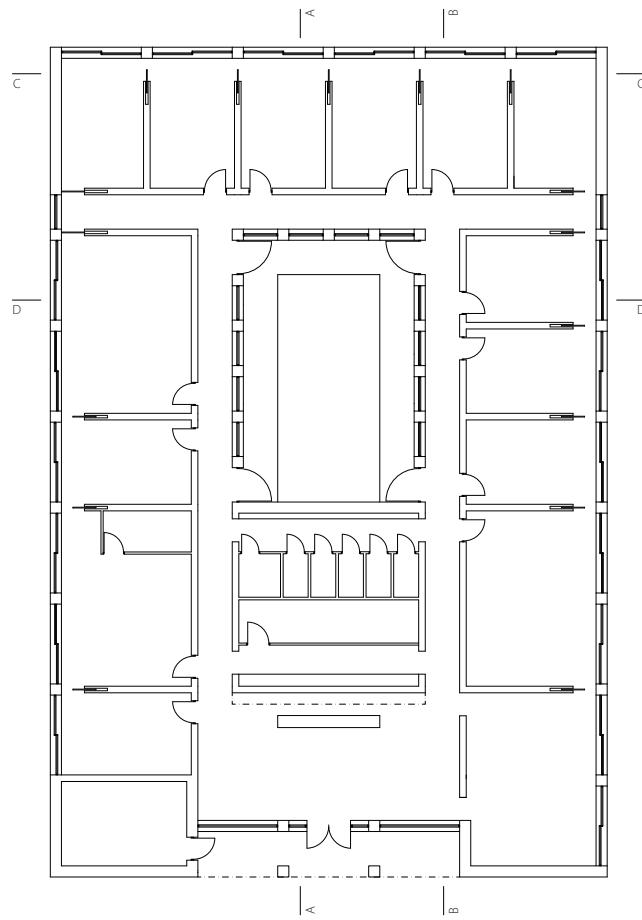
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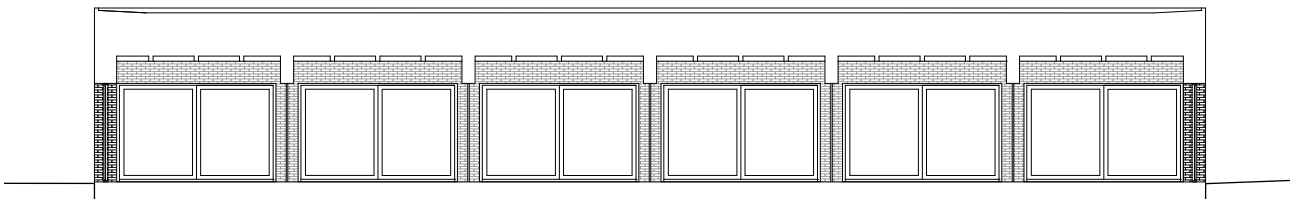


n A-A

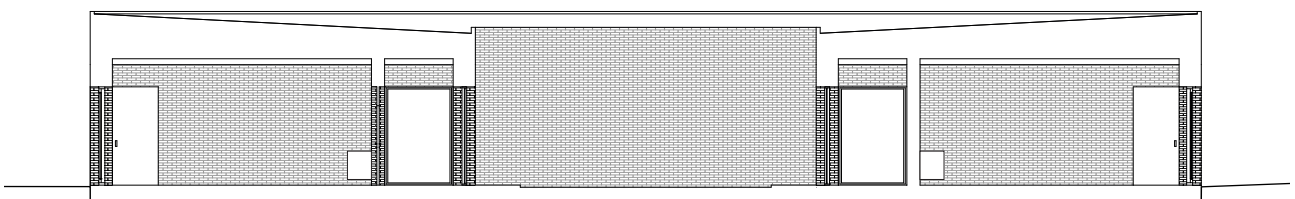


n B-B



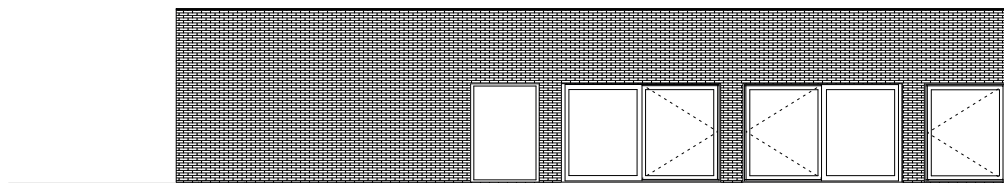


Section C-C

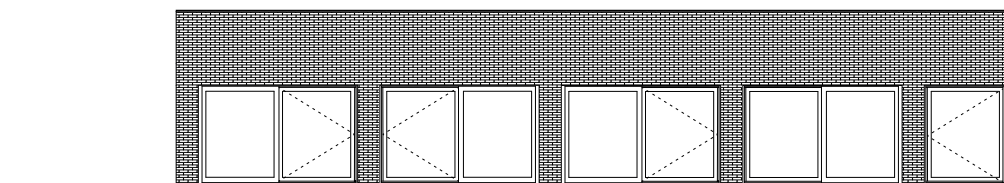


Section D-D

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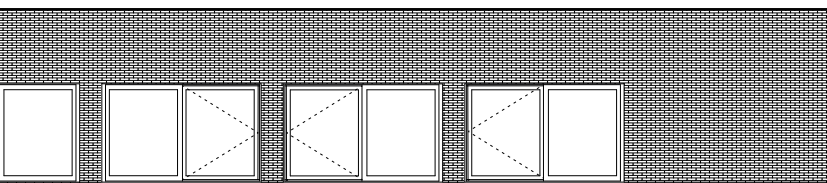


South

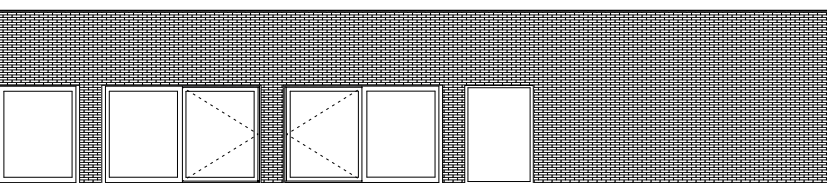


North

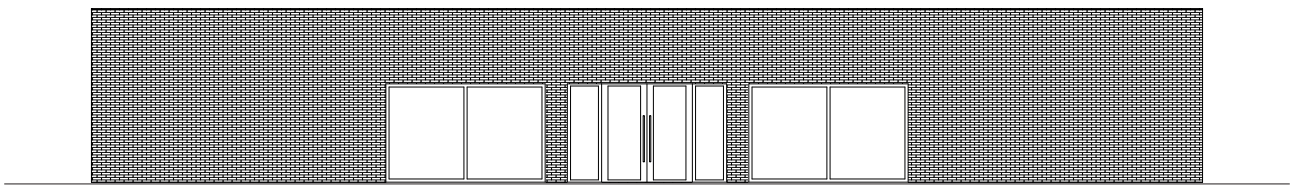
Elevations 1:200



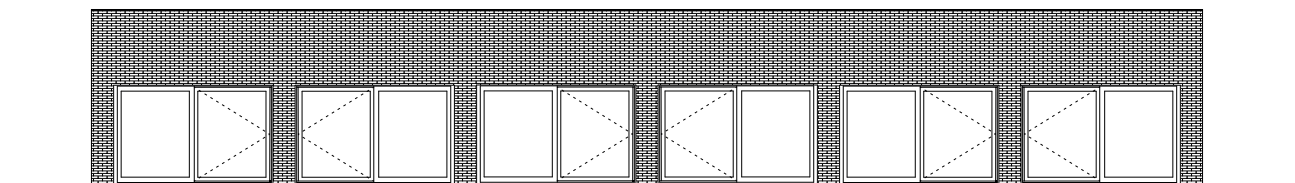
n-west



n-east



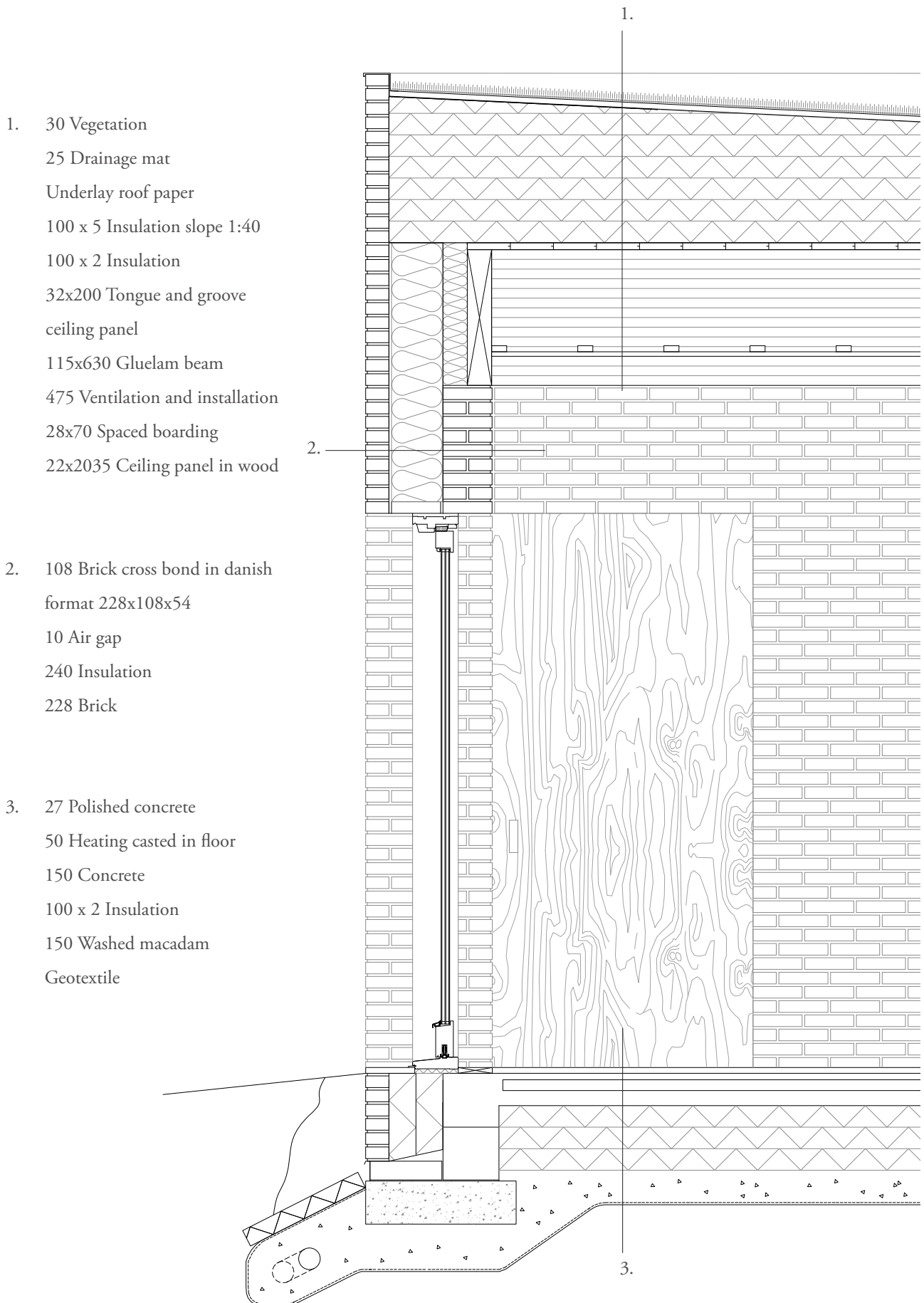
South-east



North-west

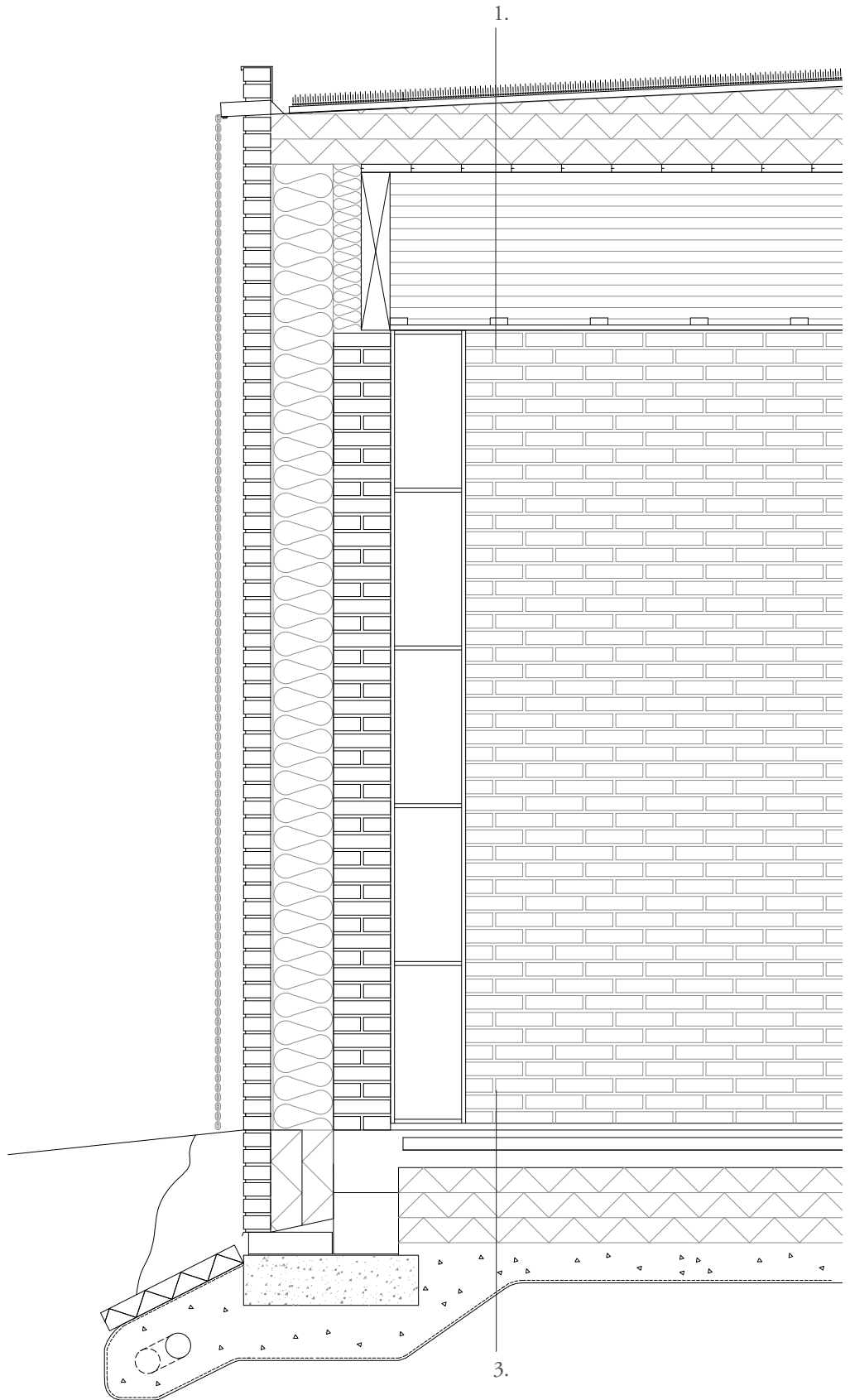
Elevations 1:200





Section 1:25





Section 1:25

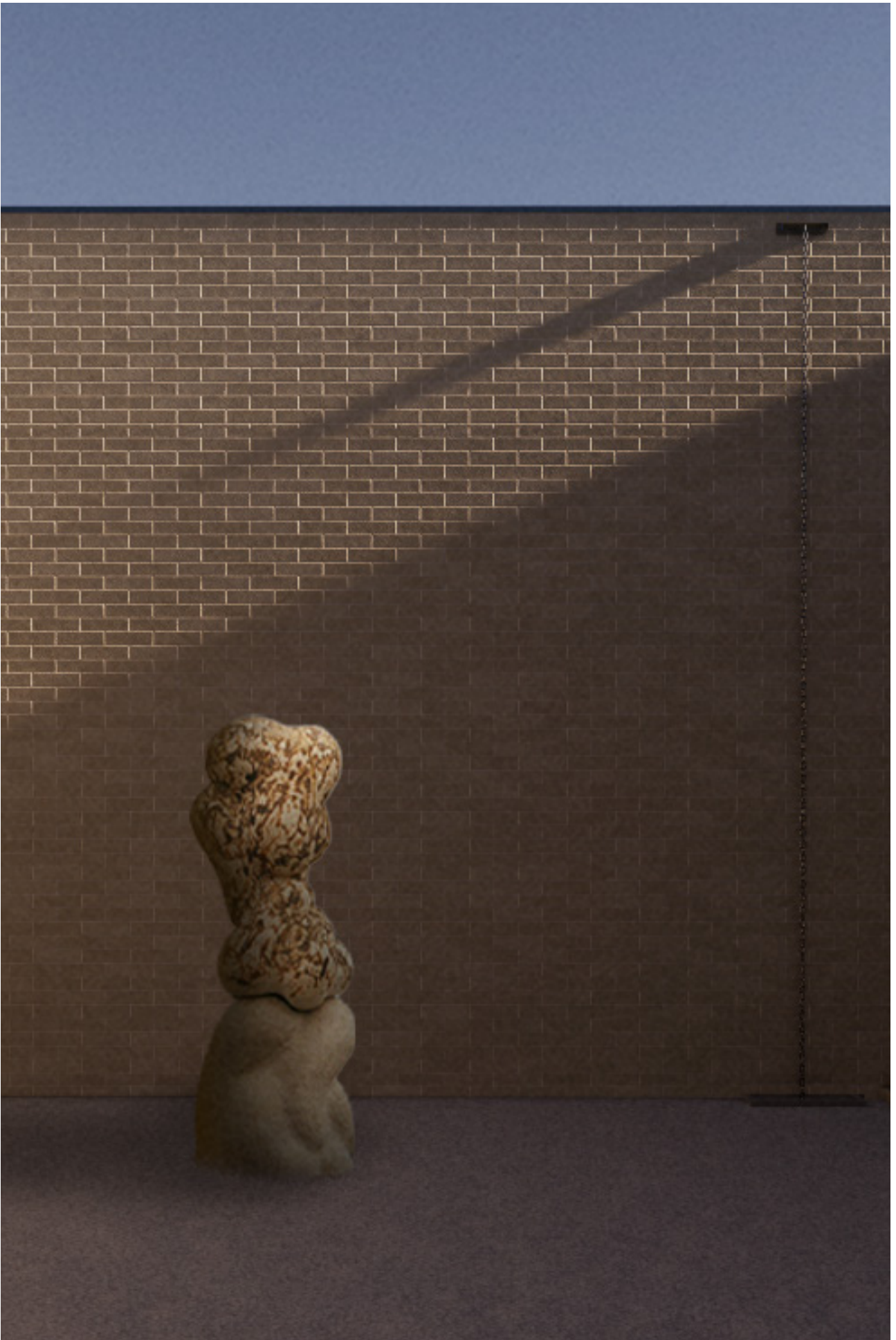
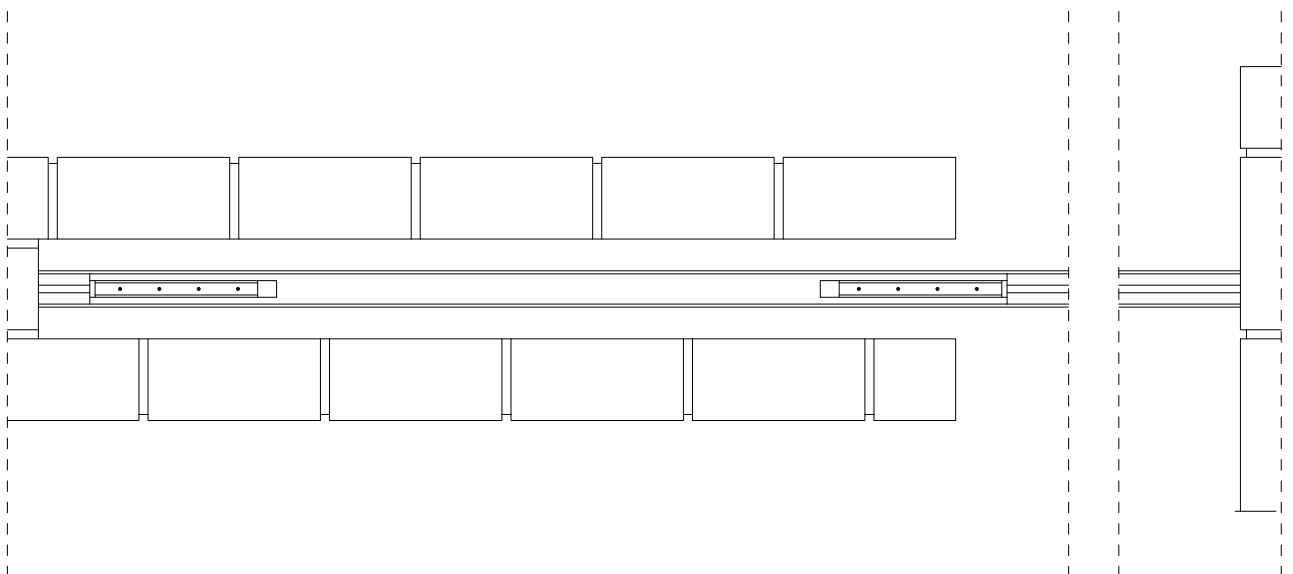
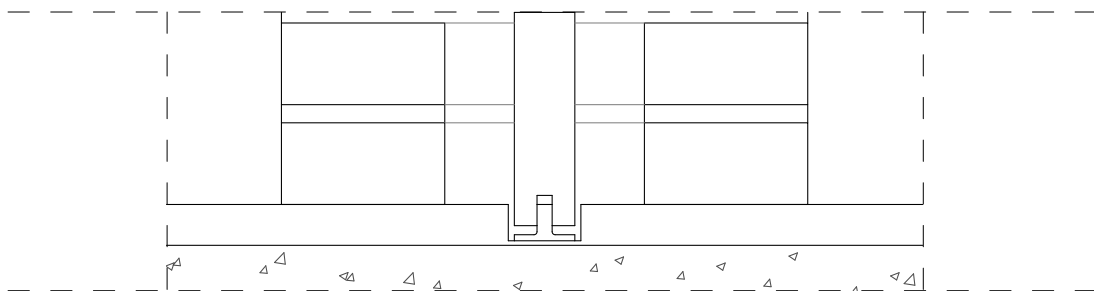
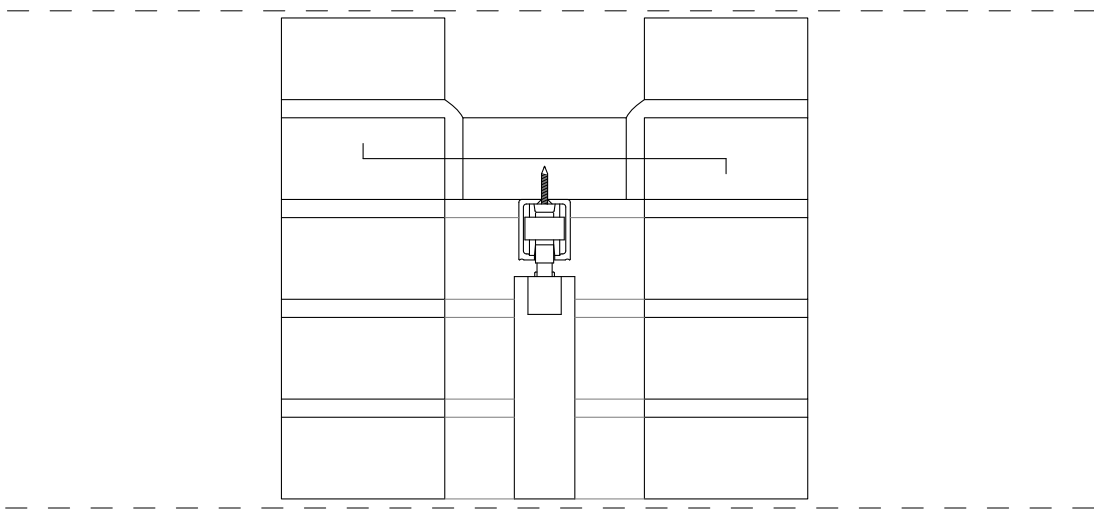


Fig. 4

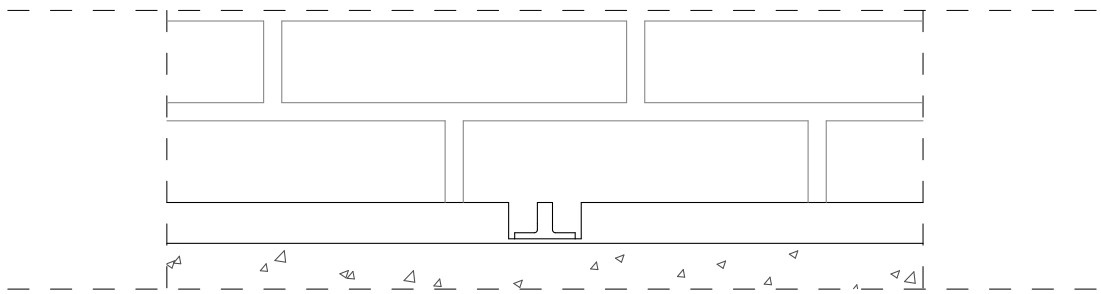
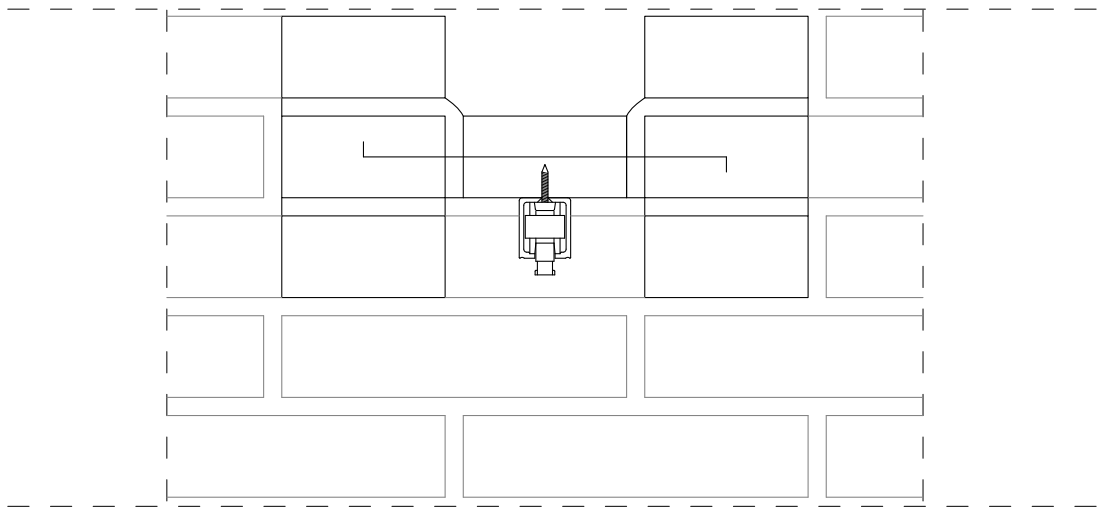


Sliding door horizontal section 1:10





Sliding door vertical section 1:5



Part IV

Conclusion

This master thesis delved into the fundamental importance of the artist's studio as a locus for creative expression and investigated how to materialize the ceramic process as a part of the exhibition experience for the public, through the need for additional studio space, particularly for ceramicists, within the context of Gustavsberg. The exploration of the ceramic process and its integration into a design proposal has underscored the intricate relationship between art production and public engagement. The research has aimed to bridge the gap between the functional, private workspace of ceramicists and the potential for an enhanced interaction with the public. Furthermore, exploring how needed space does not go to waste or stand empty, but rather adapts to the happenings of the place. I believe that the final design proposal of this project deals with and achieves that.

Throughout the course of this investigation, extensive fieldwork was conducted. By visiting and experiencing the site in various seasons, a deeper understanding of the site and its context was gained. This ensured the consideration of the changing nature of the environment, ultimately enhancing the project's potential, not only functionally but also responsive to the site's particular characteristics. Furthermore, dialogues and exchanges with ceramicist and teacher Ylva Wilhelmina Franzén, who has had a studio in Gustavsberg for several years, has throughout the thesis provided important insights and knowledge. Although these interactions provided valuable insight, it is essential to acknowledge that a more comprehensive engagement with a broader spectrum of ceramicists could have enriched the project by offering diverse perspectives and experiences. Additional conversations would have likely yielded a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and expectations of the ceramicist community in Gustavsberg. Personal experiences and observations drawn from my ceramic education played a substantial role in shaping the proposed design. The personal connection to the subject has allowed for a nuanced understanding of the intricacies of ceramic production. Yet it is important to recognize that a wider array of perspectives, including those of other ceramicists and experts in the field, might have contributed to insights altering parts of the design proposal.

The final design proposal strives to achieve a delicate balance, offering one of several answers to the question of how the ceramic process can define the configuration of an architectural proposal. In conclusion, I hope that this thesis can contribute to the field of spaces of ceramics and clay, and trigger new thoughts on how we experience not only ceramics but also art in general.

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Image sources

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- Figure 1 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, plan, Danish design review. (2018)
Retrived from <http://danishdesignreview.com/kbhnotes/2018/10/6/louisiana-the-building-by-vilhelm-wohlert>
- Figure 2 Nyckelviksskolan, plan, Marge Arkitekter. Retrived from https://www.marge.se/projects/nyckelviksskolan_tillbyggnad?lang=sv-SE
- Figure 3 Ceramic sculpture, Anna Harström. (2023)
- Figure 4 Ceramic sculpture, Anna Harström. (2023)

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2023