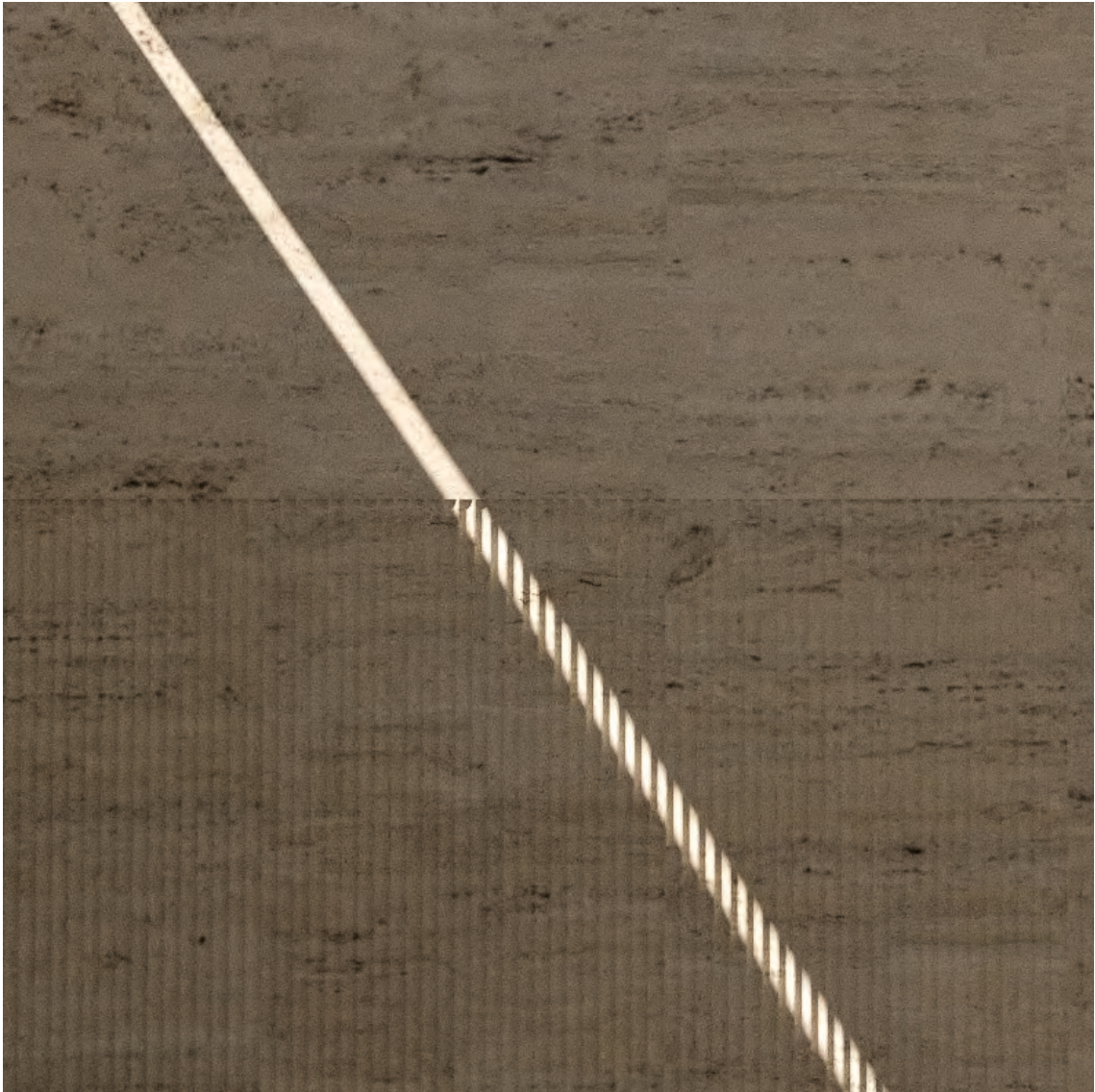




A SPACE FOR GRIEF

Authors: Elsa Jansson and Filippa Arnås
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2025

Supervisor: Filip Rem
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Building design and transformation

SPECIAL THANK TO

Gustav Hagberg, Stencentrum Mölndal, for
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Filip Rem, for great enthusiasm and support.
To friends, for all the discussions and distractions.

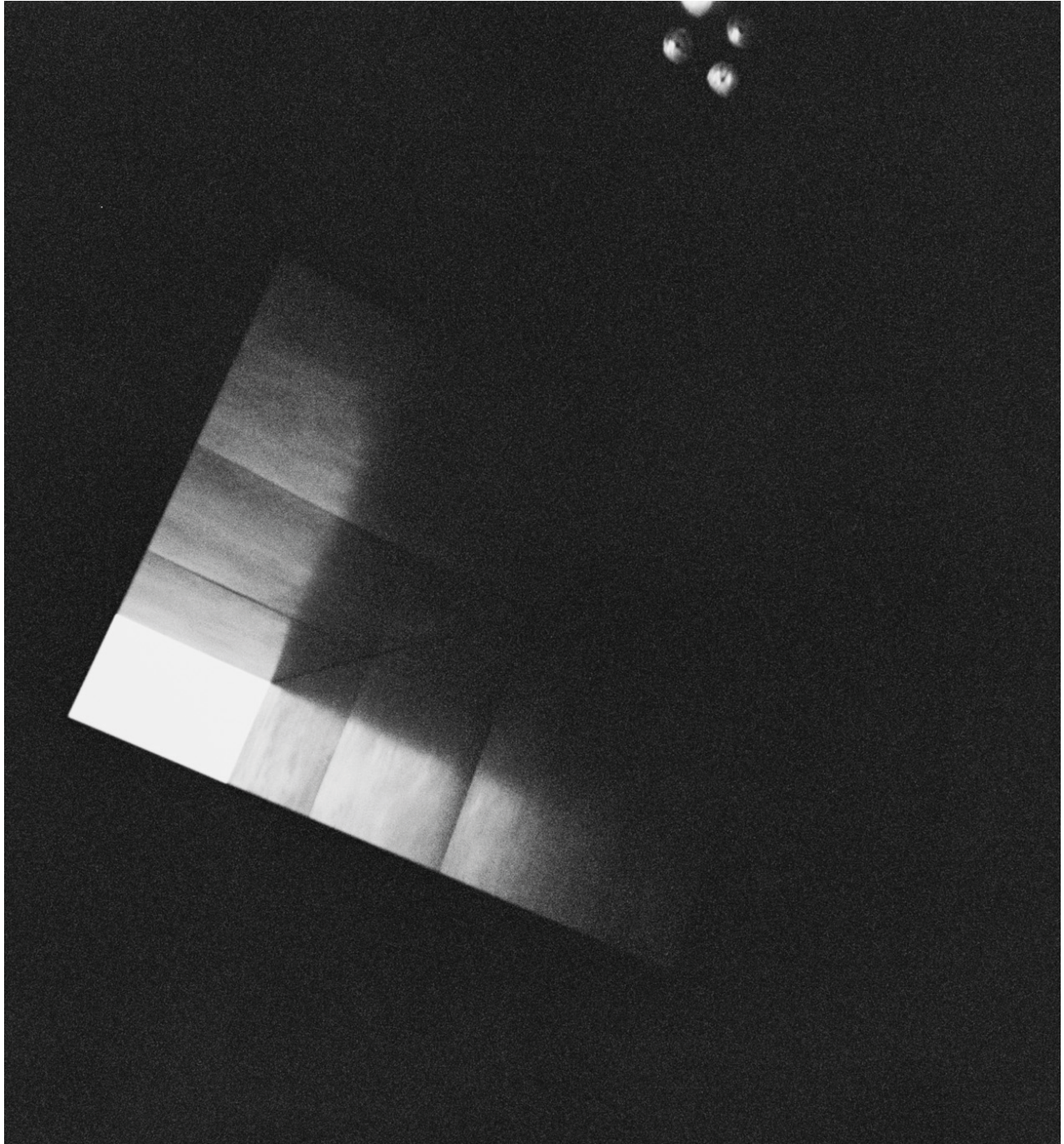


Fig i.i Window opening in Jewish museum, Berlin.

ABSTRACT

This Master's Thesis aims to meet the need for a non-religious space for grief in Gothenburg, where accessible and neutral venues for secular mourning ceremonies are currently lacking. It proposes a project on a dedicated space situated in Kungsparken, offering individuals a place to process grief of different kinds, either through formal ceremonies or personal contemplation, free from religious connotations. Prioritising social sustainability, the project aims to provide an inclusive space for people of all backgrounds.

Drawn on key theories of atmospheric architecture, such as Böhme's concept of "ecstasies", the project aims to explore how architecture could provide an allowing space for emotional responses through aspects like spatial qualities, material properties, and tectonics. The thesis employs an iterative research and design process, including prototyping and testing materials and architectural elements, and refining spatial configurations based on the findings surrounding ecstasies. This approach allows for a dynamic exploration of how various design decisions impact the overall atmosphere of the space. Ultimately, the project seeks to create an inclusive, non-religious space that fills a significant gap in Gothenburg's built environment, offering a place for secular grieving and reflection that is both functional and emotionally resonant.

**KEYWORDS: ECSTASIES, ATMOSPHERE, GRIEF
ARCHITECTURE, GOTHENBURG**



Fig i.ii Picture of the authors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	p. v
Student background	p. vii
 1. INTRODUCTION	
Purpose/Aim/Exploration	p. 1
Thesis questions and objectives	p. 1
Method	p. 3
Delimitations	p. 4
Reading instructions	p. 4
 2. BACKGROUND/THEORY	
Sweden & secularity	p. 5
Grief & grieving	p. 5
Phenomenology & ecstasies	p. 7
Built references & ecstasies	p. 9

3. MAIN MATERIAL

Documentation & design	p. 14
Material & texture	p. 15
Light & shadow	p. 17
External influence	p. 19
Heaviness & lightness	p. 21
Temperature & colour	p. 21
Insights: material documentation	p. 23
Documenting space	p. 25
Rythm & order	p. 25
Light, windows & openings	p. 27
Distances & room proportions	p. 29
Relation & movement	p. 30
Insights: spatial documentation	p. 32
The site in Gothenburg	p. 34
Three types of grieving	p. 39
Space program	p. 40
A space for grief	p. 42
The entrance	p. 51
Buffer zones	p. 55
Grieving together	p. 63
Grieving amongst others	p. 71
Grieving individually	p. 75
Discussion	p. 79
References/bibliography	

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE / AIM / EXPLORATION

When mapping Gothenburg, there is an abundance of spaces for religious ceremonies, most of them christian. But there are less spaces for non religious and secular ceremonies, especially with the context of grief. Even fewer exist where the architectural design of such a space was specific in its program from the beginning. There is therefore a need for a new type of space in Gothenburg. A space for processing grief in general, both in a ceremonial setting and in more solitude.

The aim of this thesis is to explore a possible design of a non-religious space for grief, including but not limited by ceremonies like funerals and memorials. This is to be done through the exploration of architecture's ecstasies and their characteristics and possibilities and applying the observations made onto the program of grief. The final project proposal is to be a building situated in Gothenburg and the design is site-specific.

THESIS QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective is to create an architectural design project for grief in Kungsparken, Gothenburg, illustrated and communicated through drawings, 3d-images, physical models and a booklet explaining the thought process in more detail based on the thesis questions:

How can an exploration of ecstasies in materials, tectonics and spatial forms help create an architectural proposal of a space for grief in Kungsparken, Gothenburg?

And

How can wood, stone, and metal contribute to the atmospheric qualities of a grieving space?

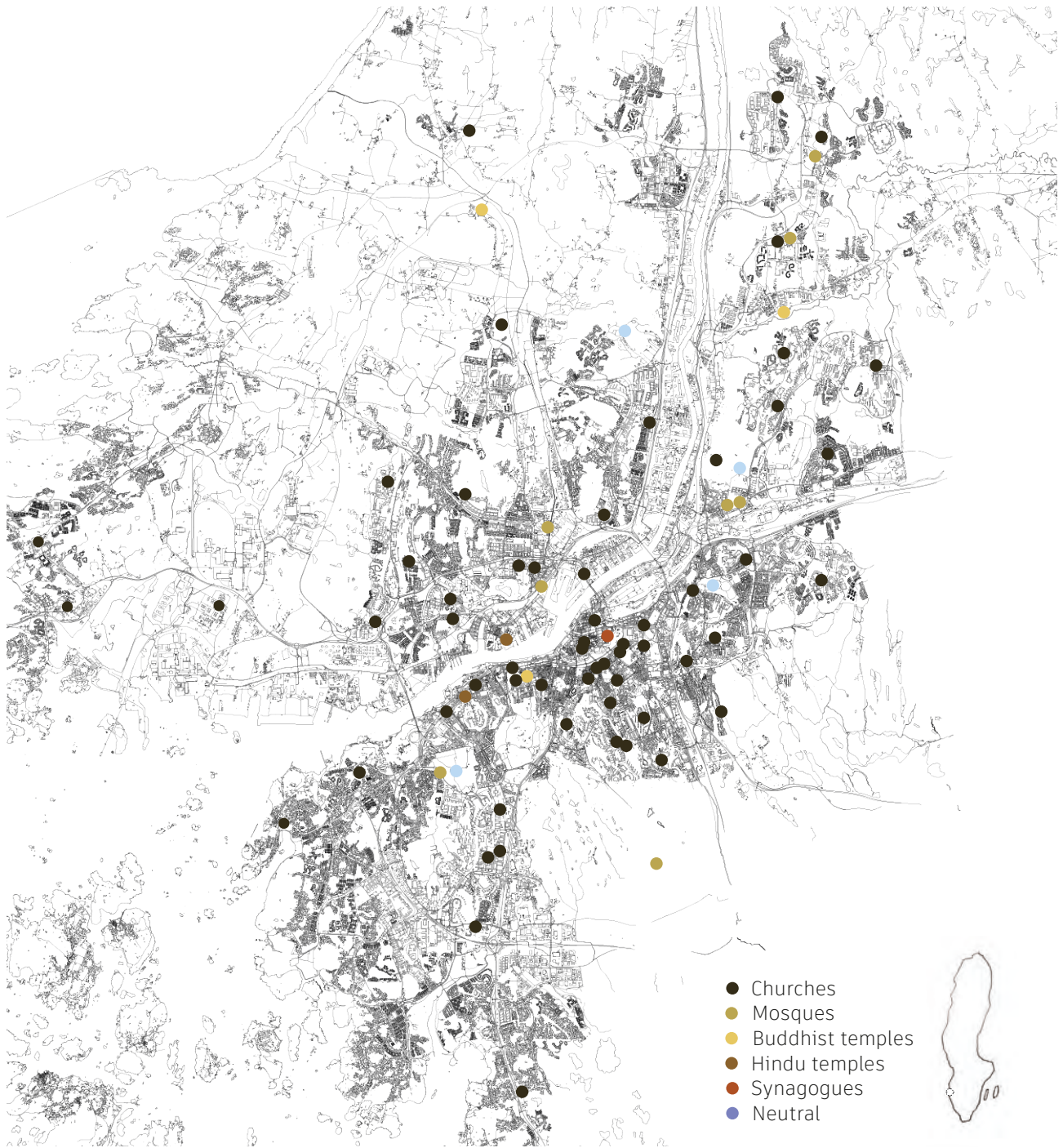


Fig 1.1 Mapped religious spaces in Gothenburg. Scale 1:150 000

METHOD

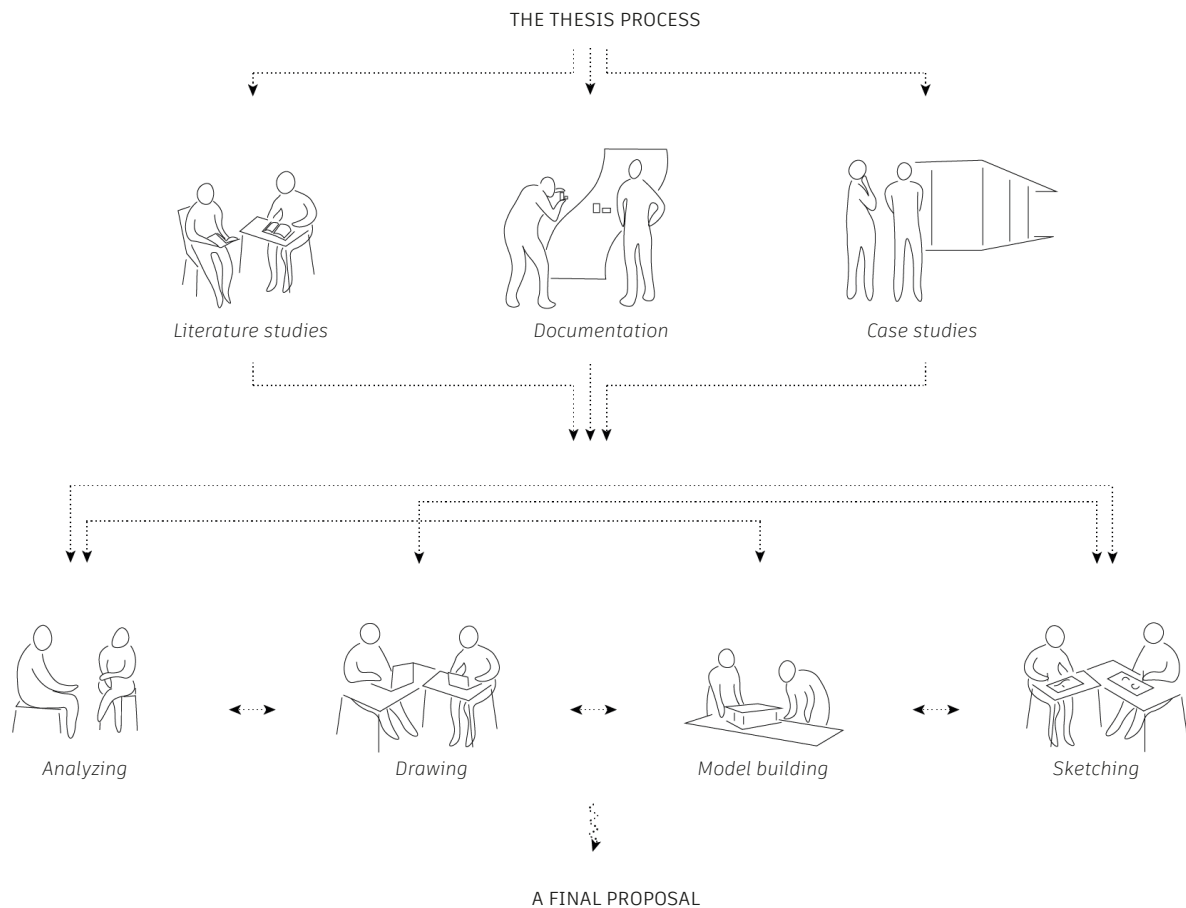


Fig 1.2 Diagram over the iterative process and its phases

This thesis is conducted through a varied number of methods. Surrounding the theme of grief and its research, the main methods are self reflection and literature studies, while surrounding the theme of ecstasies, phenomenology and the design of the building, methods like documentation, spacial laborations in model, drawings, sketching, digital models, 3d-images and physical models played a bigger role. However, literature studies were conducted on this theme as well.

Especially the later part of the process has an iterative nature, where the design development occurred through constant trials of ideas and then evaluating these same ideas. This main part consists of research through and by design.

DELIMITATIONS

As previously mentioned, the aim of this thesis is to design a space for grief through the exploration of ecstasies but as we also want our proposal to be situated at a specific site, we limit ourselves from making a general method or rule for the creation of this typology of space. We do not however delimit ourselves from the discussion of what this type of space might need in other contexts.

We limit this thesis from investigating in what way the proposal in its entirety will be ecologically and economically sustainable or not. We will not delimit ourselves from reflecting on the end results.

The thesis will not be a study of religious architecture, nor will it try to accommodate every religion's spatial and practical needs in grief ceremonies. As such, the building will be entirely secular.

The finished proposal will not work with symbolism/allusion as we connote that with religious buildings.

READING INSTRUCTIONS

THINGS

Objects like a teakettle and architecture.

ECSTASIES OF THINGS

According to Böhme's (2017) definition, how things act in relation to other things and how they affect the world around them.

ECSTASIES OF ARCHITECTURE

How architecture affects its surroundings, like through scale, texture, temperature and form.

ARCHITECTURAL ATMOSPHERES

A combination of ecstasies experienced in an architectural setting.

THE VISITOR

The person interacting with the ecstasies and atmospheres, bringing their own emotions and circumstances that complete the architectural experience.

BACKGROUND/THEORY

SWEDEN & SECULARITY

Many argue that Sweden is a secular country, even the most secularised in the world (Thurfjell, 2015). They may refer to how the state has been separating from the church for 150 years. The law has over many years also evolved into focusing more on the rights of the worshipper, or none worshipper, rather than the importance of God and religious writings. It is also theorised that Sweden's history of extensive welfare has meant less of a need for religion.

Even though Sweden is a very secular country according to official statistics regarding religions or how our laws have been developing through the ages, there are still uncertainties whether this is completely true. Even though we might not feel like we belong to a specific religion, it is common to believe in something and to appreciate spiritual ceremonies. According to a survey in 2005, 53 % of the Swedish population believe in some sort of vague force (Thurfjell, 2015). It is therefore more a rejection of the organised church that is taking place. It is also not uncommon to see the combination of religions as something positive. The individual's right to choose for themselves is what is important, not the authoritarian rules a religion might implicate, which is connected to a desire for self realisation and wellbeing. This ambivalent take on religion is by some called private religiosity, *privatreligiositet*.

GRIEF & GRIEVING

Regardless of religious or spiritual beliefs however, there is one thing that will always unite us. Only the loneliest person might escape the experience of grief, yet even they may mourn the absence of a life filled with love. The one thing we might know for certain is that we at some point will experience grief. This doesn't have to be an inherently bad thing, but a sign that you experienced something so good that it is worth sorrow. Attig (2010) coined a reaction specific to loss called "grief emotion" which he describes as a desire to keep on loving something or someone you have lost. Working through your grief is realizing that this love does not need a physical presence as a subject but can exist anywhere if you allow it to.

Boss (1999) expands on the loss in grief as not something only caused by the death of someone close, she even argues that more ambiguous losses can cause even more grief or perhaps grief that is more difficult to process. This could for example be the loss an immigrant experiences when leaving their home land, the loss parents experience when children grow up and move out, or the loss any person can experience when a great friendship is lost due to life simply turning in different directions.

What you need as a griever is very subjective and changes depending on where in the grieving process you might be, according to Worden's (2008) handbook on the subject. The emotion of grief may also encompass a variety of other emotions like numbness, anger and relief depending on the relationship the griever had with what they are grieving. Worden also proposes certain tasks that the griever must do in order to move on from their loss, for example one must let themselves process and feel the difficult emotions relating to the loss and find a new enduring connection or space with the deceased without preventing a new life without them to take form.

According to Sveriges auktoriserade begravningsbyråer (Borgerlig begravning, n. d.), a secular ceremony, like a funeral, can take place anywhere that does not disturb the public. This could be somewhere subjectively meaningful like in a forest, in a park, by the ocean or in a home.



Fig 2.1 A forest on Kinnekulle



Fig 2.2 Kungsparken in Gothenburg



Fig 2.3 The west coast outside of Gothenburg



Fig 2.4 Villa Beer, Josef Frank

PHENOMENOLOGY & ECSTASIES

To design a space with accuracy, many argue that we must adhere to all senses. One of these advocates of phenomenology is Erwine (2017) who claims that an ocular-centric view on architecture creates a gap between the mental construct of a design and how it actually is to experience it. By only focusing on the visual, we also deprive ourselves as designers from the possibilities of space creation through other senses. This gap can, for example, result in new developments becoming sites of display rather than sites of dwelling. Furthermore, Erwine does not just critique the ocular centric view on architecture, but also communicates the opportunities a more phenomenological space offers.

Working on the same theme and expanding on what it actually is that affects us in an architectural setting is Böhme (2017) doing through his coined term “ecstasies”. He describes these ecstasies as ways in which objects affect viewers and other objects. They do not merely exist as objects, but as things existing and interacting with their surroundings. Looking at architecture like this object, we can also discuss the ecstasies of architecture more specifically. While they might not be called the ecstasies of architecture in Pallasmaa’s book (2012), the way architecture affects is thoroughly examined as well, arguing that the lack of tactility and plasticity results in buildings lost in a visual void and become immaterial and unreal. Drawing on more personal experience, Zumthor (2006) describes similar or the same aspects when discussing atmospheres more specifically. He explains how characteristics like intimacy, tension between interior and exterior, and a seduction of movements are important parts of designing.

Connecting all of these theories on phenomenology, examples of certain ecstasies stand out as important when designing architecture. Materiality is one such thing, evident in aspects like temperature, texture, sound and weight. Temperature in colour can evoke senses of safety and community, connected to the situational culture. On a large scale, a whole building can have a certain temperature, and can be tempered based on the desired outcome. A flat surface without pattern feels more immaterial while a rough surface might draw the attention of both hands and eyes and convey a sense of history. A comfortable smooth chair or handle, adapted to the curves of the body, can make the user feel more welcome than that of a rugged one. The sound of a space is absolutely unique and not only measures its scale, but also speaks of its monumentality or intimacy. Furthermore, a floor allowing sounds like footsteps might signal a more public space than that of the more private, quiet and soft textile-covered one. Regarding weight, we might see a room behind a heavier door as more important or serious than the room behind a thin sliding one. But weight is not experienced solely through the material itself but also through how it might affect the tectonics of the whole building. Architecture can make us aware of gravity by how it stands grounded, or floats seemingly effortlessly.

Another theme discussed heavily in the theories presented is the relation between light and shadow, and the spaces it can create. Less light can for example create a more ambiguous space where tactile fantasy and internal focus can take place. We sense the boundaries of light when moving through a building. There is a constant rhythm between them, a breathing as both Erwine and Pallasmaa calls it, where shadow inhales and light exhales. Darker spaces can then be spaces of refuge or pause between the lighter activated ones. Light can draw attention and focus if used in combination with shadow, too little contrast however can make something look bland while too much may distract or even cause glare. The interplay between light and shadow can even emphasise textures or break up continuous surfaces through visual patterns.

Something less visual and perhaps less tangible is also the aspect of bodily presence and designing with this presence in mind. This can be connected to the way architecture represents the continuation of time, and does not act as a non-affected constant or a temporary structure with no effect. It can also be discussed through a more literal sense, how the architect tries to internalise movement, proportions and scale in their own body, to be able to create an architecture that interacts with the body of the visitor when finished. Furthermore, architecture is only authentically experienced through bodily movement and the acts like approaching a face and entering through a passage. Architecture can not only enable, but entice this movement and encourage the visitor to truly experience the building. The proportions of spaces is another theme, especially discussed by Zumthor, in the way the building can be designed in relation to distance and proximity, and scale and mass in contrast to the human one.

BUILT REFERENCES & ECSTASIES

As part of this thesis' research, several case studies have been made. The projects are chosen for various reasons: the first three relate more to our project visually, constructively and architecturally, while the other three relate to it more in program and as inspiration on how to use ecstasies as a tool in the design.

FARNSWORTH HOUSE, MIES VAN DER ROHE



Fig 2.5 Farnsworth house, Illinois. (Atelier FLIR, 2009) CC BY 2.0



Fig 2.6 Farnsworth house, Illinois. (Grigas, 2013) CC BY-SA 3.0

This weekend retreat villa focuses on mainly connecting house and nature through its glass exterior in all directions. Furthermore it is very structurally expressive with the tectonic elements being clear parts of the design and there is a clear intention to lessen the mark made by humans in nature.

Key takeaways: How it sits as a building in nature, floor slabs on pillar structure, varied high levels, glass shell with closed core

Ecstasies: weight, distance, texture, temperature

LANDSKRONA KONSTHALL, STEN SAMUELSON & FRITZ JAENECKE



Fig 2.7 Landskrona konsthall, Landskrona. (Nilsson, 2024)



Fig 2.8 Landskrona konsthall, Landskrona. (Nilsson, 2024)

Perhaps inspired by the Farnsworth house, this building draws upon the same principles but in a public setting and a Swedish context. It has an elevated foundation which also here, situates the building in its natural surroundings in a humble manner. Just because it's a public building, it does not scream superiority but instills a calm welcome.

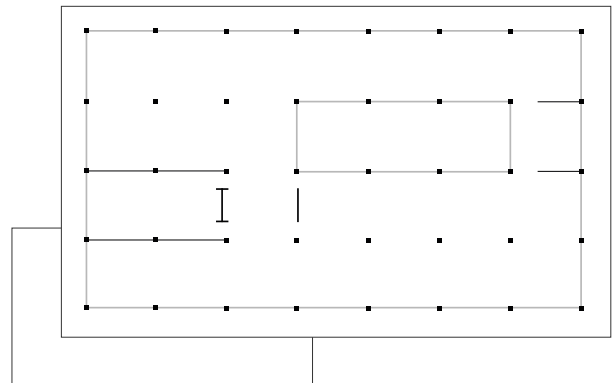


Fig 2.9 Plan diagram.

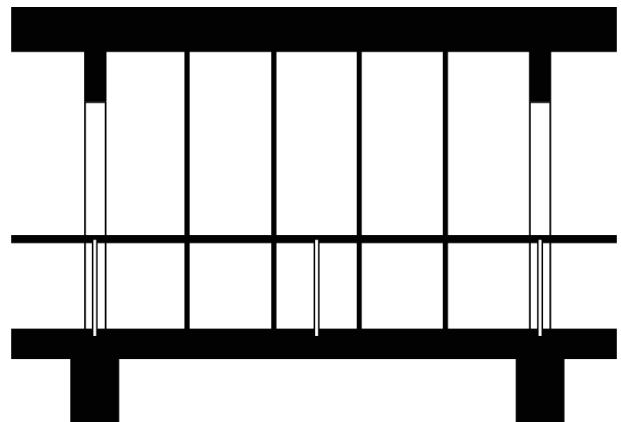


Fig 2.10 Facade diagram.

Key takeaways: How it sits as a public building in nature, the slab, pillar and beam structure, verticality vs horizontality

Ectasies: colour, contrast, temperature

**BAUMSCHULENWEG KREMATORIUM,
SHULTES FRANK ARCHITECKTEN**



Fig 2.11 Baumshulenweg Crematorium, Berlin.

This very grand building gives an importance to not only the space but also the people visiting and the person who they might say farewell to. A heavy impression also speaks of importance, while the light brings in another mood of peacefulness and even playfulness.

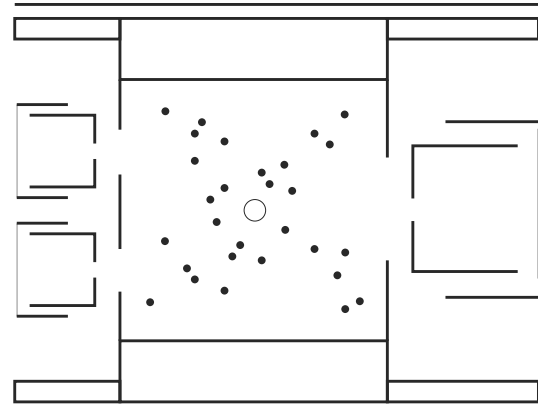


Fig 2.12 Plan diagram.

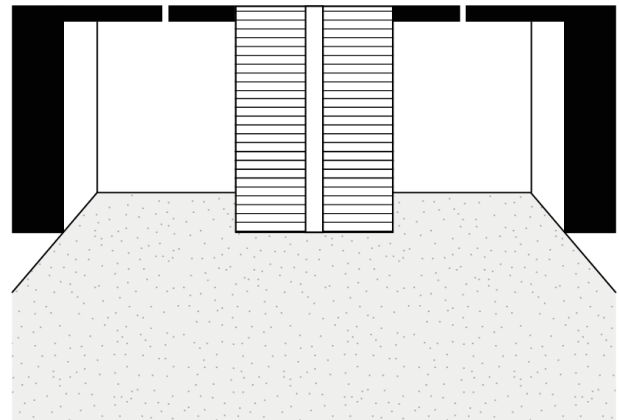


Fig 2.13 Entrance facade diagram.

The scattered positioning of the pillars in the main room creates a type of space where people can mourn in peace, perhaps alone or with a close group, while still seeing others and not being closed off from the world. The building consists of a varied collection of rooms, not only the ceremonial one.

Key takeaways: Grieving amongst others, buffer zones, program inspiration

Ectasies: light, weight, scale, colour

**JEWISH MUSEUM,
DANIEL LIBESKIND**

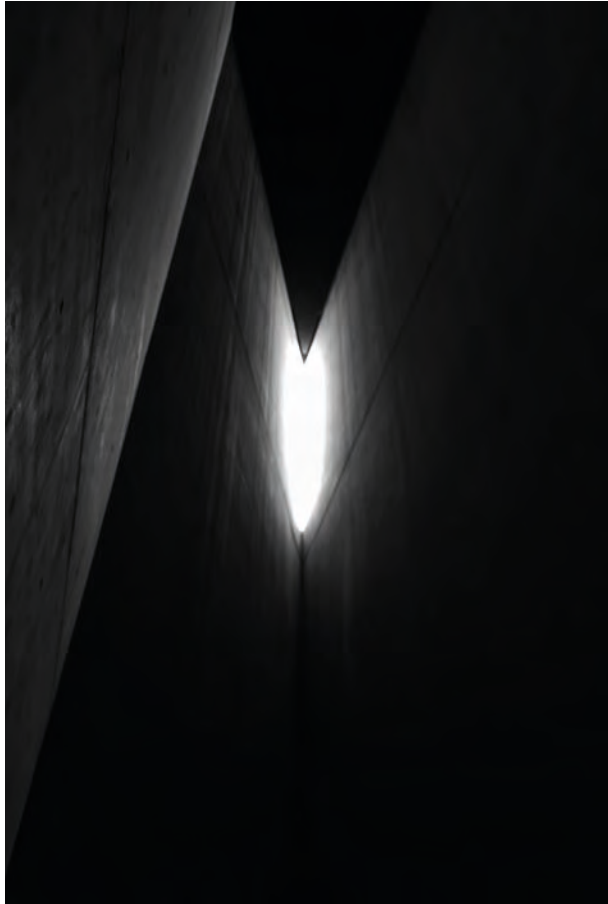


Fig 2.14 Jewish Museum, Berlin.

This building works with how ecstasies can be used to affect the visitor in a similar way to what the participant in the holocaust might have felt. A powerful tool to help the visitor grasp the narrative. This building focuses on enhancing the tougher emotions with darkness and instability while a building for grief might want to also enhance hope.

Key takeaways: Rooms that allow processing darker emotions, the power of ecstasies

Ectasies: light, shadow, sound, colour

**NEUE WACHE,
HEINRICH TESSENOW**

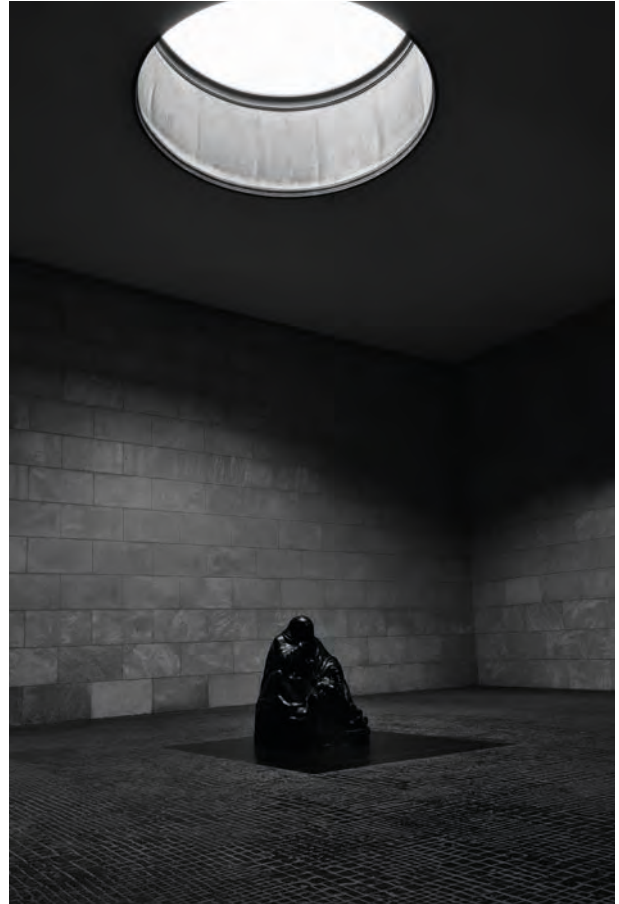


Fig 2.15 Neue Wache, Berlin.

A relatively simple but very impactful building, it uses simple means and clear building elements that create a whole and an atmosphere surrounding the monument in the middle. Here, the symmetry and light highlights a centre piece and the temperature and texture tell a cold, sad and perhaps inhumane story.

Key takeaways: Directional lights, materiality and its temperatures, the effect of a centre piece

Ectasies: light, temperature, texture, proportions



Fig 3.1 The site model

MAIN MATERIAL

DOCUMENTATION & DESIGN

The thesis' design process has two main phases, and the first one focuses mainly on documenting ecstasies. This is done through working with selected material samples and photographing them in different states and textures like wet and dry, polished and rough. They are also curated in ways that might express a contrast in material or highlight their perceived weight. The documentation of ecstasies is also done through physical models of spatial configurations and tectonic elements and discussing how they may affect a visitor.

The second phase focuses mainly on implementing the findings from the first phase in an iterative design process where trial and evaluation are core elements of the process. Here, the design takes form through sketching and drawings in both detail and at building level, as well as volume studies in the context of Kungsparken and its trees.

Ultimately, these two phases culminate in a thesis project: a space for grief offering a place for secular grieving and reflection that is both functional and emotionally resonant.

DOCUMENTING MATERIAL & TEXTURE

In the early stage of the project, we defined three materials that we wished to work with: stone, wood and metal/steel. We started the documentation by photographing the materials in their raw form, which is presented in the diagram to the right.

The stone and metals have varying finishes, primarily affecting touch and texture but also colour as more polished surfaces give a deeper colour. A rougher finish might, according to Erwine (2017), often be seen as more natural and convey a sense of its origin and change over time, and can ground an object in its region, while flatness can create a sense of lightness and immateriality, a contrast between the two might invite touch.

Böhme (2017) further explains that material can also provide synaesthetic characteristics like how cold can be produced by smooth, glassy surfaces or the color blue and warmth could be produced by the color red or a mat surface, like wood. We might also have subjective connections to material and their atmosphere based on our childhood.

Texture: interactive, imperfect, allowing, timeless, time-bound, immaterial

Fig 3.2 Kolmårdsmarmor: Sandblasted
Fig 3.3 Ekeberg Elx: Honed
Fig 3.4 Brown Antique: Honed
Fig 3.5 Rosso Travertine: Filled, honed
Fig 3.6 Grå Bohus: Polished
Fig 3.7 Grå Bohus: Honed
Fig 3.8 Grå Bohus: Cleft
Fig 3.9 Kalksten Ölands: Antique
Fig 3.10 Norrvange: Planed
Fig 3.11 Grigio Montcau: Flamed
Fig 3.12 Grigio Montcau: Honed
Fig 3.13 Nero Assoluto Memorial: Polished
Fig 3.14 Al
Fig 3.15 Spånskiva
Fig 3.16 Alm
Fig 3.17 Ek
Fig 3.18 Asp
Fig 3.19 Furu
Fig 3.20 Ask
Fig 3.21 Limfog
Fig 3.22 Bok
Fig 3.23 Björk
Fig 3.24 Gran
Fig 3.25 Stainless steel: Polished
Fig 3.26 Stainless steel: Brushed
Fig 3.27 Galvanized sheet: Deformed
Fig 3.28 Alumium: Deformed
Fig 3.29 Copper
Fig 3.30 Copper: Polished
Fig 3.31 Brass: Polished



Fig 3.2

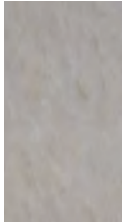


Fig 3.3



Fig 3.4

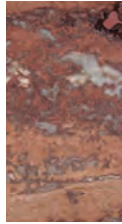


Fig 3.5



Fig 3.6



Fig 3.7



Fig 3.8



Fig 3.9



Fig 3.10



Fig 3.11



Fig 3.12

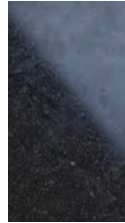


Fig 3.13

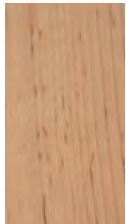


Fig 3.14

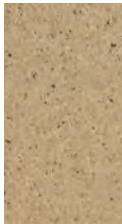


Fig 3.15



Fig 3.16



Fig 3.17



Fig 3.18



Fig 3.19



Fig 3.20



Fig 3.21



Fig 3.22



Fig 3.23



Fig 3.24

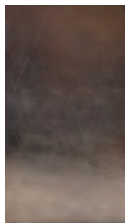


Fig 3.25



Fig 3.26



Fig 3.27



Fig 3.28



Fig 3.29



Fig 3.30



Fig 3.31

LIGHT & SHADOW

Different materials act differently regarding the ecstasies of light and shadow. When focusing a direct light on a lighter than a darker material for example, it becomes brighter and perhaps even blinding in the case of the aspen wood. When the light is more scattered, it becomes less visible on a more textured surface like the kolmårdsmarmor. A polished surface of stone or metal could be perceived very differently on a cloudy and on a sunny day.

Light itself can also come with powerful connotations. To Zumthor (2006) for example, daylight has a spiritual quality as it is something he does not entirely understand and becomes something beyond him and his world.

Light & shadow: rythm, serenity, spirituality, directional

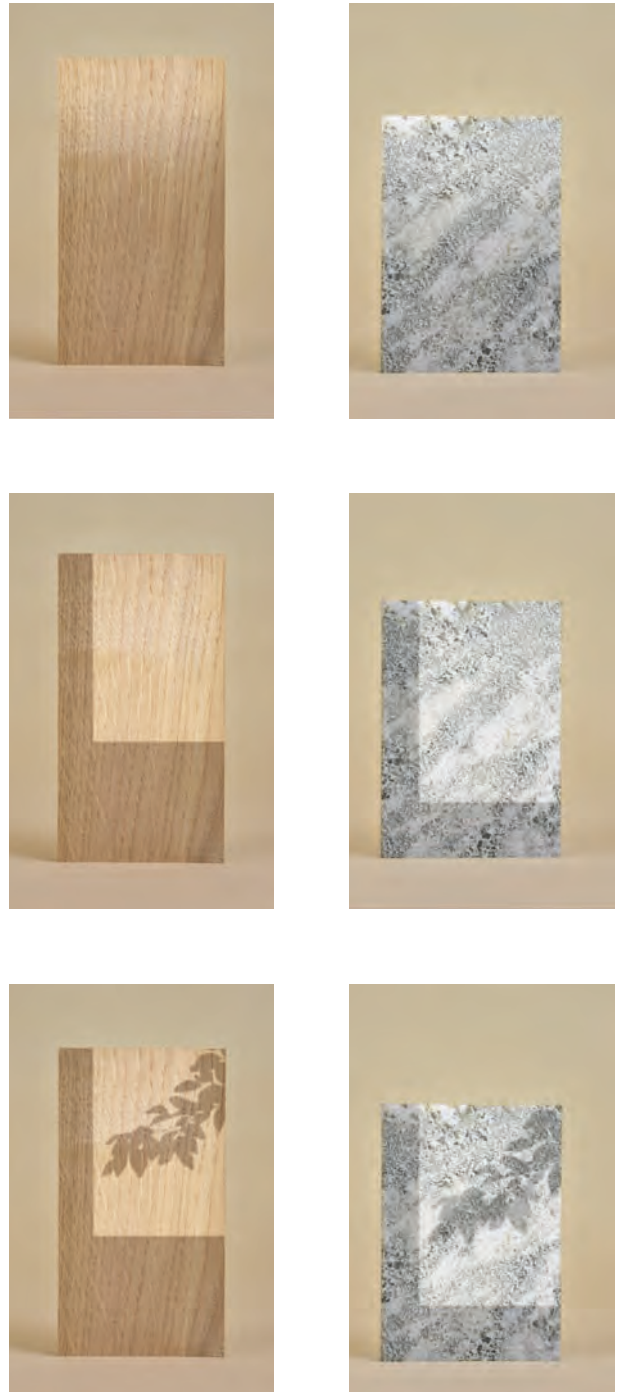
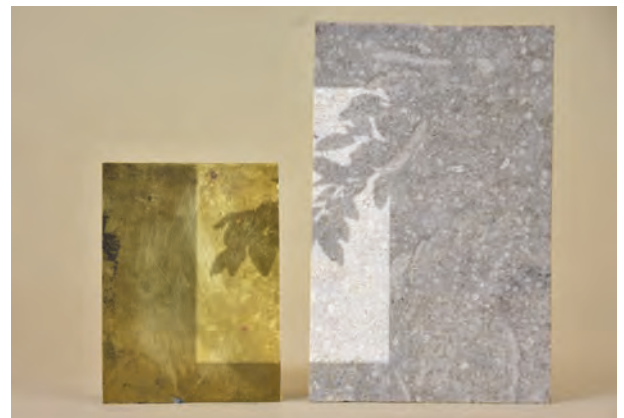


Fig 3.32 Different materials with different types of light.



EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

We also noticed that some stones displayed clearer traces of external influence, such as getting wet and drying up. This might not be desirable on the floor of a toilet bathroom for example, but might be desirable as an interactive fountain piece where the visitor can become part of the installation. Some stone and wood are also harder as materials and will wear out slower than others. A softer material or a metal being polished by touch might then be desirable in case one wants to highlight the movement in the floor, or the usage of a handrail.

External influence: traces, stories, interactive

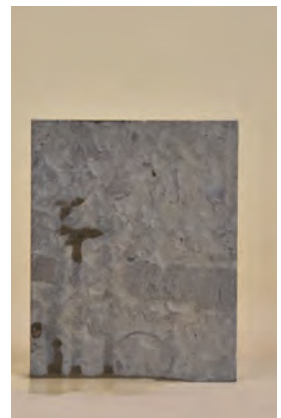


Fig 3.33 Investigation of the stone when wet

HEAVINESS & LIGHTNESS

We connotate materials with different weights as well, especially if we commonly handle them and have a physical grasp of what they are. Stone, which rises from the ground and is perceived to be solid and subtractive, feels and is heavier than the more additive, flexible wood construction. Heaviness might feel more important, in a way that it stands more firm and is more difficult to move. A space behind a heavy door feels more important than that behind a lighter door. An open lighter door is more flexible and okay to close, while a heavy open door is consciously placed open and is supposed to stay there.

Heaviness: safety, permanence, continuation
Lightness: hope, positivity, non-permanence and continuation



Fig 3.34 Different stones stacked



Fig 3.35 Different stones stacked

TEMPERATURE & COLOUR

The materials all vary on a scale of temperature and colour, as is illustrated in the diagram (fig x.x) to the right. The material itself does not determine this however, but stone can be both warm and cold, light and dark, just like wood and metal. Wood is in its natural state more often warm in colour, however aged wood or wood with patina can become greyer.

Warm temperature: safety, love, warmth
Cold temperature: clean, unemotional, blank
Light colour: solemnity, hope, happiness, cleanliness, perfection
Dark colour: importance, sadness



Fig 3.36 Pieces of different wood stacked

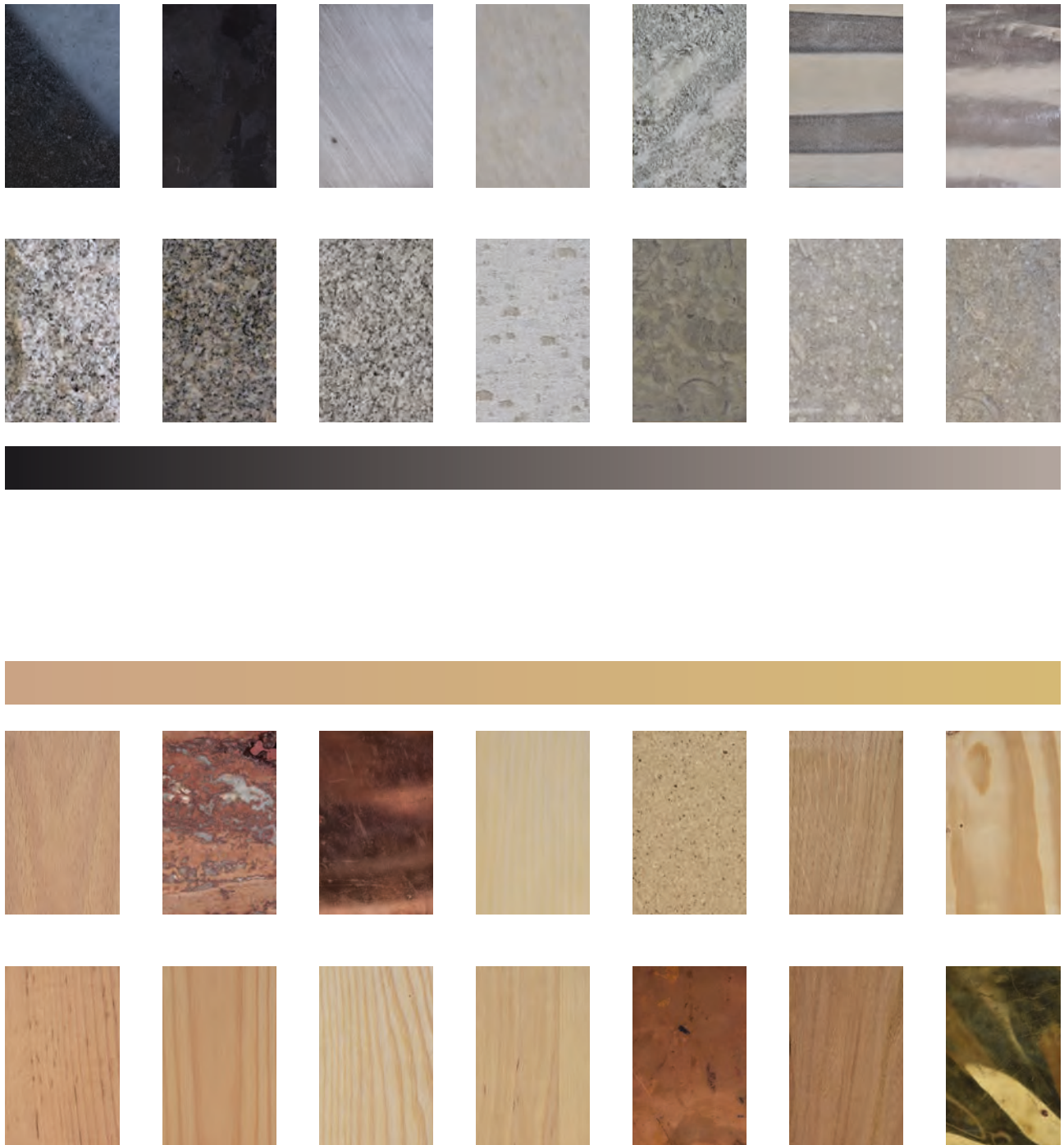


Fig 3.37 The scale in colour and temperature of the analysed materials

INSIGHTS: MATERIAL DOCUMENTATION



Fig 3.38 Combining different materials

Palettes of materiality appear when combining the different samples in different ways, creating palettes that either contrast, like the one in figure x.x, or complement each other, like the one in figure x.x. Some main aspects that we bring with us from this documentation are:

- 1.. Utilizing the importance and significance stone signifies through its heaviness, connotations to public space and texture in the more central spaces for grief.
2. Utilizing the warmth and familiarity wood signifies through its colour, craftsmanship and texture in the buffer zones and where care is necessary.
3. Utilizing metal as a bridge between the other two and as a material that ages and becomes transformed when used, telling the story of the building and its visitors.
4. Being conscious of where the light lands and how sharp the shadows become when directing light intake and focus.
5. Wood being represented in the more lighter, tectonic constructions while stone being represented in more stereotomic and closed spaces.



Fig 3.39 Combining different materials

DOCUMENTING SPACE

To document spatial configurations, several physical models are created that can be analyzed both in plan and section. These configurations provoke questions in regards to rhythm, order of elements, light intake and openings, size, distances and room proportions and movement through space. The models are curated with soft and strong lighting to soften or emphasise shadows.

RYTHM & ORDER

When looking at the element of the column in relation to rhythm and order, certain aspects stood out. One of them is how the sight lines are affected by the degree of order in the elements. A disordered space can be compared to a naturally grown forest where there is always another tree trunk obstructing the view, even as you position yourself differently and move through it. In a more ordered structure, the sight lines are completely obstructed in one angle and completely free in another, and vary drastically depending on where you stand in relation to the order. As you move through it this variation creates a rhythm that isn't noticeable in a more disordered space. This rhythm could evolve and vary based on the frequency and interval, offering opportunities to customise this based on the preferred experience.

A more structured space also creates a more defined space, you can trace the connection between free-standing elements like pillars without them actually connecting, and sense their relation to each other in the grid, especially when frequent. A more disordered space on the other hand, can offer more flexibility in what the space is and is as such less defined in its borders. There is also perhaps some connotation to order, rhythm and monumentality. A symmetrical and centred path with chastened greenery is seen as more important than one to the side with a wilder theme.

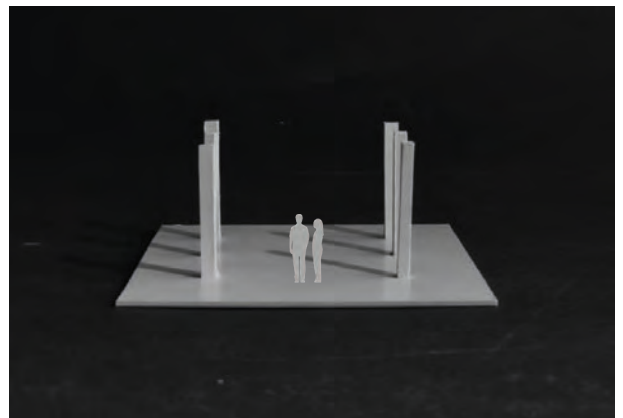
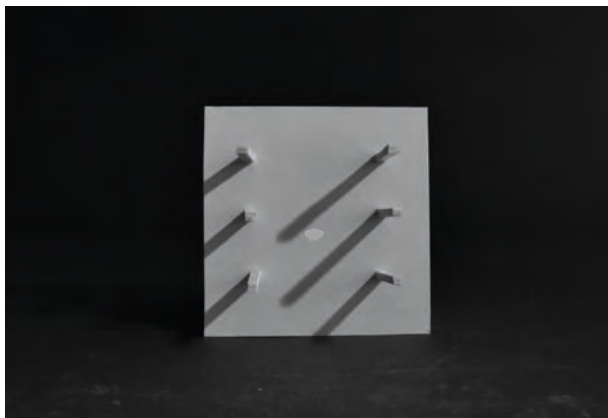
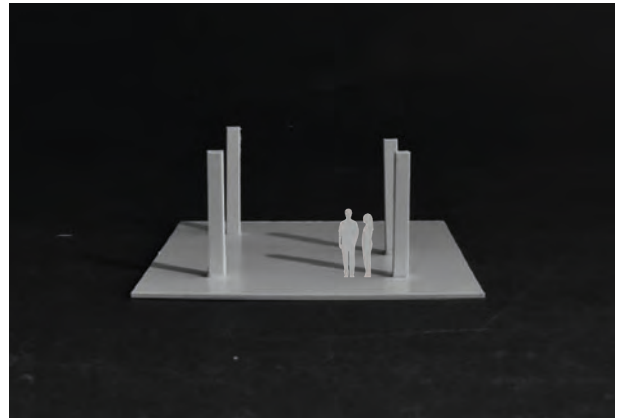
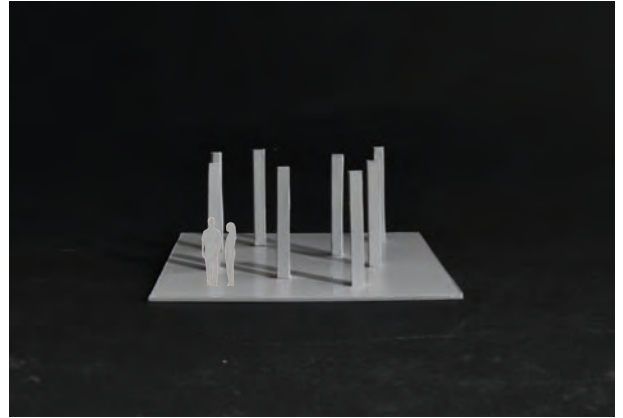


Fig 3.38 Investigations of rythm and order

LIGHT, WINDOWS & OPENINGS

Openings in the form of windows are vital when designing what type of light is preferable in a space. Based on our investigations we discern how the proportions and interval of a window or opening can make it be perceived as a window or as an entrance/passage. The proportions can also tell the story of what happens inside the building where a facade with more windows signifies a more public function while a facade with less openings signifies a more private function. The size, proportion and interval of openings can also affect how the light itself is experienced inside the building through the light's refraction. This decides whether the light is directed with high contrast between light and shadow, if it's scattered and creating a pattern on surfaces inside or if its refracted to a soft light, like one you might experience on a slightly cloudy day.

The positioning of the windows in regards to interior surfaces can also affect if the openings function as views to the outside or merely as a source of light. If the window is placed at an angle or at an height where one can't, or is discouraged to, see through it, it might keep the interior private while still providing light. If it on the other hand is placed in the middle of a wall and in eye level, it will act as a painting to the outside and drawing focus to the connection between the exterior and interior.

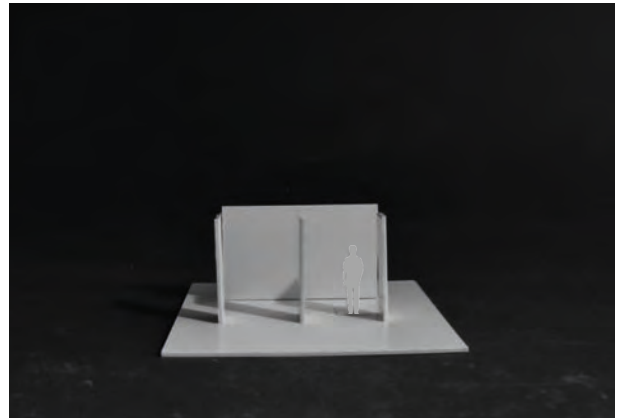
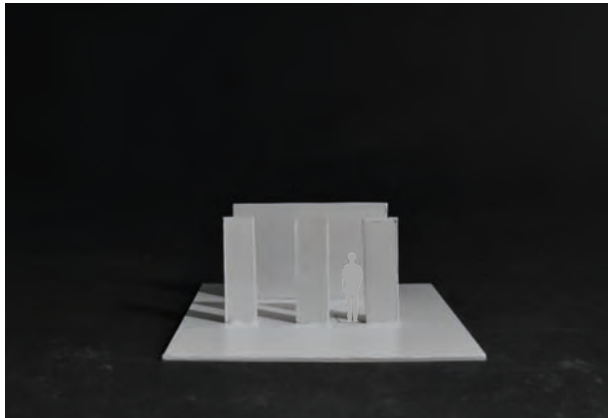


Fig 3.39 Investigations of light intake and openings



Fig 3.40 Investigations of element relation and movement

RELATION & MOVEMENT

How building elements relate to each other is closely linked to how we experience moving through the building itself. For example, there is a difference in the experience of moving through a narrow versus big wide passage, a very wide passage might not even be experienced as such but as another room or space that needs a more defined function. Moving between different heights is a great way for the visitor to really reflect on the building and feel it in their own body, and it can give a higher importance to spaces that you enter by either going up or going down. Relating to elements with different heights can also offer different views in different spaces, and utilizing this can for example affect how private or public a space is perceived.

A building can also encourage movement. Overlapping or skewing surfaces can hint on a continuation and something around the corner that the visitor will want to explore. Giving a visitor sight lines and an overview of a building can help a visitor orient themselves, making them more comfortable with moving around in its different parts.

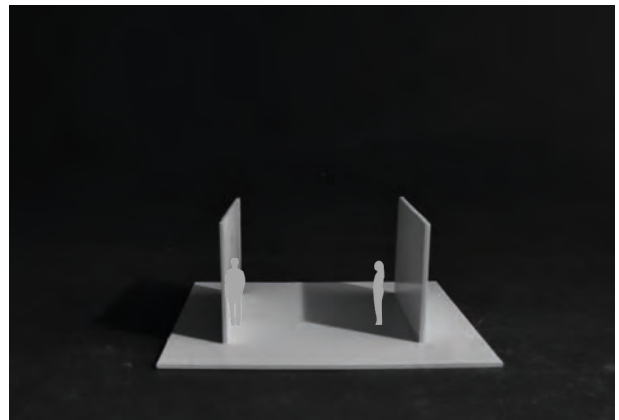


Fig 3.41 Investigations of distances and room proportions

DISTANCES & ROOM PROPORTIONS

We cannot look at spatial configurations without discussing distance, size and room proportions. A more narrow and small space can for example feel more personal and intimate while a wider and bigger one feels more impersonal and public. You can also use proportions to direct the focus of the visitors. A narrow but high space will point the focus in the direction of the roof or the sky, upwards, while a wider and low space will help point the focus outwards, to other rooms or the outside perhaps. A powerful tool can also be to utilize contrasting proportions to heighten the experience, making the visitor feel the difference to a greater extent.

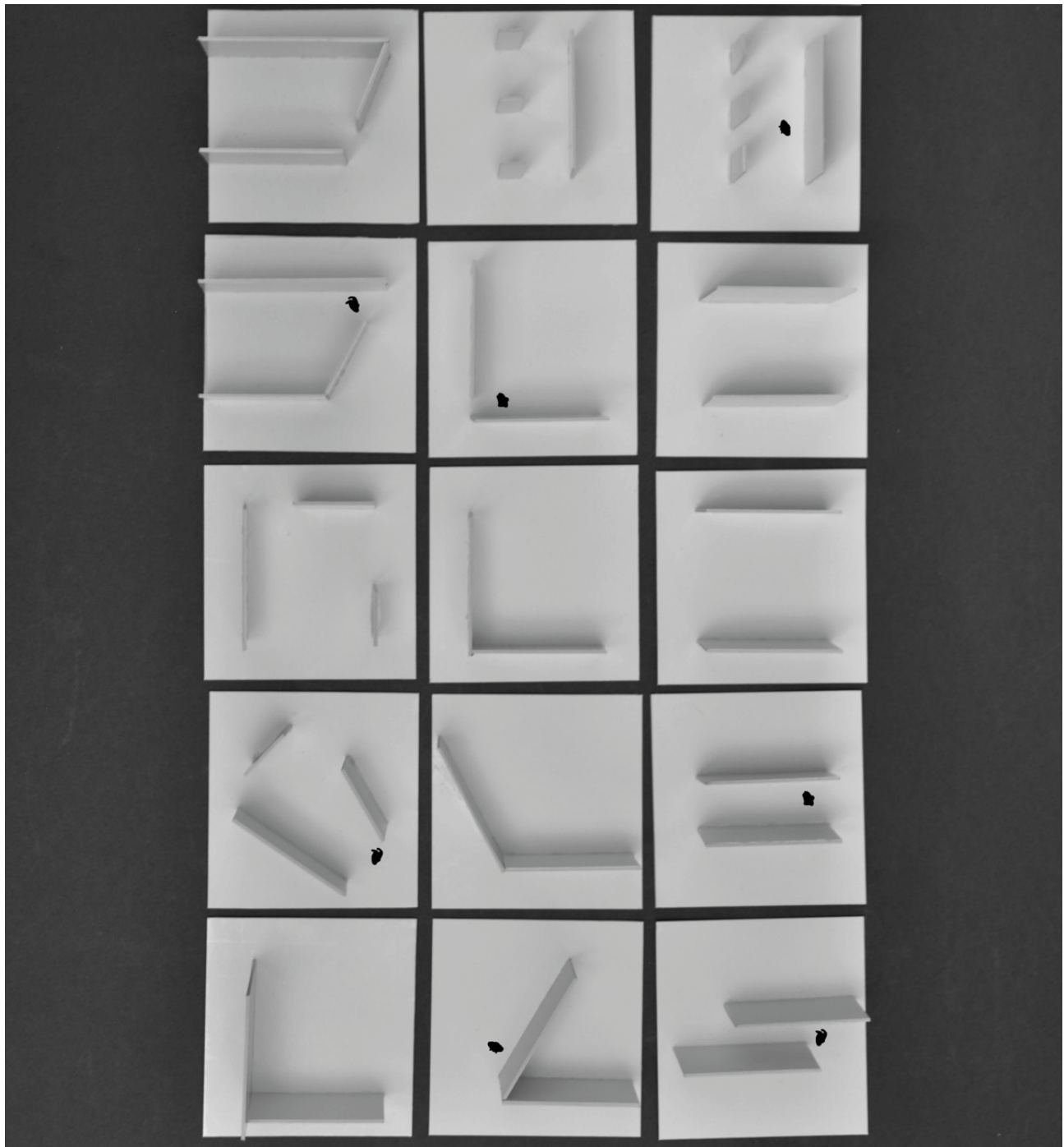


Fig 3.42 Collection of spatial investigations in model

INSIGHTS: SPATIAL DOCUMENTATION

Through this documentation and laboration of space, we are allowed to gain a greater understanding for the characteristics of the material and spaces, as well as discover preferences in the context of grief. There are choices that have to be made in a context, not a documenting vacuum, and where the combination of ecstasies plays a bigger role in the design as a whole. In the interplay between ecstasies, we choose to work with for example both contrast and cohesiveness, surprise and predictability, where it is fitting.

Moving on to the design phase, we bring with us certain specific aspects regarding the spatial configurations that will, in combination with the site, the program and its movement, and the material documentation, lay a foundation for the iterative design process to fully take place. These aspects are:

1. Letting light and its opening have different character depending on their function, utilizing contrast between shadow and light when beneficial and creating a breathing rhythm of light and dark spaces.
2. A movement in the height plane to both create distance and privacy, overview and connection and an interaction between body and building.
3. Utilizing proportion of spaces and placement of openings to direct focus, and working with the interchange between different spaces.
4. Working consciously with the experience of a public or private space in combination with the program, as it is a building for the public but with a sensitive and often private function.



Fig 3.43 A line-drawing of Gothenburg.



Fig 3.44 A picture of the west coast archipelago.



Fig 3.45 A picture of Slottskogen, Gothenburg.



Fig 3.46 A picture of Tyska bron, Gothenburg.

THE SITE IN GOTHENBURG

Gothenburg is a city on the west coast of Sweden with a history of the ship industry that is still visible to this day. Its most central parts still have traces from the old city center with its surrounding moat. Today the moat provides a pause in the building grid with a green park following along most of its length. This big park called Kungsparken hosts various different informal and formal activities like strolling, picnicking, partying and mini-golf playing.

As presented in the introduction, the city of Gothenburg lacks a space for secular grief. When deciding where in Gothenburg this need would be filled, we analyzed three types of places with different degrees of centrality: Skärvallsberget, an isolated point by the sea, Slottskogen, a very wild and big city park, and Tyska bron, one of the busiest and noisiest places in the city. Based on this analysis, we concluded a few main points that the building would need or benefit from:

1. A central and accessible site that lets the building both be a destination in more formal settings like a ceremony, and approachable for more spontaneous and personal grief.
2. A site which offers some breathing space to other buildings, structures or streets
3. A site that utilizes already public spaces, like parks, and provides possibilities of nature acting as a buffer between the city and the program of grief.

The chosen site for this proposal is in the south western parts of Kungsparken, where the park becomes somewhat wider and offers less connection to the moat, and most of the more noisier activities.



Fig 3.47 Situation plan 1:5000



Fig 3.48 Section A-A 1:5000



Fig 3.49 Buildings

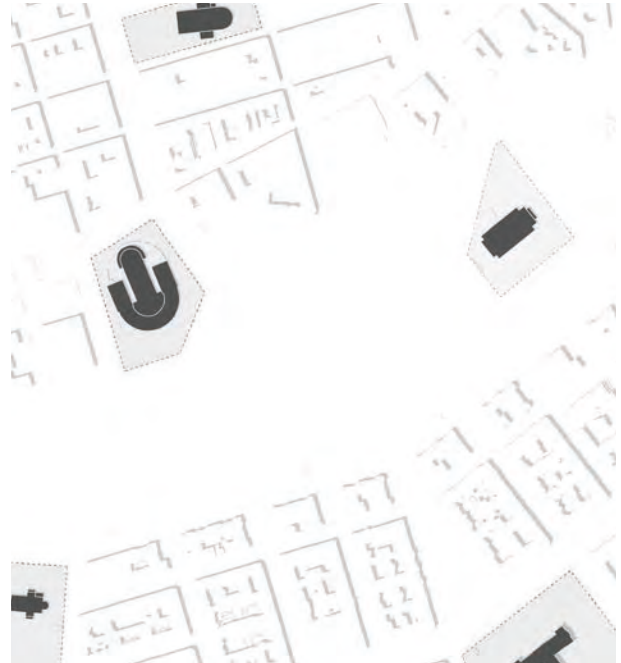


Fig 3.50 Buildings with a similar typology in the city



Fig 3.51 Main flows, tram paths and a walking distance of 2-3 minutes.

The park is situated along two of the more trafficked streets in Gothenburg. From north to south are main tram routes, and from west to east are main car passages. The same paths are also popular with both pedestrians and bicyclists, providing an almost constant movement of people around the site.



Fig 3.52 Green and blue infrastructure.

Surrounding the site are also buildings with a similar typology that our building provides to the city grid, buildings that disconnect from a more rigid structure, create a parvis around it and offer some distance to the streets.

THE PARK & THE SITE

Kungsparken is a very green and old park, with many trees in varying sizes and ages. The specific site in the park is a more open part of the park where many different types of visitors are able to meet. The movement between north and south is purposeful, with a destination in mind, whereas the movement between east and west has a strolling character.

Most of the park activities happen closest to the moat and along the existing paths, where the ground is angled and offer great sitting spots and views over the water. The majority of noise comes from the streets, and especially the south west where the sun is also most prominent. As it is a park of trees however, the site is quite shaded by the canopies.

The trees can be protected from the building by keeping a distance as large as the canopies so as to not harm the root system. The foundation will be a slab on pillar foundation to further minimize both the visual and actual impact the building has on the park.

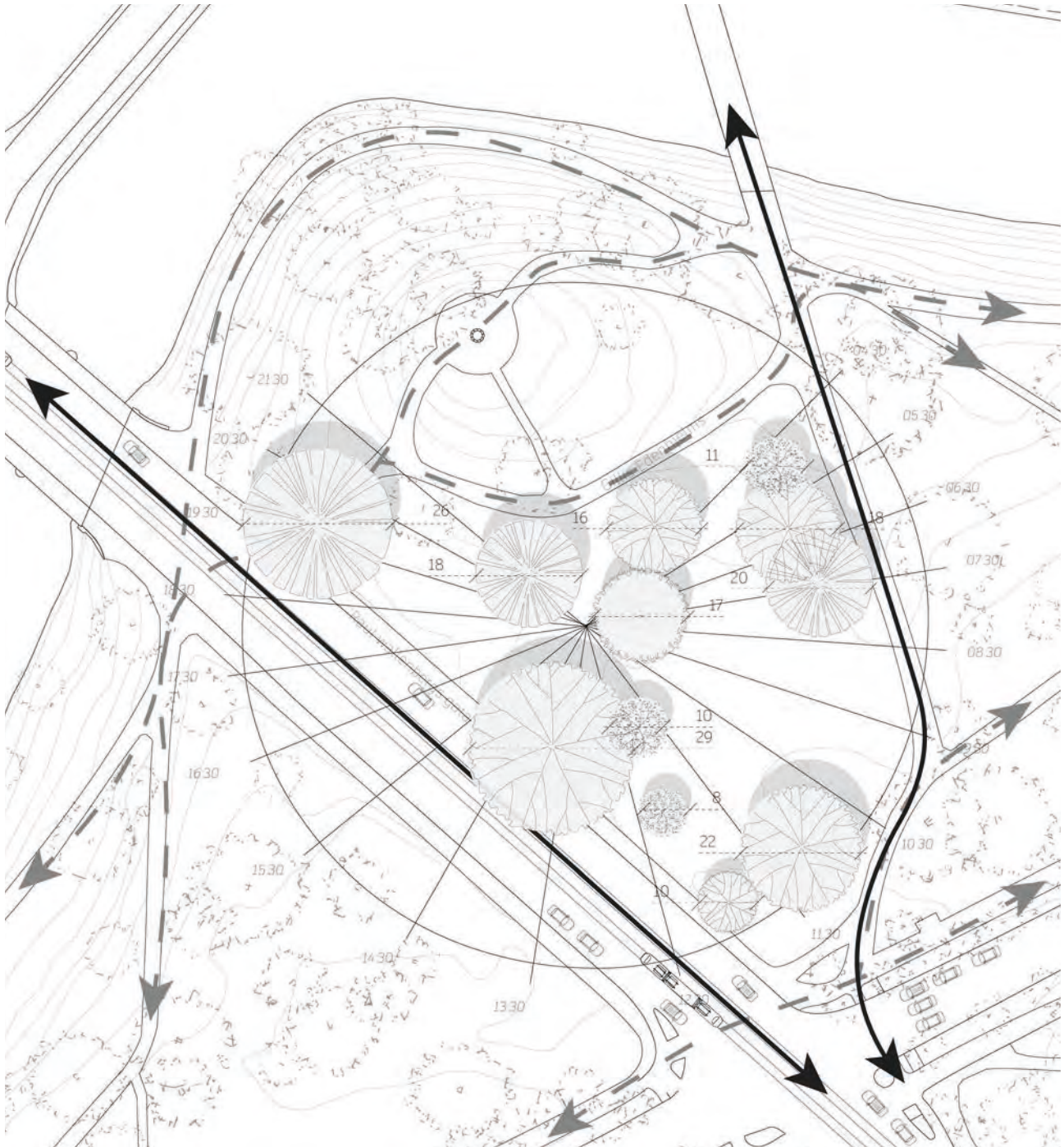


Fig 3.53 The site in Kungsparken 1:1000

THREE TYPES OF GRIEVING

An important part of the design is providing different types of spaces for people with different needs in their grieving process. Based on our readings and reflections, these have been narrowed down to three different types: The ceremonial space for grieving together, the space for grieving amongst others, and the space for grieving individually.

The ceremonial space is designated for the more formal gatherings, grieving with people you might share your specific grief with, like family and friends. Here is a space characterised by contemplation, safety, support and focus, giving us a closed stone room, with warm wooden details and a directed focus through light elements.

In closest connection to Kungsparken, is the space for grieving amongst others. Here you may uphold yourself in smaller groups or individually, while still being connected to others and the city. Circular openings and seating arrangements create a more natural flowing movement in the space and offer both outward and inward facing views. Under one roof opening, a perforated stone acts as a central point of interest and a rain water pool.

The space for grieving individually is mainly for those seeking refuge alone and therefore focuses on limited and directed sight lines through light and texture in material. The entire building works with different degrees of perforation to direct focus and movement, but especially here where the eyes of the visitor shouldn't be on other visitors, but on the internal processes. In this room are more intimate niches for seating angled toward the center where an opening in the roof mainly illuminates the middle of the room and a centrepiece.

Between these spaces for grief are the buffer zones, spaces where the visitor can pause, breathe and move through the building without impeding on others.

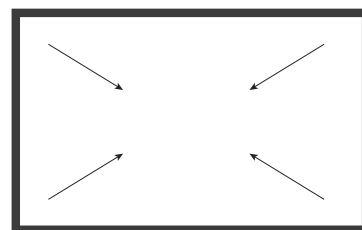
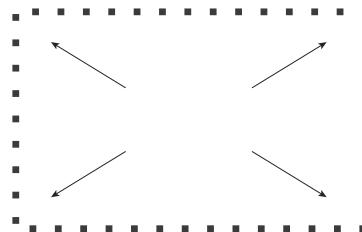
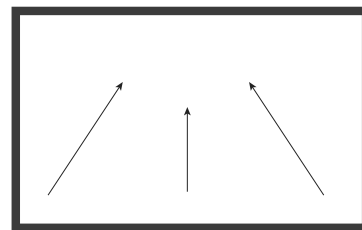


Fig 3.54 Grieving together, amongst others or individually

SPACE PROGRAM

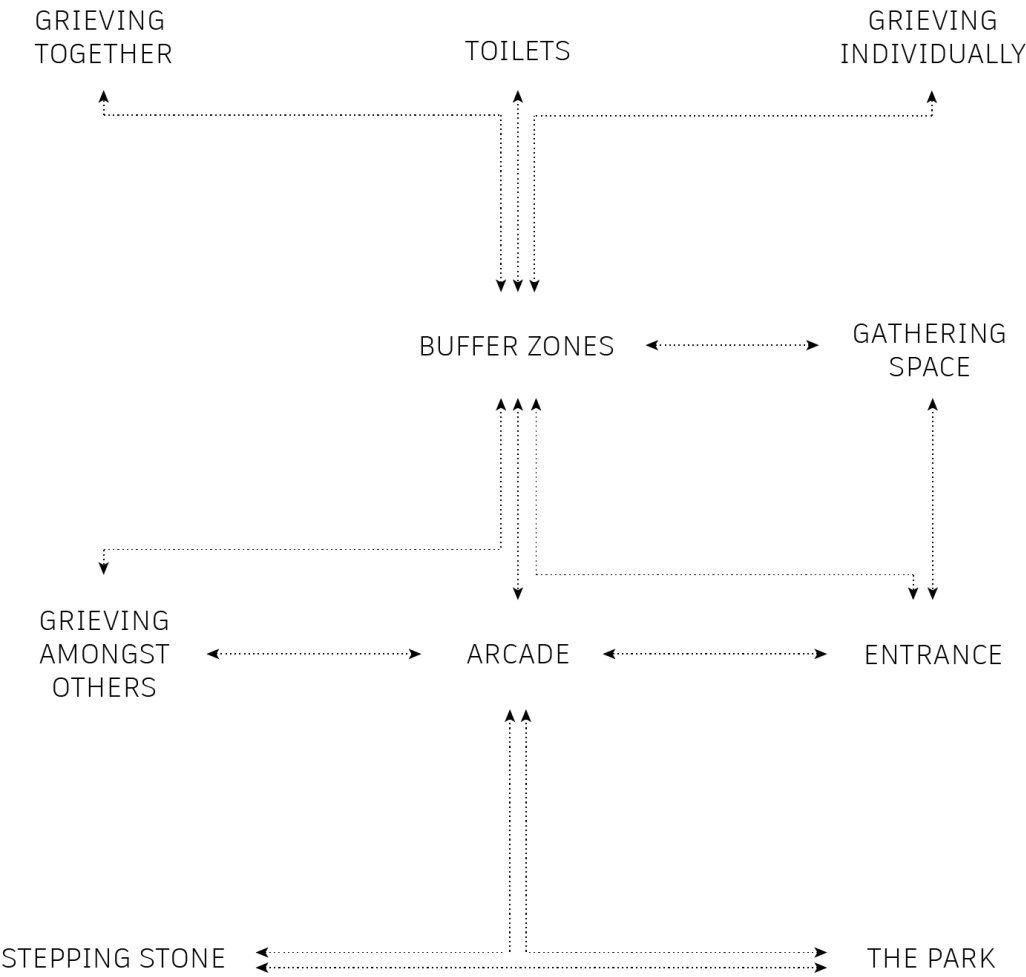


Fig 3.55 Space program and its connections

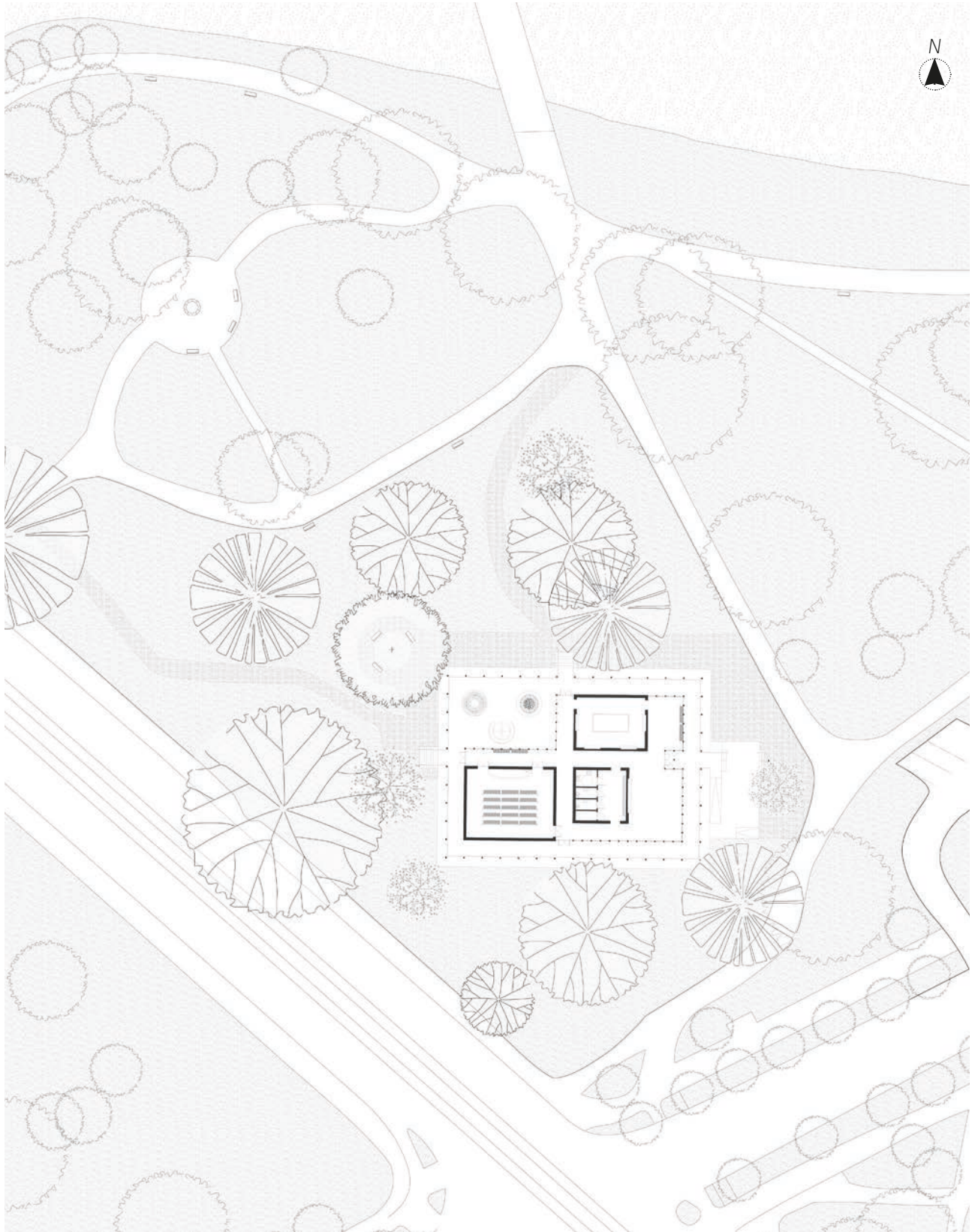


Fig 3.56 Site plan 1:750



Fig 3.57 Main social spaces of the site and its surroundings

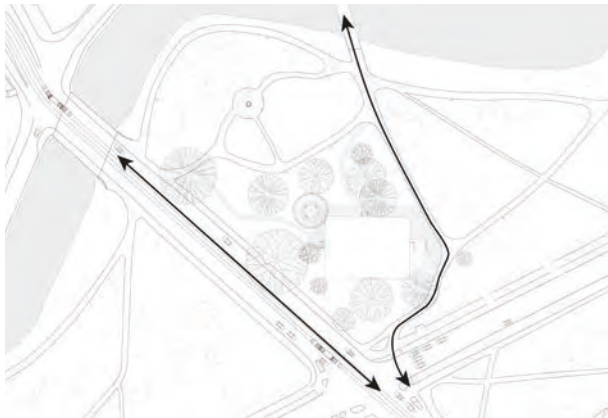


Fig 3.58 Purposeful movement around the site

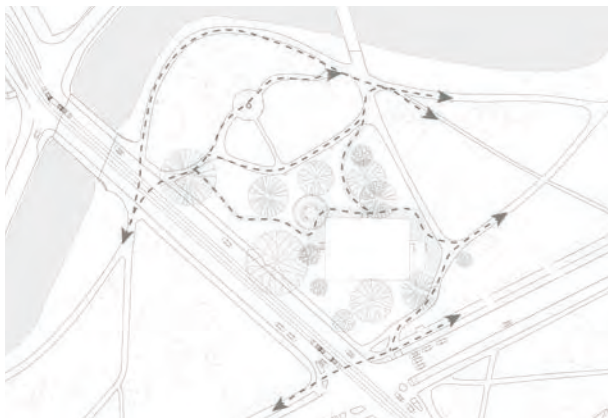


Fig 3.59 Strolling movement on and around the site

A SPACE FOR GRIEF

The space for grief is a 919 square meter big building landing lightly nestled between the trees of Kungsparken. There are new paths in the park, leading up to and by the building according to already existing movements, with the addition of new spaces and connections in the north west. The main entrance to the building is to the south east, where the addition of an accessible parking space provides access to emergency vehicles and other transportation. Here, a generous stair and ramp brings the visitor up to floor level and creates a space to gather before ceremonies.

Smaller stairs to the north and west also provide access to the building from the more populated parts of the park, and gives more opportunities of moving around and into the building. New spaces where one can uphold themselves are created to invite the public close, while still maintaining privacy through a height difference and retracted climate shell.

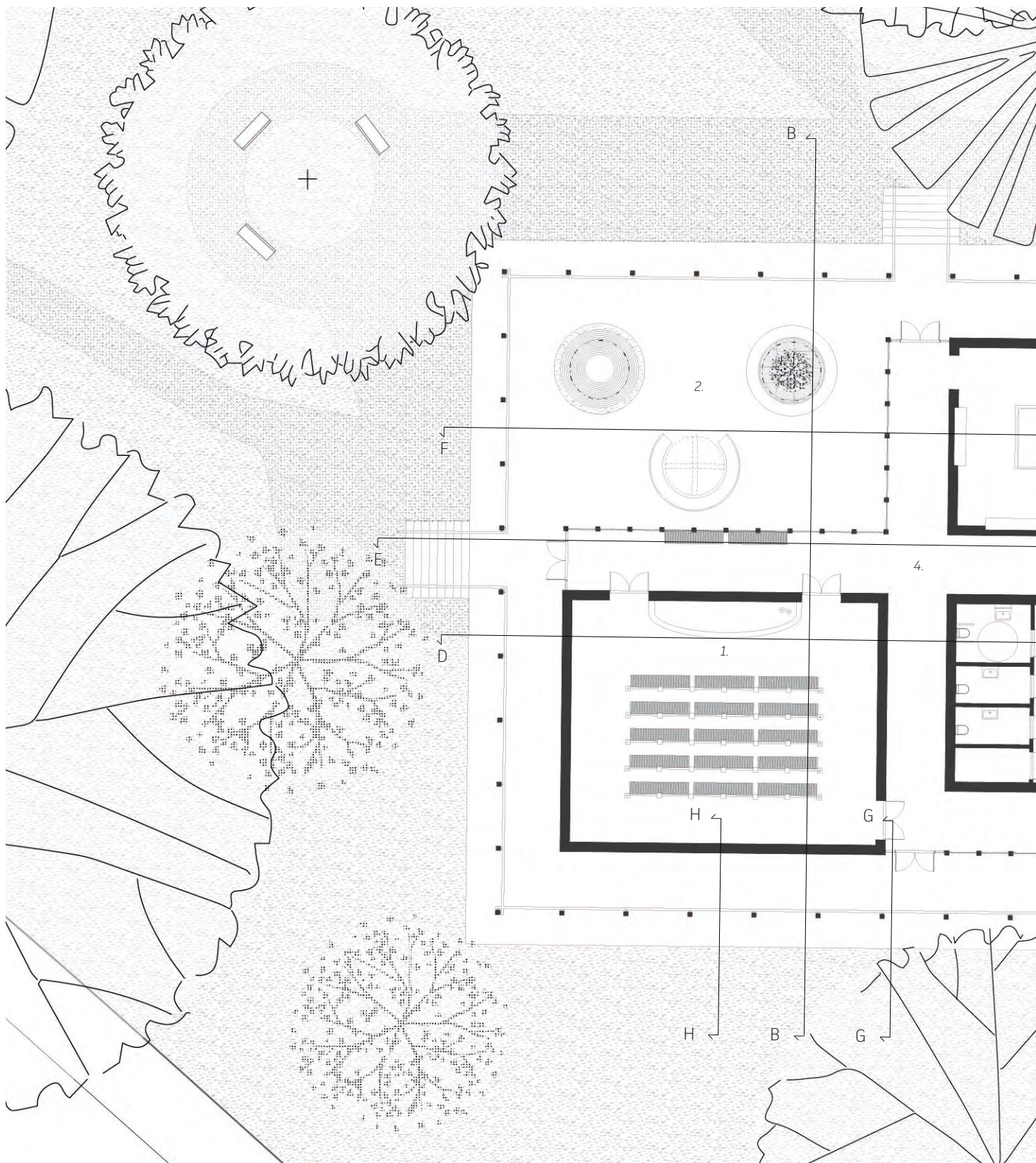


Fig 3.60 Plan 1:200





Fig 3.61 The entrance of the building.

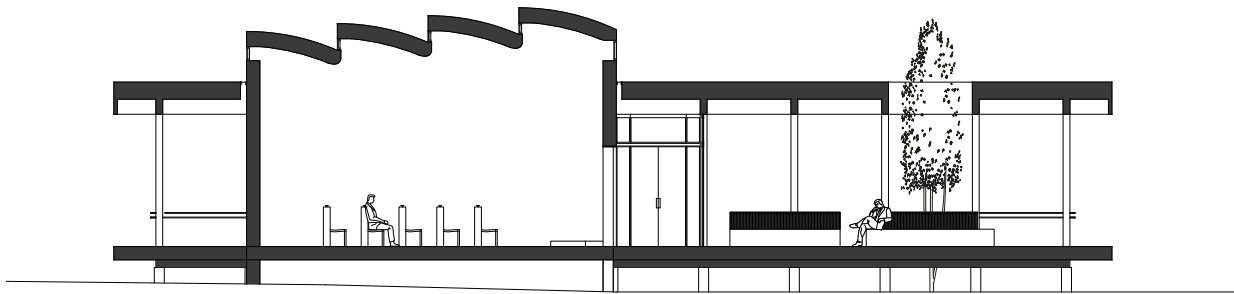


Fig 3.62 Section B-B 1:200

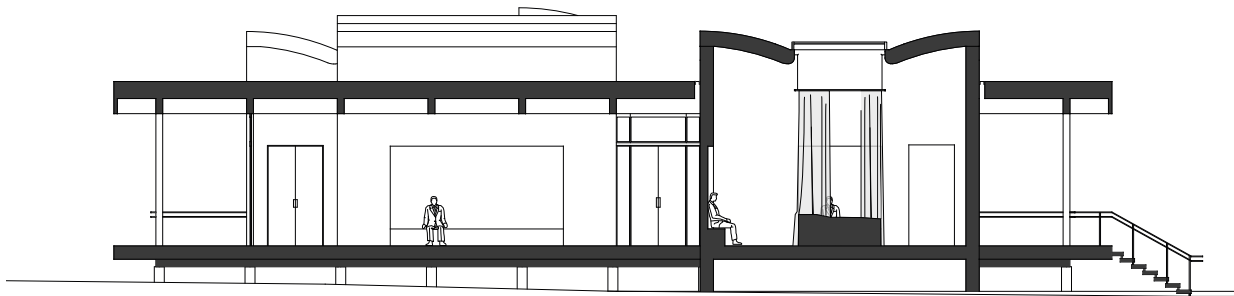


Fig 3.63 Section C-C 1:200

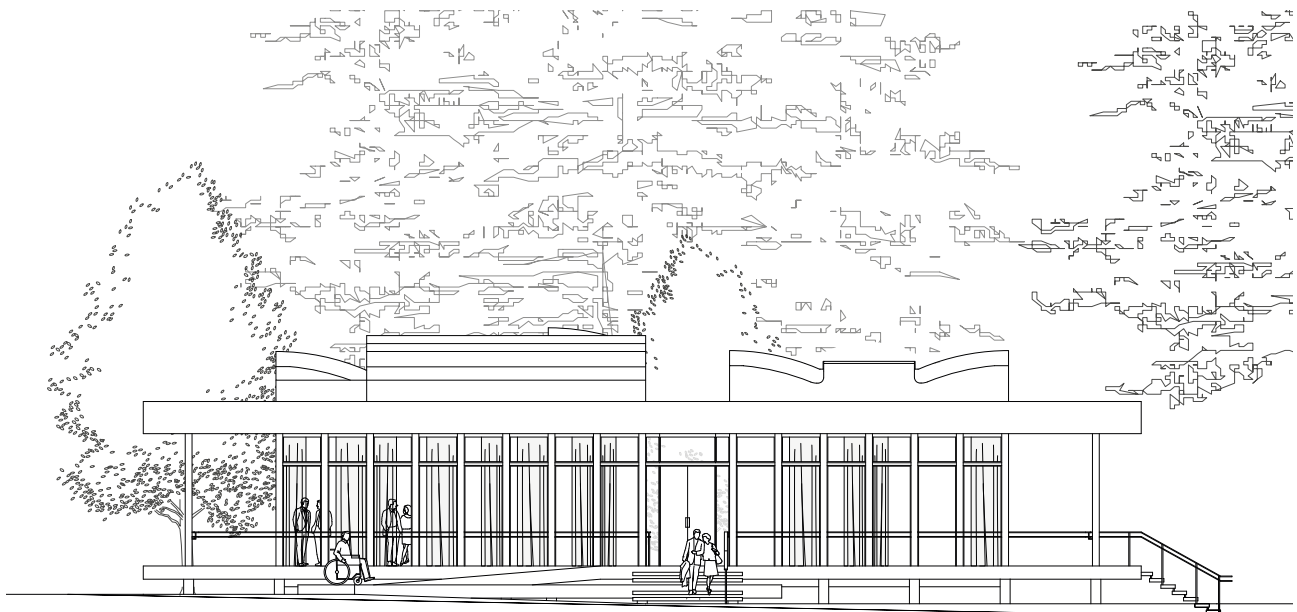


Fig 3.64 East elevation 1:200

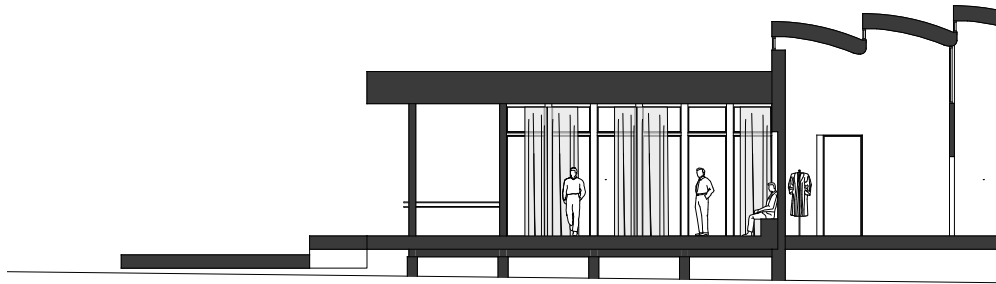


Fig 3.65 Section D-D 1:200



Fig 3.66 Section F-F 1:200

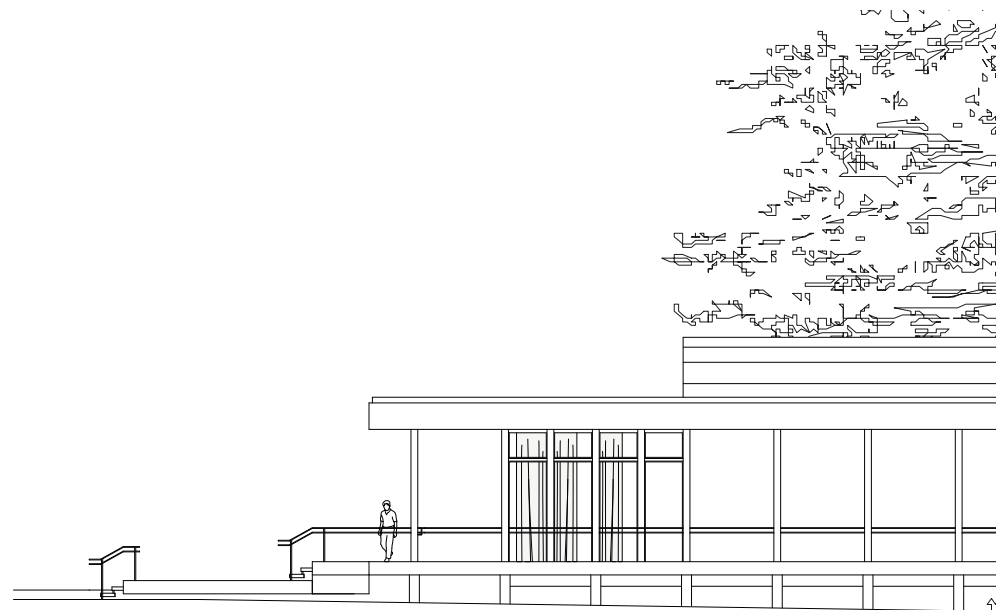
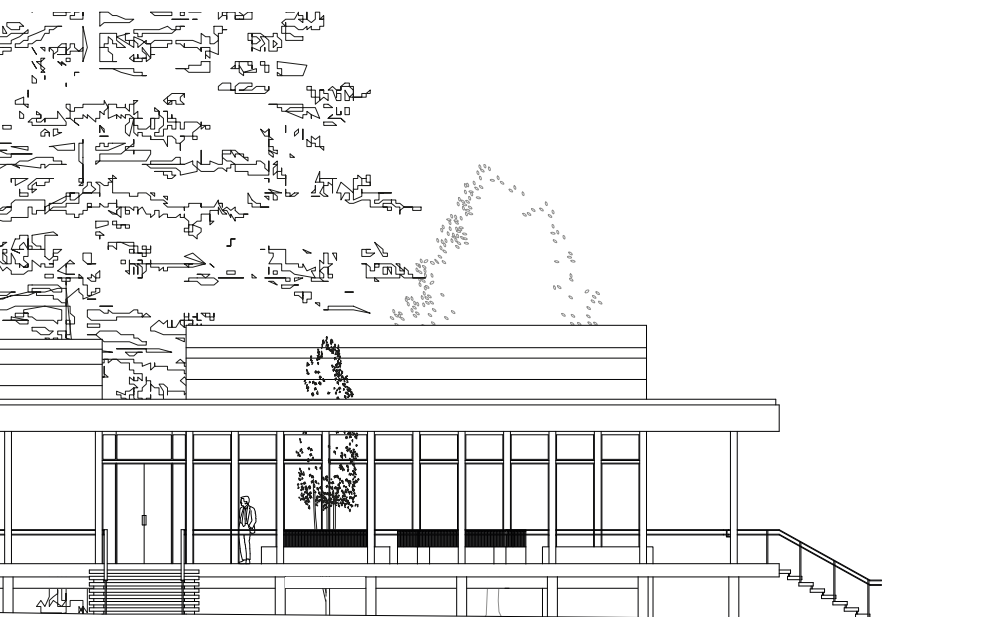
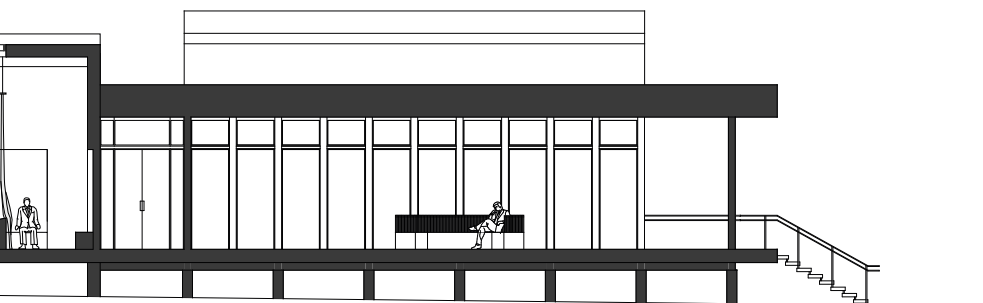
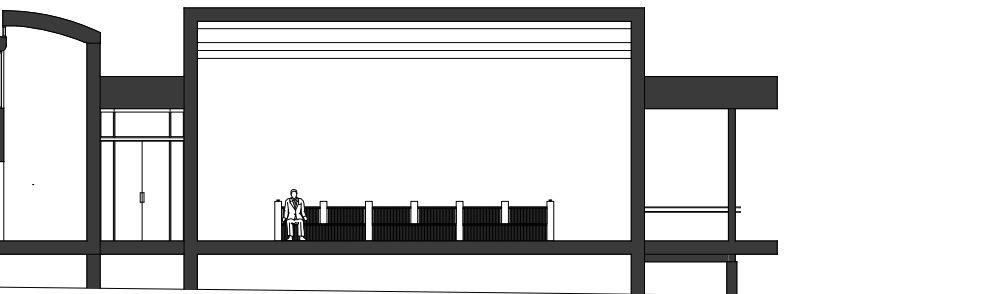


Fig 3.67 North elevation 1:200



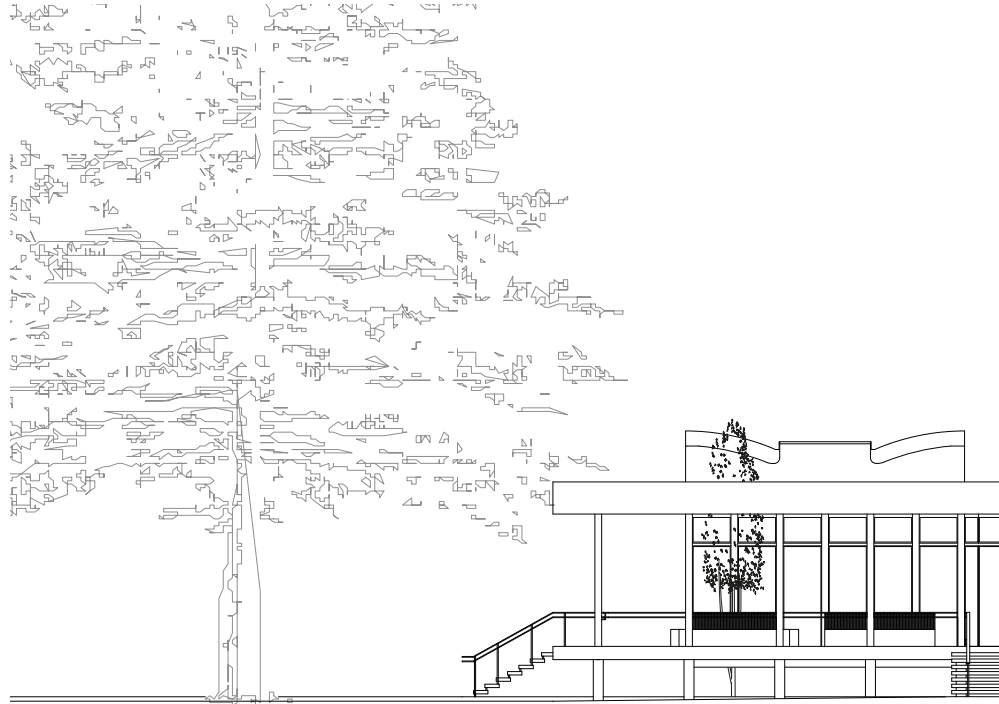


Fig 3.68 West elevation 1:200

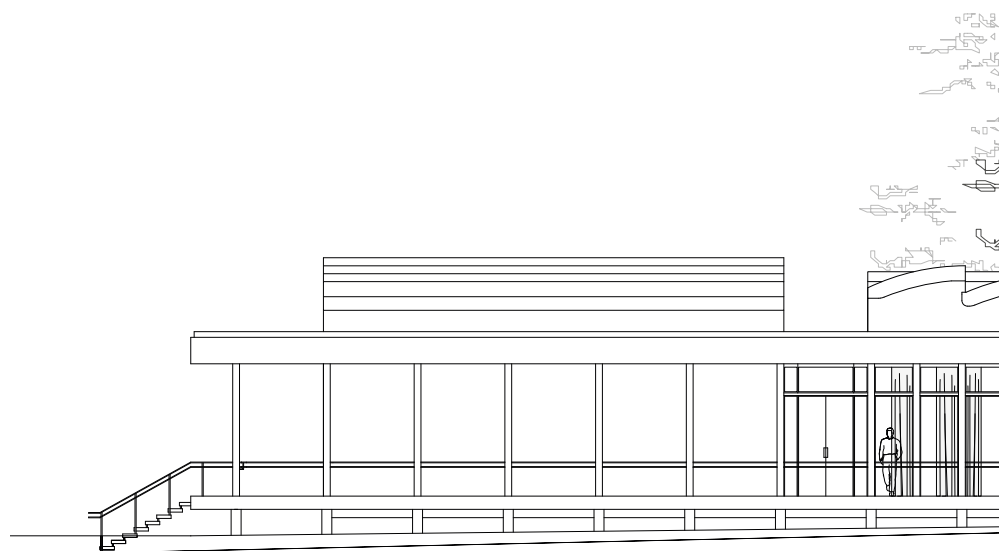
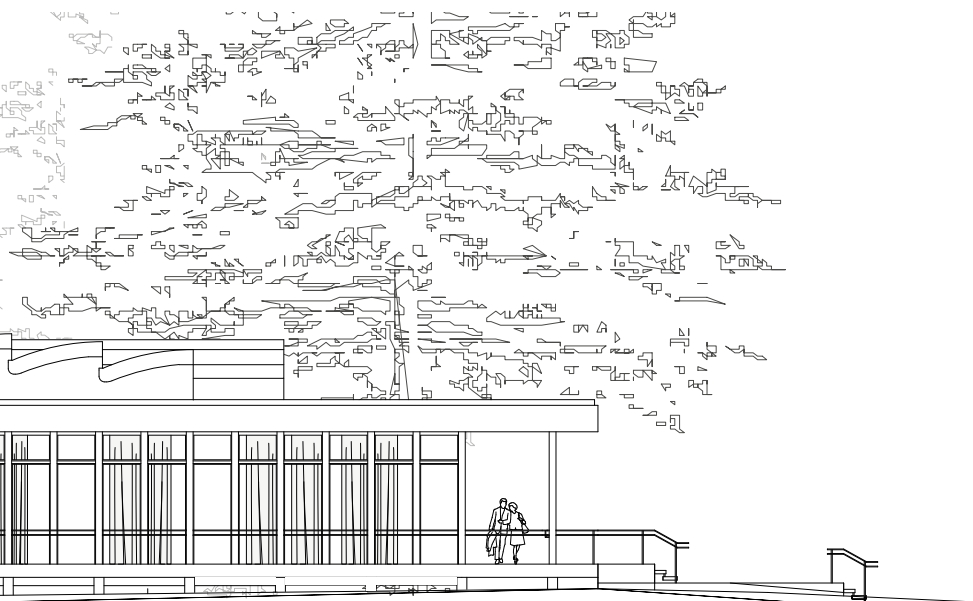
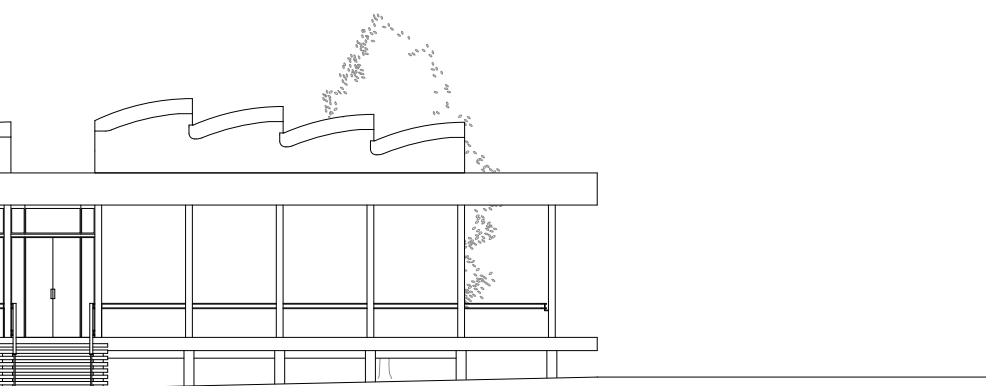


Fig 3.69 South elevation 1:200



THE ENTRANCE

A first welcome for most visitors. Leads into the main path of movement. Spaces for visitors to gather before ceremonies.

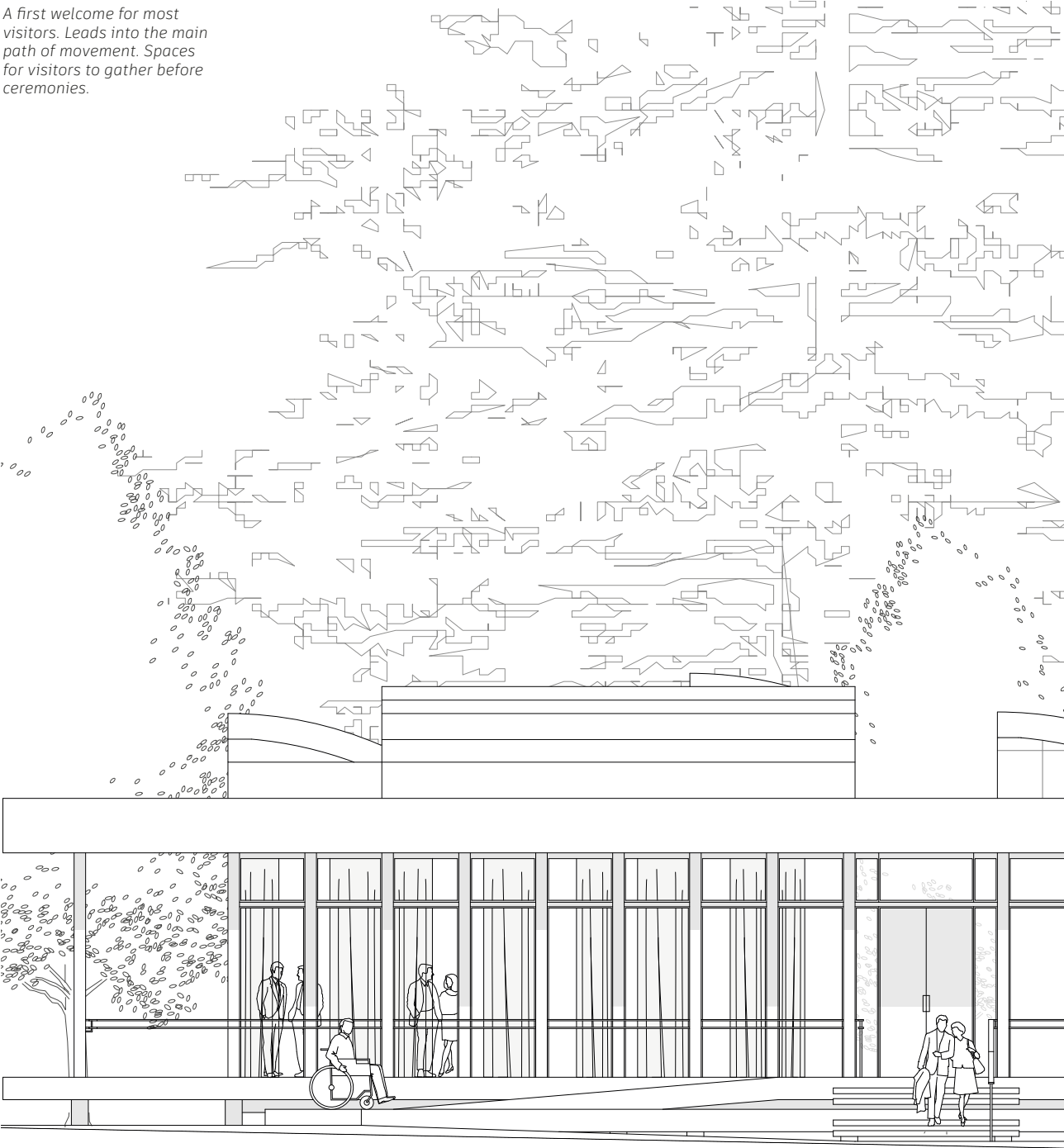


Fig 3.70 East elevation 1:100

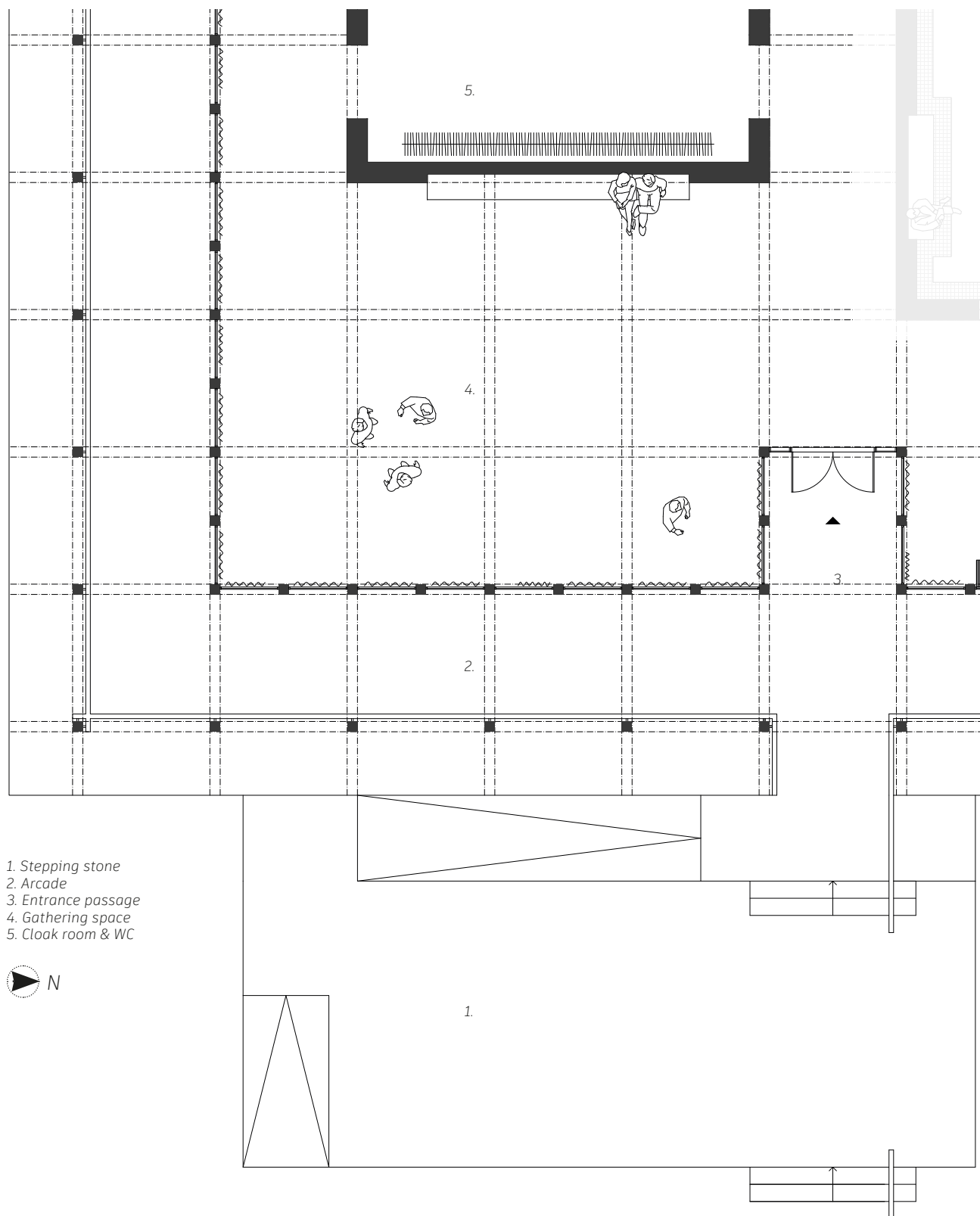


Fig 3.71 Plan 1:100



Fig 3.72 A heavy copper door with wooden handles leads into the gathering space, with perforated connection to the park through sheer curtains that create a soft light. The warmly toned wooden construction enhances a sense of safety and support.



Fig 3.73 The outer arcade envelops the building, providing access without disturbing the spaces inside and providing something to escape to. A thin, floating, wooden hand rail protects the visitor from getting too close to the edge.

THE BUFFER ZONES

A sequence of spaces from the outside, to the inside, to the stone. Areas to breath and gather. Surrounding spaces for grief with wooden tactility.

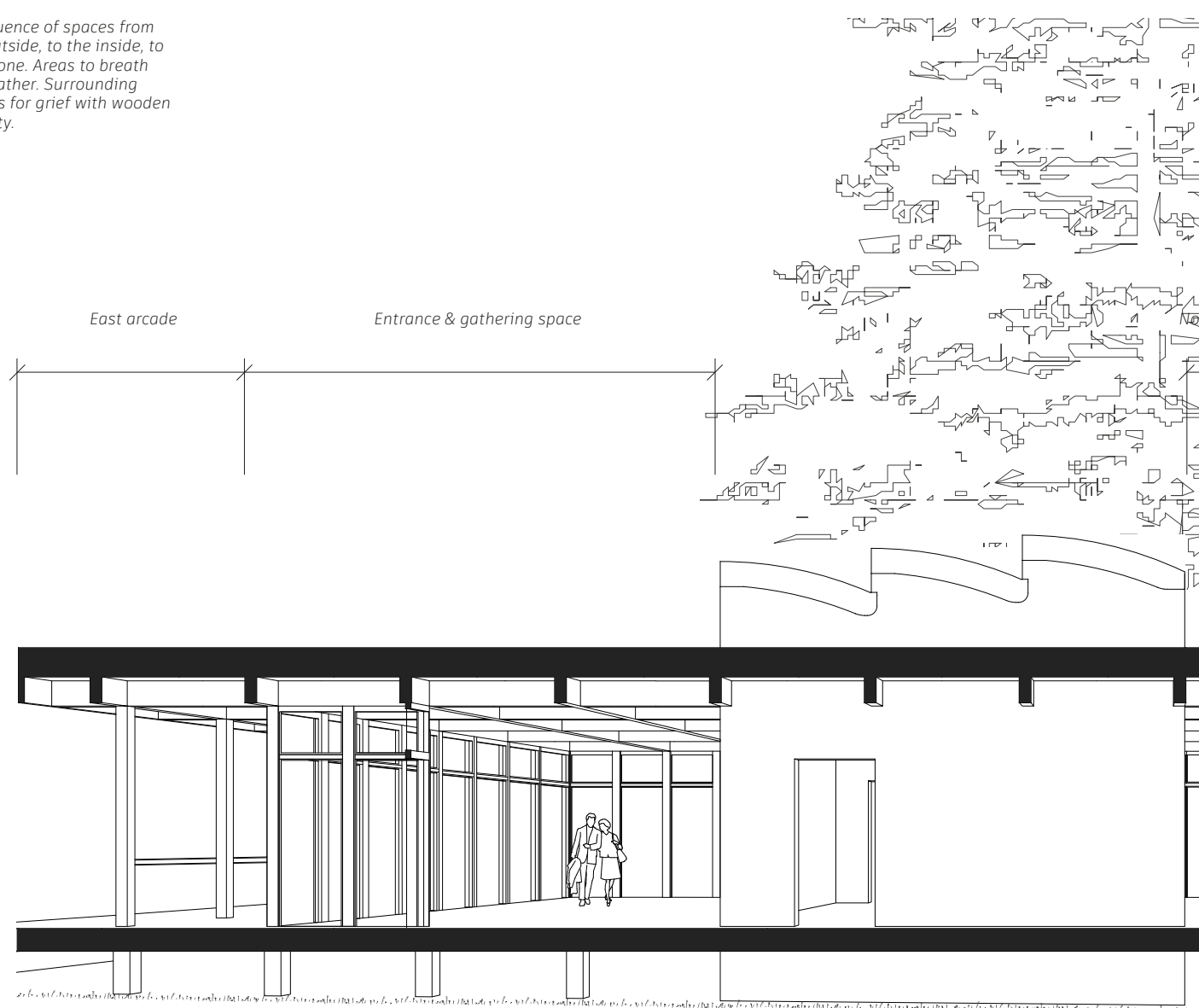


Fig 3.74 Section E-E 1:100 with perspective illustrating the sequence of spaces and the different room proportions.

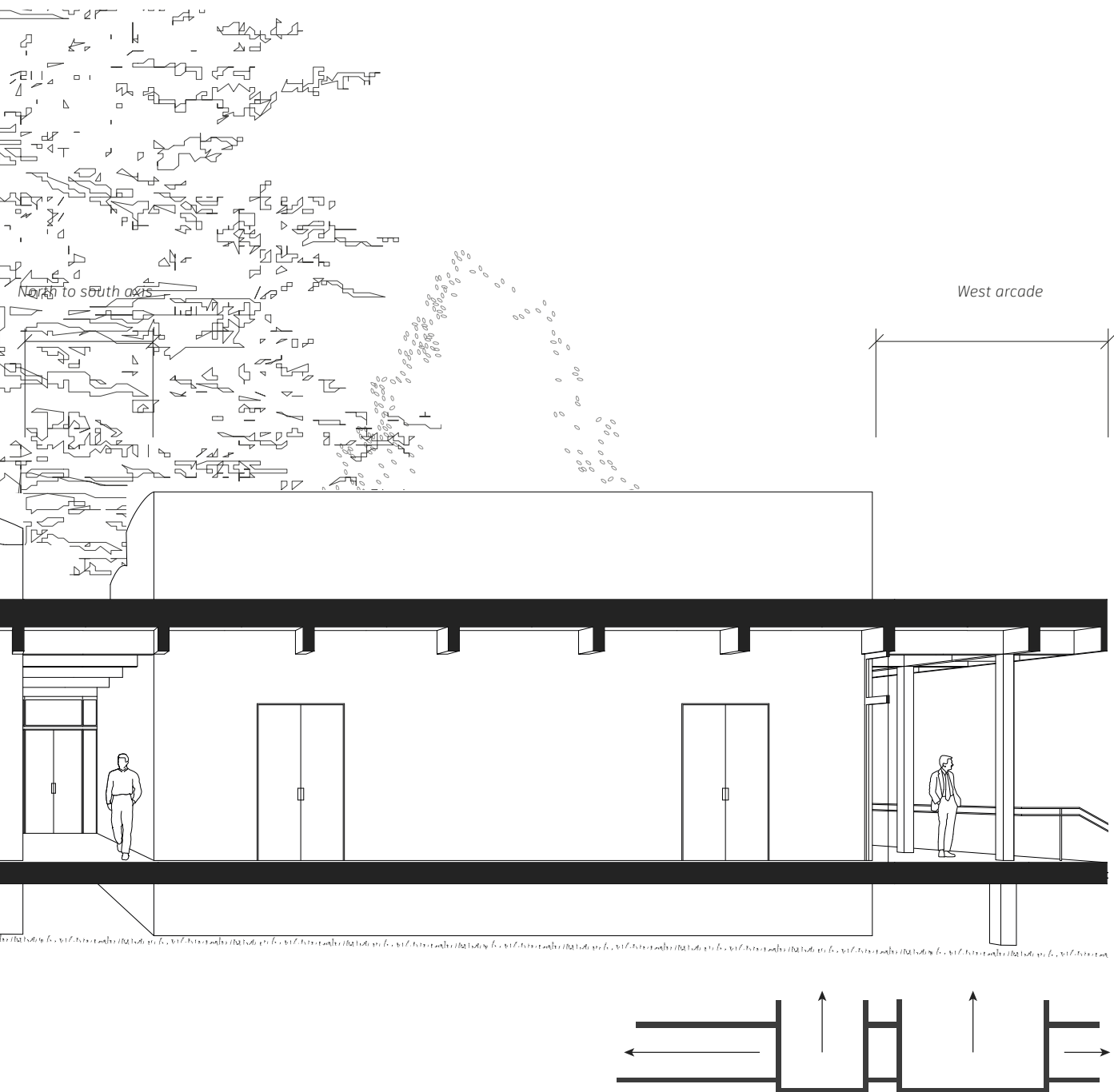




Fig 3.75 Visualization of the gathering space moving into the buffer zones, and the stone nische with textured stone wall cladding. Openings in the roof are made between the wood and stone construction, emphasising the contrast and the importance of the stone, while also bringing light into the deeper spaces of the building.



le between

Fig 3.76 The north to south axis with a glass door at the end, providing a hierarchy in the entrances through the more lightweight door and viewpoints to the park and the path out.

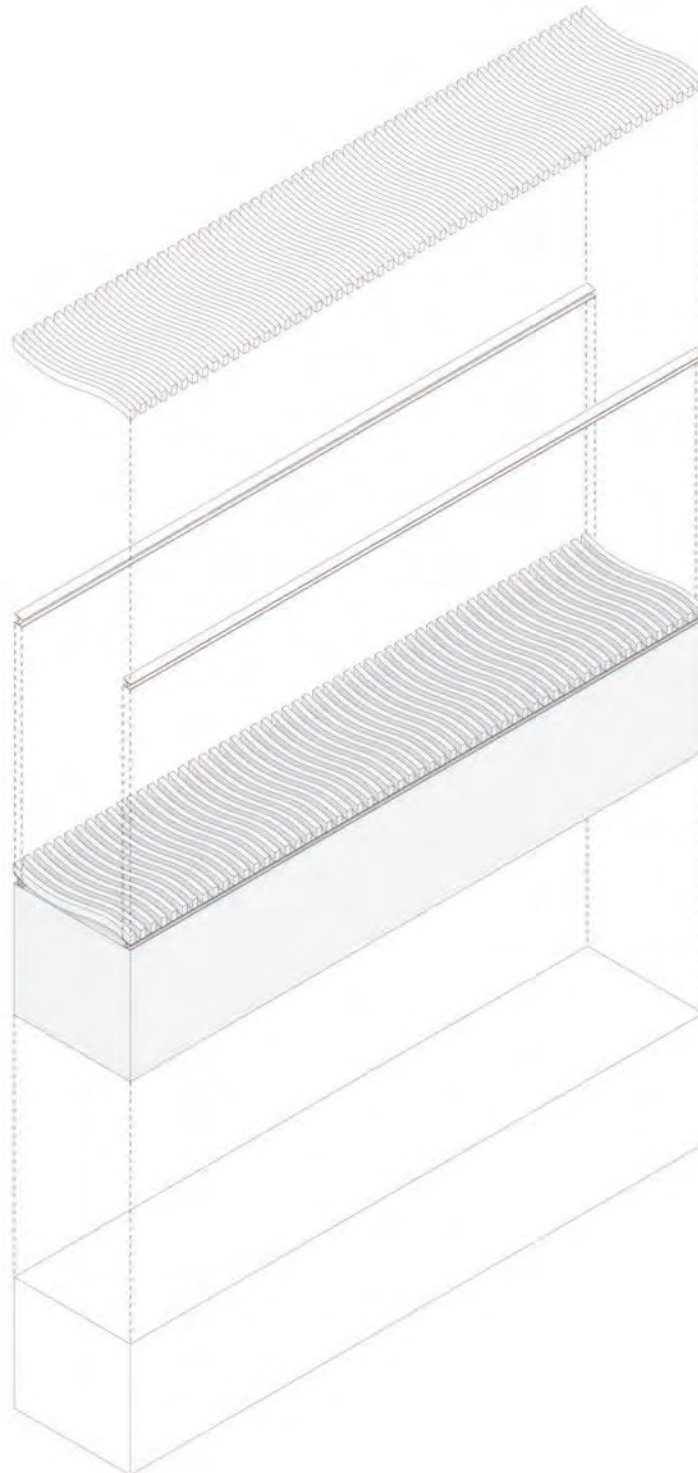


Fig 3.77 The bench in the gathering space, and in the space for grieving individually (p. 75). Stone or concrete rises from the floor to meet the soft wooden seat, with copper fittings connecting the two.

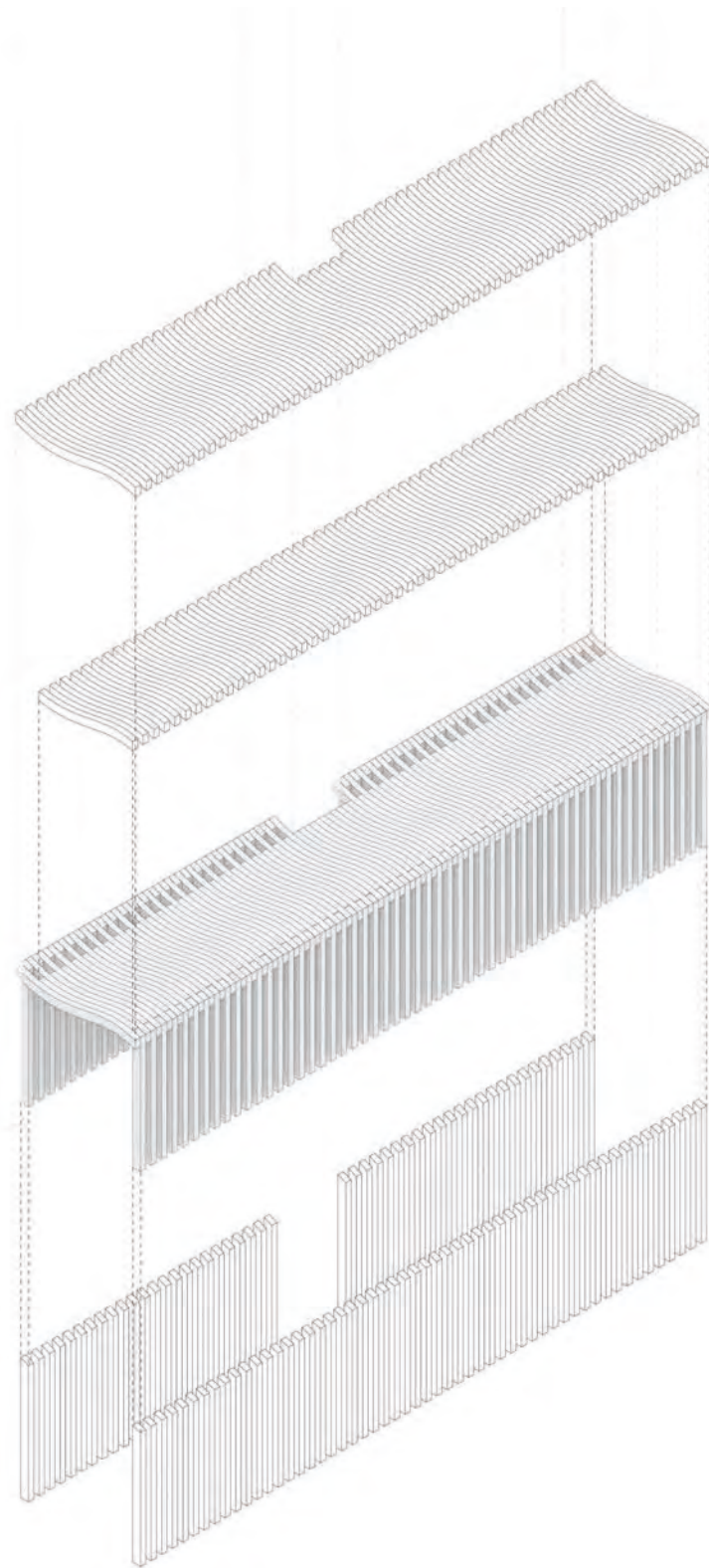


Fig 3.78 The seating in the buffer zones, covering radiators in the window while still letting through air.

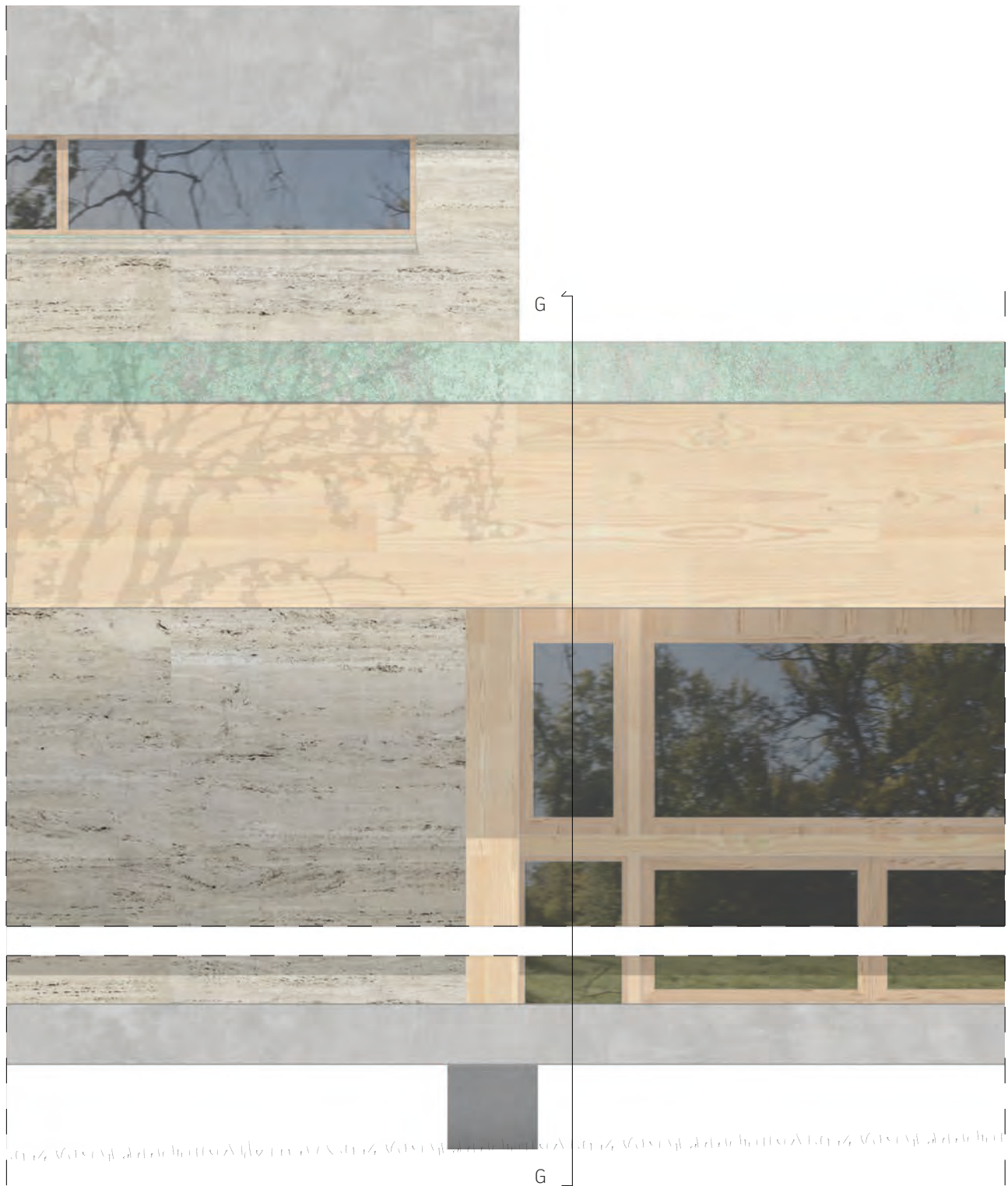


Fig 3.79 Detailed facade elevation 1:20. Illustrating the light travertine pattern on the stone volumes, in combination with the oiled wooden detailing of the buffer zone.

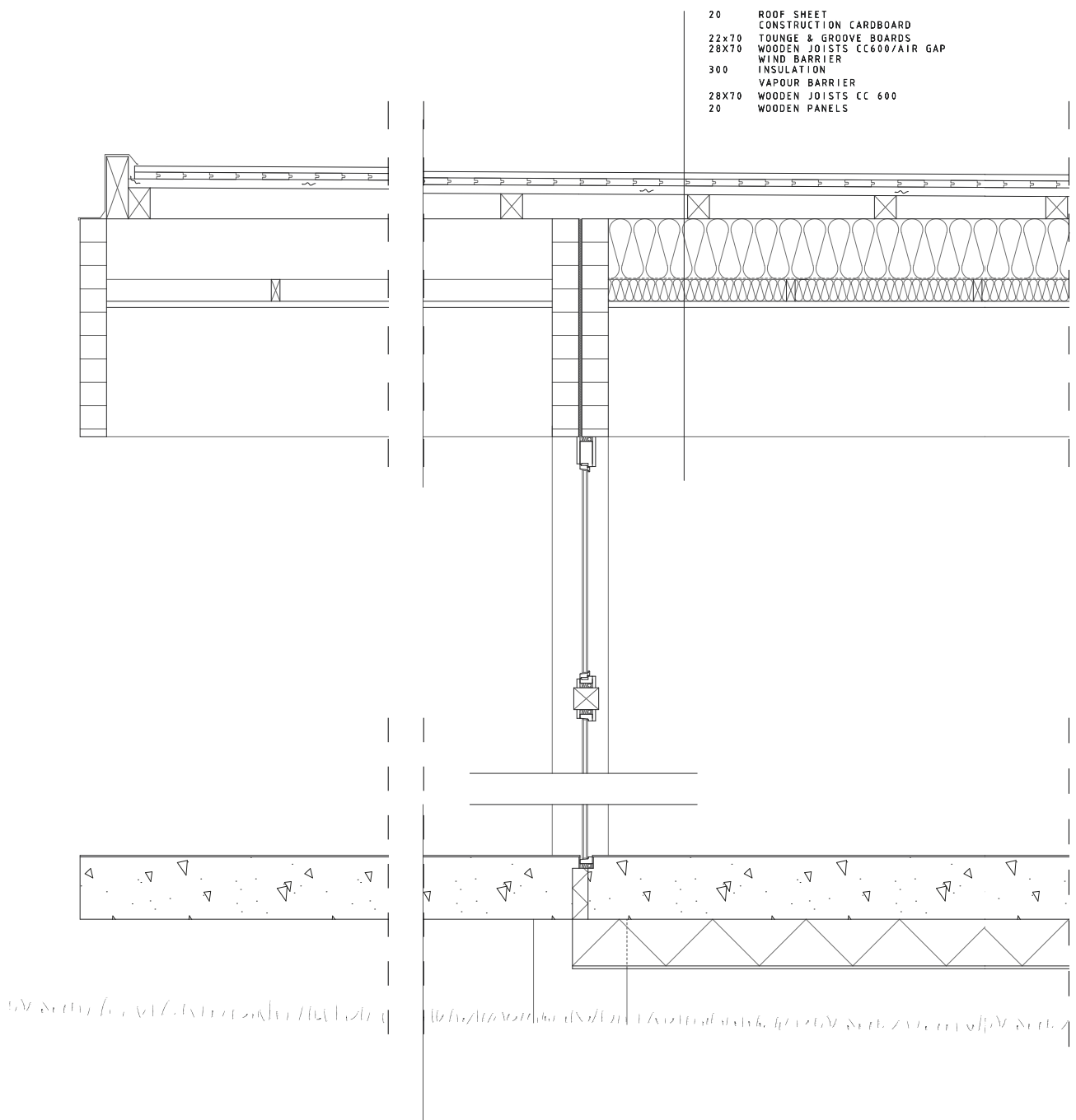


Fig 3.80 Section G-G 1:20.

GRIEVING TOGETHER

A place for more private formal ceremonies and memorials when the doors are closed, and a place for lighting a candle when they are open.

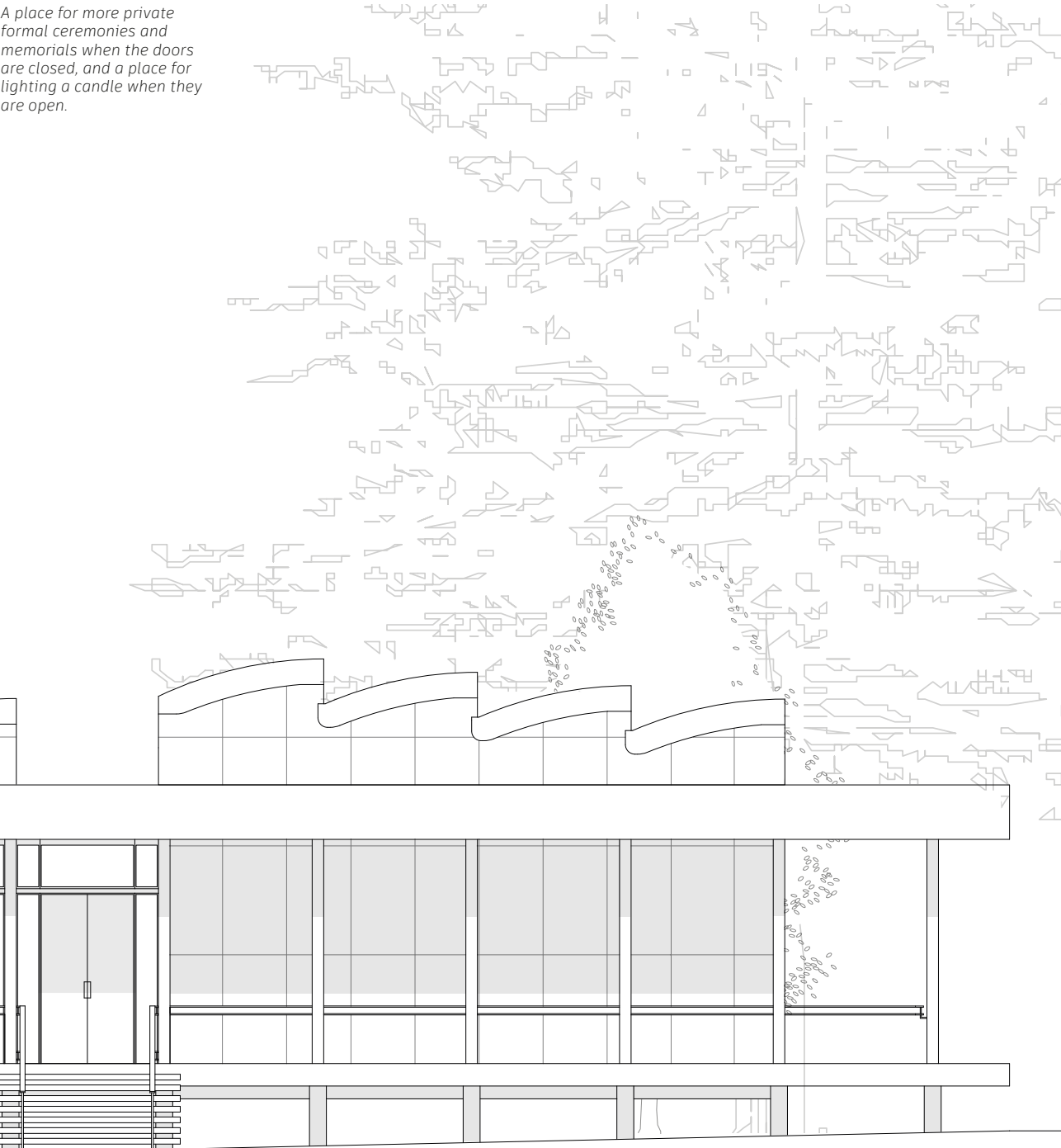


Fig 3.81 West elevation 1:100

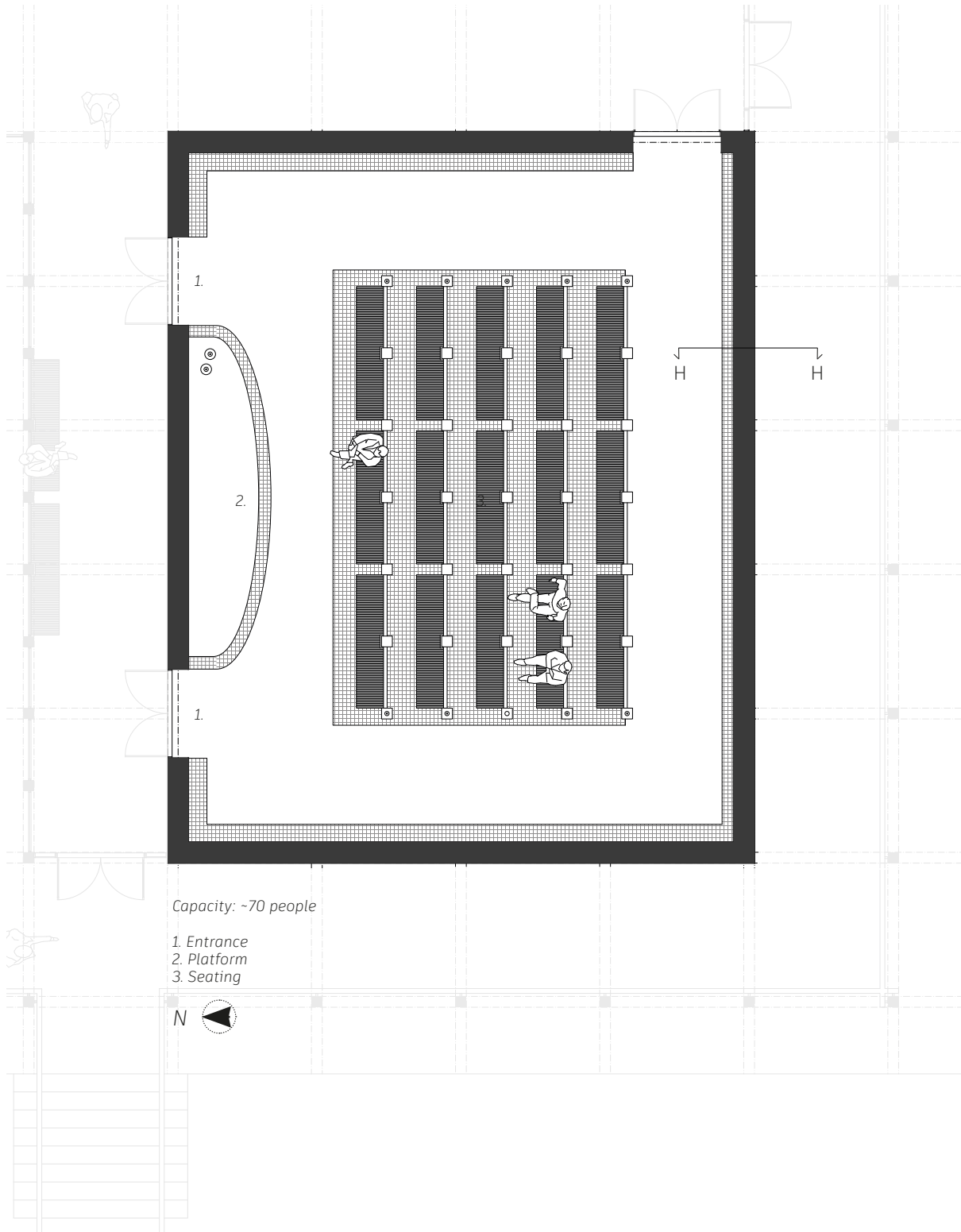


Fig 3.82 Plan 1:100



Fig 3.83 The rhythmic roof construction lets in limited sun rays and straggling light, illuminating the water milled travertine from the south.



Fig 3.84 The openings in the south facade enhances a focus forward towards an elevated platform. A high window lets the visitor view the sky and the canopies of the park during a ceremony.

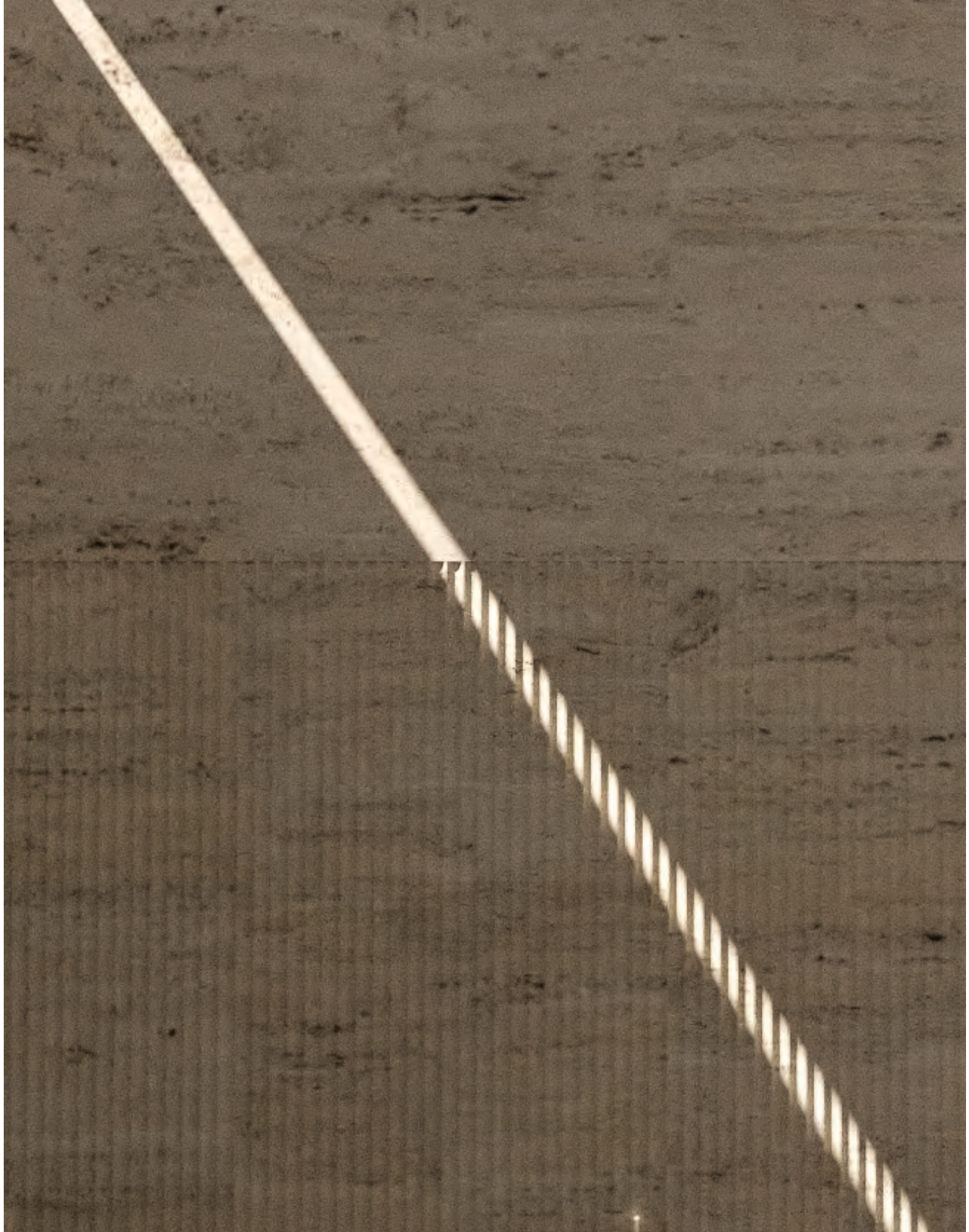


Fig 3.85 The water milled travertine in detail, a pattern of hollowed out half circles.

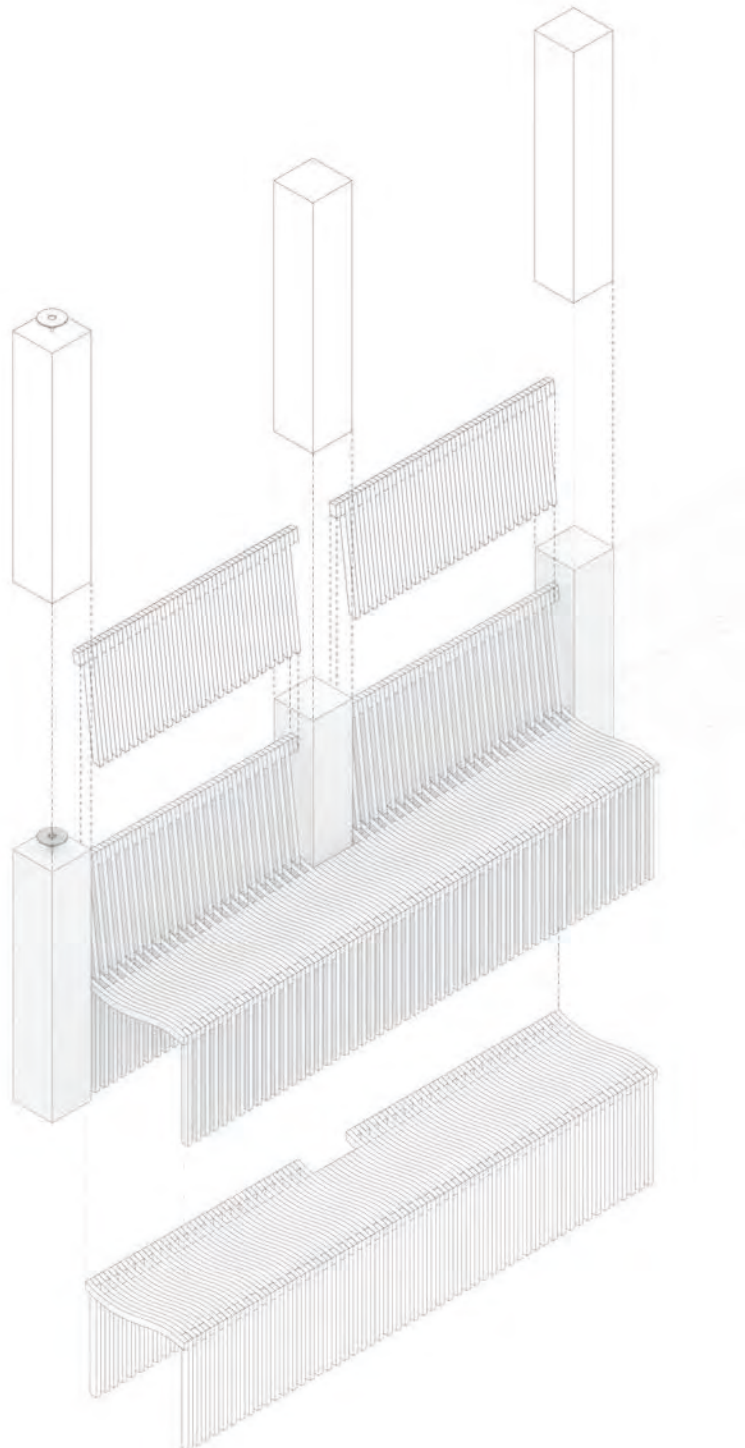


Fig 3.86 The benches in the space, inspired by the wooden pillar structure of the surrounding building and similar in style to the other benches. The wood acts as a warm element in the colder stone room shaped for human touch and use.

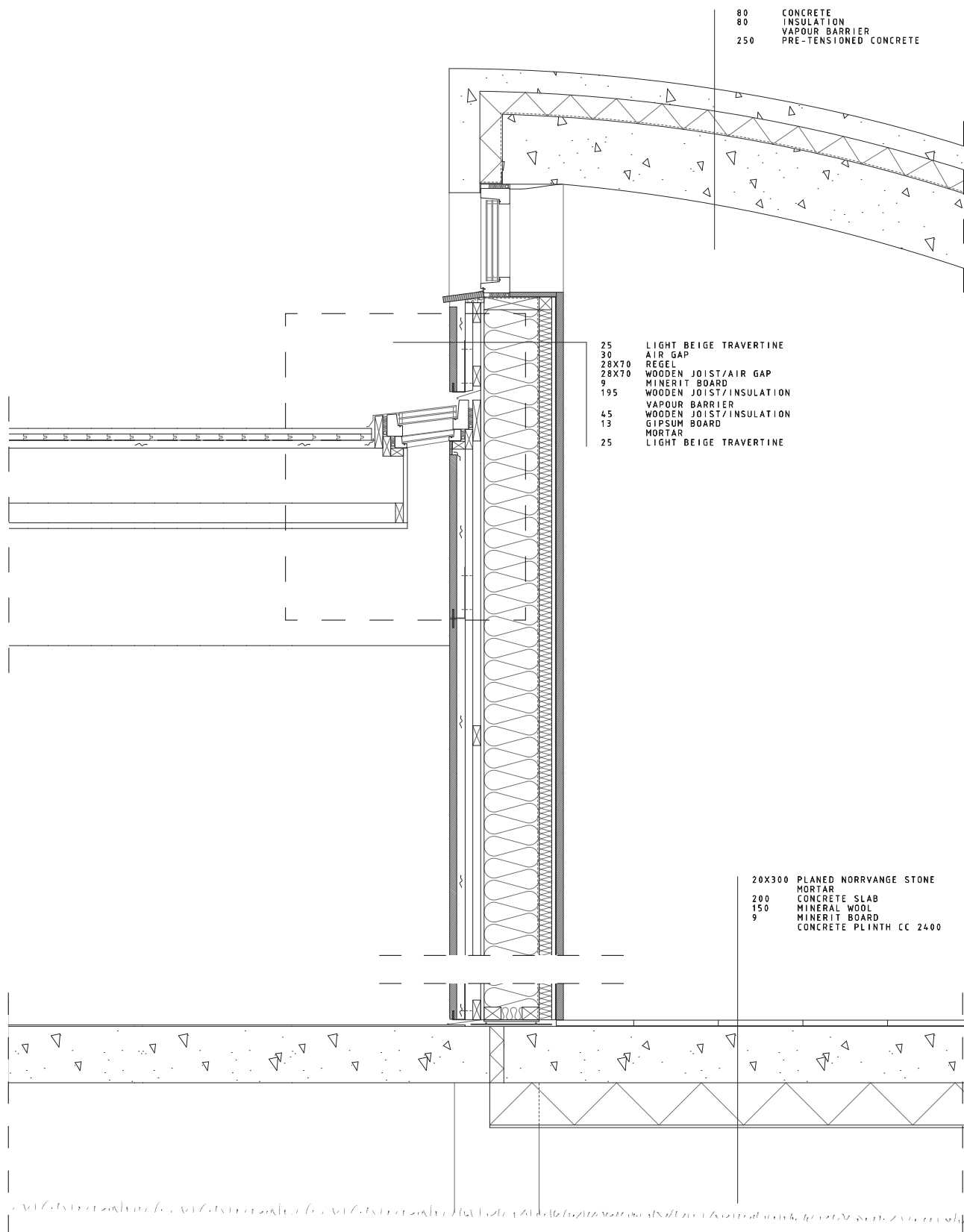


Fig 3.87 Section H-H 1:20.

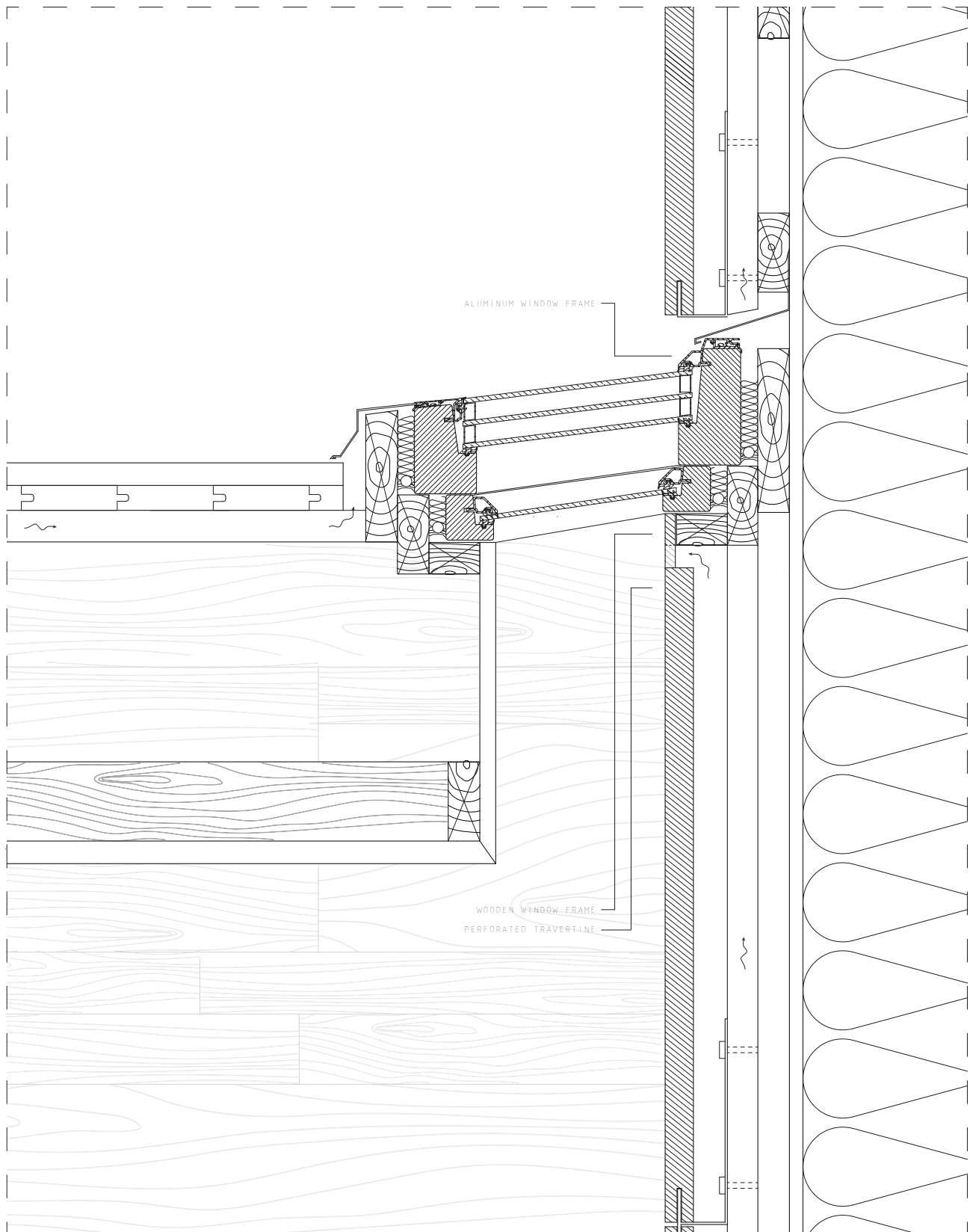


Fig 3.88 Detailed section 1:5. As to create an illusion that the stone facade is only broken by the wooden window, the window openings and their window frames are displaced.

GRIEVING AMONGST OTHERS

A space to grieve without
being isolated from the
park, the city and the world.
A perforated stone gathers
rainwater as an interactive
and ever changing element.

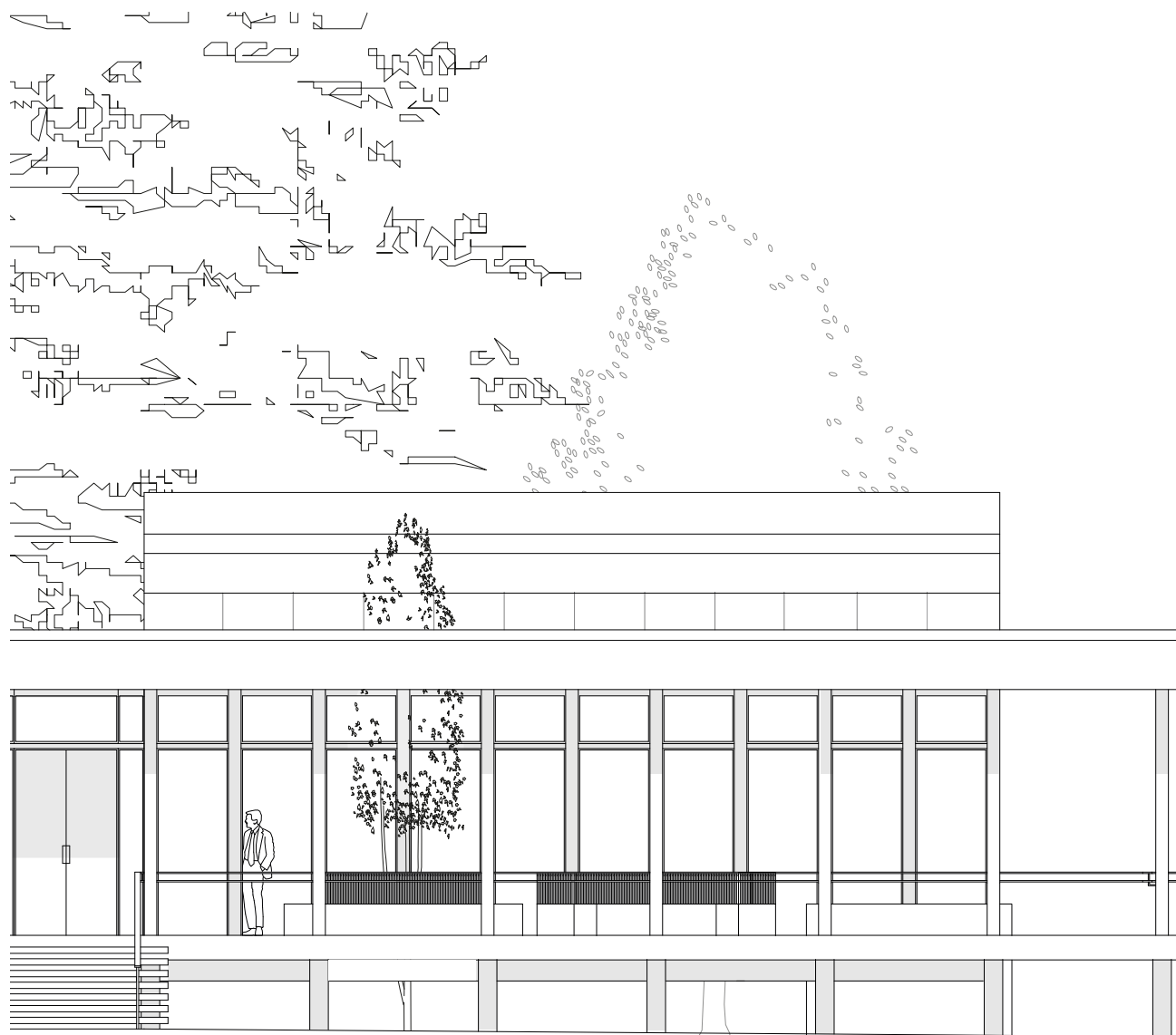


Fig 3.89 North elevation 1:100

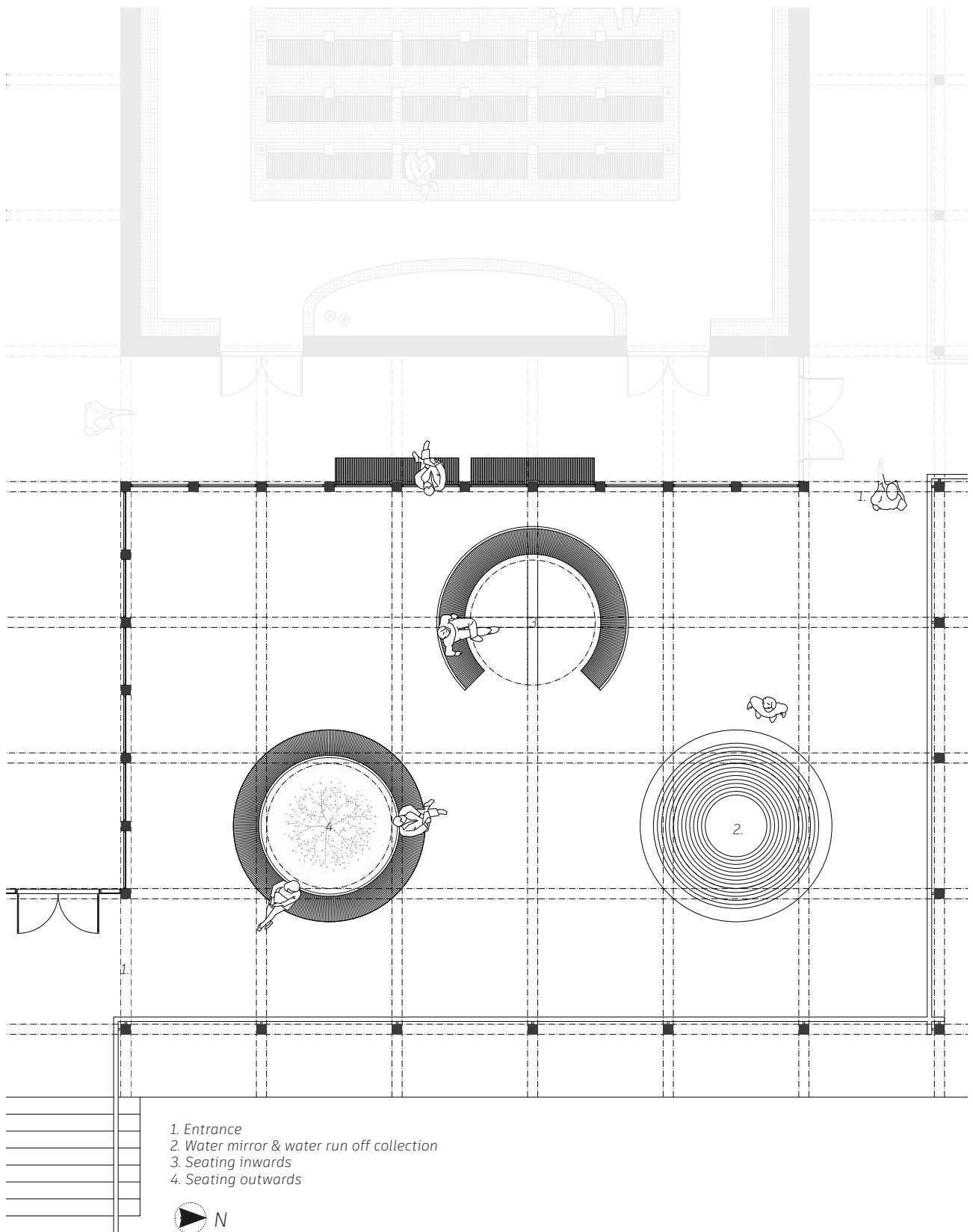


Fig 3.90 Plan 1:100



Fig 3.91 The benches are turned inwards or outwards, offering the visitor a choice of seating. Openings in roof and floor provide opportunities for the natural elements to be invited into the building in this space that is connected closely to the rest of the park.



Fig 3.92 The building is lightly placed among the trees in the park, showing consideration to the surroundings.

GRIEVING INDIVIDUALLY

A place for solitude and silent contemplation, with a light catching art installation the gaze can land upon as the thoughts drift away.

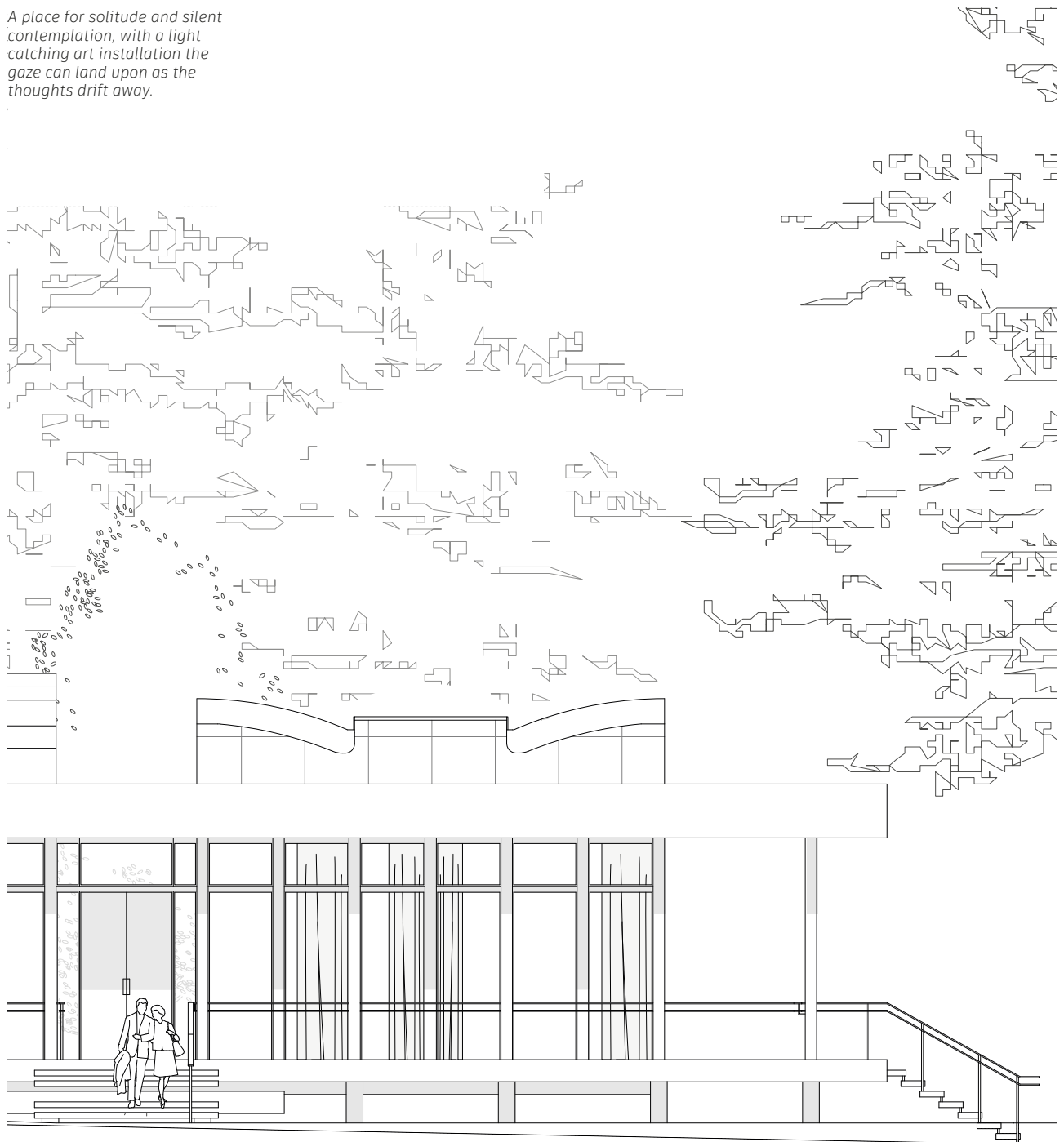


Fig 3.93 East elevation 1:100

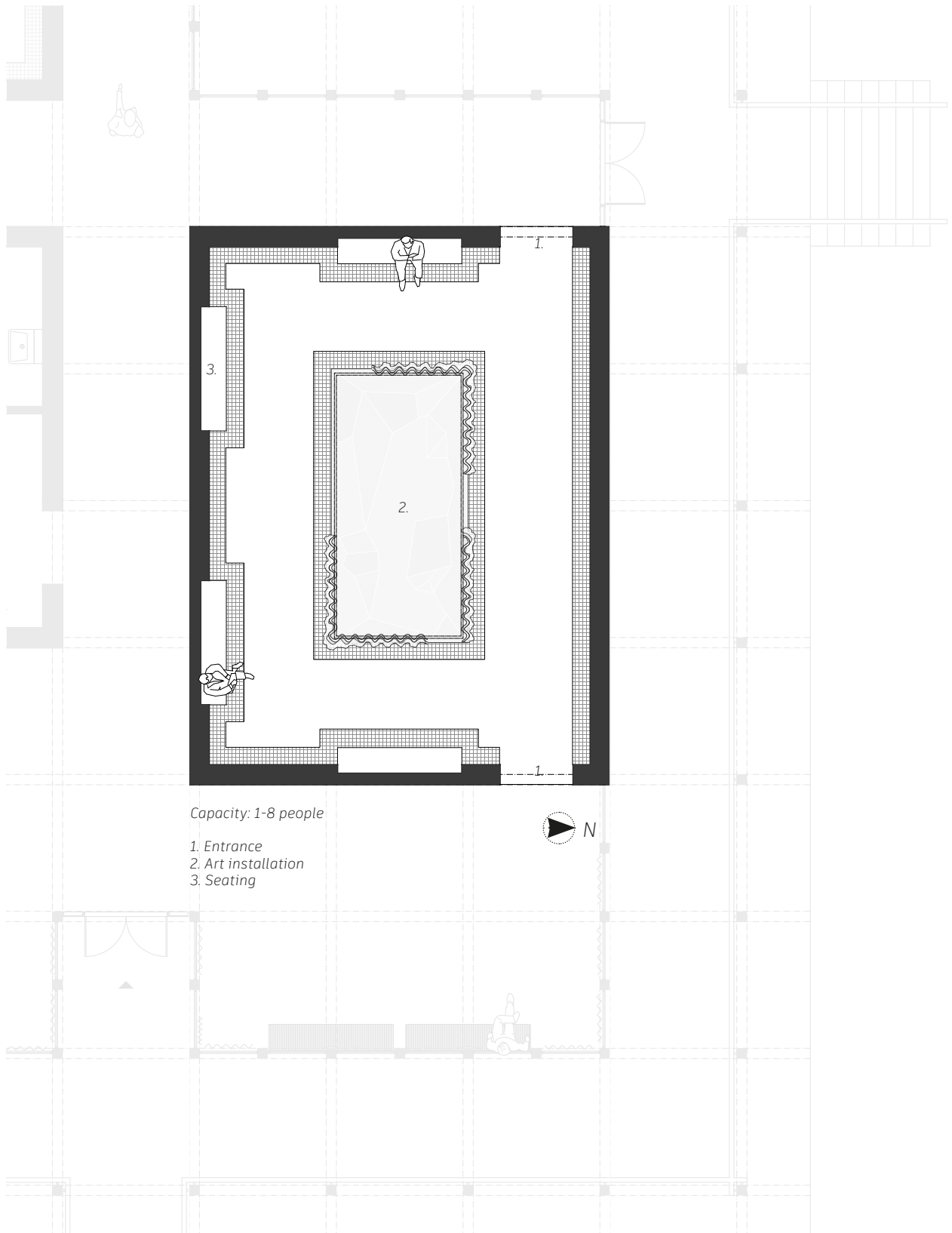


Fig 3.94 Plan 1:100 of the grieving individually space.



Fig 3.95 The fabric of the art installation limits the view of the visitor and promotes an inner rather than outer gaze. The roof and its openings act as a spotlight, putting the centre of the room in light and the borders in shadow.

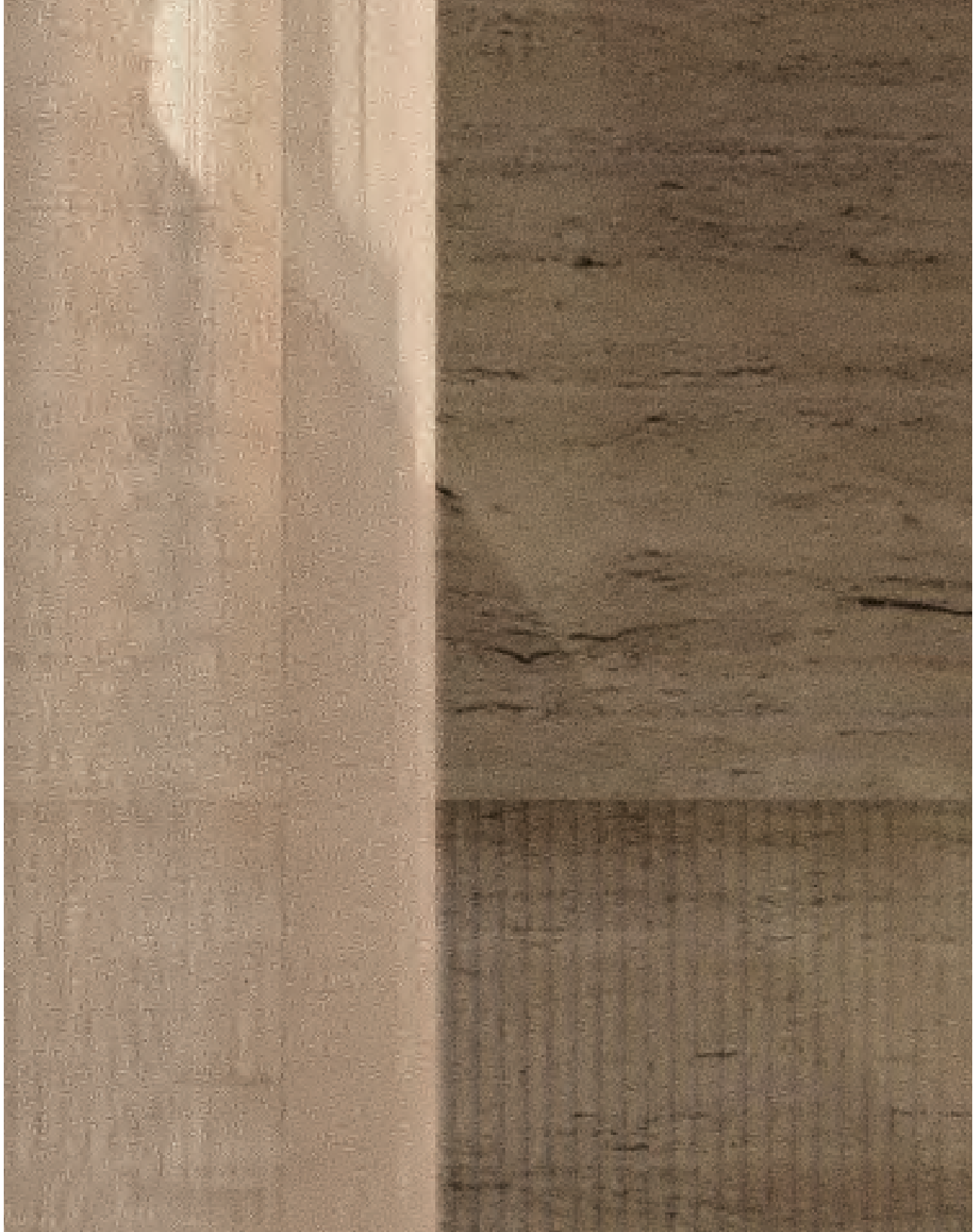


Fig 3.96 The seating is inserted into the wall for an enveloping and comforting character, providing a sense of privacy to the visitor.

DISCUSSION

The aim for this thesis was to explore a possible design of a non-religious space for grief, including but not limited by ceremonies like funerals and memorials. This was to be done through the exploration of architecture's ecstasies and their characteristics and possibilities and applying the observations made onto the program of grief. The final project proposal was to be a building situated in Gothenburg, and the design to be site-specific. It resulted in a materially complex pavilion in Kungsparken, Gothenburg, where not only space for ceremonies exists, but where also other parts of the grieving process can take place in an emotionally resonant setting.

Our first thesis question focused on how an exploration of ecstasies can help guide our design choices as we design for grief and for grief in the public setting that Kungsparken is. The purpose was not to create a strict methodology for architectural design and ecstasies, which led to a flexibility in the design, letting us also design through intuition and based on other factors besides only ecstasies. This ambiguity however, also resulted in a process that was more difficult to communicate methodologically. A project done with a stricter approach could have clearer represented the possibilities of ecstasies in design, but we believe this would have worked better in an abstract setting and context. As we prioritised a site-specific design, we also let the site guide our choices in relation to the function of grief and the building itself.

We interpreted ecstasies in our building through several large and small scale aspects. One main thing was to work with a sequence of spaces from the public setting of the park, to the higher level of the arcade surrounding the building, to more visible spaces for grief, to the buffer zones between and lastly to the more enclosed and private stone volumes that physically break away from the surrounding wooden building. This related heavily to the aspect of privacy in a sensitive setting, and instilling a sense of security and safety for vulnerability in the visitor. We did this through working with different height levels and limiting visible contact by closing certain walls and perforating others with sheer fabric. Furthermore,

when entering the building, the visitor may easily gain an understanding of their surroundings and the ability to confidently choose their preferred path inside.

Regarding light and shadow: rhythm, direction and character of light has been our focus. In the buffer zones, light reaches the building horizontally, while surrounding the stone and inside the stone, it does so vertically. This experience is reinforced through the room proportions, with the ceiling becoming higher as you enter the stone. The light is not constant, but broken up by a rhythm of shadow through the pillar structure and repeated smaller openings in the more stereotomic spaces. Sometimes the light is straggling or more general, while other times it is more directed to draw focus to certain points, like in the space for grieving individually. There is also a contrast in the amount of light the spaces have, heightening a sense of internal focus and serenity in darker areas.

The second thesis question focused on how the material contributes to the experience of the space. Here, the ecstasies temperature, texture and weight play a big role in how the materials stone, wood and metal can create atmospheres. Wood and stone are used in both harmony and contrast to each other, utilizing the importance and significance stone signifies through its heaviness, connotations to public space and texture in the more central spaces for grief and utilizing the warmth and familiarity wood signifies through its colour, craftsmanship and texture in the buffer zones and where care is necessary. The harmony is then achieved through the colouring of the light beige travertine in combination with the oiled glulam wood. Furthermore, the materials act in ways logical to their constructive qualities with wood being represented in the more lighter, tectonic constructions while stone being represented in more stereotomic and closed spaces. Copper acts as a bridge and gateway between the two, its heaviness and patina signifying the space's importance and the building as something existing in time.

Something that might be controversial is our chosen site for a grieving space. Not only is it central in the city, but by also placing it in a park and not conforming to the city's grid structure, it stands out as a significant building in the urban landscape. We placed grief in public, visible and accessible. Not following the more dominant view of grief as something hidden and private but something part of everyday life. But through this controversy, the proposal also highlights a need for a variety of religiously neutral spaces. We have tried to fill this gap by offering different types of spaces in the same building, but perhaps another solution could be to create different types of buildings on different sites around the city.

Another aspect in relation to the site, is whether the building clearly shows its function of grief, or if a not grieving public will impede on the spaces as they would wish to explore such a visibly open public architecture. Because of this juxtaposition of grief and the public eye, several design strategies for privacy are employed, as previously mentioned, but we also believe there is a greater theme to discuss here. How do we design something that shows the function of grief, without utilizing the symbolism and strategies that exist today which are derived from the christian tradition? Our building is an attempt at providing an alternative, and as such is not meant to look like a traditional church or chapel.

For further developments on this theme of ecstasies and grief, it would be interesting to work with stricter and more systematic methodology surrounding ecstasies, disconnected from a site context. On the other hand, it would also be interesting to translate our explorations and strategies into other situations and cultures and experience the possible diversity that would create. Regarding our work with phenomenology, it could also be expanded to include more explorations on multisensory spaces with additional focus on ecstasies like sound and scent.

Ultimately grief is universal, but also deeply personal. Our proposal is one attempt that can ignite reflection on what grief can look like in an architectural setting, providing not only space for sorrow but also for reflection, remembrance and thankfulness, integrated in the city of Gothenburg.

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BUILT REFERENCES

Baumschulenweg Krematorium - Shultz & Frank
Architects

Farnsworth house - Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Jewish museum - Daniel Libeskind

Landskrona Konsthall - Sten Samuelson & Fritz
Jaenecke

Neue Wache - Heinrich Tessenow

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 2.5 Atelier FLIR. (2009) *Farnsworth house*.
[photography]. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/atelier_flir/3890047886/

Fig 2.6 Grigas, V. (2013) *Farnsworth house*.
[photography].

Fig 2.7 Nilsson, V. (2024) *Landskrona Konsthall*.
[photography].

Fig 2.8 Nilsson, V. (2024) *Landskrona Konsthall*.
[photography].

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