Babylon Nexus

Energizing Cities
Innovative Public Property Development,
Group 1 Plot 1

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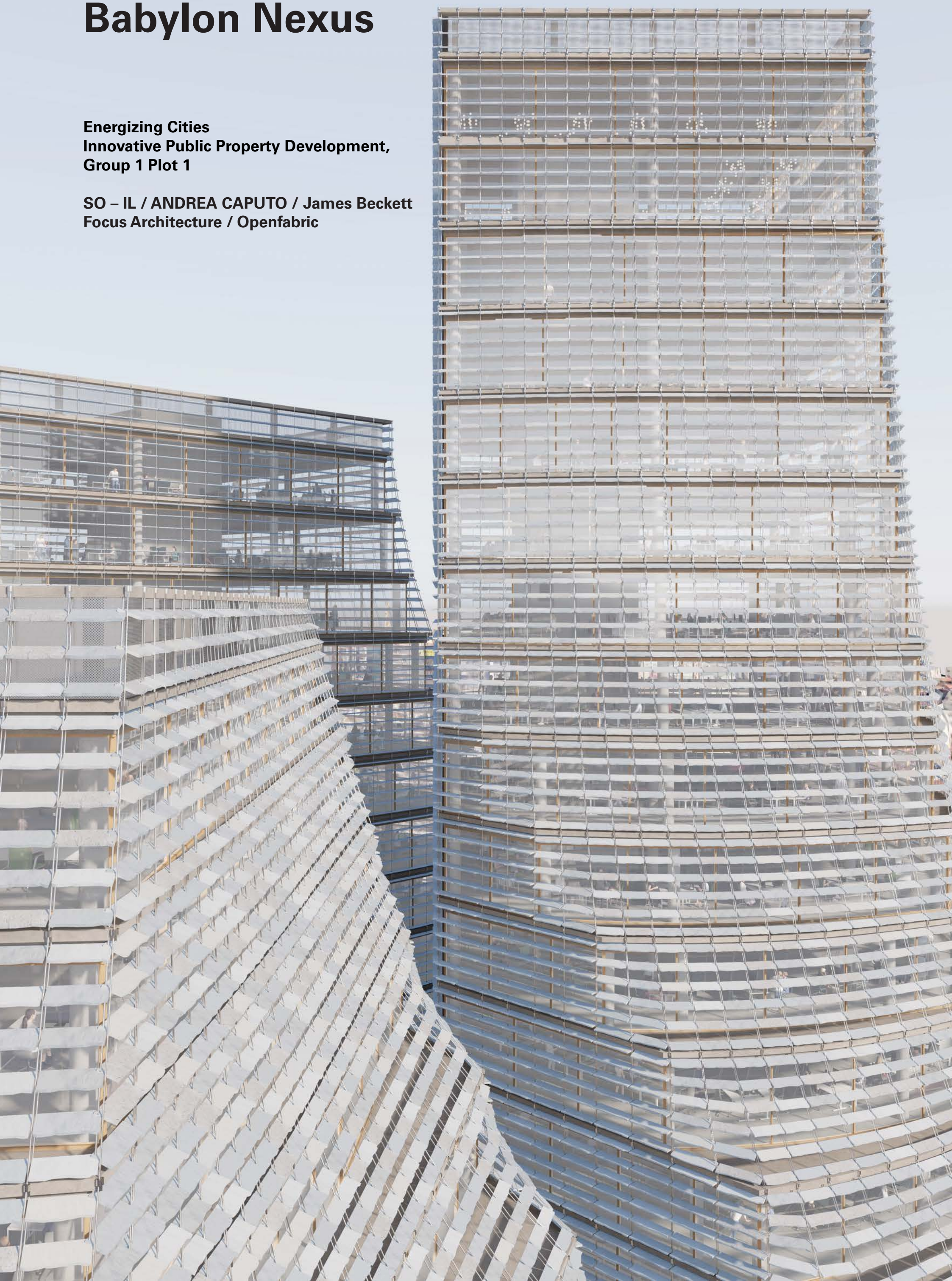
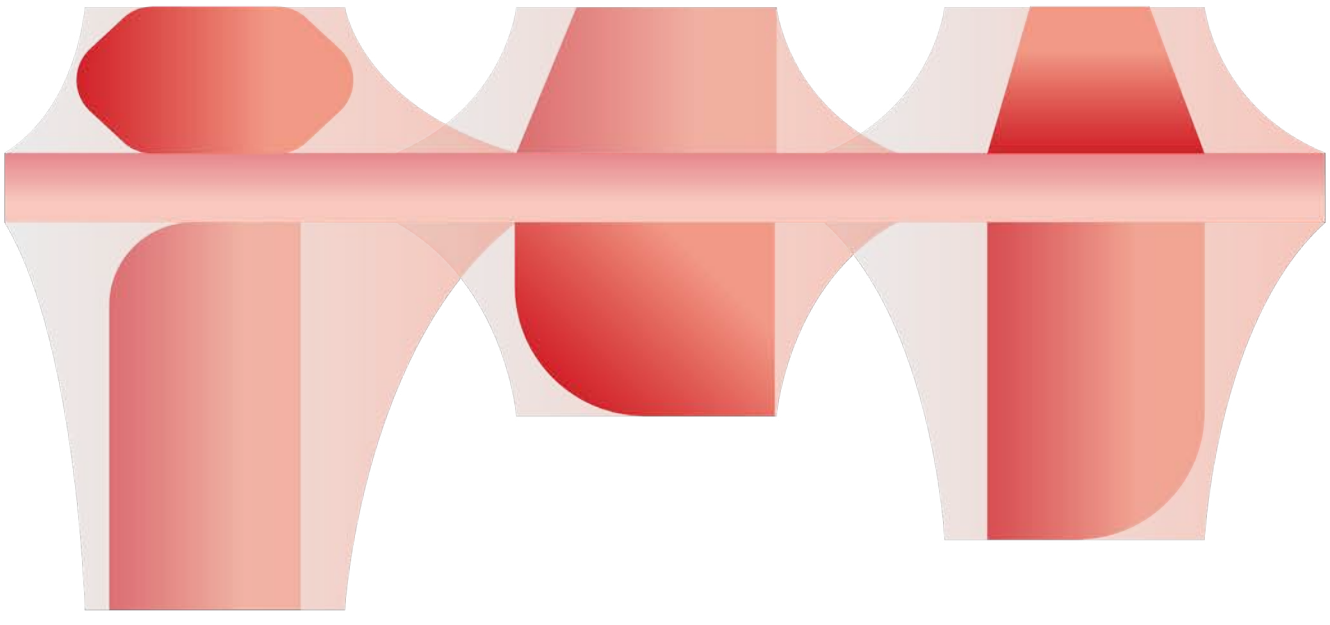
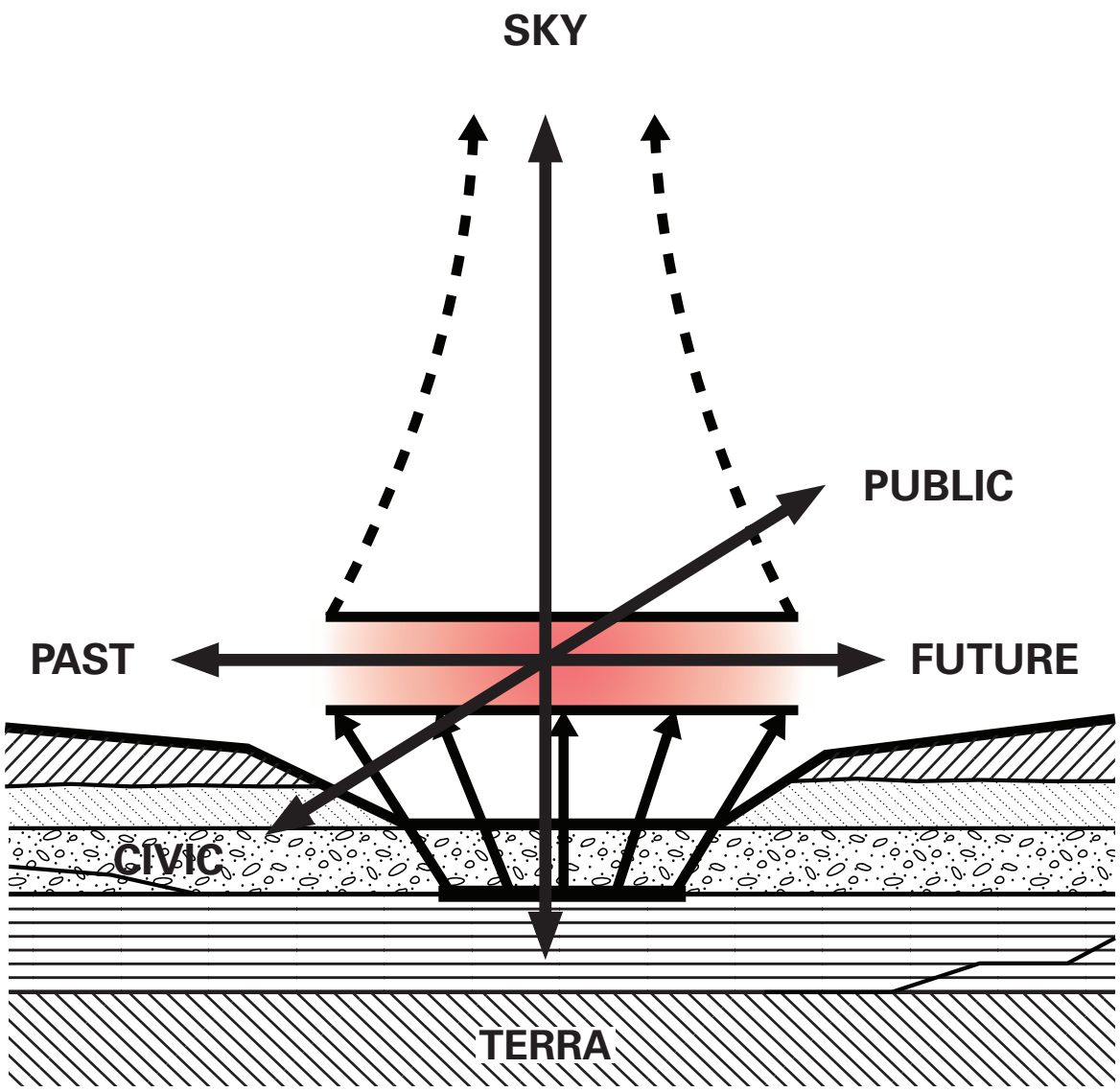




Vision



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They converge from all corners of the city—the engineers, makers, architects, and planners—ensuring trains run on time, planes land safely, and ports remain open. Without them, the nation would come to a standstill; life's rhythmic hum would fade into silence, and all in motion would halt. As they gather, they realize they are part of a grander whole, no longer isolated. Their new setting rises as an oasis in the city, emerging organically from the very site itself. It is a stoic and grounded entity, representative of both people and place.

Thoughtful architecture confidently reacts to its city and remains active in its citizens' civic life. Given this plot's unique program—hosting the heart of those shaping Tirana's future—the proposal should connect to and respond to various parts of the city: the historic town, the river, and nature. The building acts as a nexus between earth and sky, zenith and nadir, past and future. Positioned to channel human flows, it interacts with the sun, the earth's crust, rain, and light. It channels and redistributes energy metaphorically and literally, acting as a catalyst, animator, and source.

The massing of the building, though radically different from what has been built before, expresses a sense of timelessness, as if it has always been here and always will be. It is proudly clad in regional geology yet remains porous and light. It channels the Albanian Kulla, with welcoming hajat (porches) at its base. It also features a raised çardak—a space for relaxation and entertaining—and a vast central hall for collective assembly, out of which three distinct towers rise.

Traditional Çardak House of Albania

Model of New Babylon by Constant Nieuwenhuys

Model

Visualizations

View from Rruga Medar Shtylla


FARMACI EDJONA

View from the plaza

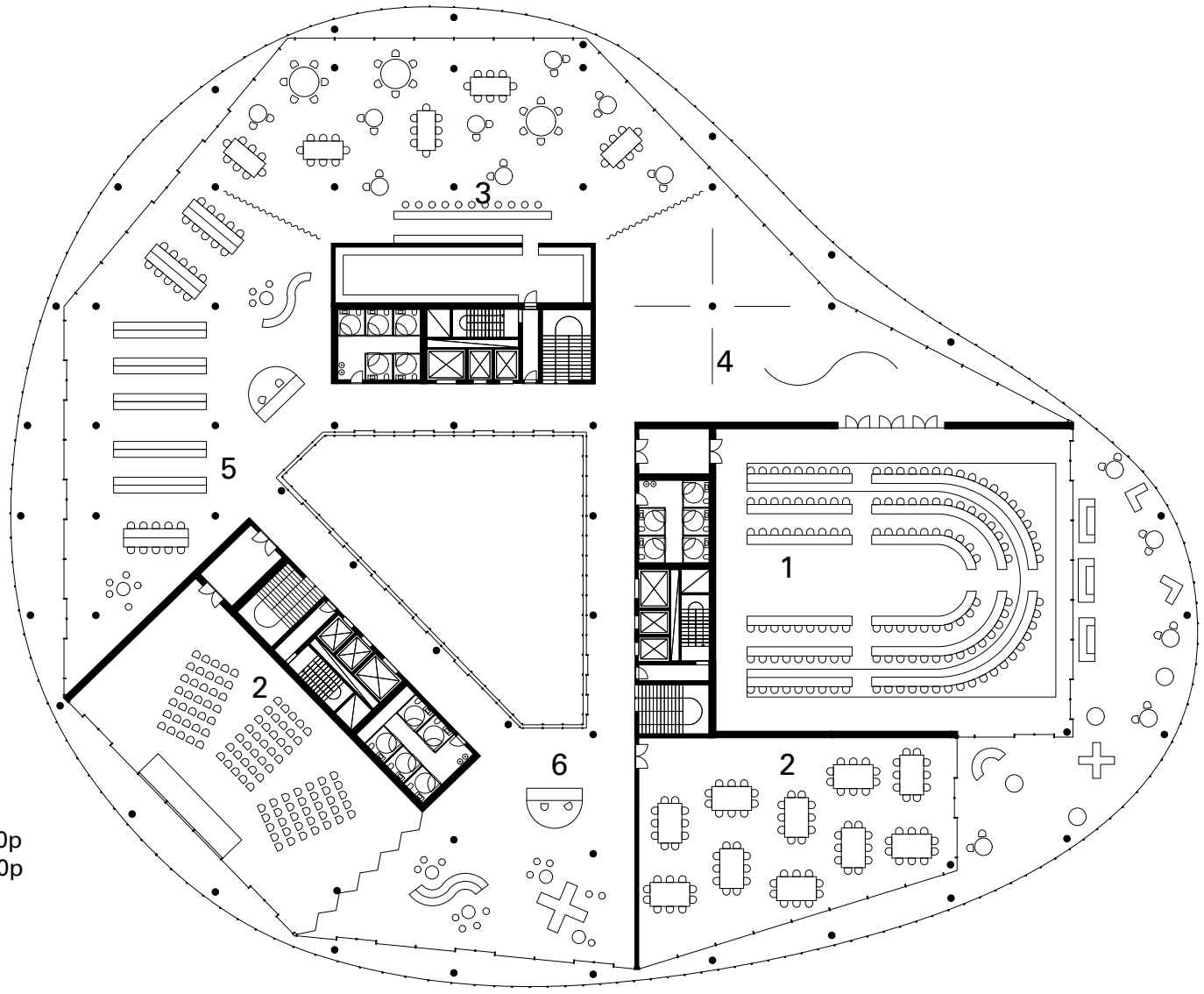
View to entry

View from Aneksi i Dinamos

Design Drawings

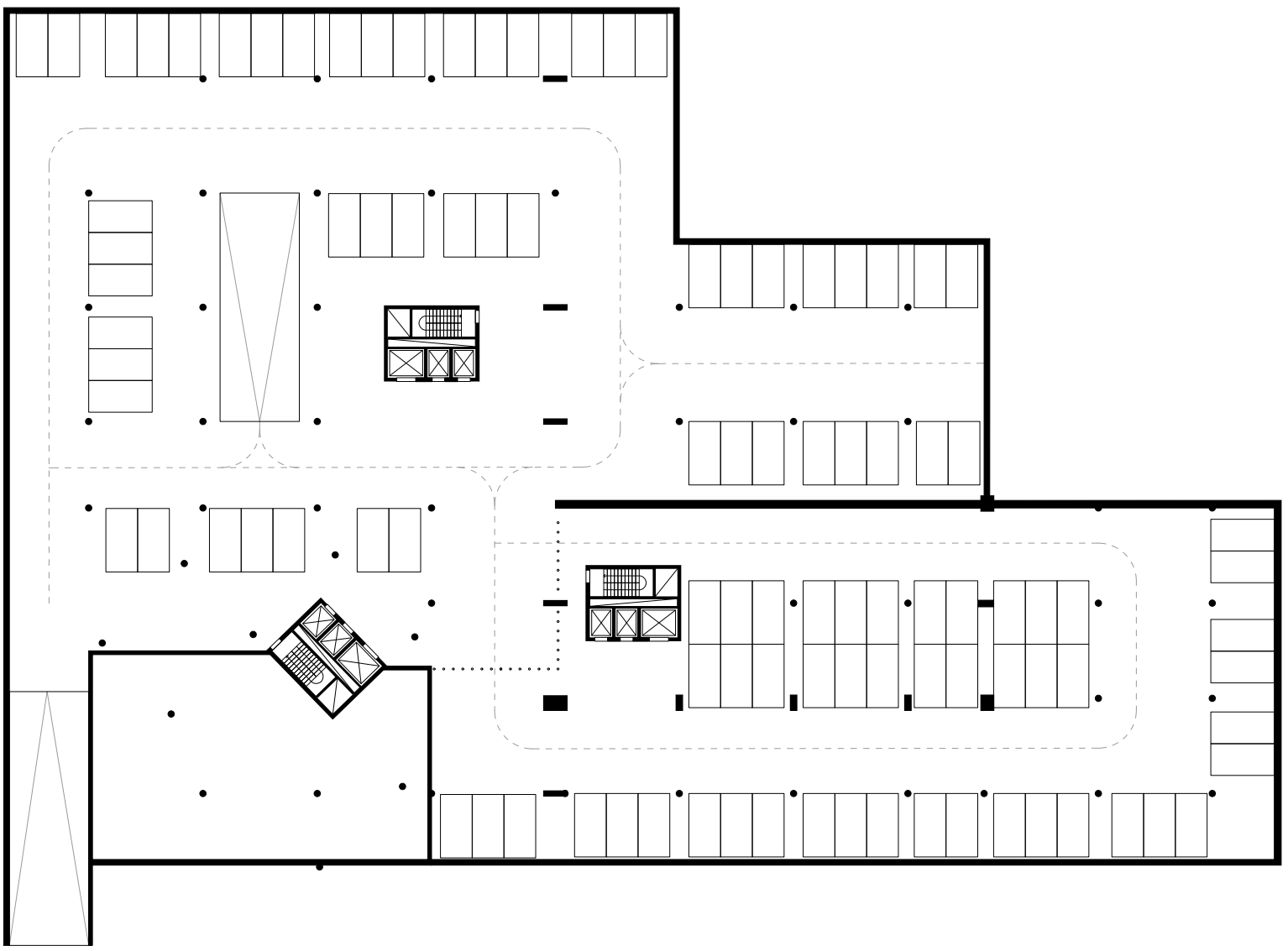
Site Plan, 1:1000

Design Drawings

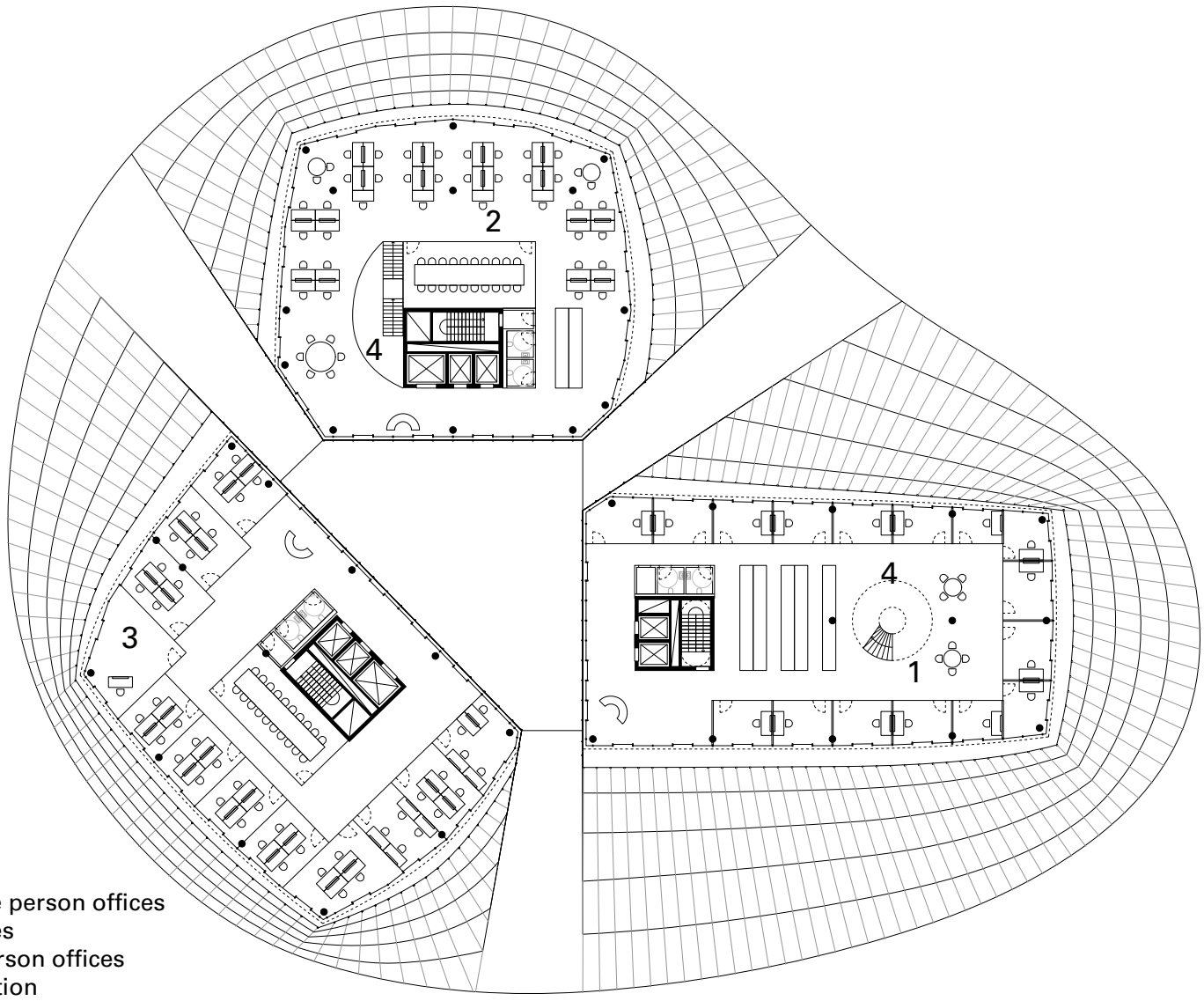


1. Meeting Room 300p
2. Meeting Room 100p
3. Cafeteria
4. Exhibition
5. Library
6. Lounge

Third Floor Plan 1:500

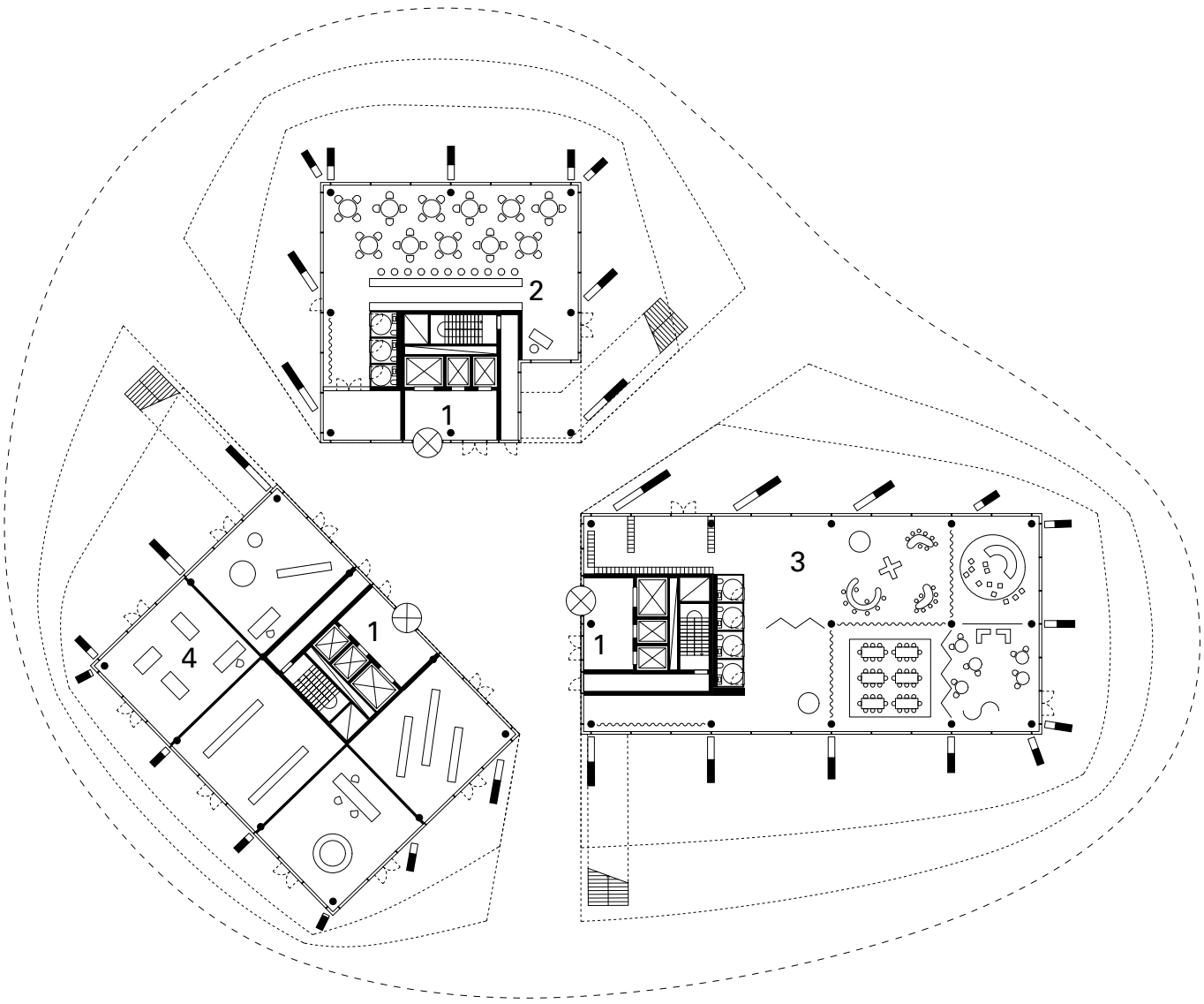


Parking Plan, 1:500



1. Parliament - Single person offices
2. AZHT - Open offices
3. ARM - Tir - Four person offices
4. Intra-floor connection

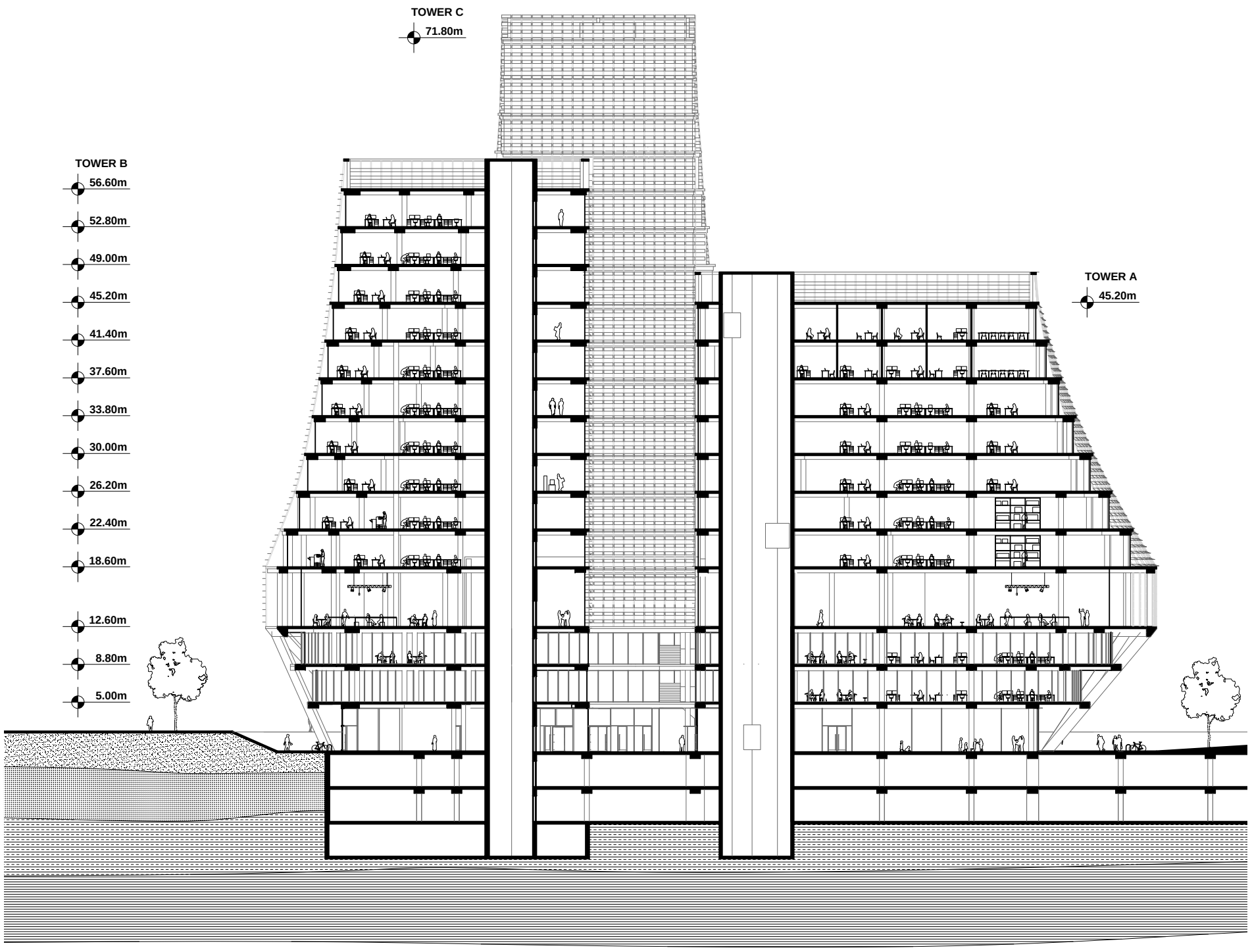
Typical Office Floor Plan, 1:500



1. Elevator Lobby
2. Restaurant
3. Kindergarten
4. Retail

Ground Floor Plan, 1:500

Design Drawings



Section A, 1:500

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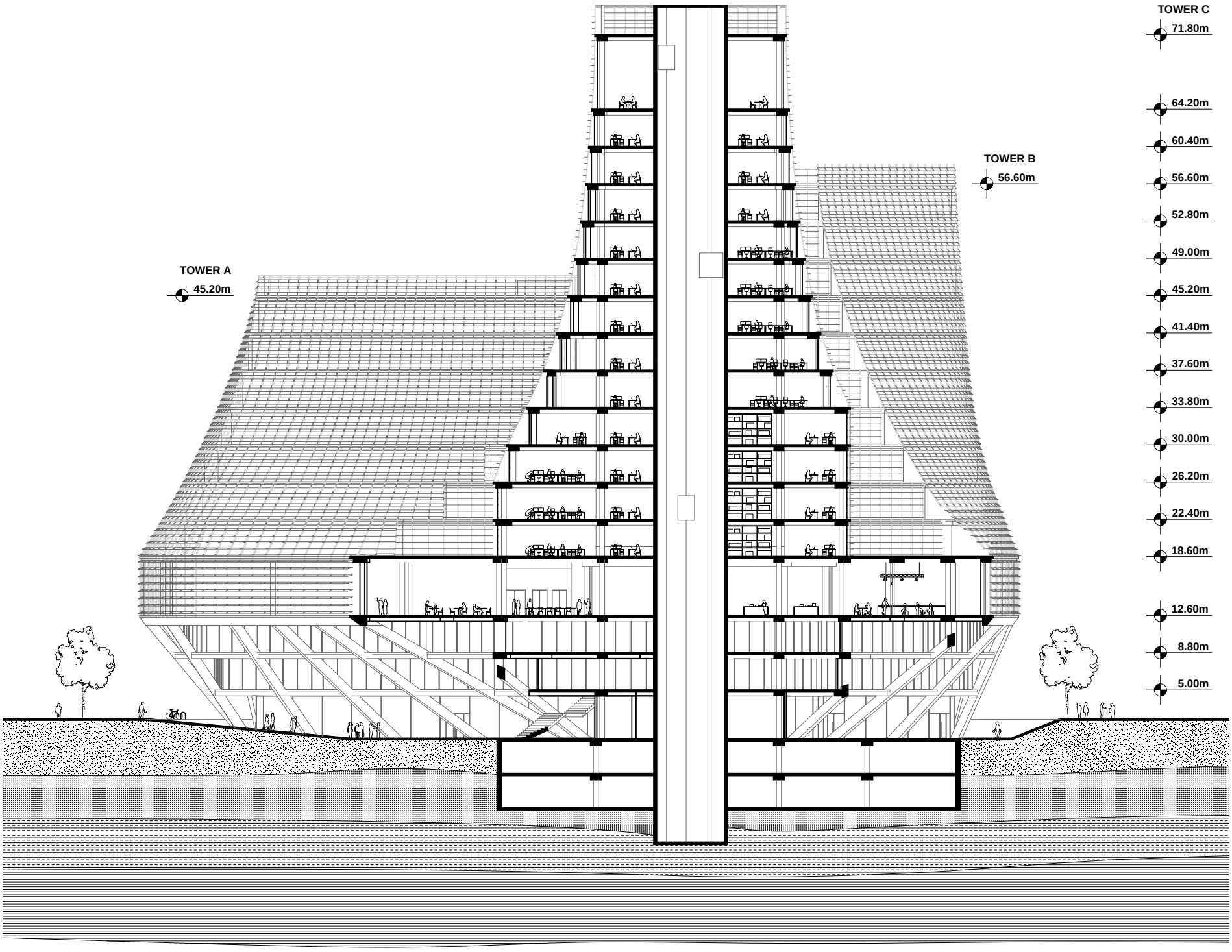

Section B, 1:500

Dynamic Spaces

Dynamic Spaces

An array of spaces that create comfort for work

Lobby

Large Conference Room

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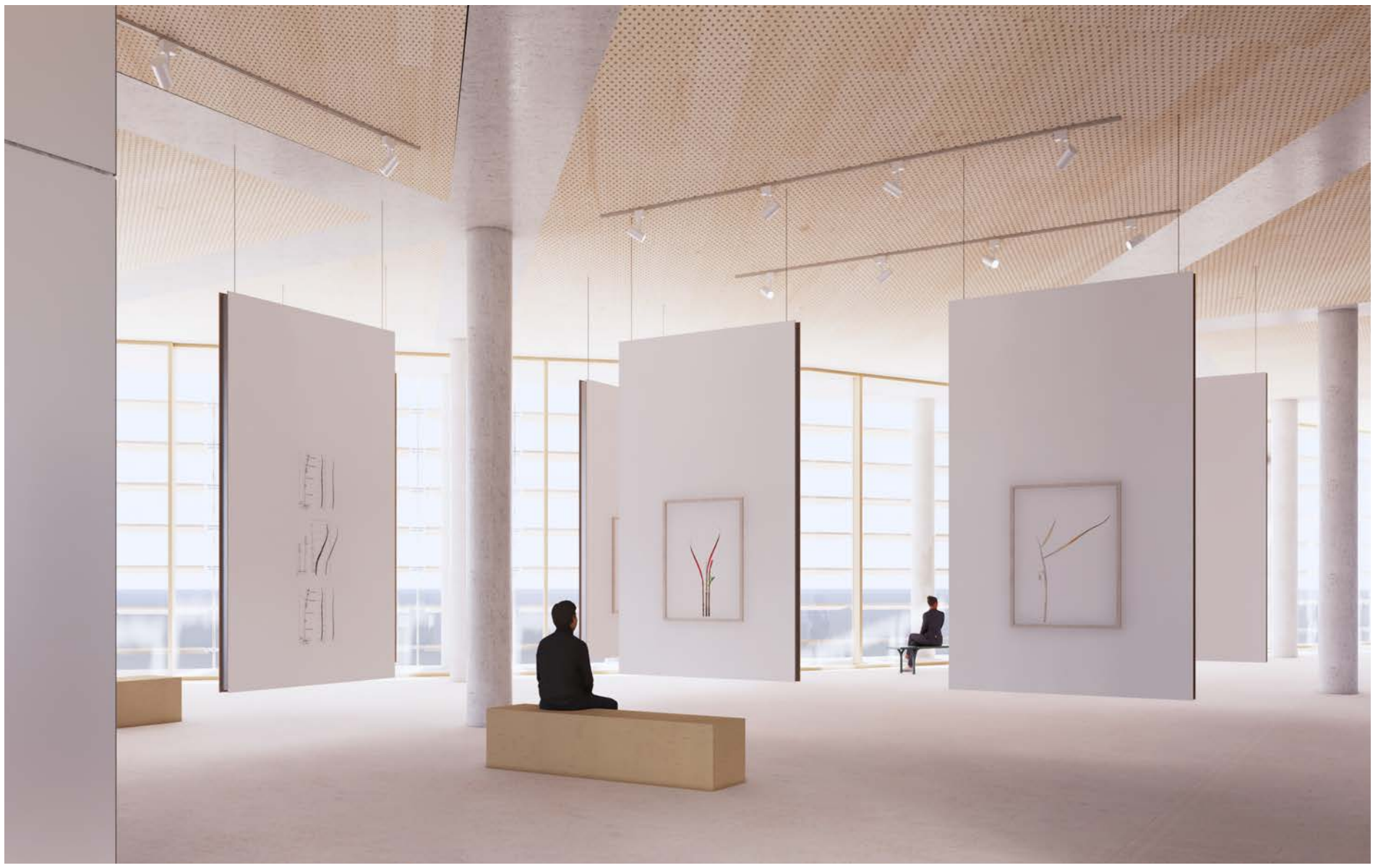
Staff Cafeteria



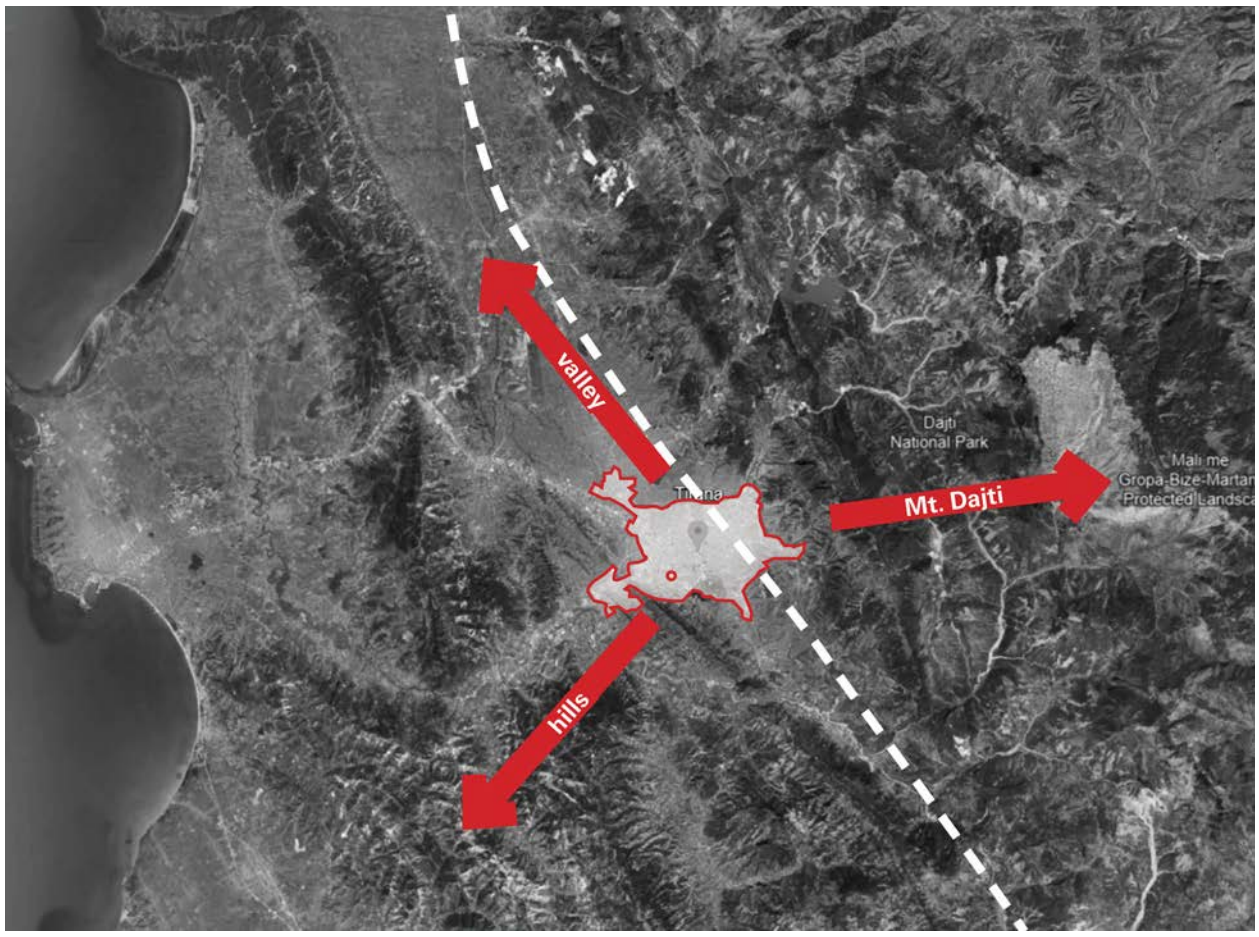
Exhibition

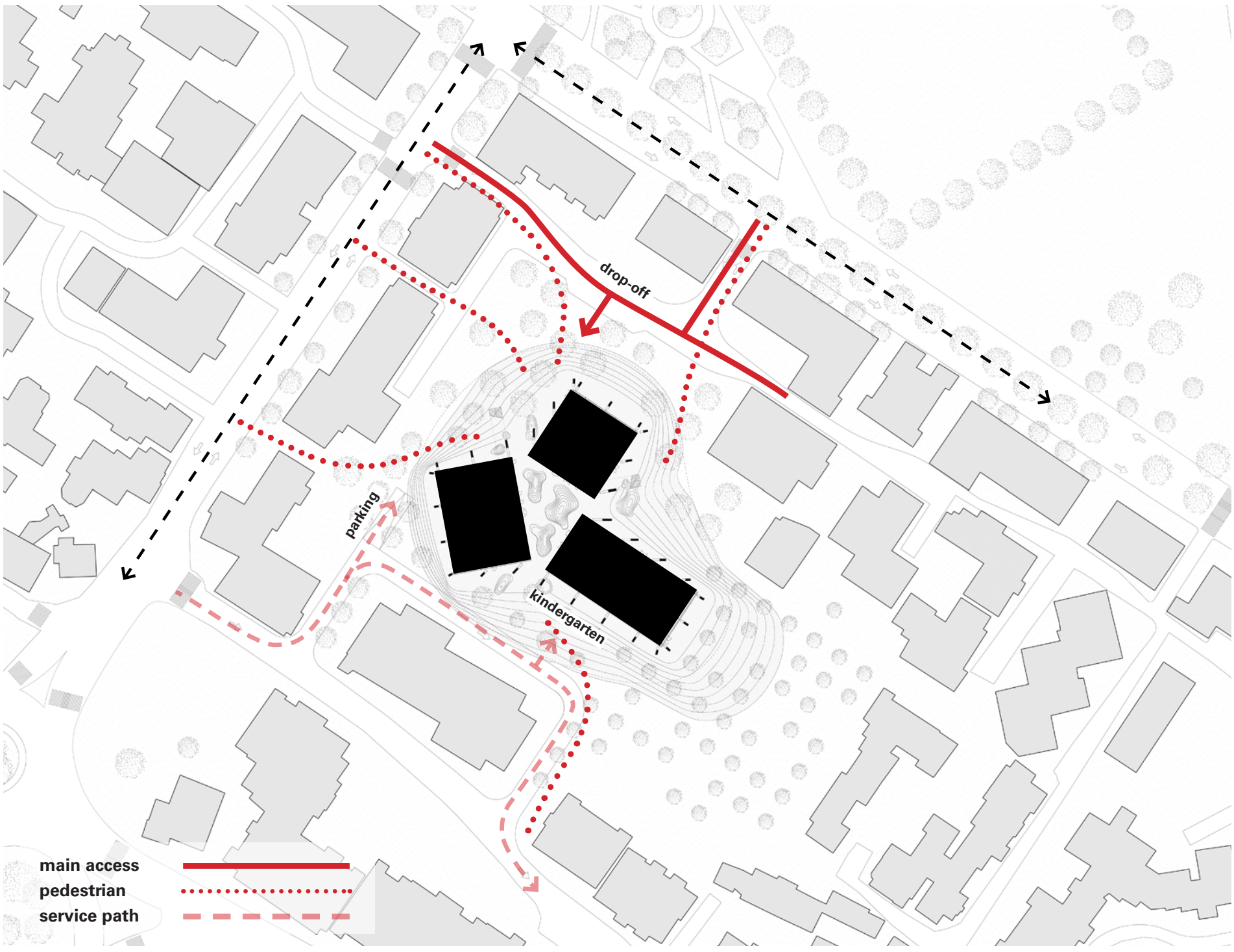
Context and Urbanism

A responsive design emerges from the unique urban context

The site is located in southwest Tirana, just blocks from key landmarks like the lake and hills stretching from northwest to southeast. Surrounded by residential units, it is accessible through green corridors, adding new texture to the ecosystem. The open space project revolves around the concepts of the Macrocosm and Microcosm.

The Macrocosm, representing the city, is reflected in the site's orthogonal grid, extending public spaces—green areas, play zones, and relaxation spaces—toward the city. This grid leads to the courtyard, the Microcosm, a tranquil oasis nestled between the building's three cores, shaded and passively controlled.





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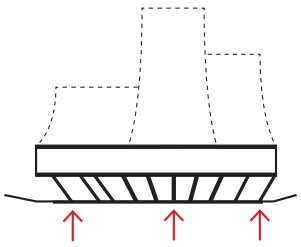
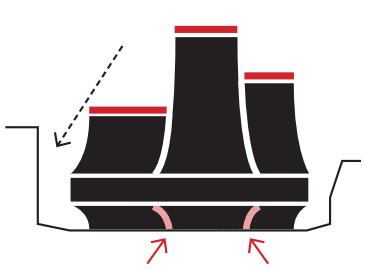
Values

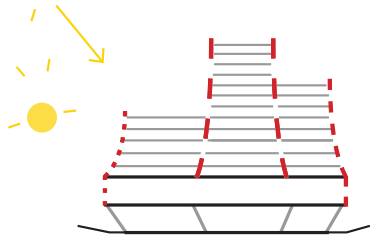
The building's shape is thoughtfully sculpted in response to the surrounding neighborhood, creating a harmonious relationship with its context. Its form is not rigid but rather fluid, shifting to accommodate the urban fabric around it. By carefully considering the scale and rhythm of nearby structures, the design introduces varying degrees of intimacy, where certain spaces feel more enclosed and personal, while others open up to embrace broader views and interactions.



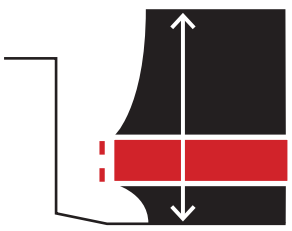
structure emerges from ground depression



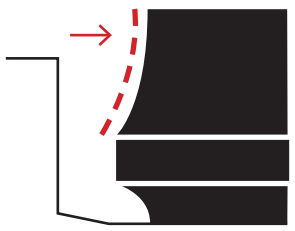
towers heights vary
gaps articulate, create views + mark entries



skin unifies + responds to climate



common "living room" connects



towers move away and respect neighbors

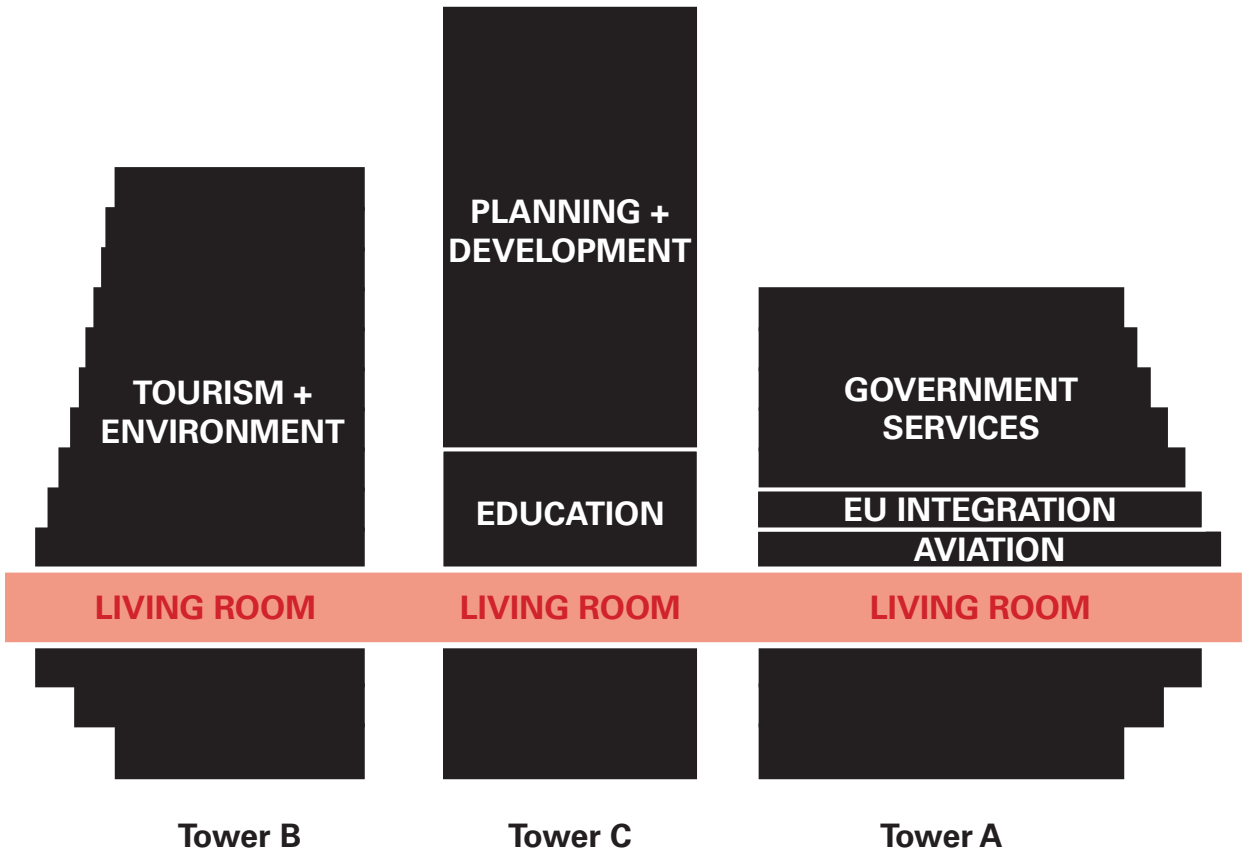
cantilever creates intimacy

A new icon emerges, waiting for the future to come

These subtle nuances are achieved through a series of terraces, setbacks, and angled façades that respond to both the natural and built environment. Viewing corridors are strategically created, allowing sightlines to extend across the neighborhood, offering glimpses of distant landmarks and the surrounding landscape. This careful modulation of the building's form enhances connectivity with its surroundings while maintaining a sense of privacy and retreat within certain areas. Each level of the building provides a different spatial experience, balancing openness with more intimate zones, reinforcing the relationship between the building, its users, and the neighborhood at large.

Three Addresses, One Entity

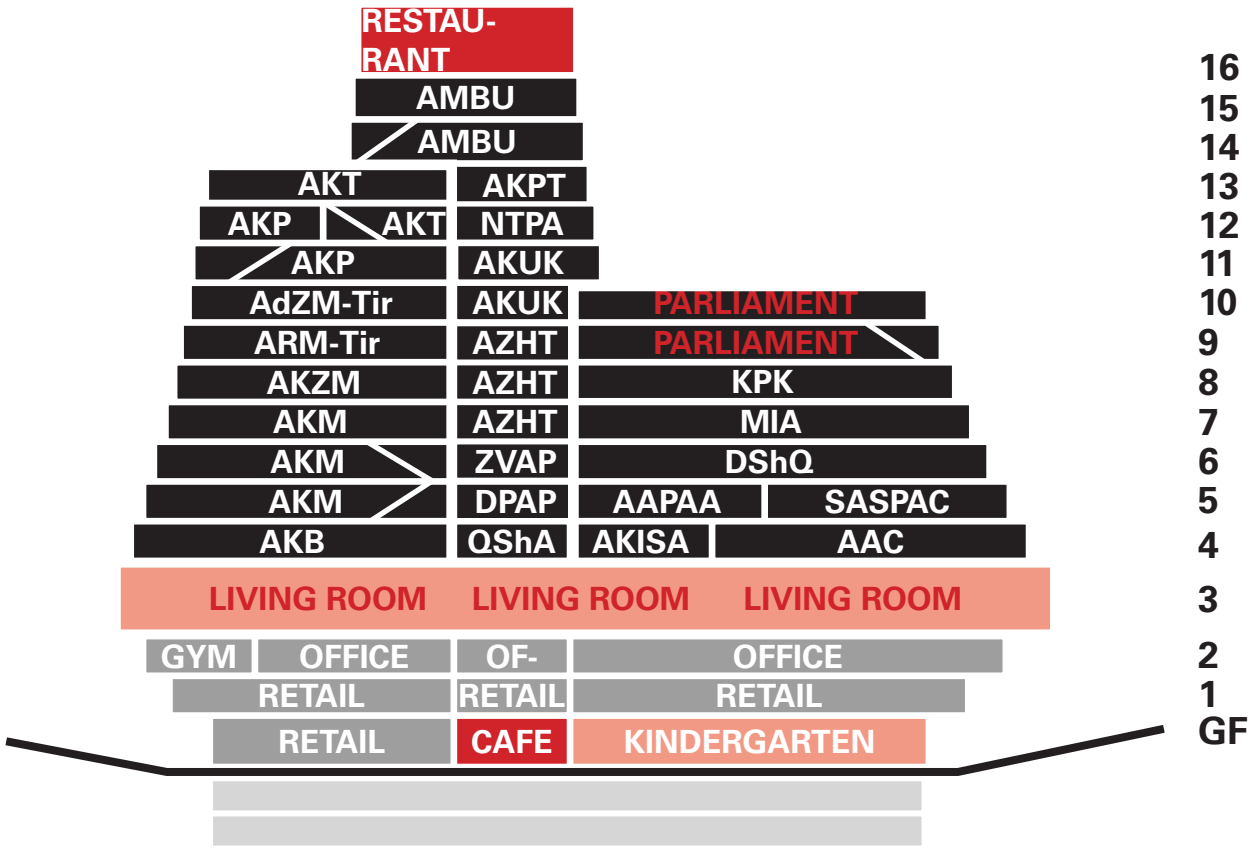
Home for the future of Albania



The institutions currently scattered across the city will be centralized in this office building, enhancing efficiency and collaboration.
The building features three interconnected towers—A, B, and C—each with varying heights and floors. These towers are linked at the third floor by the “Chardak,” a central hub for collaboration and socialization. The Chardak sits atop a plinth that houses essential amenities such as commercial units, lobbies, and a kindergarten, creating a unified, community-focused environment. Above this, a further series of incremental rings create Teliz-corridors in the form of continuous balconies – further establishing synergy across agencies and disciplines.

The office spaces are tailored to meet the diverse needs of 22 different organizations. Since the floor plates differ in size, organizations and clusters can be allocated a most suitable floor plate, miminising the need for subdivision and customization, enabling each department to maintain its identity while contributing to a cohesive overall aesthetic that reflects Albania’s future. The structural grids are engineered for flexibility, allowing for adaptation as organizational needs evolve.

The top floor of the highest tower holds a collective offering exciting views over the dynamically evolving Tirana skyline. This office building is designed to be a functional and efficient space for government operations, providing comfort and professionalism, embodying Albania’s progress and future aspirations.



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Building Logistics

Security, Comfort, and Socialization

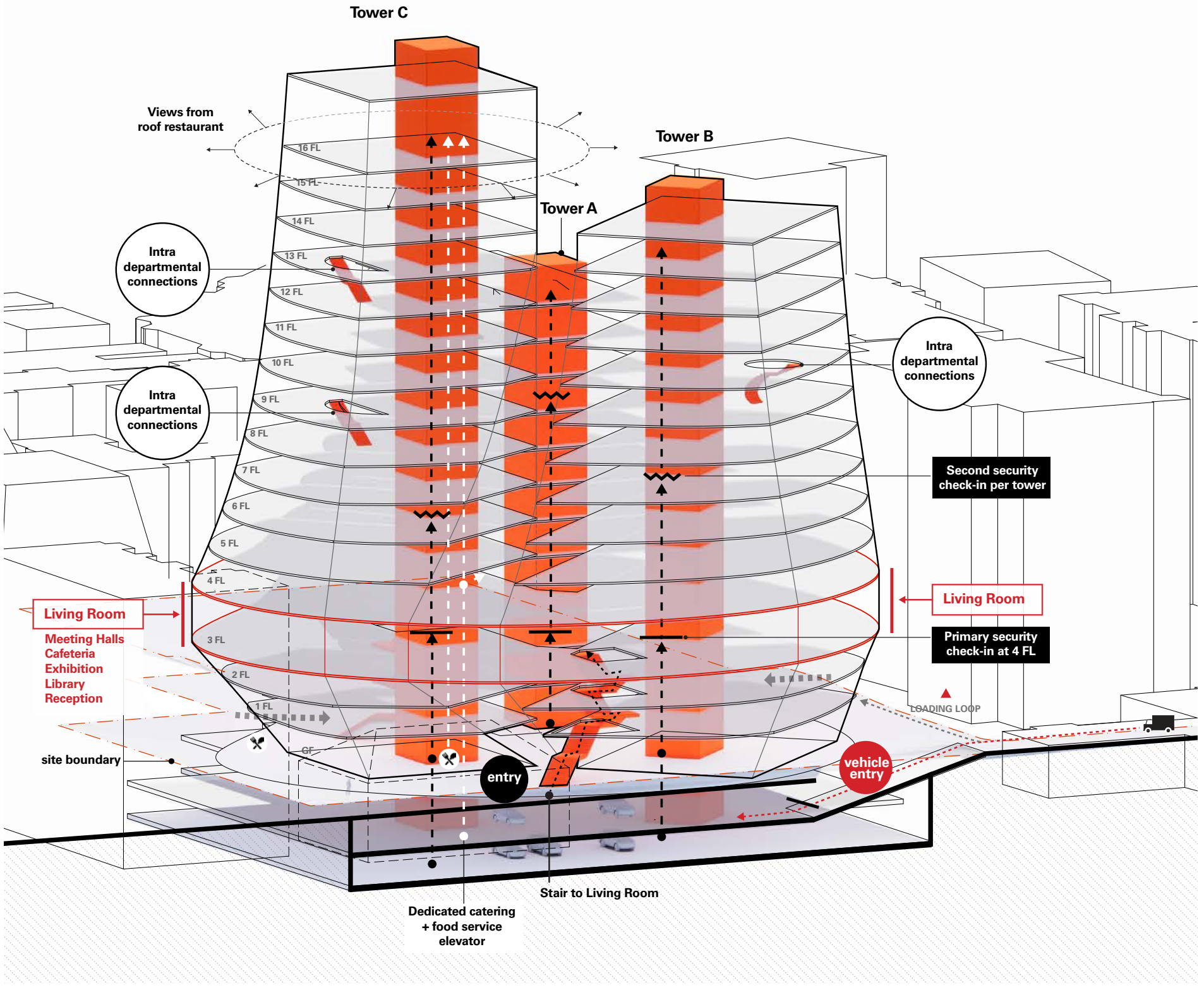
Security is built into the design with controlled access points and organized movement throughout the space. The Chardak floor is a key area for socialization, promoting interaction and collaboration among departments. The building prioritizes comfort with layouts that maximize natural light, ventilation, and accessibility, ensuring a pleasant working environment.

Arrival and Orientation

Visitors and employees enter through multiple lobbies on the ground floor, each leading to the respective towers. The design ensures a smooth and secure entry process. Visitors are directed along a generous public stair to the Chardak floor, where a reception area provides orientation and guidance to their destinations.

Parking

The building includes three subterranean parking levels designed to accommodate a substantial number of vehicles. Elevators from the parking levels provide direct access to the office floors.
This parking solution is integrated with existing private and public partnerships for efficient operation and partial profit, offering an additional 100% capacity to the extended neighbourhood. This establishes the building as a host, contributing to the site with its extended program.



Urban Oasis

An interplay between Macrocosm and Microcosm

From a landscape perspective, the site unfolds through two distinct systems. The first is a formal grid that connects the site to the surrounding urban fabric, creating visual permeability and linking it to its context. Three different tree species define the outdoor areas, diversifying the canopy and enriching the atmosphere of the formal landscape.
In contrast, the inner courtyard presents a topographical landscape, lush with vegetation, forming a green oasis that offers a dynamic counterpoint to the structured grids.
These open spaces reflect the encounter of formality and informality, reconciling opposites in a unified design. Through landscape, the proposal offers a critical interpretation of Tirana, expressed through the interplay of plants, trees, pavement, and furniture. The design mirrors a city where diversity thrives, a complexity that cannot be reduced or constrained—a perpetual balance between contrasting elements.

These two spaces are seamlessly connected by a gently sloping landscape. The pavement of the outer area gradually descends, guiding visitors toward the central courtyard, which slowly reveals itself as they move downward.
From a distance, the building appears to rise from the ground like a solid mineral fragment, with the ground floor subtly concealed at a lower level due to the folding planes of the terrain.

Geranium ‘Rozanne’

Dryopteris erythrosora ‘Brilliance’

Loropetalum chinense

Hosta halcyon

Hosta patriot

Hosta ventricosa

Smashed stone
Main Park surfaces

Limestone
Pavement

Vegetation
Mediterranean trees

Vegetation
Dynamic under-

Laurus nobilis

Punica granatum

Schinus mollis

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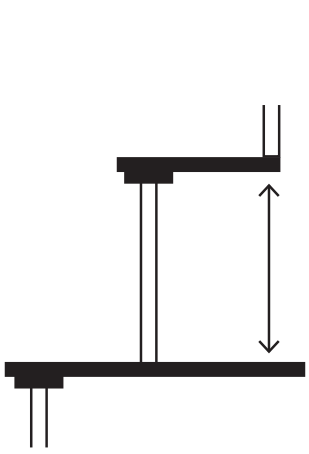
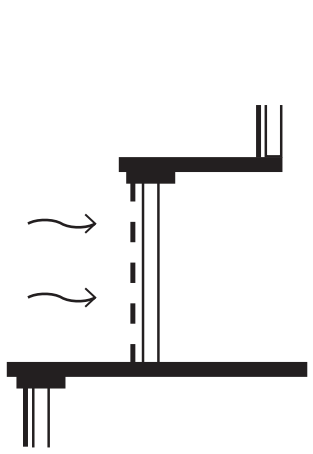
Structural System

Robust system to facilitate a flexible office grid

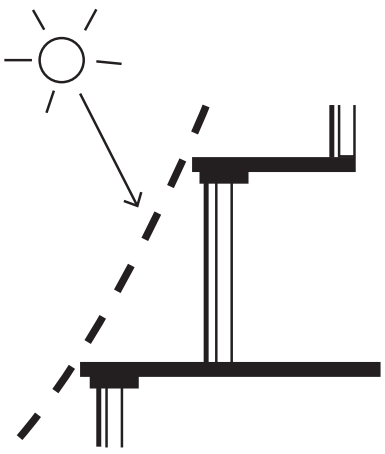
The building's robust superstructure is designed for both structural integrity and sustainability, primarily using concrete columns and beams. Concrete cores stabilize the structure, providing rigidity against lateral forces, while mass timber offers a more ecological alternative, blending strength with sustainability. The integration of a walking column system enhances construction efficiency by reducing material usage and simplifying the structural grid, allowing for faster assembly and greater flexibility in interior layouts. This balanced approach ensures both durability and adaptability while minimizing environmental impact.



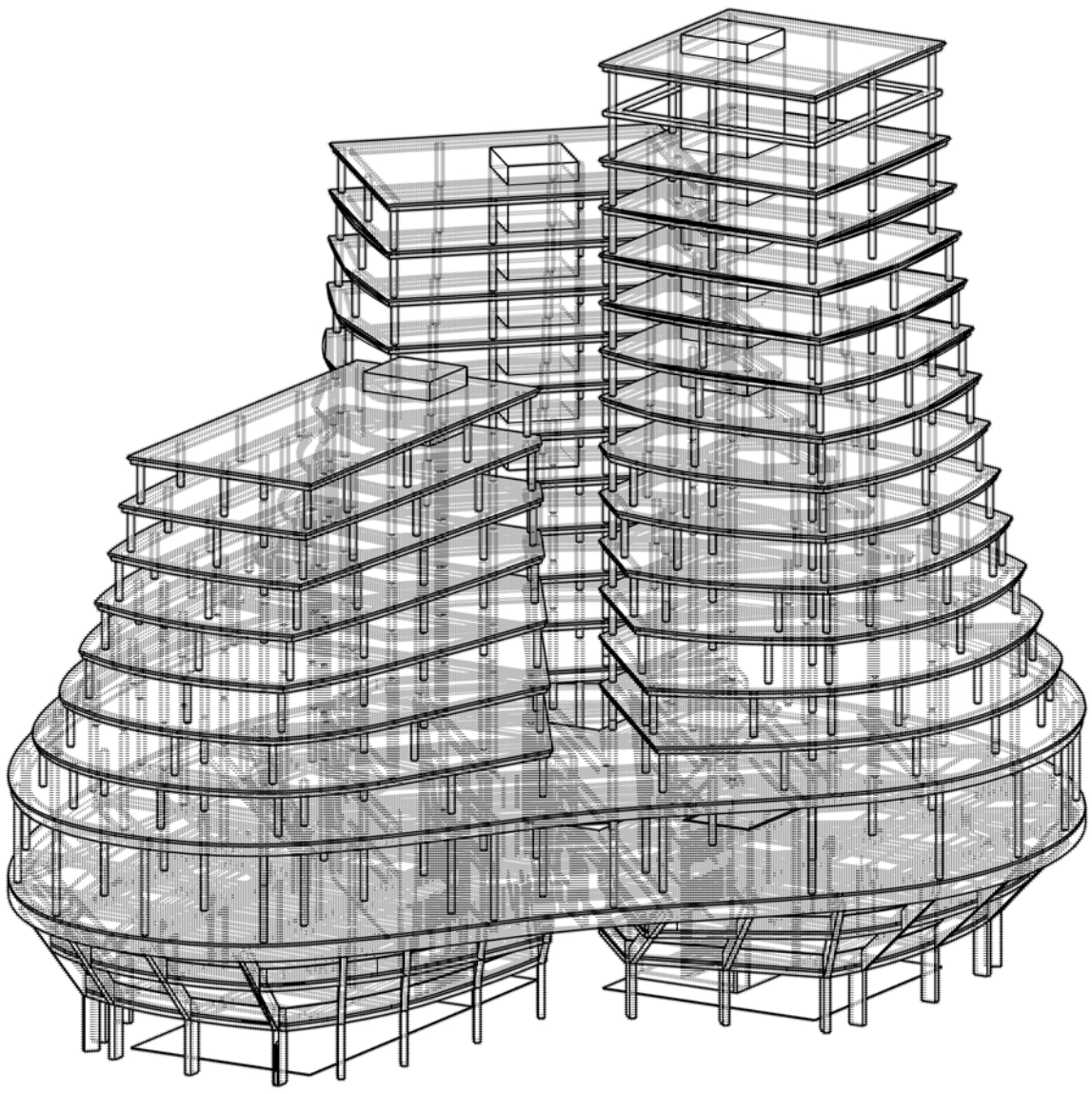
generous structure



operable windows



louvered skin



This flexible column and beam grid allows for both focused and open office layouts, accommodating various departmental needs. Private, enclosed spaces can be created for concentrated work, while open areas encourage collaboration and communication. The adaptable grid ensures that the space can be easily reconfigured, making it ideal for dynamic, evolving office environments.

Facade System

Sourcing local stones

The facade uses “controllable stone offcuts” within an effective attachment system, ensuring the material is used efficiently and securely while reducing waste. PV panels can be integrated into the facade to generate renewable energy on-site, contributing to the building’s energy needs. Combining cutoffs and tinted PV allows for carefully considered patterns, enhancing shading, ventilation, views, and energy efficiency.

For this concept phase, we work with facade consultant Front to develop the system that utilizes lightweight cables, slab anchors, clamp brackets that will hold the stone panels together. The system is developed such that each panel can be easily installed, replaced, and maintained.

Enlarged facade section

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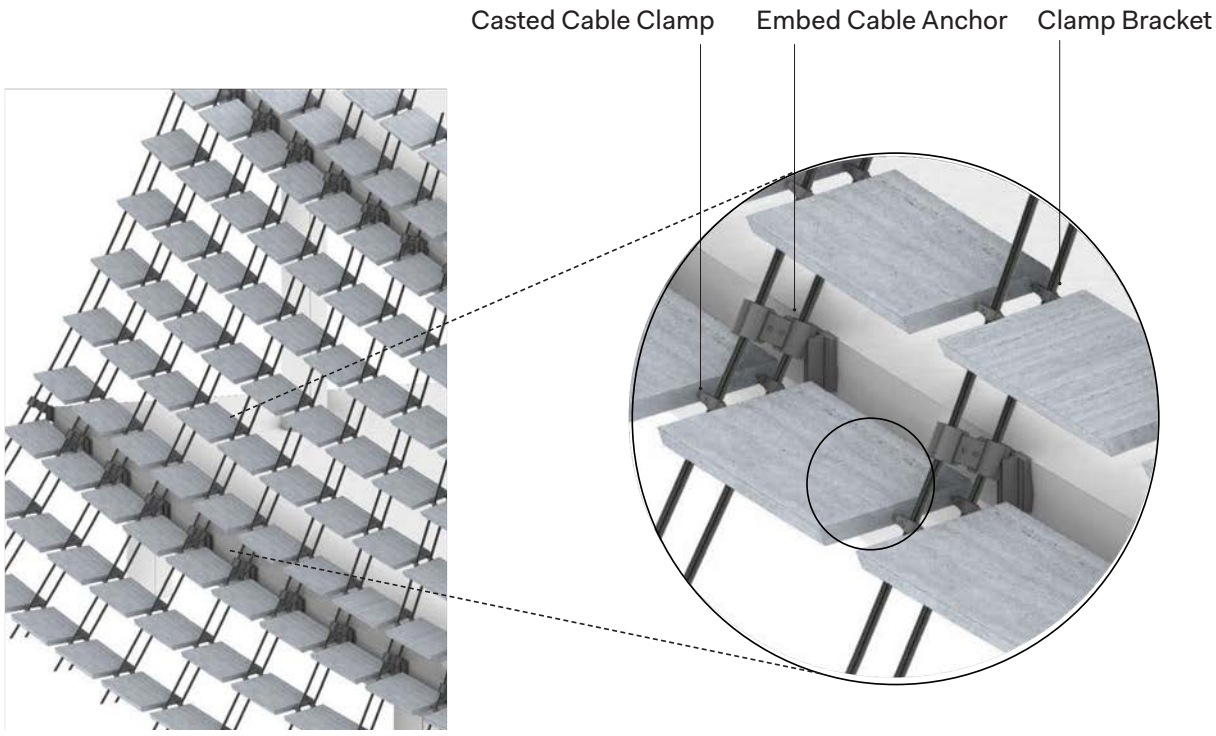
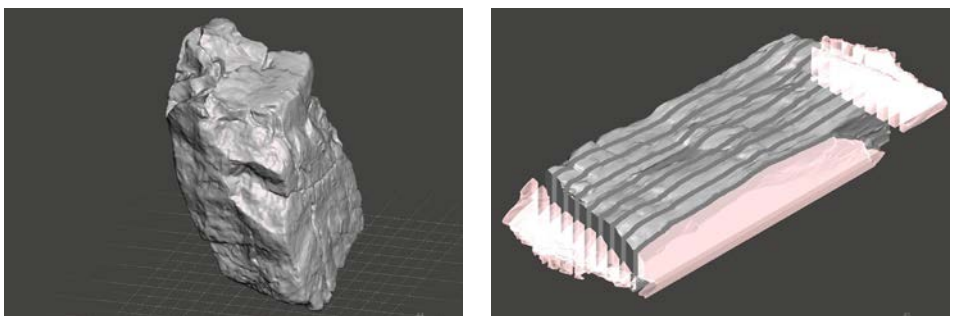
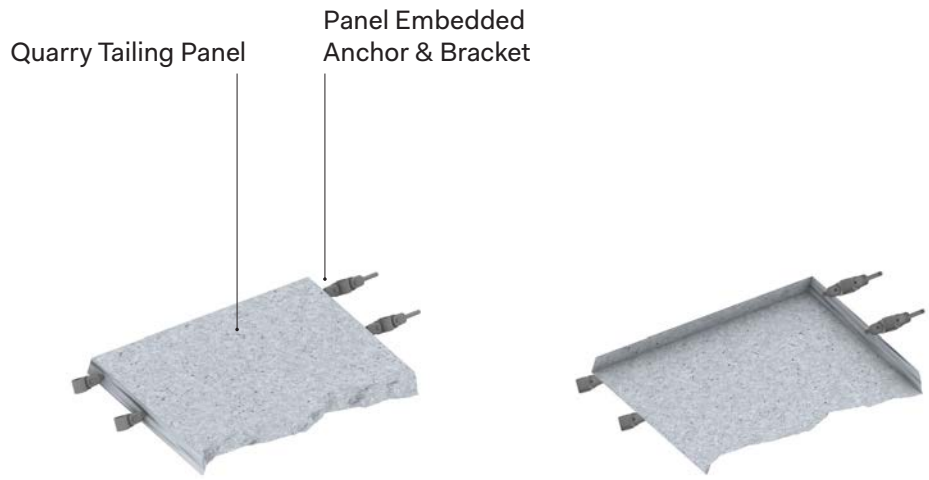
Facade System

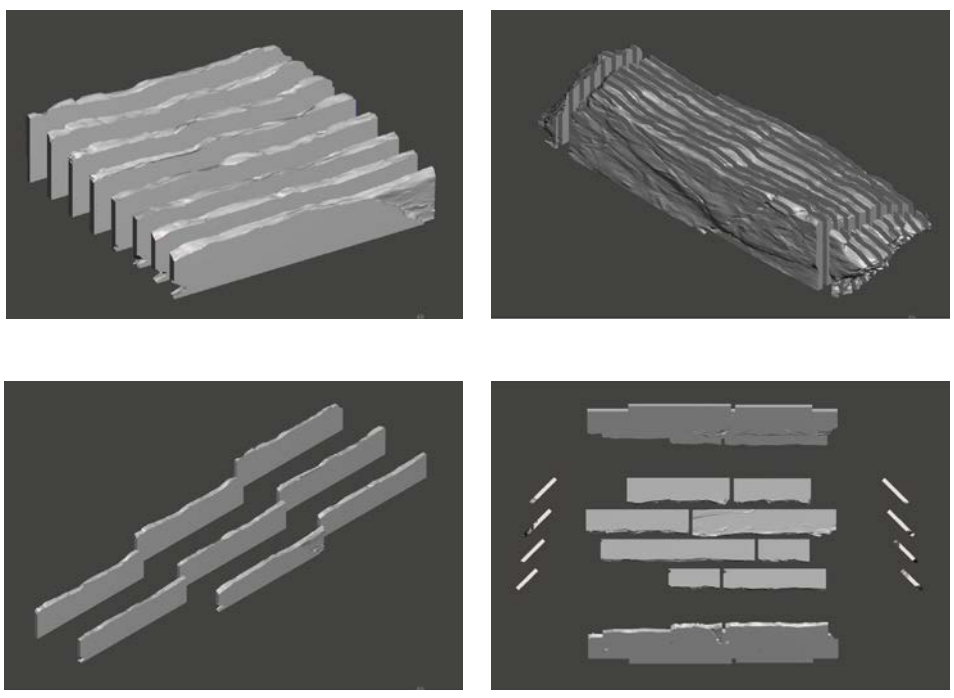
A breatheable space that brings the outdoor in

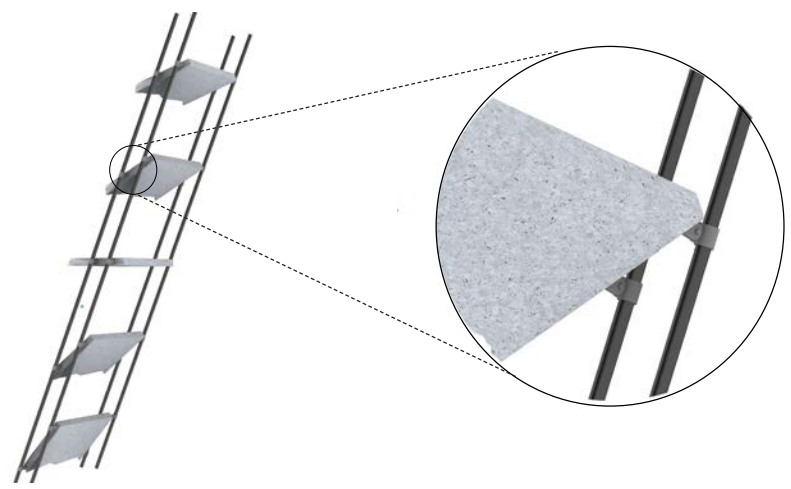


The building's skin is designed to significantly reduce the need for mechanical cooling by responding intelligently to the local climate. With the increasingly hot climate, effective sun shading is essential. The building incorporates advanced shading devices that adjust whose design and placement corresponds directly to the seasonal shifts of angles and intensity of the sun, minimizing solar heat gain while maximizing natural daylight. The facade allows occupants to open windows for passive ventilation on moderate days, leveraging natural airflows to cool the interior spaces. On very hot days, the skin acts as a barrier, minimizing heat gain and reducing the reliance on air conditioning. A solar tray is integrated into the facade design to optimize natural lighting. Reflecting sunlight deep into the interior spaces reduces the need for electrical lighting during daylight hours.



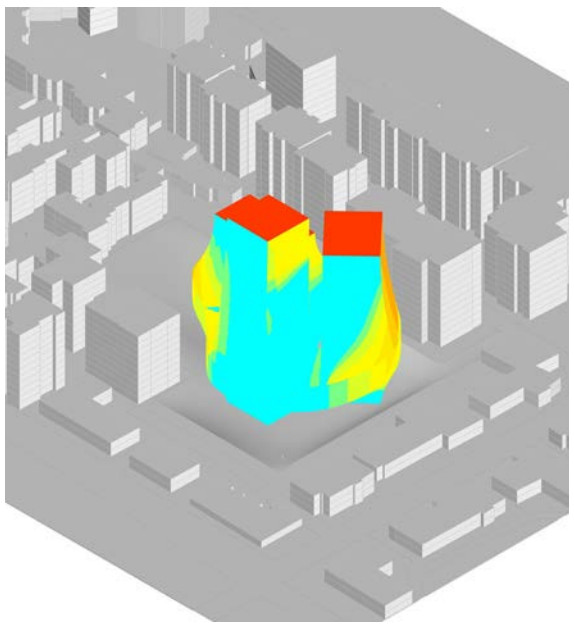




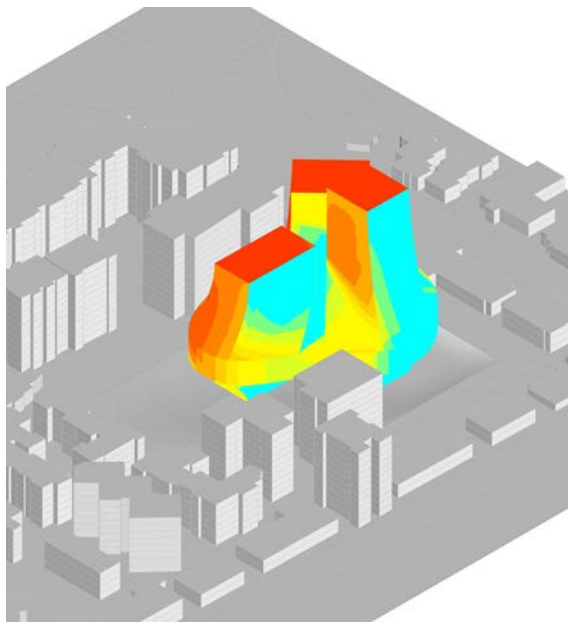


Facade System

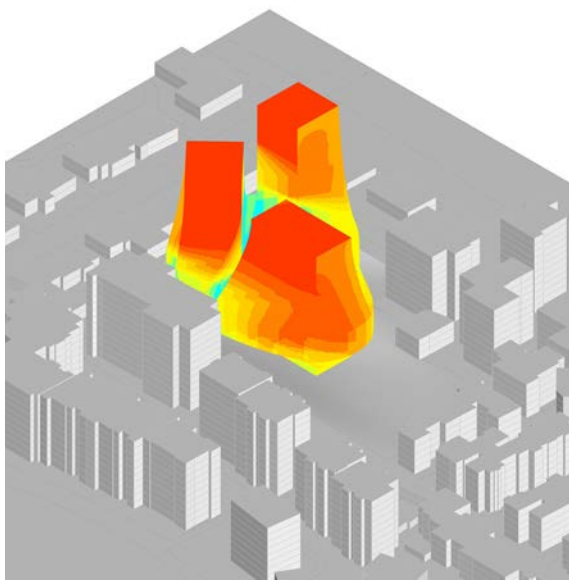
Climate, Future Comfort



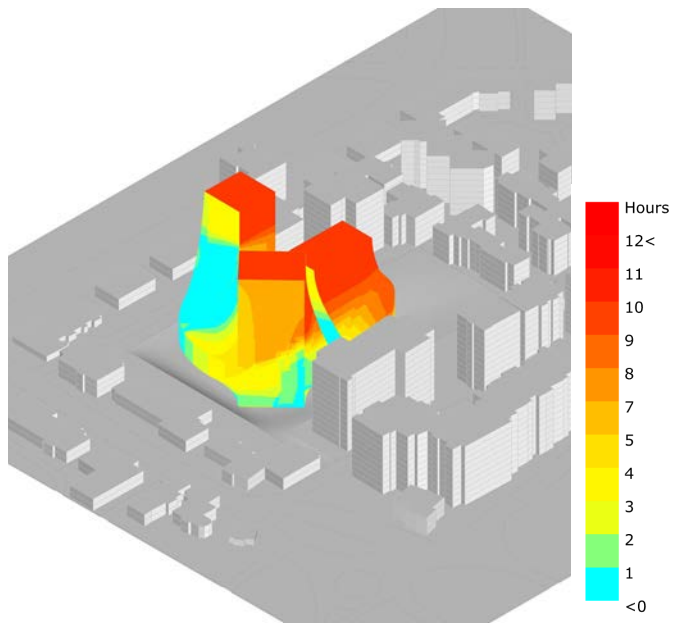
north



east



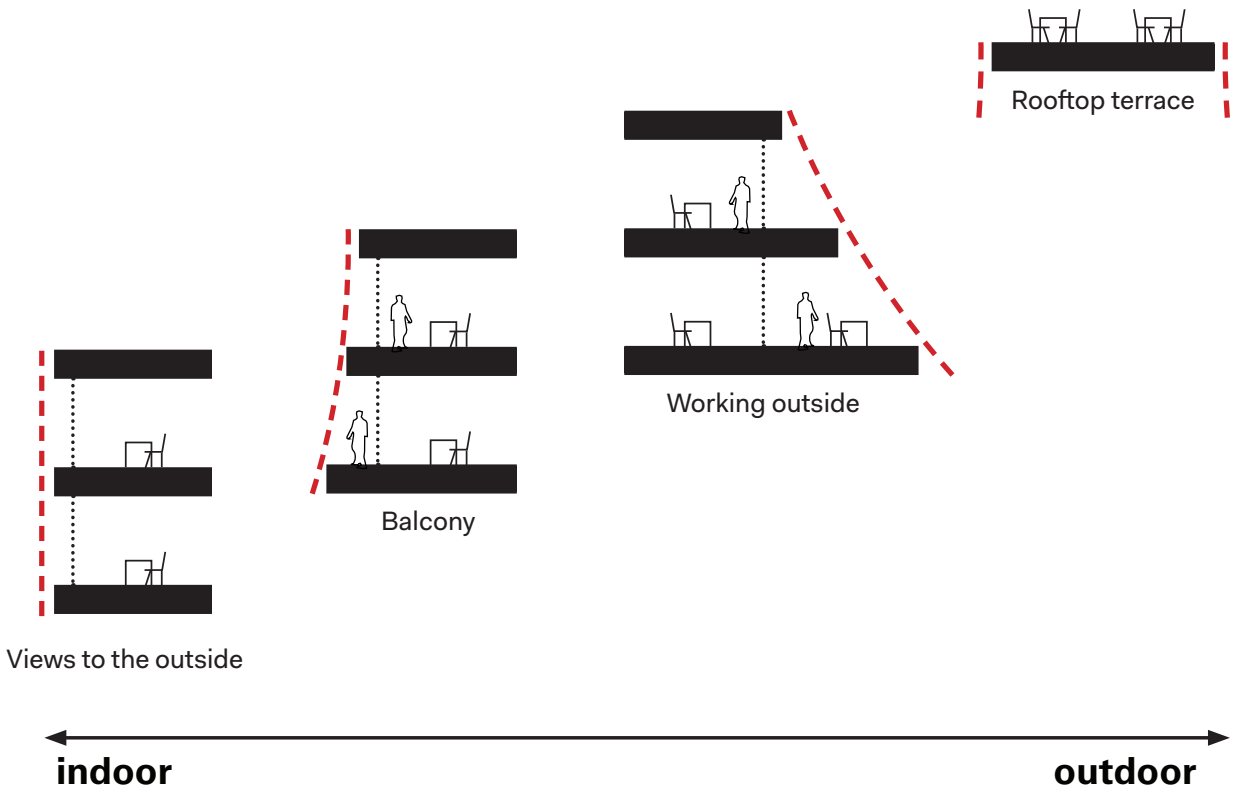
south



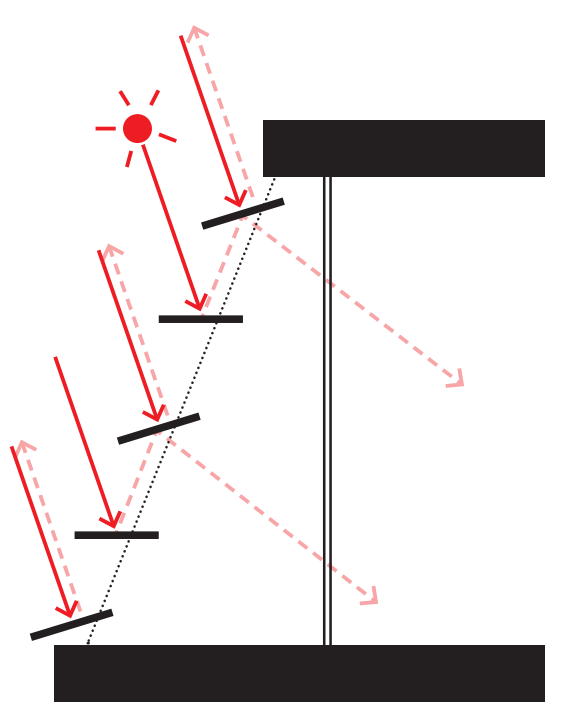
west

The building's orientation has been carefully designed to optimize its interaction with the sun, particularly in the context of Tirana's Mediterranean climate. Positioned to harness the benefits of natural light while minimizing excessive heat gain, the building maximizes daylight exposure on its northern and eastern façades, where softer, indirect sunlight can illuminate the interiors without overheating the spaces.

On the southern and western façades, where the sun's intensity is strongest, advanced sun-shading systems are integrated into the design. These shading devices—ranging from louvers to perforated panels—are strategically placed to reduce direct sunlight during the hottest parts of the day, ensuring comfortable interior temperatures. The shading elements are also designed to respond to seasonal shifts, with dynamic adjustments to minimize glare and solar heat gain during summer while allowing more sunlight in during the cooler months.



Different conditions on each level create diverse opportunities for interacting with the exterior environment.



indirect light reflects deep into office floor

Louvers and light shelves designed to optimize natural light while controlling heat and glare.

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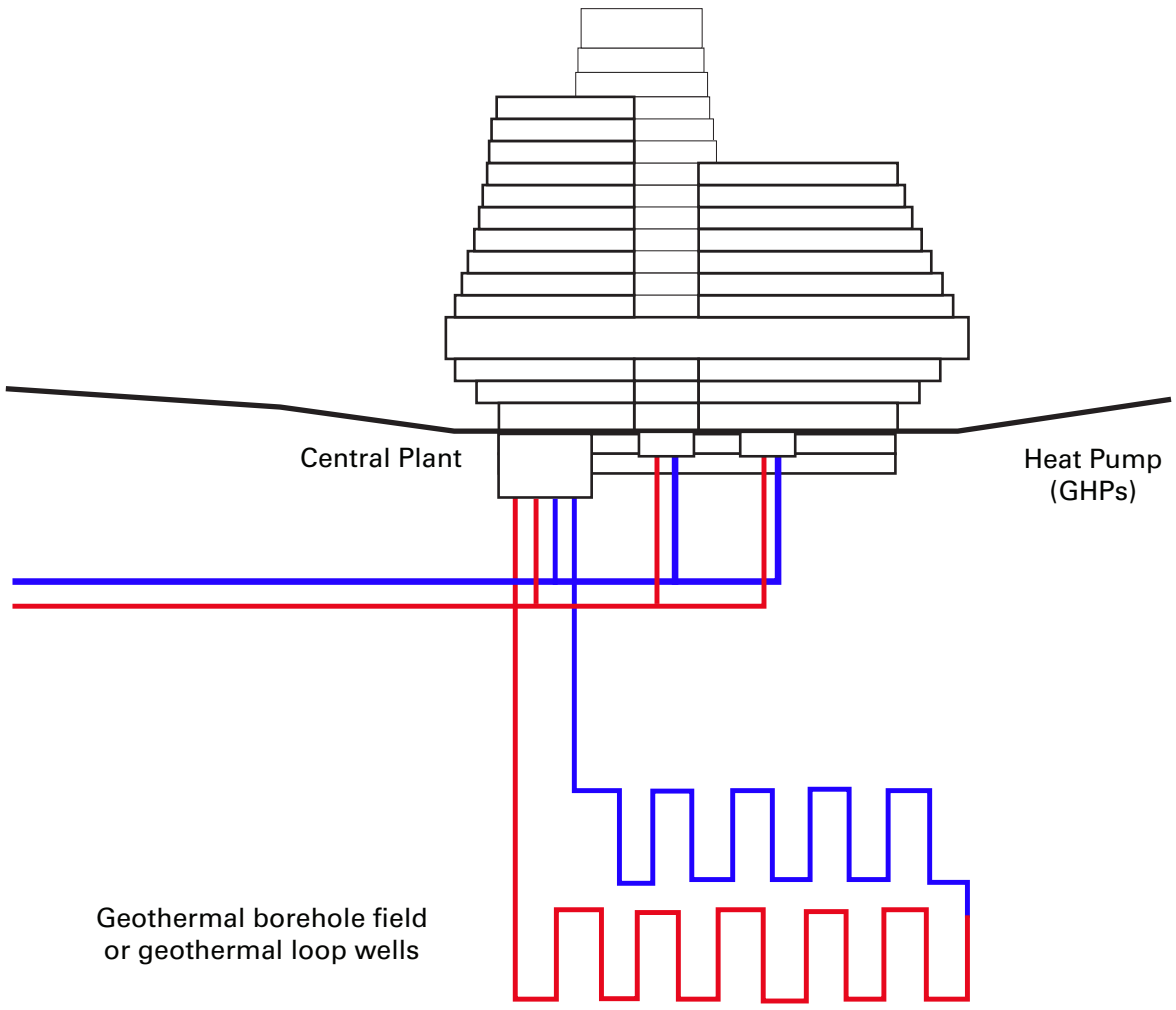
Climate, Geothermal Research

Tapping into the earth's energy for a renewable future

The building's geothermal system is a critical element of its sustainable design, offering an efficient and ecological solution for heating and cooling. Harnessing stable underground temperatures significantly reduces the need for conventional HVAC systems, leading to lower operating costs and a reduced carbon footprint. The building will tap into the hot aquifers deep under Tirana – a highly rich yet seldom exploited resource.

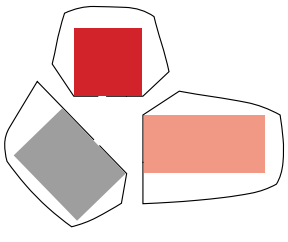
This will effectively establish the site as a geothermal district heating and cooling system, delivering an additional 100% climate control beyond its own needs. Retrofitting surrounding buildings will expand community energy efficiency, cutting long term costs and raising the quality of life for residents in the direct surroundings.



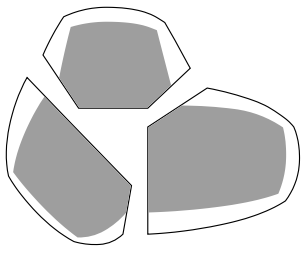
Permet hot spring in Albania (source: Franco Pecchio / flickr, Creative Commons)

The long life, economic, and famously low maintenance of such a system should help establish a precedent for cheaper, greener energy. A partner company could establish and manage this broader geothermal network, creating a flagship for the technology in the city and the country as a whole.

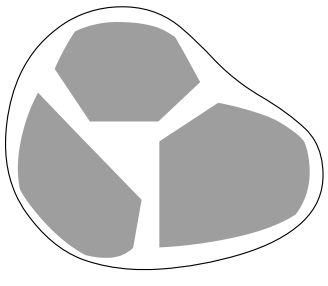
Area Count



GF



1 FL



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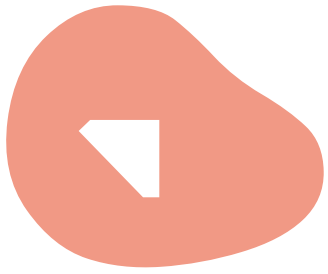
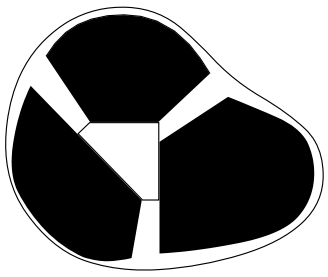
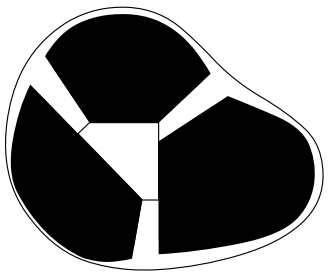


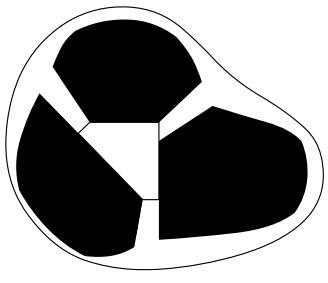
3 FL



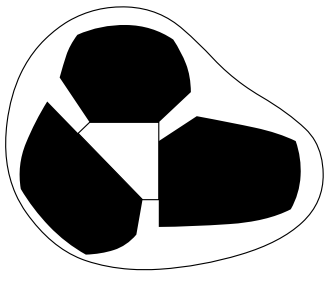
4 FL



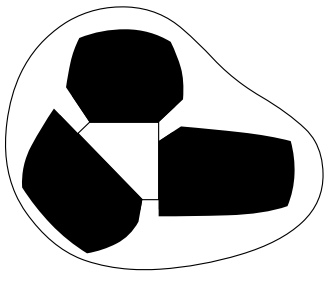
5 FL



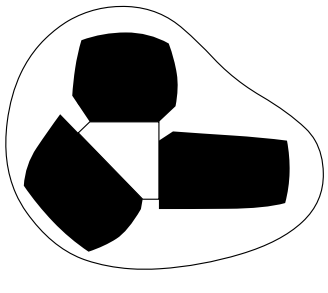
6 FL



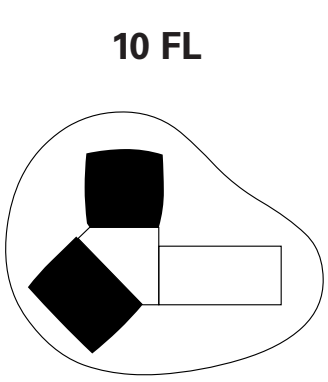
7 FL



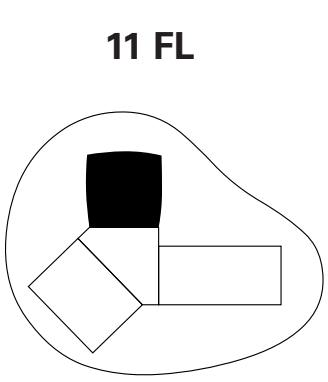
8FL



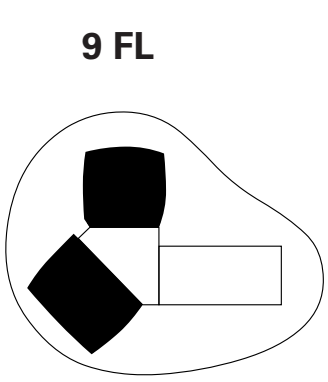
9 FL



10 FL



11 FL



12 FL

14 FL

15 FL

16 FL

	Tower 1	Tower 2	Tower 3	Subtotal
16			370	
15			390	
14			410	
13		490	430	
12		520	460	
11		560	490	
10	550	600	530	
9	640	650	580	
8	720	700	640	
7	850	780	710	
6	1020	860	790	
5	1230	940	890	
4	1480	1050	1000	
Total Office	6.490	7.150	7.690	21.330
3 FL				3.220
2 FL	1380	970	890	3.240
1 FL	1030	770	660	2.460
GF	550	410	370	1.330
200 Underground Parking				(x2) 5.380
GFA				42.340

View from Aneksi i Dinamos