

Master Dissertation Project

BEYOND THE HOUSE



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This project was developed for the master dissertation project dealing with the area of Tøyen (Oslo, Norway) proposed by RAF DE SAEGER



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Foreword and Acknowledgements:

This publication presents a combination of research and analysis conducted around the site of Tøyenparken (Oslo, Norway) and the issue of the relocation of its famous attraction - the Edvard Munch Museum - to the newly developed waterfront of the city. The project deals with the urban and social challenges and opportunities of the site with, as outcome, an architectural proposal adapted to these elements. Brought as a coherent story, this reflection paper offers an insight into the progress, and outcome of my master dissertation project. The presentation of the project itself was accompanied by a set of physical models and technical drawings to give a better visual perception of the architectural design. This paper is meant as a theoretical addition to the story.

I would like to thank the following people for their help and support during this semester-long process:

First of all, I am grateful to my academic promotor, Raf De Saeger who has been a fantastic guide on our trip to Oslo and a patient tutor throughout the whole process.

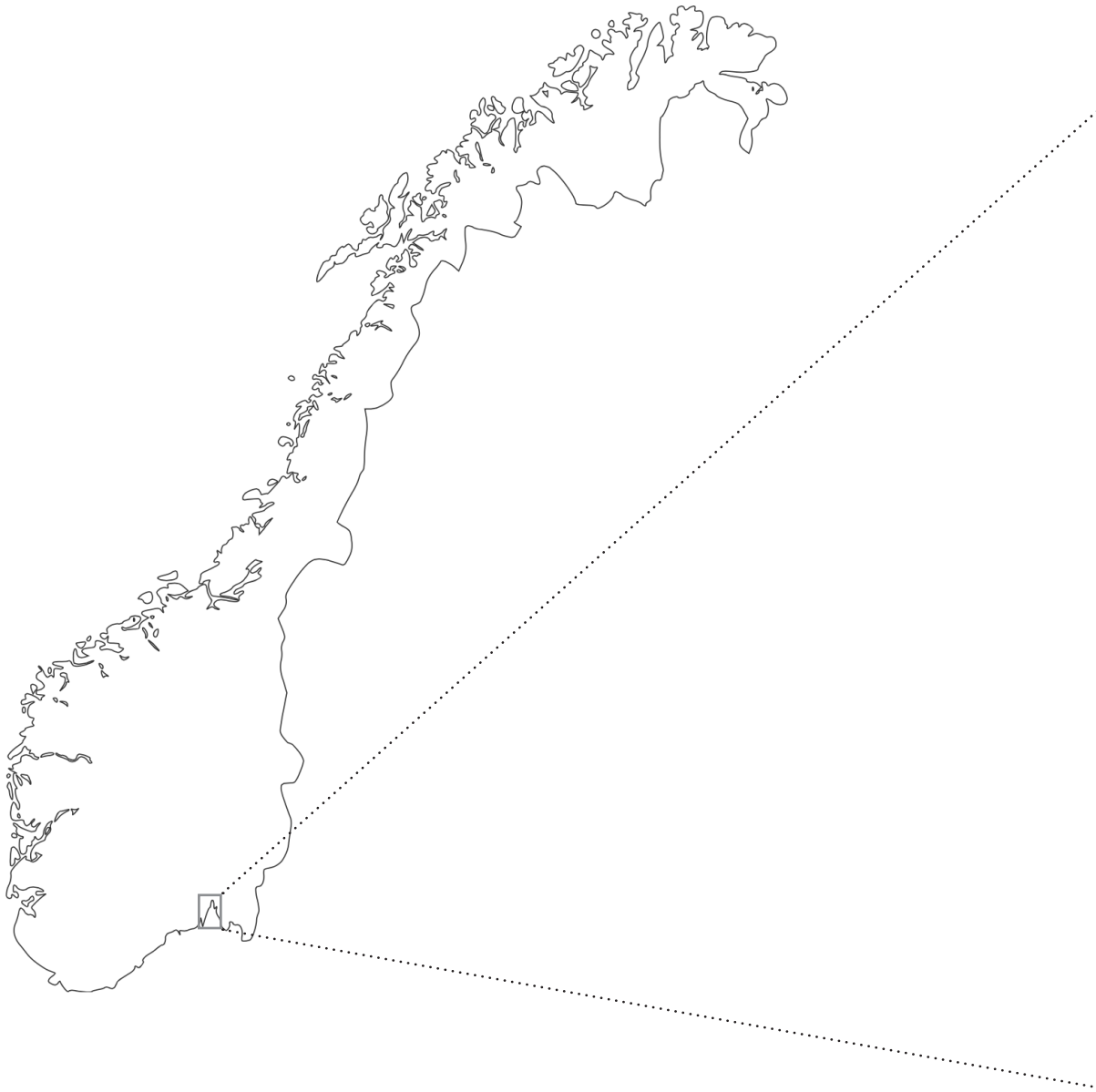
Special thanks to my fellow students at the faculty of architecture for sticking together during these five years and hopefully for many more years to come.

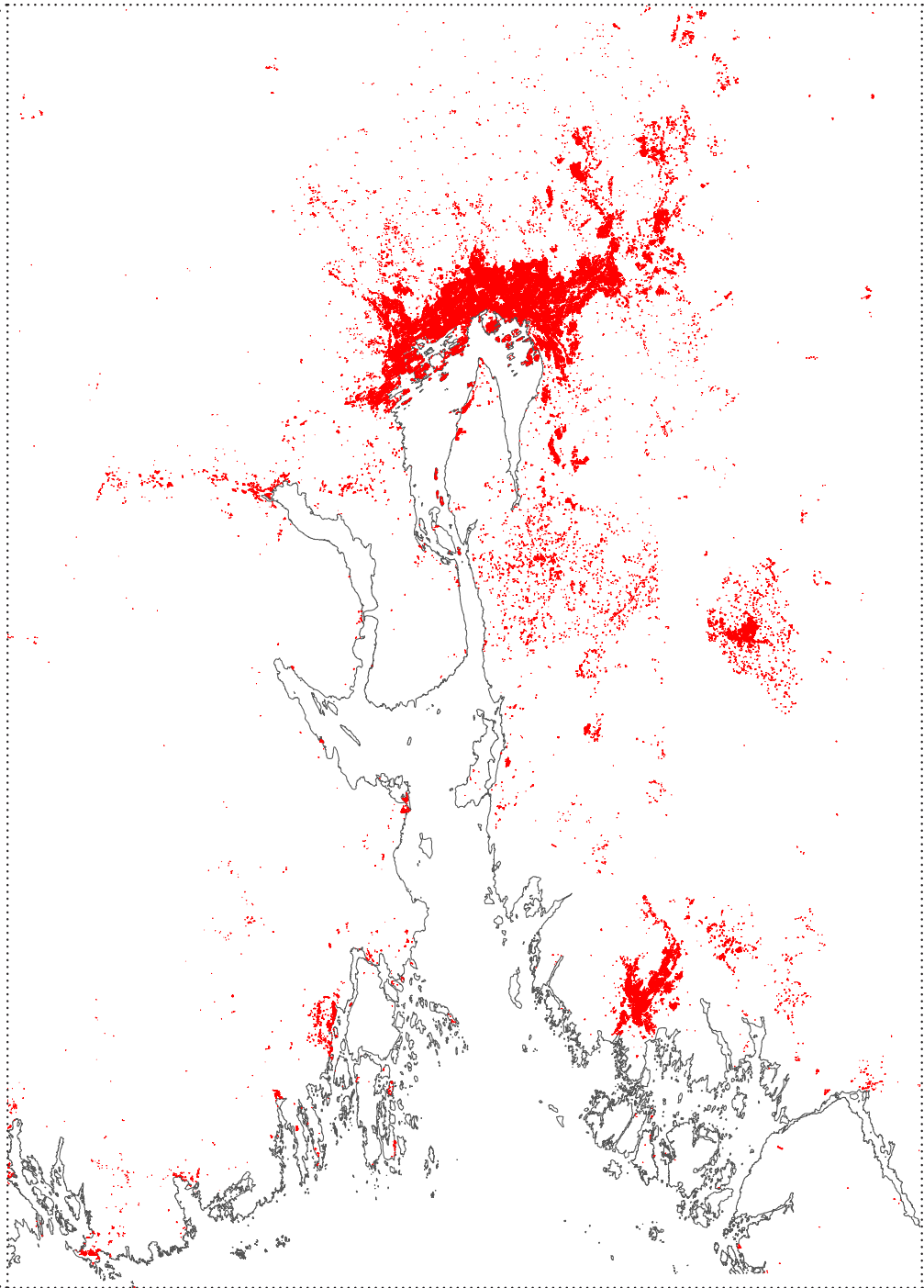
I would also like to express my gratitude to Elisabeth Blichfeldt, Property Director of the Munch Museum in Oslo for the essential added information on the building.

And finally, but most importantly, I also take the opportunity to acknowledge my parents, for giving me the chance to study and travel around.

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Introduction: Defining the Problematic:

*“Architecture is narrative. Rome is the greatest novel ever written in tiles. And Oslo? Oslo is a crime story.”*¹ - Sverre Fehn

One can easily imagine what the Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn meant by this when visiting the capital of Norway. To outsiders, it is a confusing city. It doesn't reflect the typical Nordic feel that can be found in other Scandinavian cities like Stockholm or Copenhagen. Or does it? It is a messy city, not only because of dirt and smoke but because of an endless sequence of unrelated neighborhoods and architecture that follow each other up with no defined structure or style.

From the 1960's on, consumerism was introduced in Norwegian architecture where quantity prevailed over quality resulting in a loss of experimentation and craft. Today, new developments pop up like mushrooms along the rediscovered richness that is the waterfront, with great views over the fjords, while the inner parts of the city seem to be forgotten.

Oslo is currently one of the most rapidly expanding cities in Europe due to its growing immigrant population, most of whom are coming from Pakistan, Sweden, Somalia and Poland. The population of the city increased by at least 17% during the past 15 years². This is probably one of the reasons why Oslo seems to be in a frenzy of fast development.

1 Langslet, L. R. (2004), *A century of Norwegian culture*. Consulted on 07/04/2015 via <http://sks.sirs.bdt.orc.scoolaid.net>

2 Statistics Norway, www.ssb.no



Rådhusgata, Oslo

In fact, Oslo and Norway as a whole have only recently started to attract foreign attention. The city started off as a humble fishing village on the eastern side of the river Akerselva, bordered only by fjords and forests, until it became the capital of Norway in the 14th century. In 1624, after having endured several destructive fires in the past centuries, the core of the city was moved to the other side of the river where the Royal Palace and governmental buildings can still be found today. Gamle Oslo ('Old Oslo') and other districts on the eastern side of the Akerselva have later on evolved into industrial areas where working class and immigrant populations settled while the more wealthy class established itself around the Royal Palace on the West End of the city.

The Akerselva river has always been an important feature in the history of Oslo's urban development, separating the city in two not only physically but also socially. The river and the fjords have shaped the city throughout the centuries, which has grown in a semi-circle around the city centre, and along the fjords.



1830, Oslo



1858, Oslo



1958, Oslo



2011, Oslo

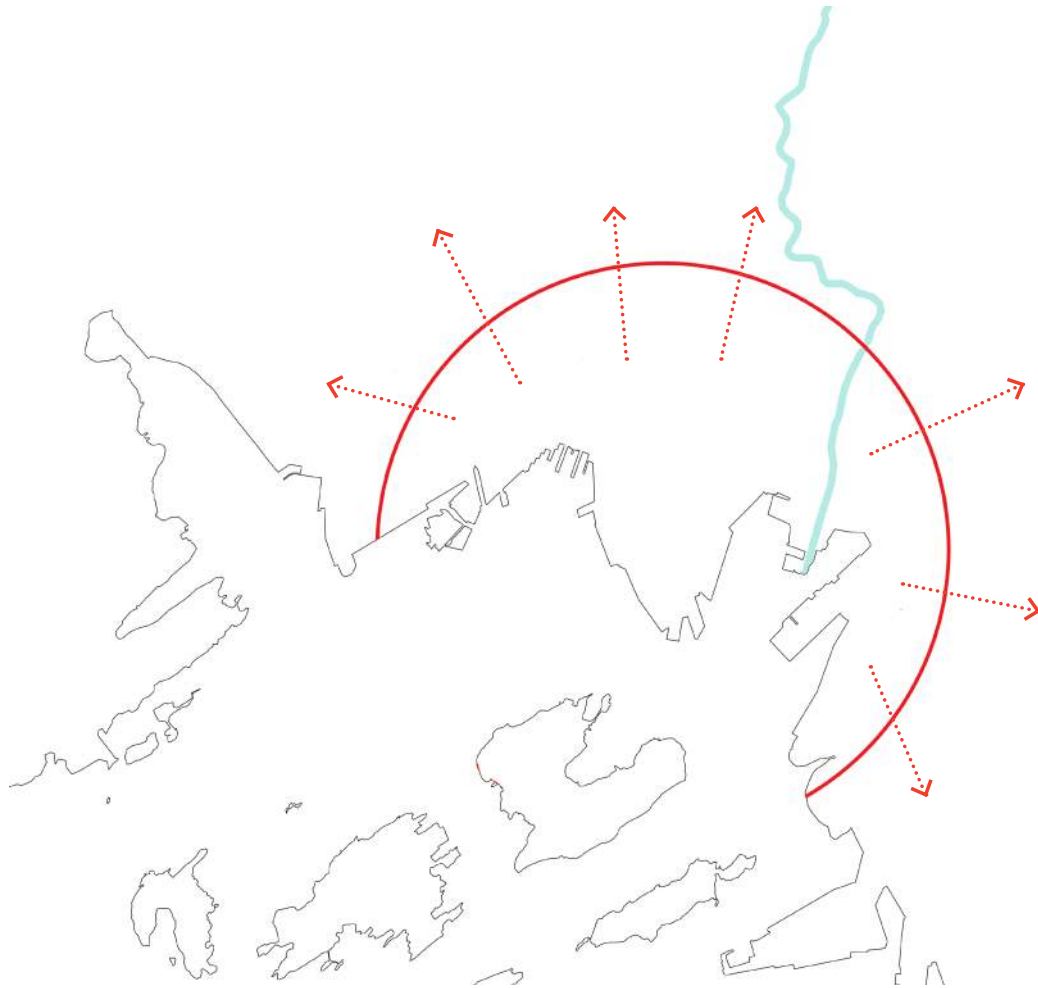
Oslo le Grand, MVRDV



Relocation of the city centre from East to West in 1624



*View from Gamle Oslo (the former city centre) towards the new centre of Christiania (Oslo) in 1814.
Painting: Christiania, Norway in 1814 by MK Tholstrup*



Development along the fjords in a 'horse-shoe' shape



Development along the water between the Old and New city (1840)

One of the positive outcomes of Oslo's city planning from the 19th century on is the implementation of multiple parks and green spaces throughout the city despite the rapid growth of the capital. Especially the industrial areas in the East (Østkanten) were given priority for the creation of recreational green zones due to congestion and industrialization. Today, almost every inhabitant of Oslo lives less than 300 metres from a park or green space¹. Outdoor culture is still very present in the Norwegian lifestyle and this characteristic is clearly visible in the presence of so much greenery inside and around the capital.

The site of interest for this master project is Tøyenparken, one of the largest parks within this network of green lungs. The park used to be farmland belonging to a wealthy chancellor until part of the estate was given to the University in 1814 who established a botanical garden now bordering the park on the western side. In the 1940's and 1950's the land was also used to build residential blocks because of the housing shortage caused by World War II. These blocks still stand today in the Northern and Southern parts of the park. Tøyen Square, a run-down commercial and business centre, is located on the Southern edge of the park. Other important features of Tøyenparken are the Tøyenbadet public baths and the Munch Museum.

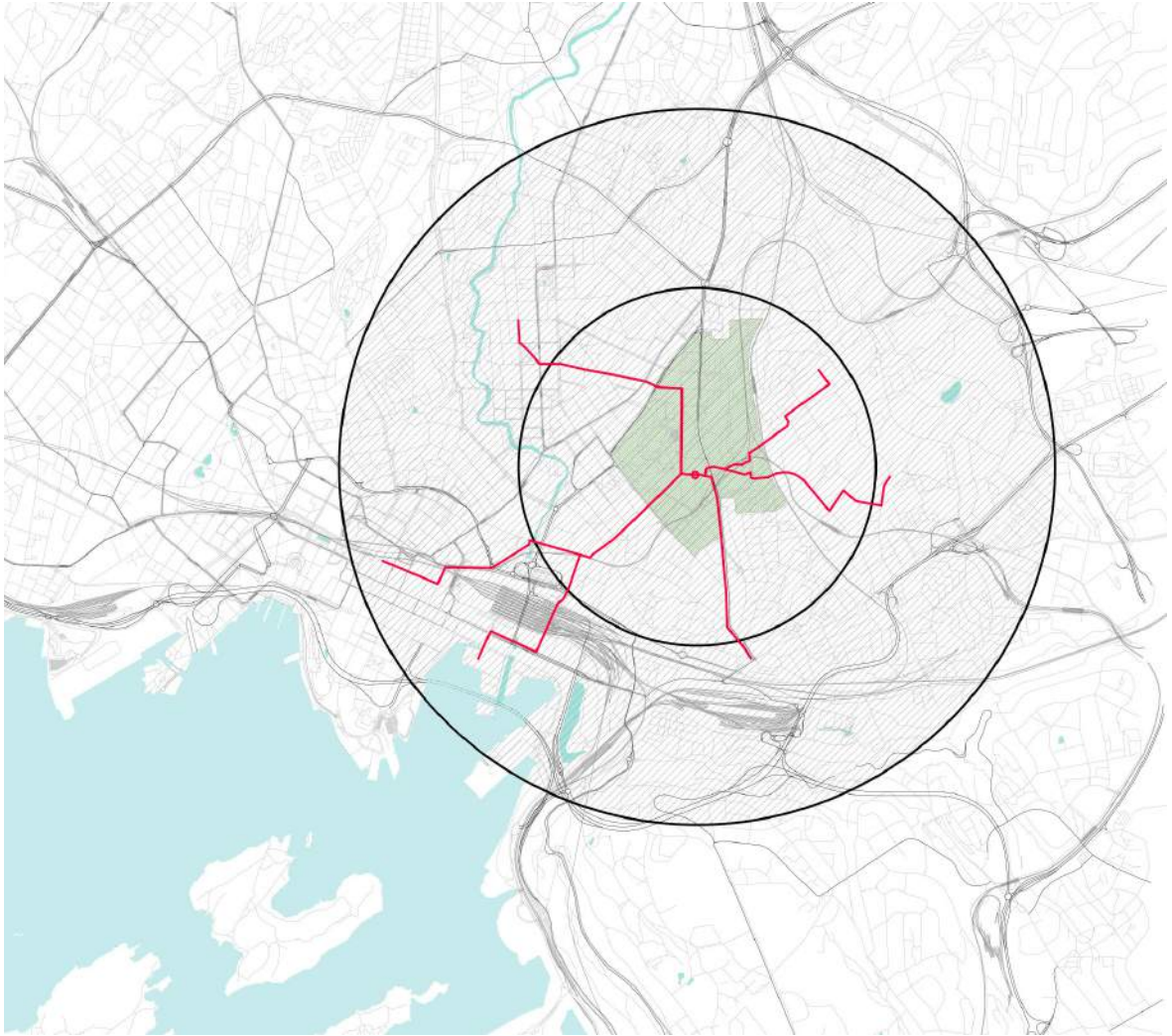
1 Parks and open spaces in Oslo. Consulted on 17/02/2015 via http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parks_and_open_spaces_in_Oslo



Map of Christiania (Oslo) in 1901 showing the green zones around the centre, with Tøyenparken on the far right.

The Munch Museum opened its doors to the public in 1963. It has undergone a few changes since then but despite the modern extensions, the building is now outdated and the location deemed unsuitable for the work of the famous Norwegian painter. In the near future, the museum will be relocated to the newly developed waterfront at Bjørvika, next to the Opera. Today, the park is very popular in summer, especially during Øya Festival. The park also hosts a yearly circus and people enjoy sitting there for a pick-nick.

Tøyenparken is part of both Gamle Oslo in the South, and Grünerløkka in the North. Every neighborhood bordering the park has its own distinct identity. Tøyen and Grønland (two neighborhoods in Gamle Oslo) are the areas where newly arrived immigrants tend to settle. The streets are filled with cafés and restaurants serving exotic food. Large families live in small apartments or houses and the neighborhoods are characterized by many social problems. The level of poverty and crime in these areas is the highest in Oslo and the whole of Norway. On the other side of the park is the area of Grünerløkka. It is a vibrant neighborhood where mostly students and artists live. This is the place that tourist guides recommend to visitors for a coffee and 'kanelboller'. The area is full of cafés, bars and vintage design stores. Just like Tøyen and Grønland, the area of Grünerløkka used to be a working class area. However, it has witnessed drastic gentrification over the years, making it an exciting neighborhood for younger people. On the Eastern part of Tøyenparken, over the railway, lies an industrial site bordered by residential areas. In the near future, this industrial area will be turned into a residential area as well.



The map shows the quickest pedestrian routes (all ranging between 17 and 25 minutes) towards the surrounding areas and the city centre. The inner circle has a radius of one kilometer around the core of the site (the Munch Museum) and the outer circle has a radius of two kilometers.

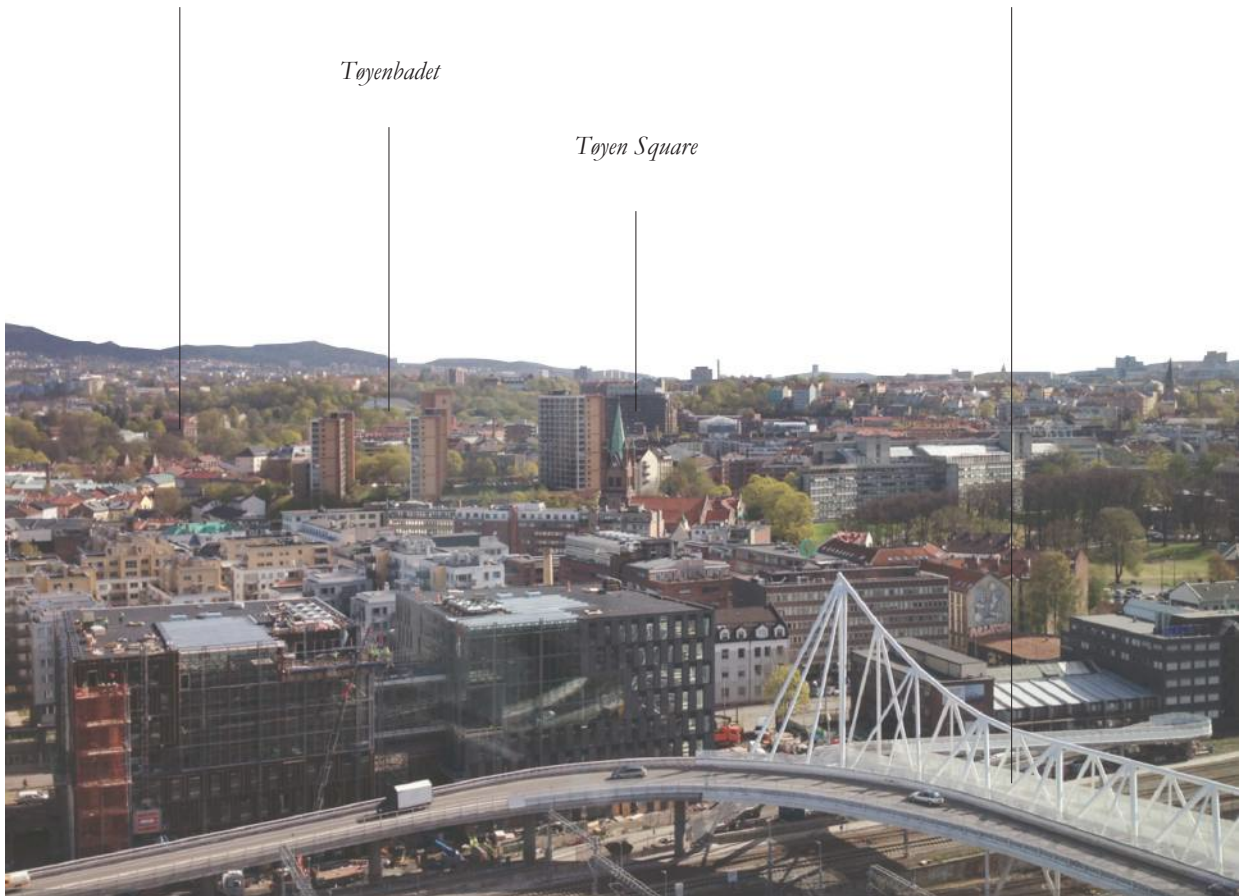
The site is only a kilometer and a half away from the city centre and the waterfront, which is to become the new centre for leisure and tourist activity, and is relatively well connected through large streets for traffic, a metro station that serves all metro lines of Oslo and even a train station. However, in mind, the area seems much further away from its surrounding districts because of certain physical and mental boundaries. In the South, Tøyen is separated from the waterfront by a railway station and the high-rise buildings of Oslo's newly developed 'Bar Code' which form a strong contrast to the lower houses of the inner city. In the West, The site is hidden by a fenced Botanical Garden which acts as a separate island within the neighborhood even though you can cross it by foot during the day. Further on, there is the river of Akerselva which delimits both sides of the city. This delimitation isn't purely physical but mostly mental. The separation between Østkanten (East of the river, mostly working class and immigrants) and Westkanten (West of the river, mostly upper class) has always existed in the minds of the people of Oslo. Today, Tøyen is starting to become more gentrified but it is generally perceived as an unsafe district and not inviting to cross at night.

*Natural History Museum
(Botanical Garden)*

*Nordenga bridge
(over railway)*

Tøyenbadet

Tøyen Square



View from the 'Bar Code', over the railway, towards Grønland and Tøyen behind. photo: MVRDV

It seems that the main problematic of the site are the mental distances separating it from the other parts of the city. In theory, Tøyenparken is well connected to its surroundings and the area has a great potential for local and outdoor activities.

With the international focus now mainly turning towards the waterfront, how can a new centre of activity and gathering be implemented in the park, on a more local scale, in the inner city?

To achieve this, a broader issue should be addressed first: How can Tøyenparken be more integrated into the urban and social fabrics of Oslo?



This map shows the landmarks (red) and boundaries (black) between the waterfront/city centre and Tøyenparken. Some landmarks can be considered boundaries as well, like the 'Bar Code', South from the railway.

I. Zooming in on the site:

SOCIAL CONTEXT:

“The ghetto label still clings somewhat to the image of Tøyen Street and the surrounding area. (...) But it is also in conflict with the image of Old Oslo as exotic, exciting and entertaining.”¹ - Tone Huse, 2014

In his book ‘Everyday Life in the Gentrifying City’ (2014), author Tone Huse carries out an extensive study on the evolution of Tøyen Street through the years and the community’s reaction to the phenomenon of gentrification that has started to spread in the neighborhood. Tøyen Street is the most important commercial street in Tøyen. It starts down hill in Grønland at the new Grønland Bazar on Grønlandsleiret and goes up until it reaches the Munch Museum in Tøyenparken. It is therefore important to be familiar with the social and historical contexts of that street to create a better image of the area surrounding the park.

As mentioned before, Gamle Oslo (which includes Tøyen and Grønland) has been the historical working class area since the centre moved to the other side of the river in 1624 when the old wooden city burned down. The people living here were large Norwegian working class families until the 1980s when the district was mainly taken over by workers from Pakistan, Somalia, Afghanistan and other countries from the Global South. At that time, housing conditions in Tøyen were terrible and with a growing immigrant population, the city of Oslo was afraid that the area would turn into a ‘ghetto’ or ‘slum’. So they initiated an urban renewal to better the living conditions of the inhabitants. However, the renewal made housing prices rise and the families who couldn’t pay for the new rent were forced to look elsewhere for a cheaper home. In most cases they moved further East of the city centre. Vibrant and tight communities were broken up and some shops started to disappear due to the relocation of their clientele.

¹ Huse, T. (2014). *Everyday Life in the Gentrifying City: On Displacement, Ethnic Privileging and the Right to Stay Put*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.



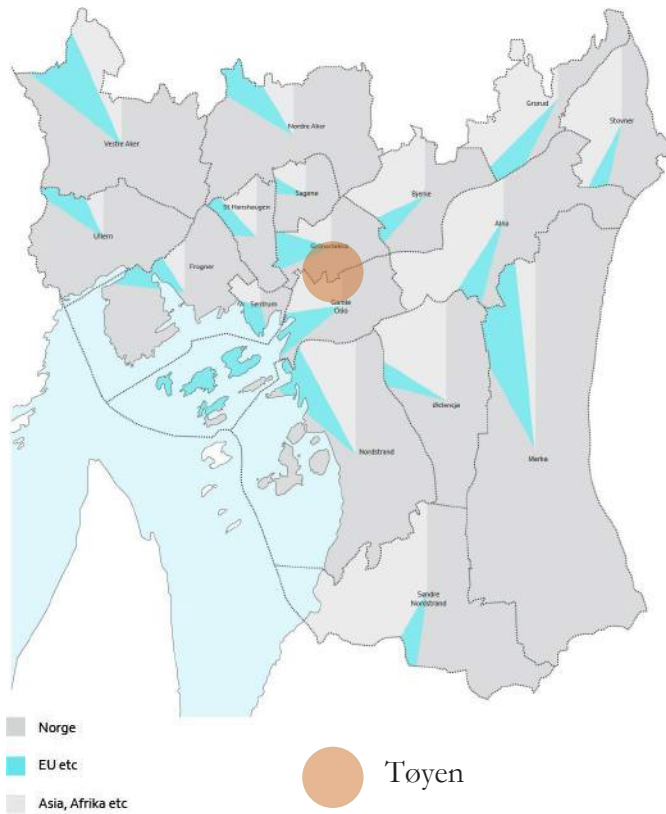
View towards Tøyengata from Grønlandsleiret. photo: Tore Væfferstad

The newly refurbished houses and the multi-cultural aspect of Tøyen and Grønland started to attract new middle class ethnic Norwegian residents who were keen on raising their living standards by renting or buying cheaper flats in an area that is still very central. These new residents are young with few or no kids and they are not in Tøyen to stay which doesn't make them keen to invest much time in the local community. Tøyen is on its way to become the new Grünerløkka. However, despite many immigrant families moving out of the area, Tøyen/Grønland still has this exciting multi-cultural feel that is characteristic to the place. It is still like a little city within Oslo itself. Many families return to the mosque on Fridays and the streets again bustle with life. But as gentrification moves on and housing prices are ten times higher than fifteen years ago, who knows how long the area will keep this exotic feature which makes it so exciting and attractive.

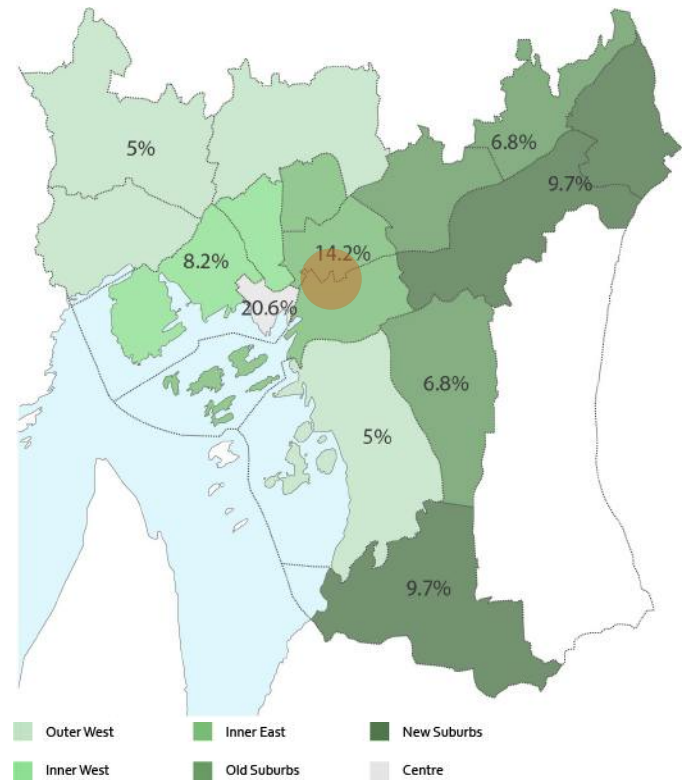
Today, the neighborhoods of Tøyen and Grønland still suffer from substantial social problems which underline the inequality between people in the East and people in the West of Oslo. 25% of Norway's immigrant population lives in Oslo, mainly in the inner-East and outer-East. Almost 30% of Oslo's population has an immigrant background. Still today, one in three children living in Gamle Oslo is poor according to European standards (Nadim and Nielsen, 2009). The life expectancy is also four years under the average in Oslo (Dybendal and Skiri, 2005).¹

1 Huse, T. (2014). *Everyday Life in the Gentrifying City: On Displacement, Ethnic Privileging and the Right to Stay Put*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Ratio of ethnic Norwegians vs immigrants in the Oslo boroughs



Number of people living on a wage below half the median wage of the given borough

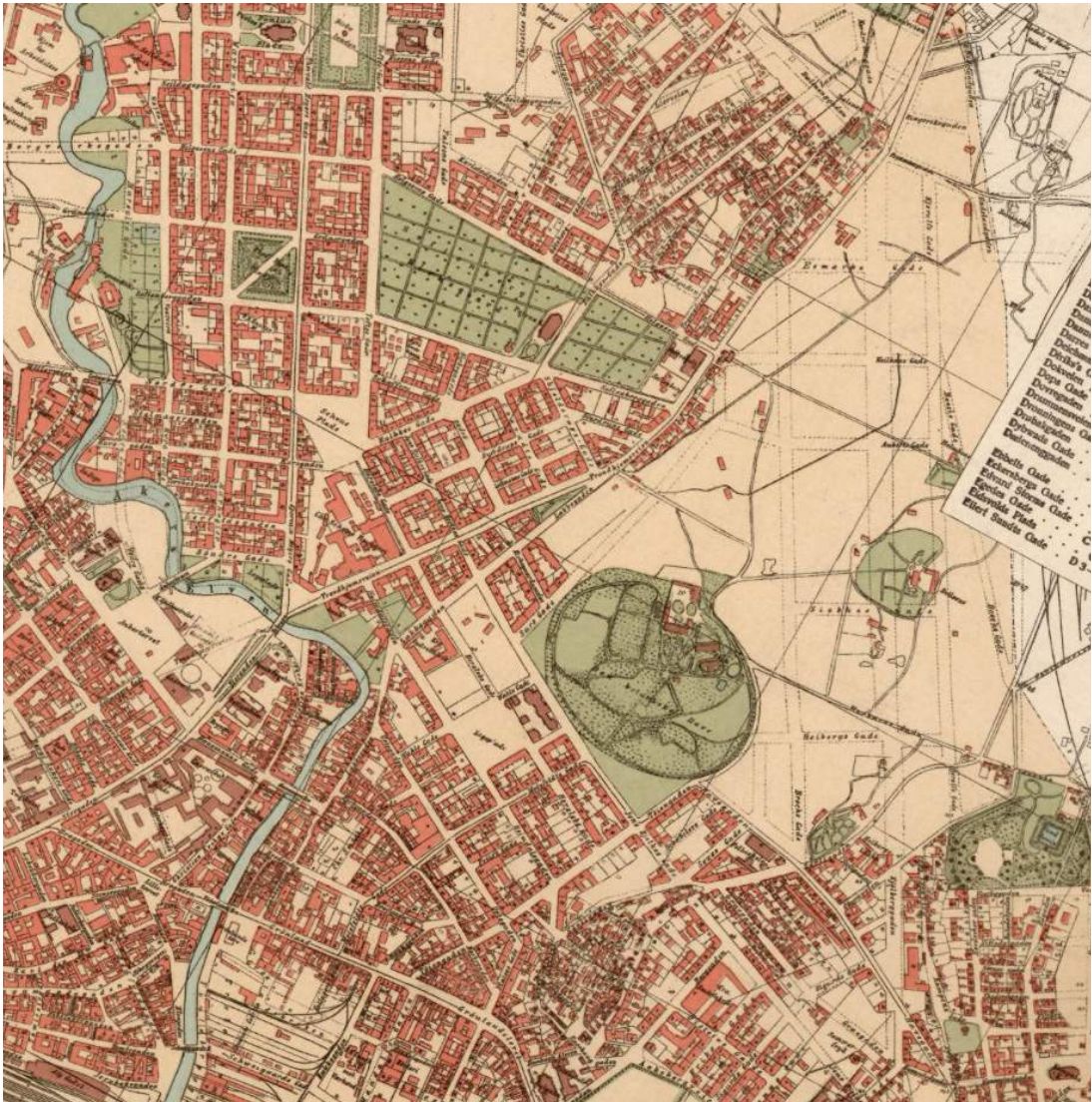


Data taken from the Oslo Municipality (Oslo Kommune: Befolkningen i Oslo per 01.01.2011 etter delbydel og bakgrunnsland)

ACCESSIBILITY AND SURROUNDINGS:

Tøyenparken is directly linked to every other part in Oslo through the Tøyen metro station that lies 100 metres from the Munch Museum and the commercial area of Tøyen Square. All metro lines in Oslo pass this station. The metro station is the first and probably the only impression people get from Tøyen when visiting the Munch Museum. The connection by metro is fast, and it is safe. However, it emphasizes the fact that the museum is an 'island' in the neighborhood. Another important access point is Finnmarkgata, a large busy street cutting the park in two. This street redirects most traffic between North and South, coming from the Eastern part of the Oslo fjords and has a particular importance for the area as it serves several bus stops along the way. However, in the delicate setting that is a park, it is a rather odd connection.

The park is part of a green network around the city centre and easily accessible by foot. However, the topography of the city and other mental and physical boundaries mentioned before make the site more distant in mind than it actually is. Tøyengata (Tøyen Street) is the most important pedestrian link between the site and the city centre. It starts in Grønland, behind the railways leading to the Central Station and goes all the way up in a straight line until it reaches the parking lot of the Munch Museum and ends in an awkward point. The street loses its 'hustle and bustle' the more it goes up towards the park. This makes the area around the park very calm and pleasant but the emptiness of that part of the street signifies a certain end-point in the network of activity that is happening down hill. In fact, the park acts as a break in the urban structure that has been there since the beginning of Oslo's urban development. The way Oslo has evolved around this former farmland makes the connection between North and South almost non-existing at the level of the park. The fenced off Botanical Garden also creates a boundary between east and West making it hard to orient oneself around that area.

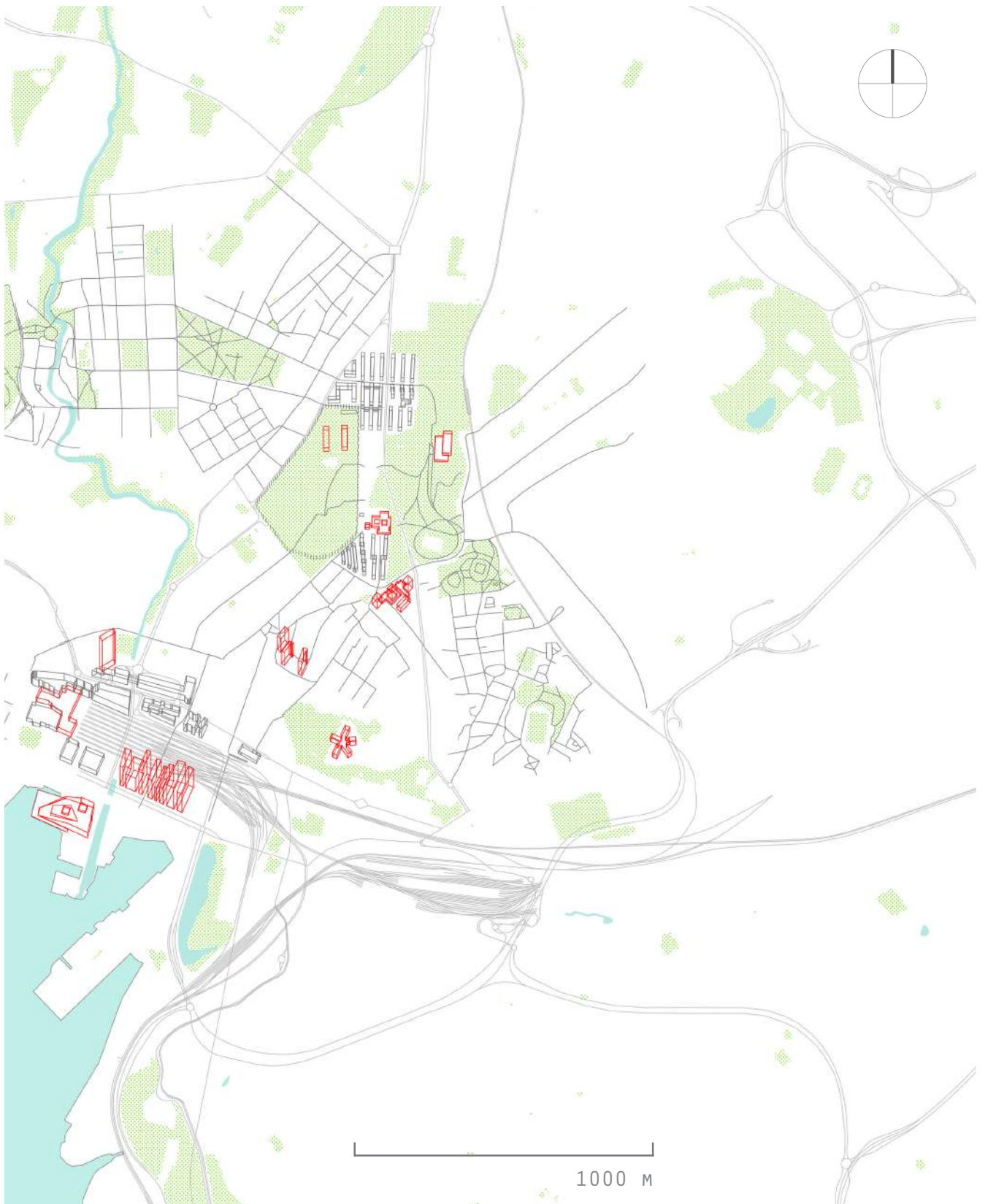


Map of Christiania in 1901.

The large empty patch on the right is the site with part of the Botanical Garden already developed. It shows the gap in the urban fabric between Gamle Oslo and Grünerløkka at the level of the park.



The map shows the network of green spaces around the city centre as it is today. The streets around the parks have been highlighted to show how the urban grid is still interrupted at the level of Tøyenparken. All pedestrian paths seem to end at the parking-lot of the Munch Museum.





East-West boundaries

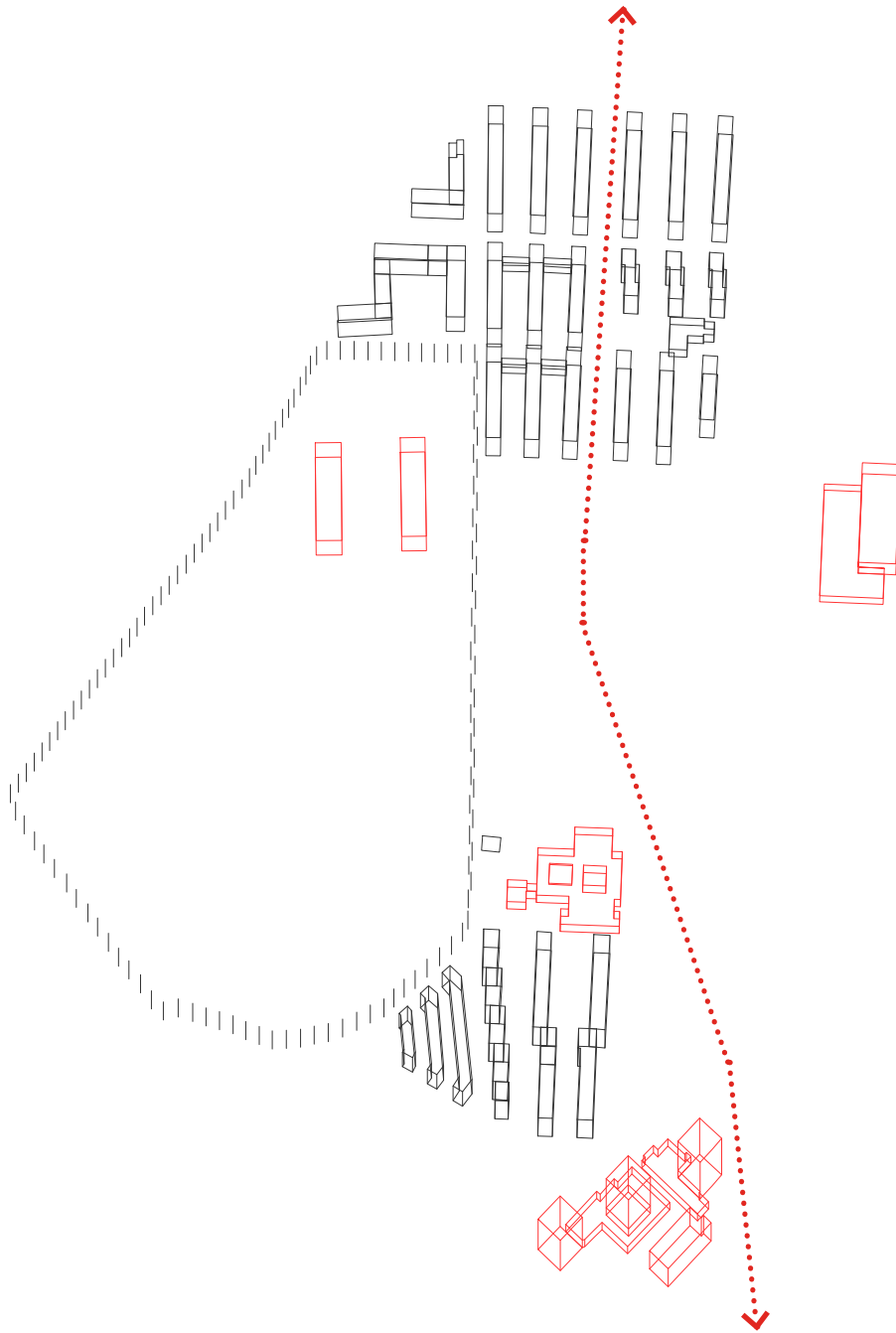


North-South boundaries

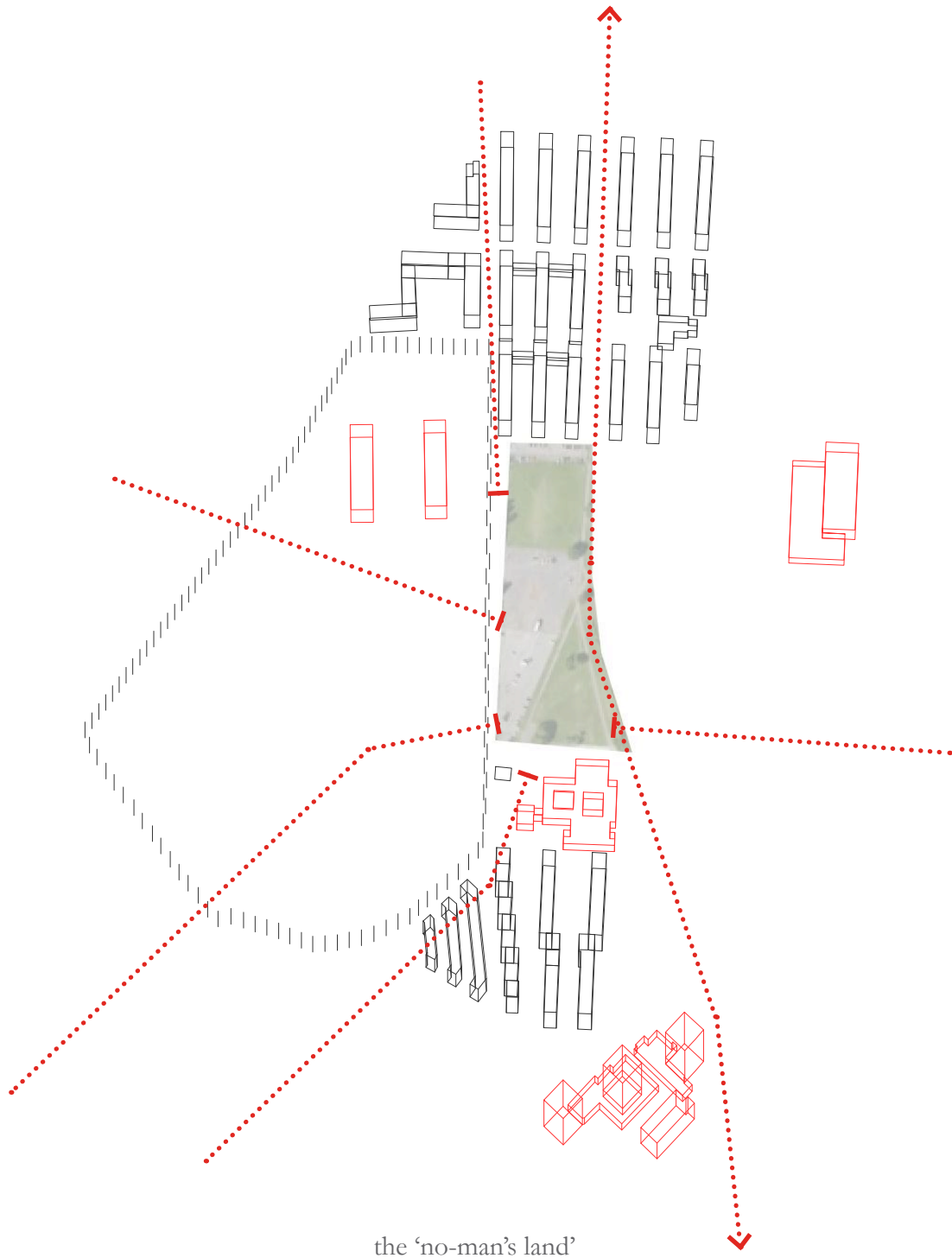
A DIVERSE BUT FRAGMENTED PARK:

Tøyenparken is a very diverse park and its size and openness give it a certain flexibility of use for big events such as festivals and sport activities. In summer, people come to the park with friends or family to enjoy the sun and the views from the hillside whereas in winter it is mostly empty except for the children from the kindergartens playing outside. But when there's snow, the park attracts local kids for sleighing down the hill. As mentioned before, the park houses many other important features. First, there is of course the Munch Museum which contains many of the Norwegian painter's important works. Next to the museum there's the Botanical Garden, which is a very intimate part of the park open to the public by day but completely closed off at night. It is the first part of the park that one encounters when coming from the city centre or Grünerløkka. In the Botanical Garden there's also the Museum of Natural History. Another remarkable and popular feature in Tøyenparken is the public swimming pool (Tøyenbadet). The building is located in an odd part of the park but seems to be very popular among the local inhabitants. In summer, the outdoor pools are also accessible. Another characteristic of the park is that there are many schools and kindergartens on the edges and even inside the park.

Despite this positive diversity, the different elements of the park act like separate islands of activity giving the area a lack of structure and legibility.



‘islands’ in the park





View towards 1950s housing blocks in the North.



Finnmarkgata, view towards the South.

II. The Ambition for Tøyenparken:

URBAN STRATEGY

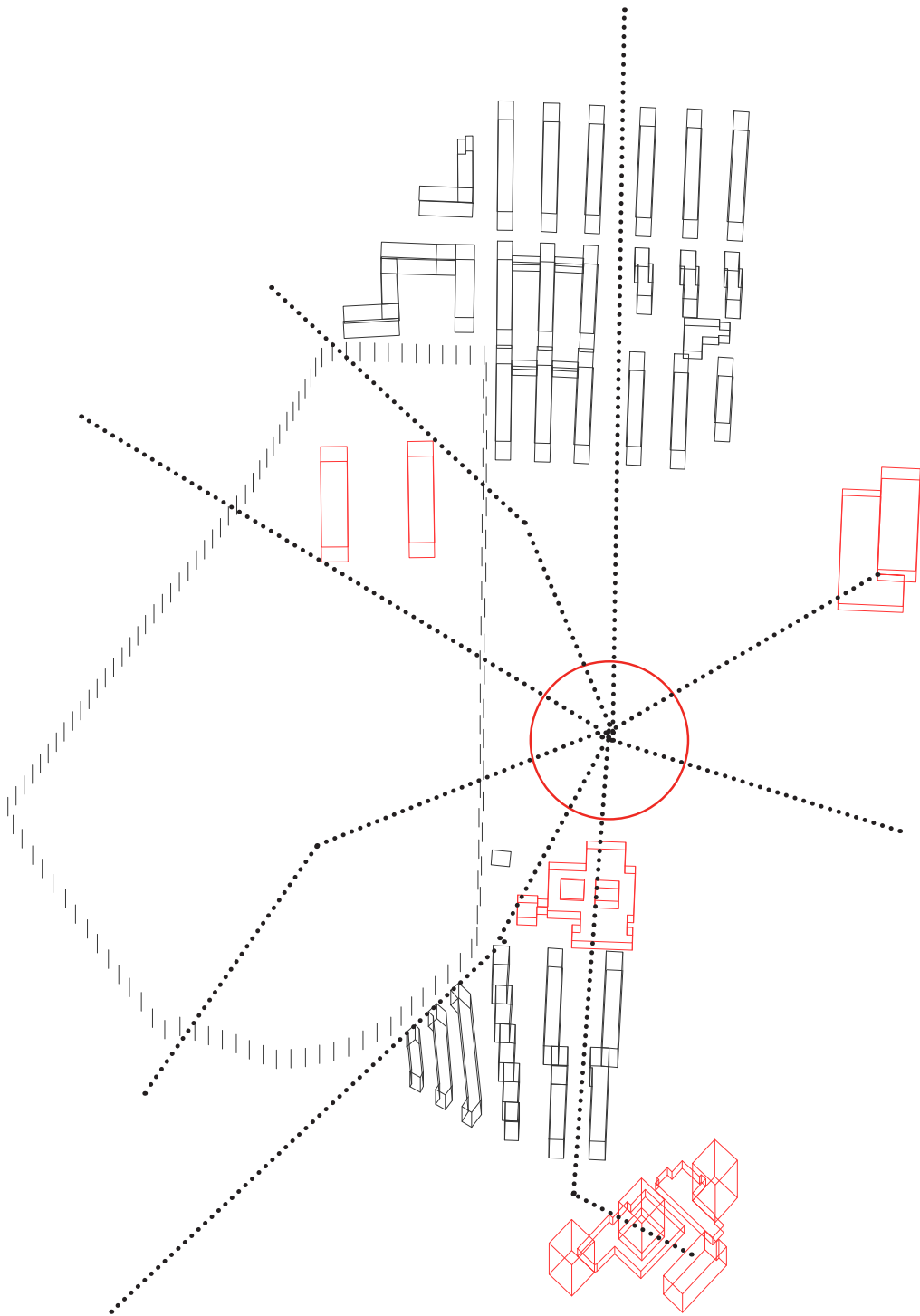
It seems that Tøyenparken has everything to become a vibrant addition to the neighborhood of Tøyen. However, with the Munch Museum being relocated in the future, Tøyenparken is facing a change in identity. The vast parking lot which now serves the Munch Museum will become obsolete in the future. This ‘no man’s land’ cutting the park in two and the empty museum have the potential to host a local network of attractions connecting all ‘islands’ in the park, day and night and all year round.

This network needs to be active during the day and evening to give a sense of security and orientation when moving from one end to the other, especially in winter when days are short.

The parking lot of the Munch Museum is the main issue on site. It is a ‘non-space’ with little to no spatial qualities other than being a functional parking lot. This blank space between the housing in the North and South of the park is an end-point of multiple streets with no continuation to link both sides. There is a break in the urban tissue but this gap creates a lot of potential.

Each side of the park has its own ambience. The Botanical Garden is a quiet, hidden and intimate garden fenced off from the surroundings by high and bushy trees. The higher part of the park in the East is very open and allows for all sorts of activities from sporting to sitting and enjoying the view over the city or watching a concert during a festival. These different identities are important and the contrast between intimate and open shouldn’t be removed. However, the Botanical Garden can seem too hidden and blocks off the park from the city.

Therefore, a new walkway through the Gardens should be created to connect the park with the city. The former parking lot can function as a ‘hinge’ between all different parts of the park to connect them visually and give more structure to the ‘nonspace’.



How to give meaning to the open space, the ‘no-man’s land’?



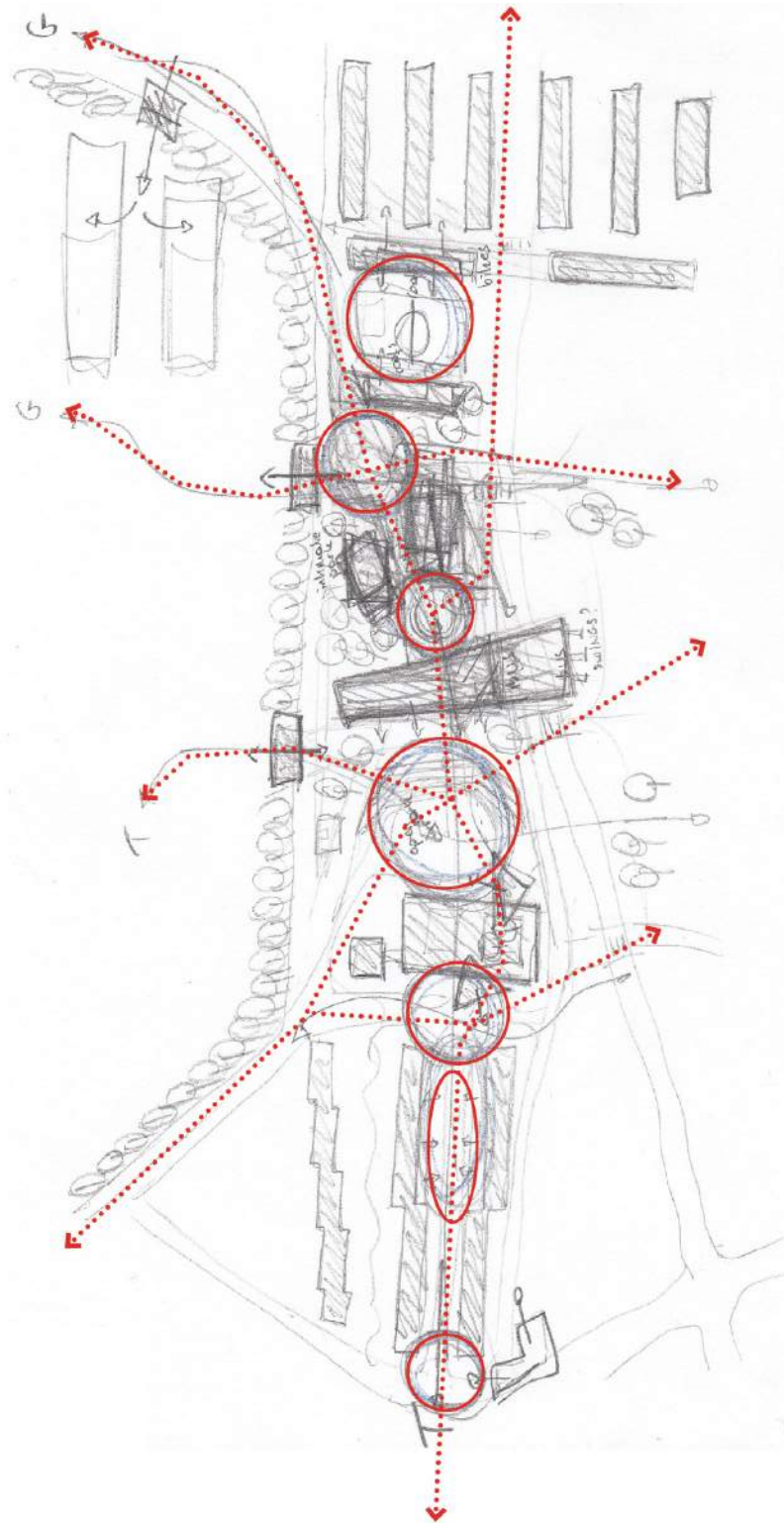
GIVING MEANING TO PLACE:

First of all, fragmenting the ‘no man’s land’ into multiple spaces with different ambiances will create a better ‘place legibility’. This concept was introduced by Kevin Lynch in his book ‘The Image of the City’ (1960)¹. The notion of legibility of place relates to the way how people read and understand the layout of that place. In fact, Lynch states that people always create a mental map of their surroundings. Each individual’s mental map is different, according to the meaning of a place, the use of a place, and so on. Lynch defines a series of key features in our surroundings that help to create these maps in our heads. These features are: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Paths are linear elements through which people move through the city, such as streets, sidewalks and roads. Edges are also linear elements but they channel circulation in a different way. They can be fences, walls, trees or rivers. Districts are larger parts of a city, characterized by a specific identity such as Grünerløkka and Gamle Oslo. Next, nodes are areas of concentration like city centres and intersections. Finally, landmarks are specific focal points that stand out of the urban fabric. These can be very different from one person to another. They can be a fountain, a tree, a mountain, a view, a store, a building and so on. They are key points in the orientation and legibility of a space.

In the context of the empty lot in the park, these features can be introduced to make the gap more readable. Paths and edges will channel people through the site. Paths can make connections and edges can cut off spaces to create more intimate areas within the network. They will direct visitors and locals towards different nodes in the network which are needed to give people a sense of security and keep the network alive. Lastly, the landmarks (new structures, light features,...) will allow people to orient themselves and to meet up with others at distinctive places. In the end, the arrangements of these features on site will allow people to create a better map of this area when moving from one end to the other.

Meaning can also be given to a space through a specific architectural approach, that respects the context in every way.

1 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1960.



III. Architectural Approach:

DESIGNING IN A PARK:

The main challenge of the site is to design an intervention in a delicate setting: the park. First, it is important to look at the culture of public space and outdoor life in Norway.

Public Space in Oslo: The Importance of Gathering:

It is clear that Oslo has a lot to offer in terms of public spaces. The waterfront and parks are bustling with life in summer and even in winter if it involves playing in the snow or skiing. The public spaces around the fjords are turned towards the wide views, which makes the roof of the Opera and the docks of Aker Brygge so popular in all seasons but especially in summer when it is still light at ten o'clock in the evening. In the inner city and particularly in the East, the public space is characterized by the hustle and bustle of exotic shops and cafés which gives a nice contrast to the larger shopping streets around Karl Johans gate. And of course, Oslo is rich in parks and green spaces which are never far away and present in the entire city.

However, the most important and specific feature of Oslo remains the proximity to wild nature which surrounds the capital on all sides with fjords, forests and mountains.



Top view from the roof of the Oslo Opera House. photo: Liz Palm

The Culture of the Outdoors:

“There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.”

- Scandinavian saying

This sentence sums up Norway’s affinity with nature to some extent. In fact, there’s even a word for this culture of the outdoors: *friluftsliv*, which means ‘free air life’ or ‘outdoor life’. Nature is really embedded in daily life, even for citizens of larger cities like Oslo. In Norway, just like in the other Scandinavian countries the ‘*allemannsretten*’ or ‘right to roam’ is applied. This means that everyone has the right of access to every public or privately owned land for recreational use. Many Norwegians own a small piece of land in the forest or mountains where they stay in a cabin in the weekends and on holidays.

In kindergartens children spend a lot of time outside. This is certainly noticeable in and around Tøyenparken which is surrounded by many schools and kindergartens. There’s a rule in many schools that states that at least once a week, children should spend the whole day in the open air. All activities are then moved outside. On these ‘turdager’, classes spend the whole day hiking, playing and climbing trees in a park or forest nearby.

*“The ‘Norwegian child’ should live an active and outdoor childhood. Strong emphasis is placed on the relationship between young children and their wider environment, in particular the outdoor environment and more generally, with nature. Apart from being fun and healthy, being outside throughout the year is about learning to live in and with strongly demarcated seasons and extreme weather conditions... In short, being active and outdoors is both an issue of health and an issue of value, or identity”.*¹

-OECD Norway country note, 1999

1 <http://www.oecd.org/norway/>



Children from the Prestebø Kindergarten having lunch in a forest near Kristiansand, Norway. photo: Verity Taylor

The 'Protagonists' of the Park

When designing in such a specific setting, it is important to know who the 'protagonists' or users of that setting are in order to create an integrated space, not only in the urban setting but also on a social level. Since the focus here is on the outdoor space, it is also crucial to distinguish the activities on site according to the seasons and the weather. The question here is: Who am I designing for? When are which users active in the park? And how can I improve the surroundings according to their activities.

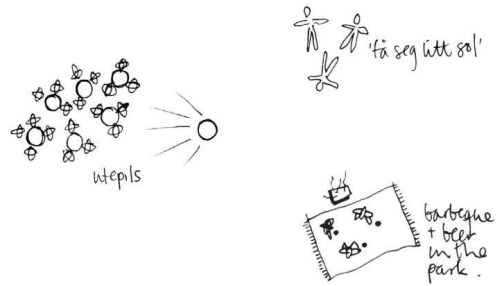
All year round and in all kinds of weather, you will spot little groups of children from the multiple kindergartens in the park during the day. They mostly concentrate their activities around the few playgrounds on site. More facilities and exciting new structures could vary the activities of the children and enhance the feeling of going on an adventure outside of the classroom.

The Munch Museum and its café also attract people all year round and functions as a gathering space for locals and tourists alike. This characteristic needs to be preserved and possibly enhanced to keep the building and its surroundings active at all times.

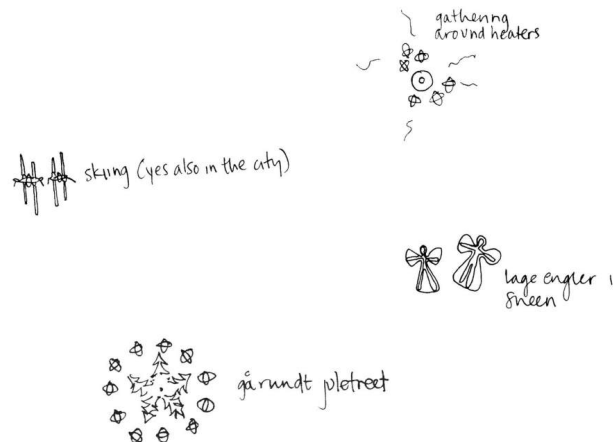
When the weather is good enough, and days start getting longer, the park is very popular for young people and families with children. Many people take their barbecue to the park and enjoy their time in the sun, even until late in the evening in summer, when days are long. In August, The park hosts a big music festival (Øya Festivalen). The open space of the park is very suitable for concerts and other big events. It is a moment when the area stands in the spotlights and this feature should be kept as well, along with more intimate spaces for regular use of the park.

Most people in Norway (locals and immigrants alike) are used to the weather and embrace it most of the time. However, it is also important to provide spaces of shelter and rest for people to gather outside of the house, in all kinds of weather and all year round.

Summer



Winter

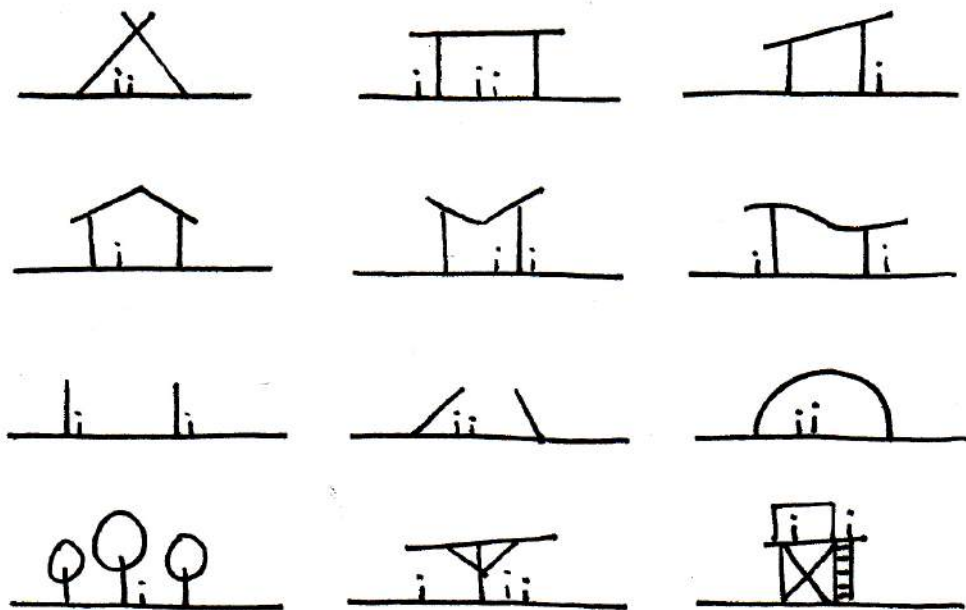


Sofie Flakk Slinning, 'Norwegians in Plan'

THE SHELTER:

“Whilst the strength of many cities lies in that their architecture symbolizes a rich register of relatively “distant” meanings, Oslo is a place which first and foremost lives in and of the direct relationship with its natural surroundings. (This is why it is so important to preserve these!) However, Oslo also needs good city-scapes where we can seek shelter. Seeking shelter happens in the house, but is prepared by the city’s environment. In Oslo, it was especially the street lights and the lights streaming out of the plentiful, large windows of the houses which gave the city spaces their necessary character. Everyone who has grown up in Oslo will remember the consolation the light gave when one walked through the streets in rain or snow.”

- Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Mellom Jord og Himmel*, 1978



The Shelter, Past & Present:

The Scandinavian 'Langhus' (longhouse).

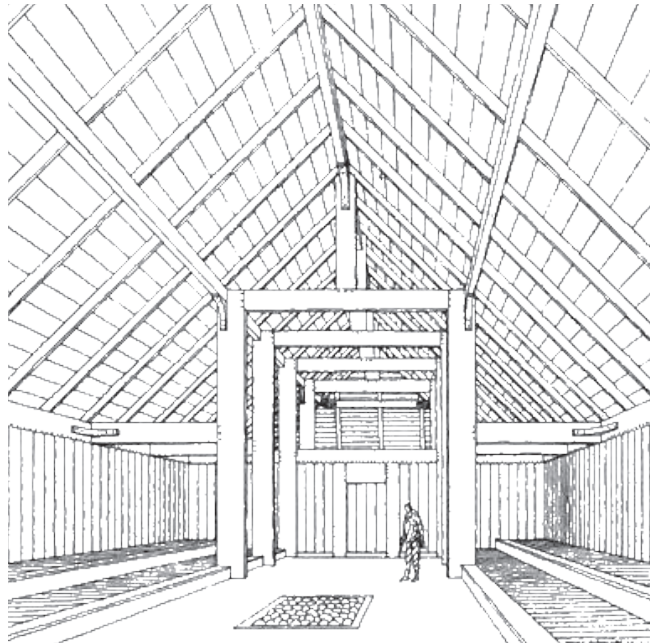
*"When the family wasn't busy working outside, they gathered around the hearth, talking, weaving, making baskets or listening to stories."*¹

In a country where winters are harsh and days are short, even the most seasoned inhabitants need shelters to gather and rest. The Vikings (8th-11th centuries AC) - who were mostly farmers and fishermen besides their infamous reputation of being raiding pagans - lived in these so-called 'longhouses'. They were long, boat-shaped structures made of wood or turf and stone. In winter, all activities were concentrated around the central hearth of the house. Animals were kept here, food was prepared and stored and people worked and slept in these halls. It was the most important social gathering space for the extended families.

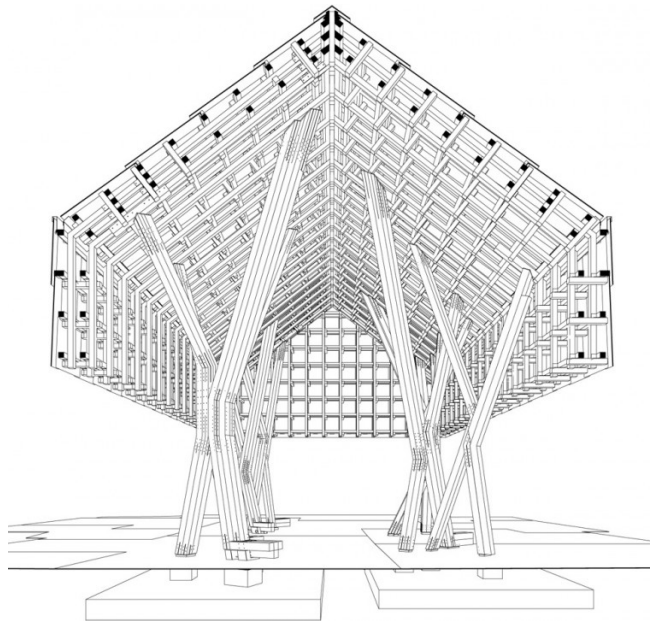
In a contemporary setting, this culture of gathering is still very present in Norwegian culture, but also in the culture of the immigrant communities who are settling in the country. In Sandnes, a city on the west coast of Norway, a traditional pitched roof with a modern outlook has been constructed to cover a central square for people to take shelter and gather underneath. This shows how the vernacular architecture of the longhouse is still present and recognizable today, with the same characteristics of purpose but in a more contemporary context.

In the setting of the park, the shelter can be used as a point of recognition for people to meet but also to inspire play and discovery.

1 The Viking Longhouse: A Crowded, Cozy Home. (2014). Consulted on 09/05/2015 via <http://www.historyonthenet.com/vikings/the-viking-longhouse.html>



Reconstruction of a Ninth-Century Great Hall, Denmark



Lantern Pavilion, Sandnes; Architects: AWP & Atelier Oslo

THE ISSUE OF THE MUNCH MUSEUM:

The original building was designed by the architects Gunnar Fougner and Einar Myklebust and was opened to the public in 1963. It was a modern building with simplistic lines and materials. It has a courtyard in the middle, a small library and restaurant and a separate room for concerts and lectures in the middle of the exhibition hall. Later on, a few extensions were added by the same architects to improve security and for a café with views on the park. The building has a lot of qualities in terms of space. The only problem is its location which is the reason why the city has decided to relocate the art pieces to a new museum in Bjørvika, next to the Opera House. In fact the waterfront is to become Oslo's most important tourist attraction in the future. The new museum will join other developments like the Aker Brygge and the recently added 'Bar Code' along the water.

The question today is if the old Munch Museum is worth keeping or if it should be demolished. The museum still has a symbolic meaning and it is used as a reference for the place. Also it has a lot of qualities and potential to be reused on a more local scale. In fact, many people used the building as a gathering space ("Let's meet at the Munch café!"). People around the park know the building, it is well connected to the centre by metro and if it functions on a more local scale it could become a new focal point in the neighborhood, attracting the inhabitants of the surroundings instead of only attracting the occasional tourists. This new social centre could reactivate the direct surroundings and act less as an island in the park.

Another issue that needs to be looked at is how people approach the building. The current situation is confusing as people coming out of the metro station are directed into a street that leads to the back of the museum. This street is a 'non-space', a dead end. It is mainly used as a parking lot for the residents of the housing blocks on either side. This connection needs to be clearer and give more quality to the public space and privacy of the residents. Opening up the Munch Museum on both sides could accentuate its presence and give a better orientation for visitors.

It is important in the global urban strategy to address the whole connection between Tøyen and Grünerløkka in order to complete the loop around the city centre. Therefore, the new network needs to include the street between the station and the museum, the museum itself, the parking lot and the new connection along the Botanical Garden.

MASTER PLAN

How to integrate Tøyenparken into the urban and social fabrics of Oslo?

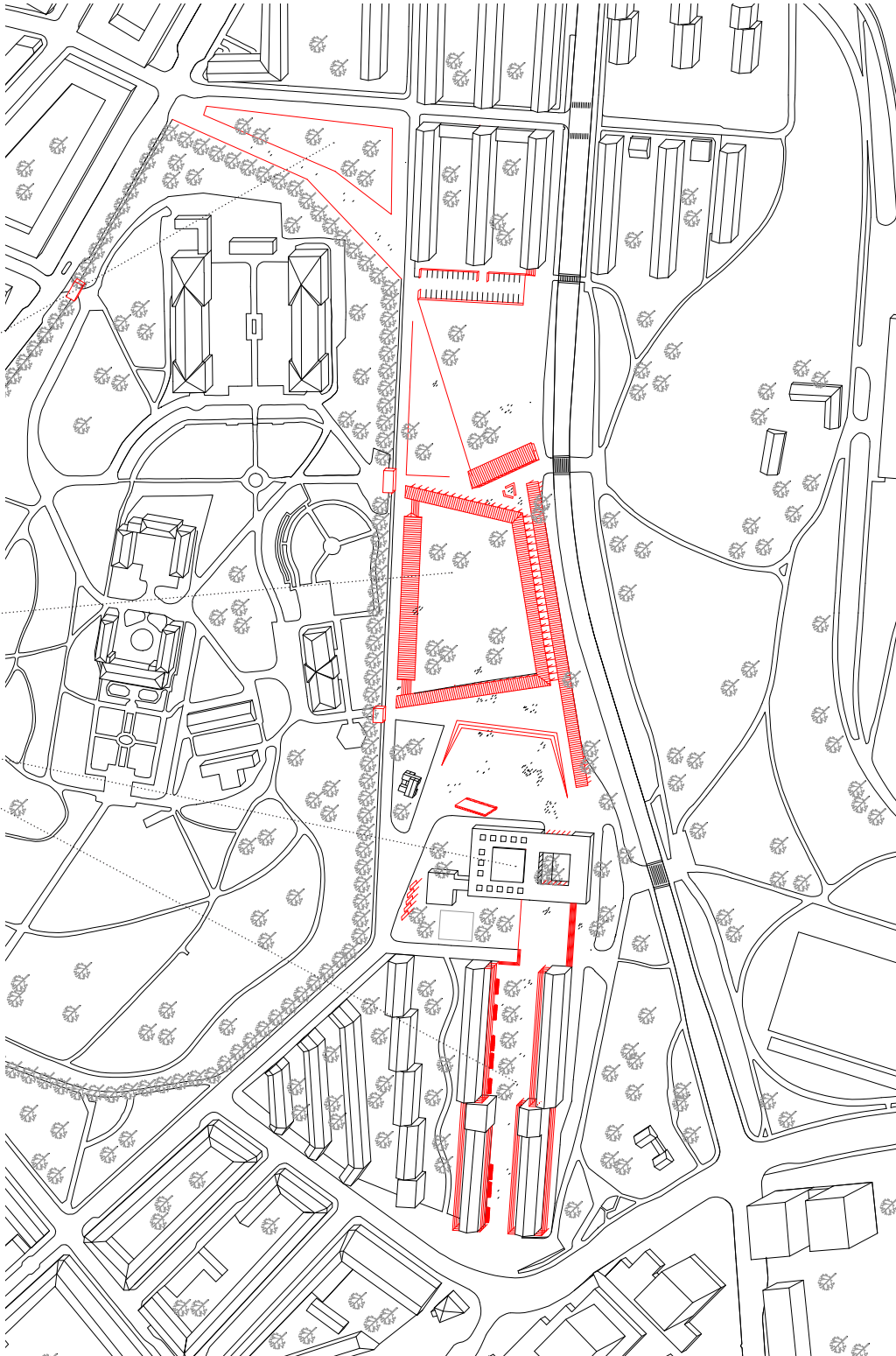
The global intervention on the site will consist of three main parts:

- The street connecting the metro station to the Munch Museum.
- The empty Munch Museum.
- The open space and its connection towards Grünerløkka and the Botanical Garden.

How to give meaning to the open space, the 'no man's land'?

After researching the urban surroundings and sociocultural context of the site and following the urban strategy of the 'hinge' between all parts of the park, several preconditions for the final design can be stated:

- Improve the place legibility of the 'no man's land' through clearer connections (paths, edges) and focal points (nodes, landmarks).
- Introduce spaces and activities that will keep the area alive in daytime and evening, and all year round.
- Use the idea of the shelter as a place of gathering outside of the house throughout the whole design.



IV. Architectural Development:

INTERVENTION I:

FROM BACKSTREET TO PUBLIC CHANNEL:

When walking out of Tøyen Square or Tøyen metro station on the side of the park, Ringgata is the first street that leads towards the Museum. However, arriving at the end of the street, one bumps into the back of the museum and has to walk around to find the entrance or the park for that matter. At the moment the street only functions as a parking because it is a dead end, so it doesn't divert any other traffic than local traffic. The façades of the buildings have small windows which makes them rather closed off. Only the building on the right has balconies that look onto the street.

It is not an inviting street to walk through and it certainly doesn't encourage play or social interaction. This, and the fact that the Munch Museum blocks off the street at the end, creates a boundary between Tøyen and the park.



View of Ringgata, towards the back of the Munch Museum.

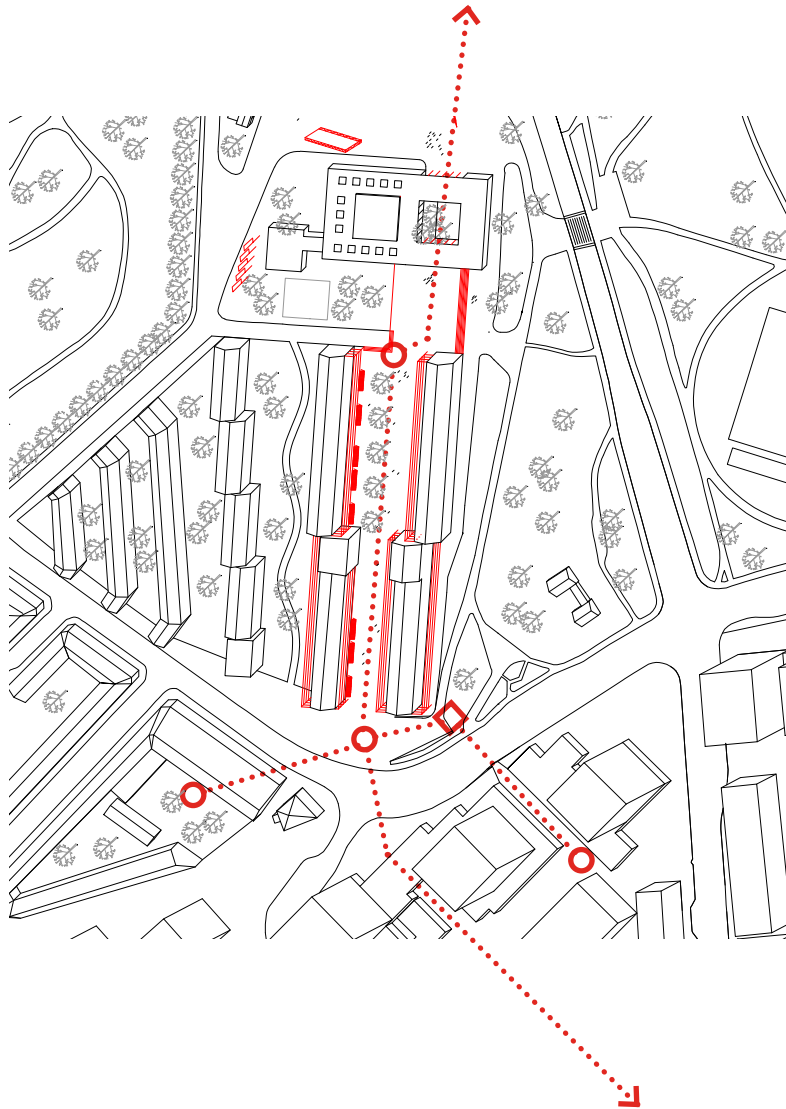
The Interactive Façade:

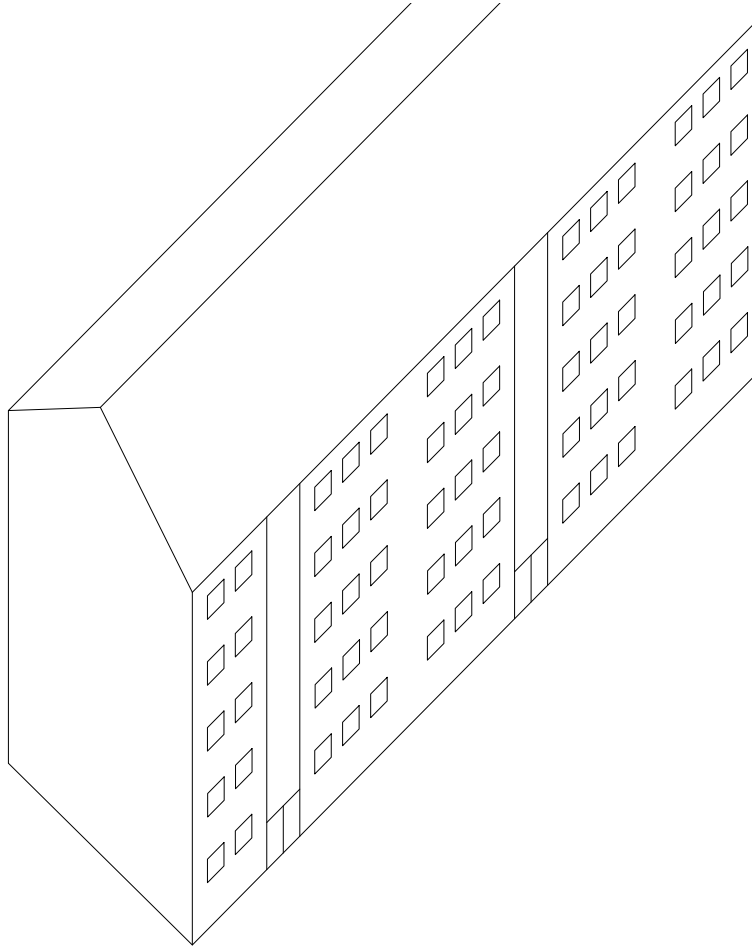
The choice to renovate the 1950's housing blocks instead of starting from scratch was quickly made due to the fact that they had been renovated already in 2010 and now have good spacial qualities on the inside. However, the apartments are rather small for larger families (they don't exceed two bedrooms) and leave no space for flexibility and personification on the outside. The young people living here will eventually leave for the suburbs when starting a family and won't invest too much time and money in the local community.

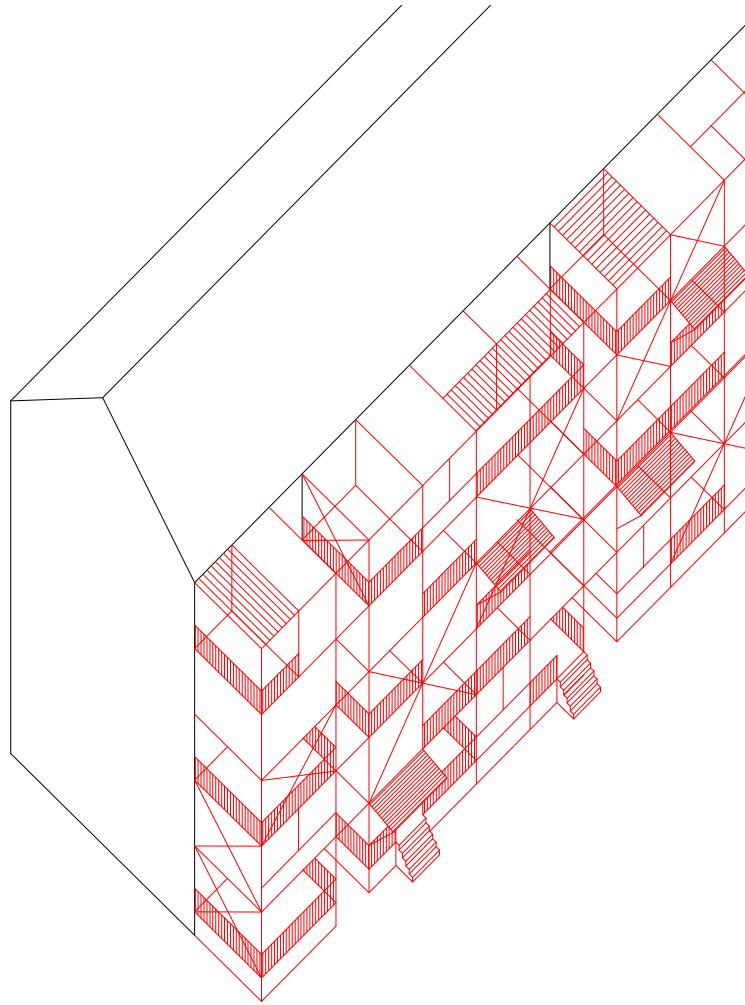
To make the street more welcoming and the apartments larger, the façades should be opened up towards the street with terraces and winter gardens. These extensions need to be airy and bright and should provide enough flexibility to be used in winter and summer and let the light shine through from inside to outside in the evenings to create a safer and more inviting ambience in the street.

The extensions can function as private outdoor spaces for children to play, as a compromise for not having their own private garden, along with the safer pedestrian street that will be created on the ground floor. But, if needed, they can also combine the living space and kitchen to make room for a third bedroom. This could encourage families to stay longer if they want.

The upgrade of the street and its improved connection to the new social centre in the park will potentially encourage the opening of cafés and shops on the ground floor of these apartments and create an attractive public space for locals and visitors alike.

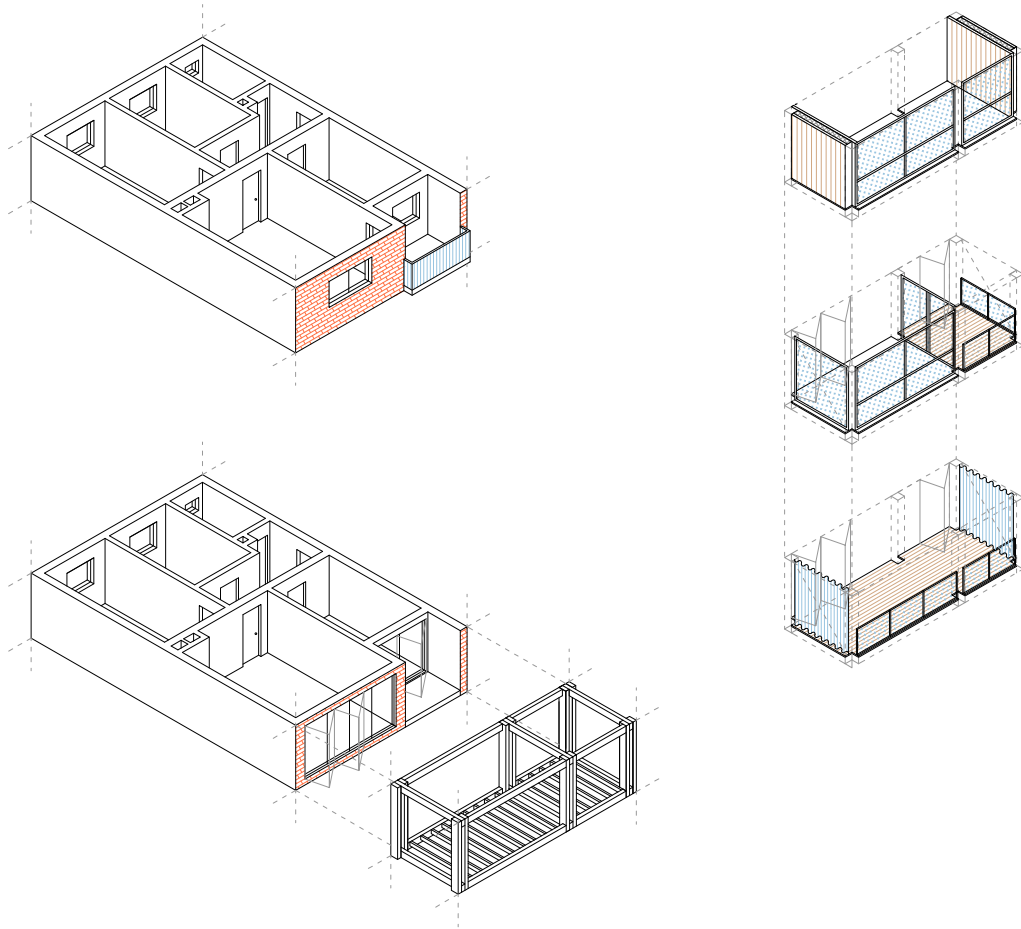




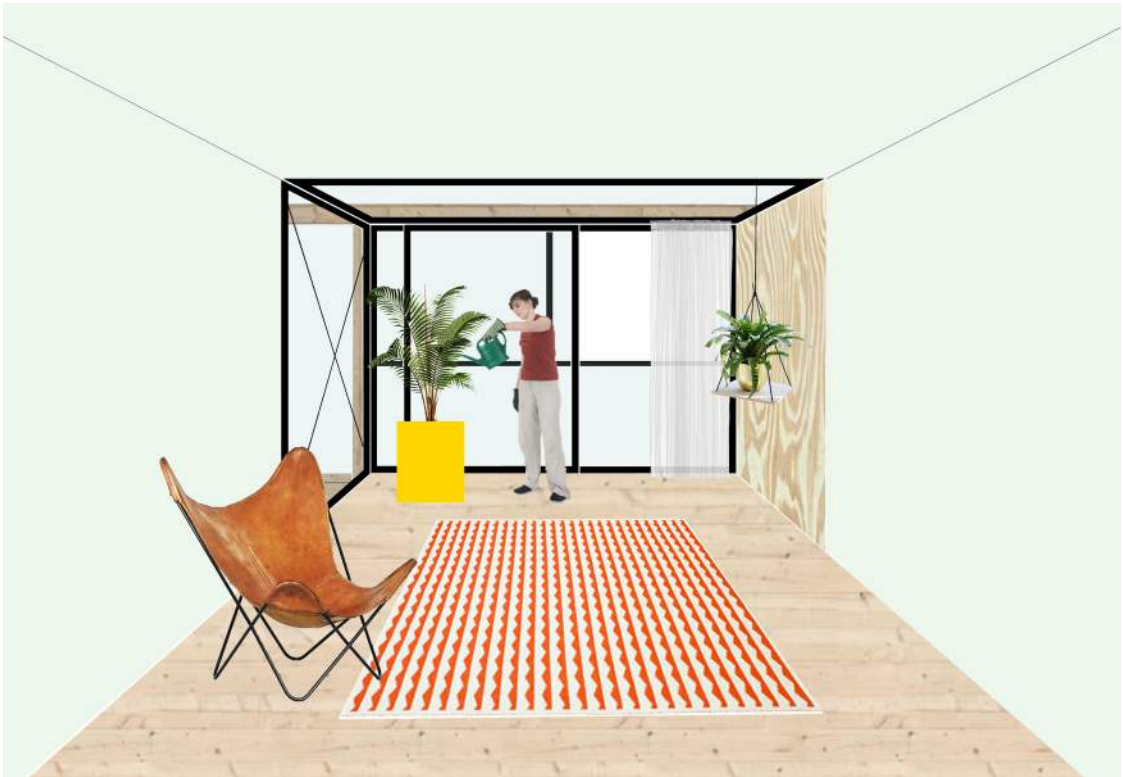


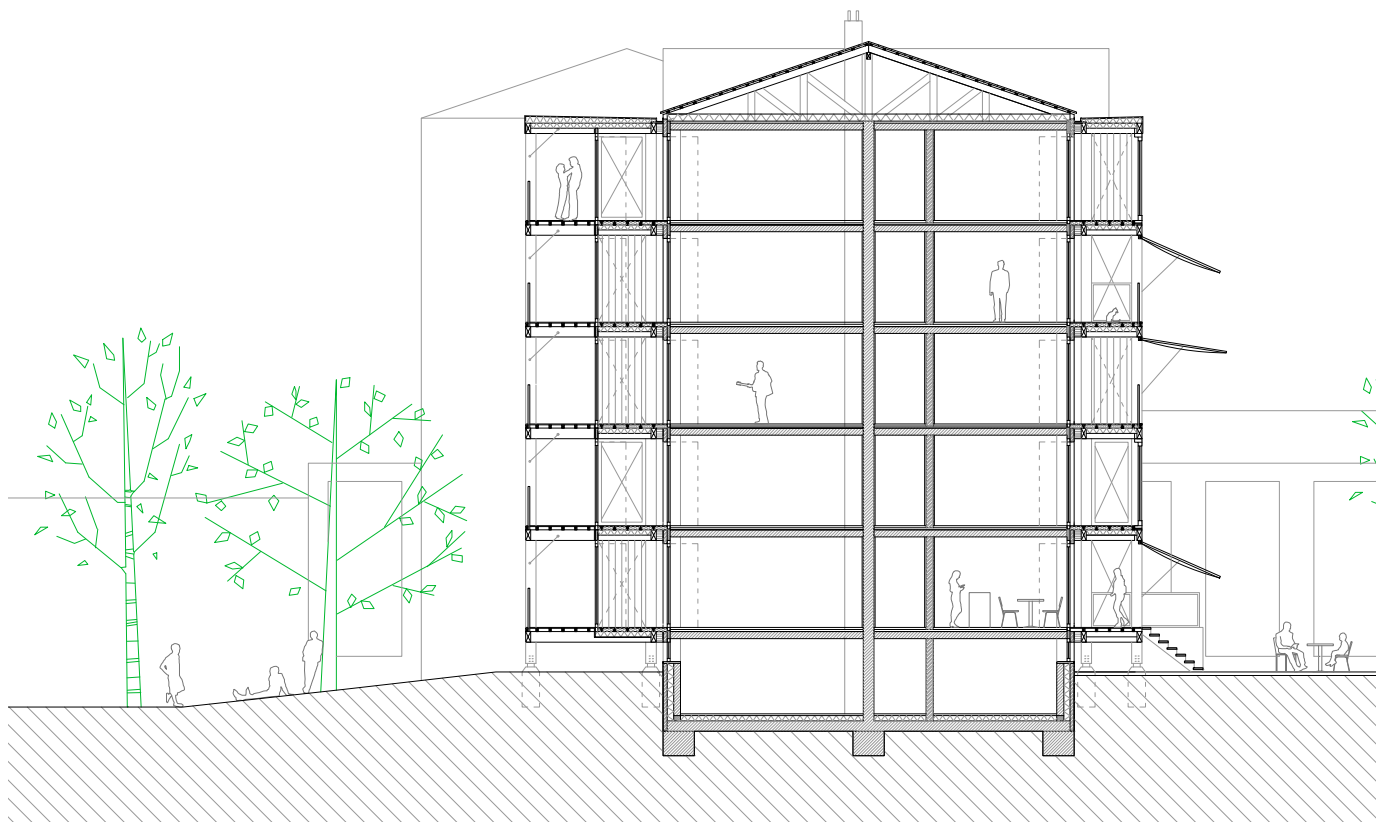
As for the structure of the new façade, it will be a wooden frame, stabilized with wind bracings. The infill of the structure will be made according to the wishes of the inhabitants and their needs. Some households might want to extend their living space and create a winter garden that can be opened up in summer while others might prefer a larger terrace instead. The materials for the infill of the extensions will vary according to the need for privacy of the households. Corrugated fibre glass panels can be used to separate two neighboring terraces but still let the light through while large windows will be used for the front to let the light in to the deepest part of the apartments. Instead of closing off the apartments with walls, floor-to-ceiling curtains will provide privacy and flexibility of use during the day. And will give the inhabitants the possibility of personalizing the interior and exterior view of their home.

The element of flexibility will thus be present on short term (curtains, winter gardens) and long term (extension of living spaces and addition of room if needed).

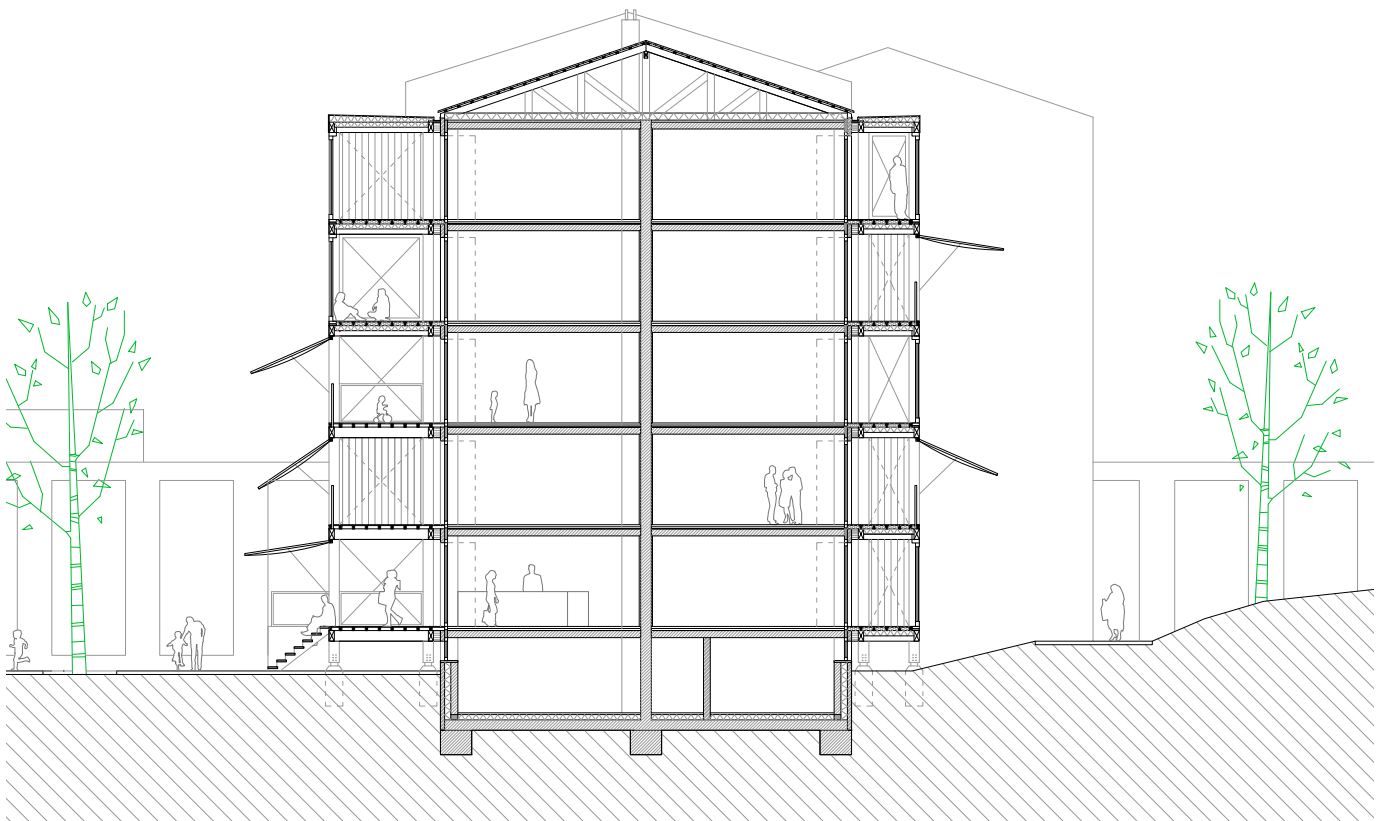


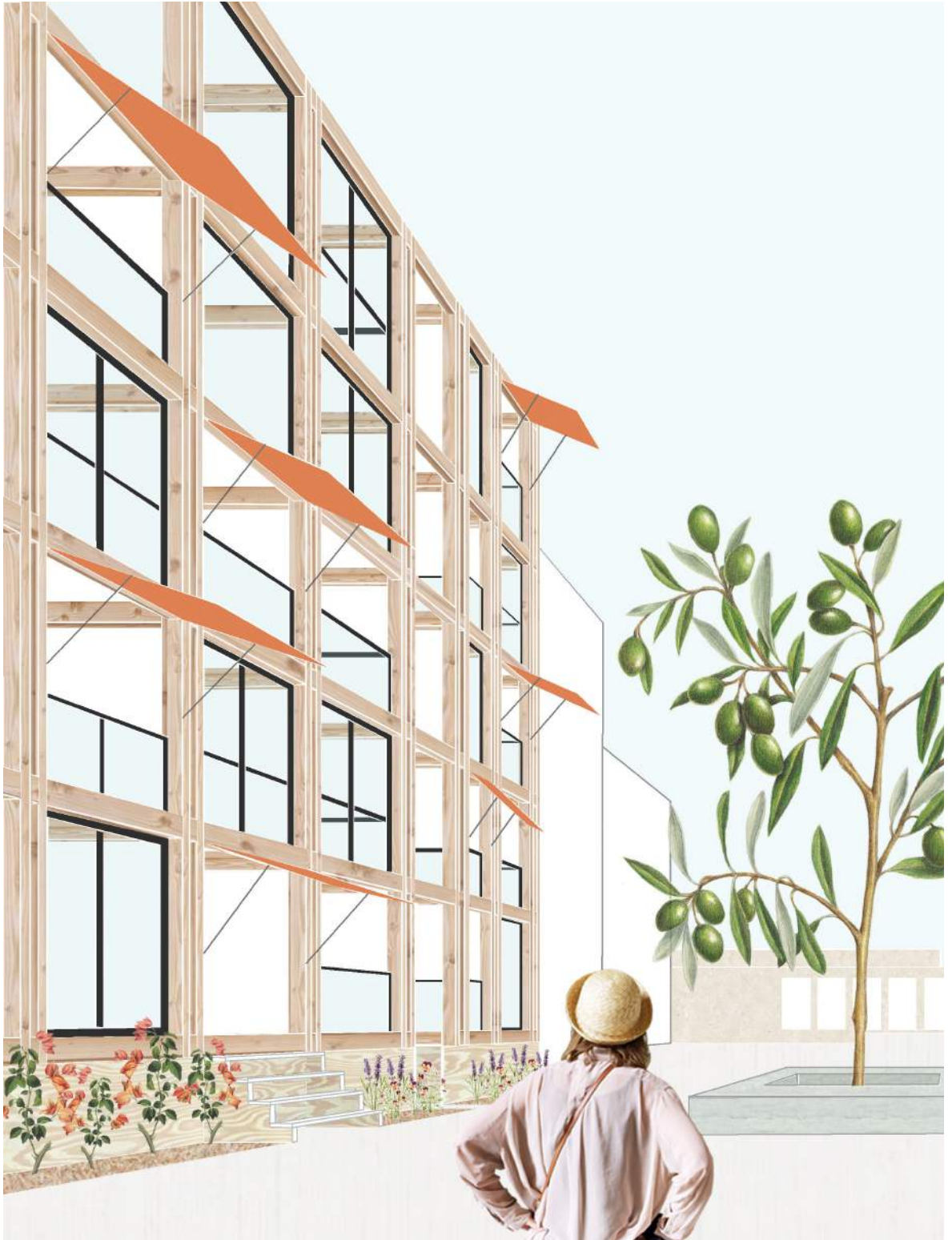






10 m







INTERVENTION II:
A NEW SOCIAL CENTRE IN THE PARK

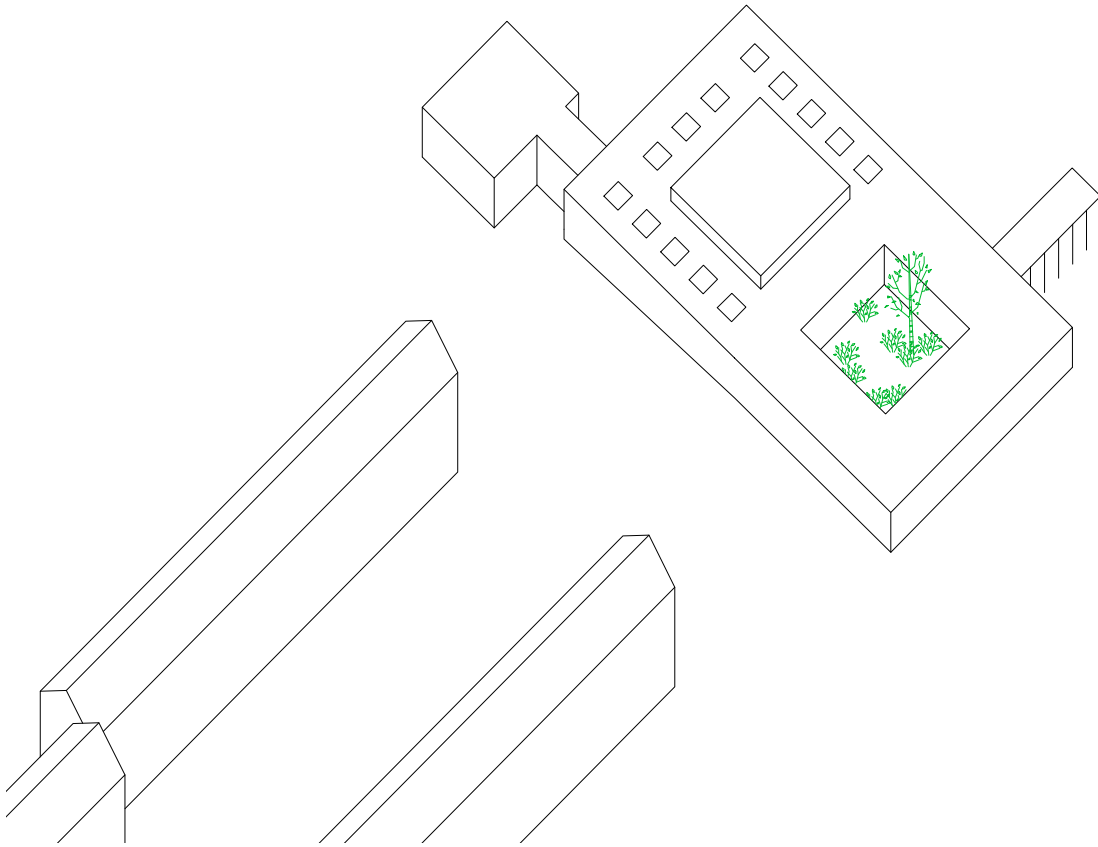
With the Munch collection being moved to the waterfront, the area of Tøyen is losing an important piece of its history and identity. However, the empty building still has a lot of potential and without the need for high security infrastructure, the building has more freedom of adaptation to the neighborhood and its urban fabric.

The former Munch Museum could act as a new centre between all neighborhoods surrounding the park, with activities for the University (lectures,...) by day and for the community (movies, exhibitions, debates,...) in the evenings. Opening up the building to local users will make it less of an 'island' in the park as it was before.

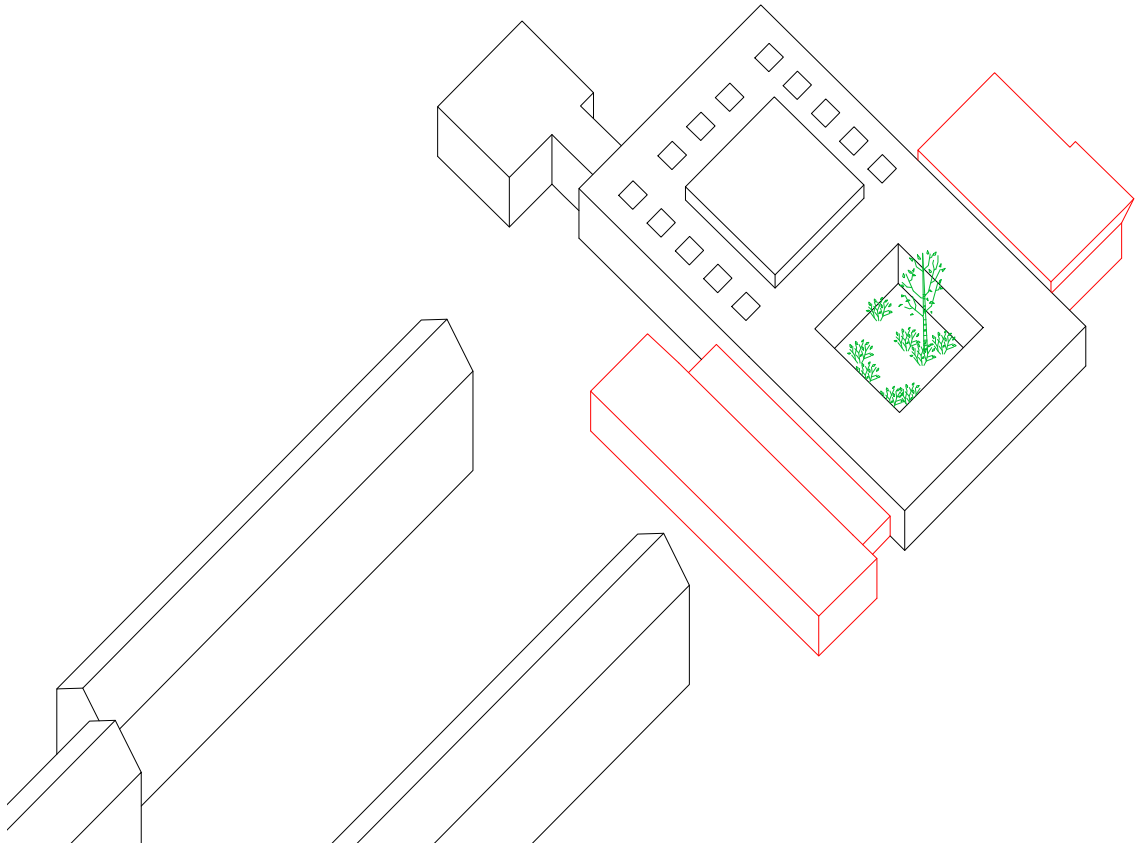
Before the new security extensions were added in 1994, the museum was a simple and elegant modernist building with lots of daylight seeping through the roof windows. It sat beautifully in the landscape of the park but had little to no relationship to its surroundings at the back, where the 1950's housing blocks still stand today.



The Munch Museum in 1963. photo: Teigens Fotoatelier



Opening of the Munch Museum, 1963

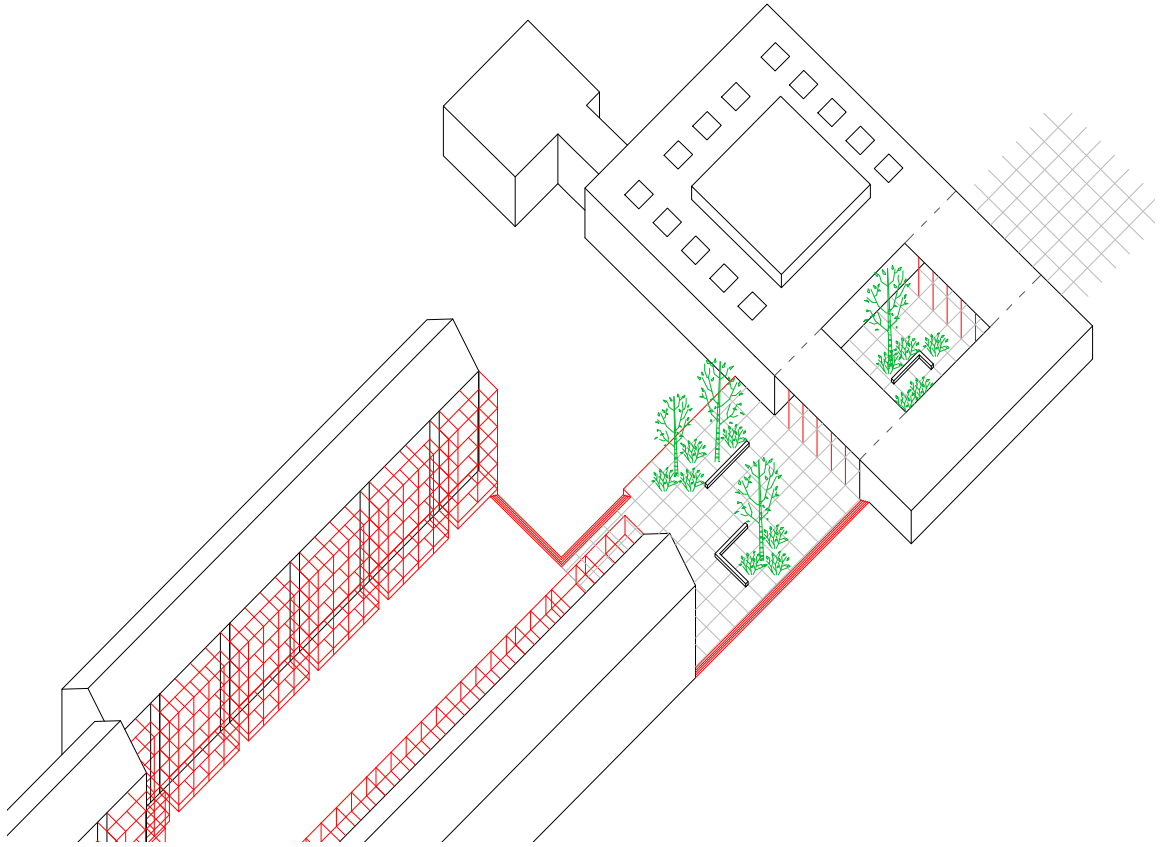


Expansion and rehabilitation of the Museum, 1994

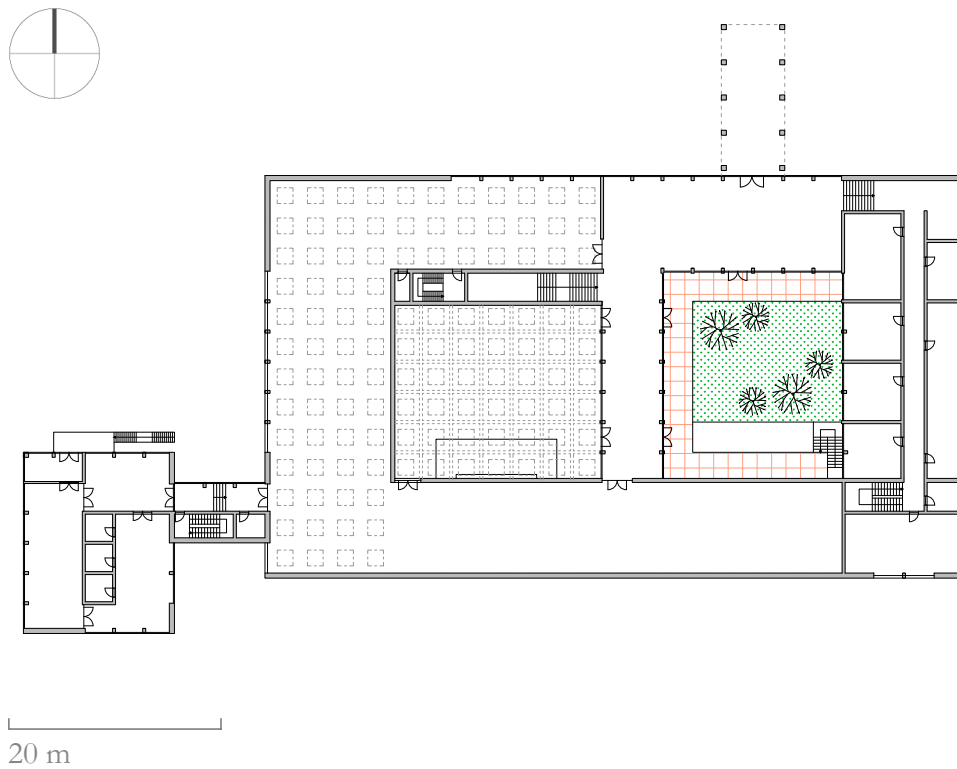
Therefore, it would be crucial - with the urban strategy in mind - to strip the building from its recent extensions and open it up on both sides to create a better flow between the new 'public channel' (Ringgata) and the park on either side of the museum.

This connection will go through the courtyard to minimize the intervention on the building and the loss of interior space. Also, this will create a better visual connection between both sides, making it seem like the park seeps through the building.

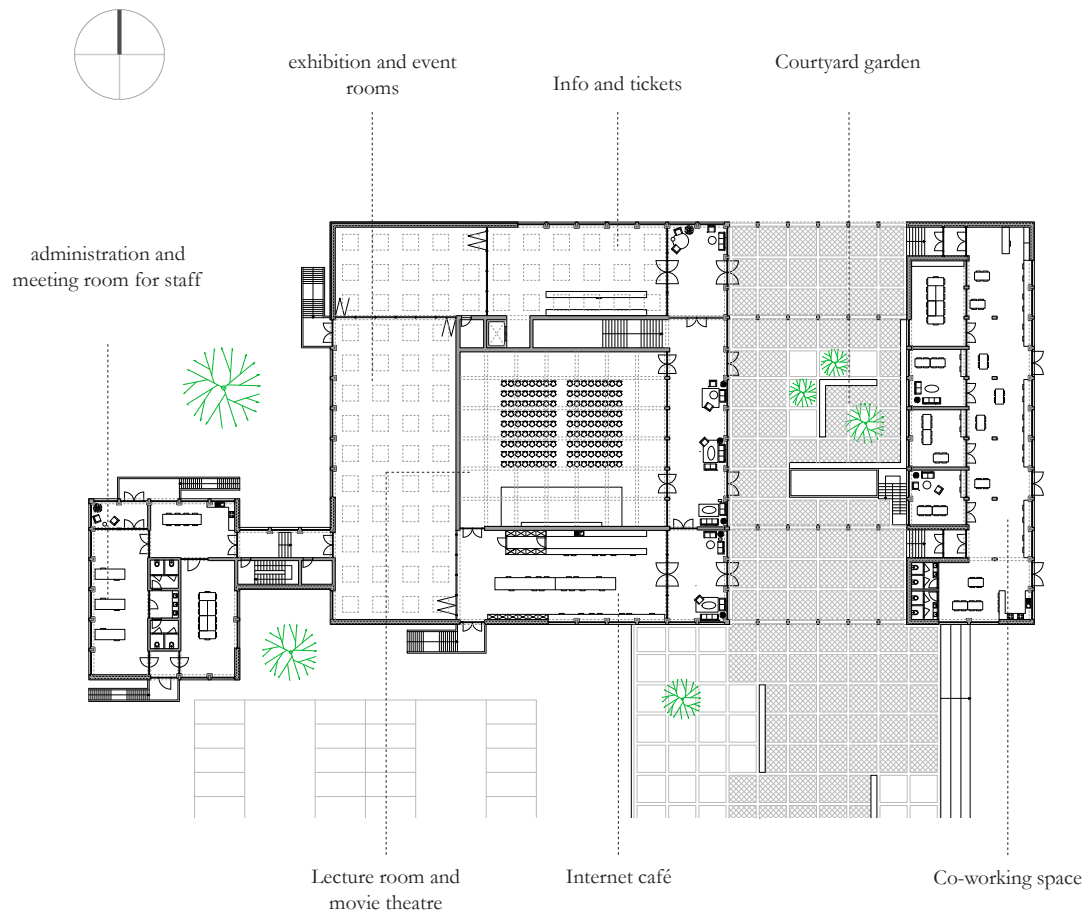
On either side of the museum, new squares will be designed as resting and meeting nodes. The square on the side of the park can be used to organise outdoor events like a concert or an open air cinema night for example, whereas the square between the museum and the houses will be more intimate with respect to the inhabitants.



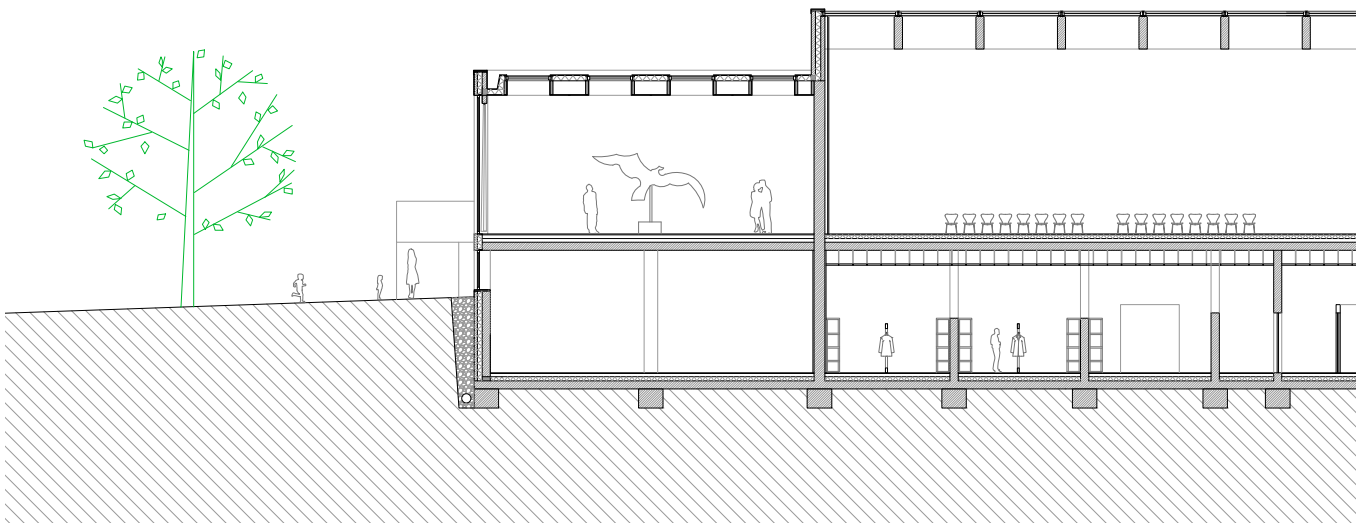
A new social centre in the park, after relocation of the Museum to Bjørnvika, 2018

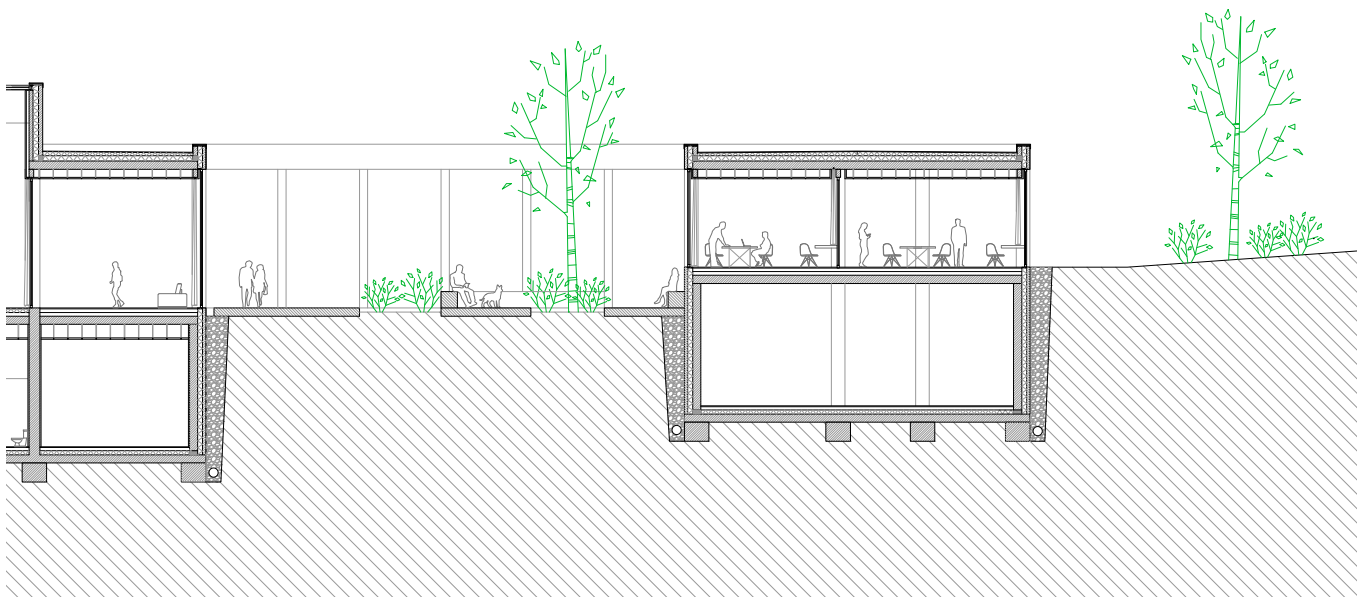


1963



2018









INTERVENTION III:
A PLACE TO GATHER, PLAY AND SHELTER

The open spaces in the middle of the park will be left empty after relocation of the Munch Museum in the near future. At the moment, this ‘no man’s land’ is cutting the park in two with no clear connections between both parts.

The idea would be to implement structures in the shape of shelters or walls (edges) to frame the emptiness, which doesn’t need to be necessarily filled up entirely. These structures will also create paths and nodes according to the way they are placed. In fact, these new structures become the paths, the edges, the landmarks. This will improve the space legibility as mentioned before and give people a better orientation through the site, with spaces to rest and gather along the way.



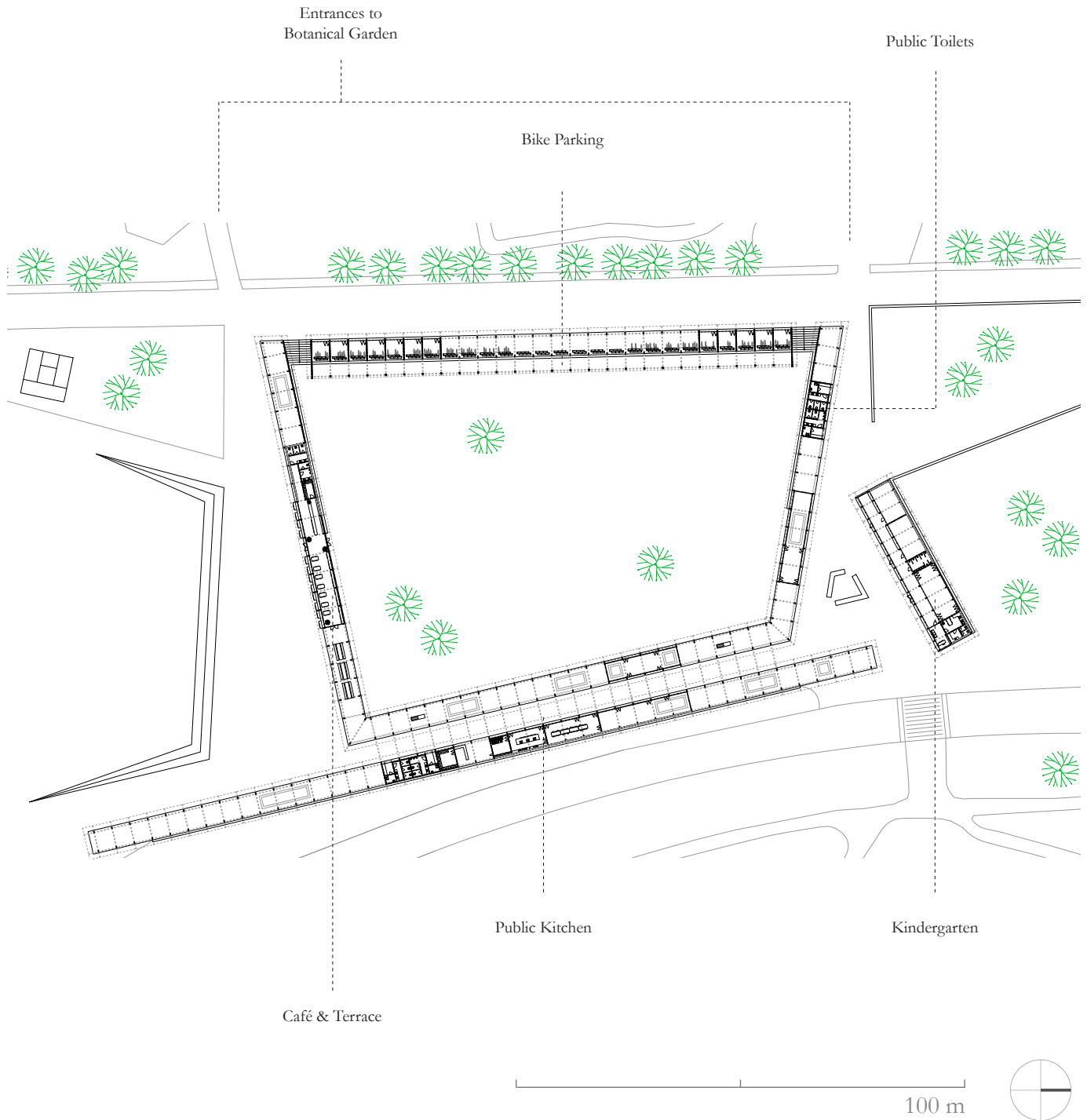
Underneath these shelters will be spaces that encourage people to stay in the park in all kinds of weather. There are open parts but also closed off shelters for little groups to gather and enjoy being outside of the house but still in a sheltered space. Children from the surrounding kindergartens could come here and spend the whole day outside of the school and have a rest in one of the closed shelters for lunch or for story-telling.

A public kitchen and public barbecues will allow people to gather for cooking or for organizing small parties. A café is placed in between the open square towards the Munch Museum and the framed emptiness, making it possible to interact between the open and intimate areas.

This central framed emptiness will be sheltered from the outside city and park making it more intimate and giving the feeling that you are in another place because you will not be able to see the surrounding buildings.

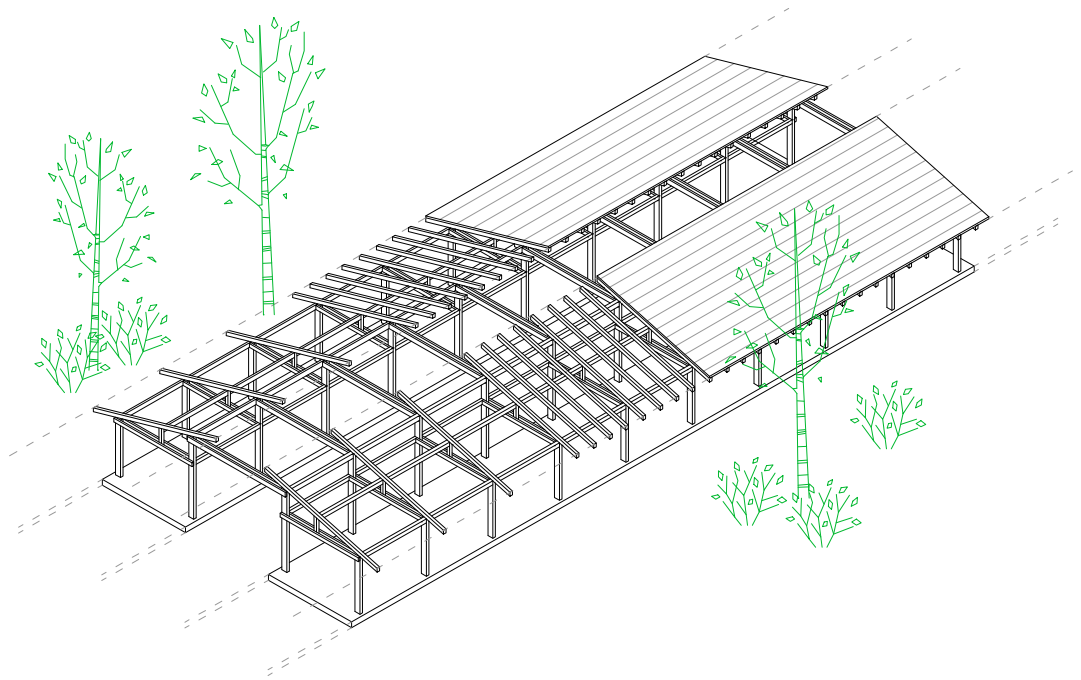
On the side of the Botanical Garden there's a large bike parking with private compartments for the local inhabitants and more space for bikes for the occasional bigger events that could happen in the park.

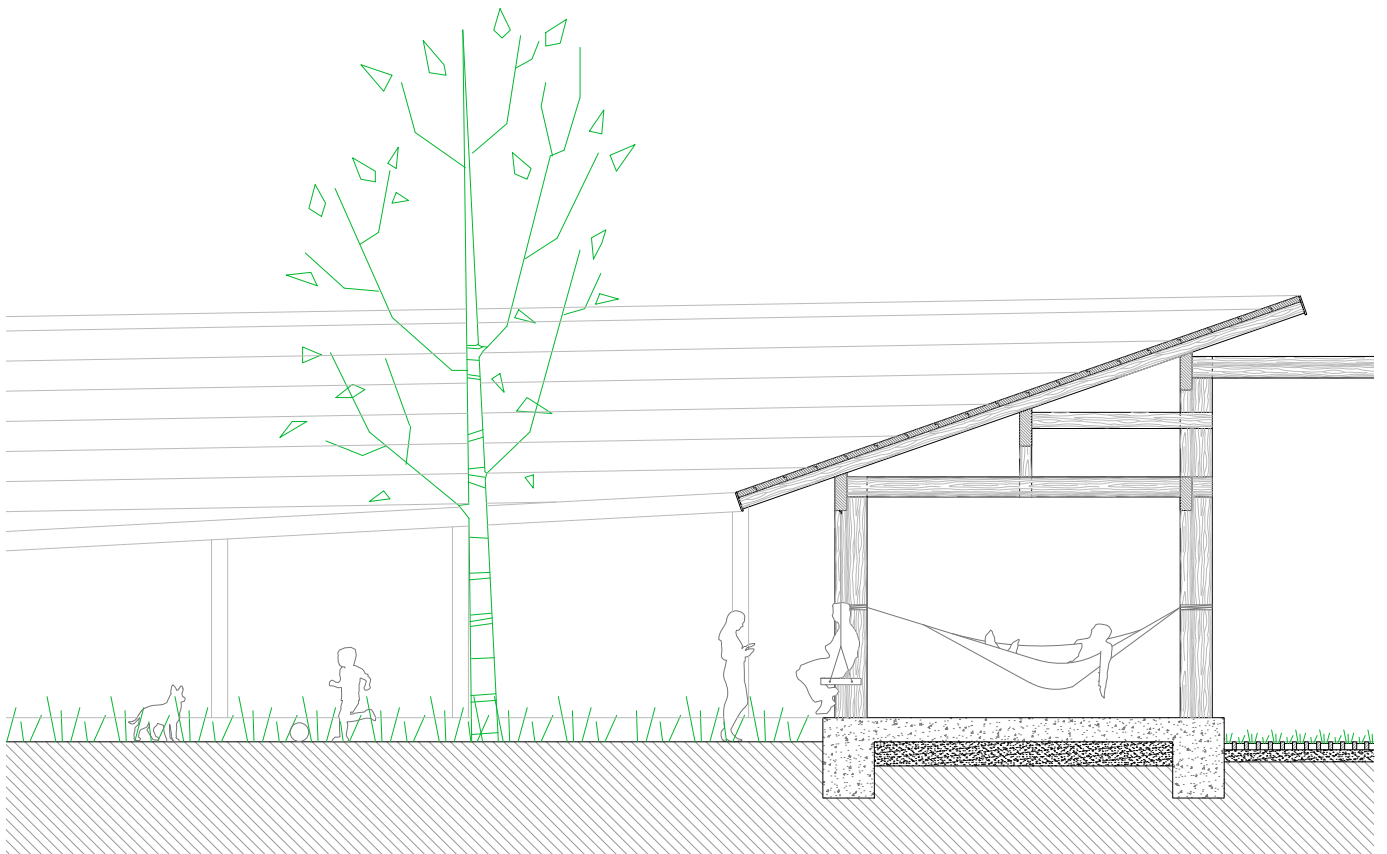
All new activities in this part of the park are implemented with the purpose of giving attractive places for locals and visitors to enjoy the park at all times, in all kinds of weather, and also during big events such as the music festival in summer.

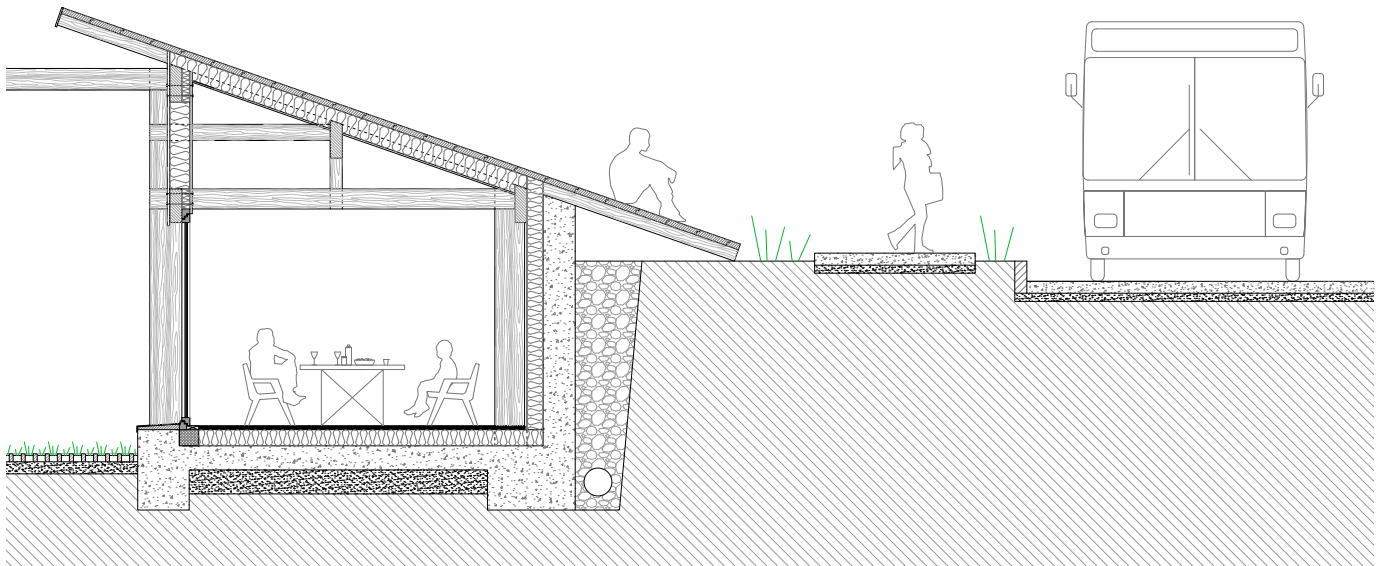


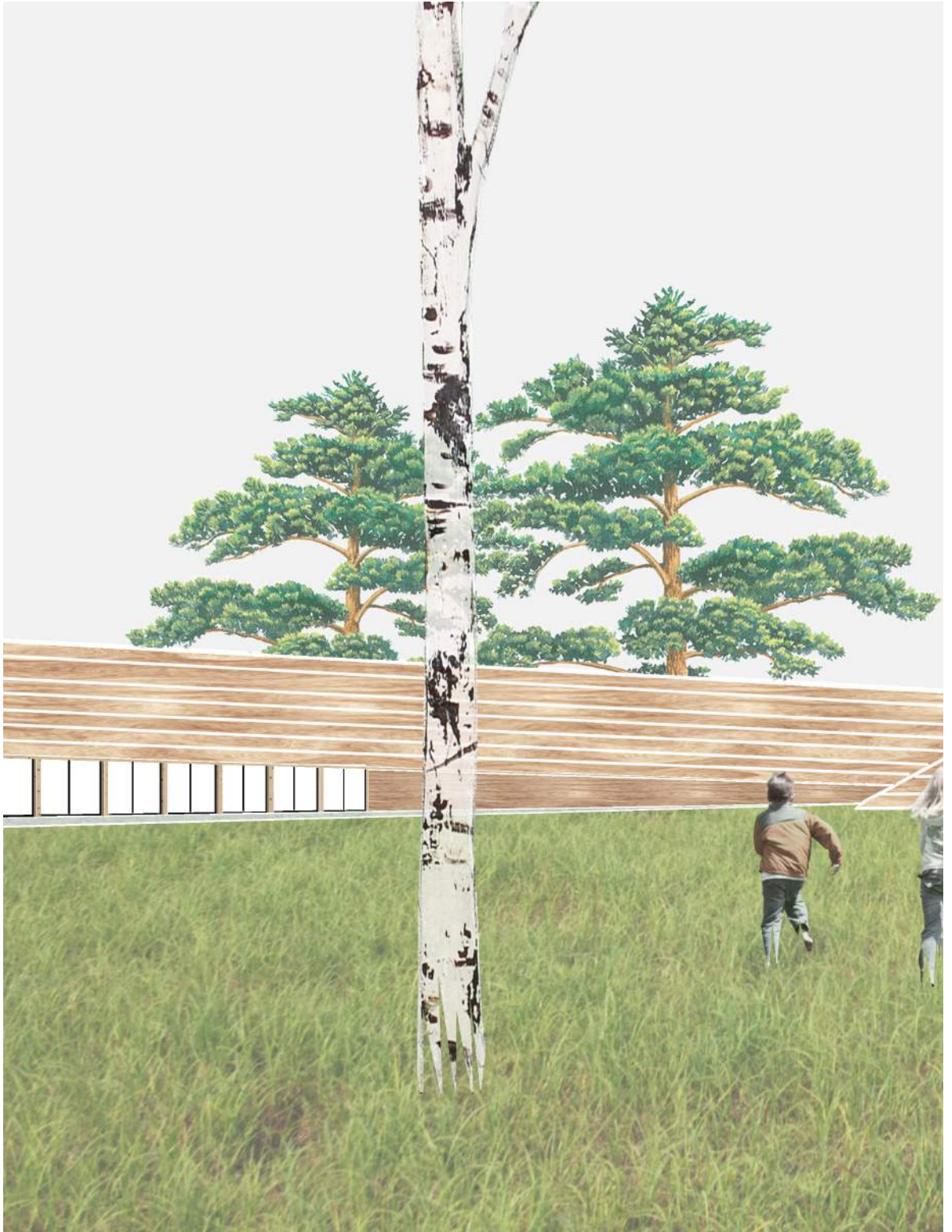
As for the structure of these shelters, the inspiration came from the Scandinavian longhouses with their pitched roofs and wooden structures. In fact, the same idea of the longhouse being the central part in the social life of Viking communities is used as a general concept for the shelters. Everything happens under one roof.

However, the structure was adapted to the more contemporary uses with a pathway going through the structure, dividing it in two. The open wooden beams would allow people to hang a swing or a hammock in between the columns making the use of the structure very flexible all year round.

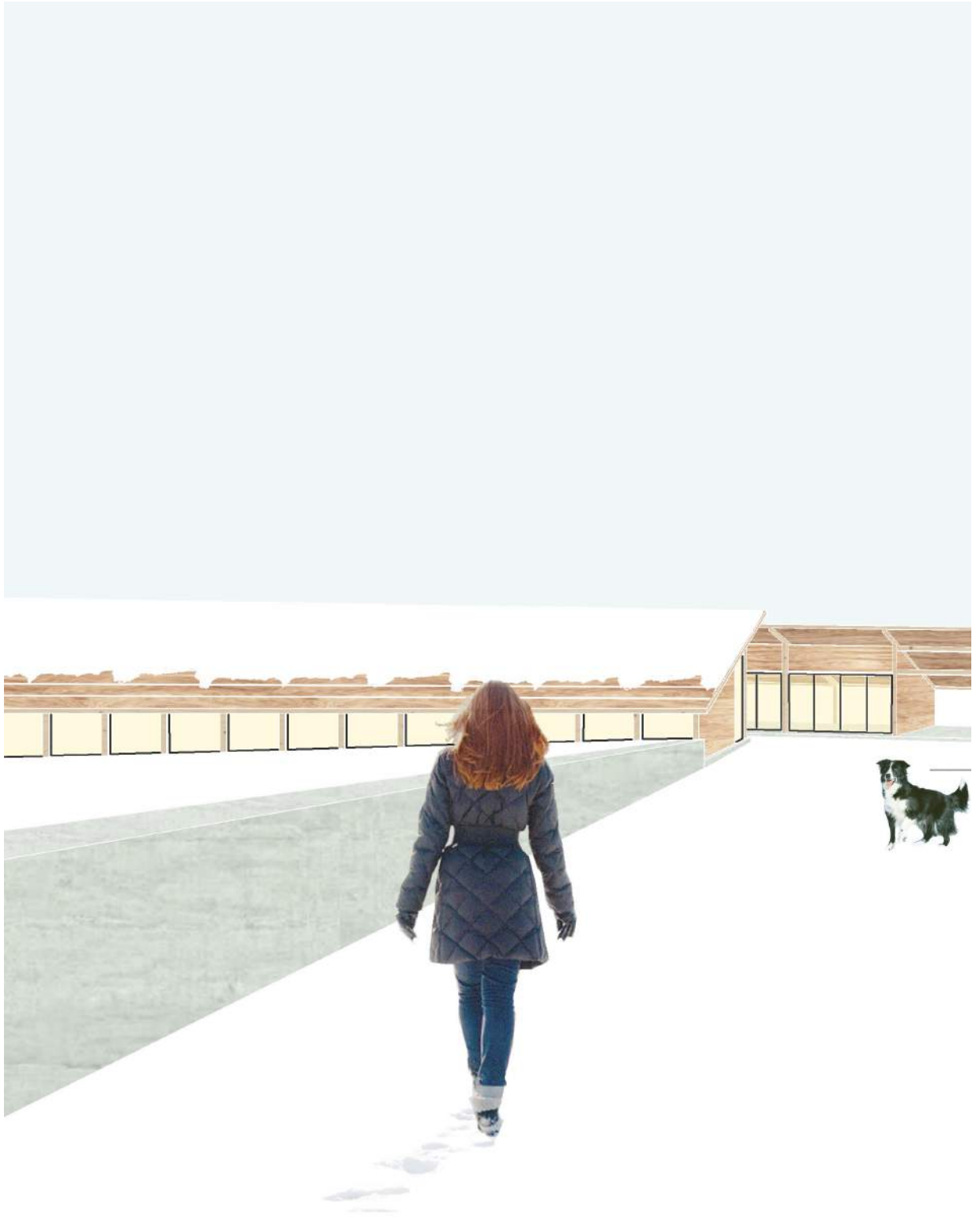














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