

Reconstructing Heritage in Transition:

Uzun Çarşı Between Memory and Modernity

Situated at the crossroads of multiple empires and civilizations, Antakya has long been shaped by complex layers of cultural, religious, and commercial exchange. Rather than a static emblem of harmony, the city reflects a dynamic and, at times, contested space of coexistence and transformation. At the heart of this urban stratification lies Uzun Çarşı, one of the oldest covered bazaars in the Middle East and a historical anchor of Antakya’s social and economic life. As a living witness to local craftsmanship, this market has profoundly shaped the city’s everyday rhythms through its vibrant alleys, artisanal trades, and enduring interpersonal networks.

However, long before the 2023 earthquake, Uzun Çarşı was already showing signs of decline: the gradual weakening of the local economy, the loss of interest in manual trades, and a lack of adaptation to contemporary uses. The earthquake only accelerated this process, destroying part of the built fabric and starkly exposing the physical and social vulnerabilities of this endangered heritage.

In response and following the reflections set forth in the theoretical statement, this project approaches the site not as a relic to be preserved in stasis but as an active agent of renewal. Within the broader discourse of living heritage, the intervention is guided by four key principles: rapid execution, spatial efficiency, constructive resilience, and programmatic adaptability. Instead of replicating the past, the design aims to carry its spirit forward by developing new architectural forms that remain sensitive to historical context while meeting the demands and urgencies of the present.

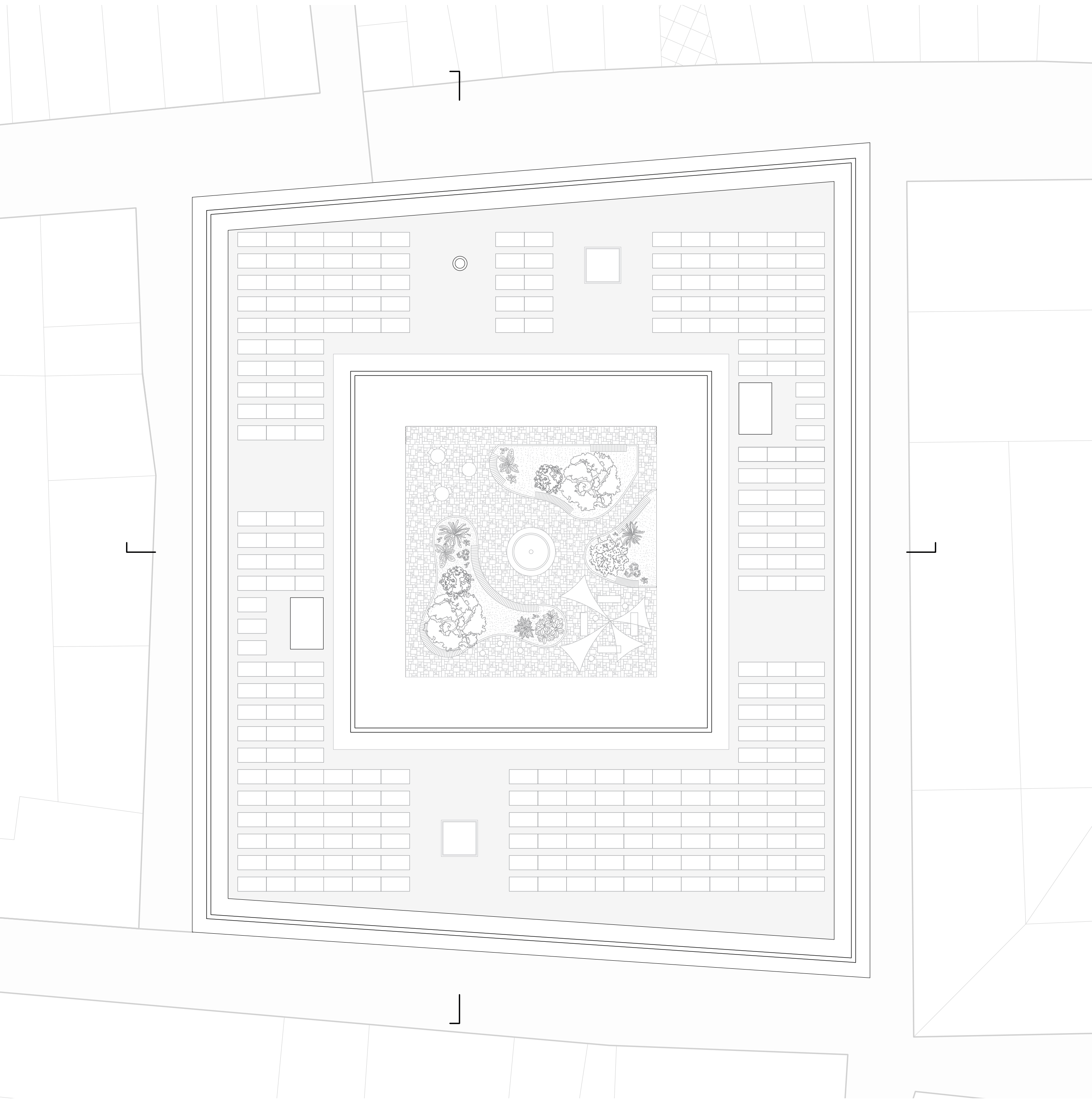
The partial reconstruction of Uzun Çarşı is thus envisioned as a contemporary urban layer, delicately placed upon a living memory. It anchors the project in history while opening it to the future, through adaptable structures capable of accommodating the social, economic, and cultural transformations of the city.



Network of the City's Historical Layers, Scale 1:10000



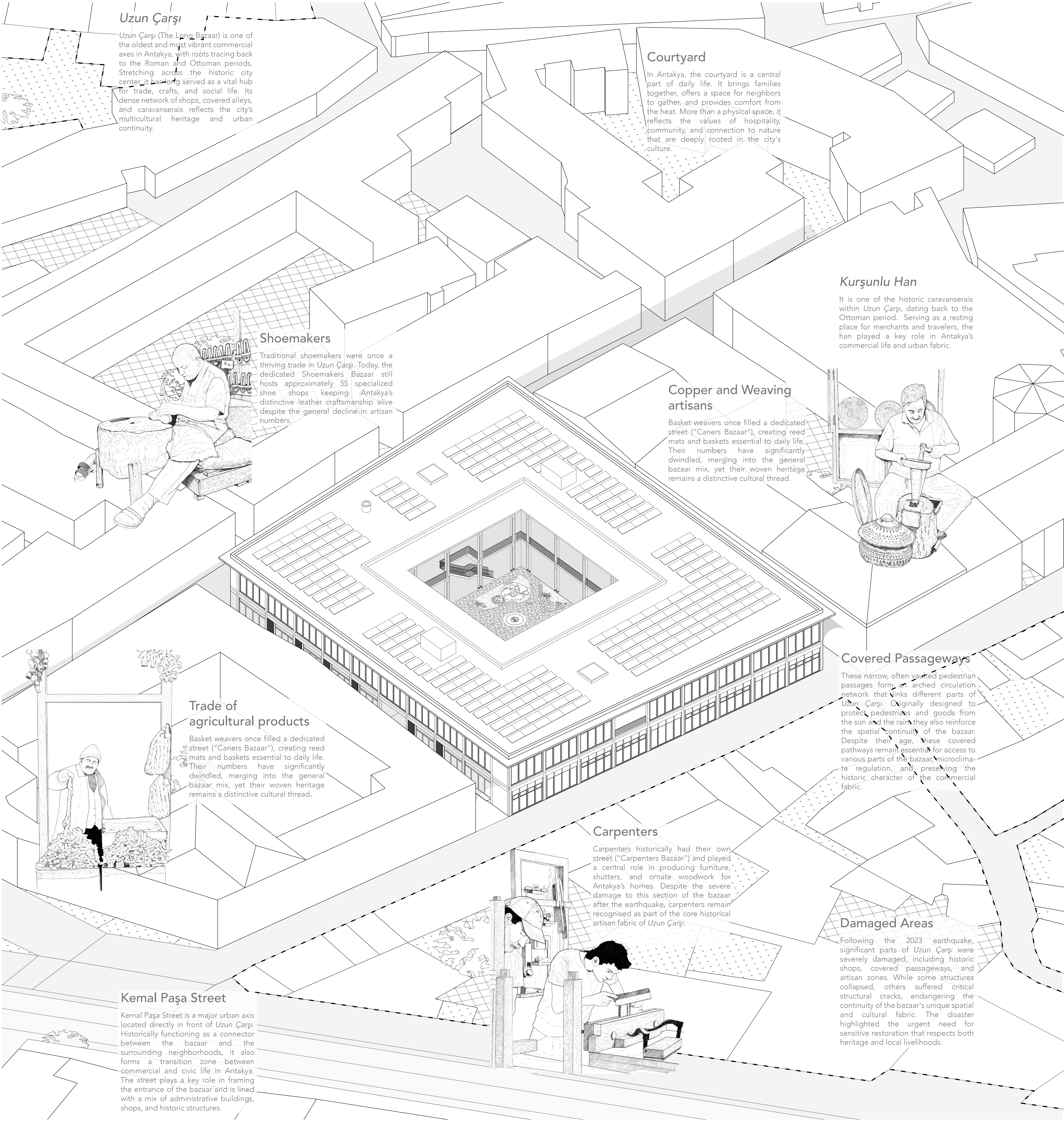
Urban Sociocultural Network, Scale 1:10000



Roof Plan, Scale 1:500



Situation Plan, Scale 1:500



Uzun Çarşı

Uzun Çarşı (The Long Bazaar) is one of the oldest and most vibrant commercial axes in Antakya, with roots tracing back to the Roman and Ottoman periods. Stretching across the historic city center, it has long served as a vital hub for trade, crafts, and social life. Its dense network of shops, covered alleys, and caravanserais reflects the city's multicultural heritage and urban continuity.

Courtyard

In Antakya, the courtyard is a central part of daily life. It brings families together, offers a space for neighbors to gather, and provides comfort from the heat. More than a physical space, it reflects the values of hospitality, community, and connection to nature that are deeply rooted in the city's culture.

Shoemakers

Traditional shoemakers were once a thriving trade in Uzun Çarşı. Today, the dedicated Shoemakers Bazaar still hosts approximately 55 specialized shoe shops, keeping Antakya's distinctive leather craftsmanship alive despite the general decline in artisan numbers.

Copper and Weaving artisans

Basket-weavers once filled a dedicated street ("Caners Bazaar"), creating reed mats and baskets essential to daily life. Their numbers have significantly dwindled, merging into the general bazaar mix, yet their woven heritage remains a distinctive cultural thread.

Kurşunlu Han

It is one of the historic caravanserais within Uzun Çarşı, dating back to the Ottoman period. Serving as a resting place for merchants and travelers, the han played a key role in Antakya's commercial life and urban fabric.

Trade of agricultural products

Basket weavers once filled a dedicated street ("Caners Bazaar"), creating reed mats and baskets essential to daily life. Their numbers have significantly dwindled, merging into the general bazaar mix, yet their woven heritage remains a distinctive cultural thread.

Carpenters

Carpenters historically had their own street ("Carpenters Bazaar") and played a central role in producing furniture, shutters, and ornate woodwork for Antakya's homes. Despite the severe damage to this section of the bazaar after the earthquake, carpenters remain recognised as part of the core historical artisan fabric of Uzun Çarşı.

Covered Passageways

These narrow, often vaulted pedestrian passages form an arched circulation network that links different parts of Uzun Çarşı. Originally designed to protect pedestrians and goods from the sun and the rain, they also reinforce the spatial continuity of the bazaar. Despite their age, these covered pathways remain essential for access to various parts of the bazaar, microclimate regulation, and preserving the historic character of the commercial fabric.

Damaged Areas

Following the 2023 earthquake, significant parts of Uzun Çarşı were severely damaged, including historic shops, covered passageways, and artisan zones. While some structures collapsed, others suffered critical structural cracks, endangering the continuity of the bazaar's unique spatial and cultural fabric. The disaster highlighted the urgent need for sensitive restoration that respects both heritage and local livelihoods.

This site functioned as a vibrant historical marketplace with dense traditional urban fabric, showcasing Antakya's cultural and architectural heritage.

Pre-Earthquake State Historical Uzun Çarşı

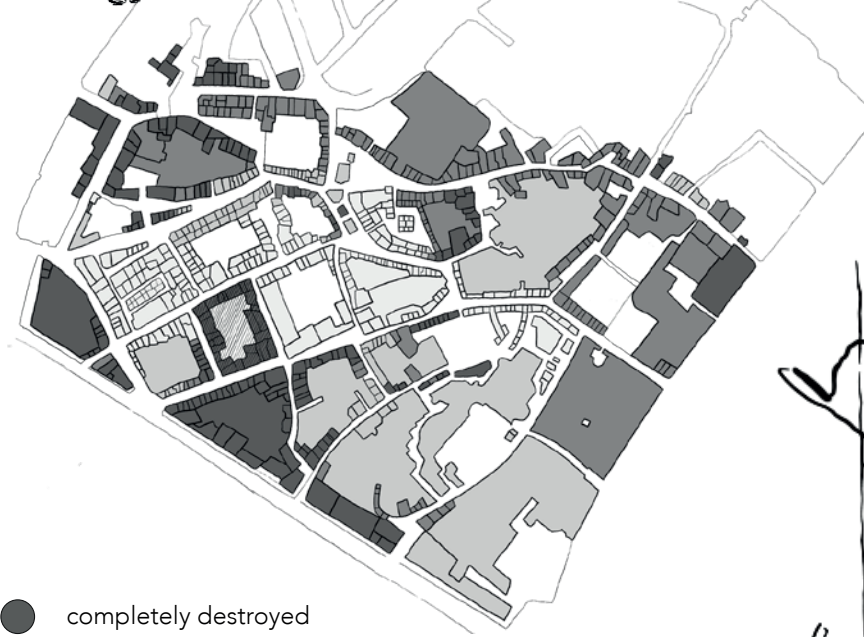
2022



A devastating earthquake caused widespread structural damage and the collapse of many historic buildings within Uzun Çarşı.

Earthquake and Destruction

06.02.2023



- completely destroyed
- severely damaged
- moderately damaged
- slightly damaged



Heavy machinery and manual labor were used to clear rubble. Usable stones, bricks, and timber were sorted for potential reuse in reconstruction to support circularity.

Debris Removal, Site Cleaning, and Material Sorting

2023 - 2024

A comprehensive survey and 3D scanning of the damaged site was conducted to document surviving structures and align future plans with the historical grid.

Documentation & Surveying

2024



Site Organisation & Infrastructure Setup

2024 - 2025

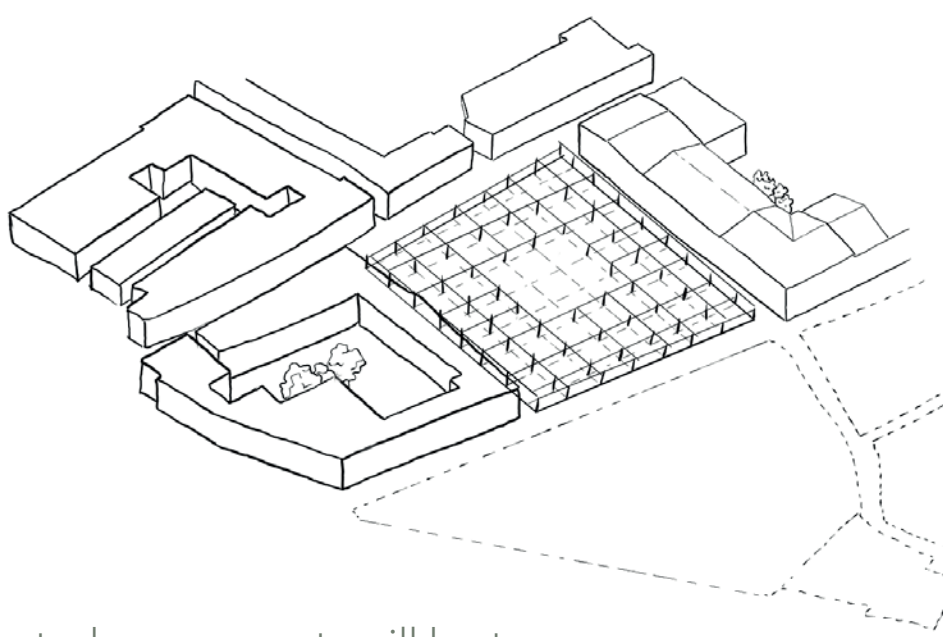


Construction zones, logistics routes, and storage areas will be defined. Temporary utilities and safety perimeters will be established to ensure efficient site operation.

Concrete or recycled-stone foundations were laid. Structural frames were erected using sustainable systems adapted for seismic resilience.

Foundation Works and Structural Frame Completion

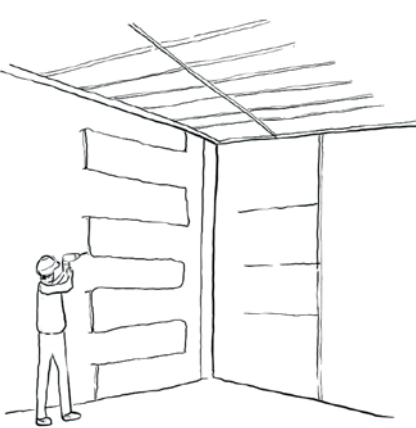
2025



Prefabricated components will be transported and assembled on-site, minimizing construction time and reducing environmental impact.

On-Site Assembly and Installation

2025 - 2026

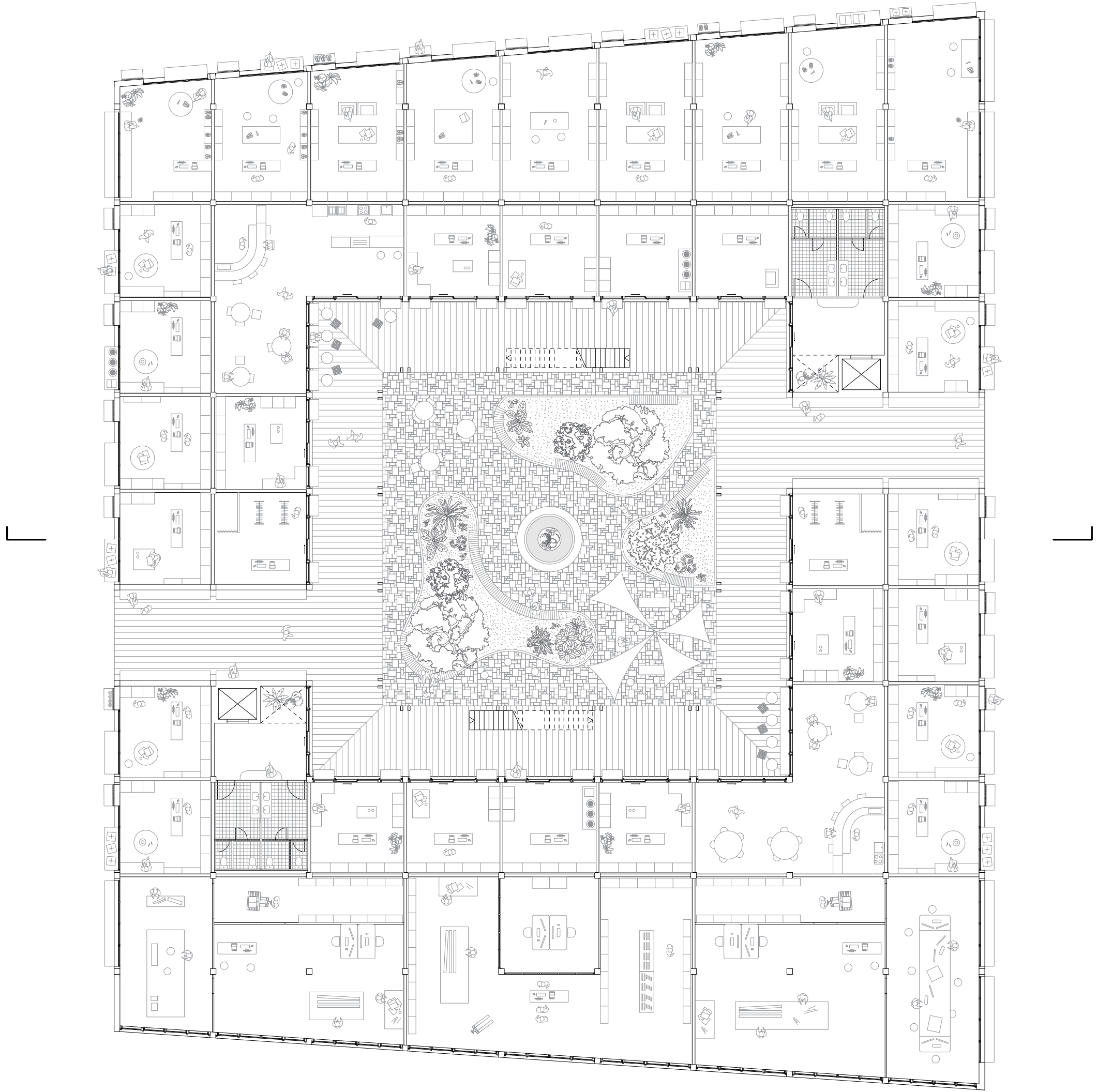


Final architectural finishes, public realm improvements, the planting of climate-adapted vegetation in the courtyard, and the reintroduction of commercial activity will be carried out to help revive Uzun Çarşı.

Finishing Works & Public Space Activation

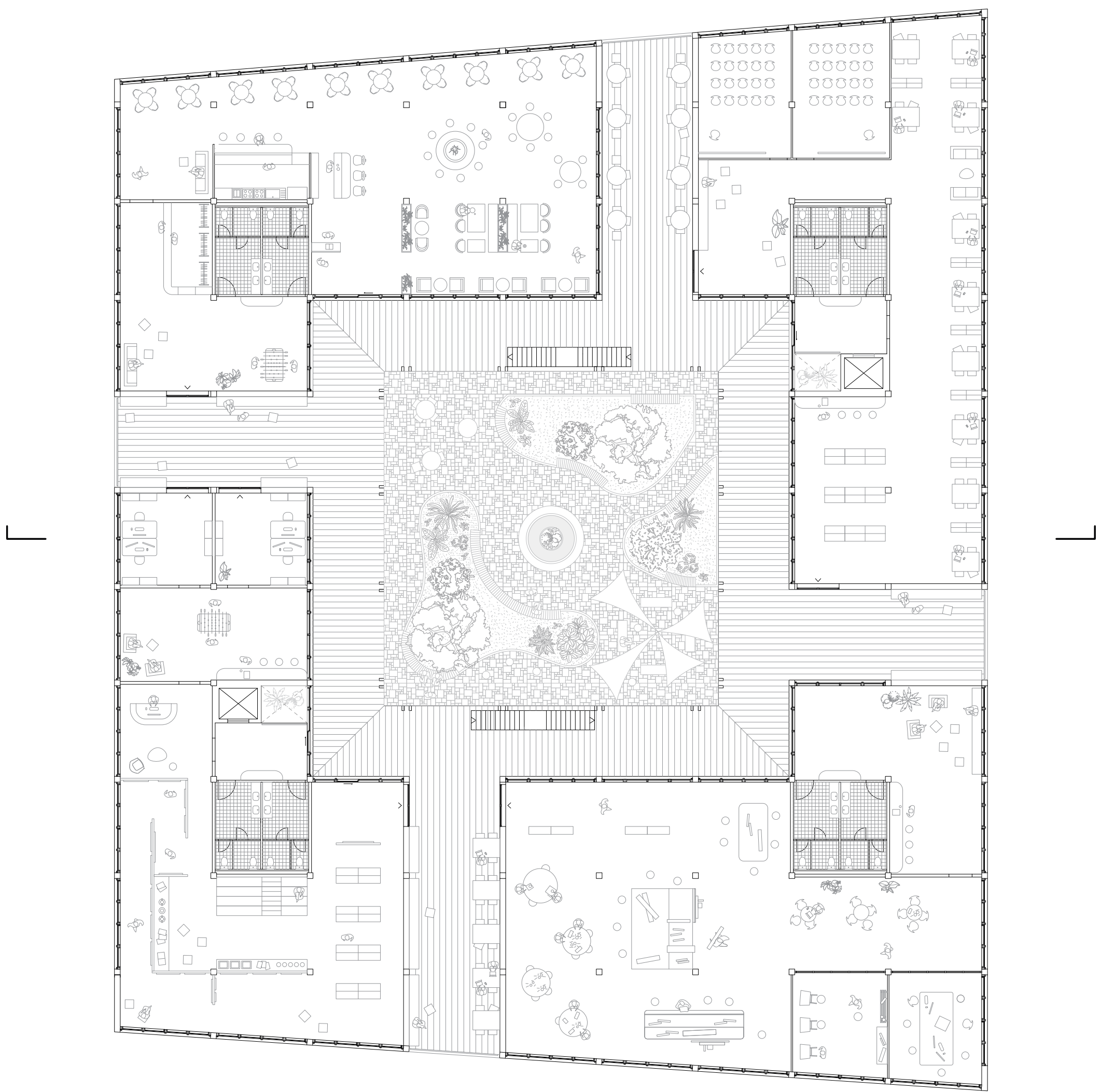
2026

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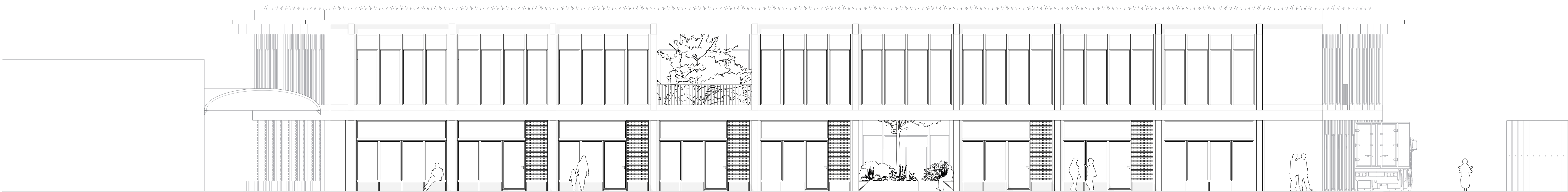


Ground Floor Plan, Scale 1:200

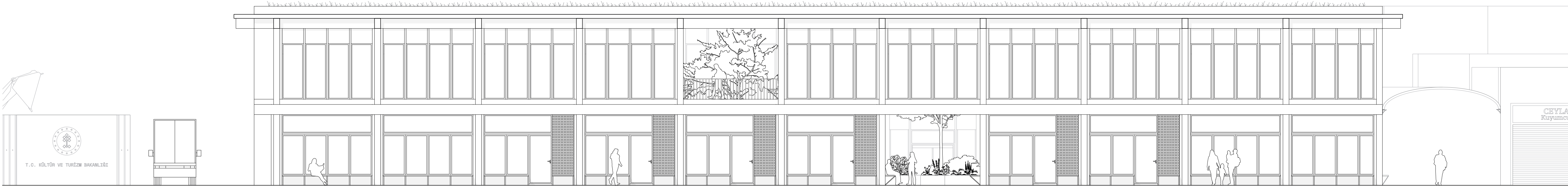
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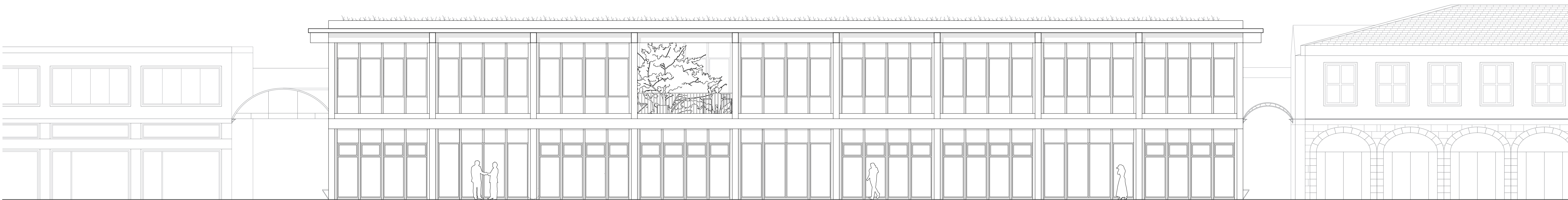
First Floor Plan, Scale 1:200



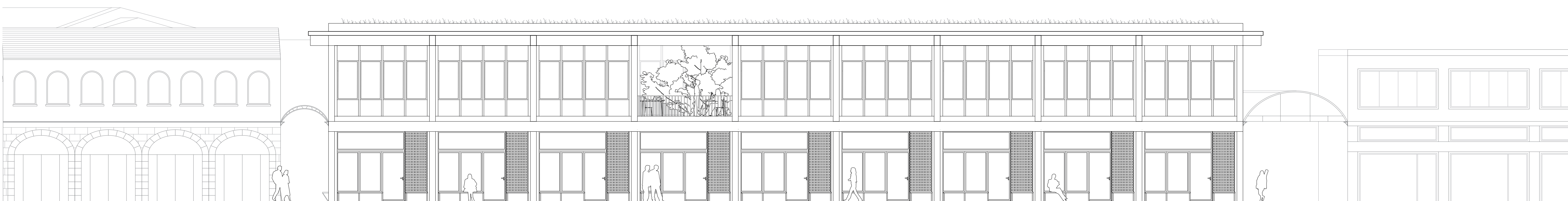
Northeast Elevation, Scale 1:100



Southeast Elevation, Scale 1:100



Southwest Elevation, Scale 1:100



Northwest Elevation, Scale 1:100



Cross Section, Scale 1:100



Longitudinal Section, Scale 1:100



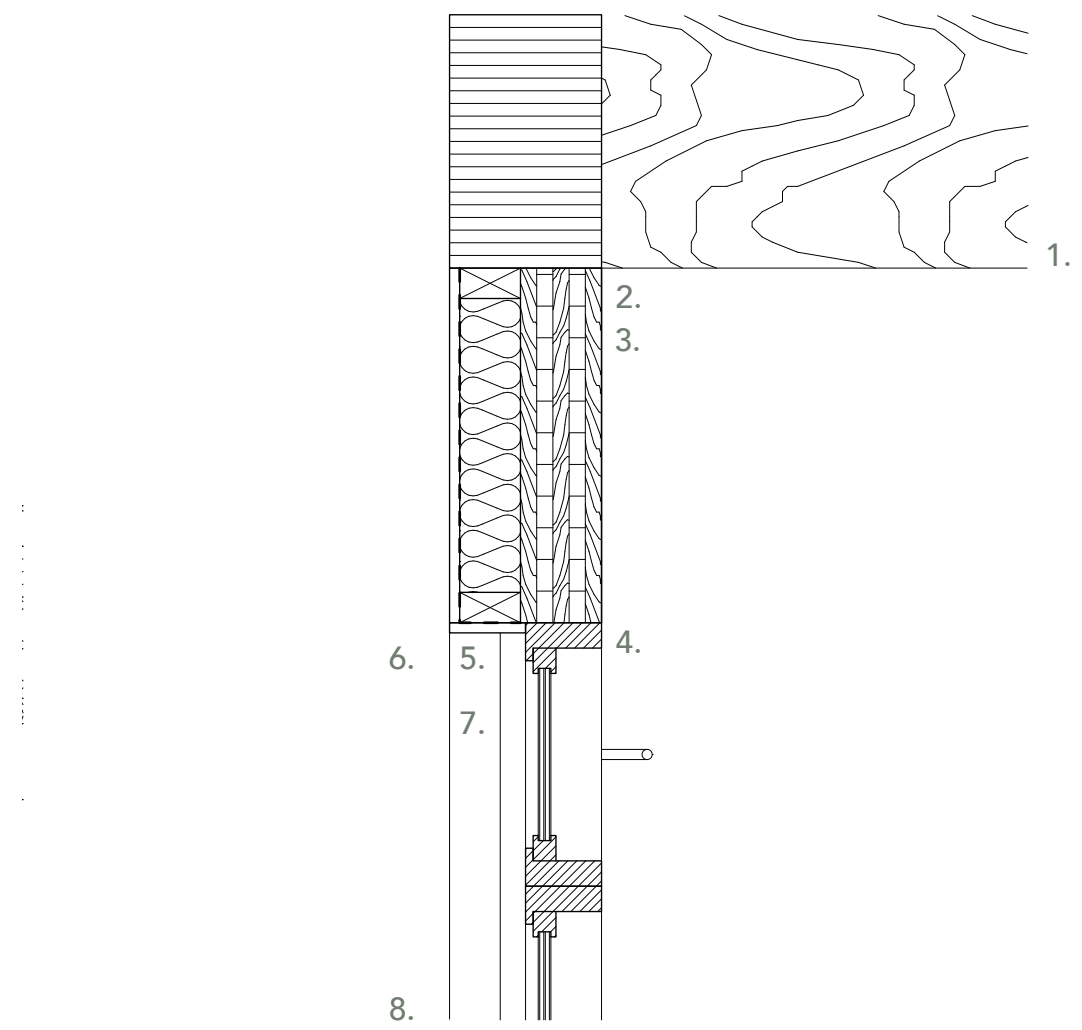
Perspective view of the courtyard



Interior view of the shop

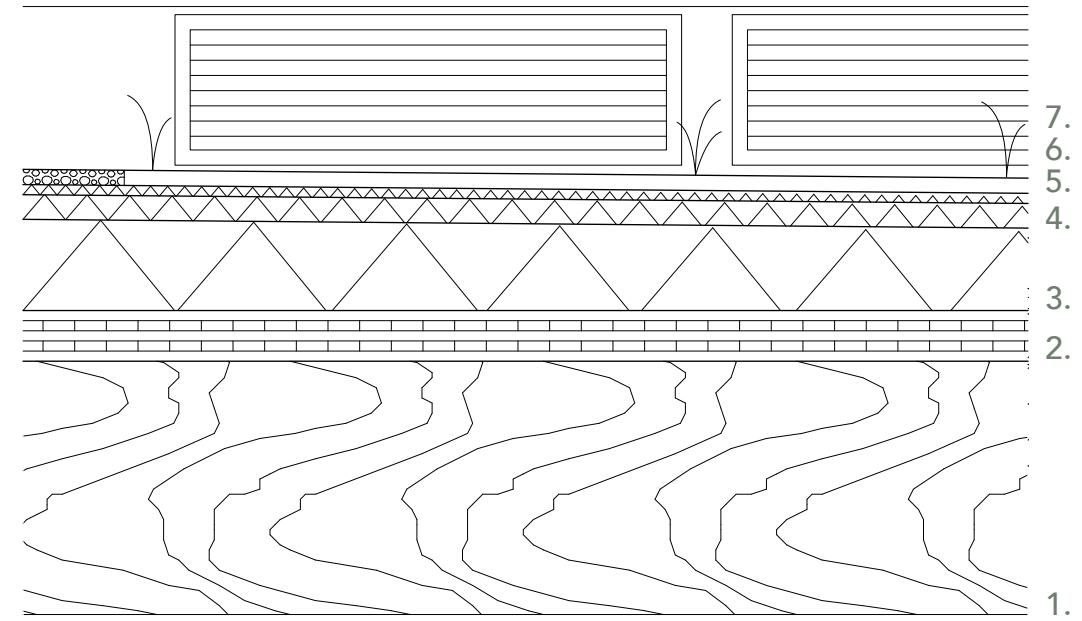


Interior view of the restaurant



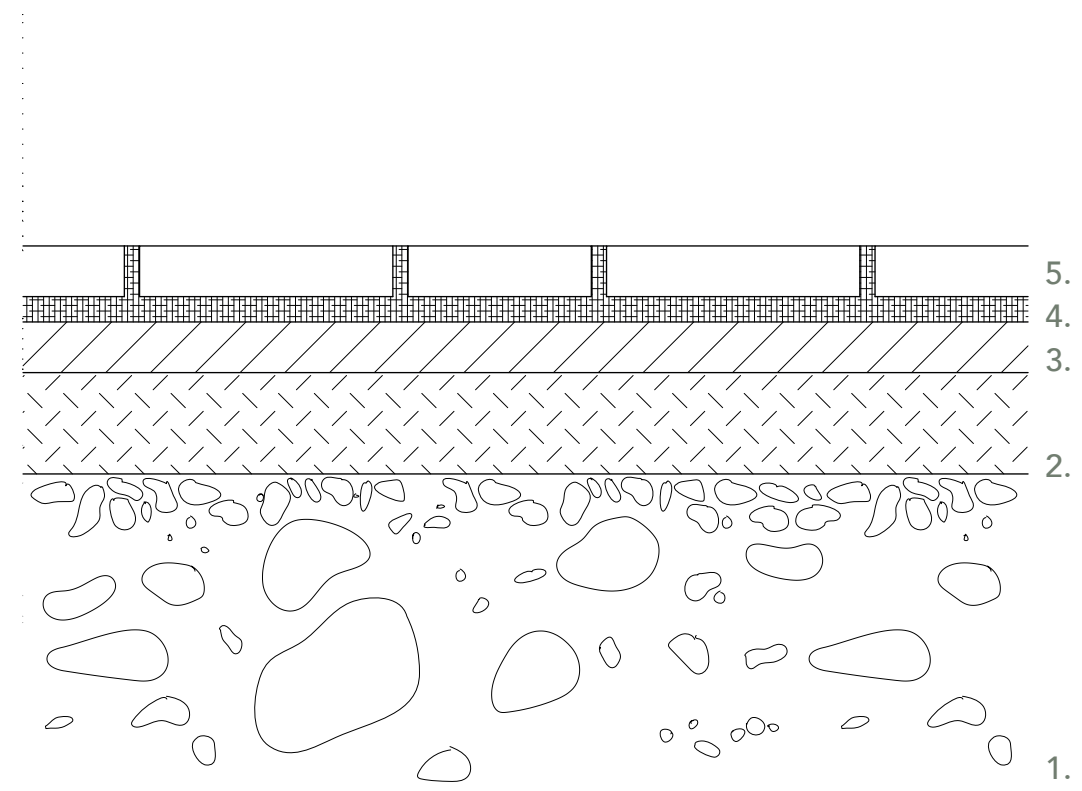
Façade Construction, Scale 1:15

1. 300–500x300 mm – Glulam columns/beams
2. Fire-retardant clear varnish on visible CLT
3. 160 mm – CLT panel (5-ply)
4. 80 mm – Triple-glazed aluminium joinery (RAL green)
5. 120 mm – Wood fibre insulation + timber secondary frame
6. 0.2 mm – Breathable rain screen membrane
7. 20–90 mm, Thermo-treated timber cladding
8. Built-in bench + mosaic board (functional façade)



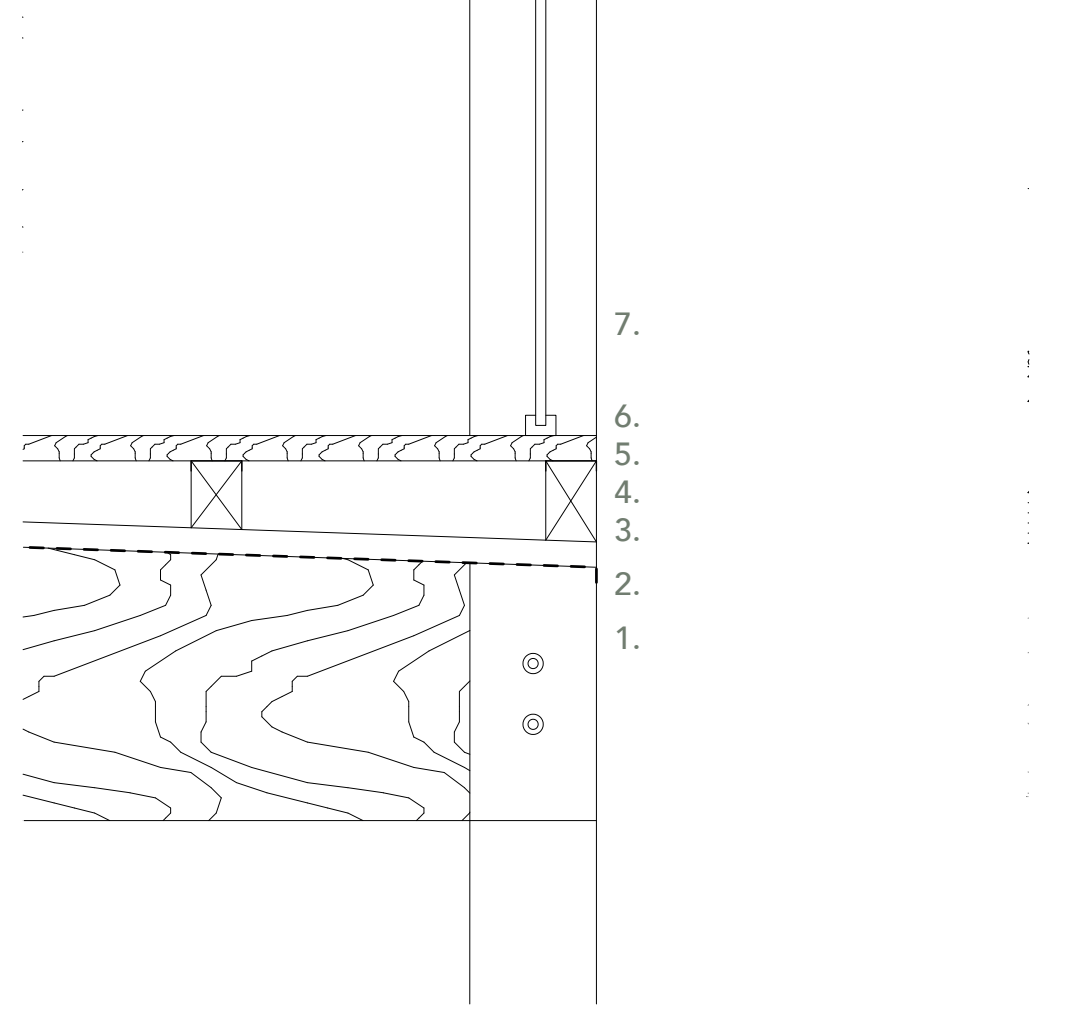
Roof Construction, Scale 1:15

1. 500 mm – Timber beam grid (load-bearing structure)
2. 100 mm – CLT roof slab
3. 180 mm – Tapered thermal insulation
4. 2x layers – Bituminous waterproofing membrane
5. 10 mm – Drainage mat with filter fleece
6. 100–300 mm – Green roof (sedum + perimeter planting)
7. 1000 mm – Photovoltaic panels (mounted on green roof)



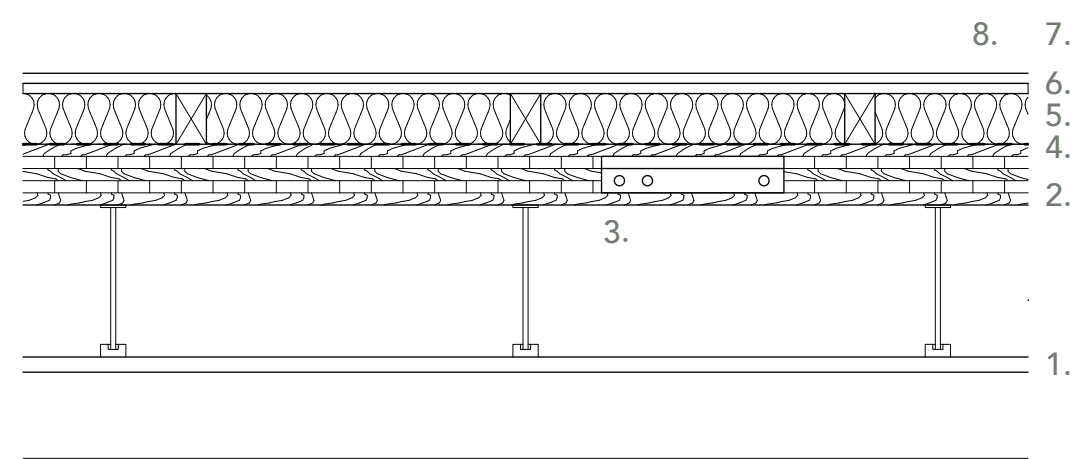
Courtyard Construction, Scale 1:15

1. Compacted subsoil (foundation ground)
2. 200 mm – Foundation gravel layer (well-compacted)
3. 100 mm – Leveling layer (compacted crushed gravel)
4. 50 mm – Bedding layer (gravel)
5. 100 mm – Recycled natural stone paving



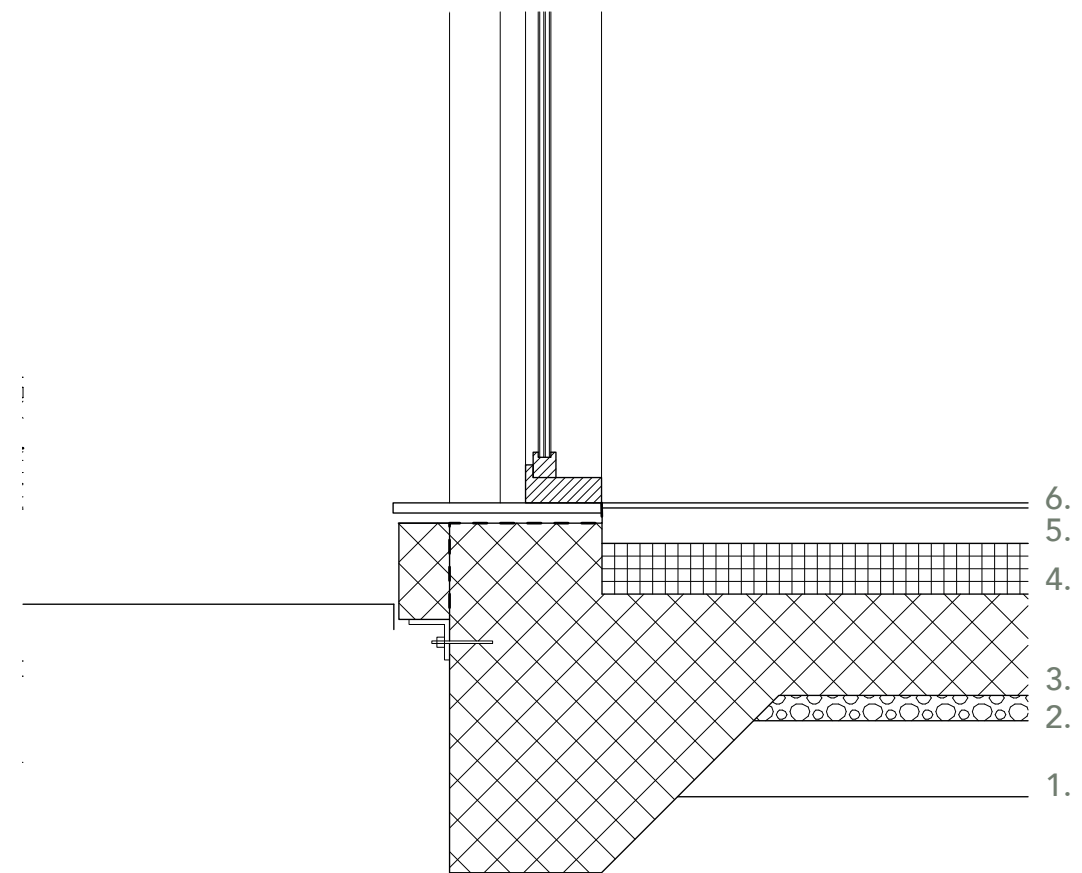
Course Construction, Scale 1:15

1. Timber decking
2. Waterproofing complex
3. 50 mm – Raised timber battens (for water drainage slope)
4. Load-bearing timber structure
5. Bituminous protection strips (moisture protection)
6. Timber slats
7. Guardrail



Floor Construction, Scale 1:15

1. Suspended acoustic ceiling (in the required areas)
2. 120 mm – CLT panel (5-ply)
3. Sprinklers + Services in ceiling through
4. Vapour control layer
5. 100 mm – Insulation between timber battens
6. 20 mm – High-density board (Fermacell/OSB)
7. 20 mm – Gypcrete
8. 5–15 mm – Finish flooring (in the required areas)



Foundation Construction, Scale 1:15

1. 150 mm – Hardcore (crushed stone/gravel sub-base)
2. 50 mm – Sand binding layer
3. 200 mm – Reinforced concrete raft slab
4. 100 mm – Rigid insulation
5. 25 mm – Concrete screed (levelling layer)
6. 3 mm – Microcrete polished finish (wear layer / aesthetic finish)