0 10 20   50

## Amsterdam Kraal: urbanity by porosity

Kraal is an eighteenth century term used by Dutch colonists to describe a peculiar southern African typology of settlements. The word relates to the idea of an enclosed community and the way the singular modules are scattered and grouped together around a shared empty space. The project aims at achieving the same extraordinary condition of urbanity back in H-buurt Amsterdam, dealing with a multicultural approach to private and public life, living and working needs. In order to accomplish the maximum level of urbanity, Amsterdam Kraal envisions a process of gradual development toward the formation of a porous urban environment, which conveys a flexible implementation of a set of spaces and architectures as a whole.

In these days, there is no more necessity to differentiate the space for living and that of working. Hyperconnectivity lets people transform an even spatial domain into a working, leisure, or living space at once. Therefore, we addressed the topic with a toolkit of flexible "fields", physical and digital places, that together form the experience of a richer range of human activities; indented as unexpected encounters, manifold functional programs, and different family nucleuses to happen in the same area. Here the notion of "difference" is the cornerstone of the future development of the area. A main challenge would be to integrate material and informational networks with architecture, figuring the Kraal as a layered network node, where different vectors can be exchanged or combined. Since typological, functional and formal complexity of urban space would implode into a social condenser, the latter represents itself as an urban island, setting up a city inside the city. Connective spaces, dwellings, commercial units, public facilities and offices interweave in the three dimensions of space. The alley, the square, the terrace would attain those "streams of communal life" to which Walter Benjamin addresses when comparing the Kraal with the "dispersed, porous, and commingled private life" of Mediterranean cities. And is the study of the archetypal space of historical European cities that would unfold the right set of spatial tools to project a future in which technology and physical sociality are no longer two poles in antithesis.
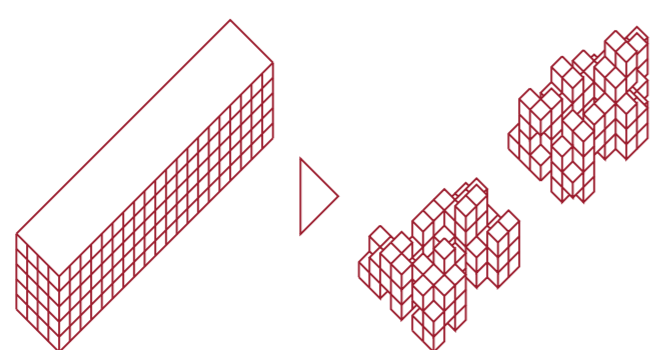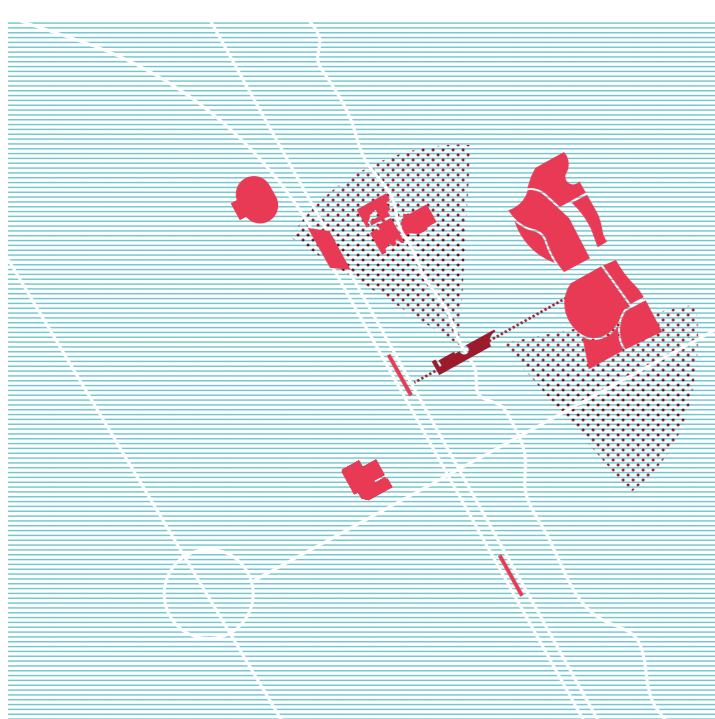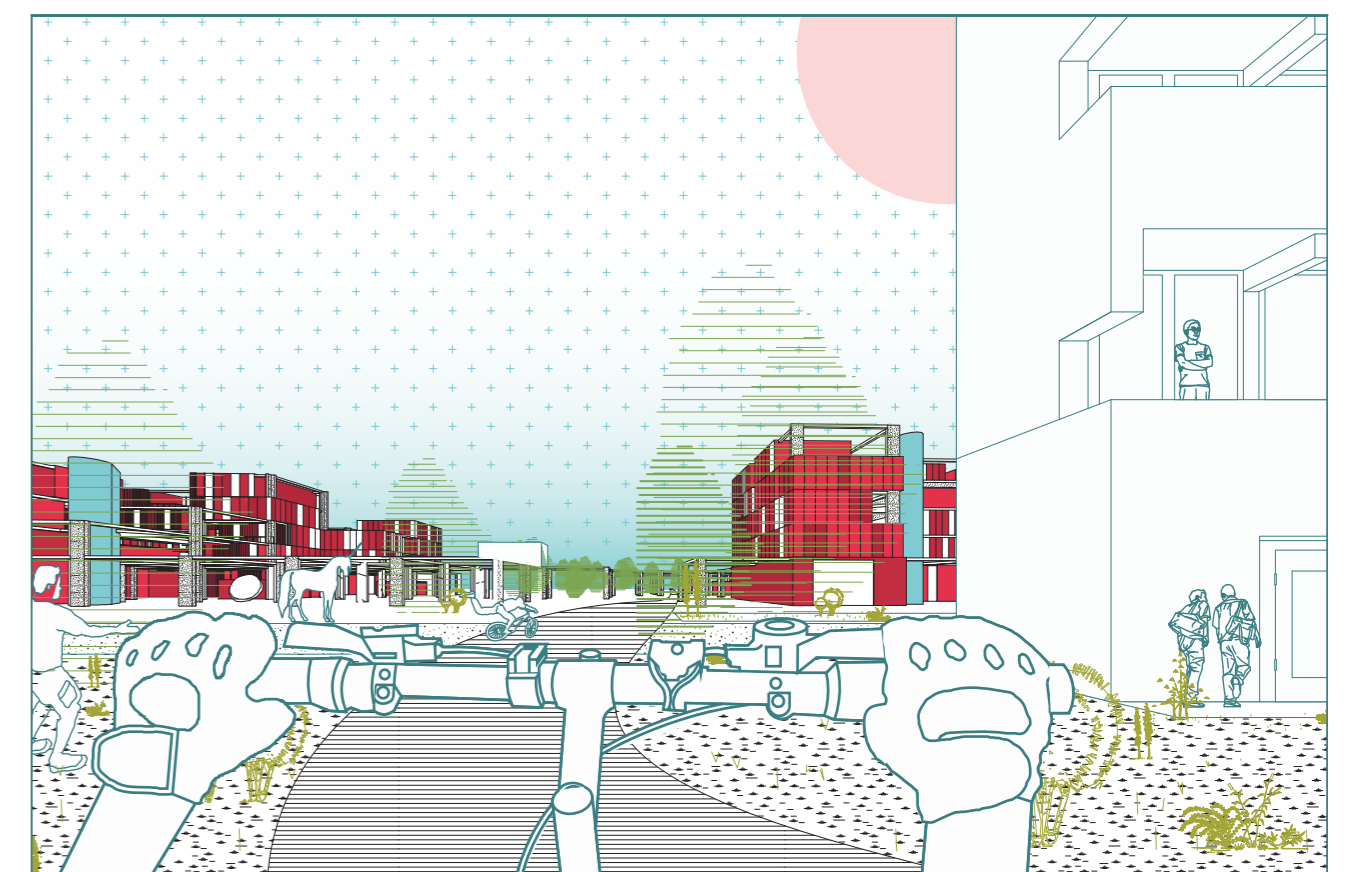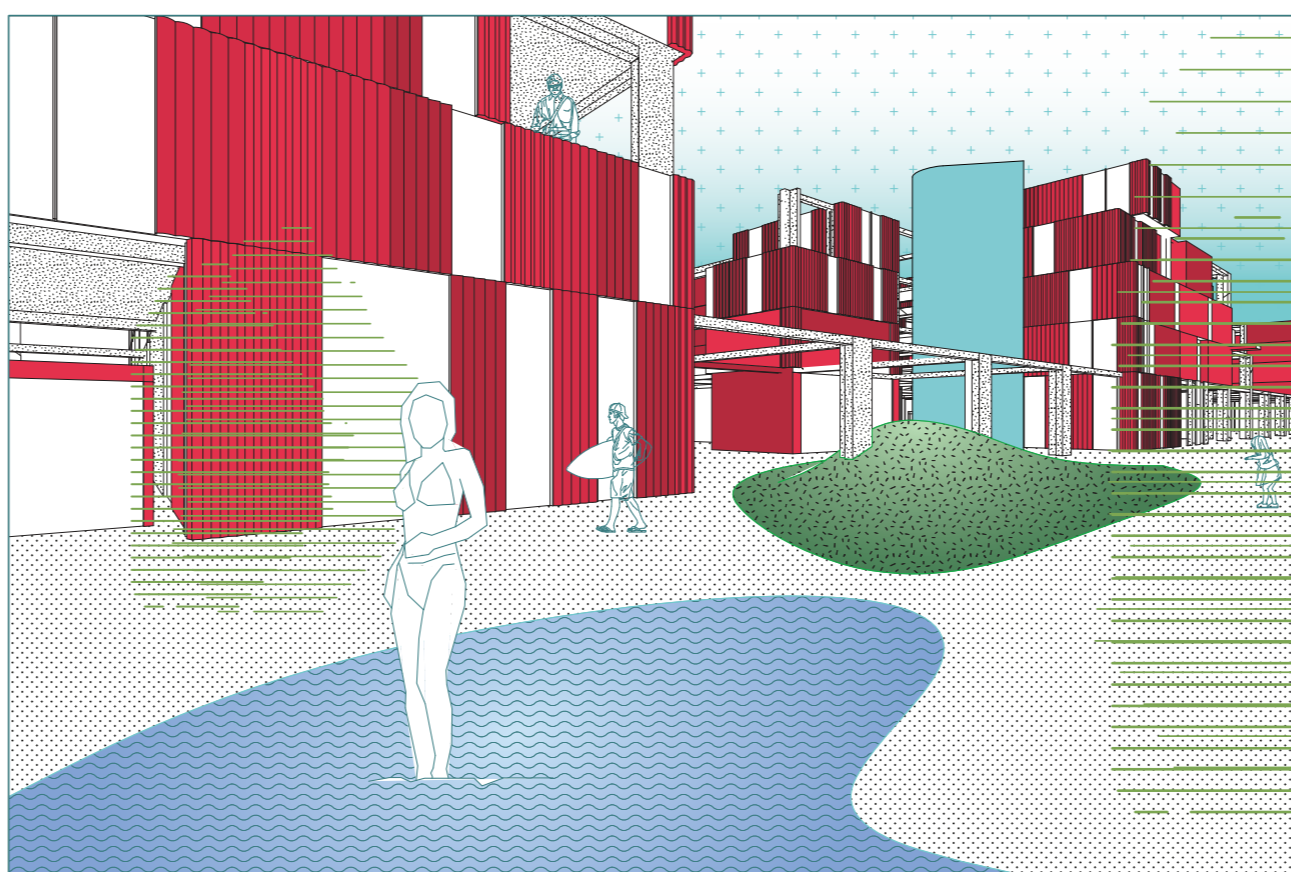
POROSITY
The term "porosity", taken from geology, expresses the fraction of the volume of voids over the total volume. If the similitude is applicable in architecture, porosity should represent the ability of the urban solid to be permeated by public space and activate urbanity inside.
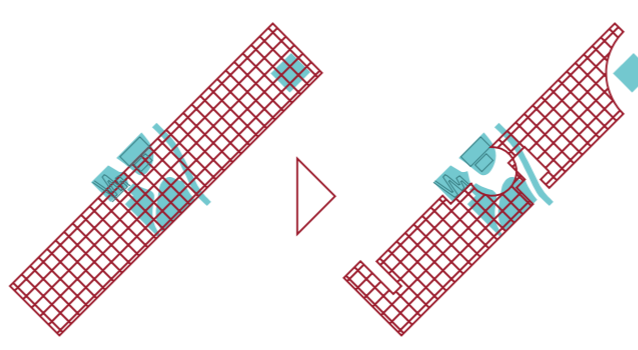
CONTEXT
Some existing building and amenities have been treated as linking nodes with the context. The shape of the Kraal conforms its boundary to the playground, the bike lane, the building in the East side and the greenery system.

DENSITY
The density of the intervention is designed to recreate a human-scale urban experience, helping occasional social encounters and small retailing. While certain parts convey higher density, other areas are gradually dispersed when relating to selected views. The Amsterdam Arena, the train station, the two large shopping malls, and the Nelson Mandela park as well, are the closest landmarks that interact with the system of the Kraal.

PLAYGROUND
The area under the influence of the Kraal is a playground that gather natural element, such as hills and water places, and artificial fragments, such as benches, skateboarding pipes, urban furniture. In this way, the Kraal will convey an internal micro-landscape of *objet trouvés*. The outer space wold be an extension of the domestic space, inviting each inhabitant to share a piece of its privacy to gain a passive social control of the area.
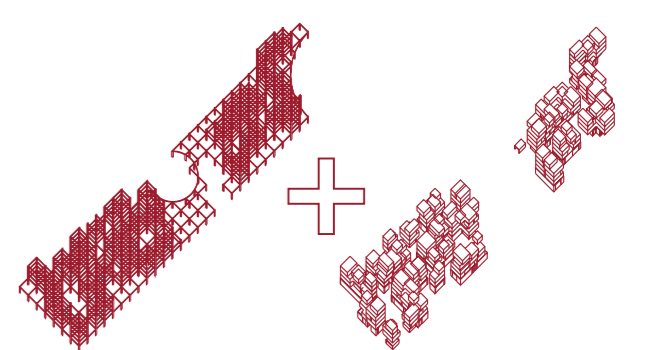
FLEXIBILITY
Our proposal would define a process to be used as tool by investors and the municipality. Changes will take time; evolving needs will challenge the design, which is meant to be structured on non-dogmatic rules to let the intervention to be consistent with the demand of the area. The cluster strategy would better adapt to the ongoing transformation in Amsterdam H-Buurt.

first floor

second floor

ground floor

fourth floor

0   2.5   5

0   5   10   20
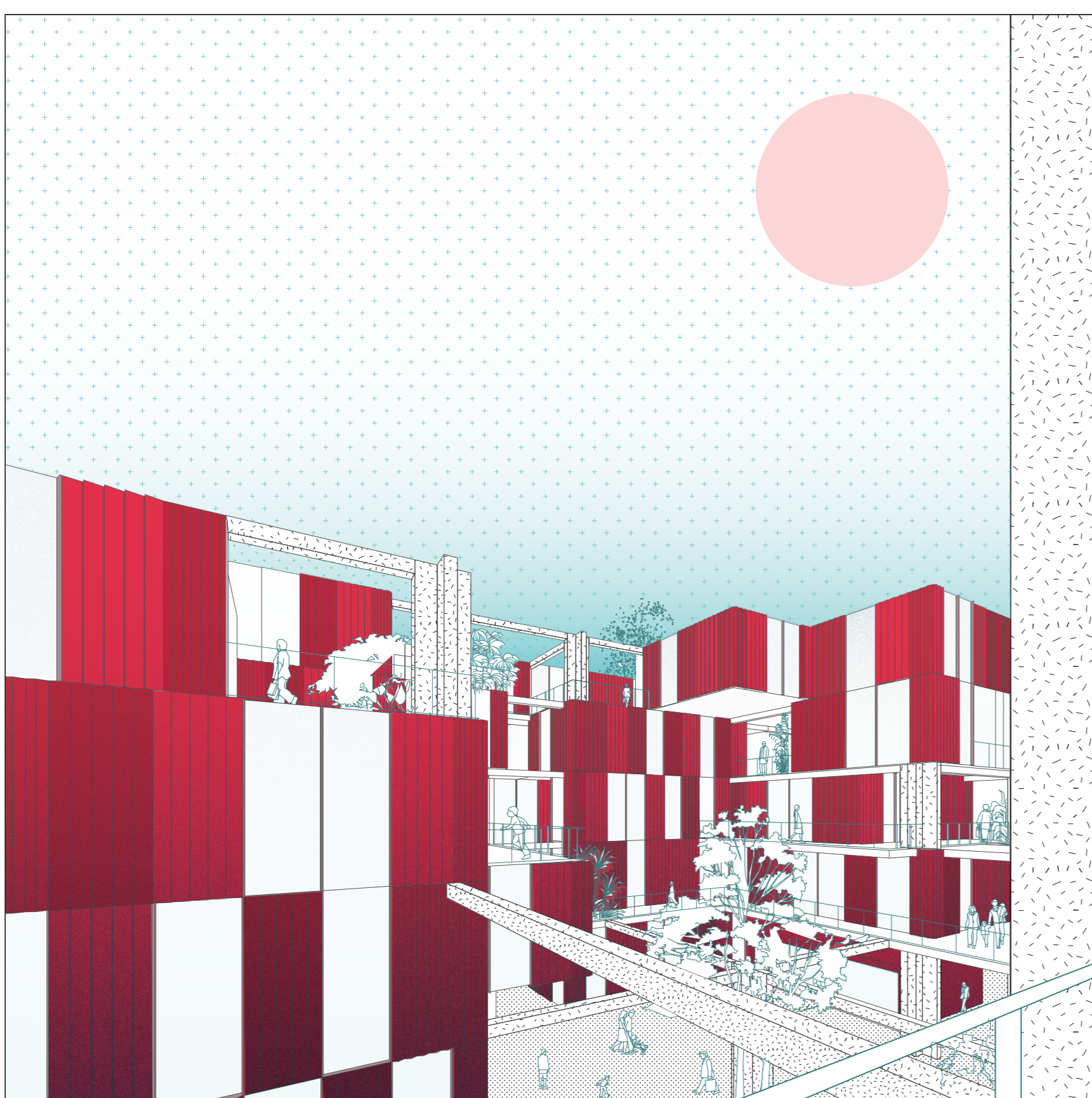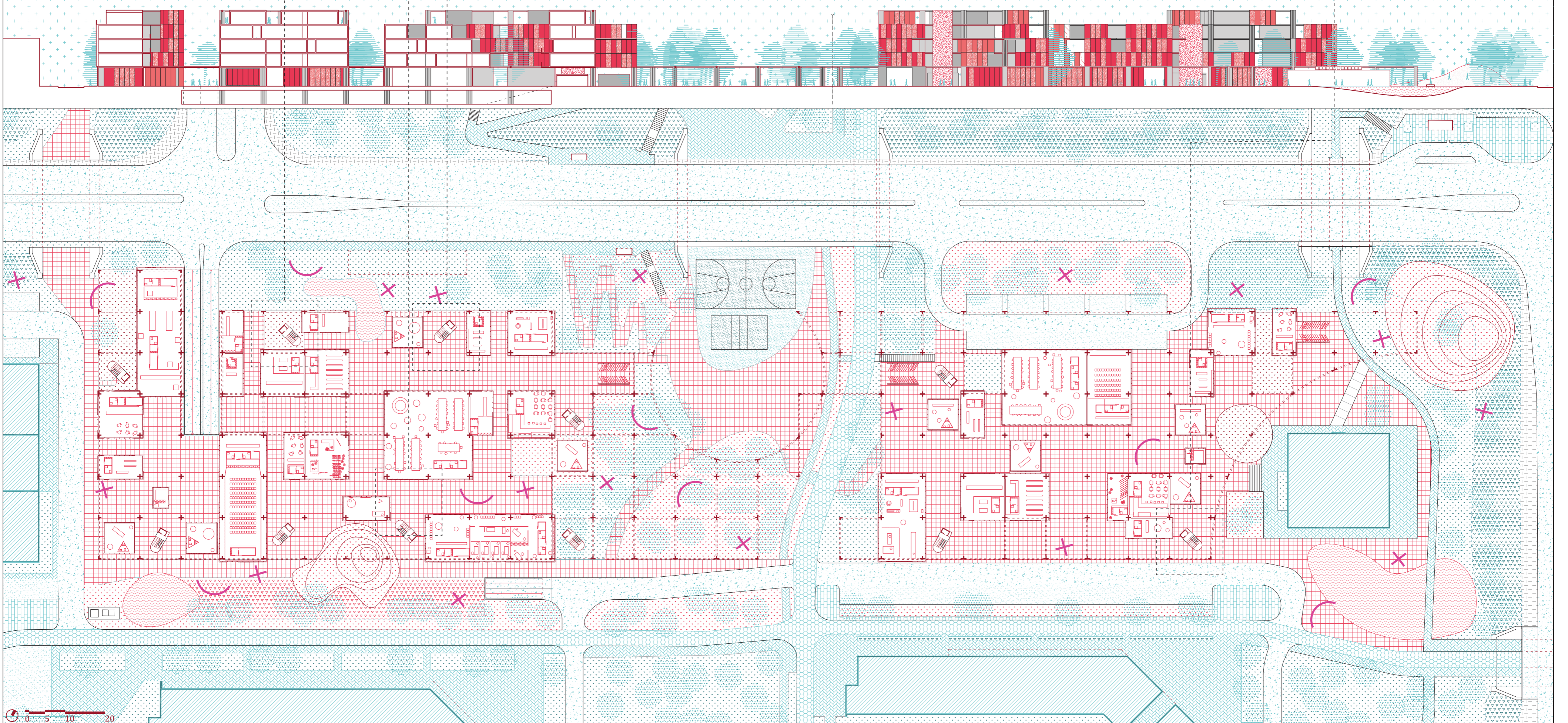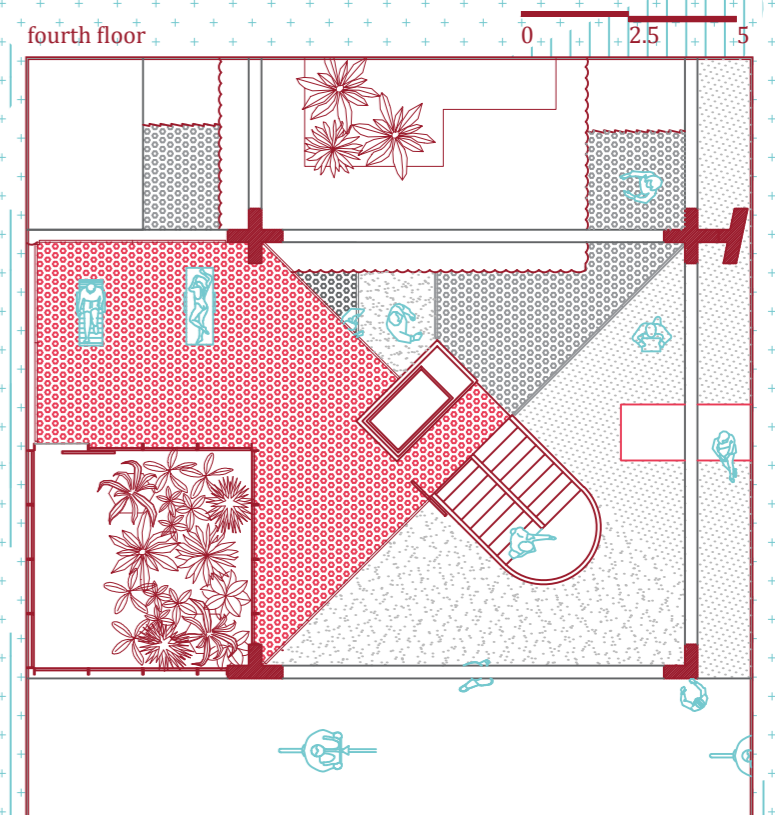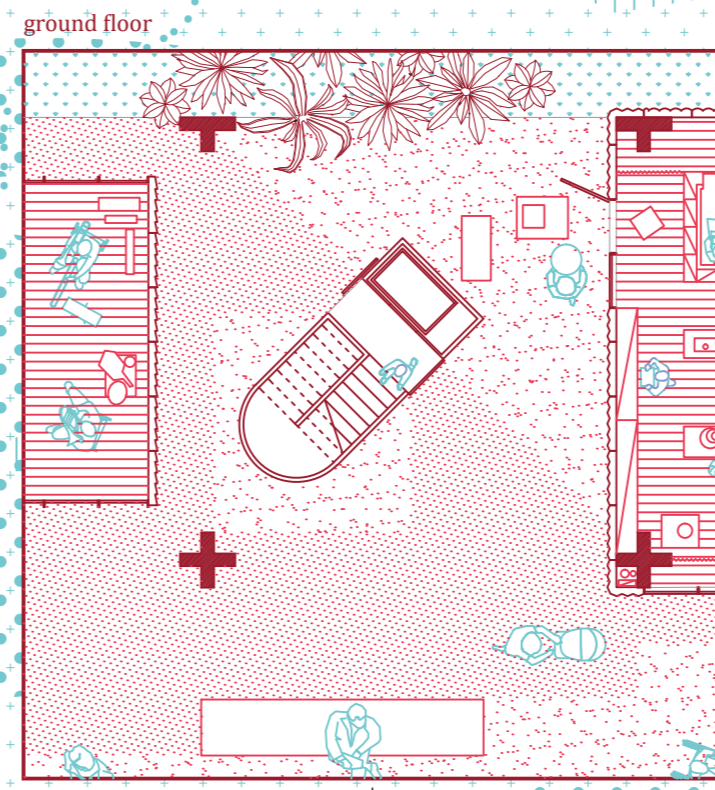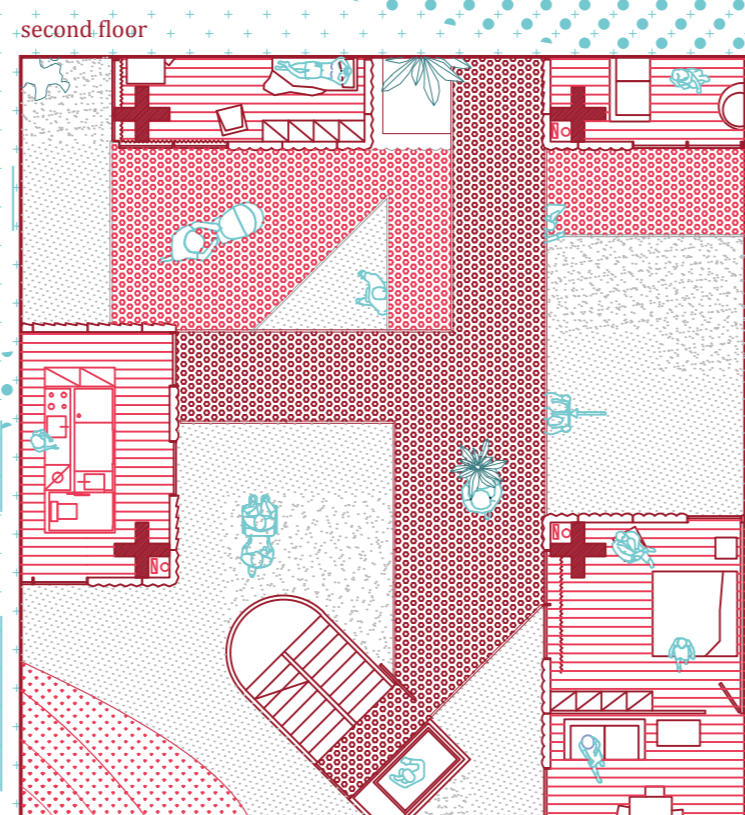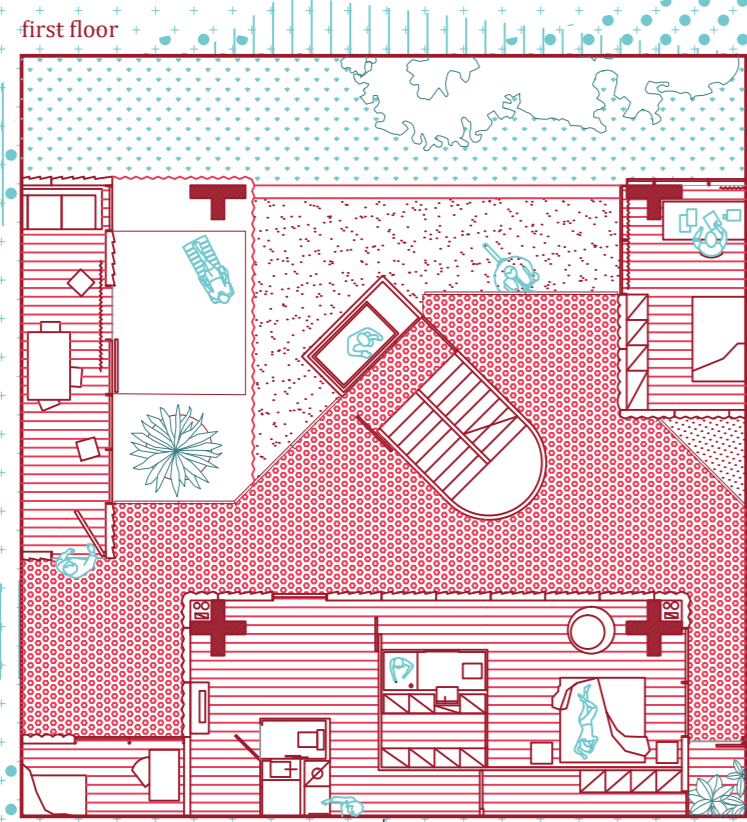
PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

MODULES
Prefab structural modules would structure the settlement on the base of nine field typologies. The enclosure combines three modular panels according to personal needs and customized layouts.
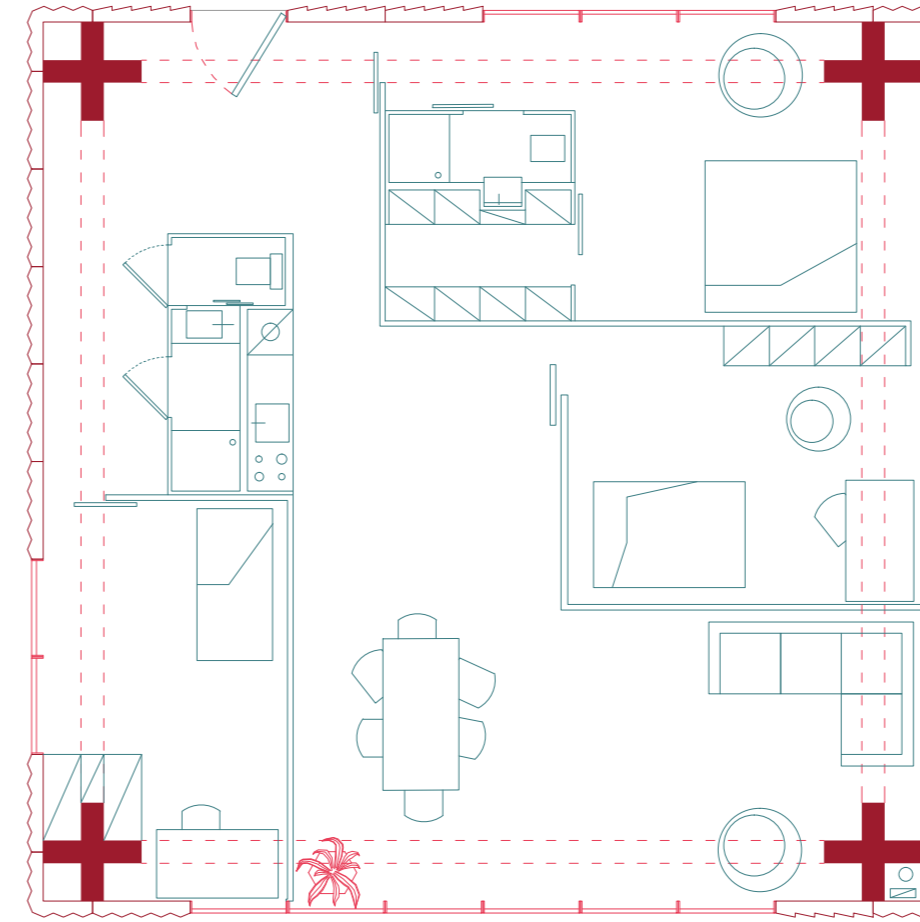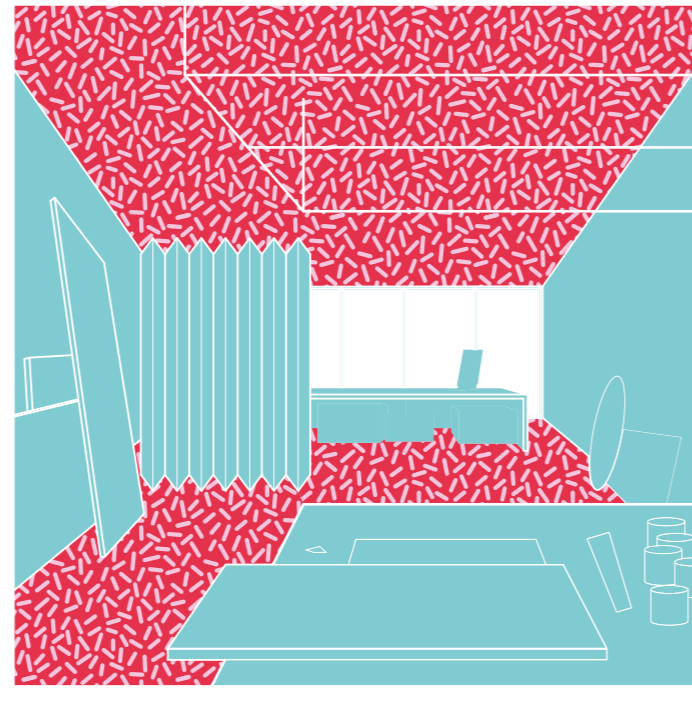
UNDERGROUND PARKING
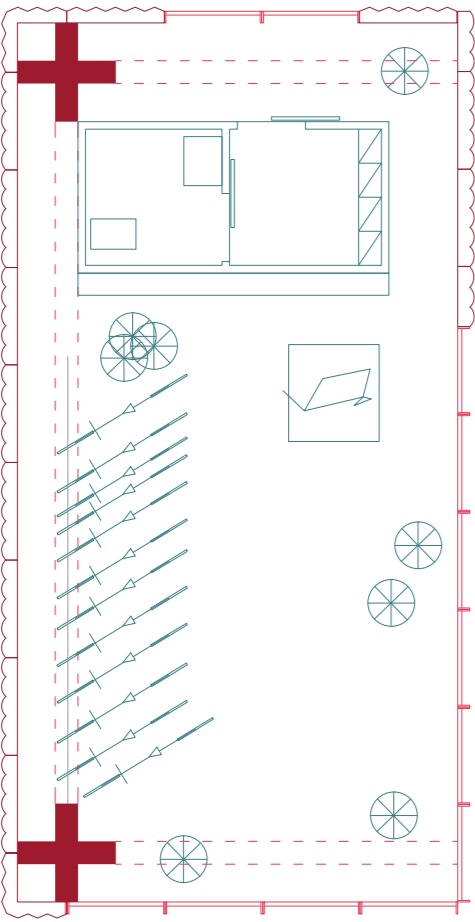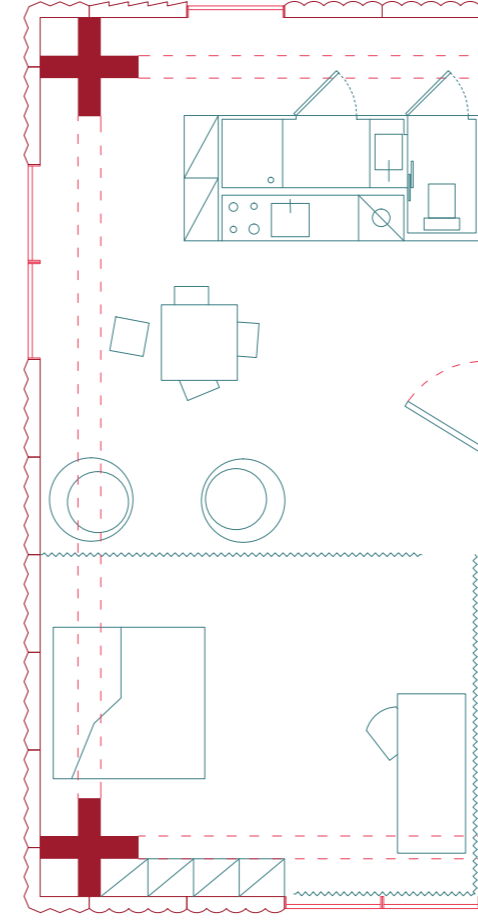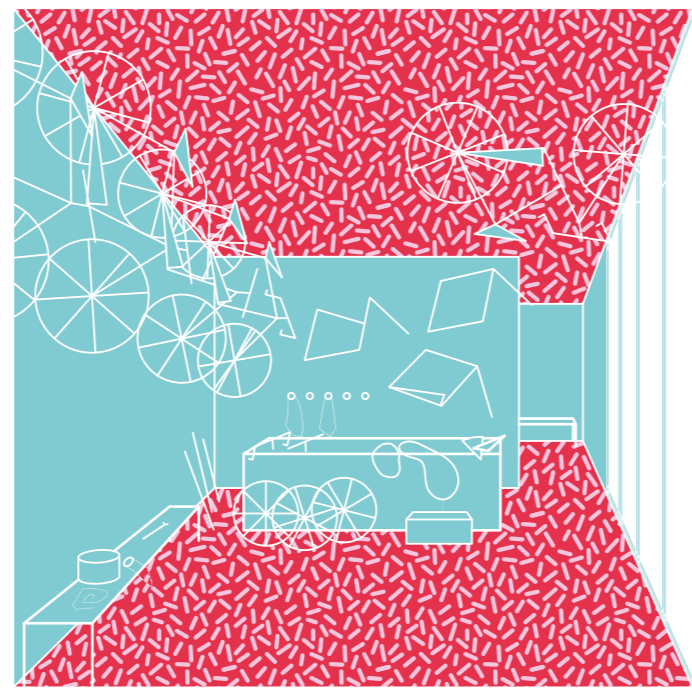Amsterdam Kraal comprises one underground parking and five surface parking areas.

0   20   40   80

PHASE ONE

PHASE TWO

PHASE THREE

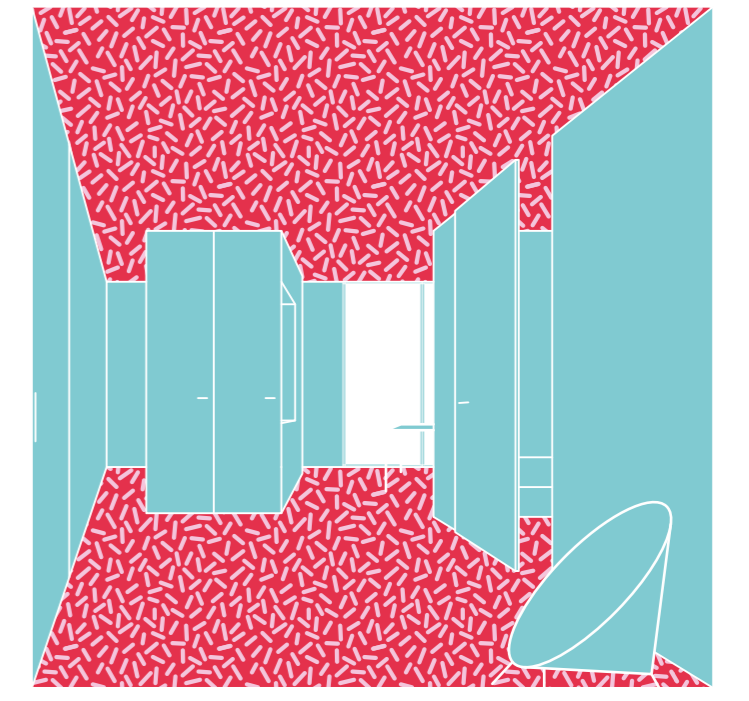0   20   40   80

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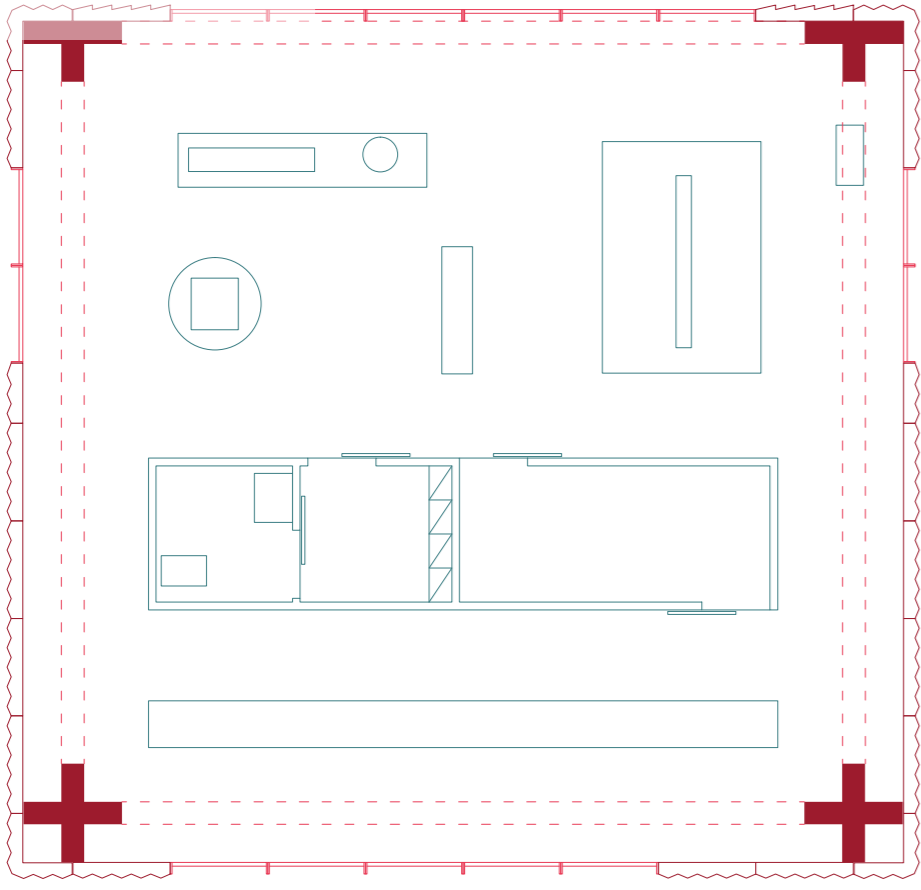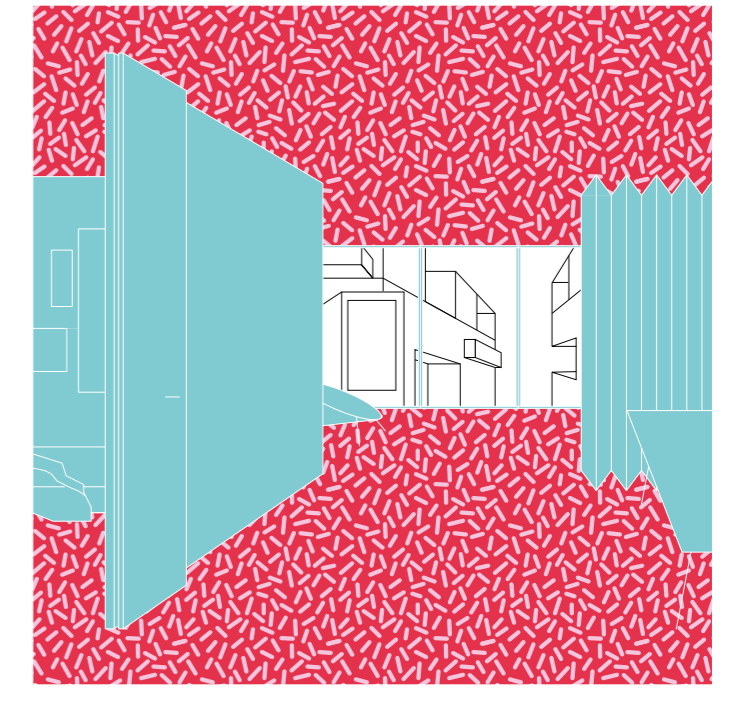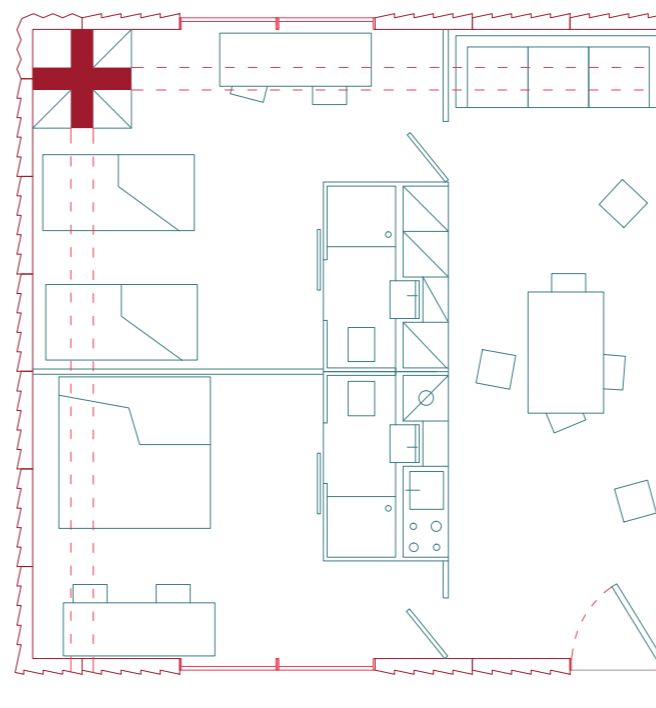
Field A

Field E

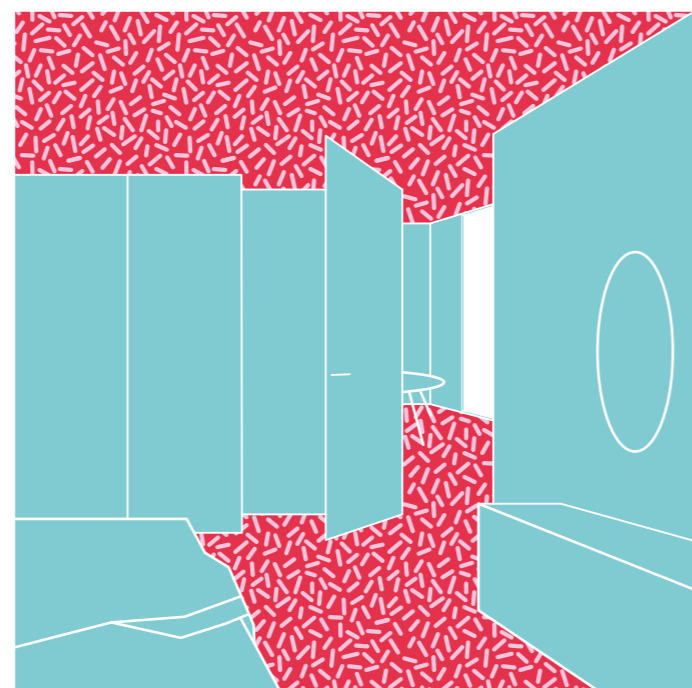
Field B

Field F
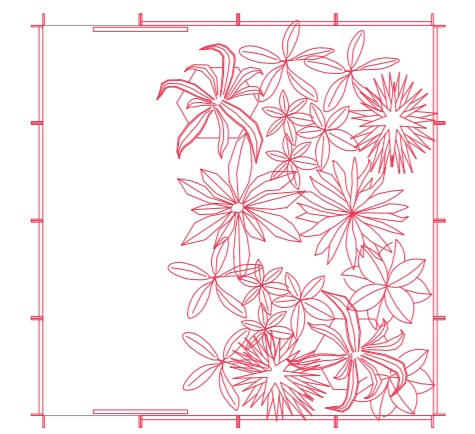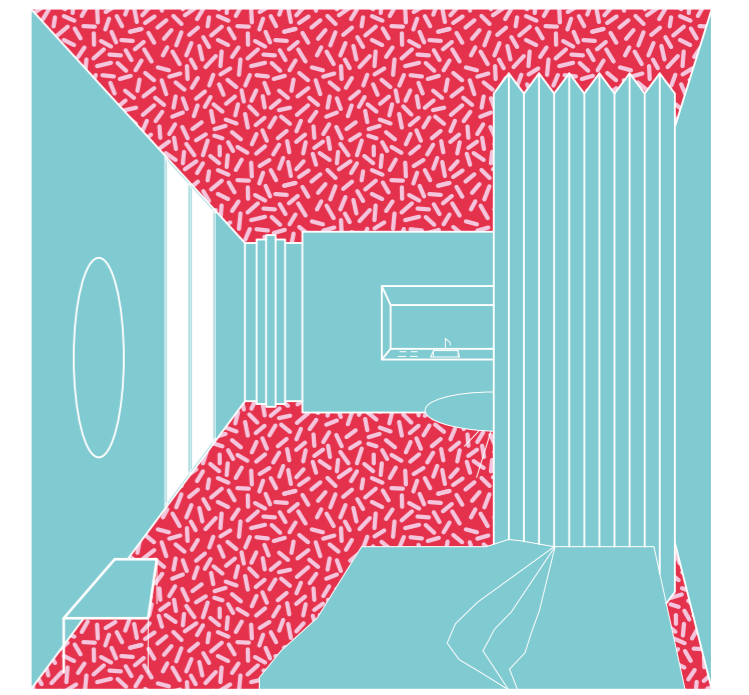
Field C

Field G

Field D
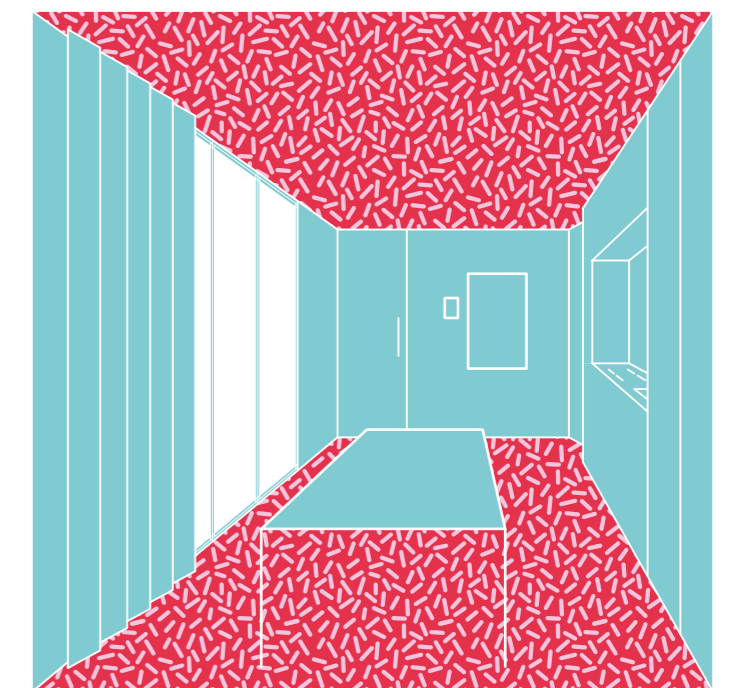
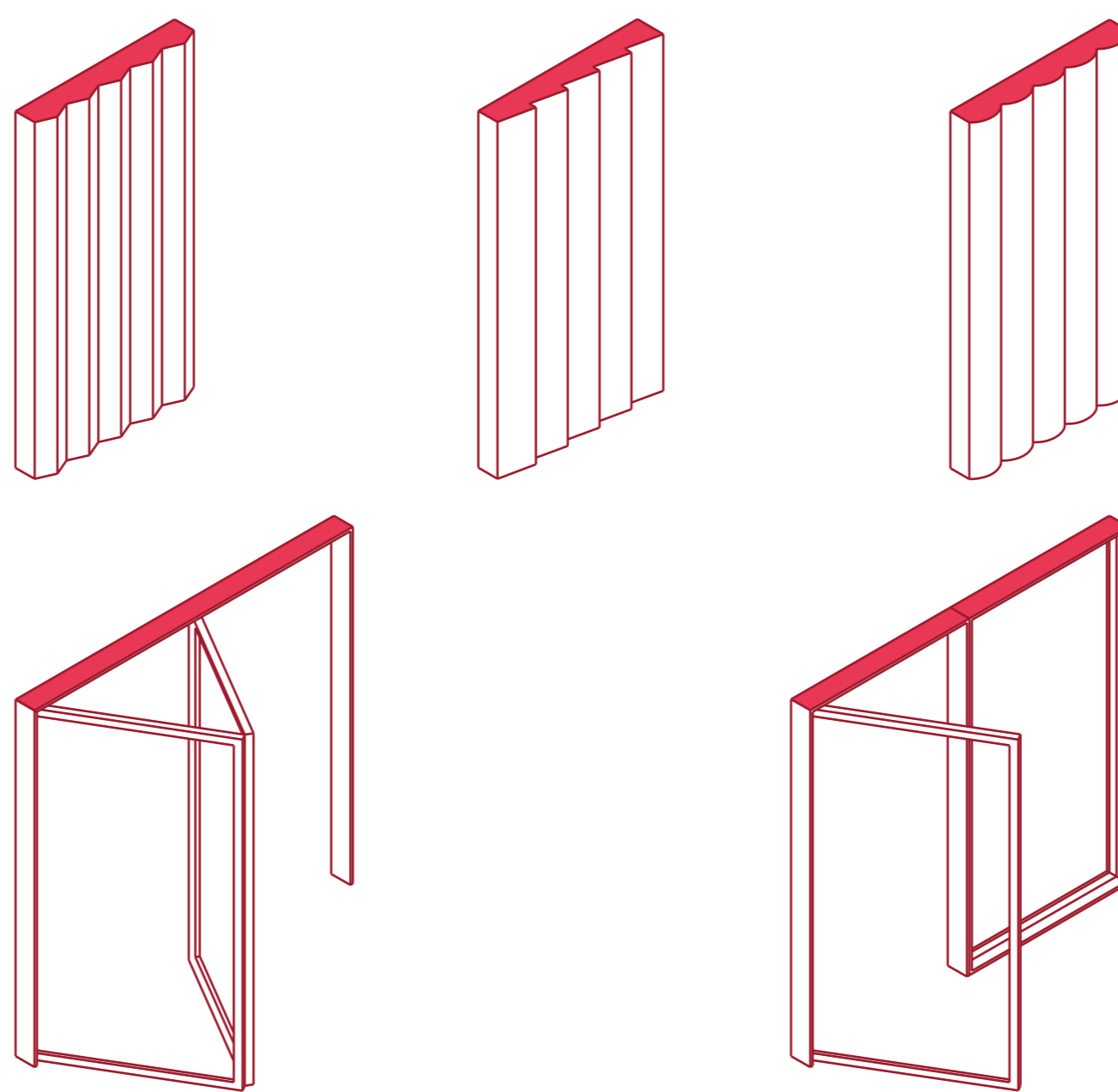0 1 2   5
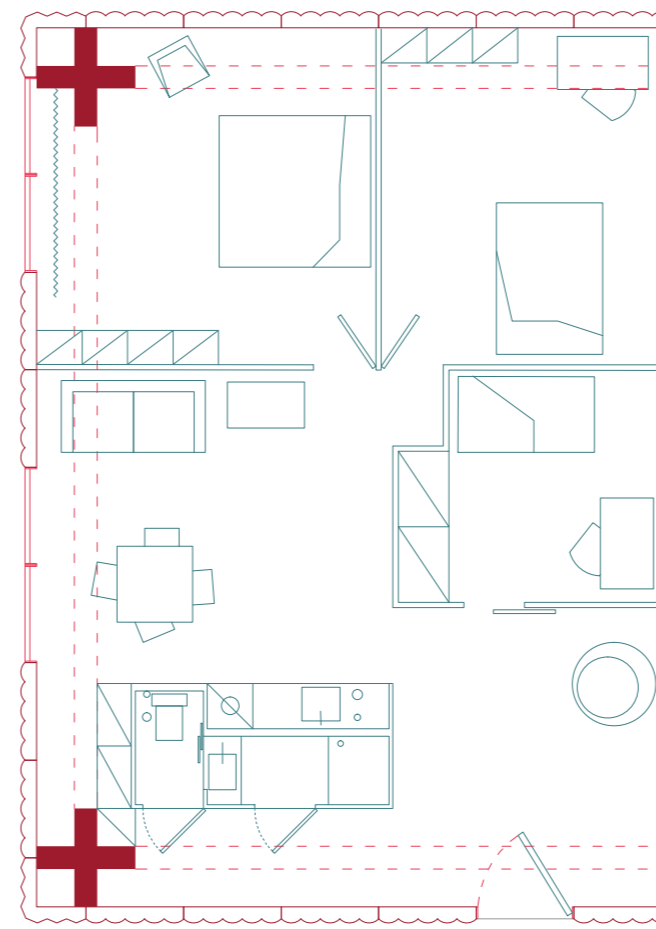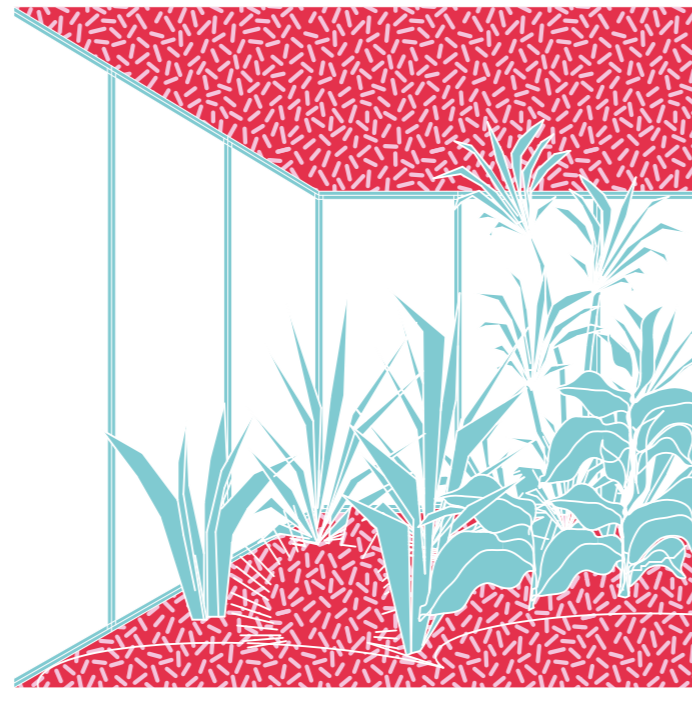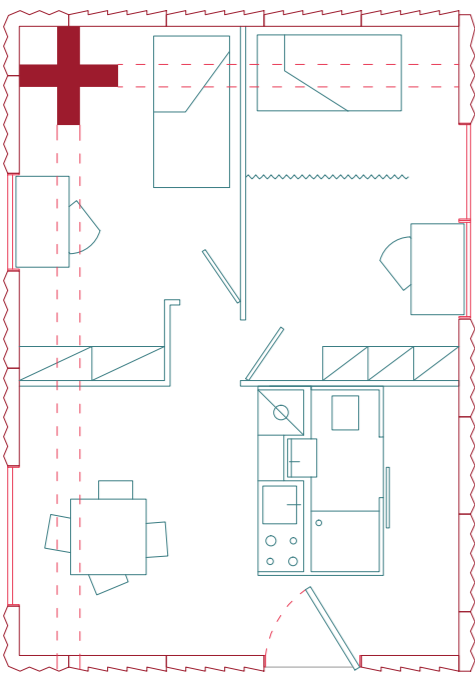
Field H

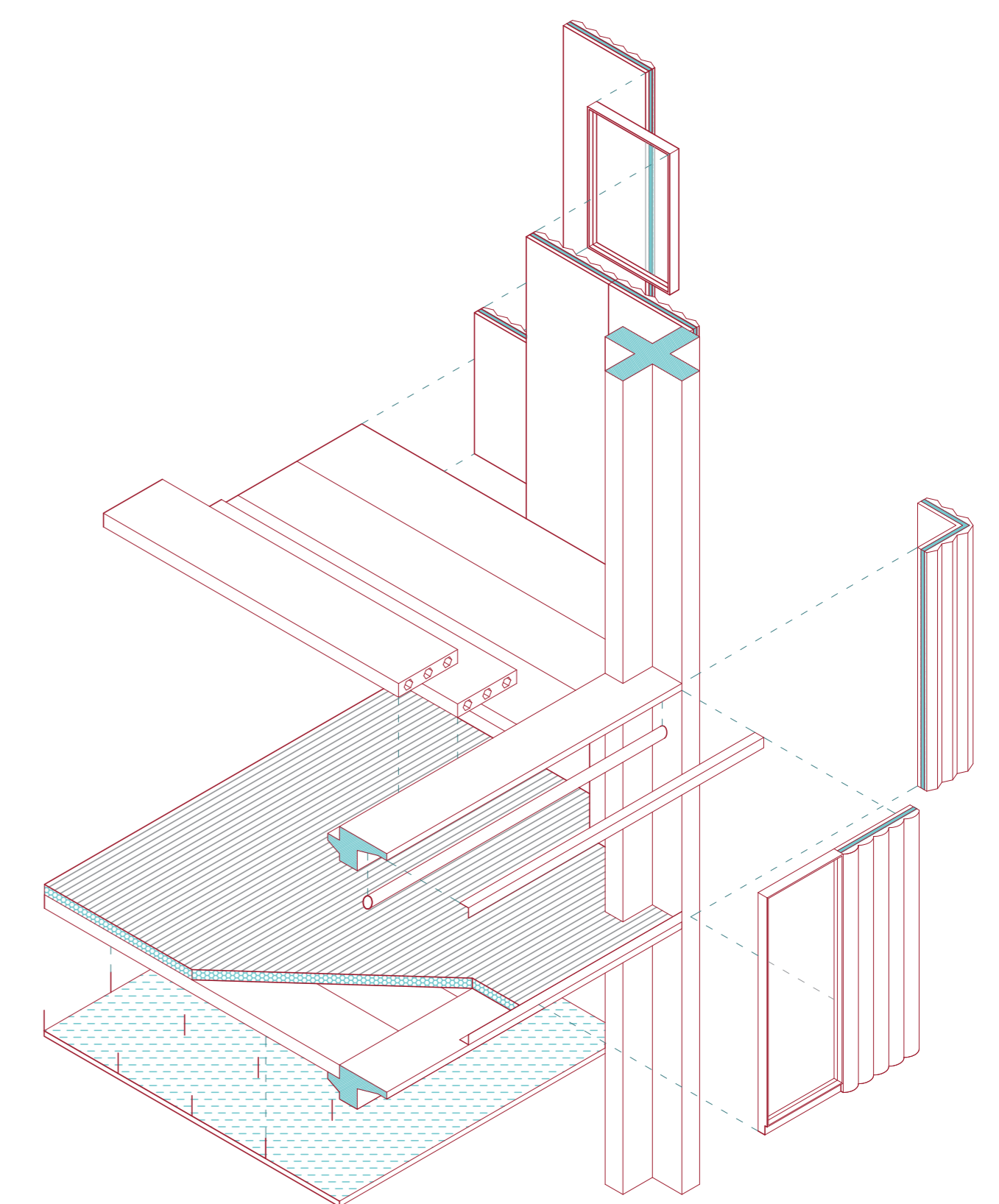Fourth floor

Third floor

Second floor

First floor

Ground floor

LIVING AND WORKING
Living and working do not need specialized spaces anymore, since they are part of the broader domain of social life. The idea that a professional, as well a craftsman, shares its services or products on the socials is the proof that no boundary between labour and free time still exists. The Amsterdam Kraal is composed of elemental fields, combining the place of the (small) production and that of living. A manifold program would engage the spaces to be continuously active during the greater part of the day, and consequently to be controlled by the community and the occasional users as well.
The same idea of flexible fields should be extended to the specialisation of the rooms: families are increasingly more dynamic and less inclined to live the same place for the duration of one's life. Non fixed layouts are provided, that are based on a core of services and different areas of domesticity.

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