

**break limitations**

# beyond seeing

Break the limitations. In Rotterdam there are living a lot of visually impaired and blind people. It's 8% of all the inhabitants between 19 and 64 years. That makes an enormous group of 32.886 people. Because of this visual handicap, the risk of social isolation is relatively high and happens a lot. Another notable finding is the high percentage (59% instead of 4,9%) unemployment in this group.

So there is a group of blind people that's going to live in the building. Where it is not intended for families with a blind family member. It's specific for people who can't longer live at home with their parents and looking for a place for themselves. That will make it a group of young single people or maybe blind couples. Further it's a group that no longer wants to be unemployed. The building also gives the blind people the opportunity to work in a blindness lunchroom or restaurant. A reference for this is the Ctaste restaurant in Amsterdam where you experience eating in the dark. Finally, they will become a group that live independently.

So the question is 'how to bring this group of people back in the society'? If we go back to the slogan 'break the limitations' and see what is exactly means. About what kind of limitations we are talking?

It's a fact that they can't use their eyes. But after a conversation with a old blind architect I came with a conclusion. From my opinion its not the group of blind people that have a restriction. They living in blindness but see exactly a lot. They use their other senses to see the world. Probably their experience of a good room of space with more richness than the experience of people that use their eyes. This is because they use all their senses except for one, in contrast to people that see where the eye is extremely dominant. More than 80% of all our sensory perceptions reach us through the eyes. You can see that reflected in the built environment. The most buildings have generally only stimulus for the eye. Actually blind people live in a world that is not built for them. It is time to look beyond the limitation of seeing or being blind and create spaces, buildings and public spaces that everyone experiences as pleasant.

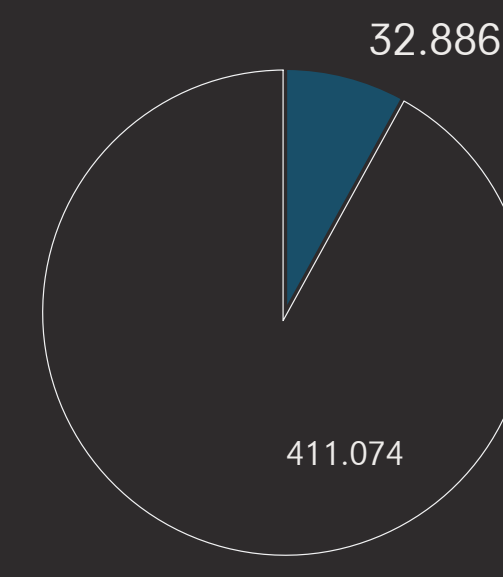
**LOCATION**  
The location of the building will be at the Schiedamsedijk. The 'Verolme pavilions' are currently standing here. The current building makes a big border between

the city and the water. I give this place back to the city en connect the city again with the water. The building will be an urban balcony over the water. Where live freely and the people of the city can use it like a public space on the water. A place where the architecture makes opportunities for social interaction. Another reason for this location is that it's really close to the eye hospital. This is not only a benefit for the residents of the community but also for the visitors of the hospital to pass by and have a drink or talk.

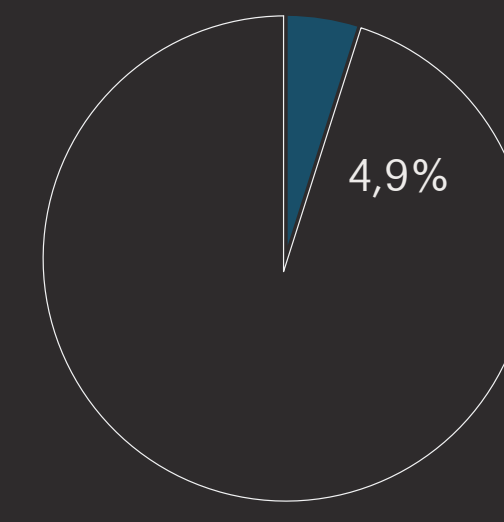
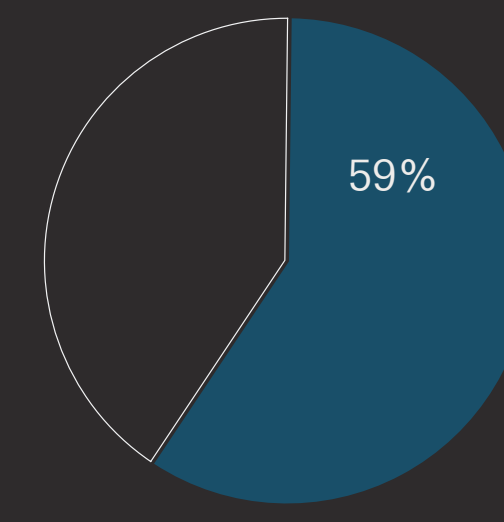
**DESIGN**  
The design has attempted to take the experience of a blind person as a starting point. There are a few aspects really important in this architecture: structure, orientation and expression. Structure means that the design is consequent in solutions and free from unexpected barriers. Orientation has to do with the way of moving. For blind people, an orthogonal structure is most helpful because in this way they always make a conscious choice to go in a different direction. And expression has everything to do with how you perceive something. For example: smell, sound, acoustic, texture, atmosphere and colour.

the building is actually a large roof with spaces underneath. the blind people who live there have their own private home because it is important that everything is manageable. when I put something down somewhere I have to make sure it stays there or you lose it. In addition, there is a common room where you can cook and eat together. there is also a sports room in this room that can also be used for rehabilitation. There is a small music school on the corner of the building, this could help with orientation. The quay continues to exist but is deepened so that contact with the water is sought. this also happens on the waterfront. the outdoor spaces also border on this new quay. Due to the minimal separation between private and public, the blind will feel more involved with the city, the public part has a gravel surface so that it is always clear when someone passes by.

The space in the home is divided into a traffic space that is made of concrete and a living space that is made of wood. the edges of the wooden planks are always towards the traffic area. The large void is at the rear to preserve privacy, this also makes it possible to work with a minimum number of walls / doors.

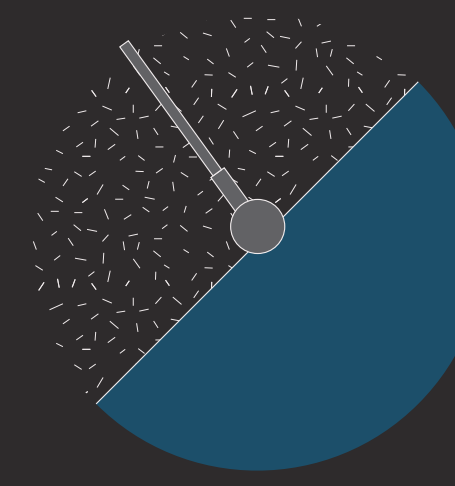


- people that see the world totally different
- need a good orientation
- structure is really important
- prefer orthogonal
- wealth of sensory experiences



blindness in Rotterdam

unemployment



sound of water  
city sounds



feel different  
structures



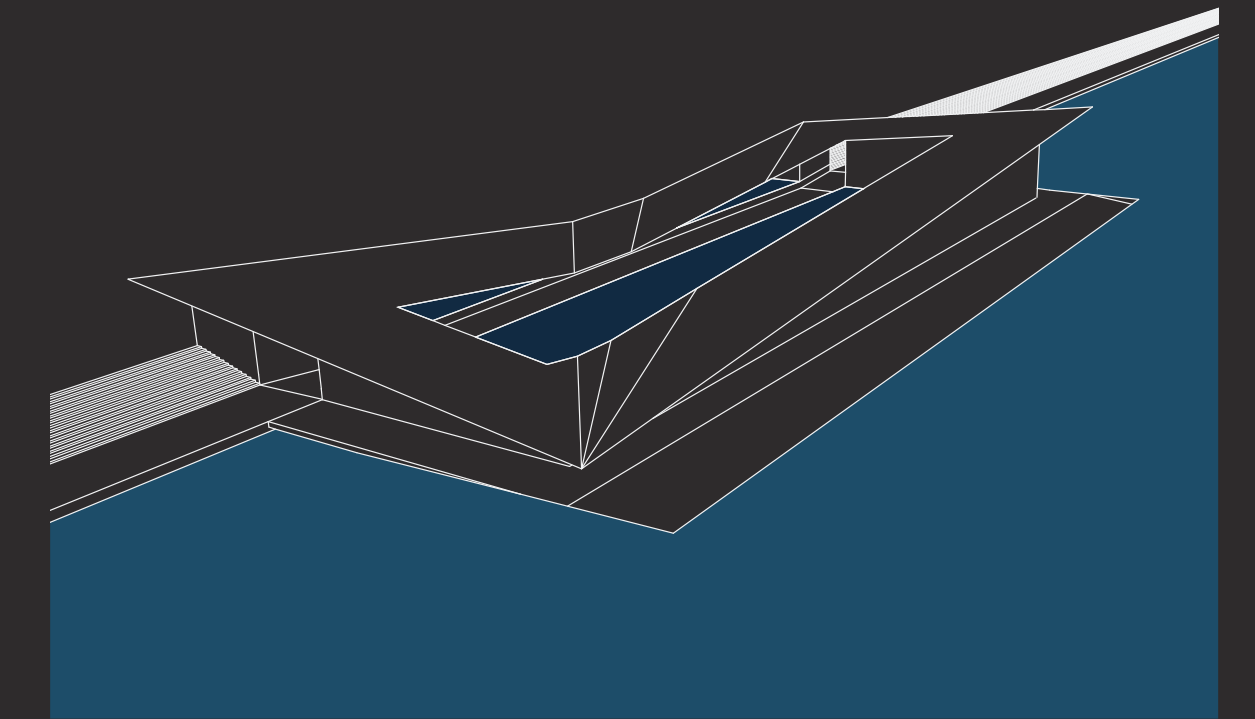
smell the kitchen  
or flowers/plants



taste of food  
or drinks

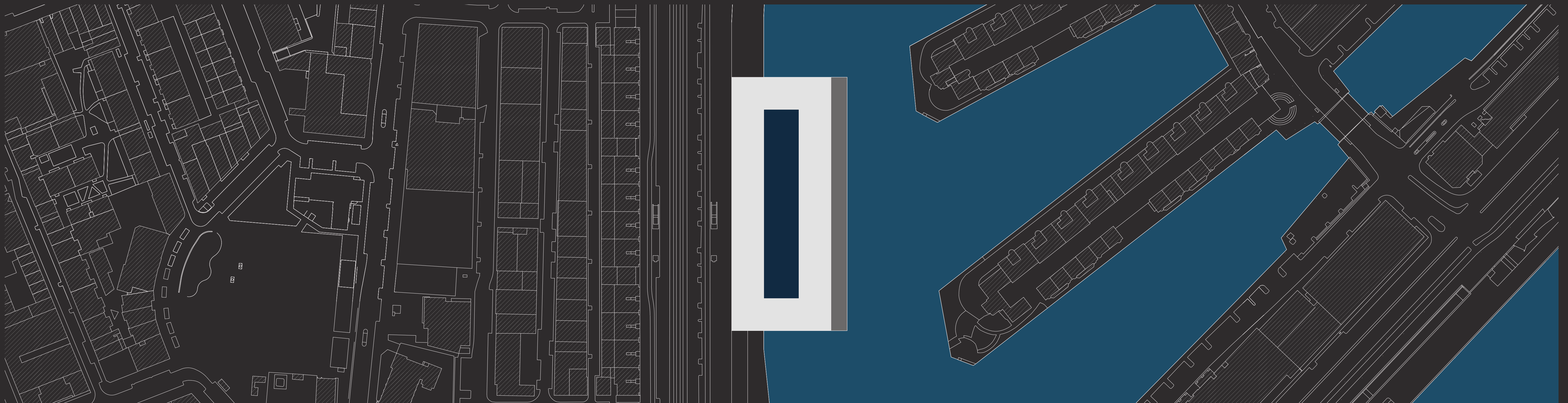
the guide stick is for blind people like an extension of their arm

use of senses



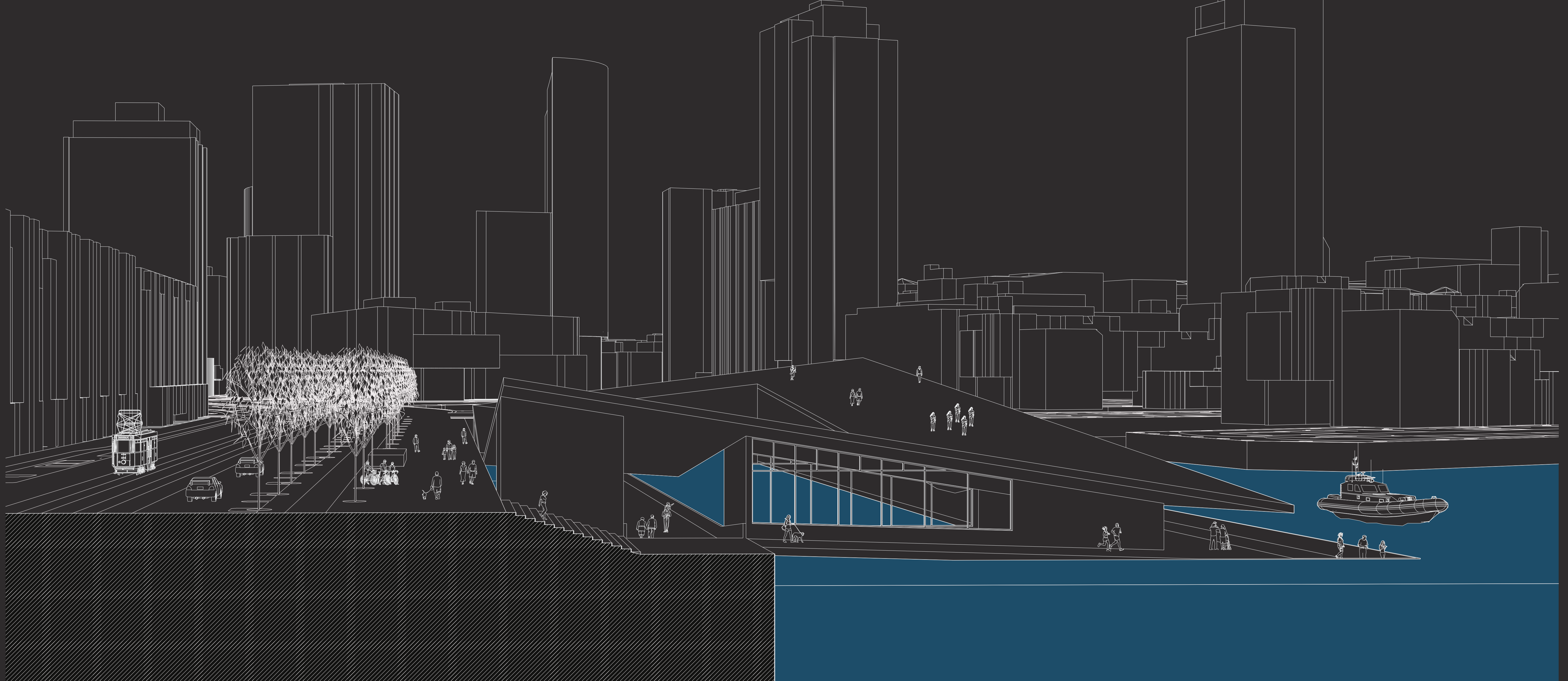
overview impression

design diagrams

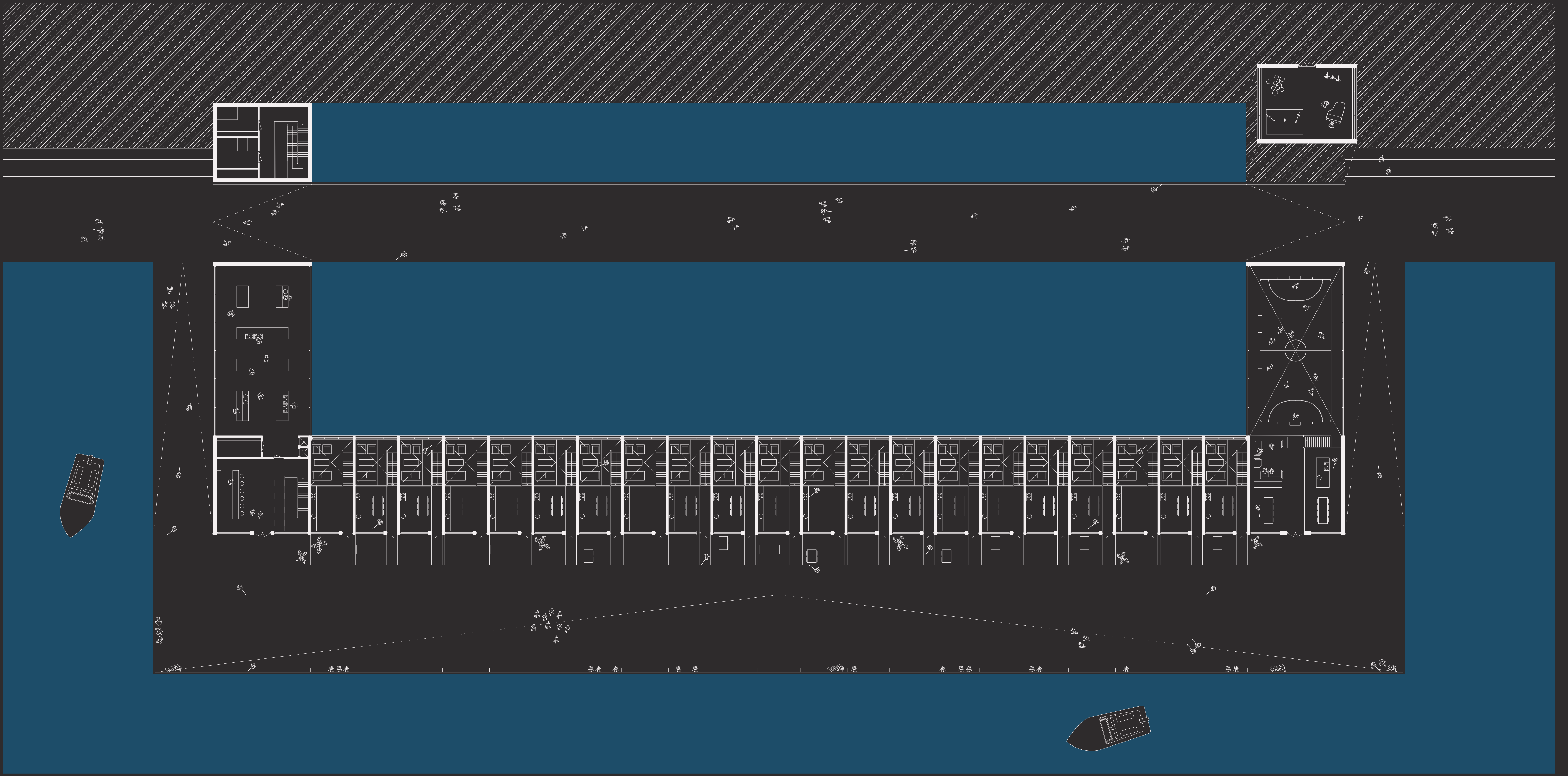
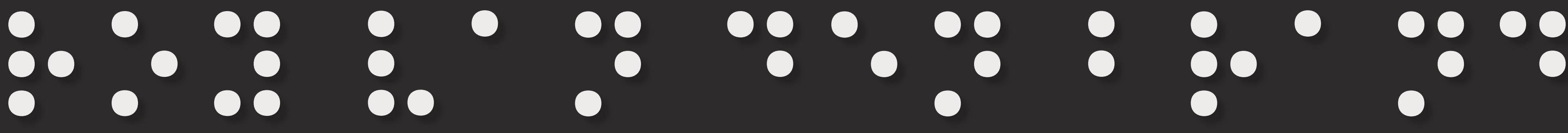


location at Leuvenhaven

location 1 : 1000

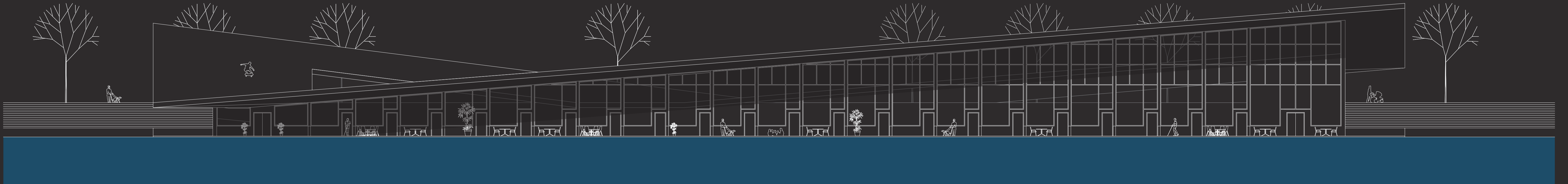


impression



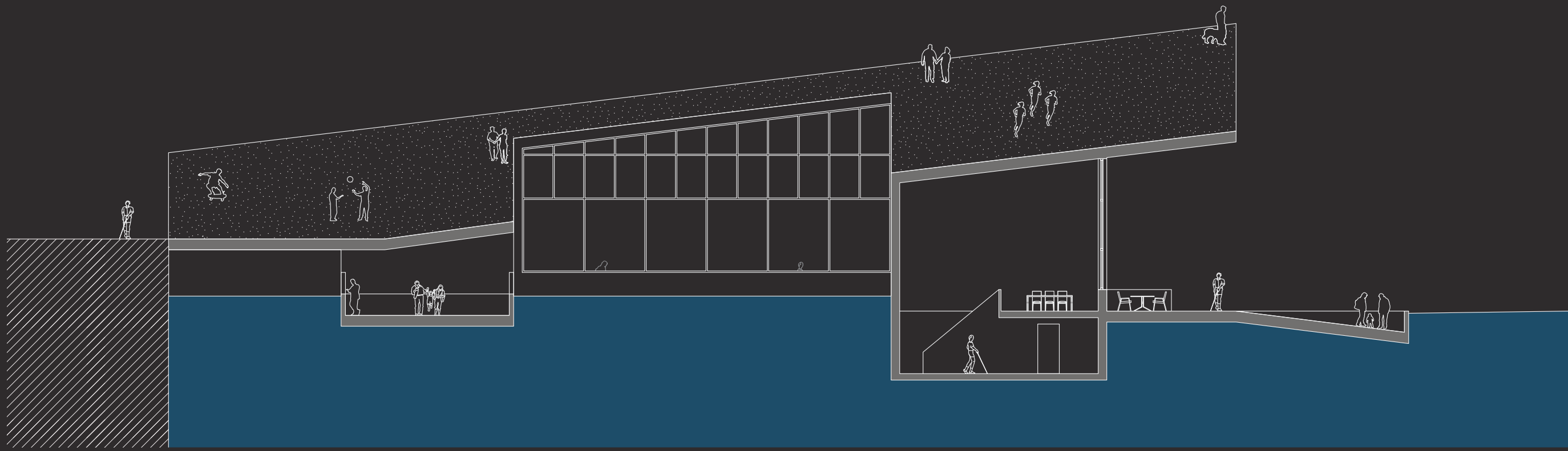
floorplan on quaylevel

floorplan 1 : 200

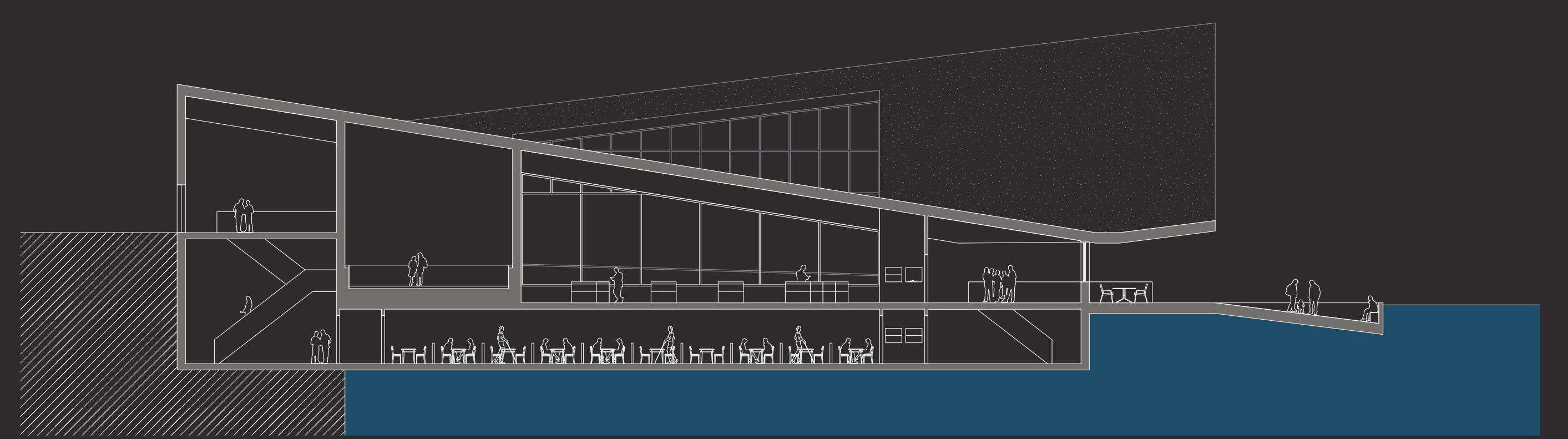


elevation from the water

elevation 1 : 200

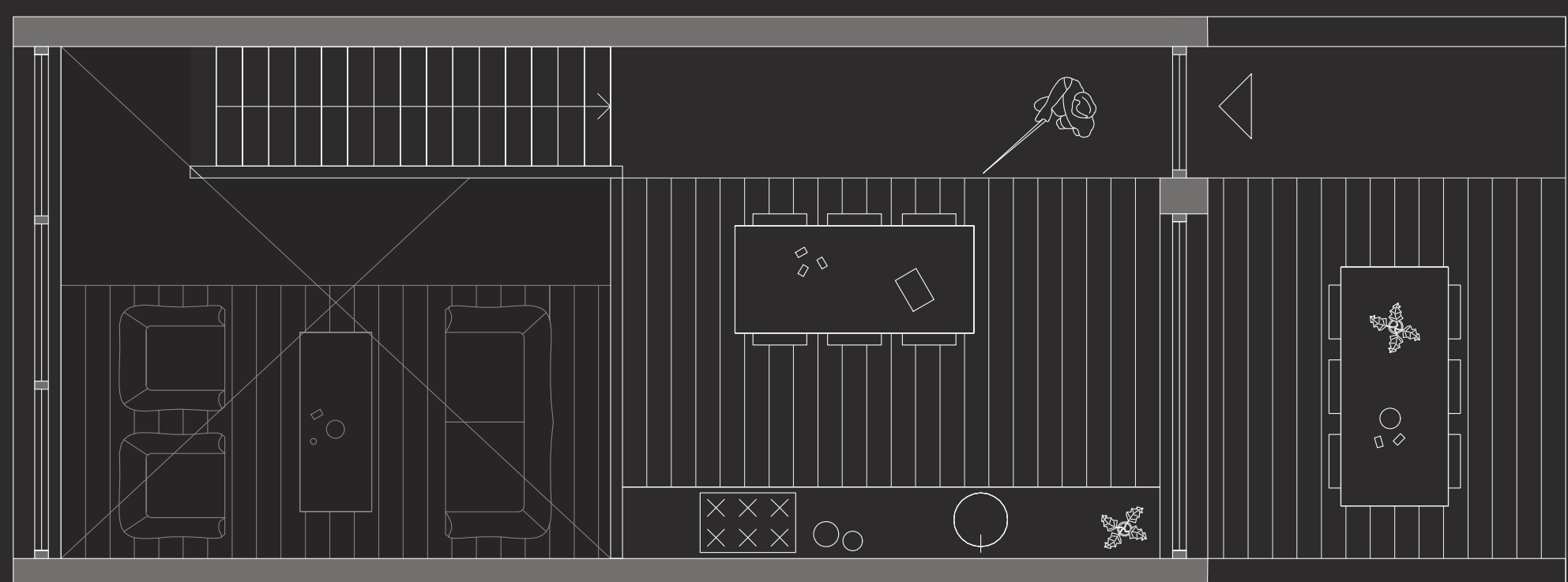


section over the quay and dwelling

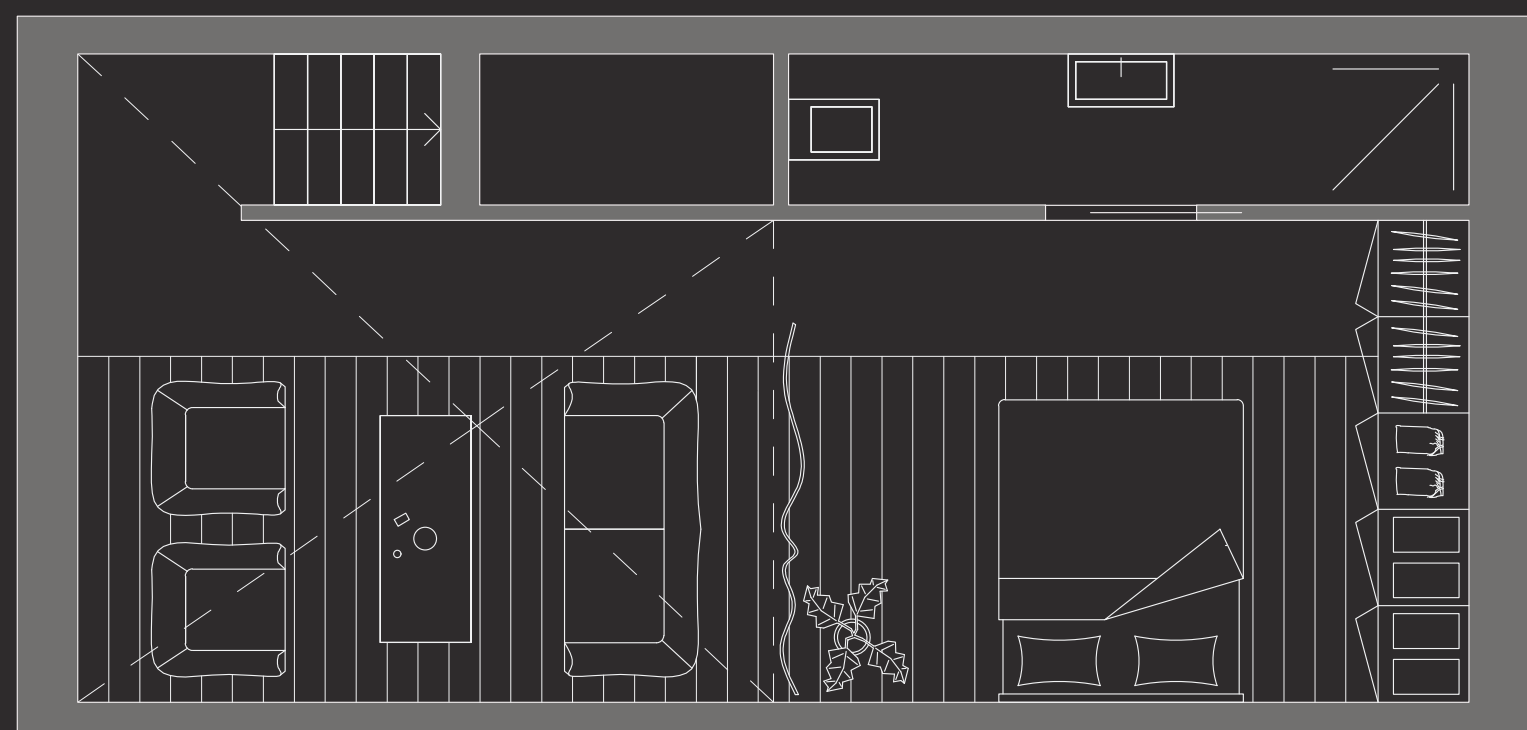


section over the restaurant

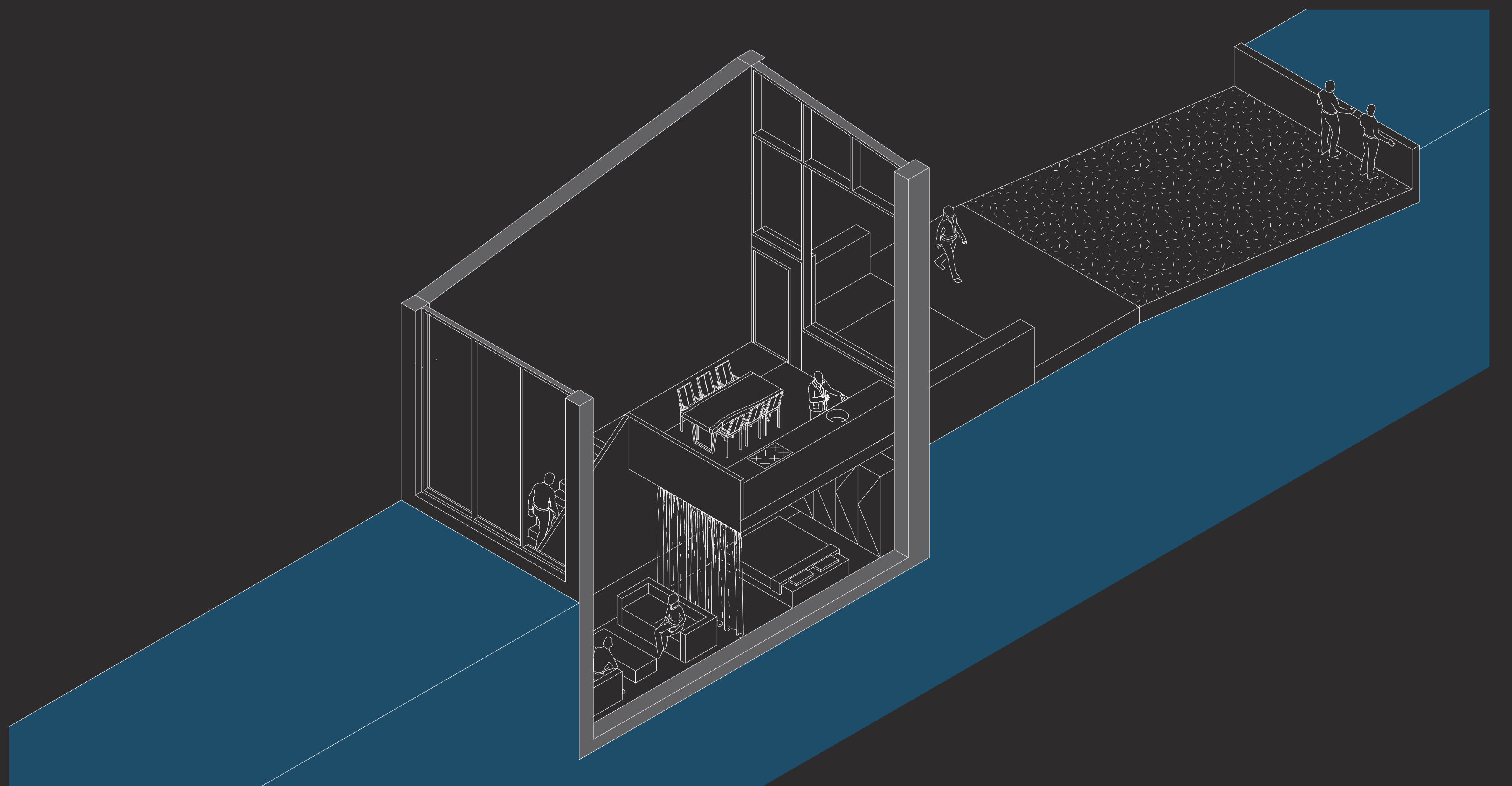
sections 1 : 200



floorplan quaylevel



floorplan waterlevel



dwelling in use

dwelling 1:50