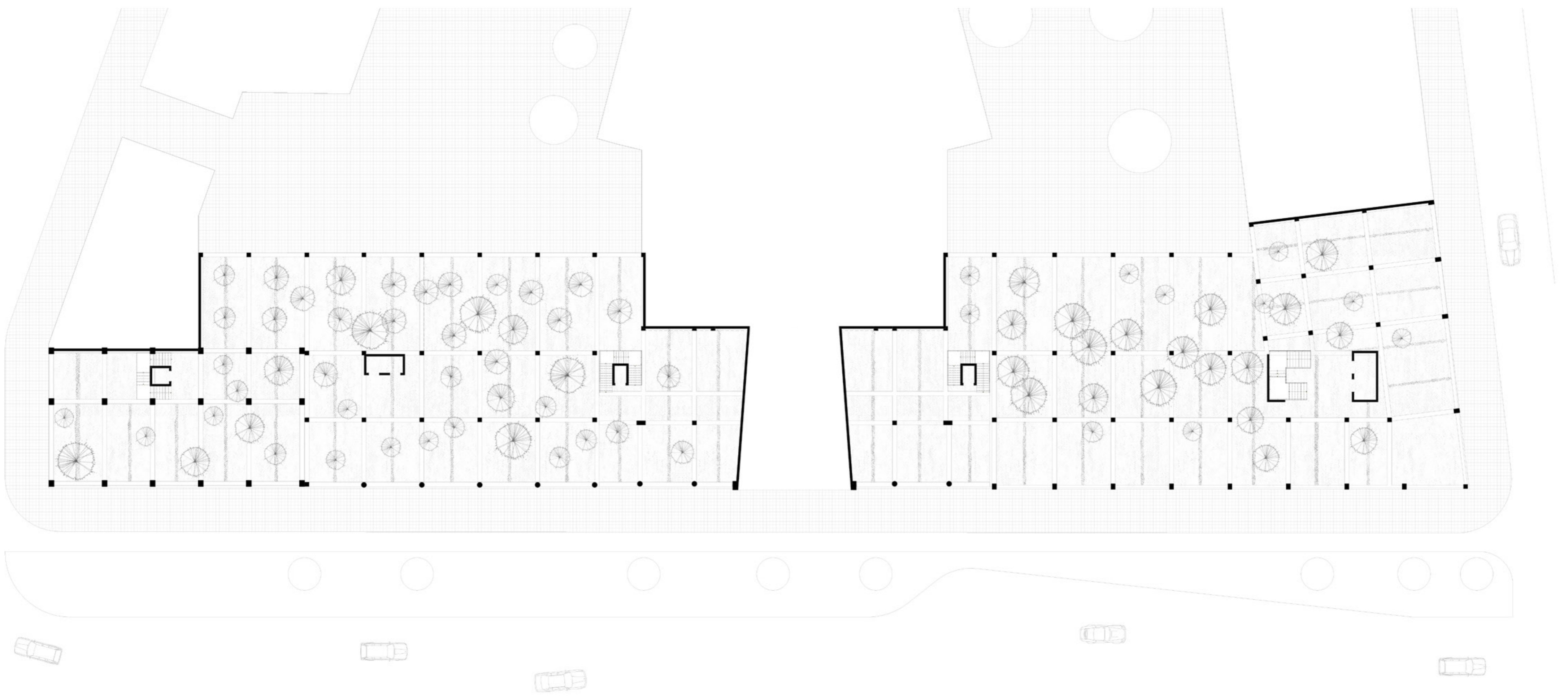
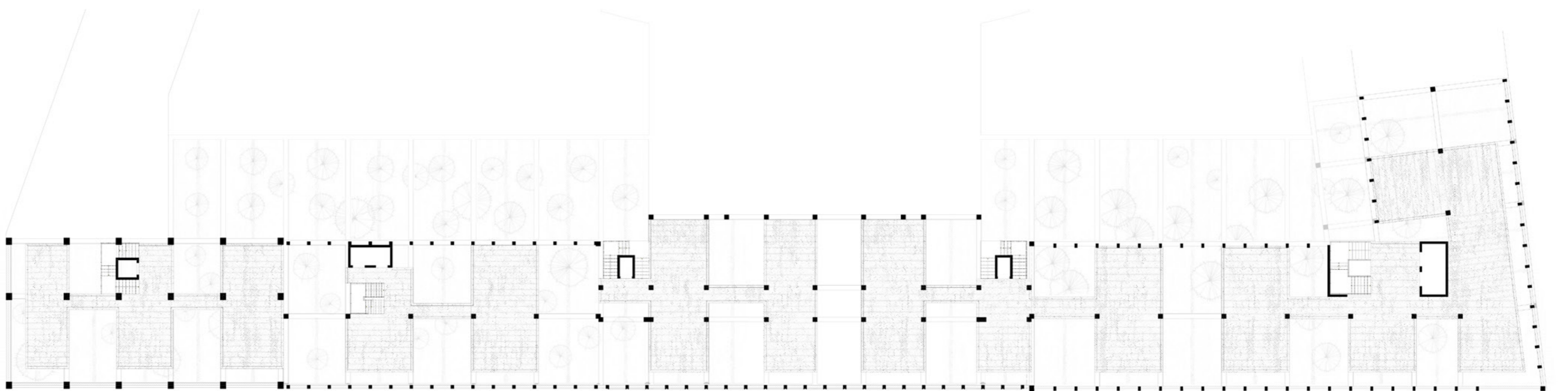


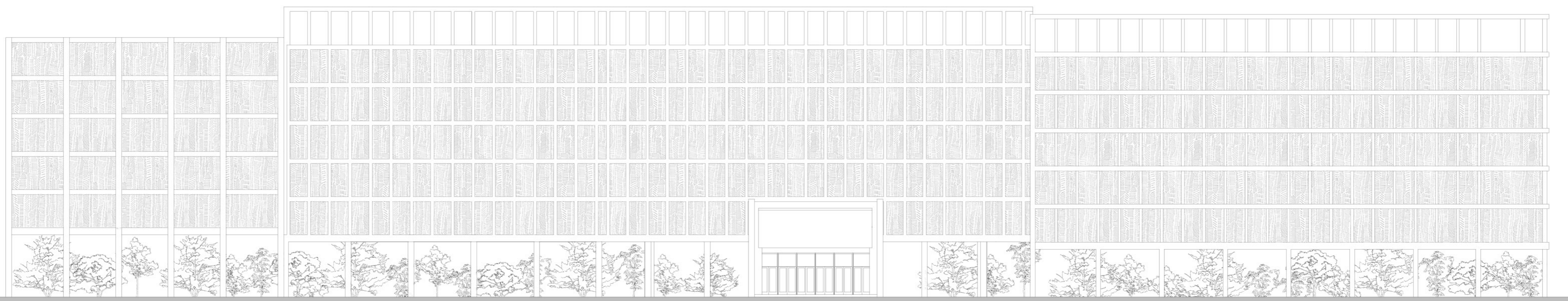
Plot



Ground floor plan



Typical floor plan



Front elevation - Westblaak



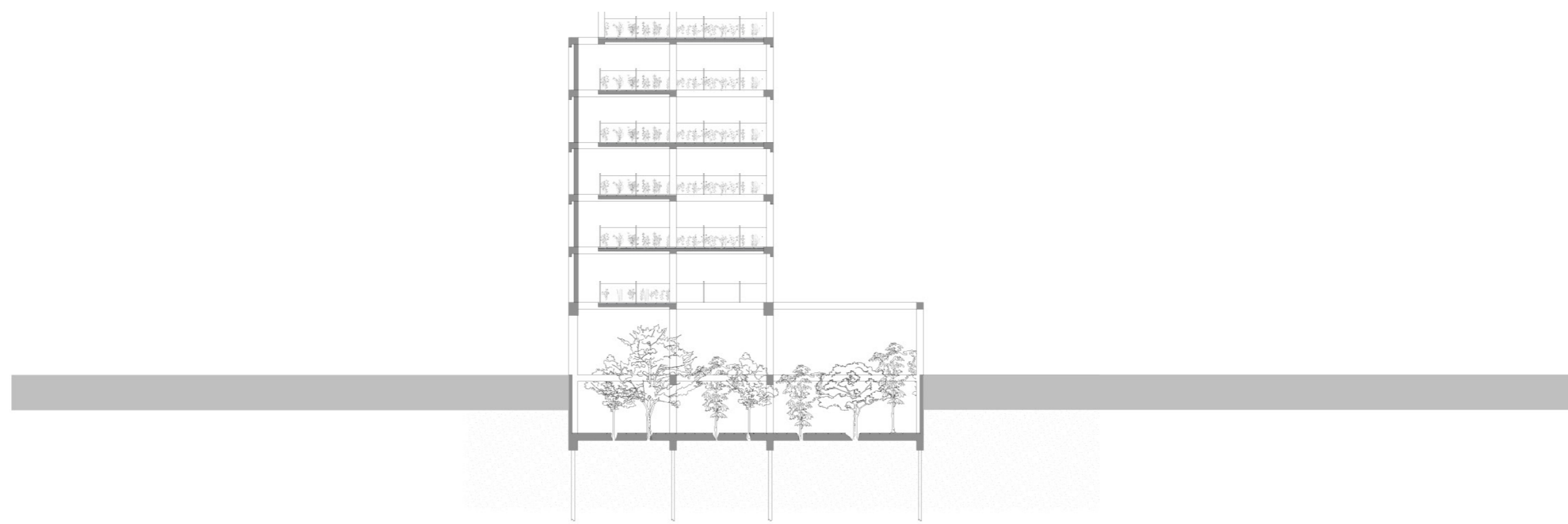
Back elevation - Schiedamse Vesthof



Side elevation - Hartmanstraat

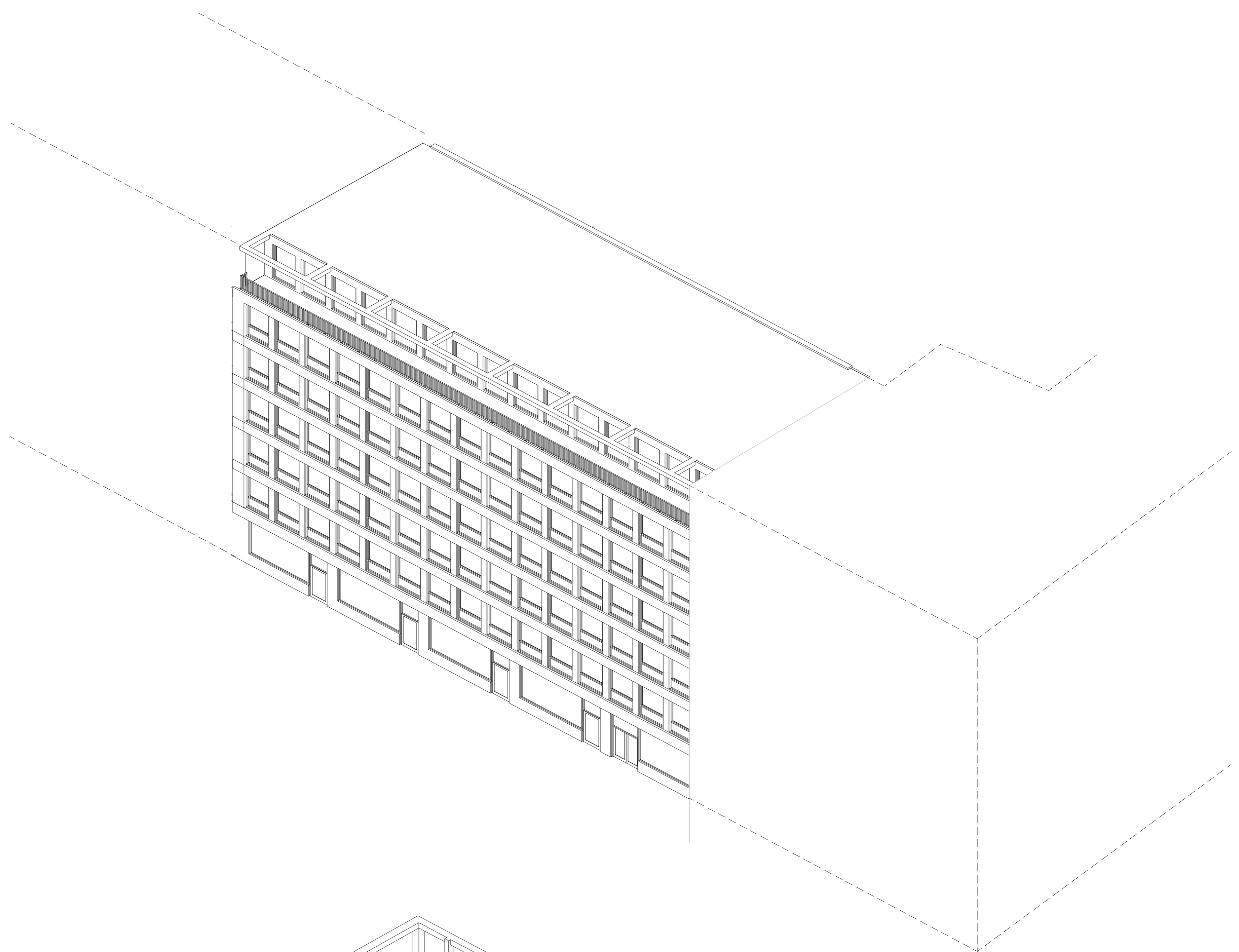


Side elevation - Schiedamse Vest

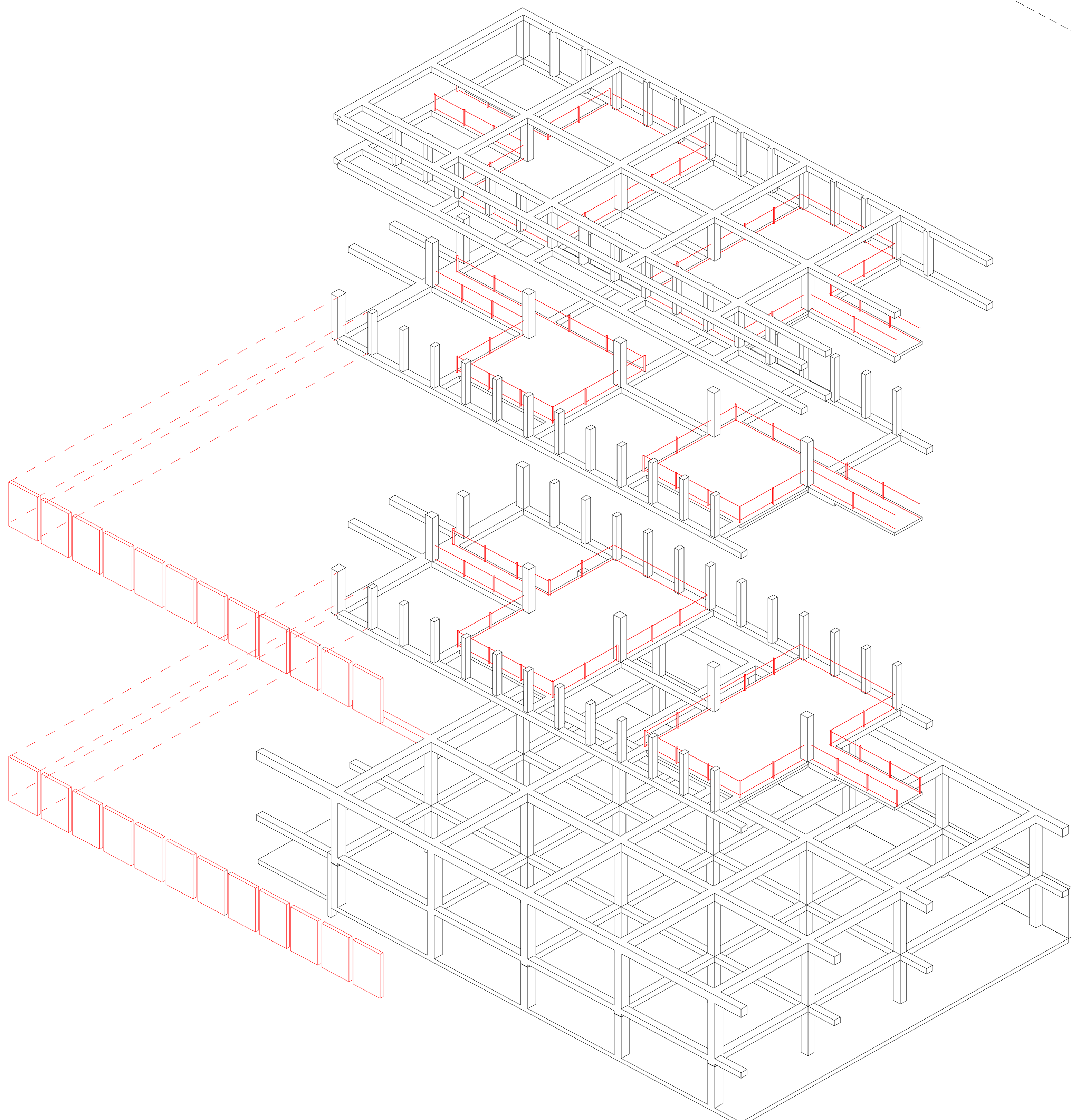


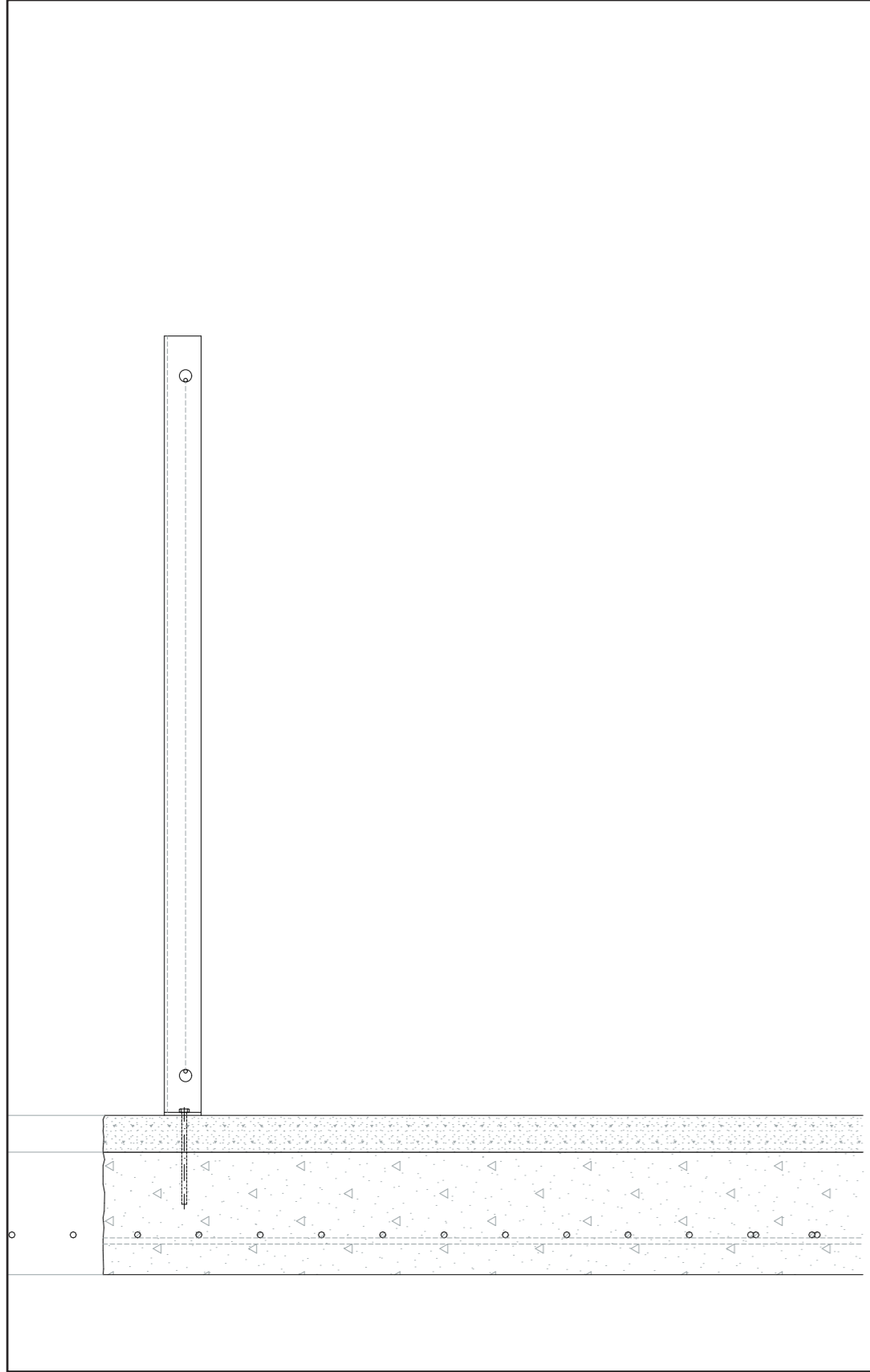
Cross-section

Existing

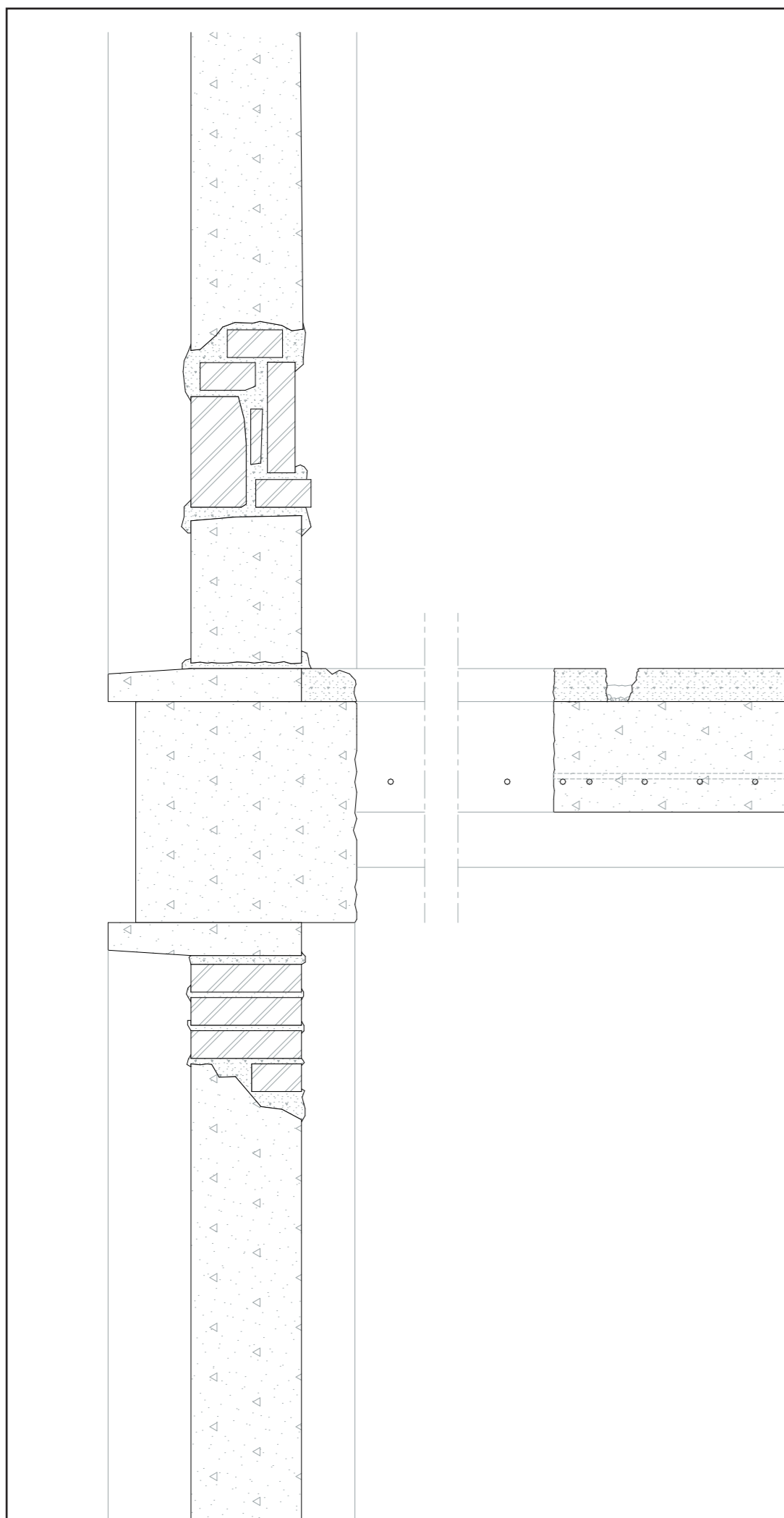
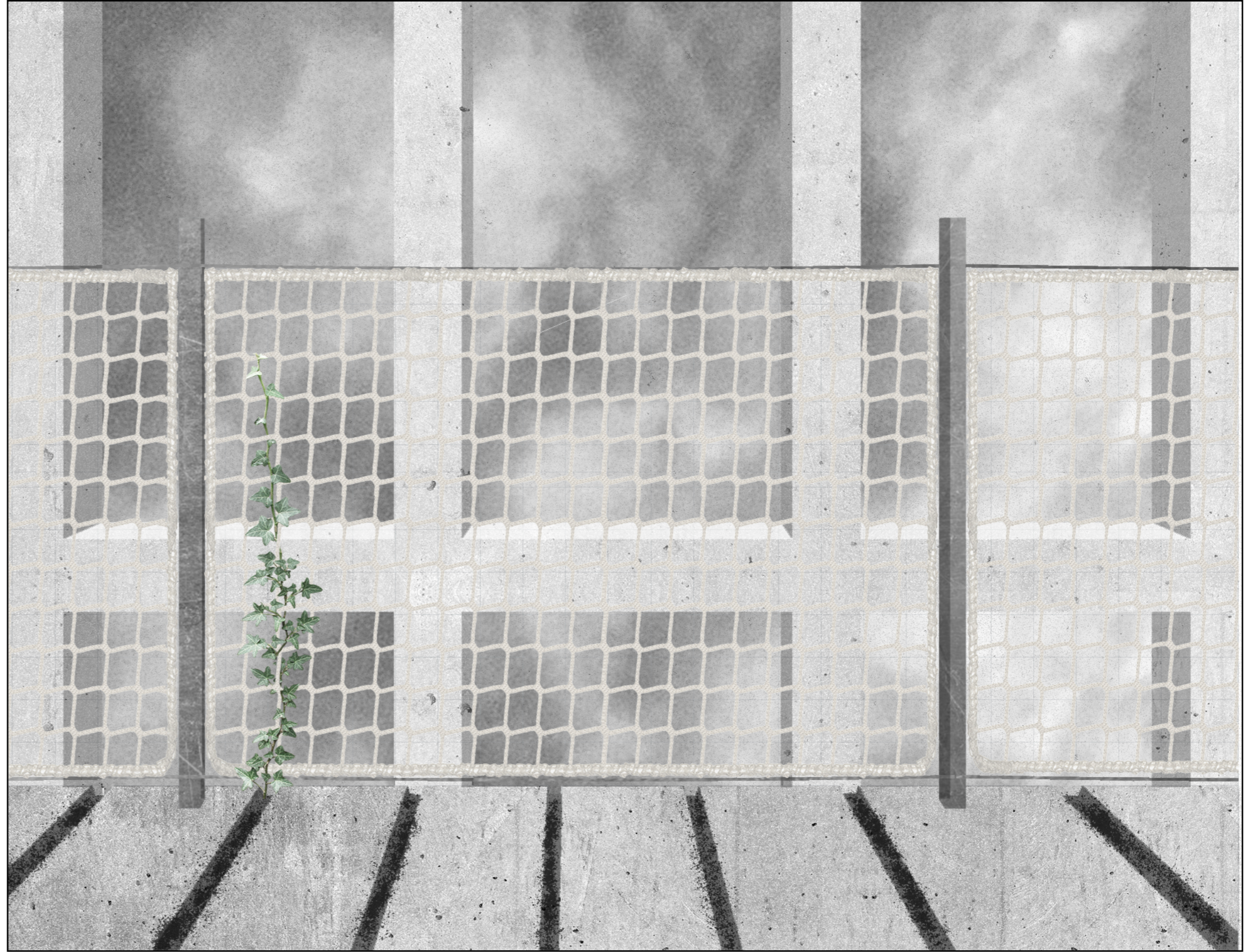


New



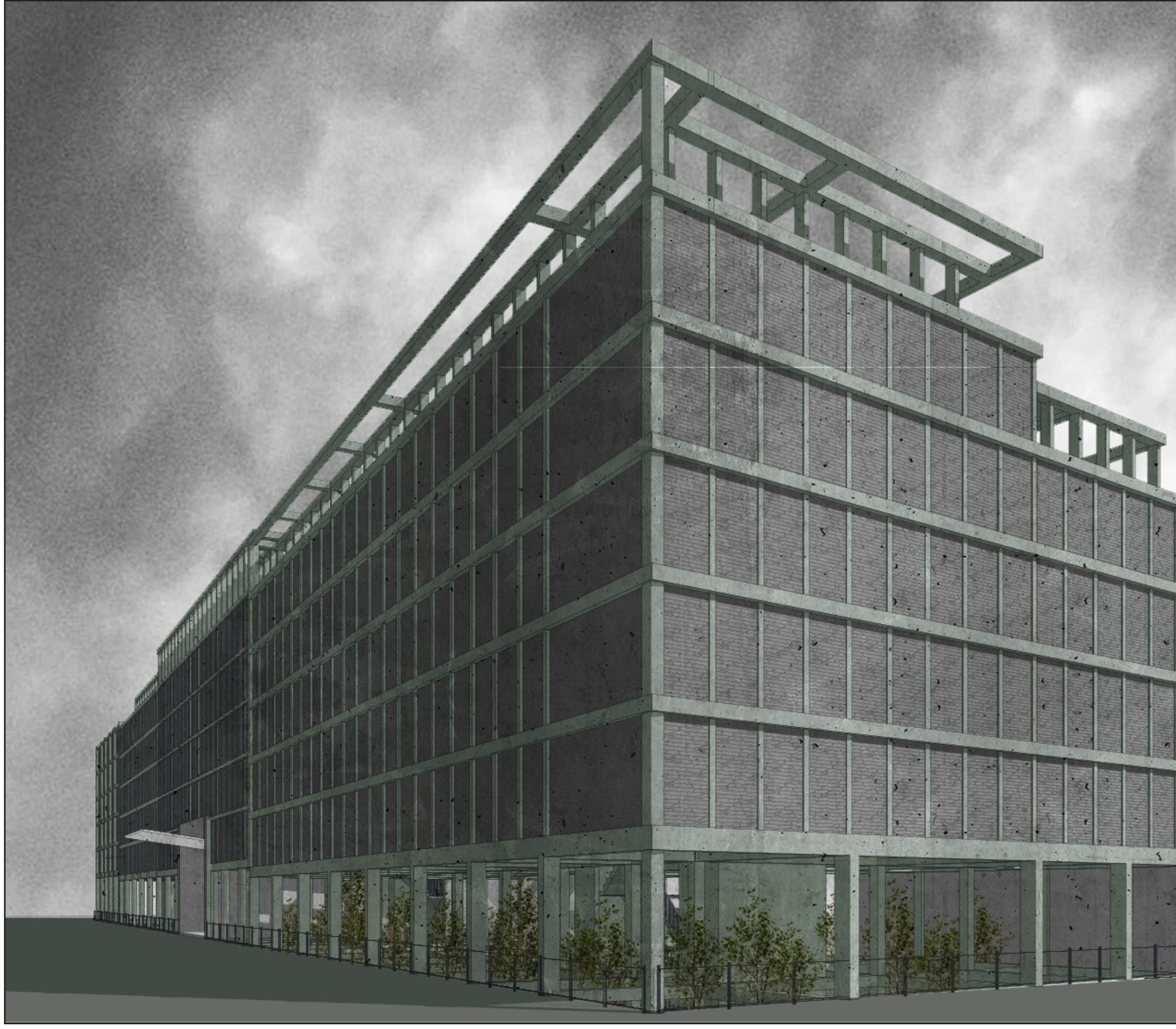


Safety fence

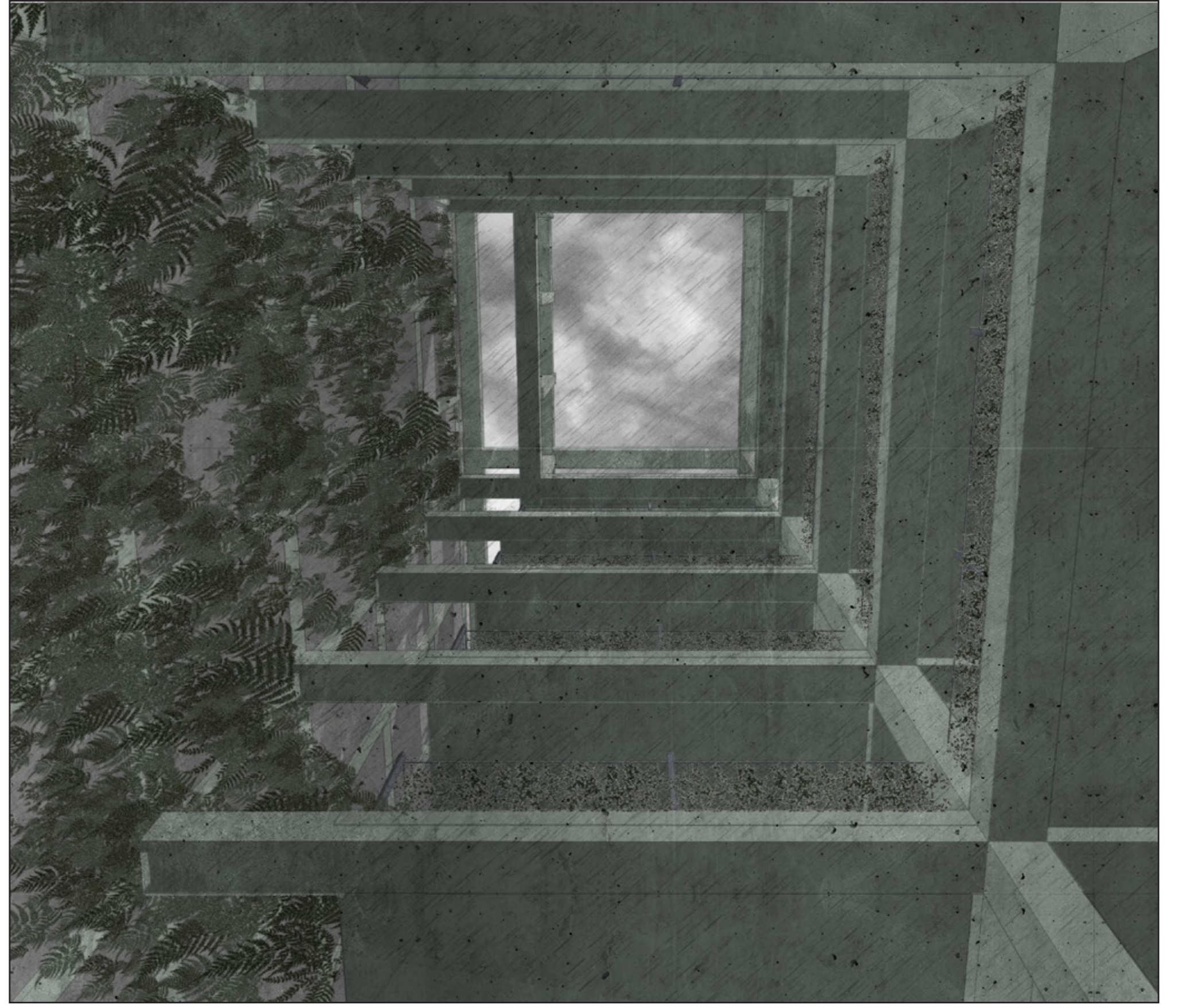


Blind facade

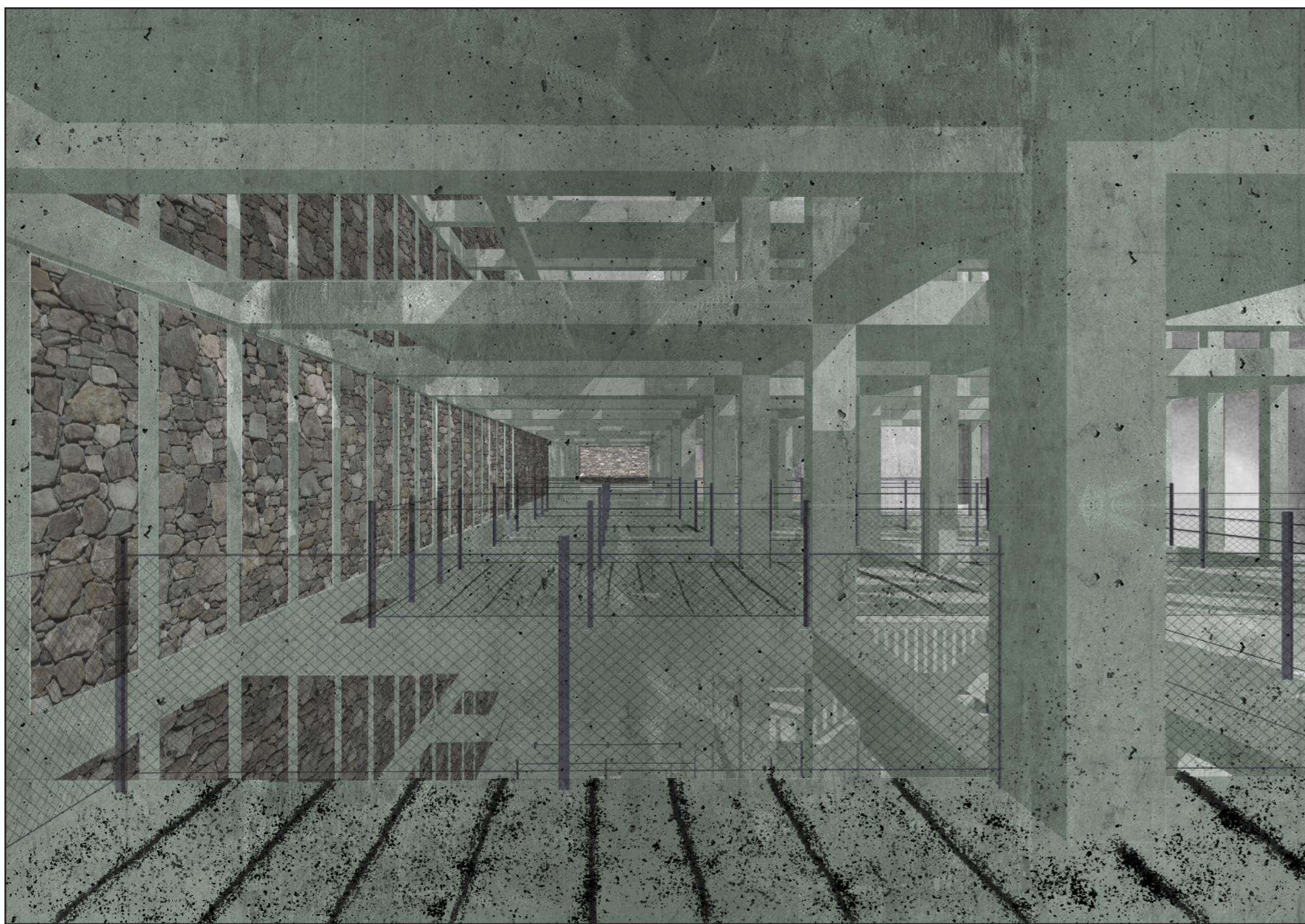




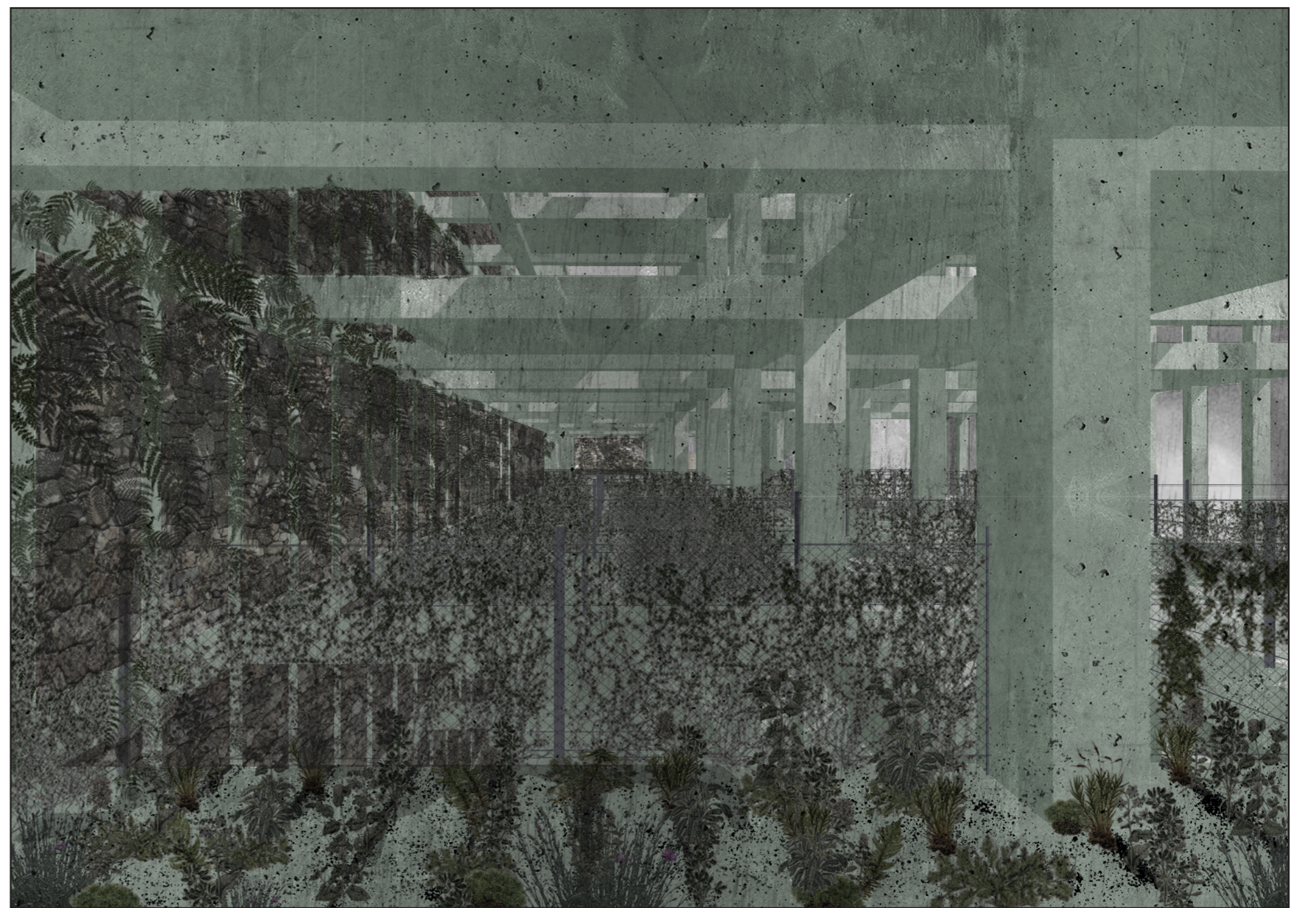
View from the street



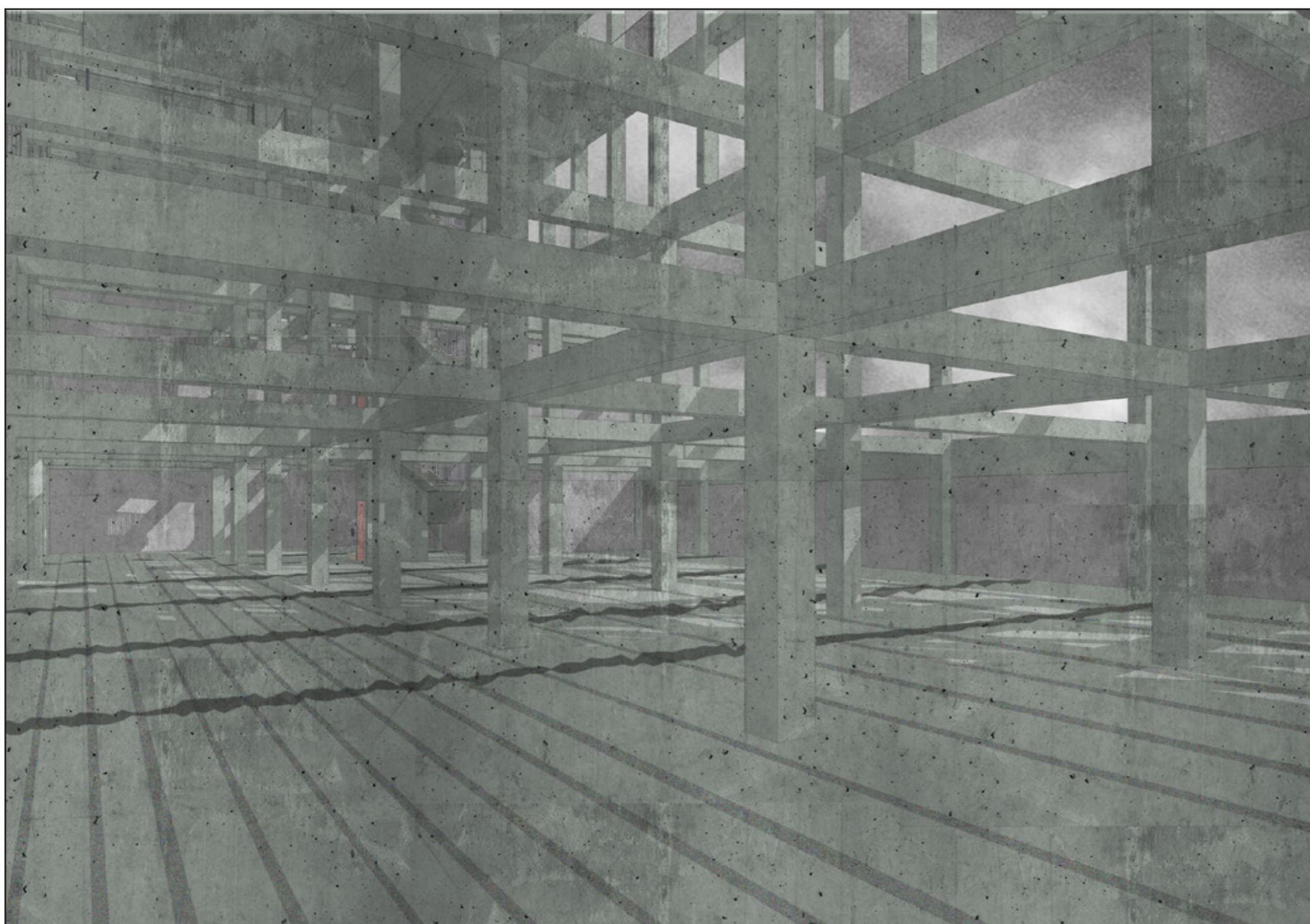
Void



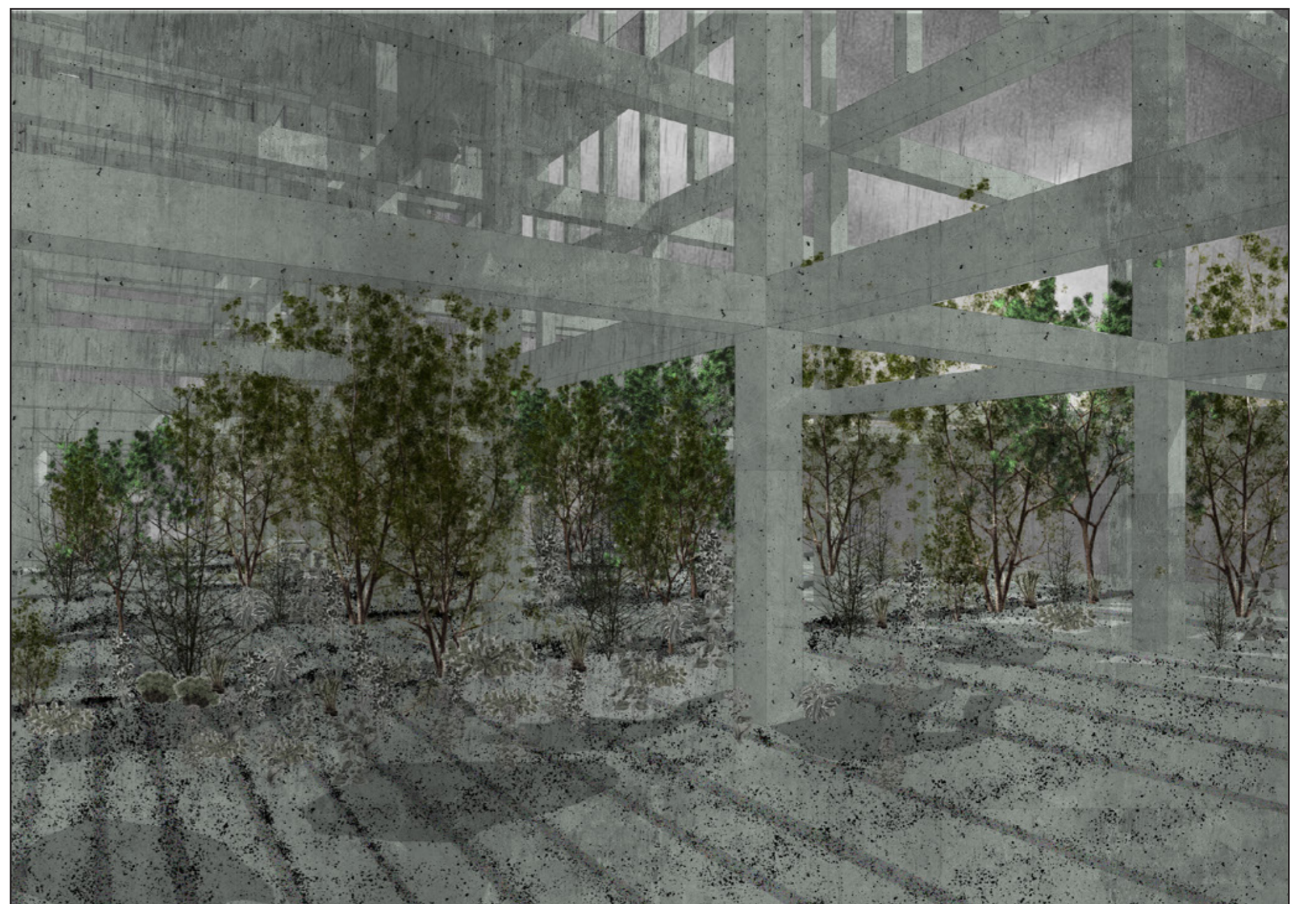
After modifications



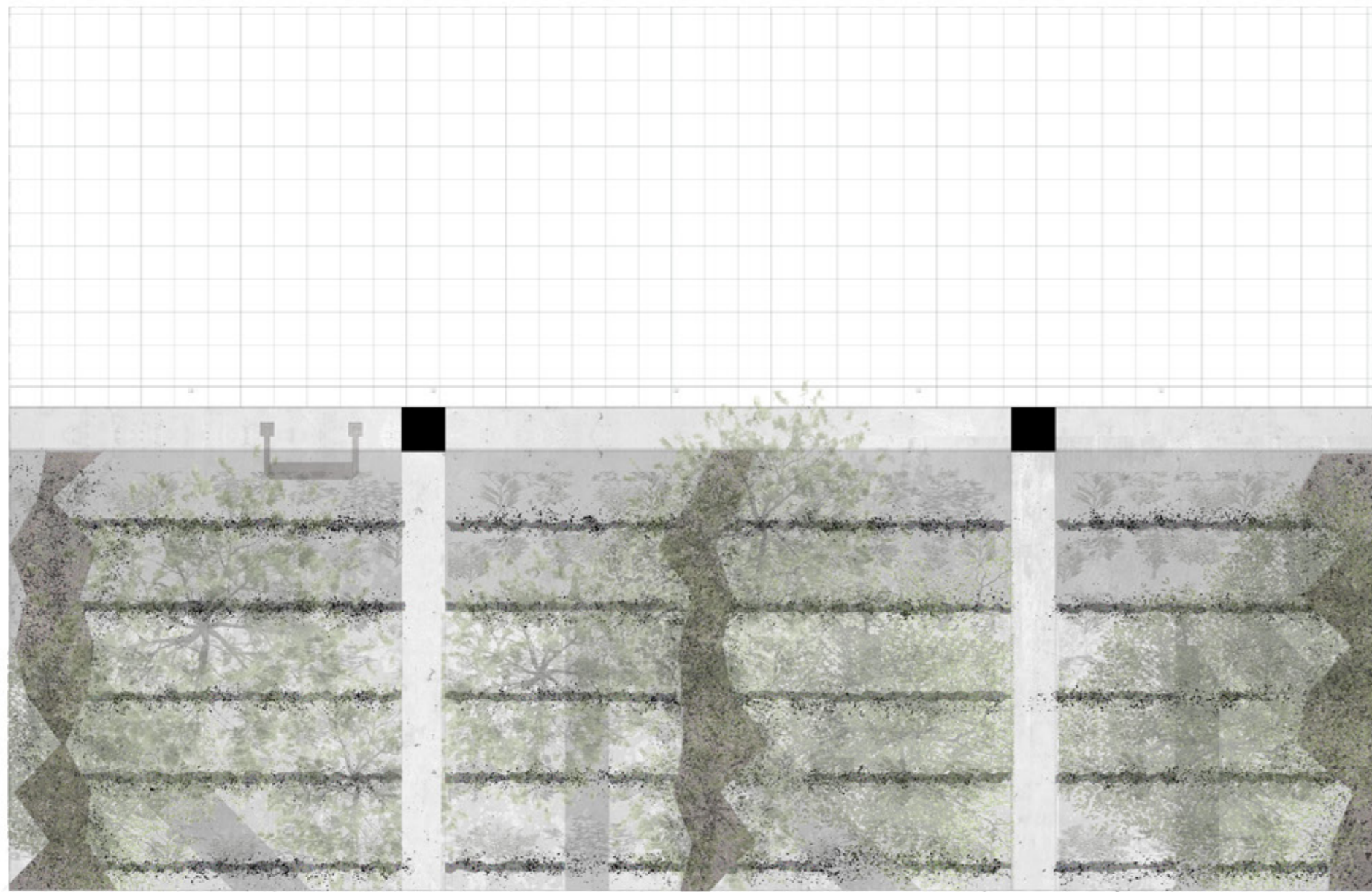
Some time passes



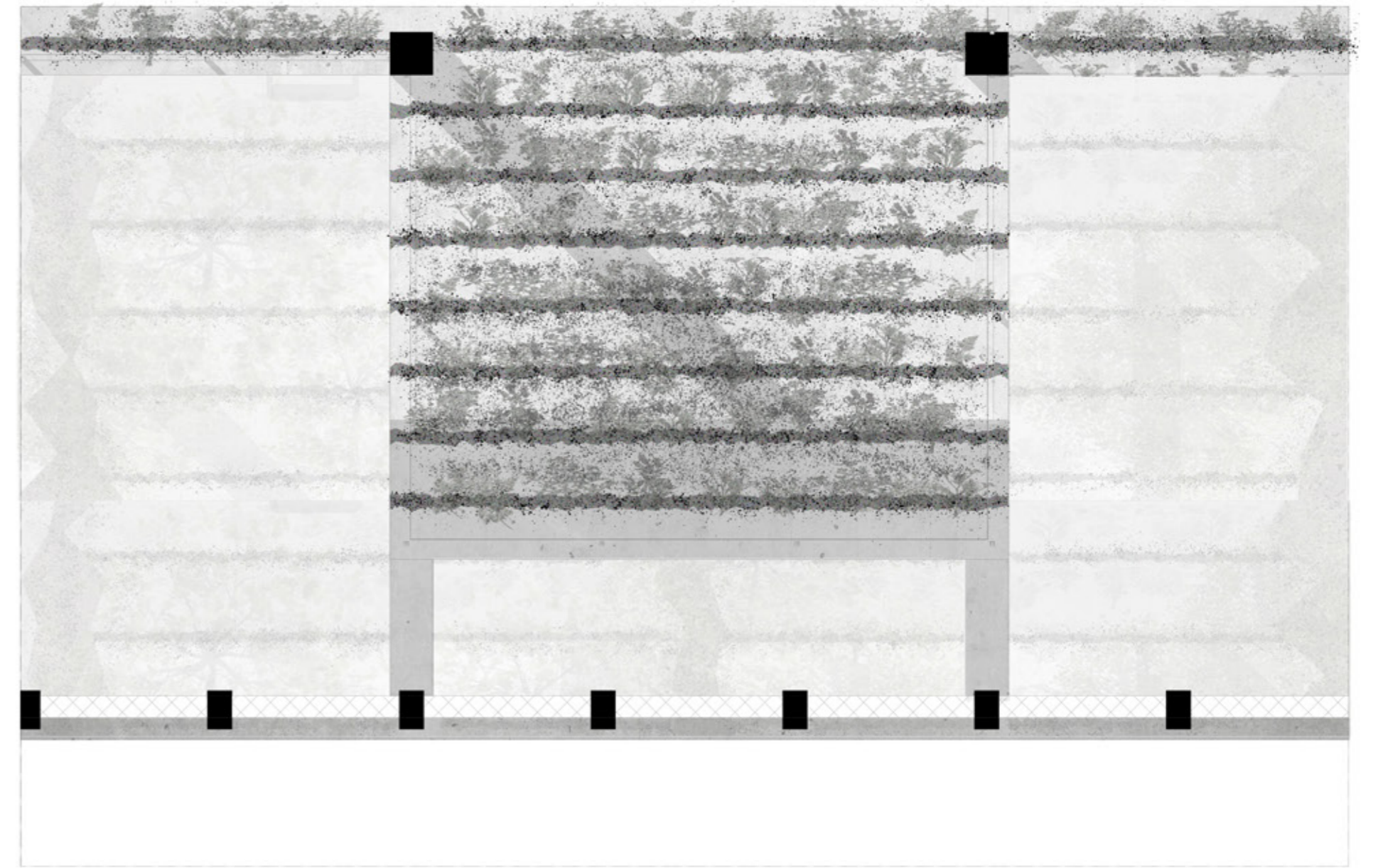
After modifications



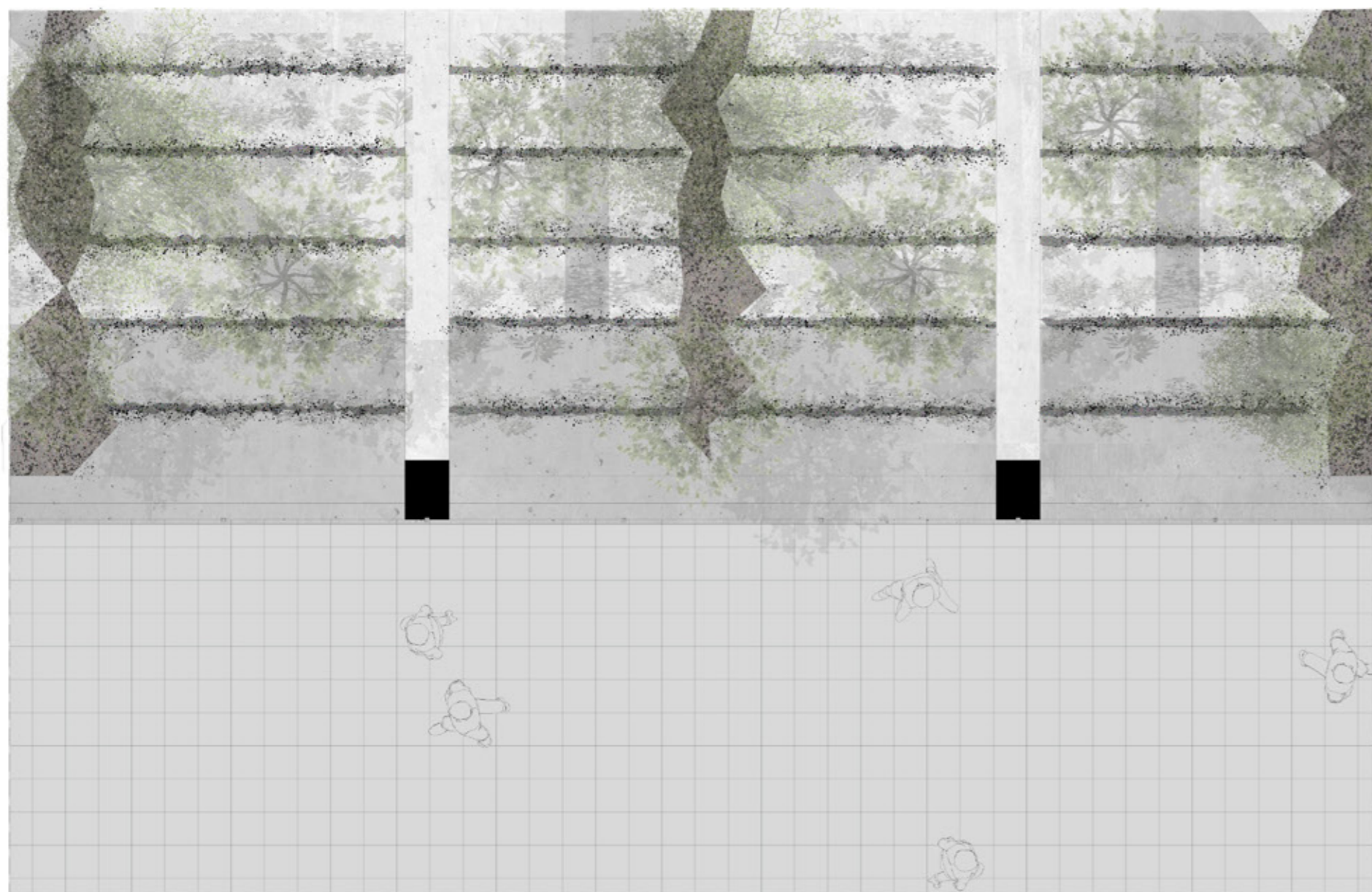
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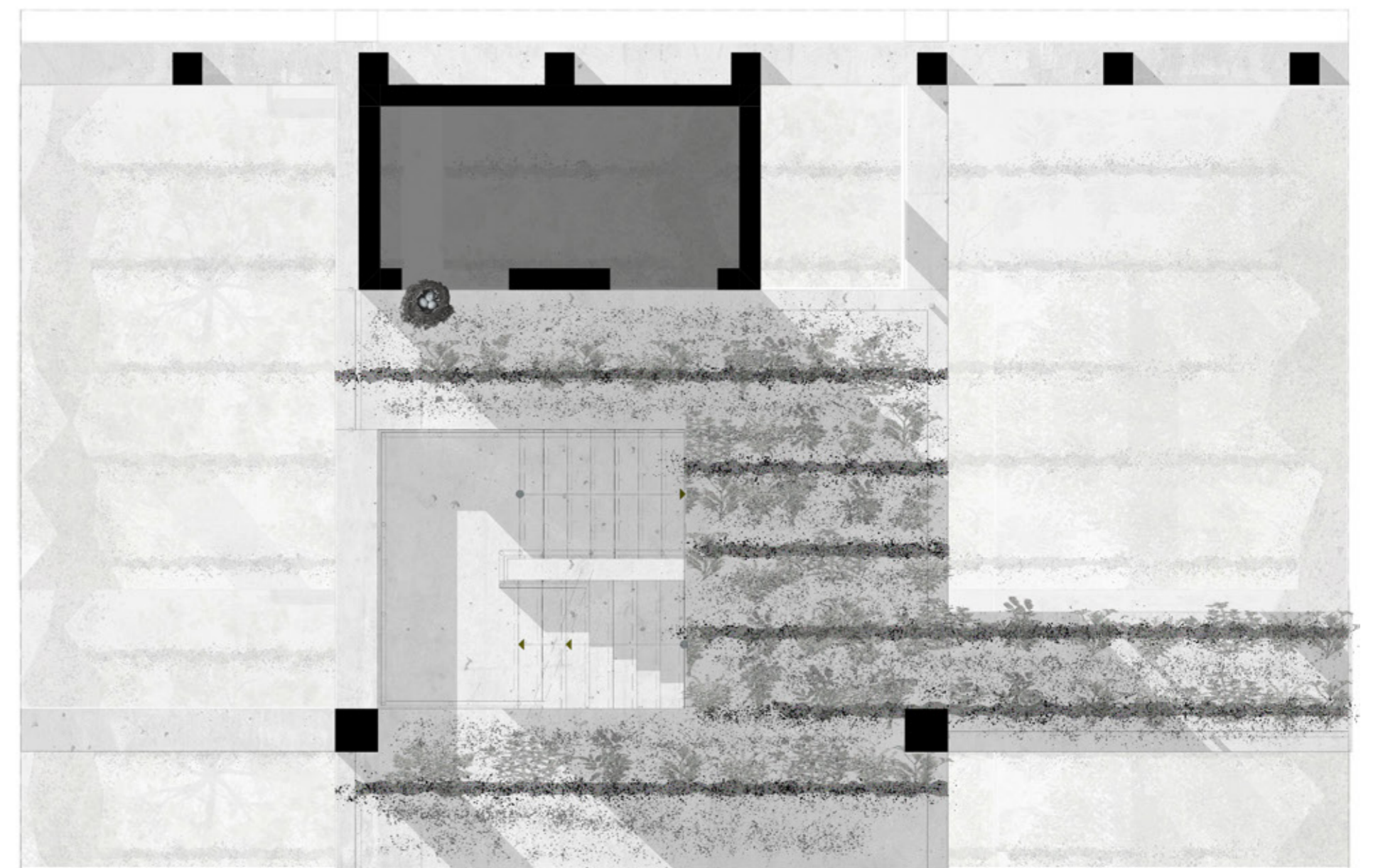
Maintenance entry



Front facade section



Streetlevel section



Elevator shafts & stairs

We are in the midst of a growing ecological crisis. Since the beginning of the anthropocene humans as a species are confronted by their impact on Earth's geology, ecosystems and climate change.

So far, the way we as a society have responded to these increasingly alarming signals has been lacklustre at best and apathetic at worst. With the current direction society is heading, it seems more and more likely that the consequences will be inevitable: rising sea levels and droughts threatens people's livelihood and the planet's biodiversity will be at risk.

Most of all, the impact that our actions have on the natural environment is already evident all over the planet.

One of the many reasons that it is so hard for western civilisation to deal with these issues is the capitalist values that are ingrained deep in society. Especially the characteristic tendency of endless economic growth has resulted in large scale degradation of the natural environment.

Therefore something that often comes up when it comes to potential solutions to the climate crisis is the idea of degrowth. Thinking about an architecture of removal inevitably brings up this same notion. What does it mean to engage in an act of removal in a society that is dominated by the spatial and cultural narrative of productivity and function?

One of the most extreme or confronting forms of degrowth might be the image of a ruin. It confronts us with our non-permanence but at the same time it offers the beauty of the cold hard built environment that is contrasted by the relentless power of nature. This project explores ruination as a method of removal and as an expression of a dystopian vision.

The location of the ruins are the office buildings on Westblaak.

The structure of columns and beams of these buildings offer an optical contrast against the plants and trees that will grow there. The removal consists of a series of simple, functional actions that have the sole purpose of facilitating nature and exposing the building to different elements.

First the building will be stripped of its soft materials, leaving only the structure: floors, load bearing walls, columns and beams.

This will be the first step in exposing the building to the elements, allowing some light, moisture and air to come in.

Large parts of the building are still mostly in the shade and rain will only be able to enter the areas close to the opened up facade.

The second step is to allow in extra light as well as rainwater by removing large parts of the floors within the existing grid. In this way tall voids are created that simultaneously enable rainwater to travel through the height of the building.

To allow plants and trees to take root, modifications of the existing structures are necessary. By drilling long cuts in the floor, areas are created that can hold plant life. These drillings will also allow the concrete to crack and become more porous, creating an environment where roots can search, dig and grow.

After removing the ground floor entirely, the earth is exposed on the lowest levels by cracking open the basement floors. The thick fen soil underneath can become a place where plants with larger roots such as several tree species can thrive.

The view from the street is obscured by the blind facade while offering minimal shelter and fertile ground for moss and ferns.

Simple safety nets are placed for initial caretaking purposes.

By placing thin layers of substrate and seeding species that will thrive in the specific circumstances of different parts of the building, the eco-system can start growing and expanding.

Slowly but surely roots will start breaking open floors, ferns and ivy will overgrow columns and walls and the material will start rotting. So while the plants thrive, the building will over time become less and less recognisable until nature has fully taken over.

