

PLAYGROUND OF SOLASTALGIA

A playful perspective on uncertainty

How does it feel, growing up in a place that is increasingly at risk for flooding, but hasn't been flooded, yet? With a rising sea level, the endpoint remains unknown. Is it a meter or three meters? Does it take a childhood or a lifetime? Our ways of coping with the effects of these changes are inhibited by the uncertainty of it. we must learn to embrace the finiteness and changeability of things. The Playground of Solastalgia offers a playful perspective on uncertainty and transience.

SOLASTALGIA

The notion of solastalgia is best described as the feeling of homesickness whilst still being at home. Not knowing when, or till what extend, to relinquish spaces and everyday rituals, a feeling of solastalgia sets in. The perpetual floodings of Noordereiland can be seen as a prelude, a harbinger for a more sinister future. Seeing places vanish in the dark waters evokes a dormant form of solastalgia.

BRIDGEHEAD

The old bridgehead on Noordereiland appeals to the imagination of solastalgia. Every now and then the platform that is resting on the old bridge foundation vanishes in the rising waters of the Maas. Once this place was a key connection between Noordereiland and the city center, now it's a relic of a history long past. The old bridgehead lost its original function after the connection was replaced. but the events of the second world war that took place on the bridge are etched in the memory of Noordereiland. After the war it became a place of meaning, symbolizing Rotterdam's' resilience and vigor.

The old bridgehead underwent a radical transformation throughout time. It started as a raised platform high above the river carried by solid brick arcs. After the old bridge was demolished the bridge pillars were left standing, creating a new platform much closer to the water. It resulted in a sequence of spaces connected by concrete steps leading up to the two watchtowers. Since the platform is the lowest level on the island this monumental place is extremely vulnerable for flooding. It is destined to be the first element of Noordereiland that must be relinquished to the water. With this inevitable outcome in mind, it has the potential to become a place that expresses the feeling of solastalgia. The question arises how we can give new meaning to this monumental place that is extremely vulnerable for flooding?

A PLAYFUL PERSPECTIVE

Can this be a place that offers solace and new perspectives that deal with, and maybe even embraces, uncertainty? The platform has the symbolic and haptic potential to embody the notion of solastalgia by embracing its ever-changing characteristics and function. In this playground the water redefines the space, it sets the terms for play without prescript. It constitutes a terrain for imagination by allowing the water to bring its own

fluid characteristics, sometimes translucent, other times shimmering or craggy and rough. A child perceives the platform in an imaginative way, the water becomes an actor in their playful interactions. Each moment they will visit the platform it takes a different form and challenges them to explore a new playful perspective.

THE FLOOR IS LAVA

By lifting the wooden top floor, the concrete beam layer grid underneath the platform is exposed. The grid becomes a guiding principle, a base to superposition five steps of solastalgia in the form of geometrical shapes that intersect. As a result, the floor is no longer just a floor.

In playful terms the floor is lava. It creates a multileveled playground of walls and floors forming various spaces that create the haptic and functional potential to be influenced by the rising water level. The grid is filled with a pink and permeable metal grating to allow the water to enter the platform as it rises. with its soft and playful colors, a duality is created between the playground and its monumental setting.

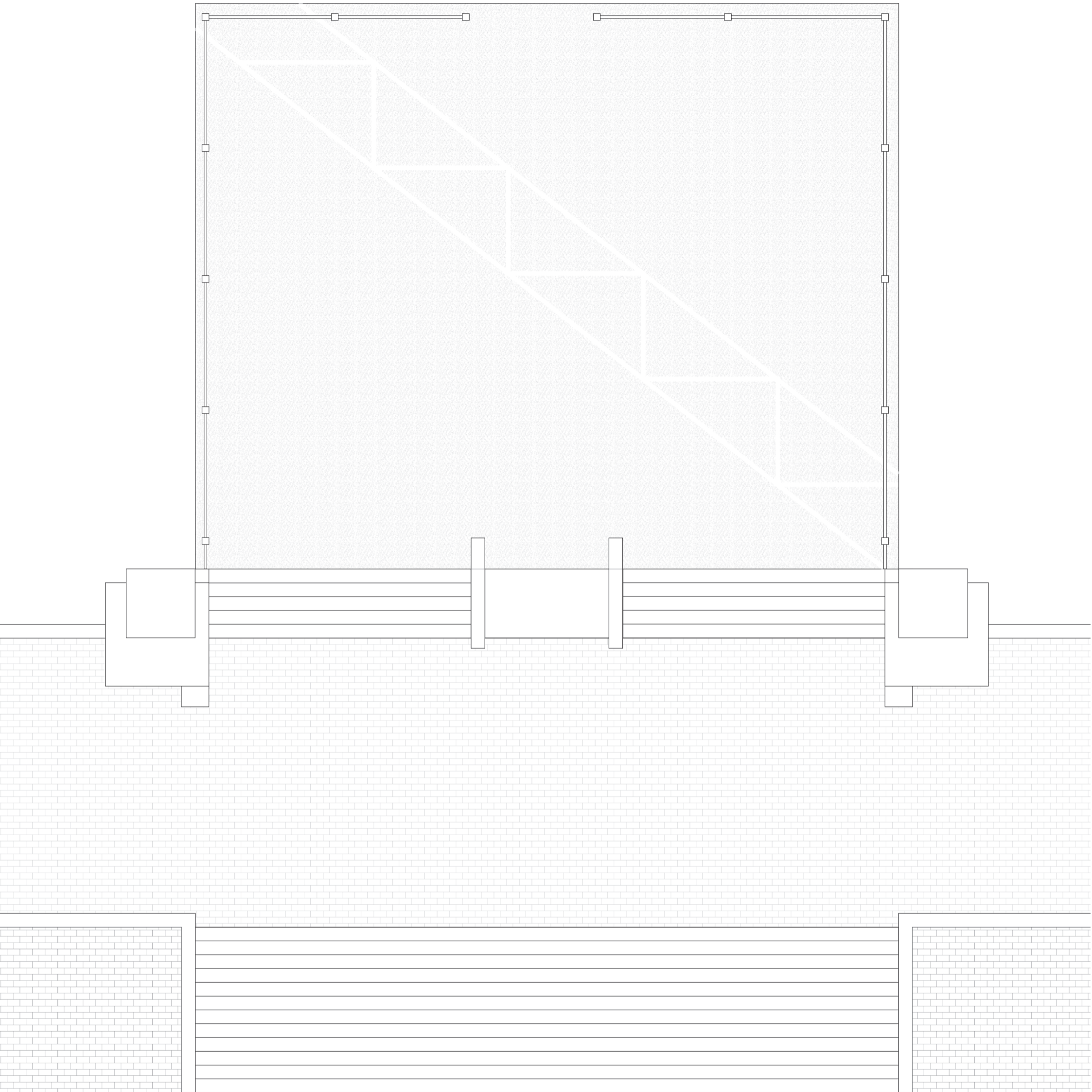
FIVE STEPS

The playground is divided into five steps, creating five levels in height. As the water rises the surface of the platform shrinks. Water pushes trough the pink metal grating as it takes over the spaces. A room turns into a cistern, a sitting pit becomes a pool. Parts of the playground become inaccessible, challenging the imagination for a new use of play. As the water reaches the fifth and final stage the platform is almost completely physically cut off from the lower quay, making the playground only accessible by two thin strips centrally placed between the two watchtowers.

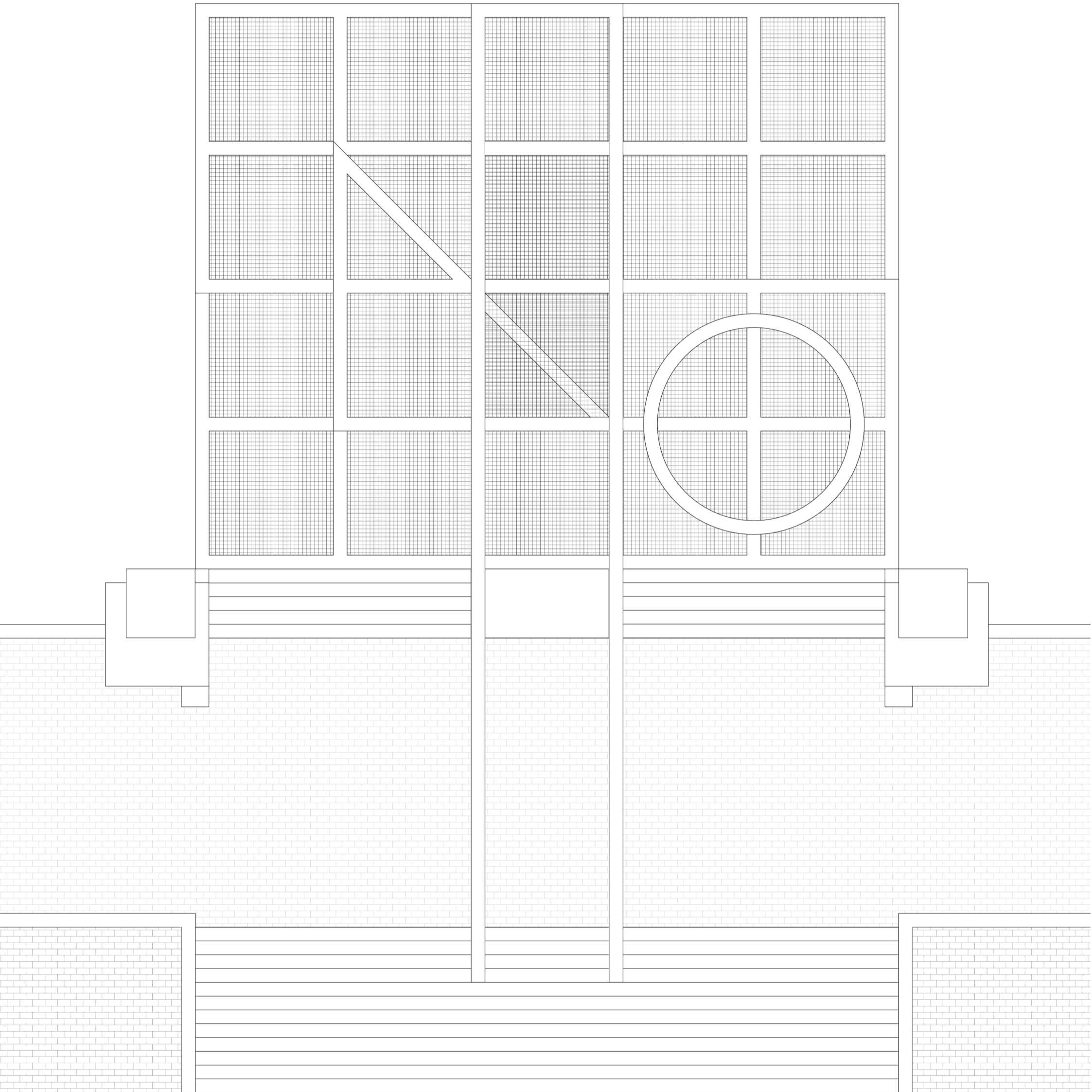
This dramaturgical lead up can be seen as an effort to make the feeling of solastalgia tangible and relatable, for both children and spectators. The Playground of Solastalgia teaches us to navigate towards a new perspective in an increasingly unstable and uncertain environment by cultivating the idea that we can find new meaning amidst the uncertainty.

*Project by Daan de Jong
Studio Learning from Venice
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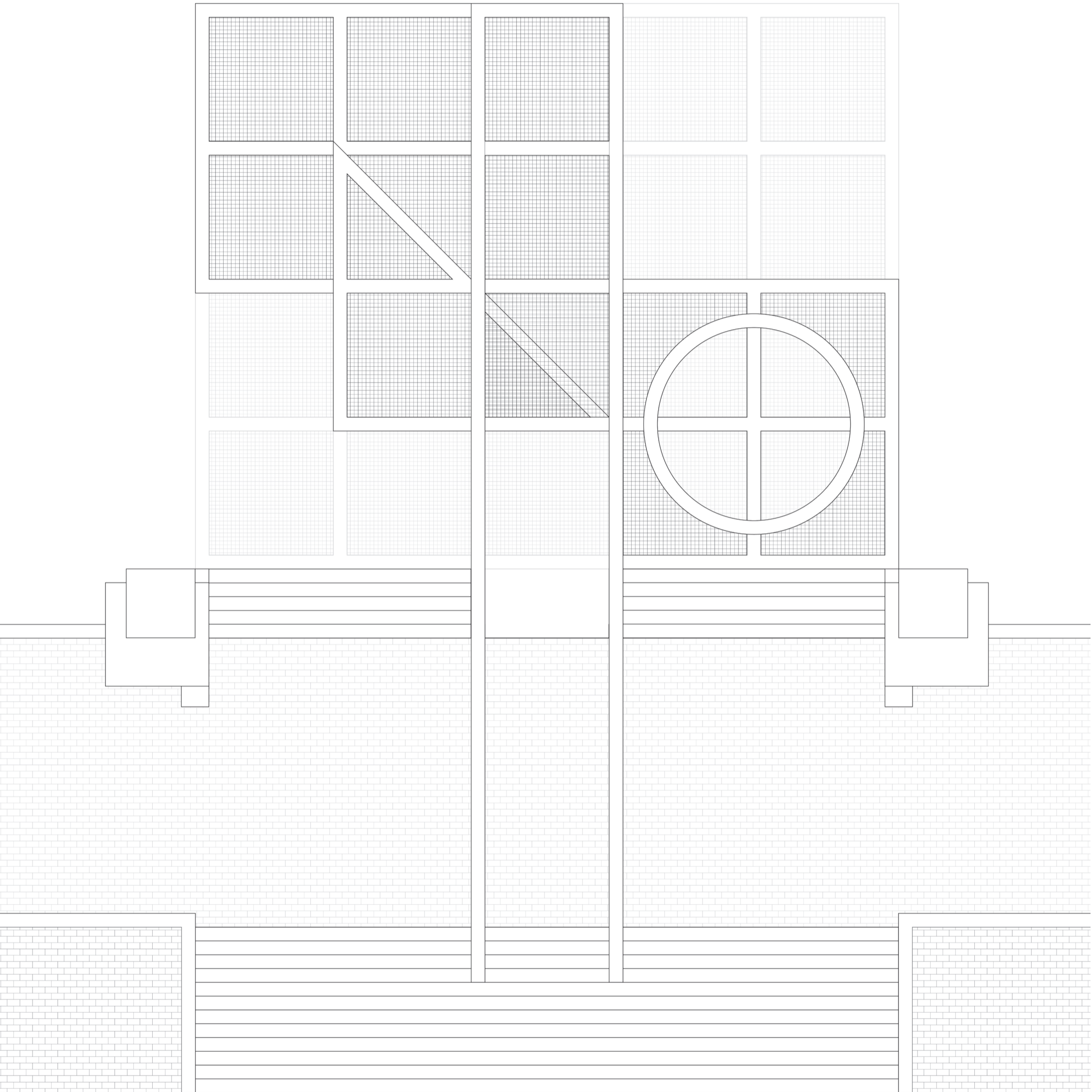
Stage 0 +1.40 NAP (high tide)
plan 1:150

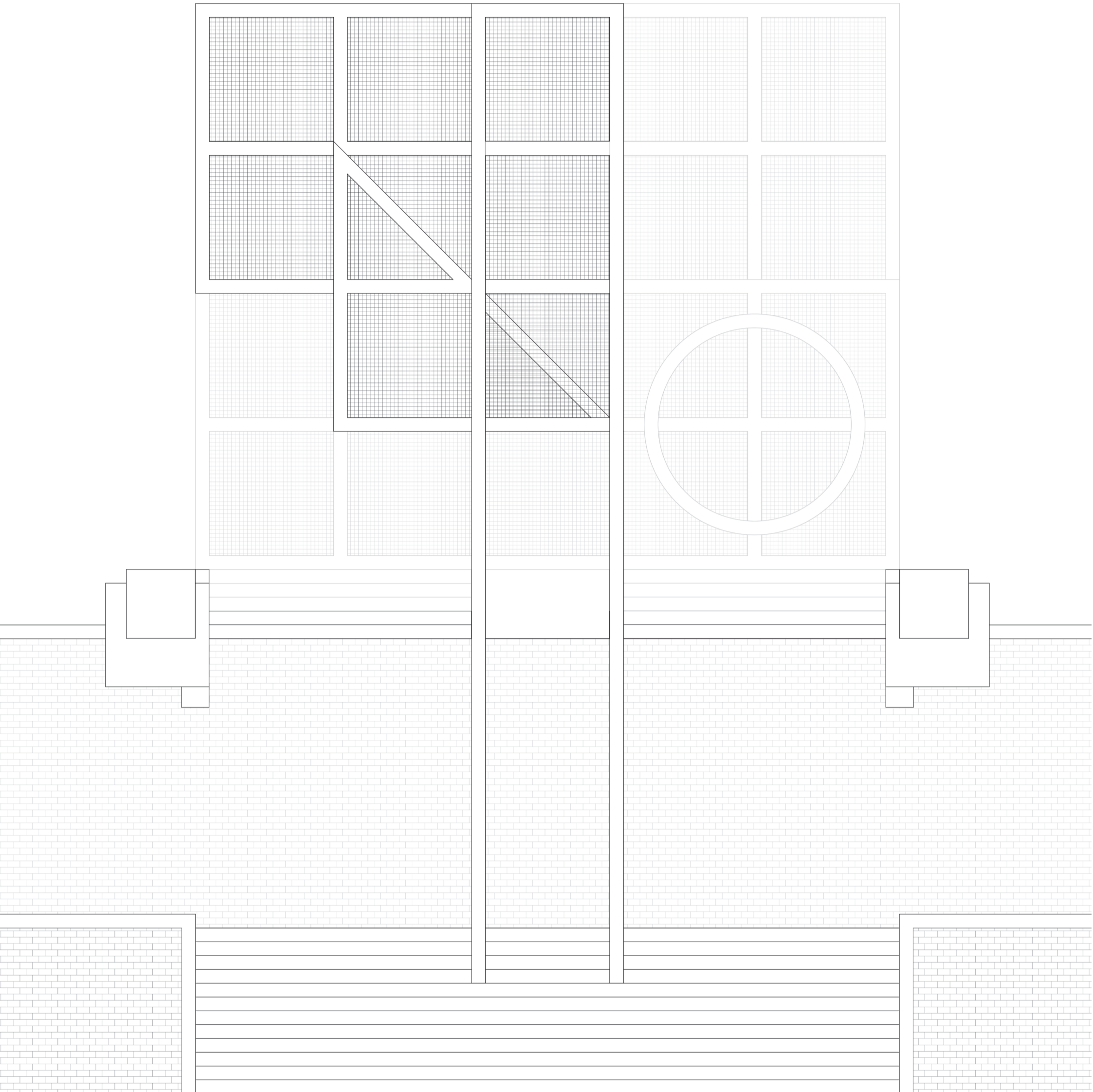


Stage 1 +2.00 NAP
plan 1:150

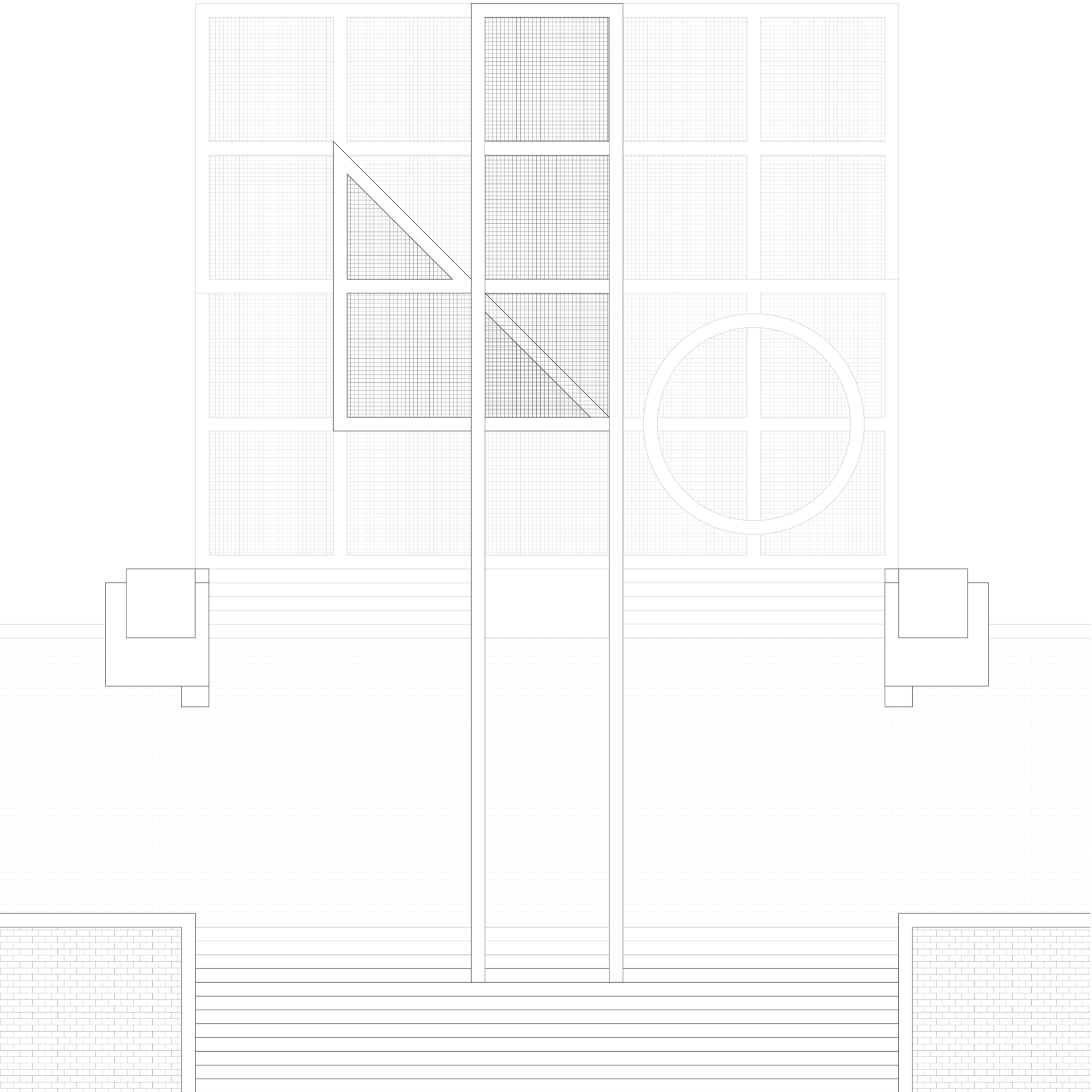


Stage 2 +2.60 NAP
plan 1:150





Stage 4 +3.80 NAP
plan 1:150



Stage 5 +4.40 NAP
plan 1:150

