

A FOREMAST FOR THE MS NOORDEREILAND
by Ronja Dmoch

"Learning from Venice"
RAvB & Rotative Studio

A FOREMAST FOR THE MS NOORDEREILAND

Building on a unique identity to navigate future challenges

Starting out as nothing but a wide sandbank on the river shore of the Maas in the center of Rotterdam, things started to change when in 1840 a huge ramp was built and a harbor was dug right next to it. Big ships were towed ashore for maintenance, while the surrounding land started to flourish with economic growth settling all around the shipping industry. The following decades the Noorderhaven (North harbor) was dug, effectively creating the Noordereiland. A railway bridge was built across the island, connecting the two halves of the city and creating a major crossroad for all manners of transportation.

Today, the island certainly is a unique place to experience. Ever since the Erasmus bridge took the city's infrastructure to new heights, the island no longer needs to be crossed to make one's way across the Maas. The inhabitants now enjoy a peaceful neighborhood and a tight-knit community. Although the shipping industry is no longer a defining factor of the island, the community still strongly identifies with its past and its relationship with the "Zeevaart" (Maritime transport).

The artist Joey Cillen, who lives and works on the Noordereiland, interpreted the island itself as a ship that is anchored in the harbor of Rotterdam and made it his mission to get everyone on board for his vision of the "MS Noordereiland". In alignment with his vision, when a new apartment complex was built at the foot of the Willemsbrug in 2002, two large "lamps" were installed on the corners. These green and red panels are there to represent the lights on a ship indicating port and starboard.

During our investigation into the history, current state and future scenarios regarding the island, it became clear that the "ship", contrary to what it might seem like at first glance, is anything but calm and quiet. It is soon to encounter rough waters. However, it appears as if no one is taking this threat seriously enough

The urban landscape of the city of Rotterdam keeps on developing. Just recently the new skyscraper called the "Zalmhaven" was finished, standing at an astounding 203 meters tall, making it the new high-rise record in the Benelux. Luxury condos started selling at over a million, providing a spectacular view of the historic landmark that is the Noordereiland. Despite the paramount observing positions, few onlookers are truly observing what is actually going on.

In line with the analogy that the inhabitants of the island already identify with, it became apparent what the MS Noordereiland is still missing to call for attention: a foremast. A foremast is a tall structure at the front of the ship, rising vertically to its center line. Its function is to provide a good height for the navigation light, radio and radar aerials and scanners. It usually has a special light that is shown at night, which communicates the ship's presence to its surroundings.

Situated in the centre of a booming city, the community living under the ever growing threat of flooding needs to start shining a light on its situation to its vicinity - quite literally for that matter. Therefore, the mast's light has the shape of a house, a home, that is lifted into view. A symbol that everybody can relate to. That is the main function of the design: to establish a new relationship to the city, to put the Noordereiland back on the map and give it a sight visible to everyone.

In raising awareness to the fate of the MS Noordereiland, might we still be able to change its course?

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1840
During the early developmental stages of the city, Rotterdam did not yet have the Noordereiland. Instead, a green landscape situated on a wide sandbank lies in its future space.

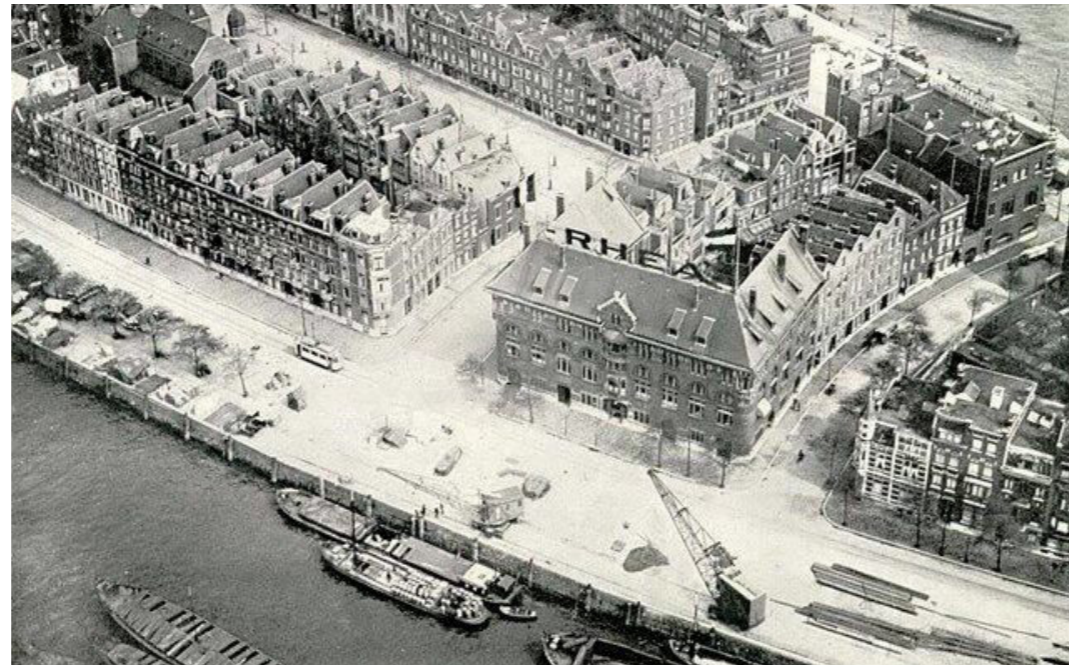


1910
The harbour is dug, creating the manmade Noordereiland. Many sailors settle on the island, the railway bridge is built and the island gains economic and infrastructural importance.

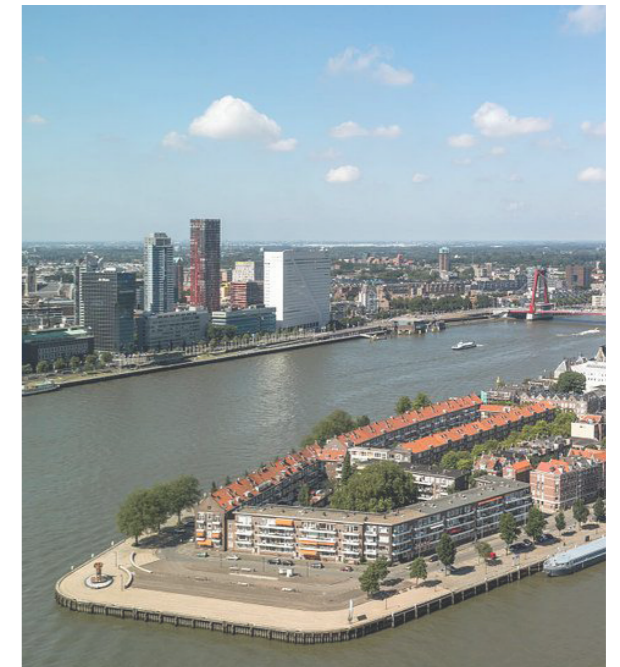


2000
The urban landscape of the surrounding city evolves. Due to the building of the Erasmusbrug, the Noordereiland no longer needs to be crossed to make one's way across the Maas, thereby rendering the island a secondary, almost redundant crossing point.

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PAST
&
PRESENT



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Artwork by Joey Cillen

THE MS NOORDEREILAND
a strong sense of community

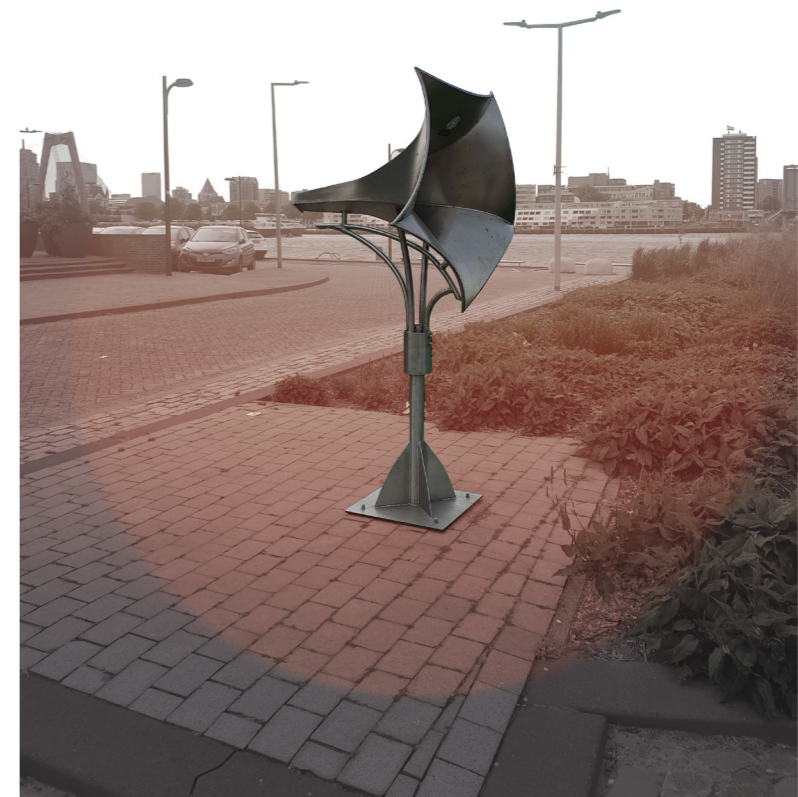
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5. port

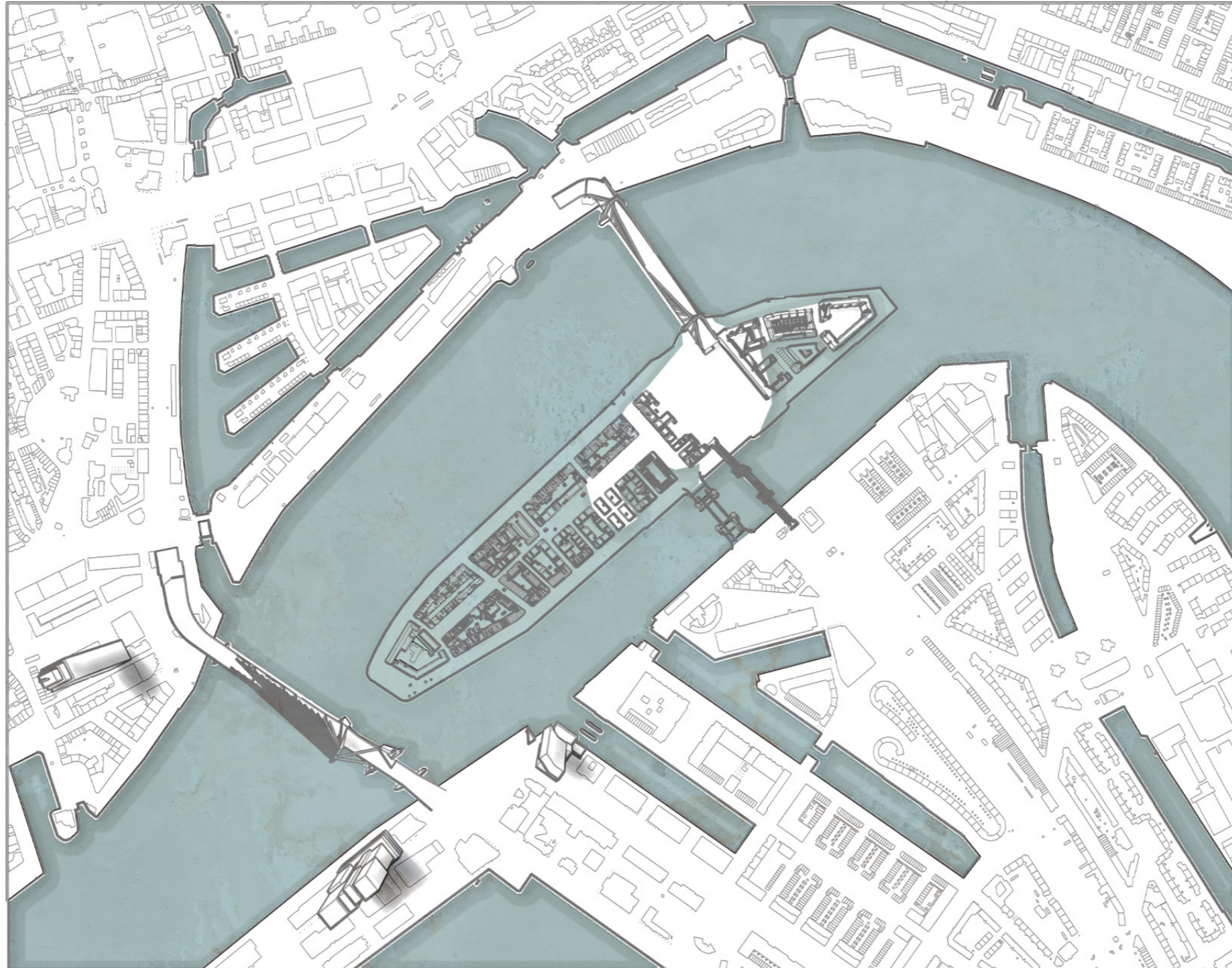


7. starboard



1. foghorn

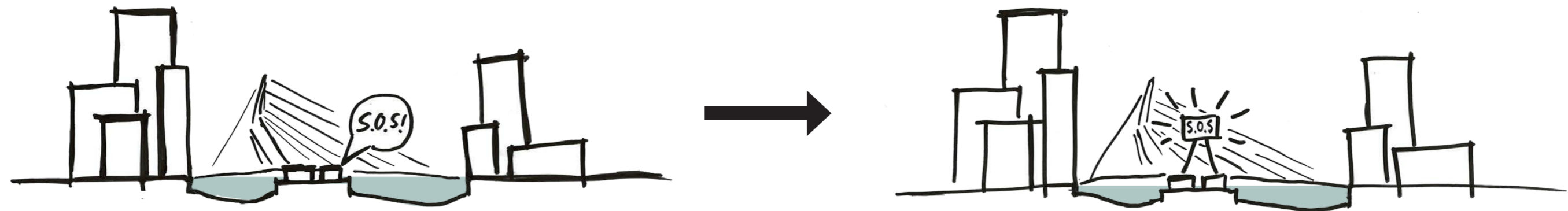
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ⓘ Situation Noordereiland
possible flood scenario +3,6 N.A.P
1:10000

THE MS NOORDEREILAND IS SINKING

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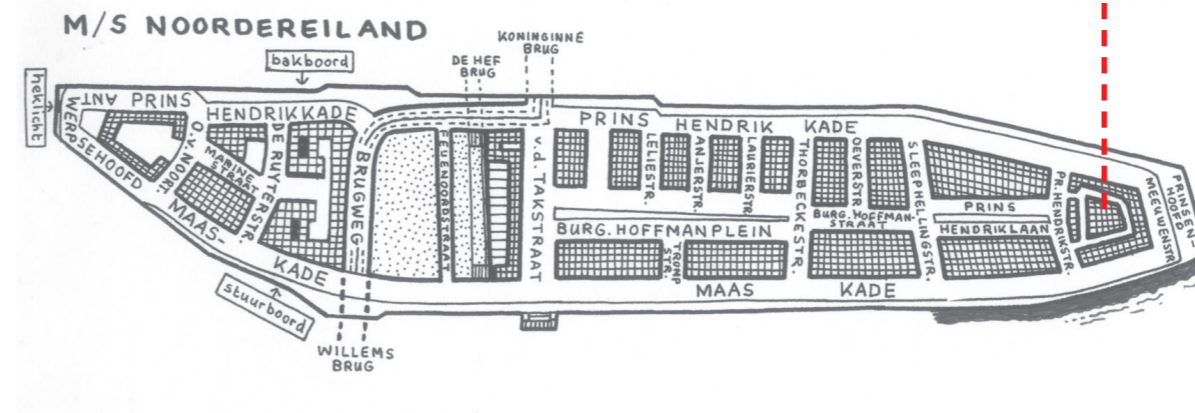
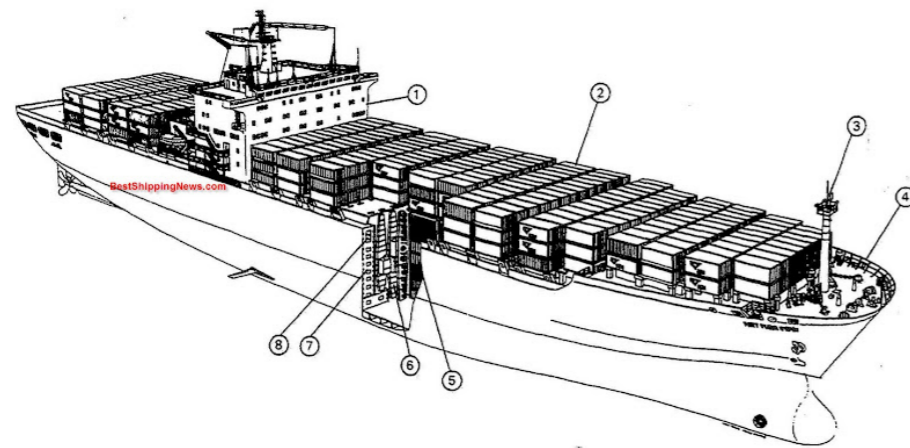


RAISING AWARENESS

So how do you solve a problem, when you don't know there is one?
- You don't.

The MS Noordereiland is sinking while the city is seemingly unaware.
It is of paramount importance to make the issue at hand visible and confront a
broader audience. Because it is only with an extraordinary joint effort that we
can steer a new course and make the waters safe again.

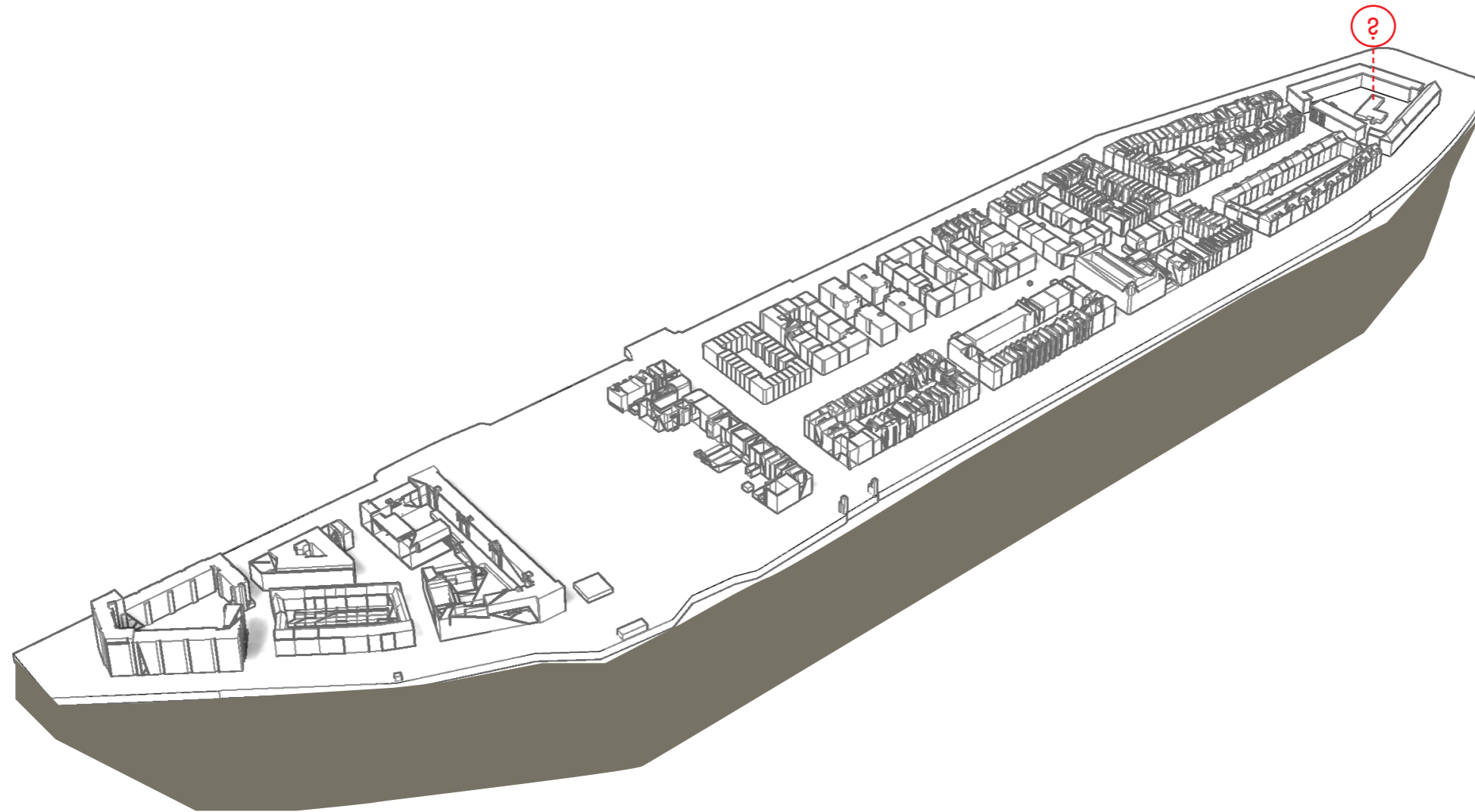
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THE FOREMAST

The mast nearest to the bow of the ship. Its function is to provide good height for the navigation light, radio and radar aerials and scanners. It usually has a special light that is shown at night, as well as the ship's foghorn which is blown during poor visibility to warn other ships of its presence.

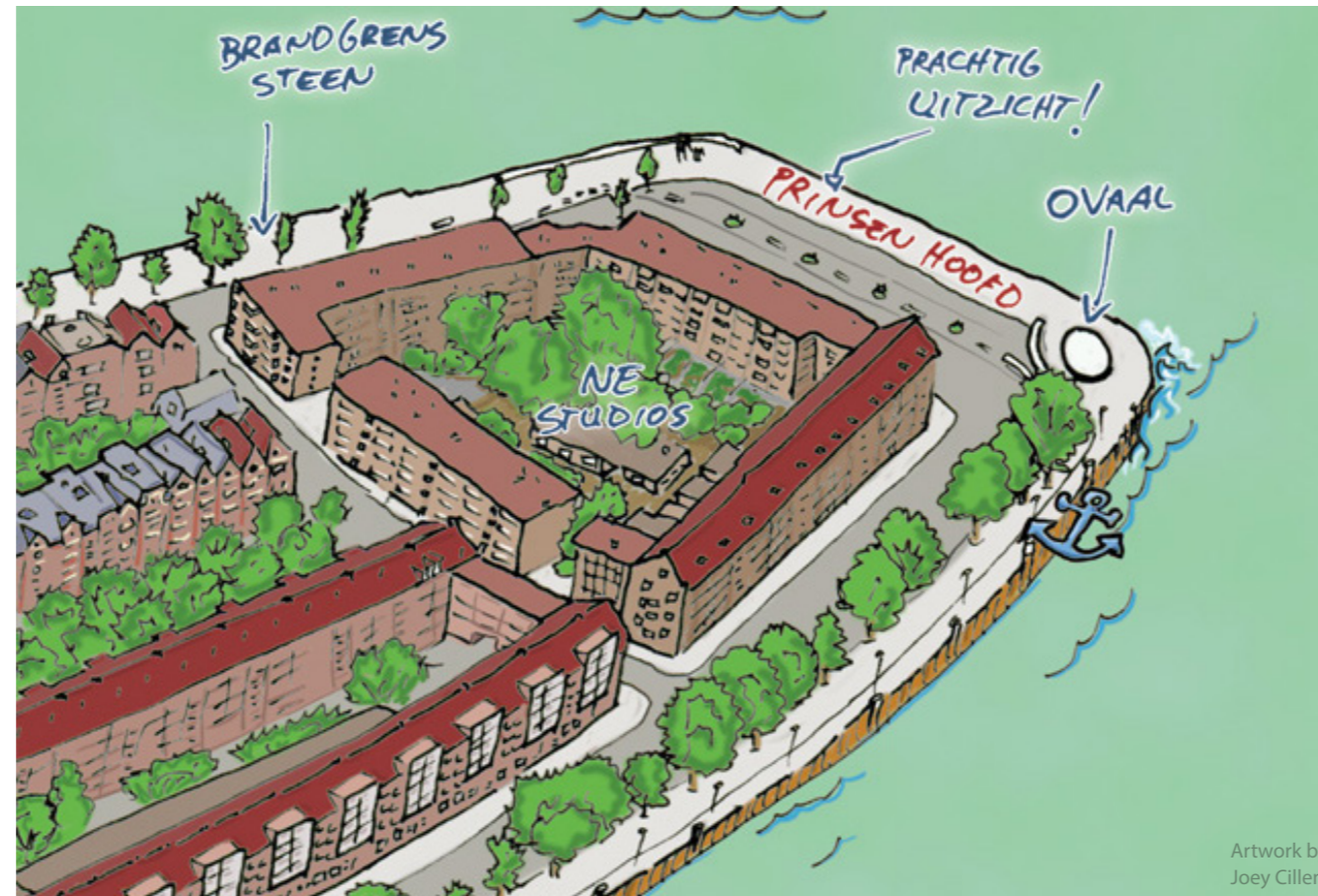
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THE LOCATION

On the Noordereiland the most suited space for the new nautical addition is the center courtyard of the most outer block, which is closest to the Erasmusbridge and therefore in reach of a frequent stream of spectators. The quay in front of the last houses is to be left untouched, as the quality of this public space would suffer, as well as the quality of life in the apartments, due to blockage of view and increased shading. Also inside the courtyard itself the existing situation is to be carefully considered.

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INTRODUCING NE STUDIOS

Since 1988 various artists work in the NEstudios in different creative disciplines such as sculpture, photography, painting, graphic design, video, illustration and spacial design. The work is autonomous aswell as comissioned, and wherever possible the artists benefit from each others expertise. Each year the artists present their work to the public during open atelier days. Furthermore their work gets exposed nationally and internationally.

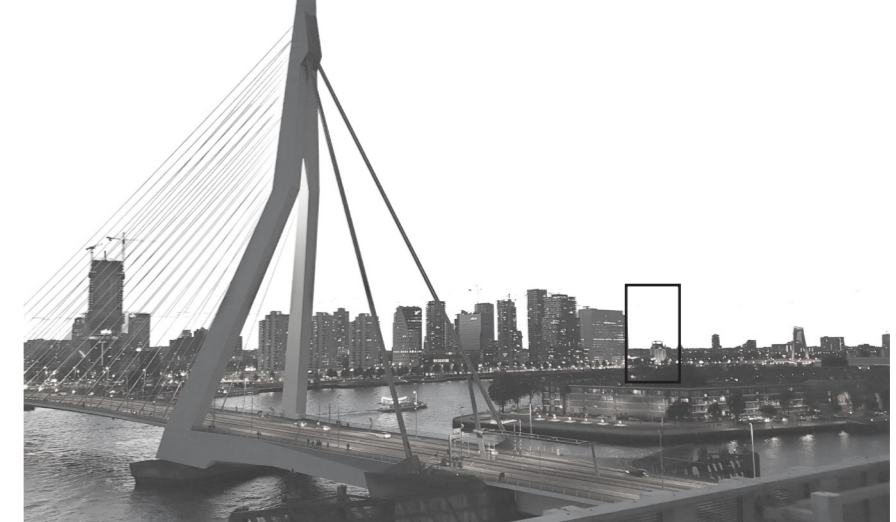
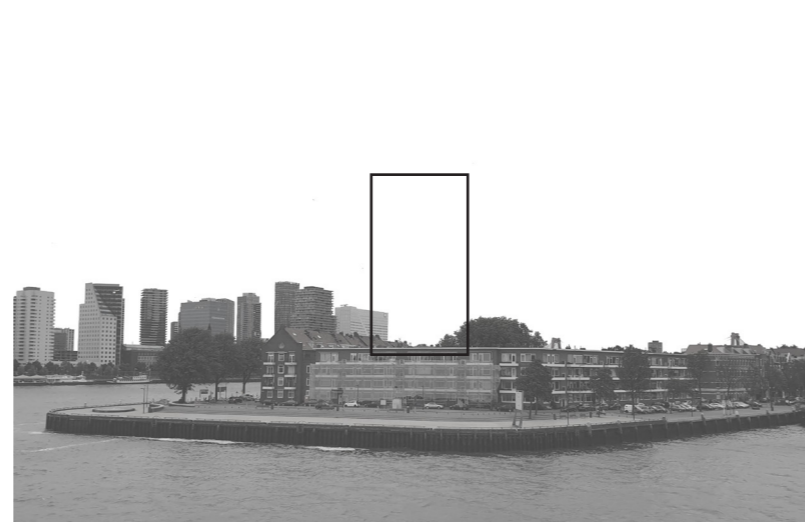
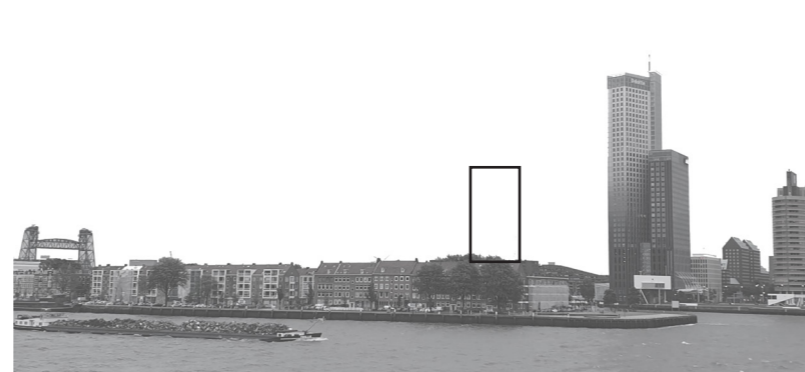


hidden between houses, in a lush green oasis, lays the former school building. The roots of the surrounding trees have transformed the once sleek yard into an organic landscape. Wild berries grow between the hedges and fruittrees, flowers and herbes thrive in this environment. It is a creative nest that offers a home to various cultural projects.

(- translated from www.nestudios.nl)

Relationship with the island

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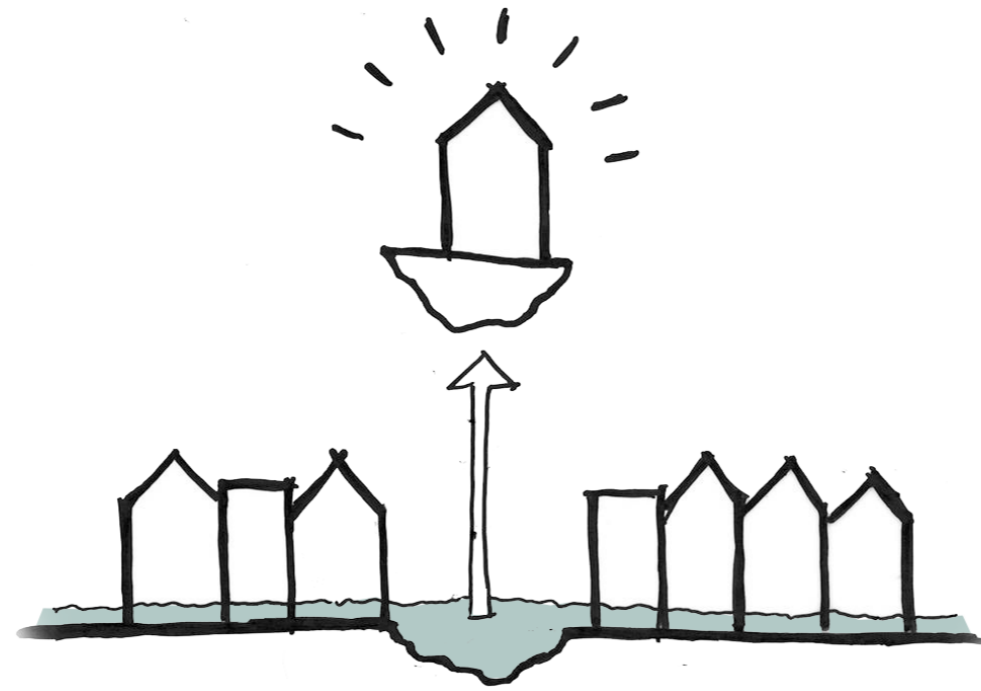


360 DEGREES

Given that it is often times overlooked on tourist guides, it is striking that - once paid attention to - the Noordereiland is actually visible from all directions of the surrounding city, as well as from well-visited tourist sites such as the Euromast and Erasmus bridge. With the set elements of the Rotterdam skyline prominently in the tower's periphery, the many viewing angles provide an ever changing background for the foremast.

Relationship with the city

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The foremast of the Noordereiland will raise the local environment of the island into view for the surrounding city. At the top of the tower is a structure shaped to symbolize a home raised to safety, with the purpose of conveying the threat the island is under.



Urban confluence silicon valley (R1)
San Jose, United States
Bernhard Khoury, 2020

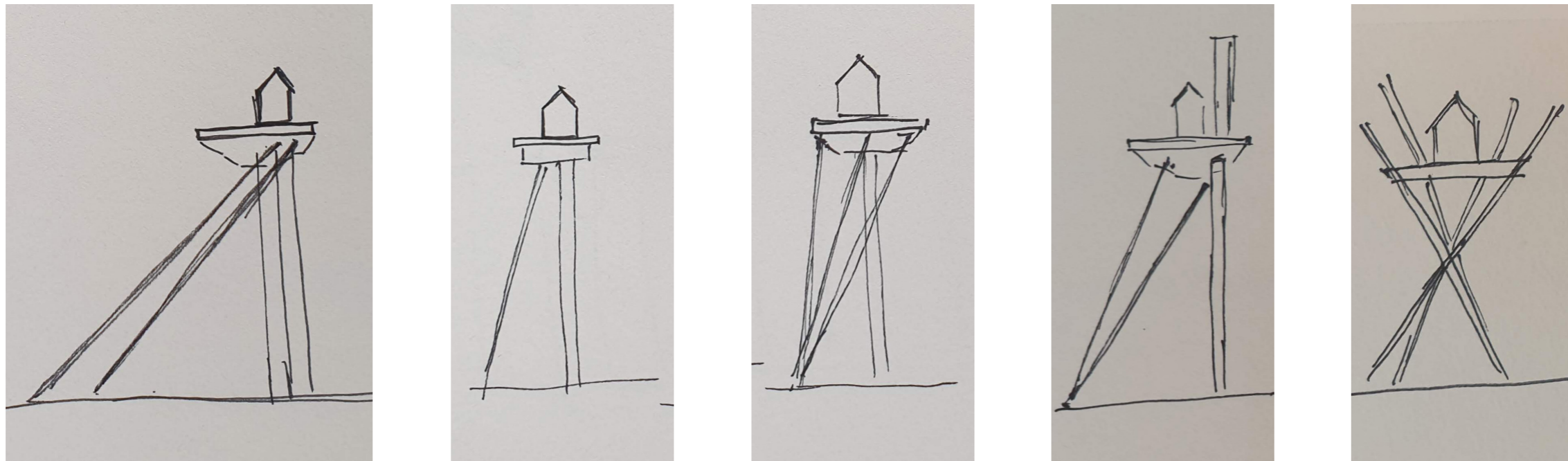
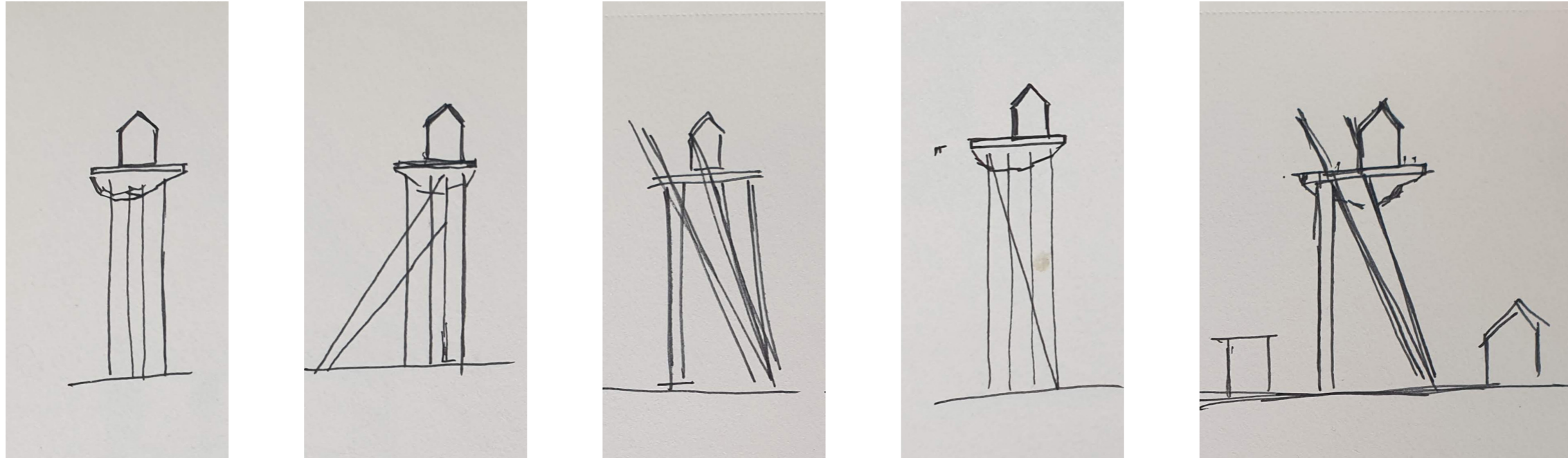


"pioneers house"
Hijplaat, Rotterdam
John Körmeling, 1999

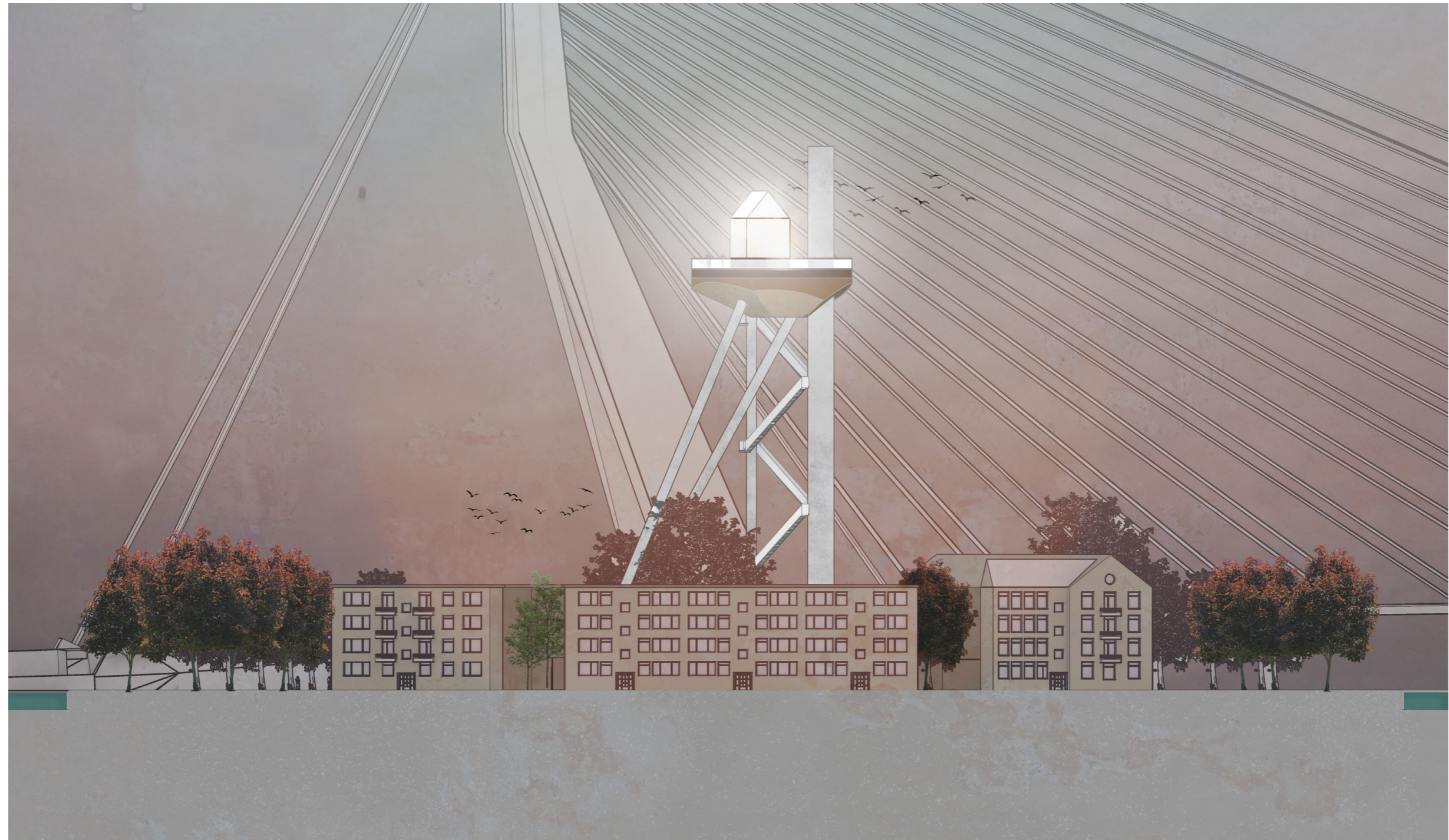


Lasvit Headquarters
Nový Bor, Czech Republic.
Ov-a Architecti 2019

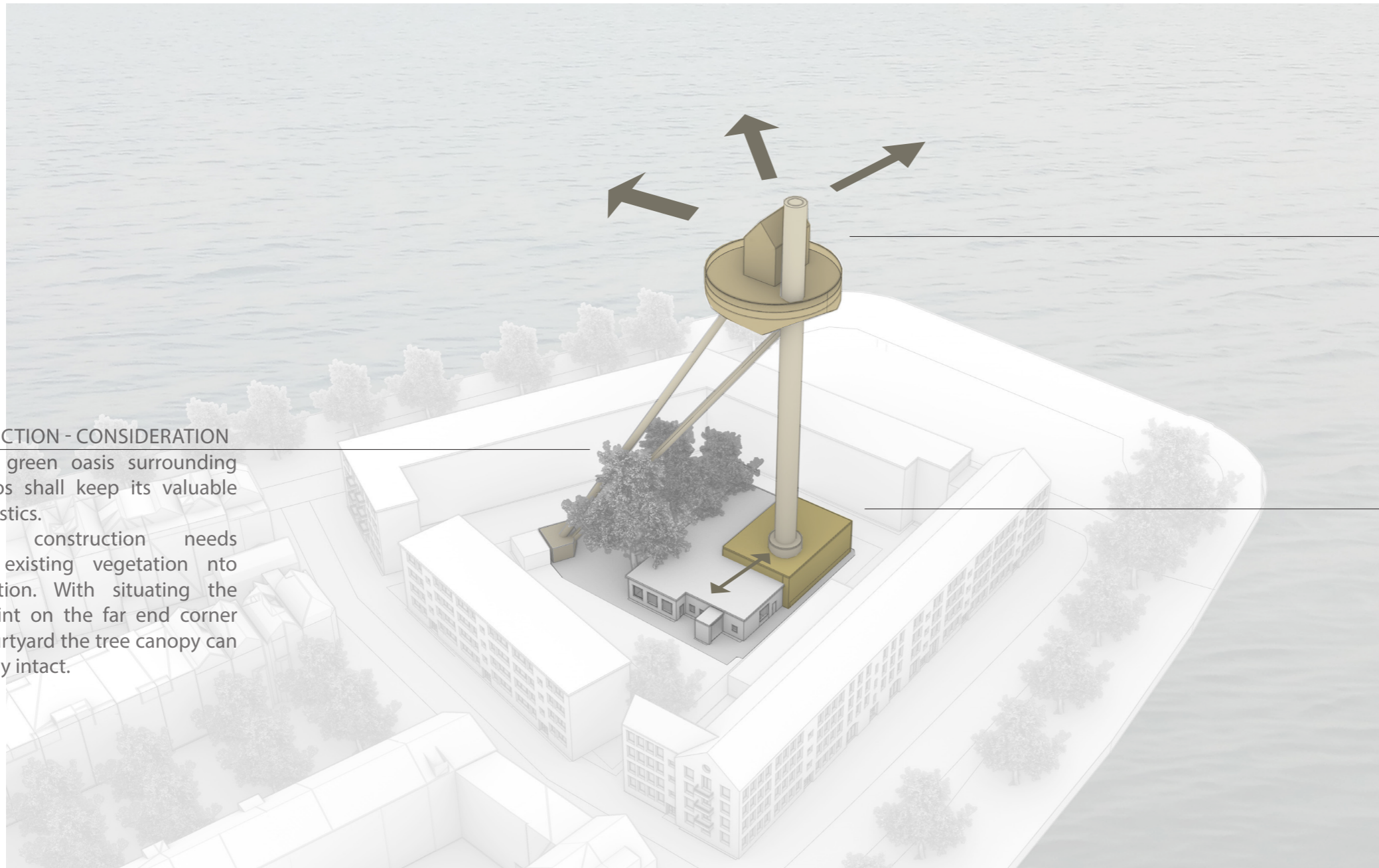
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CONSTRUCTION - CONSIDERATION

The lush green oasis surrounding NE Studios shall keep its valuable characteristics.

Therefore construction needs to take existing vegetation into consideration. With situating the anchorpoint on the far end corner of the courtyard the tree canopy can stay largely intact.

TOWER - LOOK OUT & LOOK AT

It is a sight with the capacity to communicate the island's situation to its surroundings.

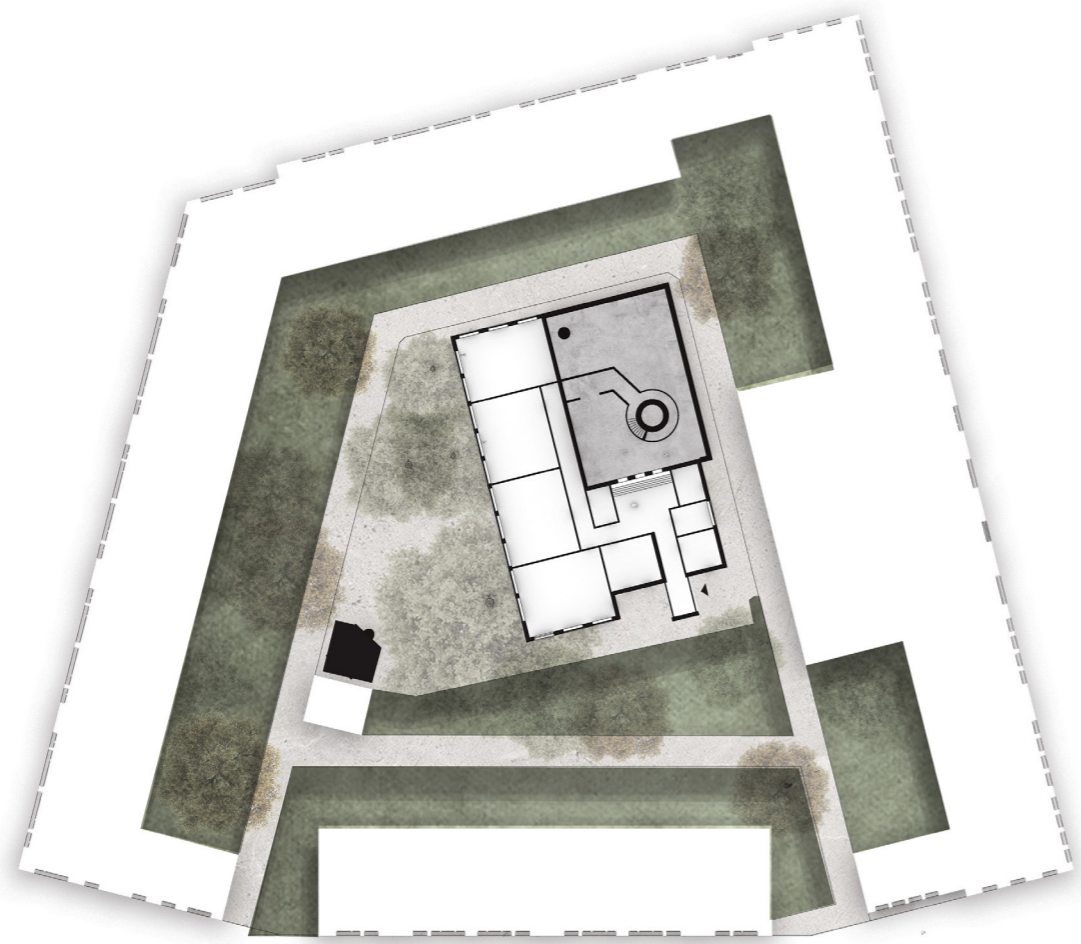
The focal point of the foremast is the elevated 'home', which is a flexible, minimalistic space that is clad with translucent polycarbonate. This structure facilitates a space for artists, with the potential to both literally and figuratively enlighten its visitors and the vicinity.

BASE - EXTENSION & SAFETY

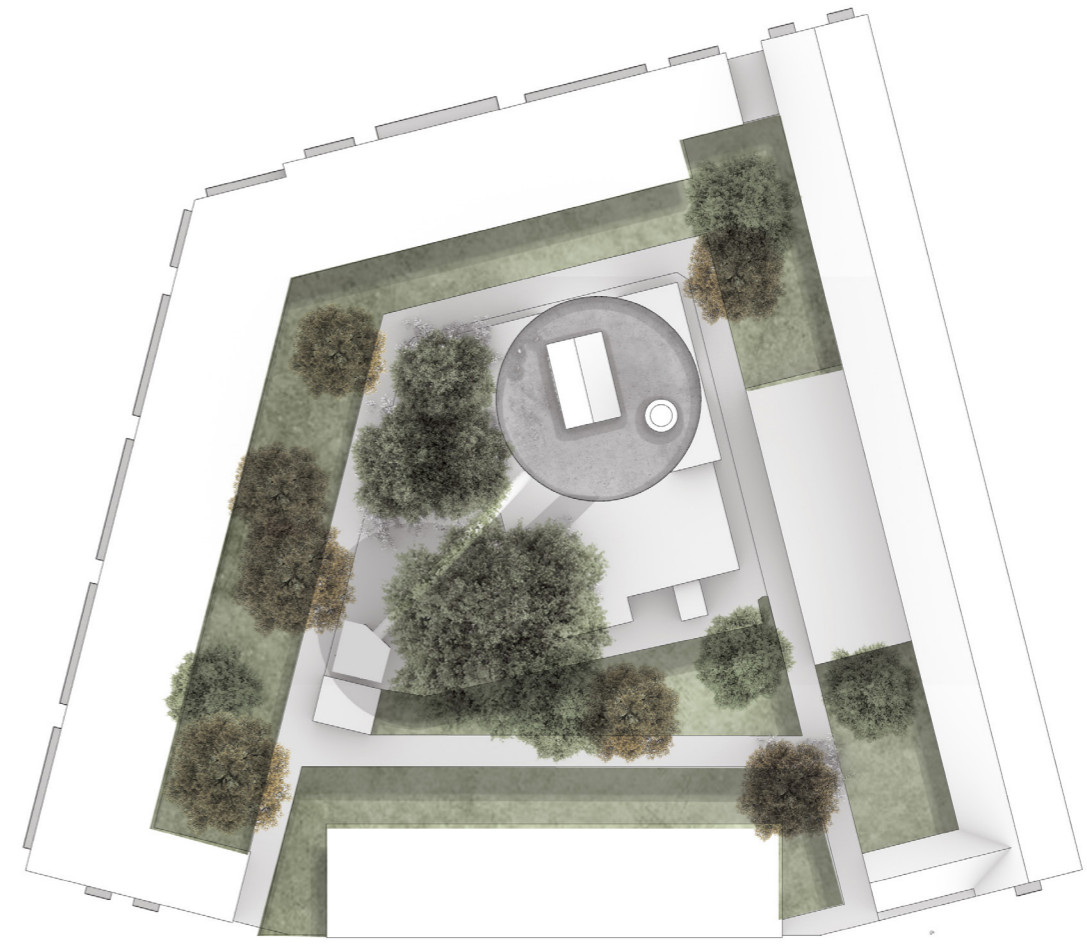
The existing building used by NE Studios is being extended by a new gallery space and at the same time an elevated floor that, in times of flooding, will keep artwork from destruction.

The Mast becomes entirely part of the Studio's jurisdiction. It uses the existing entrance and is not meant for big scale tourism, but for the community and especially the creative sector settled on the island.

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ground floor
1:500



top view
1:500

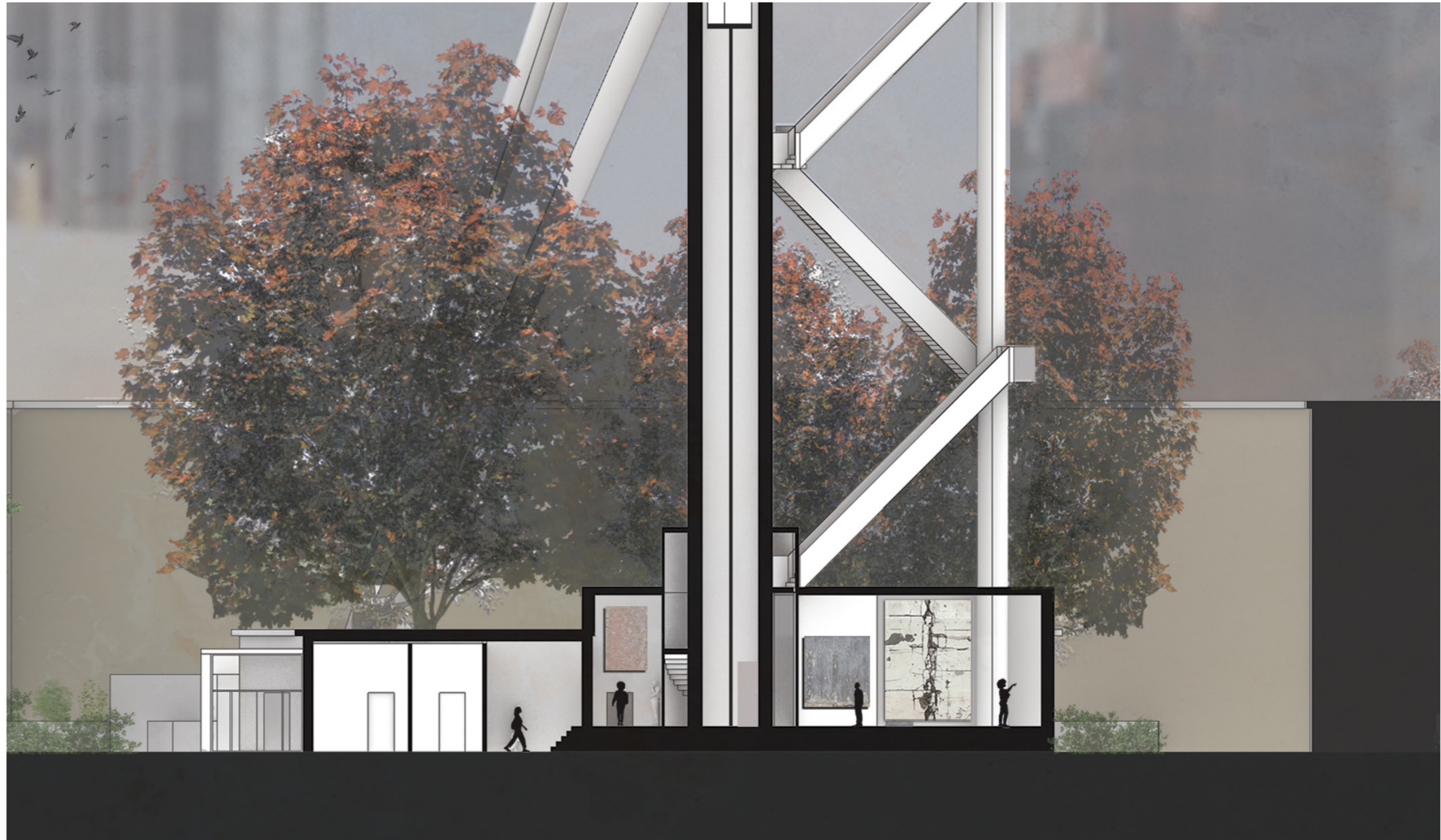


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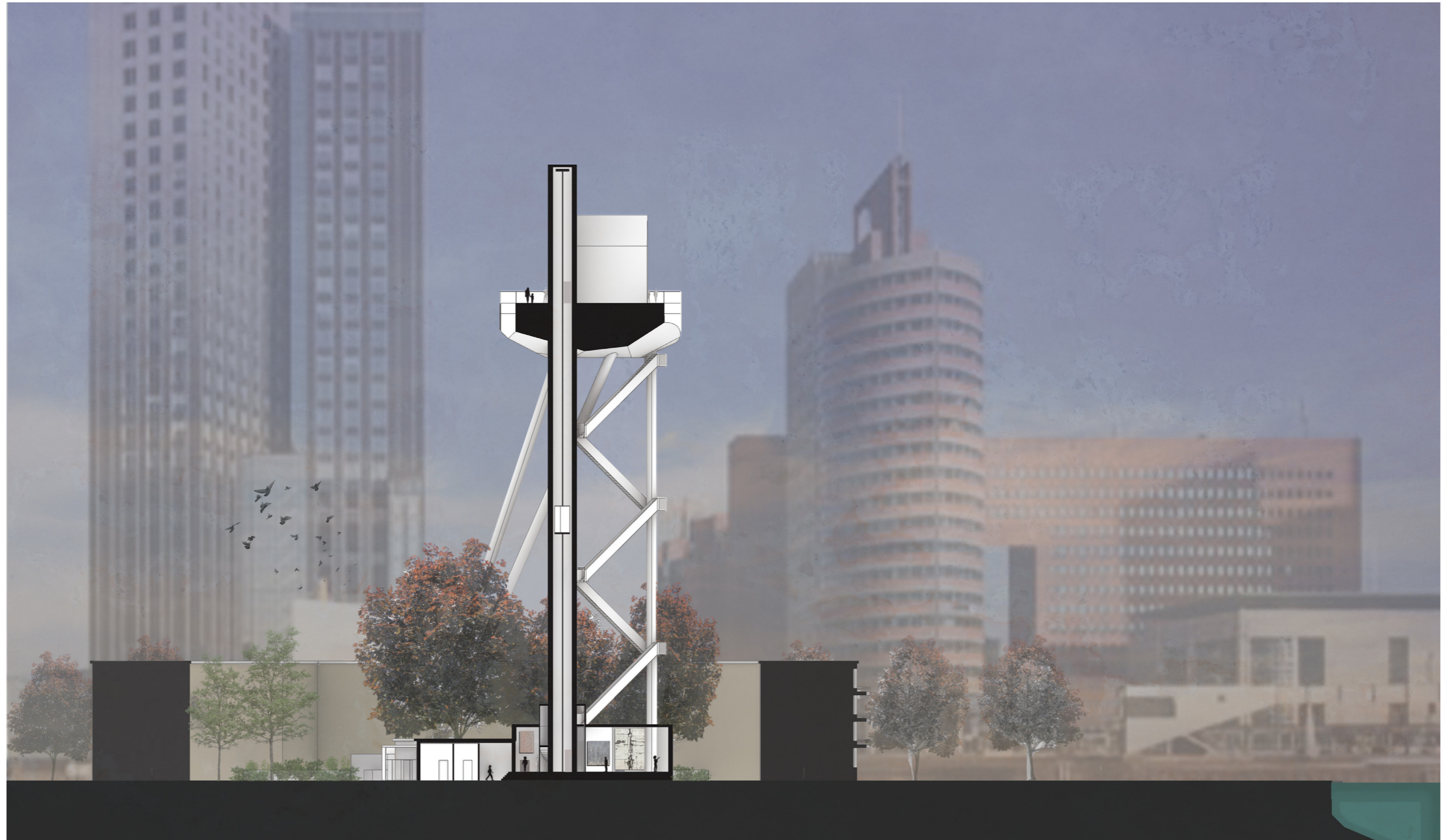
ground floor
1:200

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Section
1:200

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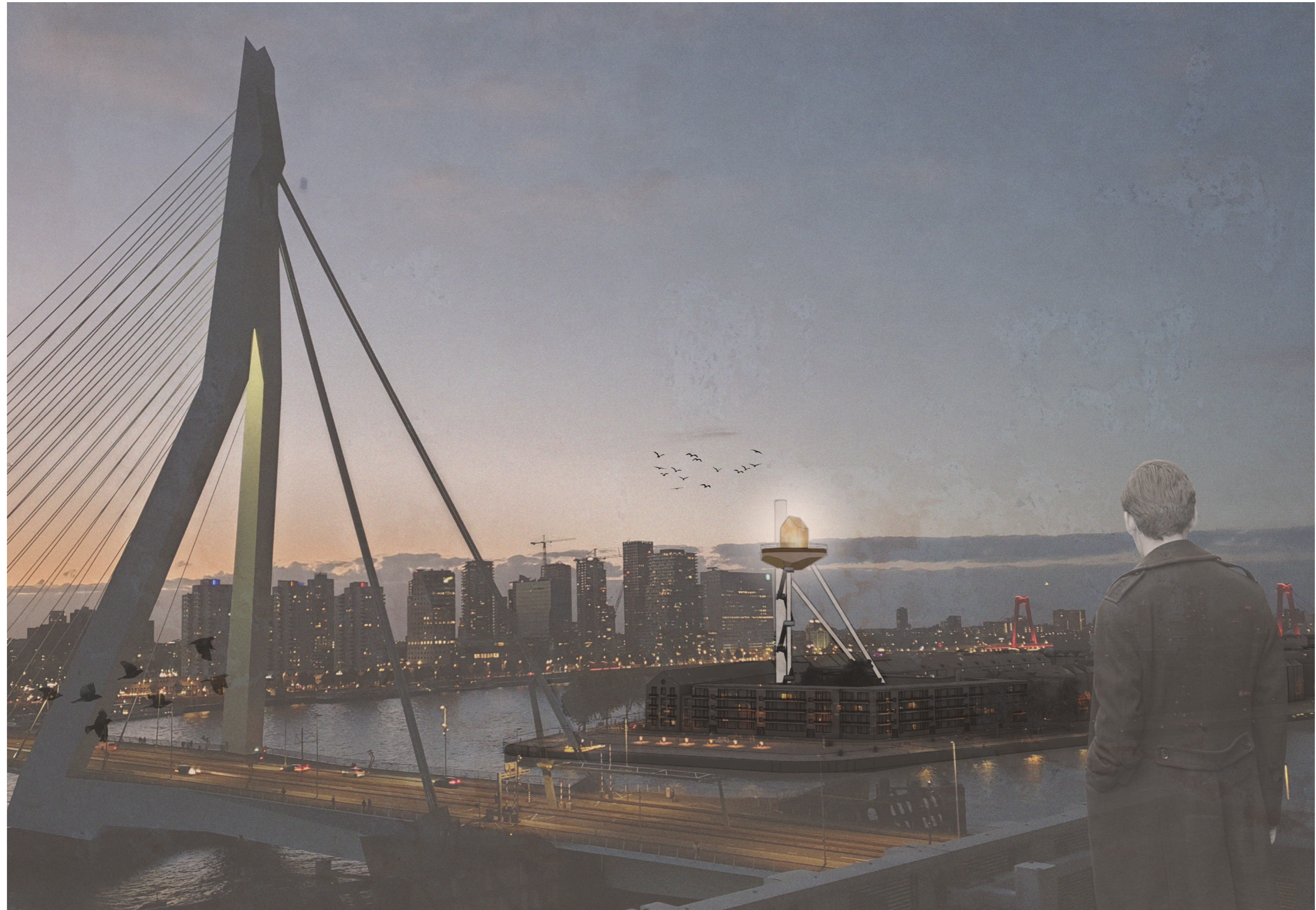
Section
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perspective section

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View from the skybar of "De Rotterdam"