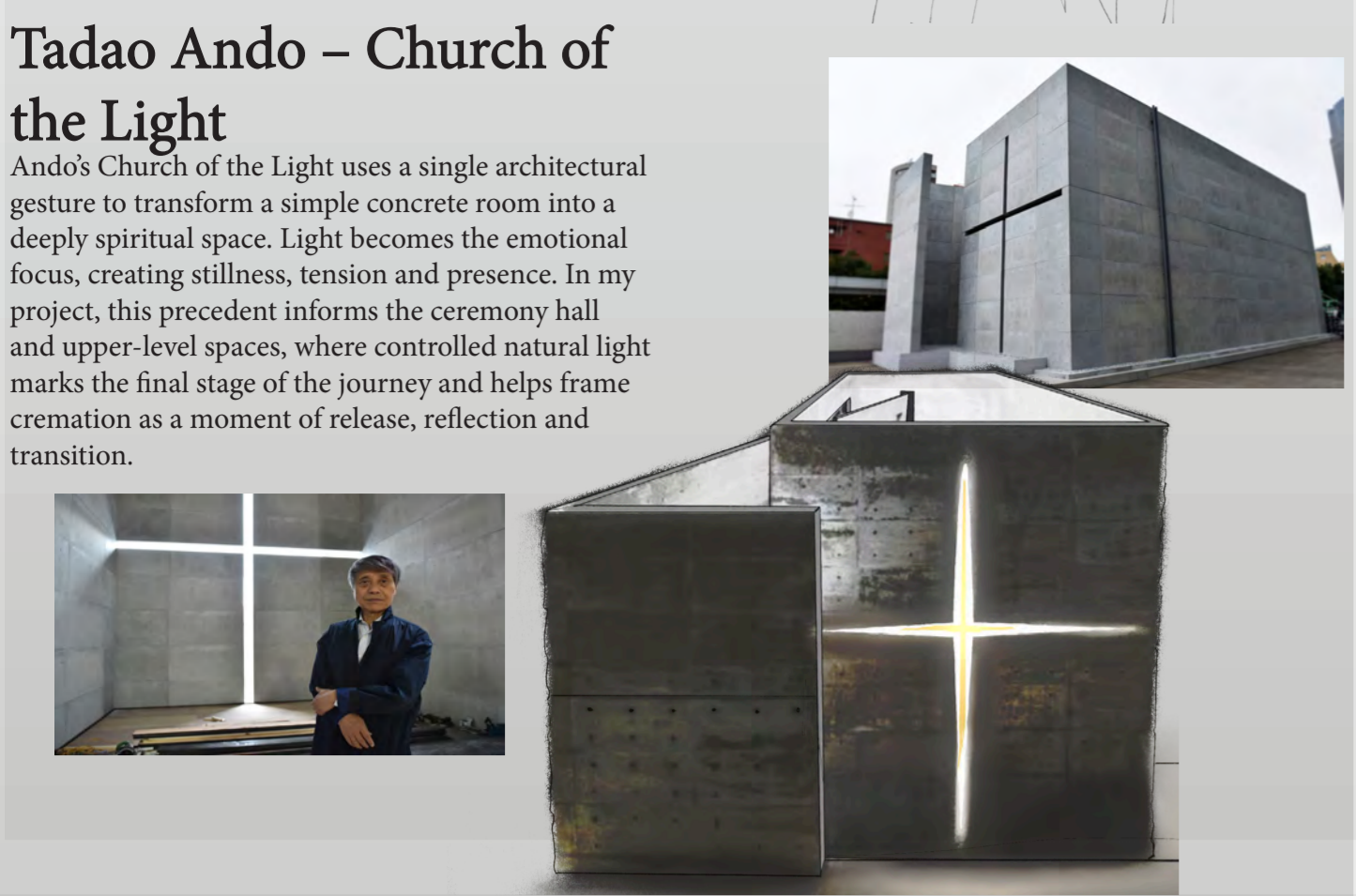
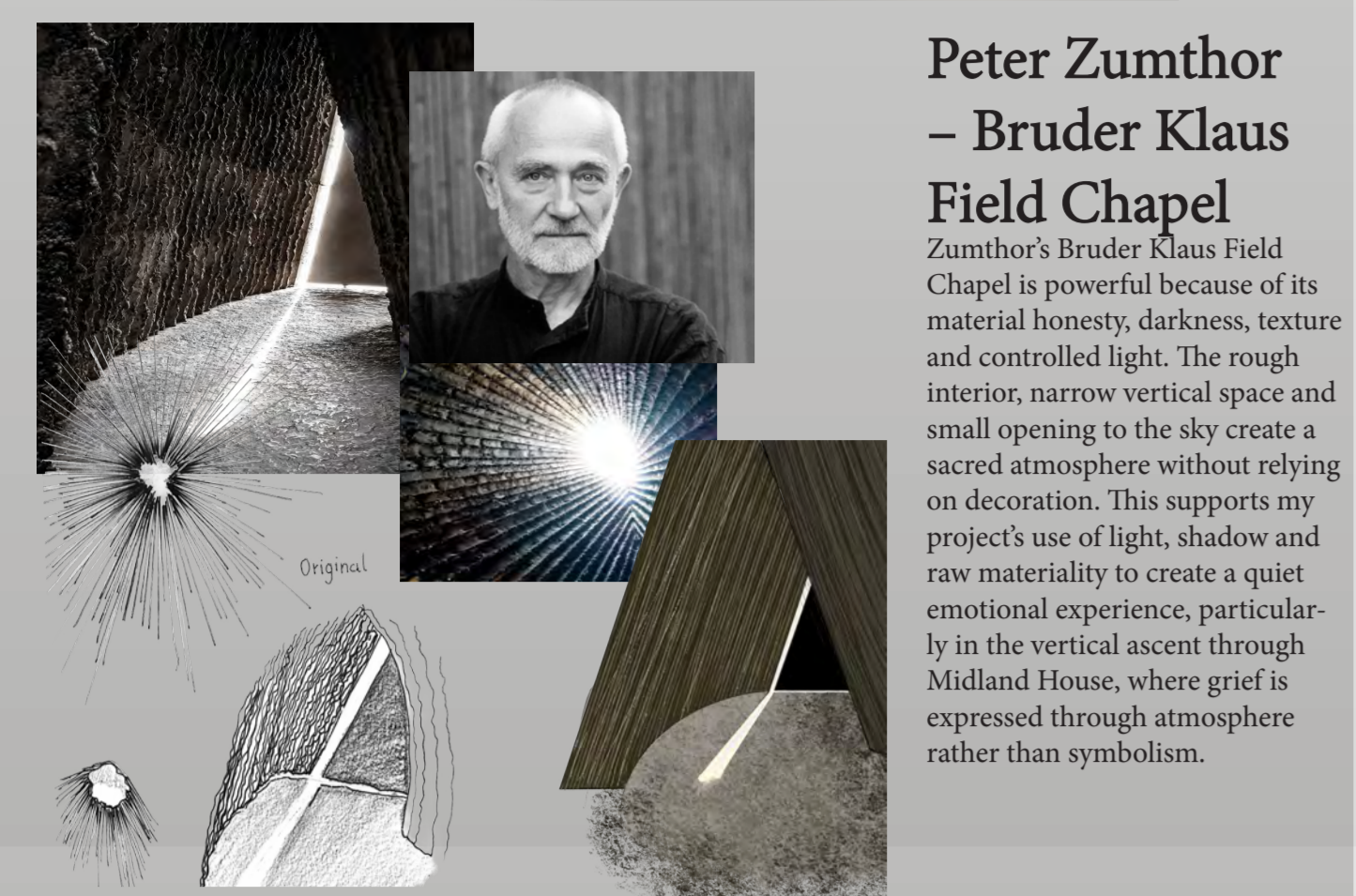




Maya Lin - Vietnam Veterans Memorial
 Maya Lin's work shows how grief can be held through simplicity, silence and bodily movement. The memorial does not explain loss directly. It creates a descending journey into the earth, allowing visitors to confront absence through reflection, touch and personal ritual. This relates to Liminal through the idea of the crematorium as a spatial journey, where the visitor gradually moves through weight, pause and release rather than experiencing death as a hidden or purely functional event.



Tadao Ando - Church of the Light
 Ando's Church of the Light uses a single architectural gesture to transform a simple concrete room into a deeply spiritual space. Light becomes the emotional focus, creating stillness, tension and presence. In my project, this precedent informs the ceremony hall and upper-level spaces, where controlled natural light marks the final stage of the journey and helps frame cremation as a moment of release, reflection and transition.



Peter Zumthor - Bruder Klaus Field Chapel
 Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Field Chapel is powerful because of its material honesty, darkness, texture and controlled light. The rough interior, narrow vertical space and small opening to the sky create a sacred atmosphere without relying on decoration. This supports my project's use of light, shadow and raw materiality to create a quiet emotional experience, particularly in the vertical ascent through Midland House, where grief is expressed through atmosphere rather than symbolism.



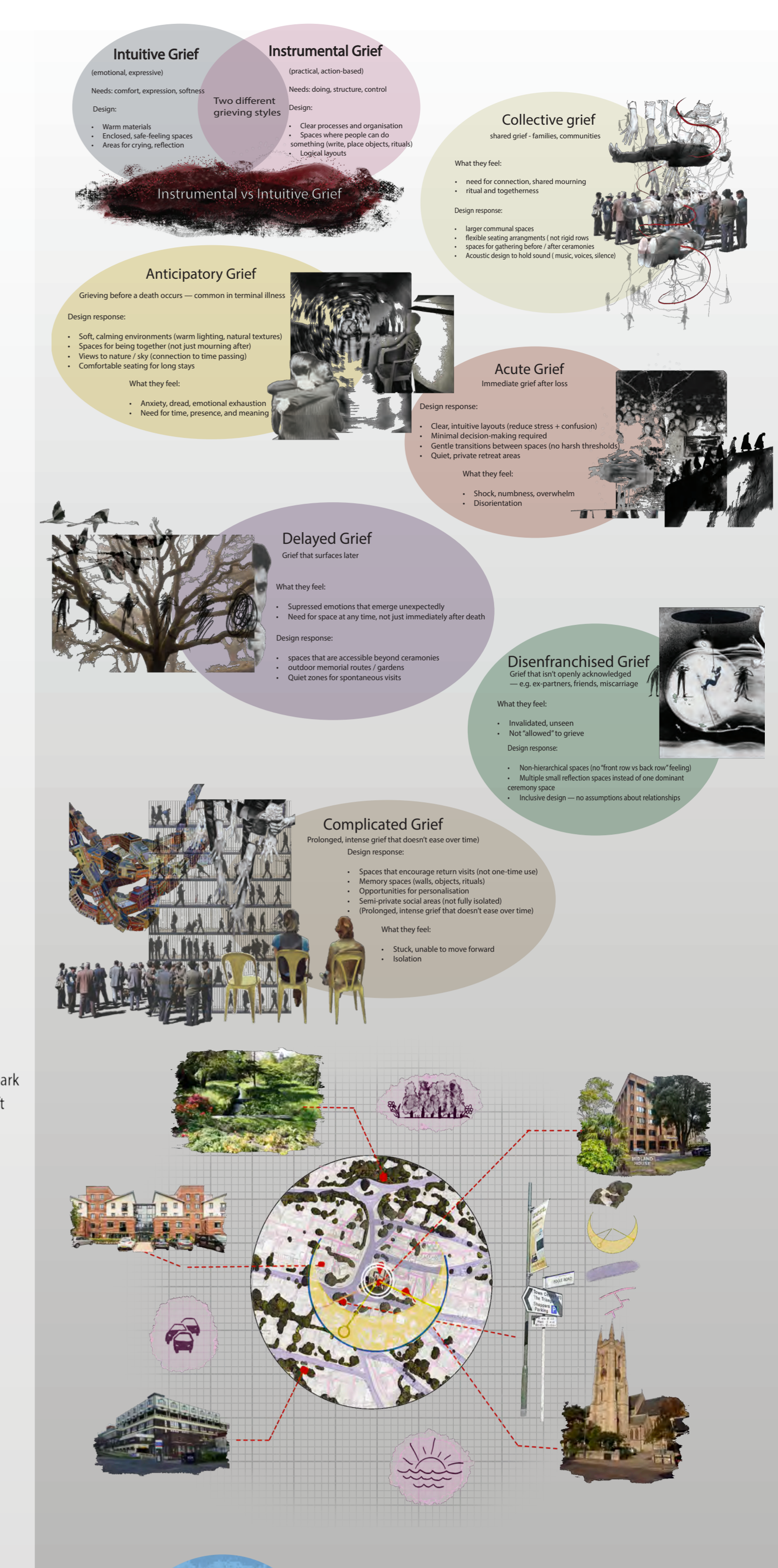
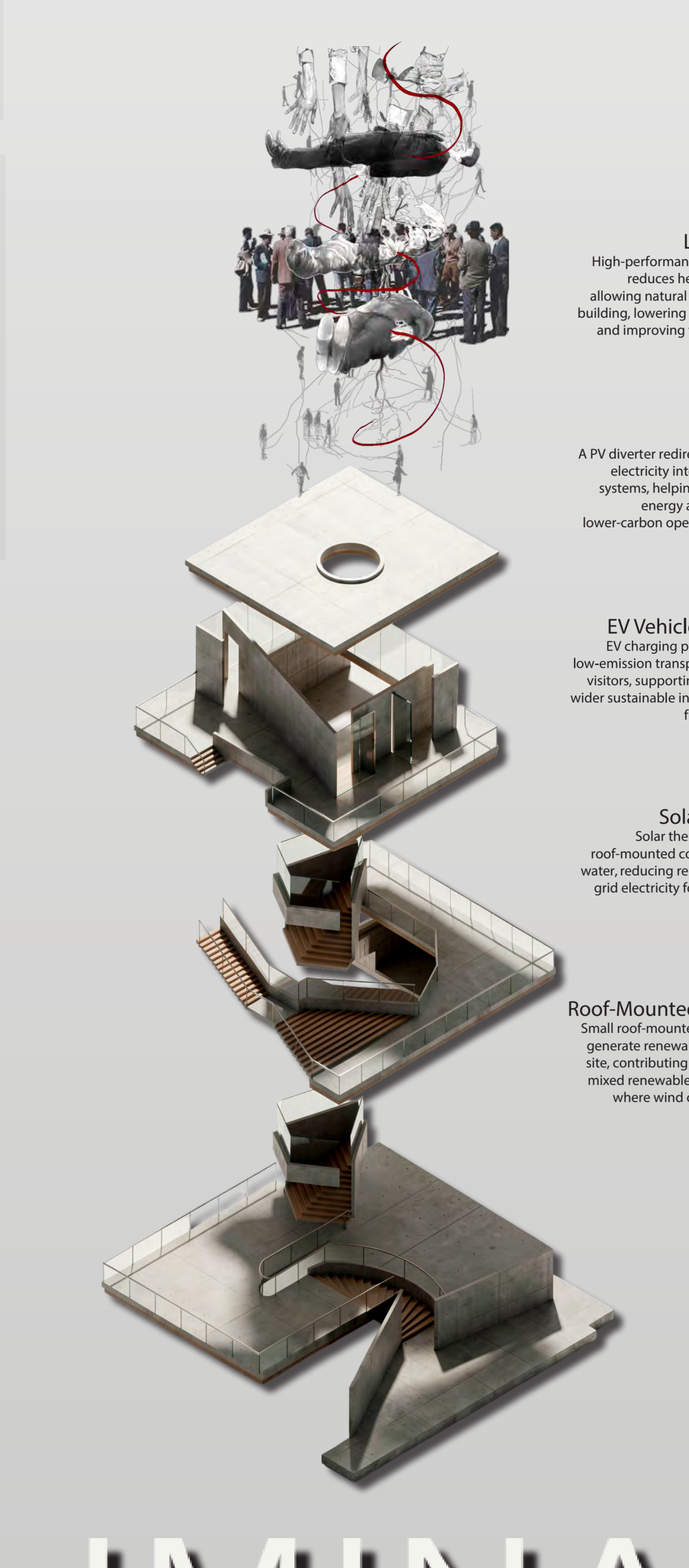
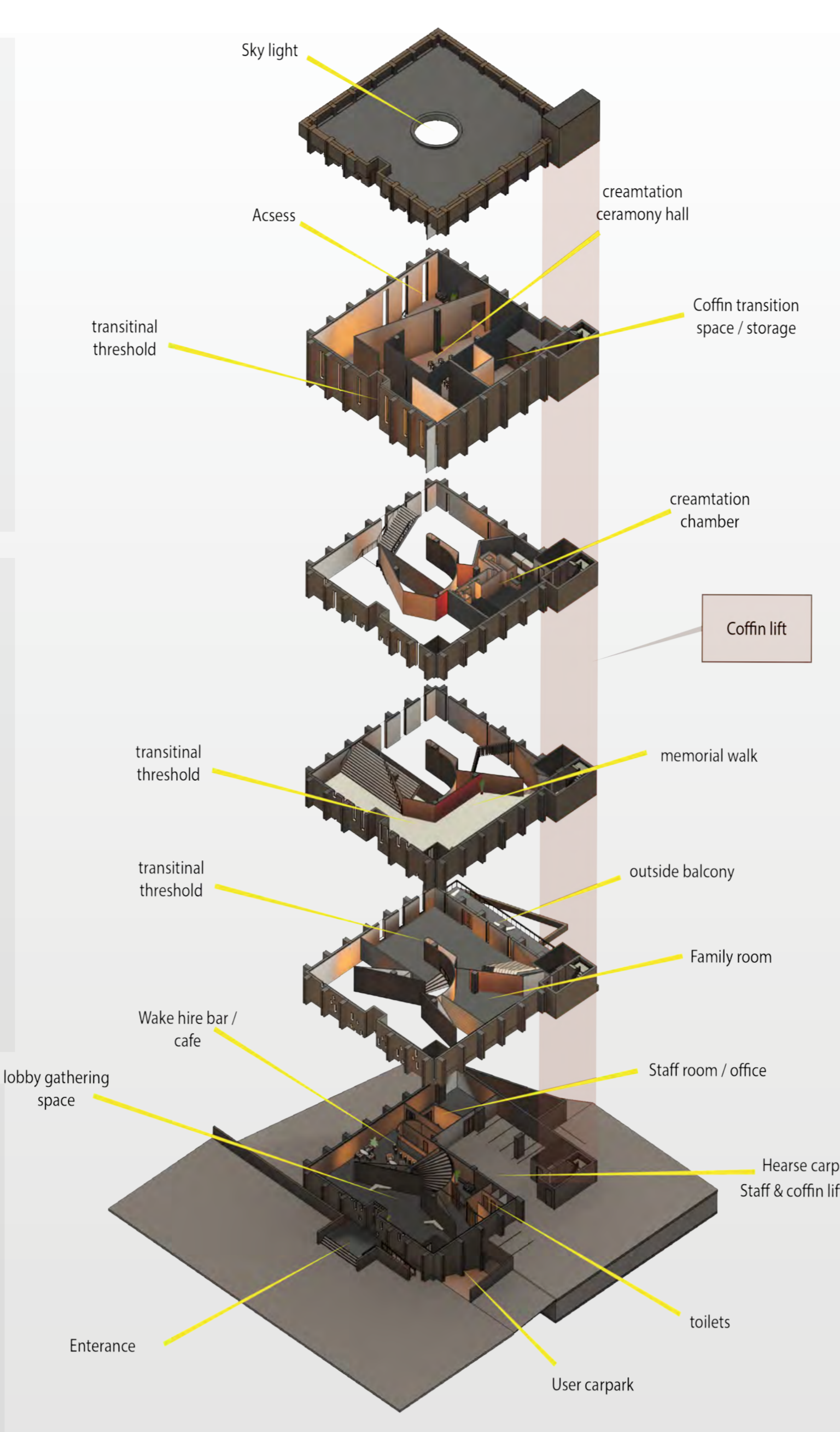
Crematorium Hofheide
 Crematorium Hofheide demonstrates how cremation architecture can be calm, dignified and connected to collective grieving. Its separation of ceremony, reflection and operational spaces allows death care to feel considered rather than clinical. This is relevant to Liminal because my proposal also balances sensitive public experience with the practical requirements of cremation, using spatial sequencing to make the process more transparent, respectful and less hidden within an urban context.

THE CONTEXT - A need for change

- 75%** Of crematoria are located outside town centres
- 78%** Of people want death to be acknowledged more openly in society
- +40%** In cremation rates over the last 20 years
- 1/4** 1 in 4 People feel uncomfortable talking about death

THE PROBLEM

- DEATH IS HIDDEN**
Crematoria are often pushed to the edges of towns and out of sight
- FUNCTION OVER EXPERIENCE**
Many facilities prioritise efficiency, making grief feel rushed and disconnected
- GRIEF IS ISOLATED**
Lack of public awareness can make death feel uncomfortable and something to be avoided
- URBAN POTENTIAL IS WASTED**
Existing buildings are overlooked as places that could support meaningful death care.



LIMINAL

modern society suppresses visible grief and removes death from urban life
 by Ceris Mullane



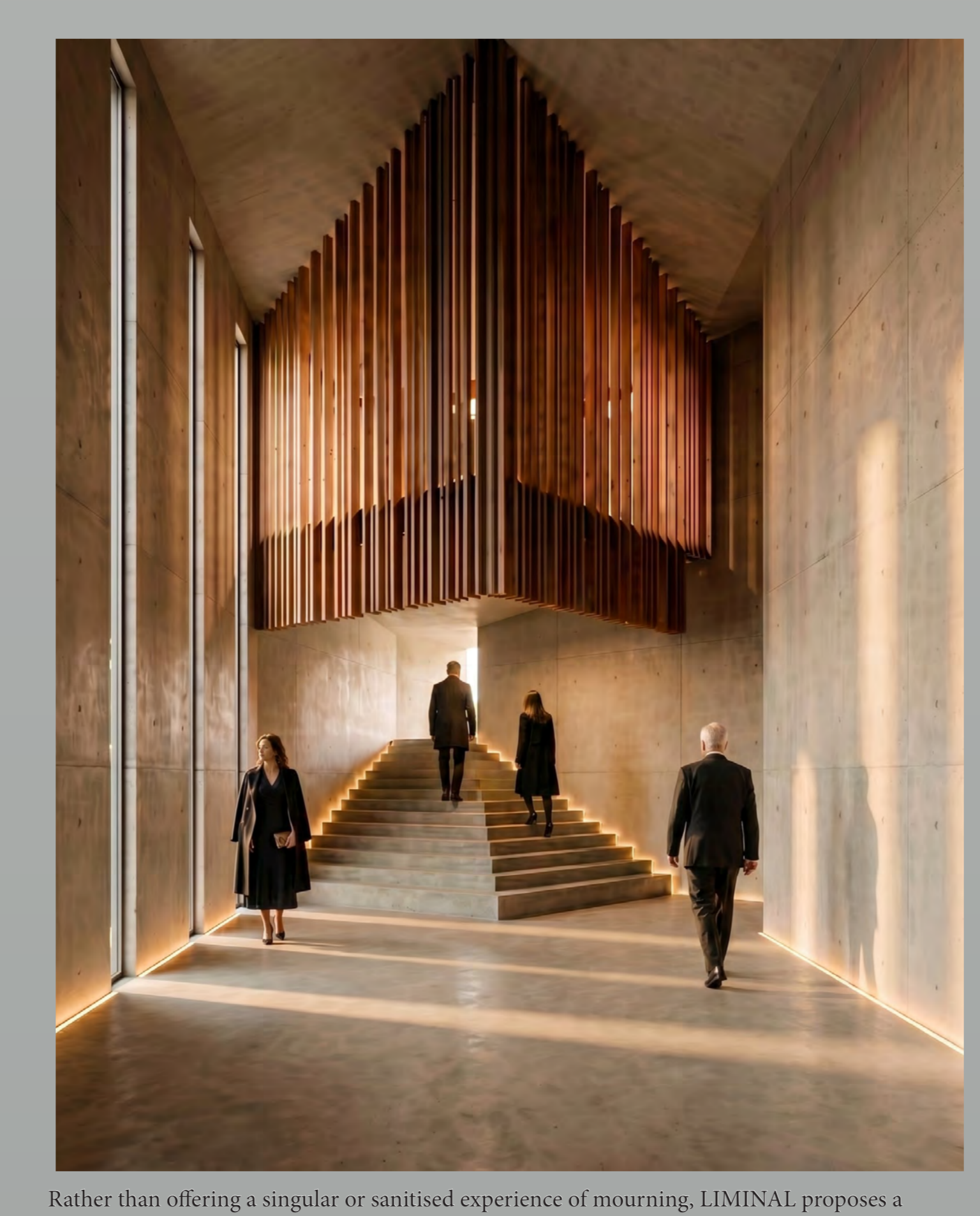
Modern society has displaced death from everyday life, concealing grief within private institutions and regulated systems. As mourning becomes increasingly individualised and compressed by the pressures of productivity, many forms of grief remain unseen, unresolved, or socially unacknowledged. LIMINAL responds to this cultural detachment by reintroducing death and remembrance into the urban environment through architecture that embraces transition, ritual, and emotional reflection. Drawing from varied forms of grief — from anticipatory and collective grief to disenfranchised and complicated mourning — the project challenges the sterility and invisibility often associated with contemporary crematoria. Through materiality, procession, light, and vertical ascent, the design creates a sequence of liminal spaces that support both personal and communal experiences of loss. Rather than hiding grief from public life, the proposal positions mourning as a necessary and visible human experience, transforming Midland House into a civic space for remembrance, contemplation, and emotional connection.



Rather than treating grief as a singular experience, the design responds to its many forms — creating a sequence of spaces that support emotional, social, and personal ways of mourning



The atmosphere of the scheme is shaped around the emotional threshold between presence and absence. Grief is treated not as something to be hidden, but as a quiet, dignified process that can be held within the city. Through controlled light, shadow, softened acoustics and restrained materiality, the interior creates a sense of stillness where visitors can move slowly through moments of arrival, ceremony, separation and reflection. The journey through the building becomes ritualistic; a gradual ascent that allows the body, the mourners and the act of remembrance to be treated with care. Liminal spaces between floors, rooms and thresholds are used to express the uncertainty of loss, offering moments of pause before transition. Rather than presenting death as a purely functional service, the design creates an atmosphere of dignity, silence and collective memory.



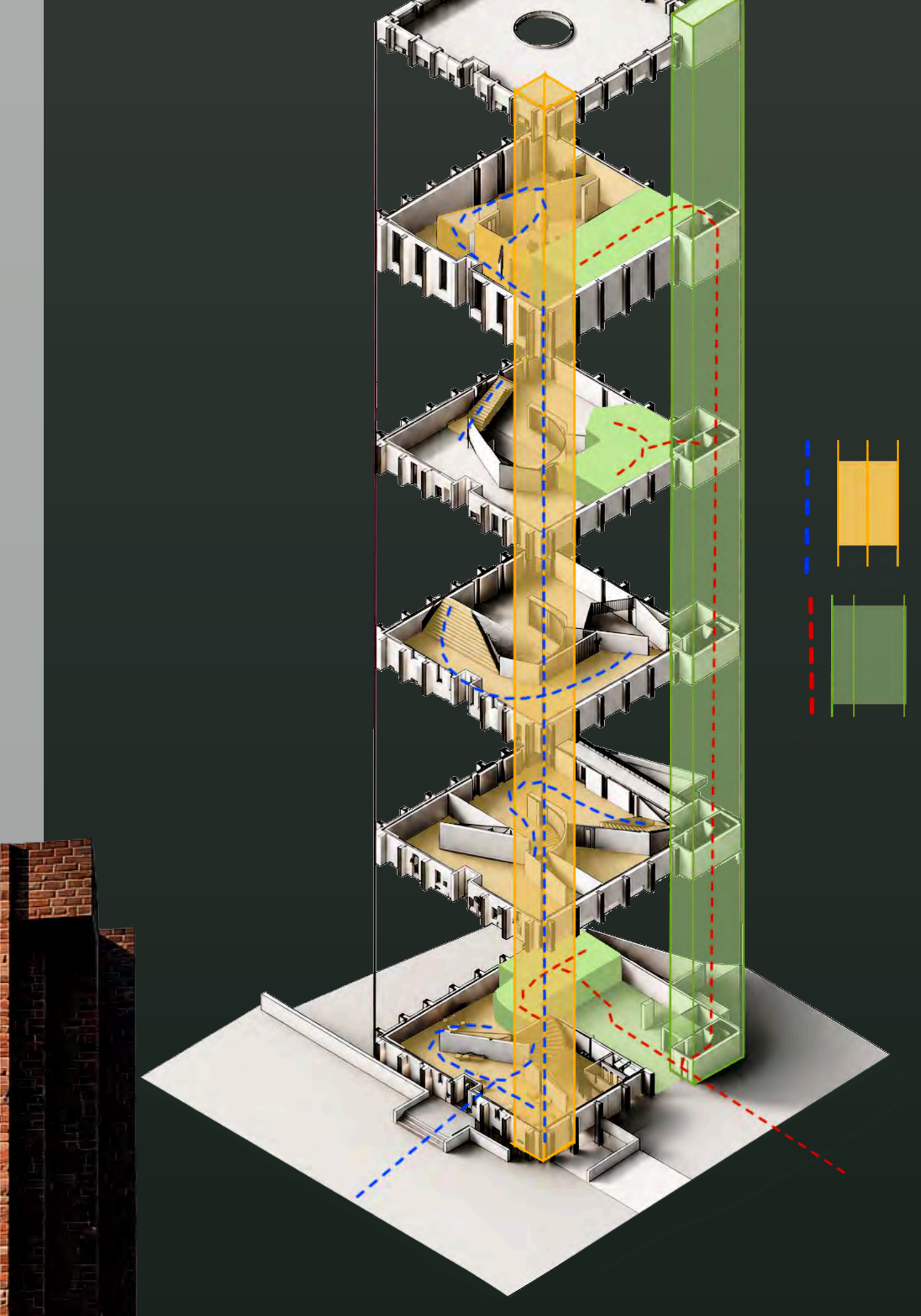
Rather than offering a singular or sanitised experience of mourning, LIMINAL proposes a contemporary crematorium that acknowledges grief as layered, collective, and deeply human. Through a carefully choreographed journey of compression and release, darkness and light, the architecture becomes an active participant in the grieving process — guiding visitors through moments of reflection, ceremony, and reconnection. The project reframes the crematorium not as an isolated industrial facility, but as a civic landmark that restores visibility to death within the contemporary city. By transforming Midland House into a space of emotional resonance and ritual, the proposal challenges cultural discomfort surrounding mortality and creates an environment where grief can be experienced openly, spatially, and with dignity.



THE ASCENT OF GRIEF

A Journey From Public Arrival to Private Ceremony

- 01 — Arrival at Midland House**
The journey begins at the familiar exterior of Midland House. The existing building becomes the threshold between everyday life and the emotional interior world of remembrance.
- 02 — Entering the Liminal, more enclosed space.**
Visitors move into a darker, more enclosed space. The heavy textured walls create a pause from the outside world, signalling a shift into reflection.
- 03 — Decompression and Gathering**
The waiting lounge allows mourners to gather, sit, and adjust emotionally before the ceremony. The screens create privacy without complete separation.
- 04 — Filtered Transition**
Timber slats soften the boundary between spaces. Light, shadow, and materiality create a calmer transition into the deeper interior.
- 05 — Vertical Awareness**
The slat system softens the vertical volume, introducing the idea of ascent, suggesting movement from grief toward acceptance or release.
- 06 — The Beginning of Ascent**
The slat becomes more than circulation; it is a symbolic ritual route. Each step slows the body and encourages reflection.
- 07 — Processional Movement**
The extended slat creates a ceremonial procession. The handrail and long wall guide visitors gently upward through the building.
- 08 — Moment of Stillness**
A quiet focal point interrupts the journey, the narrow vertical detail suggests fragility, absence, and the thin boundary between presence and loss.
- 09 — Arrival at Ceremony**
The journey ends in the ceremony hall, where mourners gather collectively. The skylight and ordered seating create a calm, focused space for remembrance and farewell.



This visual demonstrates the clear separation between public mourner circulation and private staff/service movement within the building. The yellow route represents the user journey, guiding visitors upward through the central sequence of spaces as a slow, processional core. In contrast, the green route identifies the staff and operational core, allowing back-of-house movement, service access and functional circulation to remain discreetly separate from the emotional public journey. This separation supports both dignity and efficiency, ensuring mourners experience a calm, uninterrupted ascent while staff can operate safely and privately behind the scenes.

