

# FROM STAGE TO STUDIO

## RECASTING A THEATRE INTO LAYERED ZONES OF LEARNING, EXPRESSION, AND EXCHANGE

"From stage to studio" transforms Canterbury's landmark theatre – The Marlowe, into a layered academic hub for interdisciplinary learners. The design reinterprets the theatre's original spatial framework – the open-span auditorium, vertical fly tower, and linear circulation into three transitional volumes: Solid, Translucent, and Transparent. Each reflects a different degree of exposure, privacy, and learning engagement.

This transformation is driven by the idea that students are both audiences and performers of knowledge. Through spatial re-zoning, vertical layering, and material logic, the proposal supports diverse learning styles, from solitary reflection to collective interaction, while maintaining the theatre's essence of gathering and exchange.

Rather than overwrite the site's identity, this project builds upon its architectural legacy to shape a dynamic, student-managed hub for coexistence, adaptability, and interdisciplinary expression.

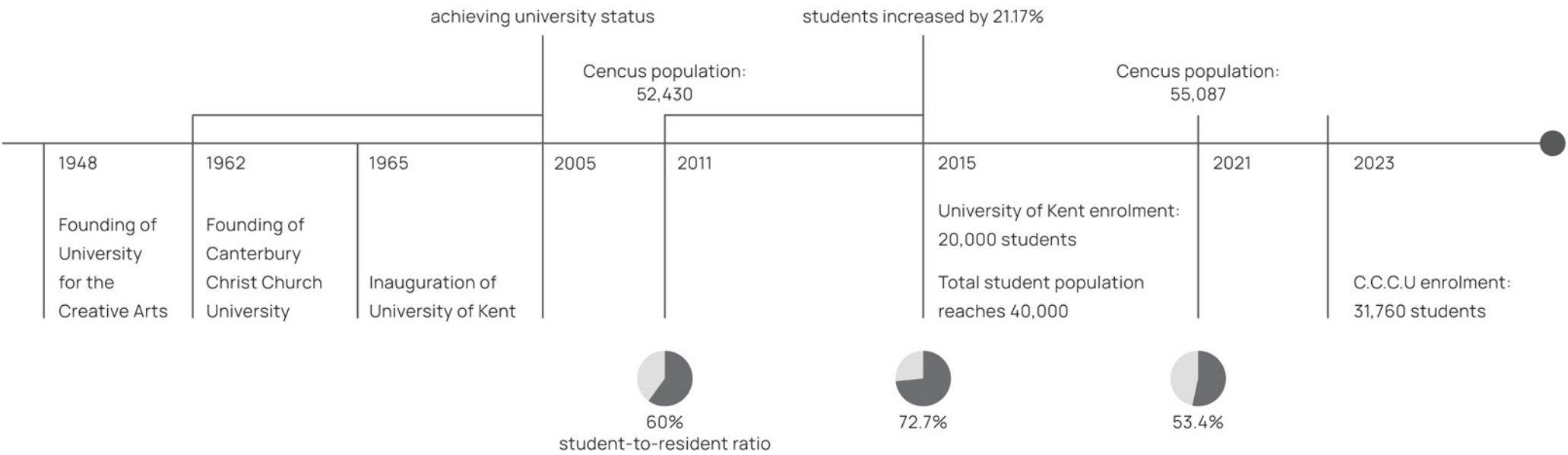
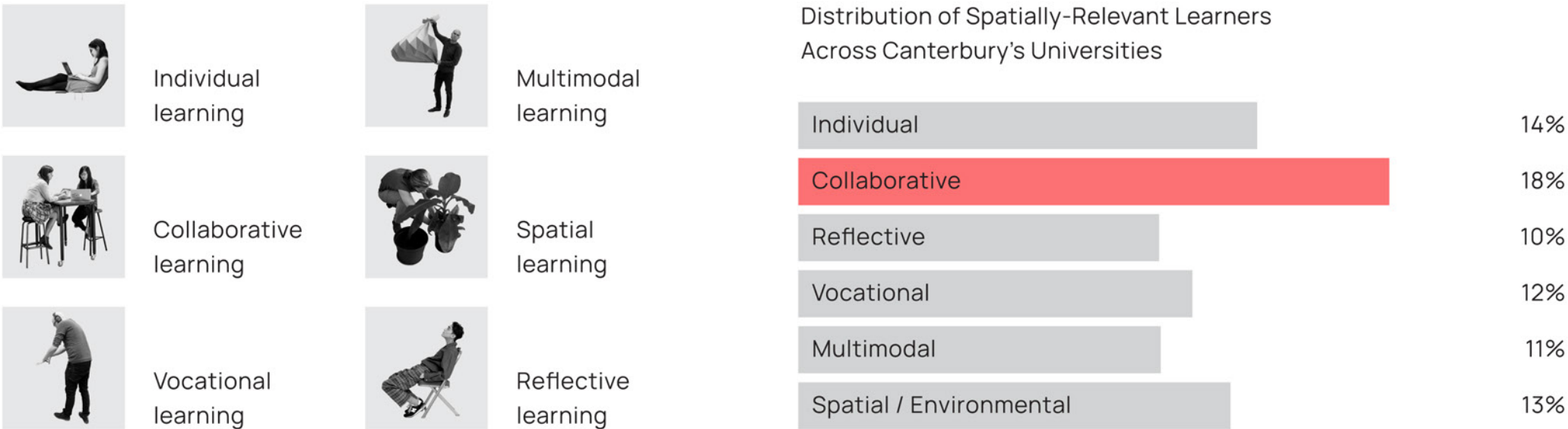


### SITE: PRESERVE + ADAPT

This proposal builds on Canterbury's existing academic geography, with The Marlowe theatre positioned at the centre of three universities to form a shared civic space. By linking students beyond institutional boundaries, it strengthens connections across disciplines, learning cultures, and communities.

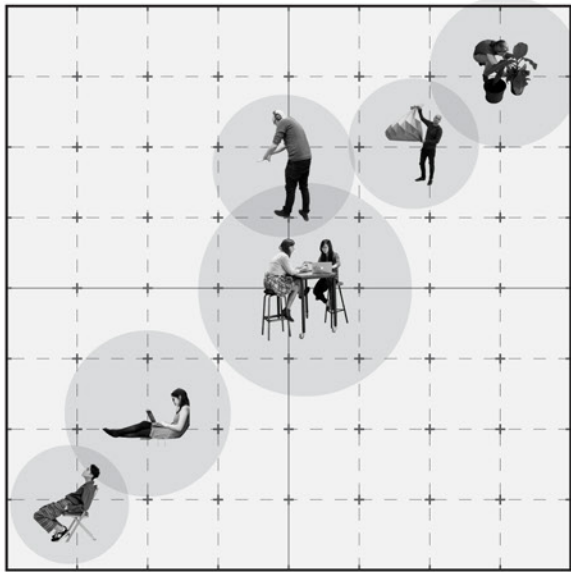
## USERS: UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNERS SPECTRUM

Canterbury's three universities represent a wide spectrum of disciplines – from creative arts and sciences to vocational studies. Each learner brings different spatial needs, shaped by their field and learning style. From quiet, individual focus to open, active collaboration, these behaviours don't conflict, they form a layered spectrum of spatial experience.



## TRANSLATING INSIGHT TO DESIGN

Flexibility



Stability

Enclosure

Exposure

The wide range of spatial needs across learners reveals a clear design hierarchy – not through separation, but through spatial sequencing. Some learners need enclosure and stillness, others seek openness and flexibility, each with valid spatial expectations. This proposal builds on that range by creating layered zones that allow different users to co-exist, move, and choose, without compromising their learning style or experience.

sequence of spatial needs





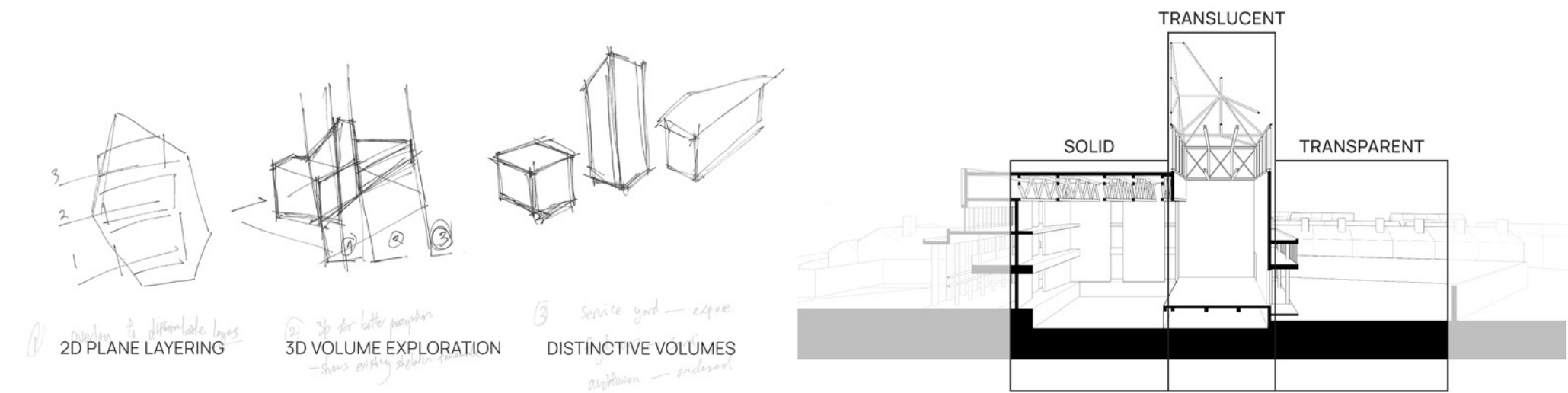
METHODOLOGY: RECOMPOSING EXISTING SPATIAL BODY

The Marlowe's existing layout is reinterpreted through a layered spatial lens, dividing the footprint into three primary zones. This zoning marks the first step in translating a performance-bound structure into a spatial framework capable of supporting multiple modes of use.



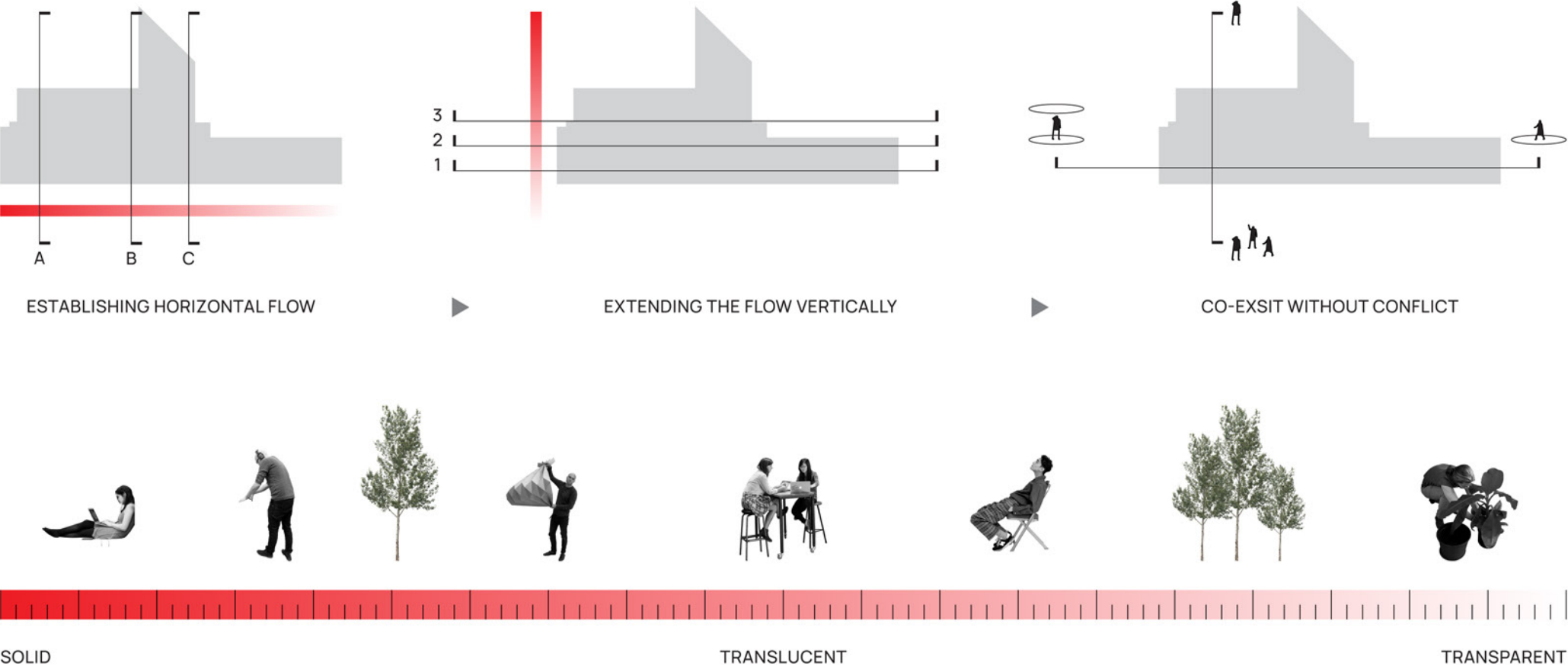
METHODOLOGY: DEFINING LAYERS AS VOLUMES

Through spatial reinterpretation, the Marlowe's footprint is divided into three volumes, a solid core at the heart of the building, anchoring quiet and focused activity, a translucent middle layer that mediates flow and visibility, and a transparent edge that opens outward to connect with the city. This sequence follows the site's natural progression, moving from inward containment to outward expression.

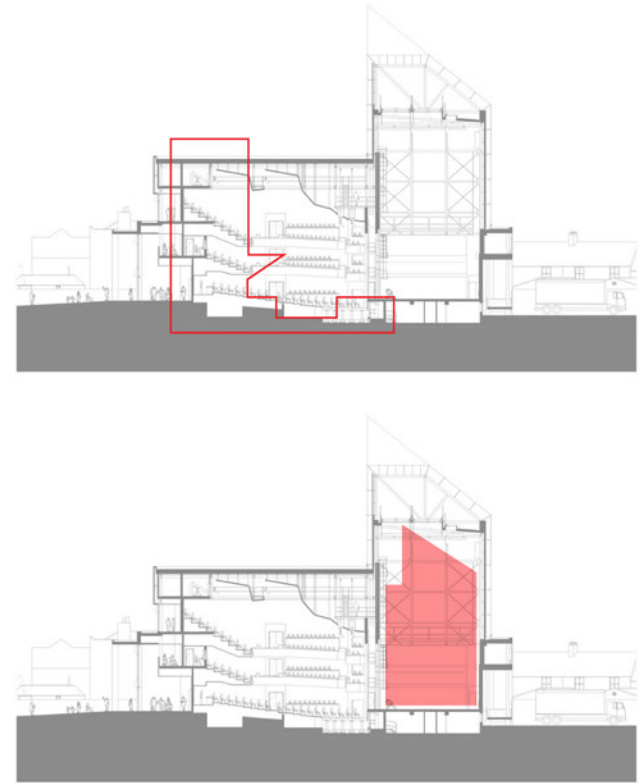


METHODOLOGY: TRANSLATING AXIS INTO SPATIAL EXPERIENCE

By slicing the Marlowe into three volumes, a clear horizontal transition is established, guiding users from contained to open space through a continuous spatial rhythm. This rhythm extends vertically as well, as the Marlowe's generous ceiling height enables a second axis of transition, supporting a layered range of experiences across height.



DESIGN: 3 VOLUMES, 3 APPROACHES TO ADAPTIVE RE-USE

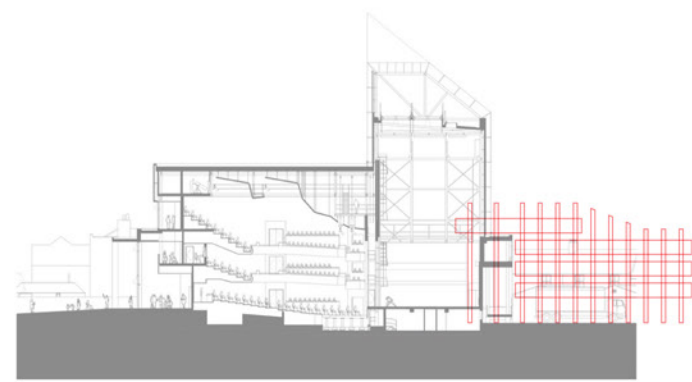


INTERVENTION: THE SOLID VOLUME

The design intervenes within the original auditorium, reconfiguring the stepped seating into a contextual learning platform. While the overall floor profile remains, the tiered rows are replaced with flat, usable levels, enabling new modes of learning and movement.

INSERTION: THE TRANSLUCENT VOLUME

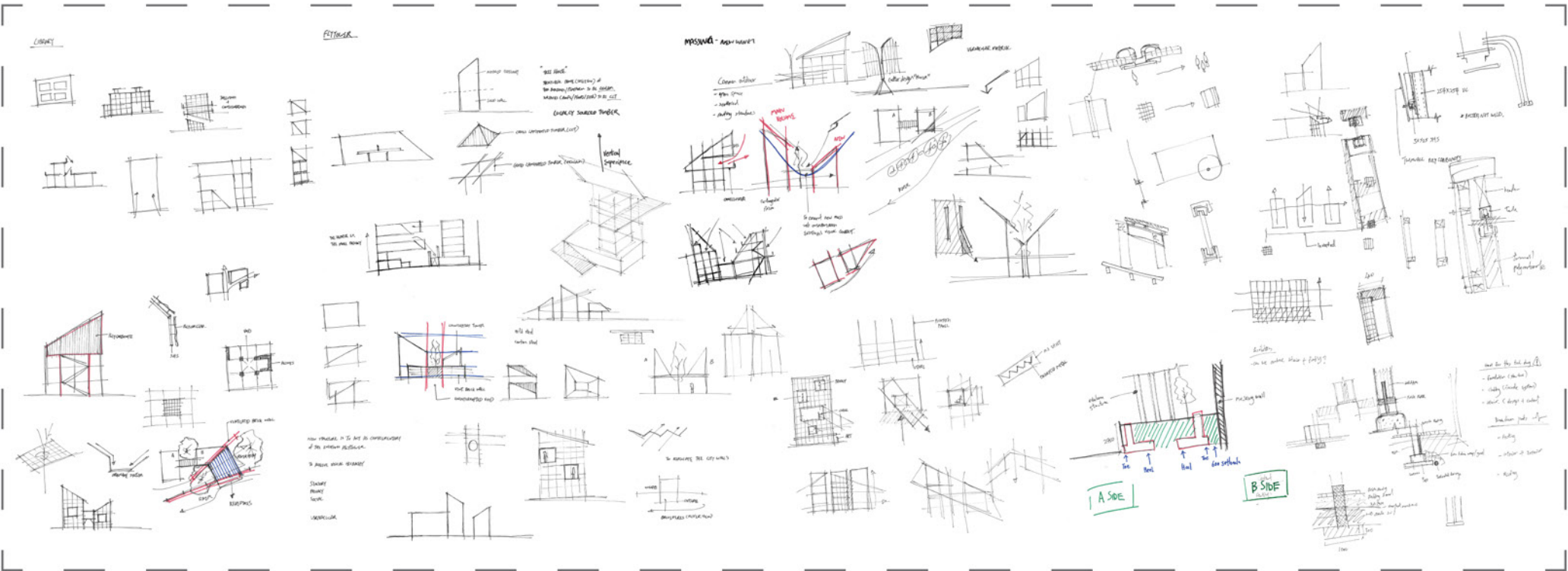
The platform is inserted into the fly tower's unused height, reimagining its vast interior volume. By filling the void with flexible, learner-centered spaces, the design transforms a dormant shell into an activated learning spine.



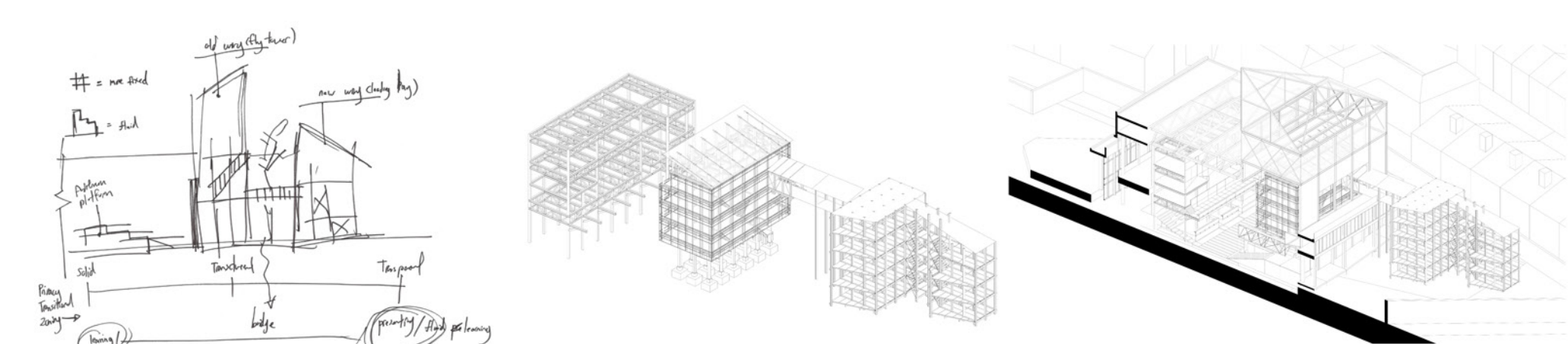
INSTALLATION: THE TRANSPARENT VOLUME

The volume is introduced as an installation, a lightweight structure built onto the Marlowe's former loading bay, transforming an overlooked space into a new exterior learning ground. By building outward instead of inward, the platform respects the existing form while extending the building's dialogue with the city and its elements.

DESIGN: FORM FINDING PROCESS



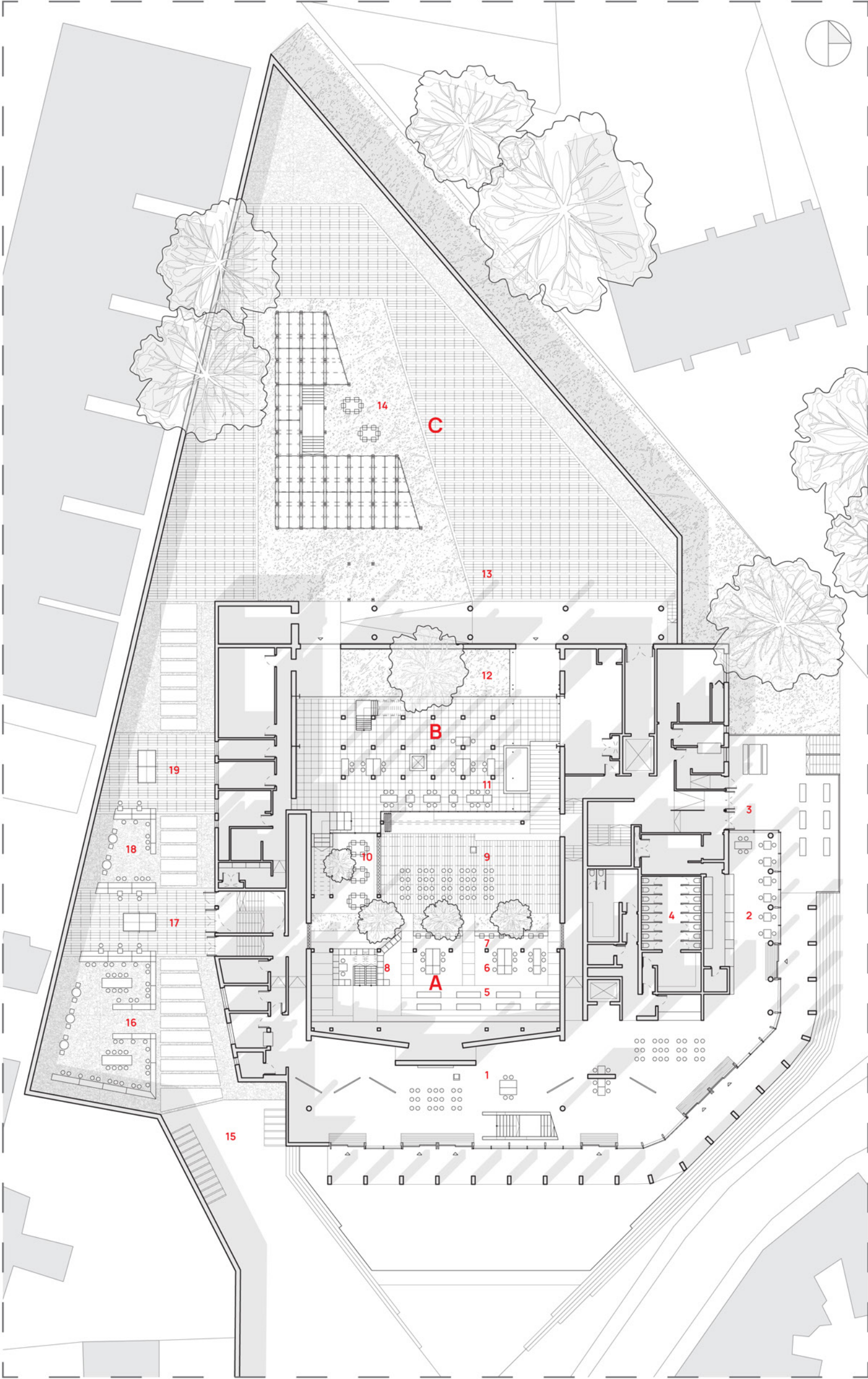
DESIGN: IDEA TAKING SHAPE





# GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

Through spatial reinterpretation, the theatre's footprint is divided into three volumes a solid core at the heart of the building, anchoring quiet and focused activity, a translucent middle layer that mediates flow and visibility, and a transparent edge that opens outward to connect with the city. This sequence follows the site's natural progression, moving from inward containment to outward expression.



## A. SOLID VOLUME



Materiality:



Typology:

- Steel structure platform
- Enclosure and acoustics

Floors:

- 3

## B. TRANSLUCENT VOLUME



Materiality:



Typology:

- Timber structure platform
- Semi-exposure + common space

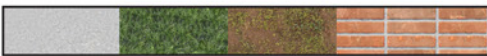
Floors:

- 5

## C. TRANSPARENT VOLUME



Materiality:



Typology:

- Aluminum structure platform
- Exposed and public

Floors:

- 5

1. Exhibition format open space
2. Cafeteria
3. Outdoor patio
4. Toilet
5. Bench seatees
6. Shared study space
7. Individual study space
8. Common storage space
9. Make-shift format open space
10. Indoor courtyard
11. Common space
12. Semi-indoor courtyard
13. Open yard
14. Agora
15. Public bicycle parking
16. Pocket space common area 1
17. Ping - pong 1
18. Pocket space common area 2
19. Ping - pong 2

Total study area:  
5500 sq.ft

Total flexible format open area:  
2500 sq.ft

Total vegetation surface area:  
1500 sq.ft





ACTIVITY



The top level of the “Solid” volume offers a private haven for self-directed learners — a series of stacked modular bookshelves shape mini enclosed rooms for focused study, along with tucked-away spaces for small group discussions.



The flexible open space hosts lectures from all three universities throughout the day and doubles as a makeshift playground for diverse leisure activities.

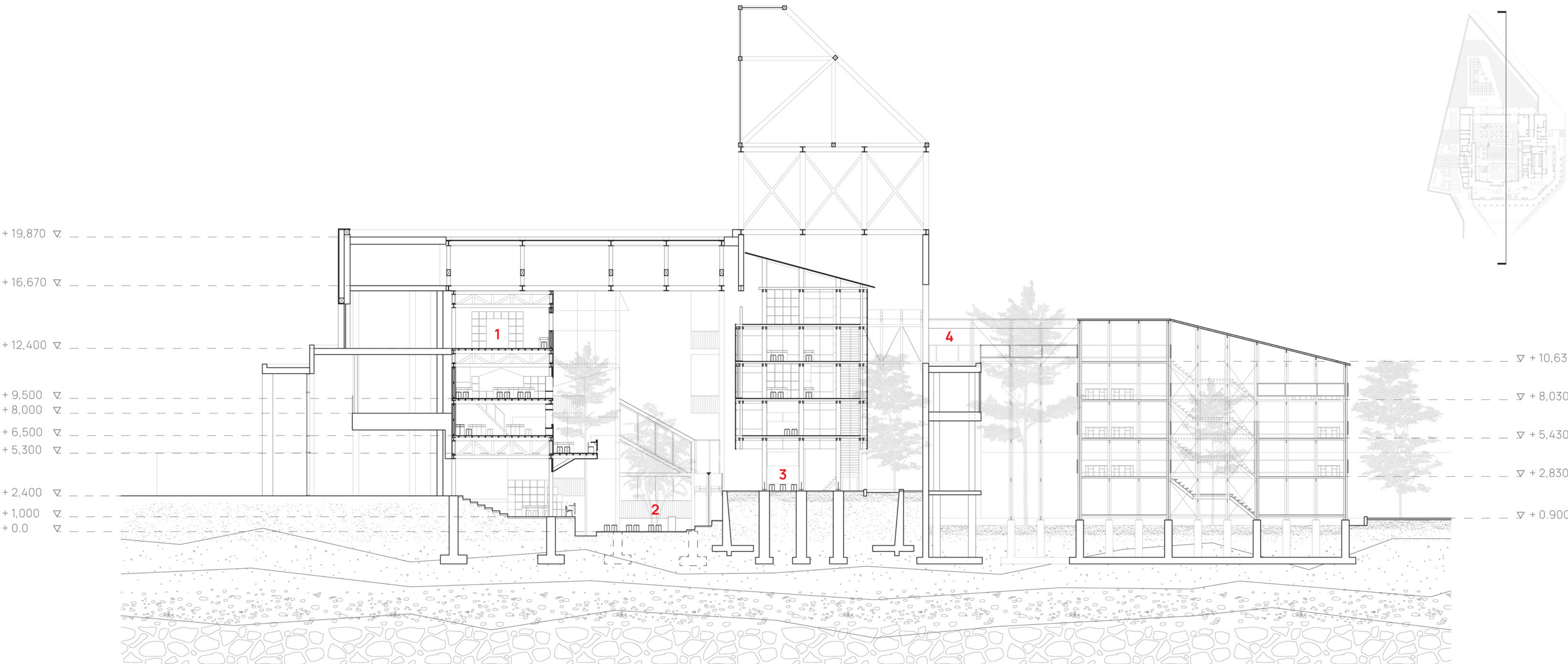


A space that dissolves academic boundaries—inviting open collaboration, spontaneous gatherings, and the vibrant exchange of passionate learners.



A connective platform linking the “transparent” and “translucent” volumes—promoting seamless access and adaptable learning experiences.

CROSS-SECTION





MATERIALITY

“ SOLID ” VOLUME

To define enclosure, plywood cladding is applied throughout, providing spatial warmth, acoustic control, and a visually grounded identity.



“ TRANSLUCENT ” VOLUME

Cladding in twin-wall polycarbonate provides privacy, light diffusion, and a blurred spatial threshold, forming a calm, layered interior atmosphere.



“ TRANSPARENT ” VOLUME

Corrugated polycarbonate forms the roof and selected cladding, offering light diffusion and weather protection. Welded wire mesh acts as balustrades, maintaining lightness and unobstructed sightlines. At floor level, steel grating ensures grip, drainage, and a functional, exterior-ready surface.



ROOFING

FLY TOWER PRISM STRUCTURE

The prism-shaped hip roof is retrofitted, original aluminum clad changed into polycarbonate structure while preserving its structural integrity. This allows the shape to preserving its symbolic significance in relation to the Cathedral.

CORRUGATED FIBREGLOSS ROOFING

STRUCTURE

“ SOLID ” VOLUME

A robust frame of 254×254×73 mm mild steel UC, supported by SHS beams and a Pratt truss system, creates long spans with fewer vertical posts – keeping the ground level open and adaptable.

“ TRANSLUCENT ” VOLUME

The platform is supported by glued-laminated timber (GLT), offering a high strength-to-weight ratio suited for tall spans, while its natural warmth mediates the contrast between solid enclosure and transparent openness.

“ TRANSPARENT ” VOLUME

The platform is built on an aluminum SHS split-column system, selected for its corrosion resistance, lightweight strength, and visual porosity – supporting a structure that feels open, durable, and breathable.

