

**Adaptive Reuse of New Holland Island in St. Petersburg, Russia:
Incremental Development within Historic Fabric**

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Fig. 1: Aerial view of St. Petersburg

CHAPTER I Introduction

St. Petersburg was founded in 1703, during the rise of imperial power in Russia, as Peter the Great's "window to Europe" with a strong naval base for trade opportunities. The historic core of the city is located in the Neva River delta on a series of islands and has, many times, been referred to as "Venice of the North" for its numerous canals and picturesque views. It was the capital from 1712 to 1918 when the Russian revolution led to overthrowing of the tsar regime. Grand palaces and public squares developed throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in harmonious ensembles, the most famous of these today being the Hermitage Museum on the Palace Square. After withstanding Germany's 900-day siege, the city was restored to its imperial glory after World War II. The unique historic center became a very strong symbol for St. Petersburg's residents as well as for the rest of the country as a representation of cultural and historical heritage. Great postwar reconstruction efforts "reasserted the primacy of the city's historic center" (Brumfield 1990, 37). In 1990 the core



Fig. 2: View of Moika Canal



Fig. 3: Palace Square



Fig. 4: Shopping mall on Sennaya Square

area of St. Petersburg's center was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site (World Heritage List, No.540). As a result, today it is a challenging place for contemporary architecture, a place of a lot of tension and debate over new development.

On the one hand, St. Petersburg is almost a city preserved as a museum: the historic built fabric is precious to residents and visitors. Many express adverse reactions to even the slightest changes and additions in buildings. Often, the best solution seen is keeping everything as is and renovating or reconstructing buildings to represent a certain historic moment in time.

At the same time, there is a very obtrusive approach in new developments, which are attracted to the city center for economic and touristic opportunities. Most of these are very large scale projects, typically business or commercial centers that overpower the historic fabric in scale. Too often historic buildings are demolished to make way for the new, raising more opposition towards contemporary architecture.

Along with these two approaches to building in the historic center of St. Petersburg, there is a large amount of deteriorated and abandoned fabric in the city. St. Petersburg is perhaps one of the few cities where there is an abundance of these kind of places - almost ruins, experienced in a non-museum setting. This thesis argues that these types of 'quiet' places are just as important in the city center as the busy commercial and cultural attractions. Deteriorated and largely underused, they have certain qualities of silence and



Fig. 5: Abandoned building

mystery and serve as a counterbalance to the hectic display and presentation of the city's commercial and cultural assets.

How, then, can these abandoned places be redeveloped for contemporary life in a way that is sensitive to their character? This thesis proposes a different kind of approach from what is typical today: a framework for incremental development within historic buildings, which sets up an infrastructure to support future uses, where inhabitants can appropriate the historic fabric and make use of it with small scale interventions accreting over time. New Holland Island, a deteriorated and under-utilized military site in the city center, has been selected as the thesis site. The thesis includes analysis of the island, a discussion of a theoretical framework for an incremental approach to intervention and a design proposal that demonstrates the framework.



Fig. 6: Deteriorated courtyard with graffiti

The subsequent chapters are organized as follows. Chapter II deals with site analysis, presenting New Holland Island's history as it relates to the city's development and describes its current condition in the urban context. Chapter III presents theories that frame the approach to New Holland Island's development and gives examples of similar interventions. Chapter IV explains the broad interventions for the entire site and then focuses on an intervention in one of the historic warehouses of New Holland Island. Chapter V includes the conclusions of the process.

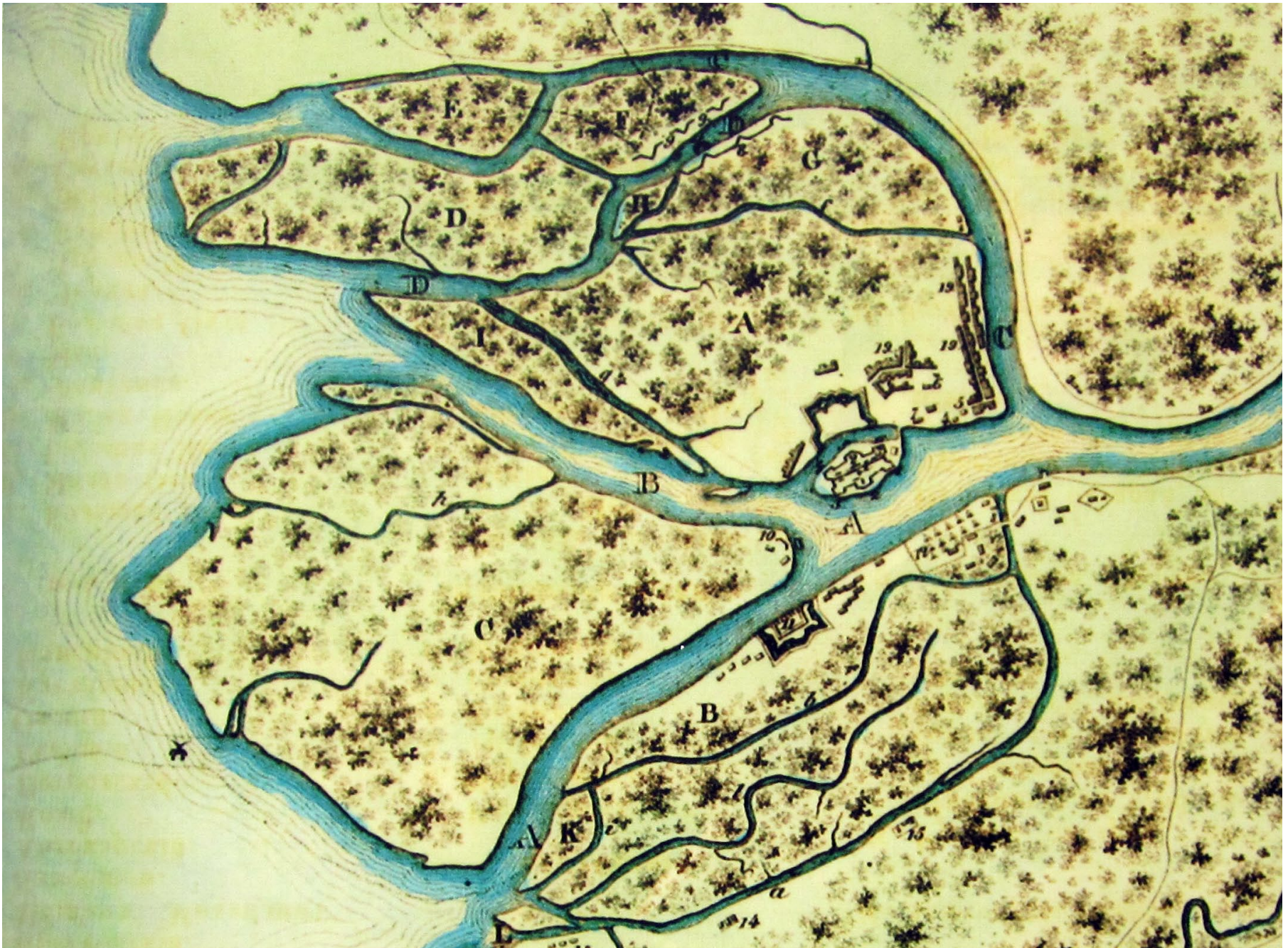


Fig. 7: Map of St. Peterburg's initial settlement

CHAPTER II Site Analysis

A. New Holland Island History ¹

Historical development of New Holland Island is closely related to the founding of St. Petersburg as a naval base, “the window to the west” of Peter I. The city was founded in 1703 on a series of islands in the delta of the Neva, which flows from the fresh water Lake Lagoda into Finnish Bay. The area was initially an uninhabitable swamp, but great effort was made to build a base for a strong naval force here under Peter I, who was in a rivalry with Sweden at the time. The location ensured sea access for new trade opportunities and a defensible area to build an entirely new city. Two structures seen on one of the earliest maps of St. Petersburg are the Peter and Paul Fortress on the northern side of the Neva and the city’s main ship building wharf across the river to the south, a complex known as the Admiralty.

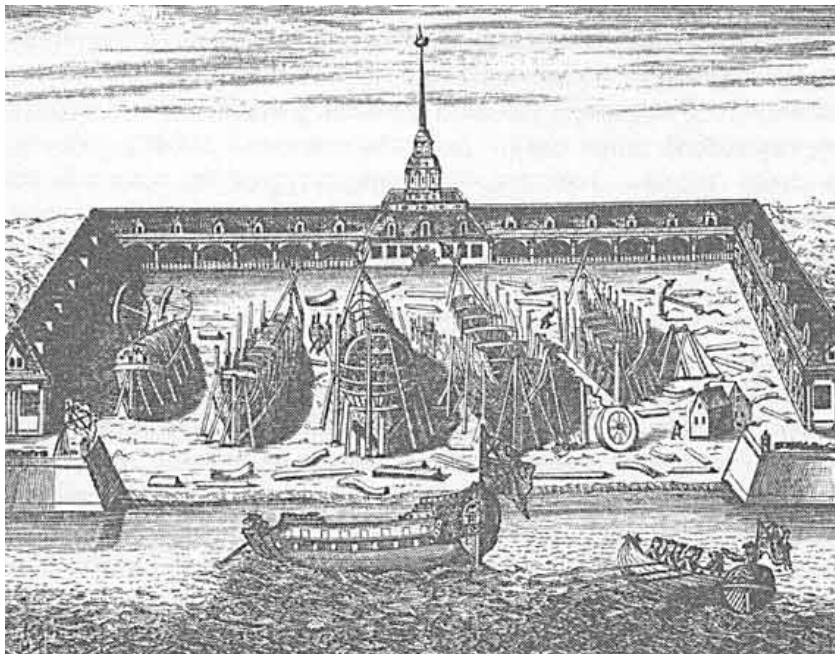


Fig. 8: Admiralty. 1716 engraving

¹ Historical reference from [http:// voopik.spb.ru](http://voopik.spb.ru)



Fig. 9: 1737 map of St. Petersburg. Canals forming the island are highlighted in blue.



Fig. 10: Peter I at construction of St. Petersburg. Engraving.

Most of the initial construction in St. Petersburg related to ship building activity. Numerous canals and waterways were created, particularly between 1717-1720 Admiralteisky and Krukov canals were dug to connect an area of ship building workshops and materials storage with Admiralty wharf and the Neva. The triangular island was formed between the two new canals and the existing Moika canal. According to some stories, the island was named “New Holland” because its clutter, construction noise, foreign workers and activity gave an overall sense of Holland’s own ship yards, Peter’s precedent for development of the Russian naval industry. Wooden sheds were constructed on the island in 1731-38 for lumber storage.

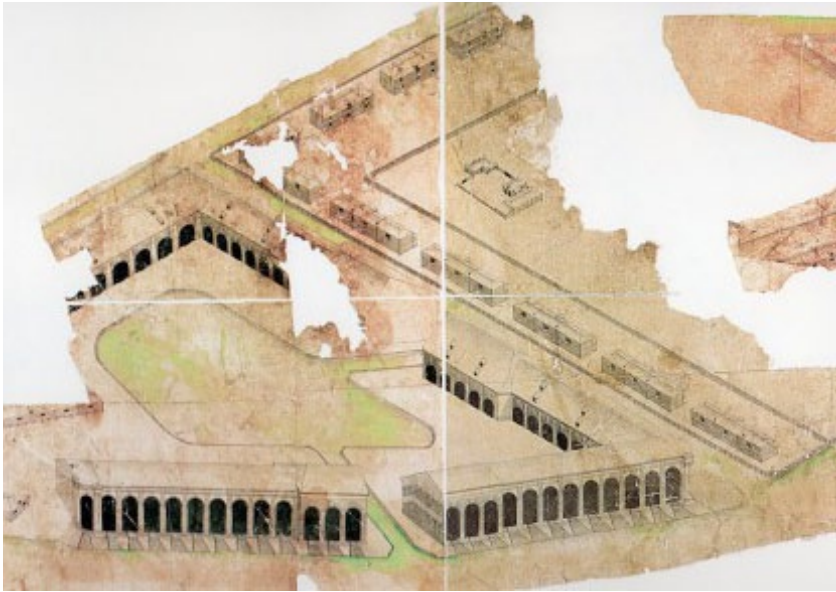


Fig. 11: Fragment of New Holland Island's 1763 plan

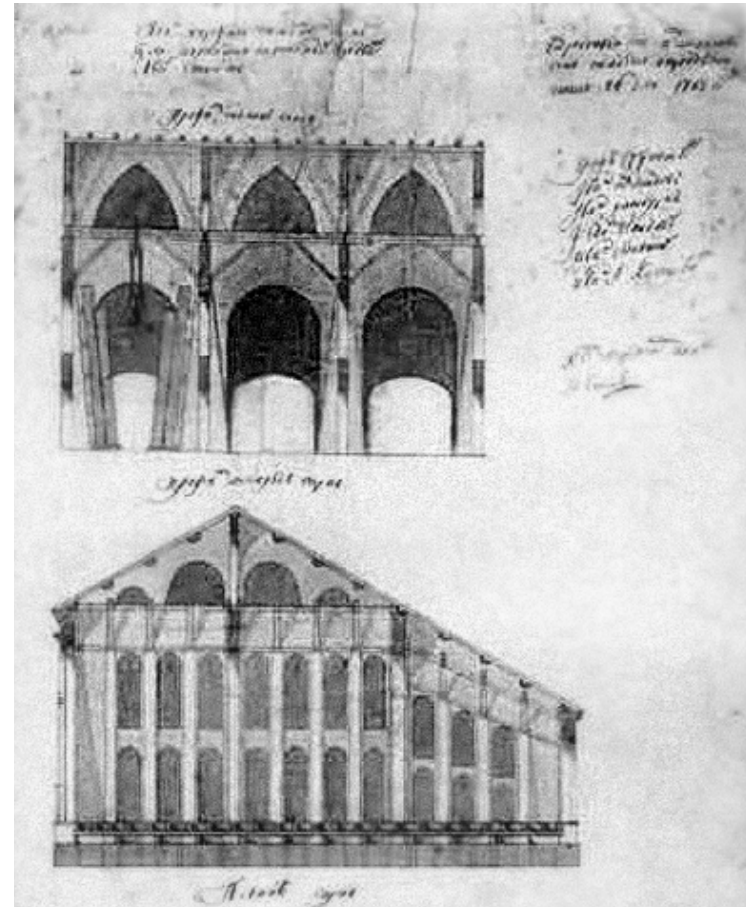


Fig. 12: Longitudinal and cross section views through warehouses

Under Catherine II, large masonry warehouses were built in 1763 along the perimeter of the island to store long timber material in an innovative (at the time) vertical system. The interior pool and small canals constructed inside the island were used for loading and working on wooden planks. The facades of the warehouses were designed by architect Jean-Baptiste Villen de la Mothe, introducing the European Neoclassicism to St. Petersburg.



Fig. 13: Diagram showing the infilled canal and public squares in relation to New Holland Island



Fig. 14: View of Palace Square and boulevard leading to New Holland Island



Fig. 15: View from boulevard towards the island

In 1844 the canal connection from New Holland Island to the Admiralty was filled in. This became a tree-lined boulevard, connecting to a series of major public spaces at the city's core, including the Palace Square.



Fig. 16: Historic drawing of the prison by architect A. Straubert



Fig. 17: View of the prison building today

Several new structures were built on New Holland Island in the 19th century. These included a prominent circular naval prison, built in 1828, a small forge building (1852), and other structures. Ship building activity continued on the site, now with advanced technology (as metal replaced wood), and the masonry warehouses, originally designed for wood storage, were adapted for storage of various naval inventory.



Fig. 18: Famous Russian cruiser Aurora, whose model was tested at New Holland's research laboratory



Fig. 19: View of the inside of experimental pool

During the Soviet period, the island continued to be used by the Russian navy. In the early 1900s, Ivan Krykov's Institute was formed for scientific and military research, including testing ship models in a covered pool depicted above. Other structures on the site, now destroyed, included a radio station and various production facilities.



Fig. 20: View of the interior of New Holland Island's warehouses



Fig. 21: View of the interior of New Holland Island's warehouses

During the 20th century, the masonry warehouses were used as storage facilities, gradually becoming underutilized. Ownership of the island by the navy became criticized - as early as 1906 a publication pointed out the irrational use of this grand island, stating that the buildings stood "75 % empty and 25% full of metal scrap" (Solovyova 2005, 58).



Fig.22: Proposed design by Norman Foster

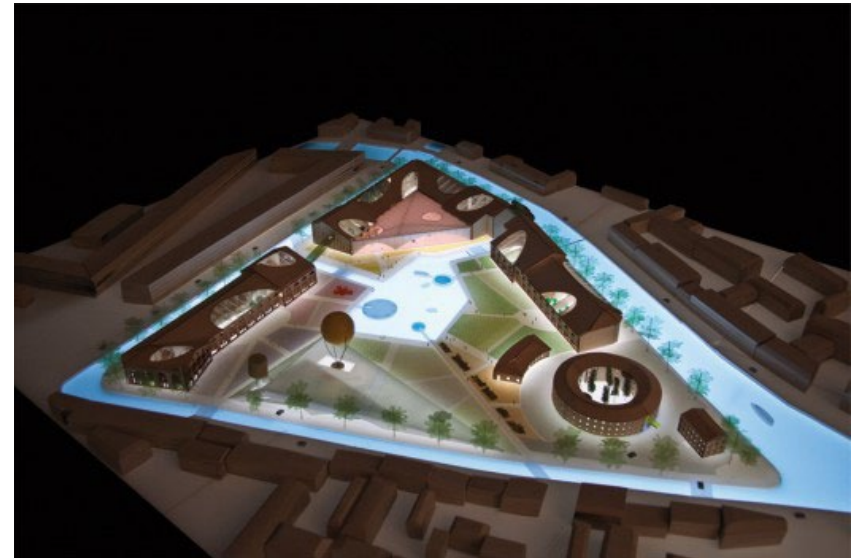


Fig.23: Proposed design by WorkAC

In the last two decades, several proposals have been made for New Holland's future development, starting with a proposal for a naval museum and library in 1989. In 2004 the site ownership was finally transferred to the city. Since then, it has been proposed for public development for the first time in its nearly 300-year history. The office of Norman Foster won an early competition in 2006, but the project never went beyond the design stage. The current plan for the island is a project won by a U.S. firm WorkAC in 2010 to turn the site into a high-end cultural and commercial hub.



Fig. 24: Figure Ground. Public outdoor spaces

CHAPTER II Site Analysis

B. New Holland Island and Urban Context

From its beginning, St. Petersburg was a planned city, growing from the Admiralty outwards with a radiating street pattern. The figure ground of the historic center reveals the regularity and density of the city's blocks with the major historic landmarks (shown in red) standing out from the rest of urban fabric. New Holland Island, in particular, draws attention for its unique triangular form and large void at its center. Outdoor open spaces in St. Petersburg are mostly formal public squares or formal gardens, and many, although public, are limited in use and often gated. It has been said that public space in St. Petersburg today is still "rarely perceived by the citizens as their own territory that can be freely used and appropriated" (Zhel'nina, 2011, 6). In many cases, with the idea of the city as a "museum," public space is focused on the visual experience of tourists rather than supporting a social interaction and providing a comfortable environment for locals. New Holland Island's redevelopment for public use thus has the potential to provide a more public, informal space for city residents.



Fig. 25: Views of public green space in city center

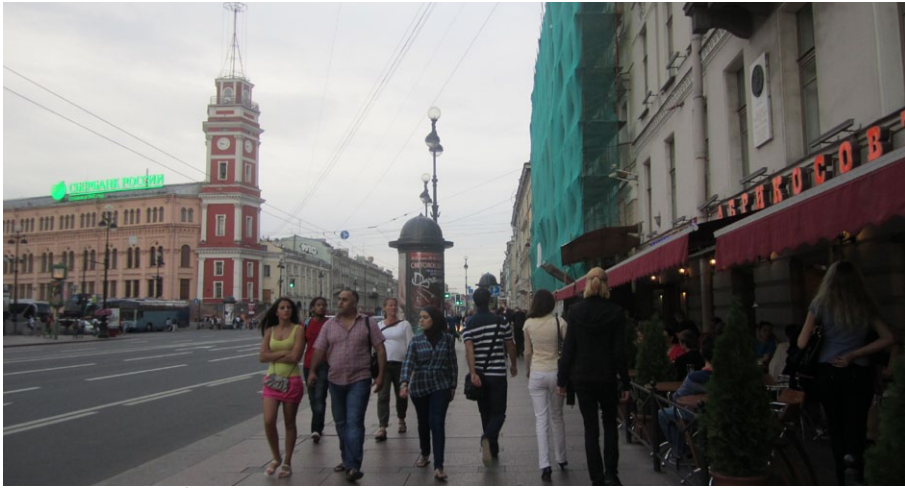


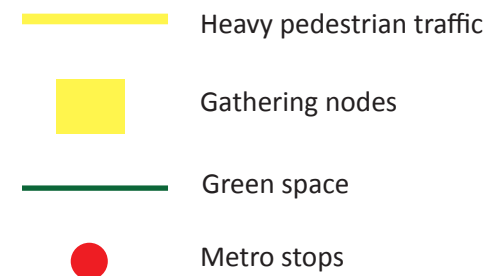
Fig. 26: View of Nevsky Prospekt, main tourist artery

Pedestrian activity in the city center is concentrated around the major cultural and commercial attractions near Hermitage Museum on the Palace Square and then radiates out along a major street - Nevsky Prospekt. This is the main artery of the city, attracting millions of tourists each year. Over 5 million tourists came to the city in 2010 and 8.1 million tourists are targeted by the year 2016 (O'Flynn, 2012)).



Fig. 27: View of Sennya Square, a commercial node

Fig. 28: Diagram of pedestrian activity



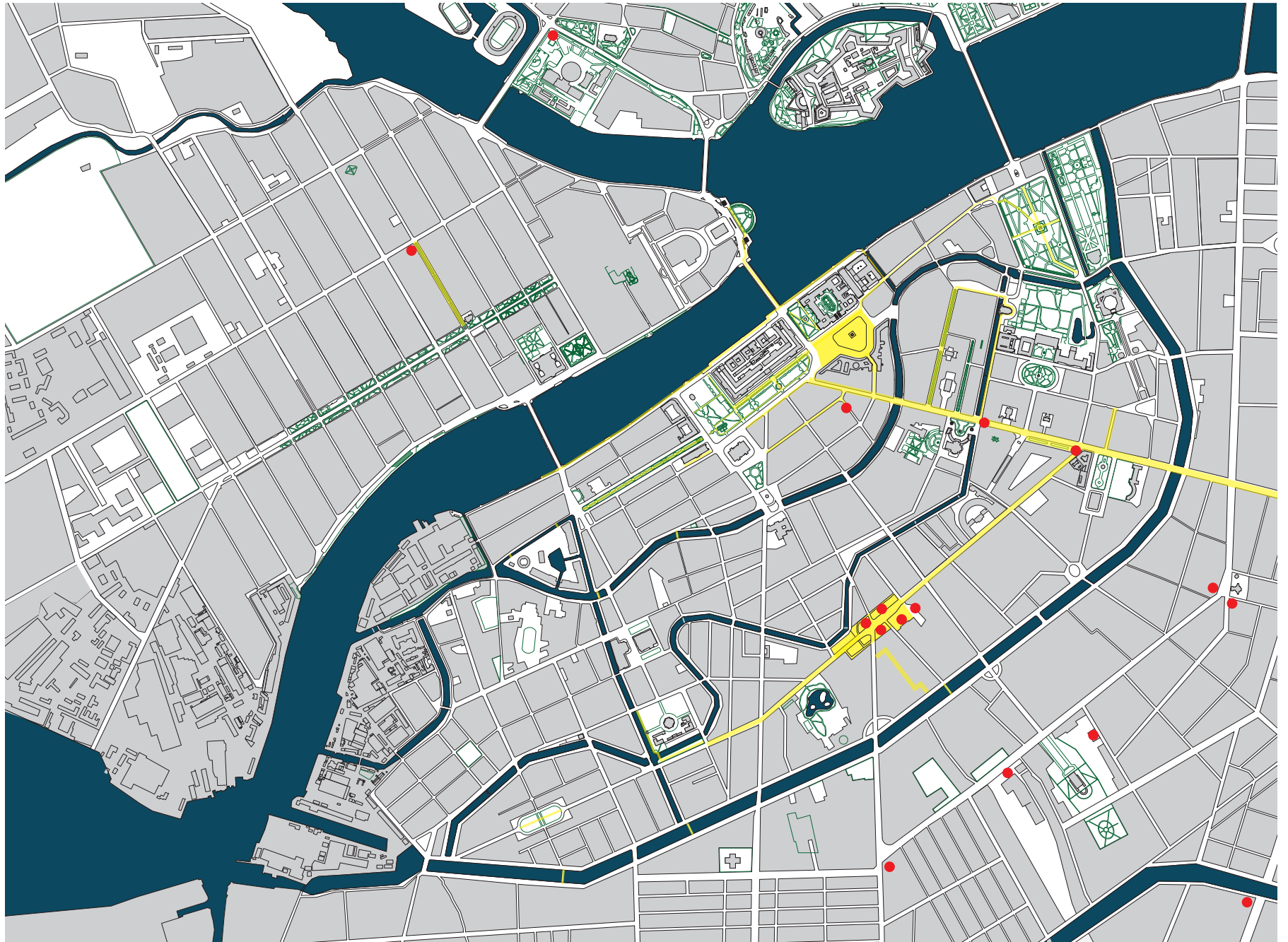
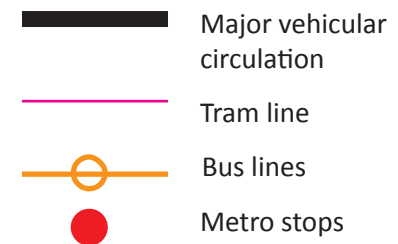




Fig. 29: Traffic in front of New Holland Island as seen from the boulevard

The transportation diagram shows the busy traffic of St. Petersburg's center today. There is heavy vehicular traffic, for instance, coming from Blagoveshensky Bridge, which cuts off a pedestrian boulevard connection from the series of public squares to New Holland Island.

Fig. 30: Transportation diagram



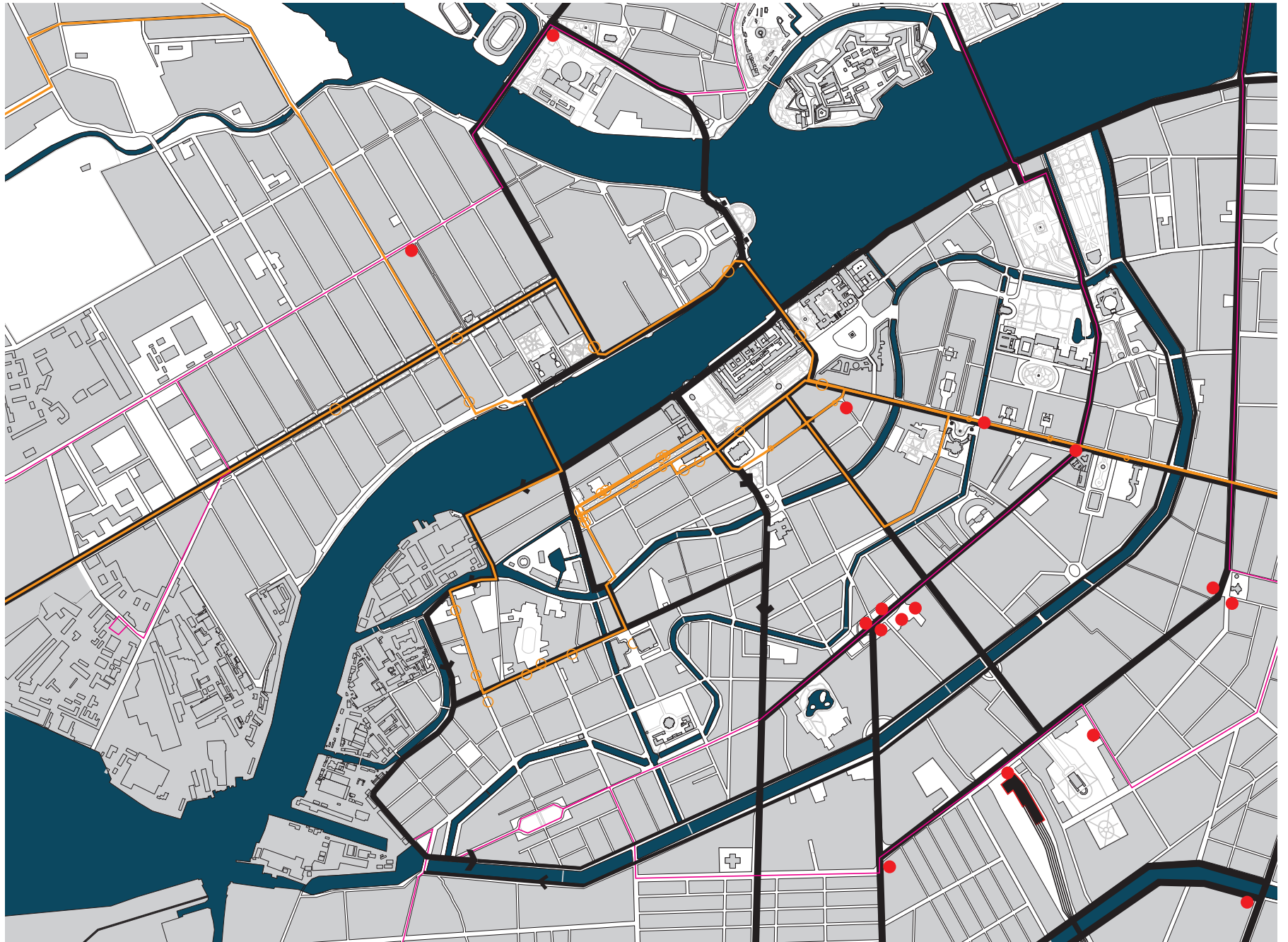


Fig. 1: Transportation

The busy streets fade away as one moves from Nevsky Prospekt towards the west, where the city consists of a more local, residential character and attracts far less tourists. The western edge of the city is marked by industrial zones along the Neva, closed off for public access. New Holland Island is uniquely located in that it lies between these three zones, the busy commercial, local residential, and industrial.



Fig. 31: Photomontage of the character of the city center

Fig. 32: Zoning diagram





Fig. 33: View of New Holland Island and building of the Royal Naval Guards Crew across the canal, on left.

Looking closer at the area around New Holland Island, the land use diagram reveals several universities and local schools as well as cultural landmarks in the vicinity of the site. It is particularly important to note the building across the canal from the island to the east - a former building of the Royal Naval Guards Crew. The historical barracks are being adapted as the new home of the Central Navy Museum of St. Petersburg and will house over 800,000 exhibits on naval memorabilia, armaments, equipment, and vessel models (www.navalmuseum.ru).

Fig. 34: Land use diagram

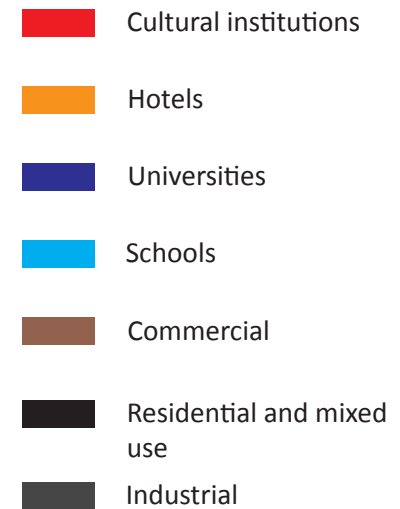






Fig. 35: Aerial view of New Holland Island, 2008

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1. Warehouses
2. Former research institute, now destroyed
3. Interior pond
4. Forge
5. Prison

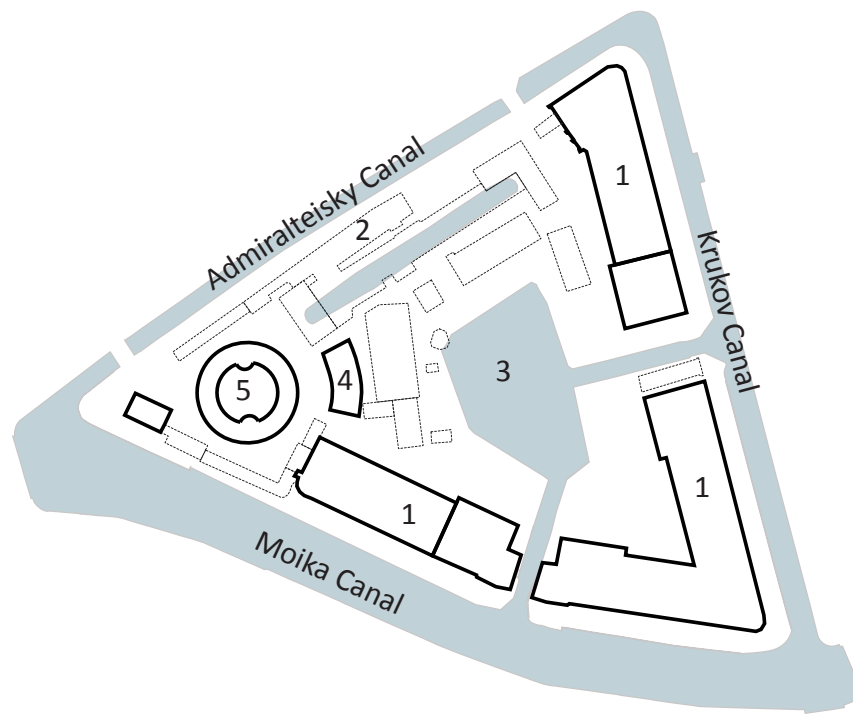


Fig. 36: Existing plan of New Holland Island

CHAPTER II Site Analysis

C. New Holland Island Today

New Holland Island has been historically isolated from the city as it was always a military site not integrated with the rest of the urban fabric. Today it still stands as a remote place with an aura of mystery and myth around it. It is separated from the adjacent streetscape by canals on all edges, with two bridges providing access on just the northern side (across the Admiralty Canal). A line of tall trees along the perimeter of the island separates it visually even further and gives a sense of mystery and the unknown of the interior. Historical warehouses along the perimeter are monumental in scale and present a prominent brick corner at the northeastern tip of the triangle, facing the open space in front of the future Central Navy Museum. The buildings on the island, which have been standing vacant for over a century, are largely deteriorated now. Windows, doors, floors, and parts of roofs are missing, and rubble fills the interior. The structure of heavy masonry walls supported by buttresses is stable, however. The images presented here give a sense of the site.



Fig. 37: View towards New Holland Island from southeast



Fig. 38: View along perimeter of the island



Fig. 39: View from Moika Canal. Archway and canal towards interior pond



Fig. 40: View from Krukov Canal towards interior of the island



Fig. 41: View from interior pond towards Krukov Canal



Fig. 42: Northeast corner



Fig. 43: View of the warehouse from interior of the island



Fig. 44: End wall of warehouse structure

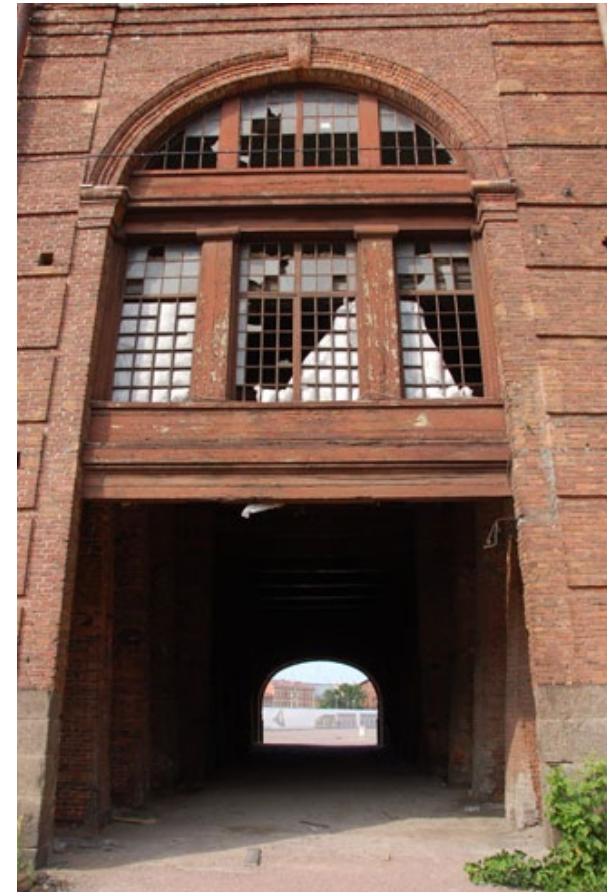


Fig. 45: View through the building towards interior of the island



Fig. 46: Warehouse facade facing interior



Fig. 47: Fish eye view of one of the warehouse bays



Fig. 48-51: Warehouse Interior views



Fig. 52: View into the island under the archway

CHAPTER III Theories and Examples

A. *Terrain Vague*

New Holland Island is unique in the city fabric. It lies in close proximity to a noisy commercial and tourist center, but its primary context is a quieter local neighborhood, at the edge of the city where the historical palaces and the well-known postcard views fade away into the utilitarian sites and buildings of the industrial zone, closed for public access. The main intriguing quality of New Holland is its silence. Its separation and isolation from the urban context by canals, as well as its emptiness and abandonment, contribute to this quality. This thesis argues that this kind of quiet place is just as important in the city center as the busy commercial and cultural attractions. New Holland Island acts as a counterbalance to the constant display of commercial and historical “things” in the busy metropolis of St. Petersburg.

A term used by Spanish architect Ignasi de Sola-Morales describes this kind of deteriorated urban fabric such as New Holland Island. A French term, “*terrain vague*,” translates directly



Fig. 53: Joan Fontcuberta's Terrain Vague series: "Coking plant, Yorkshire", 1997

into "waste land", but also describes a sense of a void, something unproductive, devoid of activity, a kind of "residual space", most often obsolete (Sola-Morales, 23). Joan Fontcuberta, a photography artist from Barcelona, writing in the same exhibition publication, describes *'terrain vague'* as "present[ing] itself to us as diaphanous void laden with potentiality, heterodoxy and memory" (Fontcuberta, 267).

The standard approach to abandoned sites is to reintegrate them into the "productive mesh of urban spaces of efficient... busy effective city" (Sola-Morales, 23). This is the approach clearly seen in many of the new developments in and around St. Petersburg's historic center, to which so many residents and historians react so unfavorably. The city's future plan for New Holland Island is similar - to fully integrate the island, the aim is "to transform the site into a dynamic, mixed and integrated quarter" (New Holland Development online). Some of the future uses include:

"a collection of cultural spaces, theaters, exhibition halls, educational centers, and science labs, specializing in the advancement of information technologies. Alongside them would be a vital array of commercial infrastructure, from office space to residences, hotels and more" (New Holland Development online).

This thesis takes on an approach put forward by Sola-Morales, who argues, on the contrary, that areas of *"terrain vague"* should be addressed in such a way as to keep their unique qualities of abandonment. "It is this vacancy and absence that must be preserved at all costs, and which must register the difference between the federal bulldozer and

a sensitive approach to these places of memory and ambiguity”,
Sola-Morales states (23).



Fig. 54: Aleksandr Pushkin's museum-apartment: living quarter of the poet reconstructed to 18th century period

B. Various approaches to development today

What might this sensitive approach look like on such a large-scale site as New Holland Island then?

John Ruskin's theory from his book *Seven Lamps of Architecture* suggests one extreme, a romantic fascination with ruins would suggest leaving the site as is and allowing further deterioration by the environment, since the structures have gone past the stage where easy maintenance would make them usable again. In fact, many of St. Petersburg's deteriorated structures are in this state, probably as a result of lack of funding. On the other hand, Viollet-le-Duc's approach was to restore, and, as he stated in his *On Restoration*, "to reestablish to a finished state" (195). This approach has been used in many of the projects in St. Petersburg's. These restorations, for example the numerous apartment-museums of the famous poets Pushkin or Nabokov, who once resided in the city and gave it fame, represent an approach that might imagine New Holland Island as a museum returned to a specific time period. A similar museum, already mentioned, will be created inside the historical naval barracks building across the Krukov canal adjacent to the island on Krukov canal.

Yet another contemporary approach is represented in works of architects such as Rem Koolhaas, or, notably, Norman Foster (who controversially won the initial competition for New Holland in 2006, but the actual project did



Fig. 55: Construction of Mariinsky Theater Second Stage, 2012

not precede) as well as other contemporary large-investment projects in St. Petersburg. In “The Generic City”, Rem Koolhaas describes a future or perhaps a contemporary city today with no history or culture; a city which can produce a “new identity every Monday morning” - what has outlived its use is replaced with “whatever grows in its place” (Koolhaas, 218-220). The architecture is produced at “incredible speed”, with only a ‘lip-service’ to historical references and grand projects filled with “splendid, shining arrogance” (Koolhaas, 223). This may be the horror to which many residents in St. Petersburg react to, seeing rapid development around the city after the long stagnant Soviet regime. As mentioned previously, the new projects are typically large commercial centers, but the most recent new construction in the city center is a second stage for Mariinsky Theater in close proximity to New Holland Island on the Krukov Canal. It is currently scheduled to open in May 2013 and has been criticized by many architects as well as the public for this exact “generic” quality, among others criticisms. The several historic structures have been demolished for the new stage building, for example, leaving only a portion of facades. The new theater building has been labeled a “banal”, out of scale and non-contextual (Online812 News, 2011).

In the context of current trends, Joseph Rykwert’s conclusion in his book *The Seduction of Place* comes to mind. “It is not intoxication and grandiloquence we need now, but sobriety and effective action. Therefore, make little plans,... and lots of them”, he states (Rykwert, 246).

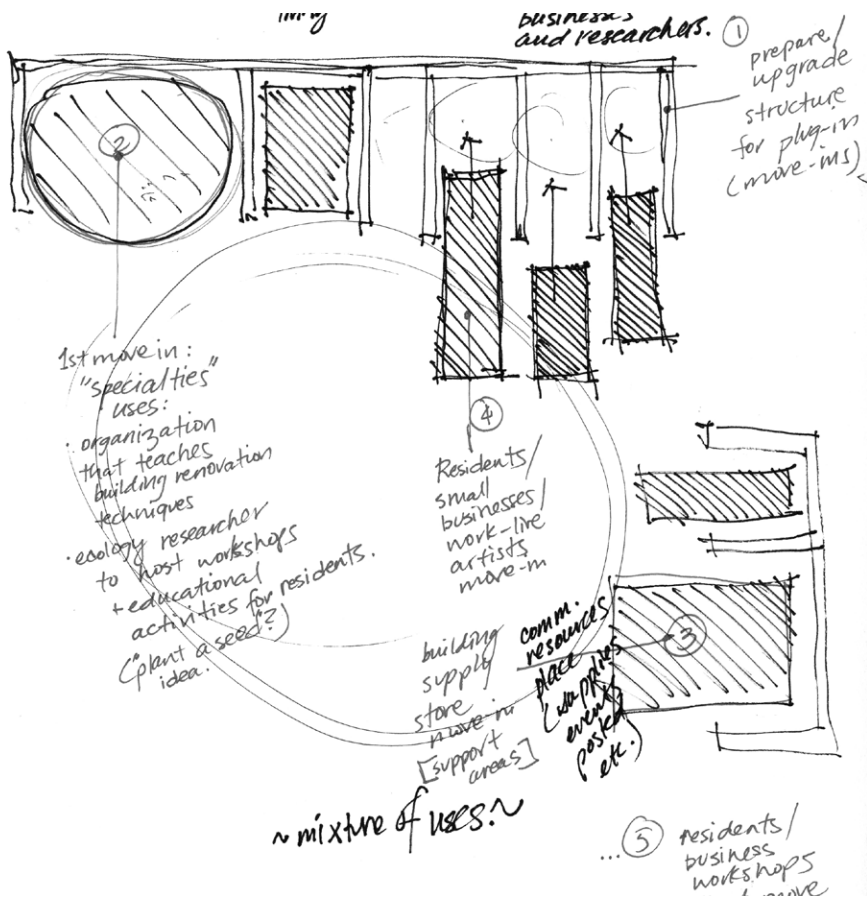


Fig. 56: Early conceptual sketch for a system of incubator spaces

C. The incremental approach

In seeking a sensitive approach for intervention within the historic fabric of New Holland Island, one which lies between becoming a museum and preservation or a destructive large-scale development, this thesis proposes an incremental approach to occupying the site. The thesis project, first, consists of putting in place a system to support small-scale interventions over time, which then are imagined to be completed by various users, possibly researchers or artists. The site will become filled with “incubator spaces”, leaving most of the site to be experienced as a ruin by the public and enjoyed as a large open public green space.

This thesis draws upon the work of Dutch architect N. John Habraken, who suggested an alternative proposal to mass housing. In *The Structure of the Ordinary: Form and Control in the Built Environment* (1998), Habraken discusses how there can be an intimate and “unceasing interaction between people and the forms they inhabit” (Habraken, 1998, 7). The transformation by planners, architects, and inhabitants “[forms] part of the cycle of actions by which the built environment lives” and endures (Habraken, 1998, 8). Further, in his book *Supports. An Alternative to Mass Housing* (2000), Habraken proposes a system where a structure acts as a bookcase, containing books - a kind of construction containing individual dwellings, which allows for the greatest variety (Habraken, 2000, 59 - 61).

This approach of a certain framework, which al-

lows user transformation of space closely resembles that which is already occurring in many residential projects in Russia. Typically, a unit can be sold during the early phases of construction of an apartment complex, providing the basic fit out, plumbing, and electrical services, but allowing the freedom to the owner to complete the unit as desired. This approach is used by many as a response to difficult financial situations (purchasing a bare unit at the early stage is usually less expensive) and shows the motivation of people for expressing and appropriating a space to their needs and wants.

In the specific case of New Holland Island and its historical warehouse structures lining the perimeter, the “support” structure for incremental development which is proposed is not a new construction on a massive scale as perhaps N. John Habraken imagined it, but rather, a system within the historic buildings. This thesis argues that such an infrastructure can be developed to support a variety of uses over time. Chapter IV shows the proposed framework and intervention on New Holland Island, focusing on one of its historic warehouse buildings.



Fig. 57: 'The Rope Show' in Carlberg Factory site, Copenhagen

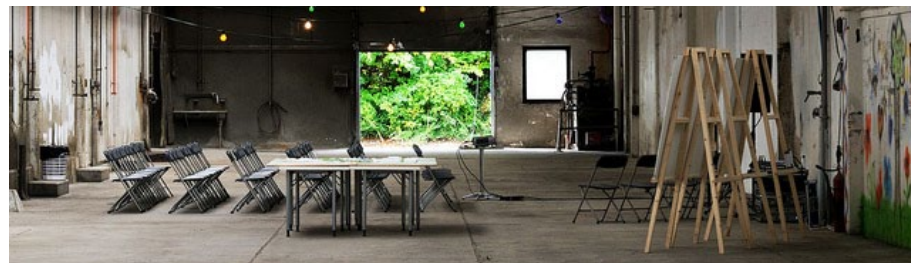


Fig. 58: New uses inside Musicon, Roskilde

D. Examples

Carlsberg Factory temporary installations, 2010

Designed by UiWE and Keinicke & Overgaard Arkitekter
Former Carlsberg brewing factory, Copenhagen, Denmark

Musicon development, since 2003, ongoing

Managed by Musicon sekretariat, municipality of Roskilde
Former Concrete factory, Roskilde, Denmark

Two projects found show a method of gradual and incremental development on large scale sites. The plans for Carlsberg brewing factory in Copenhagen were initiated with a competition, master planning, and large-scale project to turn the vacant area into a vibrant cultural and residential quarter. However, as the economy went down, the project could not proceed as a large investment all at once. What is happening in turn are several successful small scale interventions, which create public spaces in an overall empty industrial site. Installations such as the field of ropes hanging from a roof structure were very successful in attracting people to the site, which otherwise felt as a trespassing zone. Currently several buildings are beginning to be adopted for dance studios and art galleries. Another project, in Roskilde, Denmark in a former concrete factory, took on the incremental approach from its initial conceptual development. "Musicon" project turns the former industrial site into an experimental ground focusing on creativity and entrepreneurship through gradual change, with full development only expected in 15 years. The attitude of Musicon's site can be summarized from Peter Schultz Jorgensen, an urban

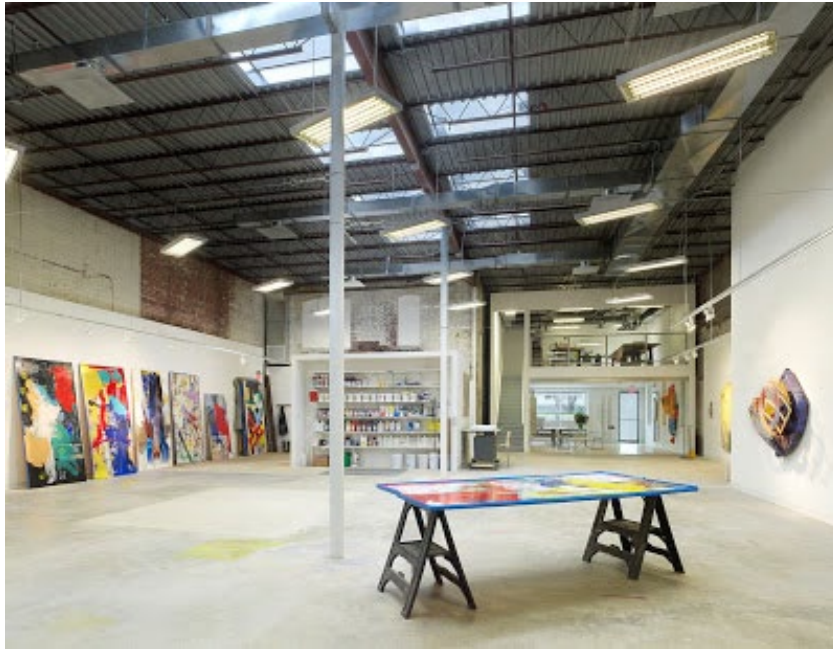


Fig. 59: Artist studio by Wnuk Spurlock Architects



Fig. 60: Artist studio by Wnuk Spurlock Architects

planner in Roskilde, as follows:

“It would be easiest thing ... to fill Musicon with traditional city development - this is the master-plan, this is what it will look like and this is more or less how it will turn out. ...A different strategy and tactic has been implemented ... by operating with great sensitivity - over time” (Jorgensen, 2012).

Artist studio, 2012

Wnuk Spurlock Architects

Washington D.C., USA

An example of how one may insert new uses in the historic fabric is seen in a artist studio space design by Wnuk Spurlock Architects in Washington, D.C. The space is a hybrid art studio, woodworking shop, office, gallery, and storage space for an artist Sam Gilliam. In words of the architect, the space is thought of as “multiple programmatic freestanding interventions” (Herman, 2012). The new interventions clearly are differentiated from the old masonry structure and are like containers, “dropped” into the space (Herman, 2012).



Merida Museum of Roman Art, 1986

José Rafael Moneo

Mérida, Spain

Although a different program, the Museum of Roman Art is looked at as an example for architectural concepts of intervention within a large rigid structure of parallel walls. Moneo's great achievement in this design have been praised for the strong axis of main nave and articulation of the brick walls with natural light manipulation, giving an overall sublime ambience to the visitors.

Fig. 61: Interior of Merida Museum of Roman Art by Rafael Moneo

CHAPTER IV Proposed Intervention

A. Site interventions

The proposal for development on New Holland Island starts at the urban scale with several conceptual interventions for the overall site. It then narrows in on the northeastern corner of the island with the proposed framework and intervention in the historic warehouse building as an example of how the rest of the buildings on the site may be adapted for new uses. The main goal for the intervention is to keep the unique qualities of New Holland Island - silence of the abandoned ruins and monumentality of the austere warehouses - while carefully reintroducing the site to the public and setting up a framework for contemporary uses.

Three connections to the rest of the city fabric are proposed as continuations of specific unique paths in the city. A path from the southwestern edge of the city along the water and its industrial uses has unique sectional qualities as a greener part of the urban core closer to the water's edge; it will connect the local residential area and New Holland Island. The path coming from the area of Nikolskiy Cathedral also along the edge of the water,



Fig. 63: One of the connections to the site from the tree-lined alley of Admiralteisky Boulevard

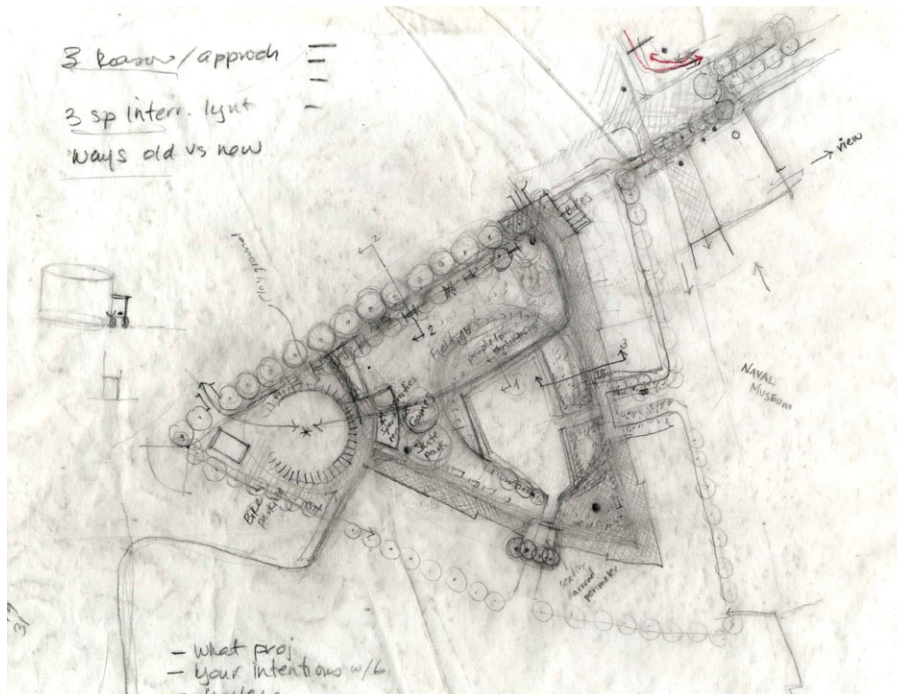


Fig. 64: Process drawing. Site plan

the Krukov Canal, connects to New Holland Island at its south-eastern corner. And finally, a connection is proposed to continue the pedestrian tree-lined boulevard from the east through a public square, Ploshad' Truda, in front of the future Central Naval Museum. Thus, three new bridges are proposed for the island.

Other initial interventions are two main paths, one on the interior of the island along the buildings' edge and one along its exterior perimeter. The two paths are connected through certain bays of the warehouse structures. The path along the perimeter would be a unique experience in the city fabric - a place close to water's edge isolated from vehicular traffic, a typical condition in the rest of the city center streets.

B. Users

Possible users using the site are the general public from local neighborhoods, scientists and researchers, and various local and visiting artists. A proposal is made to reveal the original water pool on the site which, historically, had been used for research and experimentation, but was filled in after 2004 when the island was opened to the public. New uses can develop around its edge, particularly involving experimental uses of water for scientific purposes and sustainable goals for the polluted Neva. The focus in the warehouses is to provide an infrastructure for a variety of new uses such as workshops and classrooms, artists studios and residences, and residential units.

The thesis intervention focuses on the northeastern corner of New Holland Island to show a way this infrastructure and intervention is designed.

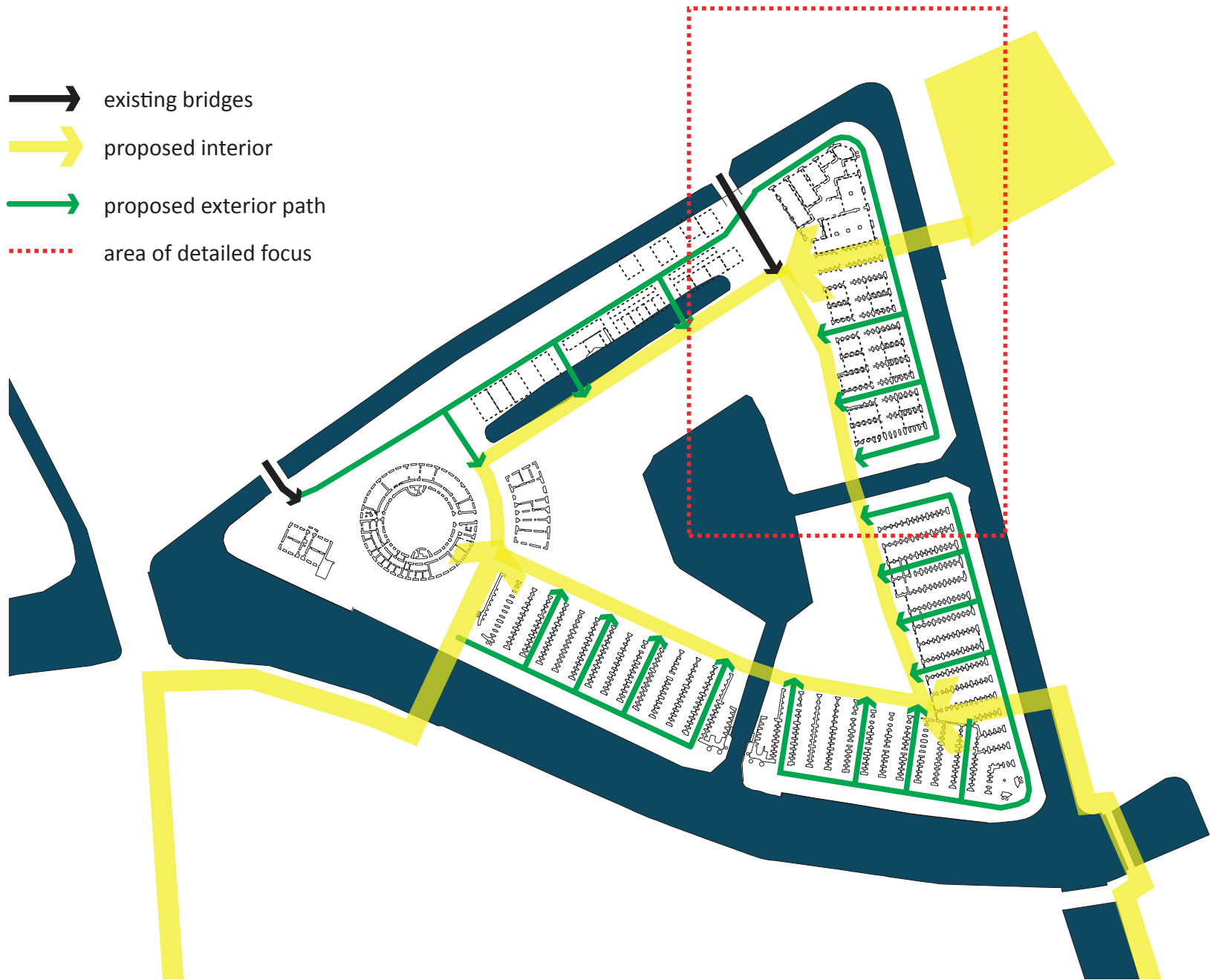


Fig. 65: Site diagram. Proposed interventions

C. Building intervention

The historic warehouse building is a twelve-bay load-bearing masonry structure with a rounded corner facing an open public square, Ploshad' Truda. The bays are approximately 28' apart and 100' deep, with 2' thick rigid walls supported by buttresses. One of the bays is designated for a more public use - a cafe, gallery spaces, and performance space.

The rest of the chapter shows the main categories of intervention made within the building:

- Framework and horizontal and vertical circulation
- Light
- Gathering nodes
- Structural system
- Sequence of experiencing the site

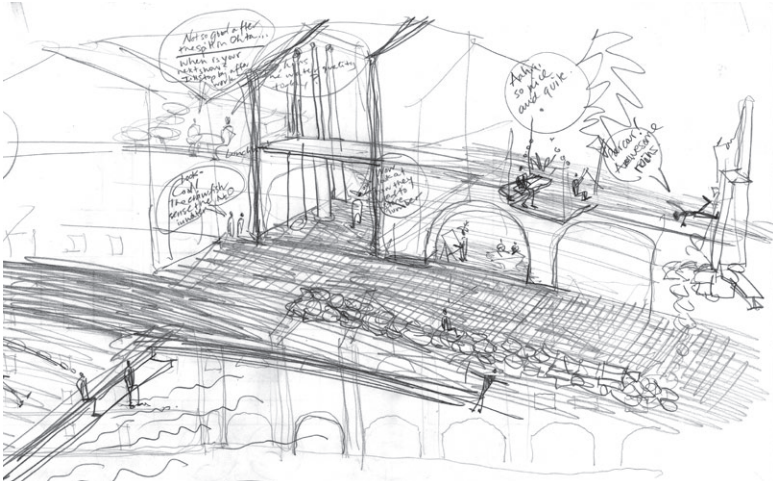


Fig. 66: Process sketch

- interior (urban) path connections
- exterior perimeter path
- public use relationship

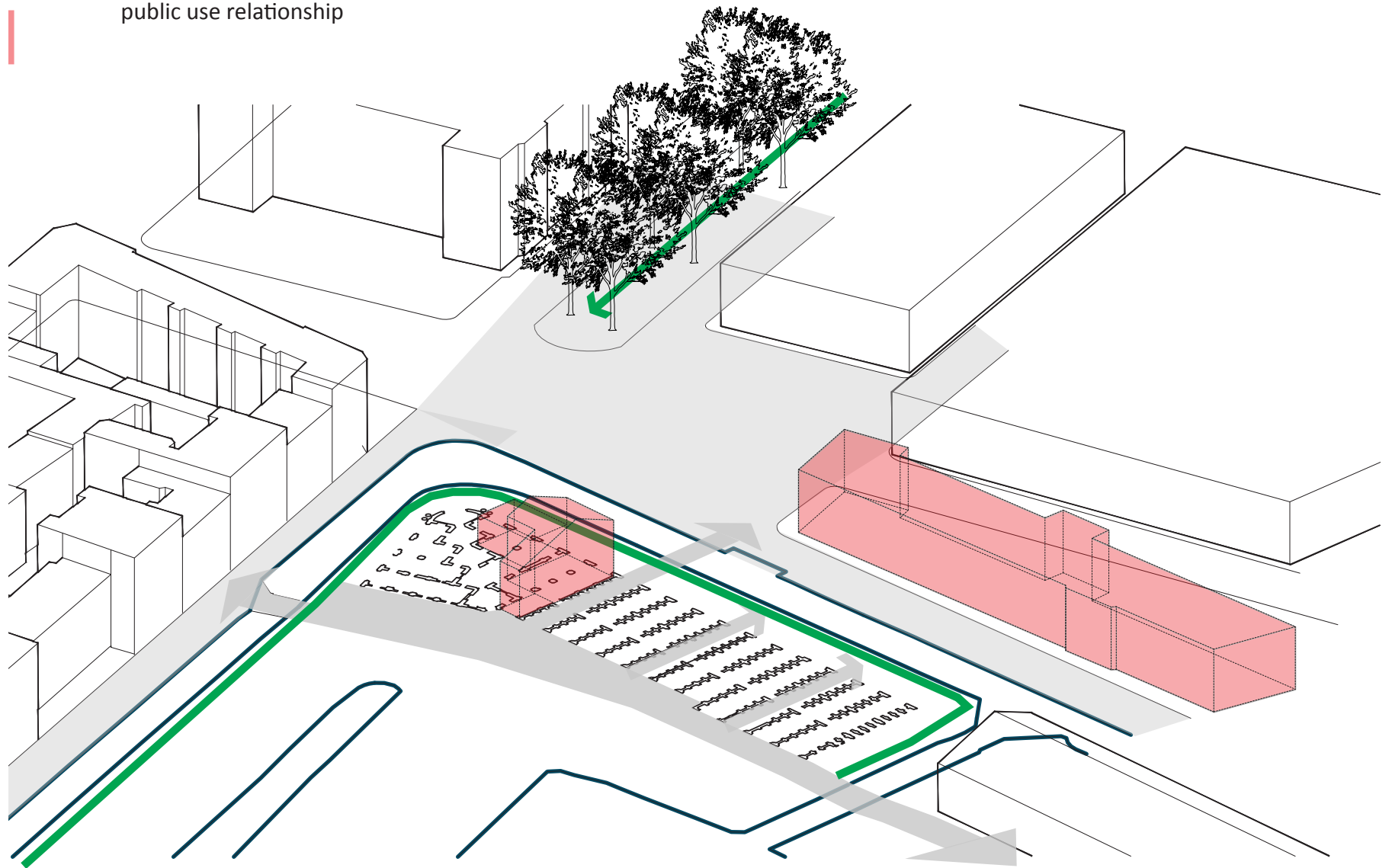


Fig. 67: Site relationships diagram

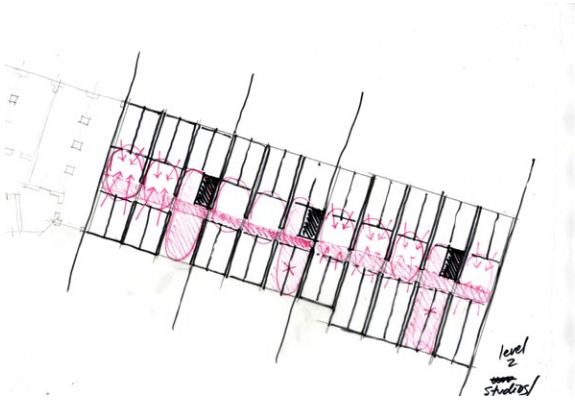


Fig. 68: Process sketch

Framework:

Specific cuts are made in the walls to allow for continuous horizontal circulation at the second level. The four vertical cores are placed to support a cluster of units around them. Each entrance to the cluster of units corresponds to a passageway connecting the two paths on the island.

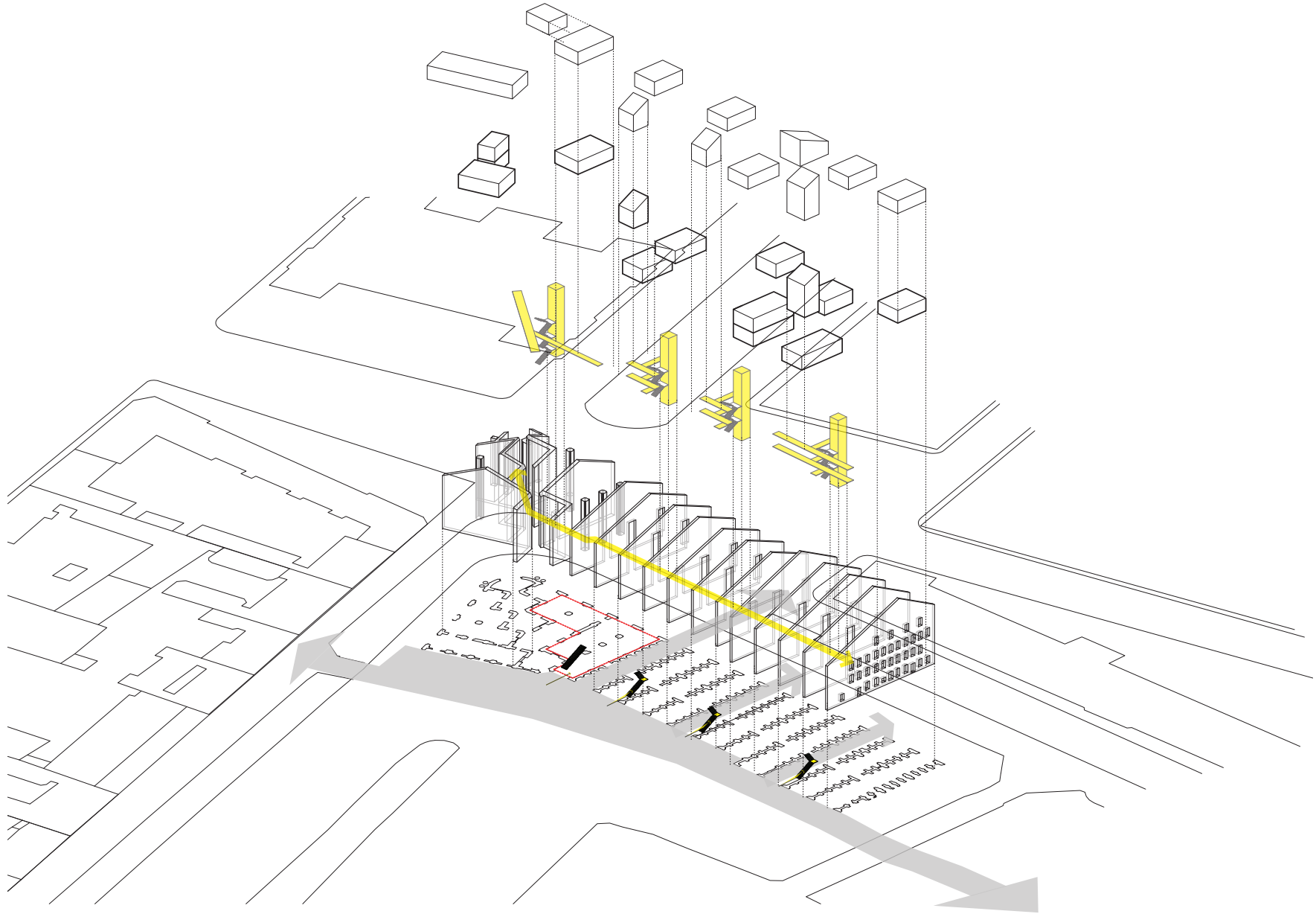


Fig. 69: Framework diagram

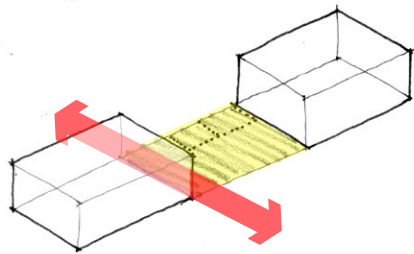


Fig. 70: Framework relationship to program:
ground level workshops

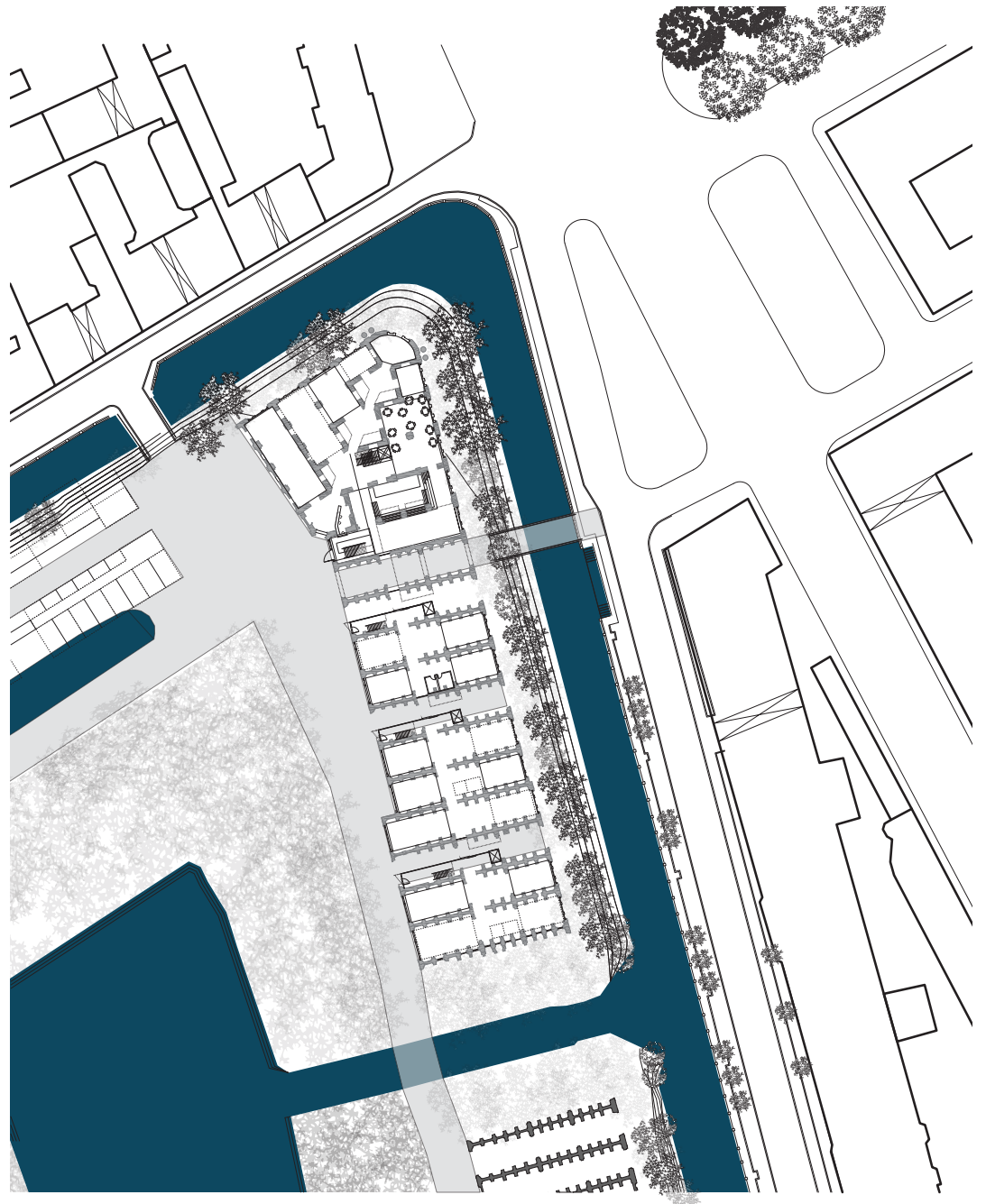


Fig. 71: Plan. Ground level

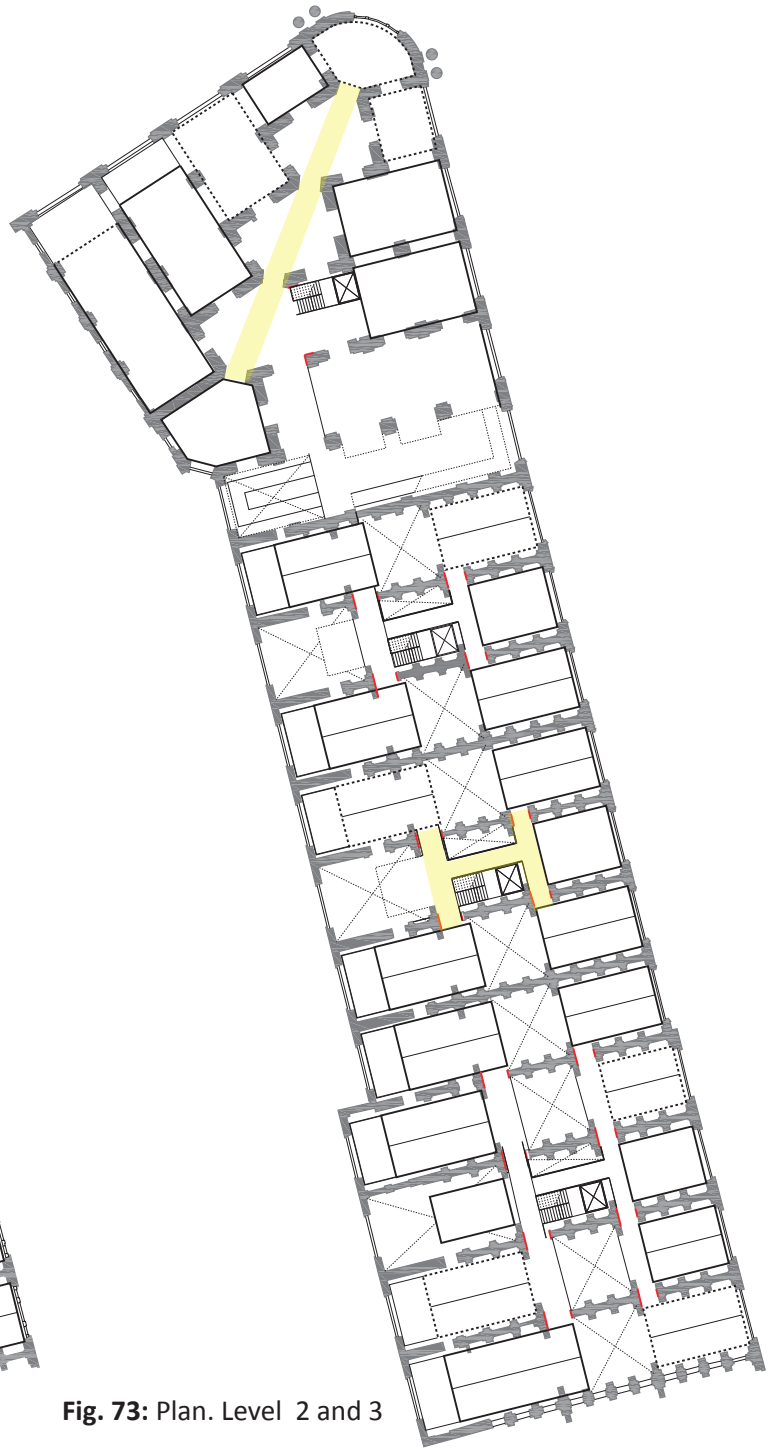
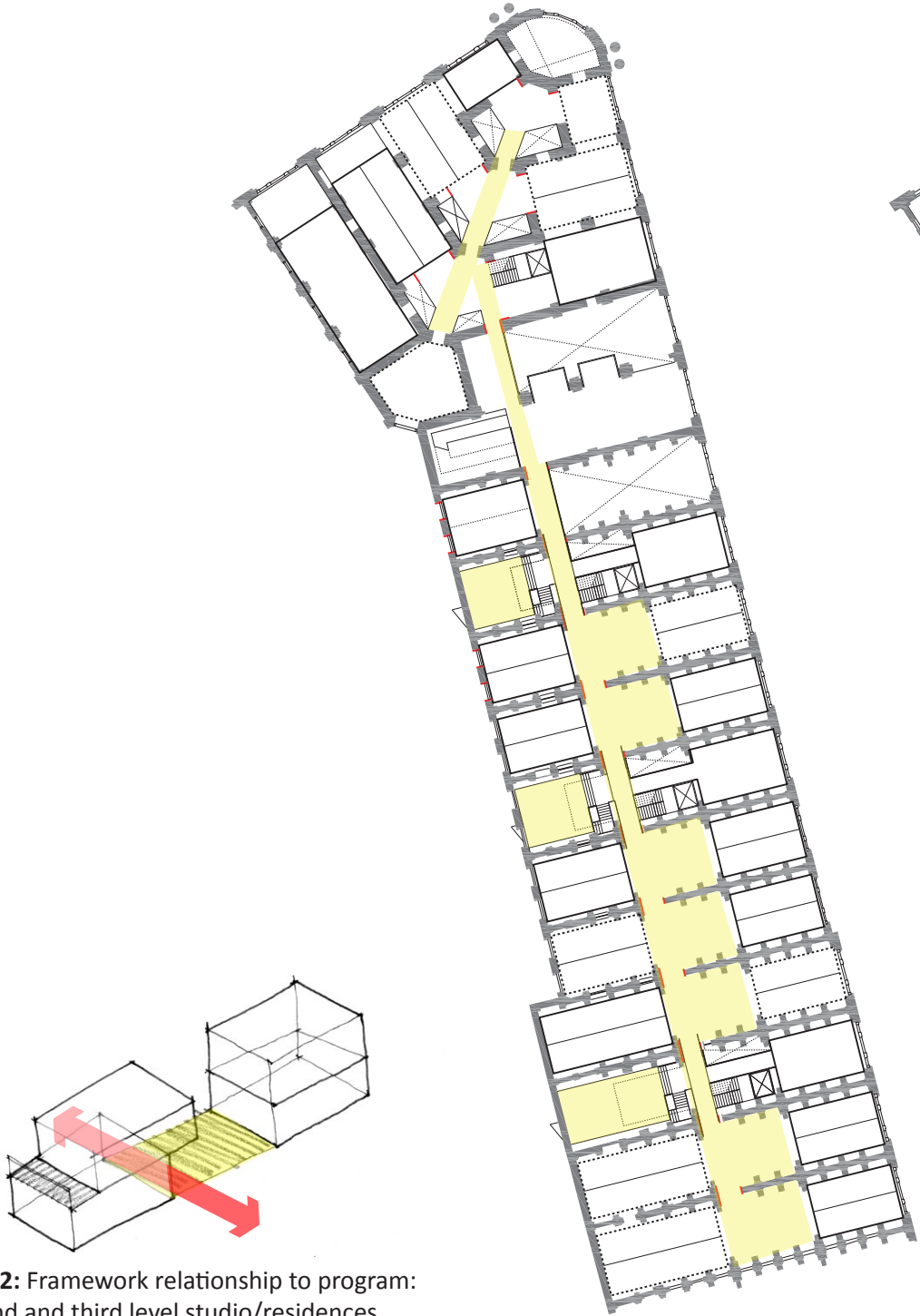


Fig. 72: Framework relationship to program:
second and third level studio/residences
60

Fig. 73: Plan. Level 2 and 3

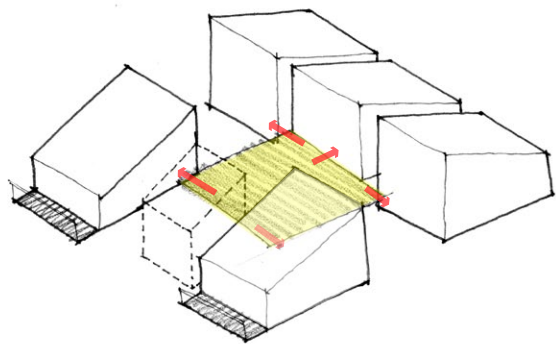


Fig. 74: Framework relationship to program.
fourth level loft residences

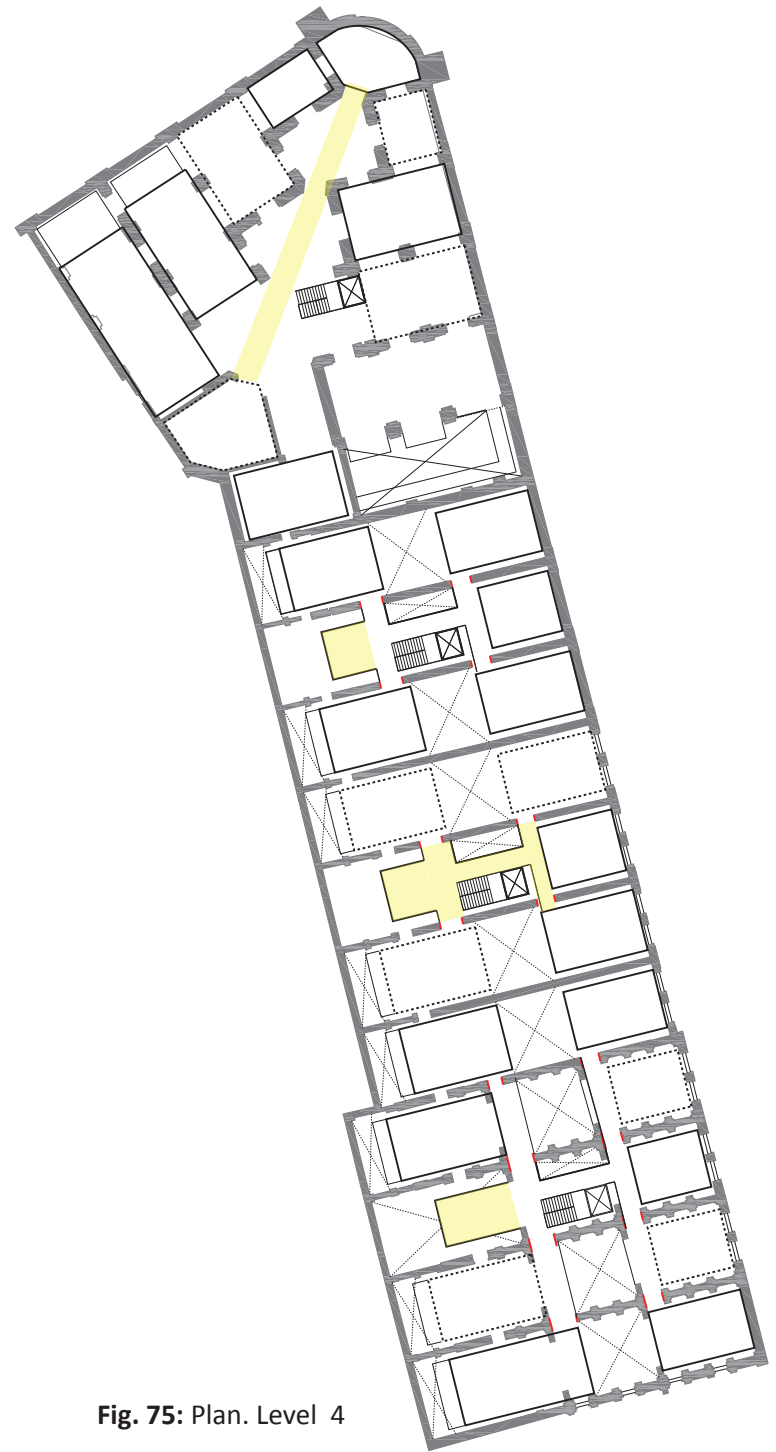
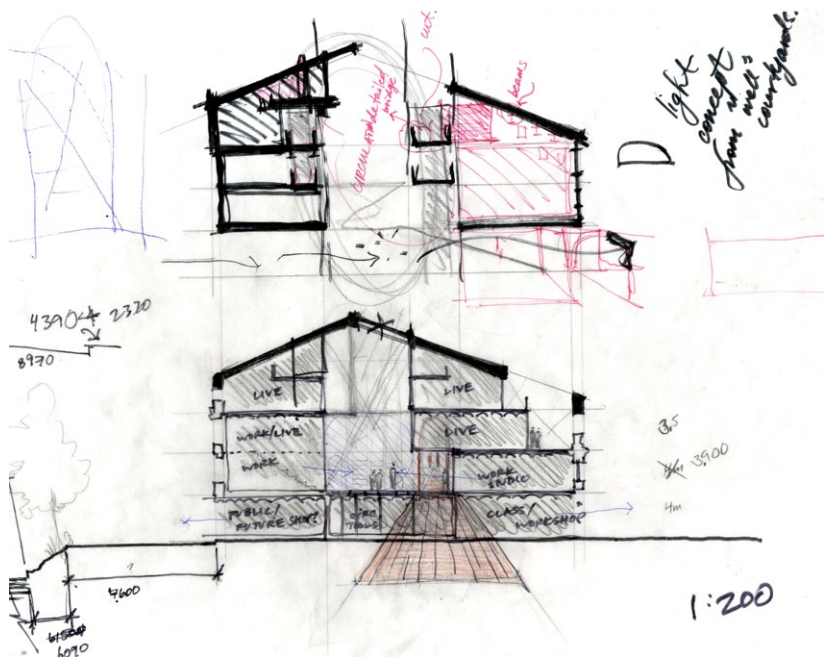


Fig. 75: Plan. Level 4



Light

Natural light has been introduced to common gathering spaces within the deep bays, such as a common working area for artist studios shown in section A or the large flexible void space shown in section B and C. The light enters in a variety of ways, from a large skylight (Section A) or smaller linear skylights washing the walls (Section B,C).

Fig. 76: Process sketch. Section.



Fig. 77: Section A

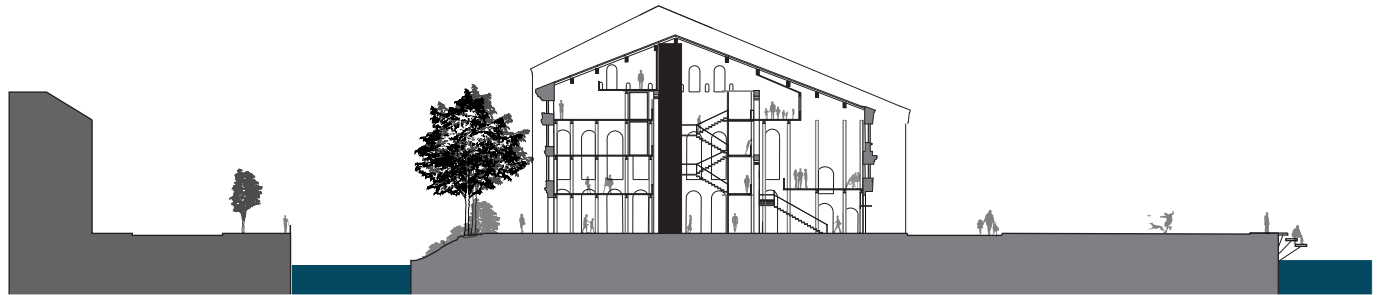


Fig. 78: Section B



Fig. 79: Section C

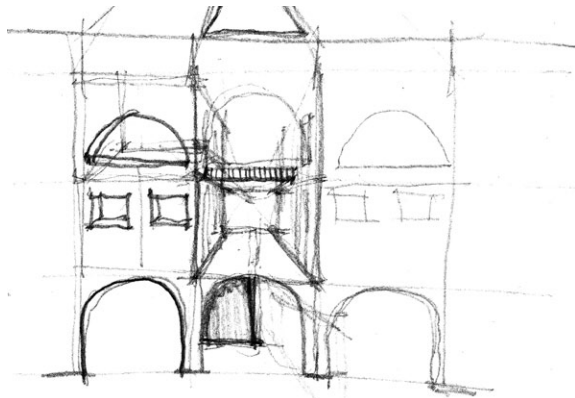


Fig. 80: Process sketch

Gathering nodes:

Adjacent to each vertical cores is a common gathering space for the cluster of units. This is a large double or triple-height void, which can support a variety of uses, such as a meeting space for the inhabitants or a gallery display area. The space is off the main circulation of the building and is seen to become the node of activity for residents.



Fig. 81: Section-perspective drawing through common space

Structural system:

To support new programs within the historic warehouse building a structural system was developed. The steel channels along the existing buttresses of the masonry walls provide flexible ways to attach steel beams at various heights. The system thus allows for different configurations within the large void of the gathering nodes, for example. The section-perspective drawing on the previous page shows one configuration of a floating “box” in that space - a classroom, for instance, or a meeting area. The system also allows to be used in the areas where steel beams still remain from the later historic additions to the warehouses.

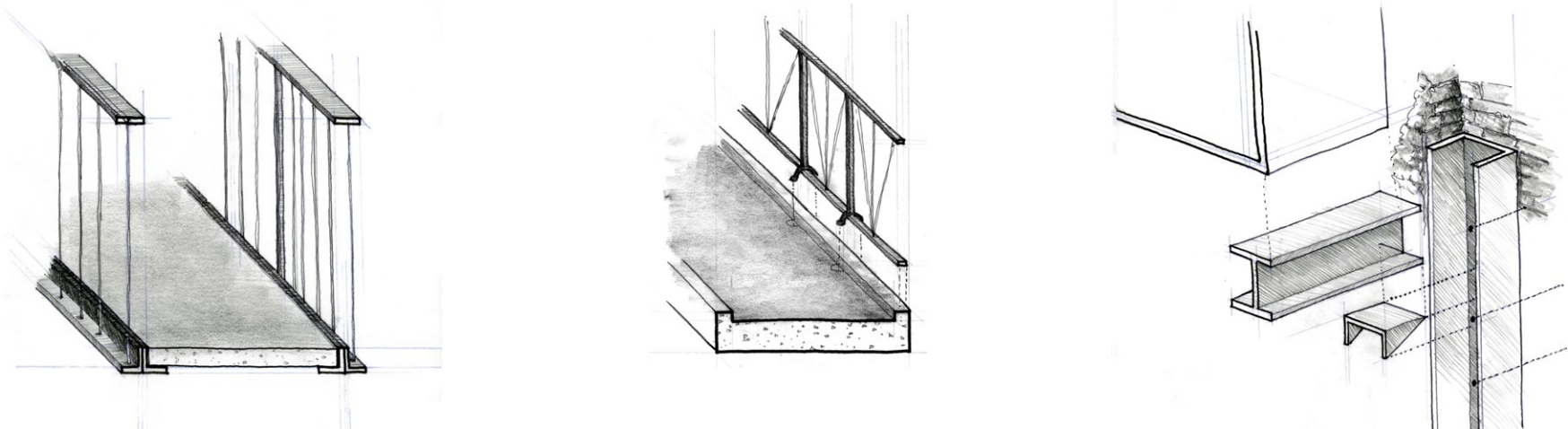


Fig. 82: Series of details sketches

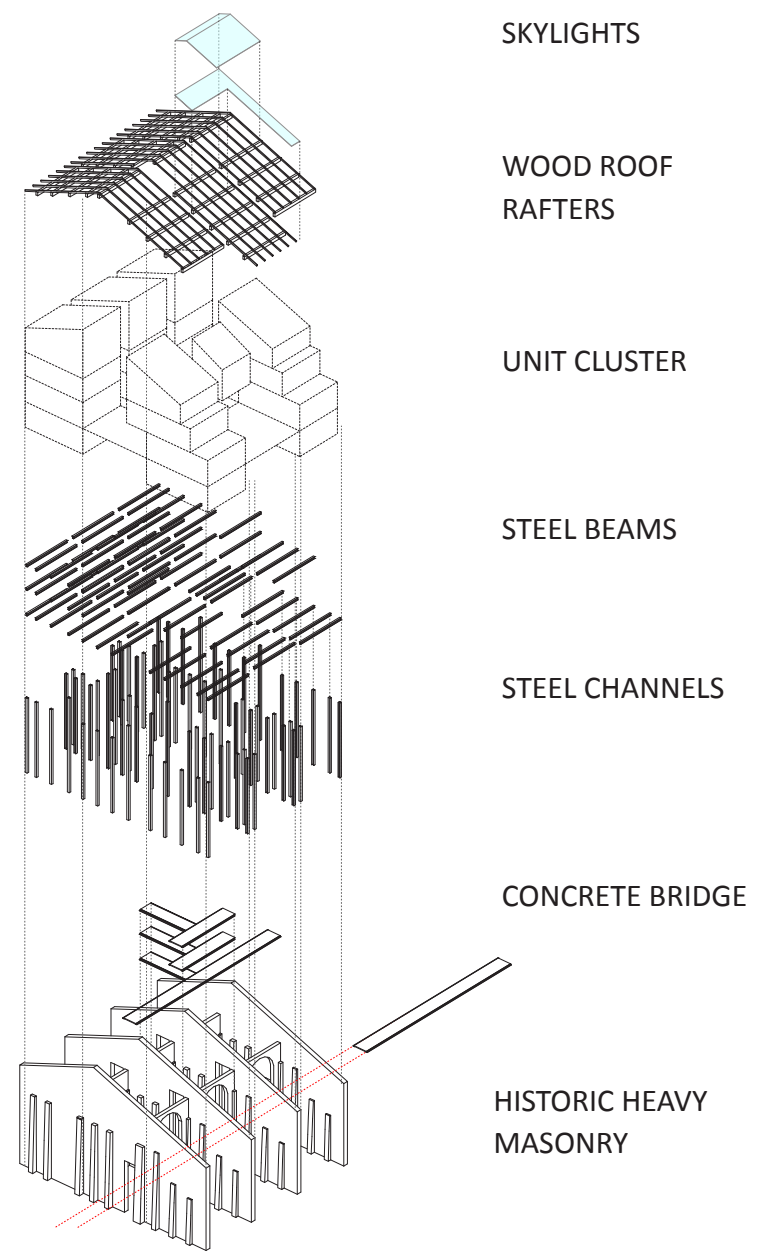
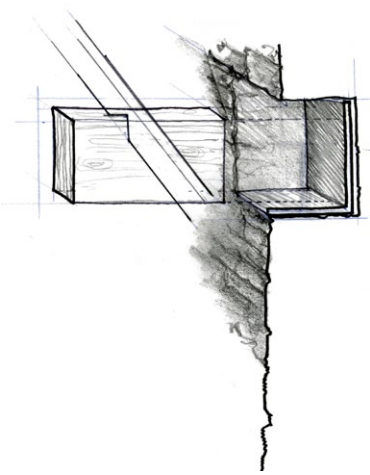
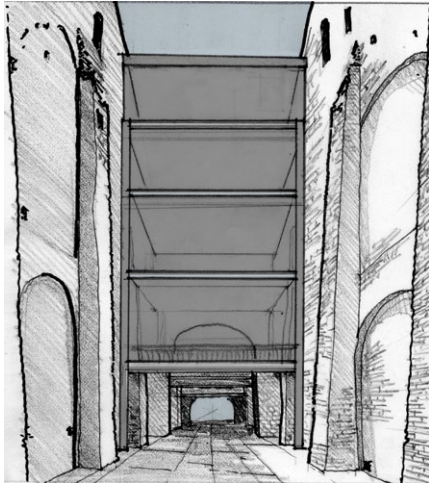


Fig. 83: Structural diagram



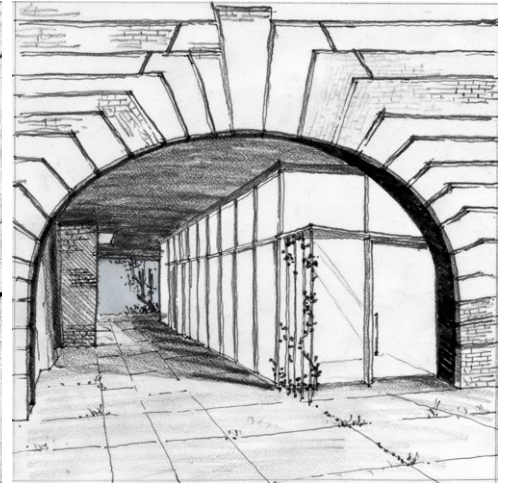
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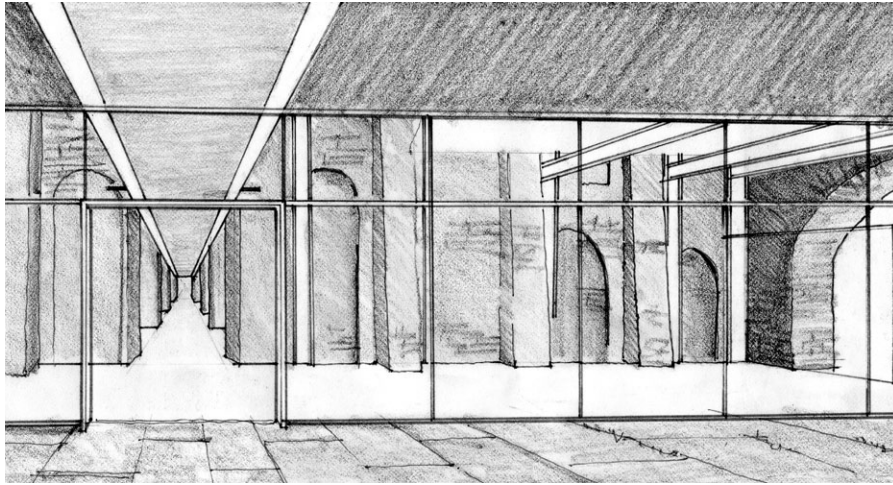
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Sequence of experiencing the site

Fig. 84: Towards new bridge entrance

Fig. 85: Within the bay looking at new intervention

Fig. 86: Within the bay looking back

Fig. 87: Entrance into new studios and residences

Fig. 88: Underneath new circulation. Entrance into workshops

Fig. 89: Interior view of the common void space



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CHAPTER V Conclusion

This thesis began with a fascination the abandoned places of culturally rich historic center in St. Petersburg and a reaction against the current methods of development. The process sought to comprehensively examine a large vacant site, New Holland Island, and suggest a sensitive development which begins to introduce contemporary uses while at the same time retaining the unique qualities of the abandoned place. The incremental approach and the infrastructure that supports its gradual development emerged as a specific response to the monumental historic warehouse structures on the site. To intervene not entirely at once but to initiate infrastructure enough to suggest a variety of future uses showed to be a challenging concept to convey. After all, “an architect has a legitimate need to leave behind something of himself in his project” (Tafuri, 1991). The role of the designer in adaptive reuse projects, however, is not to overwhelm the historic fabric in grand gestures and master plan schemes. This role is re-envisioned in this thesis as providing a system and a set of careful interventions to create a balance which allows New Holland Island to continue to evolve without destroying its unique fabric.

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