

The Ruin: History as a Labyrinth

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ABSTRACT

As one of the oldest European cities, Berlin has many historically significant buildings. Due to heavy bombardment during World War II, many of those historical architectural remains are present in ruined condition today. In many cases, instead of being demolished for new construction, they are excavated, preserved and turned into visible landmarks in the city. Ruins have a strong narrative quality causing the observer to experience a passage of time by depicting the present state of a theatrical past. Developing and reusing those valuable architectural spaces in a contemporary context has to reconcile its design with the history of the site. The renovation and conservation of the architectural ruins raises the question: how does one respond to a site's history and its future? The new narrative is not simply to rely on a process of restoring the original but to demonstrate the development and transformation of culture and history into a modern context. The history of ruins is composed of a multitude of singular narratives that exist illegibly as fragments of history. This thesis proposes an architectural intervention that engages with a ruined site by assembling those fragments in order to become a catalyst in developing new languages for the site. The proposal seeks to use architectural space as a metaphor to connect the history and future of the site.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks for my thesis committes, Nicole and Vikram, for all your encouragement and guidance. It's a great experience to study in Berlin, and having those great talks with my thesis chair Nicole Huber and Manfred Mangold. From them, I begin to understand that the process of exploratio is always more important than the outcome. In the future, I will continue searching for the future, finding myself.

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Figure 1. Photo of Ruins of Anhalter Bahnhof

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Architectural ruins are characterized by their incomplete structures, exposed skeletons, visible raw materials, and their dramatic contrast with the surrounding context. Ruins are no longer conceived of as programmed space, instead they are kept in the city as stories with various endings which speak about time, nature, historical events, and people. For an architect, the question of how to design for a site located next to architectural ruin addresses the tension between the contemporary and the historical, and the ambiguity between construction and deconstruction. The former Franciscan Monastery Church is the ruin selected as the site in this thesis design and investigation. The ruin is a significant historical site within the city of Berlin which illustrates the city's origins. The church was built in the thirteenth century when the city was founded and is located next to the former city wall. As it has not been destroyed during World War II, the ruin has the potential to be experienced as a collection of historical traces which have remained throughout the changing history of the city, characterized particularly through the medieval and early-modern epochs. Conscious of the fact that the site is strongly tied to its historical background, this thesis seeks to develop a design intervention which can be read as an attempt to re-insert a new entity into the site's history. The major method behind the design work is the use of and reference to archaeological research by using existing historical fragments. By assembling them, the site will be transformed into a catalyst representing visual paths of a narrative history.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Romanticized Ruins

The history of Berlin is spread throughout many different lenses. When I first arrived the city, something felt like it was mixing in the air, suspending my senses, it left me depressed but also excited and open to the exploration of Berlin's architectural and urban history. During my initial research, I developed a deep interest in the architectural Berlin's history can be seen through many different lenses. When I first arrived in the city, I felt an inexplicable mix in the air, something that suspended my senses and left me depressed but also excited to explore Berlin's architectural and urban history. During my initial research, I developed a deep interest in the architectural ruins remaining everywhere in the city. There are several questions that have driven my curiosity: why are ruins fascinating? How does the city deal with its ruins? And how do architects develop a site and respect the previous historical elements that are present?

Architectural ruins inspire wonder through their alteration of the surrounding physical environment through their incomplete structures, exposed skeleton, raw material, which dramatically contrast with the modern buildings' completeness. Architecture preserved as ruins is no longer conceived as programmed space. Instead, it can be seen as telling stories with various endings resulting from the concurrence of time, nature, events, and people. Ruins have a narrative effect causing the observers to experience a passage of time by depicting the present state of a theatrical past. The structure might be a remaining wing of an early gothic church right next to a heavily trafficked street. Surrounded by the city's chaos, the ruin brings you to a distinct contextualized experience which triggers the imagination and evokes images of the original architecture structure, and relays events that you may have never witnessed, such as war, natural disaster or erosion.

It's interesting to note Joseph Heelys observations surrounding the historical effects of ruins:

“Upon first glimpse of this becoming object, which adds so much dignity to the scene, one cannot resist an involuntary pause — struck with its character, the mind naturally falls into reflections, while curiosity is on the wing, to be acquainted with its history; and I make no doubt that an antiquarian like my friend, would sigh to know what era it was founded, and by whom: — what sieges it had sustained; — and would lament that hostile discord, or the iron hand of all-mouldering time, should so rapaciously destroy it.”¹



Figure 2 Hubert Robert, Design for the Grand Gallery in the Louvre (1796)



Figure 3 Hubert Robert, Hubert Robert, An Imaginary View of the Gallery of the Louvre as a Ruin (1796)

As existing architectural ruins can be defined as the outcome of past events that we do not witness, future ruins will be created through events unfolding today. Potentially, any building that is occupied or functioning today could become a ruin as a result of current or future events. As an architect, to imagine the building you are designing and constructing as a future ruin, illustrates the ambiguity between construction and deconstruction. For instance, there are two paintings by Hubert Robert in 1769, one is the interior exhibition scene of the Louvre's Grand Gallery and the other is an imaginary view of site in ruins.² The two paintings together create a dual vision of the future: one presenting as a functioning art institution, the other displaying this institution's consequent condition as a ruin.³ The museological purpose of the exhibition of architecture is to present the history of civilization and to preserve the artwork from physical deterioration. However, the architecture's ability to preserve is tested by the fragility of the structure, the anticipated termination as a ruin. The narration of history has its character with linear, sequential and continuous transitions, while the future ruin is an act of narration that can be constructed by any events between the present and the future. The period of time defined as "now" and the one described as "future" provides the potential for various narratives which bridge the gap between construction and deconstruction.



Figure 4. Joseph Gandy, Painting of Soane's Bank of England as a Ruin (1830)

Painted in a similar picturesque style, Joseph Gandy's "Soane's of Bank England as a ruin" (1830) also presents the idea of ruins in construction. This idea is again used to fabricate and narrate the present and future. The painting was commissioned by the architect John Soane when the building was nearing its completion in 1830.⁴ In Gandy's painting, architectural construction was permeated by the state of ruination. The architecture is to collapse gradually due to the deconstructive force of time, people and events, thereby revealing both the vulnerable materiality of architecture and the permanence of time. "Engaging in the contrasts, transience and permanence that ruins suggest, ruins leave the historical to be 'physically merged into the setting', allowing the ruin to become the visual index or material manifestation of time."⁵ Both Robert's and Gandy's paintings, the imagination of architectural ruins present an impressive visual contrast between the existing and the lost, revealing transience and permanence.

2.2 Precedents Study

Museum Island

Since Berlin was badly bombed during the war, there are many locations of ruins still existing in the city. For most cases, instead of being quickly demolished for new construction, these architectural ruins are discovered, excavated, preserved and made visible. These ruins present the narrative distinctions between the time of “then” and a time of “now” Robert and Gandy depicting. The most distinctive example is the museum island located in the central part of Berlin. The museum island is constituted by the complex of five buildings serving purely museological purposes, and it is highlighted in the urban fabric in the city planning to provide an urban public forum connecting to history, culture and art.⁶

The five museums were built between 1842 and 1930, focusing on different periods of history.⁷ Unfortunately, the buildings on the museum island were severely bombed during World War II and the reconstruction process still continues today. Part of the island was quickly restored after the war, but the rest remained in ruinous condition for decades until it was renovated in recent years. The renovation and conservation of the island continues, its master plan integrates planning, architecture, and artifacts, and physically expresses the narrative of history. Responding to an ongoing history, the renovation narrative is not only a process of restoring the original historical design but also a demonstration of the transformation of culture and art in a modern context.



Figure 5. Bird's-eye view of Museum Island

David Chipperfield Architects is responsible for the master plan of Berlin's Museum Island. The master plan conceives the ensemble of five historical buildings as a single entity, while respecting the architectural autonomy of the individual museums. The additional structure of the James Simon Gallery, which is currently under construction will serve as the entrance of the museum island and link the Neues Museum, the Altes Museum, the Pergamon Museum and the Bode Museum with a subterranean passageway decorated in the historical ornament.⁸ The "Archaeological Promenade" will link all of these buildings. The master plan provides a reorganization of the access to the Museum Island echoing the urban situation of the pre-war site. Based on the different degrees of ruinous condition and the restoration period, the five museums are preserved in their own unique characters. Various means of renovation, in line with their own past and modern design language, were applied.

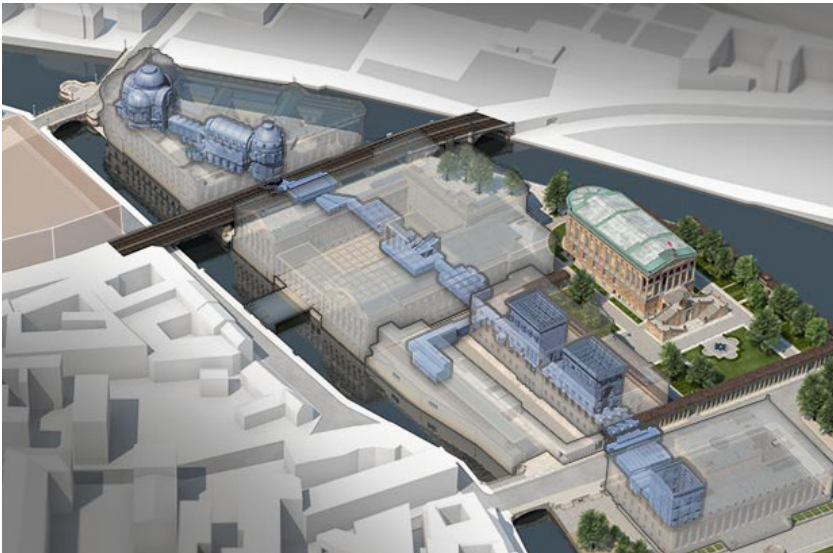


Figure 6. Underground Archaeological Tunnel on Museum Island

Neues Museum



Figure 7. New Museum Overlapped With its Ruinous Condition, Berlin

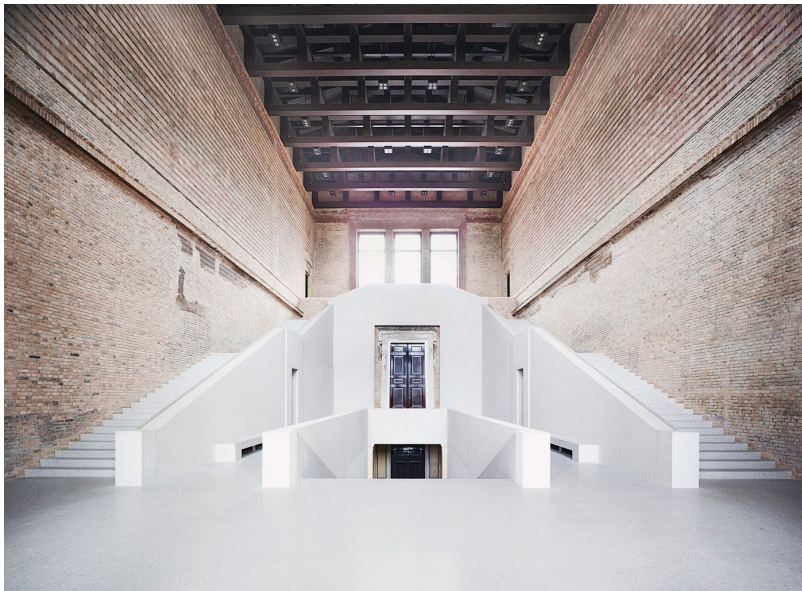


Figure 8. Renovated Entrance Staircase of New Museum, Berlin

The renovation of the Neues Museum on Museum Island is conducted by the same architect, David Chipperfield. The museum was heavily damaged during World War II with entire sections missing and others severely damaged. The building had been in ruins for 60 years until the reconstruction was finished in 2009.⁹ During the GDR (German Democratic Republic) period, the ruin of the museum was even planned to be demolished, the reconstruction decision was only made in 1985.¹⁰ Corresponding with the concept that the planning of the Museum Island will respond to its historical and contemporary role of museological purposes, the renovation concept of the Neues Museum is based on its nature as a museum. The architecture is regarded as part of the exhibition, it connects with the exhibition objects and demonstrates the passing of time and the development of civilization. The design focuses on restoration and reparation of the remaining and the reconstruction of the lost structure. The concept is not merely tracing the original historical form, but also reflecting the understanding of the events that the building had gone through and that the museum had remained in ruins and exposed to natural forces for decades. The museum's original volume has been rebuilt without decoration as a way to respond to the building's long history, while the addition of new forms reflects the portions which were lost without imitating them. The design is emphasized by its spatial context and original materiality, but in a modern form. For instance, the building's central stair hall was destroyed in the war, the new main staircase had to be reconceived without replicating its past. The new staircase is a modern concrete form based on the original volume but devoid of its original ornamentation.

IBA Housing

Another example of the reconstruction of ruins in Berlin is the IBA housing complex designed by Peter Eisenman. This site is characterized by its adjacency to the remains of a three-meter-high section of the Berlin wall.¹¹ Instead of referring to site-specific historical elements, Eisenman introduced a deconstructive design language to both the urban and architectural context. The remaining Berlin Wall was demolished, and the project walls were designed with the same height, about which Eisenman suggested “without the barrier of the wall the new ground of Berlin would be at a height of three meters.”¹² There are three grids being created to map the historical importance to the site, which Eisenman described as “fiction ground”.¹³ The three grids are composed of: a modern grid of squares, the eighteenth-century Berlin street grid, and an abstract Mercator Grid.¹⁴ The first grid fits into the existing street and the eighteenth-century urban site. The next grid system refers to the global Mercator network, which aims to evoke a relationship between Berlin and the rest of the world. These reinterpretations of the site aim to signify its historical and political situation.

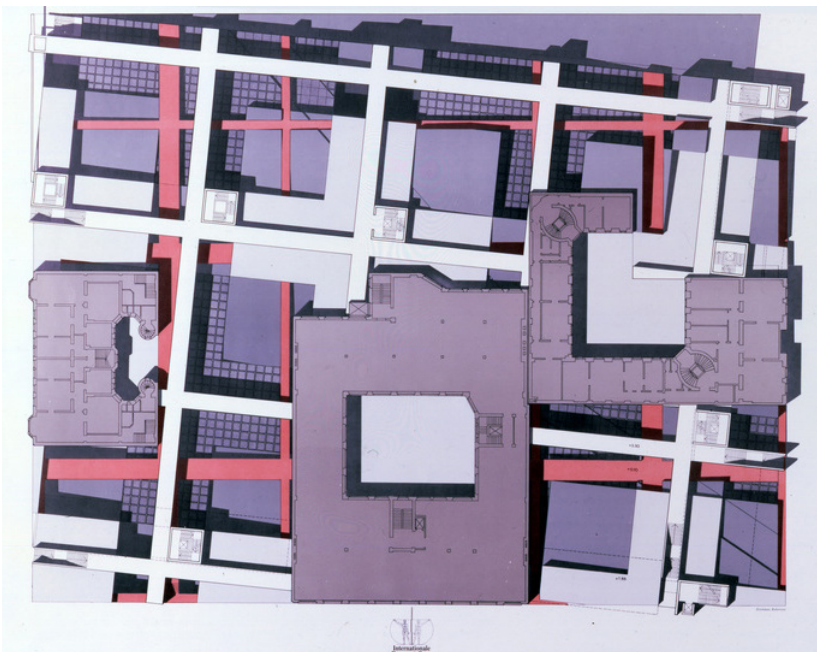


Figure 9. Site Plan of IBA Housing, Berlin



Figure 10. Street view of IBA Housing, Berlin

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

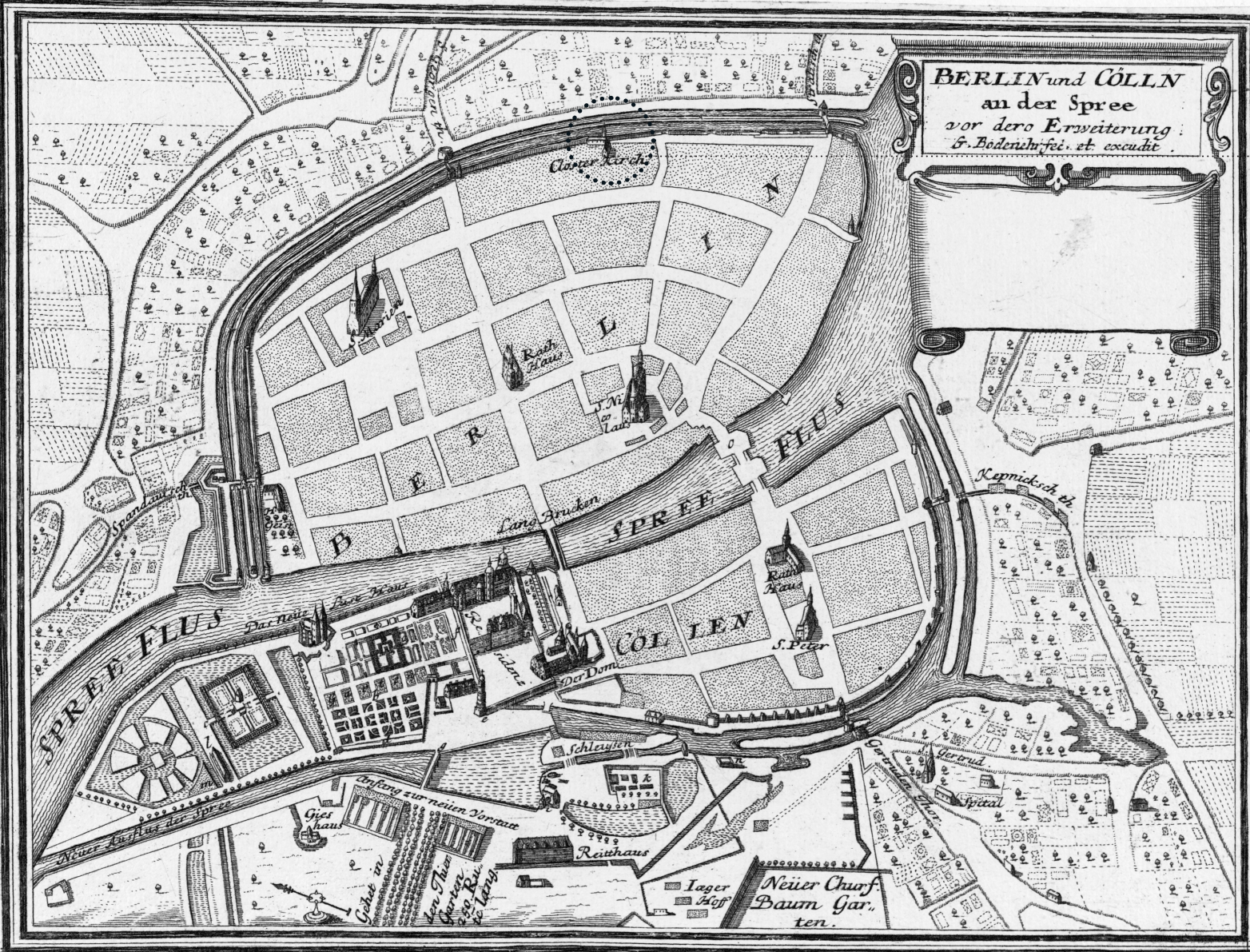
3.1 Thesis Objectives

These reconstruction projects are spread throughout Berlin and are based on the narratives of various designers stimulating the present and future of Berlin. However, neither David Chipperfield's nor Peter Eisenman's design answer the historical questions directly: What has already been there? What should be added to a ruined site? The renovation of the Neues Museum by Chipperfield mostly focuses on the conservation and restoration, which is to suppress the existing damage, while providing new modern elements to recomplete what is lost. Eisenman did not repair, reuse or restore the remains, but added multiple layers of new languages to the site to reinterpret past and present. They both missed the concept that the important element is the ruin itself, which can be regarded as a desirable centerpiece for architectural hierarchy. In one of his presentations David Chipperfield compared his approach to an archaeological reconstruction of a broken vase which is not trying to replicate the original, but to assemble the pieces of fragments that can be found through excavation. If these fragments are just sitting on the table, it will be hard to find much meaningful information. In contrast, the imbedding of fragments in their original context while not reproducing the missing pieces is the method to exhibit history in an authentic way.



Figure 11. Display of An Ancient Broken Vase

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 Brandenbu-
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 rausen an den
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 fen, u. mit meh-
 rern Privilegia
 begabet wor-
 den, da über
 Anno 1440 ihre
 Bürger des gut-
 Glücks halber
 so sie in der
 Kaufschafft
 gekübt über-
 mächtig worde
 u. sich an ihre
 Rath vergriffen
 hat Marg-
 graf Erich
 rich ihre Frei-
 heit beschnit-
 u. ein Schlos
 allhier gebauet
 u. haben sol-
 gends die Chur-
 fürsten zu Brä-
 denburg ihr
 Hofflager all-
 hier angestellet
 Sie ligt an der
 Spree der
 sich bey Span-
 dau in die
 Havel mit
 derselben aber
 bey Werben in
 die Elbe er-
 gießet
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 Stadt COLLN
 also die Chur-
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19
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 nicht geringer
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 die S. Peters
 Kirche
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 Buchstaben
 In COLLN.
 a. Lustgarten.
 b. Wassergarten.
 c. Kuchengar-
 ten.
 d. Die Grotte.
 e. Wasserkunst.
 f. Churf. Statua
 im Garten.
 g. Hundsbri-
 den.
 h. Schneidmühl-
 le.
 i. Walkmühl.
 k. Holzgarten.
 l. Pommeran-
 zen Haus.
 m. Gärtners
 Haus.
 n. Ballhaus.
 o. Mühlendam.

Figure 12. Medieval City Map of Berlin and Cölln

3.2 Site Selection and Analysis



Figure 13. Photo of Franciscan Monastery Church in Winter

Site Brief History Introduction

The ruins of the former Franciscan Monastery Church, built in thirteenth-century, are the surviving testimonies to the foundational history of Berlin.¹⁴ The site traces back to the earliest history of human settlement on the river Spree. During this period, Berlin existed as the twin-city of Berlin and Cölln, which developed on the two sides of the river. Due to the prosperous location, the twin city quickly grew. The perimeter of Berlin and Cölln was marked by long sections of city wall. A series of architectural landmarks was built during the foundational decades and the Monastery Church was among them. The church was located in the Berlin side of the twin-city, at the edge of the town and adjacent to the city wall. In the fifteenth-century, additional structures were built and the church began to function as a school until it was partly destroyed in 1945.¹⁵



Figure 14. Interior Photo of the Church in 1869

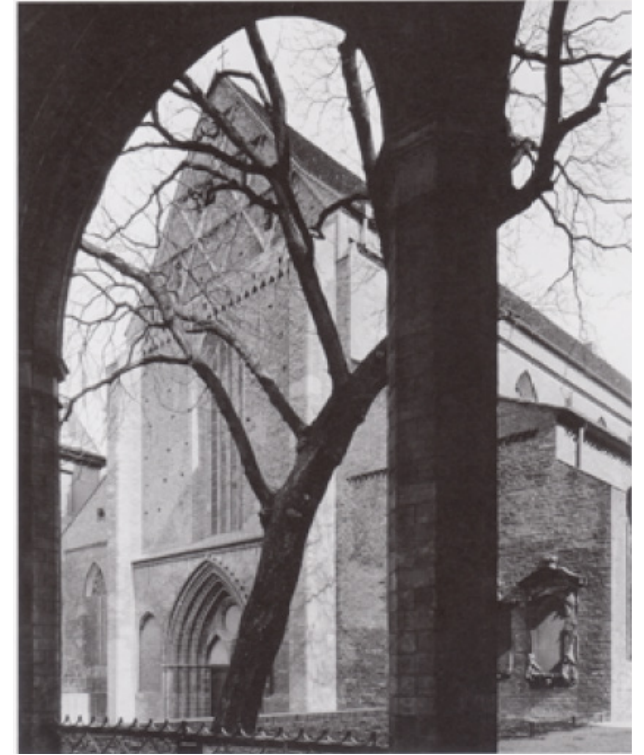


Figure 15. Photo Street View of the Church in 1933



Figure 16. Photo Entrance of the Church in 1936



Figure 17. Schoolchildren playing on the site, 1934



Figure 18. Site Photo in 1947



Figure 19. Site Photo in 1947



Figure 20. Site Photo in 1961



Figure 21. Site Photo in 1965

At the end of World War II, the church and its surrounding neighborhood have been severely damaged. Part of the church, a hallway structure and the northern wing remained in heavily damaged condition. After the war ended and development and reconstruction resumed, urban development as well as the construction of the Berlin subway further damaged the remains of the monastery. Only the ruins of the main hall of the monastery church were preserved, while the remaining damaged structures were demolished.¹⁶



Figure 22. Map Illustration of Site Location

Today, the neighborhood Molkenmarkt that the site belongs to is directly across G runerstraß e and nex t to A lex anderplatz . A t the time of the G erman division after World War II, Aleanderplatz was a central square within the GDR capital. Today, it serves as transport hub in the district of Berlin Mitte.¹⁷ The urban fabric of the neighborhood was very dense before World War II, but most buildings were destroyed during the bombings. After the war, almost all of remaining ruined structures were demolished in order to aide urban development. The previously dense residential neighborhood with pedestrian friendly environments no longer exists. Instead, the urban fabric is sporadically spread out and oriented towards public transportation or commercial development. With the increasing demand for transportation, the 19th century urban structure with its perimeter blocks has been replaced by two of the city's major traffic heavy roads. In the early 1980s, the church ruins opened for its first exhibitions. Since then, the church ruins occasionally host temporary exhibitions or events.¹⁸ Today, the remains of the building stay in ruin with the surrounding site open as a public park. The church ruin also hosts exhibitions along with plays and concerts during the summer season.



Figure 23. Map of Berlin



Figure 24. Bird-eye View of the Site from Google Earth



Figure 25-28. Art Installations in the Church

Site Urban Context

The overlay of the medieval urban map and the current situation shows that most of the significant landmarks have been demolished, only the monastery church and two other medieval remains still exist within the boundaries of the previous twin-city area. Surviving through a tumultuous history, Petriplatz, St. Mary's Church, the remains of the Monastery Church, and the adjacent remains of the early city wall, make the medieval foundation of the city legible today. Looking at this area from an overall historical perspective, the three medieval remains, associated with a series of pre-war buildings are part of a large architectural network of history. The network provides a tracing path that links the history from different perspectives. The ruin of the church and the remains of the adjacent city wall play significant roles as historical starting points of the city foundation leading to later phases. In the scale of the neighborhood, the ruin of the monastery church is the most important historical landmark, that identifies Molkenmarkt as one of the oldest neighborhoods in Berlin.

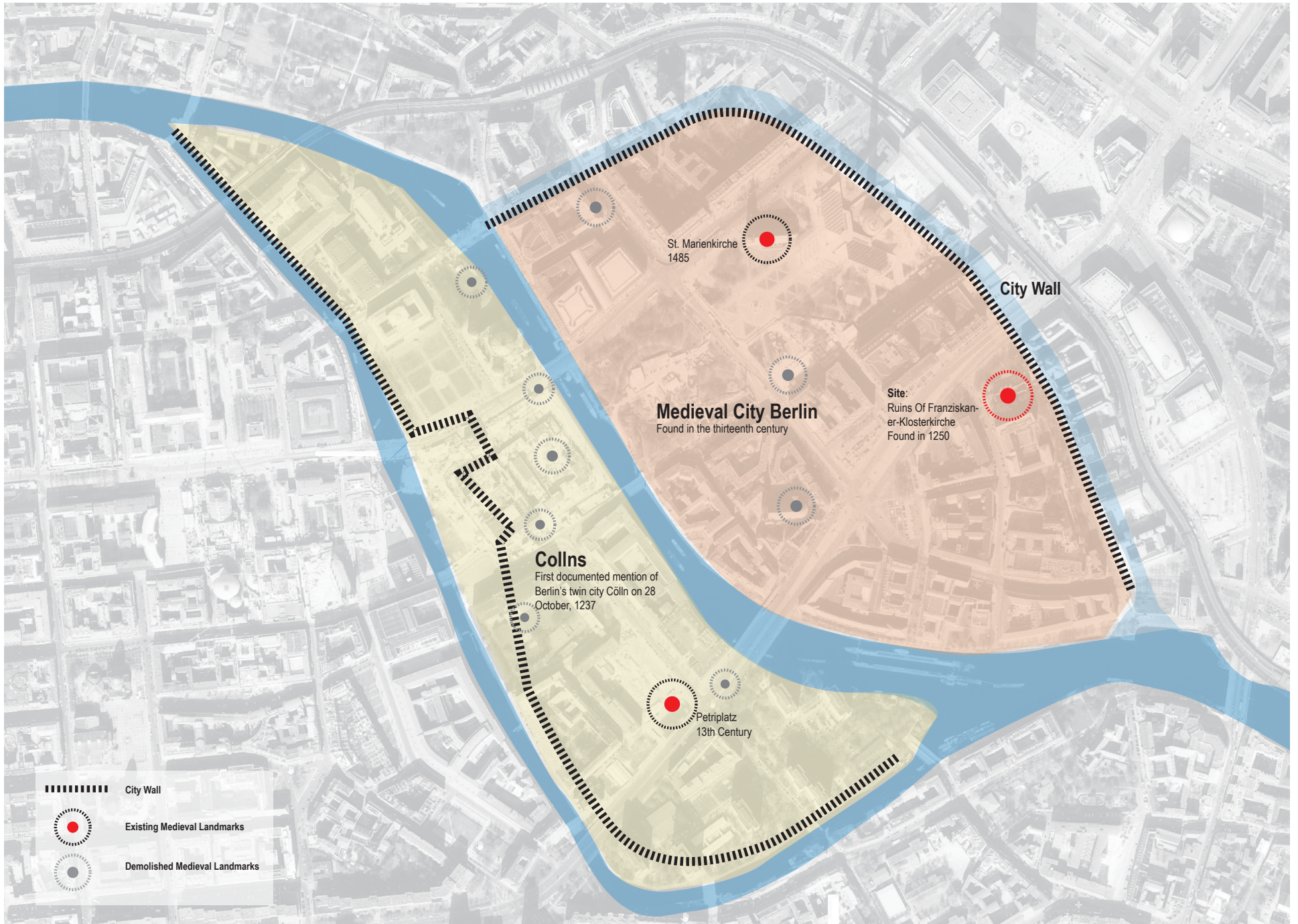


Figure 29. Medieval City Information Overlapping with Current City Map

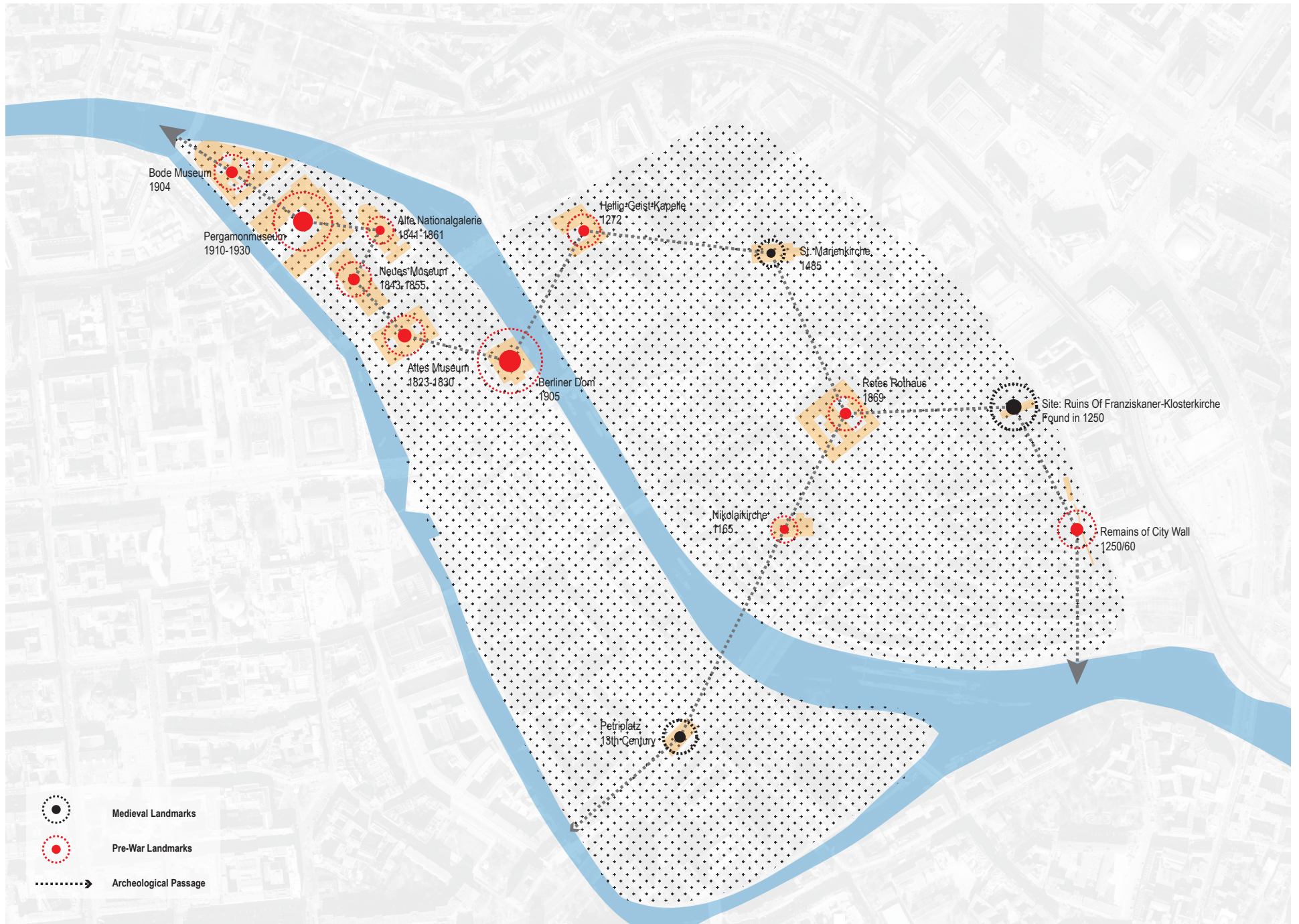


Figure 30. Network of History Architectural Traces in Old Berlin

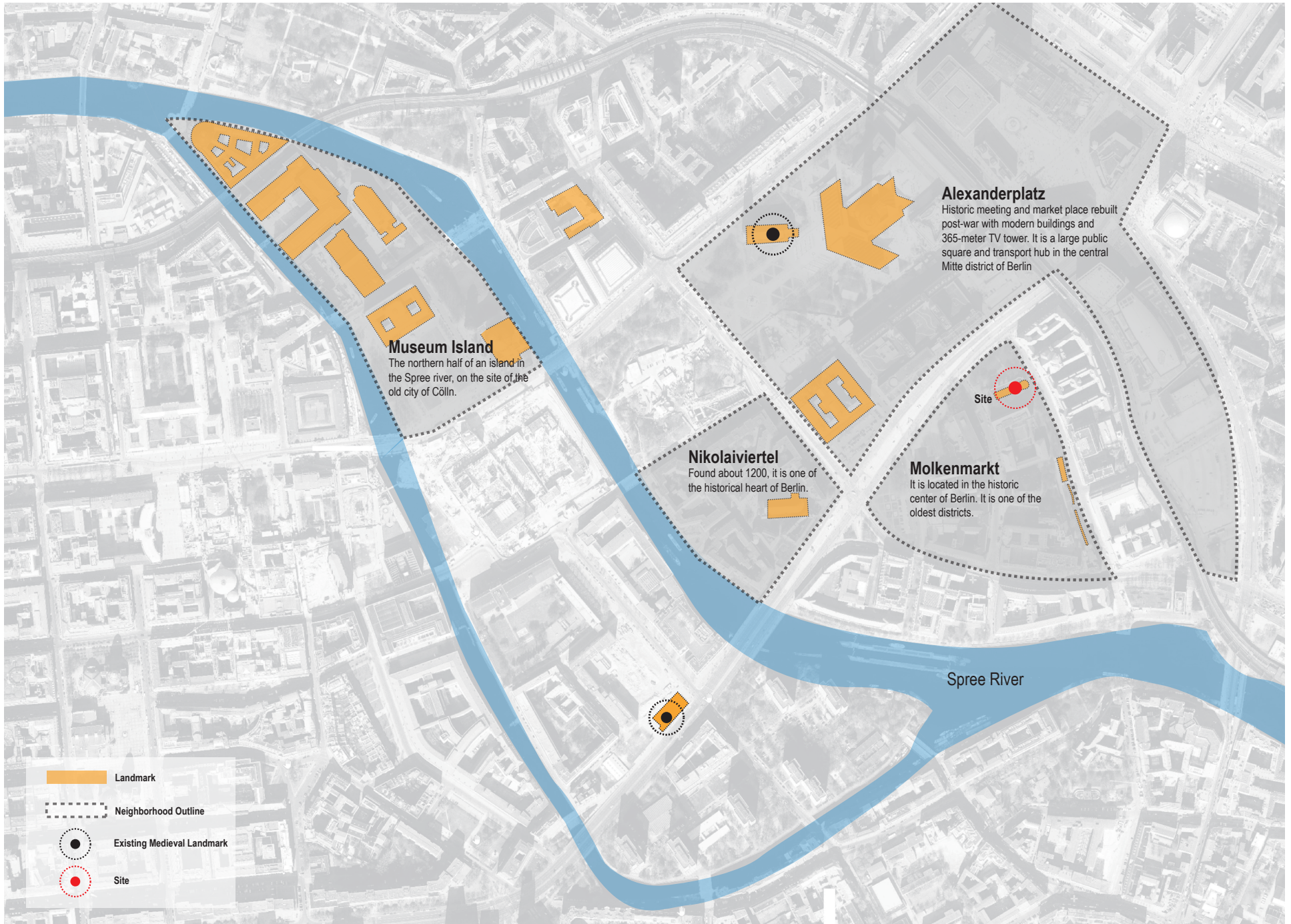


Figure 31. Landmarks of Neighborhoods in Old Berlin



Figure 32. City Fabric in 1935



Figure 33. City Fabric in 2005



Figure 34. City Fabric of New Urban Proposal in 2015



Figure 35. Street Photo in 1931



Figure 36. Street Photo in 1930



Figure 37. Street Photo in 1900



Figure 38. Street Photo in 1904

City Urban Design Proposal

For more than ten years, Berlin has been striving for a comprehensive urban redevelopment of the area around the monastery church ruins. In 2015, an urban development proposal was approved by the city. The urban design is intended to revitalize the urban density of the surrounding site, and to rebuild the traditional urban outline of the area Molkenmarkt. A series of commercial, office and residential buildings have been proposed which are supposed to reconstruct the traditional urban block structure surrounding the monastery ruins. As for the site of the ruins itself, the construction of a new school is proposed on the adjacent property. It is designed to reference the previous program of the site. In the proposal it is suggested that “only this way can the significance of the Franciscan Monastery Church for Berlin be perceivable. The ruins of the church can not cope with this task. alone in this environment.”¹⁹ Following the layout of earlier school buildings and Berlin’s education facility requirements, a U-shaped building is proposed to shield the interior and ruins of the church from the street noise.

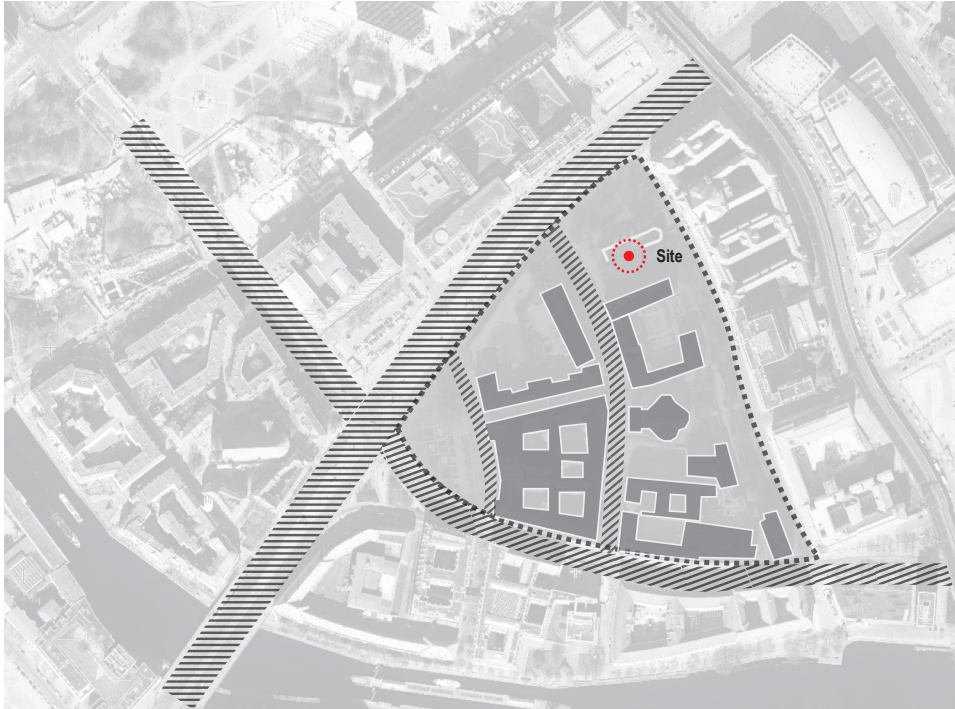


Figure 39. Current Map of Molkenmarkt

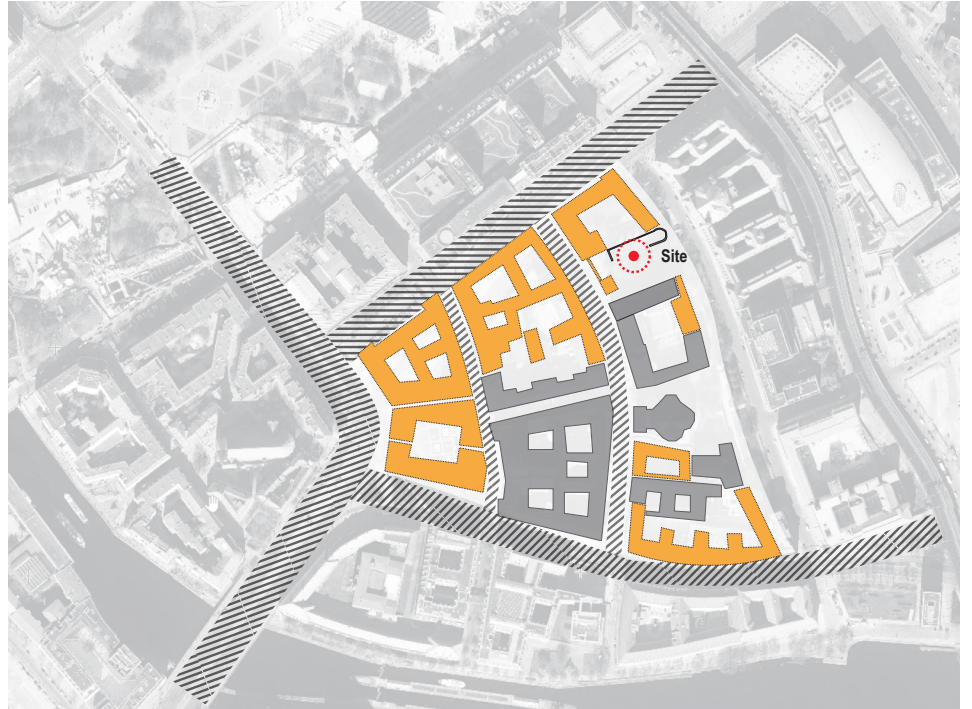


Figure 40. New Layout of Molkenmark in 2015 City Urban Planning



Figure 41. Current Perspective of Molkenmarkt



Figure 42. New Perspective of Molkenmarkt in 2015 City Urban Planning



Figure 43. Image of Church in 1690

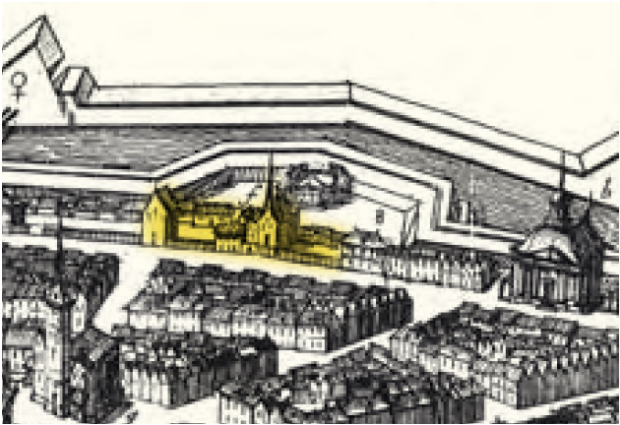


Figure 44. Image of Church in 1708



Figure 45. Image of Church in 1830

Counter-Urban Design Proposal

The qualities and historical significance of the Monastery Church are strongly highlighted in the design proposal for the site. However, the question is raised: would the construction of a six-story school complex be an appropriate response to the historical significance of the ruins? The design proposal of this thesis questions the decision made by the proposal to build a school. Contrary to the goals of the proposal, this would make the historical layers of the site much less publicly perceivable and accessible. It is indisputable that the monastery church ruins historically constituted a common building complex and that the connections it makes to the public should remain to be experienced in the future, but this also requires it to be associated with its own situation and context. Historical documents show that the church complex dominated the entire site since the Middle Ages, and as a landmark in the neighborhood it was clearly perceivable from the major streets. After the war, even when most parts of the church complex were demolished, the open green park associated with the ruin of the church provides clear public accessibility and visibility of the site. However, within the new urban design scheme, the new construction of the building next to Grunerstraße and the colonnades would severely limit the visibility of the ruins. Based on situations from past to present, it is by no means an appropriate solution to obscure the ruin of the church by placing it into the inner part of a building.

In addition, the planned development lacks concern for the ongoing archaeological excavations on the site. In the city report, parts of foundations of the ruin of monastery church are still buried underneath. Archaeological excavations are currently planned in this area, which may lead to substantial findings and may require a significant change to the present planning in this area.²⁰ Since the planned archaeological excavations are still yet to be carried out, the connection between the church ruins and the remains of the monastery complex is a necessary discovery. However, the new construction would occupy nearly the entire site, which indicates a termination of the planned archaeology excavations. In regards to the public use, the ruin of the church is currently used for exhibitions, plays and concerts, opening education and entertainment opportunities for the public, while the intention for school use would only narrow the benefits, since it would be only opened for school lectures for students. This thesis argues that it is not a convincing solution to build a school complex on the site, and that this site calls for a more carefully considered approach to retain the cultural significance of the ruin of the monastery church.

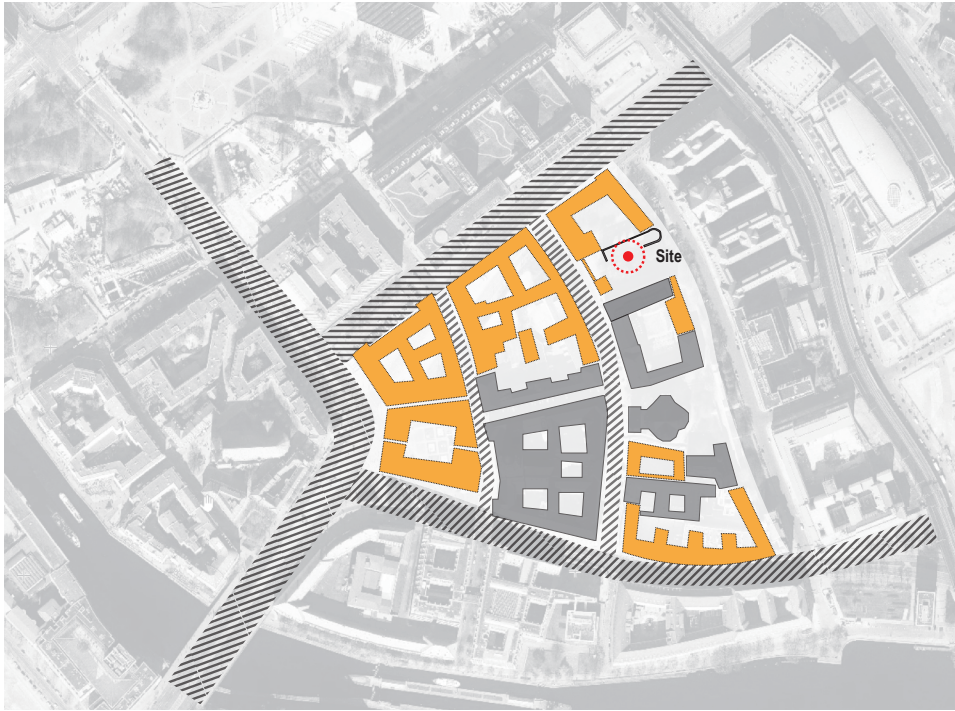


Figure 46. Current Layout of Molkenmarkt



Figure 47. New Layout of Molkenmarkt in 2015 City Urban Planning



Figure 48. Green Space of Molkenmarkt



Figure 49. Photo of City Wall and the Church Ruin

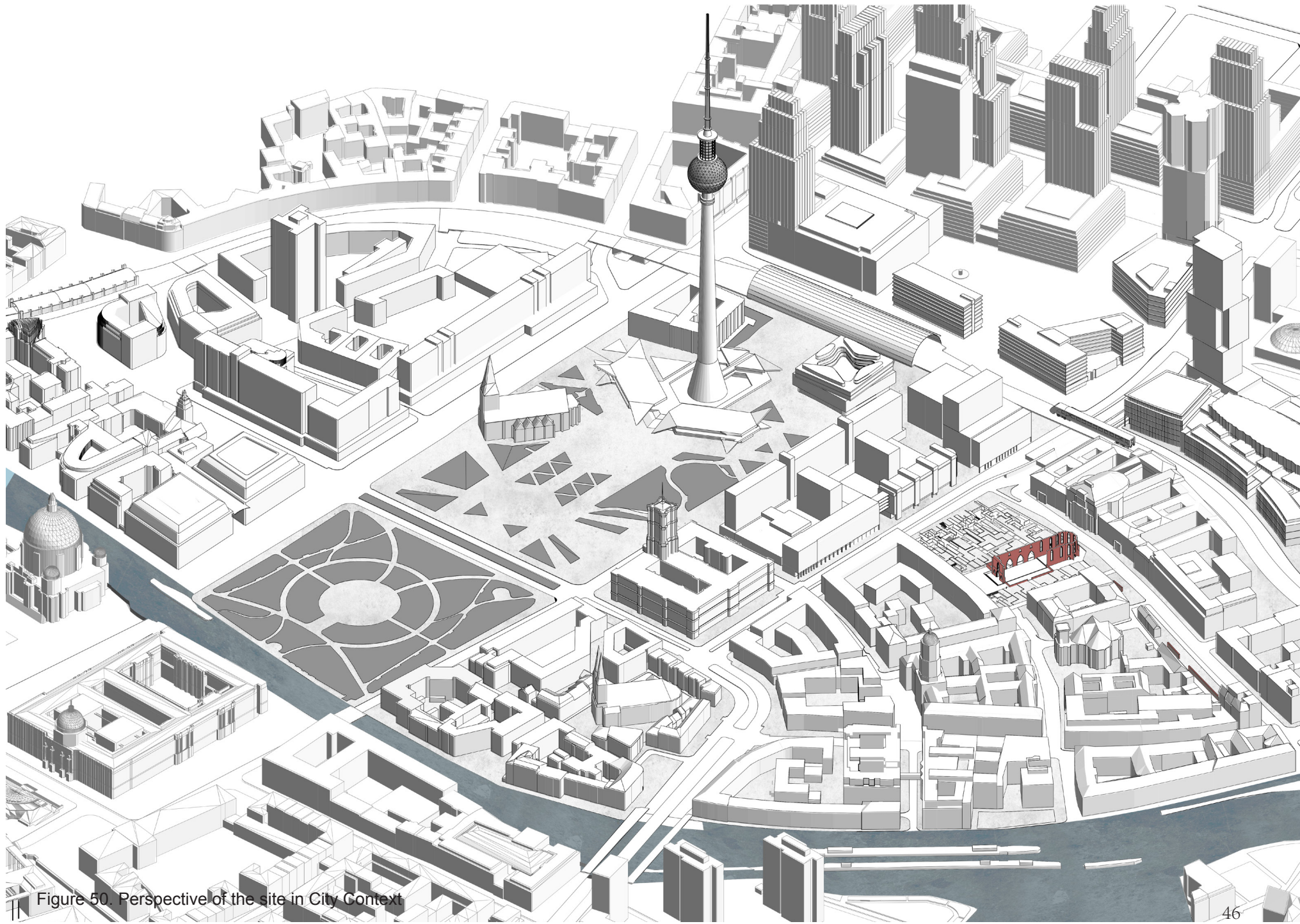
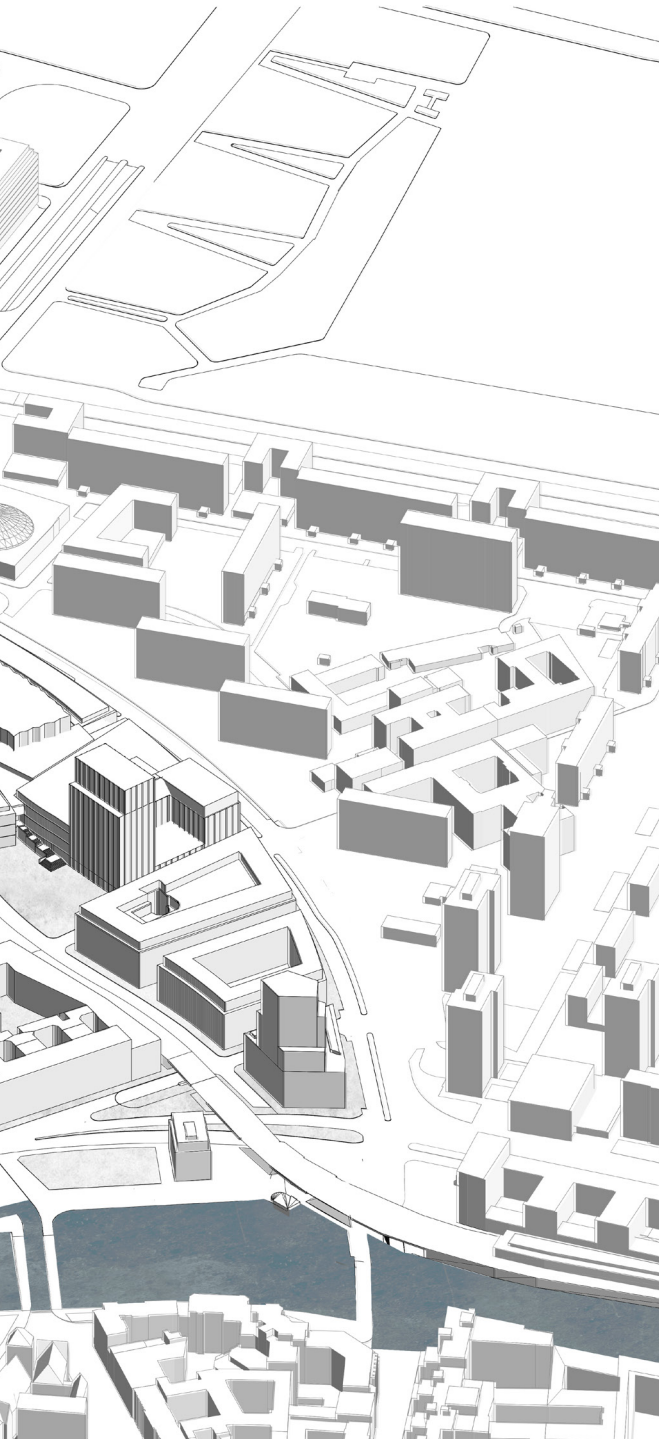


Figure 50. Perspective of the site in City Context



CHAPTER 4. DESIGN RESPONSE

Due to its legacy stretching from the foundation of the city and its adjacency to the medieval city wall, the ruin of the former the Franciscan Monastery Church is a significant of Berlin's historical heritage. It is also one of the few surviving structures remaining after the bombing in World War II. The future of the current site has the potential to be experienced as a collection of historical traces which have remained throughout the changing urban history and is particularly characterized by the medieval and early-modern epochs, since there were diverse events of appropriation, unexpected disasters, preservation and transformation during those two periods which continuously shaped the site.

The old memories and the historical evolution of the various spectrums of relationships on the site lie hidden and exist as fragmented pieces waiting to be discovered. Unveiling the history and reconstructing an artificial narrative from an archaeological viewpoint, allows to find a collection of lost fragments or pieces and to assemble them. Transforming the illegible existing historical fragments on the site and engaging with the site becomes a catalyst and represents the visual path of the architectural and historic narrative. Searching for the history in narratives is a way to form a framework for the creation of new space and pathways, which provides chances for future journeys on the site, which in turn create an interesting tension between "old" and "new".



Figure 51. Masterplan of the site in City Context



Figure 52. Photo of Park on the Site



Figure 53. People Biking on the Site

Open Space

The current situation is characterized by an open space surrounding the ruin and is quite interesting and atmospheric. Due to the array of differing architectural languages which surround the site, the perspectives of the occupant are constantly shifting between views of the modern and the historical. The current green space naturally links the city with the ruin of the church and leads to the remains of the city wall, which provides clear tracing of a historical path. In order to continue maintaining the characteristics of a location with cultural uses and open green space for the general public, this thesis focuses on both architecture and landscape design. The site is programmed to act as an open architectural project with landscape elements, maintaining and strengthening its current function as a public space.

In my design, the open space is kept as a protective element of the historical terrain and exposes the historical layers of the site. Based on the previous building footprints, a series of stages is carved into the ground, while the section at ground level is designed to provide opportunities for the construction and display of various temporary installations or structures for events. The site can be accessed from all directions to offer a wide range of spatial experiences and views of the site. The remaining ruin and the surrounding spatial design intervention emphasizes the identity of the church as the most significant historical landmark in the Molkenmarkt neighborhood.

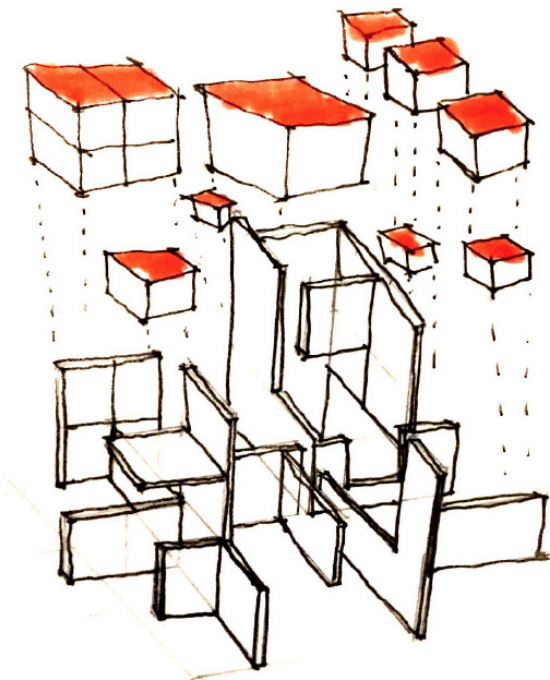
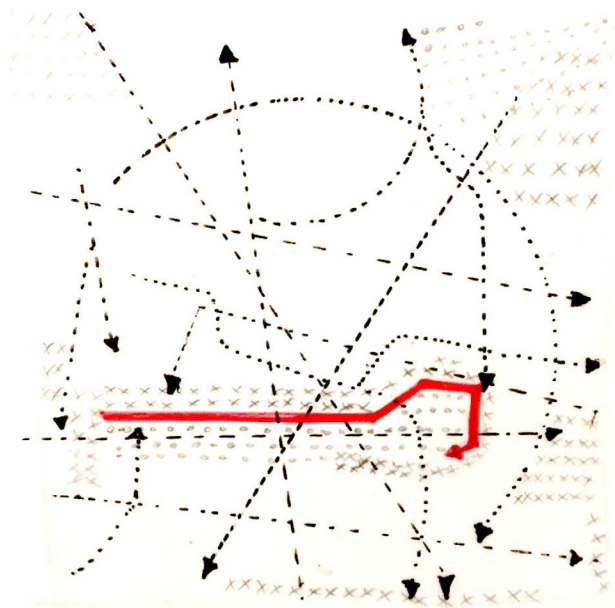
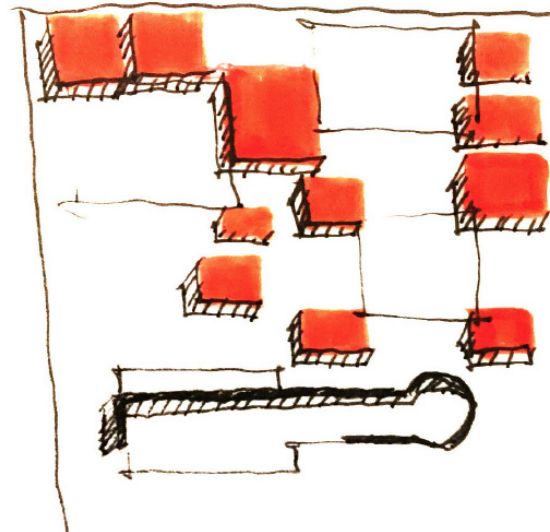
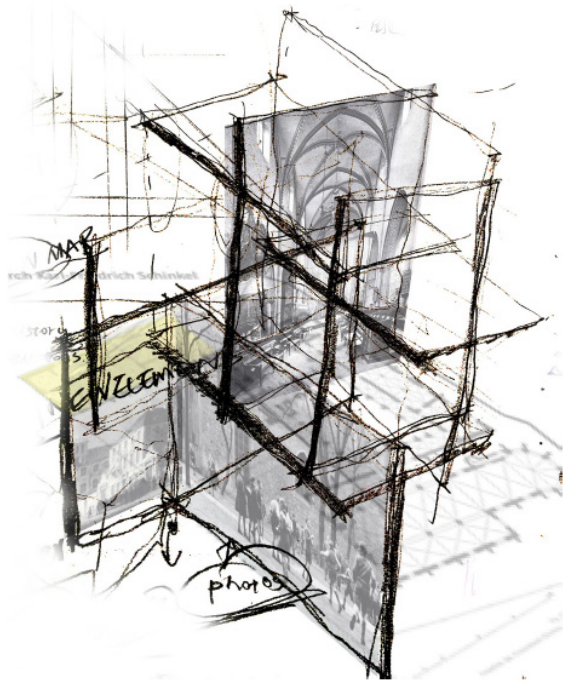


Figure 54. Concept Sketch

History as a Labyrinth

The most unforgettable memory of the site is that it used to exist as a building complex which provided places for religious and school activities. However, the void, emptiness, and depression caused by the deconstructive power of World War II still dominates the atmosphere of the place. Presenting paths based on personal subconsciousness continually drives the audience's curiosity about the parts of the site which have become missing or lost. This awareness of the lost and hidden aspects of history leads to "History as a Labyrinth" as the major concept in the design, which is meant to create architectural space by metaphorically linking it to history. Firstly, the concept is applied to the site by creating spaces calling for audience participation and triggering a feeling of self-exploration through the searching for a personal interpretation of history. As occupants from various backgrounds and perspectives experience the space, their experiences and interpretations of the site can lead to a wholly different conclusion. There is no specific or clear and linear pathway to follow, instead, the pathways are intentionally complex and confusing. The spatial organization of the design project is a metaphor for perceiving and exploring history from different aspects by forming non-linear explorations on the site. Secondly, as the other parts of church complex no longer exist on the site, and the church exists in ruined condition, the construction of an abstract labyrinth could also be read as an attempt to insert a new journey into the site. This underlines a certain sadness and confusions in the atmosphere, a feeling of searching for something absent and severe loss. Finally, the concept creates new spatial relationships to the ruin of the church, the openness of space, enclosure, changing levels and dead ends weaving through the labyrinth while compacted by the carving of the ground pathways which suggest routes for exploration and discovery within the new spaces and the ruins of the church.



Figure 55. Diagram of Previous Building Footprint

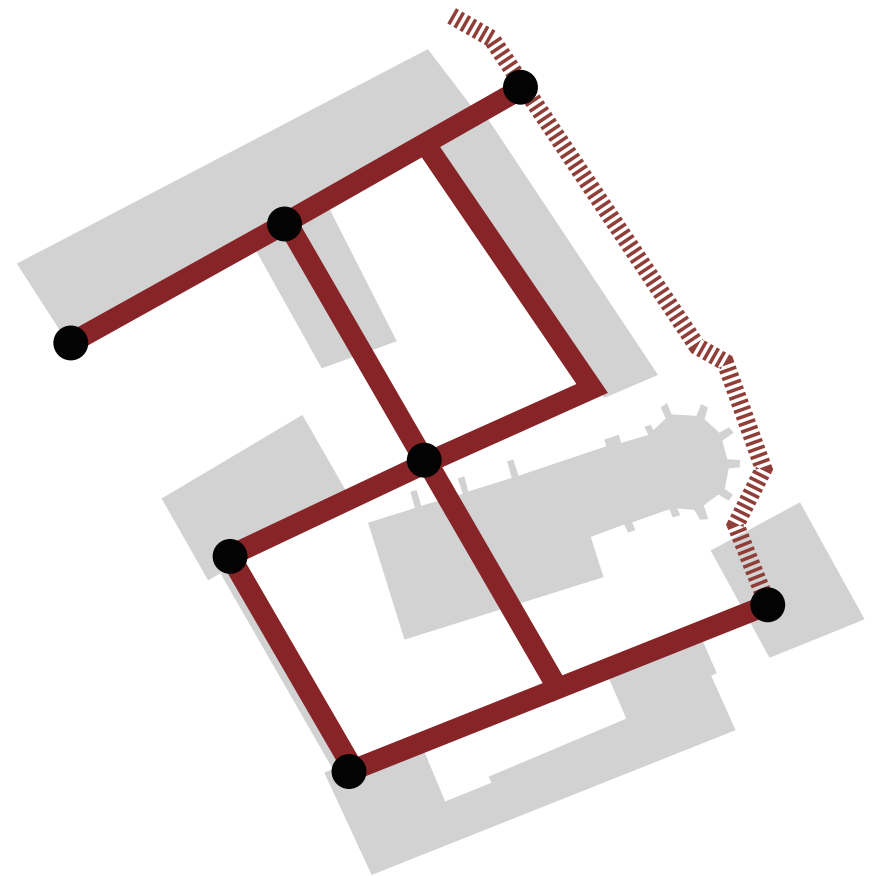


Figure 56. Diagram of Historical Circulation

Historical Circulation

In the reorganization of the site, the concept is designed to follow the framework of the various historical traces present on the site. The diagrams on the left page show the current condition of the ruin and its relationship with the previous building footprints, also included is information on their date of construction and on previous programs. The design seeks ways to find missing memories through these elements. The history of the church is not only a frame but also script. Instead of directly designing a structure which refers to the previous layout, the design applies the historical circulation to a new structure based on the previous layout of the buildings and the foundations of the city wall. The overlaid historical circulation presents itself through new forms and structures, such as pathways or stage spaces that spread through the whole site allowing the site to become a catalyst for new narratives for the church. The previous building footprints become a major space in the design, while the historical circulation and the footprint of the city wall become a new pathway to organize the circulation on the site.

Curve Out of Previous Foundations

Since the medieval level of the terrain was over one meter lower than today's ground level, carving into the ground to the previous foundation allows to reveal the historical terrain that hasn't been used for centuries. A design strategy of excavation allows to perceive all of the different layers which constitute the site, the foundation of the city wall, and the foundations of the demolished buildings on the site. Continuing to dig into the ground is an approach which makes use of historical ground, working as a way to record the layers of history, while creating and generating new layers of meaning and multi-dimensional spaces. In the design, the major L-shaped building footprint is lowered 10 feet which is distinctively lower than the rest of the ground level space, which is designed to make the historical footprint more readable, while strengthening the feeling of loss on the current site. A sequence of walkable stage spaces for exhibition and display are weaved through the labyrinth by panels that are set up in this part of the site. The part of the non-excavated ground surface is designed with a series of various changing slopes which run down as a way merging the surrounding landscape into the excavated portion. This also provides alternative pathways from the carved-out section into the ground level, creating a confusion of underground and street level. The boundaries surrounding the carved-out portions are toothed-shaped because of slopes in the topography, which in turn create a soft transition from the street into the site and from ground level to the underground. The pathways that link the carved-out portions and the church are also cut into the ground, with various changing levels which shape the journey.

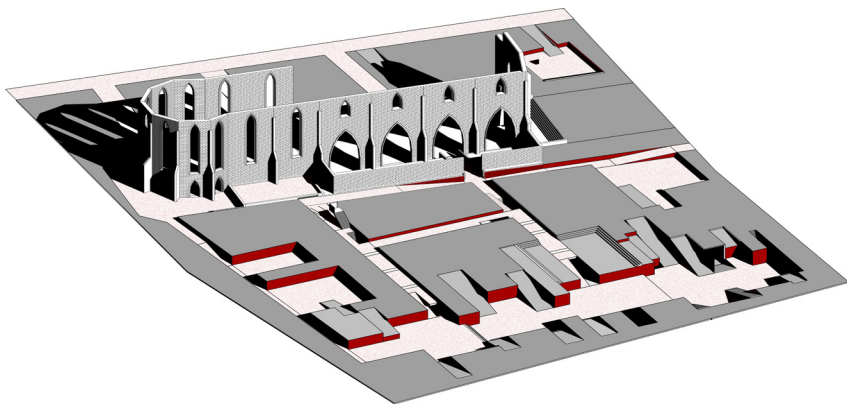


Figure 57. Diagram of Curve Out Portion

Panels of the Labyrinth

In the design, the labyrinth space is weaved using solid panels, which create multiple loose circulations that open up the choices of exploration, either opening to anywhere or leading to dead ends. The panels all have the same thickness, but they vary in height. They pop out in the carved-out portion, while becoming flush to the ground in the open ground space, they act not as barriers but as a hint of the larger mapping of the labyrinth, linking the carved-out portion to the ruin of the church. The spaces formed by the panels create an atmosphere of confusion between a space of enclosure and disclosure, ground and underground, of continuous and discontinuous, of inside and outside. Each of these elements are open for individual interpretation, providing opportunities for the occupant to engage with the site by developing a personal journey.

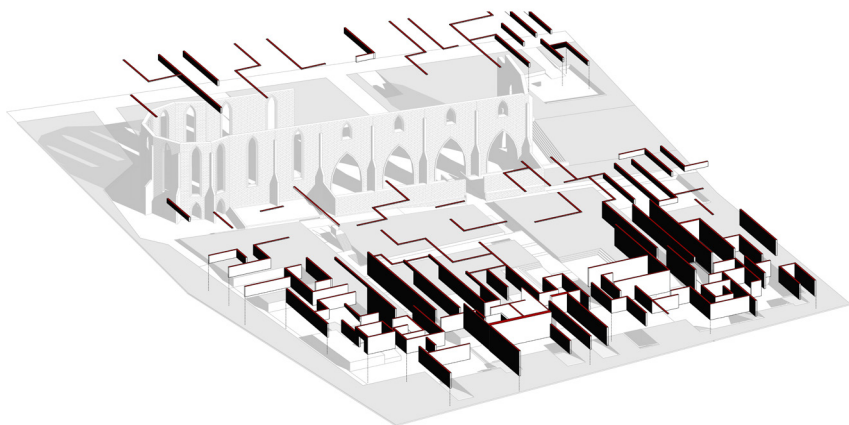


Figure 58. Diagram of Labyrinth Panels

Underground Tunnel

To draw stratigraphic sections in archaeological research is a way to decipher the history and its process of sedimentation. In an architectural language, finding existing layers and adding new ones is also a way to create narratives for the past and future. There are two underground tunnels proposed in the design that underline the two major pathways. They provide a continuously shifting experience of the ground level, the lower level, and the underground level, and link the archeological site with the existing basement of the church. They are also designed to emphasize the atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty thereby turning the subconsciousness into the major driving force that leads occupants into this dark space with only small portions of skylights.

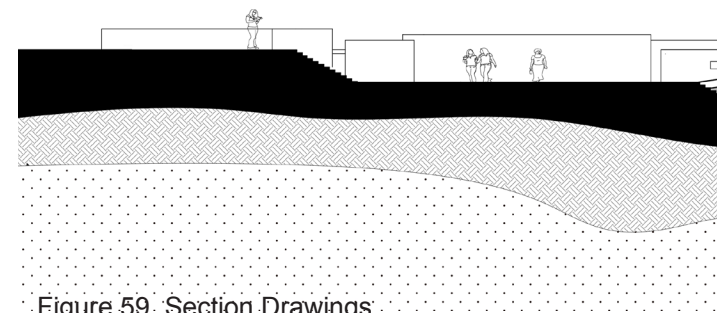
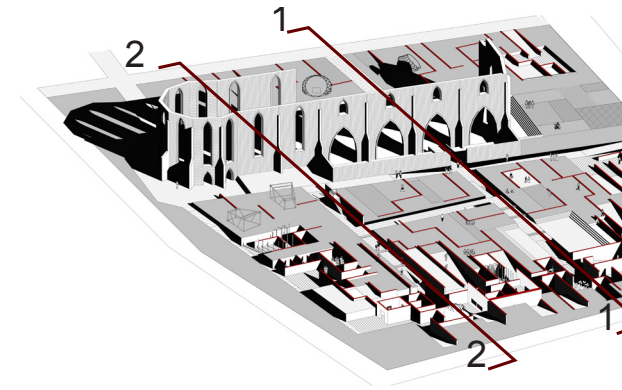
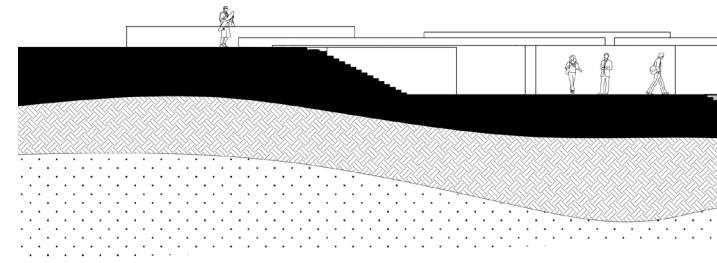
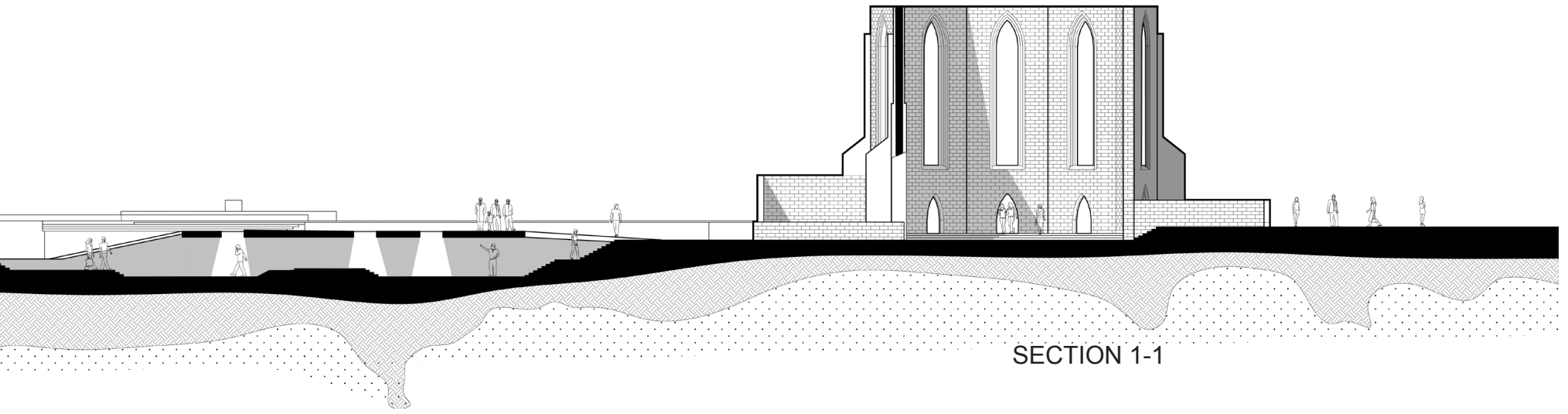
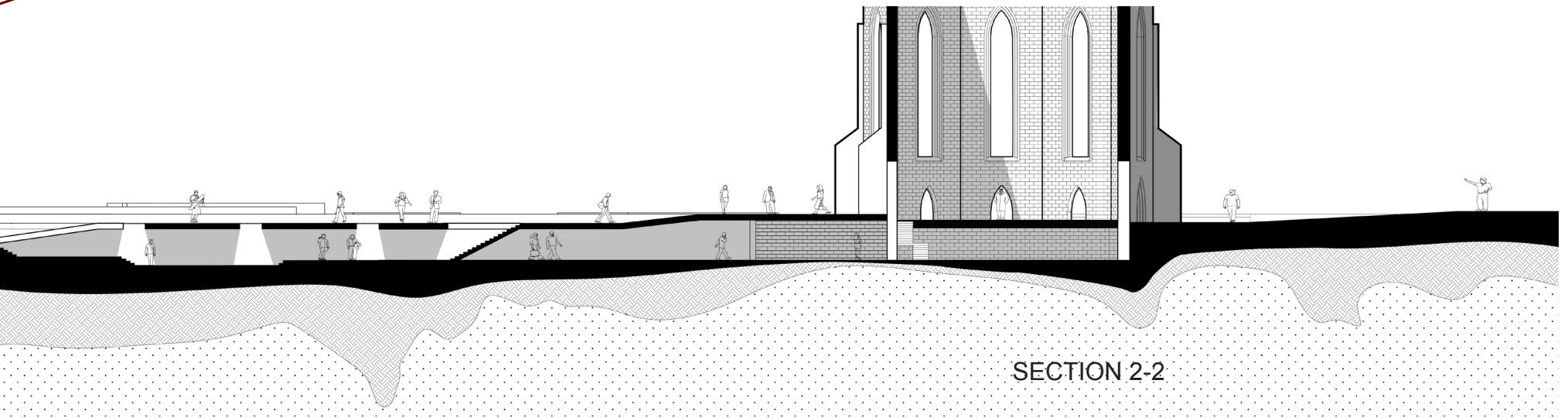
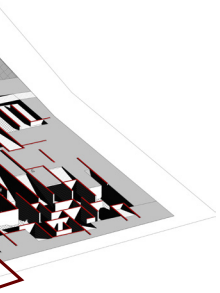


Figure 59. Section Drawings



SECTION 1-1



SECTION 2-2

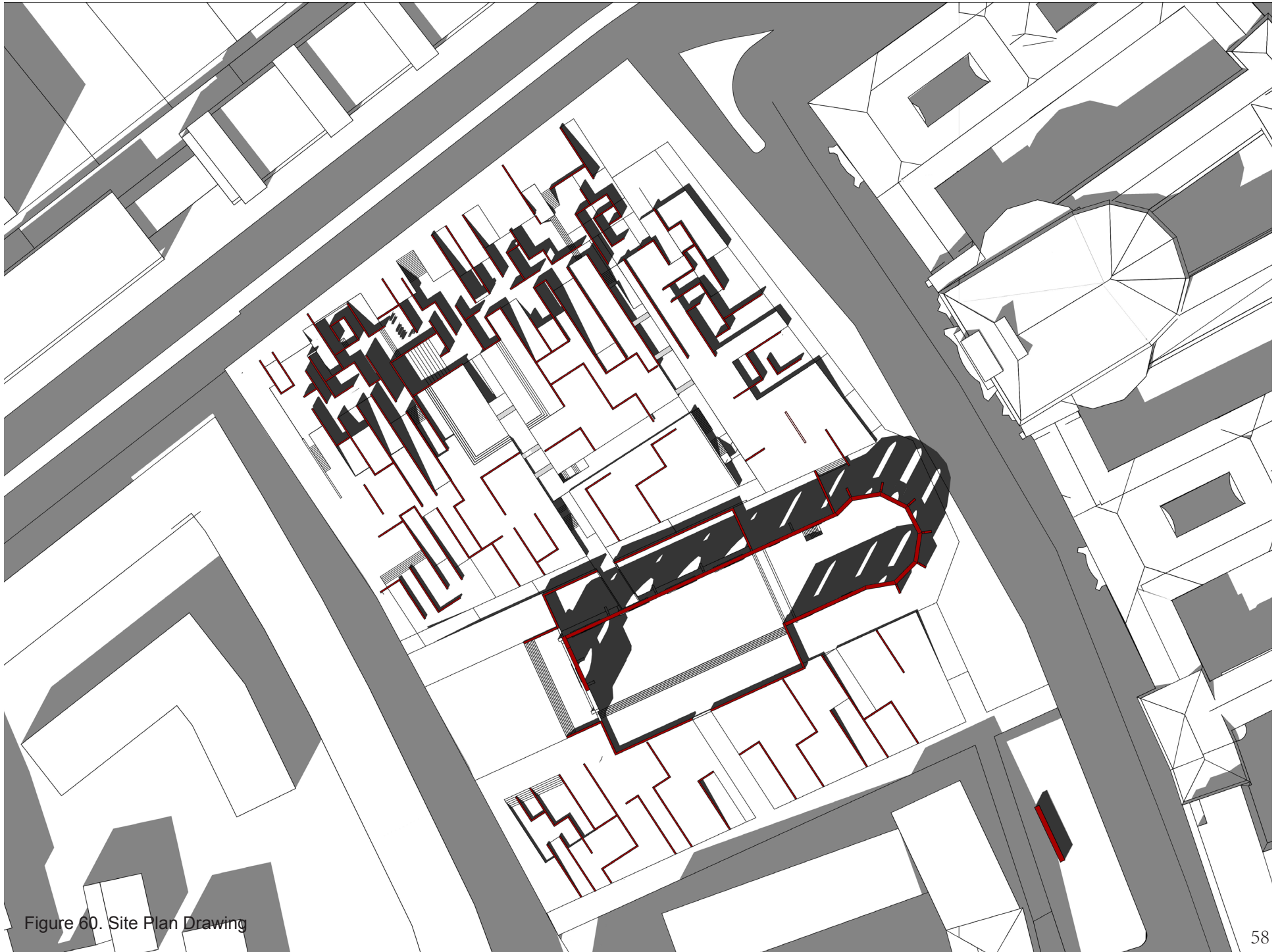


Figure 60. Site Plan Drawing

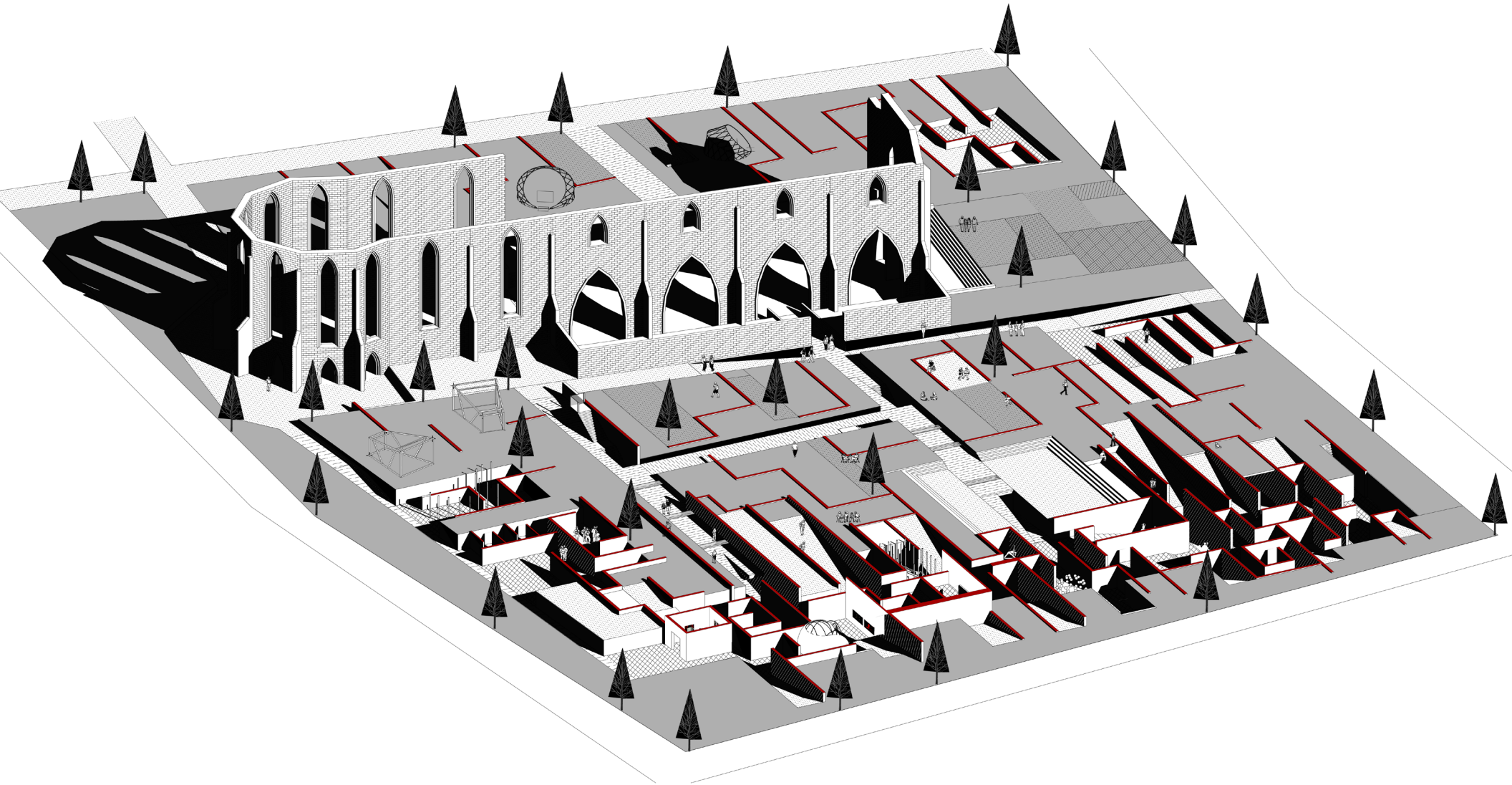


Figure 61. Site Perspective Drawing

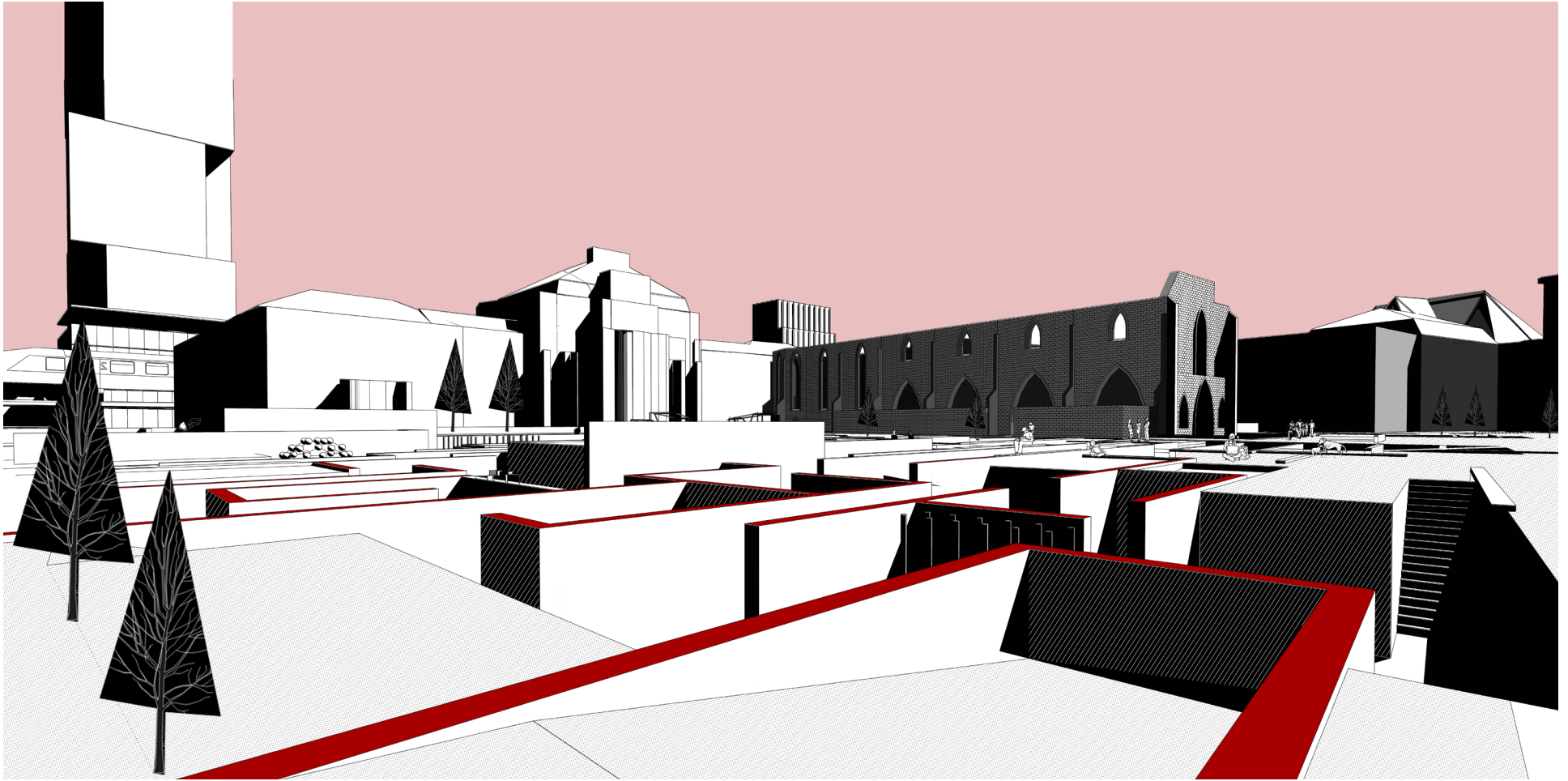


Figure 62. Perspective Drawing 1

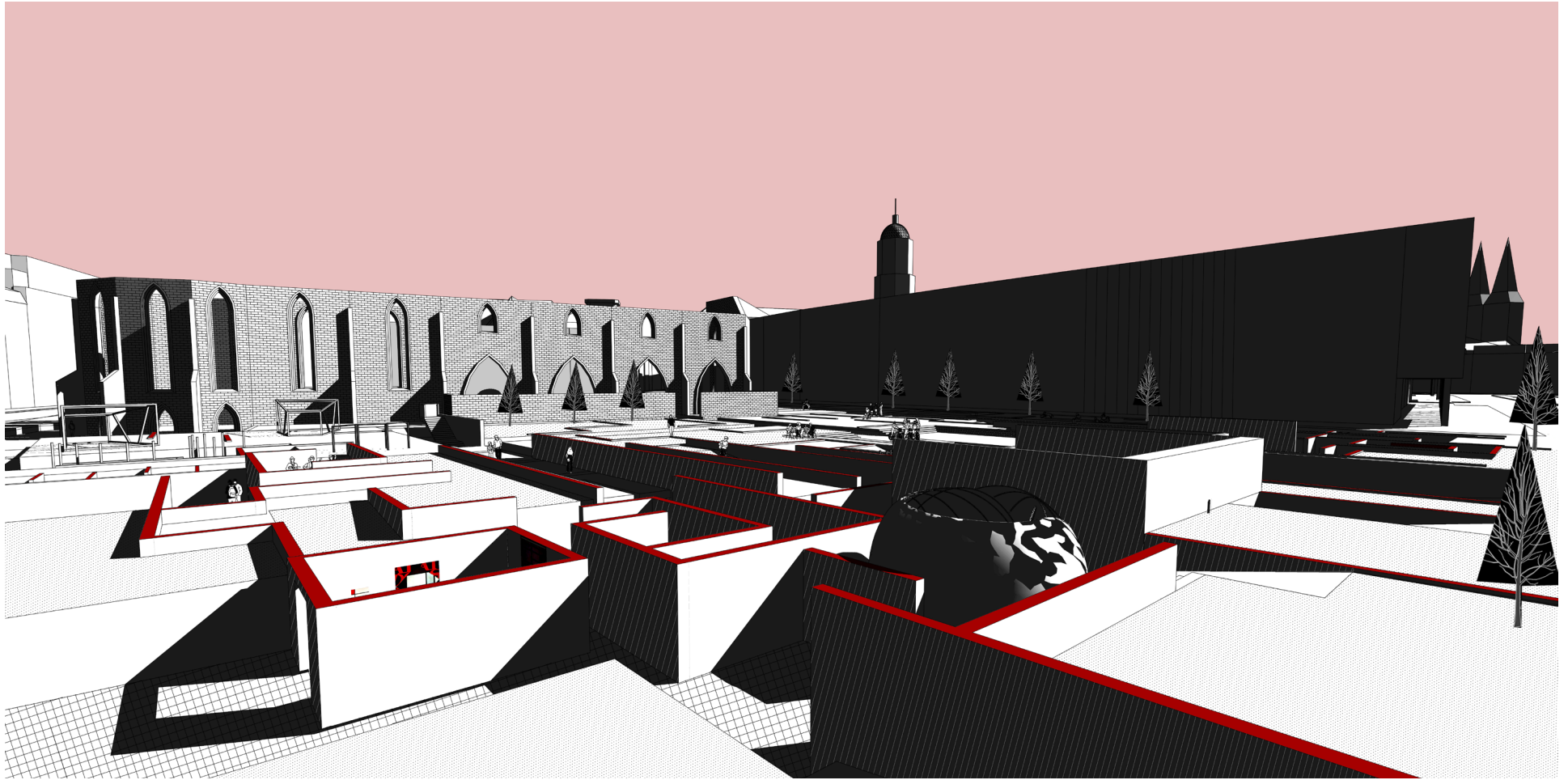


Figure 63. Perspective Drawing 2

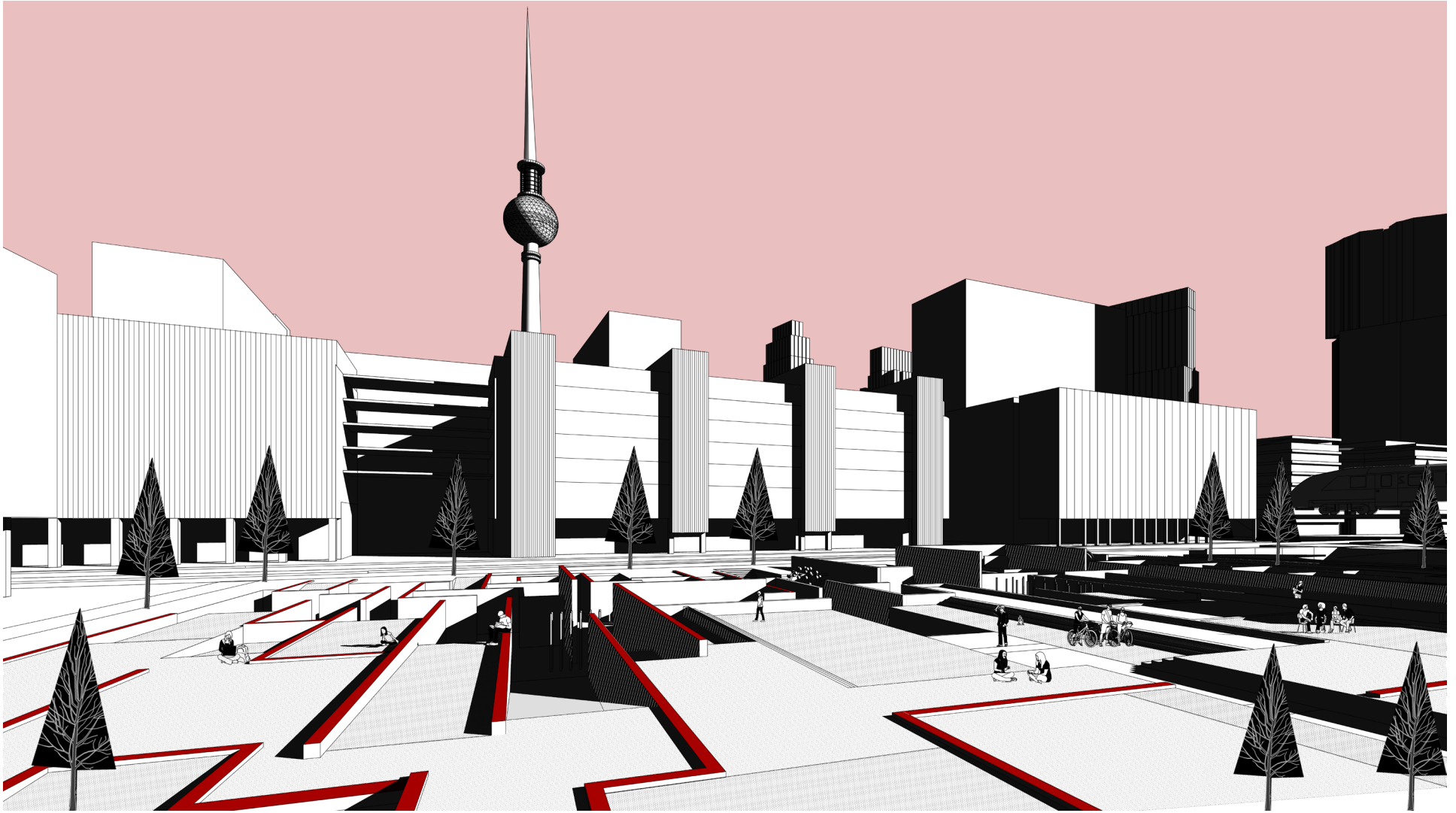


Figure 64. Perspective Drawing 3

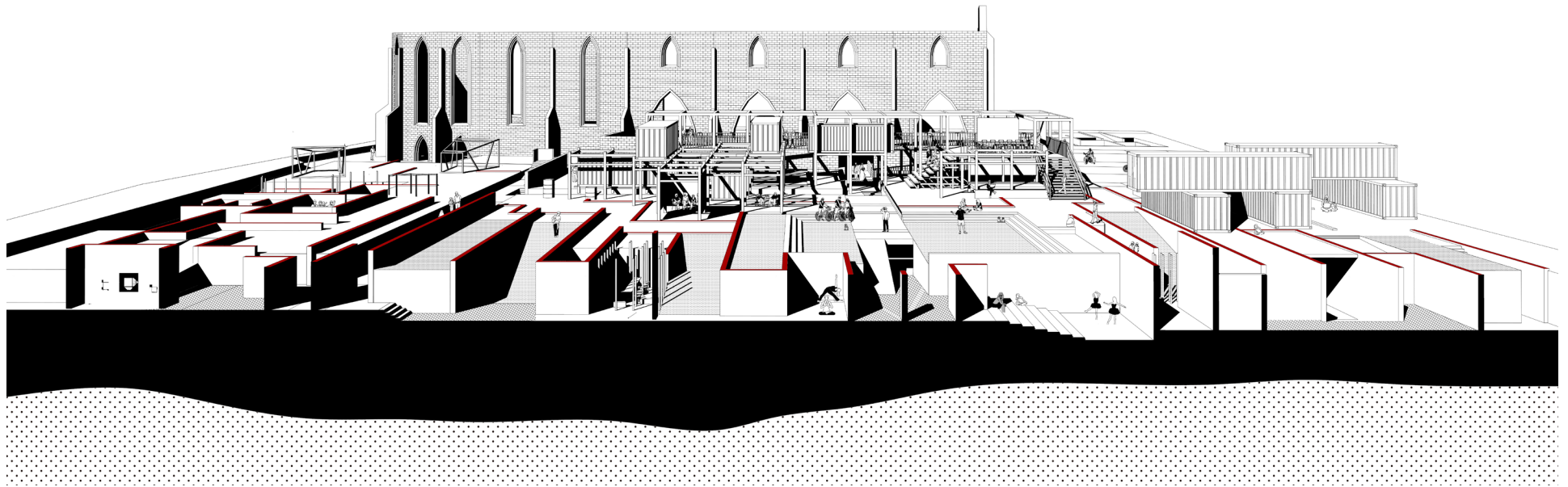


Figure 65. Section Perspective Drawing

Flexible Temporary Structures

In the design, the ground space is also left as an open narrative. It is not just empty and void but the open space acts as a canvas allowing for temporary events and activities. The creation of space is a metaphor for history which is continually being constructed and reconstructed, and there are always new stories and events happening. The canvas of the open space will be filled and generated by the future participation in the “construction of history”. The open space in front of the ruin of the church is opened up to host various events and to accommodate special occasions. The temporary structures also appear and disappear on the site, depicting unfinished history and the unpredictable future.

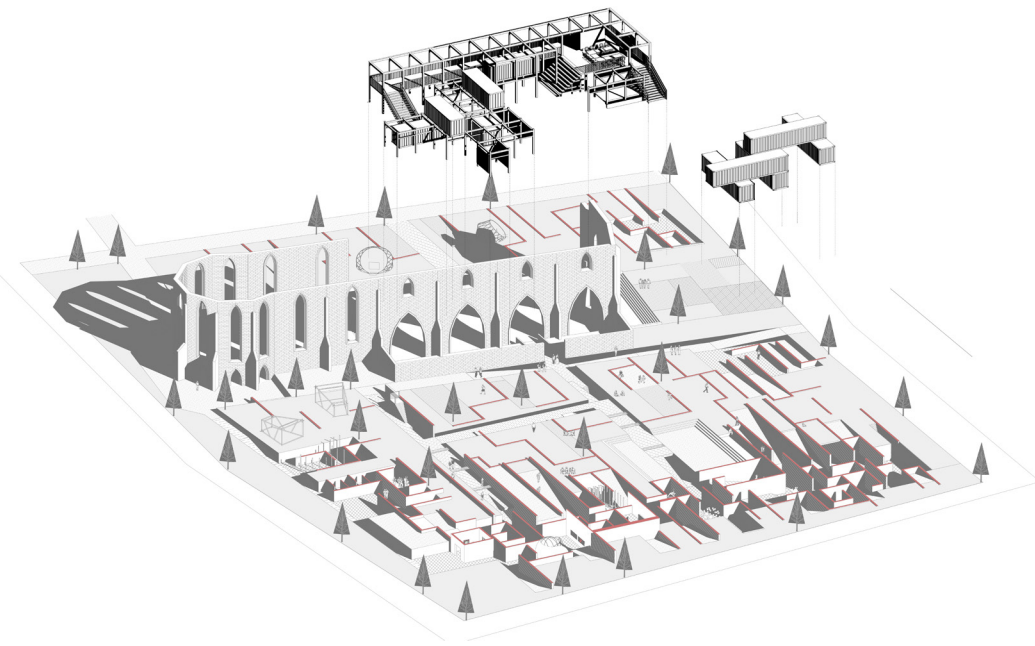


Figure 66. Diagram of Temporary Structures

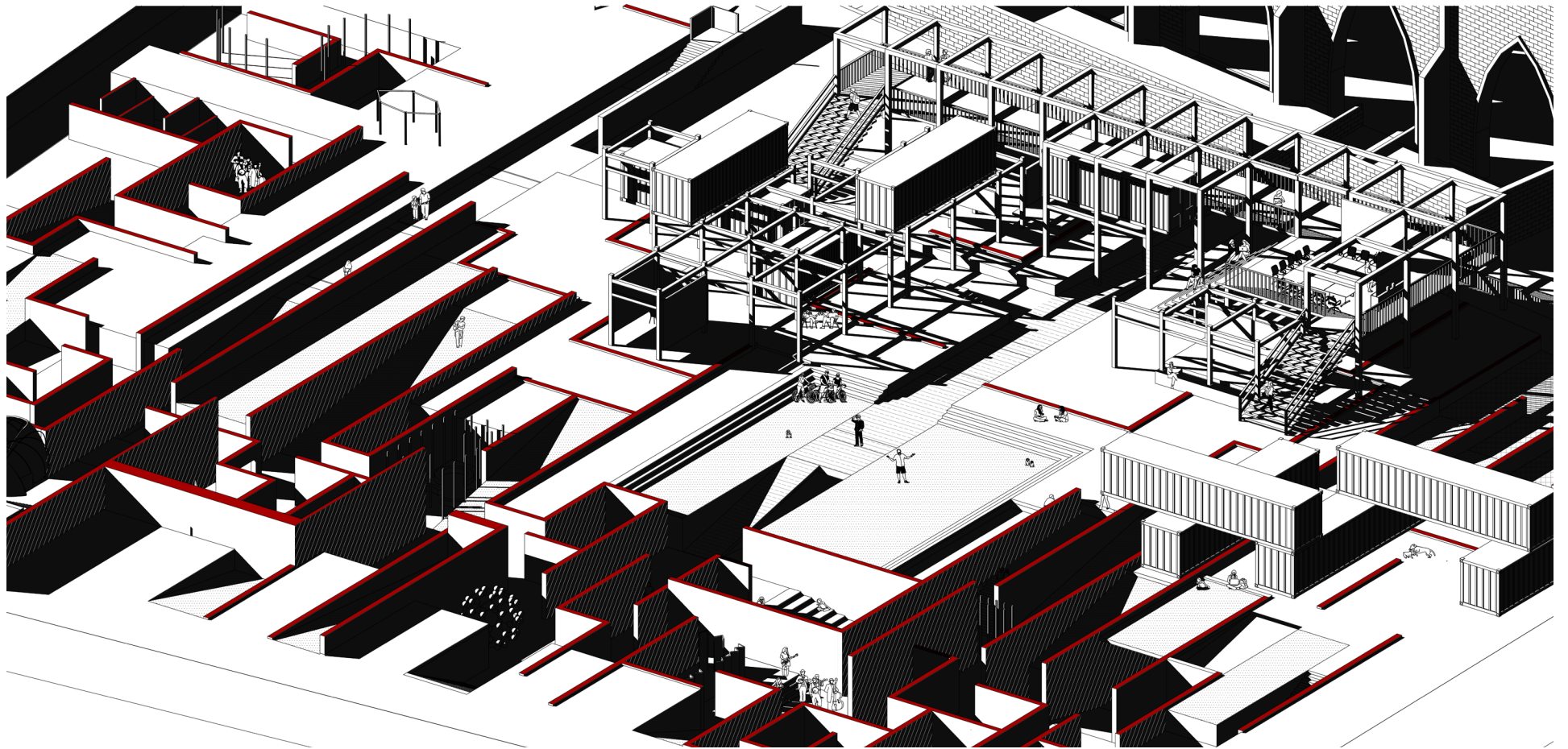


Figure 67. Axonometric Drawing

LOOKING FORWARD

Growing up in an ancient city in China, which has its earliest record starting in the 4th century, I was attracted by the ruin of the Franciscan Monastery Church as I was wandering the streets of Berlin one day. I found myself quite interested in historical architectural remains. The history transferred from text or spoken language would always lead to different understandings and interpretations. However, the information of history presented by architecture is always solid and could not be revised. Preserving and restoring those architectural remains is a way to inherit the city's memory. However, in China, instead of preserving and revitalizing historical architecture, it is often demolished due to the country's rapid development, and new buildings lose ties with the county's history and traditions.

From this thesis research and design, a question that came up towards the end of this thesis: "how could the examination of this ruin, within its specific context, could be extrapolated into a method that could have wider implications?" Even in China with a totally different context. The design approach evolved directly out of this specific site, its condition, history and its suggested program. It is very possible that this method of examination could be transferable to many other situations. The method starts from the generic history information and zooms into the more detailed context and then finally to the site. This method could be utilized to examine other cities and structures and to tie the design of a project to the roots of its city.

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