SAWH oX26 – SAWH Online Exhibition 2026
'TRANSLATION'

EDINBURGH

'translating the foreignness of *Any Place*'

By Nikolia-Sotiria Kartalou, The University of Edinburgh

translation[i]

translātiōn-, ***translātiō***

< ***translāt-***, past participial stem of ***transferre*** (Latin)

< ***transfer*** (v.) **+** ***-iōn-***, ***-iō*** (Latin) –a suffix forming nouns of condition or action

< **trans-** (prefix) (Latin) – 'across, to or on the farther side of, beyond, over', **+** ***ferre*** (Latin) –to bear, carry, bring

The *Architectural Design 2: Any Place* studio course of the BA/MA in Architecture at ESALA[ii] is concerned with the unfamiliar; with circumstances and conditions beyond the local context. As such, the city of focus belongs to a foreign context, introducing to second-year students issues of foreignness, distance and unfamiliarity. The current theme of this course –*The Tracery of a Pattern*– attempts to bring both the 'foreign context to the students' and 'the students into the foreign context' through a series of investigative exercises that aim to foster a deeper understanding of architectural synthesis, which can be interpreted as a *process* (or an *act*) of **translation**. The translated 'foreign', in this brief, is the city of Venice (Italy), which becomes both a literal and a symbolic point of departure for all exercises of this course. The *crumbling walls* of Venice reveal the impermanent nature of housing, encouraging students to see buildings as enduring structures for evolving human activity. In doing so, it challenges them to imagine and propose housing schemes for multiple occupants in selected sites with existing building stock in Venice. The work presented in the next slides of this presentation contains student work from the 2024-25 academic year. The following pages manifest how the students ***translated*** symbolisms, intentions and architectural languages discovered in a foreign context into meaningful design proposals that transform and adapt existing buildings or the relations generated between them. **Act I** precedes all investigations, with the exploration of symbolisms. **Act II** follows, allowing an in-depth understanding of the foreign. **Act III** concludes all investigations by presenting three selected design approaches, one for each foreign site in Venice.

Act I: To 'carry over'

Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* brings the foreign context to the students—an act of translation– where the foreign manifests through imagination. Students are invited to *carry over* ideas, notions and symbolisms from fiction into their architectural proposals in real Venice. In order to do so, they first have to study an *Invisible City* and trace patterns of relationships that can introduce principles for design composition/synthesis.

Act II: To 'bear across'

The Venice field trip *bears* the students *across* cultural boundaries and introduces them to the real foreign context. The transition from fiction to reality unveils all visible and hidden perspectives that shape the histories of buildings and places, and allows a contextual understanding of the existing structures in three selected sites (lane, garden, canal).

Act III: To 'bring beyond'

The last act of the project asks the students to *bring* the examined symbolisms and design explorations *beyond* the limits of their preexisting knowledge of the familiar local. It invites an acknowledgement of the historic foreign environment, ultimately guiding them to become creators of design principles that respond to and evolve with[in] an already-carved environment.

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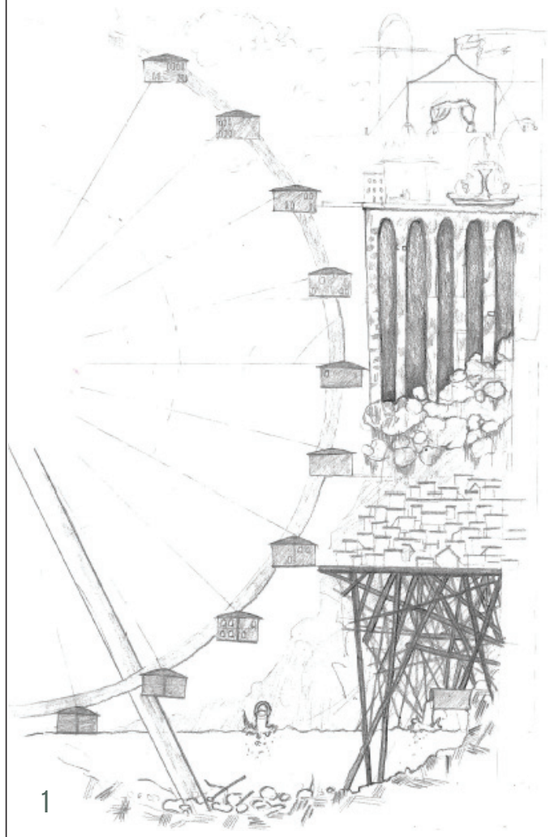
[i] Oxford English Dictionary

[ii] Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture



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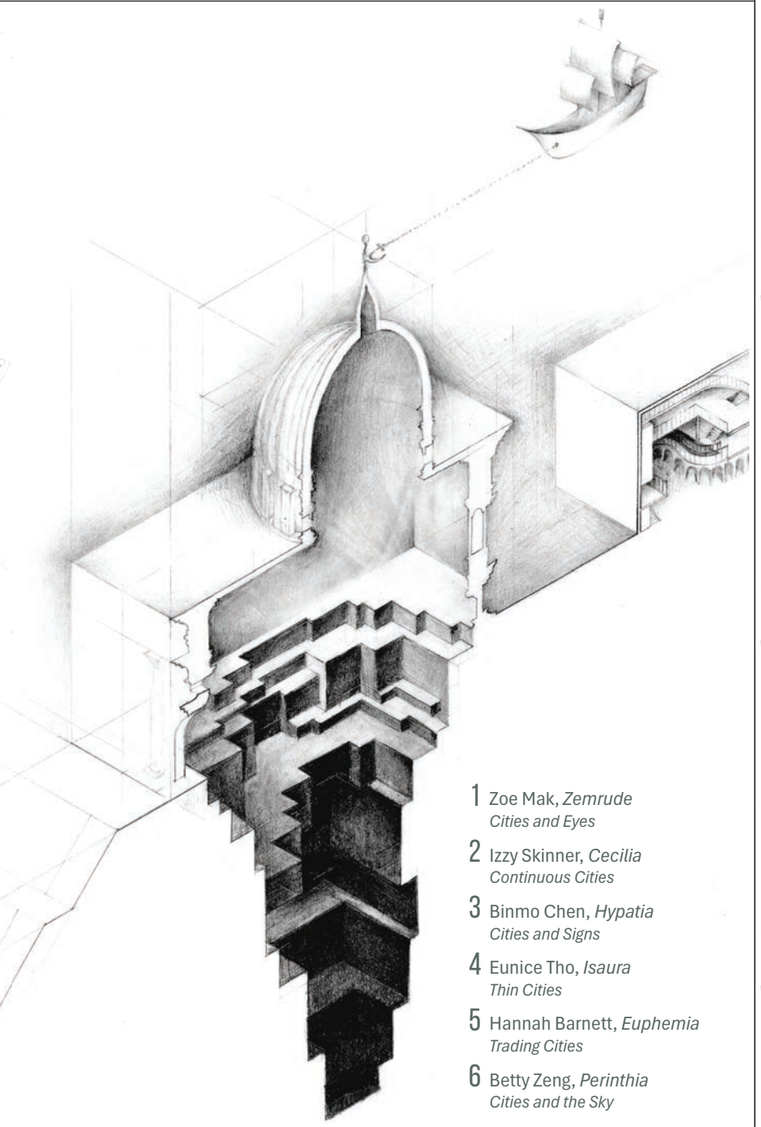

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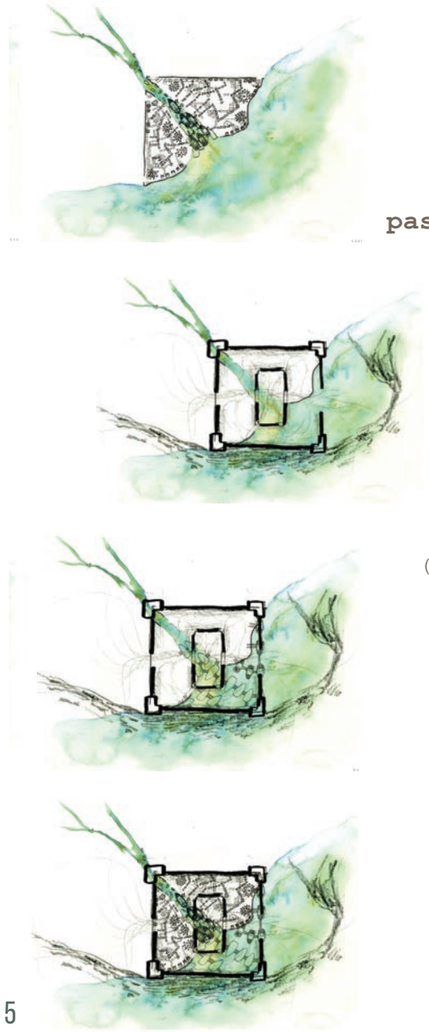

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Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had: the foreignness of what you no longer are or no longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign, unpossessed places.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (Harcourt Brace,1974), 29.

6

1 Zoe Mak, *Zemrude Cities and Eyes*
2 Izzy Skinner, *Cecilia Continuous Cities*
3 Binmo Chen, *Hypatia Cities and Signs*
4 Eunice Tho, *Isaura Thin Cities*
5 Hannah Barnett, *Euphemia Trading Cities*
6 Betty Zeng, *Perinthia Cities and the Sky*

"There is still one of which you never speak."

Zattieri recreated inbetween Perarolo and Codissago,2022, photograph

Zattieri of Nervesa, 1900 postcard

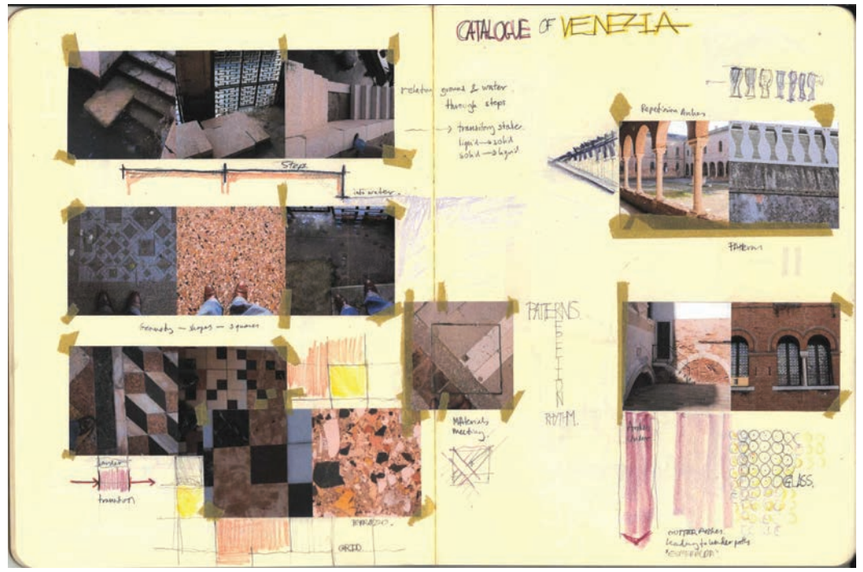
1 One of the last ports before Venice. Men of all ages could work downstream on the Piave.

Marco Polo bowed his head.

Marco smiled.

"What else do you believe I have been talking to you about?"

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (Harcourt Brace,1974), 86.



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1 Zoe Mak
The journey of the Zattieri

2 Lawrence Fung Roviras
Catalogue of Venice

3 Mukhamed Al-Khuraybi
Colours of Venice

4 Euan Hao
View from Scala Contarini del Bovolo

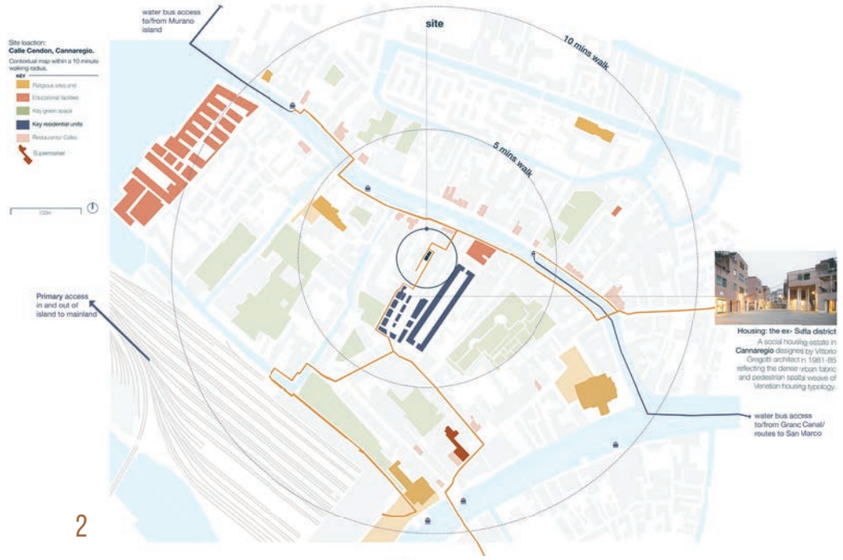
5 Betty Zeng
Carlo Scarpa's Ollivetti Showroom

6 Noah Claridge
Gino Valle's Giudecca Residencies

7 Dominykas Adomaitis
Exploring Venice's patterns

8 Amy Jensen
Venice explorations

1



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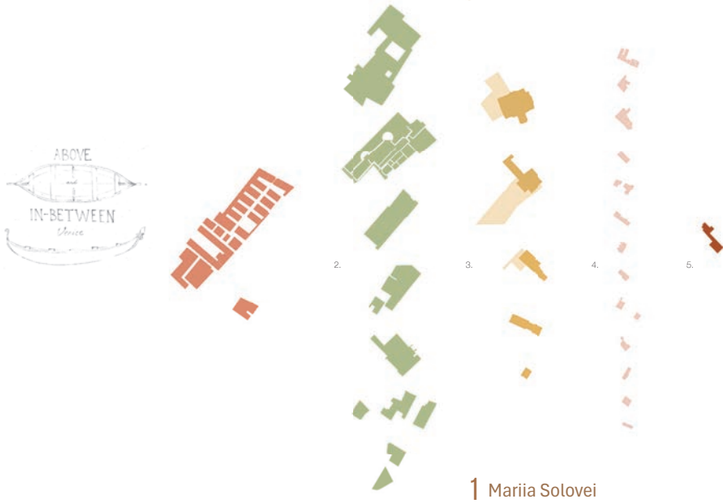

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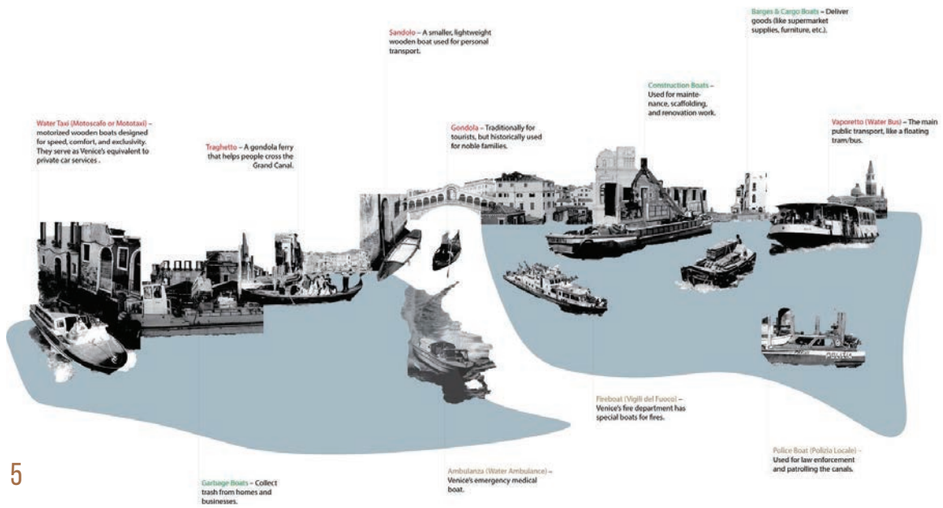


5

1 Mariia Solovei
The lane site and its immediate context

2 Izzy Skinner
Contextual map of Cannaregio

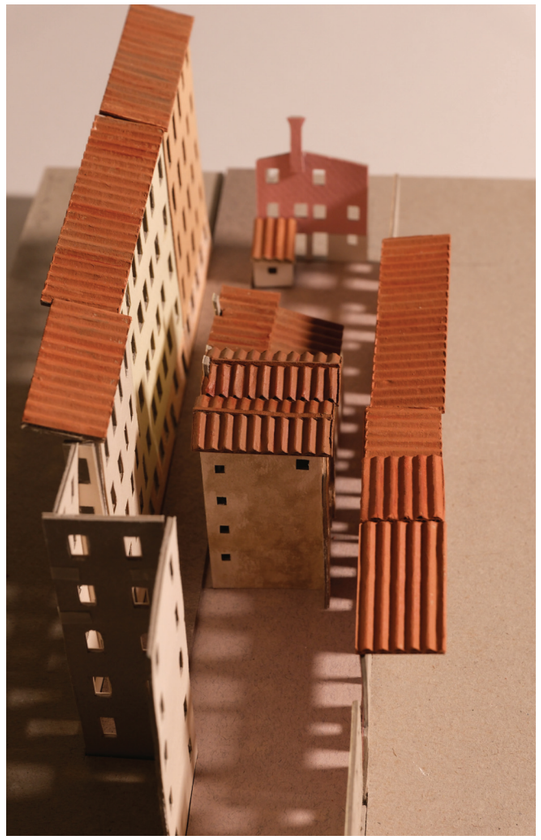
3 Solveig MacCallum
Photographic collage of the lane site

4 JJ Chu
Collage of pictures from the site

5 Solveig MacCallum
Transportation research

6 Group work
1:200 Site model

6



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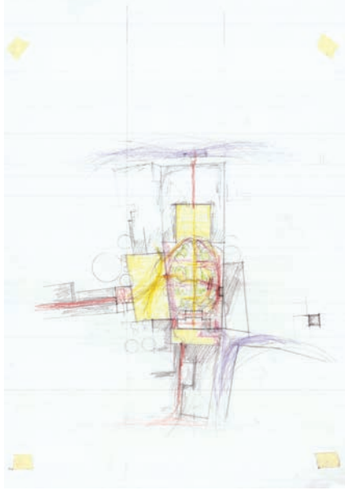

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7

1 Charlotte Stewart
Patterns and textures of the garden site

2 Lawrence Fung Roviras
Photographic collagae of the garden site

3 Eunice Tho
Elevations of the loggia building at the site

4 Sophie Calder
Types of plants found at the site

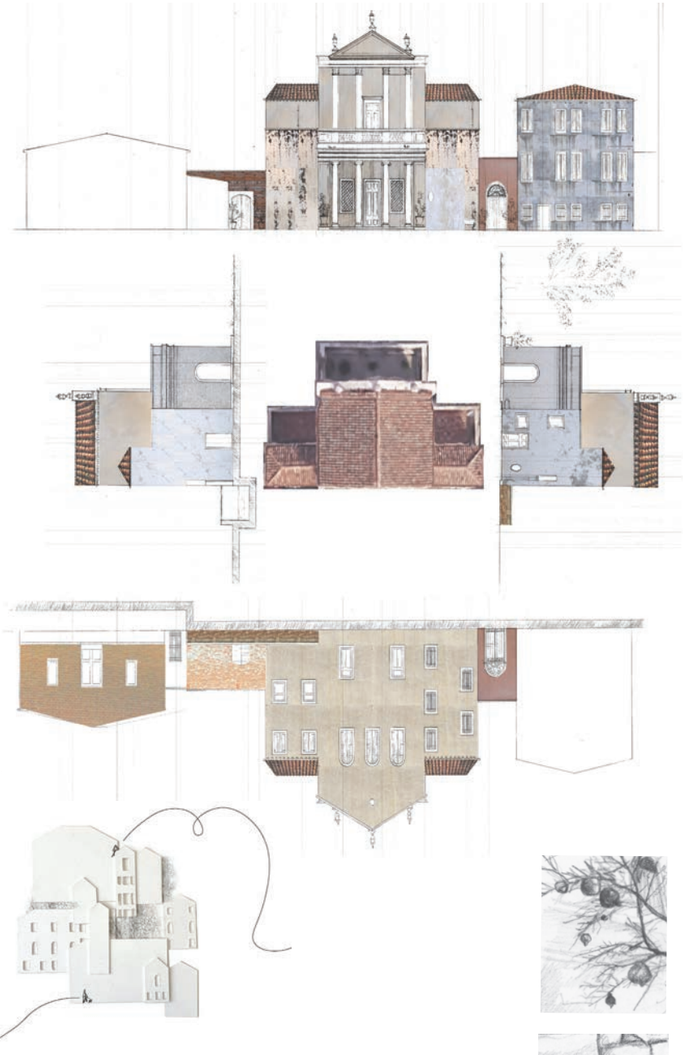
5 Lawrence Fung Roviras
Access and movements and east elevation of the garden site

6 Amy Jensen
Collage of buildings; site textures

7 Group work
1:200 Site model

8 Muzi Zhu
Map of uses and movements

9 Amy Jensen
Site observations



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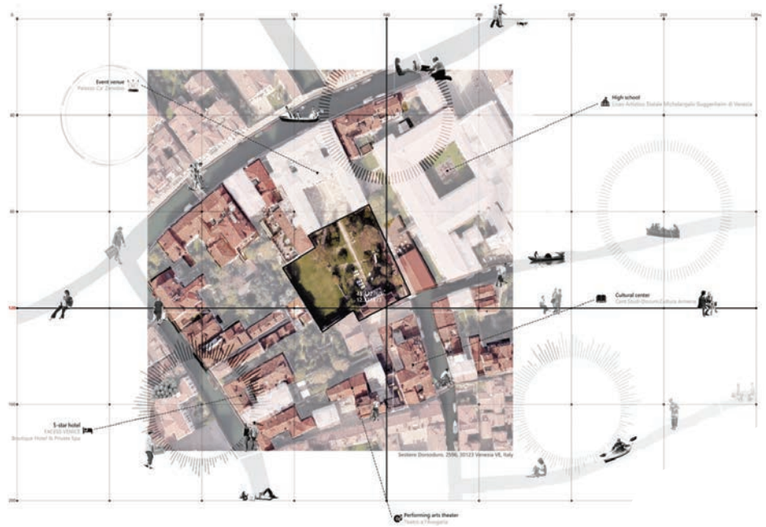

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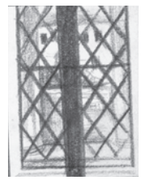


9

1

2

1 Josh Cooke
Colours, materials and textures of the canal site

2 Nat Jakobi
Existing buildings

3 Ziqi Pang
History of Squero di San Trovaso

4 Alexia Johnson
The canal site

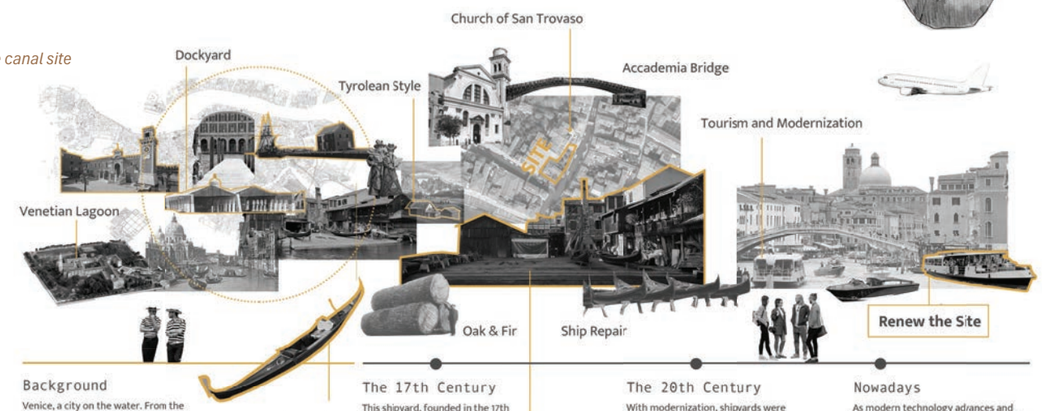
5 Weiqing Ge
The pillars of Venice

6 Zoe Mak
Material deterioration on site

7 Mia Zucchi
Views of the canal site

8 Fai Atkinson
Elements of the site

9 Noah Claridge
Materials of existing buildings and flood levels on site



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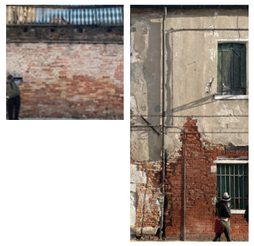

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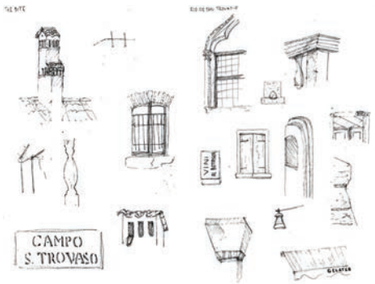

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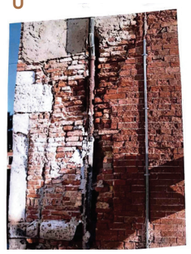

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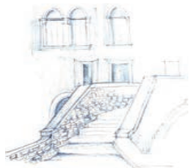

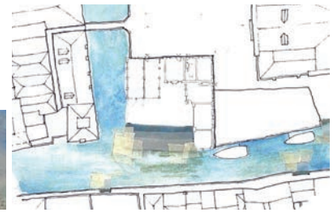

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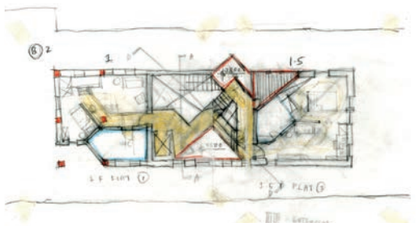
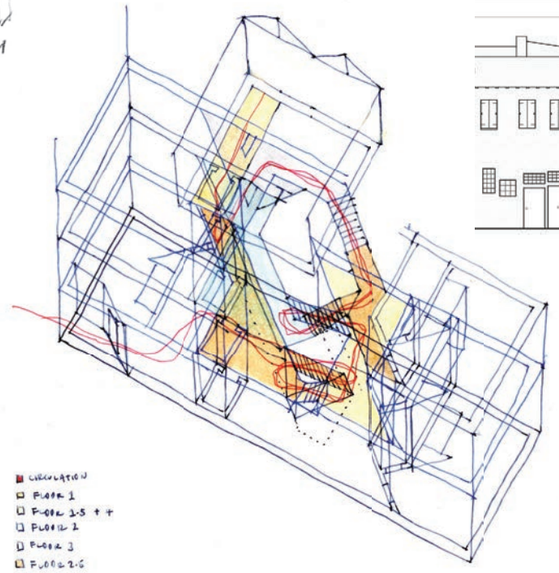
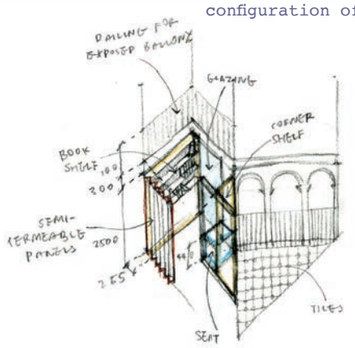
rear elevation - sketch

configuration of heights for merging the two existing buildings with a new staircase



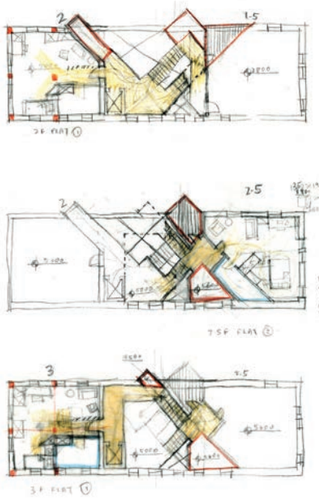


staircase configuration

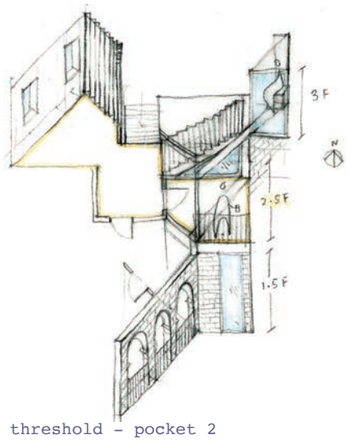


threshold - pocket 1

1:50 threshold model

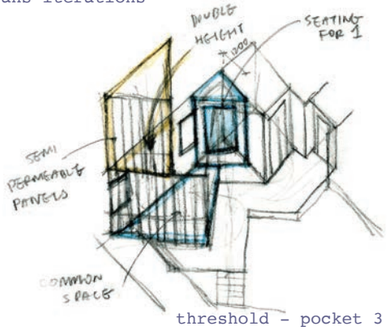


floor plans iterations

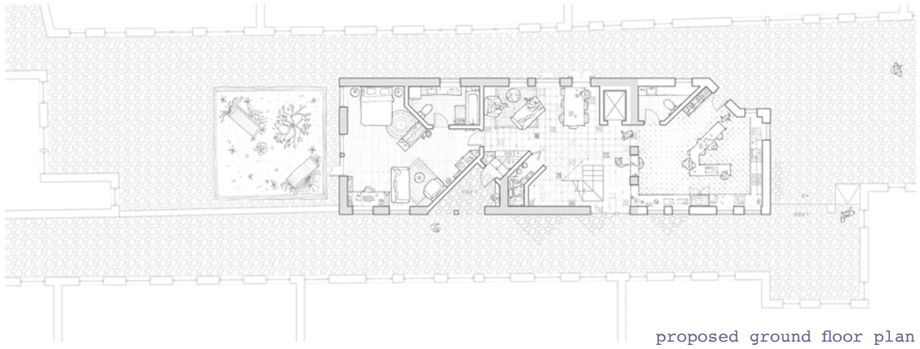


threshold - pocket 2

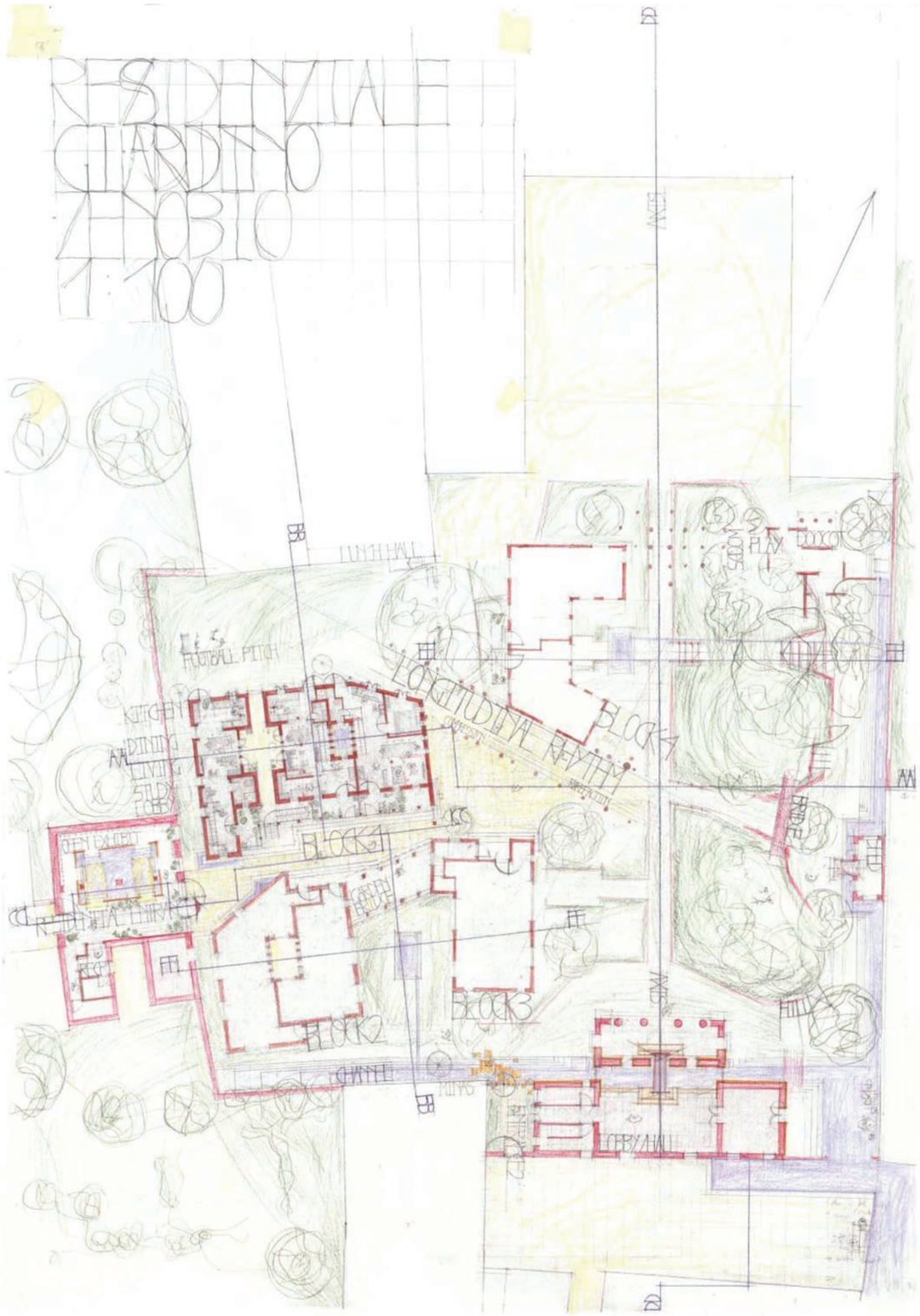
proposed section

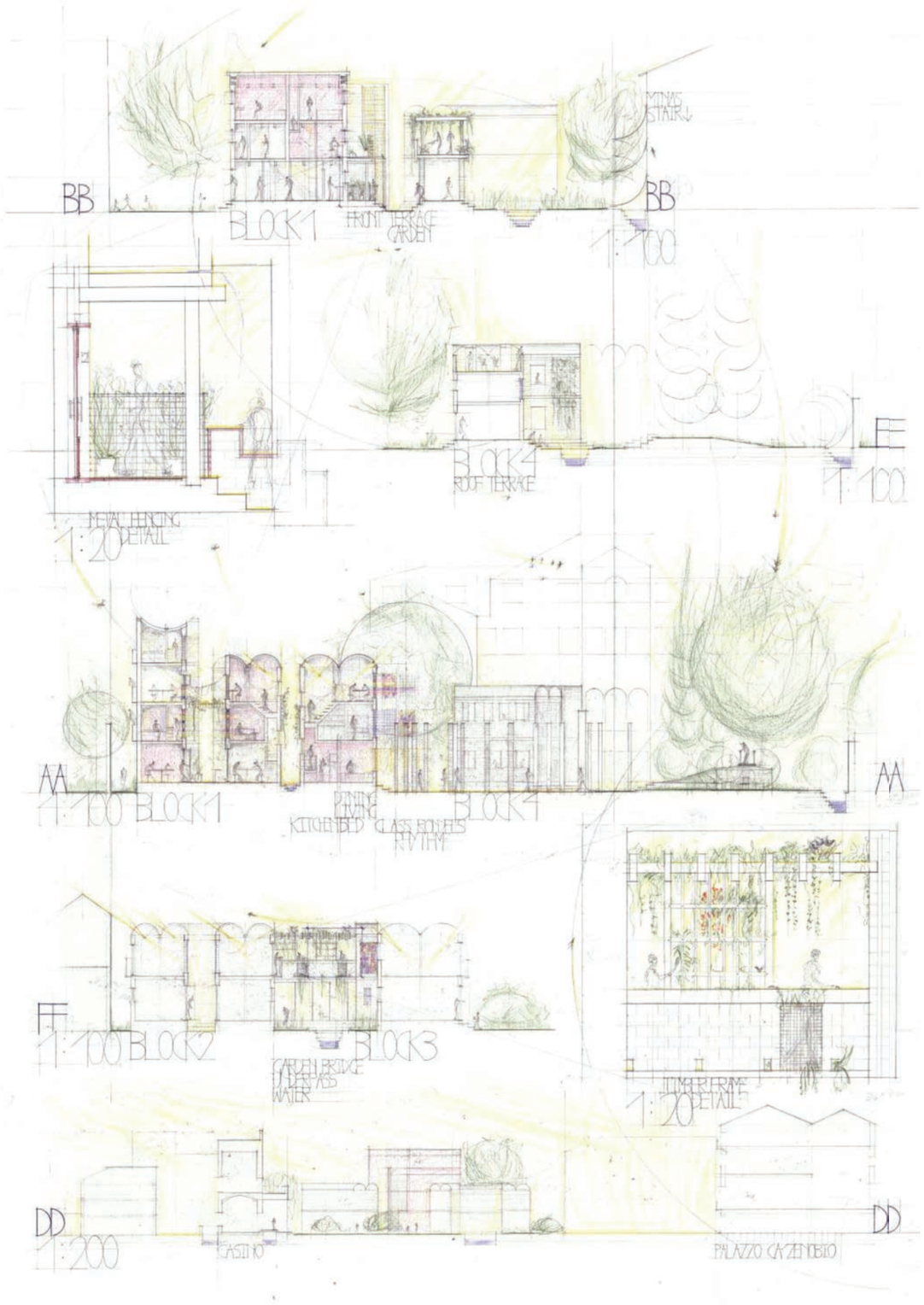


threshold - pocket 3

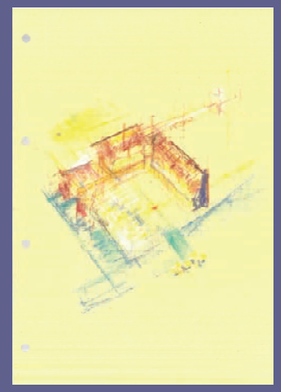


proposed ground floor plan

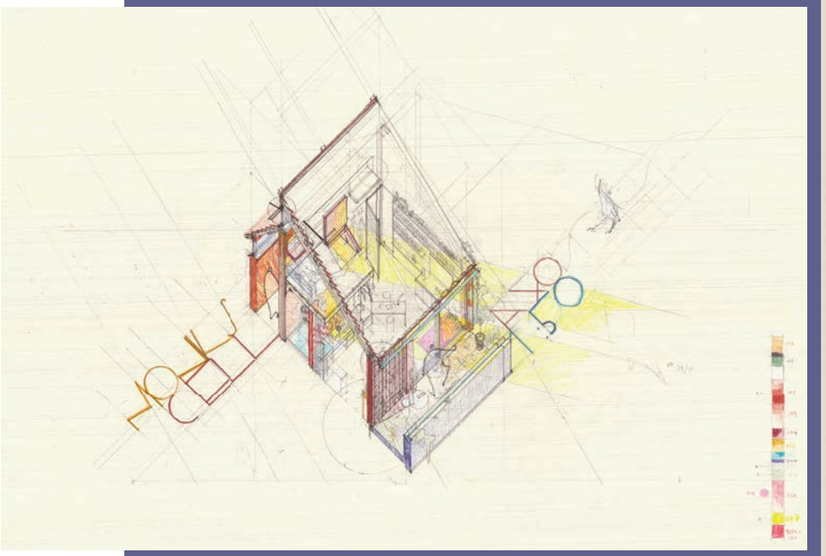

RESIDENZIALE
GIARDINO
ZENOBIO
1:100
BB
LUNCH HALL
FOOTBALL PITCH
KITCHEN
OPEN EXHIBIT
BLOCK1
BLOCK2
BLOCK3
BLOCK4
LOGGIA RAVIM
PLAY
LOBBY/HALL
AA

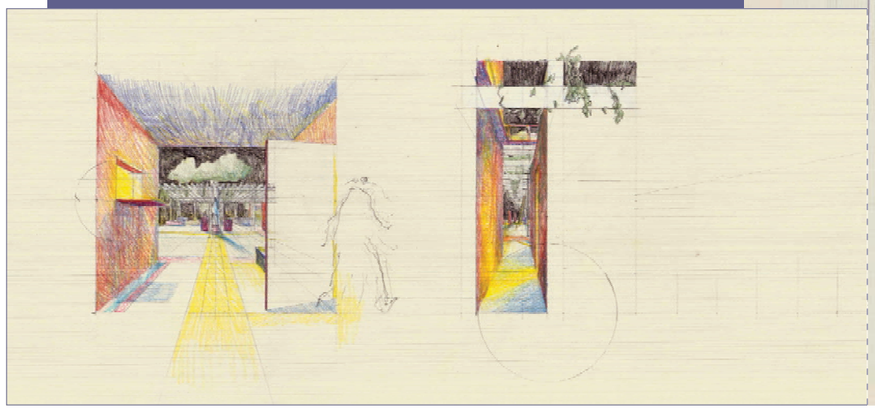

BB
BLOCK1
ROOF TERRACE GARDEN
BLOCK4
ROOF TERRACE
METAL FENCING
1:20 DETAIL
AA
1:100 BLOCK1
BLOCK4
KITCHEN BED
GLASS ROWERS
RAVIM
FF
1:100 BLOCK2
BLOCK3
GARDEN BRIDGE
TIMBER FRAME
1:20 DETAIL
DD
1:200
CASTIO
PALAZZO GAZENTBIO

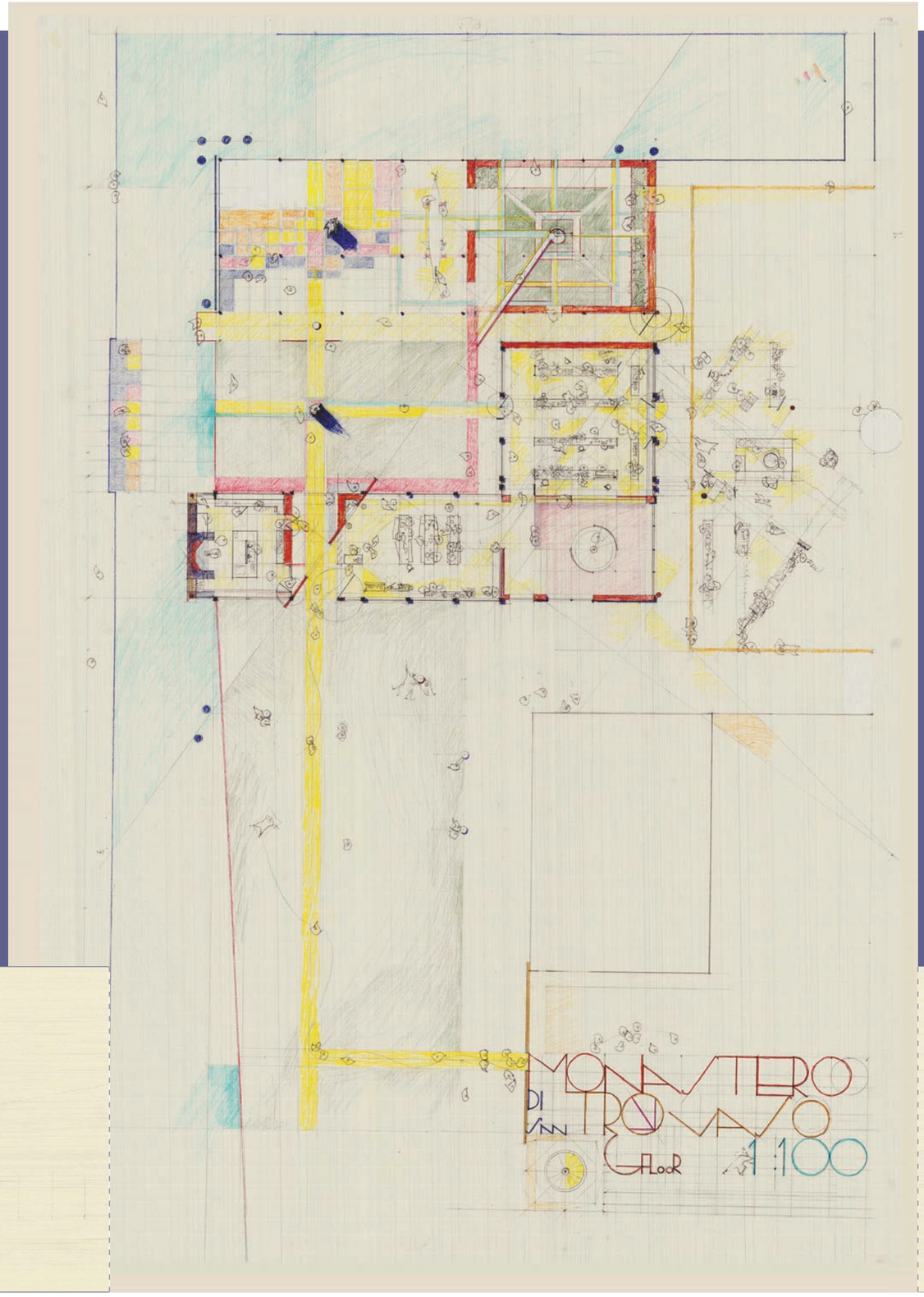
existing

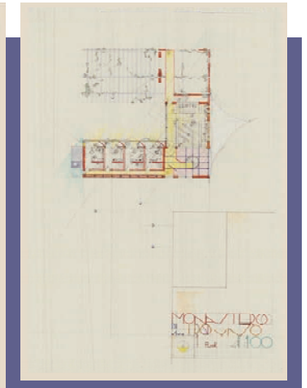


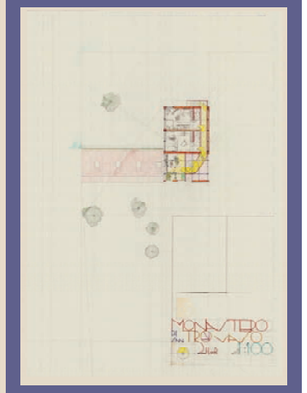
proposed

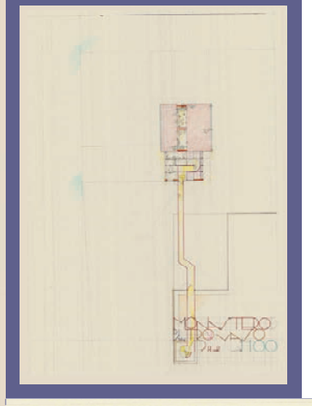


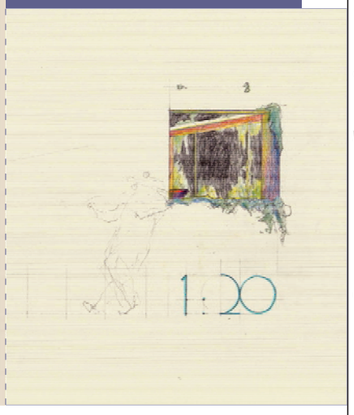












Act III: To 'bring beyond' // Josh Cooke, Monastero di San Trovaso [site c]