

SHOU COUNTY CULTURE AND ART CENTER

Studio Zhu-Pei

Location: Shou County, Anhui Province

Architect: Studio Zhu-Pei

Principal architect: Zhu Pei

Design team: You Changchen, Shuhei Nakamura, Liu Ling, Wu Zhigang, Yang Shengchen, Du Yang, Ke Jun, Ding Xinyue, Wu Zhenhe, Du Yao

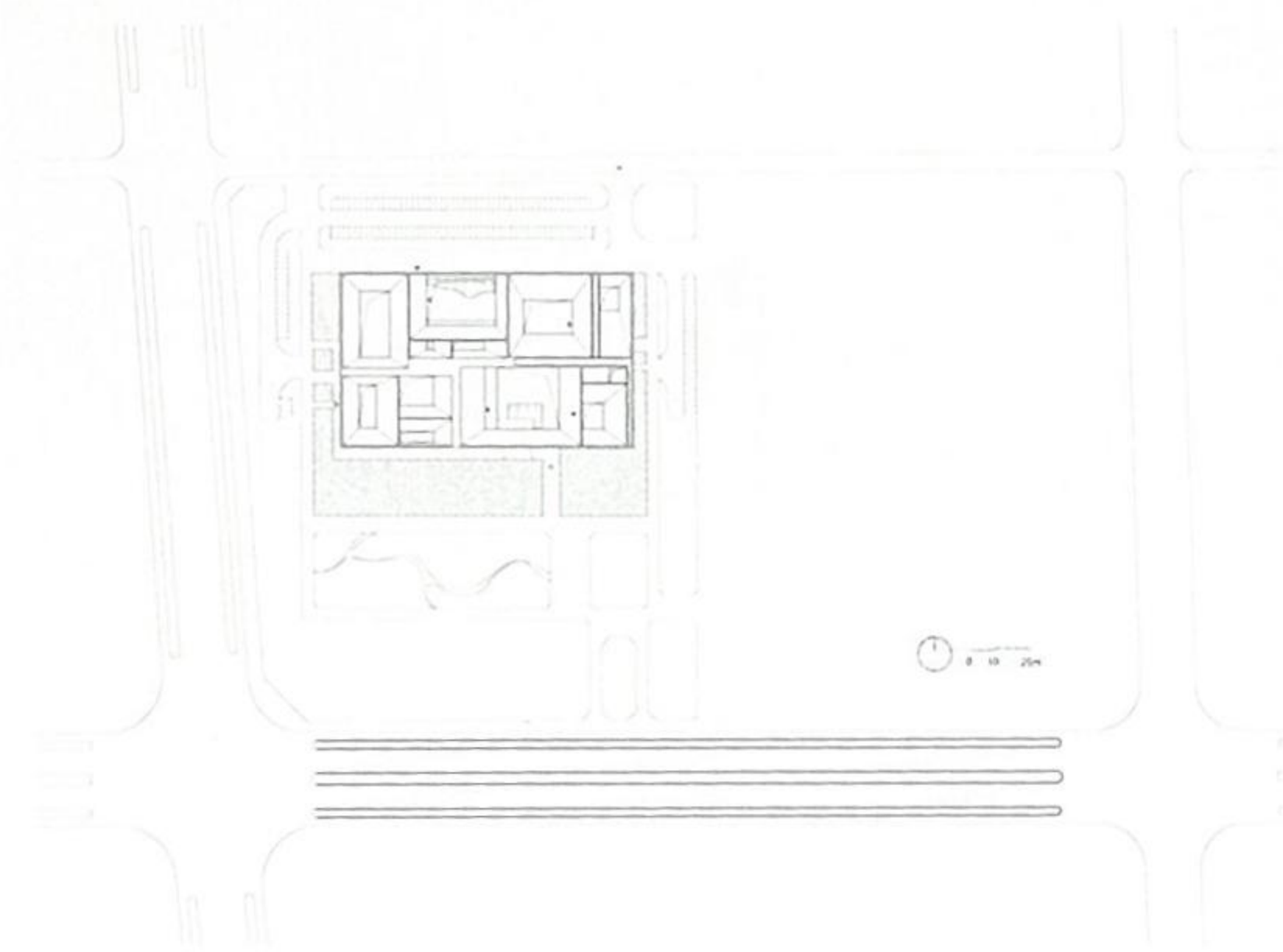
Structural and MEP engineer: BIAD JAMA CO., LTD.

Landscape and interior: Studio Zhu-Pei, The Design Institute of Landscape and Architecture China Academy of Art

Area: 30,010 square meters

Project completion: 2019

Photography: Su Shengliang



Site plan

Shou County is located in the center of Anhui Province, on the south bank of Huai River. In ancient times, it was the home of the Chu culture and where Liu An, King of Huainan, edited a compendium of ancient Chinese philosophy and composed poetry. The old town of Shou County is roughly square in shape and surrounded by rammed earth walls, with the outward-facing sides of the walls covered in brick above an elevated stone foundation. The entire wall is inclined slightly inwards to allow the stone layers at the bottom to sit firmly in place. The city moat lies to the southeast of the city; Fei River to the north; Shouxi Lake to the west; and Bagong Mountains can be seen in the distance. A walk across the ancient bridges, a stroll through the old town, or an exploration of the ancient relics can offer boundless inspiration. The city walls wrap tightly around



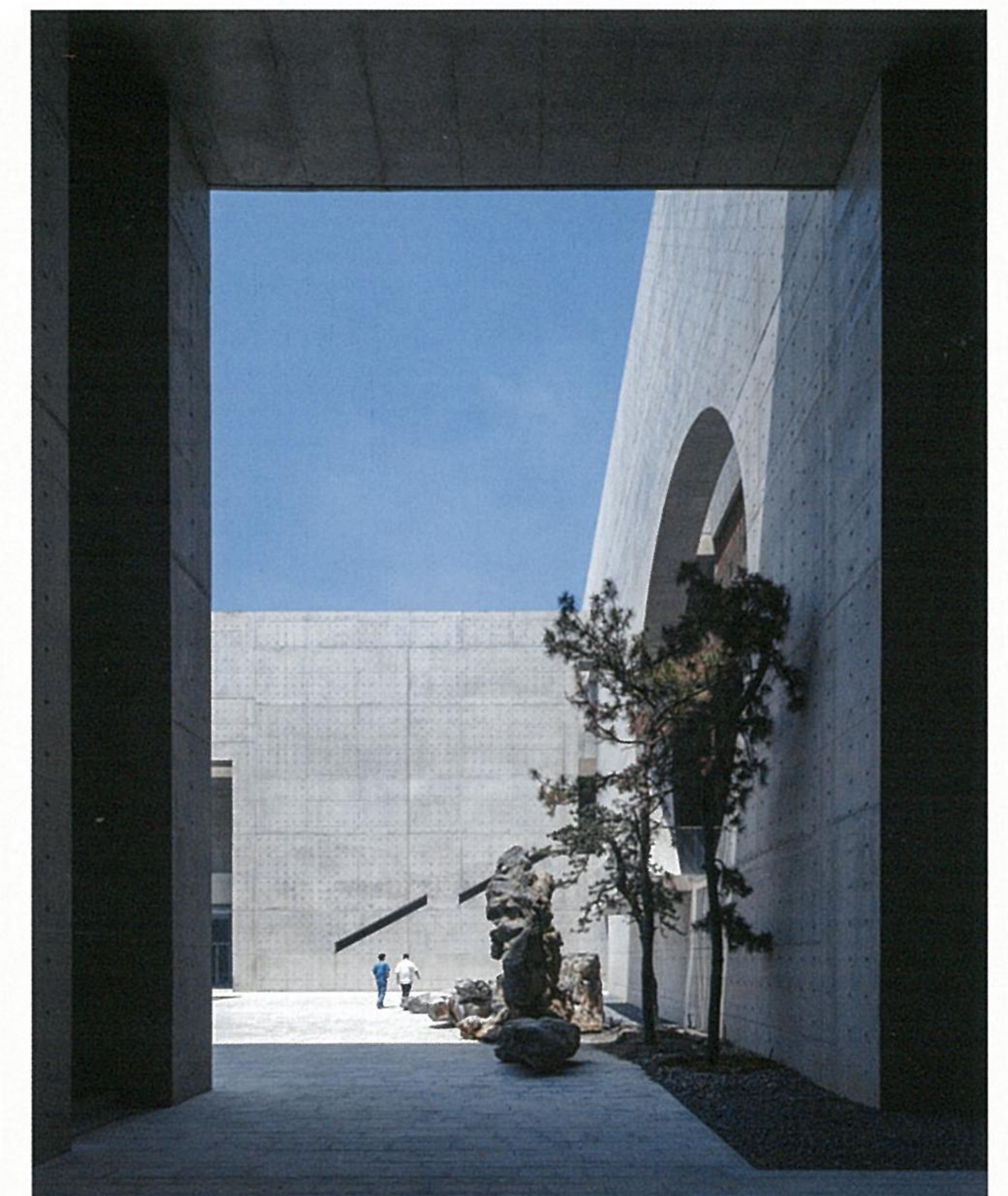
Shou County Culture and Art Center



Main entrance

the chaotic, scattered, and diverse buildings of the city, creating a sudden change in the experience of the environment once the threshold is passed.

The buildings within the city are constructed in the courtyard house typology, which differs from those in northern China and the Huizhou houses in southern Anhui. The typology of the buildings in the old town of Shou County strongly reflects the characteristics of the region's climate, as well as the local culture and way of life. Along the narrow streets, the vertical courtyard houses have small windows and solid walls—a typical weatherproofing feature to protect occupants from the cold in winter and heat in summer.



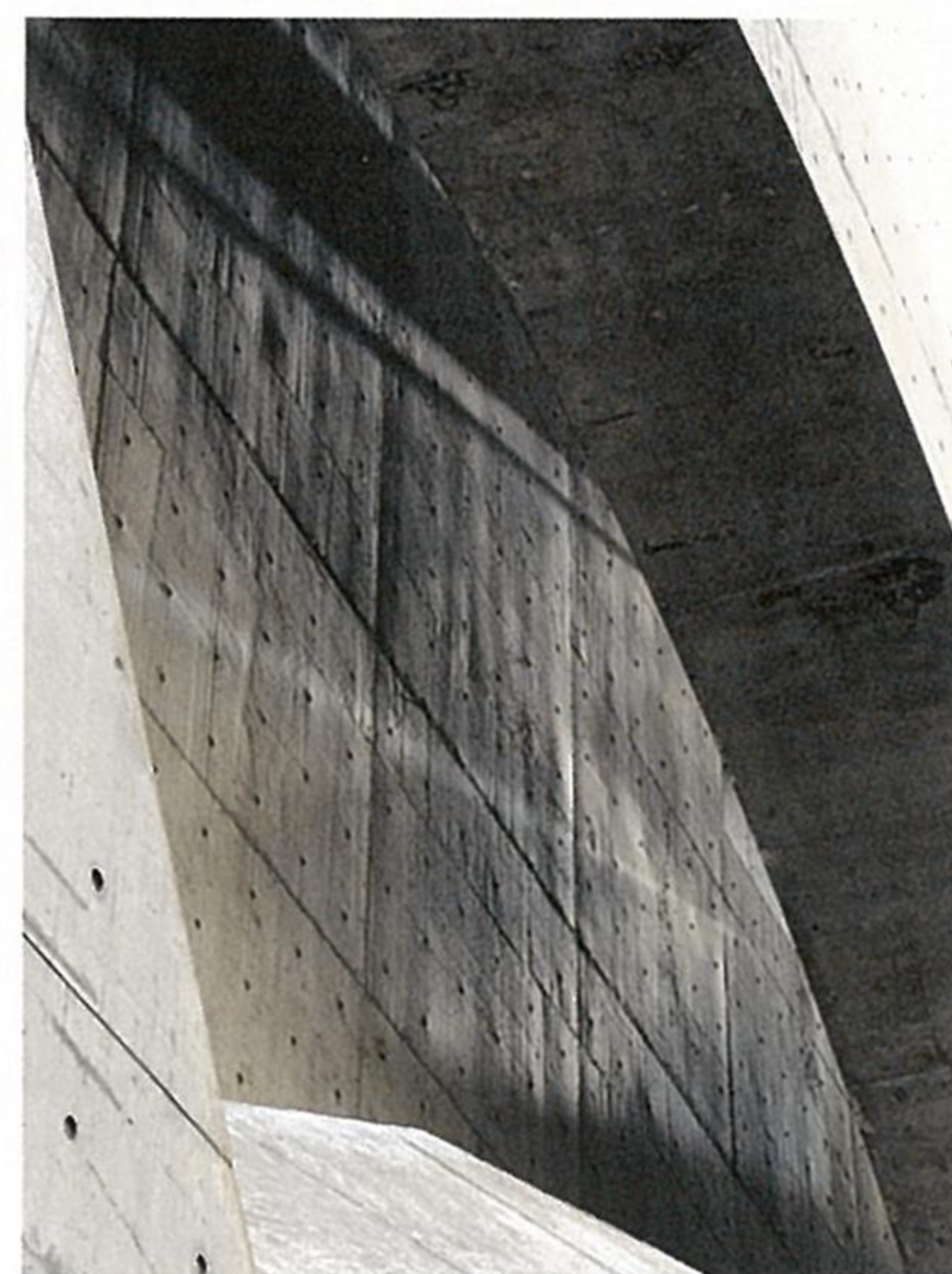
View to the main courtyard



Visitors enter via a bridge crossing the moat

Shou County Culture and Art Center was built in a new city a few kilometers southeast of the old town, on what used to be empty, flat farmland with a lack of landscape features. Many new tall, generic buildings surround the area and fail to reflect the local climate and local culture. The blandness of the project site resembled a blank piece of paper for Zhu Pei offering the potential for a multitude of creative opportunities. The county government was open-minded in that it didn't insist on specific design requirements, however it demanded the project "be built quickly and completed next year."

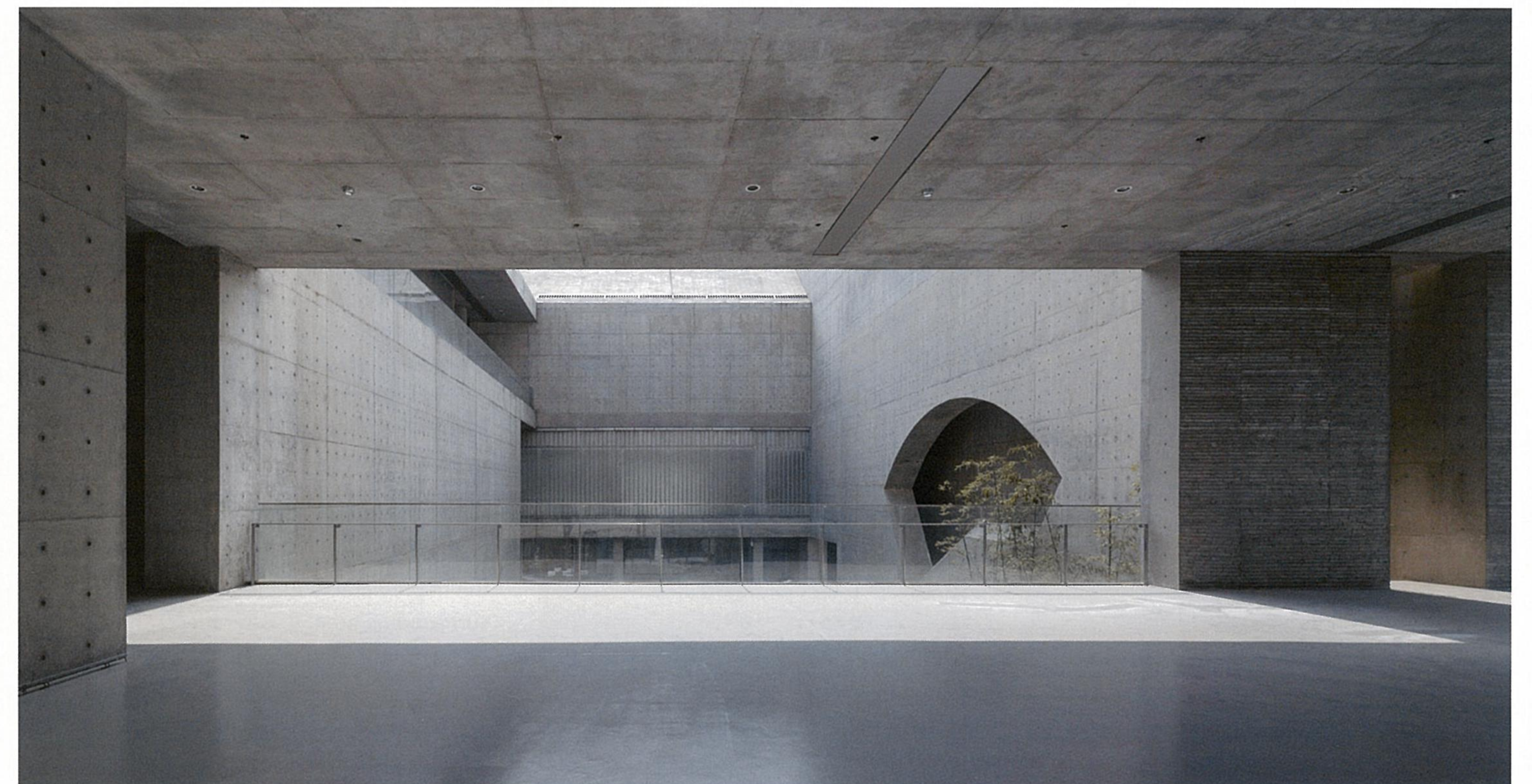
The program includes an art gallery, cultural center, library, and archive. Cultural and art centers are not new in China. Many were built between the 1950s and 1970s under the influence of the former Soviet Union. Nowadays, they have been endowed with a range of new possibilities, including creating urban public space for cultural activities. Shou County Culture and Art Center is designed to draw people in to discover and experience it, unlike a beautiful sculpture that can only be viewed but not experienced.



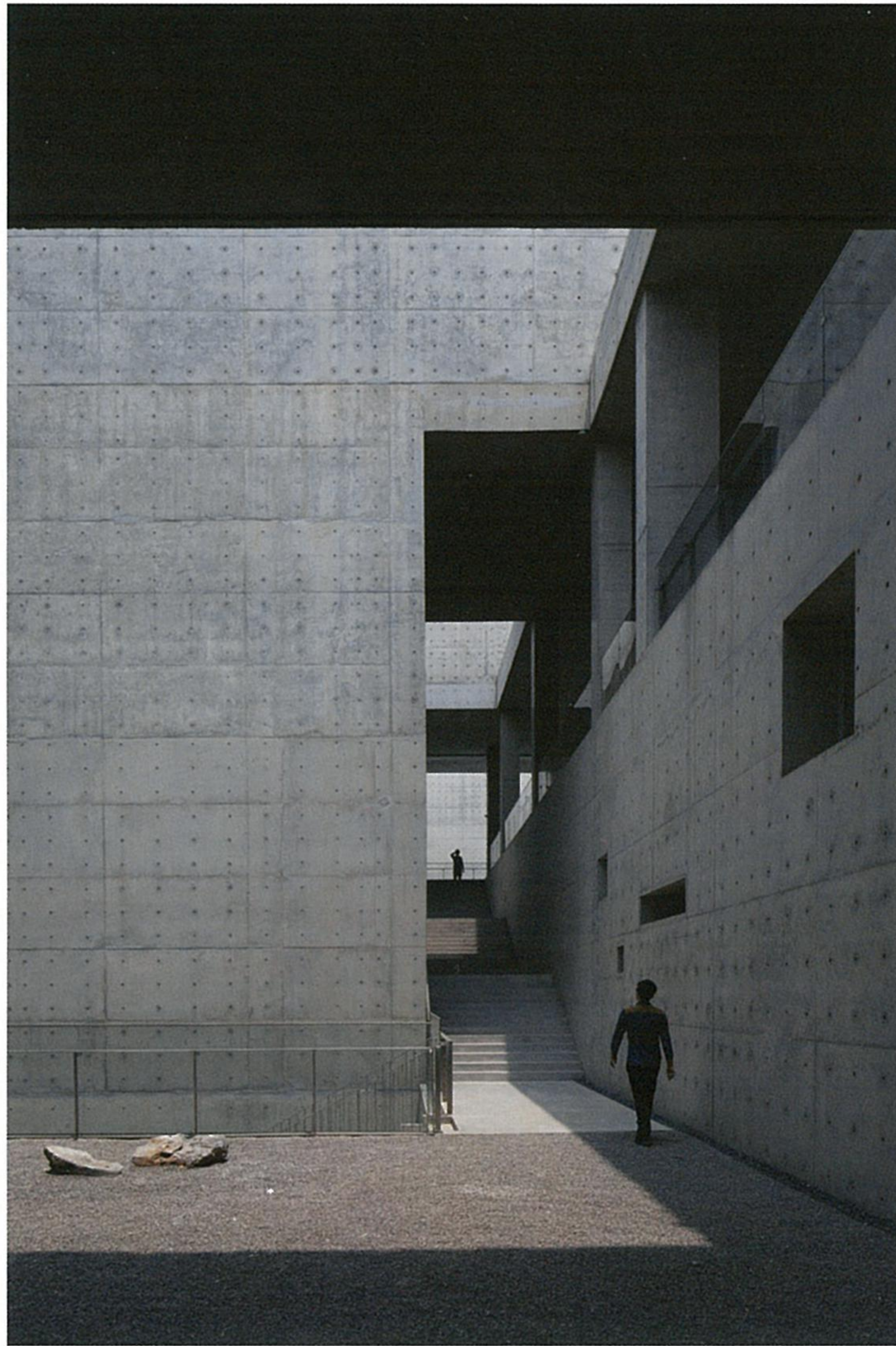
Detail of the Moon Window © Studio Zhu-Pei



Rear garden



View to the rear garden



View from the courtyard to the corridor



The corridor is protected from the rain and sun

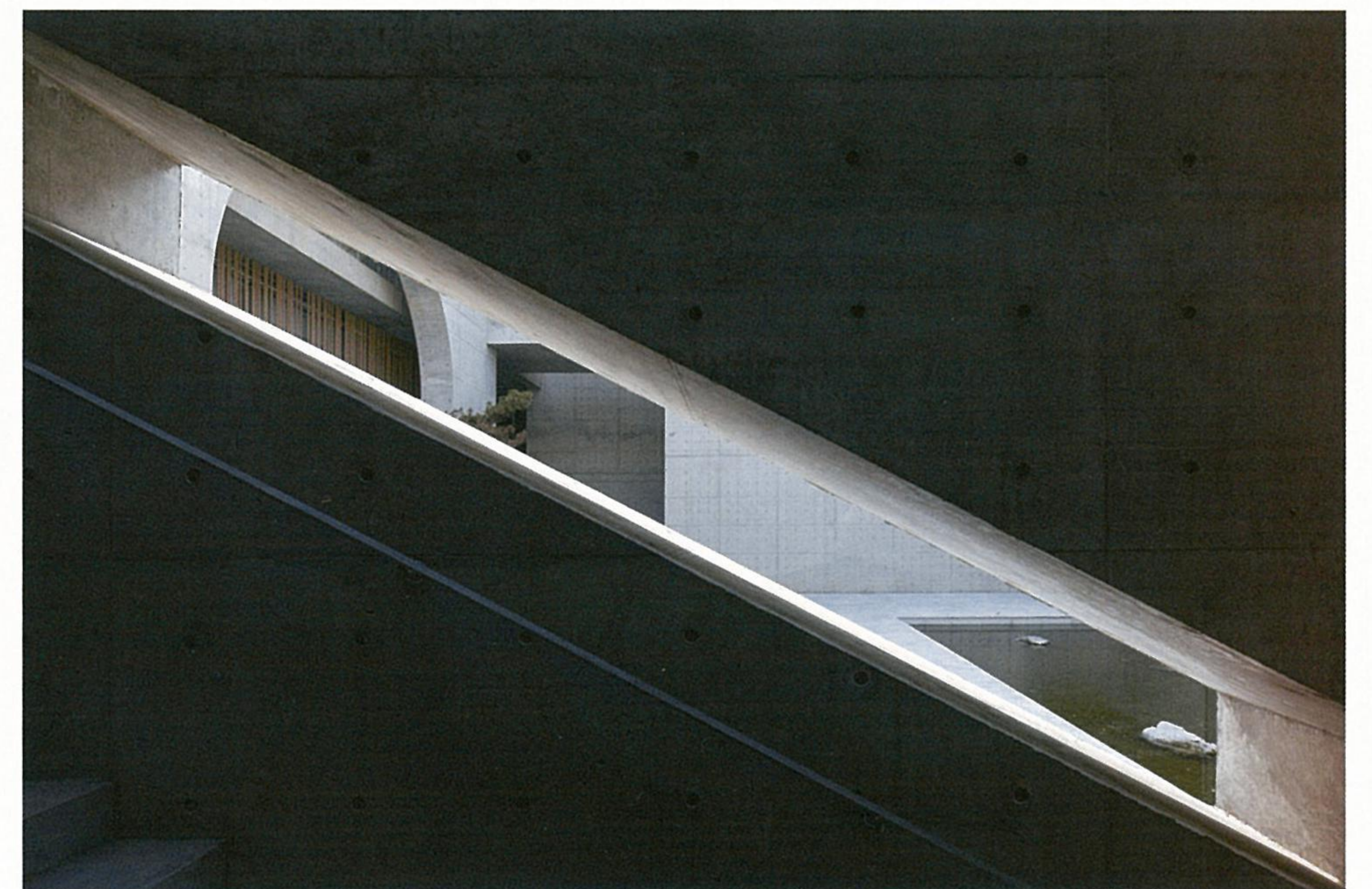
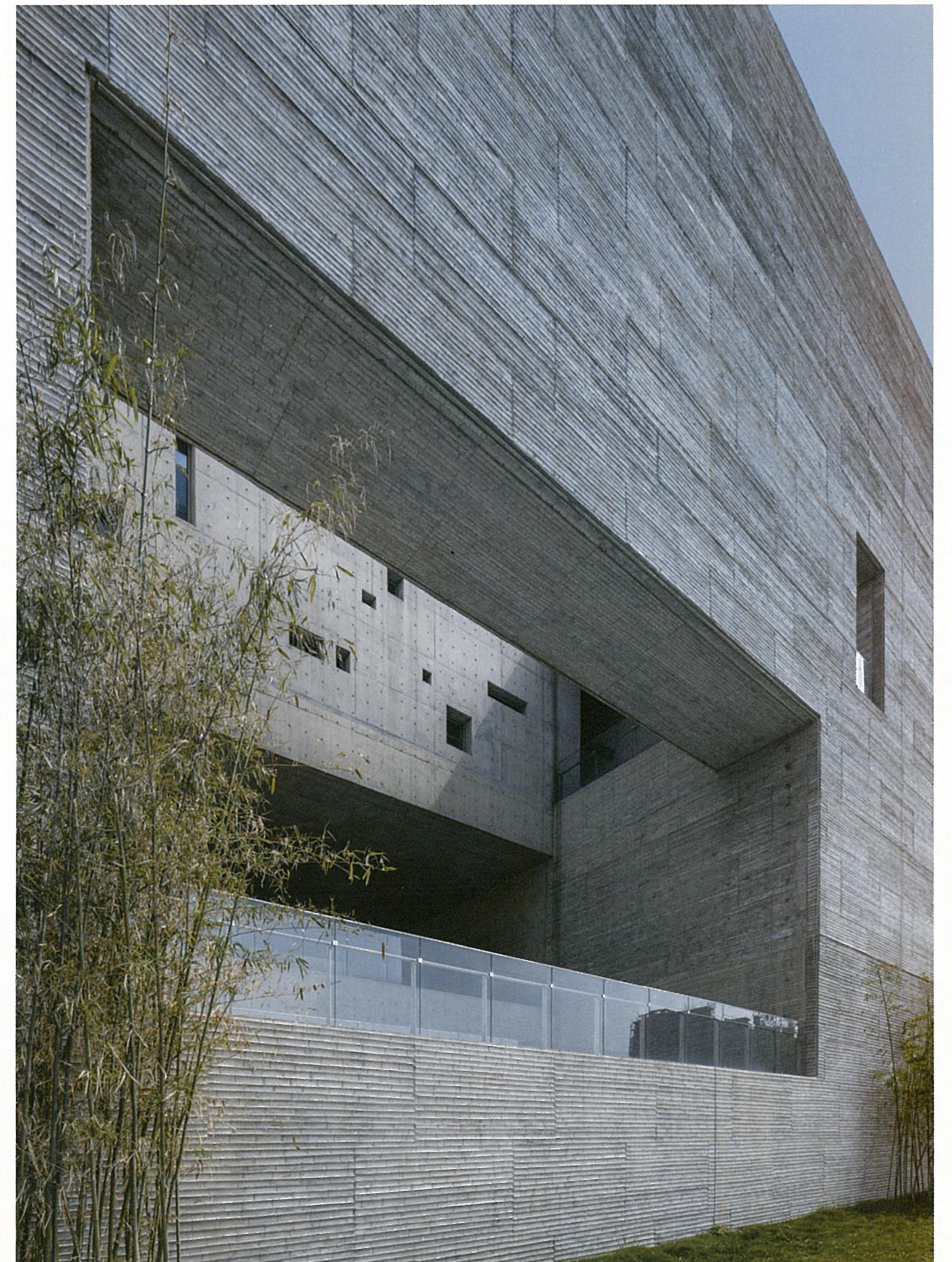
Zhu Pei investigated the cultural roots of Shou County, observing old dwellings and ruins, and identifying how ancestors sought balance between the primal force of nature and active construction without modern technologies. The buildings in the old town provided plenty of inspiration. The inward-oriented living patterns of the vertical courtyard houses, and the narrow lanes extending out in all directions connecting houses to one another, reflect the local way of life and hint at the rules of construction for local climate conditions. Zhu Pei reimagined this living and spatial experience to help to embed Shou County Culture and Art Center in the local community.

Multiple courtyards of different sizes are placed in a relatively enclosed rectangular block. They are connected by a winding, undulating public walkway, which is a public loop protected from the sun and rain. The public loop guides people over the bridge, crossing the moat into the building. The extensive front yard at the main entrance forms a public square that represents the *tang wu* (central room) of typical Shou County residences, while the backyard resembles the back garden of local folk houses. Each program of the building has two or three inner courtyards. From the front yard, visitors can wander all the inner courtyards without interrupting the continuity of the rooms. Walking along the protected public

loop, visitors can find themselves at times on the first floor, second floor, or third floor. The space is unpredictable, and light and shadow continually shift to surprise visitors, allowing them to feel the artistic spirit of traditional Chinese architecture expressed by the principles of "hide, breath, cultivate, and wander."

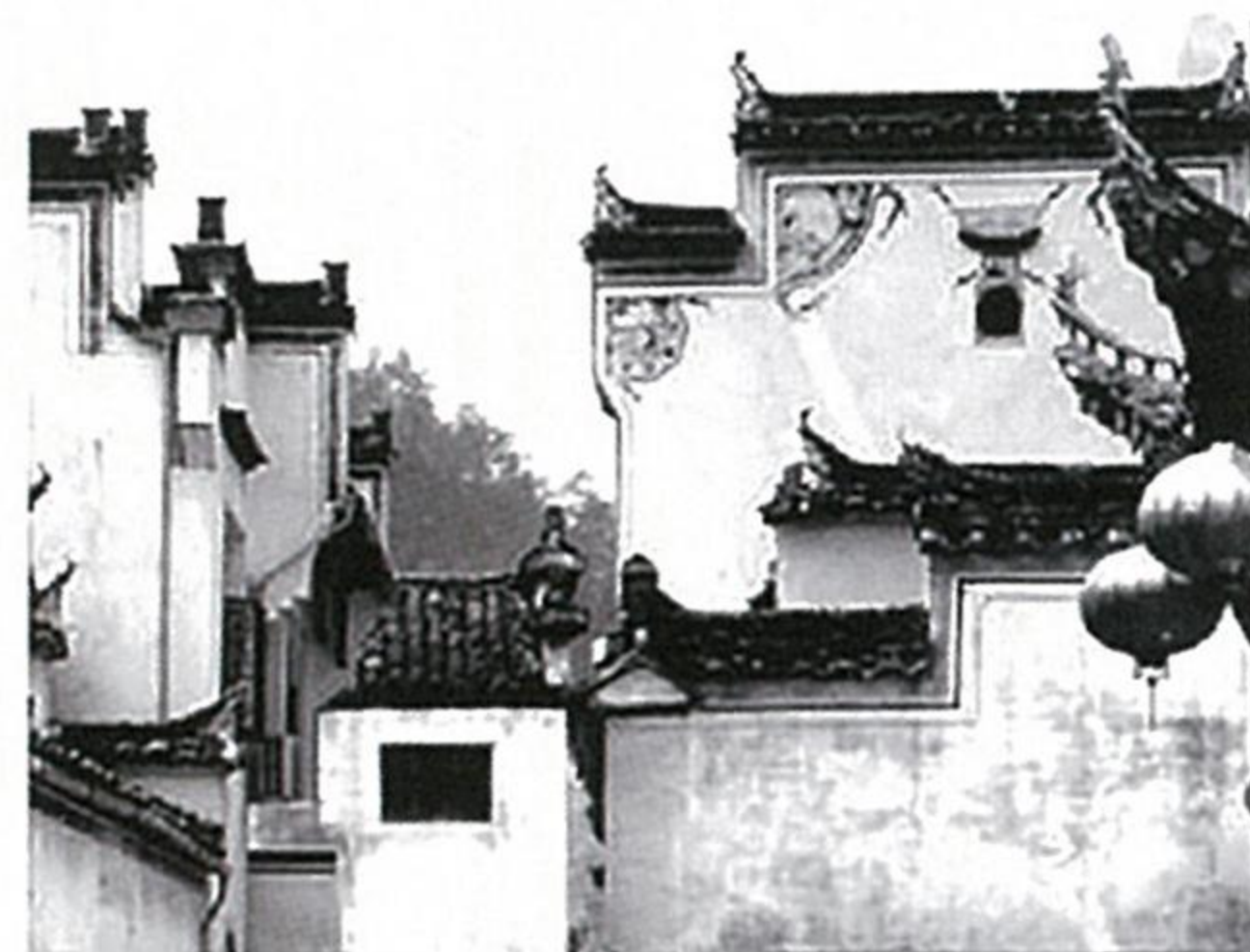
The introverted concept of Shou County Culture and Art Center is a sensible choice for the unpredictable future development of the surrounding area. It also reflects the grace, inclusiveness, and vitality of the ancient city of Shou County, which has withstood the test of time.

1. Textured concrete
2. View of a courtyard from the staircase





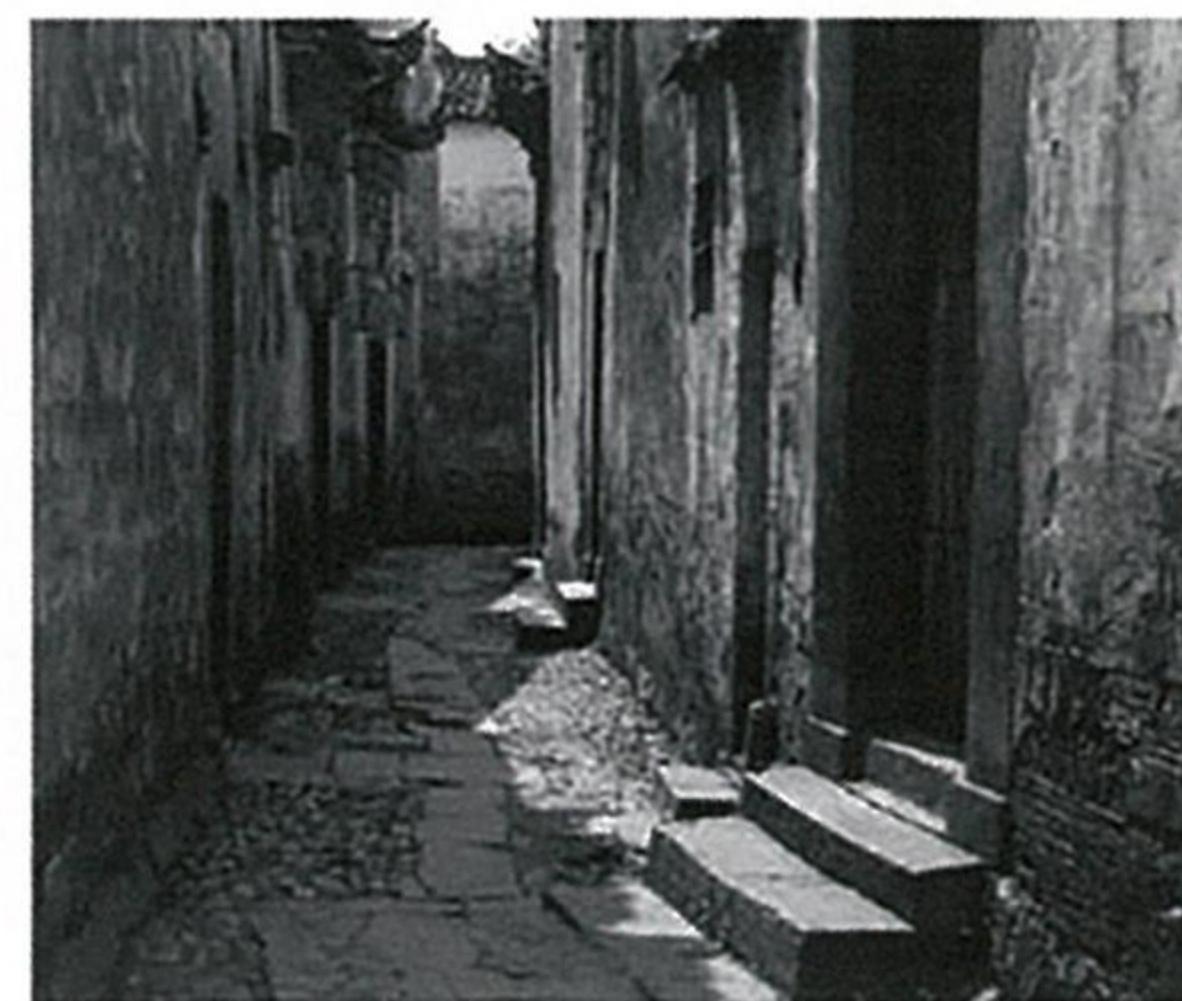
Inner courtyard of traditional dwelling



Solid façade of traditional dwelling



Interior courtyard of traditional dwelling



Pathways connect courtyard of traditional dwellings

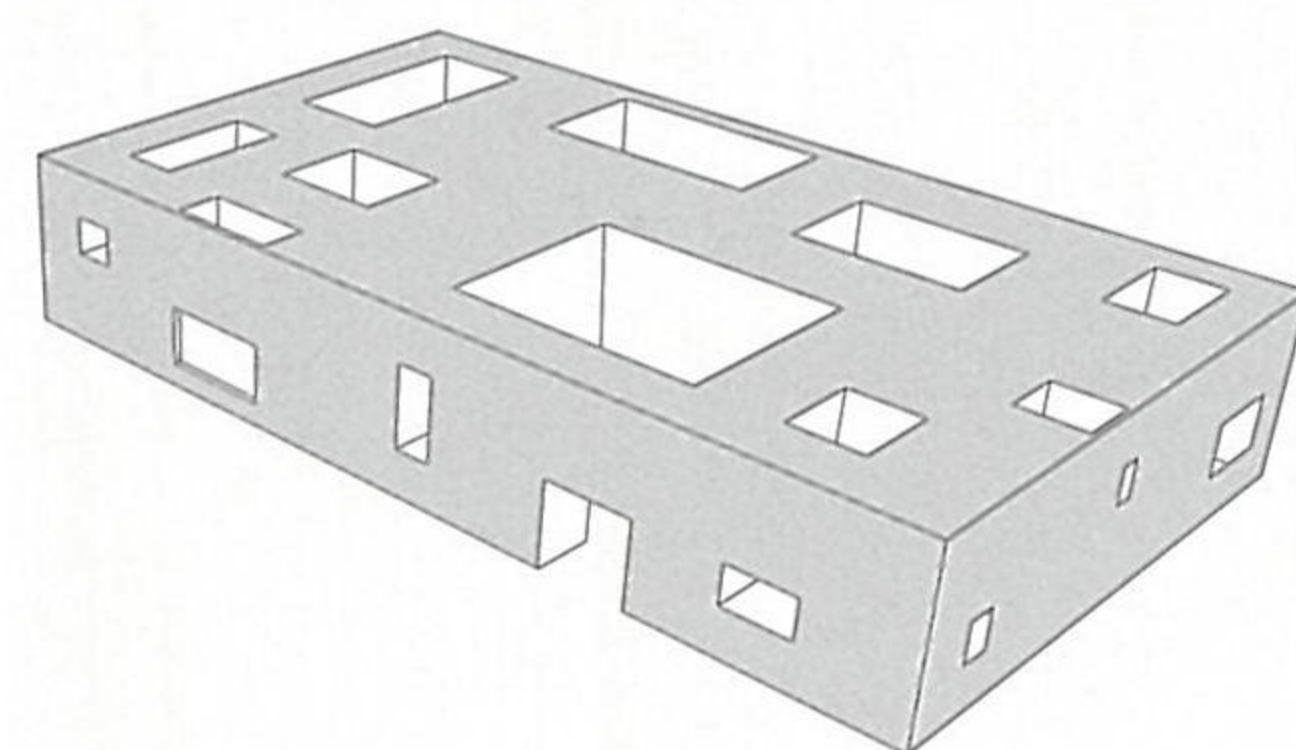


Diagram of solid façade with voids

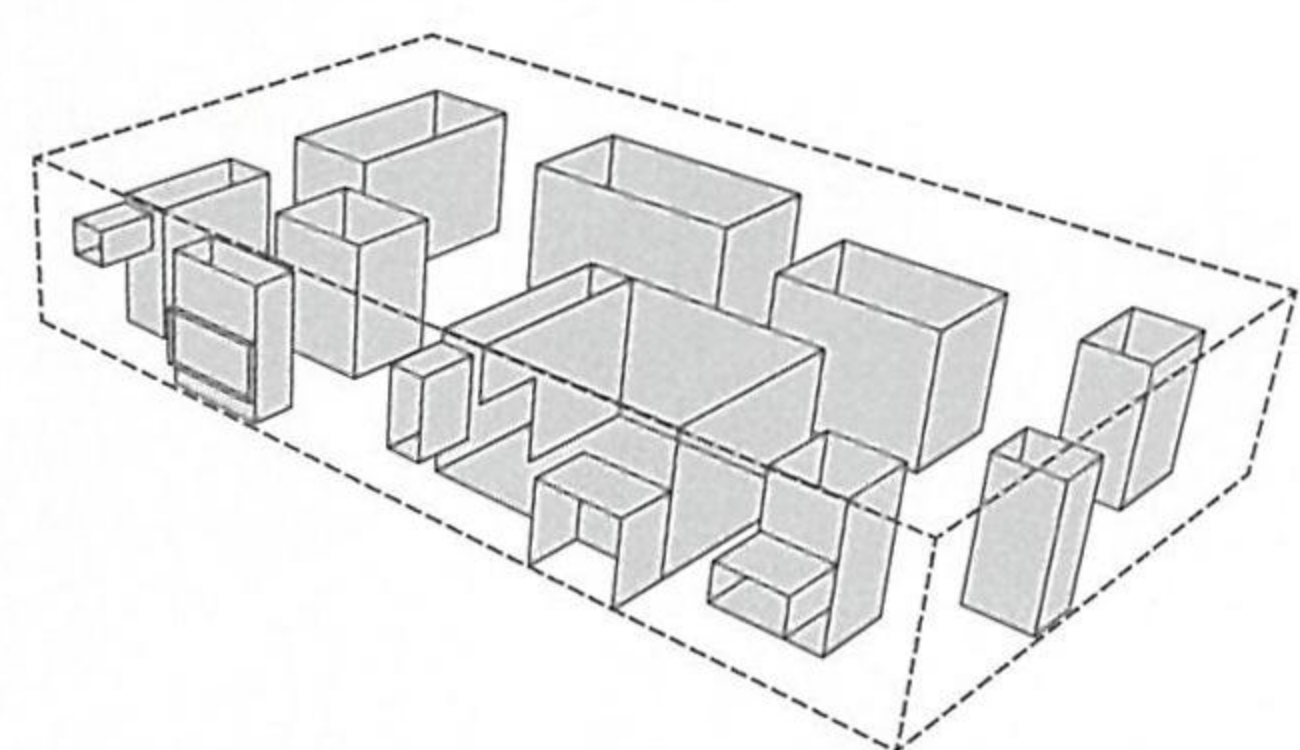


Diagram of inner courtyards

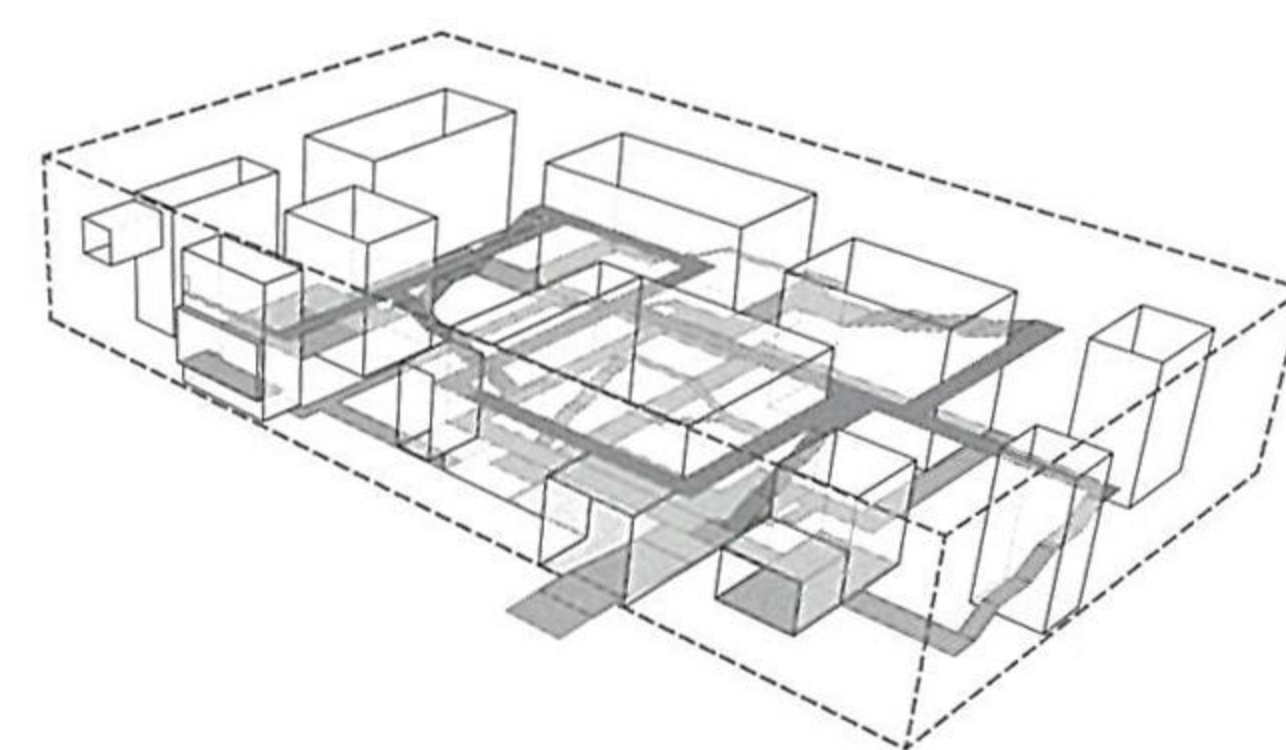
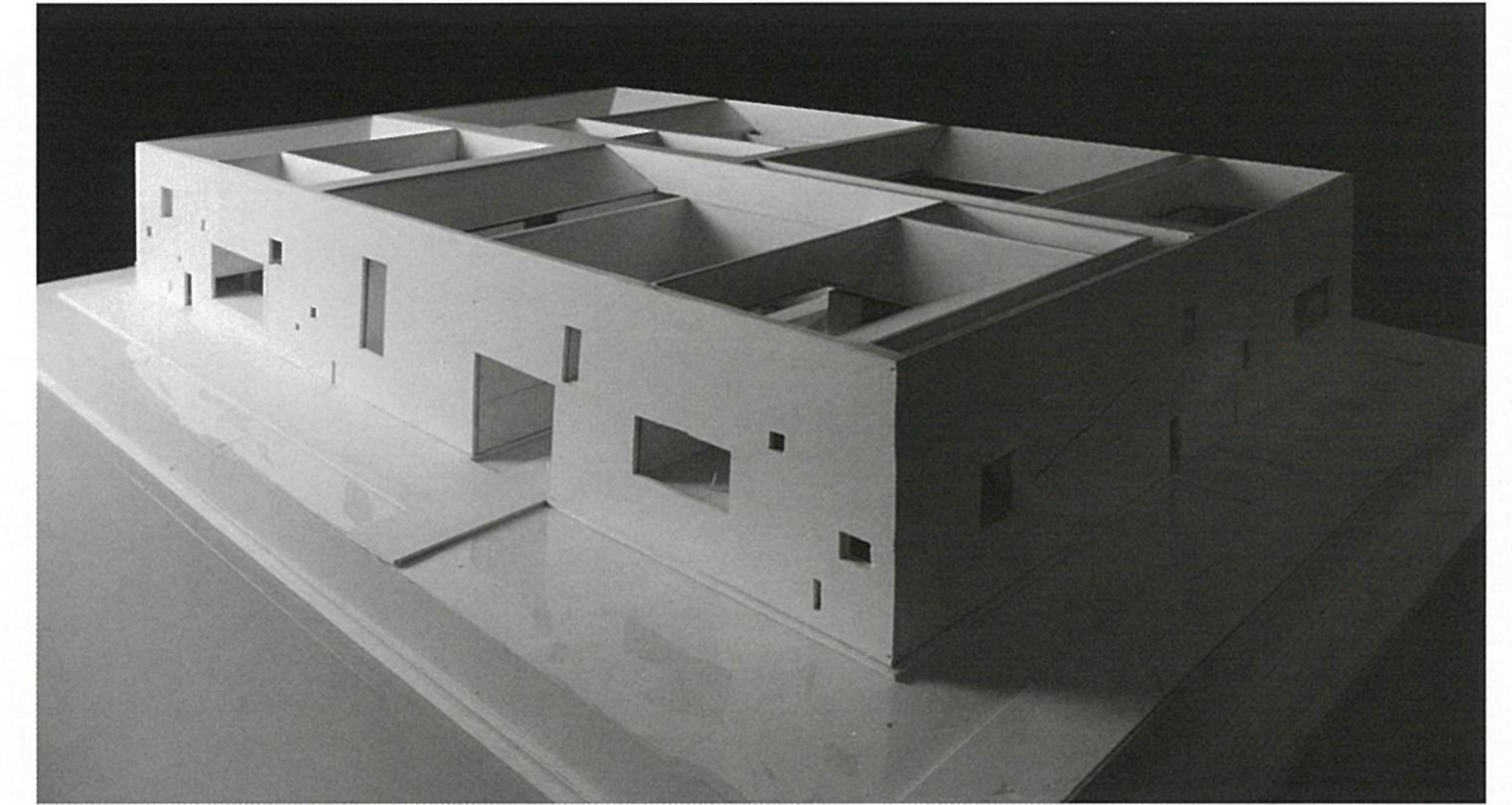
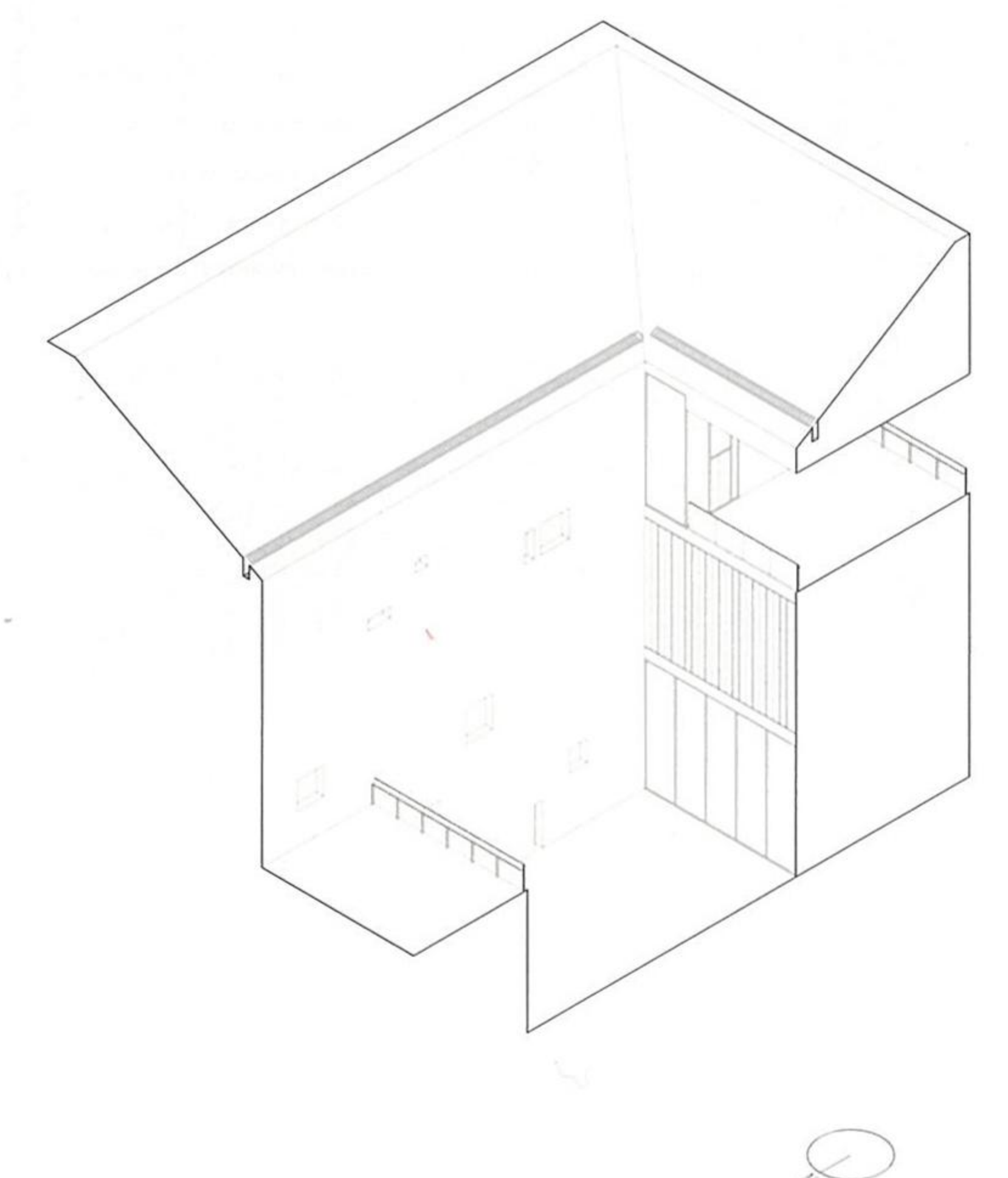
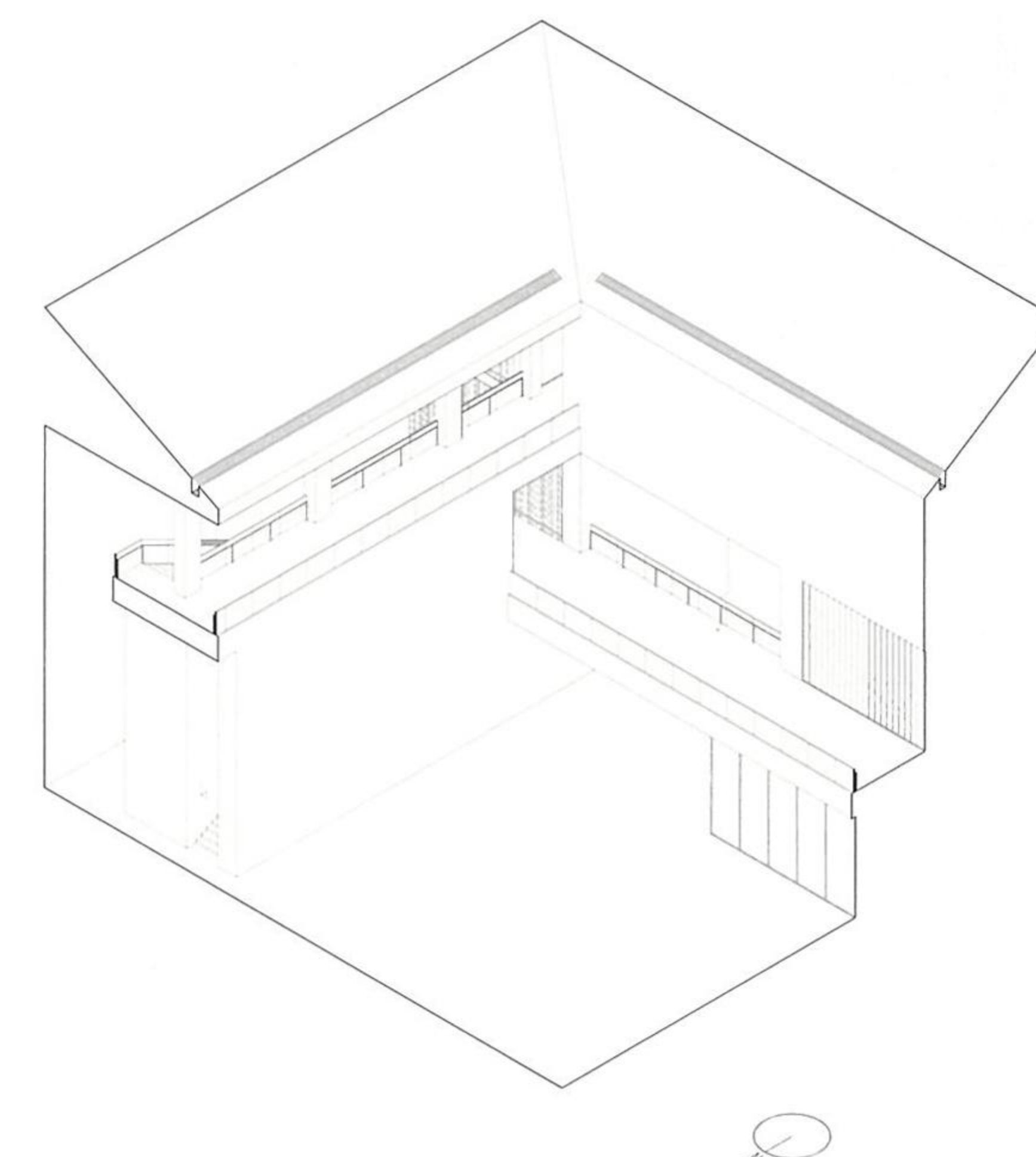
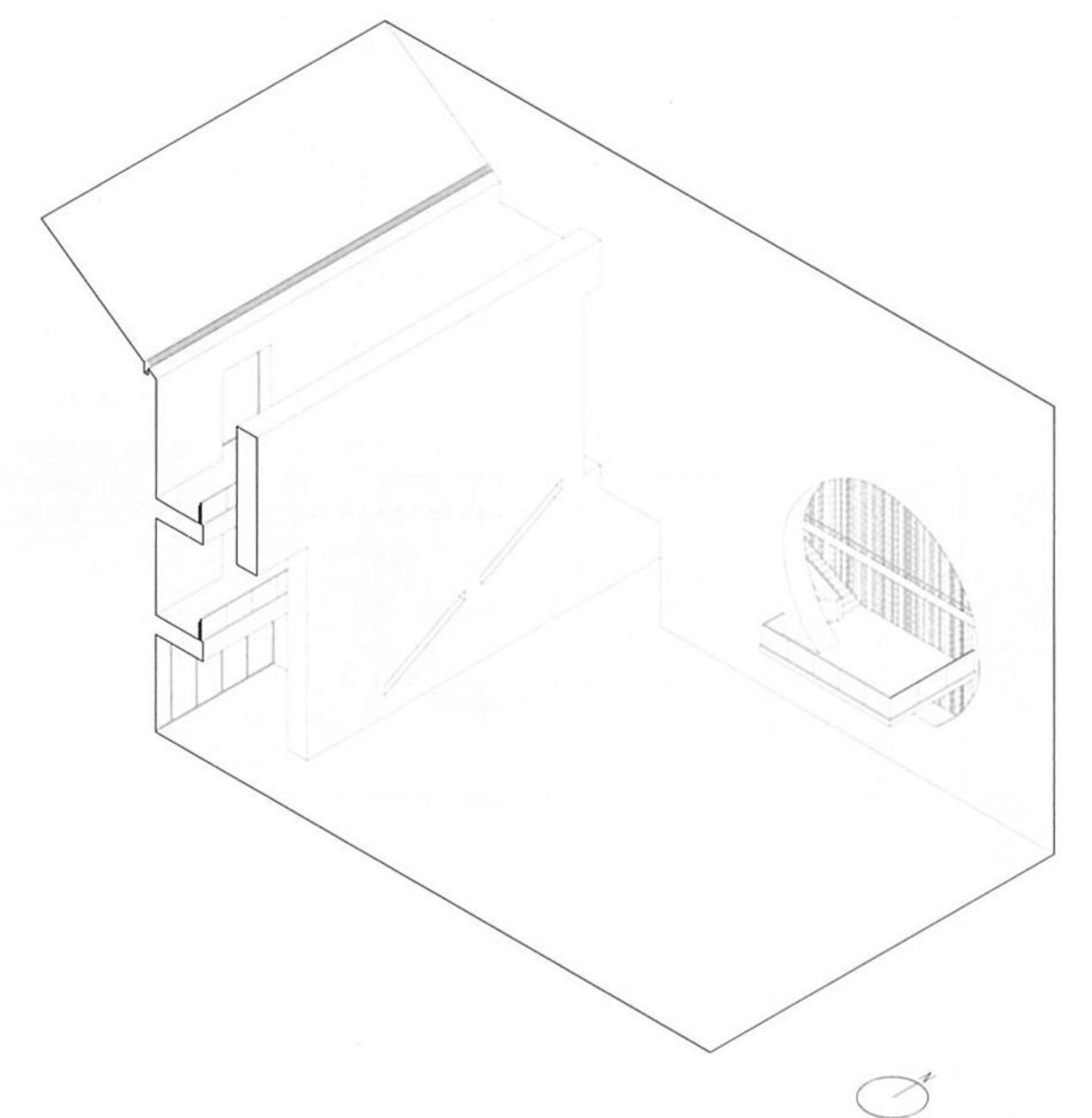
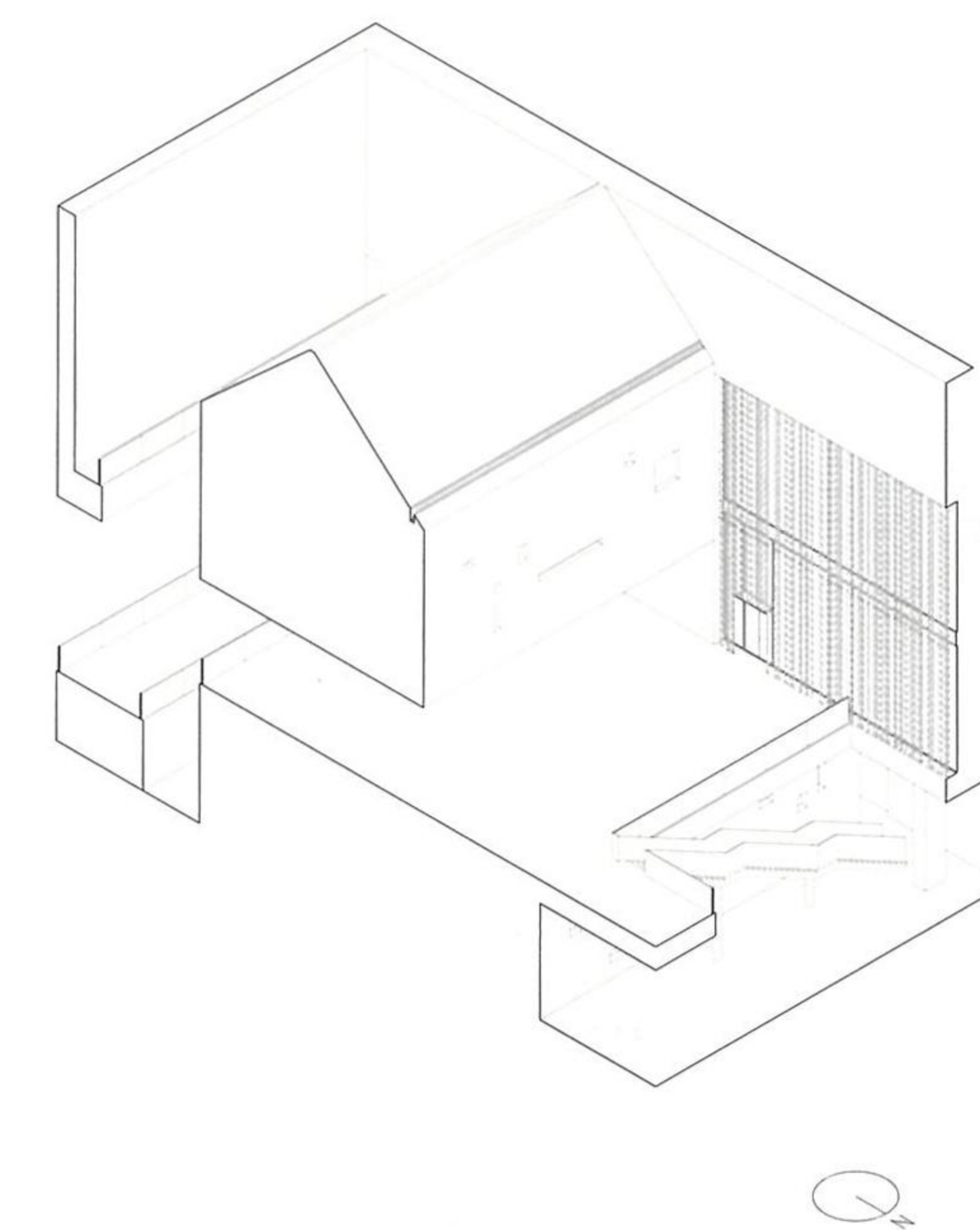


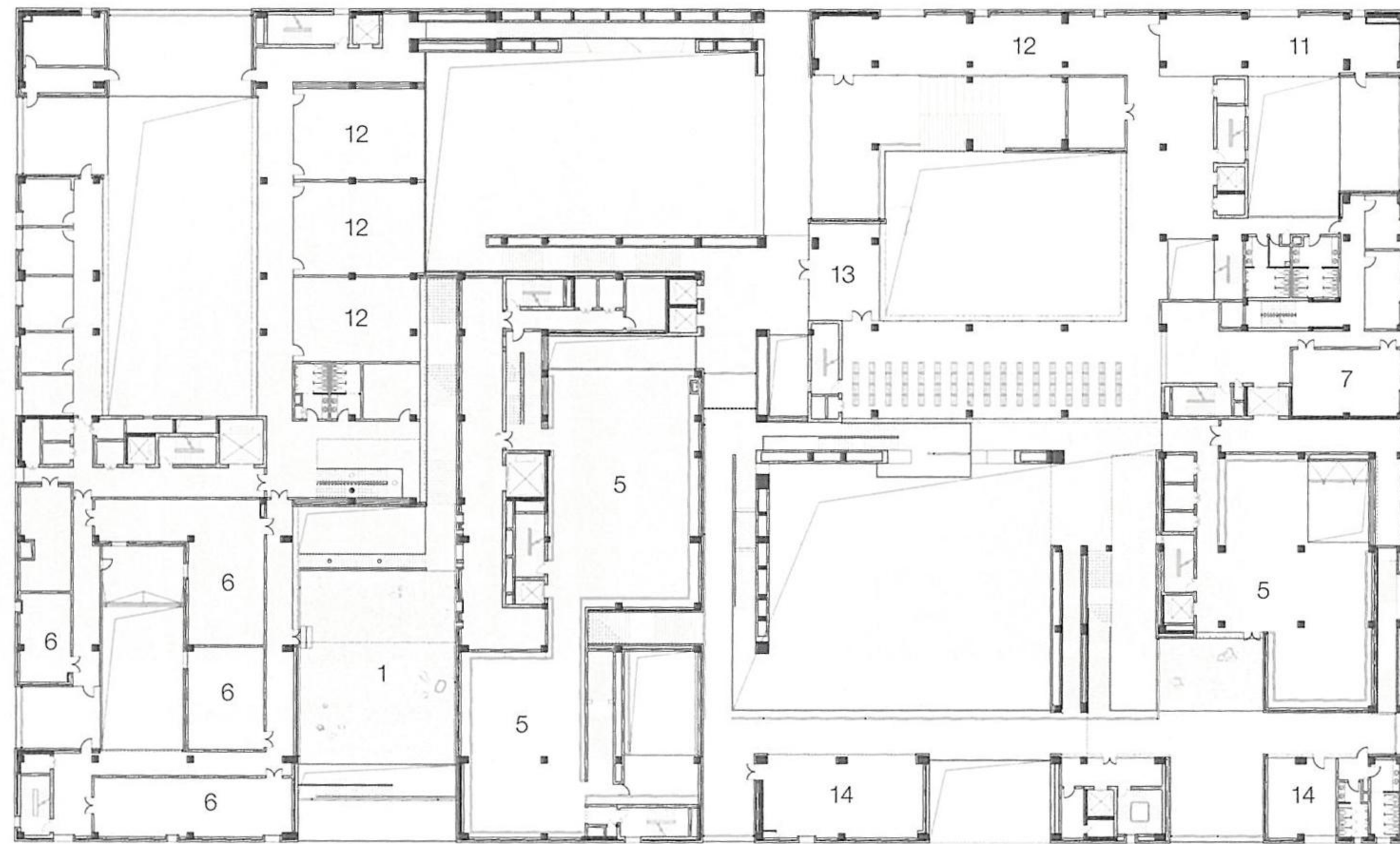
Diagram of pathways connecting courtyards



Architectural model of Shou County Culture and Art Center © Studio Zhu-Pei

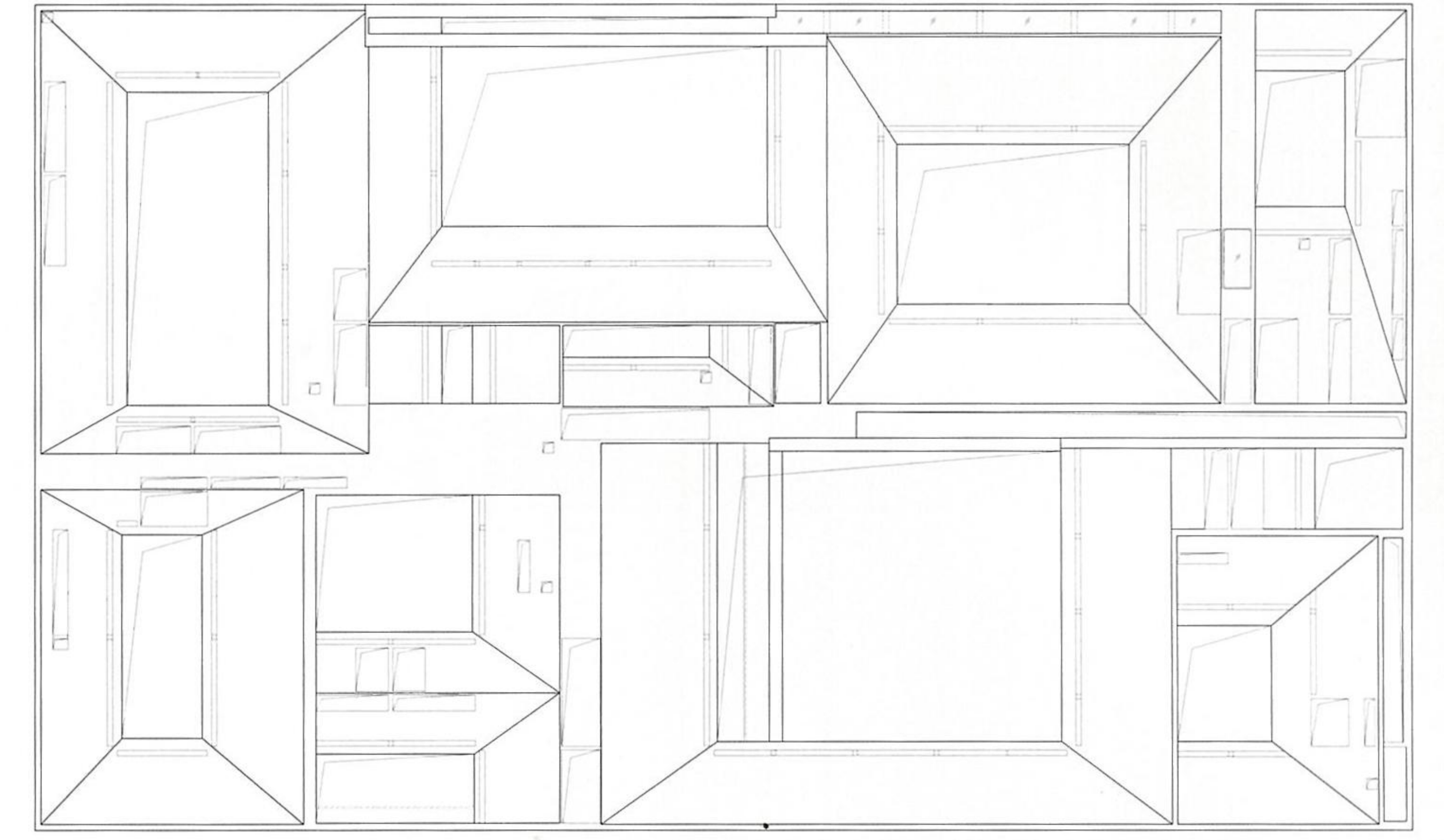


Axonometric diagrams of inner space

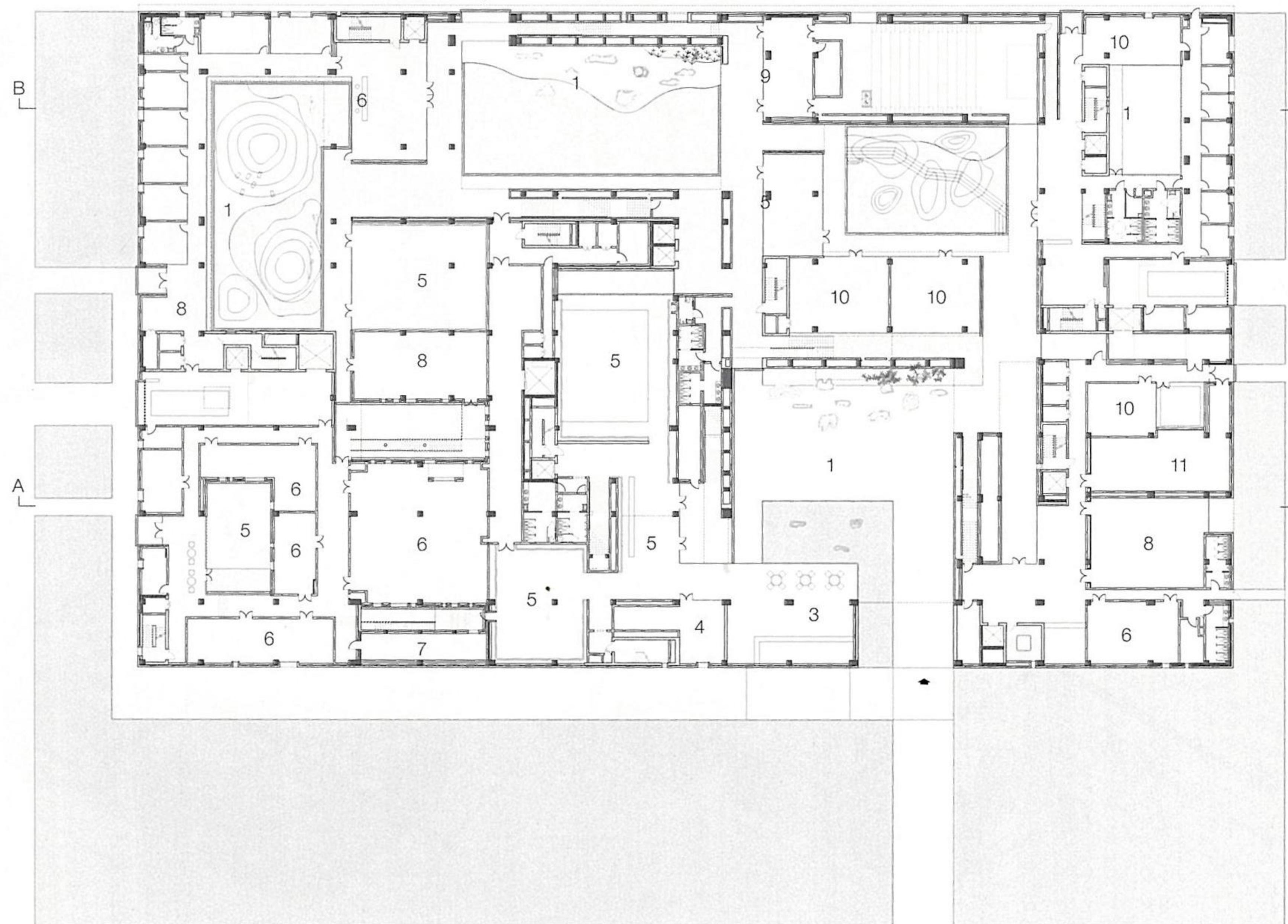


Second-floor plan

1. Courtyard
2. Reception
3. Café
4. Bookshop
5. Exhibition hall
6. Archives
7. Storage room
8. Classroom
9. Lecture room
10. Reading room
11. Multifunction room
12. Multimedia room
13. Activity room
14. Studio



Roof plan



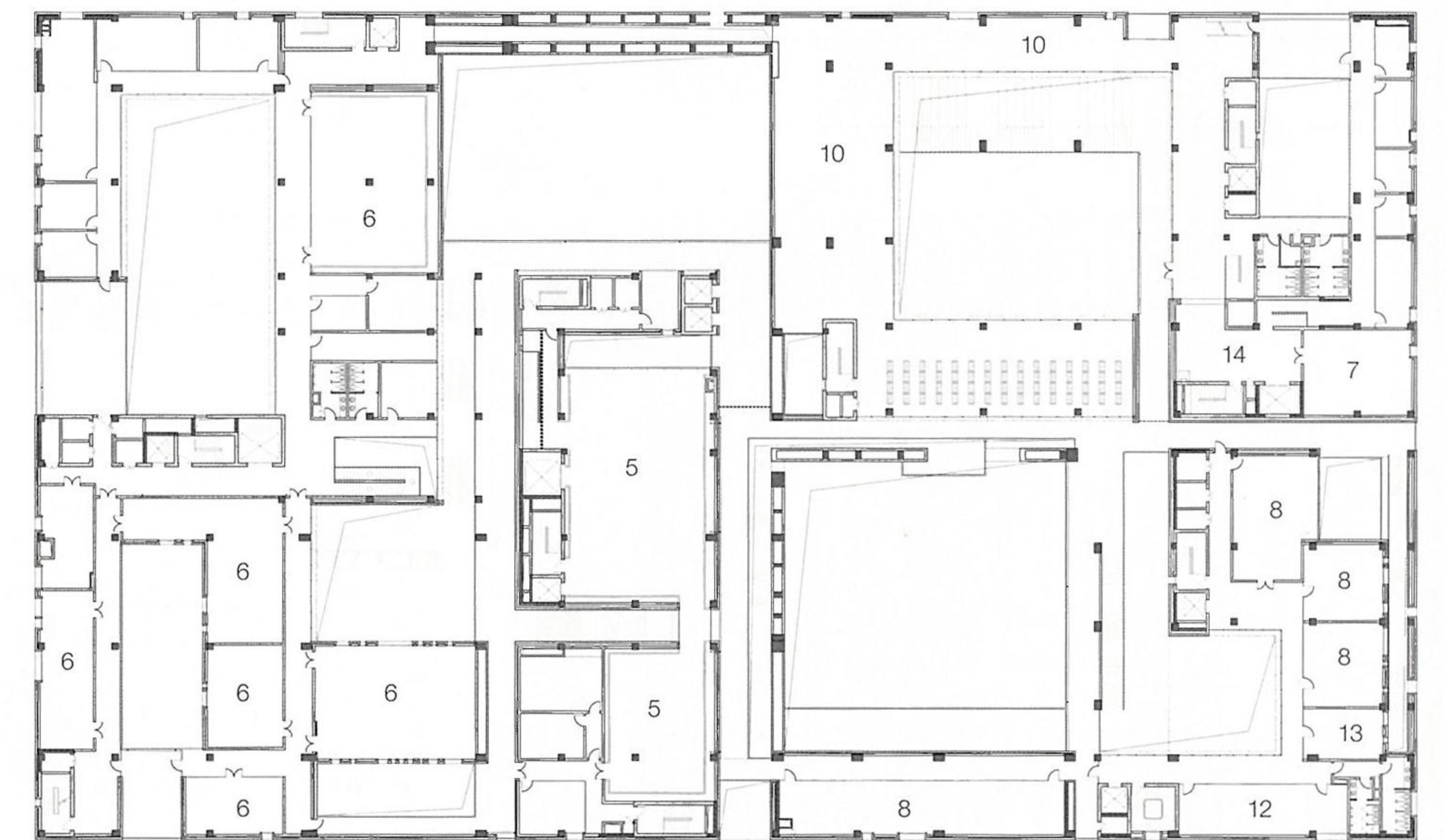
First-floor plan

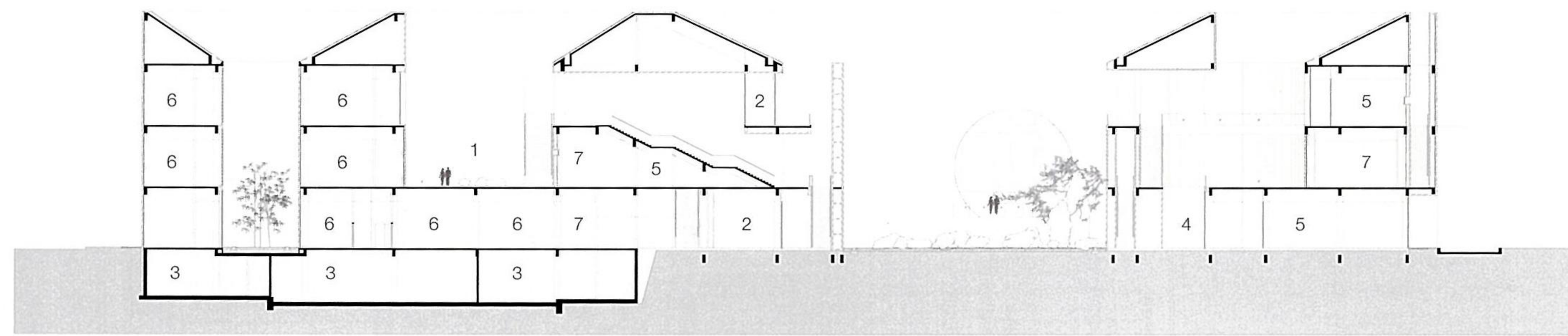
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Third-floor plan

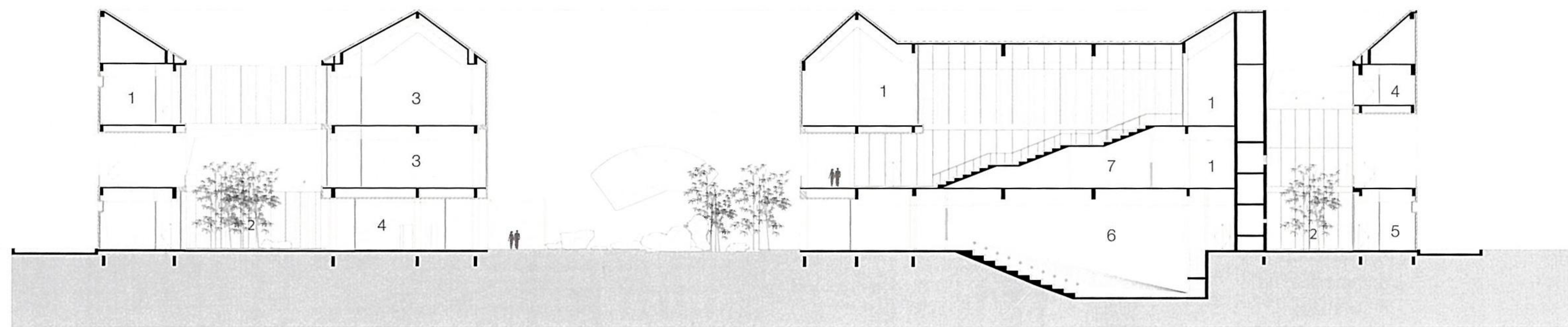
1. Courtyard
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8. Classroom
9. Lecture room
10. Reading room
11. Multifunction room
12. Multimedia room
13. Activity room
14. Studio





Section A-A

1. Courtyard
2. Reception
3. Equipment room
4. Classroom
5. Exhibition hall
6. Archives
7. Storage



Section B-B

1. Reading room
2. Courtyard
3. Exhibition hall
4. Reception
5. Studio
6. Lecture room
7. Storage

Construction details

1. Roof comprising exposed reinforced concrete panels, concrete fill, extruded polystyrene rigid insulation, polyethylene film, double waterproofing membrane, and reinforced concrete slab
2. Exposed reinforced-concrete hollow structure
3. Façade comprising exposed reinforced concrete, rigid insulation, and aerated concrete blocks
4. Glazed curtain wall with aluminum glazing units
5. Concrete slab paving, mortar layer sandwiching waterproofing membrane, reinforced concrete slab, and rigid insulation
6. Suspended ceiling comprising drywall, flame-retardant panel, aluminum C-profile framing suspended by tie rods
7. Wood paving
8. Fair-faced concrete balustrade panel
9. Tempered glass balustrade panel
10. Floorboards, insulating matting, mortar layer, screed, gravel layer, and earth
11. Rubble layer
12. Paving of gravel

