

The Living Library

Concept :

Reviving the spirit of Sia Boey's trading culture by reimagining trade not as a transaction of goods, but as the exchange of cultural heritage, local knowledge, and collective memory. The design blends past and present—respecting Sia Boey's identity while giving it a new civic and cultural purpose.

Programme Focus

Create a multi-layered urban library/civic hub that supports:

- Cultural exhibitions and storytelling
- Informal and formal learning
- Community events and discourse
- Memory archiving (both tangible and intangible heritage)
- Thrift market
- Relaxed, welcoming third spaces for everyday use

Design Aim

- To revitalize the identity of Sia Boey by transforming it into a living archive of Penang's cultural trade and collective memory
- To offer an inclusive, layered urban room that promotes interaction between people, culture, and knowledge
- To merge architecture with memory, allowing users to experience the site's historical depth while participating in its future
- To reinterpret the idea of trade as intellectual, emotional, and cultural exchange
- To provide a sustainable and flexible urban infrastructure for the community to grow with

In the heart of Sia Boey, a former market ground full of life, trade, and memory, stands a new kind of library — not a quiet shrine of books, but a vibrant house of lived stories.

Here, books are read while seated on vintage chairs once used in kopitiams.

Music is not streamed from digital libraries but played from vinyls and cassettes, echoing past decades.

Objects like an old fridge, a fan, or a handwritten recipe book are not just “exhibits” — they are anchors of personal and cultural memory.

The Living Memory Library invites the community to remember, reconnect, and relive — not by looking backward with nostalgia, but by looking inward with intention.

This library preserves not just what was, but how it felt.

S.W.O.T

SWOT Analysis	Details
Strengths	<p>Strong Cultural Identity: The concept is deeply rooted in Sia Boey's local heritage, which strengthens place attachment.</p> <p>Flat Topography: Site conditions are generally level and conducive for construction with minimal earthwork.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Noise Pollution: Surrounded by heavy traffic and commercial activity, especially from adjacent malls and roads — may disrupt quiet functions.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Noise Pollution: Surrounded by heavy traffic and commercial activity, especially from adjacent malls and roads — may disrupt quiet functions.</p>
Threats	<p>Strong Community Bond: The community bond is too strong until they will scare when there is outsider coming to Georgetown</p>

Target Users

- Local community (residents, youth, elderly)
- Students & researchers
- Cultural practitioners/artisans
- Tourists & visitors interested in heritage
- Traders & vendors (for temporary community markets)

Third Place Theory

- Neutral Ground (A place where people relax)
- Regularity (Frequent regularity)
- Playful mood (Relax and enjoyable)
- Easy accessible and Affordable (Free entry)
- Community Space

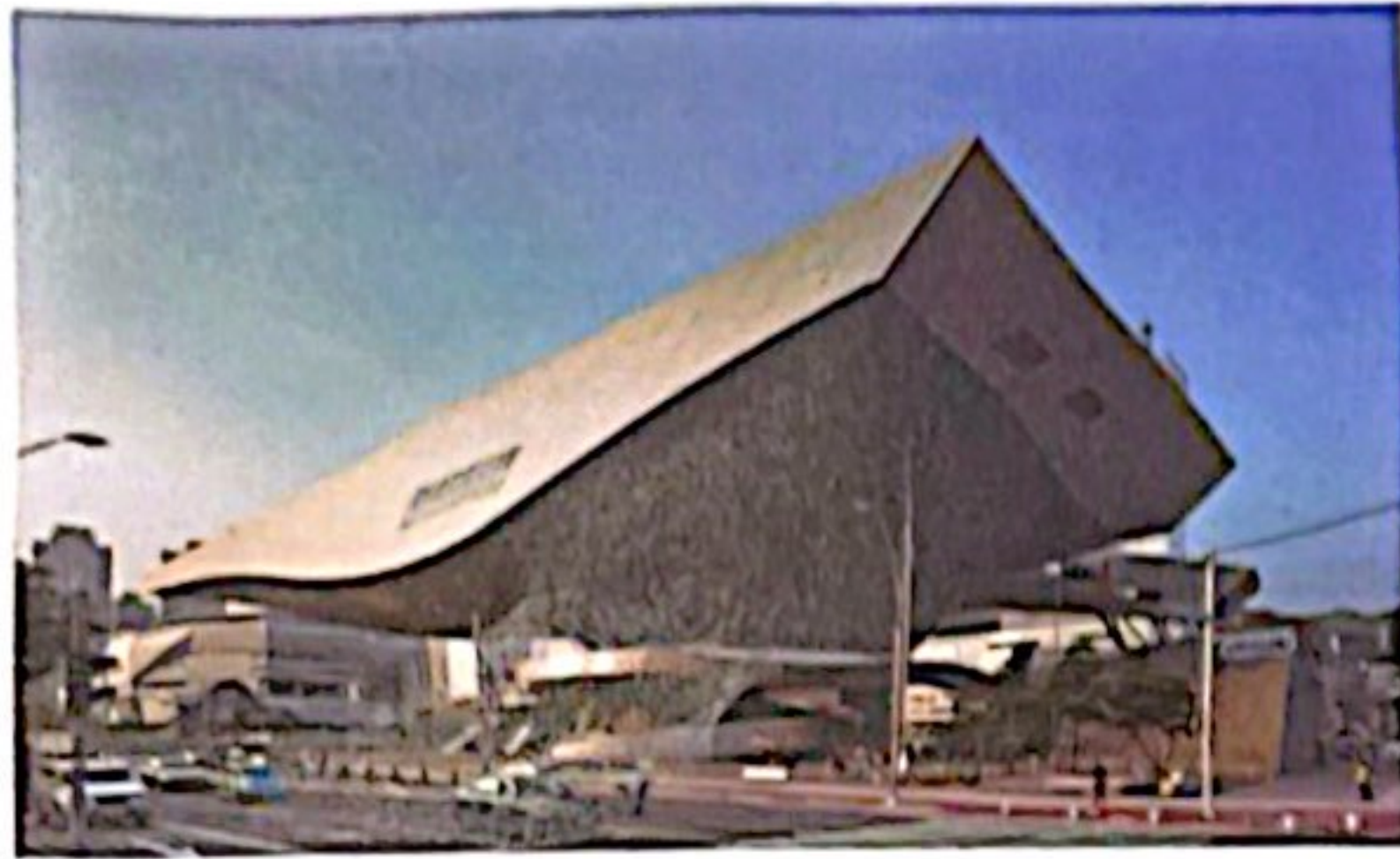
Breaks the stereotype of a quiet exclusive library

- From knowledge storage to exchange
- From Silence to dialogue
- From Passive to Active
- From book to people
- From borrow book to borrow people for their story
- Not the endpoint of information, the starting point of culture.



Cheng Jing Yang 0350519

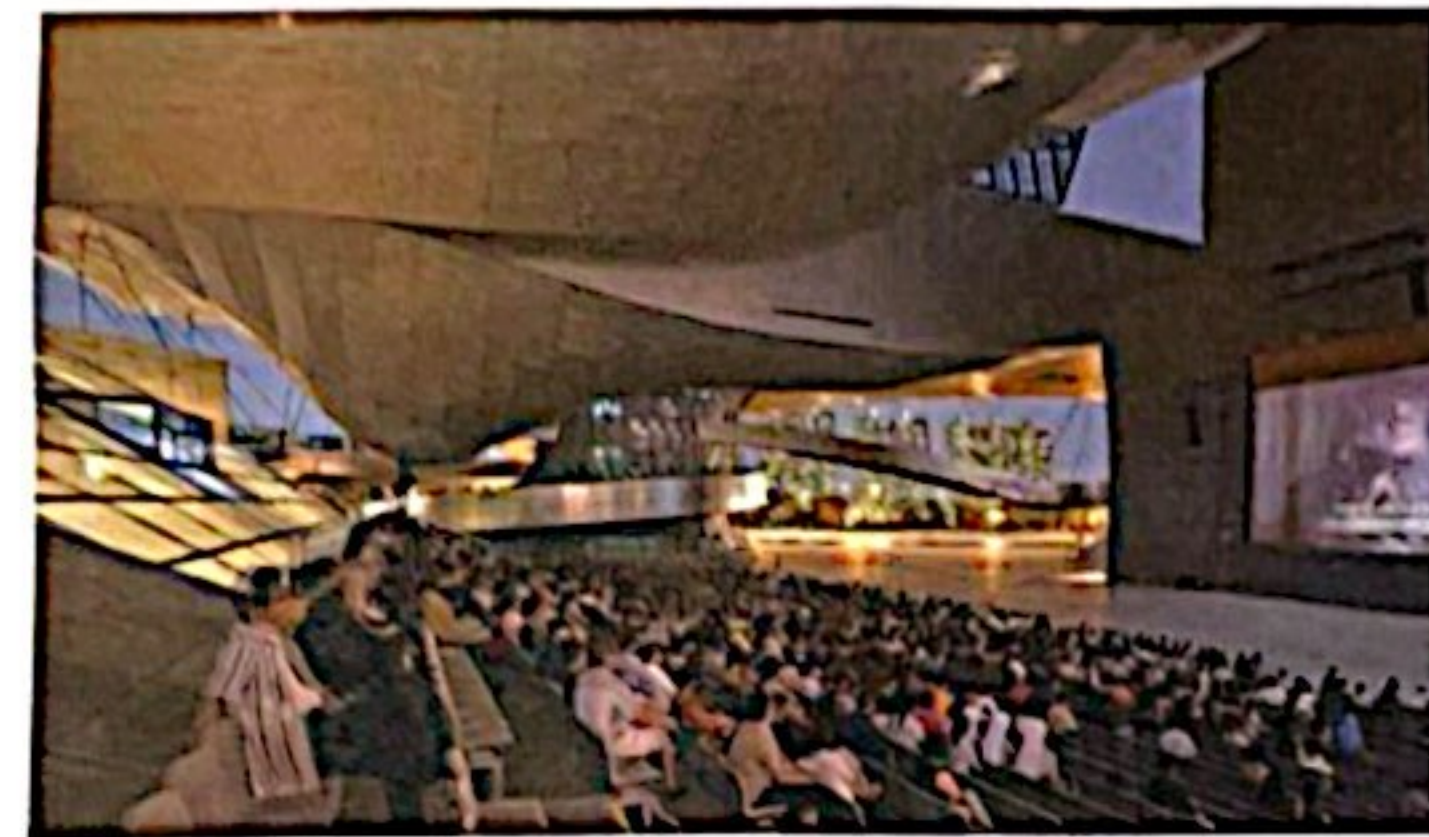
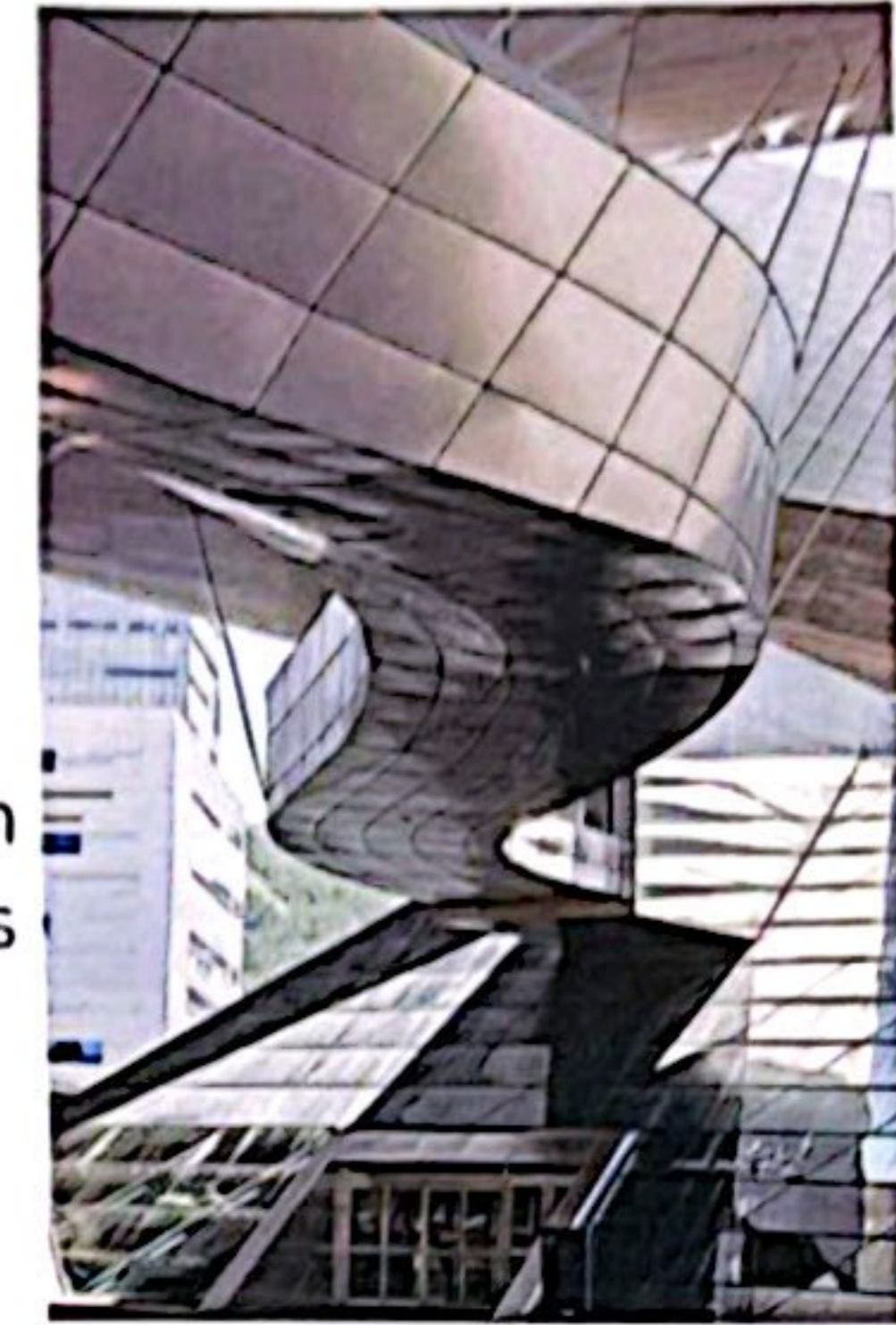
Precedent Study: Busan Cinema Center



- **Location:** Busan, South Korea
- **Function:** Cultural complex and main venue for Busan International Film Festival (BIFF)
- **Completion Year:** 2011
- **Architect:** Coop Himmelb(l)au (Wolf D. Prix and Helmut Swiczinsky)

Background:

The Busan Cinema Center, located in Busan, South Korea, the center is known for its striking “Big Roof” — a massive cantilevered steel structure that covers outdoor plazas and theaters. The center serves as a cultural hub for film lovers and the local community, combining innovative architecture with functional public spaces.

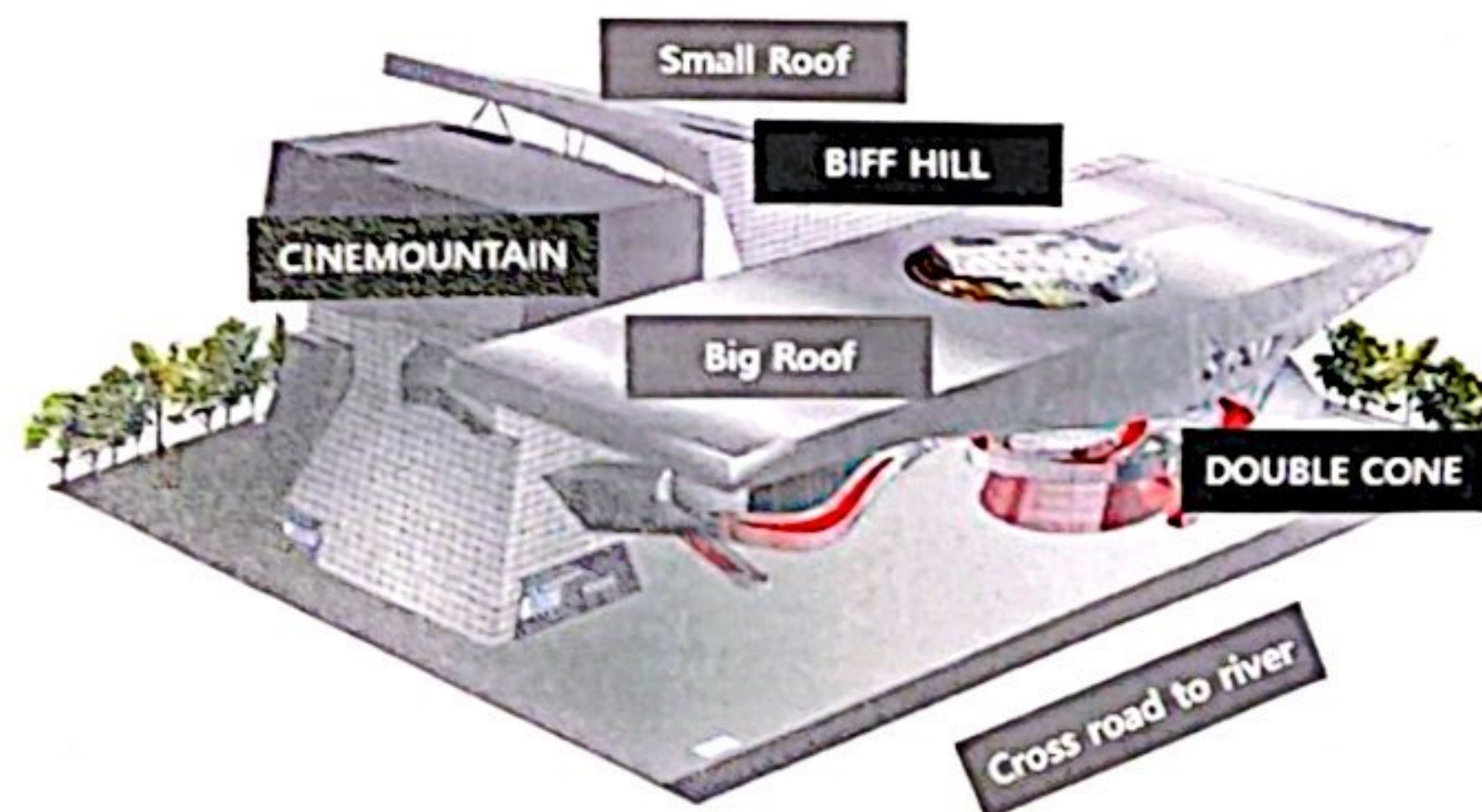
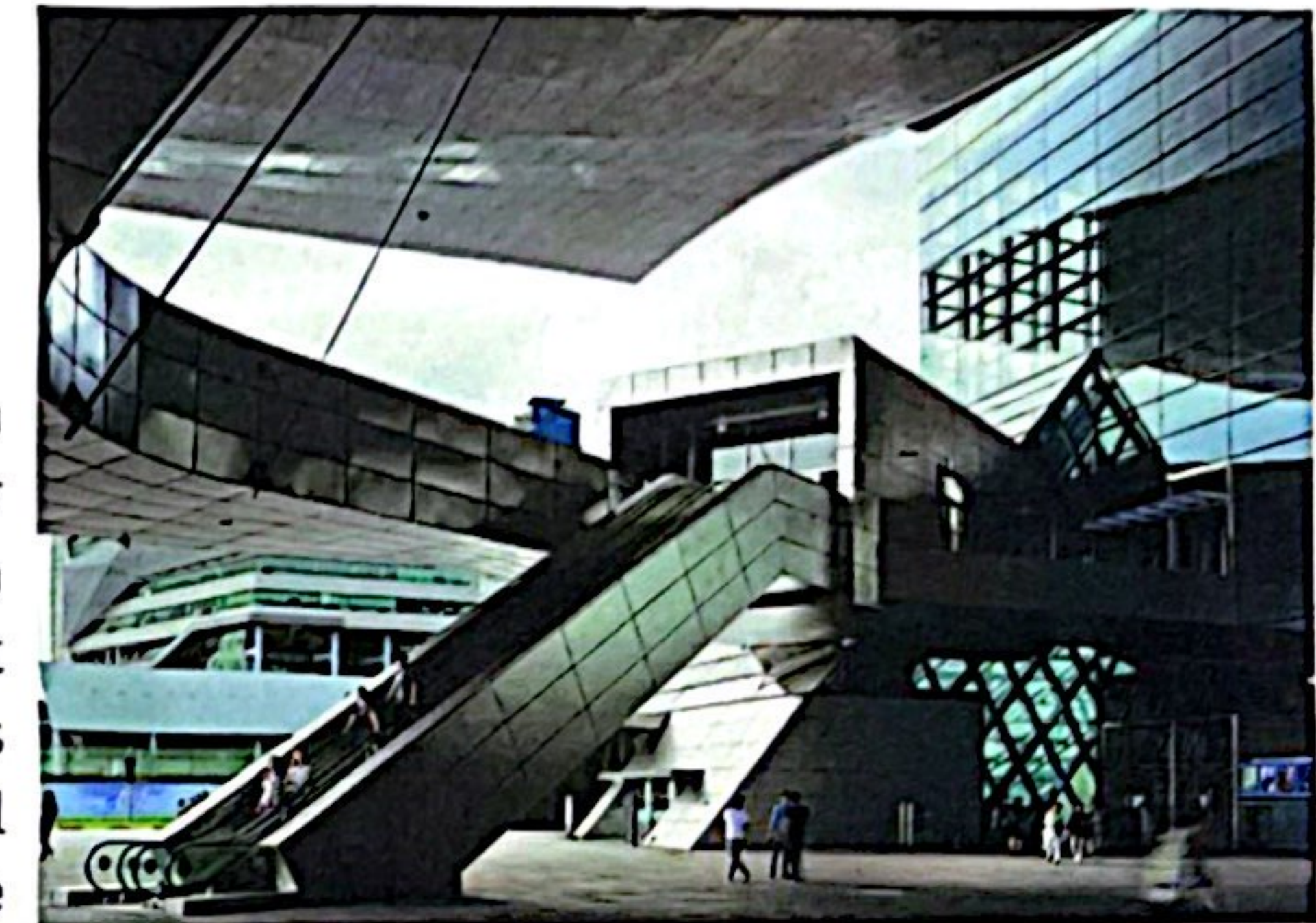


Outdoor Cinema Experience

Creating a vibrant public gathering place by integrating outdoor screening spaces
Encourages community engagement and inclusivity through open-air events

Vertical Connectivity: Escalator Design

Seamless transition from ground floor to upper levels enhances user circulation
Promotes easy access and flow between different public and event spaces
Integrates architecture with user movement, improving spatial experience



The Big Roof Structure

Innovative cantilever design creating a vast sheltered plaza without columns
Provides shade and protection from weather while maintaining openness
Acts as an iconic architectural statement and landmark

What I learned from this project is the use of outdoor cinema to create a public gathering space, the dramatic 'Big Roof' structure that shelters the plaza, and the use of escalators to connect ground to upper levels efficiently.

Precedent Study: James Baldwin Media Library and Refugee House



- James Baldwin Media Library & Refugee House
- Architects: associe
- Location: Paris, France
- Completion: 2024

Background:

This project serves as a cultural and educational hub for both refugees and local residents. It features spaces for language learning, communal cooking, and social interaction. The design employs prefabricated poured earth walls and a wooden structure, promoting thermal comfort and sustainability.



Lessons from this project:

- **Combined social & cultural functions:** library space + refugee training
- **Adaptive reuse of existing buildings:** turning an old school into a media library
- **Multipurpose, flexible spaces:** coworking, café, multipurpose room promote interaction, learning, and community events.



Similarities to Your Site:

Community Integration: Designed to foster interaction between diverse user groups.

Programmatic Flexibility: Accommodates various activities beyond traditional library functions.

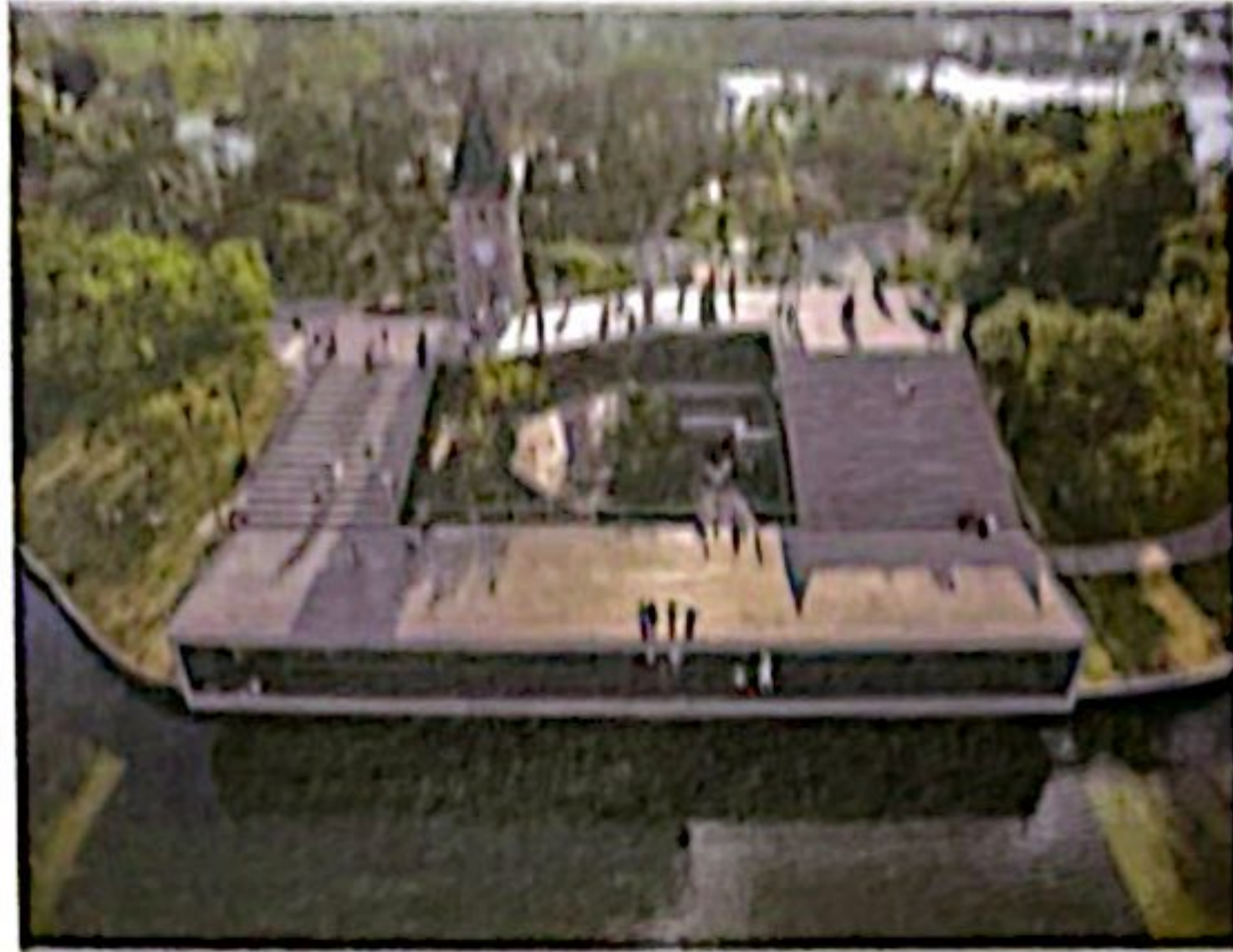
“This project is located in Paris and was completed in 2024 by transforming a former high school into a media library combined with a refugee integration center.

What makes this project special is its social mission—it’s not just a library, but also a place for language learning, vocational training, and cultural exchange. It welcomes both the general public and vulnerable groups like refugees and the deaf community.

Architecturally, it emphasizes inclusivity through open, flexible spaces like coworking areas, multipurpose halls, and a café that fosters interaction. This directly inspired my design to support social inclusivity and cultural revitalization in George Town.

The project also reflects adaptive reuse—respecting the past while creating a space for the future. This aligns with my concept of reviving the Sia Boey spirit by turning memory and knowledge into a new form of trade.”

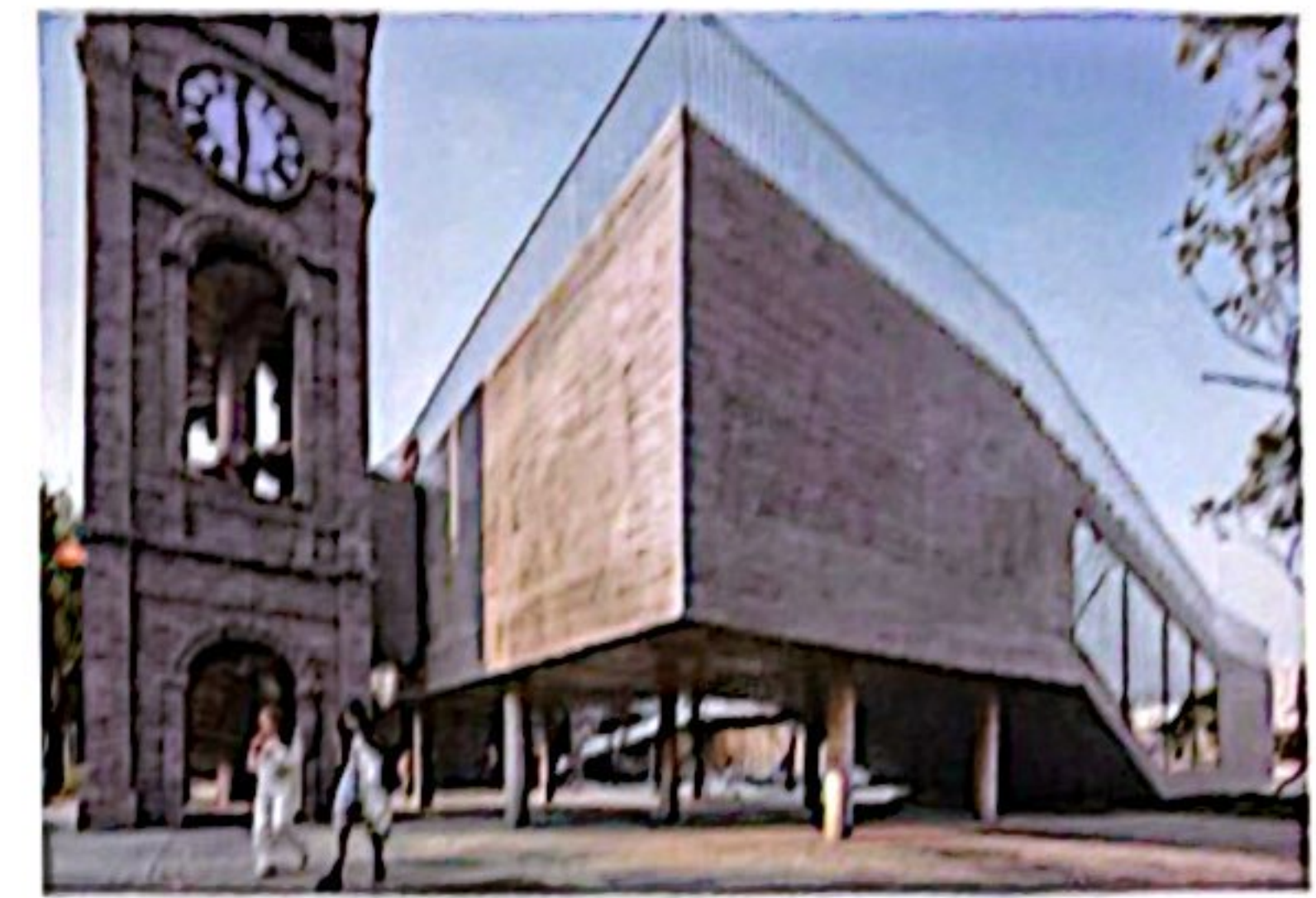
Precedent Study: Mengzi NSAU Bookstore of Libralrie Avant-Garde



- Architects: ZAO/Standardarchitecture (Zhang Ke)
- Location: Mengzi, Yunnan, China
- Completion: 2023

Background:

Situated by Southlake in Mengzi, this bookstore is part of a broader urban renewal project. The site was historically significant as the campus of the National Southwest Associated University during WWII. The design preserves existing structures and integrates new architectural elements, creating a serpentine loop that connects the building with its natural surroundings.



Lessons from this Project:

Spatial Journey: Create a narrative through architectural forms that guide visitors and evoke exploration.

Material Palette: Use a combination of traditional and contemporary materials to reflect cultural continuity and innovation

Raw and minimal intervention:

Maintains the rough stone and concrete walls, giving a cave-like atmosphere.



Similarities to Your Site:

Historical Context: Engages with a site rich in historical significance, akin to George Town's heritage.

Landscape Integration: Blurs the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces, enhancing the connection with nature.

Why the circulation is fun:

Unexpected Entrance

Visitors enter through a former air-raid shelter, creating a sense of mystery and excitement right from the start.

Meandering Pathways

The circulation mimics a cave-like tunnel, curving and unfolding slowly, encouraging visitors to wander and discover, rather than rush through.

Varied Spatial Experience

As you move through the store, the ceiling height, lighting, and openness shift, making each area feel different and refreshingly unpredictable.



"The Mengzi NSAU Bookstore offers a unique spatial journey. Visitors enter through an old air-raid shelter, creating a sense of quiet descent. The circulation path winds like a cave, gradually revealing spaces. Varying ceiling heights and soft lighting guide the user's mood, encouraging a slow, personal engagement with books. It's not just a bookstore—it's an introspective journey."

"This is not a conventional library, this is a redefinition of what a library means in the 21st century"

→ library can be a new tourist spot.

→ From book-based library to people based library.

Traditional library

→ store knowledge

→ let people to study

→ Reading

→ Passing ~~the~~ knowledge.

My library

→ store culture and memory

→ passing down the history

→ let people come join, sharing, creating

→ listen to people, read their life.

"in ancient times, libraries were about scrolls and books.

In modern times, they're about people, conversations, and memory.

This is a library of stories, of cultures, of community."

Library:

• 一种思想容器

• 一种文化的聚合平台

• 一种地方记忆的存档机制

• 一种人和人之间连接的媒介

Redesign library

→ From storage → exchange

→ From silence → dialogue

→ From passive → active

→ ~~people~~ From book → people

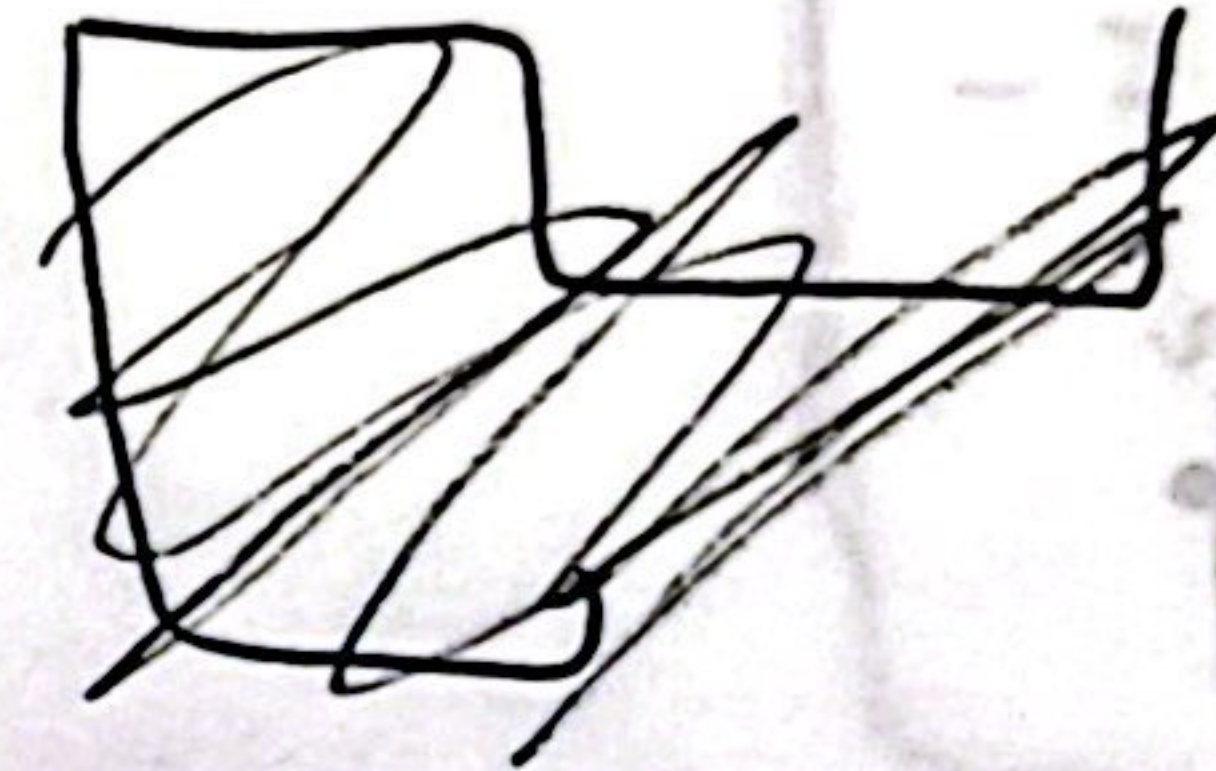
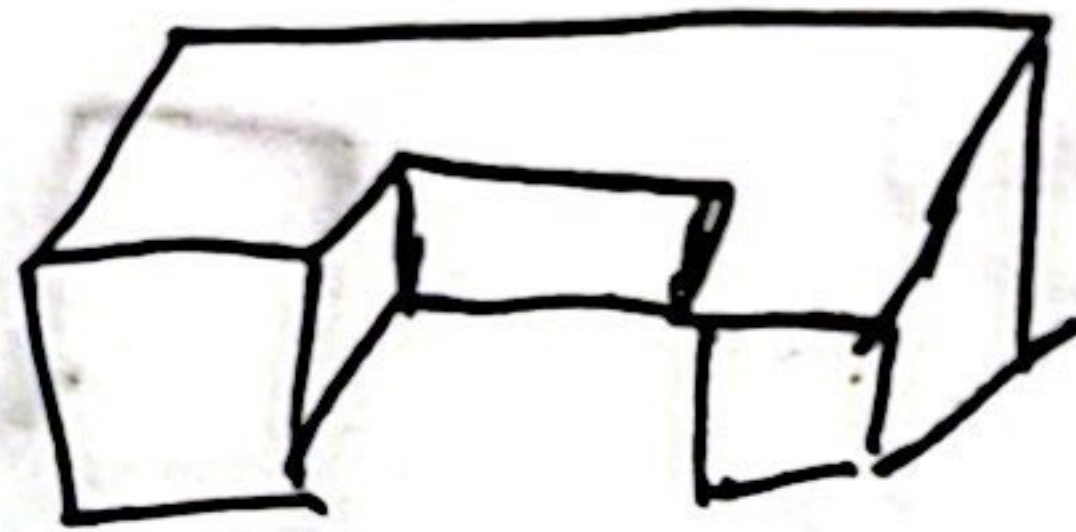
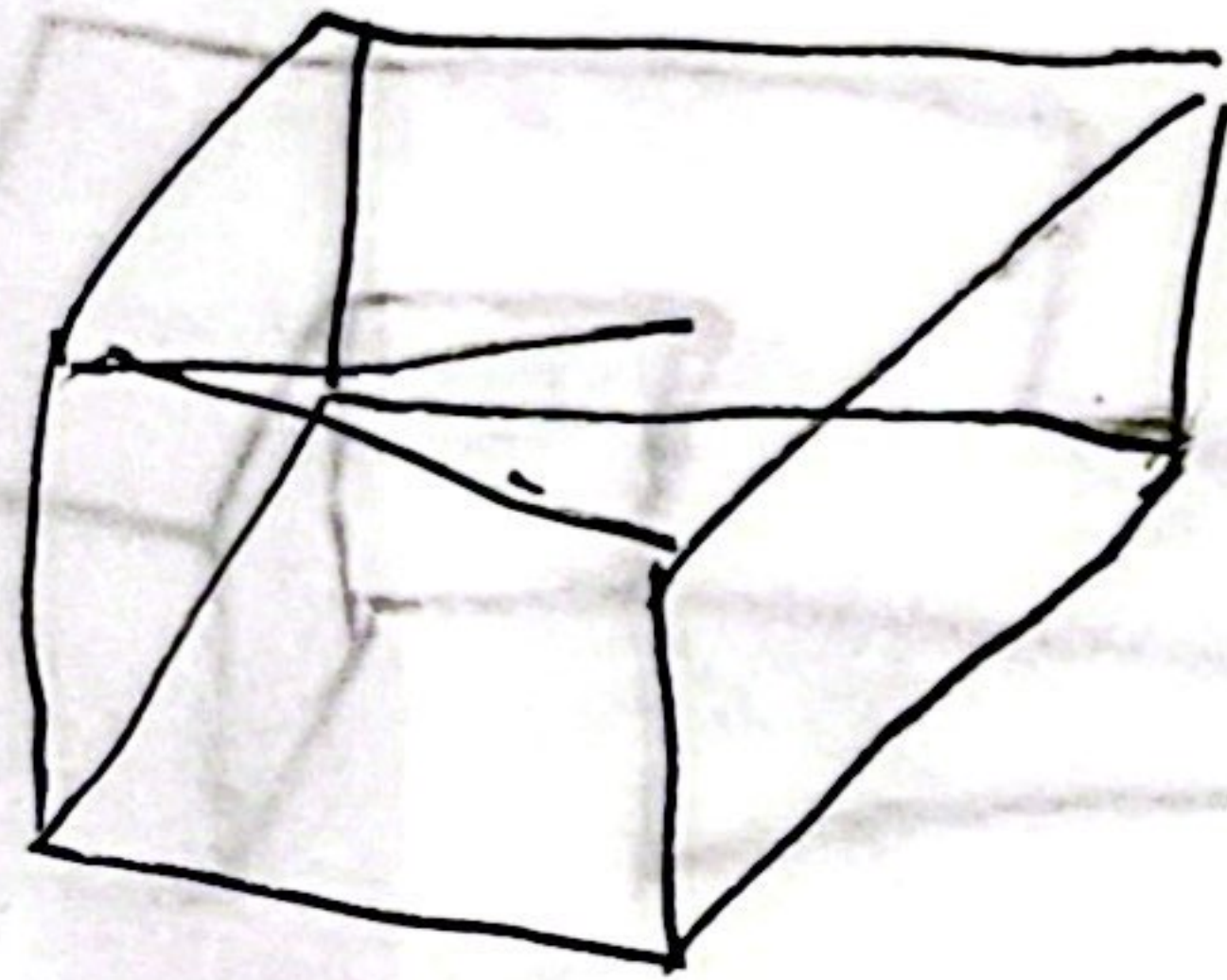
→ You're not borrow a book, borrow a people to listen their story.

→ library can be the most vibrant place in the city

→ Not the endpoint of information, The starting point of culture.

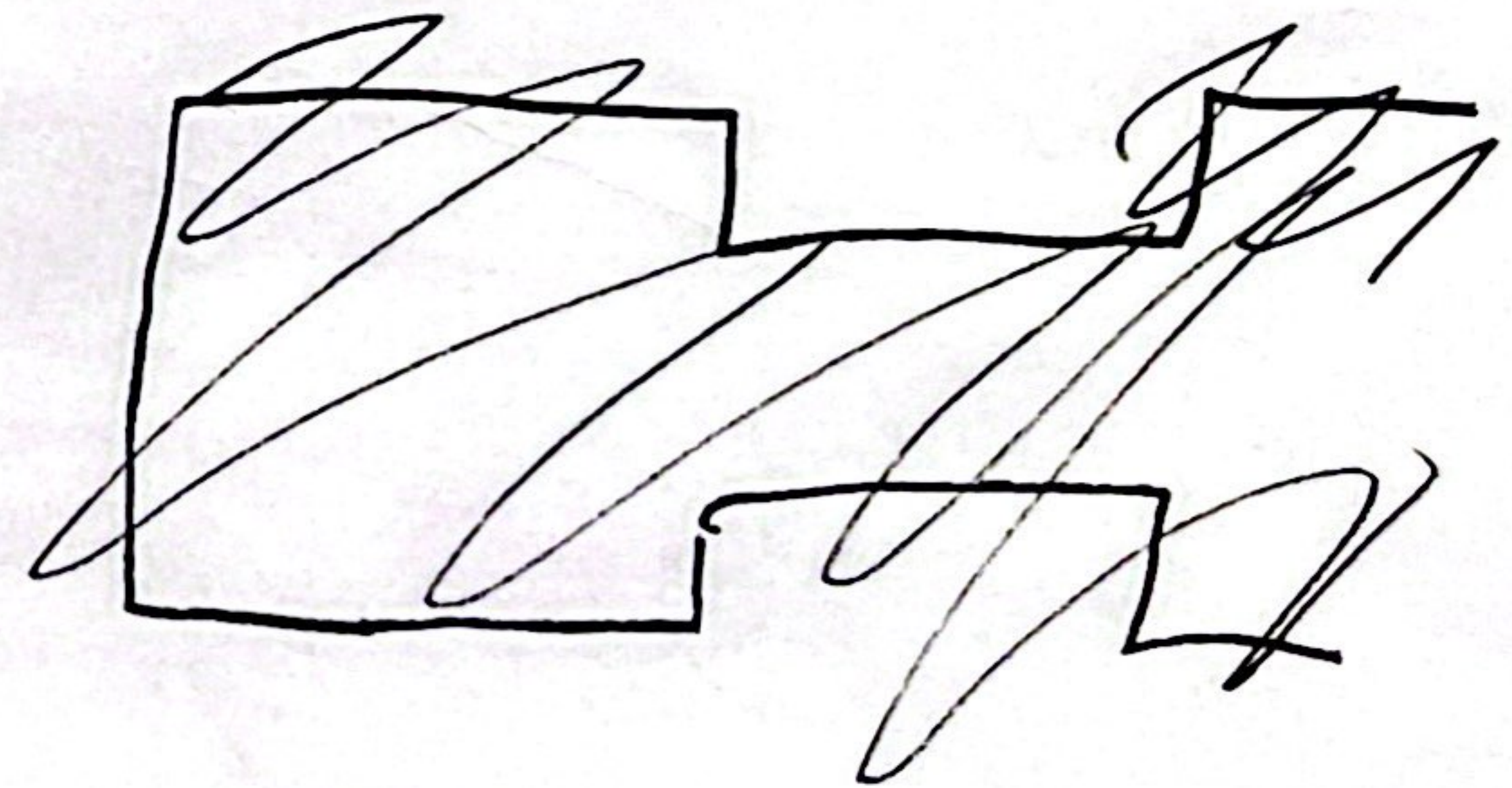
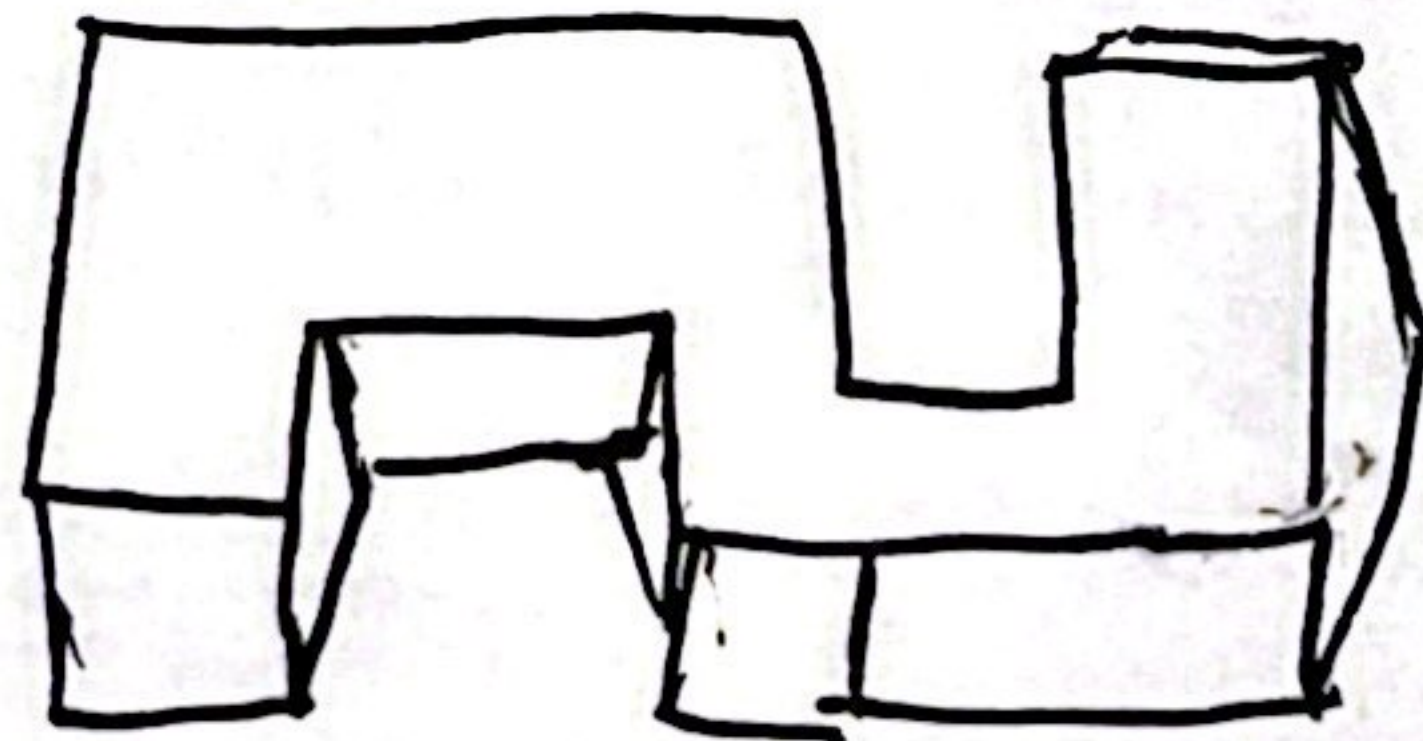
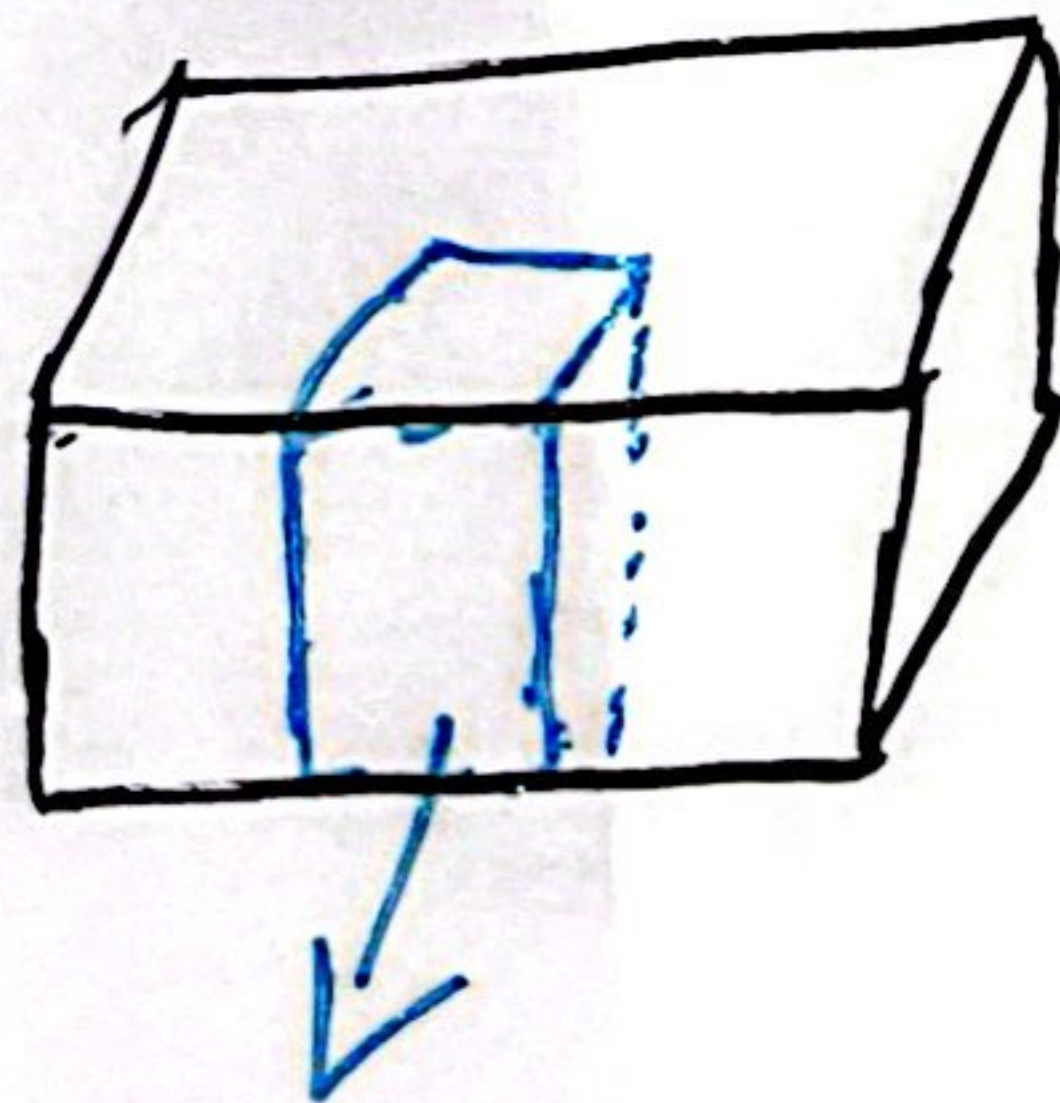
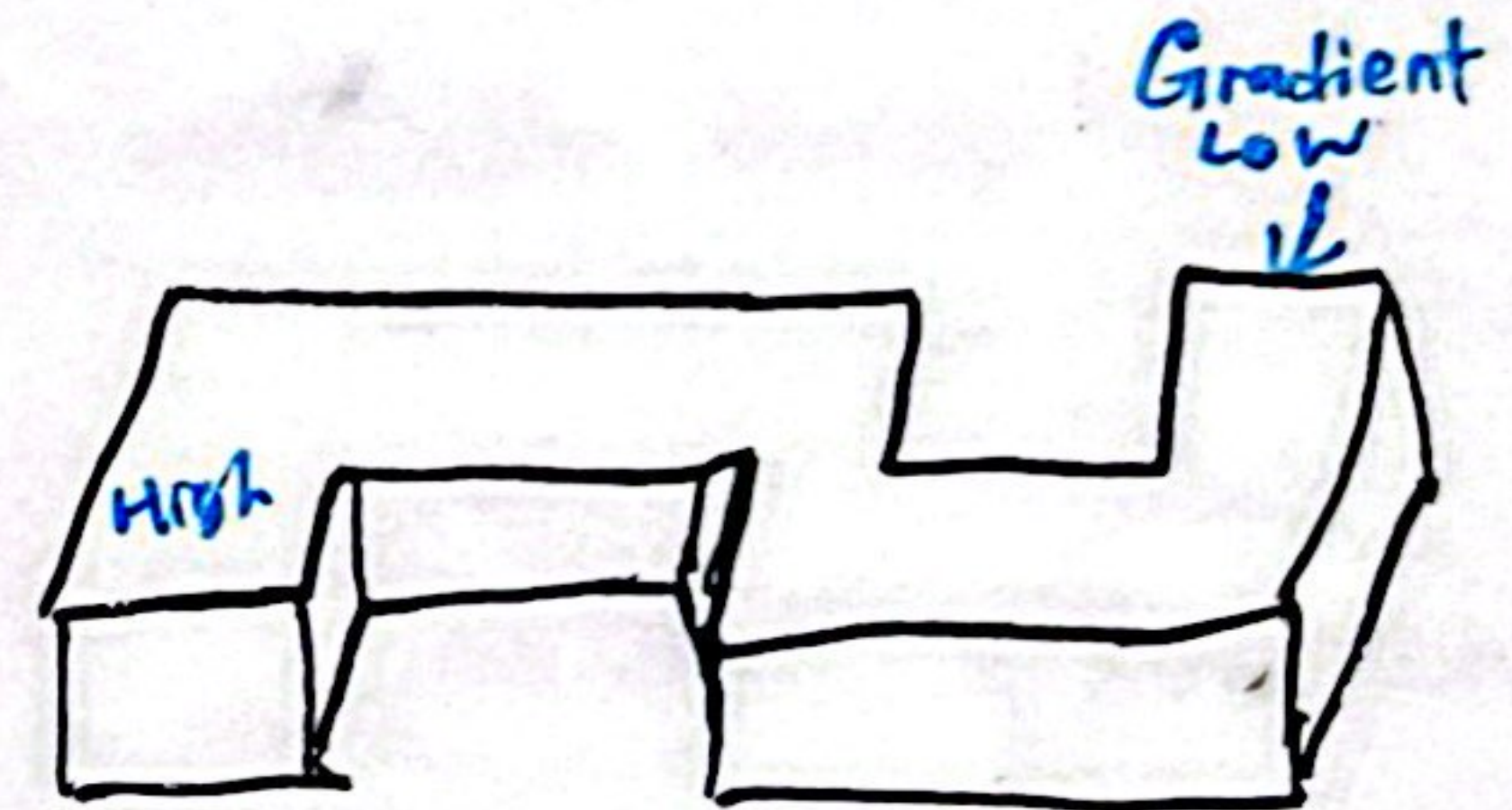
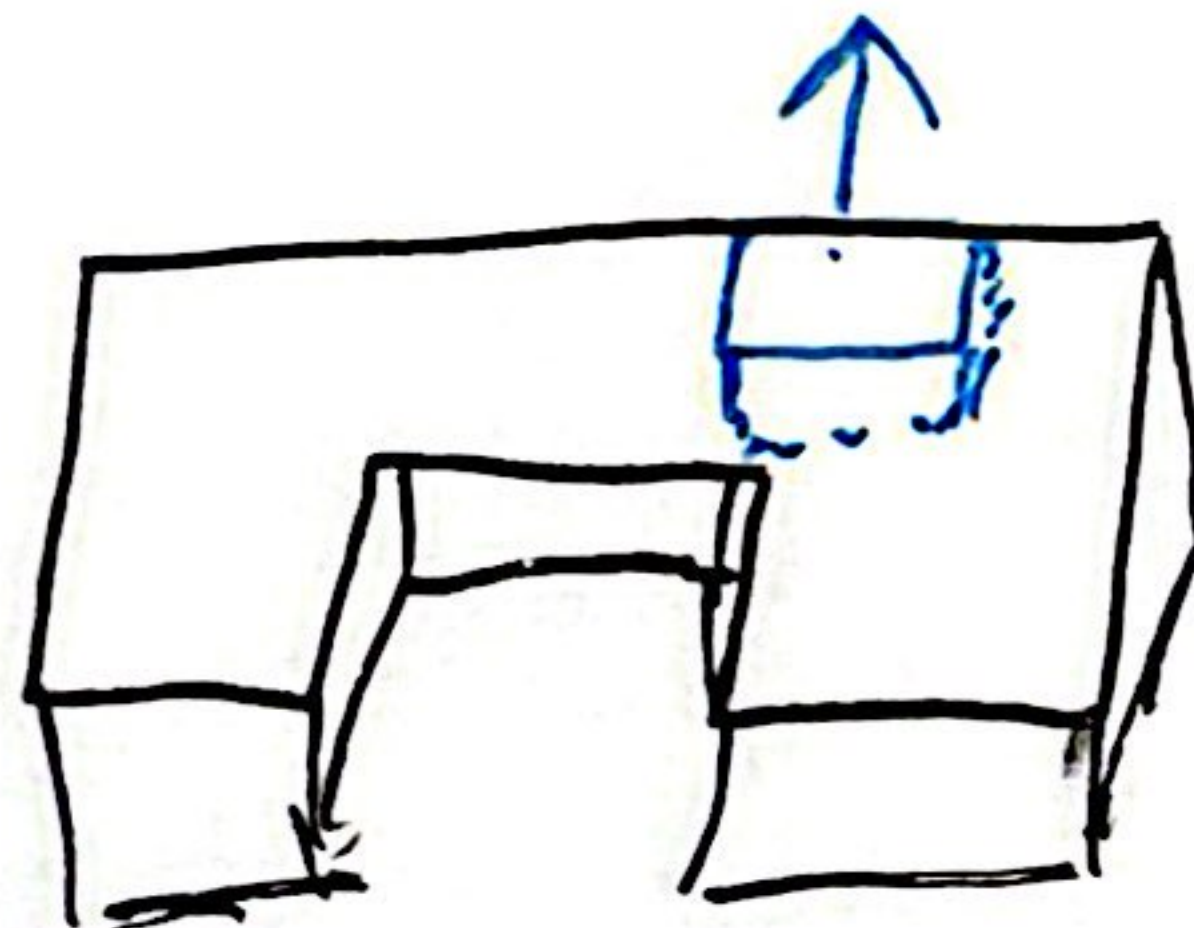
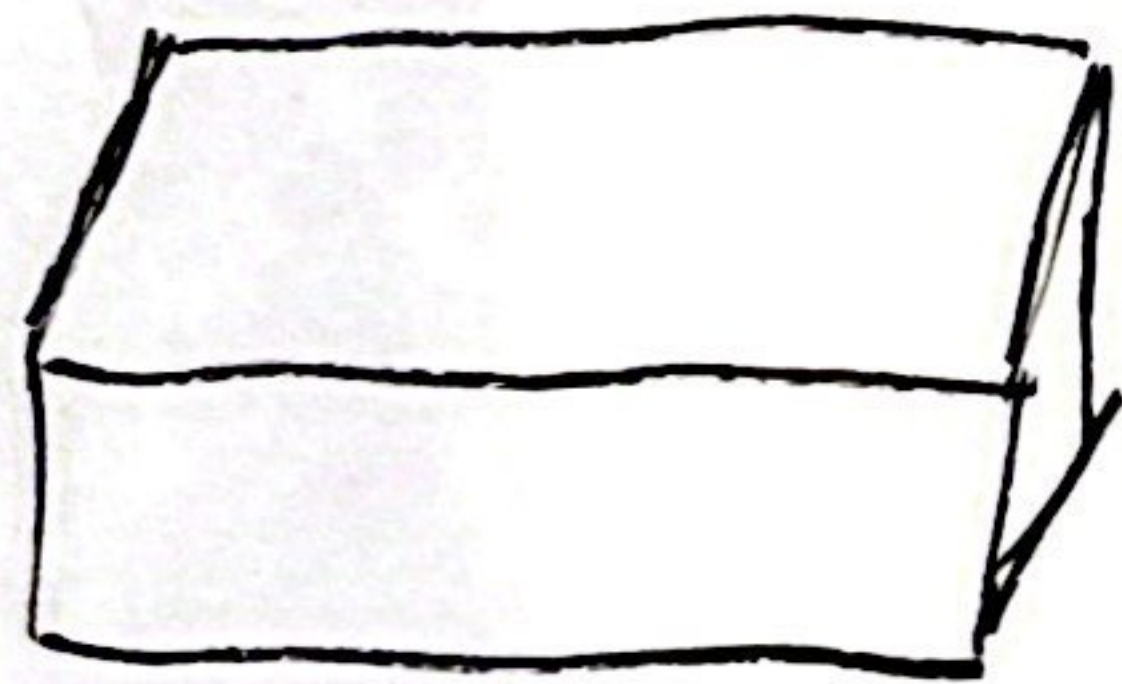
→ Not a place tourist pass by → A place they choose to stop.

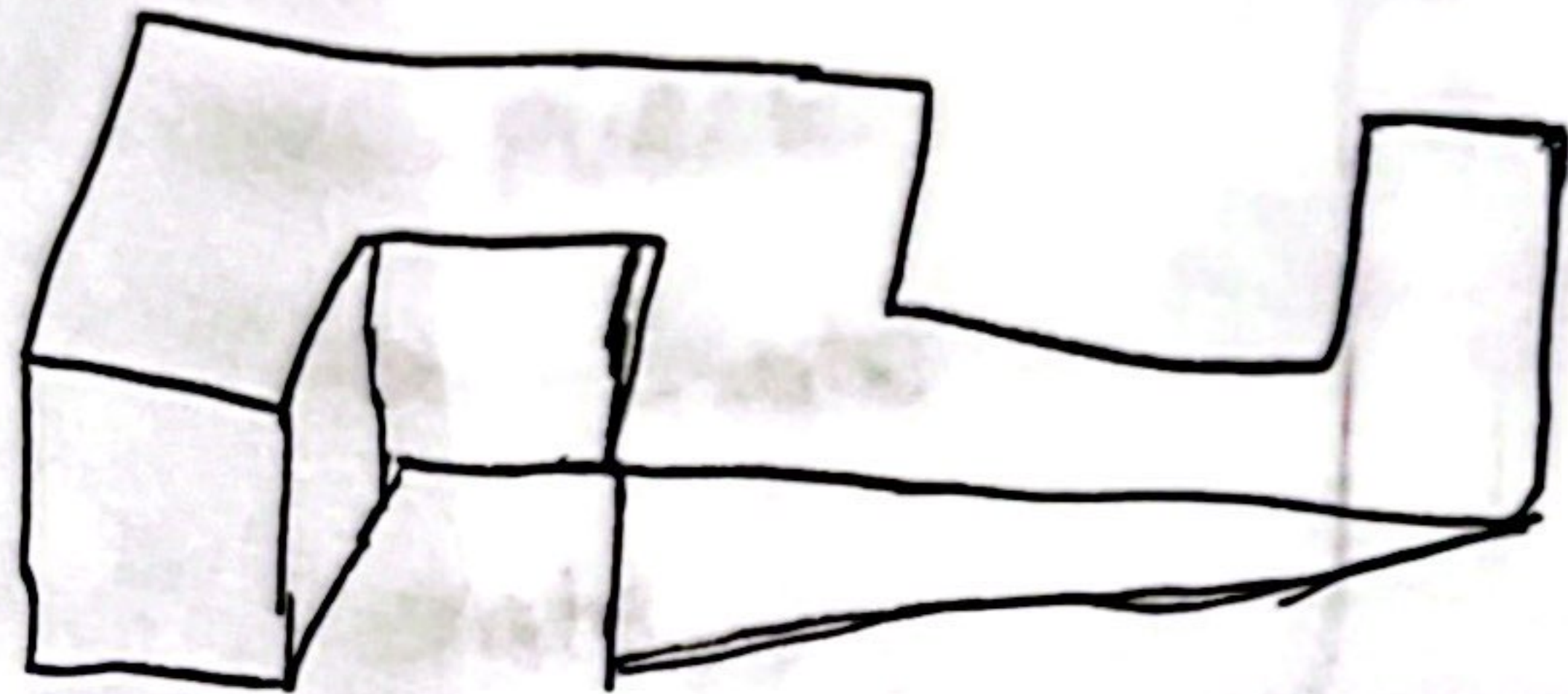
Form Development



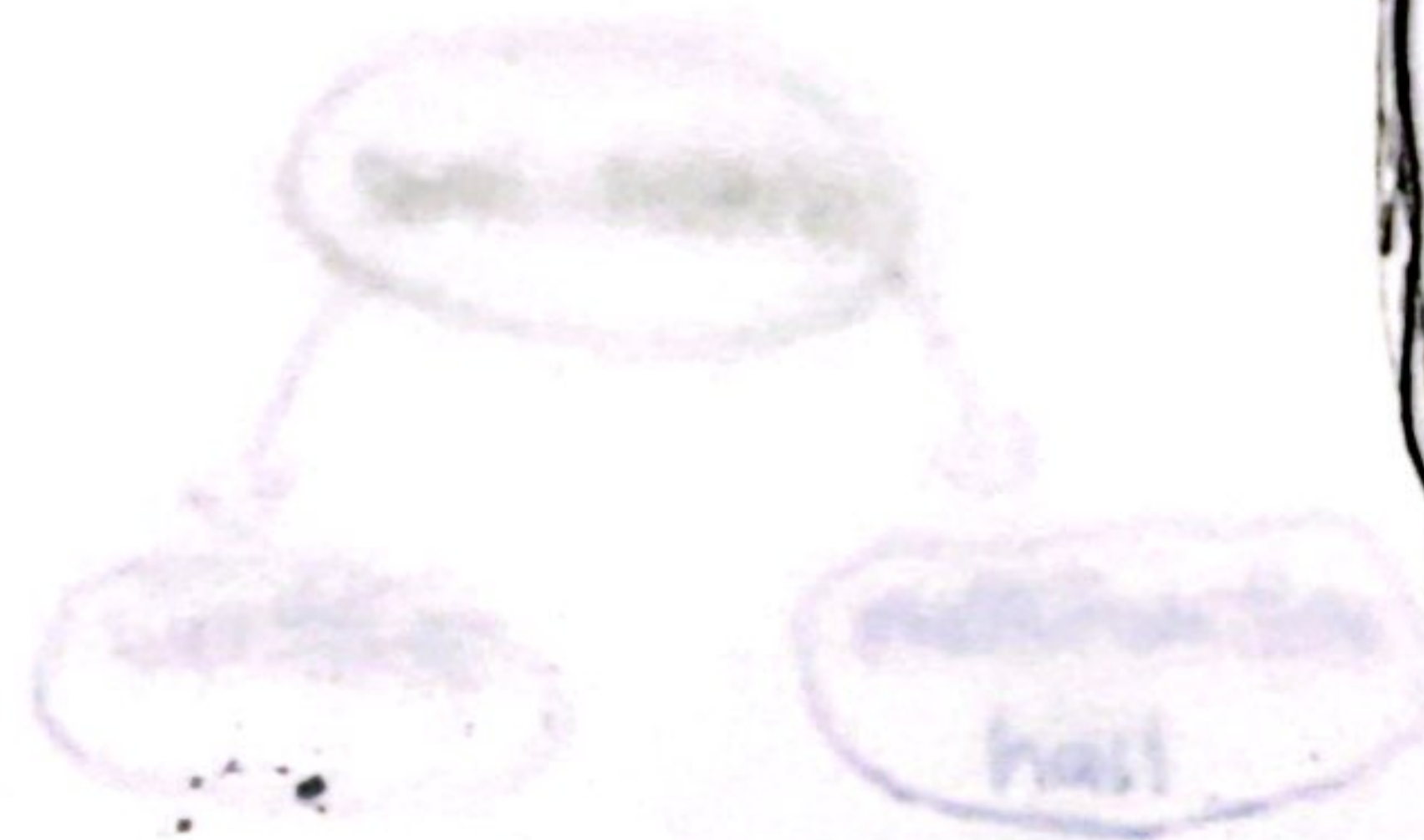
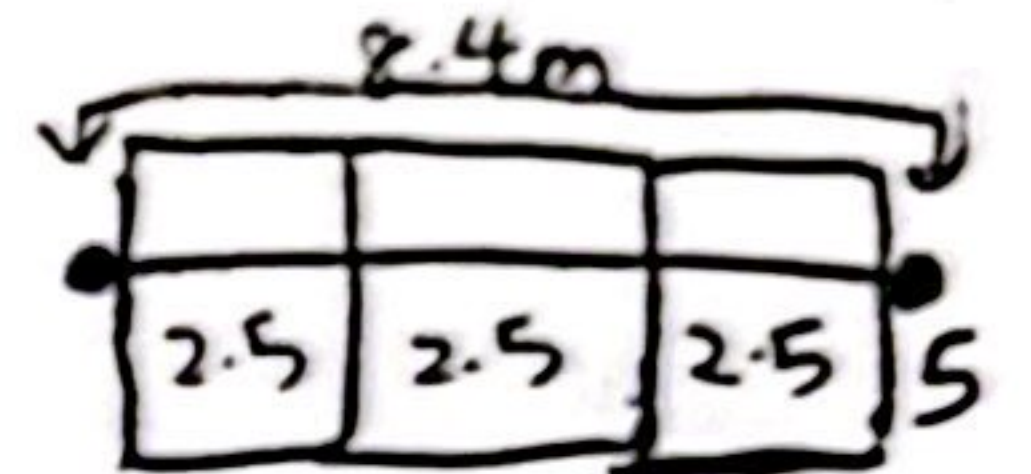
Parking
OMA
MURDV
Big
Green link diagram

2.5	2.5	2.5	5
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- Parking
- 8.4m
 - 2.5m for each



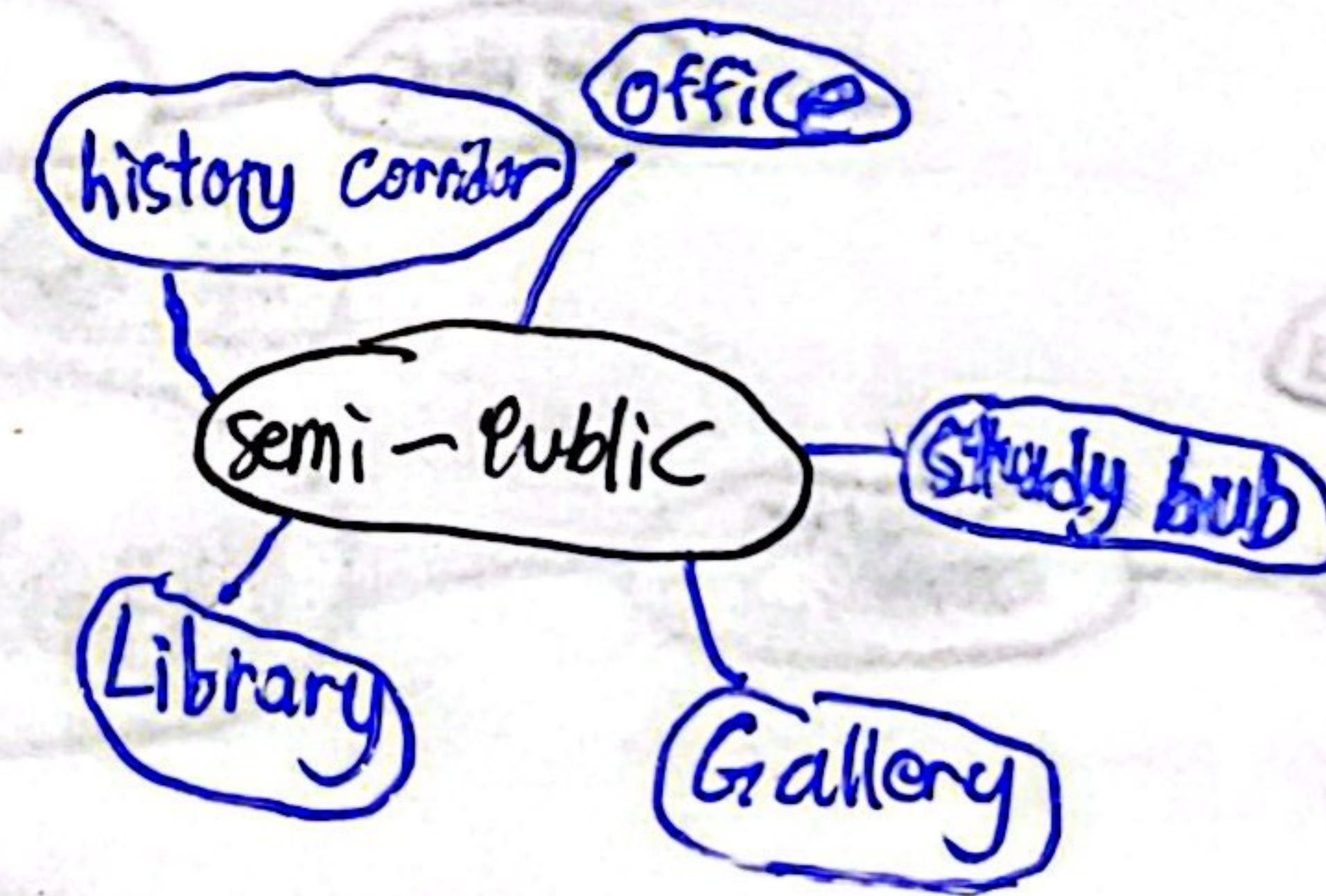
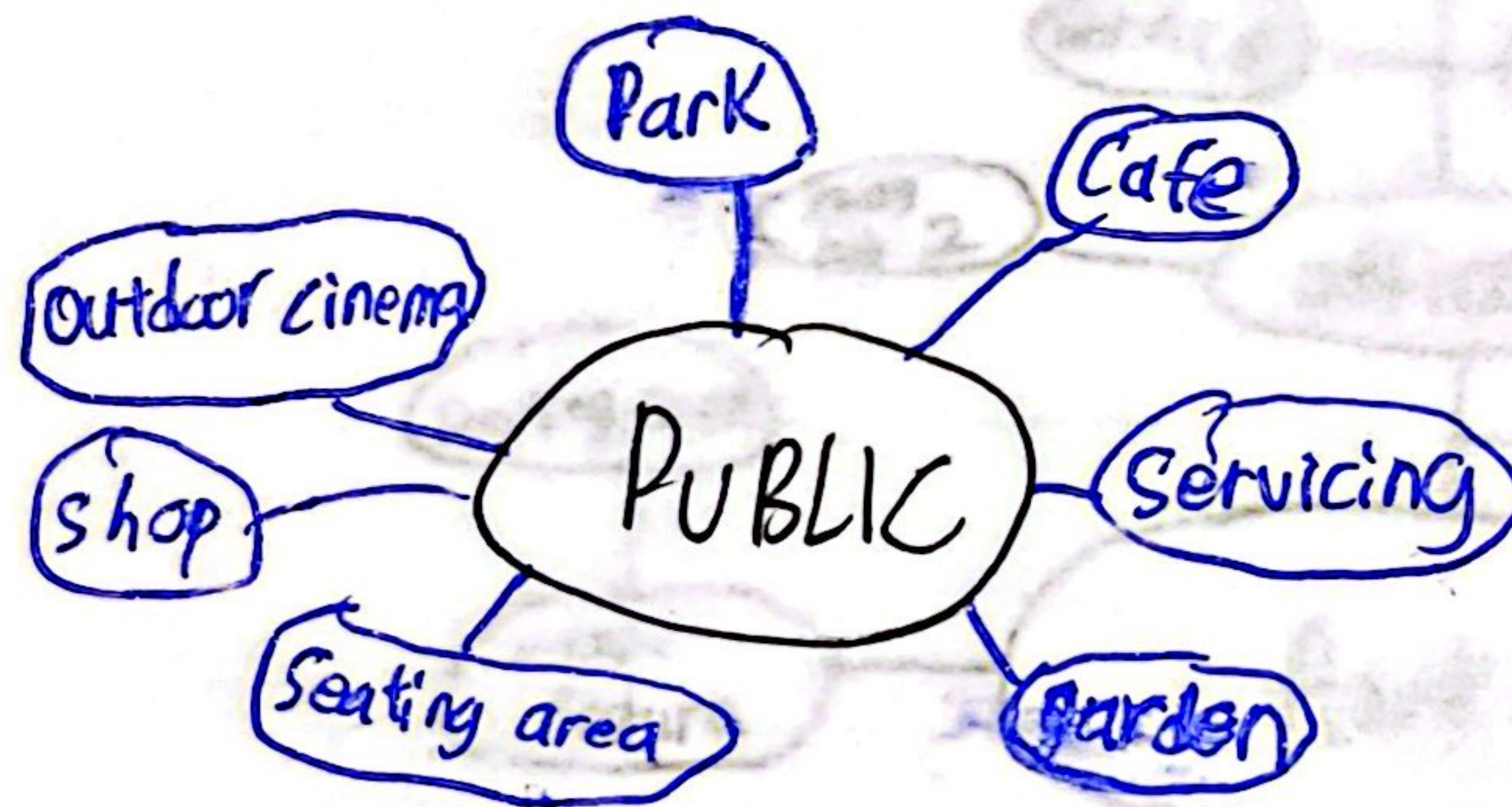
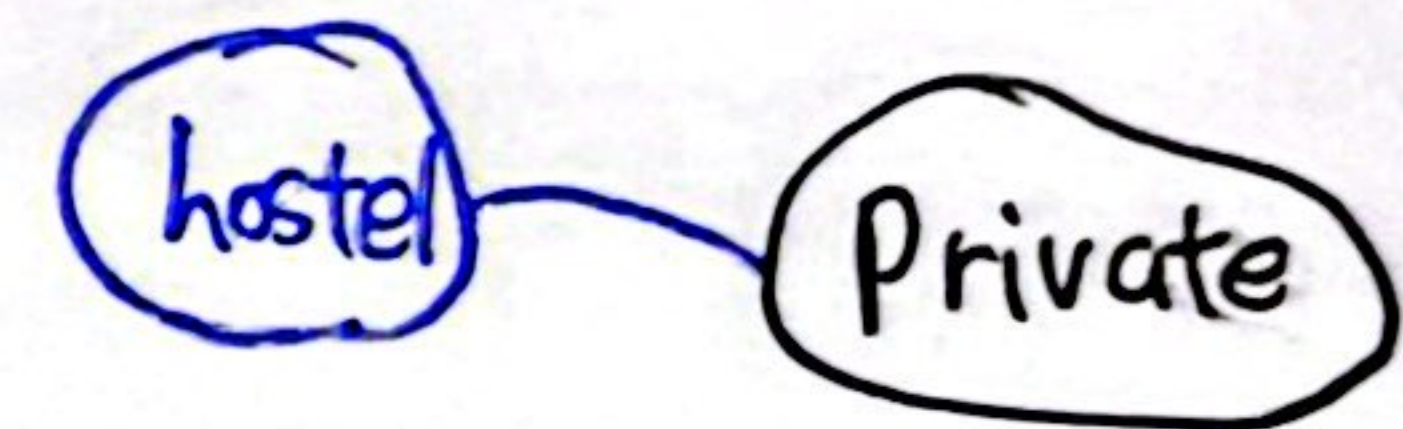
6FP → PUBLIC

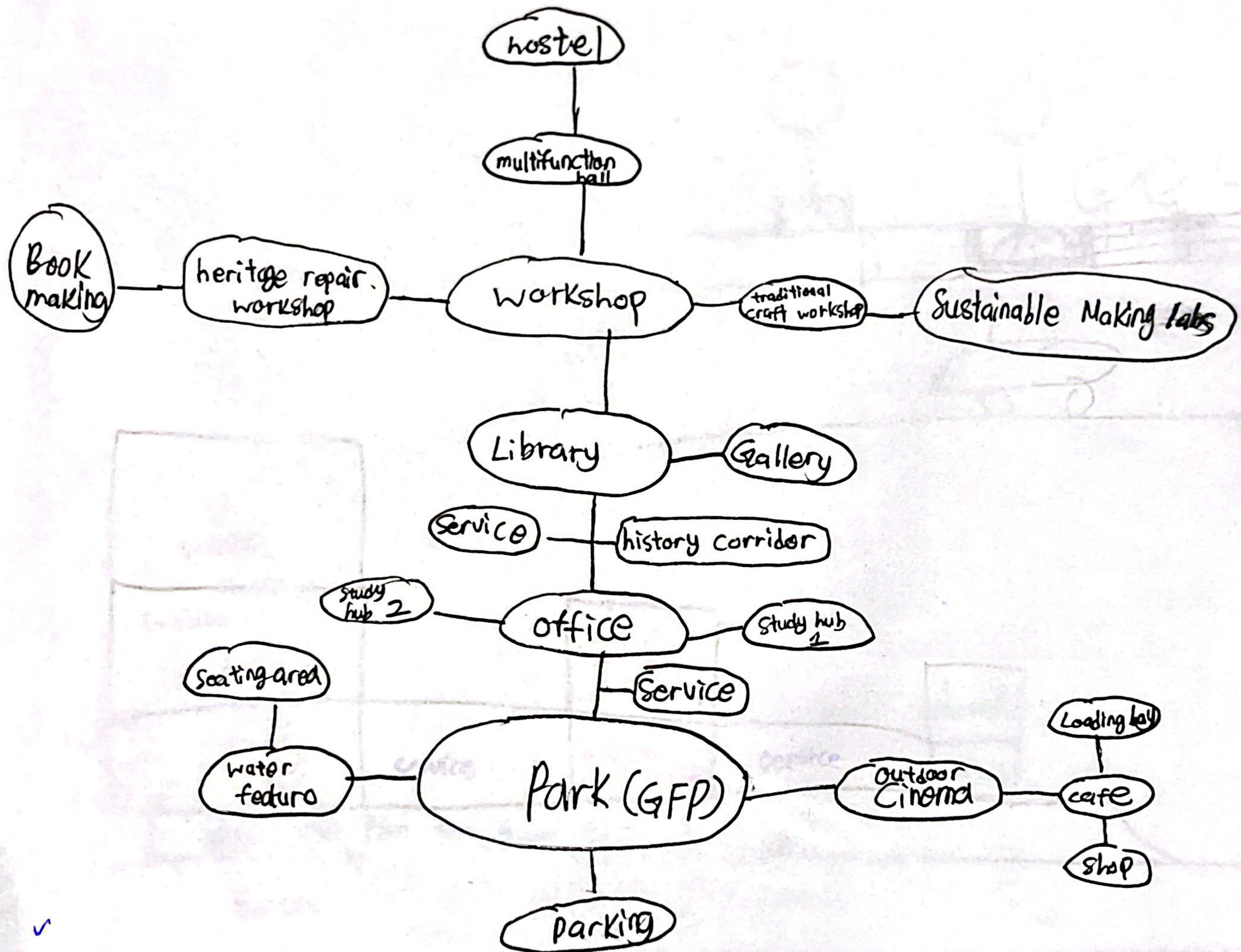
1FP → Semi - PUBLIC

2FP → Semi - PUBLIC

3FP → \$ Semi - Private

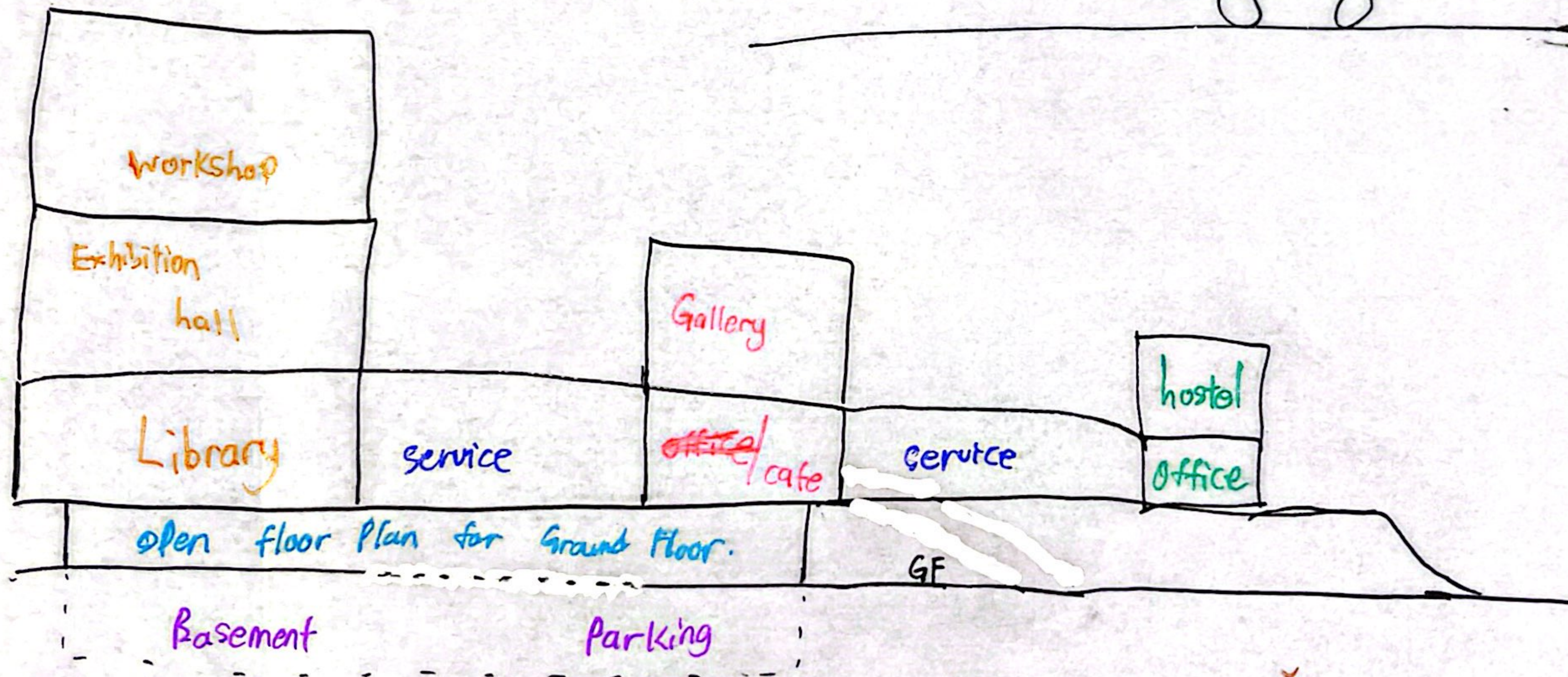
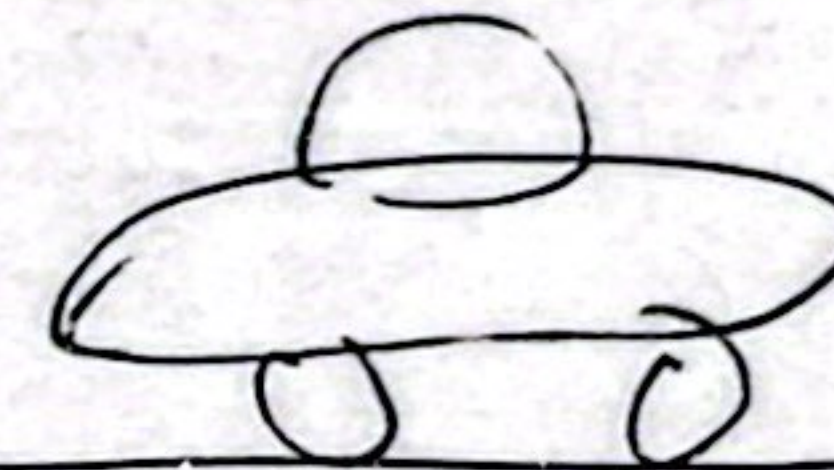
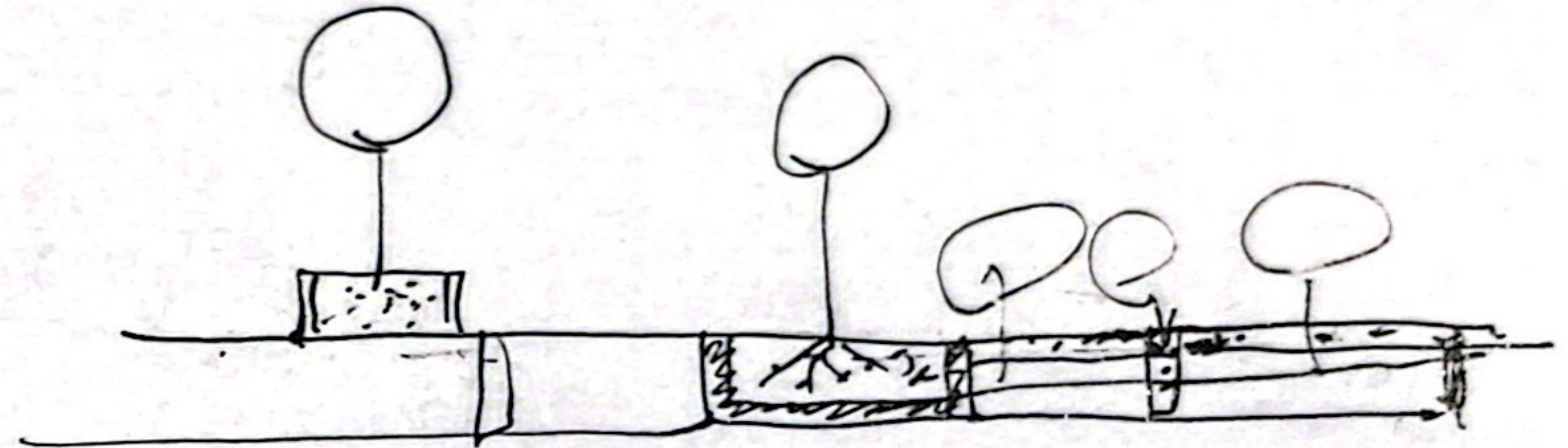
4FP → Private



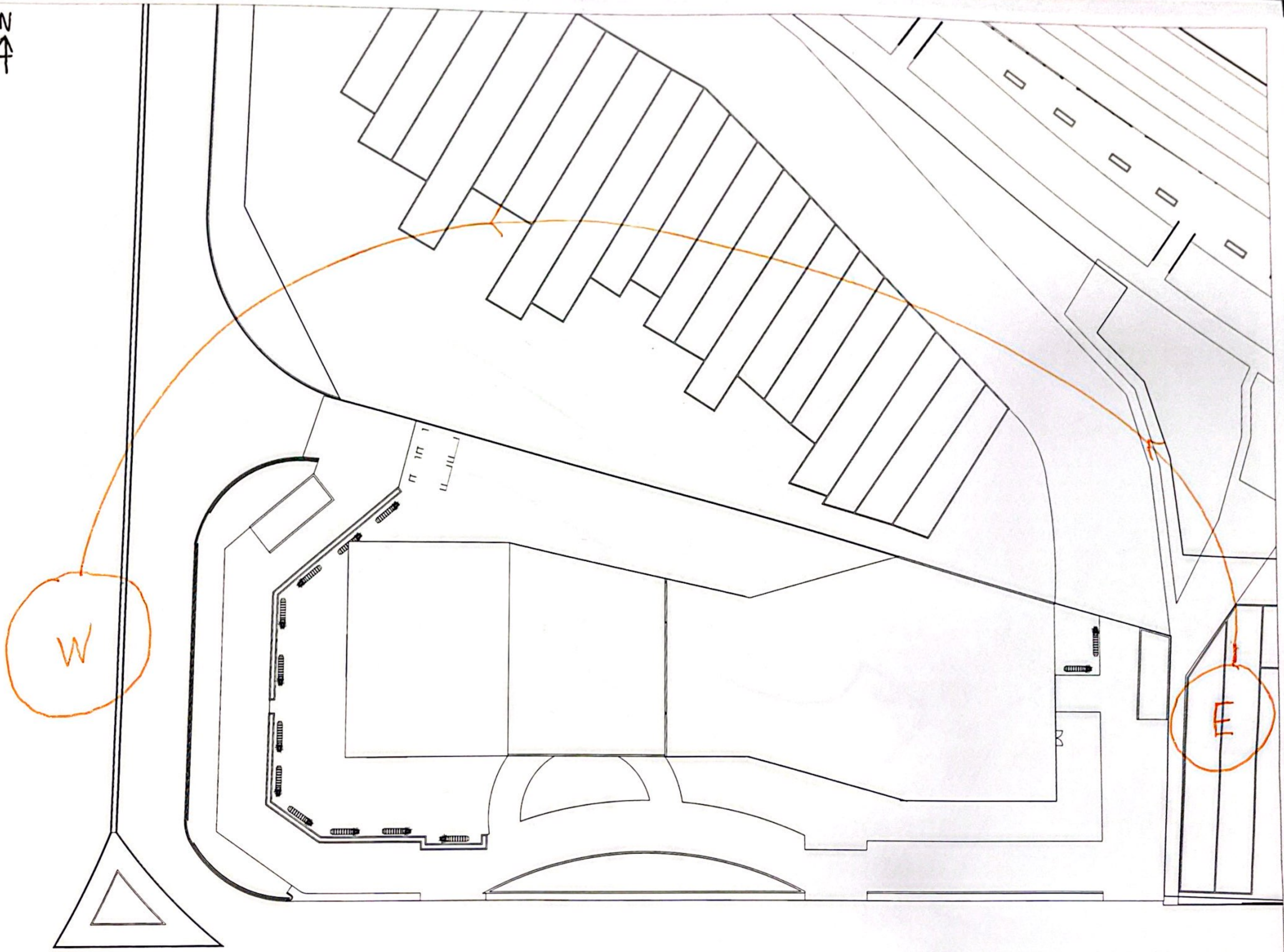


Busan Cinema Center

3rd floor level



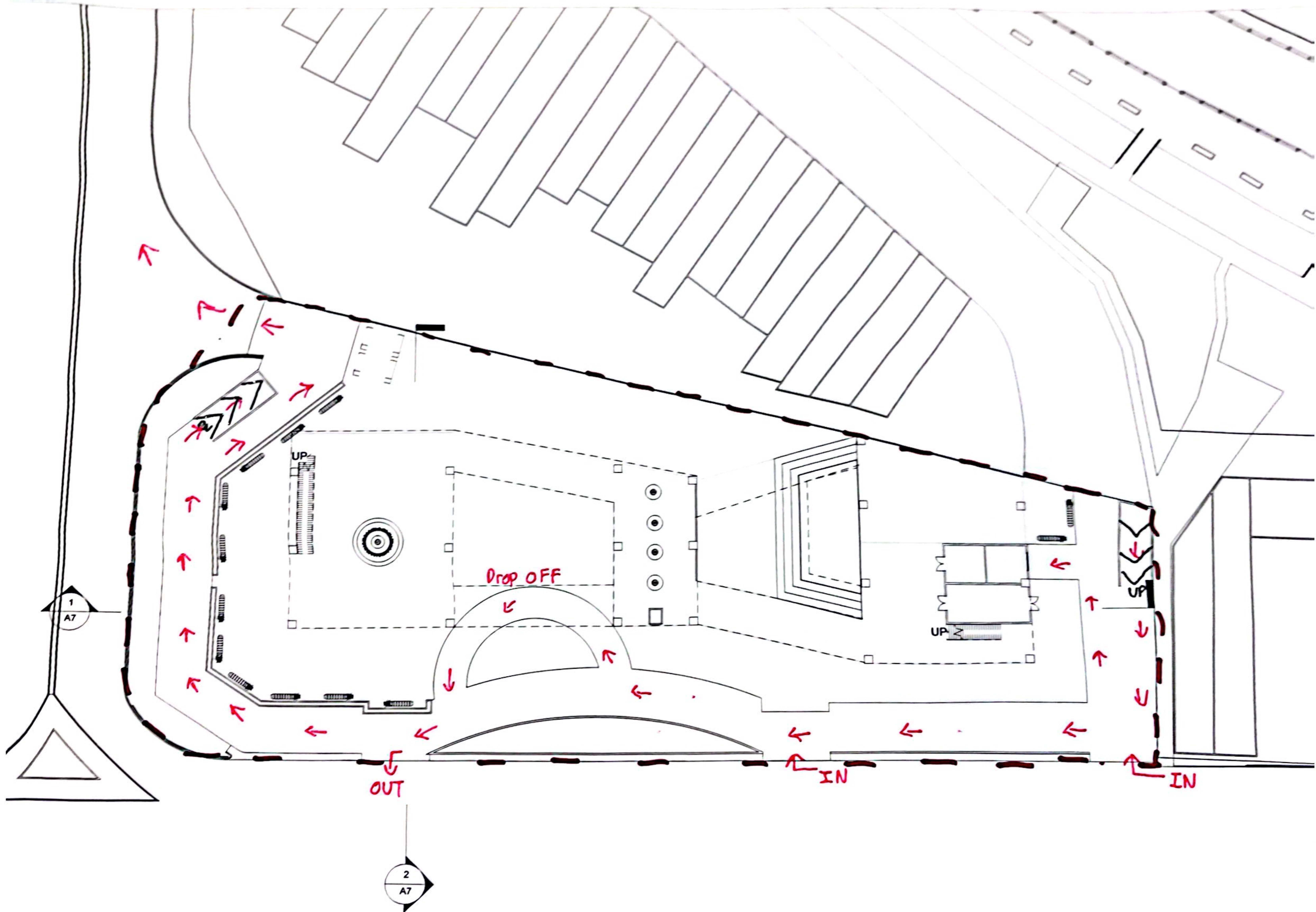


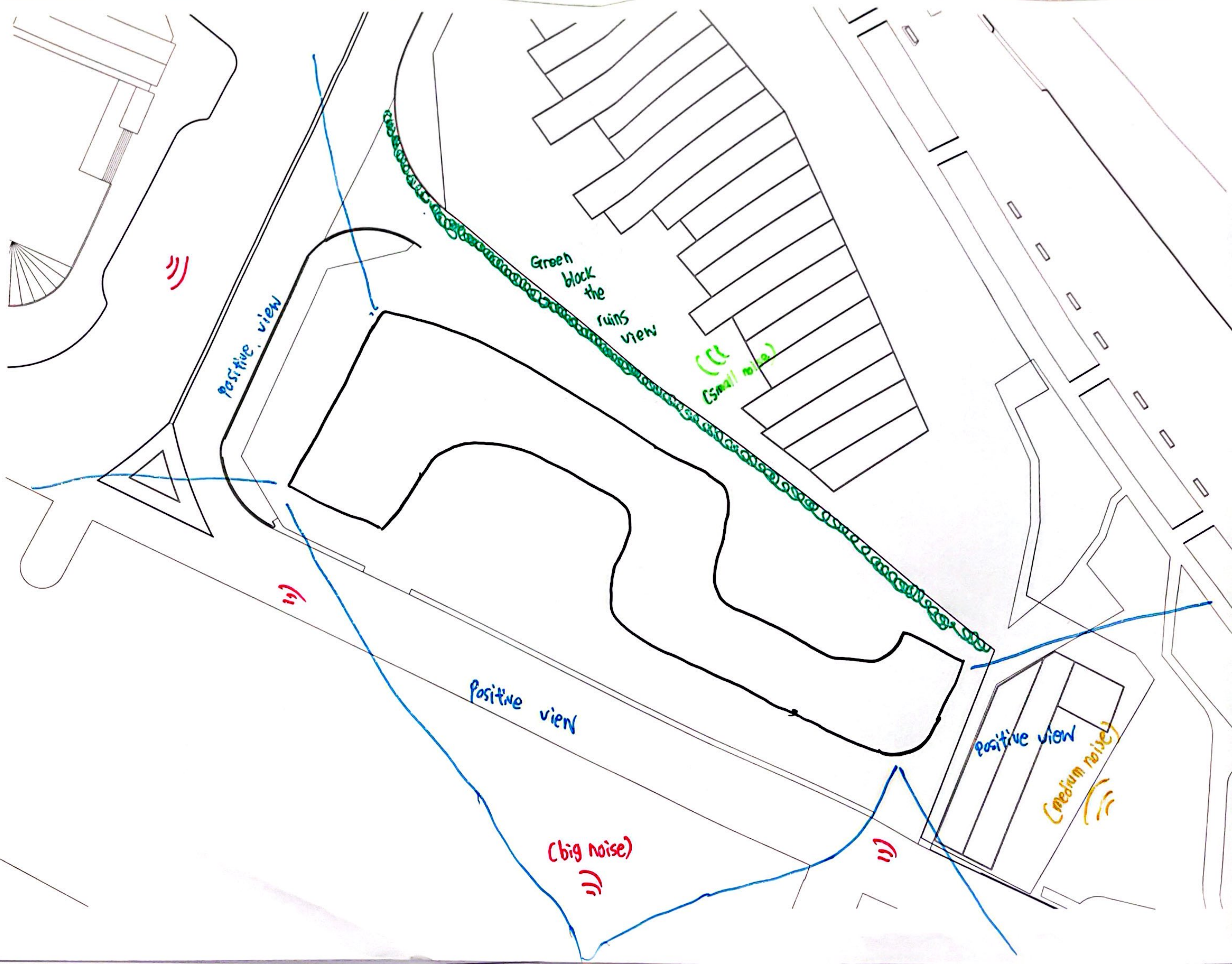


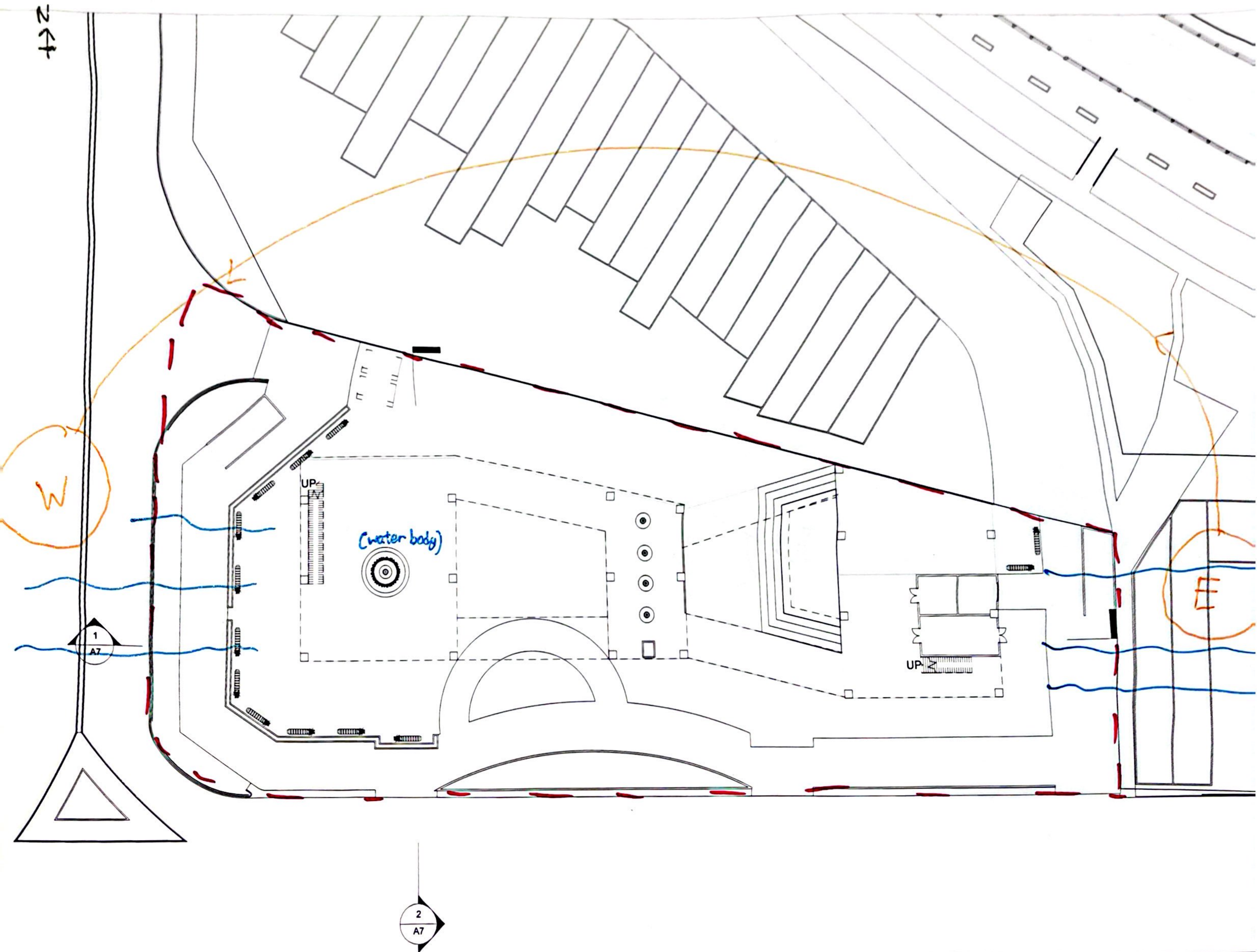
The longest side of building facing north and south to avoid the direct sunlight



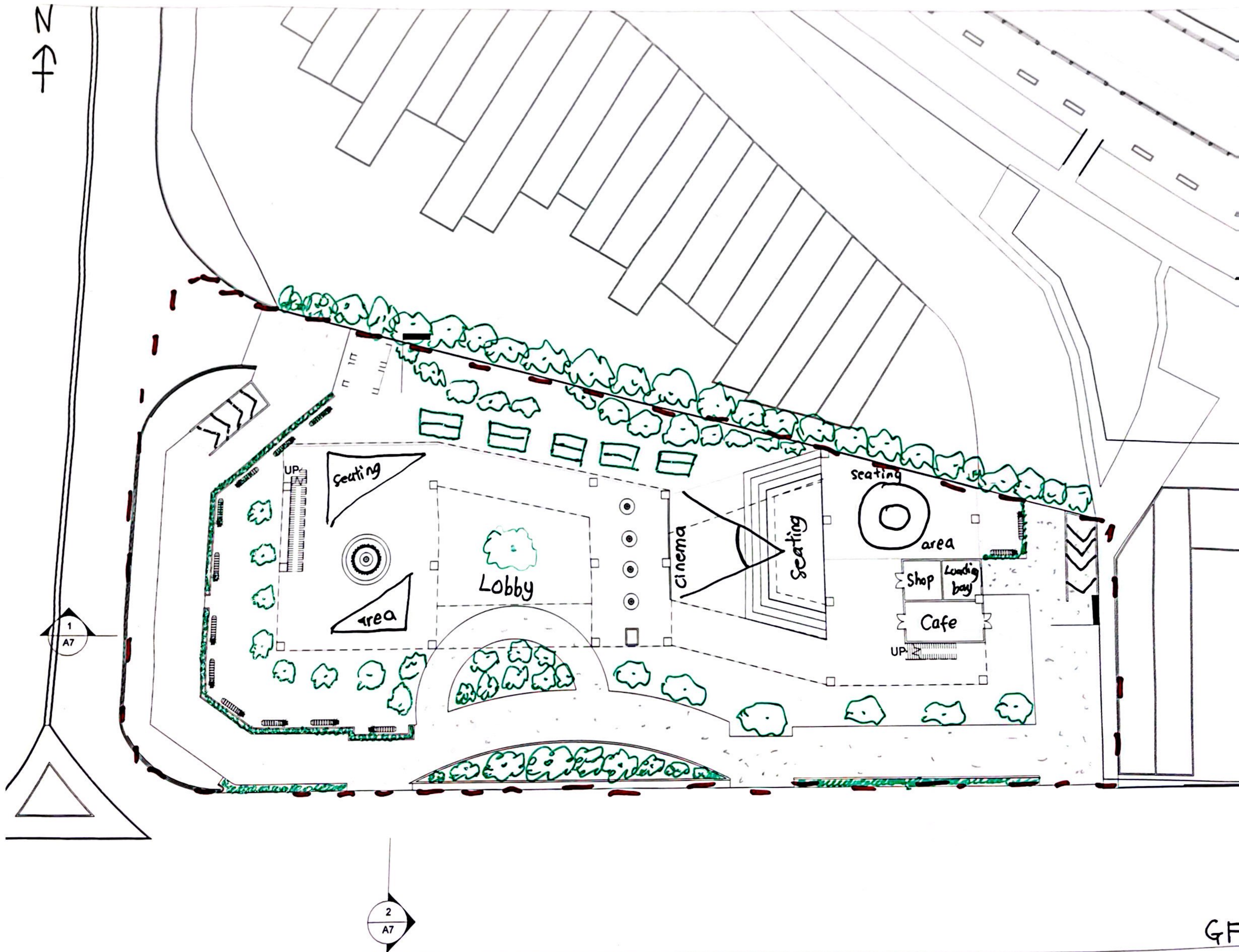








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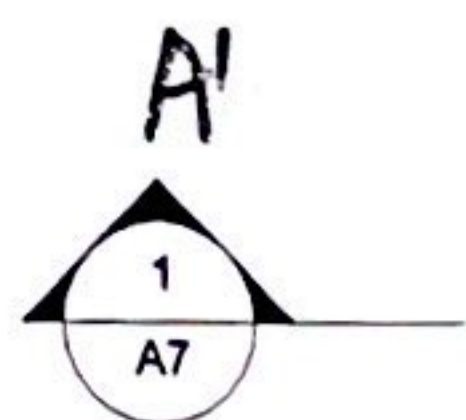


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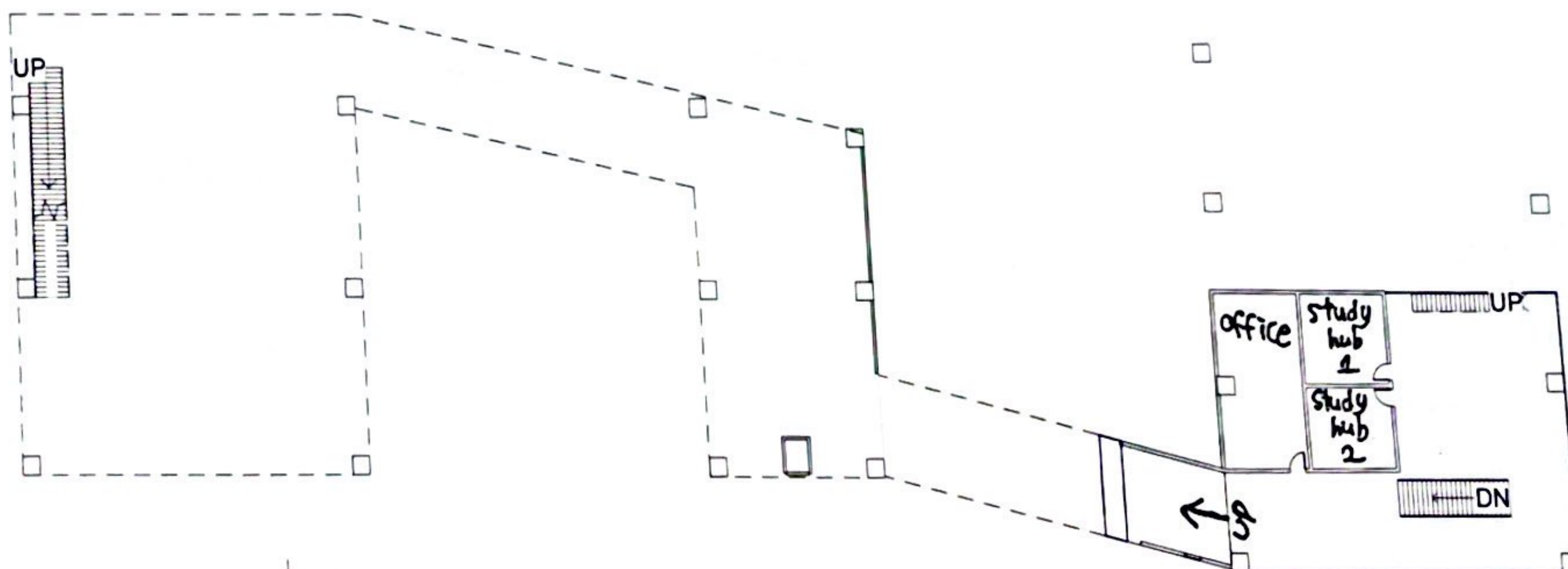
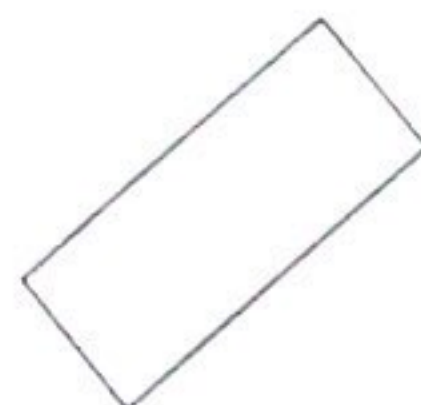
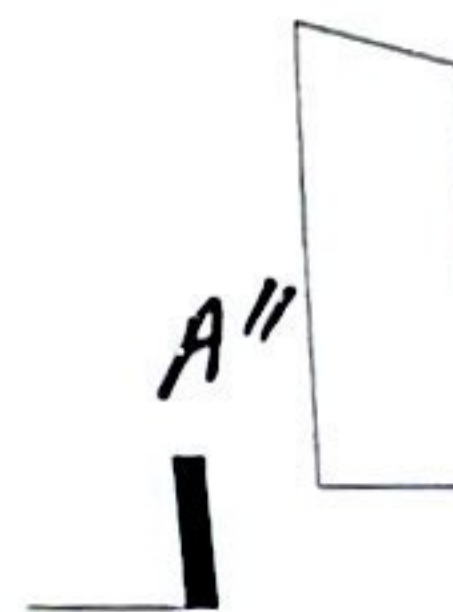
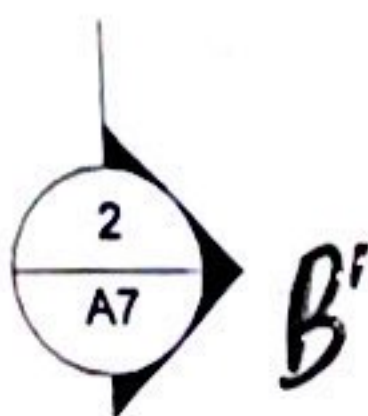
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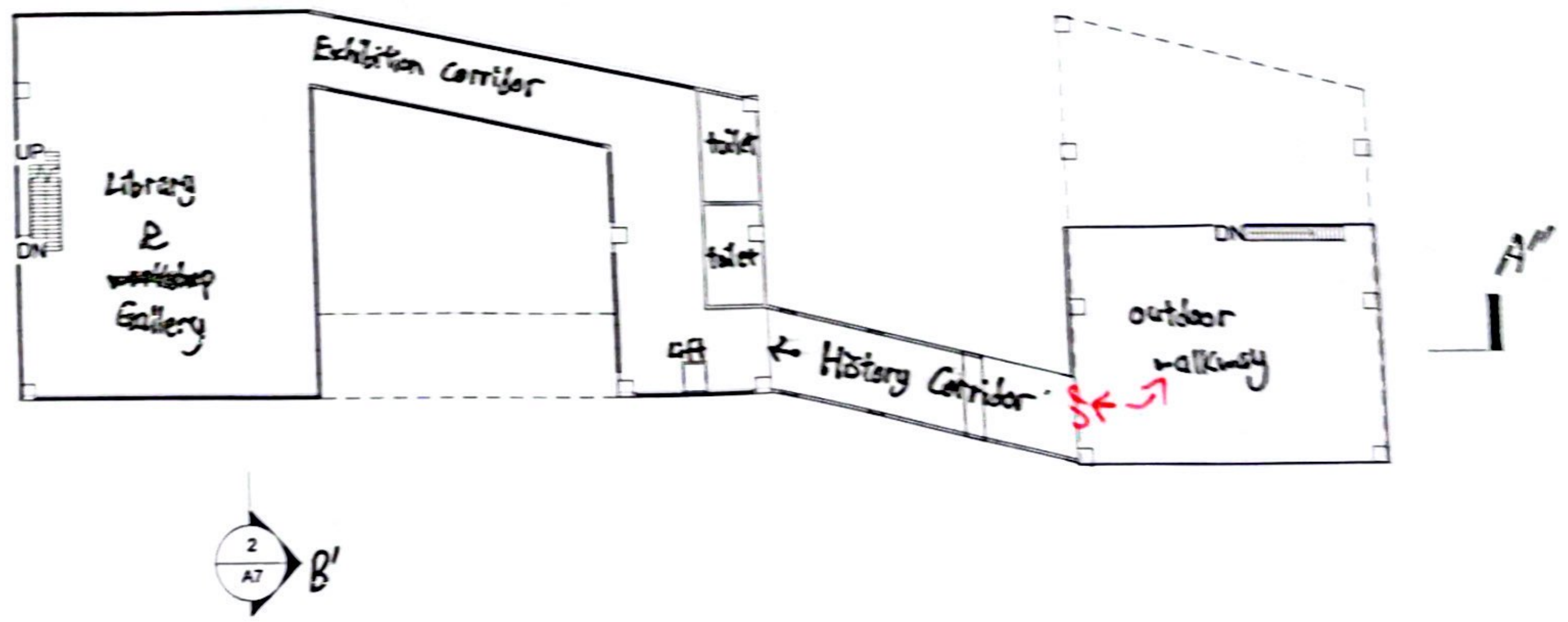
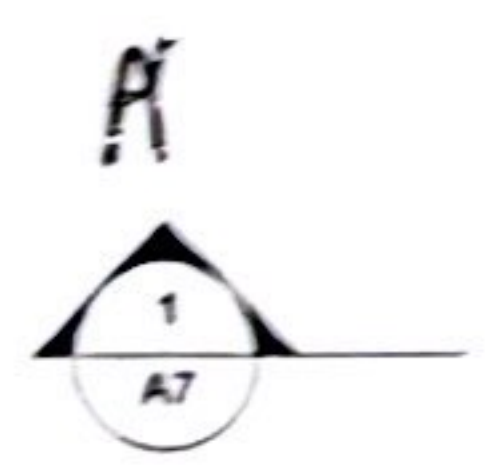
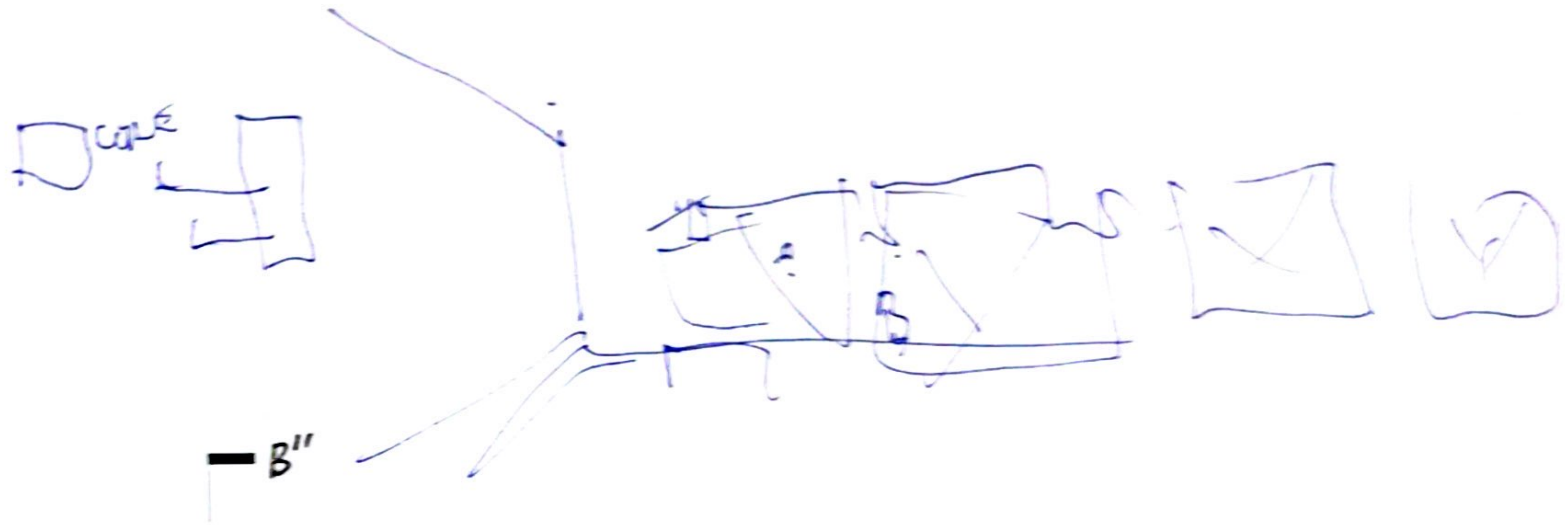
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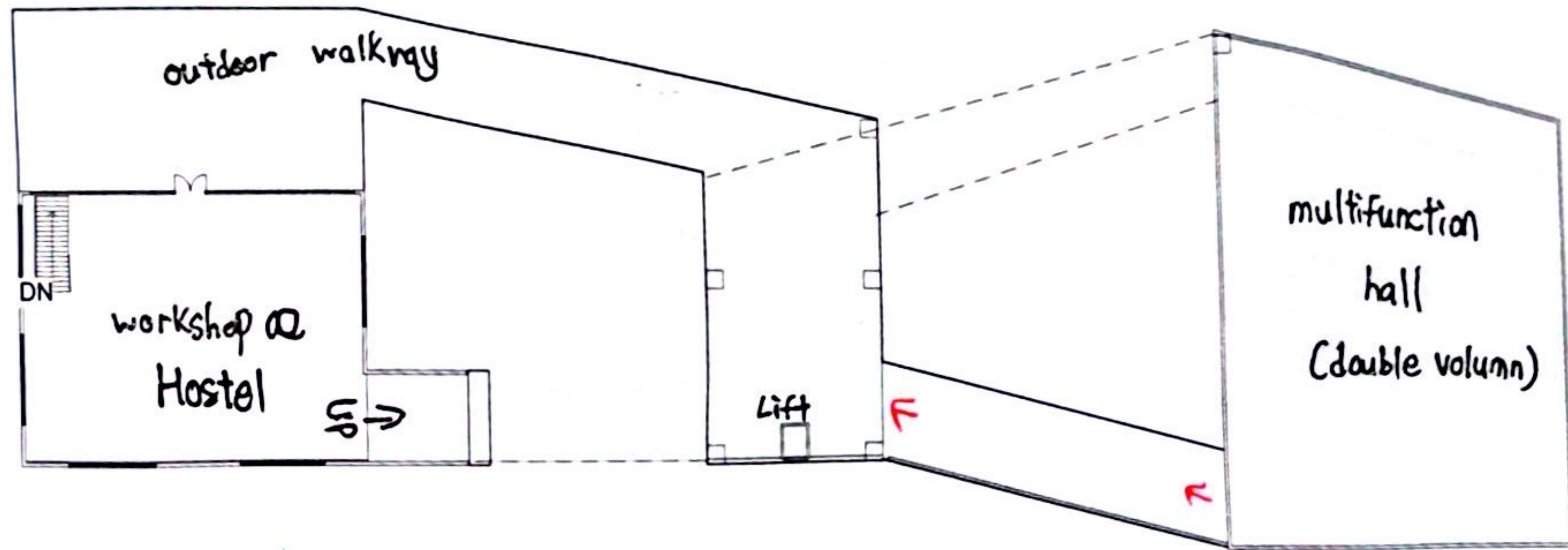
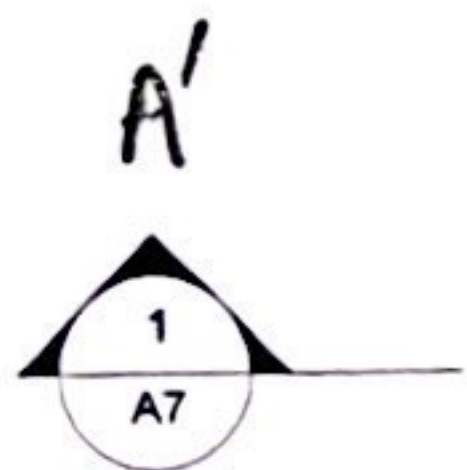


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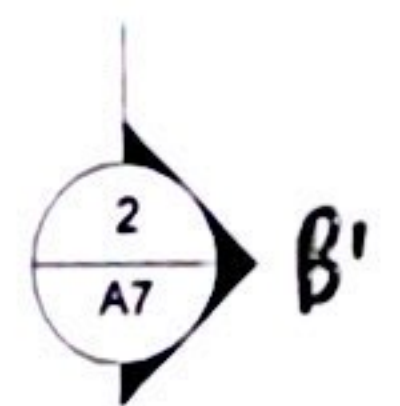




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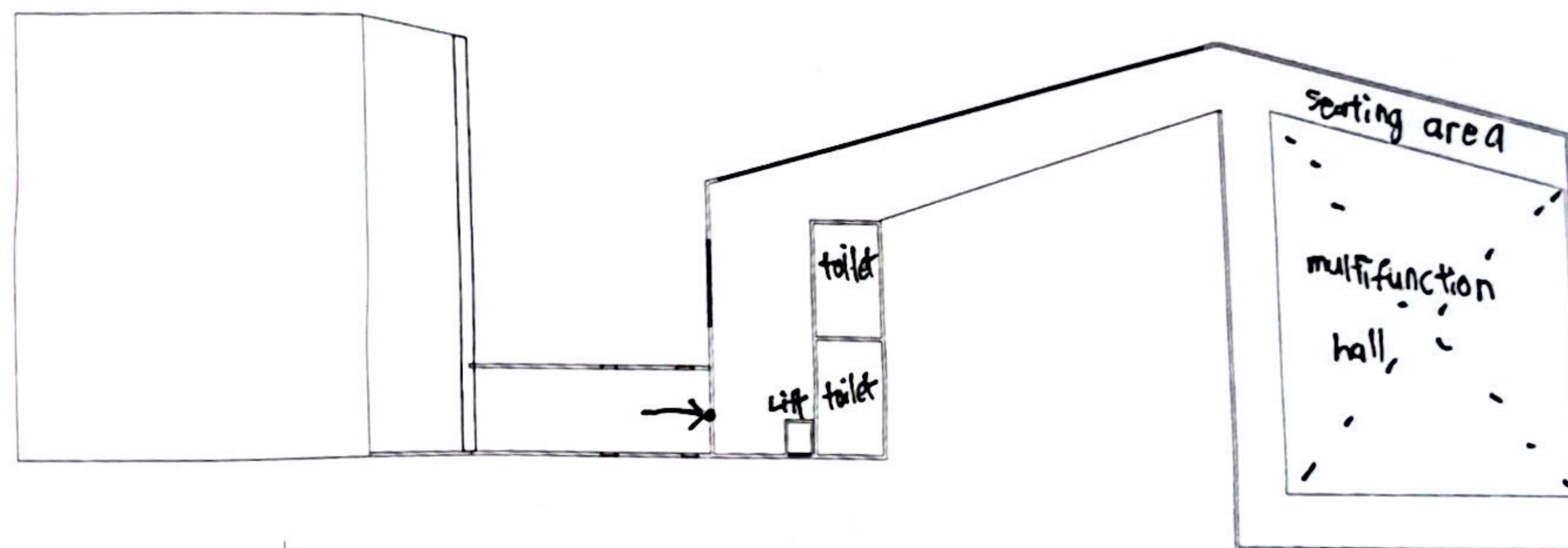
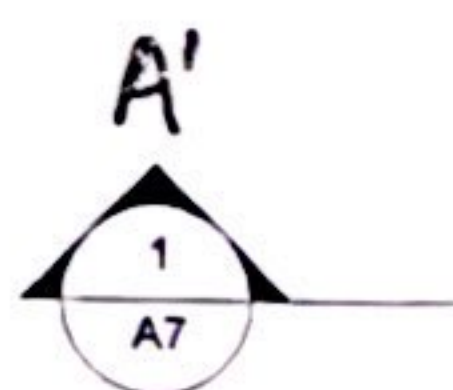


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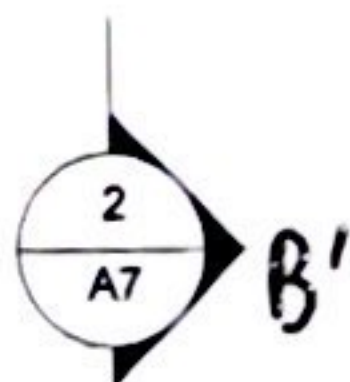


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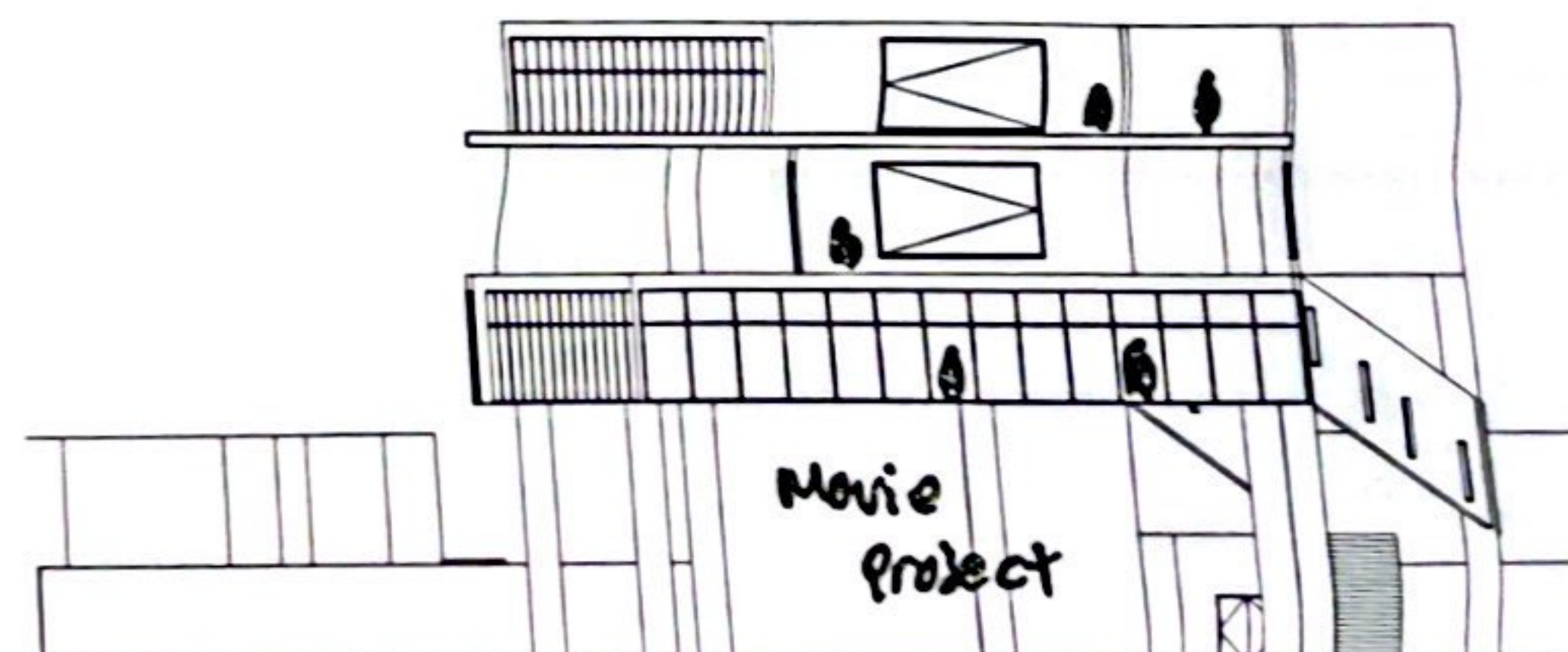


A''
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SECTION A'-A'



SECTION B'-B''

- Level 5
- 16 Level 4
- 12 Level 3
- 8 Level 2
- 4 Level 1
- 0



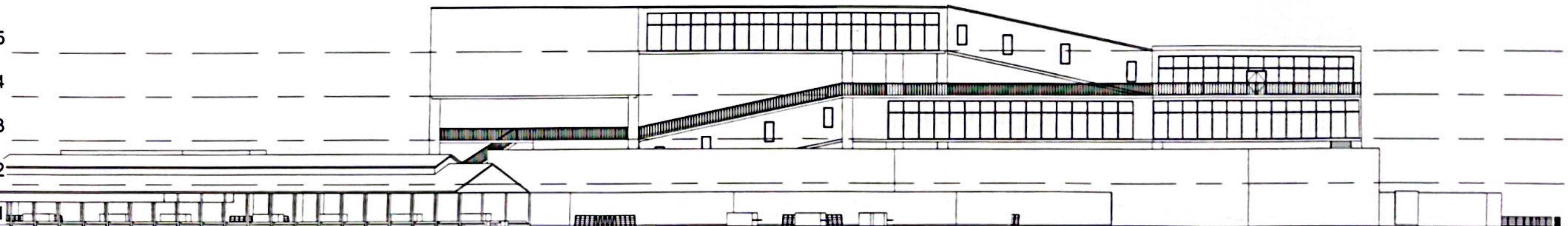
WEST ELEVATION

- Level 5
- 16 Level 4
- 12 Level 3
- 8 Level 2
- 4 Level 1
- 0



SOUTH ELEVATION

- Level 5
- 16 Level 4
- 12 Level 3
- 8 Level 2
- 4 Level 1
- 0



NORTH ELEVATION

- Level 5
- 16 Level 4
- 12 Level 3
- 8 Level 2
- 4 Level 1
- 0



EAST ELEVATION

