An aerial photograph of a city, likely Ávila, with a dense grid of buildings and streets. Overlaid on the image are various architectural and urban planning elements, including a large rectangular boundary, a network of lines, and a circular emblem. The text is overlaid on the image.

ESALA 2023

Master of Architecture

island territories viii:

SCAPELAND. ÁVILA

Adrian Hawker
Victoria Clare Bernie

SCAPELAND. ÁVILA





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CONTENTS

-	ÁVILA NOCTURNE ADRIAN HAWKER + VICTORIA CLARE BERNIE	1
-	BIBLIOGRAPHY & IMAGE REFERENCES	140
-	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	142
01	UNEARTHING THE MERCADO GRANDE DAN ANDERSON TOBY ECCLESTON PETER BREWSTER	24
02	THE PORT OF THE TWELVE VESSELS DANIEL LOMHOLT-WELCH	38
03	THE AQUA-LITHIC SEAM EDEN DOUGLAS	44
04	ST JEROME'S GARDEN JAMES MELVILLE	48
05	THE FIELD OF SAN VICENTE	52
a	TOPOGRAPHY OF MEMORIES JOSEPH BARNES	56
b	THE WEAVER'S YARD MARIA TAN	60
c	THE PERFORMER'S WALK CARL HARRIS	64
06	THE WALLED GARDEN XIZHE HUANG	70
07	THE ARCADES OF THE PLATEAU HONGYI ZENG	74

08	INTERLUDE DE CAMINO BOLUN HUA	78
09	LAS SEMILLAS DE LA TIERRA JIAYUE NIU	82
10	ASSEMBLY OF MIRIAM NATHALIE ZARINA HARRIS	86
11	EL NUEVO PALACIO DE ÁVILA JIGAO LI CHENJIE QIAN JIAKAI ZUO	92
12	THE CABARET OF SAN ESTEBAN TIANAI ZHANG	104
13	THE ADAJA DINING ROOM ATINUKE ADETOLA	108
14	THE RIVERINE MONASTERY CALVIN KAI SHU LEUNG	114
15	THE HYDROLOGICAL CATHEDRAL SOPHIE LEWIS-WARD GILES DAVIS	118
16	A CASTILIAN UNCONFORMITY TOBI PHILLIMORE	126
17	THE ADAJA OPERA JIAN FAN	130







island territories vii

SCAPELAND: ÁVILA

ÁVILA NOCTURNE

In the warmth of an October evening high above the plains of Castilla y León, we mingled and merged with the devoted followers of the Spanish Carmelite reformer and mystic St Teresa of Ávila. We manoeuvred for a place in the Plaza de La Santa for the start of a procession that would see her adorned effigy temporarily removed from the nave of the Iglesia y casa natal de Santa Teresa de Jesús and carried to the city's cathedral for a mass to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of her canonization. As both witnesses and participants, the ritual procession provided us with a unique introduction to the walled city of Ávila.

The church and convent of Santa Teresa lies on the southern edge of Ávila, marking the site of her birth in 1515 and her family home until her initiation into the Carmelite Order. It is the present-day museum of Santa Teresa and the archive of her numerous works. Its vertiginous baroque façade is attenuated as though to elevate both crowning *fronton* and *campanario* above the horizon of the great medieval granite city wall that encloses the far side of the plaza. Together, the altarpiece-like façade and the austere castellated fortification form a deep drum into which we, the observant crowd, had gathered in anticipation.

Open to the evening air, the plaza resonated with the sound of the first discharge of a languid sequence of fireworks launched into the darkening sky above, illuminating ornate limestone details with an iridescent wash of white. Lit, somewhat casually, from the cigarillo of a shadowy figure,



seemingly always present on the outer edge of the gathering crowd, the flash and its thunderous report initiated movement. The plaintive rhythm of further explosions marked the progress of the procession. Each clap echoed from the encircling city walls, the cloistered courtyards and the robust elevations of palaces and convents that lay beyond the narrow streets. It was as though the city was being described to us through soundings, percussive beats, well before we might witness it in the full glare of Castilian daylight.

The waxy figure of the saint that emerged from the 17th century basilica was carried on a litter festooned with an array of red and white flowers and illuminated by the tremulous flicker of delicate glass lanterns. Unlike the dishevelled marble folds of Bernini's *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* in Rome, the white robe of this likeness was held taut like a sail embroidered with further floral emblems threaded in gold. The saint and her attributes rolled gently as they drifted, held aloft on the straining shoulders of a rotating entourage of dark suited men – a voluminous, marvellous and singular ship navigating the slender passages of the nocturnal city. This, the *Procesión Chica*, the little procession, was merely a prelude. The next day held a more bombastic sequence of events, beginning with a mass for a sea of the faithful drawn in from the farthest reaches of the province. Beneath the vaults of Catedral del Salvador de Ávila, a temporary anchorage for the night, this benediction would inaugurate her return journey, a grand carnival in vivid sunlight. It would involve the blessing of bishops and politicians, the uniforms and sheen of police and military, the costumed grandeur of carnival queens and the grotesque satire of gargantuan puppets preoccupied with the gentle ridicule of the great and the good.

By comparison, the nocturnal passage of the *Procesión Chica* was the more immersive, focused as it was on the city not the artifice of its players. Populated in the main by the citizens of Ávila, who seemed to emerge from its deeply recessed doorways purely for the event, this dreamlike drift was choreographed through a wealth of strange details. Worryingly thin, crutch-like staffs of ebony and silver were employed at regular intervals to hold the saint aloft during the rotation of pallbearers. A shrill handbell would herald this well-rehearsed ritual or signal another elaborate manoeuvre, a pause, or a resumption of the slow progress. Families viewing from cast iron balconies, or through open shutters above, became an impromptu guard of honour as the ecstatic, elevated gaze of the statue washed past their faces.

An escort of casually dressed musicians led the way, a troupe formed from across at least three generations of Ávileño. The tone of reed instruments, cymbals and drums altering noticeably as we passed from open plaza through narrow cobbled street and arched arcade.

We were eventually received by a measured knell, this more solemn sounding softened as we proceeded through the tall wooden narthex of the cathedral-fortress. Entering the great belly of the nave, the sound of the procession echoed back to us, its tremulous light playing upon the wide, pale alabaster retrochoir that screened the walnut stalls and transept beyond. Finally, at berth in the side-chapel of the southern transept, the saint's gaze fixed upon a knowingly elevated crucifix, her lanterns illuminating the curious red veins of the *pedra sangrante*, the locally quarried 'bleeding stone' granite set into the fortified apse to form a great swelling in the city's eastern wall. The warm night, the procession, the report of fireworks, the timbre of drum, bell and whistle, an introduction to the city from deep within its grain.

AN ISLAND ON THE PLATEAU

Although landlocked high on the central Spanish plains, we understand Ávila to be an island, an overarching conceit that casts the city as both apart and particular. The Scapeland: Ávila studio has engaged with the geographic insularity and environmental uncertainty of this unique city where economy of resource, specificity of climate and distinctive, often strange, cultures of dwelling and imagining have developed over time to both survive and prosper. Building on seven past iterations of the *island territories* programme, this studio has sought to address insularity in extreme environments where climate, economy, culture, politics and art – the stories that we tell about ourselves – inform the architectural language of a place. In so doing, we have sought to create responsive, highly inventive, articulate and beautiful buildings that engage, through their materiality, spatiality, structure, situation and conceptual invention, with our present condition of uncertainty.

The central Spanish city of Ávila in *Castilla y León*, is an enduring insular condition by dint of a two-and-a-half kilometre sepia tinted granite wall, twelve metres high and three metres thick. The eighth-century Roman, then Visigoth, settlement of *Abula* was conceived as a strategic outpost

high on the central Castilian plateau. Three hundred years of conflict saw an oscillation between Moorish and Christian possession until 1083 when King Alfonso VI of Castile gained definitive control. By decree, the defensive frontier city of Ávila was established and extended west over the vestiges of the Roman *cardo* and *decumanus* to the crossing of the Rio Adaja. Encapsulated and compressed within its wall this, the highest of Spain's provincial capitals, became home to settlers from the country's north and from the south of France.

By the 16th century, the wool trade drove the economy of central Spain. Through a system of *cañadas*, drove roads or sheepwalks, herds were moved between summer grazing in *Castilla y León* to winter grazing in *Extremadura* and *Andalusia* along routes protected and maintained by royal decree. The nine gates of Ávila connected directly to the *cañadas*, the markets of the city prospered and the wealth that came with the trade in wool was made manifest in the ornate architectures of palace and convent that inhabit the interior of the great city wall to this day. It was into this period of the city, powerful, wealthy and strategic, that Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada, was born. A revered religious leader, she was author of numerous mystical writings and a confessional autobiography that tells us as much about the society and character of the city during its heyday as it does about the particularities of her beliefs. Along with Cervantes, these works are prized amongst Spanish Renaissance literature and she remains the defining figure in the history and identity of the city. Her writings, strange and visionary, draw on metaphors of fortification, enclosure, interiority, garden, gate, well and water.

Ávila is an island city in miniature. As with the fictional islands of Gulliver, the sense of scale is untethered, adrift from the familiar. The gargantuan Romanesque-Gothic hulk of its cathedral-fortress anchors the city wall to an elevated rocky outcrop, its apse forming the largest of the wall's eighty-eight semi-circular towers whilst, in a curious geological mirroring, vast boulders occupy the surrounding parched and abandoned sea-like plain. Despite its modest size, the city casts a strategic hold across the landscape towards the surrounding Guadarrama, Sierra de Ávila, and Sierra de Gredos mountains. Within the city, *palacio* and *convento* are formed around small fertile gardens, made all the more extraordinary by their contrast with the dry, seemingly inhospitable terrain beyond. Like the cathedral, these





buildings, in their adjacency to the wall, extend their influence, measuring both the city it encapsulates and the landscapes it observes.

From the outset, we sought to engage with the scalar strangeness that islands afford. We saw geological abnormalities in the red veins of the cathedral's '*pedra sangrante*'. We registered traditions of forestry within the ornate walnut features of its choir and the carvings of palatial furnishings. We began to understand the underlying hydrology of the city through the siting of merchant's palaces, where each in turn is tethered to a particular well. We saw landscapes in the cloister gardens of convents and cities in the fortified arrangement of palaces. Each of the nine city gates described to us a particular custom, cultural trait and connection to the wider landscape beyond – the farmer's market, the drove road, the *Alcazar*, the mill, the hermitage, the basilica, the Falangist prison, the *Camino*, and the Sephardic diaspora.

Nowhere is the relationship between the city and the landscape upon which it is founded more acute than upon its walls. Here, it is possible to read the distant terrain, the dry sea of brush and stone and the fertile seam of the Rio Adaja. Coursing north, the river, a landscape of irrigation, historic mill lades and bridges, skirts the city at its western gate where its flow is supplemented by rainfall from the latitudinal streets that, like tributaries, descend the city from the east. Upon the walls, there is a sense of heightened elevation. Their sheer scale lifts one above the street to a field of terracotta roof tiles and *campanario* whilst outside, a rocky outcrop drops sharply to the flattened expanse of the plain below. Added to this is the knowledge that the plain itself is being held aloft by the Sierra beyond. The cold winds that are channelled by these enclosing mountains act as a reminder that this dusty plain is more than one thousand metres above sea-level. As a consequence, the meteorological range of the city is surprisingly wide. The red and grey sets of the central Plaza del Mercado Chico could either be exposed and empty, scorched by sunlight, its inhabitants having retreated to the shadowy cool of arcades and cloisters or, hidden beneath a deep carpet of snow.







GARDENS, GATES, SEEDS & FIELDS

In the Scapeland : Ávila studio, the lens of landscape has enabled us to negotiate a topography of scales appropriate to the city, to draw upon its physical and cultural characteristics. During our time in Ávila, this island in miniature became our studio. Initial territories of interest and the discourse they inspired were but a short walk from one another. Like the fiery soundings of the procession, ideas and strategies began to resonate across the city. Clustered in groups of three or four, the territories became a common ground for research and discussion which, on our return to Edinburgh, evolved into garden-like spaces across which small gate-like architectures gathered and conversed. The mapping of these territories became a shared, collective resource – a set of ‘Fields’ within which each emerging thesis engaged and communed through a common set of cultural, material and environmental concerns.

In calling these territories ‘Gardens’, we formed an intentional connection with the abundance of *Jardín del claustro* that temper the environment from deep within the city’s complex grain of the convents, palaces and civic buildings. In parallel, the adoption of this term knowingly referenced the mystical writings of Teresa and her frequent use of the garden as symbol, metaphorical image and ritual device. For the saint, the tending a garden became a devotional activity. The relationships between the enclosed garden, the bounded city, the thick wall and the open landscape, informed the site, structure and output of the Scapeland : Ávila studio. In the first semester, highly detailed micro-architectures explored reciprocal relationships between architecture and the idea of ‘Garden’ as a semi-public space and as a means to temper and tailor the environmental conditions of an exposed location.

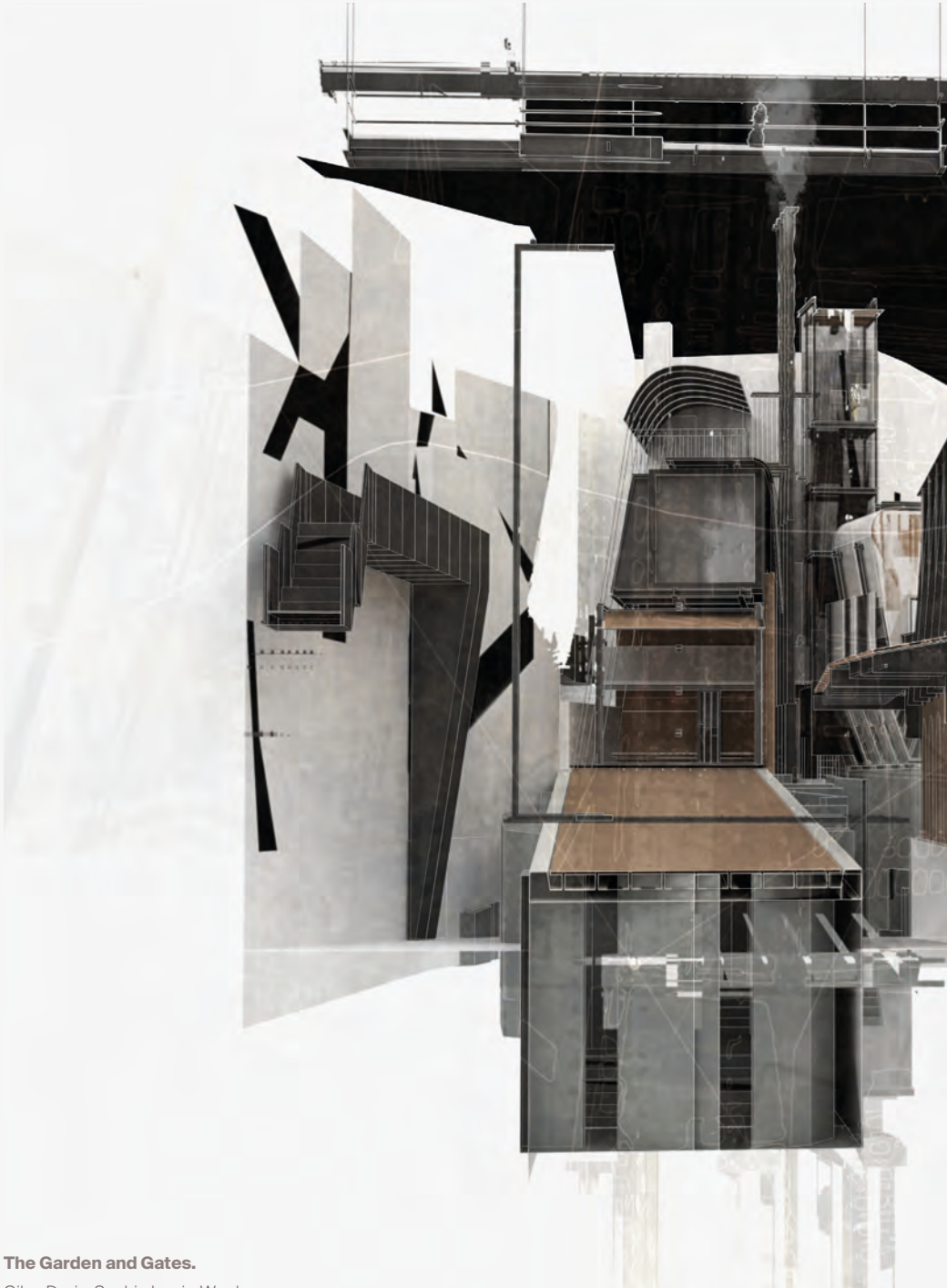
These miniature architectures were ‘Gates’, active thresholds between the life of the city and the particularities of the ‘Garden’. These ‘Gates’ clustered around the common territory of the ‘Garden’ and intuited programmes that operated through a shared choreography of internal and external space. Gatehouses are a curious typology. They often attempt, through an excess of detail, to introduce an architectural language of something far greater than themselves – be that a palace, a parkland or a schoolhouse. The Ávila ‘Gates’ became the vehicle for the development of an intense architectural

tectonic, an articulate material and constructional language through which we could also speak of other things.

In the second semester, we recognised these small, richly inscribed and deeply engrained architectures as ‘Seeds’ - to be cast elsewhere, within, across or beyond the city fortifications and into a greater ‘Field’ of both city and landscape. In so doing, we engaged with the scalar doubling we had first experienced whilst walking upon the wall – the bound, elevated city and the enclosed altitudinous plain. The concerns of this greater landscape were, from the start, always within our peripheral view – the inextricable relationship between the island and its ‘sea’. An exposed terrain much affected by a changing climate and decades of abandonment. An inevitable consequence of an economically driven period of depopulation.

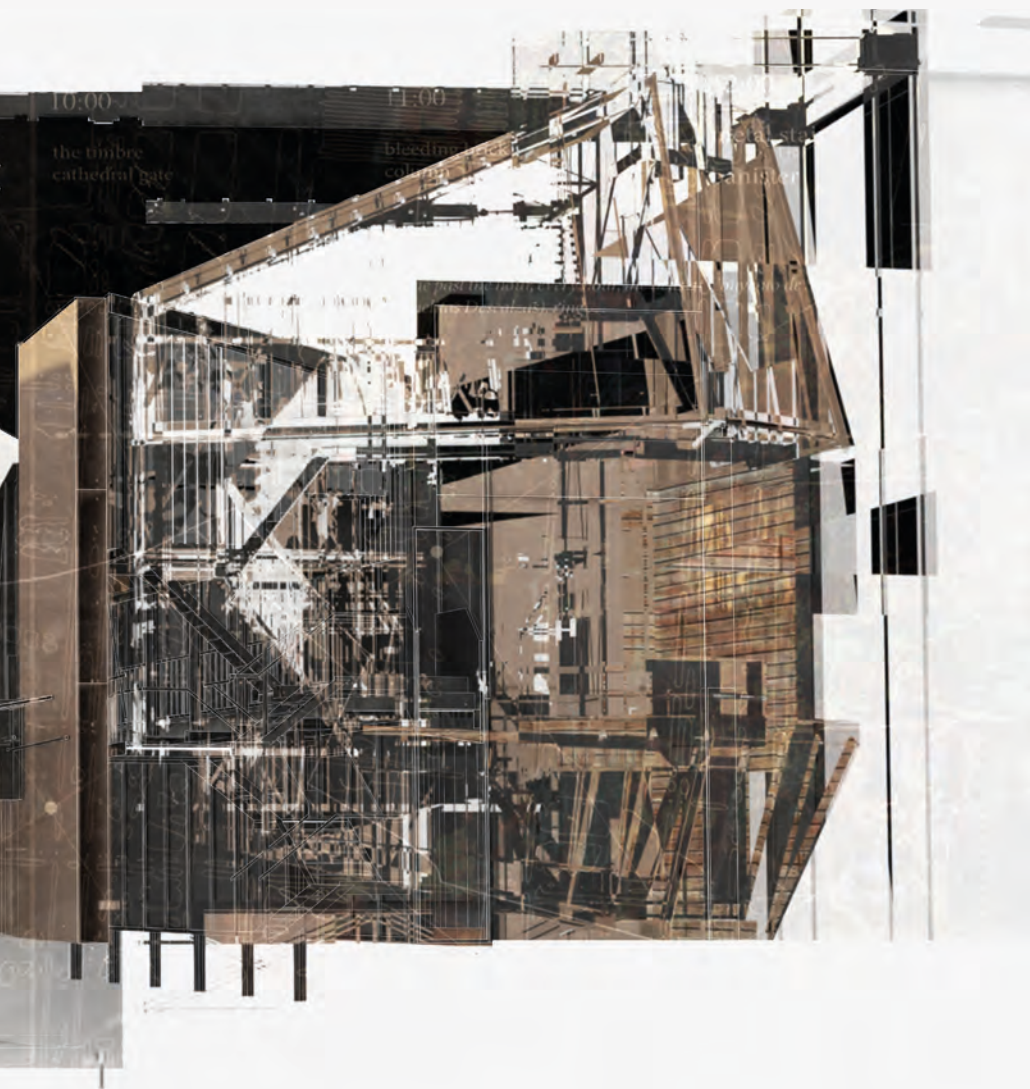
The casting of these ‘Seeds’ has informed the ambitious, poetic, and deeply considered, proposals that are presented through this catalogue. They are thesis proposals that engage with both the complex material and spatial interior of the walled city and the exposed and challenging landscape beyond. Through their inception and germination within the granite urban furrows of Ávila, these are architectures that are imbued with an intense and particular set of material and spatial traits. Through a re-Seeded position and new adjacency to both city and landscape, they advocate for a contemporary, revitalized form of continuity and reciprocity, between that which is seen as culturally urban and that which is considered environmentally rural – between the narratives of the island and the stories of its sea.

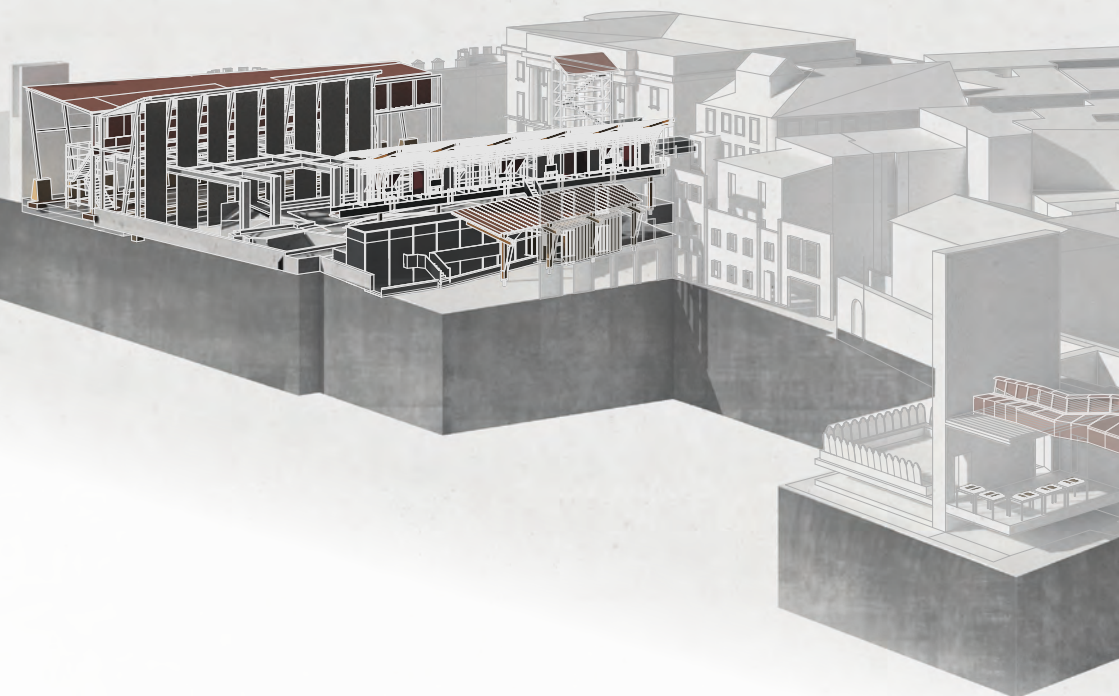
Adrian Hawker and Victoria Clare Bernie



The Garden and Gates.

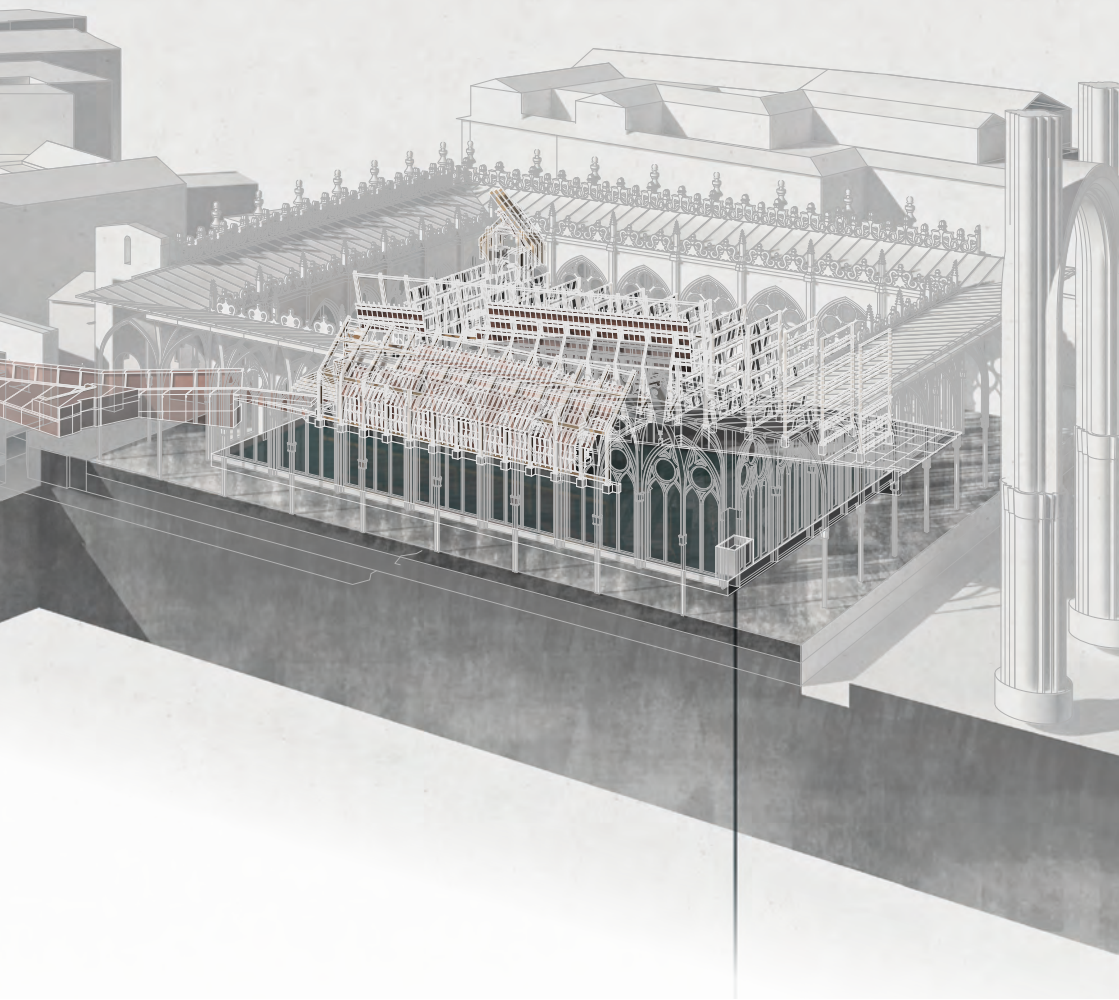
Giles Davis, Sophie Lewis-Ward

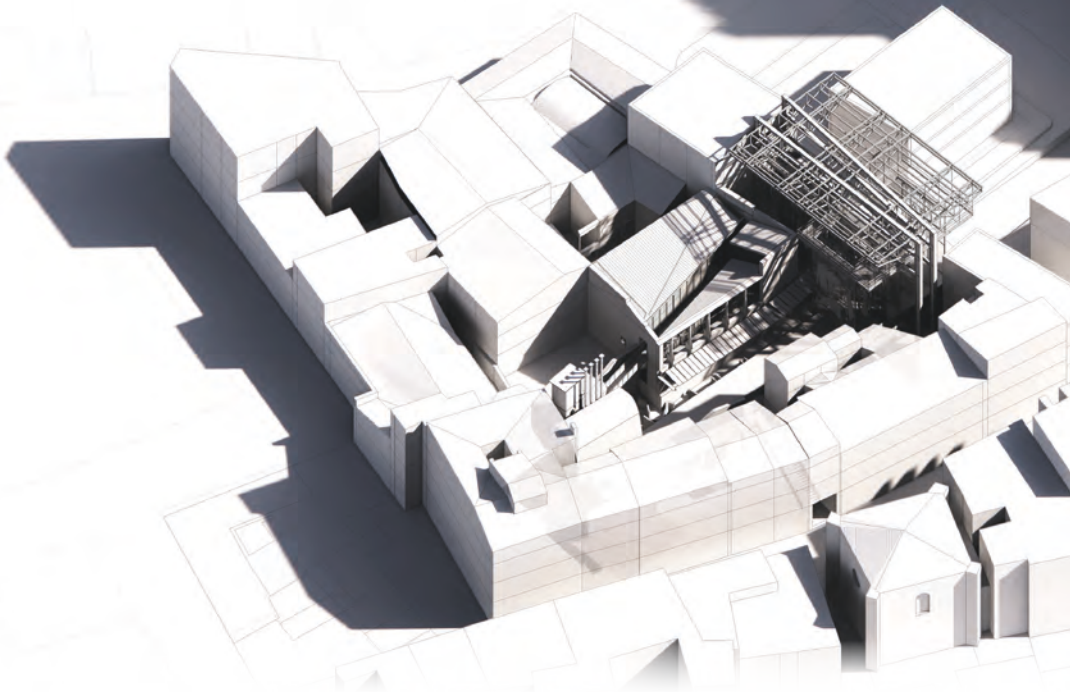




The Garden and Gates.

Dan Anderson, Toby Eccleston, Peter Brewser

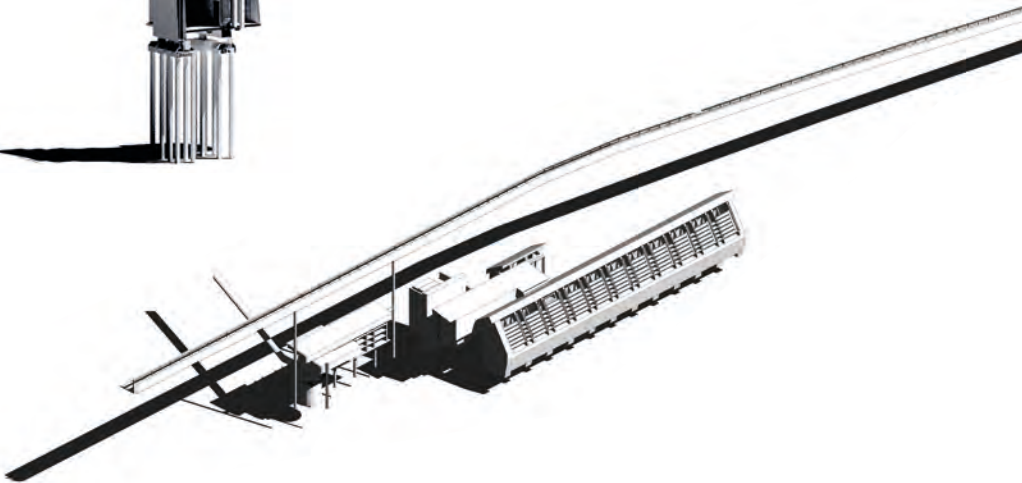
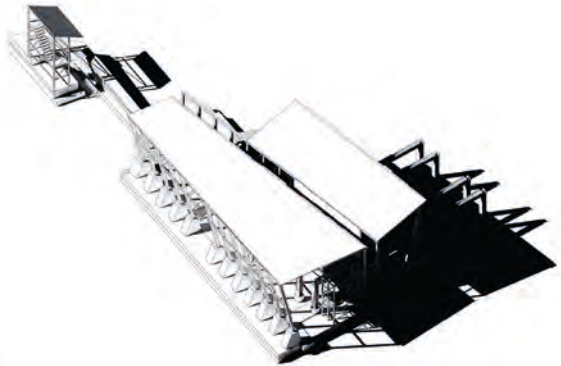
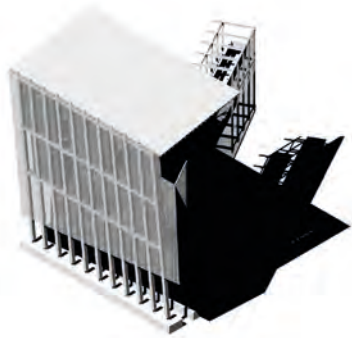
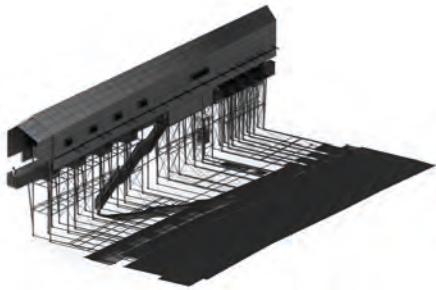




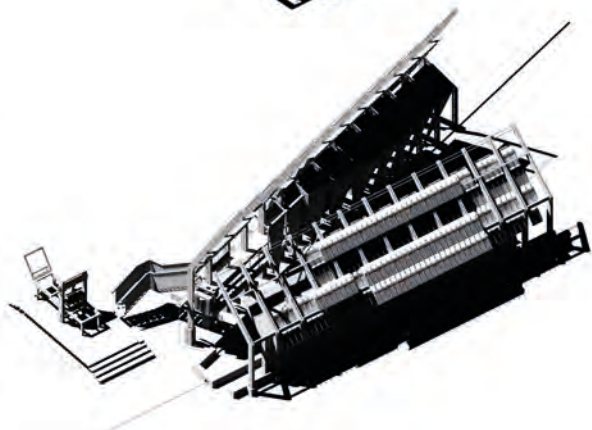
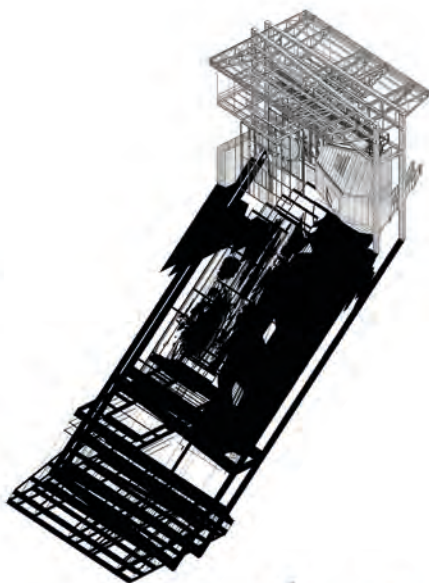
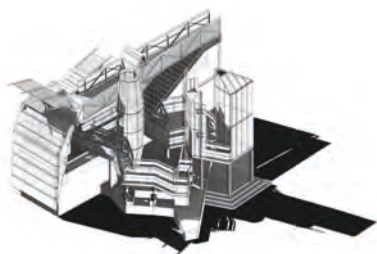
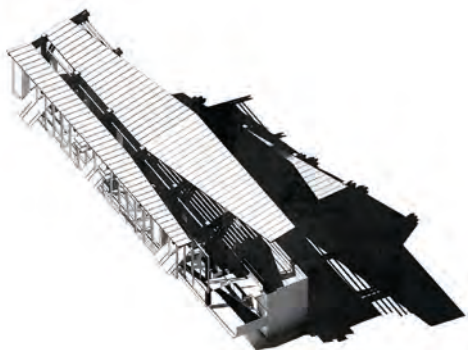
The Theatre of Ávila.

Giles Davis, Sophie Lewis-Ward, Tobi Phillimore





Ávila Seeds.
Collective







Site: Plaza de Mercado Grande.
Programme: Weekly Market & Permanent Stalls, Guildhall, Laundry, Flour Mill, Jeweller's Workshop, Auction House & Workshops, Cinema, Writer's Study, Dormitories.

01

UNEARTHING THE MERCADO GRANDE

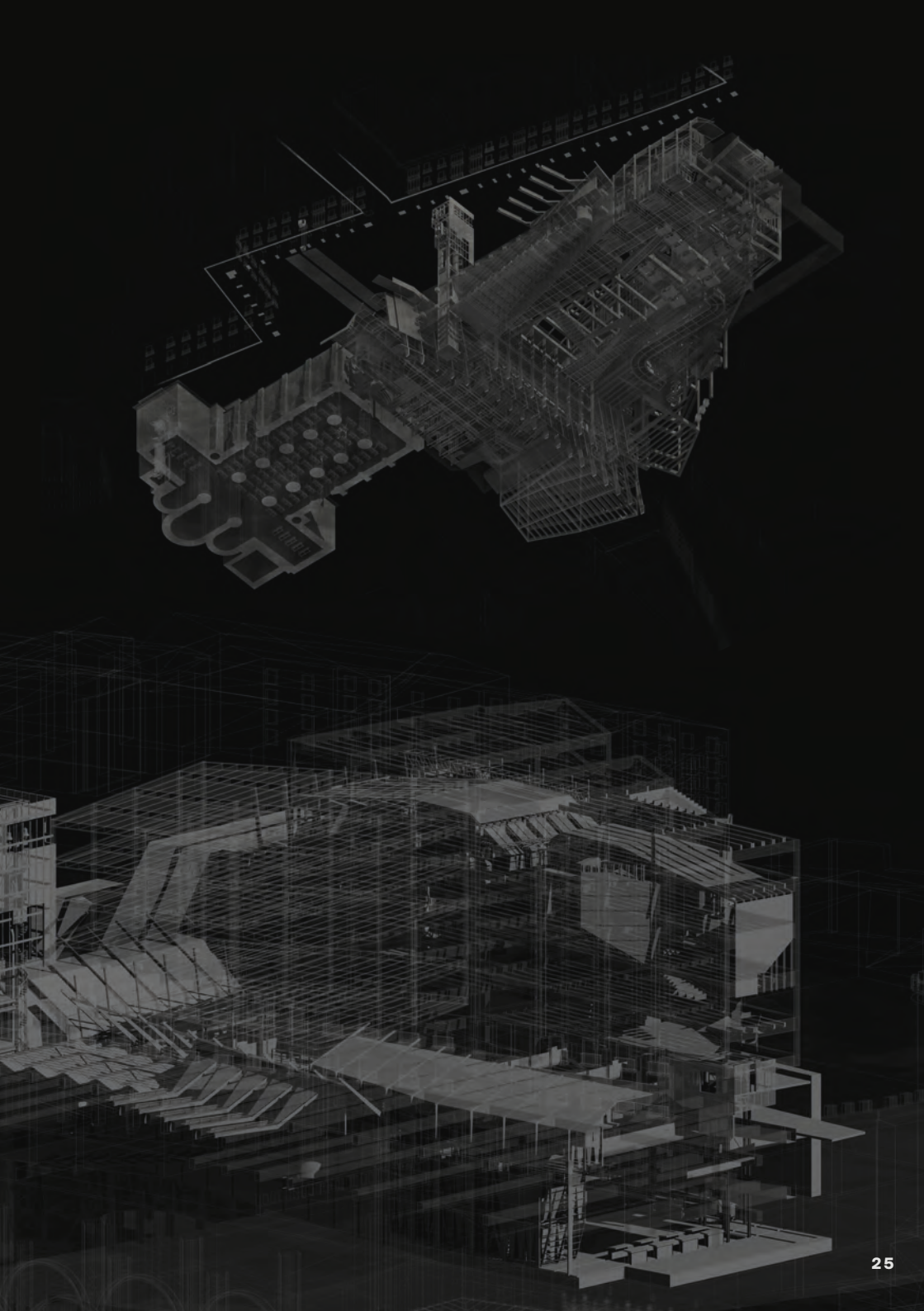
AN ENTANGLED CIVIC MONASTERY

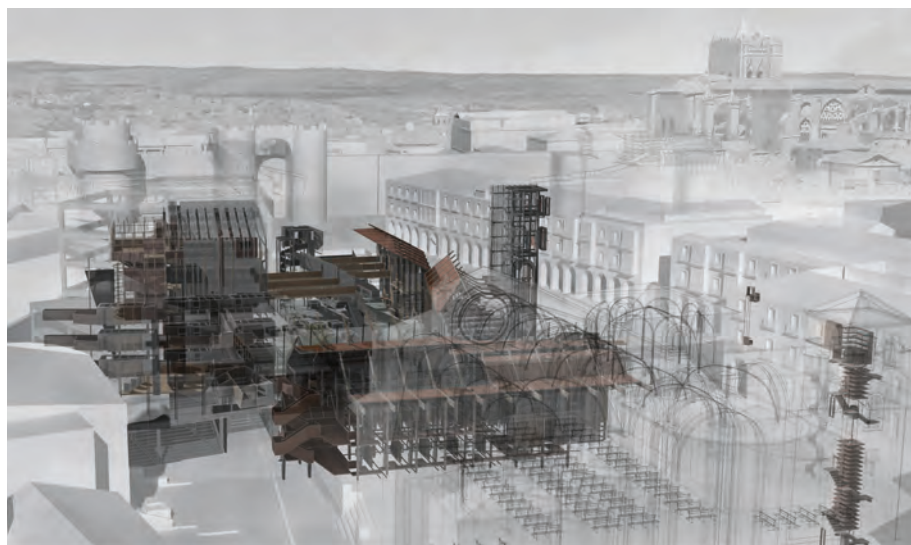
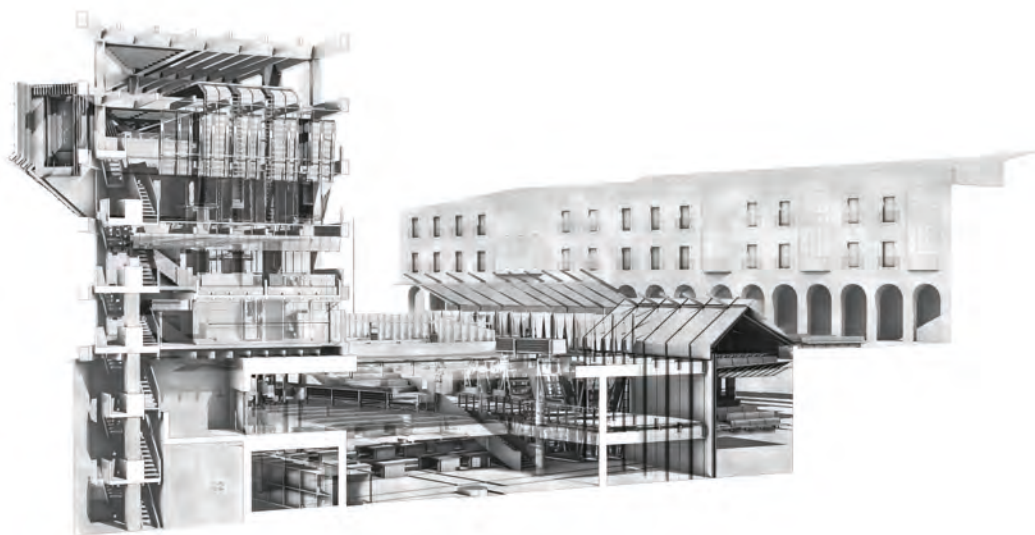
DAN ANDERSON
TOBY ECCLESTON
PETER BREWSTER

Plaza de Mercado Grande borders Ávila's eastern wall at a confluence of routes that connect a community of monasteries within and beyond the medieval city. As traditional location of the weekly market, histories and memories of Ávila were inscribed into its surface, a record now lost beneath Rafael Moneo's municipal office complex and underground car park - built despite outcry from local community and international heritage organisations.

The *Civic Monastery* offers redress by unearthing the generous civic potential beneath the Plaza's surface. A varied programme of public spaces, informed by the typologies of the medieval monastery and carefully entangled in the concrete skeleton of Moneo's now ruined intervention, invite the city voices back into the Mercado Grande through the housing of a new cast of citizens, organisers and craftspeople.

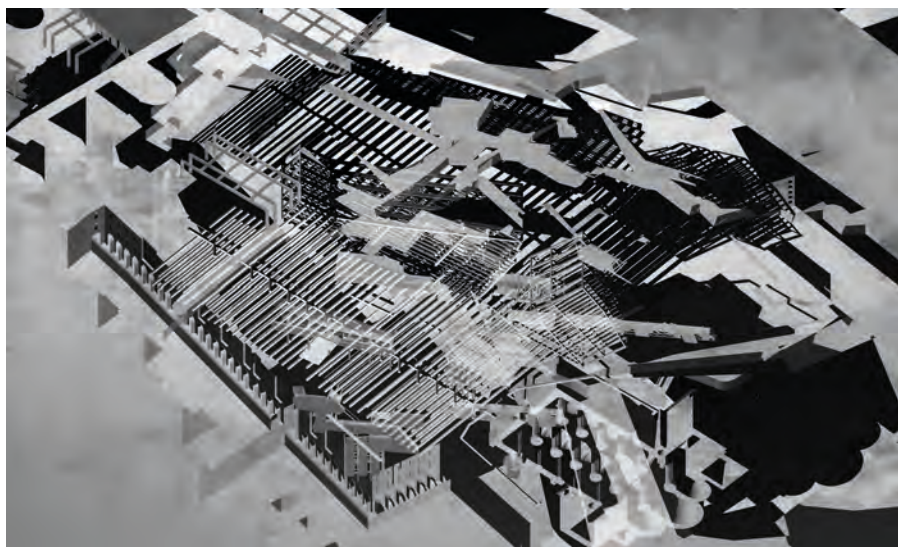
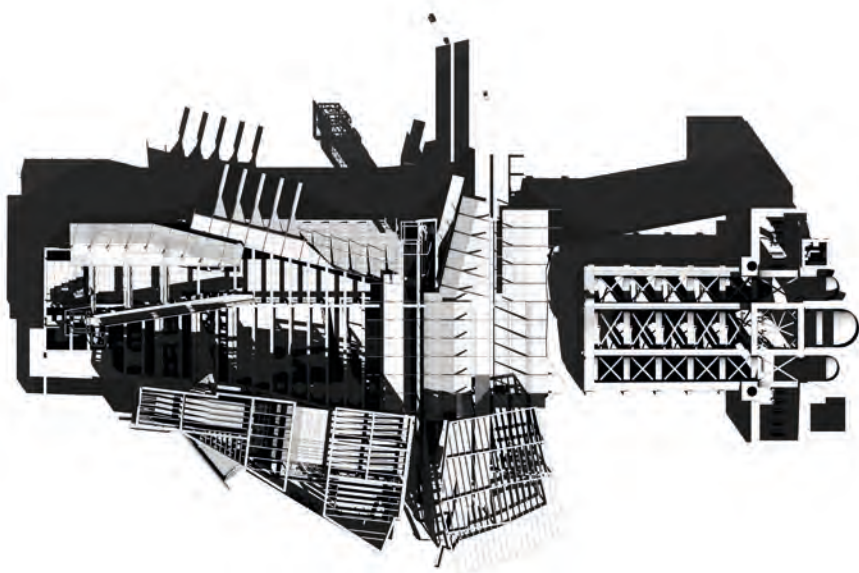
The existing market is accommodated within the former car park, alongside more permanent stalls. Above, cradled by the concrete skeleton, a guildhall overlooks the landscape, supporting community gatherings and mercantile negotiations. Productive activity, in the form of a flour mill, laundry and jeweller's workshop, inhabit the empty office buildings, alongside dormitories for visiting craftspeople. An auction house, densely packed with furniture, art and relics collected from the city, sits at the base of the west door of the church of San Pedro. By night, the light of projected films escapes from a community cinema. Standing over the Plaza in a new bell tower, a wandering statue of Santa Teresa surveys the daily life and changing seasons of the *civic monastery*.





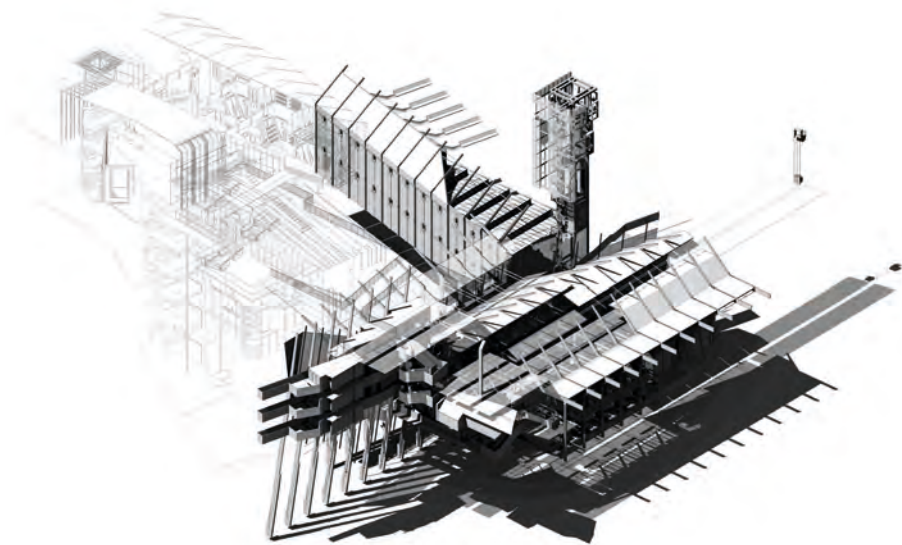
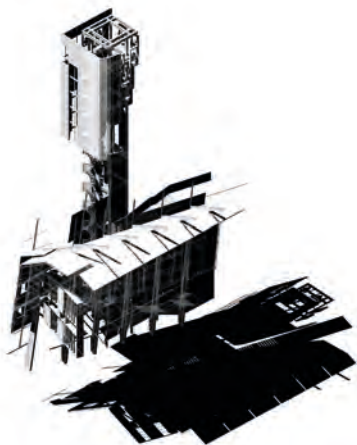
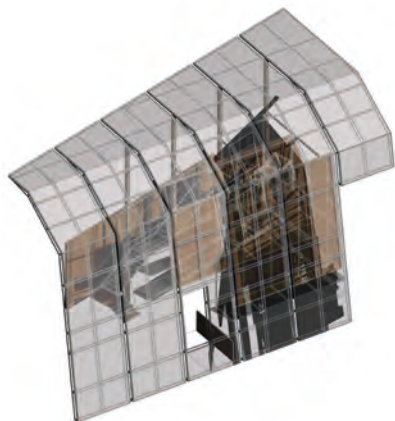
Upper left. **Looking west through Laundry, Market & Cinema** perspective section

Lower left. **Civic Monastery** Mercado Grande looking west



Upper right. **Civic Monastery** plan

Lower right. **Civic Monastery** worm's-eye view

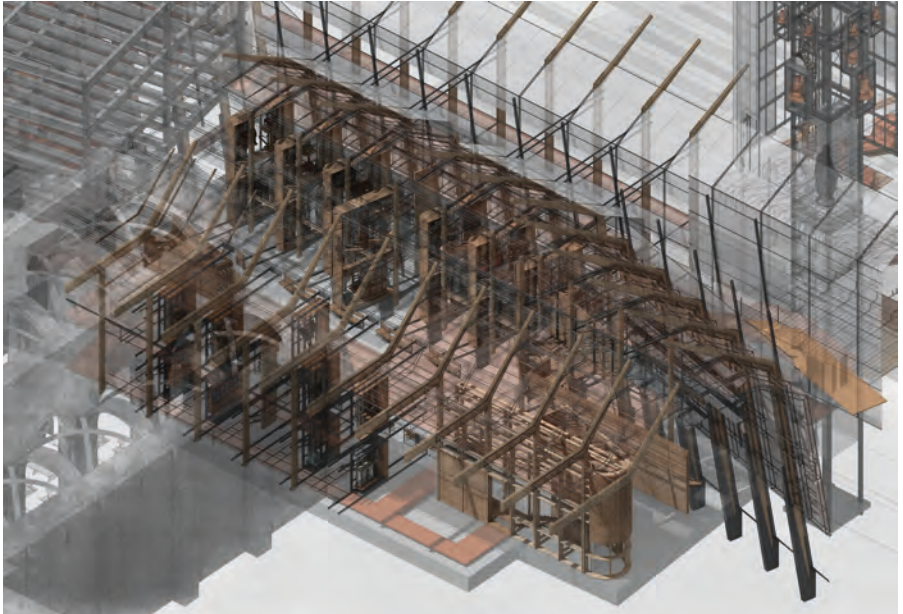
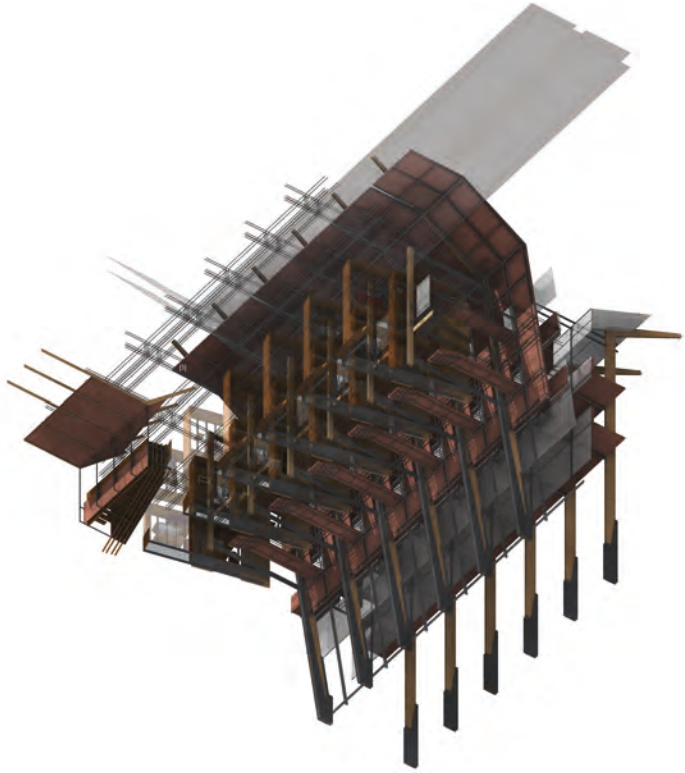


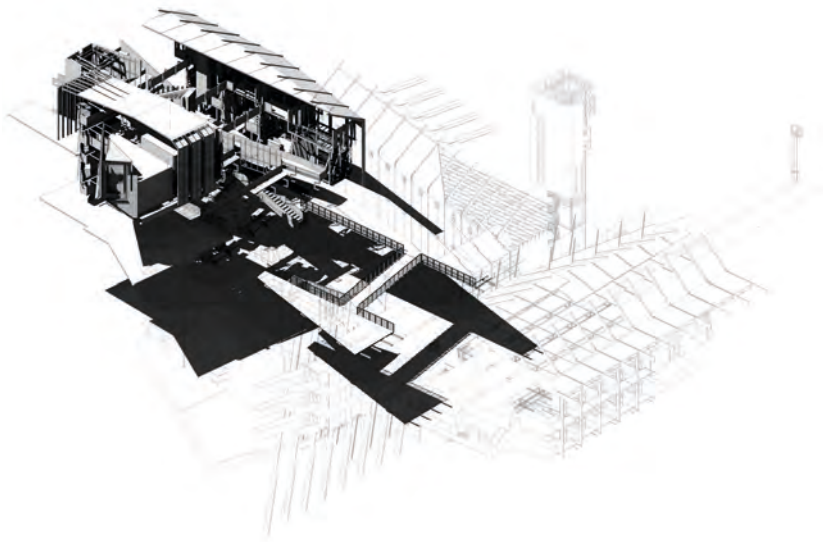
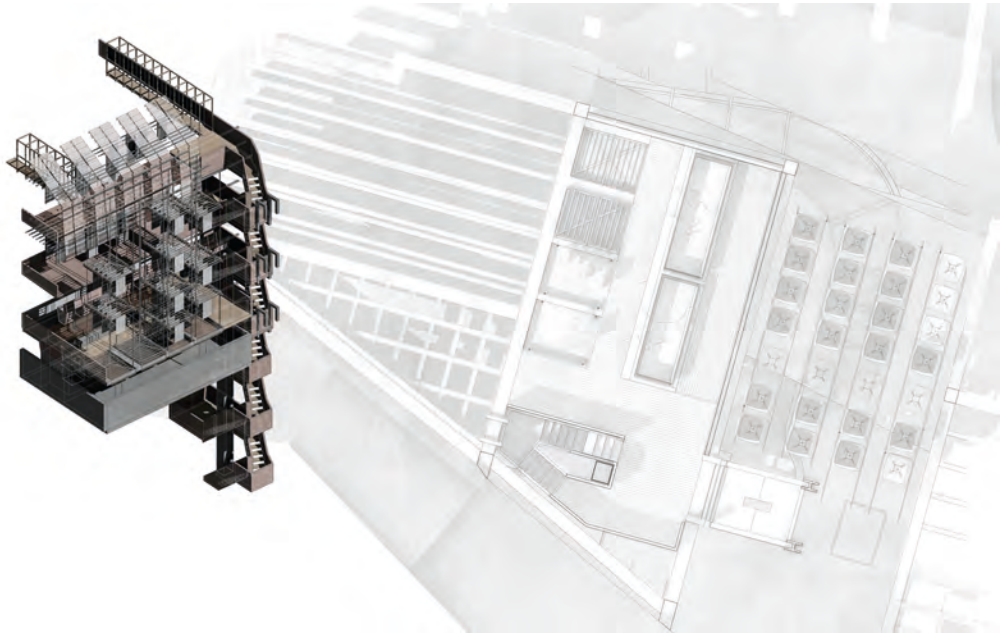
Upper left. **Workshop & Bell Tower**

Lower left. **Auction House, Bell Tower & Cinema**

Upper right. **Auction House** worm's-eye view

Lower right. **Auction House** from north west



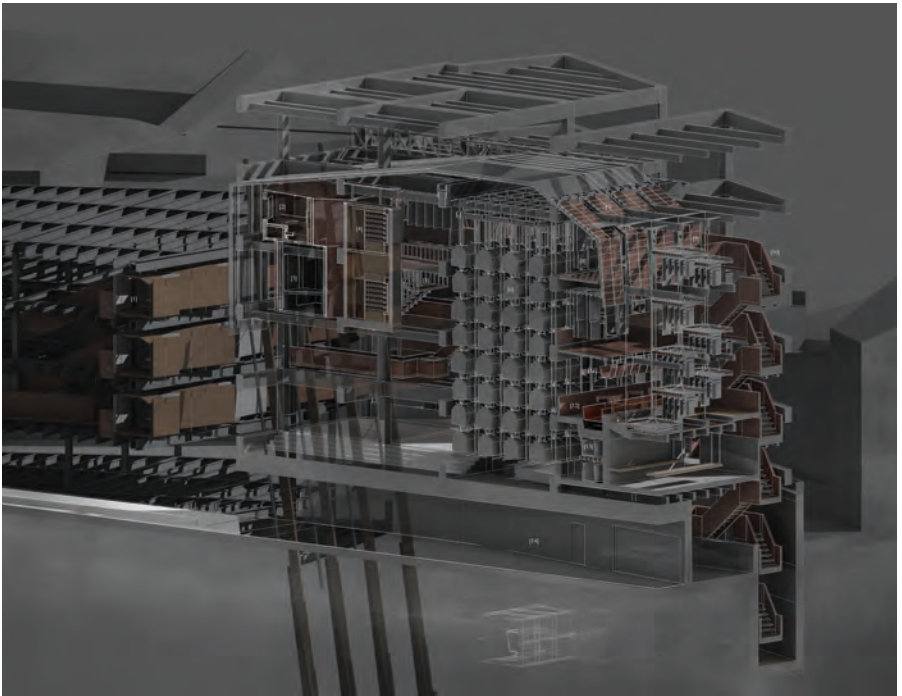
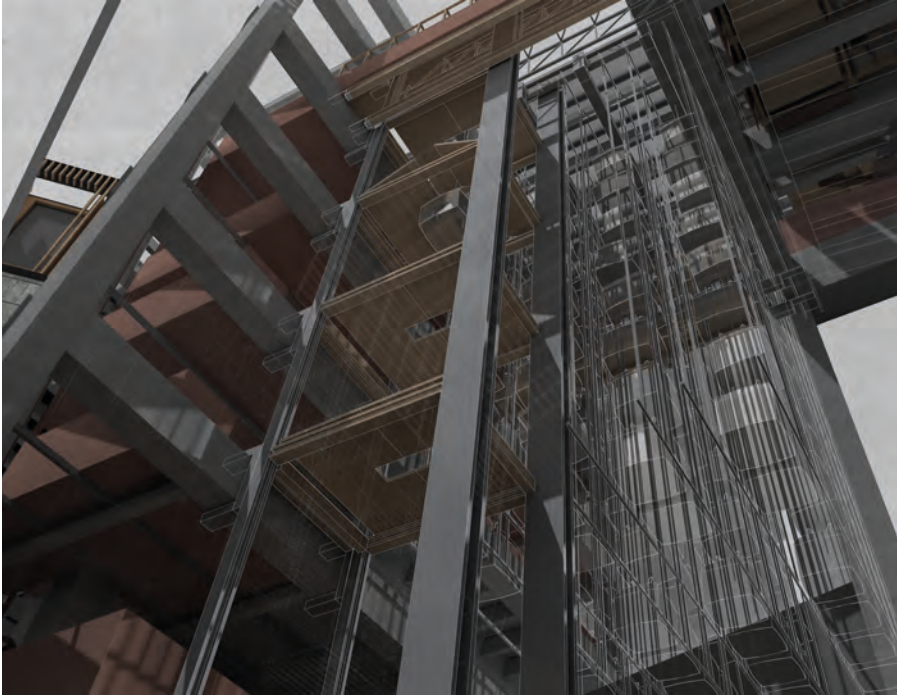


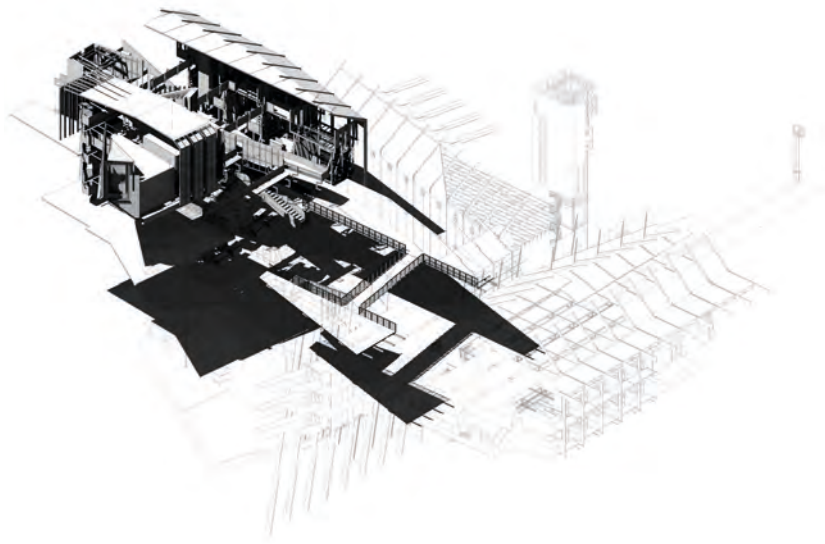
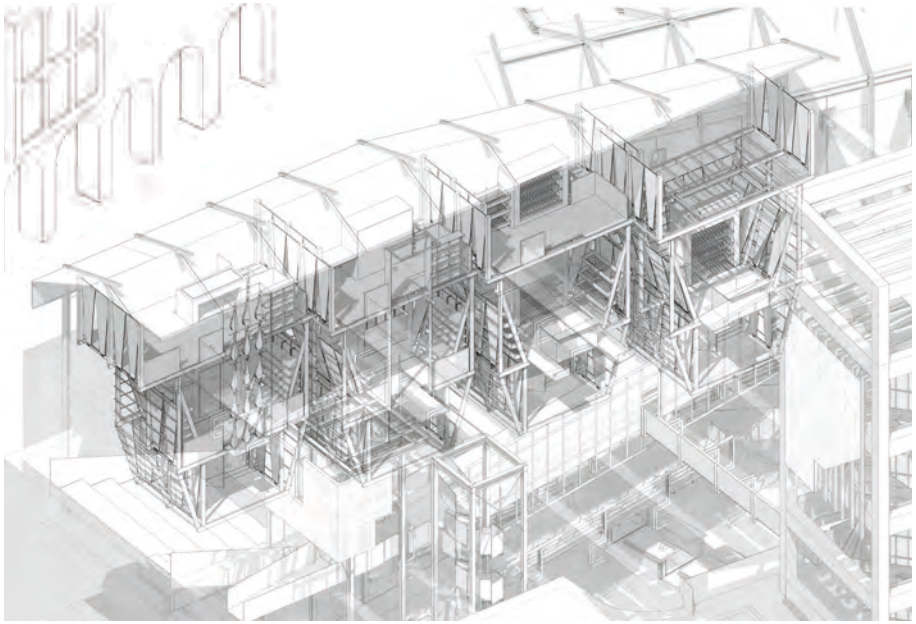
Upper left. **Laundry** isometric and plan

Lower left. **Laundry, Flour Mill, Jeweller's Workshop**

Upper right. **Laundry & Flour Mill Elevator**

Lower right. **Laundry & Jeweller's Workshop** perspective section



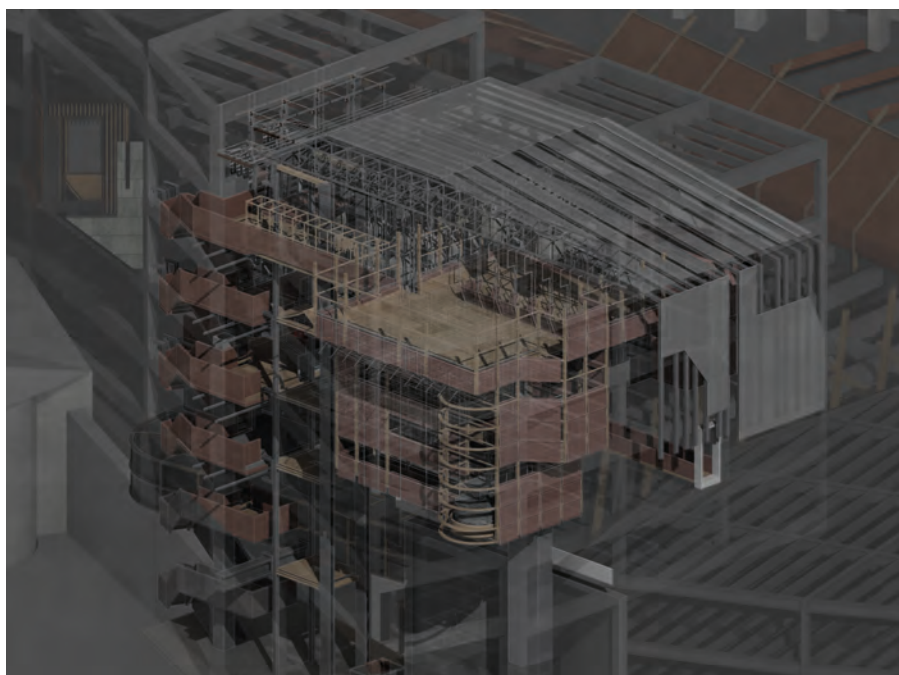
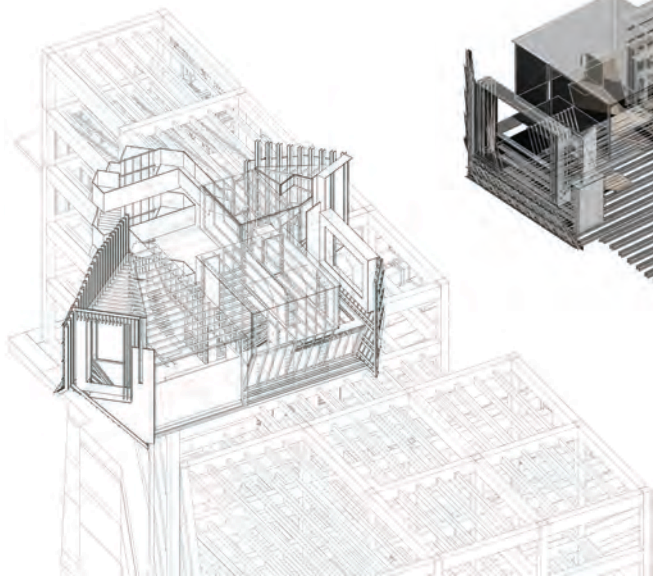


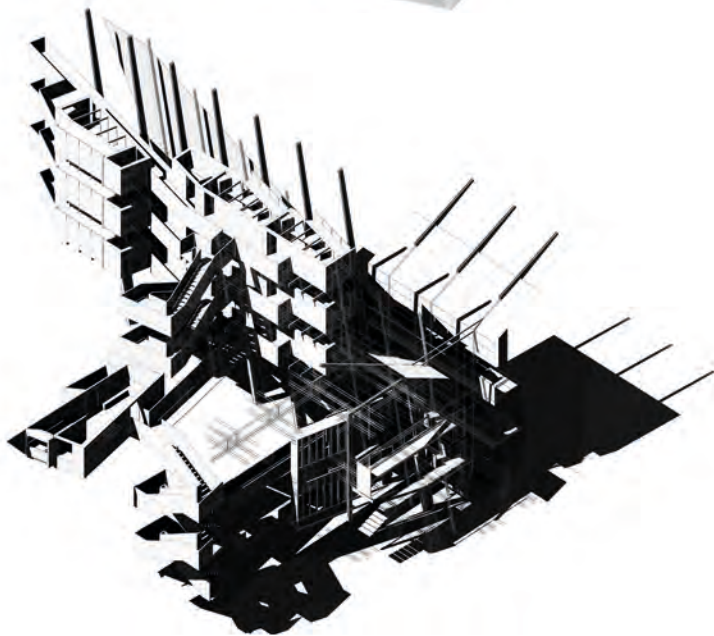
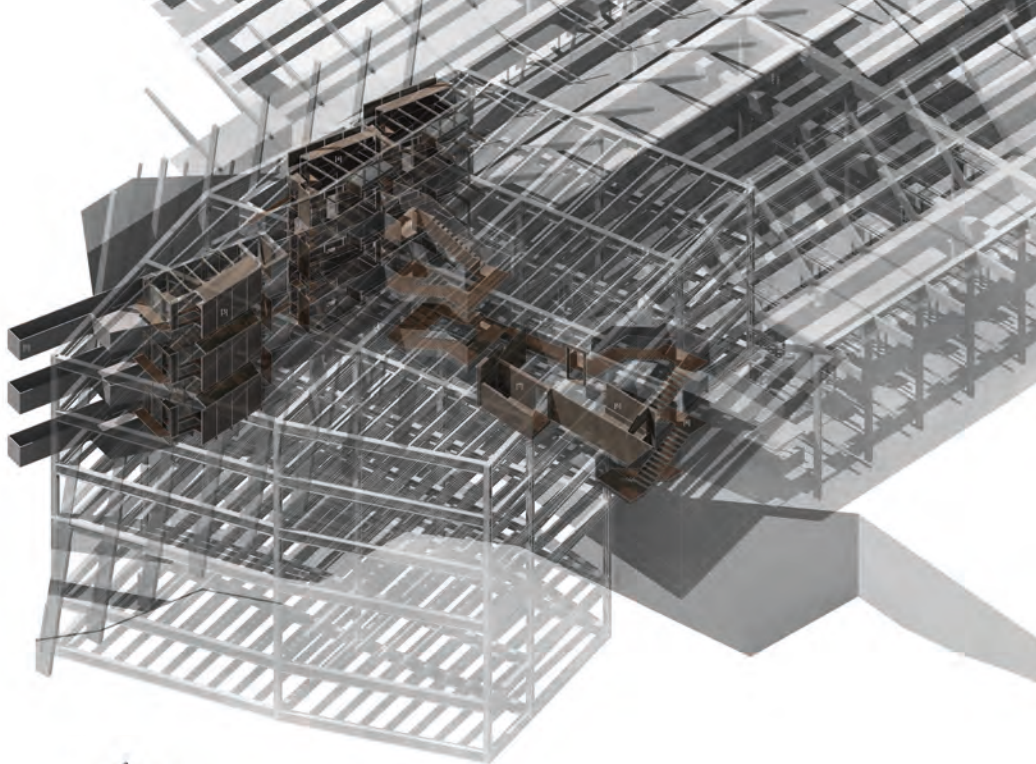
Upper left. **Market Stalls for Butcher, Baker, Greengrocer & Florist**

Lower left. **Markets & Guildhall**

Upper right. **Guildhall** axonometric

Lower right. **Laundry & Flour Mill**

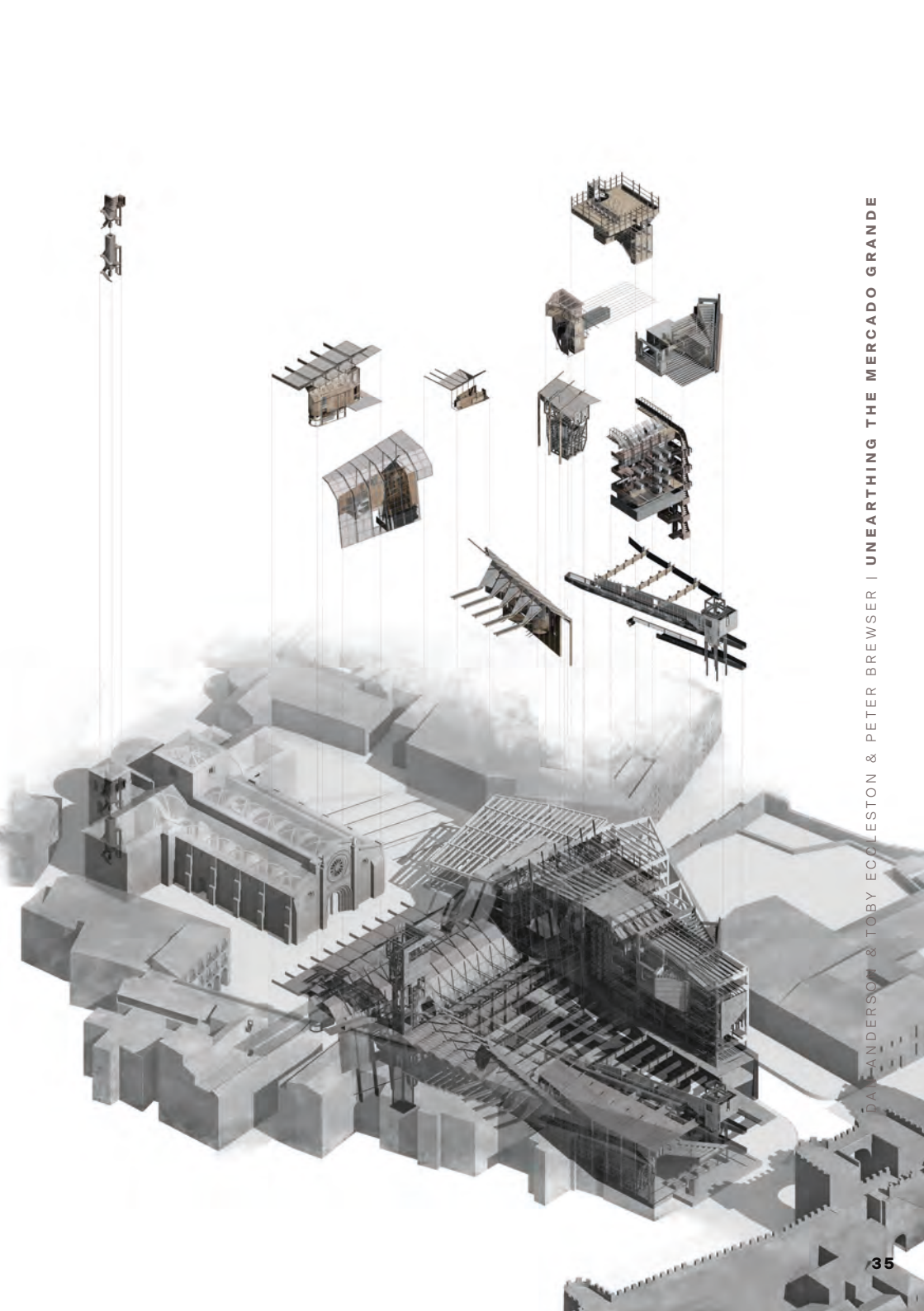


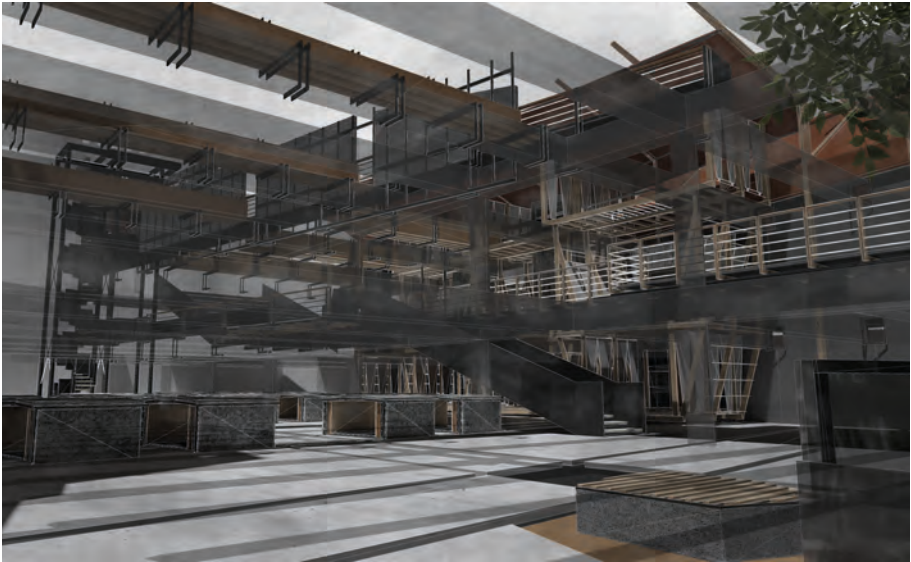
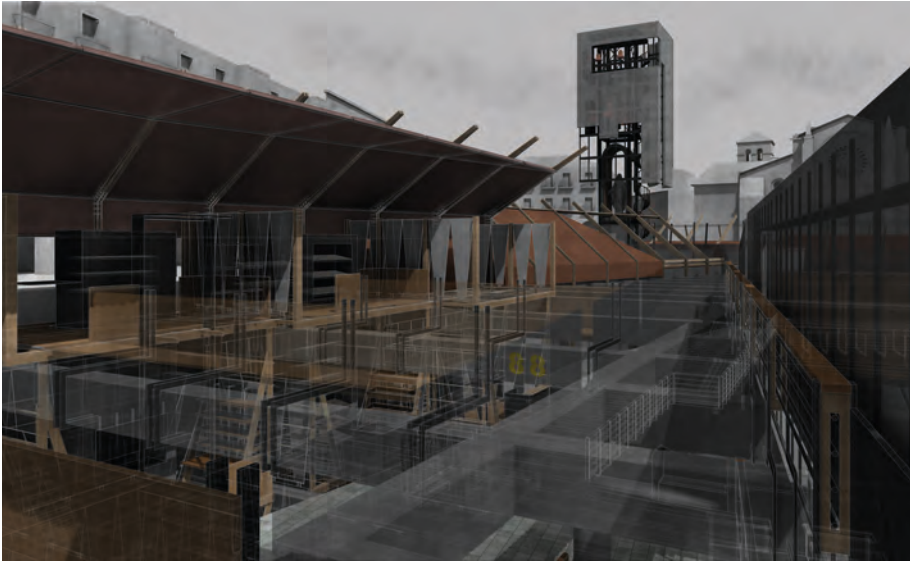


Upper left. **Dormitories**

Lower left. **Dormitories and stair to Auction House & Markets**

Right. **Architectural Characters** exploded isometric





Upper left. **Marketplace & Bell Tower**

Lower left. **Marketplace lower level**

Upper right. **New Tempietto from Church of San Pedro**



DAN ANDERSON & TOBY ECCLESTON & PETER BREWSTER | UNEARTHING THE MERCADO GRANDE

Site: Plaza de Catedrale de Ávila
Programme: Research Archive, Conservation Workshop, Lithographic Printworks and Undercroft

02

THE PORT OF THE TWELVE VESSELS

AN OPENING TO ILLEITY

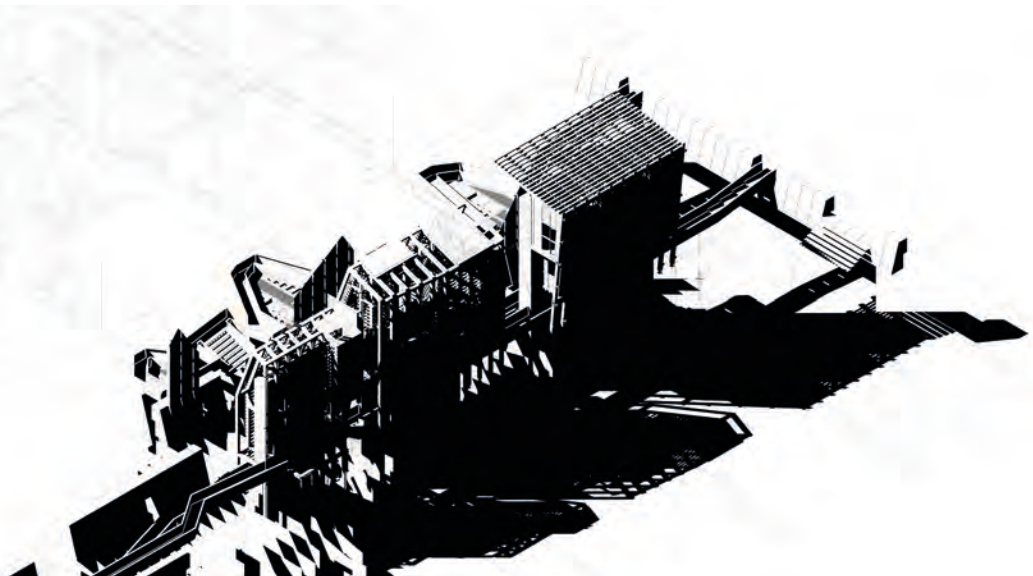
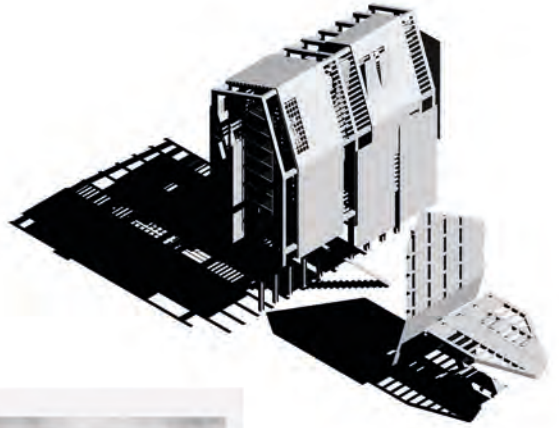
DANIEL LOMHOLT-WELCH

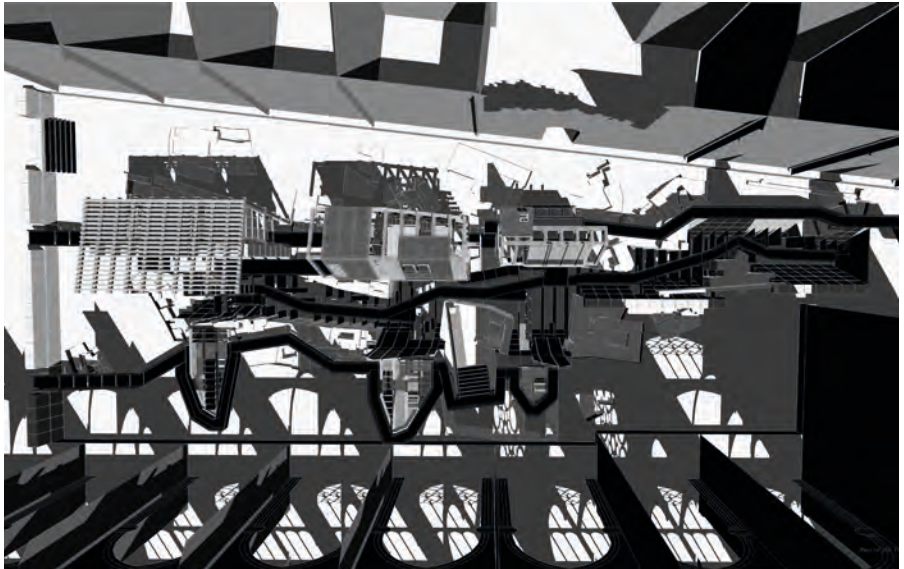
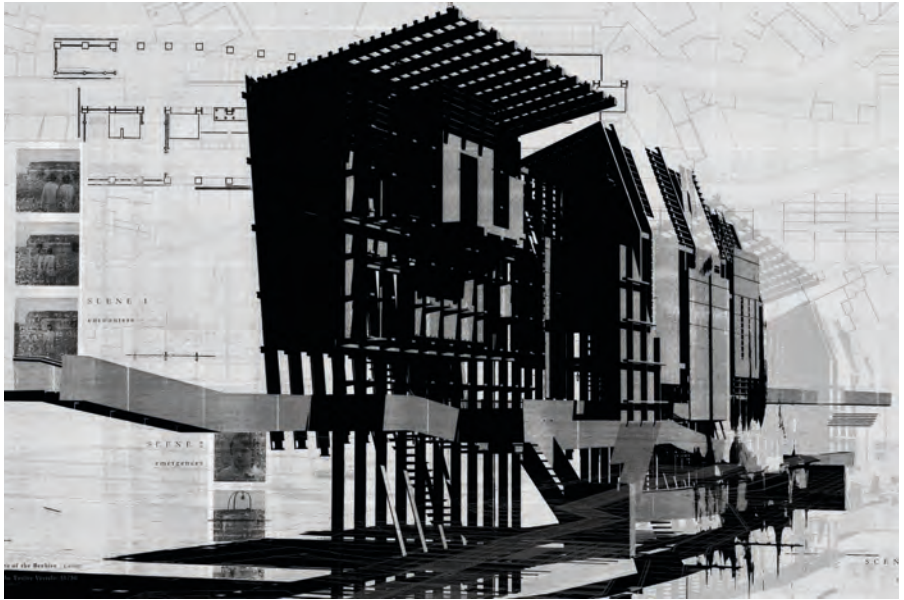
The Port of the Twelve Vessels acts as a gateway to the walled city of Ávila and the texts of the renowned 16th century writer and mystic, Santa Teresa de Ávila. The discernible shadows cast by the imposing 12th century Cathedral de Ávila coalesce with the imperceptible shadows left by the twelve absent relics of Santa Teresa, themselves cast across Western Europe for the purpose of reverence. The sciographic landscape is one of flux, set to the material rhythm of the Cathedral's buttresses, mullions and piers. The topography's temporal rhythm is defined by the conveyance of pilgrims, antiquarians and religious processions across itself.

Poised above this landscape, a sequence of tower and screen architectures curate the flow of light, moisture and movement. Space is carefully articulated to accommodate the study of Santa Teresa's texts, a programme which is served by a suite of subterranean workshops for conservation, publication and lithographic printing. The architectures themselves form husks for twelve empty vessels, [re]animators of *illeity*, the presence of absence.

The ebb and flow of atmospheric conditions through the *Port* is navigated through a series of material and structural exchanges. A steel skin channels rainwater to provide drainage and cooling for the internal spaces, whilst redwood louvers can be adjusted to moderate sunlight. Castilian limestone basins take the stain of the lithographer's ink, marking, however faintly, each subsequent print. In relation to its context the architecture is both the reader and the writer.





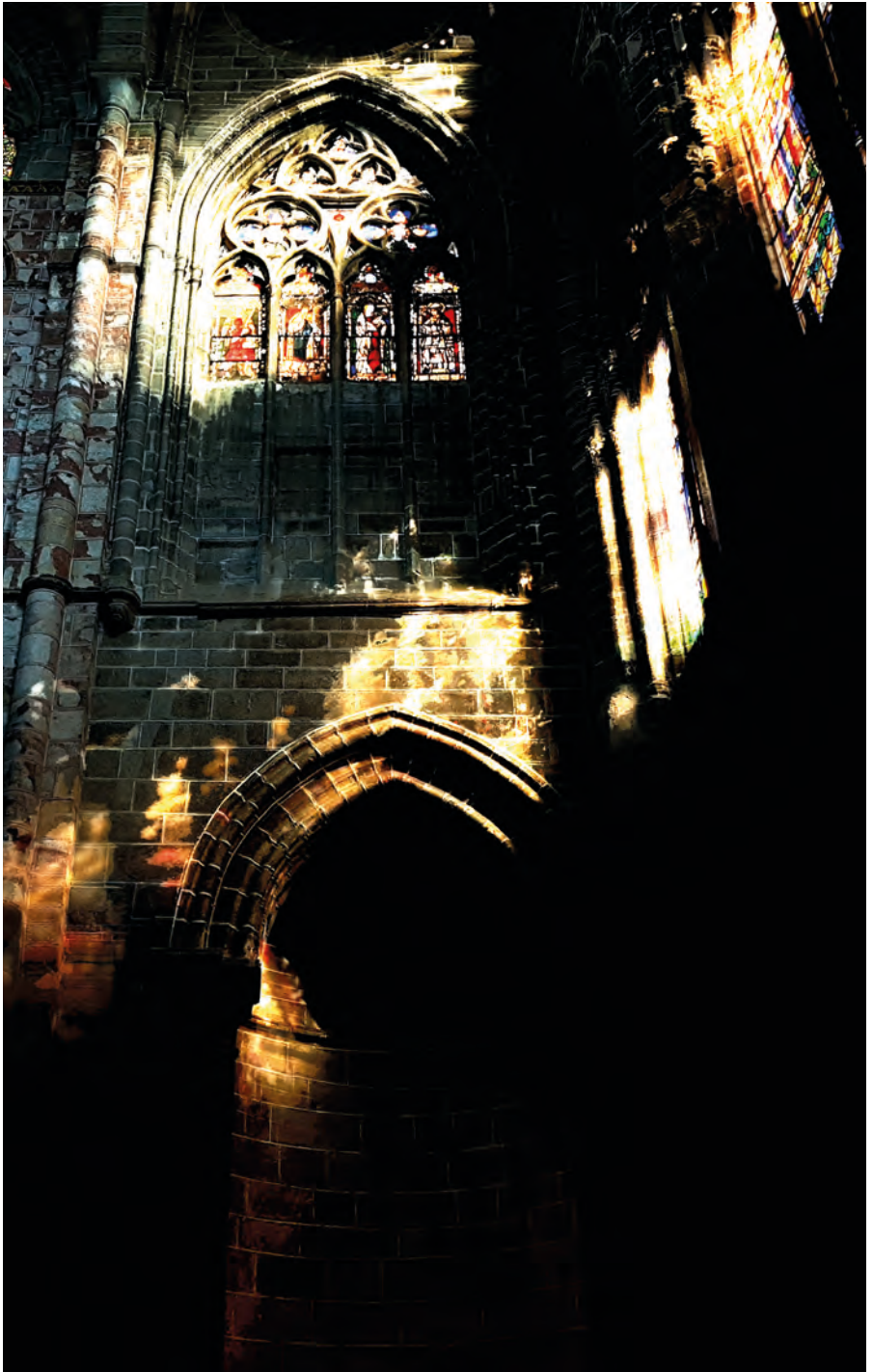


Upper left clockwise. **Procession of Santa Teresa tower view, Individual Reading Tower and Enclosing Screen, Archival Towers** viewed from undercroft, **Port of Twelve Vessels** viewed from southeast
 Lower left. **The Port of Twelve Vessels Towers** walkways and screens
 Upper right. **Towers and Screens with Walkway** sectional perspective
 Lower right. **The Port of Twelve Vessels Towers** aerial view



Coloured light, Ávila Cathedral.

Giles Davis



Site: Plaza de Nalvillos, Plaza de Italia
Programme: Bathhouse, Ceramic Studio

03

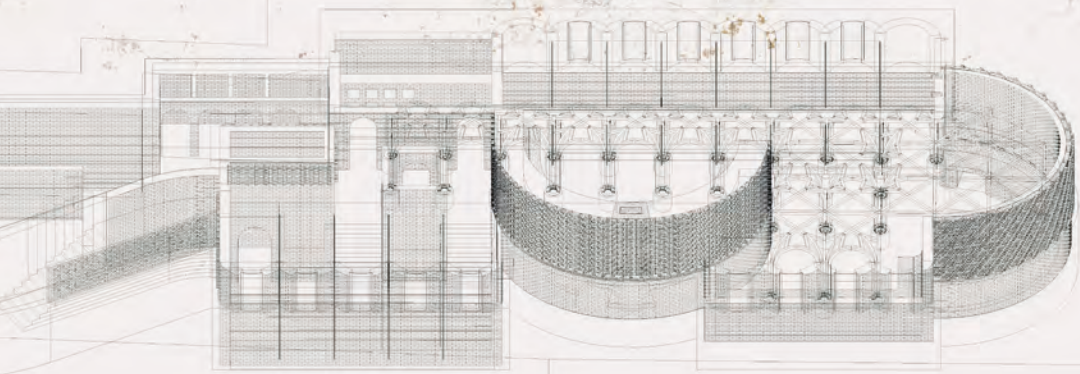
THE AQUA-LITHIC SEAM

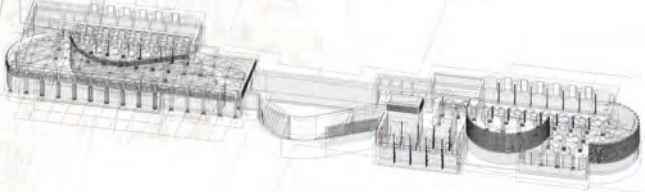
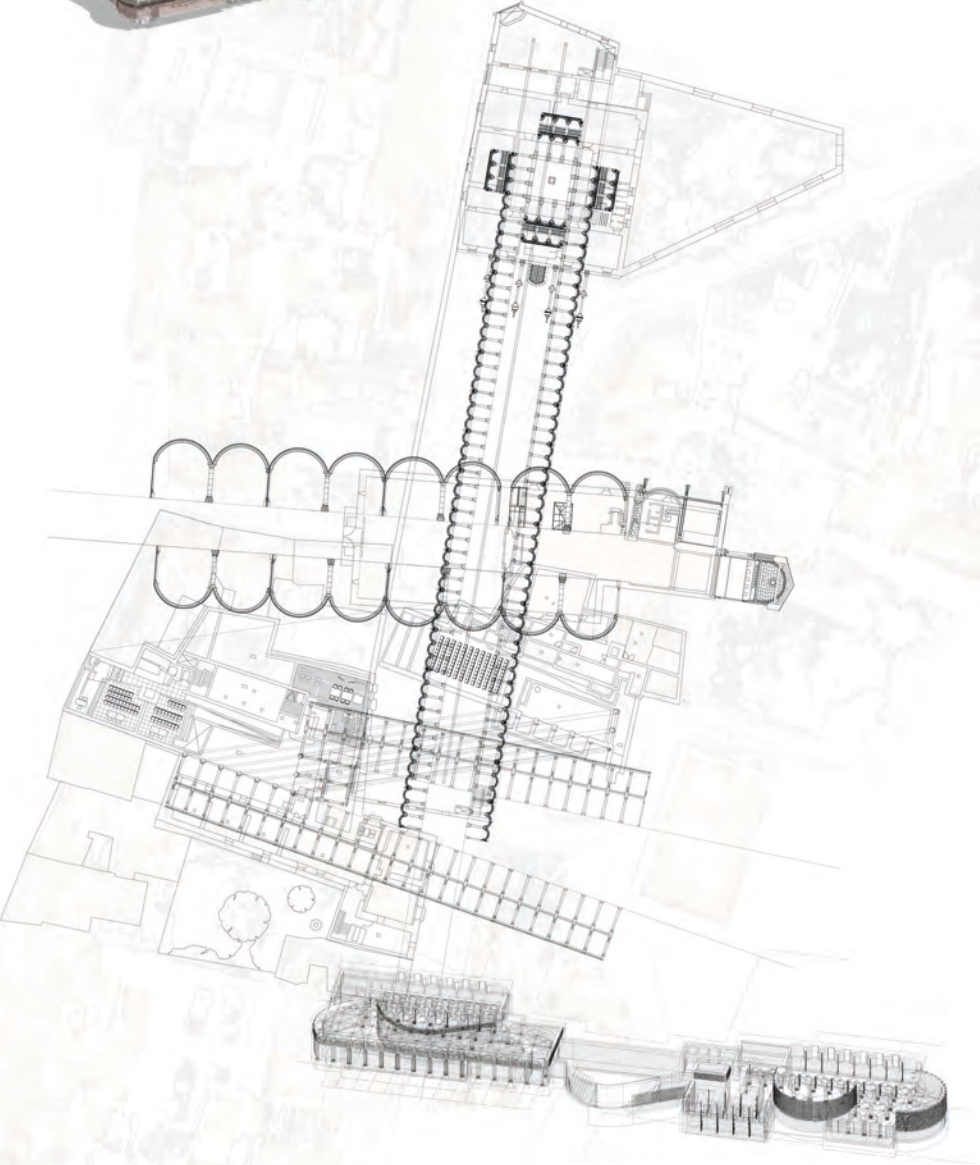
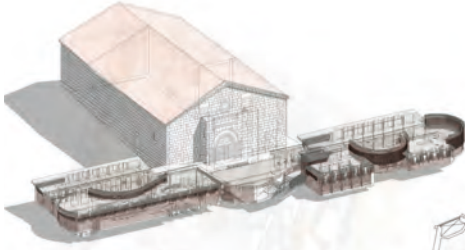
A BOW TO SANTO TOMÉ EL VIEJO

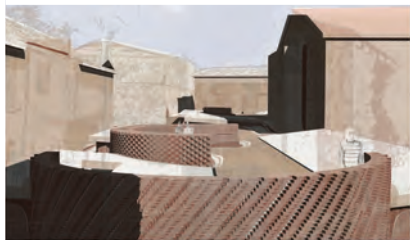
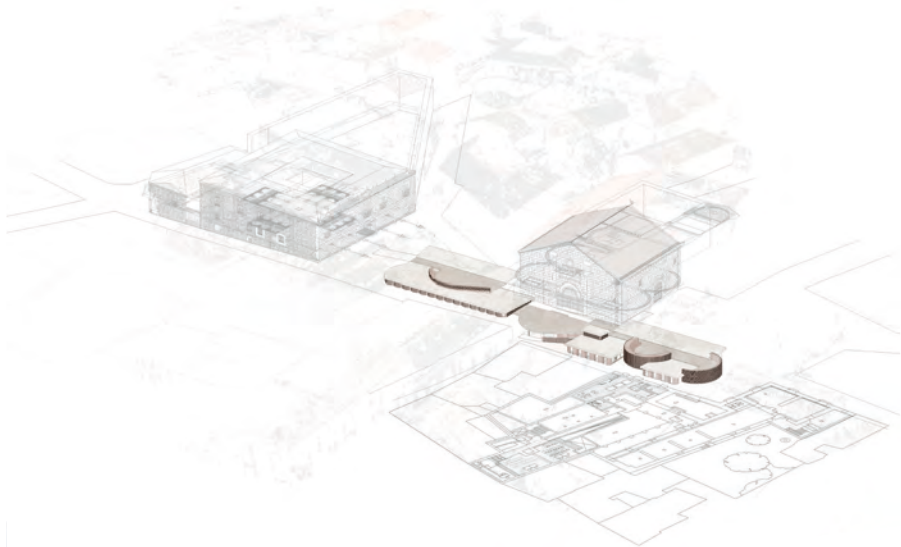
EDEN DOUGLAS

Close to the Gate of El Peso de la Harina on the eastern extremity of the walled city of Ávila, the *Aqua-lithic Seam* is a cultural junction between three buildings: the Museum of Ávila, the Church of Santo Tomé el Viejo and the Palace of Los Serrano. Framing the Plaza de Nalvillos and Plazuela de Italia, these educational nuclei serve Ávila's rich cultural landscape, her archaeology and art. The territory is physically defined by a distinctive planar dip which informs the scale and locus of this architectural proposition. Characterised by a series of horizontal pulls, an architecture embeds itself within this terrain to produce a new ground plane, revealing a bathhouse and ceramics studio below.

Ávila's troubled history in relation to water supply extends across Spain, particularly the southern regions. In Moorish times, this was acknowledged through *hammams* - steam bathhouses built to celebrate this sacred resource. A new bathhouse reimagines this typology. Occupying the adjacent subterrain, a ceramics studio and workshop shares the heat of kilns to warm its waters. Situated between the archaeological archive of Santo Tomé and the art college of Los Serrano, the *Aqua-lithic Seam* intends to unite the two disciplines. The Province of Ávila has a rich mineral palette that has given the city an abundance of building materials; this proposition will honour Ávila's relationship with its materials through the crafting of fine ceramics. The *Aqua-lithic Seam* enables a symbiosis between its counterparts, creating an environment steeped in cultural solidarity, environmental consciousness, and physical grounding.







Upper left. **Aqua-Lithic Seam with S. Tome** view from southwest

Middle left. **Aqua-Lithic Seam** plan evolution

Lower left. **Aqua-Lithic Seam** isometric

Upper right. **Aqua-Lithic Seam** in context

Middle right. **Aqua-Lithic Seam** roofscape

Lower right. **Aqua-Lithic Seam** elevation looking east

Site: Plaza de San Jerónimo
Programme: Agricultural College, Lecture Hall, Study Gardens, Dormitory, Classrooms,
Library, Laboratories

04

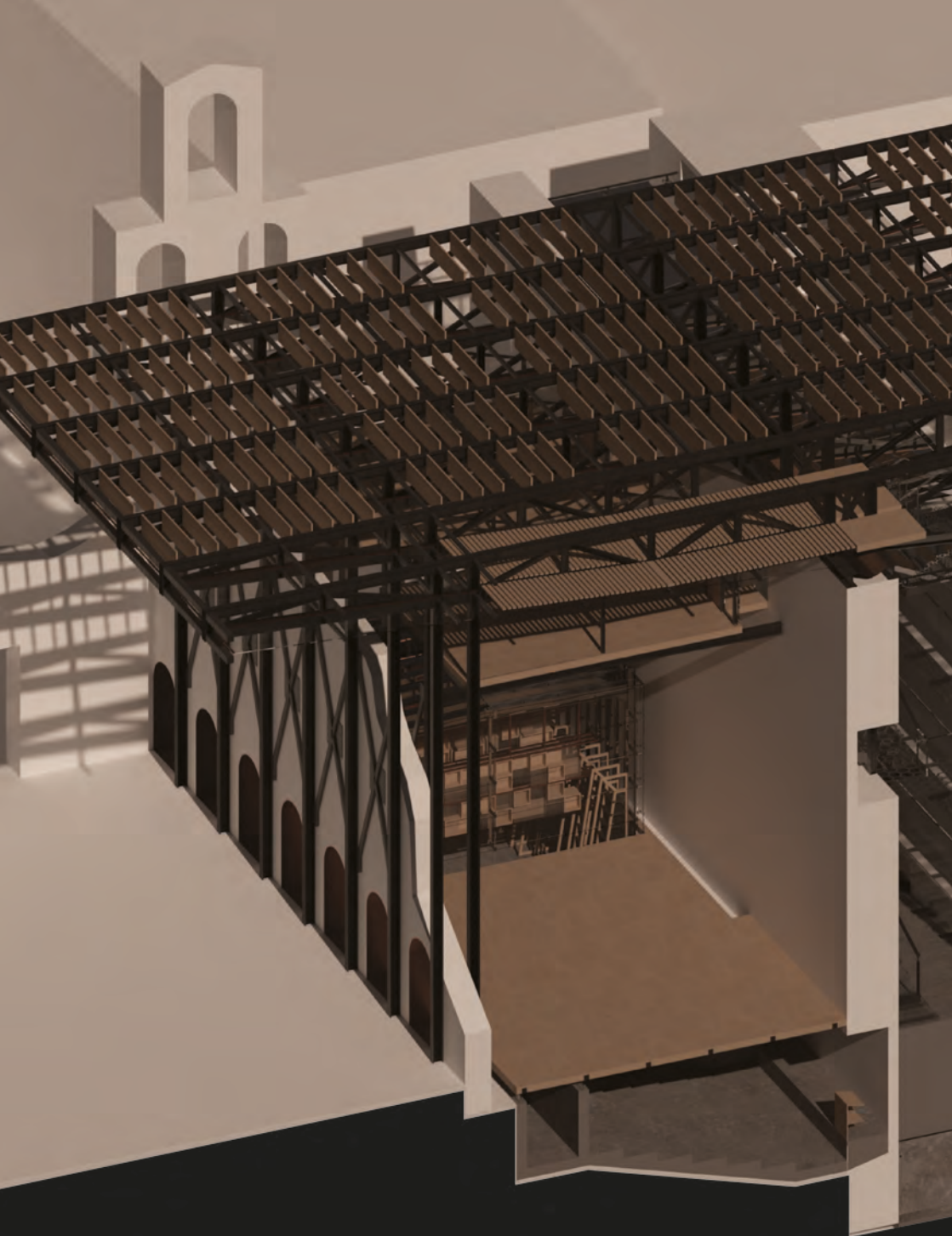
SAINT JEROME'S GARDEN

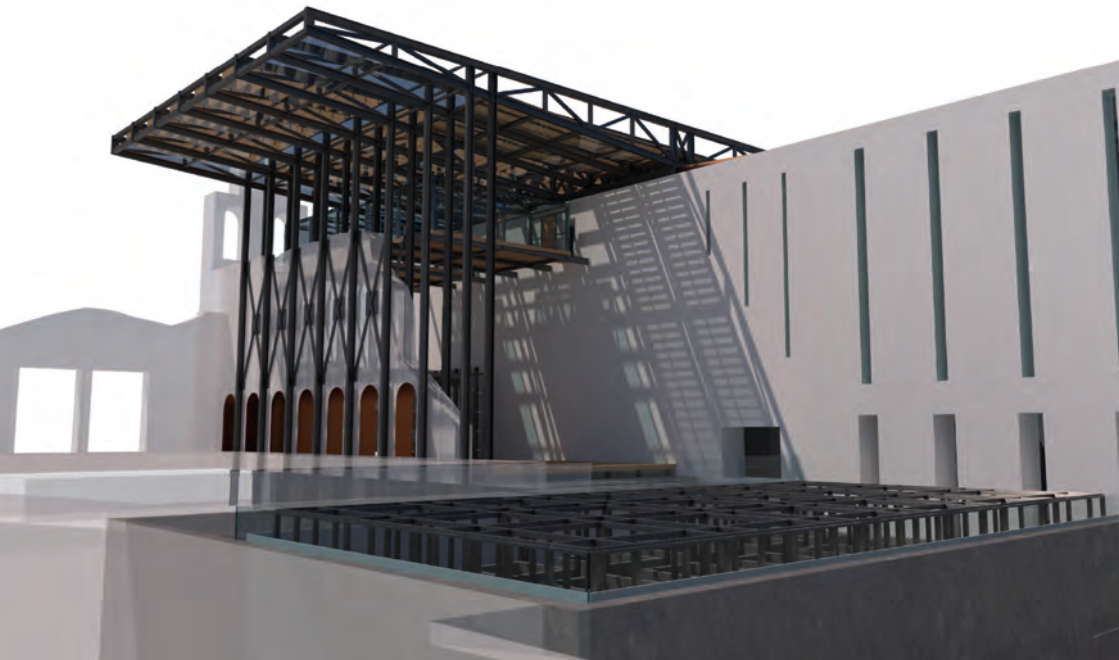
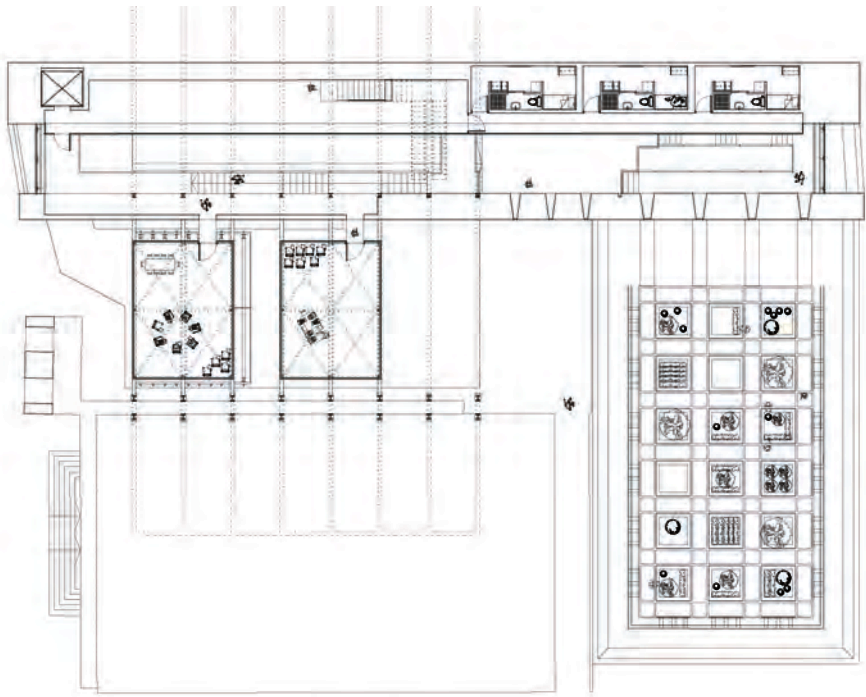
JAMES MELVILLE

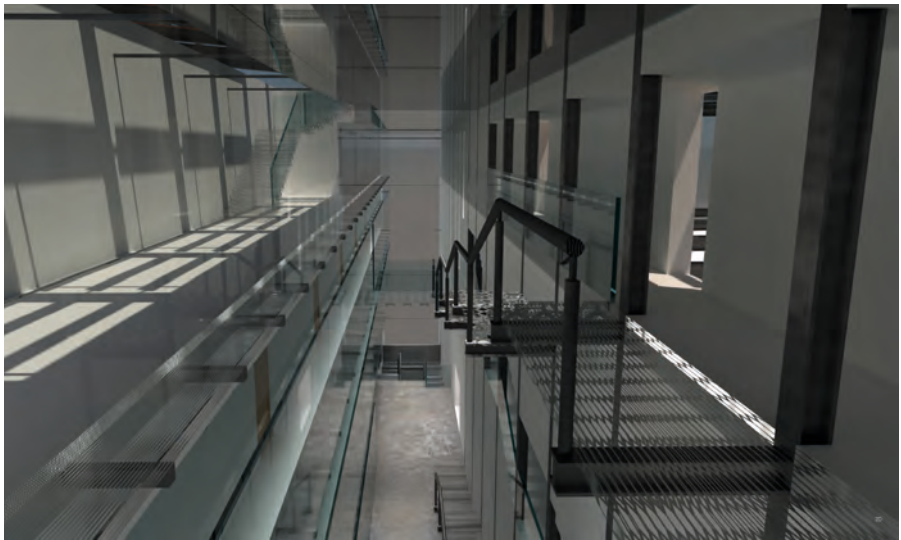
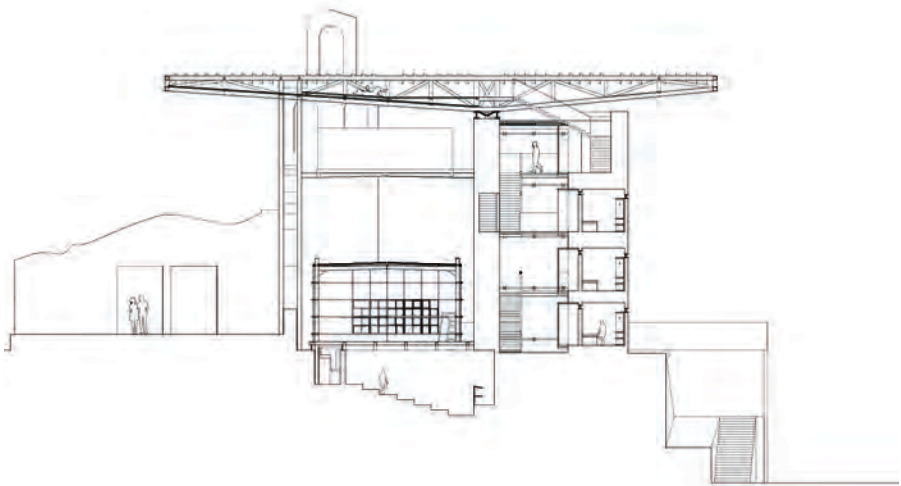
As a consequence of de-populated rural communities, the warming effects of climate change and the application of industrial monocrop farming techniques, the agricultural wealth and diversity of the alluvial plane of the Rio Adaja has experienced a steady decline. In response, *Saint Jerome's Garden*, as a new model of agricultural college, seeks to provide a forum and place of learning where the concerns of stewardship and sustainable rural economies are researched, studied and explored through the working of external, artificial landscapes.

The project is sited within the ruins of Monasterious de los Jerónimos which lies a short distance outside Ávila's eastern wall. The iconic image of Saint Jerome at work in his study, housed within the rich fabric of an ecclesiastical building and contemplating the distant landscape beyond, offered inspiration. However here, the 'study' as the focus and embodiment of research and contemplation is replaced by the typology of the 'garden'. In so doing, *Saint Jerome's Garden* prioritises active, prototypical research as a mode of learning.

A new thick granite wall holding circulation and residential accommodation runs parallel to the largest remaining fragment of the monastery. From here, classrooms span out over the ruins with views to the landscape beyond. Set within the ground below are two deep wells. The first contains a lecture theatre entered via lantern-like Corten-clad library. The second contains the sunken garden, working laboratories in which new forms of crop growth are explored.





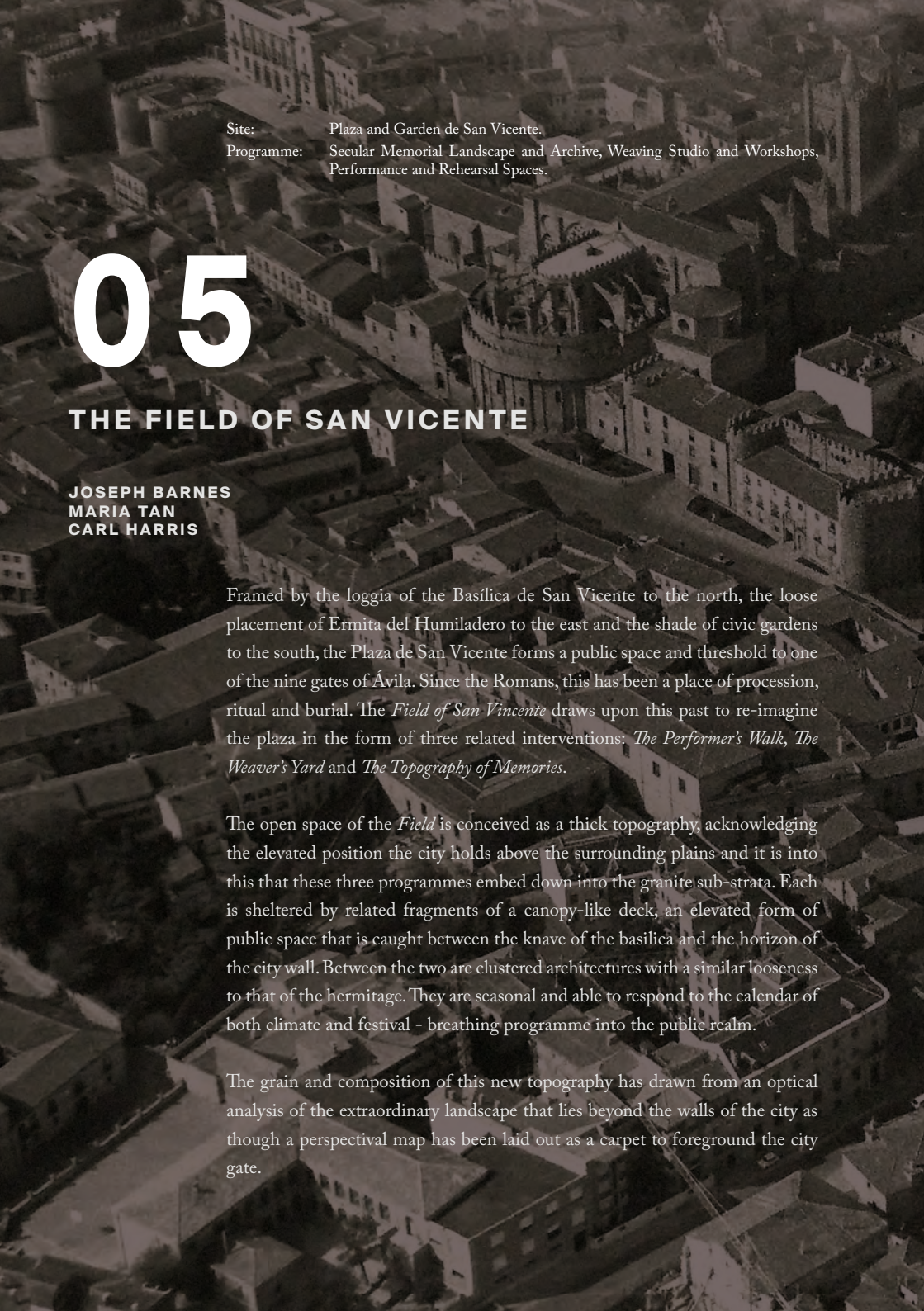


Upper left. **St. Jerome's Garden** plan at elevated classroom level

Lower left. **Study Garden and Elevated Classrooms**

Upper right. **Lecture Theatre, Cells and Sky Garden** section

Lower right. **Garden Wall** internal perspective



Site: Plaza and Garden de San Vicente.
Programme: Secular Memorial Landscape and Archive, Weaving Studio and Workshops, Performance and Rehearsal Spaces.

05

THE FIELD OF SAN VICENTE

JOSEPH BARNES
MARIA TAN
CARL HARRIS

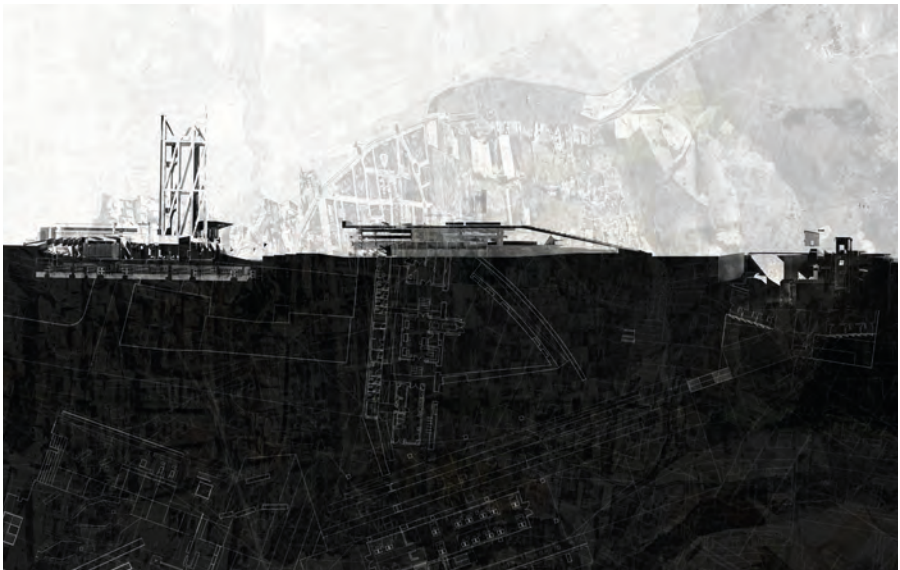
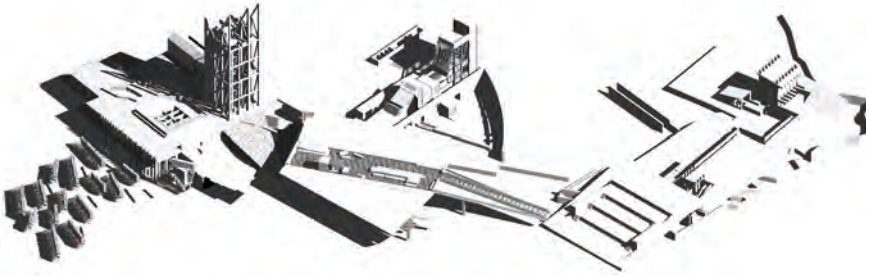
Framed by the loggia of the Basílica de San Vicente to the north, the loose placement of Ermita del Humiladero to the east and the shade of civic gardens to the south, the Plaza de San Vicente forms a public space and threshold to one of the nine gates of Ávila. Since the Romans, this has been a place of procession, ritual and burial. The *Field of San Vicente* draws upon this past to re-imagine the plaza in the form of three related interventions: *The Performer's Walk*, *The Weaver's Yard* and *The Topography of Memories*.

The open space of the *Field* is conceived as a thick topography, acknowledging the elevated position the city holds above the surrounding plains and it is into this that these three programmes embed down into the granite sub-strata. Each is sheltered by related fragments of a canopy-like deck, an elevated form of public space that is caught between the knave of the basilica and the horizon of the city wall. Between the two are clustered architectures with a similar looseness to that of the hermitage. They are seasonal and able to respond to the calendar of both climate and festival - breathing programme into the public realm.

The grain and composition of this new topography has drawn from an optical analysis of the extraordinary landscape that lies beyond the walls of the city as though a perspectival map has been laid out as a carpet to foreground the city gate.







Left. **Ávila Field Drawing** after Jaques Callot, *The Siege of Breda* (1627)

Upper right. **The Field of San Vicente** left to right, **Topography of Memories**, **The Weaver's Yard** and the **Performer's Walk**

Lower right. **The Field of San Vicente** plan and section from north

Site: Plaza de San Vicente, Ermita del Humilladero.
Programme: Secular Memorial Columbaria, Landscape, Garden, Archive and Registry with Viewing Tower.

05a

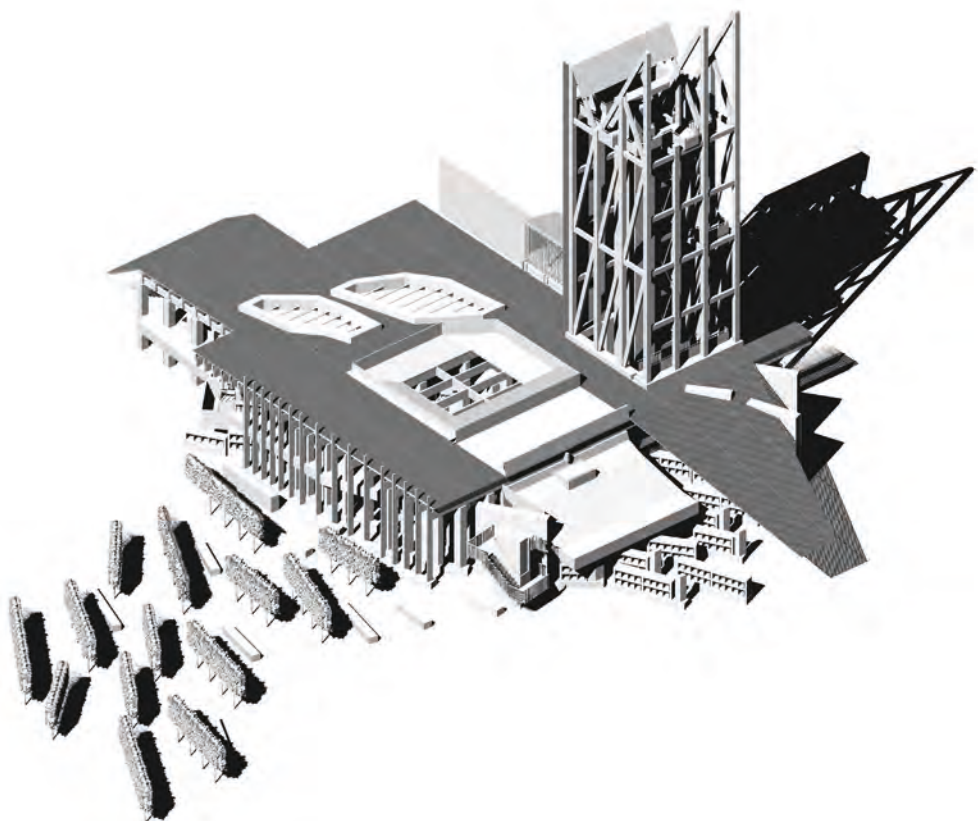
TOPOGRAPHY OF MEMORIES

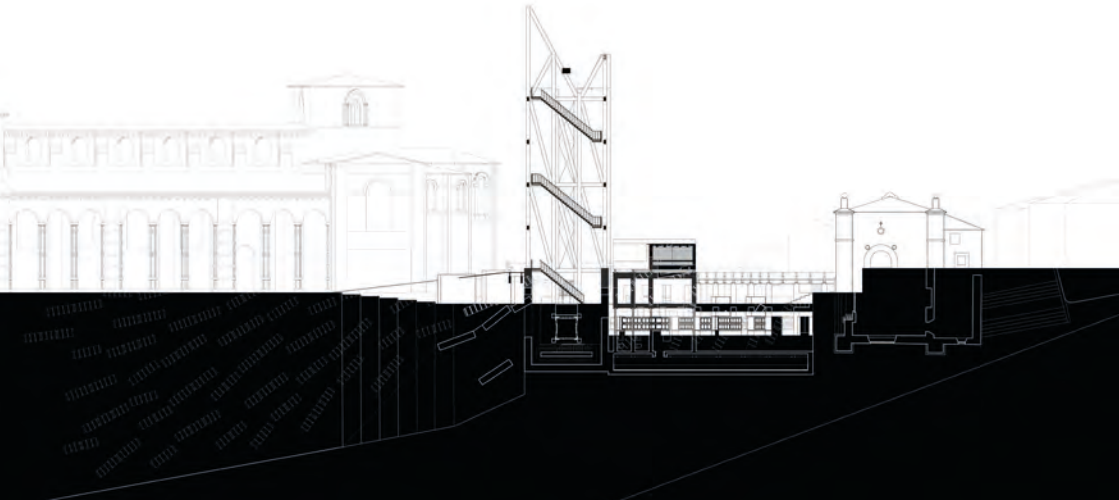
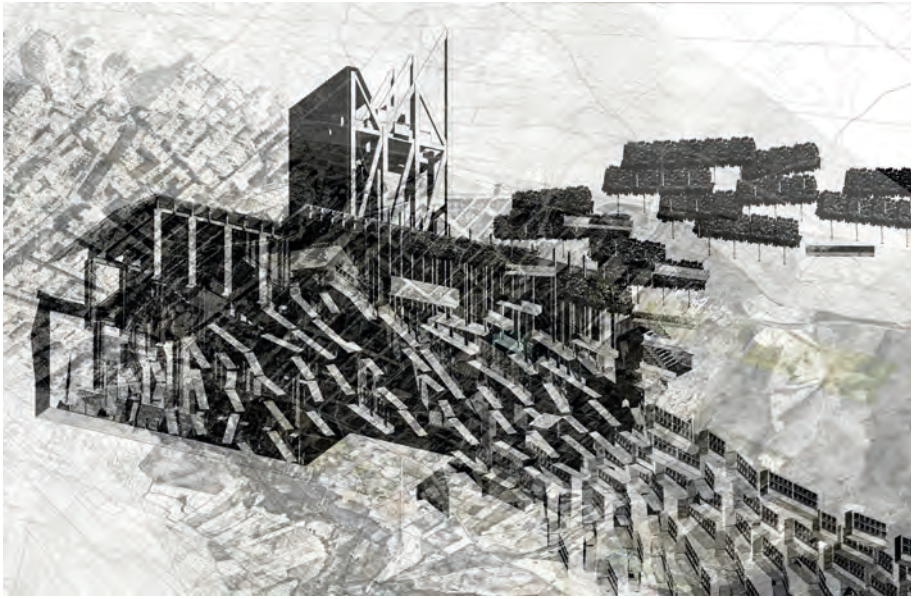
JOSEPH BARNES

The *Topography of Memories* builds on the tradition of burial grounds placed outside, but in proximity to, the fortified settlement. Rather than acting as a place of physical internment set into consecrated ground, this proposal seeks to offer dignity and ritual to a secular form of remembrance.

Caught in the visual field of the city gate of Puerta de San Vicente to the west and Hermitage of Humilladero to the east, *The Topography of Memories* ritualises, through discrete optical moves, a sectional connection between the intimate examination of artefacts of deceased friends and relations placed relic-like within a subterranean columbarium and the expansive, aerial views back to the city of their past life.

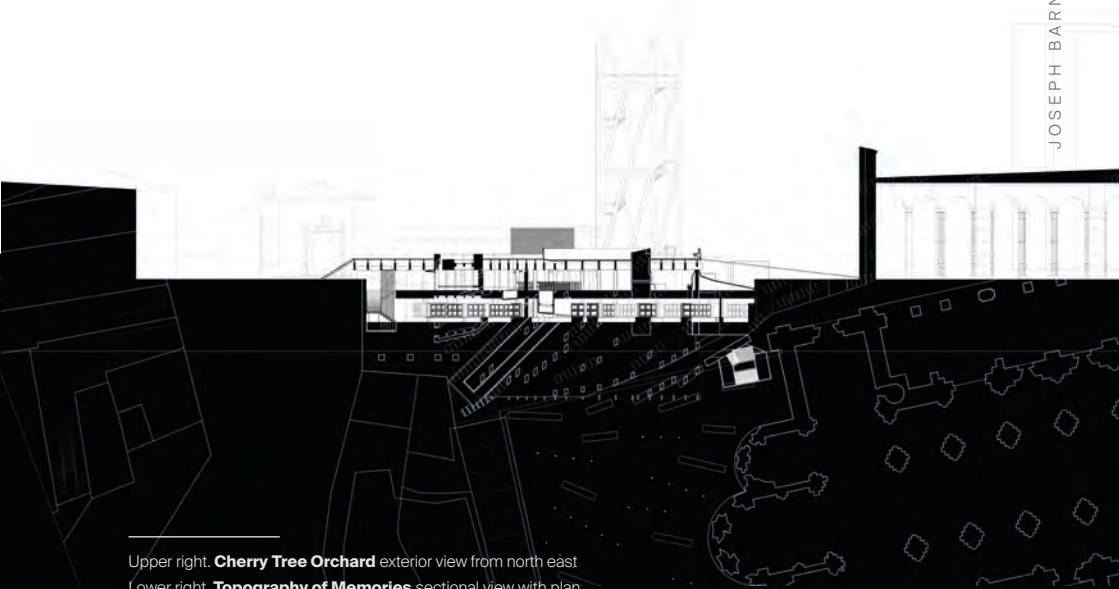
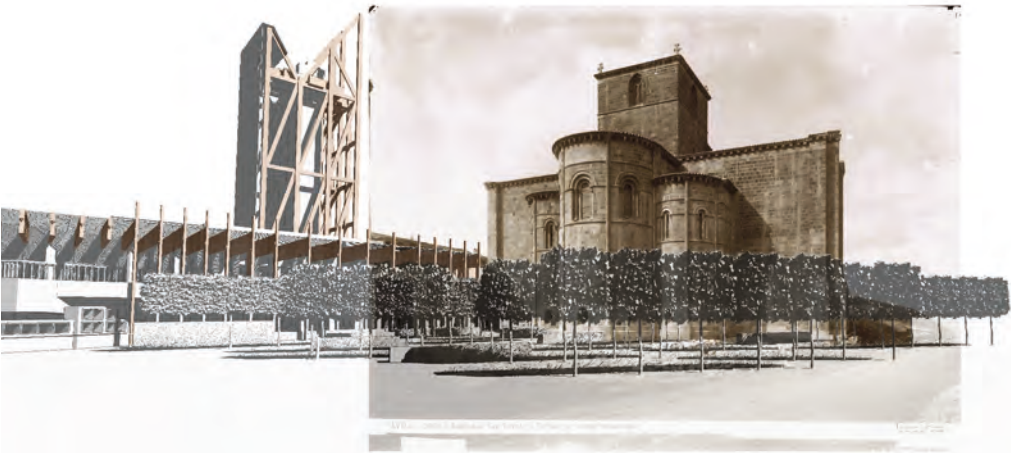
The columbarium cuts down to the lower ground and bedrock upon which the adjacent Basilica de San Vicente is founded and revealed within its crypt. Above, at the level of the plaza, a series of spaces arrange the programmes of eulogy, registration, archive and wake. At this level, there is a loggia-like veil of transparency where visual connections are formed between spaces – acknowledging but not disturbing the activities within. A raised deck reimagines the public space of the plaza and looks back towards the city gate. From here, a belvedere emerges as a counterpoint to the *campanario* of both hermitage and basilica and gazes back to the city. Cut into the deck are deep camera-like wells of light that illuminate the granite memorial topography below.





Upper left. **Topography of Memories** worm's-eye view

Lower left. **Topography of Memories** sectional view with plan



Upper right. **Cherry Tree Orchard** exterior view from north east
Lower right. **Topography of Memories** sectional view with plan

Site: Plaza de San Vicente, Loggia de San Vicente.
Programme: Weaving Studios, Textile Workshop, Storerooms, Dyeing Rooms, Garden and Landscape.

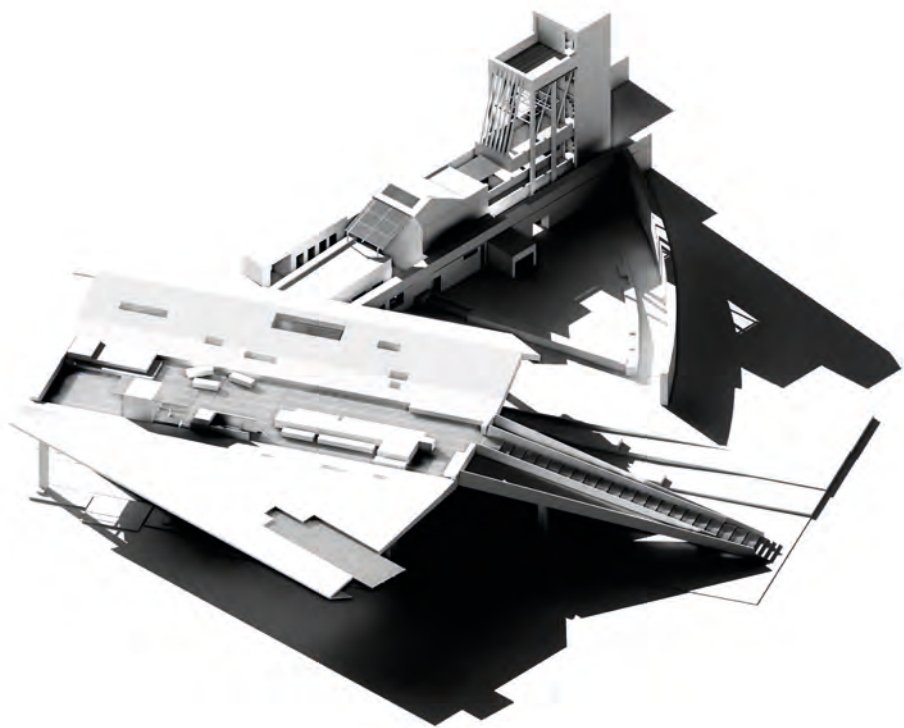
05b

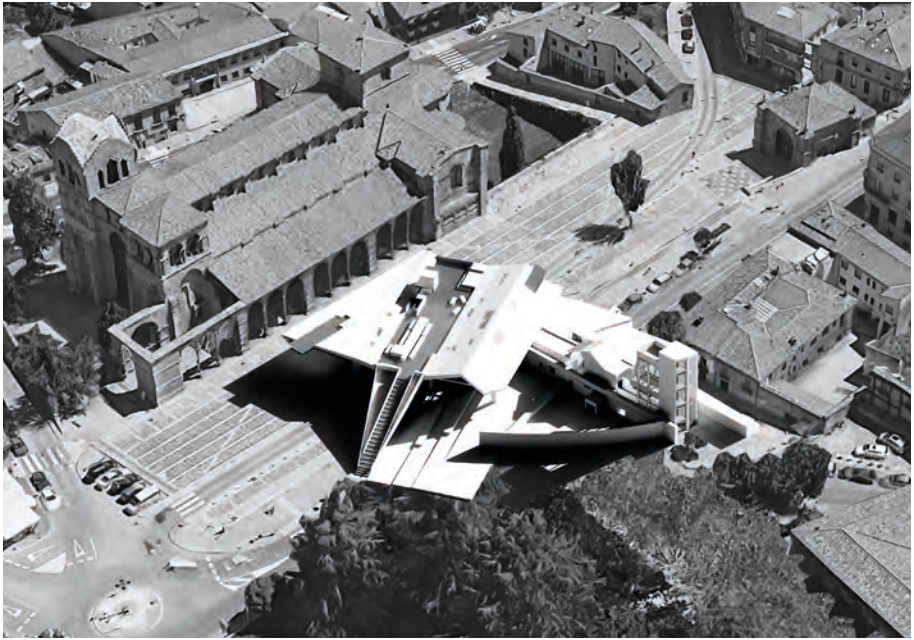
THE WEAVER'S YARD

MARIA TAN

During its zenith in 16th century, Ávila was central to the thriving wool-driven economy of Castile. As part of the Segovian *cañada* routes, herds of transhumant sheep migrated west and south through its province. Most *Abulenses*, the citizens of the city, worked as artisans — weavers, dyers, carders, combers, spinners, fullers — particularly engaged in the manufacture of woollen cloth. Drawing from this rich history of wool production and weaving, which has ostensibly since been in slow decline, the foremost aim of *The Weavers' Yard* is to conserve, continue and stimulate the production of woven textiles local to Ávila, and to train new, contemporary artisans.

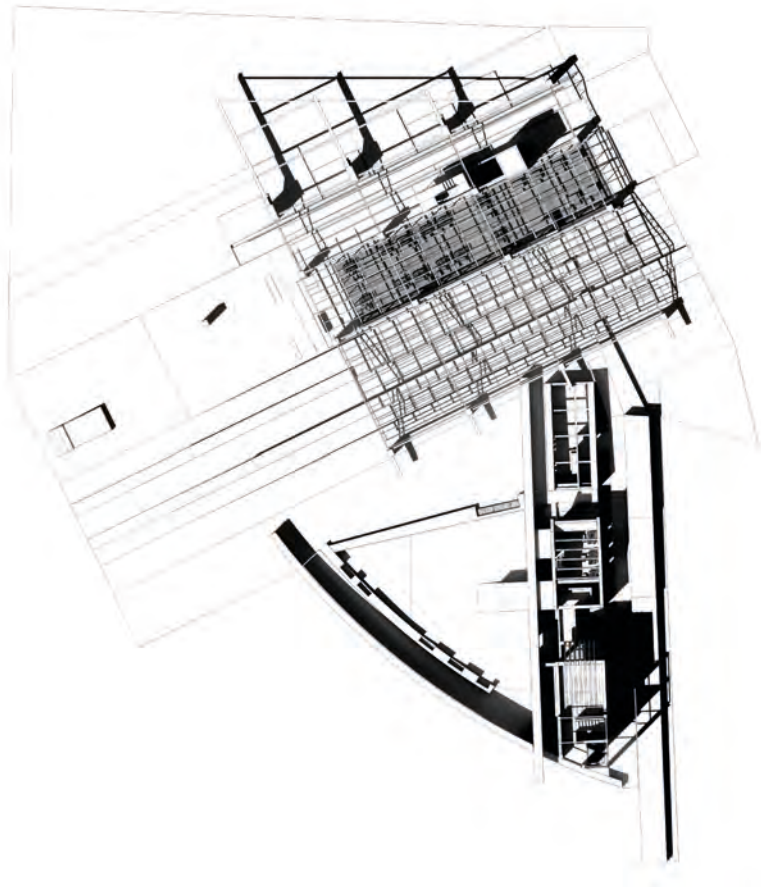
The Weavers' Yard is a weaving plaza, textile workshop, studio and loggia that unravels across Plaza de San Vicente, just beyond the eastern walls of the city. Through a graphic rescaling of Ávila's wider agrarian landscape onto the Plaza, the surface is reimagined as a granite and limestone topography of troughs, cuts and walls. It's materiality, like the adjacent Basilica de San Vicente, is quarried from the nearby La Colilla. Into this topography, various spaces celebrate the ritual, production and performance of weaving. The *Yard* is sheltered by a raised public deck of steel and timber, folded like fabric above the topography of production. Between these two surfaces, education, exploration and the exhibition of the related processes are made public, encouraging the continuity of this artisanal tradition. The *Yard* is seasonal, at times thick with semi-external activity, at others withdrawn, enclosed and discrete.



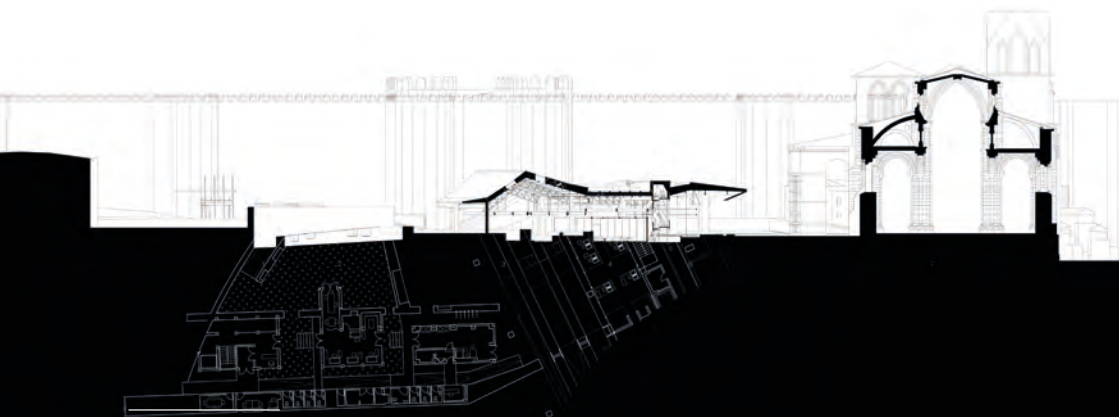


Upper left. **The Weaver's Yard** aerial view

Lower left. **The Weaver's Yard** sectional perspective with architectural characters



MARIA TAN | THE WEAVER'S YARD



Upper right. **The Weaver's Yard** plan

Lower right. **The Weaver's Yard** sectional view with plan

Site: Jardin de San Vicente.
Programme: Circus Arts Performance and Rehearsal Space, Elevated Landscape, Courtyards and Towers.

05c

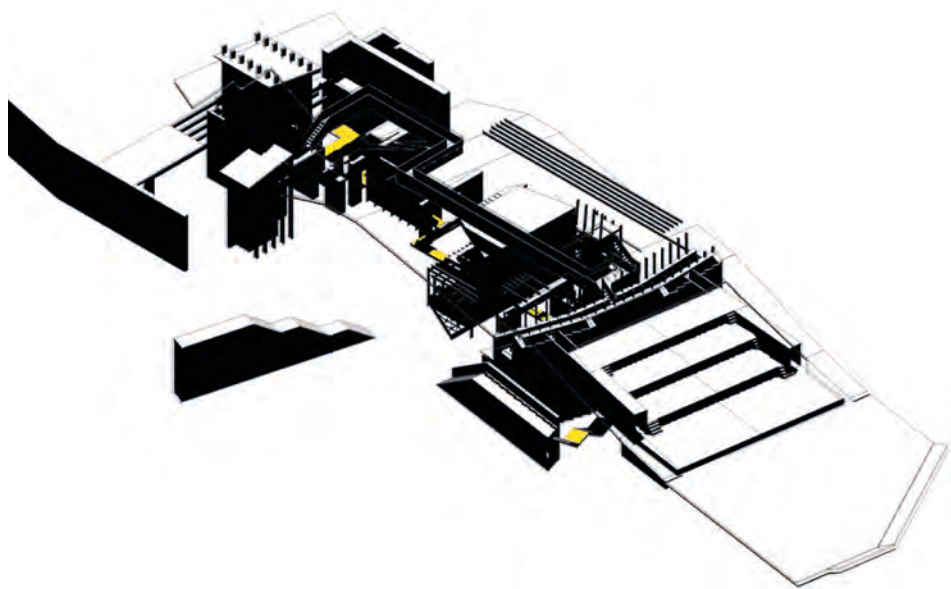
THE PERFORMER'S WALK

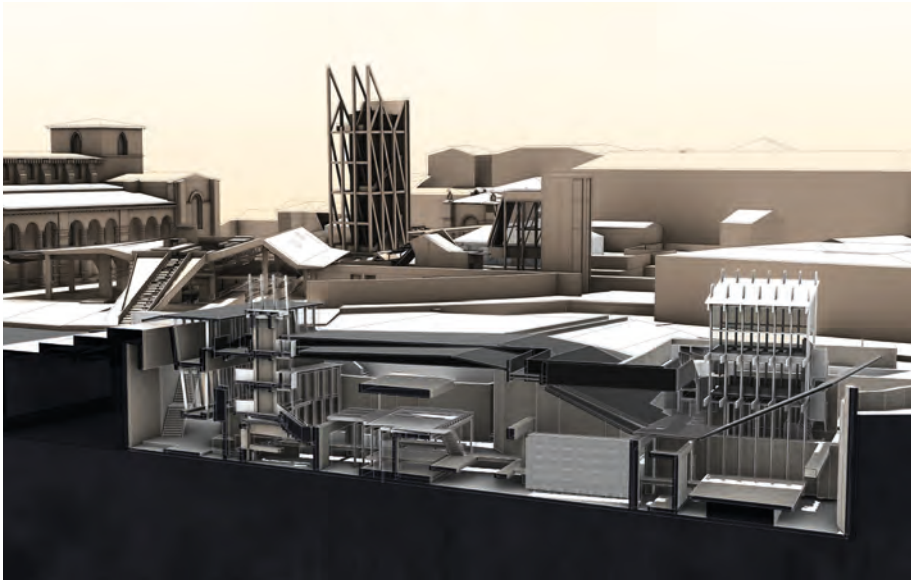
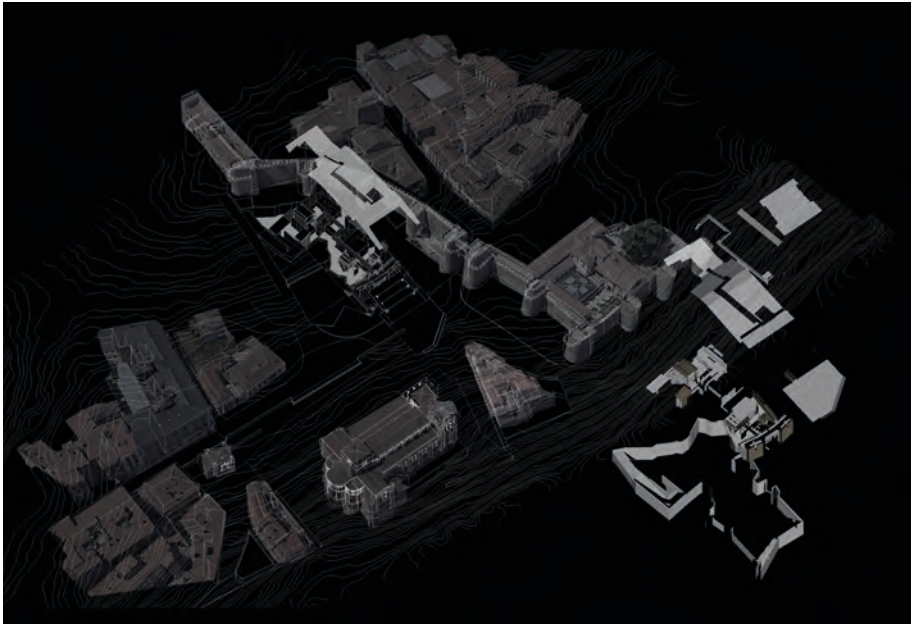
AN OBSERVATORY FOR PERFORMANCE ABOVE THE DIDACTIC ENGINE

CARL HARRIS

The annual CIRC*a* Festival in the medieval city of Ávila is an ad-hoc circus, a display of strength and flexibility where contemporary dancers take to the air, high-flying, visceral and scenic. Opportunistic in nature, the CIRC*a* occupies the spaces of the city for practice and display in a mirroring of the various processions, religious and secular, that define the Ávila cultural year. In *The Performers' Walk*, the circus becomes the subject of a new civic landscape situated to the east of the walled city in the shadow of the Basilica de San Vicente.

An architecture of excavation, canopy, tower and bridge offers a new home to the circus and its performers, an armature for practice and display, enclosure for privacy, bridge, ramp and stair for vertical and horizontal movement. The intention is to be boundless, to offer a limitless terrain to aerial performance whilst carefully curating the public gaze as designed view or orchestrated glimpse. Engineered timber fins allow for multiple viewpoints and heightened solar gains in a cool winter whilst thick limestone walls shield and enclose, offering cool air in a hot summer. Open courtyards and towers run counter to the traditional proscenium in favor of spaces that elevate the performance against the backdrop of Ávila's extensive city walls.



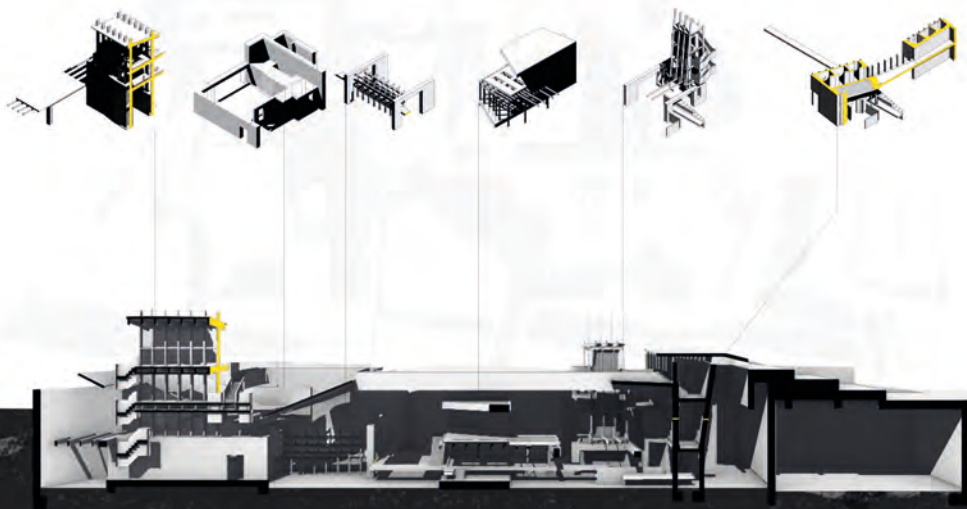
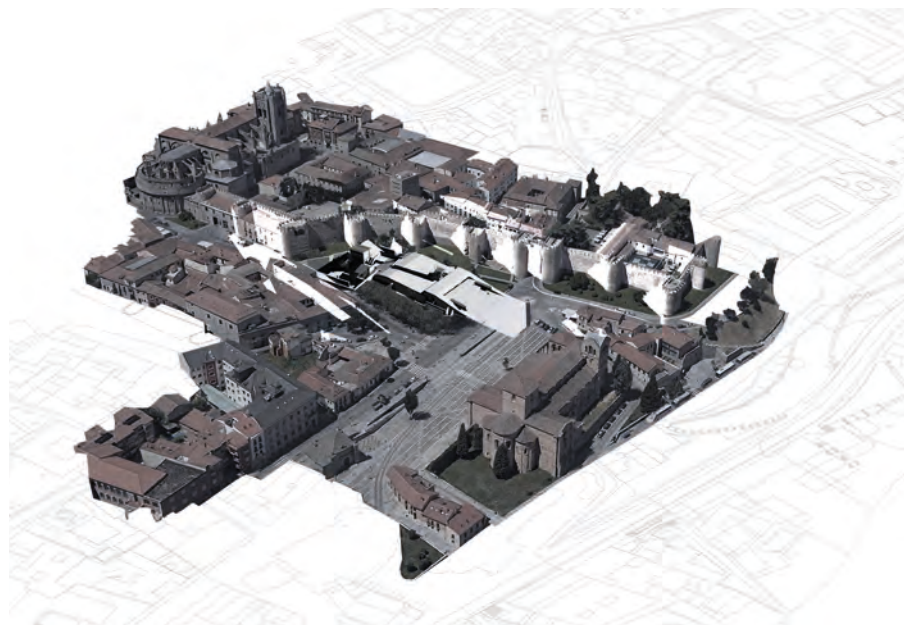


Upper left. **The Performer's Walk** aerial view exploded axonometric

Lower left. **The Performer's Walk** sectional perspective looking east

Upper right. **The Performer's Walk** aerial view

Lower right. **The Performer's Walk** sectional perspective with architectural characters







Site: Palacio de Sofraga, Puerto de San Vicente.
Programme: Vineyards, Urban Gardens, Vintners' Towers, Cisterns, Walkways, Winery and Restaurant.

06

THE WALLED GARDEN

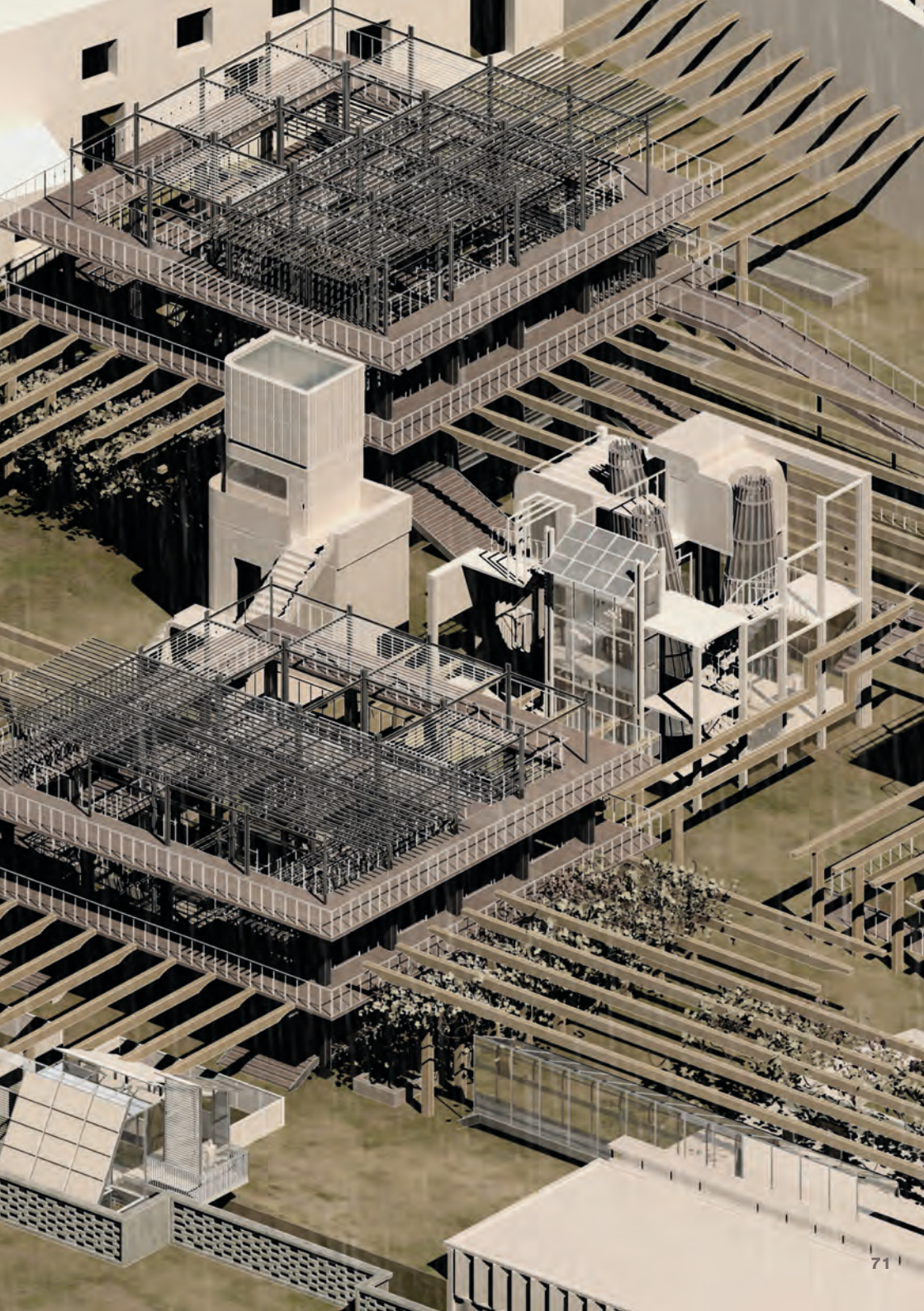
AN URBAN WINERY

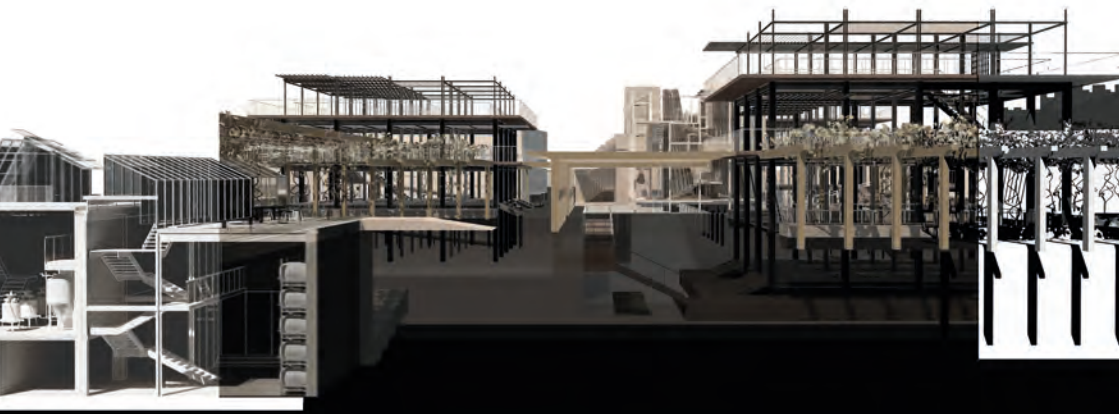
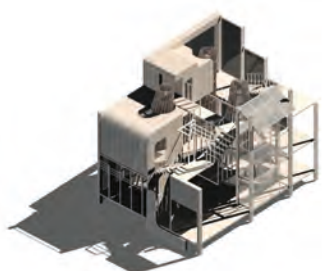
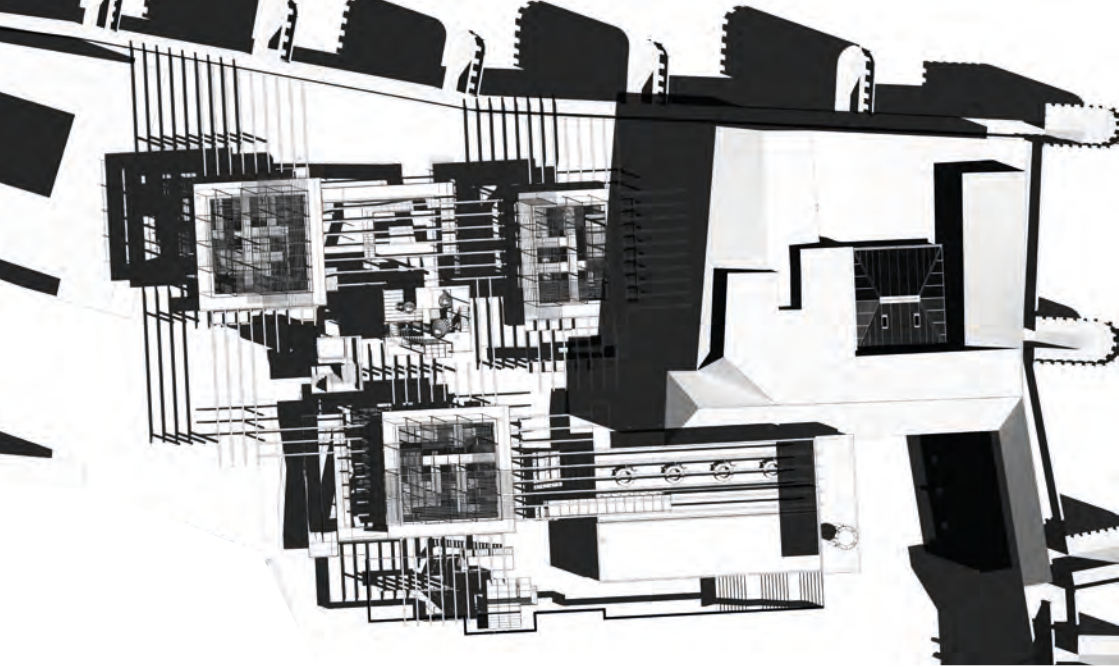
XIZHE HUANG

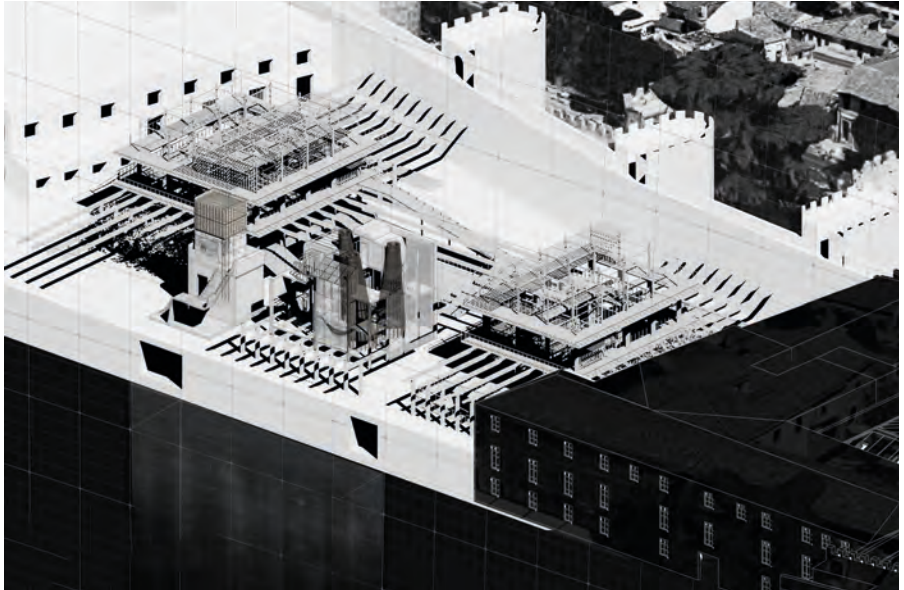
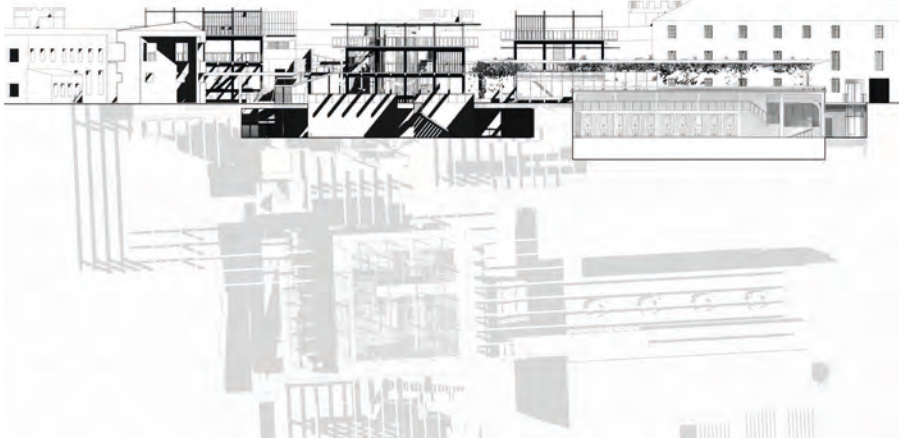
Situated amongst the Renaissance palaces of the walled city of Ávila, in the shadow of the northern wall, the *Walled Garden* reimagines the cultivated landscape of the Adaja River plain to the south, a parched terrain of dense cultivation under constant threat of fire and drought. Rescaled and refined to a single crop, the grape, the proposal comprises an excavated ground between two palaces. A series of interlinked vineyards, a network of shaded urban gardens, a winery for production and distribution, a restaurant and vintners' towers for the accommodation of the gardeners and the collection and distribution of water.

Informed by a language of rescaling and reoccupation, the architecture of the *Walled Garden* finds its origins in the spatial arrangement of the Renaissance palace, a language of cloister, well, gallery and arcade and a concern for the distinctive food of the region of Castile y Leon. In a detailed design for a singular restaurant, a kitchen garden and water infrastructure, an architectural language of excavation and elevation was developed, a language of granite cistern and aqueduct, timber deck and arcade as a forerunner to the pergolas, towers and canopies of the winery.

Inspired by the atmosphere of a medieval marketplace, the *Walled Garden* rescales and reorganizes the components of the garden, the winery, and the urban public space to develop an island as a landscape in miniature under the Ávila city wall.







Upper left. **Walled Garden** plan

Middle left. **Vintner's Tower**

Lower left. **Winery, Gardens and Vintner's Tower** sectional perspective

Upper right. **Walled Garden** section

Lower right. **Walled Garden** aerial view from south east

Site: Plaza Mercado Chico.
Programme: Museum, Archive, Research Laboratory, Sample Gardens, Market, Water Landscape and Meeting Rooms.

07

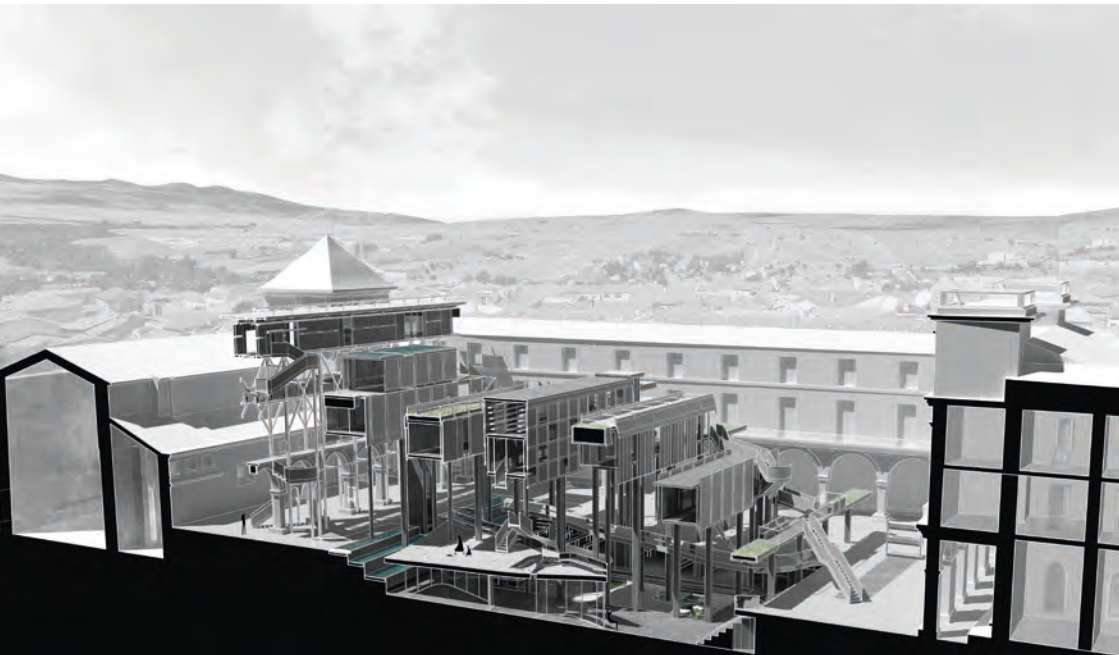
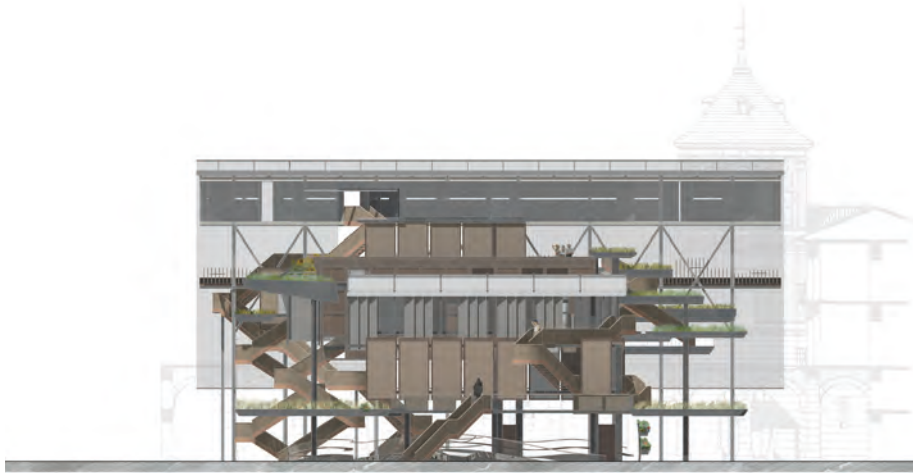
THE ARCADES OF THE PLATEAU

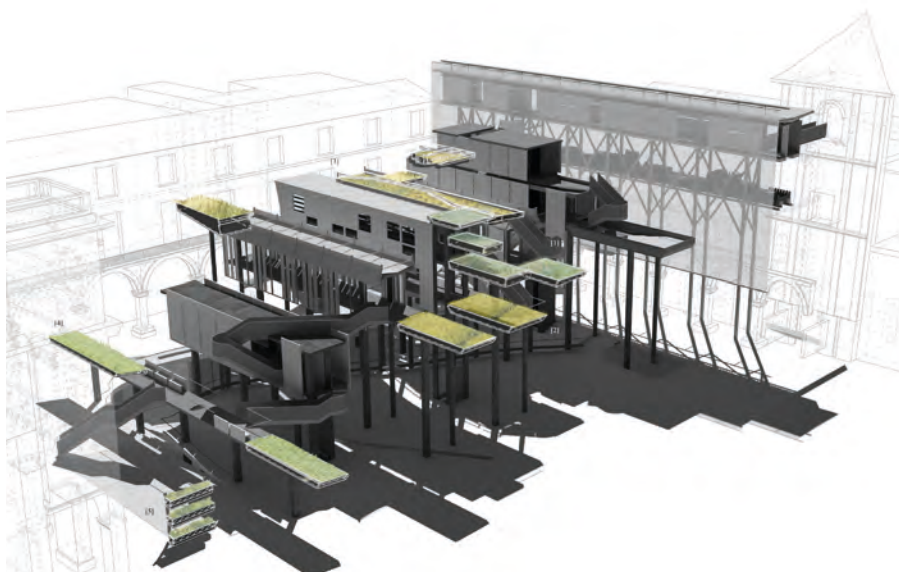
HONGYI ZENG

Set into Ávila's Plaza Mercado Chico, the city's central market square, *The Arcades of the Plateau* form an institute that is concerned with the preservation of the ecology of the vast area of landscape beyond the city walls. Within the scope of a sectional range of 1474 meters this includes the mountains, scrubland, rivers, arable land and the air above and geology below this extraordinary plateau. Taking the rhythm of the existing stone arcades that enclose the plaza as a starting point, these new, elevated arcades respond, in turn, to a particular ecological condition drawn from this landscape. The most southerly of these linear forms spring from the incomplete nineteenth century arcade below. It rises above the mass of the Iglesia de San Juan Bautista to witness the landscape under scrutiny. Within, large walnut architectural models, gathered from monuments around the city, are arrayed in the context of both this view and the skyline of the city so the city and landscape are understood to be a continuum.


Within, this parallel series of narrative strips form a taxonomy of climate, hydrology, vegetation, minerals, birdlife and fauna that tell the story of the land. The delicacy and transparency of their linear forms allow for an interplay of subject matters whilst contrasting with the thick granite weight of the city walls below. Beneath, they offer shelter and shading to a new form of civic market space that is environmentally tempered by water and shadow.







Upper left. **Arcades of the Plateau** elevation from north
 Lower left. **Undercroft to Rooftop** perspective section
 Upper right. **Structure and Materiality** perspectival view
 Lower right. **Roof Garden Test Fields**



Site: Jardín del Rastro.
Programme: Sanatorium Landscape, Hydrotherapy, Physiotherapy, Sleep Therapy, Talking Therapy, Pools, Dormitories, Consultation Rooms and Gardens.

08

INTERLUDE DE CAMINO

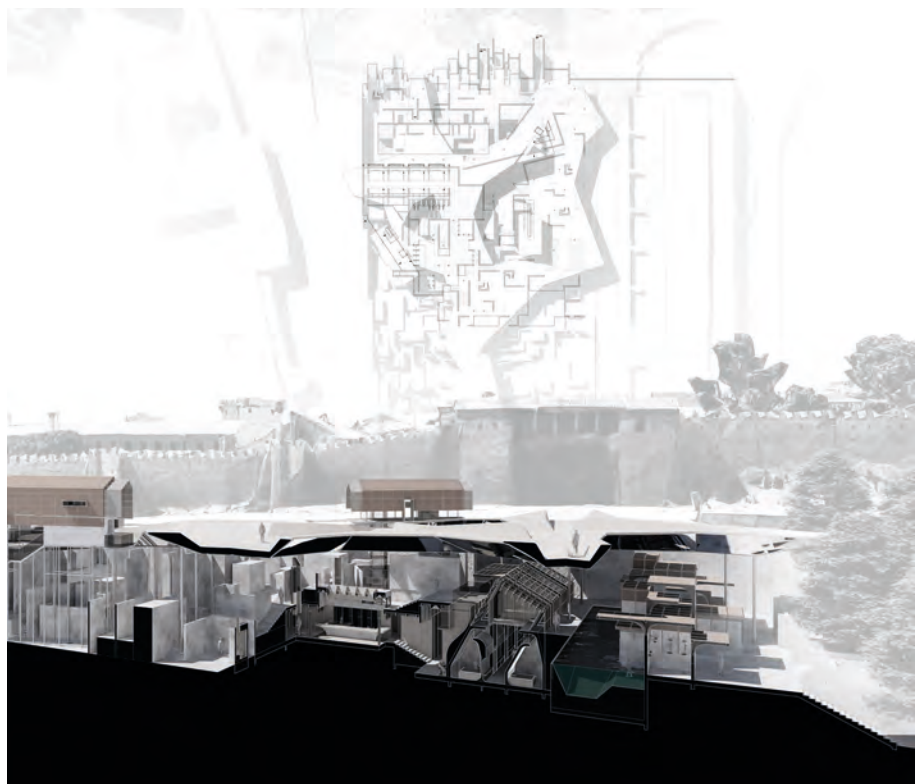
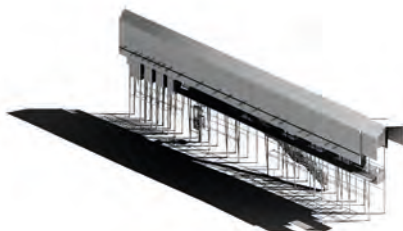
BOLUN HUA

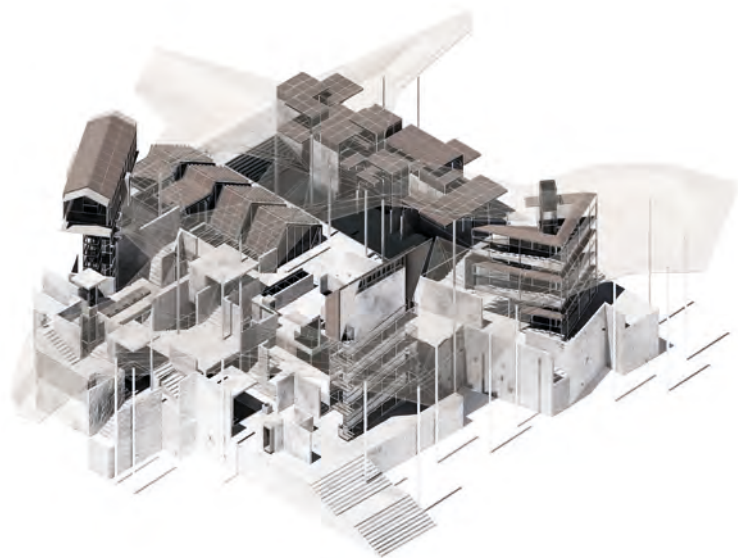
The Puerta del Rastro marks the moment where the pilgrimage route of the Camino de Compostela enters Ávila's fortified wall from the south and passes through the city. The *Interlude de Camino* acts as a threshold to this passage as an architecture of hospitality and respite that responds to the physical and mental health needs of Camino pilgrims. Generous in scale, programmes of therapy are then offered back to the city as a form of sanatorium for its citizens.

The cluster of buildings that form the *Interlude de Camino* are composed around a new timber deck that extends the public promenade of the Rastro. From here, they negotiate the sectional drop from the rocky outcrop upon which the city is founded to the lower plains below. This deck affords views back across the Castile y Leon section of the Camino and the cluster references moments along this route through as though caught in an eddy. The buildings act as gatehouses to a hypostyle-like topography below. Caught within its striations are vessels of therapy that offer physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, sleep therapy, exercise and consultation. While some of the thick walls of this undercroft house facilities that serve these vessels, others are left open to create a deep cloister for meditative wandering.

Through an engagement with an existing and adjacent parking structure and bus terminus, the sectional composition of undercroft, deck and gatehouses now offer a new, vertical form of procession to the city.








Upper left. **Ávila** cross section

Middle left. **Sleep Therapy Gateway** seed architecture, plan

Lower left. **Interlude de Camino** perspective section

Upper right. **Interlude de Camino Sleep Therapy and Hydrotherapy**

Lower right. **Interlude de Camino** threshold view



Site: Puerta del Carmen.
Programme: Landscape Research Institute, Laboratories, Archives, Seed Bank, Garden

09

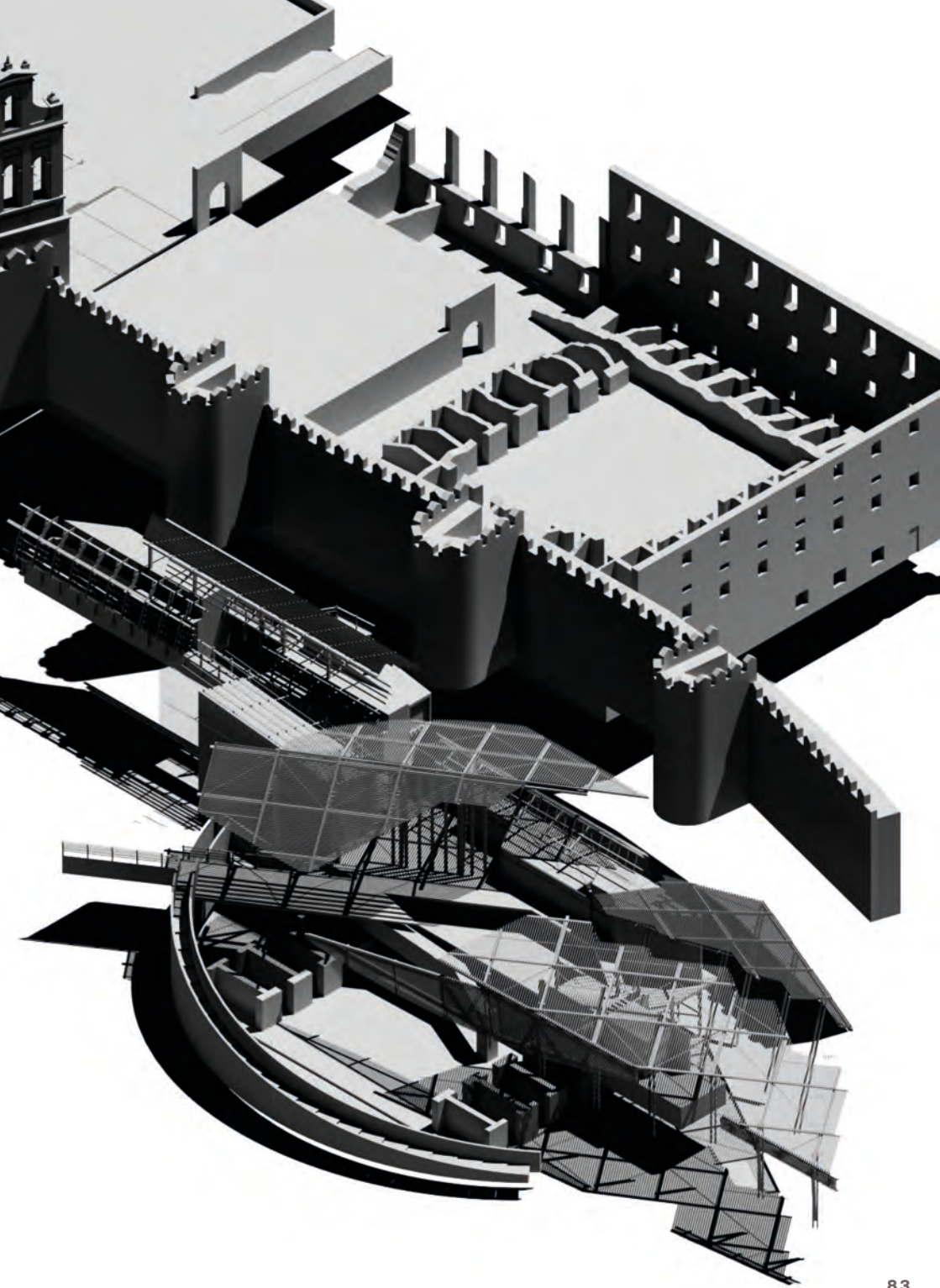
LAS SEMILLAS DE LA TIERRA

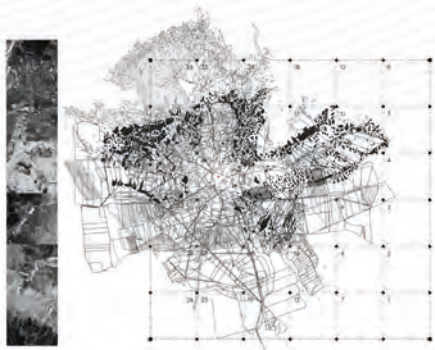
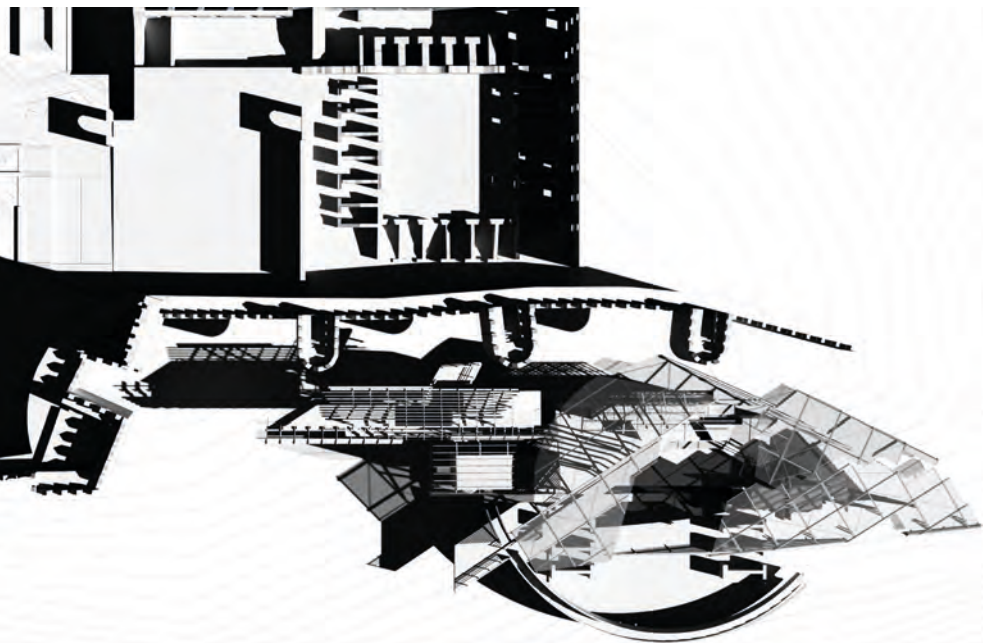
JIAYUE NIU

Conceived as an extramural counterpoint to the cultural concerns of the *Archivo Histórico Provincial se Ávila* that occupies the site of the ruined Carmelite monastery of Plaza Concepción Arenal, *Las Semillas de la Tierra* curates, conserves, and analyses artefacts and traces of the landscape that radiates out from the walled city along the valley of the Río Adaja towards the further enclosure the Guadarrama, Sierra de Ávila, and Sierra de Gredos mountains. Where the inner archive is concerned with the stories of people, this outer shadow is concerned with the changing narrative of the land.

Under a generous series of folded canopies, the proposal choreographs a public route from the adjacent city gate of Puerta del Carmen to the grassy flanks beneath the northern stretch of city wall. Along this journey nestle a series of volumes, each concerned with the testing and evaluation of potential new crops and the diversification of approaches to the land management and conservation of the Río Adaja valley in response to climate change and a dwindling of rural population.

The proposal is analogous to a germinating seed. A partially buried seedbank finds its roots in the granite outcrop that holds the city above. Fibres of movement connect the upper city to the lower land and river valley. An overarching canopy forms a microclimate of tempered public spaces within which the future stewardship of the land can be debated and determined.

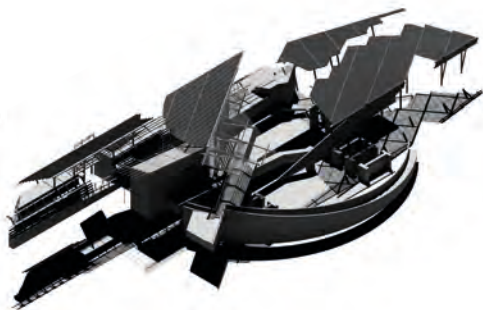
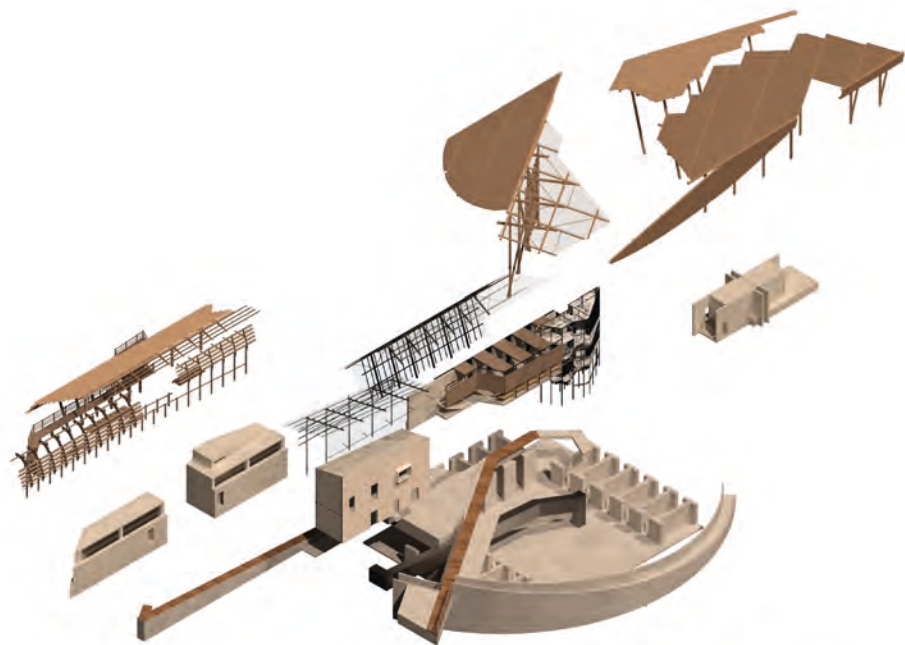




Upper left. **Las Semillas** roof plan

Middle left. **Field Drawing**

Lower left. **Las Semillas** long section through the laboratories



Upper right, **Las Semillas** exploded axonometric

Lower right, **Seed Storage and Conservatory** short section

Site: Antiguo Hospital de Santa Escolástica [ruin].
Programme: Genealogical archive, Library, Public Dining Room-Refectory, Cistern, Loggia Wall, Scholars' Residence and Study Space, Mikveh and Bathhouse.

10

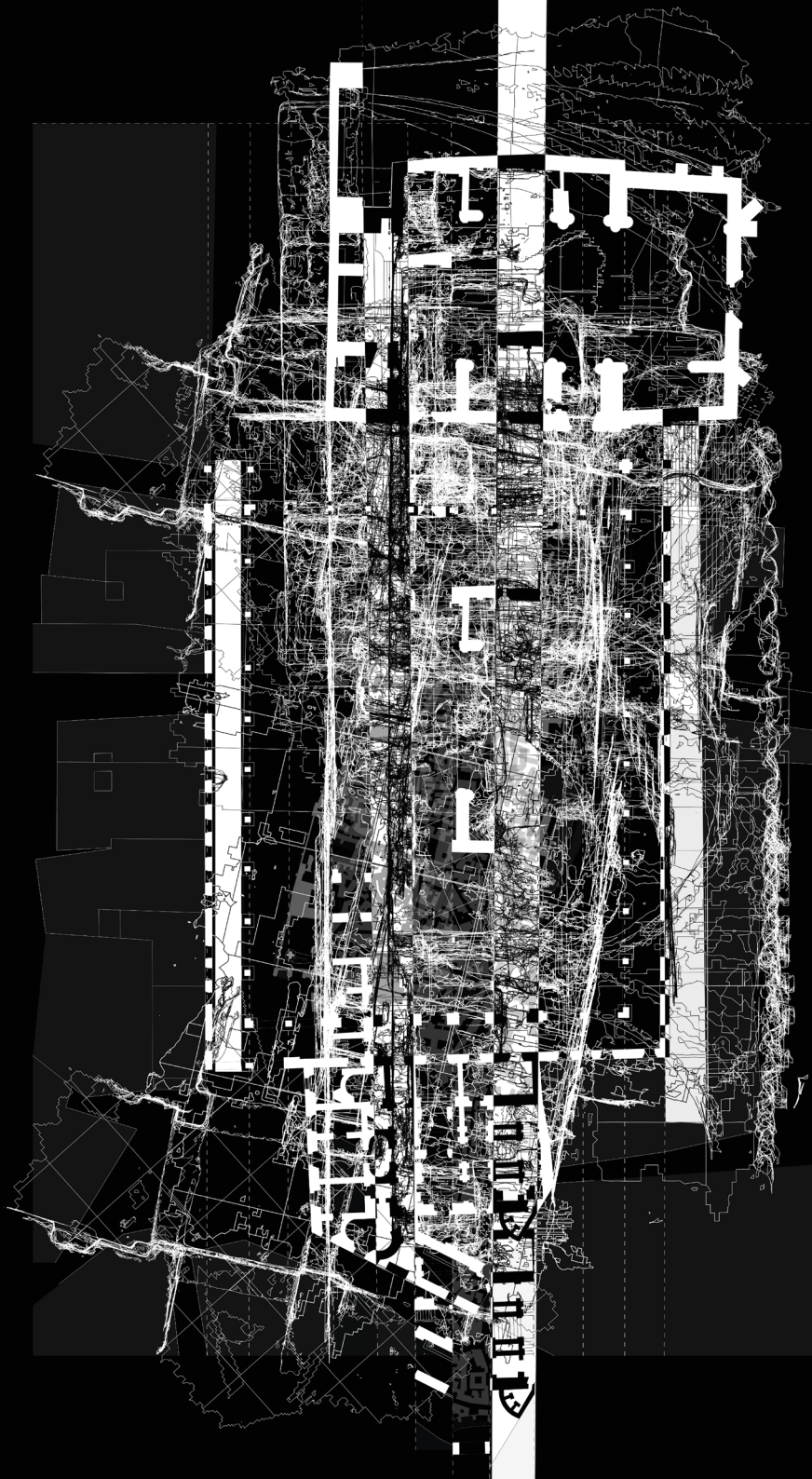
THE ASSEMBLY OF MIRIAM

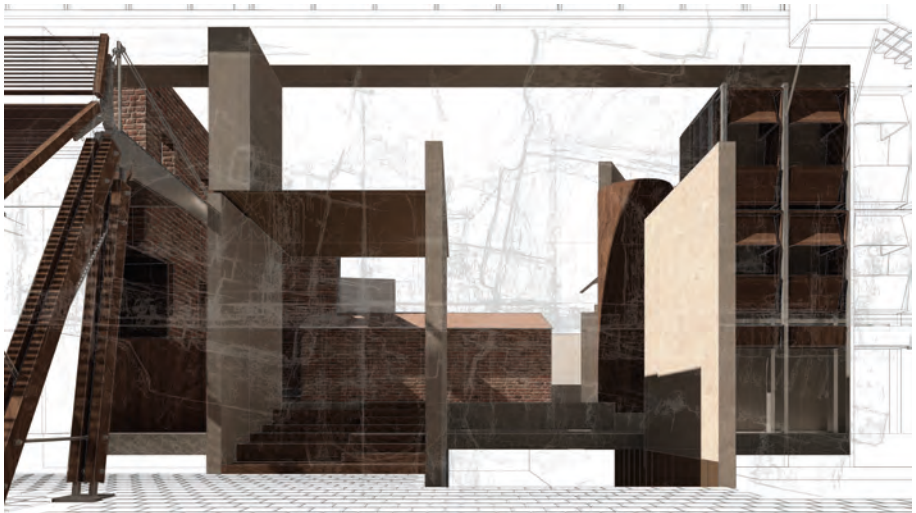
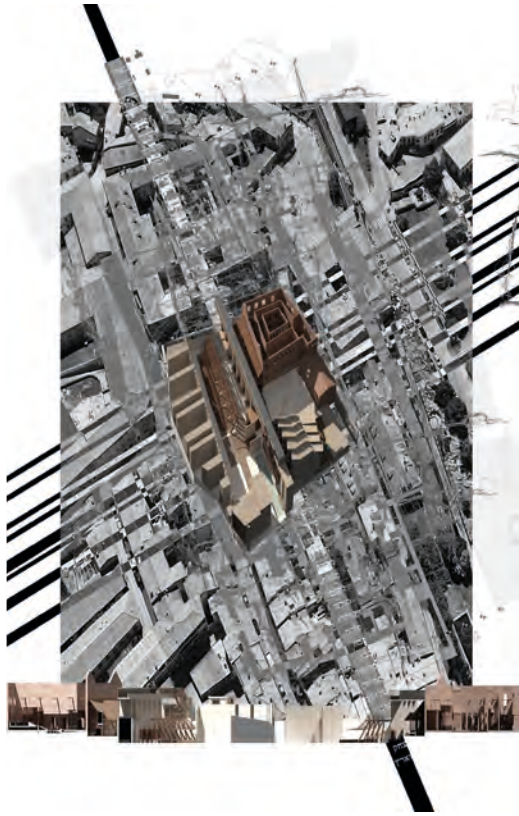
NATHALIE ZARINA HARRIS

From within the folds of the Ávila palimpsest, *The Assembly of Miriam* seeks to recognise and reinvigorate the once hidden Sephardic community of Spain, providing an architecture that shelters and facilitates a reclamation of Jewish ancestry. The Alhambra Decree of 1492 forced a large portion of the Jewish community of Spain to convert to Catholicism or be expelled. Many descendants of these *Conversos* are now interested in reidentifying with their Sephardic ancestry and heritage. Recent years have seen the emergence of the Paths of the Sepharad, routes that connect and reveal Jewish heritage across the cities of Spain.

The Assembly of Miriam is a station on these routes and a centre for national research. A genealogy archive is anchored onto a Babylonian library that conserves texts pertaining to Jews in Spain, including literature on the Ladino language in an attempt to increase the spoken population. *The Assembly* hosts living quarters for academics that wish to travel to Ávila, engage with these collections and, through a communal refectory and shared garden, connect with the local community. A specific archival collection focuses on female-centric anatomy and reflects the rituals and ceremonies that are held in the *Well of Miriam*, a bathhouse for women to take *mikveh*.

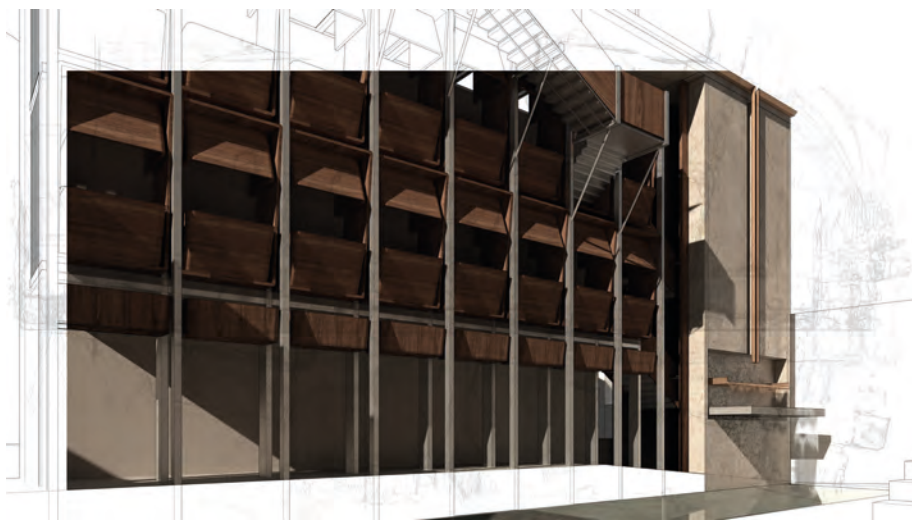
Intersecting with the topography of the site is a *Wall of Names* that creates a threshold between public and private realms. It holds a vertical cloister from which the singing of prayer may permeate through the *Assembly*.





Upper left. **Assembly of Miriam** aerial view

Lower left. **Bathhouse and Scholars' Gateway**



Upper right. **Assembly of Miriam** exploded axonometric
Lower right. **Loggia Wall and Cistern**





Site: Puerta de San Isidro o de la Malaventura.
Programme: Offices, Theatre, Gatehouse, Library, Archive, Galleries and Bathhouse.

11

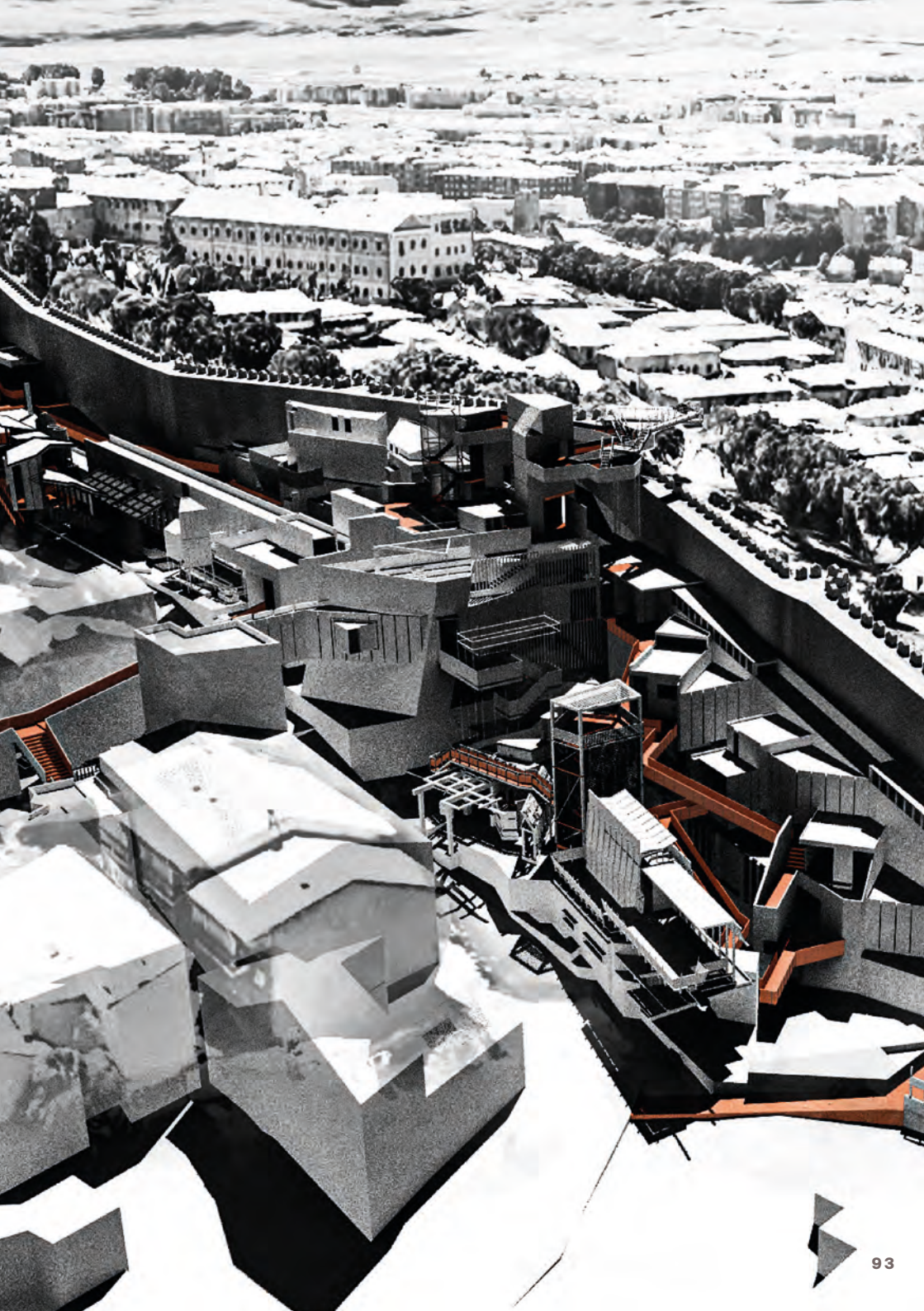
EL NUEVO PALACIO DE ÁVILA

JIGAO LI
CHENJIE QIAN
JIAKAI ZUO

Occupying a granite outcrop and tethered at the angle of the western wall, the *El Nuevo Palacio de Ávila* offers a landscape of educational, performative and governmental spaces to a community overshadowed by its neighbours to the east. Eastern Ávila, elevated, fed by natural springs and peopled by palaces and convents stands in stark contrast to the lower west with its impoverished and workaday heritage of small-scale manufacture, storehouse and transient populations.

The thesis proposes an architecture of unfolding and enfolding - a combination of two folded objects: the procession of Santa Teresa through the streets of the city and therein the enfolding of architectural figures from the densely woven grain of the city and, the greater extramural landscape of cultivated fields, a river and mountains. Unfolded, this landscape of granite, limestone, timber, terracotta and steel; of vessels and canopies, loggias, walkways and bridges inscribe a new palace above its granite footing. With the palatial conceit of enfilade, the design foregrounds a central spine for movement, service and the distribution of water. Gatehouse and vestibule lead through open cloister and atrium into a building at once civic - open to and of the city and its landscape - and governmental.

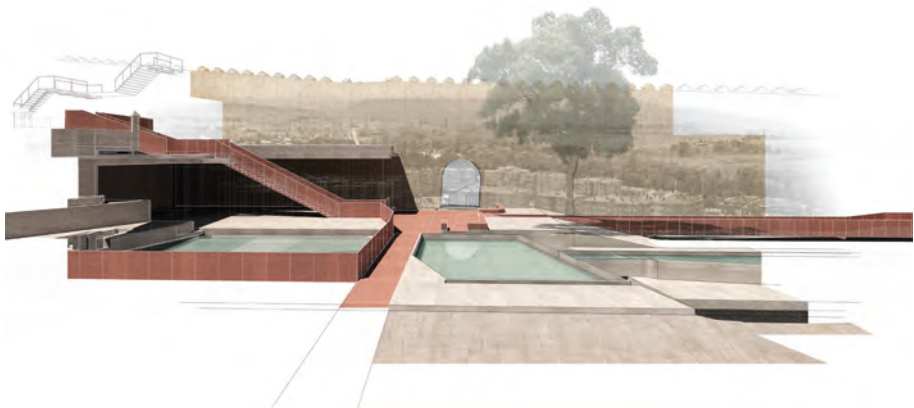
Shaded from the summer sun and winter snows, tempered by the thermal mass of granite walls and cooled by the passage of channelled waters, the *El Nuevo Palacio de Ávila* transforms a once-neglected area into a vibrant, inclusive civic centre, rooted in history but poised for the future.

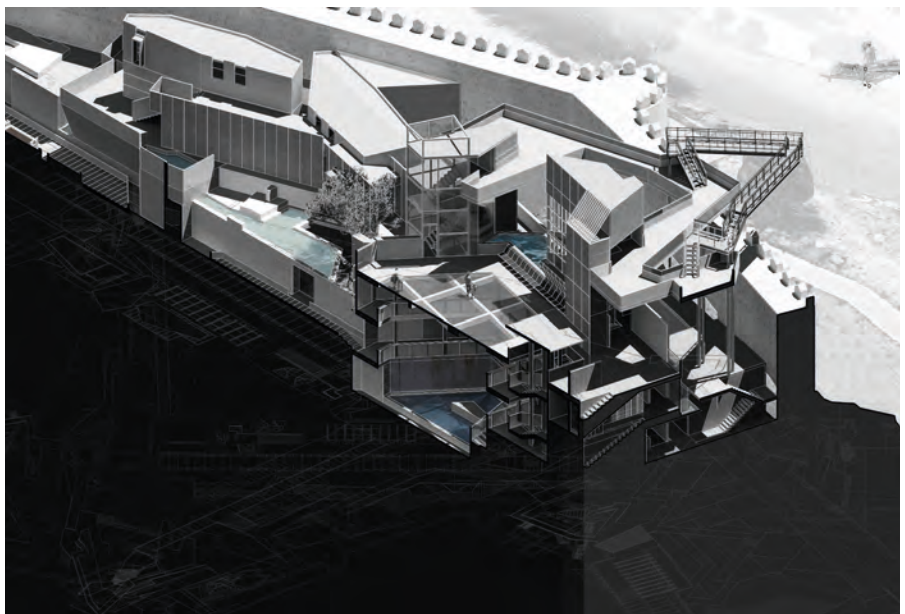






JICAO, LI & CHENJIE QIAN & JIAKAI ZHUO | EL NUEVO PALACIO DE ÁVILA





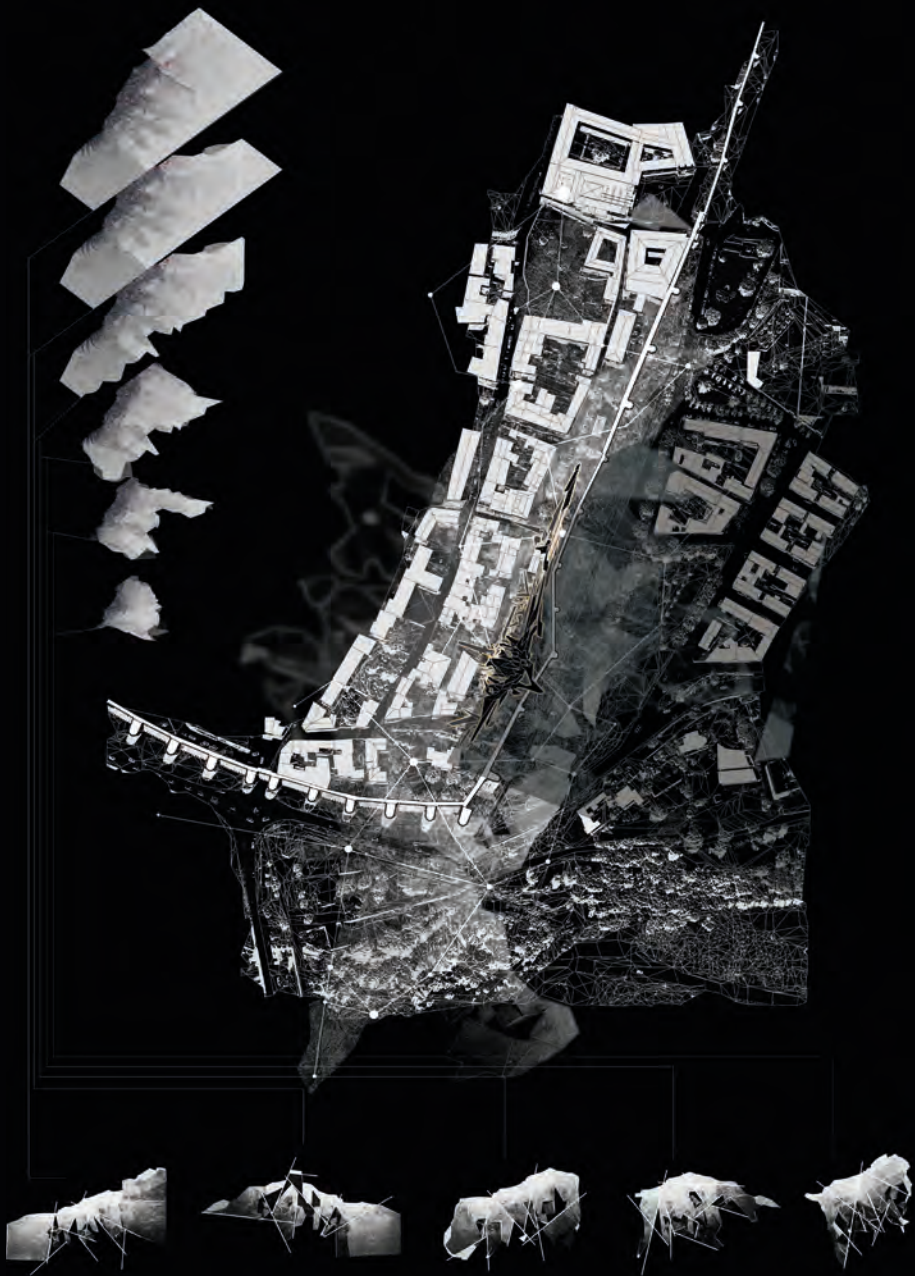
Upper left. **El Nuevo Palacio** axonometric view

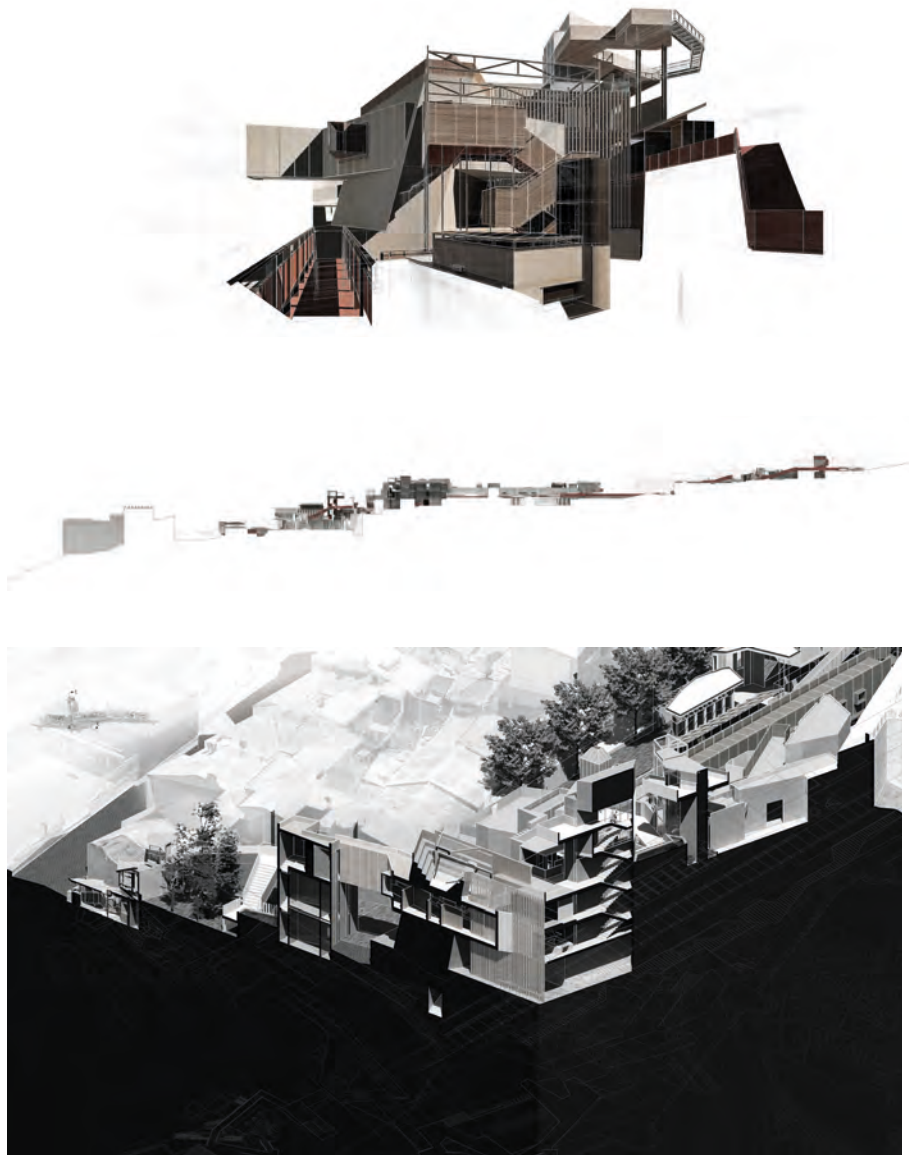
Middle left. **Public Gardens from Puerta de San Isidro o de la Malaventura**

Lower left. **Entrance from the North**

Upper right. **El Nuevo Palacio** Offices, Theatre, Gatehouse, Library, Archive, Galleries and Bathhouse

Lower right. **Eastern Gateway and Bathhouse**





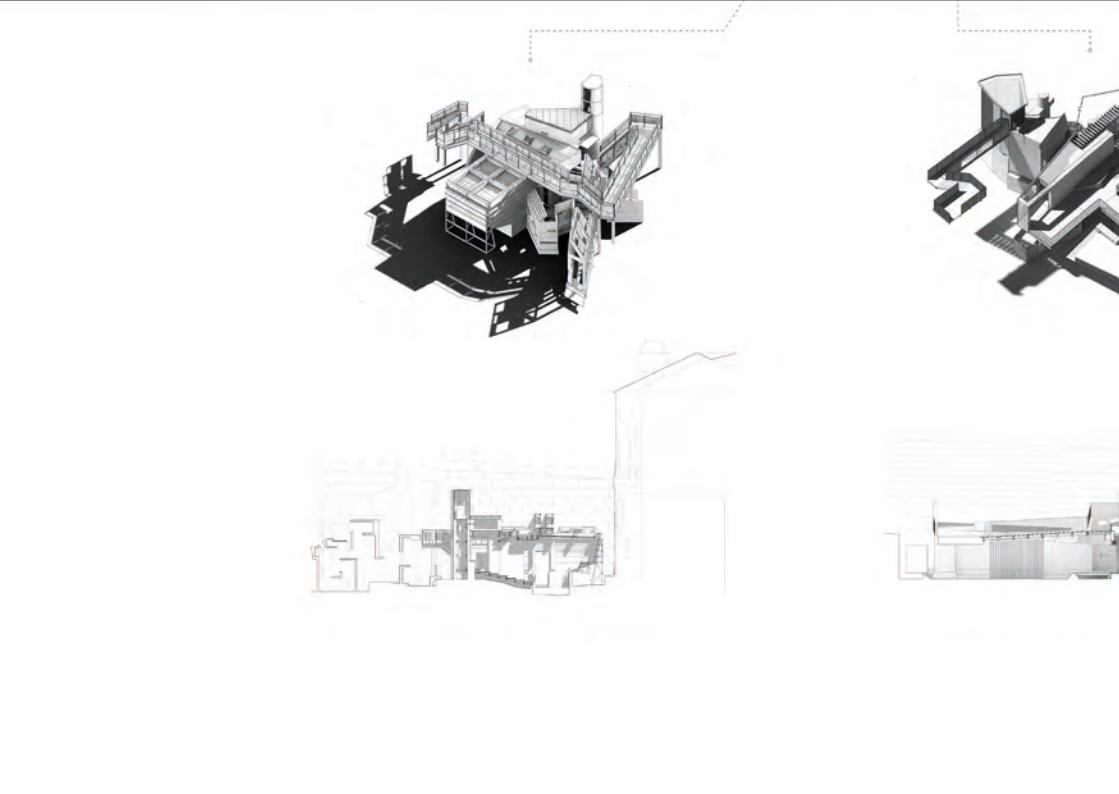
Left. **Enfolded Landscape** field drawing

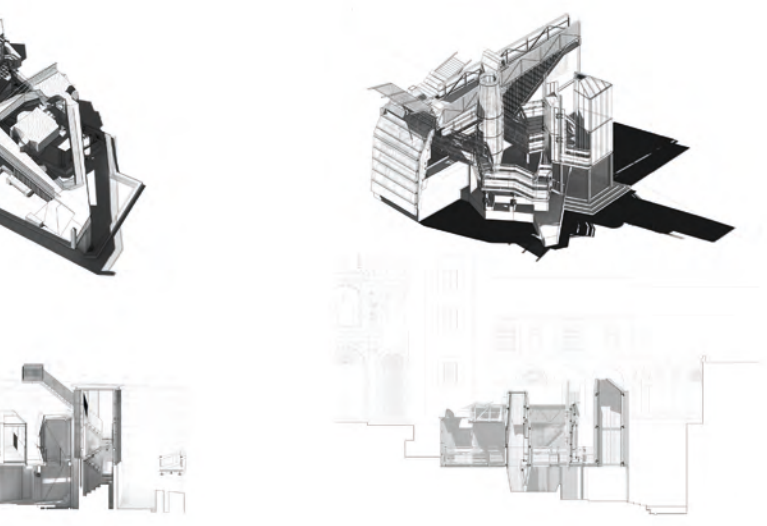
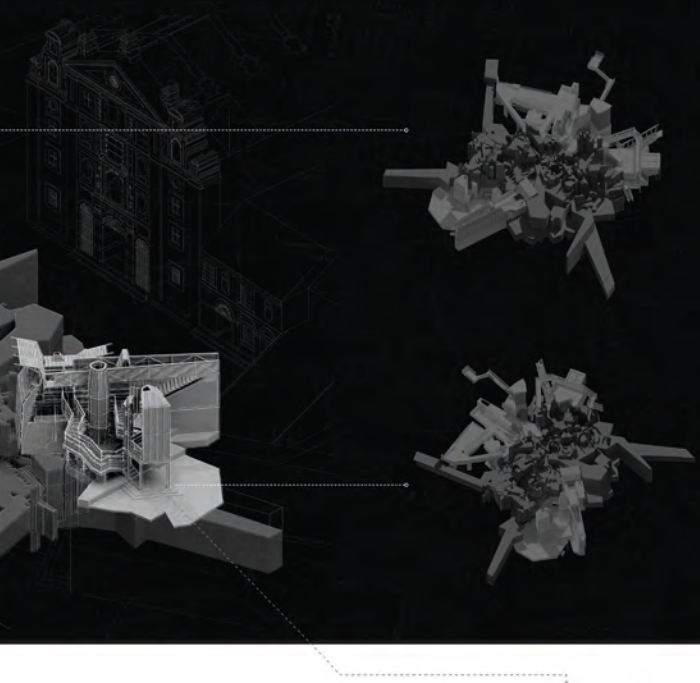
Upper right. **Terracotta Walkway and Observation Deck**

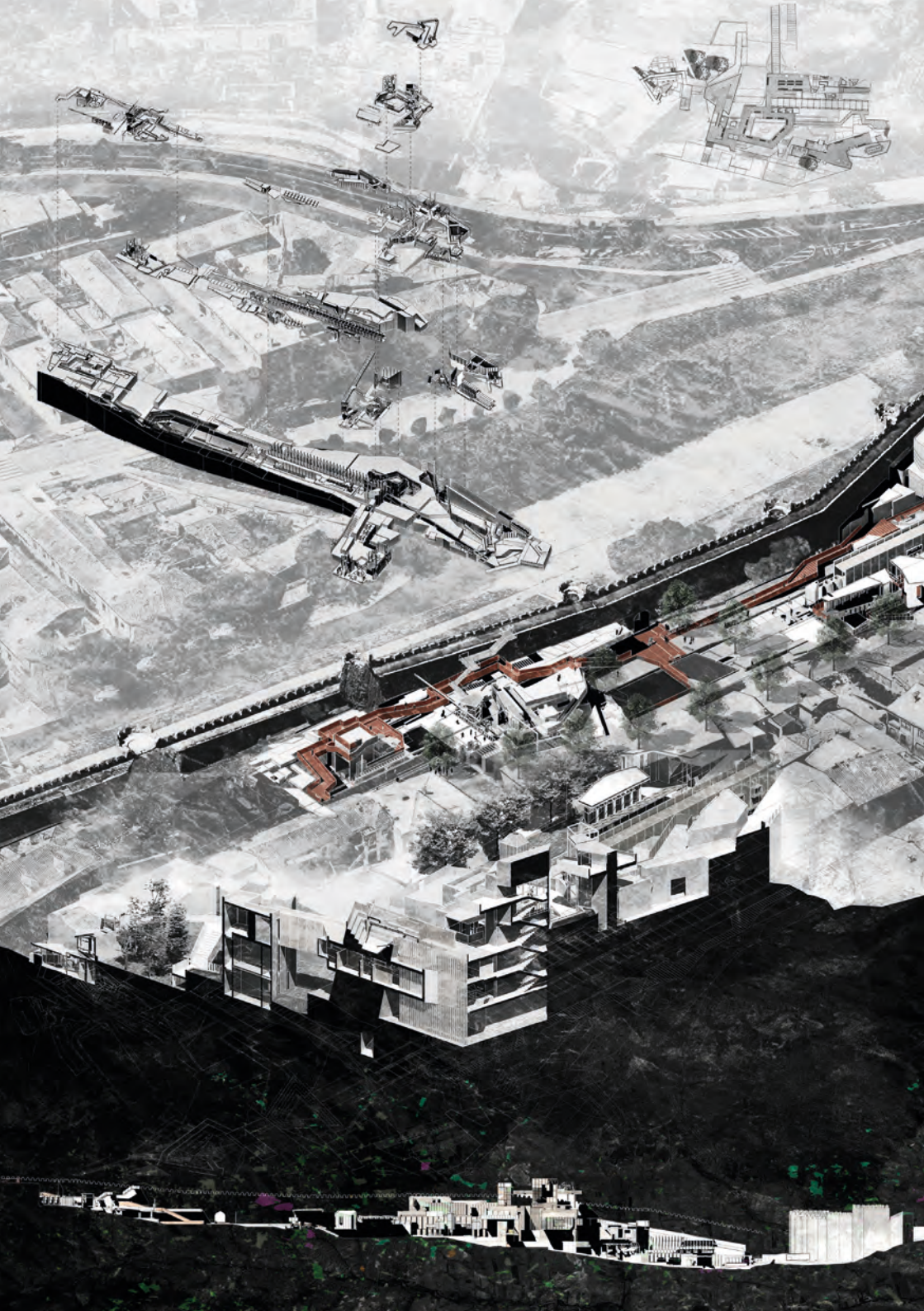
Middle right. **El Nuevo Palacio** long section

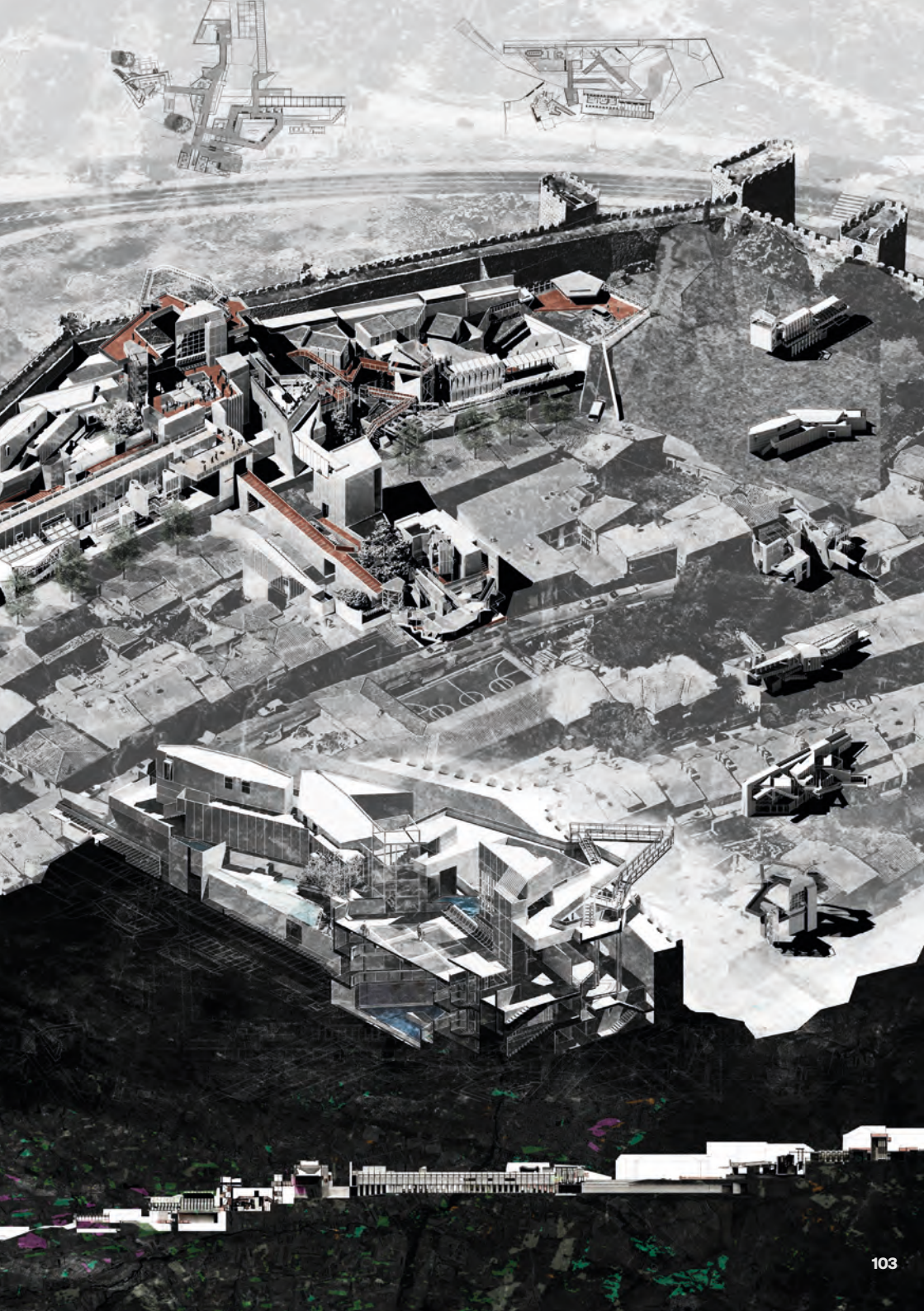
Lower right. **El Nuevo Palacio** perspective section

Following page. **Seed Architectures**









Site: Plaza San Estaban.
Programme: Cabaret Theatre, Performance Spaces and Restaurant.

12

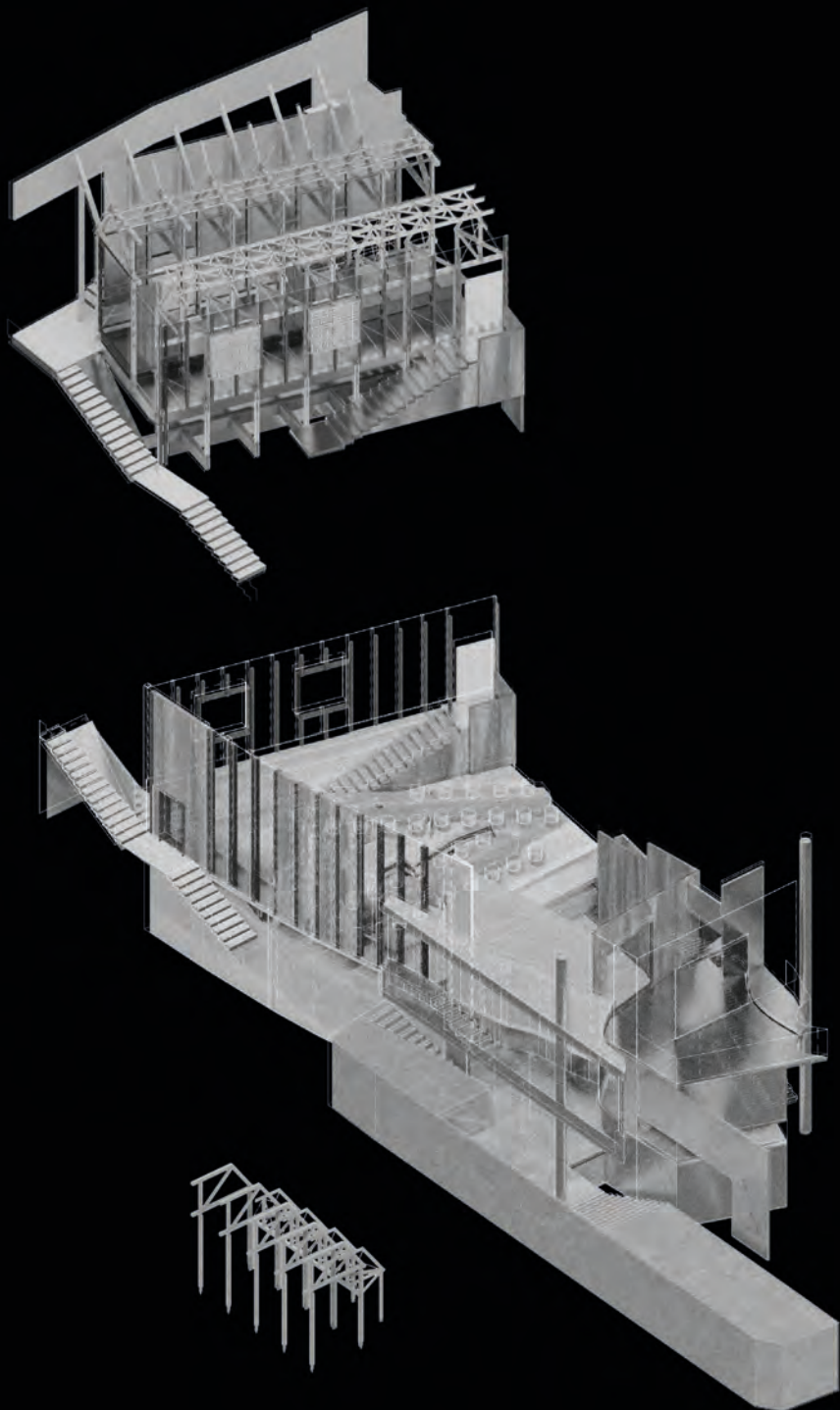
THE CABARET OF SAN ESTEBAN

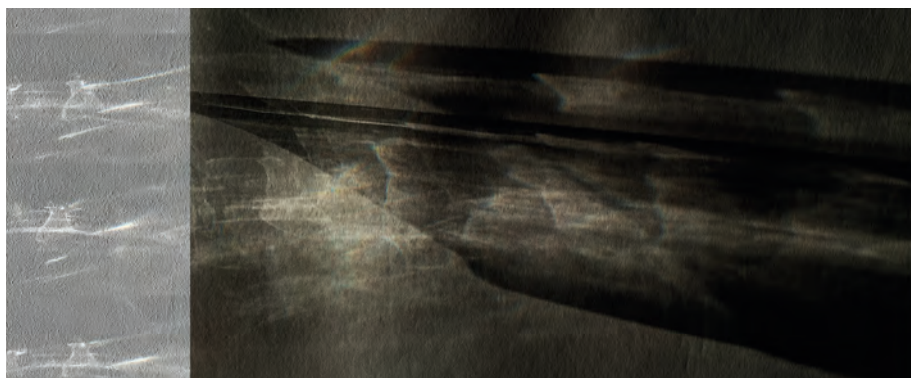
TIANAI ZHANG

Located within the confluence of Calle Conde Don Ramón and Calle Vallespin, central streets that descend east to the river gate of Puerta de la Adaja, *The Cabaret of San Esteban* offers a civic amenity to an otherwise deprived area of Ávila. The lower eastern flank of the city lacks the urban grandeur of the western plateau of palaces, convents and plazas. Although rich in small craft-based industries, as home to communities outwith the ruling Catholic faith it suffered from a social, political and economic exclusion from the wealth and culture of the city. Sited below the small Ermita de San Estaban, *The Cabaret* reinterprets, in a secular manner, the charitable works associated with Saint Stephen.

From within the tight, primarily domestic, grain of this area of the city, *The Cabaret* offers a generous space to meet, eat and dance. In so doing, it seeks to engender integration amongst the diversity of local population. At the focus of *The Cabaret* is space for the performance of the folkloric musical tradition of *Flamenco*. Powerful and emotive, this form of music and dance developed within the *gitano* subculture of the Andalusian region of southern Spain and was introduced to the city through the *cañada* drove routes with which the city gates engaged.

The Cabaret of San Esteban negotiates the steep fall of the site through a series of spatial plates that reference the spatial distribution of landscape beyond the city walls and distribute programme and light deep into the ground.



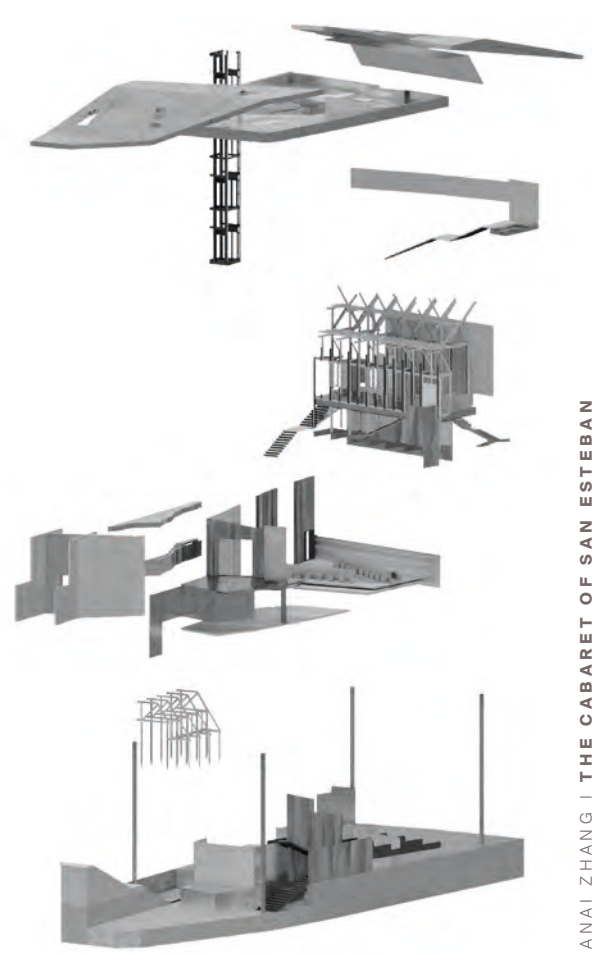


Upper left. **Cabaret Bar and Stage and San Esteban** landscape model

Middle left. **Plateau landscape** light study

Lower. **Cabaret of San Esteban** long section

Upper right. **Plateau landscape** models and **Cabaret of San Esteban** exploded axonometric



TIANAI ZHANG | THE CABARET OF SAN ESTEBAN



Site: Calle los Telares.
Programme: Dining Rooms, Gardens, Kitchens, Smokehouse, Marketplace.

13

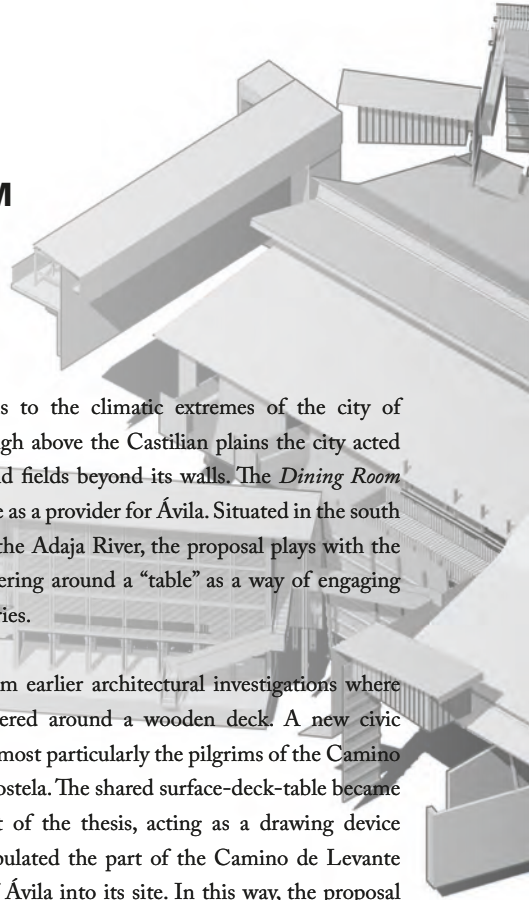
THE ADAJA DINING ROOM

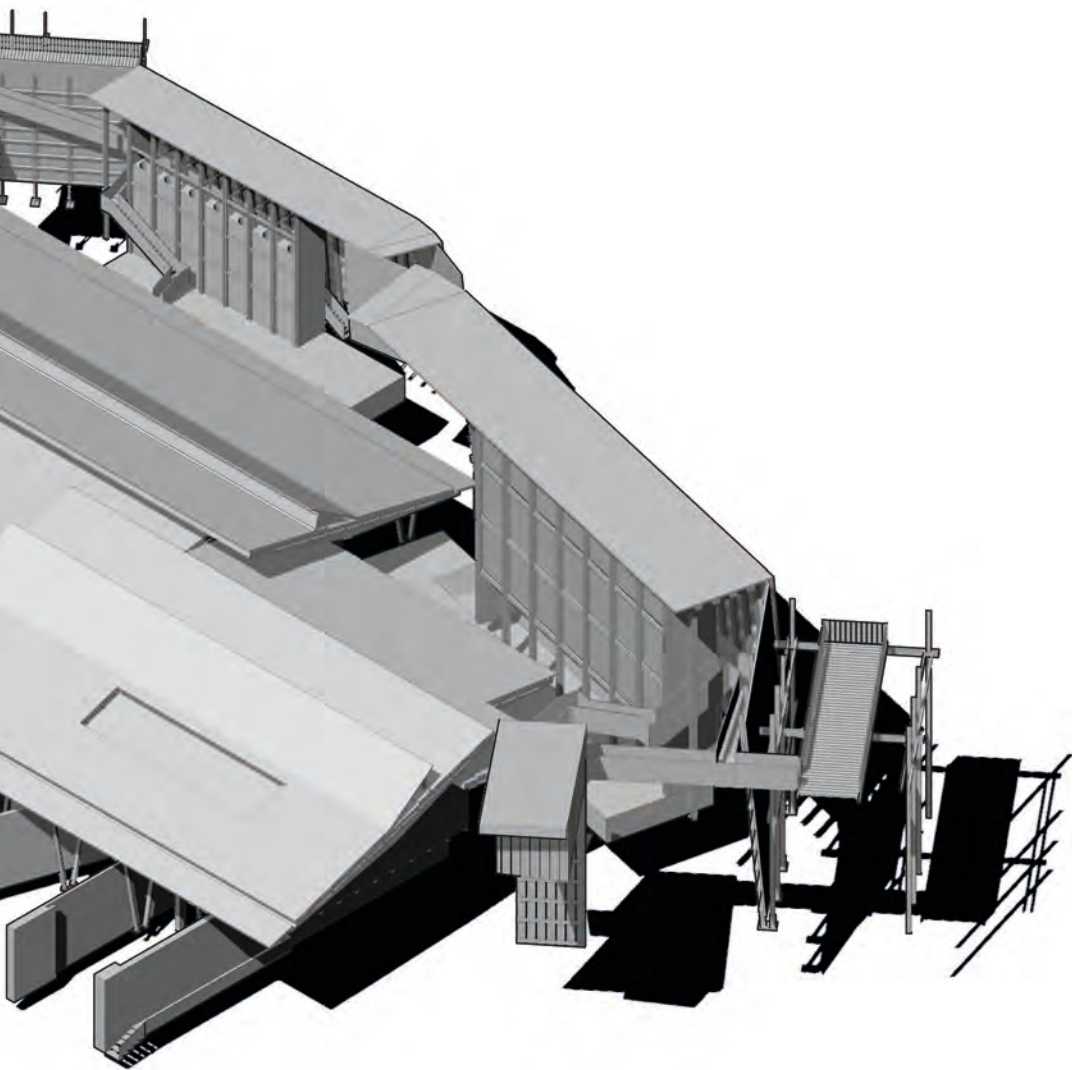
ATINUKE ADETOLA

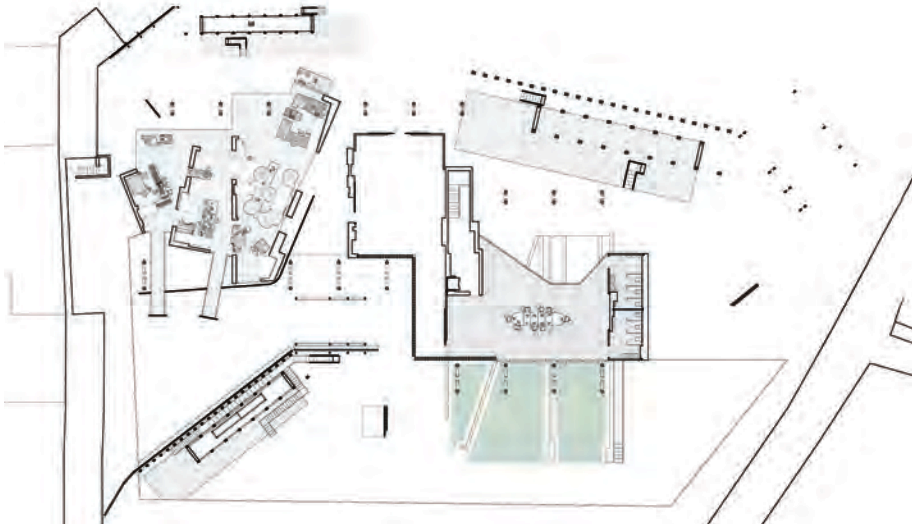
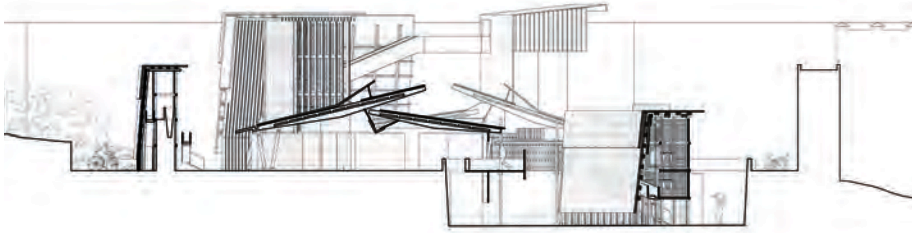
The *Adaja Dining Room* responds to the climatic extremes of the city of Ávila. Built in the 10th century high above the Castilian plains the city acted as steward to the rivers, forests and fields beyond its walls. The *Dining Room* engages directly with this landscape as a provider for Ávila. Situated in the south west corner of the city, bordering the Adaja River, the proposal plays with the idea of communal dining; of gathering around a “table” as a way of engaging with the city, its cultures and histories.

The concept of a table derives from earlier architectural investigations where small gate-like architectures gathered around a wooden deck. A new civic surface for the city, its citizens and most particularly the pilgrims of the Camino on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The shared surface-deck-table became a vital aspect of the development of the thesis, acting as a drawing device which redrew, rescaled, and manipulated the part of the Camino de Levante that journeys through the walls of Ávila into its site. In this way, the proposal carries elements of the city’s contextual inscriptions in its spatial arrangements, structure and materiality.

The *Adaja Dining Room* is a space of eating around which small architectural cabinets gather. These cabinets allow for the processing and refining of produce collected from the landscape. The project as kitchen, dining room and market offers spaces for the growth, harvesting, preparation, preservation, sale and consumption of food.







Upper left. **Dining Room** short section

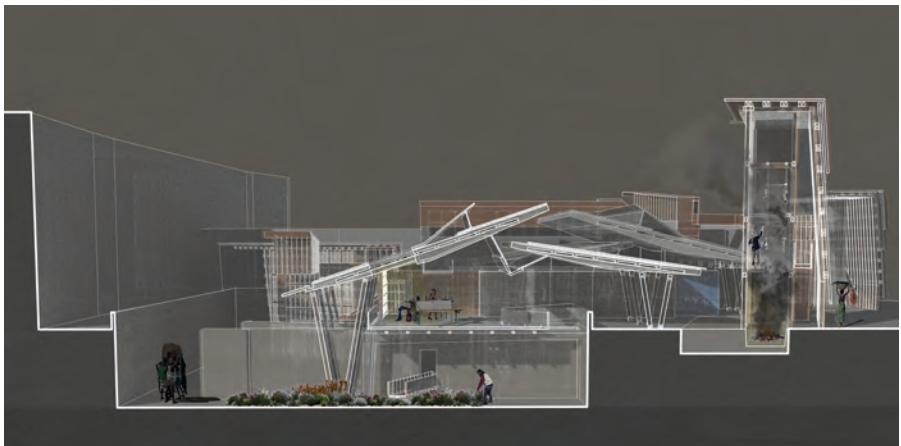
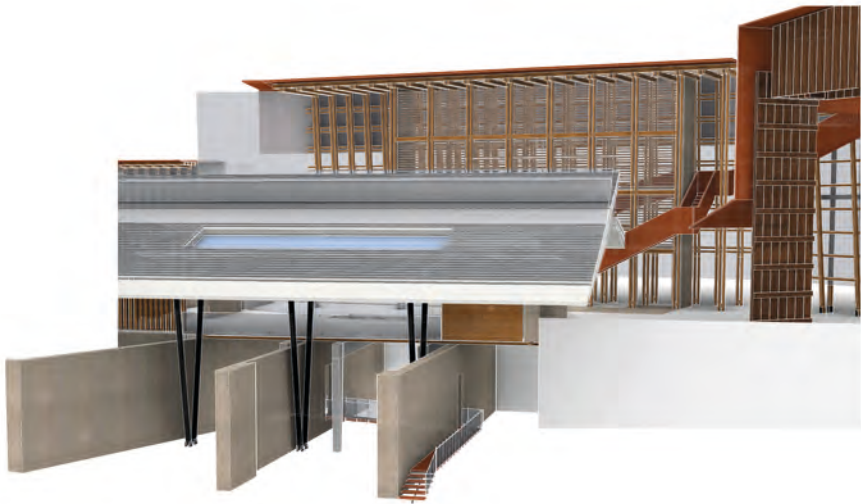
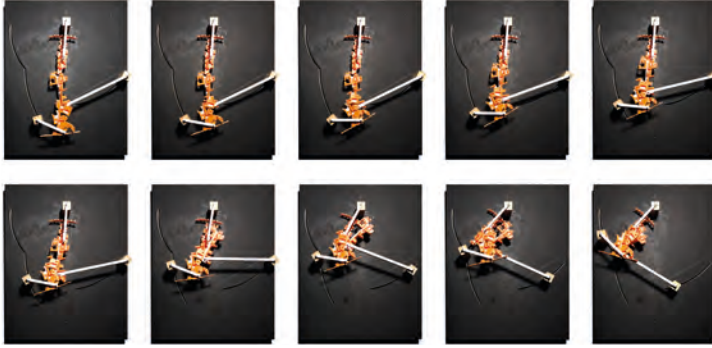
Middle left. **Dining Room** ground floor plan

Lower left. **Dining Room** long section

Upper right. **Dining Room** rig garden view

Middle right. optical soundtrack of model manipulation

Lower right. **Environmental Strategy** sectional perspective







Site: Adaja River, Ermita de San Segundo.
Programme: Aquatic Landscape Laboratory, Sample Landscape, Hatchery and Garden.

14

THE RIVERINE MONASTERY

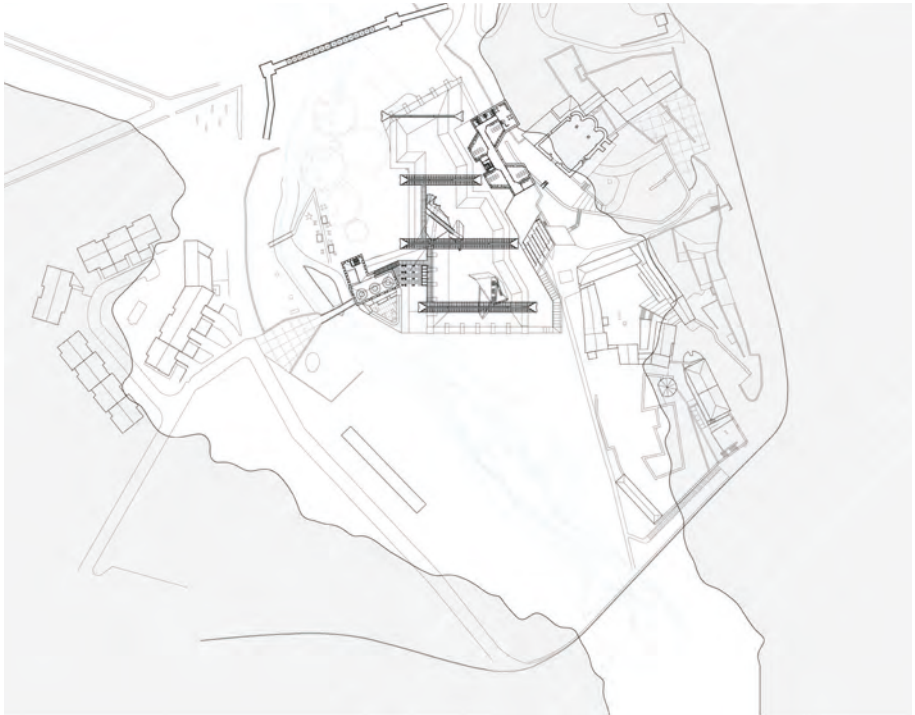
CALVIN KAI SHU LEUNG

The European Environment Agency predicts an increase in drought duration and 50-year flooding in Central Spain in all its climatic projections. Instead of a continuous stream of water, riverine architecture will have to address both a drier riverbed and extreme flooding. *The Riverine Monastery* is a research facility for the study and rehabilitation of existing water bodies.

The origins of the proposal lie in the development of an archive in the reimagined ruins of the Convent of the Carmelites, an insular typology of cloister, garden, cellular and communal spaces built within the medieval city walls of Ávila. The *Riverine Monastery* is its double, a complex architectural landscape situated within and above the river Adaja to the west of the city. The proposal engages the historic division of the river by the Molino de la Losa as it separates the river 'as is' from the proposed 'artificial' riverbed, as an aquatic landscape laboratory where researchers can manipulate the riverine ground conditions to study its effects on the Adaja.

This double of a river becomes the undercroft of *The Riverine Monastery*, above which hovers a meshed decking that shelters and looks over the riverbed. At sites of particular scientific interest, the decking folds down to the river surface to provide fish hatcheries, sampling stations and gauging stations. Beyond the cloisters, a reconstituted city wall accommodates the laboratories and ancillary programmes. As landscape is housed in a monastic garden, so *The Riverine Monastery* holds and reveals the river Adaja.



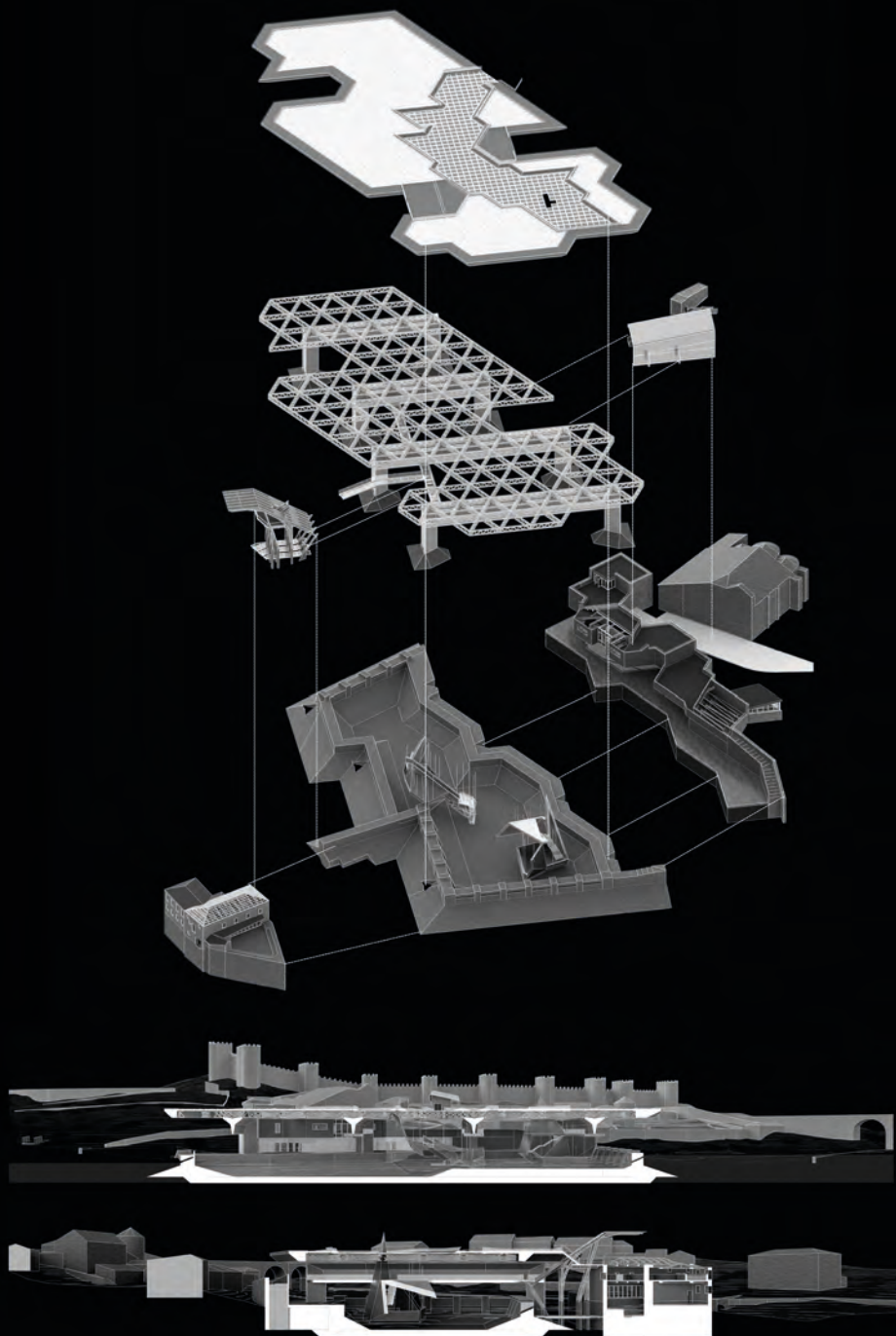


Upper left. **Riverine Monastery** plan

Lower left. **Field Drawing**

Upper right. **Riverine Monastery** exploded axonometric

Lower right. **Riverine Monastery** long section, short section



CALVIN KAI SHU LEUNG | THE RIVERINE MONASTERY

Site: Adaja River Roman Bridge.
 Programme: Hydrological research institute and public landscape, laboratories, depositories, workshops, performance spaces, walkways and bridges.

15

THE HYDROLOGICAL CATHEDRAL

A STEWARD OF VESTIGES

GILES DAVIS
 SOPHIE LEWIS-WARD

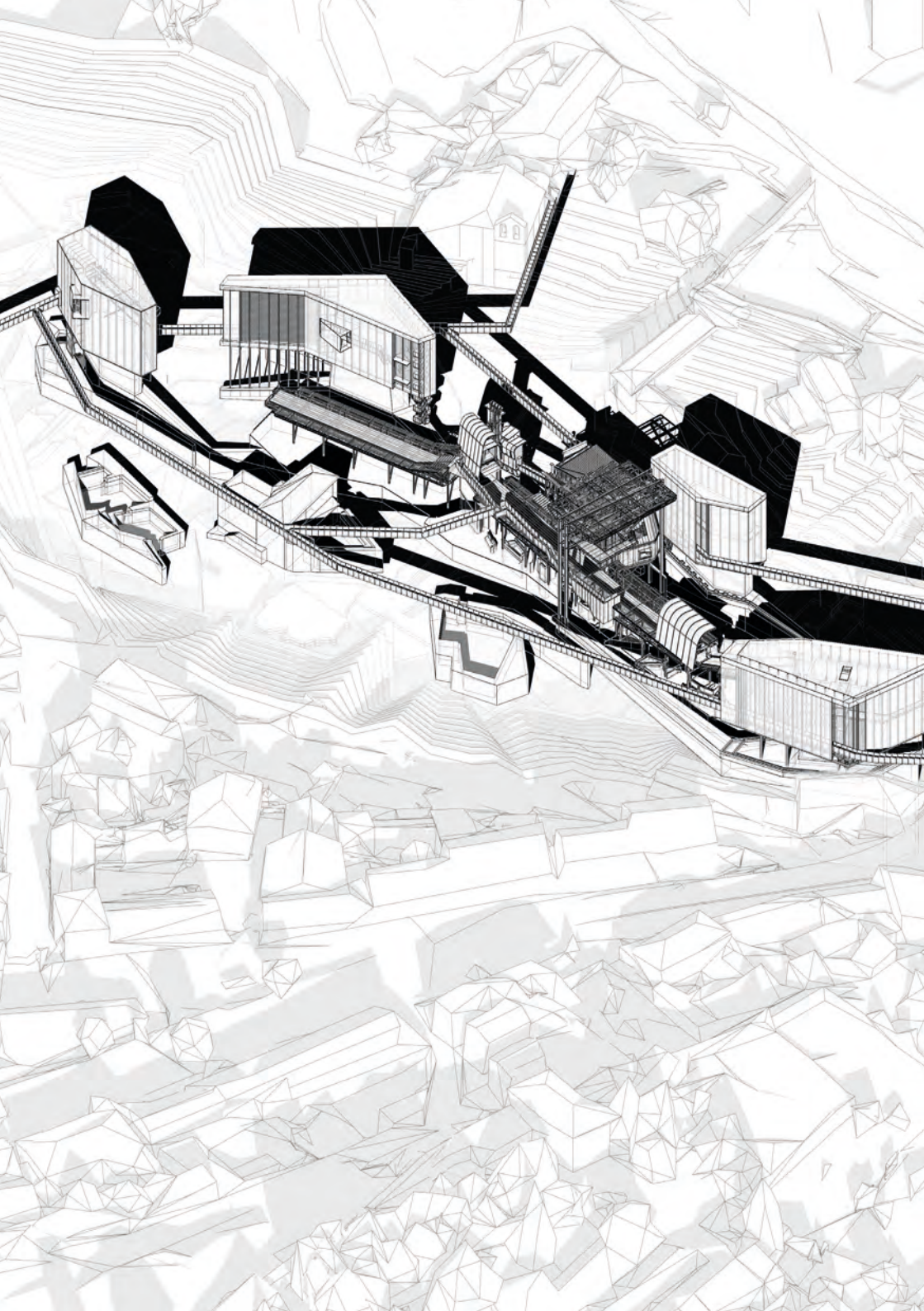
The Hydrological Cathedral anticipates future aridification of the Amblés Valley, the geological landscape of which Ávila is the custodian. Although a city in miniature, Ávila casts a strategic hold across its outward landscape and to preserve the city's hydrological vestiges *The Cathedral* itself becomes the new steward of the hydrological cycle. This thesis explores the scale of the city through a doubling of the Catedral del Salvador de Ávila, a Romanesque-Gothic fortress cathedral which anchors the city wall to an elevated rocky outcrop. An extraction and procession of the cathedral as seen through a chromatic, acoustic and geological lens elicits the dragging, catching and pulling of fragments as they striate through the city grain.

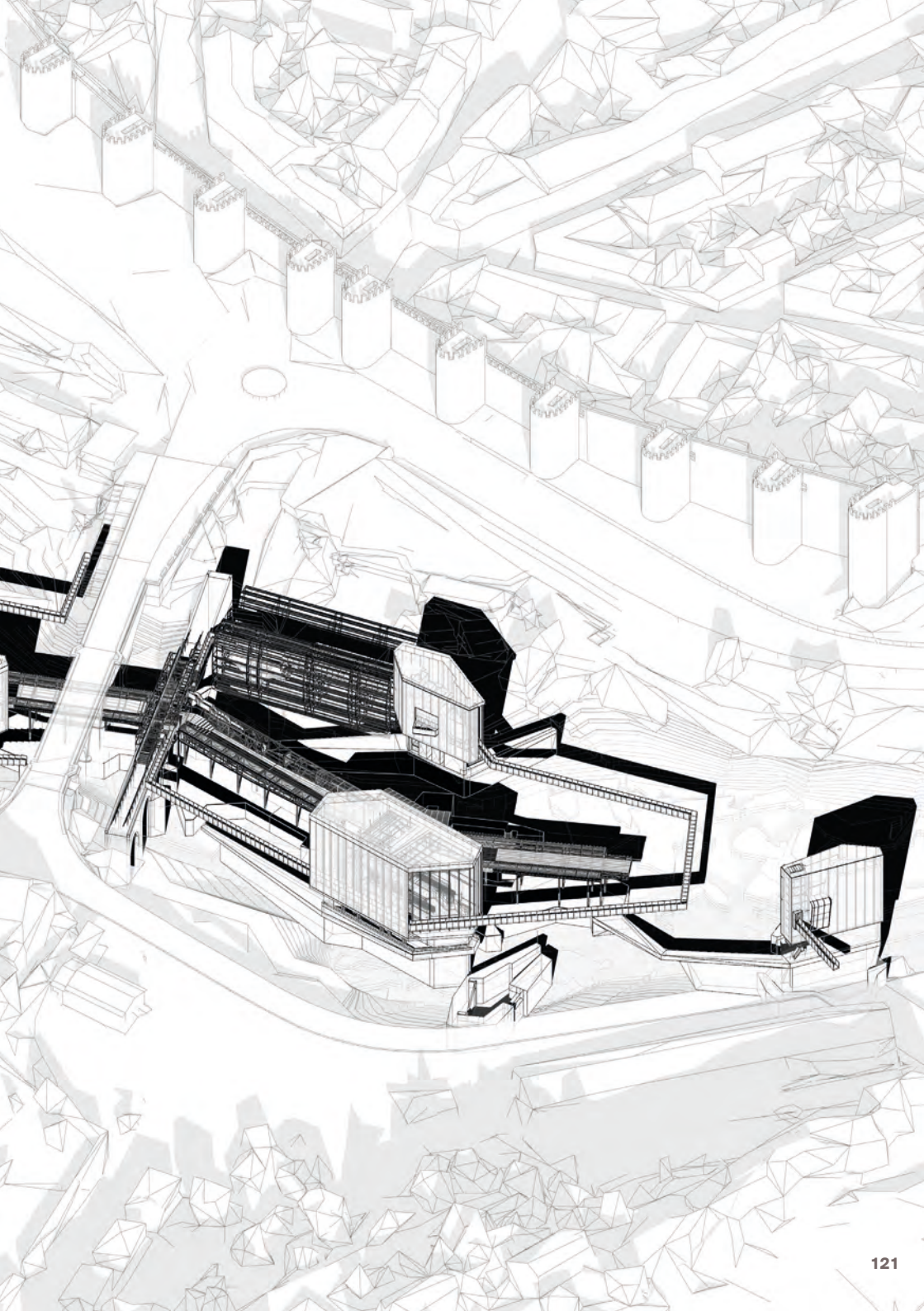
Embedded within the Adaja river, parallel to the western wall of Ávila, an archipelago of chapels for scientific discovery emerges from a [re]defined and [re]formed hydrological landscape. Through the explication of the current vertical hydrological section of the Amblés Valley, the chapels offer ecological strategies for measuring, analysing and sustaining Ávila's fragile environments. On completion of each research cycle, the seven chapels recalibrate to a series of choreographed workshops, provisioning the city with seed and soil for the cultivation of its myriad walled gardens and ruined enclosures. The *Cathedral* connects the archipelago of chapels through an elevated pier structure whilst [re]carving the watercourse of the constructed hydrological landscape to provide new channels of enquiry. By storing, studying, and [re]activating the currently vulnerable vestiges, Ávila solidifies its position as custodian over the land against its hydraulic temporality.

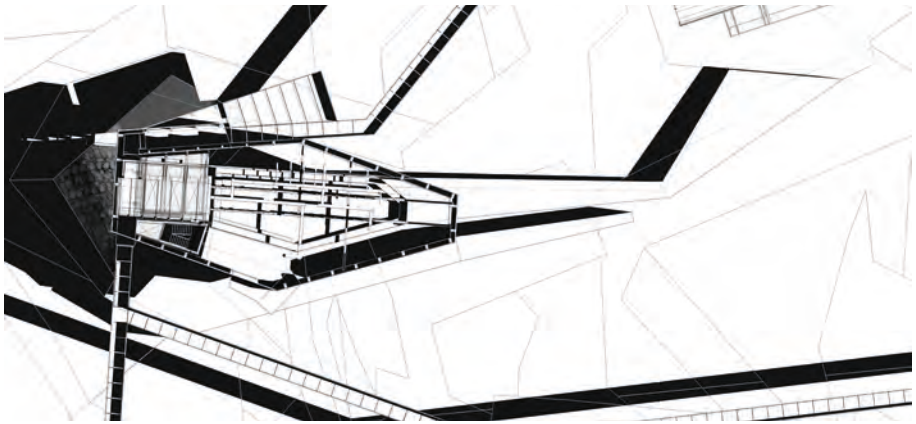
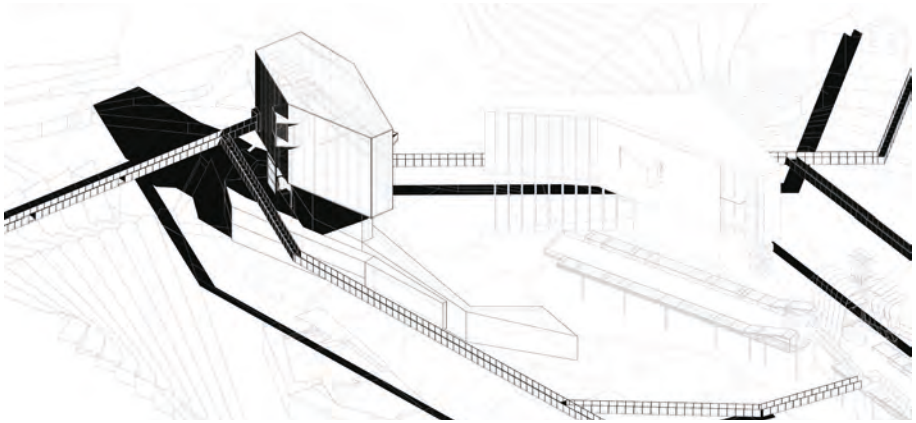


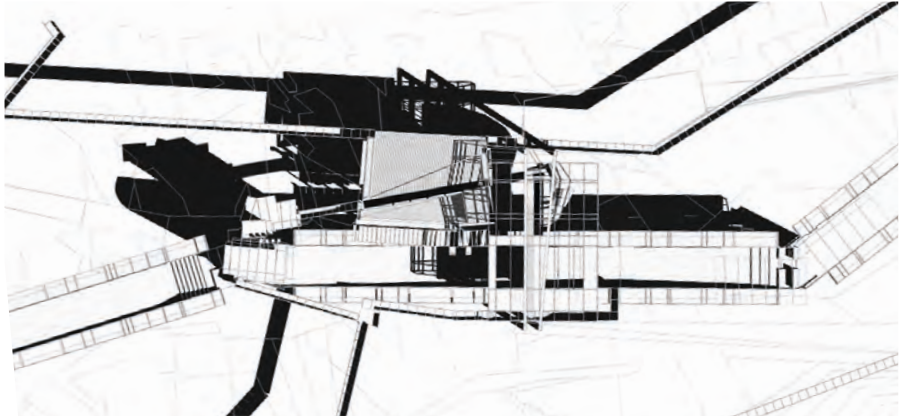
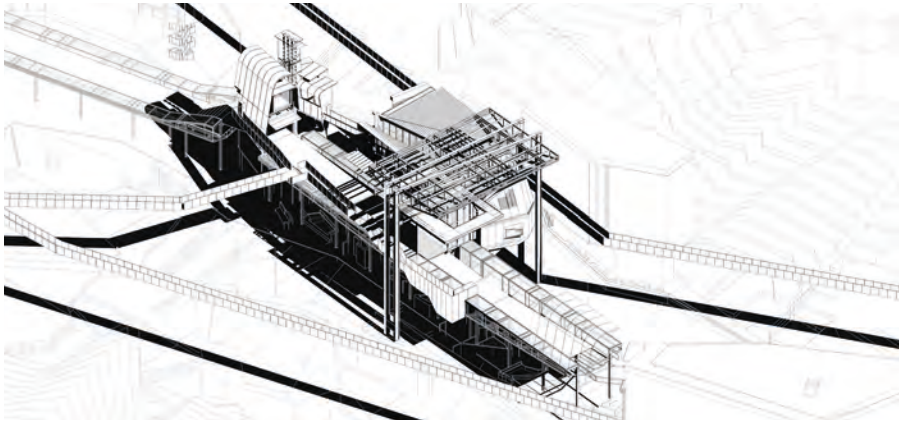
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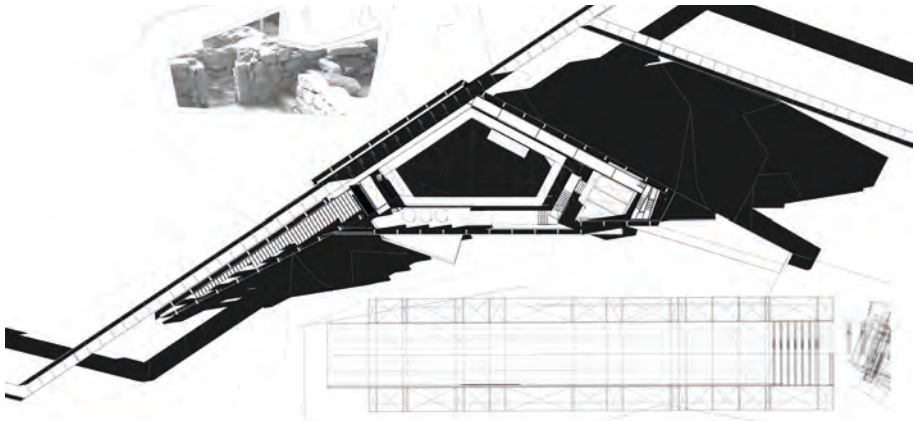
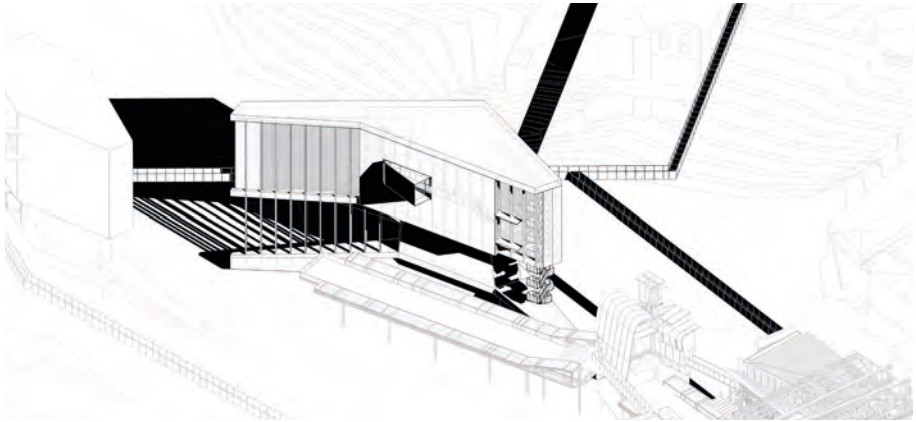


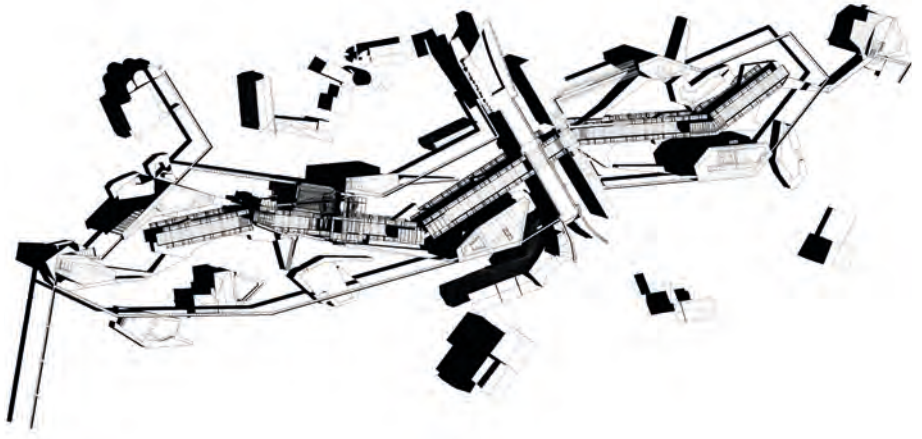


Preceding page. **Hydrological Cathedral** towards the western wall

Left. **Chapel of Soil** axonometric, plan, perspective

Right. **Hydrological Theatre** axonometric, plan, perspective





Left. **Chapel of Clay** axonometric, plan, perspective

Upper right. **Hydrological Cathedral** plan

Lower right. **Towards the Western Wall** long section

Site: Adaja River Ruined Mills.
Programme: Geological Research Institute, Archive, Library, Laboratories, Sample Gardens.

16

A CASTILIAN UNCONFORMITY

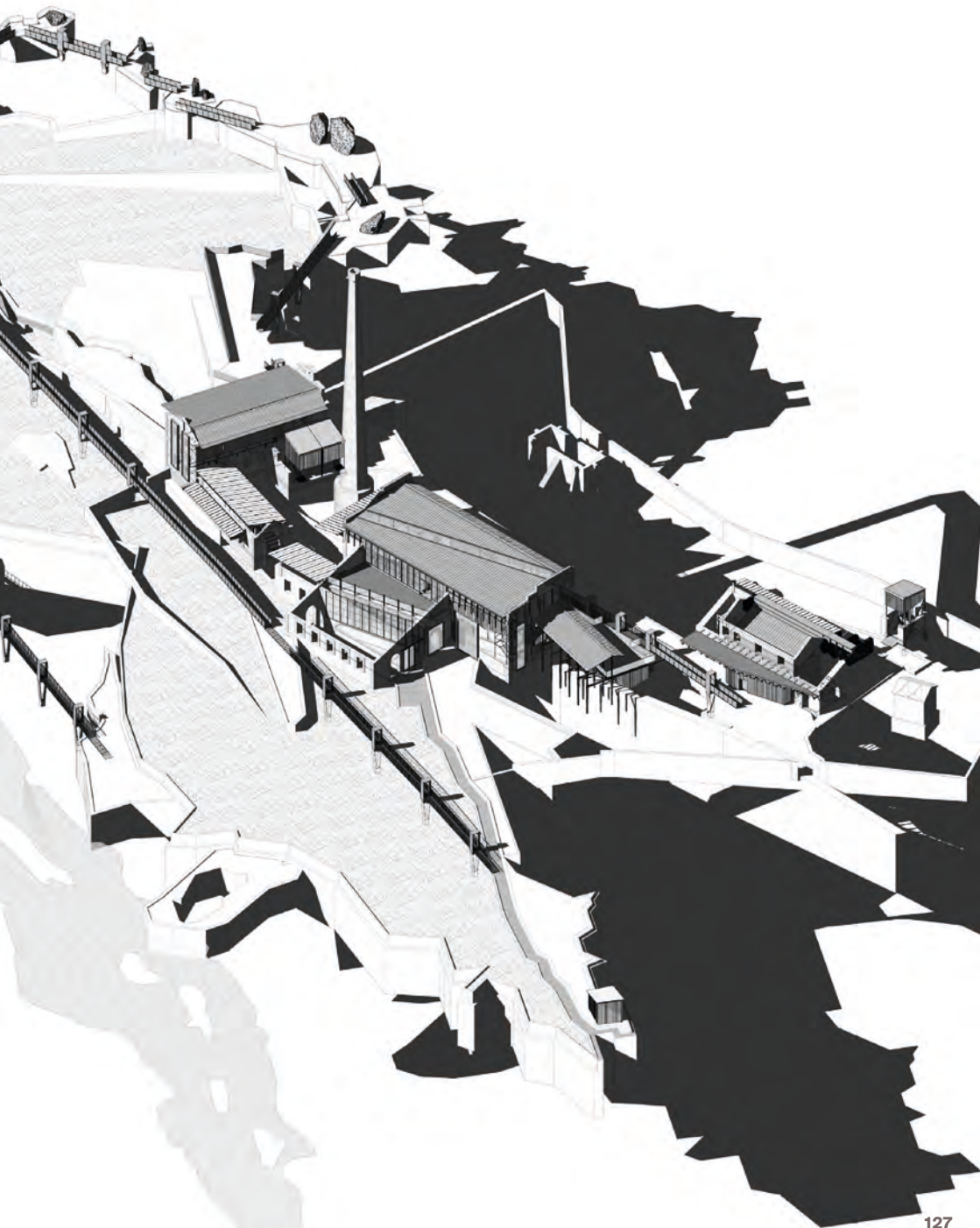
THE ÁVILA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

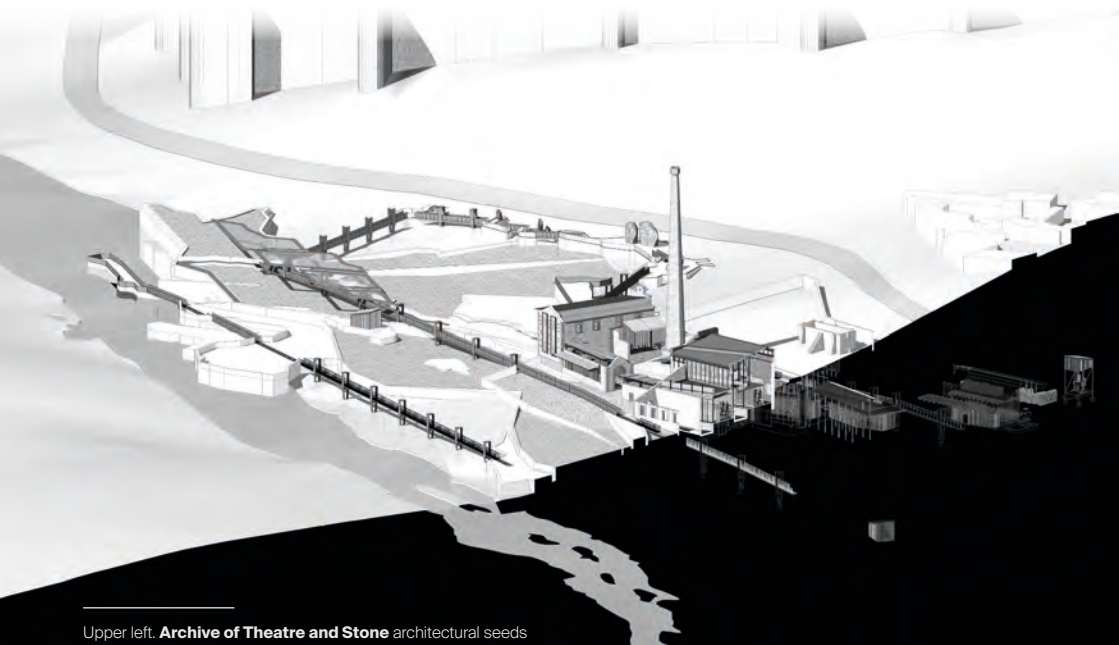
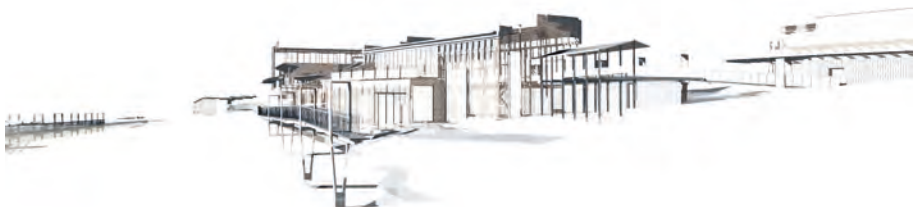
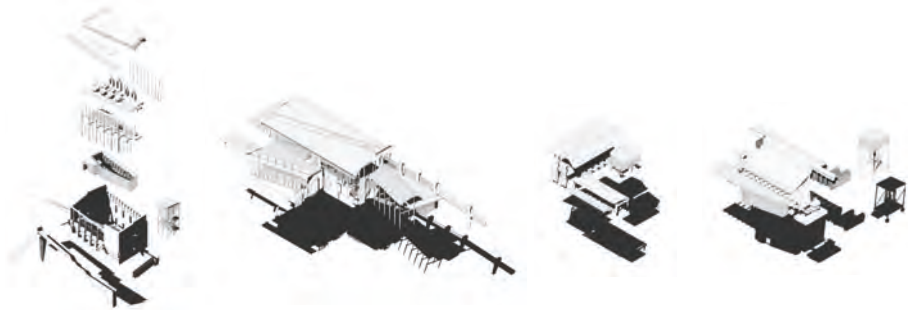
TOBI PHILLIMORE

Ávila is raised from an abundance of granite whilst at its western extremity, alluvial clay deposits from the Río de Adaja bank and settle. The Adaja, inscribes the Valle de Amblés, a fertile agricultural plain situated in the Sistema Central between the Sierra de Ávila and Sierra de la Paramera. It feeds the city, irrigating its crops and in earlier years, powering its mills. The casting of grounded bedrock and existing granite husks of former industry provides a singular geology from which an *unconformity* of new architectures, *The Ávila Geological Survey*, accumulates on the eastern bank of the river beyond the city walls. The *Unconformity* is the contact between these husks and re-seeded armatures transposed from the *Archive of Theatre and Stone* - an architecture of erratic projection that transcribed the distinctive masonry of Ávila's cathedral into the ruined housing of a former hotel towards a theatrical complex of counterweighted granite, elevated wooden stage, bridge, walkway, tower and wall.

The re-inhabited husks allow for the sampling, testing, and archiving of geologic material in laboratories and testing facilities. Above these enclosed programs, a passive observation is witnessed from a *reticulating* overlap of foyers, amenities, and walkways. Beyond, a landscape formation is carved out of alluvial clay, exposing a buried strata of granite in the form of terraced plains and retaining elements - an exterior expression of the geologic archive, allowing an experiential interaction with materials collected from the Valle de Amblés and its mountainous boundaries.







Upper left. **Archive of Theatre and Stone** architectural seeds

Middle left. sectional perspective

Lower left. sectional perspective

Right. **Castilian Unconformity** model



TOBI PHILLIMORE | A CASTILIAN UNCONFORMITY

Site: Arroyo del Nogal, tributary of the Adaja River.
Programme: Opera Stage, Green Room, Rehearsal Spaces, Workshop, Foyer, Ticket Office and Bar, Refectory Restaurant and Residents' Dormitory.

17

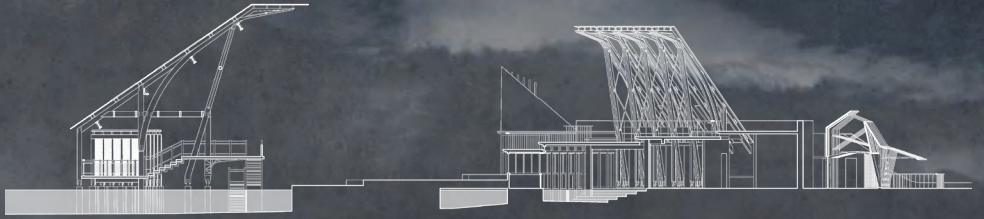
THE ADAJA OPERA

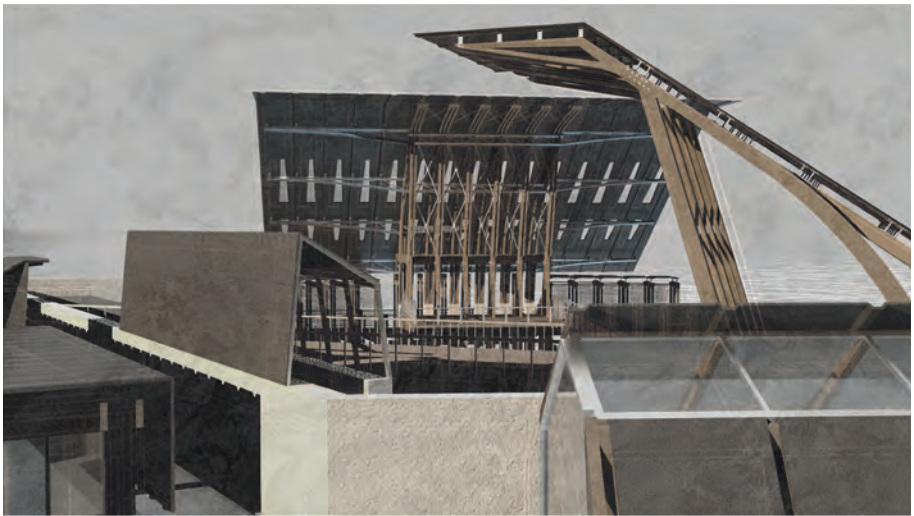
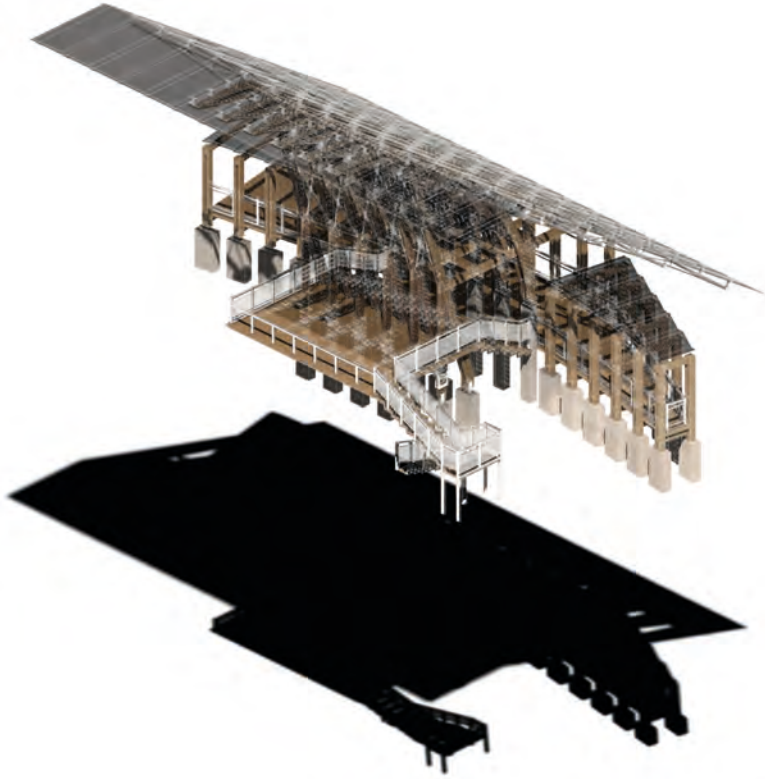
JIAN FAN

The Adaja Opera is situated 1.4 miles north-west of the ancient city of Ávila on a tributary of the Adaja river where the forests converge on the plain to the west of the Las Cogotas-Mingorria reservoir. Oriented east to west, the *Adaja Opera* comprises a stage, workshops, dwellings for performers and musicians, spaces for rehearsal and communal dining for residents and audience.

Taking its point of departure from the Convent of the Carmelites in the northern wall of the medieval city of Ávila and its reimagining as an architecture of archive, an excavated landscape, of elevated timber deck, inscribed walkway and enclosing steel volume, the *Adaja Opera* takes the form of an architectural landscape docked in the mouth of the tributary through a graphic process of drawing and redrawing the parched riverbed.

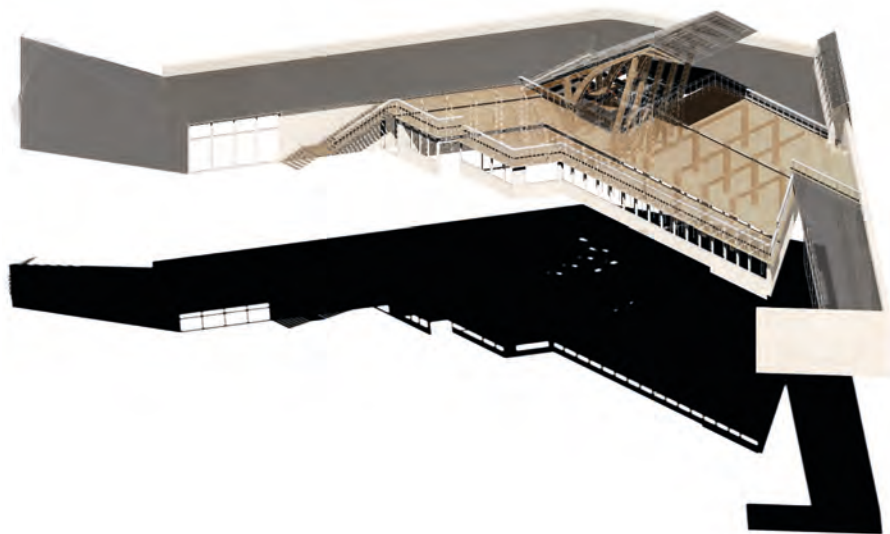
Reconstructing the topography of its site, the *Adaja Opera* incorporates the outdoor arena as a new dyke forming an artificial landscape to accommodate the rising tides. As the dam's drainage peaks, the stream floods over portions of the steps through slits in the walls into the pool of the indoor foyer; meanwhile, the staging pillars extending into the sand become submerged, rendering a concert on an isolated island. The stage's canopy erects a visual barrier to the venue as a way of retaining a deep dialogue with the water and the surrounding landscapes.





Upper left. **Stage, Backstage and Rehearsal Area** axonometric

Lower left. **Roofscape towards main stage** perspectival view



Upper right. **Entrance Foyer, Bar and Cloakrooms**

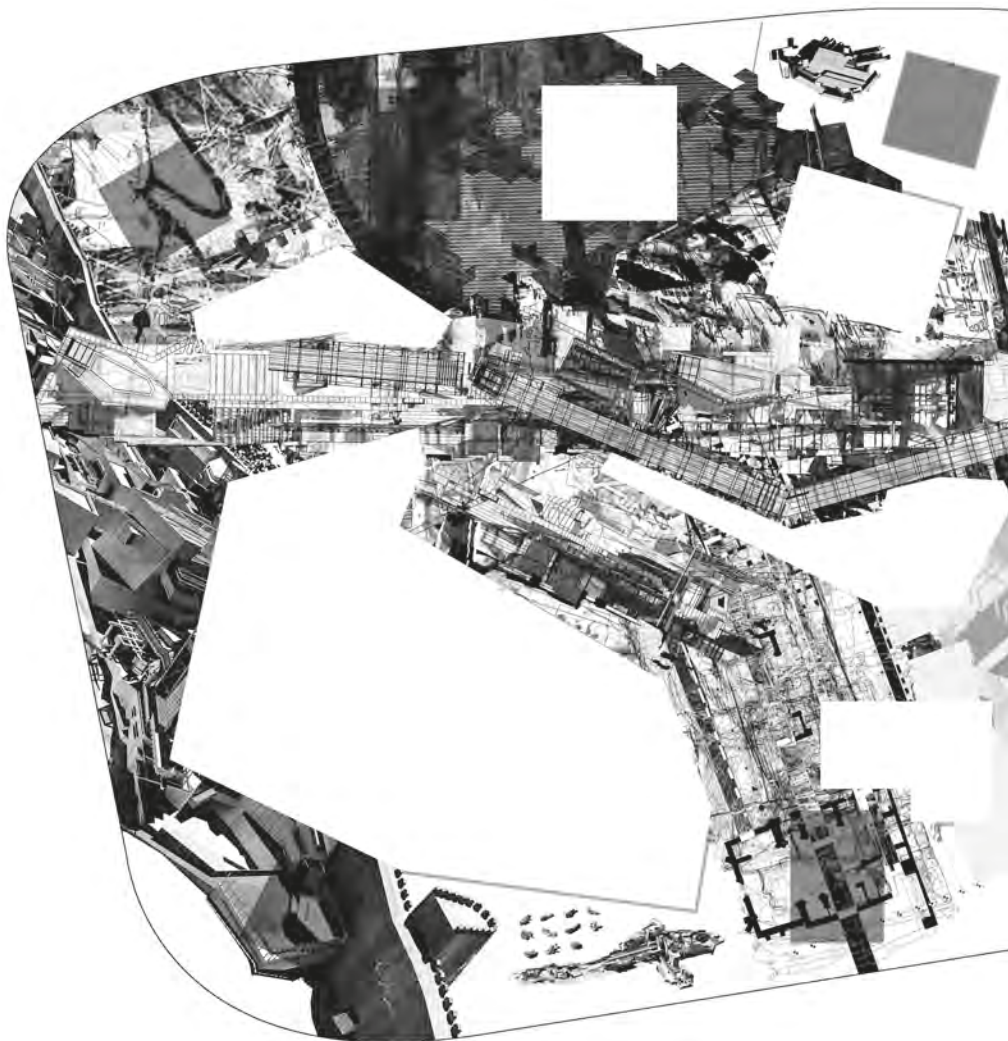
Lower right. **Audience and Resident Dining Room**



The Ávila Surveyor's Chain.

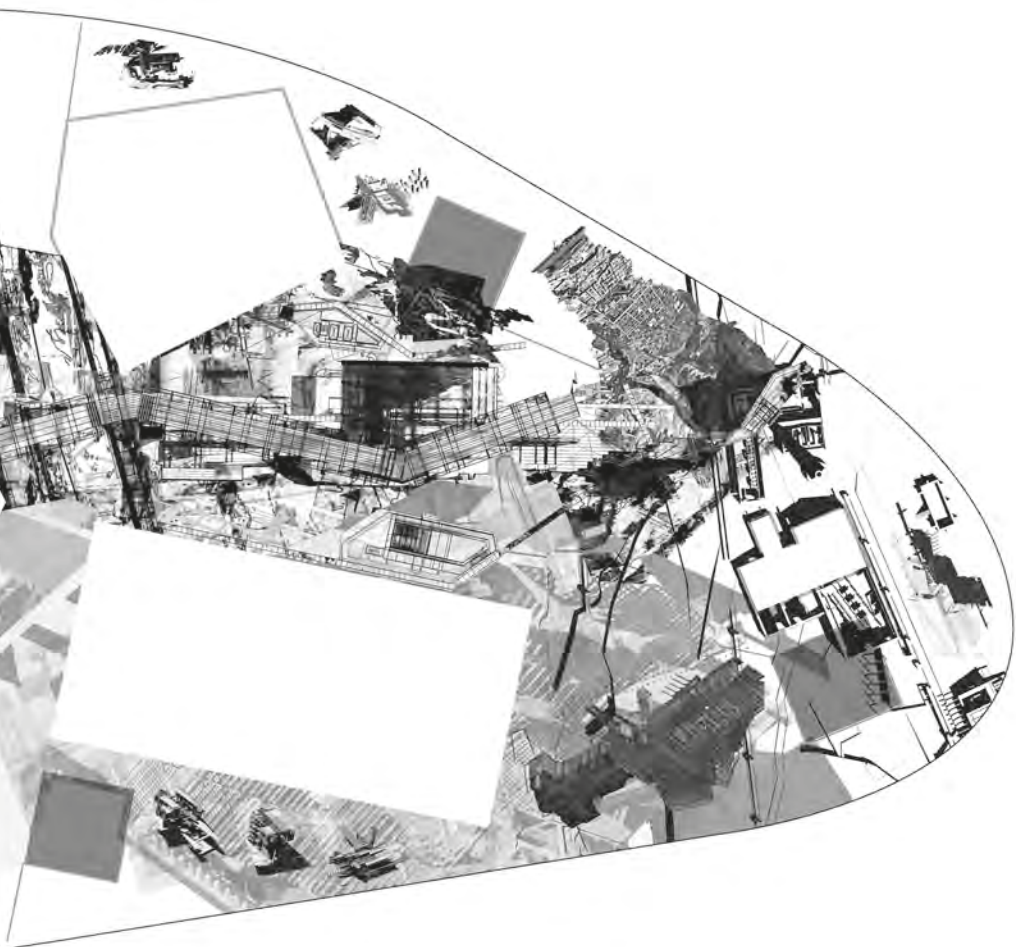
Dan Anderson, Toby Eccleston, Peter Brewer.





Drawing for the Ávila Reading Table.

Collective





Ávila Field Trip, October 2022.

Victoria Clare Bernie



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Cover

Field Drawing. Giles Davis & Sophie Lewis-Ward.

Inside Front Spread

Aerial view of the **Walled city of Ávila.**

Inside Back Spread

Aerial view of Ávila in the **Amblés Valley.**

Prologue

The walled city of Ávila from the west. Jigao Li, Chenjie Qian, Jiakai Zuo.

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- 42-43 Coloured light, Ávila Cathedral. Giles Davis.
- 136-137 Drawing for the Ávila Reading Table. collective.



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