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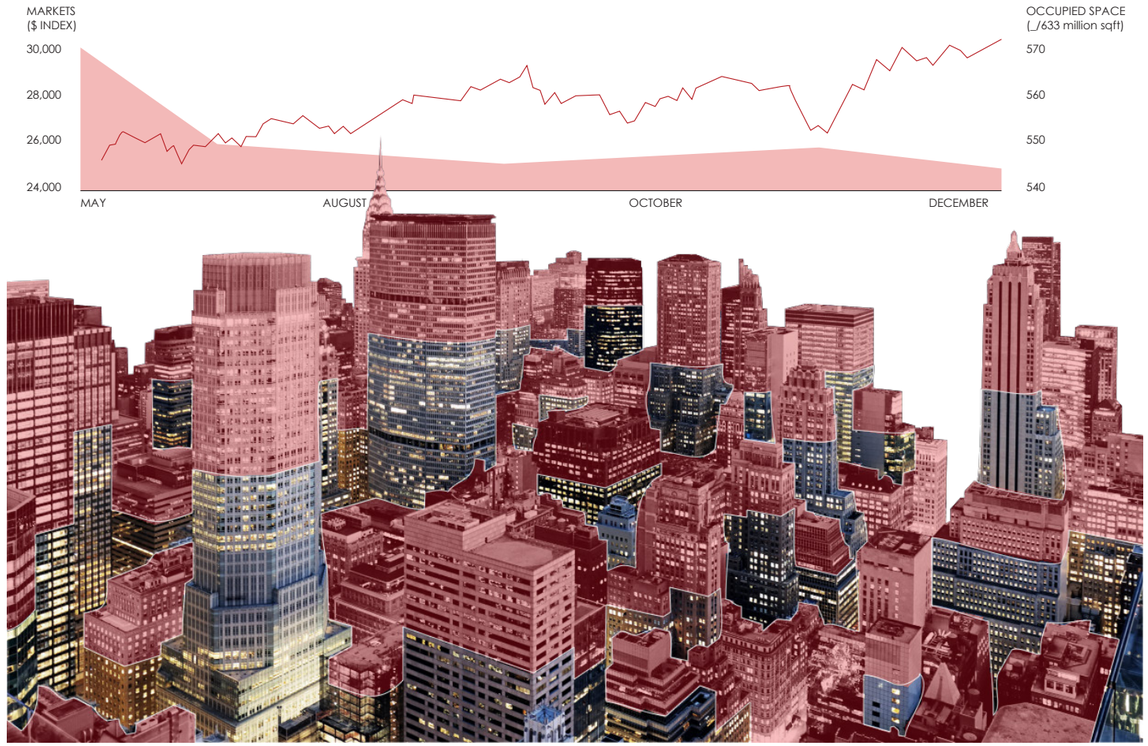
SOCIALIZING VACANCY

AN ARCHITECTURAL THESIS

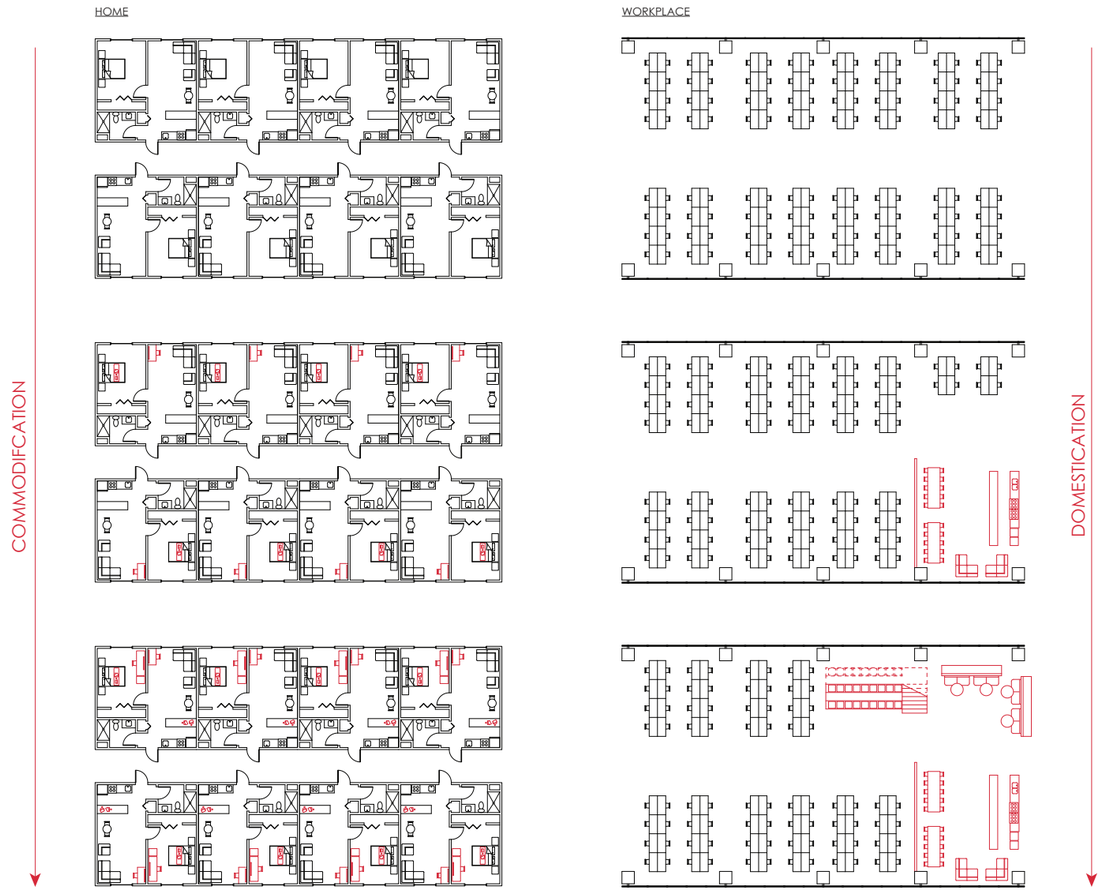
BY GREG WINAWER

A large portion of office space has been left vacant, and thus provides no beneficial program to its remaining occupants or the local urbanity it is surrounded by. When considering what can be done with this vacant space, the primary motivation should be to integrate a program which does the opposite: a program which positively disrupts its existing context to hybridize and improve the current outdated programmatic arrangement. To insert a residential program into an existing office tower both disrupts and enhances the rigorous flows of our working and our domestic lives. The predefined universal concept of the 'working-day' is no longer applicable to the way we work and live: the boundaries of our time and priorities no longer fall strictly within a daily 9-5 schedule. As the relationship between time spent working and living is blurred, so too should its environment.



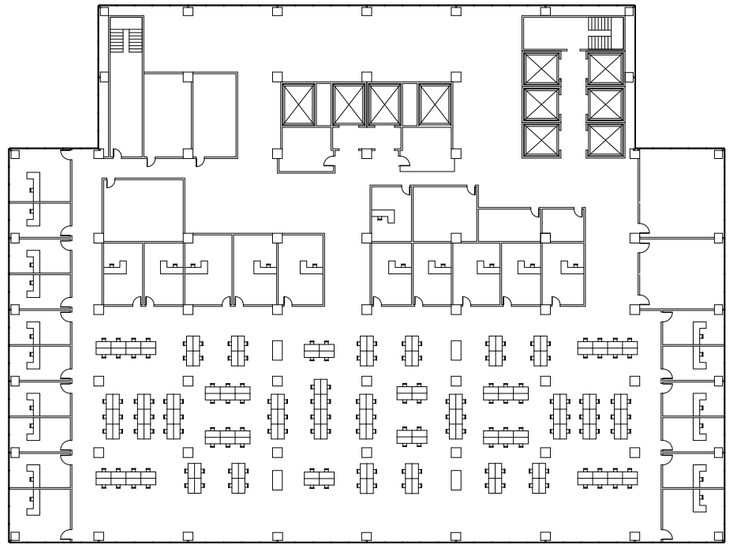
Within the programs of domestic and office environments exists a shared concept of increasing productivity within our inhabited space, constantly seeking to optimize and reduce the burden of our daily tasks. Erupting from this shared concept of exaggerated productivity is an increasing cross-contamination of programs: our homes shift to become an extension of the workplace, while our offices become an extension of our homes. To accept and develop this notion, removing the spatial burden of the operative functions of the home, such as the kitchen, a greater space to be dedicated toward the flexibility of the occupants working and domestic lifestyles. The kitchen and dining areas of the home are thus relocated externally to exist as a privately or openly social environment. By creating oversized cooking and eating areas outside of the home, the opportunity exists to either expand your personal dining room into a larger service for guests, or to engage with the fellow members of the hybridized work and living community. Within the same sphere of sharable, productive space: implementing openly available work areas allows for the flexibility of both the office and residential community members to have a separate zone to work individually or in small groups.

EVOLVING LIFESTYLES

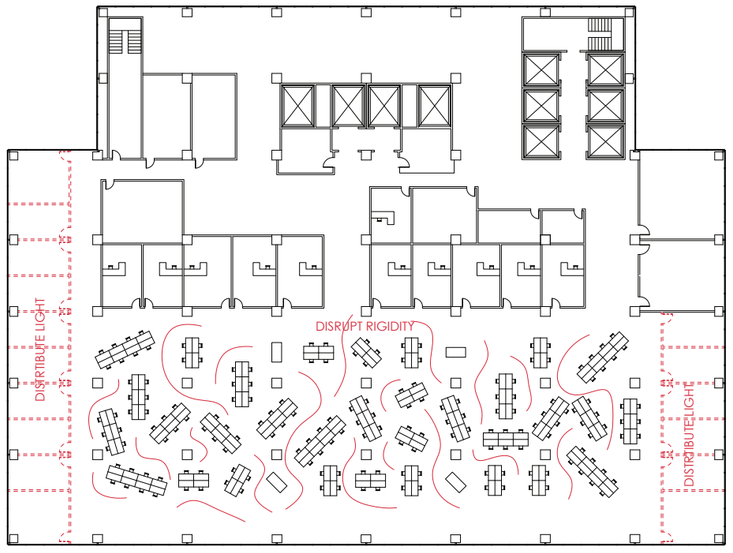


The current office environment is rigid, and follows strict prescriptions of a corporate hierarchy enforced spatially throughout. Higher ranking members of the company are given perimeter offices which rob the remaining employees of natural light, while the primary place of work for most office workers is an assigned desk within a larger row, grouped together by regarding the shared role of the neighboring employees to the given company. The rigid perimeter boundary which exists internal to these desk-communities can be broken down, and blurred into a social space which offers opportunities for additional individual and team work environments. Through allowing the moments of regular and irregular interactions to openly occur between the domestic and working members of the community, an awareness of both spheres of is created which softens the already softening boundary between them. By spreading out working inhabitants, more private spaces for traditional meeting requirements could be further utilized for their isolative tendencies.

EXISTING OFFICE TYPOLOGY

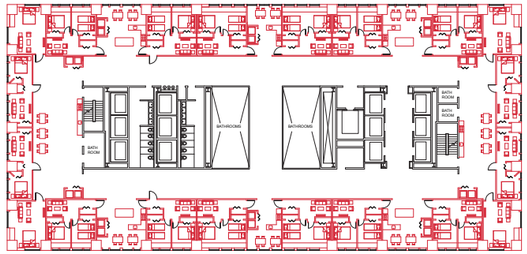


WORKPLACE DISRUPTION

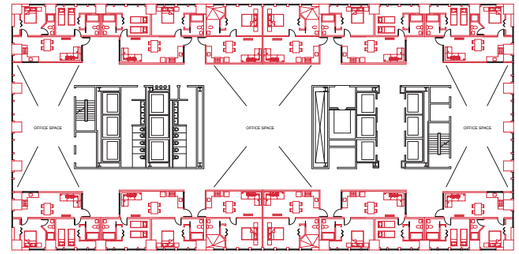


Typically, our concepts of living have been limited to exist solely as an ultra-private environment in which the home is a social escape. While many of the notions of privacy within the home cannot and should not be removed, the option to integrate your particular lifestyle into the community for its benefits and resources should be available. Through creating a continuous, shared neighborhood of balconies along the residential units, the dweller can choose to expand their home into the micro urban community, serving to break the reclusive mold of our notion of housing and allow for both social and productive improvements to our domestic sphere. The design of the unit plan within this socialized domestic environment is focused on an internal flexibility which allows for a wide-range of demographics within the upcoming world of young-professionals. The daily activities of work and social interaction can begin to flow freely through a newly hybridized domestic environment.

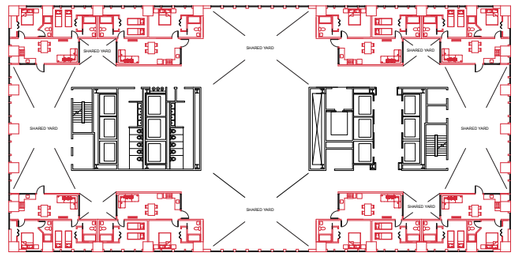
ATELIER BOW-WOW
SHARED MICRO-VILLAGES



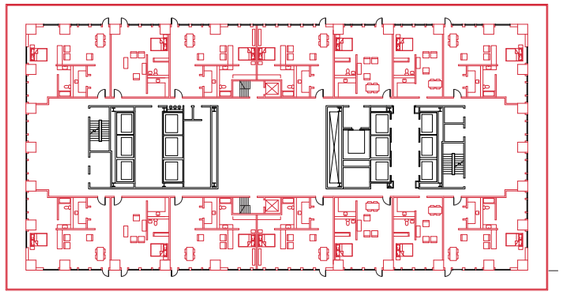
DOGMA
SHARED WORKSPACE



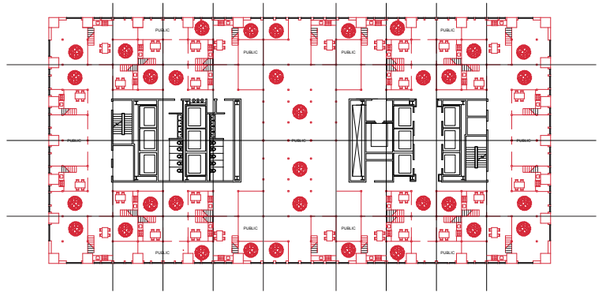
BIGyard
SHARED YARD SPACE + VIEWS



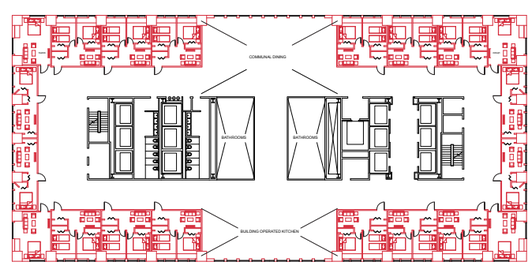
R50
SHARED BALCONY



URBAN LIVING COMPETITION
INTEGRATED PUBLIC + LIVING FUNCTION

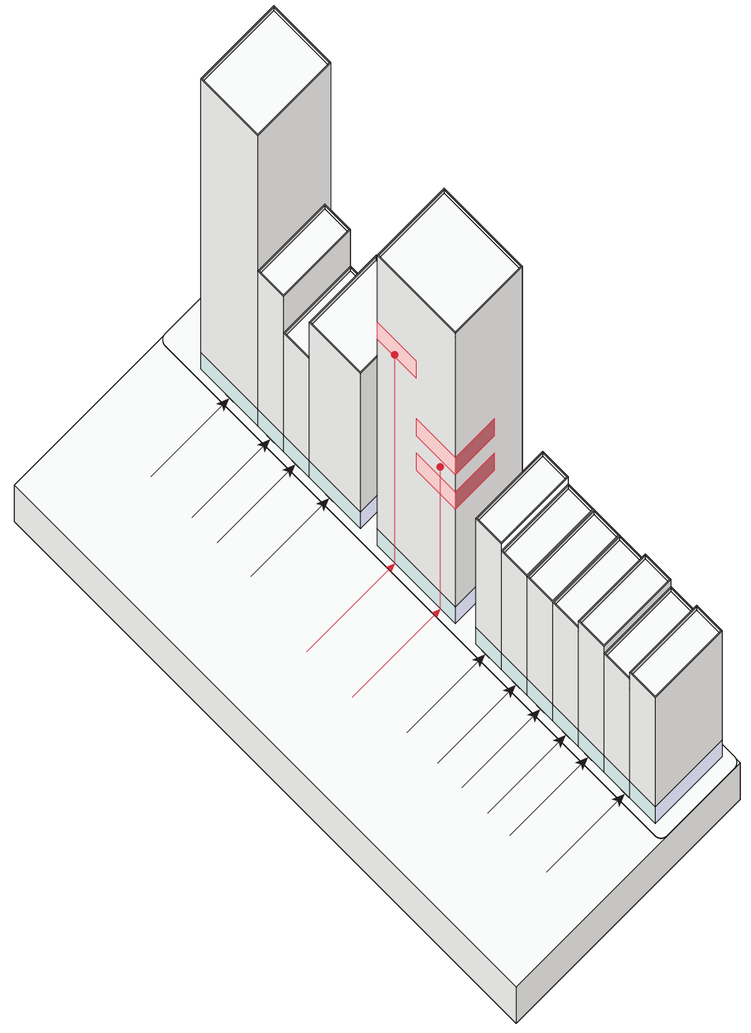


PHALANSTERE
SHARED DINING + BATHROOMS

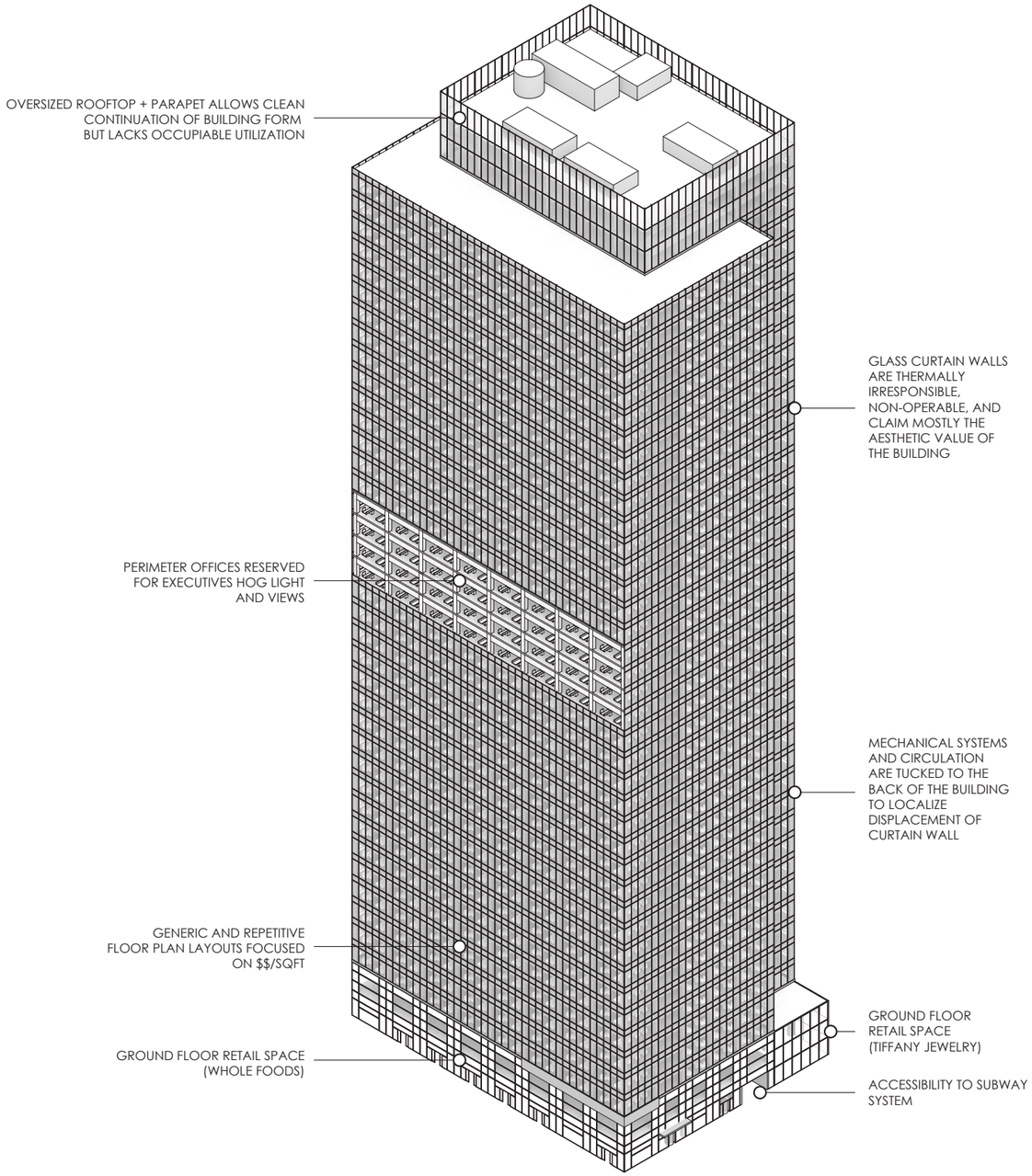


Office towers themselves serve very little benefit to the local urbanity in which they situate themselves; the neighborhoods often inevitably become dedicated to high-end restaurants, retailers, and domestic environments which benefit only the fluctuating commuters and employees of the daily population. The local urbanity becomes a part of the same machine as the office tower, a system purely to generate profits per square foot, ignoring the potential to improve the experiential value of the area itself. Through integrating new public programs into the current and predicted vacancy of the towers within such urbanities, the mold of the machine is broken, and the spheres of the public, working, and domestic environments become united within an extension of the urban environment.

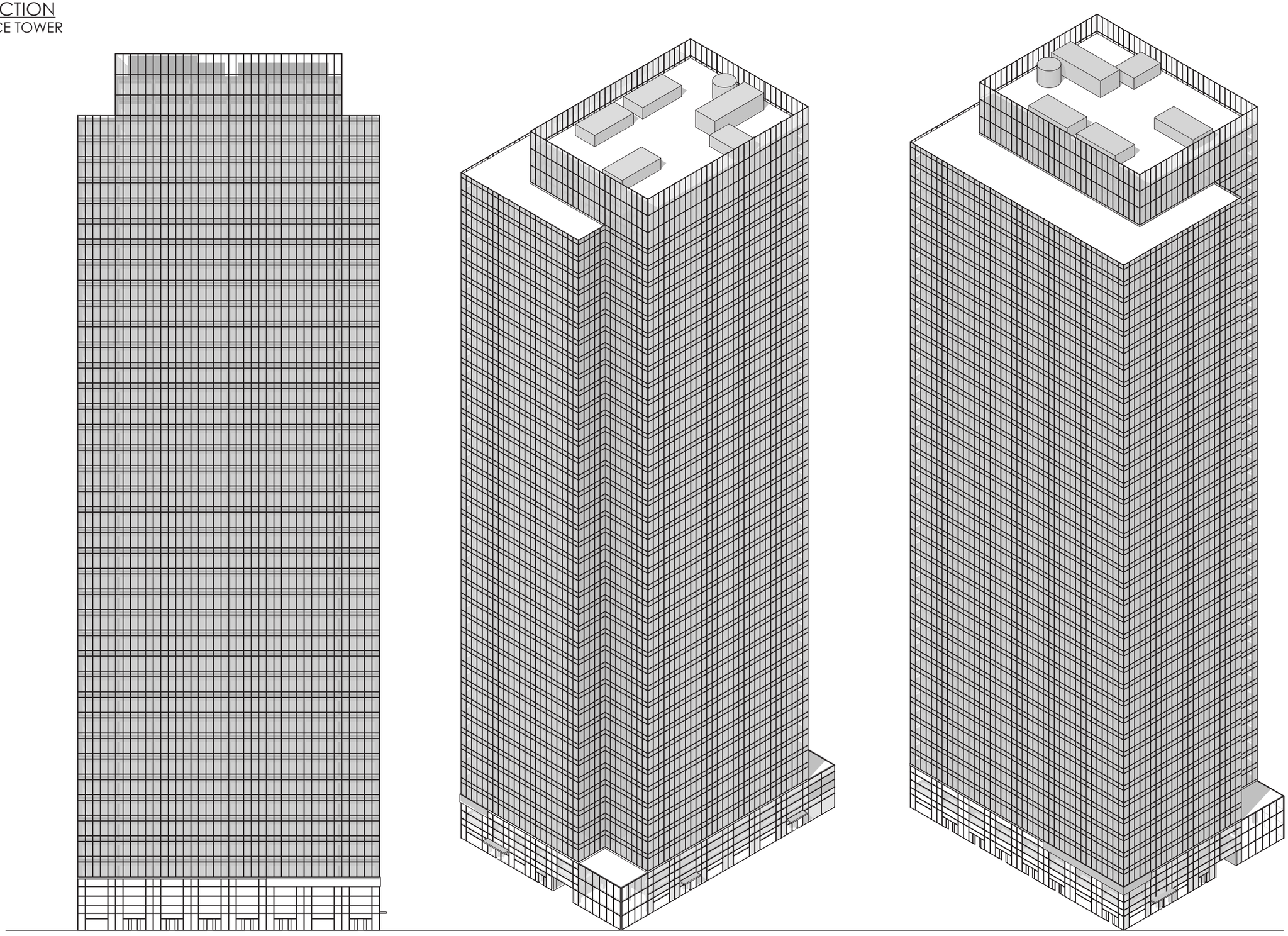
PUBLIC INTEGRATION



The exaggerated rigidity of the office tower floor plan extends beyond the interior layout of walls and furniture; greatly reflecting of the rigidity and optimization within, the office tower typology has come to consist of massive steel and concrete structures which are clad with thermally irresponsible and non-operable glass curtain walls. Such enclosures are not only counter-productive toward creating a flexible work environment, but are not suitable for hosting an intervention of housing into its existing space. By selectively stripping away areas of these non-operable curtain walls, pockets of natural exterior resources like light and air can be created, yielding spaces which both create additional program, and disperse natural resources throughout the stale office environment.

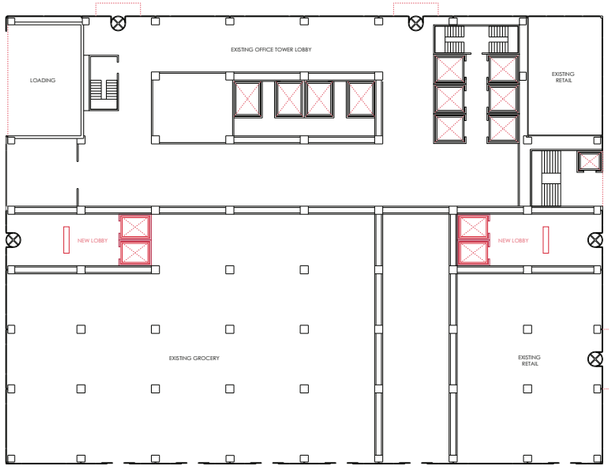


SITE SELECTION
SALESFORCE TOWER

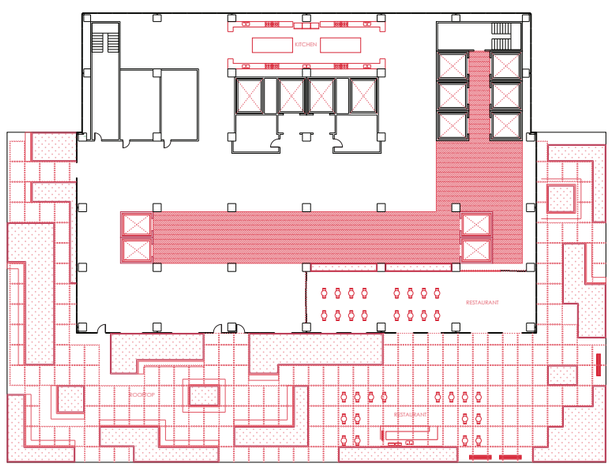


DESIGN

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

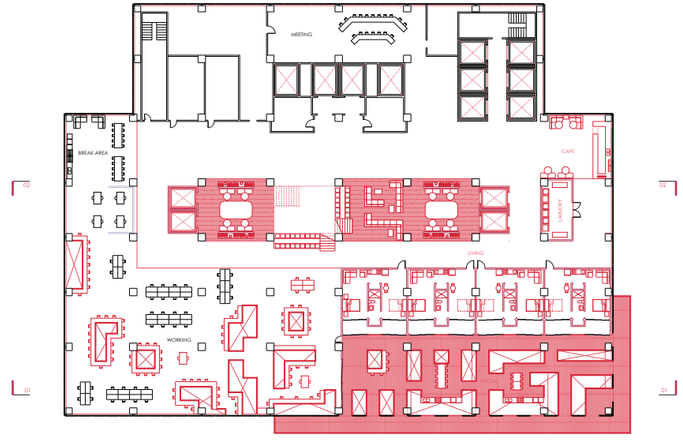


ROOFTOP FLOOR PLAN

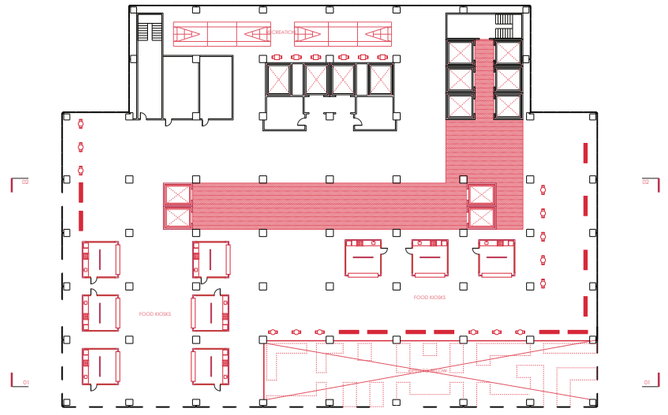


The design begins with an intervention on the ground floor. Implementing additional public and residential program requires additional lobby and circulation space; the project utilizes the retail vacancy at the ground floor to install two new lobby's which connect to the public programs and housing above.

HOUSING FLOOR PLAN

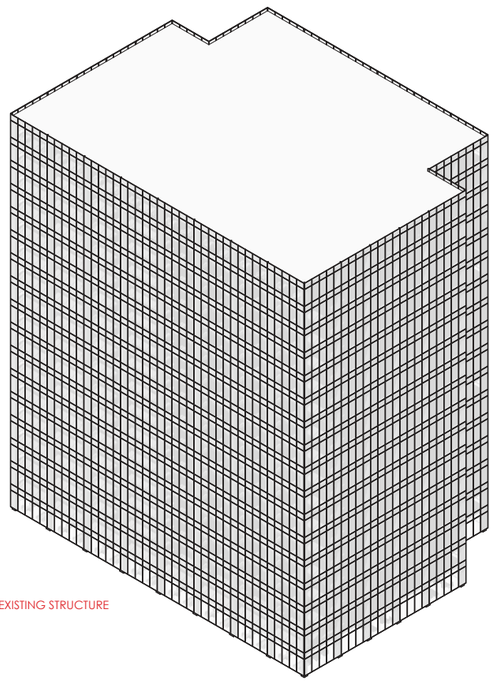


PUBLIC FLOOR PLAN

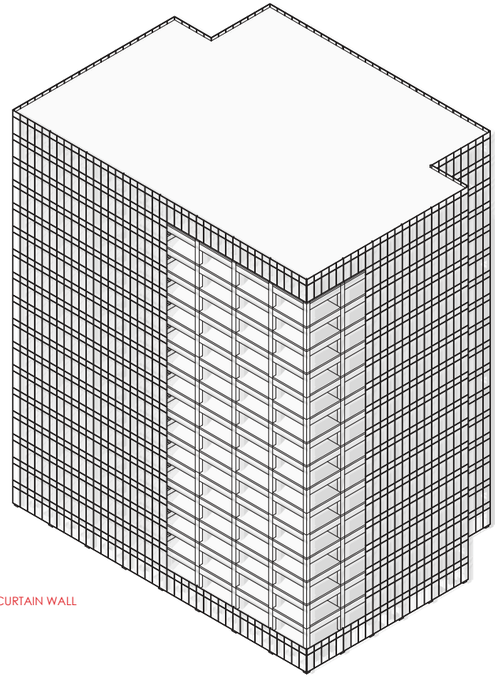


The insertions to the existing office tower are designed to disperse pockets of natural resources while disrupting and re-imagining the rigidity of the office environment. The floors are perforated in an interlocking arrangement, yielding dynamic social and workplace interaction while vertically integrating micro-neighborhoods of urbanity.

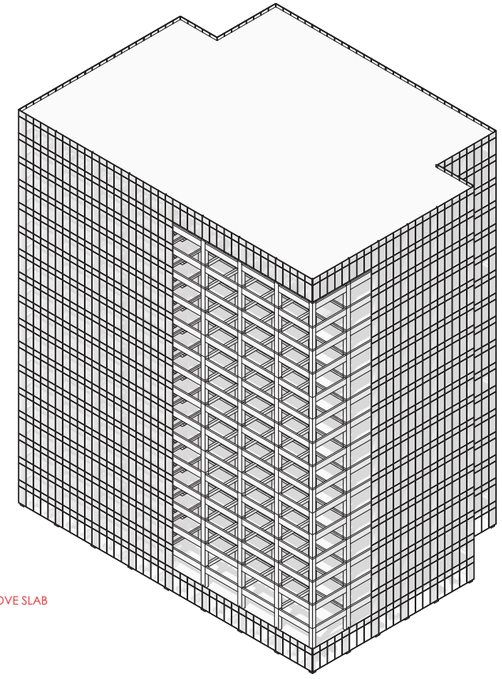
RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY



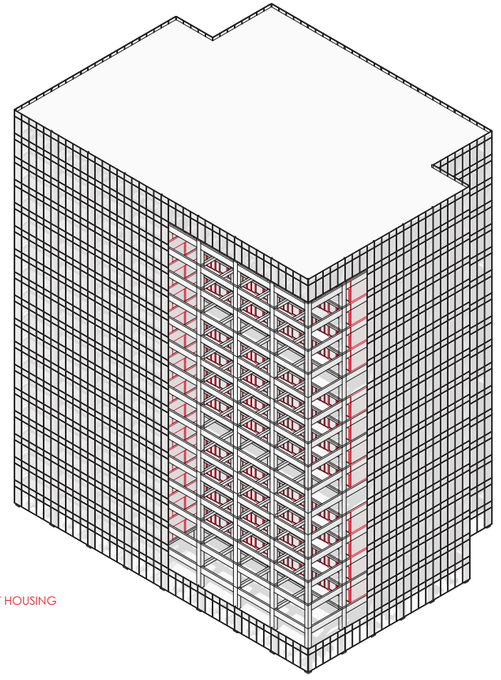
EXISTING STRUCTURE



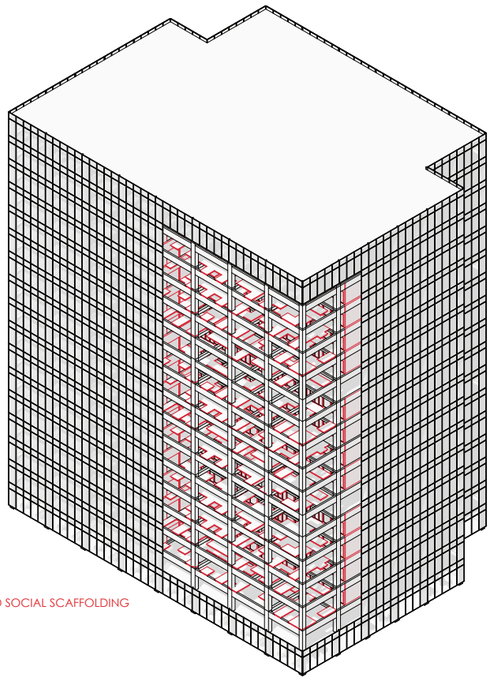
STRIP CURTAIN WALL



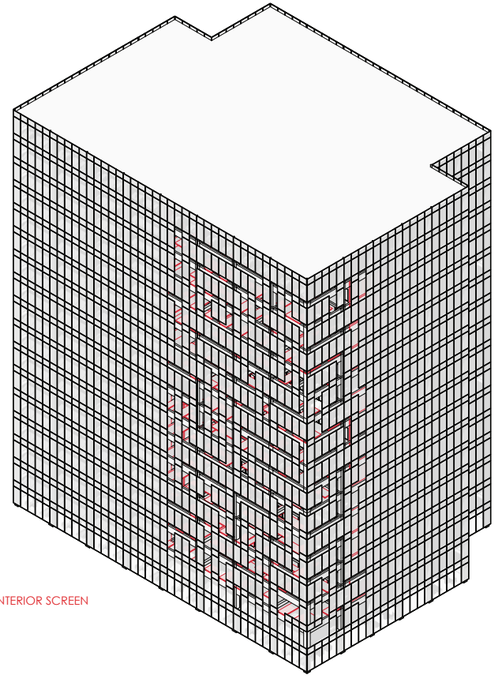
REMOVE SLAB



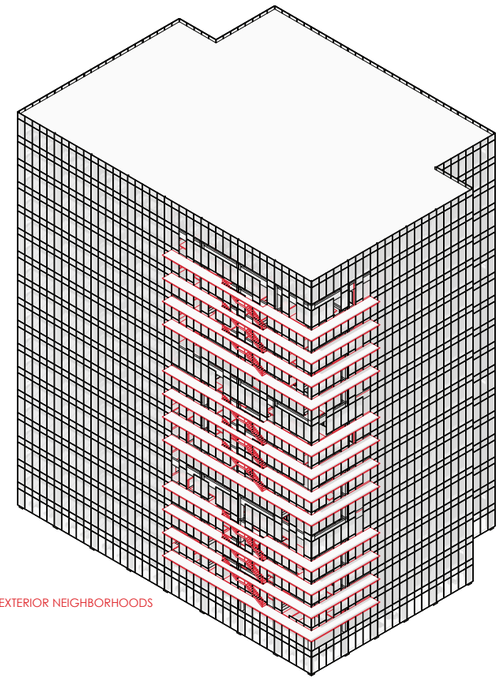
INSERT HOUSING



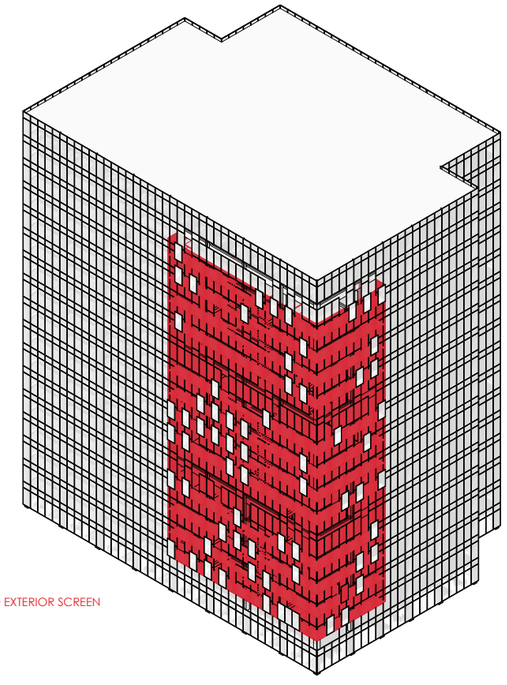
EXTEND SOCIAL SCAFFOLDING



ADD INTERIOR SCREEN

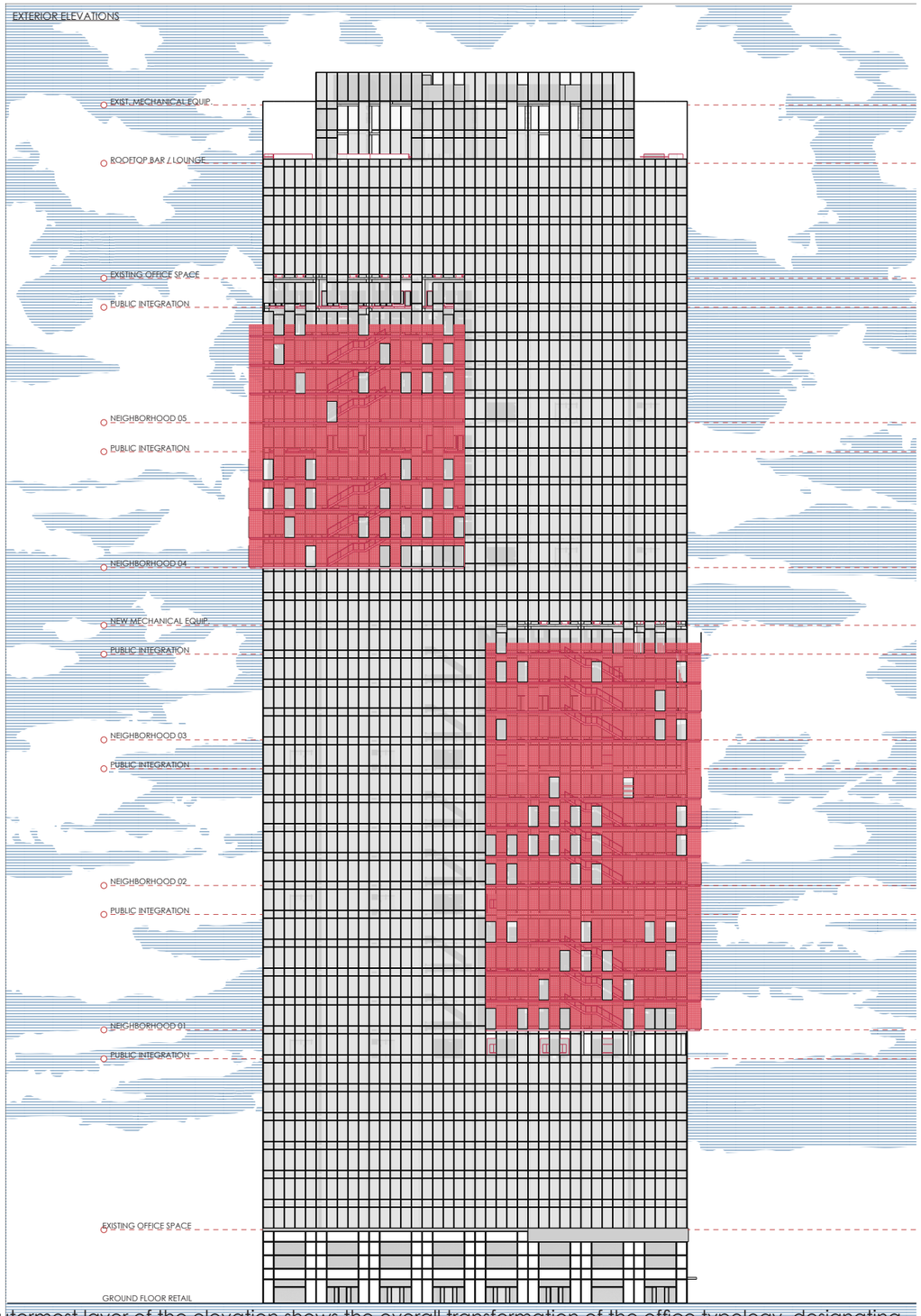


ADD EXTERIOR NEIGHBORHOODS

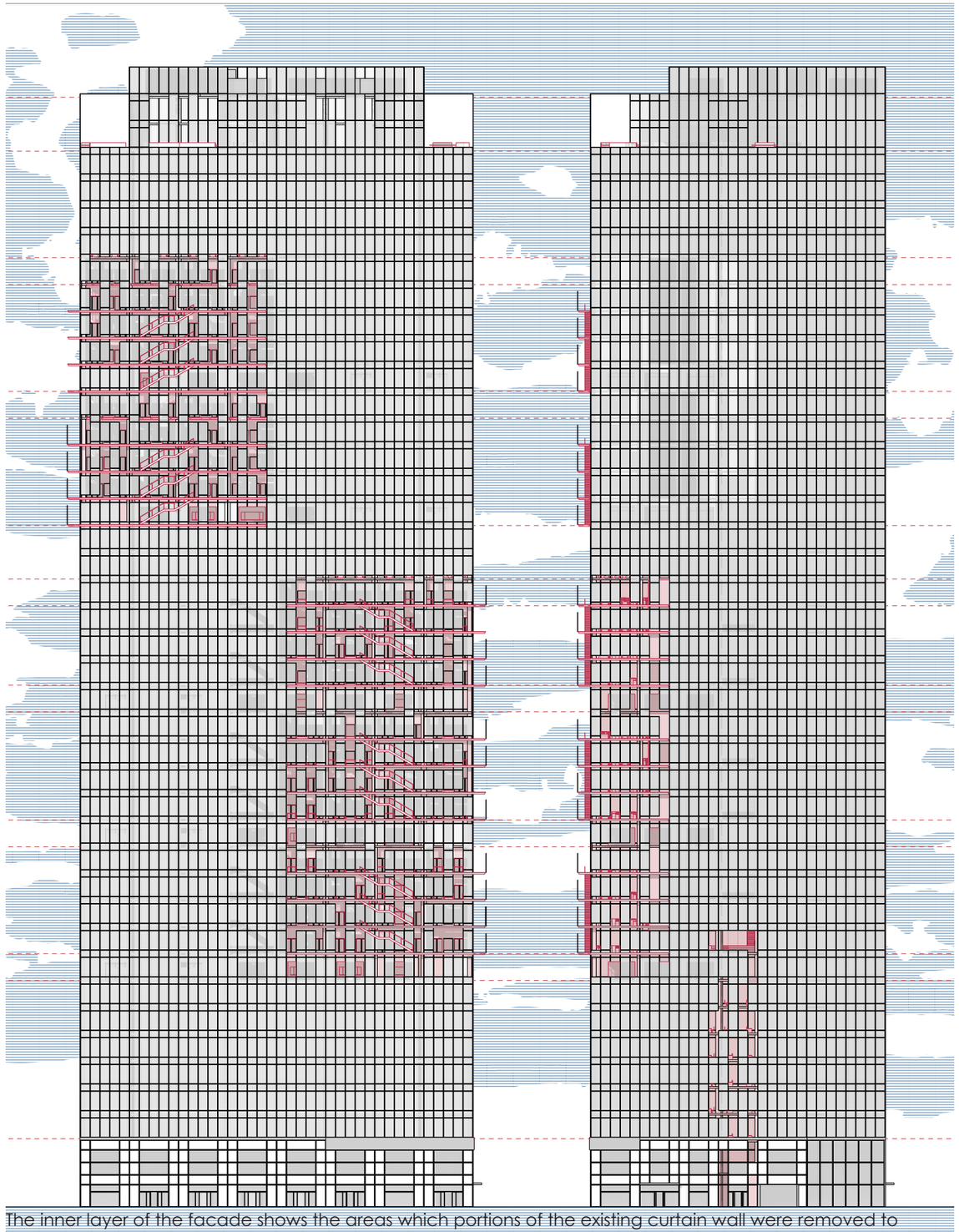


ADD EXTERIOR SCREEN

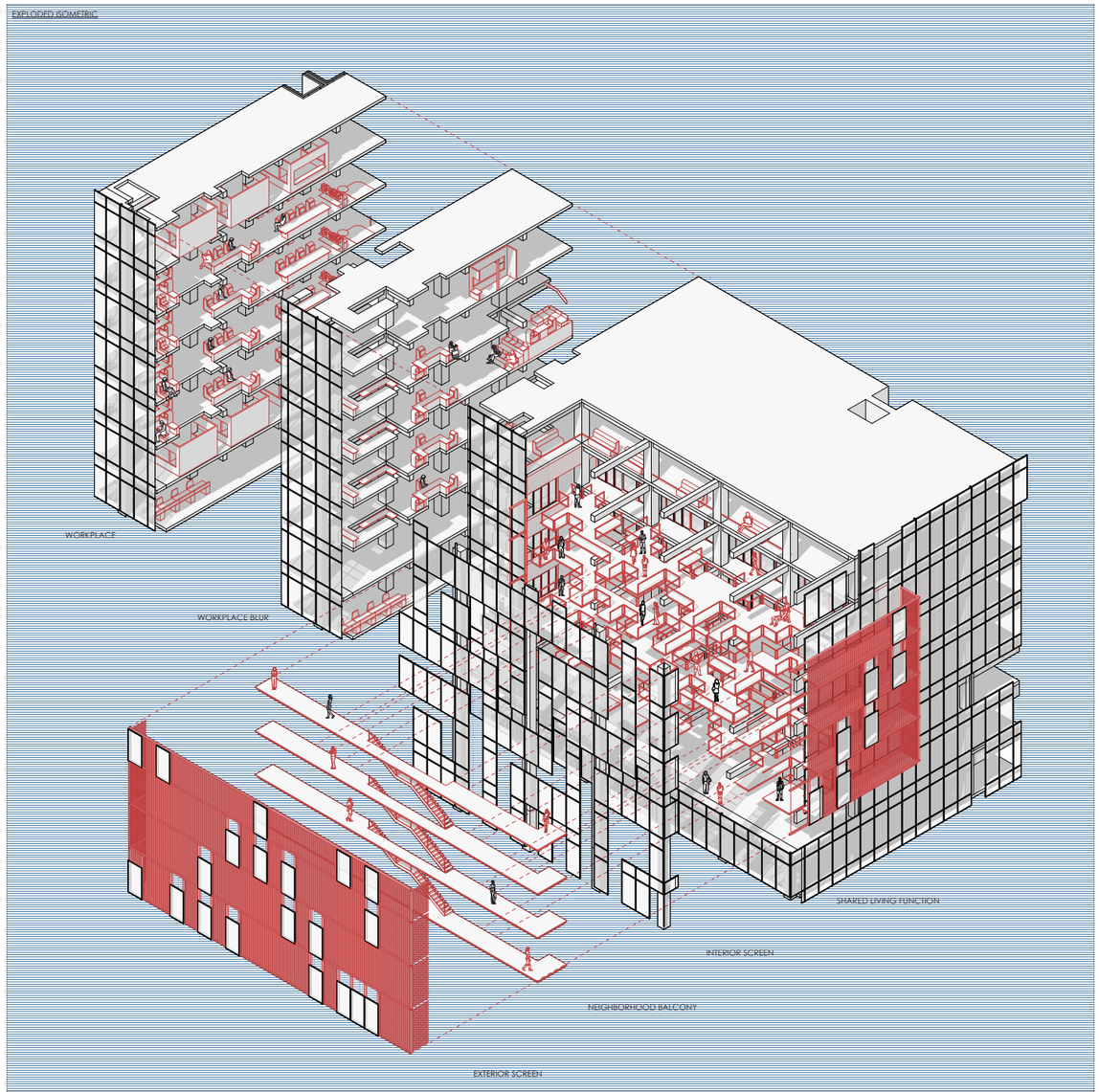
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

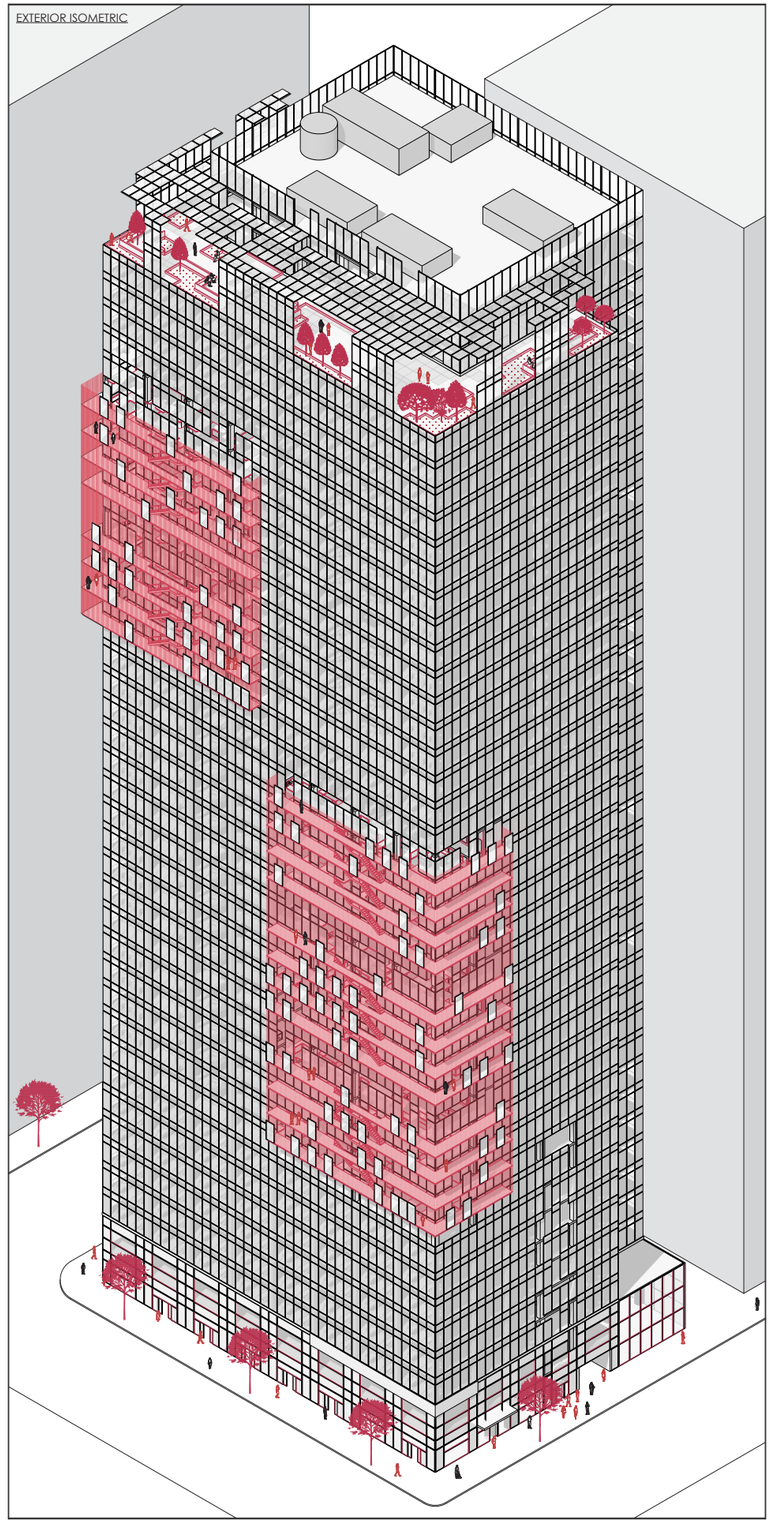


The outermost layer of the elevation shows the overall transformation of the office typology, designating the zones which a residential eruption occurs within. A portion of the removed curtain-wall elements are re-purposed as railings along the new neighborhood system of exterior balconies



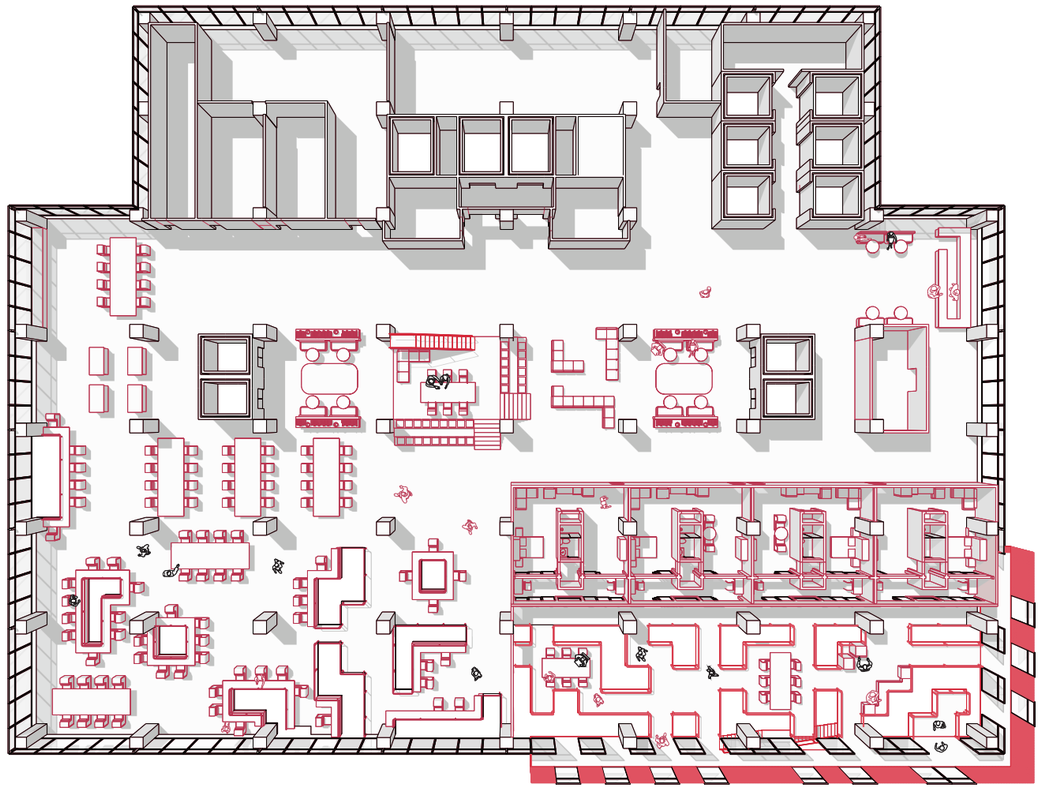
The inner layer of the facade shows the areas which portions of the existing curtain wall were removed to implement pockets of natural resources. The perforation strategy mimics the design language of the disruptions to the floor plan, and are coordinated to allow a seamless connection between the interior social scaffolding and the exterior shared balconies, forming a new idea of vertically integrated urban neighborhoods.





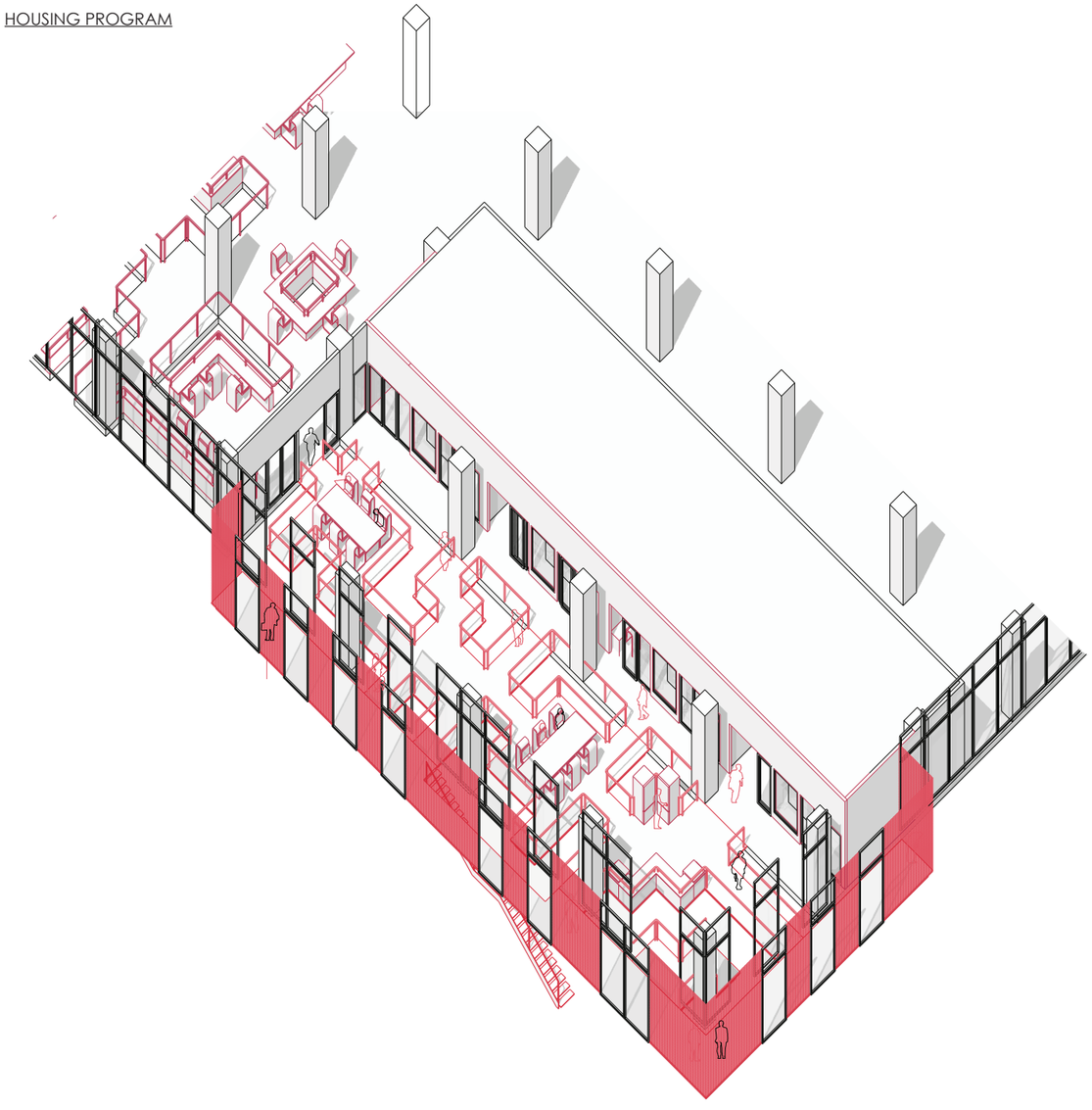
The layers of the intervention interconnect the shared living and working functions of the tower to the shared exterior balcony system, linking them together and reinforcing the concept of new micro-neighborhoods within the existing office tower. All together, these micro-neighborhoods form a dynamic internal urbanity which serves to re-imagine and revitalize the existing urbanity of the tower within the city as a whole. While the office tower previously enacted no benefit to its local context, it would now serve as a host to a new mixture of public, workplace, and residential programs, linking together the exterior and built environments.

BIRDS-EYE PERSPECTIVE



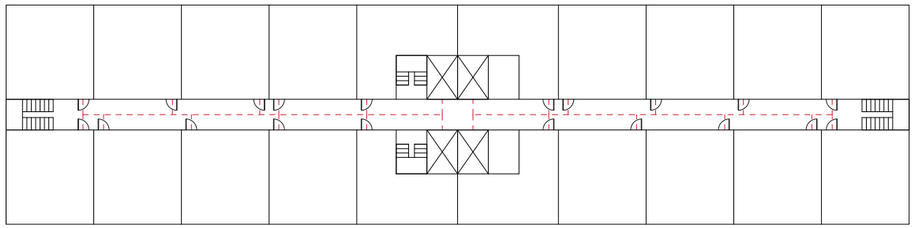
As the programs bleed into one another, each presents qualities which may benefit the other. By adding social spaces akin to domestic environments within the workplace, the interactions between the residential and office occupants are promoted. This relationship allows the workaholic-tendencies of young professionals to become embraced within an environment suited for both living and working.

HOUSING PROGRAM

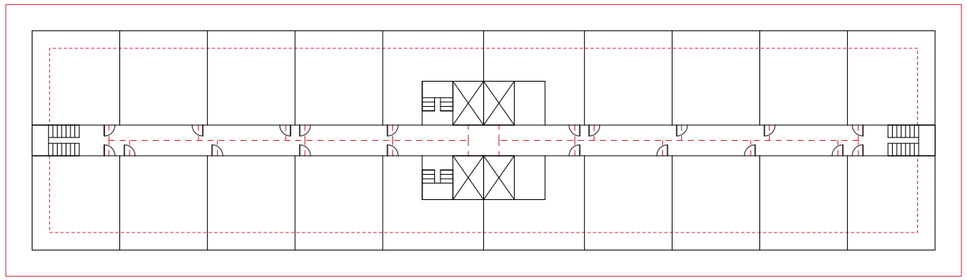


The residential insertion is designed to be an aggregated module which stitches together both the existing office horizontally, and the additional new program vertically. The social scaffolding serves as a host to the living functions of the home; the open zone of light and air is enclosed by the apartment units and the existing workplace, allowing a dispersion of the exterior into the new and existing programs.

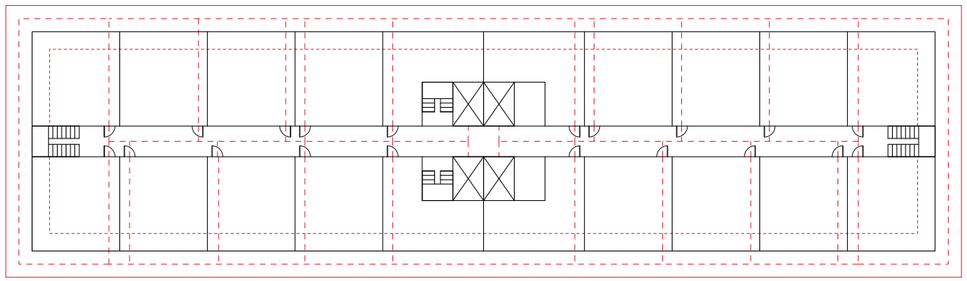
TYPOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION



ISOLATED

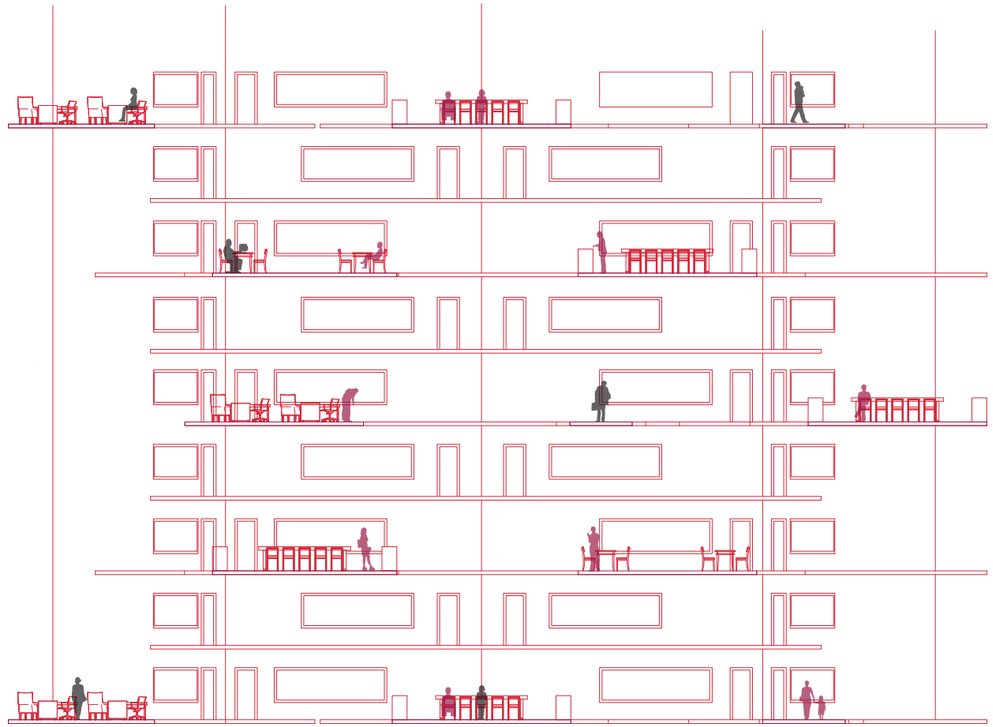


ADD BALCONY + WINTER GARDEN



INTEGRATED

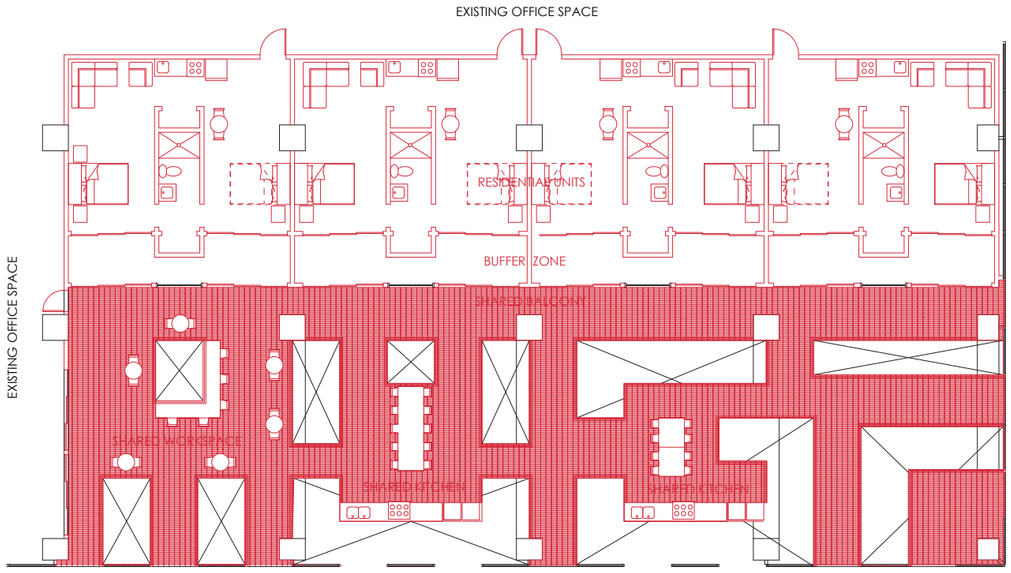
SOCIALIZED LIVING FUNCTIONS



The existing apartment typology, like its workplace counterpart, is designed in a way which yields minimal interaction between residents, only seeing your neighbors for a brief moment between the elevator and your apartment. By adding to the typology a series of shared balconies adjacent to winter gardens on the interior of each home, the flows and social interactions of the interior environment are promoted and expanded.

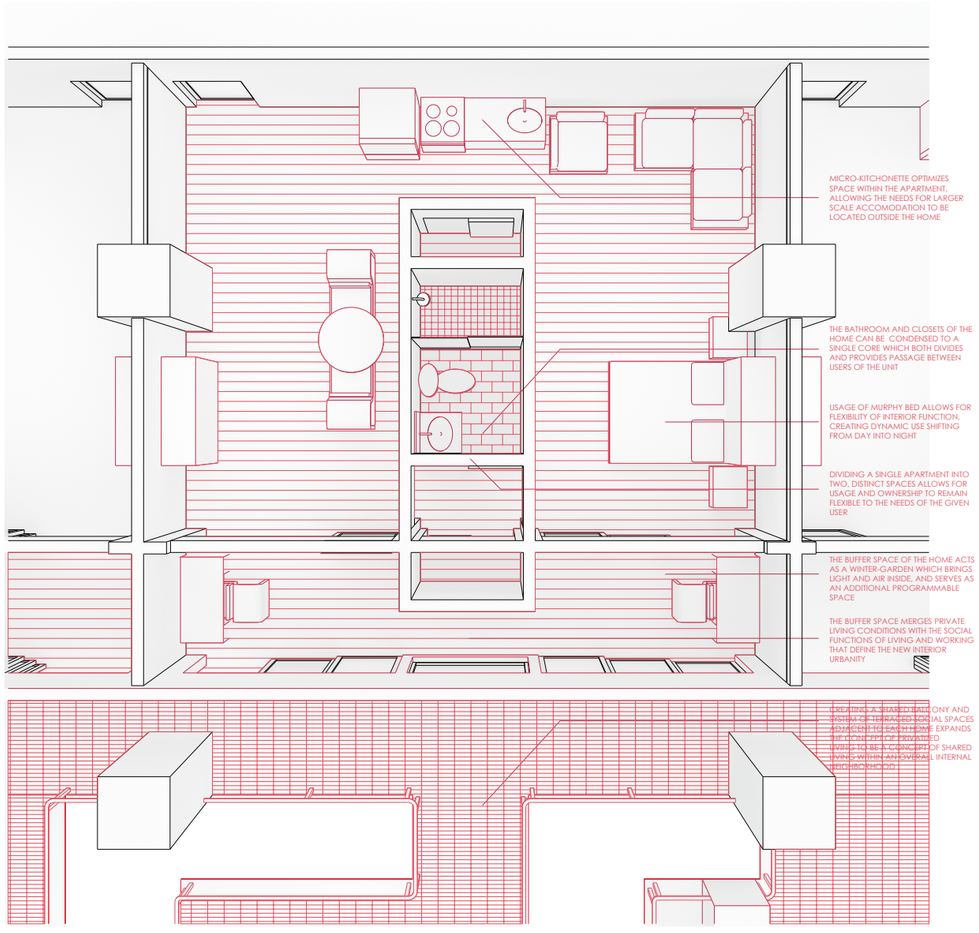
By pushing the new typology toward a more social condition, an overall awareness of the internal community is strengthened. The living and working functions of the home are shared and put on display, becoming an urban experience shared between the new inhabitants and their daily workplace guests.

RESIDENTIAL INSERTION



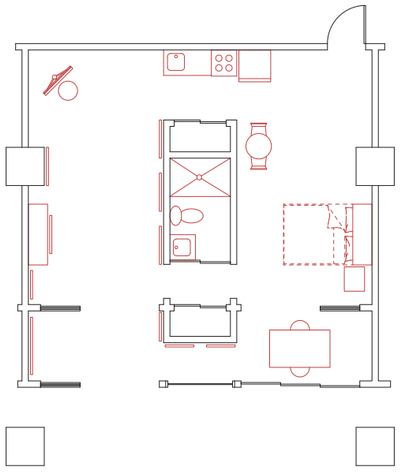
PLAN VIEW

LIVING PLAN

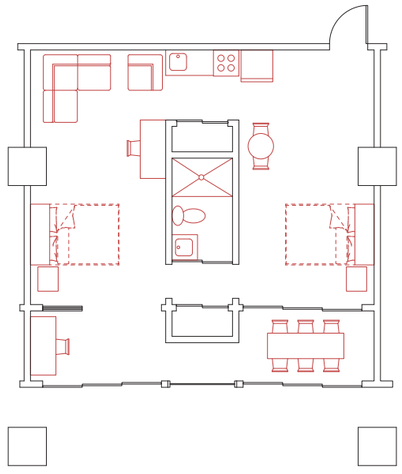


USER TYPES

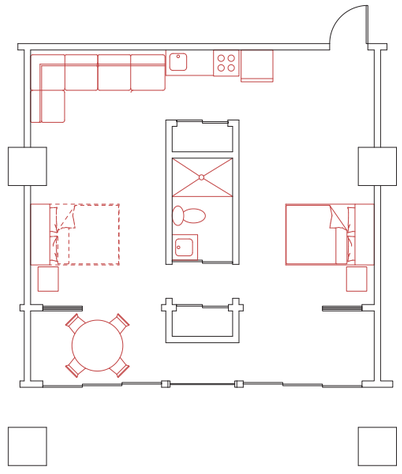
Artist
OPEN SPACE FOR PRODUCTION AND DISPLAY OF ART



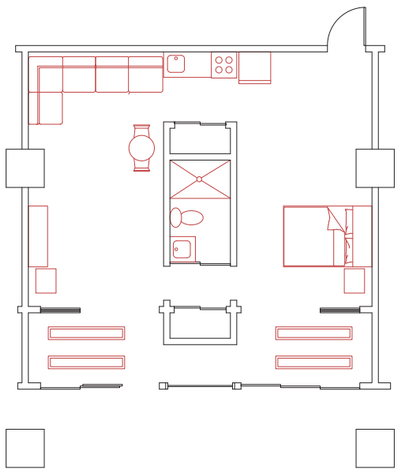
Business
EXTRA DESKS WITH CONFERENCE AND WORK SPACES



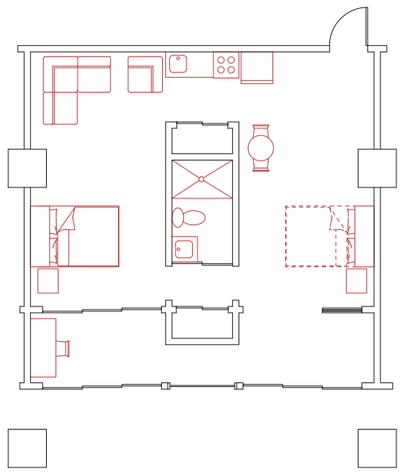
Family
DINING ROOM TABLE, LIVING ROOM, AND FLEX SPACE



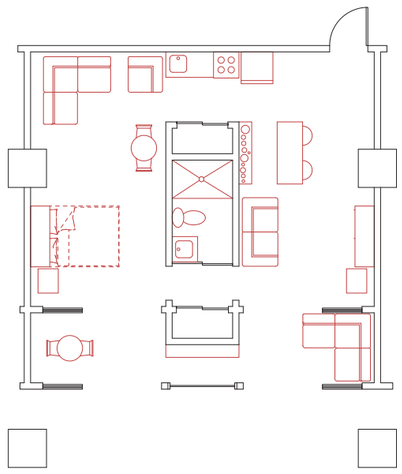
Couple
DEFINED LIVING ROOM AND USE OF WINTER GARDEN



Single Parent
EXTRA DESK INCL. SUPERVISION, ADDITIONAL FLEX SPACE

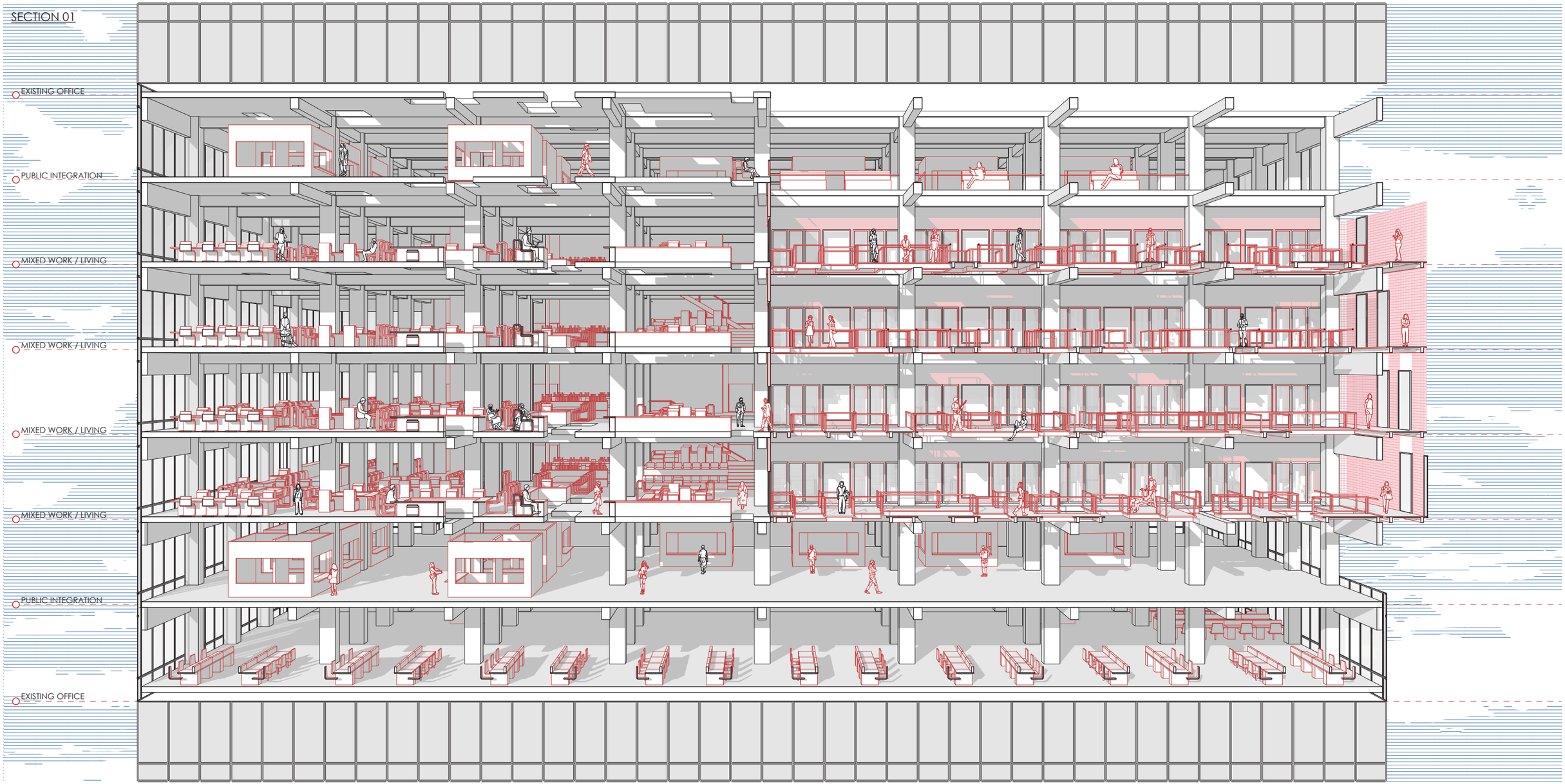


Socialite
ADDITIONAL SEATING WITH LIVING ROOM/BAR SPACE



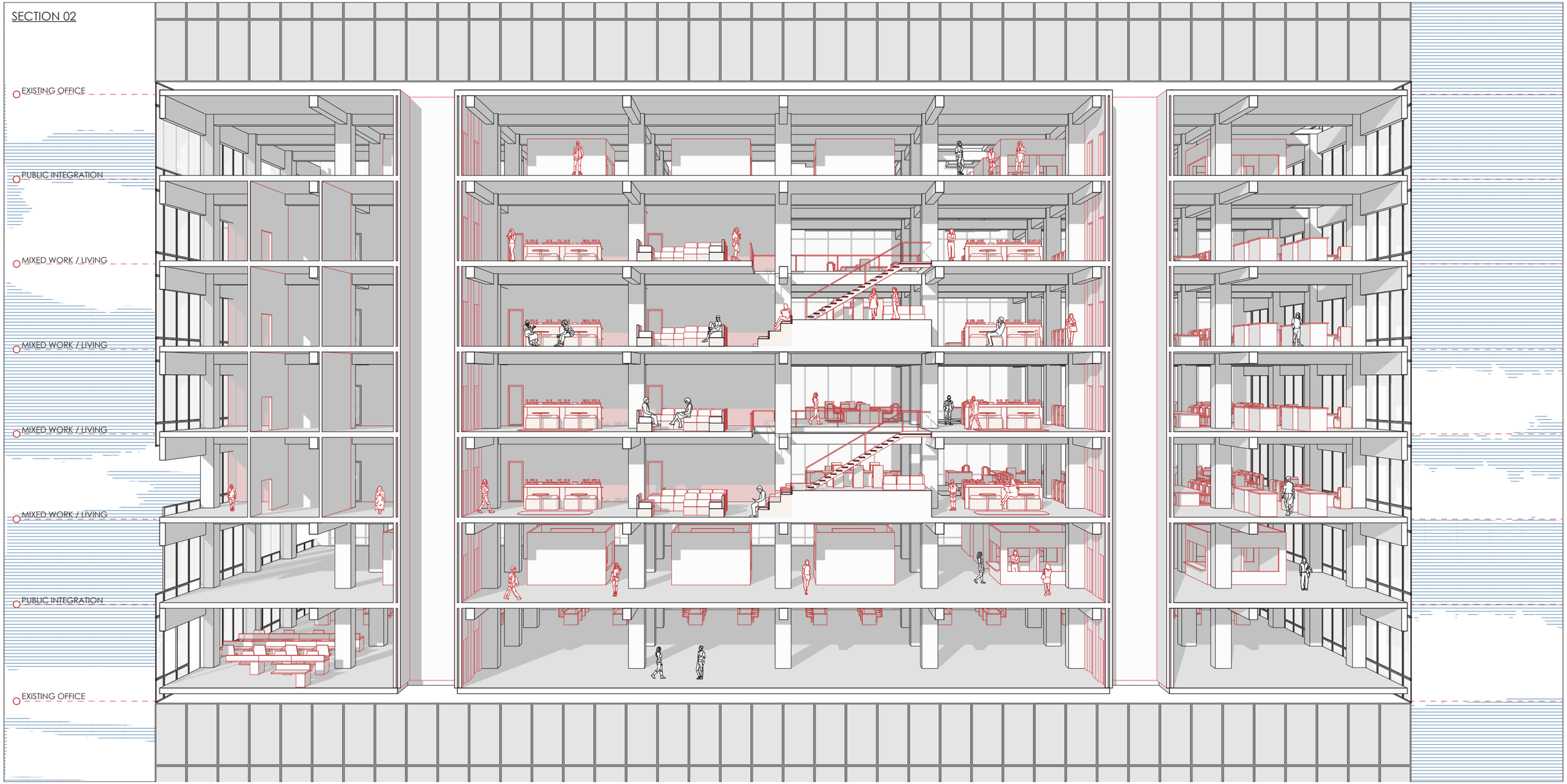
The unit plan is designed with multiple user types in mind; the 'young-professional' is no longer explicitly defined, and has a multitude of lifestyles which vary from one another. The units are designed to allow for a flexibility of these lifestyles, and for the architecture to serve as a host for the varying desires of the residents.

SECTION 01



The section cut through the social and working spaces of the design intervention shows the cross-contamination of programs which begins to occur within. The participants of the public, working, and residential programs operate within their own areas, but have their explicit boundaries blurred to harness a visual awareness of one another, serving to strengthen the shared conception of a new building community.

SECTION 02



The section cut through the back of the office space and new circulation cores shows the new vertical integration which occurs within the new design intervention. The office floors are vertically connected to one another with an additional working / social space. The food kiosks on the public levels allow for direct interactions to occur between all three spheres which operate within the new building typology.

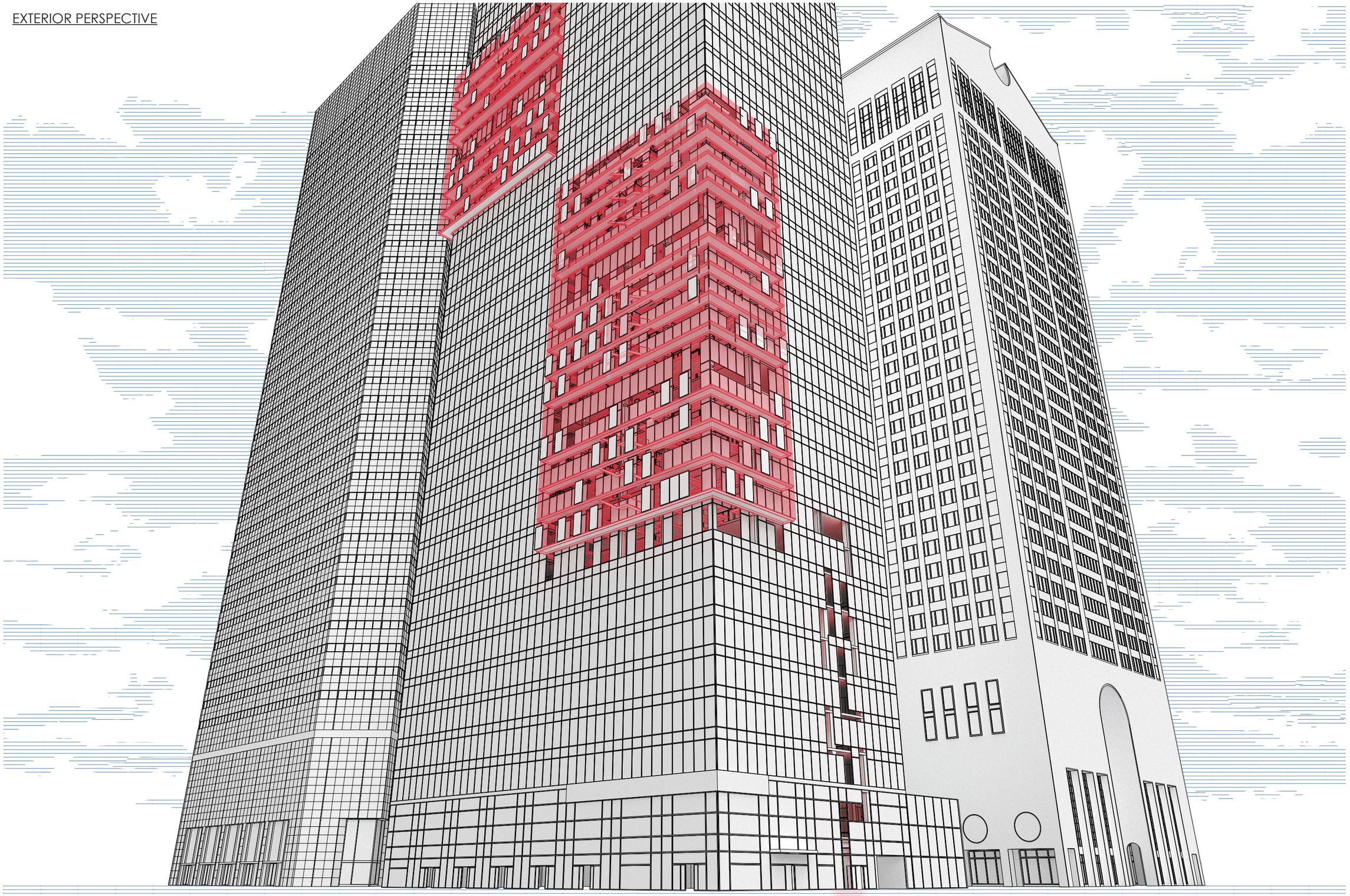
View of social scaffolding and exterior balcony which shows the intersection between residential, workplace, and public programs

View from stepping off elevator into new typology shows the ways which domestic environments already familiar to the workplace can be used to link together the new and existing programs

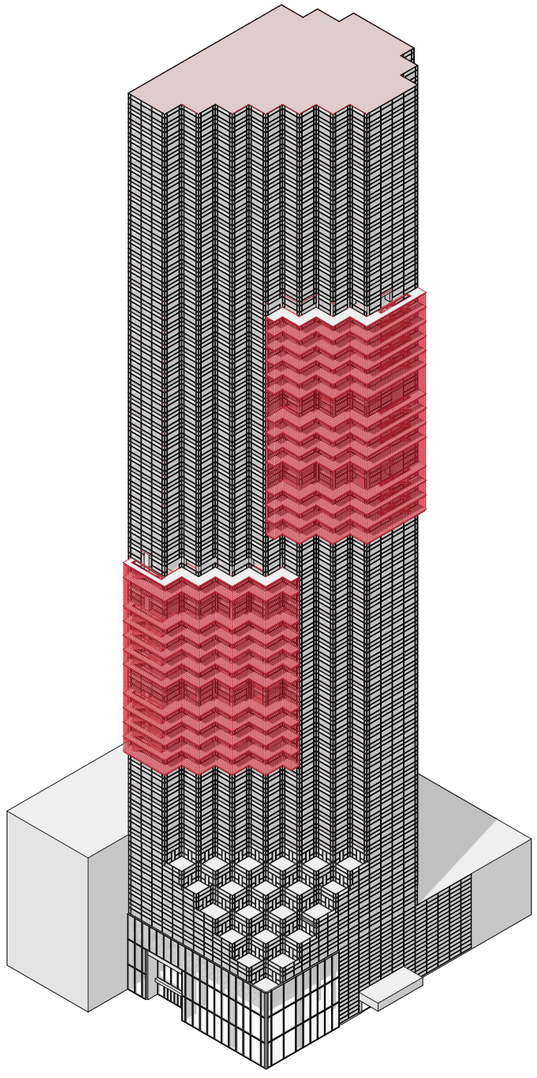
View of modified existing workplace shows the re-imagination and disruption of the office environment, and how the slab perforations socially rearrange and interconnect the floors of the tower

View from public zone shows the distinct separation of programs, but the visual awareness which exists between them, and how the pocket of natural light and air spreads into the new building typology

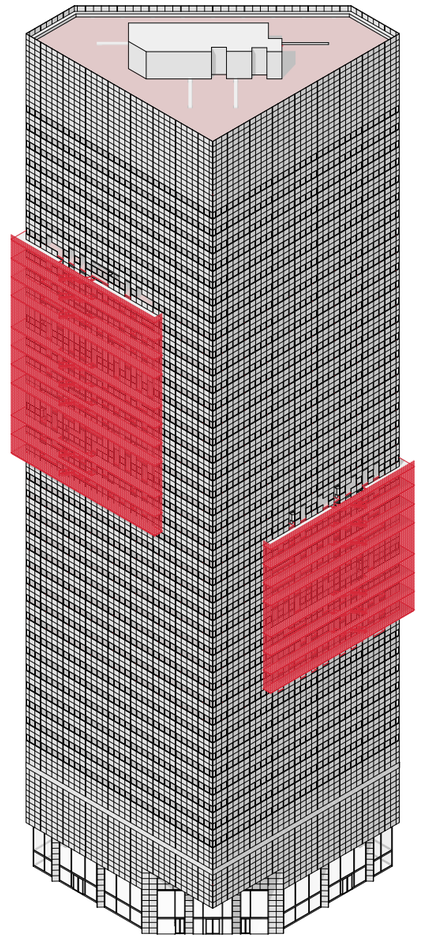
EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



TYPOLOGICAL SPREAD -
TRUMP TOWER



TYPOLOGICAL SPREAD -
IBM TOWER



As this is a typological proposal, the transformation of vacant office space can expand to be a repeatable strategy used to improve office towers across the globe.