

# Awaken the Ruins



Maximilien Rousset



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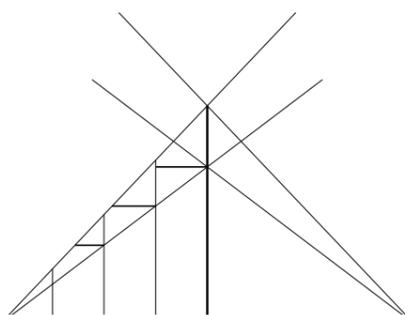
Church of Saint Etienne le Vieux in Caen, France

Maximilien Rousset

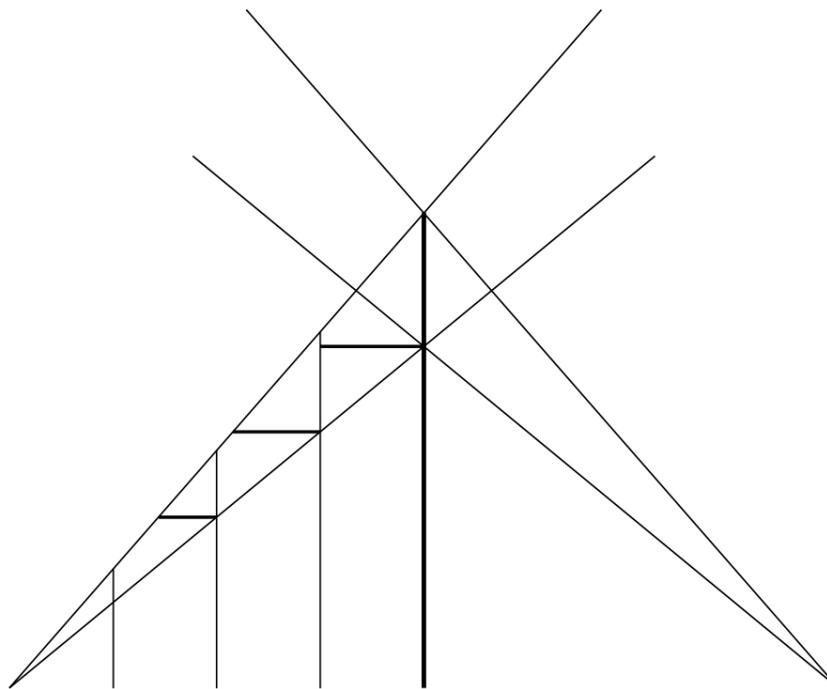
A thesis presented to the Politecnico di Milano  
in fulfilment of the thesis requirement for the  
degree of Master of Architecture

Supervisor: Elisa Cattaneo

Academic year: 2017 / 2018



*“If you focus only on the state of the ruins you miss the beautiful opportunity”*



## Acknowledgements

I would like first to thank my supervisor Elisa Cattaneo. She was always here to accompanying and to back me on my ideas. Her encouragements and advices are a big reason why this thesis have been possible.

I would like to thank Mr.Bonaparte for opening the abandoned church and sharing with me about Caen and her history.

Finally, I would like to thank my family that always been here in any circumstances, all my friends and Megan for their patience in giving me feedbacks and support. It's been a great experience and an amazing adventure that would have never been realisable without all of you.

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# The State of Architecture Today

Building type is one of the main subject one thinks about when architecture is concerned. The question here is to know whether this term still has the meaning it used to have in a popular sense nowadays. According to Le Corbusier, “building types should be thought around a human scale”. This principle was written within the Athens Charter in 1933, as part of the the modern movement CIAM. This Charter gathered the new ideas about urban building types. These theories were revolutionary at that time and knew a large success all over the world. They are the basis that allowed the architectural ideas and modern urbanism to be known worldwide, thus creating an international style. What seemed new then was in fact already inspired by a theory developed by Jean Nicolas Louis Durand at the beginning of the 19th century. He invented a sort of universal building method and appropriated economical structures. For years this functionalism in architecture was considered as a rule; an objective methodology did exist. The building types as described by the Charter of Athens found their limits on the 10th CIAM. The Team X, thus named because it was created then, wanted to show some of the precepts were wrong and that it was not possible to have rationalist and regular building types.

For the last fifty years, building types have faded away little by little. As they were created as an answer to an industrial society, they are not adapted to a commercial and ever changing one. These changes modified the vision of architecture; the way it is taught today is really evolving. That is why this “building type” question is so interesting. Architecture students are learning the various building types and architectural styles throughout history but they are not supposed to build according to them. Students have to learn from the past, from the experiences, from the experiments, from all that has been done and built but they have the opportunity to be freed from them too. Architects are supposed to be creative, to develop their own “building types”. As long as a building is imaginative and has a true meaning, it can be taken seriously and find its place in our society today. This new freedom does, however, have limits. If architecture creates the city, the city still influences architecture. Architecture should still follow some rules - we need to be aware of the urban and social structure that surrounds us. We have to take into account the thematic, height and scale. We also need to integrate the true substance of the cities. Iconic, like Venice. Economic like New York. Powerful like London. But what made these cities what they are today? Architecture and building types.

Today, architectural types are beginning to disappear and the rules established by the Chart of Athens are forgotten. Le Corbusier used to say, “As a car is a machine for driving and an airplane is a machine for flying, a house is a machine for living in”. Architecture was centred on the user. This is why architectural types were developed according to needs. Since 1990, experimentation and research have played a more significant role. There is a new expression (or a return to a certain type of expression): architects are artists that do not only offer architecture to live in but also architecture to think about. Imposed architectural typologies are no longer the basis. Architects, in particular “Starchitects”, express themselves with their news assets. There is no longer the same reliance on context, in an ever-changing world. Even when a new building method is considered “trendy” today, it does form a new building type in the way that it used to.

This thesis takes a certain stance: there is too much freedom, and not enough consideration of reasonable boundaries within the architectural field. Because of this, countries and cities are losing their identity. I argue that some rules and specific shapes are meant to be followed, or at least respected. You used to be able to recognize the function of a building just by seeing the exterior morphology. Today architects and artists are starting to apply their own rules - they want the morphology of the buildings to look like *them* and not like any typology. Following this, you will recognize a “Santiago Calatrava” building, a “Frank Gehry” building, a “Zaha Hadid” building, but not a school, a museum or a church. While this is not inherently problematic, there is some middle ground to be found. This project is proposing an alternative - to respect the past while moving to the future.

Historical



Historical train station by Ulisse Stacchini in Milan, Italy

Contemporary



Modern train station by Santiago Calatrava in Lyon, France



Historical Cathedral ( Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Chartre)



Modern Cathedrale by Archistudio in Creteil, France

# The State of of the Sacred Today (in Europe)



30 000 churches in France



308 abandoned churches



400 churches destroyed in 10 years

## The Death of Christianity

Christianity in Europe is dying out, and it has been for some time. Churches are emptying, they can't be maintained and many are sold or abandoned. Churches are an integral part of European, and in this case, French, history. They have symbolic meaning to many, and are part of a national identity. In 2017, it was recorded that less than 5% of the French population go to the church (IFOP). Only 7% of this population are going to church every Sunday, in comparison with 40% in 1960. There are roughly 30 000 churches in France. Of these religious buildings, 400 have been destroyed in the past 10 years and a further 308 are currently abandoned. There is a tendency to destroy the existing, to build something new instead of exploiting the existing structures at our disposition.

## The Lost Power of the Church, The Lost Opportunity

A city may be somewhat banal, but a picturesque church often acts as a catalyst for activity and a scenic attraction. An excellent example of this is was Eglise de Gesté in the small town of Gesté in France (shown below). Aesthetically the city has little to offer, but the cathedral (which is now mostly demolished) was a point of pride, a sight worth travelling miles to see. The people of Gesté noted that the church gave honour and importance to the town. Today, only the tower is maintained, and an insensitive circular construction takes the place of the old cathedral building. The town has lost this important symbol. This is one of countless cases where religious buildings which helped shape the country of France are left to decay to the point of ruin in order to warrant demolition.

## Approach to Counter This Occurrence

This thesis is an attempt to work with a ruin, to revive and rehabilitate a chosen church in Caen (234km from Paris) a contemporary way. This is done respectfully and with careful consideration of the existing. The old is used to inform the new, while progressing in terms of creating something usable. As there is clear evidence of the shift away from religion, a secular use is proposed.



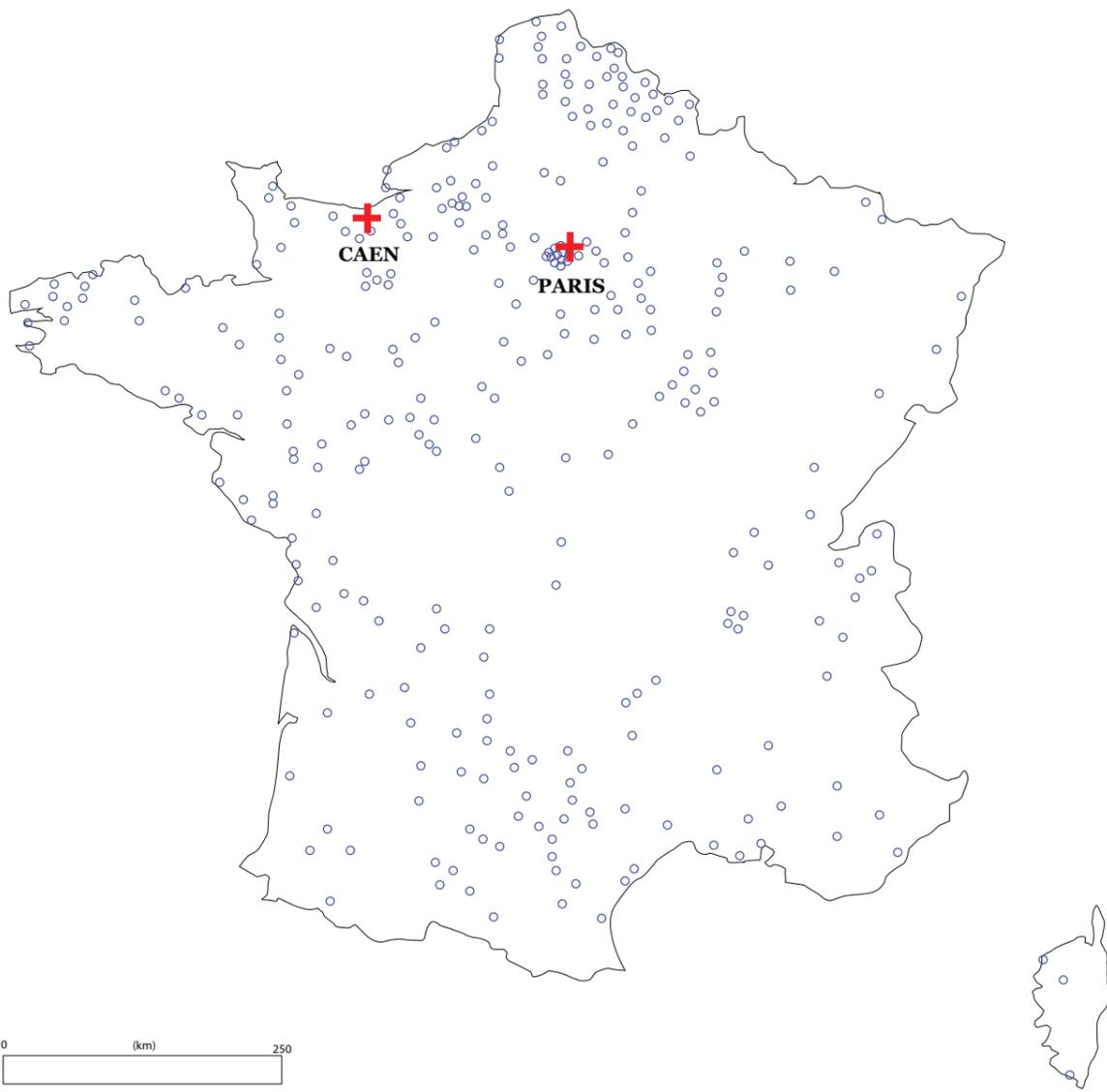
Eglise de Gesté before



Eglise de Gesté after



Chapelle Notre-dame de Lozari  
 La chapelle San Michele de Pietralba  
 Chapelle sainte-Marie-Madeleine

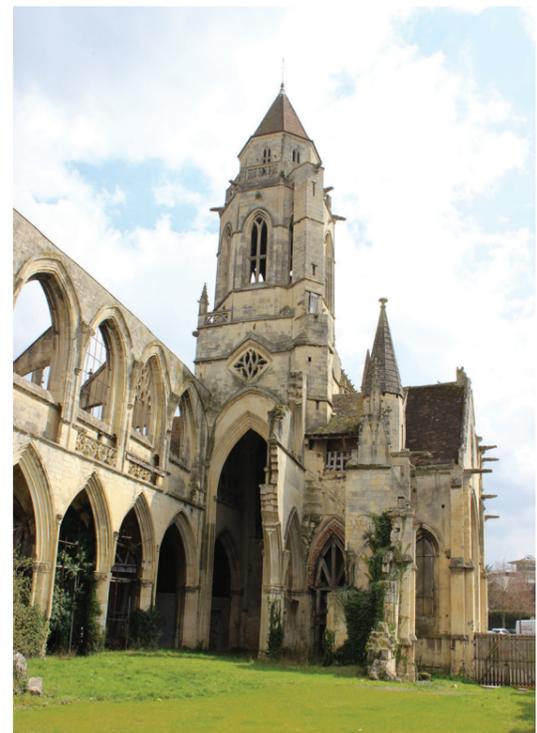
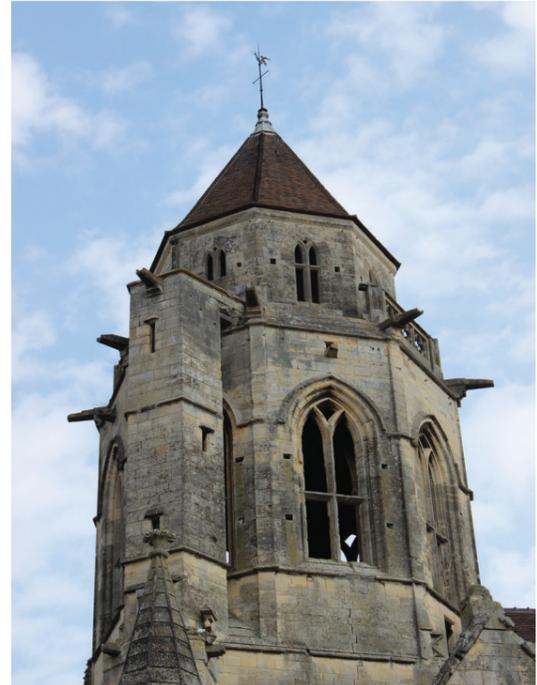


Location of 308 Abandoned Churches Mapped in France

# Church of Saint Etienne le Vieux



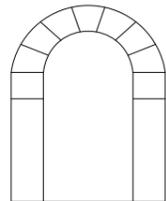
Extensive research of France's abandoned churches resulted in the choice to work on one specific structure, the Eglise Saint Etienne Le Vieux in Caen in the North of France. The partially destroyed church has been abandoned for over 70 years. During Second World War, the fighting and especially the bombing in Caen generated the death of more than 2000 people. This also resulted in the destruction of a large part of the city. The geographer Romain Stepkow says that a third of the city of Caen was destroyed by bombs. This conclusion leans on hundreds of hours spent to stack photos and cadastral maps. The Eglise Saint Etienne Le Vieux was partly destroyed during the Second World War, and since then the church has not been touched.



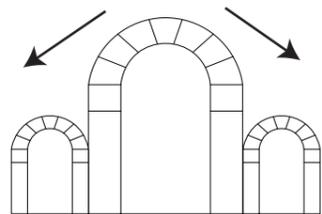
The structure is a beautiful, interesting, gothic, 11-15th century church. Before commencing with the design aspect of the project, a close study of church structures, the role of religion and how this was expressed structurally, was completed. To understand how Gothic churches worked, they were compared to the previous movement, Roman. This particular Gothic church has a unique slanted angle, and is very small - 20m by 50m. The whole Southern portion of the nave, and its roof, have been destroyed. The core of the church remains covered with a roof and still has most of its stained glass windows. Many of the buildings in the city of Caen are ancient, heritage buildings, meaning destruction is not possible. Currently many of these buildings are being worked on, with huge financial investments. It is possible to hypothesize that this church was never restored or rehabilitated, because of the competition for funding by a large number of on-going heritage buildings in Caen, which require extensive finances eg. the 3 million euros invested in Eglise Saint Pierre.

# Analysis of Roman Churches

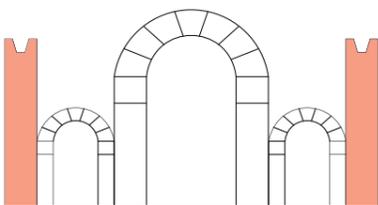
Roman churches were built between 1050 and 1150. Roman architecture is massive and low because of the heavy the vault and a heavy roof. It can just be supported by very thick walls and reinforced by buttress and it doesn't go too high up. Since the walls are carrying all along, there cannot be large open window - therefore the church remains in relative darkness.



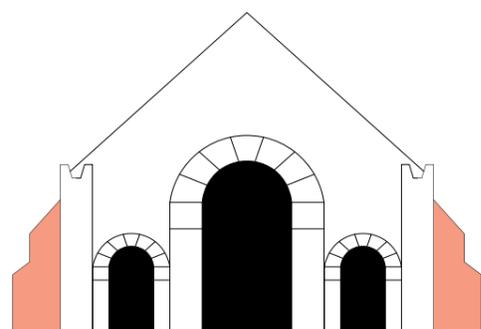
Barrel vault



Forced direct to the edges



Buttress



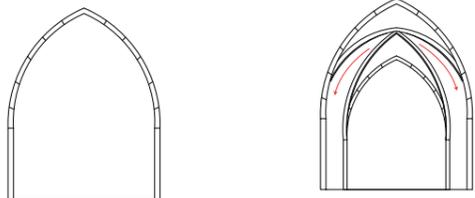
Reinforcement



Small pierced windows, so small amount of light

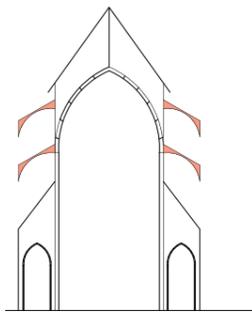
# Analysis of Gothic Churches

During the Gothic times (roughly between 1200 and 1600), churches could be built very high if the stones were of good quality. The walls were "opened" with big windows and as many stained glass windows as desired could be created - the walls were veiled, filled curtains. A pillar forest was created to hold the whole structure together. In proportion to the general size of the church building, the columns are extremely thin. These pillars were used to support arced vaults - the warp crossings carried the weight and canalized and distributed it onto the columns.

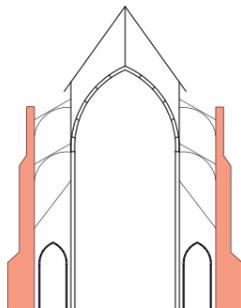


Bow in warheads

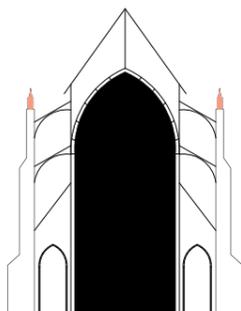
Vaults in warheads/ Force directed towards the columns



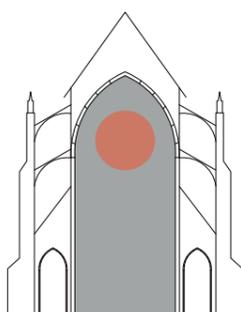
Arc-buttress



Pillar abutment

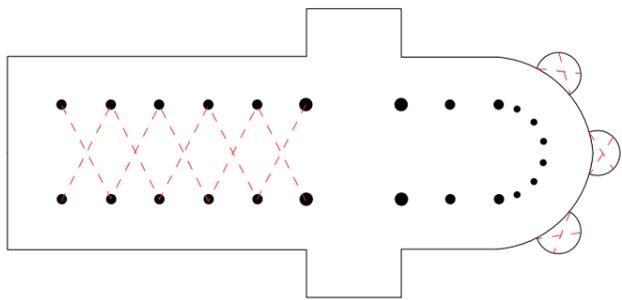


Church pinad

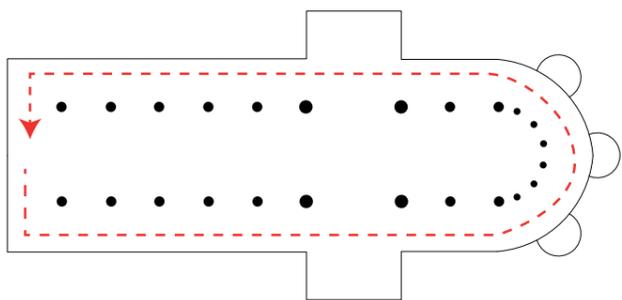


Big windows pierced, so a lot of light gets in

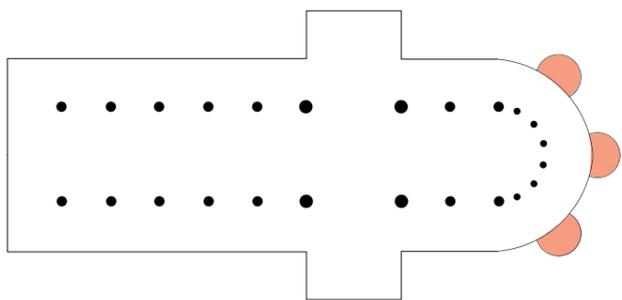
# Analysis of a Basic Church Layout



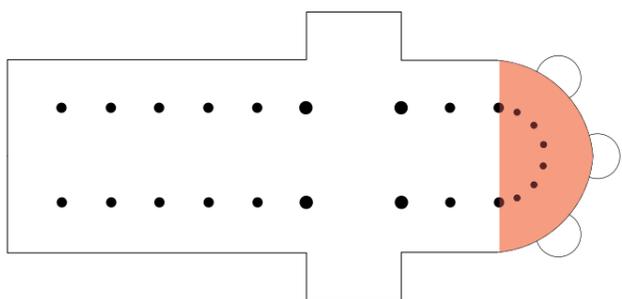
No movement



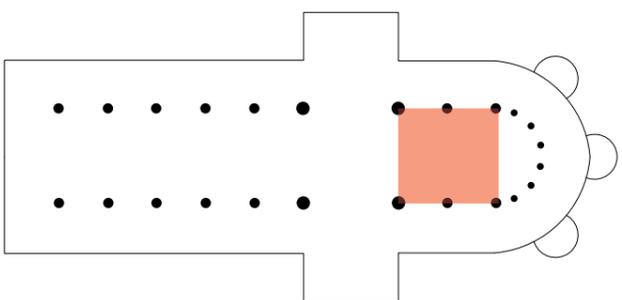
Circulation



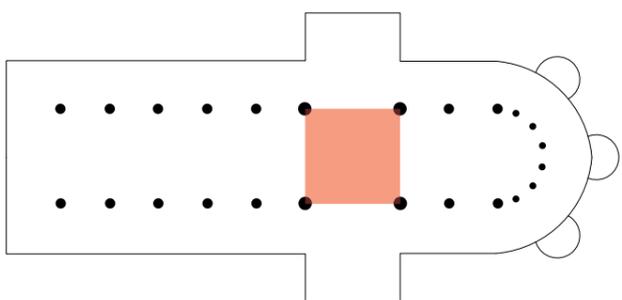
Three Chapels



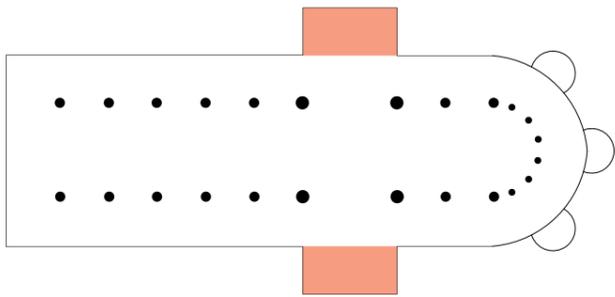
Abse



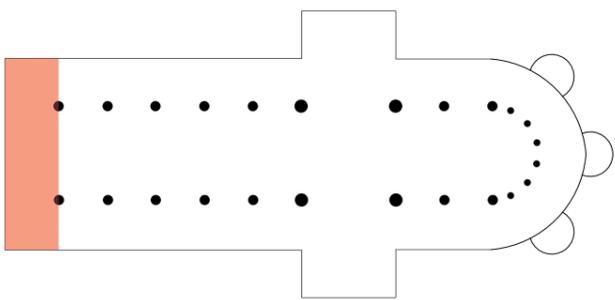
Heart



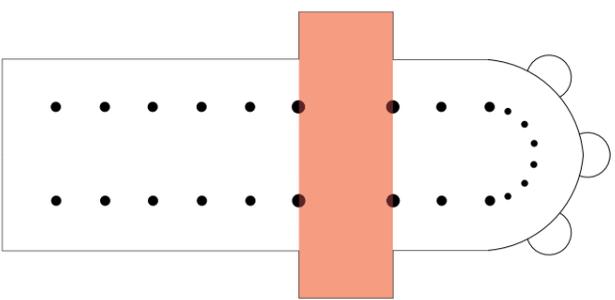
Transept Cross



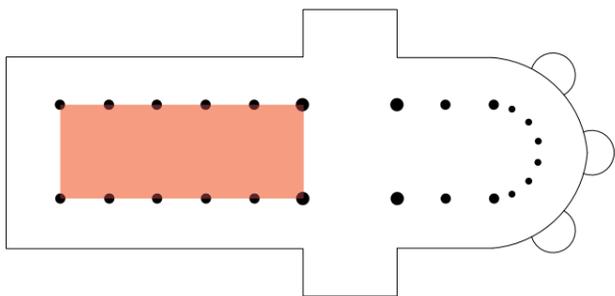
Transept edges particularly to get the church shape



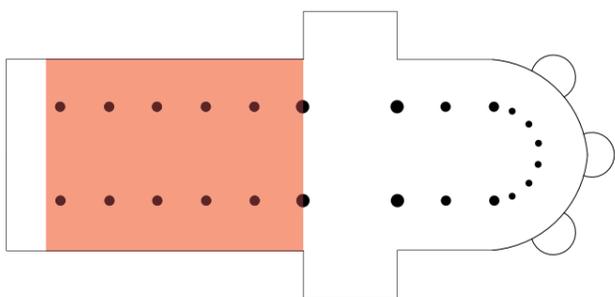
Nave



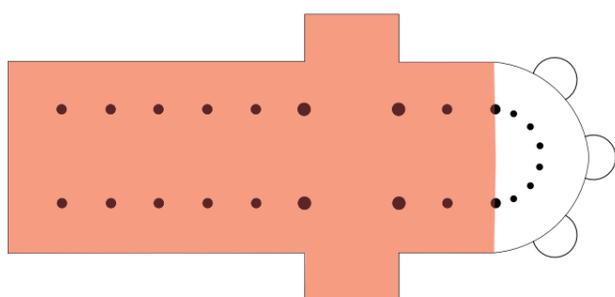
Transept



Nave / New Seats



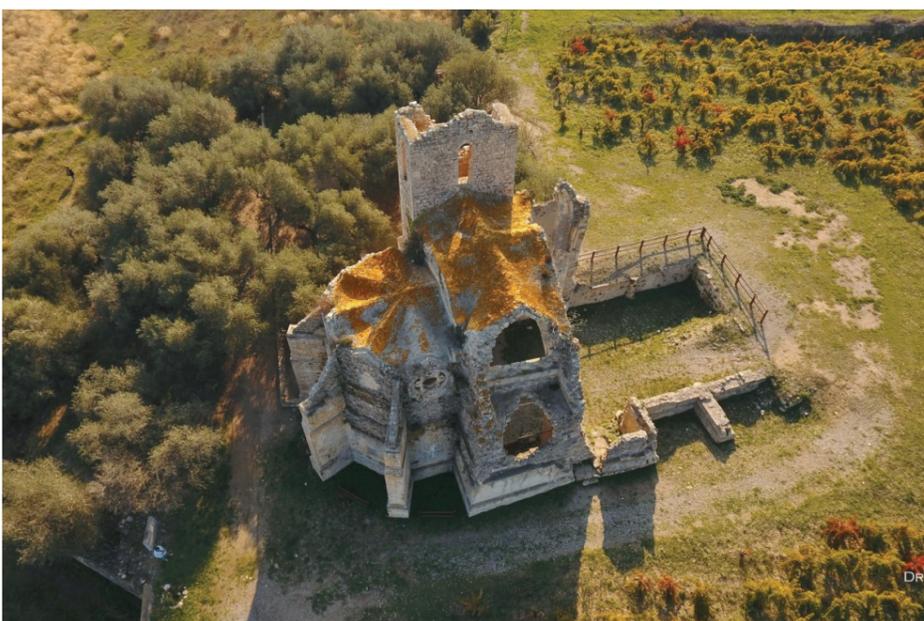
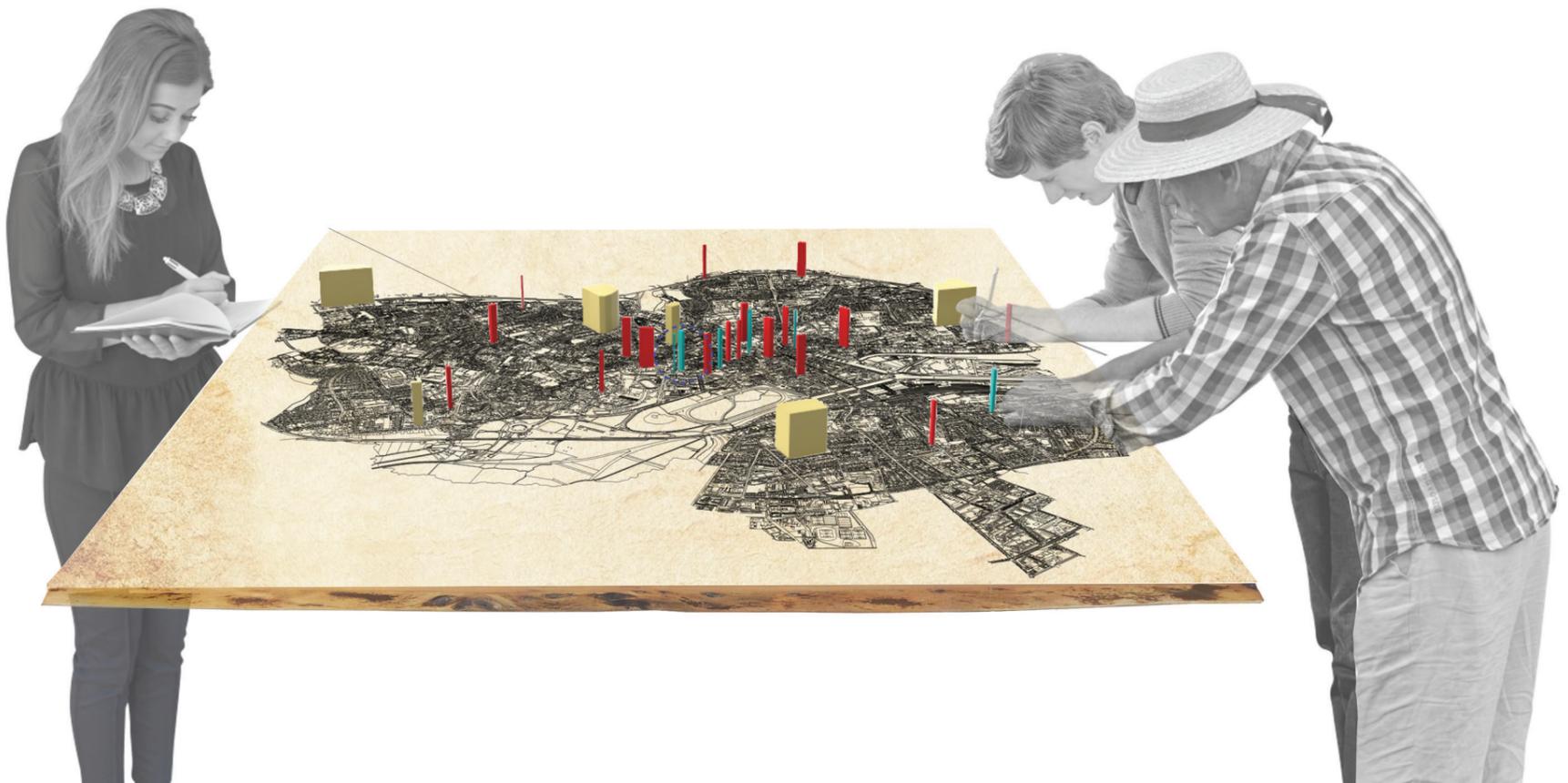
Nave



Symbolic cross shape

# Location of Site

Caen also called the city of a 100 bell towers - it has an impressive number of religious places, especially linked to the Christian faith. In the image of Caen below, we can see all the churches mapped in red, the abandoned churches mapped in blue, and the cemeteries in yellow - all surrounding the chosen site. Within the city of Caen, Eglise Saint Etienne Le Vieux is located centrally, and it is very easy to access it. For this reason, it is easy to imagine that a new purpose or program will have ample support due to its strategic location. The two maps to the right show the various transport connections in the city - the first image showing the new tram line (2019) connecting the core of the city and passing alongside the church. The second image shows all the current transport lines in Caen, clearly revealing how well-connected and well-located the site is. For comparison, Notre Dame des Oubiels in Portel des Corbières is shown below. This is another beautiful ruin church, located in Southern France, that was considered as an intervention site. While beautiful and full of potential, it does not offer the same possibilities as a structure located within a city fabric such as Eglise Saint Etienne Le Vieux is, it cannot necessarily offer a daily use and might be disregarded or unused.



Notre Dame des Oubiels - Portel des Corbières



Eglise Saint Etienne Le Vieux - Caen



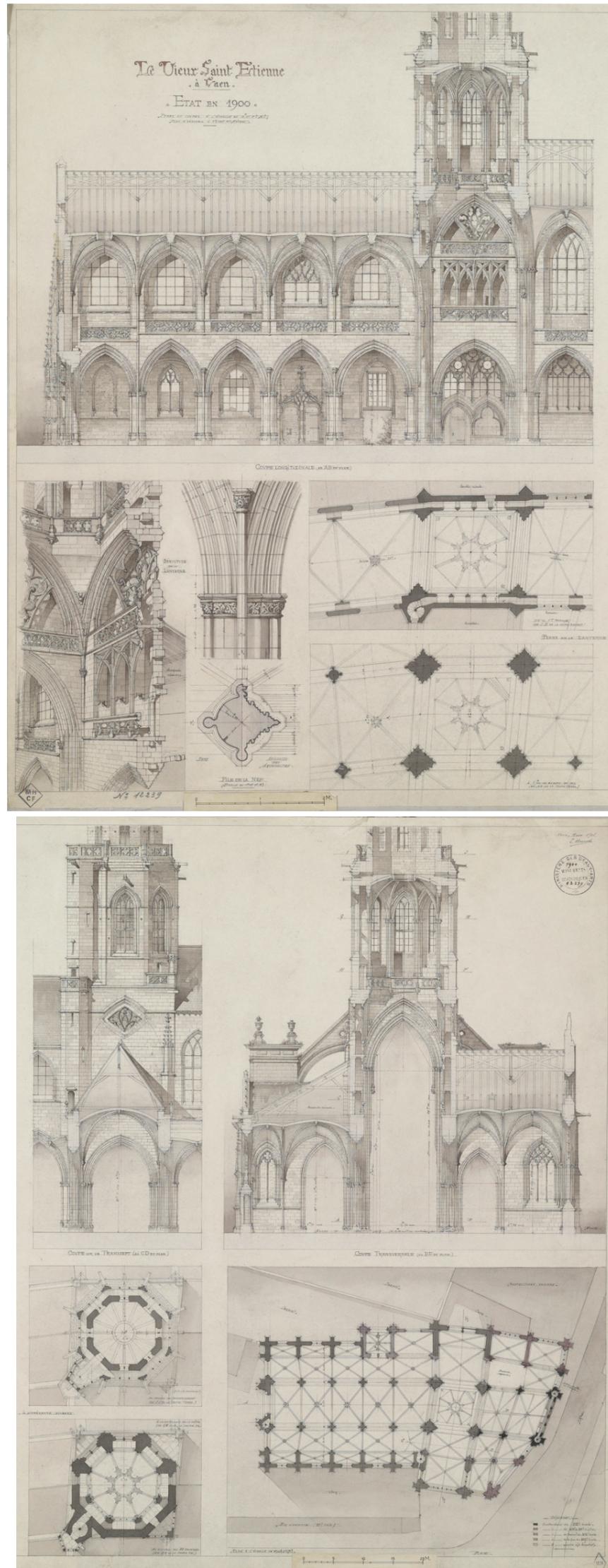
The site in relation to the future tram line connecting the core of the city



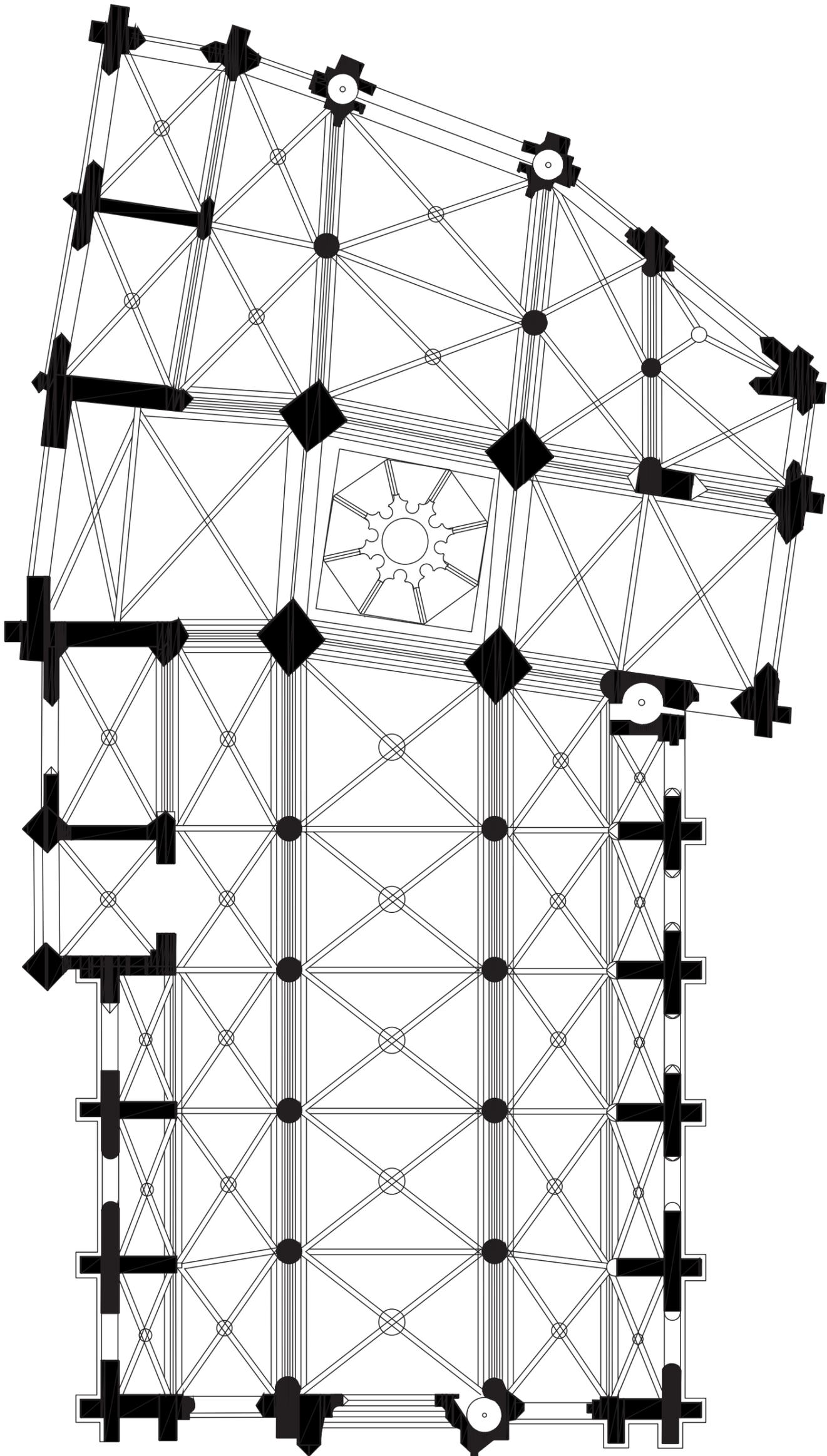
The site in relation to all the current transport lines

# Study of Existing Church

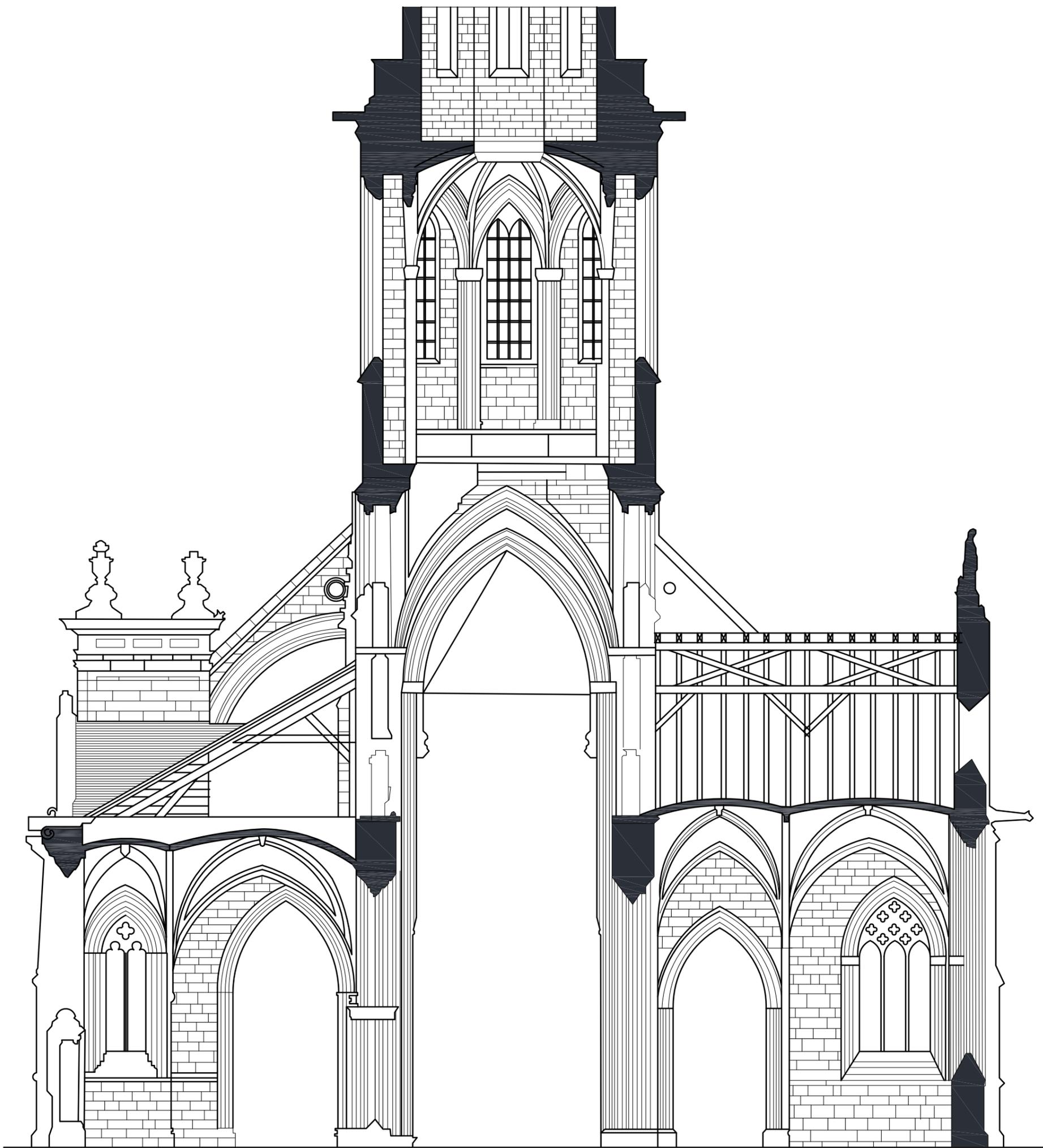
In order to fully understand something, an architect often needs to draw it. The re-drawing process is an education in and of itself. Based on the original drawings in a low-quality format (shown below) I undertook to the detailed re-drawing of the main plan, elevation and section of Eglise Saint Etienne to better understand the structure and inform my design choices. This study allowed me to gain a close understand of the forms, to continue to work with sensitivity.



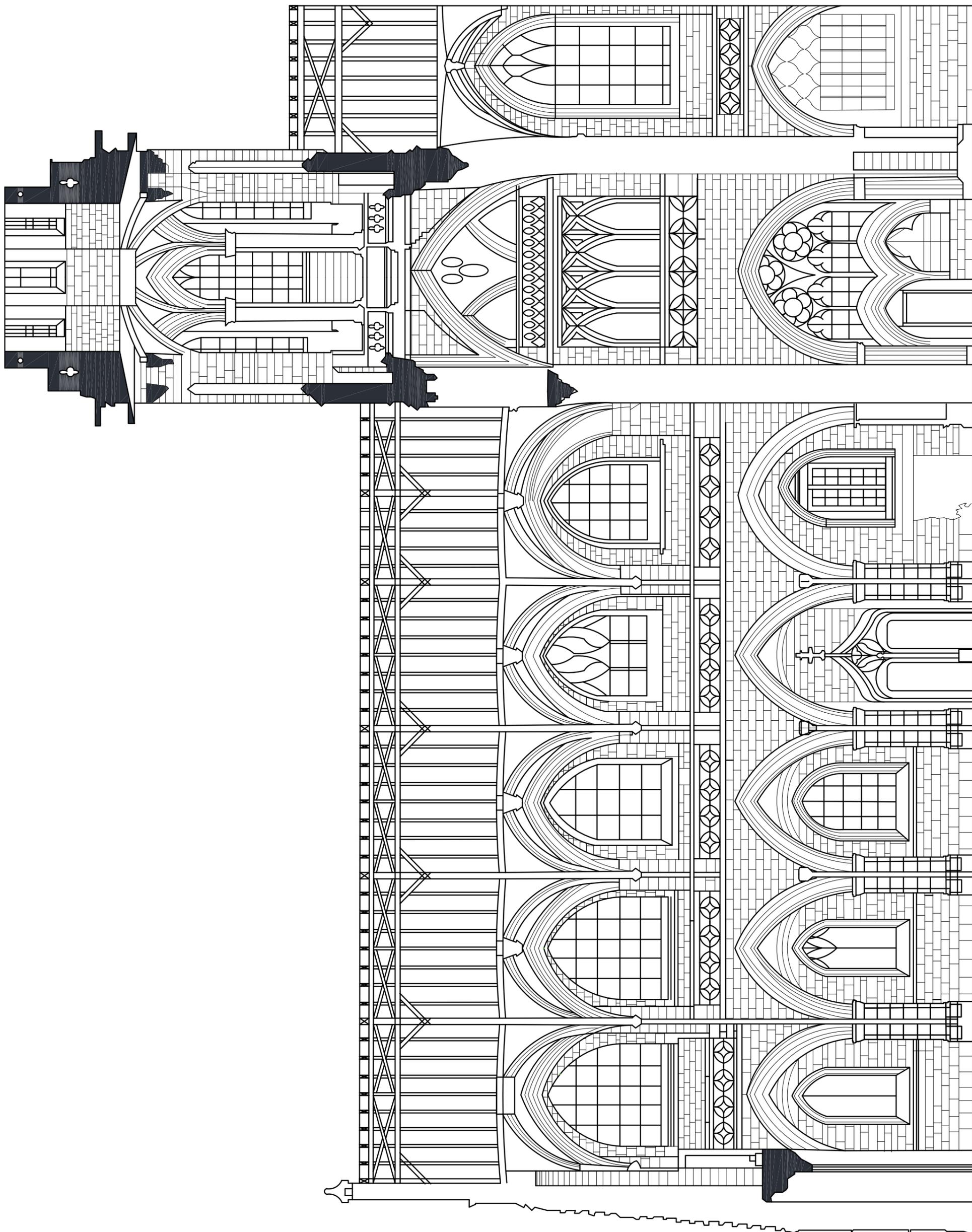
# Re-Drawn Existing Plan



# Re-Drawn Existing Section

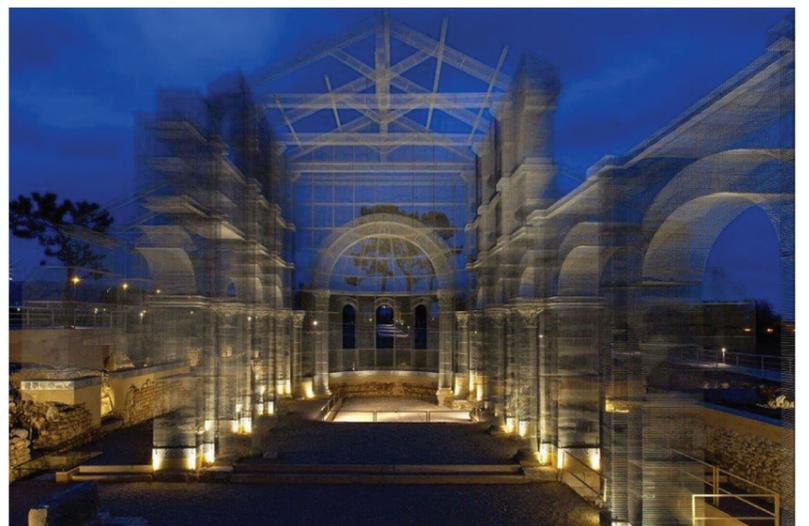


# Re-Drawn Existing Elevation



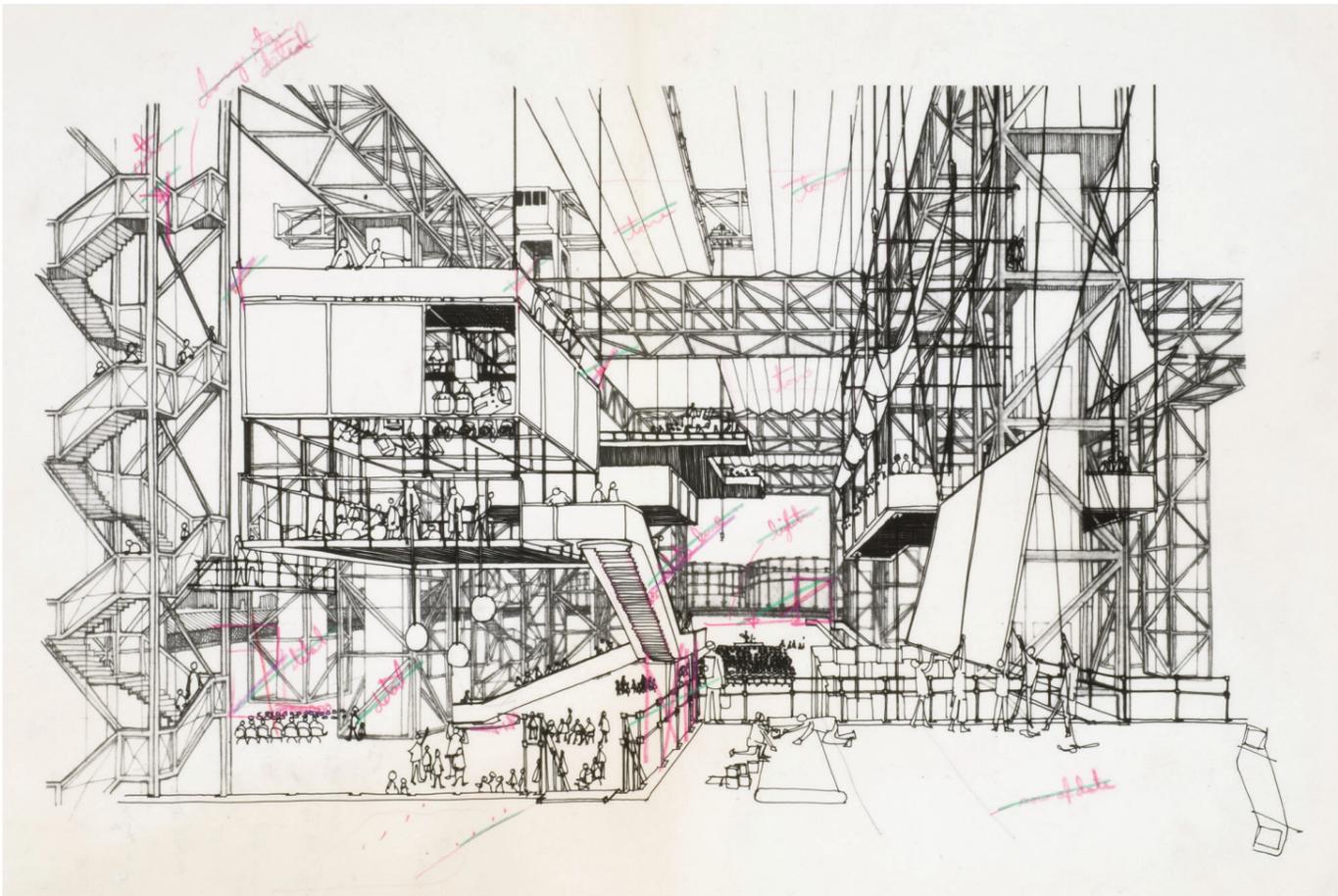
# Sacred References

Dealing with a sacred building, it was important to consult references of a similar nature. Three projects were particularly inspiring and influential: the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Chartres in Chartres, France, Edoardo Tresoldi's Santa Maria di Siponto in Manfredonia in Southern Italy and statues within the Kostel Svateho Jiri (St. George's Church) in the Czech Republic. The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral informed the idea of creating a pilgrimage within a sacred space. The chosen design may not have a sacred purpose, but it references the idea of ascension and passage, linked with the Christian faith. Edoardo Tresoldi's Santa Maria di Siponto in Manfredonia, is an excellent example of referencing the past in a contemporary way. Finally, the life-sized ghosts sculpted by Jakub Hadrava sitting in the pews of the abandoned church in Lukova allowed this space to "come alive" once again. A series of disasters over the years led to church to a state of disrepair. To many the church was a cultural monument of the Czech Republic, and they wanted to save it, but there was no funding available for this. The church was revived after the ghost sculptures were introduced - the "ghost church" made it into the international press, attracted tourists and funds were raised to help preserve and restore the old building. The roof was repaired, and the structure secured and the people of Lukova have returned to worship again inside, sitting among the "ghosts" who saved their church from destruction. In terms of formal development within the church, the Japanese architect Fujimoto's spindly bus stop in Krumbach, Austria was an inspiration. Cedric Price's Fun Palace, was also influenced contemporary architects and artists such as Richard Rogers and Rem Koolhaas, was also considered.



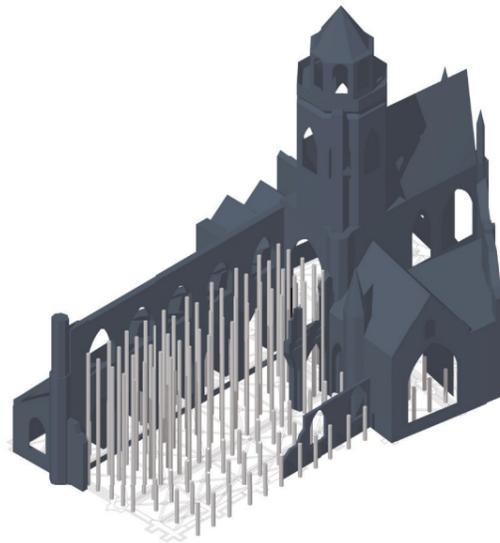
Top left: Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, Top right: Tresoldi's Santa Maria di Siponto, Bottom: Ghost Church of Lukova, Czech Republic

# Precedent Studies

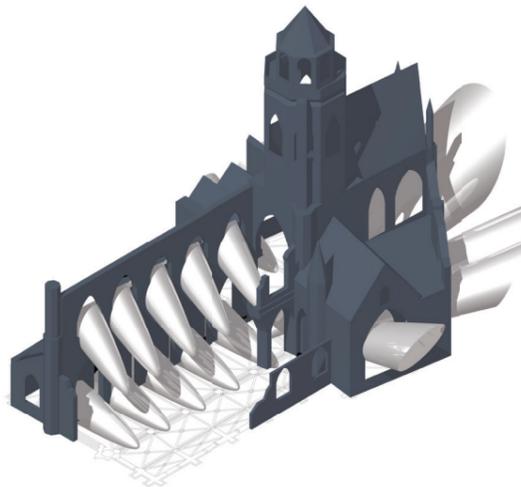


Above: Bus Shelter by Fujimoto, Below: Fun Palace by Cedric Price

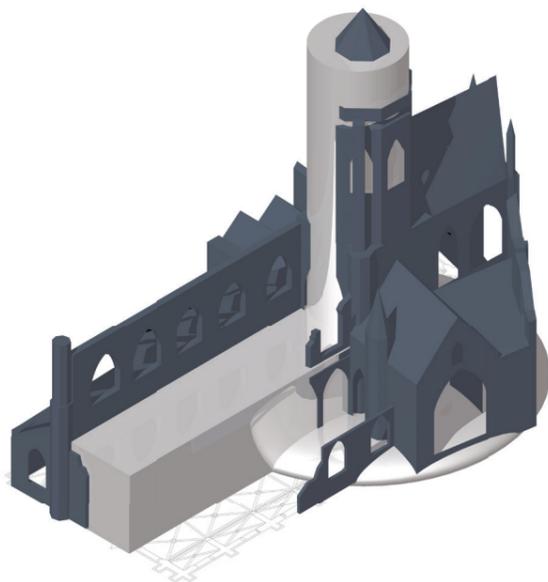
# Analysis of Church



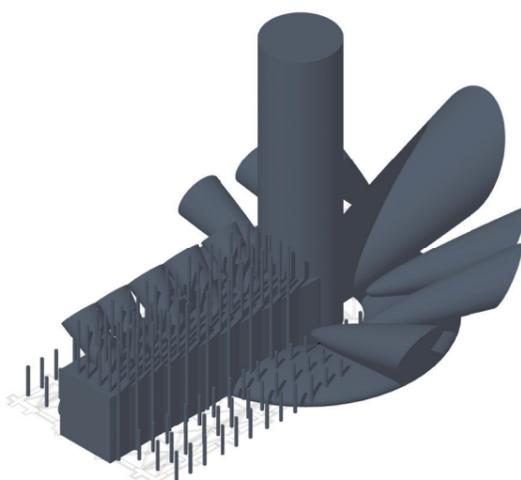
Sound Movement



Light Entering the Church



Circulation in the Core and Towards God



Compilation of Analysis

# Development of Programme & Form

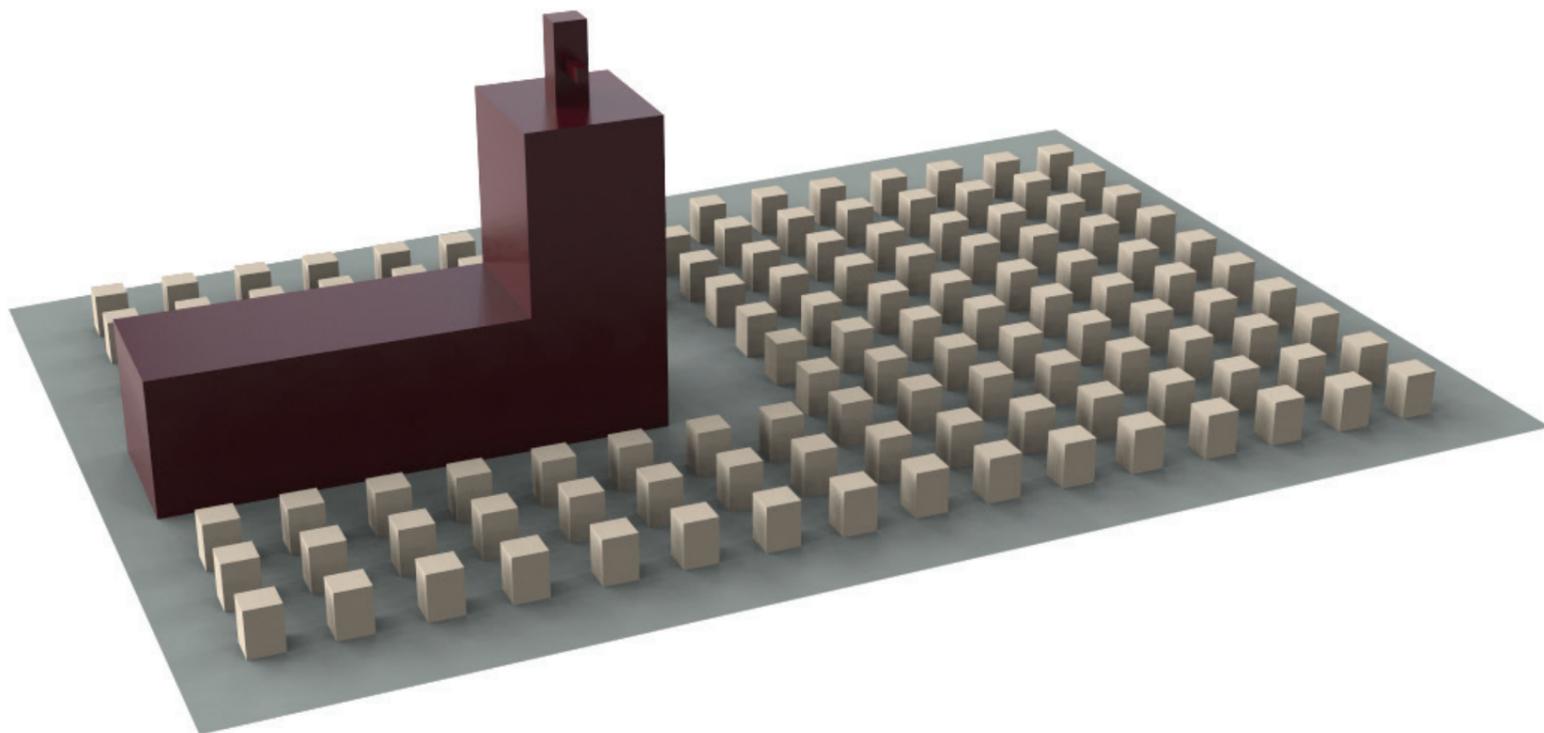
## How was the programme informed?

Research reveals that churches were intended as completely public spaces, as a place where everyone was welcome at any time. People came to pray as well as for mass, but also for trade, protection and shelter. The new programme refers back to this original intention - a public space as a resource for everyone. A church's role as a communal memory is considered, and carried forward. Victor Hugo famously said, '*Une église est d'une beauté qui ne peut appartenir à un seul. Tout le monde doit pouvoir la contempler à sa guise sans être restreint par le propriétaire qui ne voit plus la beauté de son église*' In english: 'A church is of a beauty that cannot belong to one. Everyone must be able to contemplate it without being restricted by the owner who no longer sees the beauty of his church.' It is clear, however, that to re-create the church for a sacred purpose only makes no sense. The data revealing the decline of Christianity is a clear indicator that a secular programme is necessary to give this space new, sustained life. The programme was also informed by the limitations of the churches small size - 20m x 50m. The space is a mixture of a public space and a museum - you are inside the city but escape for a moment to be surrounded by ruins. The space is to be experienced - you can read a book, dance, meet friends, or simply observe the beauty of a Gothic church as it allows you access to what was previously hidden for over 70 years. There are also a number of view points from which to appreciate the city and in general there isn't any heavy disturbance of the existing - it is simply an opportunity to visit and appreciate this underutilized space.

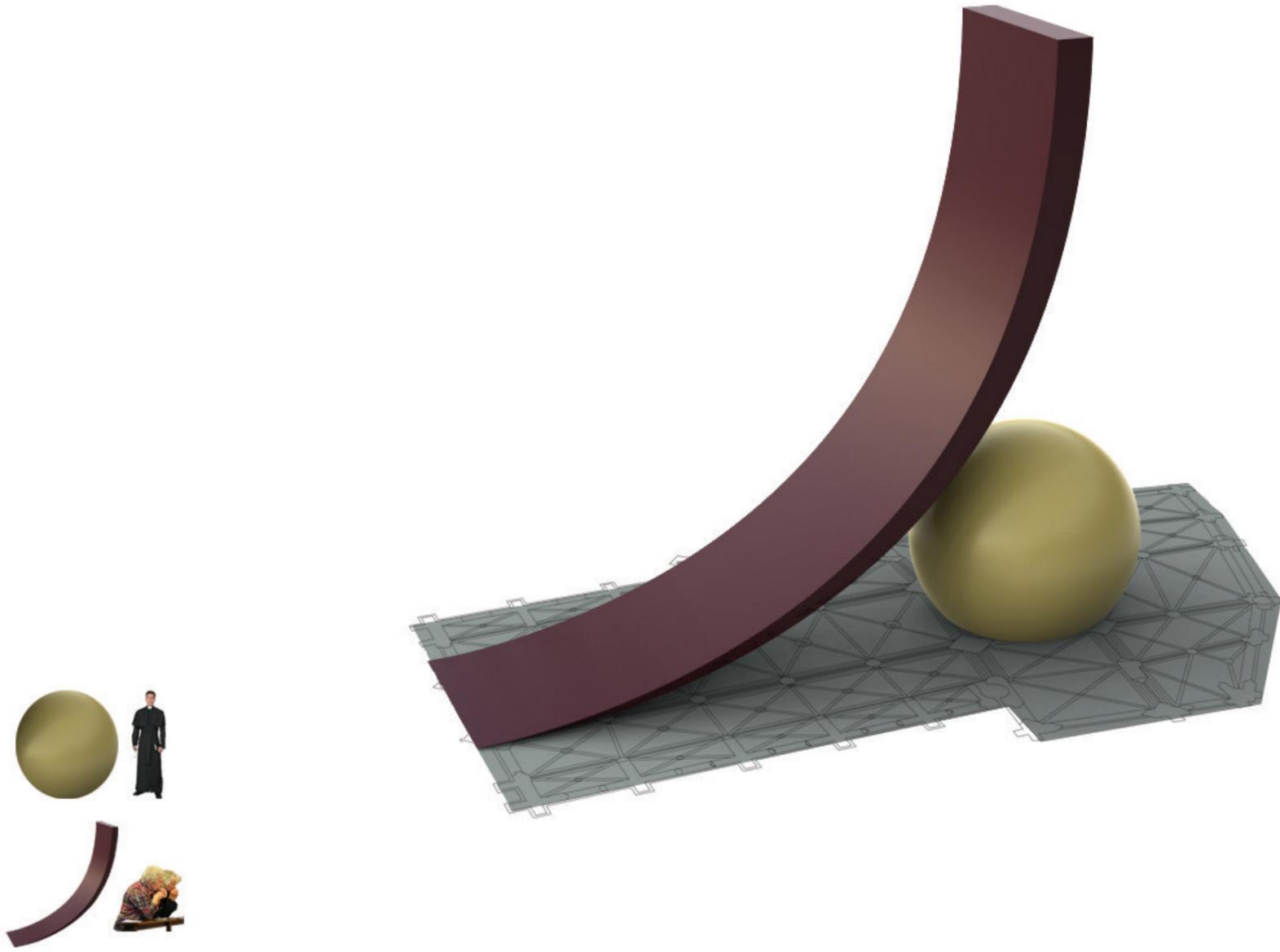
## Guidelines for Working

- 1) The particularities of the Gothic form as a reference to be respected
- 2) Consideration of past actions, movement and general circulation within the church
- 3) Working with the Golden ratio and divine number

The diagrams A) to E), as well as the following section about the Golden Ratio, reveal how these guidelines have been applied. In A) is shows that the church previously acted to "call the community" with its bell and landmark to be seen from miles away. This is reinforced, but also reversed by allowing access to all to the bell tower so that the whole city can be surveyed and appreciated from this point. Diagrams B) and C) talk about the way that the ascension or pilgrimage idea within the Christian faith has been combined with the form of the church - allowing the visitor to travel upwards ("towards God") just as the prayers travelled upwards in this space. Diagram D) shows how the previous circulation has been respected - where there was previously no movement there is still none, and where the circulation existed before, new circulation has been introduced. In Diagram E), the columns represent the sound, reference the historical circular cathedral columns and also encourage the space to be experienced vertically instead of horizontally. The two images show ceiling we how a ceiling would've created a horizontal view, while the goal of the cathedral and church was always the vertical view.



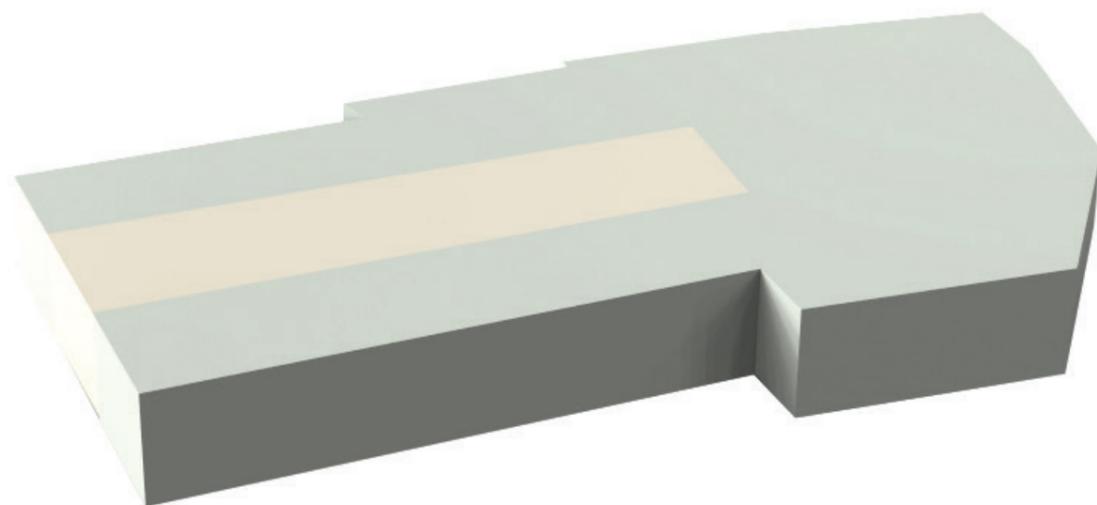
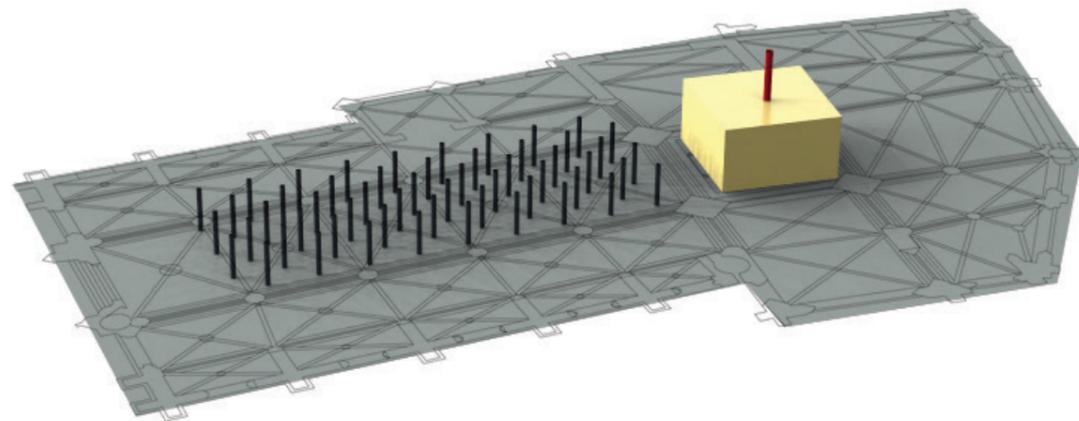
A) The church's historical role as a landmark in the city public space but as well a landmark



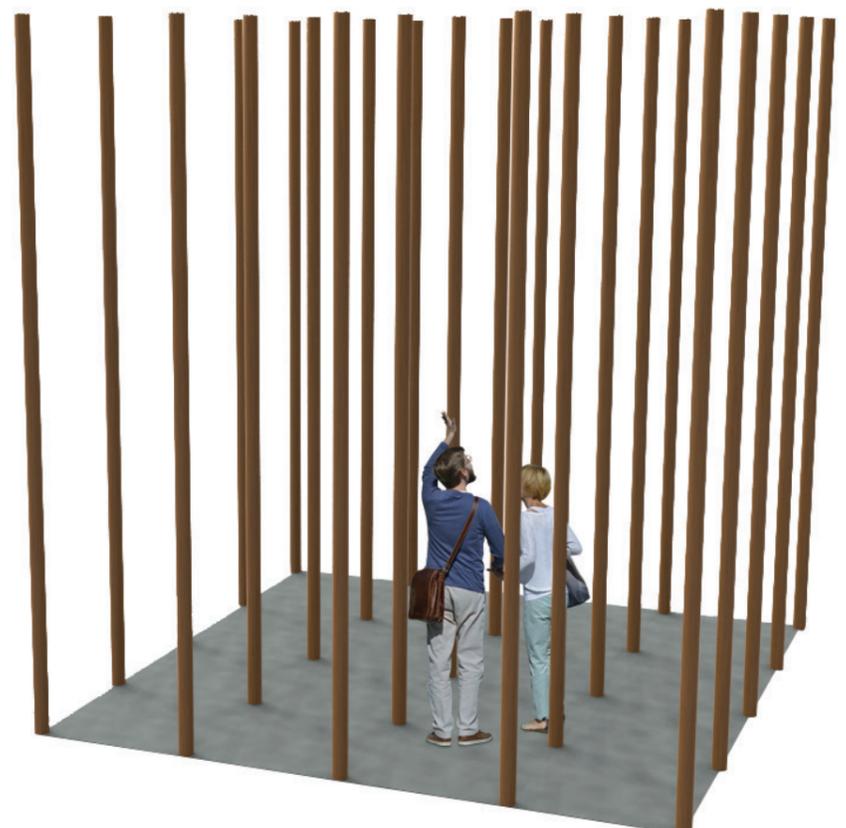
B) Location of priest, people & their ascending prayers



C) Ascension or pilgrimage upwards (towards God)



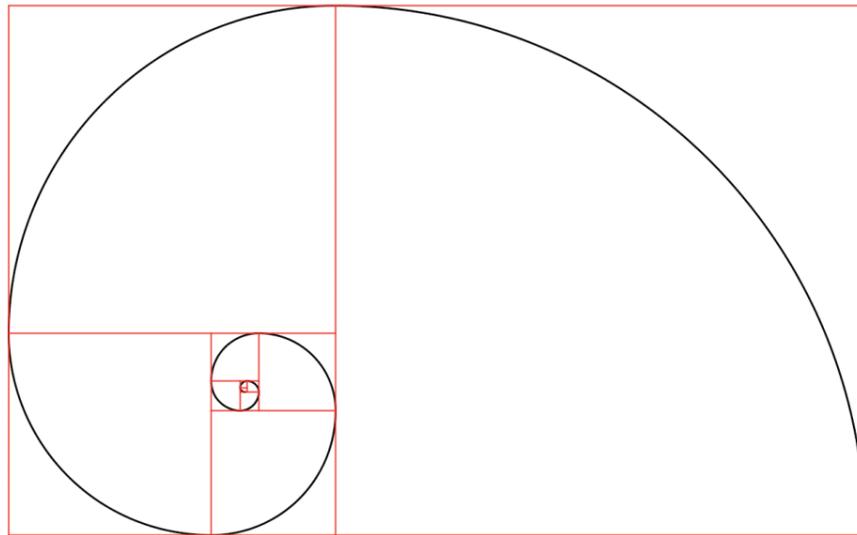
D) Area for seating vs Area for circulation (as historically used)



E) The columns representing sound, referencing circular cathedral columns and encouraging the space to be experienced vertically

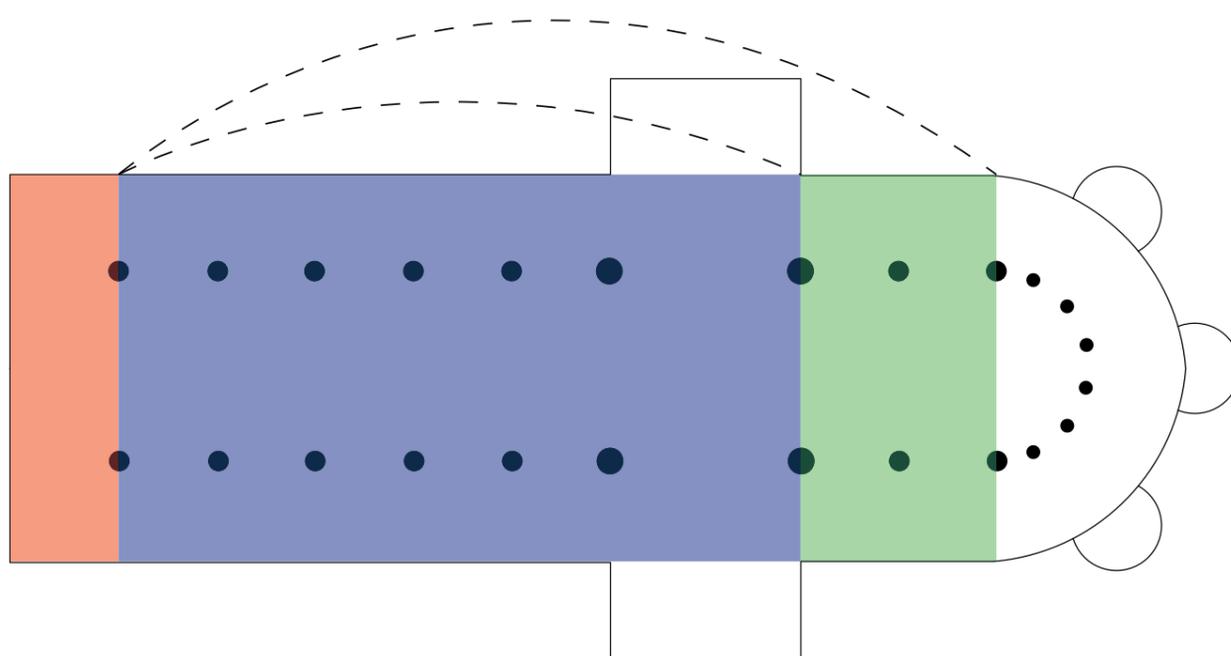
# The Golden Ratio

The golden ratio has long been applied to sacred architecture. Le Corbusier used the related concept of the Fibonacci sequence in his design. Many churches and cathedrales were built with this “divine number” and in this project, an attempt has been made to draw from these rules in order to generate forms in the church. The open staircase which is created using the golden ratio allows one to appreciate the architecture of the church - the created terraces do not destroy anything, they link to previous openings

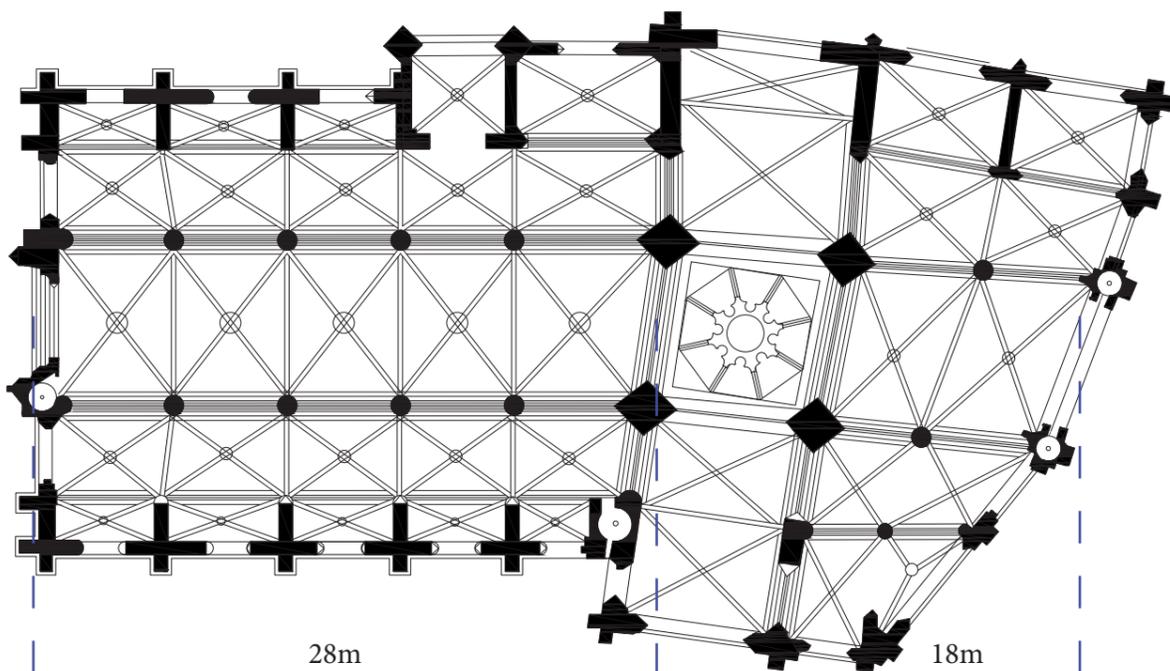


The Golden Ratio

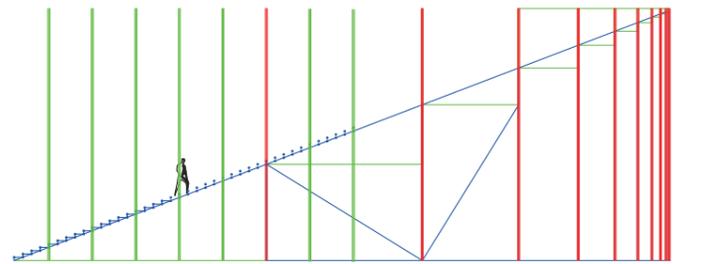
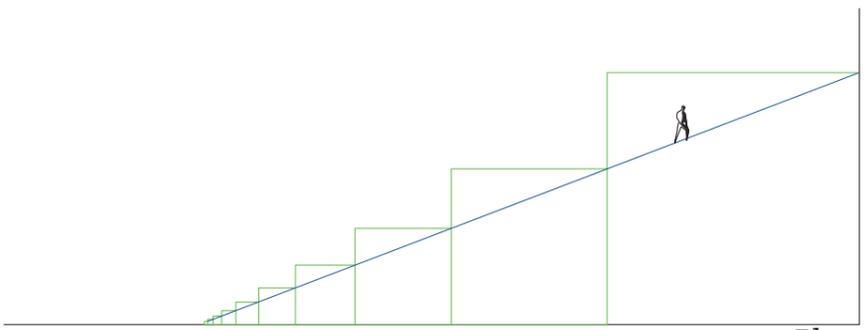
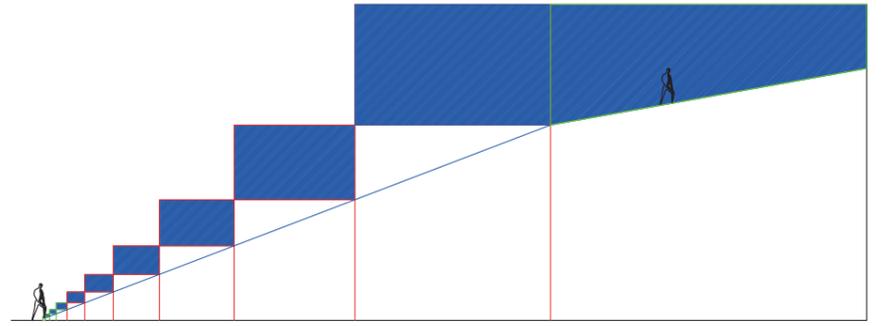
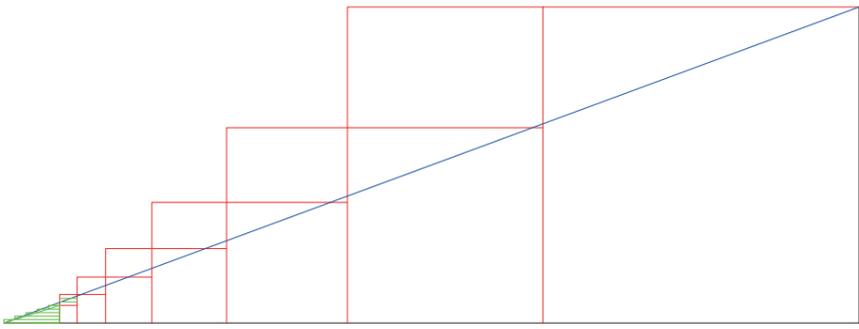
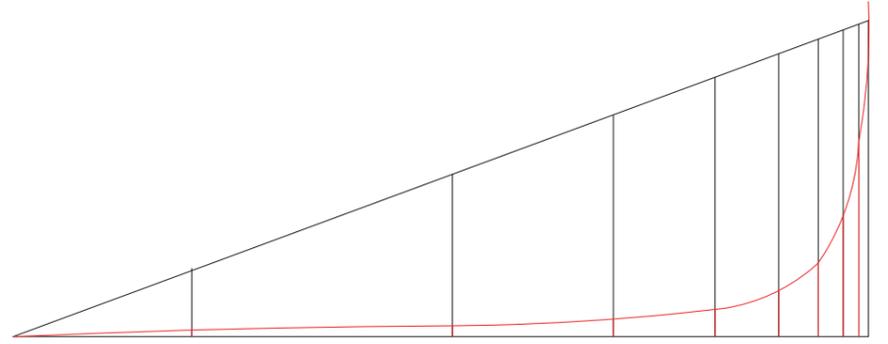
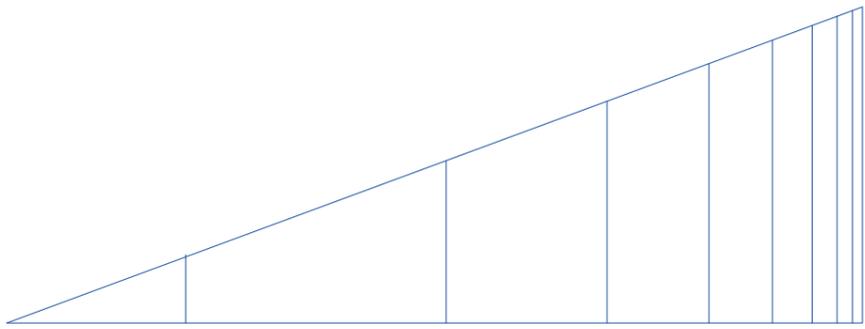
$$240/1.618 = 148$$



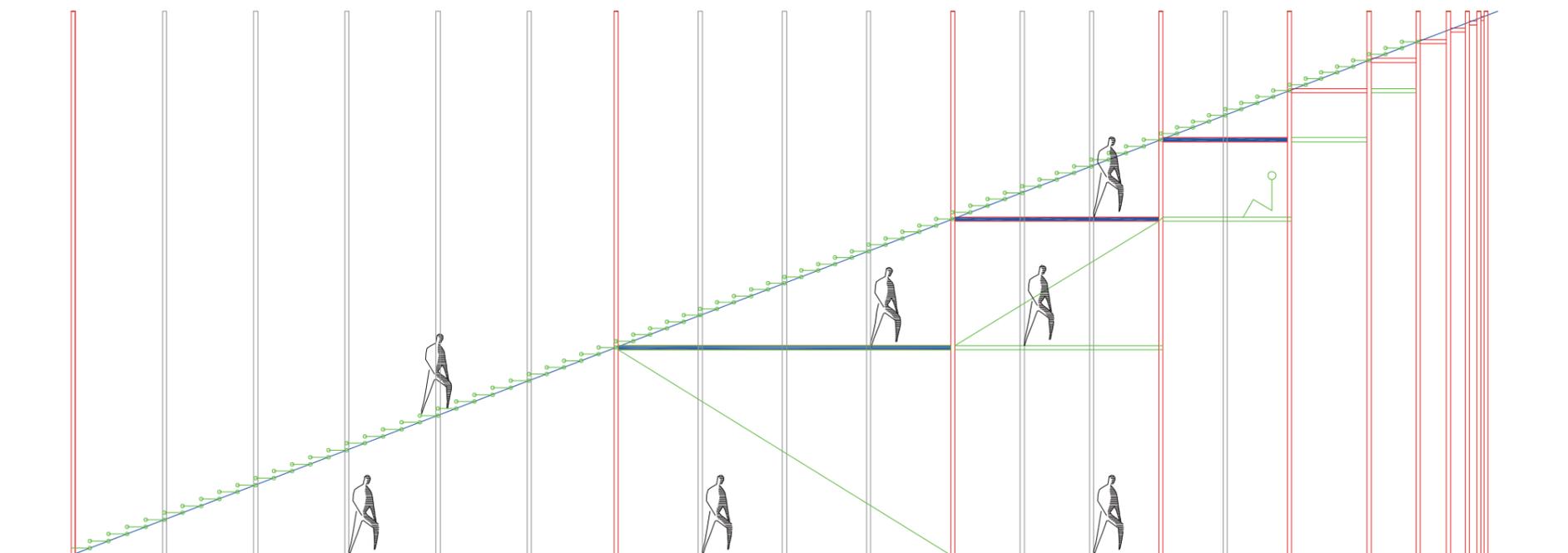
Typical floor plan correspondence to Golden Ratio



Project floor plan and correspondence to Golden Ratio



Placement of Columns

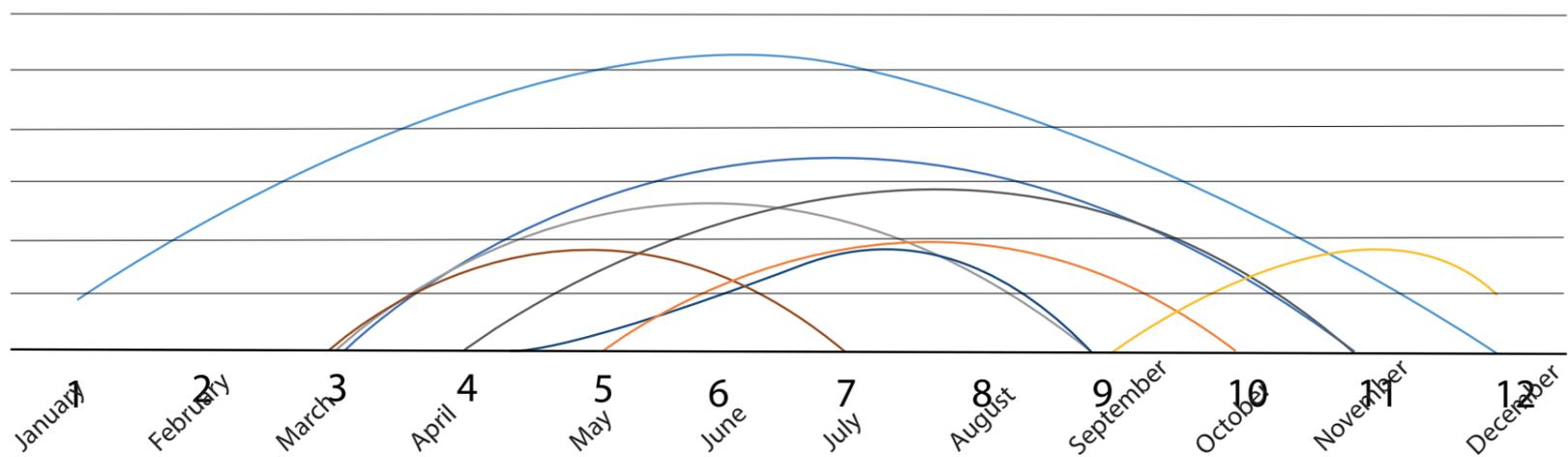


The open staircase, following the golden ratio, allows one to appreciate the architecture of the church

# Plant Glossary

Plants and nature have a role to play in the proposed design. The project links with nature in a clever way - referencing the Gothic cathedral aesthetic, vegetation is creating “new stained glass”. Below, the graph shows when the flowers are in bloom. In conclusion, there is always at least one type of plant flowering throughout the year - the plants have been carefully selected according to specific conditions.

Flowering period of plants



- |                         |             |                 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| — Campsis Radicans      | — Wisteria  | — Wheat         |
| — Climbing ivy          | — Clematis  | — Rose climbers |
| — Orange trumpet flower | — Red vines | — Hydrangea     |

## Campsis Radicans



*Latin name: Campsis*

*Family: Bignoniacées*

*Plant type: Flower*

*Possible colors: White, yellow, red, pink, orange*

*Leaf color: Green, dark green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semu-persistent*

*Max height: +10m*

*Max width: +6m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Quick*

*Resistant to the cold: Average*

*Density: 1foot/m<sup>2</sup>*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: March to June and September to November*

*Flowering: April to October*

*Max height: February, March*

## Orange trumpet flower



*Latin name: Eccremocarpus scaber*

*Family: Bignoniacées*

*Plant type: Flower*

*Possible colors: White, yellow, red, pink, orange*

*Leaf color: Green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semu-persistent*

*Max height: 5m*

*Max width: 2m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Quick*

*Resistant to the cold: Average*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: February to May, October, November, December*

*Flowering: June to September*

*Max height: March, April*

## Wisteria



*Latin name: Wisteria*

*Family: Fabacées*

*Plant type: Flower shrub*

*Possible flower color: White, pink, purple*

*Possible leaf color: Green, dark green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent*

*Max height: +10m*

*Max width: 30m*

*Maintenance: Moderate*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal/ quick*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: February to April and August to November*

*Flowering: April to August*

*Max height: March and April to November*

## Climbing ivy



*Latin name: Hedera*

*Family: Araliacées*

*Plant type: shrub*

*Possible flower color: Yellow, green*

*Possible leaf color: Grey, golden, green, dark green, red*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent*

*Max height: 10m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Exposition: Sun, semi shade, shade*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: March, April, October, November*

*Flowering: October, November*

*Max height: March, April, August*

## Clématis



*Latin name: Clematis*

*Family: Renonculacées*

*Plant type: Flower shrub*

*Possible colors: White, purple, blue, yellow, red, pink*

*Leaf color: Green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semi-persistent*

*Max height: 10m*

*Max width: 6m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Density: 1foot/m<sup>2</sup>*

*Exposition: Sun, semi-shade*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: January to May, October, November, December*

*Flowering: January to November*

## Rose climbers



*Latin name: Rosa*

*Family: Rosacées*

*Plant type: Flower shrub*

*Possible colors: White, purple, blue, yellow, red, pink, orange*

*Leaf color: Green, dark green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semi-persistent*

*Max height: 10m*

*Max width: 6m*

*Maintenance: Moderate*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal/ quick*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Density: 1foot/m<sup>2</sup>*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground*

*Plantation: January to February, December*

*Flowering: May to October*

*Max height: March*



## Solanum jasminoides

*Latin name: Solanum laxum*

*Family: Solanacées*

*Plant type: Flower*

*Possible colors: White, purple, blue*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semi-persistent*

*Max height: 10m*

*Max width: 6m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Quick*

*Resistant to the cold: Average*

*Density: 1foot/m2*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: March, April, May, September, October*

*Flowering: all year long*

*Max height: March, April*



## Wheat

*Latin name: Triticum*

*Family: Poacées*

*Plant type: Grasse and herb*

*Possible colors: Grey, gold, green, dark green*

*All year vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent/Semi-persistent*

*Max height: 1.5m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Quick*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Density: 150foot/m2*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: in open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: Febraury, March, October*

*Flowering: June to August*

*Max height: July to September*



## Red vines

*Latin name: Vitis*

*Family: Vitaceae*

*Plant type: Fruit shrub*

*Possible colors: Red, green*

*Leaf color: Green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent*

*Max height: 10m*

*Max width: 4m*

*Maintenance: Average*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal/ quick*

*Density; 1foot/m2*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

*Exposition: Sun*

*Plantation: In open ground, pot or windowsill box*

*Plantation: January to April, October to December-*

*Flowering: May to April*

*Max high: january to May and November, December*



## Hydrangea

*Latin name: Hydrangea*

*Family: Hydrangéacées*

*Plant type: Flower shrub*

*Possible colors: White, light pink*

*Leaf color: Green*

*Perennial vegetation*

*Foliage: Persistent*

*Max height: +10m*

*Maintenance: Easy*

*Need for water: Average*

*Growth: Normal*

*Resistant to the cold: High*

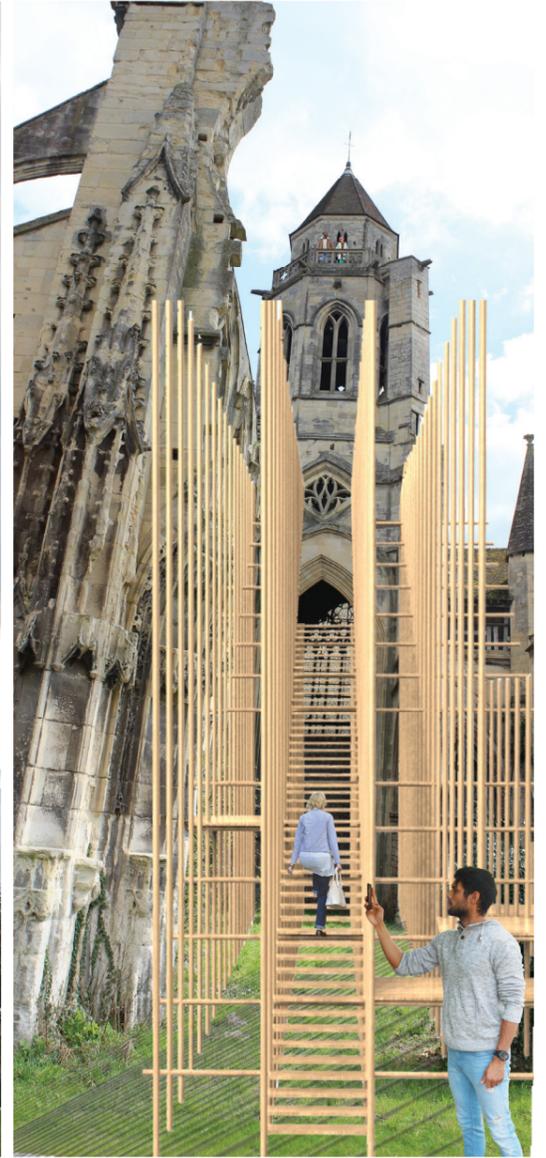
*Exposition: Semi-shade, Shade*

*Plantation: In open ground*

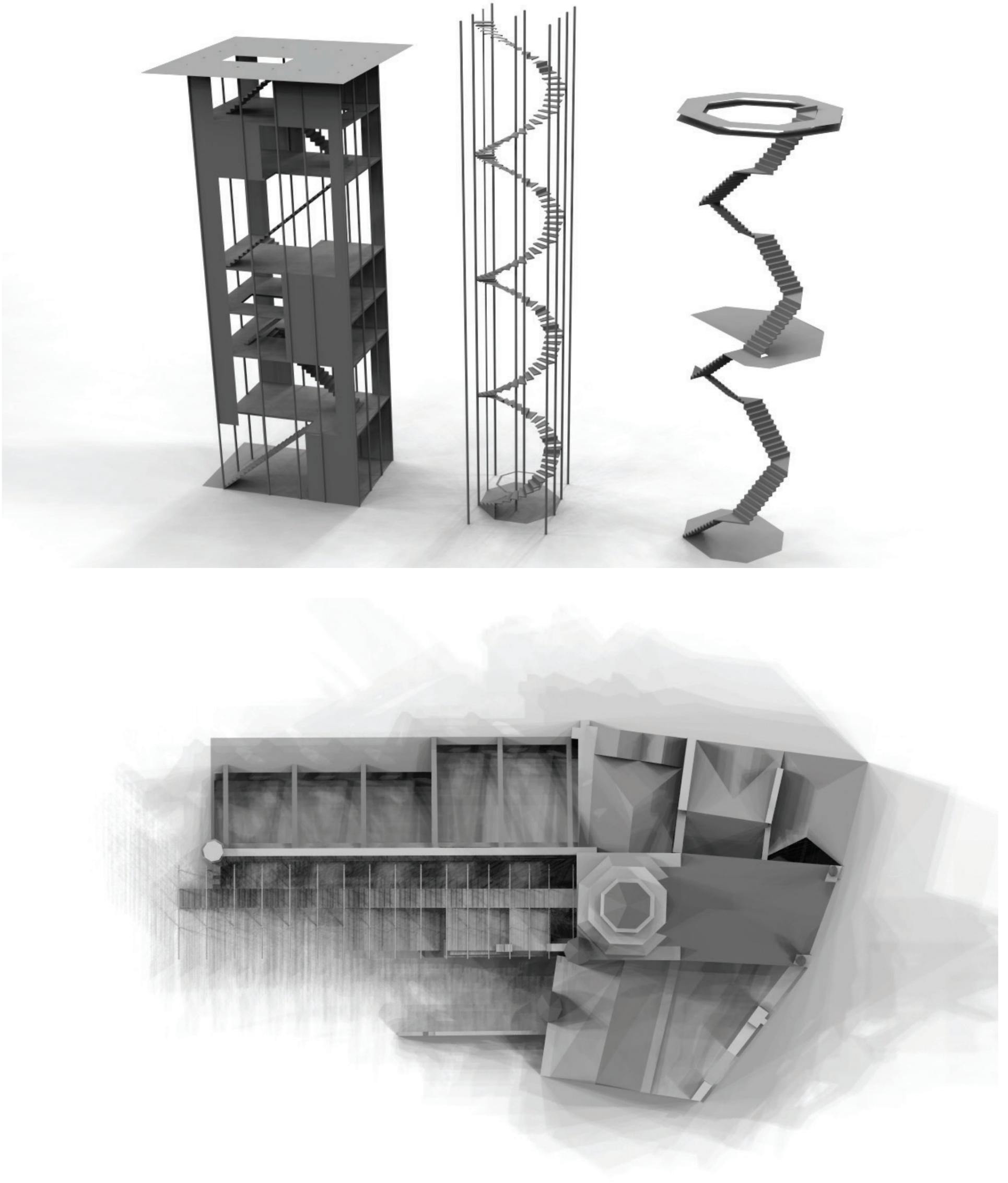
*Plantation: March to June, September to November*

*Flowering: May to October*

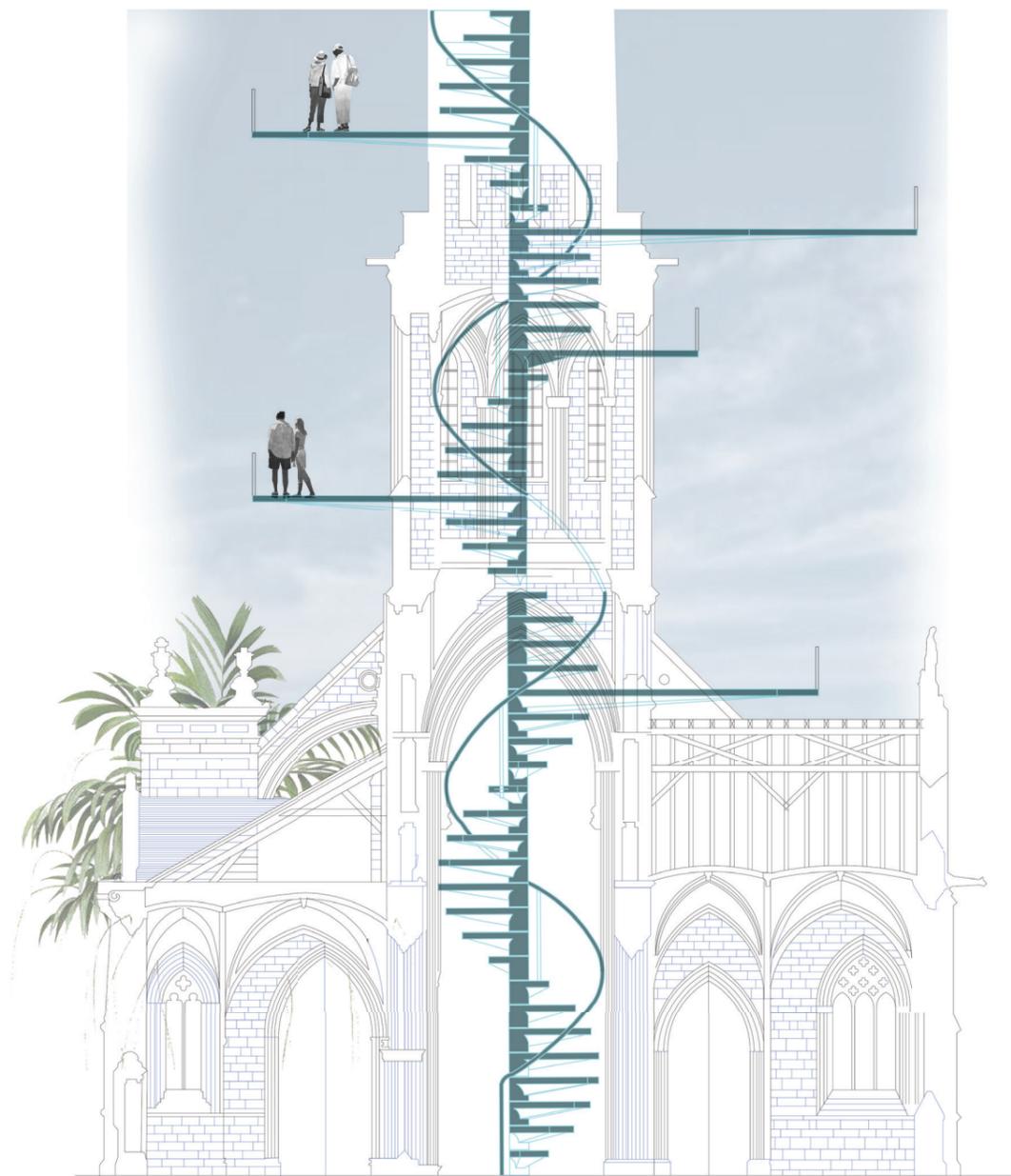
# Exploratory Collages



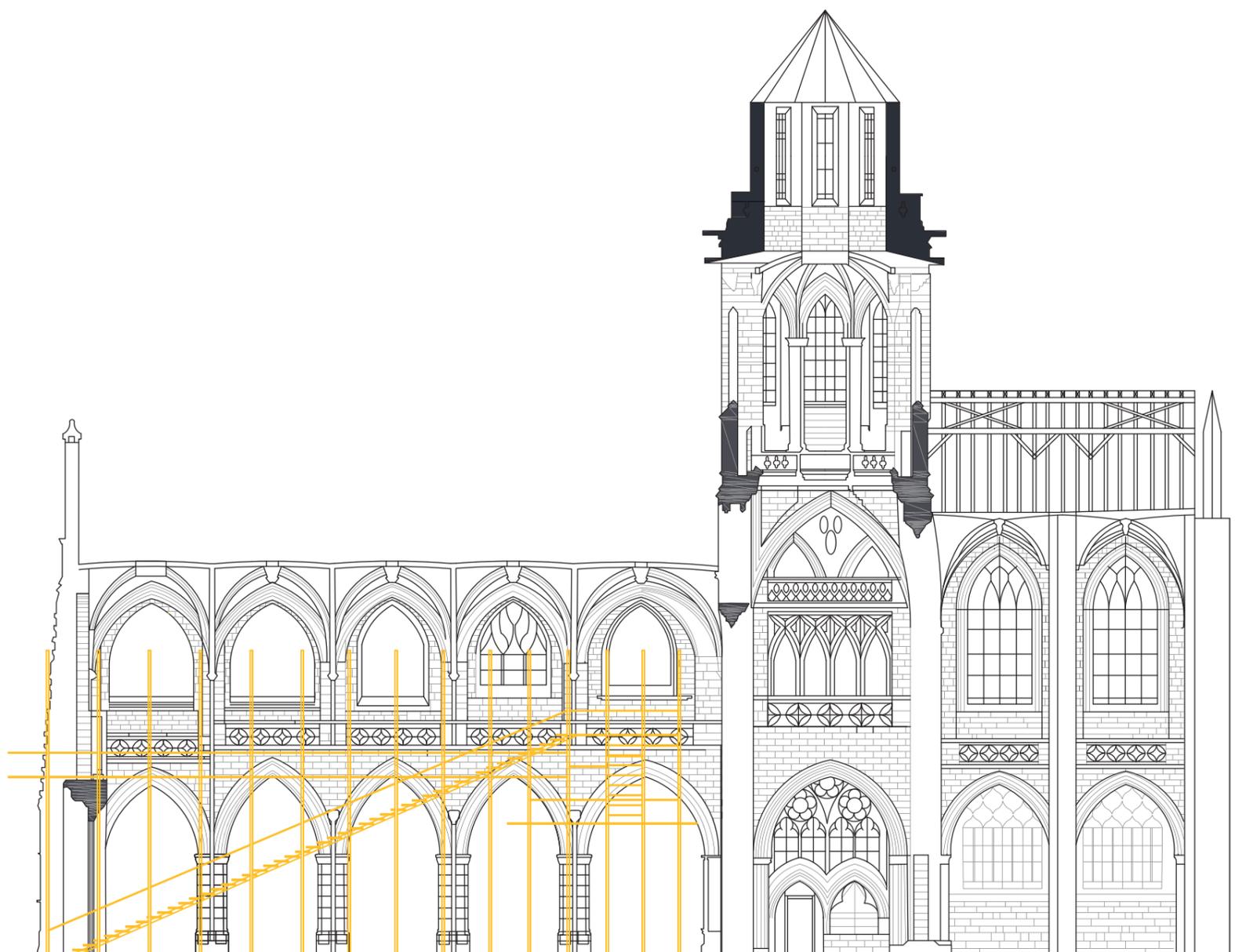
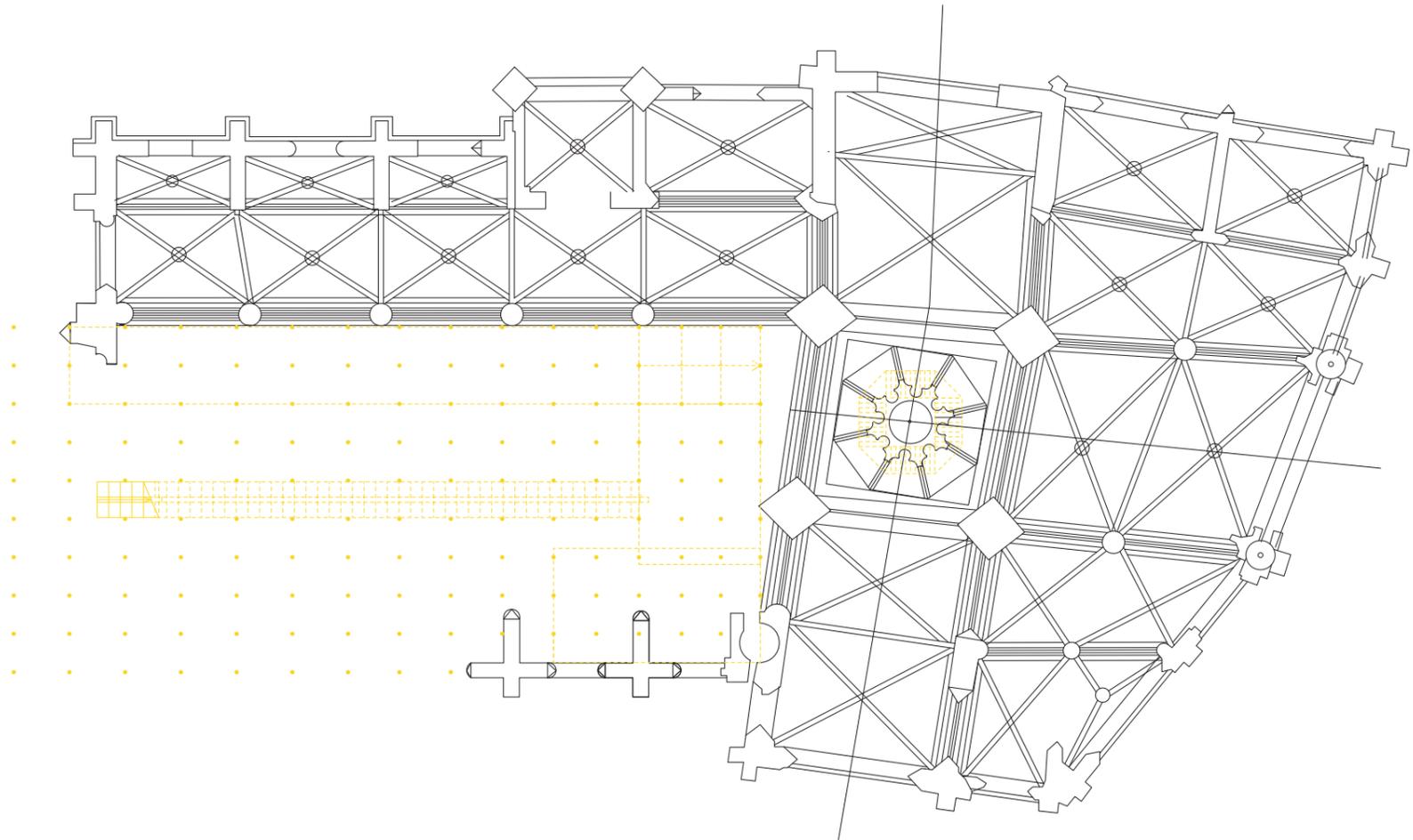
# Exploratory 3D Work



# Exploratory Collages



# Exploratory 2D Work



# Interpretation of Final Form

## Commemoration of Previous Form

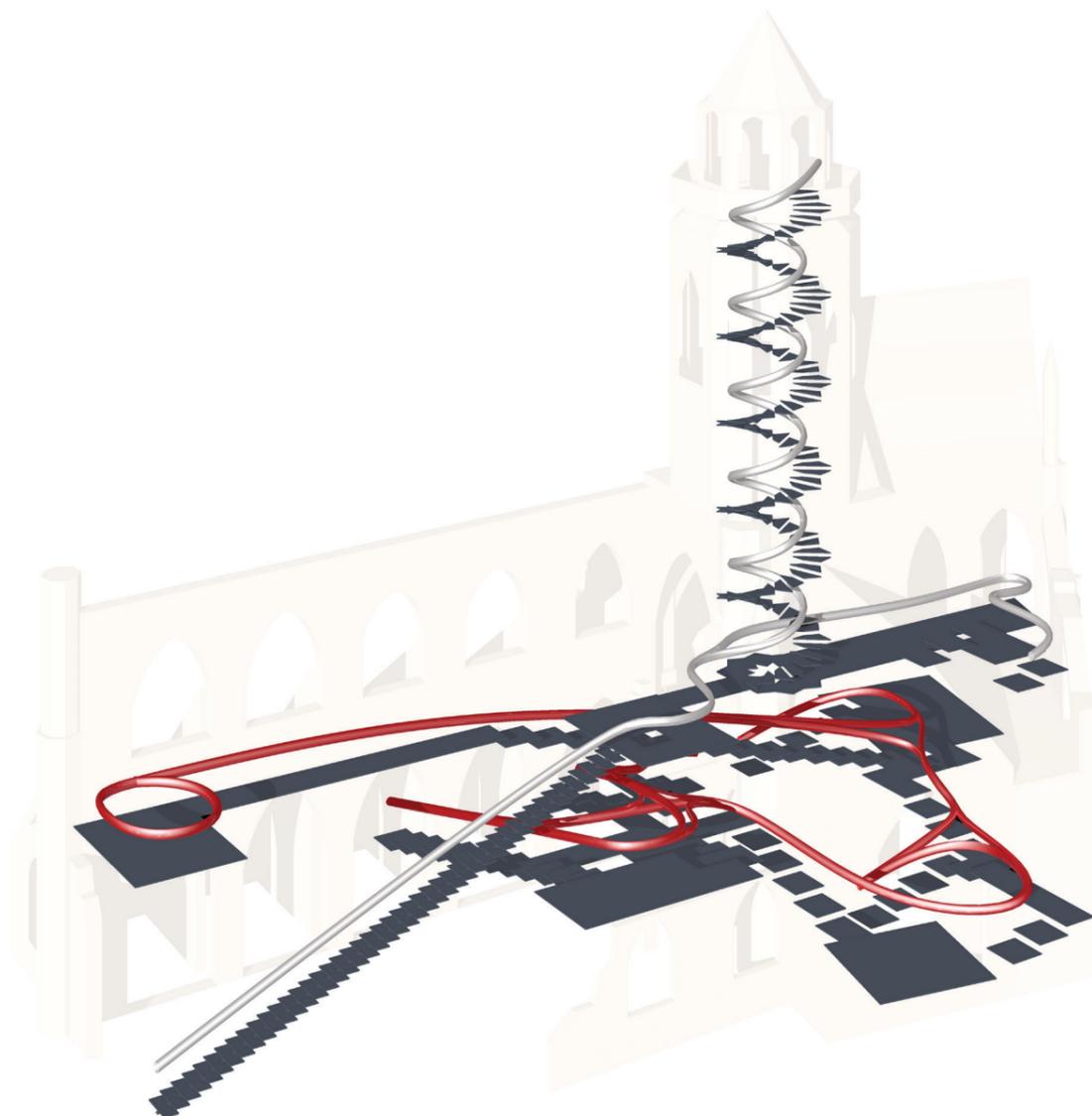
Freud supposed that we could always overlap with what was there before. The project overlaps with the existing, always leaving the remains of the church visible. The existing is not destroyed, rather it is celebrated. France's rich history is treasured, while simultaneously moving forward in a contemporary way. The ruins we find today as worth preserving, worth incorporating into our new designs. When compared with most modern structures with short construction times and relatively weaker material choices, it is clear that the craftsmanship, care and detail of a Gothic church is not to be forgotten. George Descombes said "The surface of the field where the memory and his transformations are engraved are becoming the map and the chronicle of the locality". Through pillars and platforms, the former plan and shape of the church is recalled and referenced. The main pillars have been positioned according the golden ratio ("the divine number"), while the pillars in-between them are located to support the staircase. In addition to this, there is a reference to the core of the church - a sacred place located below the new staircase. This reflection creates a link between earth and sky, in addition to the fact that water has a special place in the Christian faith.

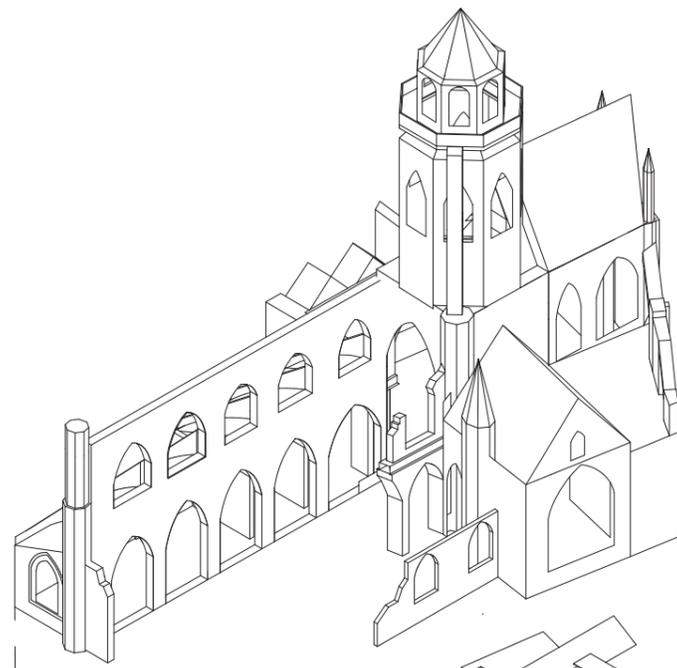
## Pilgrimage Through the Church

The central and main element is a staircase, placed to connect the user directly to the base of the tower, above the "heart" of the church – which historically led up to the divine. Bell towers pointing towards sky expressed the divine sovereign existence and historically asserted the spiritual and temporal domination of the clergy in its territory. Today the tower is still a mark in the landscape - it situates you and guides your movement in the city. While making the pilgrimage up the staircase, one connects the thoughts and prayers of the past which have historically gone up 'to God' through this space. The terrace reaching out of the tower links the structure to the city – it is visible as a curiosity from a distance.

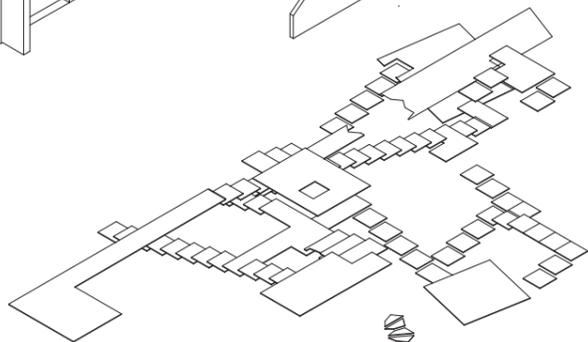
## Awakening the Ruins

It initially appears as if the main staircase and platform systems connect, but in fact the former allows a direct connection "to God" while the latter allows the complete and intricate exploration of the ruins. The discovery of the church is encouraged – the platform system leads you through the structure to experience as much of it as possible. Movement and circulation occur at various points throughout the created form, there is an overlapping and criss-crossing of flows. Everything is not immediately evident, visitors need to navigate the space to make sense of the different spaces. One of the main purposes of this arrangement is to "play" with the visitors \_ it is necessary to explore every inches of the church ruin. There is no information given concerning which way to go, you discover the platforms by yourself, or the staircases allow you to arrive to your unknown destination.





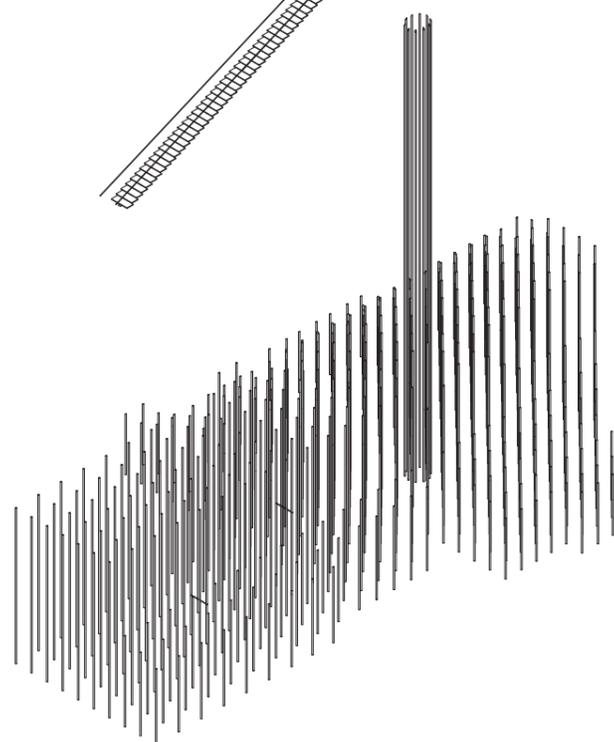
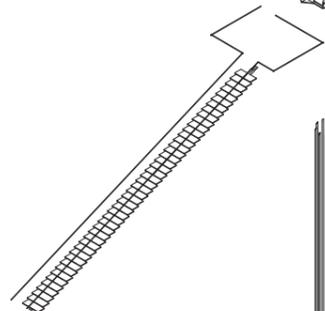
Existing church



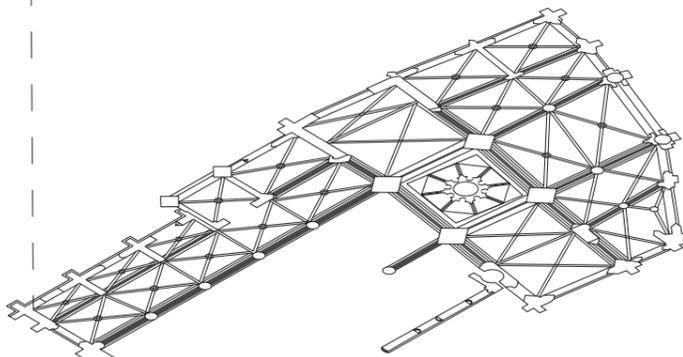
Plateformes



Staircases

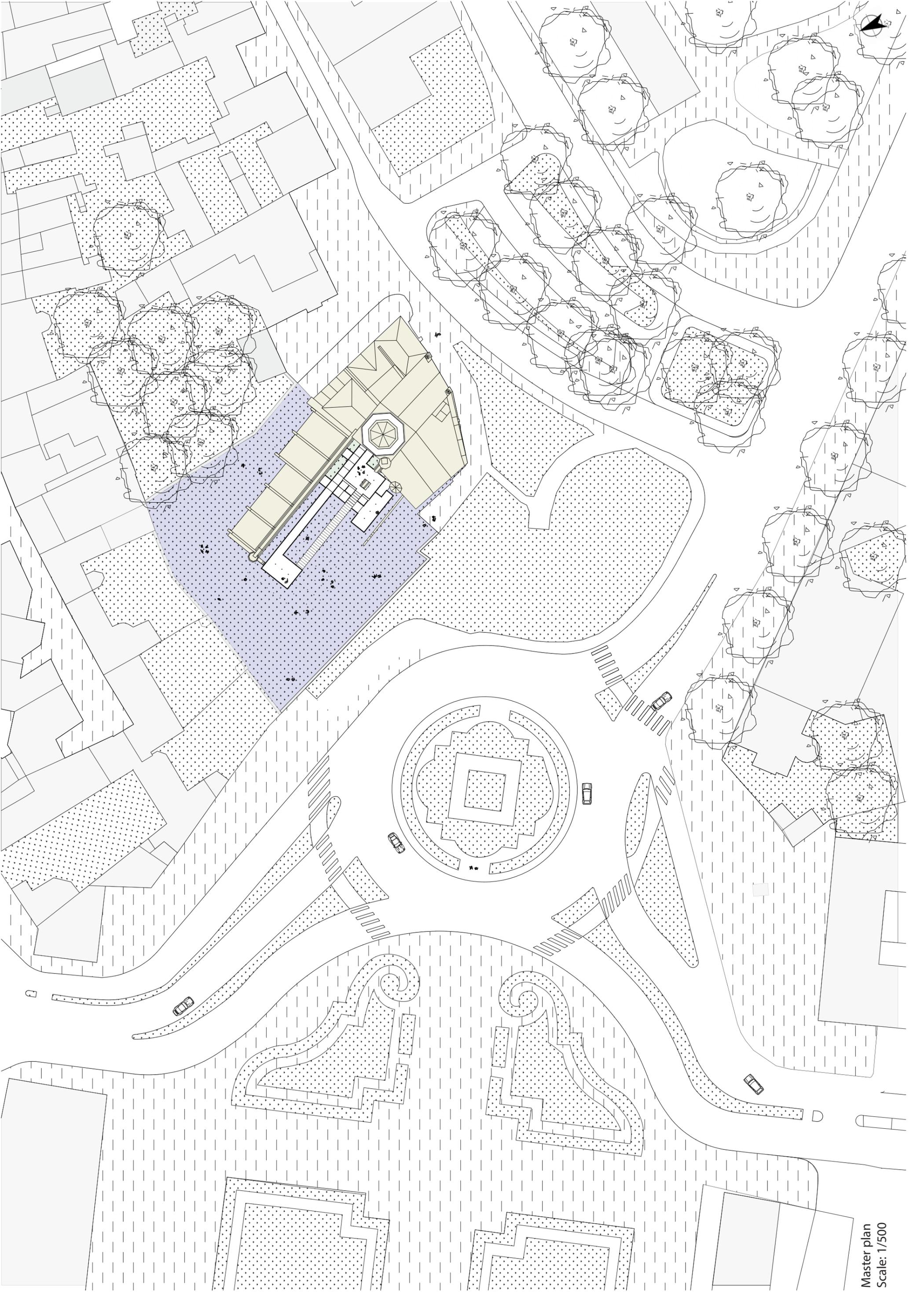


Pillars reproducing the negative of the church



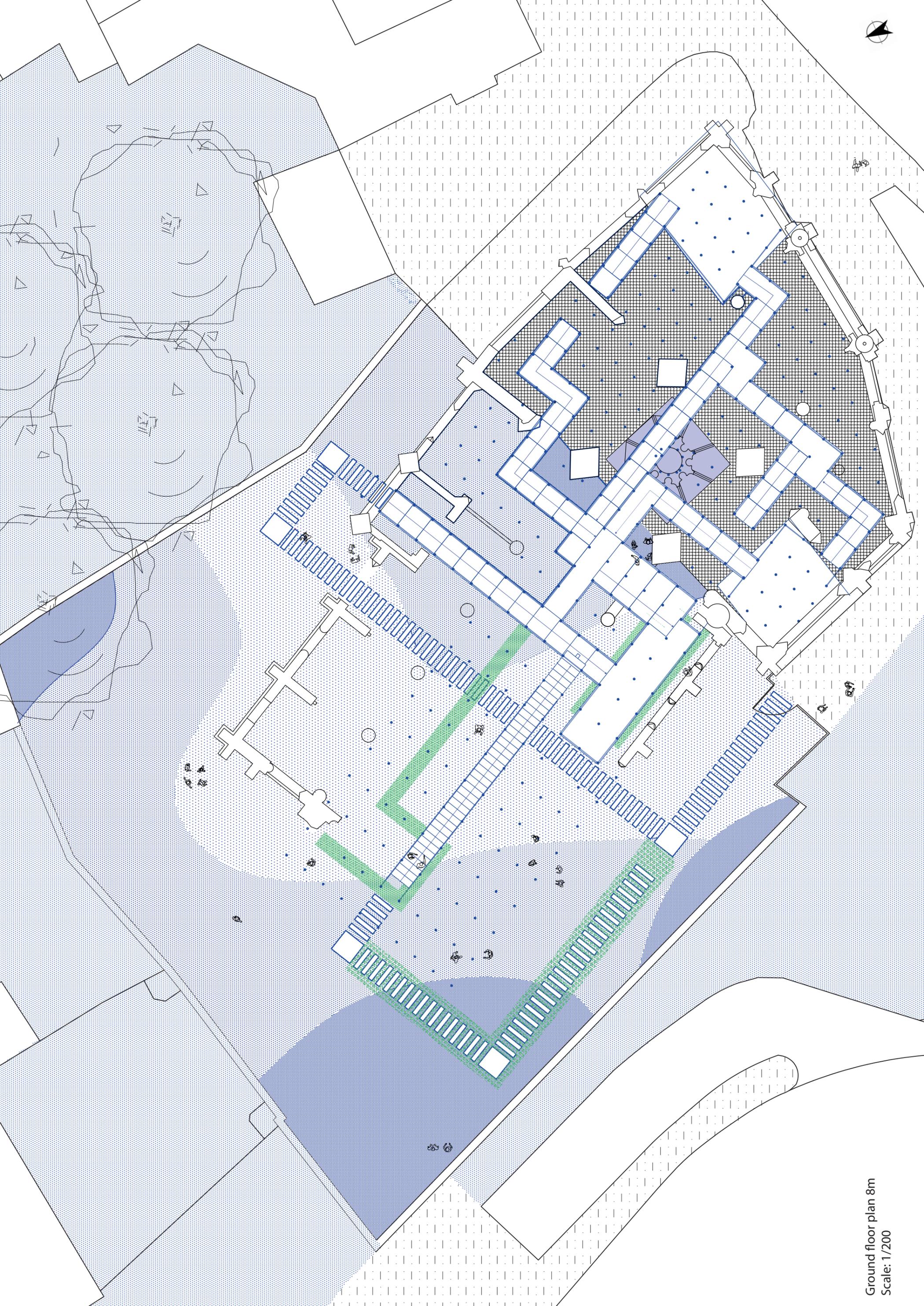
Remaining plan of the church

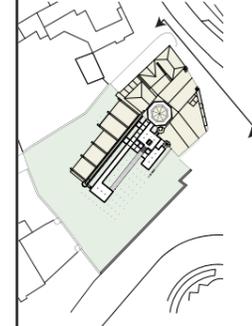
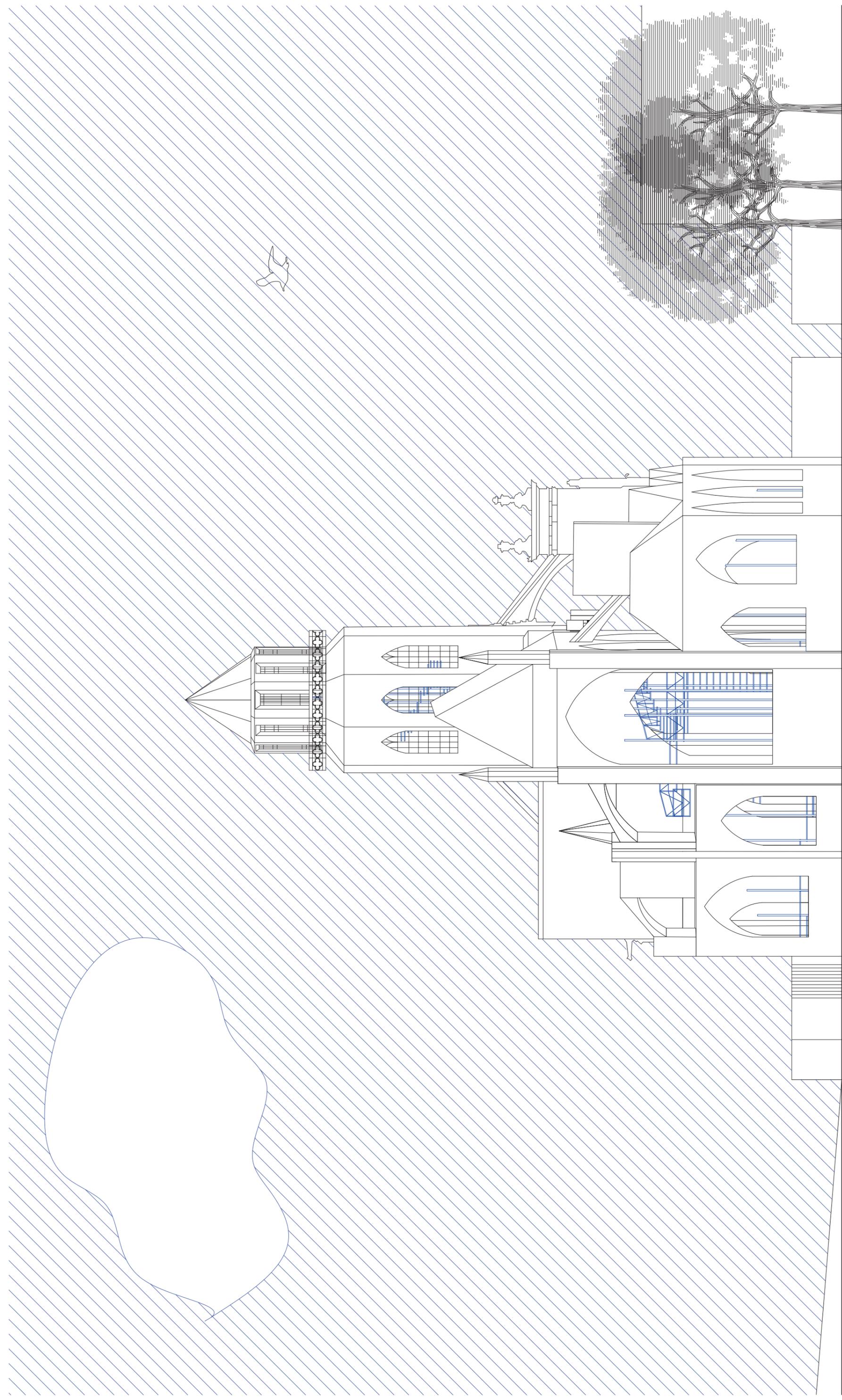
## Plans, Sections and Collages



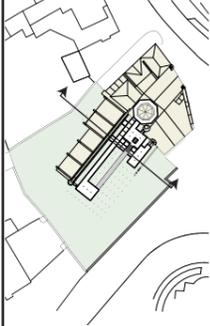
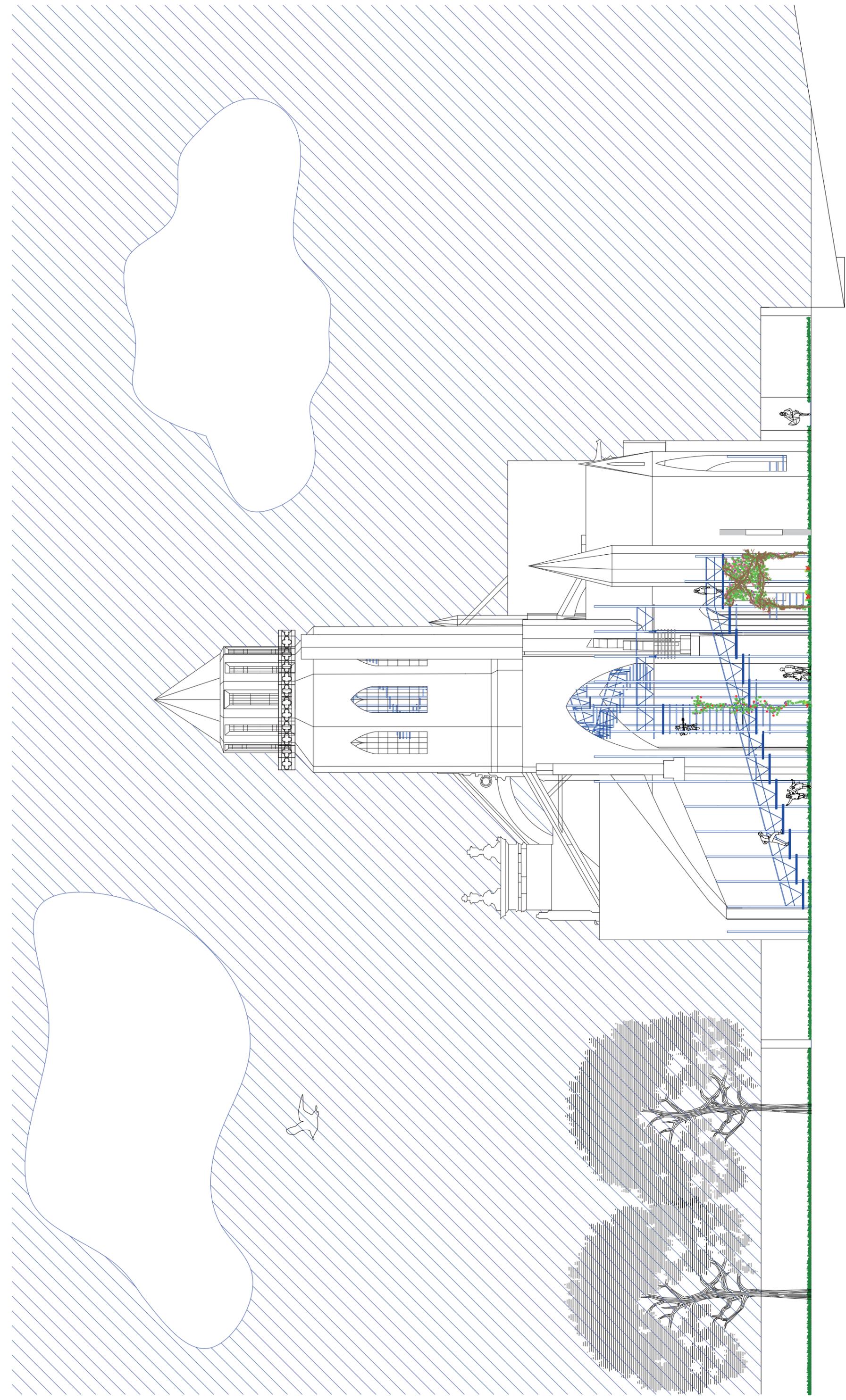


Ground floor plan  
Scale: 1/200





**Project: Awaken the Ruins**  
Title: Elevation 1  
Date: 25 July 2018  
Scale: 1/200

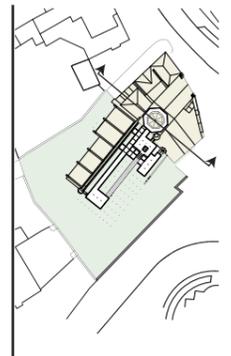
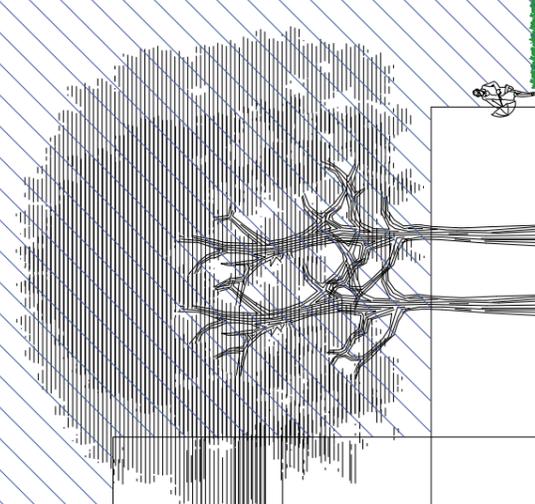
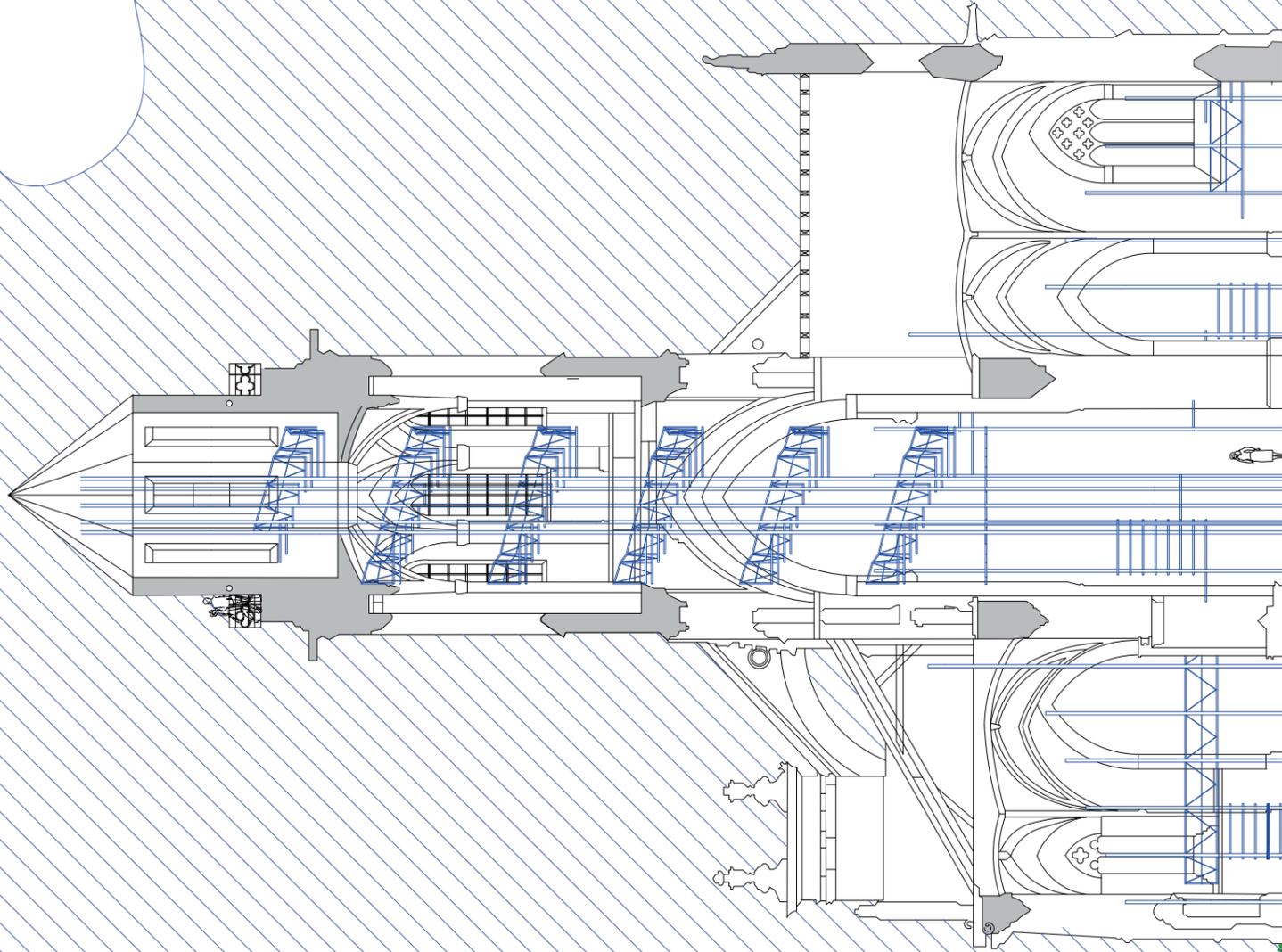
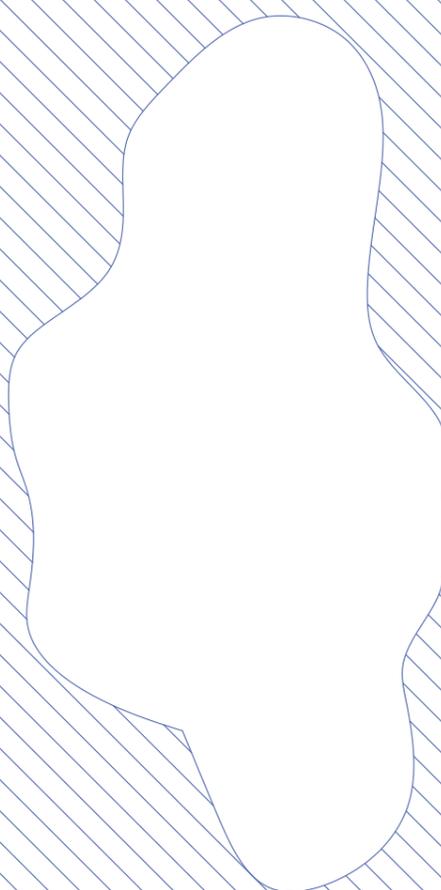


**Project: Awaken the Ruins**

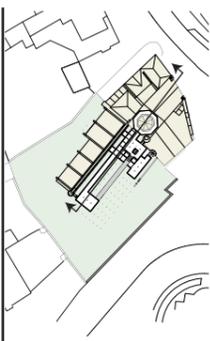
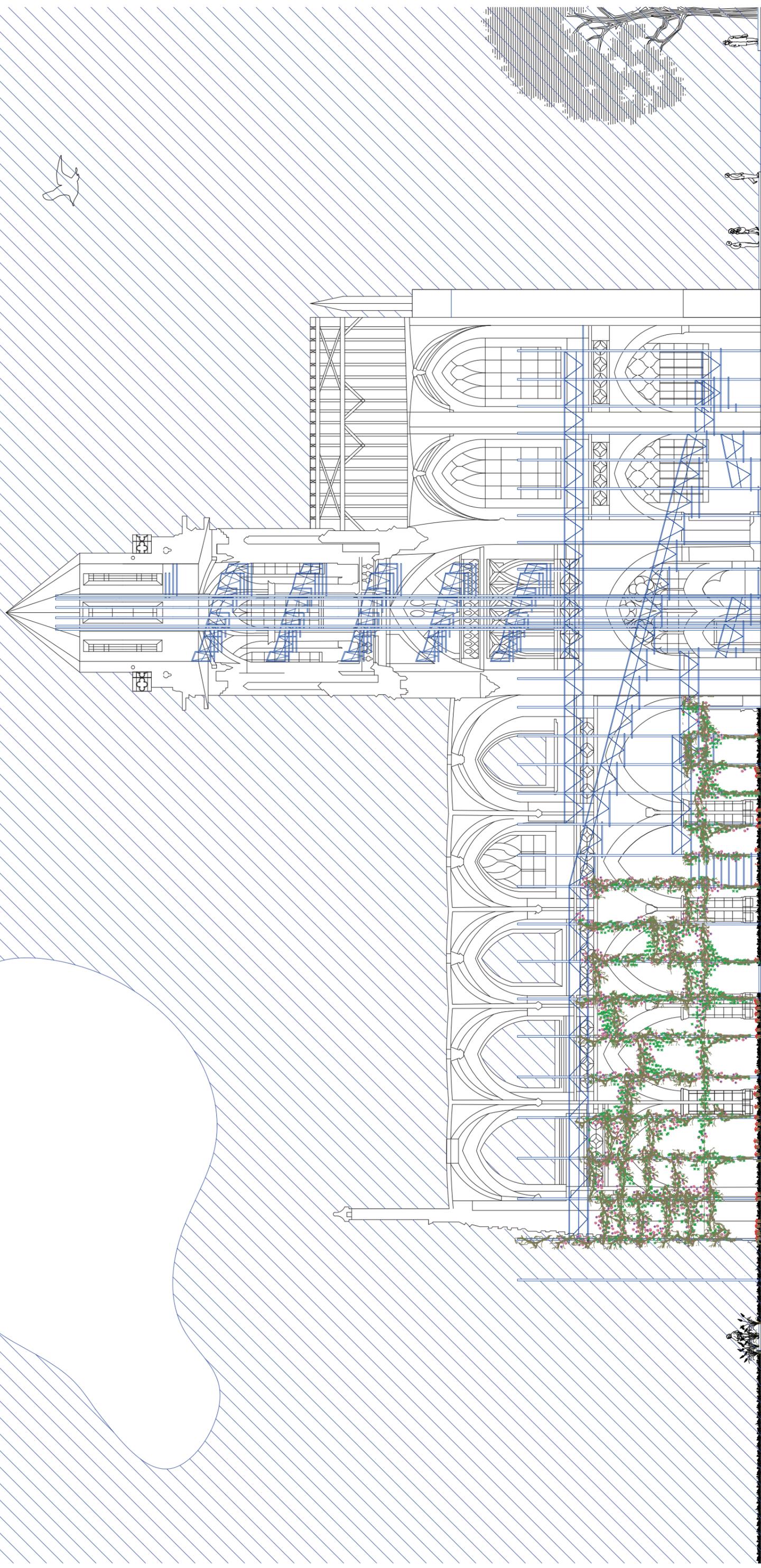
Title: Section 1

Date: 25 July 2018

Scale: 1/200



**Project: Awaken the Ruins**  
Title: Section 2  
Date: 25 July 2018  
Scale: 1/200

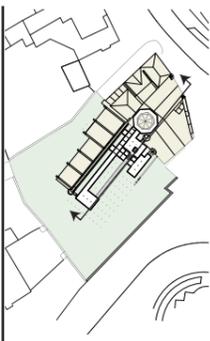
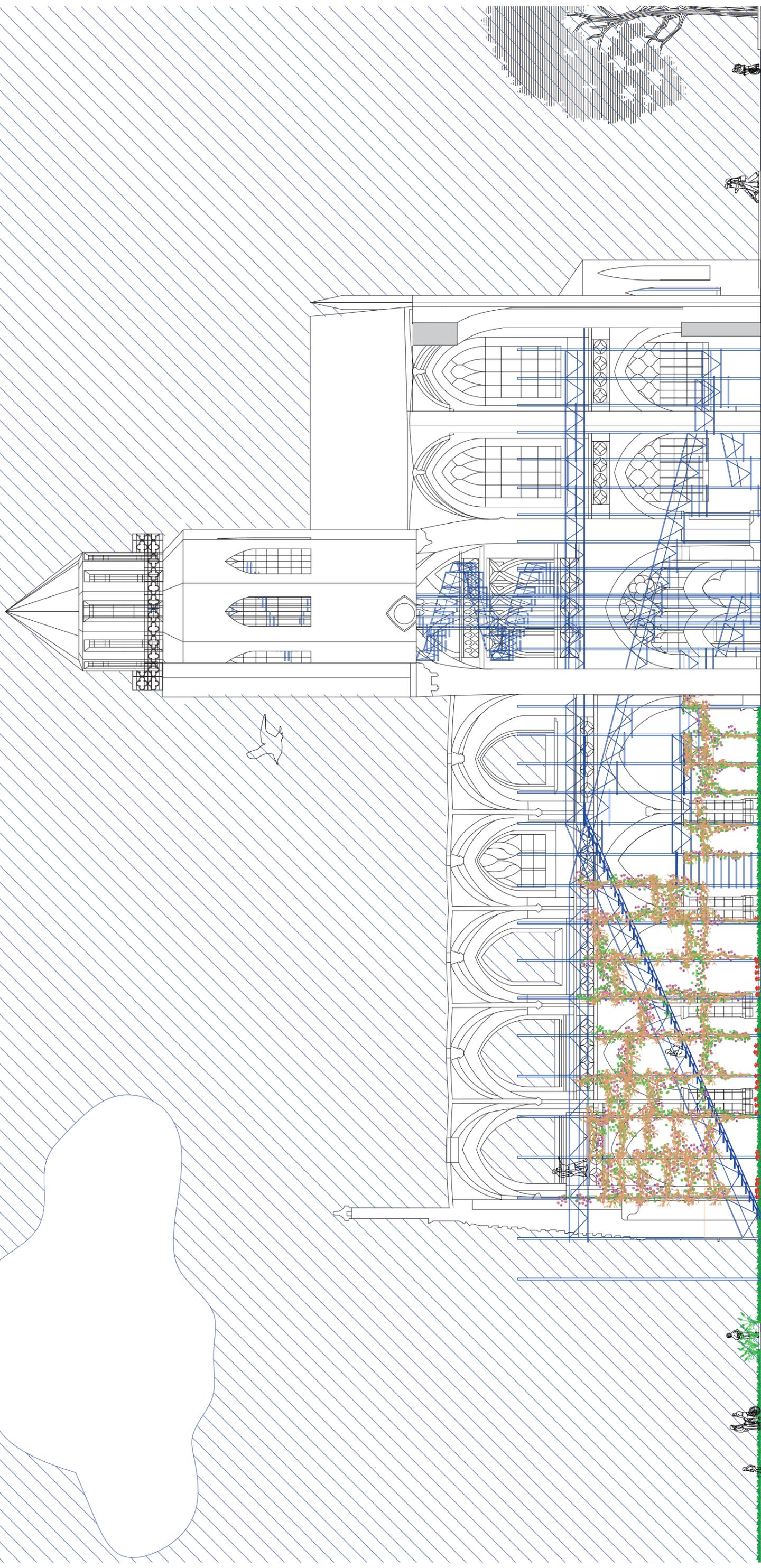


**Project: Awaken the Ruins**

Title: Section 3

Date: 25 July 2018

Scale: 1/200

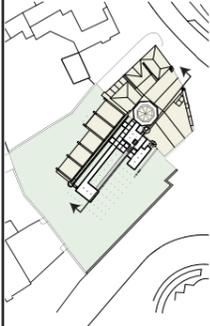
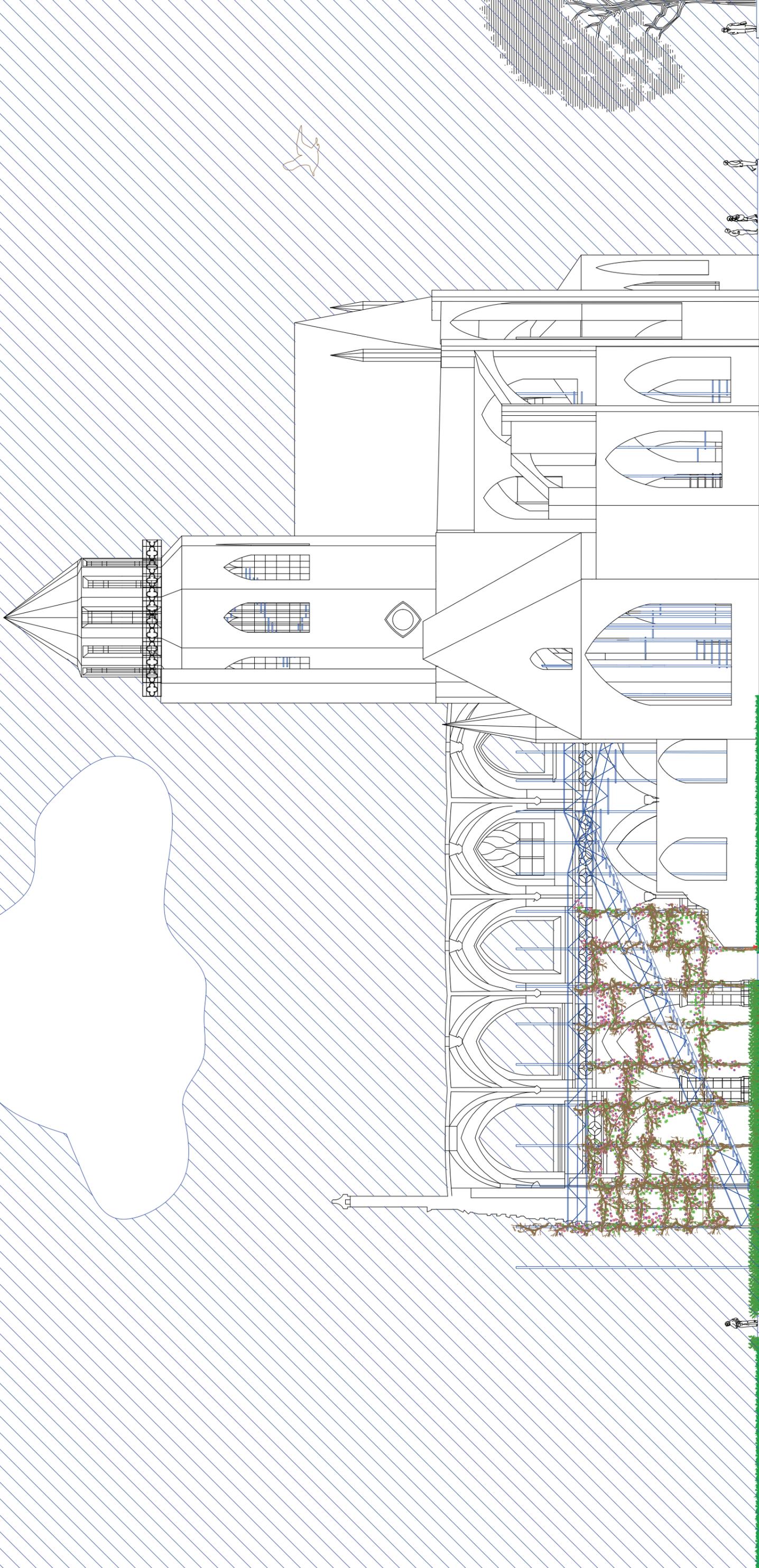


**Project: Awaken the Ruins**

Title: Section 4

Date: 25 July 2018

Scale: 1/200



**Project: Awaken the Ruins**

Title: Elevation 2

Date: 25 July 2018

Scale: 1/200







# Post Script / Conclusion

A solution such as this is not only relevant or applicable in France. Many other European countries (as well as other parts of the world), are going through the same process, the same loss of religious importance and resultant wastage of previously sacred space.

It is important to be aware of our history and where we are coming from. Destroying structures with amazing memories and intricate histories, such as gothic churches, shouldn't be considered the solution to the declining interest in the Christian faith.

In this project the goal is to show how to maintain these buildings from the past while making them useful and joyful for the future. A lot of the parameters from the past have been considered in the process and are subtly incorporated into the project.

Books:

Jack I. Nasar: The evaluative image of the city, 1997

Jeffrey Kipnis : Towards a New Architecture, 1923

Nicolas Molok : L'architecture parlante ou Ledoux vu par les romantiques

Robert Venturi: Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, 1966

Le Corbusier: Athens Charter, 1941

Sebastien Marot: L'Art de la mémoire, le territoire et l'architecture, 2010

Articles:

La révolution des paroisses - Chapitre IX. Mutations et résistances d'un monde ancien - Presses universitaires de Rennes

La révolution des paroisses - Chapitre VI. Transformations de l'espace sacré et magnificence du culte - Presses universitaires de Rennes

Marquer la ville - L'Église, la ville et la morphologie de l'espace public (1200-1600) - Éditions de la Sorbonne

Online articles :

<https://journals.openedition.org/assr/26062>

<https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Actualite/Des-eglises-a-la-recherche-d-une-nou->

