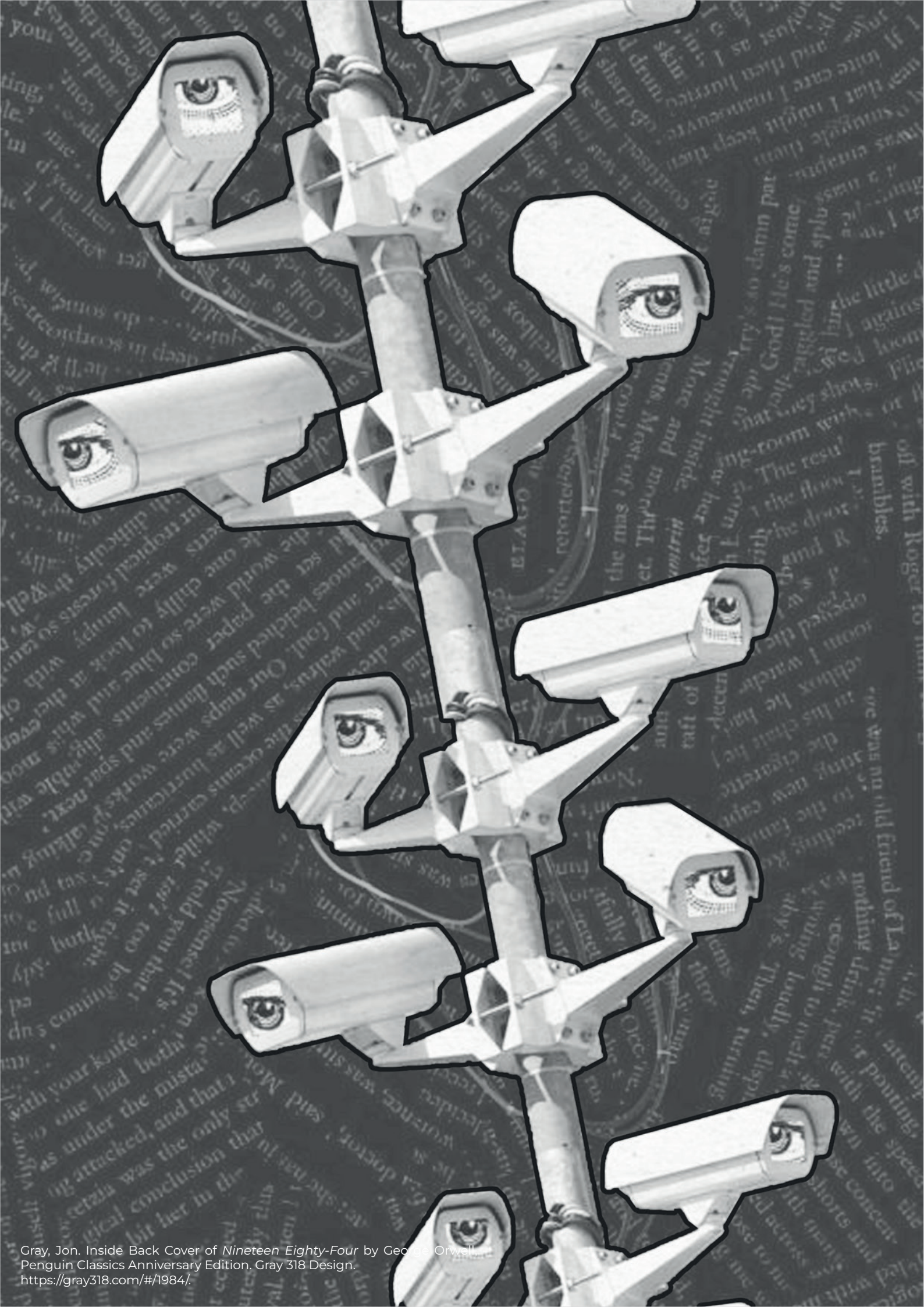




THRESHOLDS OF CONTROL

Transforming the Panopticon through Layered Visibility



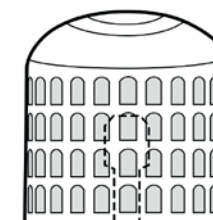
*2023 Archi-Hack Panopticon Competition
Site: Isle of Youth, Cuba
Building Area: 7,774.30 m2
Individual Work*

Proposed by Jeremy Bentham in 1791, the Panopticon transformed the rotunda into an apparatus of social control. A central inspection tower allowed a single observer to watch every inmate, while preventing inmates from knowing when they were being watched. Surveillance therefore operated through uncertainty rather than constant intervention: the possibility of observation was enough to produce self-regulation.

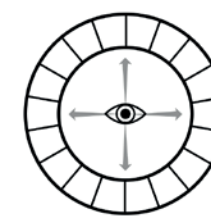
In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault reframed the Panopticon not simply as a prison type, but as a diagram of power. Its efficiency depended on a spatial asymmetry between seeing and being seen, allowing control to reach many individuals through a minimal visible authority. Panopticon prisons such as Cuba's Presidio Modelo demonstrate how architecture could individualize, enclose, organize, and expose its occupants.

The project extracts four operations from this model—individualization, enclosure, time-space correspondence, and controlled visibility—to examine how architecture structures relationships between surveillance, space, and power. Rather than reproducing the Panopticon's singular hierarchy, it asks how these operations might be redistributed within a contemporary campus building.

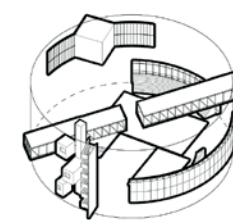
The prison's heavy exterior volume is retained, preserving the presence of the original institution, while its interior is reorganized as a more active and socially complex environment. Surveillance remains, but no longer moves in one direction from center to edge. Overlapping programs, circulation, and lines of sight create multiple positions from which occupants may observe and be observed. The Panopticon is thus transformed from a fixed instrument of discipline into a dynamic field of negotiated visibility.



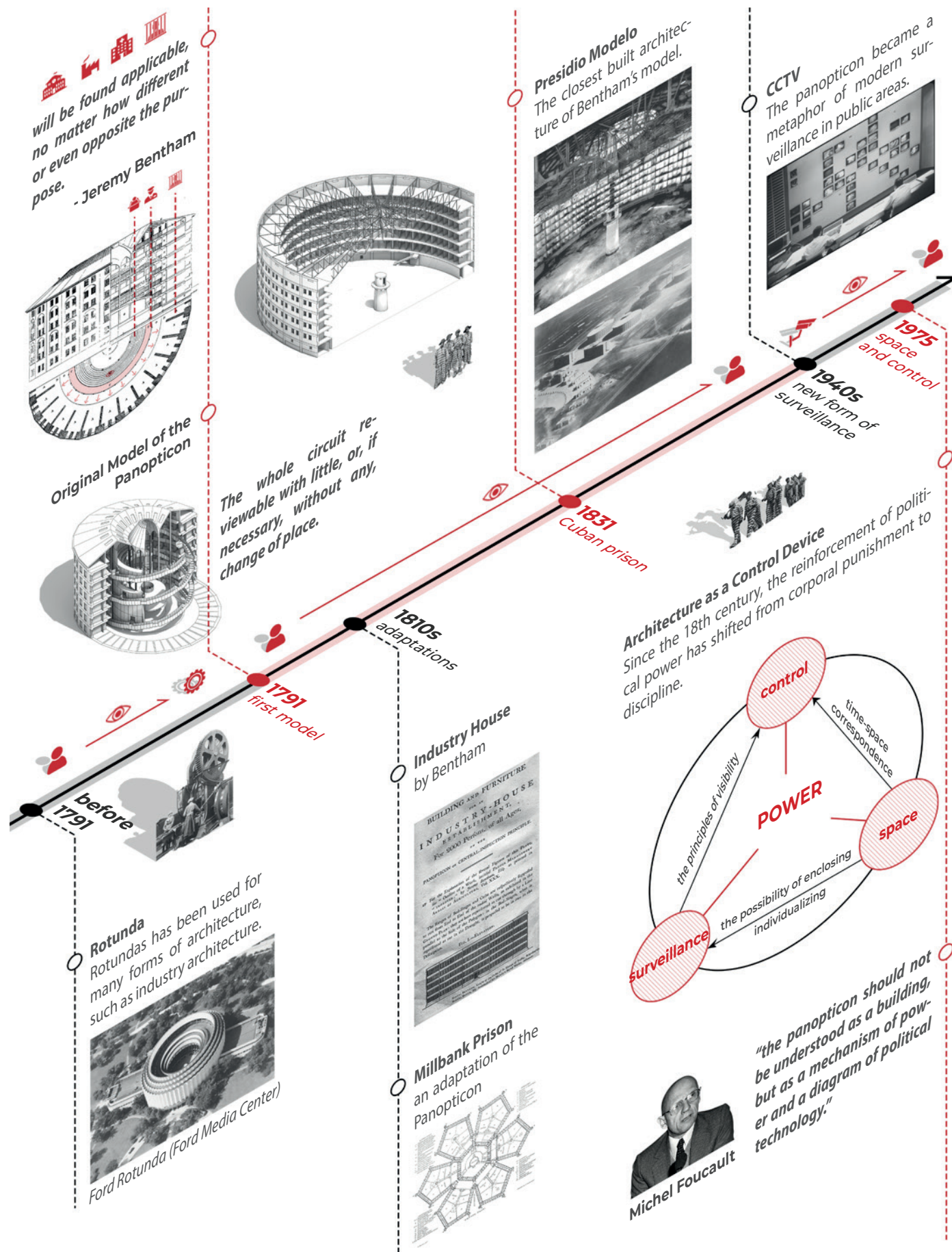
individualization in prison



seeing & being seen

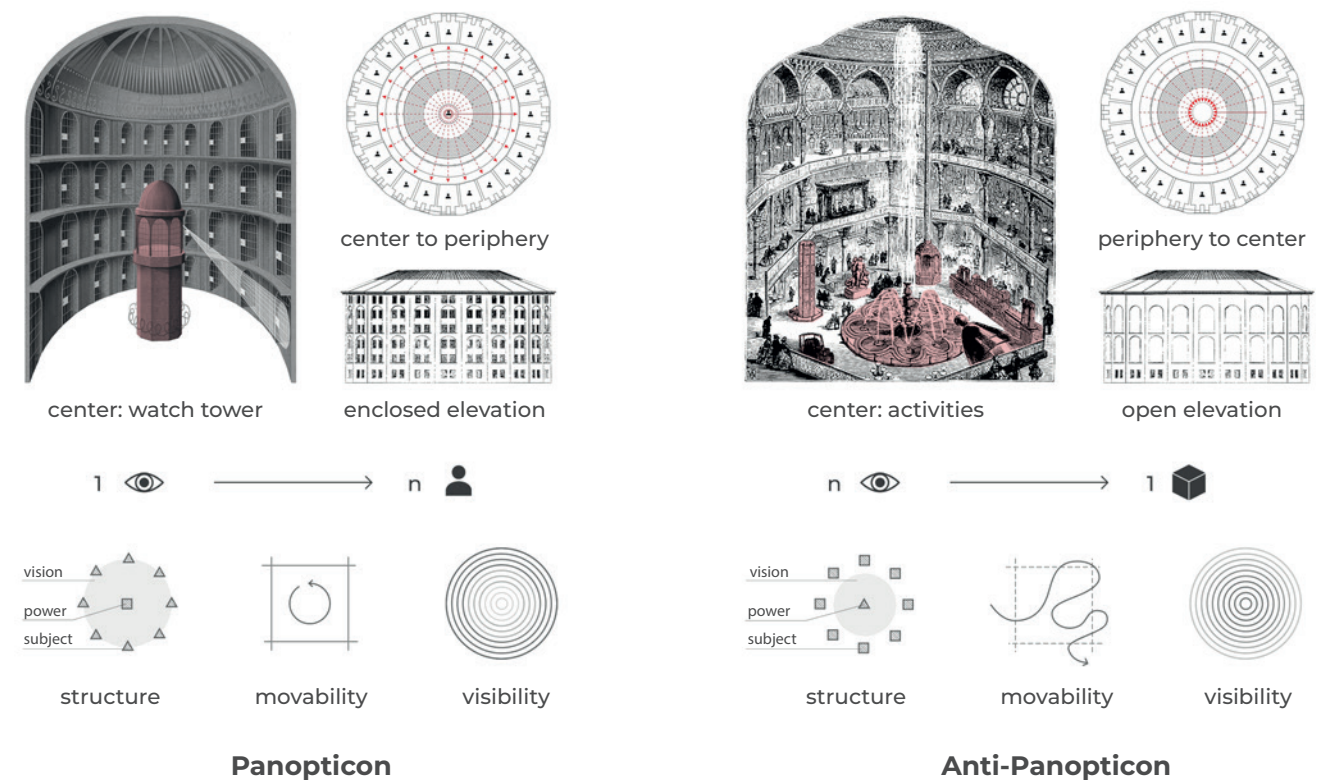


disruption & reinvention?



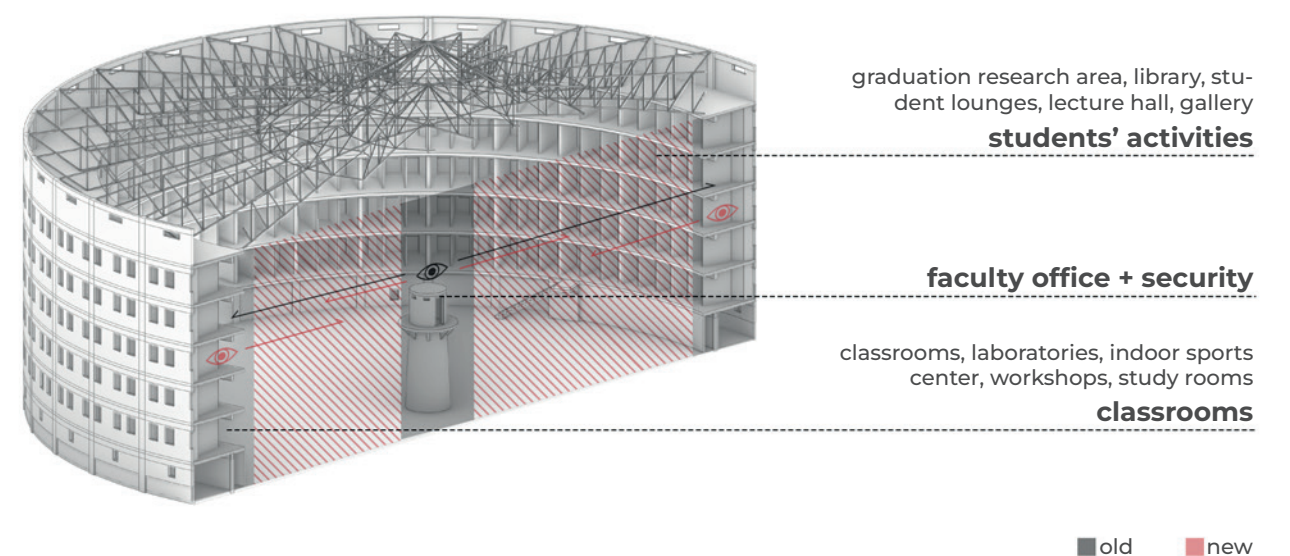
PANOPTICON: A SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL DEVICE

The panopticon separates the see/being seen dynamic: peripheral individuals are visible but can't see, while the central observer sees all. Bentham envisioned it for factories, hospitals, and schools. Later, Foucault state that the spatial character of the panopticon helps to achieve surveillance, and together they provide the material for discipline and the control of power.



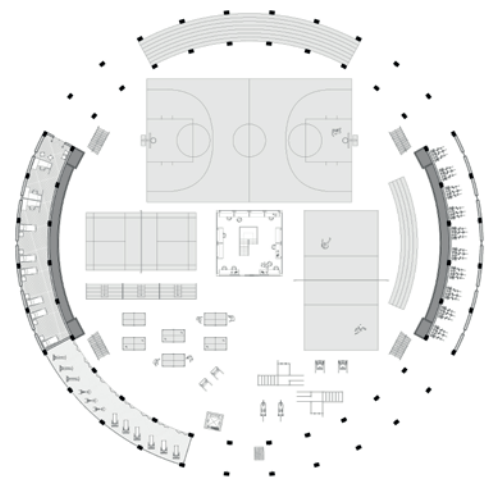
PANOPTICON AND ANTI-PANOPTICON: SUBJECT-OBJECT CONTRASTS

The reverse Panopticon emerges by altering core relationships in the original model. It changes the spatial arrangement and number of subjects and objects. The forward Panopticon optimizes control with minimal resources. In contrast, the reverse model enables 360° viewing of the object, offering enhanced visibility and observation potential.

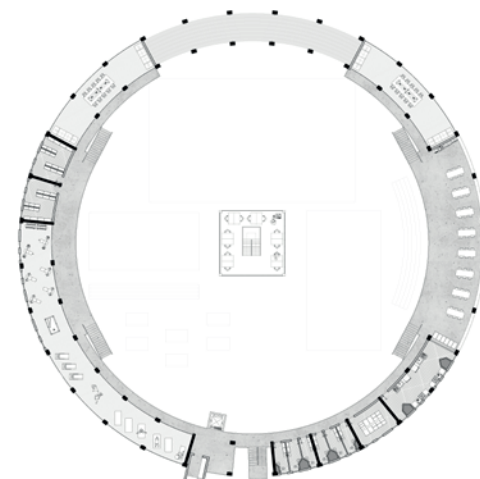


MULTIDIMENSIONAL SURVEILLANCE HIERARCHY FOR SCHOOLS

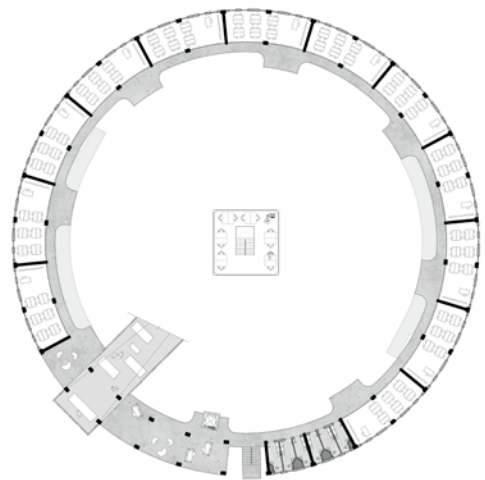
Combining forward and reverse Panopticon models creates a design suited for school spaces. This approach enriches the relationship between subjects and objects. New structural volumes are added to the original, enhancing surveillance hierarchy while improving flow and sightlines. These additions also create a more dynamic and engaging school environment.



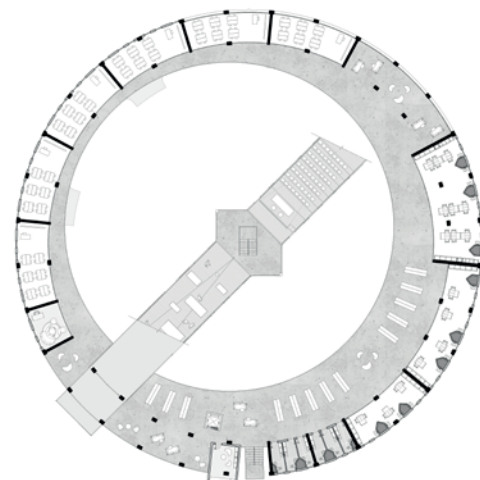
Ground Floor



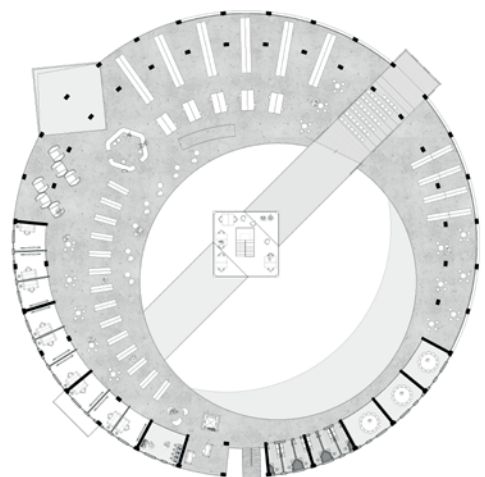
First Floor



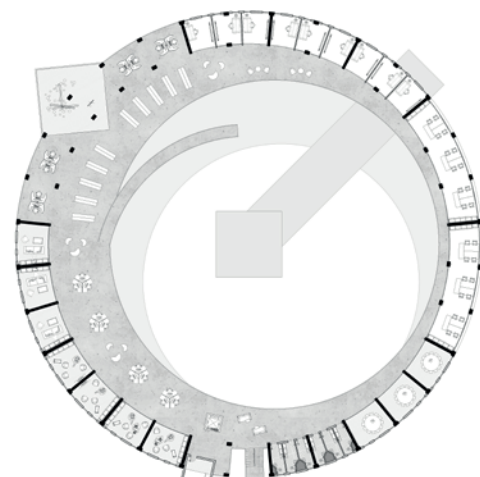
Second Floor



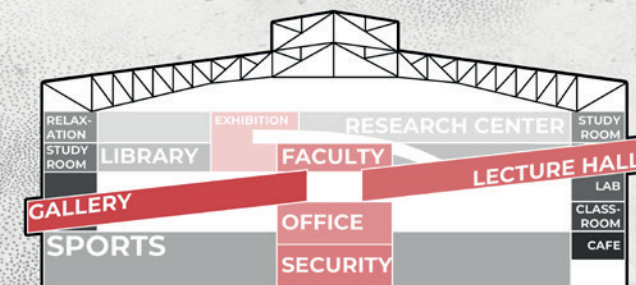
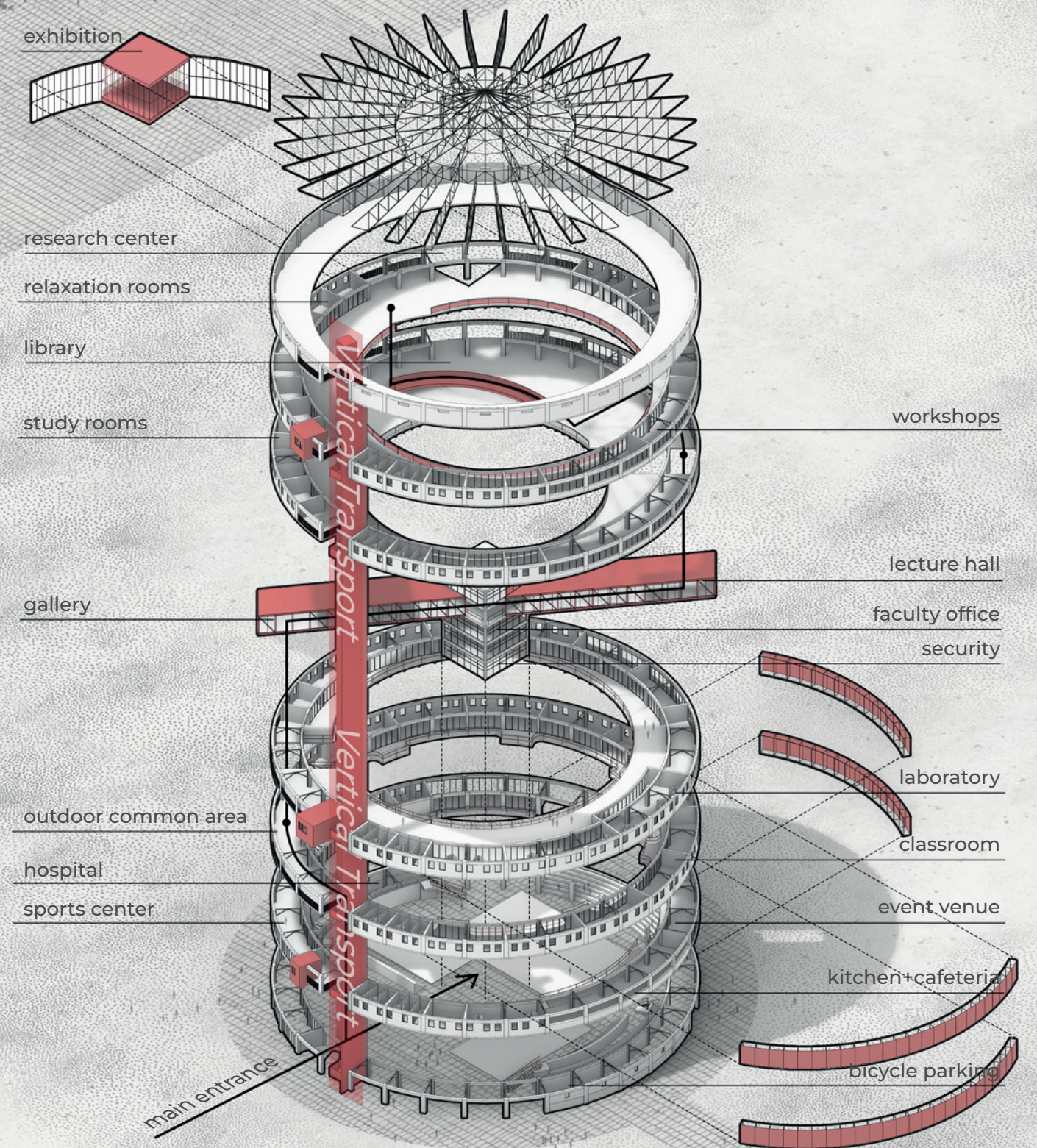
Third Floor



Fourth Floor

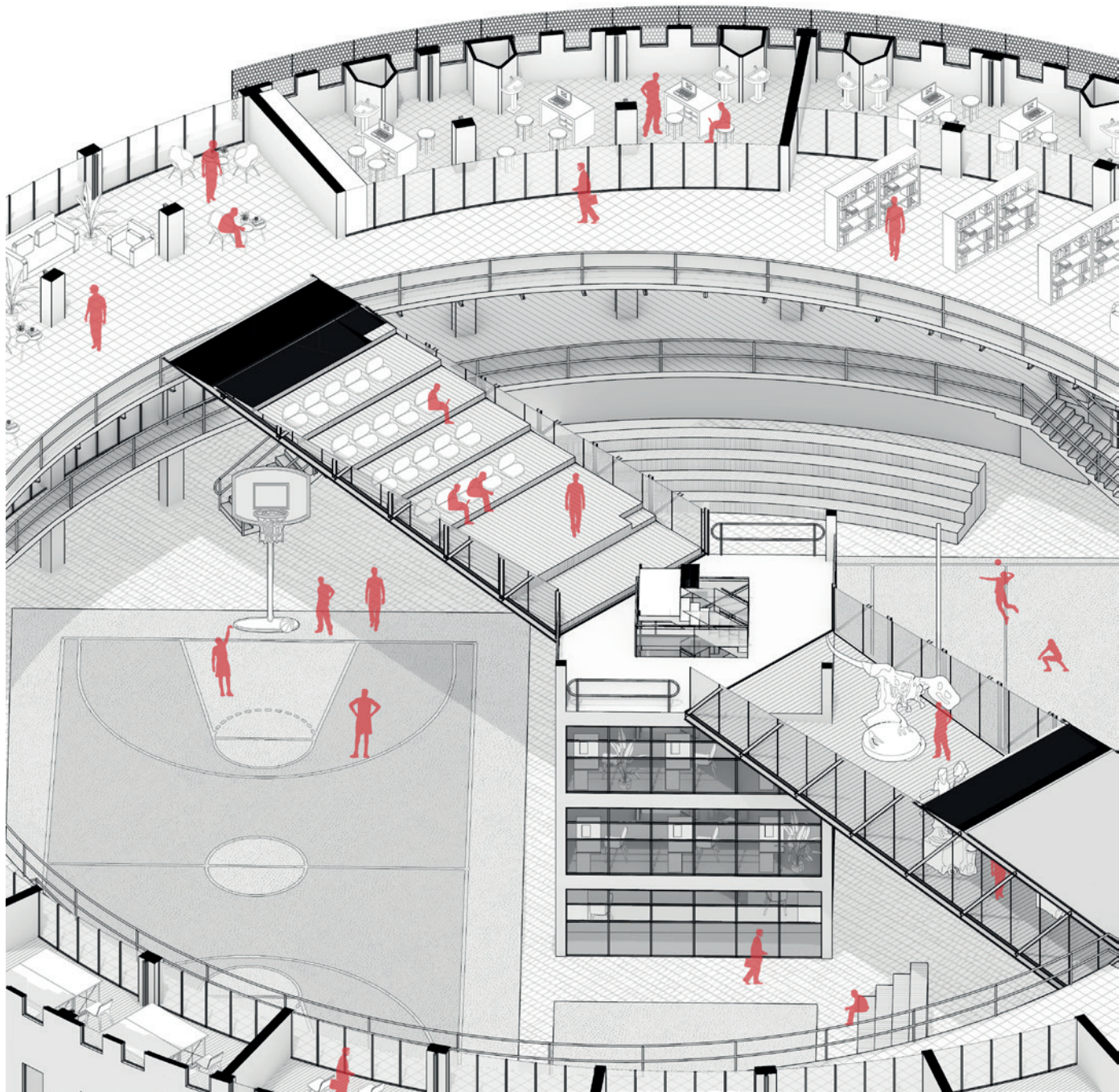


Fifth Floor

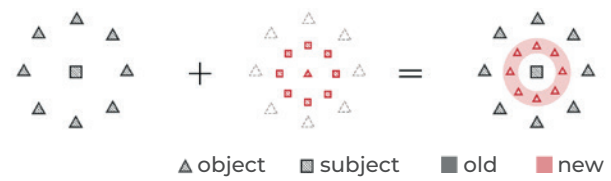


SURVEILLANCE-DRIVEN FUNCTIONAL LAYOUT

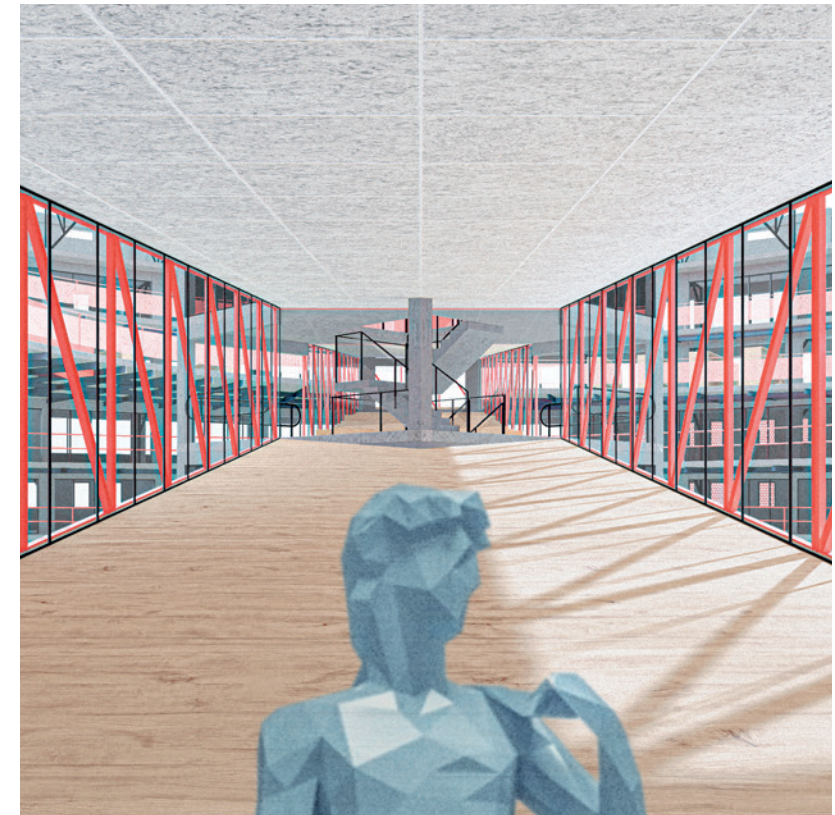
Functions are organized by height, with ground floors for low-privacy, high-surveillance areas and upper floors for private spaces like research and relaxation. The surveillance tower is relocated to staff rooms, while a central diagonal cube serves as a gallery and lecture space, enhancing flow and connecting spaces.

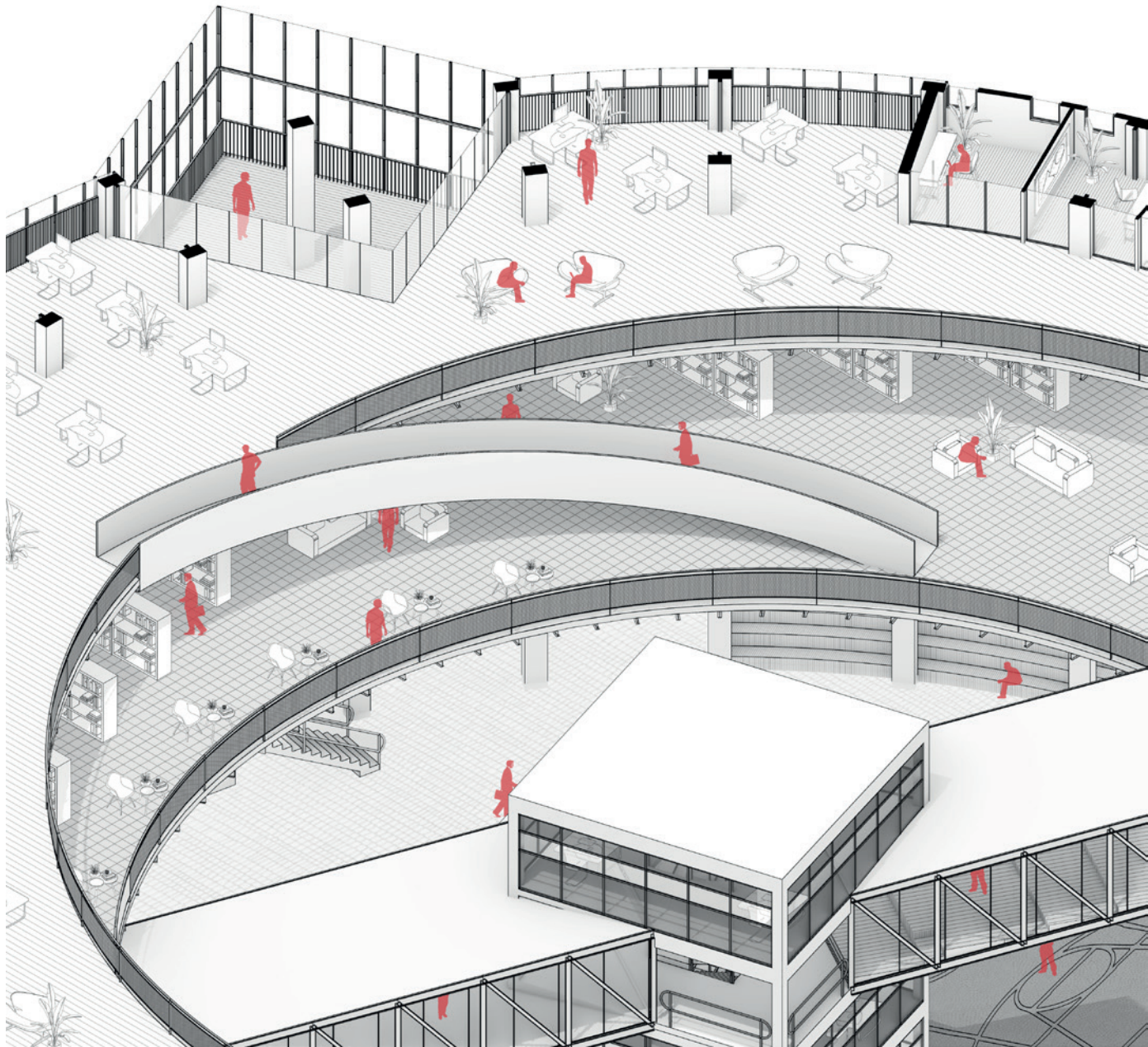


ADDITIONAL SURVEILLANCE LAYER FOR ACTIVITIES



The design combines forward and reverse panoramic models, with staff centrally located for monitoring and classrooms on the periphery. Student activities are placed between these zones, enabling 360-degree observation and energizing campus life for a dynamic, functional balance.

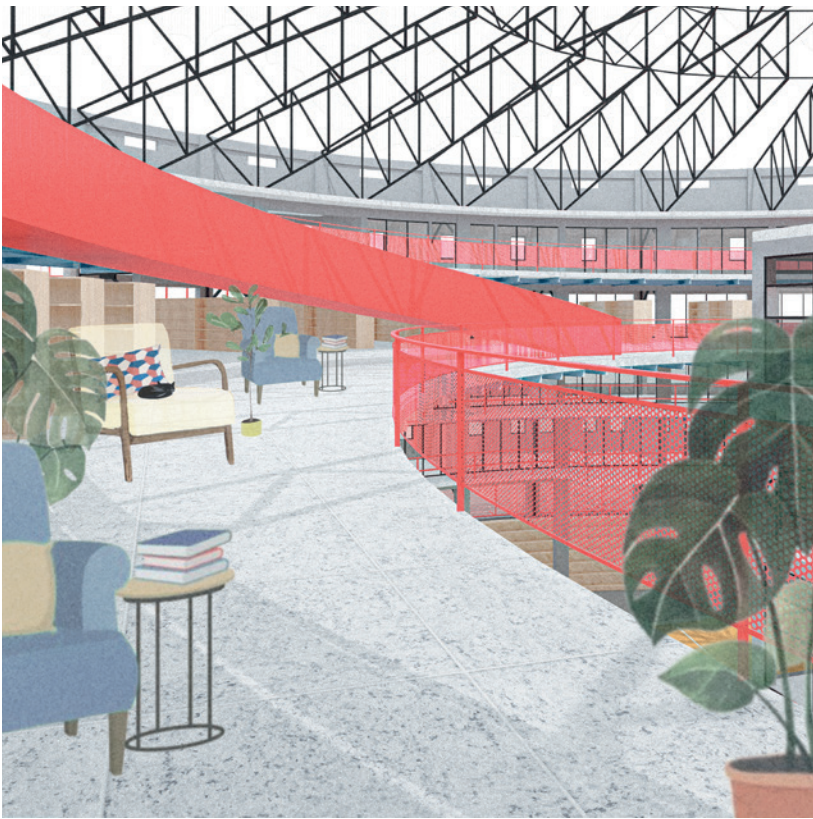




EMBEDDING BLOCKS TO ENRICH SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS



The design integrates functional blocks within the panoramic prison ring, breaking the rigid layout to enhance campus vitality. Externally, the original order is preserved, while internal blocks enrich spatial experiences, balancing historical preservation with improved functionality. This approach maintains the building's essence while enhancing user experience.



BRIDGING SEGREGATED SURVEILLANCE SPACES

A-A' Section Perspective View

1. Sports Center

2. Security

3. Faculty Office

4. Gallery

5. Lecture Hall

6. Event Venue

7. Classroom
8. Student Lounge

9. Study Room

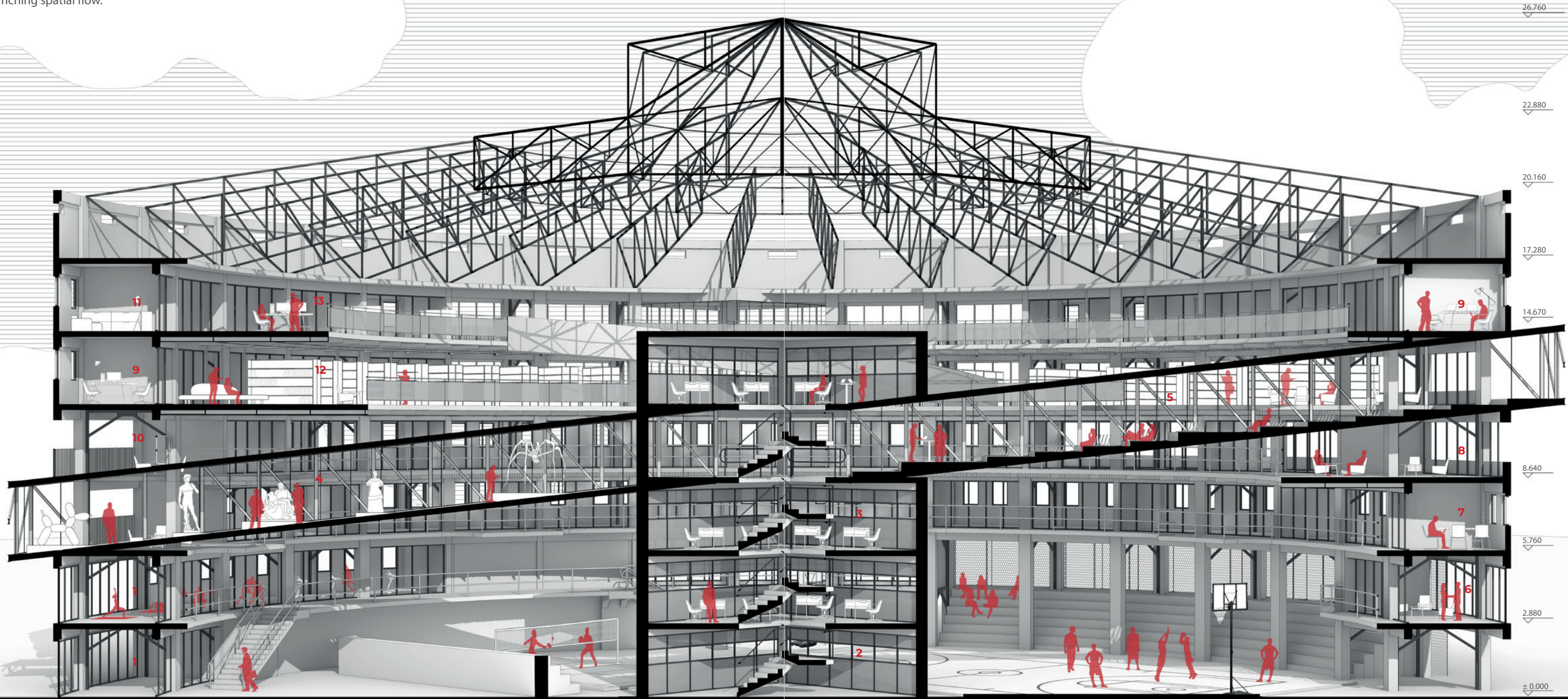
10. Outdoor Common Area

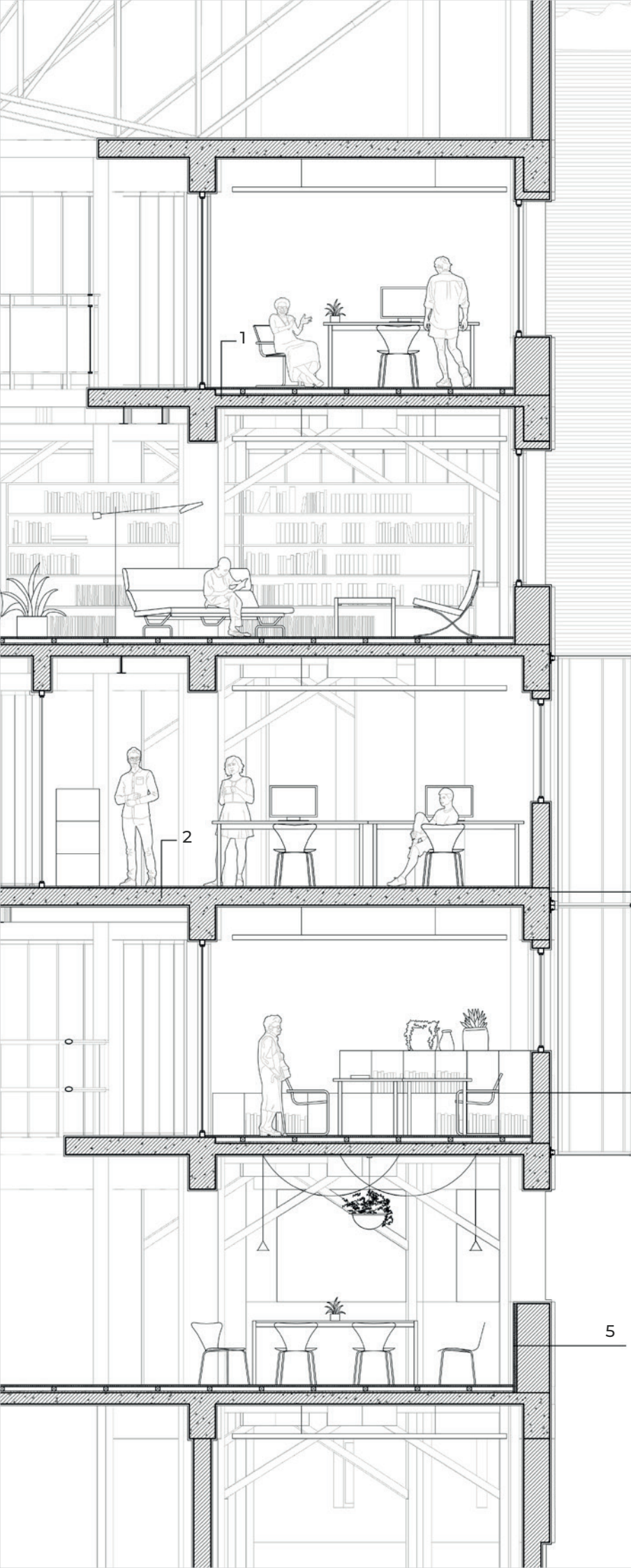
11. Relaxation Room

12. Library

13. Research Center

A 45-degree rectangular structure spans three floors, disrupting the center-periphery layout. It links the primary surveillance structure's subjects and objects while enhancing circulation. As the number of floors increases, the level of surveillance required for the functioning of the space decreases while student autonomy increases. Ground-floor sports activities are observed from first and second floors, which serves more public functions. Meanwhile, on the upper-level, the gallery and lecture hall become viewing objects for the main school functions, adding dynamic interactions and enriching spatial flow.





- 1 20 mm Glued Laminated Wood Flooring
50 mm x 50 mm Wood Joists
20 mm Cement Mortar Levelling Layer
130 mm Concrete Slab
20mm Cement Mortar Plaster
- 2 10 mm Self-Leveling Cement Floor
20 mm Cement Mortar Levelling Layer
130 mm Concrete Slab
20mm Cement Mortar Plaster
- 3 L 40x40mm 304 Stainless Steel, Bolt Rivets
50x50mm Square Steel Keel
L 40x40mm 304 Stainless Steel, Bolt Rivets
10mm Metal Perforated External Plate
- 4 20mm Cement Mortar Plaster
200 mm Concrete Wall
20mm Cement Mortar Plaster
Void
10mm Metal Perforated External Plate
- 5 20 mm Glued Laminated Wood Plate
20 mm Cement Mortar Levelling Layer
200 mm Concrete Wall
20mm Cement Mortar Plaster

PATCHWORKING EXTERIORS TO FIT FUNCTIONS

The original jail's small windows, reflecting the jail cells, are partially preserved in the new design. The façade opens in public areas, with the original façade dominating the mix. Interspersed blocks guide entry, highlighting the vibrant renovated interior.

