



UNESCO
World Heritage Centre
Special Projects Unit

Muhammad Ali Street Project

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Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo

Muhammad Ali Street Project

Final Report. Cairo, June 2014

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Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo - URHC

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Muhammad Ali Street

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Cairo has been a dominant political, cultural, commercial and religious capital throughout history playing a prominent role during Fatimids, reaching its golden age during Mamluks, and sustaining its cosmopolitan significance during Ottoman times. Due to its unique peculiar skyline, it has been known to scholars and historians as “City of the thousand minarets”.

Historic Cairo was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 recognizing its “absolutely unquestionable historical, archaeological and urbanistic importance.” Upon ICOMOS recommendation, the inscription was based on the following criteria:

1. Several of the great monuments of Cairo are incontestable masterpieces;
2. The historic centre of Cairo groups numerous streets and old dwellings and thus maintains, in the heart of the traditional urban fabric, forms of human settlement, which go back to the middle Ages;
3. The historic centre of Cairo constitutes an impressive material witness to the international importance on the political, strategic, intellectual and commercial level of the City during the medieval period.

URHC Goals and Objectives In July 2010, UNESCO-WHC launched the Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo (URHC) in the framework of a larger program of technical assistance to the Egyptian Government concerning the management of the World Heritage Site, focusing on the following objectives:

1. The preparation of a Conservation Plan for Historic Cairo’s “Core and Buffer Zones”, which would include the Management Plan required by the WH Operational Guidelines;
2. The establishment of an institutional framework to undertake and develop a sustainable urban conservation policy, promoting coordination and collaboration amongst different institutions, administrations and agencies concerned with the management of the World Heritage Site;
3. The creation of an appropriate and shared information platform for urban conservation.

To achieve these goals, an interdisciplinary team of local and international consultants are collaborating with the concerned bodies to develop a set of protection measures in order to uphold the site’s Outstanding Universal Value, to prevent further decay of the historic urban fabric and to enhance the socio-economic conditions of Historic Cairo.

Muhammad Ali Street

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The Study documented with a comprehensive survey of the southern end of Mohamed Ali Street, from Helmeya Street to Citadel square with the objective of making a proposal for the rehabilitation of the southern end of Mohamed Ali street -the 19th century dilapidated spine which used to provide access to Citadel square-, with an emphasis on the upgrading of commercial activities, services and streetscape.

Muhammad Ali Street

Muhammad Ali Street was built in the second half of the nineteenth century, within the framework of the new extension plan of Cairo by *Ismail Pasha* the ruler of Egypt. The street is connecting the new European style extensions of the city with the Mamluk part of the city. It starts from *Sultan Hasan* mosque and *Rumila* square till *Al Ataba Al Khadra* square, Passing by and crossing *Port-Said* Street (*Al Khalig Al Masri*).

The Study area is from the Mosque of *Sultan Hasan* till the intersection with *Al Helmiyya* street, about 216 meters long.

The Survey

The survey had been done by the means of Total station, and the use of 3D Photoscanning technique for measuring the facades of both sides of the street. For maps the survey based on the Cadastral maps of the study area with updating on the existent situation.

The Existent Situation

The Land Use

By reviewing the site it is very clear that most of the ground floor functions are shopping, while most the upper floors functions are residential. Few of the blots were not in use due to structural problems in upper floors while on its ground floor still used by shops. On the other hands few plots are totally empty, some of them are used as storage area and some are just empty.

The Morphology

The “Tanzim Line”; Street Alignment.

In the 70's, It was decided to change the street alignment back 3.5 meters for wider street, waiting for old historic buildings with arcades that cover the sidewalks to be collapsed or demolished. Four groups of arcades in the study area were demolished, replaced with new structures with double height columns, with ground and first floor back 3-3.5 meter from the new street alignment. This new imitating arcades doesn't give the same function because it lacks the continuity of the side walk which was in the original sit-

uation. There are few left from the historic arcades of the street, they give a repetitive pattern for the street from part to part. They have almost the same morphology with upper floors in a harmony with each other, with vertical sense opening and wooden new Mashrabiyya alike terraces.

Now the decree for street alignment was canceled by the government to conserve the existing historic elements in the street.

Openings

For the historic structures in the street, windows are mostly vertical with a ratio of 1:3-1:4. The historic buildings are covers with wooden shutters with Italian louvers colored in green or brown. Newer buildings have a similar opening but in square sense around 1.4 meter width by 1.2 meter high. Few buildings changed it into aluminum-glass windows with some with plastic folded shade to preserve privacy. Most of the terraces are closed by aluminum-glass sliding frames in a way to use the terrace to extend the living area of the apartment.

The Building Heights

There are variant heights due to different building lows along the street. Ten buildings are in the range of 20-21 meters high, while newer buildings are not more than 15-16 meters high. Old historic buildings are 17-18 meters high. Few buildings are 12 meters high, four buildings are ground floor high and one plot is empty with surrounding walls.

Building Conditions

There are few buildings in good condition with good finishing and no problems on the façade, they are the newest ones. As we are going back buildings are going in bad condition. Four buildings were not plastered leaving the concrete and bricks exposed. Only two buildings had been designed in fine bricks finish, all the others were plastered in different light colors. All colors tend to be grays due to dusty weather and the lack of maintenance.

Air conditioning outlet units are everywhere. It is part of the pattern of the façades, but an irregular one. Its location differs from one apartment to another. Not every flat has it, but none of the façades is totally empty from at least one of them.

Shops

Shops are the owners of the sidewalk, that what they believe. Most shops are occupying the side walk in front of them. On the other hand every shop decorates its own façade and banner without any restrictions or regulation. It has to be as big as possible even if it will take other floor with it. In a brief sentence the morphology of shops are in a complete mess.

Paving

Paving of the sidewalks needs a lot of replacement, alignment and design for levels. In most cases each shop designs its own level and paving materials. Different kinds of cement tiles are used while some of them are broken due to its poor properties.

Proposal for Rehabilitation

The proposal is based on the following main guidelines:

Land Use

It is recommended to determine the use of the buildings within the housing use and shops for the ground floor only. This will preserve the image of the area and protect it against grand shopping malls which became a new trend in Cairo nowadays. This new mega stores could have a bad effect on the traffic due to the parking in front of it.

Tanzim Line

New constructions may have the original street alignment, with arcades on the side walk. On the other hand, reintroducing the arcades on its original location according to the 1937 cadastral map. Not all the arcade, just their façade to avoid the connections with the new buildings. This will retain back the part of the original image of the street.

Shops

Regulate shops banners in a unify size of 75 centimeters high and the complete width of the shop. Each building will have one same level of banners. No banner should be extending off the plane of the façade. It should be at

most at the same plan of it. All the ground floor façades will be covered by stone tiles to give a base for the building and to resist the erosion due to the use of the shops. Shops should be limited to its facades not occupying the sidewalk in front of them.

Facades

1. Modifying the façades with minimal changes of the structure. It can be adding some wooden elements to maintain the vertical sense of the opening.
2. Repainting the façades following a limited selected color palette.
3. Replacing the aluminum-glass windows and frames with simple *Mashrabiyya* wooden frames and removing all the plastic shading tents.
4. Design a new host for A/C outlets with wooden frames and simple *Mashrabiyya* filling with a fixing place under the windows; it can be used also as a flower box on top of the A/C units.
5. Restoring old deteriorated buildings.

Paving

Paving should be unifying along the street sidewalks. Using hard paving bricks with same design pattern along the street. A special design for trees according to its existent location.

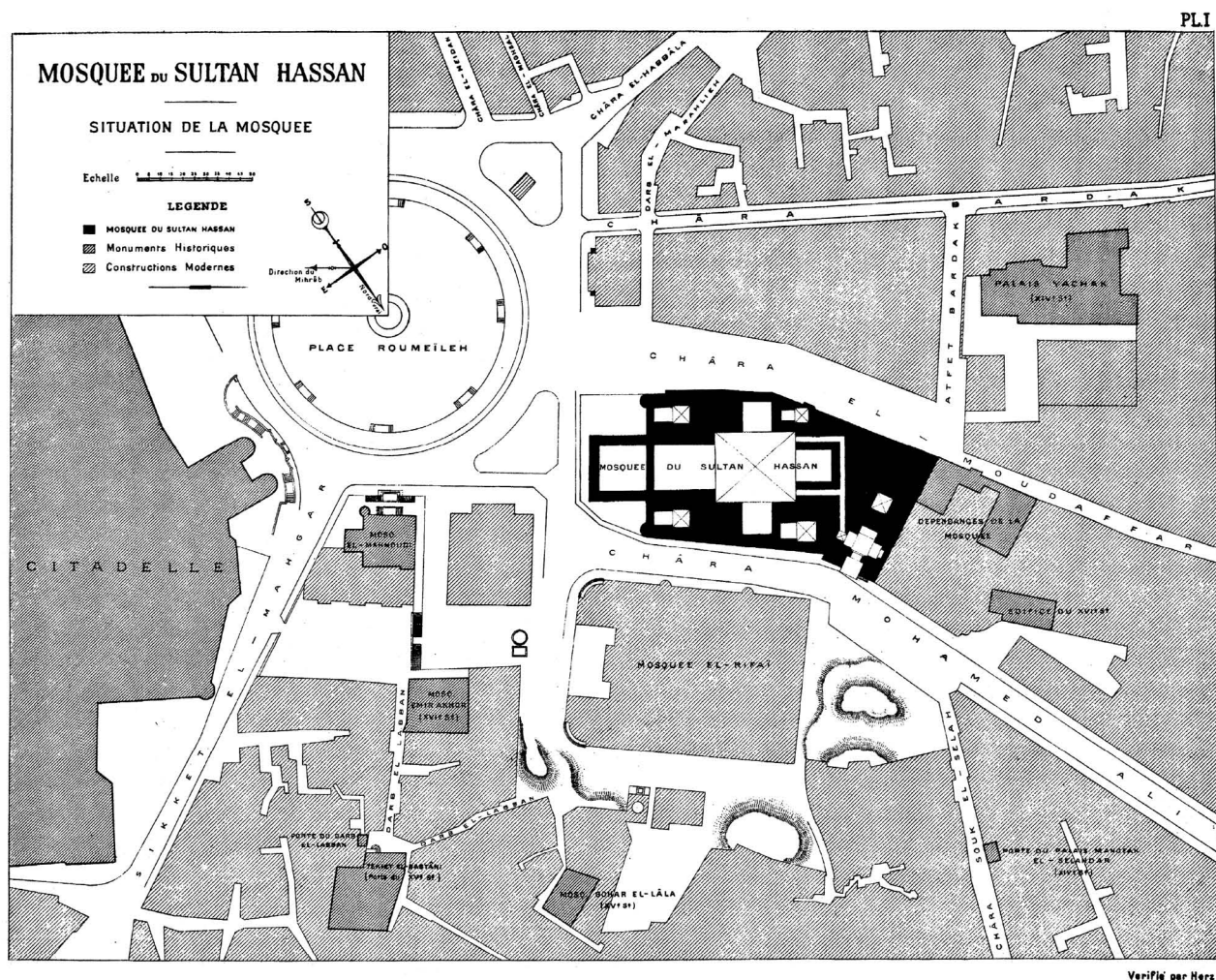
Street Furniture

1. Creating lighting elements that in homogeneous with the street style.
2. Creating waist collecting elements that corresponding with the needs of the people.
3. Creating benches for seating with shade for bus-stops.

Traffic

Changing the traffic in this part of the street one way going to “Port-Said” street.

By reviewing and documentation of the excavation in the north side of *Sultan Hasan* mosque, the remaining structure shows that properly belong to an ottoman wikala, it shows a corner of inner court with parts of shops surrounding it. By reviewing the *Sultan Hasan* book by Hertz Pasha, it describes the location of the excavation as an old structure from XVII century.



Muhammad Ali Street

شارع

محمد علي





F4.1. The Proposal; Eastern Facade
1/200



F4.2. The Proposal; Eastern Facade (Arcades)
1/200

- Red Brick finish
- Un-plastered facade
- Air Condition Outlet
- Banner
- Shop's Shutters
- Shop's Rolling Shutters
- Building Entrance
- Glass



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مركز التراث العالمي
وحدات المشاريع الخاصة

The Urban Documentation of
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Cairo, Egypt
التوثيق الحضري لشوارع
محمد علي
القاهرة

The Proposal;
Street Facades

Scale: 1/200

Date: 4/2014

Survey by: S. Laila & M. Youssef
Drawn by: T. Al Murri

Photocopy by: T. Al Murri

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F4



F_{3.1} The Proposal; Western Facade
1/200

- Red Brick finish
- Un-plastered facade
- Air Condition Outlet
- Banner
- Shop's Shutters
- Shop's Rolling Shutters
- Building Entrance
- Glass



F_{3.2} The Proposal; Western Facade, (Arcades)
1/200

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The Proposal;
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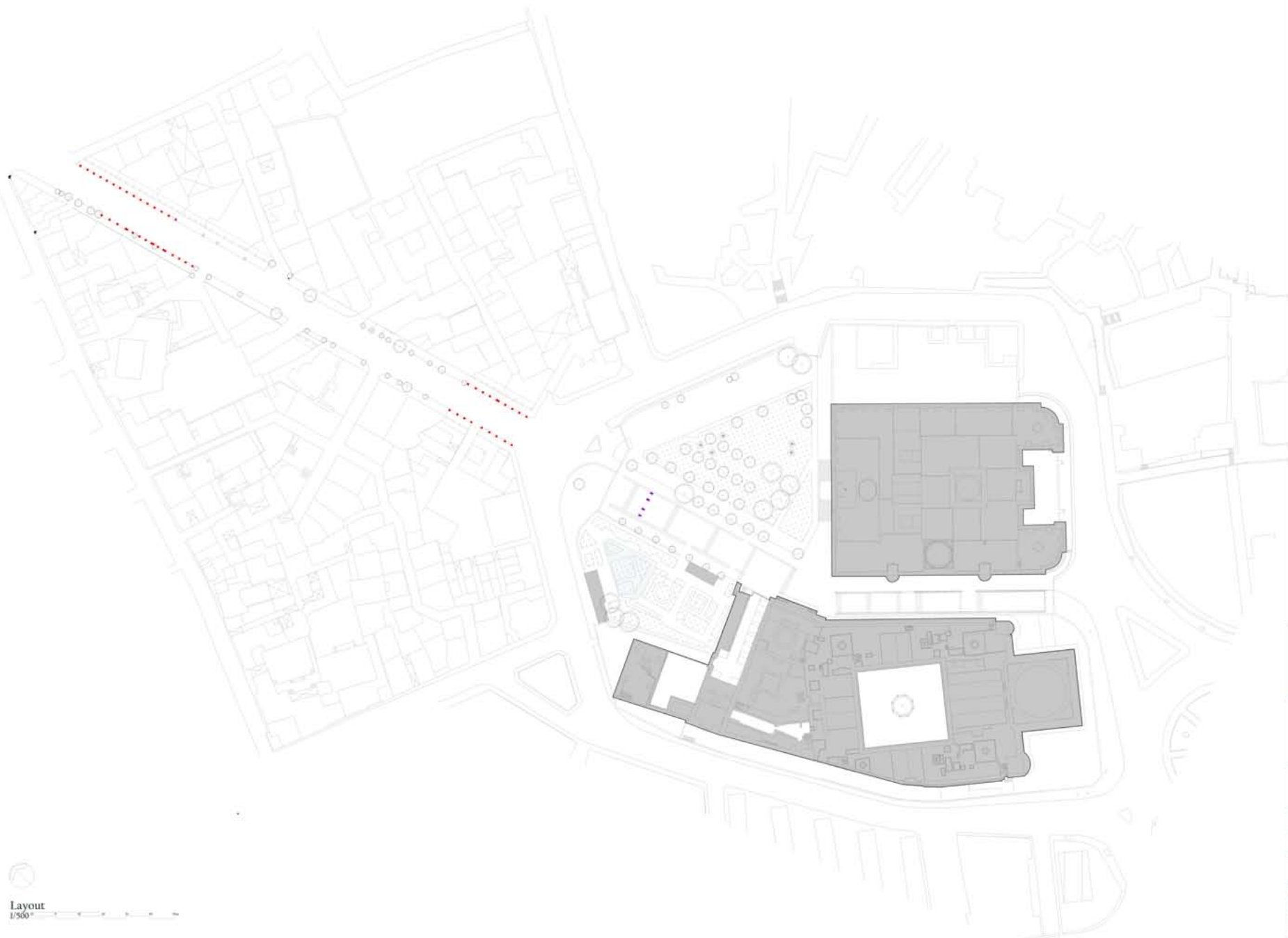
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- New Arcades
- Gate to be Removed
- Excavations



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محمد علي
القاهرة مصر

Layout; Proposal

Scale: 1/500

Date: 4/2014

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Drawn by: S. Lashin, M. Yassin & T. Al Murr

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Urban Regeneration Project for
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B



F₁ The Morphology; Eastern Facade
1/200

- Red Brick finish
- Un-plastered facade
- Air Condition Outlet
- Banner
- Shop's Shutters
- Shop's Rolling Shutters
- Building Entrance
- Glass



F₂ The Morphology; Western Facade
1/200



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The Morphology;
Street Facades

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F₁₋₂



- Empty
- Bad
- Fair
- Good
- Excavations



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The Morphology; Building Conditions

Scale: 1/500

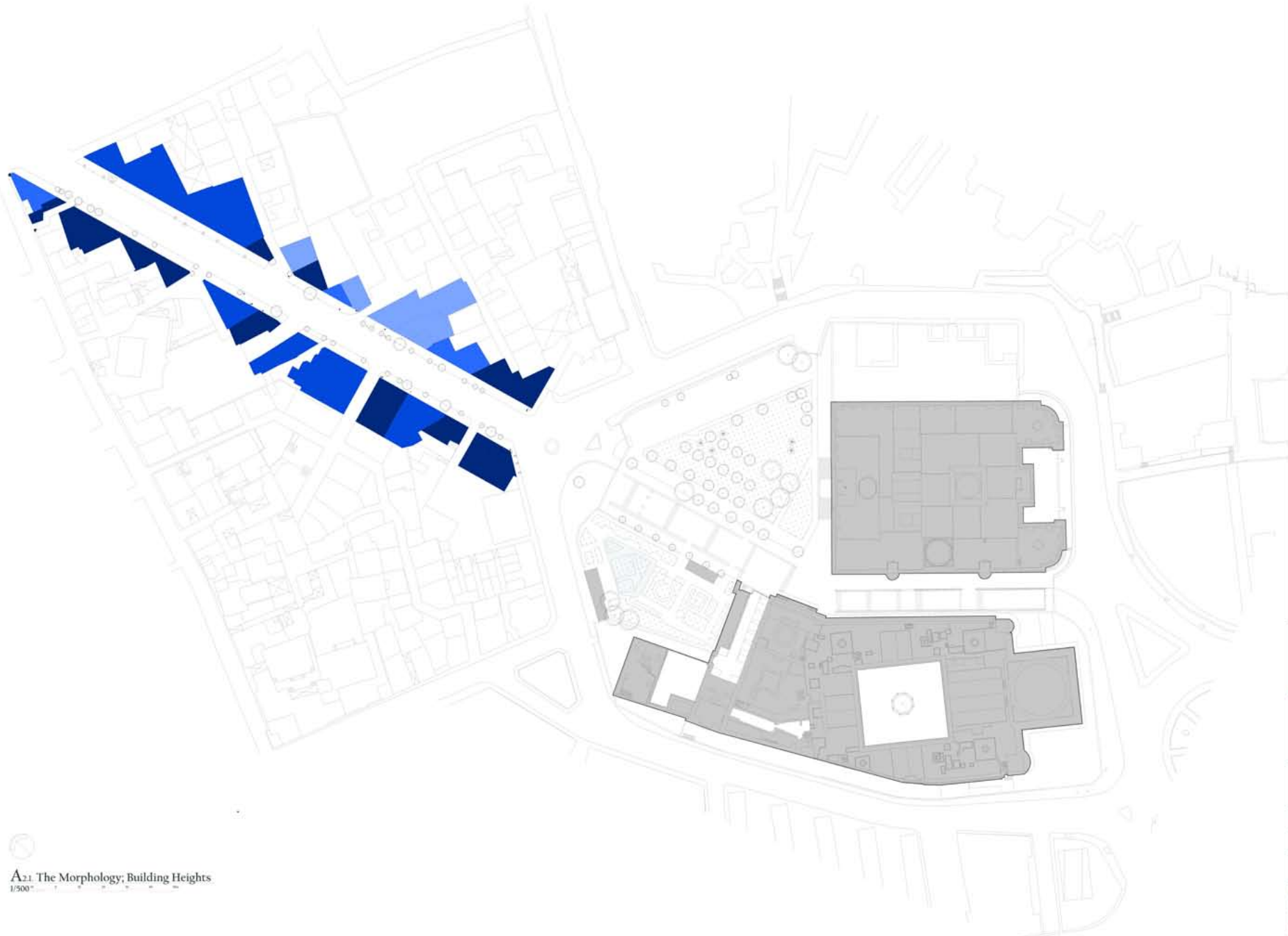
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- Empty
- Ground Floor
- 1-2 Stories
- 3-4 Stories
- 5 Stories & More
- Excavations



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The Morphology; Building Heights

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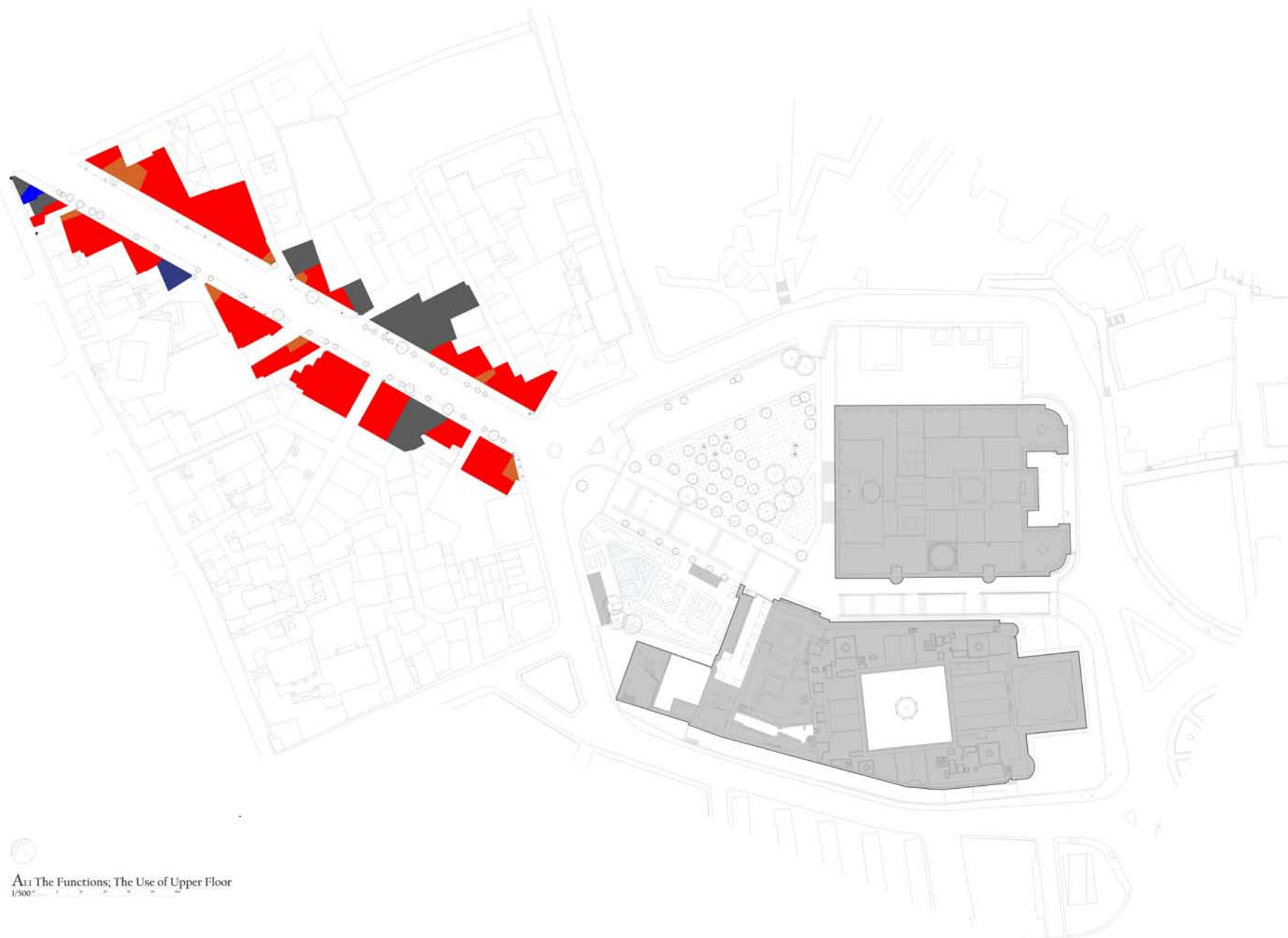
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The Functions; Upper Floor

1/500



- Housing
- Office/Clinic
- Shopping
- Storage
- Not in Use
- Excavations



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The Functions; The Use of Upper Floor

Scale: 1/500

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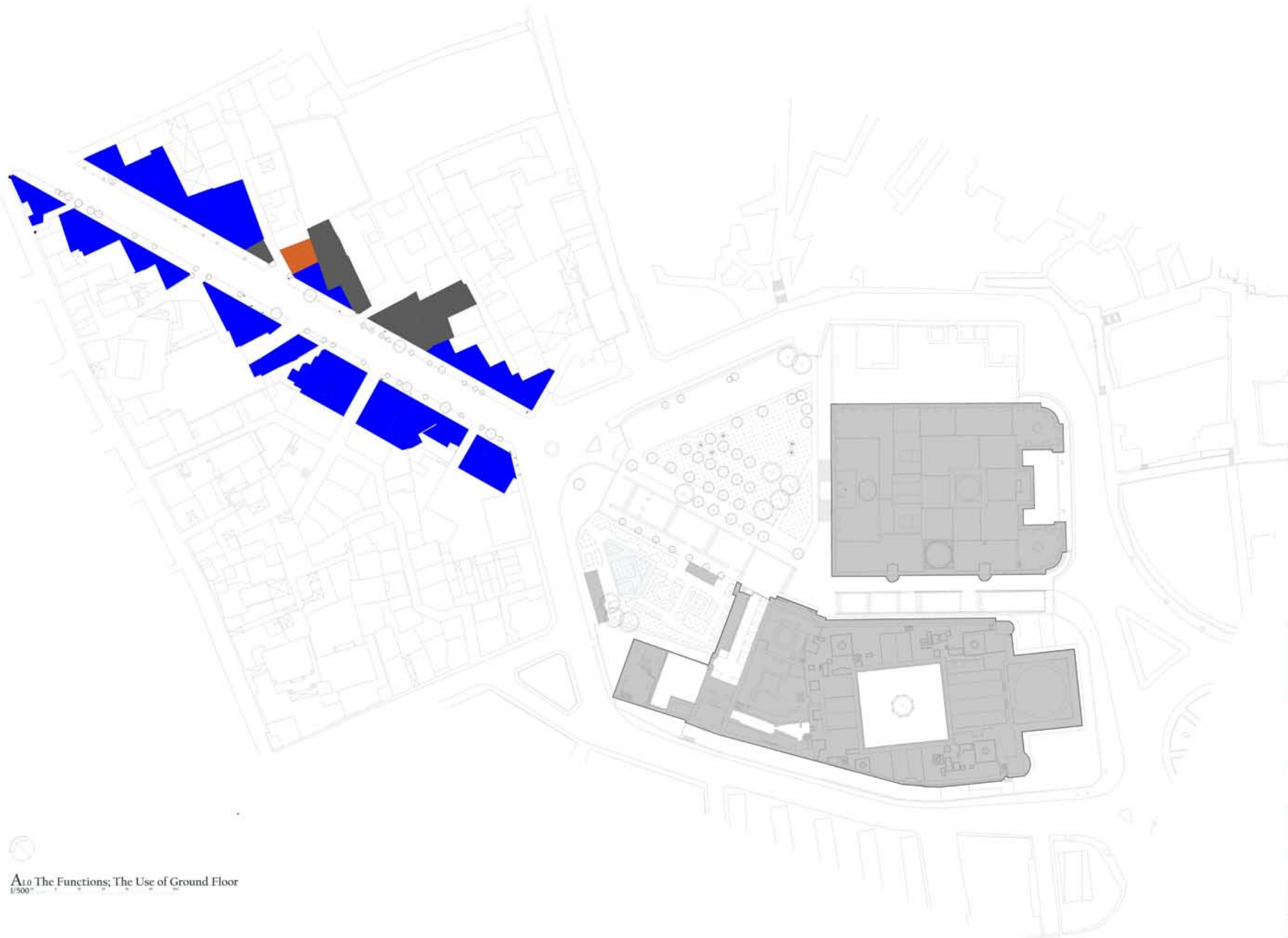
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A1.1 The Functions; The Use of Upper Floor

1/500



- Housing
- Office/Clinic
- Shopping
- Storage
- Not in Use
- Excavations



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The Functions; The Use of Ground Floor

Scale: 1/500

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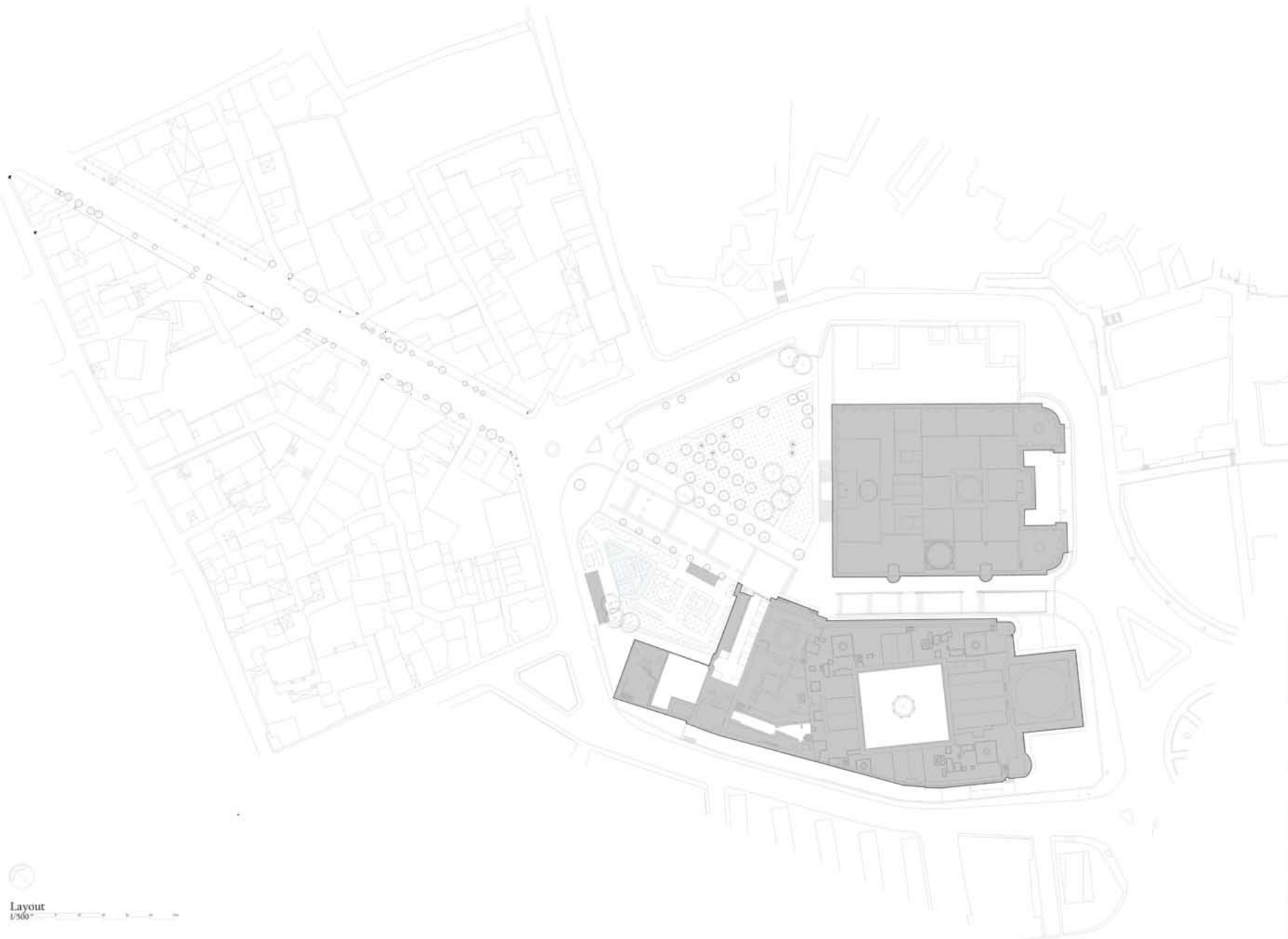
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استشاري الحفاظ على التراث العمراني



A1.0 The Functions; The Use of Ground Floor
1/500



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Layout

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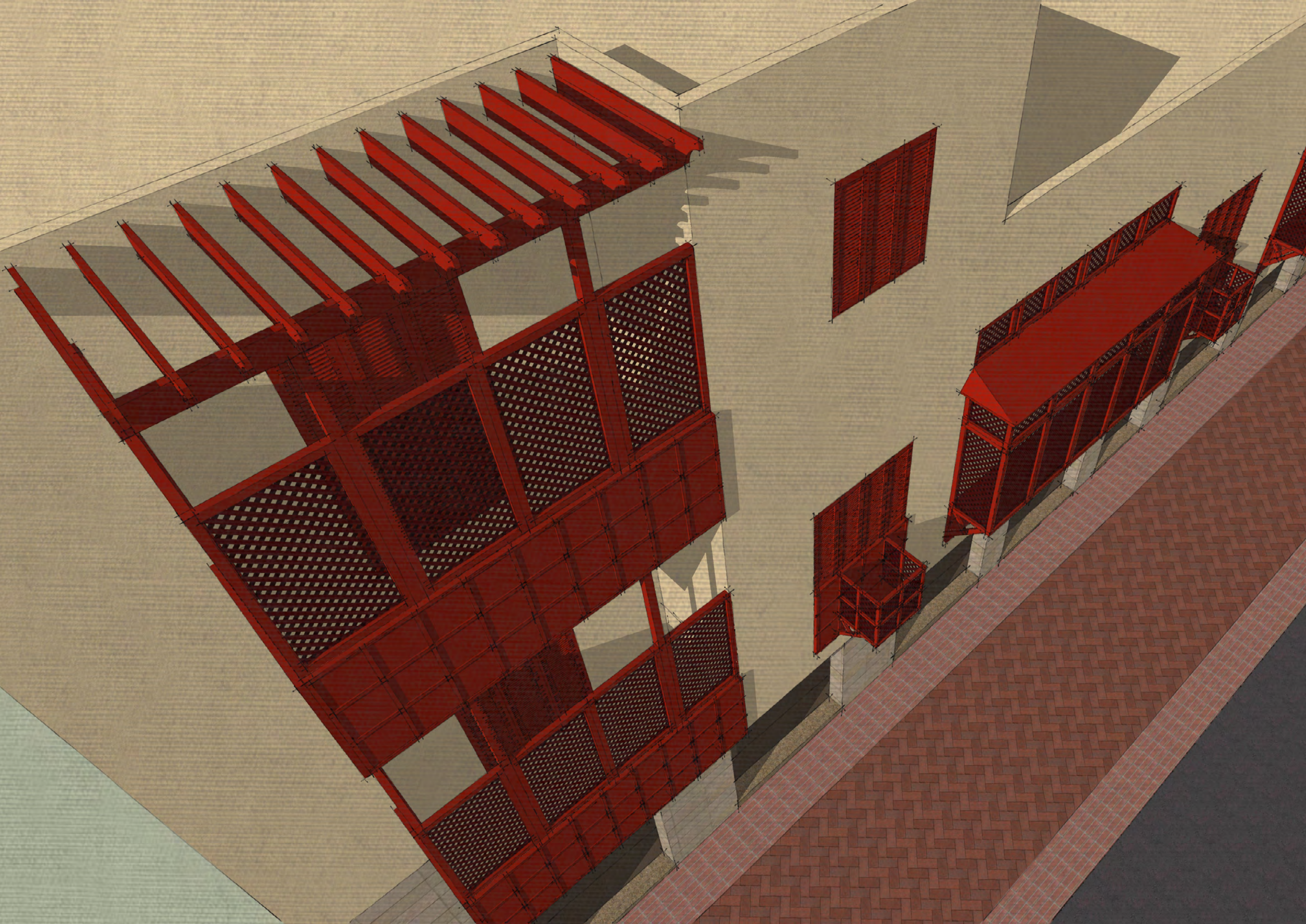


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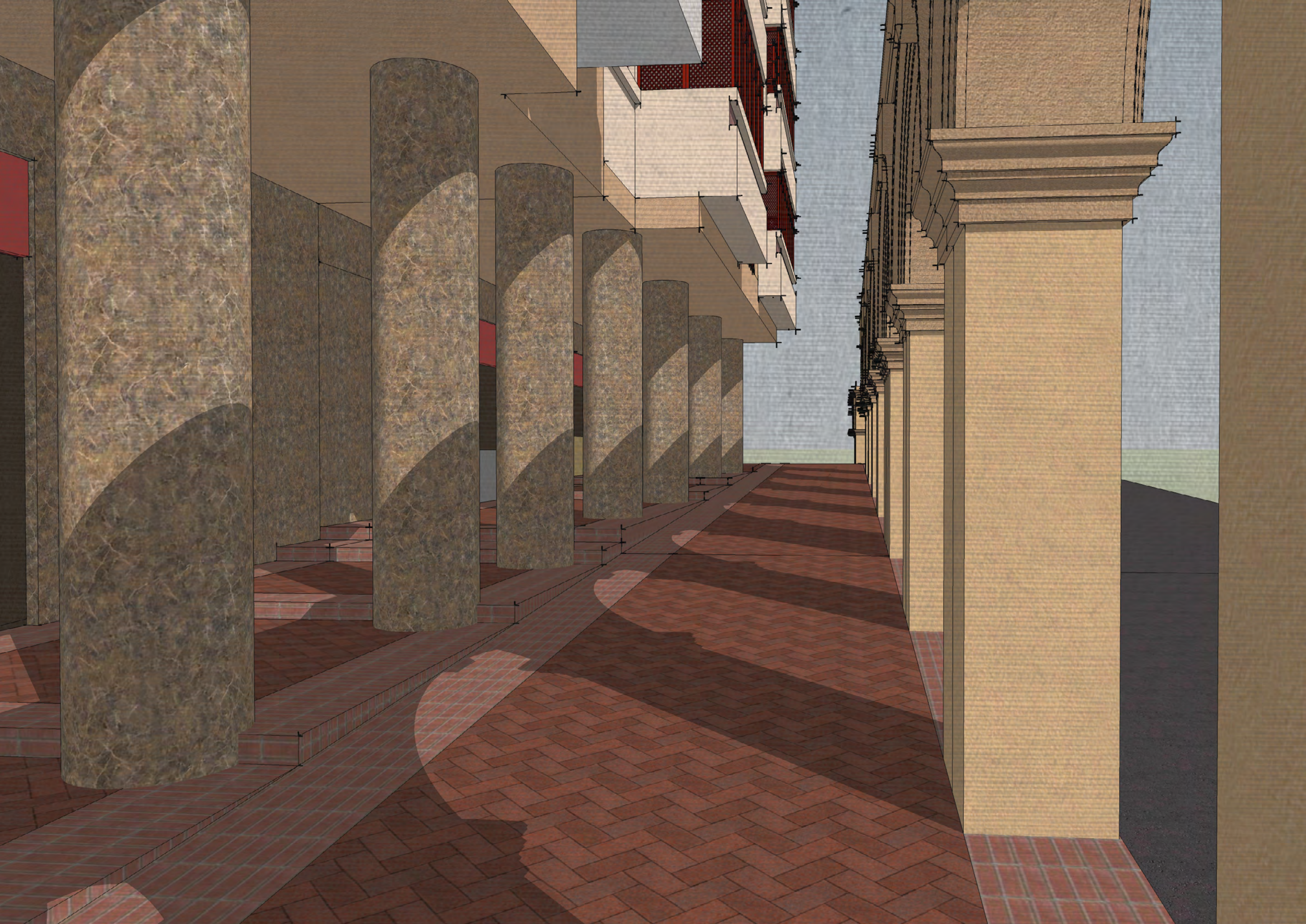
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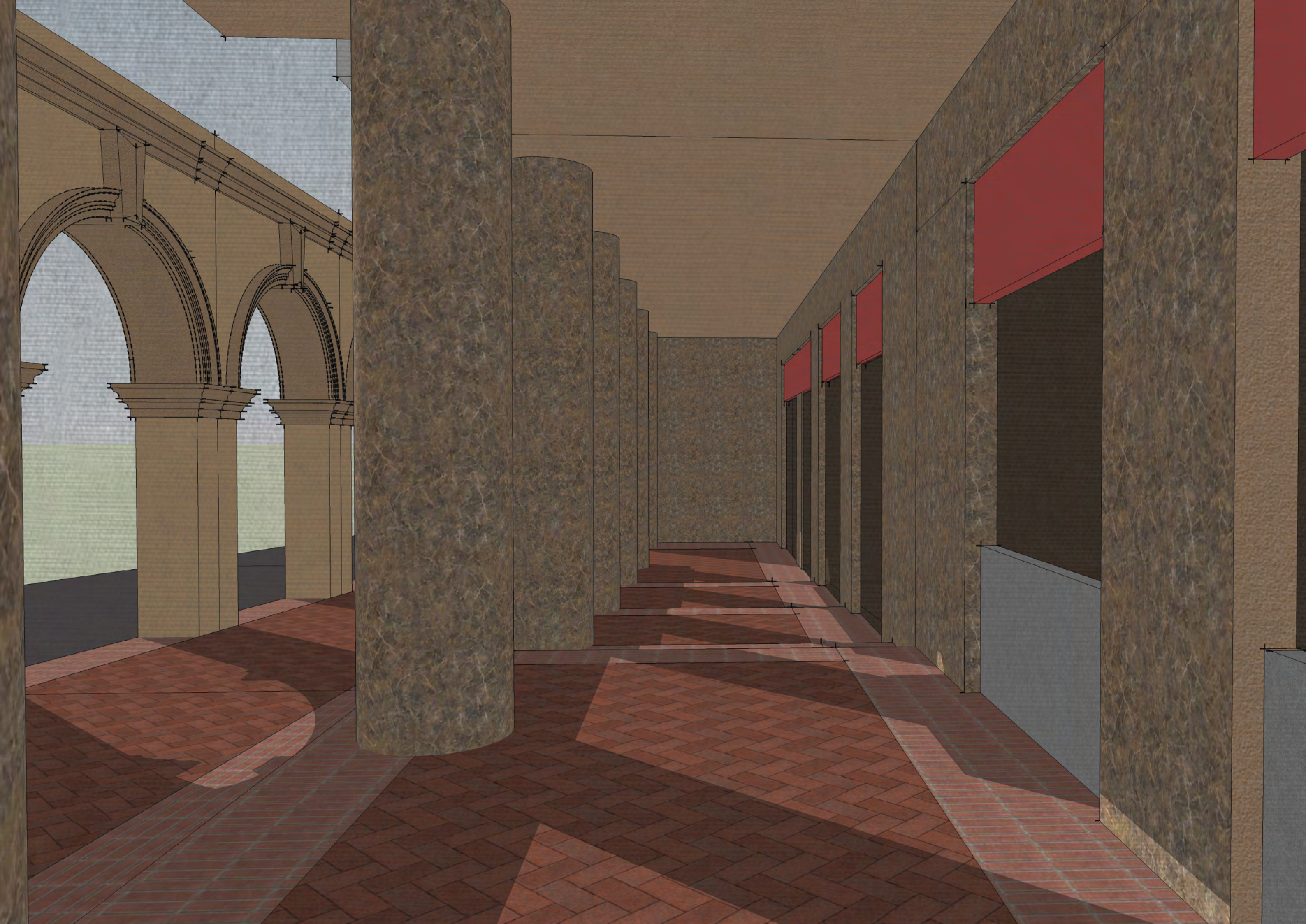


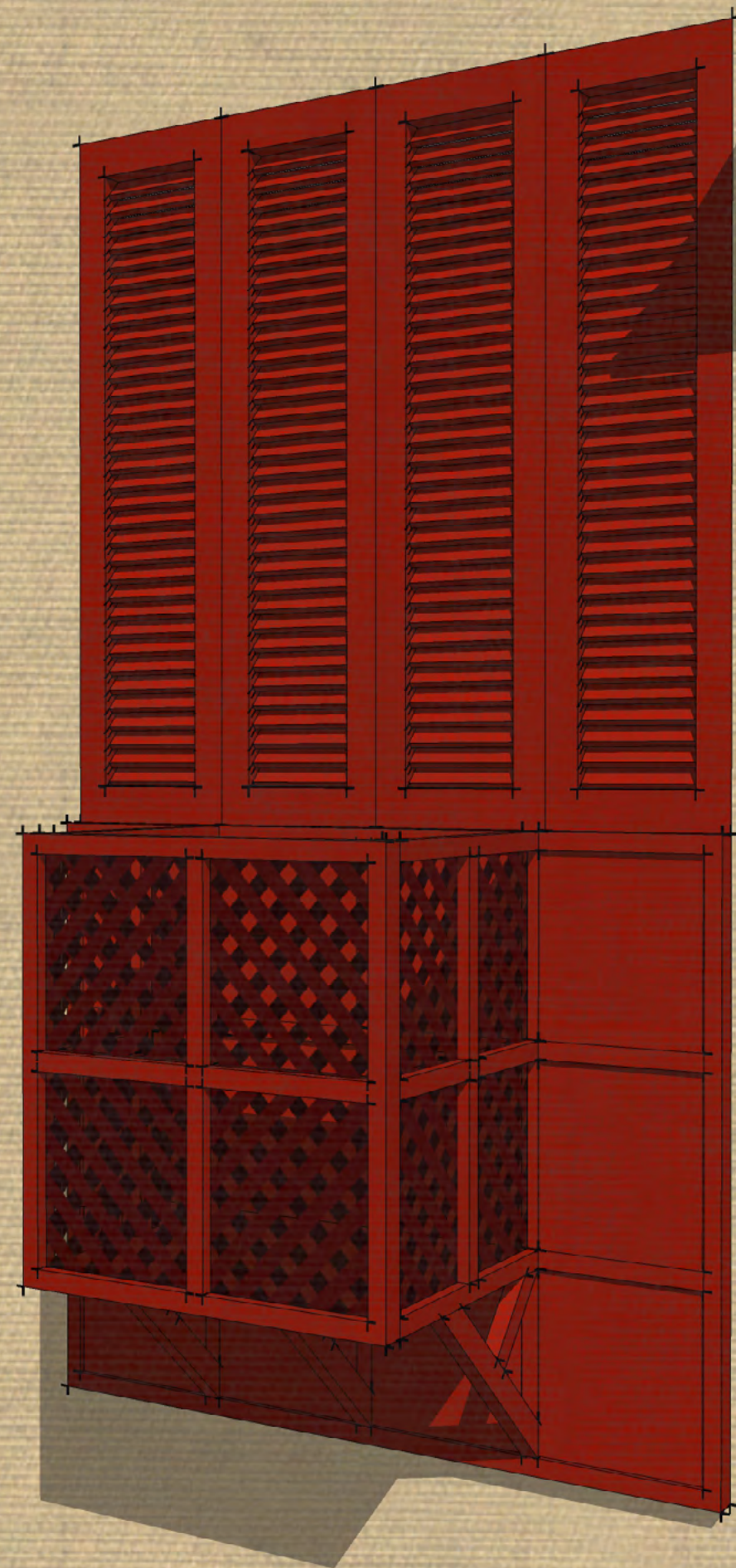
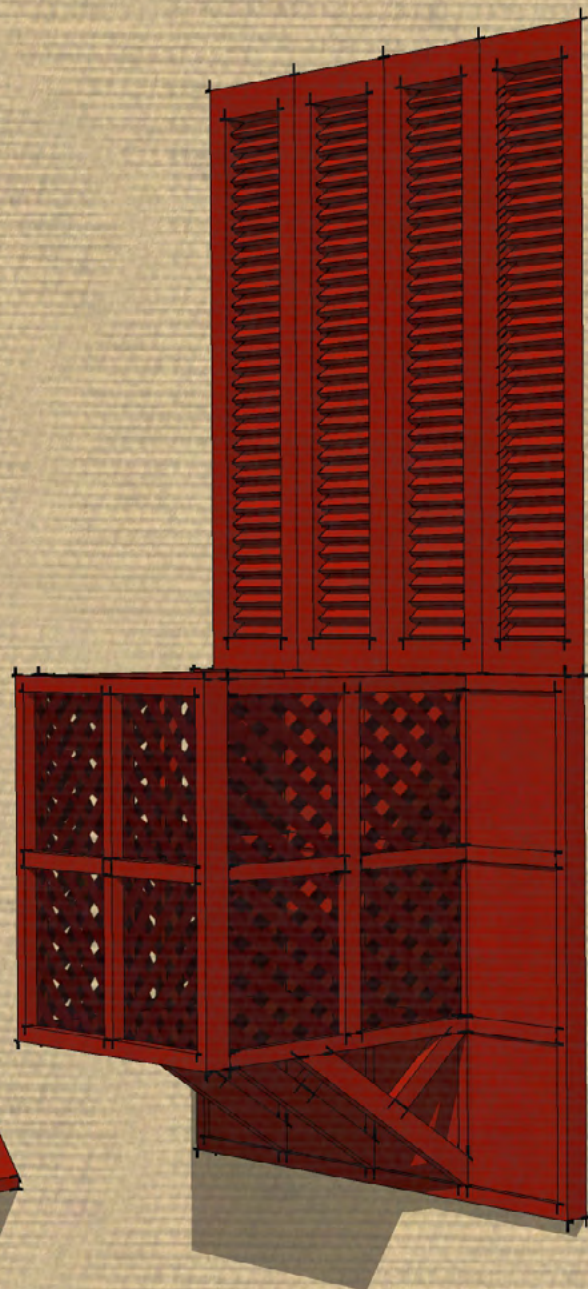
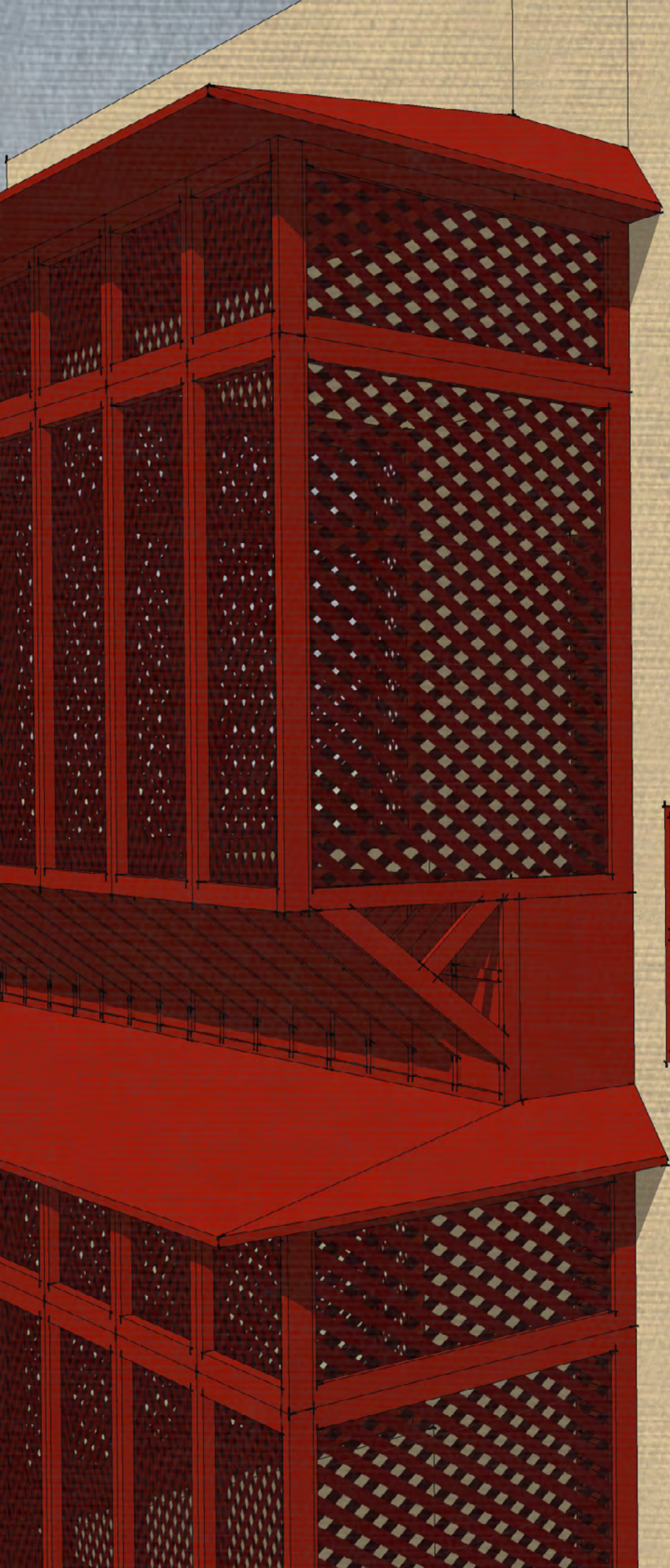




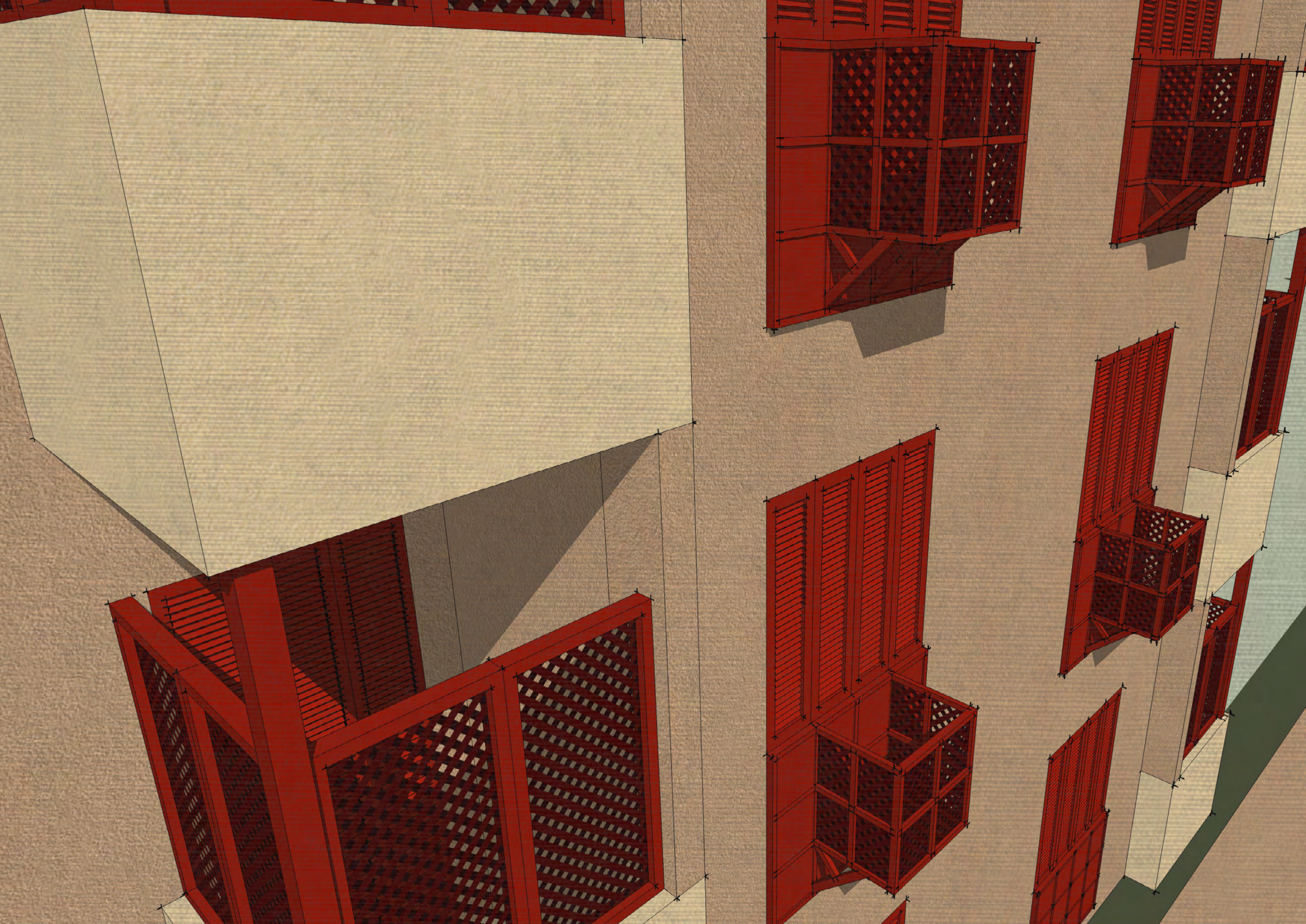
















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