

TDK 2019

# Stages of Change

MEMORY AND INSPIRATION - VELOGUES, PROVENCE

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## **Abstract**

On July 14-26, 2019, we attended a workshop in Provence, organised by the Department of History of Architecture and Monument Preservation. The task was to design the surroundings of a medieval chapel in the village of Velorgues in l'Isle sur la Source. With the help of our host, François, we learned about the history of the building and the city. The chapel is located on a small plot, so the city council is considering buying adjacent areas. Depending on this, part of our team also dealt with existing and the increased sites as well as with the urban planning of Velorgues.

The location is a commuter town, where most inhabitants do not know each other. Because of this, we considered it important to create a space that serves the needs of a growing community. During the design, social housing in the neighbourhood had to be taken into consideration. I worked with the extended area site.

In my TDK, I deal with the question of the relationship between the past and the present. It was important for me to integrate the medieval heritage of the small town into the new concept, such as the city wall, which represents the boundary between the town and the ages. An essential element of the plan is the chapel, around which everything is organized. The planned building complex encompasses the existing sacred mass, keeping a sufficient distance from it, thus respecting the legacy that was left to us. A key element of a community's identity is to pass on the cultural heritage to the future generations through events. This is what the theatre, with its thousands of years of tradition, allows. I was thinking of setting up a mobile stage that could be placed across multiple areas of the yard and in the chapel to suit the needs. The associated visitor centre forms an integral part of the city wall. In my plan, I wanted to create an intergenerational community space that will now be another hub in the suburbs' circulation.

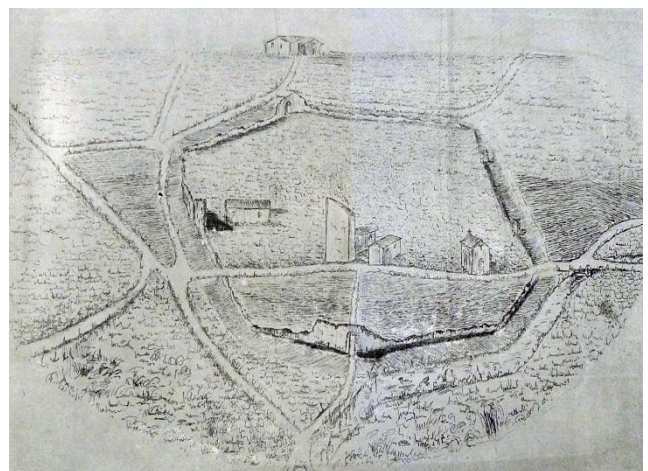
## Velorgues

Velorgues is situated in South France, in Provence, near Avignon. It can be reached within a five-minute drive from L'Isle sur la Sorgue. The structure of this town is unusual, there is no central space, where the inhabitants could hold a market or events. The inhabitants do not know each other very well either, as most of them go to work in Avignon in the morning and then they return home just to sleep in the evening. Although this commuter town sounds first boring, it hides some interesting things. As we walk towards the southern part of the village, we can see a medieval tower house, and even further south we will see the Saint-Andéol Chapel.

### The chapel

The history of Saint-Andéol Chapel is complicated. According to some records, the origin of the place goes back to ancient times. It is sure, the chapel was built in the 10-11th century, when the nearby Benedictine Montmajour Abbey was founded. In the 12th century, the tower house was built a few meters from the chapel, and the city of Velorgues was surrounded by a city wall. In the 14-15th century, the town began to decline, and the condition of the buildings deteriorated.

The chapel was originally a small, single-nave structure until the 12th century, when it was reinforced with counterforts. Through history, it was rebuilt many times and its facade was opened in several places. It had a wide range of functions, for example barn and even warehouse of antique goods. It was purchased by the city in 2013 and has been excavated since then. It is currently unused.



1. pic.: Old map of l'Isle sur la Sorgue, Velorgues    2.pic.:Medieval sketch of Velorgues

## **The concept**

The purpose of the design task is to create a new function around the chapel that will help transform the inhabitants of Velorgues into a community. Due to the small area of the chapel, the city would like to buy the adjacent site, where social flats would be built.

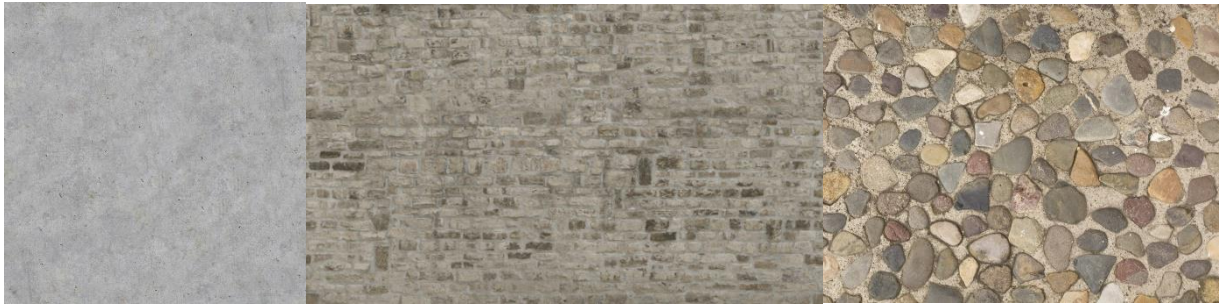
How can we build a community? What makes a community? How can we make people to know each other? Many similar, interesting question can arise during such a project. The first step is to provide a site. Once we have the venue, we can start organizing programs. Culture and tradition preservation can be a common link between people, so I came up with the idea of an outdoor theatre, because a stage can be used in many different ways.

I organised the mass keeping respect with the medieval memories of the small town. The former city wall ran on the southern boundary of the chapel, but it was taken away by citizens to use it as material for building. I would like to rebuild this section of the city wall because it has a symbolic meaning, as it separates the town and age.

The central unit is the chapel, around which the building complex is organized, keeping distance from it, but at the same time almost encircling it. Visitors can enter the site through the south building, where the visitor centre and a small cafe are located. You can have a great view of the chapel while sitting on the café terrace.

The north building is for the service functions (lavatories, changing rooms, storage). I connected the two buildings with a pergolas-like corridor. Information boards and posters can be placed on the wall of the corridor. The buildings have porch which are turning to the central square. The roof shape is also facing to the yard. The wooden shade structures can be covered with climbers (wisteria, Kiwi vines), which help to make the place more natural.

I use the past and also the present in the tiles, which is why stone, concrete and wood materials dominate. The sidewalk of the visitor centre is a medieval pebble bed that leads all the way from the centre, guiding anyone who is curious. The floor coverings of the buildings are exposed concrete, which represents the present. The white lime plaster on the facades is a special Provencal type. The large glass surfaces of the visitor centre provide natural light.

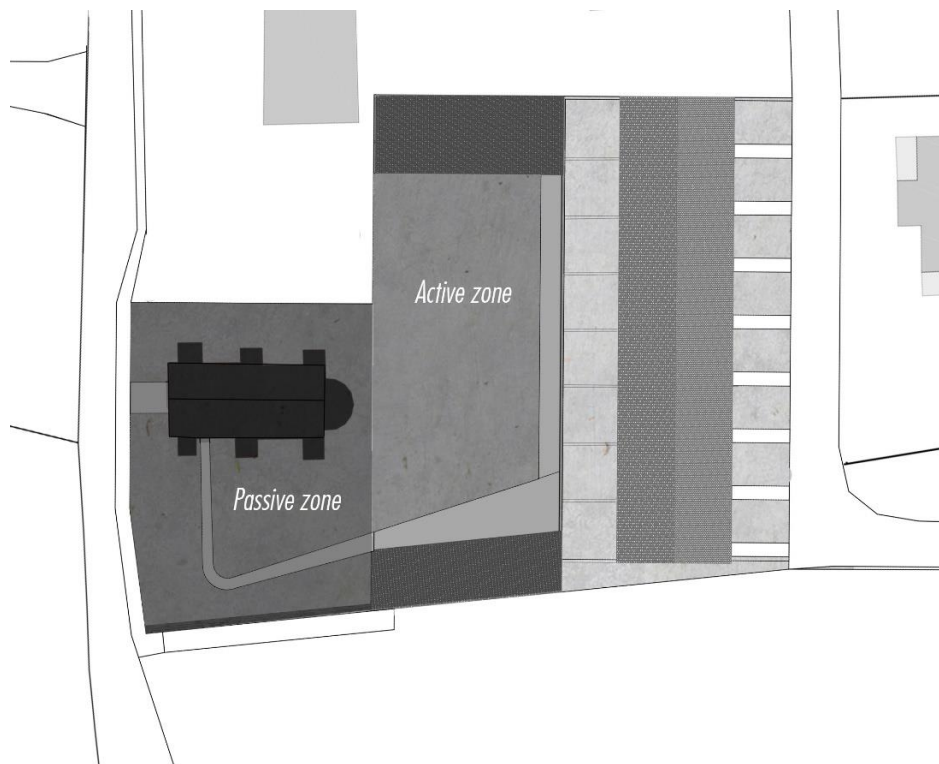


3.pic.: concrete

4.pic.: stone wall

5.pic.: pebble pavement

The plot was divided into two parts, active and passive zones. In the active zone there is the building complex and the yard where the open-air theatre is. Here you can create a mobile stage that can be freely moved to suit your needs, either in front of the service room or facing the chapel. The passive zone is the chapel and the part up to the city wall. The dissemination of information takes place here, information boards give visitors the opportunity to learn about the history of the chapel and here you can enter the chapel. I would keep the gate on the western side of the chapel as it fosters the organization of events in the chapel.



6. pic.: Site plan, active and passive zone

I designed social flats in the eastern half of the site. Eight apartments are located across the width of the site, each are two-story units. On the ground floor there is a kitchen, a living room and a storage room. Upstairs are the bedrooms and the bathroom. I tried to design a house that

suited the cityscape, so I designed blinds and similar plaster. Parking is possible in the front gardens. The ground floor is exposed to natural light through large windows overlooking the back garden.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to thank you for the possibility to take part in this workshop, it was really useful for me, and I truly hope some steps will be taken to use this building as it deserves. I am sure, the French monument authority will do its best.

## References:

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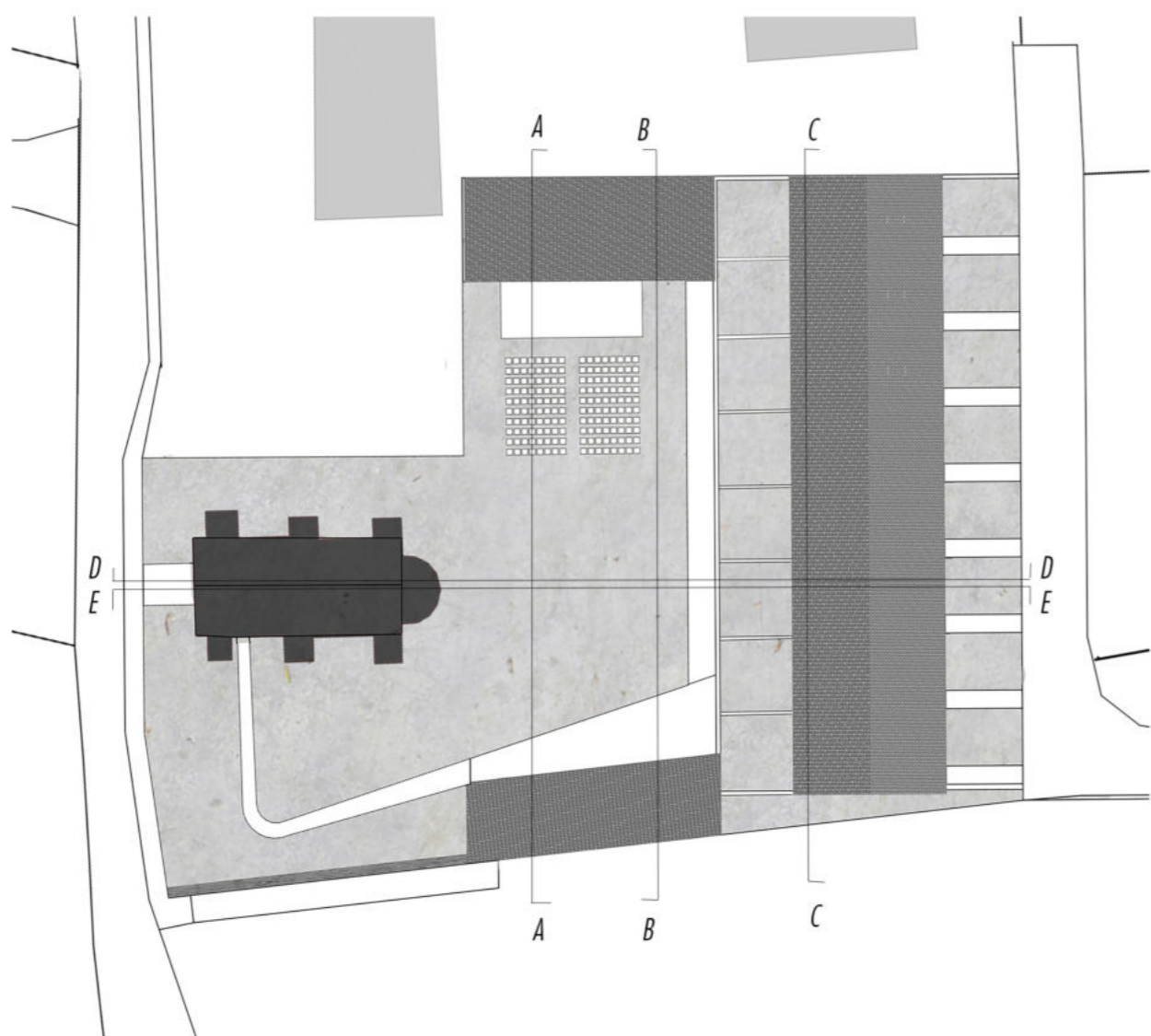
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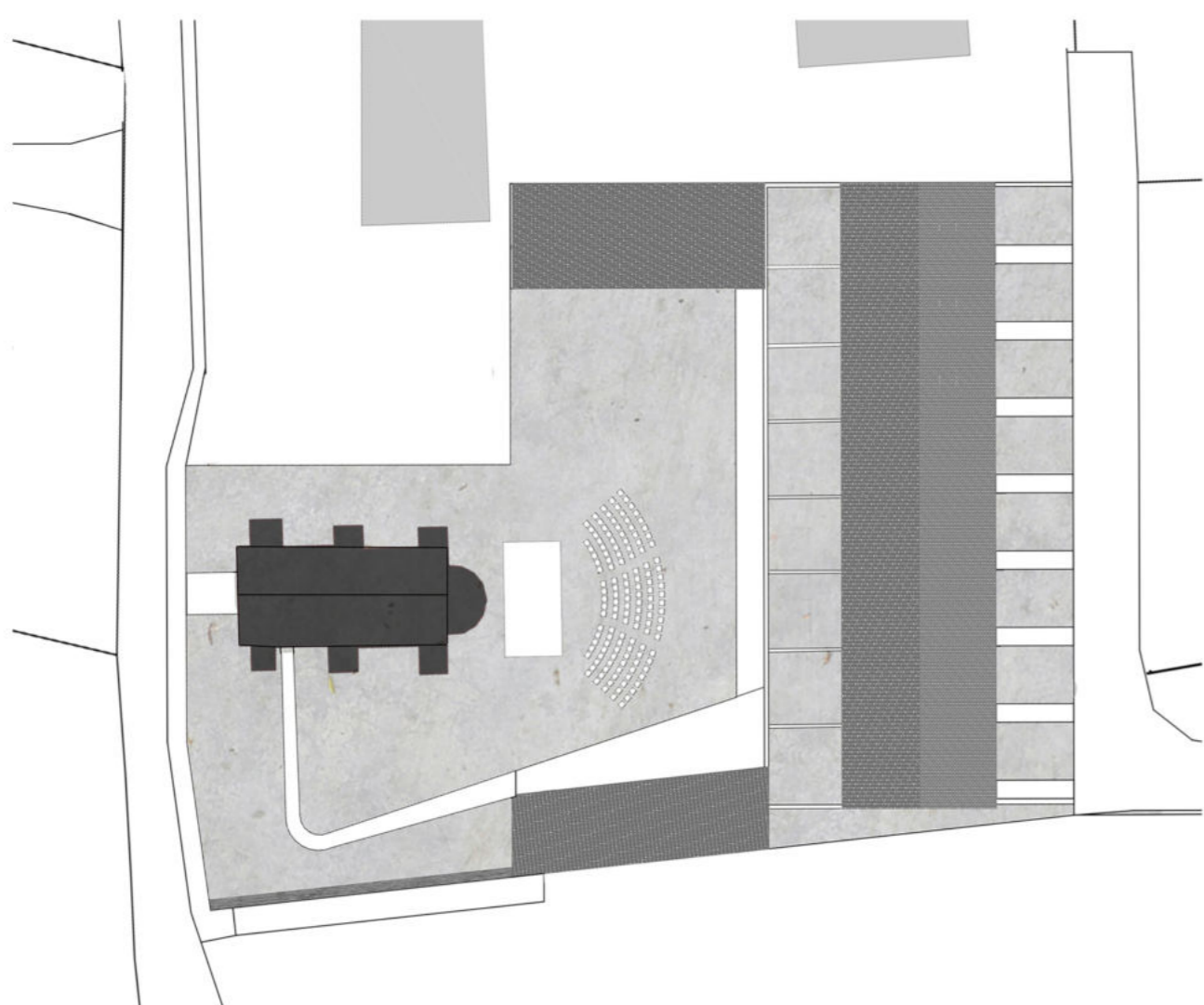


Site plan 1:500

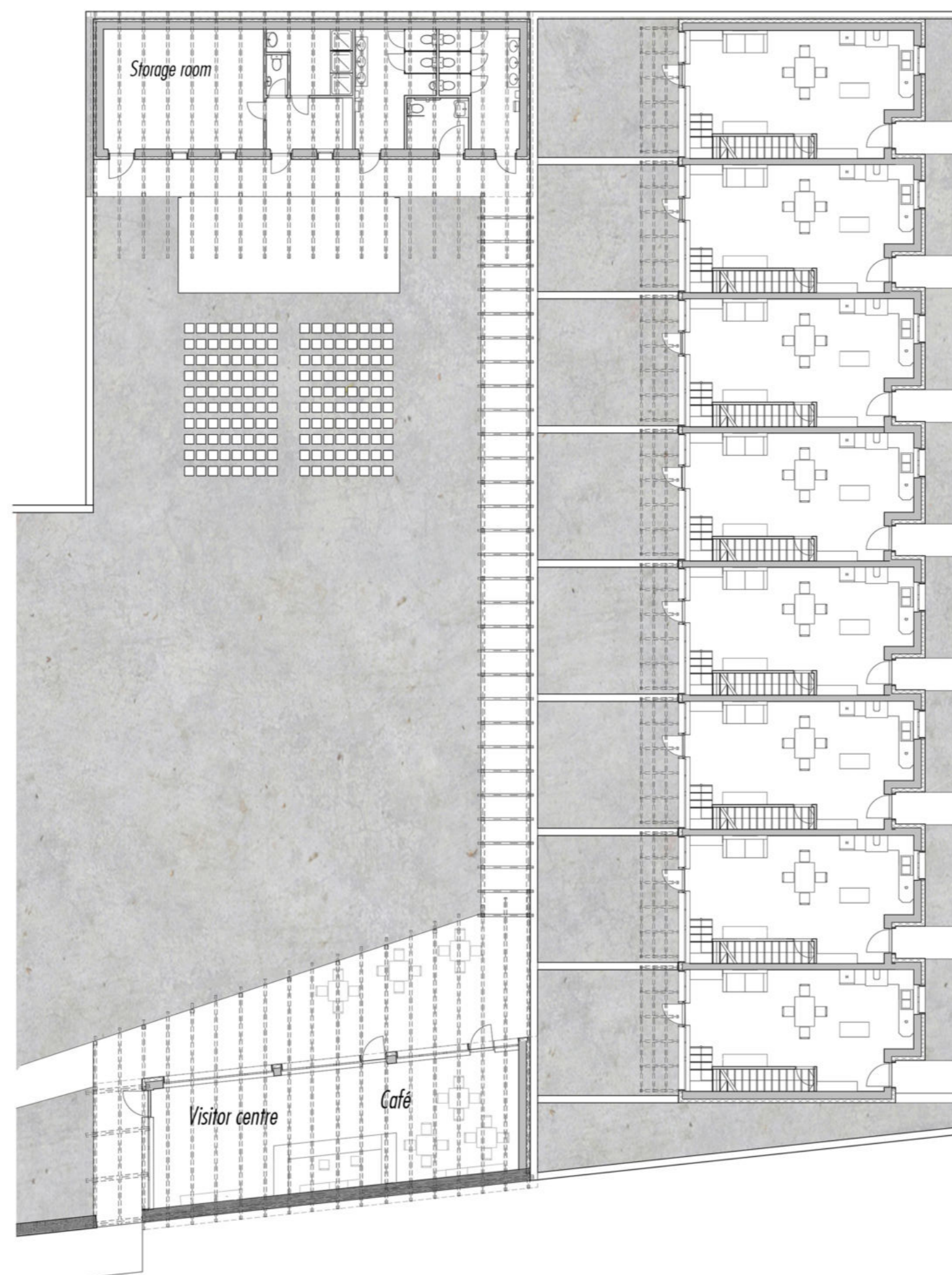
Site plan 1:500



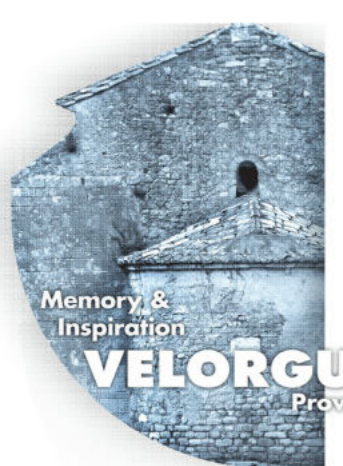
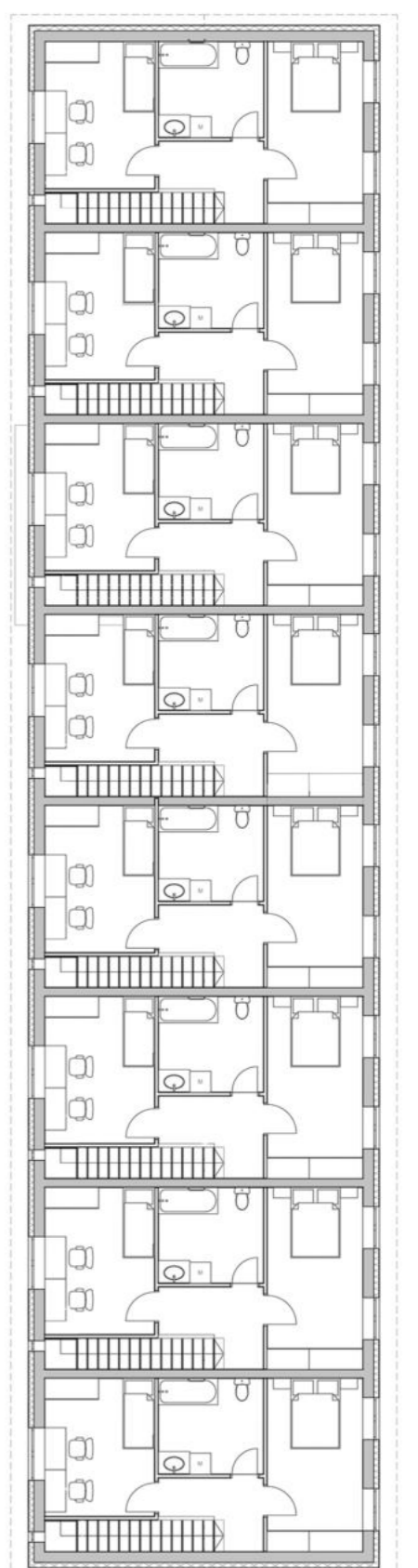
Site plan 1:500



Ground floor 1:200



1st floor 1:200

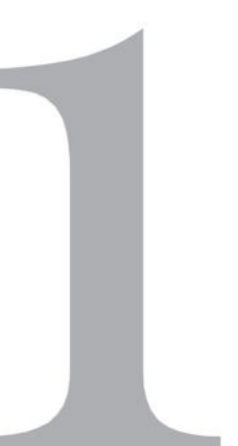


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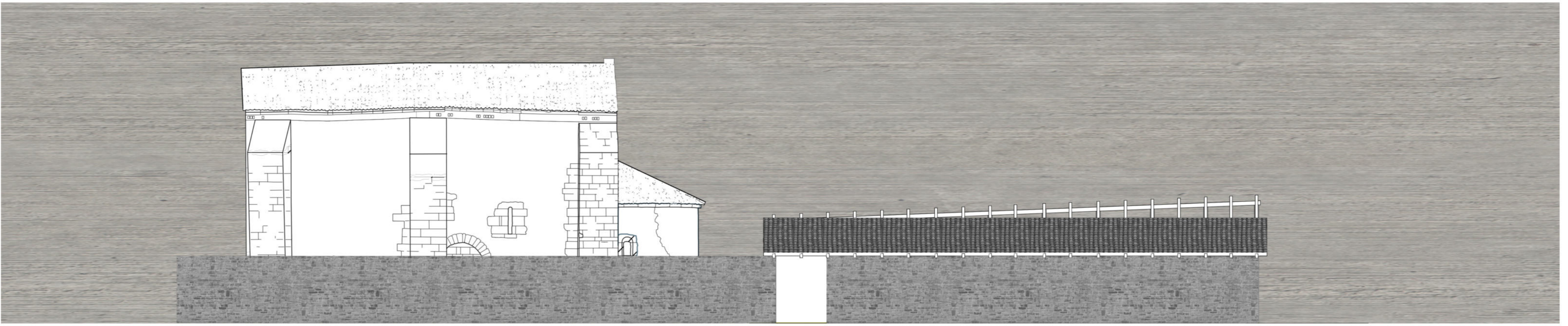
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Revitalization of the  
Chapel of Saint Andéol of Velorgues as Cultural Center  
12/11/2019



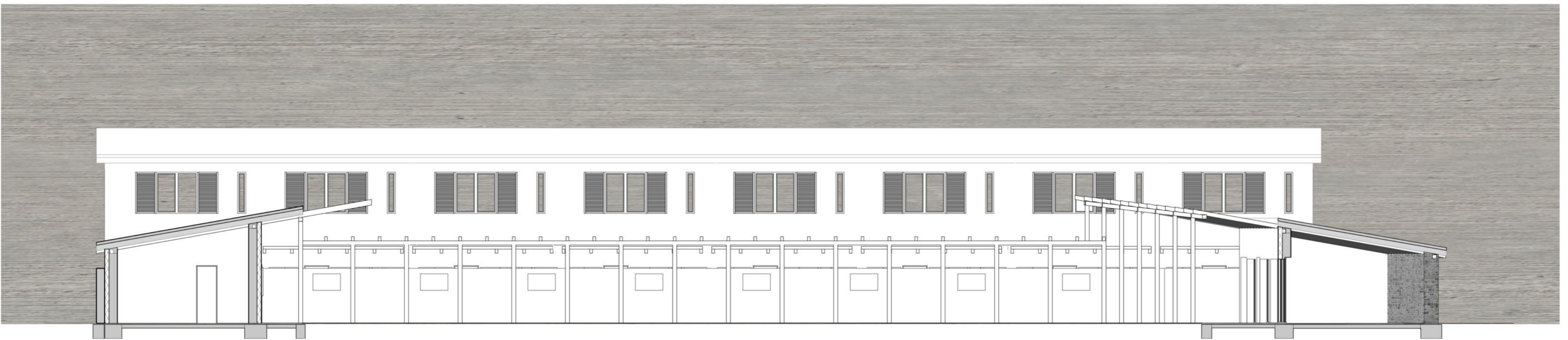
South facade 1:100



Visitor centre facade 1:100



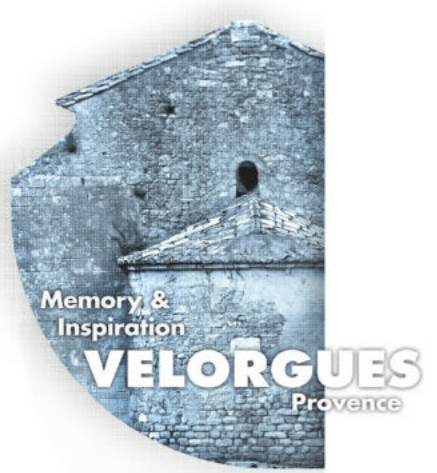
A-A Section 1:100



B-B Section 1:100



C-C Section :100



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Social flat eastern facade 1:100



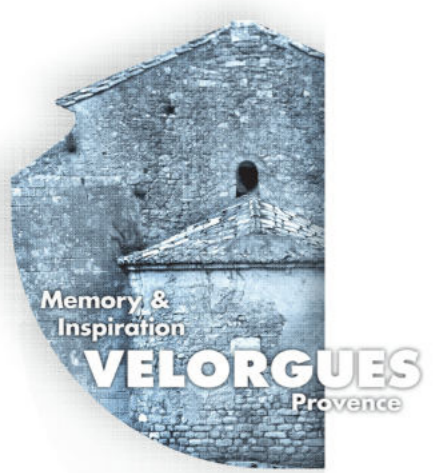
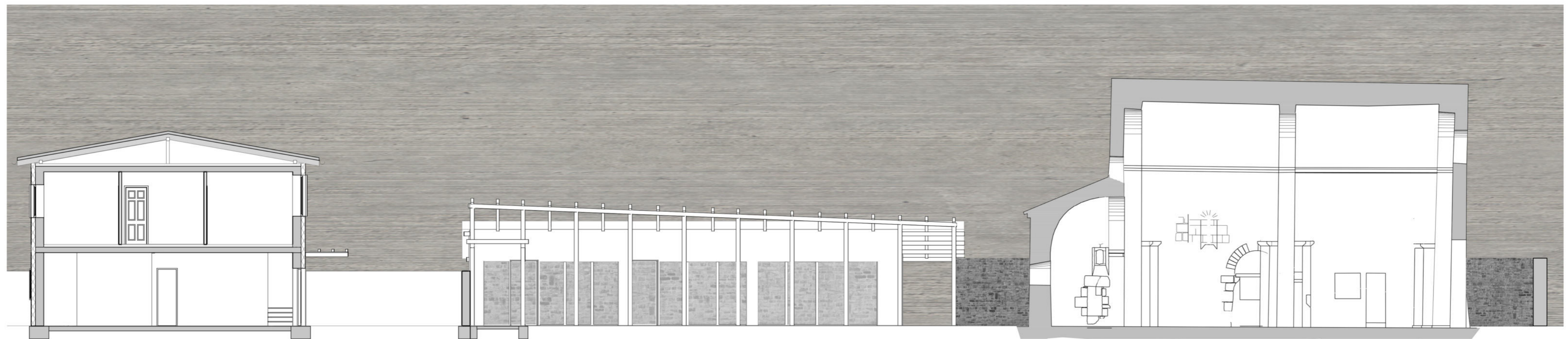
Social flat western facade 1:100



D-D Section 1:100



EE Section 1:100



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