

STEP ON
STEP/

BCN
TTN
XAU
18- 19

International
Laboratory
of
Collaborative
Architecture



Laboratory international of Collaborative Architecture/

STEP ON STEP / BCN+TTN+XAU 2018-19



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Introduction



Preliminars

In March 2018 ETSAB-UPC offered its teachers in Architecture the opportunity to participate in a cooperative workshop in Morocco. The NGO Alkaria and the association Base-A were the organizers and promoters of the workshop and those who had local contacts in order to make the experience possible.

The only way to ensure that a workshop with students is successful for all parties involved is to prepare and foresee all aspects that encompass work with cooperation and development. For that reason during March 2018 three selected teachers together with Alkaria NGO and Base-A Association went to Morocco in order to visit the different cities and local agents that could be part of the project and to define the activities to be developed. We visited the cities of Tanger, Tétouan, and ChefChaouen.

And we talked with the mayor and different technicians from the municipality of Chefchaouen. The summer workshop dates were also set to be from July 9 to 18, 2018.



Defining the sites

The interviews with the mayor and the technicians of ChefChaouen were very important to fix the places of the ChefChaouen Medina to be worked upon and some of the problems to be solved. The visit to the four proposed public spaces was indispensable to outline the format of the summer workshop. A complementary interview with a Moroccan teacher specialized in heritage was very useful in clarifying certain technical aspects of the workshop. The chosen sites were four places in the Medina of Chefchaouen: Al Hauta, Bab Suk, Dbendiben and Al Zaituna.

Visiting the site enabled us teachers to prepare all the information for having a very successful workshop.

Choosing the participants

As teachers we understand that part of the students' learning process is done between students themselves. So we considered that it was very important for our ETSAB/V students to realize the workshop together with local Architecture students. The closest to the site faculty of Architecture is the Ecole Nationale d'Architecture in Tetouan. In March we visited the university and had a meeting with the dean. We also had the chance to explain the workshop that we were preparing for summer to the students. At the end of the presentation, we were able to collect the emails of all the students interested in participating. Many students at the Ecole Nationale d'Architecture in Tetouan showed interest in being part of the workshop.

A selection of the students was made in May based on their academic merits. Finally, seven Moroccan students were chosen to receive scholarships for the workshop. At the end the summer workshop was attended by twenty students from ETSAB/V-UPC, seven students from ENA-Tetouan, three ETSAB-UPC teachers and two members of Base-A Association.



The workshop

Based on the work that had to be done and the 27 students that were participating, the duration of the workshop was set in nine days and the students were divided into 4 mixed and transversal groups regarding their age and their university of origin.

The initial work of analysis and first contact with the site was performed by all students divided into 8 groups. After reviewing these first results we assigned the places to work upon to the different groups, which were joined together leaving 4 groups of 6-7 students.

Depending on the problems detected by the different groups and the requirements formulated by the city council, the neighbours / users, and their own observation, they developed their proposals of rehabilitation and improvement. It was very challenging for the students to have the opportunity to explain the projects to the municipality. The last day of the workshop we had an open session in which different technicians of the city council participated. The response from municipality was very positive and showed interest in carrying out some of the proposed projects in the future.

The fact that the workshop was very well defined from the beginning was crucial for the good results of the proposals and the positive evaluation of all students and entities that participated in the project.



The methodology



International design workshops: learning by doing

ETSAB has a long and intensive tradition in organizing and taking part in international workshops. It forms part of our international policy. At ETSAB we are convinced that working together with people from varied cultural, social and geographic backgrounds is an excellent training for students and teachers. That is why ETSAB welcomed the idea of the NGOs Base A and Alkaria to hold a workshop in Morocco with students from our school and from the École d'Architecture de Tétouan. The proposal was made even more appealing by suggesting an exciting working site: the old medina of ChefCahouen and its public space.

A workshop activity is usually a fulltime job for most of the participants, including the teachers, all focusing the same issue. It always opens the minds, enabling to analyse and discuss matters from all kind of viewpoints. It obliges to think precisely and to explain clearly. It enhances establishing compromises: both referring to the work contents and the way to carry them out. It is an opportunity to work in a transversal or even interdisciplinary way. It widens the social and professional network of all the participants. That is, international workshops have a very high performance that justifies all the effort needed to organize them.

In Chef Chaouen we all had the opportunity to get into know another culture, share different background educations and knowledges, even customs, and the experience of searching for common places and working together has been absolutely positive.





Working in a diverse architectural environment spurs your reflection. It might have to do with cultural and historical aspects, the climatic conditions and the building tradition. All these factors get different responses, so you have to be very awake and permeable, in order to be able to integrate them in the design process. Becoming aware of the magnificent urban space of Chef Chaouen and its people by proposing a sequence of related interventions in its ancient Medina has been a highly enriching experience.

An international workshop includes also all kind of knowledges, some not directly related to the academic commitment, but not therefore less valuable. Our future contribution to improve the sites where life takes place will rest also in our capacity to observe and reflect upon reality, as diverse as this might be.

The shortage introduces intensity. It makes you introduce priorities, getting rid of all what is not essential or does not contribute to the development of the project. Limited time enhances you to come to clear conclusions and enables you to present a synthetic result.

The design workshop is clearly different in shape from the current studio, but shares the main feature: a specific way of “learning by doing” common to all architectural schools in the world. It is our own pedagogy, where we try to rehearse the way architectural studios work. But if, in addition, the workshop works on a real site and commitment, with real users with whom one can talk to and converse –which was the case-, the result of it might be a unique formative experience. In this sense, the workshop constitute an extraordinary means of knowledge transfer and, as in this case, international cooperation.

It is then when the workshop becomes a real trial of a professional office: students and tutors working in a team, as colleagues or collaborators for real clients and real users. All members of the studio are –nearly- on equal terms. The tutor, who is not required to give any rates, convinces only with reasons. And as he is the most interested of all in carrying out the work, he has to put in practice a constructive criticism. That also makes the workshop such a valuable pedagogical means.

As an international intensive workshop is an activity that does not happen every day, and likes to be conclusive in itself, there is a willing to document it properly. Of course, the outcome will not be as deep as a long-term research, but will probably be instrumental information to be used as sample or even foundation for other more complete researches. That is the purpose of this publication.

That is the work that has been done, with splendid result, in the 2018 workshop. We thank all of the participants, the organisers and especially, the Chef Chaouen City council for giving us the opportunity to live and contribute to such an amazing and enriching experience.



The medina of Chefchaouen

Territory: geography and geomorphology

The province of Chefchaouen

The province is located at the western end of the Rif mountain range, and extends from the coast to the plains of the southeast. It has a total area of 4350 km², and is bounded by the provinces of Tetouan to the north, Larache to the west and Taounate to the south-east. The city of Chaouen is located 600 meters above sea level and on the side of a mountain with an average slope of 12%, which causes a drop of 250 meters between the highest and lowest part of the city, giving it a high value landscape with its views over the valley and towards the peaks of the mountains that surround it.

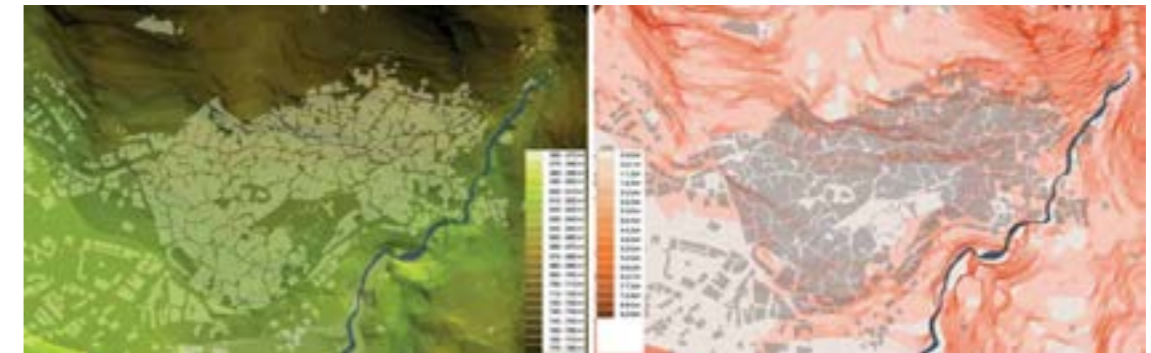
The topographical characteristics of the place were decisive in the formation of the urban structure of the city and its architecture.



Weather

The geographical conditions of Chaouen explain its Mediterranean climate, hot in summer, cold in winter and rainy in spring. The average rainfall calculated over 30 years (1933-1963) indicates that the average amount of rainwater collected in the city is 1000-1400 mm, with an average of 75 days of rain per year of medium intensity.

From the point of view of temperature, the average maximum temperature is 32°C, while the minimum temperature is 5.3°C.



Plano altimétrico

Plano pluviométrico

Population: ethnic origin

The population of Chaouen results from a mixture of people of diverse origins, who have come to the city throughout its history. The first chaouenies were descendants of Berbers, while 50% of the original population was formed by the thousands of Andalusian families, both Muslim and Jewish, who arrived from the south of Spain between the 15th and 17th centuries. Currently, the original population of Chaouen is joined by foreign residents who have acquired a home in the city.

Demographic context

The first estimate of the population of Chefchaouen, made by C. de Foucauld in July 1883, suggested a population of between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants. On the eve of Spanish colonization in 1920, the population was 10,000 inhabitants. The rise of the birth rate along with the immigration of neighboring populations, increase the number of inhabitants of Chaouen to 23,563 in 1982, or 42,914 in 1994 (19,567 of which in the medina), a number that is maintained approximately in the present.





E: 1/ 5.000

The projects





The Dbendiben tannery continued to function up to the mid-seventies of the 20th century. The authorities decided to turn it late to a square, since garbage was accumulating in the unused basins, causing hygienic issues, and discomfort of the people living nearby.

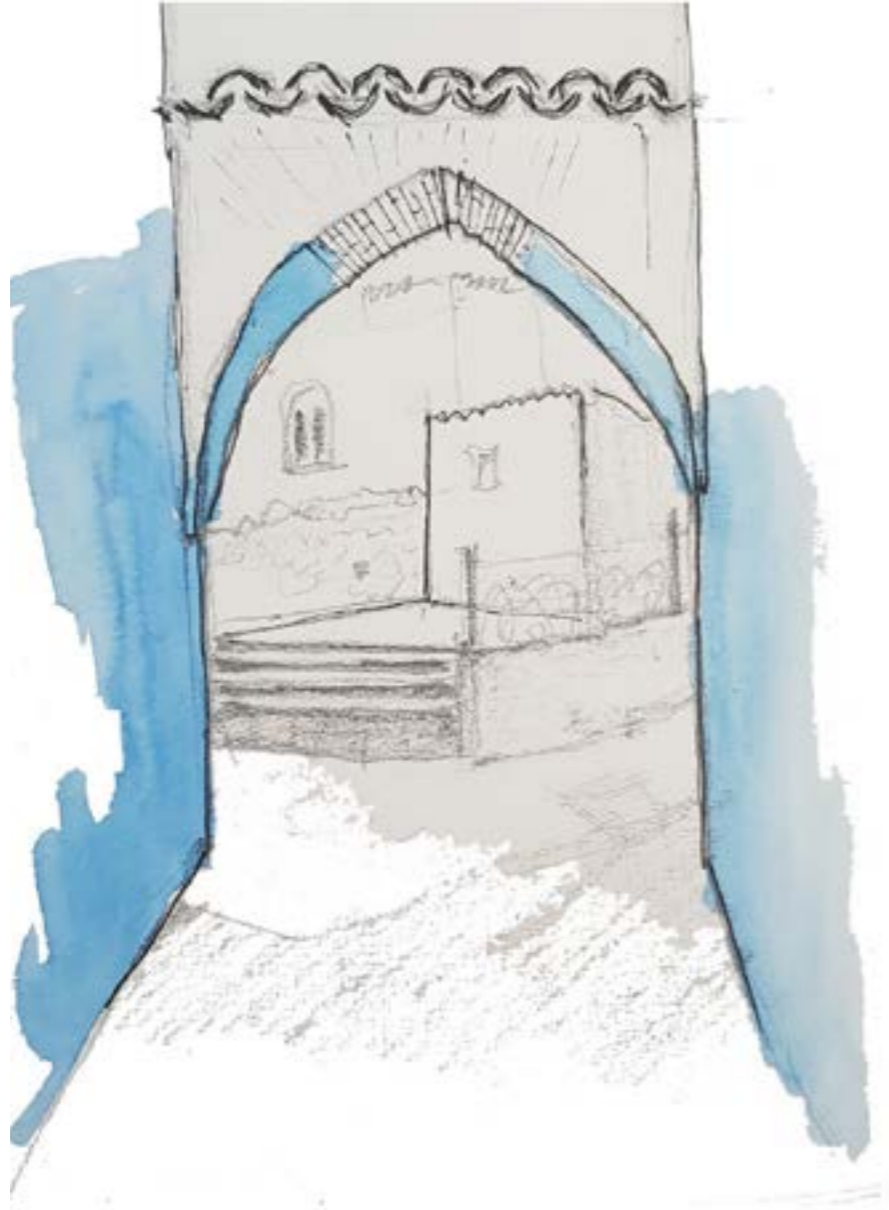
The process of dying leather in the tanneries produces an unpleasant smell, as well as an important amount of garbage, which explains why they're usually built close to the wall of the Medina,- so the residues could be easily taken out - and why the house nearby rarely have a window or a door facing the tannery. But after the tannery was no longer there, the buildings around there started to readjust to have opening on the side where the tannery used to be.

Dbendiben Square

Chefchaouen has known through time a significant commercial leather business, and the Dbendiben tannery was one of the many in the city.

The raw material, especially ruminant skin, was available in and around Chefchaouen, which encouraged artisans to engage in this trade with interest and even export their leather products to the city of Fez, and the district Kharrazin is well known as the place where the trade of shoemaking and tannery usually took place.







“Once houses started to be placed here, neighbors started complaining about the bad smell”

Mohamed, 45

“This is our only place to play and we like it this way”

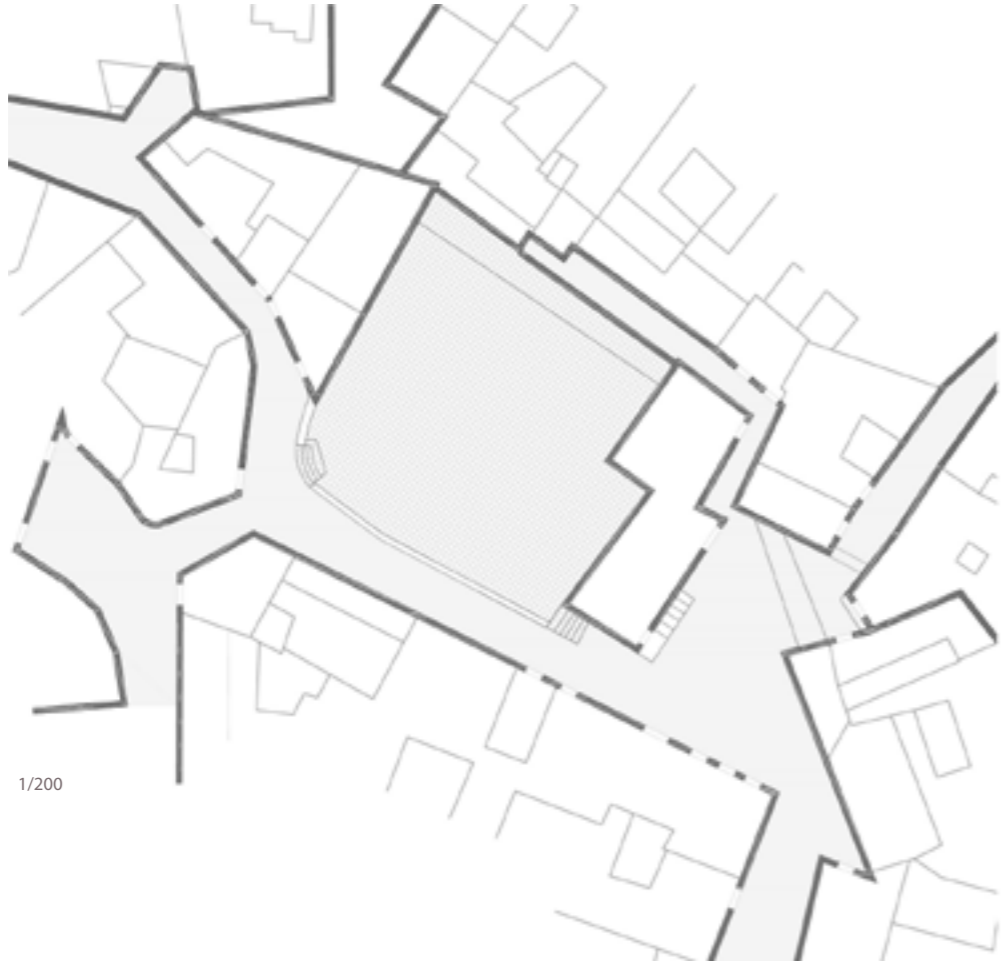
Adnan, 11

“My mum wouldn’t let me go n to play with the other kids because she says it’s too dangerous”

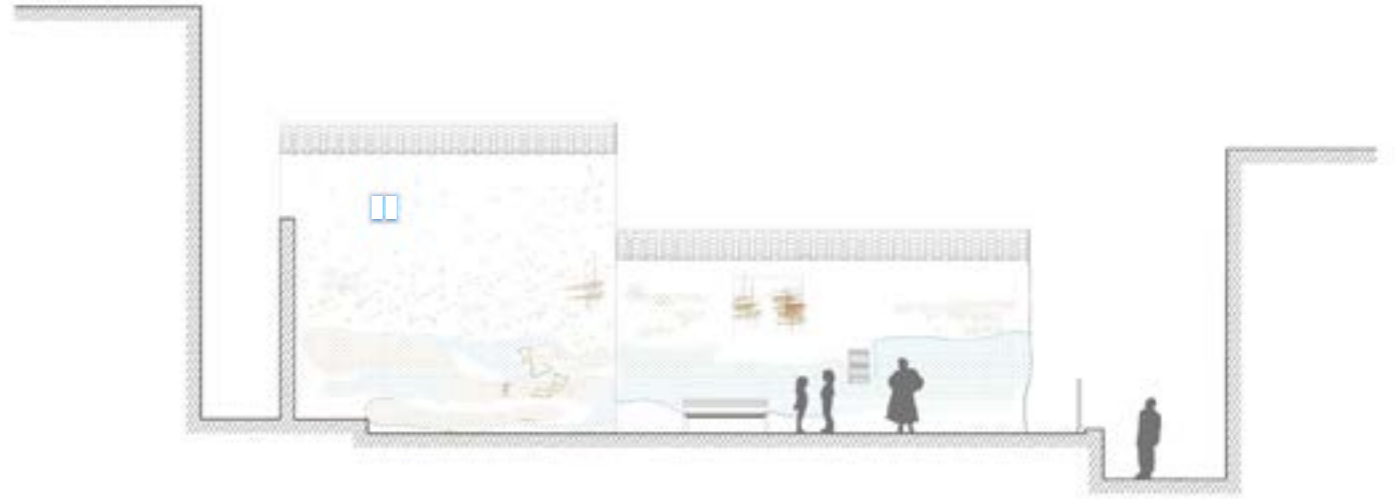
Nejm Eddine, 6







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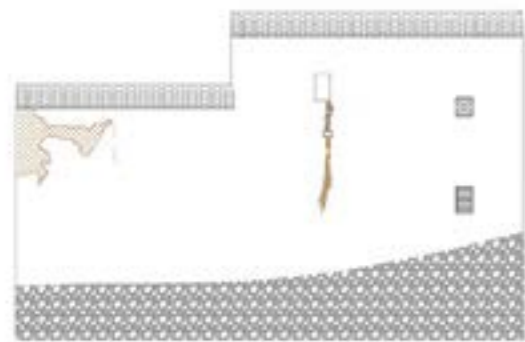
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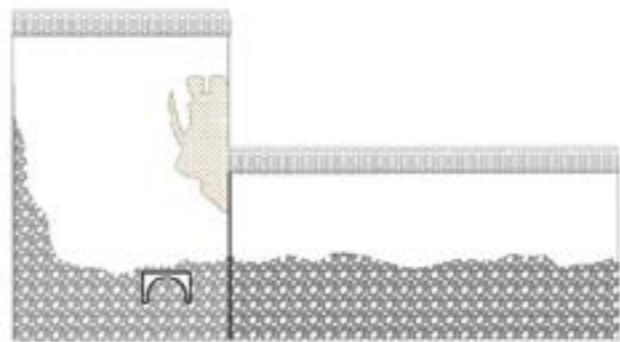
EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

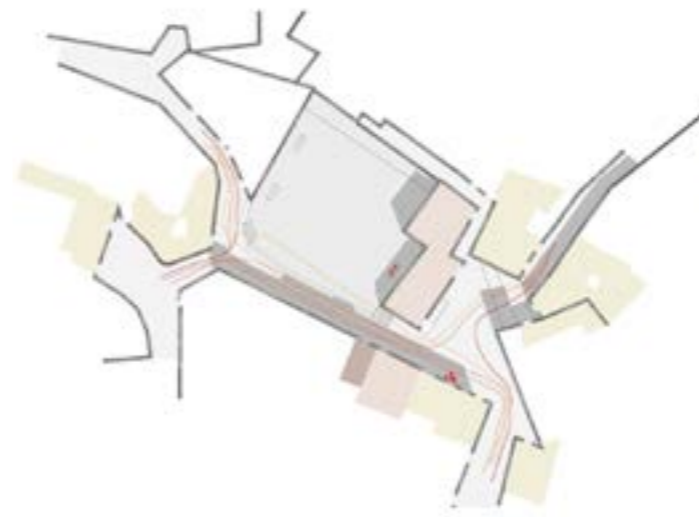


SOUTH ELEVATION

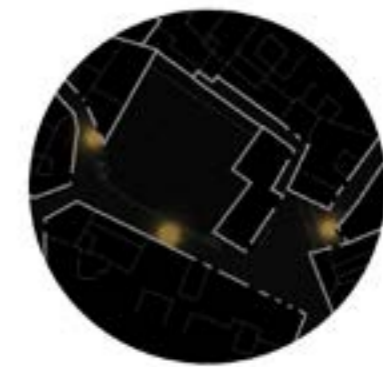


WEST ELEVATION

MORNING



AFTERNOON



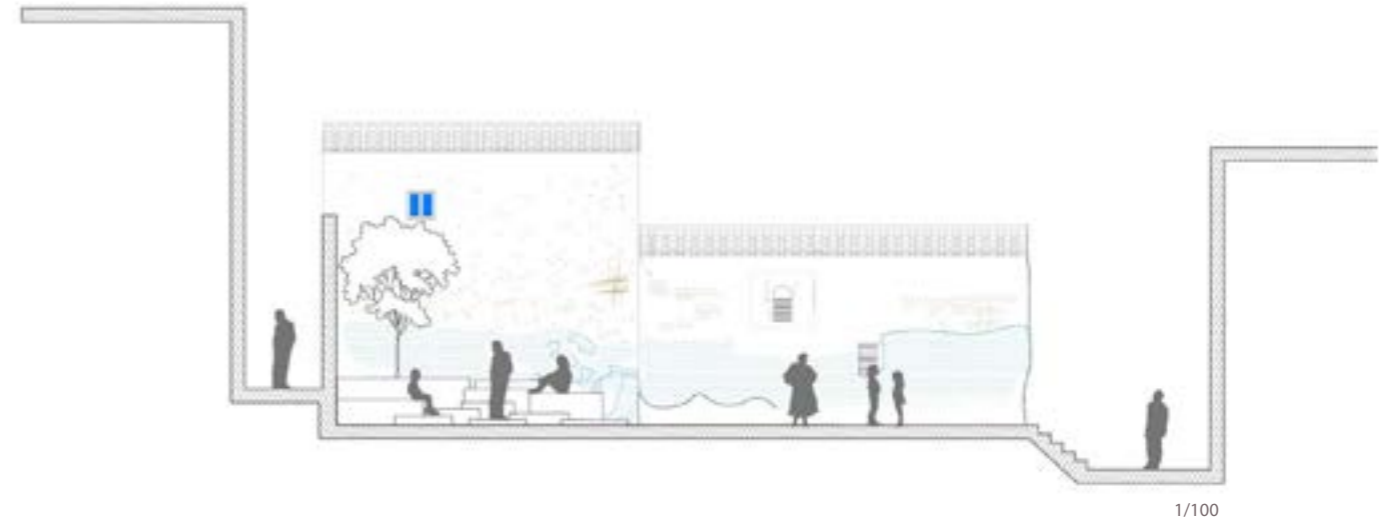


The Dben di ben square is a meeting place for young people living around. Throughout the day the image is changing and shows its different faces. This pass of the time is present in the use as well as in the form of the square and, is in this last footprint, where we go to know where the ashes present come from. Removing the past we find a story marked by the tradition of leather merchants that characterize the Moroccan zone.

Fussing past and present, the proposal aims to make visible the past by providing this area with the materials of the past, bringing them to the present with a new use, a game park.

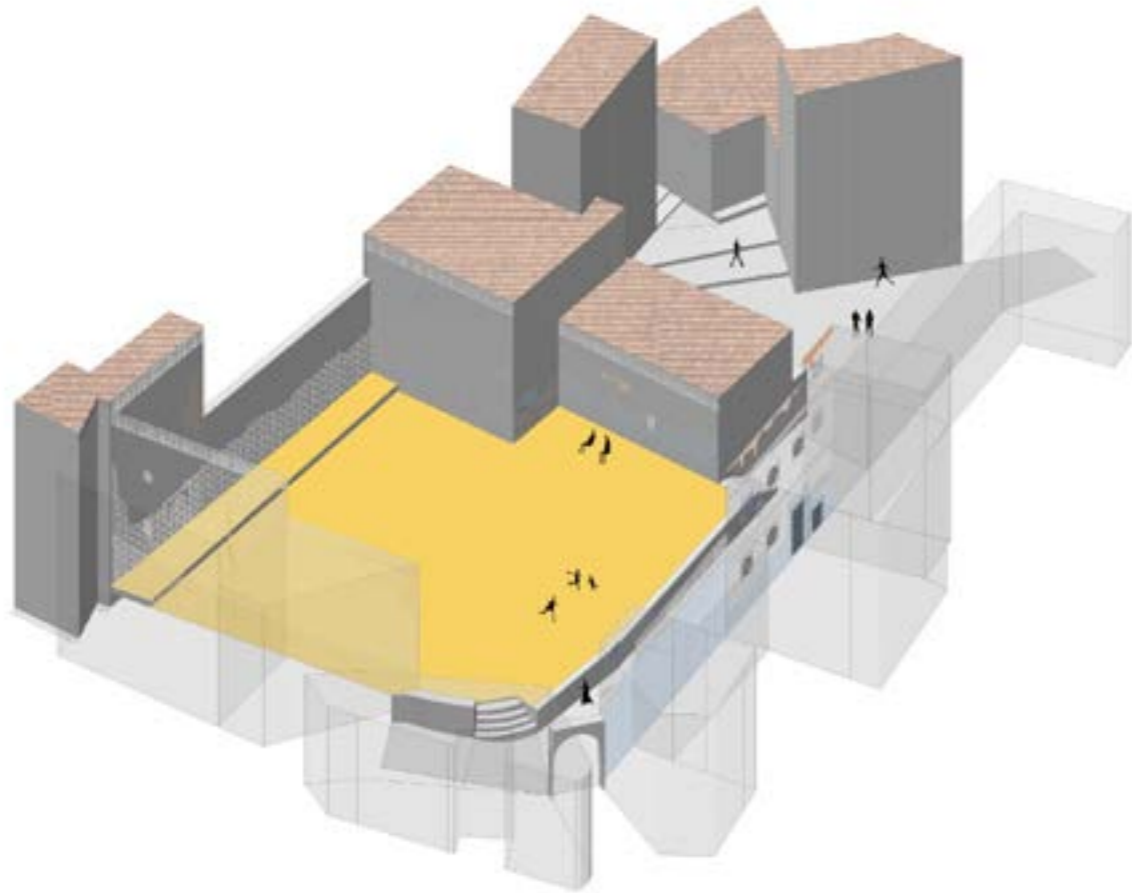
Making this place more habitable is the mission we have, to offer a safe and inclusive public space for all neighbors.

In order to integrate the historical context in the square, two proposals have been designed for it. The first proposal explains the story from murals and gives more importance to the element that generates shade and shelter in the square through vegetal pergolas that are found in the alleyways of the wall. On the other hand, the second proposal interacts with the elements of the past changing working leather for elements that work as pots or as games for children.













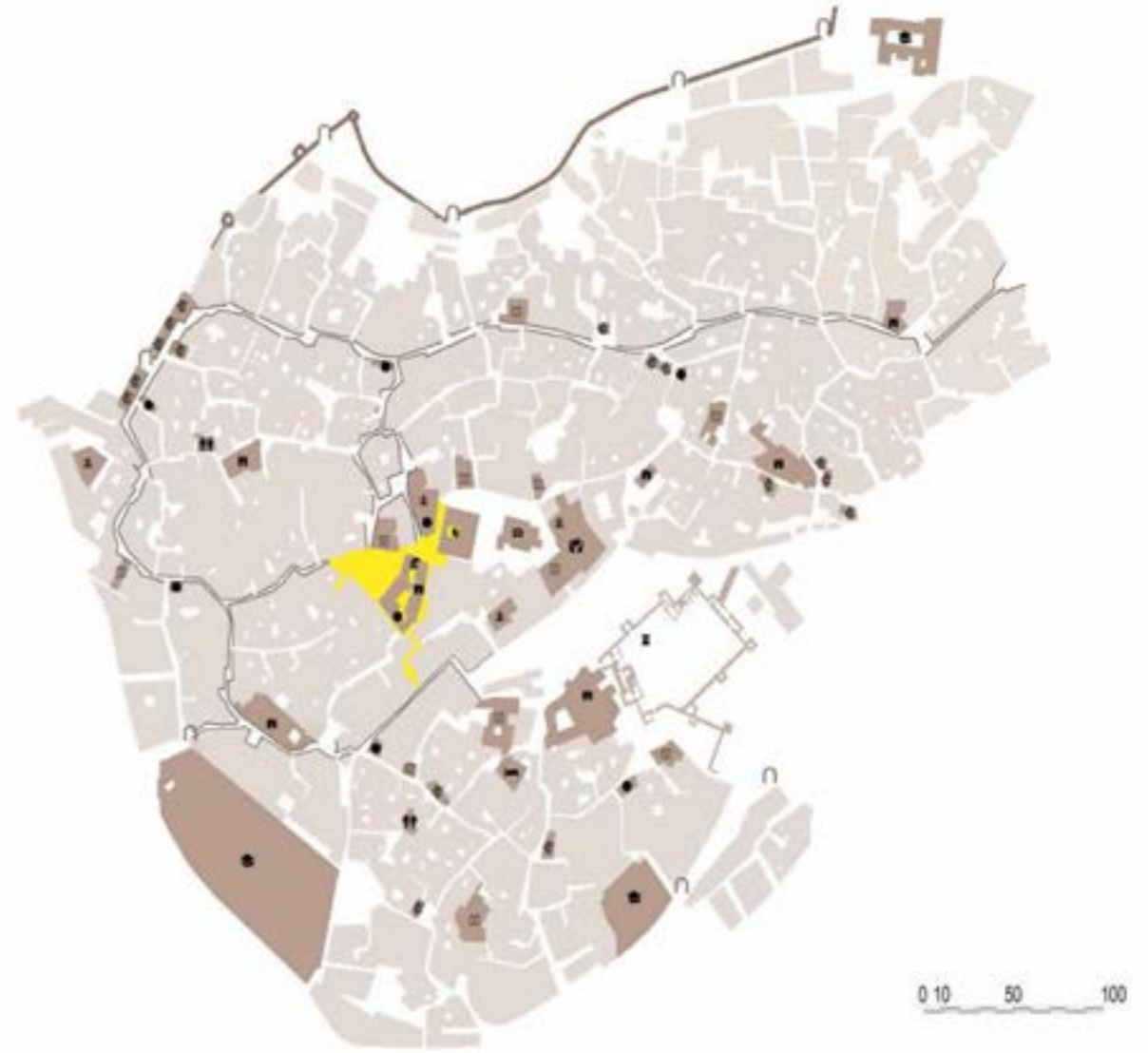
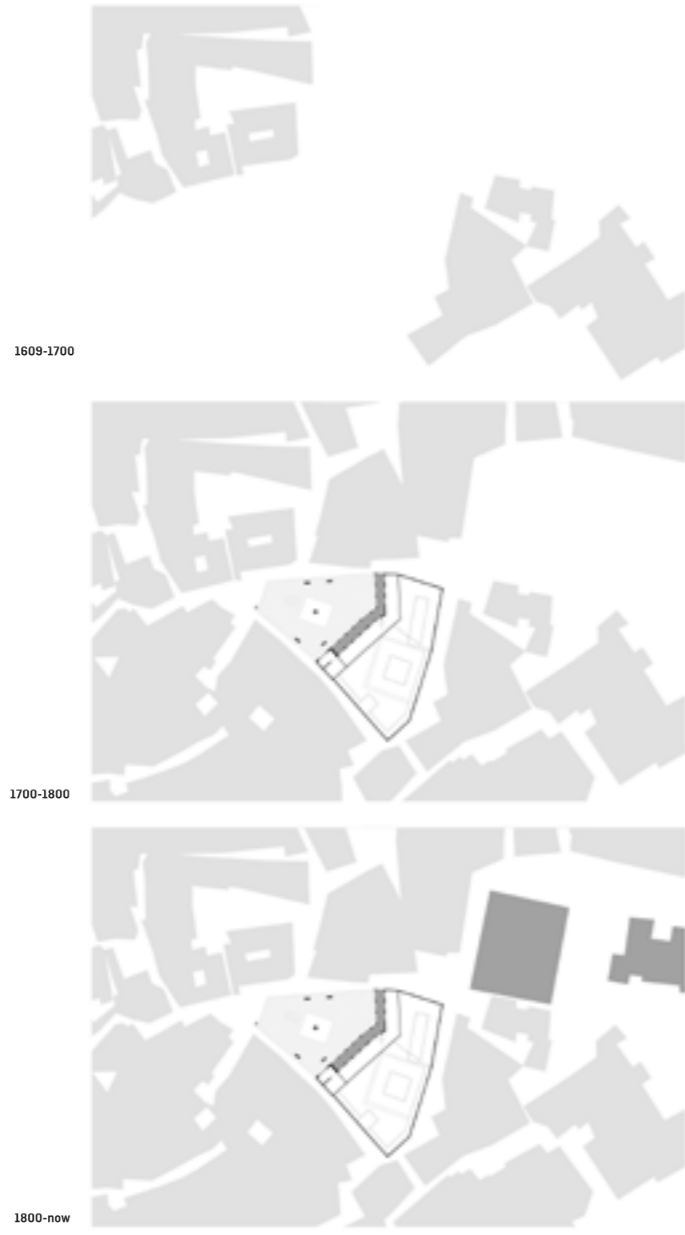
El Hauta Square

When the farmers usually find a flat field in the mountains , they call it Hauta. Chefchaouen has a lot of gradient except in this square, and that's what attributed the name Hauta to this space . the facade that limits the space from the east used to be a fish market at the beginning but then it s function changed in the 60s .

In the left of the north façade we found the only buildings that existed before and preserved the shape of the original constructions of the city which makes the square a heritage to be preserved .

Before the construction of the fountain there wasn't any central elements. Instead there was a hole from where people used to take water.







"The Hauta is the second square in Chefchaouen (after Outta Hammam)"

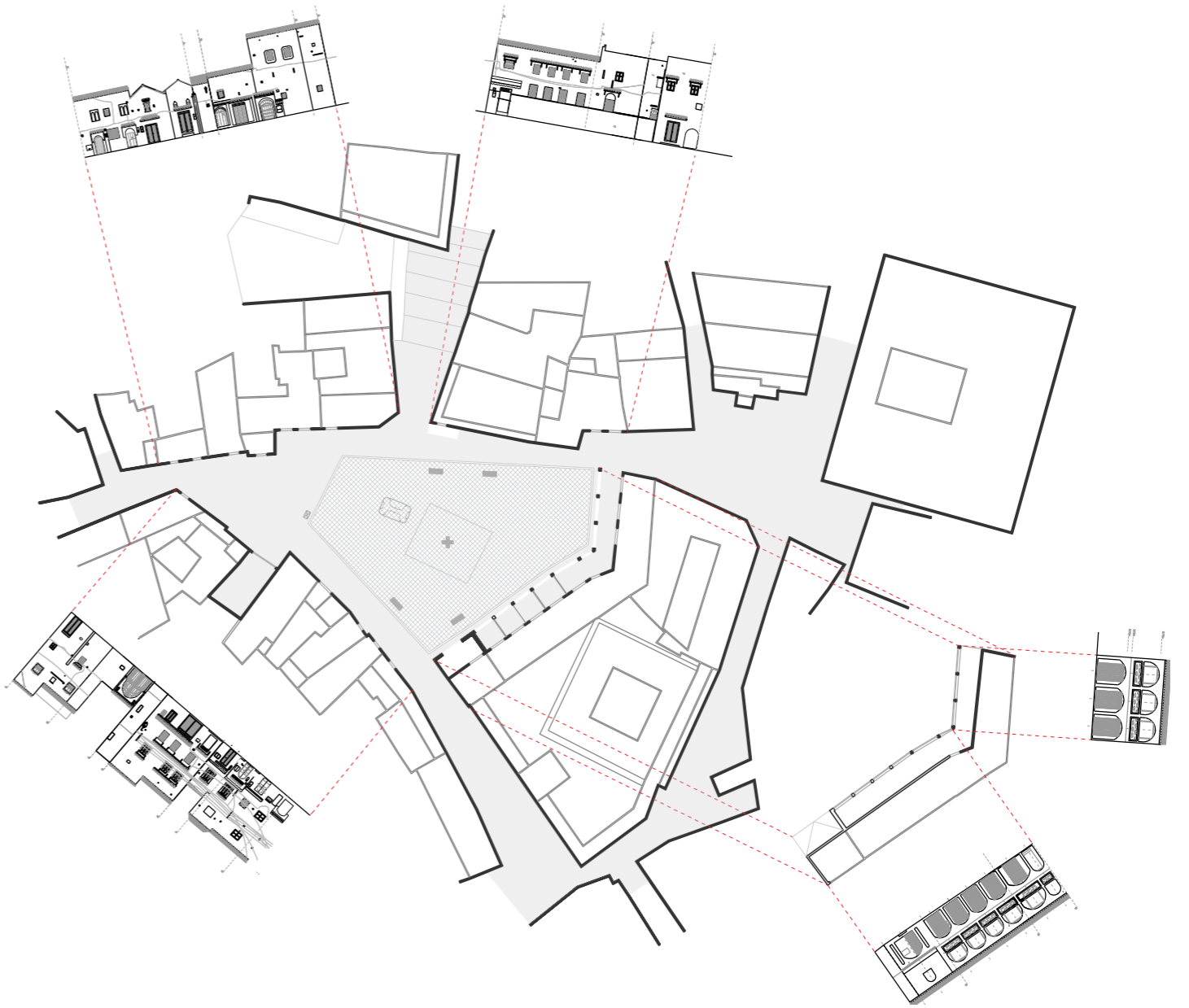
"I want more tourists so that they see, and appreciate the beauty of the artisans work. Morocco is a country of artisans."

"Chefchaouen has a familiar character, everyone helps each other."

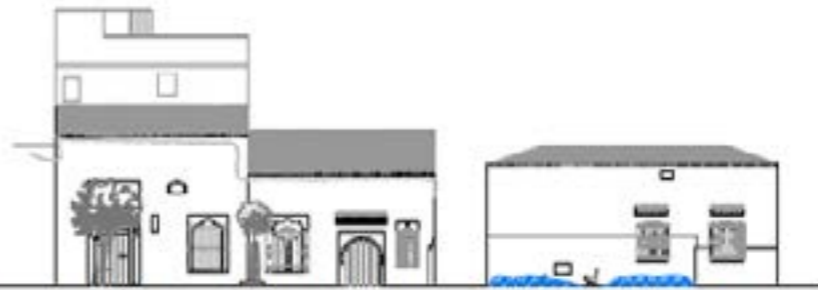
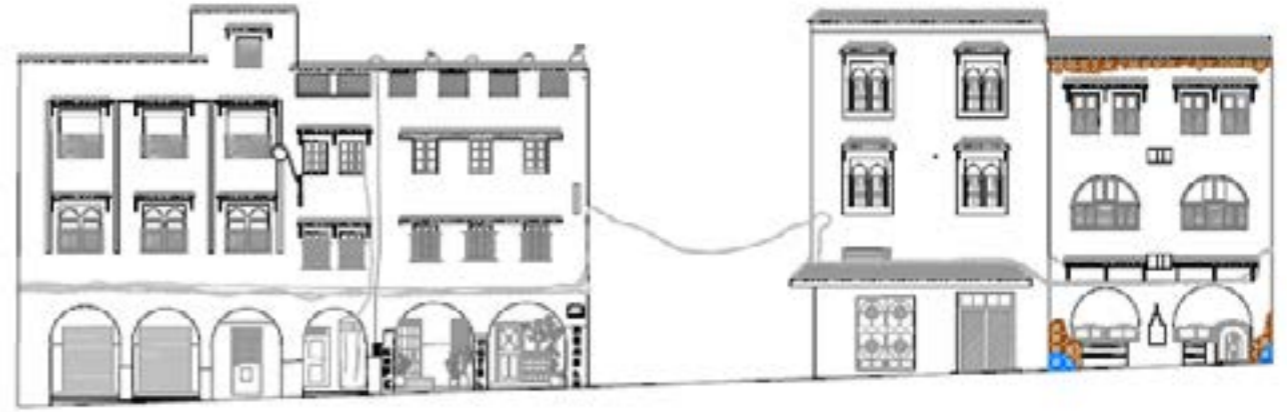
"The most representative colors of Chefchaouen is the blue that is very light. "your intervention should really take into consideration the heritage"

"this site suffers also from drainage problems , electricity, no

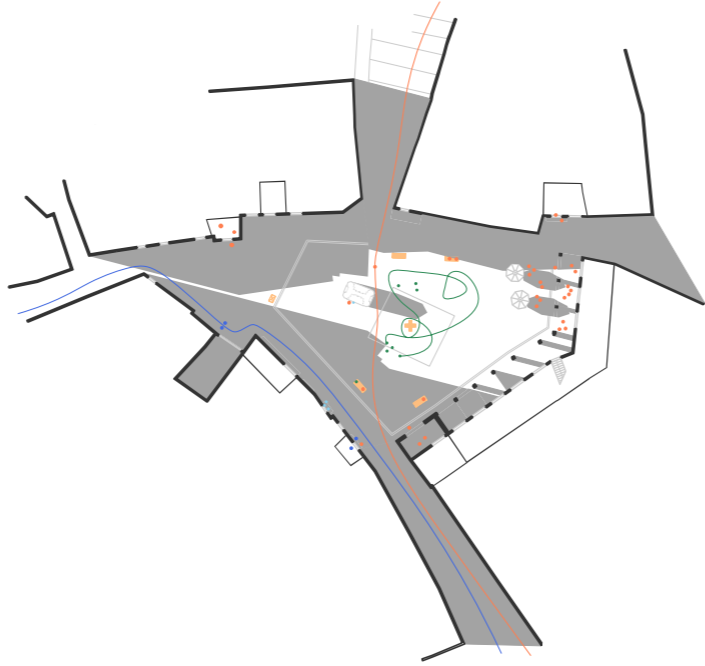
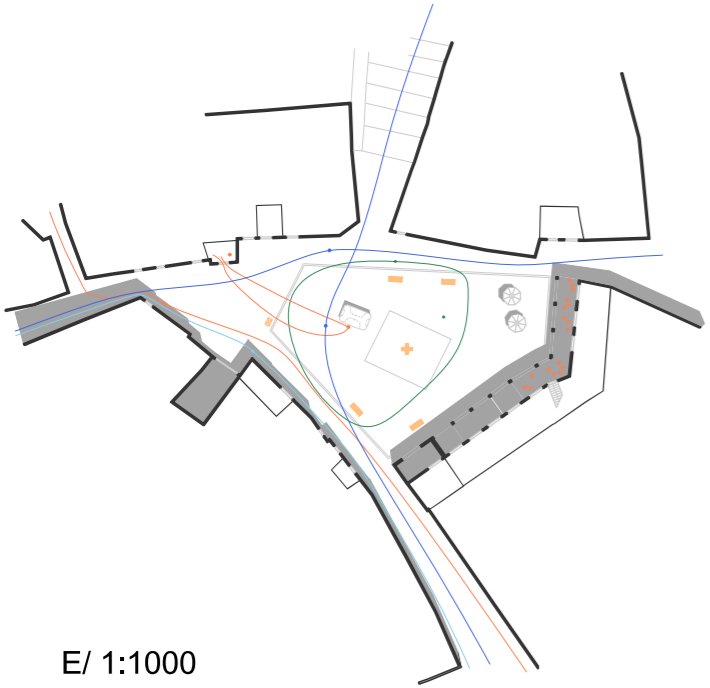
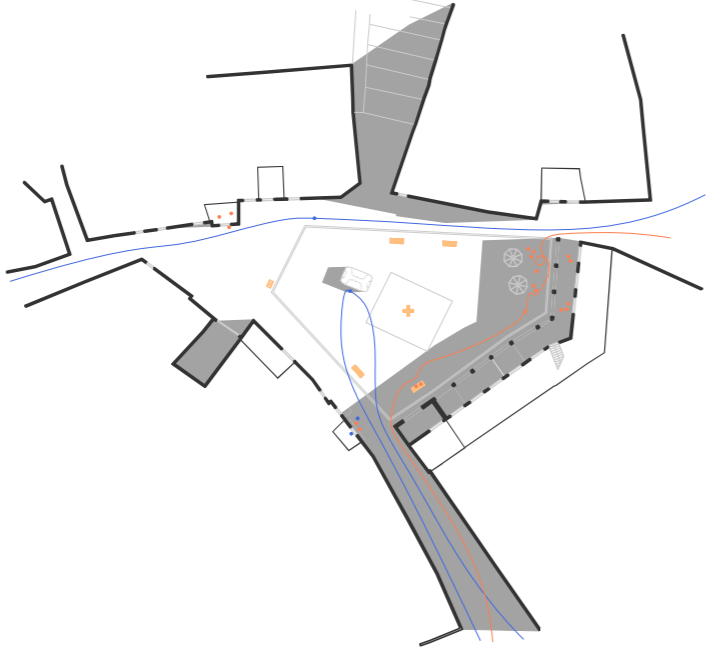




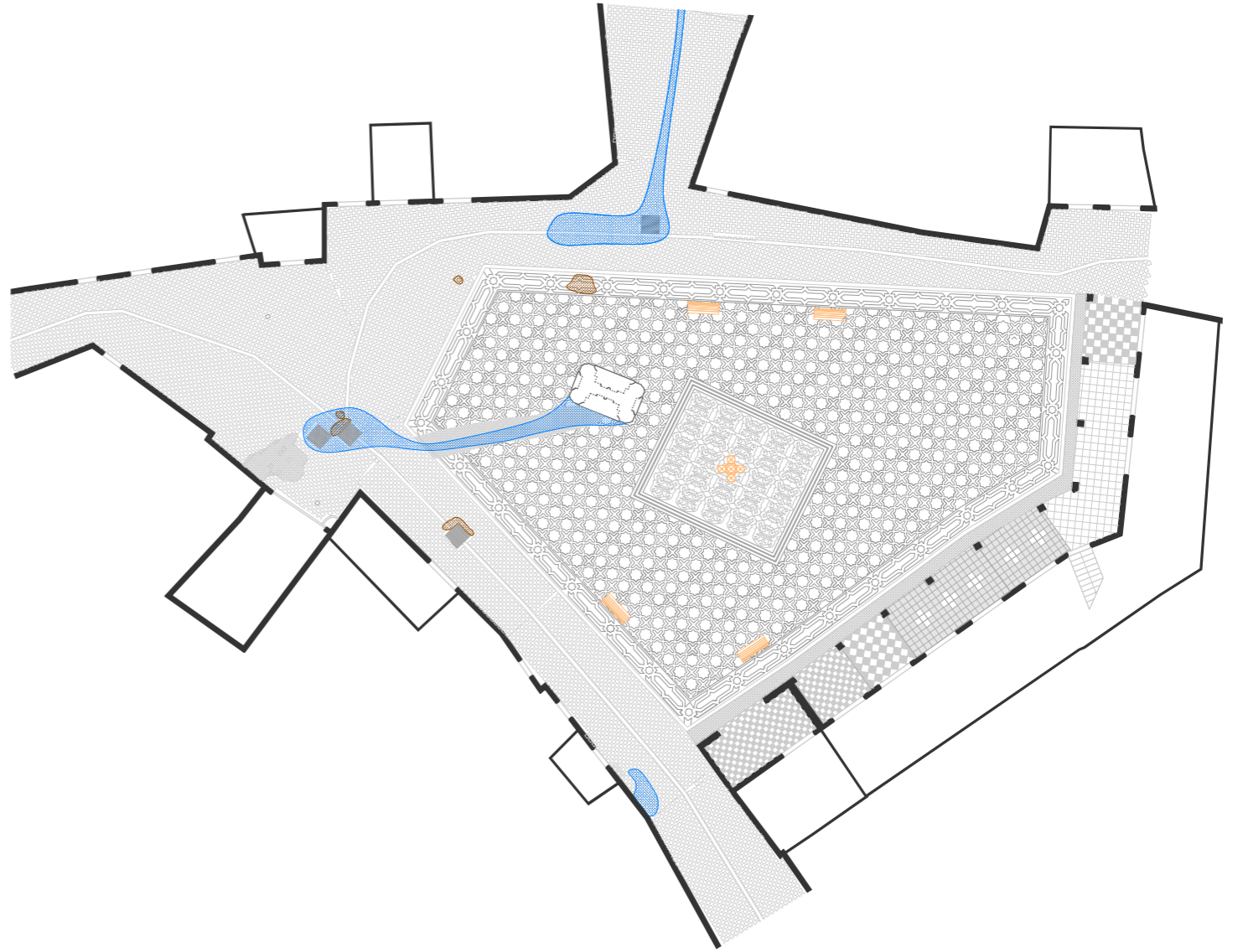
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Despiece de las diferentes fachadas de Bab Souk y análisis de sus patologías.

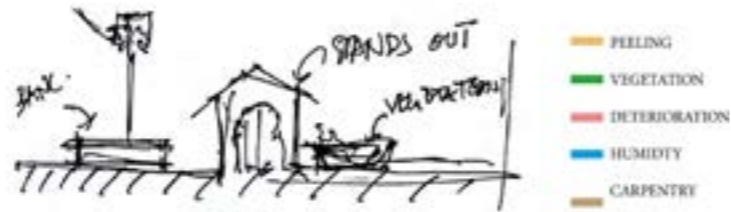
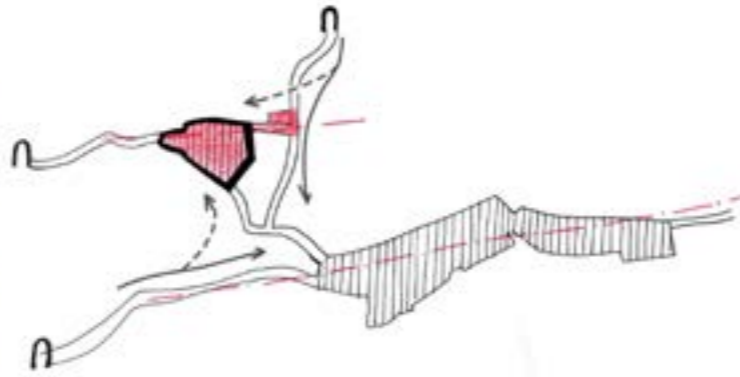


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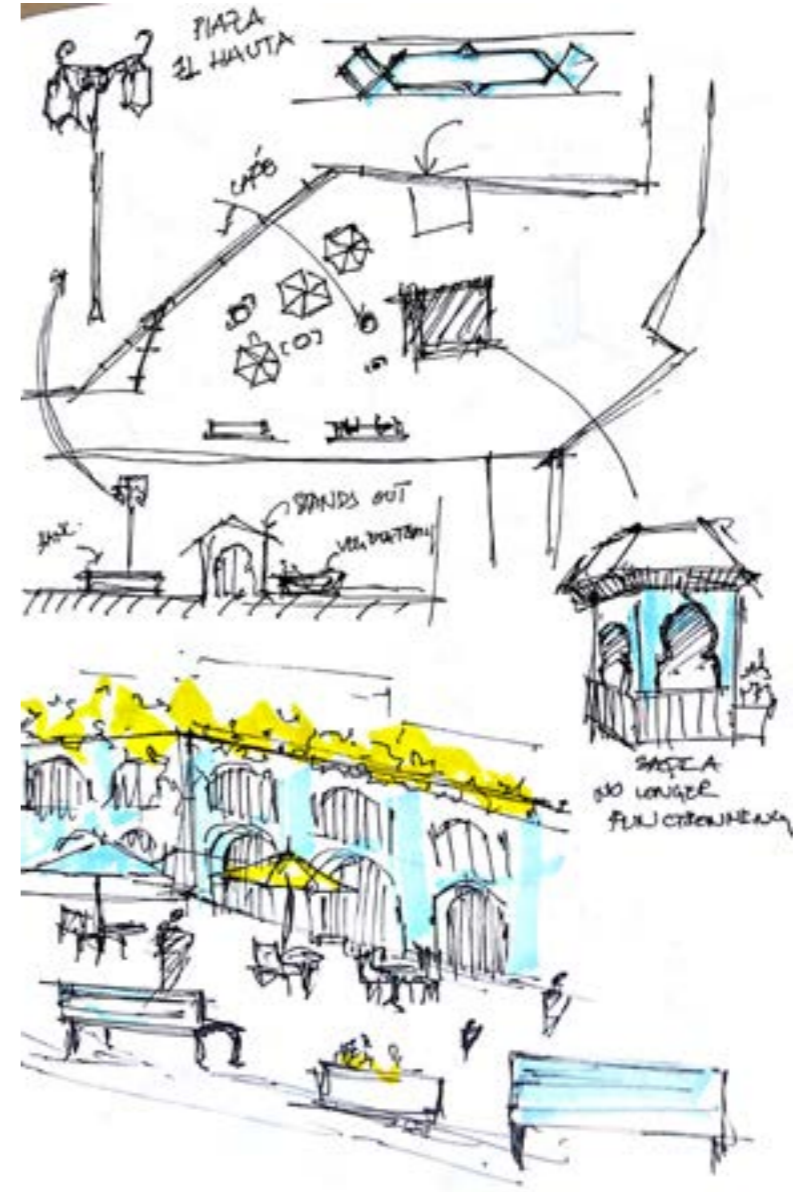


E/ 1:350





- PEELING
- VEGETATION
- DETERIORATION
- HUMIDITY
- CARPENTRY





In this project we tried to abstract the essential of this public space by analysing the historical and nowadays usage context.

There was not enough “natural” shade to be comfortable on the square while having a beverage on any of the cafés. Because of that, there was the need of using sunshades by all the users.

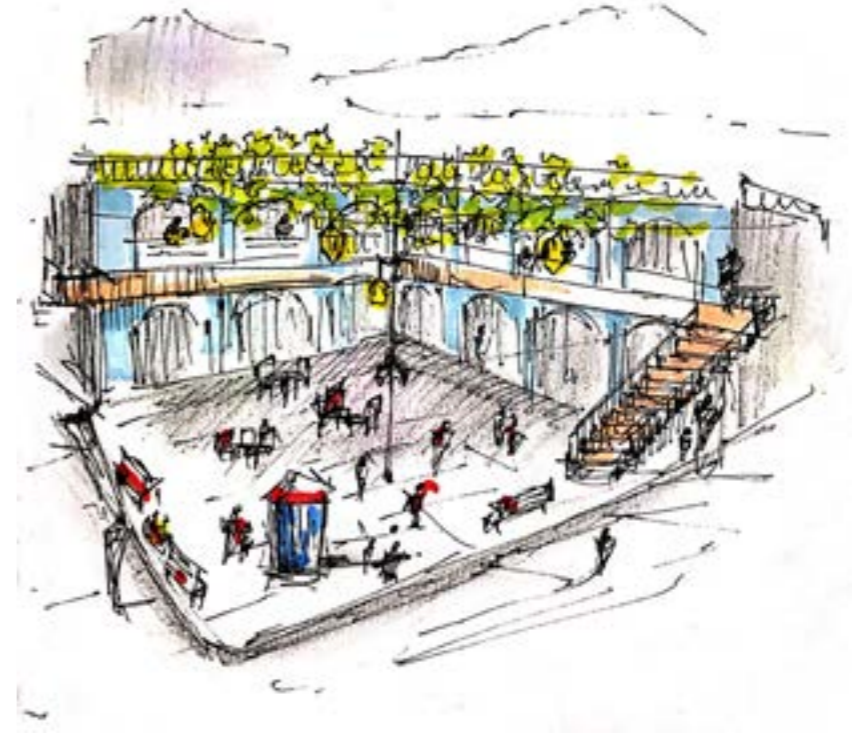
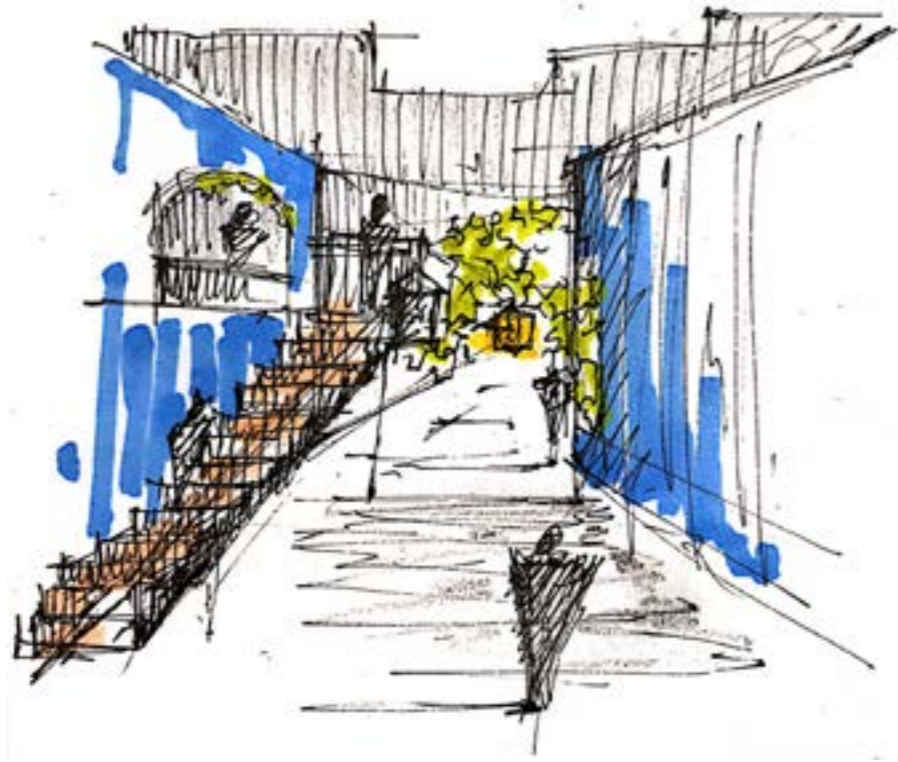
Indeed, that is why we projected a new “natural” shade for the space. We considered that by adding a new tree vine on the middle square would emphasize the symbolism of the square and give a better atmosphere on the place.

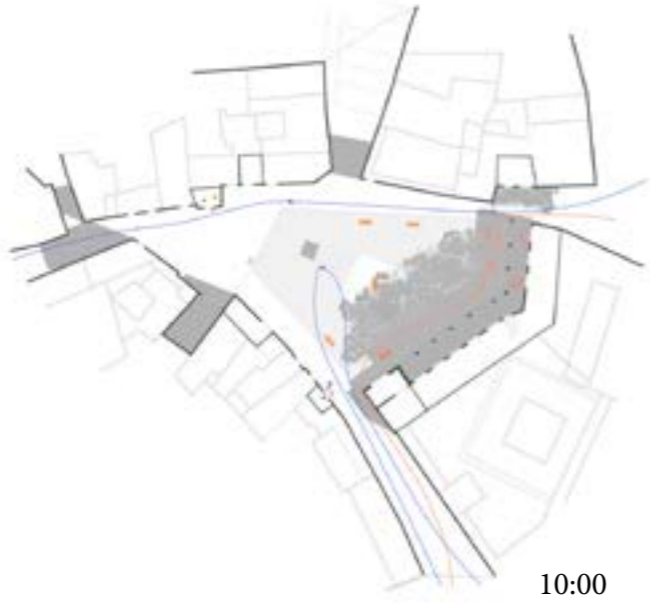
Another main problem was that the craftsmen were kind of isolated from the square on the first floor of the building. The staircase was not visible from the outside and the user experience was affected by its long and narrow interior passage.

In this case, we insert a new staircase on the outside of the building, so you can have a new contact path with this first floor. The path connected two spaces, one on the square el Hauta, and the other point on a smaller square; meeting point of a cultural centre, a political party centre, a hammam, and a traditional oven.

With these interventions we add a new attraction to the medina, not just for tourists but for all the users of this ancient square by preserving its original character.



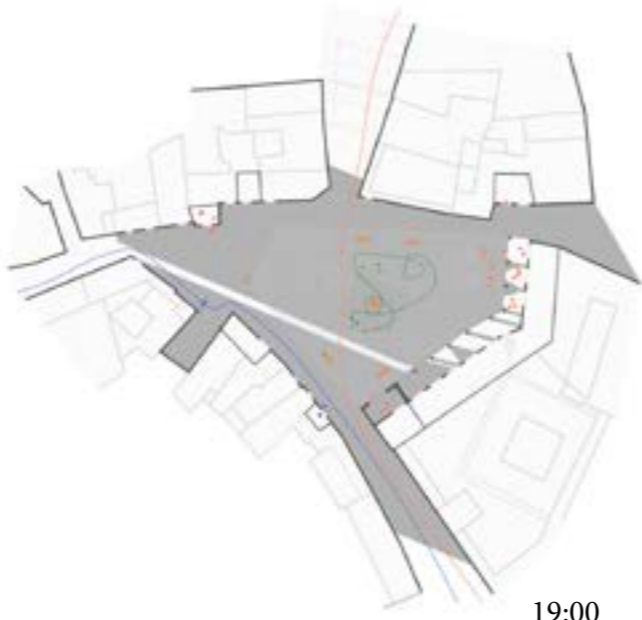




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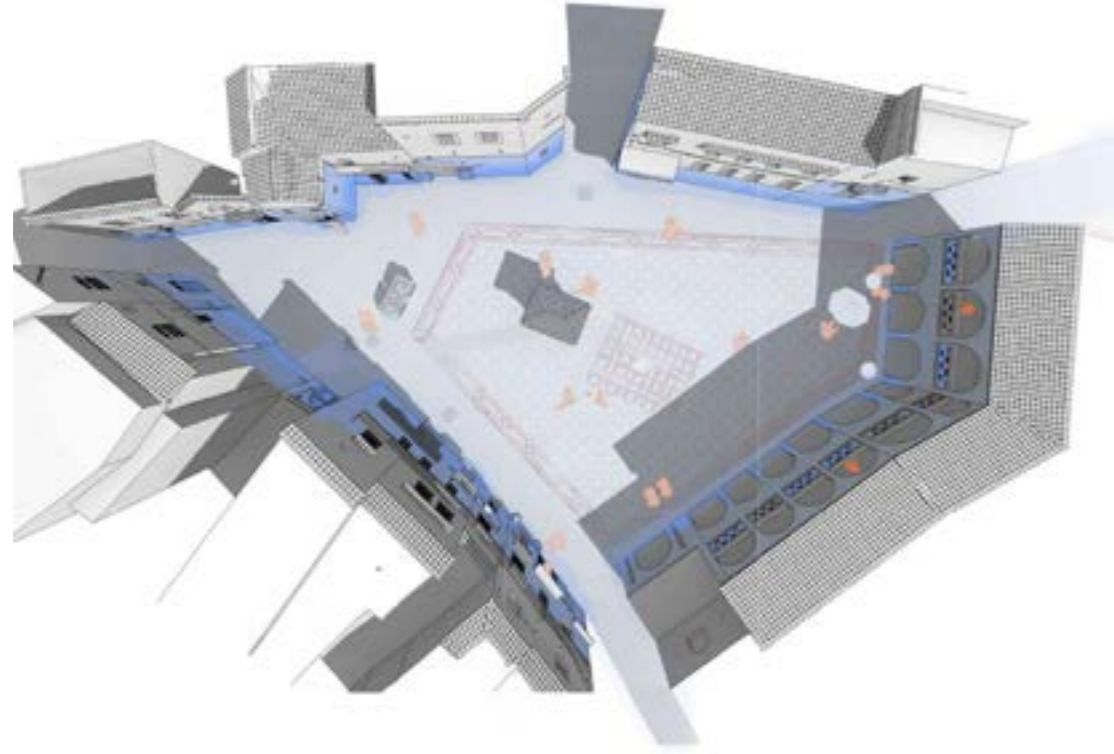


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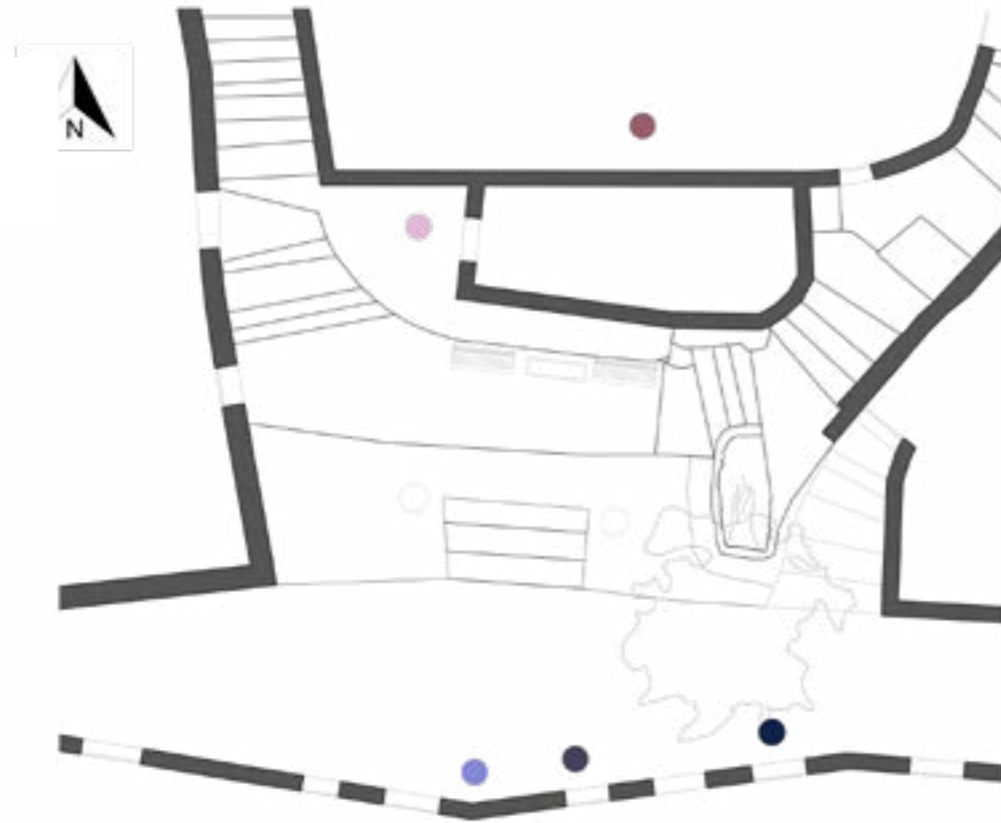
Al Zaituna Square

The Zaituna Square is located along the medina's longest street, Hassan I. The peculiar shape of this space, both a square and a crossroad between three streets, is determined by its history; its position, at the intersection between three neighborhoods: Al Andulus, Sebbanine and Al Onsar, made sure no building was constructed here. The latter, built in the 16th century, is located at the highest point of the medina and close to the river, accessible through Al Onsar door.

The main features of the square are the olive tree it takes its name from, the difference of levels (the two main levels are saved by bearing walls made of calcaric stone), and the homonymous oven. Ovens were one of the most important buildings of ancient medinas: together with the mosque, it constituted the main equipment of each neighborhood.

The Zeituna oven is located on the highest point of the square. Like other ovens in the city, it was owned by three or four families and was used by the locals that brought their food here in order for the bakers to cook it. Originally it was a traditional oven, characterized by a two-slope tile roof and a chimney in the middle. Following the death of its last owner, the oven was converted into a private space for his wife and family and the cooking space was converted into a smaller gas oven with a metallic chimney on the outside.





FATMA / This woman is a 70 year old widow with 7 children. She owns the oven.

She goes to the oven on foot every morning. She says this square used to be a gathering point for all the neighbours, that cooked bread and pastries in the Al Zaituna oven. The oven dates back to the 15th century. Nowadays, the oven does no longer provide this service, and has become of private use for her and her 7 children.

In general, she says the locals enjoy the presence of tourists and the small businesses surrounding the square use its walls to exhibit their products. As for the landlords, they do not show any sign of complaints as long as there is not too much noise.

WOMAN/ This woman is a 40 years old living above the oven.

She does not spend time in the square normally as her balcony directly connects her to the it. She says her favorite part of the square is the perimeter of the tree which offers a nice shelter for the tourists and the locals.

Her least favorite part is the rooftop of the oven connected to her house because the smoke rising from it pollutes her laundry and impedes proper ventilation of her living room.

AHMED / He is a 35 years old chef in Belgium and a carpet seller in Chefchaouen.

Ahmed goes to the square every day to help his uncle to sell carpets in his shop. Mostly he sits in front of the shop but sometimes he sits on the bench and plays with the kids. He stays here from ten in the morning to six in the afternoon.

Regarding tourism in the city, he says the government wants to attract tourists but this does not help the locals to preserve the public space and they even have to pay to paint their houses blue.

DIRECTOR OF URBAN AGENCY IN TETUAN/ This 45 year old man is in charge of the renovation of several public spaces in Chefchaouen and is currently in charge of analyzing the current state of Al Zeituna. He says the square is crowded most of the time, but its peak is reached during spring, when the leaves are more vivid and the sunny days are bearable.

The square attracts tourists at nighttime as well, thanks to a warm light source that showcases the beauty of the cold tones of the blue walls. He also told us that during the last 15 years, Chefchaouen's streets have known an increase in blue tones, while neglecting whites and browns, but he would like to rebalance the aesthetic of the façades.

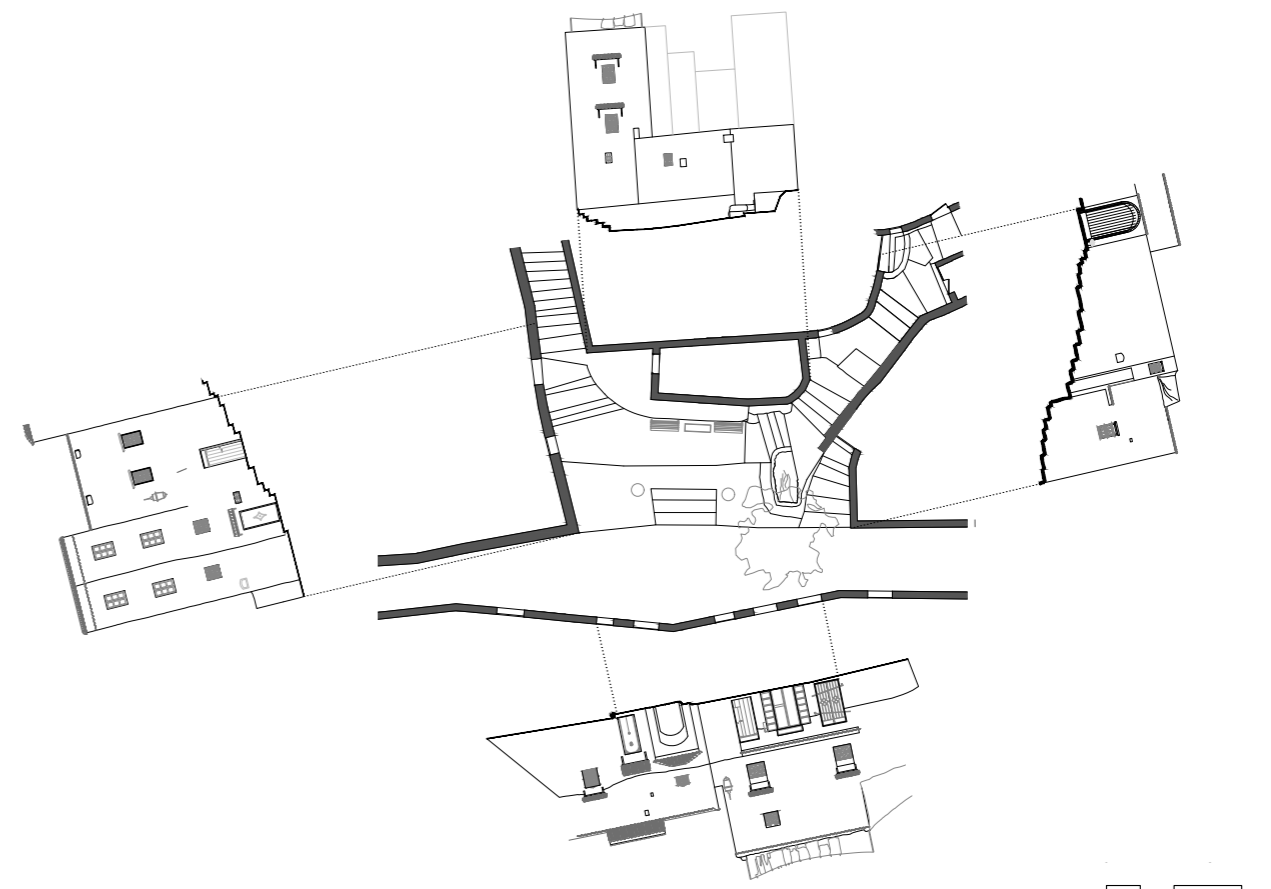
MAN / This 40 year old man owns a shop that faces the Zaituna tree that he has been running for more than 21 years and he comes to his workplace every day early in the morning.

He is bothered by the kids that play in the square because they deteriorate urban furniture; he also hates when the neighbours leave leftovers of construction in the square.

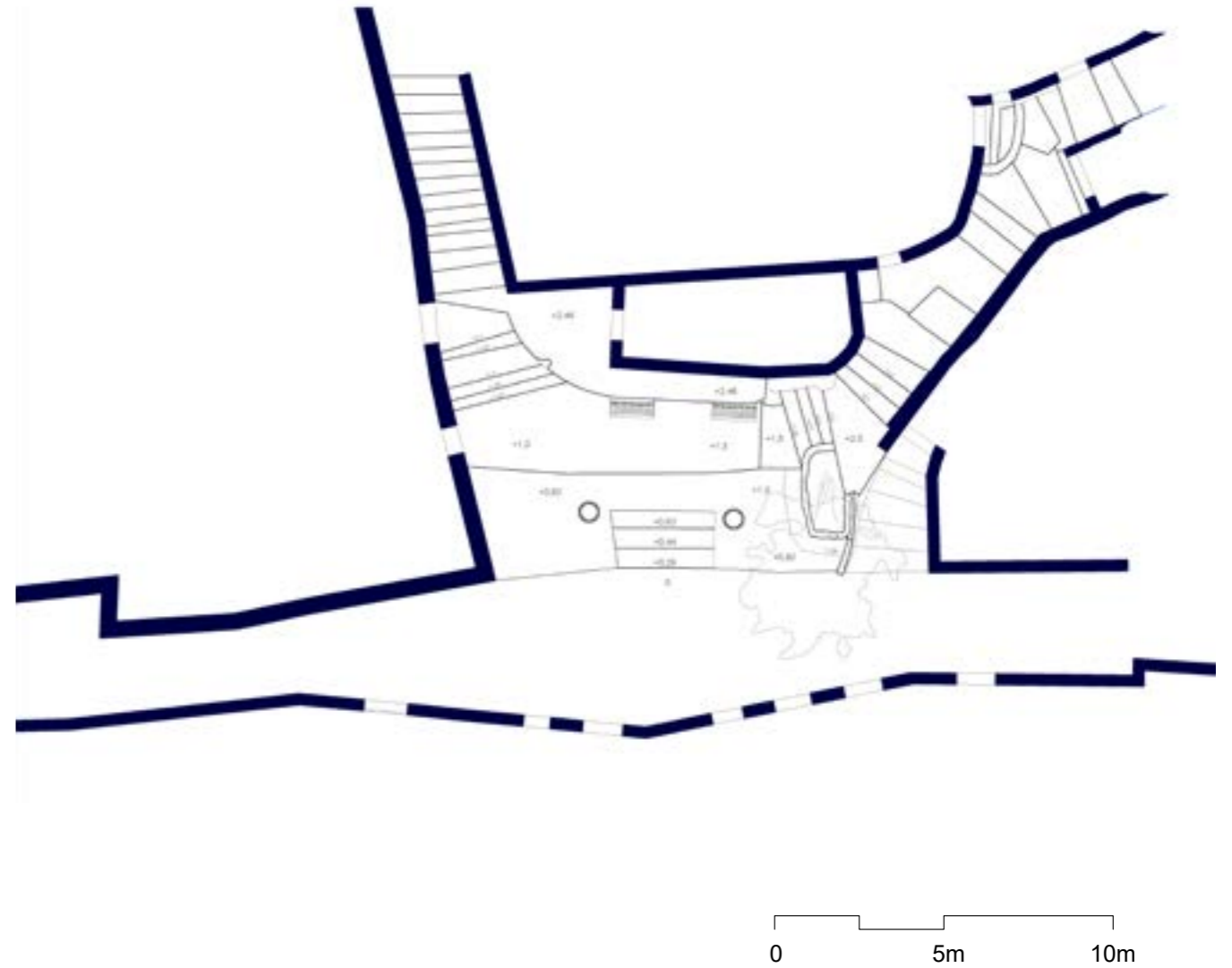
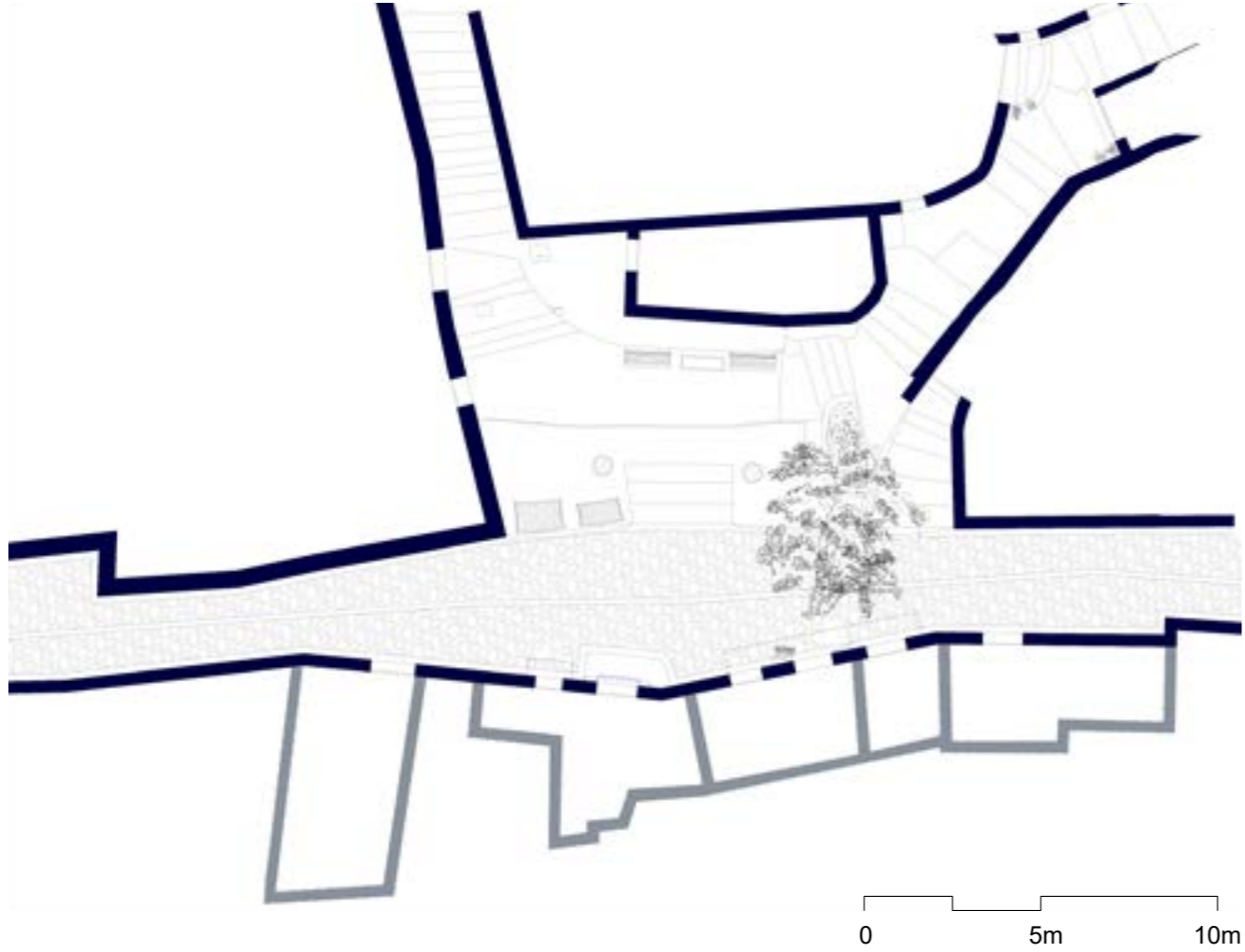
To improve the square, he thinks local authorities should provide surveillance devices to prevent these situations from happening

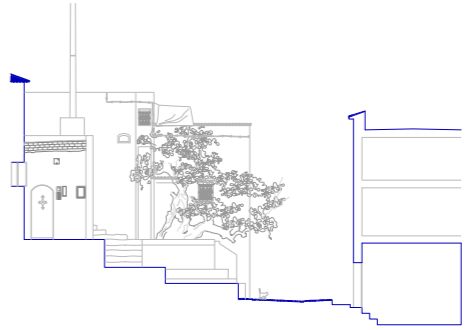
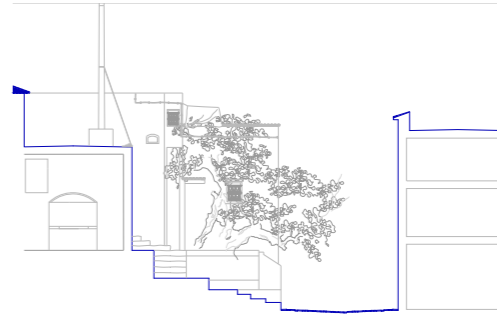
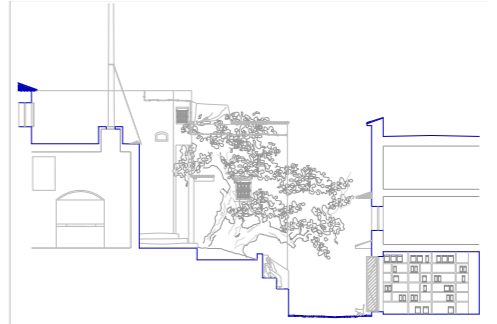
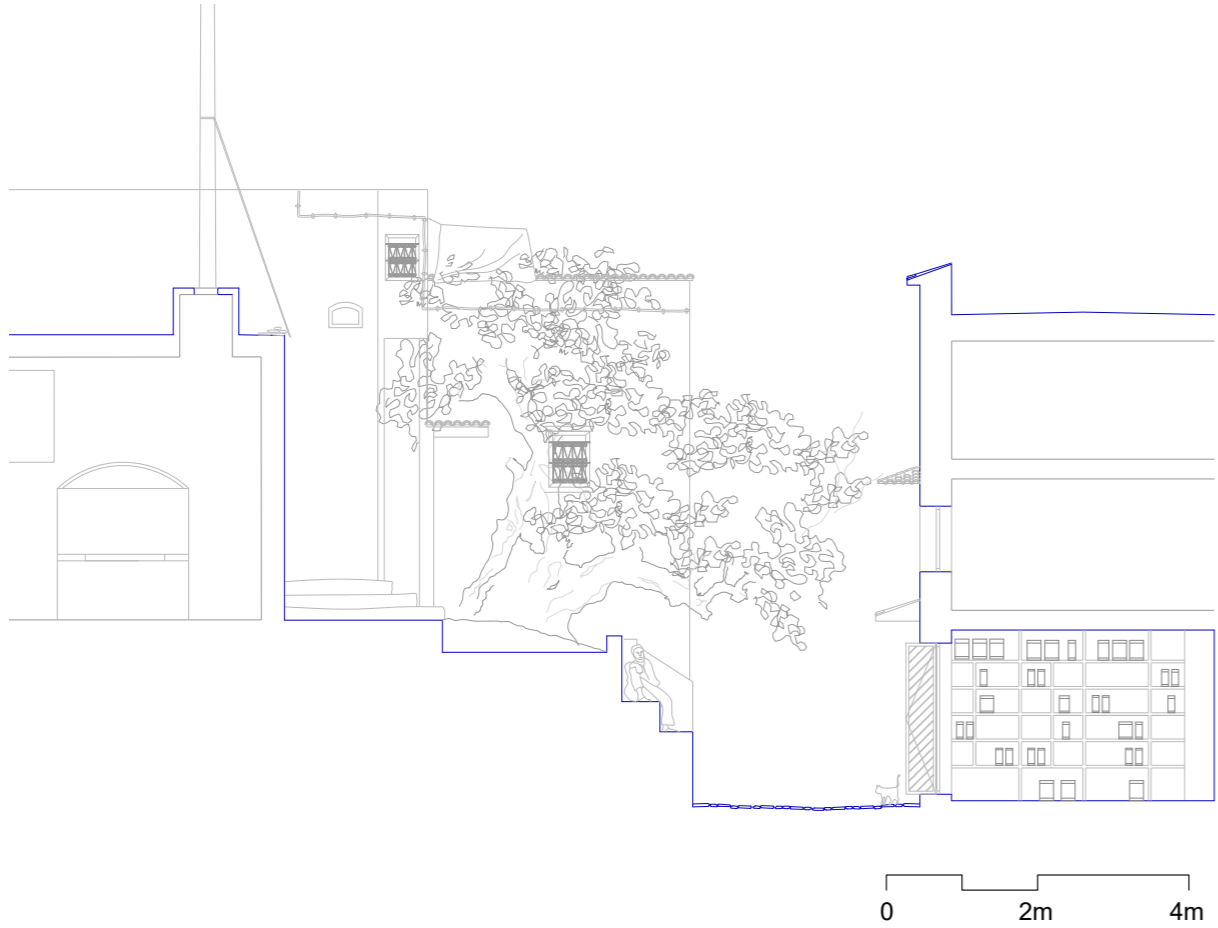
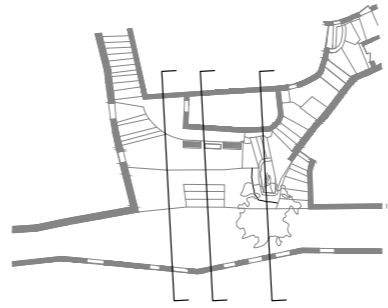
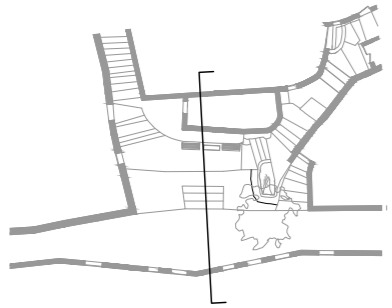


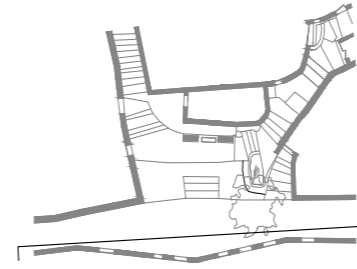
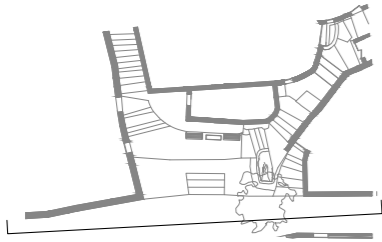
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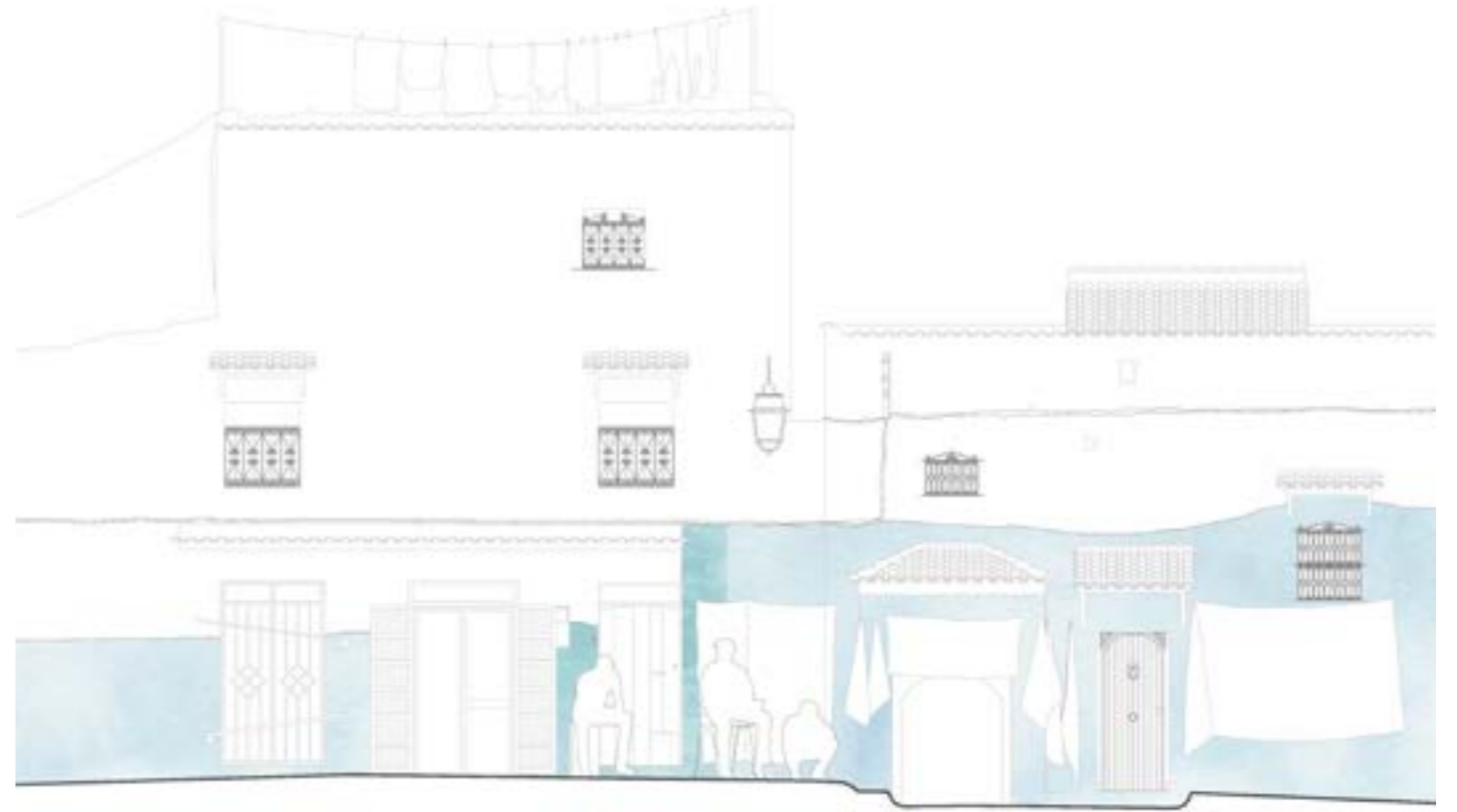
0 5m 10m



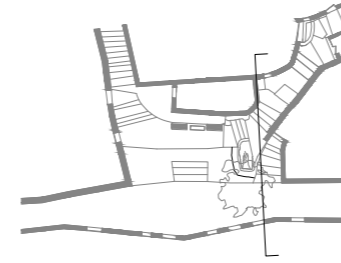
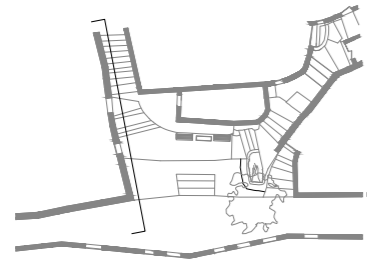




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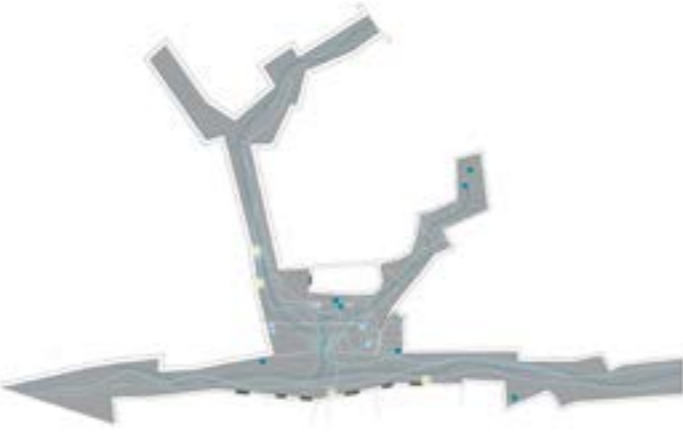
8 AM



12 AM



18 PM



22 PM

- LOCAL MEN
- LOCAL WOMEN
- LOCAL CHILDREN
- TOURISTS



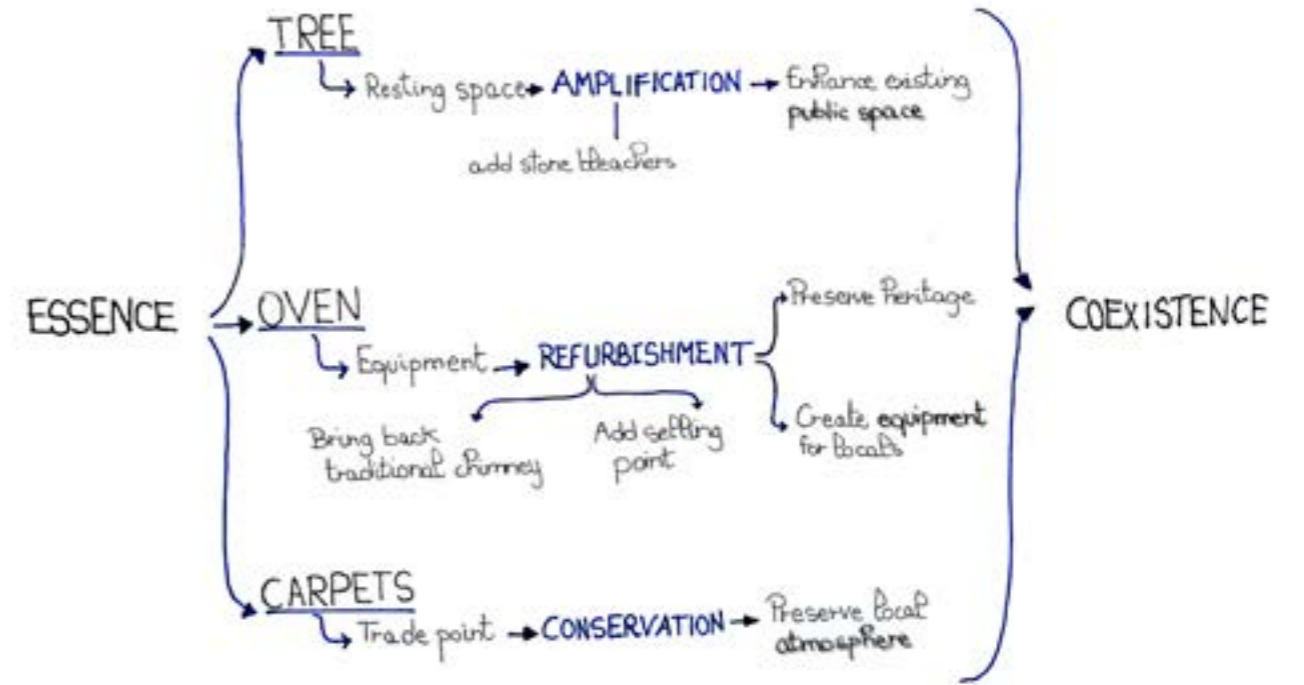


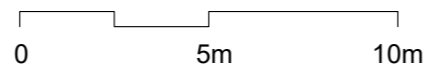
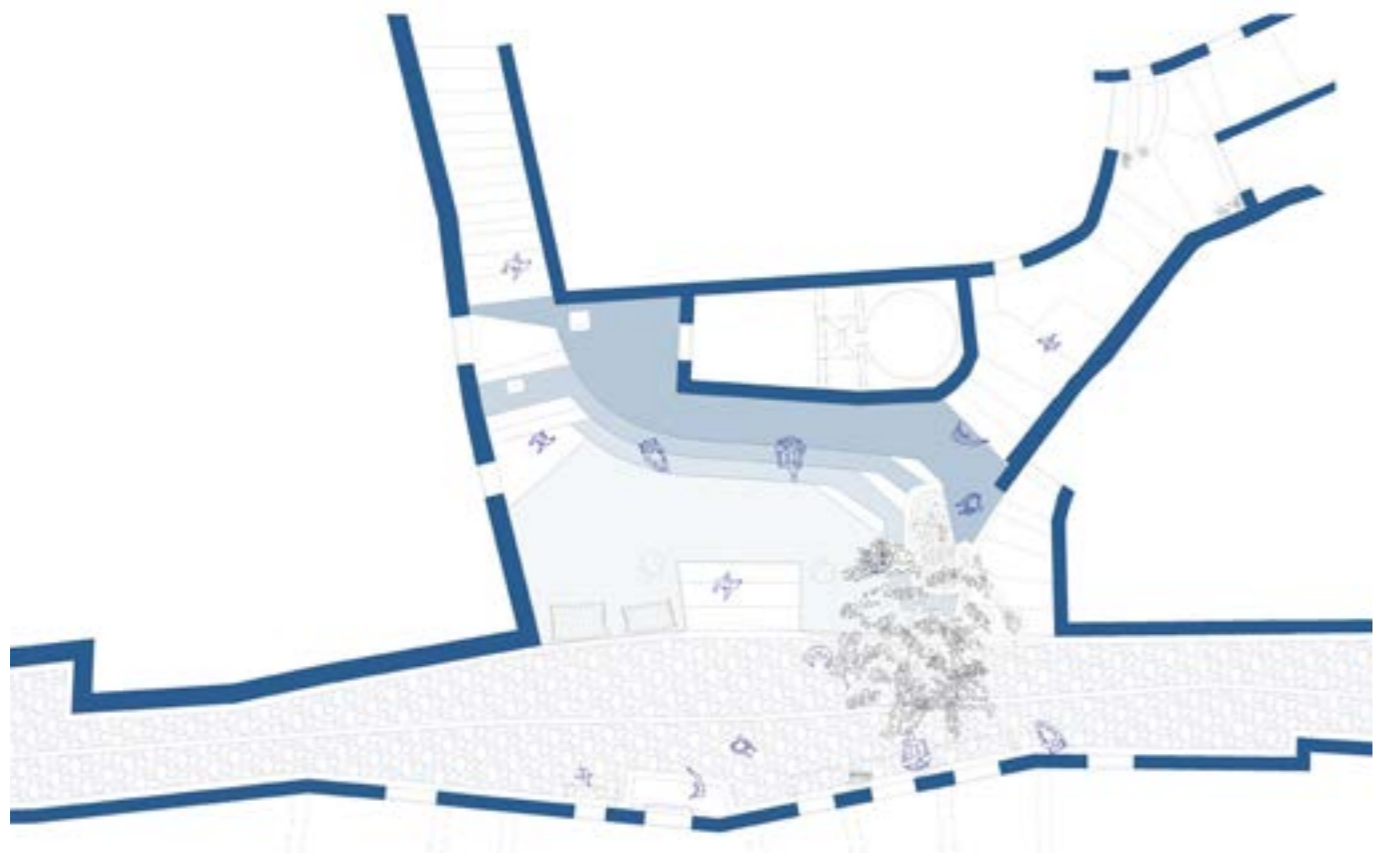
Following an analysis of the square and our interpretation of its identity, our intention is to intervene in the square to enhance the public space it generates and to refurbish the Zeituna oven in order to preserve the city's heritage and provide the neighborhood with a new equipment.

Our proposal consists of generating a connection between the essential components of the square. This connection is established through the addition of stone bleachers that cross the space by connecting the stairs to one another. This space will be used to sit and enjoy the square, but will also create a more practical access to the oven.

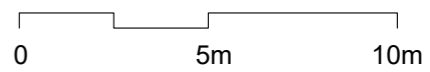
As regards the oven, the proposal is to place a window where the owner of the oven will be able to sell her bread and pastries.

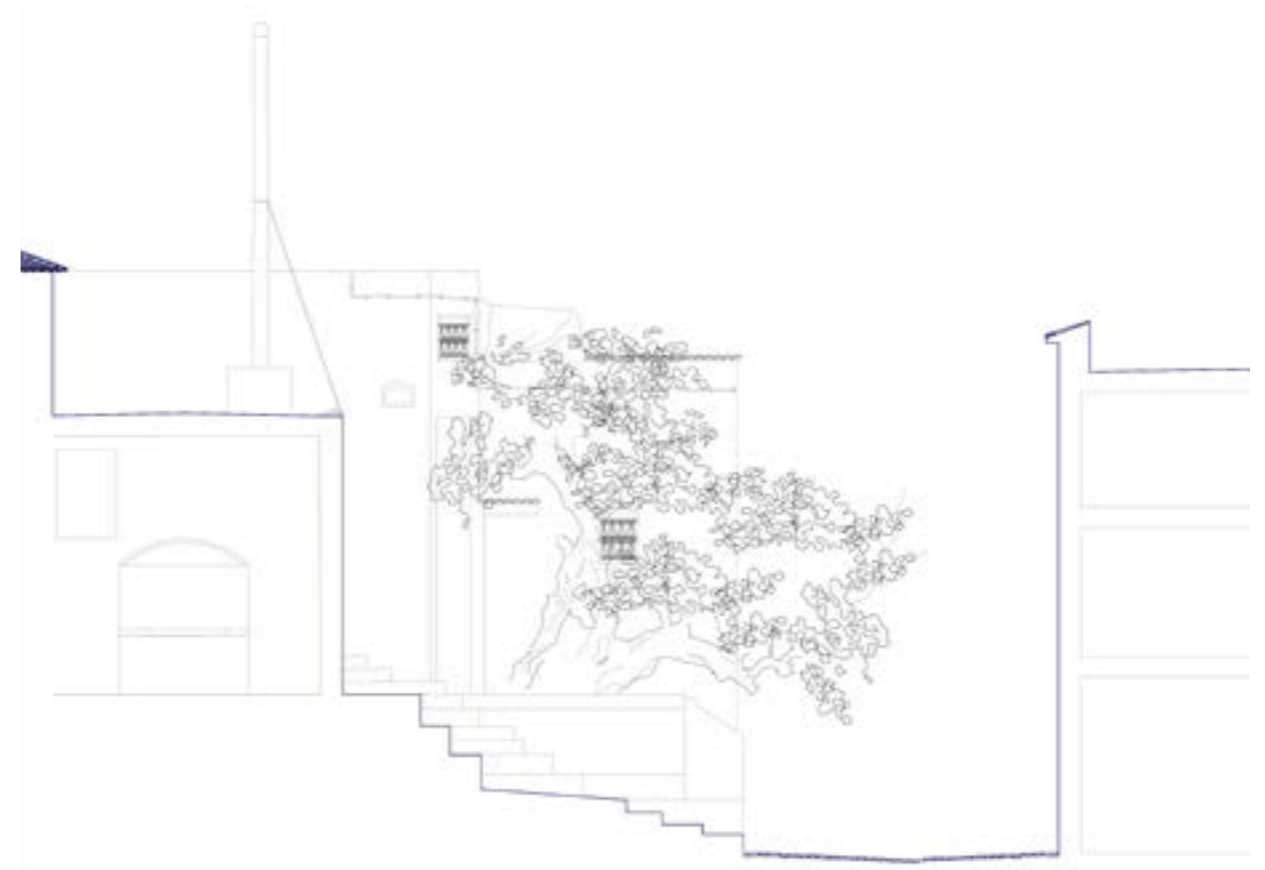
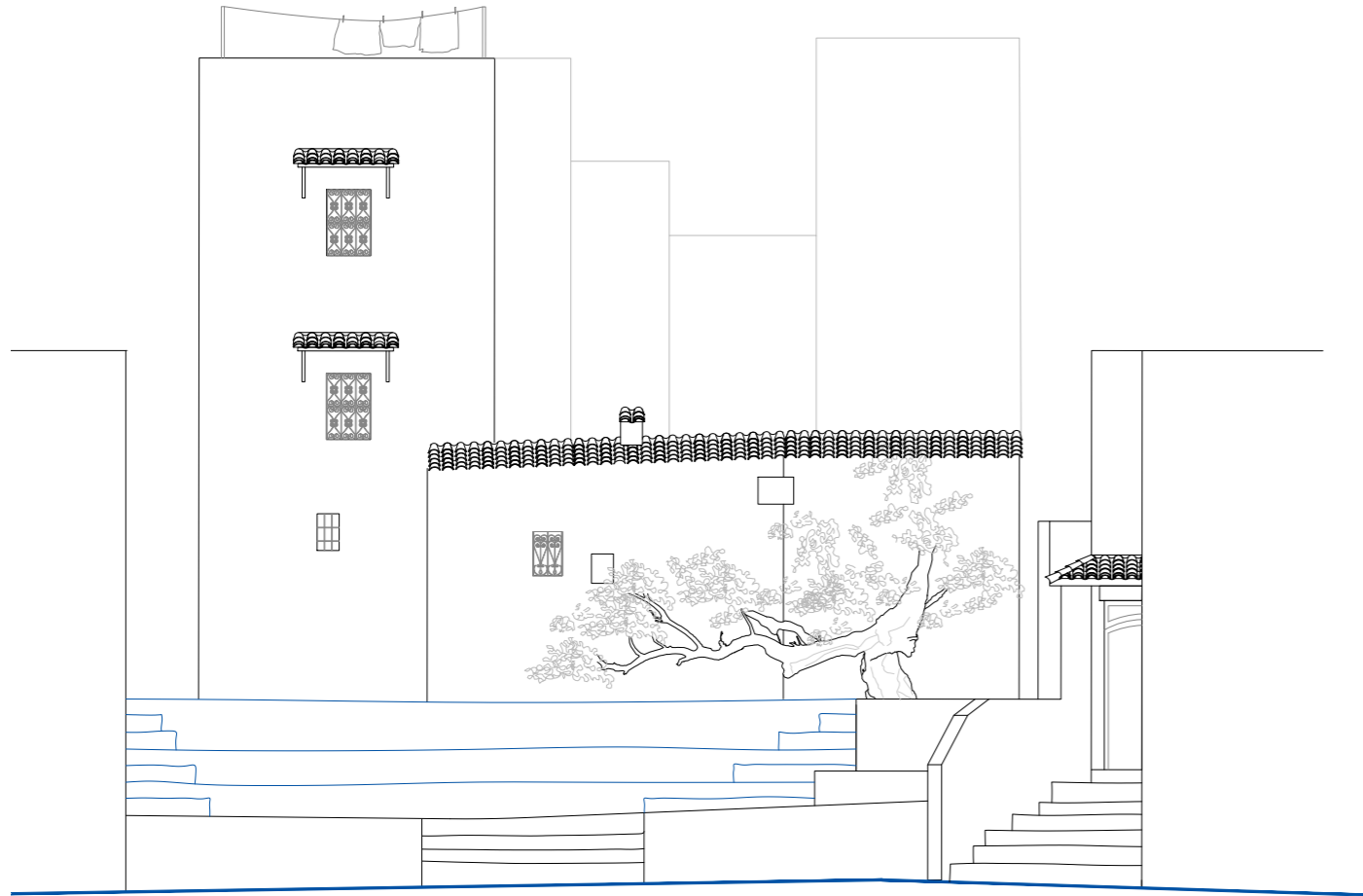
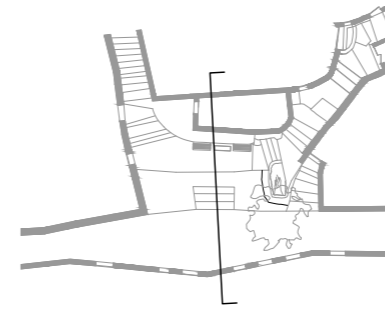
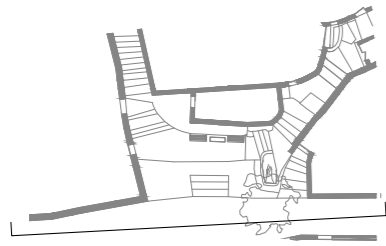
The goal of these two interventions is to create a space for everyone to coexist and share moments together, while preserving the elements that are making this place unique.





- LOCAL MEN ●
- LOCAL WOMEN ●
- LOCAL CHILDREN ●
- TOURISTS ●





0 2m 4m

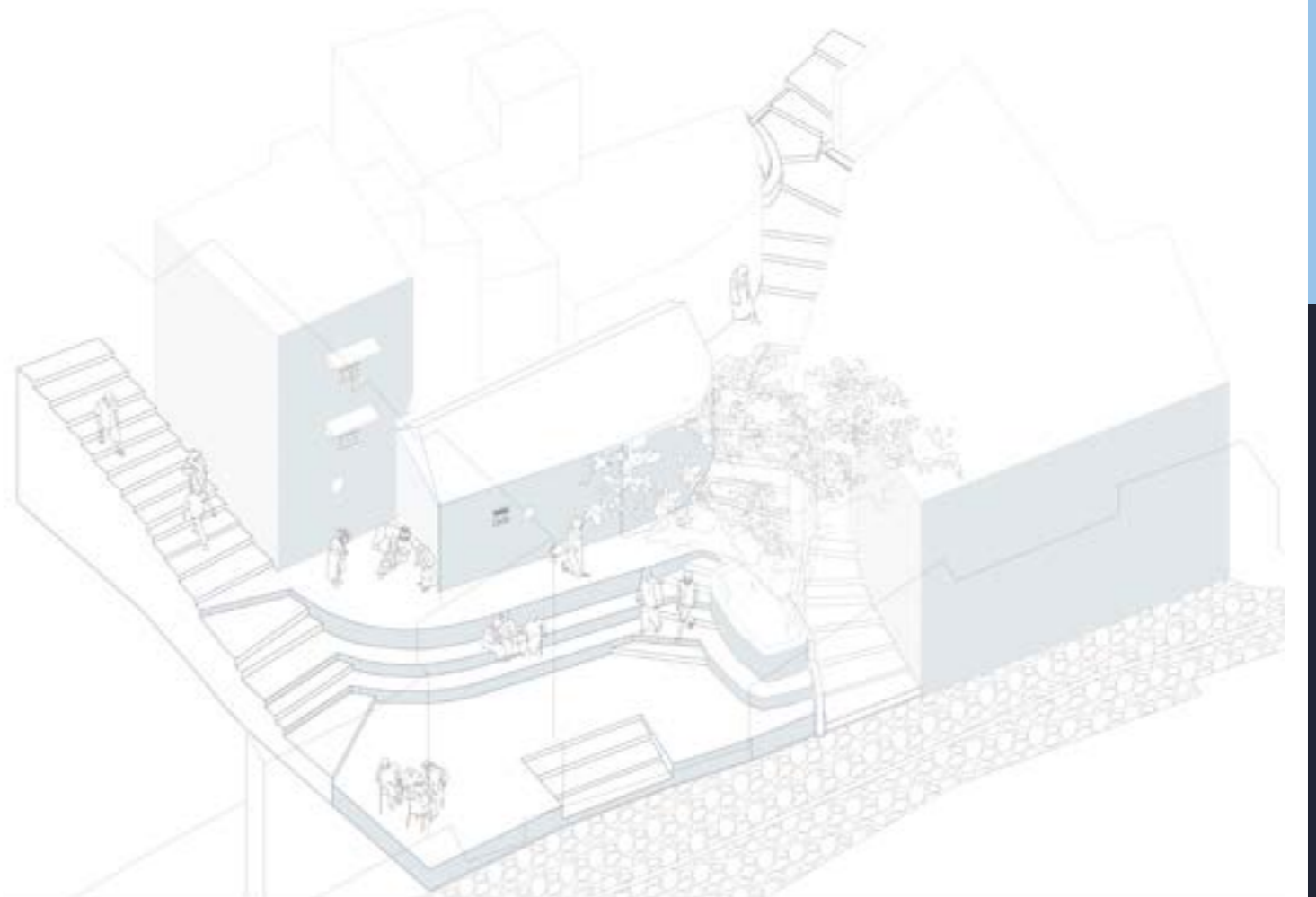
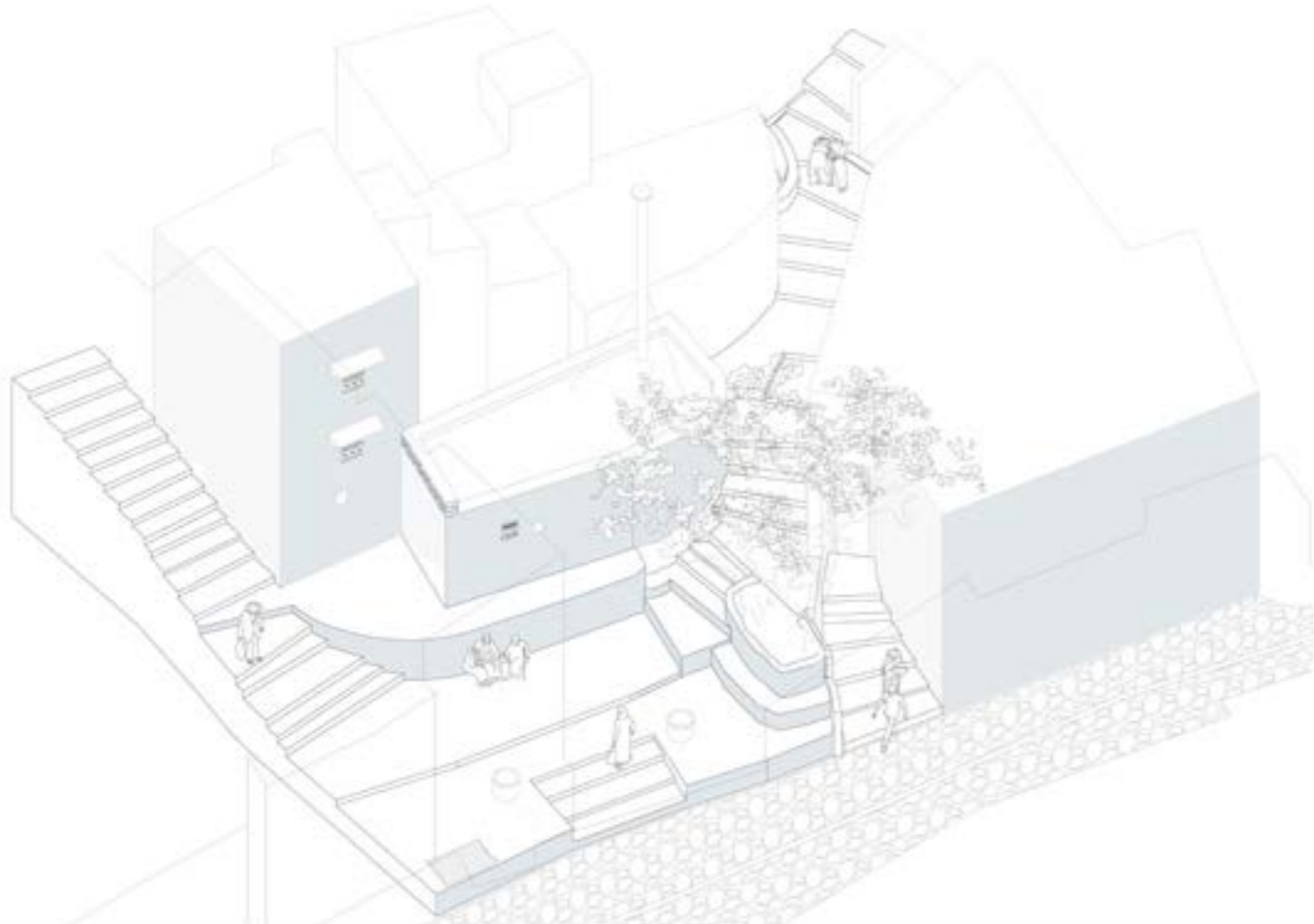
0 2m 4m

Oven - current state

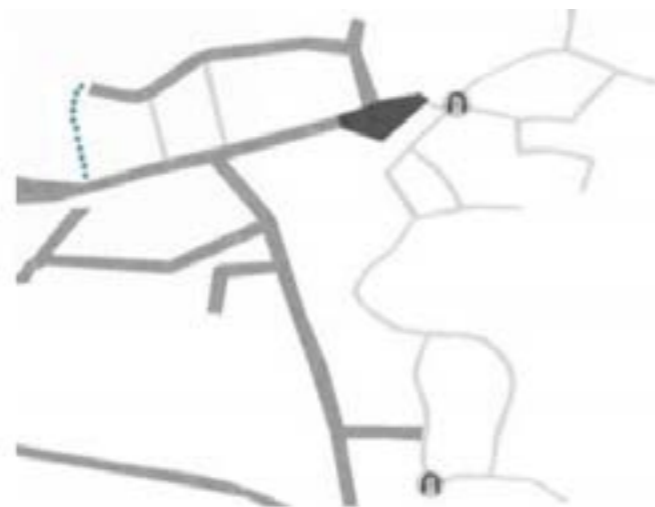


Oven - proposal









The Bab Souk door, by which the Bab Souk square was labeled, was and it's still one of the first and most emblematic doors of the old medina. The importance of this door is given because it was the passage of Sultan Moulay Hassan I during his historical visit to the city of Chefchaouen in 1886, and it also was the one that the Spanish used to get in Xauen in the 1920s and this is why they stayed in this neighborhood (in the outskirts of the wall). Xauen has extended over this door during the years, but back in the days this represented one of the limits of the medina.

This door has been restored by a workshop-school, (documented through the historical photos of the file of Mohamed Hakoun) given that it had no roof until 2007, just keeping his structure. Another thing about the Bab Souk square is that this is where the first market of Xauen was placed. Afterwards, the main market was moved to the Outa Hamman square, but given that the market was celebrated on fridays and friday is the holy day, the market got moved again, this time out of the wall until it came back to where it is nowadays. Despite these, Bab Souk was still holding a market on Mondays, and sometimes it started to be celebrated on thursdays too, so there were markets twice a week just like now. In spite of the survival of the market in this square, there is actually a project to remove it from here and bring it to another place, somewhere located 15 minutes away from the actual square. This is something about what the local workers of the market totally disagree of, because they already have their own customers in this market, and they live nearby, so changing the place of the market would mean losing their customers. The sellers also complain about the new market because there will come people from other towns and they will not know the people as they do now in the actual Bab Souk square.

Other than Bab Souk, this was also called "Babdesnin" in the past, which means MONDAY; elderly people still call it this way but everyone else calls it Zoko door. This is the way that the people that was going from Xauen to Tetuán went through, and people from the mountain and from all over came to sell in the market. Back in the days they used to come riding donkeys... and now they rent cars or trucks in their local towns, that the different sellers from a same place use to get to Bab Souk. Also, the workers in the market keep their staff near the market in local garages so they don't have to bring everything every time they have to come to work to the market.

The main access to the square is through the Abdessalam Benmchich street, that finishes its route here in a roundabout built between 2006 and 2007, which uses half of the space. From this street looking to Bab Souk there is a panoramic view of the square with the Riff mountains behind.





A local, 34 years old

He was born in Bab Souk and still lives there. He loves the square and often sits in the stairs, near the door, with his friends at different times of the day because it's always secure and save. He likes meeting tourists and telling them the story of Bab Souk.

A cafe owner, 56 years old

He affirms that the market doesn't disturb him as long as they don't put the stands in front of his terrasse. He believes that if they move it, it won't affect him because, even if it's more crowded on Mondays and Fridays, his clients are the same whatever was the situation, the season or the day.

A fruit seller, 41 years old

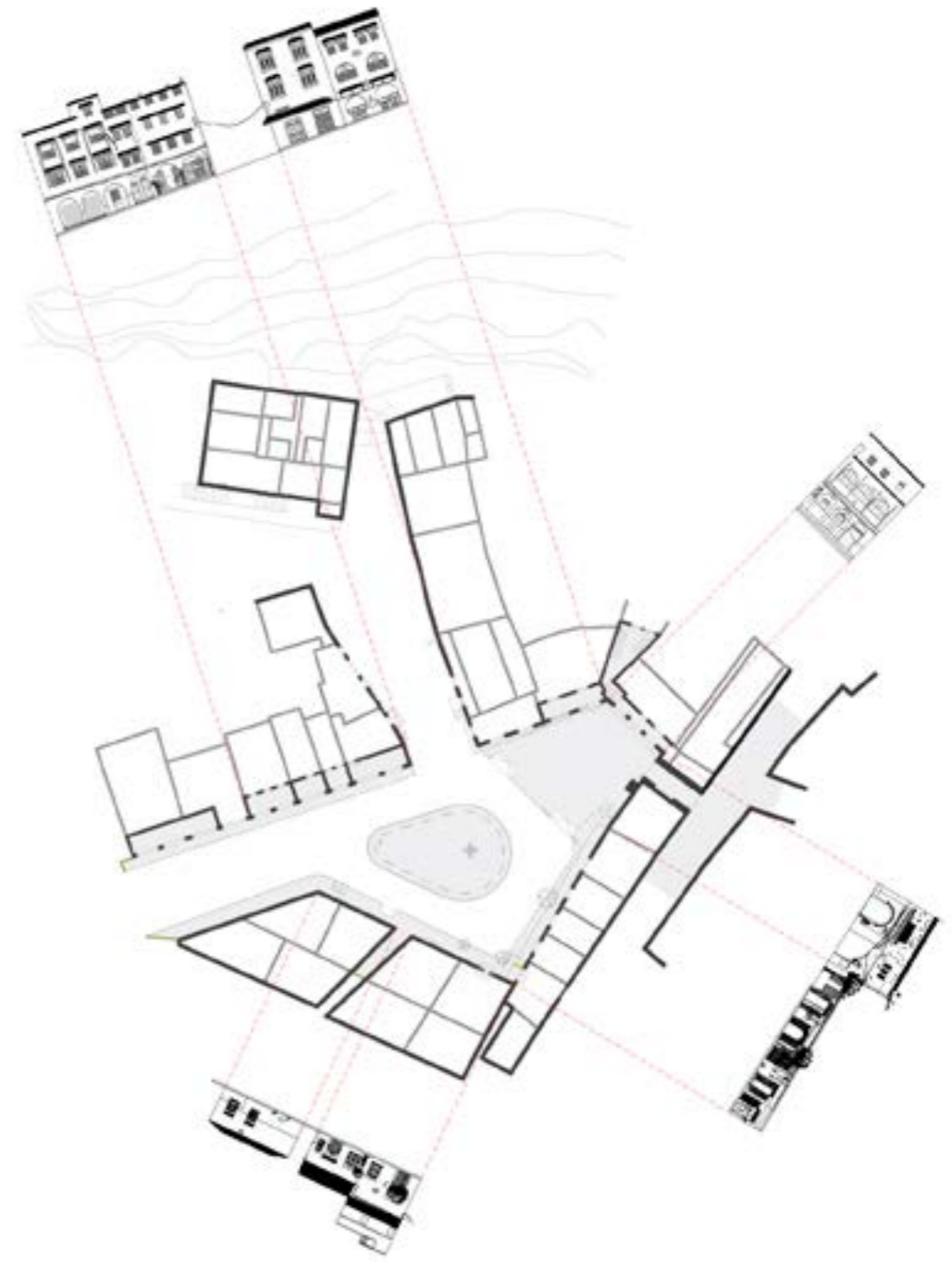
He is used to that place and he doesn't want to move. He confirms that he has everything in Bab Souk square : his clients, his friends and all his routine. Also, he reinforced his position with many arguments : the stands will be more expensive to rent, the thing that he can't afford, its location is near to a mountain from where fall down the stones which is insecure and it's also far from the residents. He hopes that nothing will change.

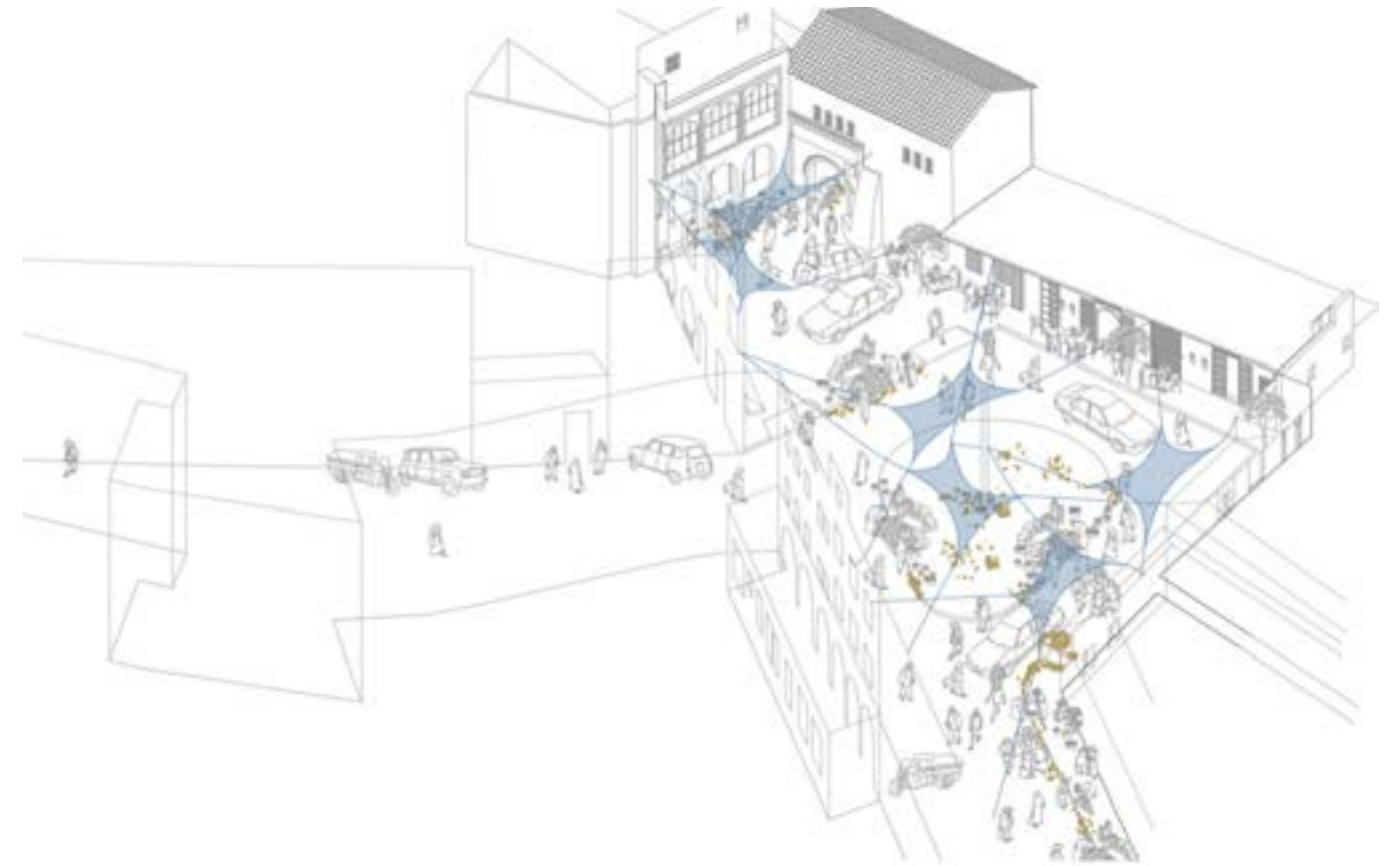
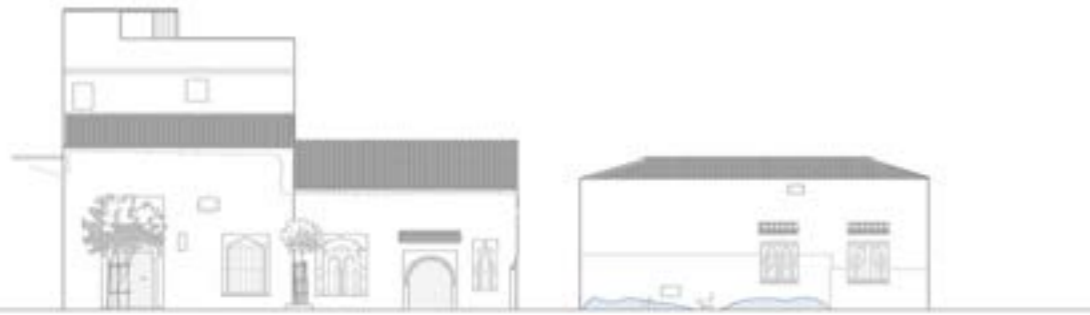
A woman traditional pasteries seller, 48 years old

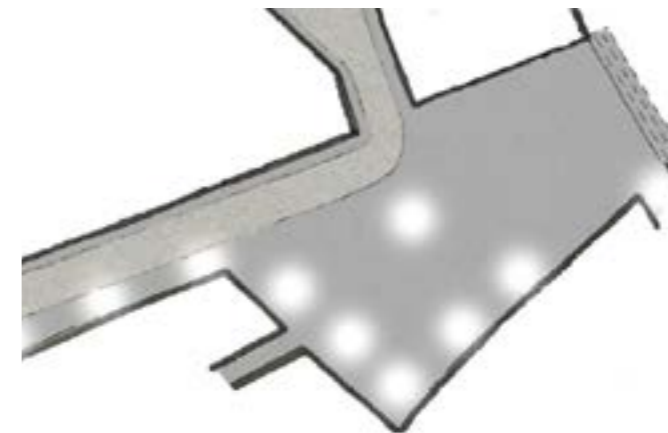
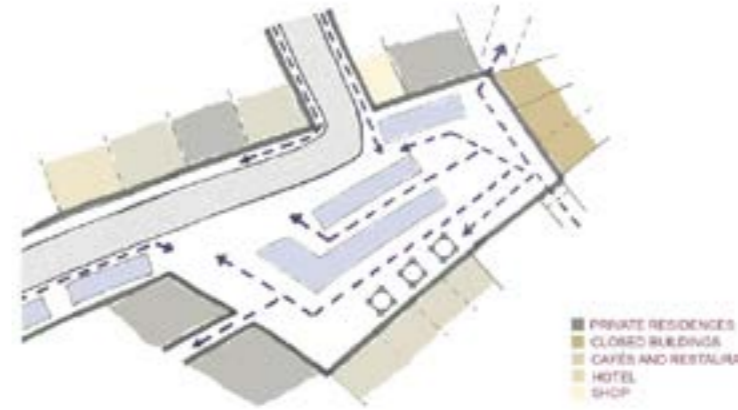
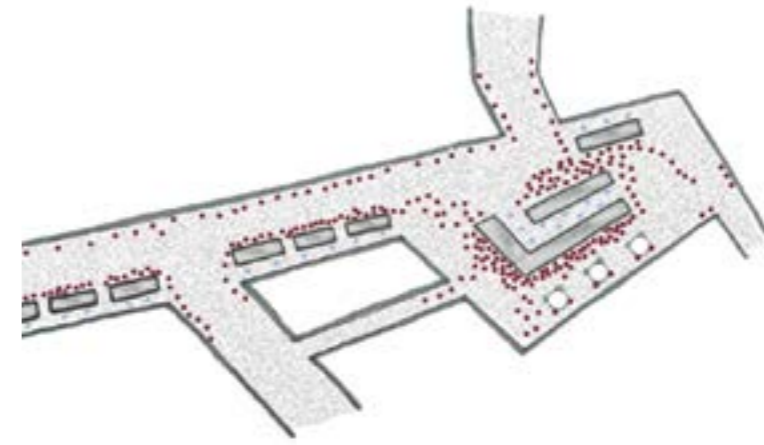
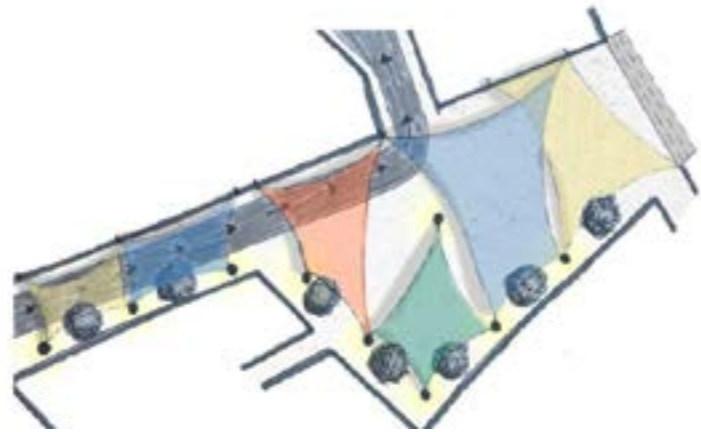
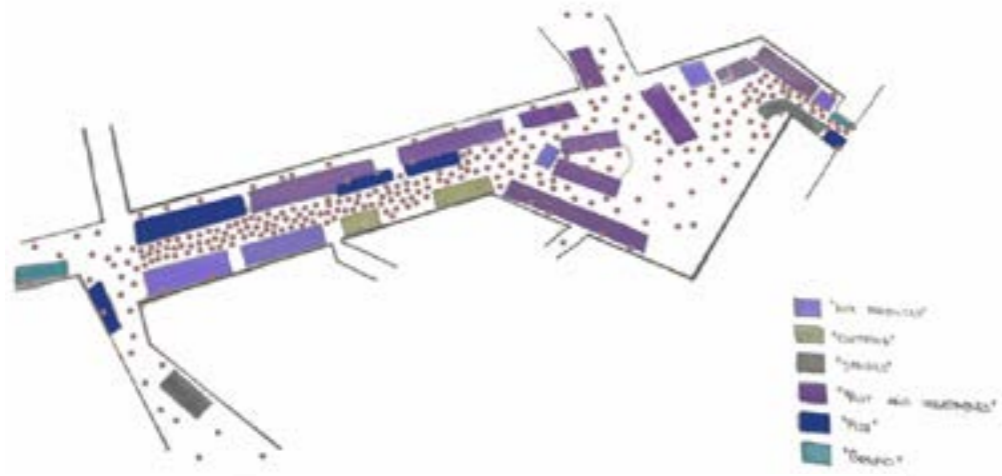
She love working in Bab Souk. She is like a mother for many youths. The only problem, in her opinion, is the gathering of rubbishes. She hopes that the management of the trashes will be improved.

A hotel owner, 61 years old

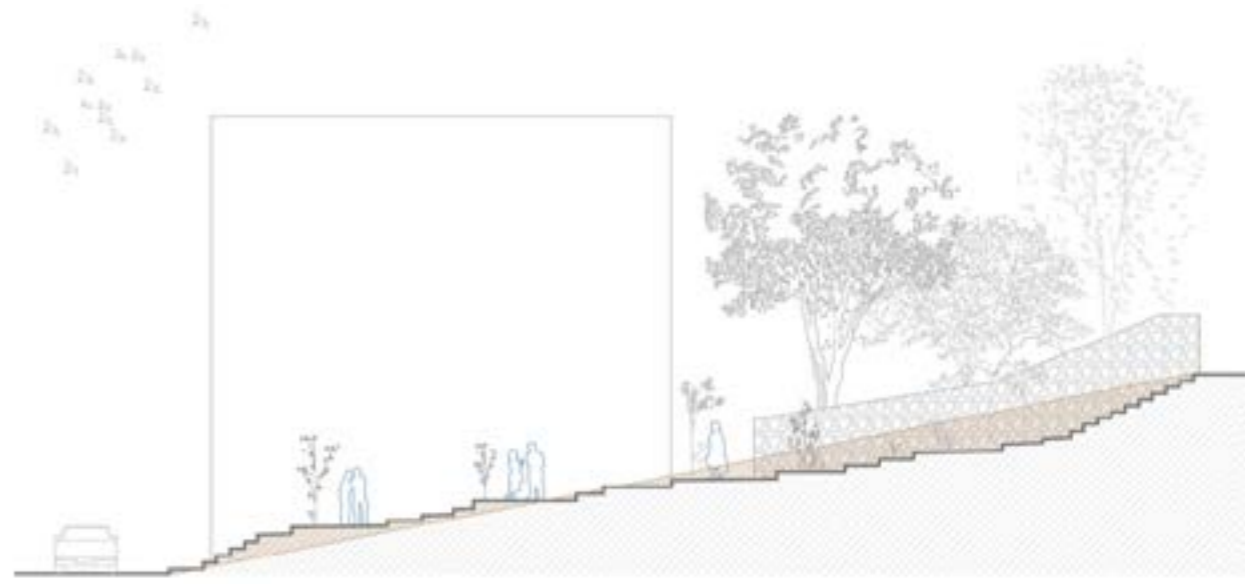
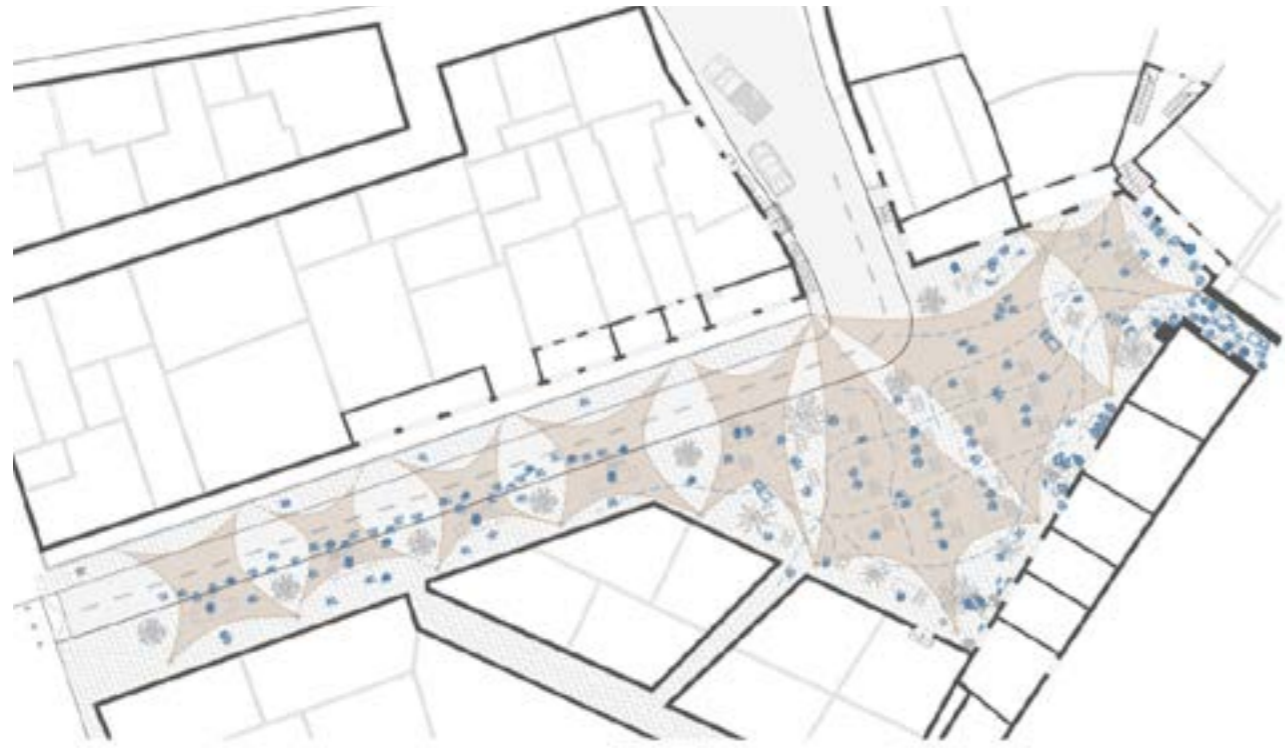
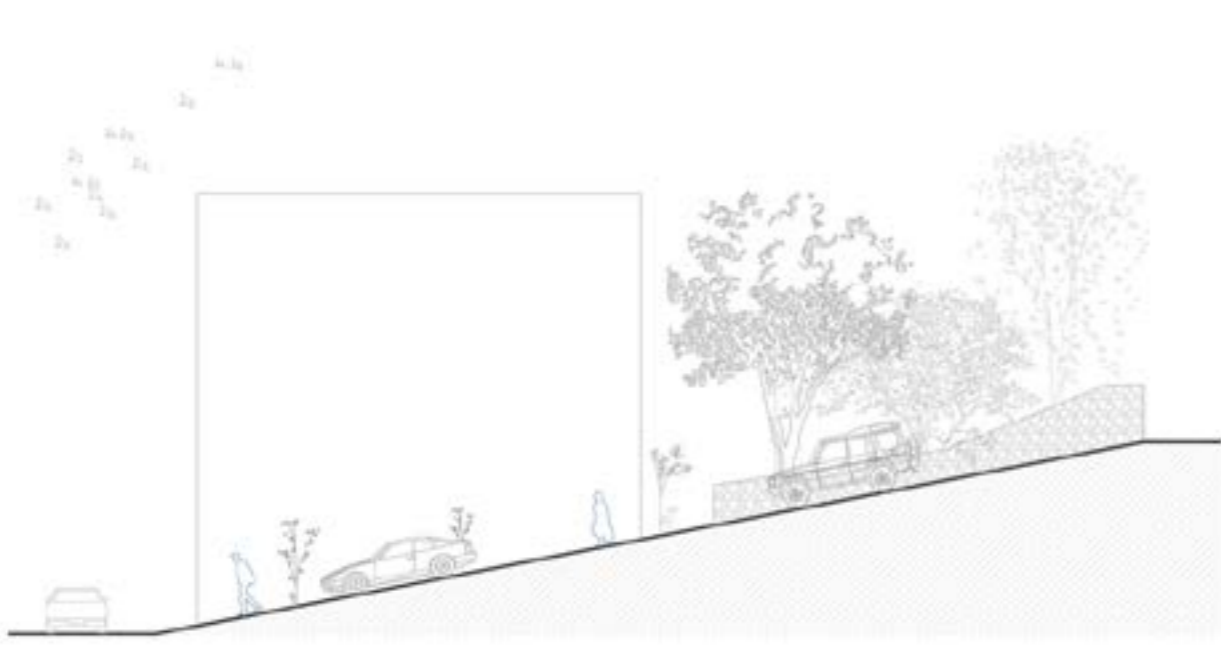
He doesn't mind if the market moves. He thinks that he would have less noise on Mondays and Thursdays. Aslo, the cars could arrive easily to the square where his hotel is located, so his clients won't be complaining.

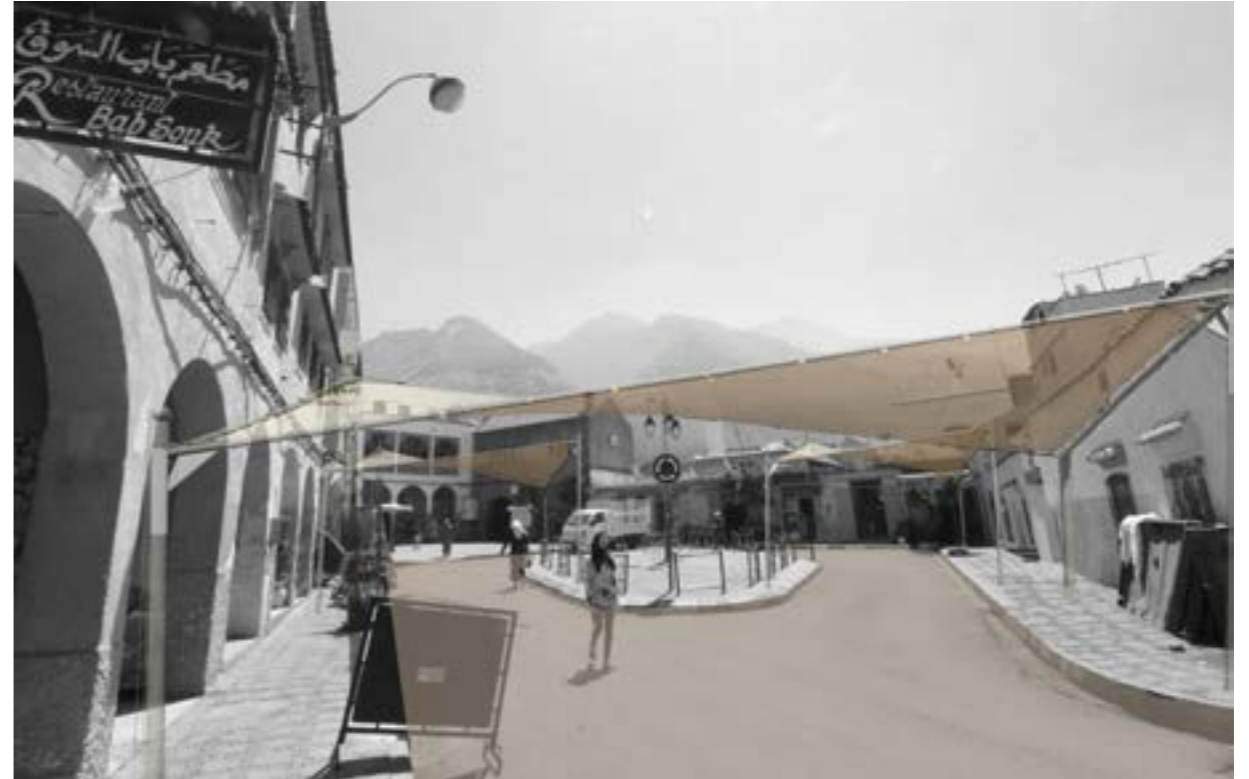












Conclusion



The projects show us that with few means and relatively humble interventions the four public spaces can improve considerably. Especially in terms of use they will work better, rationalizing on-going activities and facilitating new ones.

A main issue at all four places is to smoothen the topography. Chauen lies on a steep slope. This is probably its main feature, as it has several consequences on the urban landscape. Chauen tops with amazing viewpoints on its territory, with picturesque stairs, contention walls, ramps and terraces containing and composing its ground. But what makes part of its identity on the other hand is difficult to handle with. In the Medina wheel traffic is not the problem, as it is banned to few roads and established times, and carried out by miniature vans that do not interfere with the busy pedestrians. The difficulty is for the pedestrians themselves. That is why all the projects are working on inner connections and ways of crossing and going along the “squares”.

And sometimes the proposals go even further: At Al Hauta the square “extends” to the upper level of the artisans building, while at Bab Souk (the only site outside Medina) a whole new car traffic arrangement is proposed to avoid disturbing the market activity. The other two projects arrange the ground in order to make the places not only more accessible, but also more comfortable and/or more interesting.

Complementing the work with the ground, all projects deal with urban furniture. Increasing the number of basic elements like benches and lights, proposing new locations for them, and often using them to structure the space, is common to all the proposals. Some sites work with special elements, like the canopies for the market or the displays at Ben di Ben. These elements are developed in a way that permits to assemble and remove them easily, making the users participate actively in disposing the town space. The users also are invited to take care of trees and plants.

By adapting and filing the topography, and by improving urban furniture included vegetation, more activities will be developed. All projects take in consideration the current activities enabling to carry them out more comfortably. But at the same time the proposals try to provide spaces flexible enough to be used also in other, unexpected ways. While underlining its specificity all spaces are designed in order to trigger additional uses.

The four projects are not working on constructive pathologies. In case the projects are developed, it will be necessary to identify and document the existing pathologies, to analyse their origin and consequently propose ways of sorting them out.

In parallel it is highly recommendable to work out both cleaning and maintenance strategies for these four sites in particular (specially Bab el Souk) and for the Medina public space in general, that should involve also active participation of the users.



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