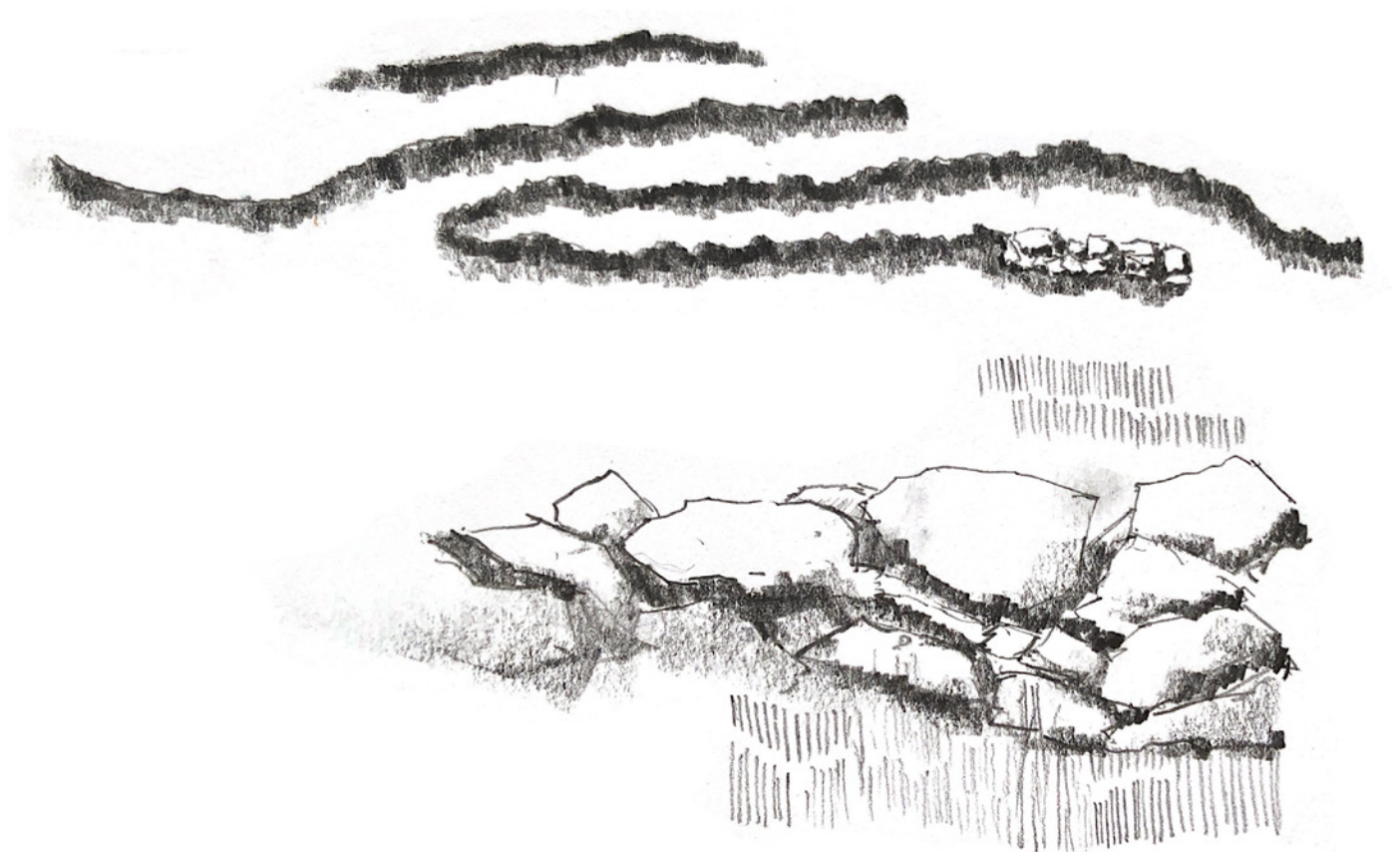


Coromandel Boutique Hotel

Developing an authentic language for design



Bokoni ruins sketch, author, 2022.

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Submitted in fulfilment of part of the requirements for the degree Master of Landscape Architecture (Professional)

Department of Architecture

Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT)

University of Pretoria

Dissertation title: *Coromandel Boutique Hotel: Developing an authentic language for design*

Site description: A valley situated near Dullstroom with prominent existing heritage in the form of a manor house designed by Marco Zanuso, stables designed by Stefan Arendt, and Iron Age Bokoni ruins.

Users: hotel guests and day visitors to the Coromandel valley.

GPS co-ordinates: -25. 25' 30.31" S; 30. 32' 42.36" E

Research field: Memory, Legacy, and Identity

Declaration

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of Landscape Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution. I further state that no part of my thesis has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma, or other qualification. I further declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Ben Jooste

2022

*To my parents,
You have shown me the truth of love.*

*To Laura,
I will always be grateful to you for the never-ending, joyous life-spark in your eyes.*

*To Heinz,
For always understanding that I am an atypical roommate, and never holding it against me.*

*To Johan,
Never have I known a better mentor. Thank you for inspiring me beyond my own capabilities.*





Figure 1: Bokoni ruins, author, 2022.

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Definitions

Authenticity

A contextual-specific definition for authenticity at Coromandel is one that is based on an identity (1) and truth (2). Any new intervention that subscribes to these characteristics is authentic.

1: Identity

A collection of the natural characteristics, the built artefacts, and the socio-cultural agricultural presence that result in a unique identity of place, or *genius loci*.

2: Truth

The honest expression of the identity of place in a way that is materialist (the physical object) and constructivist (the associated or underlying meaning), (Barker 2021).



Figure 2: Entrance to stables photo, author, 2022.

The hidden landscape

A place of eternal mist

Travel far from the bustling metropolises and into the great escarpment, where mountain ranges stitch land together in towering masses of rock, and green fields extend as far as the eye can see, shimmering into a distant blue haze, all gleaming underfoot with an air saturated with clarity.

Within this region of mountains, valleys, rivers, and waterfalls, man has settled in small towns and laboured in contoured fields beneath the gaze of these stone giants. The simple beauty of its rolling plains, dappled with a hazy mist, has drawn people from all directions to delight in its quiet peace and whispering streams. And it is in these timber cabins for tourists, with fire-lit whiskey-filled glasses and the promise of trout in the lake nearby that it becomes impossible not to compare this landscape as a simulacrum of that of Scotland, transporting you away to an older, more ancient place. This myth has developed to such an extent that this area in Mpumalanga close to Dullstroom and Lydenburg greater area has been named the Highland Meander town region, and has become well-known to provide this mostly view-centric experience to tourists.

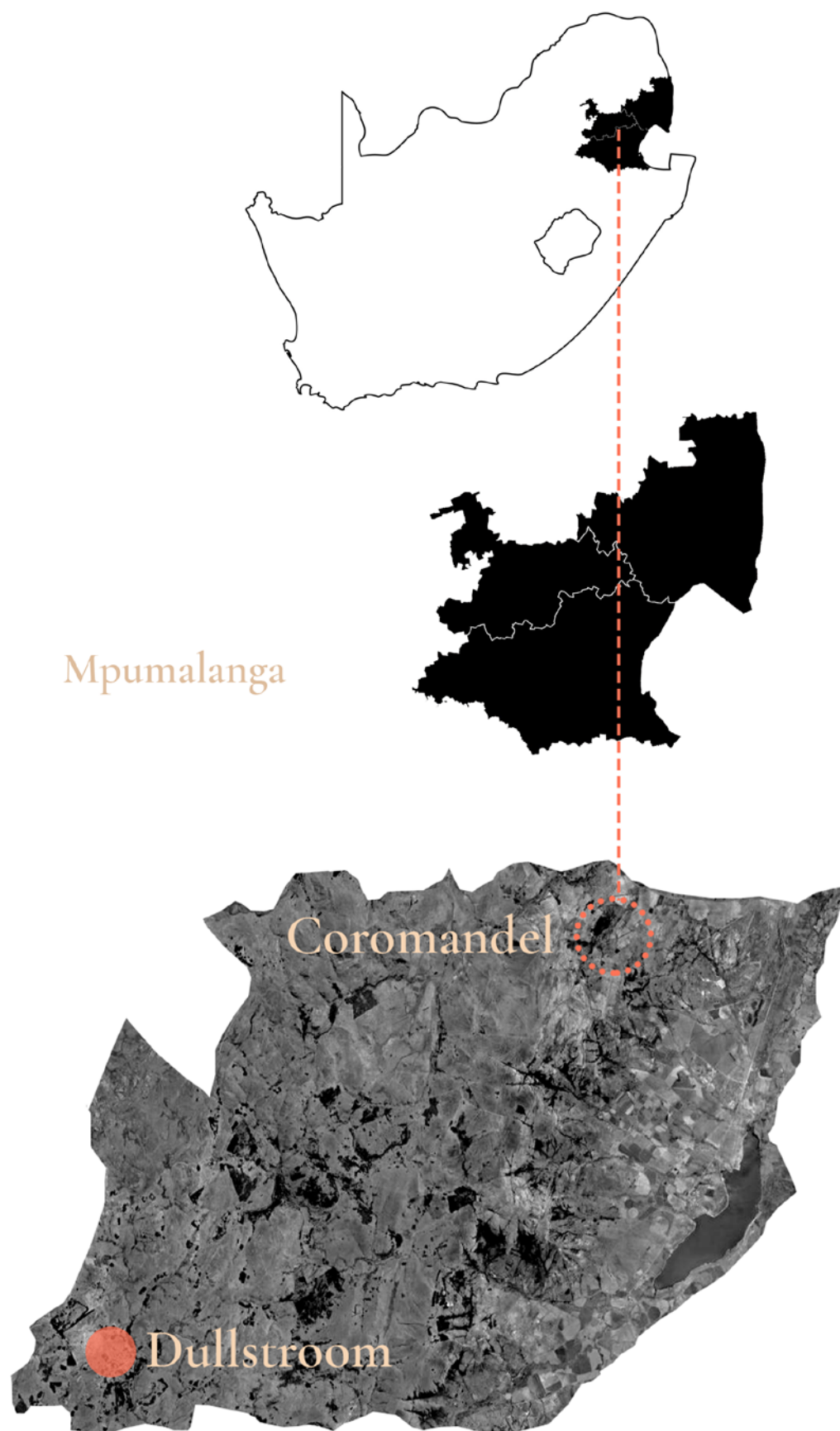


Figure 3: Locality map, author, 2022.

Authenticity through a conscious history

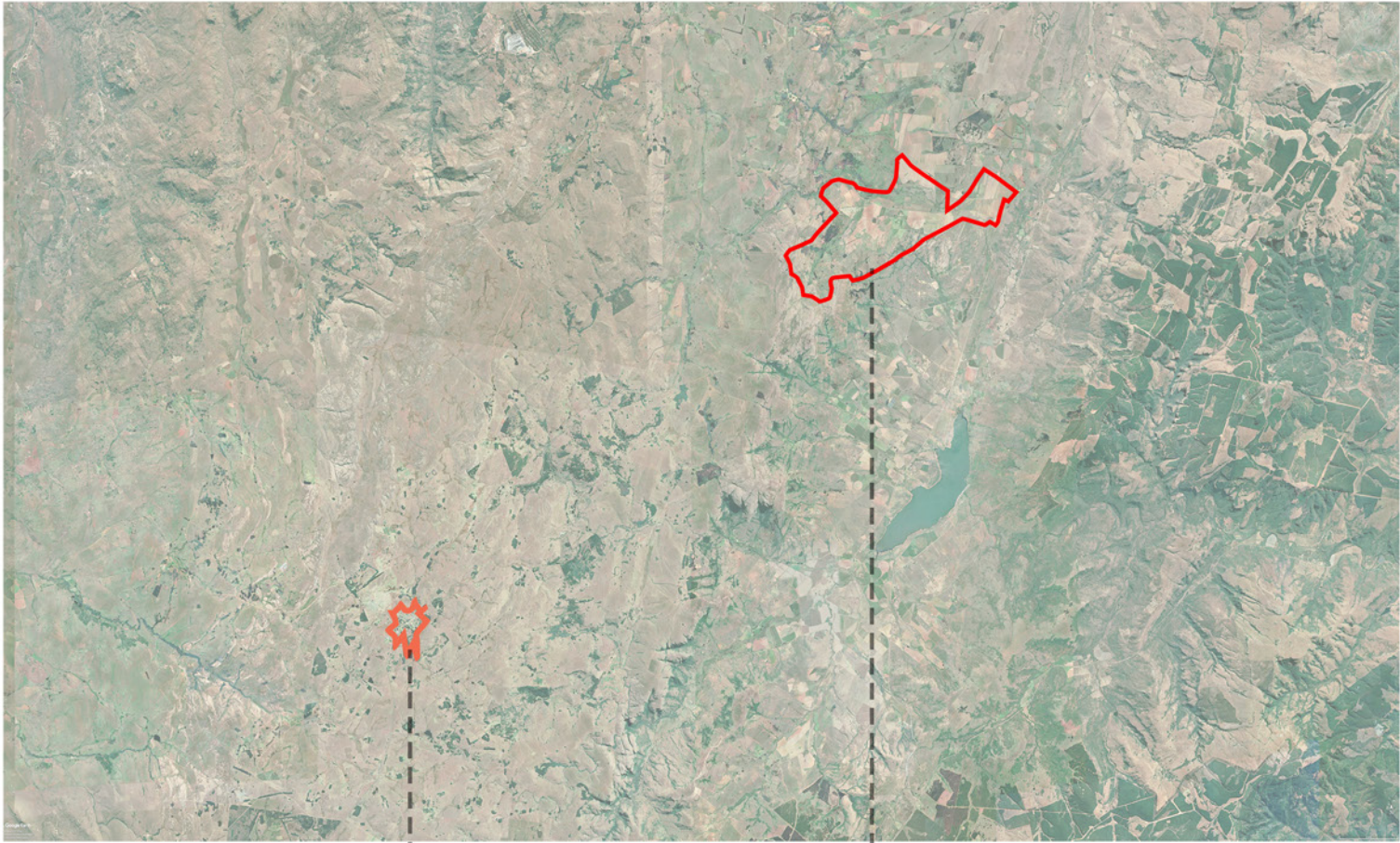
Along the mountain ranges in this region that run north and south, there is a fertile valley that is known as Coromandel. Established in 1968 by the late industrialist Sydney Press (1919-1997), it was consolidated using multiple parcels of land, and was chosen for its inherent beauty and spirit of place, which was immediately present in the relationships between the embracing mountain ridges, sparkling waterfalls, green valley, and in Iron Age (1500s–1800s) archaeological ruins present.

After the demarcation of the 5800 hectares of land, Press promoted multiple agricultural ventures, such as planting a blueberry orchard, establishing a dairy, growing maize, potatoes, wheat, sugar beans, sunflower, and soya, along with fruit of peaches and nectarines. The farm also sported stud-breeding facilities as well as a barn for wool farming.

Sydney Press' wife, Victoria Press (1927–2015), advocated for the natural beauty of the site to be

paramount in any development. Her definition for beauty was one of harmony, of inherent appropriateness, of composition, and as a result, any development at Coromandel was guided by an enhancement of the *genius loci* of the site, by respecting and enhancing the untouched natural beauty of the landscape.

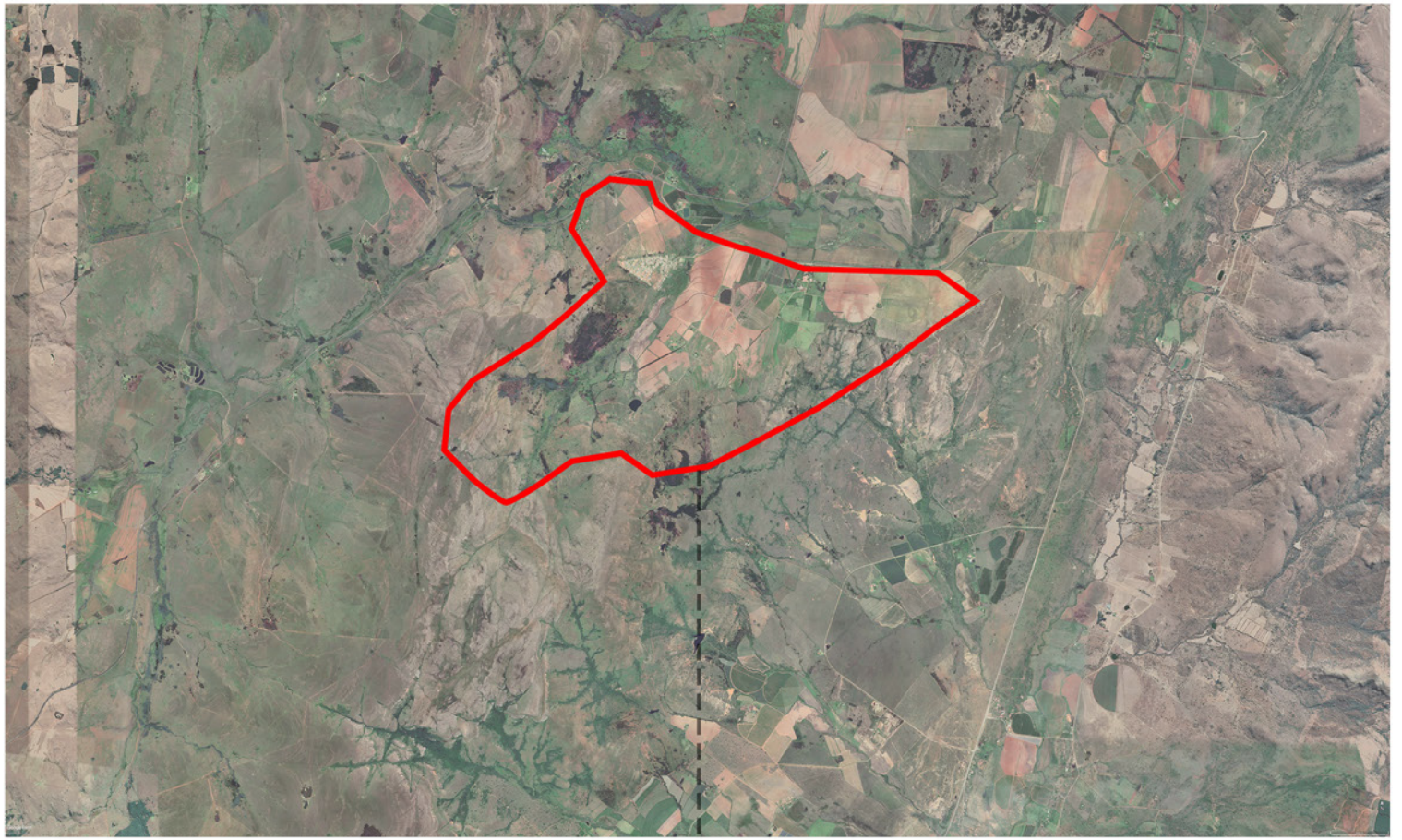
In this year 2022, a research book was published by architect Dr Edna Peres and Andrea Zamboni, titled *Creating Coromandel: Marco Zanuso in South Africa* on the history and development of Coromandel. This source has proven invaluable, and has been used to elucidate the finer points of heritage that lies at Coromandel.



Dullstroom

Coromandel





Coromandel focus area



Old stables

Horse pastures

Coromandel manor house

Site focus area



Figure 4: Photo of manor house, northern facade, author, 2022.

This approach is seen most clearly through the design and construction of the manor house, completed in 1975, by Italian architect Marco Zanuso (1916-2001). The Press' saw precedent in Zanuso's Sardinian vacation homes, which were an example of authentic placemaking in a stark but beautiful landscape.

This ability of Zanuso to create poetic spaces in landscapes with intense natural beauty was deemed appropriate for Coromandel, and Zanuso undertook a thorough study of the landscape. He drew inspiration from the many layers of history of the site, most notably the Iron Age Bokoni ruins, to design the manor house. By consciously following the history of the site, Zanuso achieved an authentic design that was neither of the past nor present.



Figure: Pietro Porcinai 's Masterplan for Coromandel 1970 (Archivio Porcinai)

This approach continued in the landscape of Coromandel, with Pietro Porcinai¹ (1910–1986), Italian landscape architect, who was involved with a masterplan for the manor house and stables. Eminent South African garden designer Patrick Watson (1947–) continued Porcinai’s vision and implemented a naturalistic, wild garden aesthetic with local flora and fauna. Roberto Burle Marx (1909–1994), Brazilian landscape architect, also drew up masterplans for the manor house, but these were not implemented due to a desire for a landscape garden design that integrated naturally with the valley of Coromandel.

This extremely rare confluence of international and local designers with Porcinai, Marx, and Watson resulted in principles of landscape architecture that is seen still today, such as indigenous plant groupings, architecture and landscape merging through the use of a roof garden, courtyards that bring the garden into communal living spaces, and the dramatic use of *en masse* planting of trees and self-seeding grassland species.

After Sydney Press’ death in 1998, the Estate was undertaken by the Coromandel Farmworkers Trust as an empowerment project. It is still a working farm, and the manor house is available as self-catering accommodation. The Coromandel valley today contains dams, stables, hiking trails, and many

productive programmes of maize and dairy farming. The landscape remains a beautiful one: green and low grasslands cover the undulating hills and amidst them are dotting of trees. To the west, ravines hold secrets of thick forests congregating in shadows, and aside them waterfalls gush into the landscape. The plains contains agricultural fields: a productive beauty; that of the relations between man and labour and tool, set out in a series of axes that are framed by tall and deep shadows of *Celtis africanas*.

¹: Pietro Porcinai was considered to be a highly prominent landscape architect in the twentieth century, designing gardens and parks at multiple scales, and writing for the magazine *Domus* in the 1930s. He was brought to Coromandel through Zanuso, who deemed him a perfect fit as designer who is well versed in crafting naturalistic gardens.



Figure 5: View of the agricultural landscape, author, 2022.

An emergent language

It is the layers of heritage on the site, from the archaeological ruins, to the masterplans done by prominent landscape architects and gardeners, as well as architectural artefacts of the house and stables, that has led to the development of an emerging language of Coromandel which contrasts with that of the Highlands myth in which is it situated. There is a deeper spirit of place here, not a copy attempting to recreate the highlands of Scotland.

It is this language that is followed that leads to an authentic landscape, inherently full of character and brimming with layers of history and quiet rest and contemplation.

Coromandel is a cultural landscape: the combined efforts and works of nature and man are evident and show the relationship between people and place. As a cultural landscape, Coromandel adds value in the heritage artefacts on site and the works of international landscape architects and architects.



Figure 6: Highland Gate Overview, anon., n.d.

The residential estate: buying into myth

Coromandel is currently aimed at development, with an interest from hotel groups and investors to renovate the manor house into a boutique hotel and the stables into a day-visitors centre. This programme poses a great risk to the site, as inauthentic approaches and over-development may undermine the language of Coromandel which makes it special.

The Highland Gate Golf and Trout Estate is a recent example of the Highlands Meander approach for tourists: it is a new development focused on an Ernie Els-designed golf course, with trout dams and residential units. In Ernie Else's own words, he describes the Estate as a visual experience that harkens to the Scottish Highlands (Els n.d.). As much as the contemporary use of stone in new buildings may be traced to Scotland, the typology of architecture and landscape do not actually embrace the Scottish highlands myth of stone cot-

tages and instead deliver a contemporary aesthetic that is found in most suburban sprawling estates. Additionally, the development creates a precedent that many valleys in the Meander may be developed into residential units and golf courses, creating an excessive repetition that undermines its own desirable criteria.

Could investors see Coromandel as a similar canvas to be peppered with ready-made homes and injected with glass-fronted bars and overly large reception buildings?



Figure 7: Walkersons Hotel in Dullstroom, author, 2022.

Tourism: amnesia and exploitation

Globally, the tourism industry has identified problems in its portrayal of place and incorporation of local culture and history into the experience that guests receive (Cornelisse 2018). Often there has been exploitation of local peoples and commodification of cultural characteristics in the form of architectural motifs, indigenous performances, and the buying of souvenirs (De Bernardi 2019).

The question of inauthenticity in tourism can be considered a symptom of the culture of consumption and materialism, where newness is a strategic necessity, without reason for deeper understanding (Pallasmaa 2009).

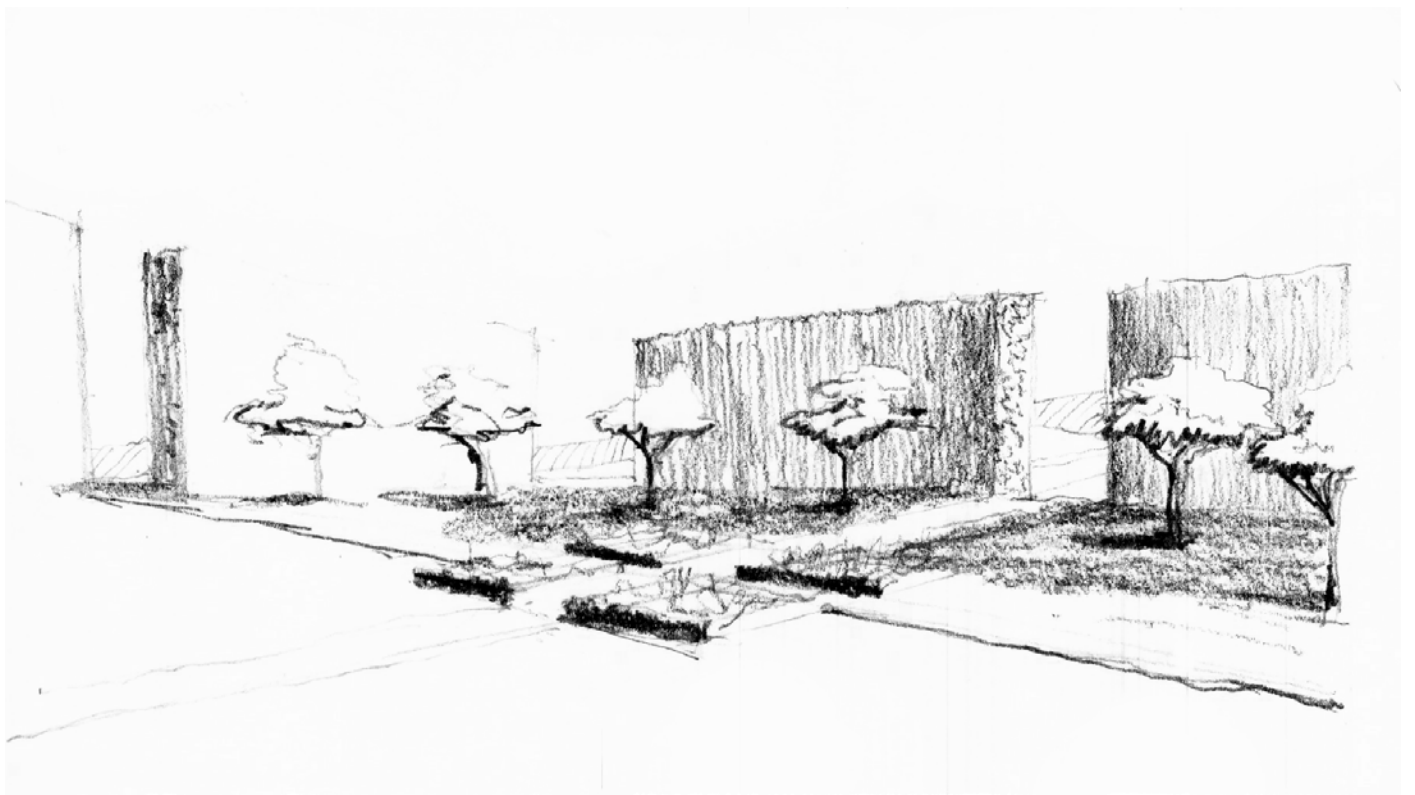


Figure 8: Imagined sketch of fundamental spatial experiences: the wall and the floor, author, 2022.

Perception without memory

In Juhani Pallasmaa's chapter *Space, Place, Memory, and Imagination: The Temporal Dimensions of Existential Space* published in the 2009 book *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, Pallasmaa writes about slowness and remembering against speed and forgetting, stating that there is an architectural amnesia present in many contemporary hotel spaces, due to the loss of the historicity of experience, seen in fundamental architectural experiences, such as the floor and the roof: the floor has forgotten its origin as levelled earth and is simply a collection of constructed horizontal planes. The loss of verticality and the ontological variance in above and below has aided this amnesia. He continues to say, "In today's accelerated life we can ultimately only perceive, not remember" (Pallasmaa 2009:32).

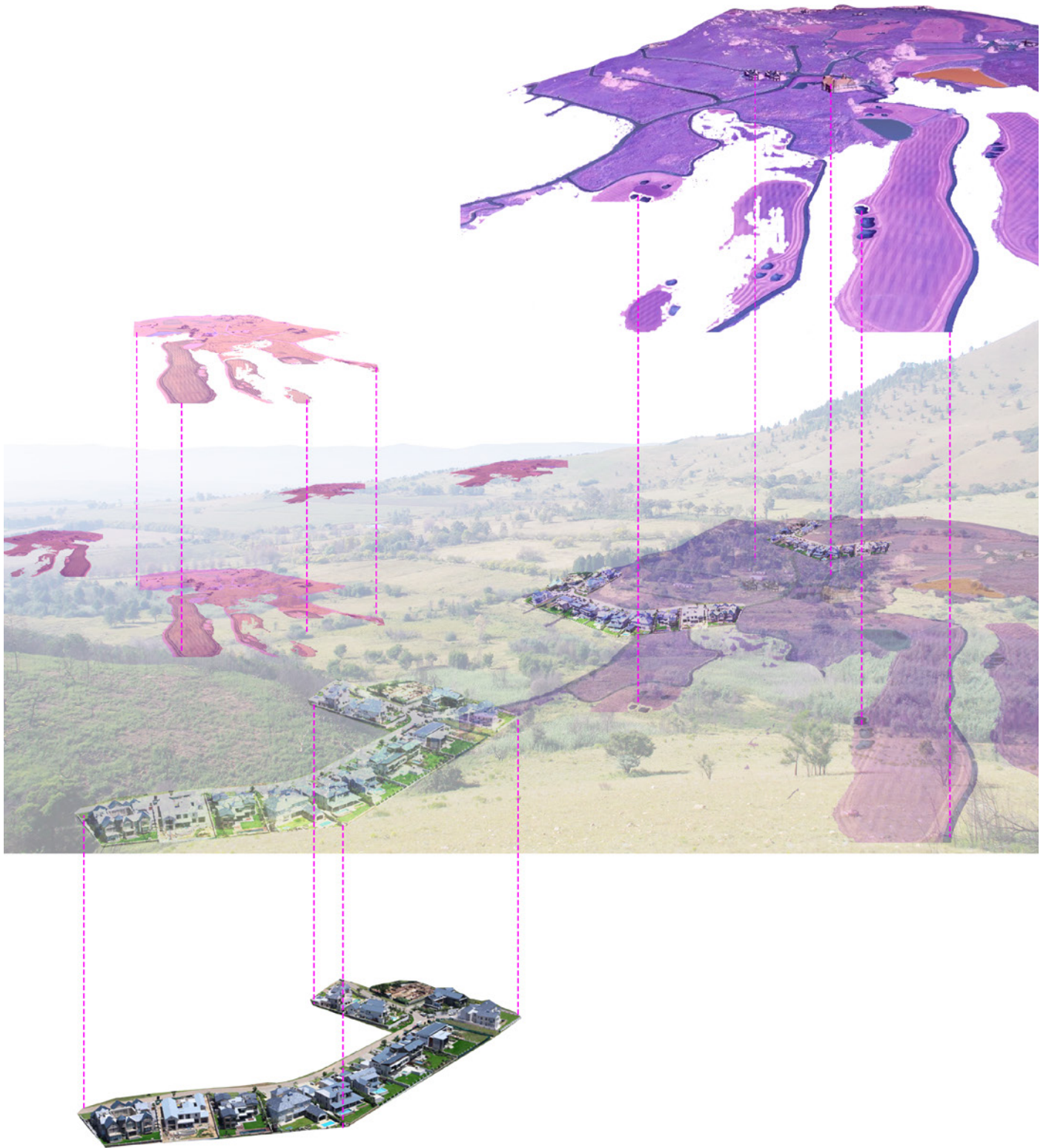


Figure 9: Typical estate superimposed on valley, author, 2022.

How dare they, here?



Figure 10: Bokoni ruins photo, author, 2022.

Authenticity in the tourism industry

Many travellers would prefer, and pay more for, experiences that are authentic, sensitive, and sustainable, and enjoy experiences that are more unique with character and identity (Coca-Stefaniak et al 2017). In defining authenticity aside from objective or subjective paradigms, performative authenticity could be a solution, which is related to the interaction between people, place, and objects (De Bernardi 2019). Additionally, the role of the history of a hotel and the active engagement of tourists in the hotel setting lead to added authenticity of the guest's experience (Juric 2019).

With the development of Coromandel into a boutique hotel, the problem arises of designing the architecture and landscape into one that remains authentic. This leads to an overall approach to the design, specifying the nature of this project: a renovated, new programme for hotel guests, with authentic experiences and authentic spaces.

Additionally, as an opportunity, the existing ruins at Coromandel can be used as performative elements, since ruins and eroded settings have an evocative and emotional power, and can be linked to slowness and memory (Pallasmaa 2009:32), as well as show the tangible results of the passing of time (Munoz-Vera 2012), as stated by John Ruskin.

This approach of using performative authenticity as well as the language of Coromandel will be appropriate tools in guiding the design of hotel spaces at Coromandel and retain, if not improve, the unique spirit of place.



Figure 11: The Coromandel valley, author, 2022.

With an authentic hotel design approach, and a surrounding landscape of untouched natural beauty, it is paramount to ask: what is the role of the landscape architect here?

Why not simply let the landscape be?

How dare I intervene, here?



Figure 12: The Coromandel valley, plan sketch, author, 2022.

A personal approach: stance

The main research question of this essay is simple:

‘How does one intervene and design a boutique hotel in a beautiful, untouched landscape that has many layers of history?’

As an initial response to this question, I will clarify my normative position towards landscape architecture: I am of the opinion that landscapes contain multitudes, echoing Walt Whitman’s poem *Song of Myself*, where he writes, “I am large, I contain multitudes” (Whitman 1856:8).

Any interaction with the landscape becomes part of these multitudes and has an impact on the existing relationships. There is a language (in the form of vocabulary and syntax) that develops from these layers of interaction, and much like the subtle pruning of plants in a garden well into its apex, so too can this language be determined and used in

any subsequent intervention.

The landscape is an ever-changing, never complete nor perfect result of the interactions of mankind, nature, and history. This is the path that led to the development of the spirit of place of Coromandel, and the participatory nature of this development allows the new words of a language to be built into this landscape – **I may intervene.**

However, it is necessary to seek guidance from those that have succeeded in shaping authentic spaces in order to develop a design approach.

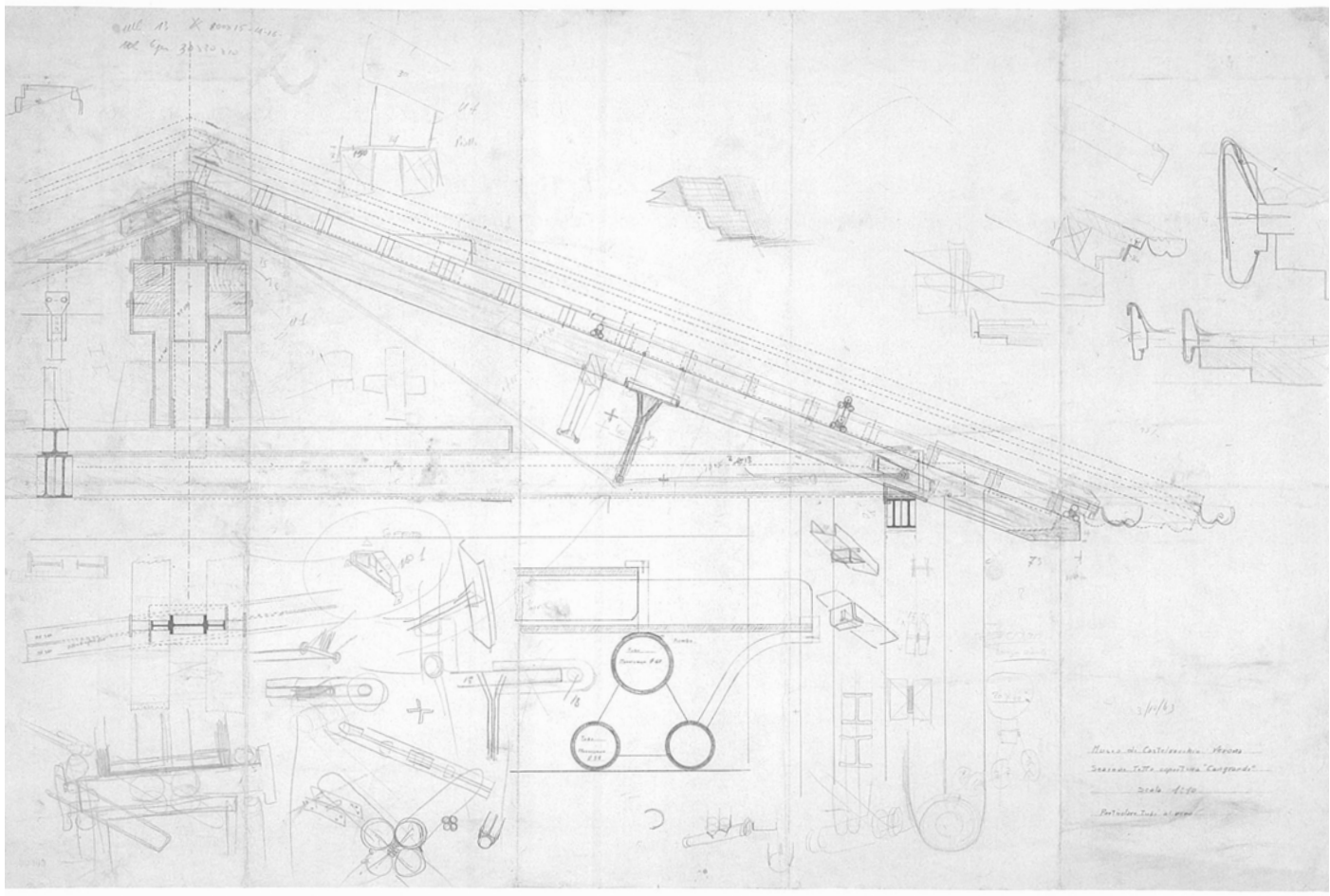


Figure 13: Section and details of roof for final proposal of the Cangrande, c. 1962-64. Museo Di Castelvecchio. n.d.

The masters

Carlo Scarpa: an attitude to history

In Albertini and Alessandro's book, *Carlo Scarpa: Architecture in Details* (1988), Scarpa's attitude to history is discussed as essential to his process. Scarpa, an Italian architect (1902–1978) often worked in historical settings, but did not wish to imitate historical materials, considering it inappropriate to contemporary materials, technologies and craftsmen. In their continued analysis, the authors elucidate that Scarpa pursued understanding of every historical detail in order to selectively value layers, and sought to expose authentic history by removing unnecessary layers of embellishment. Additionally, Scarpa analysed experiences and traced the morphology of existing forms in order to develop a collection of sources from which to work from, similar to a language mentioned earlier. The authors summarised key points in Scarpa's methods, some of which are of high relevance to the project and site, such as the use of axes and ratios to overall order and balance, using geometric

form in relationships between measurements, and to trim design ideas to coordinate to an overall ratio of balance and proportion.



Figure 14: Lunuganga, anon. 2021.

Geoffrey Bawa: palimpsest and pruning

Robin Jones, in his article *Memory, modernity and history: the landscapes of Geoffrey Bawa in Sri Lanka, 1944-1998*, the works of Geoffrey Bawa (1919–2003), Sri-Lankan architect, are discussed, with specific reference to his private garden and home, Lunuganga. This article, along with Brian Taylor's book *Geoffrey Bawa* (published 1986), expand on the initial overgrown rubber plantation that lay alongside a lagoon. The slow and careful pruning of the landscape as well as subtle terraforming interventions changed the landscape into a garden of multiple journeys and narratives. The introduction of a new road that directs the visitor similar to other picturesque gardens such as Stowe in England leads to a pre-arranged view. Although view-centric in nature, the landscape accommodated multiple structures built that utilised vernacular Sri-Lankan typologies and materials and resulted in unique spaces that celebrated the landscape, resulting in a palimpsest approach.



Figure 15: Culip, Cap de Creus, Marta Cassany, 2017.

Marti Franch: monumentalising absence

Marti Franch, Spanish landscape architect (1971-), designed a landscape in the Iberian Peninsula which focused on the restoration and monumentalisation of the site's history. Through a series of concept sketches based on the qualities of the landscape, and by using existing material from the site for construction of pathways, Franch was able to unveil and also transform the site. This methodology of working in a dedicated place with the materials at hand is an approach that may have direct impact on the authenticity of new interventions.



Figure 16: The Coromandel valley view sketch, author, 2022.

Thesis statement

In order to reach authenticity in the design, a process of developing a vocabulary and syntax of the site and its forms will be the main approach pre-design stage.

By understanding and using this vocabulary, the design will achieve authenticity by following the site's own history, and by using methods and approaches studied from designers that have dealt with history authentically.



Figure 17: Brief development plan sketch, author, 2022.

Brief development

The valley immediately from the manor house and around the stables forms the more detailed scheme of the programme.

To enhance the privacy and exclusivity of the hotel guests, they will have exclusive access to the manor house and its surrounds as well as the large dam for trout fishing and relaxation, and they can, if they please, also make use of the rest of the valley that extend to the north and to the stables.

Day visitors can enjoy the cafe, micro-brewery, and outdoor spaces around the stables for picnics, events, weddings, and functions, and the more equestrian-oriented can use the horse paddocks and the stables proper to enjoy the landscape on horseback. Additionally, the series of smaller dams will have garden spaces where guests can lounge and enjoy the pleasant green spaces socially.

In order to provide orientation to guests in this valley, a series of soft axes are proposed in the form

of trees and paths, with moments of respite where one can rest and enjoy the scenic views.

At a masterplan level, hiking trails to the Bokoni ruins and mountain biking trails will also be implemented.

This scheme is made possible by hotel groups that may invest in the restoration of the manor house, such as that of Silent Living Hotel Group, a hotel group founded in Portugal that seeks authentic places that imbue the values of locality, nature, material, and atmosphere, with the goal of shaping hotels that have simple beauty.

Emshinini settlement, which currently houses many of the workers at Coromandel, will also be involved in the development of the site, through training and skills transfer and employment of hospitality services and processing of goods such as craft beer and other goods.

1. Stables
2. Outdoor rooms for events
3. Picnic areas
4. Smaller dams and gardens
5. Moments of rest
6. Agriculture
7. Large dam stocked with trout
8. Manor house



Figure 18: Prominent axes and programmes sketch, author, 2022.

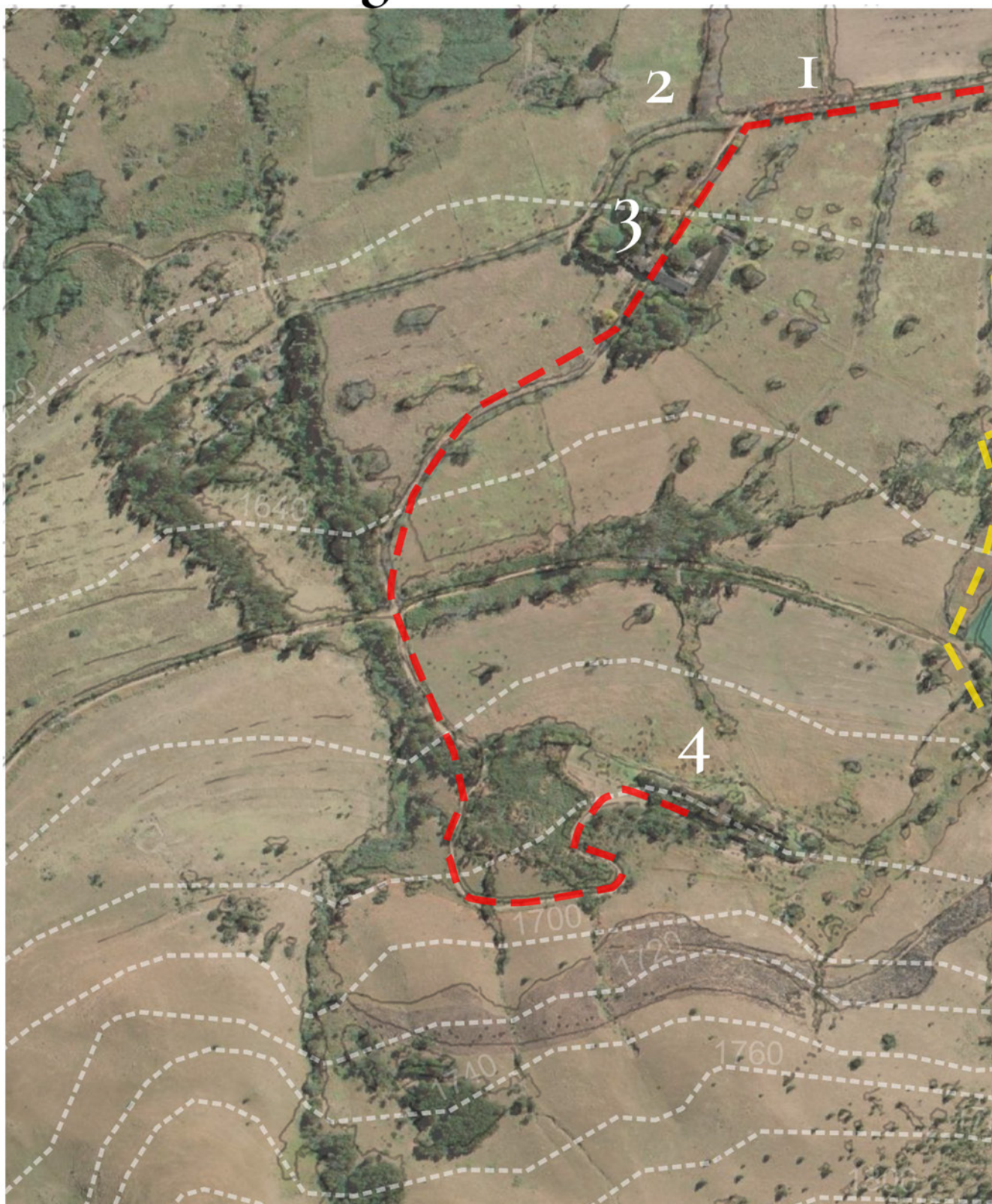
Methodology

The methodology requires fieldwork site visits to Coromandel. Of high importance are transect walks¹ throughout the valley with sketches of prominent views and photographic documentation. Additionally, documentation of tangible and intangible layers experienced on site are to be made. Opportunities during site visits include informal discussions with farmworkers, as well as using the accommodations in the manor house.

The following pages elaborate on the subsequent methods used.

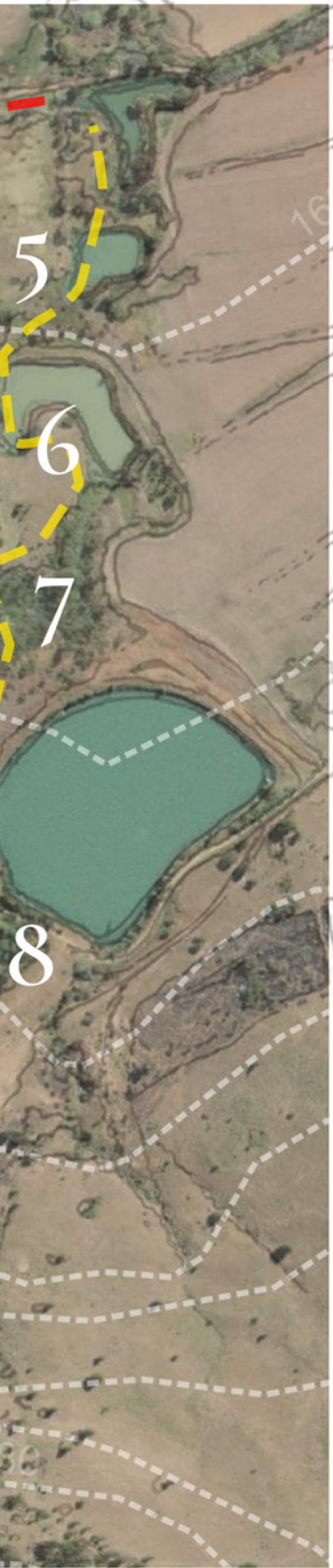
¹: a transect walk is an exercise of walking through a designated path along the site and documenting the locations and distributions of prominent landscape features, historic sites, and functional uses.

Routes through focus area



Main route

Secondary route



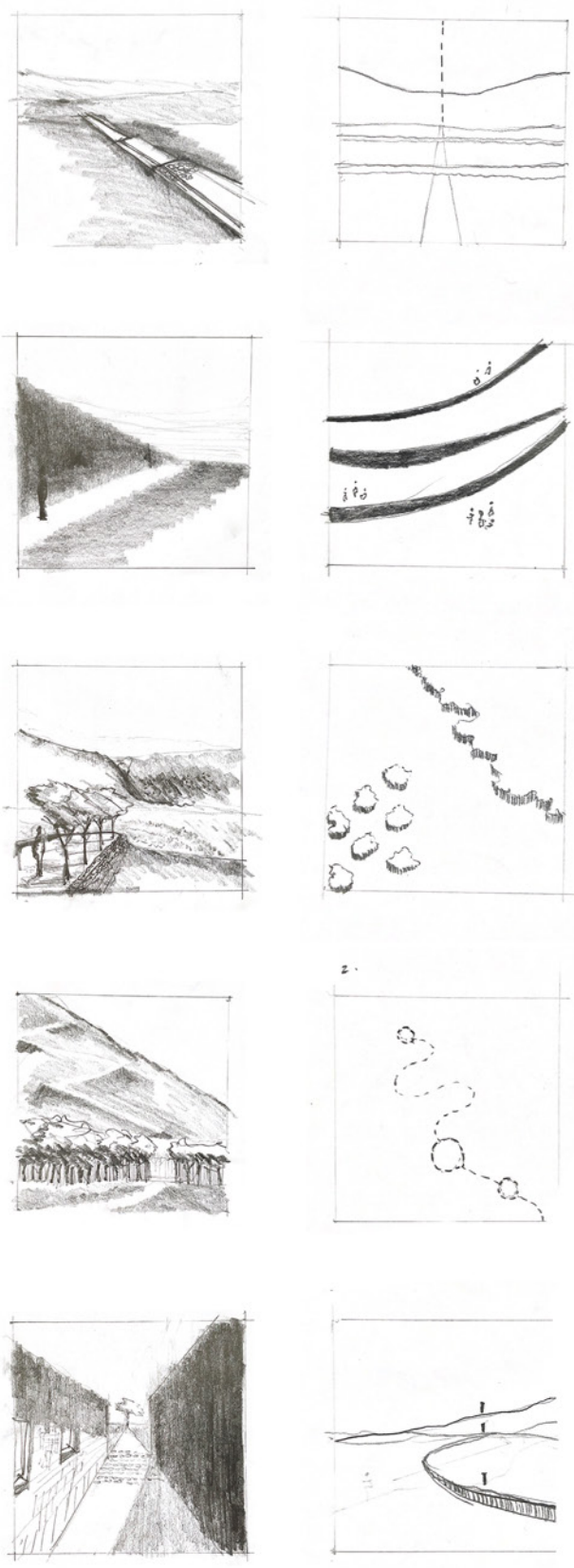


Figure 19: Spatial typologies and analysis, author, 2022.

The vocabulary of Coromandel

The first step in the methodology is to develop the vocabulary, which includes sketches to analyse the grain of the site in terms of the agricultural fields, the grasslands, the quartzite ridges with waterfalls, and the experiences of moving through the valley. This compilation of a catalogue of spaces of Coromandel from a site visit can be studied to infer about experience, tectonics, materials, and vegetation, as well as the quality of light and shadow. By using this catalogue, intended authenticity can be understood at some levels, and will allow for evaluation and the testing of new ideas. Additionally, these sketches should capture the current *genius loci* of place for the author.



Figure 20: Photos in the valley, author, 2022.

Revealing through pruning

From basic analysis of the site, much of the designed landscape has become overgrown with exotic species of plants, and little maintenance occurs. Geoffrey Bawa, as mentioned previously, undertook the design of his own garden at Lunuganga by firstly removing the plantation of rubber trees, and by a process of pruning and cutting and removing, he revealed vistas and movement routes through the garden, and in this way, he opened up the potential of the site. In order to reveal and identify some layers of Coromandel it may be necessary to use horticultural techniques such as pruning and shaping to remove build-up over decades, and to shape space, which can be explored as before and after photographs and sketches.

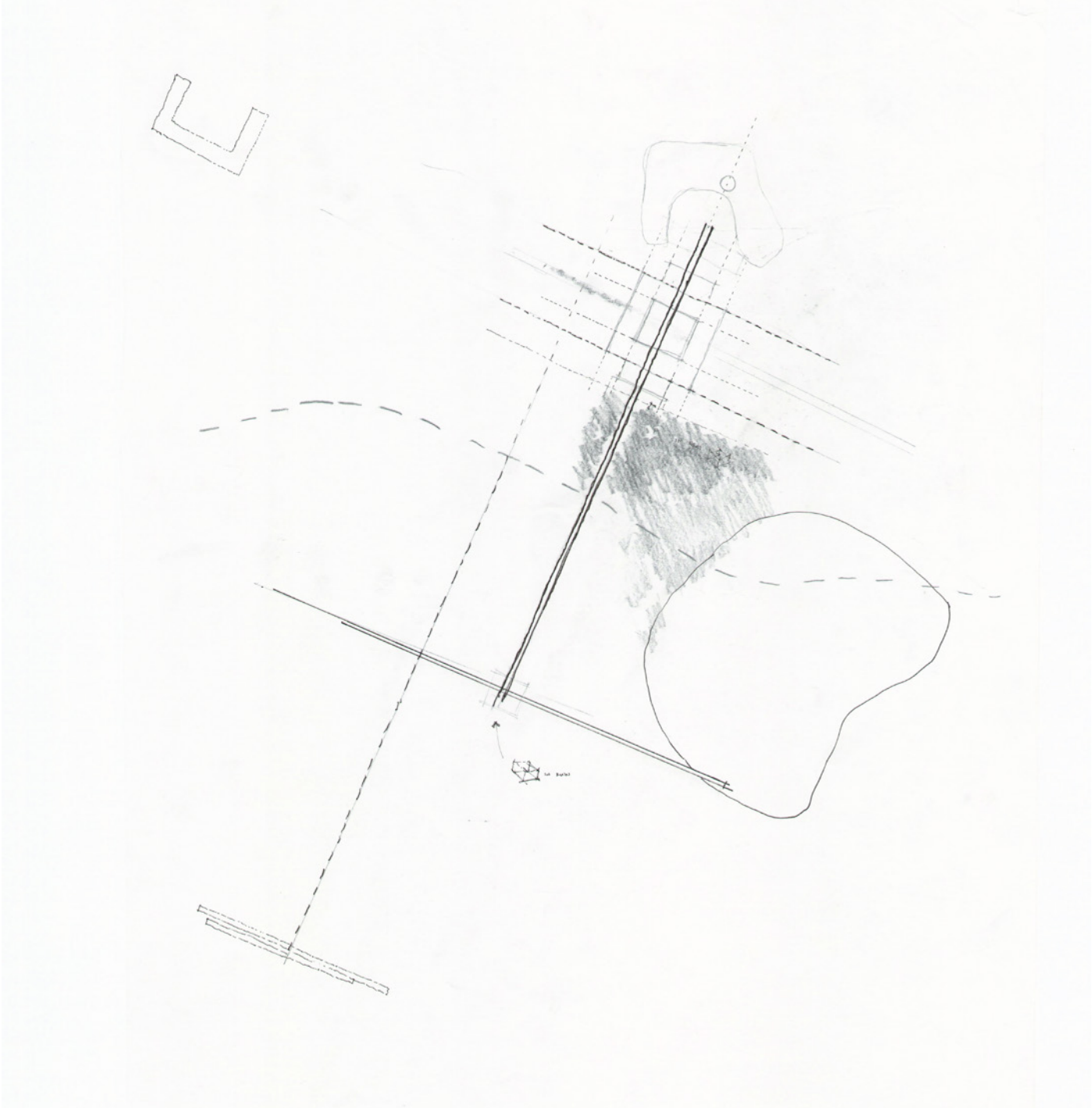


Figure 21: Hidden axes sketch, author, 2022.

The knowledge of the gods

In plan view, there exists a strong relationship of geometry between the main structures of manor house and stables and the valley wherein they reside, and clear axes that delineate the valley in different programmes. Using these axes as a guide to shape garden spaces and create narrative and reveal qualities in the landscape such as the passage of time or the textures of existing quartzite.



Figure 22: A conceptual sketch on interventions that contribute to the perspective of the valley, sketch, author, 2022.

Conclusion

The landscape of Coromandel began through demarcation, initially through the stone-packing techniques of the Bokoni people, and in recent memory by Sydney Press. It was inhabited by the Press family and farm workers for two decades, whereafter ownership was transferred over to the farmworkers. Today, three decades after this event, the site exhibits qualities of being uninhabited, and the experience of architectural and historic ruins is present. The new programme for Coromandel will impose new relationships onto the landscape. New habitation will occur, as well as new relationships between people and place. The vocabulary and syntax of the *genius loci* will thus expand and evolve, while remaining authentic.

The process of analysing history, studying the *genius loci*, cataloguing narratives into a new programme are all pre-design steps to ensure authenticity is reached and carried through into the design stage. This process is expected to bring about authentic experiences for hotel guests by enhancing the

character of Coromandel and creating new ways of experiencing the site.

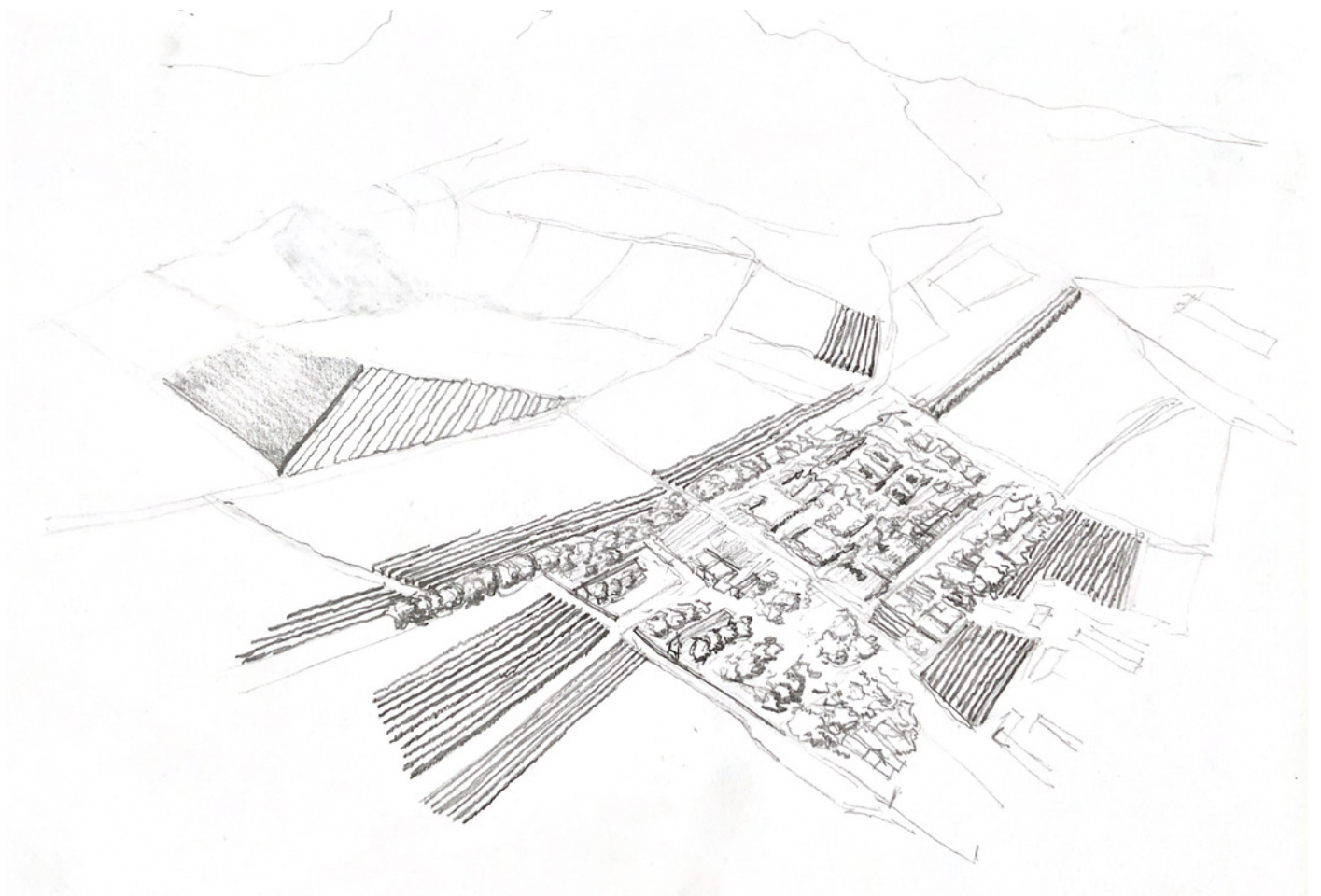


Figure 23: Landscape texture and integration of Babylonstoren, sketch, author, 2022.

Delimitations and assumptions

The Coromandel Valley is 5800 ha in size, and is owned by the Coromandel Farmworker's Trust. Parcels of farmland are currently leased to neighbouring farmers. The dissertation is focused on a much smaller area for design, namely the immediate valley from the manor house and the landscape around the stables, with detail design taking place at specific nodes.

Since the beginning of the project, there has been communication with some stakeholders that are currently involved in the project to renovate the manor house into a boutique hotel: their information has been assumed to be correct.



Figures 24: Photos from the valley, author, 2022.

A	B
C	D

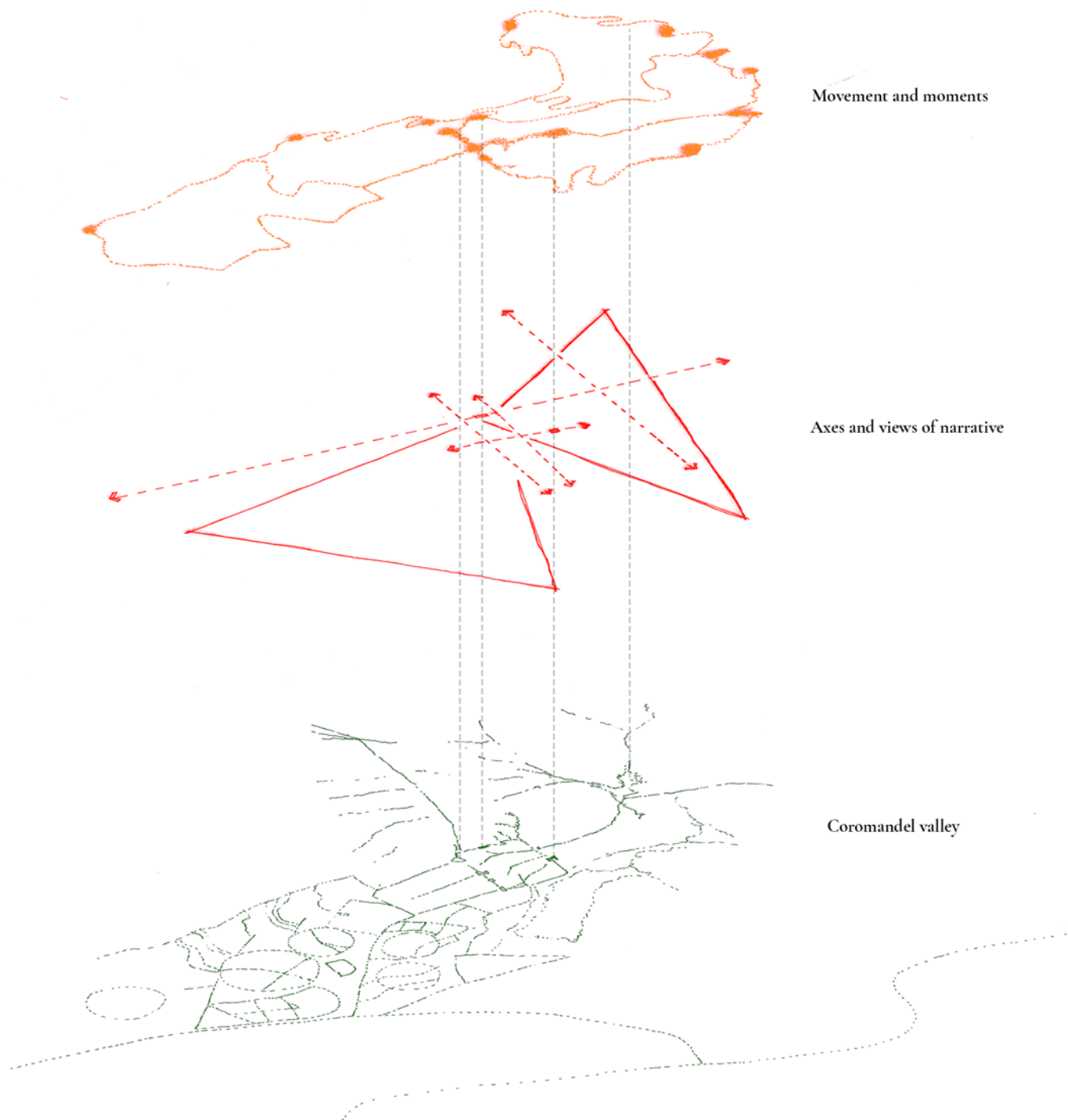
The uninhabited landscape

Throughout the early development of Coromandel, authenticity was reached through the careful approaches and principles of the Press', Zanuso, Watson, and Porcinai. This culminated in a landscape with an enhanced *genius loci* through the interactions of people and place.

Following the years after the departure of the Press family from Coromandel, the landscape has indeed changed. Black wattle has amassed in great numbers in the low-lying valley plains, shrinking the streams (Figure A), and alongside them are swathes of poplar that break the horizon into thin strips (Figure B). The mountain sides contain an unsteady mix of indigenous forest and black wattle. Some boundary fences have deteriorated and where once wild game roamed, none are to be found.

Down in the valley, the grass towers above you, and the Eucalyptus trees stretch high into the sky (Figure C), their leaves no comfort from the sun,

their dead branches blocking your way. The stables, now derelict, still anchor the major route to the manor house, but the surrounding abandoned horse paddocks are overrun with wild grasses. In the distance, what was once soft grassland becomes forested and things underfoot die. The olive tree and blueberry grids retain their rational ordering in rows, but they are wild and unkempt, growing every which way. The Manor House has achieved its goal of integrating with nature, though through chance; *Cussonia* trees sprout from its roof and fig trees emerge from the walls. The landscape is empty of others. It is quiet, still beautiful.



Movement and moments

Axes and views of narrative

Coromandel valley

Figure 25: Conceptual approach, author, 2022.

Due to these conditions, the spatial experience of the site has become more apparent to the author, a clear narrative has formed, where one experiences the difference between cultivated and uncultivated landscapes of Coromandel.

This experience begins as one enters the valley, flanked by agricultural fields and trees, comfort in the scale and enjoyment in the distant green hills. Eventually the road travels through paddocks and arrives at the old stables, a welcoming site. Once through to the other side, however, the fields become wild grasslands, and ravines gush with unseen water, and the trees are tall and wild. As one climbs up the side of the mountain, views become clear, and the expansive landscape opens up, but quickly one is thrust into the platform of the stone building, where the walls extend to create sheltered patios and deep shadows.

The house acts as a condensed haptic experience for experiencing the archaic of Coromandel. Like

entering an expansive *kloof*, the scale of the walls are daunting, but one is relieved by their strength. Looking out over the landscape from the house one can see that these two narratives meet along an axis of water flowing north through a series of constructed dams. If one ventured farther west, the archaic experience would only increase from the lack of technology and artefact, but to the east, the agriculture provides a quiet calm of civilisation.

And yet, there is a stillness. There is a sense of half-habitation, as if the landscape is dormant, resigned.

The restoration of the Manor House into a hotel alongside the revitalisation of agriculture to Coromandel is a new programme for the site. How can the past be used in order to ensure authenticity in design as well as experience of the guests? The *genius loci* of Coromandel exists without guests. How can performative authenticity be achieved?

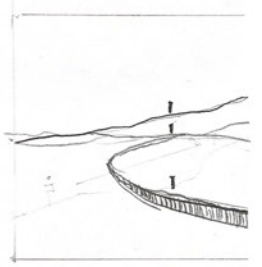
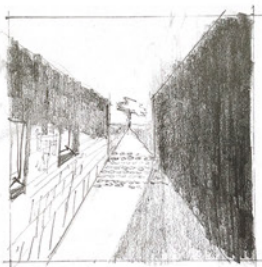
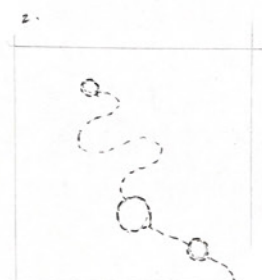
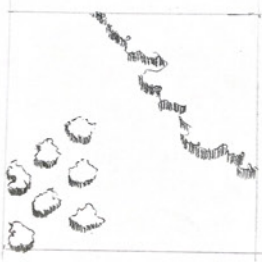
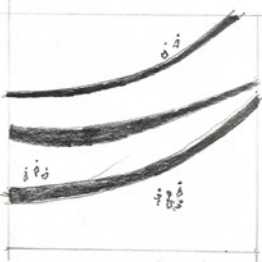
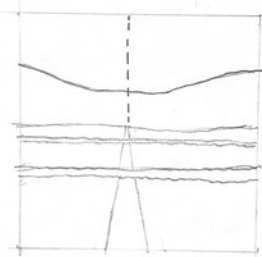
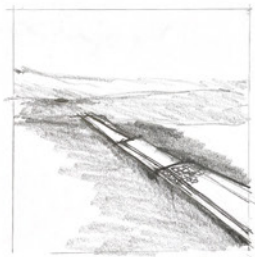


Figure 26: Spatial typologies and analysis, author, 2022.

Spatial slide reel

To “consult the Genius of the Place” was to seek an understanding of the potential natural perfection of a site and to assist its emergence, where necessary, by discreet intervention (Moore 1988:1).

The emergence of natural beauty at Coromandel was reached through the efforts of Zanuso and the Press family. As a design adding a new layer to this landscape, consulting the *genius loci* is only a first step.

In the quest ensuring that new interventions remain authentic, the development of a syntax and subsequent lexicon as a follow-up to understanding the *genius loci* of the site was undertaken.

Moore (1988:1) continues by stating how each place has unique qualities of materials, sunlight, stone, leaf, and even scent and breeze -- and through investigation, the inherent qualities of the garden will be revealed.

Therefore, an approach was undertaken whereby site artefacts and existing experiences were sketched and analysed and the natural qualities of place were investigated to form the beginnings of the catalogue.



Figure 27: Stane Street: The Roman Road, Phillip Hughes, 2010.

Additionally, the work of Phillip Hughes (1936-), a London-born artist, was used as a guide. Hughes sketches and paints the natural landscape with a focus on the topography, and through a process of drawing, he captures the memory of a place. He simplifies the landscape into blocks and lines, and there is an emphasis on geology, which he considers ancient aspects of the landscape (McKenzie 2021).



Figure 28: View from the house, author, 2022.

Starting first with the most prominent view from the Manor House, the landscape was sketched (fig. 7). The soft grain of the fields, the shady trees that line the roads and demarcate agriculture, as well as the rise and fall of the valley ending in gentle faraway hills, all contribute to a beautiful, pastoral landscape, where there is harmony between plough, man, and fertile soil. There is a crispness to the air, and a justification for a wholesome, productive lifestyle. The landscape may beckon you in some ways, but mostly delivers its views to you without asking anything in return.

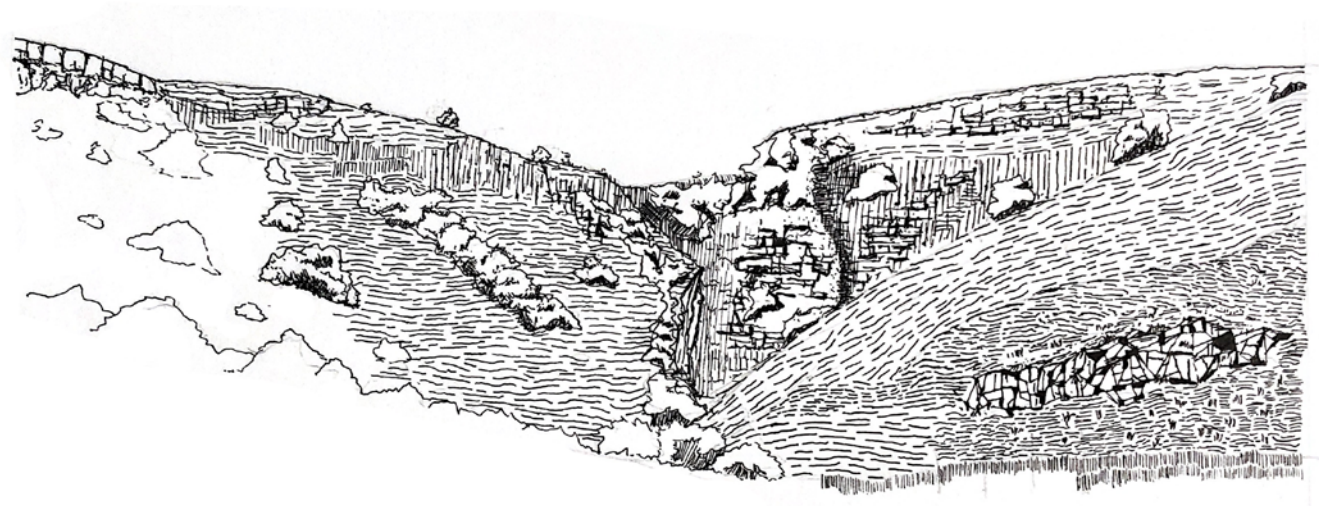


Figure 29: Textures of quartzite and vegetation around the waterfall, author, 2022.

If one ventures deeper into the east of the valley, one experiences a change in the air; an opening of the sky, the neat fields become open grassland, the carefully placed trees that line the roads become clumps of forest, segregating to the moisture-laden valley floor. The quartzite ridges, peeking through the upper reaches of the mountains, show their texture (Fig. 8), where once they were hidden underfoot or domesticated in the walls of the Manor House. This is where technology does not reach, where it is the sun, the mountain, the grass, and the gravel underfoot. It is quiet here, and feels old.



Figures 30-32: Spatial narrative qualities, author, 2022.

In order to continue deriving a lexicon of Coromandel, the corresponding three sketches (figures 9-11) capture distinct points in the journey experienced by the author.

The pole-fence around the horse paddocks, the fields set out clearly and markedly, the trees providing shade and a welcome embrace, and the future is an enticing, strong, building that promises comfort and safety. This is the cultivated, the mark of man on a landscape.

If one continues through the stables, the landscape expands into boundless territory. There are no more buildings to provide safe respite and familiarity. The hills extend, dotted with trees, and the fields of grass are taller than you are. The trees scratch the sky, providing little relief from the sun, and yet you seek something in the distance, but can't find it. It is in this place where the landscape begins to show you its ancient origin. Water may bubble nearby, but you sense it will be difficult to

reach.

Finally, you arrive at a place of shelter, hidden in the trees and archaic in its shell: stone upon stone upon stone, hemmed in by hand of man. A tension exists in these man-made, shaded wings, and although it was made for you, it will outlast you.

The collection so far provided much of the quality of spaces in the landscape, and attempted to capture important points along the narrative journey, but in themselves do not offer much to the new programmatic layer. How can the new narrative fit into the whole of the masterplan of the site, but also at a detail level such as these sketches indicate?

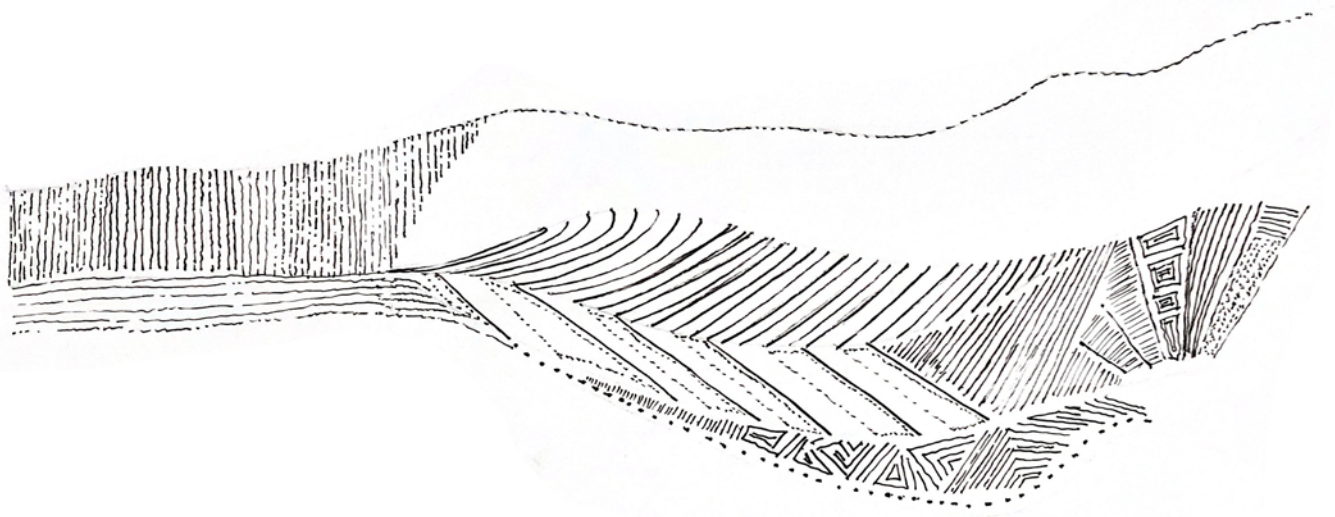


Figure 33: Exploration graphic of amplification of grain, author, 2022.

The scalpel, the chisel, the hammer

Amplification through editing

Gardens are composed to evoke rhetoric (Moore 1988:49), but many neglected, overgrown, and disharmonious spaces in Coromandel exhibit qualities which do not contribute to the *genius loci* and are thus inauthentic. These spaces are mostly contained in the lower valley below the Manor House. Since this axis is important to the new spatial narrative, an exploration was done to see what can be revealed through a process of pruning, chiselling, or, in some cases, topographic manipulation. By playing with a range of scales it is possible to shape a space to be more relational, comfortable, understandable, or even unknowable and ancient. Amplifying functional form and sacralising space can allow more definitive experiences to occur.



Figure 34: Exposed rocks at Reflection Garden, author, 2022.

At a private residence near the Cradle of Humankind, a garden designed by Patrick Watson called the Reflection Garden has a curious groundcover; an expanse of exposed rocks that the team discovered when the dam was expanded. These were cleared and exposed by hand and leave a striking image of ancient geology open to the air. This act of clearing has revealed what was once missing; there is a stark inherent authenticity to this simple act.

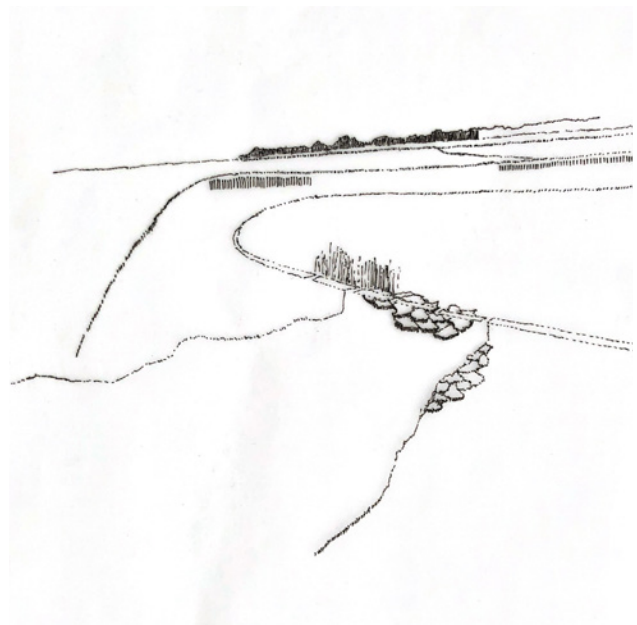
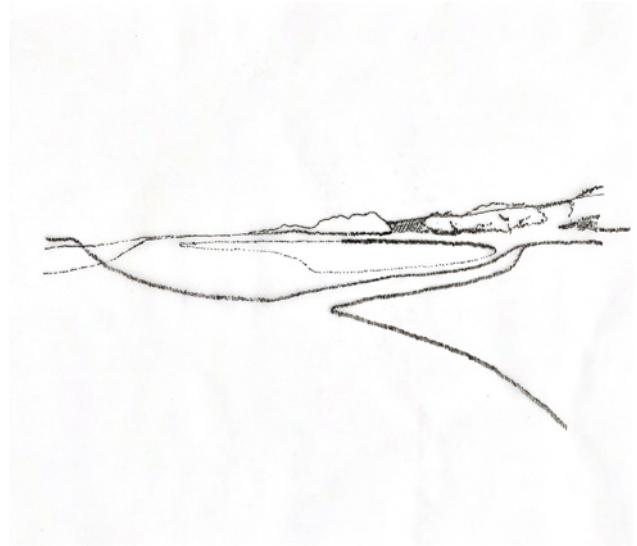


Figure 35-37: Editing sketches and site photos, author, 2022

The following sketches are an attempt at studying the inherent beauty found in the site, but removing any details that contribute to inauthenticity, be it alien vegetation, or transforming fields into lower-growing grass, or highlighting a Line of Beauty², or implementing principles similar to Capability Brown's of belting, clumping, and dotting trees in the landscape.

Photographs of Coromandel from the 1970's show a more sparse landscape; few trees and mostly soft grassland cover the valleys and mountains. This editing attempt combines a return to a more natural state, but by using the palette of today, and to bring beauty to both.

Using these approaches of identifying key moments in the landscape, the previous catalogue of spatial narratives can be overlaid with programmatic functions in order to develop the design.

2: William Hogarth (1697-1764), an English painter and writer, theorised the Line of Beauty as a flowing serpentine line that created intrigue and beauty in its visual properties due to how the eye travels along its length.

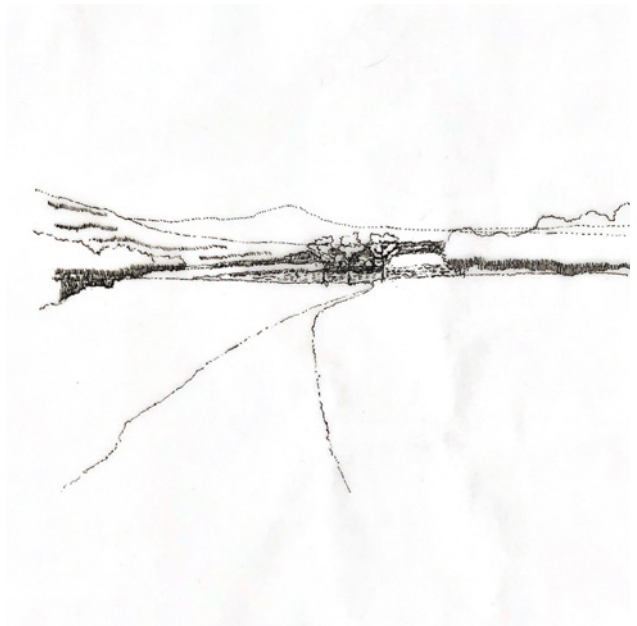


Figure 38-41: Editing sketches and site photos, author, 2022

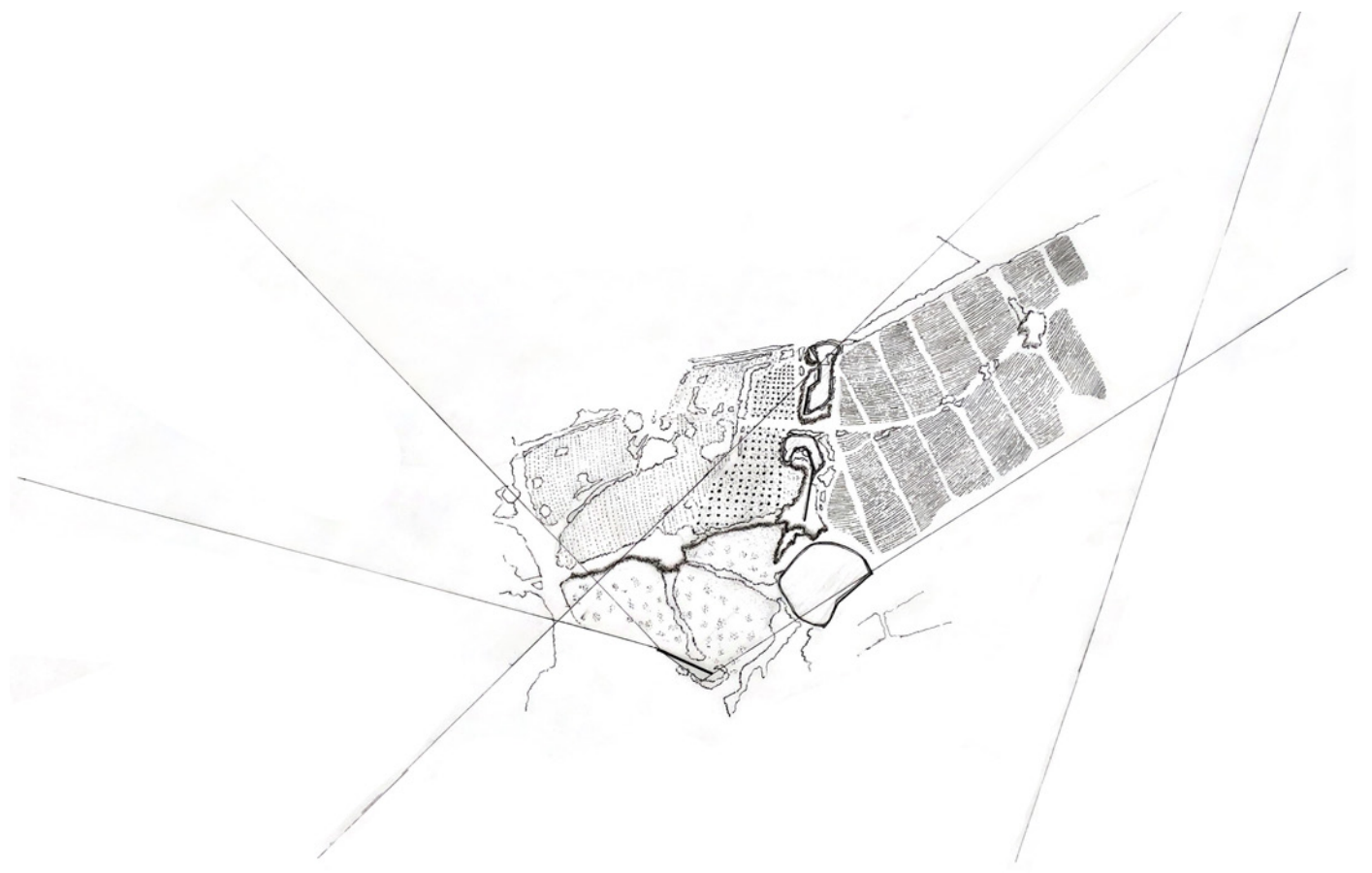


Figure 42: Axes of importance, author, 2022

The knowledge of the gods

Geometry

“The grid... is the beginning of the dialogue between the designer and the land” (Kiley 2000:11).

Fernando Caruncho (1957-), Spanish Landscape gardener, calls geometry the grammar shape; through it, it is possible to open up a landscape using grids and axes (Cooper & Taylor 2000). Thus, geometry can reveal qualities in the landscape, such as prominent textures of quartzite, the grain of grassland, the passage of water underground, the brightness of light and the passage of time, and finally, act as a guide to the spatial narrative. As a broad-strokes approach, a grid of axes can be used to give structure or armature to the narrative and allow orientation as well as hierarchy of spaces.

Additionally, Caruncho states that since geometry is a science that aids us in measuring the earth and knowing space, it can be used as a language to express knowledge and relate man to the spaces of

a place (Cooper & Taylor 2000).

Classical gardens based on geometry can have a great impact on a person, due to the effects of form, symmetry, variation, repetition, and completion; the foursquare block may be the most basic symmetrical pattern for a garden, but it is possible to develop endless versions of it (Moore 1988:158-162).

However, through contrast, it is possible to create a dramatic effect by bringing a simple foursquare garden in a landscape that is inherently naturalist.

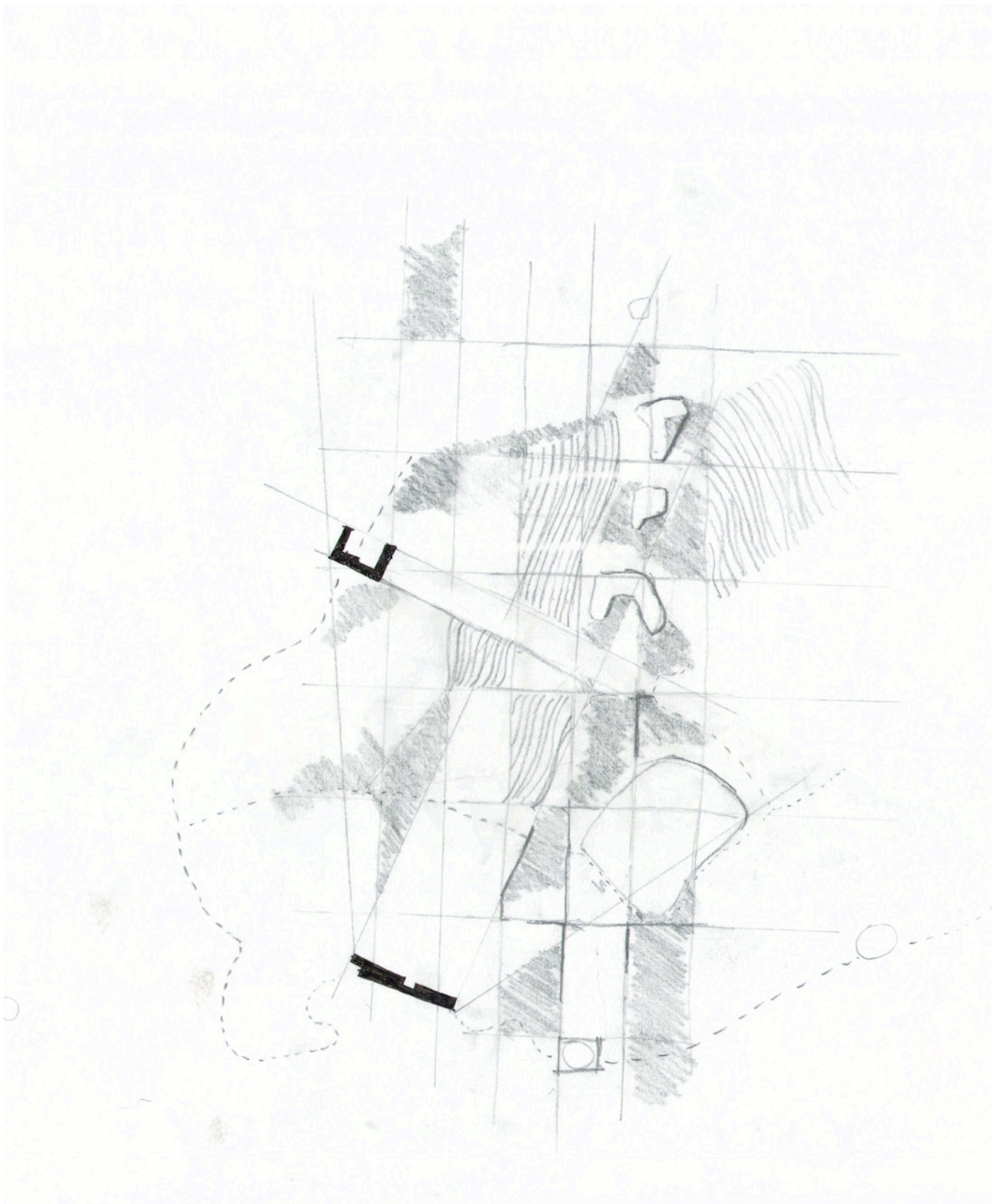


Figure 43: Exploration of axes and grids, sketch, author, 2022.

At the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, French landscape architect Michel Desvigne used topographical grids to make the geography perceptible, and used a series of models to sculpt away glades and forested areas in order to create a sense of space; the grid was further used to plant birch trees, in order to use depth of field and to create visual effect (Tiberghien, Desvigne, & Corner 2009:159-169).

By overlaying a grid developed by the length of the Manor House and the diameter of the most prominent Bokoni Ruins, a set of axes developed from house and its interaction with the stables. These axes intersected the north-south axis of the constructed dams with interesting results. The dams axis contains left-over space between the horse paddocks and the agriculture, and as such is ill-defined. The introduction of more deliberate spatial experiences, especially through geometry, can add to the knowledge of a person moving through garden spaces here. The rational, functional set-

ting out of agriculture meeting a more naturalist leisure landscape creates an interesting narrative space, as a mediation between the two.

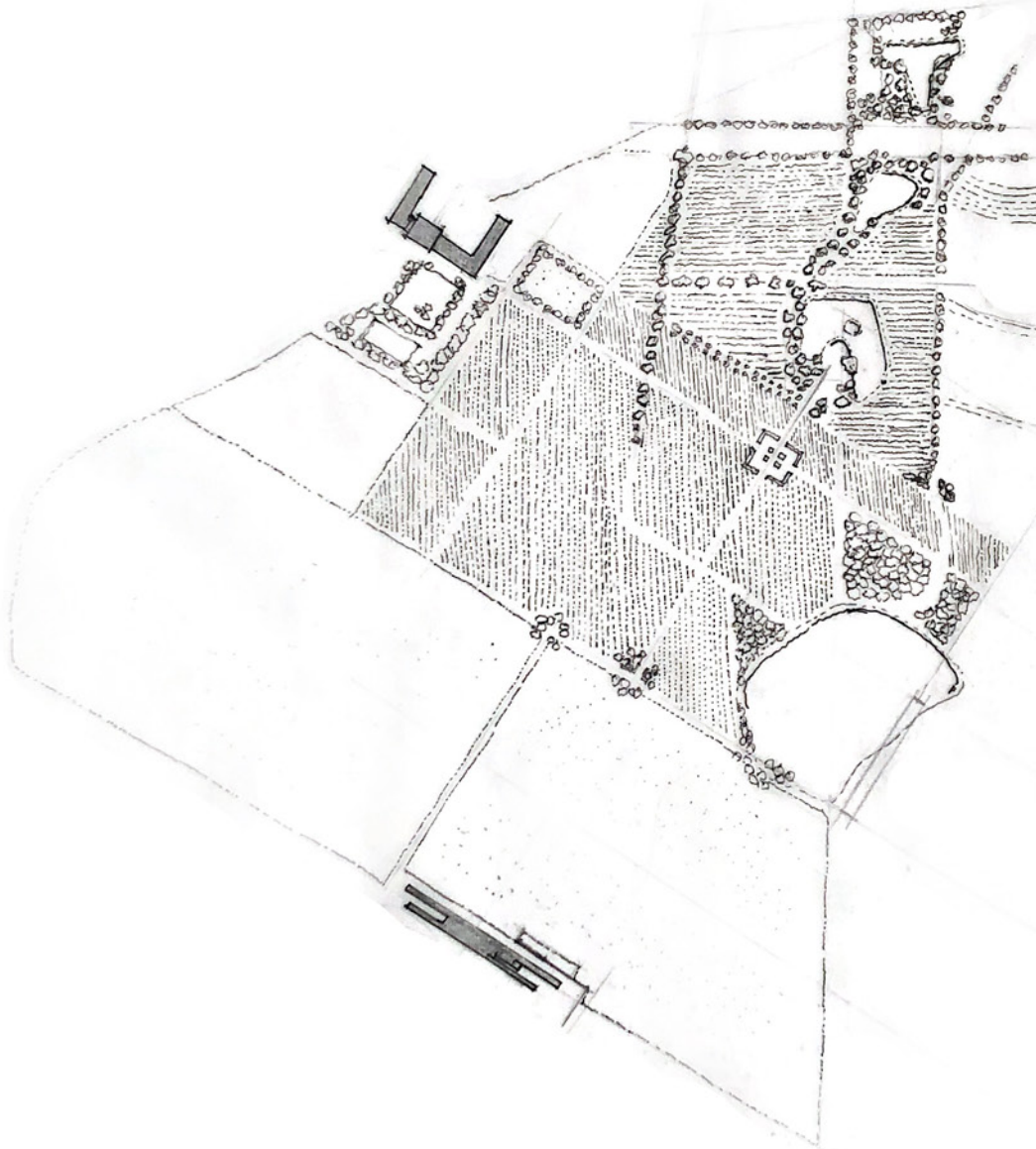


Figure 44: New agricultural axes with gardens along dams, author, 2022

By extending the existing grain and rational ordering of the landscape, opportunities reveal themselves in series of garden spaces around the constructed dams and where agricultural and leisure programmes meet.

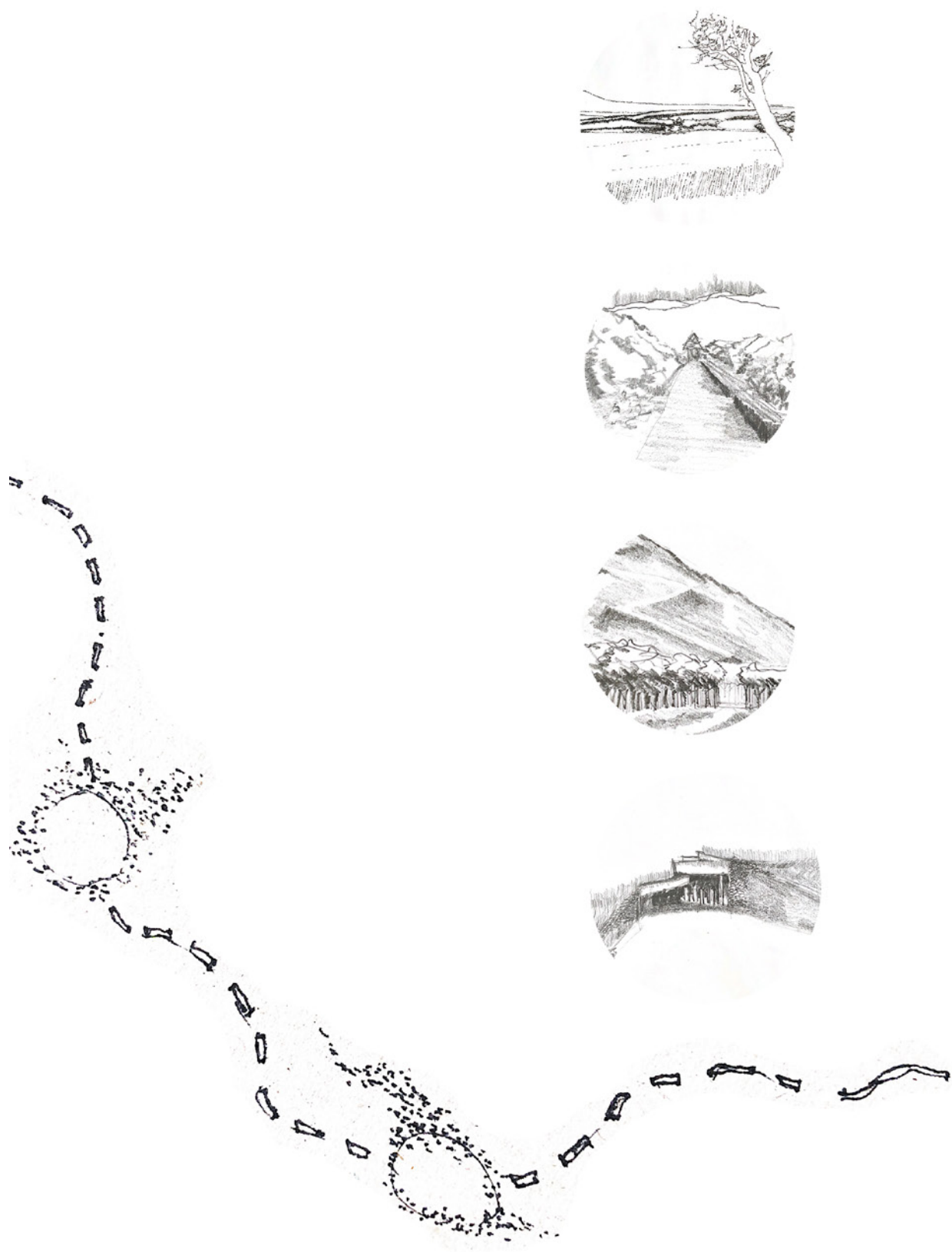


Figure 45: Spatial moments along a journey, author, 2022

A pilgrim's path

Moments

While the goal of integrating architecture and landscape into a single idea is a sensitive pursuit by the Press', it is also one that limits possibilities of spatial vocabulary. By converging definitions throughout the landscape, the result can lead to a monotonous narrative; a monomyth where there is little distinction in spatial qualities of the landscape. While the landscape of Coromandel does have moments of conceal and reveal, ensuring that a 'liquid' landscape experience does not form, a spatial narrative of a journey relies on more distinct spatial experiences, from boundless distances to enclosed, focused, or condensed spatial moments.

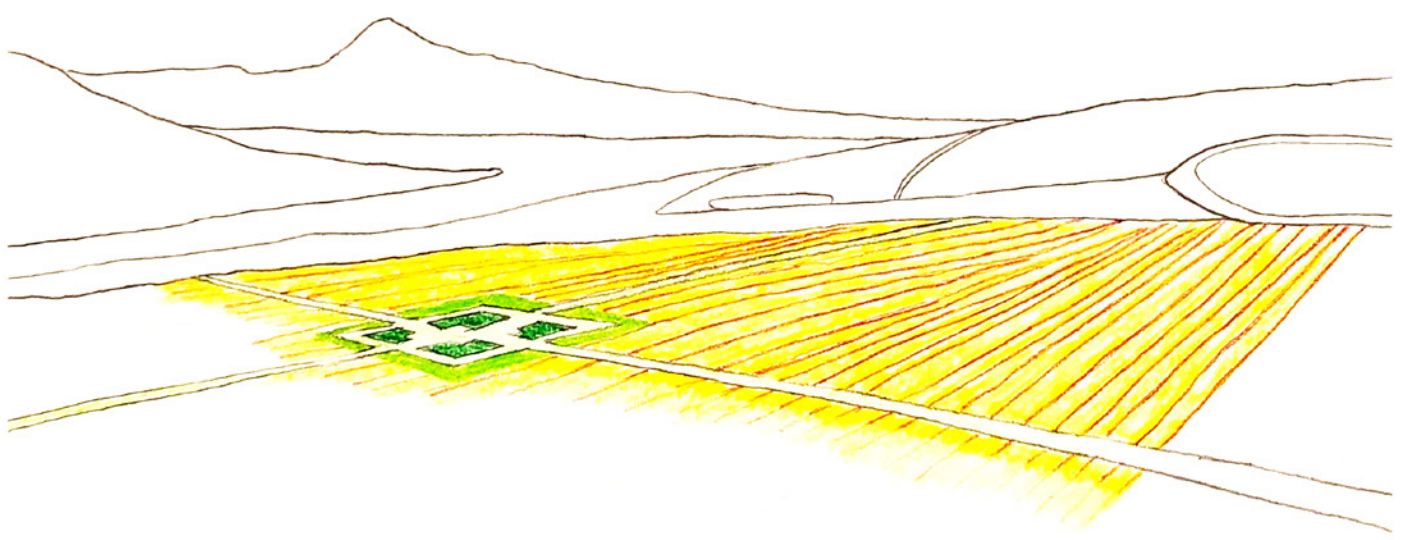


Figure 46: Foursquare in a wheatfield, author, 2022

The introduction of a new spatial narrative based on a journey requires poetic spaces that move the person. In Johan N. Prinsloo's 2015 article *Dramatic transitions for poetic spaces: notes on the potential of public walled gardens in cities*, he states that spatial and sensory differences in landscapes cause a feeling of strangeness, which in turn, makes them poetic (Prinsloo 2015:7). As the landscape will be used by hotel guests, the guests expect enjoyable memories. This ex-situ experience is also covered by Prinsloo, stating "When thinking of these moments, or longing for them, this ex situ appreciation of landscape is always poetic" (Prinsloo 2015:6).

The spatial narrative of a journey can also be viewed as a type of pilgrimage, and can be composed of shorter journeys throughout the landscape that together form a larger narrative. For this to be successful, Moore suggests that the time dimension of the narrative must be established by using sequences of movement throughout the

garden, and can end at a certain point, or simply circle back to where the pilgrim started (Moore 1988:118). Often pilgrimage journeys have moments of respite, which could form poetic garden moments in the landscape, which is often harsh, even at Coromandel. The Renaissance garden of Villa Lante contains a pilgrimage where the journey is linked to the flow of water, and the water at Coromandel has strong links to both an ancient and cultivated narrative.

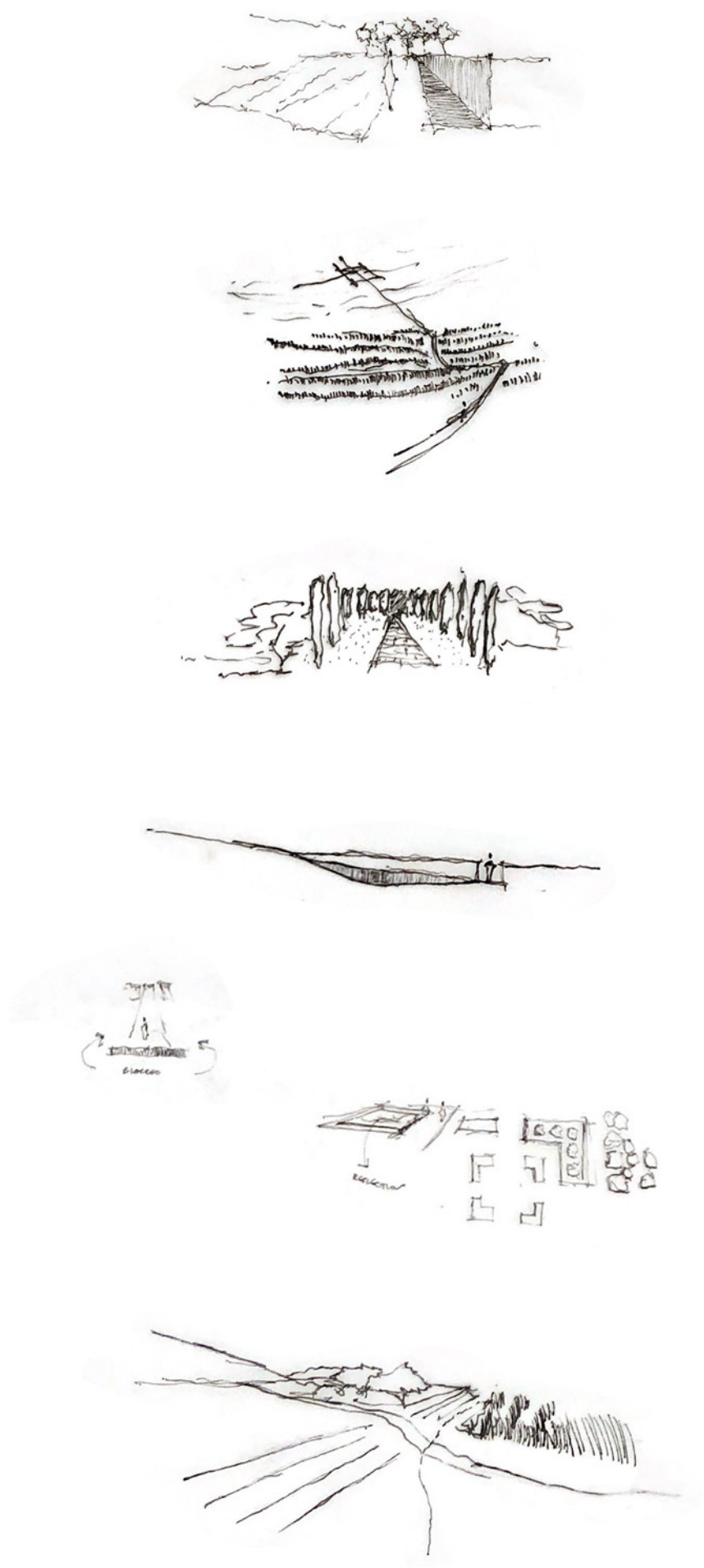


Figure 47: Site spatial moments based on journey, author, 2022

Coromandel has a rich collection of morphological typologies, such as the forest, the stream, the spring, the mountain, the valley, and the hills. These existing morphologies can be captured in abstracted typologies such as the bosque, the rill, the fount, the mound, the clearing, and used in the narrative-driven design.

Coromandel has beautiful views, but in the landscape itself the experiences are less dramatic. Walking up to the Bokoni ruins is a trek through the veld, and no path is laid out similar to the one that leads one to the Manor House. The spatial differences in the landscape is a consequence of a harmonious, albeit functional layout, but can be used as inspiration.

By exploring the effects of strangeness in a landscape, and bringing in the spatial narrative of the site, multiple vignettes were done to ground them to Coromandel and the archetypal catalogue from which they come.

By linking the narrative of the waterfall to that of a rill, or the Bokoni ruins as a clearing in a forest, or the sensation of moving down and then up again through a trough, the nearby bosque as a link to the forest... all these are moments to be used with the new narrative.

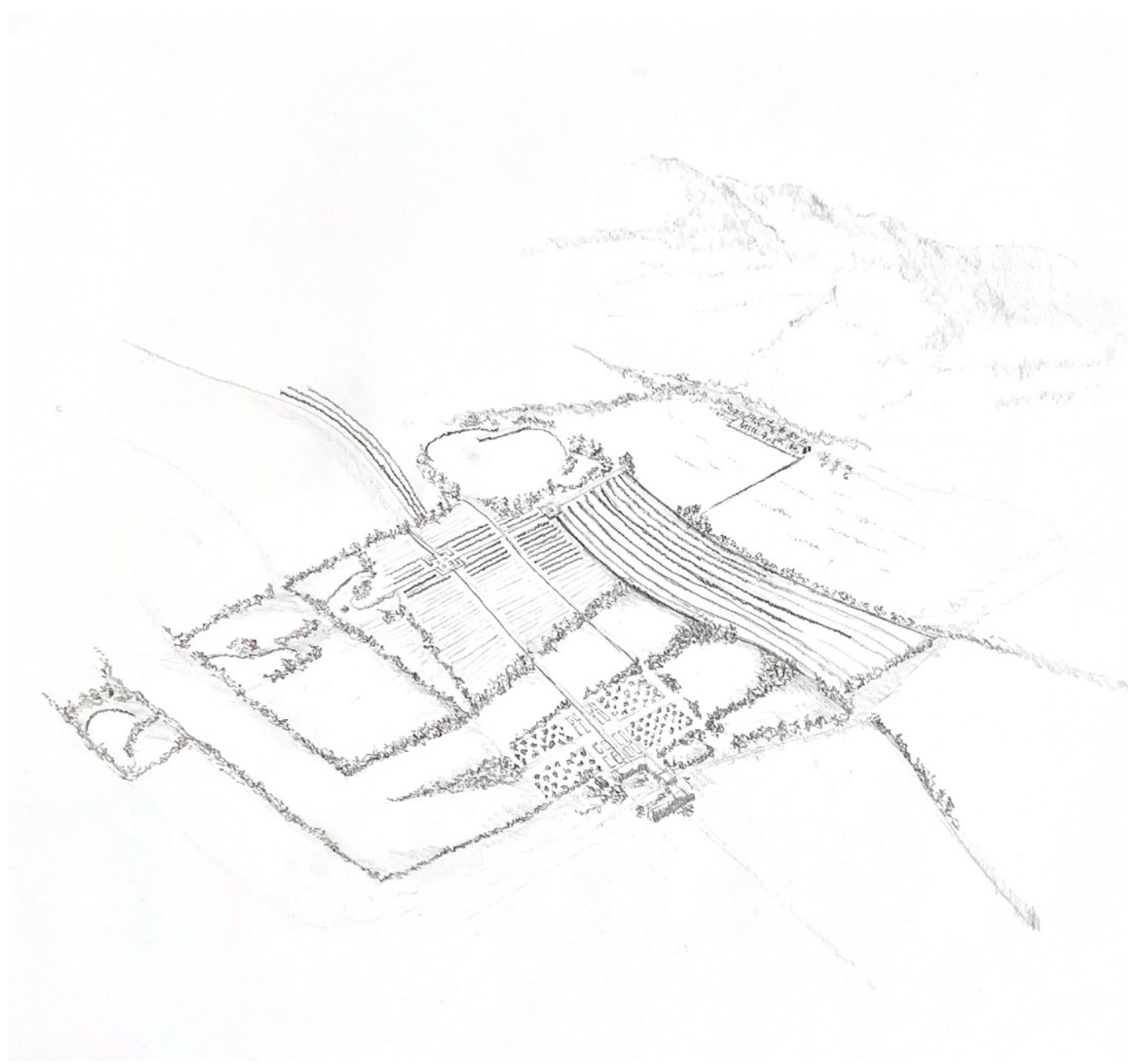


Figure 48: Aerial sketch of masterplan, author, 2022

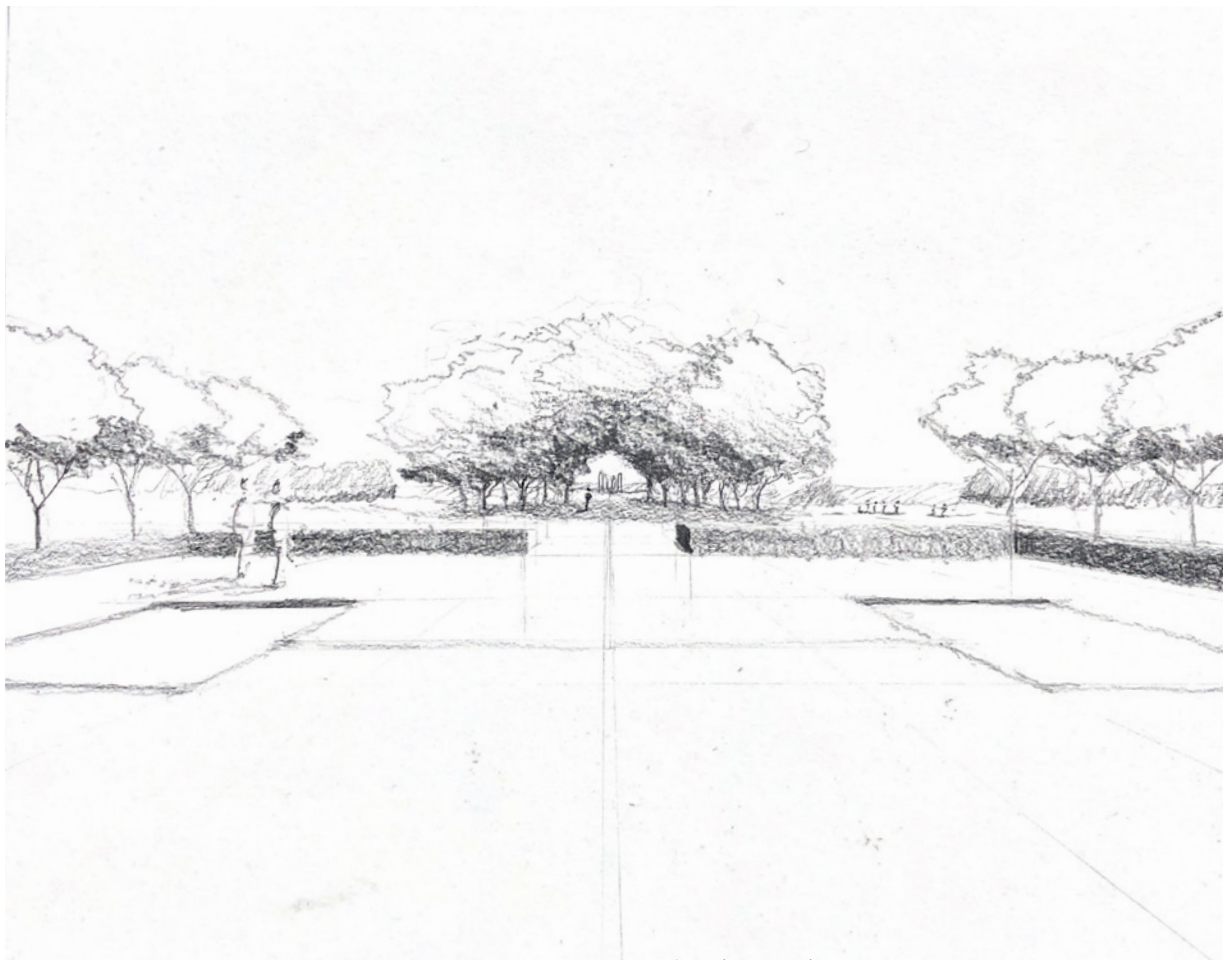
“Somewhere I have never traveled, gladly beyond”

Conclusion

The landscape of Coromandel began through demarcation, and was inhabited by the Press family and farm workers for two decades, whereafter ownership was transferred over to the farmworkers. Today, three decades after this event, the site exhibits qualities of being uninhabited, especially residentially. With the proposal of a new hotel, the landscape must be shaped and designed to accommodate for these new programmes as well as answer the questions of how to ensure authenticity is a golden thread.

The process of analysing history, studying the *genius loci*, cataloguing narratives into a new programme are all pre-design steps to ensure authenticity is reached and carried through into the design stage, which is comprised of three major approaches: editing, bringing in geometry, and designing moments. This process is expected to bring about authentic experiences for hotel guests by enhancing

the character of Coromandel and creating new ways of experiencing the site.



Figures 49-50: Projection sketches, author, 2022

Design projections

Design projections were opportunities to take existing explorations and shape them into more than simple diagrams or sketches, to ground them with intent. As such, the four projections alongside and on the next page were important in grabbing the design to a point and allowing a deeper investigation - projections are, after all, partly intuitive.

The projections were focused on key areas in the landscape: the axes created by trees that allow orientation in the landscape, the view from the stables into the next use of land and the configuration thereof, the effect of an open grove on prospect and refuge, and the recessed retained ground to shape a footpath down to a quiet pool.



Figures 51-52: Projection sketches, author, 2022

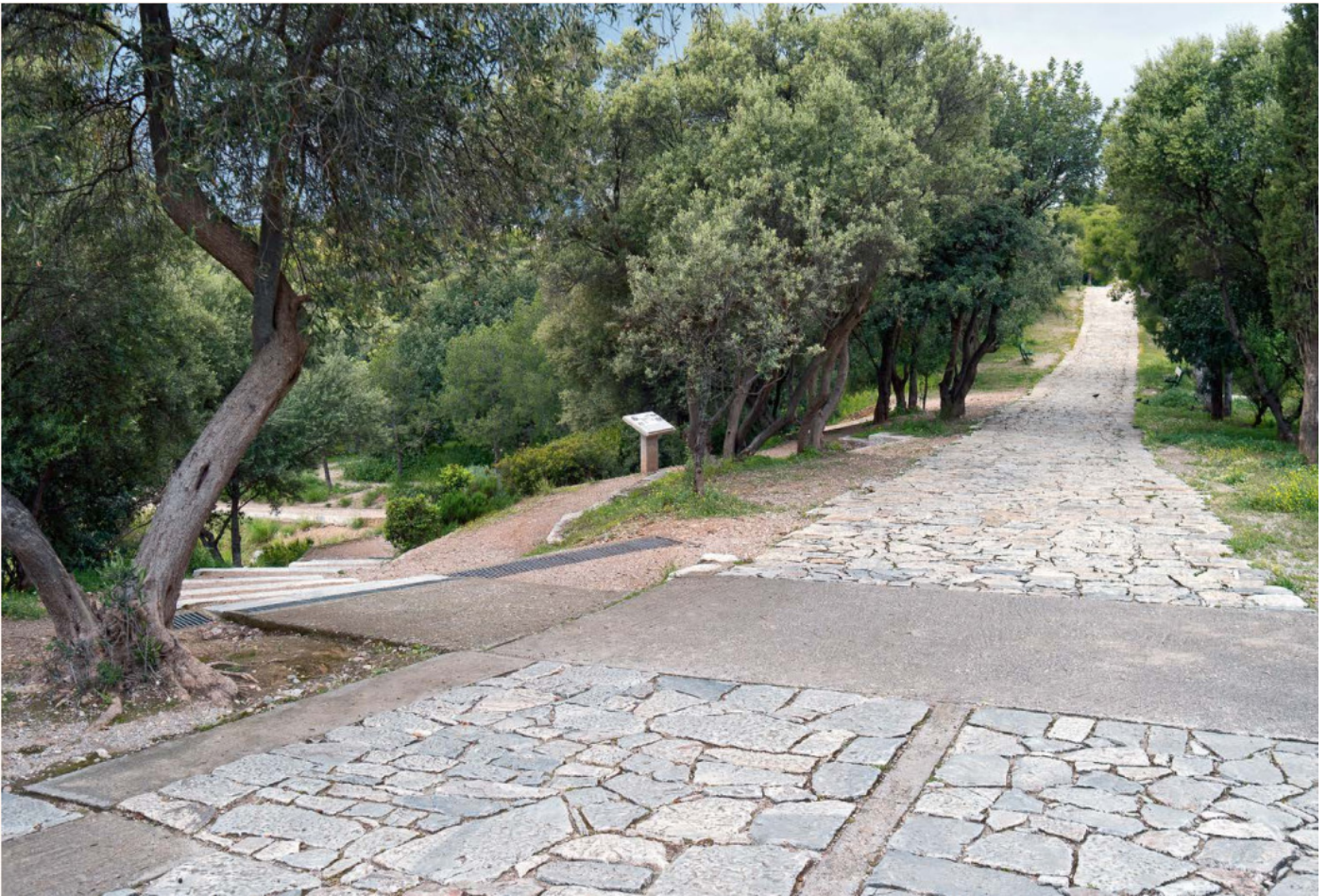


Figure 53: Photo: “Concrete shapes along the Philopappos hill pathway”, by Irene Chevroulet (2020). (Chevroulet 2020).

Design and technical approach

Technification at Coromandel and its approach is a challenging undertaking. With a focus on creating authentic landscape interventions, the technologies and materials used must remain truthful and add to the identity of place.

There are two major types of interventions in my design, with starkly different methods of production.

The first is large scale interventions, such as the introduction of trees in a grid pattern formed from grid explorations done on plan.

These grids of trees are explored as ways of shaping space for the lower valley area in order to accommodate day visitors. Additionally, they form a heritage response to the rows of trees that were planted as boundary trees, which are explored in a diagram.

In terms of other remnants of landscape design, there remains also self-seeding grasslands that are indigenous, as well as mixes of indigenous plants in and around the manor house.

These large scale interventions of trees and simple groundcovers, as well as specific mowing techniques and areas will shape the vegetation layer present on site, along with a slightly more case-by-case step in this intervention, namely, pruning.

Pruning and trimming in order to treat the current overgrown state of many landscape areas, as well as the removal of invasive alien vegetation will be undertaken in this intervention type.

However, pruning must be done on an assessment of significance, since the author has taken a pure restoration approach, whereby the history of the landscape over time adds to its authenticity. This is especially seen in the integration of landscape and architecture at the manor house.

The second type of intervention is that of detailed moments with planting design, and built interventions that highlight key characteristics of the dialogue between landscape and artefact.

The ruins will be left as-is, and act as living messengers between past and present culture, providing coexistence between architecture and nature.

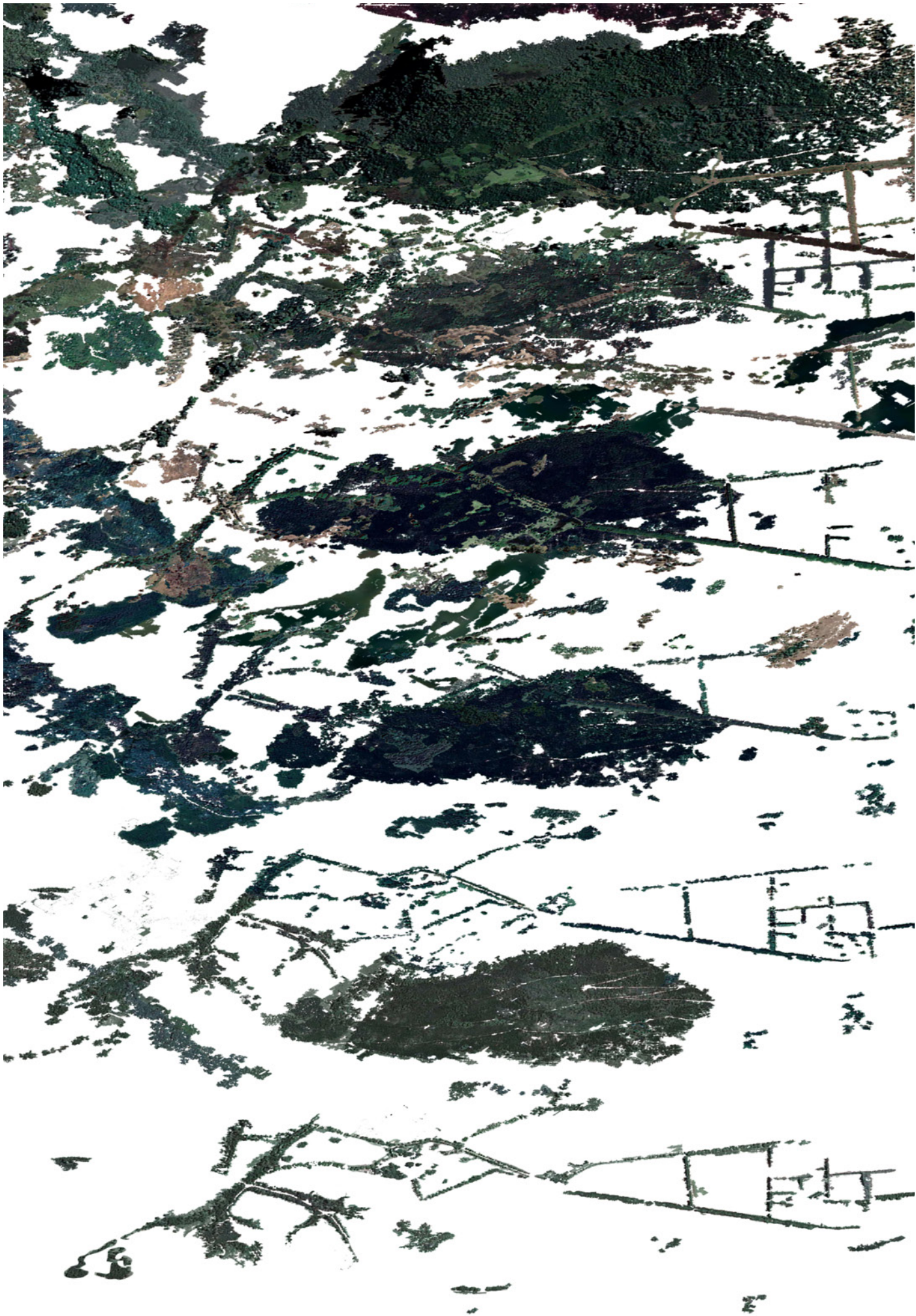


Figure 54: Layers of tree cover over time, author, 2022.

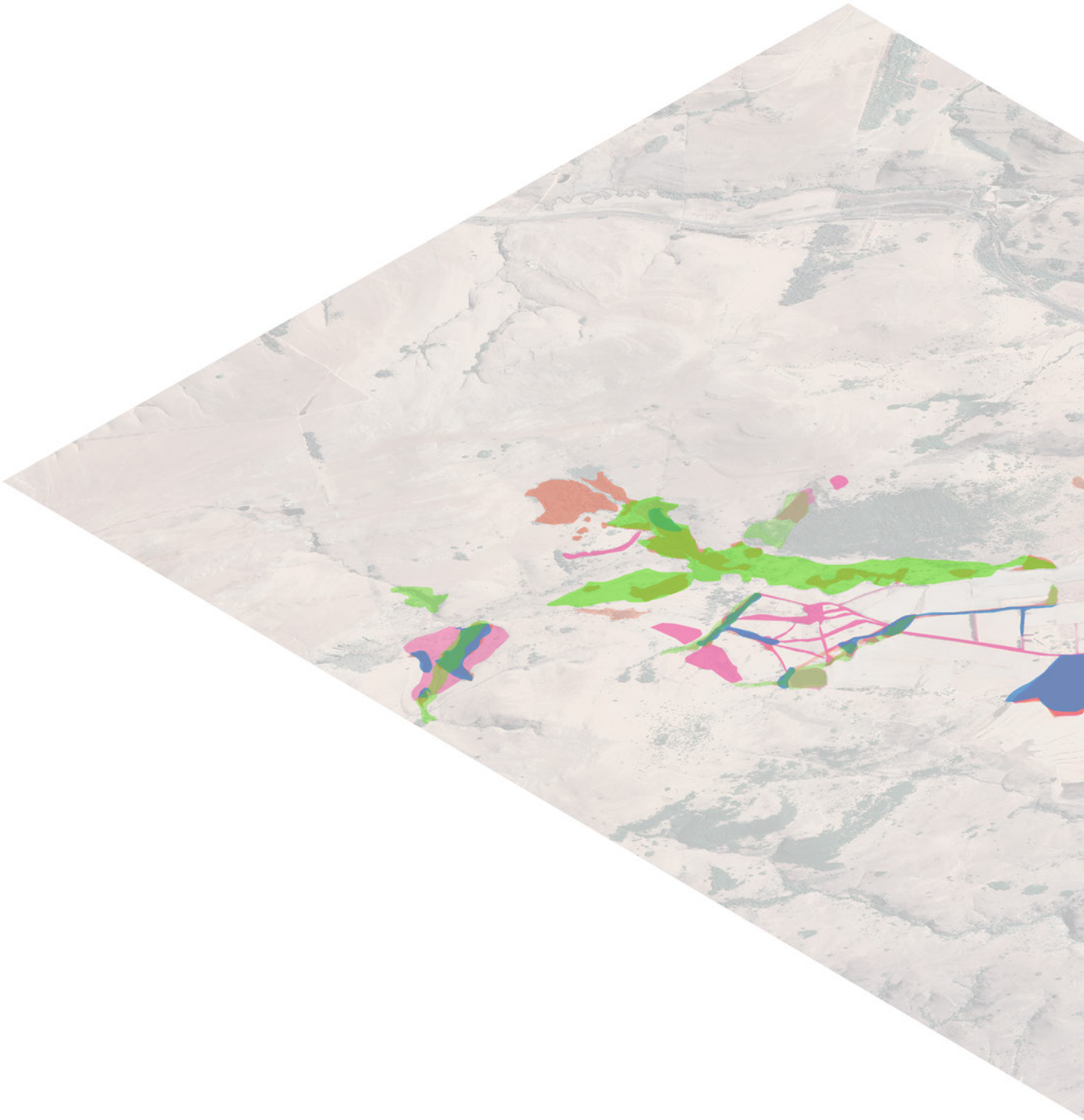
Heritage

Mapping studies were done which reveal the significance of the tree axes used to delineate space, create boundaries, and act as windbreaks.

These studies also show the spread of bush creep in the valleys and the proliferation of black wattle in the valley.

Over time, the tree-lined paths were not maintained, and lost their strength in defining space, and instead the landscape became dotted with trees as seed took root.

Instead of taking an integral restoration approach and replacing the axes of trees, the design instead celebrates the historical axes through pathways on foot and explores a grid that shapes space, which is authentic through the extrapolation of the manor house and historical horse pastures and historical agricultural lot sizes.



High heritage significance

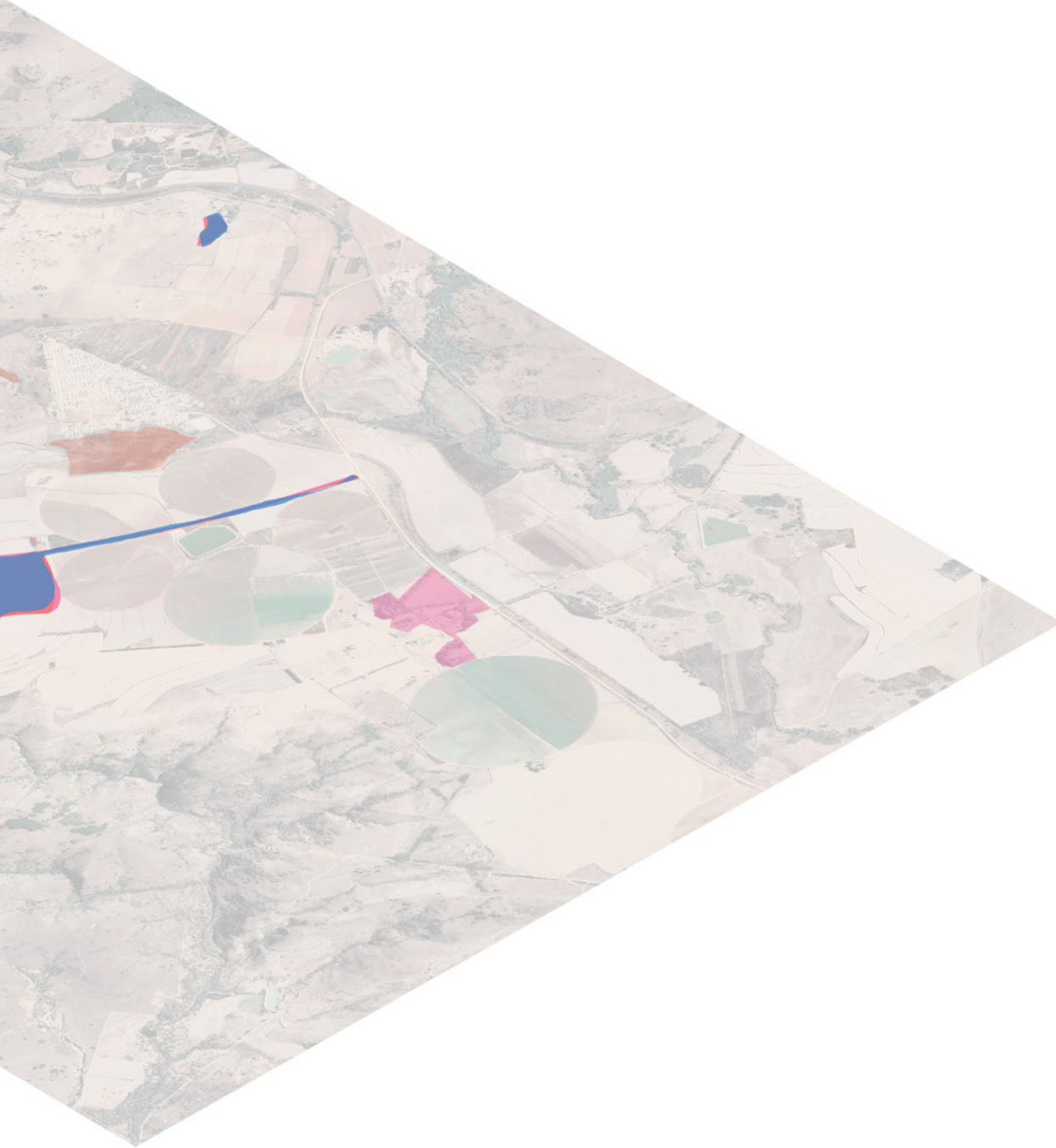


High ecological deterioration



Area of contention

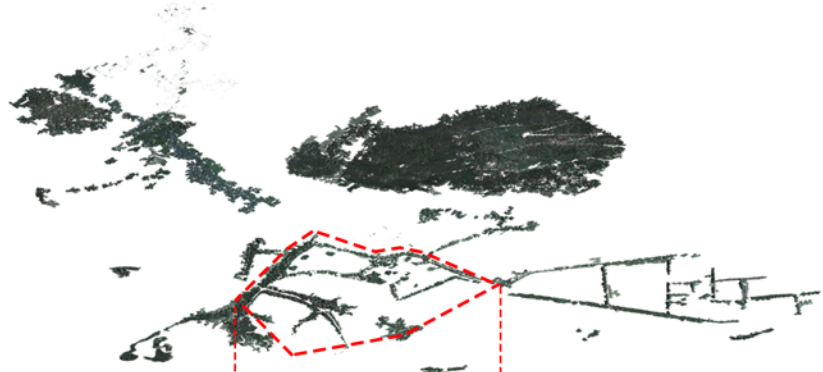




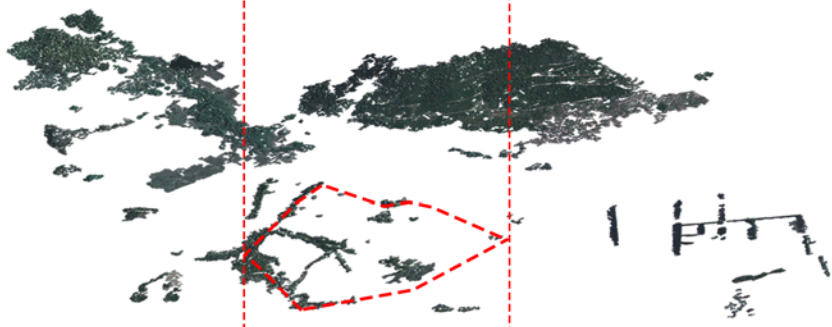
High ecological sensitivity



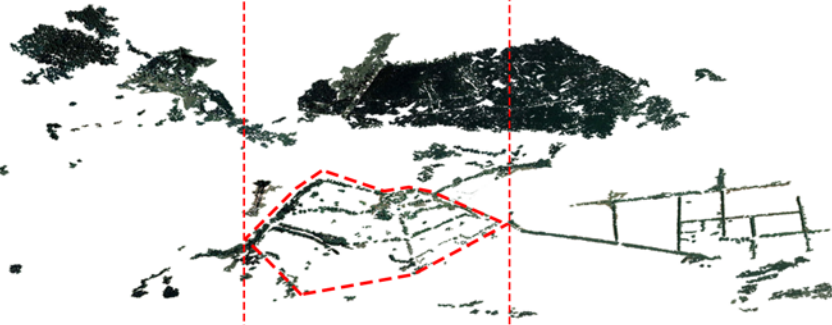
Figure 55: Areas of heritage significance, ecological deterioration, and ecological sensitivity, author, 2022.



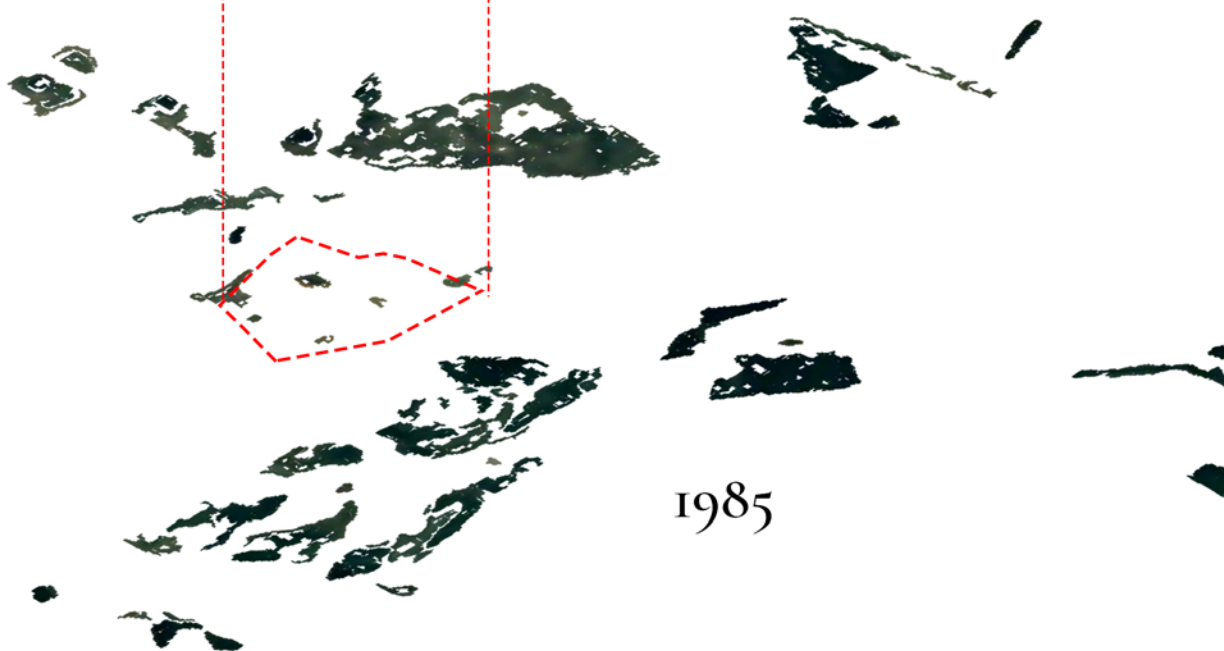
2012



2010



2003



1985

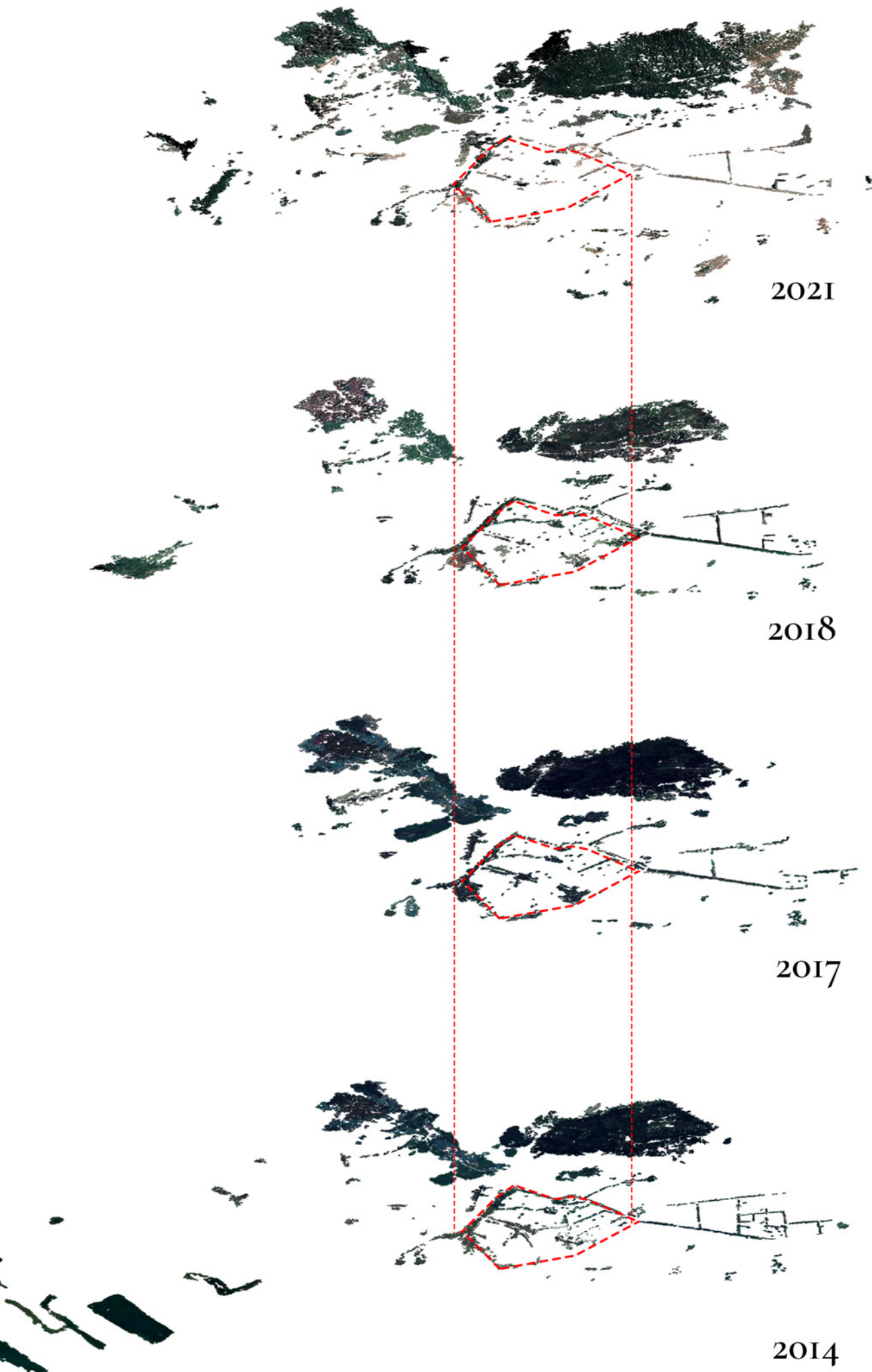
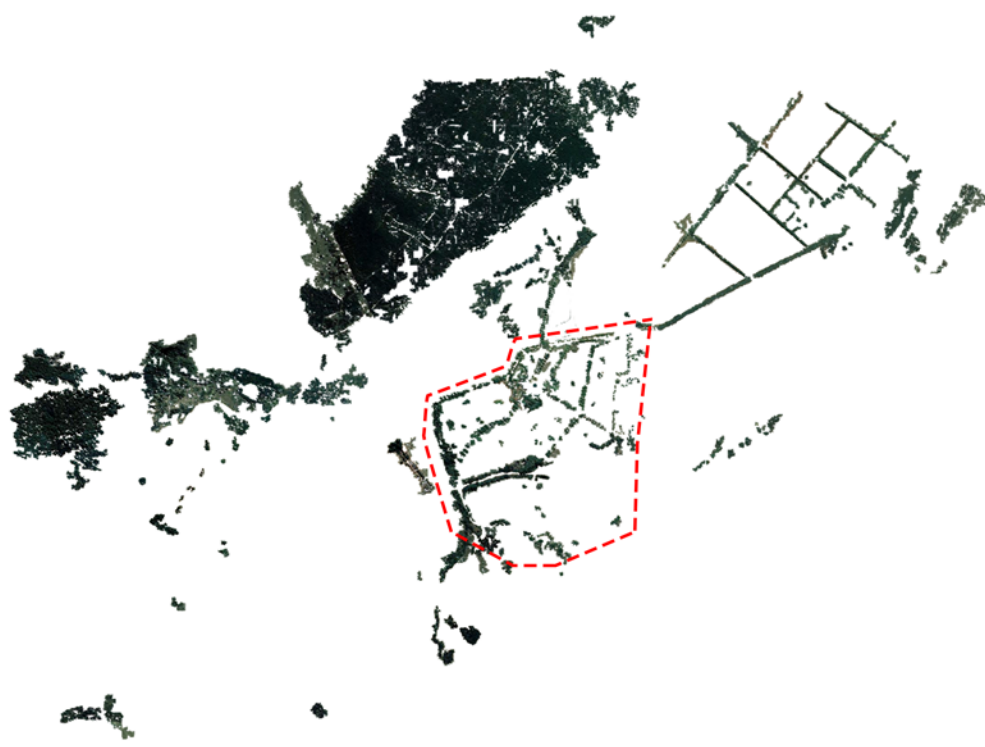


Figure 56: Change in tree cover and spread over time, author, 2022.



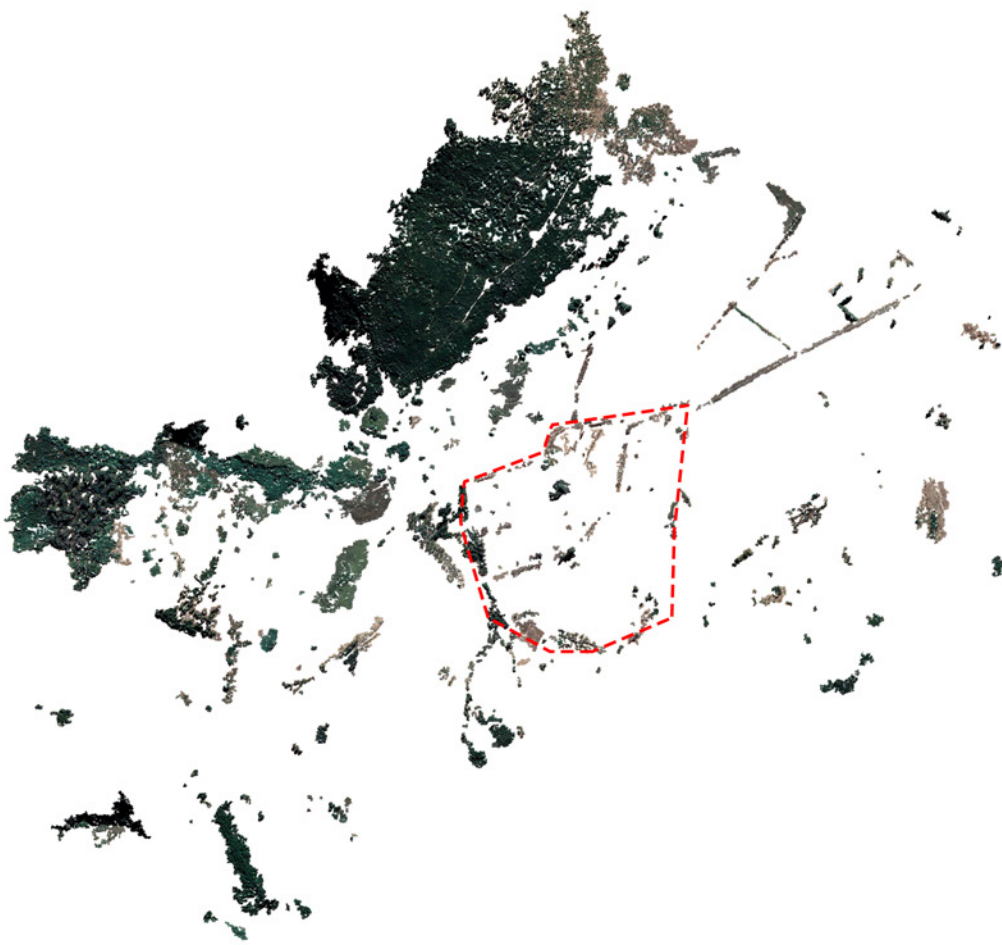


Figure 57: Earliest and latest comparison on change in tree cover and spread over time, author, 2022.



1985



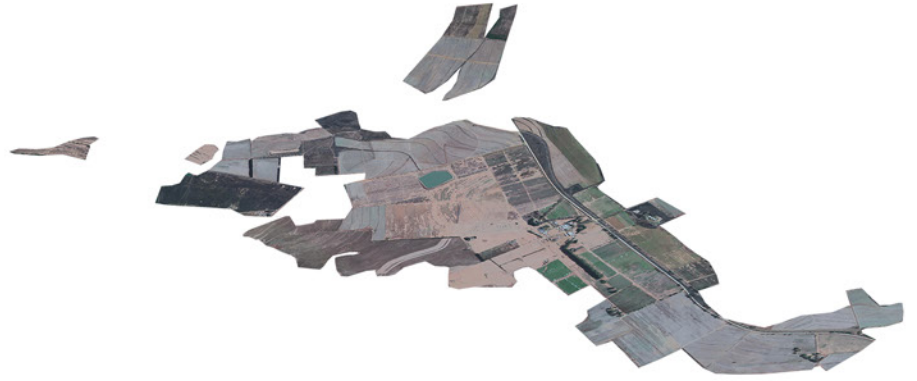
2012



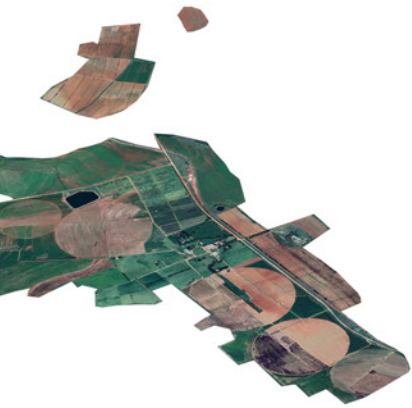
2018



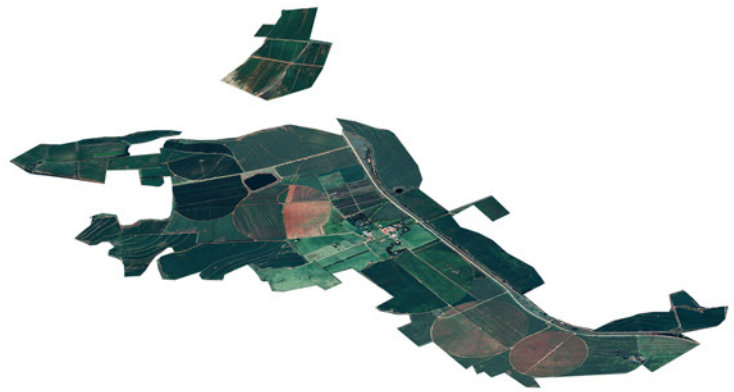
2003



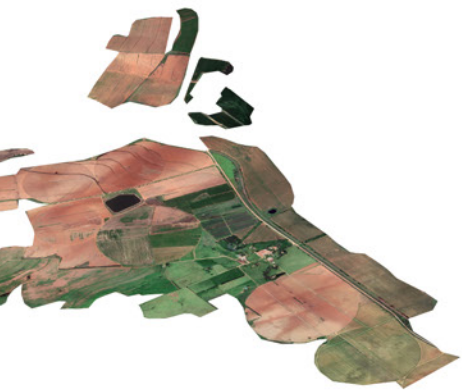
2010



2014



2017



2021

Figure 58: Change in agricultural land parcels over time, author, 2022.



White poplar
Populus alba
Category 2 NEMBA

Invades river banks, vleis, and dongas, competing with indigenous riverine species, blocking water channels and increased siltation. Spread through wind seed dispersal. Can be used for timber, shelter, and ornament.

Figure 59: White poplar forest in valley, author, 2022.

Rehabilitation of the valley



Step one of rehabilitation is mechanical clearing of invasive species by hand, and treatment of exposed topsoil through shaping against erosion.



Step two of rehabilitation is the planting of pioneer grassland species native to the Lydenburg Montane Grassland, such as *Sporobolus nitens* (Curly-leaved dropseed) and *Tragus berteronianus* (Carrot-seed grass).



Black wattle
Acacia mearnsii
Category 2 NEMBA

Invades grassland and riverine areas, reducing indigenous species and grazing land. Suitable for firewood.

Figure 6r: Black wattle forest in valley, author, 2022.



Sub-climax species begin to grow from rainfall, replacing the pioneer species, such as *Eragrostis rigidior* (Broad curly leaf) and *Pogonarthria squarrosa* (Herringbone grass).



Climax grassland species such as *Themeda triandra* (Red grass) take over along with geophytic herbs such as *Helichrysum* spp., *Selago* spp., *Gladiolus* spp., and *Sutera* spp.

Figure 62: Steps 3-4 of rehabilitation of valley, author, 2022.

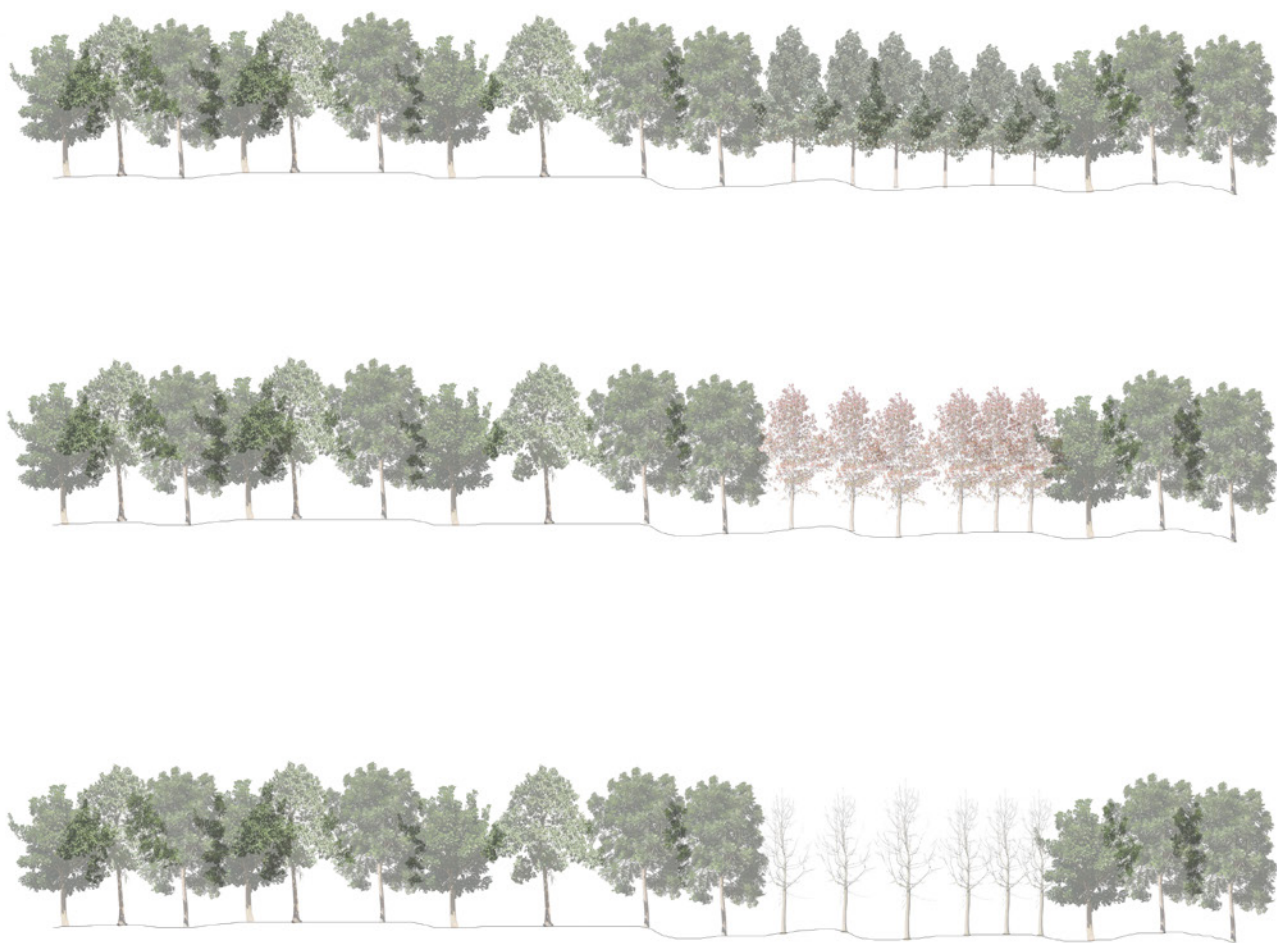


Figure 63: Exploration of the use of evergreen and deciduous trees in masterplan, author, 2022.

Large scale interventions

The grids and spacing in the design are based on tree species, and slope. The use of deciduous and evergreen trees are also important to shape the valley in different ways during the different seasons.

Deciduous trees include *Vachellia sieberiana*, *Celtis Africana*, and *Combretum erythrophyllum*, and evergreen trees that will be used are *Diospyros whyteana* and *D. lycoides*, *Euclea crispa*, *Ficus sur*, *Pittosporum viridiflora*, and *Rothmania capensis*, alongside *Faurea galpinii* and *Leucosidea sericea*.

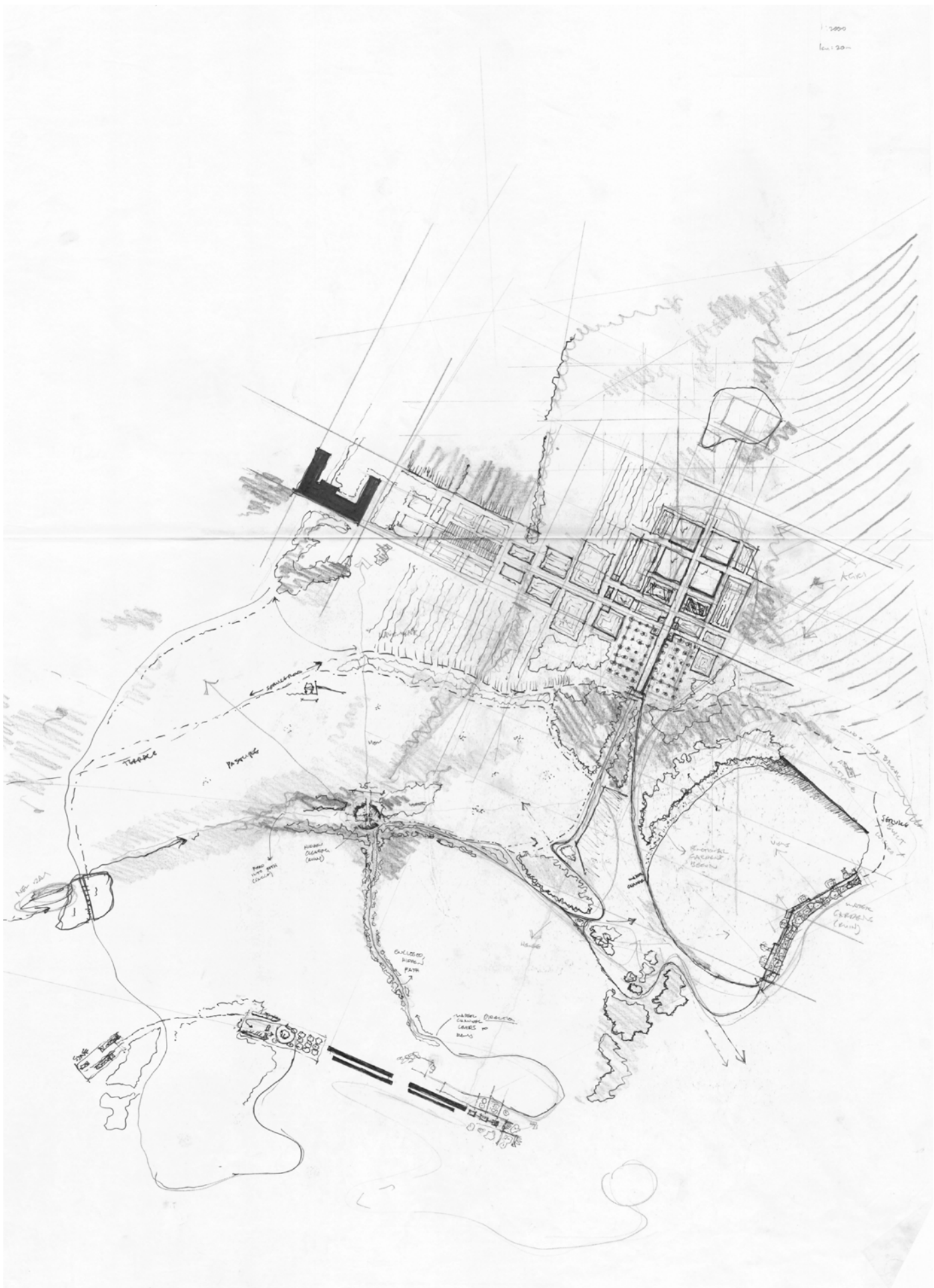


Figure 64: Initial masterplan, author, 2022.

Masterplan iterations

Early masterplan designs focused on the underlying axes placed between the stables and the manor house, and explored the presence of a strict formalised classical garden at its center. This strict geometry gave way to more natural existing paths closer to the manor house.

This design had a strong hand in shaping the immediate view and experience of Coromandel, and the formalised garden typology was also in question as to its level of authenticity.



Figure 65: Subsequent masterplan, author, 2022.

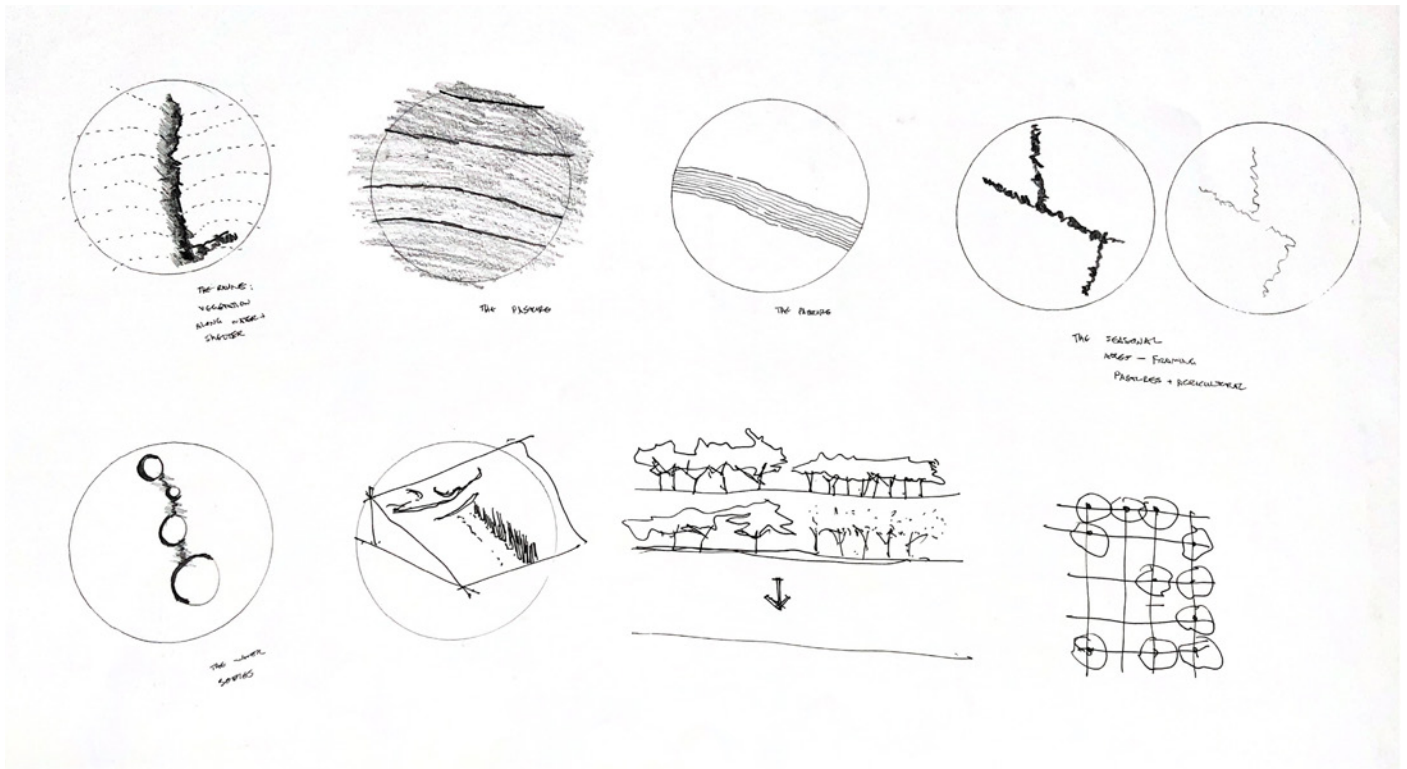


Figure 66: Sketches of existing land-related typologies and their interpretation, author, 2022.

Additionally, the masterplan design brings together the approaches of pruning, geometry, and moment experiences that respond to the heritage axes and areas of contention. The functional aspects of programme allow the implementation of a series of outdoor rooms.

This second iteration used the site’s inventory to organise the landscape, in an attempt to be more authentic and bring out the character of the site. However, the programmes around the stables have not been considered fully, and as such a new interpretation of the existing axes must be iterated.

In the final masterplan on the following pages, grids have been used to shape the voids around the existing heritage axes for the day visitor’s areas, in order to accommodate various programmes and to create a sense of movement along the landscape.

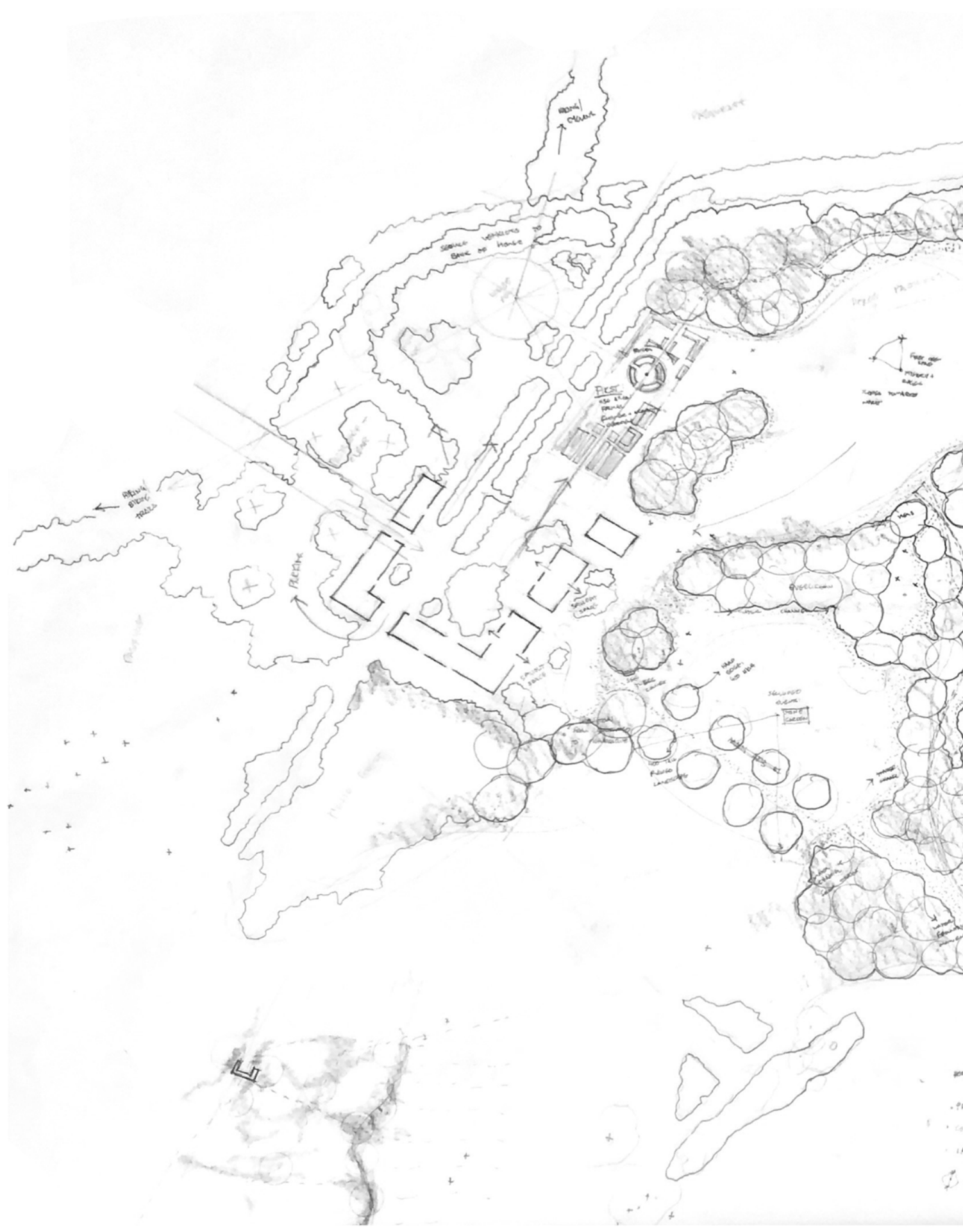




Figure 67: Northern masterplan area interaction, author, 2022.

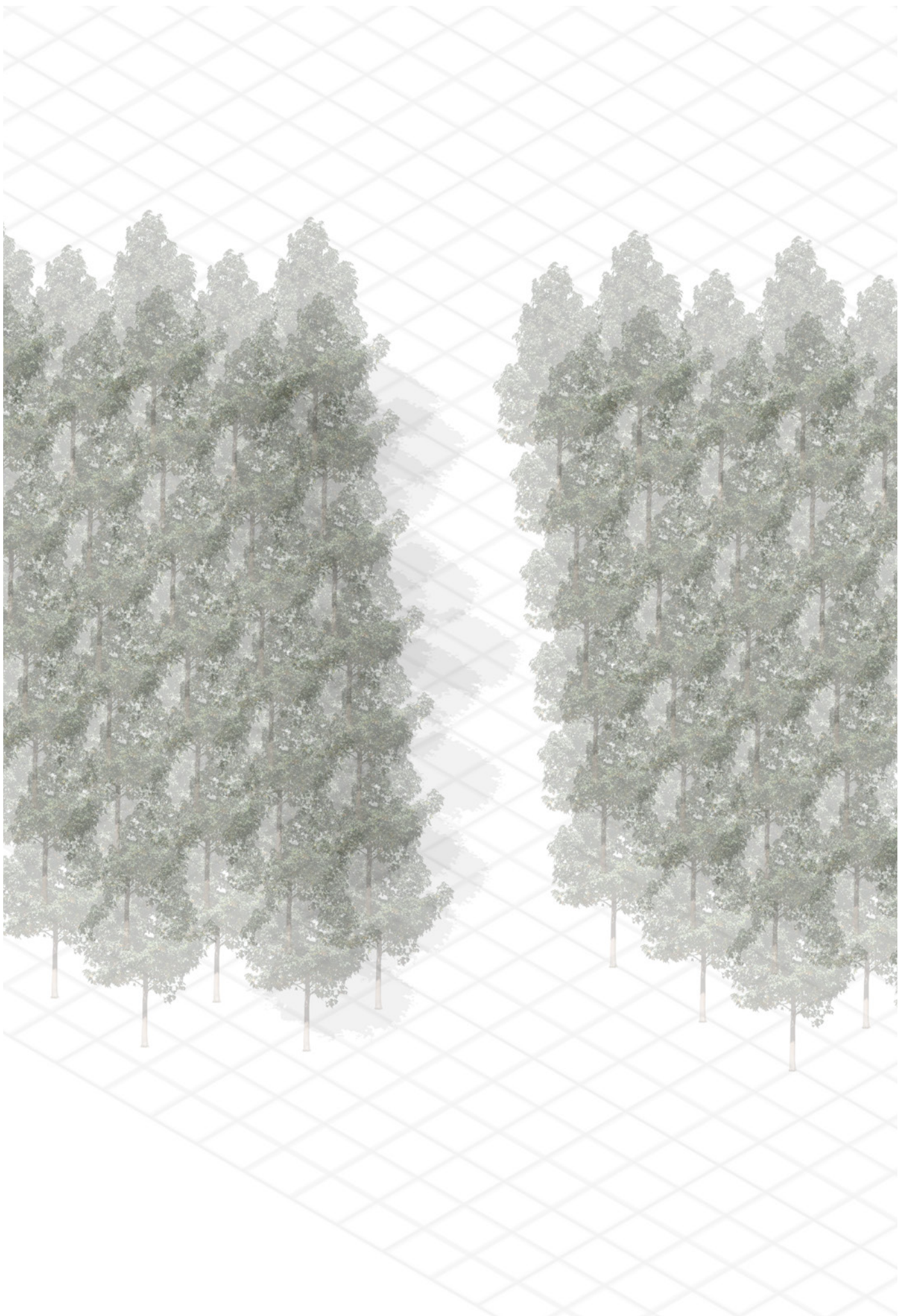


Figure 68: Concept graphic of removal of trees on axis, author, 2022.

An axis was established that linked the Bokoni ruins to the masterplan area, but the ruins are hidden in a forested southern aspect slope. By removing the trees along this axis and creating a pier that links up with it, there is a dramatic recognition of the ruins.



Figure 69: Photo study of the sequence of materials at the west of the manor house, author, 2022.

Detail investigations

The more detailed areas in the design required studying the approach that Zanuso had to the integration of landscape and architecture. These details are often simple but dramatic, with clear boundaries of material, size, form, and scale.



Figure 70: Photo study of the sequence of materials at the main driveway of the manor house, author, 2022.



Figure 71: Photo study of the sequence of materials at the dam, author, 2022.

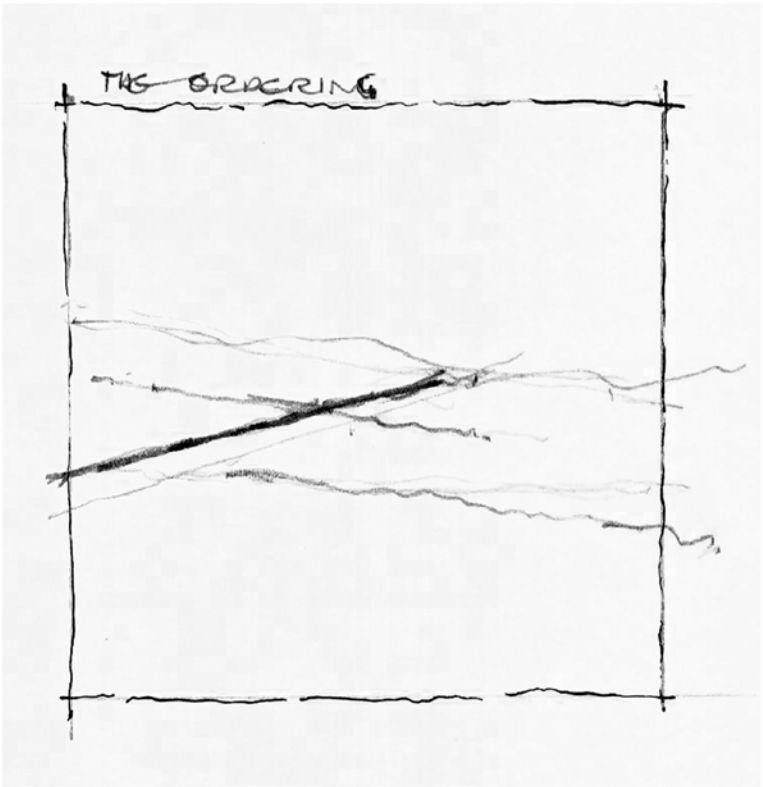


Figure 72: Early conceptual sketches on the effect of detail interventions in the landscape, author, 2022.

Detail detail process

The detail design process includes areas that are moments in the landscape that deliver key experiences of Coromandel that link to the cultivated and uncultivated story that exists in the landscape, and seek to reveal qualities of the site through form, views, experience, materials, and details.

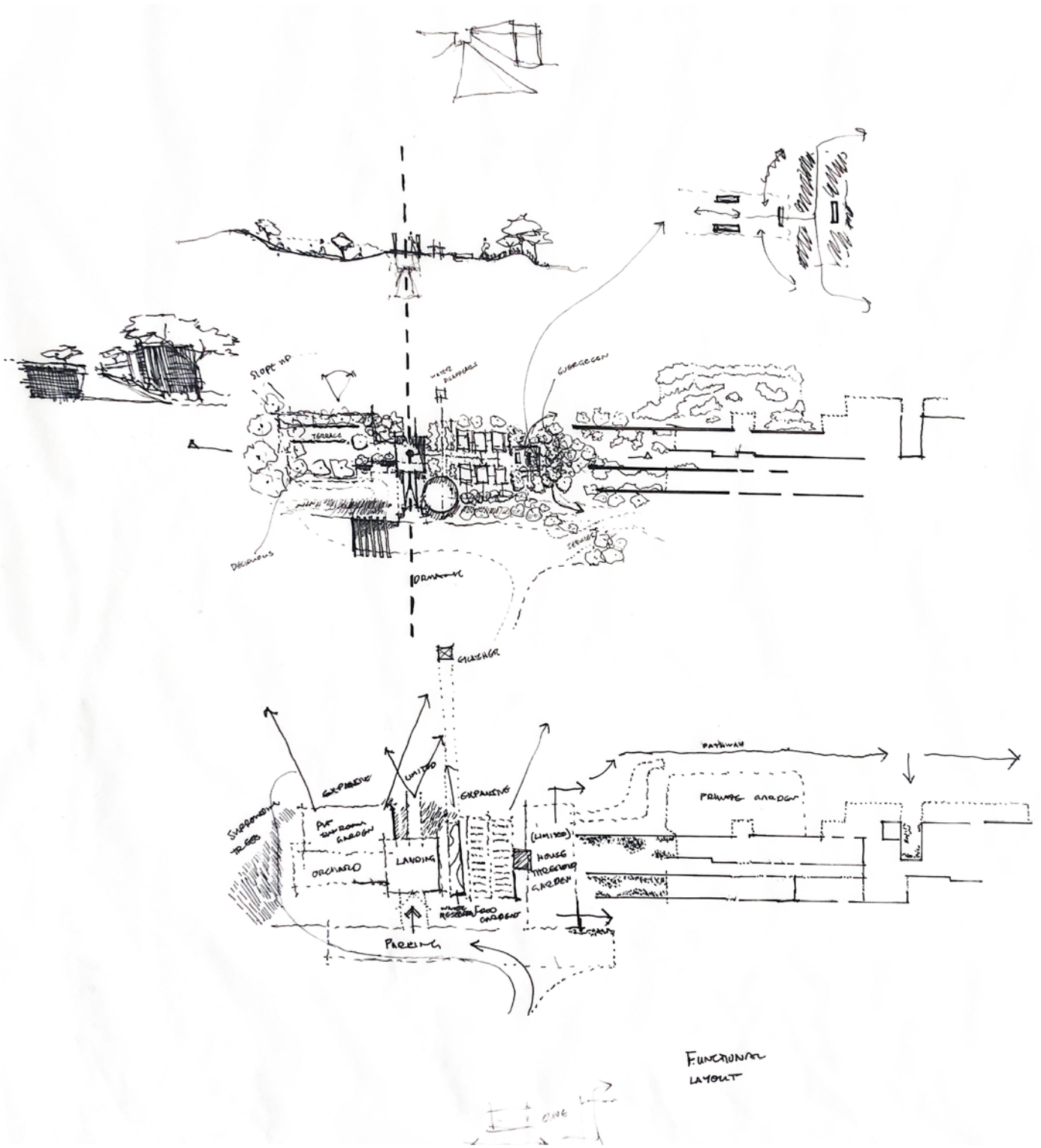
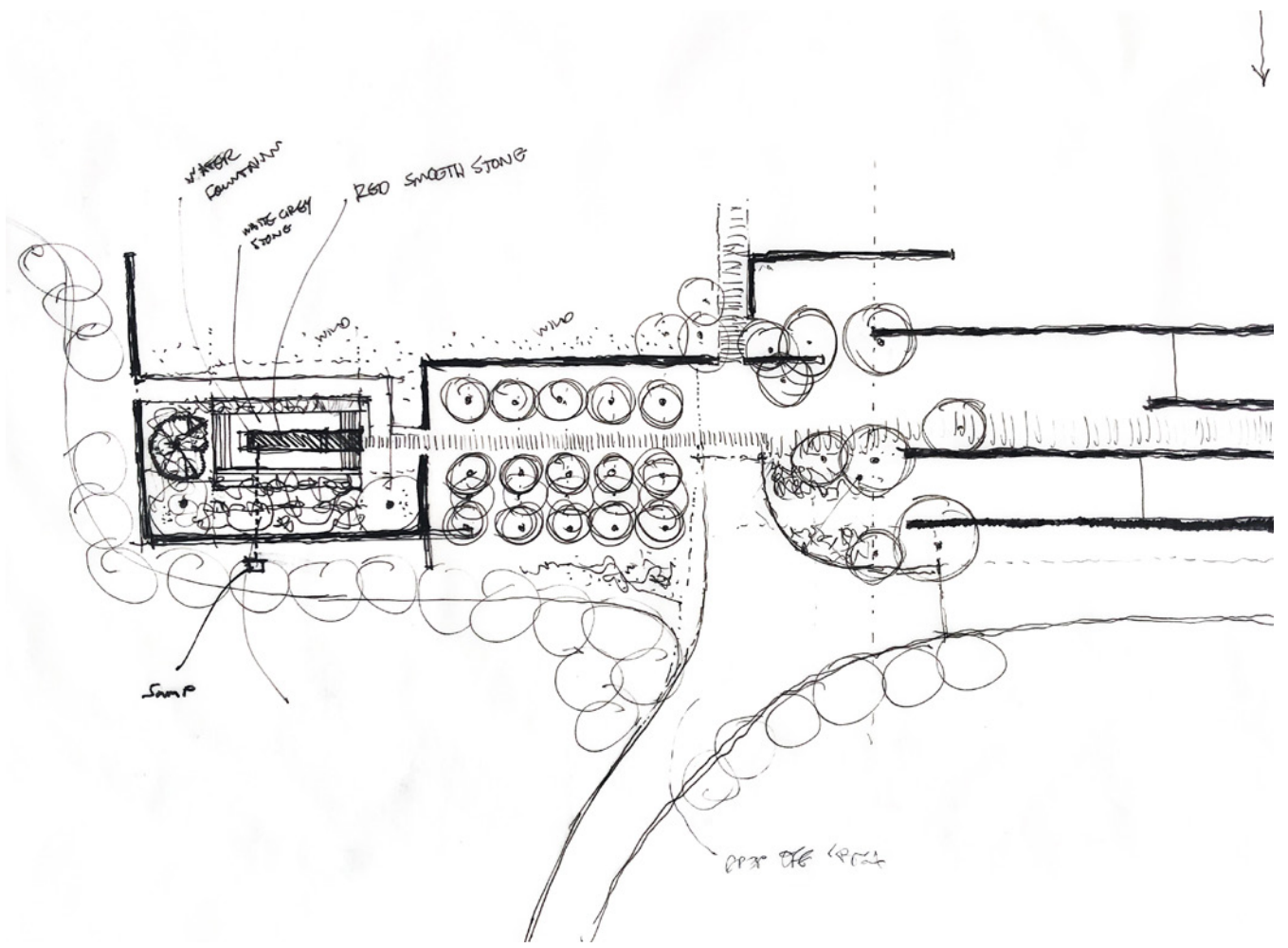
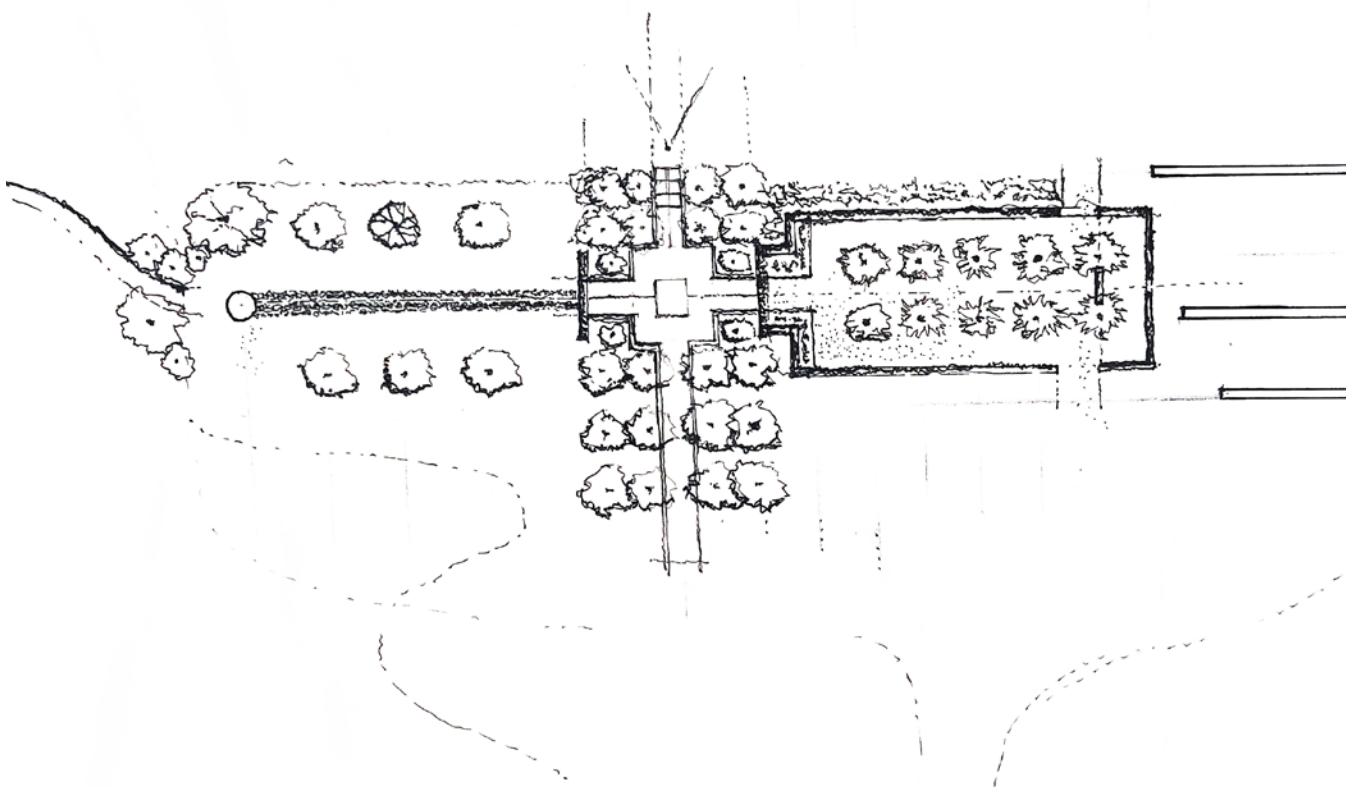


Figure 73: Programmatic and functional diagrammes of the west of the manor house landscape, author, 2022.

Manor house

The western landscape around the manor house seeks to mediate the agricultural aspect of Coromandel into a place for hotel guests to relax, have meals, and experience the landscape through the establishment of an orchard and olive trees and to bring in a new element: water as a reflective and interactive tool that links the landscape with occupation. The hiking and bicycling paths also begin here.



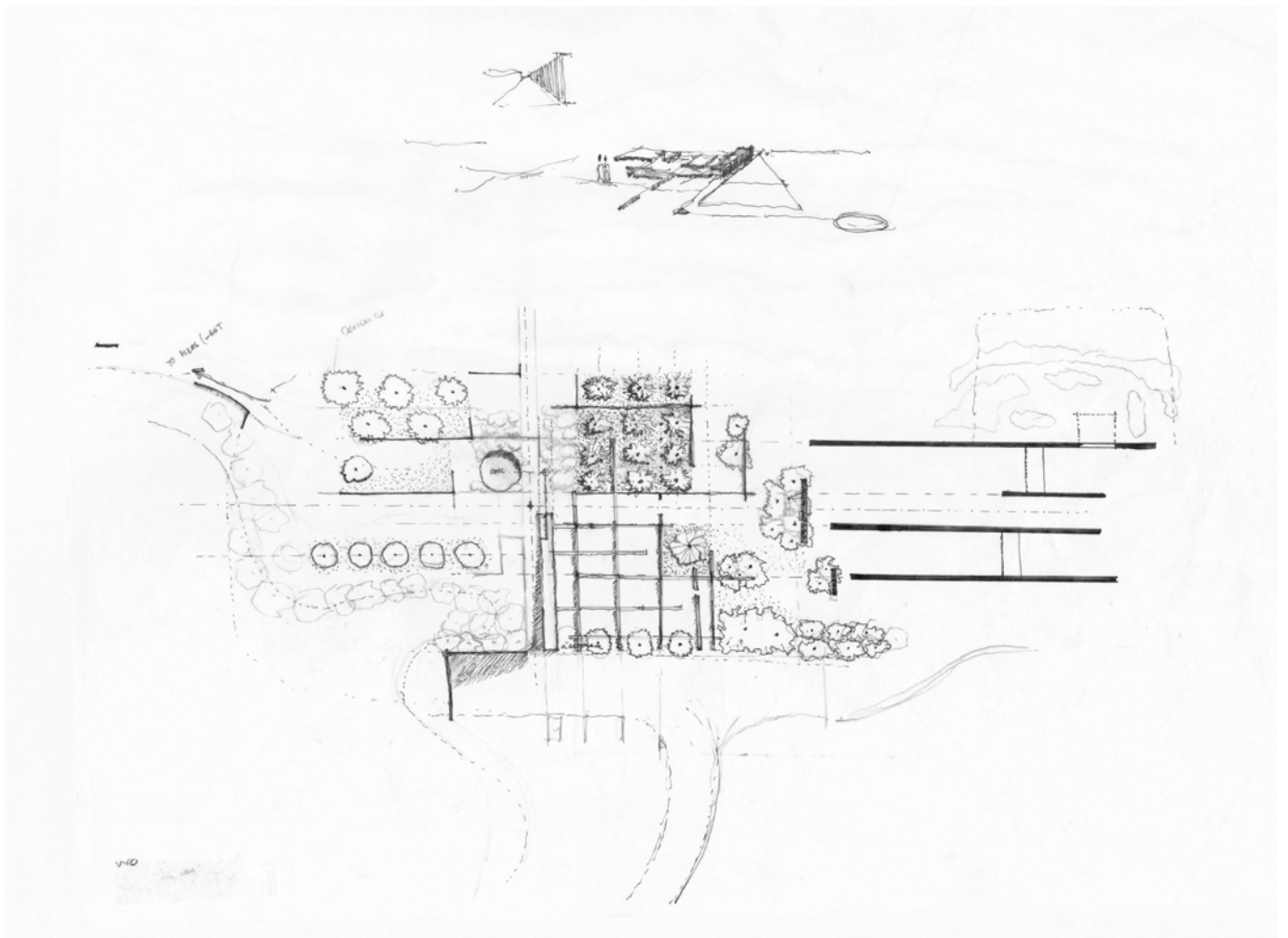
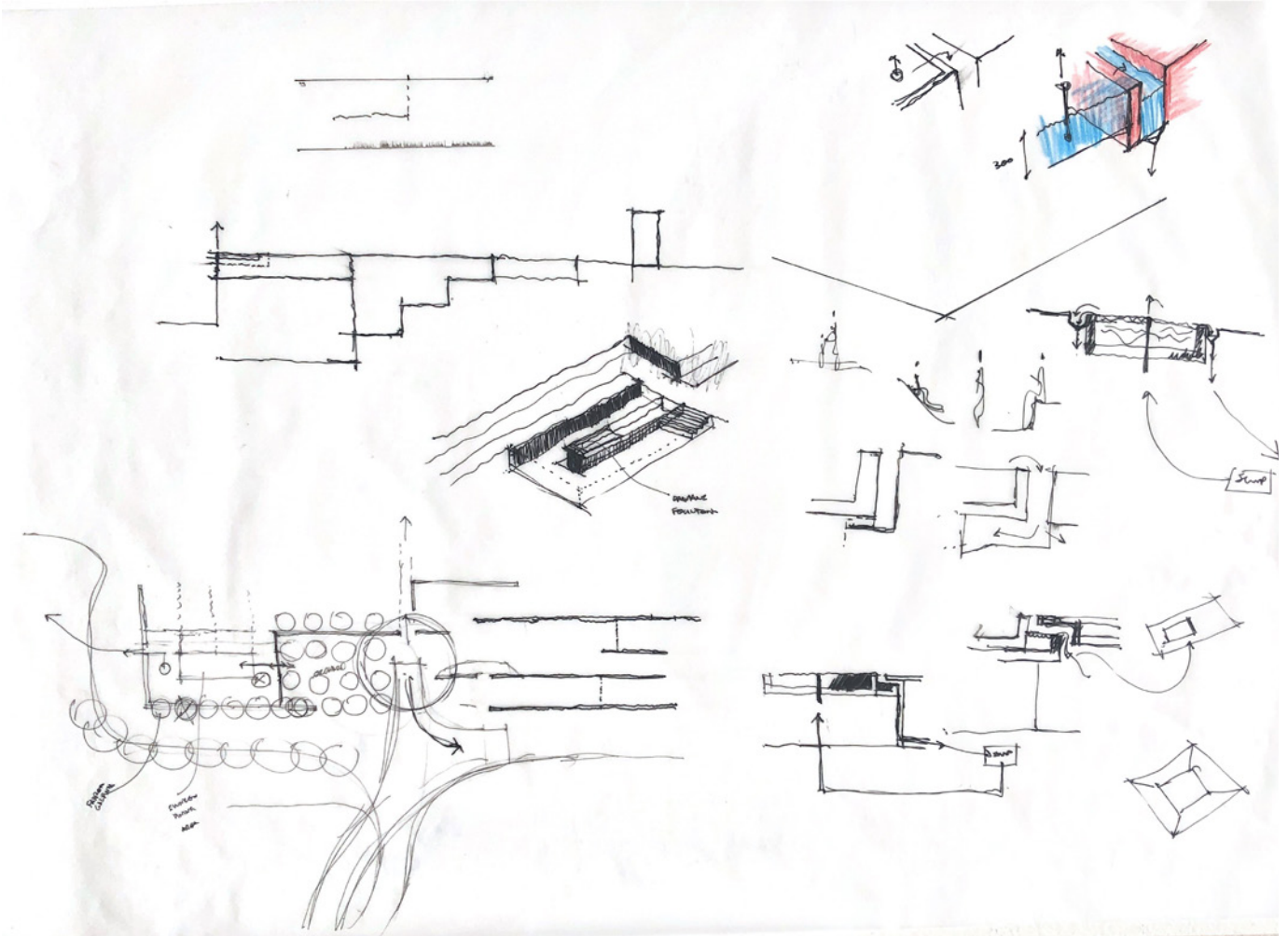
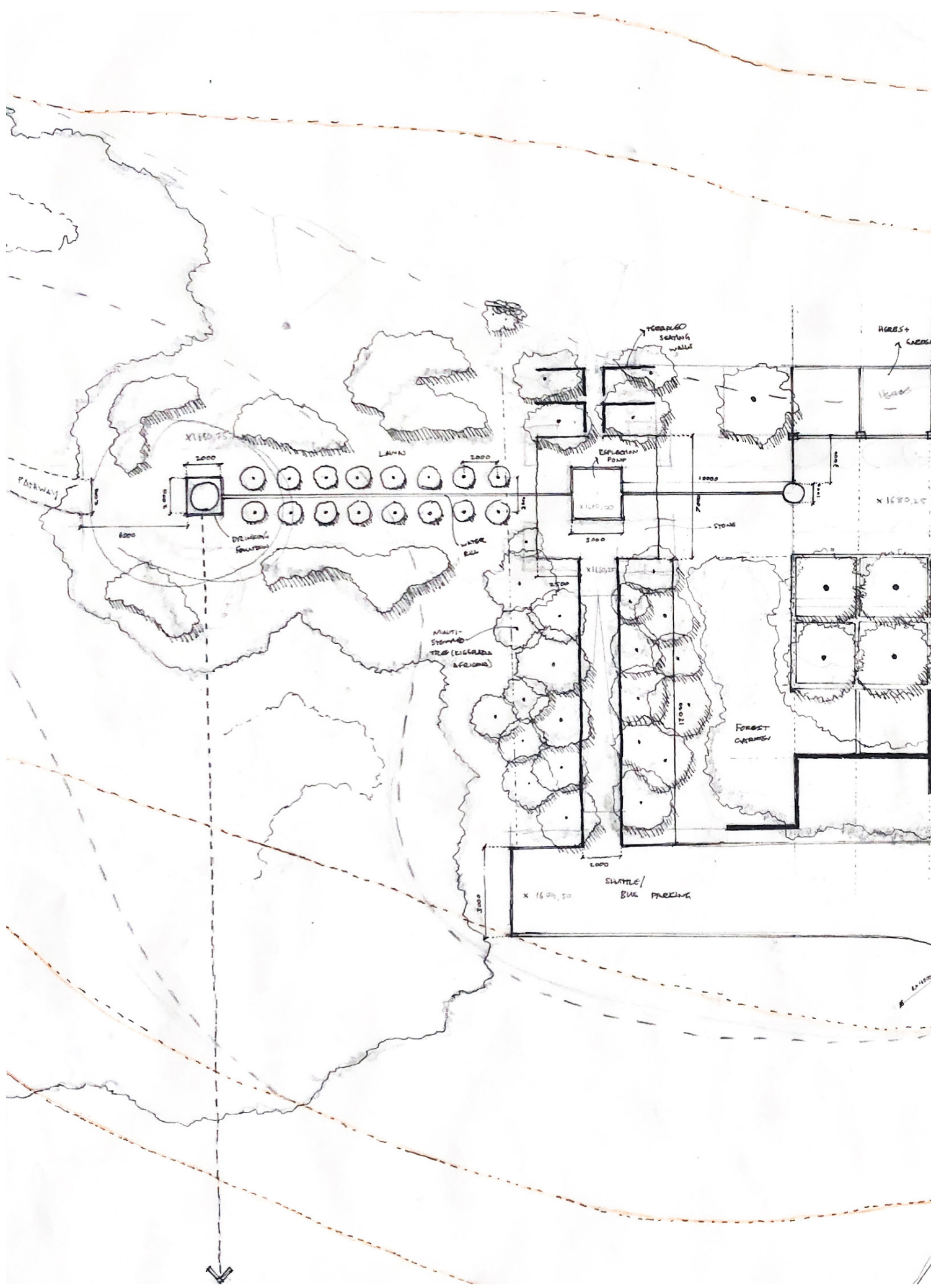


Figure 74-77: Iterations of sketchplan areas and details of the west of the manor house landscape, author, 2022.



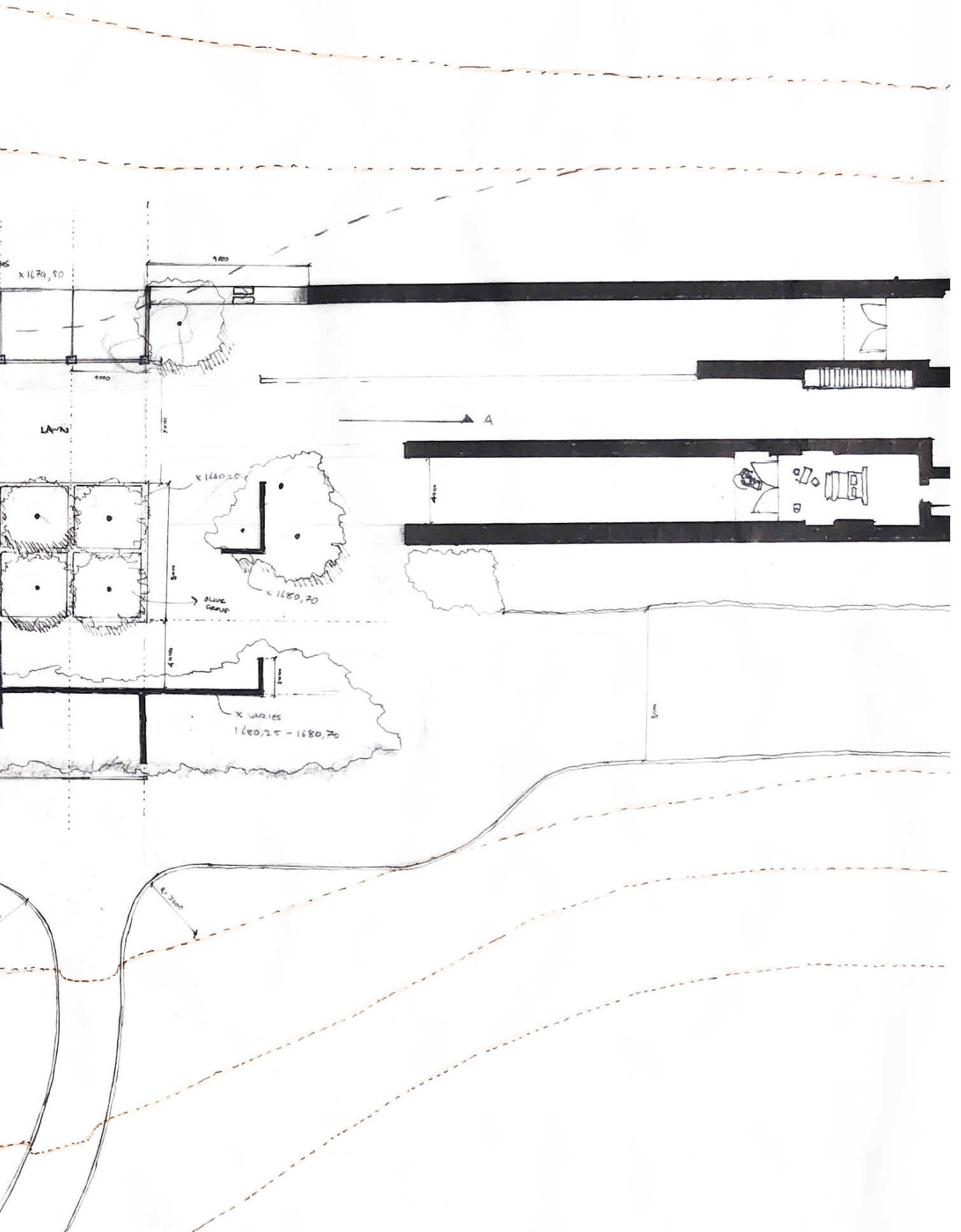
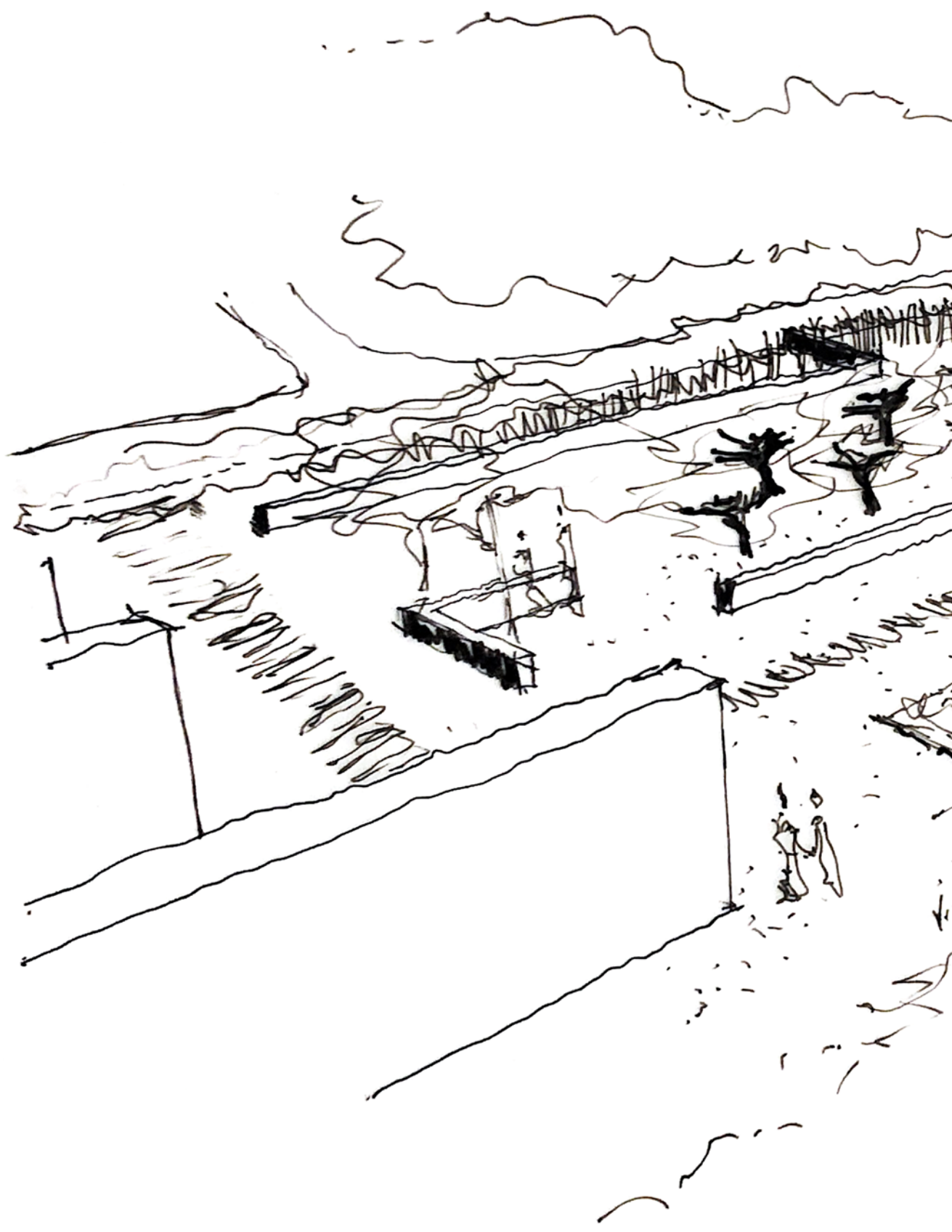


Figure 78: Sketchplan of the west of the manor house landscape, author, 2022.



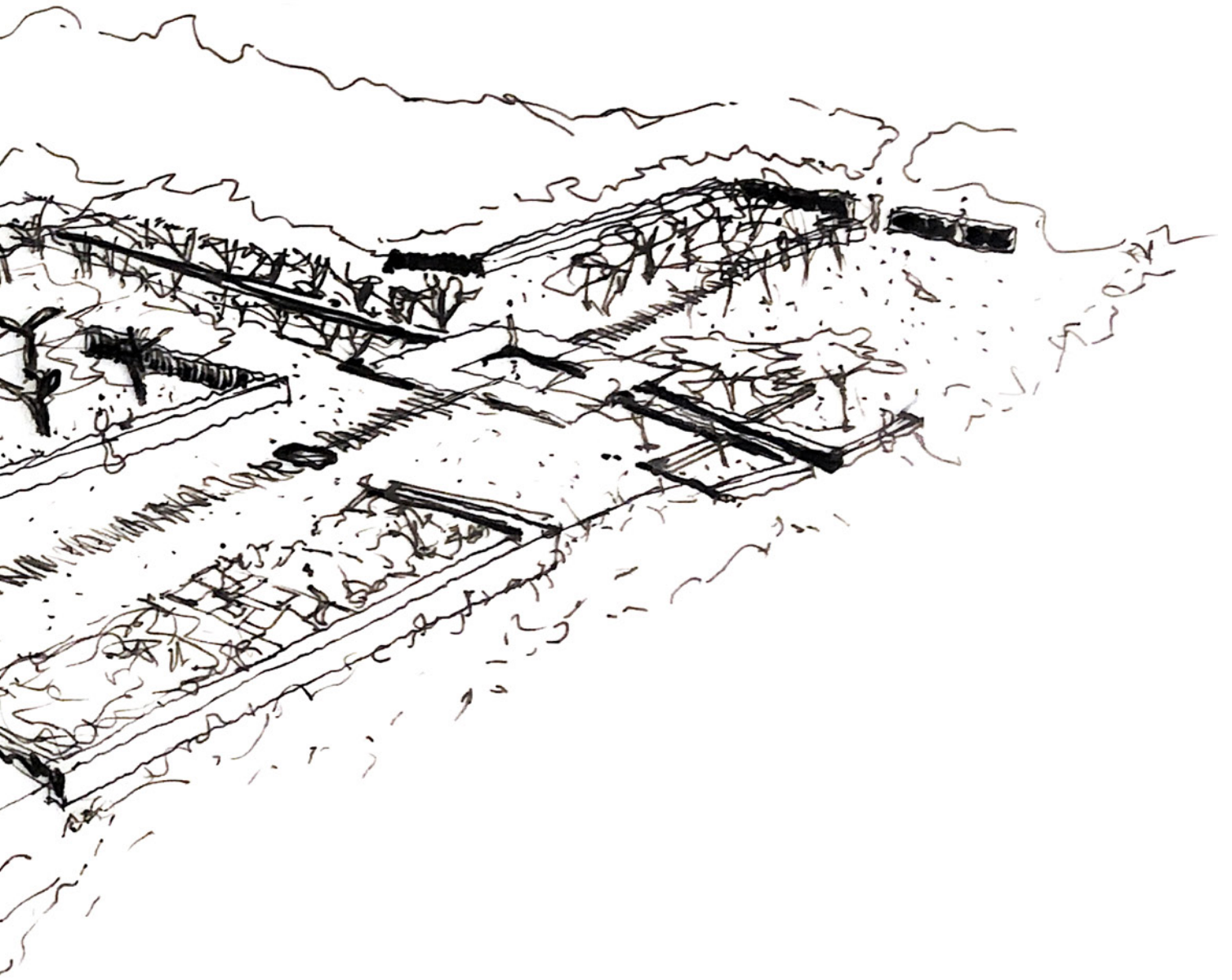
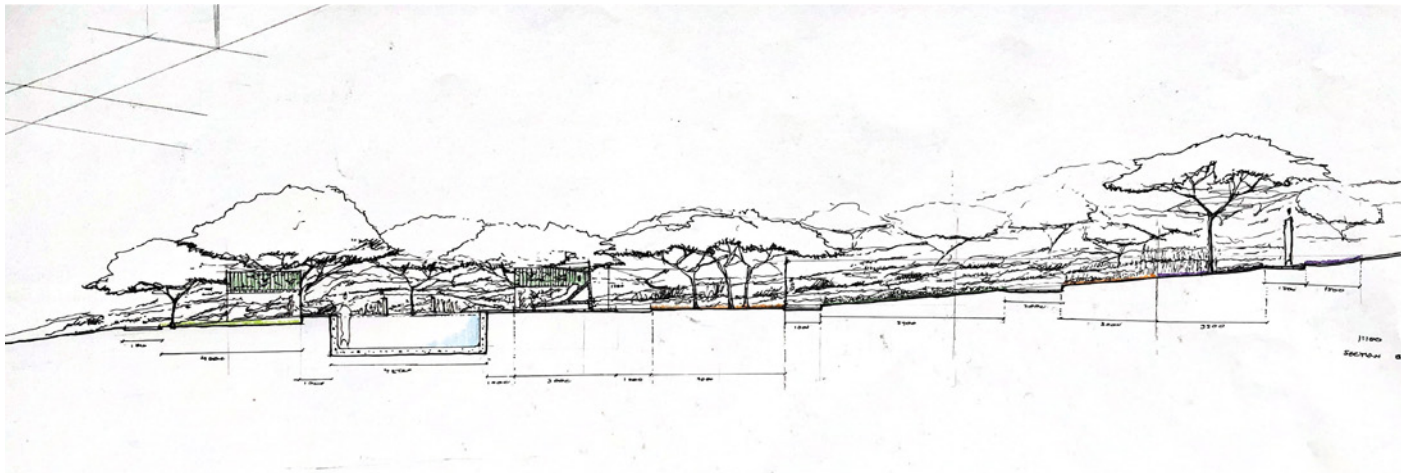
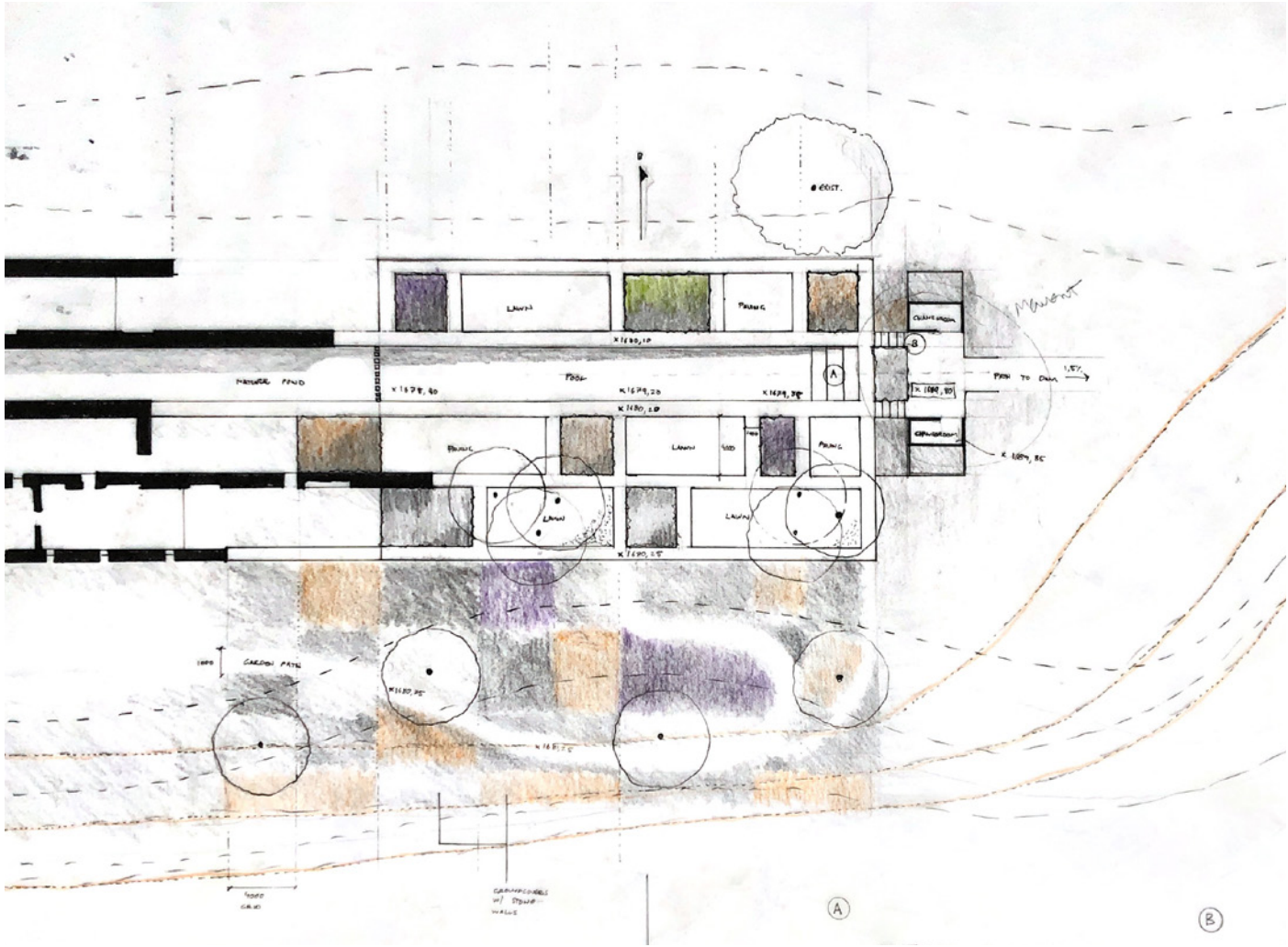
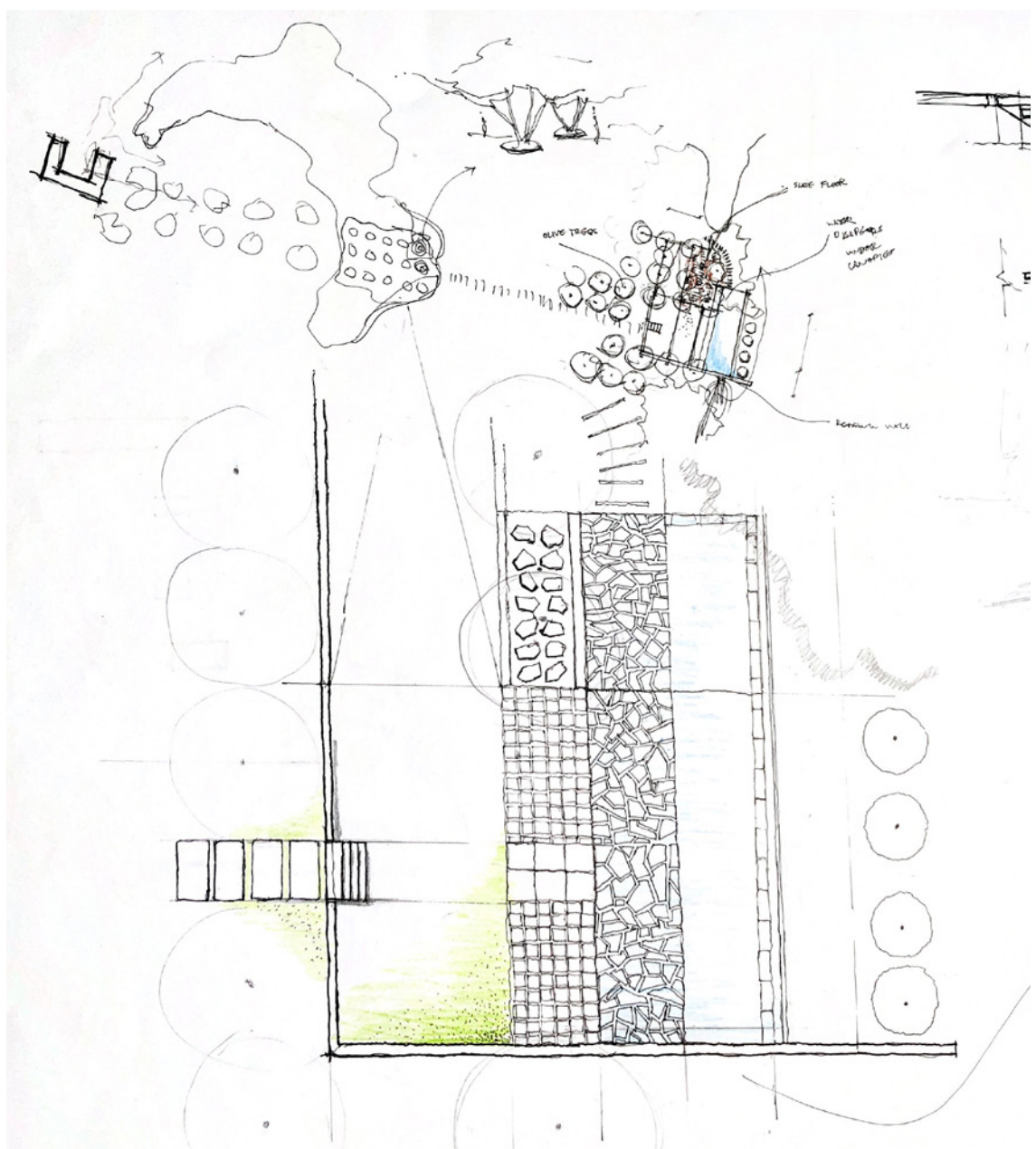
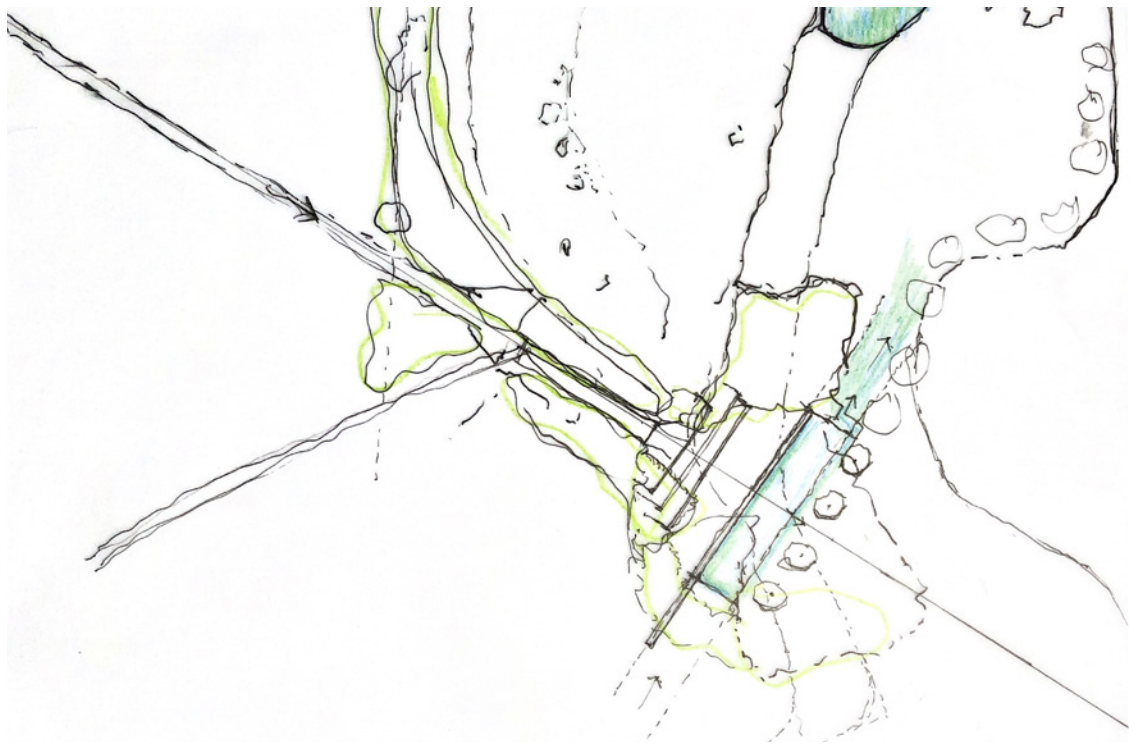


Figure 79: Aerial sketch of the west of the manor house landscape, author, 2022.



Figures 80-81: Sketchplan and section explorations of the eastern manor house landscape, author, 2022.

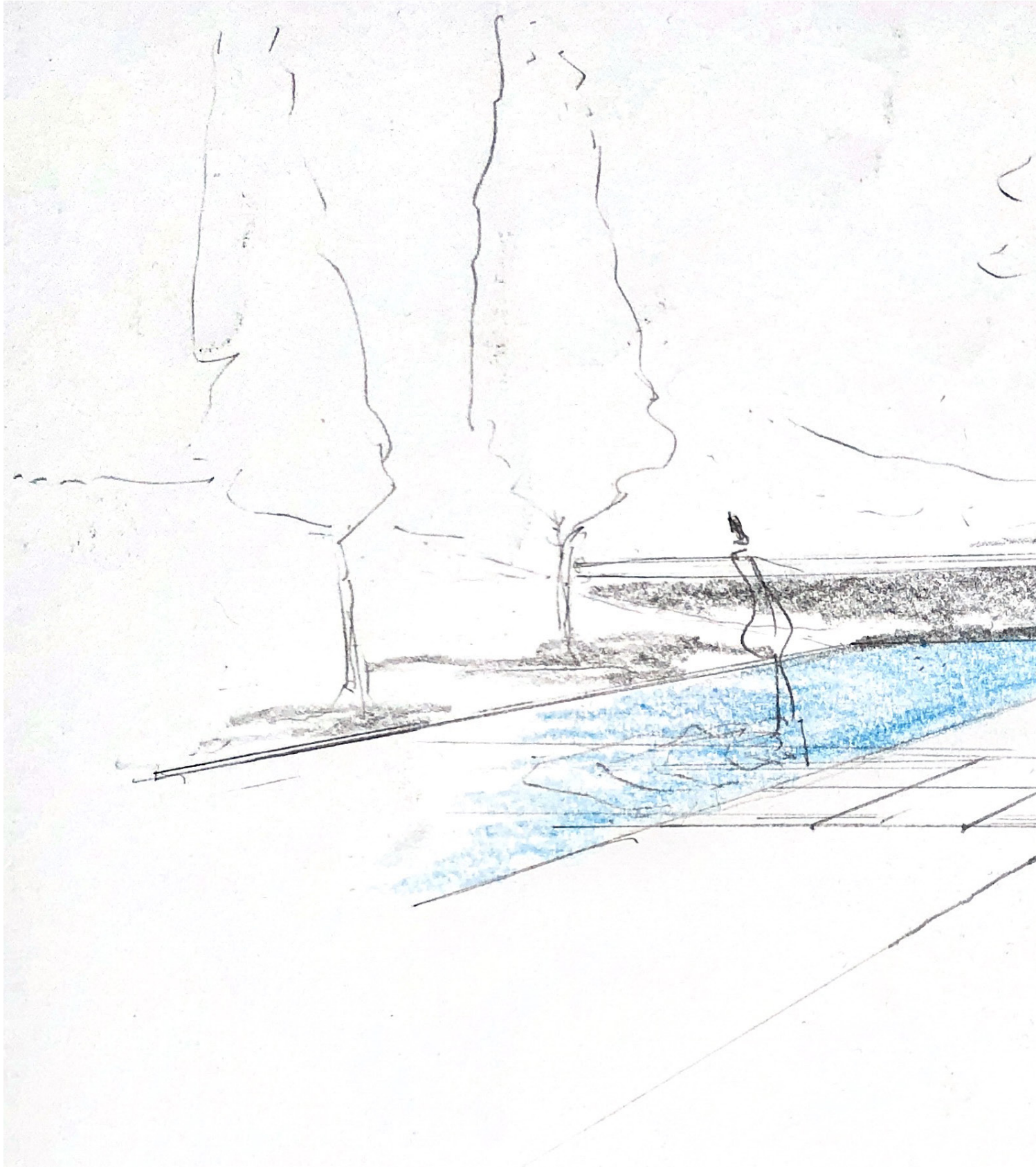
The eastern side of the manor house is a design that is focused on the extension of the pool area that serves as a place to lounge and relax and swim, and contains the pathway down to the large dam.



Figures 82-83: Diagram and plan explorations of the pond area detail, author, 2022.

Pond area

The pond area is an extension of the stables that culminates on axis with the series of dams that separate the agricultural fields from the historical horse pastures, now the landscape for day visitors. This design uses datums and materials of stone, lawn, and water to create a gradation of horizontal elements that communicate the balance of cultivated and leisure landscape, with the agricultural fields visible between the fenestration created by *Cupressus sempervirens*.



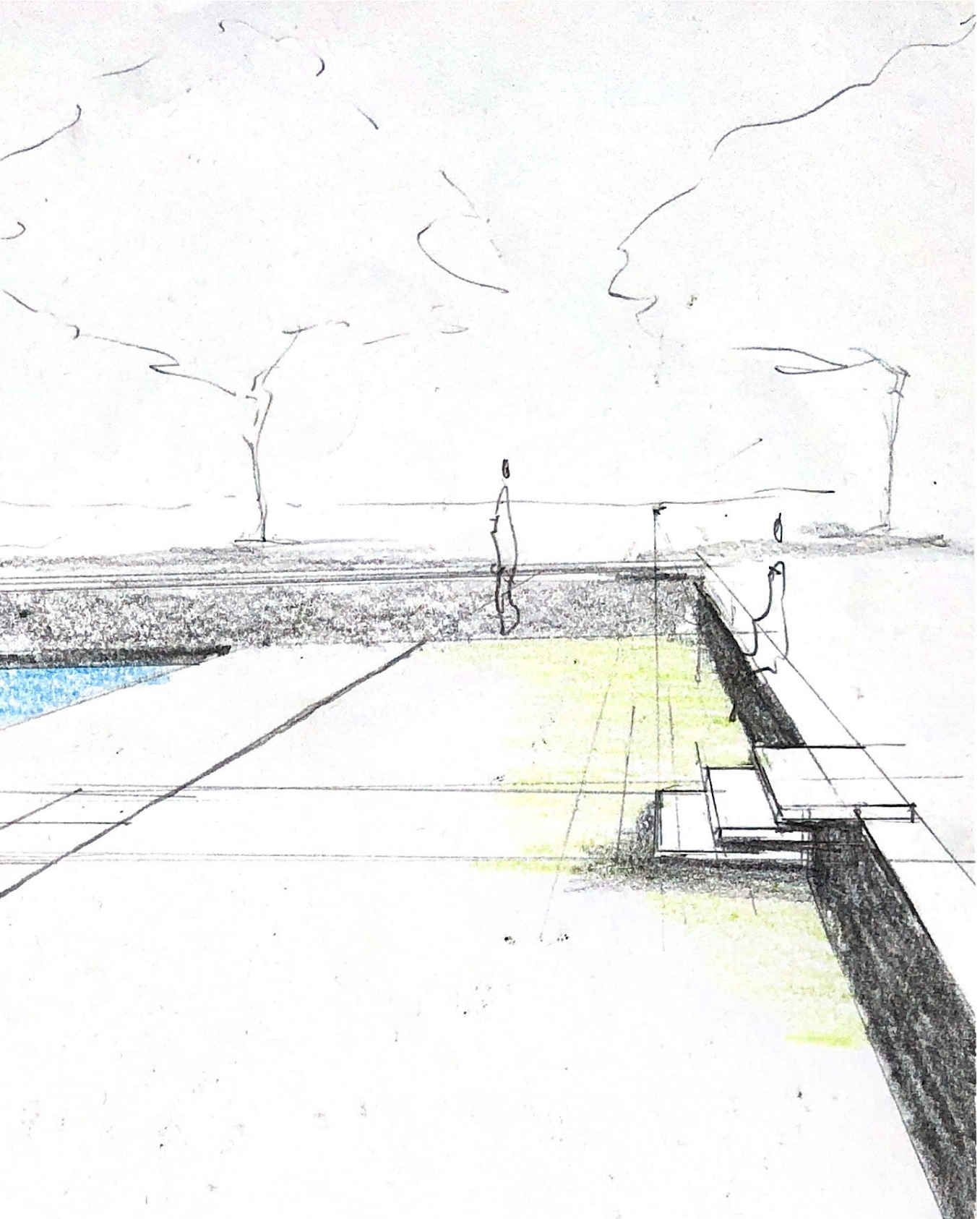
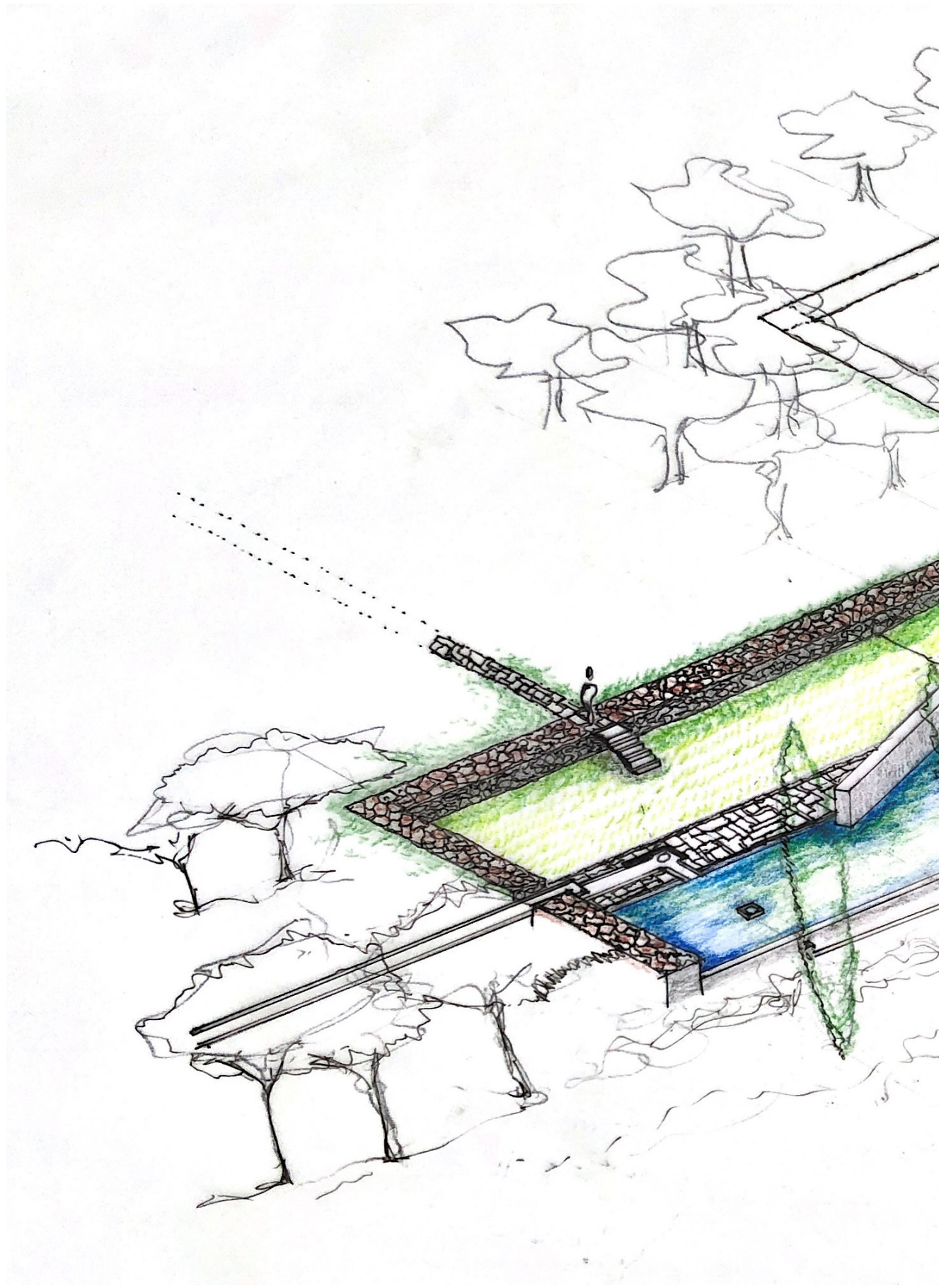


Figure 84: Perspective sketch of the initial pond area, author, 2022.



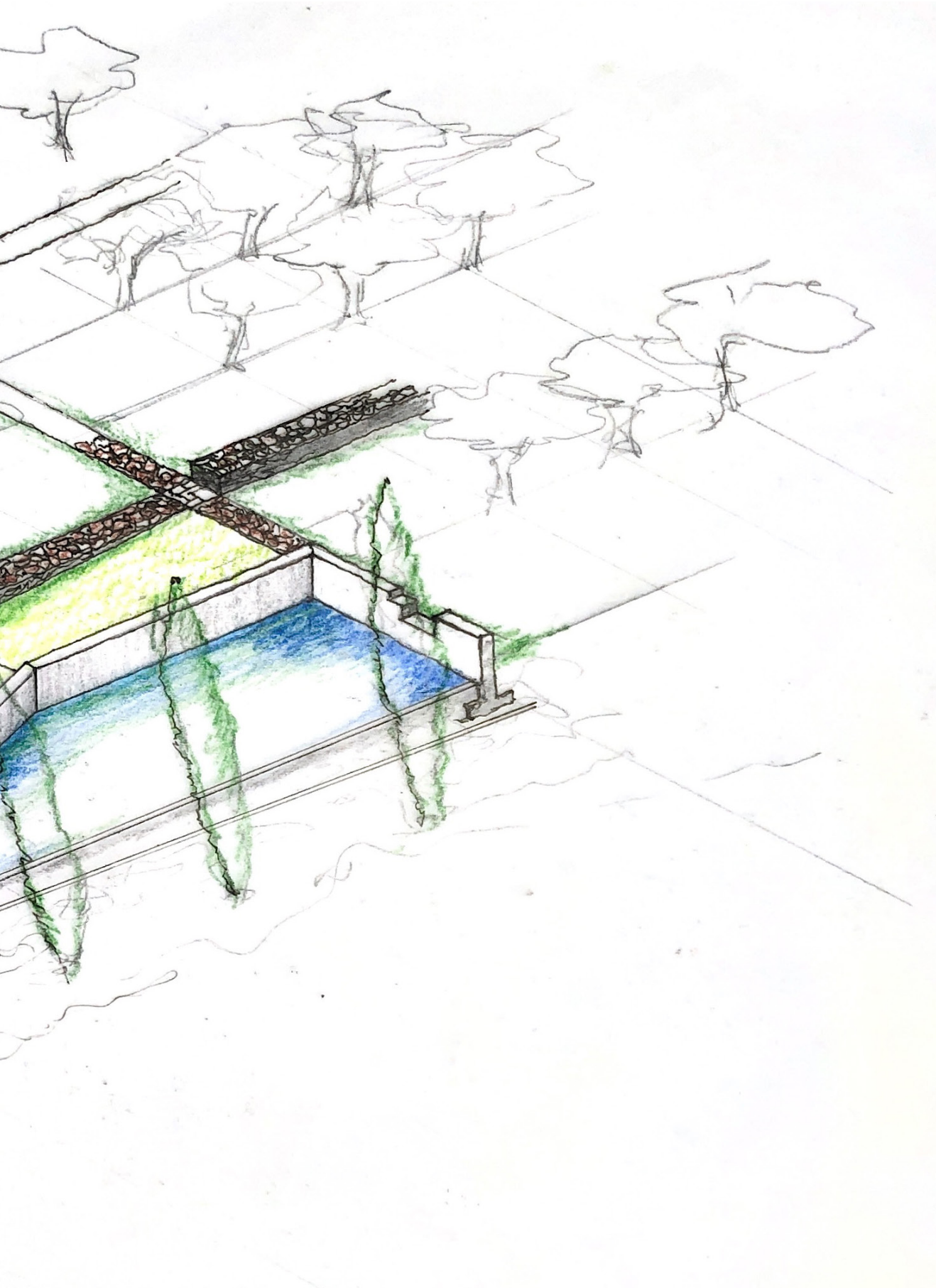
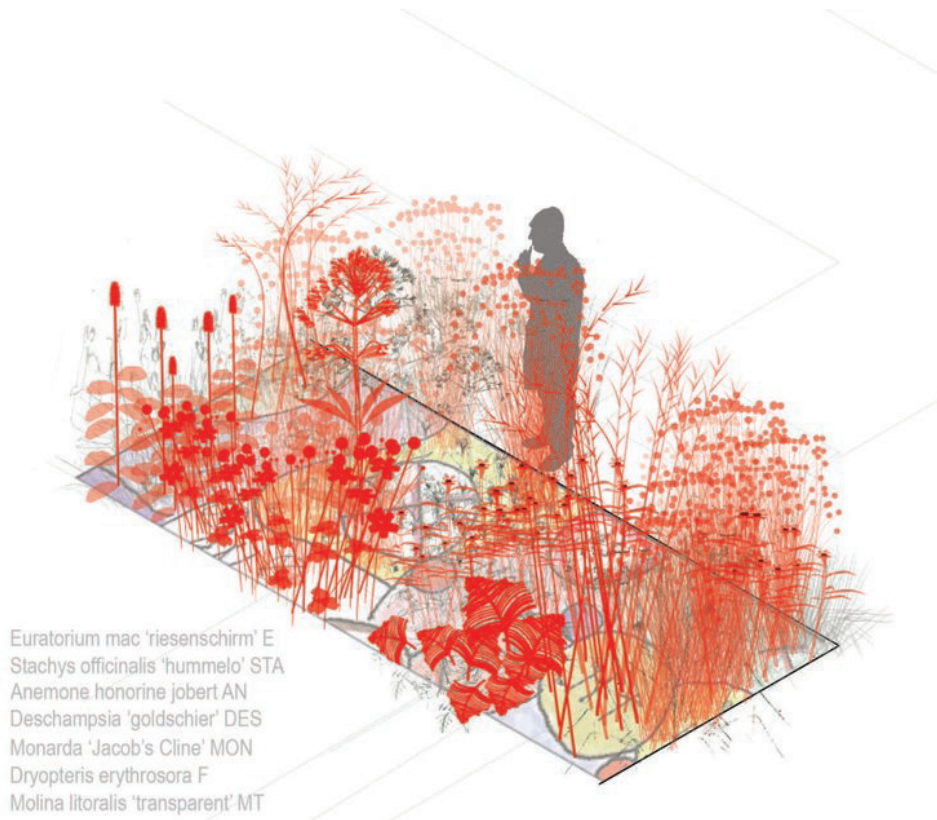


Figure 85: Aerial sketch of the initial pond area design, author, 2022.



- Euratorium mac 'riesenschirm' E
- Stachys officinalis 'hummelo' STA
- Anemone honorine jobert AN
- Deschampsia 'goldschier' DES
- Monarda 'Jacob's Cline' MON
- Dryopteris erythrosora F
- Molina litoralis 'transparent' MT

"Hortus Conclusus," Serpentine Gallery, Piet Oudoulf + Peter Zumthor

Figure 86: Hortus conclusus: Analysis of Piet Oudolf @ Serpentine Pavilion, Catalog Landscape Architects, n.d.

Detail planting design

Detail planting design in the moments comprises of a concentrated collection that communicates the concept. Explorations in design include axonometric layering and Piet Oudolf guidelines of working in contained areas. Other areas will use the guidance of Getrude Jekyll in arrangement and choice.

The following pages explore detailed planting design in a layout that will be utilised at the manor house landscape.

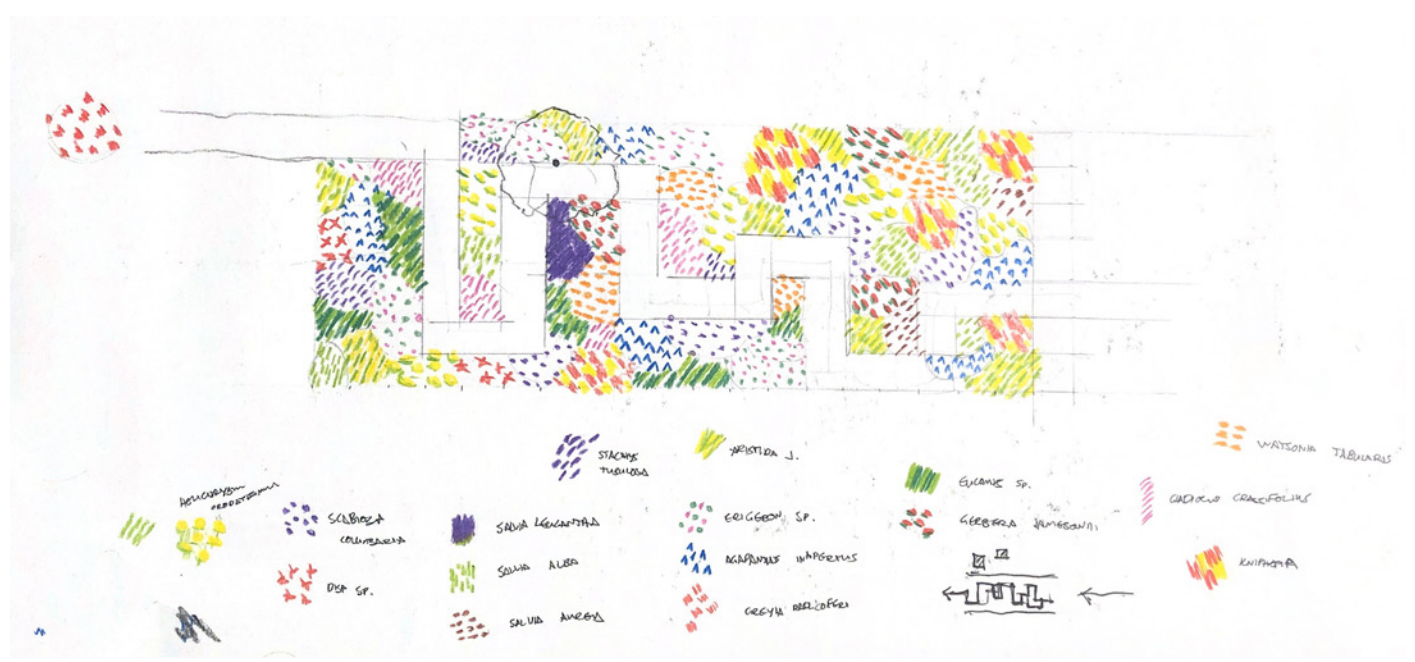


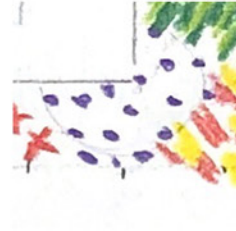
Figure 87: Detail planting design layout for western manor house landscape, author, 2022.



Helichrysum orodatissimum
Kooigoed



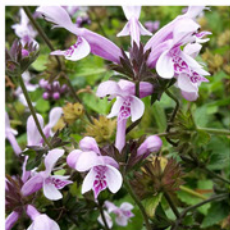
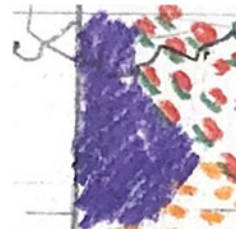
Scabiosa columbaria
Blue wild scabiosa



Disa uniflora
Red disa



Salvia leucantha
Mexican bush sage



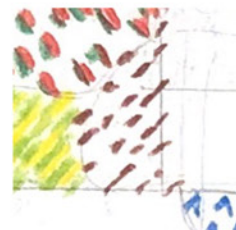
Stachys tubulosa
Mauve stachys



Salvia alba
White sage



Salvia aurea
Golden sage



Aristida junciformis
nGongoni grass



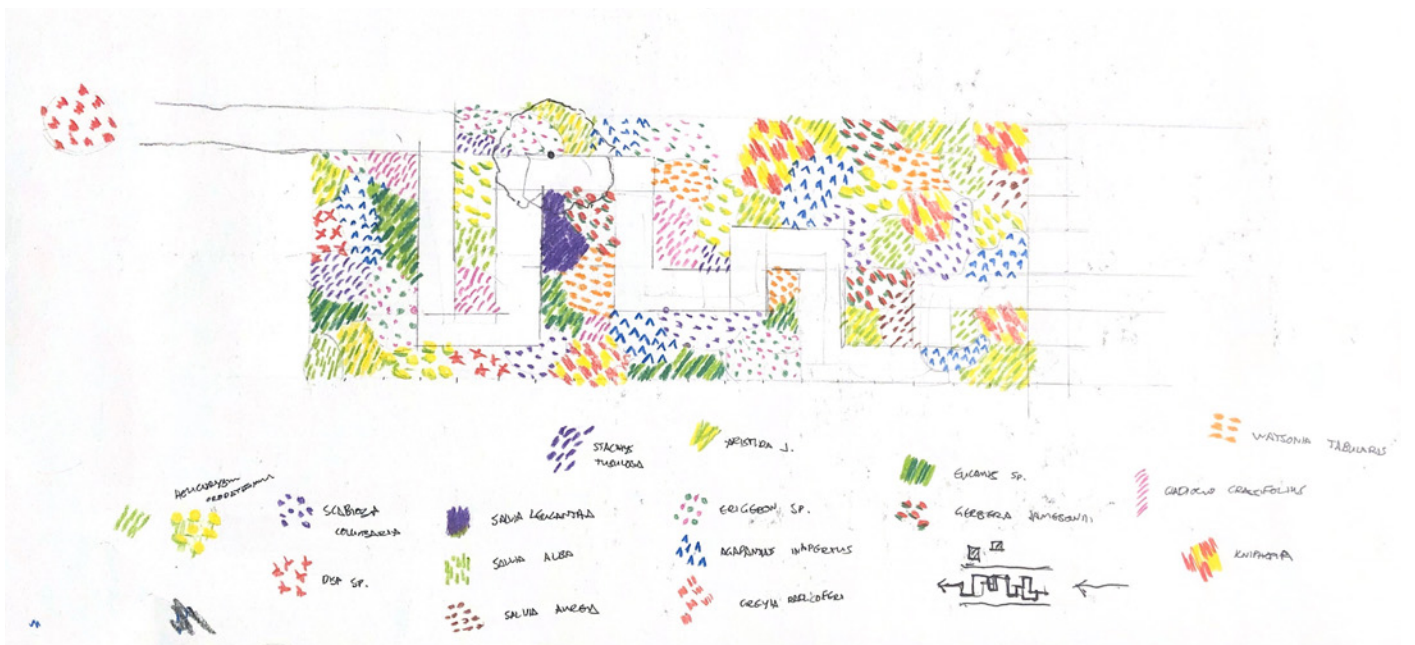
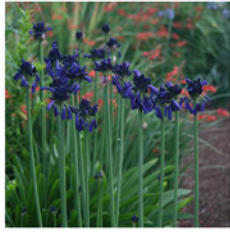


Figure 87: Detail planting design layout for western manor house landscape, author, 2022.



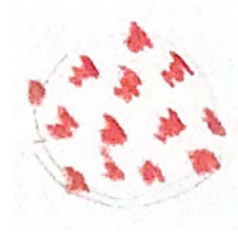
Erigeron karvinskianus
Santa Barbara daisy



Agapanthus inapertus
Drakensberg agapanthus



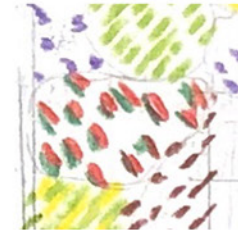
Greyia radlkoferi
Transvaal bottlebrush



Eucomis autumnalis
Pineapple lily



Gerbera jamesonii
Barberton daisy



Watsonia tabularis
Table Mountain watsonia

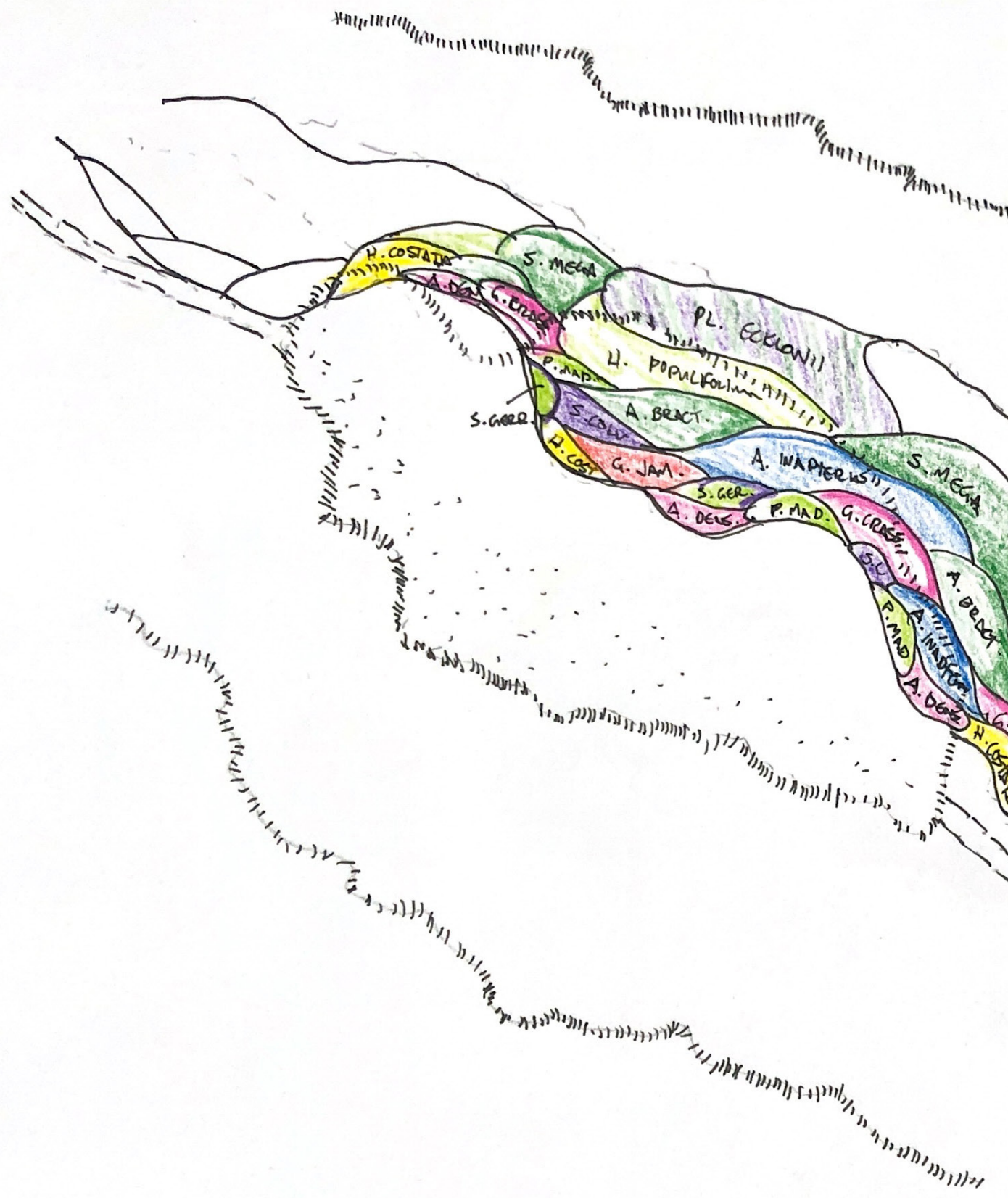


Gladiolus crassifolius
Thick-leaved gladiolus



Kniphofia spp. 'Alcazar'
Red hot poker







- PLECTRANTHUS MADAGASCARIENSIS
- ALBUCA BRACATA
- ASORAGIS DENSIFLORUS
- SCABIOSA COLUMBARIA
- GERBERA JAMESONII
- GLADIOLUS CRASSIFOLUS
- SENGCIO GERARDII
- HELICHEYSUM POPULIFOLIUM
- AGAPANTHUS INAPTERUM
- LYPOXIS COSTATA
- SETRODA MEGAPHYLLA
- PLECTRANTHUS ECKLONII

Figure 88: Detail planting design layout for forest pockets in masterplan landscape, author, 2022.

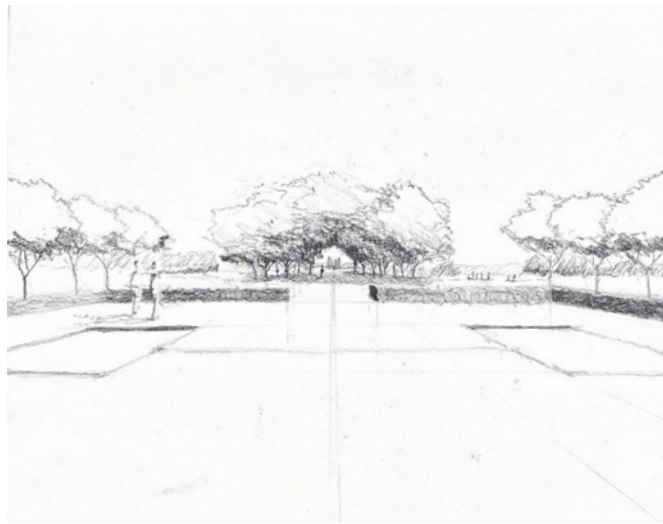


Figure 89: Projection sketches as perspectives for masterplan, author, 2022.

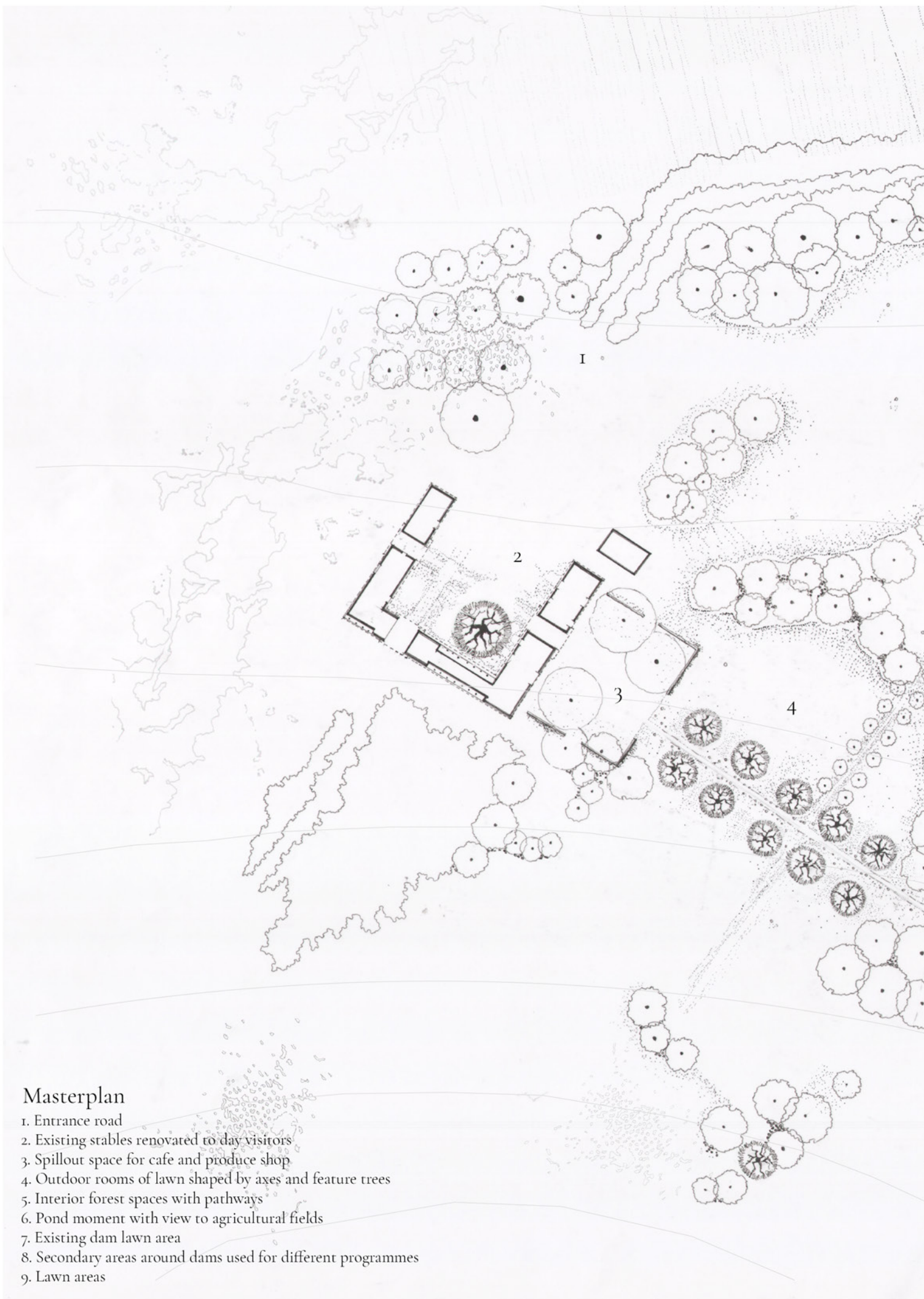
Final design: masterplan

The final masterplan is separated into two areas: a northern plan that focuses on the day visitors as programme, and the southern plan, that is primarily for hotel guests.

The masterplan is formed from the perspective and typological sketches done throughout the year, shaped more specifically with intent as the masterplan was refined.

The northern plan showcases the interpretive use of historical tree axes: by shaping new pathways and views of the landscape culminating in focus detail design areas, and by juxtaposing the effect of an avenue of trees by opening them up into a glade, a clearing. This design cultivates the existing elements of the landscape into a new programme and new experiences for guests.

The southern plan takes a less dramatic approach, instead using more existing landscape with slight modification in subtraction of a recessed footpath to the dam, as well as a footpath from the main garden into the landscape, criss-crossed with views to prominent features (the waterfall, the ridge, the dam) to accommodate the slope. Perhaps more dramatic, is the low stone pier that extends into the dam, on axis with the Bokoni ruins, linking up with a linear clearing of the forest on the ridge, from valley to upper reaches; a cut-away that extends further than one can possibly clearly see.



Masterplan

1. Entrance road
2. Existing stables renovated to day visitors
3. Spillout space for cafe and produce shop
4. Outdoor rooms of lawn shaped by axes and feature trees
5. Interior forest spaces with pathways
6. Pond moment with view to agricultural fields
7. Existing dam lawn area
8. Secondary areas around dams used for different programmes
9. Lawn areas

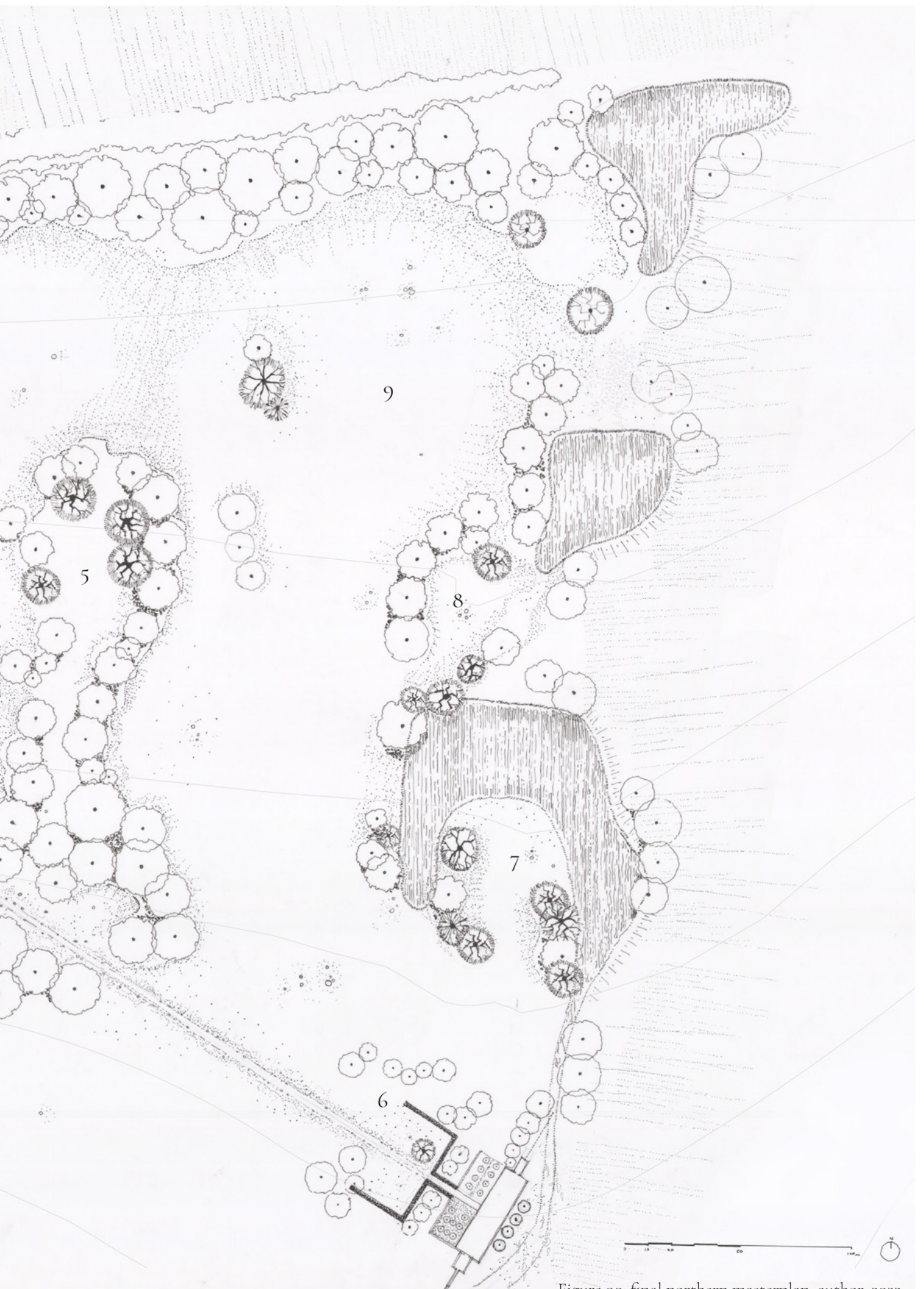
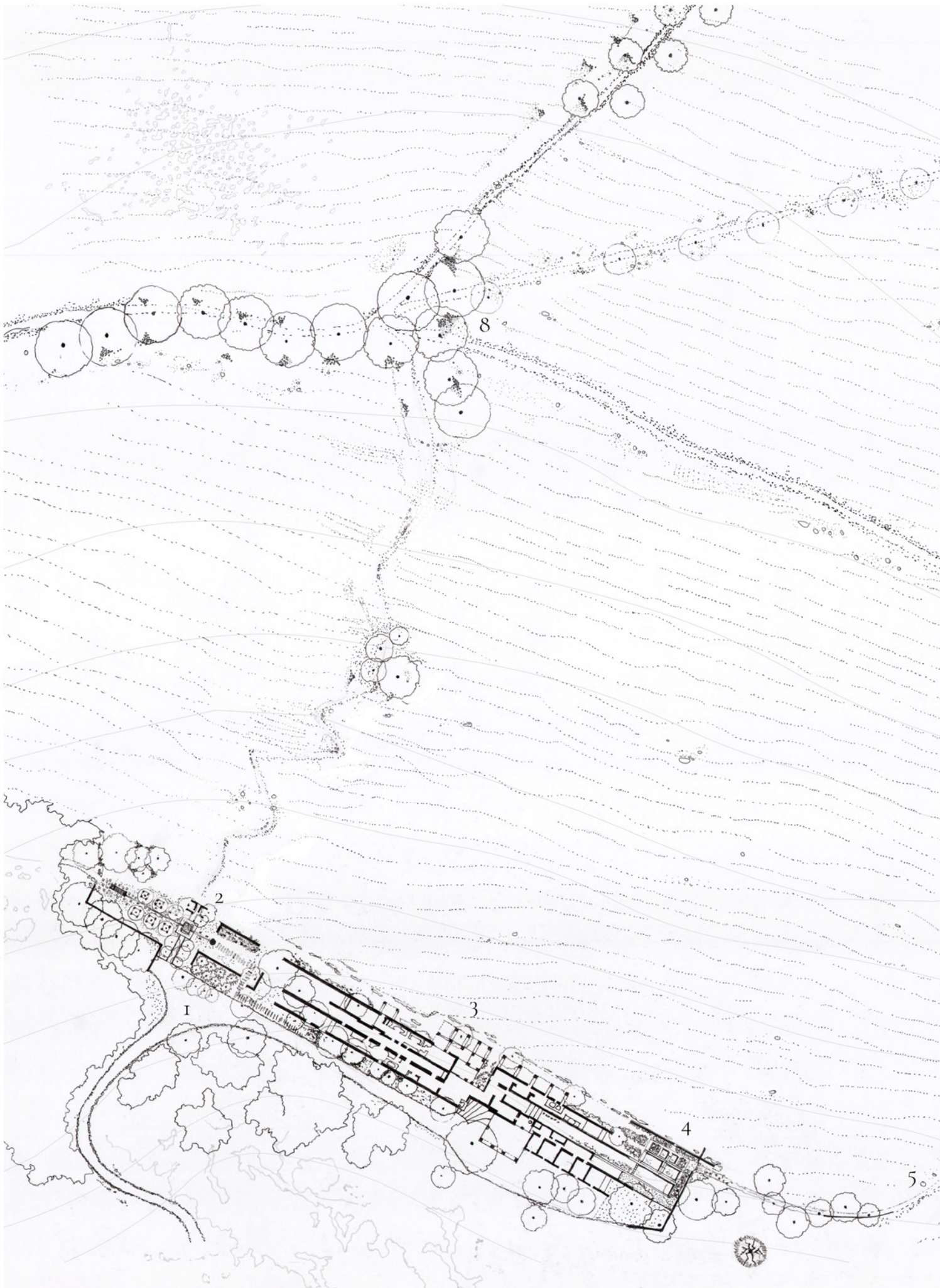


Figure 90: final northern masterplan, author, 2022.



Masterplan

1. Road to manor house
2. Landing garden with footpath leading into landscape
3. Manor house
4. Extended water features with gardens and footpath to dam
5. Path with retaining walls
6. Landing area at dam
7. Stone pier extending into dam on axis of Bokoni ruins
8. Existing, pruned Bluegum trees as enclosed space that congregates existing paths
9. New dam weir on axis with pier

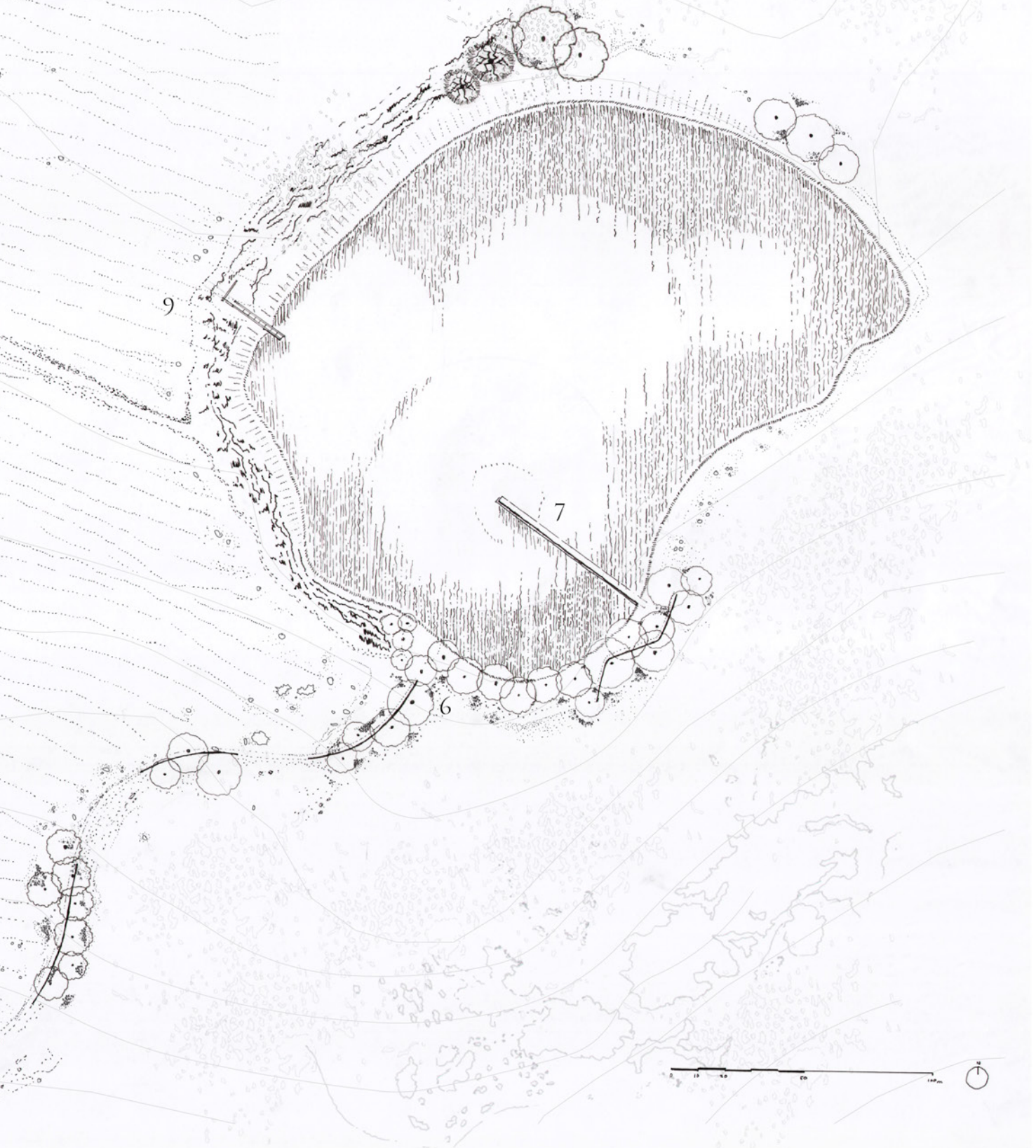


Figure 9r: final southern masterplan, author, 2022.

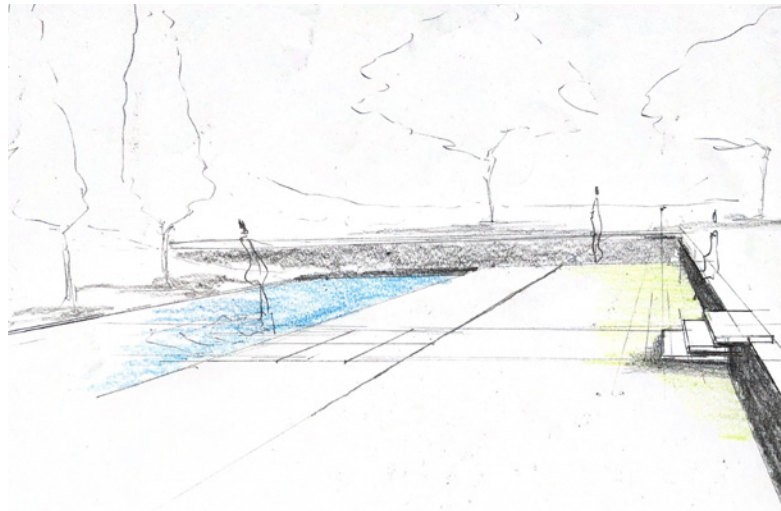
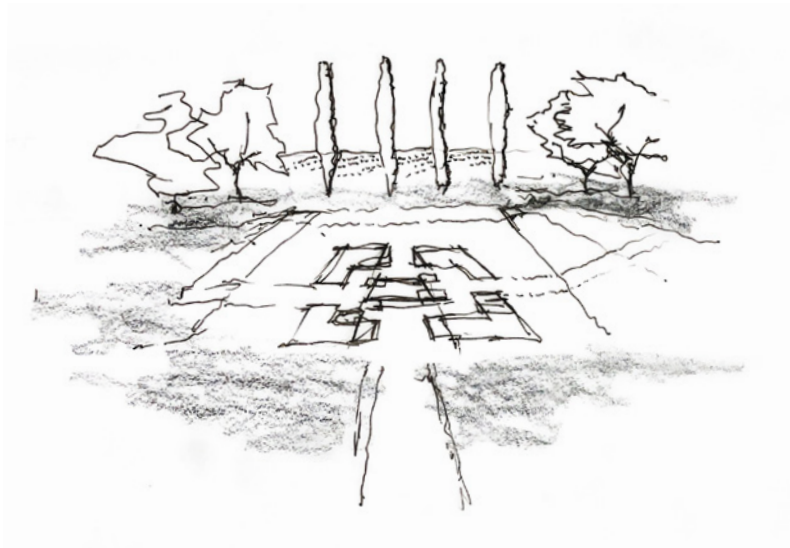
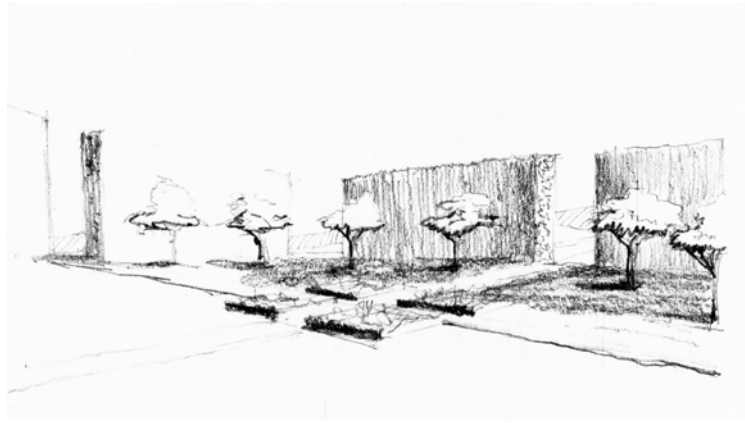


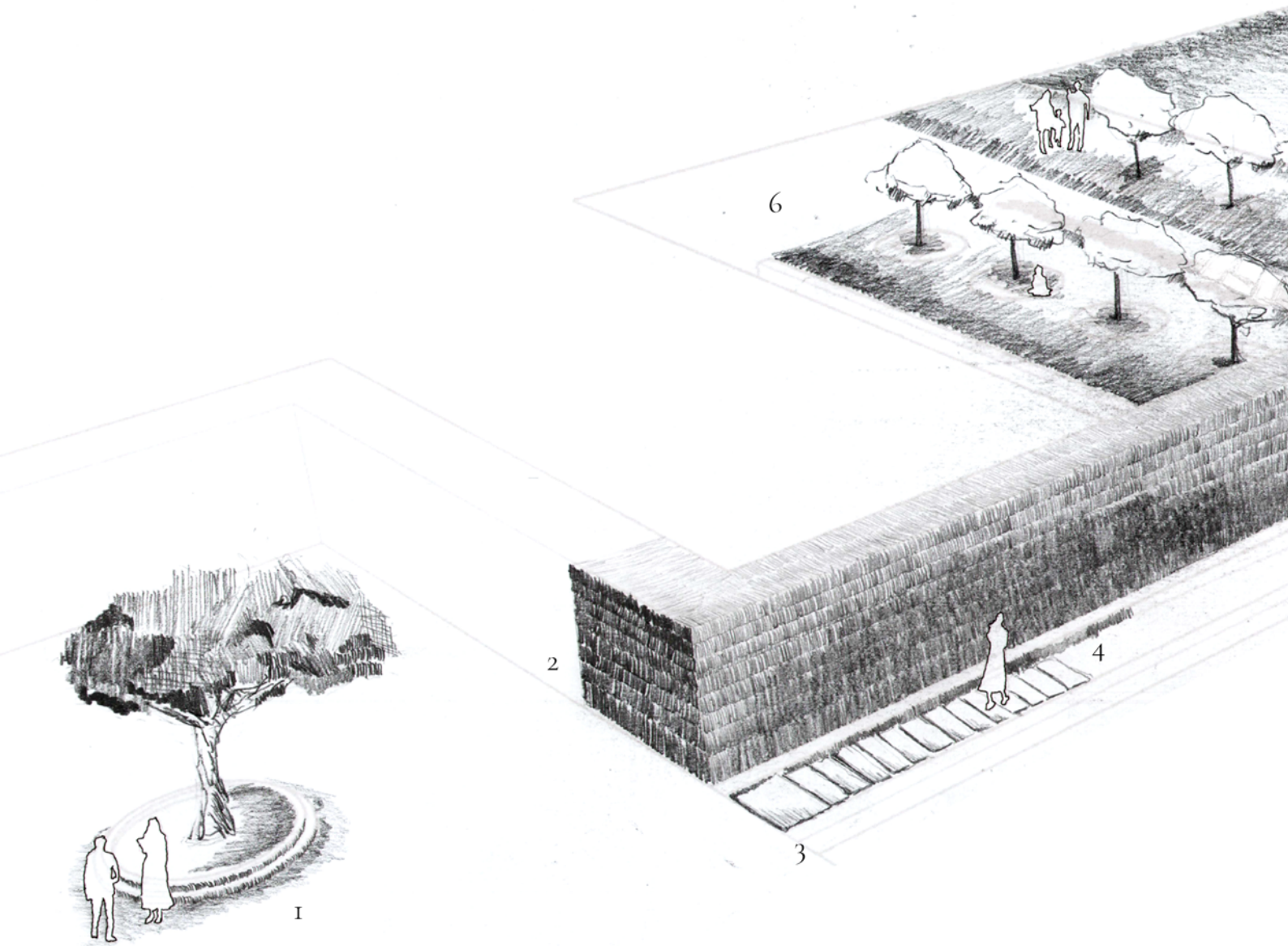
Figure 91: spatial sketches for pond detail design area, author, 2022.

Detail design: the mediation of landscapes

The previously named pond detail design area was a gentle excavation that retained the landscape with the use of a retaining wall, and used the reflection of water to create a visual threshold leading to fenestrated views of the adjacent agricultural fields.

Always an attempt to mediate these very different programmes, yet not always clearly different landscapes, this design area evolved into something more stark and focused: two tall arms of thick hedge encircling an austere square, coming from an axis off the stables, but culminating in a narrow path ramping down into the previously designed water and cypress trees. Now, however, the space also opened up to the termination of a less severe axis; the series of dams running north to south. These spaces accommodate places of rest and contemplation, through the repetition of raised grid planter boxes and avenues of trees. The water, diverted from the main stream connecting the dams. Additionally, acting as a stormwater solution, a trench runs along the boundary of the area, which is filled with the same water of the reflective pond.

The materiality of this trench is explored in detail later.



1. Circular brick tree seating ring with *Lecuosidea serica* planted
2. 3.5m tall *Viburnum sinensis* hedge
3. Quartzite stone retaining wall
4. Ramp leading down to pond area with pre-cast concrete pavers
5. Square stone tree grid with *Rothmania capensis*
6. Lawn
7. Water channel for stormwater and as feature
8. Shallow pond with diverted water from stream
9. *Combretum erythrophyllum* tree axes

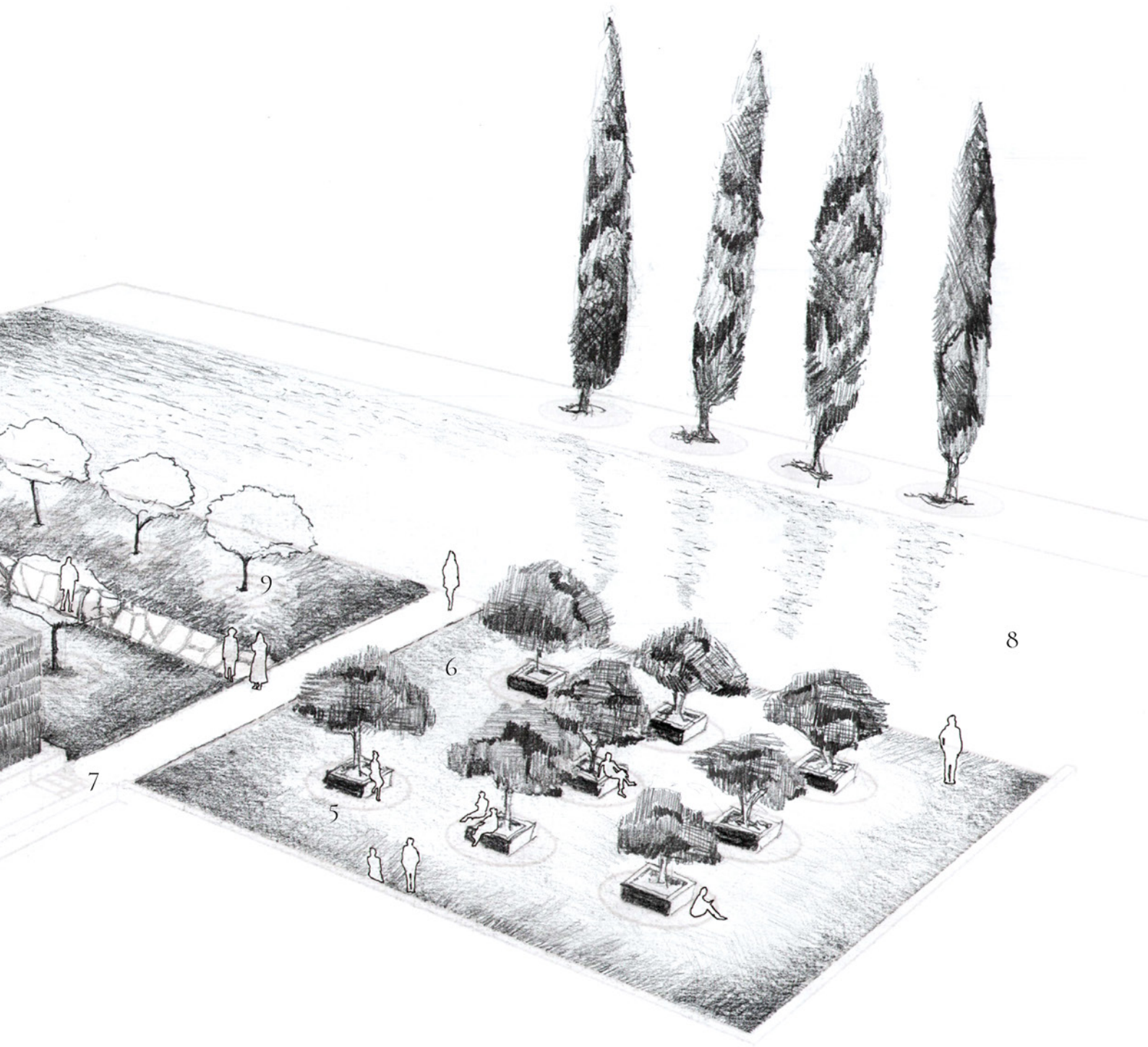


Figure 92: final pond detail design area, author, 2022.

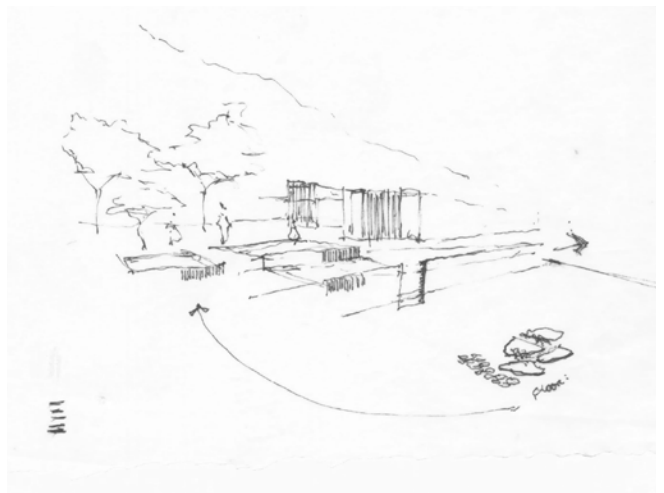
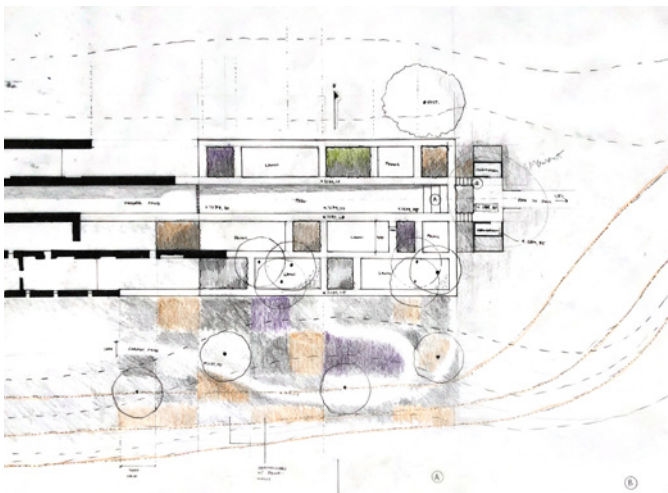
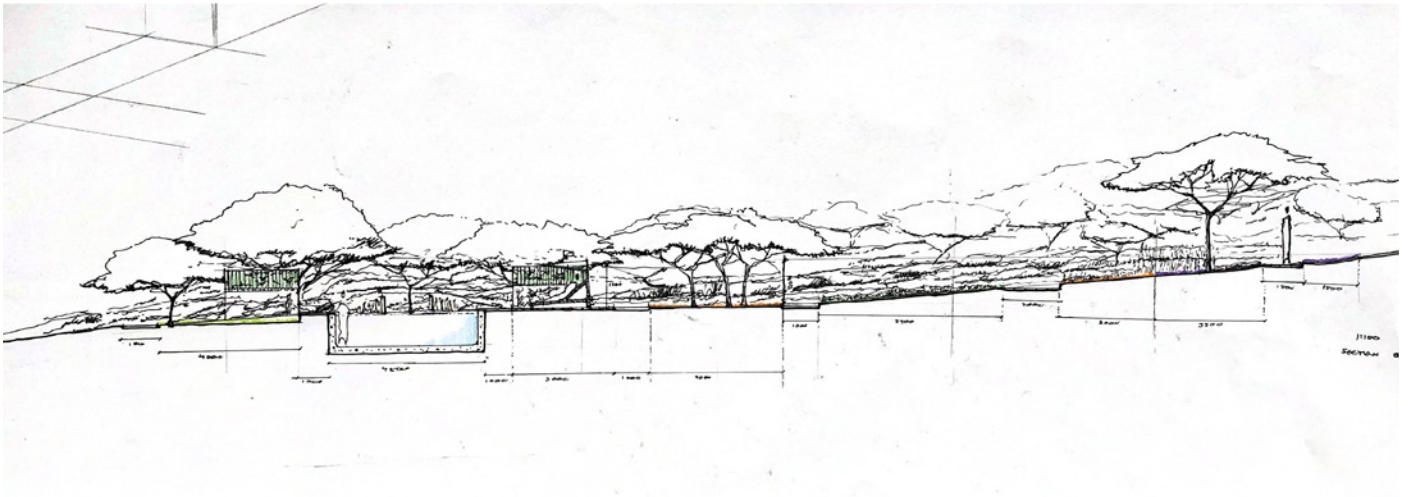


Figure 93: photos and process sketches for western side of manor house, author, 2022.

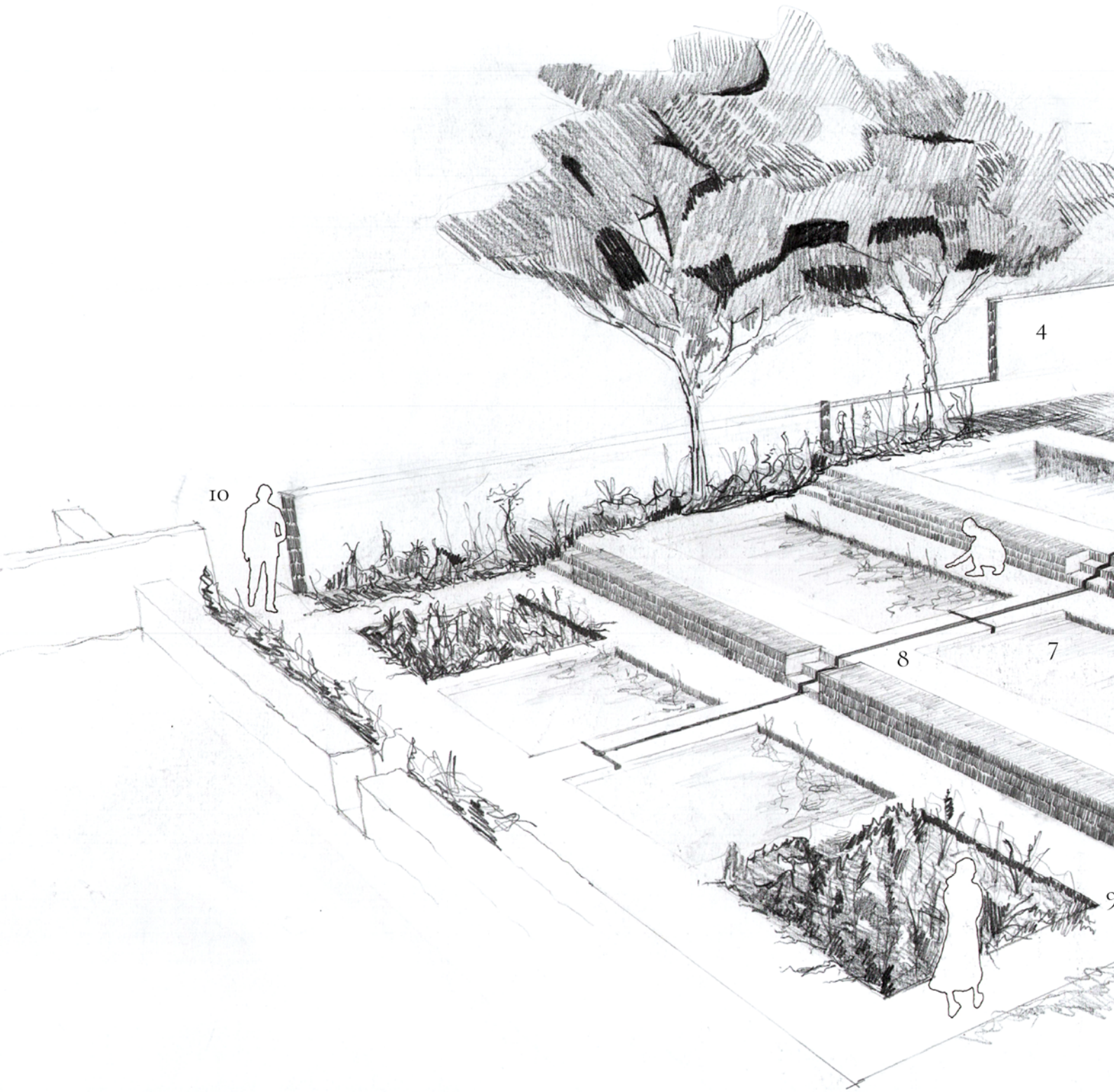
Detail design: contrasting geometry

The eastern side of the manor house with the existing pond and pool were met with constraints of space, the strict house grid, and the existing vegetation.

Ensuring that the manor house can still accommodate hotel guests of different groups, and aware of the magnificent view from this space, the geometry of the pool was extended as a contrasting perpendicular form from the manor house's grid.

This extension enabled use of the natural slope downward, and so a new system was developed of using the existing pond as an ecopool regeneration basin, and the swimming pool and subsequent pools and planters would use the water through gravity flow.

By replacing the materials around the pool edge and unifying it with the exposed screed edged new pond areas, linking up with smaller quartzite-clad concrete retaining walls which link with the stereotomic walls of the house.



1. Existing swimming pool renovated and turned into eco-pool using adjacent pond
2. Lawn
3. Gravel and existing *Acacia* sp. trees
4. Quartzite stone-clad concrete wall framing new *Combretum erythrophyllum* tree and distant ridge
5. Water channel from pool detail into brick steps flowing into ponds below
6. Smaller quartzite stone (maximum 150mm x 150mm) clad concrete retaining wall
7. Shallow pond with aquatic plant species
8. Exposed concrete apron around ponds
9. Planter squares
10. Pathway to dam

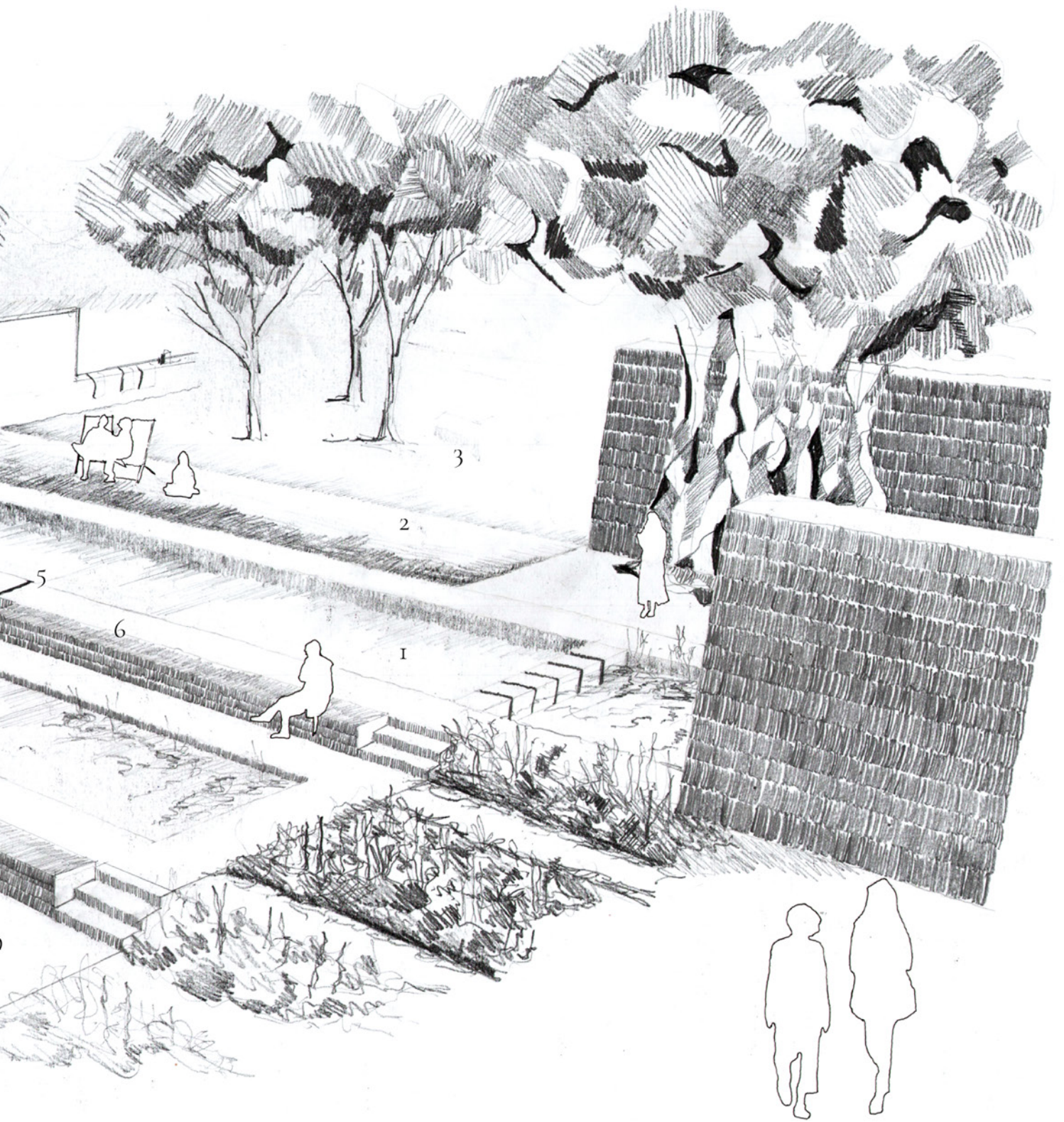


Figure 94: final design for western side of manor house, author, 2022.

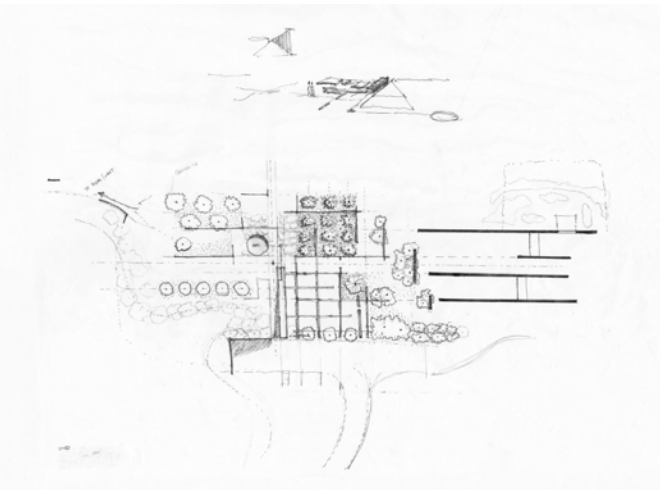
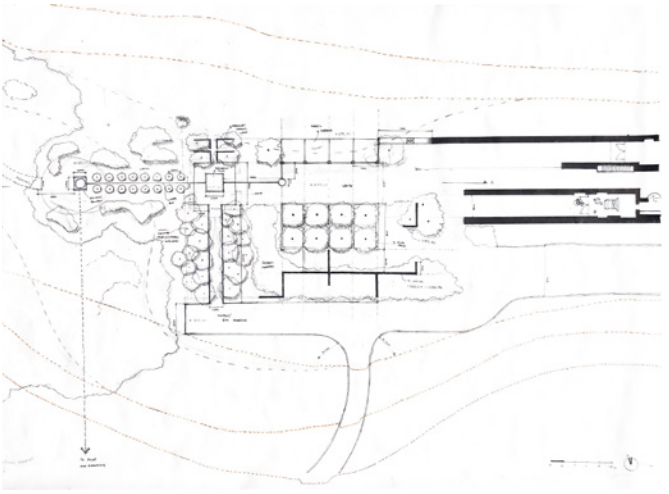
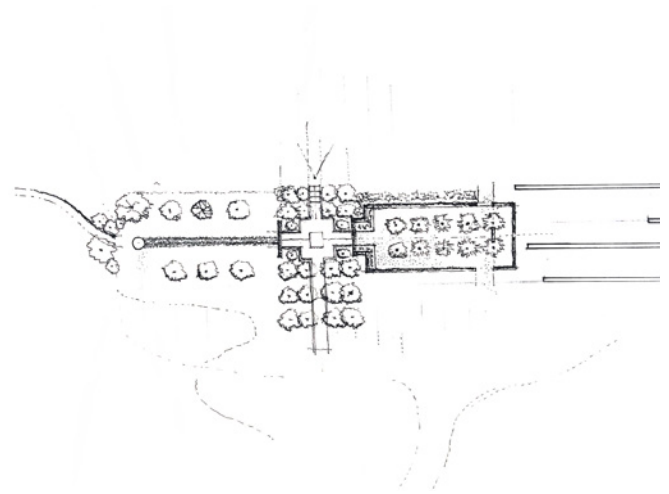
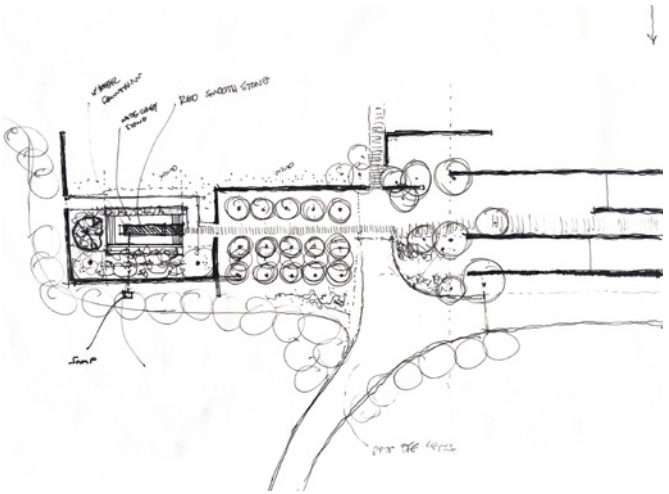


Figure 95: photos and process sketches for design for eastern side of manor house, author, 2022.

Detail design: the extension of geometry

As an entrance, the manor house is currently a megalithic stone structure, hunched down and peppered with trees, seen as soon as one rounds a corner. Although the walls extend into the landscape, creating dialogue with it, there is very little extrapolation of the concept into the immediate landscape, only lawn and a few small, untidy fruit trees.

And thus the landscape to the west presented a unique opportunity to create a gathering point for dropping off guests to the manor house, and using the grid to shape new spaces, namely an olive grove, planter beds, pathways, natural forest, and retaining walls that hold new structures: a harvest table with a water basin for the washing of hands and face after a hike, or the cleansing of fresh produce from the landscape.



1. Outdoor table for harvest food with drinking water fountain and trough
2. Entrance and exit to hiking trail deeper into valley
3. Water channel to feed reflection pond with stepping stones
4. Planted forest of *Combretum erythrophyllum*, *Diospyros whyteana*, and *Euclea crispa*
5. Square staked *Rothmania capensis* trees to be pruned for vault effect
6. Reflection pond with raised coping edge
7. Decomposed granite pathway
8. Limited framed view of valley with retaining walls and *Faurea galpinii* trees
9. Olive grove
10. Planted area with indigenous plants as per detail planting plan

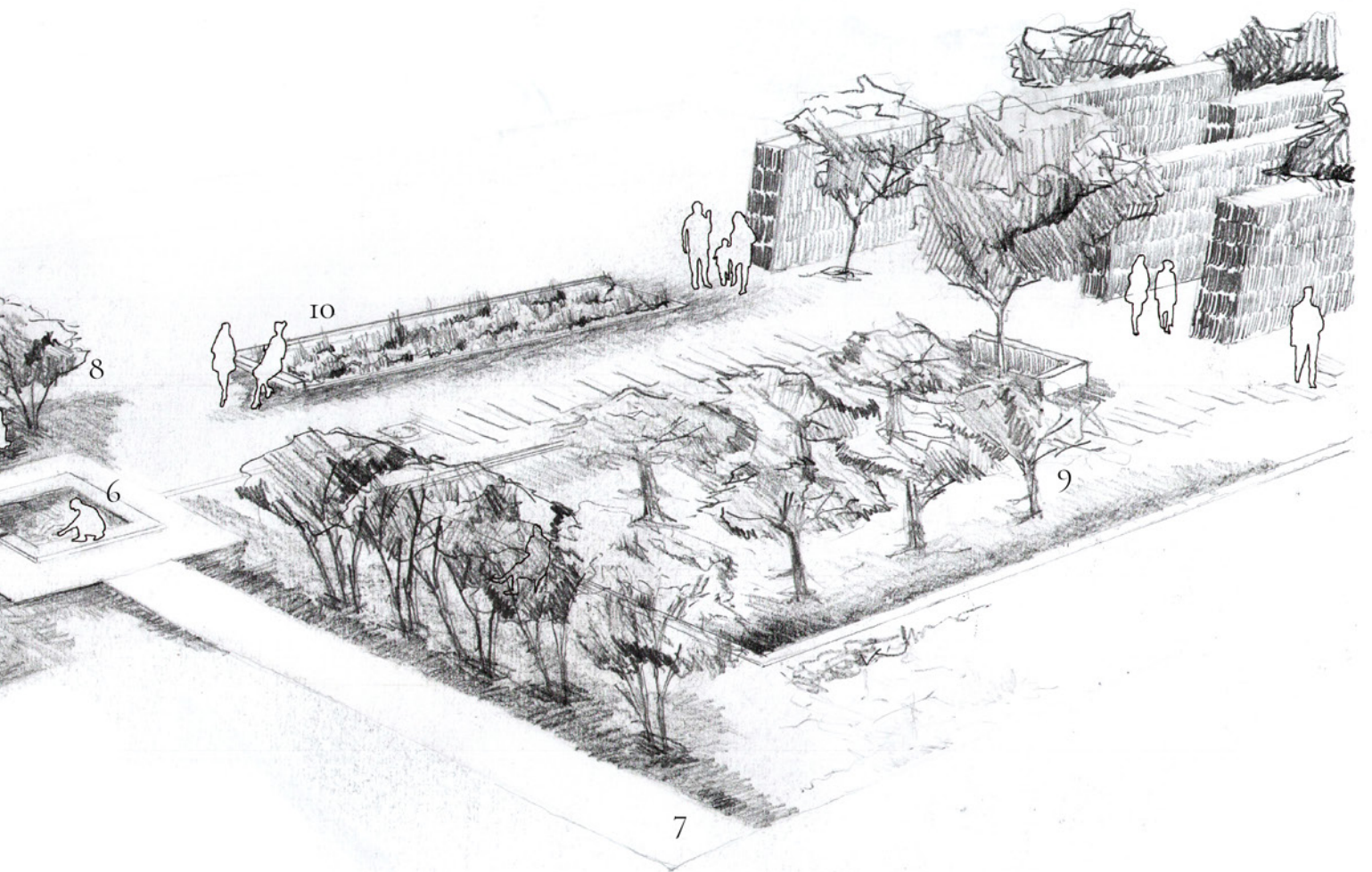


Figure 96: final design for eastern side of manor house, author, 2022.

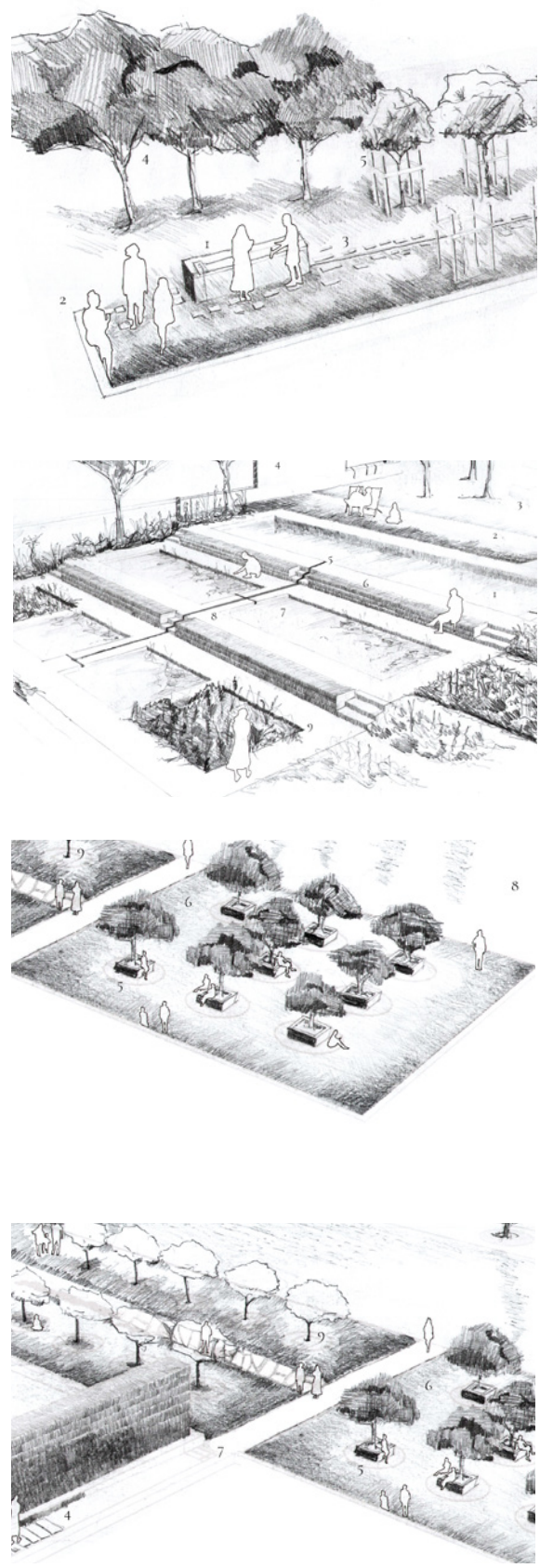


Figure 97: key plans for detail areas, author, 2022.

Detail design

The construction detail design was an important exploration into answering the final question of authenticity at Coromandel. Through an iterative process of testing materials, investigating new ways of working with stone, considering sizes, touch, and weathering, as well as functionally making the detail designed areas work, all lead to construction details that seek to show how to deal with existing artefacts like stone walls, water, and the use thereof, exposed concrete, polished quartzite, the bricks as seating and used to cast channels of water, and the touch of working with a stereotomic materials in order to separate it into visual parts of harmony.

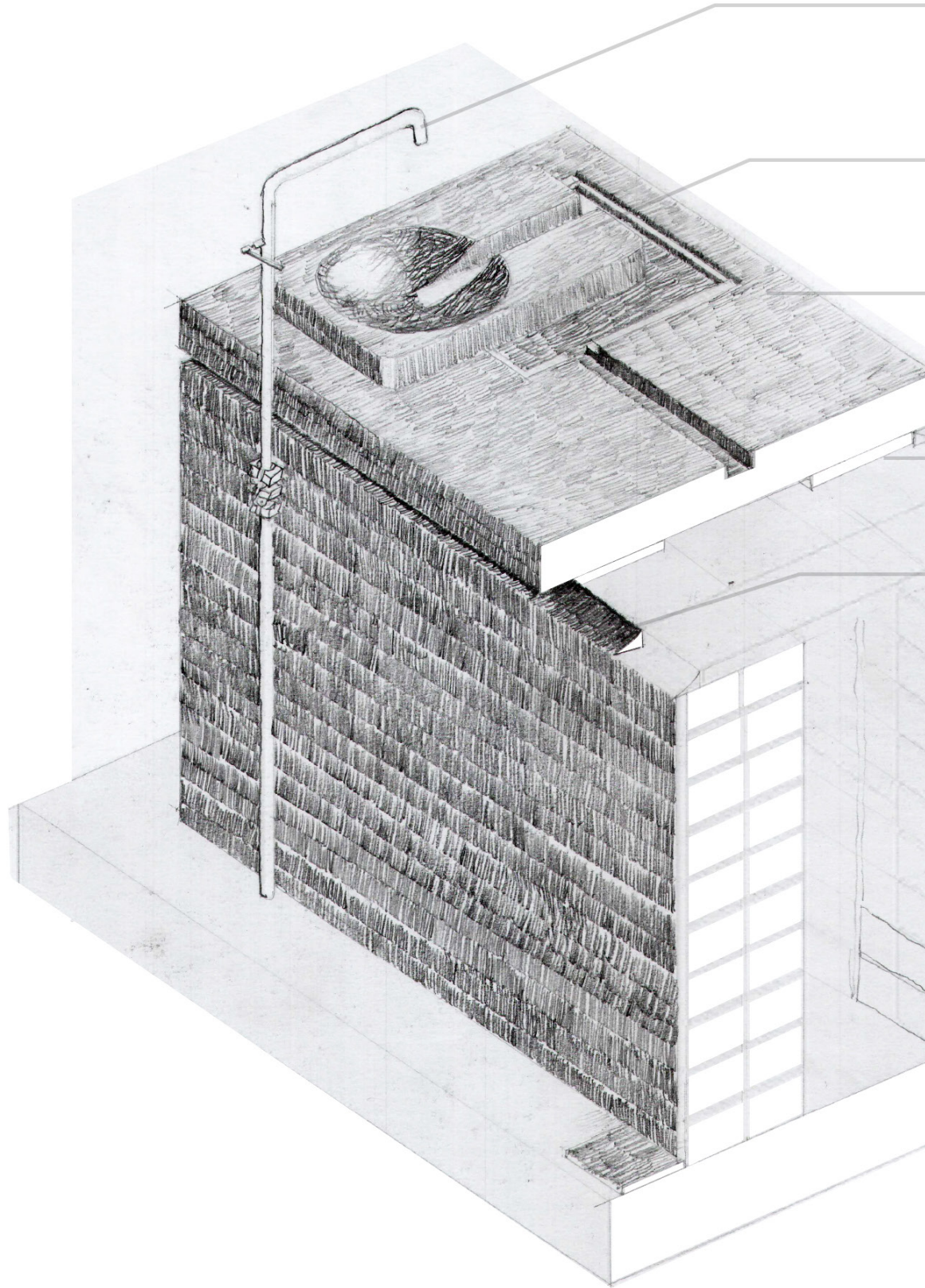
The following details all attempt to communicate this: a way of working with a material, in the language of Coromandel, but also show something new.

The first details show the construction of the harvest table, a stereotomic structure in dialogue with the manor house, but cut back and polished to a scale more approachable, where the simple act of water running down a small channel and falling through a fluted shaft into brass anti-splash fins reminisce the buttresses that hold the northern facade of the house.

The second set details the materiality of the swimming pool and how the new landscape around it is constructed from it, and how new materials like brick can be used in shaping more than the steps,

but have impact on the floor quality as well by acting as formwork for the water channel.

The final set of details deal with using an existing language of stone retaining walls but combining them with steel formed channels, respecting the contact points with multiple layers. Additionally, the small bridge that crosses this channel of water does so by articulating a stereotomic slab with hidden steel frames, bisected twice and with edge treated to lead to visual harmony.



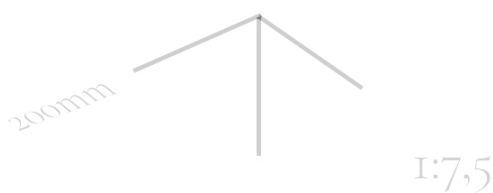
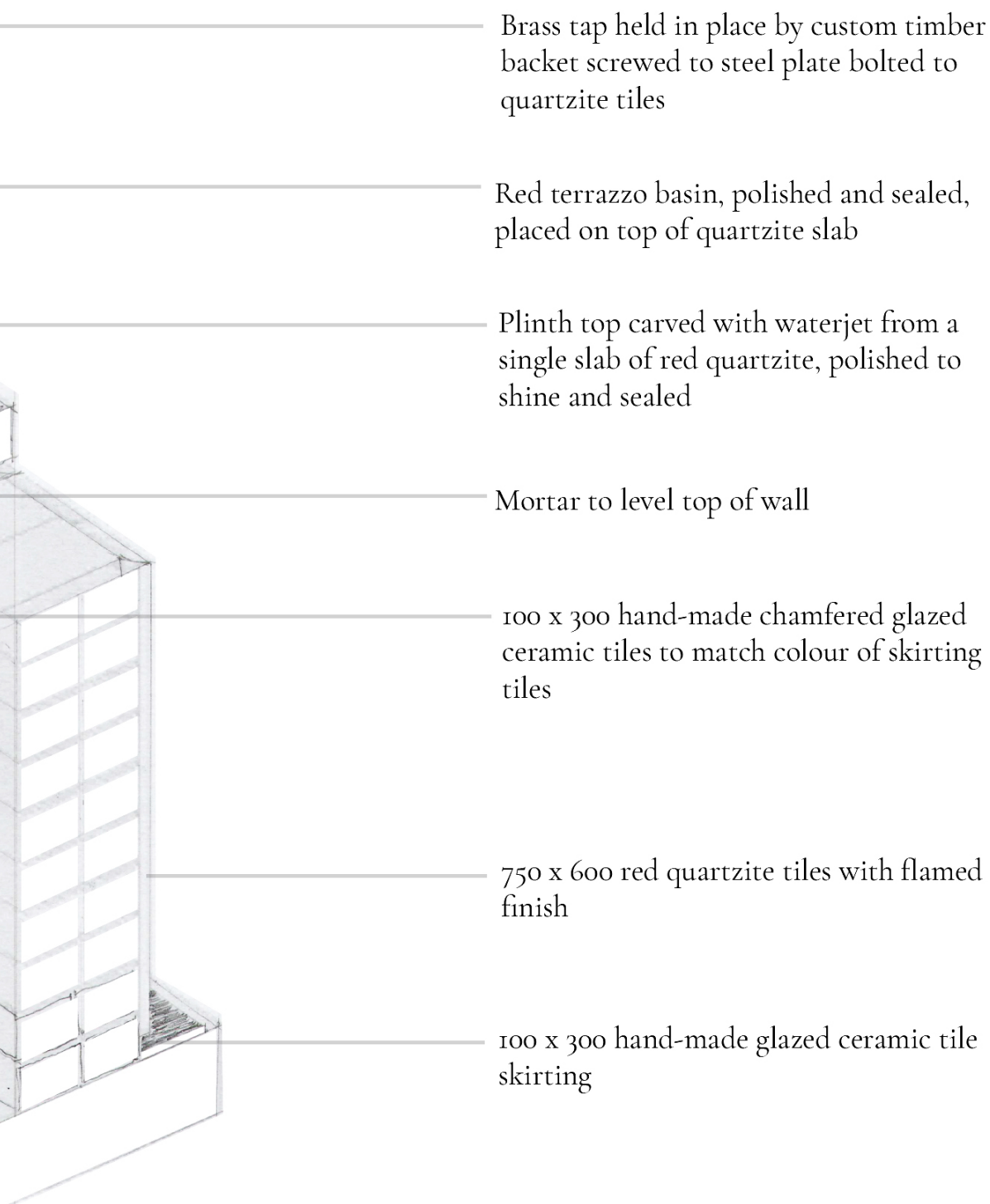


Figure 98: harvest table detail 1, author, 2022.

Plinth top carved with waterjet from a single slab of red quartzite, polished to shine and sealed

100 x 300 hand-made chamfered glazed ceramic tiles to match colour of skirting tiles

750 x 600 red quartzite tiles with flamed finish

50 x 300 hand-made fluted glazed ceramic tiles to fit into trough

Finned brass anti-splash feature slotted in palce

Concrete trough cast in-situ to lead water to reflection pool

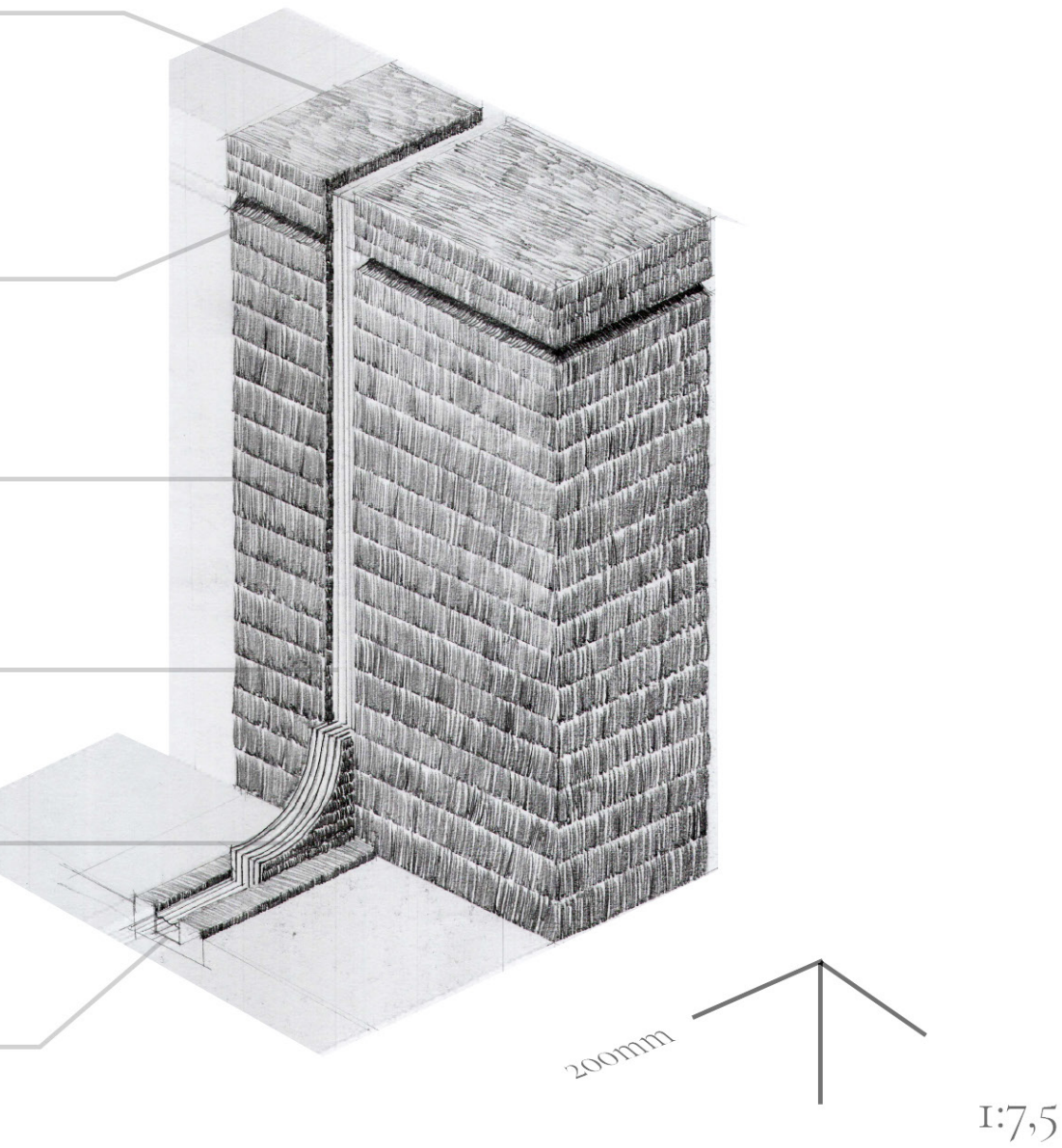
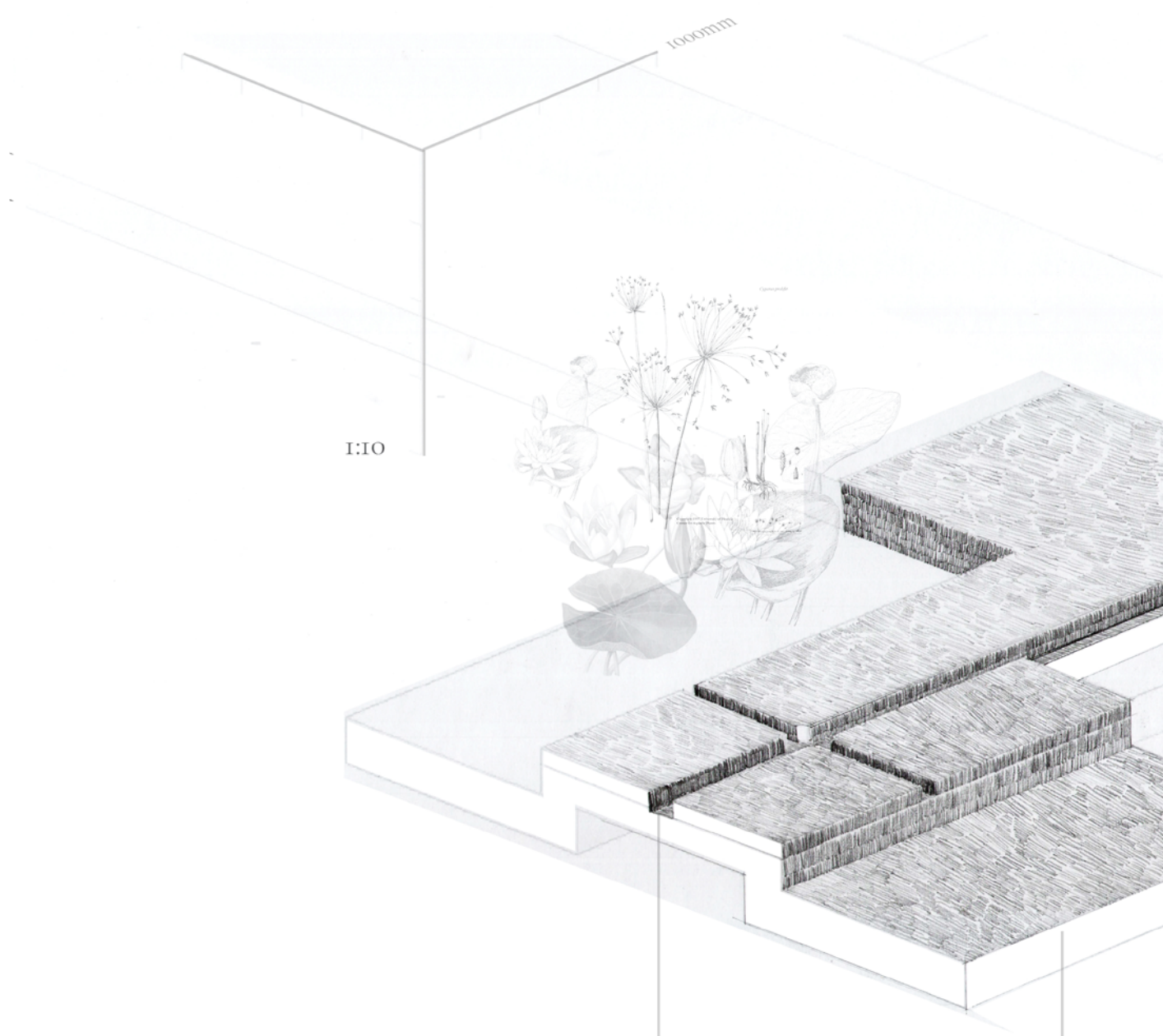


Figure 99: harvest table detail 2, author, 2022.

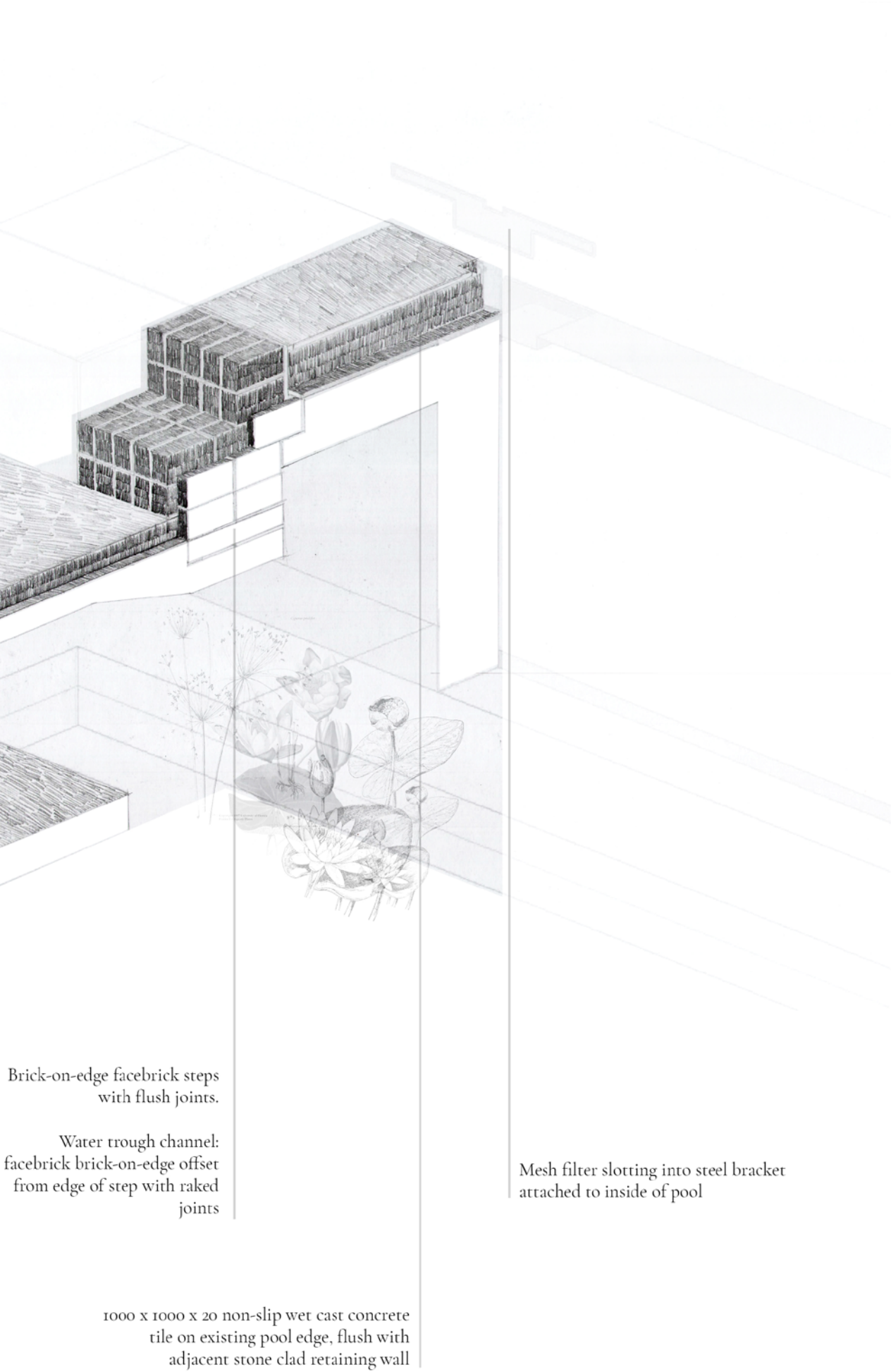


1:10

1000mm

Trough: row of bricks-on-edge temporarily laid on concrete slab as formwork for channel and removed after screed cures

150mm concrete slab cast on 97% 200mm MOD AASHTO compact earth lined with waterproof pond liner, with 50mm layer waterproof screed cast on top with water sprayed surface to expose aggregate



Brick-on-edge facebrick steps with flush joints.

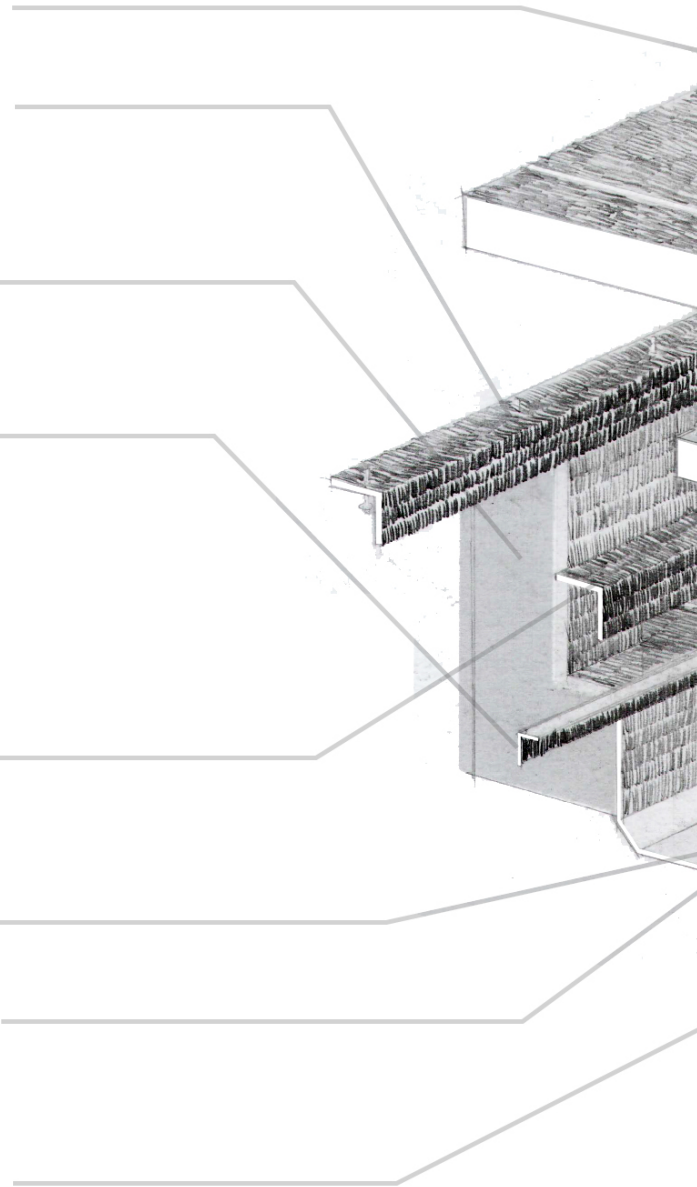
Water trough channel: facebrick brick-on-edge offset from edge of step with raked joints

Mesh filter slotting into steel bracket attached to inside of pool

1000 x 1000 x 20 non-slip wet cast concrete tile on existing pool edge, flush with adjacent stone clad retaining wall

Figure 100: swimming pool and pond detail, author, 2022.

- Pre-cast concrete steps with filleted edge
- 50 x 50 steel angle as bracket for concrete steps
- Concrete retaining wall strip to hold water channel
- 25 x 25mm steel angle as skirting to hold in custom steel channel
- Custom pre-cast concrete bridge with spacers and fixed to a 50 x 50mm steel angle bracket
- Custom steel water channel
- Custom cold-formed lip channel as visual buffer and to accommodate lightening feature
- Concrete strip foundation for apron and channel



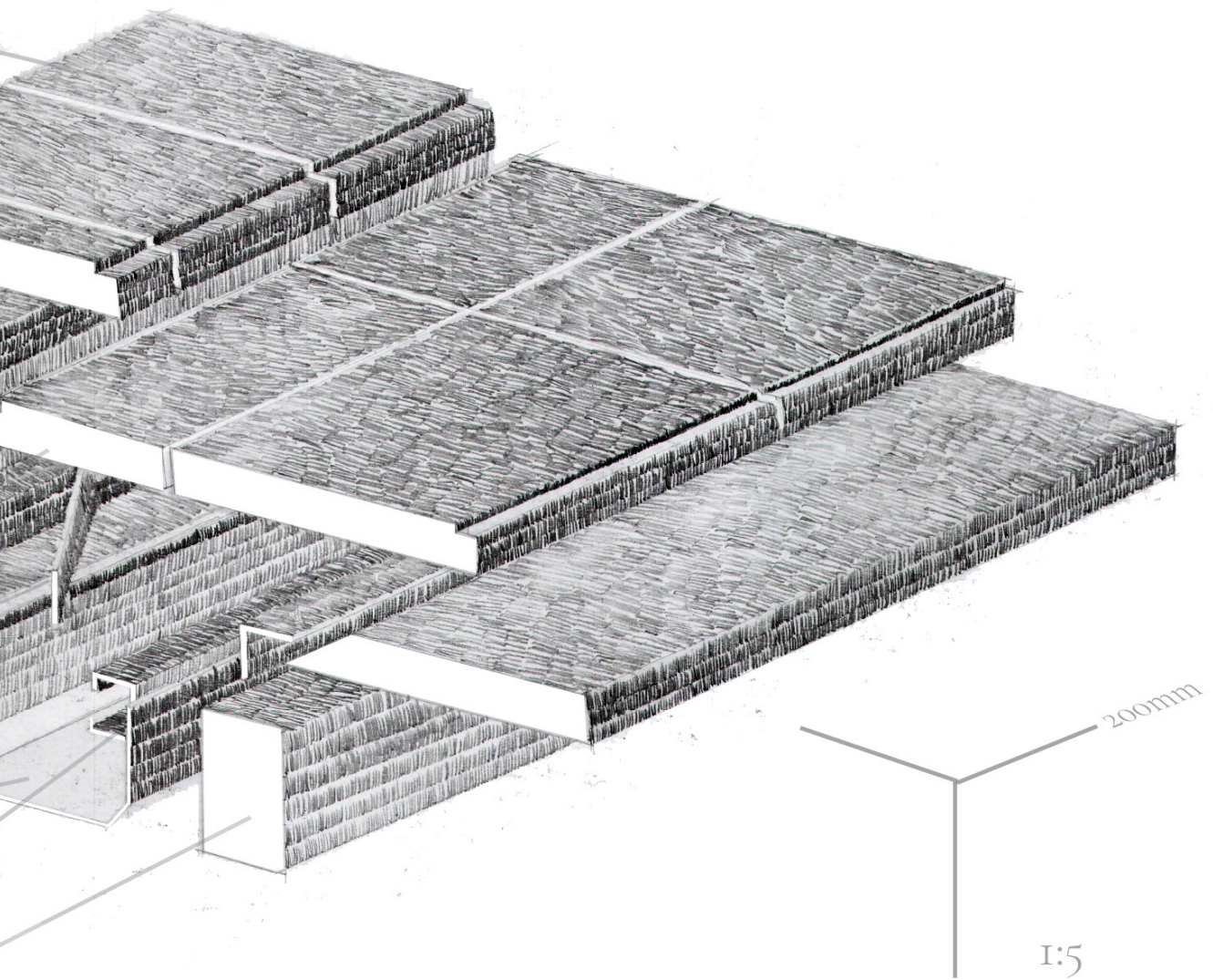
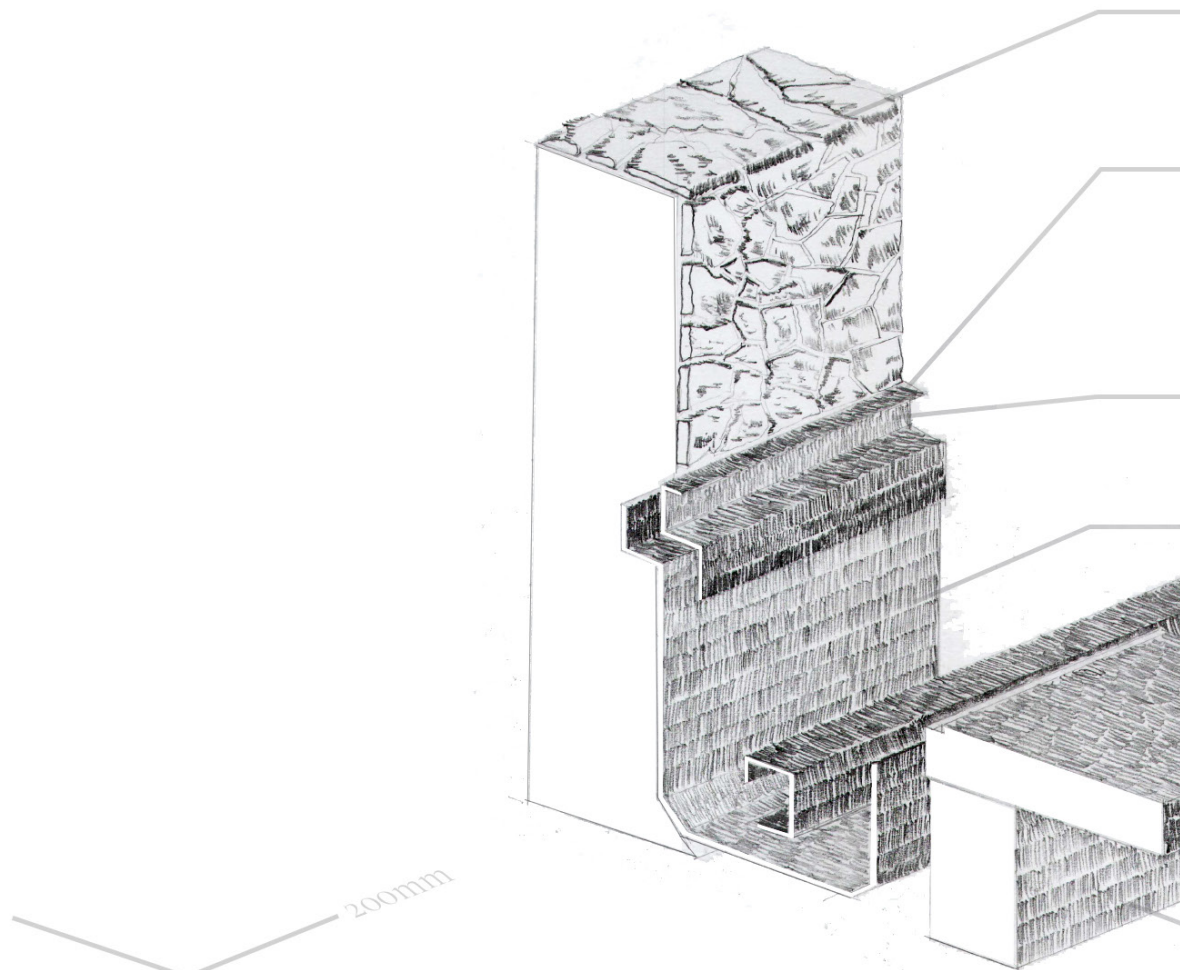


Figure 101: pond area channel bridge detail, author, 2022.



200mm

1:5

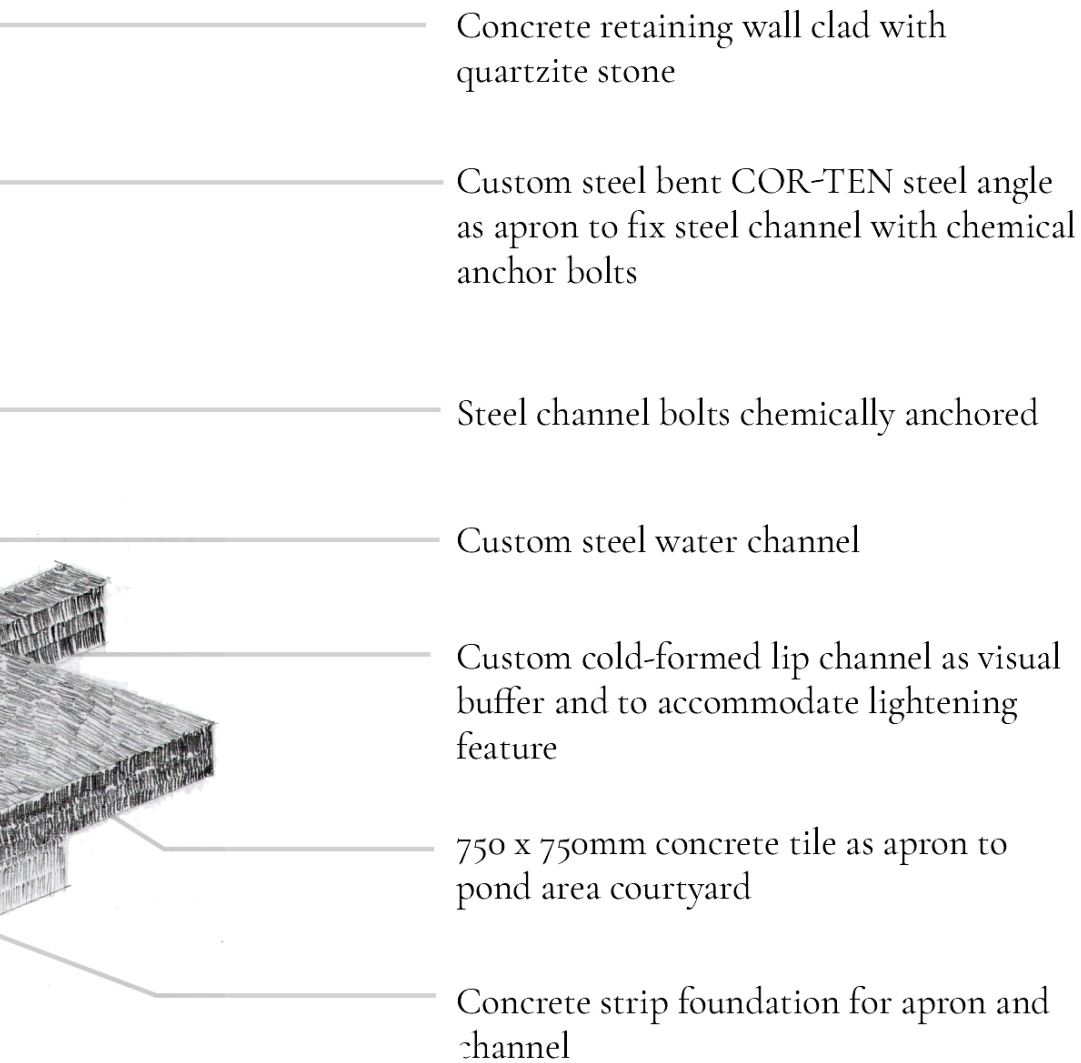


Figure 102: pond area channel detail, author, 2022.



Reflection and conclusion

The landscape of Coromandel presented a new and unique challenge to me, and though at first daunted by the intensity of the existing, the project slowly inched its way into something that allowed the main research question to be answered.

The methodology of carefully graphically sketching and studying existing and extrapolated typologies, spaces, and experiences, and linking them with historical gardens and designers like Bawa, Scarpa, Franch, Moller, lent a grounding to the whimsy in my head.

These explorations that preceded the design allowed varied and interesting developments of the site, and showcased highly interesting spatial explorations that allowed rich interventions to be designed.

While very important in the process, perspectives proved to be just out of reach for the final presentation. Vignettes or perspectives of the final design done with the same care as other explorations may have continued to expand the breadth of the design intentions and solutions.

The complex heritage of the site and how to respond to this was a difficult endeavour, but interventions that respect this heritage instead of shying away from it resulted in varied spatial qualities for the programme.

Another highly interesting approach in the design, that of pruning, was hinted at and explored at a basic level, but definitely contains much more than a simple cutting away. As a design approach, it can contain very interesting results, and is an appropriate method in a landscape such as this. However, due to the design moving forward in different ways, this was never fully explored, which is regrettable.

The final design details allowed the approach of the project to show. By getting to the very specifics of dimensions, materials, finishes, and uses, I was able to link the detail interventions to an identity of Coromandel, creating dialogue with existing built artefacts, socio-cultural landscapes of agriculture, and the natural characteristics of place. Throughout the design, down to the detail level, there was an emphasis on an honest expression of this identity, based on the physical objects, and, hopefully, the associated meanings thereof. Abiding by these tenets of identity and truth, I believe that my intervention at Coromandel is authentic.

Undertaking this type of project under my supervisor Johan N. Prinsloo was a privilege and an opportunity that will have lasting effect on me as a designer, and I am immensely grateful.

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