



PAK RALLEL SPK RAWL

Learning from Pristina

WORKSHOP HELD AT
THE KOSOVO ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL 2018
2nd - 13th July 2018

100%

100%

Kosovo in a nutshell

- Total land area: 10,908 km²
- Resident population: 1,815,606 estimation (December 2012)
- Total number of households: 297,090
- Total number of dwellings: 412,884
 - of which occupied dwellings: 71%
- Percentage of people living in rural areas: 61%
- Average size of household: 5.85 persons
- Population density (people per km²): 177.4

The 1999 military conflict marked the history of Kosovo and its people, deeply affecting its political and economic configuration. Post-conflict migration brought many people to cities in the search for jobs, better living conditions and a safer environment, while those who remained in rural areas commute to the cities on a daily basis for work or education. Post-war reconstruction together with rural-urban migration and an important birth rate, one of the highest in continental Europe, has resulted in urban growth and a construction boom of unprecedented scale. In order to deal with all these challenges efficiently, local authorities need long term plans to guide their spatial, environmental and economic development while dealing with a present which is being built on its own by the citizenry.

Source (July 2018): www.unhabitat.org/kosovo

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Introduction English



Most of the urban discussions that are taking place in Pristina today are around the large scale projects going on in the centrally located Lakrishte district or the construction of a Great Mosque. While both developments are symbolically important, the former placing Kosovo in the map of global capital and the later in the cosmology of global Islam, the real needs of Pristina citizens rely most probably in the improvement of the living conditions of its conspicuous suburbs.

This workshop, held during the Kosovo Architecture Festival in July 2018, addresses the study of urban sprawl in Pristina and the possibility for its improvement with fresh eyes, retracting from the dogmatic view against suburbanisation that pervades in European academia. While acknowledging its issues and challenges, a new understanding of urban planning in a post-human condition, i.e. taking into account that we're not any longer designing habitats specifically for the human being but for all species on the planet, takes us to consider the advantages of those urban situations where the natural-artificial divide is less defined. The new set of options and constraints provided by new technologies and environmental challenges calls for a complete re-thinking of the way we inhabit the planet.

On the other hand, the specific recent history of Kosovo has created a suburban landscape that, while remaining problematic, reveals some of the possibilities that can be achieved when collectives and constituencies take themselves the endeavour of building their dwellings in the lack of a strong public sector, a scenario that might become more common in other European cities.

The aim of the workshop is to create a detailed analysis of the most characteristic typologies of suburban habitat encountered in eight different neighbourhoods of the metropolitan region around Pristina, as well as the uses of its public spaces, by strictly using tools specific to the architectural profession (drawing, collage) and others (photography, film, story-telling). The work will serve as a basis for the proposal a series of quick actions or urban recipes that could cheaply improve the living conditions by the students, with the mission of creating a speculative scenario that helps bring together the communities around a shared vision for their future.

Introduction Français

La plupart des discussions urbaines qui se déroulent actuellement à Pristina concernent les projets de grande envergure qui se déroulent dans le quartier central de Lakrışhte ou la construction d'une grande mosquée. Alors que les deux développements sont symboliquement importants, le premier plaçant le Kosovo sur la carte du capital mondial et le dernier dans la cosmologie de l'islam mondial, les besoins réels des citoyens de Pristina dépendent probablement de l'amélioration des conditions de vie de ses banlieues.

Cet atelier, organisé pendant le Kosovo Architecture Festival en juillet 2018, aborde l'étude de l'étalement urbain à Pristina et la possibilité de l'améliorer avec un regard neuf, en se retirant de la vision dogmatique contre la suburbanisation qui règne dans les universités européennes. Tout en reconnaissant ses enjeux et ses défis, une nouvelle compréhension de l'urbanisme dans une condition post-humaine, c'est-à-dire que nous ne concevons plus d'habitats spécifiquement pour l'être humain mais pour toutes les espèces de la planète, les avantages de ces situations urbaines où la fracture naturelle-artificielle est moins définie. Le nouvel ensemble d'options et de contraintes offertes par les nouvelles technologies et les défis environnementaux appelle à repenser complètement la façon dont nous habitons la planète.

D'autre part, l'histoire récente spécifique du Kosovo a créé un paysage de banlieue qui, tout en demeurant problématique, révèle certaines des possibilités qui peuvent être atteintes lorsque les collectivités et les circonscriptions s'efforcent de construire leurs logements en l'absence d'un public fort secteur, un scénario qui pourrait devenir plus courant dans d'autres villes européennes.

L'objectif de l'atelier est de créer une analyse détaillée des typologies d'habitat suburbain les plus caractéristiques rencontrées dans huit quartiers différents de la région métropolitaine autour de Pristina, ainsi que les utilisations de ses espaces publics, en utilisant strictement des outils spécifiques à la profession d'architecte. (dessin, collage) et autres (photographie, film, narration). Le travail servira de base à la proposition d'une série d'actions rapides ou de recettes urbaines qui pourraient améliorer les conditions de vie des étudiants, avec pour mission de créer un scénario spéculatif permettant de rassembler les communautés autour d'une vision partagée pour leur avenir.



Sprawl as a Verb

We usually think the sprawl as something that takes place somewhere beyond the city. We are used to focus on the representations and crystallizations of the sprawl. But these representations, all these things that we are building, should rather be treated as emergencies of a sprawl conceived as a mode. This means, not as a noun but as a verb! What is happening with the sprawl is much more than simply “the built”.

Let us point out at least one aspect that seems important to us: the confrontation with the city or rather with the idea of city that we have. That it means, a specific confrontation with the culture or tradition to which we belong. We must consider that the momentum, the desire, the dream that are involved in the implantation outside the city, as well as in rural settlements, suppose the way the past is being assimilated. As well as how the past opens itself to the future. That is why we propose the term post-urban. Post-urbanism refers to a relationship with the city and its historicity, the city as that from which we come.

Basically we can identify three ways in which post-urbanism takes place, they are different and specific ways of thinking and producing: as a continuation, as a break or as a remembrance:

1 – Continuation: the city as a paradigm of modernity and Western tradition is an unfinished project. And it's a question of pursuing it.

2 – Break: the meaning of “post” in post-urban has the meaning of a radical break. The city as a paradigm of Western culture and all it supposed is «dead». Allied and implicit modernity in the city is dead.

3 – Remembrance: post-urban territory cannot be conceived as a continuity or a radical break with urbanity. It is necessary to take into account a historically determined and mobilized context. The interpretation of post-urban implementation must be understood as a dialogue, that is, to concretely discuss the contents of tradition. So that the sprawl implies the deployment of another territory, neither urban nor rural in a strict sense, it will not be able to neglect the “monuments” which come from the past. The tradition deserves to be revisited, reinterpreted; moreover, something like the possibility of absolute amnesia of our cultural anchorage would be unthinkable. The hermeneutic of the sprawl proposes itself as having the concern to open up to the past with piety. Piety for the world of the city that we don't want to repeat and that we are nevertheless forced to consider.

We can observe these three approaches expressed in different combinations in the eight cases analyzed in the study on the post-urban dimension around Pristina. They mean different types of impulses that characterize particular modes of existence and worldviews. We are suggesting that the way in which post-urban implementation is carried out reflects different possible forms of existence. These forms are revealed as more or less favorable for the human being.

Analyzing how the Kosovar sprawl takes place is the first step to propose some sort of emancipation, as long as this analysis reaches what is effectively relevant in the incessant search for surpassing that human beings reveal.

Agustin Casalia

Sprawl is uncontrolled,
unordered, it is a machine
running on economic priorities,
that has nothing to do with a
specific place, or setting up a
rational logic or order where
parts can come together to
make a whole that is greater
than their sum.

Albert Pope – Excerpt from “Parallel Sprawl - The Film”
(Ibai Rigby), 2017



- ① Balshaj
- ② Hade e Re
- ③ Arbëria
- ④ Kalabria
- ⑤ Qëndresa
- ⑥ Lagjja Nic
- ⑦ Marigona
- ⑧ Gjilan - Balec



1 Balshaj

Sprawling beyond cities is happening, and we have a case study in Balshaj where the settlements are arranged in agricultural lands, after being divided into plots by the owners. The here represented neighbourhood is owned by different brothers of one large family who bought this land and decided to move in, as a consequence of their previous habitat lacking infrastructure, public transportation, schools, and other elementary facilities that any growing family needs. Once the houses were built they were connected to public facilities and infrastructure. The shared road is still not paved and most of the houses remain empty since their owners live abroad. The houses were built by contractors, all of them (except one) without a plan, following the rhythm and style that is pretty much the same across Kosovo.

The exception in this case is the “American House”, which was built following a plan that the owner downloaded from a website. A local architect adapted the plan, more or less successfully, to the cultural customs and building tradition of the country. In Kosovo, when you own a house you also own the property or land where you build the house. The government can easily expropriate the properties if they arrange an economic or relocation agreement with the owners.

Since the government hasn’t considered building infrastructure and public spaces, residents create their own. Most of the streets that exist within the neighbourhood are created by the residents themselves. They don’t have an urban plan to follow, except for the main roads that connect the cities with each other. Like most neighbourhoods in Balshaj, this family shares a road and public space between the five houses, and keeps a private garden surrounding each house.

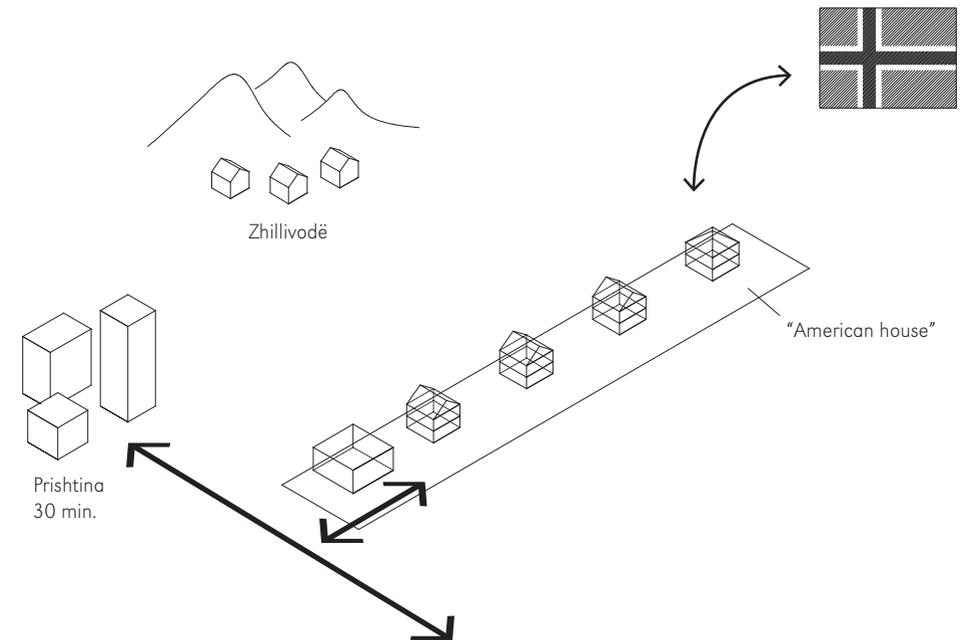
Most of the people who live in Balshaj work in nearby Obiliq, where the Power Plant and coal mines are located, or in Pristina. There is public transportation; a regular line linking Pristina to Mitrovicë by bus calling at Balshaj works from 7am to 8pm, but most people prefer shared taxis because they are more efficient. Nevertheless, private car ownership is growing, and you can spot the difference between houses built before the war and after the war as these last have a garage.

Overall, the neighbourhood feels safe. While a considerable number of houses remain empty throughout the year, it is customary that those members of the family living in Kosovo take care of them. To avoid

unwanted visitors a gate was placed at the entrance of their neighbourhood, even though the surrounding lands are not fenced and access would still be very easy. The children use the shared road for their activities, but there are no other public spaces outside the brotherhood limits.

The family of our case study used to live in Zhillivodë, a village on the hills to the West of the central plateau. Up to thirty-six members of the family shared space in two houses, until the conflict started in the late 90’s. Most of them managed their way as refugees to Norway, spreading all through Europe after the war. The owners of the “American House”, for example, have lived in Sweden for almost 20 years, and come back to Kosovo for their summer holidays to meet with other family members living in Kosovo or elsewhere in Europe. The house is actually designed for temporary use, but it keeps the “Oda” tradition where a large living room would serve for the family members and guests to gather around their elders and discuss about their issues or tell stories.

Qëndresë Tërrokollë





2003



First settlements follow the agricultural land pattern, each family developing their own neighbourhood along a private street. General urban growth happens organically around road junctions

2014



As the main road connecting Mitrovicë with Pristina is enlarged, making it faster to access the capital, urban growth in the area follows. Most new buildings take advantage of the roads and infrastructure built by the first settlers.

2010

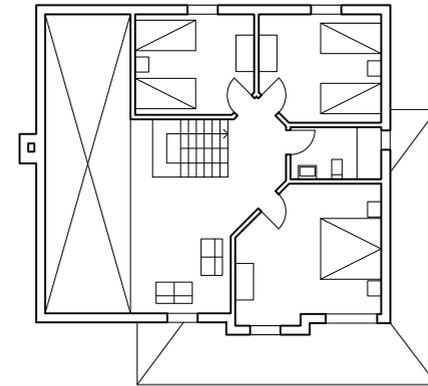


2017

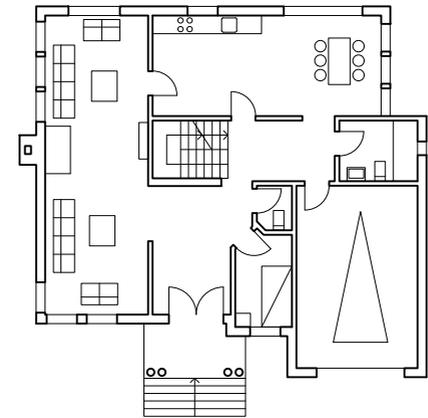




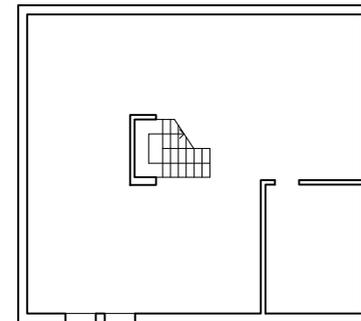
1st floor

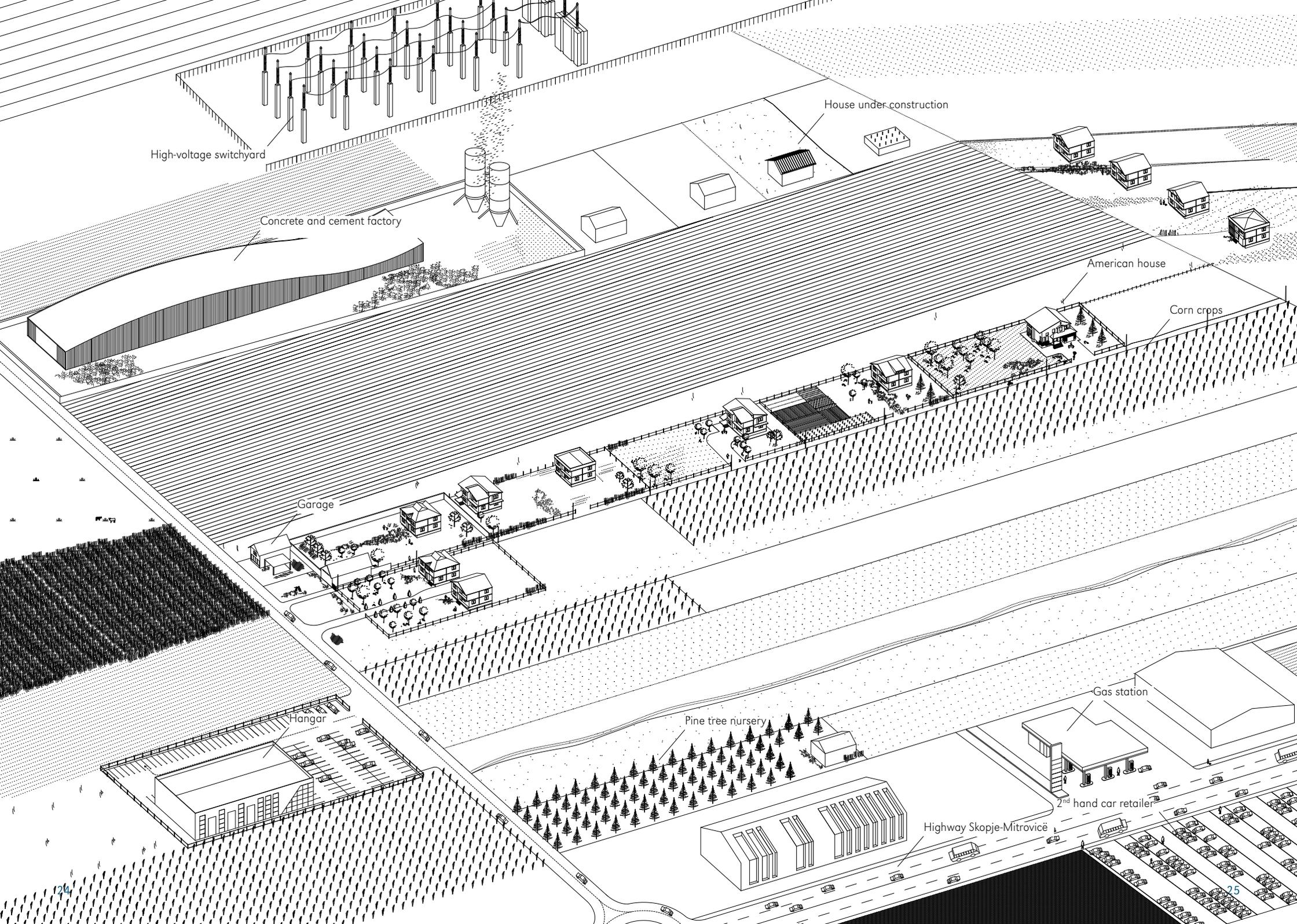


Ground floor



Basement





High-voltage switchyard

Concrete and cement factory

House under construction

American house

Corn crops

Garage

Hangar

Pine tree nursery

Gas station

2nd hand car retailer

Highway Skopje-Mitrovicë

② Hade e Re

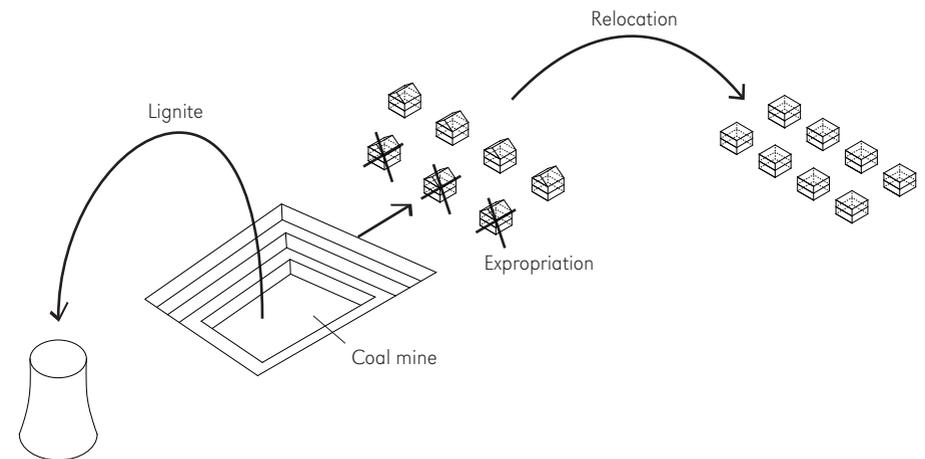
Hade e Re (New Hade) is a neighbourhood near Obiliq, built by the Kosovo Energy Distribution Services company (KEDS) to relocate inhabitants from Hade as a result of mining processes in the area. The lignite mine, which will expand beneath the old village of Hade, is considered a national economic treasure, as it fuels the country's only electricity power station, and in consequence, people living there were forced to abandon their dwellings. The residents were offered to sell their houses to the energy company or to move to Hade e Re, through a process that not all residents accepted and that has been in courts for a while.

KEDS is responsible for the urbanisation process of Hade e Re, rearranging what was originally agricultural land into well defined urban property lots. The neighbourhood is connected to the infrastructure network of the city, and the main street is properly paved with sidewalks and planted trees, following an architecture designed urban plan that included the design of the individual houses.

Nonetheless, since the relocation process is not yet completed, the families who already moved to Hade e Re are faced to many challenges. No public institution is taking care of the streets and infrastructure, that has degraded ever since it was built. No public transportation serves the area, which is still lacking public schools and other public facilities. And the fact that most of the lots remain empty gives the neighbourhood a ghostly appearance that doesn't help to create a sense of community. The fact that the houses lack any kind of regional characteristic doesn't help either.

People in Hade e Re have different kinds of jobs; while some work in the city centre of Pristina or at the KEDS power plant, others still work the land. In every case, they are all forced to use private means of mobility given the lack of public transportation.

Drilona Hyseni





2003



There are few visible elements that can apparently guide us to know why the site for the relocation of Hade was chosen.

2014



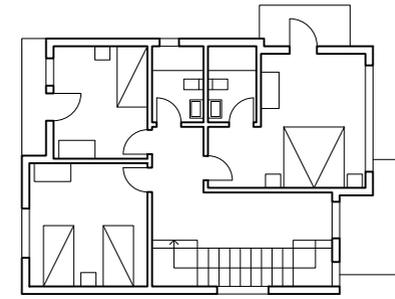
Since the settlement of Hade e Re (New Hade) was established in 2011, only 15 families have moved in.

2010

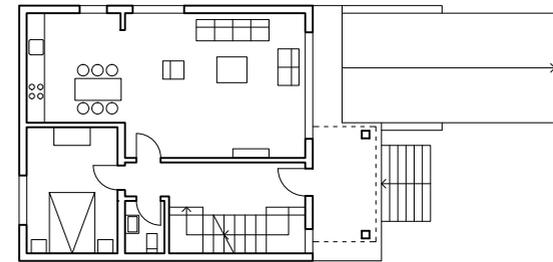


2017

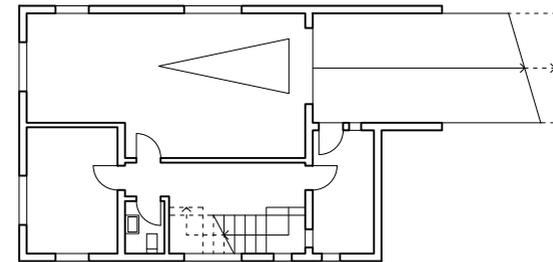




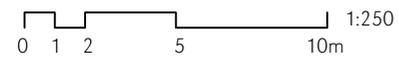
1st floor

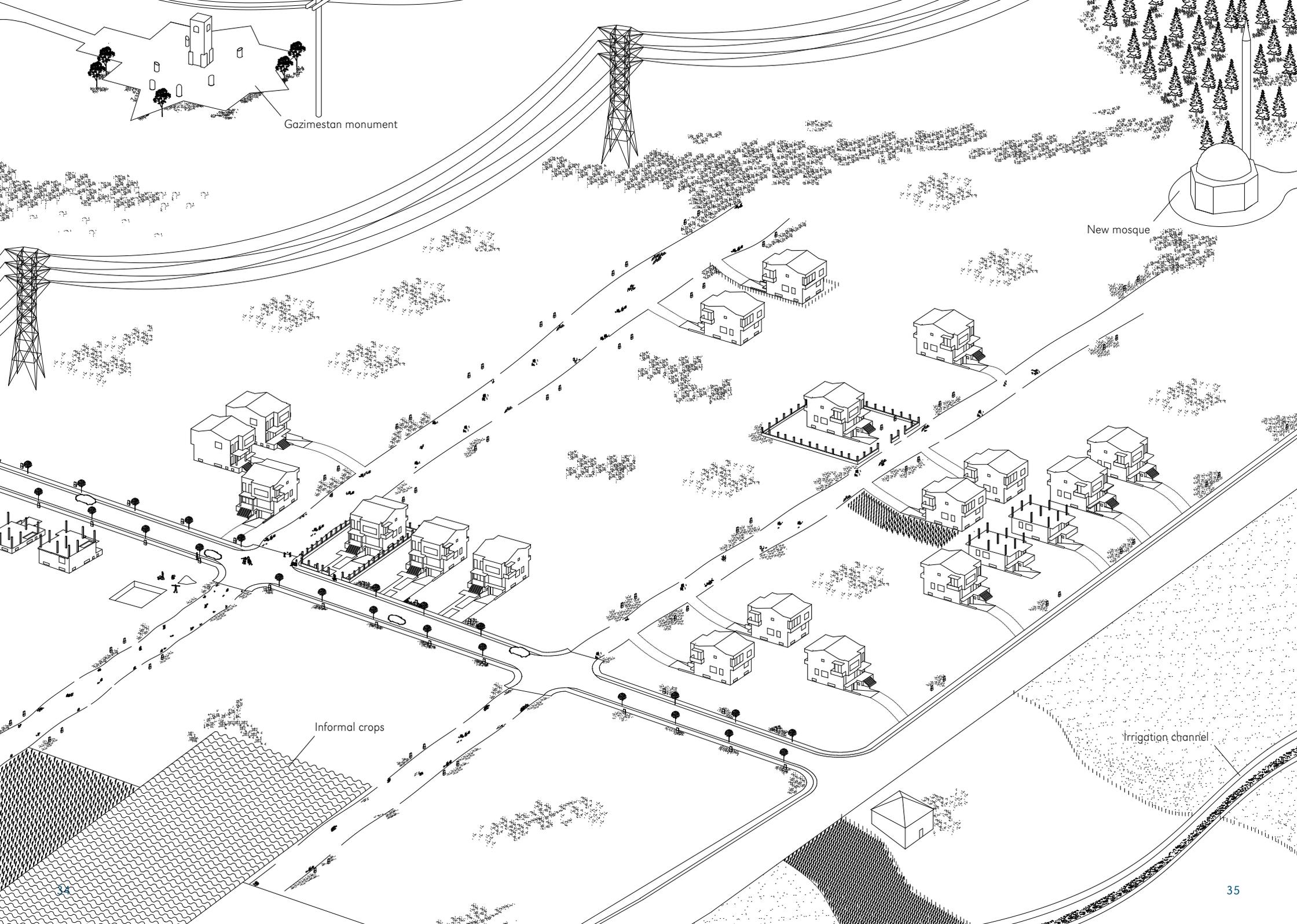


Ground floor



Basement





Gazimestan monument

New mosque

Informal crops

Irrigation channel

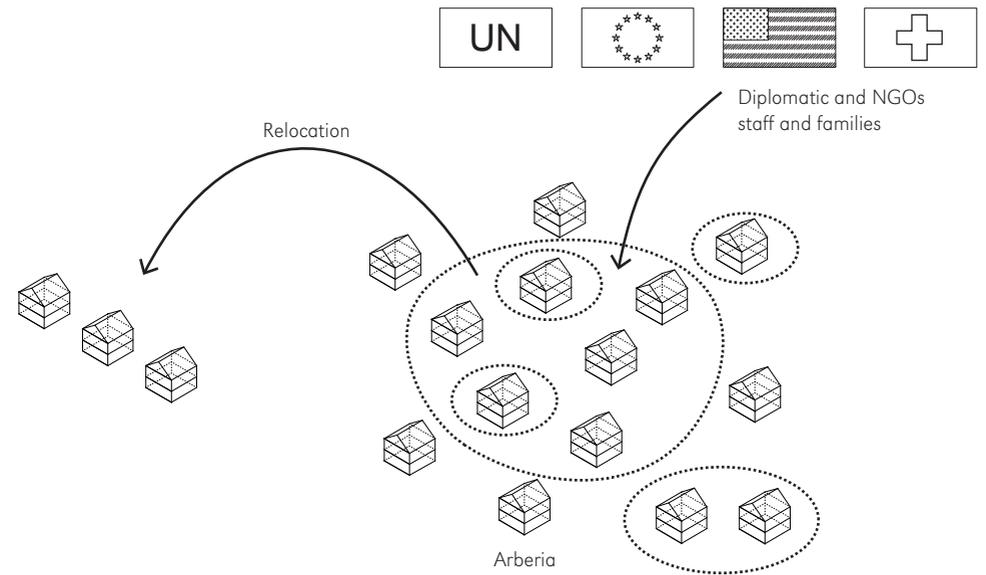
3 Arbëria

The Arbëria neighbourhood, also known as Dragodani, was built around 1983, at the time of Yugoslavia. It was built by architects following an urban plan provided by the administration: streets were paved since the beginning and included sidewalks. The inhabitants living there owned their dwellings, and still today many houses belong to the same families who built them. Nonetheless, the area has changed dramatically after the war, having become the preferred neighbourhood for embassies and expats, given the security measures provided by the nearby KFOR military base. While the original dwellers remain the owners of these houses, most of them are rented out to foreigners, generating a real-estate market that develops at a different pace compared with the rest of Kosovo.

As a consequence of this over-heated real-estate market, what was a more or less well designed neighbourhood is degenerating into chaos. Most of the houses have been expanded to the point where they almost touch each other, their overgrown new heights casting shadows all around them. The embassies have also created a specific urban landscape full of high-security fences, check-points, police officers and CCTV cameras. The few remaining public spaces are simply used as parking lots, as most of the streets and sidewalks.

But despite all the chaos, it's still a lively neighbourhood for foreigners and locals living in Pristina; apart from the feeling of security, many up-scale restaurants and services can be found in the area, and it is a short ride to the city centre. All these reasons make it a residence of choice for many people in the country.

Diellza Zogaj





2003



While Arbëria was a consolidated neighbourhood already in 2003, a process of densification has been going on ever since.

2010



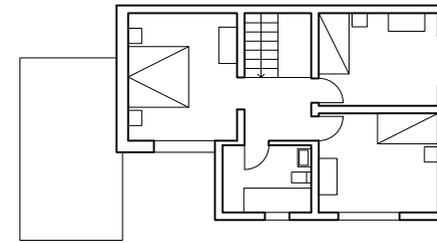
2014



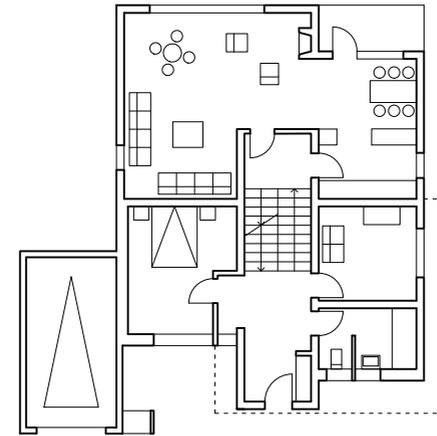
The neighbourhood has a great potential given its location next to the city centre, the possibility of rearranging the forest as a public park and the reopening of the existing railroad for local or regional public transportation.

2017

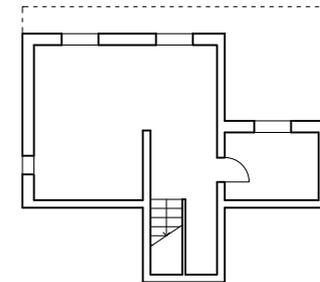




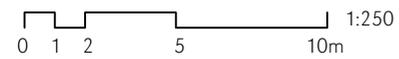
1st floor

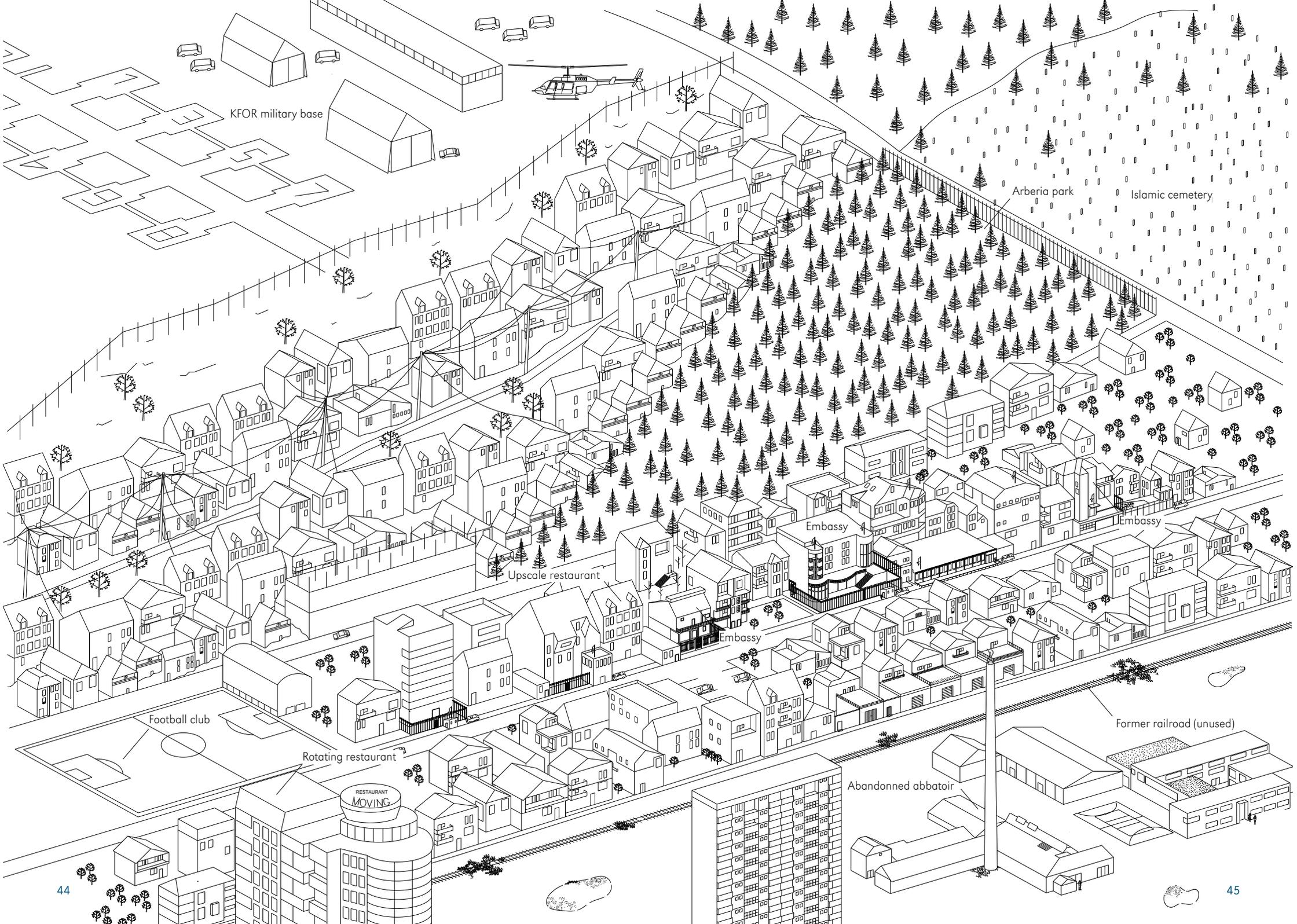


Ground floor



Basement





KFOR military base

Arberia park

Islamic cemetery

Embassy

Embassy

Upscale restaurant

Embassy

Football club

Rotating restaurant

Former railroad (unused)

Abandoned abattoir

RESTAURANT
MOVING

4 Kalabria

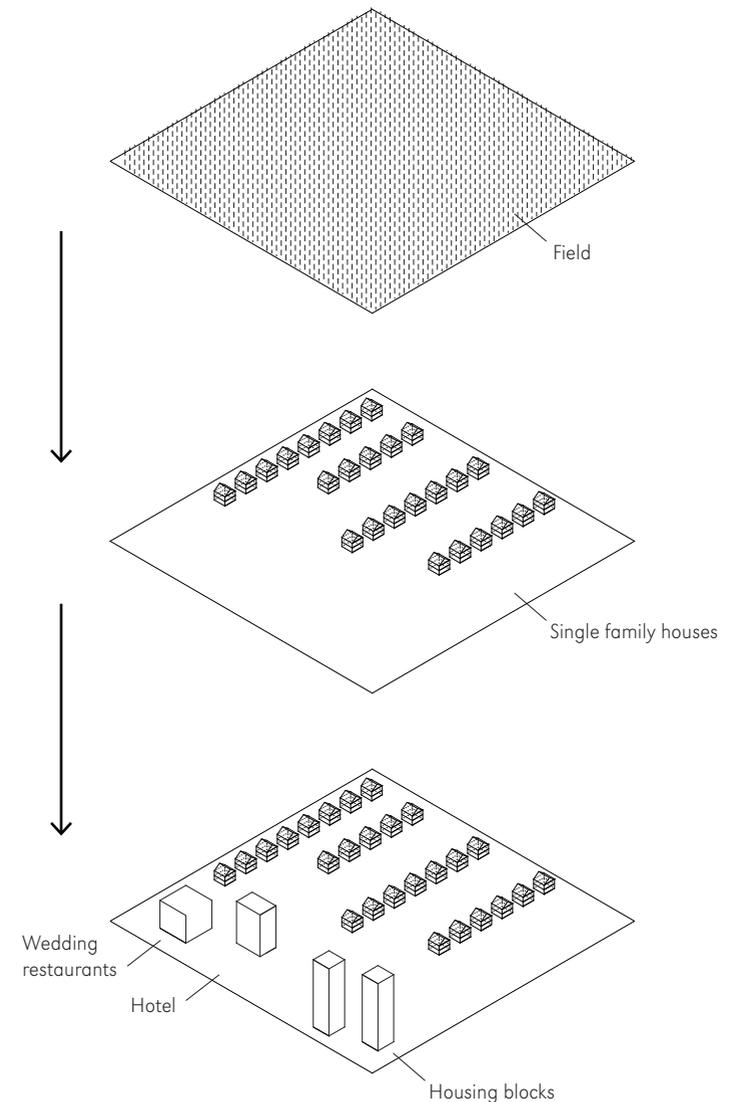
This neighbourhood is on the SouthWest side of Pristina, five minutes by car, fifteen minutes by bus and forty minutes walking distance from the city centre. Isolated enough from the city but still nearby, this suburban area is a very quite place, perfect for having a family life away from the noises of cars, neighbours, etc.

The bus runs every fifteen minutes from 7:00 am till 9:00 pm, linking the area with the university and working places in Pristina. A river used to cross the neighbourhood, but it has been recently covered because of smells as a consequence of being used as a black-water sewage for the city. The recent construction of the two highways linking Pristina with Tirana in Albania and Skopje in Macedonia nearby has made the neighbourhood easily accessible by car from the airport, which has resulted in the construction of a couple of hotels, adding pressure to the economic value of the area. Schools, universities, markets and family medical centres are also located in the neighbourhood.

The land was once owned by one man, and once he passed away the land was inherited by his sons, who started dividing it and selling it into lots. While most houses were built by contractors using designs made by architects or engineers, there are also examples of self-built dwellings following no plan. The exception is one big development of twenty-six equal houses, built by one contractor and sold afterwards individually.

Infrastructure, street lighting and paving was provided by the government, but this didn't include sidewalks or public parks. While the neighbourhood feels safe, it is the lack of centres of activity and sidewalks that makes it uncomfortable to walk from there to the city by night.

Iliriana Hoxha





2003



Given its location near the city centre of Pristina, Kalabria was one of the first suburban neighbourhoods to develop after the war.

2014



Changes in the way of living in Kosovo have popularised apartment building blocks in the last years.

2010



2017

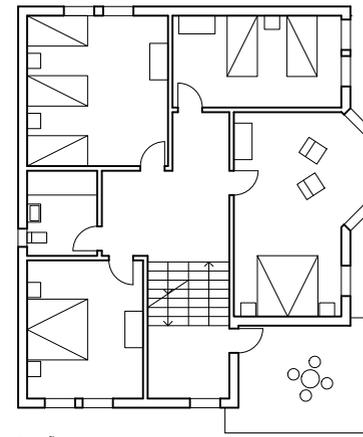




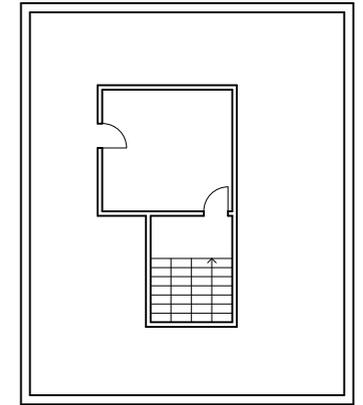
The city will
take care of
itself.
The problem is
the suburbs.



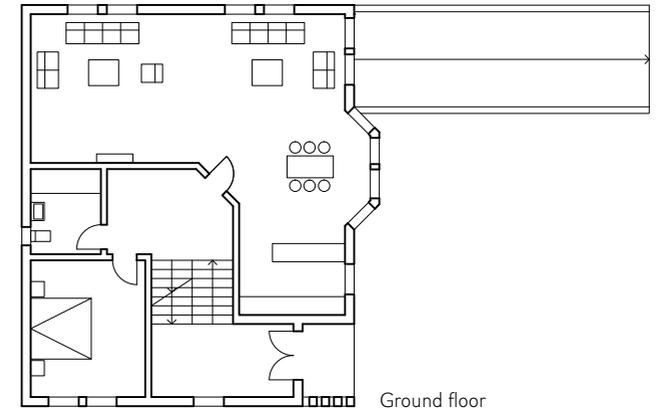
A. Betsky – Excerpt from “Parallel Sprawl - The Film”
(Ibai Rigby), 2017



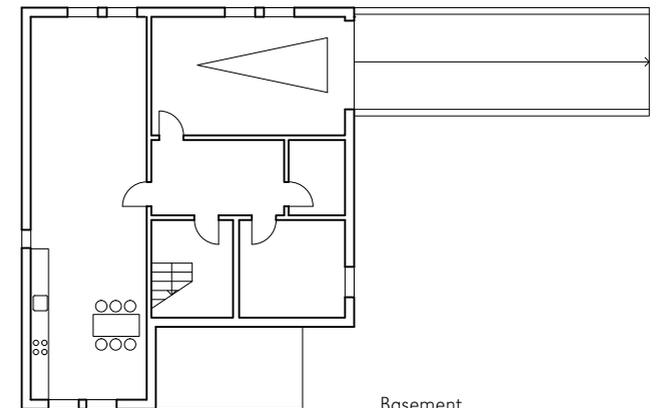
1st floor



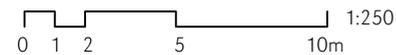
2nd floor

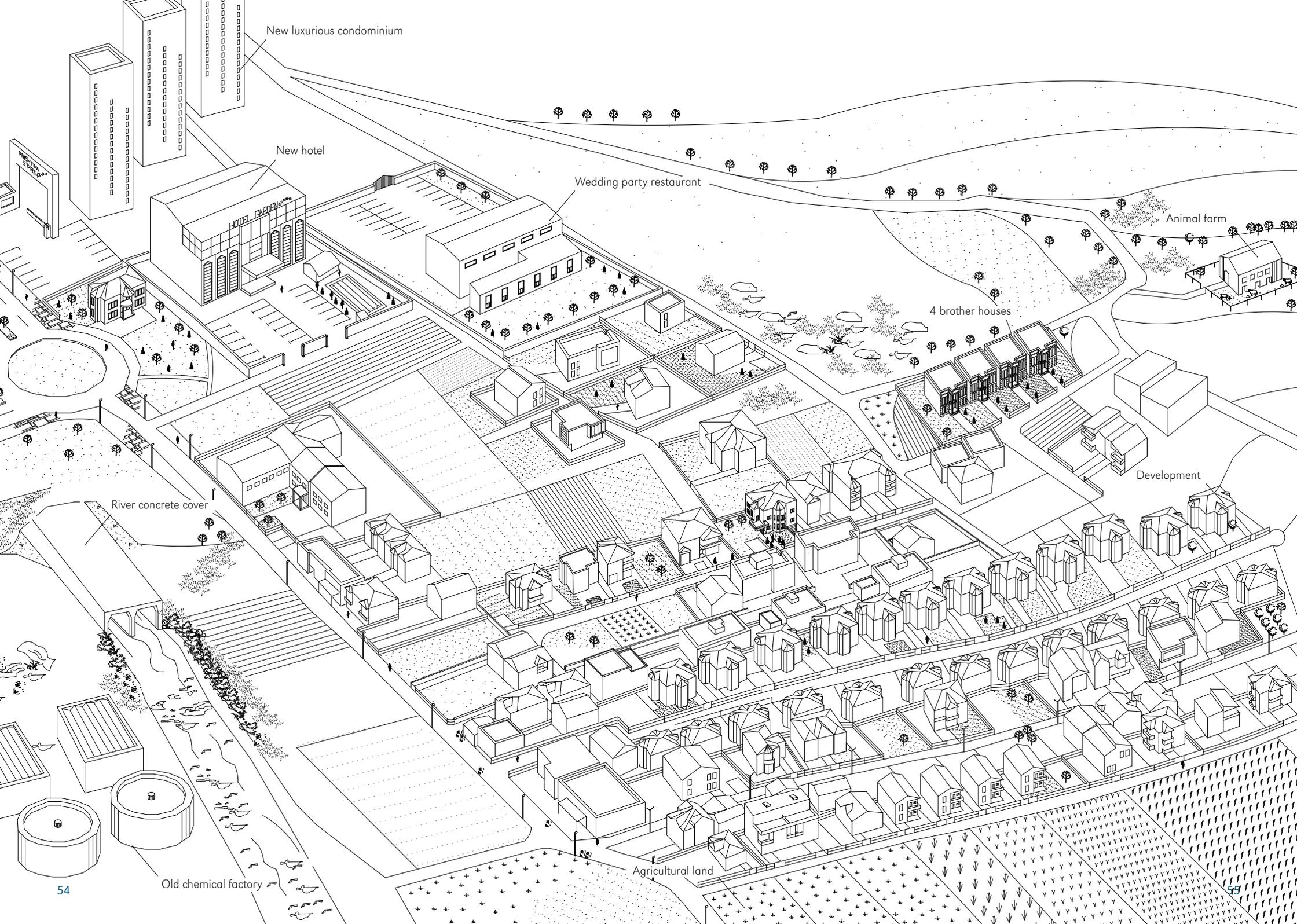


Ground floor



Basement





New luxurious condominium

New hotel

Wedding party restaurant

Animal farm

4 brother houses

Development

River concrete cover

Agricultural land

Old chemical factory

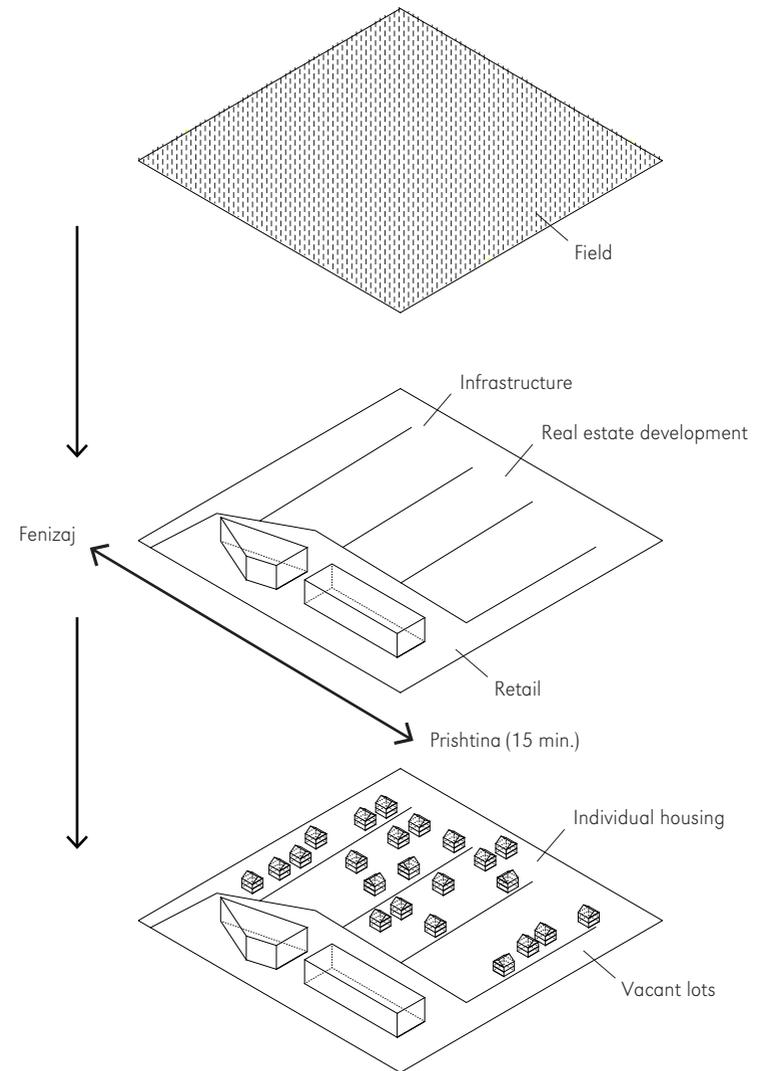
5 Qëndresa

This neighbourhood is in Çagllavicë at the Southern entrance of Pristina. The area was developed by a private company named Al Trade, who re-arranged the lots, built the infrastructure and paved the streets with some help from the government. Nevertheless, the houses were built by the people following architectural plans, mostly for their own inhabitation, but also to sell them later hopefully at a higher price.

There are many works still going on in the area, with people moving in from other parts of Pristina. The land has become more expensive, and this results in new buildings being built in the form of small apartment blocks rather than single-family units. Since it's well served by public transportation, close to Pristina city centre and near the main shopping malls of the city, it is considered an upper class neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the lack of clear urban planning and proper infrastructure has generated some chaotic scenarios where some houses are too close to each other, or garages flood after heavy rains. Without help from the government, all these issues have made the community organise itself, and the inhabitants are working together to organise their own primary and middle school.

Rina Kadolli





2003



Its location just outside Pristina made Qendrese an interesting place to invest in property just after the war. The company AI Trade was in charge of urbanising the whole area.

2014



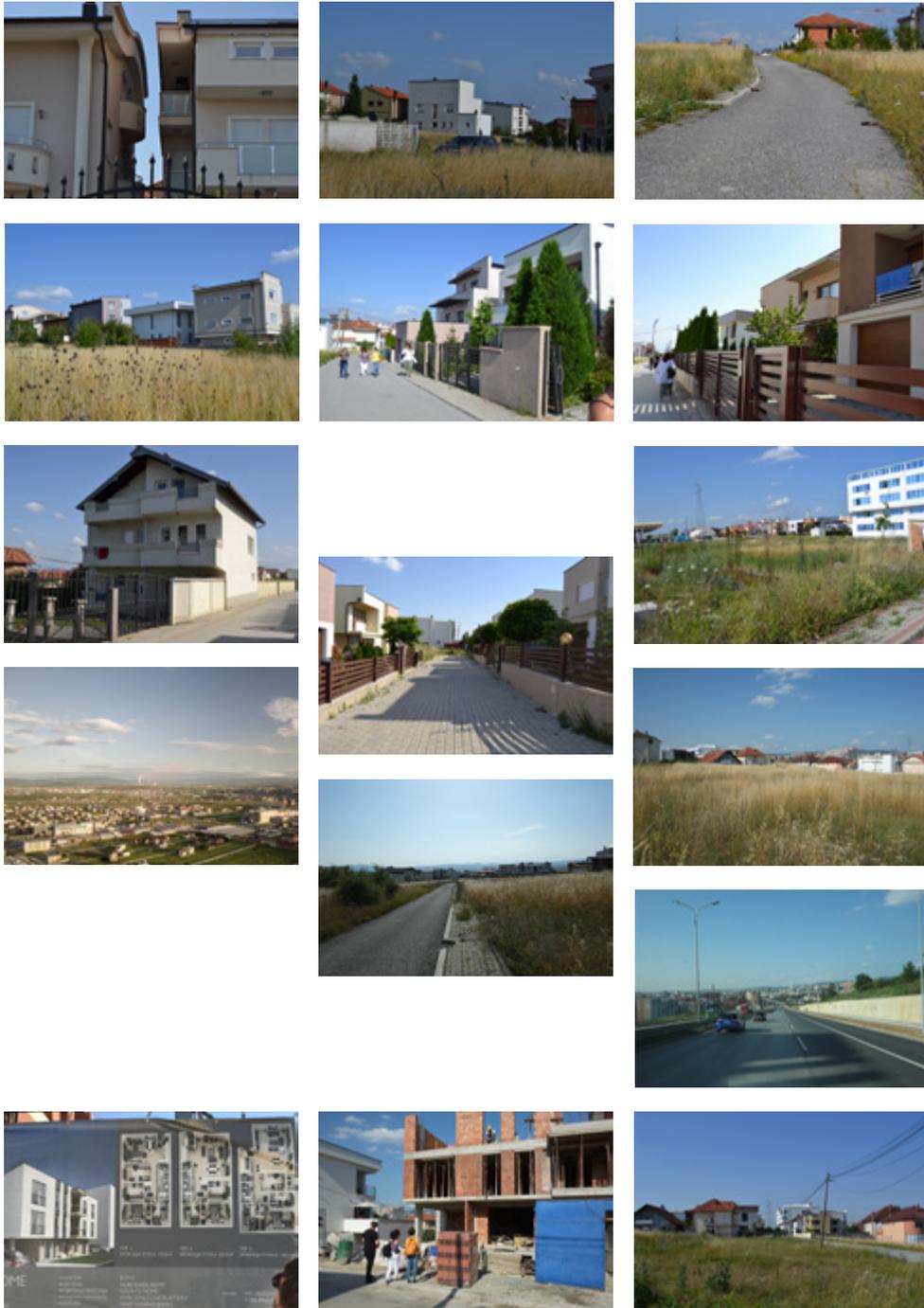
Problems regarding the reliability of the infrastructure in place, together with continuous flooding of garages has stalled growth in the neighbourhood during the last years.

2010

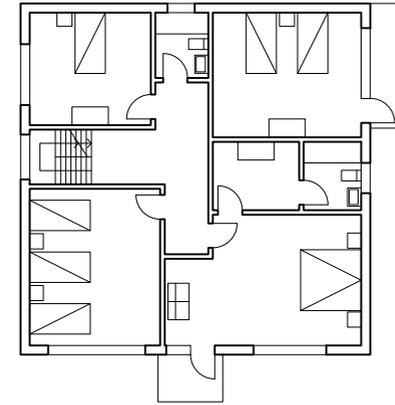


2017

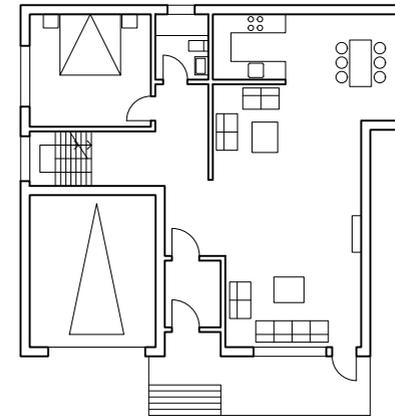




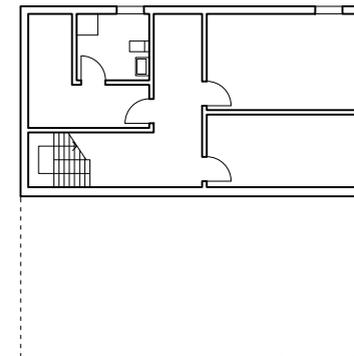
1st floor



Ground floor

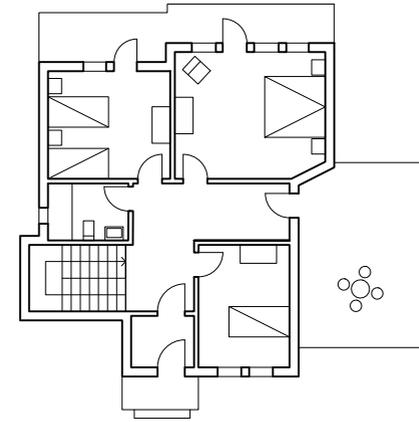


Basement

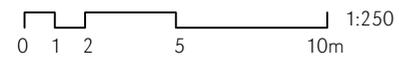
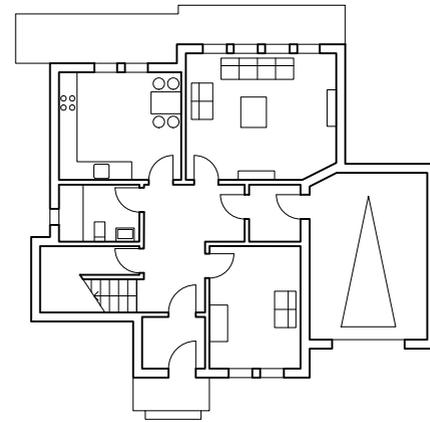


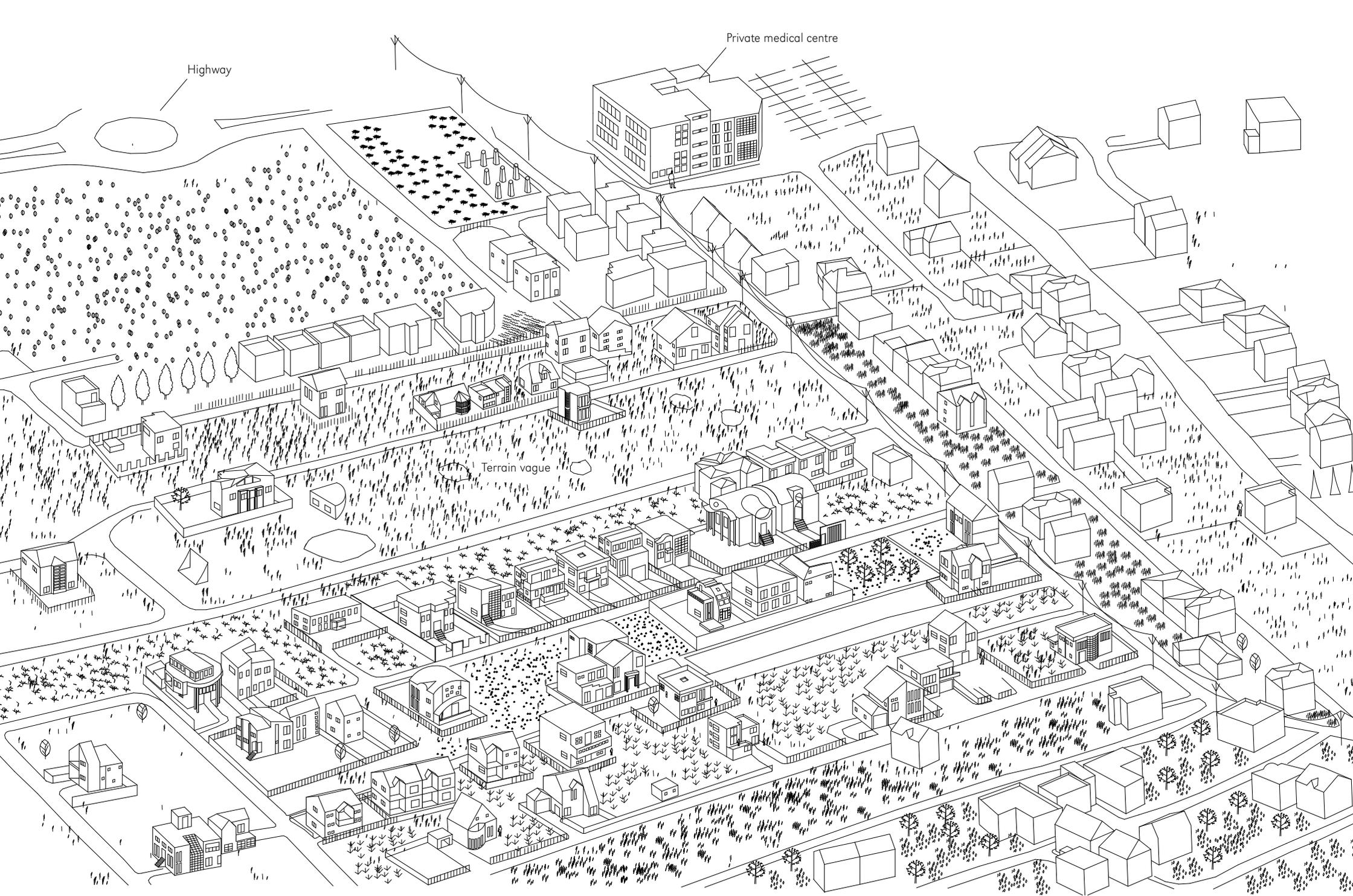


1st floor



Ground floor





Highway

Private medical centre

Terrain vague

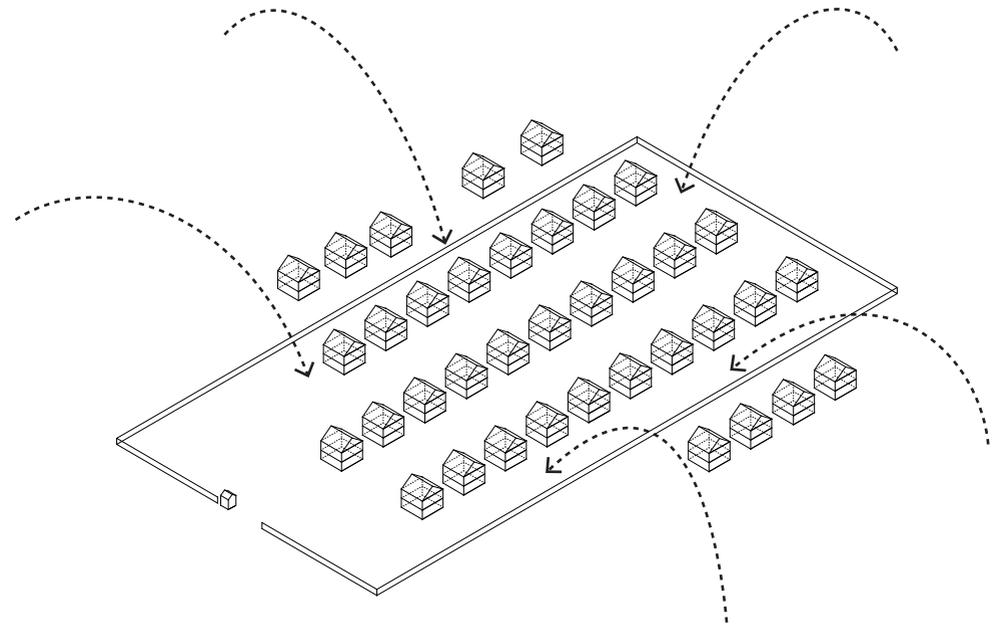
6 Lagjja Niç

Lagjja Niç was formally built by private investors and later resold to individual owners through well established legal formalities. It is considered one of the latest luxury neighbourhoods with modern looking houses in Pristina. Each house has its own fenced garden surrounded by pine-trees to visually separate it from its neighbour. Every house has two floors, with three or four bedrooms, ranging from 180 to 230 square meters, including a garage.

The neighbourhood is strictly residential; all the facilities, public services such as schools or kindergartens, restaurants, shops, etc. are outside. The neighbourhood is guarded by security officers; access is controlled. Streets are well paved and illuminated by night.

Since there are no bus stops nearby, mobility is done by car. Little activities occur in the streets, there's little sense of community and any hint of life happens inside the houses or in the private gardens. Most inhabitants of this neighbourhood moved in from apartments in Pristina.

Fjolla Voca





2003



Lagjja Niç shares the location advantages with Qendresa, but it was built by a different company, who took care of the whole process, from urbanisation to the construction of housing units.

2014



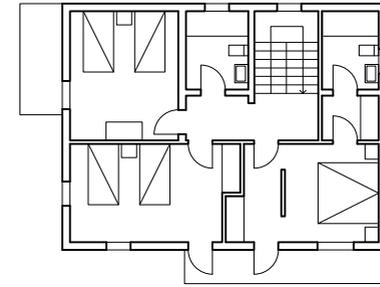
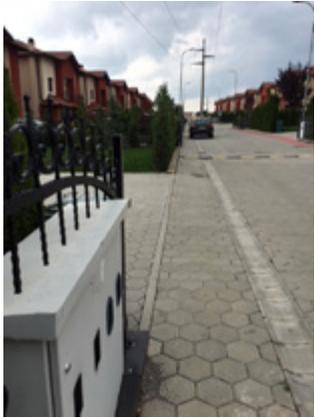
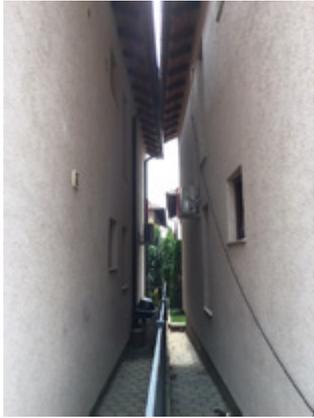
Compared with the neighbouring settlements, Lagjja Niç seems to be working fine.

2010

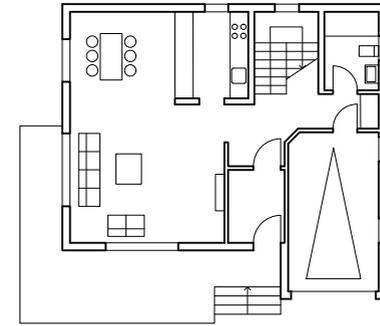


2017



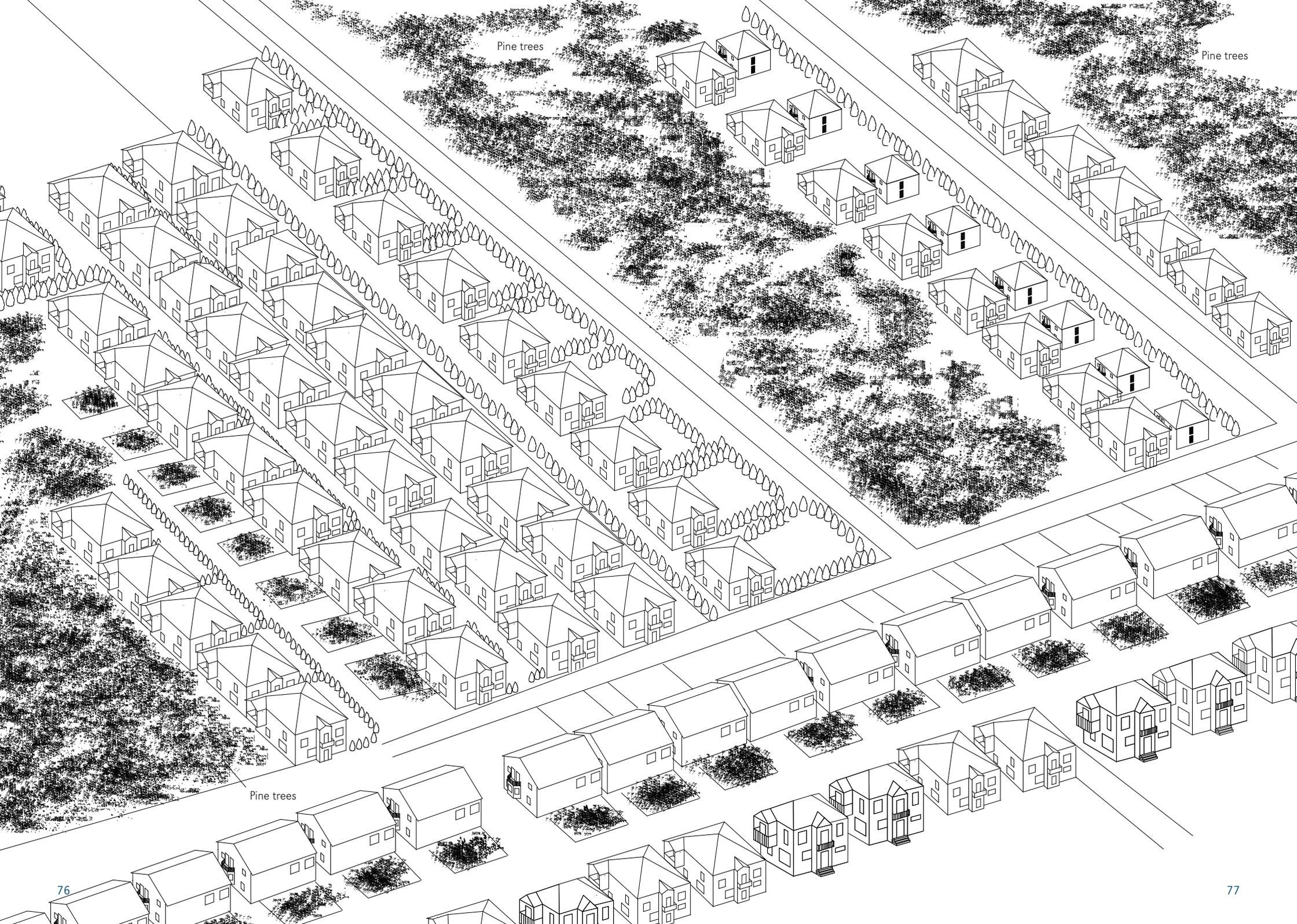


1st floor



Ground floor





Pine trees

Pine trees

Pine trees

7 Marigona

The countryside surrounds the car. All what eyes can see is land. In the distance, a wall. The driver tells us the story of this residence, how everything came to be. Apparently, an investor contacted the government with an idea for a gated community. After they reached an agreement, the investor began reshaping and arranging the lands, connecting the place with infrastructure networks. An architecture office started working on the projects for every house as well as the shopping centre, the middle school and the kindergarten.

As we approach the entrance, the security officer opens the gate allowing us inside. The streets are quiet as the sun is high in the sky. We're told that people have a one hundred year ownership contract for their houses, after which the investor will have the power to take them back. The government, in agreement with the investor, could also demolish the whole neighbourhood if needed.

Silence seeps inside the car. Outside the windows some people can be seen walking in the streets. The roads are wide enough for two cars to pass, with side walks and space for parallel parking on both sides underneath planted trees. While some of dwellers work in the neighbourhood, the great majority commutes outside the residential area for work. A bus linking Marigona with the city centre of Pristina passes every hour from 6:45 in the morning till 10pm and is mostly used by students; those who work use their own cars. Since the trip takes around half an hour by car, the cost of taking taxi is very expensive and therefore little used.

As the car slows down, we can notice that all the houses have garages inside, which makes the streets empty of cars and safe for walking without care. There are seven different types of houses, each type clustered in groups, so each part of the gated community groups people with a similar income.

The car stops. Outside, a low fence with cypresses behind it greets the visitor, a mailbox at the side of the door. The pavement is interrupted with trees that are all the same, the public lights taller than the houses themselves. On the street corners small plaques indicate the names of each street: California, Hawaii, New York, Nevada, Iowa are only some of many. People walk around unbothered and some kids play on the street as the neighbourhood is safe all day round, every day. CCTV cameras on each corner film everything going on.

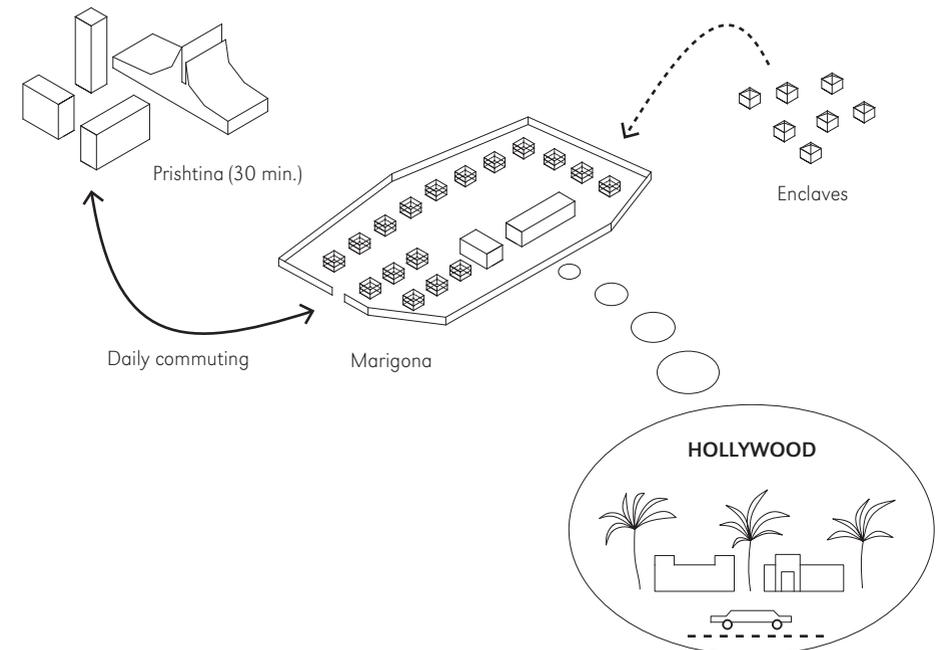
The woman opens the gate, stepping aside to let us in. A carpet of grass surrounds the only paved part that leads to the entrance door. To the left the fence is hidden behind dense trees to prevent the view from the neighbours

they don't talk to, while to the right the fence is low; they do talk with those neighbours. Inside, the house looks modern, with expensive furniture are all over the place. The woman explains that the some owners did changes to the original interior design, but that they were not allowed to change the outside appearance of the house.

People here are perceived as wealthy; Marigona even appears in a rap video-clip featuring the ultra-rich of Kosovo. But despite their high status, they still remain human and need shopping malls, restaurants, fitness centres, parks, etc. as anybody else. Everything is provided within the gated community.

As the woman walks outside her house, she speaks about her neighbours. Some moved from the towns around the residence for safety and other personal reasons, while others got the houses as a compensation for the work they did here. They are mostly happy, the ones that live here (as some also live abroad), even though the isolated ambience of the community is sometimes suffocating and makes it feel as an American dollhouse. The car then drives away, outside of the gates and brings us back to the city.

Vjosa Saraçini & Bijona Trakaniqi





2003



Created ex-novo in the middle of agricultural land, far away from the city and the main roads, building Marigona seemed at the time a quite risky investment.

2014



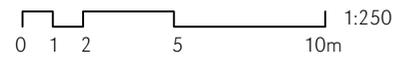
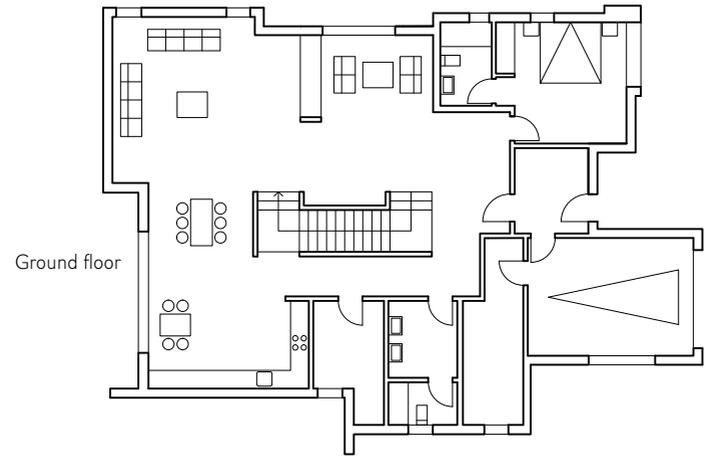
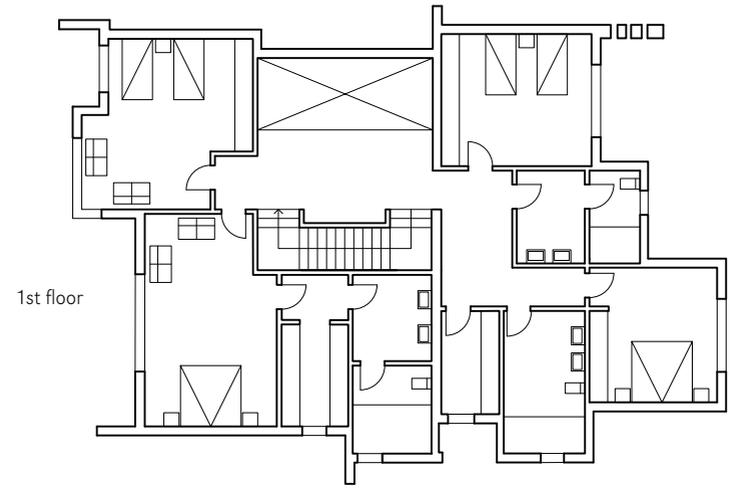
Nevertheless, it's success in presenting itself as a golden standard of luxury housing in Kosovo, together with the exclusiveness of the shopping mall inside, it has kept expanding ever since.

2010



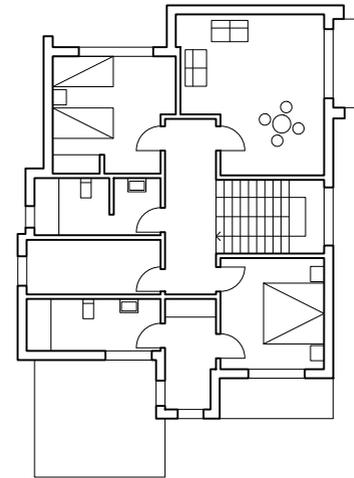
2017



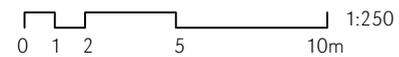
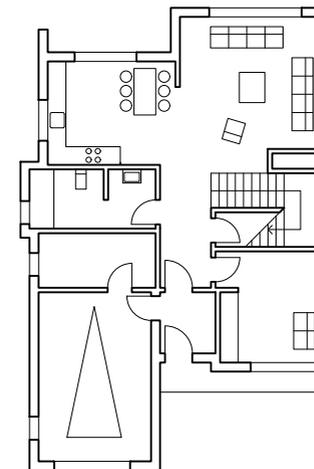


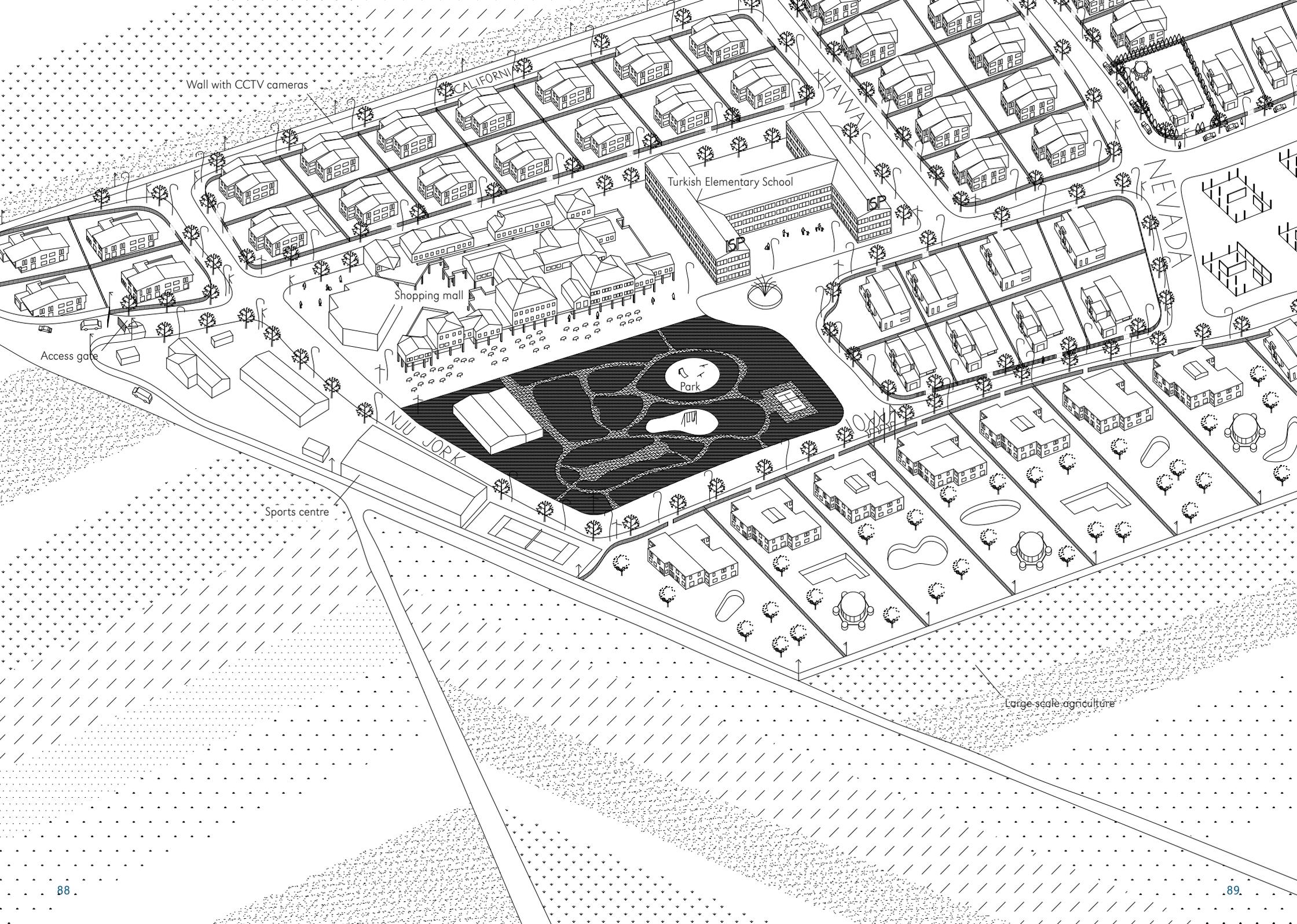


1st floor



Ground floor





Wall with CCTV cameras

CALIFORNIA

HAWAII

NEVADA

Turkish Elementary School

Shopping mall

Park

NEW YORK

Sports centre

Large-scale agriculture

8 Gjilan – Balec

Balec is an old neighbourhood in Gjilan. The sprawl in this part of the city started in the 70s, with inhabitants moving in from the rural parts nearby, such as Kamenica, Presevo and Bujanovac. The main reason for this migration was the need for better living conditions.

Previously, the land was agricultural and it was the landlord who rearranged the lots to make it part of the city. The construction of the houses started gradually by individual owners, without following any regulation plan. The infrastructure network and paving of the streets was done afterwards by the public administration.

Most of the inhabitants made their own plans and organised themselves the construction of their houses, leaving the architects out of this process. Since there was no urban plan to start with, the houses were built without any boundaries, that is, without plot borders. Only after Kosovo organised a legalisation process for such cases, did these houses become legal. But from now on, every new construction should follow urban planning rules, which means that an architect or engineer must be involved. In any case, they all have now ownership documents and the government can only make changes if right compensation is given and a majority of house-owners agree to do so.

Originally, houses were built according to local precedents and to the needs of the families. But in the late 90s, a new area started, with new buildings following different designs influenced by foreign cultures.

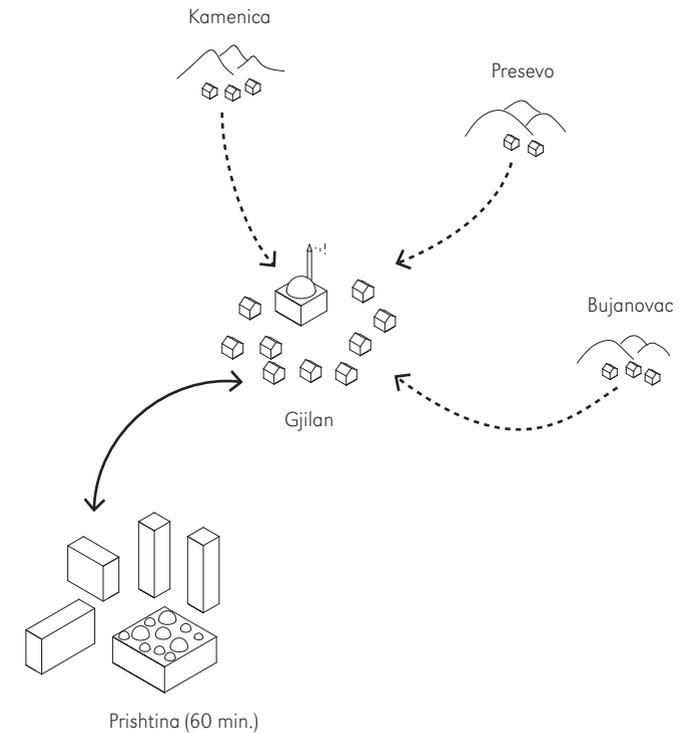
The neighbourhood is relatively safe and there are rarely any incidents. It is not guarded by security guards or surveillance equipments, since there is always someone in the streets. There is not so much traffic on the streets, because the streets are narrow. Street-lamps are located in some parts at long intervals but it is enough.

People of Balec are very friendly and communicative, you see old people walking around and children playing even if the place doesn't really have other public spaces apart from the street. There's a lot of interaction between neighbours, which tells us that it isn't just a place for sleep. The area gets very lively whenever there is a football match in town. The stadium is located a few meters away and Gjilan is known for its football matches. Other facilities in the neighbourhood are: the mosque, a medical center, two primary schools, all the high schools of the city, the university,

kindergarden and further away, a park. Nonetheless, many people must still commute to Pristina, around an hour away by bus or car, either for studies or for work.

From outside, Balec is considered a crowded place, with a high density of buildings, but other than that, it offers much more because of its location in the city and the lively environment, created mostly by its people.

Etleva Arifi





2003



The size of Gjiilan has probably helped in maintaining the urbanisation process under some sort of control, compared with the chaotic growth of Pristina.

2014



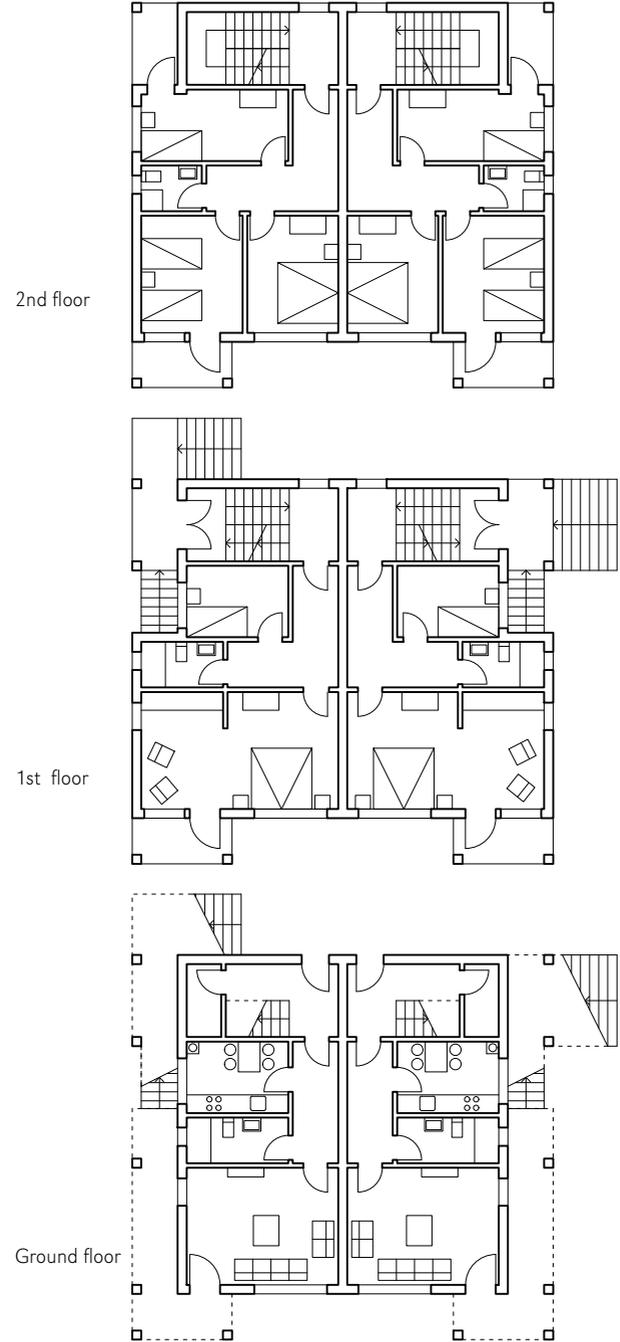
Gjiilan is still today a compact enclave, only limited by its isolation from main roads. The situation might improve once a new highway makes it's way into the city improving connections with Pristina and neighbouring areas in Macedonia and Serbia.

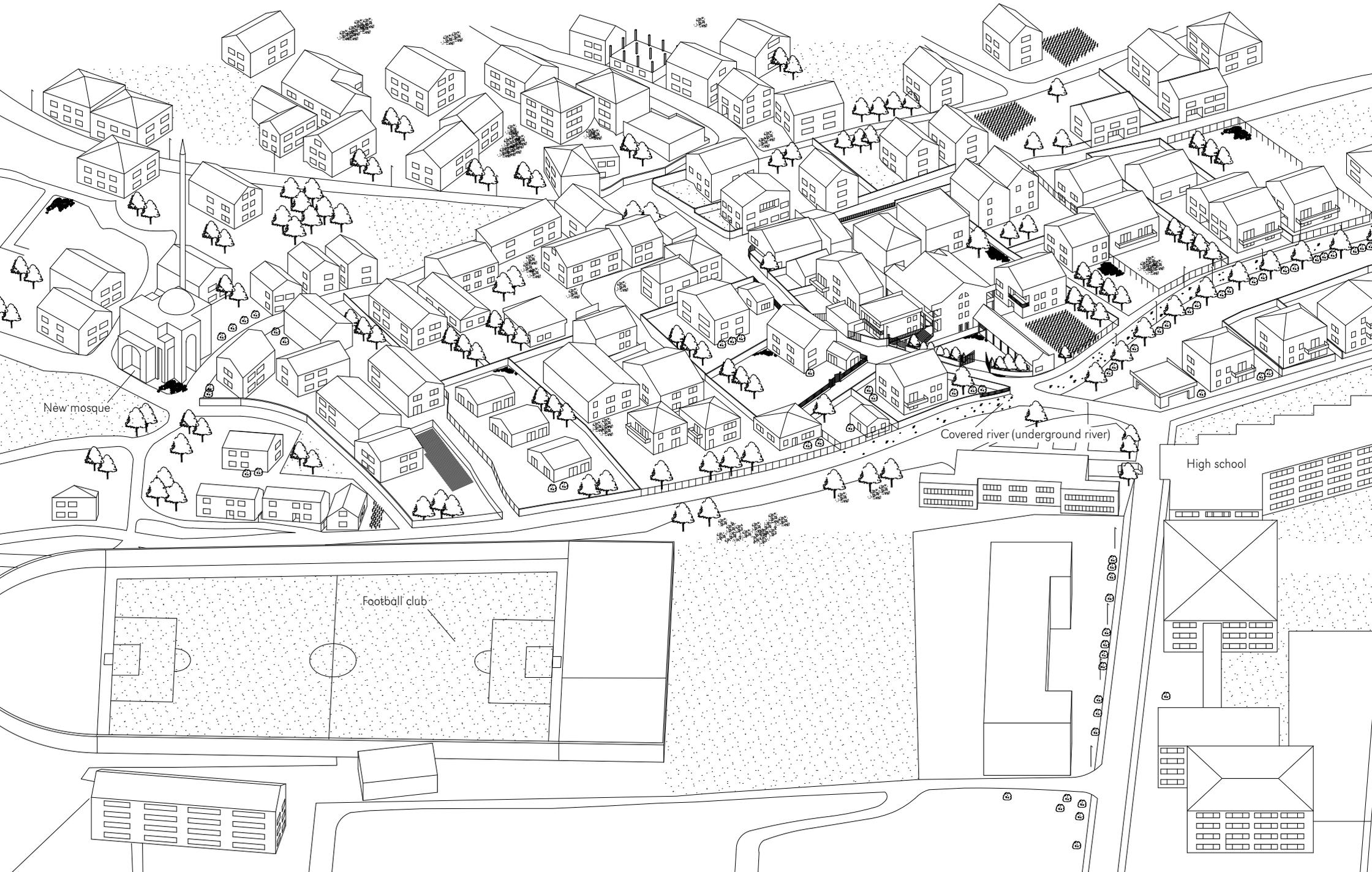
2010



2017







New mosque

Football club

Covered river (underground river)

High school

Towards Post-urbanism

A closer sight to the sprawling landscapes of Kosovo revealed some particularities that in a certain way exposed the complexities of urban development today and offered insights into what might be the conditions of our territories in the future.

We can quote first how corruption and a large informal economy in Kosovo translate in low tax income, and therefore a weak public sector. Expensive public buildings and infrastructure can sometimes become more of a burden than an asset for populations with limited resources; as the recent controversies around the Pristina airport show. Also, given the current global trend of lowering taxes, epitomized with Trump's last tax reform, elites are getting used to pay less and less taxes, a situation that only a large disruption (war, climate change) will be able to change: municipalities all over the globe could be soon dealing with budgets similar to those in Kosovo. To which is added that the unemployment rates of Kosovo (around 30%) are close to those expected in a future where technology and artificial intelligence might get rid of most routine and unskilled jobs (47% of US jobs).

In this context we must highlight that the radical transition from a planned economy to a market economy has resulted in the creation of an unequal society, where the elites segregate themselves from the rest in gated communities, something we start to see more often in Western Europe.

In other vein the return of the spiritual is something that is happening all across the world but it is strikingly visible in former socialist countries where religion had completely disappeared from the landscape. Hundreds of mosques have been built in Kosovo during the last 10 years, especially in rural areas.

Despite these almost apocalyptic views, the sprawling landscapes of Kosovo offer some hints of what the solutions might be, becoming a laboratory for tomorrow's urbanity, in a similar way the science of urban planning as we know it was created to find solutions to the quick changes occurred in 19th century industrial cities.

For instance, the initial capital to build an individual house is lesser than that needed for an apartment block, democratizing the activity of building and developing land where weak municipal governments cannot take the initiative. Thereby, small suburban houses can be self-built by its occupants, making use of other resources such as time.

English

In the same way incremental construction that is, building by phases, might allow low income families access to housing without going through financial products such as mortgages. And material experimentation as well might be easier in smaller building sites than in large construction programs.

An unemployed family can also grow its own food or manage its own small farm in a post-urban house, producing its own compost and generating its own energy, something unthinkable in a city apartment. Likewise a single-family unit can be easier adapted to the professional needs of its occupants: a garage can become a shop or a kindergarten!

On the other hand, we're globally confronted to other possible scenarios that encourage us to consider the sprawl as a laboratory for future habitats:

1 – Large chunks of city centers being bought over and re-developed into private campuses by corporate capital, such as the Amazon offices in Seattle (occupying around 20% of all inner city office space), the Google campus in Berlin and whatever is left being rented out through Airbnb the historic urban centers are losing citizens, diversity and texture, becoming de-urbanised, using the terms by Saskia Sassen, in favour of the less dense suburban areas.

2 – The industrialization of agriculture, which is encouraged to feed a still growing global population, and the large scale use of pesticides, genetically modified crops, etc., most of what is today considered "rural" land will be completely unfit for natural life. However, the green spaces in the low density suburban areas could be transformed to favour the cohabitation of species; if cities in the 20th century were traditionally designed for human beings, the 21st century suburb (or ALTER-urb) should be designed for all species (a hard case to argue when cities seem today designed only to benefit the few).

3 – The changing patterns of precipitation, cities and urban centers are more likely to be flooded. A less dense form of land occupation, integrating permeable surfaces, storm water retention landscapes, ponds and wetlands is certainly more appropriate. Watersheds, ecological corridors and services as well as seasonal landscape dynamics should be considered as important as the need for retail, resources and mobility.

4 – As the invention of the automobile revolutionised the city in the early 20th century, shared mobility, automation and electrification of cars will revolutionise cities in the 21st century. Since passengers will be able to communicate, work and even rest in their cars, autonomous vehicles may accelerate sprawl by increasing the distances people are willing to commute. Shared mobility might allow the use of cars by people who can't afford car ownership. Electrification might remove part of the disadvantages, such as pollution, that car mobility has today.

5 – If the car killed the main street across the US, online retail is slowly killing brick-and-mortar shops and shopping malls. And together with the development of drone transportation of goods, the sprawling city might be better equipped for future ways of commerce than the dense traditional city, where thanks to 3D printing and the shared economy every suburban consumer might become a producer and every house a factory.

6 – All this takes us to the old idea of telecommuting or distance working, that might finally take off.

These and other ideas encourage us to abandon the dogmatic view that urban sprawl has no future in human being habitat. Our cities, as we have planned, are not the only open possibility for an future adequate human settlement. It is now time to begin to consider with due attention other forms of habitats that may have to do with start provincializing our territories.

We must also raise the question of territorial governance, building policies, land-use and the potential decentralization of these is therefore more relevant today. We must go beyond the dominance of the city over the rural, and imagine a more decentralized planning system that federates the communities.

But we're not defending here one urban model over another, nor romanticizing the resource fullness of the suburban poor we found in Kosovo, but looking closely at what has been achieved there and see how some solutions might be optimized through architectural design. In similar ways biodiversity is important in ecosystems because it allows organisms to adapt to changes in the environment, what we're suggesting here is that a redundancy of urban systems is needed to better tackle the important challenges we will be facing in the future.

Vers le post-urbanisme

Un examen plus attentif des paysages tentaculaires du Kosovo a révélé des particularités qui, d'une certaine manière, mettaient en lumière les complexités du développement urbain et donnaient un aperçu de ce que pourraient être les conditions de nos territoires à l'avenir.

Nous pouvons citer en premier lieu comment la corruption et une économie informelle importante au Kosovo se traduisent par des revenus fiscaux faibles, et donc un secteur public faible. Les bâtiments publics et les infrastructures coûteuses peuvent parfois devenir un fardeau plus qu'un atout pour les populations aux ressources limitées ; comme les récentes controverses autour de l'aéroport de Pristina. En outre, compte tenu de la tendance mondiale actuelle à la baisse des impôts, illustrée par la dernière réforme fiscale de Trump, les élites s'habituent à payer de moins en moins d'impôt, une situation que seules les grandes villes peuvent affronter. A cela s'ajoute que les taux de chômage du Kosovo (environ 30%) sont proches de ceux attendus dans un avenir où la technologie et l'intelligence artificielle pourraient éliminer la plupart des emplois courants et non qualifiés (47% des emplois américains par exemple).

Dans ce contexte, nous devons souligner que la transition radicale d'une économie planifiée vers une économie de marché a abouti à la création d'une société inégalitaire, où les élites se séparent des autres communautés, ce que nous commençons à voir plus souvent en Europe occidentale aussi.

Dans une veine similaire, le retour du spirituel est quelque chose qui se produit partout dans le monde, mais il est remarquablement visible dans les anciens pays socialistes où la religion avait complètement disparu du paysage. Des centaines de mosquées ont été construites au Kosovo au cours des dix dernières années, en particulier dans les zones rurales.

En dépit de ces vues presque apocalyptiques, les paysages tentaculaires du Kosovo offrent quelques indications sur ce que pourraient être les solutions, devenant un laboratoire pour l'urbanité de demain, de la même manière que la science de l'urbanisme a été créée pour trouver des solutions aux changements rapides qui se sont produits dans les villes industrielles du 19^e siècle.

Par exemple, le capital initial pour construire une maison individuelle est inférieur à celui nécessaire pour un immeuble, la démocratisation de

Français

l'activité de construction et de développement de terrains où les gouvernements municipaux faibles ne peuvent pas prendre l'initiative. Ainsi, les petites maisons de banlieue peuvent être construites par leurs occupants, en utilisant d'autres ressources comme le temps.

De la même manière, la construction progressive, qui se construit par phases, pourrait permettre aux familles à faible revenu d'accéder au logement sans passer par des produits financiers tels que des hypothèques. De plus, l'expérimentation des matériaux pourrait être plus facile dans les petits chantiers que dans les grands programmes de construction.

Une famille sans emploi peut également produire sa propre nourriture ou gérer sa propre petite ferme dans une maison post-urbaine, en produisant son propre compost et en générant sa propre énergie, ce qui est impensable dans un appartement en ville. De même, une unité individuelle peut être plus facilement adaptée aux besoins professionnels de ses occupants : un garage peut devenir un magasin ou un jardin d'enfants !

D'autre part, nous sommes confrontés globalement à d'autres scénarios possibles qui nous encouragent à considérer l'étalement comme un laboratoire pour les habitats futurs :

1 – Les centres-villes sont en train d'être rachetés et transformés en campus privés par le capital de sociétés, comme les bureaux d'*Amazon* à Seattle (occupant environ 20% de tous les bureaux du centre-ville), le campus de Berlin et tout ce qui reste loués par *Airbnb*, les centres urbains historiques perdent des citoyens, de la diversité et de la texture, se désurbanisant en utilisant les termes de Saskia Sassen, en faveur des banlieues moins denses.

2 – L'industrialisation de l'agriculture, qui est encouragée à nourrir une population mondiale toujours croissante, et l'utilisation à grande échelle de pesticides, de cultures génétiquement modifiées, etc., la plupart des terres aujourd'hui considérées comme « rurales » seront totalement impropres à la vie naturelle. Cependant, les espaces verts des banlieues à faible densité pourraient être transformés pour favoriser la cohabitation des espèces ; Si les villes du 20^e siècle étaient traditionnellement conçues pour des êtres humains, la banlieue du 21^e siècle (ou ALTER-urb) devrait être conçue pour toutes les espèces (un cas difficile à argumenter lorsque les villes semblent aujourd'hui conçues uniquement pour le petit nombre).

3 – Les tendances changeantes des précipitations, des villes et des centres urbains sont plus susceptibles d’être inondées. Une forme d’occupation du sol moins dense, intégrant des surfaces perméables, des paysages de rétention des eaux pluviales, des étangs et des zones humides est certainement plus appropriée. Les bassins versants, les corridors et services écologiques ainsi que la dynamique saisonnière du paysage devraient être considérés comme aussi importants que les besoins en matière de vente au détail, de ressources et de mobilité.

4 – Comme l’invention de l’automobile a révolutionné la ville au début du 20^e siècle, la mobilité partagée, l’automatisation et l’électrification des voitures vont révolutionner les villes du 21^e siècle. Les passagers étant capables de communiquer, de travailler et même de se reposer dans leur voiture, les véhicules autonomes peuvent accélérer l’expansion en augmentant les distances que les gens sont prêts à faire. La mobilité partagée pourrait permettre l’utilisation de voitures par des personnes qui ne peuvent pas se permettre de posséder une voiture. L’électrification pourrait éliminer une partie des inconvénients, tels que la pollution, que la mobilité automobile a aujourd’hui.

5 – Si la voiture a tué la rue principale à travers les États-Unis, la vente au détail en ligne tue lentement les magasins et les centres commerciaux. Et avec le développement du transport de marchandises par drone, la ville tentaculaire pourrait être mieux équipée pour les futurs modes de commerce que la ville traditionnelle dense où, grâce à l’impression 3D et à l’économie partagée, tous les consommateurs de banlieue peuvent devenir producteurs et usines. .

6 – Tout cela nous amène à la vieille idée du télétravail ou du travail à distance, qui pourrait enfin prendre son envol.

Ces idées et d’autres nous incitent à abandonner la conception dogmatique selon laquelle l’étalement urbain n’a pas d’avenir dans l’habitat humain. Nos villes, comme nous l’avons prévu, ne sont pas la seule possibilité ouverte pour un futur établissement humain adéquat. Il est maintenant temps de commencer à examiner avec une attention particulière les autres formes d’habitat qui pourraient être liées au début de la provincialisation de nos territoires.

Nous devons également aborder la question de la gouvernance territoriale, des politiques de construction, de l’utilisation des sols et la décentralisation potentielle de celles-ci est donc plus pertinente aujourd’hui. Nous devons aller au-delà de la domination de la ville sur les zones rurales et imaginer un système de planification plus décentralisé qui fédère les communautés.

Mais nous ne défendons pas ici un modèle urbain par rapport à un autre, ni ne romançons la richesse des banlieues pauvres au Kosovo, mais examinons de près ce qui a été réalisé et voyons comment certaines solutions pourraient être optimisées grâce à la conception architecturale. De la même manière que la biodiversité est importante dans les écosystèmes car elle permet aux organismes de s’adapter aux changements de l’environnement, nous suggérons ici qu’une redondance des systèmes urbains est nécessaire pour mieux relever les défis importants auxquels nous serons confrontés à l’avenir.



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