



Cities

Ethnographic Mapping in London

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Cities Research Group,

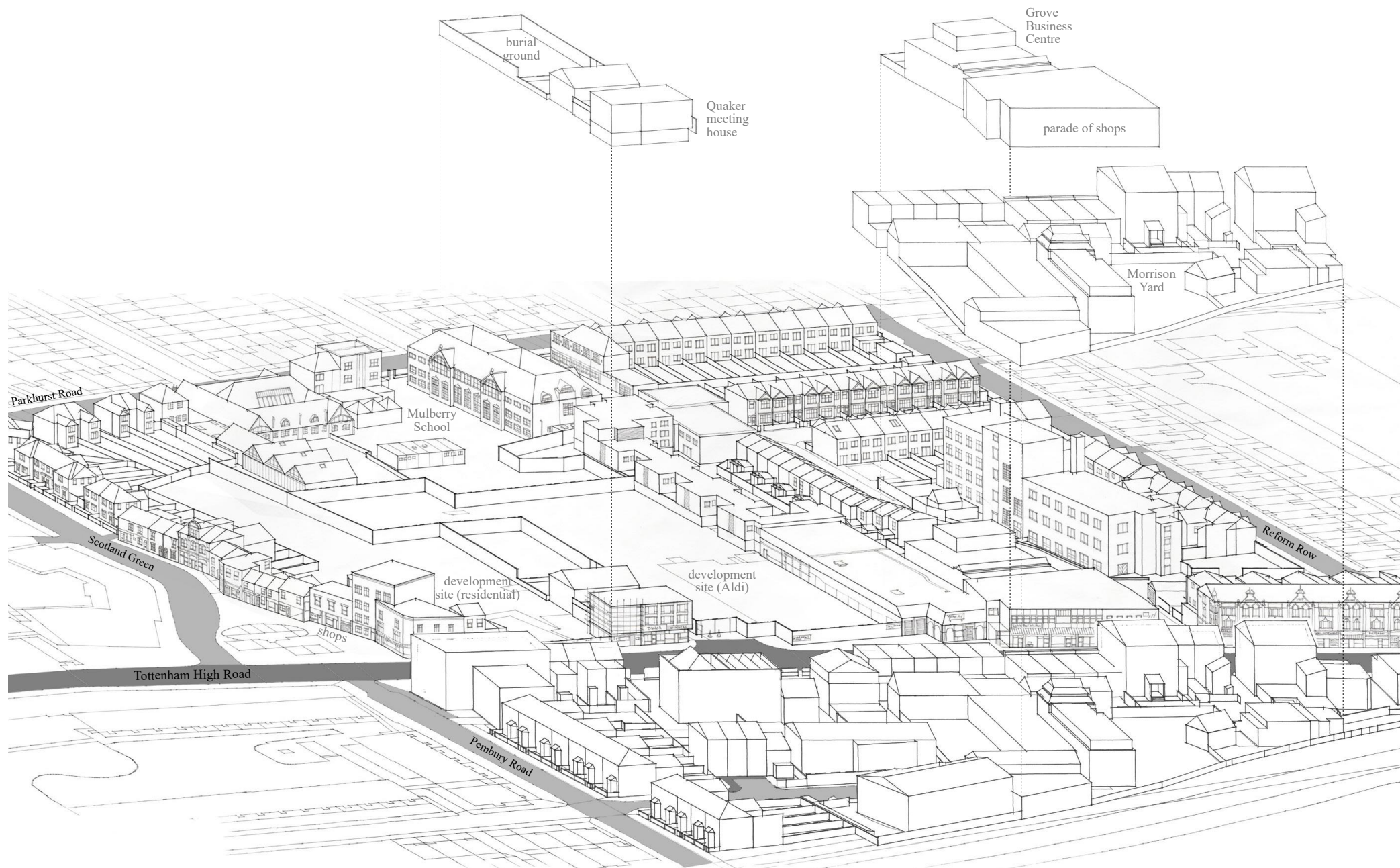
London Metropolitan University

SPACETIME MATTERS Lecture Series at TU Berlin, 3rd July 2023

Today's talk

- **What I did** during my PhD and subsequent research
- **What I found**
- **Why it matters** to think about the city in terms of both time & space

What I did



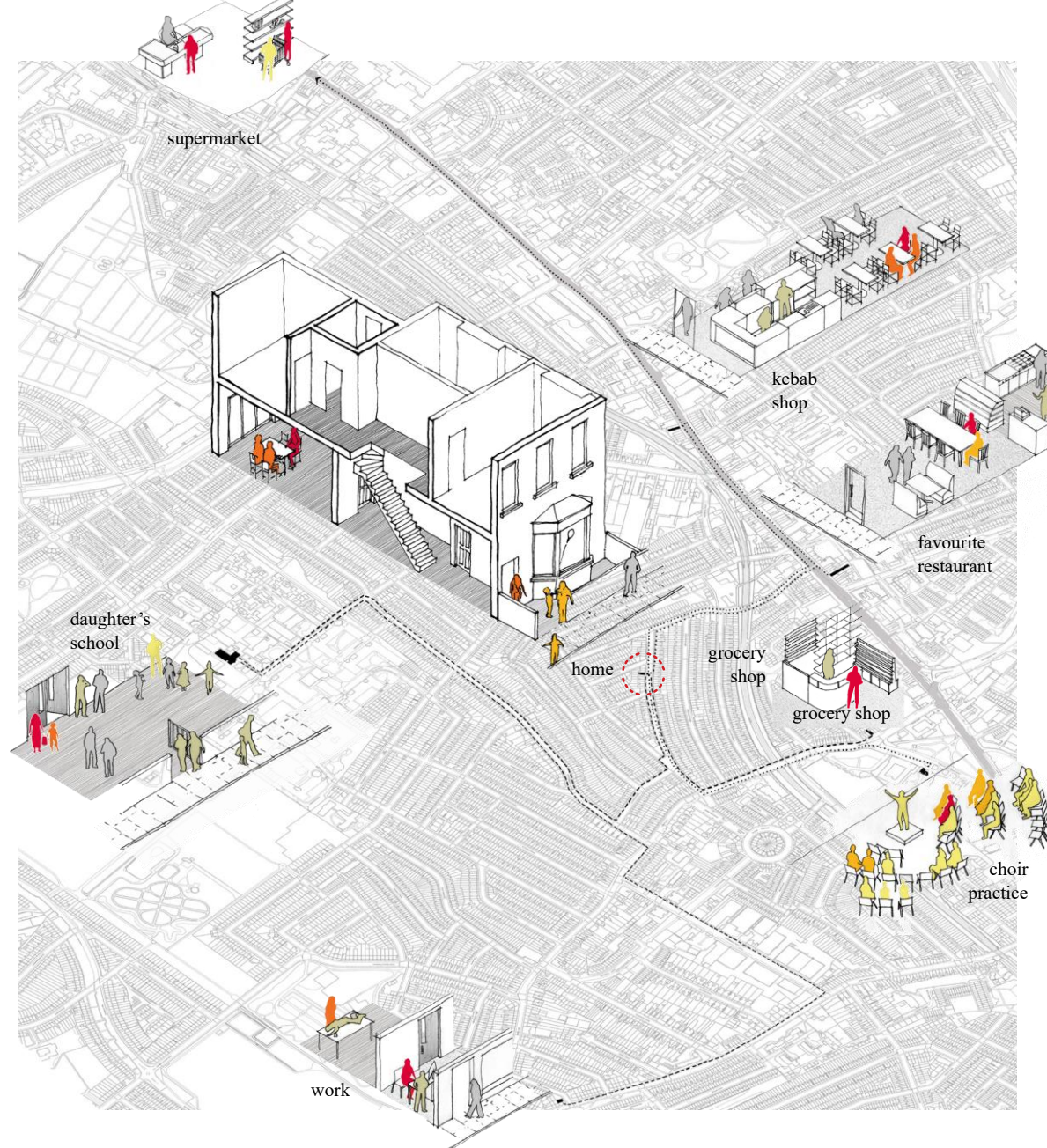
What I did: ethnographic mapping

- Participant observation
 - Graphic anthropology - interviews
 - Mapping and making plans of different places & phenomena
-
- Block scale
 - Building scale
 - Room/person scale

The Depth Structure of a London High Street: a Study in Urban Order

<https://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/1278/>





- Sally
- Very close relationship, intimacy, love
- Close, good friend, close neighbour, like/love
- Colleague, neighbour, frequent acquaintance
- Acquaintance
- Unknown person, neutral/aversion

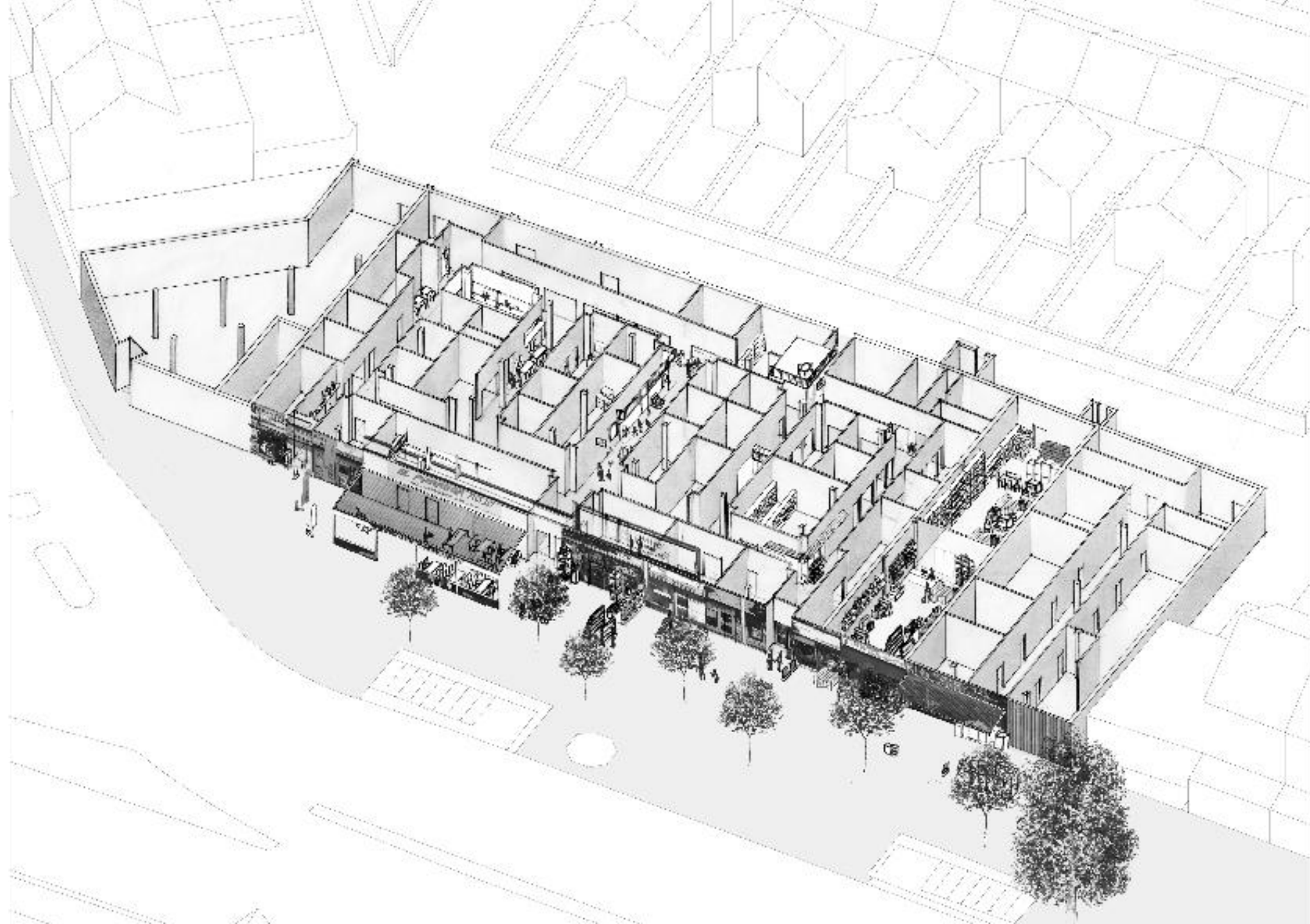
- Daily journey
- Occasional journey

■ Person with no outline: the relationship with this person continues across a range of places

■ Outlined person: for Sally, this person is attached to this particular time/place

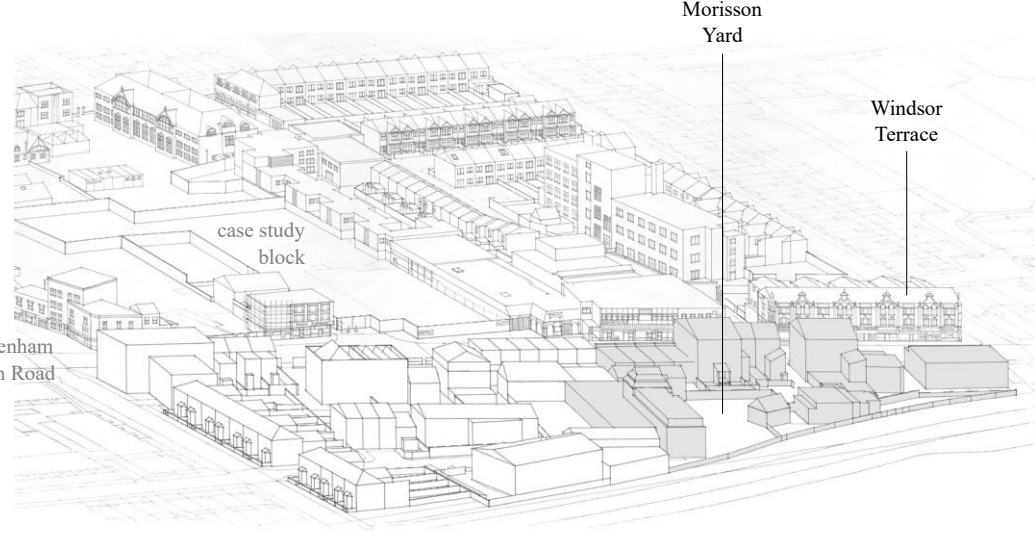
- Entrance is by invitation only
- Entrance allowed if money is being spent

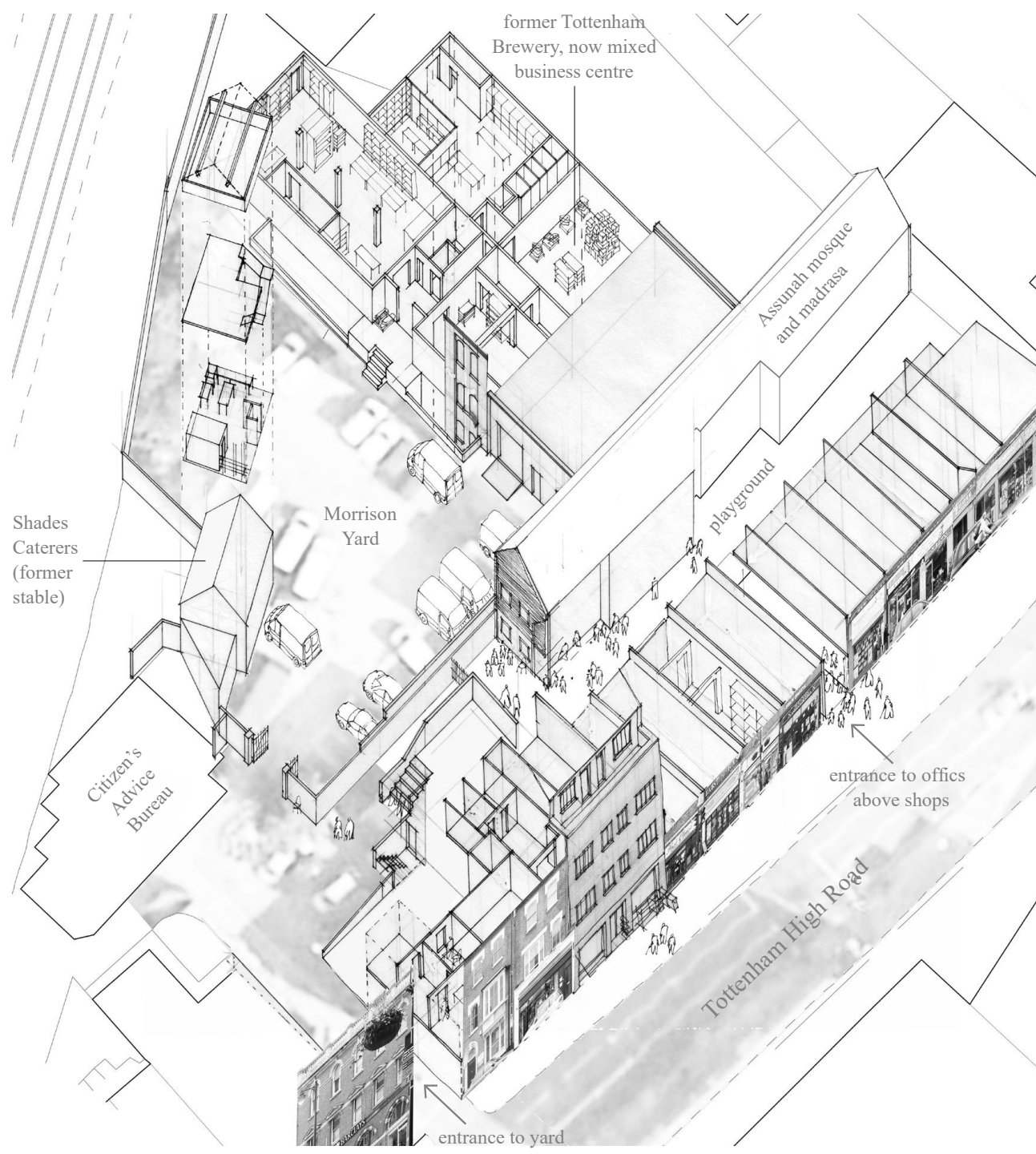
Sally's place ballet





Tottenham
High Road





former Tottenham
Brewery, now mixed
business centre

Assunah mosque
and madrasa

playground

Morrison
Yard

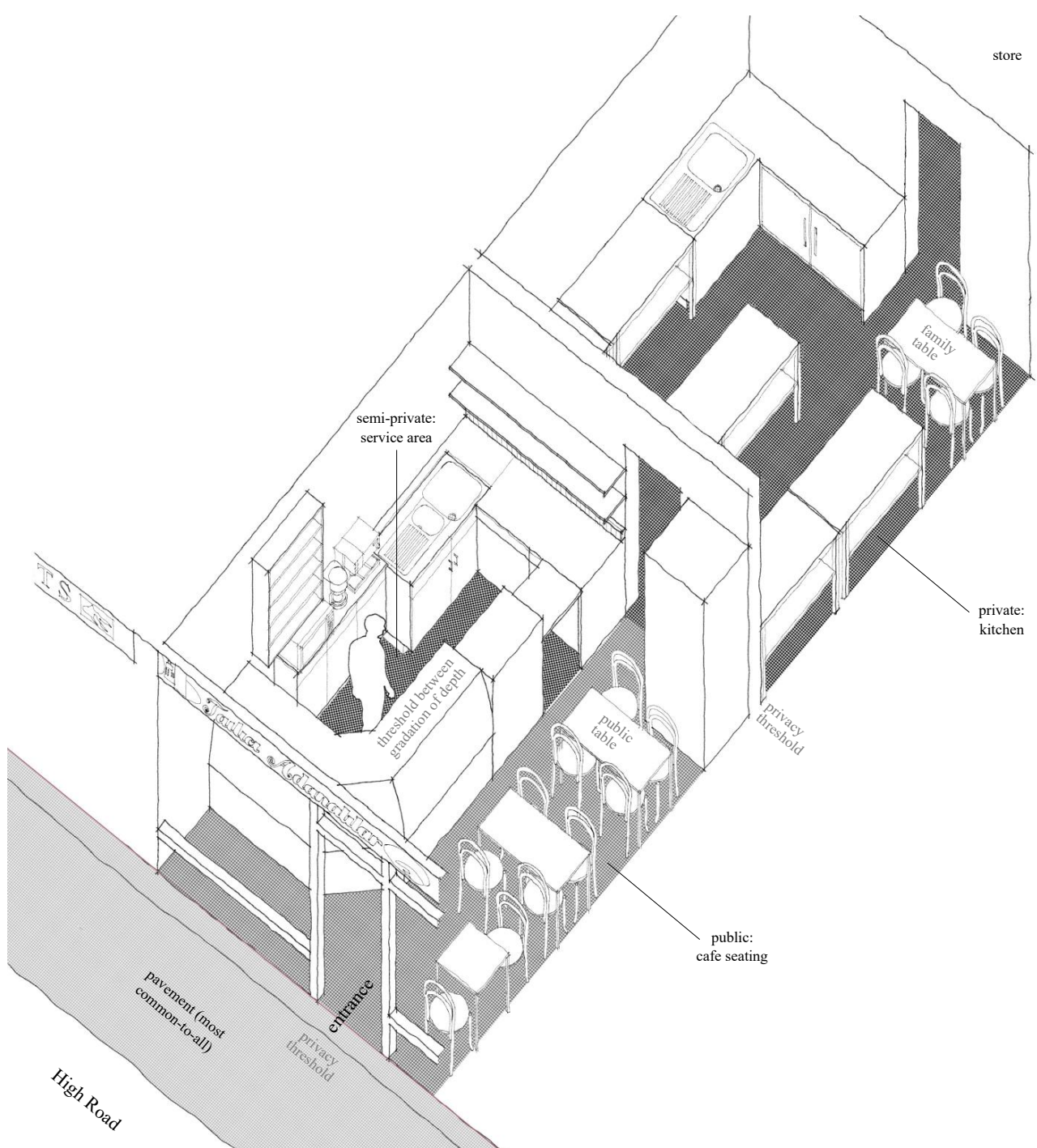
Shades
Caterers
(former
stable)

Citizen's
Advice
Bureau

entrance to offices
above shops

Tottenham High Road

entrance to yard



Spaces existing simultaneously: front, back, street - the whole scene



Thoughts on methodology

- Follow your nose – it knows
- Researcher is always present in research – acknowledge that
- Talk to people, they're always the experts, things may not always be as they seem (remember you bring yourself to the situation)
- Mapping and drawing at any scale shows you what is important in a situation, it's an interpretive act
- Ethnographic mapping a creative act – a conversation between you and the situation
- Being there is valuable – be there to observe, participate and draw (space and time)
- Timescales or temporalities are different and overlapping: days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries

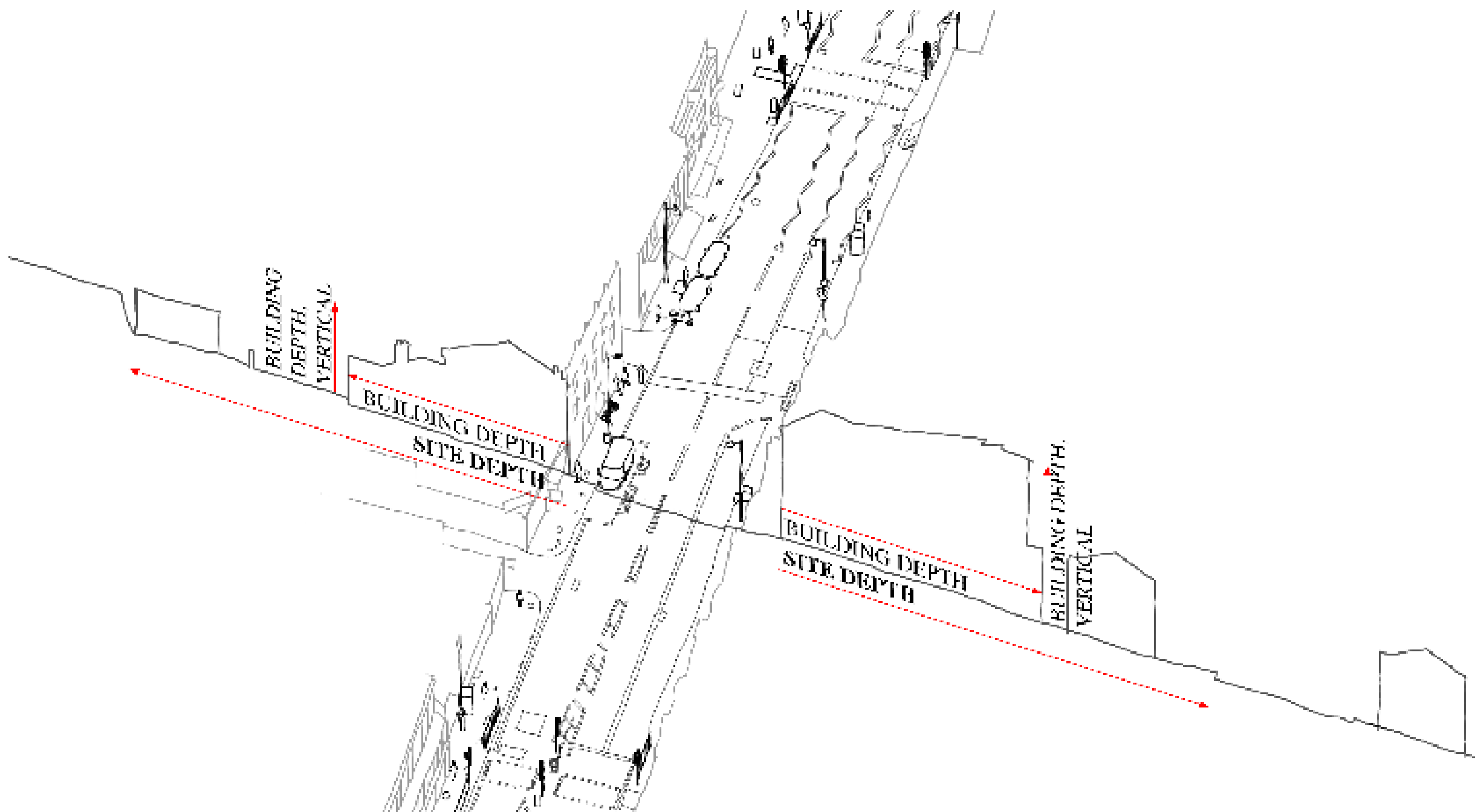
What I found

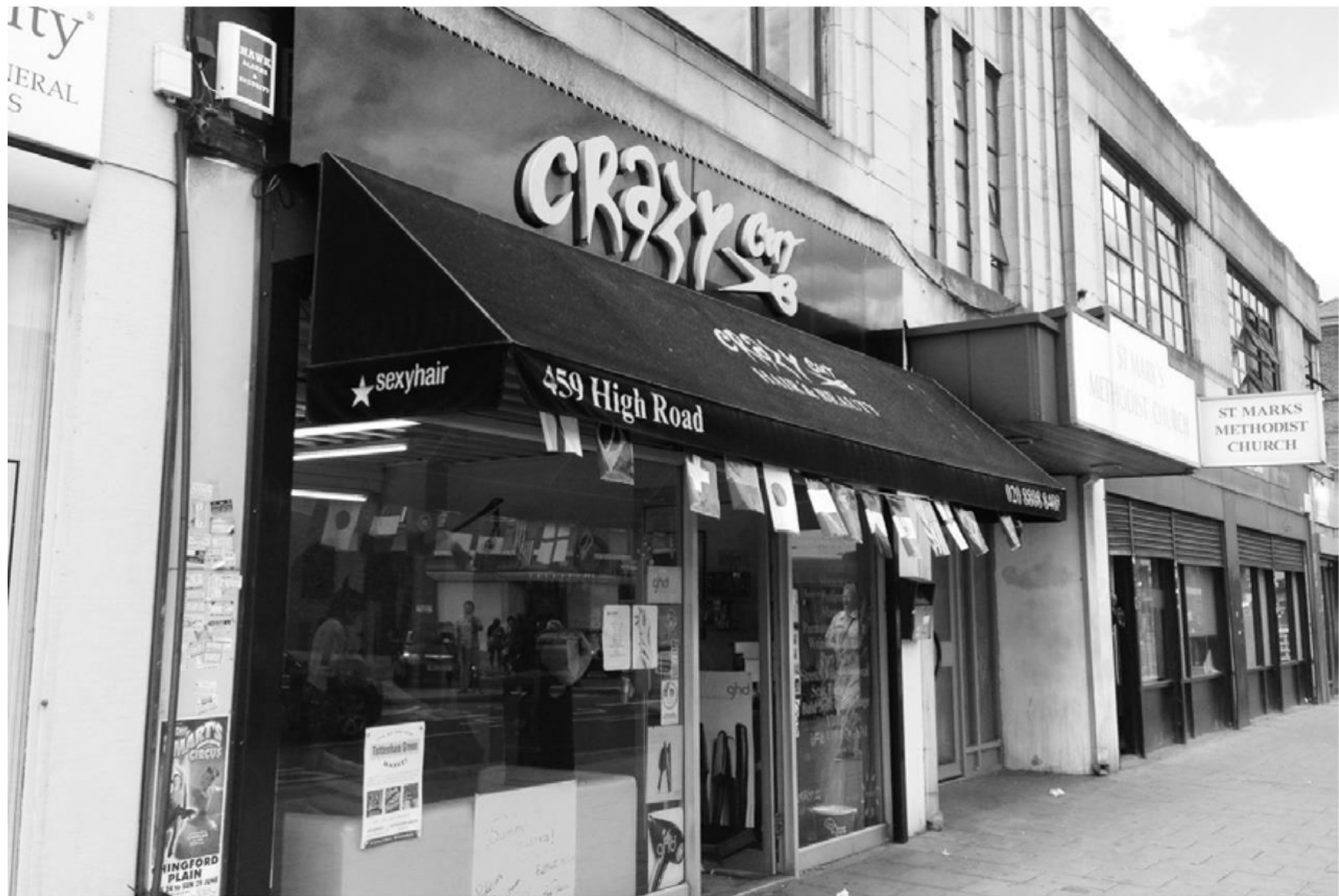
Urban Depth and Depth Structure

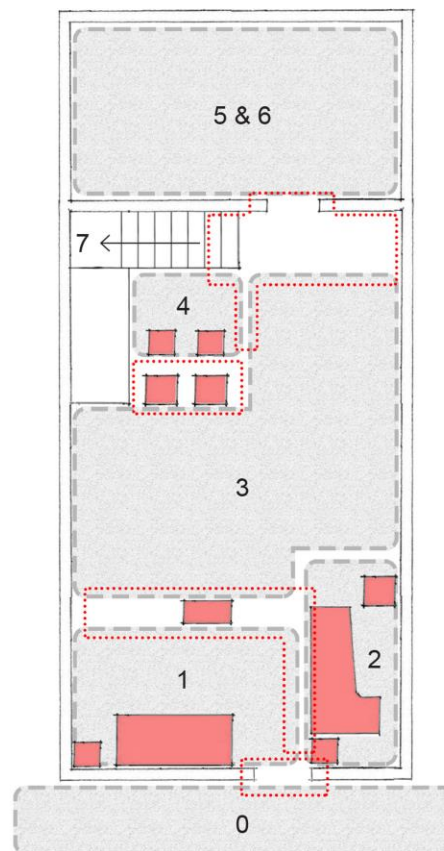
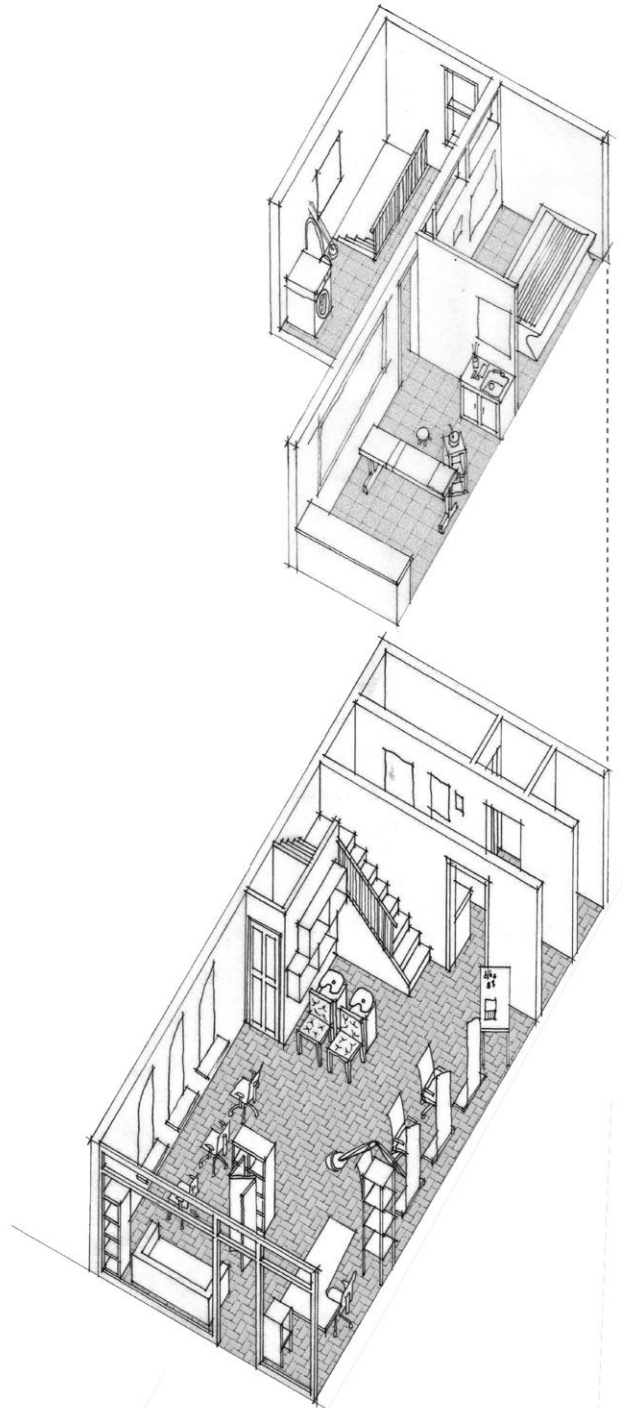
Urban Depth: a term which describes the contents of buildings, city blocks and neighbourhoods in their entirety, including architectural, economic and social aspects.

Depth Structure: how Urban Depth is structured, with the following components:

- Zones
- Thresholds, indicated by boundary conditions
- Decorum indicators







- 0 Street
- 1 Waiting area
- 2 Reception desk
- 3 Main salon
- 4 Hairwashing
- 5 Toilet
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Treatment rooms (upstairs)

- zones
- ... thresholds
- boundary objects



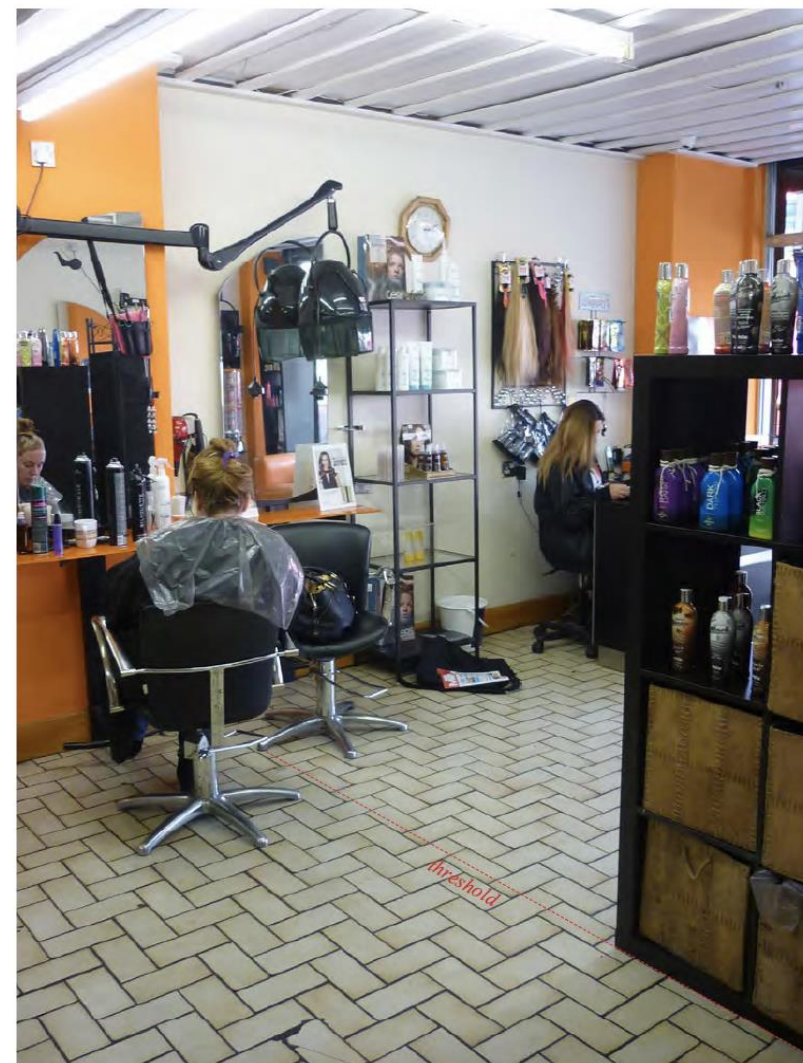
front door and
picture window
to High Road

behind me, adjacent to
the door, is the reception
desk, where a staff
member always sits

waiting sofa, for
clients waiting for
salon services

High Road

gradation of publicness



client having
hair dyed

Oya's sister can be
seen sitting at the
reception desk

barrier of shelves
marking a change in
level of publicness



gradation of publicness

High Road



sinks for washing clients hair
are a barrier marking change
in level of publicness

gradation of publicness

door through to kitchen and
WC (WC accessible to clients
and visitors)



understairs cupboard

up to sunbeds
and treatments
and
washing machine,
vacuum cleaner and
general junk storage

'front of house'

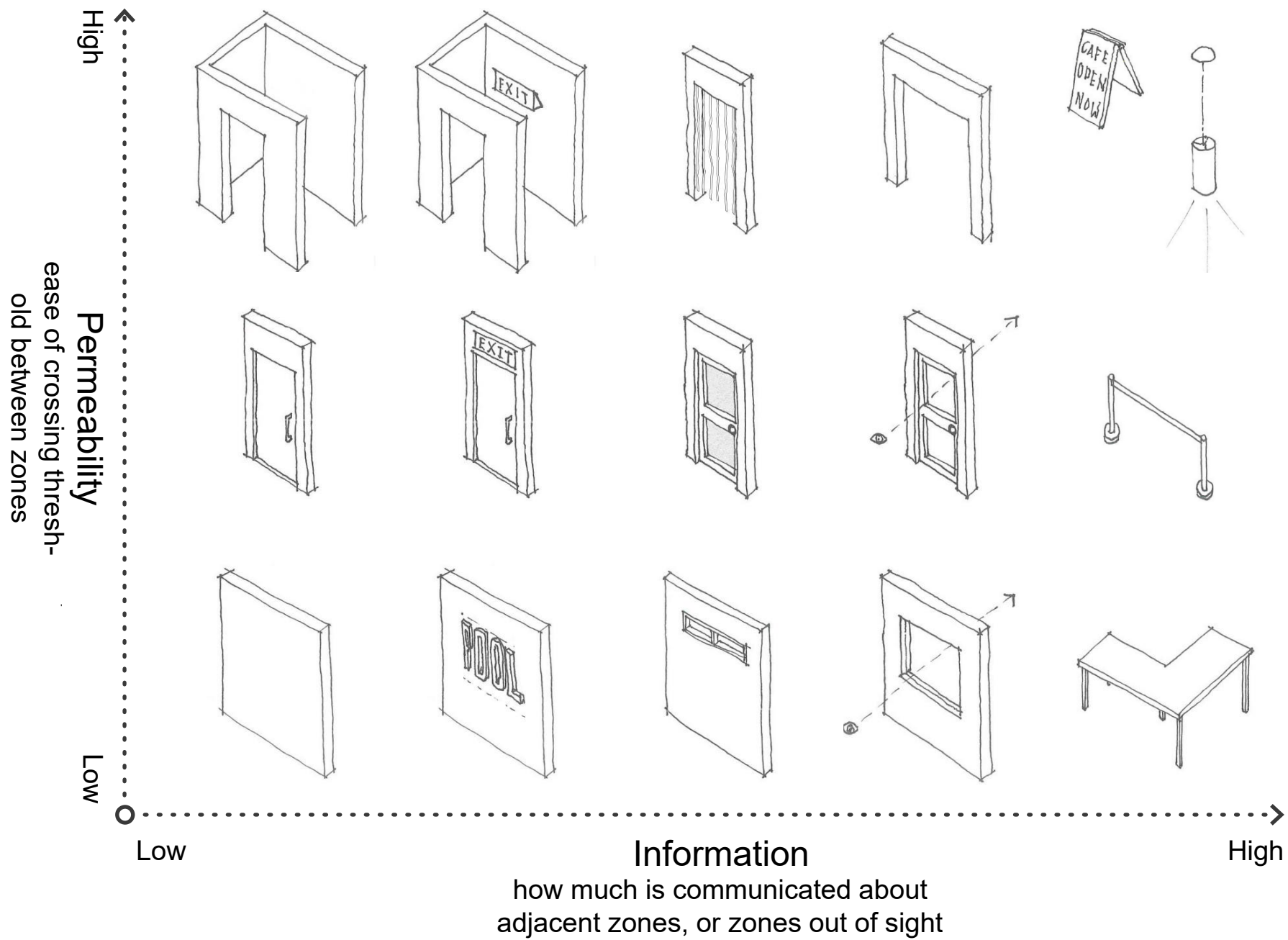
cleaning products
stored behind sinks,
out of sight of door
'back of house'

people walking in from
the street intercepted by
person at reception desk

hair cutting and styling,
nails and eyebrow
threading in English

private conversations in
the kitchen in Turkish

gradation of publicness

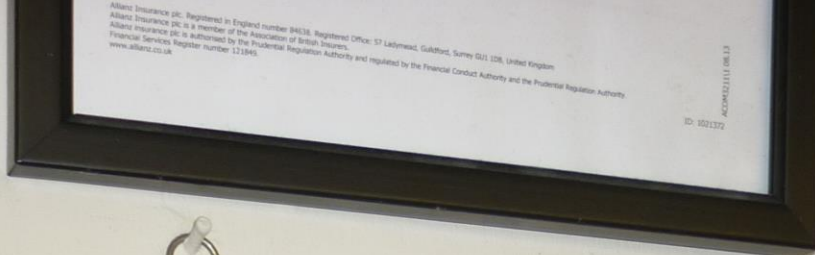


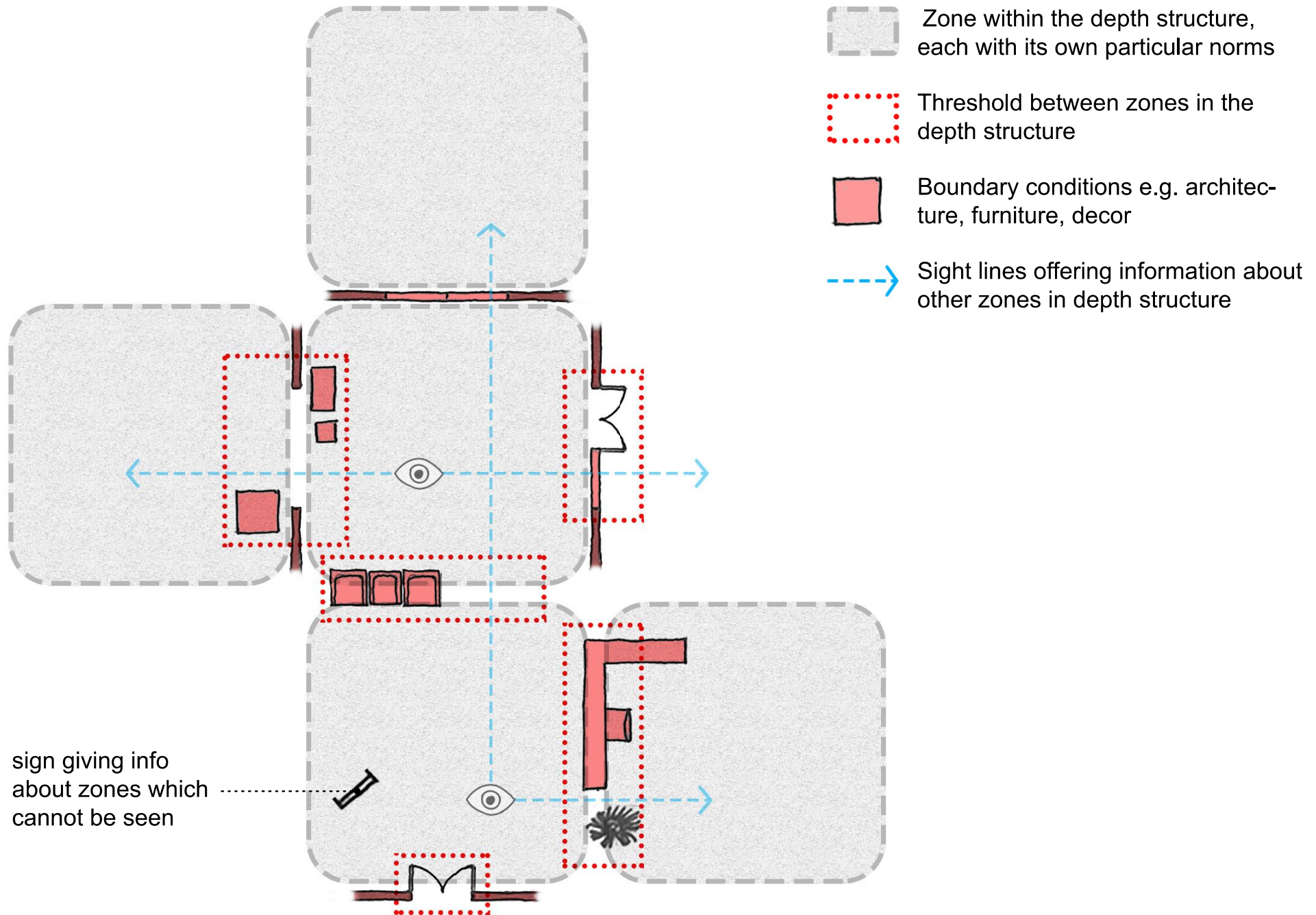


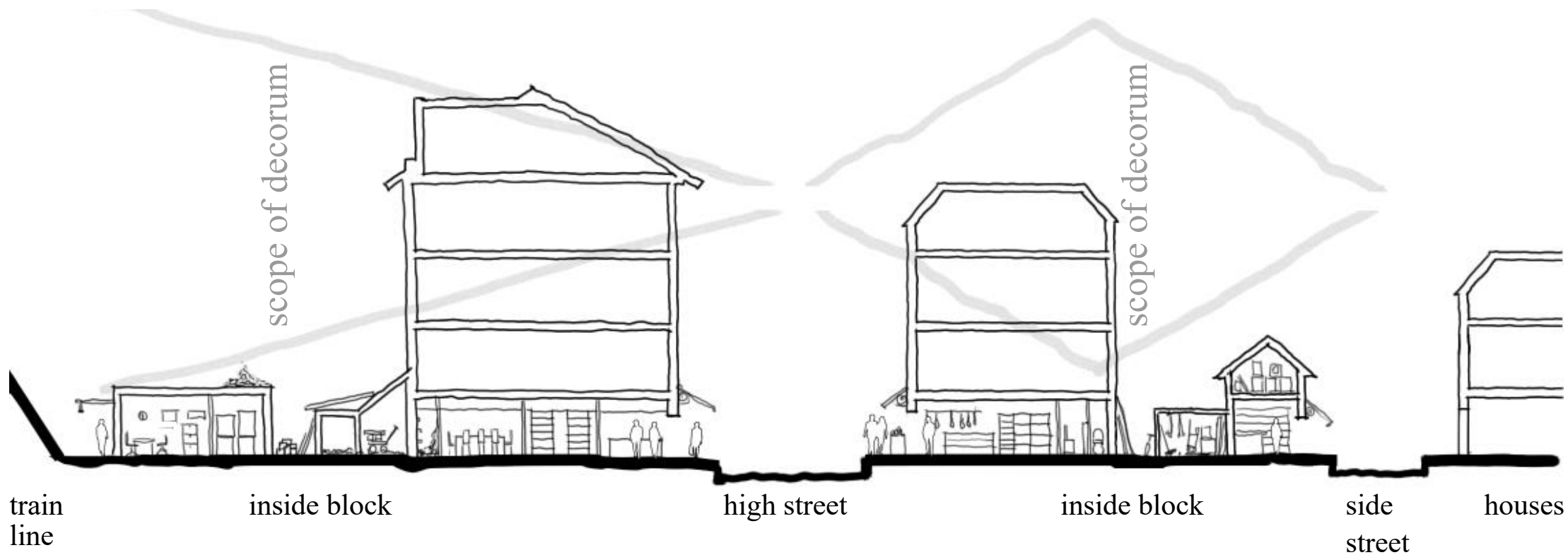
shelf at front of house, neatly arranged to sell products



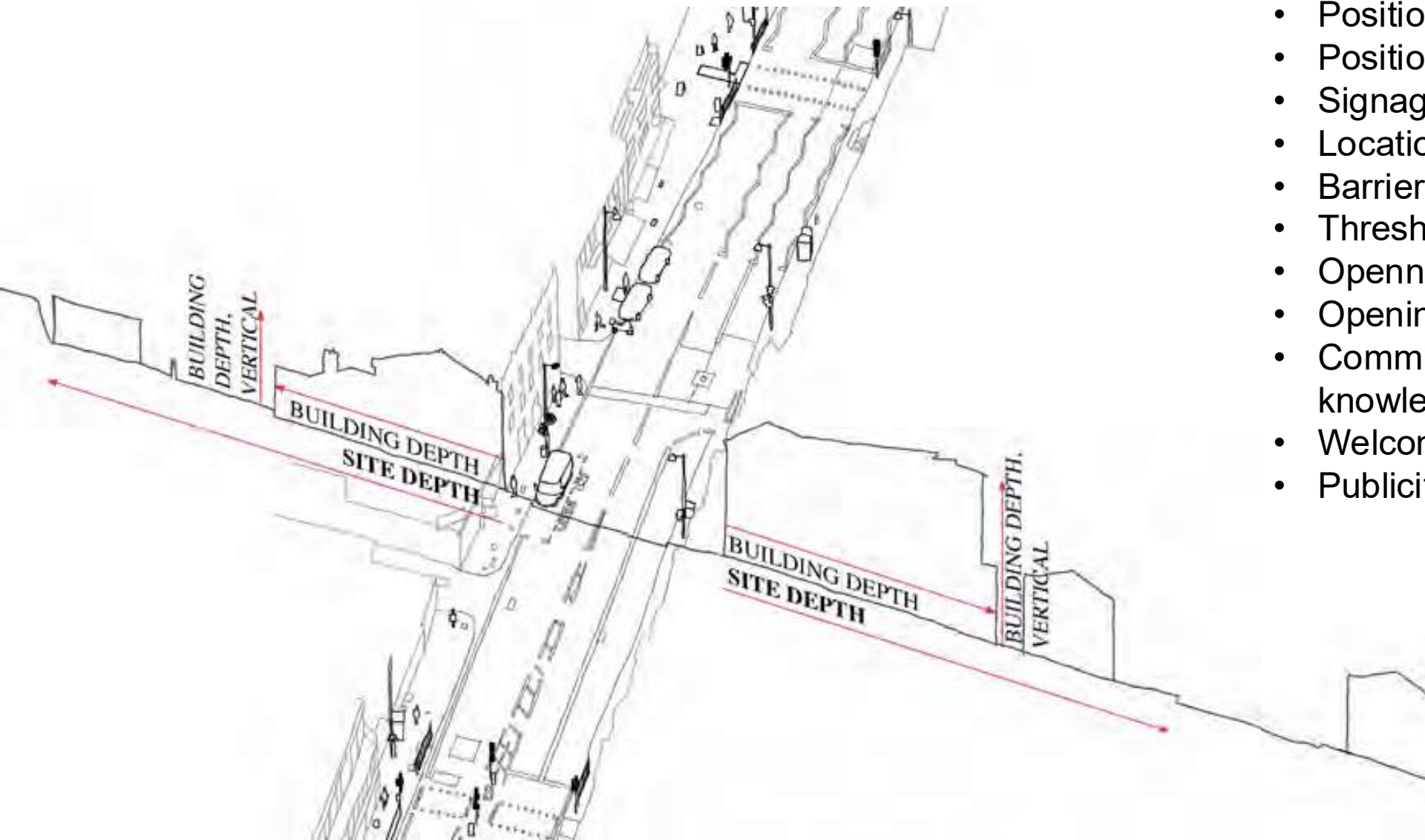
shelf in kitchen, never intended to be seen or used by anyone except staff members



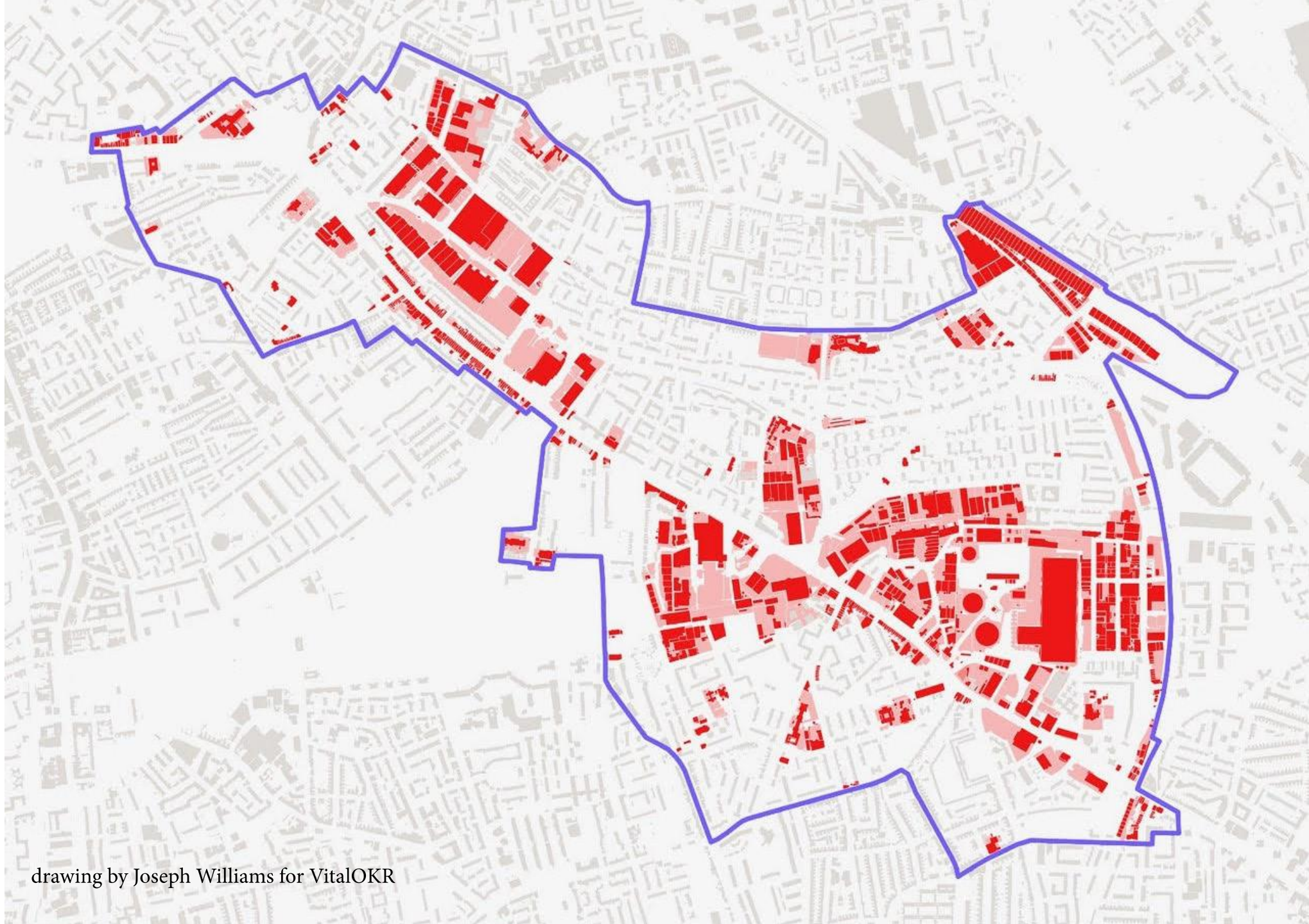




Why it matters



- Position in street network
- Position in urban block
- Signage indicating publicness
- Location of entrances
- Barriers
- Thresholds & boundaries
- Openness to the street
- Opening hours
- Communication of relevant knowledge
- Welcoming gatekeeping
- Publicity



drawing by Joseph Williams for VitalOKR

**In 2018 14% of businesses in the
Old Kent Road Opportunity Area
had been contacted by Southwark**

Business Consultation Meeting, 12 March 2018, New Covenant Church



Position in street network	On Old Kent Road (main road). ⇒ The building is near bus stops and safe, easy walking distance from the majority of businesses and homes in the OKR.
Position in urban block	Front of urban block. In former Sambo Fashions factory, now the New Covenant church, sited between McDonalds and Asda on OKR. ⇒ Building is distinctive and obvious, although some people might be put off by entering an unfamiliar place.
Signage	None ⇒ There was no signage externally to indicate the business meeting was taking place, so only invited guests knew.
Entrances	Door entry direct from the street into the shop which fronts the street, a non-intimidating entrance physically. ⇒ Although, the vast majority of people would never cross this threshold into either the bookshop or the church.
Thresholds/boundaries & movement barriers	Once through the entrance into the shop, there is then a second set of double doors to the church hall behind, where I assume the consultation meeting took place, (waiting for confirmation from Colin Wilson about the details). ⇒ This is two thresholds and one boundaried zone between the street and the consultation.
Permeability/openness of facade	Façade to front is totally open, however the consultation took place in the church hall behind, which is not visible from the street. ⇒ Lack of visual connection to the interior could result in people being discouraged from entering because they can't see what's going on inside.
Opening hours	Unknown
Knowledge communication	At the meeting, there were presentations from GVA and Architecture 00, the consultant authors of the 'OKR Workspace Demand Study'. ¹ ⇒ According to Mark Brearley of Vital OKR, the findings presented were that many existing buildings are fit for purpose; the OKR contains scope for significant economic growth in the small office, studio and industrial sectors; the mix of uses needs to extend above ground level in order to accommodate the amount of economic growth the OKR is likely to experience; and that no more of the economy should be lost through planning blight.
Gatekeeping	Unknown
Publicity	Southwark spread the word about the meeting by emailing its 'Business Network' which is a mailing list. No flyers or posters distributed in hard copy. ⇒ According to Mark Brearley of Vital OKR, the mailing list contains contact details of fewer than half of OKR businesses. ²

- Spatially accessible on the main road
- No signage - only invited guests
- Two thresholds to cross including a church
- No visual connection to the street
- No flyers or posters distributed
- 2-hour event
- Fewer than half of local businesses on the mailing list
- 45 people attended of 9,500 business employees
- No records of the discussion in the public domain





Planning Action OKR
8–9 June 2019
231 OKR



- Spatially accessible on the main road
- Open frontage and signage – walk-ins
- Single shop threshold
- Lots of flyers, posters and online promotion
- 2-day event
- Several businesses attended, over 150 people total
- Deliberately welcome gatekeeping

Position in street network	On Old Kent Road (main road). ⇒ The building is near bus stops and safe, easy walking distance from the majority of homes on the OKR, it is however 1.2 miles to the core business district of OKR which is a long distance for business owners to walk e.g. in their lunch hour.
Position in urban block	A former shop at 231 Old Kent Road was secured in December 2019 and the first meeting to plan the project took place on 15th January. ⇒ A shop is a very accessible type of building, see example of the Tottenham Living archive, below.
Signage	The outside of the shop will be designed by architects what:if projects to clearly show the purpose of the shop. ⇒ The openness of the window will be a place that clear signage can be located, informing local people of events which will take place. Signage will clearly show the purpose of the space and upcoming events.
Entrances	The door is right on the corner, since the shop is located on the corner of the block. ⇒ Unlike the previous two examples, the shop only has one threshold, and once crossed, visitors will be inside and participating.
Thresholds/boundaries & movement barriers	There is only one threshold between the internal boundaried zone, and the street: and because of the windows the two zones are clearly visually accessible to one another.
Permeability/openness of facade	231 Old Kent Road is a former shop with a large, open window facing the street.
Opening hours	TBC ⇒ The opening hours are likely to be much longer than either of the previous examples According to Ulrike Steven of what:if projects, they will aim to open the shop 9am - 5pm three days a week. ⇒ Longer opening hours, or on a range of different days each week, would ensure that a greater range of people will be able to access the shop and its provisions.
Knowledge communication	In the shop, the group who have driven the project, Action OKR, will make an accessible hub for local planning, with planning documents and planning applications available and one display. The shop will host workshops, talks and other events aimed to engage local people and businesses in the planning process and offer a substantive opportunity to participate in future consultations.
Gatekeeping	The shop will be staffed to help people understand what they are looking at.
Publicity	n/a



what_if_projects • Following

what_if_projects Old Kent Road projects at the Cass summer show. Well done everybody! @casscities @thecassart @alex_christie @garethdmorris @action_okr @structure.workshop @vitalokr #oldkentroad #architecture #studentshow #degreeshow #architectureexhibition #archdaily #exhibition #architecturestudentblog #architectureschool #goodgrowth #London #OKR10

gemmaleigh_h How long is the show on for?

what_if_projects The show is on until 5th July. Come and see!

vitalokr @gemmaleigh_h Hello Gemma who previously vanished. How is it going? Are you able to help with OKR things? Would be welcome.



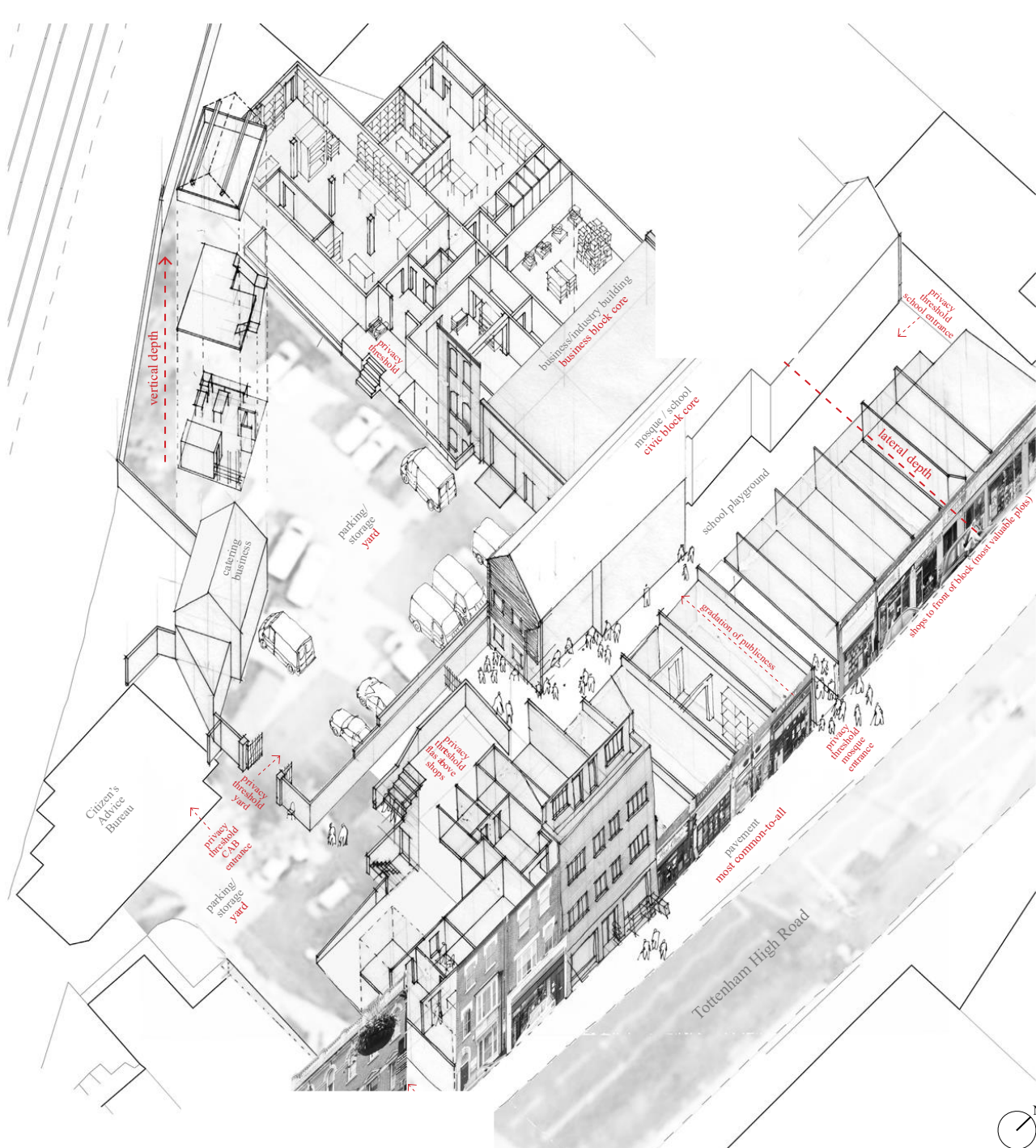
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5 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



**It is our ethical responsibility
as built environment professionals
to ensure that the city is accessible
and to do that we need
to understand depth structure**



- Follow your nose
 - Researcher is always there
 - Talk to people
 - Mapping shows what is important
 - Ethnographic mapping a creative act
 - Being there is valuable
 - Timescales/temporalities
-
- Position in street network & urban block
 - Signage indicating publicness
 - Location of entrances and barriers
 - Thresholds & boundaries & openness to the street
 - Opening hours & gatekeeping
 - Communication of relevant knowledge/publicity
-
- Accessibility is our ethical responsibility
 - As designers we have to understand depth structure

Free book

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AND JANE CLOSSICK

EVERYDAY STREETS

INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO
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