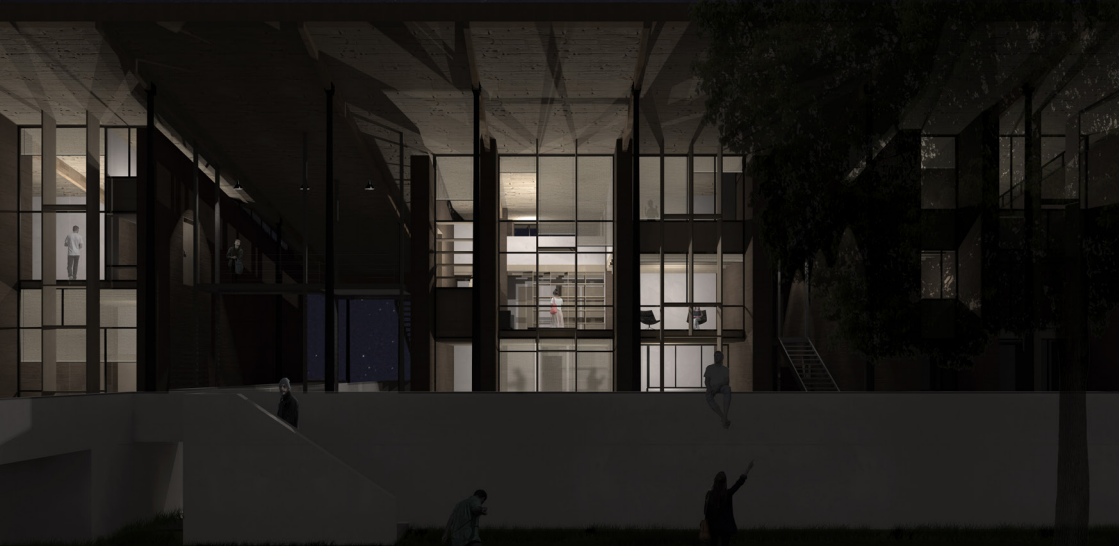
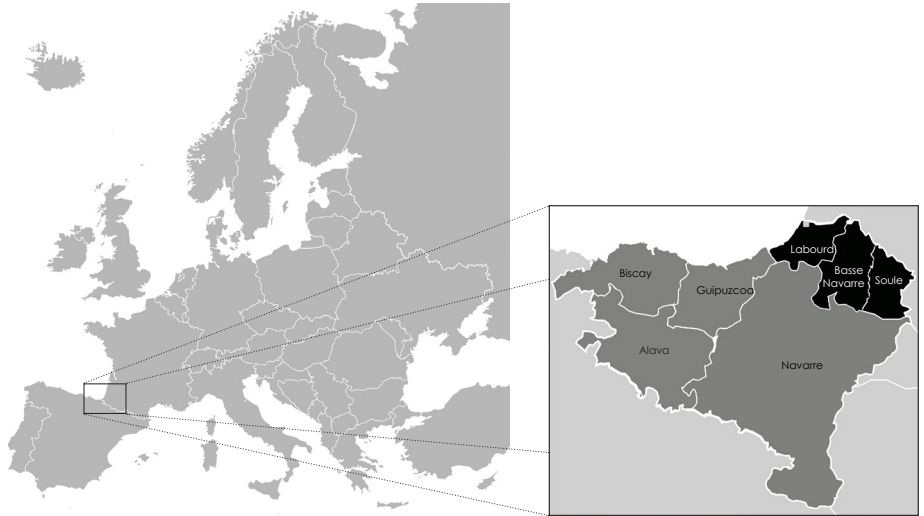


OSOTASUN

Housing complex in the basque
country



THE BASQUE COUNTRY «EUSKAL HERRIA»



The Basque country, "Euskal Herria", literally «the country of the basque language» is composed of two big areas :

The French one, "**Ipparalde**", is made of tree regions:

- Labourd, Basse Navarre and Soule.

The Spanish one, "**Hegoalde**", is made of four regions:

- Navarre, Biscay, Alava and Guipuzcoa.

Ipparalde represents only 15% of the Basque territory, but has nevertheless a common love: its heritage and Identity. This love can be found today in its daily life, custom, landscape and architecture.

Yet, two different opinions can be found:

- One group believe that they are the guarantor of the architectural heritage by perpetuating a picture of this patrimony. They have modelled this legacy and want to preserve their landscape and patrimony as it was.

- The second one believe that they are respecting their patrimony by considering it as a resulting of a "praxis" which is a cultural and social product. For them the Basque house, "Etxe", was design for specific needs which were essentially agricultural. The

technics and materials used were pertinent with the context of this time. According to them, we are losing this link between cultural and social practice, materials, skills, and architectural production by picturing this legacy.

Anyway, according to me, architecture should not be something fixed at a time, creating architectural pastiche and nonsense. It is also not supposed to be a sum of functions well adapted to its time and its environment, basic social needs, or aesthetic concern with tastes.

It is a living being, entirely created by men for themselves, which give them back an image more or less faithful of their own culture. Placed in a particular context, architecture finds a new framework that go through cultural changes. It is then linked to its time and made of local memory and external inputs.

THE BASQUE VILLAGE «HERRIXKA»

A Basque village is a place with a strong soul which is based on its community. Usually each village has one strong and central public place where ones can meet, have a drink or play a typical basque ball game «the basque pelota». This game is played on a large and tall wall called a «Fronton », present in every basque village. Big events, like «force basque» (Litteraly «basque strength») are also usually organized every summer on this place.

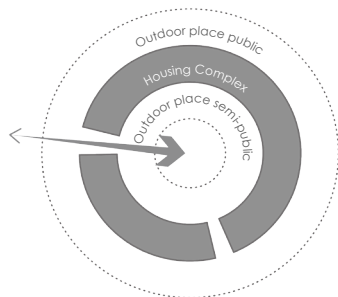
These central places, heart of the village are therefore indisociable of the basque identity.

Today because of the increasing population, new big housing

complex are built in the basque country. The outdoor spaces of these new buildings are usually used as parking slots or are unused by its population, because they are not welcoming or even unsafe. People rather use their private outdoor spaces instead.

There is no interaction between people anymore, and it is creating a distance between neighbours living in the same village, killing in the mean time the feeling of being a part of one community.

We will see that I choose to reconnect these central outdoor public places to the housing complex to recreate interaction between the inhabitants.

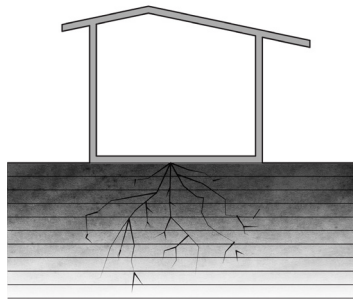




THE BASQUE HOUSES «ETXE»

The Basque architecture is massive and durable. The houses are built in order to last and to face the damages inflicted by time. It is heavy, as if by its architecture, the Basque people decided to cast a heavy stamp on the land for

eternity. And it seems the strategy works when you see that today, in a world of globalisation, the Basque identity is still able to withstand the test of time by its architecture, its language and its traditions.



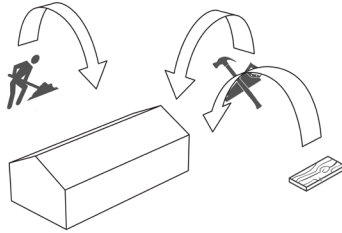
In a village each building has its own identity and characteristics but still has got the same language. Basque houses are family houses, big and massive, where were living at least 3 generations.

Every house has its own name which sometimes even supplant the name of the family.



The Basque country is also a place with a strong link to its direct surroundings and its people will always try to benefit from its local resources.

Local workforce, local resources and local techniques.



The house is an evolution of a cave which, according to the Basque mythology, protects the family from the world of the spirits running on the surface and into the earth during the night.

The threshold between the outdoor and the indoor of the Basque house is therefore really important. It is the limit between the unsafe, mystical and cold against the warm, the welcoming and the protecting.

The threshold between the



In the basque tradition, one person does not really own a house. The house is more a legacy to take care of and to pass on to your children.

The «Exte» is own by a family trough several generation.



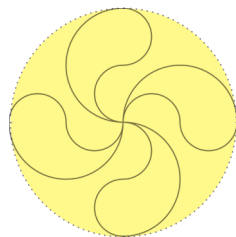
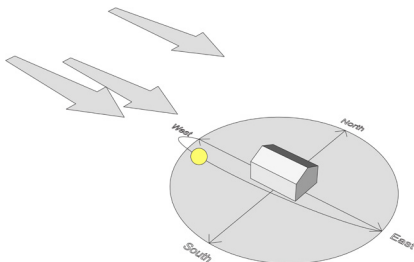
Houses in the basque country are usually oriented to the East as much as possible.

Two explanations can be found :

- The first one is that the buildings turns its back from the west coast from where wind, rain and storm are comming.

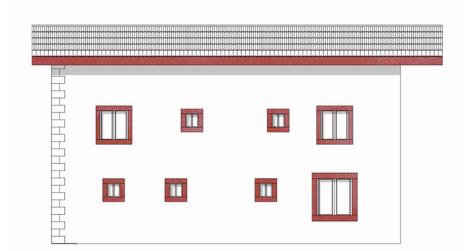
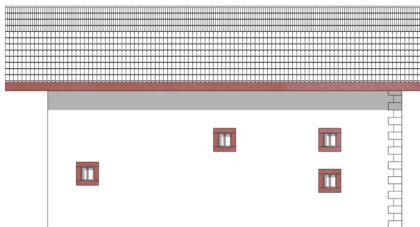
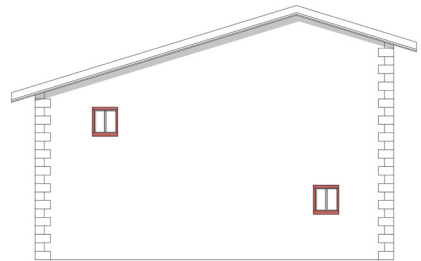
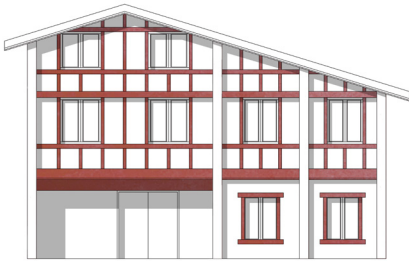
- The second one is that is a former sun worship has continued until today trough the basque architecture. Worship that can be also found in the basque cross, still one of the strongest symbols of the basque identity.

The east facades of each houses were also traditionally the start of the «death path», path from where a dead was carried from his house to the church.



This dynamic to the East is strongly visible within the basque architecture. The basque houses are composed of three massive mineral walls and a light one in wood. The west and north wall are

usually poorly opened. The south one has several small openings to bring light into the houses. However, the East facade is a light facade built with wood structure and long windows.





I wanted this project to be able to talk to people that are also not architects. I wanted to make it resonate with our collective psyche. However, I did not want to reuse the Basque architectural canon. I do not think that it does have any tenor today, else than fitting the preconceived idea of the tourists. I wanted to reinterpret and understand the soul of these region to find new concept of creation.

- As a 25 years old man who lived in this Basque country during more than 20 years, what are my understandings of these local memories and what are, for me human being living in the 21th century, the external inputs that should be bring into my architectural concern ?

- How do I conceive the fact of building housing and living in the Basque country?

THE SITE : MATZIKOENEA

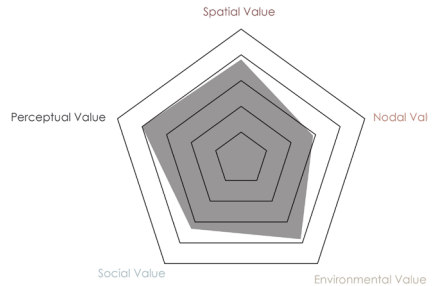
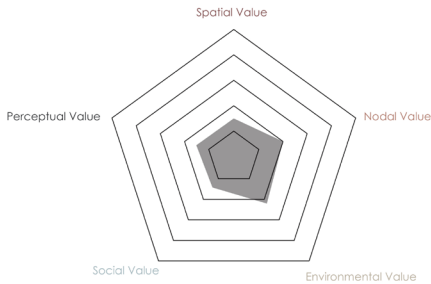
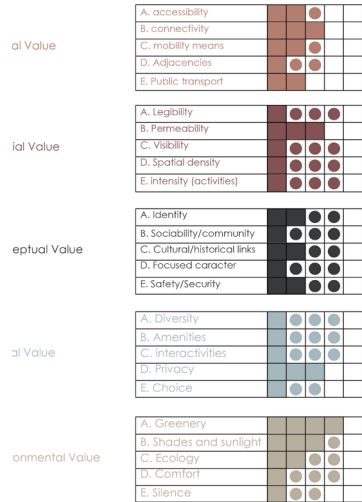
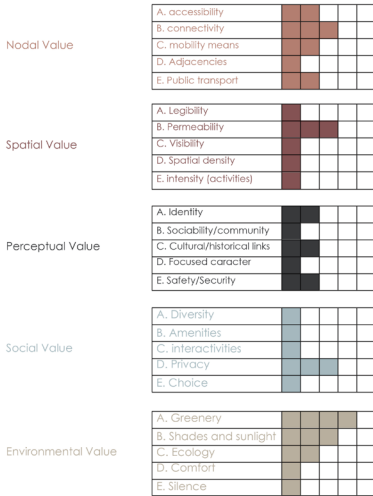
The site is situated in a basque village of less than 7000 inhabitants, Ustaritz. It is close by the city of Biarritz, famous for its surf spots and the city of Bayonne, known for its feria. Few decades ago, Matzikoenea was a small heart of Ustaritz and was a welcoming location for the basque pelota, restaurants and local markets. Today only the restaurant remains, using the fronton as a parking slot for the trucks travelling between France and Spain. All the local markets disappeared as well, forcing the inhabitants to use their cars all the time. Because

of the development of bigger cities and bigger facilities from the surroundings, These small villages are losing their amenities, and in the same time they are evolving into dormitory villages.

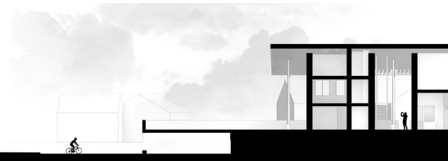
I wanted this area to recover its former function as a center and a joyful place of life. To do that I decided to design 42 flats organized in 15 units, A small cafe, an association house and a small market, selling local products. Different outdoor spaces with several levels of intimacy have been created to allow activities.



URBAN ANALYSIS S.U.S.I.E



GROUND FLOOR PLAN





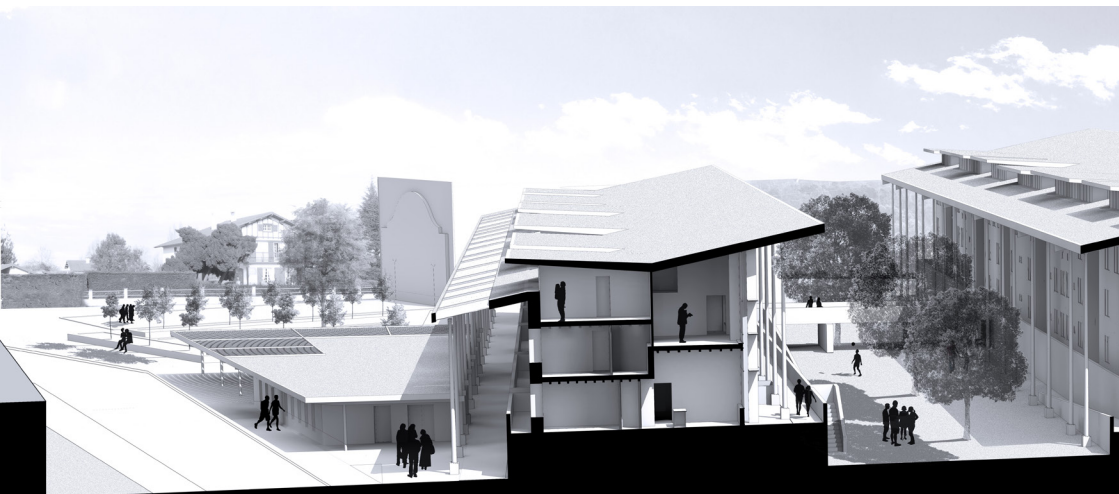


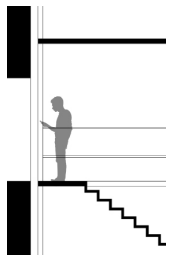




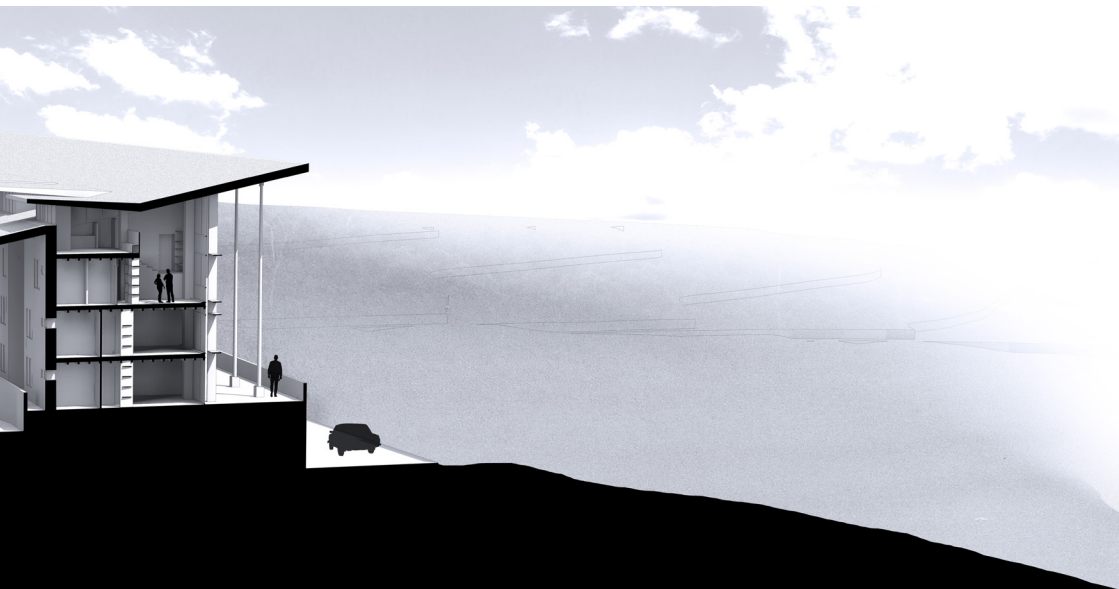
Two outdoor places has been designed in this project : one semi-public wich could be considered as a «big garden». It is a safe place secluded from cars, surrounded and supervised by the house units. The second

one, public, is the one with the «Fronton». It is a public place with a café/boulangerie, big and central enough to organize events and come to rest during the sunny days.



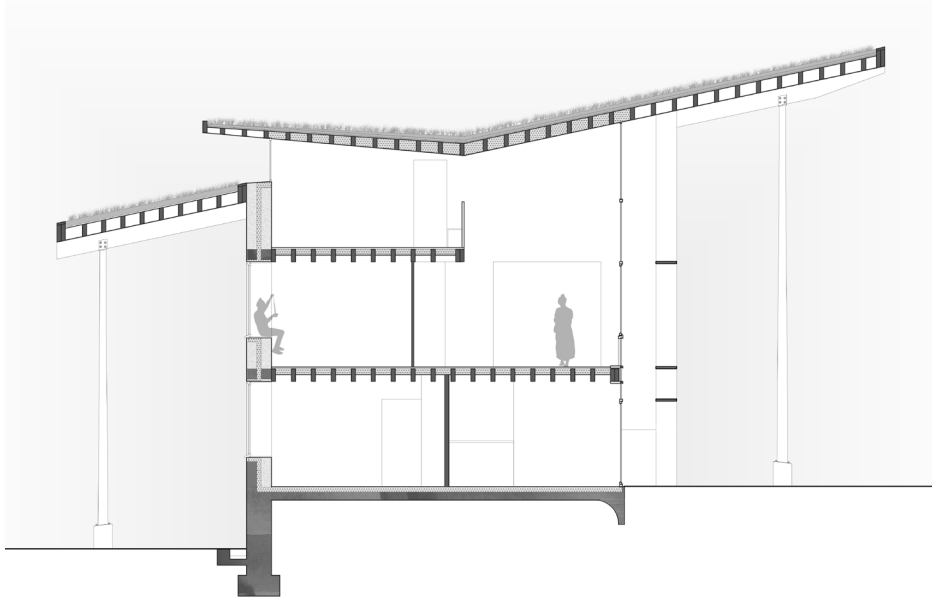


To underscore the limit between the exterior and the indoor space, the external circulation is disconnected from the housing units. This one step over a gap will symbolically show that your environment has changed.



I decided to design individual units so that everyone has its own intimacy but by using one big roof that connects all the different units, I tried to recreate the feeling of one structure providing shelter to individuals, each part of one family. The slope of the roof increases its dynamic trough the south east whereas the west opening allows the last floor apartment to enjoy the sunset. Each unit is build with massive rammed earth wall whereas the east facades are fully glazed and

opened to the sunrise. The soil is extracted from the hill closeby and will reveal its powerfull texture to emphasize the connection between the house and its identity, rooted into the ground. The circulations are discreet by their lightness and external in order to enhance the felling of intimate home with only one door to your apartment, as if you have your own private home. The outdoor staircase creates also a clear limit between the outdoor and indoor.



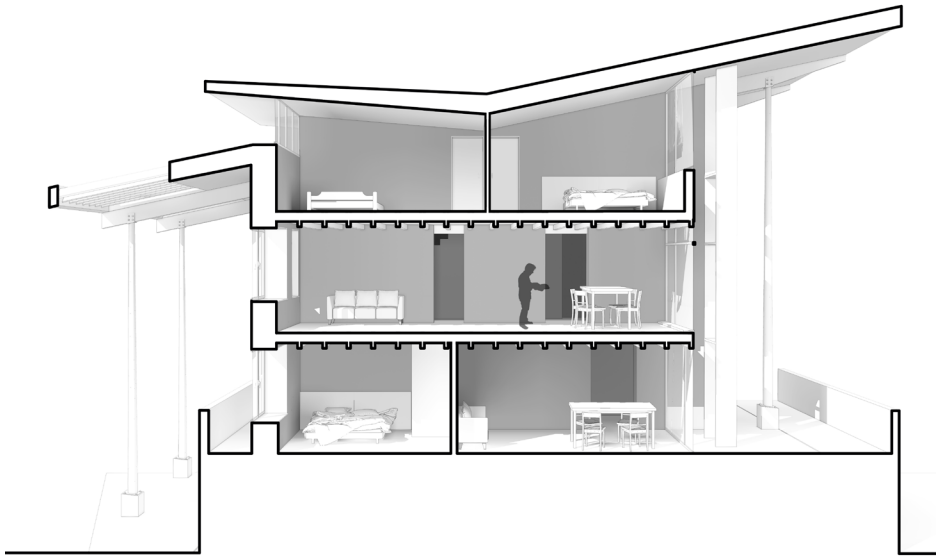


X2

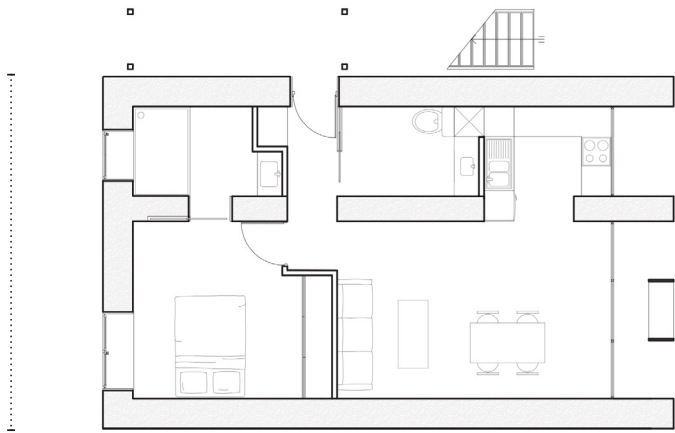


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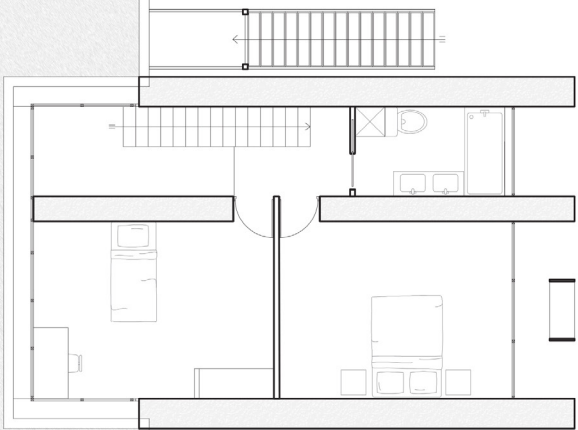
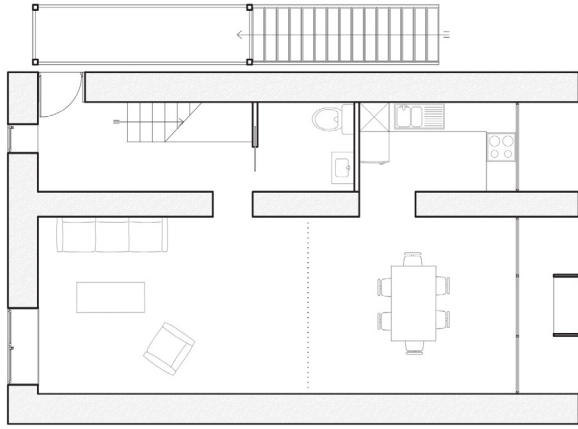
«ESTU»
Narrow/intimate



51 sqm



1 0 0
sqm

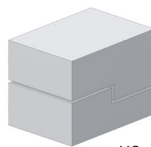




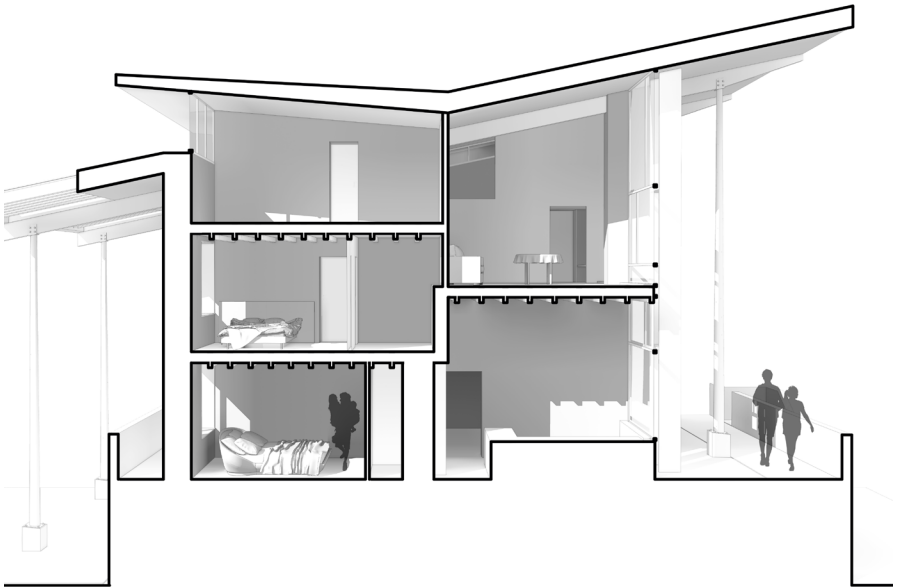
«JOSTETA»
Game and amusement



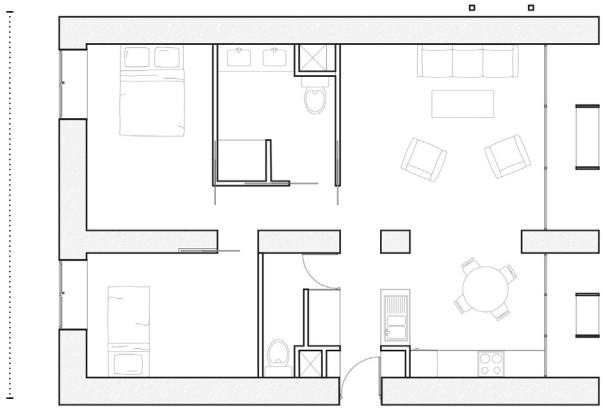
X2



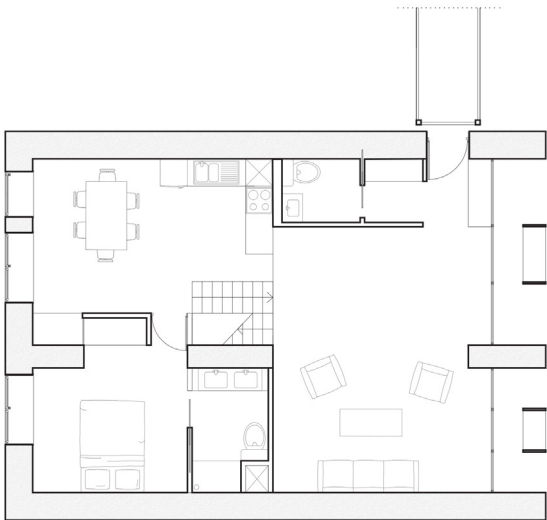
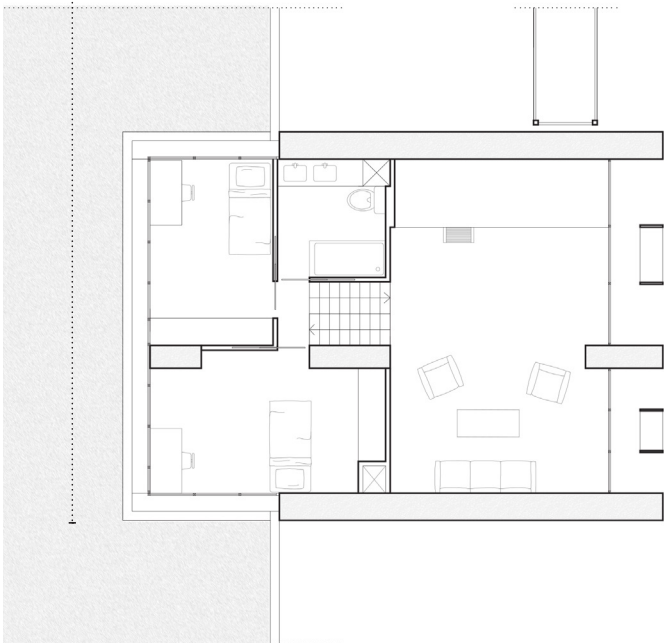
X2



65 sqm

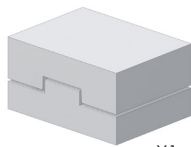


100
sqm

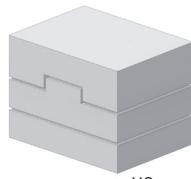




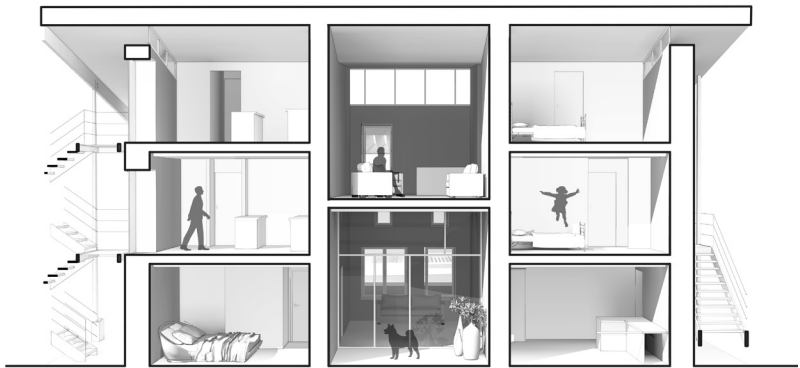
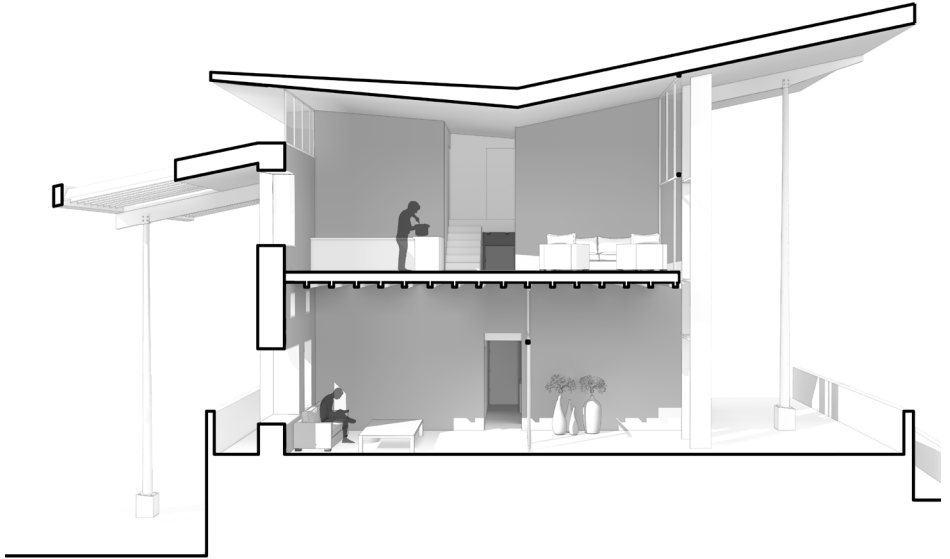
«ZABAL»
Large



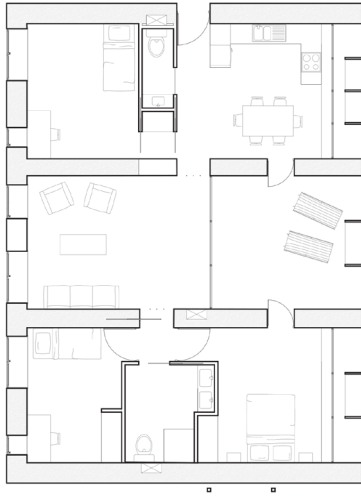
X1

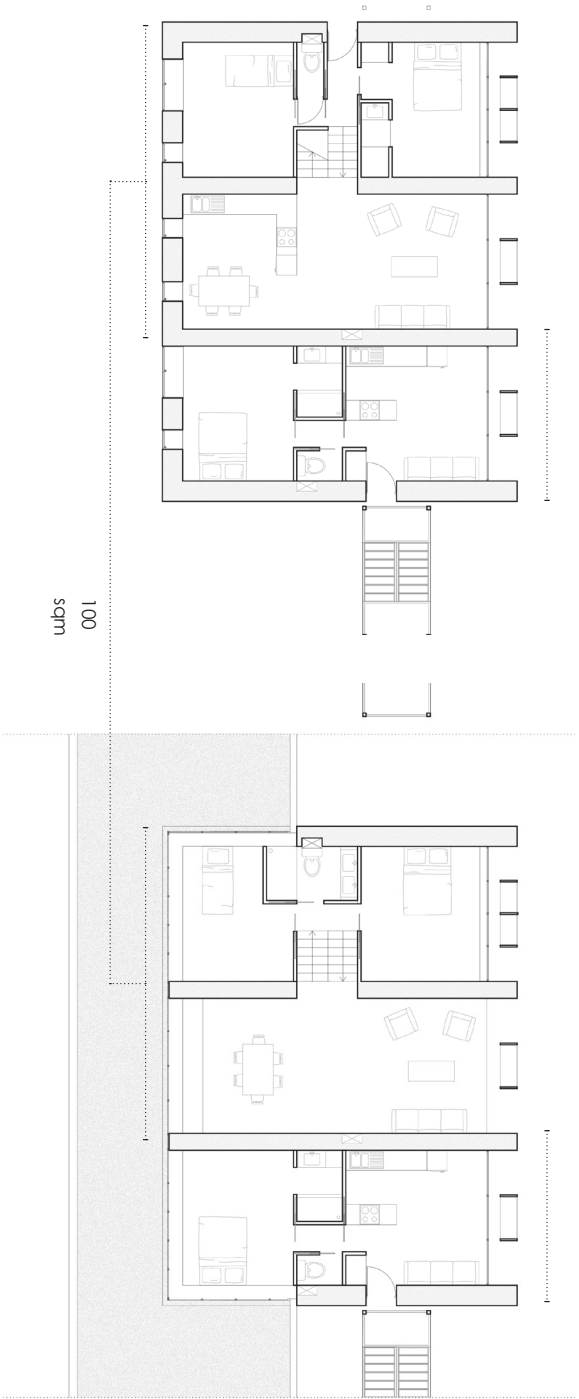


X2



wbs 06





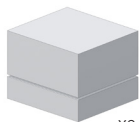
36 sqm

100
sqm

36 sqm



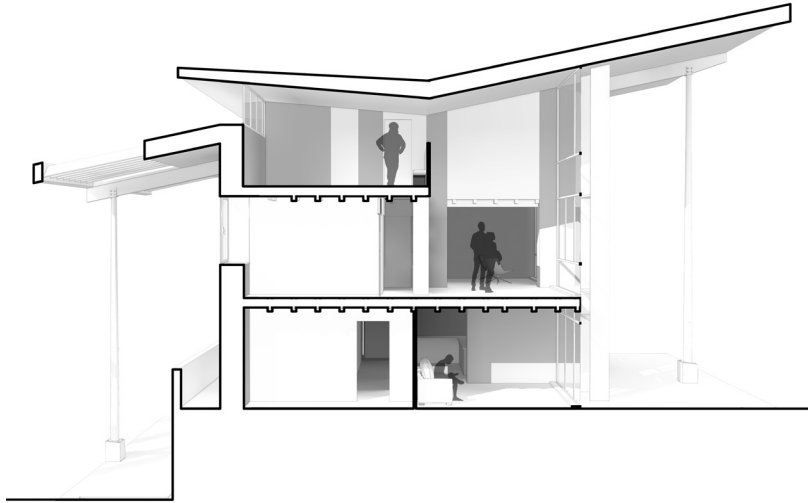
«TEILAKATU»
Overlap



X2

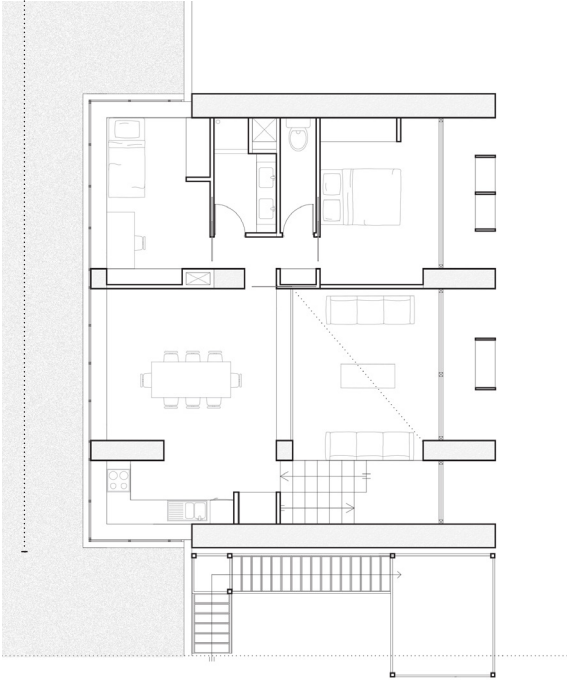


X2

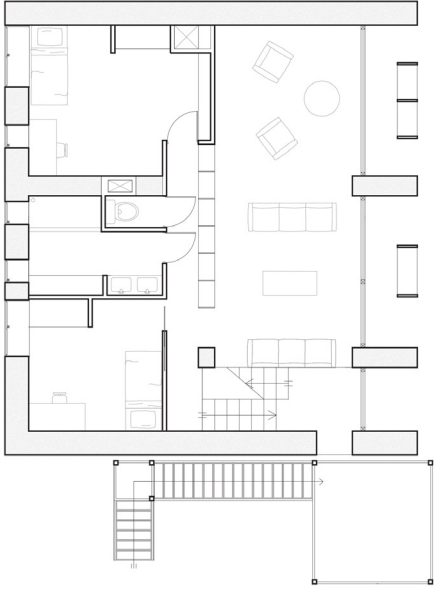


74 sqm





130
sqm



MASTER THESIS at Chalmers Architecture, MPARC, Matter Space & Structure

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The Spanish one, "Hegoalde", and The French one, "Iparralde". Iparralde represent only 15% of the Basque territory, but has nevertheless a population which has the same purpose and the same love: Its heritage and Identity. This love can be found today in its daily life, custom, landscape and architecture. Yet, two different opinions can be found:

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CHALMERS
University of technology