Porous Things

Interweaving Boston Public Works with Boston public space

A 2024 Rotch Traveling Scholarship Final Competition Proposal

submitted by Isabel Strauss

Inspired by the spirit of Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood's 1960s *Fun Palace*, a project designed, "to be erected on disused public land slated for redevelopment and intended to be dismantled after 10 years[1], *Porous Things* is designed as a "short term plaything" intended to activate the BPW site and to link the underutilized land to Boston's South End and Southie.
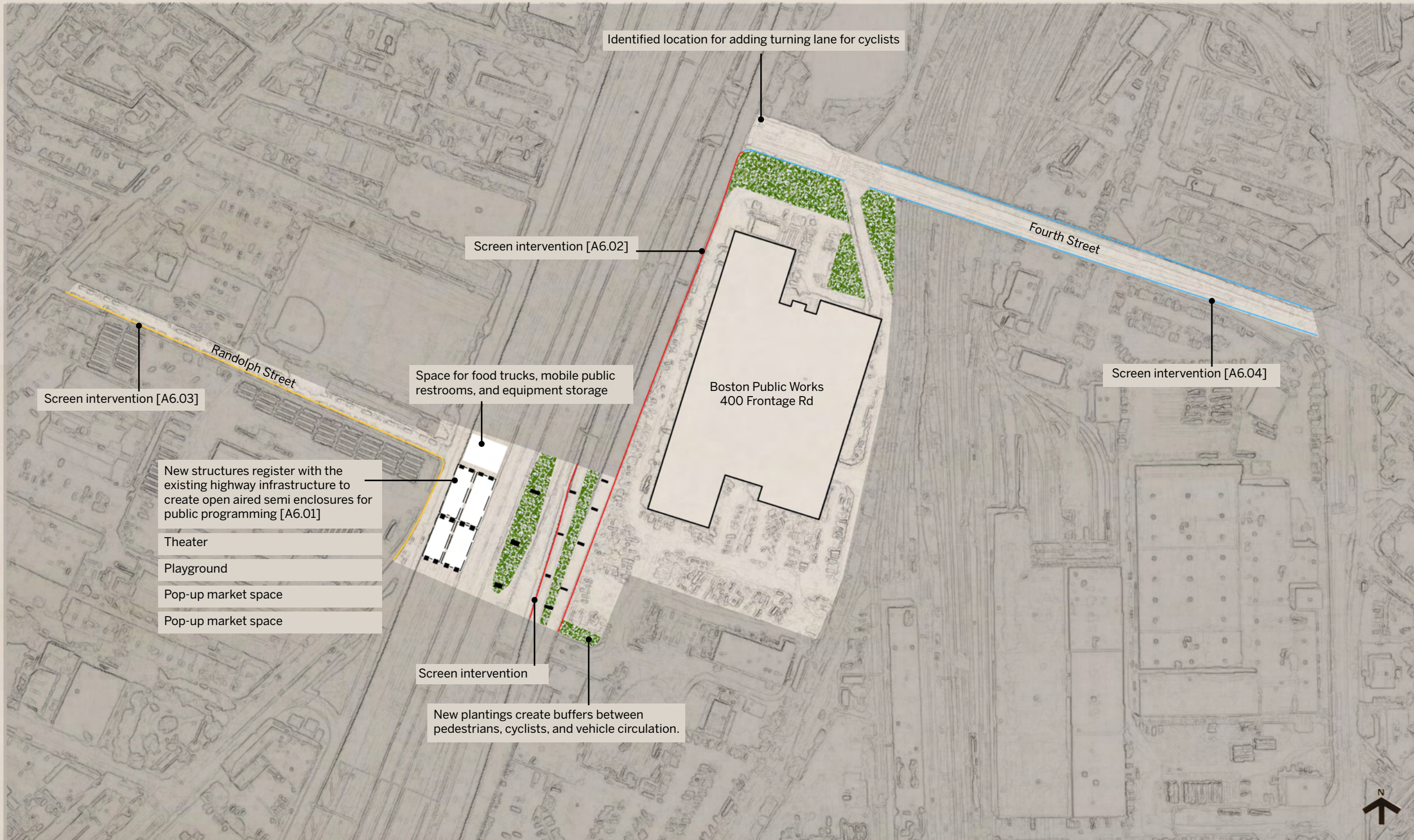
Nested volumes underneath I-93 are constructed from perforated metal panels, shielding visitors from the intense wind, illuminating dark, uninviting zones, and creating spaces large and flexible enough to accommodate bleacher seating for theatrical performances and rallies, in addition to dance parties, protests, community organizing, and futsol.

Porous Things improves the overall exterior appearance of the BPW facility, not by merely dressing up the building, but by curating views both into and through the site. Like Claes Oldenburg's *Proposals for Monuments and Buildings, 1965-69*, *Porous Things* takes elements from the everyday to the colossal, from the profile of tent like structures to the celebratory and commonly cut *papel picado*.

Porous Things guides the visitor's journey, inviting them into the site, signaling *this* is the space to activate, and gesturing that "it's up to you how you use it."

1 (CCA), Canadian Centre for Architecture. "1964: Fun Palace." Canadian Centre for Architecture. Accessed April 2024. https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/2/what-the-future-looked-like/32737/1964-fun-palace.

Identified location for adding turning lane for cyclists

Screen intervention [A6.02]

Space for food trucks, mobile public restrooms, and equipment storage

Boston Public Works
400 Frontage Rd

Fourth Street

Screen intervention [A6.04]

Randolph Street

Screen intervention [A6.03]

New structures register with the existing highway infrastructure to create open aired semi enclosures for public programming [A6.01]

Theater

Playground

Pop-up market space

Pop-up market space

Screen intervention

New plantings create buffers between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle circulation.

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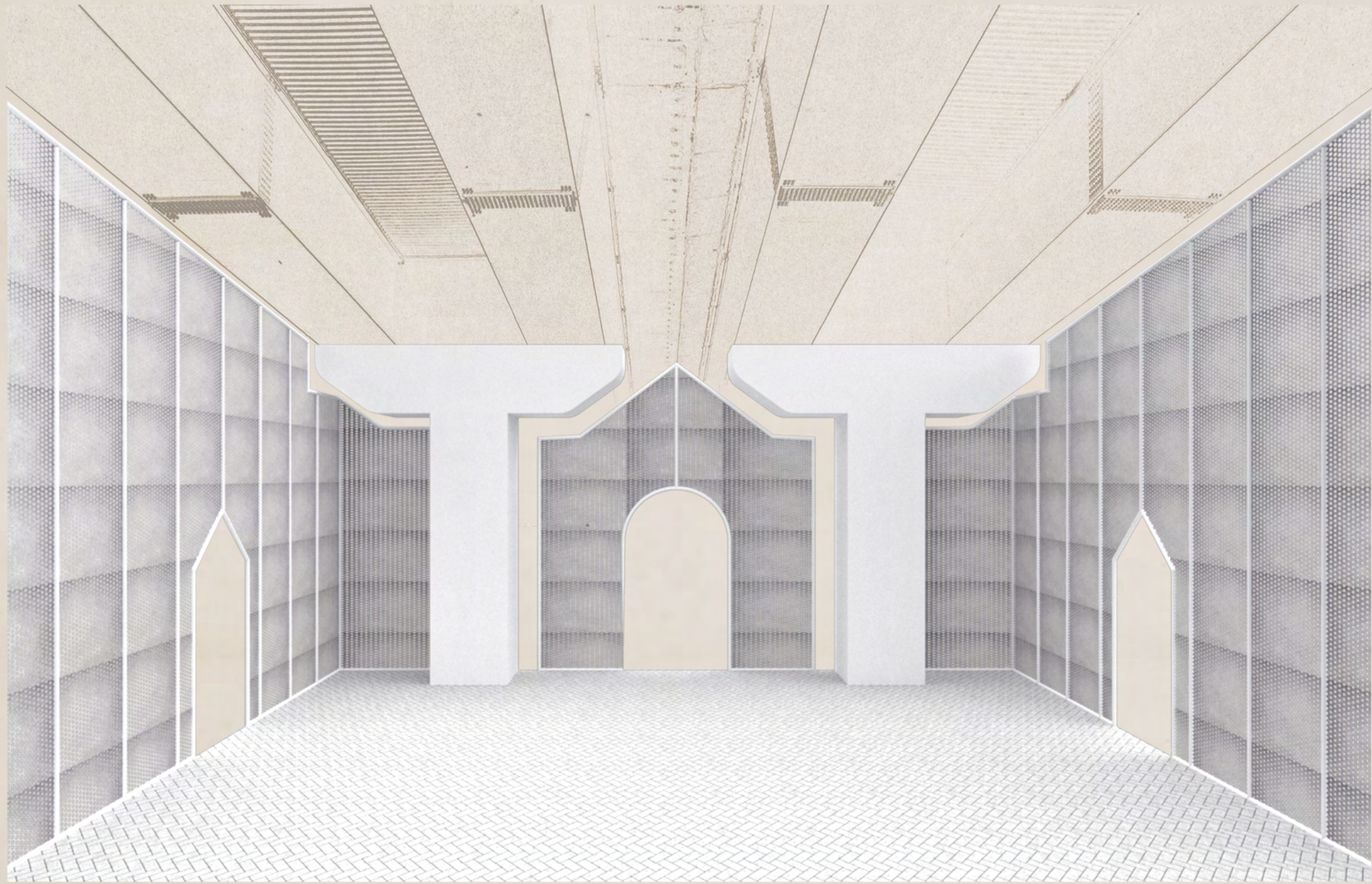
A2.01

overall plan

Porous Things

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A6.01

flexible theater space render

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"ARRIVE AND LEAVE by train, bus, monorail, hovercraft, car, tube or foot any time YOU want to – or just have a look at it as you pass. The information screens will show you what's happening. No need to look for an entrance – just walk in anywhere. No doors, foyers, queues, or commissionaires: it's up to you how you use it."[1]

1 (CCA), Canadian Centre for Architecture. "1964: Fun Palace." Canadian Centre for Architecture. Accessed April 14, 2024. https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/2/what-the-future-looked-like/32737/1964-fun-palace.

A3.11

flexible theater space
and pop up market place
section perspective

Porous Things
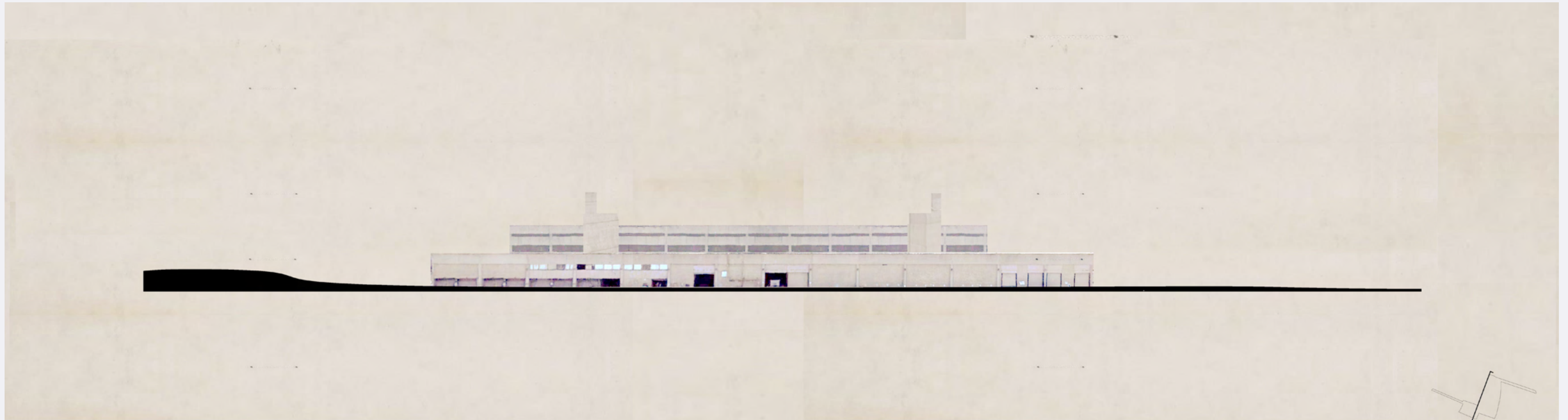
site section (before) cutting along the bike path on Frontage Rd., looking SE toward the BPW building

Isabel Strauss
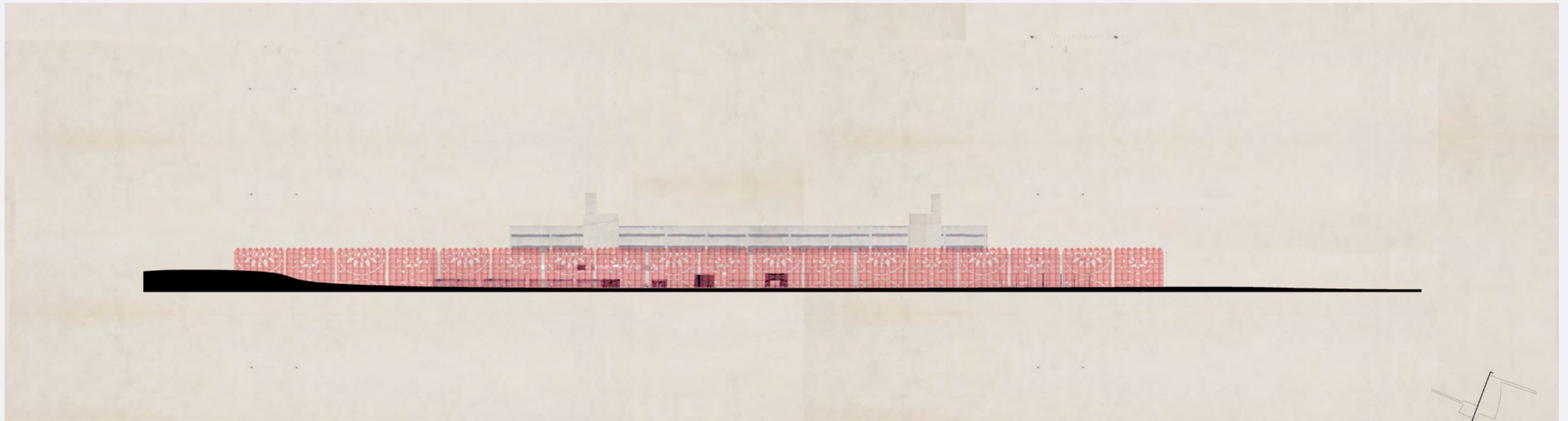
site section (after) cutting along the bike path on Frontage Rd., looking SE toward the BPW building
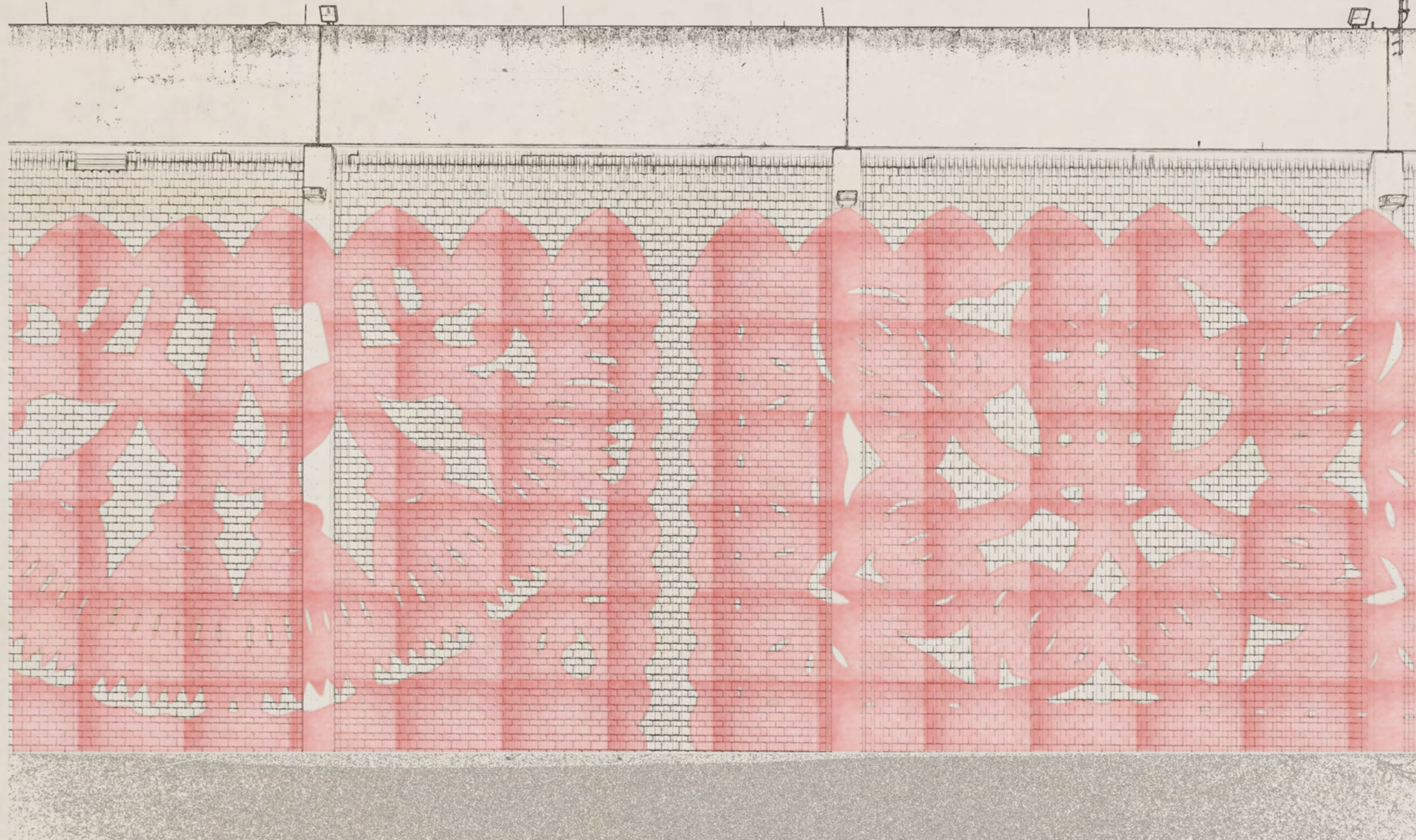
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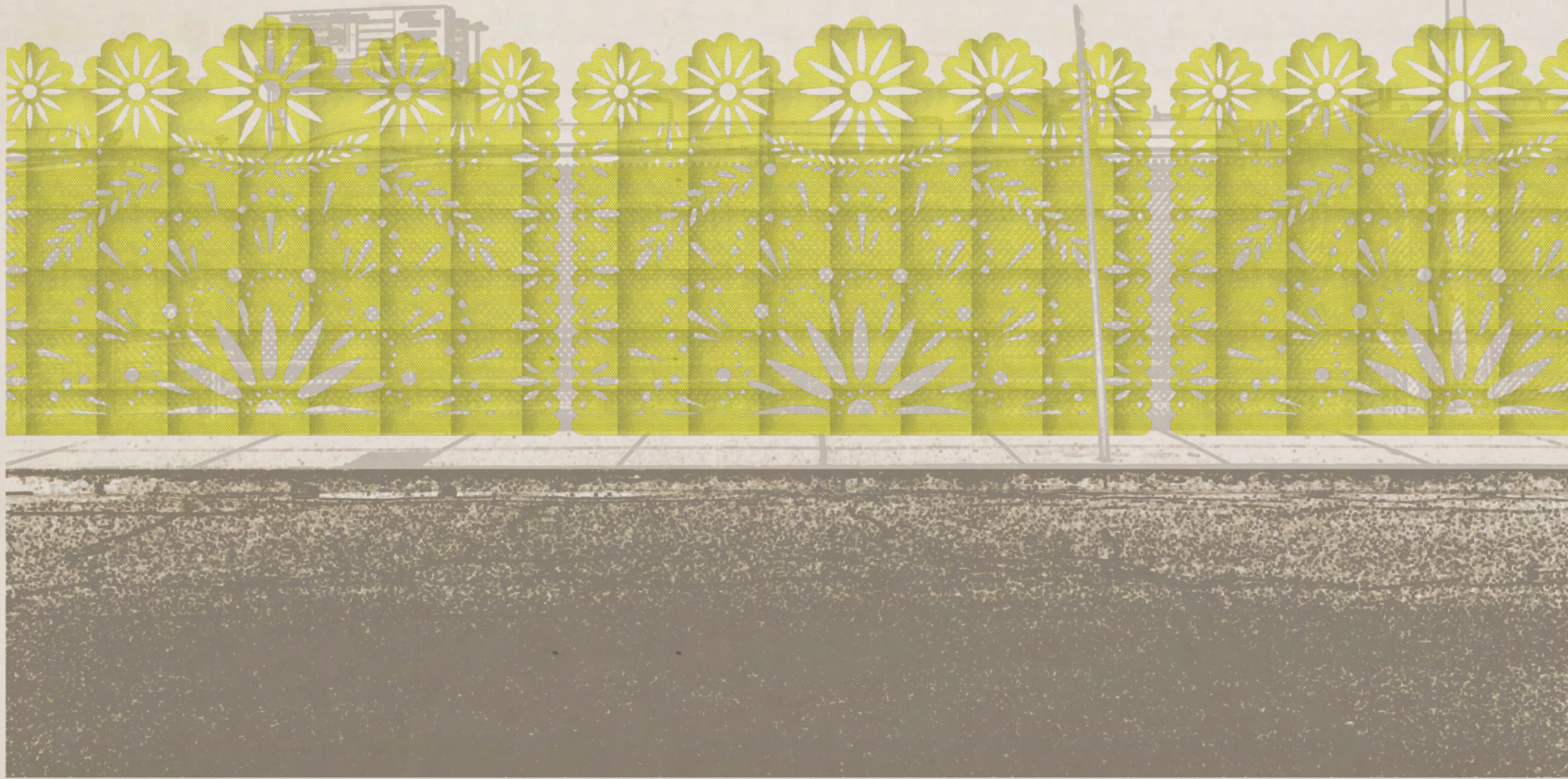
A6.02

screen intervention render

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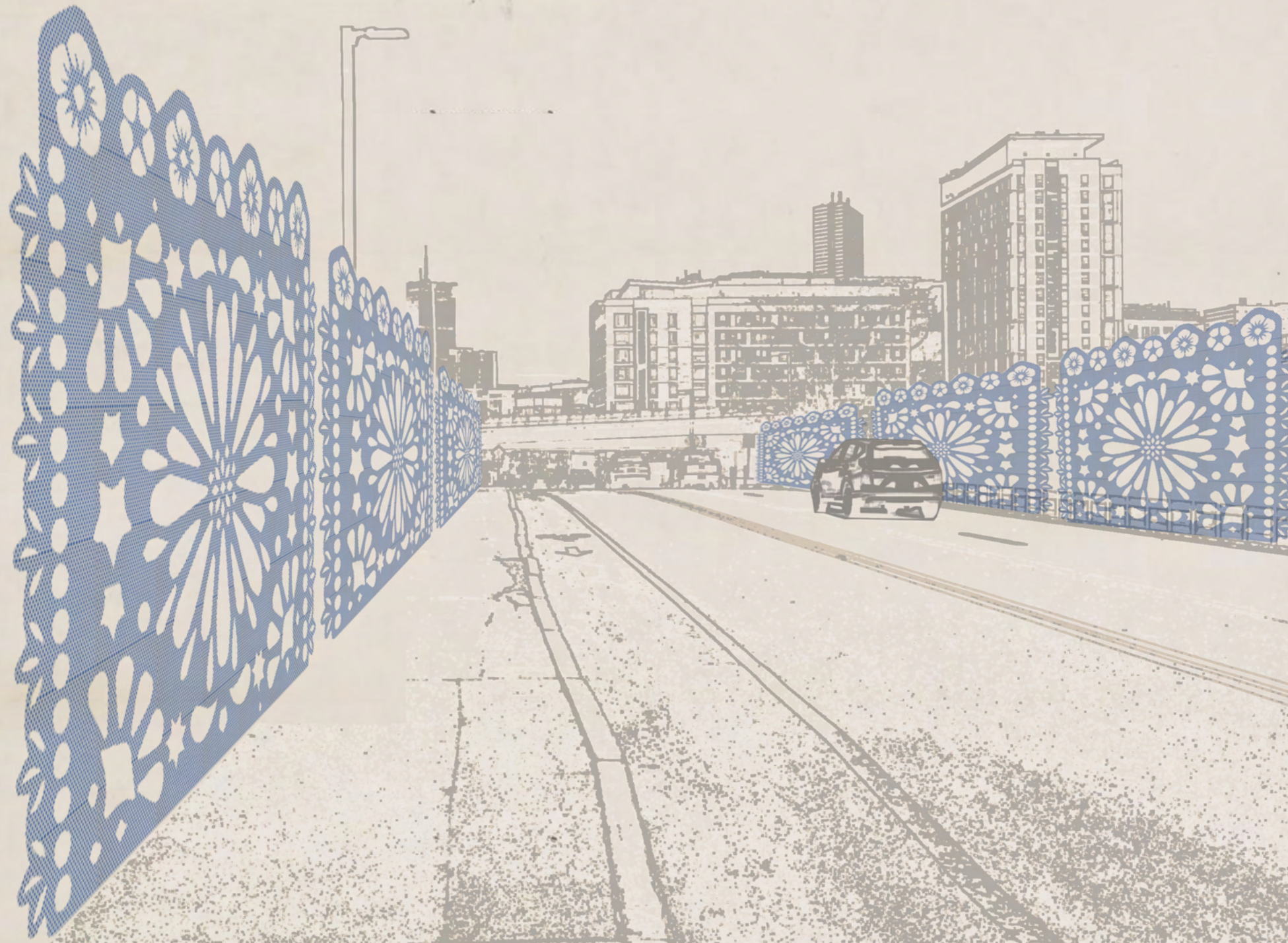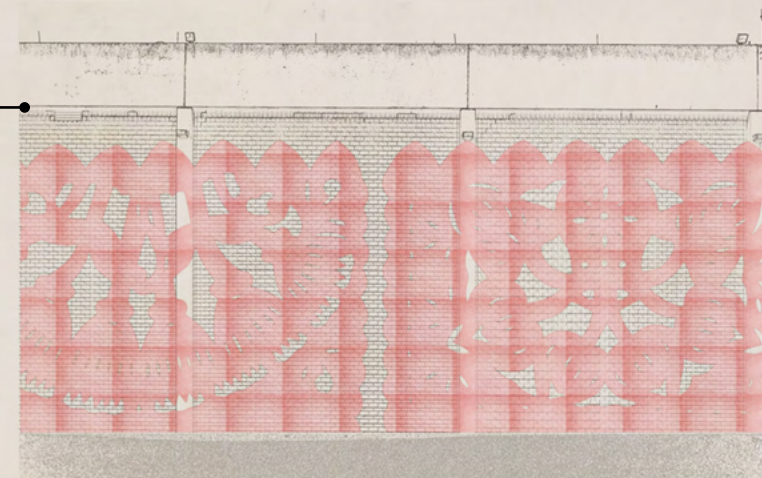
A6.03

screen intervention render

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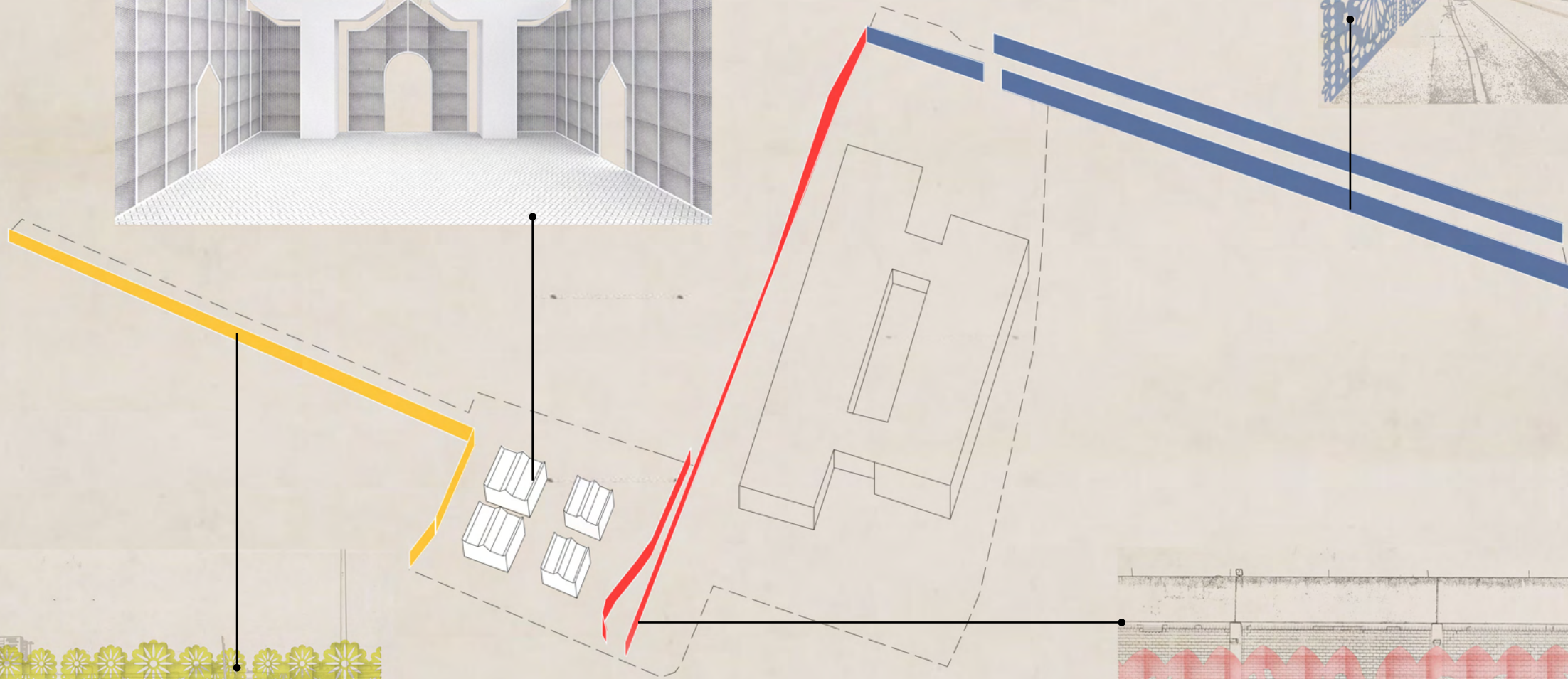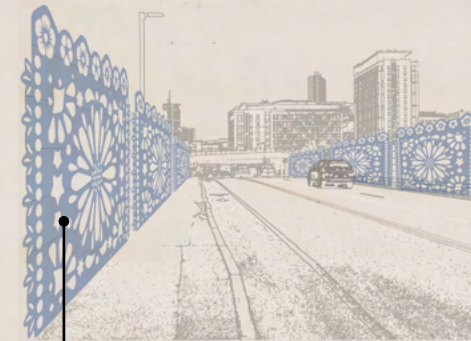Isabel Strauss   2024

A6.04

screen intervention render

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A7.01

axonometric
diagram

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