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Berlin: Border Control

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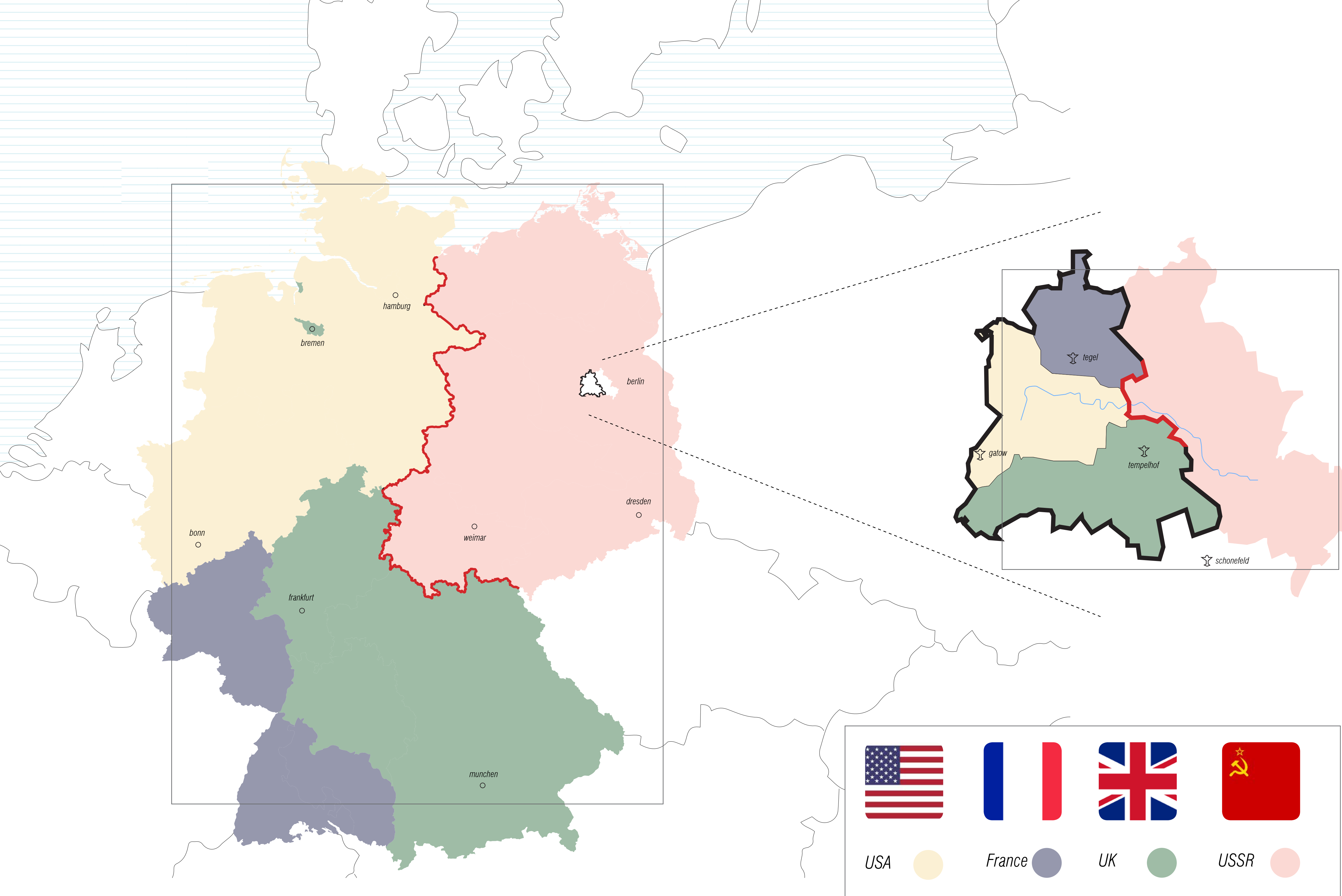
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SITING

DIVISION IN GERMANY



A NATION DIVIDED

Following the conclusion of World War II, according to the Potsdam agreement, Germany was divided into four occupation zones. Berlin as capital, was divided in a similar way. France, Britain, and the United States met to combine non-Soviet zones into a single zone for reconstruction according to the Marshall Plan. As West Germany developed into a capitalist country, the economy began to rebuild. However, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) followed in Soviet form with a communist economy heavily owned by the state. With a standard of living gap that continued to widen, huge numbers of citizens from the GDR emigrated to West Germany. Thus, Stalin called for a border: "The demarcation line between East and West Germany should be considered a border—and not just any border, but a dangerous one ... The Germans will guard the line of defence with their lives." The inner German border was closed in 1952, with the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961.



TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!

"Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German, separated from his fellow men. Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar"

"After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor."

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

-Ronald Reagan, 1987



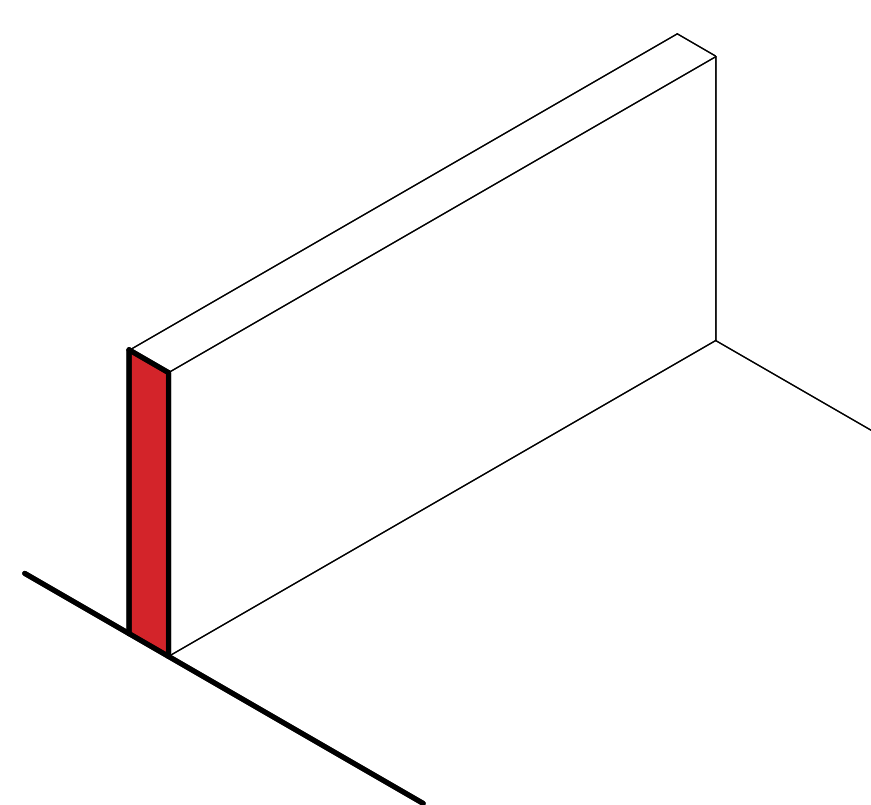
PEACE + FREEDOM

"The Berlin Wall, this symbol of state abuse cast in concrete, took millions of people to the limits of what is tolerable, and all too many beyond it. It broke them."

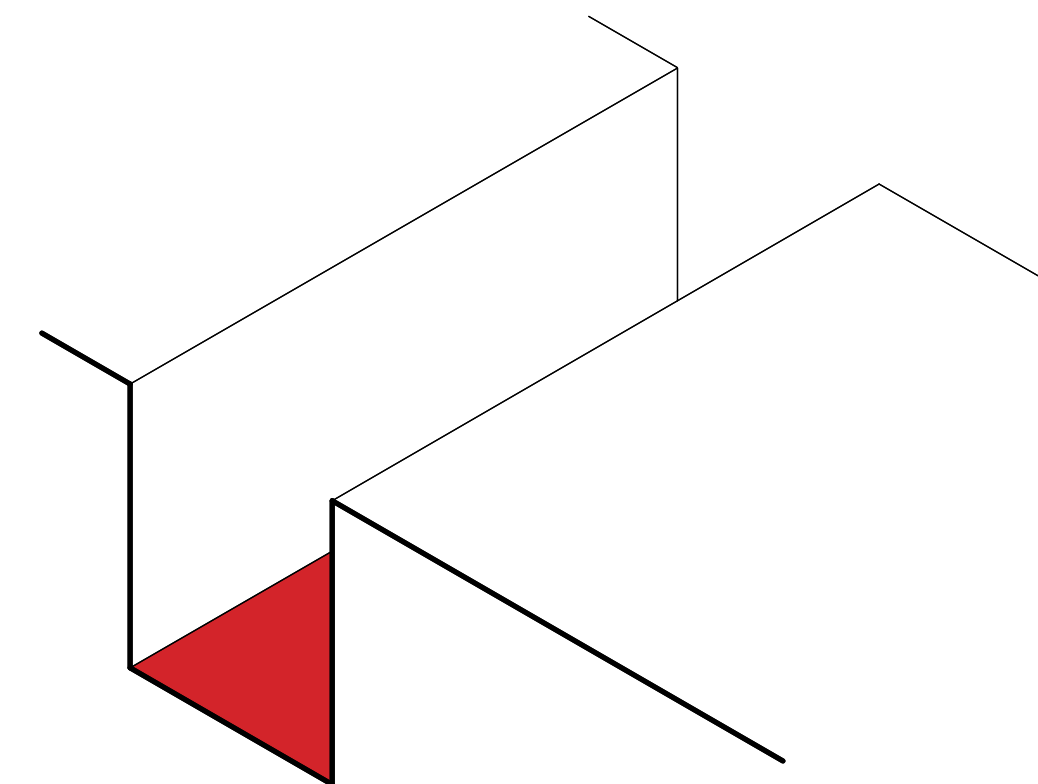
"The fall of the wall has shown us that dreams can come true. "Nothing has to stay the way it is, however big the hurdles are. "

-Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, 2014

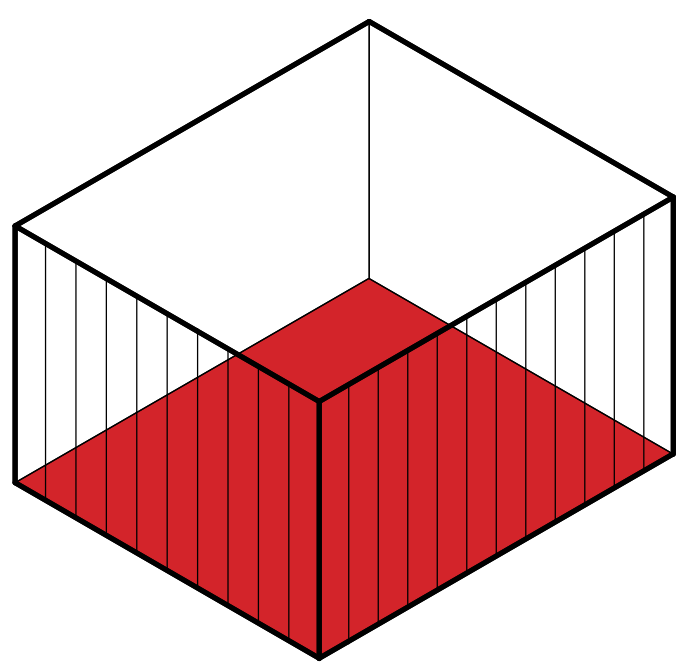
DIVISION



WALL

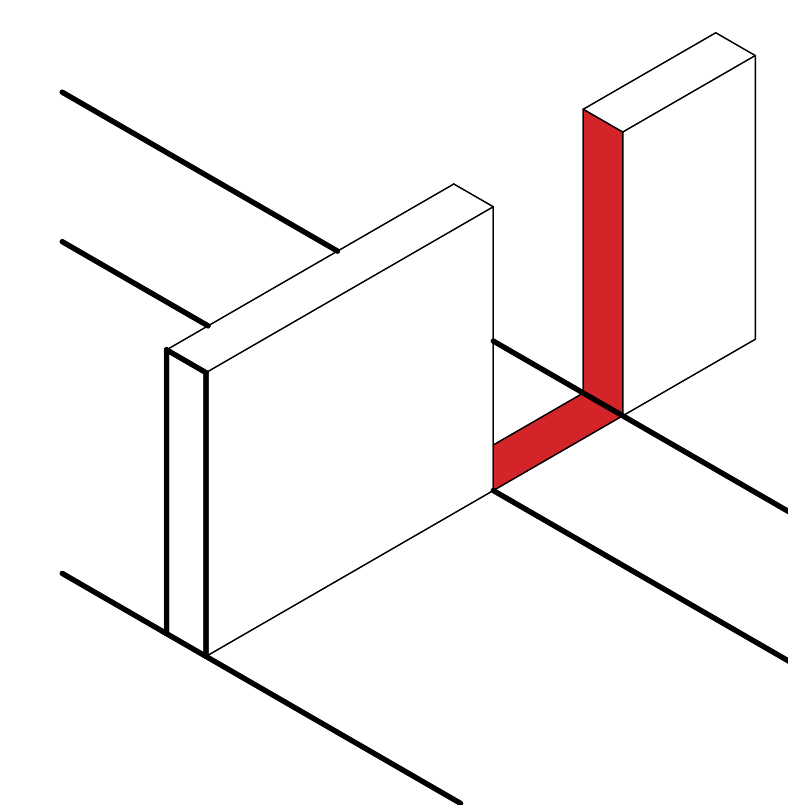


TRENCH

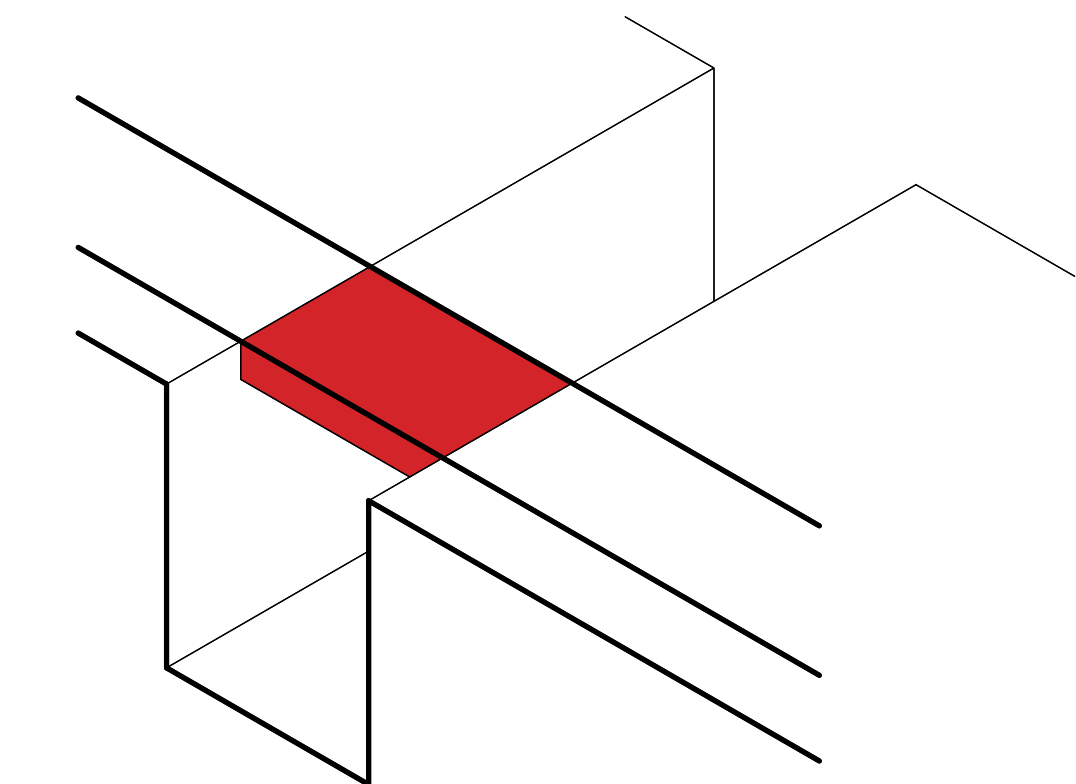


CAGE

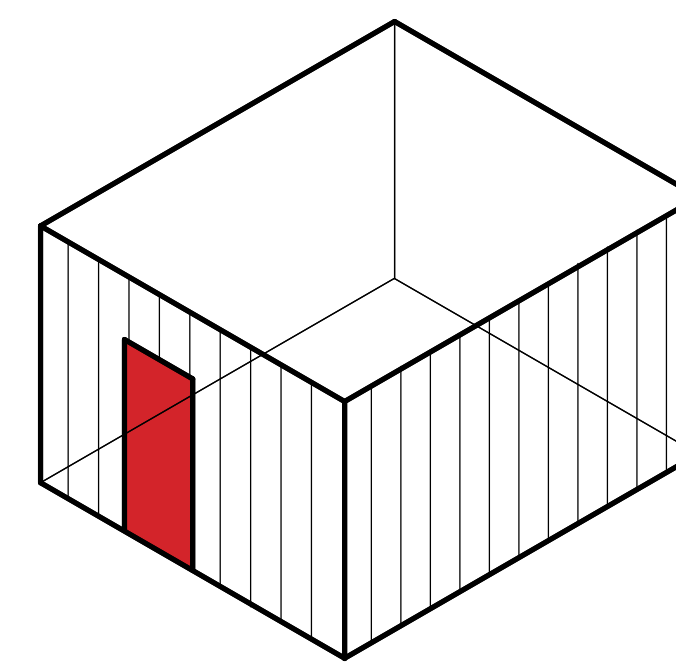
PERMISSIVITY



GATE



BRIDGE



OPENING

SITING

DIVISION IN BERLIN

THE DEATH STRIP

The Berlin Wall existed as the ultimate realized instrument of order. Dividing East and West Berlin with over 100 miles of wall, the methods of control included 267 dog runs, 260 watchtowers, trip wires, electric fences, and land mines. From 1961 to 1989, the wall claimed 138 lives as guards were given "permission" to use weapons in response to escape attempts. The wall, and it's death zone left a lasting impression on the cityscape of Berlin.

border crossing

chaussestrasse



border crossing

invalidenstrasse



border crossing

check point charlie



border crossing

heinrich-heine-strasse



border crossing

bornholmer strasse



FRIEDRICHSTRASSE BAHNHOF

Of the eight border crossings of the Berlin Wall, Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof was the only crossing not to occur at the physical location of the wall. The station mitigated transit for the East and West nationalities simultaneously. The separation occurred physically on all levels with separate entrances and multiple checkpoints. The Tranenpalast, also known as the Palace of Tears, was constructed to help facilitate this filtering. The train station was reconfigured to become a literal microcosm of the Berlin Wall.

border crossing

oberbaumbrücke



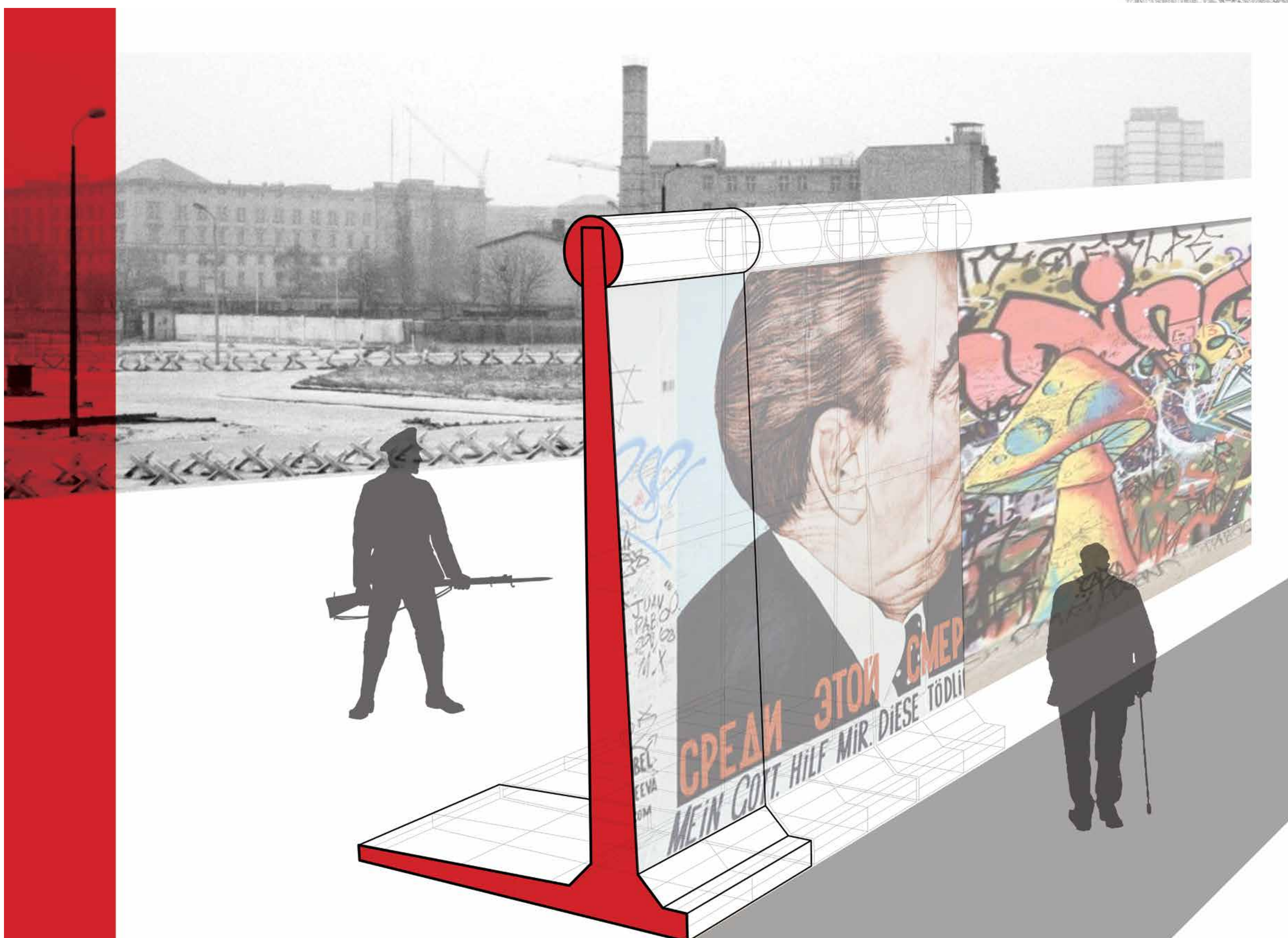
to cottbus, strausberg nord, ahrensfelde

ARCHITECTURE OF THE WALL

STUTZWANDELEMENT UL 12.11

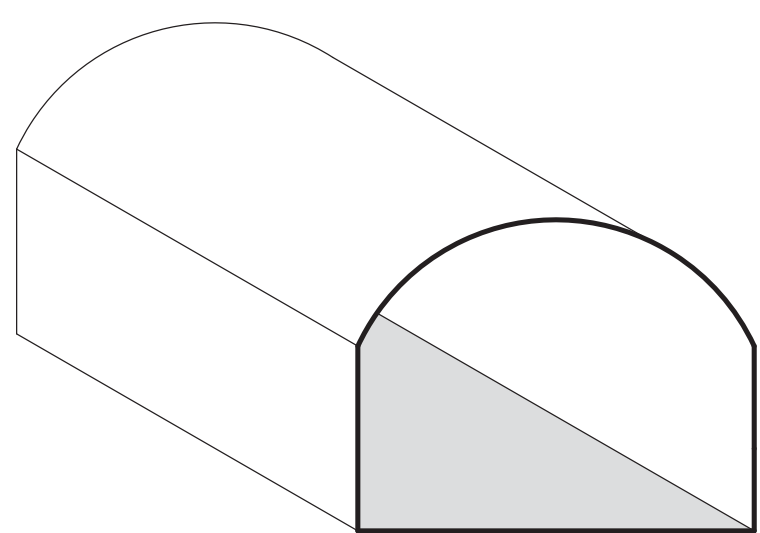
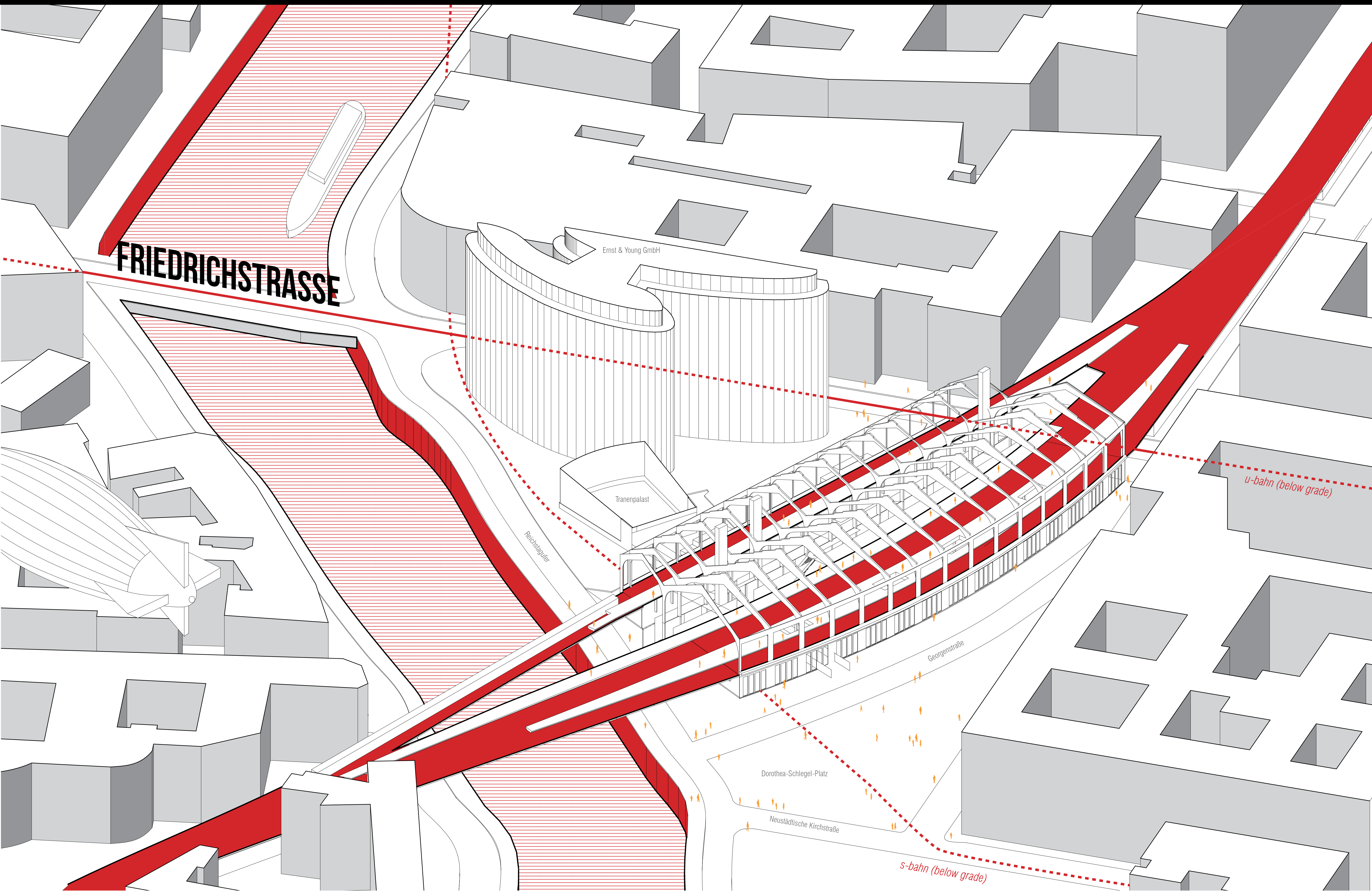
The final iteration of the Berlin Wall - retaining wall element 12.11.

It has a distinct architectural language of division. It is a blank slate, inviting artistic expression while forbidding passage. Modular, sturdy, insurmountable, heavy. This wall implies permanent separation more so than early barbed wire fences. And the wall creates two unique conditions on each side.



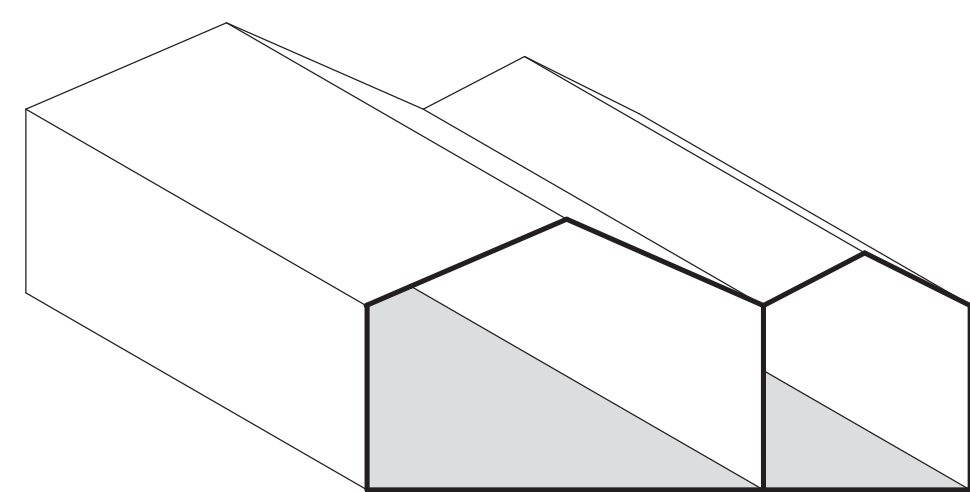
SITING

DIVISION IN FRIEDRICHSTRASSE



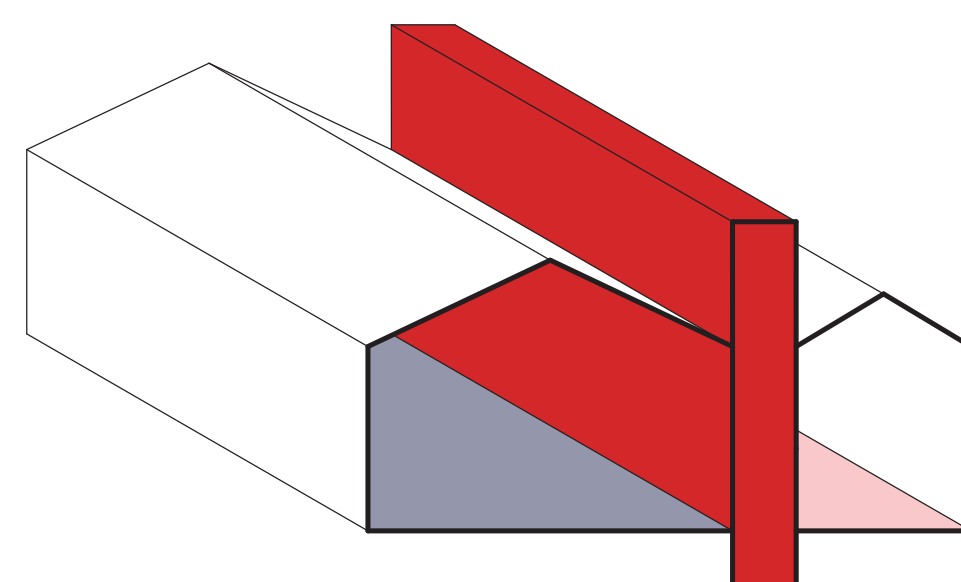
1878

Friedrichstraße Bahnhof began construction in 1878 as part of the Berlin Stadtbahn project. The two platforms sat within a large curved train shed resting on a masonry base. The main entrance was on the northern side of the station. The ornate masonry detailing however did not survive multiple renovations during and after the World Wars.



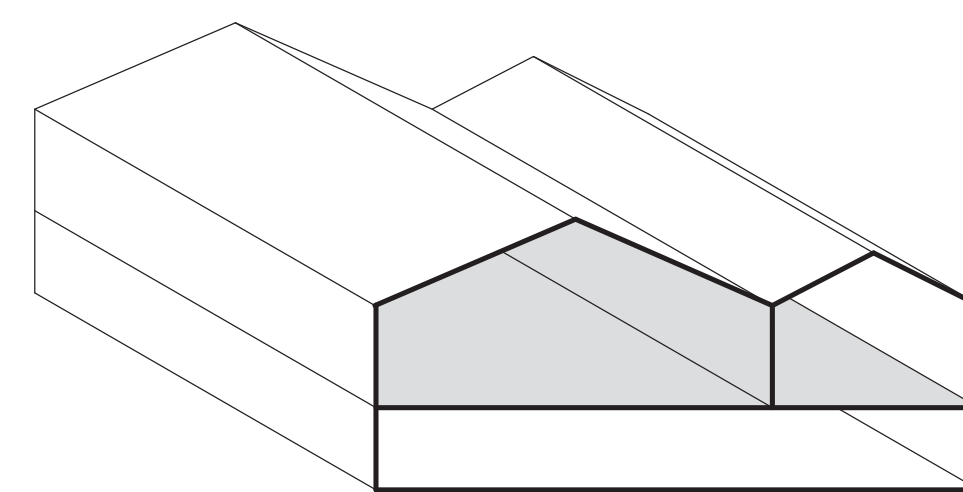
1923

Between 1919 and 1925, the renovation took an expressionist style and the entire northern side was covered with the dark brick that can be seen today. The station was expanded for the increase in rail traffic by the addition of a second shed.



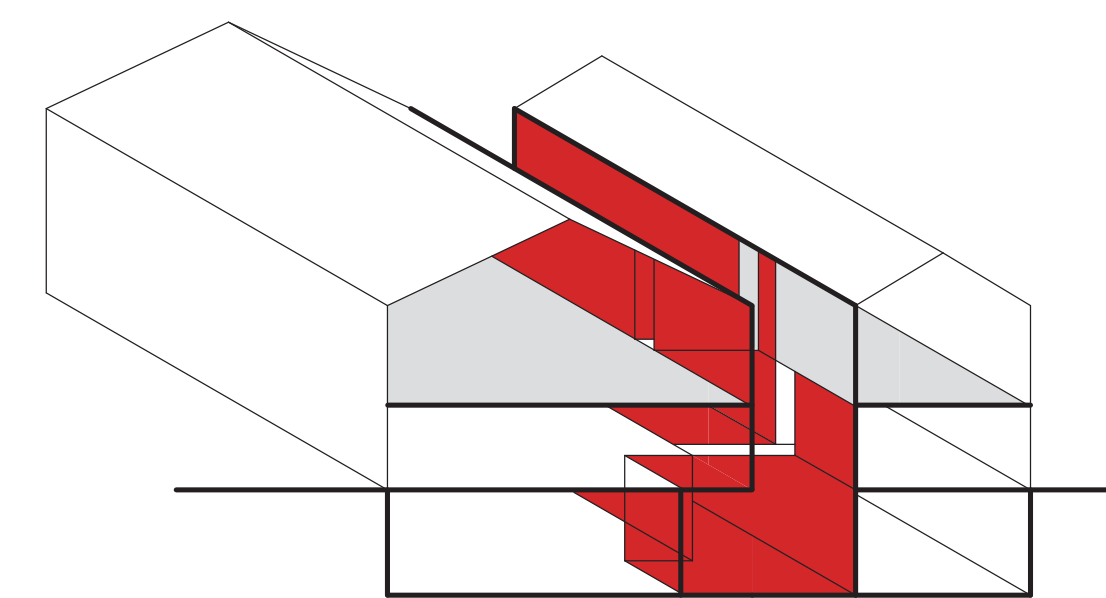
1961

Along with the erection the Berlin Wall, Friedrichstraße Bahnhof was separated in a similar manner. Division occurred between the two sheds with the construction of a physical metal wall. The two separate nationalities could simultaneously use the station without ever seeing one another. Being a border crossing, the station also was associated with several daring crossing attempts. The station existed as a terminus point for East German trains and a transfer point for West German U-bahn and S-bahn lines.



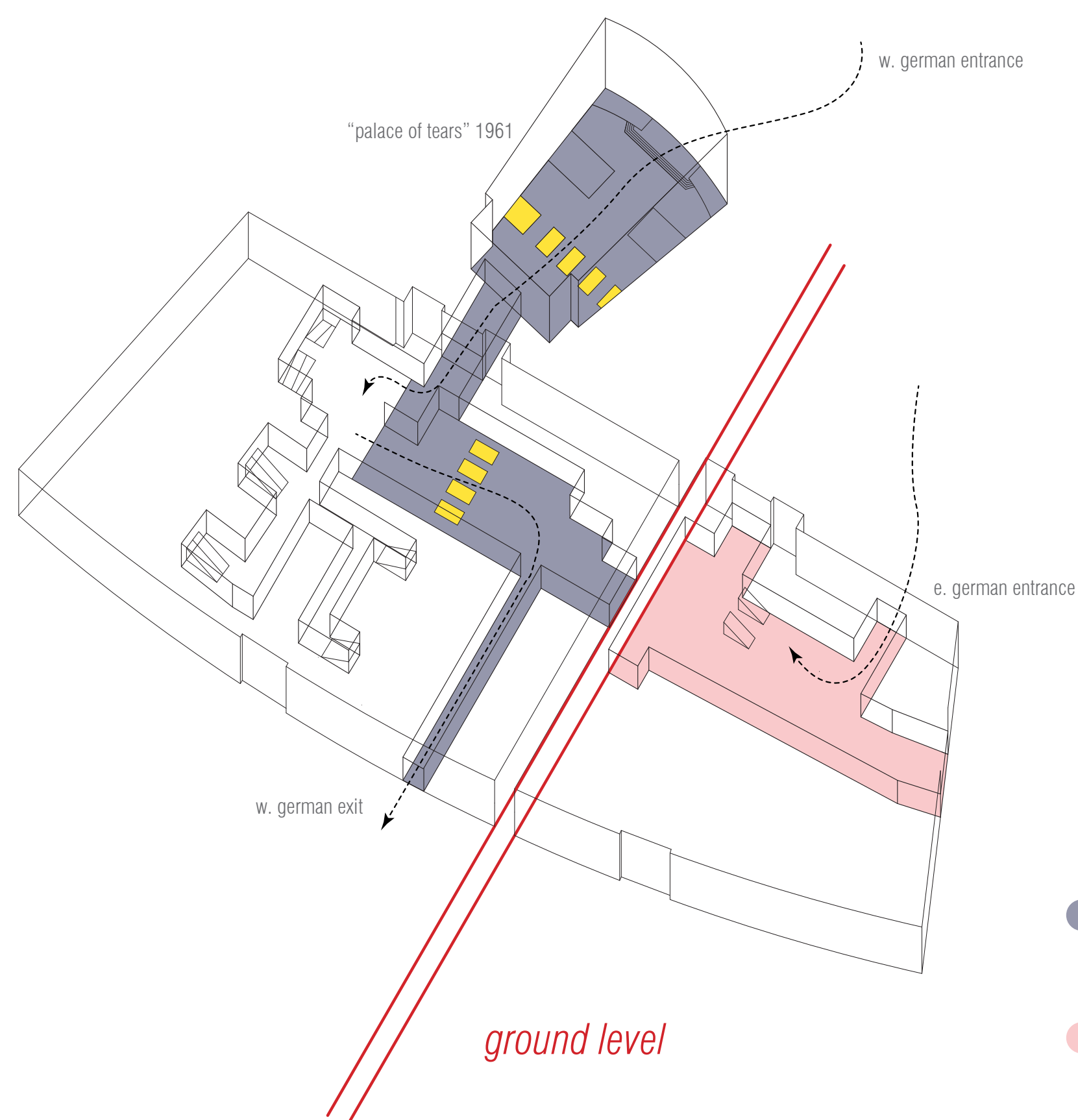
1990

Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, the station reopened for free transit. The wall was removed allowing free passage between the two sheds. The instruments of control including border checkpoints and interrogation rooms were replaced with a retail experience at the ground level. Maze-like navigation in this "mall" carries a remnant of the border control from the past.



2016

This project proposes a new future for the station, one that celebrates freedom of movement. I seek to reinhabit the wall by clearly loading the circulation of the station among the spine of the station where the division once occurred. By cutting into the station, I can increase the natural light that can reach the entirety of the section while also allowing greater visual connections between the multiple levels and platforms. The trench that marks the location of division is now bridged and moved across freely.

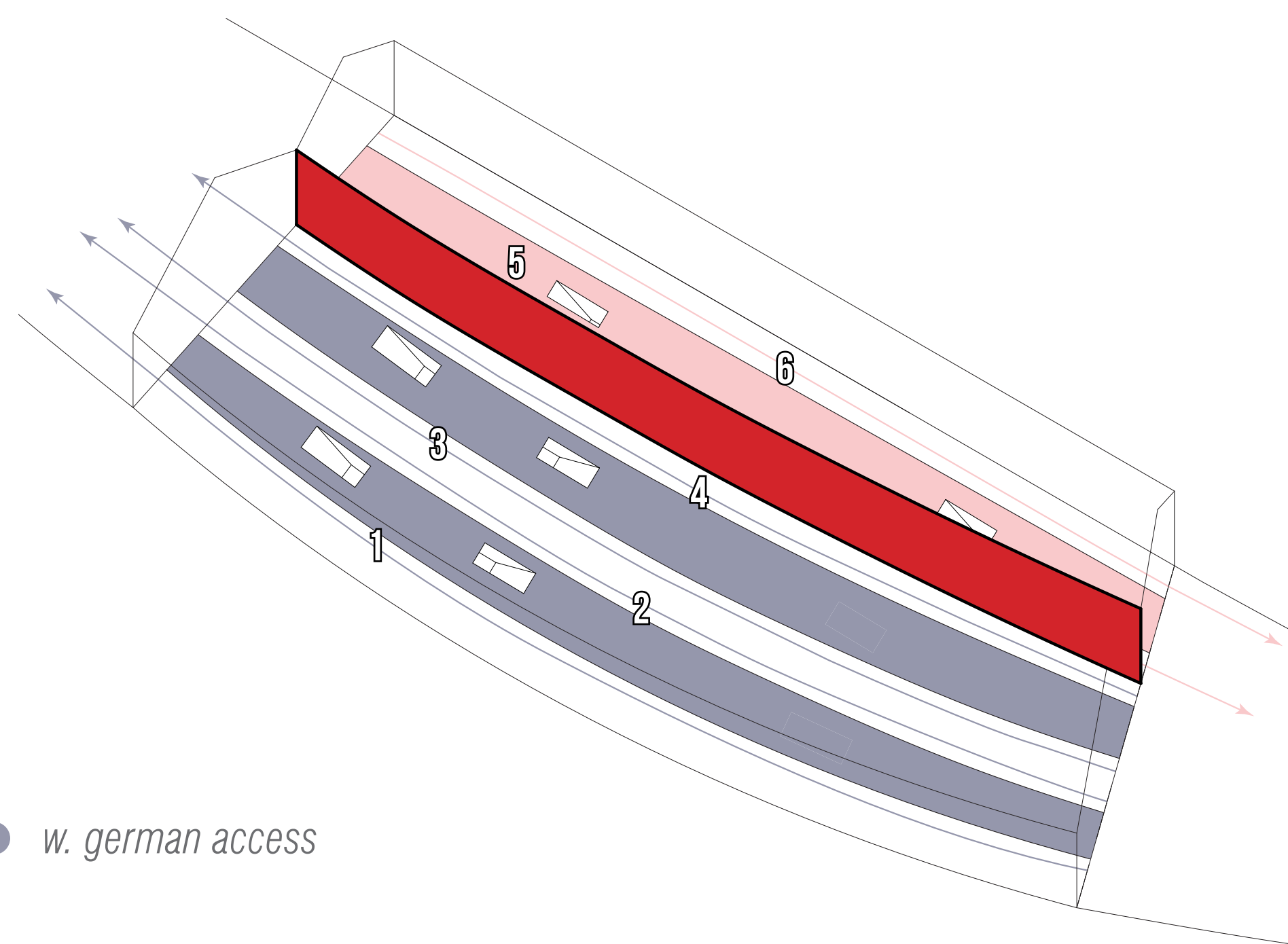


w. german access

e. german access

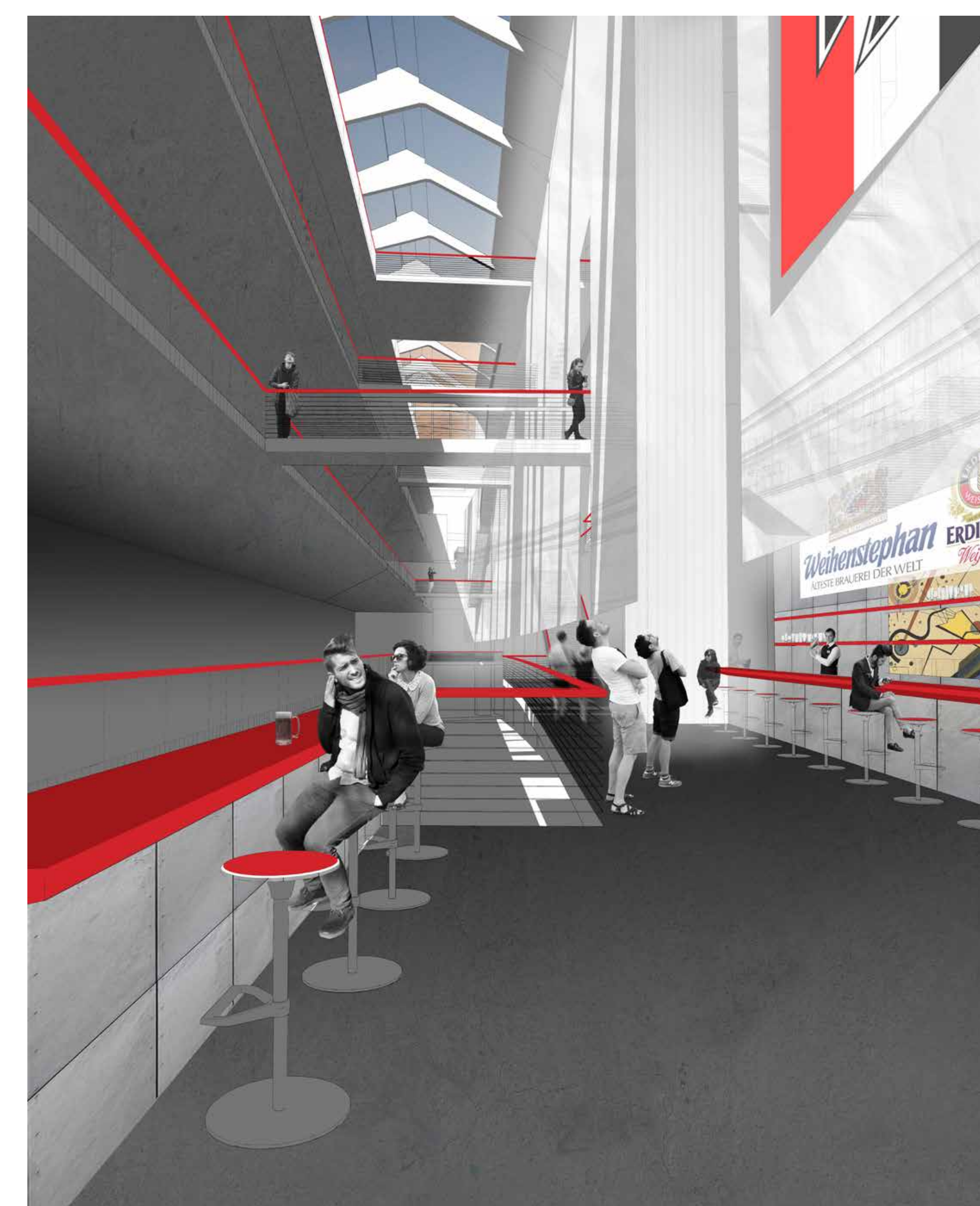
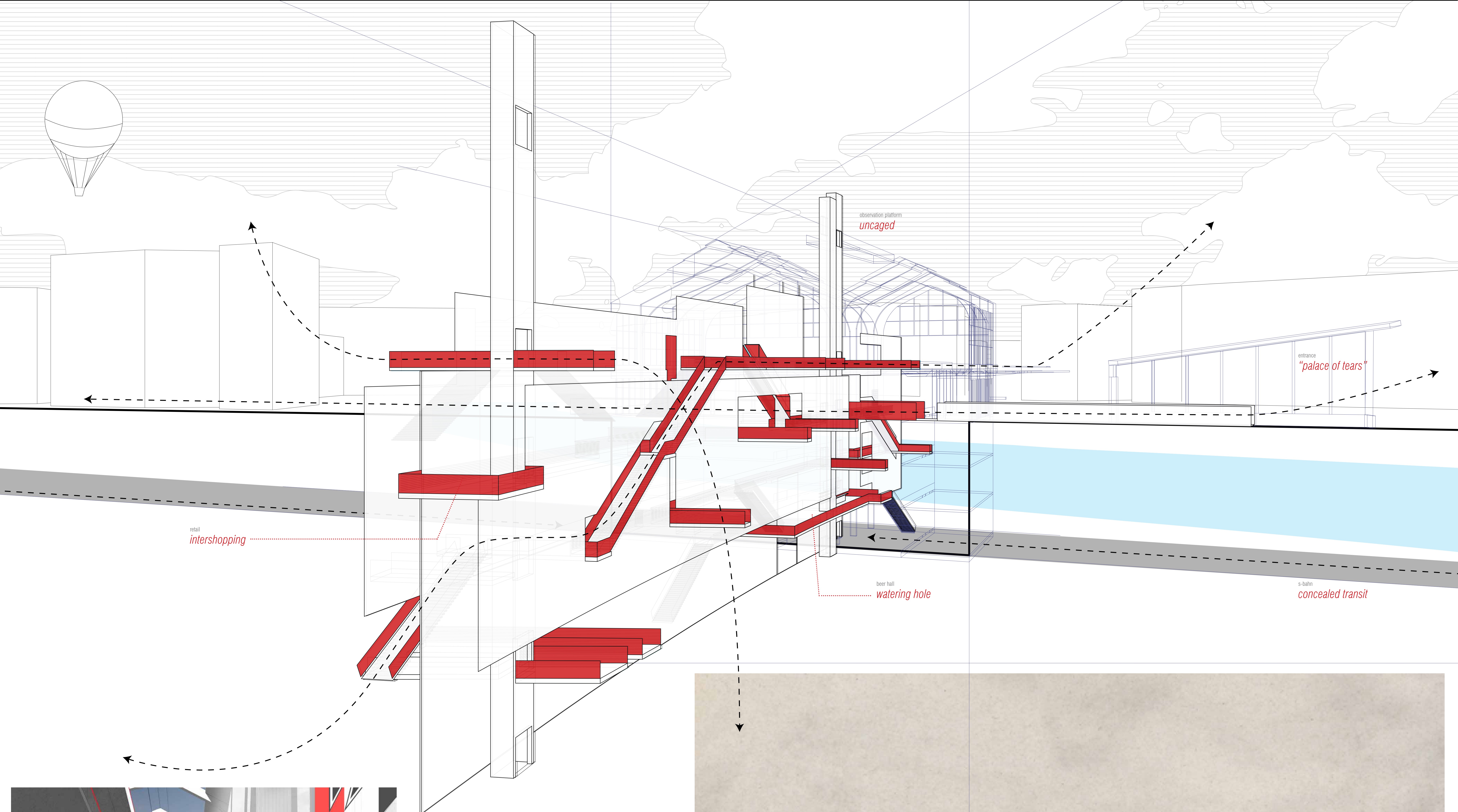
ground level

platform level



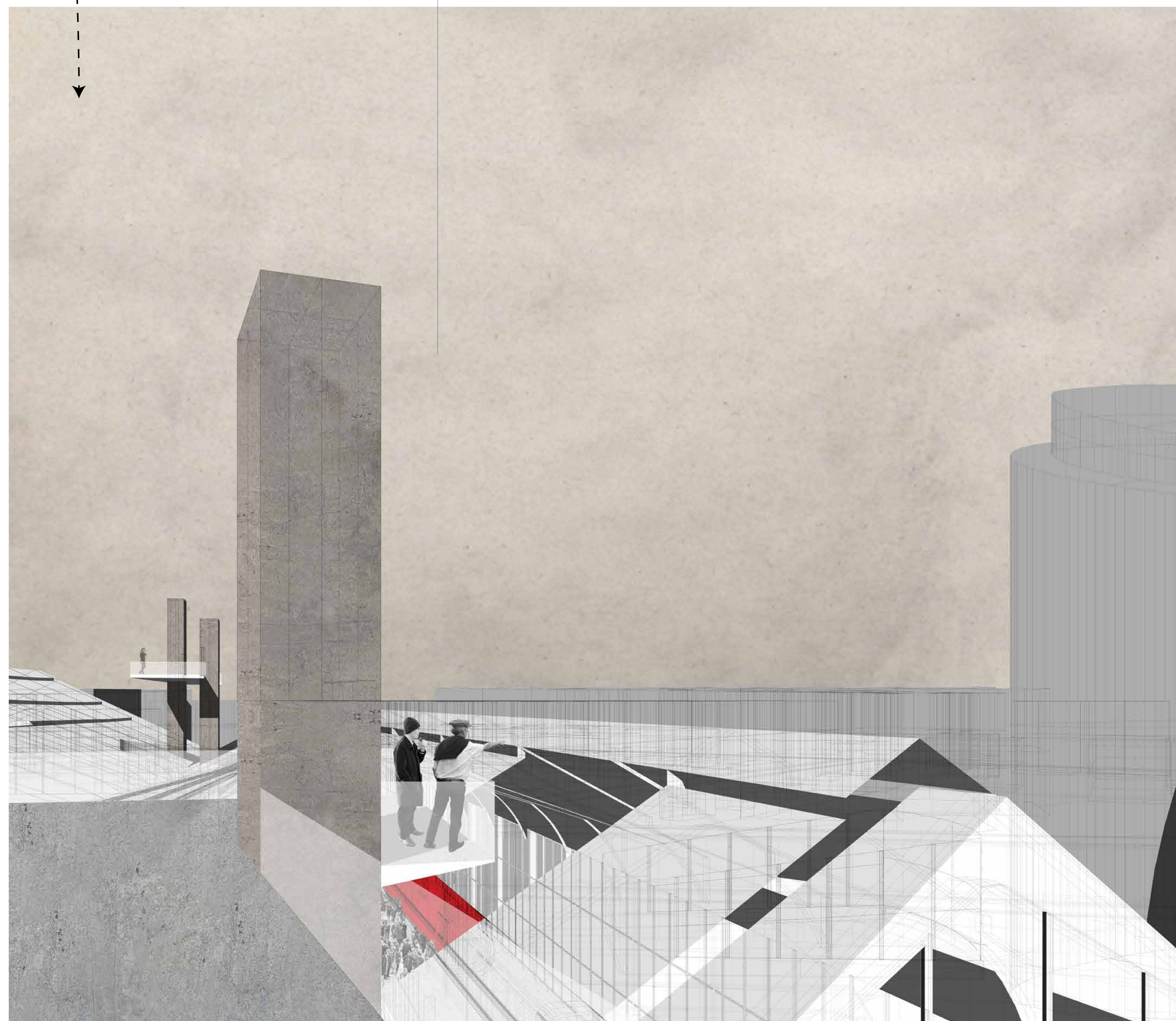
INTERVENTION

RENOVATION OF PLATFORMS 4+5



[RE]CROSSING THE WALL

During the Cold War, it was very difficult to cross the wall, and impossible to inhabit the physical zone of the wall. The renovation of Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof allows one to move freely across the wall on multiple levels and engage with program that is embedded in the wall. Apart from observing the station, the screens augment the way that you look at other people. Sometimes, the screen is punctured to allow greater transparency and sometimes pieces of program such as bars and exhibits nestle themselves within the edges.



(above) casual observation at the bar
(right) observing the city—the release from the cage

