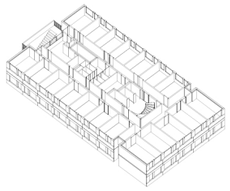
PRESERVE, RESTORE, ADAPT

Site plan
1:2000

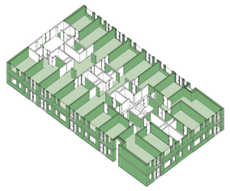
Tower A

Tower B

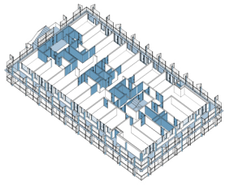
Tower C



Existing walls and infills



Preserved built elements



Additional elements

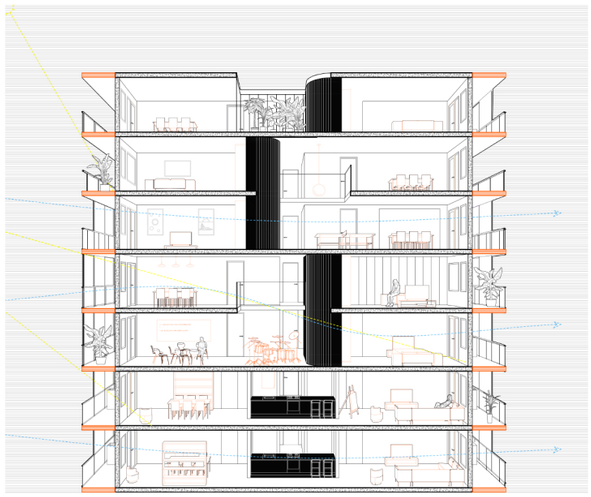
West view of tower C from tower B

PROGRAM
The life of the Triemli towers is not over just yet. The housing shortage in Zurich questions the decision of demolishing these underused buildings as they bring the opportunity of temporarily accommodating the emerging population with lower energy consumption when compared with newly built structures. 'From tower to tower' repurposes the three brutalist high-rise Triemli towers offering a mixed-use program including different sized dwellings with collective spaces, a city hotel, a youth hostel, student housing, elderly residence, coworking spaces, ateliers, and care facilities. The multi-purpose complex rises proudly as the gateway to the city of Zurich lodging short, medium and long-term visitors in small, medium, and big size rooms for tenants from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

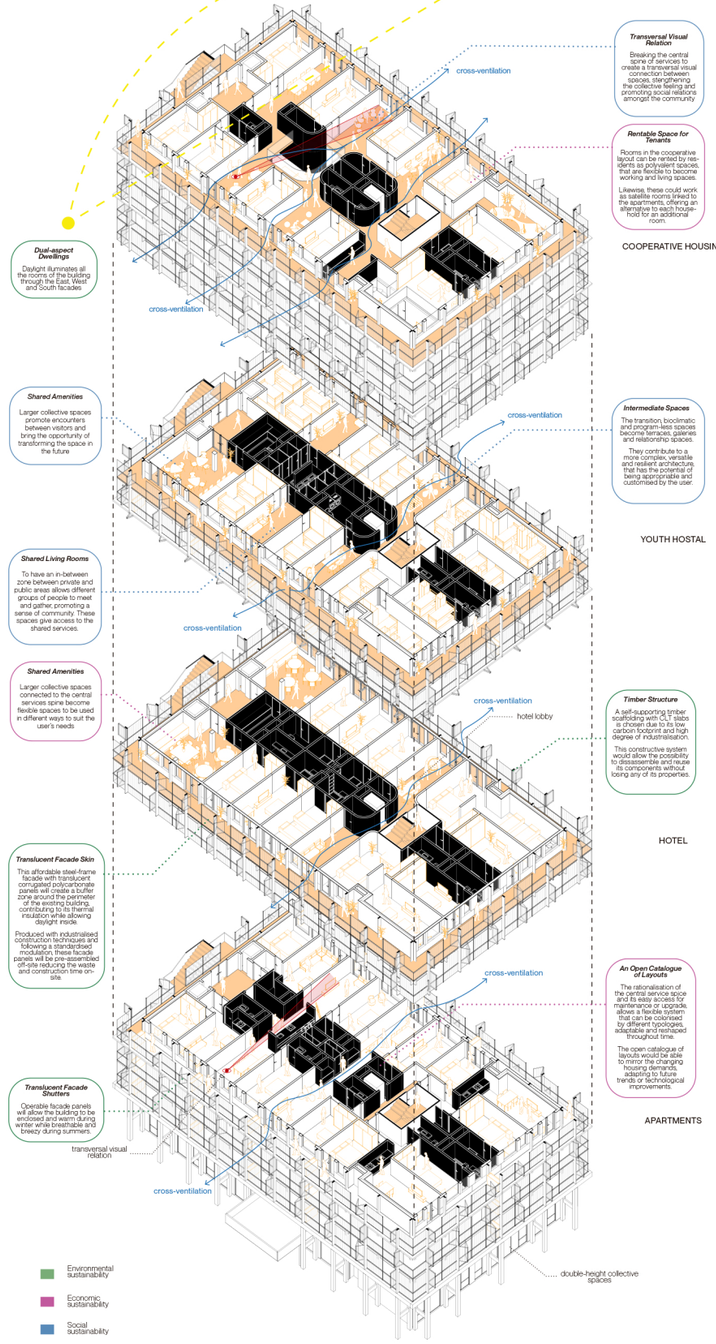
As the three towers were designed and built with identical elements, we designed a catalog of layouts that could be applied in different levels according to the contemporary housing demand of the city. We designed a system rather than a building, purposely designed to shift and adapt in time for the new inhabitants through a modulated open plan layout. Modular rooms can be divided or merged together to meet the tenants' requirements according to the level of privacy and activity. The privileged proximity of the site to the Uetliberg mountains makes the complex an attractive hub for people visiting Zurich for a short and long rental term wanting to be close to nature. While apartments range from 45m2 to 70m2 with private balconies, the proposal extends the existing staff rooms from 13,3tm2 to 18m2 with shared kitchens, laundry rooms, hobby rooms, dining areas and living rooms. With a rental based allowance, new tenants may join the 10-year plan of the Trimli towers, allowing users to redefine each floor layout through sliding doors enclosing or opening rooms to become individual bedrooms or shared spaces where people can meet.

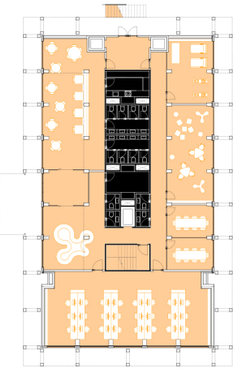
ARCHITECTURE
Our main goal is to preserve the prefabricated elements in order to decrease the carbon emissions, only being removed temporarily to trim them and bring them back to the building creating quality collective spaces. The central axis of the building is reserved for services, increasing the amount of wet area and shafts inside the structural insitu concrete shell. Two new vertical cores are proposed complying with the current fire protection regulations. In the north core a new exterior staircase with two elevators is proposed, and in the southern wing the three small lifts are replaced with one bigger lift and fire-proofed staircase.

Dual-aspect transversal apartments are designed for cross-ventilation and to embrace the east-west orientation of the towers, replacing the existing mono-oriented rooms. On the inside, 10 cm thick CLT panels become a major infill of the towers, creating a contrast between concrete and wood where smooth and rough surfaces come together thanks to this sustainable material. There is an opportunity to reuse the rooftop area for neighbors to practice urban farming, taking advantage of the outdoor terrace and indoor space.

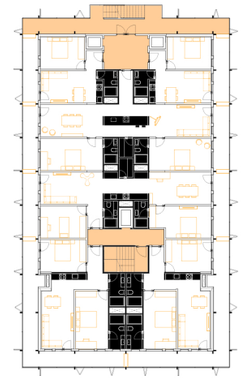


Perspective section showing cross-ventilation and double-height collective space

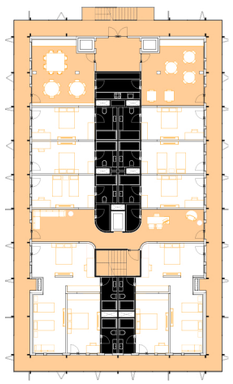




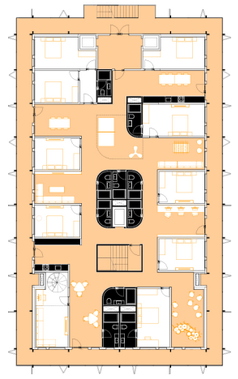
Ground floor layout
1:200



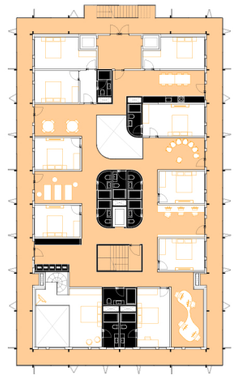
Apartments layout
1:200



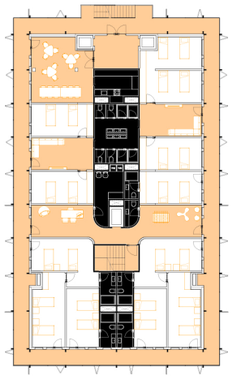
Hotel layout
1:200



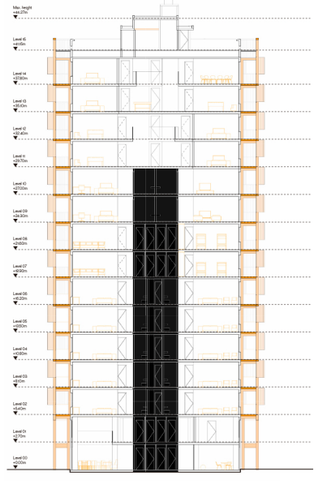
Cooperative housing level 1 layout
1:200



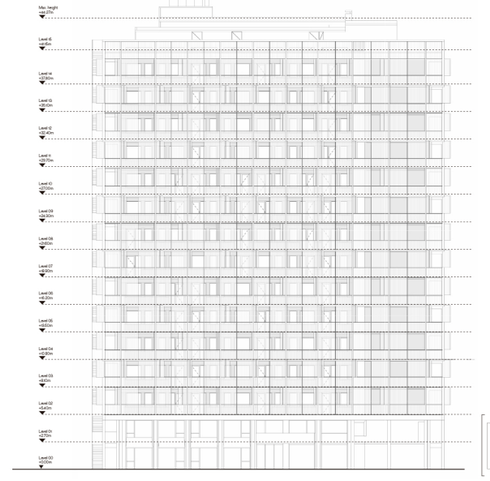
Cooperative housing level 2 layout
1:200



Youth hostel layout
1:200



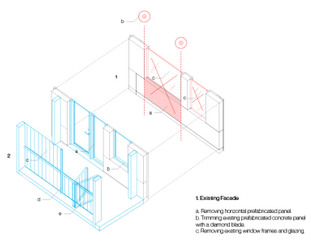
Section A-A'
1:200



West elevation
1:200

Translucent facade allowing light through and giving a glimpse of winter gardens and collective corridors

FACADE
The self-supported prefabricated concrete facade is dismantled and trimmed to create access doors to the dwellings. A light wooden frame wraps the existing building extending the existing floor boundary 1.5 meters to all sides, enabling deck access and promoting collective living in some floors and private balconies in others. Additionally, a transparent corrugated polycarbonate A acts as the exterior layer of the building, creating insulated corridors and winter gardens throughout the building. Our proposal carefully embraces the positive existing features and demolishes the negative ones such as the exterior stairwell and roof slab. In the long-term, these prefabricated facades can be dismantled in the future to be reused for a future transformation.



1. Existing Facade
a. Removing horizontal prefabricated panel.
b. Trimming existing prefabricated concrete panel with a diamond blade.
c. Removing existing window frames and glazing.

2. New facade
a. Doors and side window with wood frame
b. Double-glazed window with wood frame
c. Translucent corrugated polycarbonate panels
d. Stainless steel mullions
e. Corrugated polycarbonate shutters