

THE MEMORIAL PARK

OF THE OŚWIĘCIM GREAT SYNAGOGUE

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PATHS OF LIFE

Almost a decade ago, I accidentally came across a beautiful industrial waste material – gray sandstone slabs with countless irregular cuts. For many years I was looking for an adequate design opportunity to take advantage of this singular material. Finally, I found the right project in the city of Oświęcim, where it became the leitmotiv of the Memorial Park, symbolizing the ruins of the now defunct Great Synagogue (1863-1939) and the paths of life of the multicultural community that were once criss-crossing in this place.

References to the temple demolished 80 years ago take on various forms in the new project. The outline of the former synagogue is marked by a narrow curb, separating the interior of the park from the dense greenery surrounding it. Park's entrances are adapted to existing communication paths, additionally framing two local urban landmarks – the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Helper of Christians. The new square opens up to the picturesque panorama of the embankments of the Soła River. The main element of the park's arrangement is a mosaic of forty gray sandstone slabs. Their irregular arrangement echoes the remains of the former synagogue (particularly its floor, made of similar stone material). Individual slabs form paths leading to other elements of the park: an outdoor exhibition module presenting the history of the synagogue (stylistically referring to our previous project of the nearby Auschwitz Jewish Center), a "well" with historical floor (planned in the next stage of the development), a shallow water pond, Corten benches and a chandelier (which is a copy of an artifact found here during archeological works). Dimensions, shapes and colours of these new forms are all associated not only with Jewish tradition, but also with universal symbolism, legible for different confessions and cultures. This new space has an open character allowing for different ways of using, commemorating and interpreting.

The illustration of the „paths of life” title idea manifests itself mainly in the form of a unique material solution. The 120 x 220 cm gray sandstone slabs are decorated with "frieze" made up of countless grooves of varying depths. These cut-in-stone lines create a kind of singular "relief" that changes its appearance depending on the angle of sunlight and its intensity, or atmospheric conditions – rain, snow etc. Interestingly, this geometric pattern does not result from the work of architects using latest technologies, but was created quite by accident. In the quarry these large slabs were used as bases for cutting smaller formats and no one had ever come up with the idea of using them in construction. Classified as industrial waste, they were reused and "brought back to life" in the city of Oświęcim – as a gesture of opposition to excessive exploitation of natural resources.










The criss-crossing cut-in-stone lines also take on a symbolic dimension. Without any clear beginning or end, they seem to be heading towards infinity. This dense network of lines evokes the paths of human life, that sometimes just intersect, and at other times connect to go on together. A seemingly abstract mosaic may also resemble the now defunct urban layout of a pre-war city – its streets, pavements and buildings. This „cut-in-stone” history of Oświęcim, the Great Synagogue and the ruins remaining after its destruction aims at preserving the memory of the past, with a warning message for the future, at the same time beautifully celebrating the present. Who knows, maybe after a few hundred years time, this place will become a mysterious archaeological site? After all, throughout centuries, humanity has been learning about ancient times from illustrations and texts immortalized in stone. I often wonder how will be interpreted in the distant future the message hidden in forty pieces of the Memorial Park?

BARTOSZ HADUCH



URBAN CONTEXT

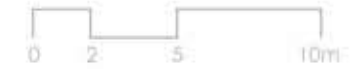
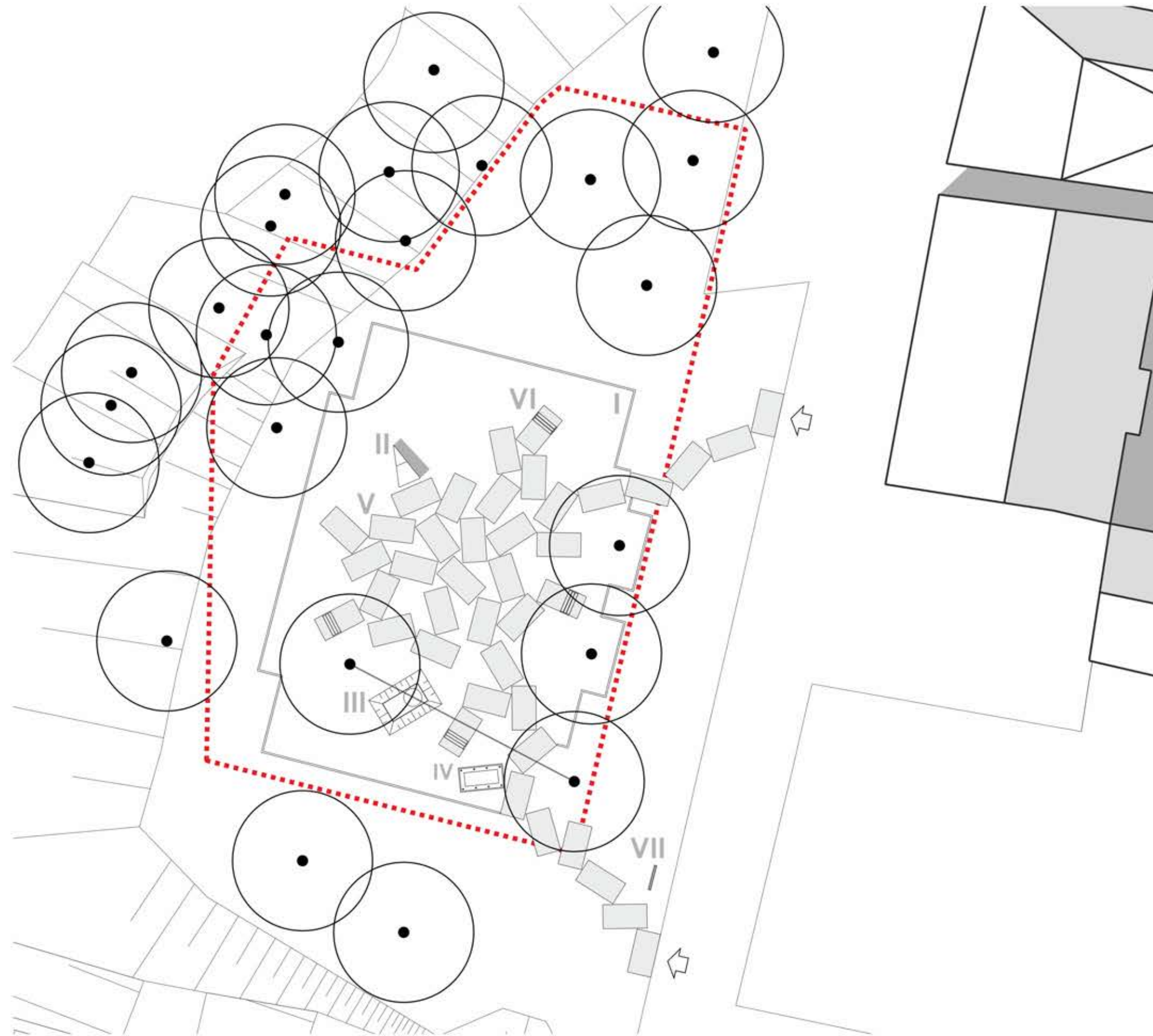


- PROJECT AREA

- MEMORY PARK (EXHIBITION STAND NO 4)

- JEWISH MUSEUM, SYNAGOGUE, AND CAFE BERGSON (EXHIBITION STAND NO 1 - 2)

- SKARBK SQUARE (EXHIBITION STAND NO 3)

- MAIN SQUARE

- CASTLE IN OŚWIĘCIM

- CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN OŚWIĘCIM

- ST. JACEK CHAPEL

- SOŁA RIVER AND BOULEVARD


EXHIBITION STANDS IN PUBLIC SPACE



SITE PLAN



- PROJECT AREA

- OUTLINE OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE WALLS
IN OŚWIĘCIM (1863 - 1939)

- EXHIBITION STAND WITH THE GREAT
SYNAGOGUE HISTORY

- THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE CHANDELIER
(REPLICA) ABOVE WATER POOL

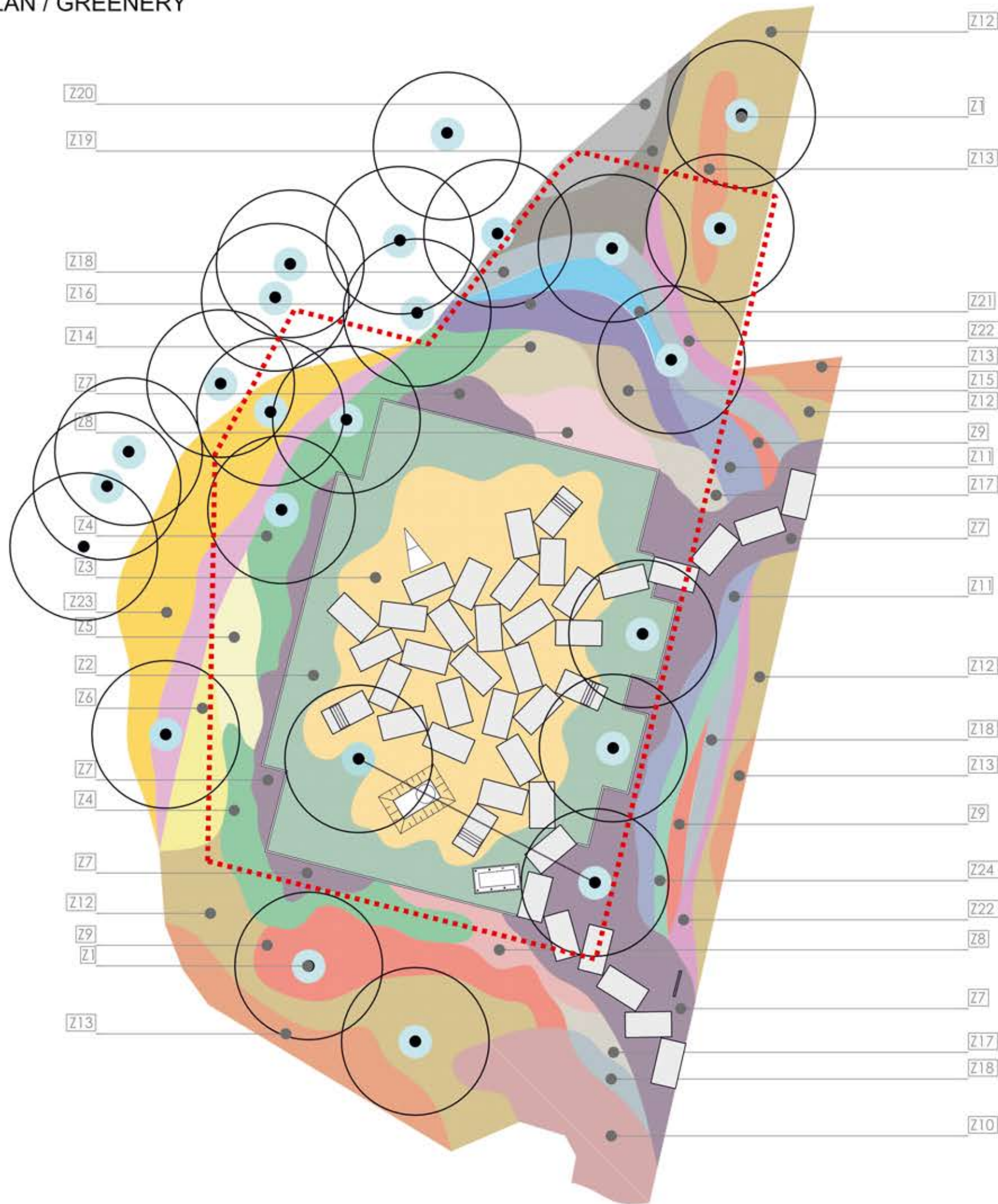
- HISTORICAL FLOOR FRAGMENT OF THE
GREAT SYNAGOGUE

- SURFACE WITH 40 GREY SANDSTONE SLABS

- BENCHES WITH THE ZODIAC SIGNS

- INFORMATION BOARD

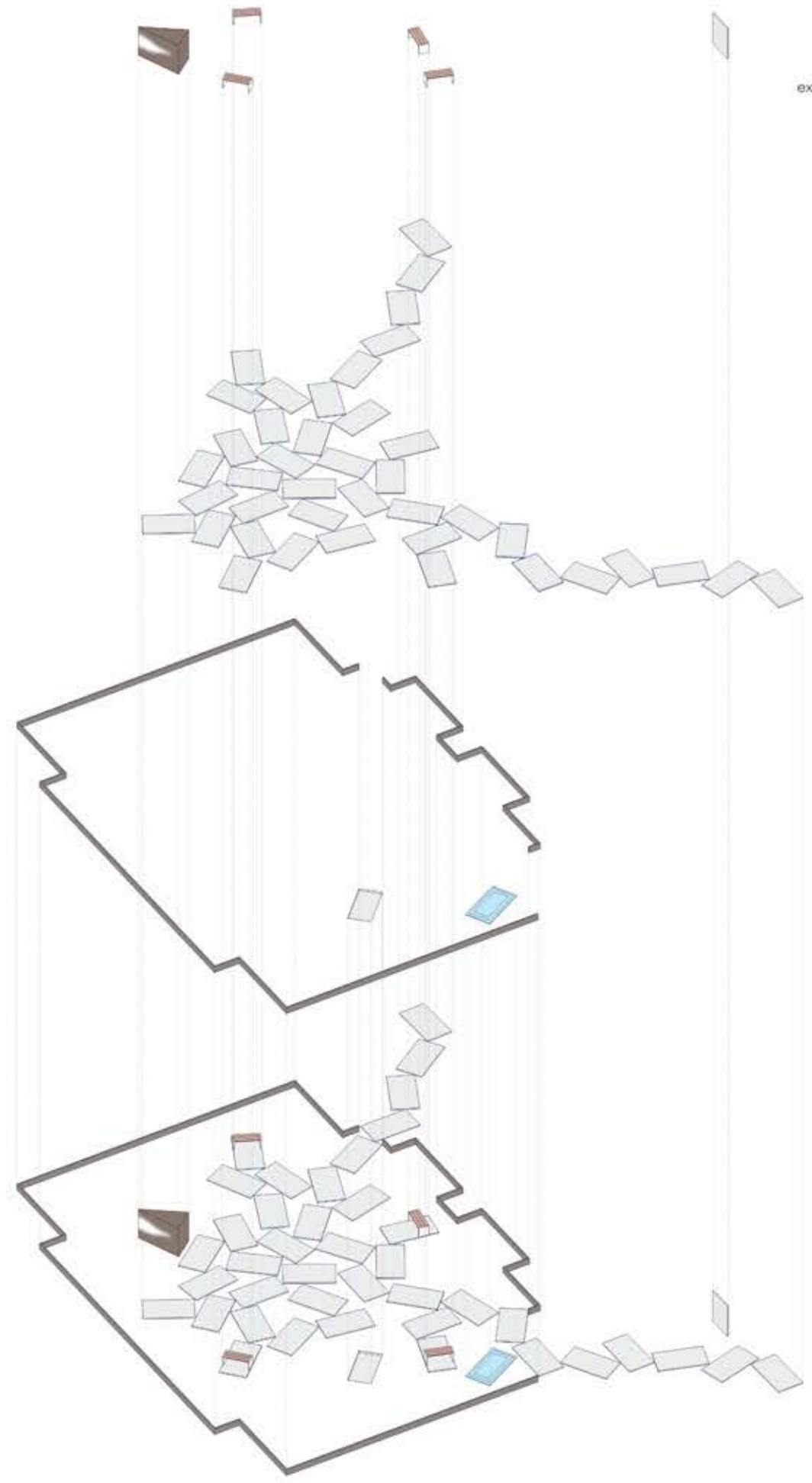
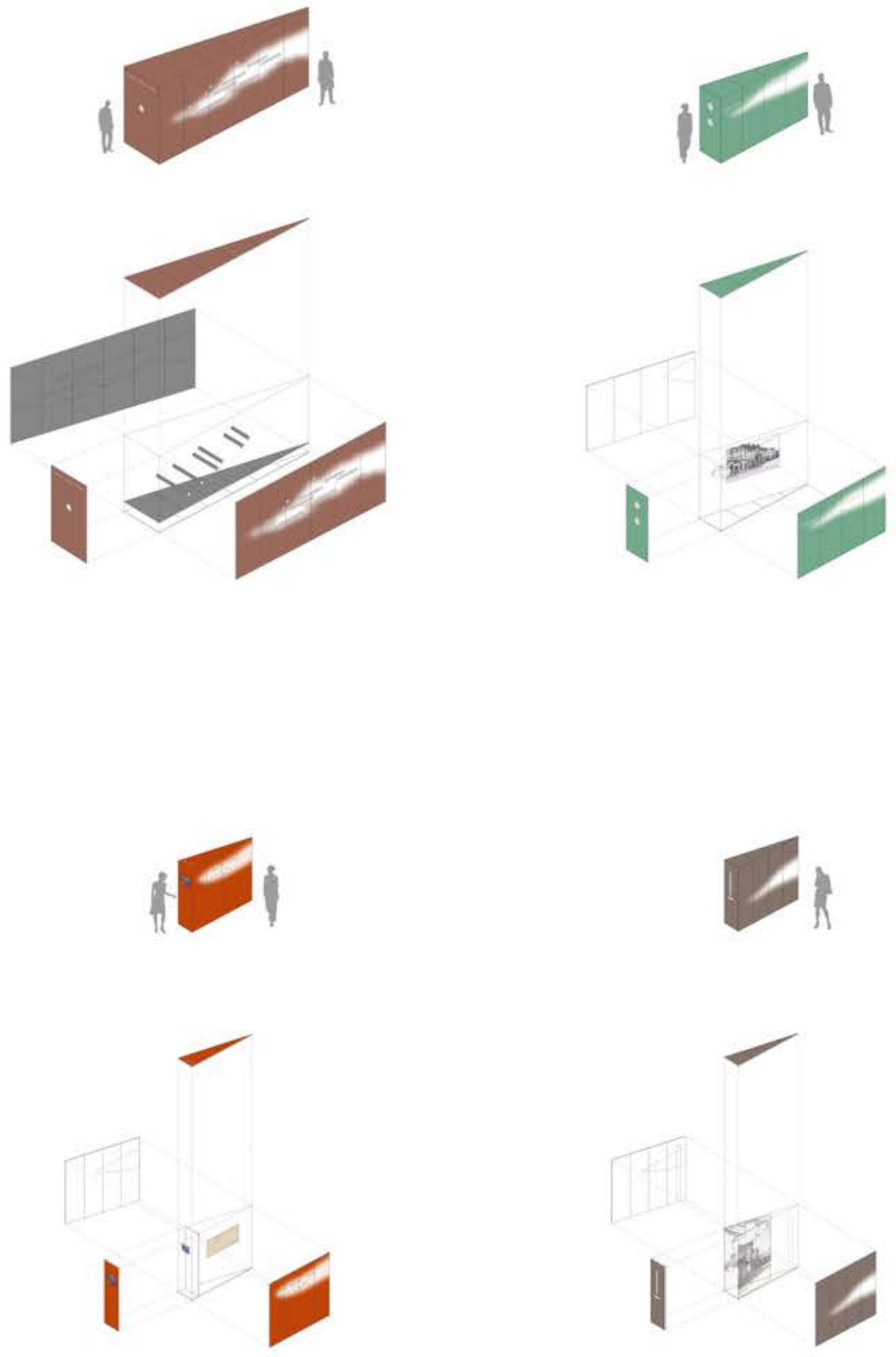

SITE PLAN / GREENERY



LEGEND: LIST OF PLANTS

- Z1 *Hedera helix* "White Wonder"
- Z2 *Hedera helix*
- Z3 *Sagina Subulata*
- Z4 *Equisetum Hyemale*
- Z5 *Liatris Spicata Alba*
- Z6 *Salvia Nemorosa Adrian*
- Z7 *Festuca Gaultieri*
- Z8 *Carex Morawii*
- Z9 *Yucca Filamentosa*
- Z10 *Lavandula Angustifolia*
- Z11 *Carex Nigra*
- Z12 *Dryopteris Affinis Crispa*
- Z13 *Dryopteris Filix - Mas*
- Z14 *Carex Grayi*
- Z15 *Mentha Piperita*
- Z16 *Pennisetum Alopecuroides*
- Z17 *Carex Flacca*
- Z18 *Miscanthus Sinensis*
- Z19 *Miscanthus Sinensis*
- Z20 *Miscanthus Giganteus*
- Z21 *Gypsophila Paniculata*
- Z22 *Cortaderia Selloana White*
- Z23 *Hedera helix*
- Z24 *Alcea Rosea*

AXONOMETRY



freestanding elements/
exhibition + benches + information board

surface/
40 gray sandstone slabs

small architecture/
fragment of the historical floor +
water pool +
Great Synagogue chandelier (replica)

outline of the Great Synagogue walls/
(1863-1939)

1. OUTLINE OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE WALLS
IN OŚWIĘCIM (1863 - 1939)

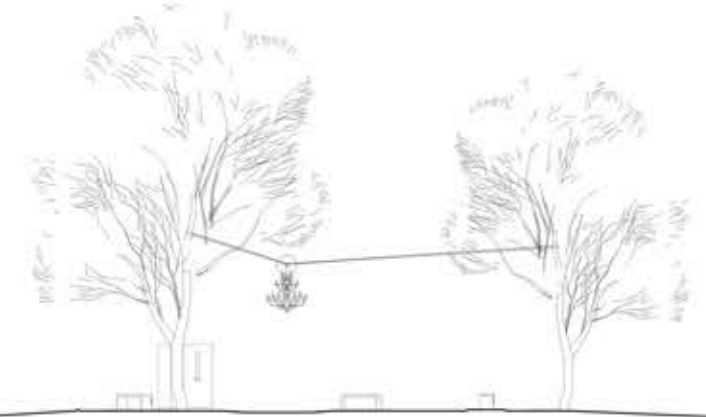
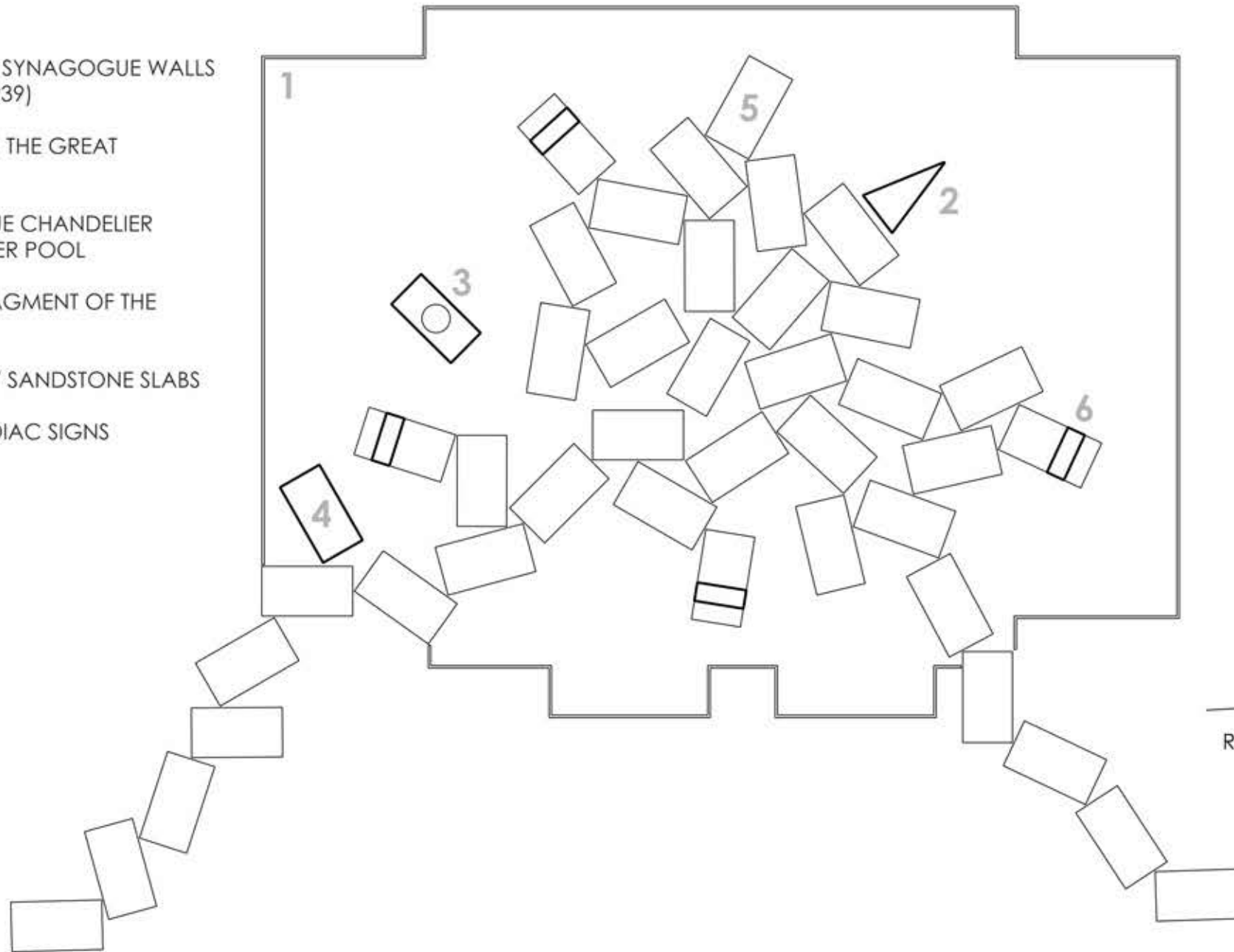
2. EXHIBITION STAND WITH THE GREAT
SYNAGOGUE HISTORY

3. THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE CHANDELIER
(REPLICA) ABOVE WATER POOL

4. HISTORICAL FLOOR FRAGMENT OF THE
GREAT SYNAGOGUE

5. SURFACE WITH 40 GREY SANDSTONE SLABS

6. BENCHES WITH THE ZODIAC SIGNS



REPLICA OF A CHANDELIER FROM THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE

