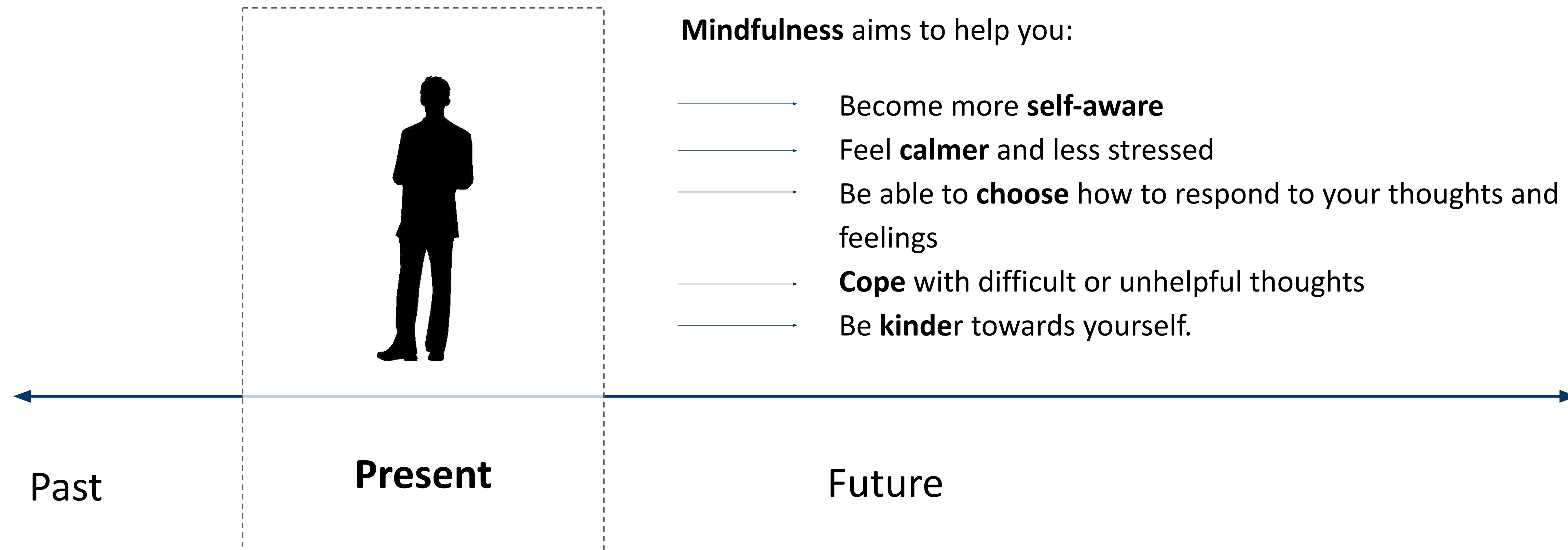


Mindfulness and Architecture

“Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves noticing what's happening in the present moment, without judgement. “^[1]



^[1] Mind, November 2021, Available on :
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>

The Role of Architecture in Mental Wellness

Considering all factors in modern day life. Mental health awareness has become a key element to sustain everyday life and bring satisfaction to others. This shows an opportunity in which architectural design can address this issues.



The architectural space influences an individual's life in many ways, from everyday behavior and habits to the emotional state one may experience. By crafting mindful architecture, the constant need for external stimuli and overall distractions can be reduced. Through design there can be a positive influence on an individual's mental state and behavior. In the long run this can increase the overall sense of wellness, thus alleviating stress and other factors which may be beyond our control.

“ Architecture has the power to promote a sense of presence, forcing users pay attention to the immediate environment or simply fading into the background to allow users to think on their own. ” [2]

[2] *Undergraduate Honors Thesis for Architecture. Arizona State University Barrett, the Honors College Spring 2018. Available: https://issuu.com/cassandrabdickson/docs/cassandra_dickson_thesis_2018*

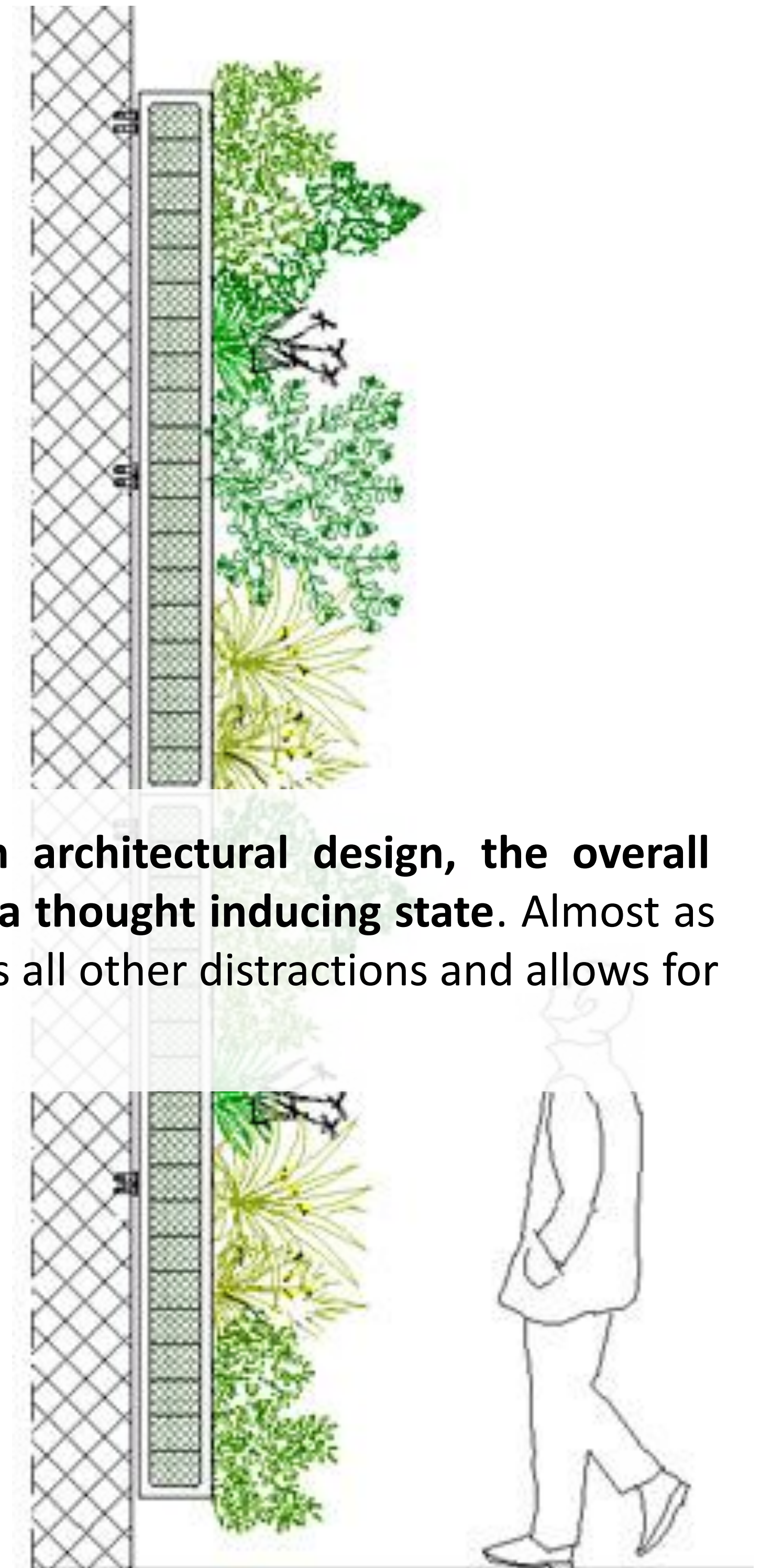
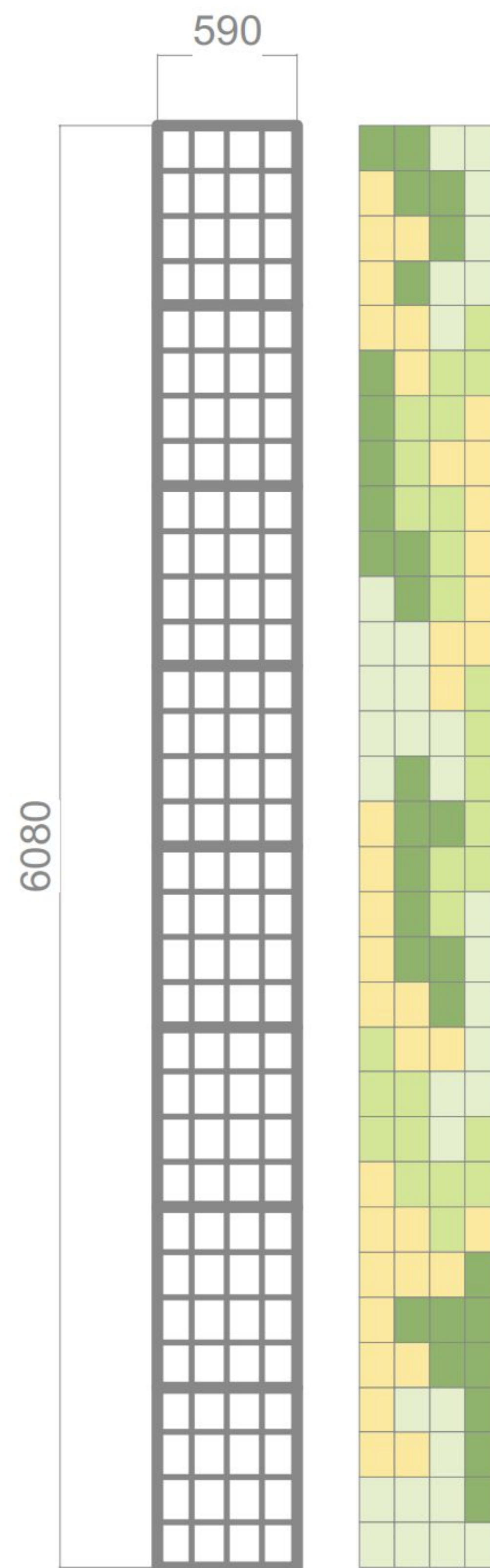
The Role of Architecture in Mental Wellness

There are certain qualities that can **open up our subconscious minds** and make us aware of ourselves, just like meditation. A meditative state can be achieved in **two ways**.

1. Internally-induced states which are **voluntary** and involve practices like praying, meditation, fasting, charity, etc. These practices are generally provided by religions and cultures. And can be practiced in any setting if the individual decides to do so.

2. Externally-induced states are **involuntary** and can be achieved through **spatial design** and sensitive architectural approaches.

This leads one to think that **through architectural design, the overall spatial experience can indeed lead to a thought inducing state**. Almost as if having an object to focus on, removes all other distractions and allows for individual examination.



Premier Gate, Internal Atrium Green Walls Residential Tower, 2020

The Mindfulness Philosophy Applied in Architecture

Mindful spaces are experienced individually, therefore every building should provide spaces aimed at **seclusion**, relaxation or even to work and study. Either in the public amenity spaces or in the private internal areas.

Architectural mindful spaces are aimed to craft user experiences that make one think about the experience of the space rather than any other external factors. The main point is the experience, forcing the user to **be present**, laying out the possibility to think without judgement and enter mindfulness.



Harrow Tower , Concept Scheme, 2022

“Mindful architecture creates an atmosphere focused on the individual rather than the outside world. Typically this includes a small-scale space with an enclosure that is defined without being rigid. Harmony with the environment as its powerful simplicity leads to a thought inducing space.” [3]

[3] Undergraduate Honors Thesis for Architecture. Arizona State University Barrett, the Honors College Spring 2018. Available: https://issuu.com/cassandrabdickson/docs/cassandra_dickson_thesis_2018

The Mindfulness Philosophy Applied in Architecture

An architecture of mindfulness would not only fulfill the needs of mindfulness meditation, but also go further in establishing physical attributes that can then form an ideal environment to be present in.

Different spatial qualities such as:

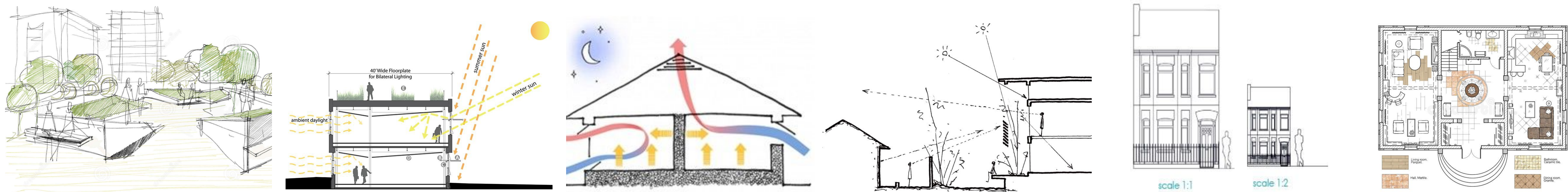
1. **Access to nature - Biophilia**
2. **Natural Daylight and Sunlight**
3. **Temperature and Ventilation**
4. **Privacy between spaces**
5. **Proportion and Scale**
6. **Materials and Finishes**

All these contribute to the users' desire to spend time within the space in a mindful way. For the purposes of establishing a baseline for a space to be considered mindful, there are essentially three different levels that should be considered in designing a mindful space. The context with access to nature and how a site might impact the overall experience. The architectural environment of mindfulness, including both natural and designed factors, and the humanity of mindful spaces, such as interpersonal relations and the individual's experience built through design.



Harrow Tower , Concept Scheme, 2022

AQUA Arch. Strategy for Mindful Design



Access to Nature - Biophilia

Humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.

Natural Sunlight and Daylight

Light serves as an activator and motivator for the mind. Well illuminated spaces

Temperature & Ventilation

Climate comfort is key to provide spaces without distractions. Keeping the balance in temperature and airflow is vital to generate these conditions.

Privacy and Connectivity

Generating a place of seclusion, individualization to relax or even to work or study.

Proportion and Scale

Differentiations in scale and relating it to the human aspect allows individuals to understand their place in the space and furthermore lead to a thought inducing state.

Materials and Finishes

Materials and finishes are often the enclosure of a building or structure. The aesthetic and functional aspect they fulfill have a great impact in comfort and perception, thus ideally generating the conditions for a mindful state.



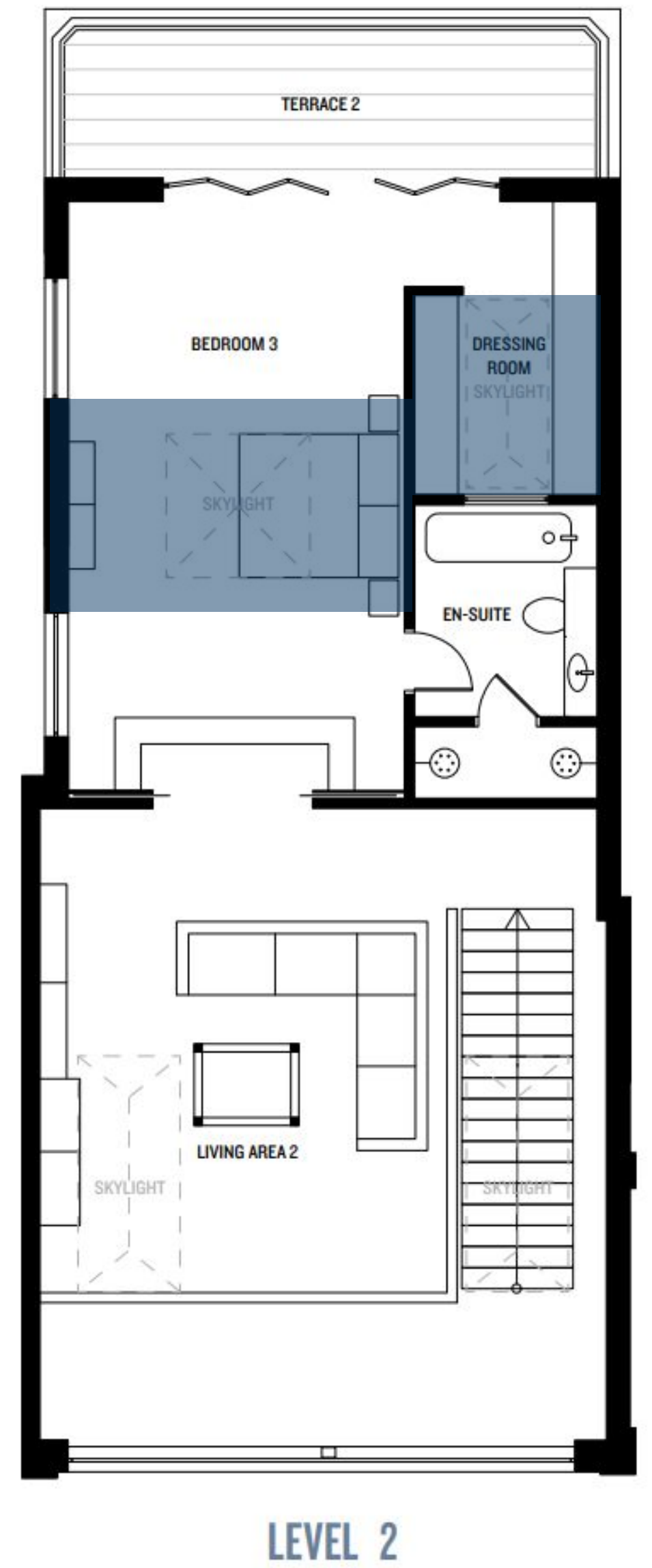
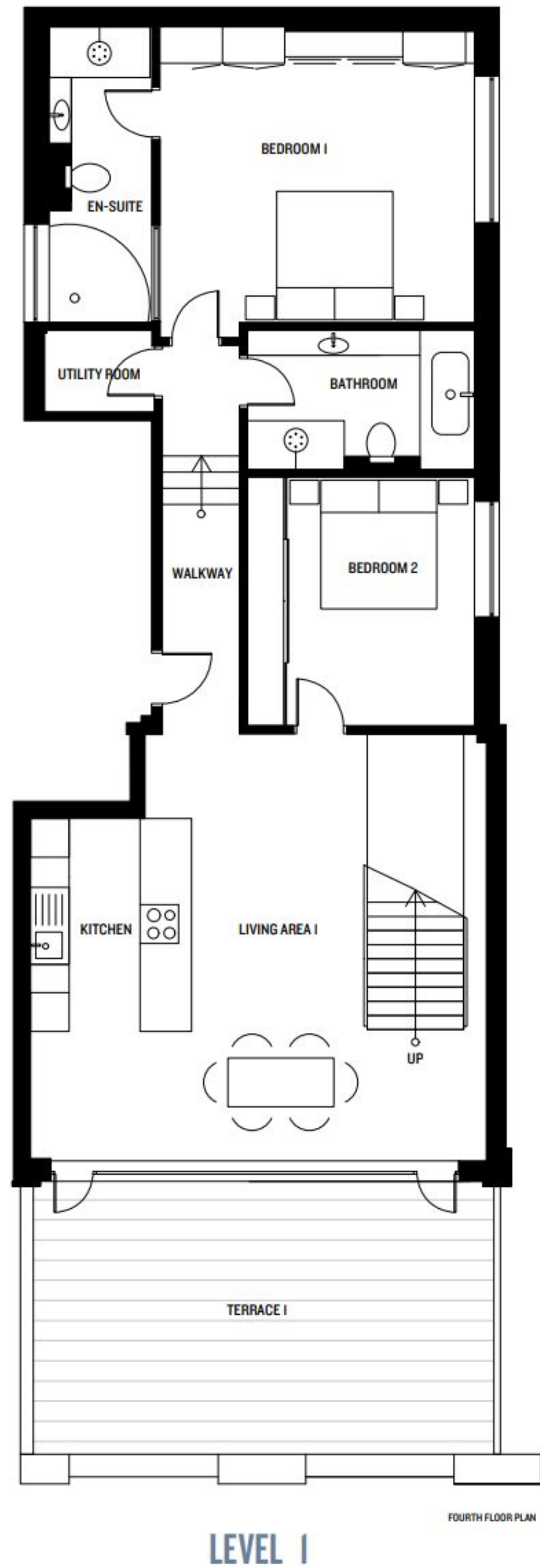
“Biophilia is the idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.” [4]

Access to Nature - Biophilia

Research has indicated that spending time in natural environments or natural elements can be very beneficial towards human health. In numerous studies, people who spend time interacting with nature, later on report a greater level of happiness and satisfaction in comparison to those who don't. Natural spaces, and in general the presence of nature alleviates stress and provides serenity, which is key to achieve that state of mindfulness.

In these projects, the implementation of nature in the form of green walls, a green frontage and green roofs maximizes the area that is dedicated to provide this. Giving access to this benefit to both the main users of the buildings as well as the surrounding neighbors.

[4] Rogers, Kara. "biophilia hypothesis". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 25 Jun. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/science/biophilia-hypothesis>. Accessed 26 October 2022.



Natural Daylight and Sunlight

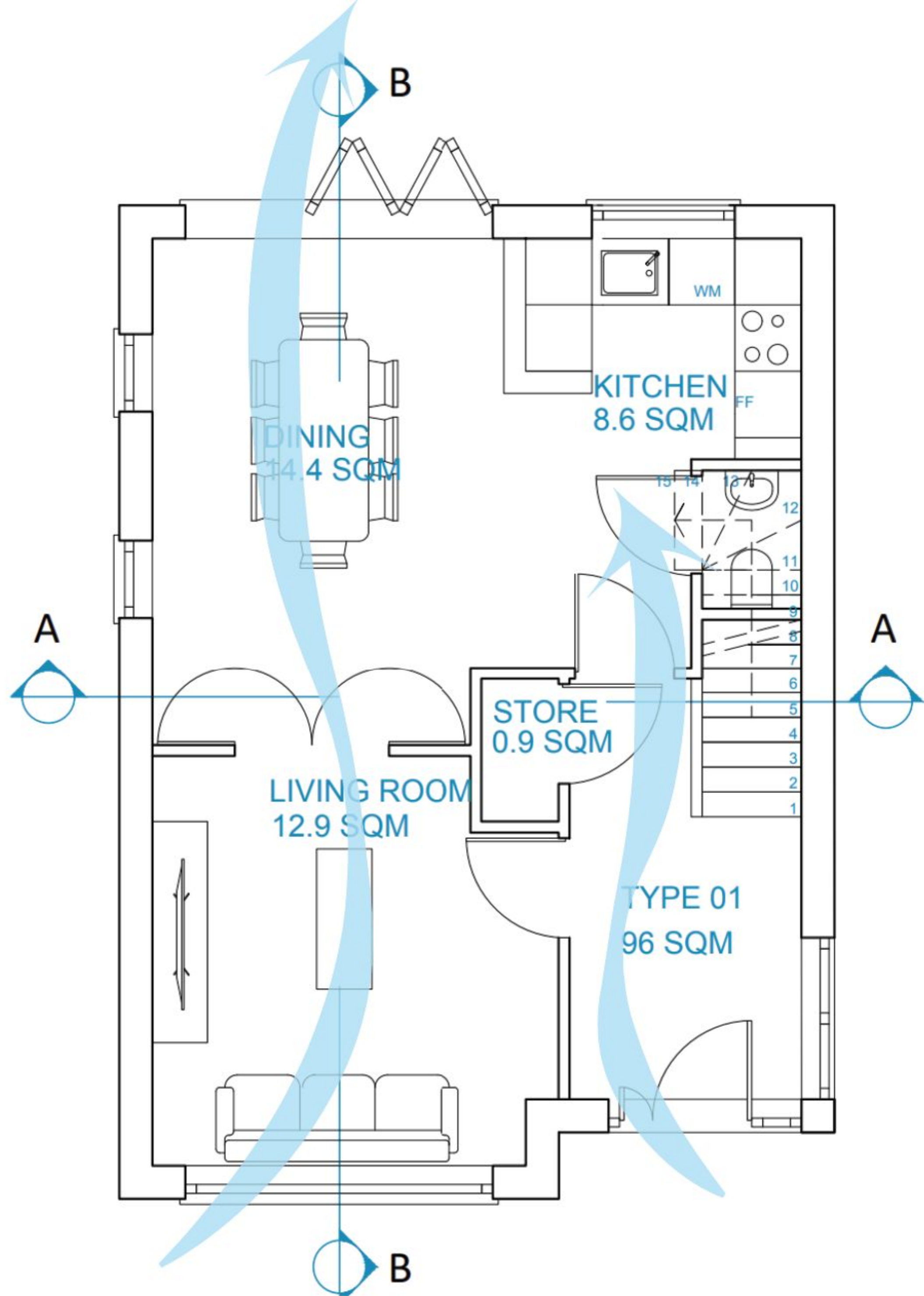
The term “daylighting” refers to architectural design that allows natural light such as direct sunlight and indirect daylight into buildings.

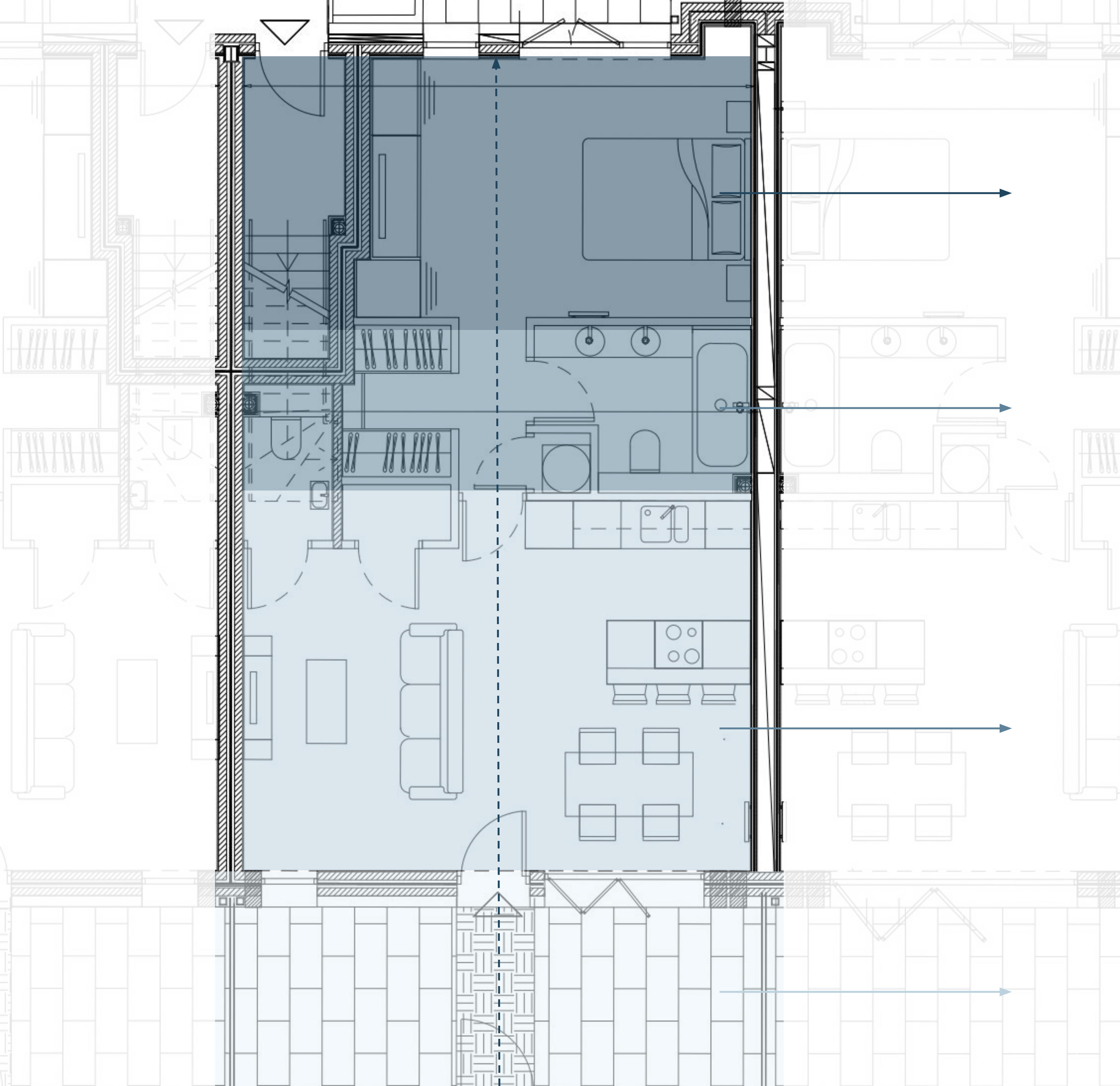
Daylighting provides many benefits, including increased calmness, enhanced connection to the outdoors, improved health, and energy savings. It’s highly desirable and one of the key element for a high quality design.

Temperature and Ventilation

Buildings and structures with good ventilation offer better air quality, which later on allows users to have better cognitive function, faster response rate and better reasoning.

In this project, cross-ventilation was achieved by providing an adaptable space that allows wind to cross through the whole structure, maximizing air circulation while also giving the opportunity to choose which areas to ventilate by implementing doors in between.



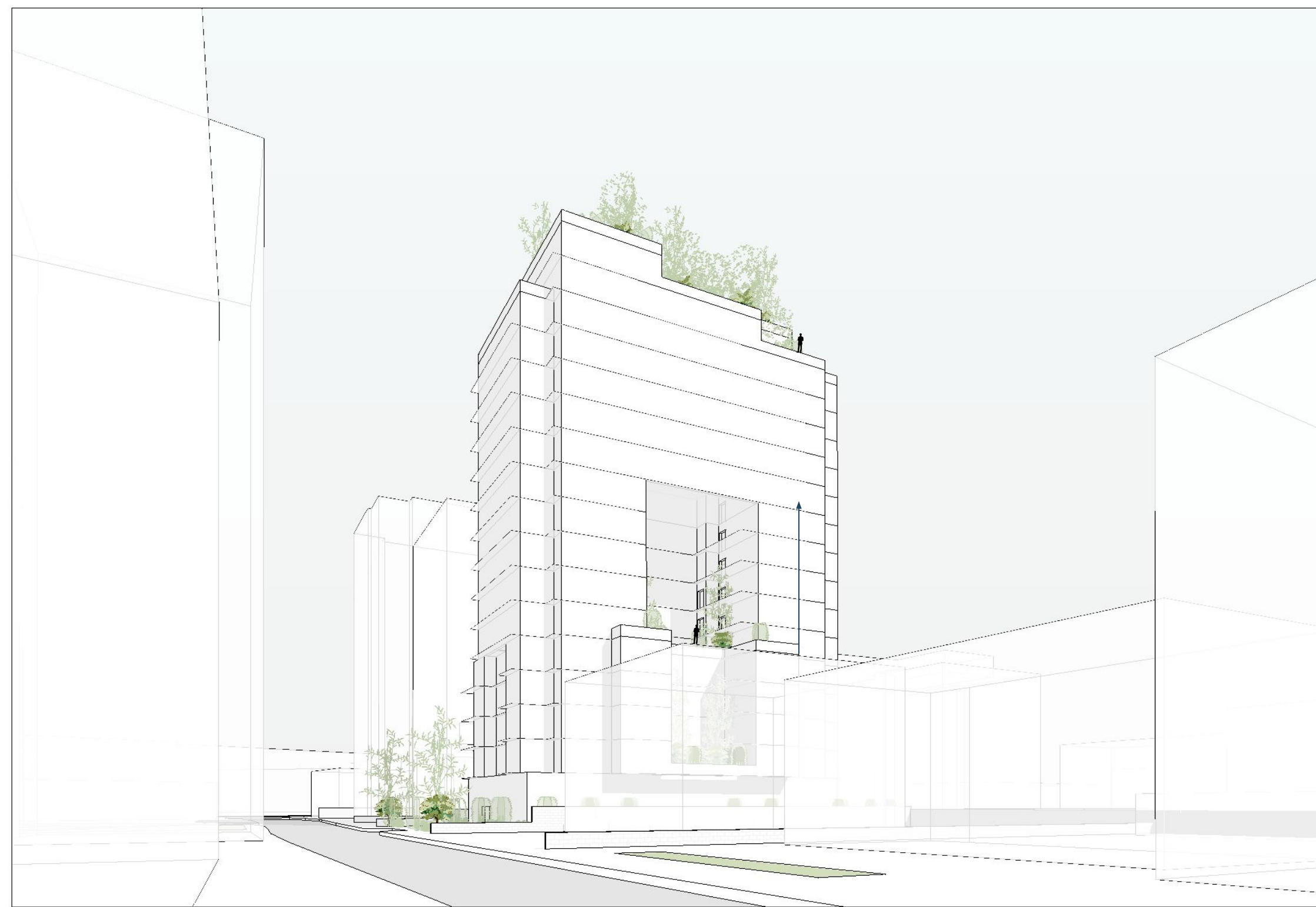


Privacy between Spaces

The home is the place of rest and relaxation to humans. Observance of human and environmental factors play a major role in the satisfaction and comfort of people in their lives. Building a house is a cultural phenomenon, the shape and its spatial organization is strongly influenced by the culture to which it belongs.

For this purpose, to meet the users' privacy expectation we care about privacy transition in our project.

Herringswell Project, Unit 5, 2019



“Proportion is the dimensional relationship of one part to another or to the whole, described in terms of a ratio. Scale is the relative size of individual elements compared to each other and to a reference measurement.” [6]

Proportion and Scale

Both proportion and scale are important aspects of good architectural design.


For this project particularly, relating the architectural space to the human scale was done by redistributing the void in two. By doing this, the potential for the area was maximized and it related more closely to the human aspect of it.

[6] Donnally, Bruce "Proportion and Scale". *Donnally Architects*, 24 March, 2017, <https://donnallyarchitects.com/proportion-and-scale/>. Accessed 26 October 2022.

Materials and Finishes

Materials and finishes often times are referred to as any treatment given to a surface whether it can be horizontal or vertical.

For this project, two key factors were taken into consideration. One to achieve harmony in the overall materials' choice, and secondly to pick a material that would stand out over the other ones. To give hierarchy to the stair core element, and drive focus to this area. Letting users be distracted by it, and ultimately creating a thought inducing atmosphere as this key element stands out from the rest, by its architectural form and its materials choice.



“They are an integral part of architecture and building; serving as a conclusion of the process of achieving functional and aesthetic purposes.” [7]

[7] Desmond, John "Architectural Finishes - What are they and what purpose(s) do they serve?". *John Desmond Limited*, 10 June, 2018, <https://www.johndesmond.com/blog/products/architectural-finishes-purposes-serve/> Accessed 27 October 2022.

Long Island Lofts, Penthouse, 2017