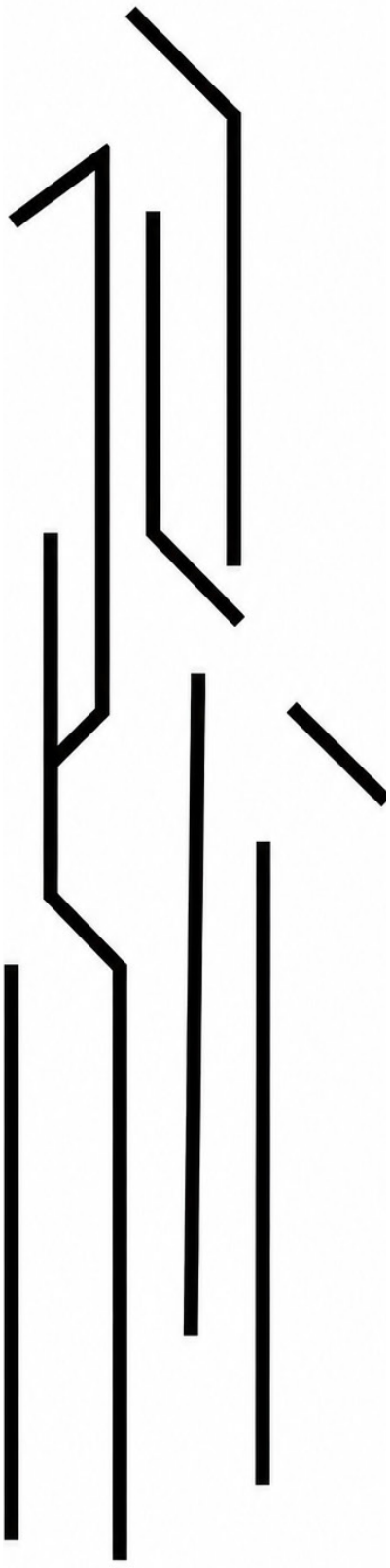
VERTEBRAE

AI DOCUMENTATION

SS 2026, studio Achten-Pavlíček



molab

MIHAELA TĂNASE

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CONCEPT SEARCHING

After the detailed research we did with the colleagues on Shenzhen and skyscrapers, we received the brief. All together, it meant one thing: we should experiment. And that was the goal for me that semester.

The analysis showed that China is widely open in this direction, not only economically but also technologically. We don’t know what the future will bring us, but we can still honour human creativity together with the tools we have and are creating, in order to find solutions to present and future problems, or simply continue to fulfill the basic human need to explore.

Since even this brochure is about AI, one of the first ideas was to look at future architecture from that perspective. Also, the wider we pursue futuristic expectations of how robots will be a part of our lives, the bigger the need and demand will be for nature to be a part of it. Not only in the idealistic way of Eden’s garden, but in the primitive way of growing your own food and picking a strawberry with your own hands.

At this phase, I used AI as an intelligent interlocutor to explore my ideas. I edited the conversation, removing the plausible intro typical for AI in order to make the text relevant for the reader.

AI TOWER

14.03.2026

How an ai skyscraper would look like and what would be the program?

OpenAi:

1. Exterior Architecture

Visually, an AI skyscraper might reflect data, networks, and adaptability. Possible features:

- Layered façade with dynamic panels
- Panels adjust to sunlight, temperature, and energy demand using AI control.
- Integrated cooling structures

Data centers generate enormous heat, so the tower might include:

- vertical ventilation shafts
- liquid cooling systems
- exterior heat-dissipation fins
- Visible robotic logistics systems
- Transparent sections showing robot elevators or drone docks.
- Green terraces and algae façades

Used for:

- carbon capture
- cooling
- energy generation
- Light-based data visualization

The building façade could display patterns based on computational activity. Think of a hybrid between:

- a data center
- a research campus
- a robotic factory
- a vertical city

2. Structural Concept

Unlike normal towers, the structure might be designed around data and energy flow, not only people.Core elements:

- High-capacity power spine (massive electrical backbone)
- Liquid cooling loops
- AI-controlled elevators
- robotic logistics shafts

The tower would essentially function as a large vertical machine.

3. Program (Typical Floor Organization)

Lower Floors (Public + Interface)

Floors 1–10

- AI museum / public education center
- interactive exhibits about machine learning
- auditorium and conference center
- startup incubator spaces
- cafes and public plaza

Purpose: connect society with AI development.

Research Floors

Floors 10–40

- machine learning labs
- robotics development labs
- simulation rooms
- VR/AR testing spaces
- human–AI interaction labs
- These floors would host:
- scientists
- engineers
- designers
- ethicists

Robotics & Fabrication

Floors 40–60

- robotic prototyping workshops
- autonomous drone testing zones
- automated manufacturing labs
- hardware testing chambers

Robots could move vertically through dedicated shafts.

Data Center Core

Floors 60–100

The heart of the tower.

- GPU clusters
- AI training supercomputers
- high-density storage
- liquid cooling systems
- redundant power systems

Some towers might devote half their height to compute.

AI Operations Floors

Floors 100–120

Spaces where AI systems interact with real-world infrastructure:

- smart city monitoring
- climate modeling
- traffic optimization
- energy grid coordination
- disaster response systems

These floors act as urban AI control hubs.

Experimental Floors

Floors 120–140

Testing advanced AI applications:

- humanoid robotics
- autonomous vehicles
- synthetic biology + AI
- digital twins of cities

Highly controlled environments.

Upper Levels (Observation + Symbolic Space)

Floors 140+

- observation deck
- AI art installations
- think tanks
- executive strategy rooms
- sky gardens

These floors represent the human oversight layer.

4. Supporting Infrastructure

An AI skyscraper would require unusual infrastructure:

Power

- direct connection to grid substations
- on-site energy storage
- rooftop solar
- possibly small modular reactors (future concept)

Cooling

- liquid immersion cooling
- geothermal heat exchange
- seawater cooling (if near coast)

Connectivity

- ultra-high bandwidth fiber
- satellite links

- quantum communication labs (future)

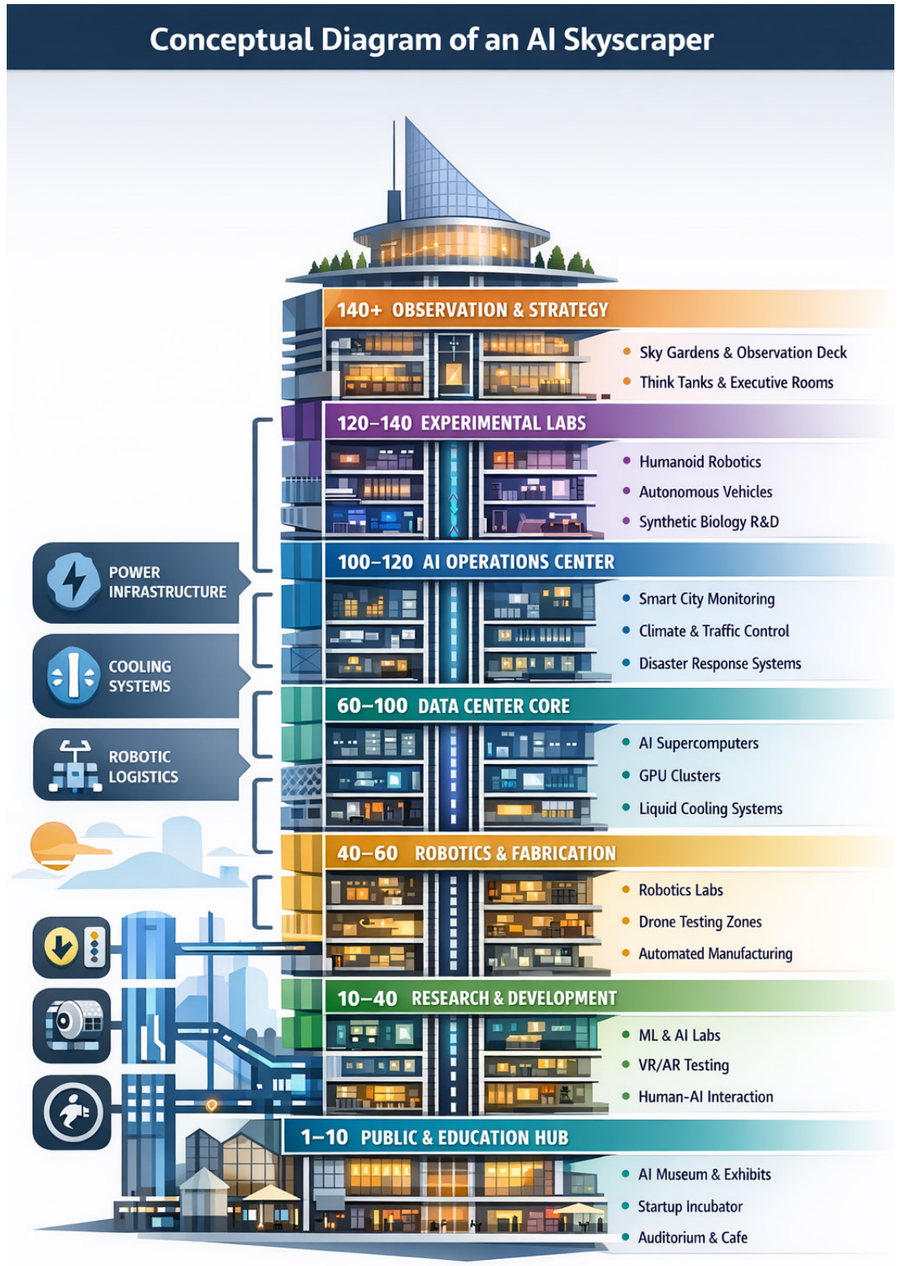
5. Urban Role

Instead of just a company HQ, the building could act as:

- a city's AI brain
- a research hub
- a public learning center
- a robotics production site
- Essentially a vertical AI campus.

One interesting design idea:

The tower could continuously reconfigure itself internally—walls, labs, and robot paths changing according to the needs of AI research.

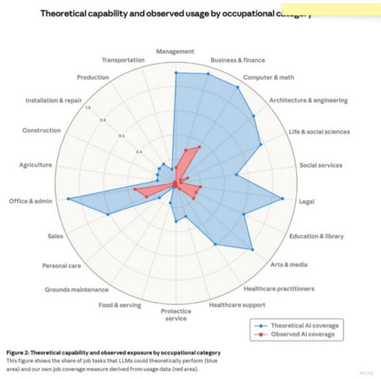


Open AI generated visual representation

FUTURE JOBS, FUTURE CITIES

14.03.2026

The anthropic recent diagram of the jobs that will be taken by llm isn't quite accurate about. It is not showing the full potential future. Contemplate on that and show me a more complex diagram or prediction of what jobs and industries can be in the future?



Anthropic March 2026

Gimini:

Anthropic's diagram is a snapshot of displacement; what you're looking for is a map of evolution.

To see the full picture, we have to look past the "Replacement Phase" and into the "Expansion Phase." Here is a more complex prediction of the four emerging economic hemispheres:

1. The Agentic Hemisphere (The "Orchestration" Economy)

As AI moves from "tool" to "agent," the job shifts from doing the work to orchestrating the outcome

- human-agent orchestrator: manages "swarms" of specialized ai agents. think of this as a conductor for a digital orchestra.
- context engineer: not just prompting, but building the "knowledge silos" and ethical boundaries that agents live within.
- ai translator (inter-species communicator): roles dedicated to ensuring that "agentic intent" aligns with human messy-reality.

2. The Synthetic Hemisphere (The "Bio-Frontier")

LLMs aren't just for text; they are for the "code of life." This industry will likely dwarf the software industry by 2040.

- synthetic bio-architect: designing custom microbes for carbon capture or plastic-eating enzymes.
- systems farmer: moving away from traditional crops to "growing" macroscale materials (like aircraft parts or textiles) using biological vats.
- personalized longevity consultant: managing AI-driven, real-time adjustments to a person's CRISPR-based health regimen.

3. The Orbital Hemisphere (The "Space Economy")

- as launch costs crater, the "final frontier" becomes a legitimate labor market.
- orbital logistics manager: managing the traffic of satellites and debris in low earth orbit (leo).
- zero-gravity ux designer: creating digital and physical interfaces for humans living in microgravity environments.
- Astro-Mining Technologist: Remote operation of robotic swarms on lunar or asteroid surfaces.

4. The High-Touch Hemisphere (The "Human Premium")

As "data" becomes cheap, "presence" becomes expensive. This is the "Humanity-as-a-Service" (HaaS) sector.

- experience designer: creating physical-world "unplugged" events that ai cannot replicate (pure sensory/social experiences).
- empathy navigator: a evolution of therapy and social work, focused on helping humans find meaning in a world where "utility" is automated.
- physical resilience coach: as digital life peaks, the maintenance of the "meat-space" body becomes a high-status luxury service.

The Evolution Table: From Displacement to New Frontiers

current role	llm impact	the future pivot (2030-2040)
software dev	code generation is automated.	systemic architect: directing agents to build entire stacks.
data analyst	pattern recognition is instant.	strategic oracle: interpreting "why" the data matters in human terms.
copywriter	text creation is a commodity.	brand soul curator: ensuring a brand feels "humanly authentic."
legal researcher	document review is automated.	interstellar/ai ethicist: navigating new laws for space and agents.

5. The Contemplative Reality

The Anthropic diagram is "accurate" in the same way a map of 1900 would accurately show the decline of "stable boys" and "farriers." It's correct about the loss, but it doesn't yet have a name for the "Automotive Engineer" or the "Air Traffic Controller." We are currently in the gap between the death of the stable boy and the birth of the pilot.

6. Future Careers by 2040

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JkY6kdlFuE

This video explores the "Expansion Phase" of the labor market, highlighting specific industries and roles that are predicted to emerge as AI stabilizes the foundational work of today.

Where are you taking those ideas? The people in 1970s also imagined 21 century with flighing cars..what if none of this makes sense and the human civilization progress speed is overrated

The "Flying Car Fallacy" of the 1970s happened because we assumed that because we got good at moving atoms (jets, rockets, cars), we would continue to get exponentially better at it. Instead, we got stagnant at moving atoms and got exponentially better at moving bits (the internet, software, AI).

Here is why 2026 feels different, but also where you are likely right to be skeptical.

7. The marriage of bits and atoms (the 2026 pivot)

In the 1970s, we tried to build the future with "dumb" materials—steel and concrete. Today, we are using AI to "solve" the complexity of "smart" materials.

1. case in point: in early 2026, companies like oxman (neri oxman's firm) are finally moving from museum exhibits to real products, like shoes and textiles grown by bacteria and shaped by robots.
2. The Difference: We aren't trying to build a "flying car" (which is a physics/energy density problem). We are using AI to design a living brick (which is a computation/complexity problem). AI is finally giving us the "software" to run "biological hardware."

8. Architecture: "The Great Refurbishment" vs. "The Sci-Fi City"

You're right to suspect that our cities won't look like The Jetsons. In fact, the most "advanced" 2040 city might look older than today's city, but it will function differently.

The "Realist" 2040 Architecture Diagram

layer	the "flying car" hype	the 2026 reality
material	chrome and glass	bio-concrete & mycelium: buildings that "heal"
energy	fusion in every basement	orbital beams: small "rectennas" on roofs receiving power from space-based solar arrays (now being tested by nato).

layer	the “flying car” hype	the 2026 reality
transport	flying taxis	the silent street: autonomous pods moving underground or in dedicated “slow lanes,” making cities 80% quieter.
structure	mile-high spatial-ly-curved towers	modular retrofitting: using ai-designed “sleeves” to slide over old 20th-century build-ings to make them carbon-negative.

9. Why Progress Might Still Feel “Slow”

You mentioned civilization progress is overrated. There’s a concept called Amara’s Law: “We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate it in the long run.”

- 2023-2025: Everyone thought AI would replace all jobs in 24 months. (Overestimation).
- 2026: We are in the “trough of disillusionment.” Companies are realizing that scaling AI is hard, regulation is slow, and “atoms” still take time to move.
- 2035: This is where the “underestimation” kicks in. By then, the kids who grew up with “Agentic AI” as their best friend will be the architects. They won’t think in terms of “blueprints”; they will think in terms of “evolutionary prompts.

10. The “Boring” Future (Which is actually revolutionary)

The future of cities isn’t “flying.” It’s Autonomous and Biological.

Imagine a 1920s brick building in London or New York. In 2040, it looks the same from the outside. But:

1. The paint is a synthetic “skin” that changes color to regulate heat.
2. The basement is a micro-data center that heats the water for the whole block.
3. The “janitor” is a swarm of agents that predicts a pipe will burst two weeks before it does.

11. My Contemplation

The “Full Potential” isn’t about more gadgets. It’s about Efficiency of Matter. We are moving toward a world where we use fewer raw materials because the AI allows us to do more with “smart” biological systems.

The progress isn’t “overrated”—it’s just shifting from the visible (big metal machines) to the invisible (biological systems and agentic networks).

Since you’re skeptical of the “high-tech” fluff, would you like me to show you a “Low-Tech/High-AI” prediction of how a standard suburb could be retrofitted for 2030?

A detailed description of what a “Day in the Life” looks like inside a Software-Defined apartment in 2030?

It’s Tuesday, October 14, 2030. You live in a “Software-Defined” apartment in a retrofitted 20th-century district. Here is how your day unfolds in a world where bits move the atoms.

07:15 AM | The Circadian Handshake

You don’t wake up to an alarm; you wake up to The Rise. Your building’s “Living Skin”—a translucent bio-polymer sleeve wrapped over the original 1980s brick—has been tracking the sunrise. The “bits” (AI agents) have adjusted the opacity of your windows to let in exactly the right spectrum of light to trigger your cortisol.

While you slept, your apartment was an Energy Arbitrageur. Your home AI agent noticed a spike in wind energy at 3:00 AM and bought “negative cost” power to top up your wall battery and pre-heat your shower water. It just made you $1.40 while you were dreaming.

09:30 AM | The Architecture of “Flow”

It’s time to work. In the 2020s, you would have sat at a static desk. Today, your apartment undergoes a Zoning Shift. * The Bits: You tap a “Deep Work” preset on your glass.

The Atoms: Your modular storage wall—built from AI-optimized mycelium composites—slides 24 inches to the left on a silent magnetic track. A hidden acoustic panel drops from the ceiling, dampening the sound of the street.

Your job isn’t “writing emails.” You are an Agent Orchestrator. You spend 90 minutes “conducting” a swarm of 50 specialized AI agents that are currently designing a new irrigation system for a vertical farm in Mumbai. You aren’t doing the drafting; you are providing the “Human Intent.”

01:00 PM | The Silent Street

You step outside for lunch. The first thing you notice is the Silence. The cars are gone. The street has been “re-wilded” into a linear park because Autonomous Bits have solved logistics. Freight moves in silent, underground vacuum tubes or via small sidewalk-pods that coordinate their movements like a school of fish.

The architecture of the street has changed. Instead of “Shop Fronts” with neon signs, the buildings have “Active Facades.” They are covered in synthetic moss and algae-vats that scrub the city air. The “architecture” is now a carbon-sequestering machine.

04:00 PM | Localized Atom Synthesis

You need a new chair for your guest room. You don’t “order it from a warehouse” (the old atom-heavy way).

You buy the Design File (the Bits) from a designer in Tokyo.

You send the file to the Neighborhood Micro-Factory at the end of the block.

By 4:30 PM, a small autonomous pod drops off the chair, 3D-printed from recycled local plastic and reinforced with bio-resin.

07:00 PM | The “Human Premium” Ritual

As the sun sets, the “bits” recede. In 2030, the highest luxury isn’t a new gadget—it’s The Unplugged State. Your apartment shifts into “Tactile Mode.” The digital overlays vanish. The lighting shifts to a fire-light spectrum. You meet friends at a “Collaborative Cathedral”—a massive, high-ceilinged hall made of raw timber and bio-concrete.

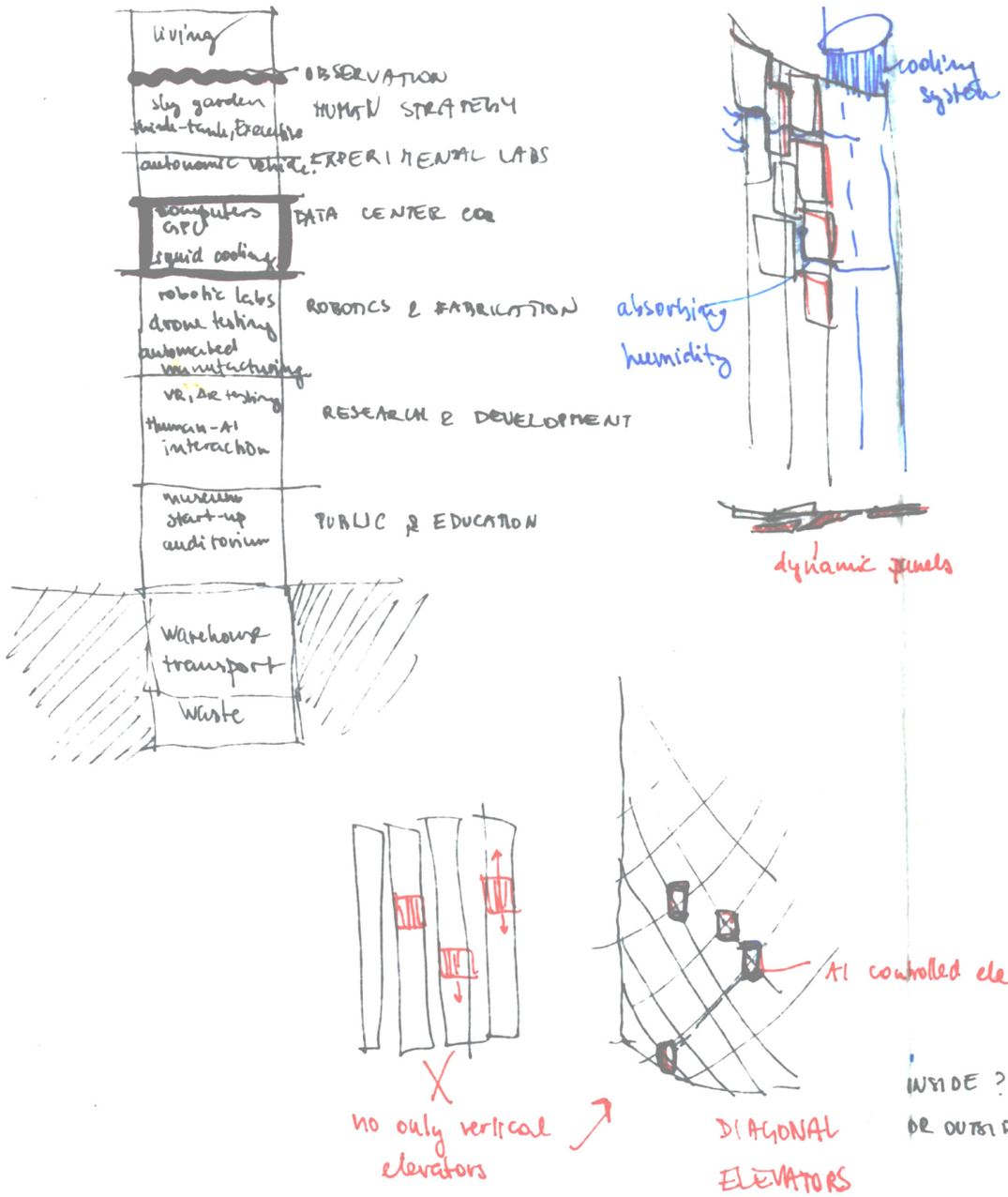
This building doesn’t have a single screen. It is designed for one thing: Presence. In a world where AI can simulate any voice or image, the architecture of 2030 is obsessed with things AI can’t touch: the scent of rain on real stone, the warmth of a hand-knotted rug, and the messy, unpredictable friction of human conversation.

HUMAN HAND & AI

One thing is to passively read all the bubbling text AI produces, and another is to truly take something meaningful from it. From my linguistic background, I know that not only words, but also structure, must carry meaning. In my opinion, the problem with most LLM-generated text is that it lacks a personal style that actually makes it readable. Very quickly, you begin skipping words and paragraphs, searching only for small glimpses of valuable information. I'm sure many of you also skipped parts of the previous text simply because it was too much and poorly formatted. As humans, we do not process information best through endless bullet points—we are storytellers and story listeners.

And as an artist, I know no stronger language than the visual one. The next pages contain sketches with annotations that are, in a way, also bullet points, but ones that passed through a human mind and a human hand. You can feel the difference. Maybe they will even encourage you to return to the previous AI-generated text, but this time with a clearer sense of meaning and direction.

TOWER



DATA CENTER

Amount of electricity → locally on your ? X

↳ limitation on size and capability

↳ Software

1 Anyway Systems

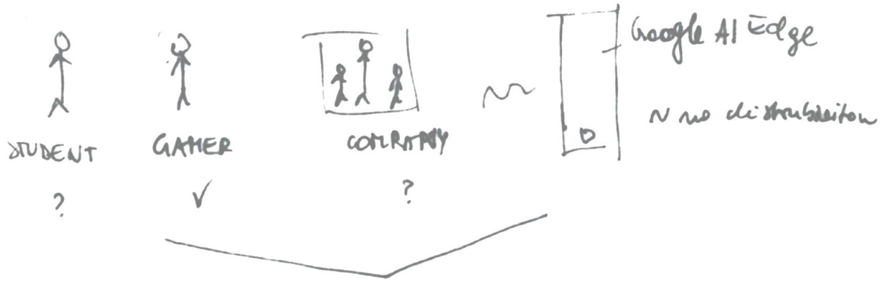
Ask globally
Train locally !

↓

DATA PRIVACY ?

chat GPT_120B requires max 4

↳ slower but still accurate



Team to manage the system

↳ Anyway does this transparently robustly and automatically.

PROBLEMS

...NECTION TO THE ORBIT?

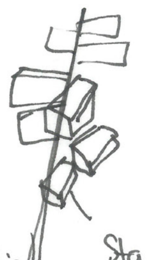
DATA CENTER

training AI models — running AI services

ALWAYS online, ultra-fast connections

VAST COOLING SYSTEMS

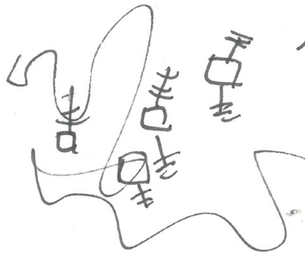
A LOT OF POWER



ALREADY HAPPENING

(Nvidia) Starcloud on satelite

-> more satellites to the orbit?



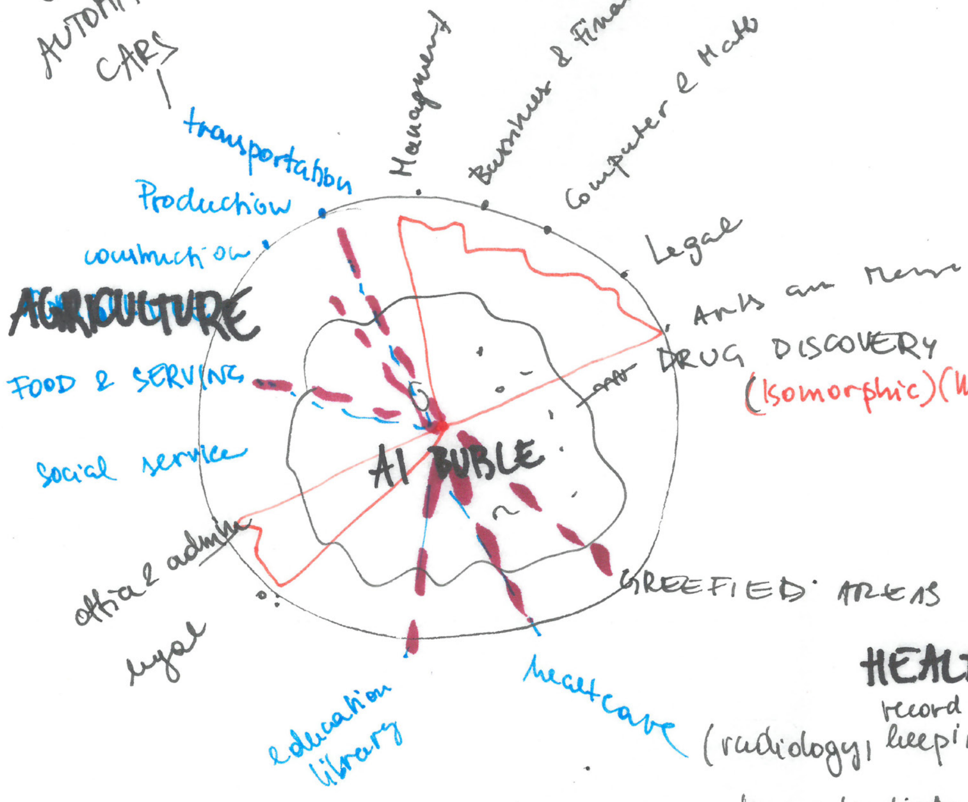
Safe wade though the 6,600 tons of SPACE DEBRIS

already 14,000 active satellites } FUEL

WORK OF ASTRONAUTS? LIGHT POLUTION ? not doing the work but orchestrating the outcome

TRANSPORTATION

AUTOMATIC CARS



HEALTHCARE

(radiology, record keeping an transcribing)

drug interaction checking

still show as low to the REGULATIONS

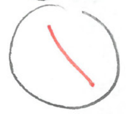
WHAT AI CAN D...

LLM

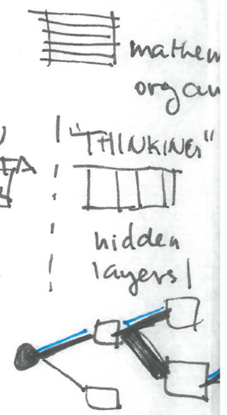
(CODERS, MATH, ART)

Large language Model

=> to predict next word in a sentence



NEURAL NE...



weight finding the

1. randome -> wro... incr... of th...

backpropagation

million...

NEW JOBS IN THE FUTURE?

the AGENTIC HEMISPERE

TOOL - AGENT

BIO-FRONTIER

designing microbes for carbon capture or plastic eating enzymes

personalized longevity consultant

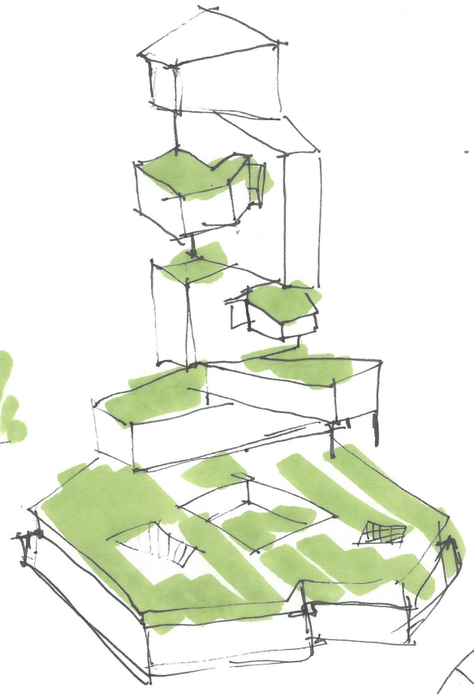
orbital hemisphere

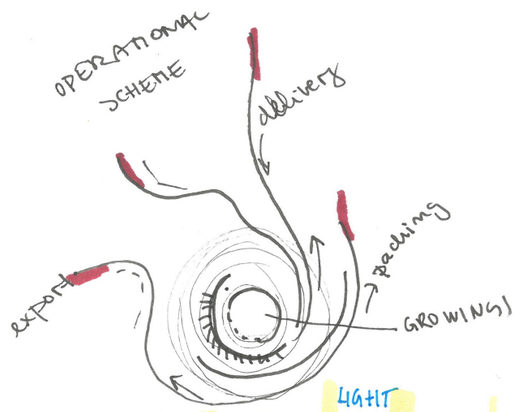
orbital logistic manager

zero gravity UX designer

Astro-mining technologies

VERTICAL FARMING

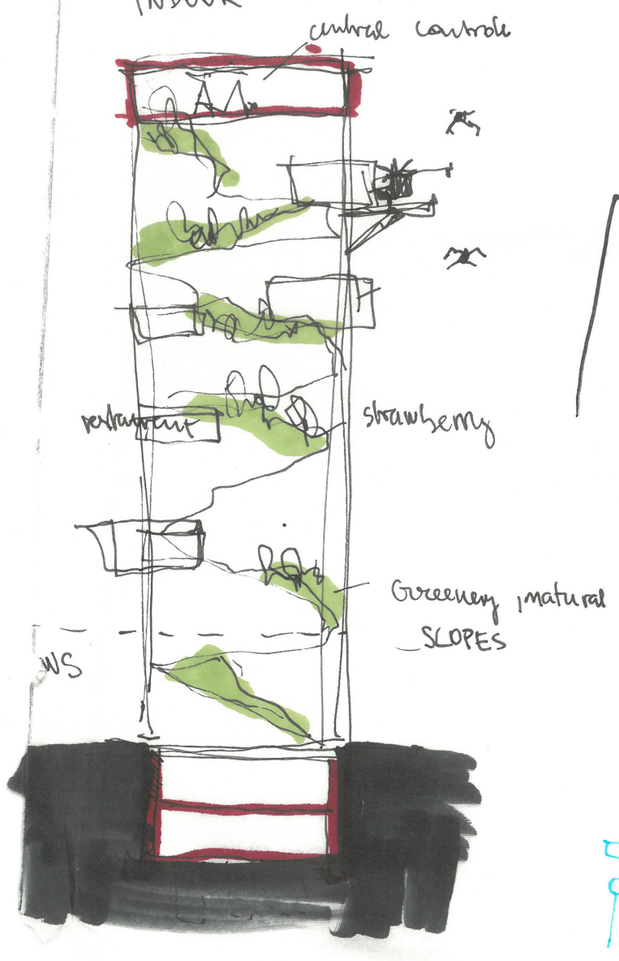


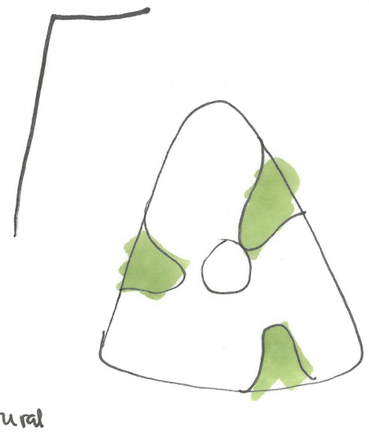


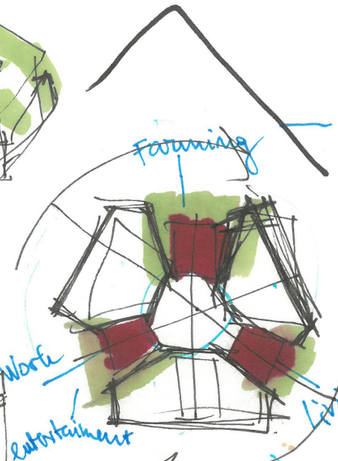
WALKABILITY

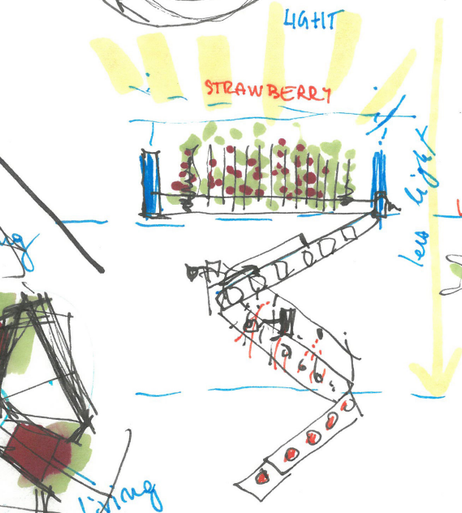
- useful (shops)
- safe (control, space)
- interesting (design)
- confortable (heat ne

INDOOR FARMING









controlled environment — AI ?
↳ dynamic not constant

plant psychology

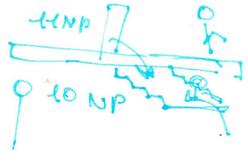
ELEKTRICITY PRICES

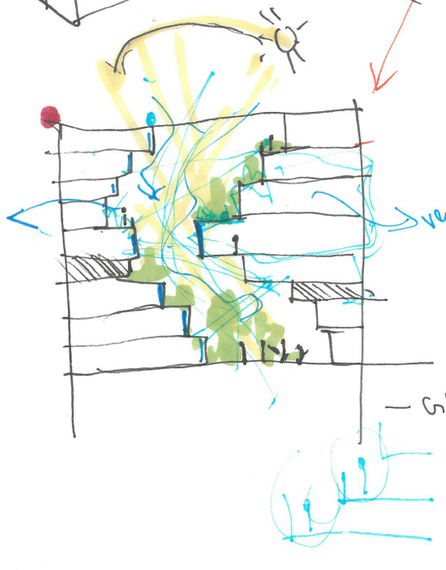
electricity can be adjusted
- during the day .. variat
light density
changing the rythm

DAY
NIGHT

end of production treatme
↳ extender shelf life

monitoring and modeling
focus on crops that a
specific to control environ





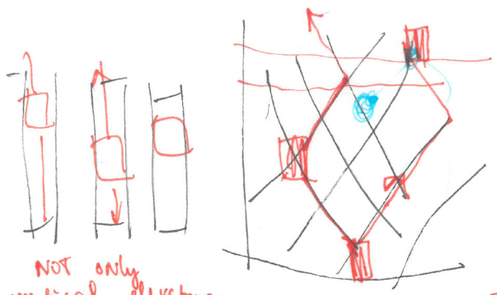
CONCEPT FORMATION

Based on the first researched concept, I began developing the project further and asked AI to critique it.

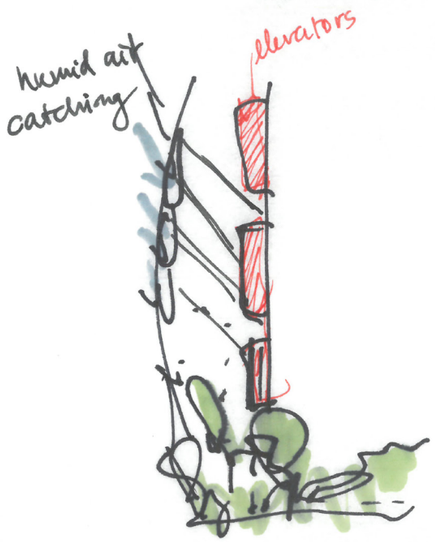
At the same time, I experimented with AI-based architectural tools, especially Snaptrude, to speed up the design process.

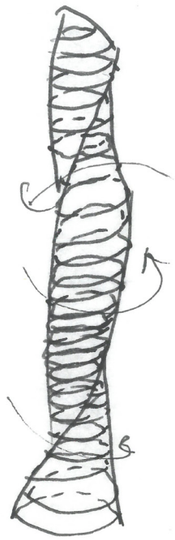
A critical moment was switching from OpenAI and Gemini to Claude. You will probably reach your own conclusions later, but I want to emphasize this point: **it was the first time I actually enjoyed reading AI-generated text.**

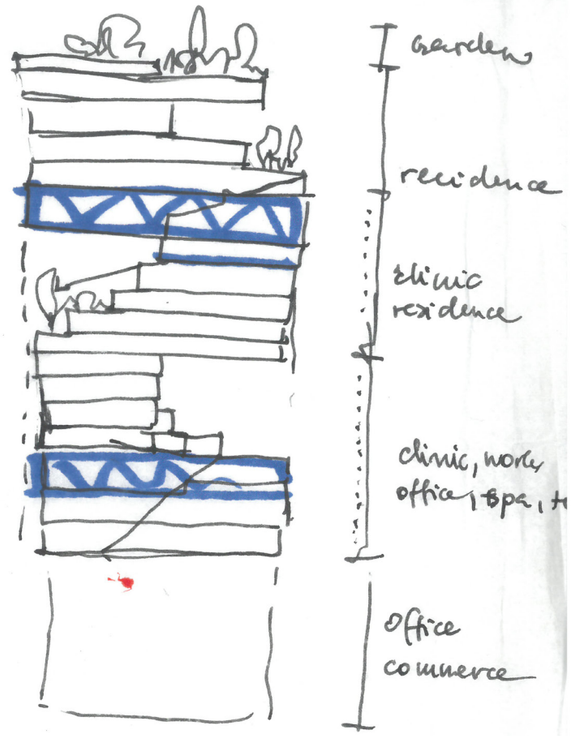
CIRCULATION



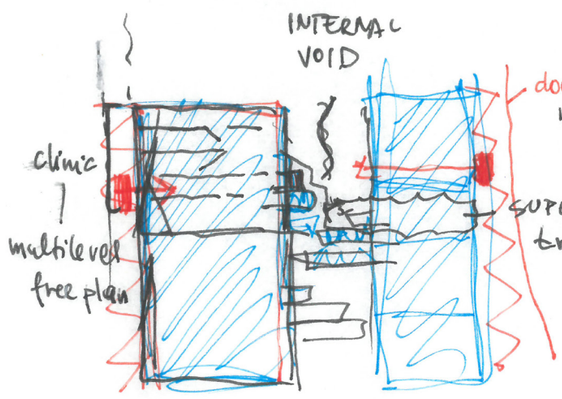
SHENZHEN CLIMATE

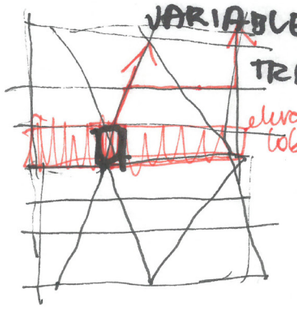


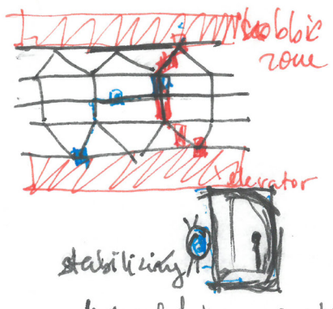




FUNCTION







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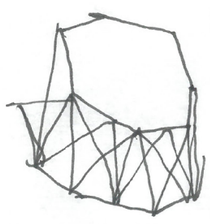

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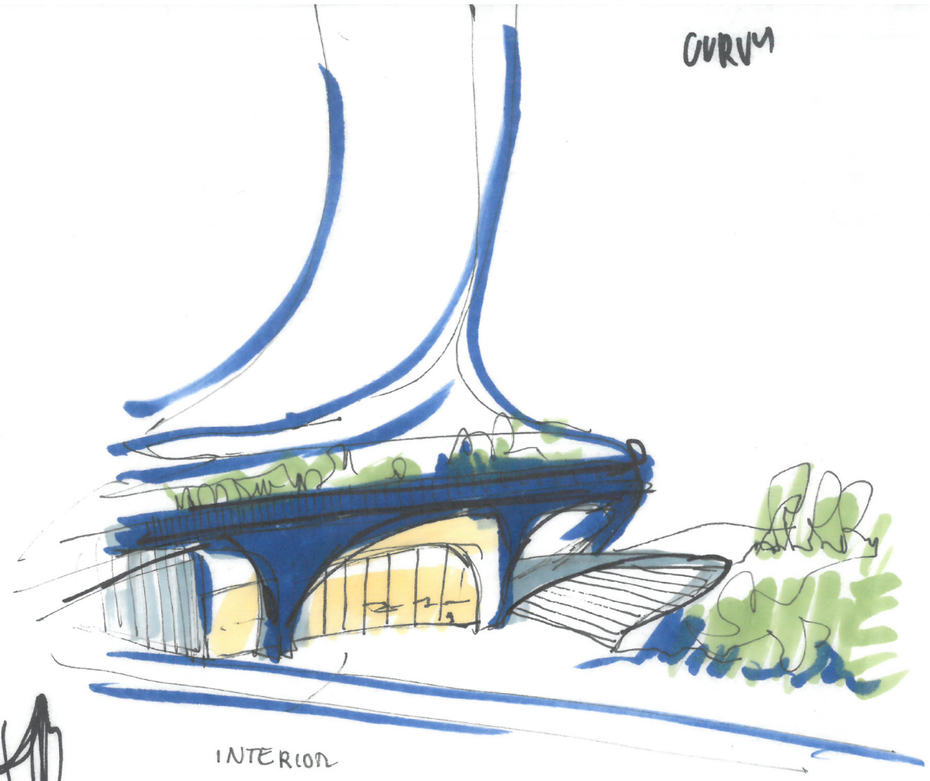

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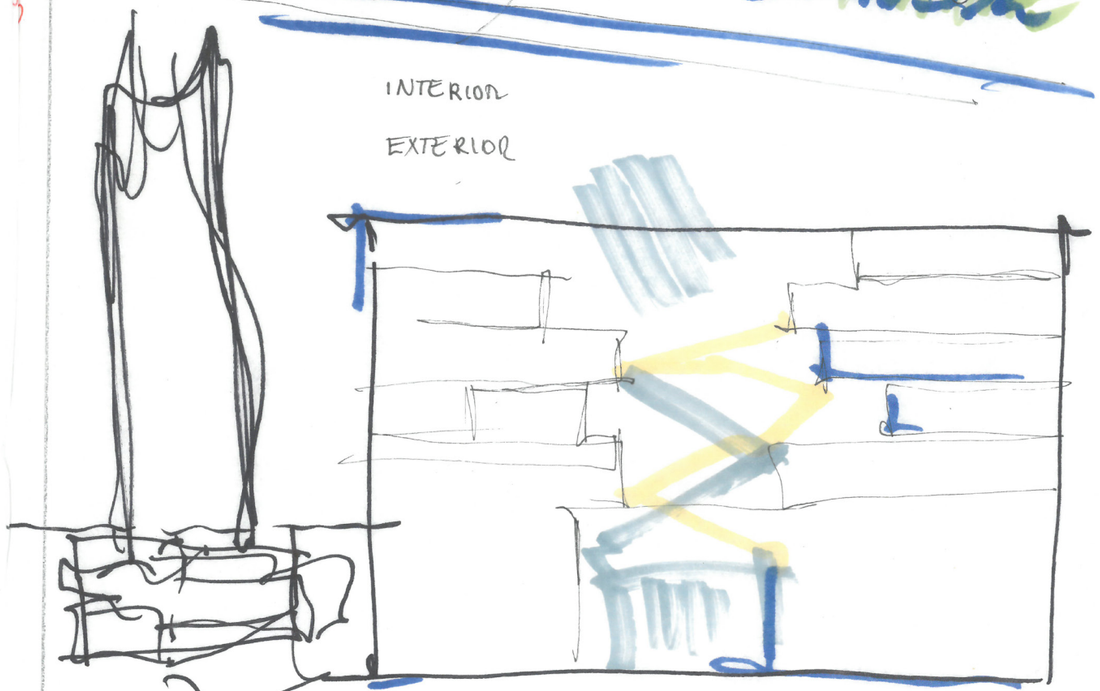

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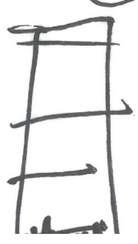

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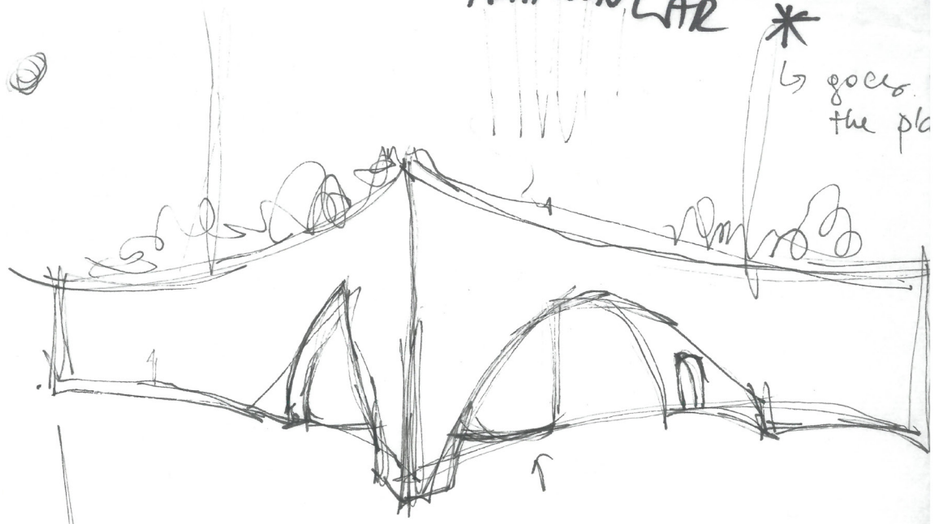

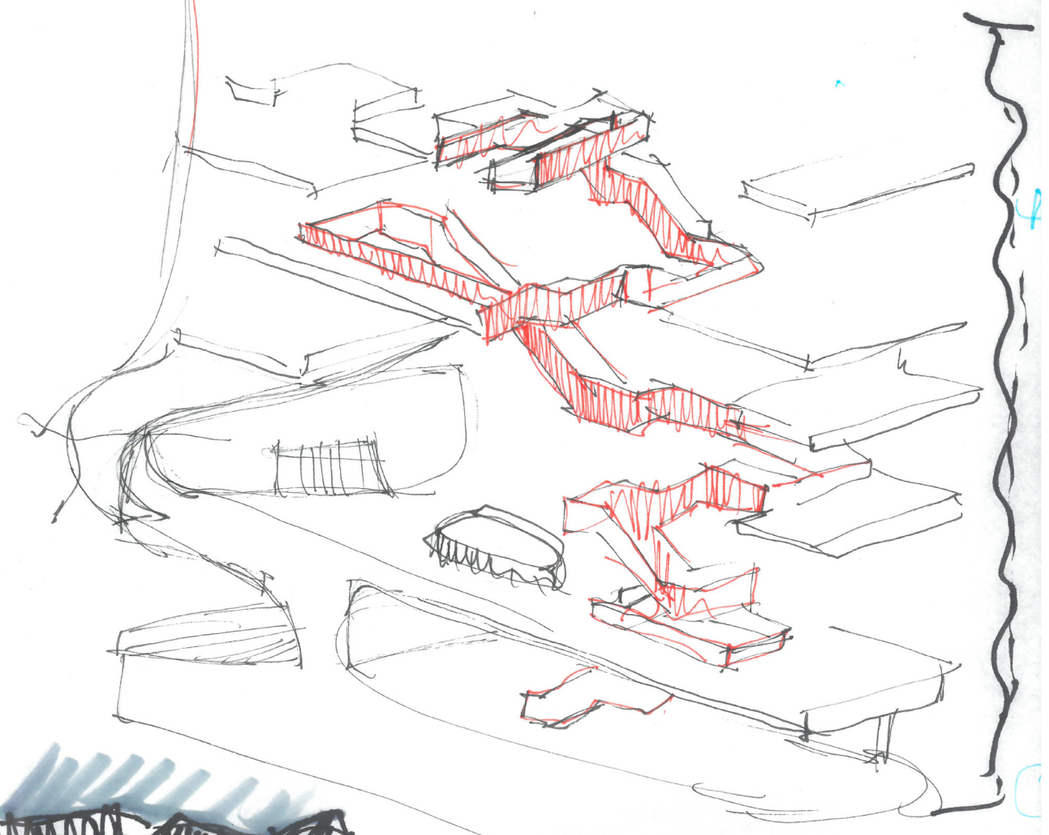

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

16.03.2026

I have this concept for a skyscraper in Shenzhen: A vertical community (city) in the fututre will be based on experimentation. One thing that will become more valuabe are the spaces we live and work. Since a lot of stuff will be automatized, we can profit from growing food inside, nearby. It will be a luxury to have strowberies and herbs growing just beside you. Considering the climate in Shenzen, i want to design a double fasade, that will collect the humidity from the air, convertting it to both potable water and aslo croping. The whole system should be Ai controlled and automatizaed. About the vertical circulation for the inhabitants. There will be multipal functions (living, farming, working). Since a lot of work will be automatized we will need both simple typical floor or blind floor for computers and on the other hand very liable spaces for work and commerce. I am thinking about a concept building in a building. Imagine you enter the building, than go by elevator to the specific zone, but for know on, you will use multiplees stars, that are vissible. You have multiple strores atrium, so the coridors are not 2m but several floors atrium, where you can see the function as you would see it in a city street. There should be elevators for emergency and elder people, and aslo for the infratructure maintance of the building, but the main idea is that stairs should become a relaxating, interconnection beetwen several floors. Something like Le Corbusier concpet of mezzanine but on higher level. Ex. If a company is renting multiple floors, the floor will be share a open space with beutifull stairs, where people coud enjoy the view, services and so on. Another idea that goes with the concept, is that the stairs will sit for internal circuclation, and for the outer circulation (the one that will drive you to the desired function) will be on the exterior. Between the double facade. I imagine elevators that dont operate only vertically, but rather on diagonal drig, maximizing the movement that is caracteristic for the human life in a city.

Also for the funcitons, i imagine a health oriented economics. Ex. A clinic focused on longevity, with fasting programs, retreats and similar.

What problems do you see in my concept? How effective are more stairs in combination with the outgrid elevators? How economical wise is the farming concept?

Gimini:

1. General Structural & Environmental Challenges

While your ideas are conceptually strong, they face several harsh realities when applied to a supertall structure in Shenzhen.

1. Shenzhen's Climate & The Double Facade: Shenzhen has a humid, subtropical climate and is highly prone to typhoons. A double-skin facade is excellent for energy efficiency, but placing elevators and circulation inside this cavity is extremely tricky. This space acts as a thermal buffer and gets incredibly hot due to the greenhouse effect. Operating mechanical elevators and forcing people to wait in a non-acclimatized, glass-enclosed solar oven would require massive, energy-intensive cooling. Furthermore, exterior systems must be fortified against Category 5 typhoon winds.
2. Atmospheric Water Generation: Collecting humidity to create potable water and irrigate crops is a brilliant closed-loop idea. Buildings in humid climates already generate millions of gallons of HVAC condensate. However, actively pulling water out of the air requires immense energy (essentially giant dehumidifiers). Powering this system, plus the AI and automation, will demand a robust energy strategy, likely requiring more power than the building can generate on-site.
3. The "Chimney Effect" and Fire Safety: The "building within a building" concept with multi-story open atriums is a dream for social interaction, but a nightmare for fire safety. Open voids acting as internal "city streets" create a powerful chimney effect. If a fire starts, smoke will rapidly travel up these atriums, asphyxiating the upper floors. You would need incredibly complex (and expensive) smoke exhaust systems and automated fire shutters to divide the atriums during an emergency.

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2. Circulation: Stairs + Diagonal Outgrid Elevators

Your idea of using sky lobbies (zones) connected by beautiful, highly visible internal stairs is an established best practice in "active design"—encouraging movement and spontaneous interaction.

However, combining this with a diagonal exterior elevator grid creates both friction and magic.

feature	the vision (pros)	the reality (cons)
zone-based stairs	promotes health, reduces elevator wait times, creates stunning architectural vistas.	accessibility: you cannot rely only on stairs for local circulation. fire codes and accessibility laws require local elevators for the elderly, disabled, or injured. these cannot just be "service" elevators; they must offer equal spatial dignity.
diagonal exterior elevators	maximizes human movement, mimics the organic grid of a city, visually stunning from the outside.	mechanical complexity: moving horizontally and diagonally requires rope-less, magnetic levitation systems (like the thyssenkrupp multi system). these require massive structural tracks, take up immense leasable floor space, and are notoriously difficult to maintain.

That clarification changes the structural logic significantly—and for the better. By making the elevators part of a Diagrid (Diagonal Grid) structural system, you aren't just moving people; you're using the circulation paths to hold the building up.

In a diagrid, the exterior mesh handles the lateral (wind and earthquake) loads, which is perfect for Shenzhen's typhoon-prone environment. Integrating the elevators into this mesh creates a "living facade" where the movement of people is literally the pulse of the building's structure.

The Integrated "Diagrid-Elevator" Logic

Instead of a traditional vertical shaft, imagine the elevators running on tracks integrated into the diagonal steel members of the outer mesh.

1. The Grid: The exterior of the building is a diamond-patterned steel or composite mesh.
2. The Cabins: Using Maglev (Magnetic Levitation) or specialized cable-less propulsion, the cabins don't just go "up"—they zig-zag.
3. The Benefit: This "Diagonal Outgrid" allows the elevator to serve a wider horizontal area of a floor than a single vertical point. It acts like a funicular on a mountainside, slowly traversing the face of the building, offering breathtaking views of Shenzhen while moving

you toward your specific “neighborhood” or sky lobby.

Verdict on Circulation: The internal stairs concept is highly effective and desirable. The diagonal outgrid elevators are structurally and mechanically prohibitive for a main transit artery, especially when exposed to Shenzhen’s climate. A better compromise might be standard vertical express elevators to the sky lobbies, combined with localized, scenic diagonal funiculars strictly inside the climate-controlled atriums.

3. The Economics of Vertical Farming in a Skyscraper

Growing strawberries and herbs next to living and working spaces fits perfectly into your “longevity and health” economic model. It is a fantastic luxury amenity. But as a purely economic venture, it is highly problematic.

1. The Real Estate Premium: Shenzhen real estate is some of the most expensive in the world. The core economic metric of a skyscraper is Yield per Square Meter. Renting a square meter to a tech firm or a luxury tenant might generate thousands of dollars. Using that same square meter to grow strawberries generates pennies in comparison. The crops can never pay the rent for the space they occupy.
2. Energy and Water Weight: Vertical farming is heavy (water, soil/hydroponic equipment) and incredibly energy-intensive (specialized LED grow lights running 12–18 hours a day, plus the HVAC required to handle the humidity the plants release through transpiration).
3. The “Blind Floors”: Using automated “blind floors” (windowless floors) for servers and farming is actually a great use of the deeper, darker interior spaces of the building footprint that aren’t legally leasable as human workspaces due to lack of natural light.

Verdict on Economics: Vertical farming in a Shenzhen skyscraper is not economically viable if you view it as an agricultural business. However, it is viable if you view it as a loss-leader marketing amenity. Just like a swimming pool doesn’t generate revenue but allows you to charge 20% more for the apartments, having a hyper-local, AI-driven, zero-pesticide strawberry farm directly supports the branding of your longevity clinics and luxury apartments, allowing you to charge premium rents.

4. Next Step

Your concept bridges architecture, agriculture, and wellness beautifully, but the spatial allocation will make or break the design.

Would you like me to help you sketch out a rough programmatic stack (a floor-by-floor percentage breakdown of how much space should be dedicated to farming, blind tech floors, longevity clinics, and residential/office zones) to see how the building’s ecosystem might actually balance out?

SNAPTRUDE

21.03.2026

Snaptrude is an online collaborative architectural design platform that combines BIM, parametric modeling, and AI-assisted workflows within a browser-based environment. It allows architects and designers to quickly generate massing studies, floor plans, and spatial layouts while receiving real-time feedback on metrics such as area, efficiency, and program distribution. Because it operates in the cloud, teams can collaborate simultaneously without relying on heavy local software. One of its key strengths is the integration of AI tools that help accelerate early-stage concept development, making the design process faster, more iterative, and more accessible.

openAI

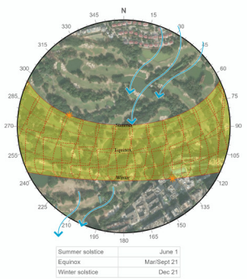
It was quite interesting to introduce myself to these tools. The issue with Snaptrude was that, as a browser-based platform, it was not always reliable for designing a skyscraper at this scale. There were frequent bugs—sometimes functions suddenly disappeared, or the page could not load properly due to memory limitations. Still, I was excited by the possibility of instantly seeing floor areas simply by assigning a department or program to a mass, instead of manually setting up all the parameters myself in Revit.

Another interesting experience was communicating with customer support. I had become so used to the application feeling fully AI-driven and anonymous that I was genuinely surprised—even slightly shocked—when, late at night during a technical issue, an actual person connected to the chat. Suddenly, I felt nervous about explaining the problem clearly and efficiently, almost minimizing my words because there was a real human on the other side whose time I valued. With AI, the interaction somehow does not feel personal in the same way.

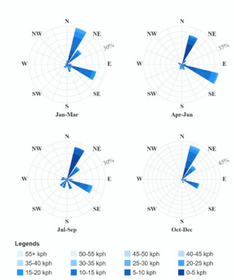
I also tried writing my own conceptual prompts to see how the system would respond. Although I designed the building massing myself, the application was quite interesting in generating presentable analytical diagrams, such as site-specific sun path studies or wind analysis. In that sense, it became less of a design tool and more of a fast visualization and presentation assistant.

Roads & Transit Connectivity Map

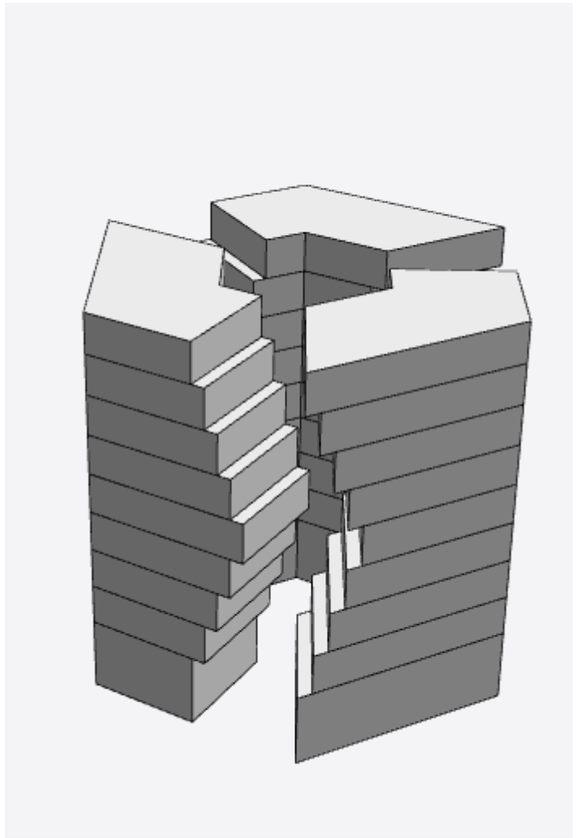
Sun path Analysis

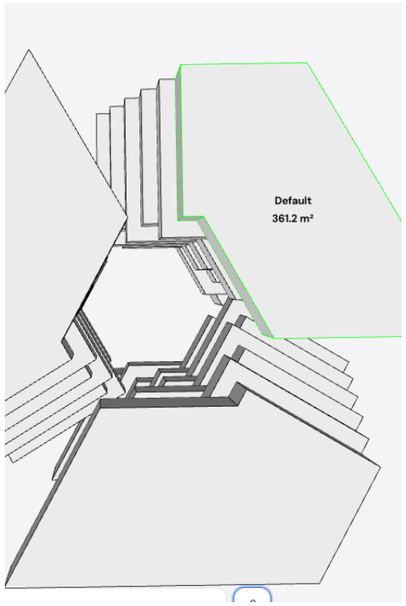


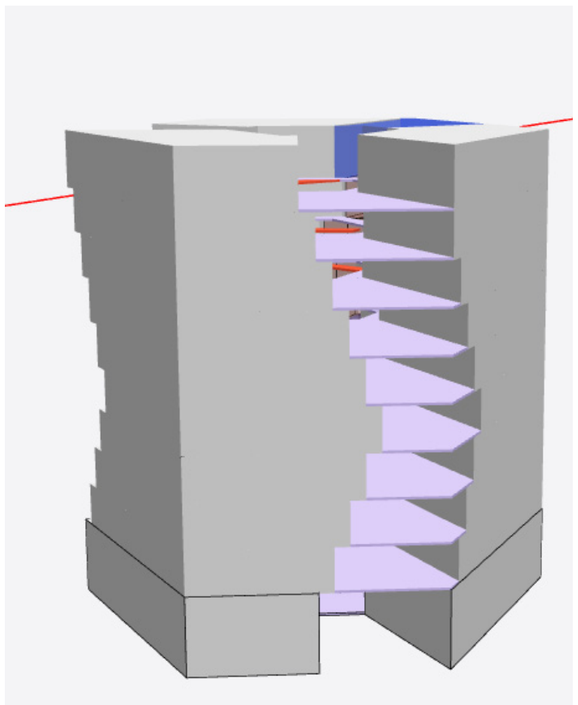
Wind Analysis

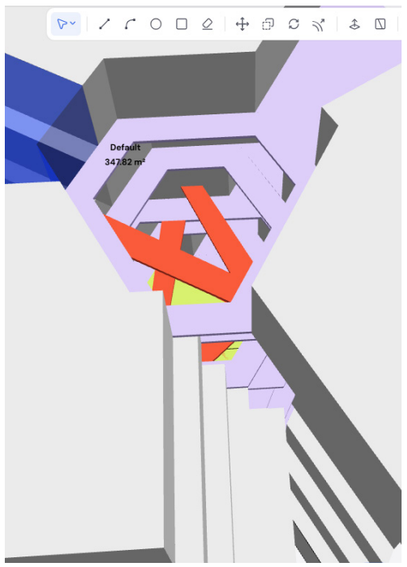


Presentation sheets based on location prompt









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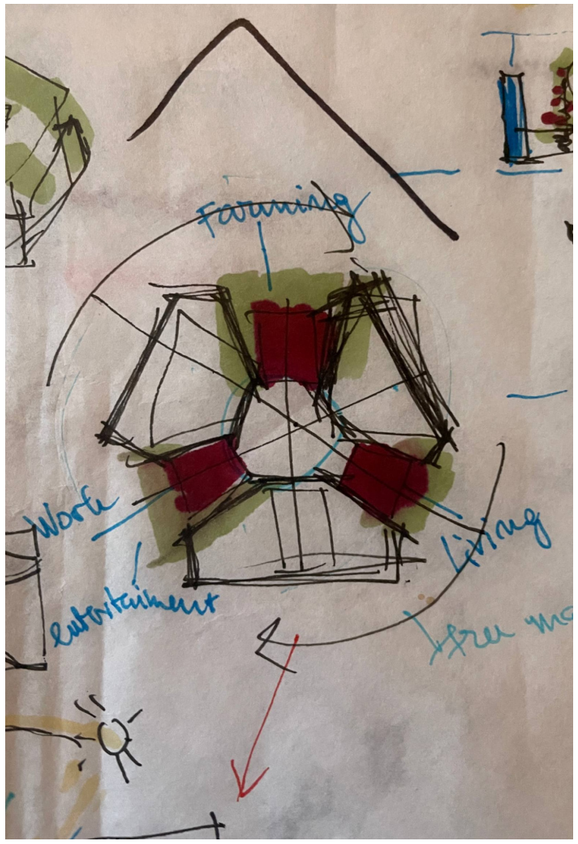
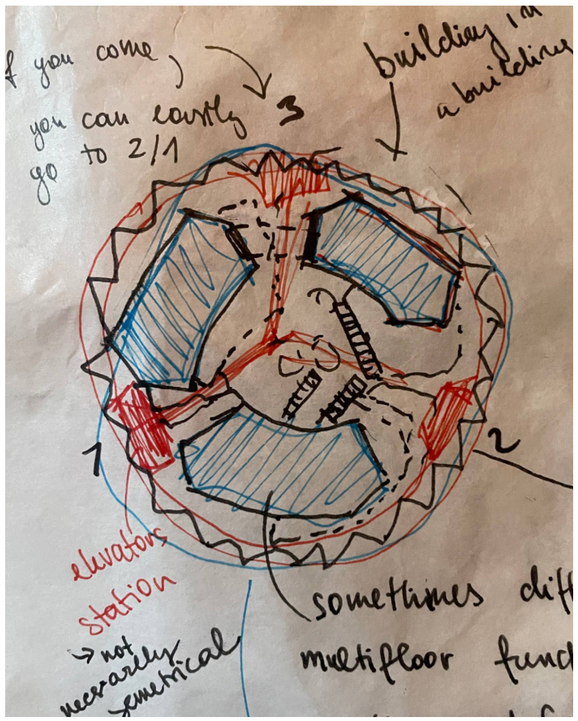




PROGRAME SPECIFICATION

22.03.2026

I have this concept for a skyscraper in Shenzhen:

*...*similar as the one to Gimini*

Update my program file based on that concept. Ensure it meets the regulations for Shenzen, Futian district. Ensure the central void is spacious enough to meet the concept and also try to give the meet FAR for a mixed-use skyscraper in Shenzen. Provide exact m2 for the functions and zones, floorplan and footprint dimensions both length and height of the floors for the specific functions. Provide the specification about the perfect plot and location (we consider the Golf Club area of Futian district), sun orientation, size and relevant details.

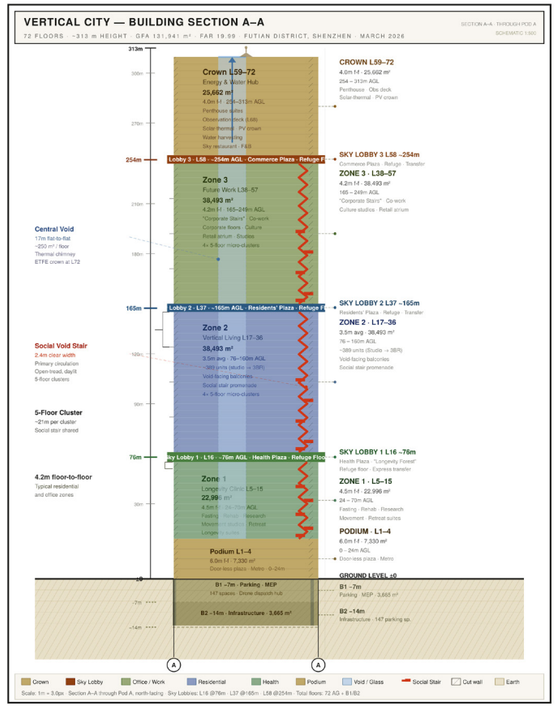
I provided Claude with a Word document previously generated by Gemini, together with my own comments, conceptual sketches, and screenshots from the Snaptrude massing study. In return, it generated a very detailed 15-page document with a clear structure and programme tables that later became an extremely valuable design resource.

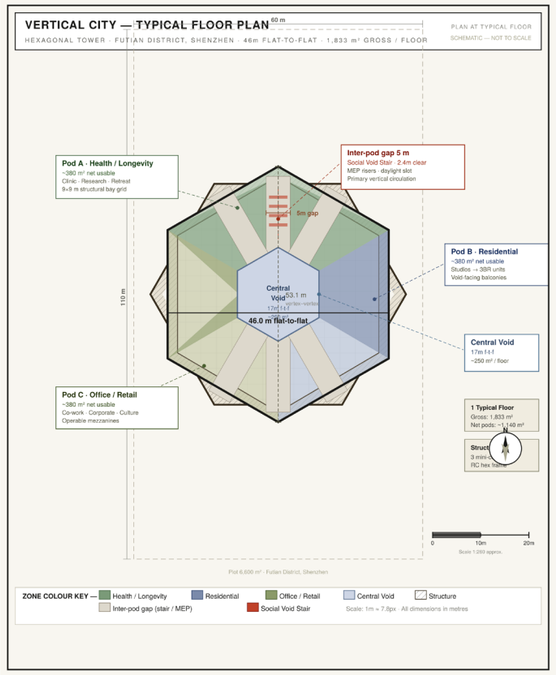
During the analysis phase, my colleagues and I gathered a lot of knowledge in Miro—about construction floor heights, elevator systems, wind design, and other technical aspects—but it was still difficult to hold all of that information together mentally while shaping one specific architectural concept. The document helped transform fragmented research into a coherent framework, giving me both a clearer understanding of the building's scale and a more structured design methodology.

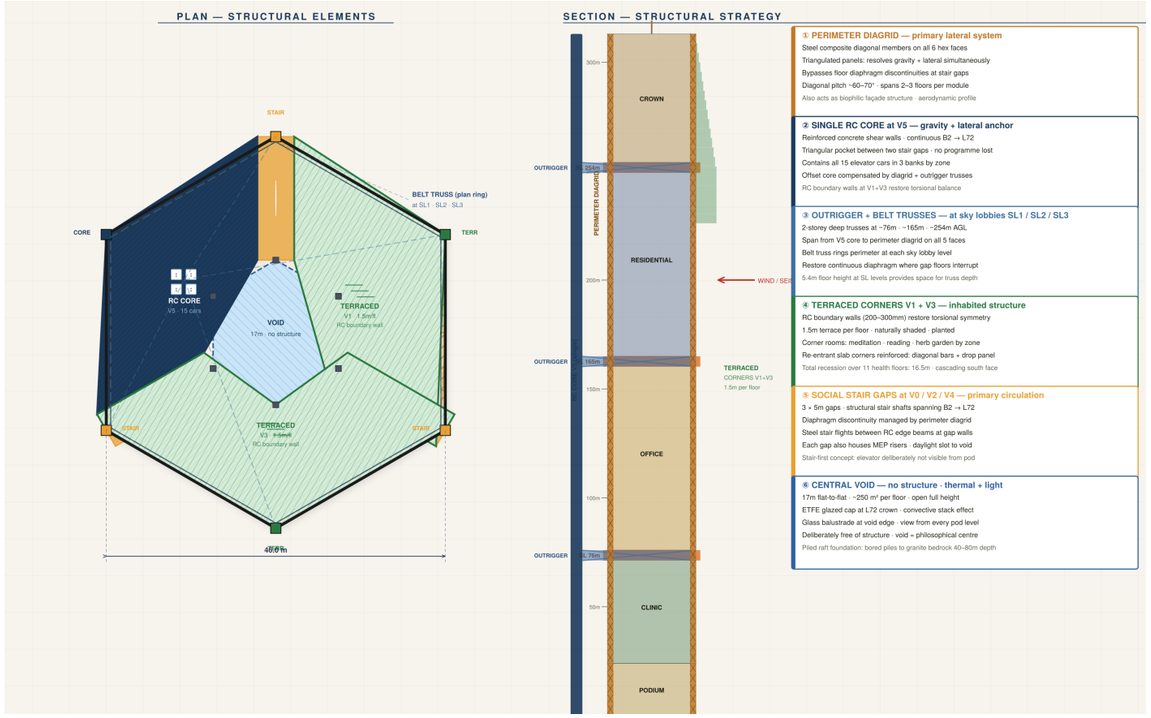
As the project evolved, I continuously updated the document alongside the design process—not only adapting my own ideas, but also responding to changing urban regulations, where the FAR shifted several times from 9 to 19, then to 17, together with modifications to the site dimensions.

What I especially appreciated was the readability of the document: the visual style, structured tables, and organized information made it genuinely enjoyable to work with. From that point on, I mainly used Claude for more complex consultations regarding design and structural logic. It was also surprisingly accurate and resourceful in estimating materials for the physical model and highly effective at generating simple, clean diagrams that only required minor adjustments afterward.

Generated diagrams by Claude







Generated diagrams by Claude with a few adjustments

CIRCULATION ELEVATORS

4.1 Elevator Provision

Elevator Type	Qty	Serves	Notes
Zone Express (Health)	2	L1 → L16	Non-stop to Sky Lobby 1
Zone Express (Residential)	2	L1 → L37	Local L17–37 from SL1 transfer
Zone Express (Office)	2	L1 → L58	Local L38–58 from SL2 transfer
Crown Express	3	L1 → L68	Penthouse / obs / sky restaurant
Accessibility / Elderly	2	All floors	1,600 kg; every floor; GB 50763 compliant
Cluster Elevator	2	cluster, each 5 floors	
Service / Freight / MEP	2	B2 → L72	2,500 kg; dedicated service core
TOTAL ELEVATORS	**15**	—	vs. ~30+ typical for a tower this size

4.2 Sky Lobby Levels

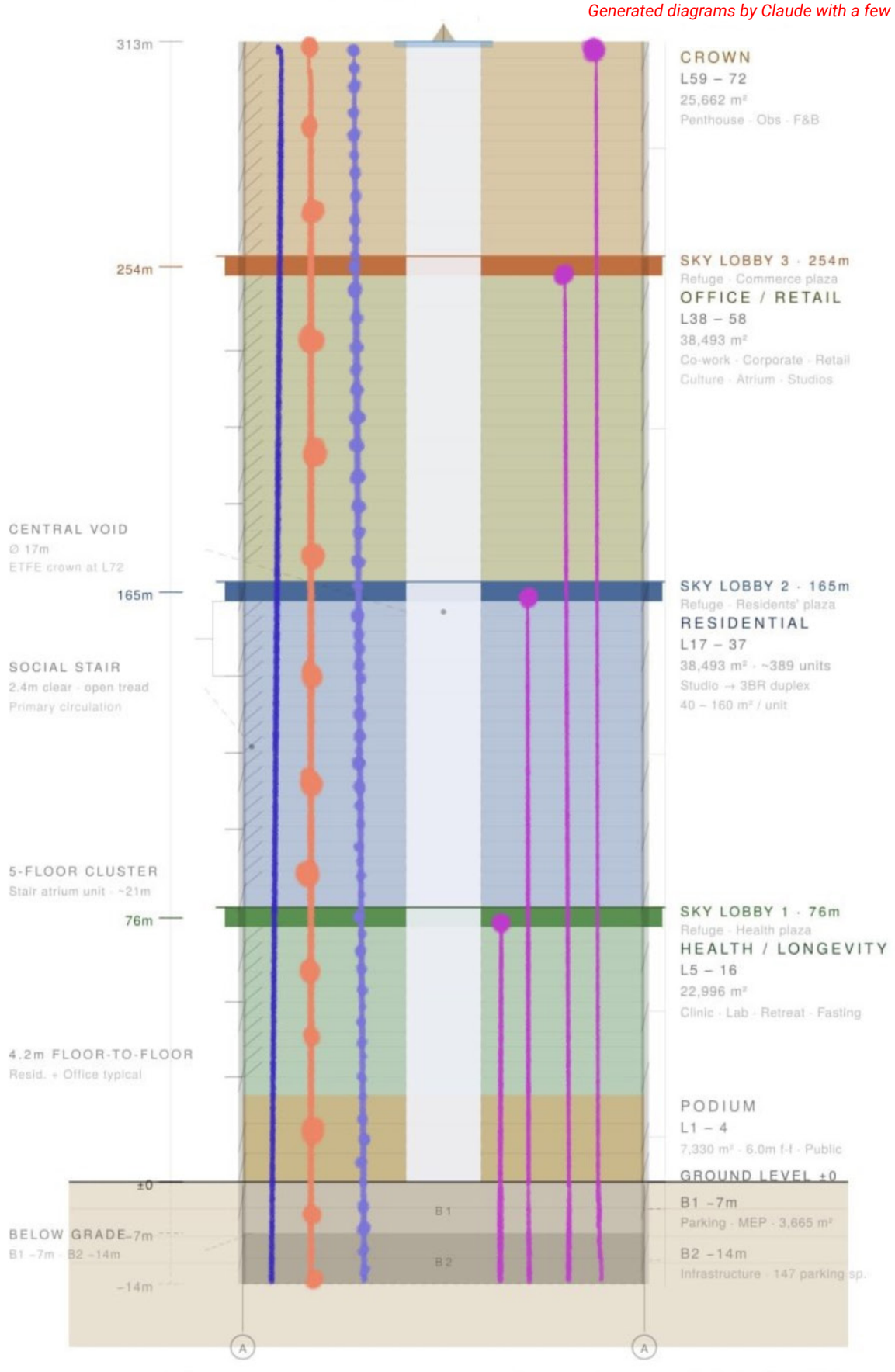
- Sky Lobby 1: Level 16, elevation ~76 m — Health Plaza; refuge; express transfer
- Sky Lobby 2: Level 37, elevation ~165 m — Residents' Plaza; refuge; transfer
- Sky Lobby 3: Level 58, elevation ~254 m — Commerce Plaza / Sky Market; refuge; transfer
- All sky lobbies comply with GB 50045 §6.1.13 refuge floor requirement (every 45 m)

zone express

all floors

cluster elevator

service/other



Claude generated program organized in tables

PROGRAMME DETAIL

5 FLOORS CLUSTER

Basement (B1–B2)

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	Elev.	Description
Parking (147 spaces)	B1–B2	3,665	0–7m	Mechanical parking, EV charging 30%, cycle bays
MEP / Infrastructure	B2	incl.		Generators, water tanks, transformers, building AI
Drone / Micro-mobility Hub	B1	incl.		E-bike, delivery robot dispatch, last-mile logistics
BASEMENT TOTAL	**2**	**3,665**		Below grade

Podium — L1–4 (0–24 m AGL)

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	AGL	Description
Public Lobby / Reception	L1	1,833	0–6m	Triple-height entry, express elevator lobby, public art
Health / Longevity Retail	L1–L2	1,500	0–12m	Rental, Pharmacy, biometric screening, nutraceuticals market
Food & Beverage (health-focused)	L2–L3	1,200	6–18m	rental, Longevity kitchen, fermented foods, communal dining
Community / Exhibition Hall	L3	800	12–18m	600 m² flexible events; connects to podium sky garden
Podium Sky Garden	L4	2,000	18–24m	Terraced garden, external ramp connection, semi-public
PODIUM TOTAL	**4**	**7,330**	0–24m	Floor-to-floor: 6.0 m

Zone 1 — Health & Longevity Institute (L5–L15, 24–70 m AGL)

Sky Lobby 1 / Refuge at L16 (~76 m AGL). Floor-to-floor: 4.2 m typical; 5.4 m sky lobby.

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	AGL	Description
Longevity Medical Clinic	L5–L7	5,499	24–37m	Primary care, genomic screening, preventive medicine
Fasting & Metabolic Reset	L8–L9	3,666	37–45m	Medically supervised fasting suites (24 rooms), IV therapy
Movement & Rehabilitation	L10–L11	3,666	45–54m	Physical therapy, hydrotherapy, yoga, Pilates, tai chi
Longevity Research Lab	L12–L13	3,666	54–62m	Microbiome / proteomics lab, AI health analytics
Retreat Suites (short-stay)	L14–L15	3,666	62–70m	18 × 80 m² wellness suites, 2–14 day fasting retreats
Sky Lobby 1 / Health Plaza	L16	1,833	~76m	Refuge floor, public café, elevator transfer, terrace
ZONE 1 TOTAL	**12**	**22,996**	24–76m	incl. Sky Lobby 1

Zone 2 — Residential (L17–L36, 76–160 m AGL)

Sky Lobby 2 / Refuge at L37 (~165 m AGL). Floor-to-floor: 4.2 m typical; 5.4 m sky lobby.

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	AGL	Description
Cluster A — Studios	L17–L21	9,165	76–97m	Studios 40–52 m². Co-working nook + social stair per cluster
Cluster B — 1BR / 2BR	L22–L26	9,165	97–118m	1BR 55–70 m², 2BR 75–90 m². Balconies on outer faces.
Cluster C — 2BR / 3BR	L27–L31	9,165	118–139m	2BR 80–95 m², 3BR 100–120 m². Sky terrace amenity at L31.
Cluster D — 3BR / Duplex	L32–L36	9,165	139–160m	3BR 110–130 m², duplexes 130–160 m² spanning 2 floors
Sky Lobby 2 / Residents' Plaza	L37	1,833	~165m	Refuge floor, sky garden, residents' lounge, transfer
ZONE 2 TOTAL	**21**	**38,493**	76–165m	~389 units total zone 2+crown

Unit mix summary (Zone 2, ~260 units):

- Studios (40–52 m²): ~80 units (Cluster A)
- 1BR (55–70 m²): ~70 units
- 2BR (75–95 m²): ~60 units
- 3BR / Duplex (100–160 m²): ~50 units

Zone 3 — Office, Retail & Culture (L38–L57, 165–249 m AGL)

Sky Lobby 3 / Refuge at L58 (~254 m AGL). Floor-to-floor: 4.2 m typical; 5.4 m sky lobby.

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	AGL	Description
Automated / Technical Ops.	L38–L39	3,666	165–173m	Server rooms, building AI, robotics coordination, low headcount
Flexible Co-Working / Start-Ups	L40–L43	7,332	173–190m	Hot-desking, maker spaces, prototype labs, removable walls
Corporate Office (multi-floor tenants)	L44–L50	12,831	190–219m	2–3 pods per tenant; internal stair bridges; atrium mezzanines
Retail / Micro-Commerce Street	L51–L52	3,666	219–227m	Multi-storey atrium retail, 30–60 m² units visible from void
Creative / Cultural Studios	L53–L57	9,165	227–249m	Art/design studios, performance, media production, 5.4m loft h.
Sky Lobby 3 / Commerce Plaza	L58	1,833	~254m	Rooftop market, food hall, elevator transfer, public terrace
ZONE 3 TOTAL	**21**	**38,493**	165–254m	incl. Sky Lobby 3

Zone 4 — Crown (L59–L72, 254–313 m AGL)

Function	Floors	GFA (m²)	AGL	Description
Premium Residential Penthouses	L59–L67	16,497	254–292m	9 floors × 2–3 units per pod; 200–350 m²; double-height living
Observation Deck & Hospitality	L68–L70	5,499	292–305m	Public observation (L68), sky restaurant/bar (L69–70)
Mechanical / Comms Crown	L71–L72	3,666	305–313m	Building services, antenna, PV crown panel, wind turbines
CROWN TOTAL	**14**	**25,662**	254–313m	~130 penthouse units

10 CONTEXTUAL NOTES: SHENZHEN LIVING & DESIGN QUESTIONS

The following section addresses the contextual questions raised in the project brief regarding life, urbanism, and design culture in Shenzhen — directly relevant to architectural decisions in this concept.

10.1 Shenzhen vs. Other Chinese Cities

Shenzhen is unique in having no historical city fabric — it was founded in 1980 from fishing villages and has no pre-modern urban tissue. This means the city is entirely defined by its infrastructure and planned districts rather than organic growth. For inhabitants, the experience is of efficiency, modernity, and impermanence: districts can be completely rebuilt within a decade. Compared to Beijing or Shanghai, Shenzhen has greater mobility between income groups, a younger demographic median, and a higher tolerance for spatial experimentation — making it the ideal laboratory for a concept like Vertical City.

10.2 All-Glass Skyscrapers in Subtropical Climate

The dominant all-glass tower typology in Shenzhen performs poorly in subtropical humidity. Thermal bridging through curtain wall frames creates condensation on interior surfaces during the May–September monsoon. Occupants typically report discomfort from direct solar gain and cold spots near windows in over-air-conditioned interiors. This building deliberately departs from the all-glass model: the stepped cantilever overhangs reduce direct solar gain, the inter-pod gaps allow cross-ventilation, and triple-glazed operable windows at residential floors enable natural ventilation during the mild October–April season.

10.3 City Cleanliness & Subcultural Space

Shenzhen's surface cleanliness (robotic street sweepers, regulated vendor zones, zero informal construction) comes with a trade-off: spontaneous subculture is difficult. Street art, informal markets, and unexpected public activation are uncommon in the financial districts. The Vertical City concept deliberately creates the conditions for subcultural emergence: the sky lobby plazas are unscripted public spaces (not programmed retail concessions), the creative studios at L44–L46 are cheap, adaptable lofts, and the atrium visible retail at L42–L43 is intended to be small-unit, high-turnover — analogous to the informal commercial energy of an older city layered into vertical form.

10.4 Orientation in a Multi-Level Connected City

Shenzhen's multilevel connectivity (Futian's underground mall network, elevated walkways along Shennan Road) is impressive but cognitively demanding for newcomers. Research on wayfinding in Futian shows that inhabitants establish fixed routes and rarely explore alternatives. This building addresses orientation through the central void: from any floor, you can see the atrium, read your vertical position by the landscaped sky lobby levels, and understand your location within the building's logic. The three macro-zones are colour-coded and have distinct material characters, so an inhabitant can identify their zone without signage. The sky lobbies at ~70 m, ~140 m, and ~210 m are deliberately designed as memorable 'urban plazas' — analogous to the named intersections of Shennan Road — so that giving directions ('meet me at the Health Plaza, Level 15') is natural.

10.5 Shenzhen Speed & Modular Construction

The legendary Shenzhen construction pace (CSCEC built a 57-floor tower in 19 days in 2015; standard high-rise progresses at 3–5 days per floor) demands modular, standardised components. This design responds directly: the hexagonal geometry reduces to a single curtain wall panel module and a single structural bay dimension (8.4 m). The three inter-pod mini-cores are identical, enabling repetitive formwork. Sky lobby outrigger trusses are steel fabricated off-site. The stepped cantilevers use precast concrete

M **Mihaela Tănase**
15:23 23 mar.

jak je mozne, ze to zna moje myslenky a otazky z predtim? :OOO

M **Mihaela Tănase**
15:26 23 mar.

interesting idea, smart

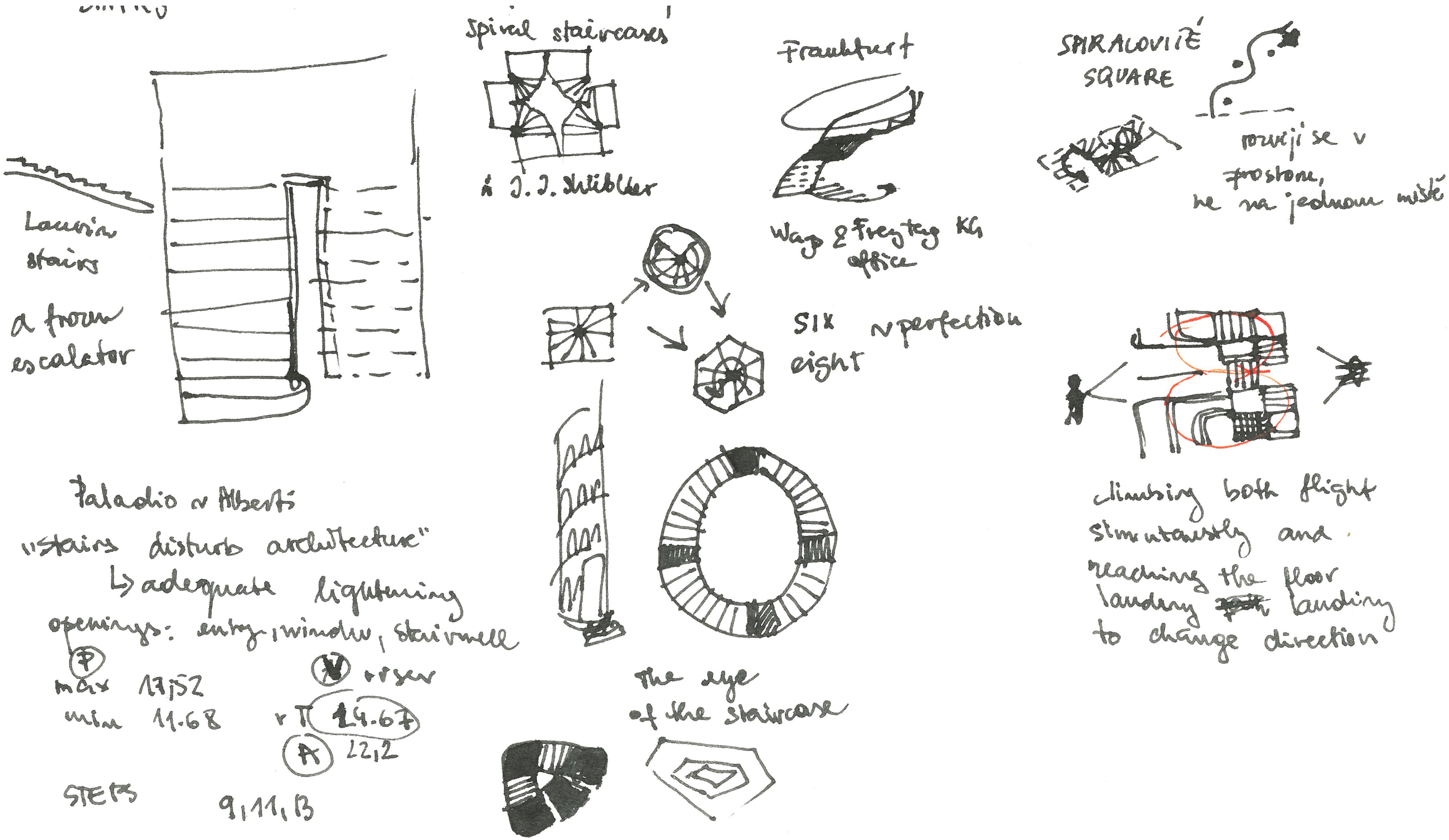
M **Mihaela Tănase**
15:26 23 mar.

they have to be somehow special, have its own theme or geometry?

DETAIL SEARCHING & FORMATION

As one of the main attributes of the concept was the staircase, I wanted to understand it more deeply, especially since stairs have long been a personal topic of interest for me. Later, I realized that the scale of a skyscraper does not really allow for designing spaces in such detailed and intimate ways, yet the exploration itself—through readings like Elements of Architecture by Rem Koolhaas and through AI conversations connecting the staircase to aspects of Chinese culture—was still very valuable.

In the end, I paid for that curiosity with time that could have gone directly into developing the final design. But honestly, there was simply too little time to do everything in the way I had imagined. Then again, that is probably a never-ending part of architecture itself.



Sketches while reading The Element of Architecture by Rem Koolhaas

SCALOLOGY

30.03.2026

There is this book The Elements of architecture from Rem Koolhaas, where a whole chapter is dedicated to stairs and scalalogy. Stairs nowadays are widely underrated. Consumerism drove us to laziness, but also gave us a lot of opportunities. In my concept, I am not rebelling against elevators, I just would like to emphasize on a better future concept for movement, a concept where people are more aware of their body and thinking, where there is less distraction and more authenticity, in a way, to be more primitive. In the chapter about escalators, China is mentioned as the country that has given it the whole new understanding. I have never been to China, so give me a dive into their thinking about the movement. From the VR video, I have noticed that they walk differently, somehow maybe faster. Give me a summary into physiology, also history of architecture and overall the importance of stairs for Chinese people.

Claude:

1. The staircase as forgotten architecture

Koolhaas's Elements of Architecture is structured as an archaeology of the obvious — it takes the elements so fundamental to building that they have become invisible and forces you to look at them again with maximum curiosity. The stair section sits at the tail end of the book, unexpectedly extended into three related circulation elements that simultaneously express the desire for contemporaneity and interest in different modes of movement: escalator, elevator, and ramp. The grouping is deliberate and quietly polemical: by placing stair, escalator, elevator, and ramp in sequence, Koolhaas is tracing the progressive displacement of the body from the act of moving through a building. The stair demands something of you. Each subsequent element asks less. The elevator asks nothing at all — you become cargo.

His framework is what he calls escalatology — a word that deliberately echoes eschatology, the theology of last things. The escalator isn't just a convenience; it marks something terminal about our relationship with movement, with effort, with the awareness of height and transition. This is the provocative undercurrent of the chapter: that the mechanisation of circulation isn't merely technological, it is a form of amnesia.

2. China and the escalator: a double paradox

The most remarkable thing Koolhaas identifies about China in relation to escalators is that it is simultaneously the culture with the deepest historical reverence for the act of climbing — thousands of years of sacred stair-pilgrimage — and the country that has become the world's primary theatre for escalator maximalism.

China is the city of records in this domain. Chongqing has become a sort of laboratory: the world's deepest subway station, a railway line suspended between two residential buildings, and a succession of record-breaking escalator projects. The latest, the Wushan Goddess Escalator, opened in February 2026 — 905 metres long, climbing 242 metres, the equivalent of an 80-storey building. It turned a tiring one-hour mountain climb into a 20-minute ride.

The language used to describe it is telling: the one-hour mountain climb was erased. That climb, in another era, would have been an act of meaning. Now it is an inconvenience that engineers competed to eliminate.

The Wushan Goddess Escalator is part of a genealogy of architectures that transform the slope into habitable space, reflecting a recurring strategy in Chinese cities built on multiple levels: not levelling the territory, but equipping it with vertical mobility devices that reformulate its perception and redefine its layout. This is the intellectual frame China offers escalator culture: not laziness, but topographic pragmatism. The mountain doesn't disappear — you are still in it, still visible within its landscape — but the exertion is absorbed by the machine. It is a fascinating compromise between surrender and engagement.

3. The ancient logic: stairs as cosmology

To understand the paradox, you need to go back much further. In Chinese civilisation, the staircase was never merely a means of getting from one floor to another. It was a cosmological instrument.

Mount Taishan's landscape is a unique artistic achievement: eleven gates, fourteen archways, fourteen kiosks and four pavilions scattered along the flight of 6,660 steps that rise between heaven and earth — not just simple architectural achievements, but the final touches by human hands to the elements of a splendid natural site. This phrasing from UNESCO captures something essential: the steps of Taishan are not infrastructure, they are composition. The mountain was already there; the steps completed it. They made the ascent legible, ritualised, human.

From as early as 219 BCE, Emperor Qin Shi Huang held a summit ceremony here to inform the gods that he was the first ruler to unify China. Confucius reached the top and declared: "Climb Taishan and the whole world looks small." The mountain is the easternmost of the Five Sacred Mountains; the east was the most sacred direction because the sun and moon rise there, representing the cycle of natural life — birth, death, renewal.

The Confucian declaration is worth dwelling on. It's not the altitude that makes the world look small — it's the act of climbing to arrive there. The effort is the epistemology. You understand the world differently because you walked to see it, because your body was engaged, because the climb cost you something. This is as close as Chinese philosophy comes to what you are articulating in your concept: that the body in motion is a thinking body, and that difficulty of access is not a problem to be engineered away but a condition of meaningful arrival.

At Huashan — the "Number One Steepest Mountain Under Heaven" — an ancient saying has been passed down through generations: "If you do not visit Huashan, you are not a true hero, and if you do not visit Huayue, your life is in vain." The steps here are nearly vertical in places, chains bolted into the rock as the only safety measure. Despite the dangers, people have been climbing to the North Peak for over 2,000 years — the route considers itself a spiritual test, with Taoist shrines and hermits at the summit. The danger is not incidental. It is the point. The steeper the approach, the more sacred the destination. There is a direct proportionality in Chinese mountain architecture between the inaccessibility of a place and its spiritual value.

This is the inverse of the escalator's logic.

4. Imperial architecture and the politics of elevation

The staircase in Chinese imperial architecture was also a mechanism of power, far more explicitly than in European traditions. The Forbidden City in Beijing operates entirely through graduated elevation. Each successive courtyard sits higher than the last. The emperor's throne hall stands on a triple-layered marble terrace — sumeru platforms in Buddhist cosmological geometry — so that every audience required the courtier to ascend toward the sovereign. The act of approaching power was architecturally inseparable from the act of climbing.

This is jiē (階) in Chinese — a word that means both step and rank, stair and social hierarchy. The language doesn't distinguish between them because historically the architecture didn't either. Your position in the social order determined how high you were permitted to ascend, and how many steps you could take on the central axis as opposed to the flanking approaches. The staircase was a semiotic system, encoding permission, status, proximity to heaven — or to the Son of Heaven, which in the imperial worldview amounted to the same thing.

The Great Wall, too, is a staircase of sorts — not a horizontal wall but an undulating stepped path across mountains, with uneven stone risers that force a particular attentiveness of foot placement. You cannot walk the Great Wall on autopilot. The variation in step height — some risers 10 centimetres, some 40 — requires constant recalibration between body and surface, between intention and terrain. Every few minutes the wall demands your full presence.

5. Physiology and the Chinese gait

You noticed something real in those VR videos. Shorter steps allow higher step frequency (cadence) while keeping overall speed steady; this conserves energy in stop-and-go urban walking and improves balance in crowds. In busy settings, shorter strides reduce the need to brake or swerve, making movement more predictable.

Chinese urban walking is characterised by what researchers describe as a higher cadence — more steps per minute, each step shorter — compared to North American or Northern European norms, which favour longer, lower-frequency strides. This is partly biomechanical (average shorter leg length), partly architectural (denser, more crowded environments where long strides are impractical), and partly cultural (more collaborative navigation of shared space, less assertion of personal territorial speed).

There is also the specific legacy of Chinese footwear and floor surfaces. Traditional Chinese interior architecture used smooth stone, tile, or polished wood — surfaces that reward a careful, grounded step rather than the heel-striking gait that Western shoes and pavements encourage. Tai chi, the most widespread daily movement practice in China, is fundamentally a stair-body training system in disguise: it cultivates weight transfer from foot to foot, single-leg balance, and precise awareness of where the body's centre of gravity sits at each moment of transition. These are exactly the skills the staircase demands of its user.

A Harvard dissertation at the Graduate School of Design specifically asked: what are the characteristics of the culture of walking in China, and how does culture influence walking behaviour? Walking there has a different social valence than in the West — it is simultaneously a health practice, a social act, a philosophical expression, and a form of resistance to vehicular urbanism.

The wǎn bù — evening walk — is a near-universal Chinese daily ritual. After dinner, families and neighbours walk in parks, along rivers, around residential compounds. It is not exercise in the Western sense of a discrete, purposeful activity; it is integration of movement into the texture of daily life, without destination or metric. The goal is simply to be in motion, together, without urgency. This is perhaps the aspect of Chinese movement culture most relevant to your concept: the idea that circulation through a building or a city doesn't need a transactional justification — it can be its own purpose.

6. The broken middle: where China finds itself now

What makes China so instructive for your concept is that it is living through both ends of the spectrum simultaneously. In the same decade that Chongqing built the world's longest outdoor escalator to eliminate a mountain climb, tens of millions of Chinese people were posting videos of themselves deliberately climbing mountains in the dark to watch the sunrise — Taishan in particular sees at least six million visitors a year, the majority of whom make at least part of the ascent on foot, at night, to reach the summit for dawn.

This is not contradiction — it's the same underlying logic expressed in two different modes. Chinese culture does not have a Victorian Protestant relationship with difficulty, where effort is morally virtuous in itself. The question is always: what does the exertion produce? On the sacred mountain, the climb produces a state of mind, a view, a proximity to something beyond the everyday. In the mountain city, the climb produced only sweating on the way to the hospital. The escalator was the rational answer to the second situation.

Your concept proposes a third situation — the vertical city — in which the climb produces encounter, community, deceleration, consciousness of the body, and therefore has its own intrinsic value independent of reaching a destination. This aligns with the Chinese mountain tradition far more than it aligns with the Western fitness-culture approach. In the Chinese framework, the stair isn't a gym — it is a dao, a path that shapes the one who walks it. The Chinese character for Tao (道) literally shows a person walking through an intersection: a walking being in the midst of the world, navigating its structure. The staircase in your building is exactly this — not a route, but a dao.

7. What you are really proposing

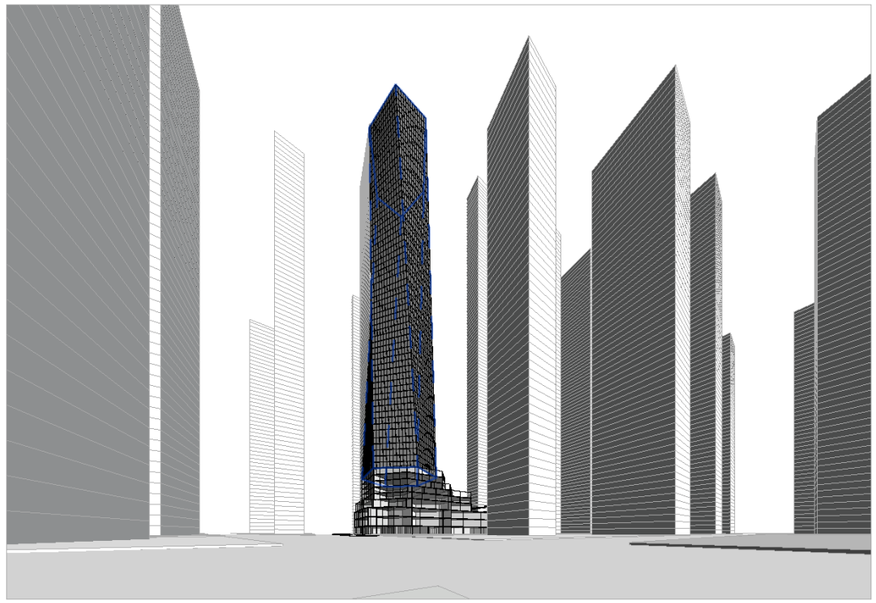
Koolhaas's escalatology frames the escalator as the end of something: the final mechanisation of the body, the completion of architecture's long project of making movement frictionless. What you are proposing is a deliberate act of reversal — not reactionary, not neo-primitivist, but a recognition that the friction the staircase generates is productive friction. It produces awareness, encounter, physical dignity, and — as China's mountain tradition has known for three thousand years — a particular quality of thought that only arrives when the body is working and the destination is earned.

The Shenzhen high-rise, in this reading, is a vertical Taishan. The sky lobbies are the named gates of heaven — Nan Tian Men, South Gate to Heaven — where the pilgrim rests, takes tea, receives a view. The social stair is the ancient stone path, worn smooth by ten thousand feet before yours. And the elevator, small in number, honoured for accessibility and emergency, is the cable car at the mid-station: not a betrayal of the concept, just a recognition that not every body can make the climb every time.

The difference from consumerism's laziness is precisely what you named: intention. The escalator eliminates intention. Your staircase restores it.

FACADE /FORM SEARCHING

15.04.2026



Source image from Revit, initial design

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CONCLUSION

Even tools that are meant to accelerate the design process still require time to truly master. I am glad I took the chance to explore AI, but there was never enough time to really go deeper into its possibilities.

One of the main outcomes of this semester was the speed at which I was generating ideas and developing them further. Being encouraged to use AI fed both my curiosity and my frustration. It made me realize how fast we are expected to live, work, and constantly adapt. I honestly do not know if we are capable of fully keeping up with all of it while still remaining simply human.

The opportunities are vast and evolving incredibly quickly. I definitely exceeded my own expectations in learning how to use AI, and I am inspired to continue exploring it further—but at a slower pace. Not for the sake of trying every new tool, but for the sake of learning it gradually, thoughtfully, and humanly.