

"The House with Blood-Stained Walls"

Pokleku Holocaust

House
Museum

[Culture/Herritage - Preservation Site]

Village of Poklek, Glllogoc; Kosova



“Designed to present and preserve the history, memories of the events of April 17th, documenting the impact of the massacre and exploring how the truth of the place can affect the emotions of visitors.”



Traces of blood absorbed in the subfloor

On April 17, 1999, during the final and most brutal phase of the Kosovo War, the small village of Poklek witnessed a tragedy of staggering scale. Fifty-three civilians—were forcibly gathered into a private home. Among them were women, elderly family members, and children, the youngest only a few months old. The atrocity took place not only in the main residential house but also in an adjacent old house and the yard nearby.

In a single act of systematic violence, they were executed at close range inside the house. After the executions, the structure was set on fire in an attempt to destroy both the evidence and the lives within it. Only a few individuals survived, escaping either moments before the massacre or by hiding during the attack. Their testimonies later played a critical role in reconstructing the truth of what occurred.



A survivor recalls—each name, each face

For years, the house stood in silence—its burned walls and bullet-ridden structure left exposed to time and weather, a raw and haunting reminder of the atrocity. It remained not just a ruin, but a witness—carrying the physical and emotional weight of the crime. It was neither restored nor protected, but it was never forgotten. In the absence of formal intervention, the community’s collective memory persisted, rooted in the space itself.



Traces of fire and flight ©project team



Burnt grey surfaces ©project team



Traces of fire etched in crumbling walls ©project team



Broken sanitary fixtures—still in place ©project team



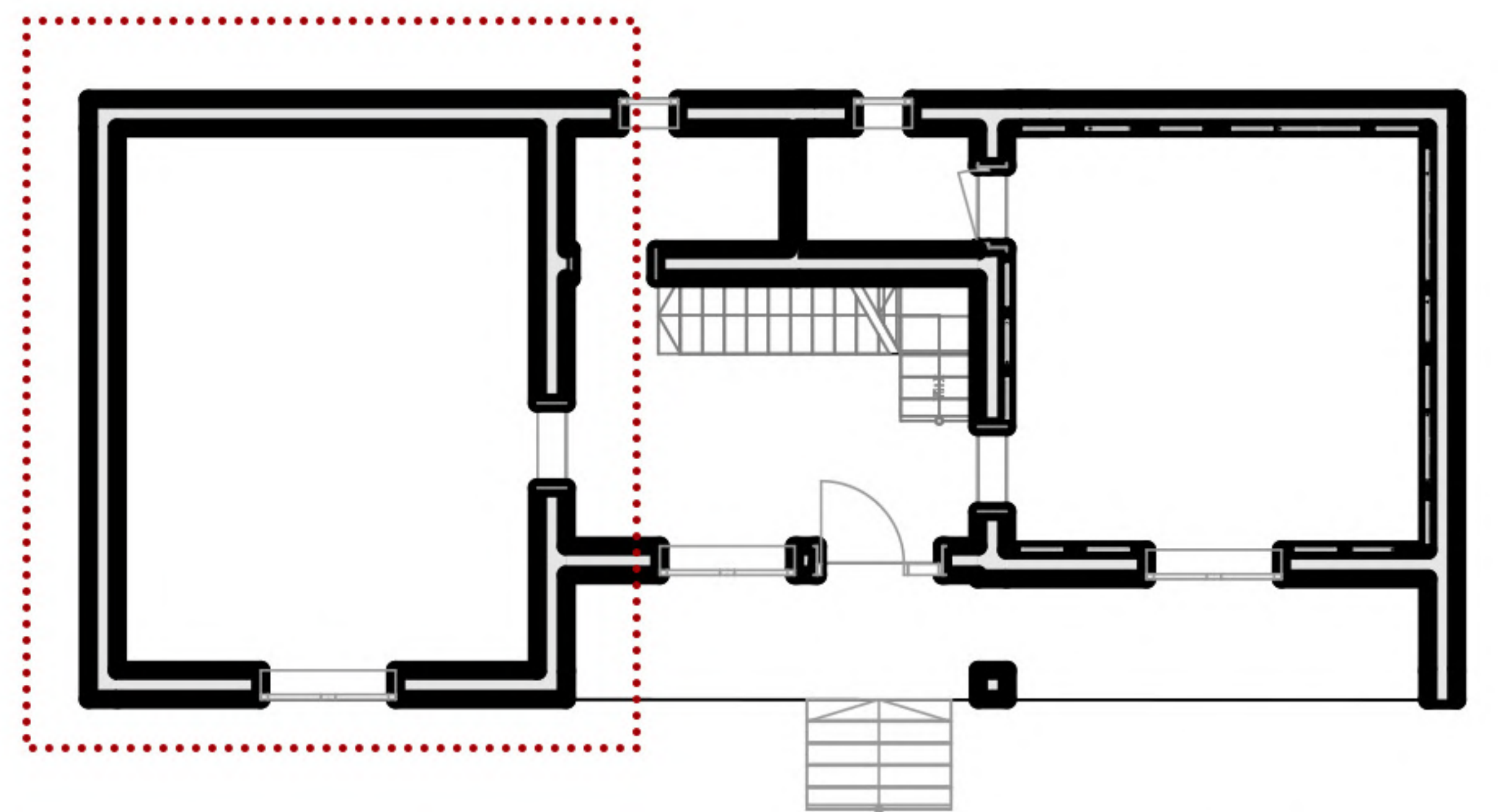
Poklek Village site view ©googleearth

The house stands within the rural fabric of Poklek, a modest village surrounded by agricultural fields, domestic enclosures, and post-war self-built housing. Despite its ordinary setting, the site carries an extraordinary weight. It is not isolated, monumental, or removed—it remains embedded in the everyday, in direct proximity to the community that still bears the memory of the event. This spatial immediacy intensifies its resonance: the massacre did not occur on a battlefield, but within a civilian home, in a residential street, during daily life.

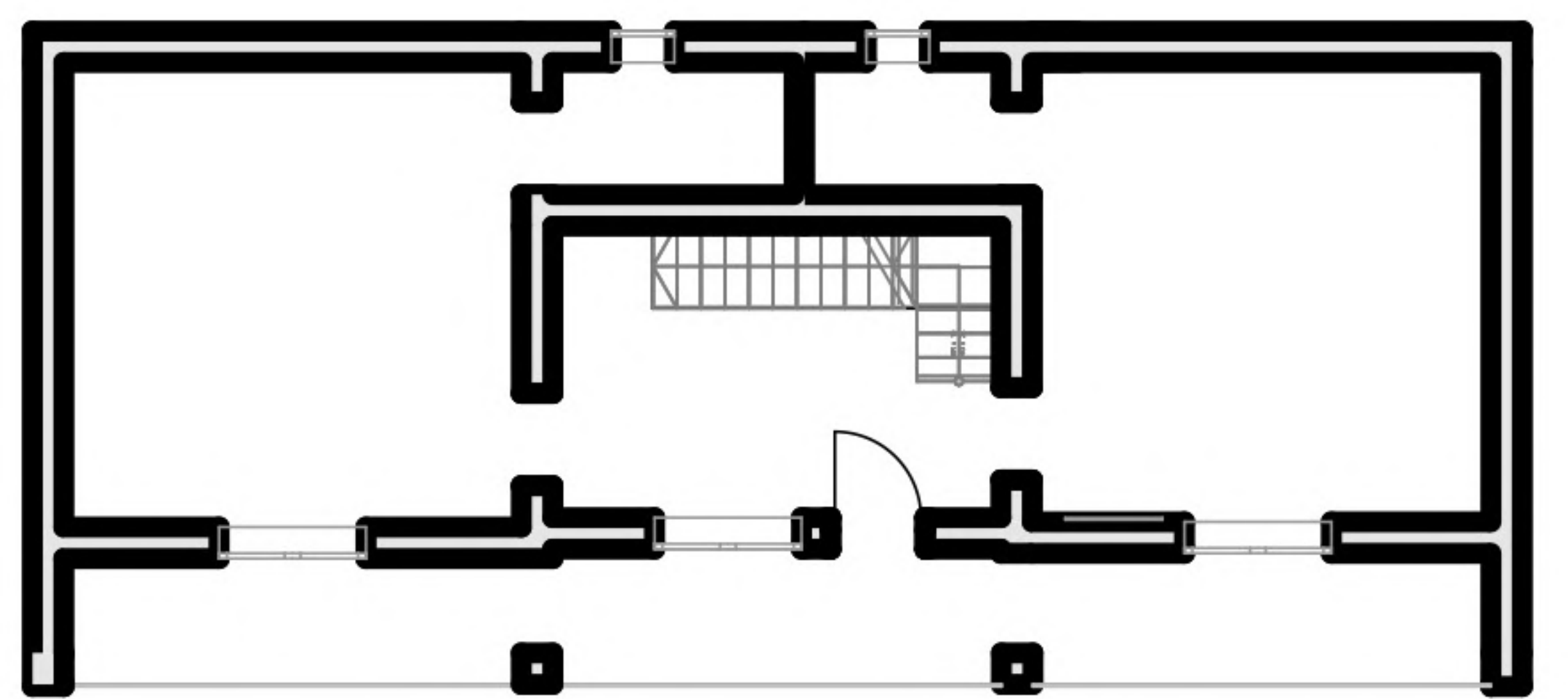
The surrounding village continues to live and rebuild, while this single home remains suspended in time, a spatial reminder of what occurred.

Massacre Room

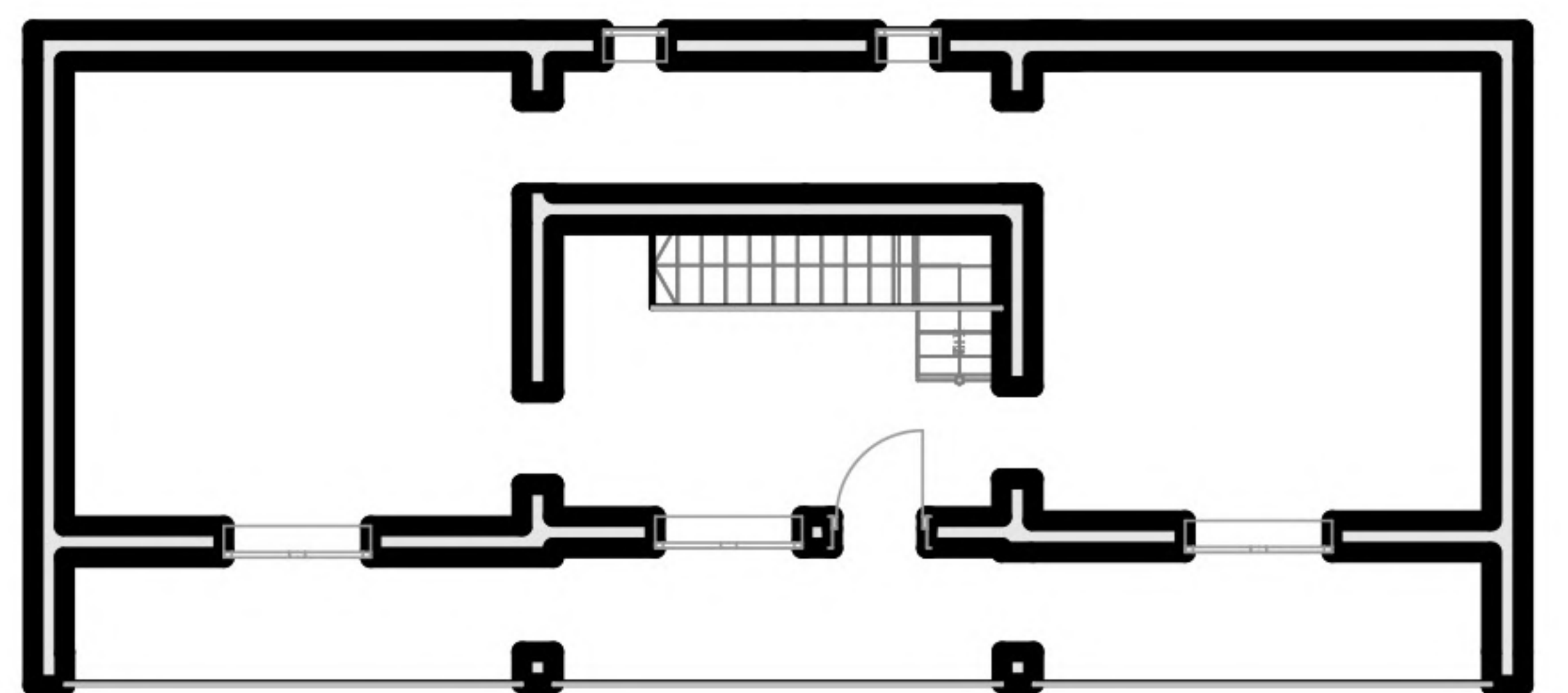
Once the heart of the home where the family gathered in warmth and unity, the main living room now lies in silent ruin—walls blackened and scarred by flames, ashes scattered across the cold floor. The absence of belongings speaks volumes, an empty shell echoing the lives brutally torn apart.



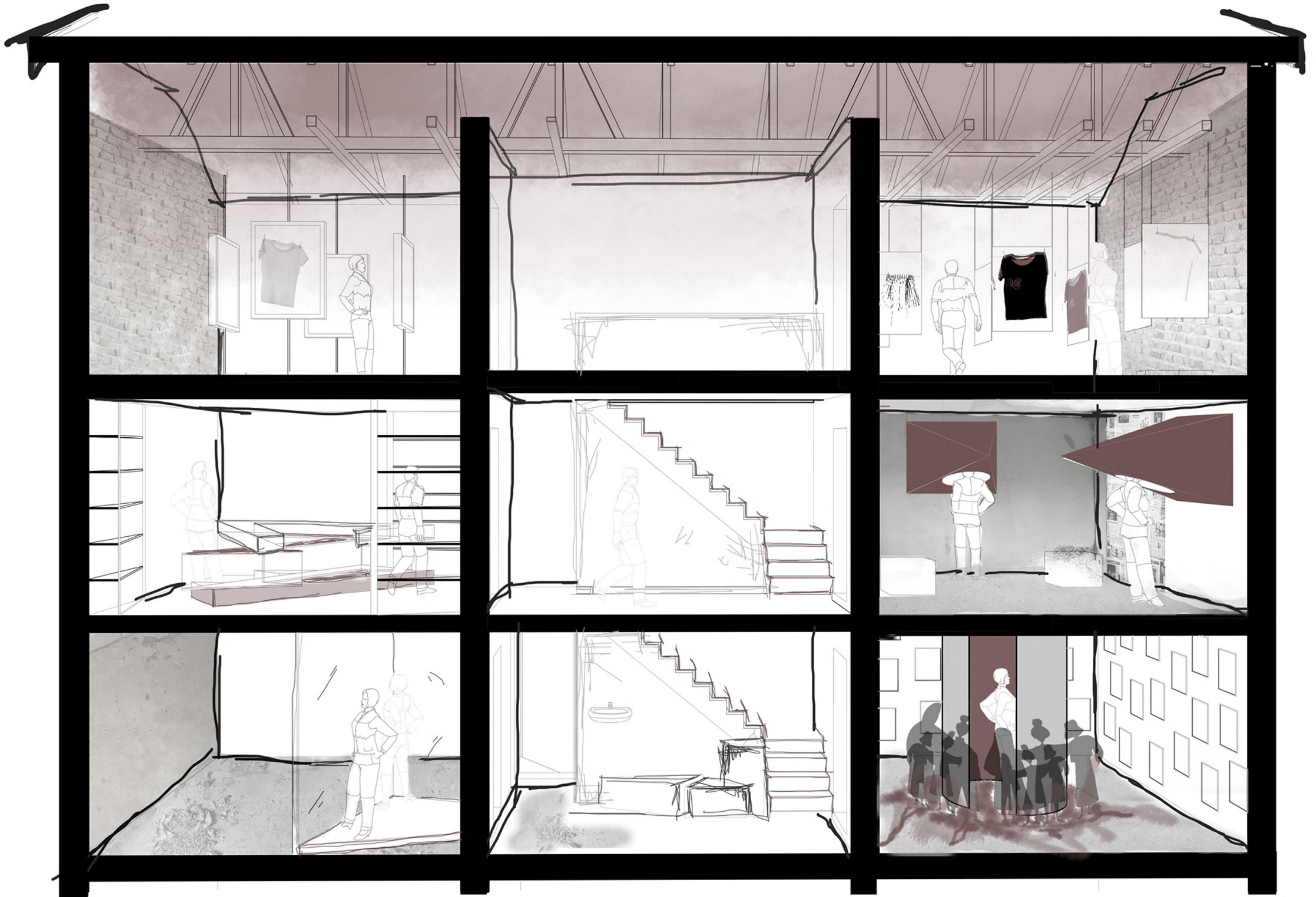
Ground floor 1:200



First floor 1:200



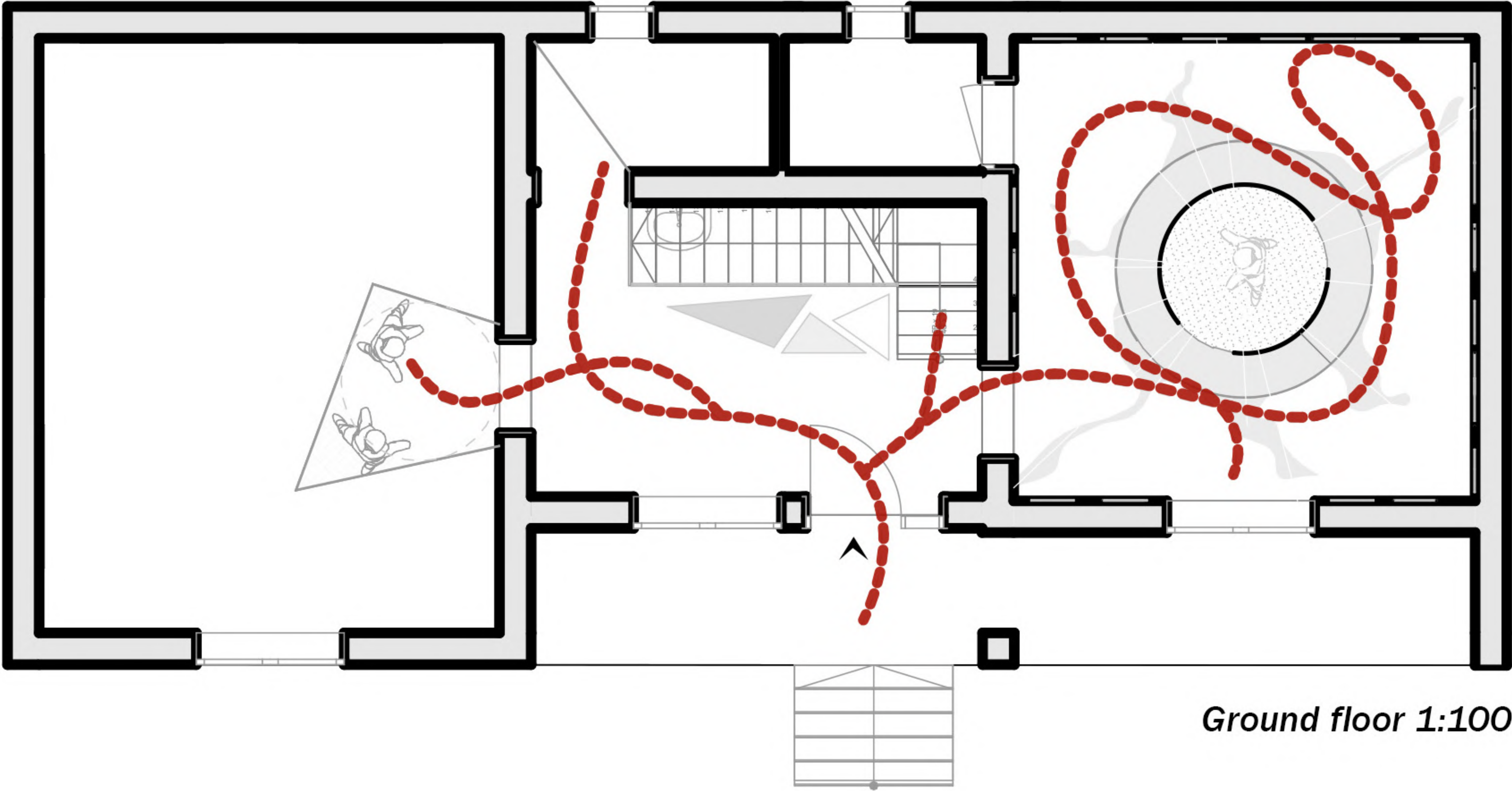
Second floor 1:200



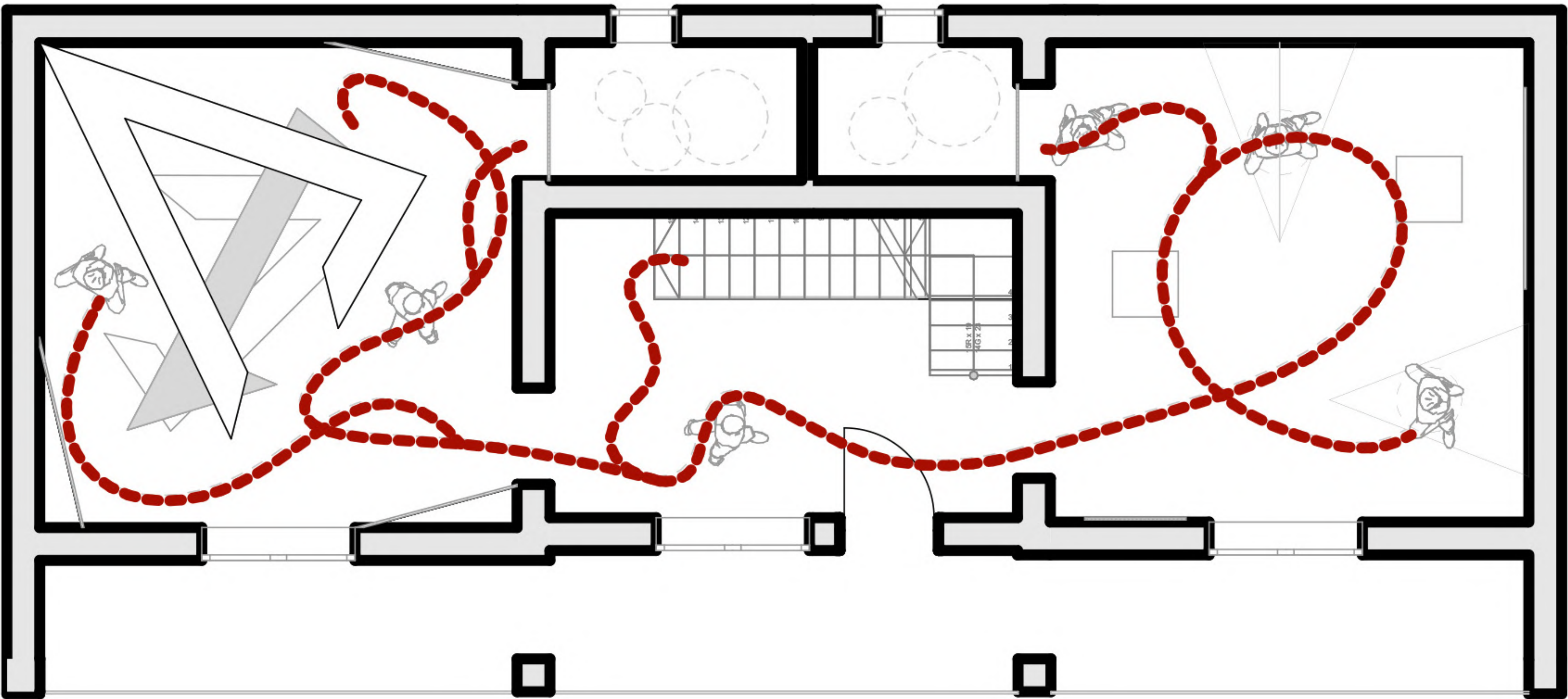
The guiding principle of the intervention is the preservation of authenticity. The project embraces the ethics of architectural non-intervention—avoiding reconstruction, aesthetic enhancement, or any formal reinterpretation. Instead, the building is stabilized in its damaged state, allowing the materiality of trauma to remain legible. Architectural elements such as controlled circulation, atmospheric lighting, and subtle narrative cues are employed to create a space of experiential and emotional intensity.

The house does not tell the story; it is the story.

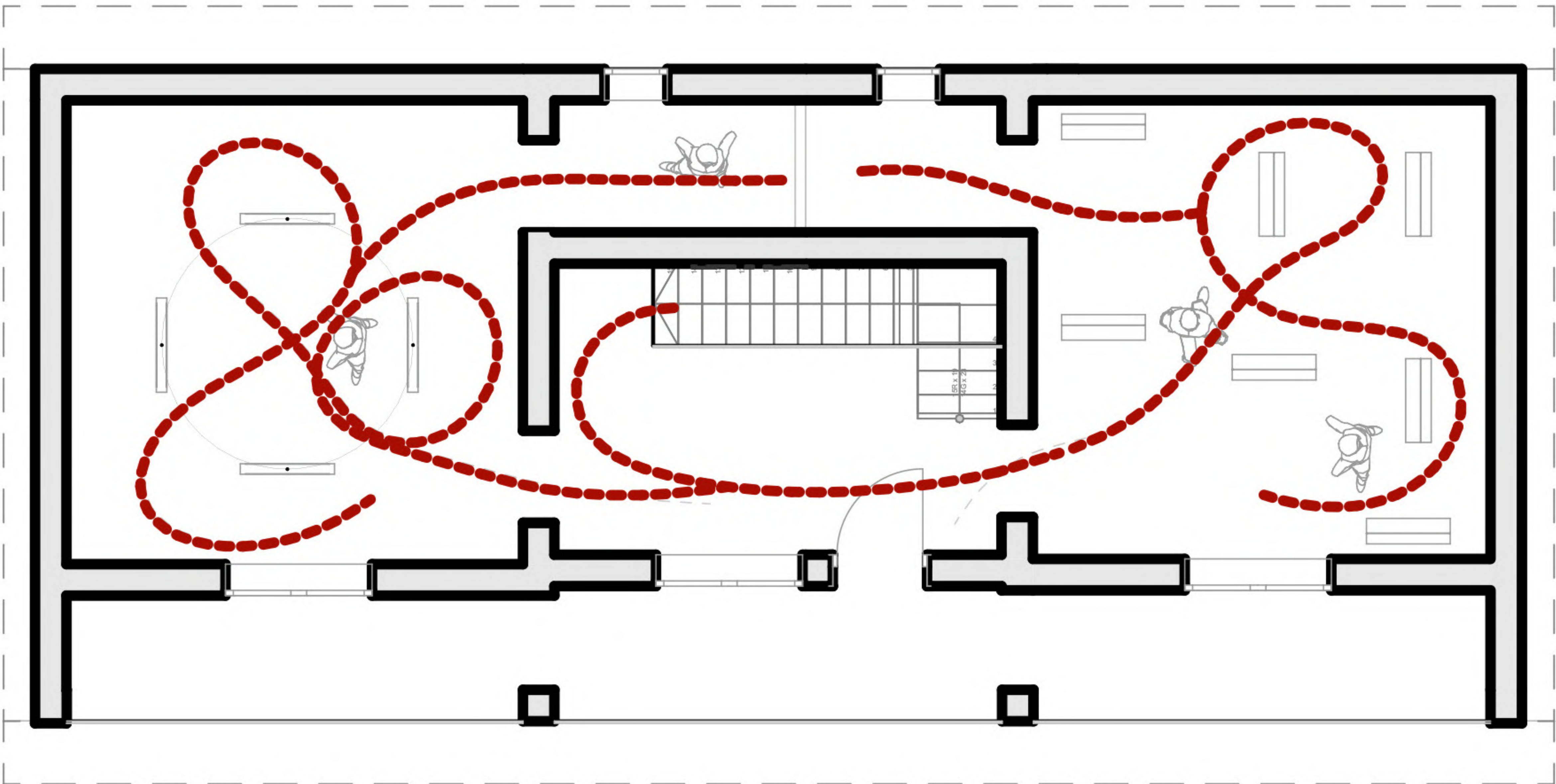
Circulation through the rooms of the house is irregular and interrupted. Although there is a central corridor, movement does not follow a straight or orderly flow. Visitors move from room to room in an uneven manner, encountering damaged doorways and uneven spaces. This irregular path reflects the internal damage and destruction of the building, creating a disrupted and often halted movement experience that mirrors the difficult reality of the events that took place there.



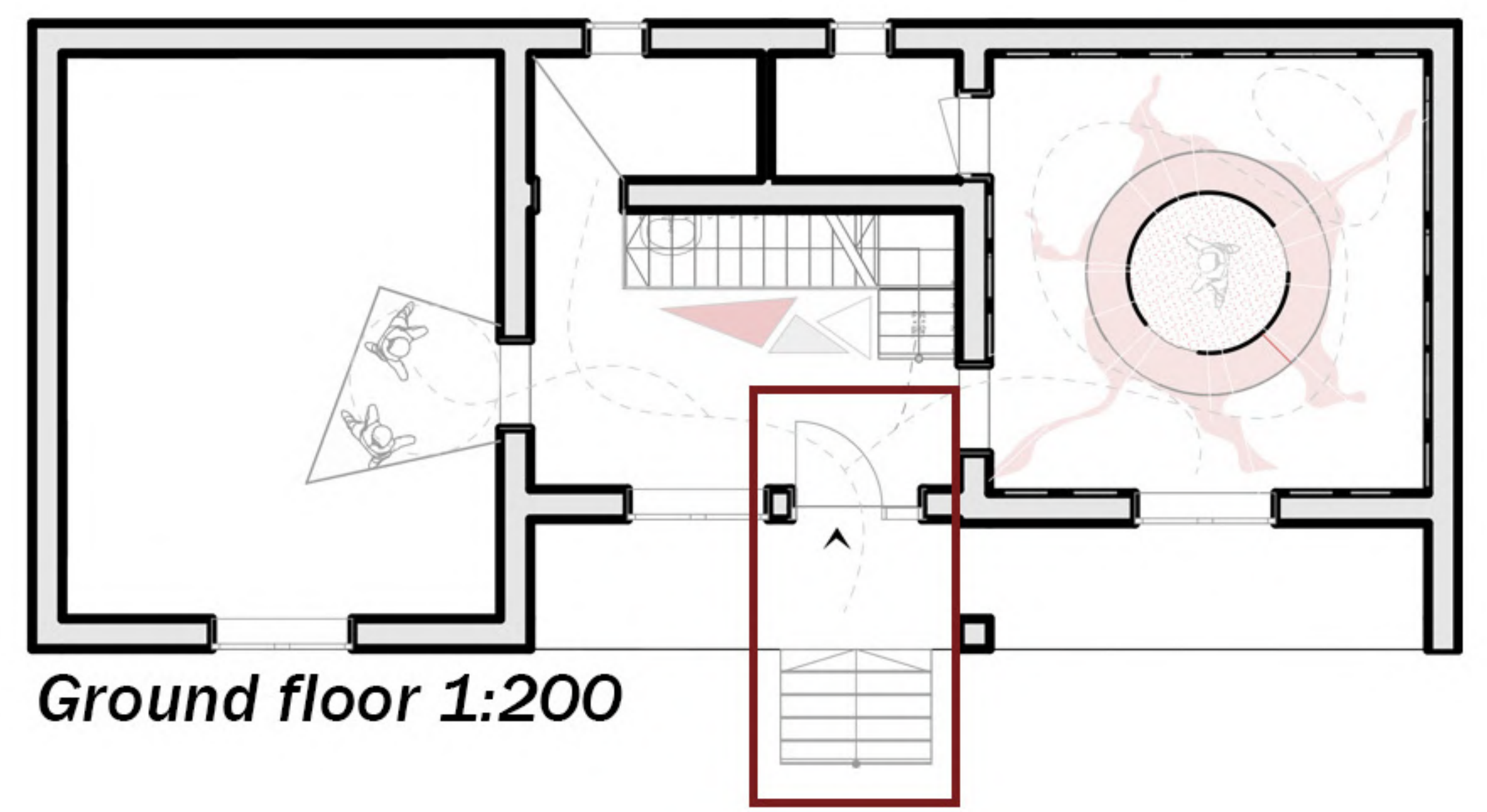
Ground floor 1:100



First floor 1:100



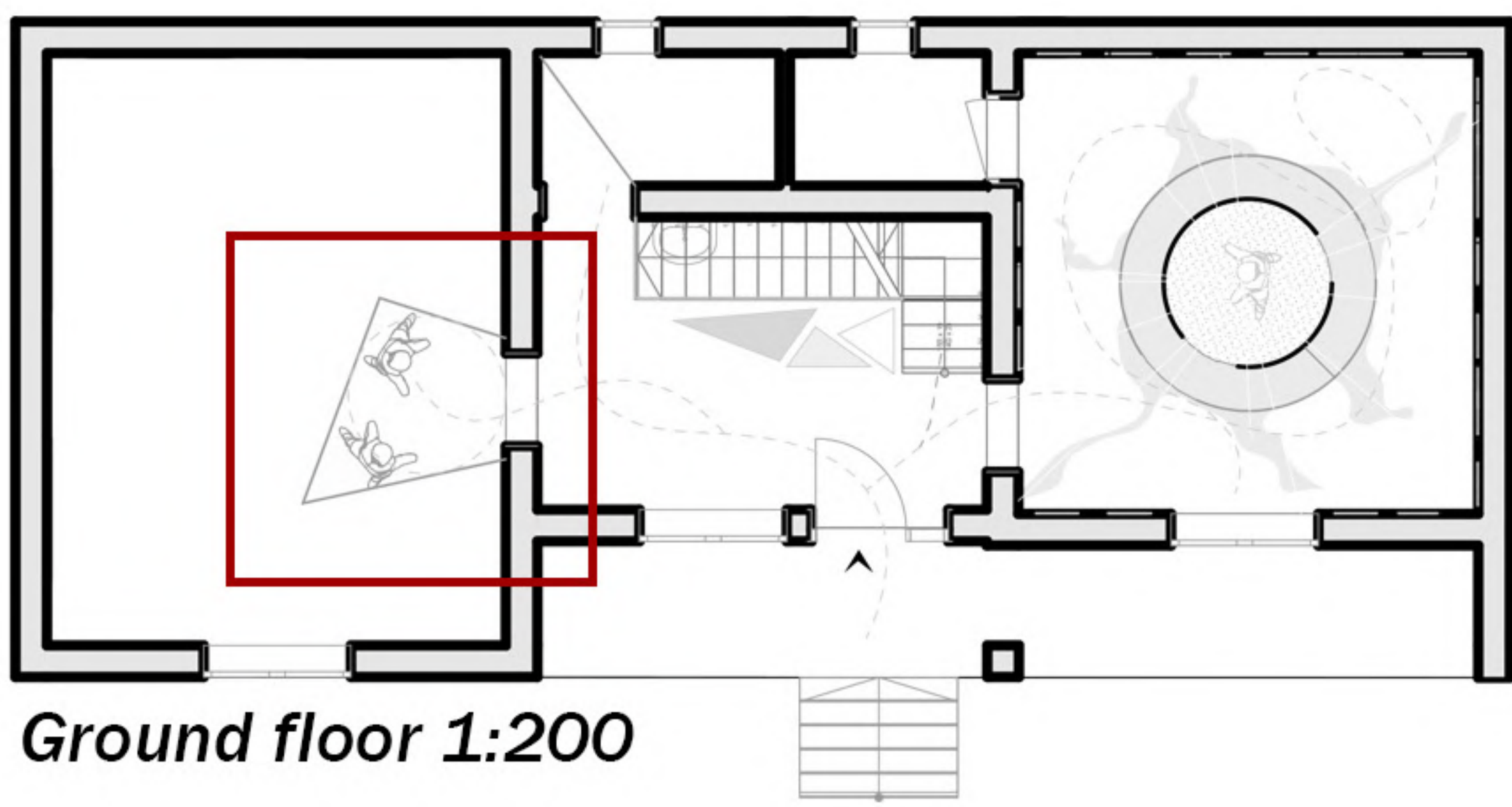
Second floor 1:100



The entrance

features corten steel steps with rusted surfaces. Red-painted footprints on the metal evoke the bloodshed of the massacre, guiding visitors toward the house museum.





Ground floor 1:200

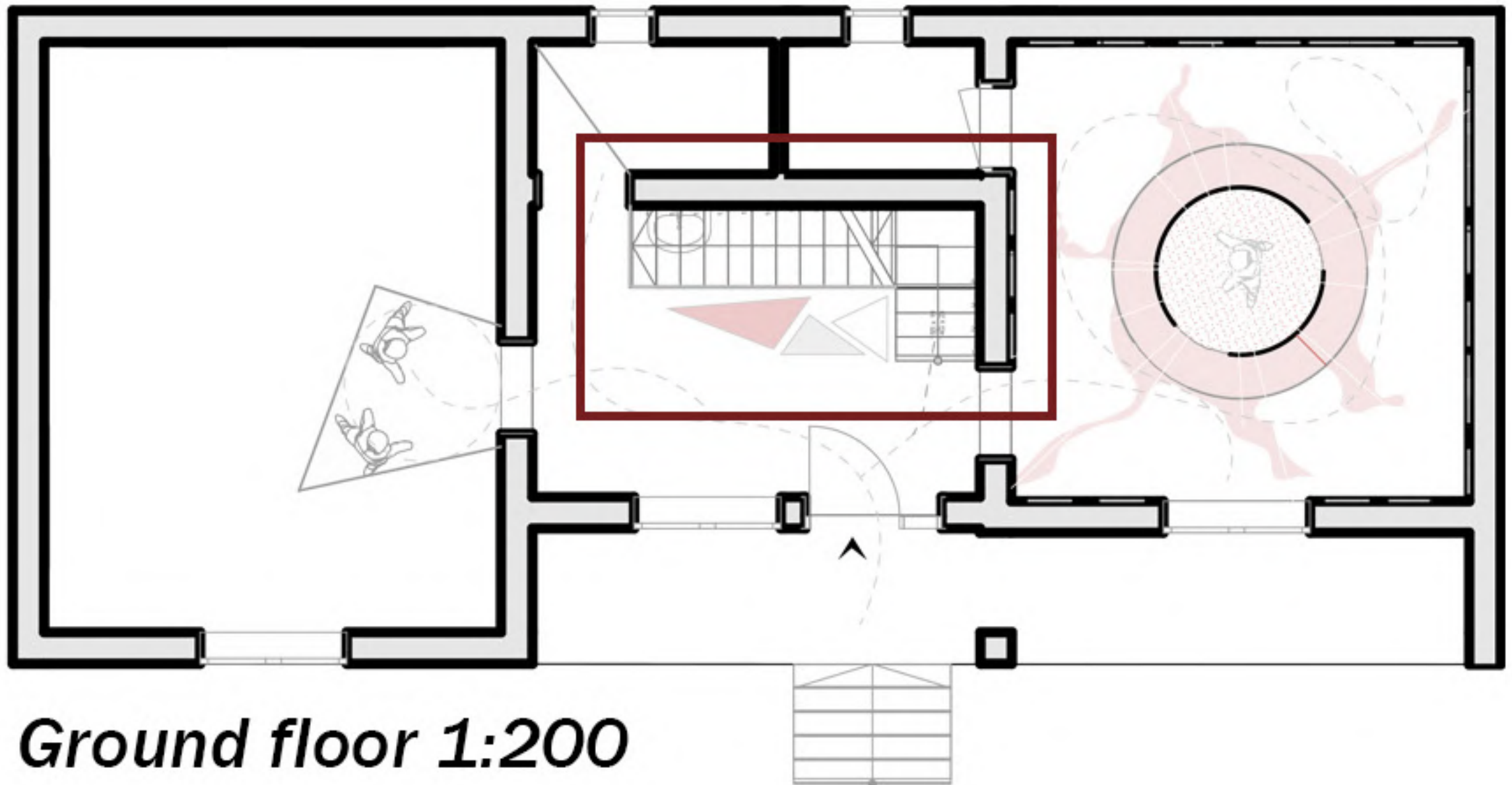


untouched.

No restorative interventions have been made in the massacre room, preserving the original condition of the walls and floor. The only addition is a surrounding glass barrier, allowing visitors to witness the space respectfully without altering its authenticity.



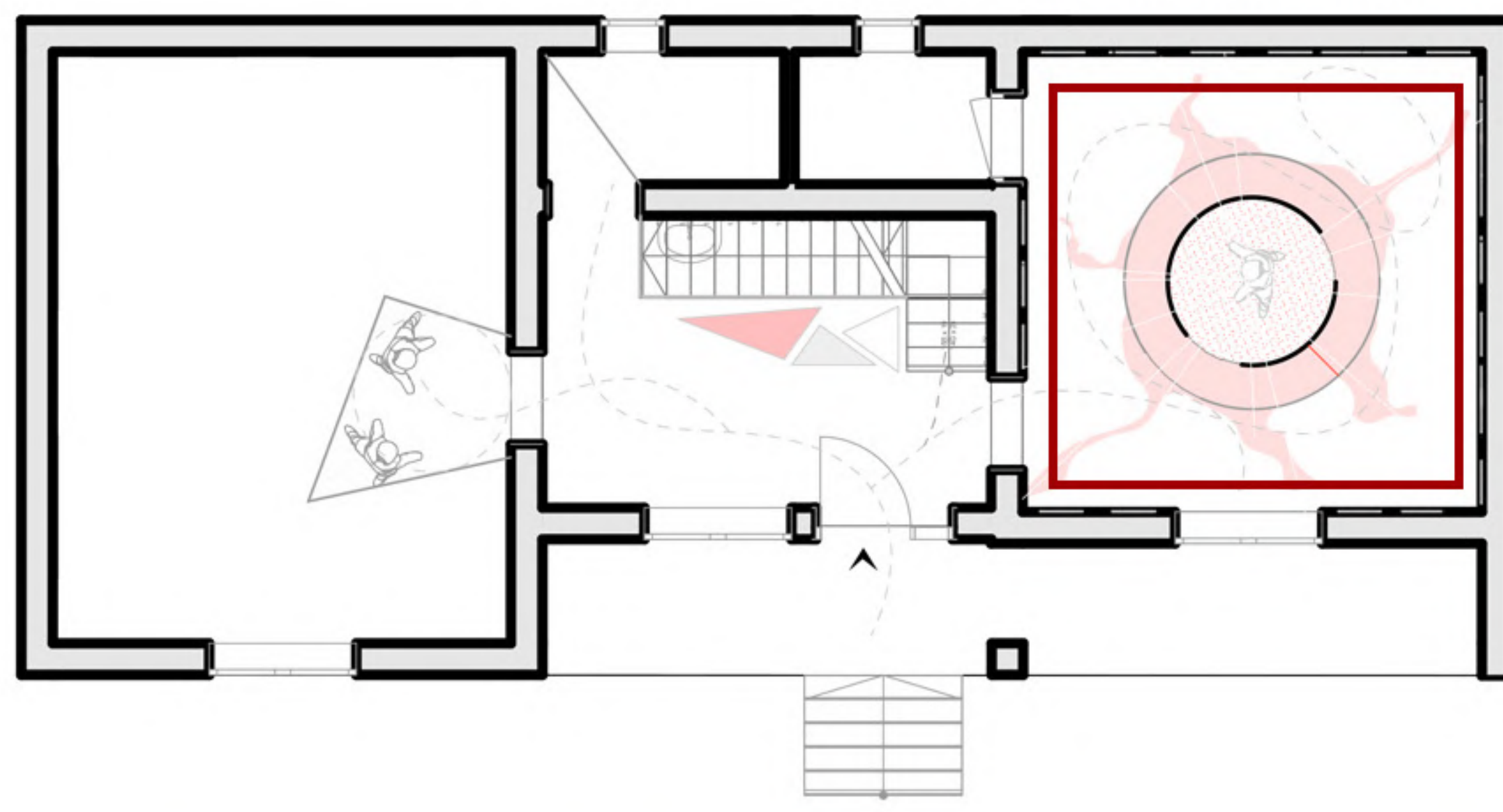
perserved space under the staircasae



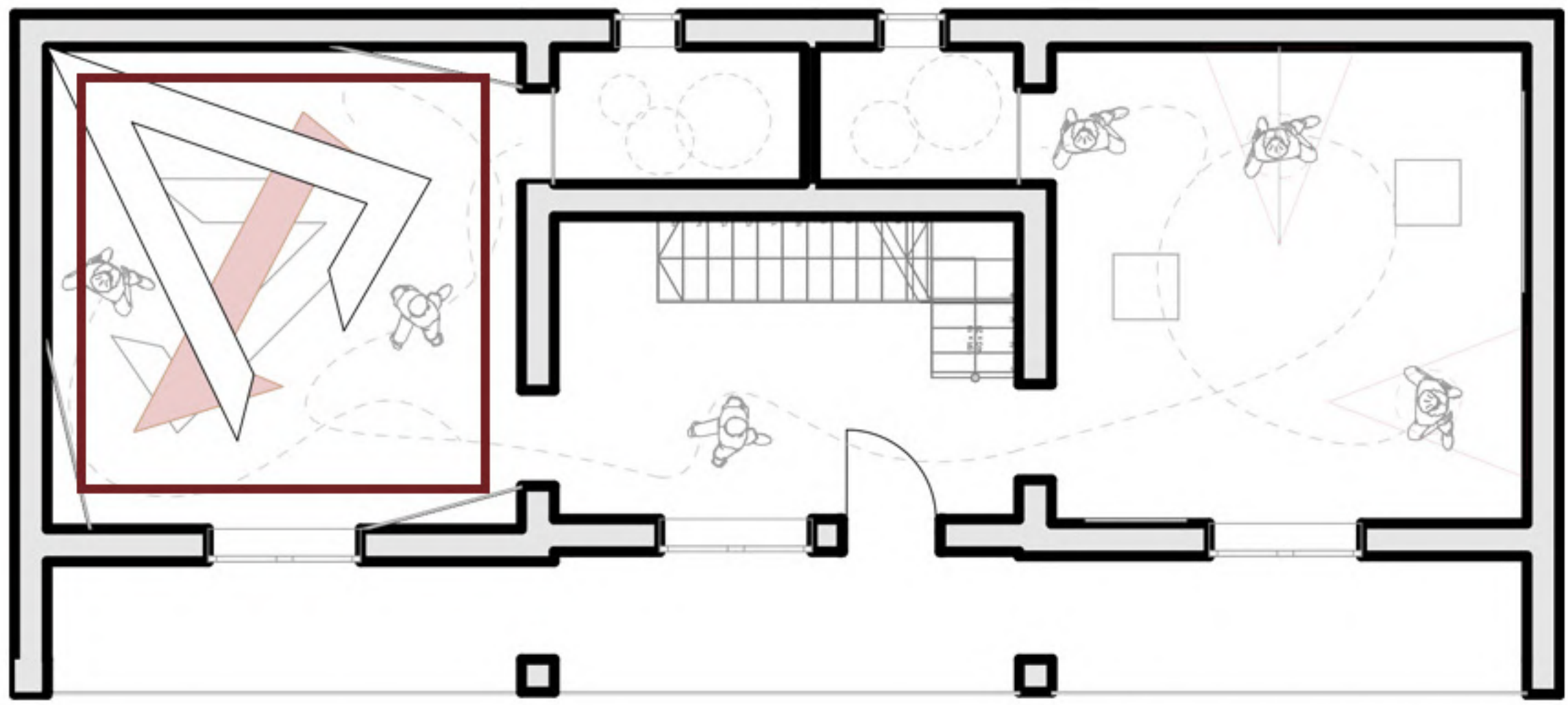


The corten steel **staircase** continues through the corridor, matching the materiality of the entrance. Metal mesh cladding protects the original walls and supports archival photographs. Most striking are the metal silhouettes integrated along the route—abstract figures representing family members who once moved through this corridor to discreetly alert others of the approaching enemy. These sculptural elements animate the space with narrative presence and spatial memory.

Ground floor 1:200



Red epoxy spreads across the concrete floor, evoking the presence of blood and tragedy. Mirrors along the walls deepen the space and reflect the silhouettes, creating a haunting, immersive atmosphere. The raw materials – steel, concrete, and resin – convey a powerful narrative of absence, memory and collective trauma.

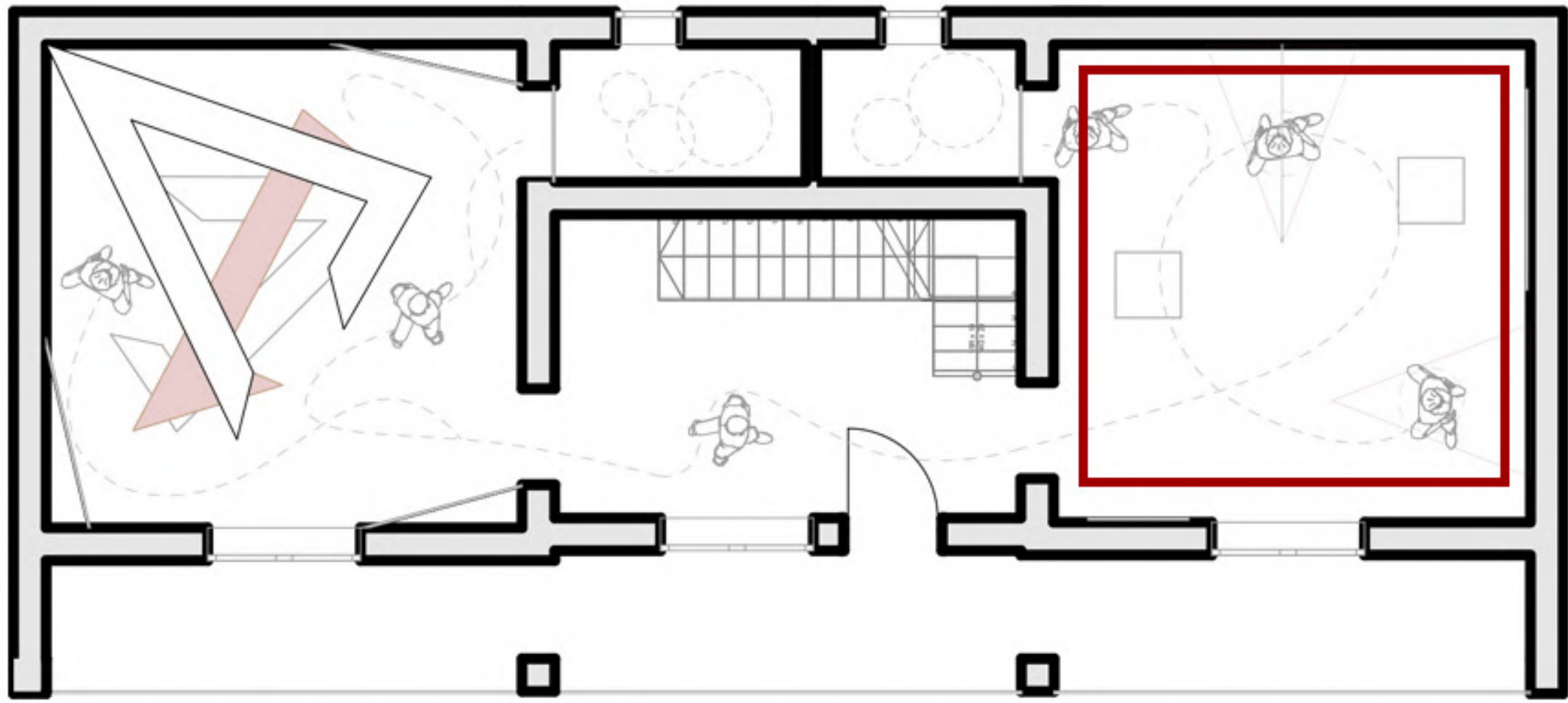


First floor 1:200

Exhibiting of the reamining traces



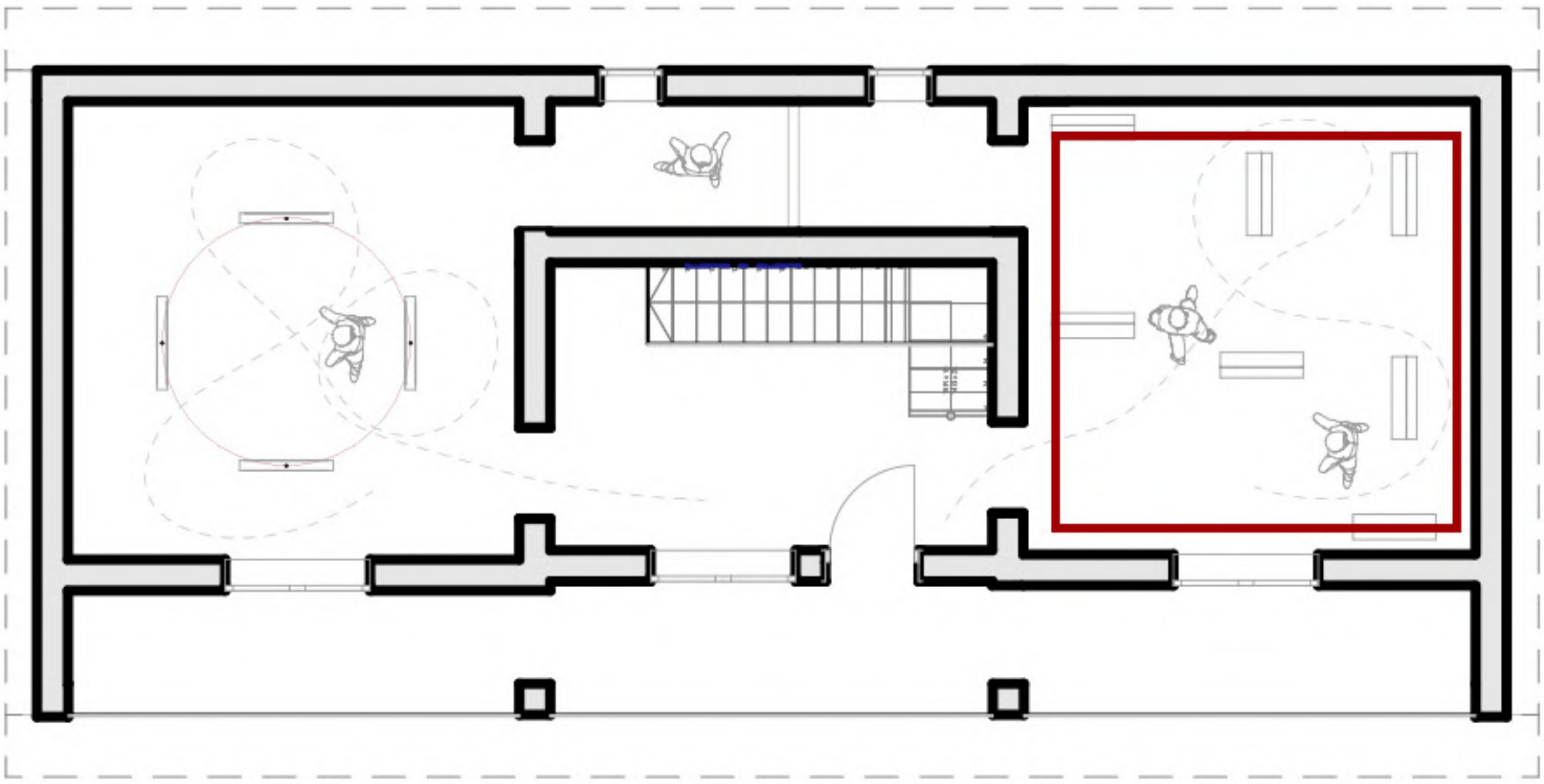
First floor 1:200



Using the booths as a means of storytelling tool by offering visitors an experience of the effects of the massacre.



Second floor 1:200



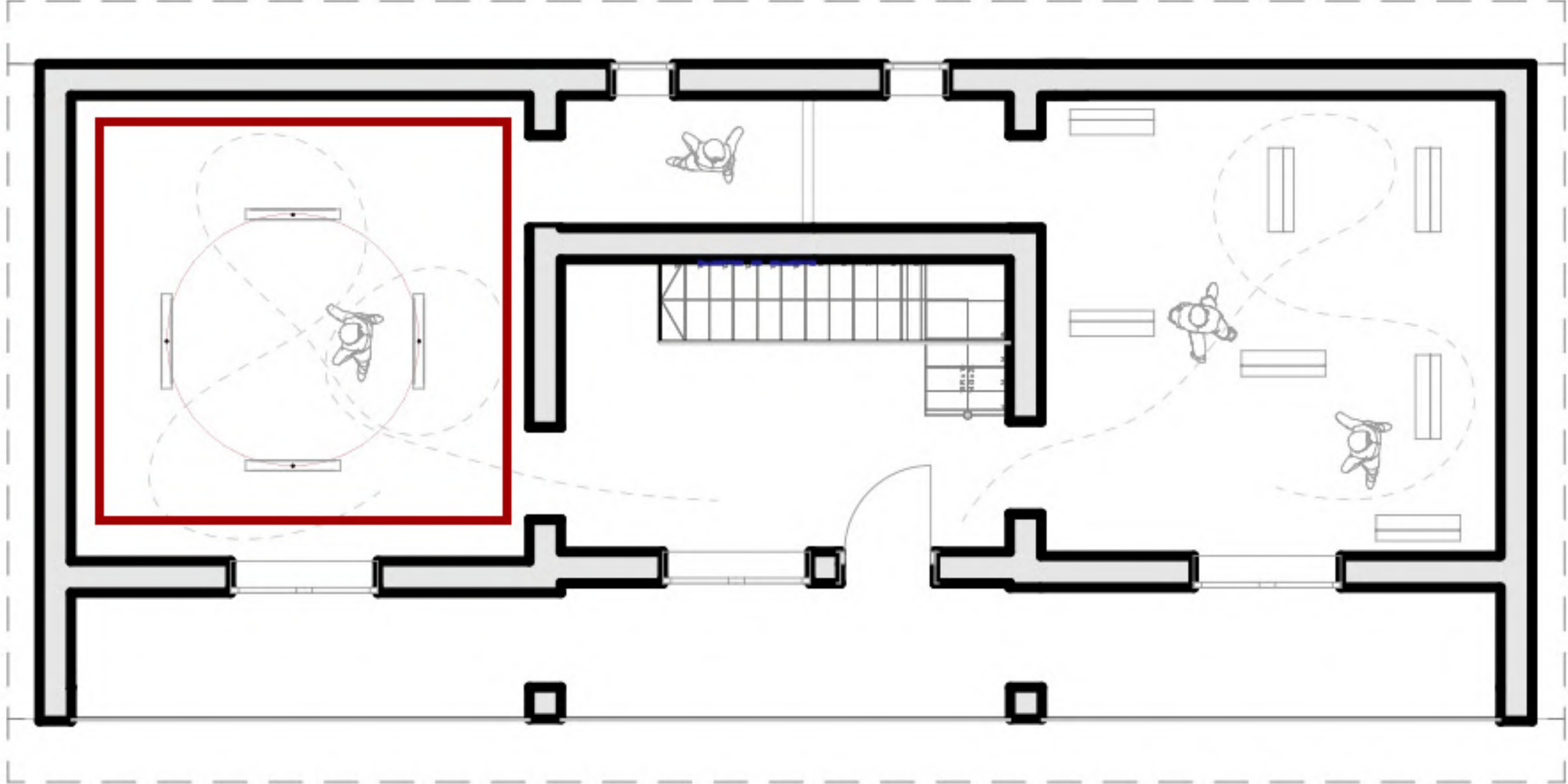
Exposure of the victims' clothes (hanging in frames)



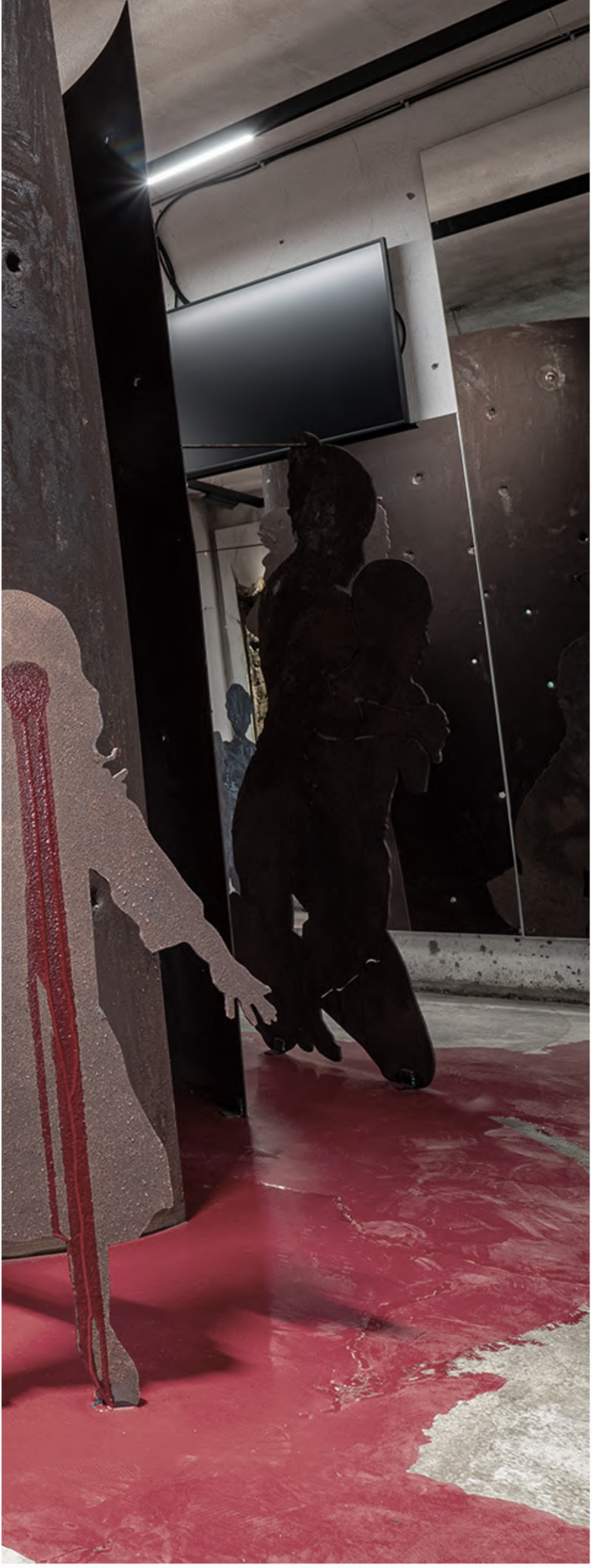
A wall lined with **portraits** of the victims, offering a quiet space for remembrance and reflection.



Second floor 1:200



Bare/untouched walls





Village of Poklek, Glogoc; Kosova