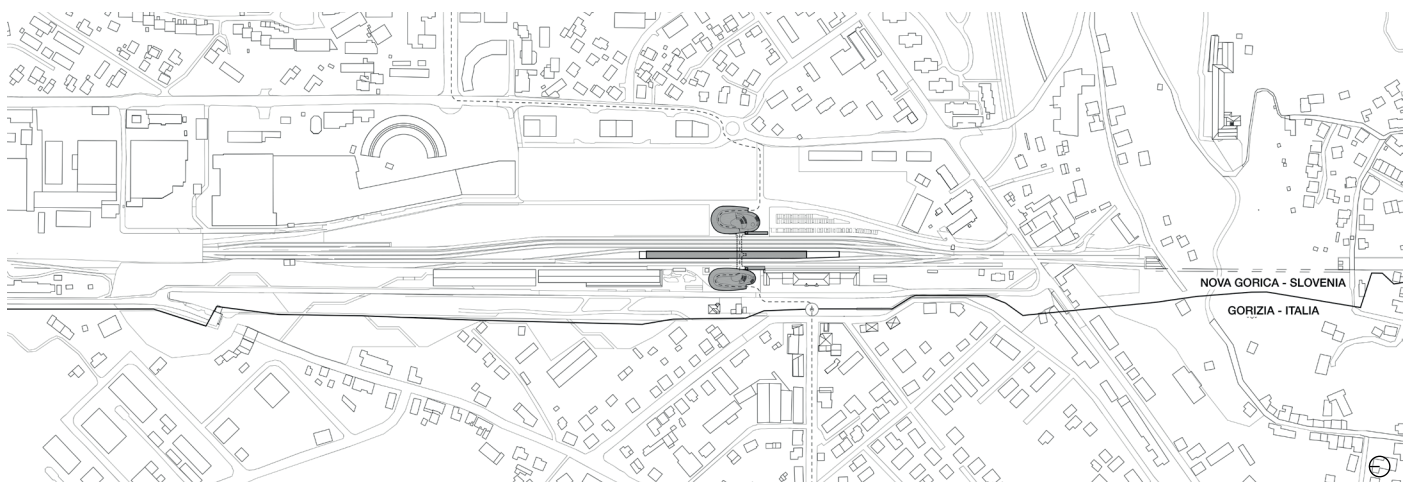
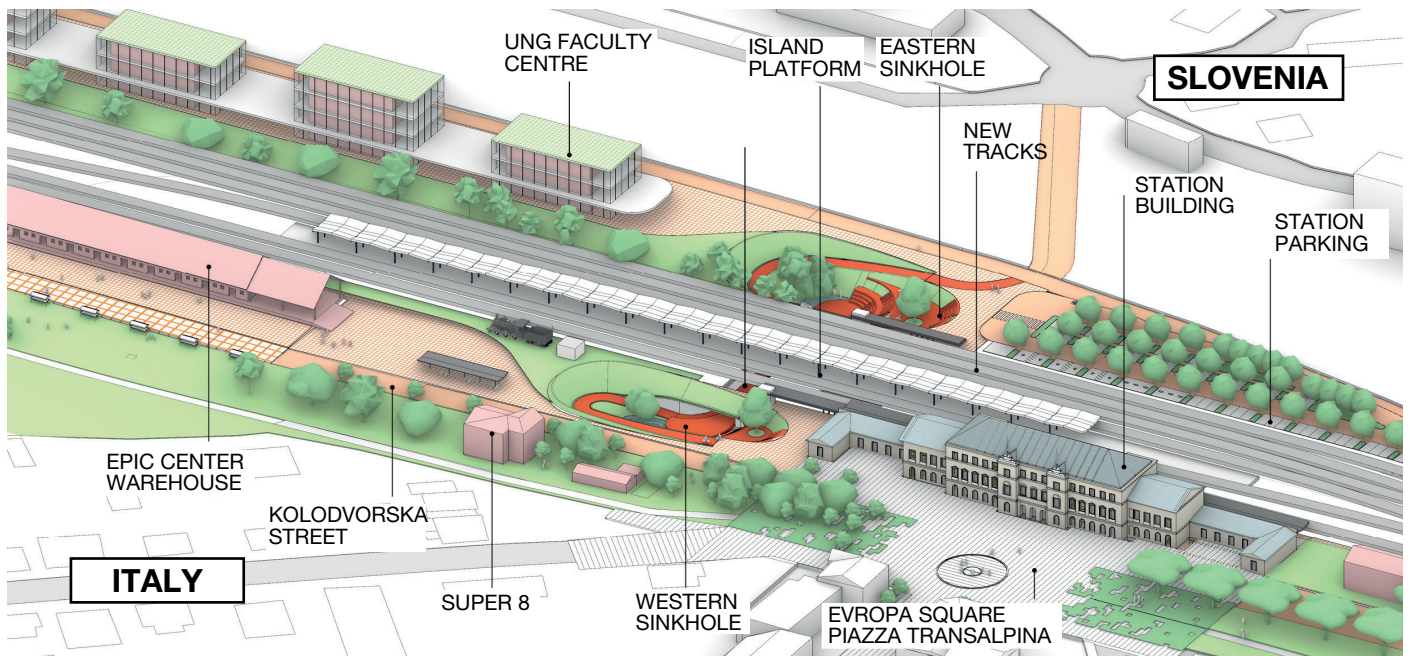


APPLICATION
SHARE ARCHITECTURE AWARD

Railway Infrastructure as New Public Space: Nova Gorica Railway Station and Vrtača Underpass



Year **2025** | Location **Nova Gorica, Slovenia** | Type **Open space** | Size **underpass 641 m², eastern vrtača 1,706 m², western vrtača 1,339 m², side platform 1,220 m², island platform 2,216 m²** | Status **completed**



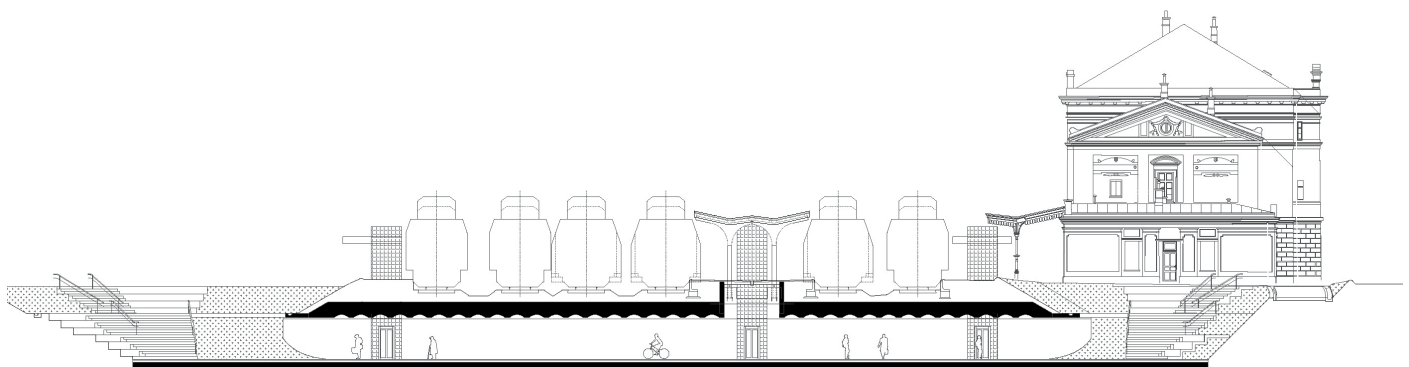
Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy) form a unique urban condition: two cities separated only by what is today an almost invisible border. In 2025, as joint European Capital of Culture, they are redefining their relationship through shared cultural and public spaces. The redevelopment of the Nova Gorica railway area, including the renovation of part of the historic Transalpina Station, the reconfiguration of the tracks, a new island platform and the construction of the Vrtača Underpass, transforms a former line of division into a place of connection.

A key intervention was the reduction of the railway infrastructure from fourteen tracks to six, creating space for a new pedestrian and cycling passage beneath the rails. For the first time, the underpass provides a safe and direct connection between the centres of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, strengthening mobility and urban cohesion.

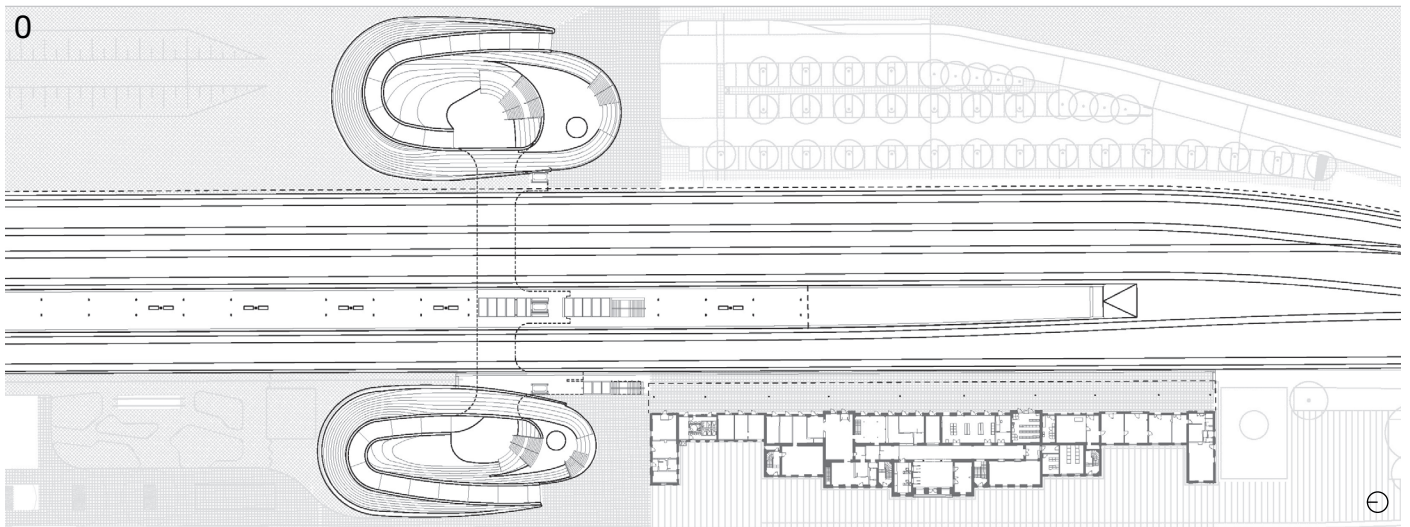
Rather than functioning solely as infrastructure, the 36.6-metre-long underpass was conceived as a public space. Natural daylight, glossy white ceramic wall tiles and brick-red paving create a bright and welcoming atmosphere, while separate zones for pedestrians and cyclists ensure comfortable use. At both ends, elliptical sunken plazas open the passage to the city and incorporate wide staircases and spiral ramps. Green slopes and rain gardens soften the intervention and introduce natural elements into the railway environment.



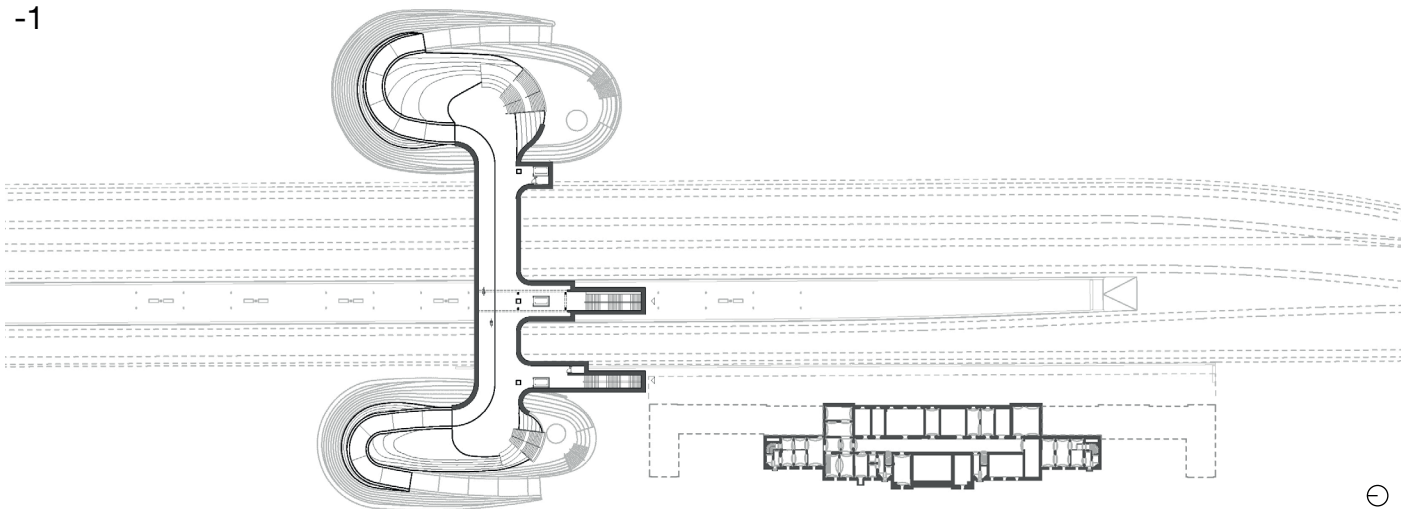
The reduction of the railway infrastructure created space for a new pedestrian and cycling connection

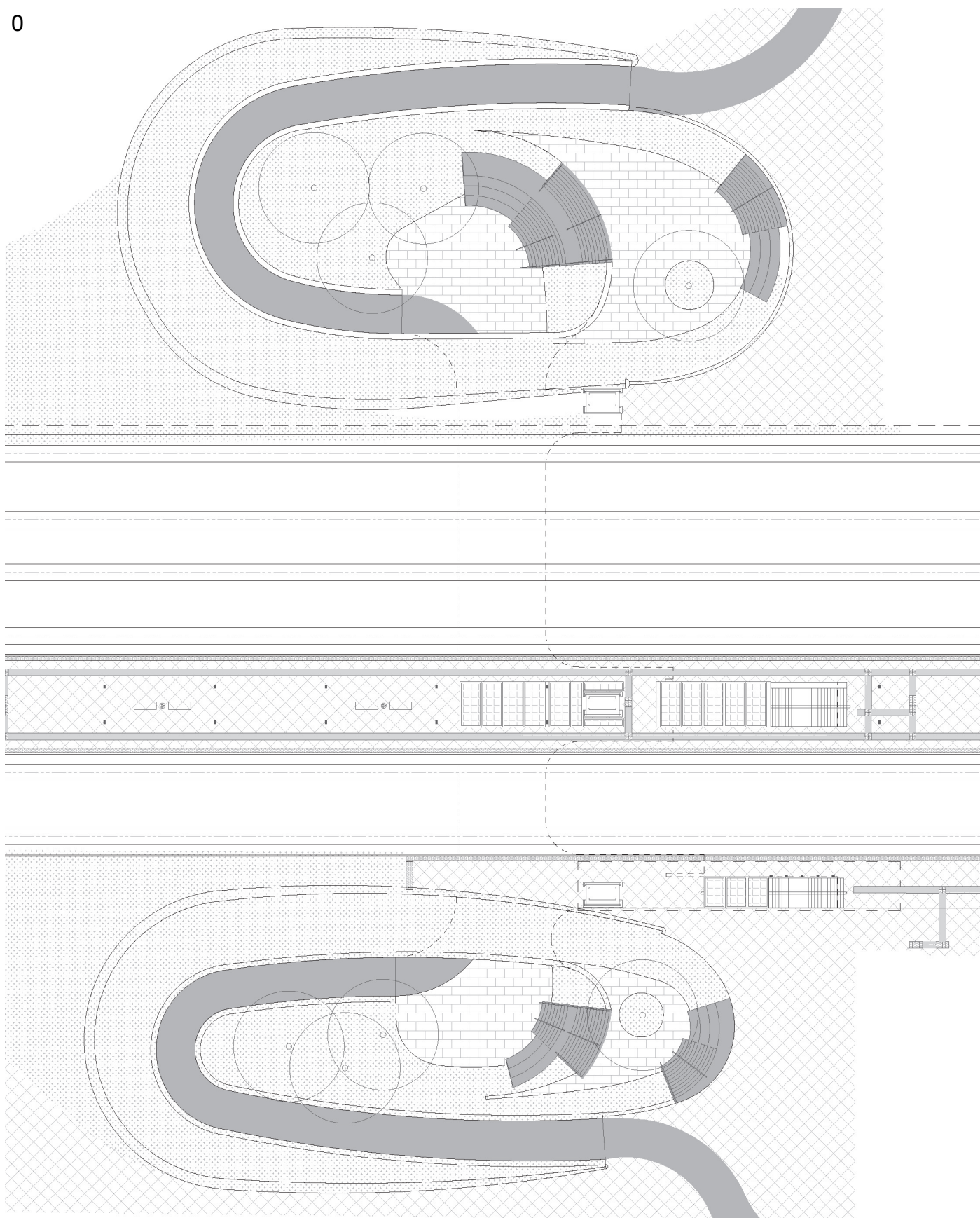


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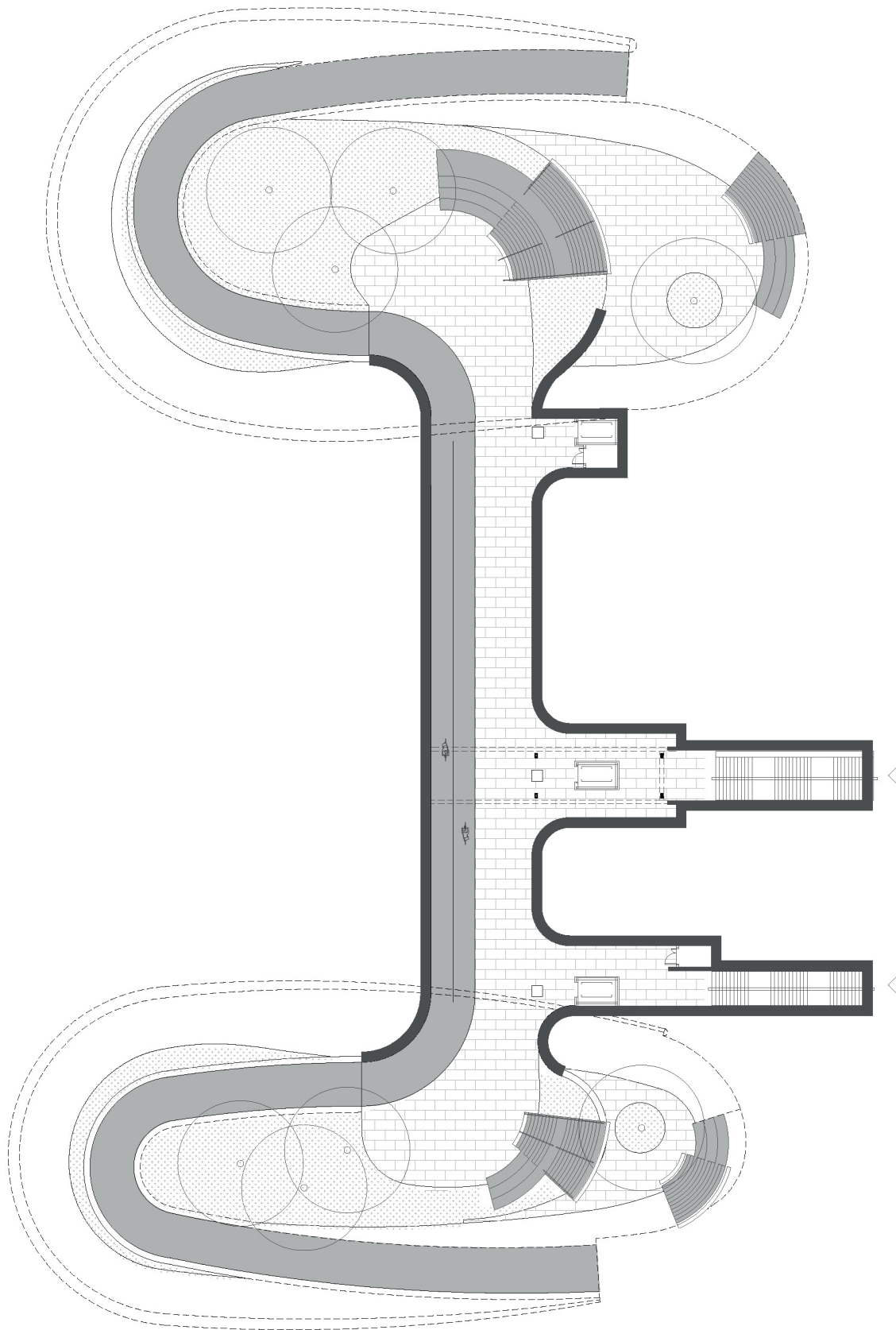




By combining railway infrastructure, public space and heritage restoration, the project creates a new shared urban centre across the border.



A former line of separation becomes a shared public space.



For the first time, pedestrians and cyclists can move safely and directly beneath the railway between the centres of Nova Gorica and Gorizia.



The project prioritises people, accessibility and everyday urban life.

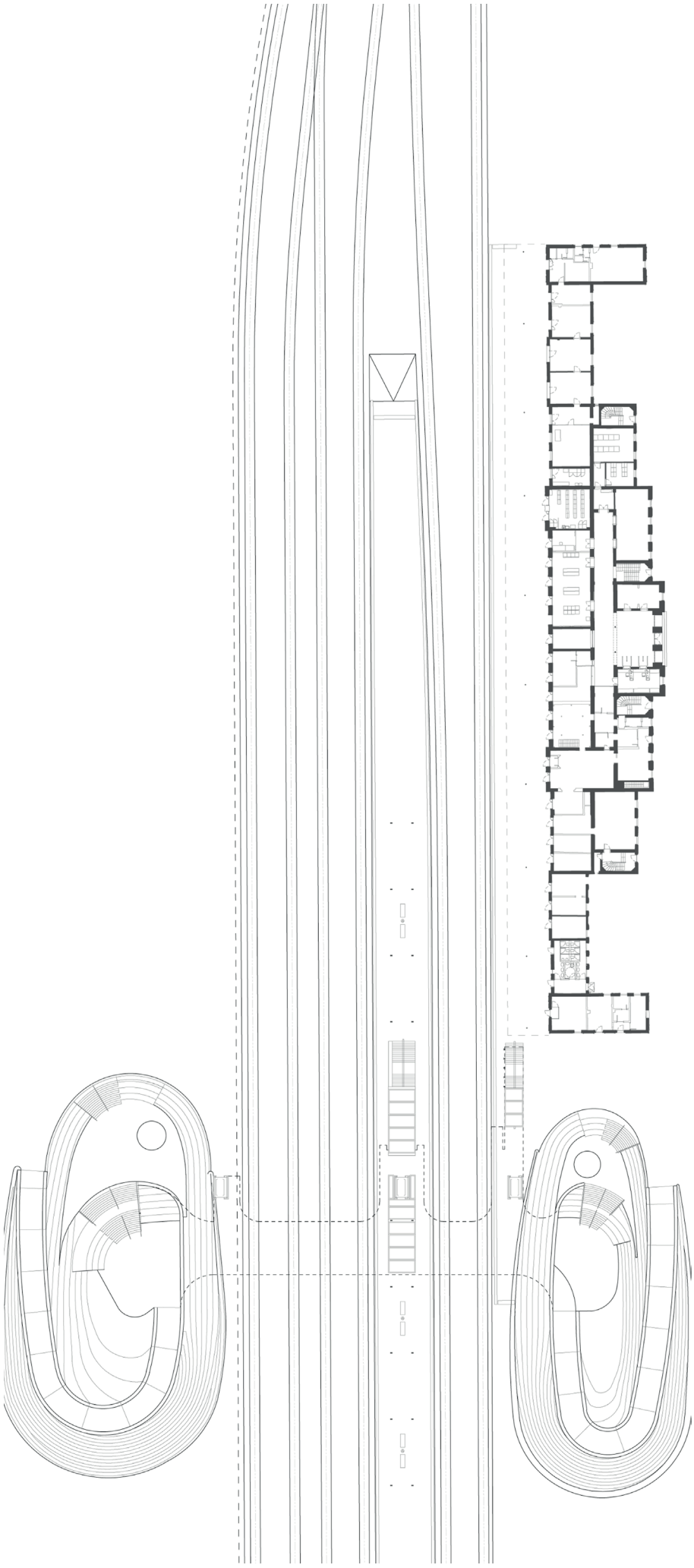






The project also included the restoration of part of the 1906 Transalpina Station. The entrance hall, ticket offices and waiting area were redesigned, while original paving, wooden wall panelling, the side canopy and newly discovered frescoes were restored in collaboration with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.





Since its opening, the Vrtača Underpass has become an active urban link and a catalyst for cross-border exchange.

Used daily by residents, cyclists and visitors, and hosting temporary cultural events as part of GO! 2025, the project demonstrates how infrastructure can transform a border from a line of separation into a shared place of encounter and become a model for European cross-border cooperation.

