

British Embassy 1, Warsaw, PL

TONY FRETTON ARCHITECTS



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The project for the new British embassy building and residence in Poland is on a site that is currently occupied by the residence alone, in a villa district in central Warsaw. The site is characterised by the 18m high stucco buildings to the West and the Prime Minister's Neo Classical residence to the North.

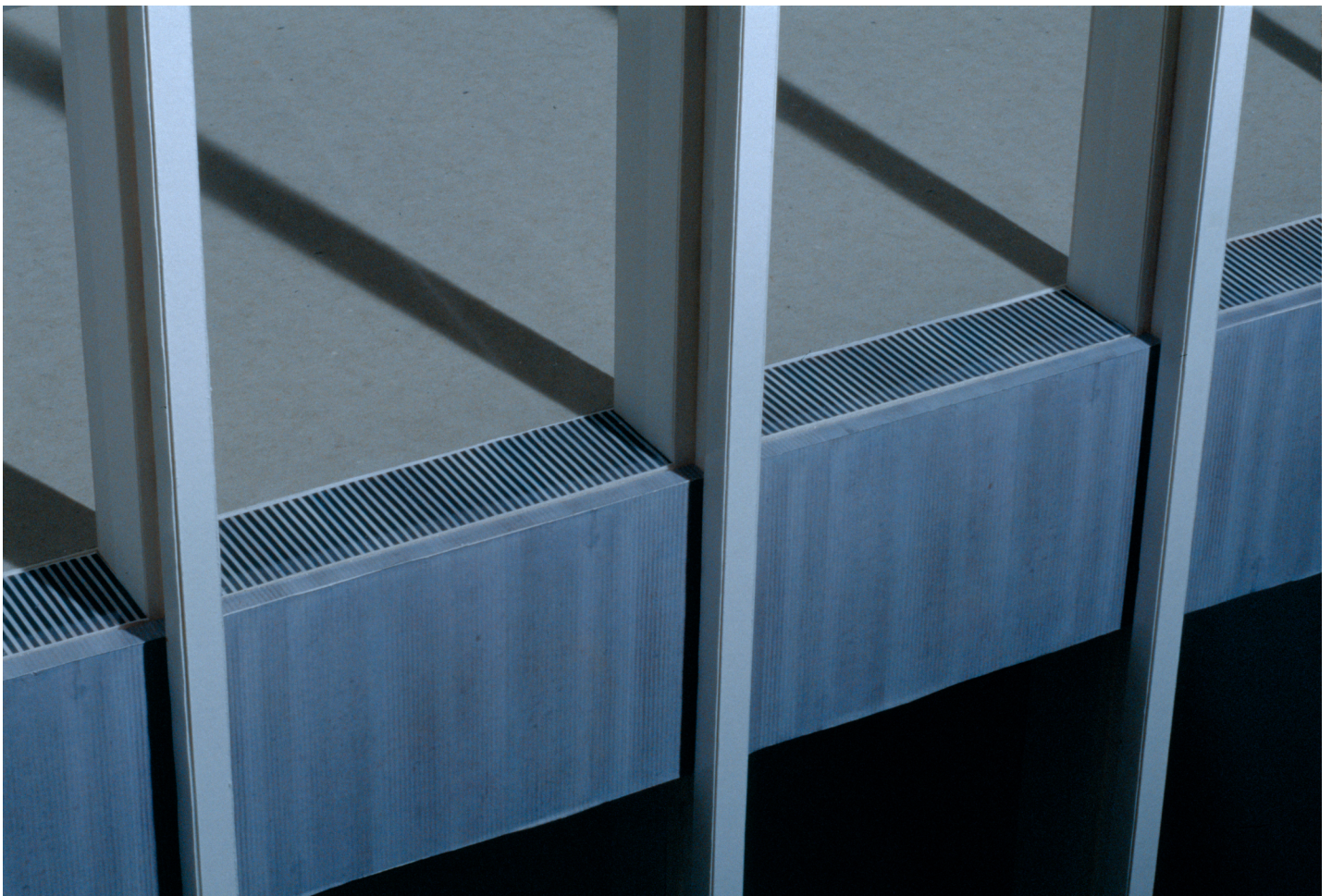
The project comprises a 5-storey embassy building, a 4-storey residence building with private garden, as well as a Gatehouse and entrance court, which provide access and orientation on to the site. The buildings are connected below ground at basement level.

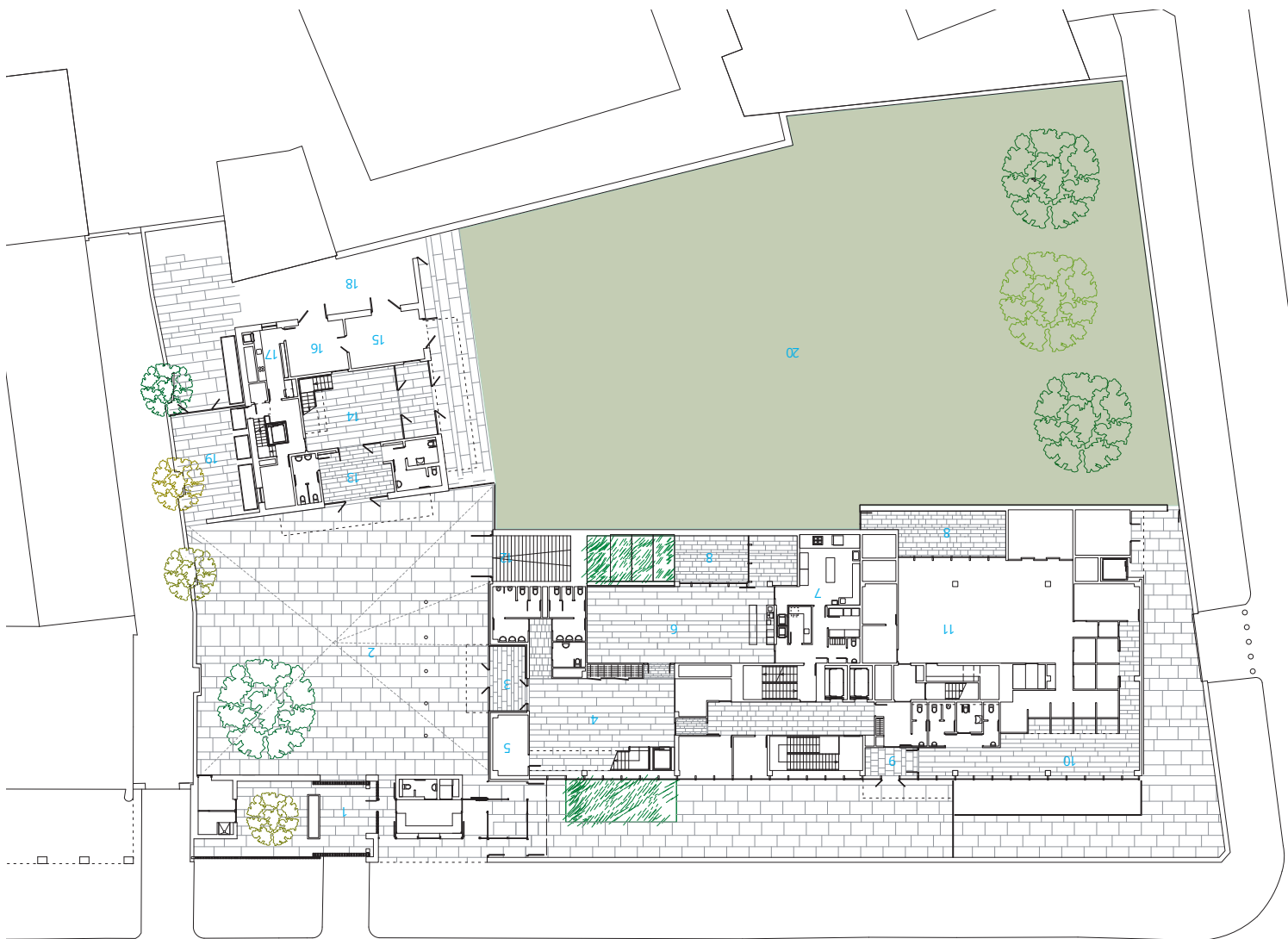
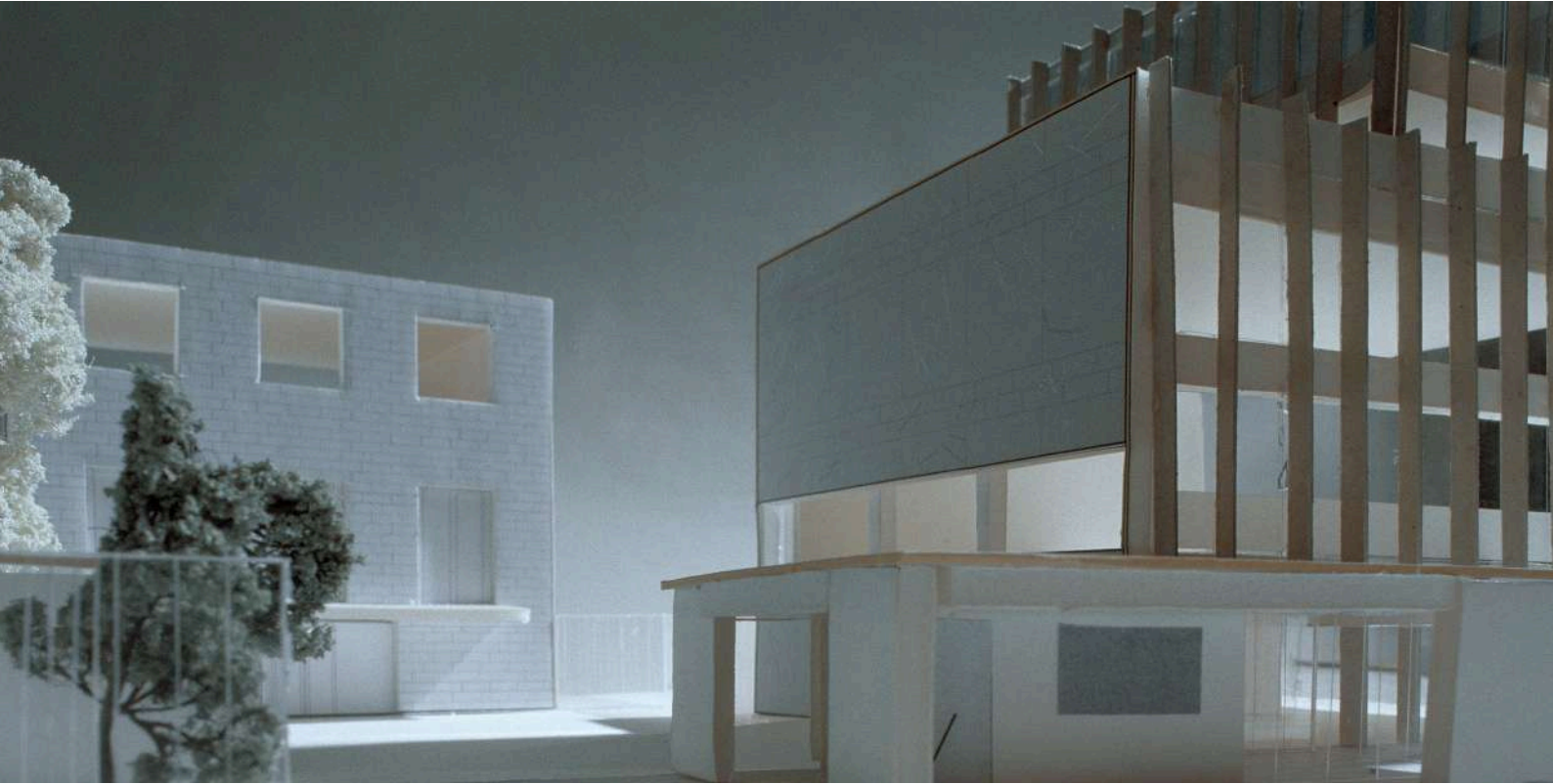
A key aspect of our design is that both buildings have a high degree of glazing and are carefully orientated on the site so as to provide interiors with maximum daylight given the relatively dark climate of Poland. Extensive glazing in the embassy building necessitated the specification of a blast resistant glass and led us to design a curtain wall to screen off activity inside the building.

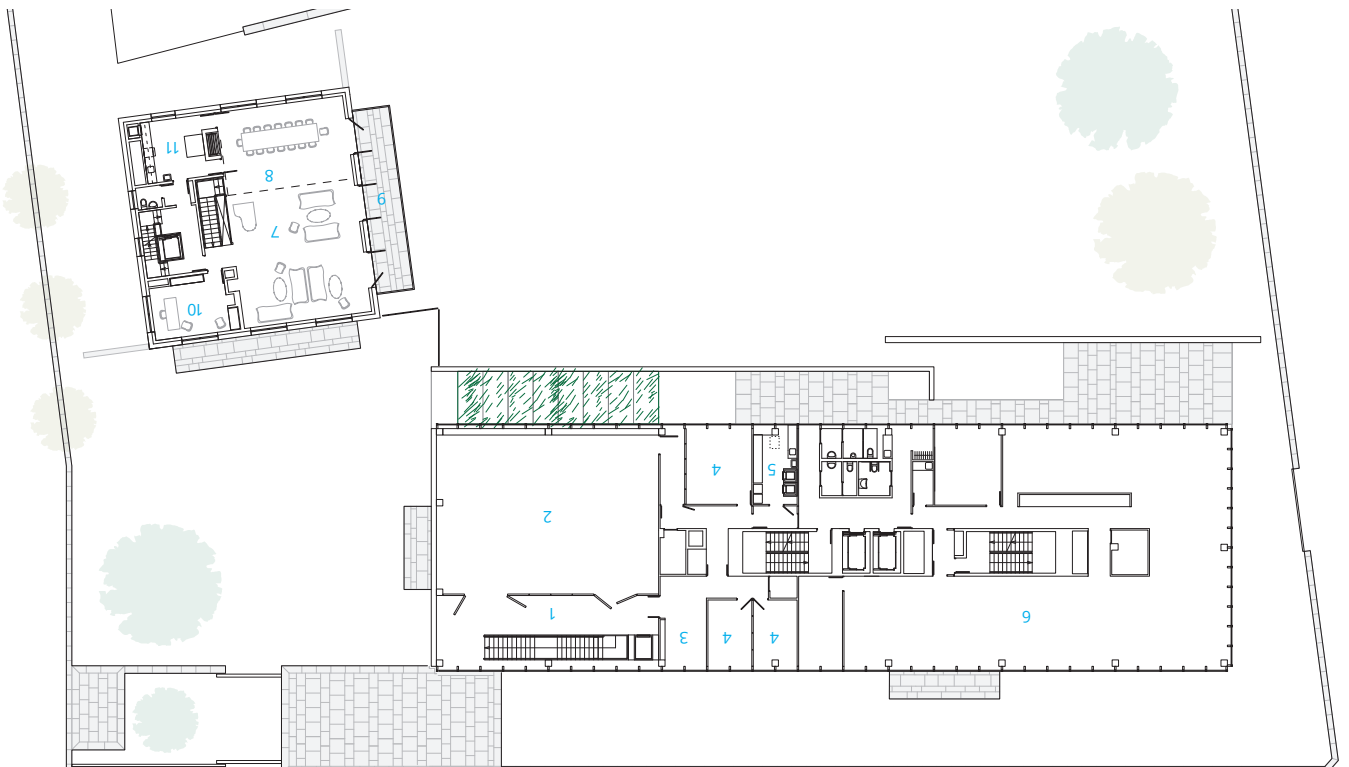
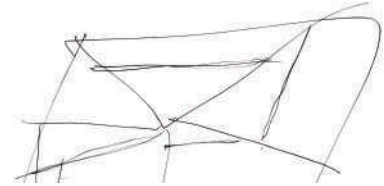
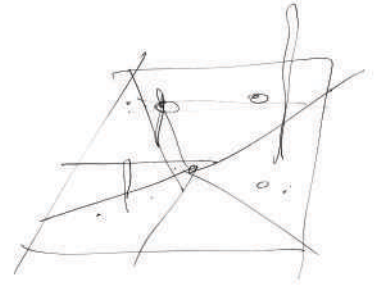
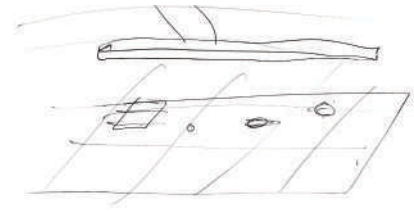
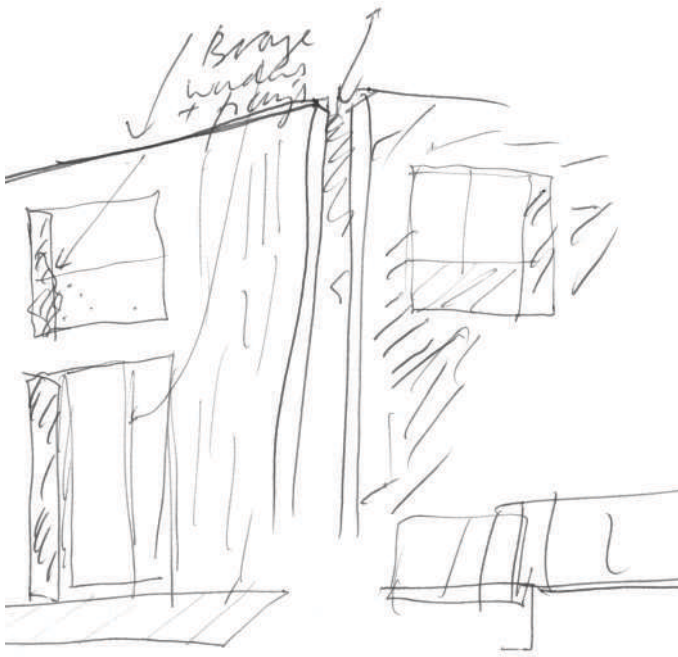
With regard to the overall scheme our strategy was to align the new buildings with the existing Swedish Embassy so as to create a domestic scale in the street where currently no urban scale is established. The Embassy building exceeds the height of the Swedish embassy but the upper two floors, reserved for the diplomatic offices are configured as an attic which is back on all sides and surrounded by a roof garden.

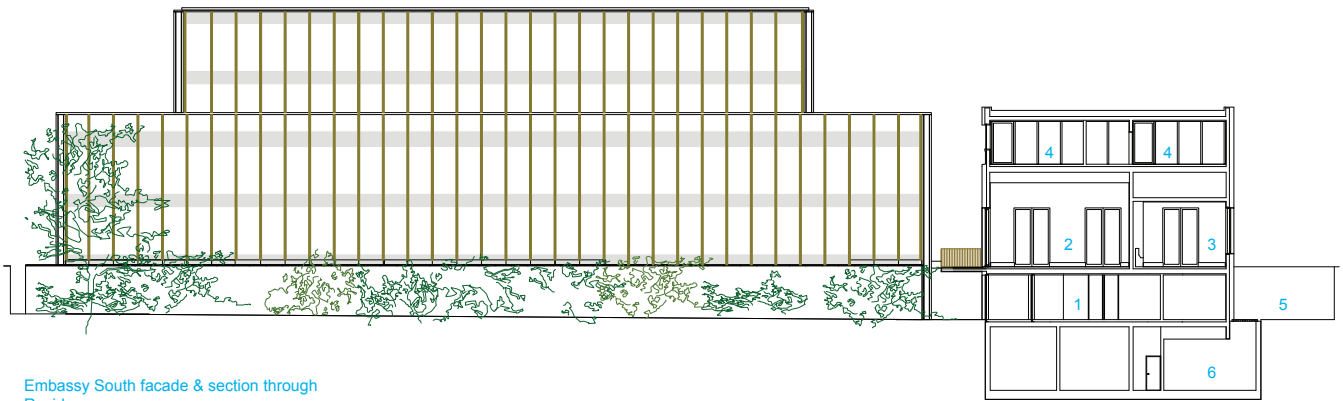
The embassy façade is modular, constructed of a regular pattern of bronze vertical divisions, glass and carved stone, a material, which changes according to the time of day and angle at which it is viewed. The building utilises a simple plan with few fixed elements, resulting in open spaces that can be divided and reconfigured according to use. The Residence building in contrast, deploys a highly detailed domestic plan, where rooms are configured and orientated to make sense of their surroundings. This more schematic plan is revealed in the stone façade behind the formal pattern of windows.

Visitors access the site via the paved piazza of the entrance court, which has a subtle incline towards the residence building, adding drama. The buildings are sited within a landscape of gentle grassy slopes and trees, which echoes the terrain of the British countryside. Both buildings are typologies, which have been established over a period of time and in their form contain cultural knowledge.



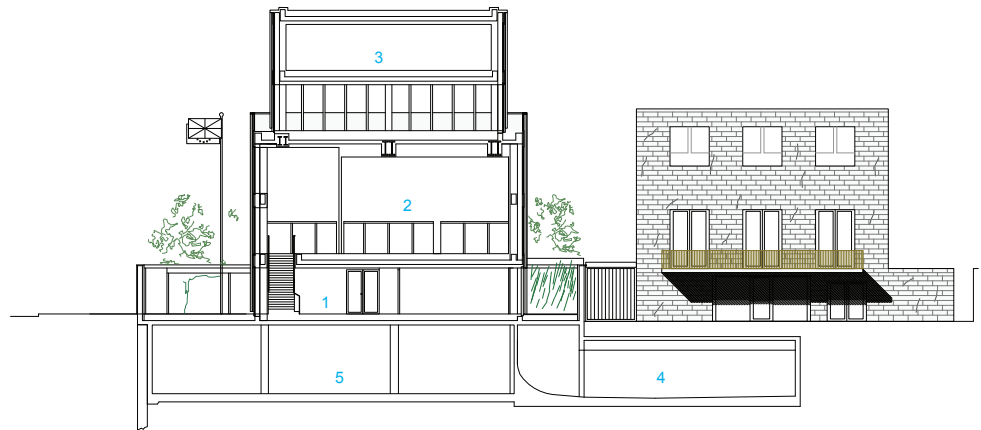






Embassy South facade & section through Residence

- 1 Entrance hall
- 2 Drawing room
- 3 Main study
- 4 Bedrooms
- 5 Staff entrance court
- 6 Kitchen



Residence West facade & section through Embassy

- 1 Main entrance hall
- 2 Exhibition space
- 3 Plant
- 4 Parking
- 5 Stores



