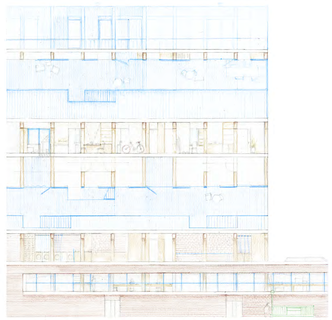
ROOMS *AS OF RIGHT*

Counter measuring zoning from city to household

The project emerges in response to a new zoning resolution passed in 2024 by The City of New York known as the City of Yes. Much like its predecessors, it is the primary enabler of a developer-led response to the need for housing which it promotes through the policy of inclusionary housing. This strategy offers incentives to densify under-built sites above the as of right or legal limit under the condition that this bonus be dedicated to affordable units. Developers, seizing the opportunity to increase value extraction, have formalized loopholes that oppose the need for permanent affordability and lead to displacement.

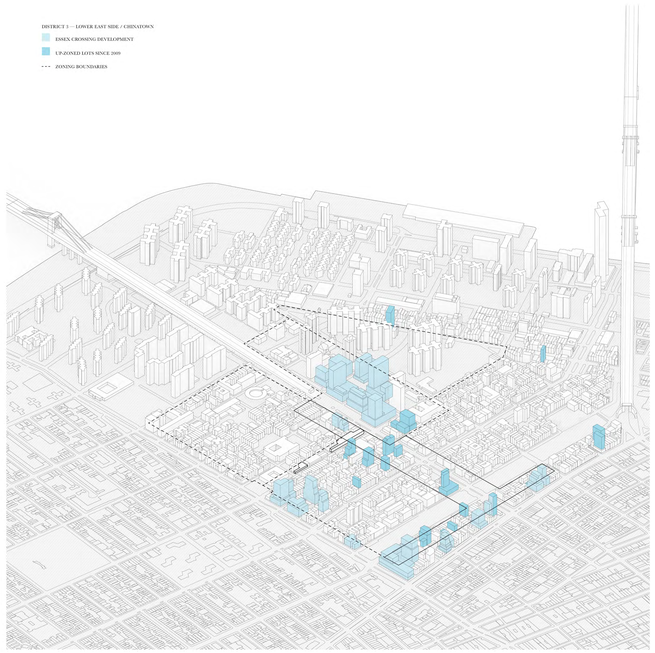
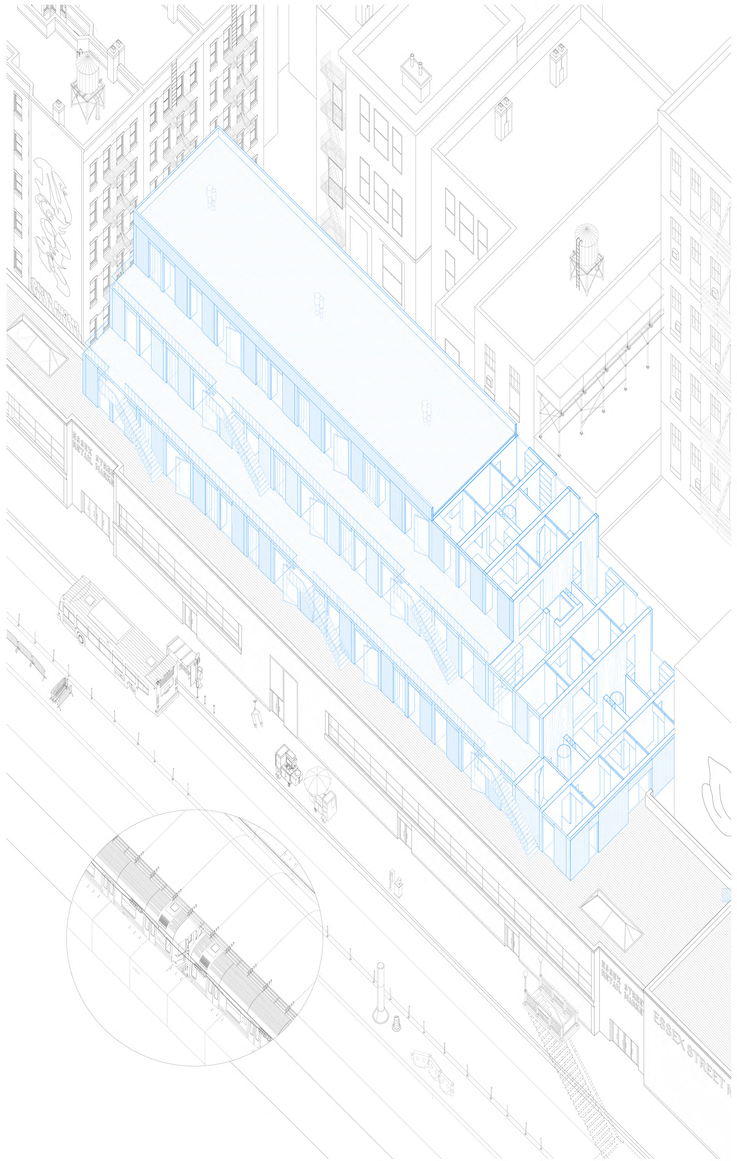
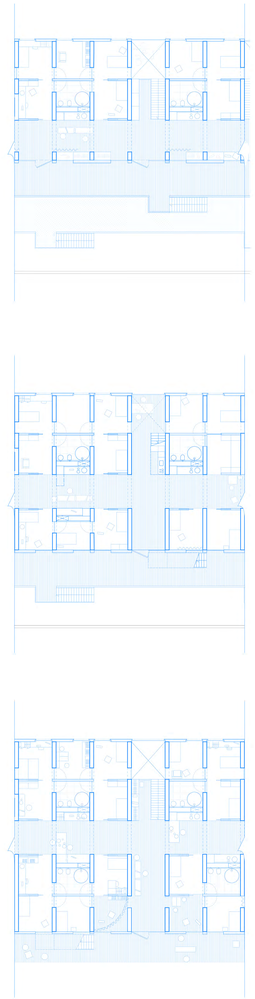
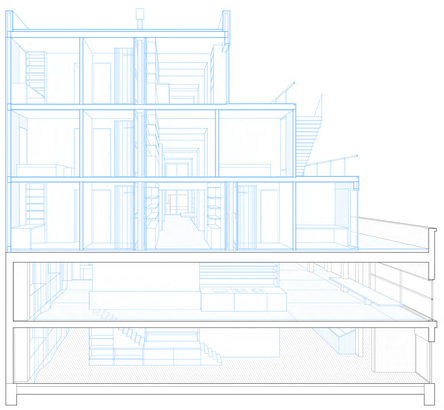
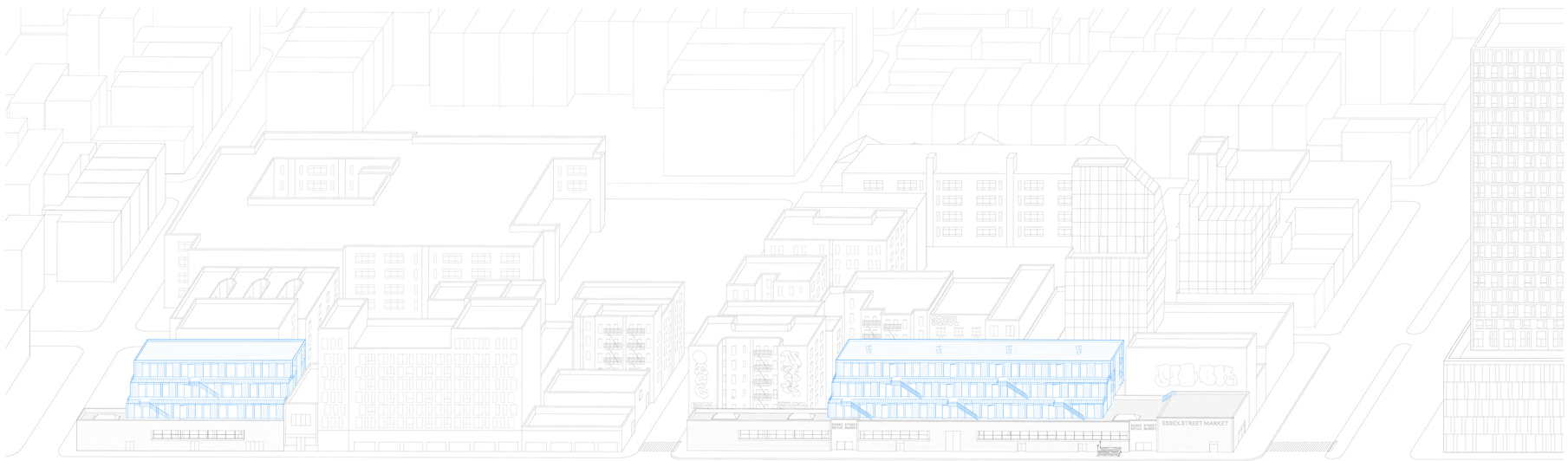
This counter proposal seeks to outline an ethics of dealing with under-built sites by first exposing the resolution's targeted upzoning as a direct result of market pressures. Secondly, the provision of affordable housing is addressed to the City by focusing on the conversion of city-owned buildings in the Lower East Side – the district with the highest proportion of city-owned land. The choice to shift the attention from housing as an asset to its use value opens the possibility of housing more residents within a compact, stepped scheme that relies on shared forms of living.

The project takes advantage of the lifting of restrictions on the minimum size of dwelling units and envisions a field of rooms of the same dimension that can be configured into scenarios of transitional households, such as an evolution of single room occupancies, as an alternative to apartment living. The aim of the counter proposal is to shift attention from buildings as of right, which are closely protected and guaranteed by zoning laws, to the provision of rooms *as of right*.



DISTRICT 3 — LOWER EAST SIDE / CHINATOWN

ESSEX CROSSING DEVELOPMENT

UP-ZONED LOTS SINCE 2009

ZONING BOUNDARIES