The Art of Presentation

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For the first edition of this book I contributed a piece on presentation techniques. I concentrated on how we might put together a presentation so that it was both informative and fascinating. My premise was that if we could maintain the engagement of our audience, we were more likely to be able to get our message across.

That approach could produce electronic presentations that would be both enjoyable and informative. It was predicated on the relatively static slide-based approach of presentation software. Yes, those slides could incorporate movement and action, but they were nevertheless based on a pre-determined structure and exposition of information.

These days the 3D based tools available to architects for design and documentation and the examination of those activities also provide opportunities for the presentation of our work which go well beyond the limitations of the traditional approach.

What those tools allow us to do is to interactively open up our design to those to whom we are presenting.

To do so however requires us to work in a less structured way, and often across different analysis and presentation tools. So it needs confidence. Confidence in our ability to maintain an appropriate dynamic in the presentation of information. Confidence in the integrity of information being opened up, even when that information is preliminary. Confidence in our handling of the technology underpinning the presentation.

When our presentation consists of separate apps providing different portals into our work, and the structure of the presentation allows for varied and perhaps unexpected questioning from the audience, the dynamic of the presentation can be more difficult to manage.

Because our work is incomplete until it is finished, we are typically presenting incomplete information. In a pre-determined presentation that can be glossed over. Not so easily in a presentation in which our design model is explored.

When working in a multi-app mode, we will need to go from one app to another. That means we will need some tech confidence.

Let's look at a typical set up for such a mixed mode approach. I work within the Apple universe. There are alternatives for those not doing so.

I generally connect my computer to the screen or projector. When projecting from the iPad I can wirelessly do so through the computer.

The traditional presentation experience is enhanced using an app called Doceri, allowing me to draw over slides on the iPad. In that way information can be expanded upon in a very interactive way.

For exploring the 3D model of our designs together with associated 2D information I use BIMx from the iPad. That glorious app allows me to pan around and walk through the model, look at plans and elevations, then explore that 2D information in the context of the 3D model.

If at any time if I want to further explore the possibilities of information being presented, I take a screen capture on the iPad, then open that up in a great illustrating app called Procreate and draw over the screen shot.

Such an approach allows those to whom I am presenting to take a stake in the presentation by changing the order and type of information being explored. Or they can be a part of the presentation by themselves doing some of the exploring and drawing!

All intended to maximise the experience and knowledge gained by those present.
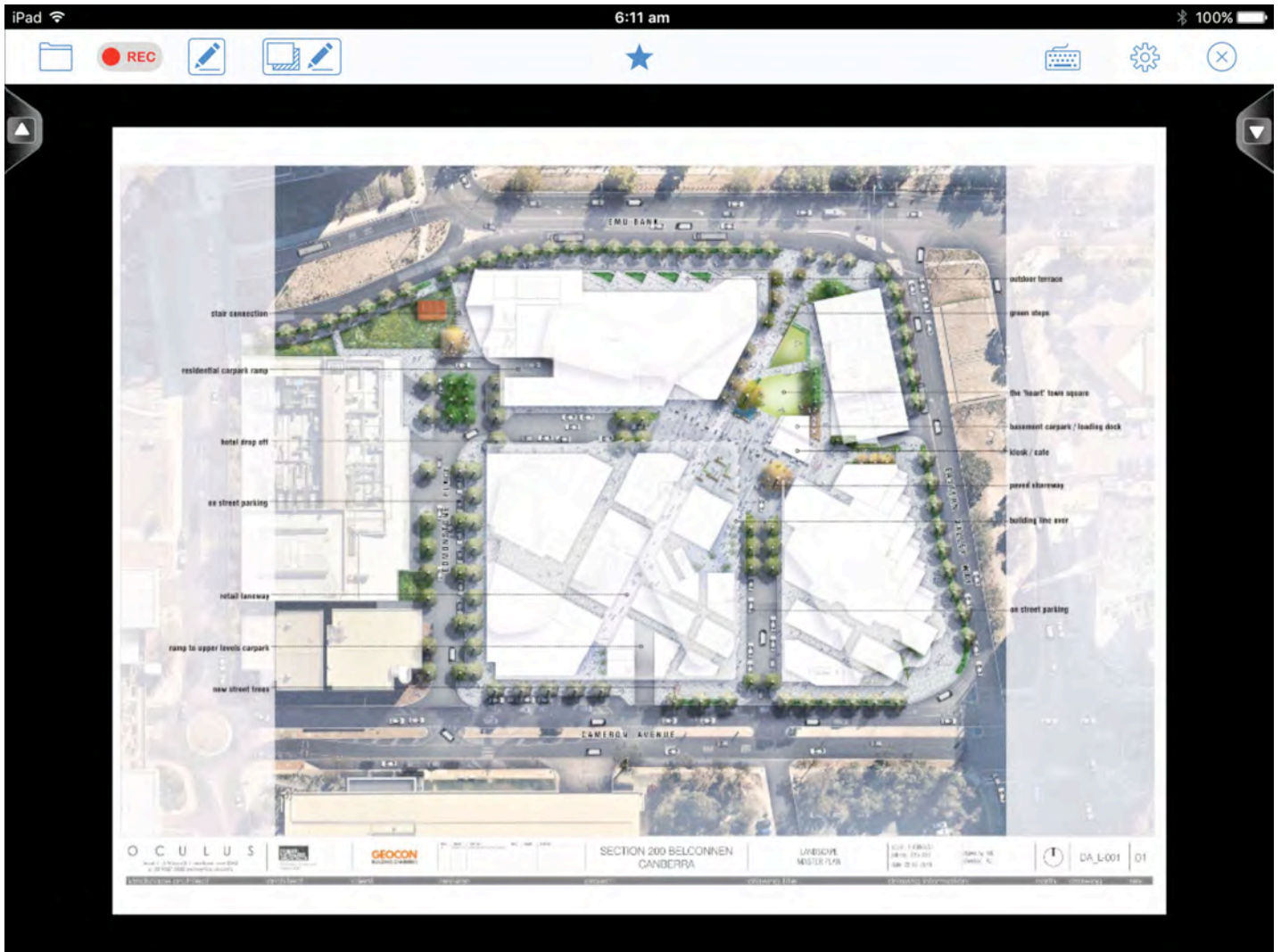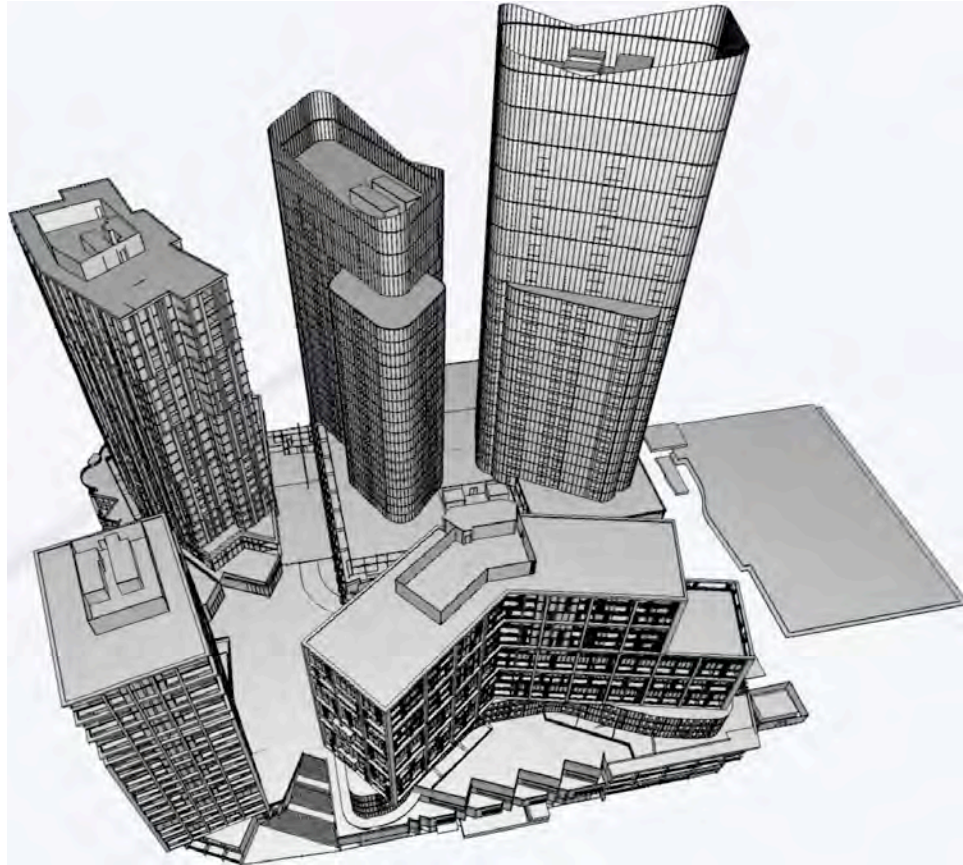
The presentation in Keynote on the Mac in Doceri on the iPad.

Note the up and down arrows- the presentation can be controlled from this interface.
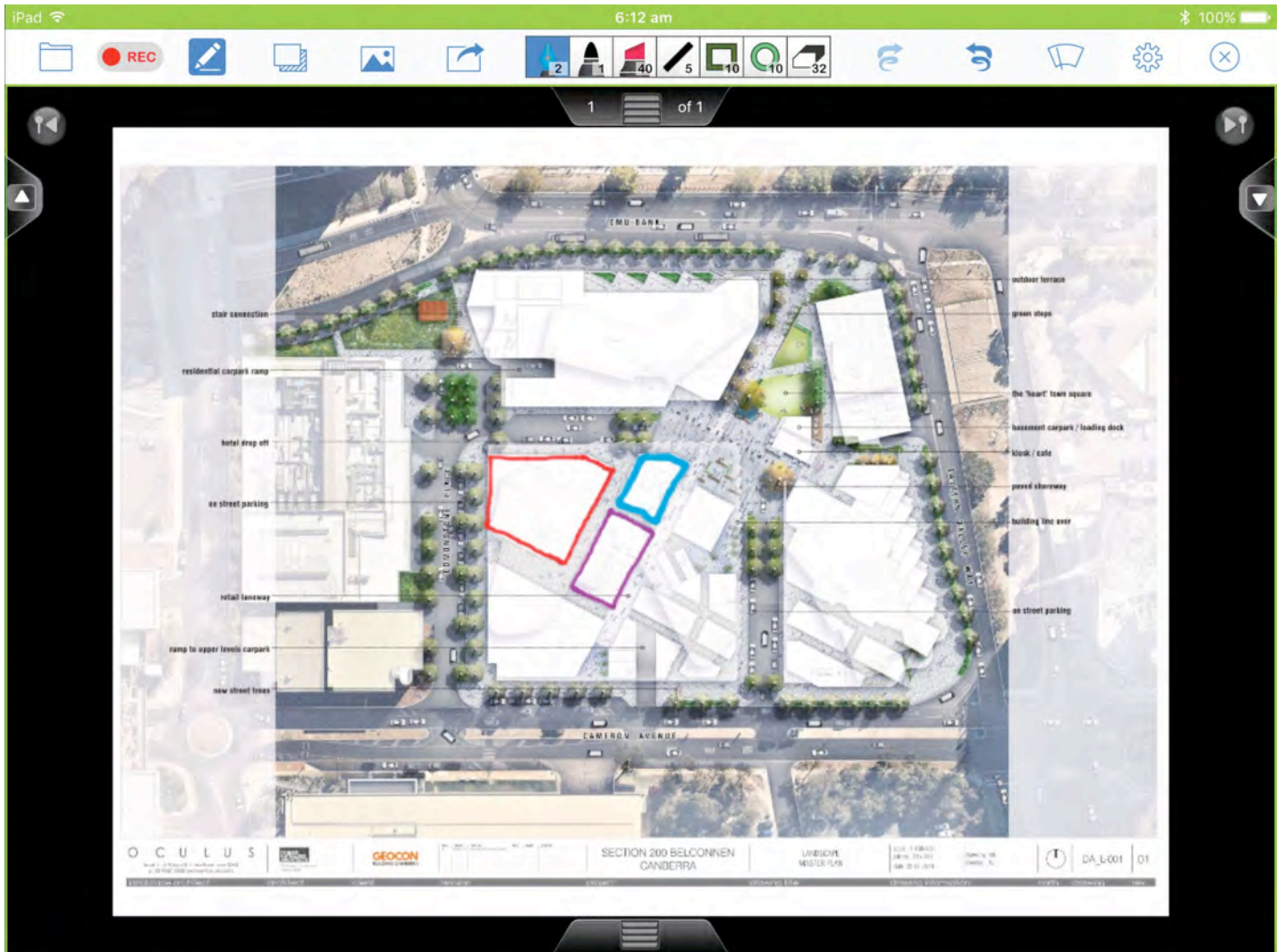
Annotating over the projected image in Doceri. Doceri provides different pens, pen thicknesses, transparency as well as geometric shapes and eraser.
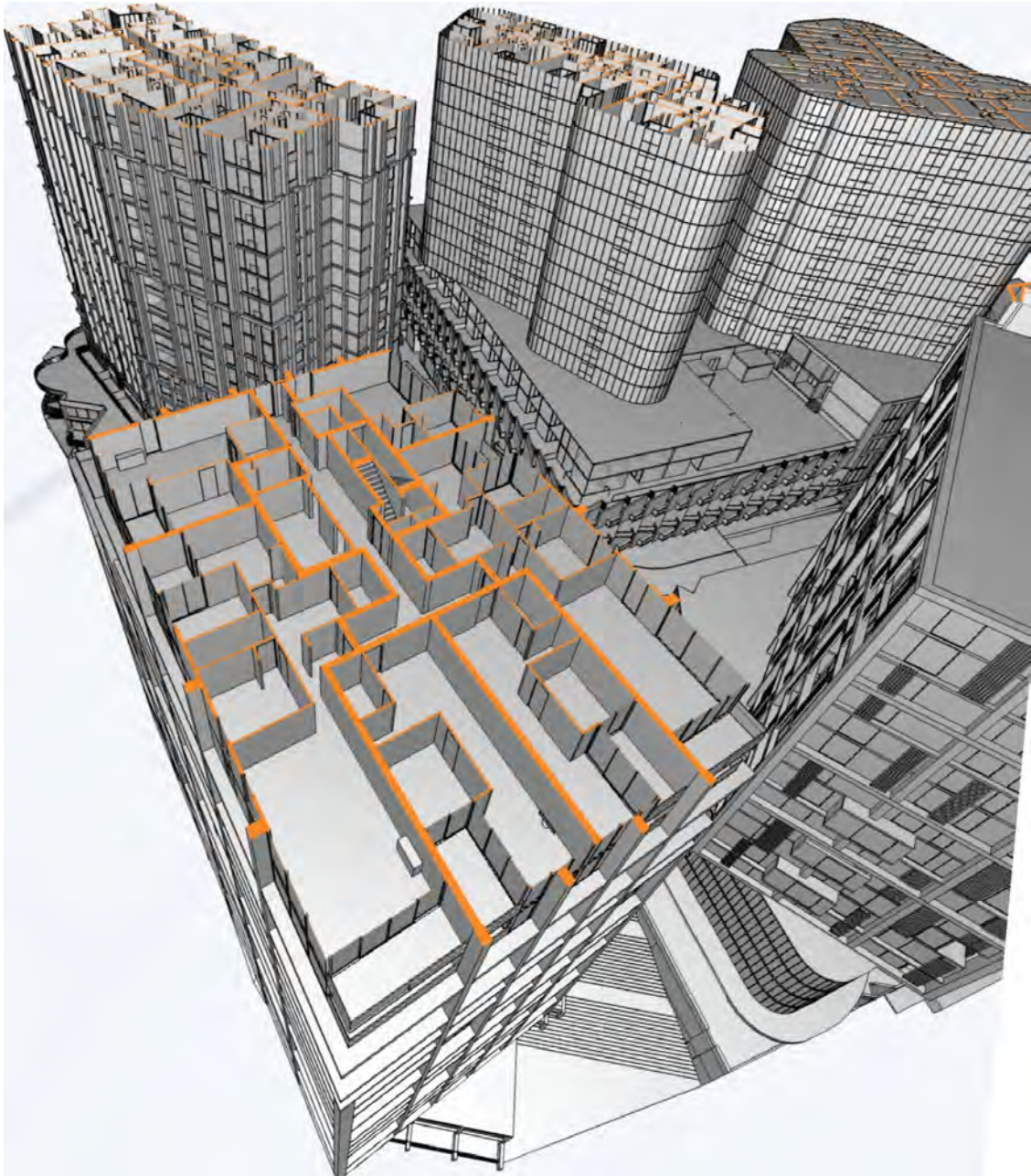
The image can be saved separate from the presentation.

A project in 3D mode in BIMx on the iPad. This model can be navigated, allowing presenter and audience to explore the project.
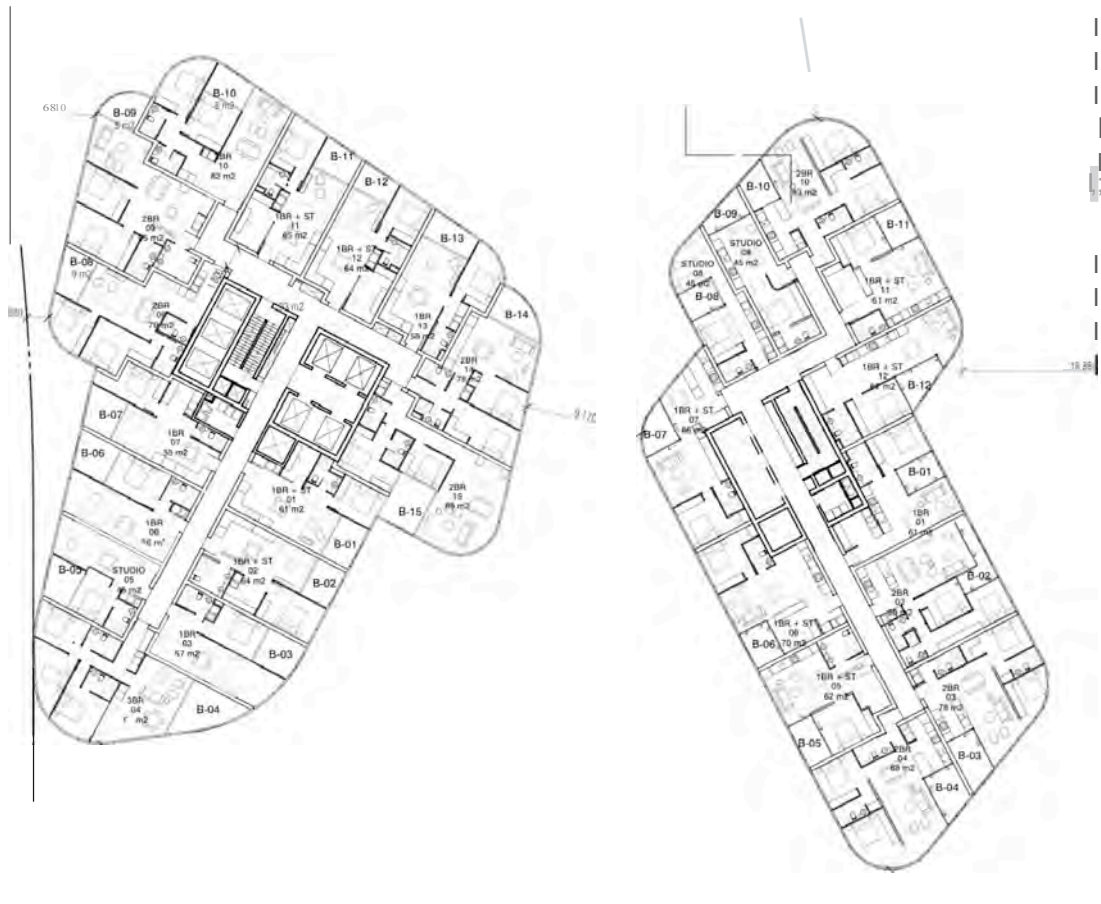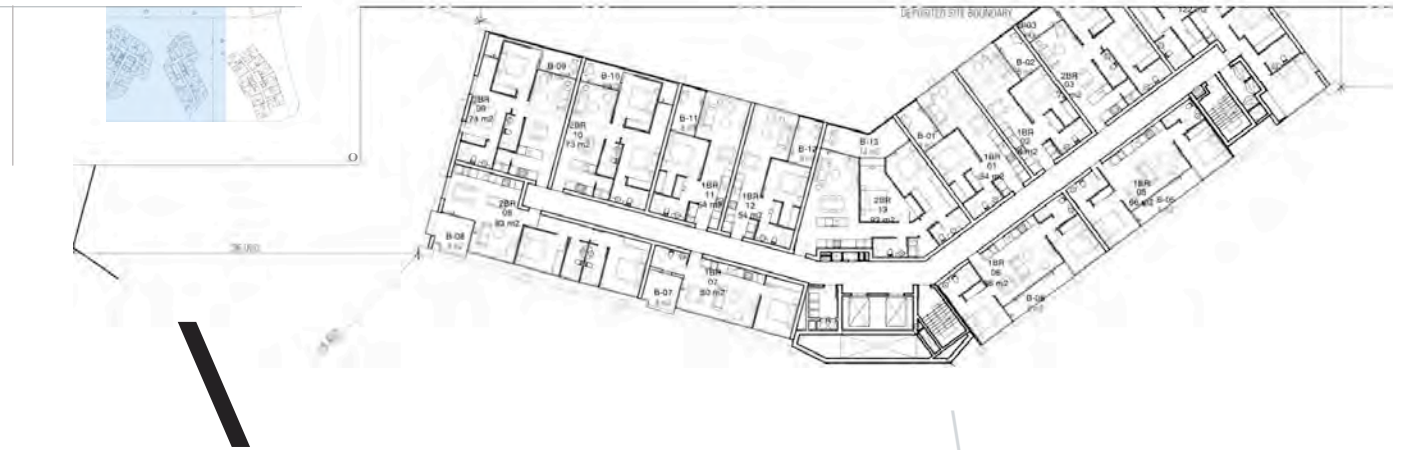
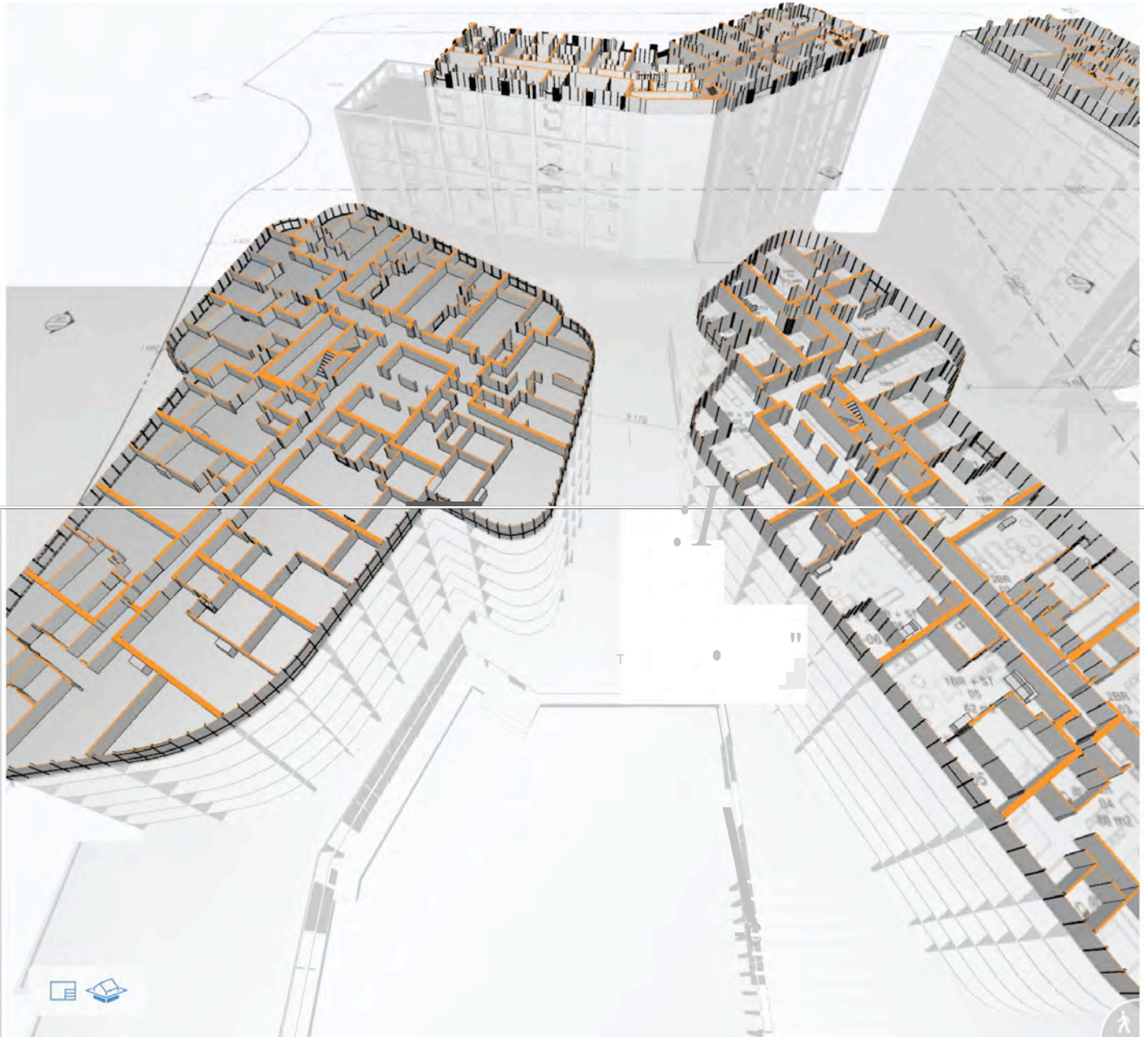Here a horizontal cutting plane is applied, allowing us to explore the internal planning of the buildings at any level.

If we like we can see that in proper 2D plan format (and being able to zoom in and out with standard pinch gestures).

If we wish we can see that drawing in its context within the 3D model (you can see the drawing overlaid on the 3D model cu at the appropriate storey). This all happens with a really enjoyable animation, which never fails to impress those who have not seen it before, or seasoned users like me. The animation is for a purpose- to provide a continual 3D frame of reference for the location of the plan drawing. There are similar possibilities for other drawings such as sections and elevation.
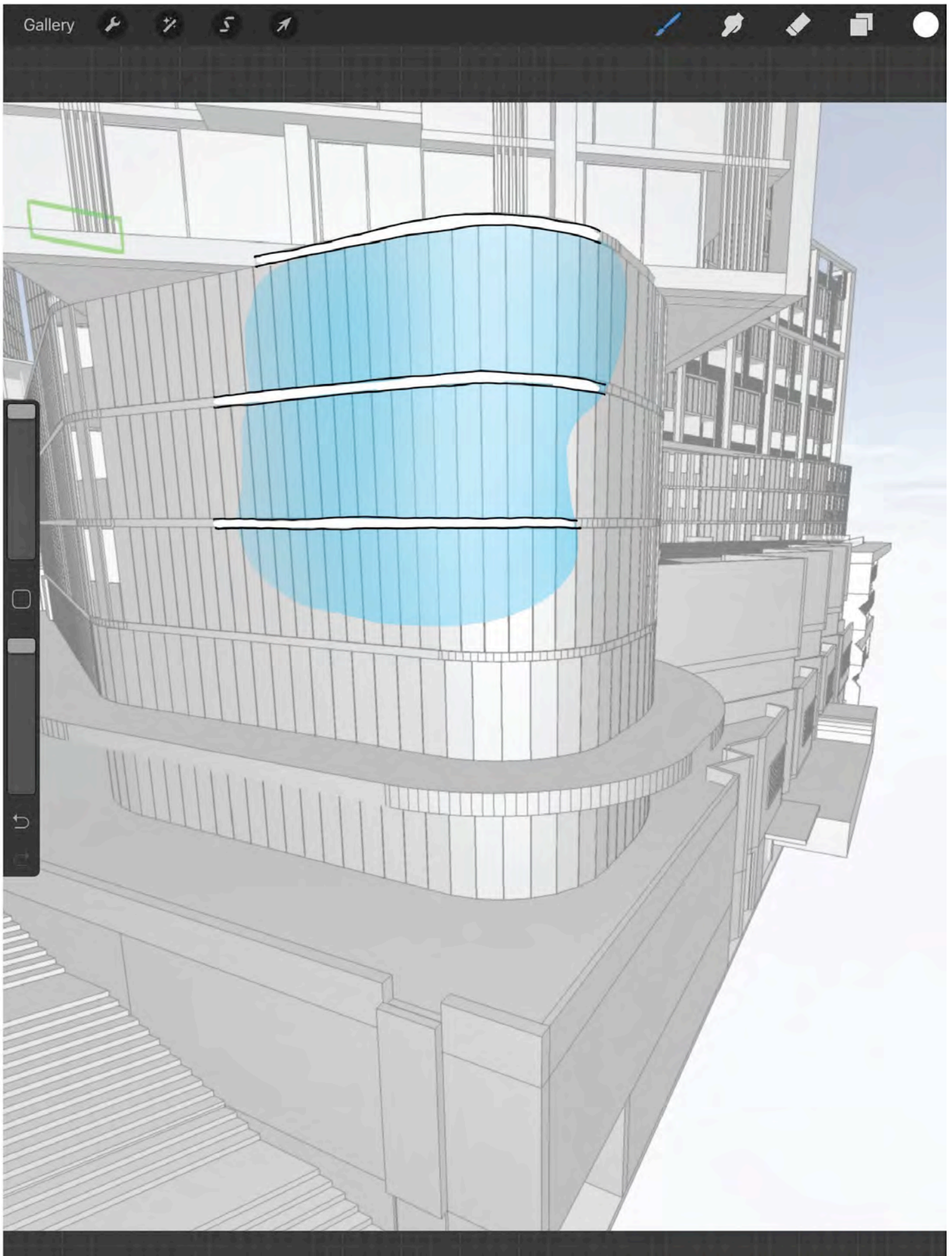
A screen capture from BIMx taken into Procreate and marked up to heighten aspects fo the design. Procreate is a marvellous illustration app (the developers are six youngsters from Hobart) that has become a core design and illustration tool for me (using iPad Pro and Apple pencil).

The act of drawing this is continually projected via the Mac.