

In today's rapidly urbanizing world, architecture has the power not only to shape physical environments but also to reflect—and question—societal structures. *Haustax* is a conceptual design project that reimagines the idea of a neighborhood by stacking it vertically. Drawing inspiration from the Transvaal House, the project examines the relationship between social class and spatial hierarchy, proposing a radical rethinking of how economic divisions might be translated into architectural form.

The central concept behind *Haustax* is simple yet provocative: what if the traditional vertical arrangement of housing, where luxury lies at the top, were flipped? In this design, the wealthiest residents occupy the ground level, while the poorest are placed at the top. This reversal is not just a spatial decision but a critical statement—one that challenges conventional associations between height, exclusivity, and status.

The building consists of four distinct floors, each representing a different socioeconomic class. The ground floor, reserved for the wealthiest class, is characterized by solid materials, large columns, and spacious private areas. Its grounded position symbolizes permanence, security, and control. Moving upward, the upper-middle class occupies the first floor. Here, a blend of modern and traditional materials gives the floor a transitional quality—comfortable, yet still striving.

The middle class resides on the second floor, where spaces become more open and integrated with greenery. This level reflects a modest lifestyle, emphasizing community, adaptability, and resourcefulness. At the very top is the lowest-income level, constructed from lightweight materials like scaffolding and shipping containers. The openness and fragility of this level reflect the precariousness and instability often associated with lower-income living—exposed to both the elements and the gaze of those below.

Despite its stratified design, *Haustax* is not merely a depiction of separation. Instead, it introduces shared circulation routes and semi-public spaces that connect the levels. These spaces offer the potential for interaction and coexistence, acting as social and spatial bridges between classes. Stairs, platforms, and gathering areas are intentionally designed to encourage a sense of vertical community, even within a structure that visibly represents division.

Ultimately, *Haustax* is a spatial critique—a thought-provoking model that forces us to confront how we design for inequality. By inverting the expected hierarchy and making the social structure visible, the project challenges viewers and designers alike to reflect on the ethics of space, access, and value in architecture. It does not pretend to offer a solution, but instead poses an essential question: how do we build not just for individuals, but for a society?