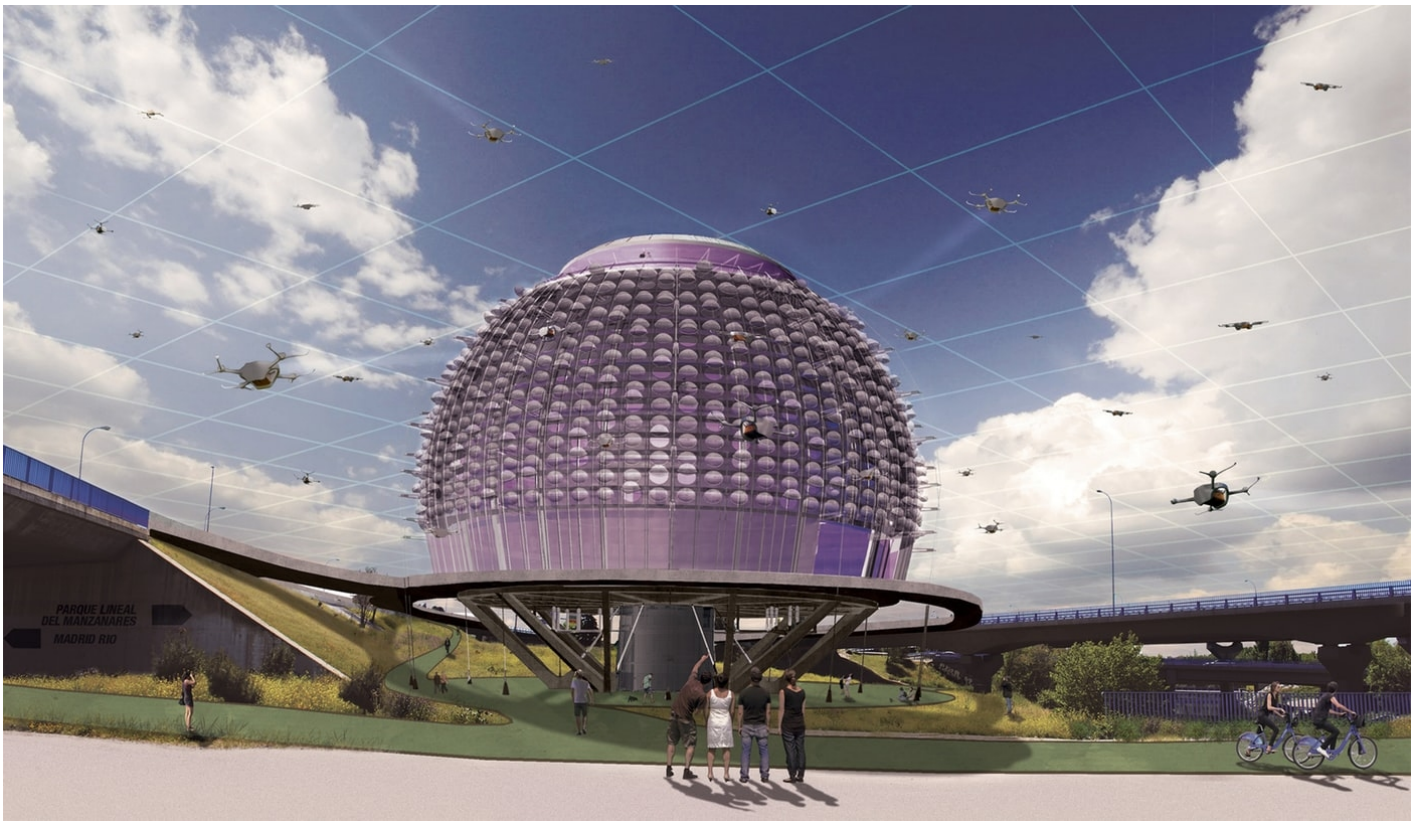
THESE NEW DESIGNS IMAGINE HOW AN URBAN DRONEPORT MIGHT LOOK

News / Airports / Routes



If you ordered something from Amazon recently, it was probably delivered by a person dressed in black and wearing a reflective vest. Chances are, that person woke up at 5 o'clock in the morning and reported for duty at a distribution warehouse in some unseemly industrial area somewhere in your city, and then set out in a van with some 150 packages. For a long time, that's pretty much how delivery logistics have worked. But a swam of delivery drones, operating out of a giant drone beehive, could change all that before long.

Out with the old, says Saúl Ajuria Fernández, an architecture student of at the University of Alcalá in Spain. For his master's degree project, Fernández composed over ten illustrations and schematics depicting an urban droneport, the delivery hub of tomorrow. The bulk of its employees? Aerial drones that would zip back and forth between their spherical HQ and various delivery destinations.

The port would be situated among a cluster of highway junctions in a real-world location in the South Node of Madrid. The highway location ensures open air and easy access to multiple areas of the city.

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Aerial drones can be seen buzzing to and from the droneport to pick up or deliver another package, as cars pass by on the roads that wind around it. In the images, Fernández superimposed a grid in the sky above the port, likely as a means to display the presence of flight patterns for the robots.

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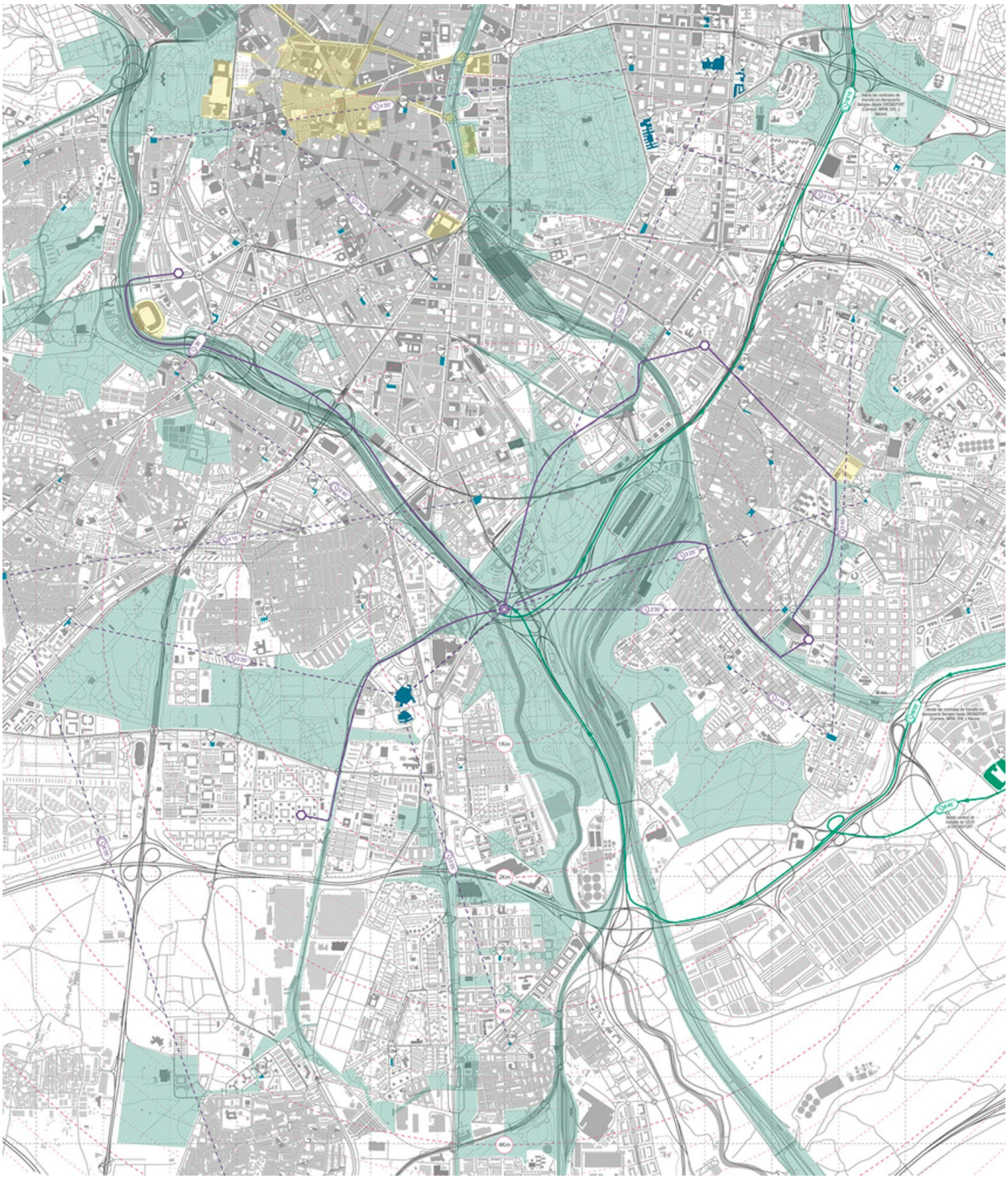

And Fernández took those flight patterns seriously, even going so far as to mark up a map of the city to show potential routes and service radii. He really considered the placement of the droneport, as well as its actual design.

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Another drawing, showcasing the height of the structure, also shows people milling about beneath it and what looks to be an observation deck of a sort at the top. It would make for a great, scenic place for employees to take their lunch.

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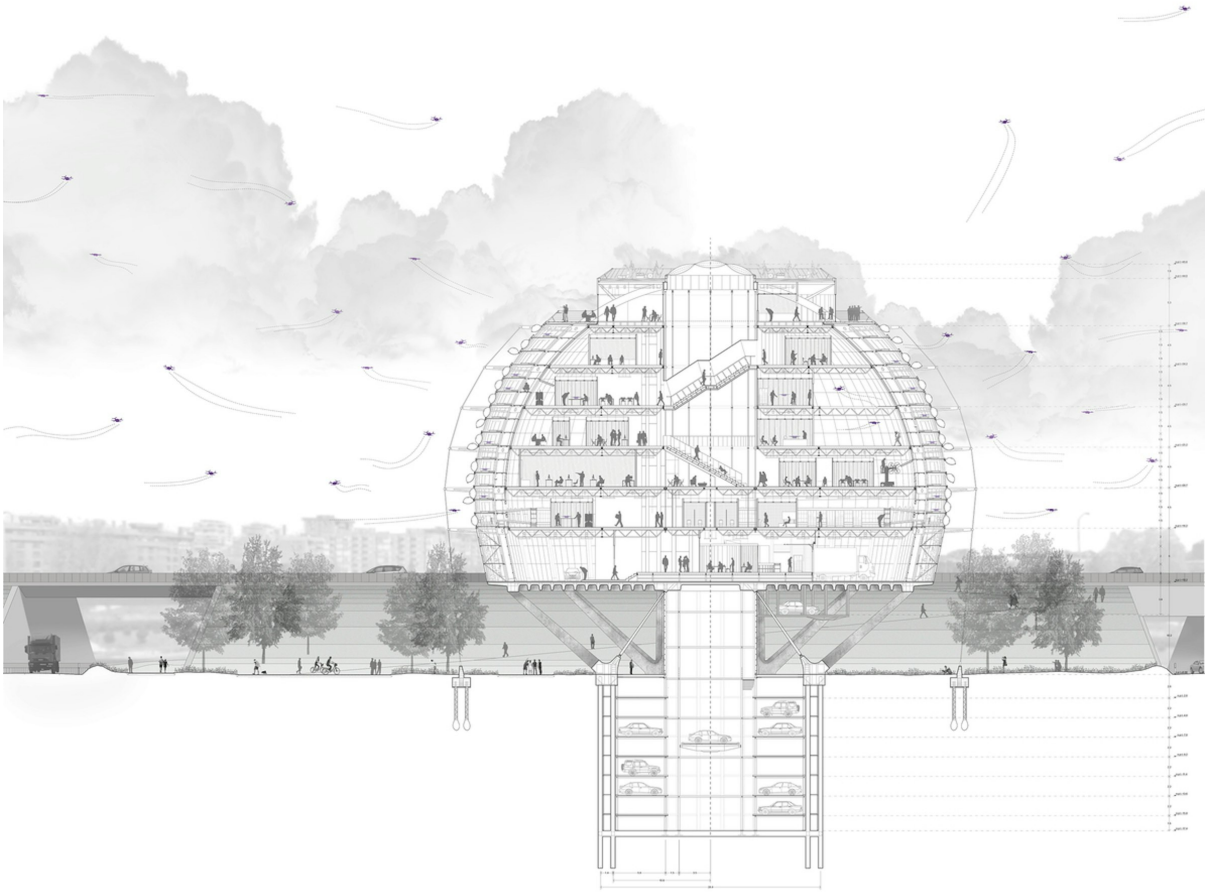

A cross section of the building, taken from the same angle as the previous picture, showcases each individual floor. The droneport comes complete with a loading dock, where trucks can offload large shipments to be sorted for delivery, as well as a number of packaging rooms, where drones would collect packages before being sent out via the circular hatches that dot the outside.

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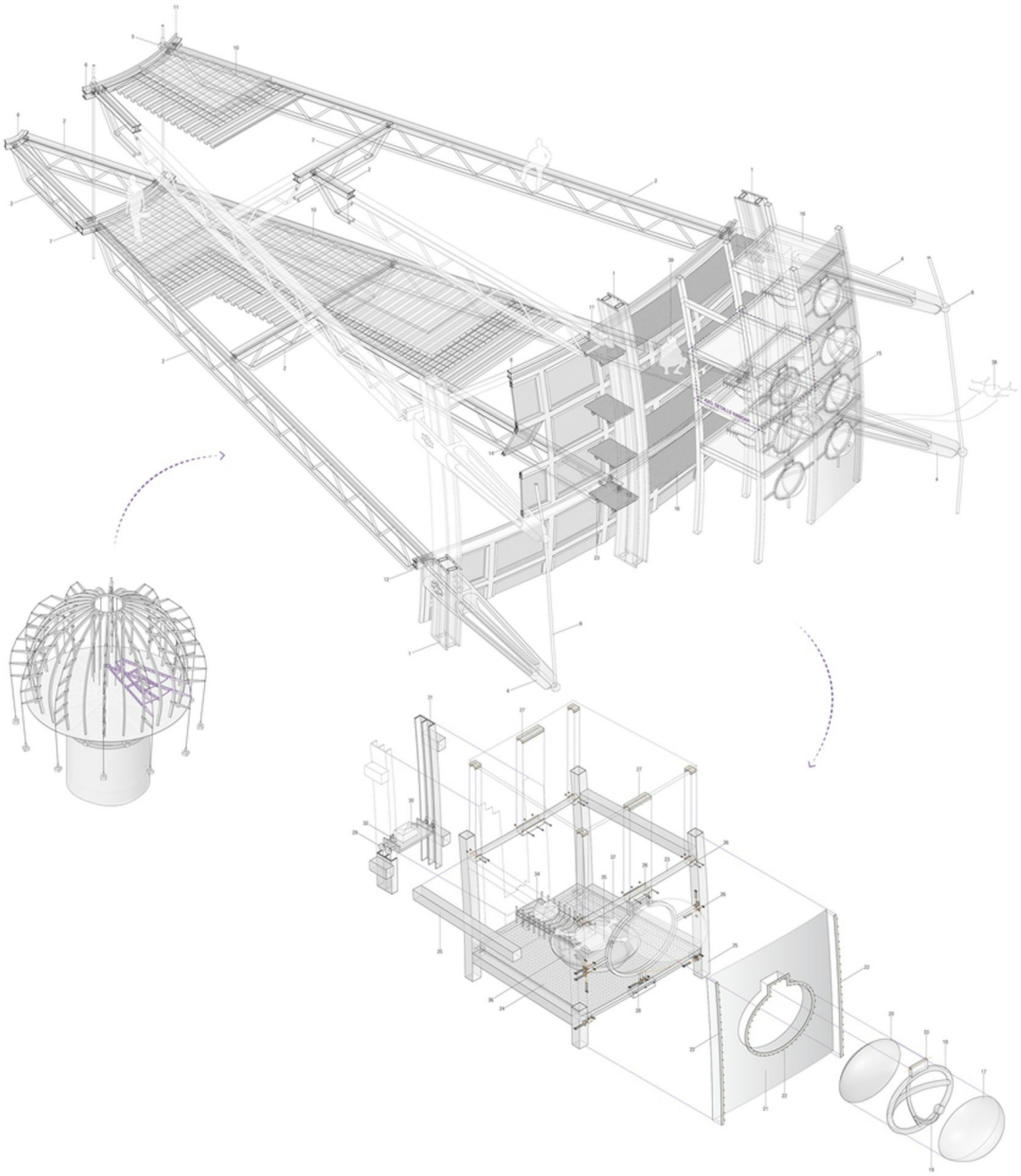

Here’s a close-up look at how the drones would actually get into the building. The hatches make for quick and fluid access. As shown in the upper portion of the picture, and employee could be waiting inside for the drones as they return, ready to hand of the next package(s) and facilitate a lightning fast turnaround.

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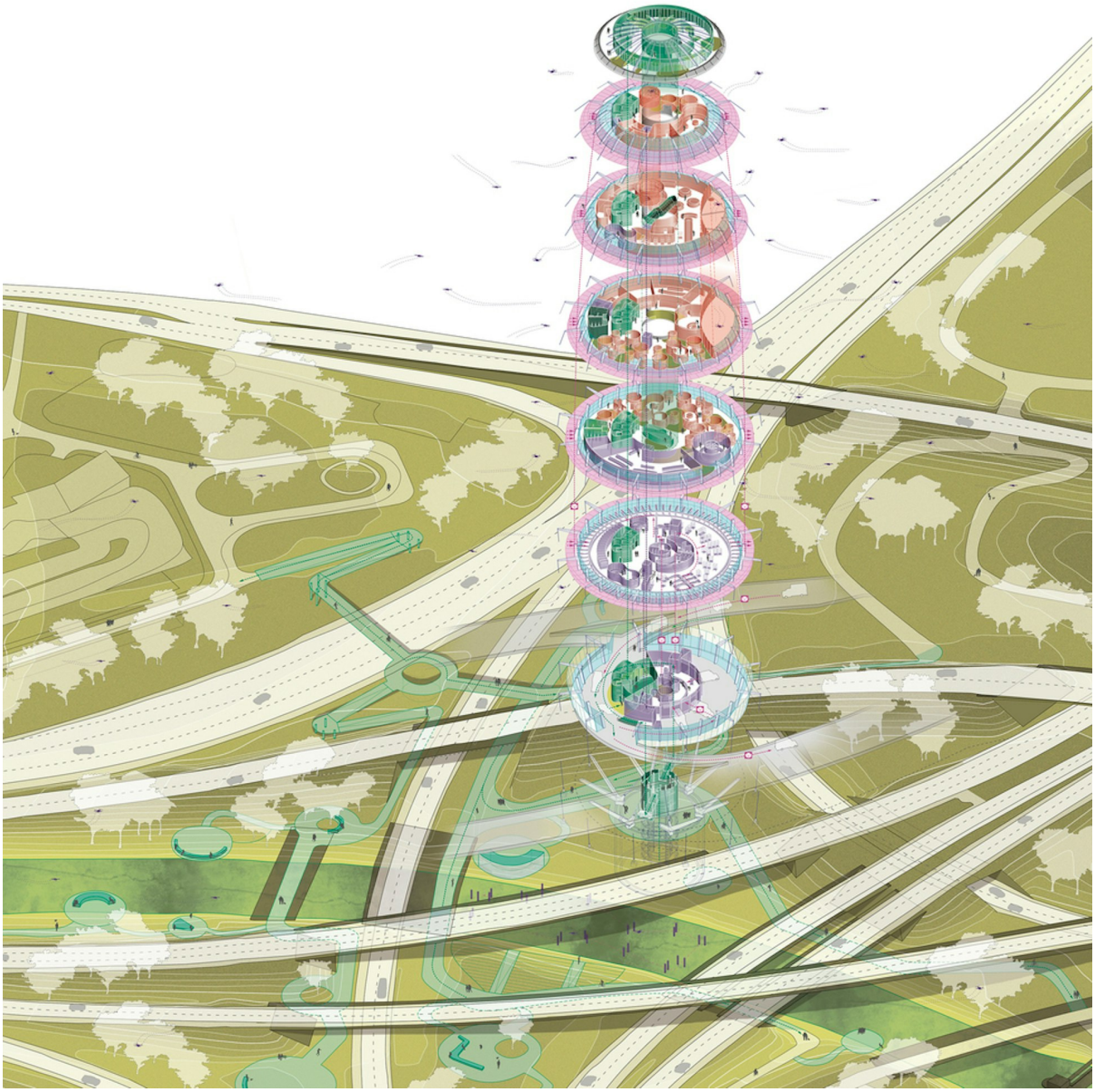

This stacked view of the six proposed floors in the design shows that just about every floors has entry points for the delivery drones, while also housing other facilities — likely offices, sorting rooms, etc. — in the interior.

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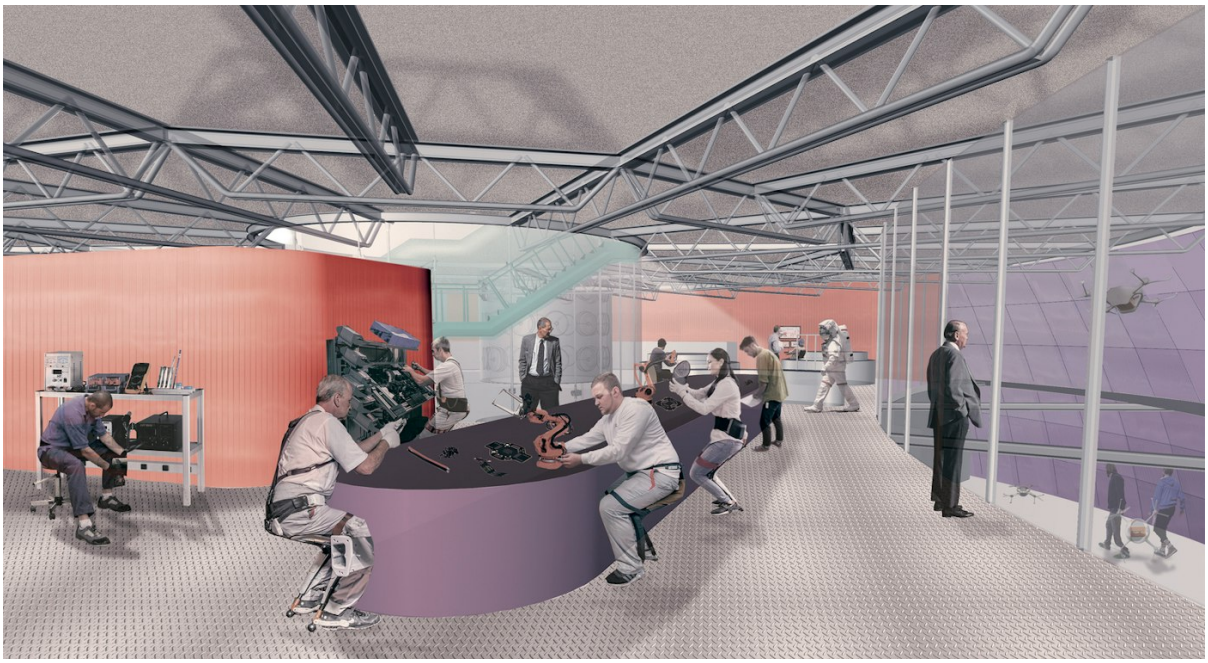

To top it all off, Fernández gives us a look inside the actual building. There, we can see people who look like repair technicians wearing leg exoskeletons (which are currently in seat mode) working with some engineering equipment. This suggests that any drone repairs or maintenance would be done on-site, further localizing and streamlining the process.

A droneport like this would be a dream come true for any urban center, optimizing the process of delivering packages to consumers in a safe and, dare we say it, gorgeous fashion. Architecture like this also raises further questions, such as how else the use of drones will impact urban landscapes. It's a question that designers like Fernández are working on answering, and they're busy as a, well, bee.

Photos via ArchDaily (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

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