

Craft School in Anderlecht

Project book



PROJECT BOOK

Craft School in Anderlecht, Brussels

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PROLOGUE

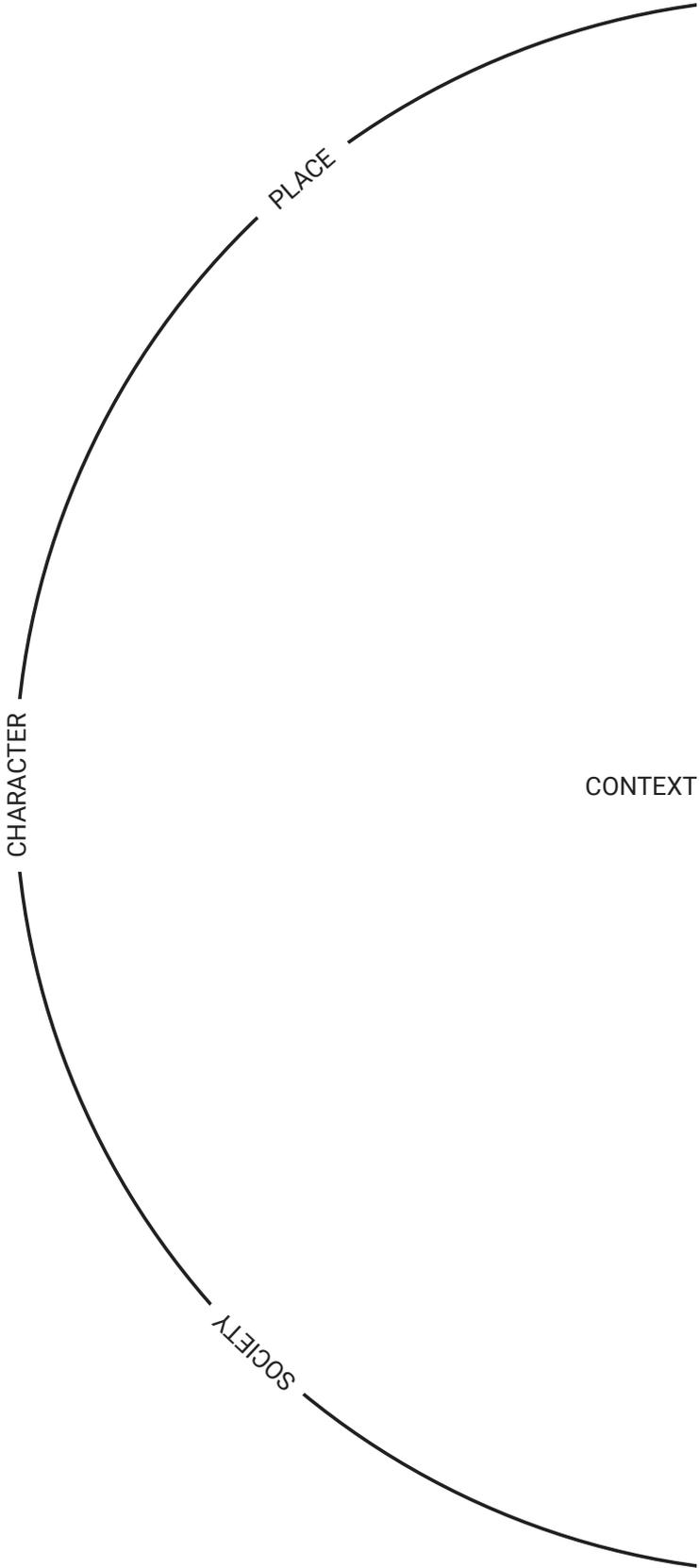
City of Brussels has a very rich history of transformation and strong identity created throughout the history. However, like many of European cities – its identity in terms of architectural style started to unify and became standardized. We can observe the cities all over the world being overwhelmed by the buildings made in unified, international style and therefore losing their identity. The issue of Brusselization left its mark on the city in the last century. Today, rapidly changing circumstances, globalization and growing demands do not leave much time for architects to properly analyse the context, which is also a matter which can be understood in different ways. Regarding the theme of bricolage or spolia in architecture I started my considerations about how the context and current situation in-place can be used as a tool to build the position of the architect towards the place. Regardless of the evaluation of the events from history, it is what has brought us here and probably triggered all the questions about identity crisis. The reality and present situation is also a valuable source of information about certain logic of events in the past. Therefore how can we use the data from the past to form the present? And I would extend this question to ask how can the present state become a valuable record of its time for the future? To be specific about my concerns, I asked myself how can the lost identity be found in this image of the city?

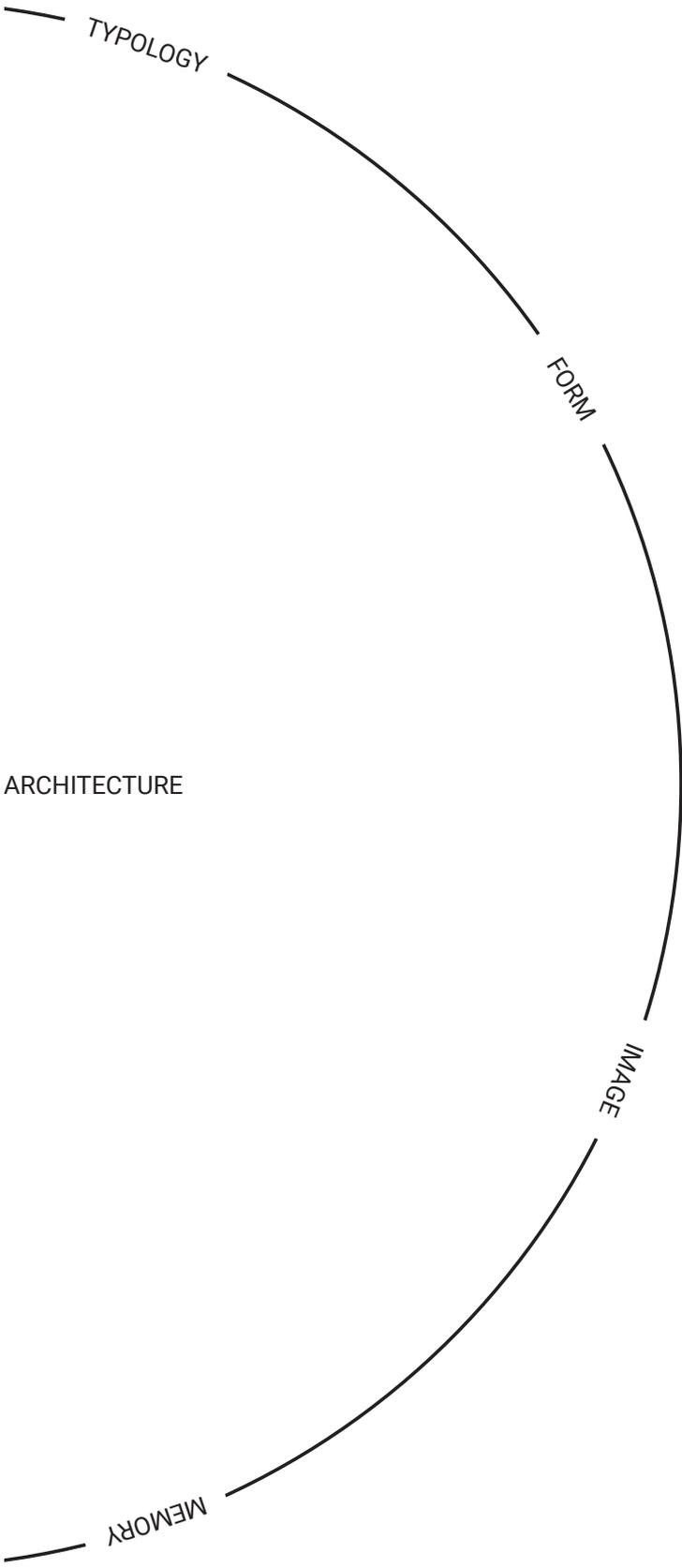
Following the research topic of collective memory, I started to analyse the site two-fold. On one hand it was conducted as a very pragmatic spatial research, trying to evaluate what is there and what's its condition based on available data. That is the most common and effective way to quickly feel the scale and importance of the neighbourhood. However, it does not say everything and here is the point, where the other view on the site became handy, relying more on the insight into the cultural importance of the neighbourhood and seeking for the identity within the place. Obviously, those two views overlap in many aspects, but looking at the place from human-eye perspective reveals the most important factor of each neighbourhood - the society.

Therefore, this book is divided into parts defining the interdependence between society, character and place - revealing the way how the decision making process was driven by the reality in place. Relation between architecture and context shows how those both factors constitute to the evolution of the place and its memory. This part explains how the critical use of the context becomes the tool to create architecture and how the architecture continues this context in return. In the end, the dependence of typology, form and image continues the story of the Craft School project in Anderlecht, explaining how all factors mentioned above continue the existing memory of the place.



Brusselization process - demolition of old town house for new developments.
Source: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/opinion/55891/the-architectural-destruction-of-brussels-incompetent-decision-making-and-the-rise-of-brusselization/>





THE SOCIETY AND THE CHARACTER

Regarding different realms, in which each neighbourhood operates, the typical division into public, collective and private spaces can be extracted. The public realm, however also goes through various transformations, which limit its publicity. This privatisation is particularly visible within the business districts and shopping areas, which regularly put pressure on the suburban neighbourhoods, forcing them sometimes to withdraw from the business. In fact, those small businesses constitute a lot to the perception of the street as a valuable factor constituting to the collective memory and identity within the neighbourhood. Regardless of the global scale of the city, this issue is also a crucial in terms of gentrification of the neighbourhood. Following the financial schemes of gentrification, which usually pushes out existing inhabitants somewhere else or challenging their future activities within the neighbourhood.

The strategy for the district aims for preserving the street - Rue de Bassins as an independent, self-sufficient part of the site with its own character. The approach to the master plan is fragmentary - spotting the important parts of the site, its weaknesses and strengths and trying to either improve or at least not disturb their activity. This collage of different characters, which site carries reveals its fragmented character and in effect leads to the defining the place as a summary of all those spatial and social factors visible on-site.

The corners seem to be important points for social interaction and gatherings – what also fits into Christopher Alexander's pattern of activity nodes for the neighbourhood. Those parts also become the intersection points putting together this fragmented image of the site. However, one of them is neglected, where the empty playground is located and this is the point which I see as an improvement.

The highest building - Les Goujons - visible on site is also a reminiscence of Brusselization process, the connection to the wider history of Brussels, therefore the master plan aims to expose it and instead of turning it down, provide an appropriate placement for this structure, praising its existence instead of treating it as an obstacle.

The master plan tries to connect two sides of the block, which does not have any collective space and the buildings are mostly turned to the outside of it. The park and green passages leading through the block on one hand allow this connection and give back the importance of Les Goujons building in the area.



Picture from the site - Rue de Bassins. Source: Author.



Picture from the site - Rue de Bassins. Source: Author.

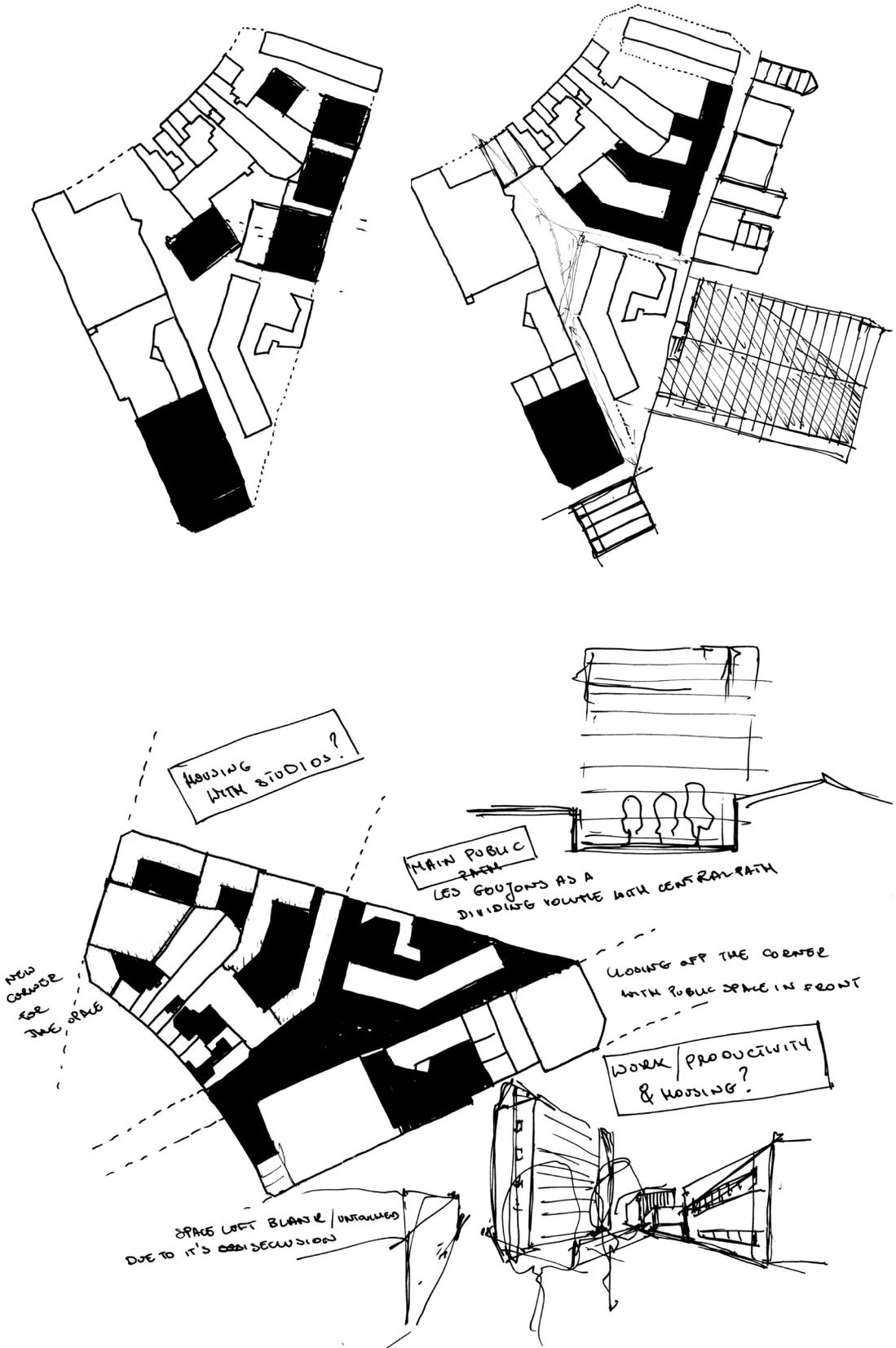


Picture of the site - Les Goujons. Source: Author.

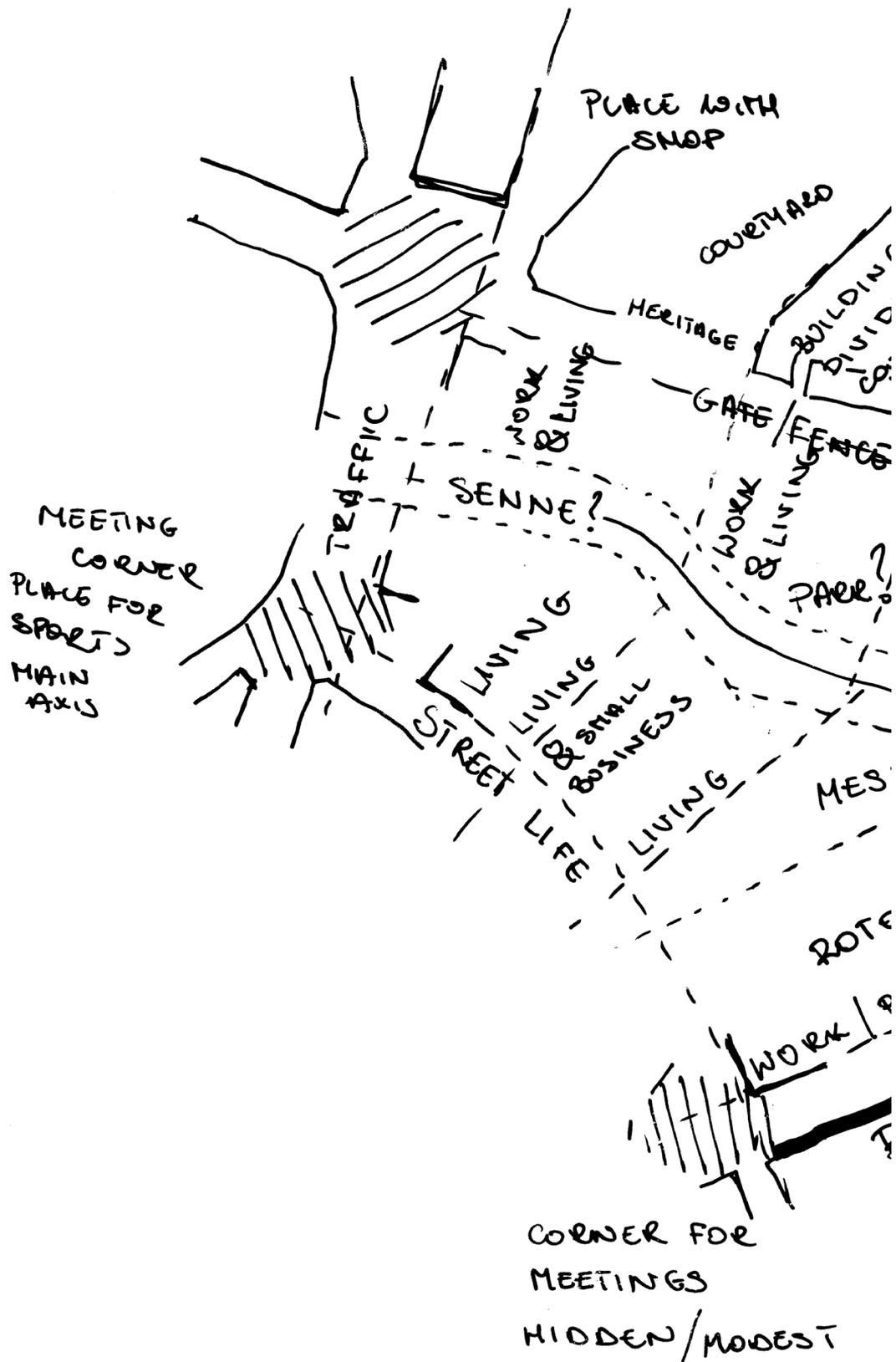


Local spots of gathering. Source: Author.

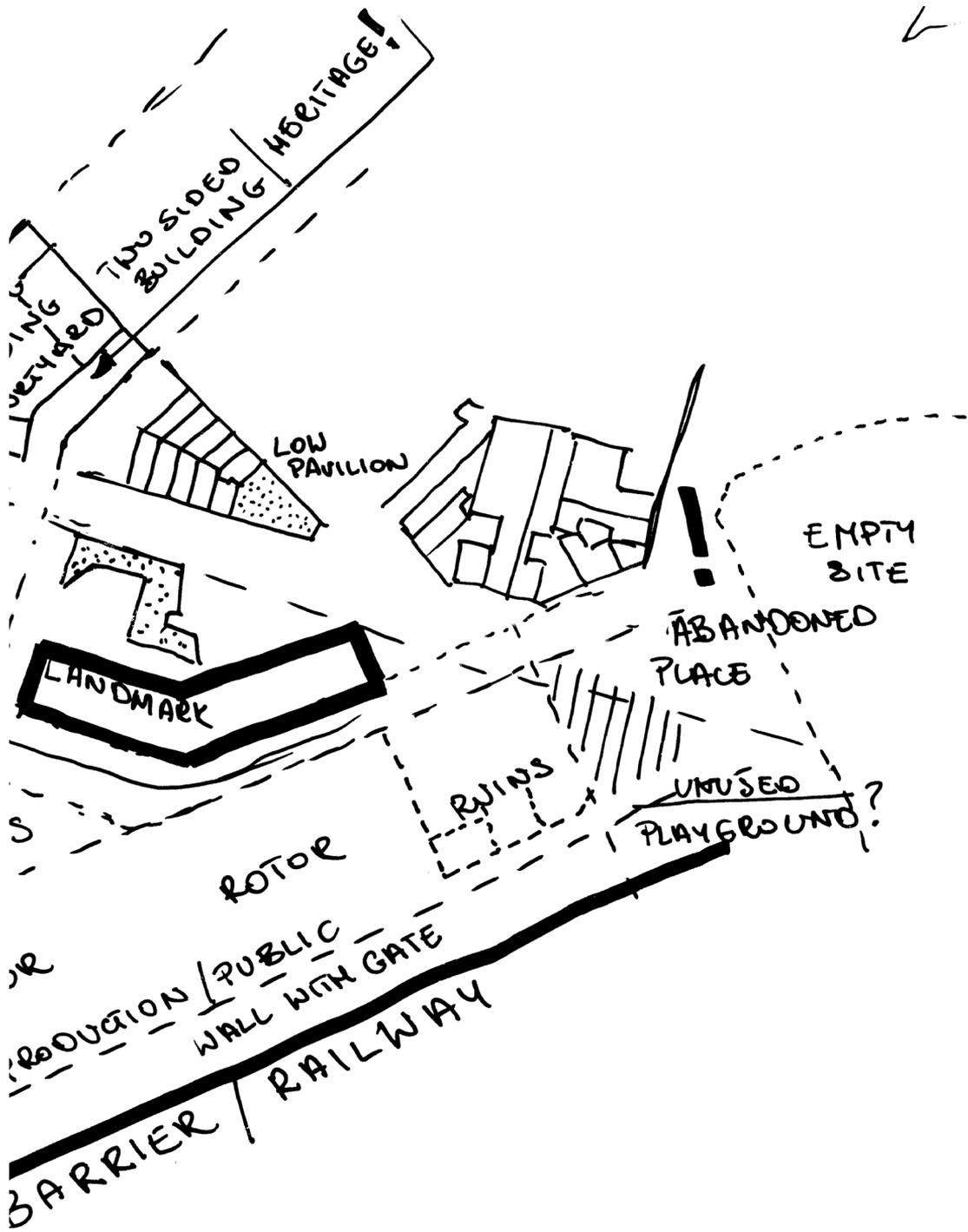




Concept sketches for master-planning phase of the project



Mind-map sketch of the site, perspective of the architect as a spectator.



THE PLACE

The research on collective memory guided me during the master planning stage and helped to decide what to change and what should I leave as it is. I used my site visit to construct my perspective on the site visible on the sketched mind-map and it became a tool for me to define the design strategy and further decisions. The aim was to express the image of the Anderlecht - post-industrial, mixed and fragmented place with a rich history. Therefore, I have formulated four points for an architecture of remembrance which is my strategy for the master plan design. It aims to celebrate the fragmentation of the block, but also to improve the spatial quality with defining the areas more precisely.

One, mind map and site visit helped to recognise the corners of the site as activity nodes for the block. Therefore, the urban plan considers street life as something that should be preserved and not interrupted. However, the corner from the City Gate side is the only one which is abandoned, with a lot of potential due to its placement in regard to other blocks in the surroundings. Also, Rue de Bassins is treated as a functioning street with its own memory and character, which is going to be preserved.

Two, the block is a collage of everything both in form and function. Industry, housing, commercial ground floors, social housing and a park mixed together within large post-industrial buildings, traditional town houses and high rise slab building. The site carries traces of the history of its own transition in time, different styles of buildings, irregular placement and the trace of the Senne river, once going through the site and now being only a part of the past times. The design aims to enhance the fragmentation and make the most of it. Therefore, the industrial strip is introduced to answer the productive metropolis agenda, with a new building at the end of it. Existing park is replaced with new buildings and the new park is given to Les Goujons as void connecting two opposite streets, two fragments and being one of them as well by opening a perspective and giving meaning to high rise slab building in this plot. The new buildings in the area aim to activate the park and a series of courtyards open possibilities for creating different notions of place. Les Goujons is treated as a landmark of the plot and the park underlines its presence. Additionally, the new introduced buildings correspond also both with the last fragment of the block and context of opposite buildings.

Three, the reference to the memory of the place is not only through preservation and intervention in a formal way of thinking. By introducing the craft school, the theme of the productive city and industrial past are tackled in an indirect way - not through looking at the immediate solution, but by providing an education for the future. The place, once famous for its textile industry can take advantage of the qualities forgotten in transition, but very valuable to the present.

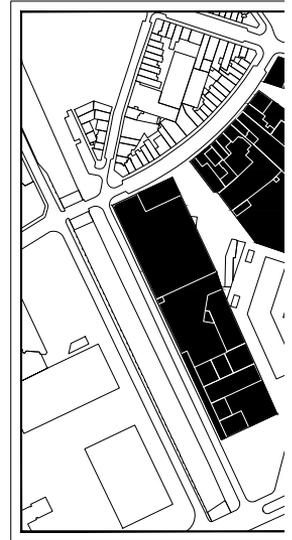
Four, Rue des Bassins is a street with many small businesses, which are the local community's way of living, being affordable and local places having a crucial influence on collective memory. It can be seen as space, which can be treated as an example of the public promenade which is not privatized – contrary to how Christine Boyer describes modern public space. Therefore, the masterplan idea was to leave the Rue de Bassins as much as it is, to let the current memory continue. However, the design takes advantage of two-sidedness of the block to write a new history of the place, parallel to the existing one.

The intervention starts with a definition of fragments visible on the site to form the functional blocks of buildings. Next, the process of refurbishing the old buildings would start - which can be a separate part of the design process. After this, the public spaces will be formed to connect two sides of the site. In the last stage of the intervention, new buildings are placed to activate the new vacant spaces and provide stable development of the place. Therefore, the first fragment is the industrial strip which also will work as noise insulation for the park which is the second fragment. Moved park gives again the Les Goujons its placement within the green area and allows inhabitants to overlook it. Also, the park in its new placement connects two sides of the urban block. The next fragment is about buildings which mix the working and living with long, narrow plots, reaching to the centre of the site. Last two fragments are closely related to each other, the lonely building with different typology than the rest of the site and the green passage which can be treated as buffer zone serving this building.



ACTIVITY NODES

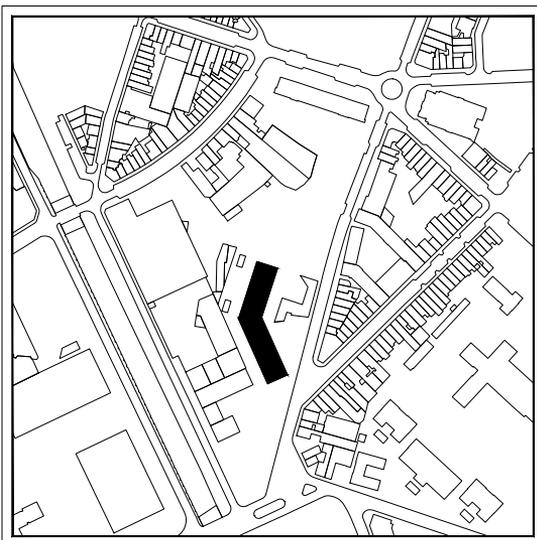
Importance of corners in the neighbourhood for local life.



FRAGMENTATION

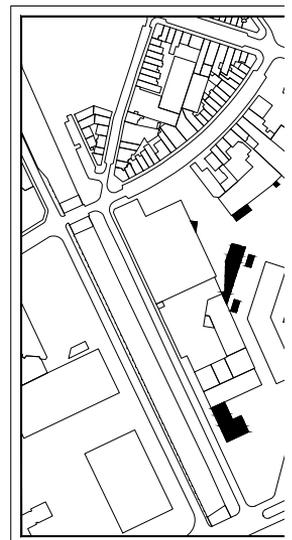
Definition of the fragment place.

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LANDMARK

Les Goujons as a formal dominant of the place, which presence can contribute to the identity.

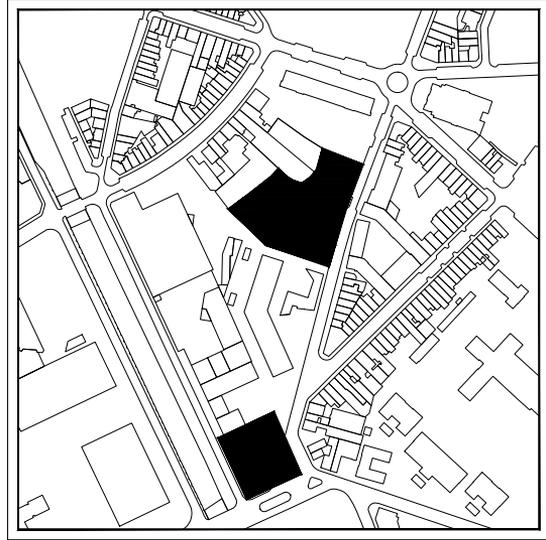


DEMOLITION

Aiming for smallest possible existing structures on the site.



ented character of the

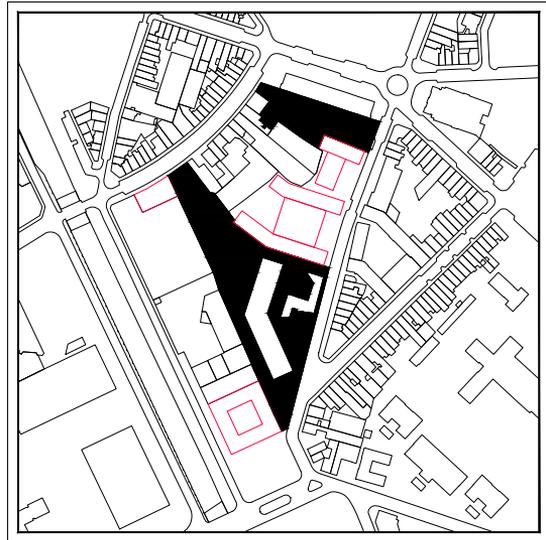


PUBLIC SPACES

Pointing out potential places of improvement for the public realm of the site - neglected corner and inaccessible park.



ossible intervention into the site.



NEW STRUCTURES

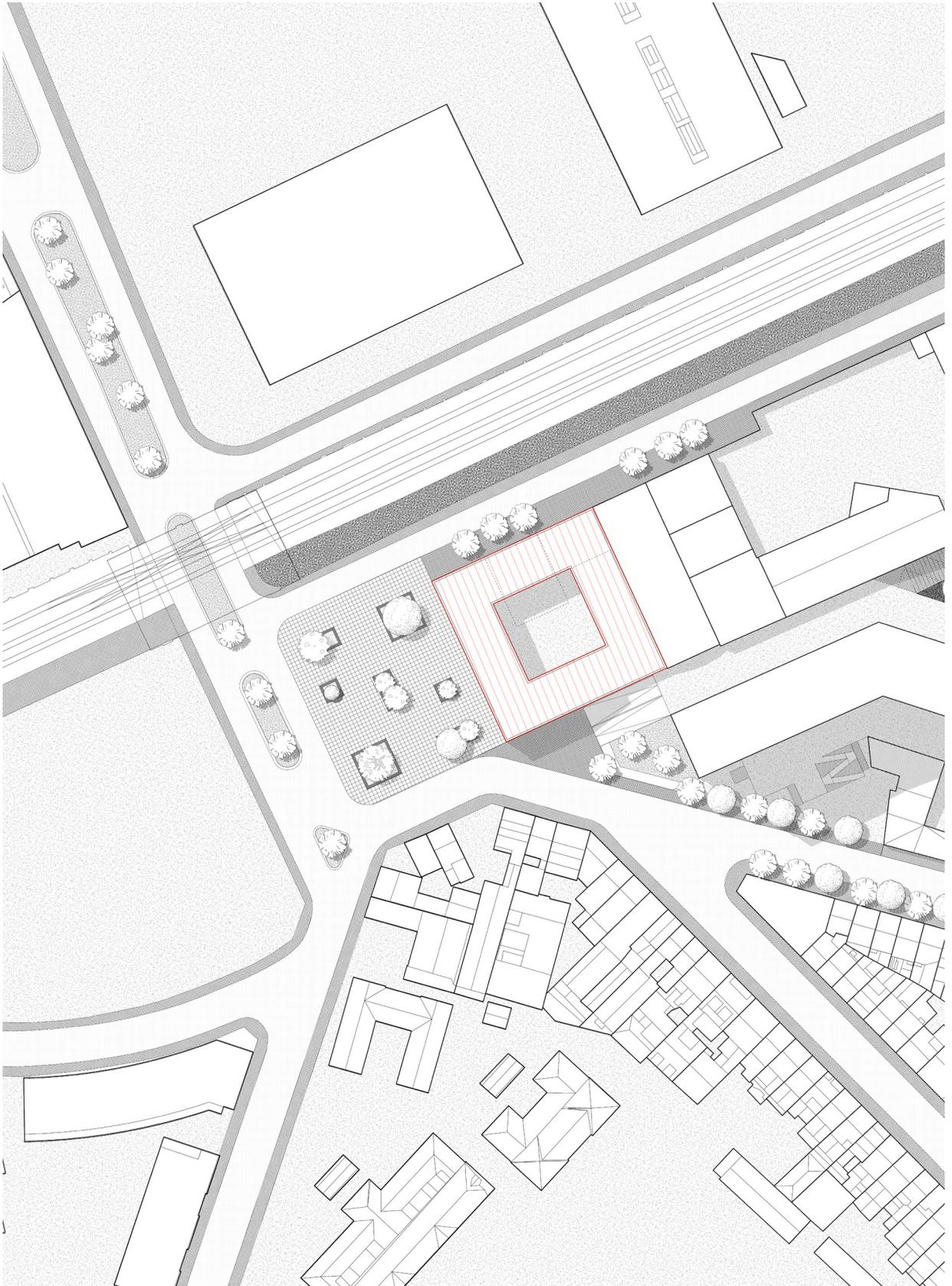
New buildings underline new public spaces as well as created passages connecting two sides of the site.



Urban context of Kuregem, Anderlecht - fragmentation.

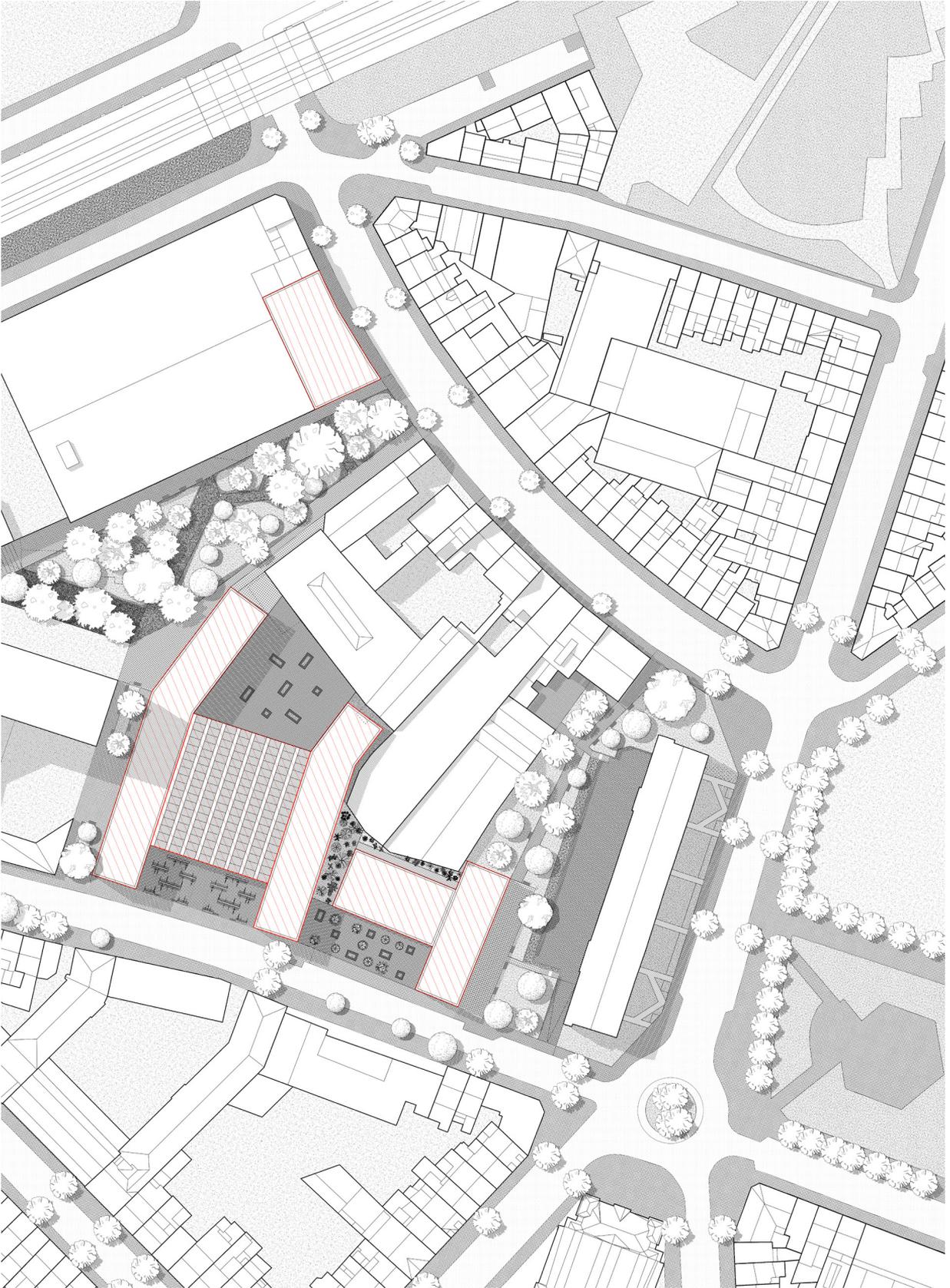


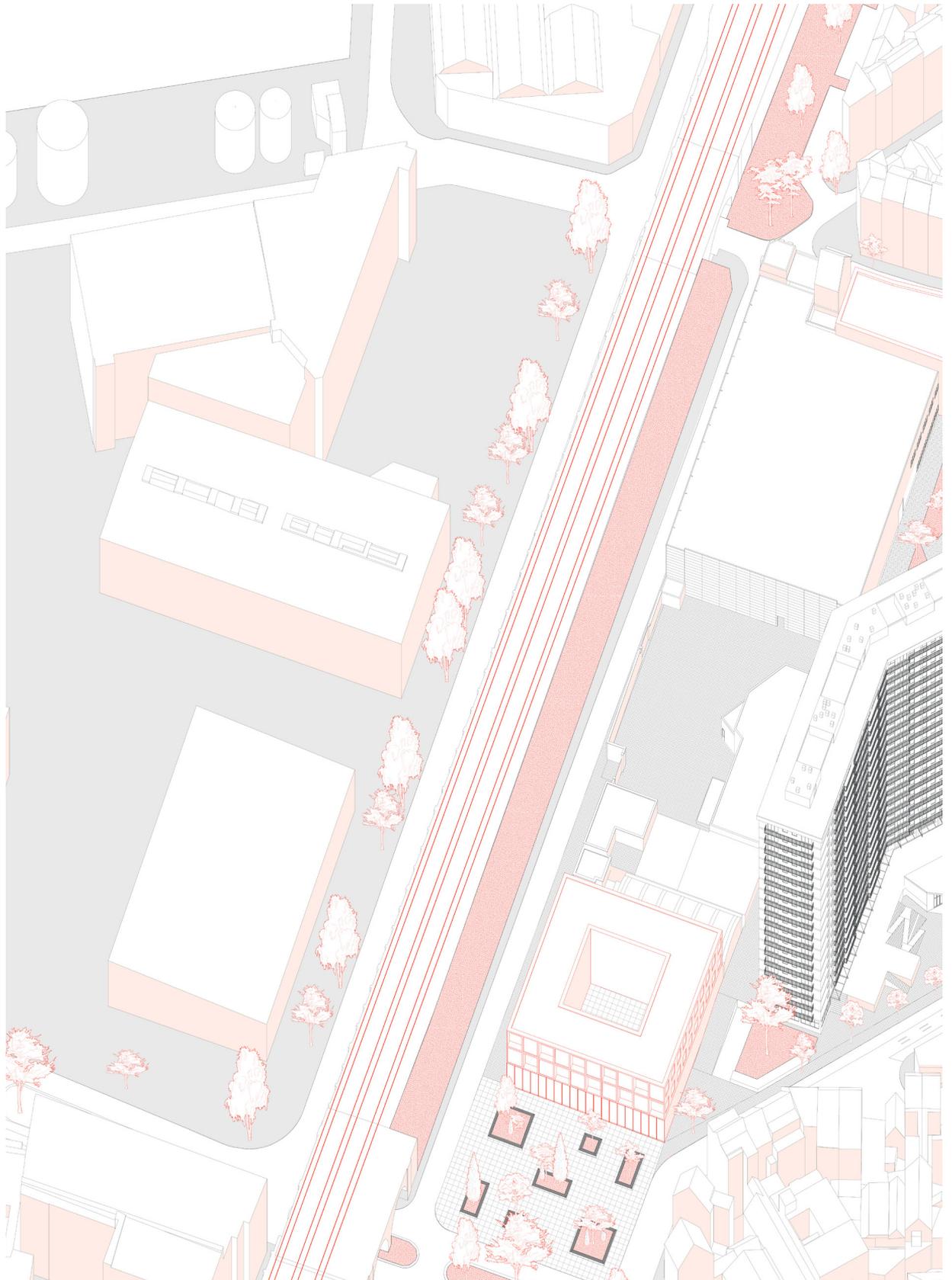
Initial concept for the master-plan, concept sketches.



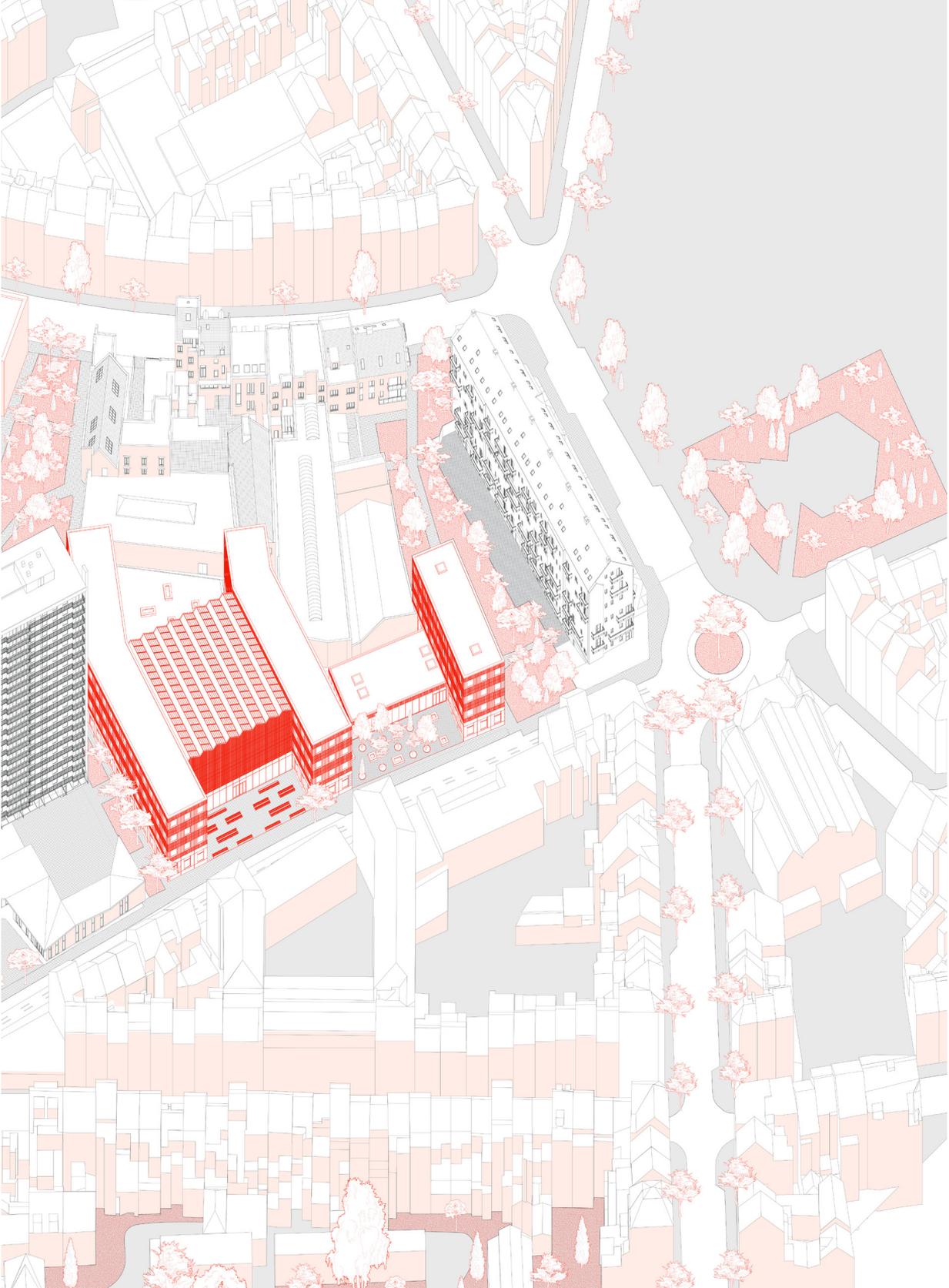
Site plan with red outlines of the buildings.







Axonometric projection of the site



THE CONTEXT AND THE ARCHITECTURE

The extension of the master plan is continued through the Craft School building. In this part of the project, the context plays biggest role in constituting the architecture in the place and also later, this urban artifact becomes the context itself. Therefore, the initial steps in terms of defining building's volume have crucial influence on the future functioning of its surrounding.

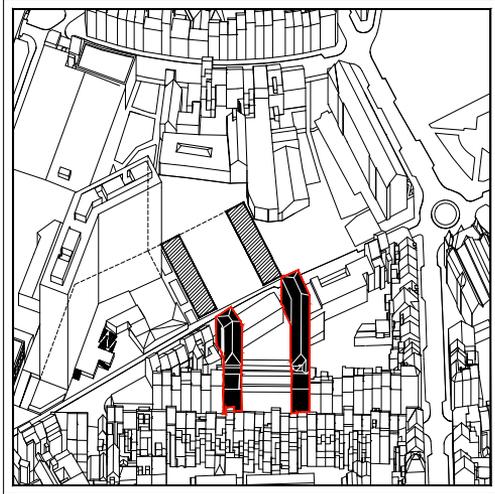
The context is understood in two ways. Firstly, it creates the physical constraint, which is followed by architecture. The uniqueness of the design itself and its relation to the context comes from the limitations which are imposed on its structure. Looking through the scope of collective memory, the architecture becomes a record of certain reality of the place. In that case, the architecture reacts to the context, but follows it up to certain point. In terms of the project, the Craft School takes a strong reference with the proportions from the existing vocational school in the area. The building also reacts to the presence of Les Goujons, marking its position with a corner. However, the most important aspect of this is extending the existing rhythm in the street. Placement of the third volume perpendicularly to the street creates a connection between Les Goujons and the last building on the site. In that manner, the architecture makes the context more valuable and gives it new meaning.

On the other hand, the context is a source of information. Its presence is a derivative of numerous changes and evolution of the site. To be completely aware of use of certain patterns on site, the architect should study the context's behaviour, which helps to create meaningful form on the basis of the context, through the interpretation of its presence and not mimicking. The context creates architecture, which continues the existing story in the area, but also extends it further.

The architecture, however is not only a bare function, what was claimed by modernists. The architecture also frames the space around it, creates the public realm. The word boundary brings quite negative connotations of isolating certain piece of land and the building should do the contrary - the boundary should mark the presence of something else.

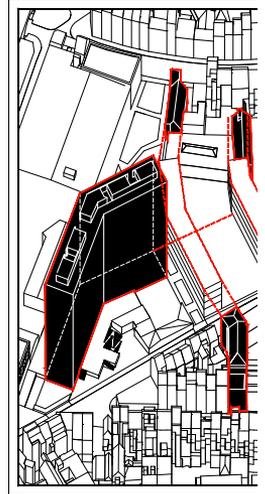


Front facade of the existing vocational school in the neighbourhood.



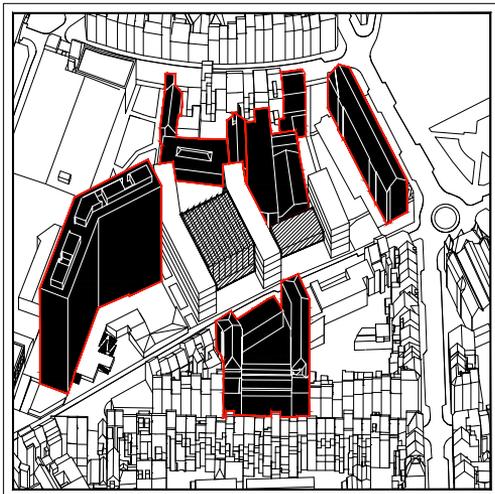
EXISTING VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Continuation of the form of the existing vocational school in the neighbourhood.



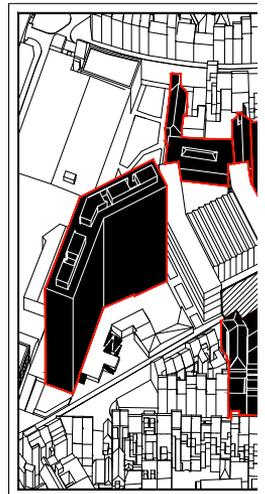
CONTEXT LOGIC

Les Goujons as a box of the buildings stretching from building to the other :



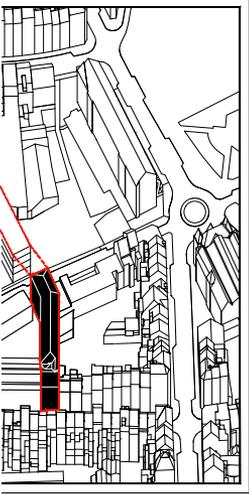
FILL-IN

Experimentation hall and the reading room for the library carving out the entrance spaces accessible from the street.

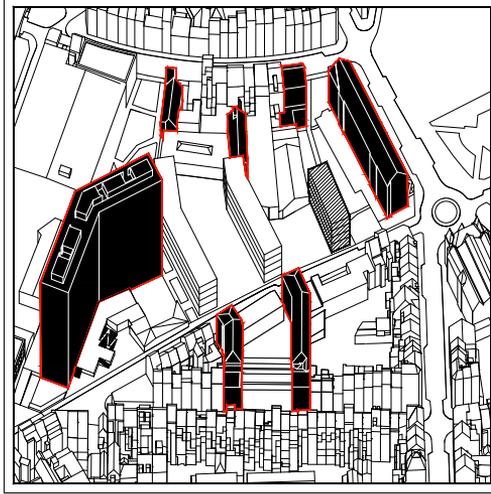


ARCHITECTURE CREATION

New public spaces of users and local community

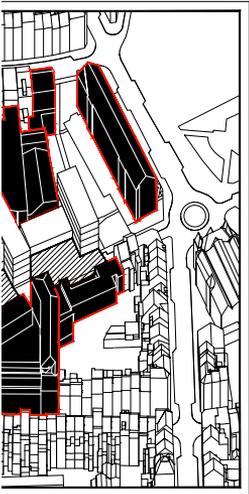


Order defining change
Structure, fitting new
side.



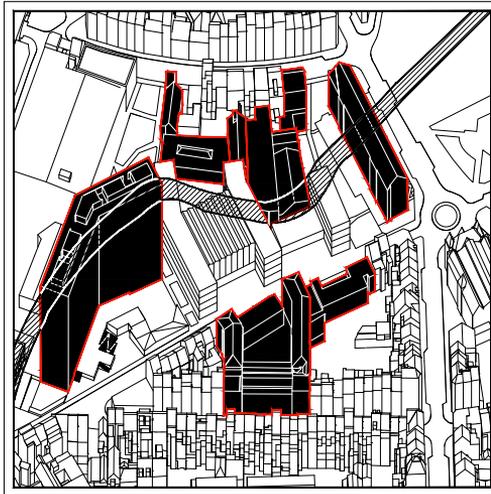
NEGOTIATION

Third building creating dialogue between
the slab social housing and the last
building on the site.



OPENING CONTEXT

Opening for the school
community.



MEMORY OF THE SENNE

Senne river memory being an important
factor for future development of the
project.

THE CRAFT SCHOOL IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

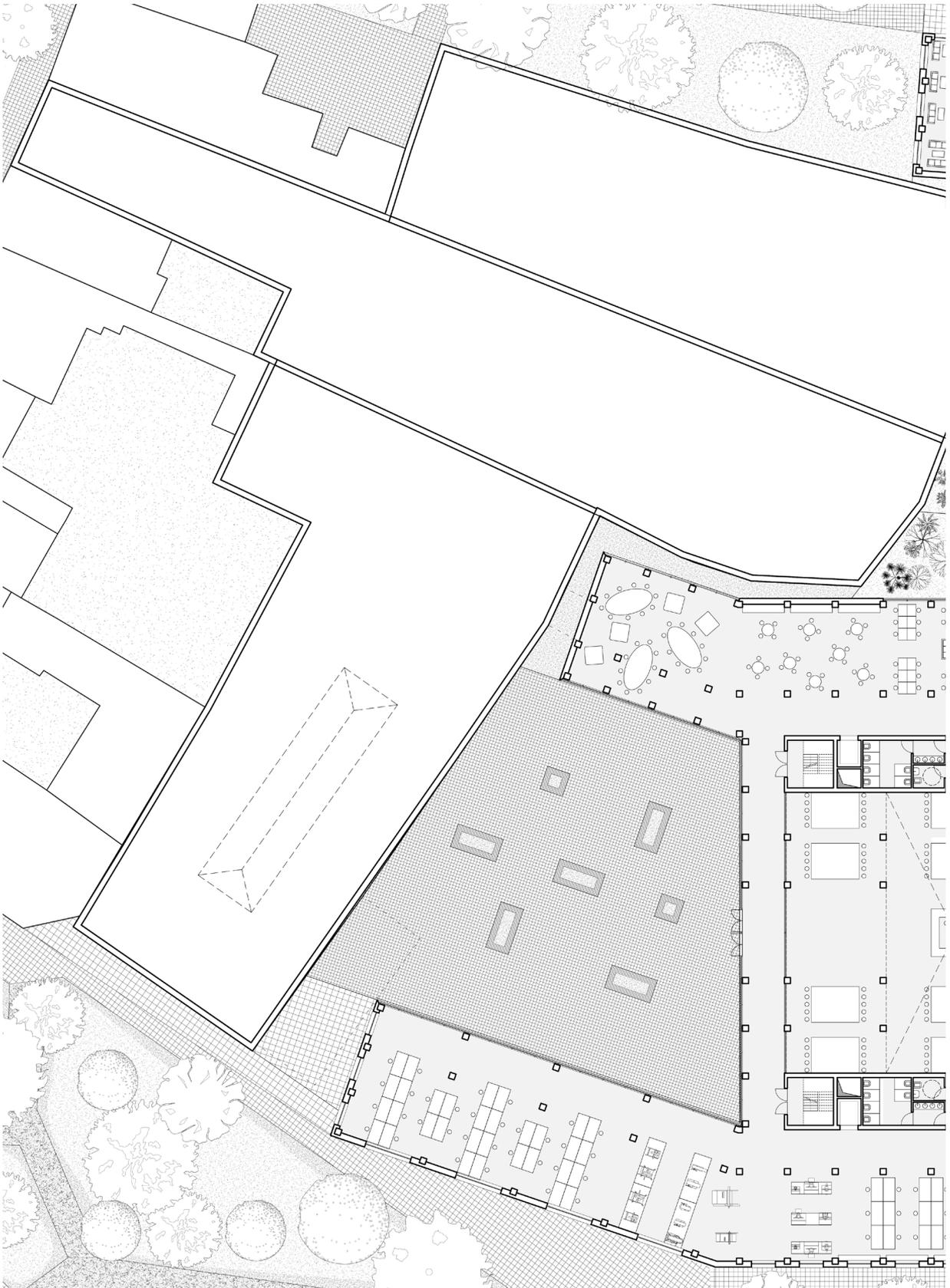
The idea of the function is two-fold. Firstly, Brussels aspires to become a productive metropolis, so to bring back the production to the city. Craft Schools always had a huge contribution to that by developing local crafts and providing skilled people. Throughout the history of course craft became something more than just a skill, therefore an education also needs to adjust to nowadays conditions.

Secondly, Schools contribute a lot to the local identity of the place – beside developing local tradition and crafts – their spatial presence raises the range of the neighbourhood. Big number of students coming to the place provide the support for local amenities and stimulate further investments in the area. However, the important conclusion drawn from the research was also about creating place for local community and bonding the architecture with the surroundings. That is why the second part of the complex was made as a library. Its presence is clearly connected with the craft school; however, its purpose is to give a new place for the local community. The library forms the public realm physically, but also makes the craft school visible within the neighbourhood.

In the whole project, ground floor is an exception to the rest of the building, it is higher, its structure is different and façade has more variety than the upper floors. The craft school building is divided into three parts: practical education, experimentation lab and theoretical education. The forms are connected with the cores serving the whole building and being important points of structure. Practical part starts with the wood workshop, place where all the heavy machinery is located, experimentation lab is just next to it allowing high spacious workspace for biggest projects done in the school. It is important to notice that turn that building makes due to presence of Les Goujons affects the structural layout as well as façade. Theoretical part of the building has a student's hub, so the informal place of meetings with visual opening to the common ground between library and school. Courtyard behind the building has two purposes, one is to be a place of leisure for students and other one is to offer outdoor extension of the workshops. The library has a completely different scale entrance with the huge reading room in the middle, overlooking the back of the buildings and creating a patio in there. Other part is less formal with spaces for work or small events.

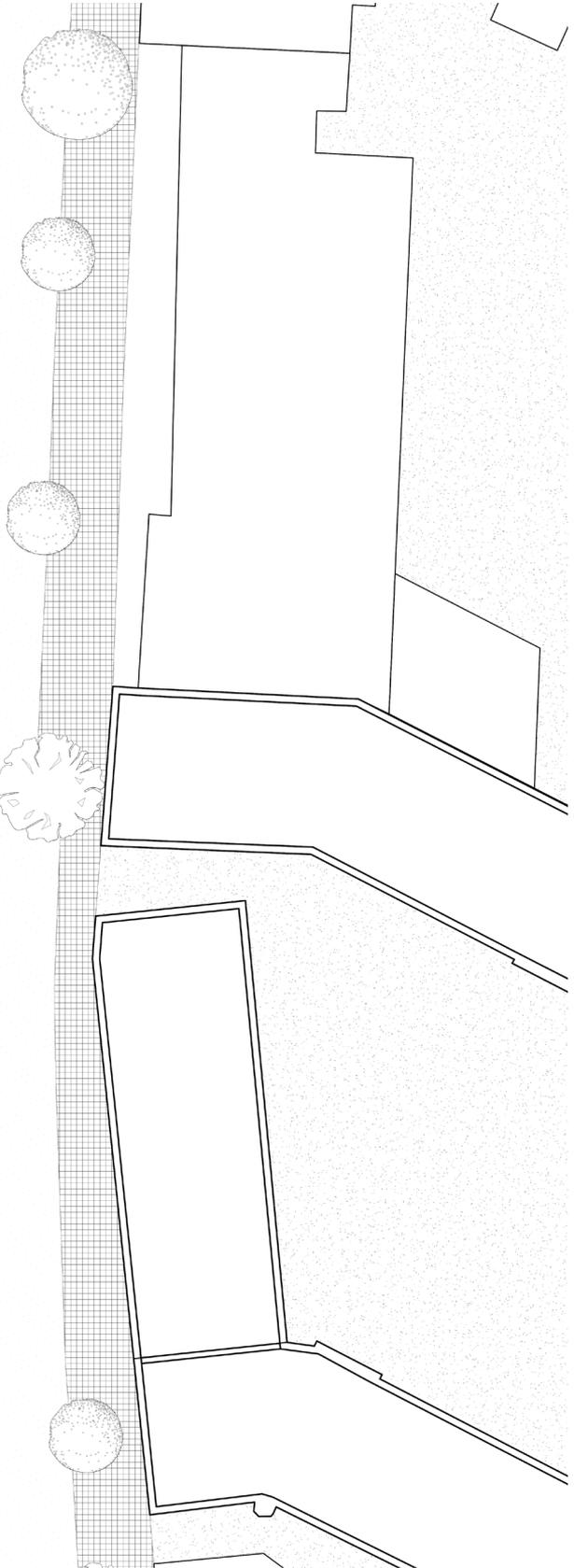
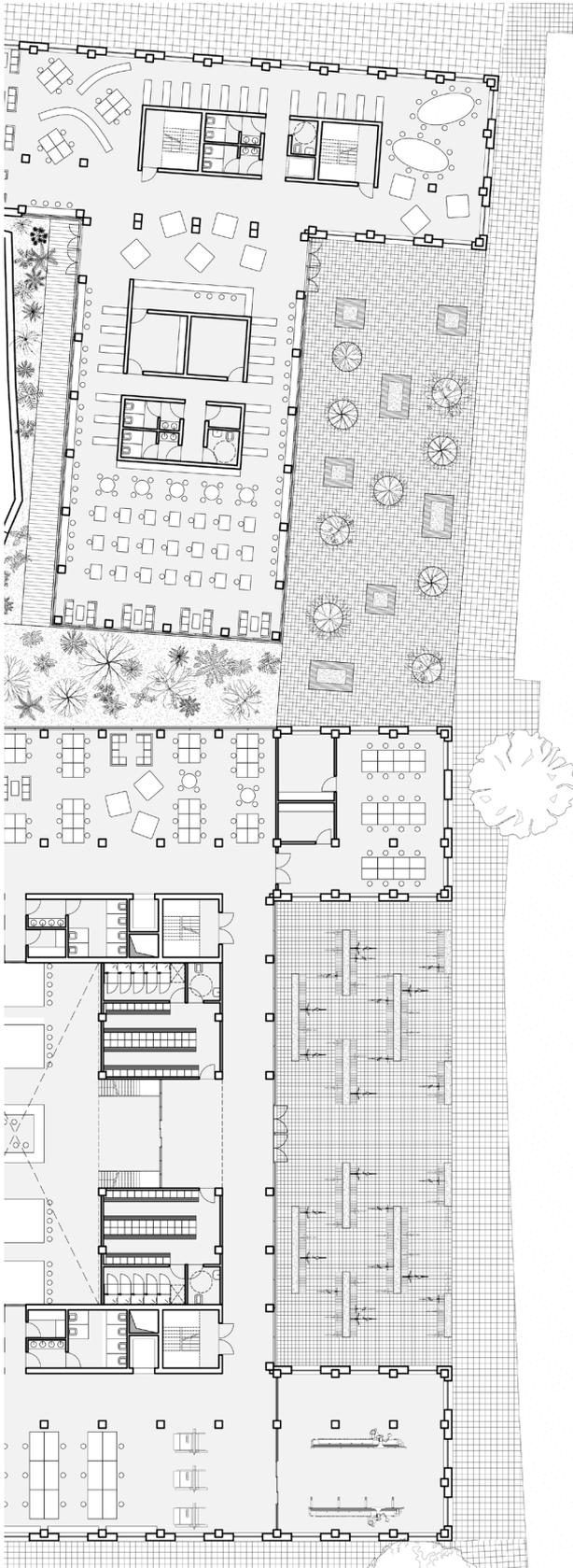


View from the Rue des Goujons - the Craft School presence in the street scape.

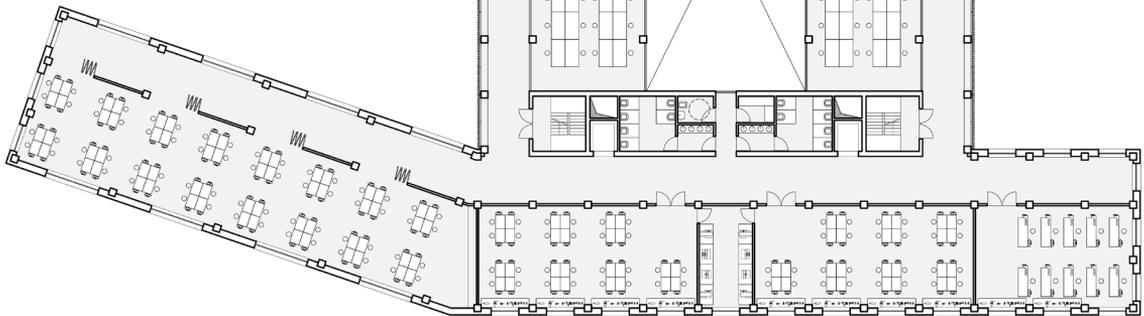
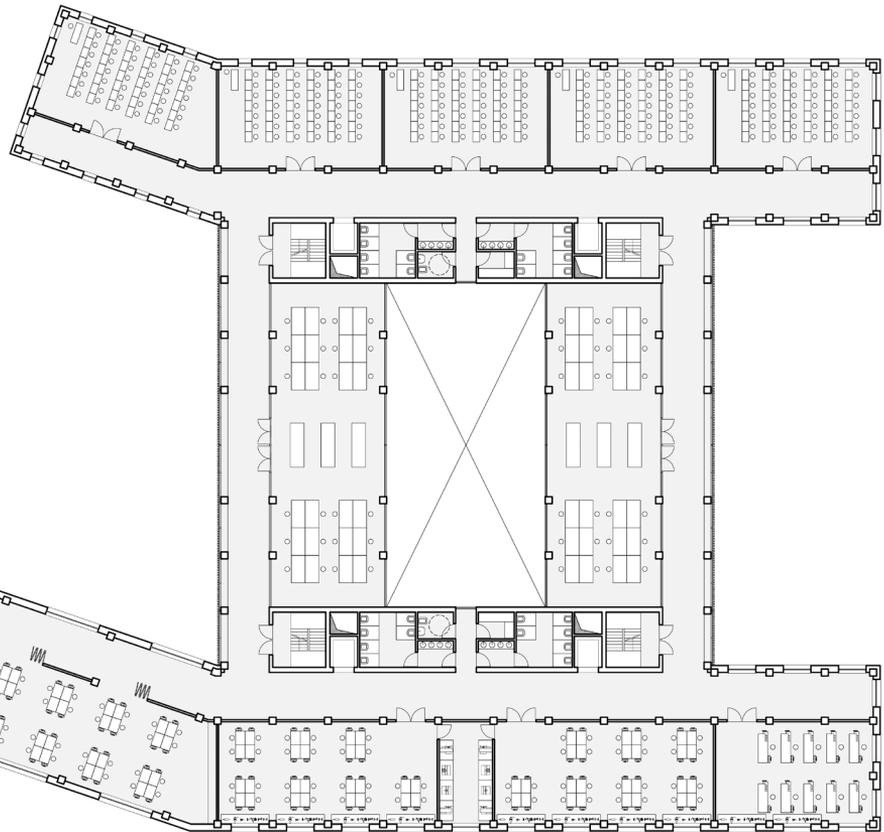
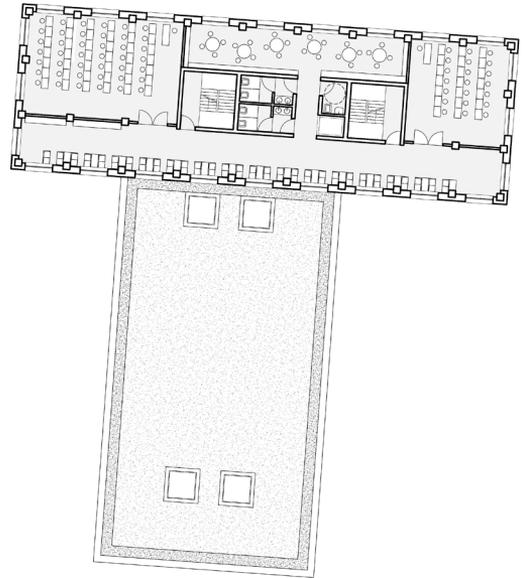


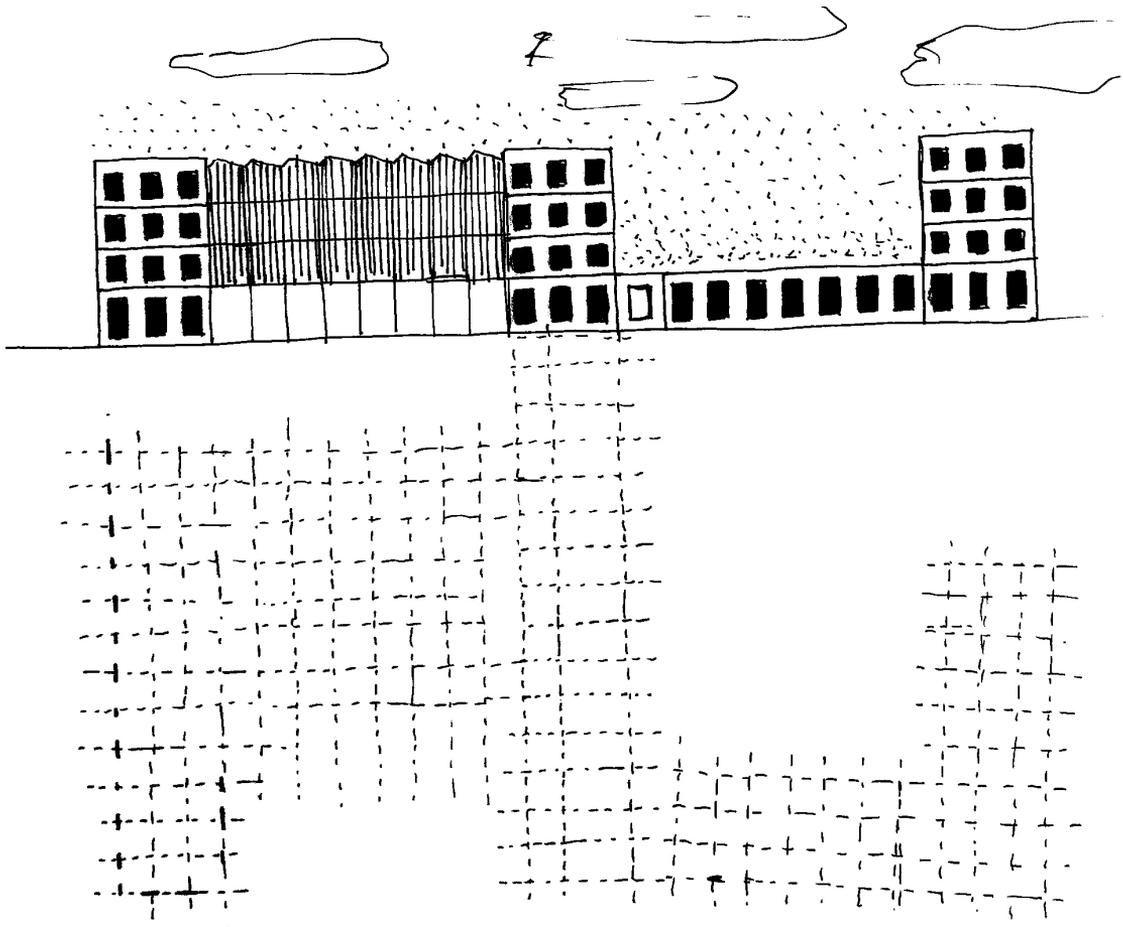
Ground floor plan

0 1 5 10 20



On the first floor the assembly workshops are located in practical education and seminar classrooms in theoretical. The library offers spaces for additional events, classes and other official activities. The experimentation lab has natural light provided from the top, so the communication allows free connection around it.





Concept sketch.



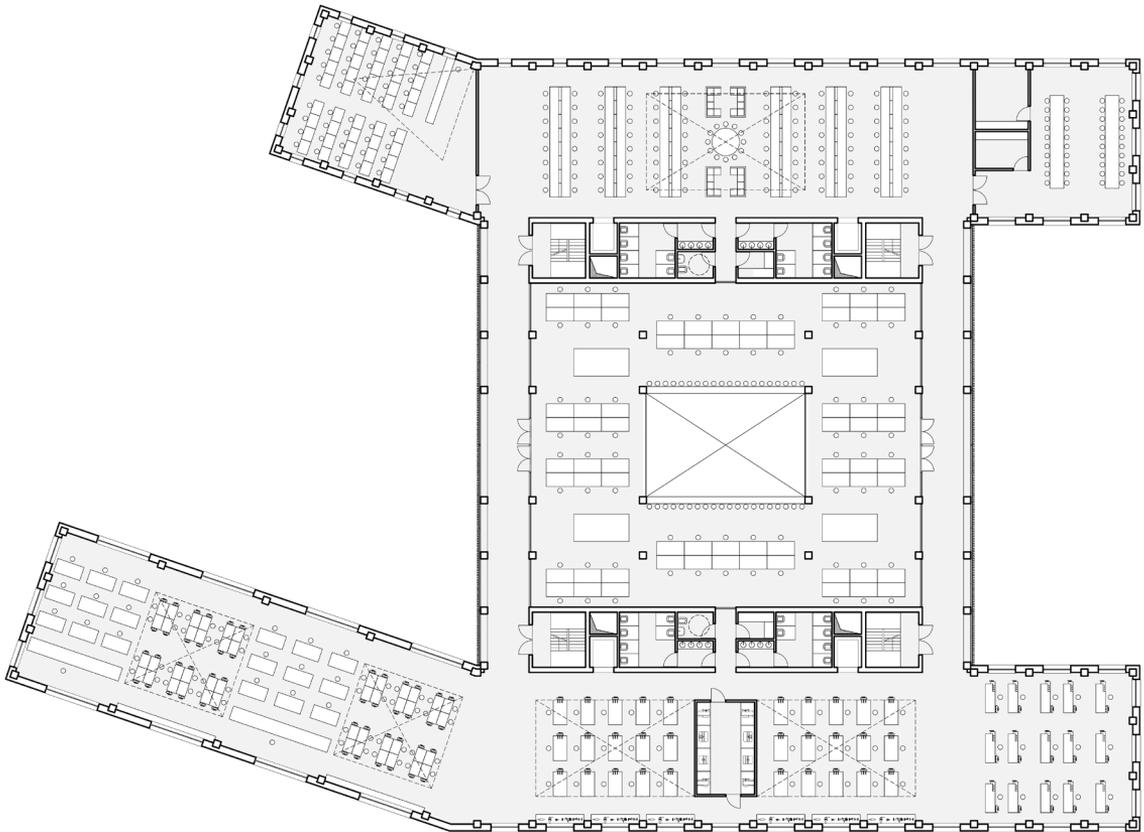
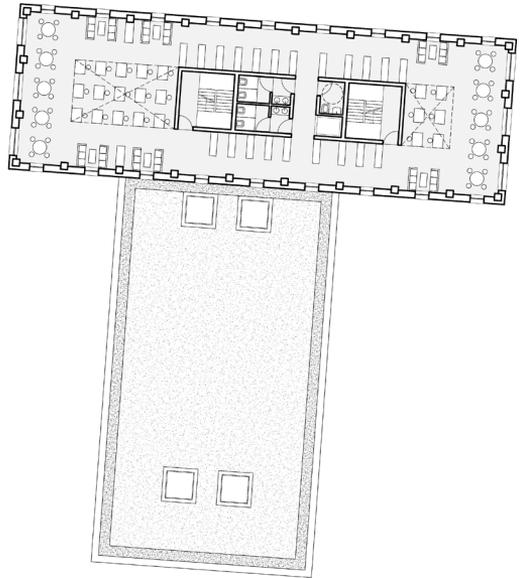
View on the front facade of the Craft School





Concept sketch

Two last floors are closely connected to each other. The structure changes to allow use of full width of the buildings, the classroom education transforms to open space education with more flexibility of arrangement. In the library it allows to create another part of the reading room, more isolated from the rest of the building.

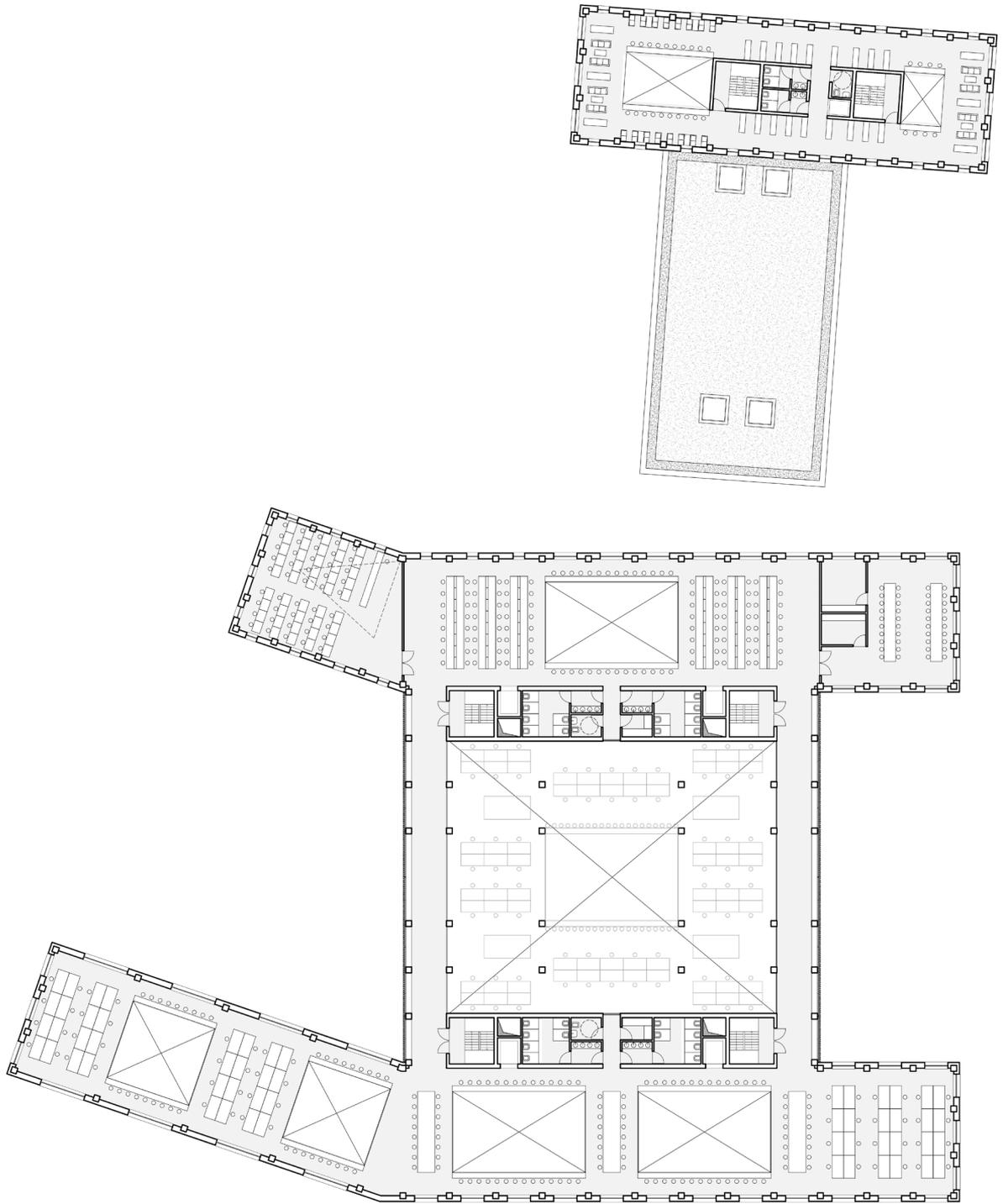


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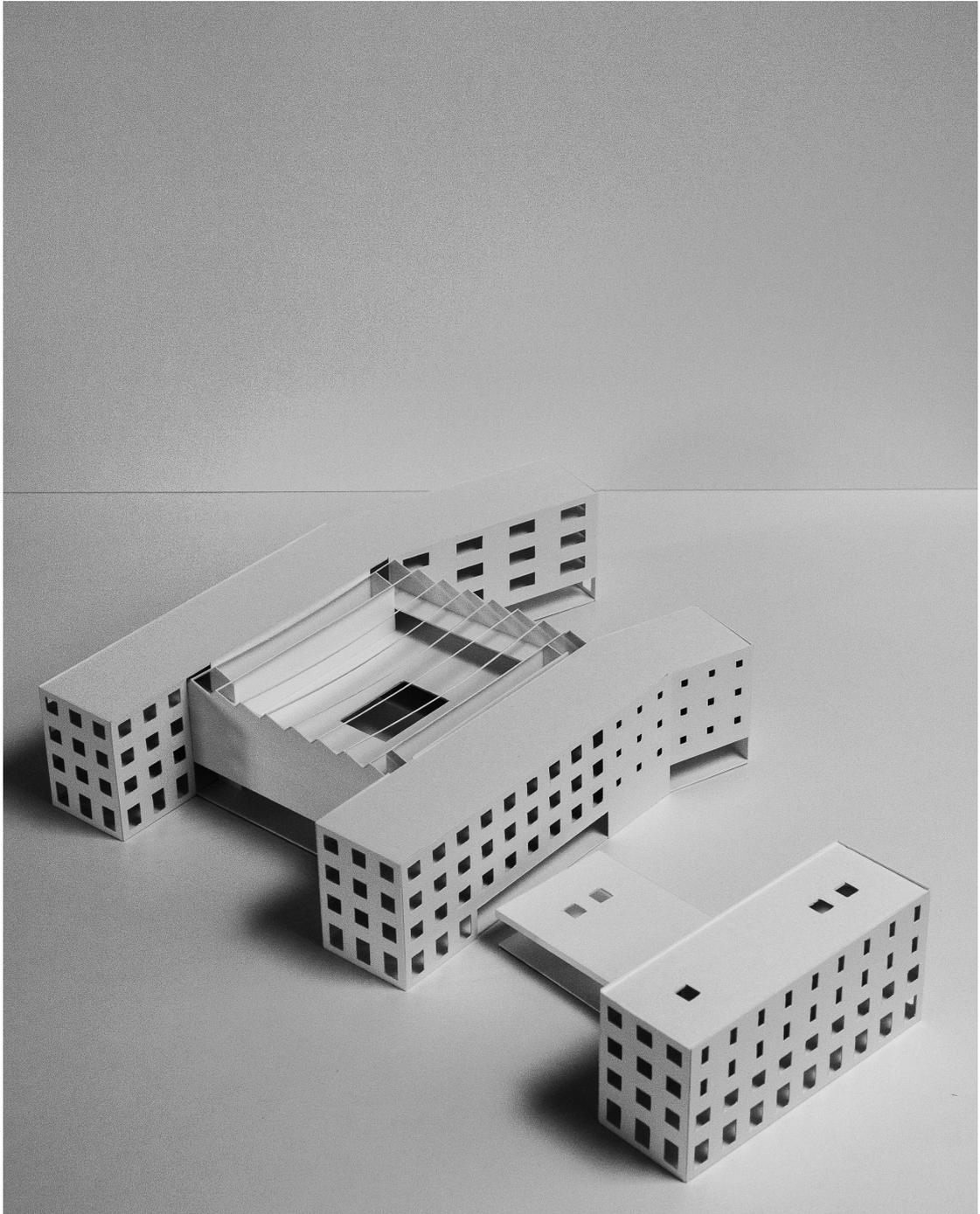


View on the front facade of library's reading room and public space

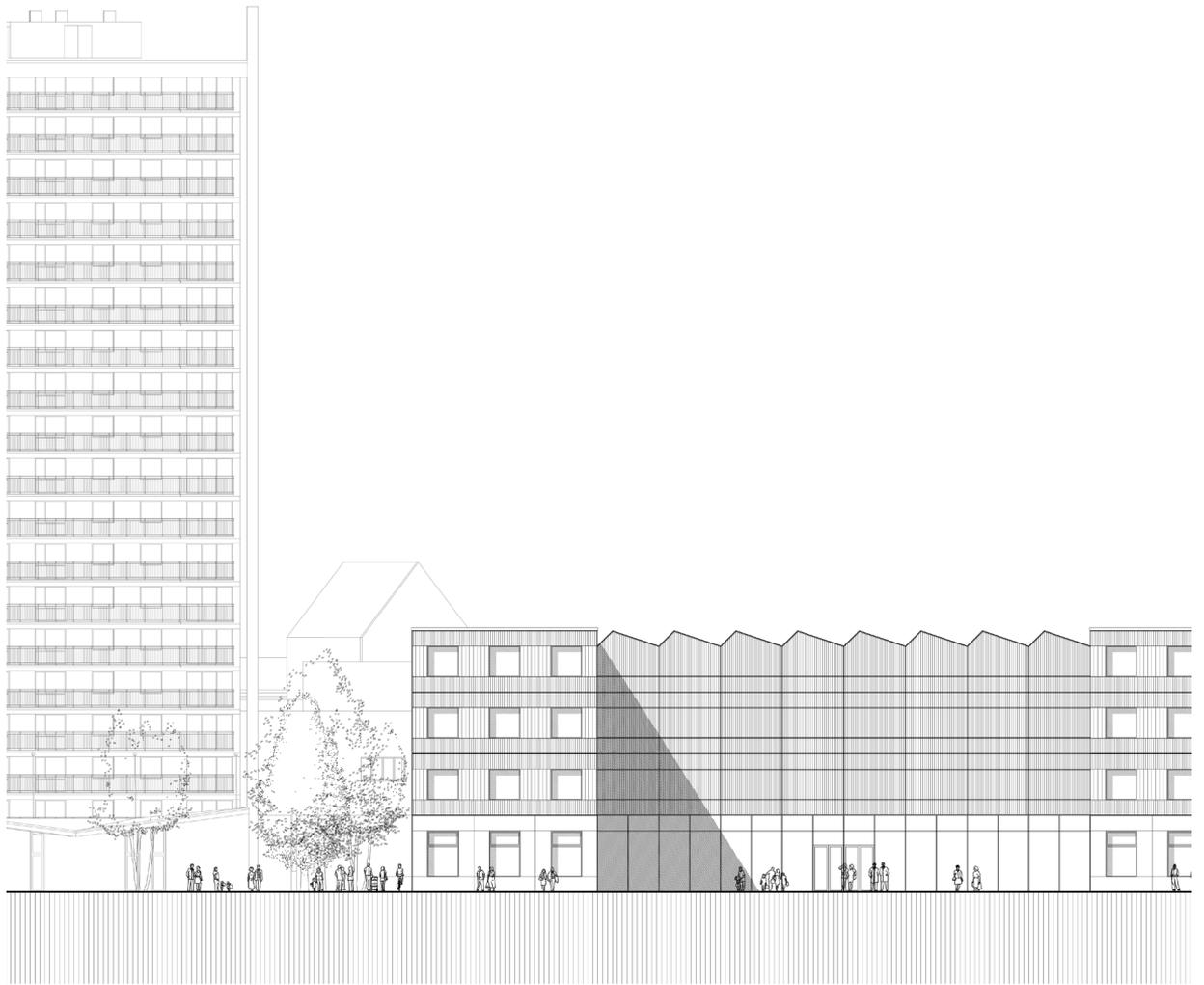




Third floor plan



Physical model - original scale 1:200



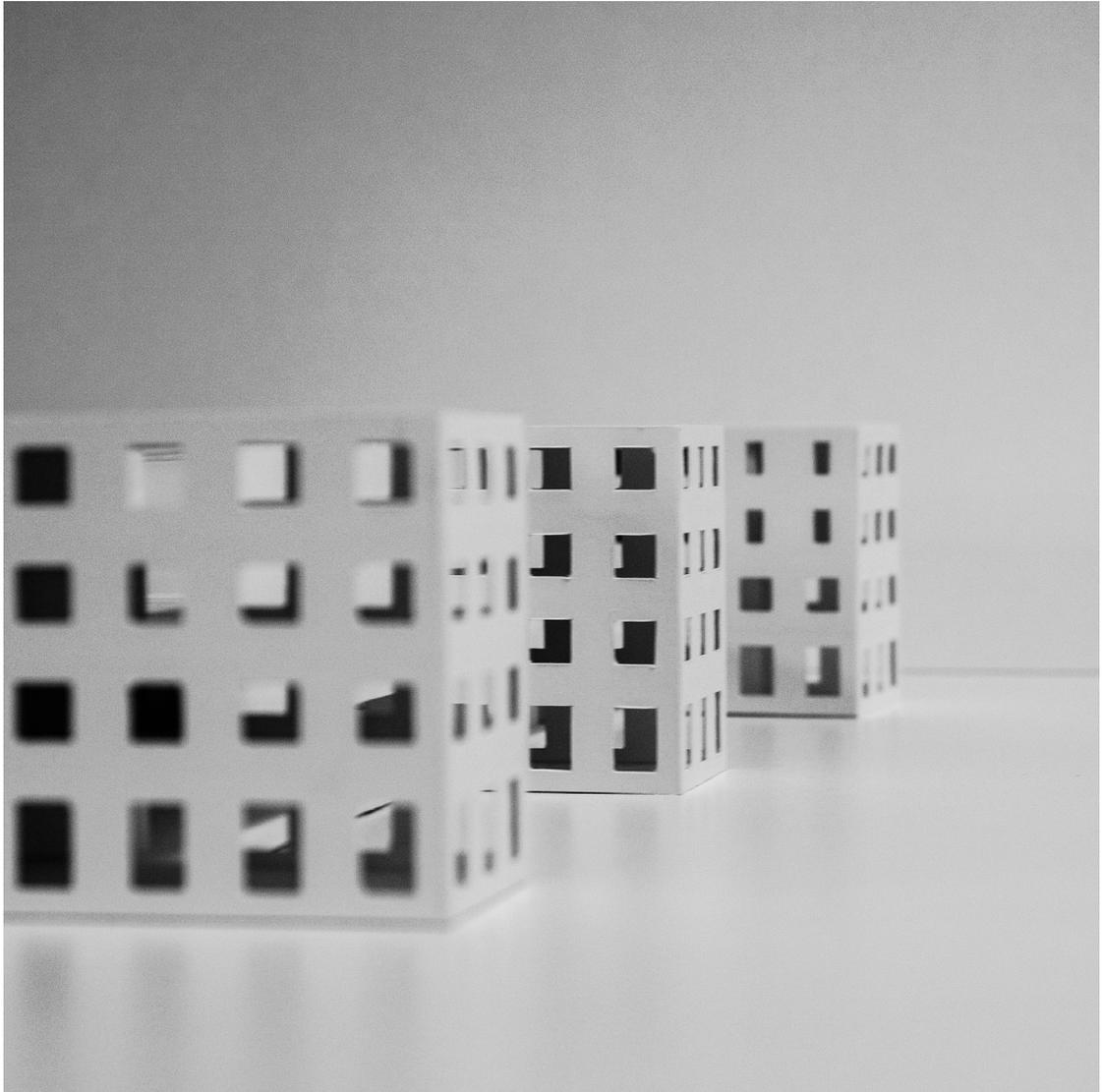
Front facade of the Craft School and the library

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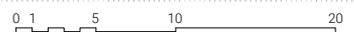


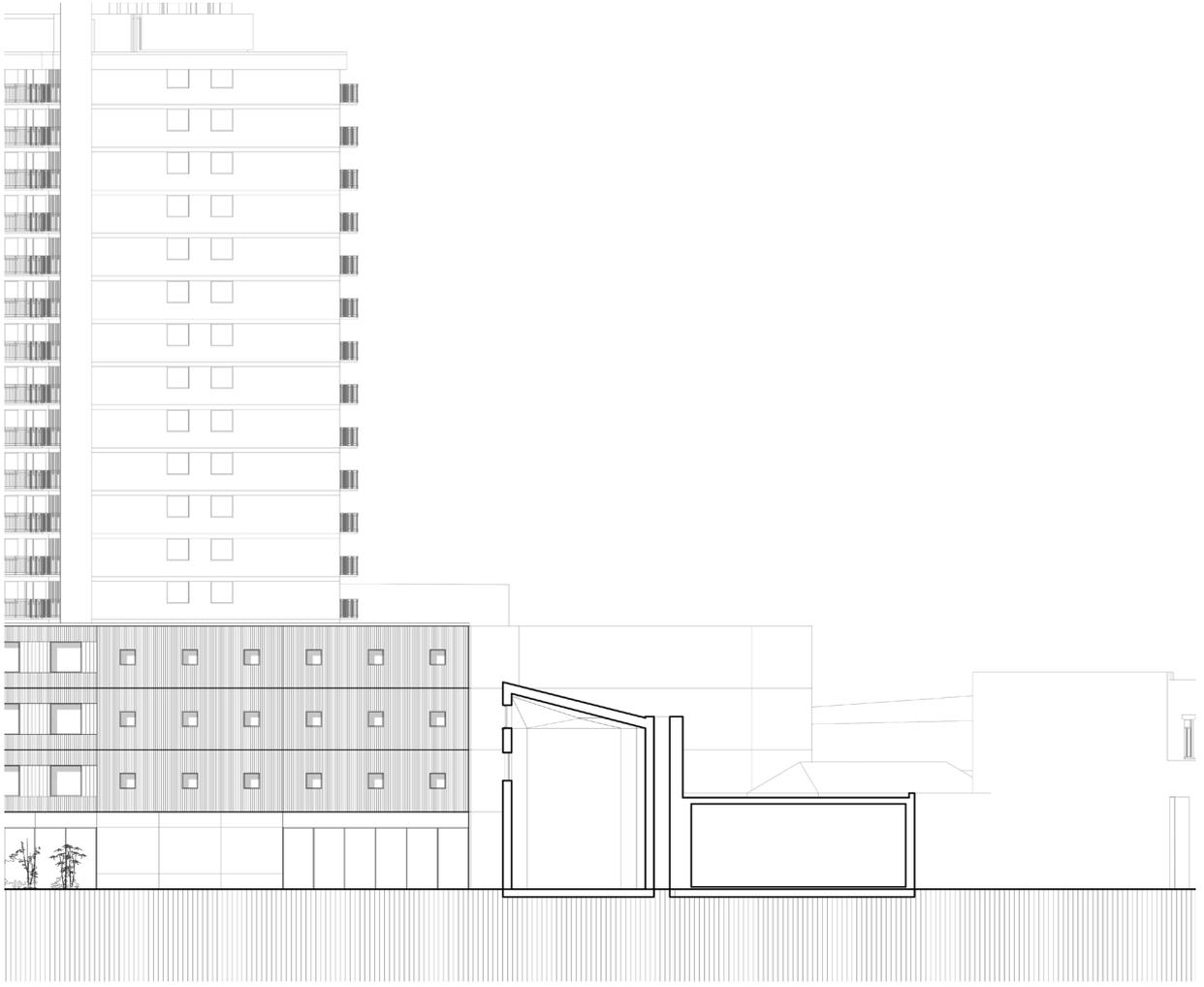
View on the back patio of the reading room with the existing wall forming the space

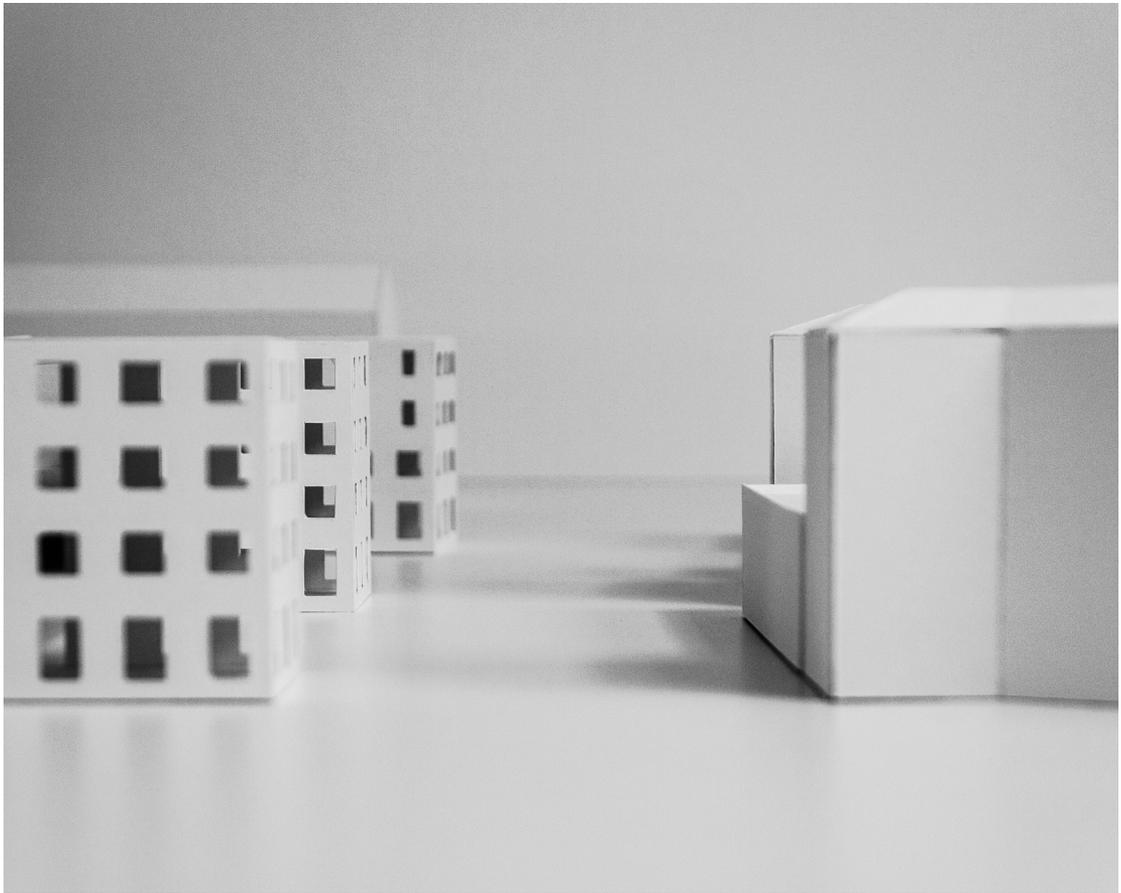




North and south facade of the Craft School's building







Physical model, original scale 1:200



Craft School's building relation with the park.



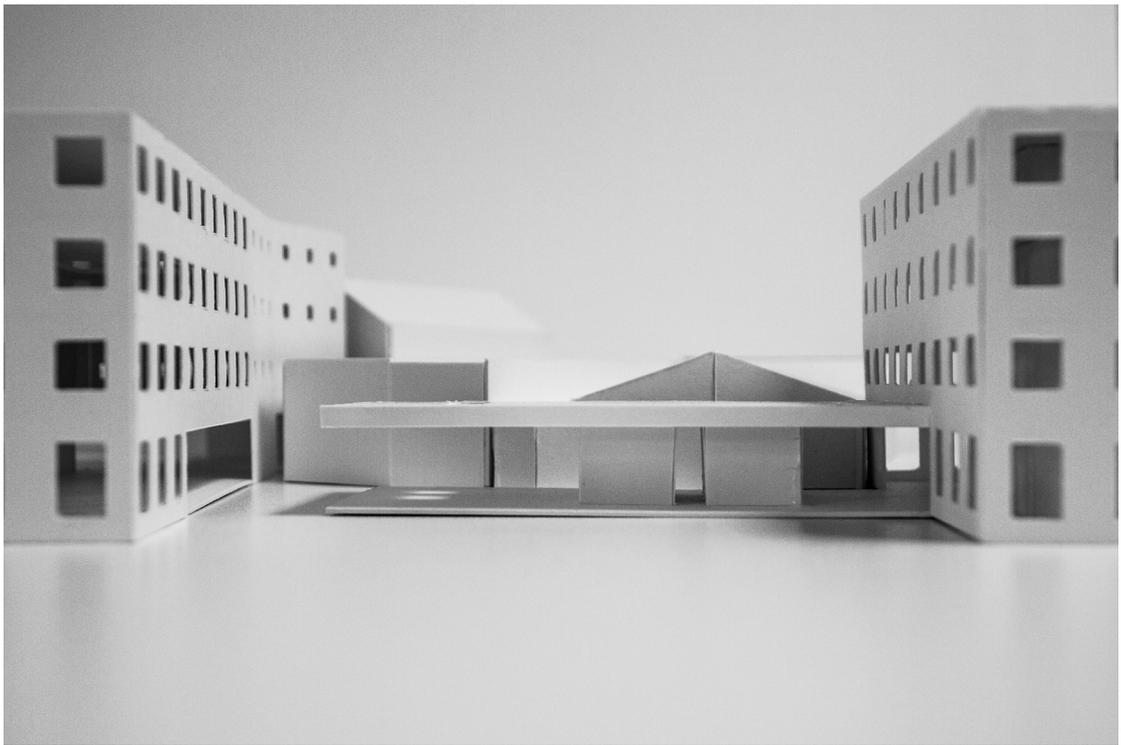
Section through the experimentation hall of the Craft School

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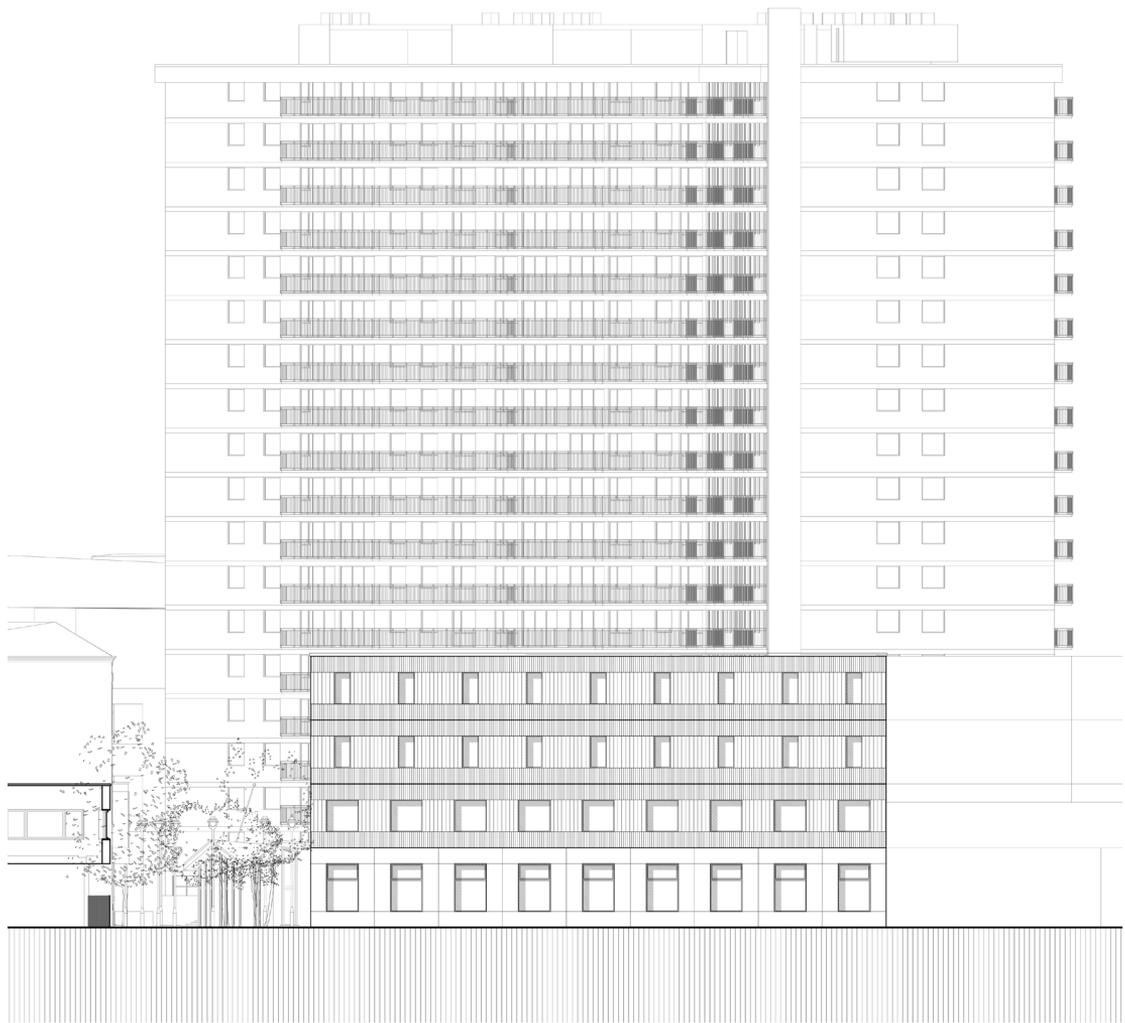
View on the entrance to the park from the Craft School's side.



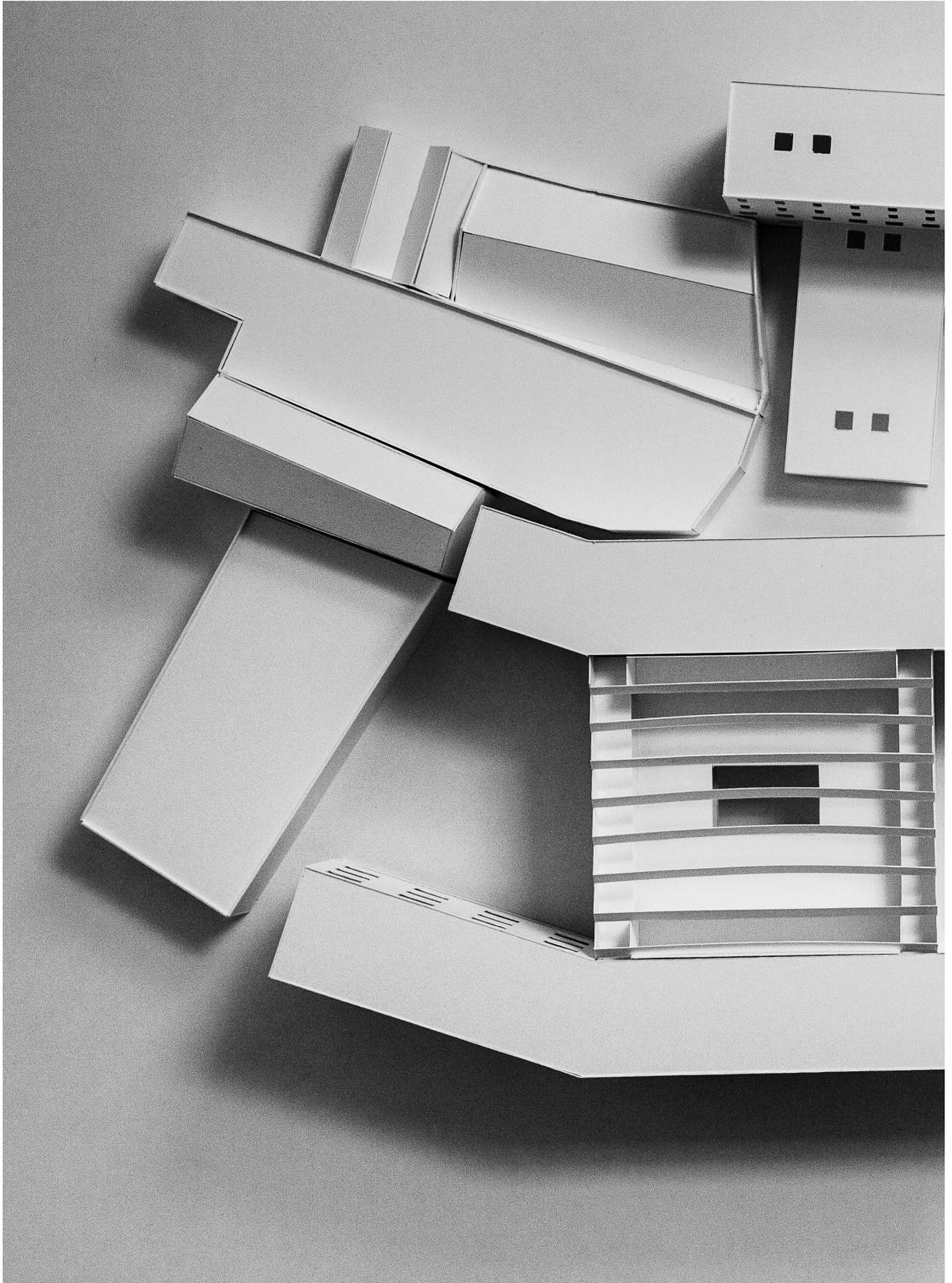


Section through the reading room / South facade of the Library

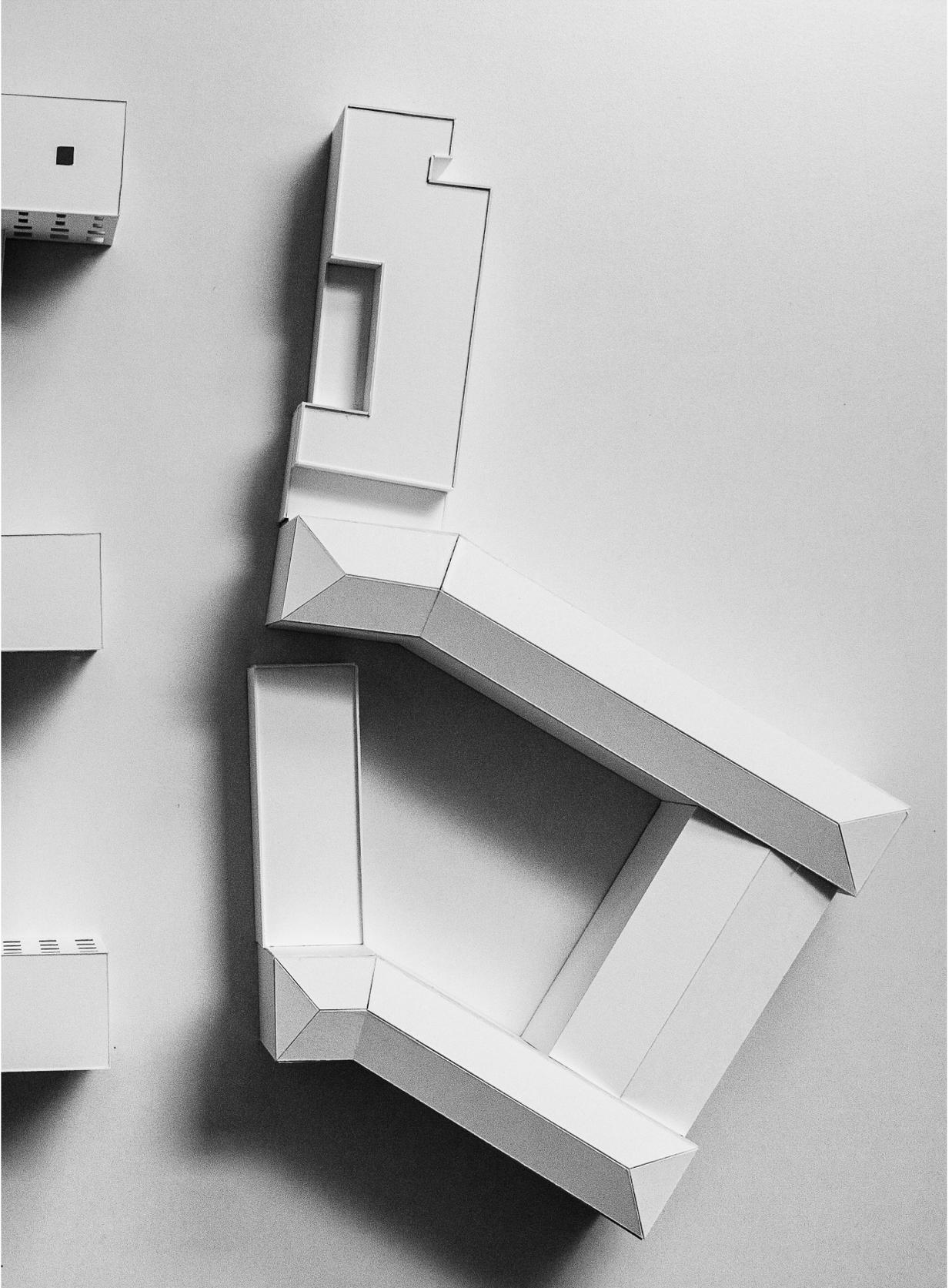
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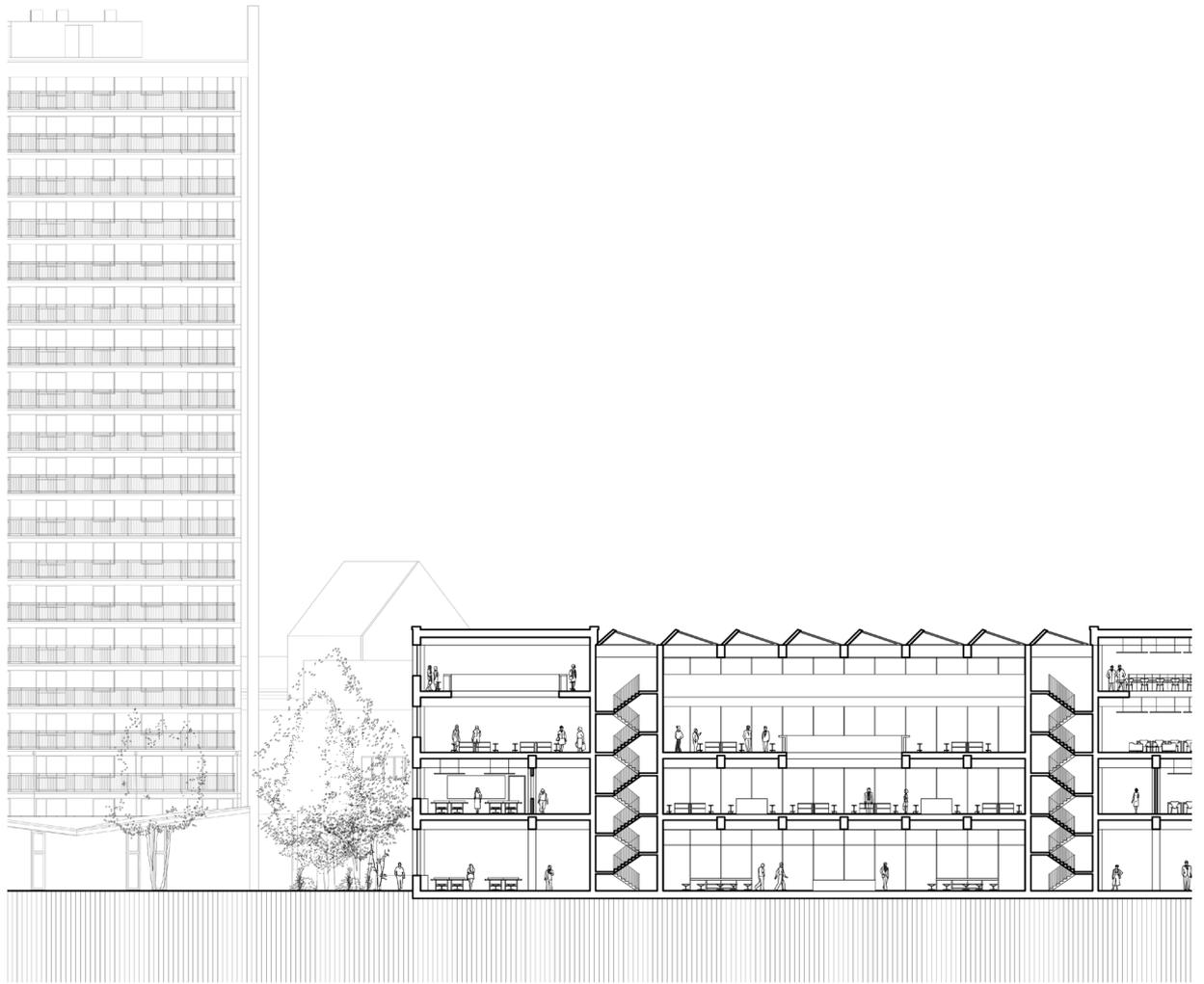


North facade of the Library



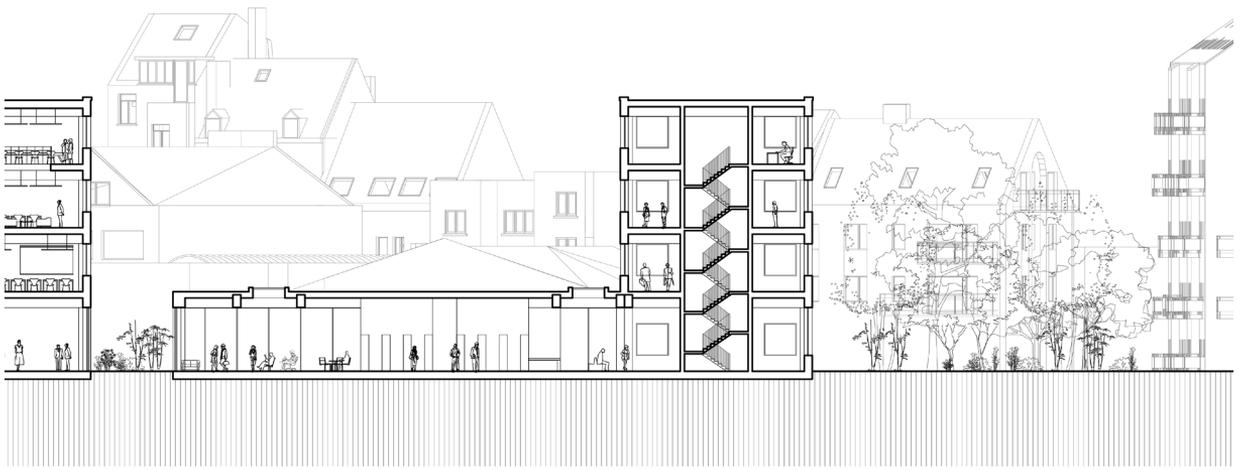
Physical model, original scale 1:200





Cross section through the complex

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THE TYPOLOGY, THE FORM, THE IMAGE AND THE MEMORY

The typology, defined by the limitations of the context, is the precedent of memory. First and last element defining the building's life cycle - in case of the Craft School building. Typology of the building offers more than just a school. The function of the school is just a response to Brussels's aspiration of becoming productive metropolis. The typology is the only thing which is not going to be replaced in this building, but will become a subject of interpretation and evolution. The collective memory is triggered by elements in space, however the meaning of what is an element in this particular case becomes blurred. Is it a structure, a type, a facade, a window, material, trace, proportion or the building itself as a whole? The craft school is built out of elements, bigger or smaller, literal and abstract, demountable and permanent. The sum of all these elements in space create the form.

The form of the building is a derivative of the typology, it defines how the decisions made in previous steps react to the context. The form, as well as the typology is timeless. No matter what happens to the inside of the building, its form will still be there in place. The building of the Craft School is made out of elements, which are ordinary parts separately, but together they form an image of the building in the neighbourhood, they mark its presence in the area.

The image of the building is the perception of its form from the outside. It is nothing new that imagery has a strong influence on collective memory and the individual memory, which is linked with certain places. As said before – the forms surrounding us derive from certain typology, which becomes a subject of constant interpretation and evolution and those typologies bring immediate connotations to certain ideas. If we know how to recognize the history, the memory and the reality visible in place, how do we translate this information into architectural form? How can we use the information found in place as a tool for developing our positioning to the site?

Nowadays every design, which strives to have a dialogue with the context must be carefully thoughtful to find its own balance between contextual avant-garde and placeless functionalism. The form is a predominant image of the place as a whole, all the current history of the place is inscribed into the form of the building. However, as soon as the surroundings start to change, the form becomes a record of memory of the place, its significance weakens, but still its image is unique due to the limitations visible at certain point in time. The function, however, lasts only for definite period of time, the building serves the function as long as needed, then its typology can become a subject of interpretation. In this matter, form and function are self-dependent, but not connected. Of course it is a tough task

to express the image of the whole in a one building. However, the building can become a record of the certain point in history. It can express the richness of its surroundings even if these surroundings are not there anymore. It can extend the existing history and become part of the future memory. It can participate in continuous story of the place and adjust itself to its rhythm. It can still allow the new history to create itself.

In that point, the architect can fall into the trap of admiration of the traditional forms of the city too much. However, there is still something to learn from those urban artifacts. As Aldo Rossi claimed – typology is the primary unit of architecture, which constitutes to the urban form. However, the lifespan of the building can finish over time. When the architecture stops to serve its primary function, the memory begins and only the form of the building survives. Therefore, the typology and the type become a predominant factor defining the future setting of the building and starts to be a structure for experimentation and interpretation of the past.

The building of the Craft School stresses the concept of collective memory both as a record of certain reality visible in place and future of the place. The form and the image of the building would be meaningless if one would take out the surroundings. The same goes the other way around, the building gives more meaning to its context at the same time. Due to the fragmented character of the place, the building of the craft school provides structure and definition to the place.

The modular way of building can be read also as a reference to Les Goujons building or the concept of circularity. Both of those guesses are true. The modularity of the building refers to the third scenario for its life span. When the function and building's purpose in general will be done, then the elements which came together to create building's form will be able to be safely dismantled and re-used in the future, however the concrete foundation will still leave a mark of its presence in the ground.

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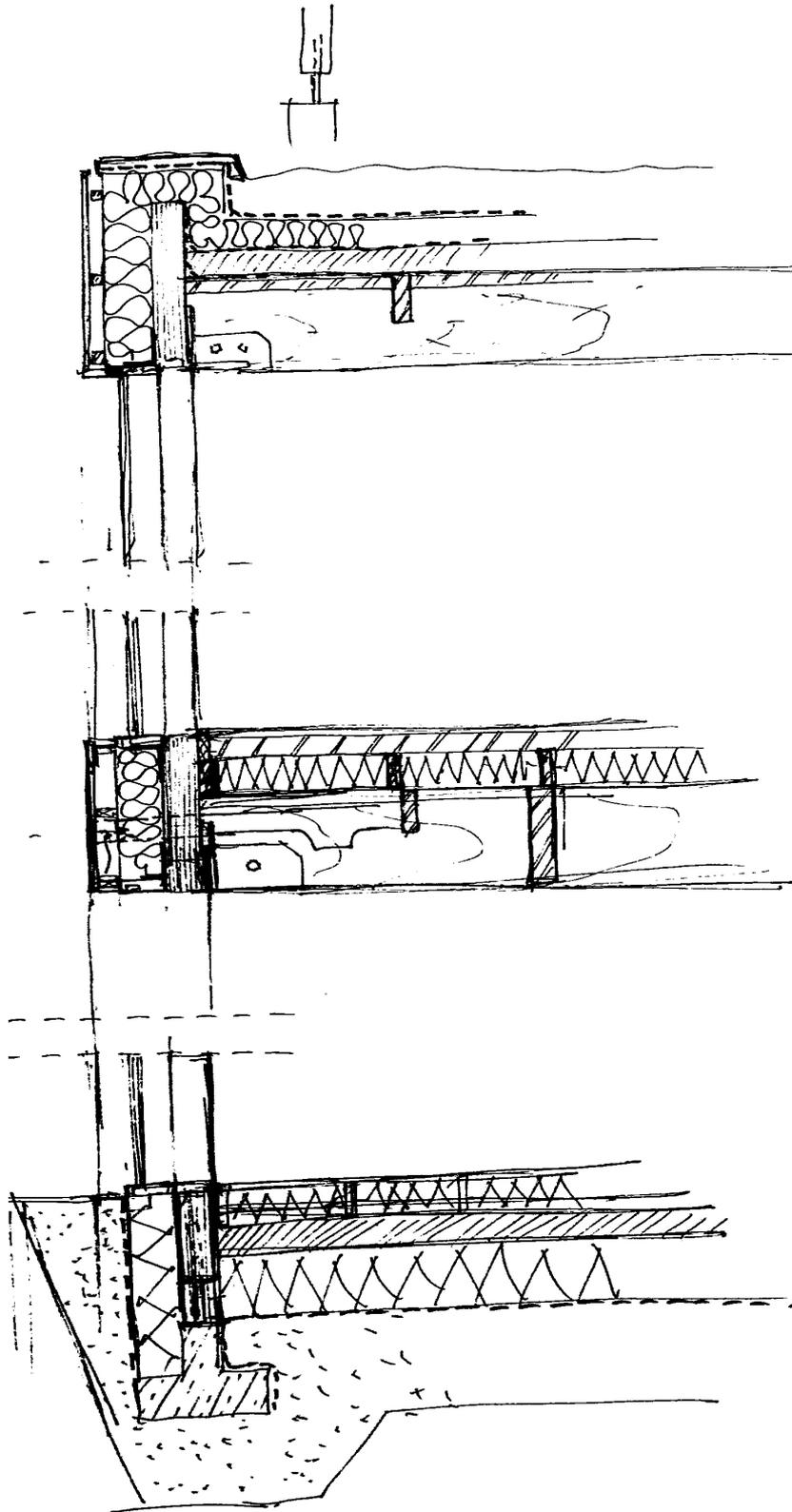
→ COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN URBAN ARTIFACTS

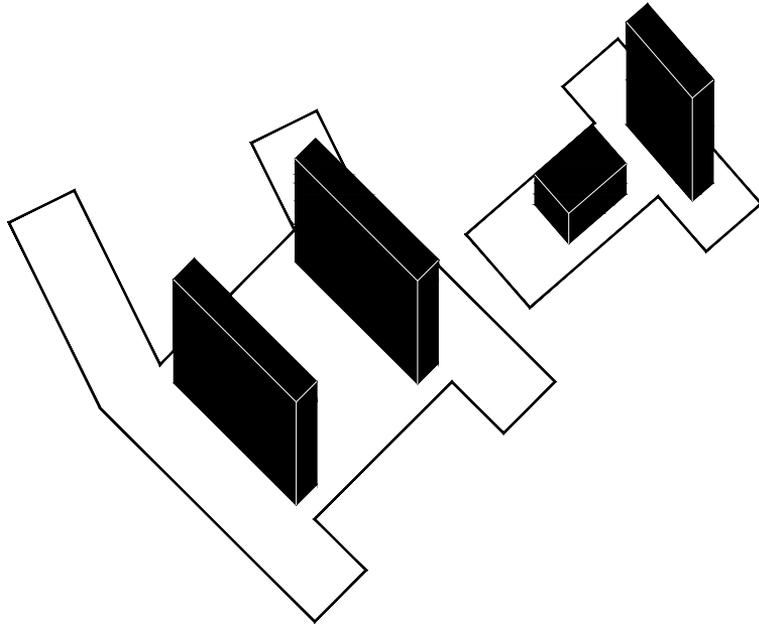
THE TYPOLOGY, DEFINED BY THE LIMITATIONS OF THE CONTEXT, IS THE PRECEDENT OF MEMORY, FIRST AND LAST EVENT [UNIT] DEFINING THE BUILDING'S LIFE CYCLE — IN CASE OF THE CRAFT SCHOOL BUILDING. TYPOLOGY OF THE BUILDING OFFERS MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL. THE FUNCTION OF SCHOOL IS JUST A RESPONSE FOR SHORT-TERM (OR LONG-TERM) AMBITION OF BRUSSELS. ARCHITECT LOOKS AT THE REALITY OF A PLACE, AT A PRESENT STATE HE FINDS IN A PLACE, THEREFORE CRAFT SCHOOL SEEMS LIKE A GOOD RESPONSE TO CURRENT PROBLEMS (AMBITIONS). HOWEVER, THE ONLY THING WHICH MATTERS IS THE TYPOLOGY. THE ONLY THING WHICH IS NOT GOING TO BE REPLACED, BUT IS GOING TO BE A SUBJECT OF EVOLUTION AND INTERPRETATION BY FUTURE DESIGNERS SEEKING FOR THE NEW SOLUTIONS.

THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY IS TRIGGERED BY ELEMENTS IN SPACE. HOWEVER, THE MEANING OF WHAT AN ELEMENT IS BECOMES BLURRED. IS IT A STRUCTURE, A TYPE, A FACADE, WINDOW, MATERIAL, TRACE, PROPORTION OR THE BUILDING ITSELF? THE CRAFT SCHOOL IS BUILT OUT OF ELEMENTS, BIGGER OR SMALLER, WHICH ARE REPETITIVE, DEMOUNTABLE. WHEREAS, THE FOUNDATION, THE BASE WHICH DEFINES A TYPOLOGY STILL IS THE SAME, LEAVES A TRACE IN THE PLOT, IS THE ONLY PART WHICH IS CONSTANT. BEING A REMINDER OF THE PAST GESTURES AND - AT THE SAME TIME - ALLOWING FOR THE INTERPRETATION FOR THE FUTURE THE PAST ELEMENTS WHICH DEFINE BUILDINGS INTERIOR ARE NOW USED AGAIN SOMEWHERE ELSE OR RE-USED FOR THE NEW PURPOSE.

THERE IS ALSO A THIRD SCENARIO — THE SCHOOL STAYS THERE FOR LONGER. AND IT BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PLACE. THEREFORE, ITS PRESENCE IS GOING TO BE A CONTEXT FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATION.

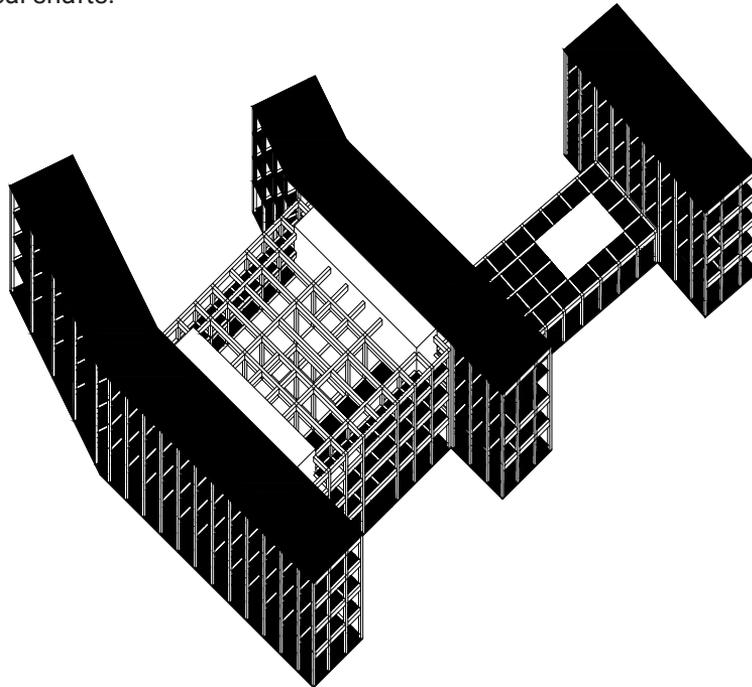
THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE BUILDING IS TWO-FOLD. EITHER IT EXPERIENCES CHANGES WHICH REDEFINE ITS MEANING OR IT BECOMES A REFERENCE FOR ANOTHER LIFE CYCLE OF THE BUILDING, THE SIMULTANEOUS ONE.





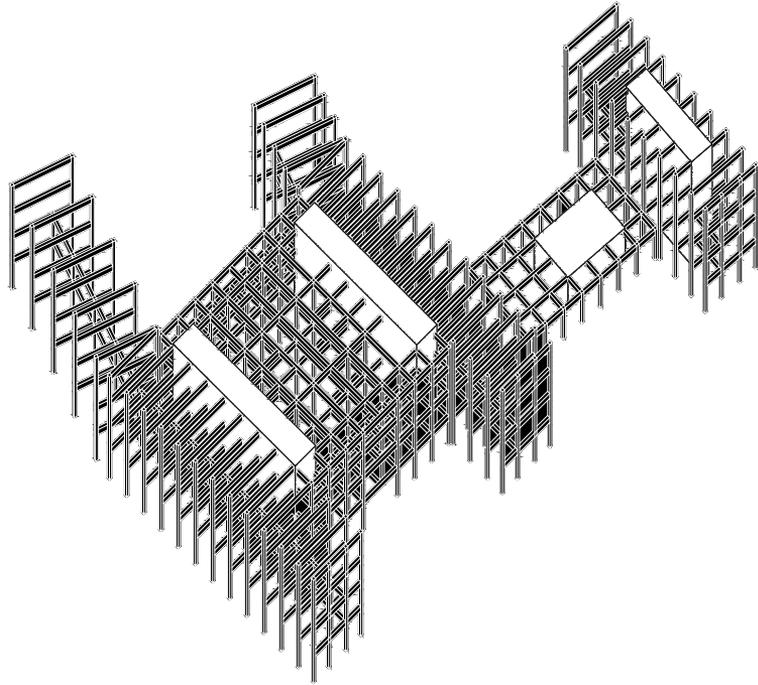
STRUCTURAL CORES

First point of stability of the building are massive cores containing the amenities and vertical shafts.



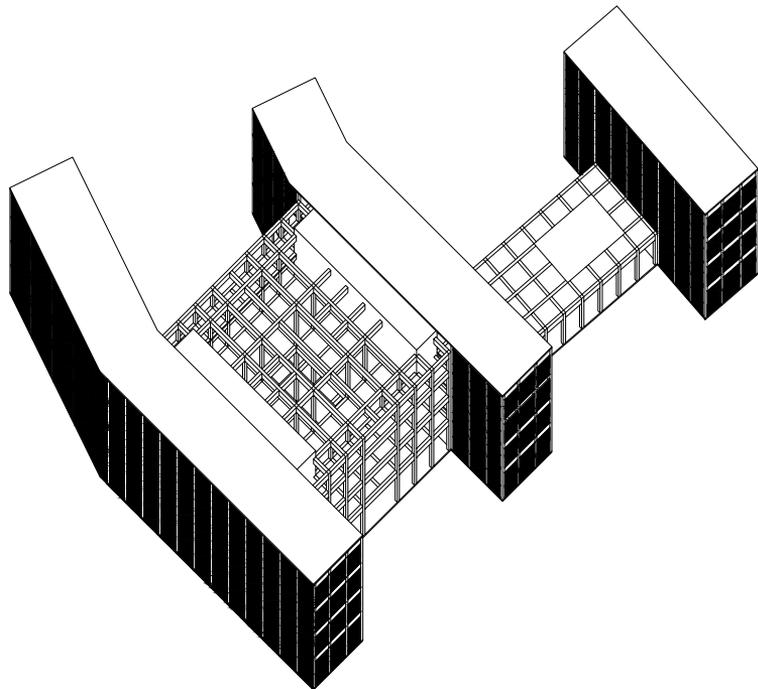
MODULAR FLOOR SYSTEM

Lignatur elements between the beams providing stiffness of the structure.



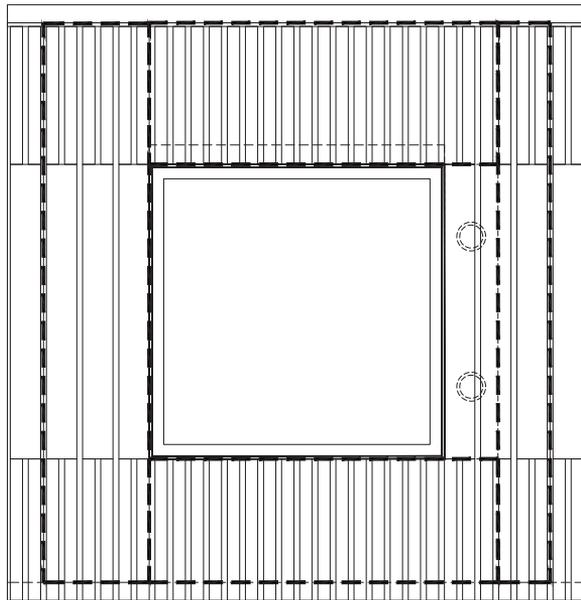
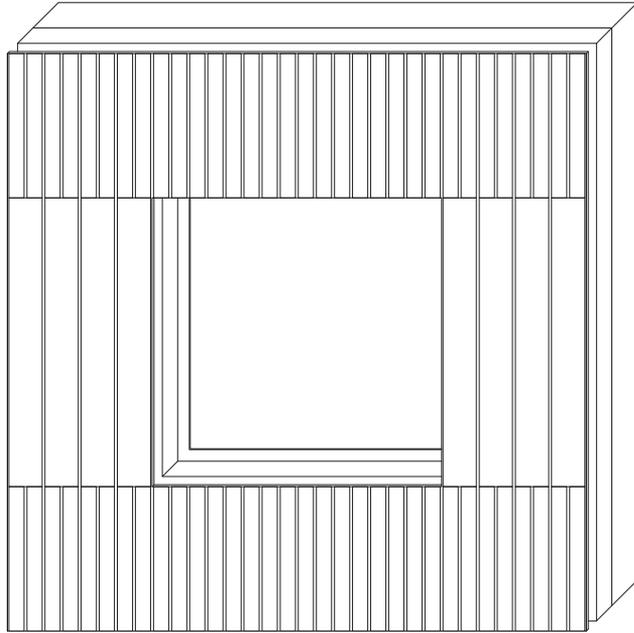
COLUMNS AND BEAMS

Structure for the modular floor and wall system for the interior.

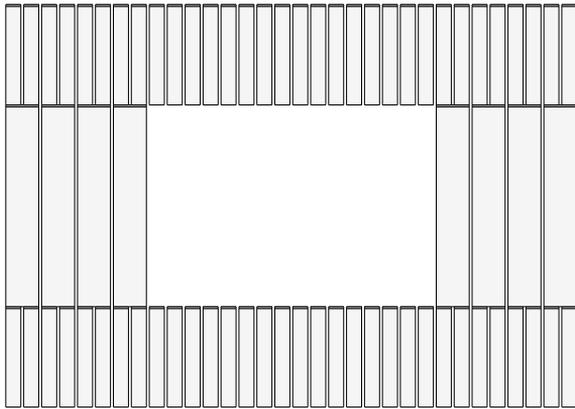
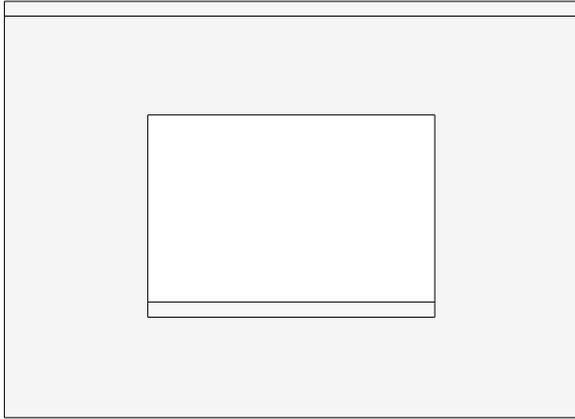
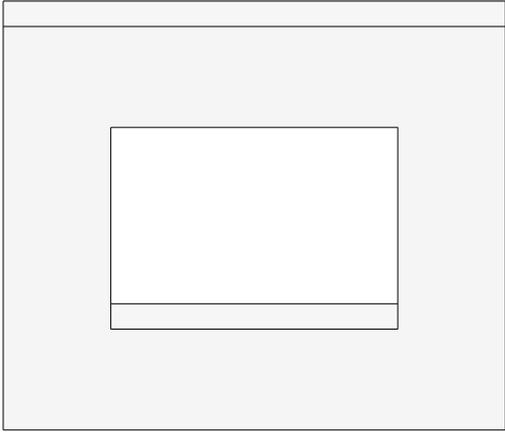


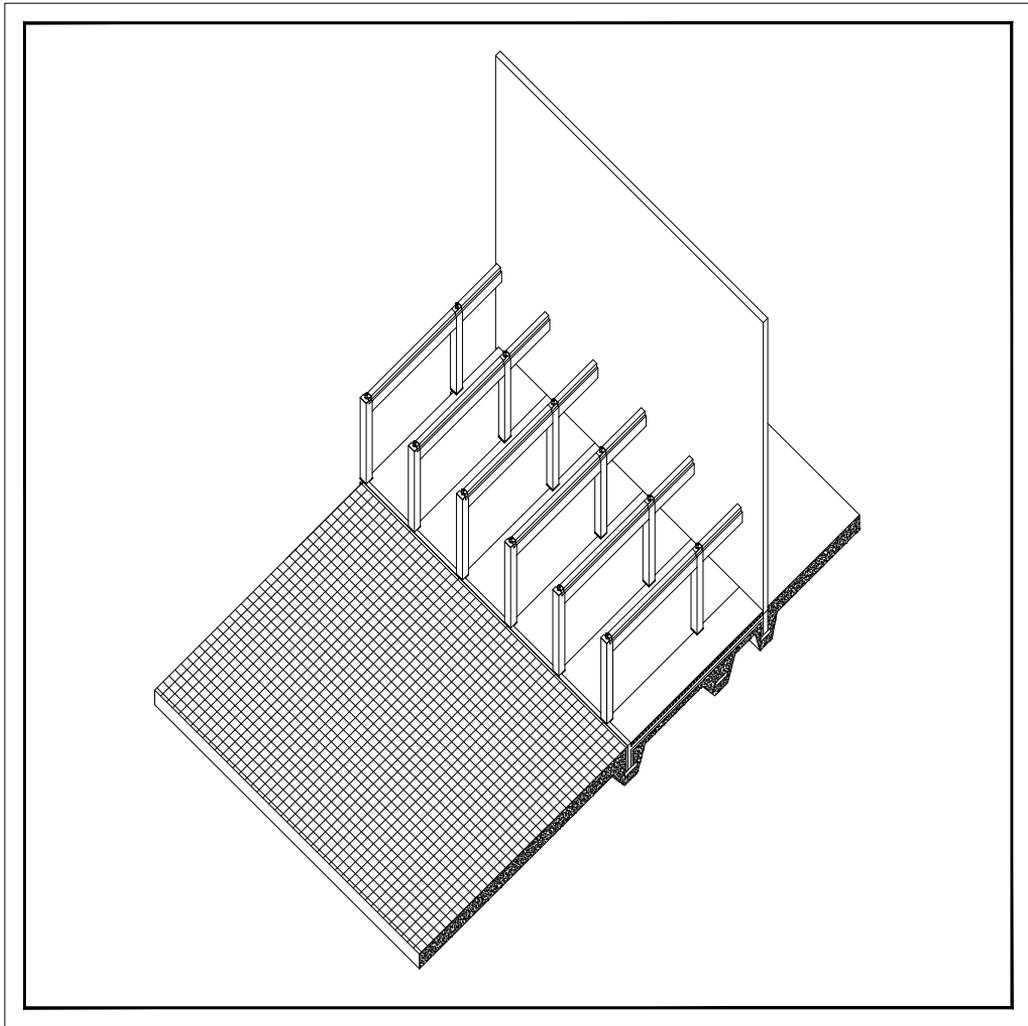
MODULAR WALL SYSTEM

Wall modules pre-assembled on the site containing sun-shading and ventilation.



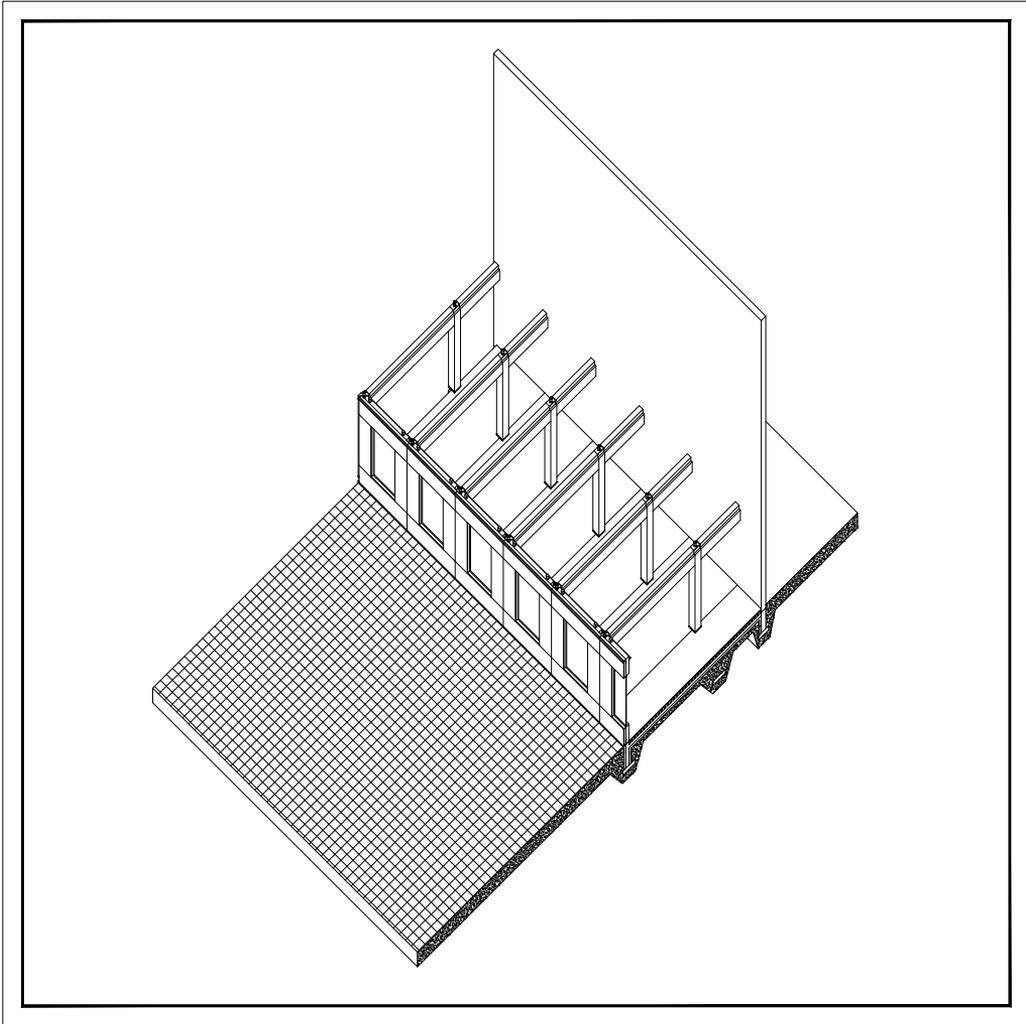
Exterior wall module drawings





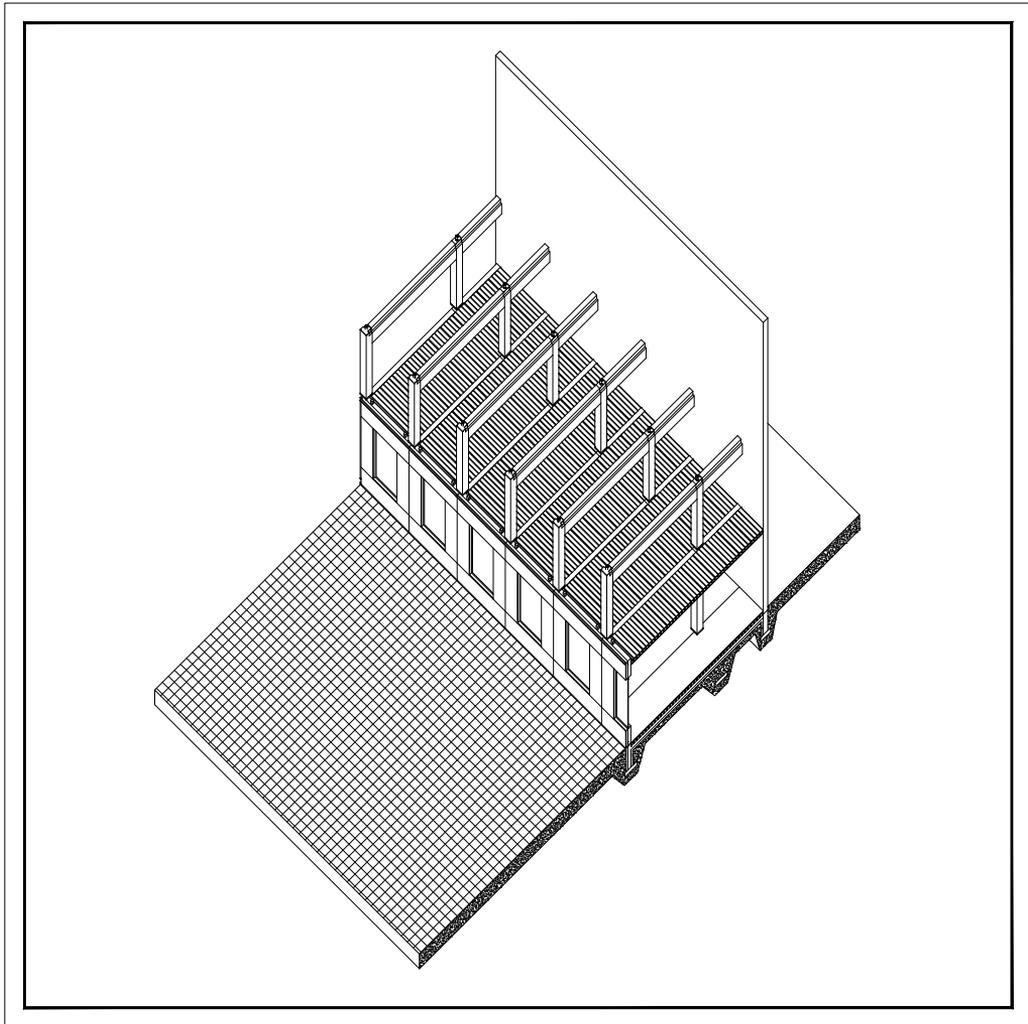
CONCRETE GROUND FLOOR

Ground floor of the building is higher and made in pre-fabricated concrete elements for water tightness.



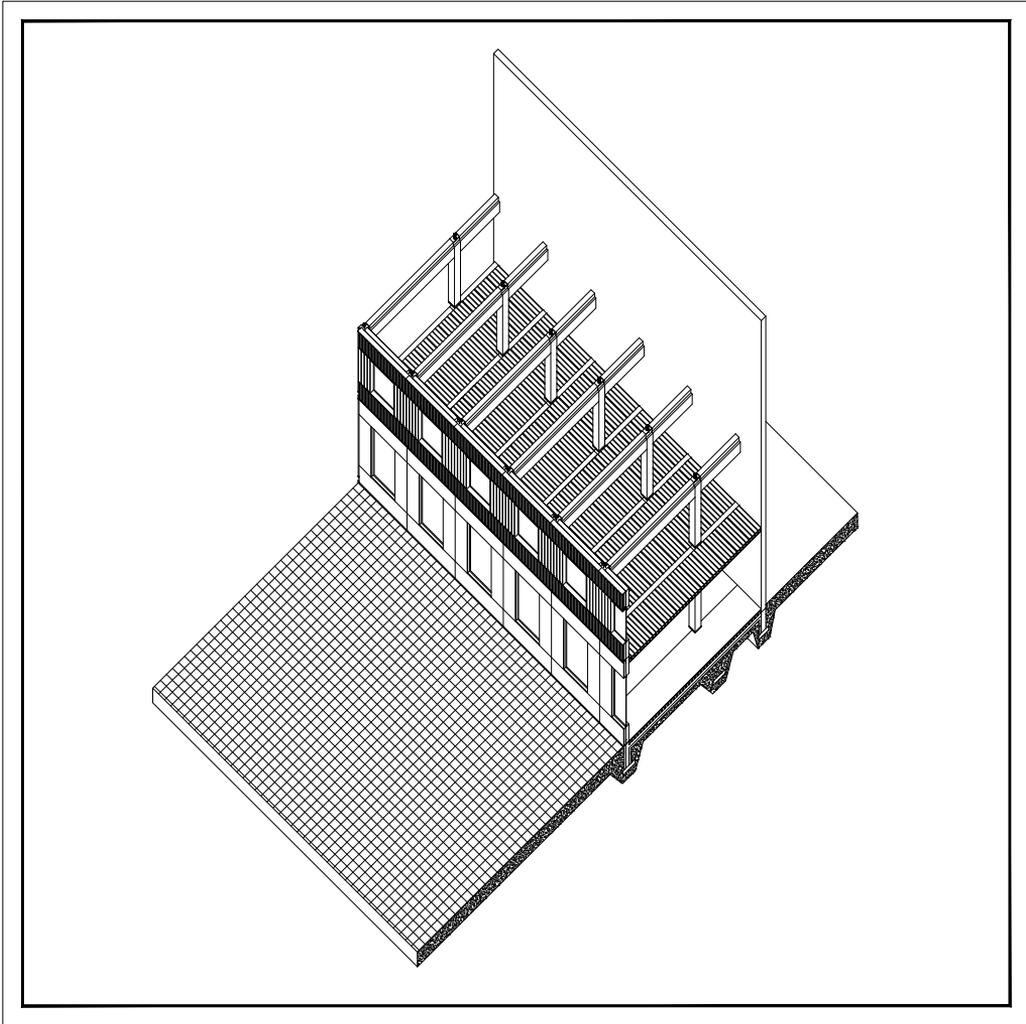
CONCRETE WALL MODULES

Ground floor walls are clad with concrete.



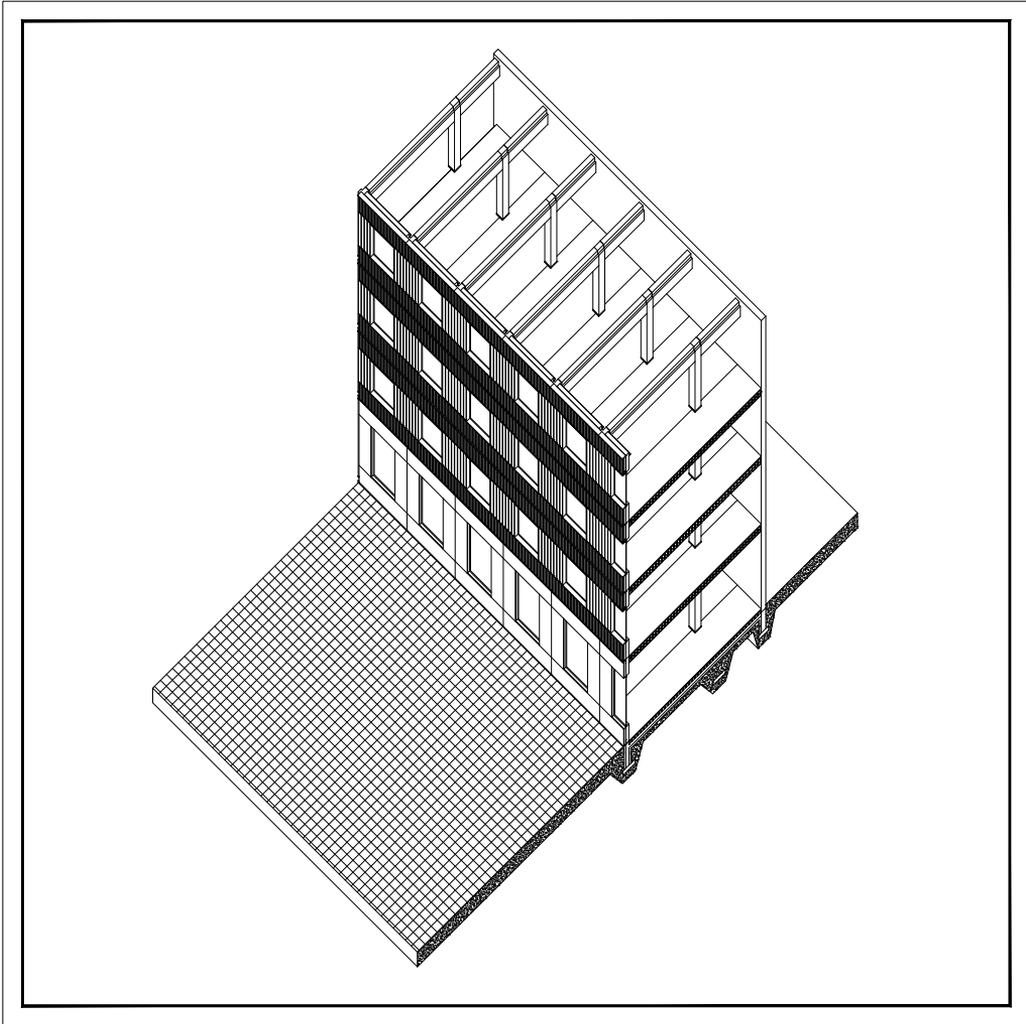
FIRST FLOOR - LIGNATUR

First floor beams and columns are installed into the building, lignatur elements create a slab for the floor, being integrated structural element of the building.



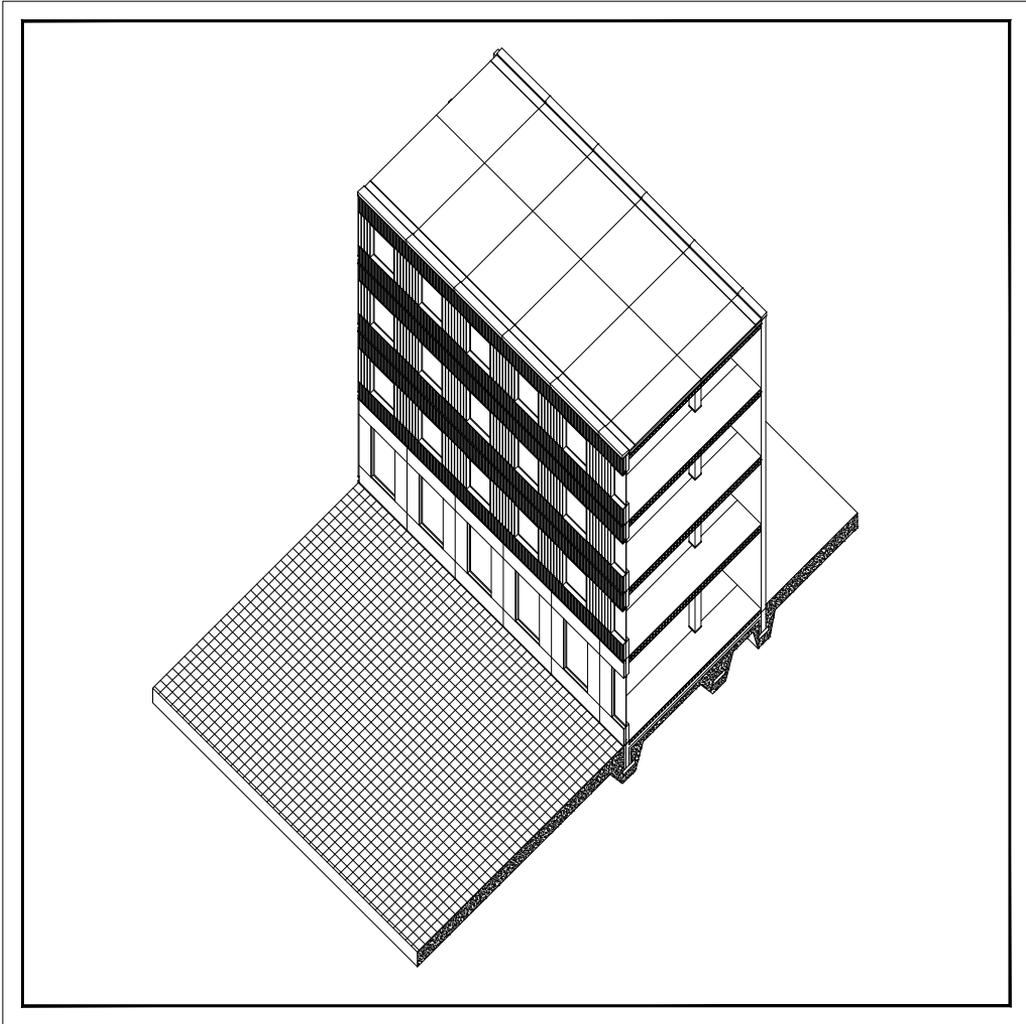
EXTERIOR WALL MODULES

CLT panels are installed and anchored to the floor slabs, what provides a starting point for finishing process.



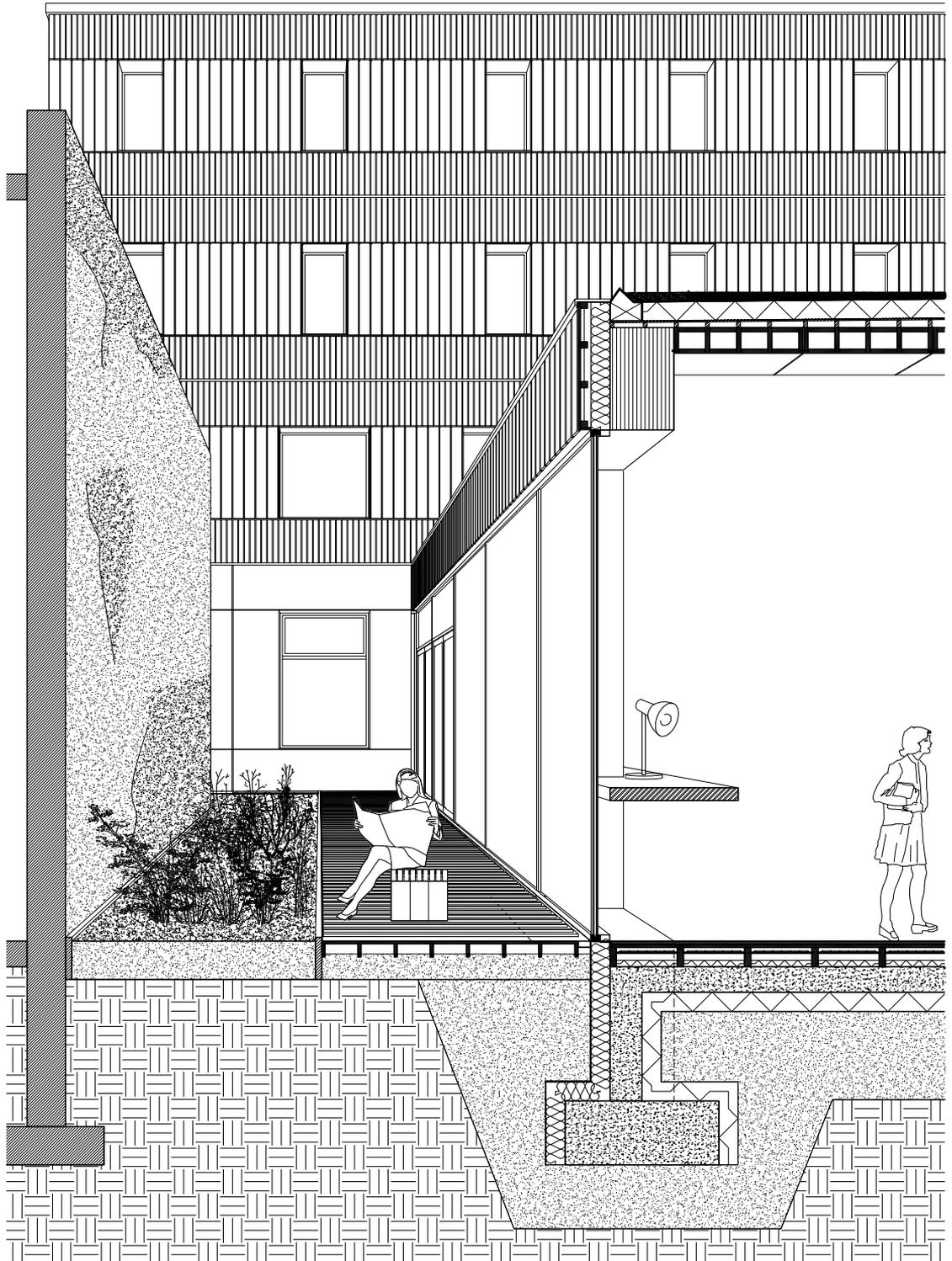
LAST FLOOR

As soon as the last floor is assembled, the finishing works can be done simultaneously on lower floors.



ROOF SYSTEM

The roof is also based on the structure of the lignatur elements, finishing the whole building structure with the limestone cornice.



Detail section of the Library's reading room with the back patio



View of the interior of the reading room

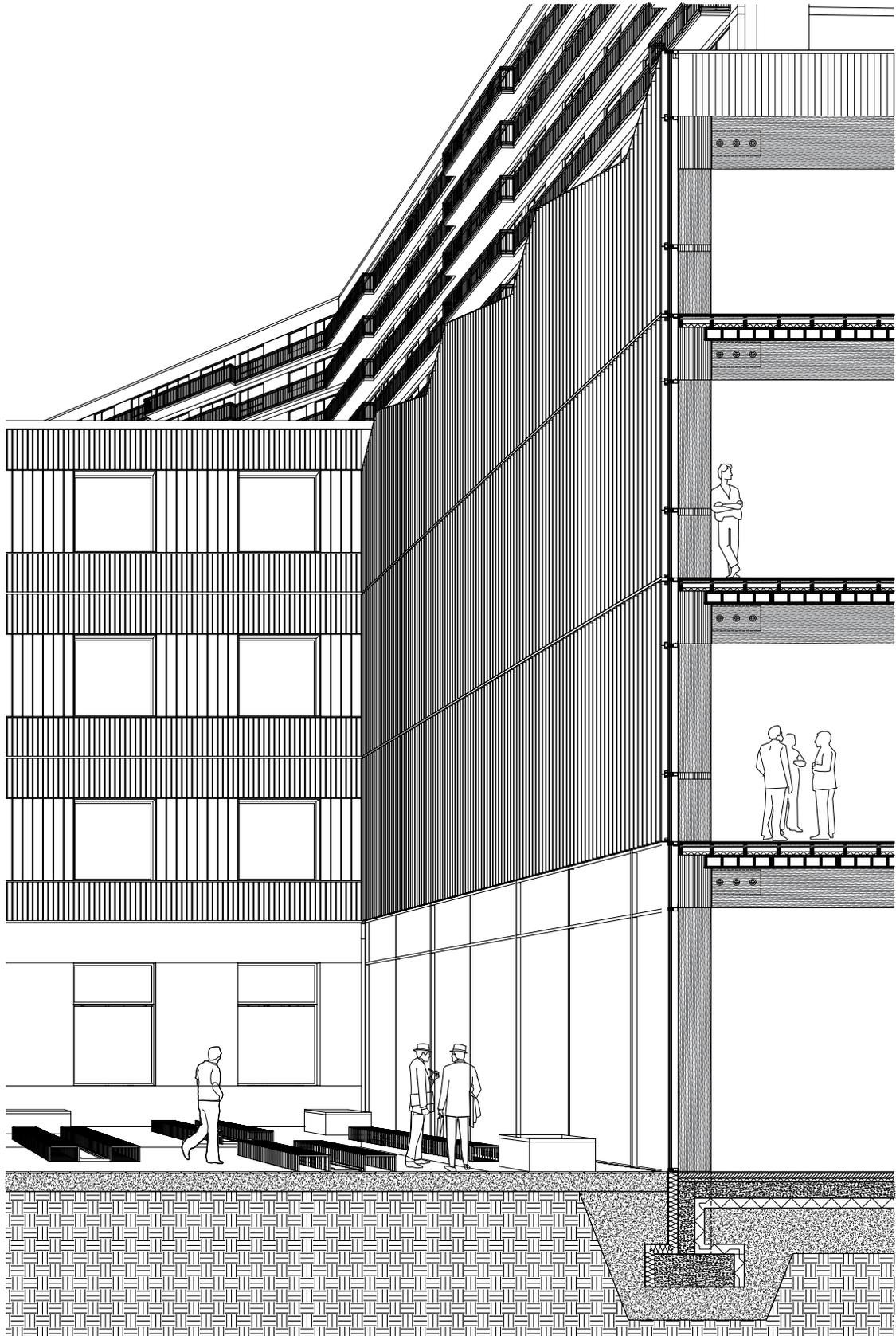


View of the interior of the practical education part



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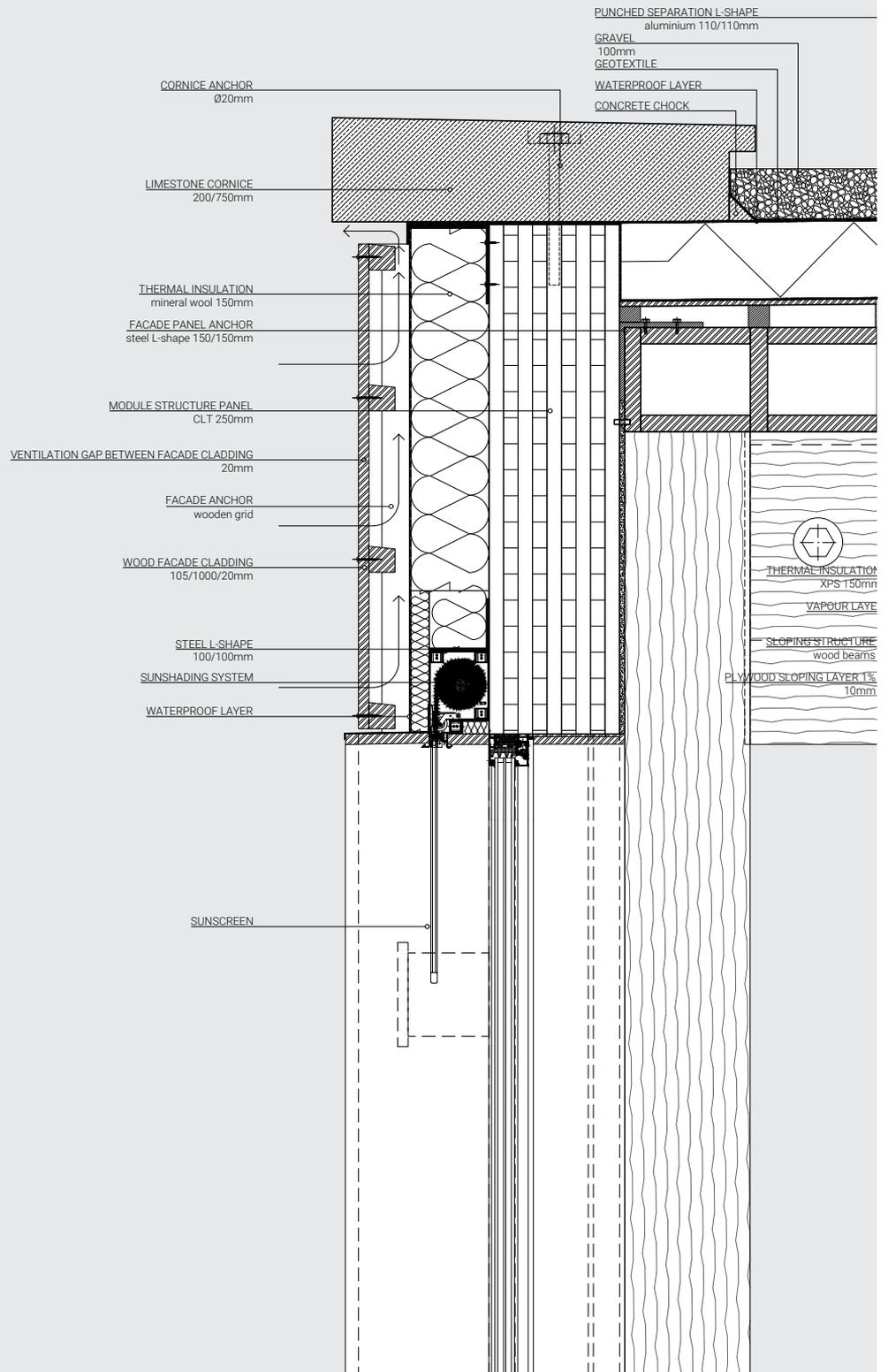
Detail section of the Craft School



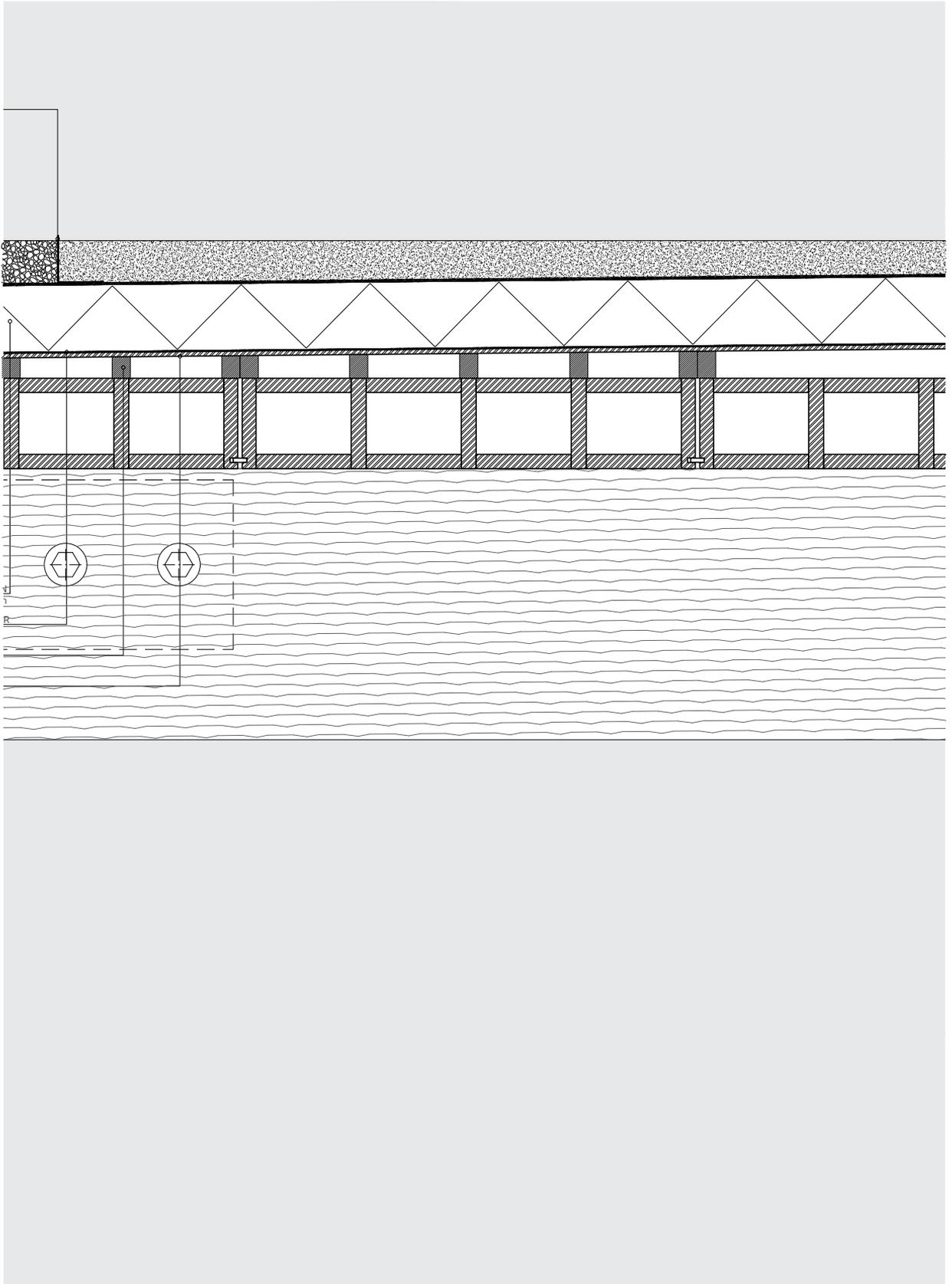
Detail section of the Craft School's front facade - Experimentation Hall

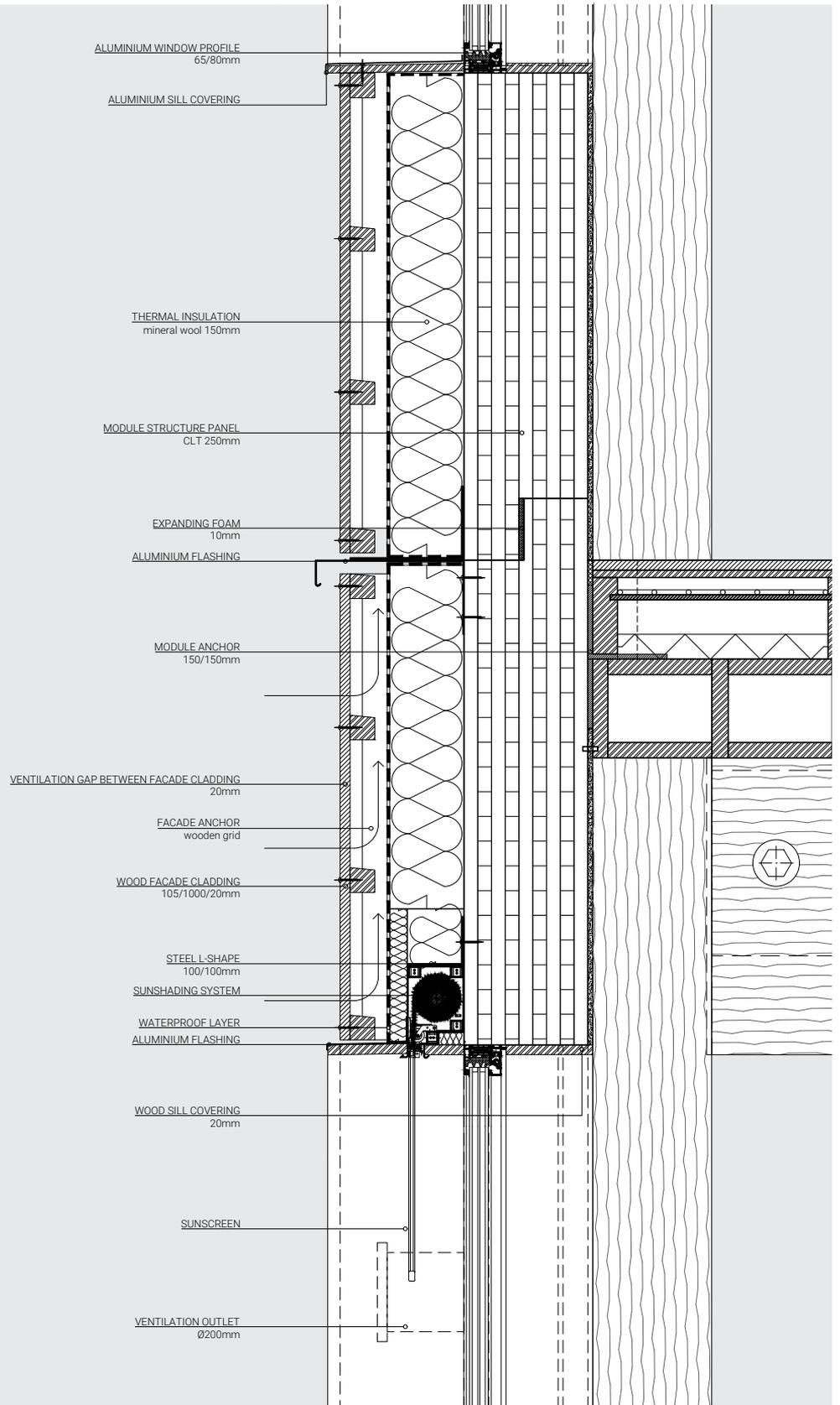


View from the interior of the experimentation hall

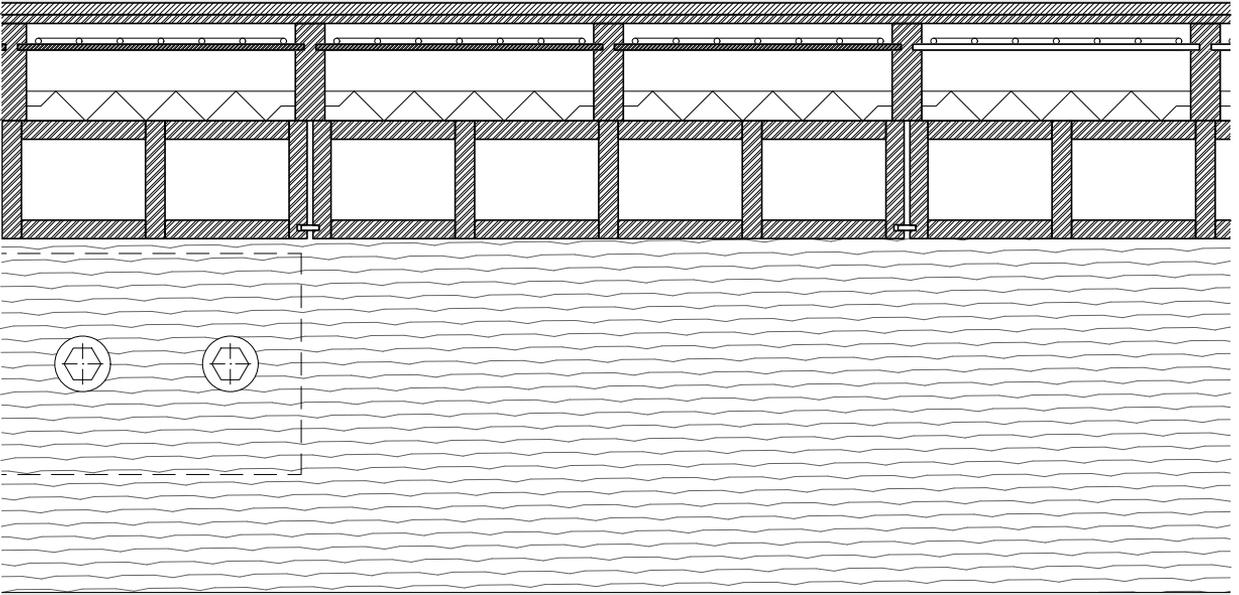


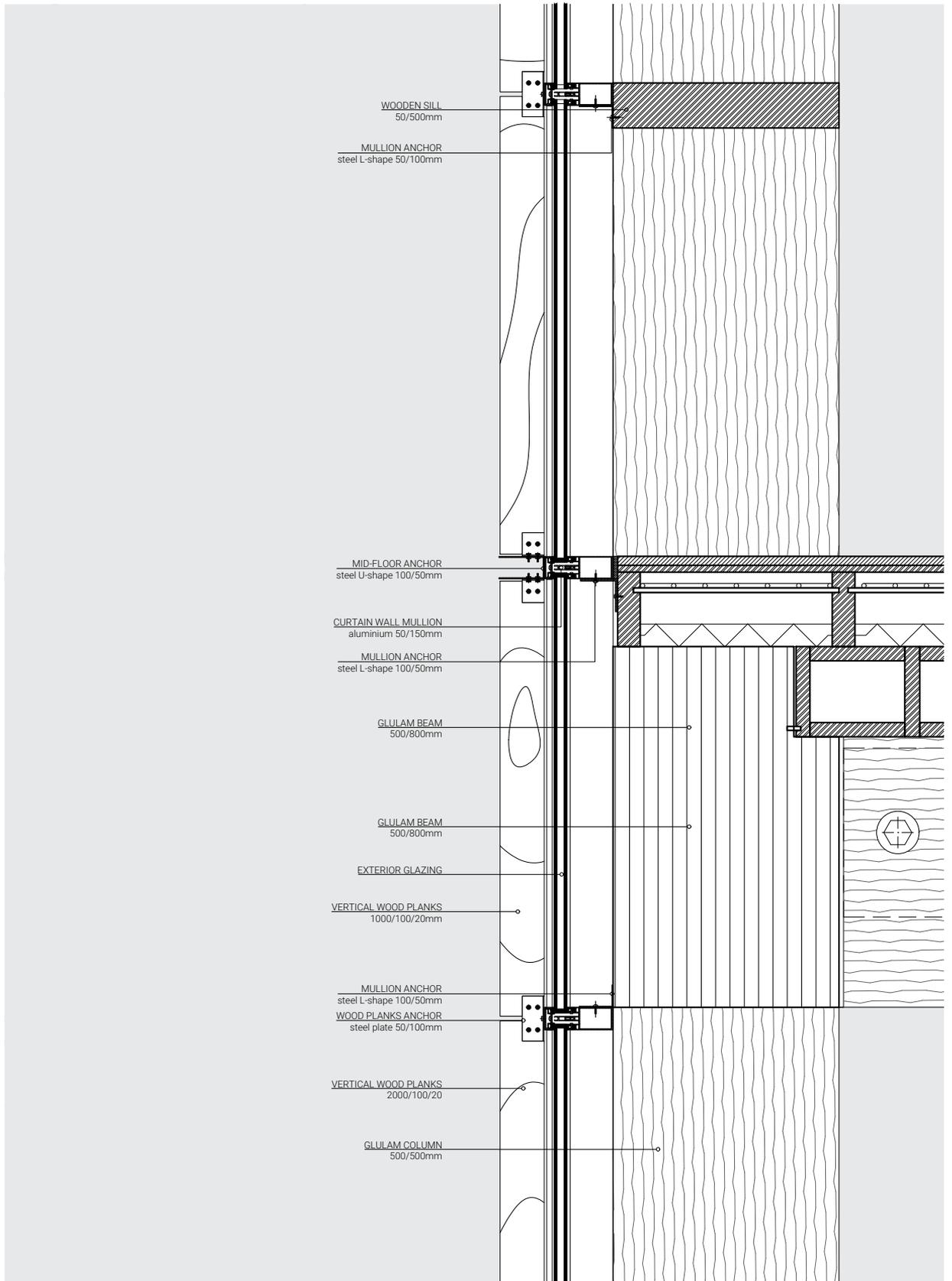
Assembly detail, Craft School - attic, original scale 1:5



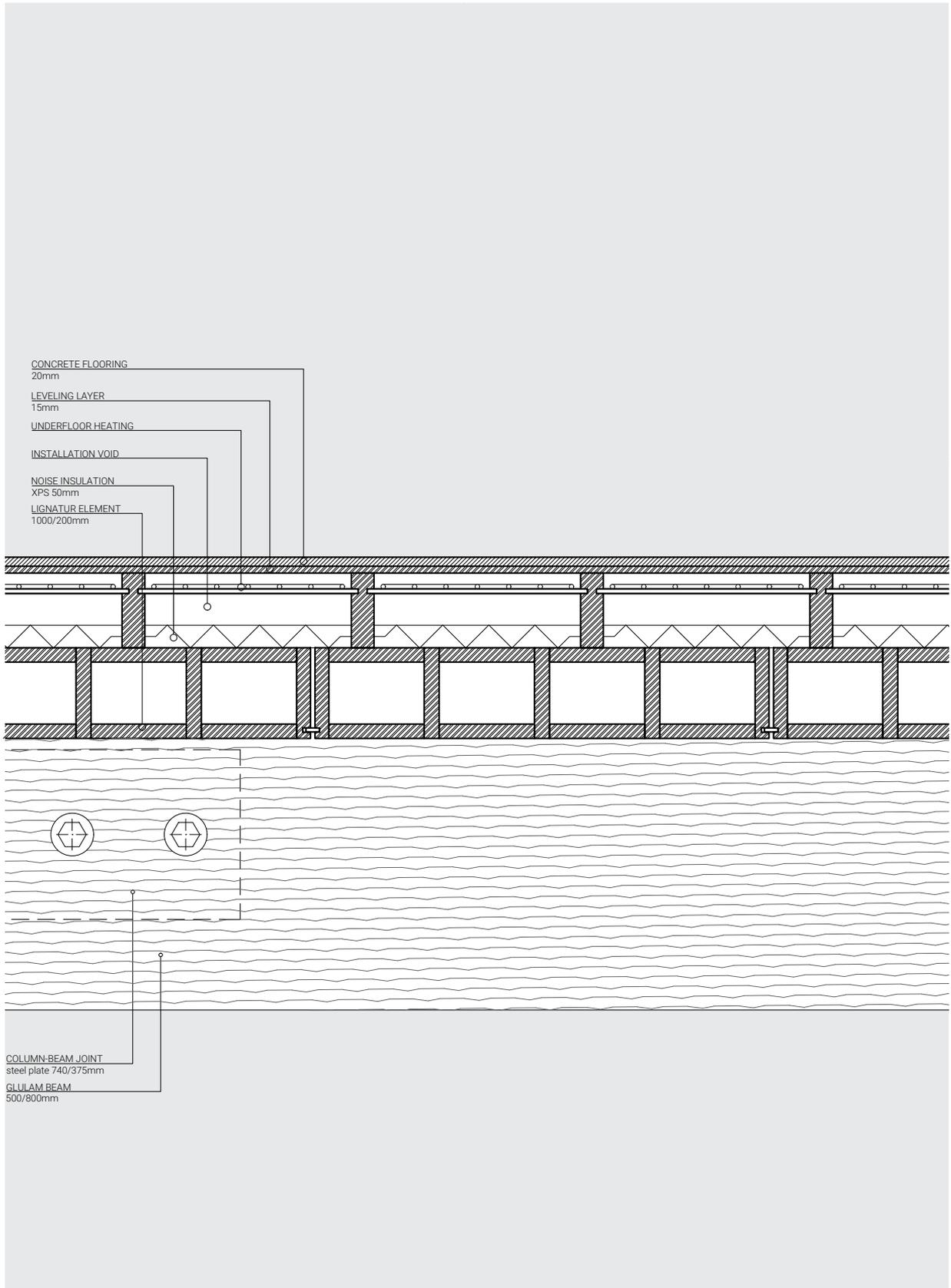


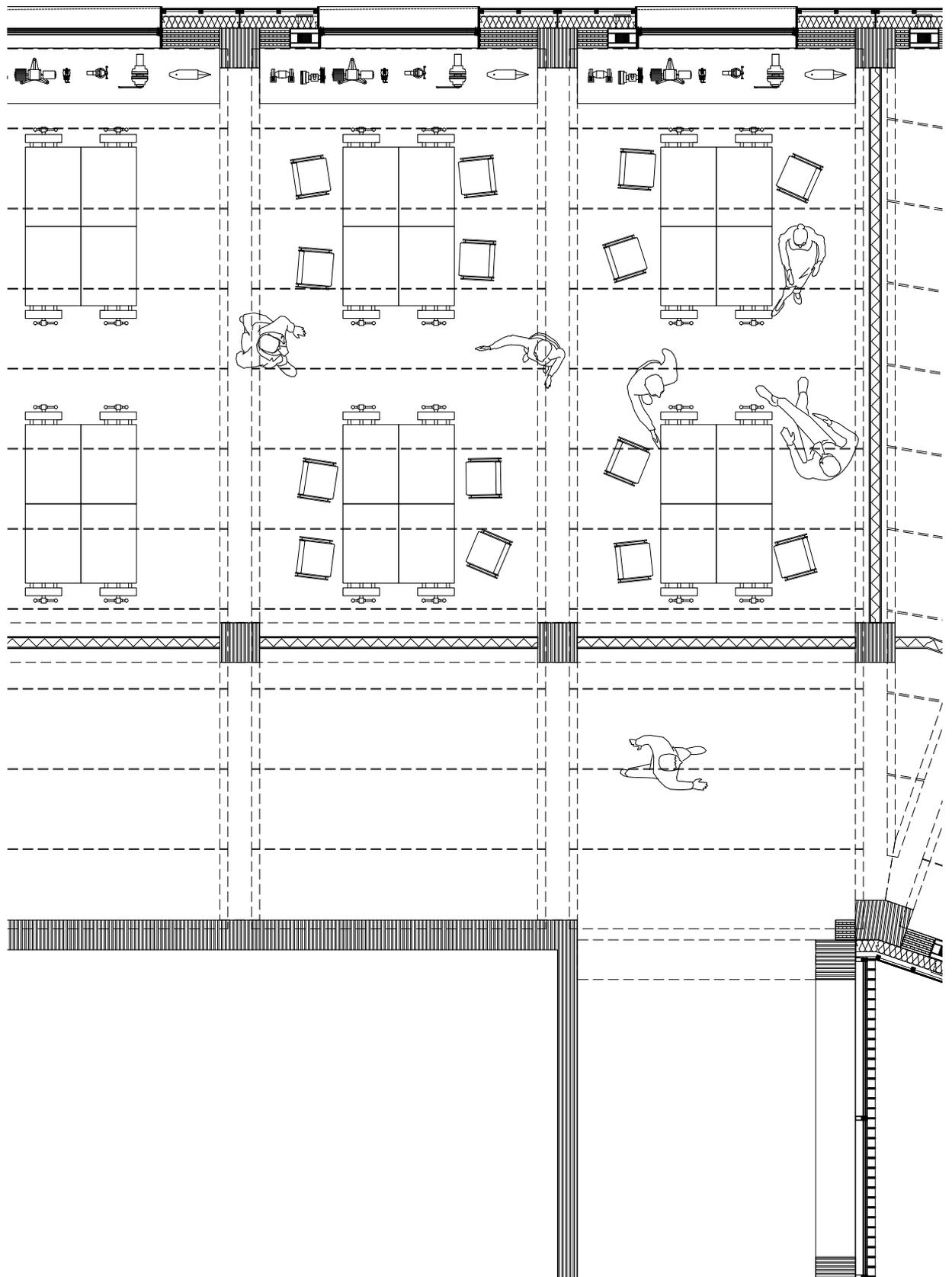
Assembly detail, Craft School - mid-floor connection, original scale 1:5



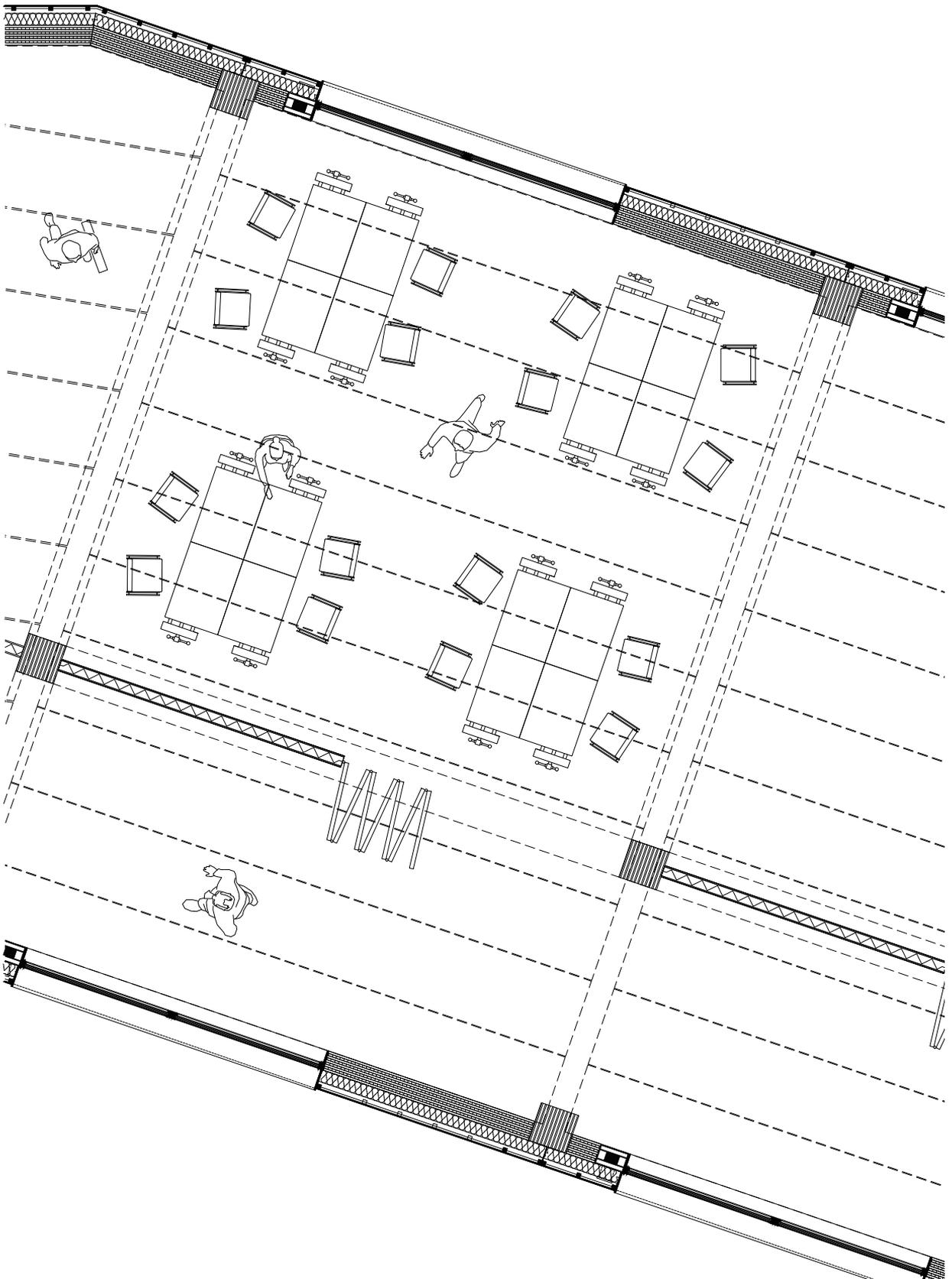


Assembly detail, Craft School - front facade, original scale 1:5





Detail plan of the practical education part of the Craft School





View from the Rue des Goujons on the Craft School and Library complex



EPILOGUE

The toughest question to answer for me is if I have found the answer to my hypothesis from the beginning. The answer would be yes and no, because specificity relies a lot on the skill of interpretation and curiosity about the place, since every case would be a different one, the personal position depends a lot on the cultural background and whole complexity of dependencies so it is not so easy – if not impossible – to just create a one-fits-all solution. When considering if spirit of the place should be more important than spirit of the age I am starting to contradict myself. It is tough to avoid building within certain spirit of the age, but the less time we as architects have to understand the context, the less spirit of the place would be continued. The most important conclusion is that the context is a source full of information useful for architects and can be used as a tool to build the positioning towards the site, however it is also important to underline that there is a very delicate border between interpreting it and mimicking it what demands extra attention to the logic of how and why some elements of context appeared. As architects we should not forget as well that the architecture serves people and space, so it should not create borders, but create new places. That is why studying specific logic of the place influences a lot the design. The context however is not the cure-all solution and I think that this is also something what Alvaro Siza was aware of in his work. The cultural background, creativity and imagination are also important features constituting to the experimentality of each project and breaking up this tight relationship at some point opens perspectives for more experimental solutions, since the evolution of the architecture is crucial.

Architect's task is to refer to the existing. The architectural design can be compared to a sculpture made by a bricoleur, using only tools and materials available at hand. However, contrary to a sculpture, the building is a continuation of some story, which was being written throughout the time, what does not necessarily apply to a sculpture. Therefore, it may seem, that the continuation of the existing and referring to it demands understanding of the processes and changes leading to the current state. All the necessary tools are available at hand – on site. It is only about designer's creativity and form of interpretation to use them to express his own position.

One would ask – why should we continue the existing story? The answer of course lies in the position of the architect. Observation of the global tendency for constant development, striving to fulfil housing shortages and provide necessary facilities led to strong standardization and commodification of architecture and – beside their effectiveness – resulted in placeless buildings and neighbourhoods without any identity. The term “regionalism” was lost in the transition because

the extents of region are understood more and more widely, without borders. Nevertheless, the need for identity with the place is still an unanswered issue of modern living areas and every intervention demands sensitivity for the existing memory – collective memory being created and continued. The architect's task is to observe and interpret patterns of inhabitation visible on-site, to create continuity of the place.

The Craft School project is an overall successful experiment, delineating my personal constraints of the extremum within the architecture. Following the limitations of the context, the project was also highly restrained by its own principles of modularity, from which it deviates at certain points, what can be seen as looking for certain compromise. However, the project as a process helped me to structure the approach to the context and was a good starting point for positioning myself towards the future projects. Additionally, the concept of modularity placed the project within the modern demands for architecture, which could become standard at some point for optimisation of the energy use and carbon footprint and in that manner, the Craft School project can be read as a statement introducing well-known method of prefabrication into modern possibilities.

The primary principle was more optimistic - looking for a structured method of finding a genius loci in each place. The process however confirmed myself in belief, that this process is non-linear and the set of approaches can be only widely described to define focus points, which allow to find extra information, which can have an impact on the architectural design. After this whole process I am far from defining it as a book of patterns, but more as an experience of learning the logic of each place, which is crucial in understanding its specific rhythm and uniqueness.

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2019-2020

Master Thesis Project



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