

Playing along

Theatre
and
Public Space

Foreword

Front matter

00



1. Clemente et al., *The Architecture of Public Space*.

2. Rosbottom, *Palace Studio Manual 2025-2026 Interiors Buildings Cities*.

Figure 1.

Image of 1:25 model of the between city and stage assignment

“First of all, public space is the core of democracy, or the space in which to make different ideas coexist and be shared”¹

Personal statement

The Theatre, an urban figure with a long-standing history in the context of European cities. From Dionysian festivals in the large amphitheatres of ancient Greece. To the street performances in the loud, dirty, chaotic streets of medieval Northern Europe. To the gilded theatres of the bourgeoisie, where theatre became a tool of social status and class division. After WWI and WWII theatres arose that attempted to break with tradition by becoming places for political expression and experimentation². Which brings us to our current moment in time. In the Netherlands theatres are largely subsidized by the government or hyper commercialized to stay afloat. The relevance and function of theatre in our society is being questioned. What is the future of theatre?

It is within this uncertainty about the role of theatre that Theatre de Veste positions its ambition for the future. They imagine the theatre as a public space where all parts of society are welcome and can engage in a meaningful way. Currently, Theatre de Veste is located on the south-west side of the historic city centre of Delft in a building dating from 1995. The organisation feels that its ambitions have outgrown its current situation and are looking to relocate.

The site chosen for this project is located at the South-West side of the historic city centre of Delft. Currently it functions as an urban back land. It contains a temporary parking structure, the back gardens of houses with their small sheds, a garage and a car rental, and a charity shop. The challenge of the project lies in manoeuvring a large building such as a contemporary theatre into the small-grain urban fabric of Delft.

The ambitions of Theatre de Veste pose interesting questions: what is the future of theatre, and in turn, the theatre of the future? To find answers to these questions, this project positions itself as an exploration of public space, with theatre as its core function. It asks how such a space can be balanced with the technical, organisational, and commercial realities of a fully operative contemporary theatre. How can a space be created that the people of Delft can use and inhabit in a meaningful way, and what if theatre alone is no longer sufficient as a reason to gather?

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2025/2026

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Setting the scene

Introduction

01



3. Rosbottom, *Palace Studio Manual 2025-2026 Interiors Buildings Cities*.

Figure 2.

View from the tower of the Nieuwe Kerk, De Veste in the distance.

City stage

De Veste has the ambition for a new building in Delft where they can develop their theatre of the future. The future they envision is a theatre that engages with society in an active way. To make space for challenging subject matters as well as popular themes. Where there is room for the debate of cultural and societal questions. Where theatre can blend with other forms of culture. Where all parts of society are welcome and can find purpose. Where performances don't only happen on the stage. A place people get to inhabit and appropriate. A place both festive and every day, both serious and fun.³

De Veste has expressed to envision a building inspired by the Forum in Groningen, where multiple cultural and public functions, such as cinemas, a public library, exhibition spaces, museums, a multifunctional auditorium, restaurants, and cafés, share one large building. De Veste would transform from a theatre into a broader cultural space. In addition to cultural functions, they also envision accommodating practical civic services, for example renewal of a driver's license.

This project takes a critical position on this idea, particularly in the context of Delft, and questions whether such a model is appropriate for this city. It argues that a city benefits from having strong and diverse functions distributed throughout its urban fabric. Rather than concentrating everything into a single large building. However, the ambition to bring multiple functions together points to an underlying desire; for the theatre to become

a relevant and meaningful building for the people of Delft, capable of bringing people together in more ways than through theatre alone.

Practically, this means that the new (theatre) building should not function as a singular cultural machine, but as an open and inhabitable public space. Through its architecture and spatial organization, it should create opportunities for people and different groups to meet naturally. Whether through attending a performance or more informal everyday use. The building should remain open and lively throughout the day, allowing people to enter freely, to study, work, attend an event, or simply have a coffee and hang out for a bit.

At the same time, the commercial side of the theatre must be able to function effectively, still supporting the repertoire De Veste currently presents. For this, the building needs to include an 800-seat auditorium that is fully equipped to host touring theatre productions. Alongside its main auditorium, the building should include an additional flexible performance space that can accommodate theatre as well as club nights, concerts and other events.

The new building becomes not only a destination for cultural consumption, but a shared public space baked into the everyday life of Delft.

Site

This project proposes to re-establish theatre De Veste as a public space. To achieve this, the project requires a site that allows the new building to integrate into the city and connect to urban life of Delft.

The site chosen is located at the South-West side of the historic city centre of Delft. It forms an intersection between distinct areas of the city. To the north, social activity clusters around the Beestenmarkt and Markt. To the east lies a quieter pre-war residential area. To the south, the logistical delivery area of shops. To the west, the edge of the commercial post-war area with shops. The site itself currently feels unresolved and somewhat neglected, making it an opportunity to contribute something meaningful to the city of Delft.

The site not only marks the meeting of different urban conditions, but also of different historical layers. During the Middle Ages Delft had several monasteries. One of them stood on the site, the Saint Ursula Monastery. During the reformation it fell out of use because of religious upheaval.⁴ By the late 16th century, the government confiscated and demolished the monastery, after which the land was redeveloped for housing Flemish refugees.

At the end of the 16th century, a large group of Protestant Flemings fled Belgium to escape religious persecution and war, and many found refuge in the northern Netherlands. It was attractive for cities to welcome the Flemings, as they were often skilled craftspeople (in brewing and textiles) whose expertise could help boost the local economy. To attract them the city would offer financial incentives, housing, and other privileges.⁵

Later, in the 17th century, the site counted several pottery and earthenware factories.⁶ The workshops were quite substantial, one even including a large pottery kiln of nearly 30 m². After the peak of Delft's pottery industry, the factories eventually had to close as the industry declined.

From 1875, a newspaper and its printing press were located on the Molslaan (De Nieuwe Delftsche Courant). They later expanded into a printing press and cardboard factory. Over time, the office and factory grew to occupy much of the city block, taking over several houses on the Molslaan and extending through the block all the way to what is now the Yperstraat.

After World War II, in 1969, the Flemish houses were demolished as part of a wider post-war urban renewal. By the 1980s, the expansion of the printing press had come to a halt, and a new public library was built, taking over part of the factory space. However, the library was only there for a short time. The building was demolished, and an apartment building now stands in its place. Meanwhile, the factory relocated out of the city centre, and the remaining halls are now occupied by a garage and car rental. Part of the former site of the Flemish houses was redeveloped for housing, while another part remains unused and is temporarily occupied by a parking deck structure.

The post-war modernisation disrupted Delft's small-grain historic fabric, leaving scars that remain visible today. The project has the ambition to stitch these loose ends into a meaningful urban figure.

Design Questions

Theatre as Public Space

How can a contemporary theatre function simultaneously as a space for performance and as an open public environment embedded in the everyday life of the city?

Theatre and Urban Fabric

How can a large contemporary theatre be integrated into Delft's small-grain historic urban fabric while repairing a fragmented urban condition?

Programme and Collective Use

What spatial and programmatic mix can allow the theatre to support both professional theatre production and broader forms of public and cultural life?

4. 't Convent Tot Sint Ursule.

5. 'Vlaamse huisjes'.

6. Van der Gaag and Frijhoff, *Historische atlas van Delft*.



Figure 3.
Urban plan existing situation



- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Parking deck | 5. Brabantse turfmarkt | 9. Station |
| 2. Kwifit | 6. Markt | 10. Bastiaansplein |
| 3. Köhler Autoverhuur | 7. Nieuwe kerk | 11. OPEN (Library) |
| 4. Besten markt | 8. Maria van Jessekerk | 12. De Veste |

Taking position

Approach

02



Figure 4.
Auditorium of de Veste

Methods

In preparation for the theatre design, and in the pursuit of developing a position, research was conducted in the following four ways.

Reference - Precedent Research

The precedent research focused on theatres relevant to the history of European theatre architecture. Theatre plans were redrawn and analyzed, and, with the effort of the entire graduation group, a collective research book was produced to provide an overview of key examples. This process enabled an understanding of differences in type as well as the evolution of theatre design over time.

Participants - Visiting Theatres

Theatres were visited through guided tours, as well as by attending performances. This allowed for an understanding of the inner workings of a theatre from multiple perspectives: the audience, backstage staff, performers, and the commercial and organizational side of theatre production.

Space - Design Research

A design exercise was undertaken to express an initial attitude towards the brief and to take a position. The exercise focused on the space between city and stage. It helped make the first ideas tangible and formed a starting point for the eventual design.

Literature

Relevant literature was studied to understand existing knowledge on theatre, performance, and the relationship between stage and the city.

For the full brief see appendices.

Reference

Theatre Through Time

The word Theatre originates from the ancient Greek Theasthai, meaning “to behold” or “to view.” From Theasthai comes the Greek Theatron, meaning “a place for viewing,” referring to the tribune in a Greek theatre and the Greek Theates, meaning spectator, the person doing the beholding or viewing. From there, the word moves into Latin as Theatrum, which refers both to a space, room, or building and to the performance itself. This is similar, if not the same, as the current meaning of the word Theatre. The spelling later changed to the Old English Theatra, and then to the late Middle English Theatre.

The etymology of the word Theatre mirrors the development of theatre itself. Especially through my dyslexic eyes, these words all appear quite similar. The same can be said when looking at the precedent research. From the Greek Theatre of Dionysus to the English Half Moon Theatre, there is always a space for performers and a space for the audience, and they are able to see one another.

However, there is nuance, of course there is. What ultimately shapes the form of a theatre is the type of performing art it accommodates, whether it is producing or receiving, and, perhaps most strongly, the role theatre plays within society at that moment in time.

Building References

1. Dionysian Theatre, Athens
2. Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza
3. Globe Theater, London
4. Opera Garnier, Paris
5. Festspielhaus, Bayreuth
6. London Coliseum, London
7. National Theatre, London
8. De Meerpaal, Dronten
9. Half Moon Theatre, London
10. Teatro Oficina, Sao Paolo

Note: All images and information regarding the theatres in the following section (page 20 - 21) are taken from the collective studio reference book. For the full research, see the studio research book.

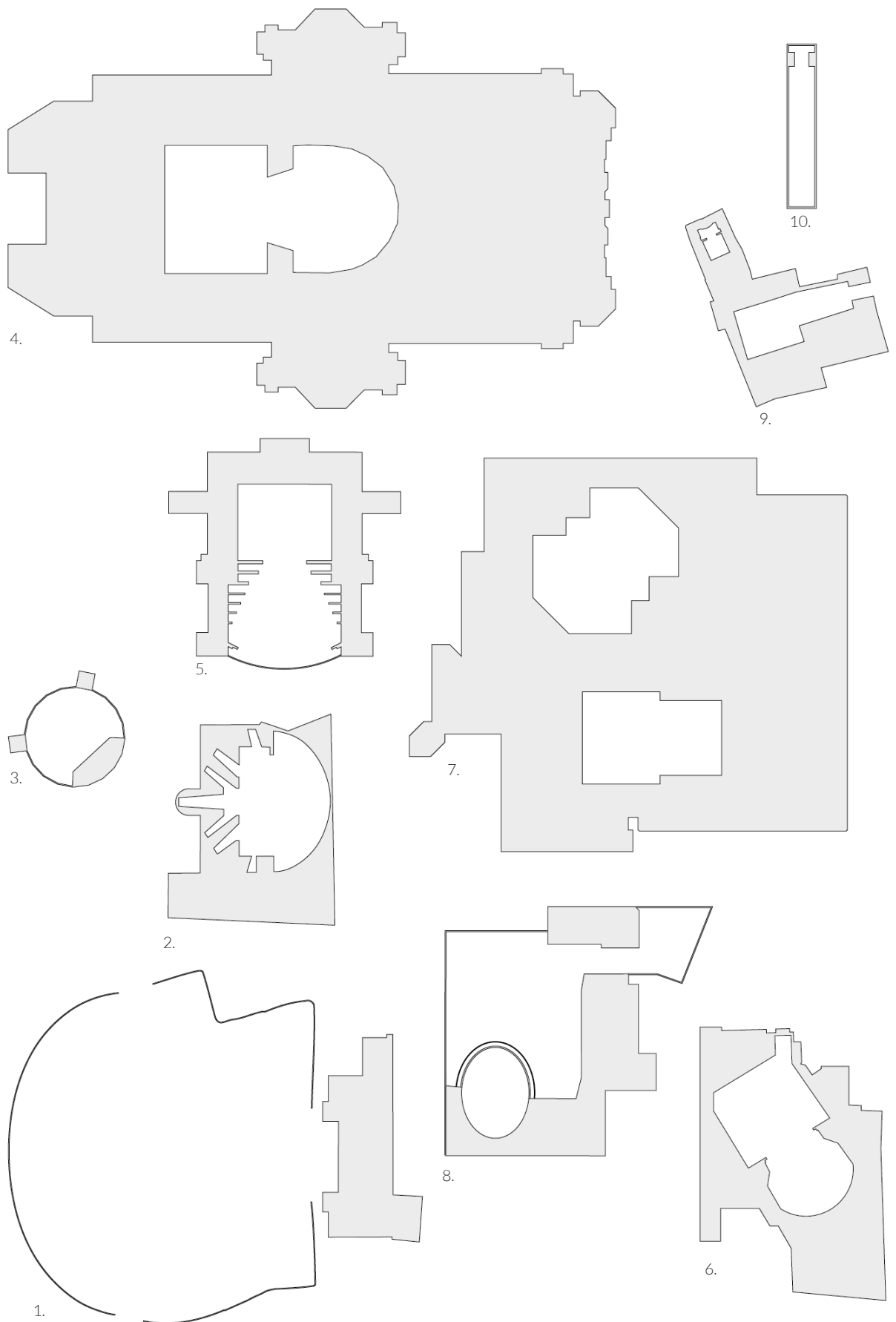


Figure 5.
Collective reference book. Grey highlights all the area that is not the auditorium.



Dionysian Theatre, Athens

Type of theatre: Receiving

Type of performing art: Greek drama as part of a larger festival

Role in society: The theatre was used in a festival honouring the god Dionysus through religious ceremonies and competitions in dramatic tragedy. The audience was primarily composed of male citizens, while women were seated separately. Foreigners, slaves, and prisoners were in attendance, with the state providing financial support for poorer citizens to attend.

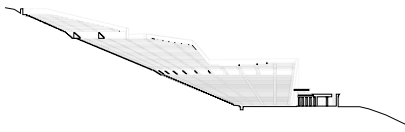


Figure 6. Dionysian Theatre Section



Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza

Type of theatre: Receiving

Type of performing art: Classical Dramas

Role in society: The theatre was built as a scholarly study of Roman architecture within a former prison. Its primary aim was the creation of an ideal, perfected architectural and theatrical model. It was built for the Accademia Olimpica, an academy of prominent scholars and artists. The Teatro Olimpico was intended as a permanent indoor setting for classical performances, particularly Greek and Roman tragedies, serving an intellectual and elite cultural community.



Figure 7. Teatro Olimpica Section



Globe Theater, London

Type of theatre: Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art: Mainly known for showing William Shakespeare's works

Role in society: Located on the south bank of London, which at the time was a rough part of the city. Performances were loud and rowdy, with audiences reacting and shouting. Attendance was open to anyone who could afford it.

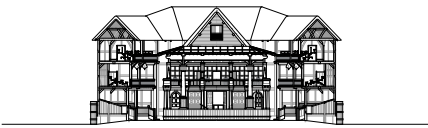


Figure 8. Globe Theatre Section



Opera Garnier, Paris

Type of theatre: Producing & Receiving

Type of performing art: Ballet and Opera

Role in society: The Opéra Garnier functioned as a prestigious social space, showcasing the grandeur of the upper classes and reinforcing social hierarchies. It was as much about seeing and being seen as it was about the performances themselves.

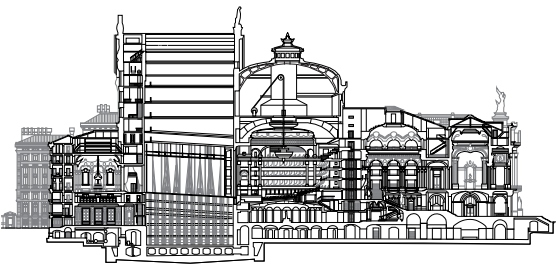


Figure 9. Opera Garnier Section



Festspielhaus, Bayreuth

Type of theatre: Producing

Type of performing art: Exclusively pieces by Richard Wagner

Role in society: The Festspielhaus was conceived specifically for Wagner's works. It was deliberately located in Bayreuth, away from the high society of larger cities. This to ensure that the performed work itself was the focal point. While the emphasis was on the art, the performances were still intended to attract and be attended by the upper classes.

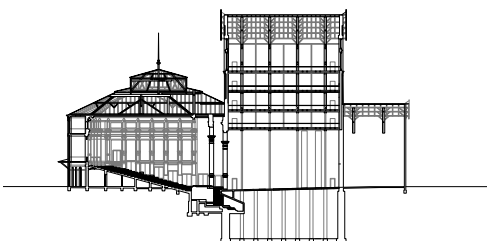


Figure 10. Festspielhaus Section



London Coliseum, London

Type of theatre: Receiving

Type of performing art: Opera, ballet, musicals, plays, and concerts

Role in society: The theatre functioned not only as a cultural institution but also as a social stage, the building was designed to impress, gather crowds, and embody the grandeur of public entertainment. It contains an intricate sequence of social and commercial spaces, including bars, tea rooms, restaurants, private salons, and multiple foyers.

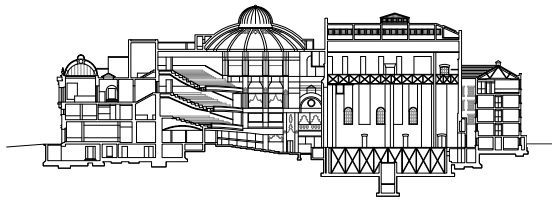


Figure 11. London Coliseum Section



De Meerpaal, Dronten

Type of theatre: Receiving

Type of performing art: Theatre, Musicals, Music Performances, Dance, Cabaret, Lectures and Youth Performances.

Role in society: More than only a theatre, De Meerpaal was designed as a living room for a newly created town. The building was intended to be open and socially mixed, allowing different groups to share its spaces.

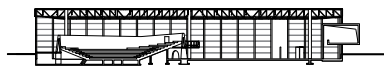


Figure 12. De Meerpaal Section



National Theatre, London

Type of theatre: Producing

Type of performing art: Theatre Productions

Role in society: A public building open to all. The theatre has the ambition of being part of the public space of the city. Therefore, it was designed as a piece of the city, an urban landscape. It sees the theatre as a civic institution, one that can be entered, climbed, and inhabited, even without a ticket.

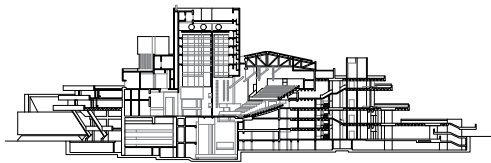


Figure 13. National Theatre Section



Half Moon Theatre, London

Type of theatre: Producing

Type of performing art: Theatre Productions

Role in society: A political and community-oriented institution within London's East End. In line with traditions of working-class activism and experimental theatre, it provided a platform for alternative and marginalised voices. Rather than acting as a neutral cultural building, the theatre blurred boundaries between street and stage, prioritizing participation, adaptability, and social engagement.



Figure 14. Half Moon Section



Teatro Oficina, Sao Paolo

Type of theatre: Producing

Type of performing art: Experimental and political theatre, mixing dramatic plays with musical presentations, dance, and visual arts

Role in society: A center for experimental performance and political expression. The theatre dissolved the boundary between performer and spectator, encouraging participation and collective experience.

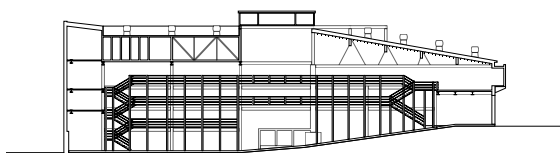


Figure 15. Teatro Oficina Section

Theatre, Theatre, Theatre, Theatre

It is important to understand the layers of theatre that have been created over time. When starting to design a contemporary theatre, or even to think about a theatre of the future, these layers need to be considered. Even if the intention is to disregard or challenge them. Questions arise such as: what art form is being housed, and is it one or many? This will inform the type of theatre machine that is required. It also influences the business side of the theatre. On top of that it is essential to consider the role the theatre is intended to play within society, and what kind of building it becomes within the city. From all of this it is also important to consider what is the responsibility of the architect. What the architect needs to form an opinion on and what needs to be thoroughly understood.

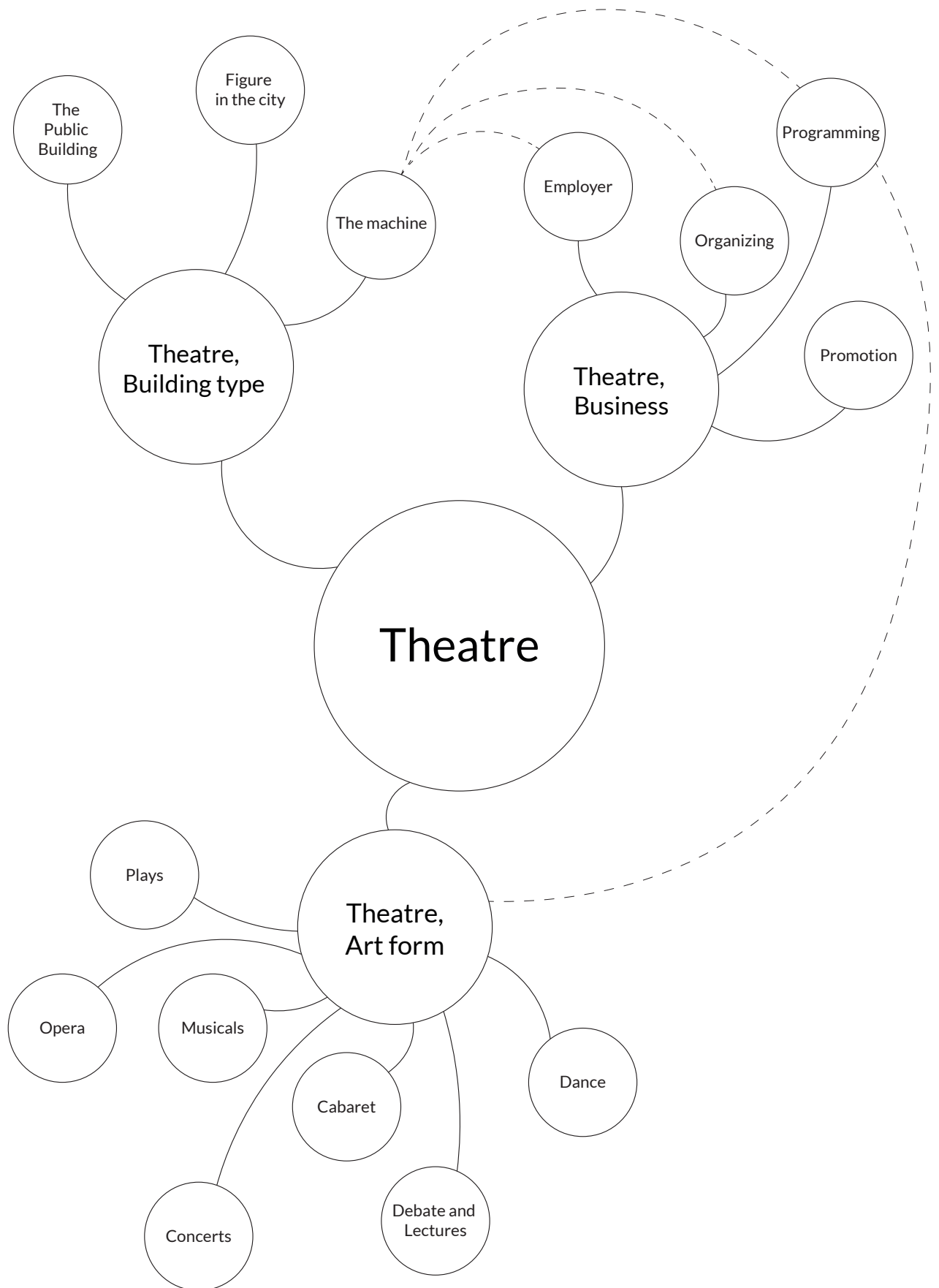


Figure 16. Theatre relations diagram

Participants

Overview of Theatres and Theatre-related buildings visited or toured



Figure 17. Theater Bellevue
Theater Bellevue, Amsterdam

Type of theatre
Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art
Theater (new drama, music theatre, visual theatre), cabaret, dance, spoken word, storytelling, puppetry/object theatre, and kleinkunst

Role in society
"For over 120 years, Theater Bellevue has been in the heart of the city and has always been a place humming with activity. In three auditoria, from midday till the small hours at night, there's a constant stream of the public, artists, writers, creatives, and curious passers-by, in search of a connection. Theatre, dance, cabaret, and anything remotely similar, is sure to move you, let you find yourself in good company, have a good conversation, or just have a good time in the theatre auditorium as well as in the infamous theatre café De Smoeshaan."

www.theaterbellevue.nl/no-dutch-required-z8n4



Figure 18. Stopera
Stopera, Amsterdam

Type of theatre
Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art
Opera, Ballet, and Musical theatre

Role in society
"We want to enrich the lives of as many people as possible with the wonder, beauty and meaning of opera and ballet. We do it by bringing song, dance, music, acting, language, technique and design together in the "live" interpretation of human emotions. In doing so, we offer our audiences an emotional, intellectual and sensory experience which transcends everyday life and can touch both the hearts and minds of people."

www.operaballet.nl/en/about-us



Figure 19. Forum
Forum, Groningen

Type
Multi functional cultural public building.

Role in society
"With its sharp lines, the striking building stands out against the historic city centre like a modern monolith. The building is 45 meters high and has ten floors and a rooftop terrace. The building consists of two 'towers', a West and an East tower, which are connected by escalators that run criss-cross through the building. Both towers have closed and open areas. In the closed areas you'll find the exhibition halls, the cinema theatres, the multifunctional hall and Storyworld. An entrance fee is charged for activities that take place in these areas. The open areas on both sides of the atrium are freely accessible."

<https://forum.nl/en/info/forum>



Figure 20. Kunstwerf & Machinefabriek
Kunstwerf & Machinefabriek, Groningen

Type
Cluster of theatre related buildings

Role in society
"No fewer than nine organizations can be found at this cultural hub: Club Guy & Roni, Noord Nederlands Toneel, NITE, De Steeg, De Noorderlingen, Het Houten Huis, Jonge Harten, Noordpool Orkest, and Gebied-B. That all fits perfectly, because the Kunstwerf consists of more than just the new black-and-white building. The machine factory, Villa B, and the old regulator's house are also part of the site."

<https://kunstwerfgroningen.nl/>

Theatres visited for performances



Figure 21. Grand Theater
Grand Theater, Groningen

Type of theatre
Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art
Theater, concerts, dance,
experimental

Role in society
"Grand Theatre is the mother ship for the performing arts, setting off from the heart of Groningen. We programme and produce trendsetting theatre, while actively engaging with our environment. Together with the public, local creatives, social partners, and national and international artists, we seek new concepts, connections and working methods to make the professional performing arts of value to everyone living in the northern Netherlands. This involves activities far beyond the confines of our own theatre."

www.grandtheatregroningen.nl/en/info/over-grand-theatre

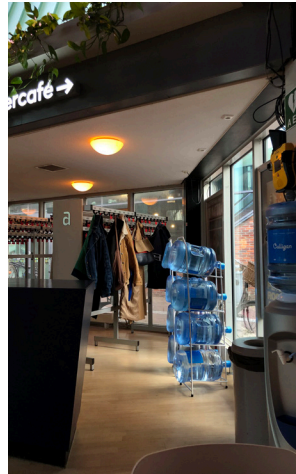


Figure 22. Theater de Veste
Theater de Veste, Delft

Type of theatre
Receiving

Type of performing art
Theatre, cabaret, dance,
musical theatre, and music

Role in society
"Theater de Veste is the theatre of today and of the future, with a clear and distinctive identity, fully in line with the innovative city of Delft. We are a contemporary, unconventional, and multidisciplinary venue in the Randstad, with a distinctive high-quality programme consisting of theatre, innovation, and debate. We are proud to present a programme that ranges from thought-provoking theatre to sensory-stimulating dance, from the very best cabaret to innovative scientific events, both national and international. Our collaborations extend from the city to the country and beyond. Each season, more than 250 performances, events, and programmes take place."

www.theaterdeveste.nl/theater-de-veste-t2pc

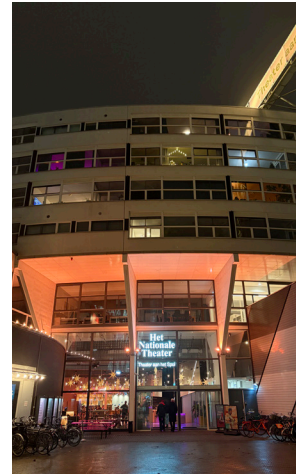


Figure 23. Theater aan het Spui
Theater aan het Spui, Den Haag

Type of theatre
Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art
Theatre, music theatre, and
cabaret

Role in society
"Het Nationale Theater in The Hague is the largest touring theatre company in the Netherlands and creates productions for audiences across the entire country. With our own youth theatre company, HNTjong, we are the only national theatre organization that makes performances for all ages. We also operate three theatres in The Hague. You can visit Het Nationale Theater at the Koninklijke Schouwburg, Theater aan het Spui, and Zaal 3."

Elaborate documentation
page 26 - 27

<https://www.hnt.nl/en/invalid-url-hphy>

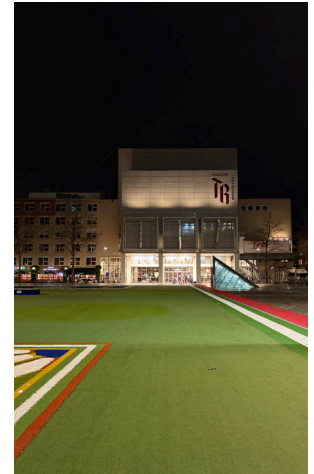


Figure 24. Theater Rotterdam
Theater Rotterdam, Rotterdam

Type of theatre
Producing and Receiving

Type of performing art
Theatre, dance, physical
theatre, performance,
storytelling, music theatre and
opera

Role in society
"Theater Rotterdam stands for leading, multi-voiced theatre. By telling stories, we bring people, perspectives, and ideas together. With "I am through you" as our motto, we fully commit to connection. We create a place where we see and hear one another—a place for dreams and consolation, beauty and enrichment. Together we celebrate and experiment, we are moved and prompted to think. And as we do so, we come alive. We warmly invite you to join this dance."

Elaborate documentation
page 28 - 29

<https://www.theaterrotterdam.nl/wie-wie-zijn-x26q>

Theater aan het Spui, Den Haag

08.01.2026

Thursday

20:15

Twee oude vrouwtjes



Figure 25.
Leaving the faculty after tutoring with Suus.



Figure 26.
Walking to the station to take the tram to Den Haag.



Figure 27.
Dinner on the tram.



Figure 28.
Got out at Bierkade and walked to the theatre.

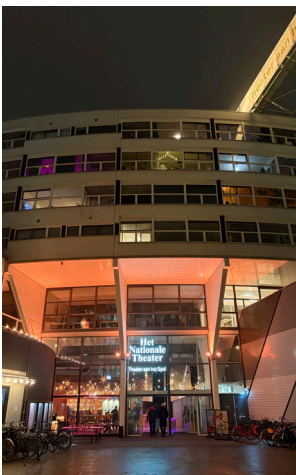


Figure 29.
The theater and cinema are next to each other. Housing above the theater. The cinema looked really cozy.



Figure 30.
The entrance looked quite promising.

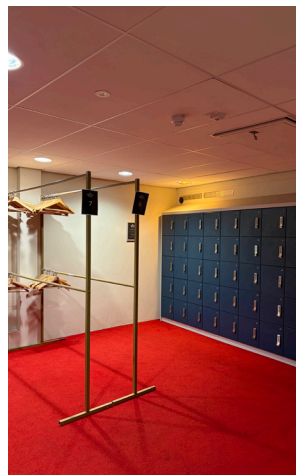


Figure 31.
Yet once inside the interior felt fragmented.



Figure 32.
Toilets.



Figure 33.
In the foyer area, there was also a small stage set up.



Figure 34.
Seating area in the foyer.



Figure 35.
A small ramp led us to the auditorium.

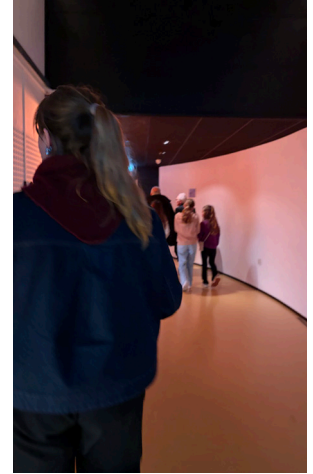


Figure 36.
Hallway to the stage.



Figure 37.
The performance was in a small Blackbox theatre.

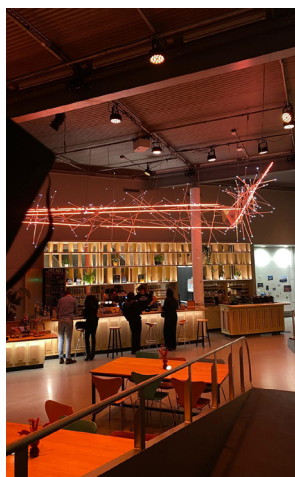


Figure 38.
After the performance most of the people left straight away.

Theater Rotterdam, Rotterdam

15.01.2026

Thursday

20:00

HOPE



Figure 39. Form uni to Rotterdam, pasta dinner at the station.



Figure 40. Walking to the theatre from the station, passed the Doelen theatre and cinema.

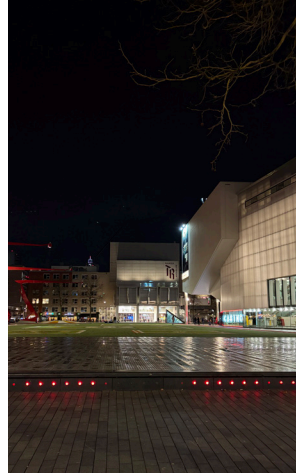


Figure 41. The Theatre is situated on a square with similar venues.



Figure 42. At the front façade there is a truck lift.



Figure 43. The theatre hangs over de street, creating a covert entrance.



Figure 44. Line for the garderobe, toilets conveniently located at the end.



Figure 45. Toilets.

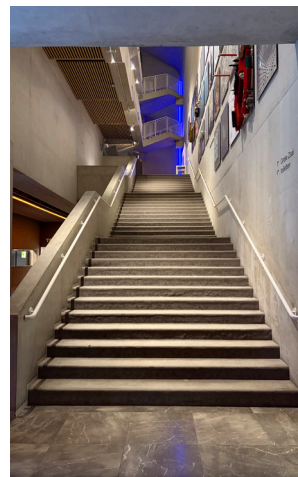


Figure 46. Grand staircase leading to the auditorium.

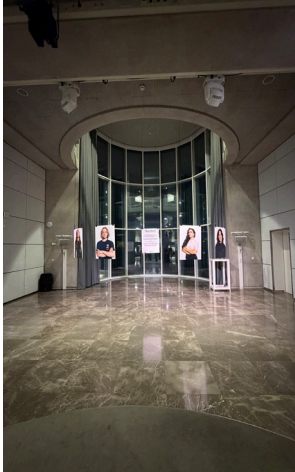


Figure 47.
The way to the auditorium leads over different levels.

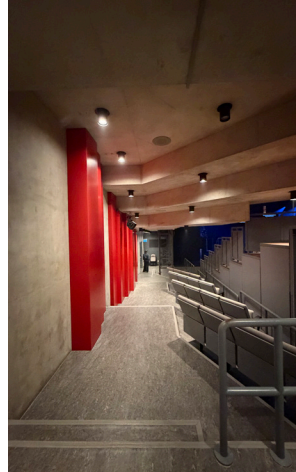


Figure 48.
Way into the auditorium.

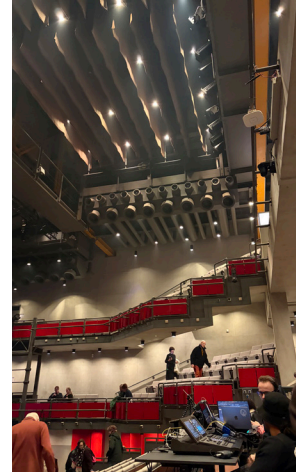


Figure 49.
Way into the auditorium.

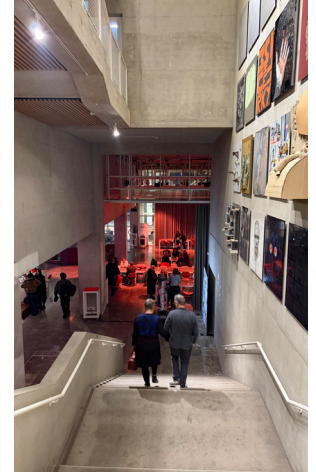


Figure 50.
After the show we went back down to the foyer.



Figure 51.
The interior felt cohesive and on theme for a theatre.



Figure 52.
People stayed after to talk and have a drink.



Figure 53. Theater Korzo



Figure 54. Zaal 3



Figure 55. Theater De Regentes



Figure 56. Theater aan het Spui



Figure 57. Koninklijke Schouwburg



Figure 58. Diligentia



Figure 59. Amare



Figure 60. Theaterschool Rabarber

The theatre of the present

After the studio excursions, visiting theatres in Amsterdam, Groningen, and Delft, a pattern could be recognized in the stories the guides told us. Most theatres expressed the ambition to invite the public in and make them part of what is happening in the theatre. Some were fairly successful in this, while in other places we arrived during the day to find the lights turned on just for us and the chairs still stacked on the tables.

Going to performances in the evenings showed theatres in full motion. These are the moments when the theatre is truly in use. Yet it was clear that the large foyer spaces were hardly occupied beyond the brief periods before and shortly after a performance. Walking past several theatres in The Hague during the day reinforced this impression, a closed building waiting for the evening to fall.

It became evident that the wishes of De Veste are not unique. Multiple institutions are grappling with similar questions. A moment of friction becomes visible in the present, between the theatre as it has historically functioned and the future theatres now aspire to become.

Space

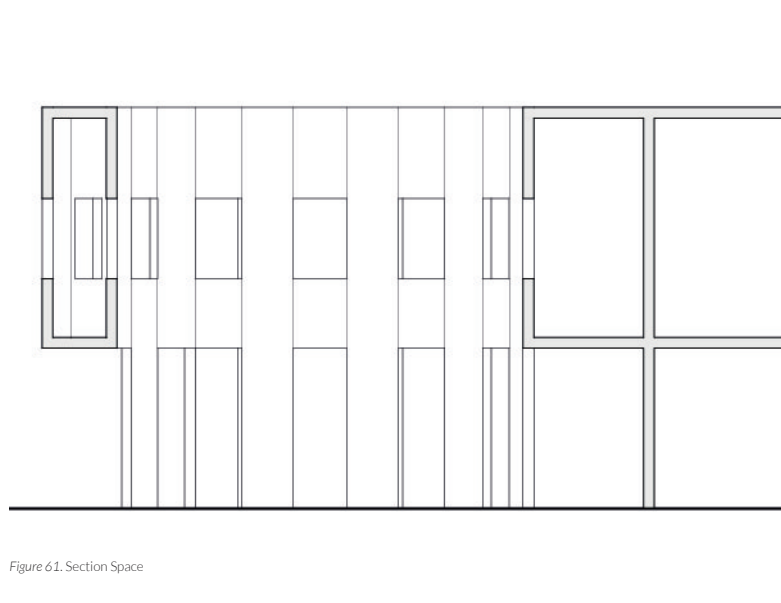


Figure 61. Section Space

Between City and Stage

Why do the ambitions of theatres and their daily reality not always align? Perhaps the answer lies in the physical reality of the buildings themselves, which do not always allow for the openness they aspire to. This raised the question of whether there are places in Delft that do succeed at being open to everyone. Spaces with a low threshold, where different people naturally meet. Markets, squares, churches, and courtyards emerged as recurring examples. A shared characteristic between them is that they function as robust rooms in the city. Some indoor, some outdoor, and some somewhere in between.

Applying this to the brief, a space between city and stage. I think this is a space where things become focused. In the city, there is a lot happening all at once. All our lives mixed together, all our stories layered together to make the city. When we move into the theatre, we take turns. We take turns focusing, directing our collective attention to one story at a time. We gather around to listen, to laugh, to judge, to understand, to misunderstand, to be part of something bigger.

This translated itself into the 1:25 model as a façade that protrudes into the city, with an open room beneath it. A room adjacent to the street, always open for people to come in. I imagine theatre could happen there as well. Passersby can become part of an audience, or the audience can sit in the room and look out at the city. The roof is open and during the day this creates a natural spotlight moving around the room.

The result of the model feels like an introduction to a public space. It embodies many of the ideas I was exploring, even though it could still take many different forms. What I take away from this model is: a façade protruding on to the street, nestled between other buildings, that invites people in by leaving a space for them.



Figure 62.
1:25 model

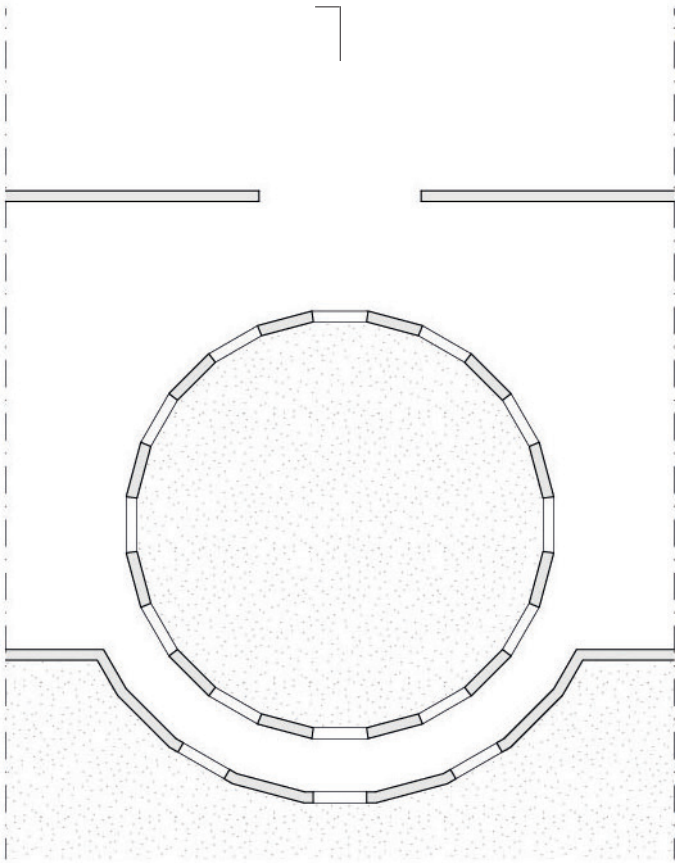


Figure 63. Plan Space first floor

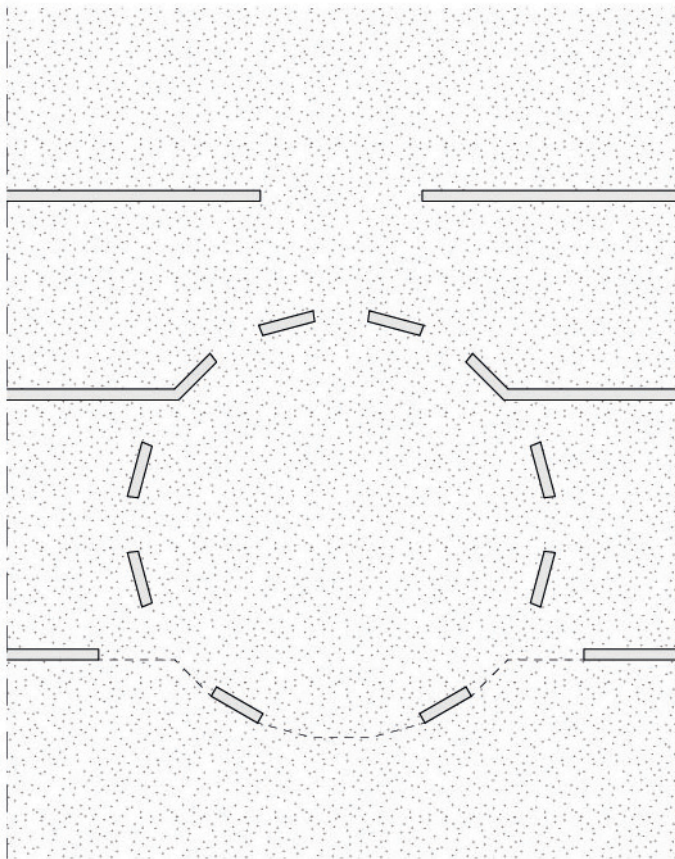


Figure 64. Plan Space Ground floor

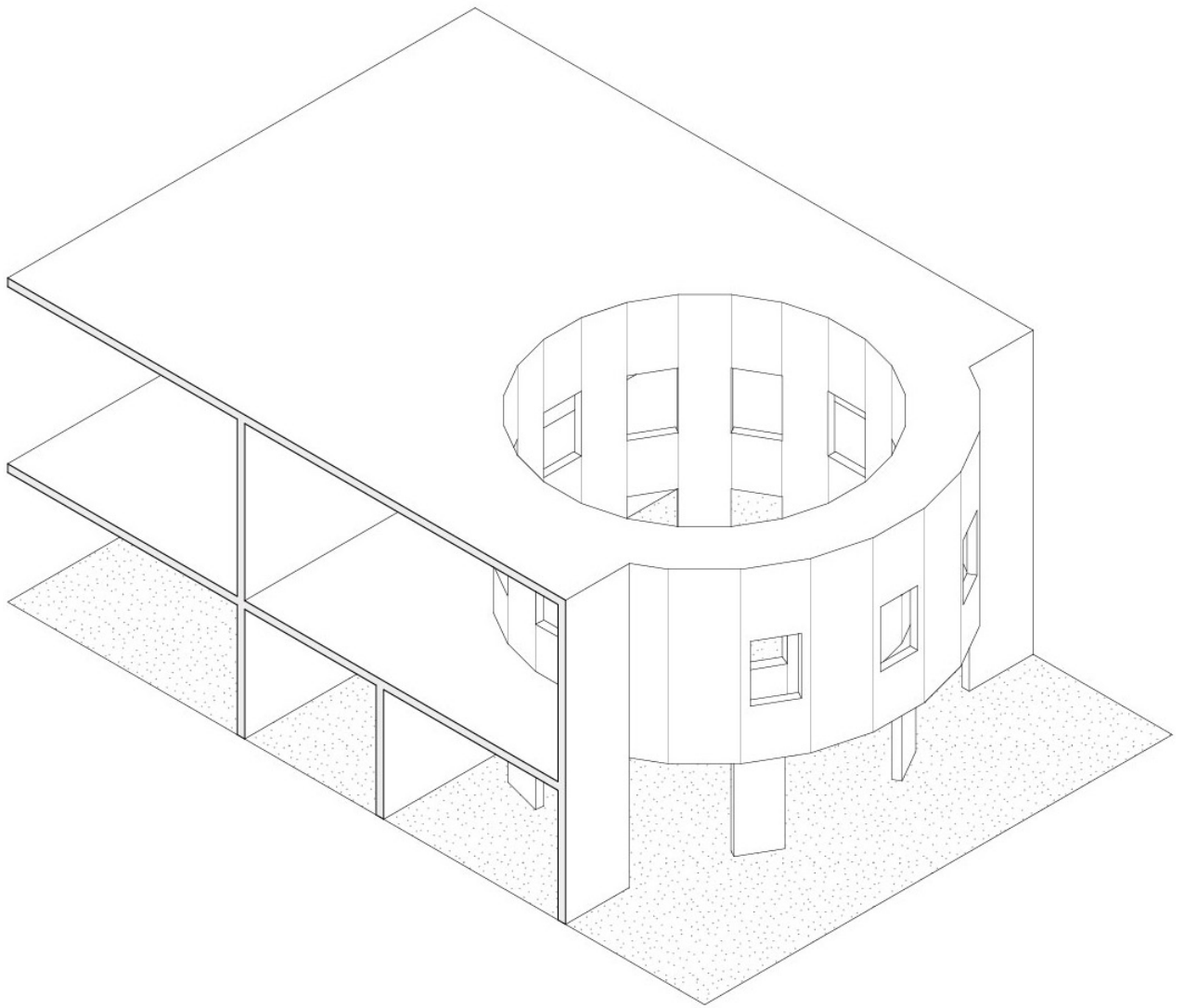
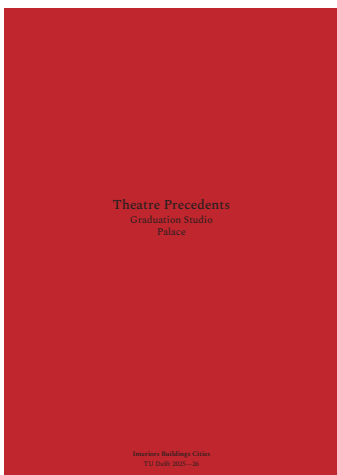
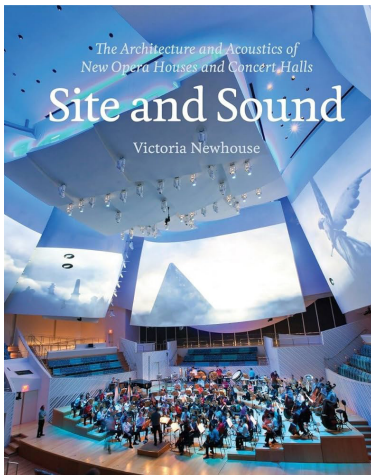
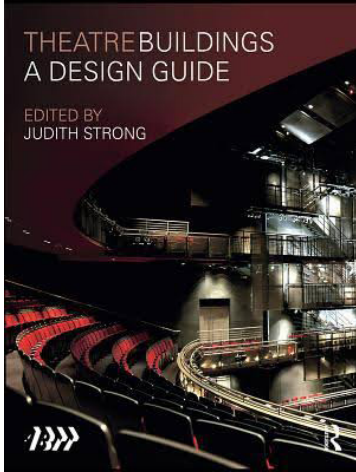


Figure 65. Axo Space

Isometric view

Litrature

This section presents books, texts, and other references that inform the understanding of theatre and contributed to the development of a critical position. The sources range from academic texts and essays to publications that examine the inner workings of theatre and provide an overview of relevant precedents.



7. Association of British theatre technicians, *Theatre Buildings*.

8. Newhouse, *Site and Sound*.

9. *Theatre Precedents - Graduation Studio Palace*.

10. Clemente et al., *The Architecture of Public Space*.

11. Brook, *The Empty Space*.

*Theatre buildings: a design guide*⁷

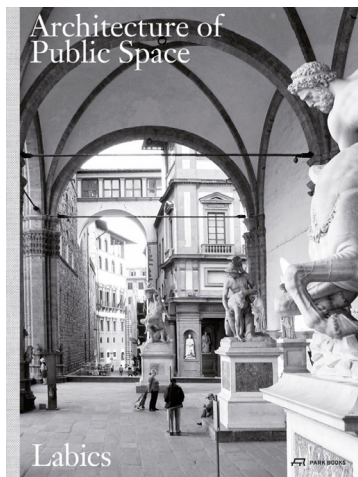
Extensive and detailed theatre design guide. Provides tools for designing every aspect of a theatre building. Especially useful for understanding the complex design requirements of the auditorium.

*Site and sound: the architecture and acoustics of new opera houses and concert halls*⁸

The introduction of this book provides a useful overview of the development of theatre buildings. Showing how evolution of performance art influenced the design of auditoria.

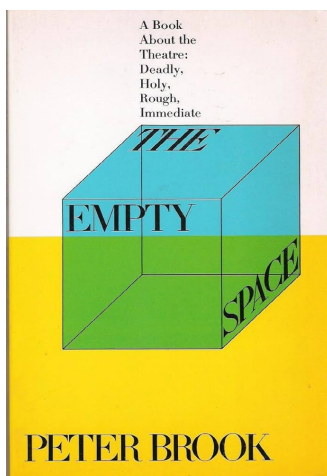
*Theatre Precedents - Graduation studio Palace*⁹

Precedent research book produced through the collective efforts of the studio. The process helped develop a thorough understanding of the history of theatre and its changing role within society. Particularly useful as a broad reference for understanding theatre as both a cultural institution and an architectural typology.



The architecture of public space ¹⁰

An overview of architectural typologies that shape public life in Italian cities. Through the study of squares, courtyards, loggias, galleries, and porticoes, the book explores how public space emerges. Particularly useful for understanding thresholds, civic space, and the role of architecture in structuring social life within a city.



The Empty Space ¹¹

Useful introduction into theatre the art form. The book explores different approaches to theatre-making and argues that meaningful performance can emerge in almost any setting. Particularly useful for understanding theatre as an event, the relationship between audience and performer, and the role of space in shaping theatrical experience.

Contemporary theatre references

Stadsschouwburg, Utrecht, Nederlands

Schouwburg Amphion, Doetinchem, Nederlands

TR25 schouwburg, Rotterdam, Nederlands

National Opera House, Wexford, Ierland

Show time

Results

03



Figure 66.
Entrance



Intentions

The ambition of this proposed design is to create a theatre building that functions not only as a place for performance, but also as an open public space that is capable of taking part in the everyday life of the city. The project is presented through a series of scales: from its position in the city and urban form, to the organisation of the building, the spatial experience, architectural expression, and technical development.

The design process was structured into phases, each guided by a specific brief. The outcomes together form the complete design.

A Performative Architecture – Diagrammatic Design

How do the different functions of the theatre relate to one another? The movement of audiences, performers, staff, and equipment informs the placement of spaces in relation to one another. Yet the spatial organisation of the theatre is not defined by circulation alone, but also by the quality of each space as a place to inhabit.

The Space of Performance – The Auditorium

The main hall should respond to the client's requirements. In the design of the hall, many aspects need to be considered, including sightlines, acoustics, lighting, structure, atmosphere, and fire safety.

From city to seat – figure, façade, foyer, fragment

The theatre is not a building that stands in isolation, it is part of an urban sequence. The project understands the theatre as an extension of the public realm and seeks to become part of everyday city life. This is developed through the design of the urban figure, material expression, spatial character, and the technical solutions that allow the building to function as intended.

For the full briefs see appendices.



0 25 50 100 m

Figure 67.
Urban plan new situation



Urban imbedding

As mentioned before, the site is located on the South-West side of the historic city centre of Delft. The massing responds to Delft's small-grain urban fabric while providing the scale and facilities needed for De Veste's programme. The large volume of the main auditorium finds its place next to the larger apartment blocks to the west of the site. The rest of the volume remains at a level that relates to the surrounding small Delft houses.

The intention of the design is to create a public space. The massing is therefore arranged around a central courtyard. The building encloses the courtyard, while two underpasses allow it to remain permanently open, enabling it to be part of Delft's urban life even when the theatre itself is closed.



Figure 68. 1:500 model



Figure 69. 1:500 model

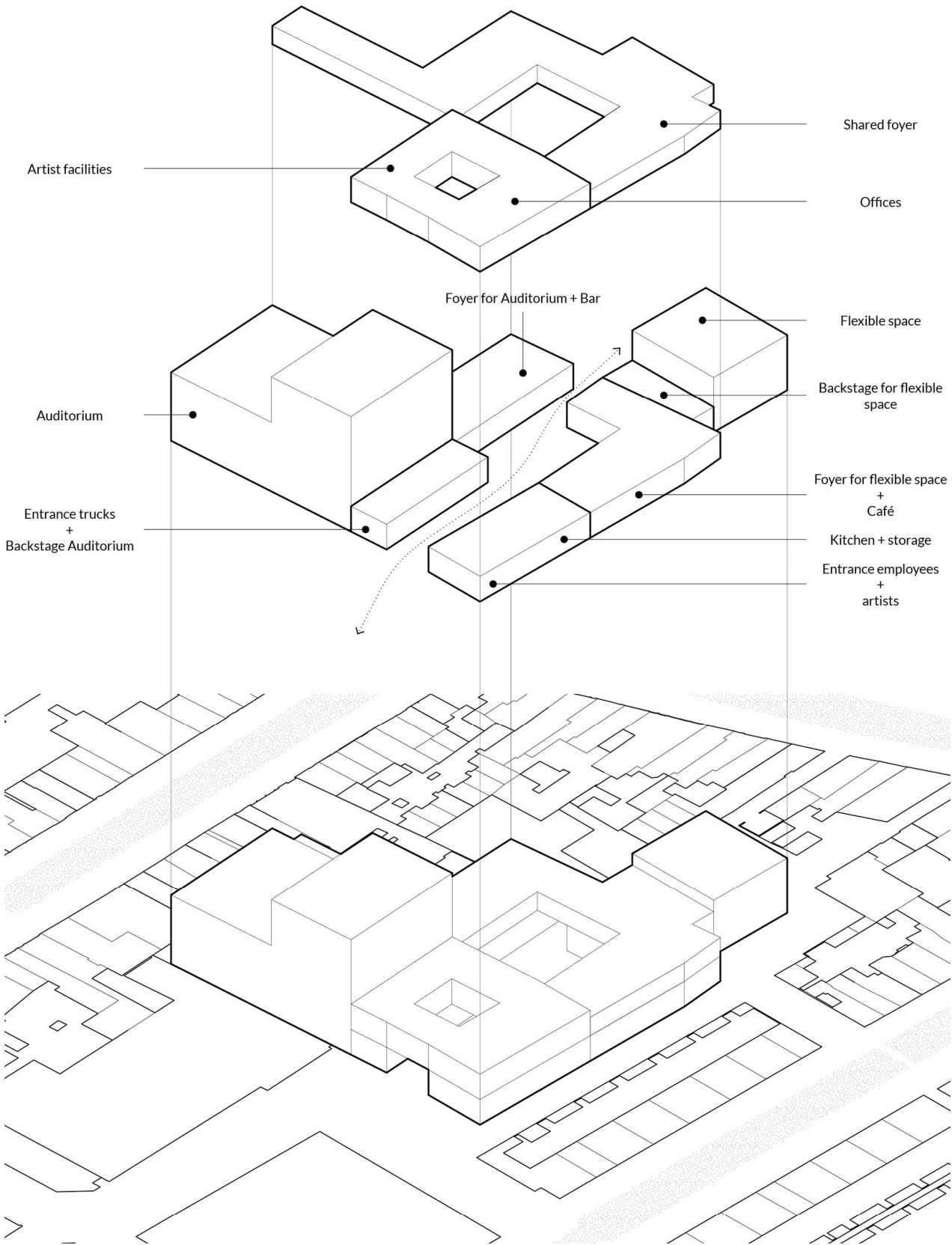


Figure 70.
Organization diagram

Organization

Social and public functions are organised around the courtyard, while the performance spaces are placed at opposite ends of the building. The foyers of both the large and small halls connect directly to the courtyard and can open towards it, extending the public realm into the building.

The courtyard

The courtyard is the entrance to the theatre. From here, people move to where they need to be. The courtyard can also be used for performances and festivals, as an extension of the café and bar, or for activities such as protests, debates, a meeting point for a run club, or other social gatherings.

The foyers

The foyer is an extension of the urban room that is the courtyard. It houses a bar and café on the ground floor. On the first floor, the foyer spans across both spaces. In the evenings, it functions as a traditional theatre foyer, but during the day it is open and inhabitable: a place where people can study, work, catch up with friends, or simply spend time outside the house. There is also space that can be used for social gatherings, workshops, lectures, debates, pub quizzes, etc.

The places of performance

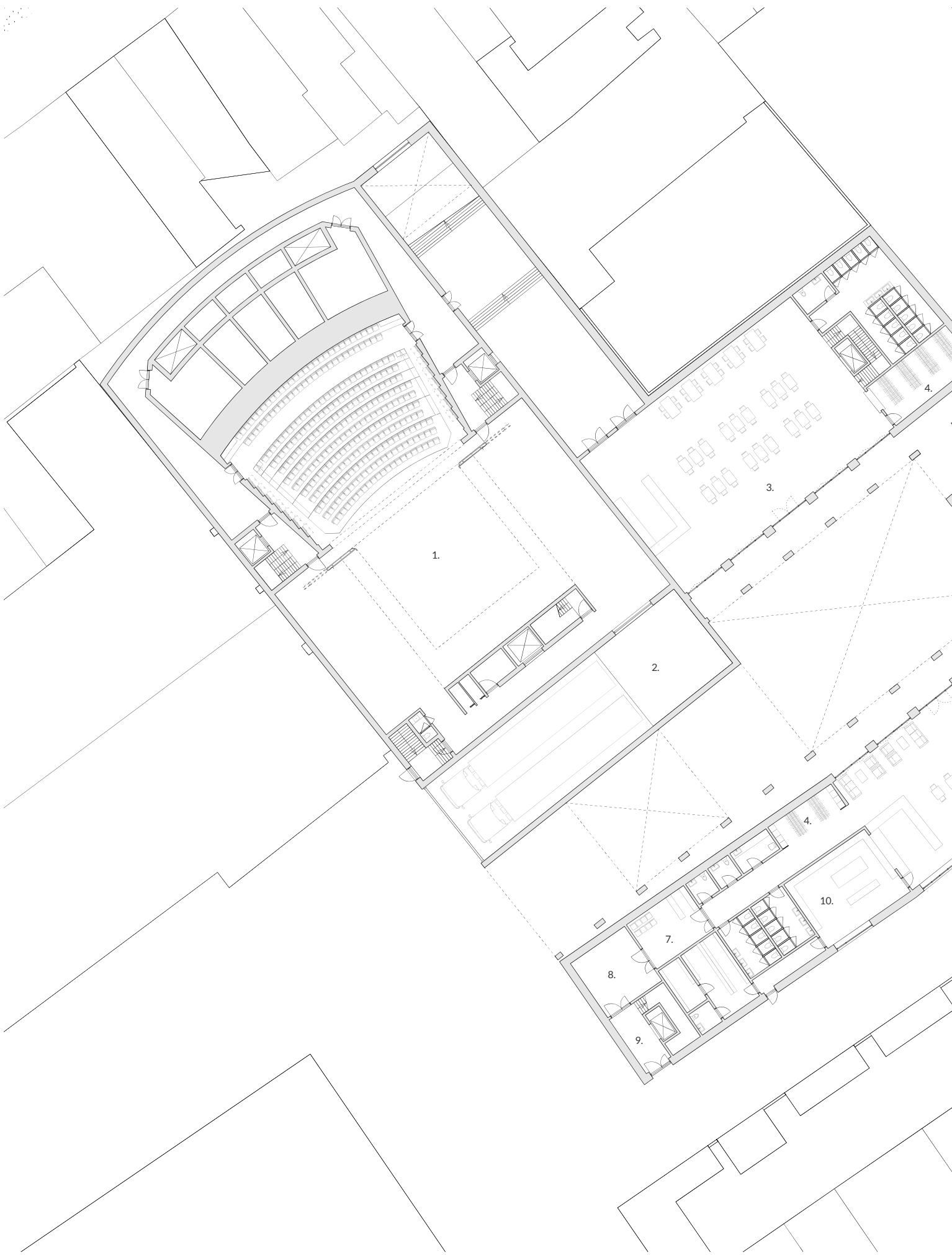
The two performance spaces differ in use and character. The large hall is a formal performance space that aims to be the theatre machine De Veste envisions. The small hall is more flexible and can be used for experimental theatre, concerts, and club nights.

Backstage and get in

Due to the nature of the site, there are limited options for truck access. The placement of the loading zones is therefore a direct response to what is possible on site. The two venues are positioned at opposite ends of the building, each with its own dedicated delivery point. The backstage spaces are arranged in a logical relationship to the stages, allowing for efficient movement during productions.

The office

The offices are situated on the first floor, overlooking the courtyard and looking out into the city. This creates a pleasant place to work while also allowing an overview of what is happening in and around the building.



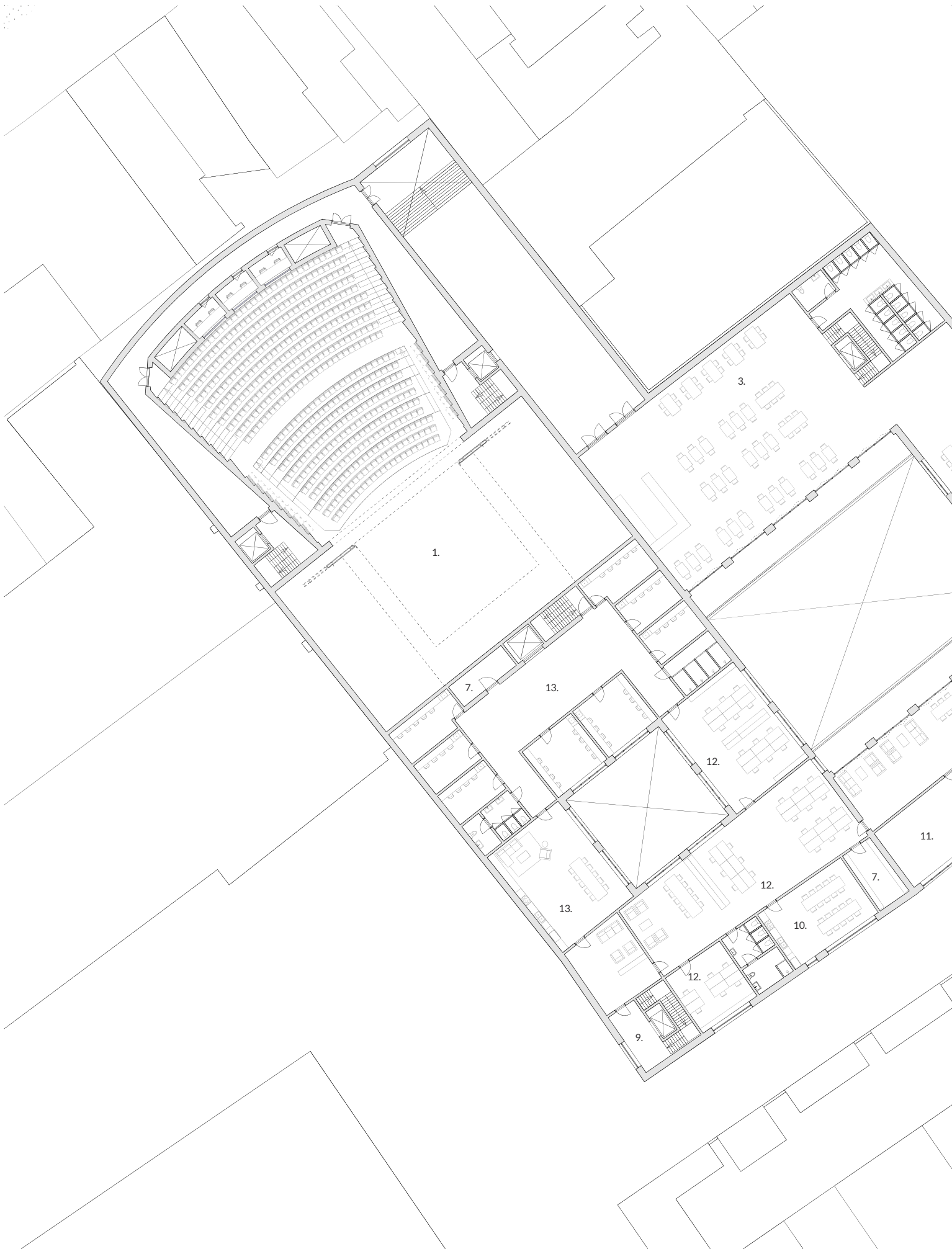


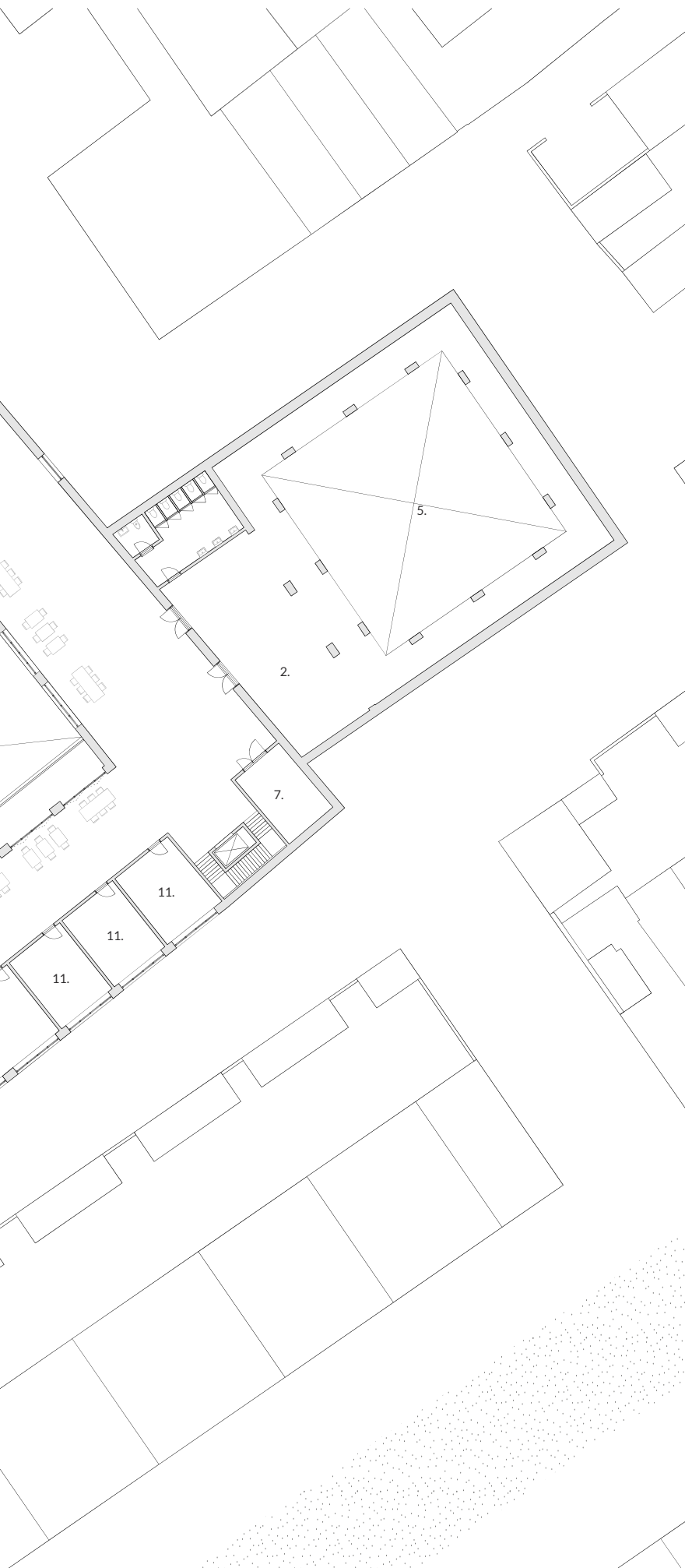
Ground floor

- 1. Auditorium
- 2. Delivery area backstage
- 3. Foyer + bar
- 4. Garderobe
- 5. Flexible performance space
- 6. Foyer + café
- 7. Storage
- 8. Technical room
- 9. Artist and employee entrance
- 10. Kitchen
- 11. Additional space for events and workshops

Figure 71.
Ground floor plan







Second floor

1. Auditorium
2. Delivery area backstage
3. Foyer + bar
4. Garderobe
5. Flexible performance space
6. Foyer + café
7. Storage
8. Technical room
9. Artist and employee entrance
10. Kitchen
11. Additional space for events and workshops
12. Office
13. Artist facilities

Figure 72.
Second floor plan





Figure 73.
Entrance

Experience

Arriving at the theatre, you are met with a relatively closed façade and a glimpse into the courtyard. The outer façade of the building has openings where they are needed. It is similar to the backside of a stage set: practical and shaped by necessity, hiding yet hinting at the world on the other side.

A large passage leads to the courtyard from the west side. In scale, this passage relates to the wider streets on that side of the city. On the east side, the courtyard is reached through an alley, followed by a smaller passage into the building. This sequence relates to the narrow passages found throughout Delft's historic center. The building plays with and responds to its surrounding urban conditions.



Figure 74. Courtyard

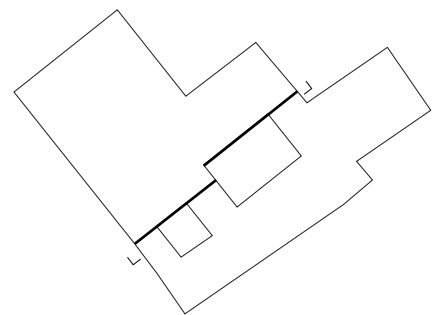
From the passages on either side, the building opens into the courtyard, an urban room. The space is rhythmic and solid. In contrast to the more closed outer façade, the courtyard façade is open and inhabitable. Encouraging people to enter and explore. A colonnade runs along its edges and forms a gradual transition between outside and inside. Passing through it, you enter the foyer spaces, where the atmosphere becomes more interior while remaining connected to the life of the courtyard.

In the foyer daylight enters from the courtyard, creating a comfortable space animated by changing shadows throughout the day. Because of its scale and the repetition of the structure, it feels generous without becoming overwhelming. During the day, the foyer functions as an extension of the city. With places to work, study, meet friends, or simply spend time. In the evening, as visitors arrive for a performance, the atmosphere gradually changes and the space takes on the role of a more traditional theatre foyer.





Figure 75. Section



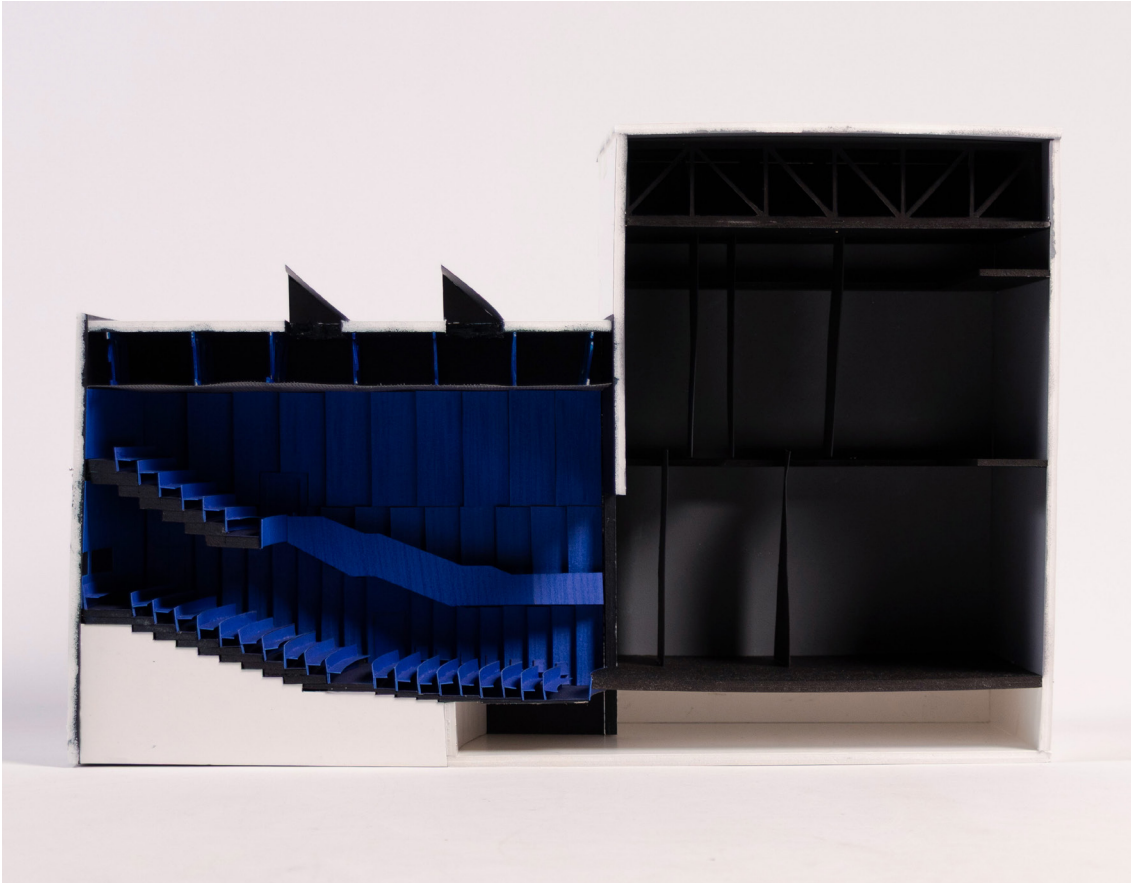


Figure 76. Auditorium model

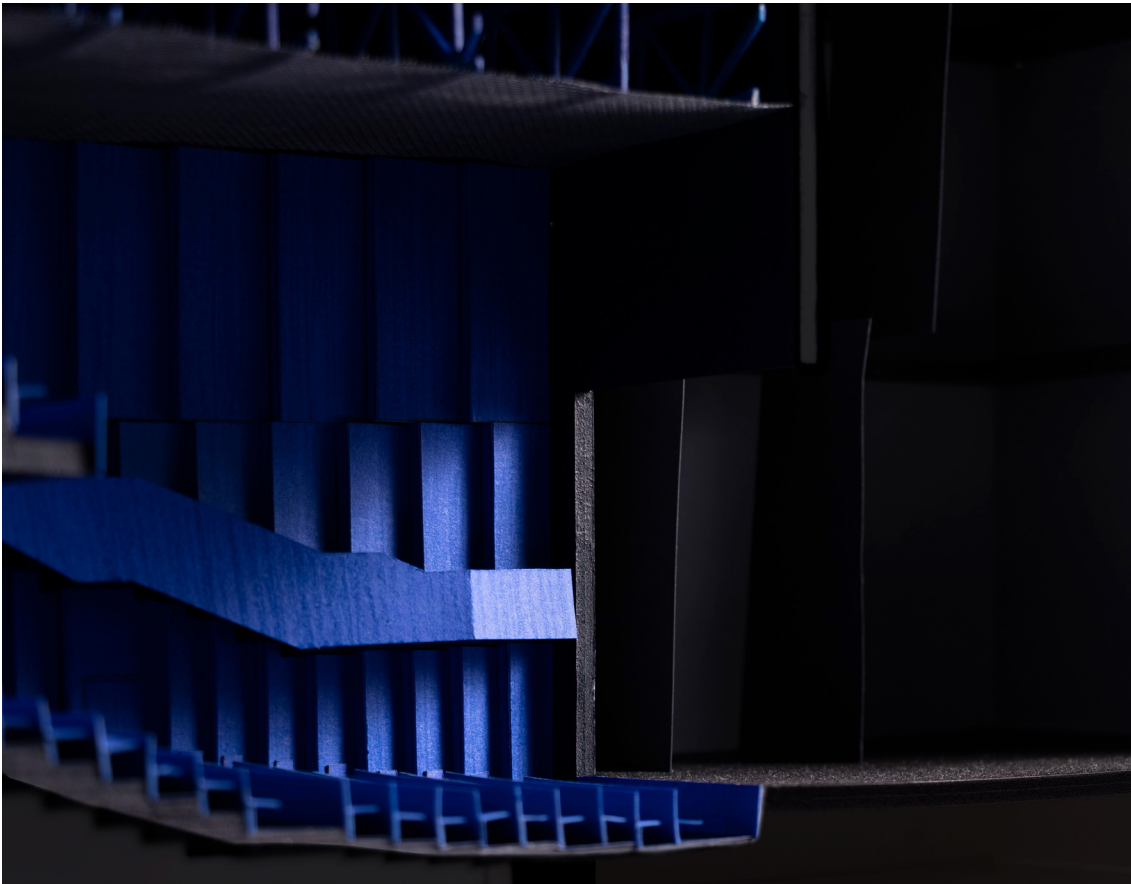


Figure 77. Auditorium model close-up

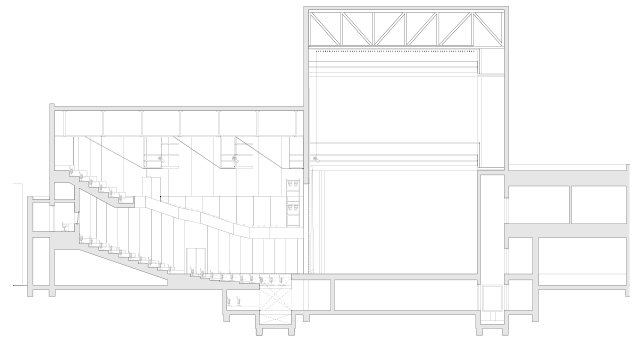


Figure 78. Auditorium section

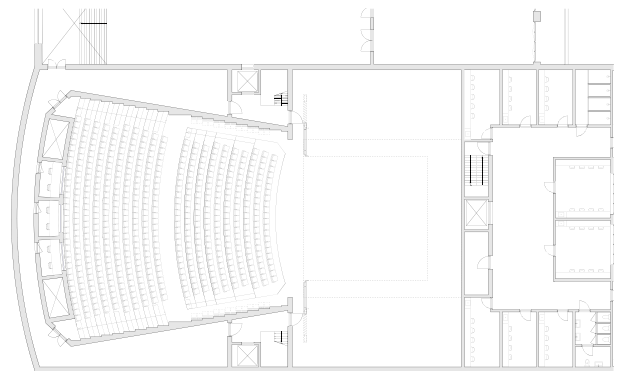


Figure 79. Auditorium plan first floor

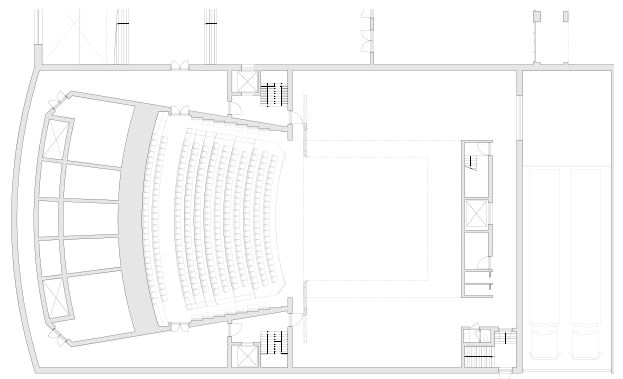


Figure 80. Auditorium plan ground floor

Auditorium

At the threshold of the auditorium something shifts. It is the least public part of the project, while still accessible, it requires a ticket. It is not private, yet it is intimate. Something special happens there, something that cannot happen in public space. Exiting the stone world of the public, the audience enters a blue hall.

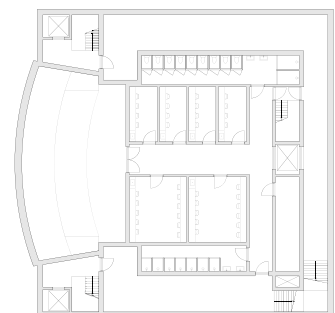


Figure 83. Auditorium plan basement

Elaboration

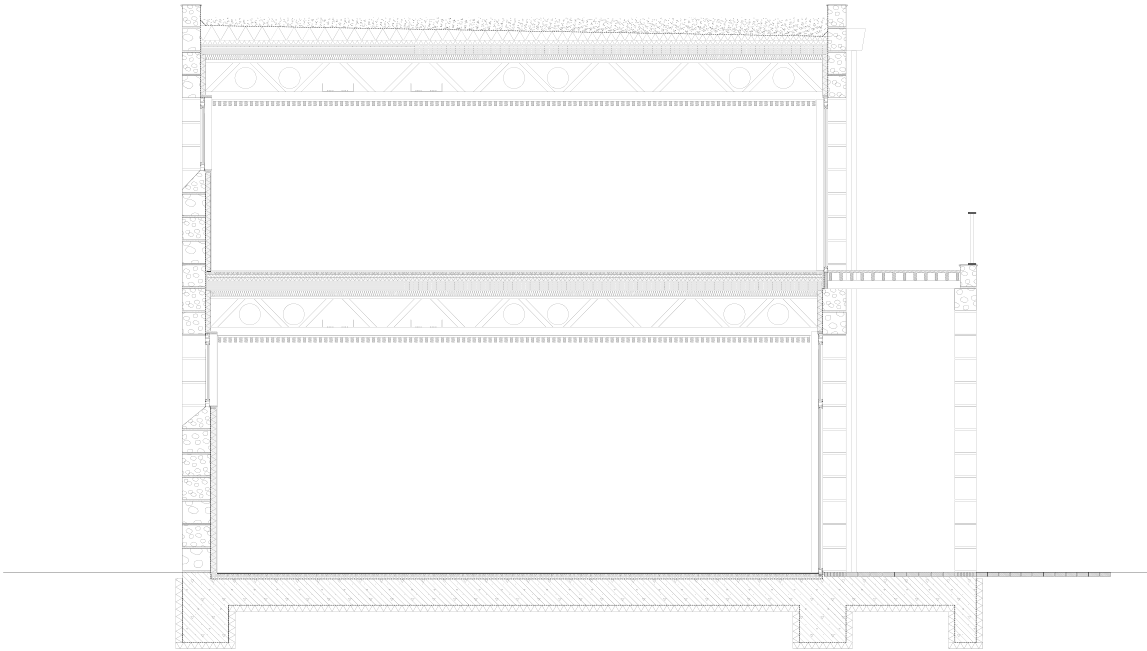


Figure 82. Section. Scaled, original scale 1:20

Façade fragment

In its material, the proposal aims to reference Delft and the public spaces the city offers: markets, squares, churches, and the stone and brick urban rooms that hold city life.

The theatre is intended to feel part of the city and familiar in character, while also clearly expressing itself as a public building. The material needs to feel contemporary, fitting for a theatre of the future but also capable of holding public life.

The building is constructed from large blocks made from demolition rubble of the site. On site, the remaining factory halls will be demolished, creating a supply of concrete and brick rubble. This makes it possible for material from the site itself to be reused in the new building. The rubble can be supplemented with reclaimed material from the surrounding area to achieve the desired appearance. In this way, the material reflects Delft's character through its variation in texture, colour, and surface. The complexity and small grain of the city translated into a larger architectural form.

This is an existing construction technique, studied through reference projects. These references can be found in the appendix, with more detailed research included in the project journal.

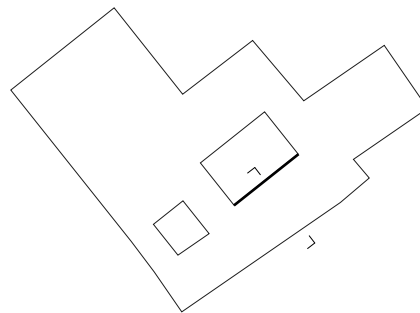




Figure 83. Elevation. Scaled, original scale 1:20

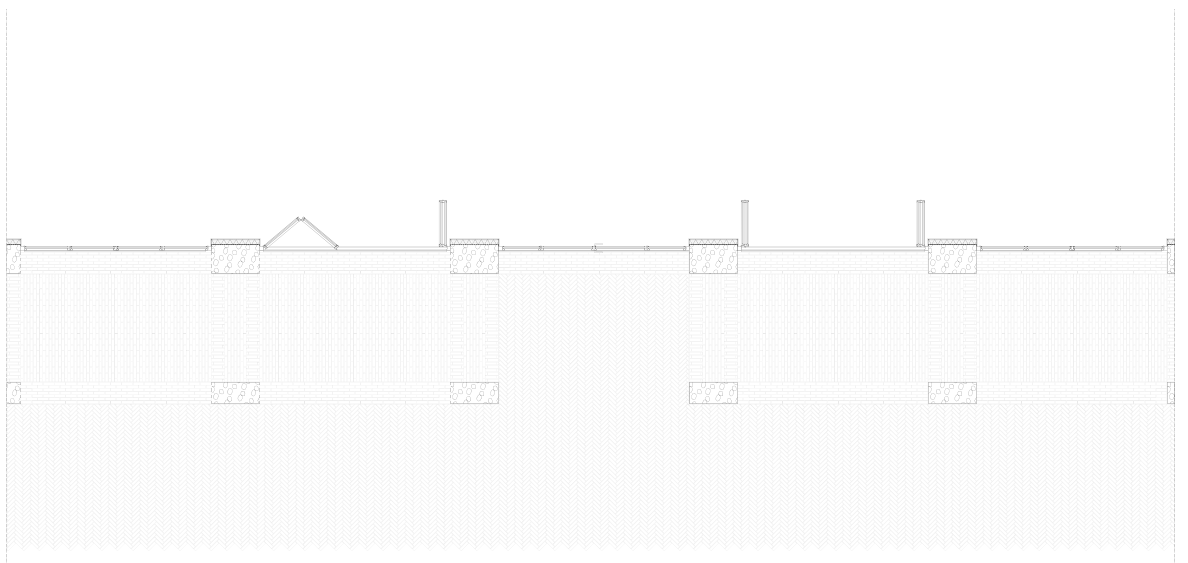
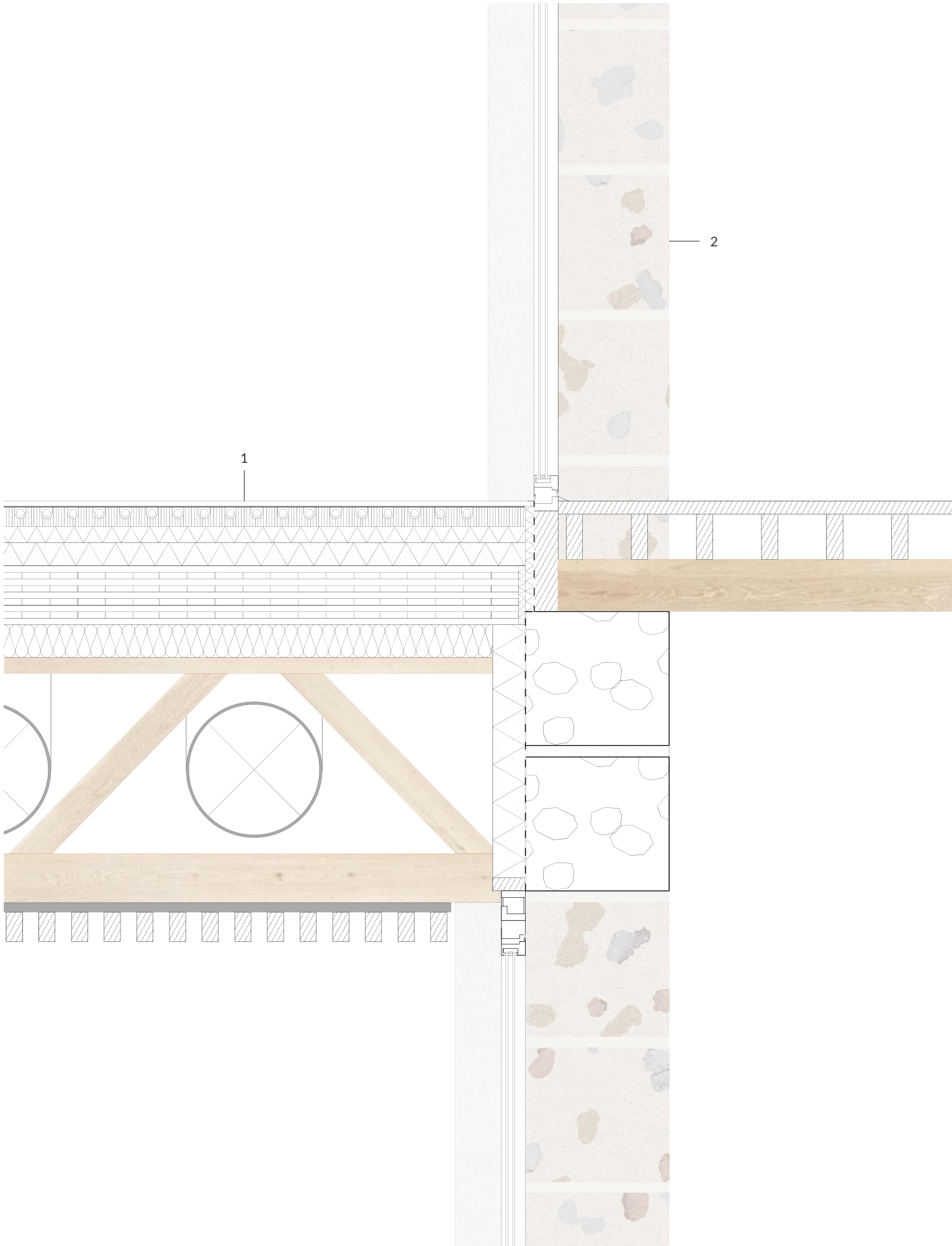
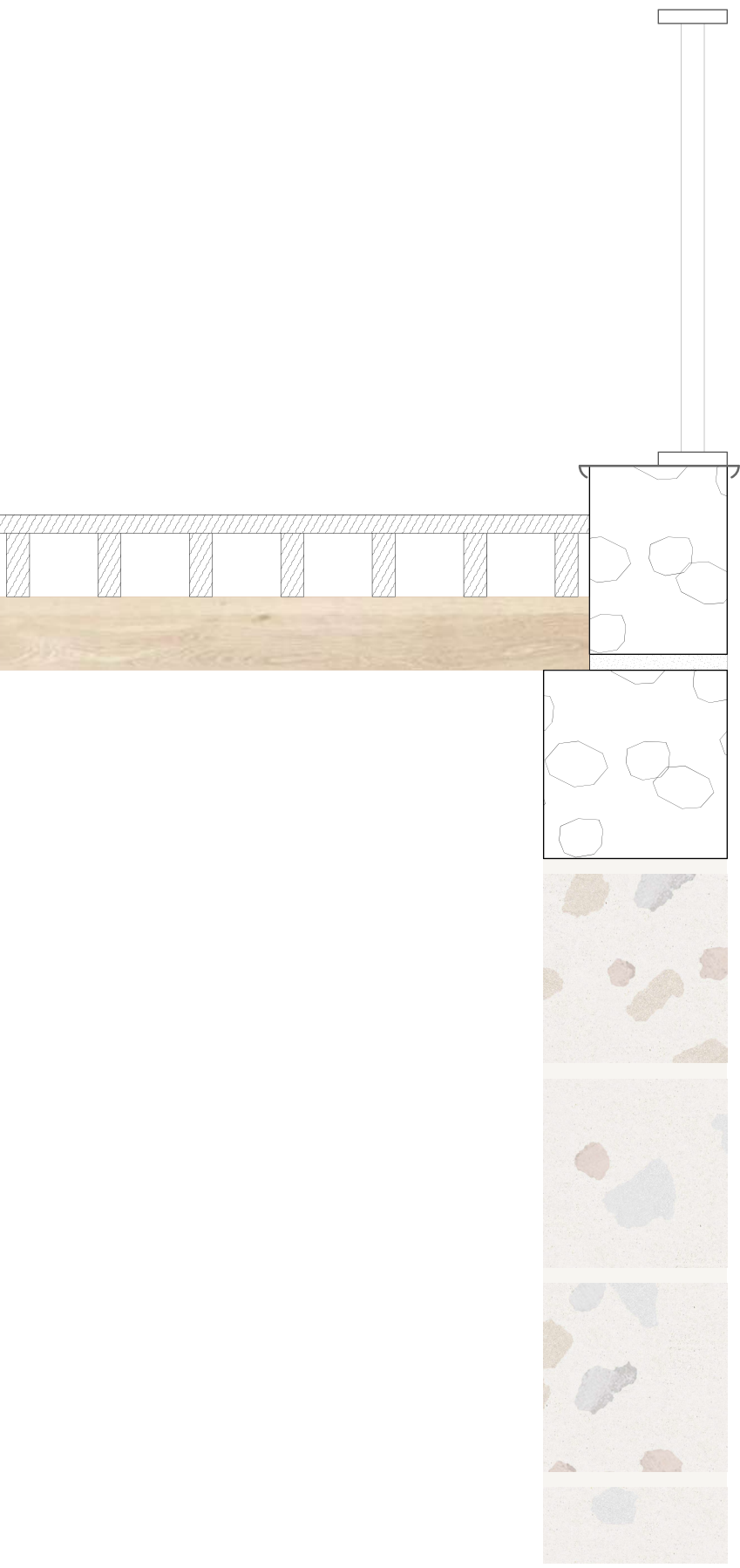


Figure 84. Section. Scaled, original scale 1:20





Detail

- 1 15 mm micro-Terrazzo
3 mm separating layer
60 mm cement heating screed
50 mm rock-wool insulation
70 mm hemp concrete
180 mm CLT floor slab
100 mm hemp fibre insulation
850 mm wooden truss
90 mm acoustic timber slat ceiling

- 2 1320,440,410 mm masonry,
recycled rubble (concrete and bricks)and
lime-cement concrete
35 mm mortar joints
3 mm separating layer
Schüco bi-folding doors
100 mm hemp concrete
15 mm lime plaster

Figure 85. 1: 5 Details

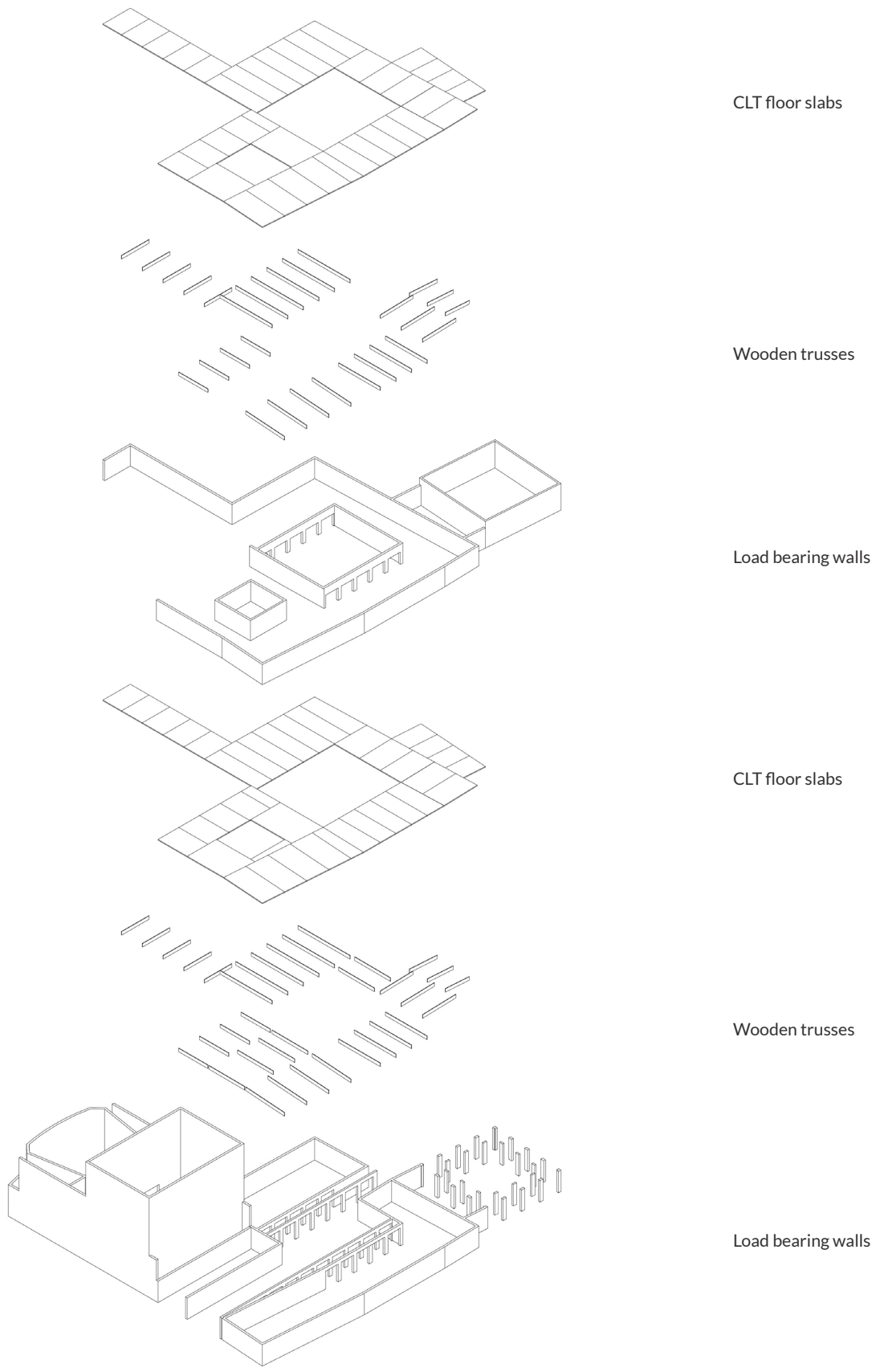
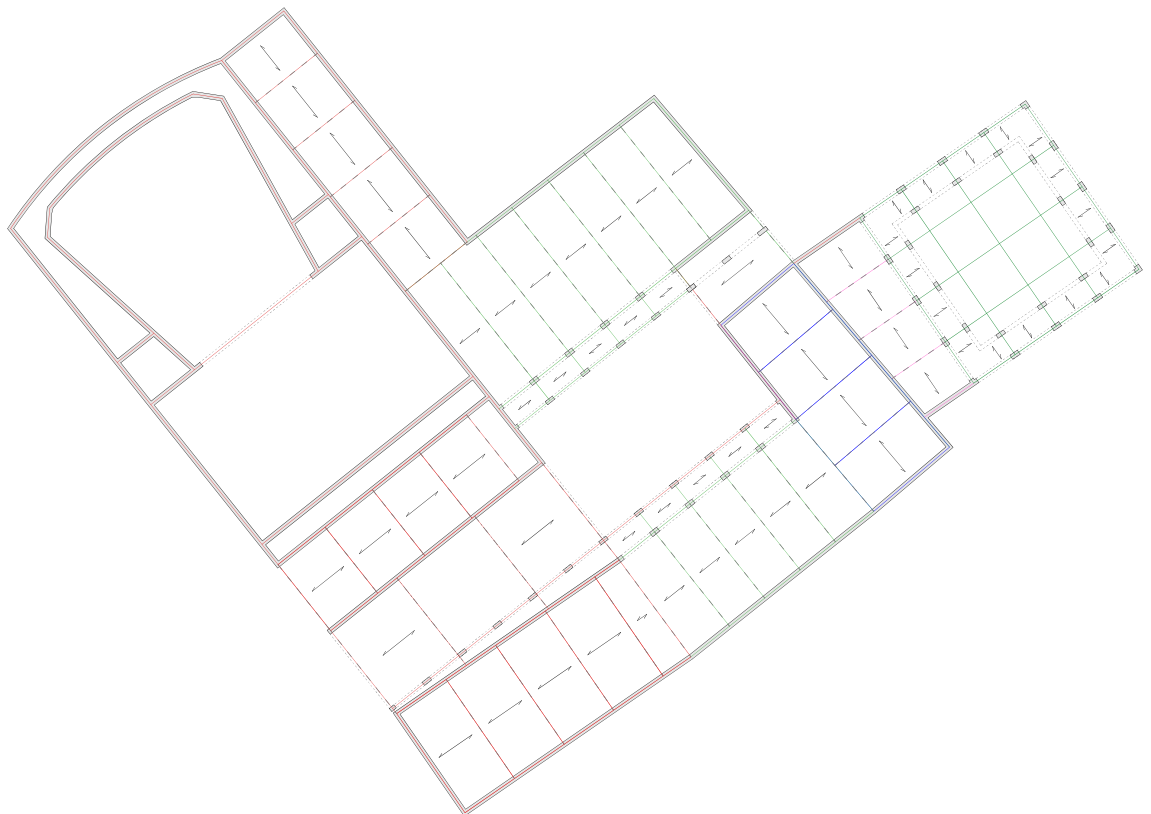


Figure 86. Construction diagram axo

Construction diagram

The façade is made up of the blocks, this created a thick loadbearing wall. The floor system is made of CLT floor slabs and wooden trusses.



0 2,5 5 10 m

Figure 87. Construction diagram plan



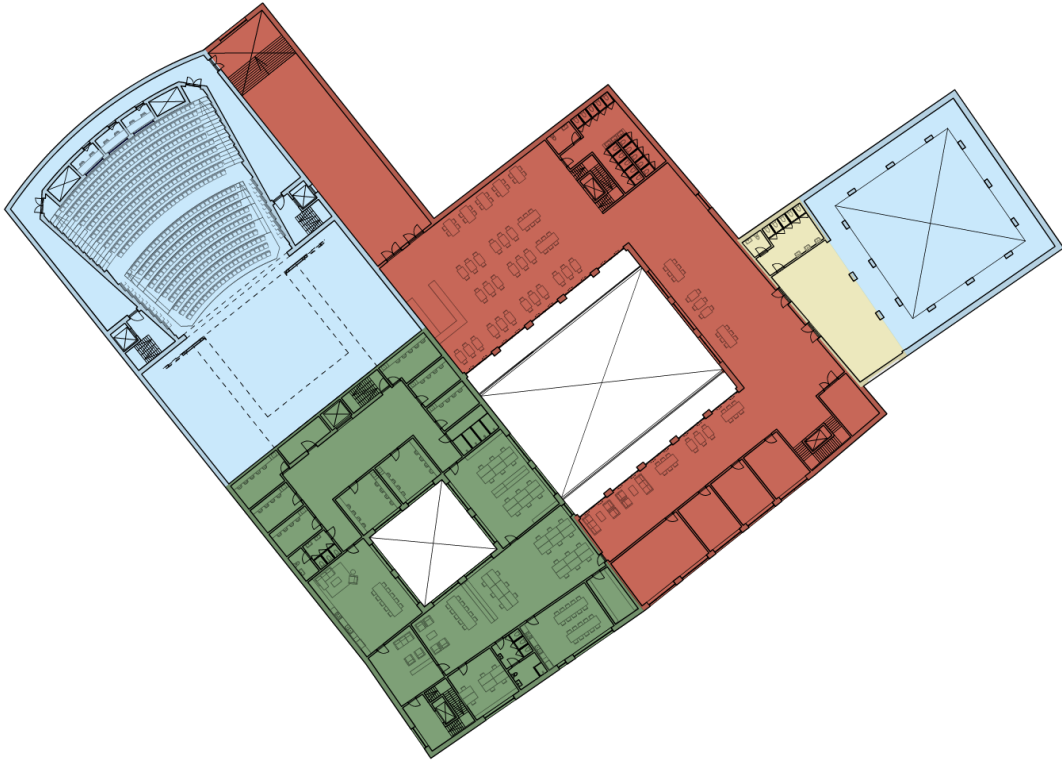


Figure 88. Climate zones plan first floor

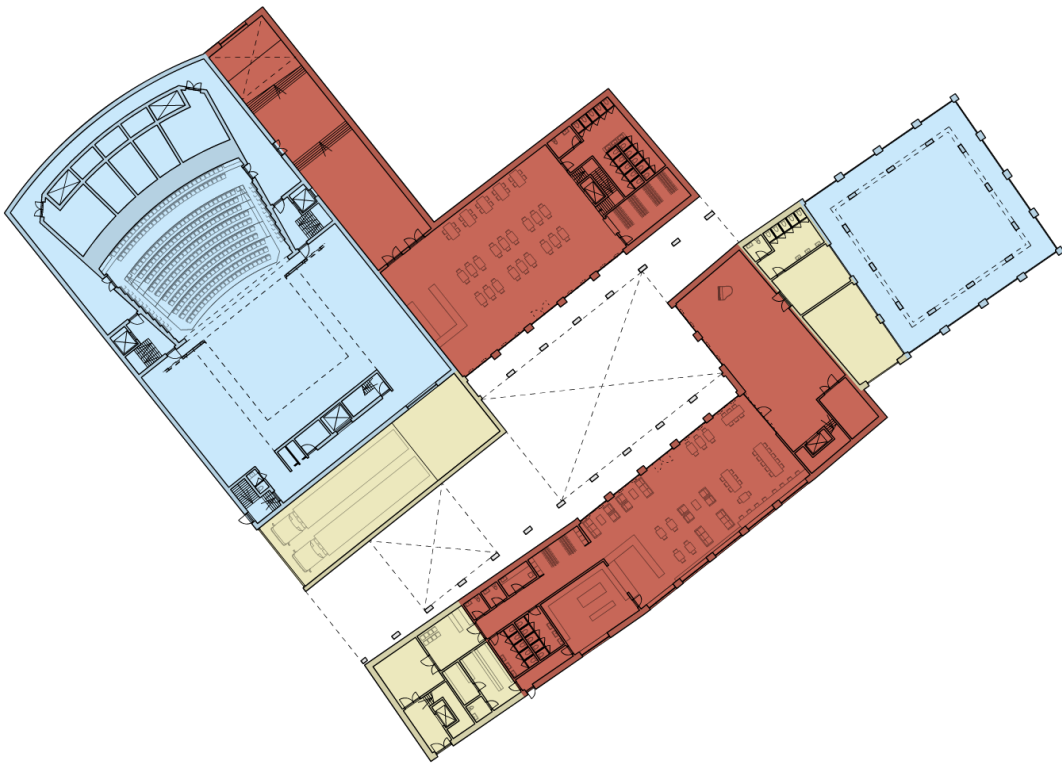



Figure 89. Climate zones plan ground floor

Climate diagram


Regarding the indoor climate of the building, it is divided into logical zones, each with a climate suited to the activities taking place inside.


Zones


- 

Performance spaces
 These spaces require a controlled climate. Large volumes of air need to be moved throughout the space. The system used is D (balanced ventilation), with mechanical supply and extraction. The air is also used to heat and cool the spaces.

For the Large Hall, it is especially important that air is supplied and circulated at low velocities to minimize ventilation noise and avoid disturbing performances.

Note: These are separate zones but operate according to the same climate-control principle.
- 

Service and Logistics Areas
 Service and logistics areas have relatively low comfort requirements. These spaces include storage areas, technical rooms, facilities, and loading/unloading areas. Ventilation is provided through natural air supply and mechanical extraction. Additional ventilation is provided in technical rooms where required to remove excess heat from equipment.
- 

Offices and Artist Facilities
 These spaces use a system with natural air supply and mechanical extraction. As this zone is the office and artists facilities, it is beneficial for occupants to have greater control over their indoor climate. Heating is therefore provided by radiators, allowing users to adjust thermal comfort to their individual preferences.
- 

Foyers
 The foyers must accommodate a more dynamic and variable indoor climate. These spaces are occupied throughout the day, serving as a third space during daytime hours and functioning as traditional theatre foyers during performances and events in the evenings. To provide a comfortable and consistent indoor environment during the winter, heating is provided through underfloor heating. Cooling is achieved through natural ventilation whenever possible. During warmer periods, or when the foyers are operating at full capacity, a mechanical ventilation system with supply and extraction is used to provide additional cooling and maintain indoor comfort.

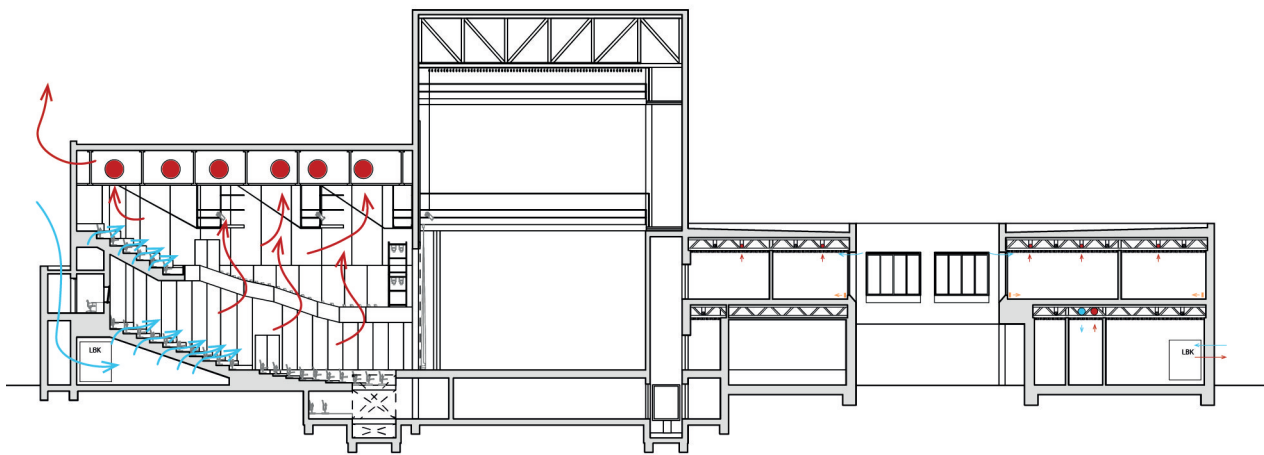
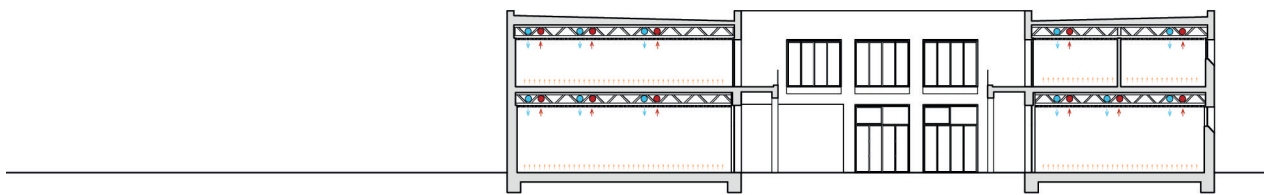


Figure 90. Climate diagram winter

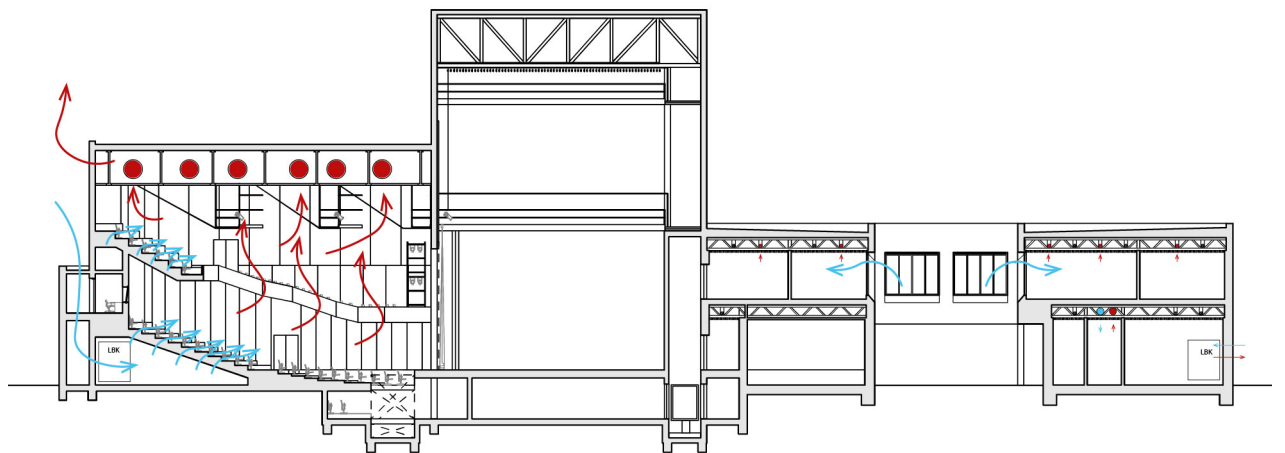
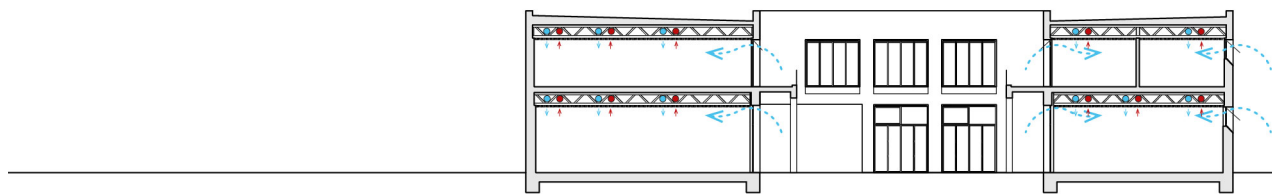


Figure 91. Climate diagram summer

Curtain call

Conclusion and discussion 04



Figure 92. Image auditorium model

Conclusion

Returning to the initial research questions offers a way to reflect on the intentions of the project and how they are translated into the final design.

Theatre as public space

Due to the nature and history of theatre, not everyone feels drawn to it, and that is okay. It has not been the goal of this project to make everyone go to the theatre. Rather, the ambition has been to create a public building that people can inhabit in an everyday way. Regardless of whether they are interested in theatre. The theatre functions and their commercial viability support the possibility for this public space to exist.

The design proposes a public courtyard with public foyers arranged around it. The functions that cannot be fully public (the main auditorium, small hall, offices, and backstage areas) are positioned to the sides, making space for what becomes the most important part of the theatre building, its public space.

The foyer spaces are imagined to be open during the day, inviting people in in a casual way. This asks for a shift in mindset. Why should a theatre foyer only be used before and after a performance? In this proposal, the foyer becomes part of everyday urban life: a space that can be inhabited regardless of whether someone is attending the theatre.

This makes certain traditional theatre elements, such as a dedicated ticket office, redundant. Why should the staff serving coffee at the bar during the day not also be able to sell tickets? This is not a revolutionary idea. In film houses, for example, it is common to buy tickets at the same counter where drinks and snacks are sold. This approach also acknowledges that many ticket sales now happen online.

Site and urban context

In the design proposal the theatre becomes part of the city in a quite literal way. It does not read as a traditional theatre, but as a place people can simply come to, walk past, choose to be part of, or not. The design responds to its surroundings through its geometry, scale, and materiality.

The proposal engages with the urban context in subtle ways. The height of the building responds to the surrounding fabric. The larger volume of the main auditorium is placed on the post-war side of the site, while the building steps down towards the smaller-scale residential areas. The geometry of the plan follows the shifting lines of the site and the surrounding streets. Allowing the building to become part of the existing urban structure rather than standing apart from it.

In terms of materiality, the project proposes a contemporary material that relates to the historic centre of Delft without historicizing. Allowing the building to feel at home within the city while clearly belonging to its own time.

Program and functions

The proposal can be seen as an open-ended place that people can simply come to and use. In that sense, it is not unlike how many public libraries position themselves today. Yet, unlike a library, the theatre has the character and possibility to not only be quiet and every day, but also festive.

For this reason, the proposal remains intentionally open about the exact uses that might take place within it. Rather than designing for a fixed set of functions, the project proposes generous and adaptable spaces that can accommodate different forms of use, not unlike a stage. The foyer spaces, for example, can function as traditional theatre foyers in the evening, while during the day they can host studying, working, informal meetings, lectures, workshops, debates, or simply provide a place to spend time. The architecture provides the framework; the specific uses are allowed to evolve over time.

Implications and/ or recommendations

This project began with a question about the future of theatre. Throughout the design process, it also became a reflection on the role of architecture and the responsibilities of the architect in redefining a specific building type, like a theatre.

Designing a contemporary theatre requires an understanding of the many layers that have accumulated around the institution over time. Theatre is not only an art form, but also a business, a social space, a public building, and a cultural institution.

The architect must therefore engage with many factors. What forms of performance are being accommodated? What role does the theatre play within society? What position should it occupy within the city? These questions shape the architecture as much as technical requirements such as acoustics, sightlines, or stage machinery.

At the same time, this project has led me to question how much responsibility should be placed on architecture. De Veste asked us to be visionaries. Which is an understandable demand and reflects the admirable ambitions de Veste has. Yet I have become sceptical of this expectation. Architecture is a slow discipline. It reflects society rather than that it transforms it. While buildings can support certain forms of behaviour, they cannot invent entirely new social realities.

What I have found is that the responsibility of the architect is not to act as a cultural or social revolutionary, but to listen carefully. To understand what is needed, and to translate those needs into architectural form.

The proposal reflects this understanding. The project is based on the idea that a theatre can also function as a public space. The theatre responds to the growing need for accessible “third spaces” that exist between home and work. A new building type emerges. This shift has implications for the design of public buildings more broadly. Increasingly, cultural institutions are expected to accommodate a wider range of activities and users. Rather than designing for fixed programmes, architects may need to focus on creating robust, adaptable spaces capable of supporting public life. The challenge is not simply to combine functions within a single building, but to create places that remain meaningful even though they are flexible.

Reflection

Throughout the studio, we were provided with a series of briefs that structured and guided the design process. These briefs addressed different phases of the project and suggested what to focus on at each stage. This proved valuable in creating structure within the long graduation process.

Beginning with precedent research alongside visits to contemporary theatres helped develop an architectural position that carried through the entire project. It allowed me to place the ambitions of Theatre de Veste within a broader historical and societal context.

Making the large site models helped me become acquainted with the site in a tangible way. They enabled an understanding of the site not only through direct experience, but also through its position within the wider urban fabric.

Being pushed to design the auditorium in detail was challenging. The many technical requirements and specific considerations sometimes led me astray. Causing me to lose sight of what I believe my role as an architect is at the end of the day, to create meaningful spaces for people.

On a personal level, I have learned a great deal from this process. Both about theatres and about the kind of architect I am becoming. I am interested in questions of social class and how they relate to the buildings we make and the people we make them for. I believe that beautiful, thoughtful architecture should be available to everyone. Not only to those who can afford it or already feel comfortable entering certain spaces. There are many aspects of the design that, in hindsight, I could have explored further. However, I do not see this as a failure. At the beginning of the project, I lacked experience in designing public buildings, let alone a theatre. Many of the questions that now seem important only became visible through the process of designing.



Figure 93.
View from de
Beestenmarkt

Backstage

Back matter

05

Appendices

References

Briefs

Drawings

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Schouwburg Amphion, Doetinchem, Nederlands

TR25 schouwburg, Rotterdam, Nederlands

National Opera House, Wexford, Ierland

Images

Figure 1. Image of 1:25 model of the between city and stage assignment. Created by the author

Figure 2. View from the tower of the Nieuwe Kerk, De Veste in the distance. Created by the author

Figure 3. Urban plan existing situation. Created by the author

Figure 4. Auditorium of de Veste. Created by the author

Figure 5. Collective reference book. Blue highlights all the area that is not the auditorium. From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 6. Dionysian Theatre Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 7. Teatro Olimpica Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 8. Globe Theatre Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 9. Opera Garnier Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 10. Festspielhaus Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 11. London Coliseum Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 12. De Meerpaal Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 13. National Theatre Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 14. Half Moon Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 15. Teatro Oficina Section From *Theatre Precedents – Graduation studio Palace*.

Figure 16. Theatre relations diagram. Created by the author

Figure 17. Theater Bellevue. Created by the author

Figure 18. Stopera. Created by the author

Figure 19. Forum. Created by the author

Figure 20. Kunstwerf & Machinefabriek. Created by the author

Figure 21. Grand Theater. Created by the author

Figure 22. Theater de Veste. Created by the author

Figure 23. Theater aan het Spui. Created by the author

Figure 24. Theater Rotterdam. Created by the author

Figure 25. Leaving the faculty after tutoring with Suus. Created by the author

Figure 26. Walking to the station to take the tram to Den Haag. Created by the author

Figure 27. Dinner on the tram. Created by the author

Figure 28. Got out at Bierkade and walked to the theatre.

Figure 29. The theater and cinema are next to each other. Housing above the theater.

The cinema looked really cozy. Created by the author

Figure 30. The entrance looked quite promising. Created by the author

Figure 31. Yet once inside the interior felt fragmented. Created by the author

Figure 32. Toilets. Created by the author

Figure 33. In the foyer area, there was also a small stage set up. Created by the author

Figure 34. Seating area in the foyer. Created by the author

Figure 35. A small ramp led us to the auditorium. Created by the author

Figure 36. Hallway to the stage. Created by the author

Figure 37. The performance was in a small Blackbox theatre. Created by the author

Figure 38. After the performance most of the people left straight away. Created by the author

Figure 39. From uni to Rotterdam, pasta dinner at the station. Created by the author

Figure 40. Walking to the theatre from the station, passed the Doelen theatre and cinema. Created by the author

Figure 41. The Theatre is situated on a square with similar venues. Created by the author

Figure 42. At the front façade there is a truck lift. Created by the author

Figure 43. The theatre hangs over de street, creating a covert entrance. Created by the author

Figure 44. Line for the garderobe, toilets conveniently located at the end. Created by the author

Figure 45. Toilets. Created by the author

Figure 46. Grand staircase leading to the auditorium. Created by the author

Figure 47. The way to the auditorium leads over different levels. Created by the author

Figure 48. Way into the auditorium. Created by the author

Figure 49. Way into the auditorium. Created by the author

Figure 50. After the show we went back down to the foyer. Created by the author

Figure 51. The interior felt cohesive and on theme for a theatre. Created by the author

Figure 52. People stayed after to talk and have a drink. Created by the author

Figure 53. Theater Korzo. Created by the author

Figure 54. Zaal 3. Created by the author

Figure 55. Theater De Regentes. Created by the author

Figure 56. Theater aan het Spui. Created by the author

Figure 57. Koninklijke Schouwburg. Created by the author

Figure 58. Diligentia. Created by the author

Figure 59. Amare. Created by the author

Figure 60. Theaterschool Rabarber. Created by the author

Figure 61. Section Space . Created by the author

Figure 62. 1:25 model. Created by the author

Figure 63. Plan Space first floor. Created by the author

Figure 64. Plan Space Ground floor. Created by the author

Figure 65. Axo Space. Created by the author

Figure 66. Entrance. Created by the author

Figure 67. Urban plan new situation. Created by the author

Figure 68. 1:500 model. Created by the author

Figure 69. 1:500 model. Created by the author

Figure 70. Organization diagram. Created by the author

Figure 71. Ground floor plan. Created by the author

Figure 72. Second floor plan. Created by the author

Figure 73. Entrance. Created by the author

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Figure 76. Auditorium model. Created by the author

Figure 77. Auditorium model close-up. Created by the author

Figure 78. Auditorium section. Created by the author

Figure 79. Auditorium plan first floor. Created by the author

Figure 80. Auditorium plan ground floor. Created by the author

Figure 81. Auditorium plan basement. Created by the author

Figure 82. 1: 20 Section. Created by the author

Figure 83. 1: 20 Elevation. Created by the author

Figure 84. 1: 20 Section. Created by the author

Figure 85. 1: 5 Details. Created by the author

Figure 86. Construction diagram axo. Created by the author

Figure 87. Construction diagram plan. Created by the author

Figure 88. Climate zones plan first floor. Created by the author

Figure 89. Climate zones plan ground floor. Created by the author

Figure 90. Climate diagram winter. Created by the author

Figure 91. Climate diagram summer. Created by the author

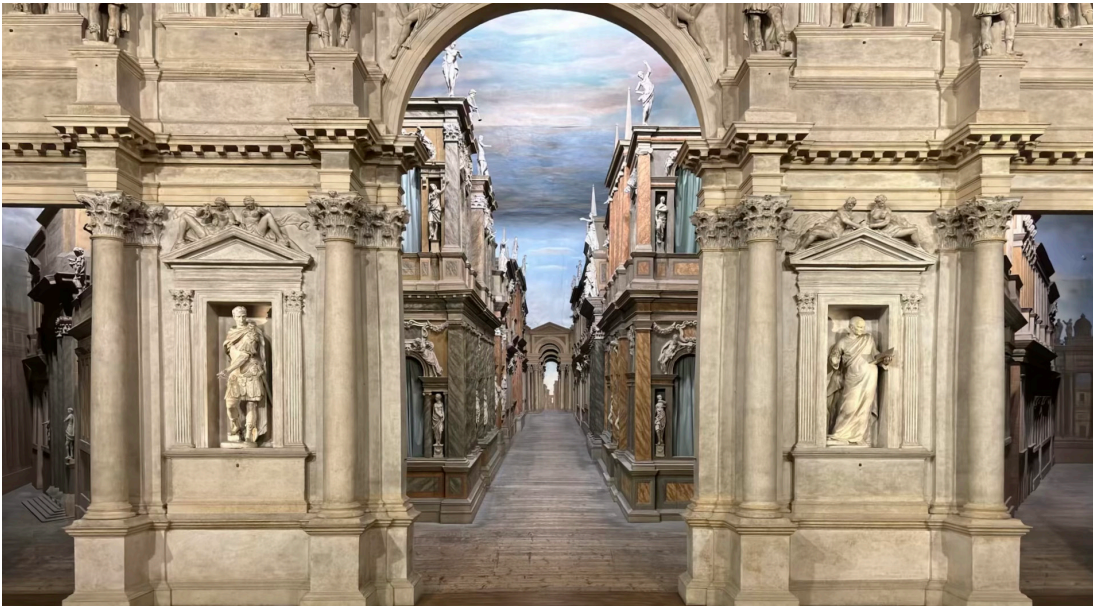
Figure 92. Image auditorium model. Created by the author

Figure 93. View from de Beestenmarkt. Created by the author

Briefs

City Stage

2025-26 AR4A1130



Andrea Palladio, Teatro Olimpico Vicenza, detail of scene, 1580-85

PREPARATION

Brief 1: Between City and Stage

As the introduction to this year's project infers, the relations between the idea of the theatre and that of the city have, in Europe, had a long and complex history, from the theatre as a space of debate, or a representative monument, to the city as a scenography or a setting for performance. These interconnections encompass the social and political as well as the performative. The ambition for a new theatre in Delft is to create a public building that is an integral part of the city, a meeting place that embraces its citizens in many ways while also incorporating what have become the orthodoxies of contemporary performance spaces and their necessary, ancillary functions.

Reference

To begin, we will start by looking more carefully at this complex, intertwined history of theatre and city, by exploring a series of historical references, which address the breadth of these relationships and which span, in time, from Ancient Greece to the near present; from theatres at their most experimental, to those that host commercial theatre. Working in small groups of two or three, you will draw them in context, plan, section and three dimensions, while also creating a view, or a scene of each. The drawings you make should read as a set. Each orthographic plan and section will be drawn at the same comparative scale and level of detail. We nominally set this at 1:200, but this may need to be adjusted as you collectively understand more about the references. The context plans might also need to be at different scales, depending on the situation of each theatre. Alongside these, you will draw two three-dimensional drawings: an axonometric, cut away to describe the relation between performer and audience and a view, which describes the atmosphere and material character of the space. The views should have a sense of atmosphere, using only line to describe light, shadow, material and texture, something in the manner of Serlio's etchings of the

comic, tragic and satirical scenes, but also of now. In parallel with the studies of the particular references, you should collate material which describes them and situates them within a wider theatrical context, perhaps showing other theatres that relate to them, or are of a similar type. In this way we will as a group build up a complex, collective understanding of the theatre, which can inform your designs later. This collated material should be presented by the group, along with the drawings in the form of a collective research book. It is therefore important that you agree on standards, formats, text and font etc.

Building References

Dionysian Theatre, Athens
 Globe Theater, London
 Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza
 Opera Garnier, Paris
 Festspielhaus, Bayreuth
 London Coliseum, London
 National Theatre London
 De Meerpaal, Dronten
 Teatro Oficina, Sao Paulo
 Half Moon Theatre, London

Interiors
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Scene from 'de Noorderlingen', 1992, Alex van Warmerdam

Space

In parallel with your collective work on references, you will each develop an idea for a space that might exist somewhere between city and stage. This will be a condition that brings ideas about the city and those of the space of performance into dialogue. You do not have to consider the space you make as part of the building you will go on to design, although it might later be the genesis of some aspect of the design project. The space does not have to be in Delft; although we do not preclude that, but could instead refer to ideas or aspects of the city more generally. The space should establish a sense of atmosphere, scale or relation that encompass and translate theatre's essential conditions of encounter, narration and communion in a performative way, while also retaining some relation to the urban condition. It might accommodate performance in a direct sense, but could also consider the idea of theatricality in a more open way: in relation to people, movement, the heightening of perception or the glimpse of the world behind the curtain. It could usefully encompass architectural elements or devices - the door, the window, the balcony, or the step for example as means to establish a sense of theatre that also engages with the urban. It could use traditional theatrical devices of layering or perspective, or perhaps translate and abstract an urban figure into an interior moment. It could be inside, or outside, front of house or back of house or somewhere in between. It will be a space of threshold, between the theatre and the city.

The spaces you make should be developed and presented as physical models, supported by drawings as necessary. The models should be made at scale 1:25 – the scale a theatre set designer typically uses. This will limit your attention to a moment, a relatively small space or a fragment of a larger interior. It will allow you to consider your proposals spatially and materially, and potentially in terms of inhabitation, and to perceive and to photograph them

as such. We have a tradition of models which are close to stage sets within Interiors Buildings Cities Cities, which feels particularly relevant here. We would like you to refer to this tradition in the ways you conceive of and build your models. You will record your models photographically, as part of your presentation of this first design project, and you may wish to record them at different moments or times of day, or from different perspectives.

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City Stage

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Aerial View of the South of Delft, following its substantial demolition for proposed new road infrastructure

PREPARATION

Brief 2: Setting the Scene

Situation

Like its forebear, the Theater de Veste, the new theatre will be sited on the southern edge of the historic urban centre of Delft. This part of the city used to form its industrial edge, a linear urban morphology defined by long canals, along which diverse buildings and spaces including the Zuiderstraat, the Gasthuislaan and the Molslaan are arranged.

In the early 1960s, with the arrival of modernism and its desire for the free flow of automobile traffic through the medieval centre, much of the area's built fabric was demolished. The St. Sebastiaansbrug was built to allow a four-lane highway to bisect the city, from which drivers would be offered an axial view of the choir of the New Church. However, as elsewhere in Europe, resistance was growing to such radical urban restructuring. Having survived the war largely intact, the old city centre slowly began to be appreciated again and protests against this proposed encroachment grew. The planned highway through the city was finally turned back at the point where what is now the Bastiaanplein lies. Historic Delft was saved.

Nonetheless, in the area we will address, the material qualities and typological diversity of the old streets were lost forever. New, relatively small-scale shopping streets and social housing emerged along the canal edges but in the area South of Molsgracht, larger scale commercial buildings dominate. Once the stores of national chains, their glazed shopfronts are increasingly boarded up and, at a time when online competitors threaten the high street, this part of the city is in urgent needs of rethinking and revitalisation.

To begin, we will set the scene, examining the city in terms of its physical, social and cultural fabric, considering who might engage with the theatre, and attending performances ourselves.

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Sites

Together you will investigate this piece of Delft, from the Rijn-schiekanaal to the South to Burgwal and the Beestemarkt in the North; between Koornmarkt in the West and Oosteinde in the East. Within it we have identified four possible sites:

1. Gasthuisplaats: an open site, formerly a hospital and now a carpark, directly engaging historic fabric;
2. Theater de Veste: the expanded site of the current theatre;
3. HEMA: the urban block including the department store, and surroundings
4. Yperstraat: industrial spaces and parking, within a larger block, bordered by individual houses.

Dividing the area into slices, each taking in one of the sites, you will research and explore them through both models and drawings, with a collective character, that can connect to form the larger whole,

Models:

Digital: A 3D model of each slice, showing building forms and key elements, with simple elevations to the street and also the rear, immediately adjacent to your site. From this 2D drawings and physical models can be taken and worked up.

Physical: An urban block model scale (1:500) and a model of the immediate site and surroundings (1:200). The urban scale models will fit together to form the larger site. These will be working models and should be capable of adaption. The urban models will fit together.

Drawings:

Plans of the area and site at equivalent scales, showing both historical and contemporary conditions, incorporating public building interiors. Site sections and elevations, with elevations drawn in more detail in the vicinity of each site.

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City Stage

2025-26 AR4A1130



Dan Graham, Audience | Performer | Mirror 1977: A performance in which the performer describes the audience, while they look simultaneously at him and themselves

Scale

For each site, you will test, in broad terms, the scale of the proposed theatre and how it might need to mass in terms of area and volume. The total area for the functional needs of the theatre, disregarding other adjacent uses is proposed as 6000m² gross area / 5000m² net. of this the rectangular footprint of the main stage and auditorium is estimated as being around 40x47m (1685m²), with the auditorium 12m in height and the stage tower around 23+m in height. The second auditorium is 20x15m with a total footprint, including ancillary spaces of 484m². Starting with these two volumes, what are the possibilities of fitting them on the site. Can they both sit on the ground? do they need to stack?

Actors

The theatre's vision of its future self imagines that other actors might play a part in its life, beyond the actors on stage. It envisages institutional relationships, political happenings, intellectual debates, social gatherings, parties and even sport might happen within the context of the theatre. In order to begin to understand what this might mean, how it might change the theatre and what the possibilities for both Delft and the theatre itself might be, we ask you, in groups of two or three, to investigate who or what these other actors, or actions, might be and how they might interact with the theatre. Possibilities might include everything from a small theatre company to the TU, from a political event to a club night. To begin to explore and develop potential networks of relationship you might ask the following questions amongst others: Who or what is this? What parts of the community does it serve? How long has it been in existence? Does it already exist in Delft? Does it have an existing relationship with the theatre? What might be the synergies?

When does it happen? What are its needs, spatially and otherwise? For each proposed event or organisation you will produce an illustrated sheet describing the potential possibilities and issues of each relationship. The format of these is to be defined collectively and they should be collated as a collective document.

Participants

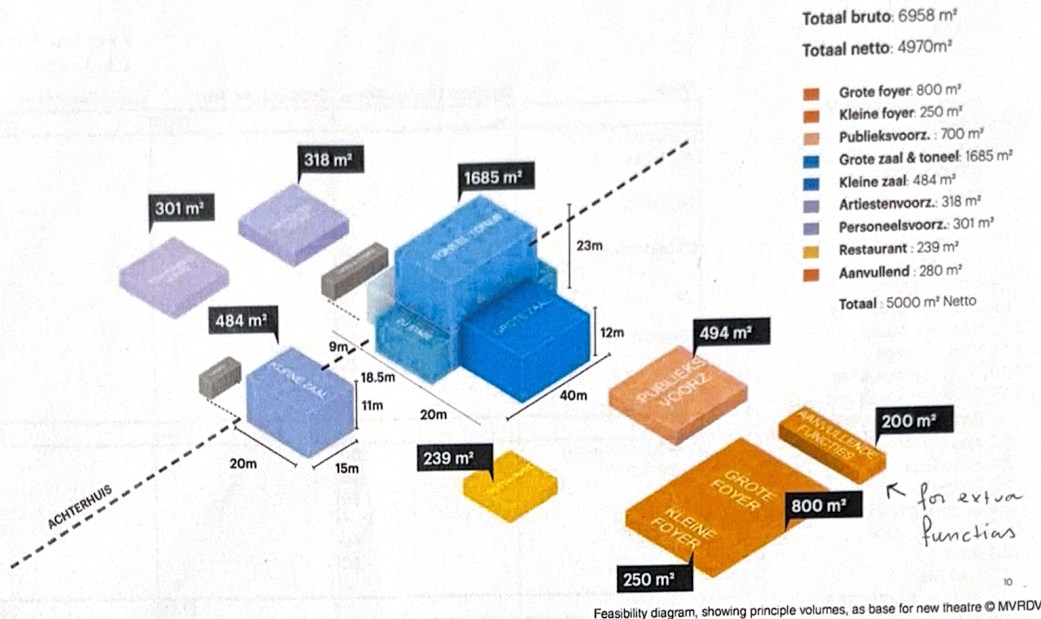
In pairs or individually, you will spend a night at the theatre, as both observers and participants. To help with this we have compiled a list of relatively local theatres, with current performances and of different types. However you may also wish to choose your own theatre, perhaps one in your home city, to document. Whichever you choose, we would like you to document your visit from city to seat, recording each step of the process, before during and after the performance. Using words and visual material you will describe the process, the atmosphere of the theatre and the experience of attending a performance. This might include interviews with other members of the audience or those working in the theatre, if this is a possibility. It can incorporate, architectural drawings, photography, sketches and artefacts as you wish, remembering it as an architectural exercise.

Each of these tasks, collective and individual, should be completed by and presented at the A1. Together with the previous design exercise Between City and Stage, they will allow you to explore the subject of theatre and help you to consider how you might begin to approach the development of your individual architectural project in Delft. Whether done collectively or individually, you should consider each exercise as collective research and define formats which allow them, including individual pieces of work, to be understood as part of a whole, so they are of value to everyone as design research.

City Stage

more vertical
auditorium? → 100m at
refe

2025-26 AR4A1130



Feasibility diagram, showing principle volumes, as base for new theatre © MVRDV

PREPARATION

Brief 2.1: Setting the Scene | supplementary *develop more.*

This is a supplement to Setting the Scene, which you received on 10th December.

You should now have an understanding of the four available sites for the theatre, documented through drawings and models. Alongside this we hope that you have each been developing individual positions and attitudes with regard to the questions posed by Theater de Veste, about how a new theatre might integrate other programmes and spaces in order to address the city of Delft, its citizens and visitors, encompassing but going beyond the core theatre audience.

In the main brief we offered some outlines of the scale of programme the new theatre requires to fulfil those core functions. Within this supplementary brief, on the following page, we expand this to include a more detailed breakdown of areas. These are derived from a feasibility study, previously undertaken, and are provided to establish the scale and possibilities for the new theatre.

These core areas can potentially be combined with, or added to, by other spaces and functions that you consider adding to the overall programme of the theatre. The table is missing some key information, notably minimum heights of key spaces and whether daylight is required, advisable or unnecessary. The heights are indicated in the volumetric diagram at the head of this brief and should be interpreted in relation to the brief. The detailed areas given are also questionable, and you are allowed to question them as your own understanding develops. Nonetheless they provide a useful starting point for your design investigation. Note that the base brief provides 200m² of additional area, to be determined. The table over the page removes this and leaves the amount of additional area open to interpretation, based on your position and investigation.

The purpose of this supplementary brief is to instigate a process of physical testing, over the next weeks, leading up to the first formal examination of the course: the A1. In the tutorial sessions leading up to that examination, we would like to address your ideas for the project, alongside and through massing studies, which test how a new theatre building can be situated within the city and what its potential image, or figure might be.

This process, will involve an iterative process of modelling and recording, within the site model and will commence with you making an initial study in the tutorial session on 8th January. You may wish, or need, to do other kinds of testing, physically and digitally, through drawings and models at different scales, to develop and refine your ideas over the next weeks.

At the A1 we would expect you to be able to present a model, alongside some analysis which shows how you have adapted the programme and what the built area and volume you are proposing is, in relation to the given. You will present this as part of a description of your thinking and process throughout the project thus far, describing your developing attitude to the new theatre and the architectural response through which you translate this.

This modelling process requires you to make a decision about which site might best suit your interests. You may already be clear about this. If not, some initial testing might be required to understand which of the given sites best accommodates your ideas. It is important that you do not spend the next weeks deciding a site. Please choose one quickly, or consult with your tutors to help you choose if you find it a struggle. It is worth recalling that architects almost never get the opportunity to choose the site of their project and it is at least as interesting to work within the limitations of what you are given.

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

what requires natural light?
what doesn't?

Palace

City Stage

- under stage?
- orchestra pit?

→ extra columns
 • Day light, seeing the outside
 & how much; when

2025-26 AR4A1130

→ prior grossing factor.
 → external wall total volume

MAIN AUDITORIUM

- 1.1 Auditorium
- 1.2 Balcony
- STAGE AREA
- 1.4 Stage
- 1.5 Proscenium
- 1.6 Orchestra Pit?
- 1.7 Chair Store
- 1.8 Technical Office
- 1.9 Loading / Unloading
- 1.10 Parking 2 trucks
- 1.11 Stage Storage
- 1.12 Technical Workshop
- 1.13 Workshop Cupboard

SMALL AUDITORIUM

- 2.1 Auditorium
- 2.2 Fixed Bars
- 2.3 Balconies
- 2.4 Sound/light console
- 2.5 Parking 1 truck
- 2.6 Store
- 2.7 Tool Store

PUBLIC FACILITIES

- 3.1 Entrance Hall
- 3.2 Additional foyer functions
- 3.3 Bar(s) main hall
- 3.4 Ticket office/information desk/bar
- 3.5 Bar(s) small hall
- 3.6 Cloakroom
- 3.7 Reception areas
- 3.8 Kitchen
- 3.9 Washing-up area
- 3.10 Catering storage
- 3.11 Foyer storage
- 3.12 Facilities workshop
- 3.13 Toilets
- 3.14 Disabled toilet
- 3.15 First aid/rest room

STAFF FACILITIES

- 4.1 Restaurant
- 4.2 Toilets
- 4.3 Kitchen
- 4.4 Washing Room
- 4.5 Cooling Room
- 4.6 Storage
- 4.7 Catering office
- 4.8 Staff Dressing Room
- 4.9 Utility Closet

STAFF WORKING

- 4.10 Office
- 4.11 Staff Room
- 4.12 Toilets

ARTIST FACILITIES

- 5.1 4 person Dressing Room
- 5.2 6 person dressing room
- 5.3 15 person dressing room
- 5.4 Showers
- 5.5 Artist's Foyer / Green Room

TOTAL BASE FUNCTION

ADDITIONAL AREA / PROGRAMME

- 6.0 To be Determined

Notes	Subtotal Usable Areas	Total Usable Area	Gross Floor Area
		1685	2358
600 seats	420		
200 seats	210		
18.5x41m	759		
20 Musicians	50		
18mx4m	144		
250 capacity (max)	300		
4x2m (x2)	16		
10x4m	40		
4	4		
4	4		
25	25		
200	200		
20	20		
30	30		
10	10		
53	53		
90	90		
25	25		
15	15		
40	40		
50	50		
12	12		
90	90		
10	10		
10	10		
120	120		
12	12		
25	25		
15	15		
20	20		
20	20		
10	10		
10	10		
2	2		
23 Workstations	230		
35	35		
12	12		
75	75		
64	64		
75	75		
12	12		
75	75		
3723	4771	6680	

→ bigger

Interiors Buildings Cities

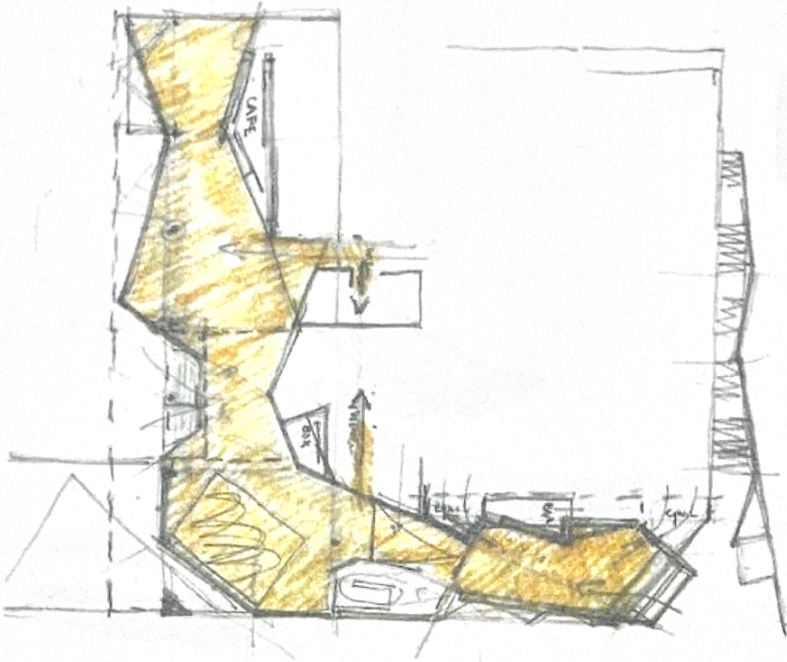
Looking at other theatres
 Contemporary, make art what
 is realistic

Palace

Next step in the development in a mass: where can we think?

City Stage

2025-26 MSc3 AR4AI130



Sketch Sadler's Wells Dance Theatre in London by O'Donnell + Tuomey

A Performative Architecture

Theatres are public, cultural buildings. In their many forms, they have, throughout history and as we have seen, represented and accommodated both social and intellectual ideas within wider society and in response to the particular conditions of places and the communities that inhabit them.

Equally, theatres are complex and intricate systems for moving and arranging people and things, at many scales. One might almost describe them as a kind of machine, not only in the mechanisms of the stage itself, but also in their larger structures.

Thus, the representative forms and figure of a theatre building can neither be simply projected onto, nor be entirely the resultant of the complex processes that resolve its many, interrelated systems. Each must emerge through negotiation with the other, with the resulting building looking simultaneously outwards to the city and inwards to the stage.

Organising and developing this complex negotiation, between the theatre's urban, representative purpose and its many layers of functionality, is the subject of this third brief.

Structures and Layers

Unlike other forms of public buildings, theatres operate in significant ebbs and flows that respond to the concentrated act of a performance. Large amounts of physical material need to be brought into the building beforehand and then leave once the performance is over. Technical staff need to be able to transform that material into a set, a lighting rig or a sound

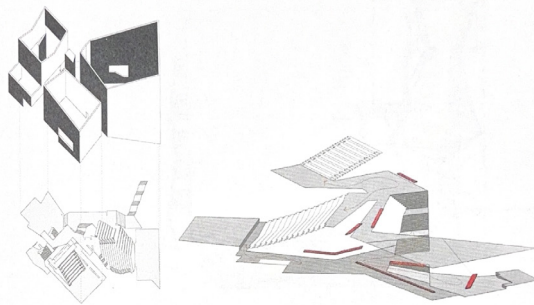
system, appropriate for each performance, whose needs can be diverse. Alongside, performers arrive, rehearse, transform themselves, perform and leave, often within a building they do not know, with the need for minimal interruption. Audiences need to be moved, en masse, from the street to the foyer, to the auditorium, and then out again. This movement happens both during intervals – where they all require a drink, or to go to the bathroom, in the same compressed timescale – and then at the end, when they all leave together, as quickly as possible. In the worst case, like a fire, different groups of people might have to escape in an orderly way, at the same time. Otherwise, except at key moments – where the stage meets the auditorium, for example – these interdependent systems do not benefit from being significantly overlapped in physical space, making the organisation of the theatre a significant logistical challenge. The spaces that result often seem oversized to accommodate these moments of intensity around the performance, offering another challenge, namely that the buildings that accommodate them can feel empty and alienating in the moments between. The theatre of the future suggests that this last problem could be mitigated if the theatre could host other urban, public programmes, meaning that the idea of the theatre as an intricate, oscillating mechanism happens not only in space but in time, through cross and parallel programming and the interactions of different users.

However, interfaces in theatres are not only about the interaction of people moving in space and time. Beyond the primary visual

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Exploded view and circulation diagram. The Lyric Theatre in Belfast by O'Donnell + Tuomey

relationships established between one thing and another, they involve all the senses, particularly in relation to questions of sound (or silence) and light (or darkness). They require large movements of air (which one should not hear) in rooms that accommodate large numbers of people, some sitting close together, while others move and speak energetically. Theatres involve spaces of many different scales, from very big rooms to very small ones. The proximity of these rooms, how they are stacked, ordered, and structured to create both organisational and constructional logic, is critical to the theatre's performance. The material and structural interfaces and systems that span or isolate spaces add yet another layer of complexity. Theatres are all different and yet often very similar. There are orthodoxies, in terms of the ways in which they function, the scales of key spaces, or the relationships between people within them, which are difficult to radically reinvent. In counterpoint, there are other spaces, such as the foyers, which are highly malleable and open to significant interpretation.

General Arrangements

During the next four weeks, we would like you to develop your outline thinking from the A1 into more rigorous elaborations, through both plan and section. Working iteratively and in relation to the various layers and systems already described, you will develop the general arrangement of your building

proposition within its site and the city, ensuring that the programme elements are accommodated in ways that are both functional and formally satisfying.

Outcomes

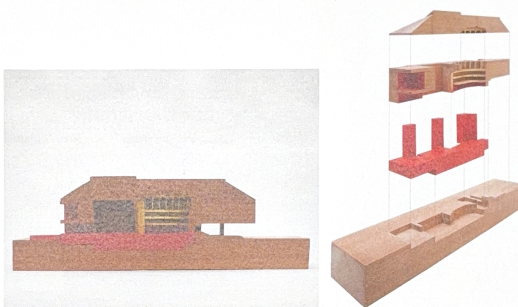
A key outcome will be a set of plans covering each level of the building and key sections through the major spaces. In order to make these, you will need to think about the spaces and systems of movement of each of the following, which you will depict as a series of plan and section diagrams (it is important to remember that functional overlaps or separations can happen in section as well as plan). As a minimum, these will illustrate the spaces and connections for the audience; the performers; technical staff and equipment. Your diagrams should illustrate how each of these works and how they interrelate.

As part of the movement of people and things, you should illustrate the locations of entrances and exits, the positions of stair and lift cores, and other ancillary zones such as toilets. These do not yet need to be planned in detail, but they should demonstrate appropriate scales and proportions of space, corridor widths, etc. Remember to consider qualitative issues like light, views, and overlooking when making decisions about where people work for example. Consider key outdoor spaces as parts of your project.

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Model and exploded view of Bourla Theatre in Antwerp by DRDH architects

Alongside, we would like you to strategically define:

- The structural parameters of the building, in both plan and section, illustrating the placement and connections (or disconnections) of load-bearing structures of different scales and spans.

- The building's servicing strategies, particularly in relation to the large and intensively used spaces, showing how air is moved, taken into rooms, and extracted and where mechanical plant is located. Remember that a complex building like a theatre will likely need to be split into zones of different environmental characteristics and requirements.

These overall plans, sections and diagrams can be drawn at 1:500 or 1:200 as you deem appropriate. We would like each of you to develop at least part of your proposed building at 1:200 scale to begin to show its form, orders, and planning. You should choose a significant set of spaces or relationships to focus on, which relate to your developing ideas about theatre and theatre in Delft. They could be ideas that come from your first design exercise between city and stage.

It would be helpful if the outcome of this phase of work can continue to be tested in three dimensions, through physical modelling and in relation to your 1:500 and 1:200 models of the sites. Doing this will allow you to consider how your functional and performative relationships are resolved into form, scale and mass within the city.

The outcome of this work will be an interim presentation and review halfway to the A2. Supported by this material, you will then begin to work on particular spatial aspects and sequences, up to the A2 examination. We intend to invite people from Theater de Veste to this review, so it will be important that you communicate and contextualise your ideas and where they are derived from in a clear and succinct form, which can be understandable to people from beyond the course.

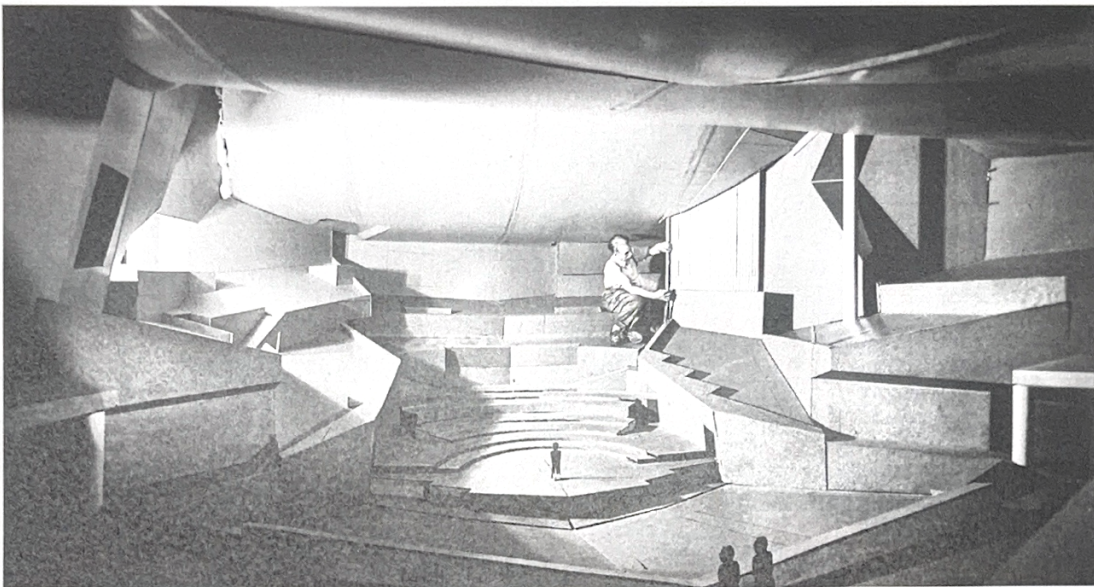
You are not the first people to grapple with these complexities. Looking at and analysing how contemporary theatre's work will be critical in developing your own understanding of the scale, order and proximity of spaces and elements within your building. A list of contemporary theatres will be posted on Brightspace in the coming days and you should choose at least one to study, whether individually or in pairs or groups as you choose. You can also choose your own relevant examples. The way you represent these reference projects should allow them to be compared to your own individual strategic diagrams. It could be helpful, as a group, to decide upon some standard means to do this.

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Large Scale Interior Model of Hans Scharoun's Berlin Philharmonie

DEVELOPMENT

Brief 4: The Space of Performance 12.03.26 -

Theatrical performance takes place in a three-dimensional space. As you know, throughout the history of theatre, the construction of such a theatrical space has evolved and diverged. In contemporary performance, relationships between actor and audience can be both formal and informal. Both actor and spectator can equally be understood to be integral to the act of performance and therefore integral to an understanding of the theatre space itself: from the 'fourth wall' of the proscenium arch, to the thrust stage, the theatre in the round and the black walls of a 'neutral space,' to name some.

"I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged."
Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*

On entering a theatre of any kind, both actors and spectators arrive into a specific space, one that is designed to produce certain reactions or responses. The reception of that space, by both, becomes part of the total theatrical experience. This is an experience that engages the whole body and all the senses.

In thinking about the new theatre in Delft, as each of you conceive it, the spaces of performance might be many and might encompass both planned theatre and conditions which are intrinsically theatrical, where spectator becomes performer or back becomes front for example. We will return to the possibilities of this wider sense of theatricality in a subsequent brief, but our immediate focus will be on the nature of the main auditorium itself, as the centre-piece of the project and the generator of the wider architectural, functional and contextual relationships within your building, in plan and section.

This main theatre is already subject to a number of quite specific requirements. To begin with, it succeeds the present theatre,

a receiving space for a variety of different performance types.

This has a scale, form and set of relationships which your new theatre will need to respond to, critique, elaborate upon or reject. In any event, in an actual architectural project it would be a benchmark against which your new design would be compared and you should therefore undertake analysis of it yourself.

Beyond that, the aspiration is to make a theatre which will typically be used in a proscenium format (from which you might choose to offer an expanded range of possibilities), with a small orchestra pit for 20 musicians, and an understage. The auditorium should be able to accommodate 800 seats, perhaps with temporary seating over the pit. The proscenium and stage size should be appropriate for a theatre of this scale.

The success of a theatre is determined by the interplay between two critical factors, its technical performance and its character and atmosphere as a performance space – from the perspective of both audience and performer. This brief asks you to develop the auditorium of your project, synthesising these two starting points and drawing upon your growing knowledge of historical and contemporary theatre architecture.

The technical aspects of the theatre are determined, in one sense, by the standards, regulations and performance characteristics that theatre companies, directors, actors other performers and audiences expect. Non exhaustively, these encompass the organisation of a stage tower; the requirements for acoustics and lighting; the technical spaces (galleries, lighting bridges etc) and their visibility or otherwise to the audience; the form, rake and relationships of audience seating in stalls and balconies, considering sightlines and adaptability to various theatrical performance modes; the thresholds between theatre and foyer (sound and light lobbying); supporting technical rooms, accessibility and escape.

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IBC House of Music 2017: 1:50 Sectional Concert Hall Model., Mohammed Rahil Sofawala

In practice, you would respond to the significant technical challenges, which you would need to resolve, in collaboration with a wider design team. However, for this brief, we would ask you to address them in principle. Some might have implications beyond the hall itself. They include:

- Sight lines: every member of the audience needs to see as much of the visible stage area as possible.
- Acoustics: shaping the volume and relation between reflective and absorbing surfaces appropriately, including their adaptability, to create the appropriate aural condition
- Long span structure: both auditorium and stage tower require large span, column free structures.
- Air volumes: a concentrated number of people in a space alongside heat emitting technical equipment means that you need a large air change and sufficient fresh air. Where will this enter, how will you extract it, how will it move through spaces, where is the technical plant?
- Theatres have house lighting and technical stage lighting: where are these placed
- If you are proposing adaptable staging, how will things move and change?
- Where will audiences escape in the event of fire and where is smoke extracted?
- The stage tower has technical gantries and a grid floor, at what levels should these be placed and how do people get to them?

While there may be many similarities between 800 seat, contemporary proscenium theatres, each will also be shaped by the constraints of its site and the desired character of its interior. The thresholds, through which people arrive together into the hall,

and the journey individually to their seat, introduce the room. Once there, an auditorium can be expressed as a scenography or a machine, decorated or stripped back, for example. The audience it accommodates can be arranged to engage one other, or have all their attention immediately focused on the stage; they can be arranged across balcony levels or as a single mass; rakes can be steep or shallow, stepped or parabolic; parterre levels can introduce scale, spatial variation and accommodate level shifts and accessibility requirements; the relation between stage and audience might be flexible; above, bridges and technical galleries might be more or less visible; concealed, or not, behind a technical ceiling.

Colour, material, light, shape and volume, all help to determine a theatre's atmosphere. Seats can be treated as individual elements or components of a larger body, surfaces might need to be soft or hard, absorbent or reflecting. Floors, walls, balcony front and soffits, ceilings and stage curtains all help determine how the space feels, remembering also that the atmosphere will shift dramatically before and after the house lights go down and the play begins.

Over the next four weeks we would like each of you to develop your theatre, encompassing stage tower and auditorium, through a detailed development of its plans and sections at 1:50 scale. Alongside this you will make a large scale, sectional physical model of your auditorium, also at 1:50 scale, in parallel to a digital model and through test fragments. This should be carefully photographed to allow for comparability. Through these various representations, you will be able to represent both the auditoria and stage tower's technical components and their spatial atmosphere. At the A2, you should be in a position to present this material but also to place the auditorium and stage tower back into the developed plans and sections of the building as a whole, in context.

Online lecture 19.03.26: Ed Elbourne, a theatre technician and acoustic engineer from Arup, London. Ed will hopefully join us later in the course for a workshop in Delft.

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Sectional Model of Garnier's Opera, Paris

INTEGRATION

Brief 5: From City to Seat 16.04.26 -

The theatre of the theatre. Throughout its history, in all its different forms, the architecture of theatres has been concerned with questions of representation and the construction of spectacle across scales, as a means to engage people with one another and to construct the relation between audience and performer.

Theatre and architecture are intertwined not only through the relationship between people and the individual, representative building but also at the larger scale of the city. Inigo Jones, often thought of as the first significant English architect and the architect of the first planned public square in London – Covent Garden – was also a set designer, as was Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the German, Prussian Architect who did so much to reconstruct the image and public experience of the city of Berlin in the 19th Century, as an urban scenography. The work of both might be understood to conceive the city as scenography: a layered, framed and choreographed urban sequence, both a setting and a stage for public life. The thinking of German philosopher Walter Benjamin reinforces this image, comparing the city to 'a popular stage', while the elaborate foyer spaces and thresholds of Garnier's Opera in Paris are conceived as a choreography, in which society perceives itself through movement.

Conversely, Sir John Soane, the architect of the Bank of England, a city in microcosm, hosted candle lit performances in his house in London's Lincoln's Inn Fields, where visitors became actors, their shadows projected on its walls. His urban thinking is transformed at this intimate scale, creating a highly specific atmosphere through theatrical effects

This conception of the theatre building as a deep threshold, which the audience traverses, from city to seat, is the subject of your final brief for this year, taking you from the A2 to the A3. It is defined in

four parts, each of which addresses a different moment of scale on this journey. However, the brief does not only want you to think in terms of the movement of an audience, indeed this is precisely not its point.

Richard Sennett suggests that when "public space becomes merely a derivative of movement, it loses any independent experiential meaning of its own. On the most physical level, these environments of pure movement prompt people to think of the public domain as meaningless... catatonic space."

Instead, you are asked to conceive of the building as a connected series of constructed and inter-related social, spatial, organisational and, most importantly, architectural moments: each with their own material and atmospheric conditions, yet conceived in response to one another.

1. Figure

The first of these moments concerns the form of the building and its status as a significant, representative urban figure. How does your building address itself to the city, define its urban spaces and take responsibility for its immediate neighbours? We would like you to draw and model your building in its context, understanding it at eye level, both from the street and, if relevant, from key vantage points within the city. You should consider your architecture at this urban scale, both in terms of its form and urban mass but also in relation to its neighbours, with regard to the urban spaces it forms or consolidates and through its material character and the effects this creates. Nominal scales for this enquiry are: 1:500 / 1:200

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Sala Beckett, Barcelona: axonometric studies of the foyers and theatre, Flores & Prats

2. Façade

The façade is the moment of threshold, where the city meets the interior. Within the larger contextual consideration of the form and figure of your building as a whole, we would like you to compose and materialise the principle facade through which your project greets the public. This facade should be conceived three dimensionally, addressing its role as a threshold, between city and theatre. You should explore the materials and construction of this facade in detail, from ground to roof, exploring the relation between how it is made, and of what, and how it presents itself. Consider the ways in which it establishes a scenography or setting for both daily urban and theatrical life and the festive moments before, during or after a performance. Lighting, words and images might all be understood to be integral parts of its composition. Nominal Scale 1:50 / 1:20

3. Foyer

The foyer is a space of spectacle, where one sees and is seen: a stage for public life as a precursor to the actual stage. Foyers engage both the exterior spaces of the city beyond and the auditorium within. They are often complex three-dimensional volumes, encompassing a series of levels and issues of movement. Festive spaces, they are inhabited by the audience before, during, and after the performance but can also be settings for events in their own right, as many of you already propose. The architecture of foyers can engage many scales, from grandeur to intimacy. They can extend the urban experience, prefigure the stage set, or oscillate somewhere in between. You will describe the experience of the foyers through which you arrive at the theatre auditoria, in plan, section and in terms of their volumes and movement. Your explorations should encompass questions of character and atmosphere, defined through material, light, colour, texture or pattern and represented through a series of carefully

constructed views of digital or physical models. Consider techniques such as stop-frame, which allow you to show how the foyers accommodate different moments and scales of public life, at different times. Alongside, you should consider the technical implications of such spaces. Often decorative, yet equally requiring robustness, how are they made, serviced and lit? Nominal Scales 1:50 / 1:20

4. Fragment

The complex relationships between the city, the building and its interior meet and are resolved holistically through critical moments of interface, where form, material and technical resolution become integrated. You will technically and architecturally resolve at least one key fragment of your building, in three-dimensions, at a moment where foyer and façade meet. This is likely to be part of your principle façade, a corner for example, but it is not only a question of building envelope and it should not be conceived in isolation. Instead it should encompass the layers of building fabric from exterior to interior and should be contextualised within the larger composition of the whole. Nominal Scales 1:50 / 1:10

The four components of this brief commence following the A2. At the interim review you should be in a position to represent your approach to **Figure and Façade**. Foyer and Fragment should have begun and all can continue to be developed until the A3. A key focus of this quarter will be on technical resolution and integration and you should consider, from the outset, the inter-relation between how things appear and how they are made, or composed, as a series of elements or a sequence of construction. on 23rd March and 7th May Dirk Somers, of IBC and Bovenbouw, will join us to discuss facade composition.

Drawings

