

THE PASSAGE

where city meets stage

Delft University of Technology
Architecture and the Built Environment

Interiors Buildings Cities

Graduation Studio

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Palace

Professor:
Daniel Rosbottom

Mentors:
Jurjen Zeinstra
Mauro Parravicini
Susanne Pietsch
Sam de Vocht

5313503

Jade Melis

GRADUATION REPORT

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FOREWORD

This graduation project presents the translation of the design assignment within the graduation studio Interiors, Buildings, Cities. Within this graduation studio, the central objective was to design the theatre of the future within the city of Delft. At the same time, this project focuses on the design of an open and inclusive theatre building. By creating an open and inclusive building, the theatre can play an important role in the cultural and urban life of Delft.

In this graduation project, the theatre building is therefore considered a public building and is not approached solely as a place for performance, but rather as a public space in which encounter and interaction are central. Historically, theatres provided space for reflection, relaxation, and collective experience. However, in the contemporary context, theatres have often become closed and exclusive places, even though their spatial qualities hold strong potential for openness and public accessibility.

Throughout this project, research was conducted into the creation of a theatre that is as open, inclusive, and future-oriented as possible. Various design decisions were made to translate the concept into a feasible architectural proposal. This assignment involved both creative and technical challenges, during which the guidance of mentors and professors provided valuable support in the realization of this graduation project, "The Passage."

Part 1.

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1. Model (scale 1:25) of a spatial transition between city and stage, in which perspective, movement and encounter key aspects



INTRODUCTION

Within the graduation studio Interiors, Buildings, Cities, the central assignment focuses on the creation of the theatre of the future. This assignment originates from the ambition to renew Theater De Veste in Delft. The theatre aims to expand its facilities, increasing the capacity of the main auditorium from 500 to 800 seats while adding an additional smaller auditorium. This new theatre will be located within the canals of Delft at one of four potential sites:

1. Theater De Veste
2. Gasthuisplaats
3. HEMA
4. Yperstraat

CITY STAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The city and the theatre have been intrinsically connected for centuries. Historically, the theatre functioned not only as a venue for performances, but also as a space for encounter, debate, and collective experience (Theatre Presents Studies). Within these spaces, people gathered to share stories, exchange ideas, and collectively experience events.

In the contemporary city, however, this close relationship between theatre and urban life appears to be gradually fading. Many theatres have evolved into closed and exclusive buildings, where access is largely determined by the possession of a ticket.

This graduation project departs from the idea of the City Stage: a theatre that does not isolate itself from the city but instead opens itself to its surroundings (Brief 1, Project Journal, p. 15). Within this concept, the theatre is understood as a spatial system in which the boundary between city and performance is minimized as much as possible. The theatre is therefore approached not solely as a place where performances take place, but as an open public building in which encounter, presence, and experience are central.

Through this approach, the theatre transforms from an exclusive destination into an open public environment where different users, activities, and perspectives come together. Consequently, the theatre of the future is approached as an urban cultural anchor point within Delft: a place that remains open during both daytime and evening hours and accommodates a wide variety of cultural activities.

RELEVANCE

The first assignment (Brief 1) and the initial visit to Theater De Veste in Delft revealed the urgency of creating the theatre of the future in Delft. As described above, theatre buildings are increasingly becoming exclusive spaces, whereas theatres historically possessed a more open character. Where theatres once opened themselves to the city, they are now increasingly closing themselves off from the city and its inhabitants.

The first visit to Theater De Veste, combined with a lecture by Marijtje Pronk, director of the theatre, highlighted both the current challenges and future ambitions of the institution. The existing theatre attracts relatively few young visitors and lacks a strong connection with the city. At the same time, the theatre aspires to reach the broadest possible audience and function as a cultural hub within Delft. To fulfill these ambitions, the theatre building would need to expand significantly and potentially relocate within the city.

Within this graduation project, the decision was made to situate the theatre of the future at Gasthuisplaats in Delft. In its current condition, Gasthuisplaats lacks a clear function. The site was formerly used as a parking area but is now located within a low-traffic zone. As a result, the space is frequently occupied by groups of youths, causing disturbances for residents (Project Journal, p. 106). At the edge of Gasthuisplaats, a cultural laboratory is currently located: a building in which spaces are rented for cultural purposes (Project Journal, p.106). Although this cultural laboratory fulfils an important cultural role within the city, its visibility and spatial impact remain limited. Its current location and scale make it difficult to establish a clear urban significance.

Gasthuisplaats therefore represents a site with existing cultural potential but without a strong spatial identity. By designing a new theatre at this location, the project aims to strengthen the cultural significance of the area. The existing cultural laboratory is not considered a separate entity, but rather a programmatic component that can be integrated into the new theatre building. In this way, the theatre can function as a culture hub within Delft's city centre.

OBJECTIVE & MOTIVATION

The motivation for choosing this graduation studio stems from a personal interest in the relationship between interior, building, and city. More specifically, the motivation for this assignment lies in the integration of a large theatre building within the small-scale urban fabric of Delft. In this context, the relationship between the city and the large scale theatre building becomes highly significant. At the same time, the experience of the visitor plays an important role, particularly in relation to the interior atmosphere of the building, such as the ambiance of the auditorium and public spaces.

During the first phase of the design process, in which various theatres were visited and analysed, it became evident that many theatre buildings remain unused for large parts of the day. Their large public spaces are primarily activated during evening performances, while functioning minimally during daytime hours. This observation marked an important turning point within the design process. The realization that theatres often function as closed and exclusive buildings led to the ambition of developing an alternative.

The objective of this graduation project is therefore to design the theatre of the future: an open, inclusive, and flexible building. The theatre is approached as a place where different forms of presence can coexist. In addition to scheduled performances, there should be room for spontaneous activities, informal encounters, and everyday urban movement. By combining these various forms of use, a building emerges that remains active and accessible throughout the entire day.

Within the context of the Interiors, Buildings, Cities graduation studio, designing the theatre of the future translates into the development of an open cultural centre. This centre focuses not only on future forms of performance, but also on the cultural context of Delft and the role of public buildings within the city.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

The central theme within the graduation studio is the design of the theatre of the future in Delft. In addition to this broader theme, a more specific problem statement and design vision have been formulated within this project. During visits to various Dutch theatres at the beginning of the graduation project, a clear problem statement emerged. As mentioned earlier, it became apparent that contemporary theatres often function as closed-off buildings. Large parts of these buildings remain unused during the day, while in the evening they transform into exclusive spaces that are only accessible to ticket holders.

This problem statement was subsequently translated into a design challenge. Rather than considering the theatre as a closed destination, possibilities were explored to open the theatre towards the city. This shift resulted in the formulation of the following design statement: Designing a theatre building that adapts to its surroundings while simultaneously positioning itself as open and inclusive towards the city of Delft.

Based on this design statement, the following central design question was formulated:

How can a large theatre be designed within the small-scale city of Delft in a way that adapts to and opens itself towards its surroundings while functioning as a cultural anchor point?

Within this question, the concept of "open" can be interpreted in multiple ways. This graduation project strives to realise an open theatre in which large public spaces remain accessible to visitors during both daytime and evening hours. Furthermore, the project aims to create a theatre that opens itself towards the city and its inhabitants, minimizing the boundary between visitor and performer as much as possible. Themes that repeatedly return throughout this project are integration, openness, connection, and the role of the theatre as a cultural hub.

Part 2.

APPROACH

Figure 2. Theatre experience, Theater De Veste Delft.



APPROACH

Various forms of research were used throughout this design process. Fieldwork was combined with both design-based and analytical research. In addition, extensive literature research was conducted to gain insights into the technical aspects of theatre design. Within the graduation studio, a considerable amount of collaborative research was carried out, particularly during the initial phase of the design process. As the project progressed, the research became increasingly individual.

METHODES

An important component of the research consisted of precedent studies, which formed the starting point of this project. In collaboration with a partner, the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza was analysed. This analysis focused on the auditorium configuration, perspective, and sightlines. The study later became part of a broader group analysis of a selection of historical theatres.

In addition, the theatrical experience was investigated through visits to various theatres. During a collective excursion, theatres in Groningen and Amsterdam were visited, where both public and backstage spaces were explored. Theatre De Veste in Delft was also visited, both as the design site and in its role as the client. Individual fieldwork consisted of attending performances and guided tours, including a performance at Theatre De Veste (figure 2) and a theatre lecture at the Leidse Schouwburg. A guided tour of the Prinses Theater in Rotterdam provided insights into the spatial experiences of theatre staff.

Another important aspect of the fieldwork involved repeated visits to the city of Delft, specifically the Gasthuisplaats. The Gasthuisplaats was visited and documented at different times and moments. In addition, surrounding typologies, such as De Zuster, the synagogue, and the Cultural Lab, were visited to gain a better understanding of the context and existing conditions. These visits have been documented in the Project Journal (p. 98 to p. 113).

Parallel to this research, a series of design exercises was conducted. Through the construction of physical models at different scales, the mass and spatial impact of the theatre became increasingly clear. Figure 1 presents the first design assignment, developed as a 1:25 scale model. This model explored how perspective, movement, and encounter could be translated into architectural form. A 1:500 scale model investigated the scale of the theatre and its integration into the urban fabric of Delft. The large scale of the theatre building within a small city such as Delft provided valuable insights into the substantial mass of the building and demonstrated how the theatre would position itself as a figure within the city.

The development of a 1:200 scale model provided insights into the relationship and integration between the theatre building and its surroundings. A 1:100 scale model examined not only the form, materiality, and atmosphere of the auditorium, but also the relationship between the theatre halls and the passage. The elaboration of the entrance to the passage in a 1:50 scale model clarified the open character of the building. Alongside these three-dimensional design exercises, two-dimensional work was carried out simultaneously. Floor plans and sections were presented and refined on a weekly basis.

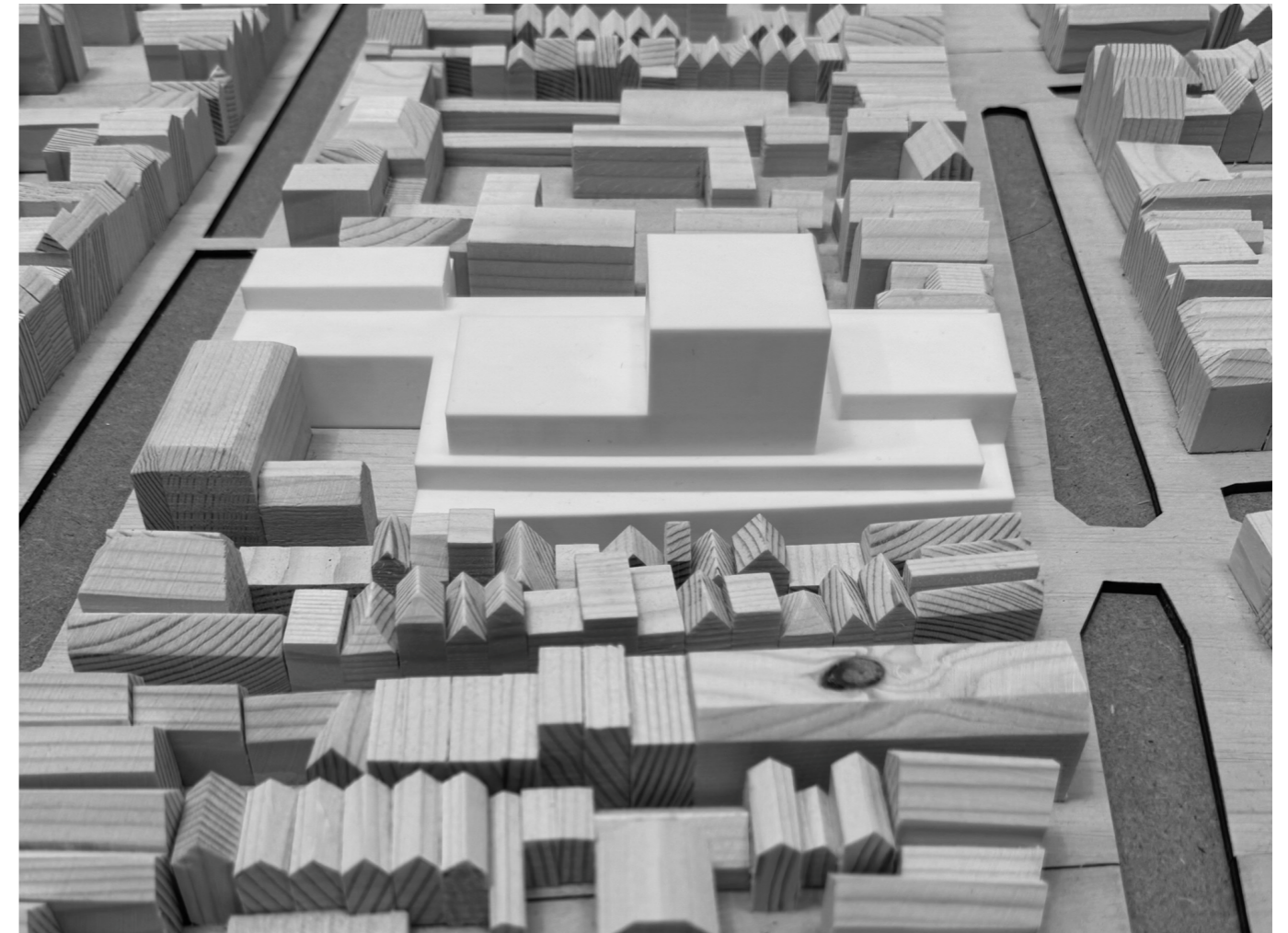


Figure 3. Model (scale 1:500) showing *The Passage as Figure* in the city of Delft

LITERATURE

Literature research forms an important part of this graduation project and primarily supports the technical aspects of theatre design. Books such as *Theatre Buildings: A Design Guide* provide insights into the technical and functional requirements of theatre architecture. Aspects such as sightlines, acoustics, logistics, and programmatic organization are extensively discussed. This knowledge is essential to develop a functional and feasible design. At the same time, the literature demonstrates that theatre design often focuses on optimizing the performance experience, while less attention is given to the public and urban role of the theatre.

Within this graduation project, literature is not only used as a theoretical framework, but also as a source of inspiration for design decisions. By combining insights from literature with precedent studies and fieldwork, a broader understanding emerges of the theatre as both a spatial and social phenomenon.

Figure 4. Model (scale 1:200) showing the facade on the Brabantse Turfmarkt

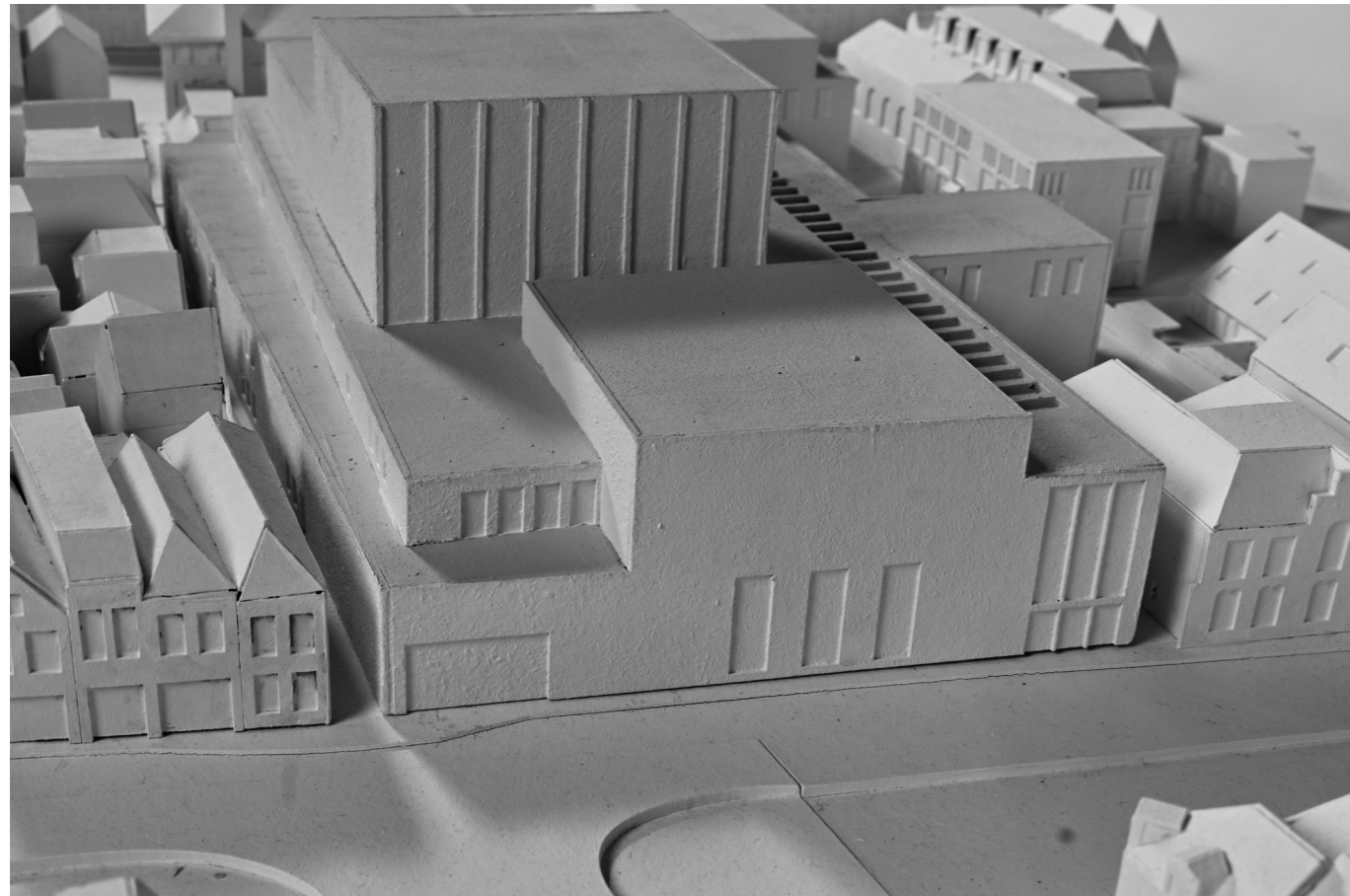
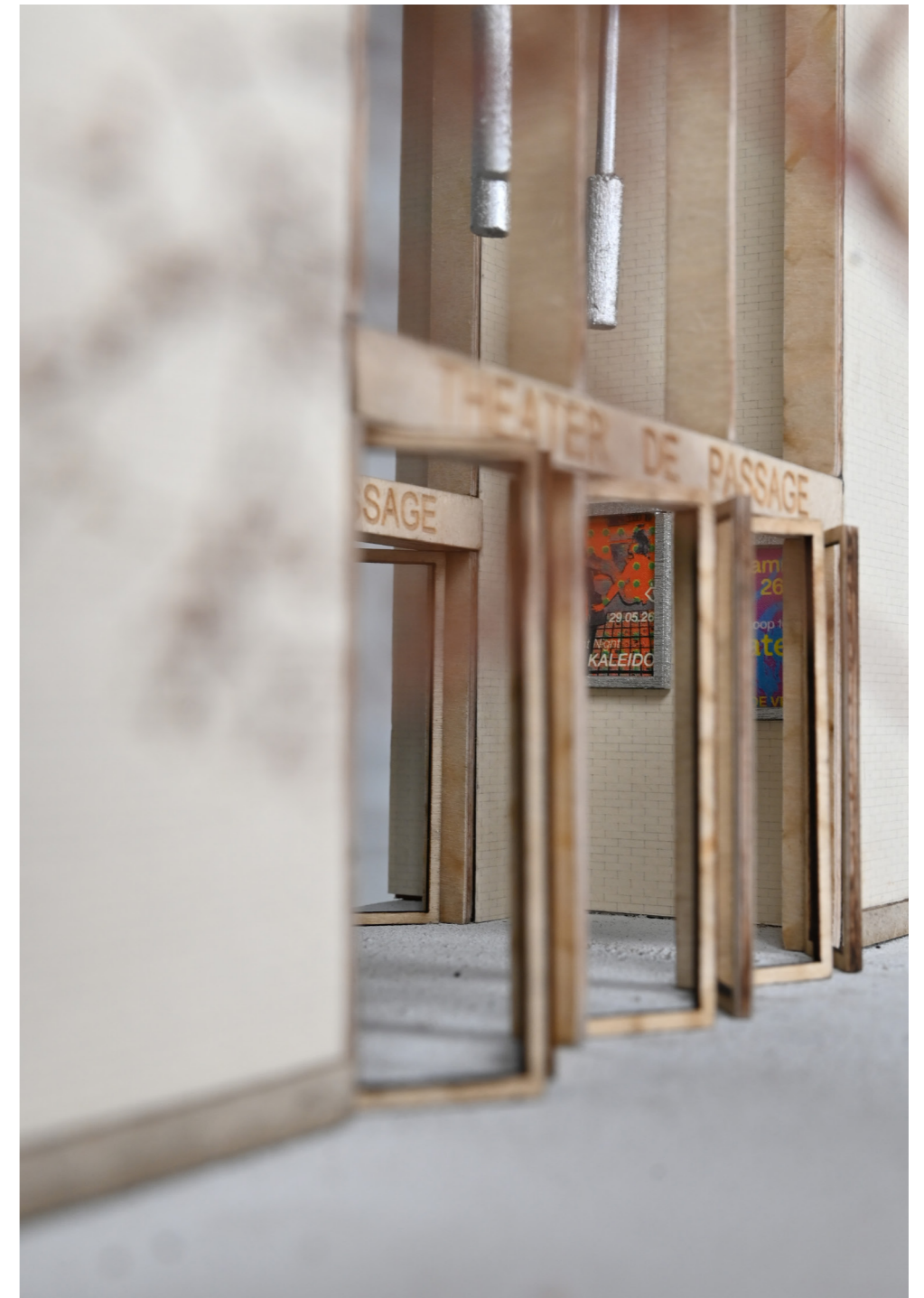


Figure 5. Model (scale 1:100) showing the length of the Passage

Part 3.

DESIGN RESULTS

Figure 6. Model (scale 1:50) showing entrance of The Passage



DESIGN RESULTS

The central objective of this graduation project is to design a theatre that responds to the needs of the contemporary city. Rather than approaching the theatre as a closed building that functions exclusively during performances, it is here conceived as an open and dynamic environment in which encounter, movement, and experience are central. The resulting design is therefore not only a building for performance, but also a cultural building that opens itself to the city throughout the day.

To achieve this objective, several design principles and themes were developed. Together, these principles form the foundation of the final design, and each contributes to the realization of an open, inclusive, and future-proof theatre. The main design principles and themes within this project are: urban context & integration, openness & accessibility, encounter & connection, and theatre & cultural anchor point.

URBAN CONTEXT & INTEGRATION

Based on the design research focusing on massing, the large scale of the theatre building became apparent. This scale differs significantly from the existing urban fabric of Delft. In order to successfully integrate the large theatre building into its surroundings and strengthen its connection to the city, the urban context of Delft was carefully analyzed. Figure 7 illustrates the context of Delft, in which the city's canal structure immediately stands out. Within this canal network, a clear pattern of alleyways is visible, connecting the parallel canals.

In order not to disrupt this existing alleyway structure, an alley is, in a sense, reintroduced into the theatre building itself. This alley takes the form of a passage running through the building and functions as the spatial spine of the design, named "De Passage."

Not only does the passage refer to the urban context of Delft, but the form of the theatre building itself also responds directly to its surroundings. As shown in Figure 8, the building follows the lines of the two adjacent canals, De Kornmarkt and the Brabantse Turfmarkt. Furthermore, the Gasthuissteeg, another alley running alongside the site, forms an important basis for the building's geometry. The building mass also visibly steps back to create space for both De Zuster and the adjacent hotel. This design approach results in the creation of two outdoor public spaces surrounding the building.

The building mass not only steps back at ground-floor level, but also gradually terraces on several upper levels. In this way, the scale of the theatre is adjusted to the surrounding buildings, such as the residential houses along the Gasthuissteeg and nearby structures including De Zuster, the synagogue, and the hotel. Larger volumes, such as the auditorium and fly tower, are carefully positioned to remain recognizable while avoiding dominance within the urban fabric. This stepped adaptation is clearly visible in the schematic section shown in Figure 9.

The context of the Gasthuisplaats therefore determines both the form and massing of the theatre building. Rather than designing an autonomous object, the theatre is developed from the existing urban structure, allowing the context itself to shape how the theatre positions itself as an architectural figure within Delft's canal district.

Figure 7. Context within the canals of Delft, scale 1:5000

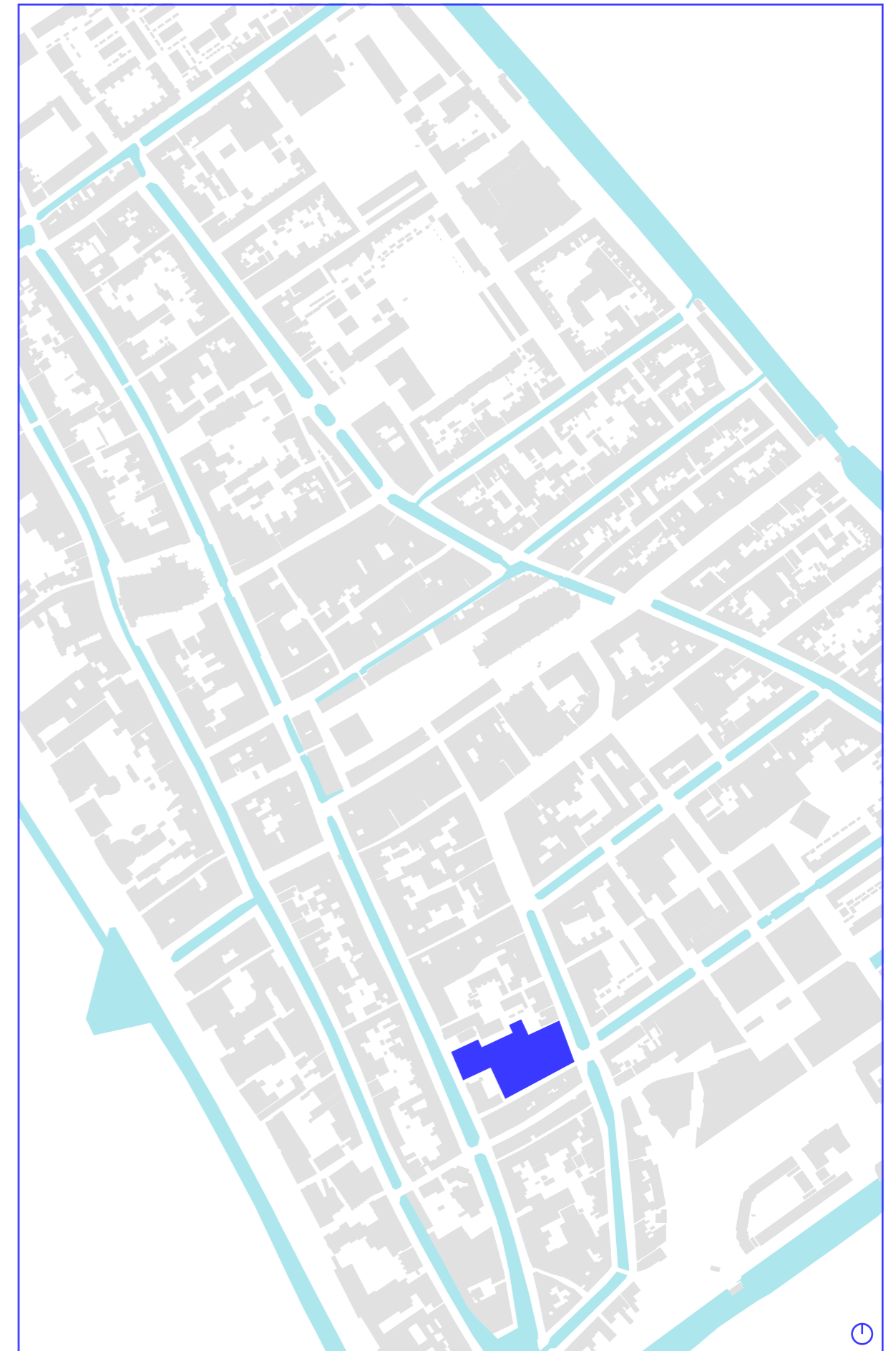




Figure 8. Context of Gasthuisplaats, scale 1:1000

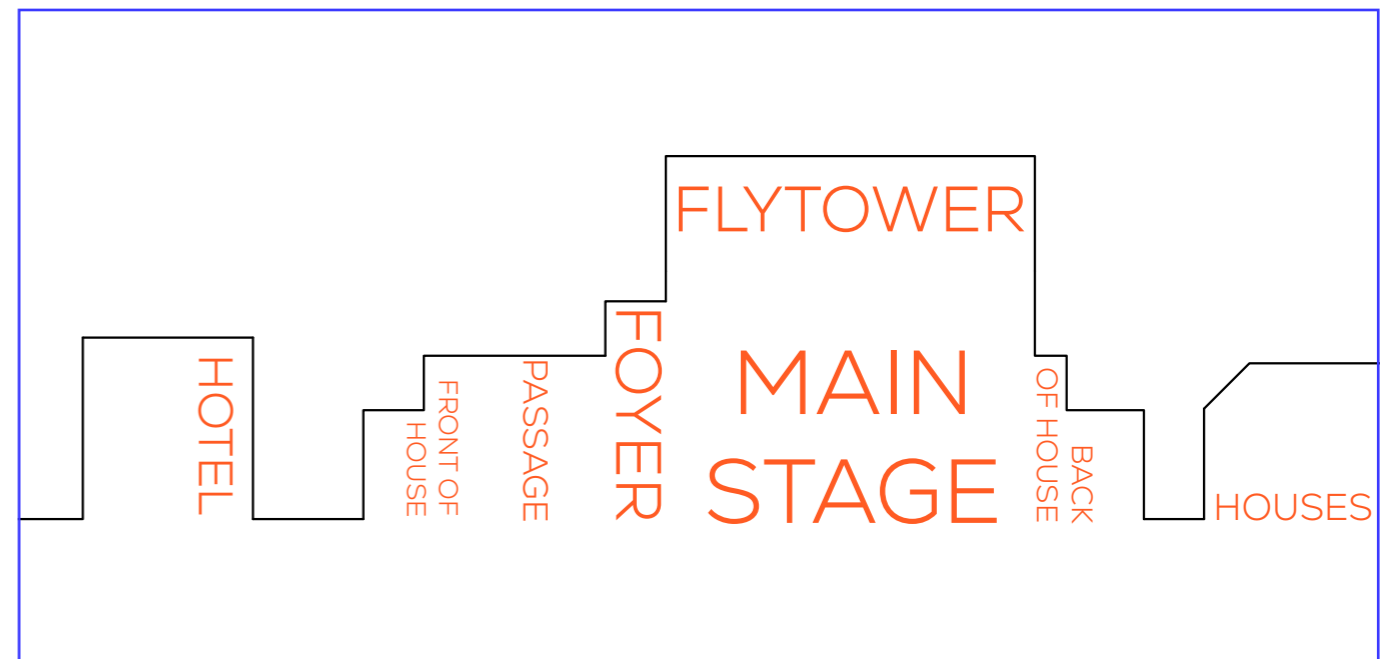


Figure 9. Section diagram showing hight of building and surrounding, scale 1:500

OPENNESS & ACCESSIBILITY

One of the main principles within the design is the creation of an open and inclusive theatre. The theatre is designed as a place that remains accessible to a broad audience and active throughout the day, independent of scheduled performances. To make this openness possible, the passage functions as the central element of the design. The passage acts as a public route through the building and directly connects to the existing network of alleyways and urban connections between Delft's canals. By extending this urban structure into the building, the theatre becomes part of the city rather than a stand-alone object.

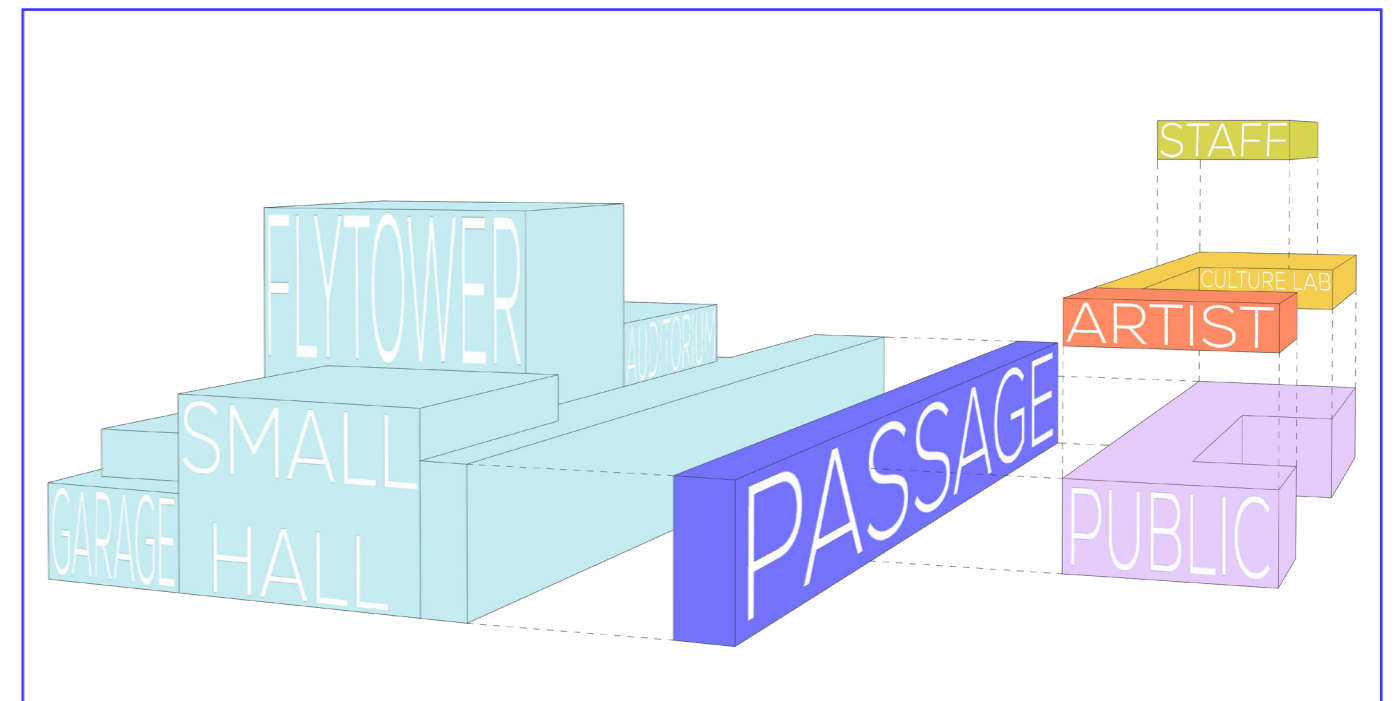
The passage does not only function as an urban route, but also creates a clear distinction between the front of house and back of house functions of the theatre. Figure 10 illustrates a diagram in which the passage clearly forms the spine of the building. On one side of the passage, the back of house is located, including the main and small auditoriums and backstage facilities. On the opposite side lies the front of house, containing public functions such as the restaurant and theatre café.

Because the passage creates a clear separation between public and private theatre functions, it becomes possible to keep the public section of the theatre open throughout the day. These users are not limited to theatre visitors, but may also include passersby, residents of Delft, and other visitors.

The passage therefore functions as a space that remains open to the public throughout the day. During daytime hours, visitors only have access to the public functions located on the northern side of the passage. Figures 11 to 15 present the floor plans of the building. At ground-floor level, visitors have access to the restaurant, theatre café, and other cultural spaces. Shortly before the start of a theatre performance, the southern side of the passage opens to the public, providing access to the larger foyer spaces and seating areas located on the first, second, and third floors. Through these levels, theatre visitors gain access to their designated seats.

Figure 16 also clearly demonstrates the separation between public functions and the theatre halls. The section illustrates, among other aspects, the height of the passage, with the theatre café visible on the left side and the auditorium with proscenium on the right. A more detailed view of the auditorium is visible in the longitudinal section shown in Figure 17. This section demonstrates the relationship between the audience and the stage. It also reveals that the two theatre halls are positioned adjacent to one another, while the backstage area physically separates them. Furthermore, the section illustrates that the smaller theatre hall directly borders the Brabantse Turfmarkt.

Figure 10. Diagram of passage, back of house and front of house



LEGEND

- 1. Main Auditorium
- 2. Balcony
- 3. Stage
- 4. Side Stage
- 5. Under Stage
- 6. Orchastra Pit
- 7. Chair Storage
- 8. Technical Office
- 9. Technical Room
- 10. Loading / Unloading
- 11. Parking Trucks
- 12. Stage Storage
- 13. Technical Workshop
- 14. Workshop Cupboard
- 15. Small Auditorium
- 16. Entrance Hall
- 17. Theatre Cafe
- 18. Bar
- 19. Foyer
- 20. Foyer / Cultural Space
- 21. Information desk
- 22. Cloakroom
- 23. Reception
- 24. Restaurant
- 25. Kitchen
- 26. Washing area
- 27. Cooling area
- 28. Catering Storage
- 29. Foyer Storage
- 30. Extra Storage
- 31. Facilities Workshop
- 32. Toilets
- 33. Showers
- 34. Office
- 35. Staff Room
- 36. Artist Room
- 37. Dressing Room
- 38. Band Studio
- 39. Dance Studio
- 40. Vocal Studio
- 41. Recording Studio
- 42. Cultural Working Space
- 43. Meeting Room
- 44. Installation Room

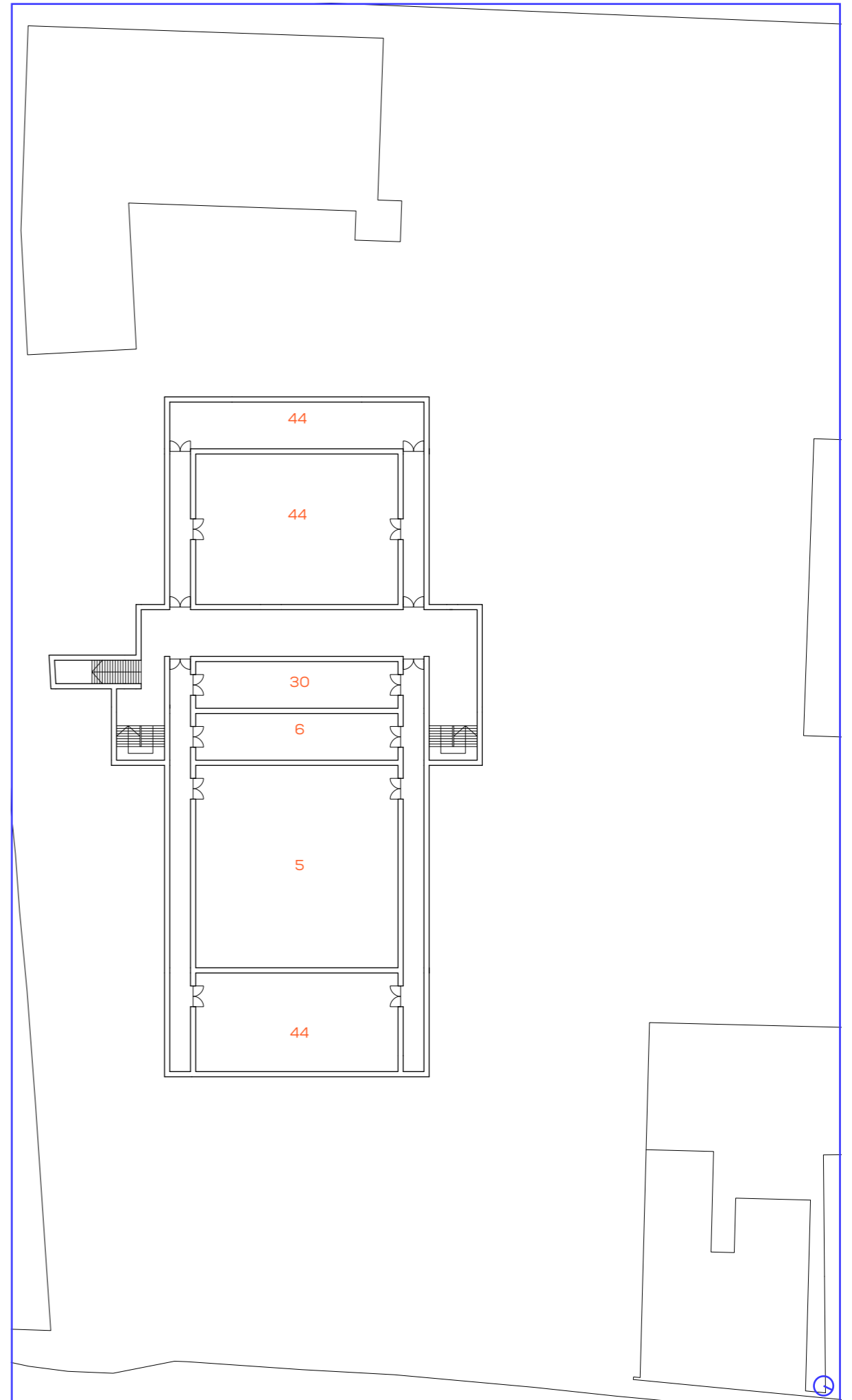


Figure 11. Floorplan basement drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400

Figure 12. Floorplan ground floor drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400

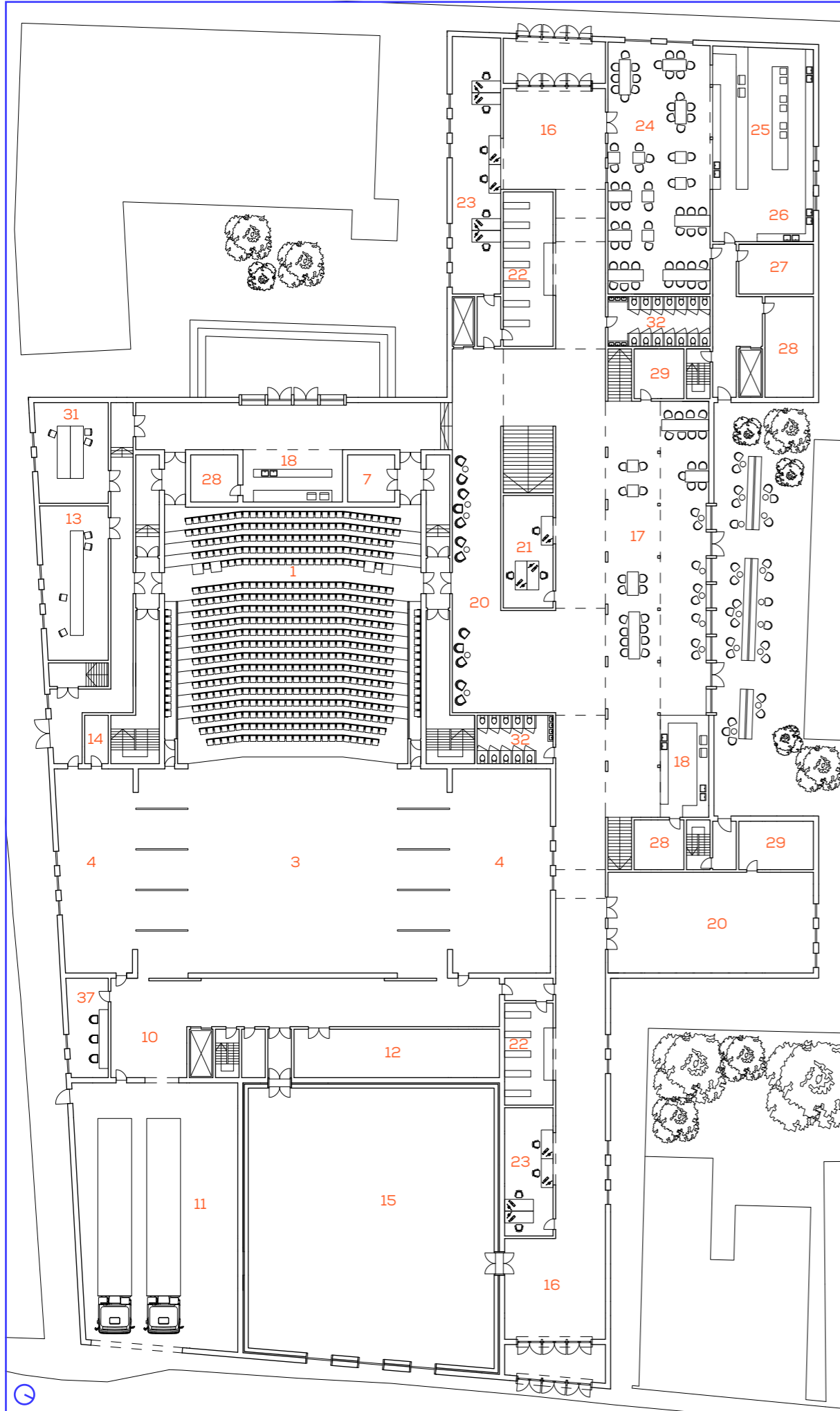


Figure 13. Floorplan first floor drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400

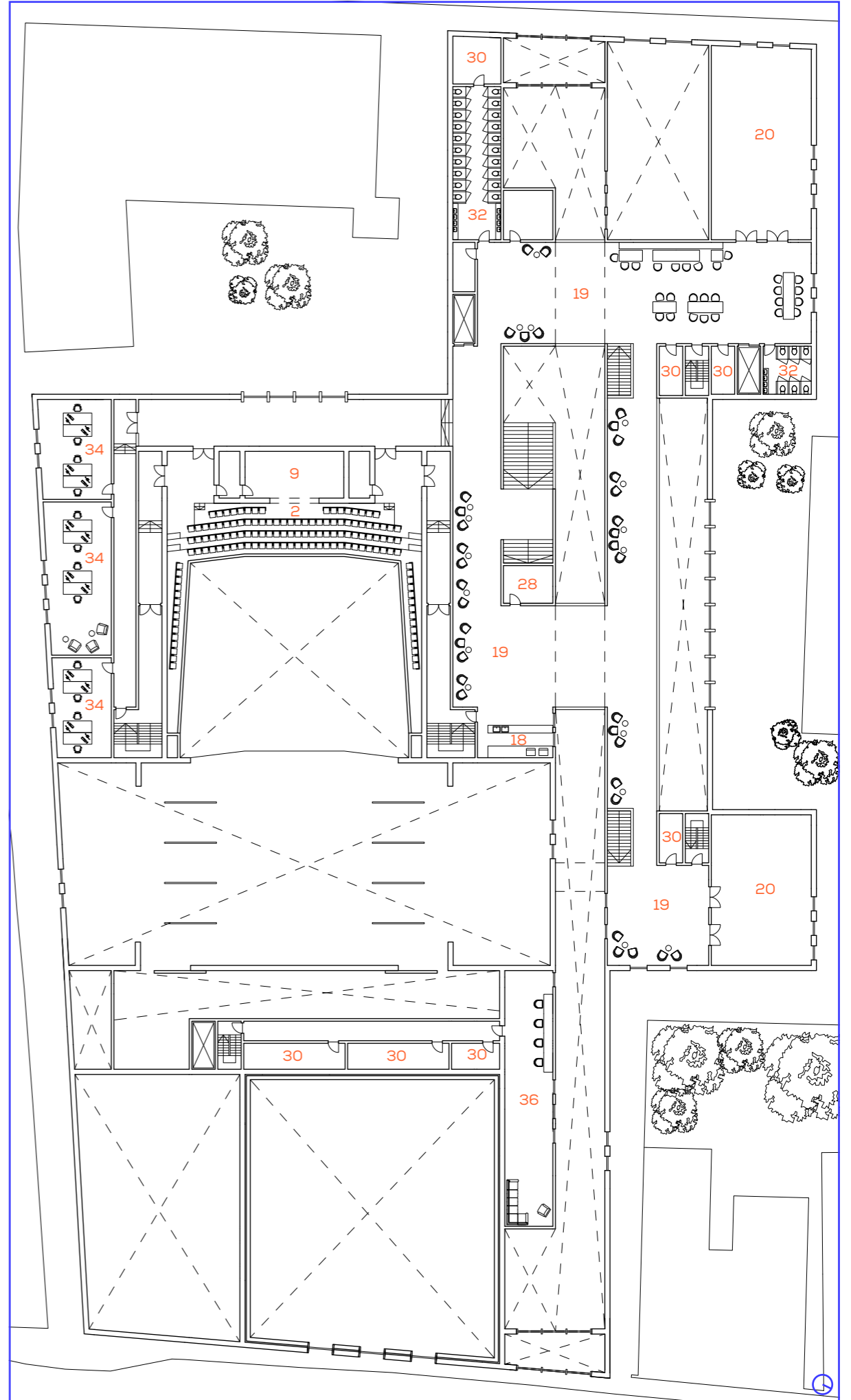


Figure 14. Floorplan second floor drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400

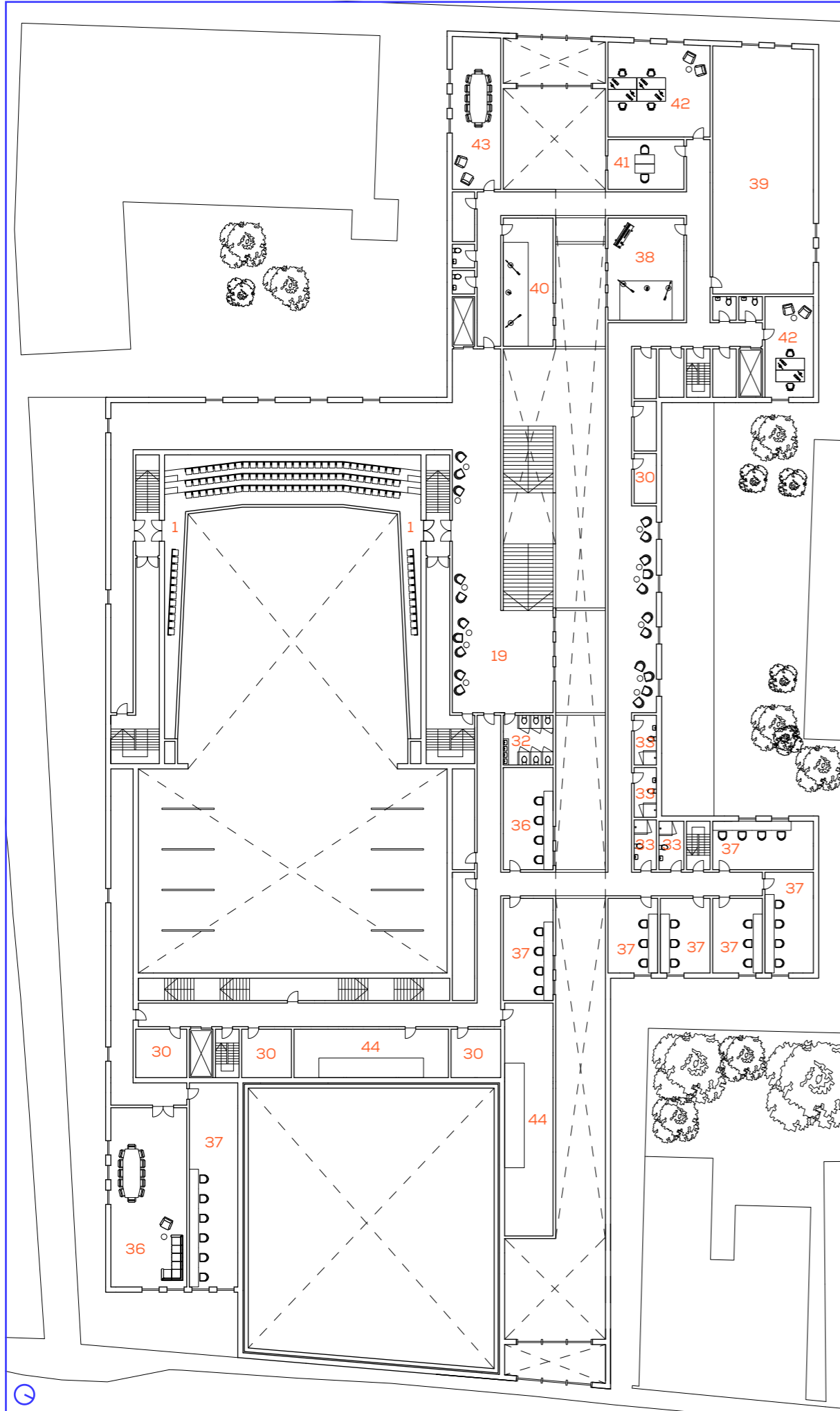
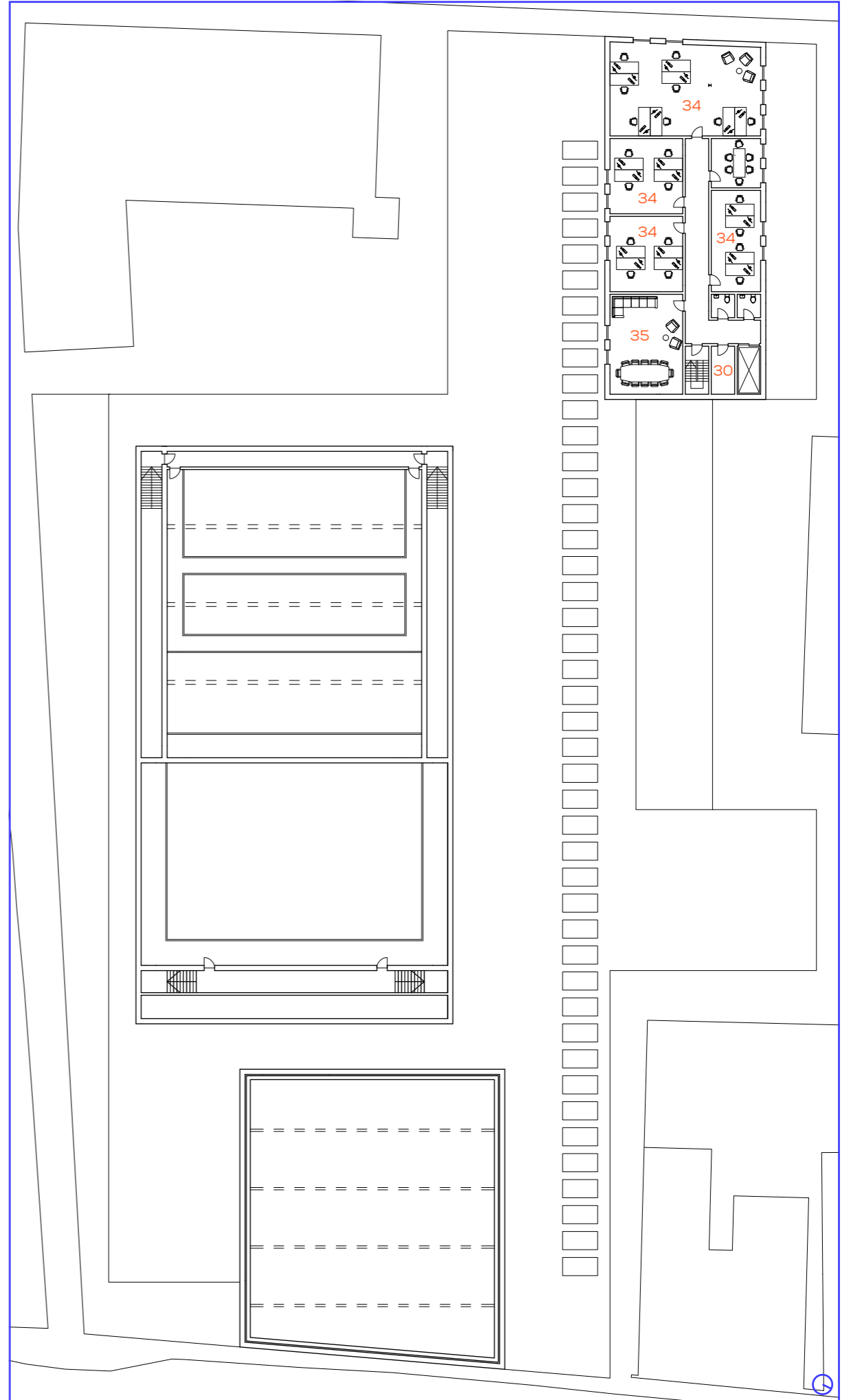


Figure 15. Floorplan third floor drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400



LEGEND

- 1. Main Auditorium
- 2. Balcony
- 3. Stage
- 4. Side Stage
- 5. Under Stage
- 6. Orchastra Pit
- 7. Chair Storage
- 8. Technical Office
- 9. Technical Room
- 10. Loading / Unloading
- 11. Parking Trucks
- 12. Stage Storage
- 13. Technical Workshop
- 14. Workshop Cupboard
- 15. Small Auditorium
- 16. Entrance Hall
- 17. Theatre Cafe
- 18. Bar
- 19. Foyer
- 20. Foyer / Cultural Space
- 21. Information desk
- 22. Cloakroom
- 23. Reception
- 24. Restaurant
- 25. Kitchen
- 26. Washing area
- 27. Cooling area
- 28. Catering Storage
- 29. Foyer Storage
- 30. Extra Storage
- 31. Facilities Workshop
- 32. Toilets
- 33. Showers
- 34. Office
- 35. Staff Room
- 36. Artist Room
- 37. Dressing Room
- 38. Band Studio
- 39. Dance Studio
- 40. Vocal Studio
- 41. Recording Studio
- 42. Cultural Working Space
- 43. Meeting Room
- 44. Installation Room

Figure 16. Section B, cross section drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400

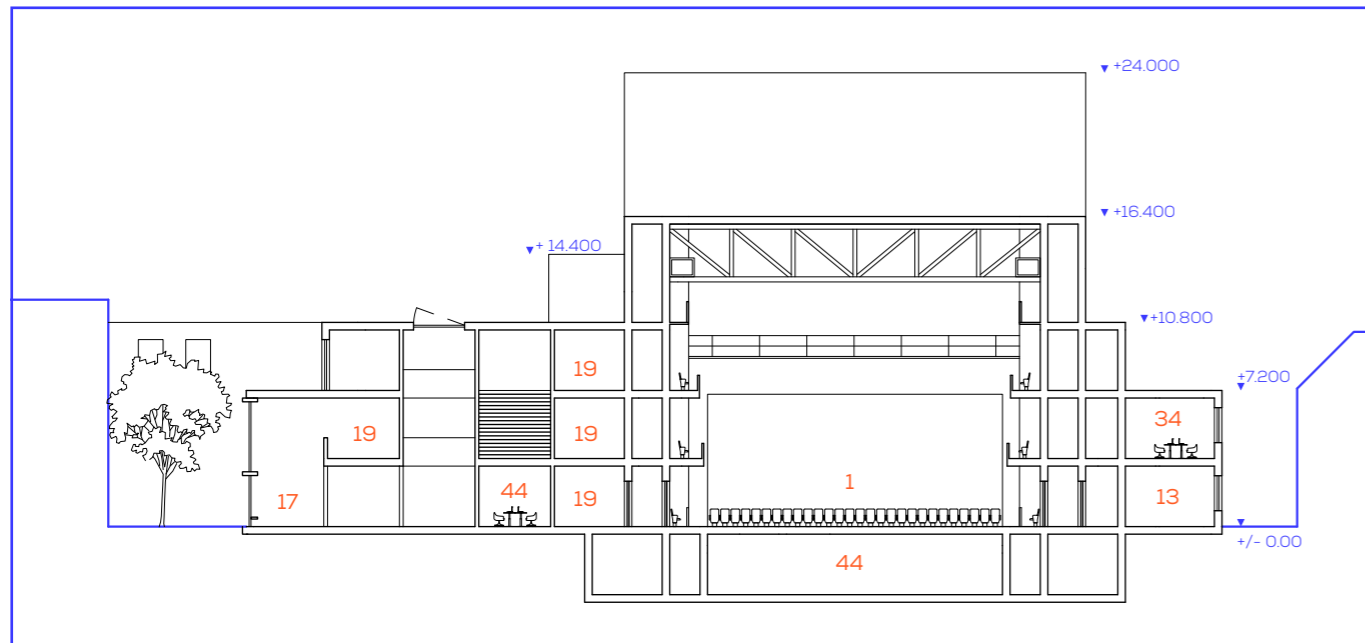
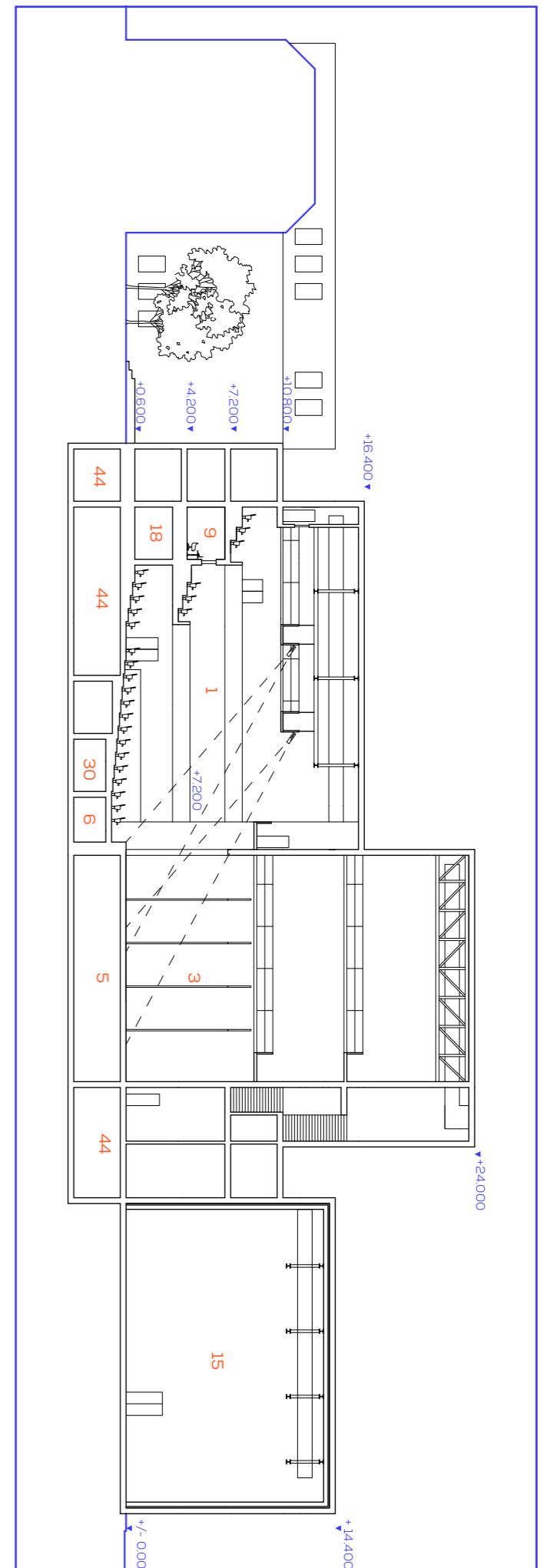


Figure 17. Section A, long section drawn on scale 1:200, scaled to 1:400



The façade along the Brabantse Turfmarkt is one of the most important façades of the building and represents the entrance to De Passage. Figure 18 presents the façade elevation along the Brabantse Turfmarkt, which also borders the smaller theatre hall. The elevation shows three large window openings incorporated into the small theatre hall. Through these openings, the theatre visually opens itself towards the canal.

As a result, not only theatre visitors are able to observe what takes place inside the hall, but passersby can also catch glimpses of performances and activities. Interested pedestrians may even sit within the deep window recesses of one of the three openings. The depth of these window recesses is illustrated more clearly in the 1:5 detail visible on figure 20. Theatre audiences can also look out onto Delft's canals during performances. At the same time, the windows can be darkened using panels, allowing the theatre hall to function as a black box when necessary. Artists are also provided views of the canal, as the artists' room is located behind two of the windows visible on the left side of the façade at second-floor level.

The passage forms one of the most important spaces within the theatre building and strives to create an open and accessible character. To reinforce this openness, a large, glazed entrance has been designed, visible in Figure 19. Due to the large glass elements, the entrance becomes immediately visible and illuminates the Delft canals during the evening.

The entrance consists of two consecutive sets of doors (shown in Figure 19), which not only contribute to climate control requirements within the building but also influence the visitor experience. Visitors experience a theatrical transition, as if moving through a lock or threshold. This sequence of transitions reappears multiple times before entering the theatre hall. In this sense, the entrance to De Passage marks both the beginning and the conclusion of the theatrical experience when visitors enter and leave the building.

Figure 18: Elevation Brabantse Turfmarkt



Figure 19. Facade fragment drawn on scale 1:20, scaled to 1:100

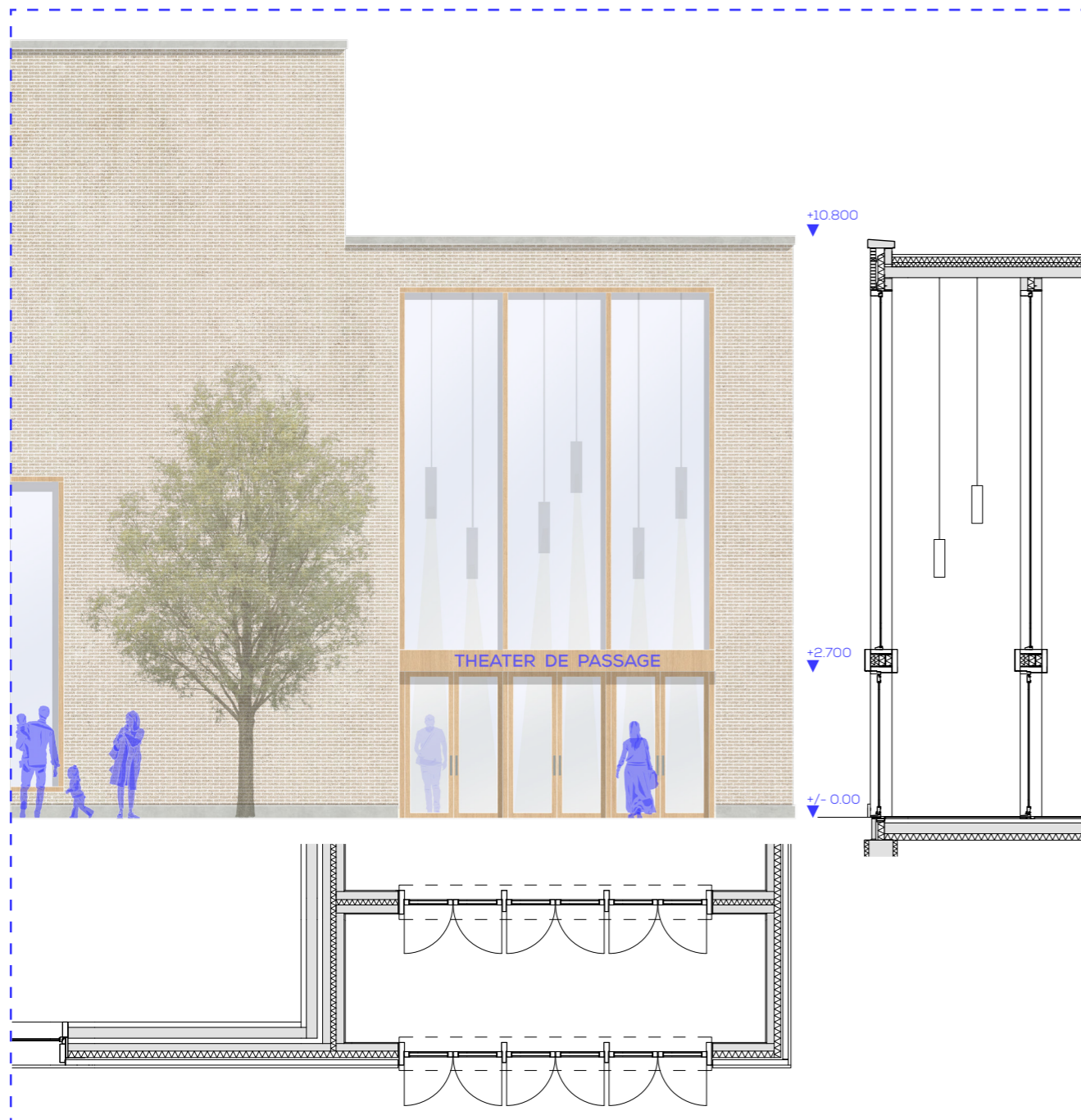
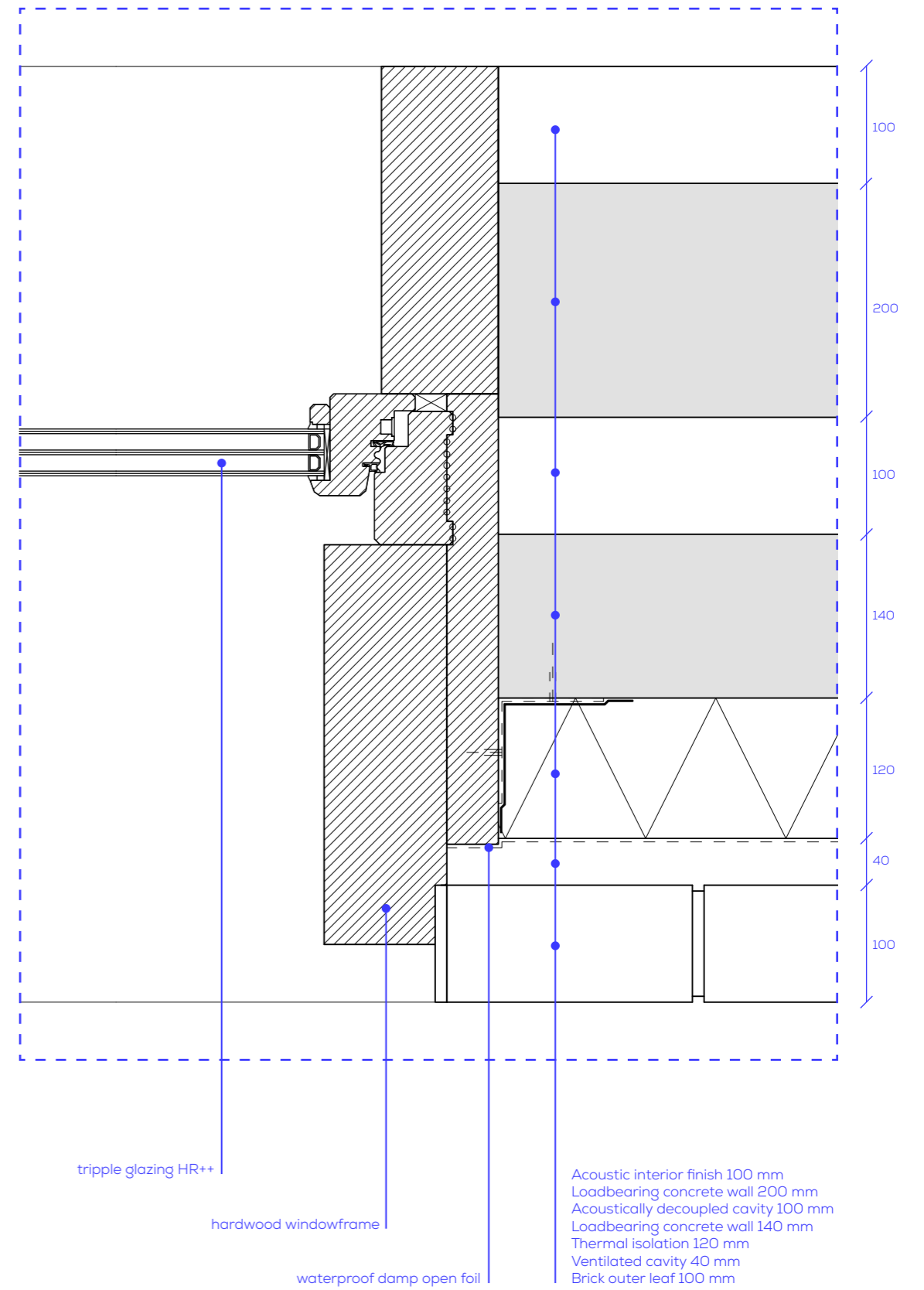


Figure 20. Horizontal detail of window, scale 1:5



ENCOUNTER & CONNECTION

Within the theatre, encounter and connection are central. The first form of encounter will take place in the passage. The passage is the route visitors use to move through the building (figure 46 in the appendix, p. 63). Visitors will also be able to feel connected to the performers in the passage. By using walkways in the passage, the front of house is connected to the back of house. Artists and staff will use these walkways to move from one side of the passage to the other. As a result, visitors can already experience a brief encounter and feel a sense of connection with the performers when they use the walkway. This experience is visualised in image ...

There is also a view from the passage onto the side stages of the main auditorium, through small window openings in the wall of the side stage. Both from the passage and from the Gasthuissteeg there is visibility into the side stage (figure 12). This opens up the mysterious backstage side of the theatre, making it possible for passers-by and visitors to observe activities on the side stage and thereby feel a stronger connection with the theatre.

Encounter and connection are also central in one of the most important spaces of the theatre: the main auditorium. The main hall accommodates 804 visitors. The audience will be distributed across three levels (figure 12 to 14). Due to the placement of the balconies, it is possible for the audience to see one another and experience a sense of connection before the performance begins. During the show, the audience will also feel connected to the performer because the stage extends into the auditorium, reducing the distance between performer and audience.

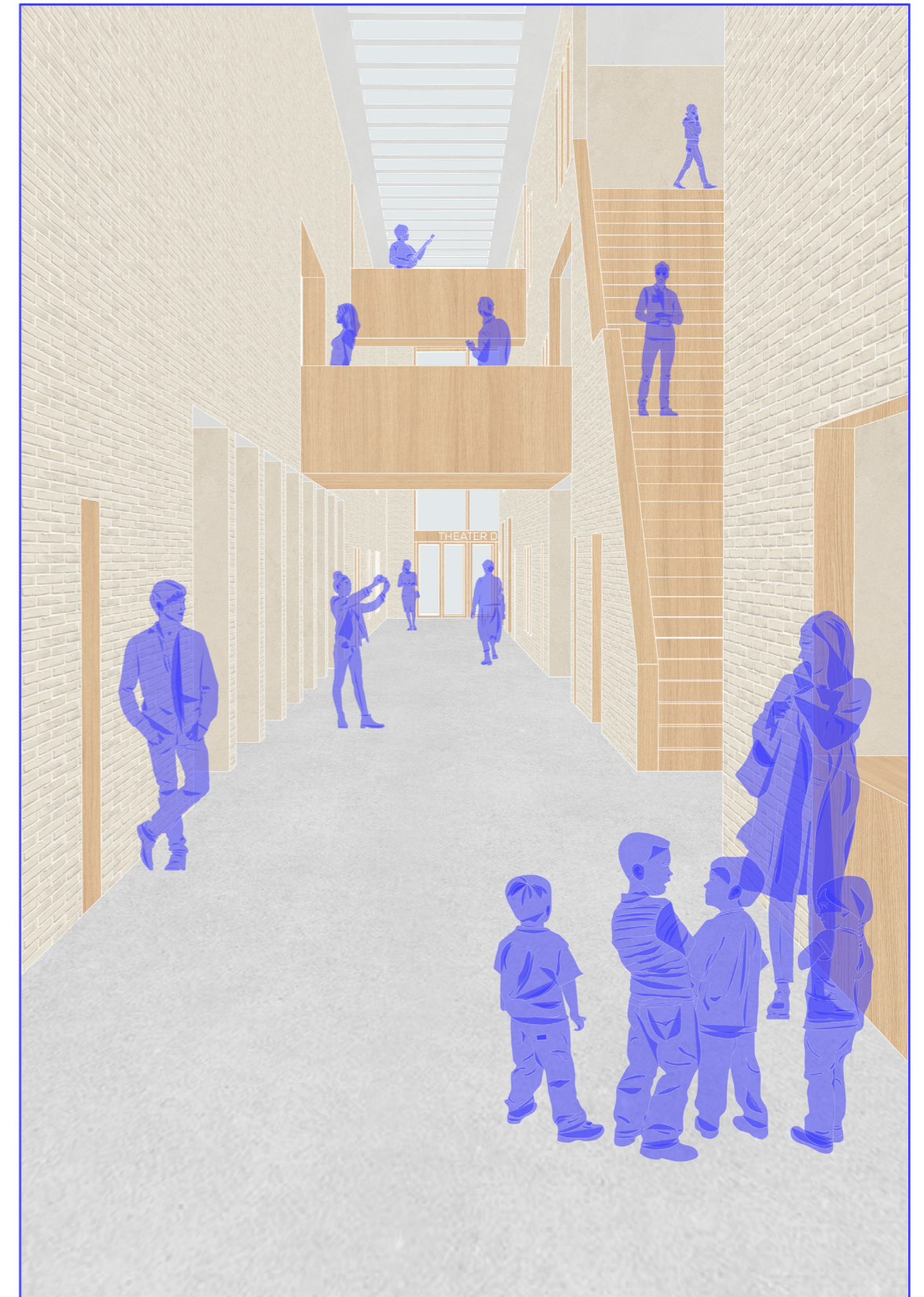


Figure 21. Image of passage with walking bridges

THEATRE & CULTURAL ANCHOR

For the realization of the theatre of the future, the current cultural lab on Gasthuisplaats will be removed. However, the function of the cultural lab will be reintroduced within the theatre building. As shown in figure 22, studio spaces will be created on the second floor of the building. These will accommodate podcast recordings, band rehearsals, and singing/dance practice sessions. Office spaces will also be created for small companies in the cultural sector.

Figure 22 also shows the ground floor and first floor, where the flexible cultural spaces are clearly visible. These three spaces can open up and function as a foyer when large numbers of theatre visitors are present. However, they can also be closed off and provide space for other cultural activities, such as exhibitions, lectures, and workshops.

In this way, the design functions not only as a theatre building but also as a cultural anchor point within the city of Delft. The building will also remain lively and open throughout the day for visitors and participants in the various cultural events taking place inside the building.

LEGEND

- Culture lab studios
- Flexible cultural space

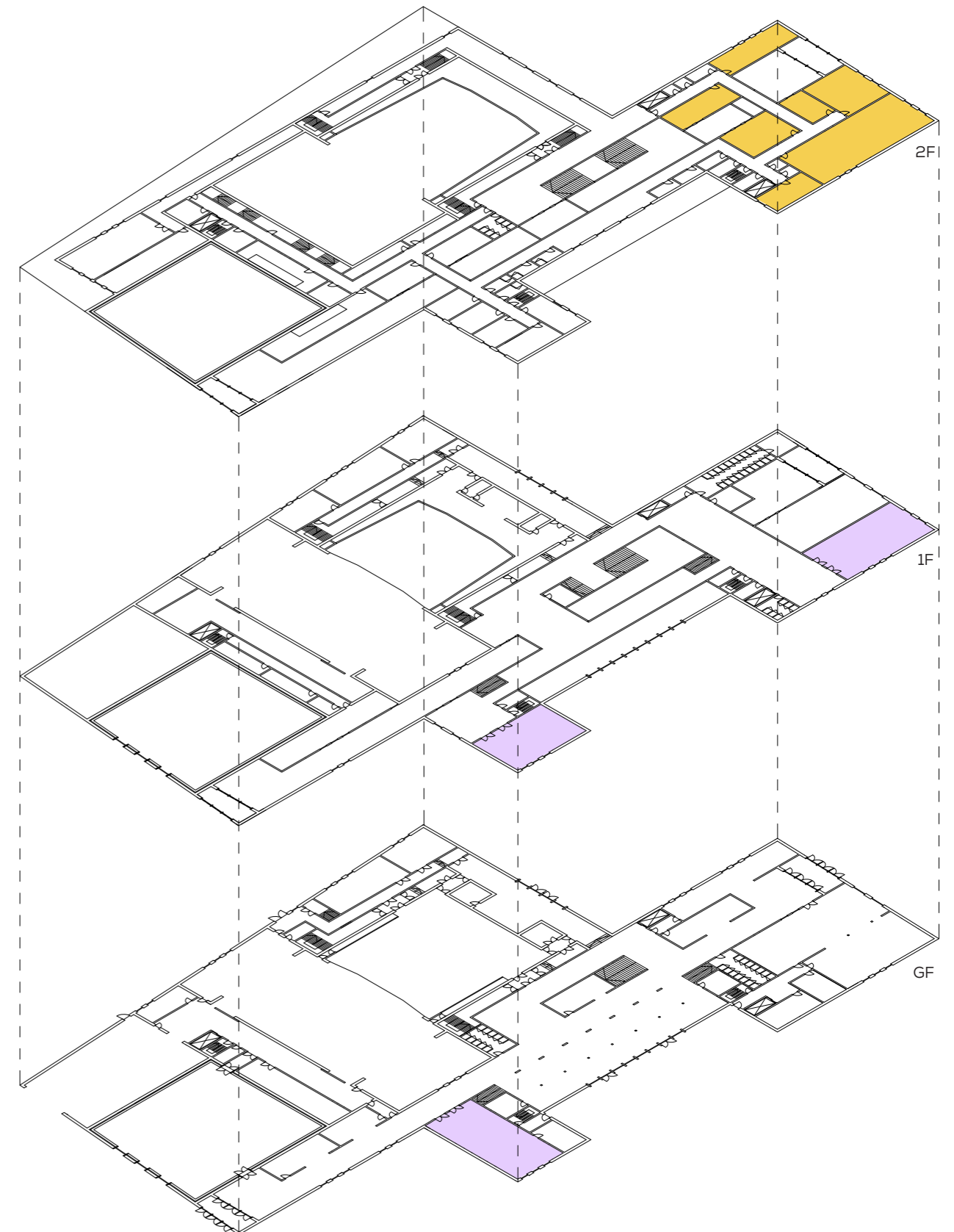


Figure 22. Diagrammatic axonometric floorplans of flexible cultural space and culture lab

Part 4.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Figure 23. Jade Melis and Sam de Vocht during a review session



CONCLUSION

This graduation project demonstrates how the theatre building of the future can be designed within the city of Delft. Specifically, the project focuses on designing a large theatre building within a small-scale city, in which the theatre adapts to its surroundings while simultaneously opening up to the city and functioning as a cultural anchor point within Delft. The central design question was: *How can a large theatre be designed within the small-scale city of Delft in a way that adapts to and opens up to its surroundings and functions as a cultural anchor point?*

One of the key findings of the research is that the urban context is decisive for the form and massing of the theatre building. By adapting to its surroundings, the building works in dialogue with the city and does not function as an autonomous object. The form of the building is determined by following the lines of the canals, alleys, and scale relationships of the surrounding buildings around Gasthuisplaats. Through an extensive contextual analysis of the city of Delft, a clear pattern of alleyways emerged. This pattern has been reinterpreted within the theatre building in the form of a passage. The passage not only functions as the main route for visitors but also creates a clear separation between the front of house and back of house within the theatre. This clear division demonstrates that it is possible to open up the public areas of the theatre building during the day, as the other side of the passage can be closed off from the public side. In this way, the theatre building can maintain an active cultural role within the city throughout the entire day.

Encounter and connection are also key concepts within the design. Small-scale encounters are facilitated in the passage between visitors, performers, and staff. The balconies in the auditorium also contribute to a collective experience, while simultaneously reducing the distance between audience and performer. In addition, the mysterious backstage world is subtly revealed to visitors, blurring the boundaries of the theatrical environment and attracting a broader audience.

Finally, the design shows that a future theatre does not only need to focus on creating a place where performance is central, but rather a place where multiple cultural activities can take place simultaneously. By incorporating various cultural spaces and studios within the theatre building, the theatre can function as a cultural anchor point within the city. As a result, the building will not only be active in the evening, but will function as an open and inclusive cultural building throughout the day.

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most important elements of this graduation project is the creation of an open and accessible theatre building. The passage functions as an open space during the day, and the public spaces along the passage are accessible to a wide audience. However, the ambition of creating such an open and accessible public building may also introduce tensions. For example, safety within the public building may be questioned when every visitor is welcome. In practice, the theatre building will need to find a balance between openness and accessibility in order to ensure safety.

In addition, it is notable that the passage provides access to the theatre from two entrances: one at Brabantse Turfmarkt and one at Kornmarkt. Because the building has two main entrances, it requires a reception desk and cloakroom on each side. This is not an ideal situation, as staff would need to always be present at both receptions and cloakrooms. This issue could be resolved by creating one central reception and cloakroom, although this would come at the expense of, for example, a central theatre café.

Furthermore, the function of the three flexible cultural spaces could be clarified in order to avoid confusion. Without a clearly defined function, vacancy could become a likely outcome. This would be a waste of large public spaces and is a phenomenon often seen in contemporary theatres. Therefore, a clear daily cultural function should be assigned to these three large flexible spaces in order to prevent vacancy and strengthen the cultural identity of the public building.

Despite these considerations, this graduation project demonstrates that theatres can be reinterpreted as public cultural buildings. By placing openness, integration, and connection at the centre, an alternative to the traditional closed theatre emerges.

REFLECTION

The design process in this graduation project was characterised by a continuous interplay and collaboration between design and research. Throughout the project, fieldwork, literature research, and design-based research were combined. The importance of physical models became increasingly clear during the process. Working across different scales led to a better understanding of the immense scale of the future theatre building. It was particularly valuable to gradually move from large-scale studies towards more detailed investigations.

In addition, the process was shaped by numerous feedback moments from professors, experts, and mentors. Every four weeks a review session took place, followed by continuous reflection. These feedback moments revealed that the passage is the spine of the design. In 2D drawings this passage was well developed, but for a long time it lacked a proper 3D elaboration, even though it is the most important spatial element of the project. The final phase of the process therefore focused strongly on developing this passage. This elaboration could have been introduced earlier in the process to provide a clearer understanding of this key experiential space.

The small auditorium is another space that lacks a certain degree of elaboration. A clearer definition of this space would improve the overall understanding of the building. However, the small auditorium also functions as a black box, meaning it is intentionally left open to interpretation to allow for a wide range of creative theatrical events.

Looking back, this graduation project has not only focused on designing the theatre of the future and its technical aspects, but also on gaining a deeper understanding of public buildings within an urban context. The process demonstrates how architecture is not only about designing a building, but also about connecting different scales such as city, building, and interior.

APPENDICES

These appendices show additional images of the “The Passage” design. Not only will extra impression images be displayed, but the technical aspects of the design will be discussed in greater depth. For instance, details are explained at a 1:5 scale. Climate and construction aspects will also be explained.



Figure 24. Impression of theater cafe

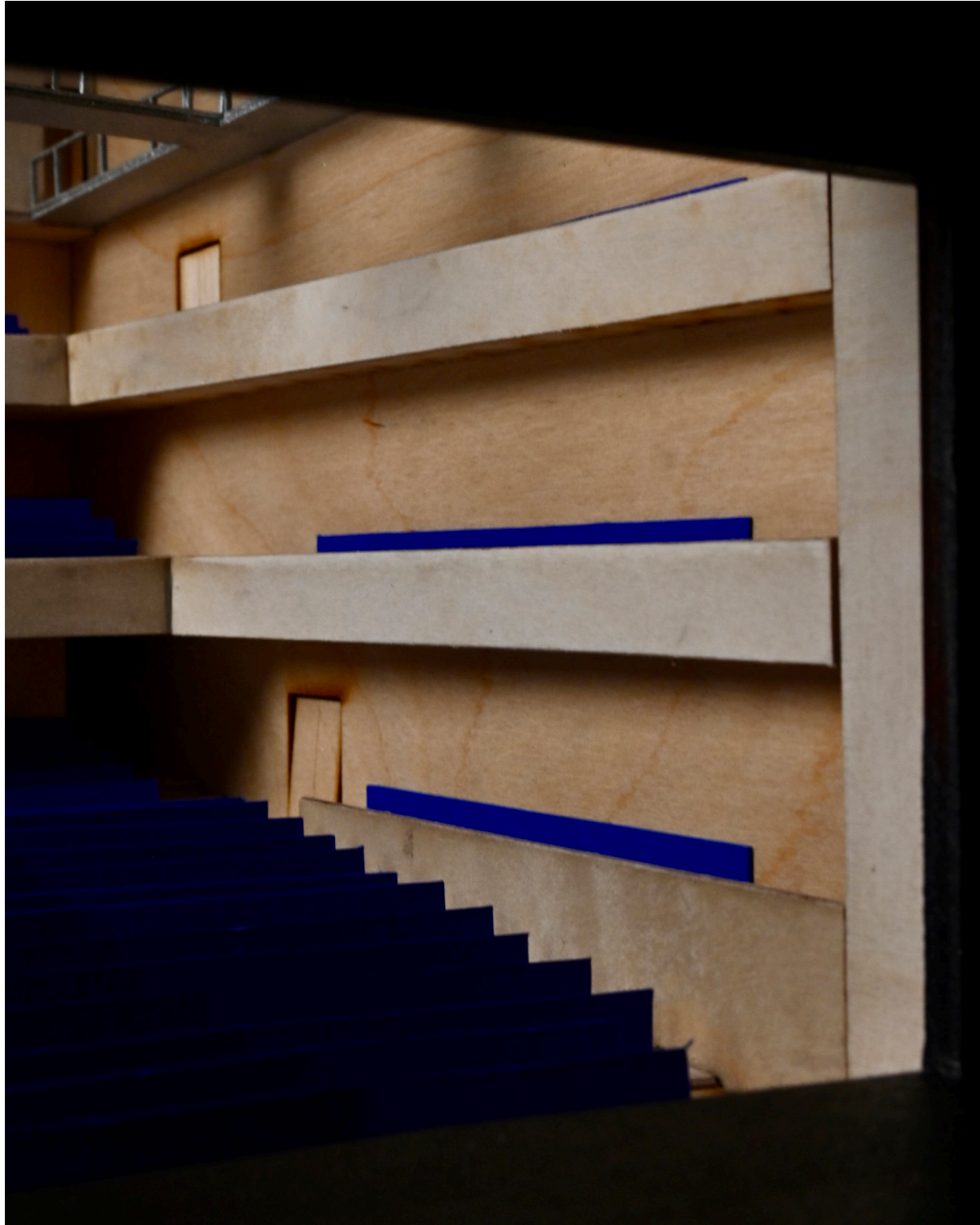


Figure 25. Photograph of model (1:100) showing the auditorium from stage

Figure 26. Photograph of model (1:100) showing flytower



Figure 27. Photograph of model (1:100) showing the small hall

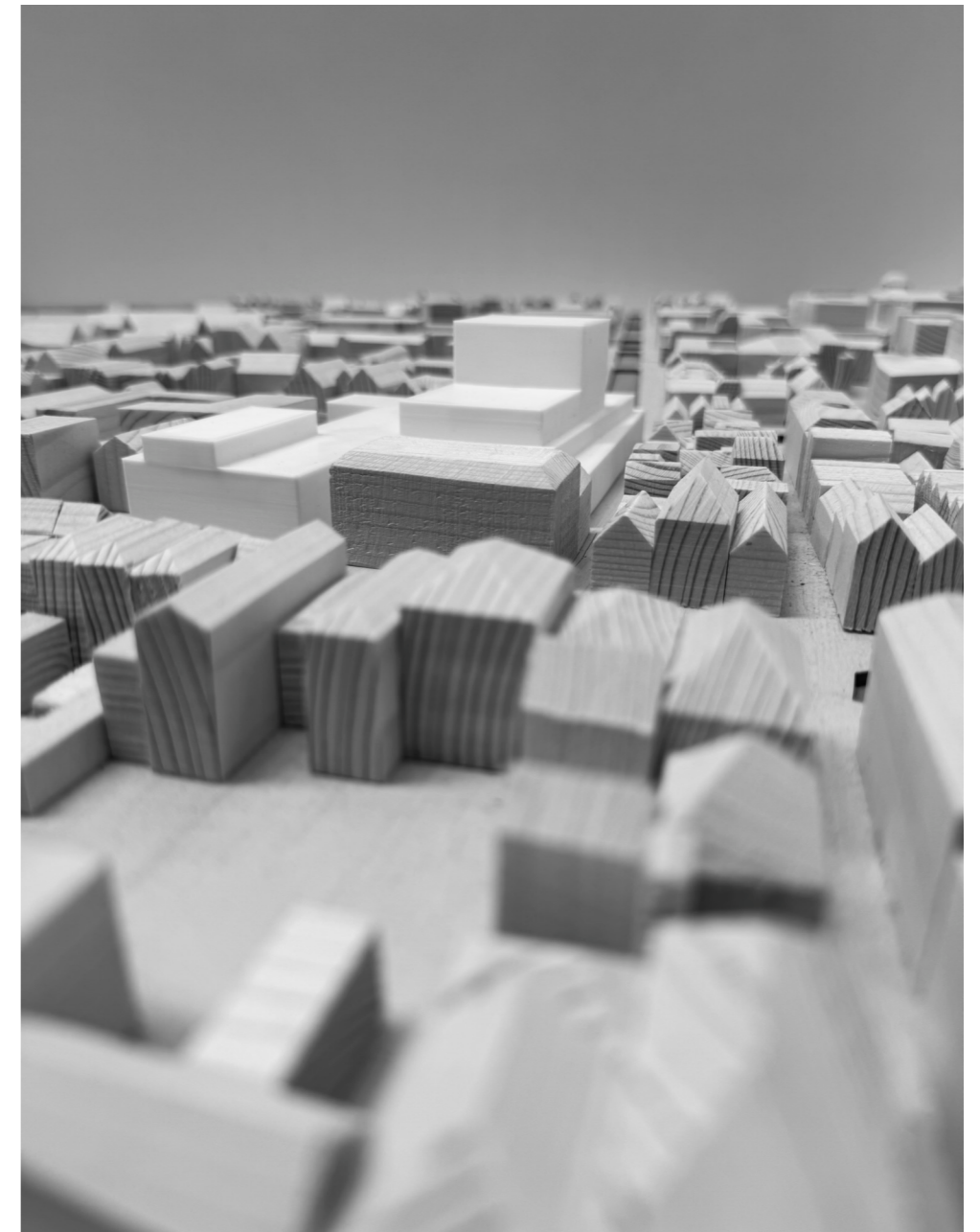


Figure 28. Photograph of model (1:50) showing the entrance of The Passage



Figure 29. Photograph of model (1:500) showing the facade on Brabantse Turfmarkt

Figure 30. Photograph of model (1:500) showing the height of the flytower



DETAIL STATEMENT

On the following pages, six different construction details are presented. These details represent the roof, foundation, and two façade conditions. For each situation, both a standard detail and an exceptional (or deviation) detail have been developed to illustrate how the design responds to varying architectural and technical requirements.

A notable characteristic of the detailing is the consistent use of a brick façade combined with timber window frames, which together define the tactile and material identity of the building.

Roof construction

Ballast layer 50 mm
 Tapered insulation 100 mm
 Insulation board 80 mm
 Hollow-core slab 200 mm

Foundation construction

Sandlayer
 Isolation 120 mm
 Isolated hollow coreslab floor 200 mm
 Dry screed floor
 Vapor barrier membrane
 Screed with floor heating
 Floor finish
 Cementitious floor finish

Facade construction

Brick slip 10 mm
 Loadbearing concrete wall 140 mm
 Thermal isolation 120 mm
 Ventilated cavity 40 mm
 Brick outer leaf 100 mm
 Concrete finish 50 mm

Figure 31. Horizontal detail, drawn on scale 1:20, scaled to 1:60

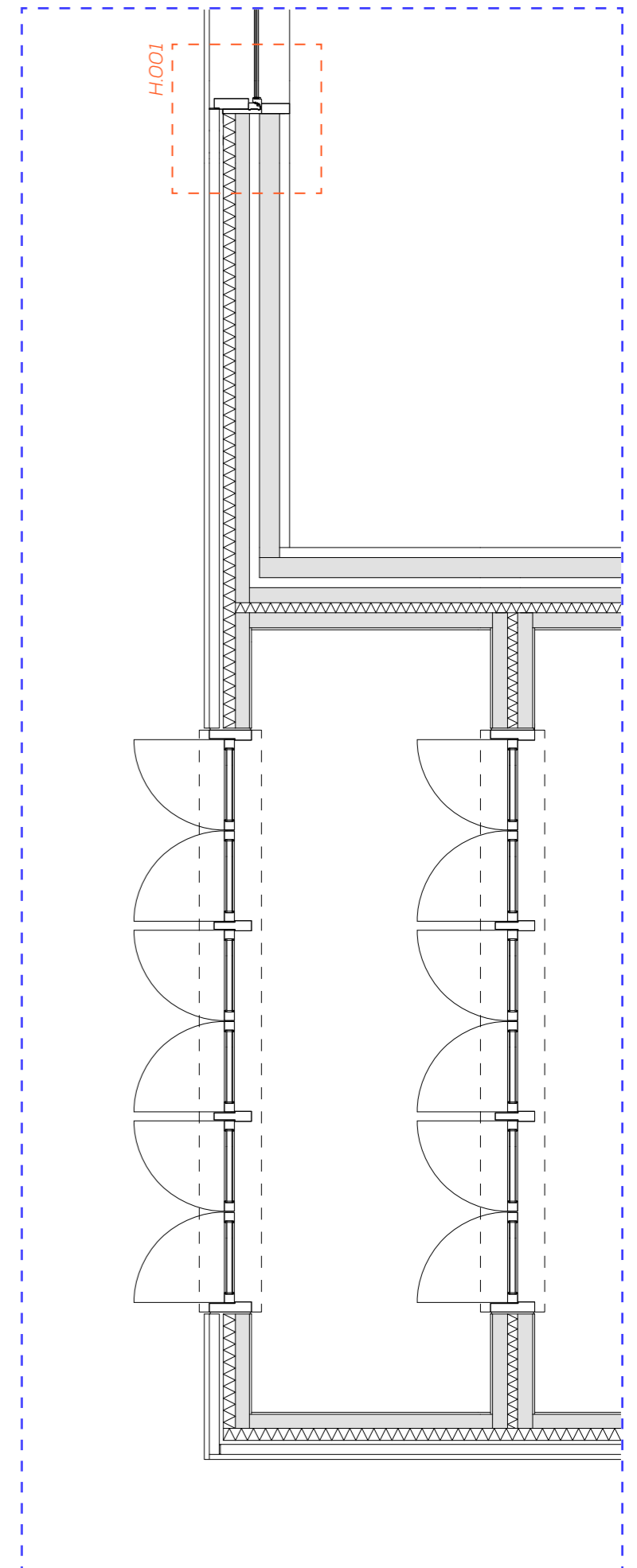


Figure 32. Vertical detail, drawn on scale 1:20, scaled to 1:50

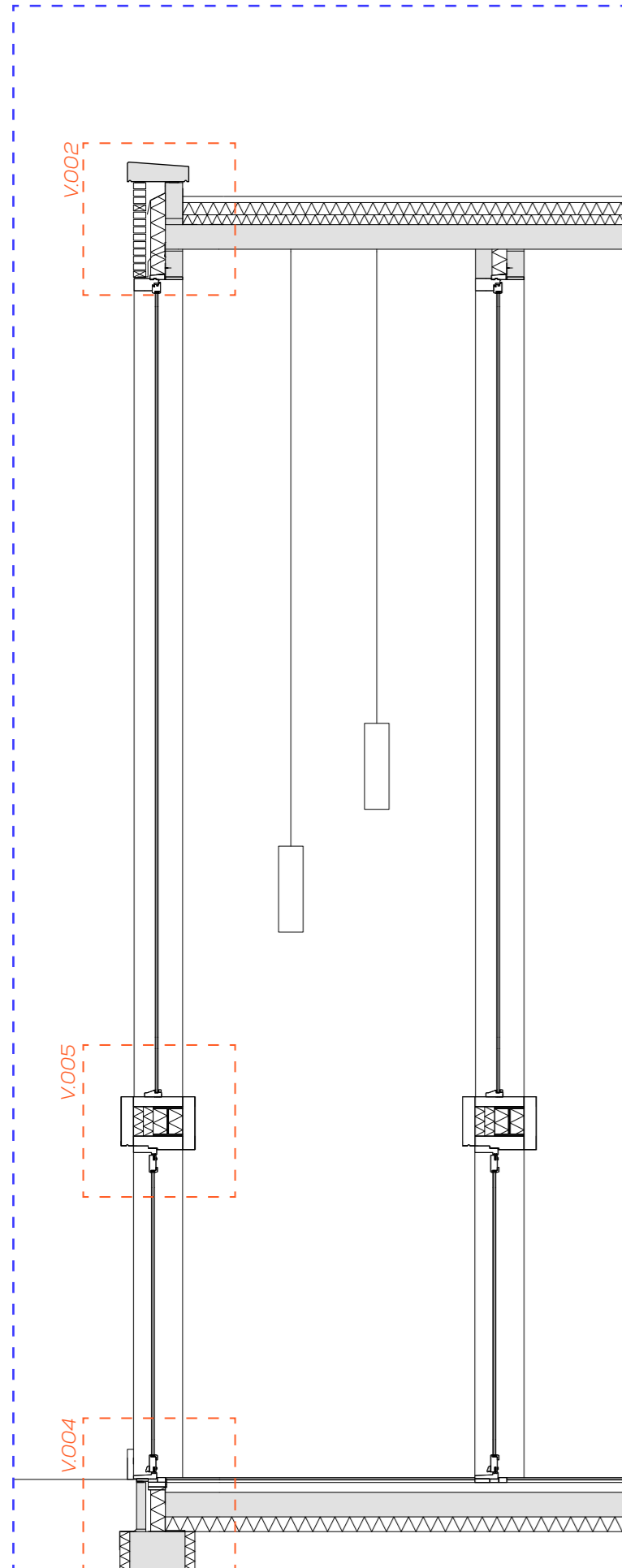


Figure 33. Vertical roof detail V.001, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10

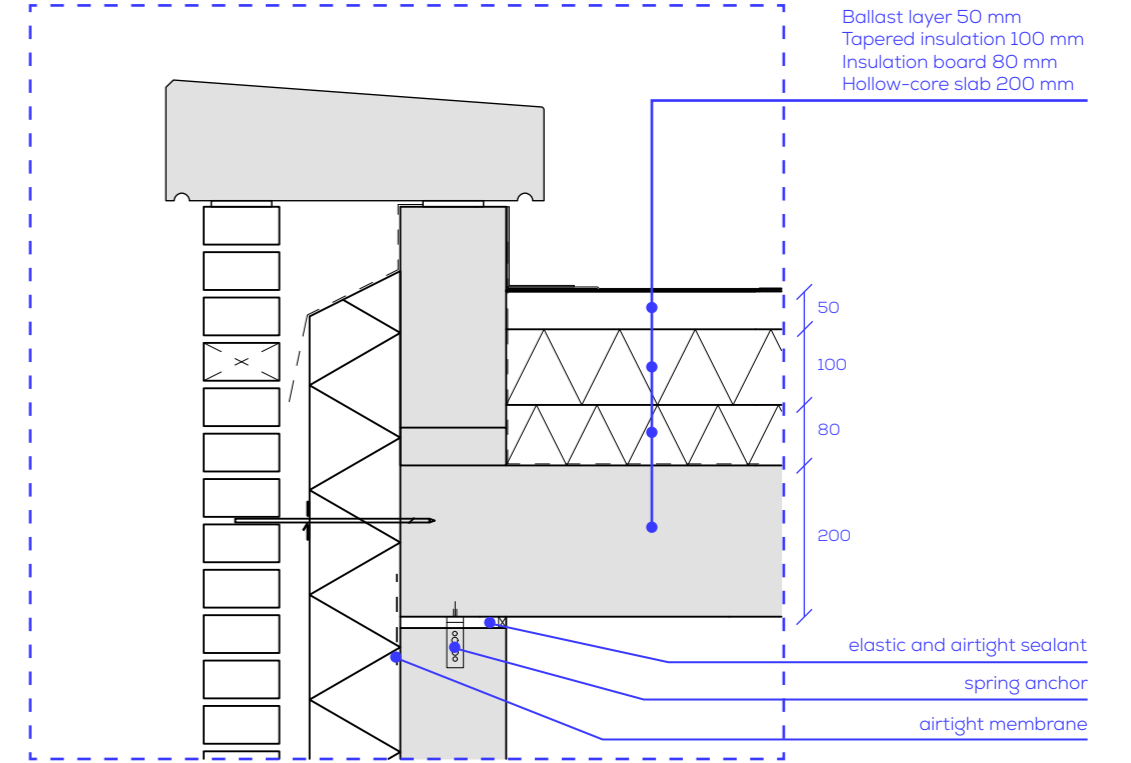


Figure 34. Vertical roof detail V.002, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10

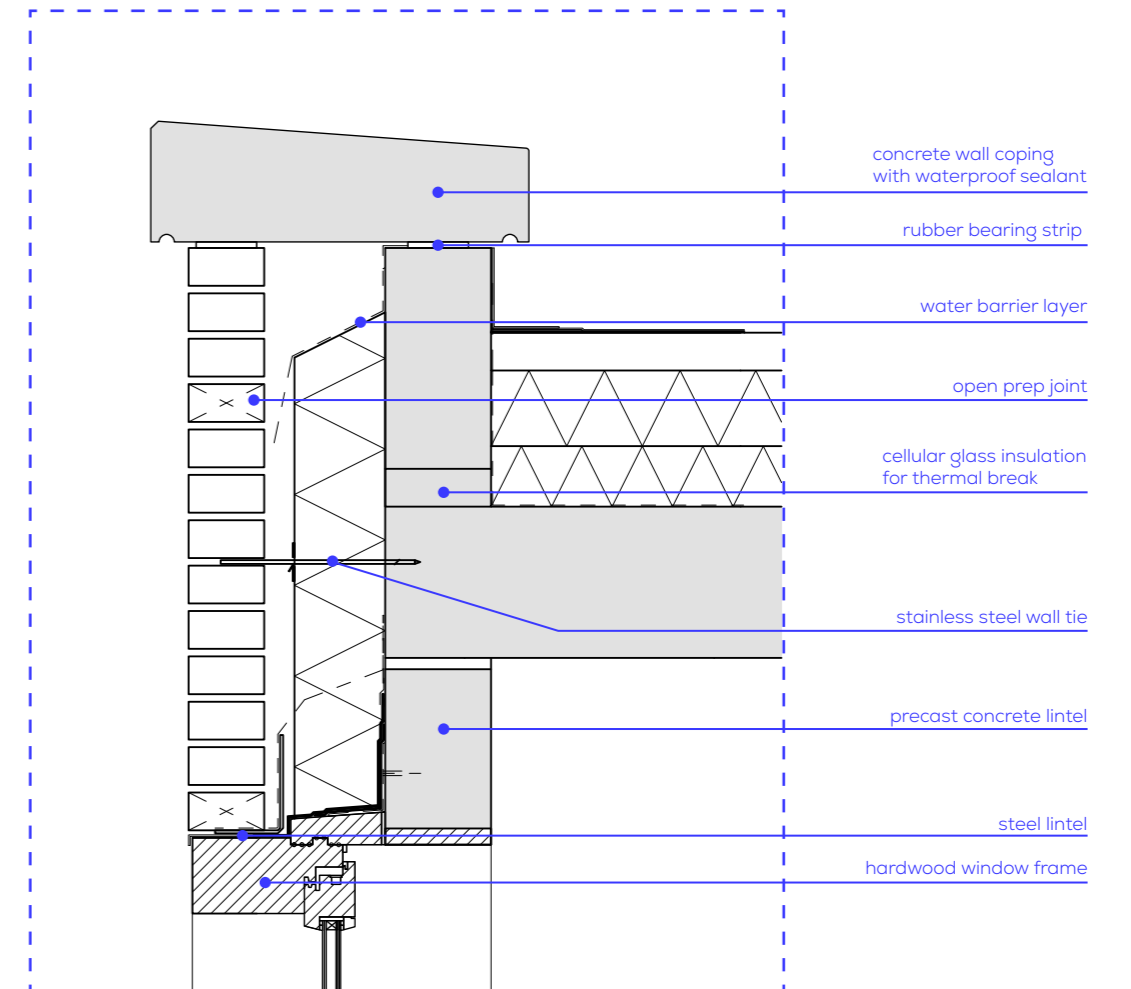


Figure 35. Vertical foundation detail V.003, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10

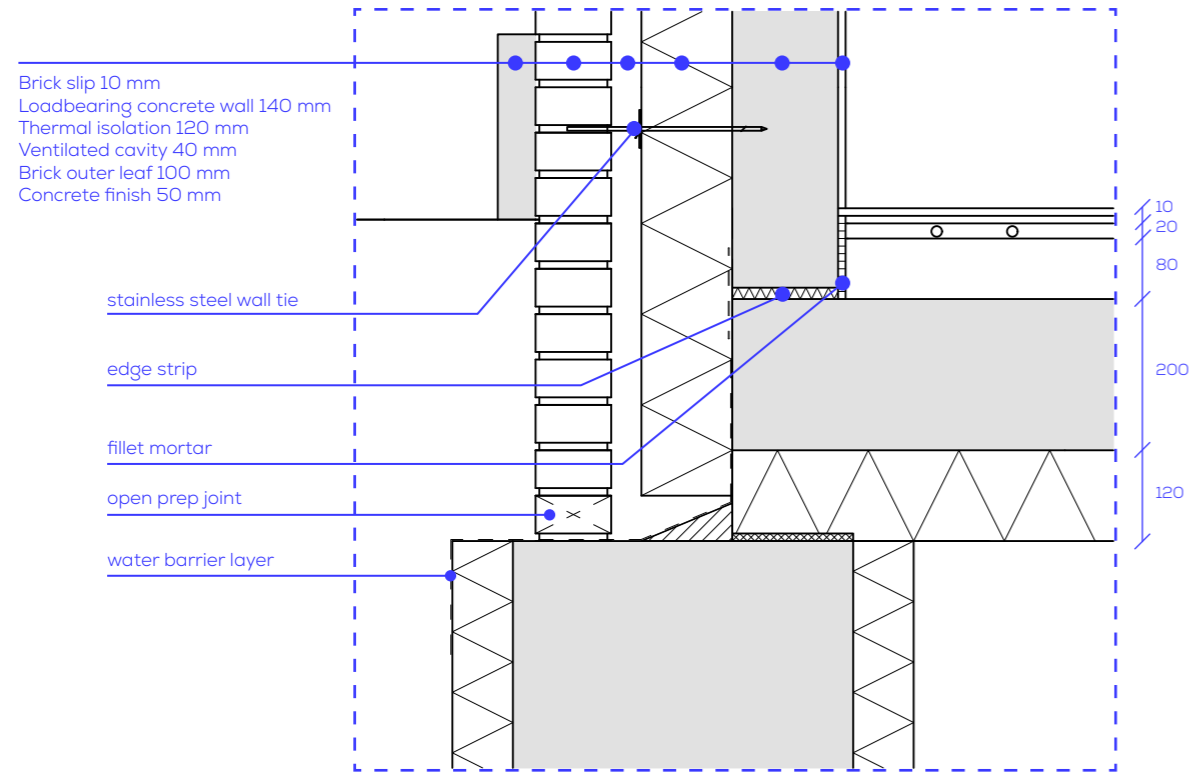


Figure 36. Vertical foundation detail V.004, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10

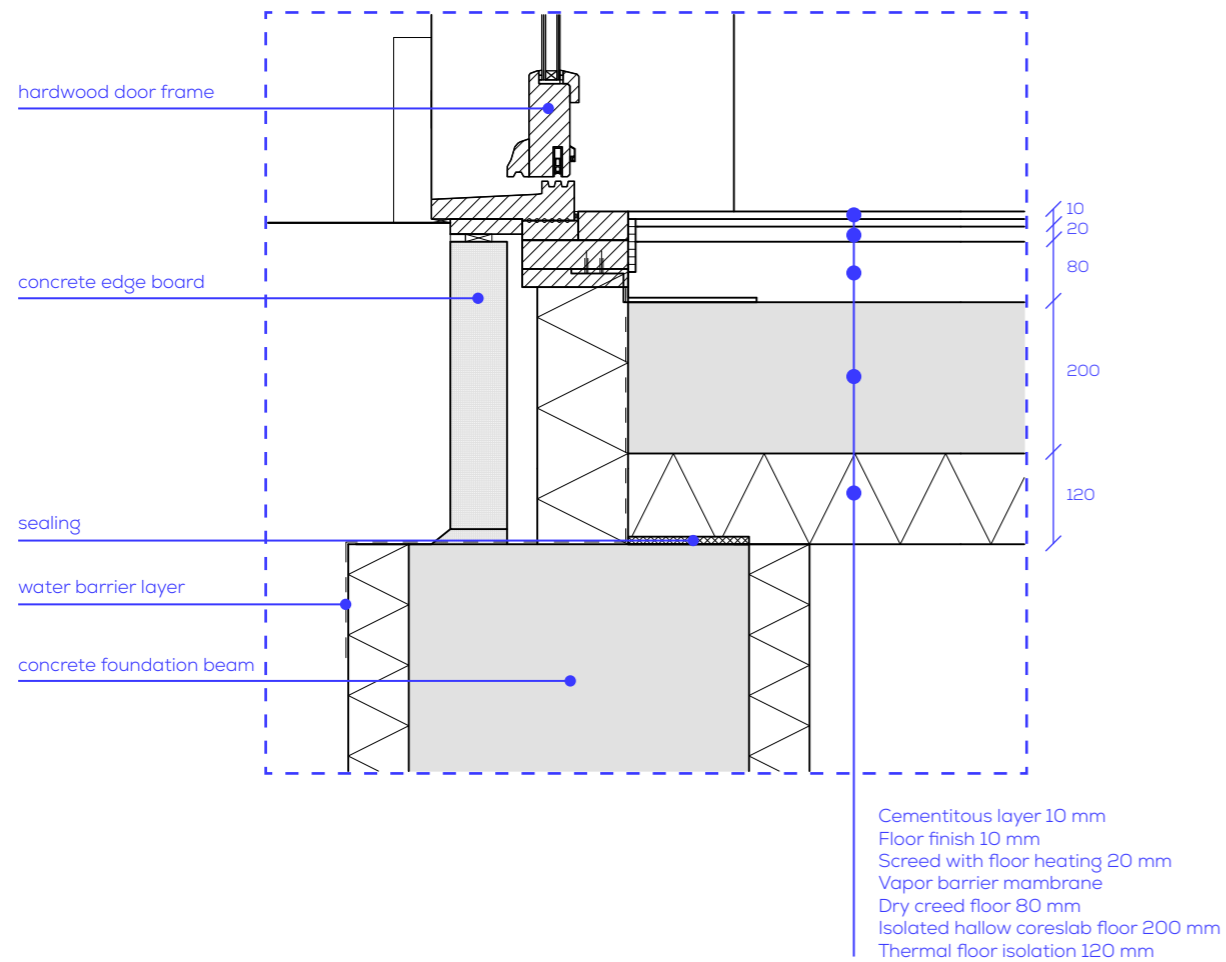


Figure 37. Vertical window detail V.005, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10

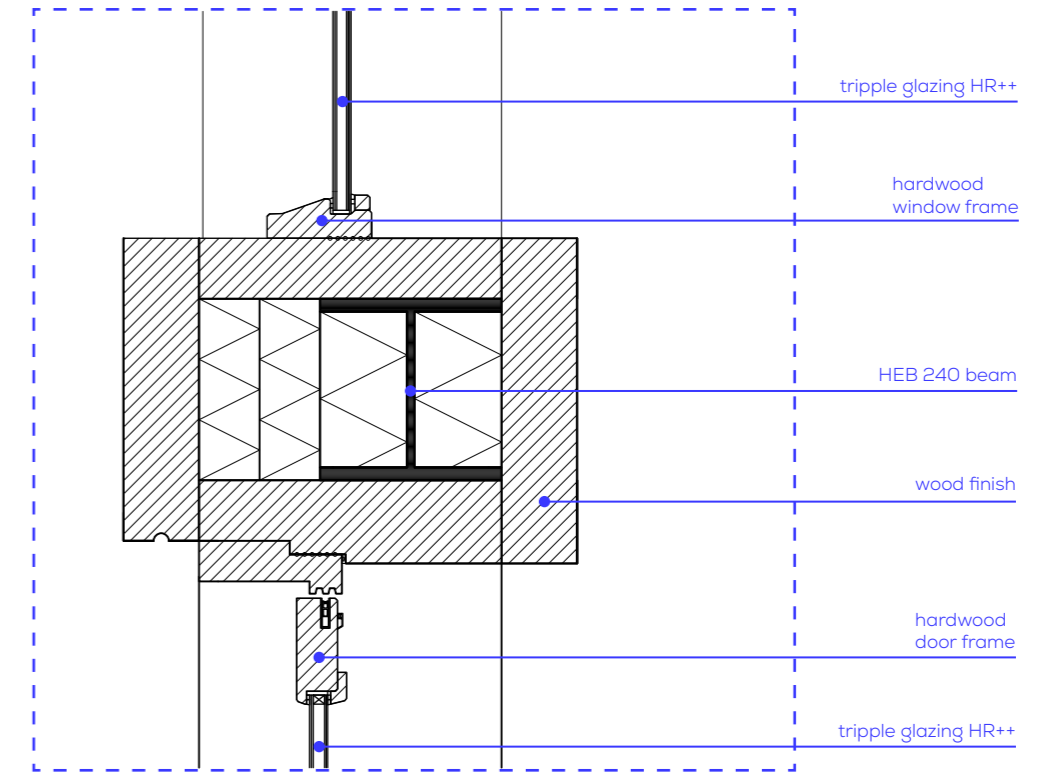
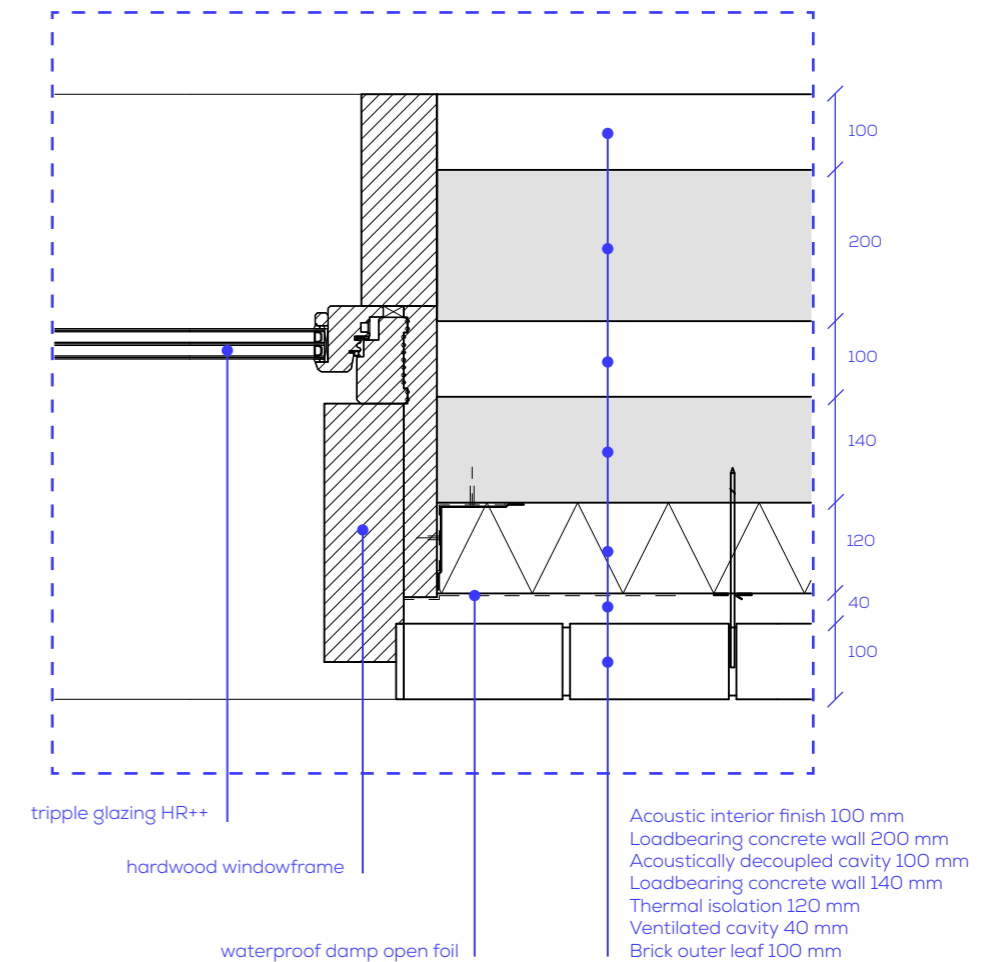


Figure 38. Horizontal window detail H.001, drawn on scale 1:5, scaled to 1:10



CONSTRUCTION STATEMENT

A defining feature of the building is its 4 x 4 metre structural grid. The entire building is organised according to this modular system, which is clearly expressed in the floor layouts, where structural spans are predominantly based on multiples of four.

Along each façade, load-bearing concrete shear walls provide primary structural stability. These structural walls also define and surround the main auditorium and small theatre hall, reinforcing their spatial autonomy within the building. Floor slabs predominantly span between these concrete shear walls. Where this is not possible, steel columns are introduced as secondary supports. Many of these columns are integrated within wall assemblies, allowing them to remain visually unobtrusive and preserving the clarity of the interior spaces.

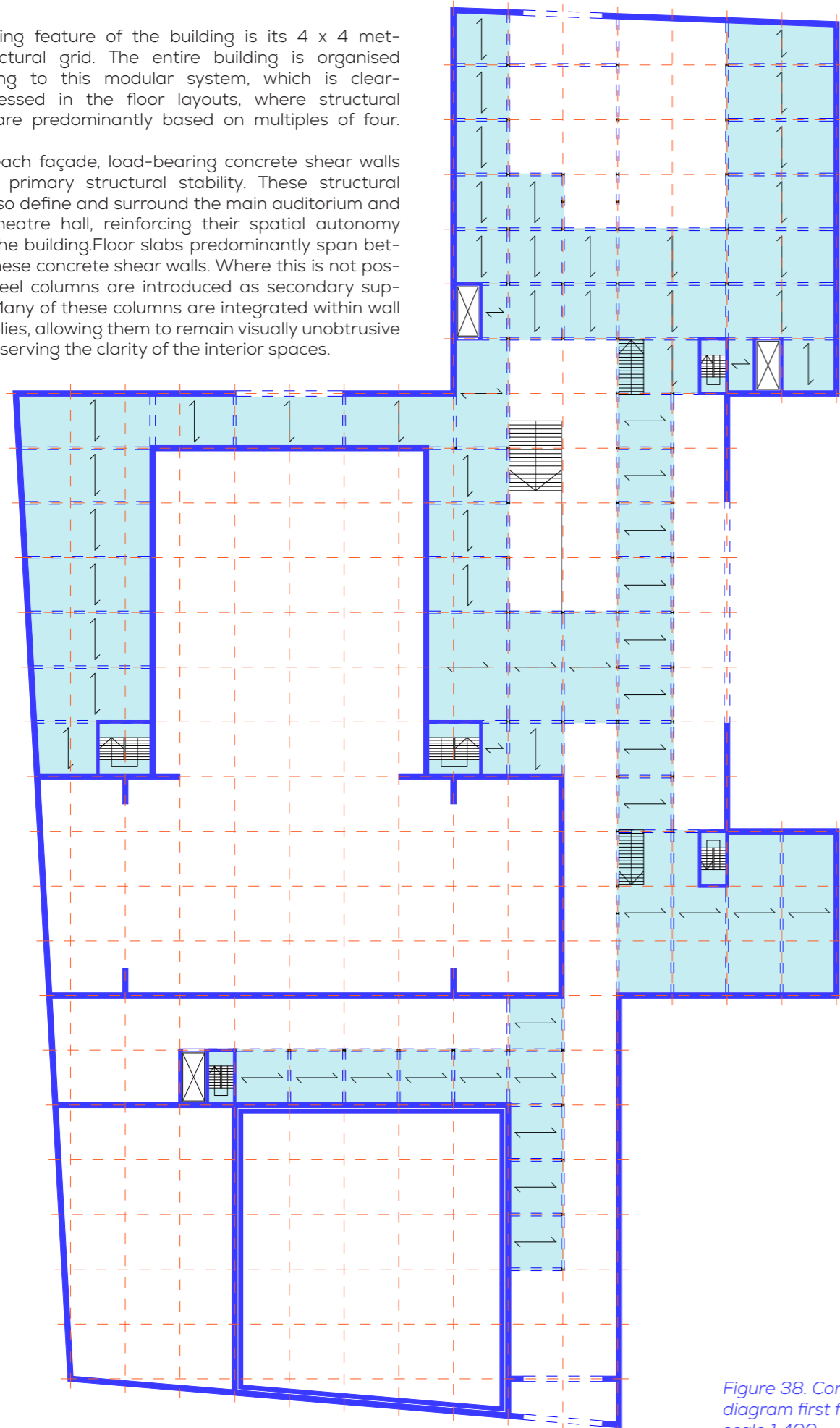


Figure 38. Construction diagram first floor, scale 1:400

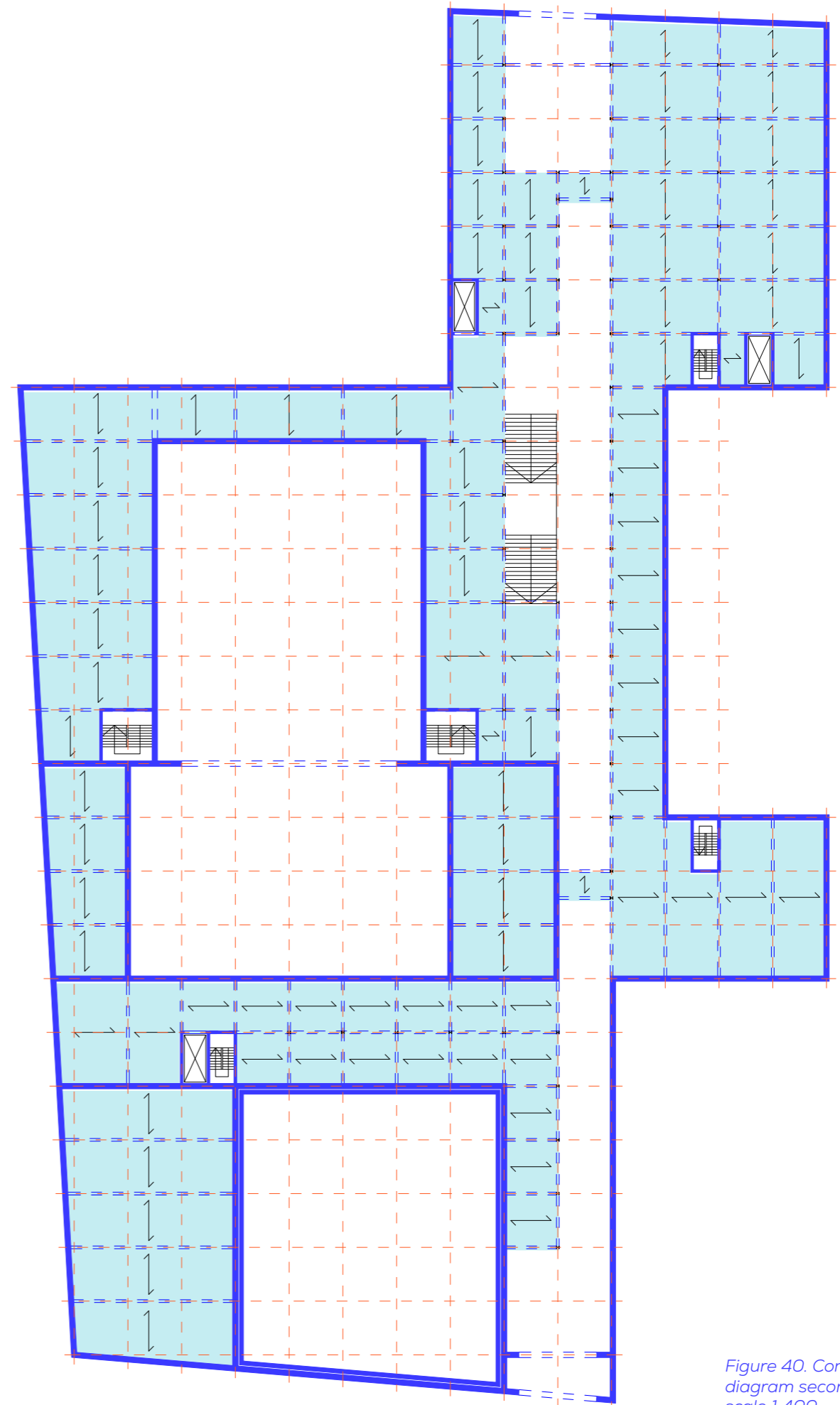


Figure 40. Construction diagram second floor, scale 1:400

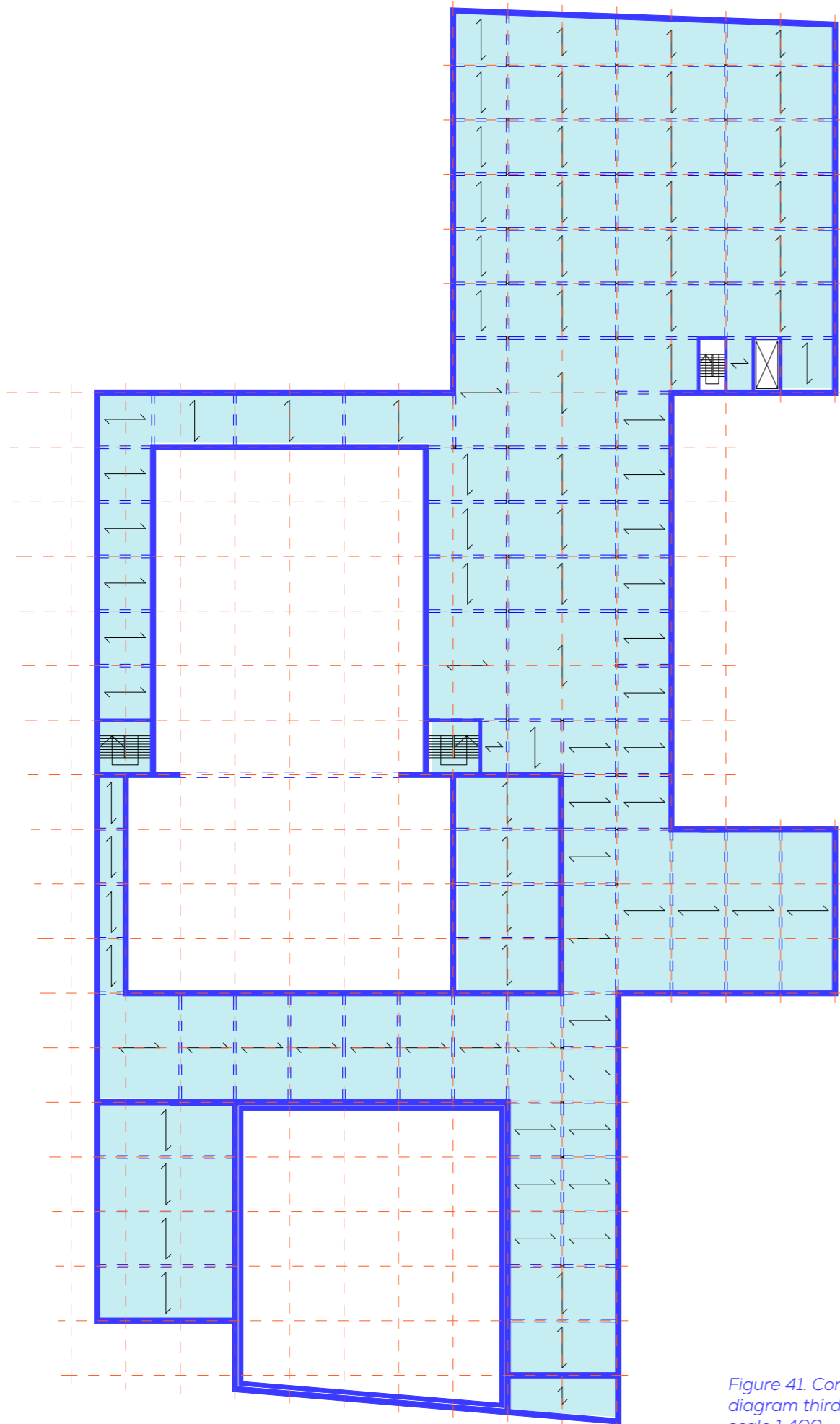


Figure 41. Construction diagram third floor, scale 1:400

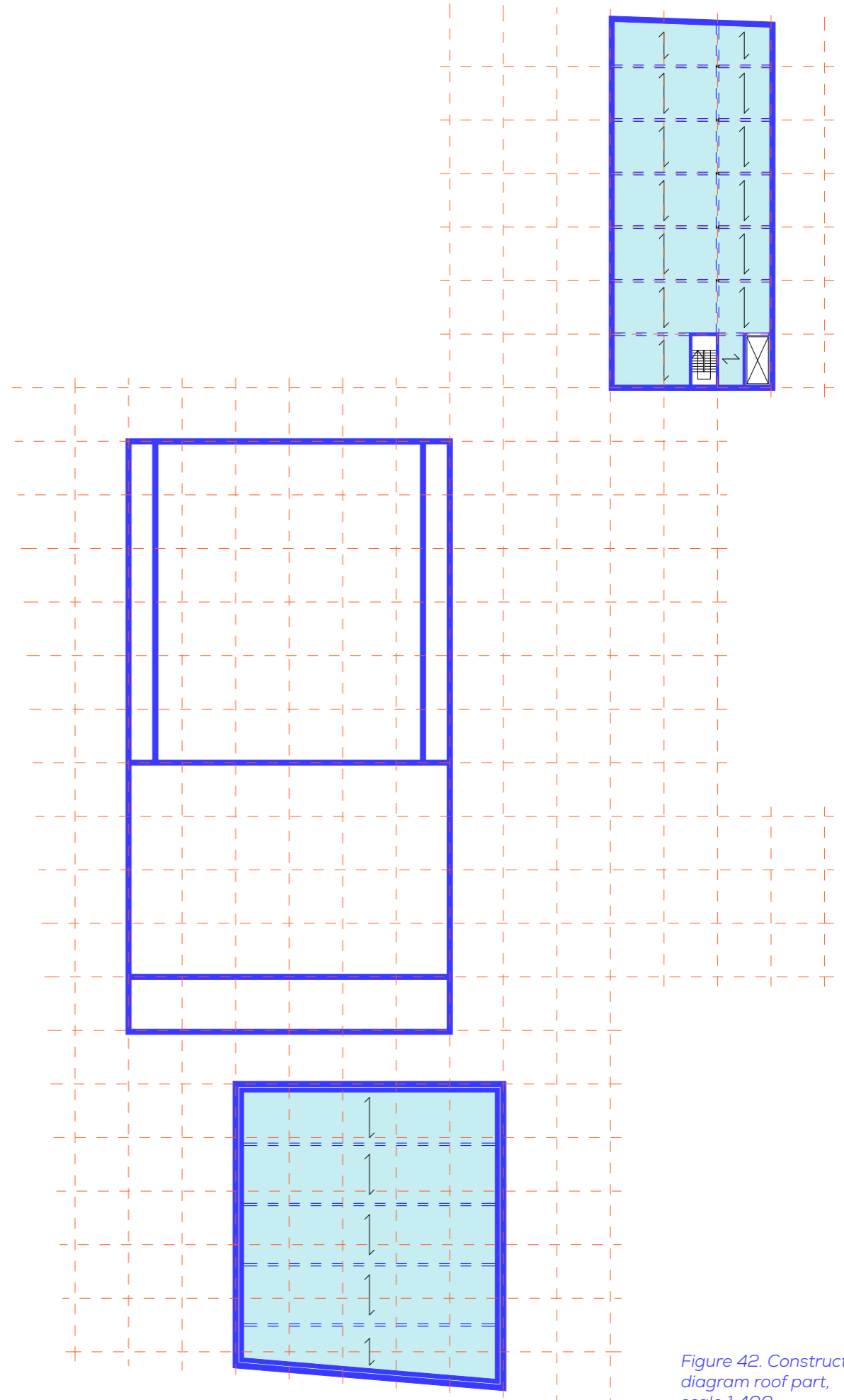


Figure 42. Construction diagram roof part, scale 1:400

CLIMATE STATEMENT

The theatre is located on the Gasthuisplaats, positioned between two canals. The water in these canals serves as the primary source for the building's water-to-water heat pump systems.

Water from the Kornmarkt canal is used to supply a water-to-water heat pump that serves the large auditorium. In addition, water from the Brabantsche Turfmarkt canal is used for a second water-to-water heat pump, which supplies the air handling units (AHUs) for the public spaces and the small theatre hall.

As a result, the building is equipped with three air handling units and three distinct climate zones:

- Climate Zone 1: the large auditorium
- Climate Zone 2: the small theatre hall
- Climate Zone 3: the remaining functions, such as offices, dressing rooms, and support spaces

Due to the use of two separate water-to-water heat pump systems, the building operates with two independent circulation systems, ensuring efficient energy distribution and climate control tailored to the different programmatic zones.

Figure 43. Climate diagram, section B, scale 1:400

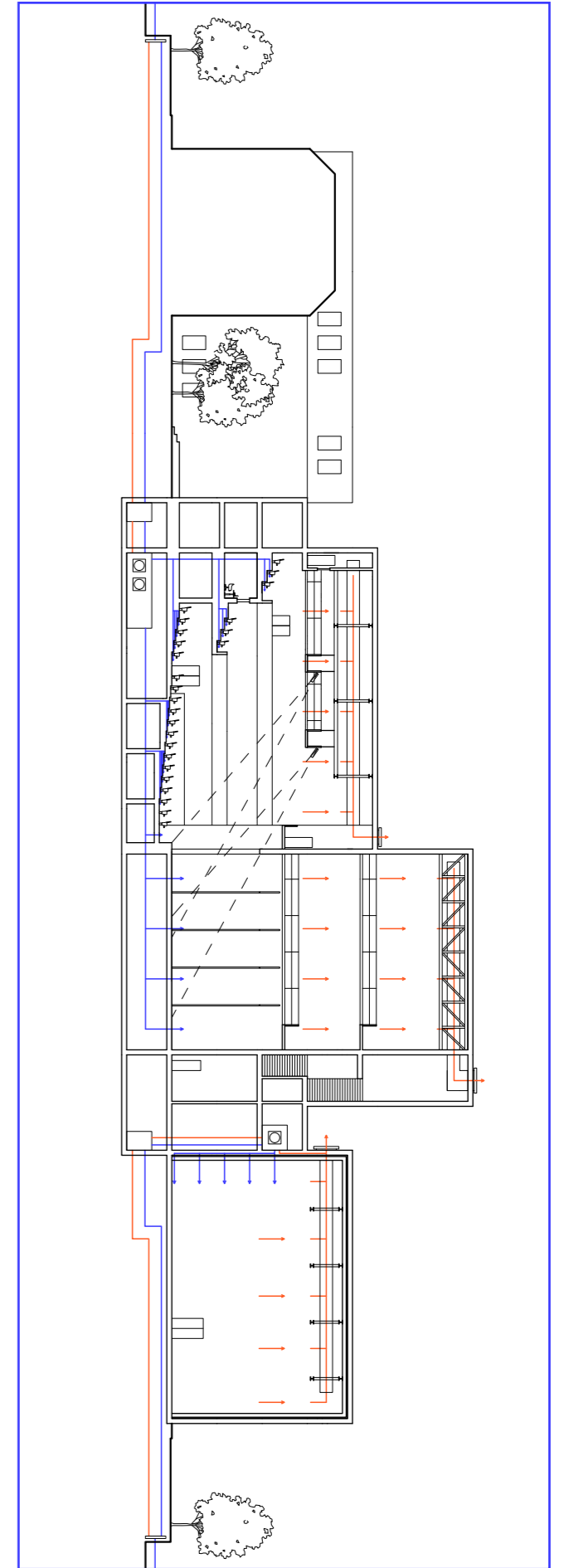
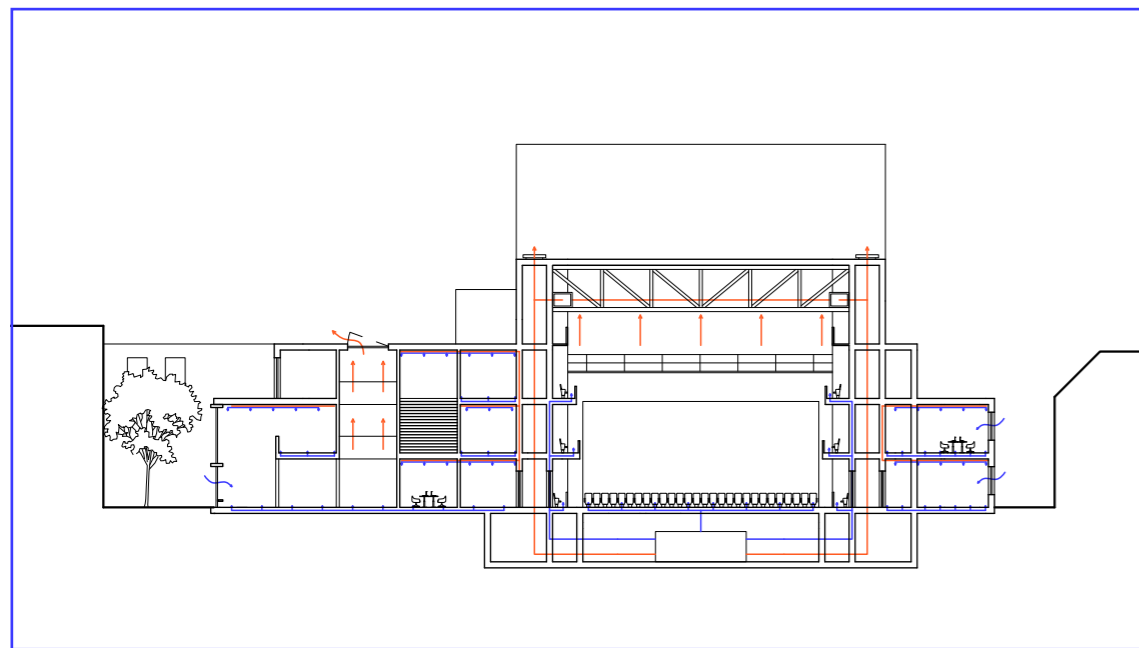


Figure 44. Climate diagram, section A, scale 1:400

LEGEND

- Climate zone 1, main hall
- Climate zone 2, small hall
- Climate zone 3, front of house

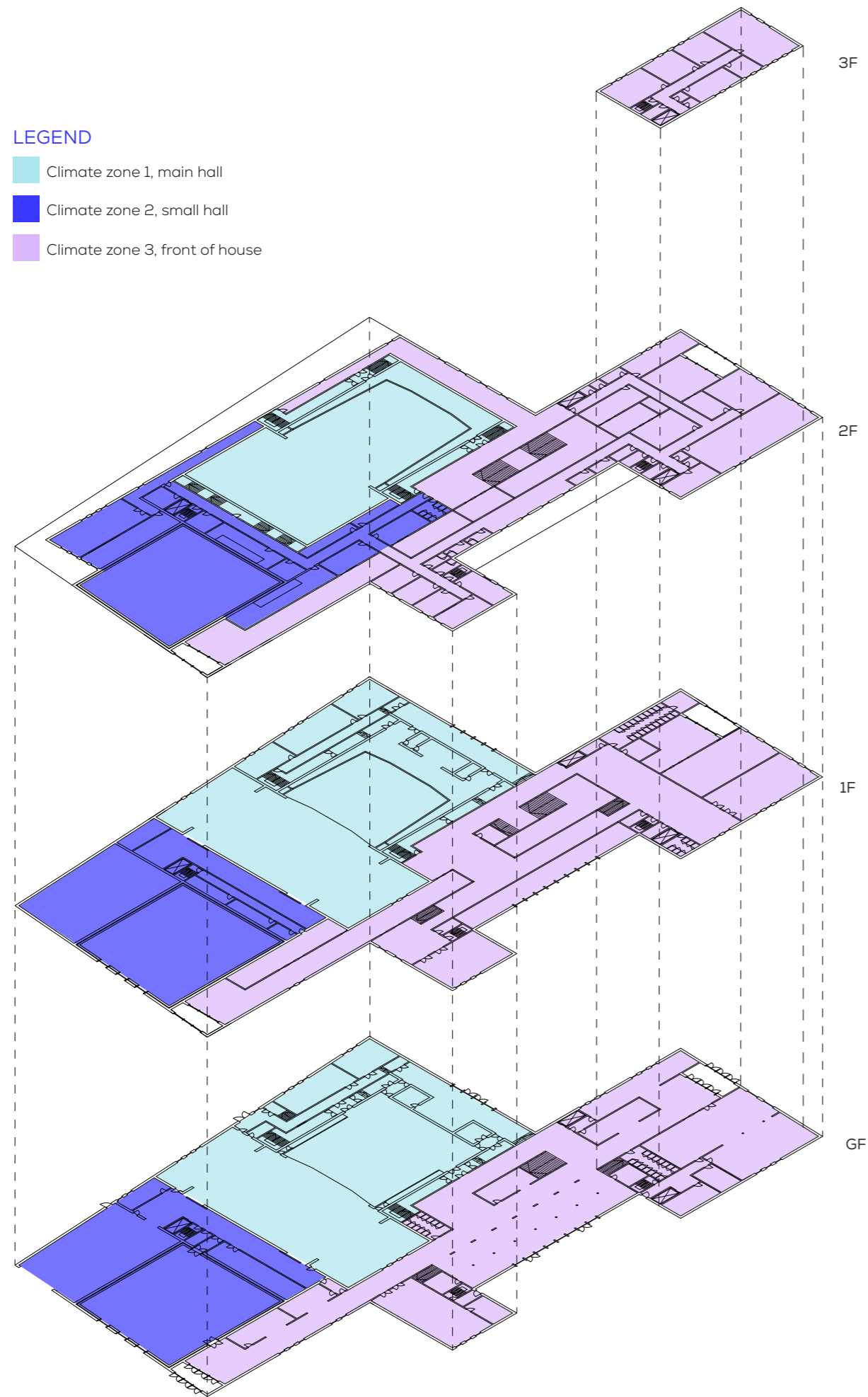


Figure 45. Diagram climate zoning

LEGEND

- Delivery
- Public
- Artists
- Staff
- Culture lab

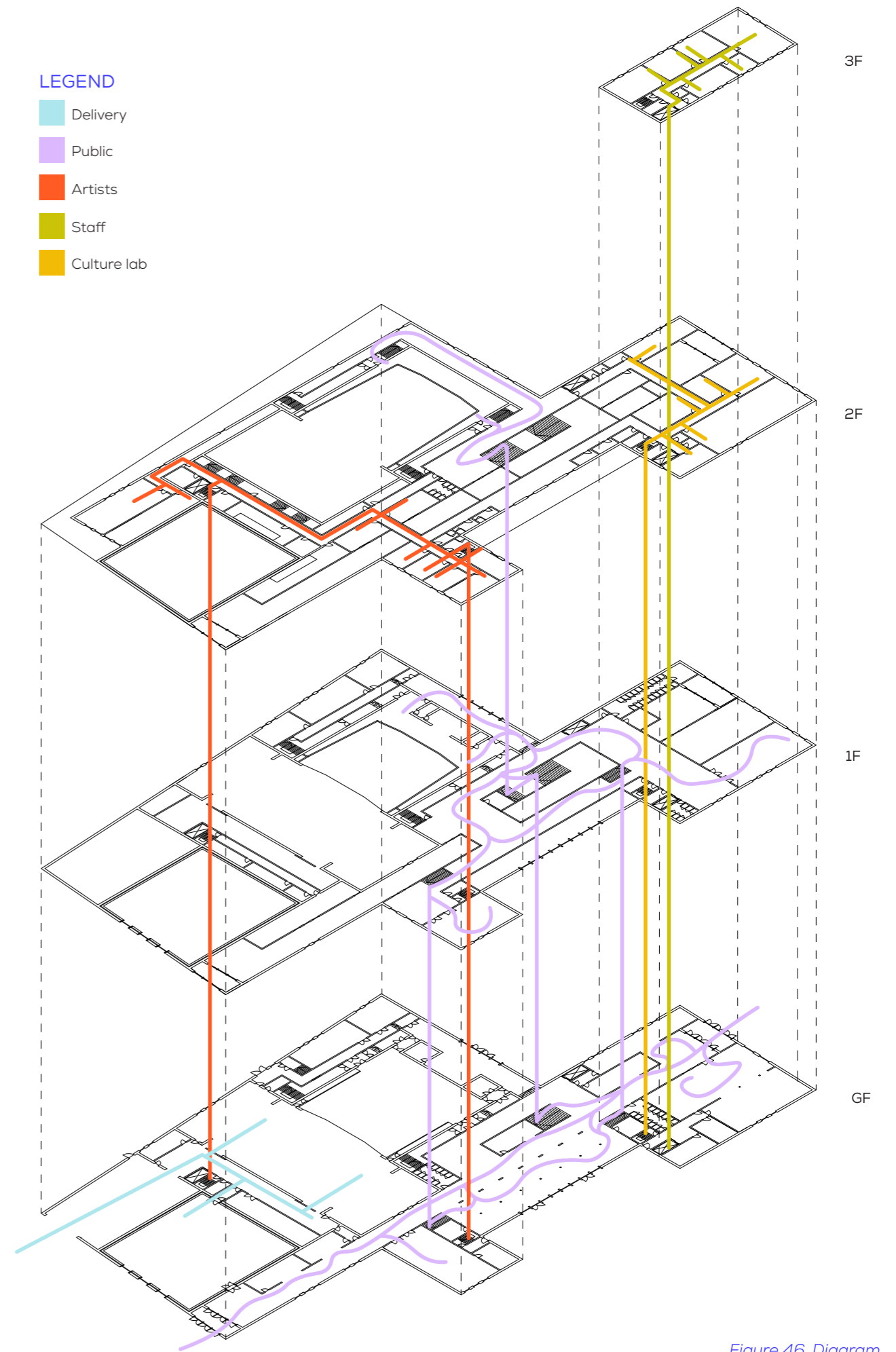


Figure 46. Diagram circulation

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Melis, J. (2026). *Project Journal, The Passage*. Graduation studio, Interiors Building Cities. TU Delft.

IMAGE LIST

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Fig 45. Climate zoning, floorplan second floor (own work)

Fig 46. Circulation diagram, floorplan firstfloor (own work)

Fig 47. Photograph of IBC graduation studio 2025/2026

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I would also like to thank my fellow students for creating such a supportive and collaborative environment. Everyone was always willing to help, talk and share ideas. Because of this the graduation studio really feels like a team.

Figure 47. Graduation studio, Interiors Buildings Cities, mentors & students, 2025/2026



THE PASSAGE

where city meets stage